

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

photo-eye BLOG

ART PHOTOGRAPHY AND BOOKS

Interviews: Sharon Harper on From Above and Below

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By: Sarah Bradley



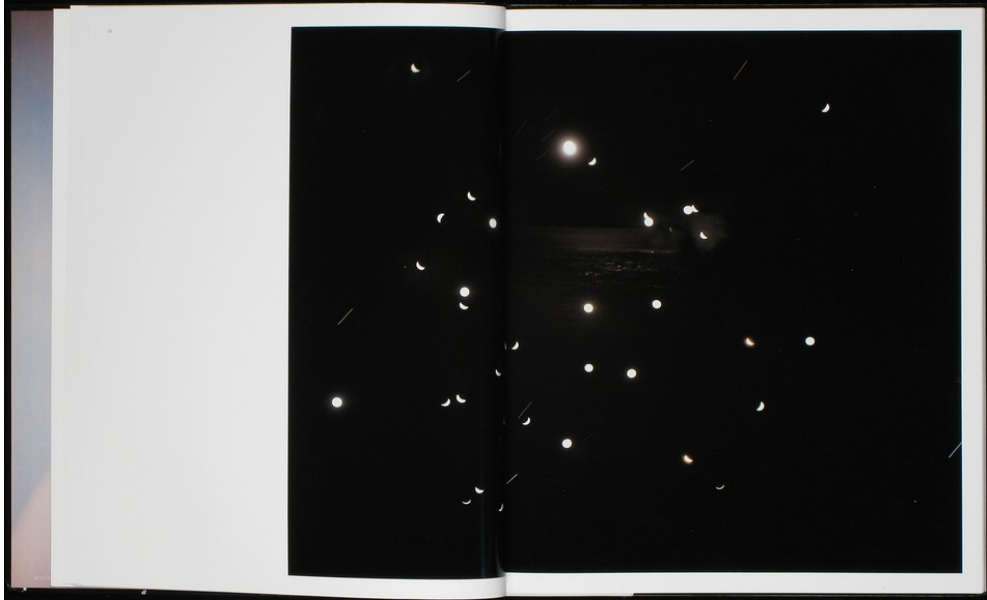
Two of the photographers in our current group exhibition *Solar*, Sharon Harper and Chris McCaw, recently published their first books. Copies of both are now available.

Harper's book, *From Above and Below*, published by Radius Books, is a selection of Harpers images that explore the night sky, perception and technology. The images range from photographs to video stills, shot with a variety of cameras, some of which Harper creates using a telescope as a lens. Though some of the images are still photographs, they are made with an interest in motion - such as the images from her series *Sun/Moon (trying to see through a telescope)* which are included in the *Solar* exhibit. All of the images present a new way of looking at the night sky and seek a new way of understanding. As Harper told the *Pasatiempo* in a recent interview, "I'm always looking to learn from photography that I can't see with my eyes."

Measuring 11x14", *From Above and Below* presents beautiful reproductions of over a decade of Harper's images of the sky and also some views of her notebooks. Last week [Chris McCaw told us](#) a little bit about his experience in book publishing and this week Sharon Harper shares hers. -- Anne Kelly

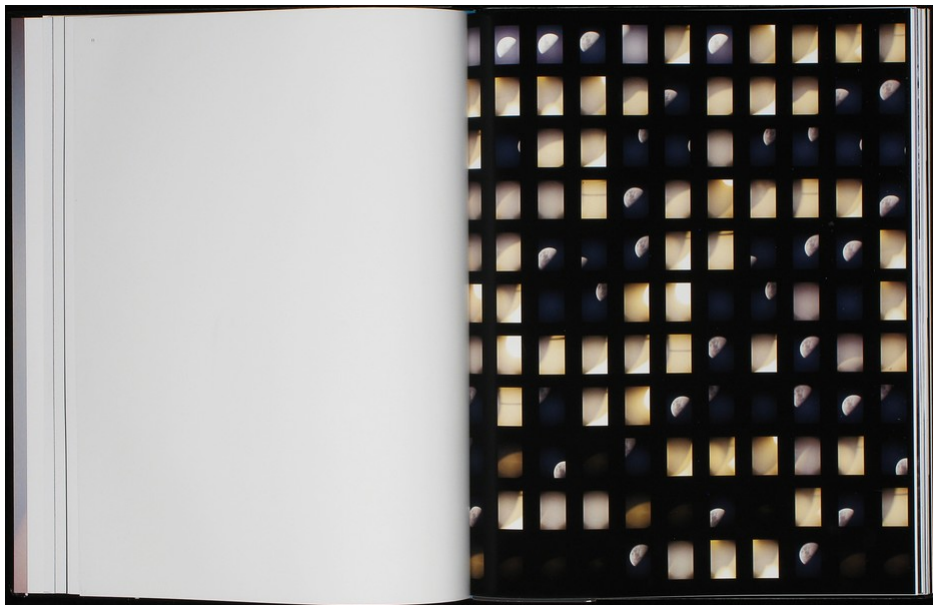
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Anne Kelly: Tell us about your book.

Sharon Harper: The book *From Above and Below* will be released by Radius Books next month, in November. The book brings together twelve years of photographs and video stills that use the sky as a site for images we can't see without a camera. The photographs flow freely between projects and are sequenced to build an experimental, symbolic relationship between the camera, the image-maker and the natural world. Throughout the book, images of the moon, stars and sun bridge the medium's ability to verify empirical evidence and to create poetic connections between our environment and ourselves.



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AK: How does it feel to have a book of your photographs published?

SH: It was a wonderful opportunity for me to revisit the past 12 years of my work and to generate connections between the projects. It really brought new life to the work by allowing me to think of the ways the work could be presented differently in the book form than it was on the gallery walls. The most creative and energizing part of the project was working with David Chickey at Radius—who is an incredibly talented, experienced and visually sophisticated person—on the concept, sequencing and design of the book. I never get to work with someone on the creative aspects of my work, and I loved it. It was fantastic to work with David on the book.



AK: Tell us a little bit about the process.



SH: I created a maquette and shopped it to Radius. When they accepted the project, I sat down with David and Darius, who was at Frankael Gallery at the time but participated in the initial phase of the book, and we decided which photographs we'd like to include in the book. The difficulty was integrating the different visual styles of all the projects we wanted to include so that they could flow throughout a sequence. I didn't want the images to be sequenced chronologically and David immediately agreed that the work would be more dynamic if the connections and the ideas flowed primarily from a visual sequence. I felt strongly that I didn't want the titles of the works, which are an important part of the work and indeed a piece of the work itself, to be listed along side of the images.

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I proposed putting the titles of the works in the front of the book so viewers would at least glimpse the importance of the titles before immersing in the visual experience. It was amazing to sequence the work with David because we were very much in synch with our understanding of the work and how it should be presented. We hit a snag on how to integrate images that contained grids into the flow of the book and had to work that out. That work was key because it forced me to realize that I originally composited the images, and that I could re-composit them to fit the book. It opened up the way to give all of the work a new life in the book outside of the way I'd originally conceived of it for presentation as prints. It was great fun to work with David on this. We decided to add my notebooks to the end of the book to have a record of my process and a different kind of voice from the one in my photographs. Photography for me is all about trying to combine the various ways that it can communicate—technically, scientifically as evidence, and poetically—into one space.



AK: Do you have any advice for photographers who would like to have a book of their work published?

SH: Have lots of patience and roll with the process. It will be longer, more expensive, and possibly more rewarding than you can imagine.

<http://blog.photoeye.com/2012/10/interviews-sharon-harper-on-from-above.html>