

# Alec Soth's Archived Blog

February 12, 2007

## Minneagraphy

Filed under: [minnesota](#) — alecsothblog @ 3:35 pm

Would some Wiki-specialist please work on an entry for Minneagraphers. I'm jealous of the [Chicagraphers](#).

## 29 Comments

1. looks like a way for today's photographers who just happen to live in Chicago to try and link themselves with historically important figures like Callahan and Moholy-Nagy. the 'Chicago School' of old was something new and bold, a far cry from this current list of people we've never heard of.

*Comment by john k. — February 12, 2007 @ [6:01 pm](#)*

2. john,  
The words "playa hater" come to mind...  
Way to go Mr. Ulrich.  
Jealous that theres not quite as solid of a group of Philadelphographers.  
But, maybe thats just because the word gets too long and out of hand...

*Comment by Chad — February 12, 2007 @ [6:46 pm](#)*

3. ok chad, tell me which people on that list are nearly as significant as Moholy-Nagy and Harry Callahan.

This need to be a part of some special group, to self-promote and bring attention to yourself and establish a heirarchy that excludes as much as it includes... yes, i am a proud "playa hater"

*Comment by john k. — February 12, 2007 @ [7:05 pm](#)*

4. Alec: I think you have to live on a lake! not near a river.  
"A small sampling of the many good talents in our city near the lake."

You may have to move closer to the Great Lakes to get listed.  
If this is any help. Do you want me to call a moving truck for your gear.

*Comment by [David Wilson Burnham](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [9:54 pm](#)*

5. Sir Jon,  
Certainly your 25A filter is fogged, or perhaps a greasy viewfinder. Might I suggest some PowerShammy™ action to wipe away that cynicism and see the humor here?  
No Chicagrapher claims to be as Moholy Holy as Sir Nagy himself. Or as well to ellicit the roof-jumping-car-chasing-super-sharpness fidelity of a Mr. Callahan (played by none other than Mr. C. Eastwood).  
It's much more a giggle than a manifesto. (Though I hear the hating is pretty popular on the blogs these days).

*Comment by ['The Real' Jonald Kincade](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [10:51 pm](#)*

6. Herr Kincade makes a good point. While humor has long played a role in Chicagart (Nutt, Paschke, Brown) it is fairly new to Chicagraphy (though Sinsabaugh's panoramas were a hoot). The Second City influence on the new generation seems obvious. Ulrich as Murray, Gitelson as Belushi, Siber as Carell...

*Comment by [Alec Soth](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [11:39 pm](#)*

7. sorry, 'the-really-not-at-all-funny' jonald kincade, i didn't know that this was only a place for photographers to come and lather up each other's asses. this stuff is important to me - you know, like how comedy is clearly important to you.

*Comment by john k. — February 12, 2007 @ [11:42 pm](#)*

8. I find Kincade hysterical, but that might just be the lather talking. Nobody soaps a rope like Ulrich.

*Comment by [Alec Soth](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [11:50 pm](#)*

9. Wait, I can understand the the Ulrich-Murray thing, and maybe even the Gitelson Belushi thing, but why is Siber Carell? Although he is great in "the office" I think he is a very different category, maybe someone like Akroyd, I beleive he was also in the Second City Troupe.

*Comment by [Michael Bühler-Rose](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [11:51 pm](#)*

10. Wait, I can understand the the Ulrich-Murray thing, his beard is starting to go grey even, and maybe even the Gitelson Belushi thing, but why is Siber Carell? Although he is great in "the office" I think he is a very different category, maybe someone like Akroyd, I beleive he was also in the Second City Troupe.

*Comment by [Michael Bühler-Rose](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [11:51 pm](#)*

11. come on alec, you know you don't have to lather anyone anymore, you've made it!

*Comment by [john k.](#) — February 12, 2007 @ [11:54 pm](#)*

12. john k.,

You're just jealous you didn't come up with it. There, take that!

R

*Comment by [Ryan](#) — February 13, 2007 @ [1:32 am](#)*

13. touche

*Comment by [john k.](#) — February 13, 2007 @ [8:21 am](#)*

14. I think Jonathan Gitelson is a significant as Moholy-Nagy and Harry Callahan.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Jonathan Gitelson

*Comment by [Jon Gitelson](#) — February 13, 2007 @ [9:04 am](#)*

15. I wonder if there are any Minneamimeographers out there.

For john k- half the web/wikipedia/artworld is based on sycophancy, but without it we'd probably be all the poorer, chaff comes with wheat.

*Comment by [rob](#) — February 13, 2007 @ [12:52 pm](#)*

16. Ray Metzker's name is misspelled in that wikipedia entry

*Comment by [Cary](#) — February 13, 2007 @ [1:48 pm](#)*

17. I grew up in minneapolis and live in chicago and I'm in MPP and I don't make either list weep weep another blow to my pitifull ego.

*Comment by [doug mcgoldrick](#) — February 13, 2007 @ [10:52 pm](#)*

18. I see this “clustering” as a new trend towards regionalism (and the fact that you can now live anywhere) and the rise in collectives and the collective urge as a response to the tough artworld. Further, it’s really about creating community and many emerging photographers are now realizing that they have the power to do that. They and their work are the better for it.

I am not a photographer—I’m on the other side of the rope in the non-profit photo world—but I grew up in Rochester (on a great lake) and now live outside of Boston (river and ocean). As an art historian, I can say we are fascinated such topics and there is definitely something going on out there in the Midwest (dissertation topic anyone?).

There is a nice contingent of historical processes young folk in Rochester and Western NY and PA now. In Boston, there is a new energy with super folks coming out of MassArt, Museum School, and other graduate schools and not moving to New York but staying and creating a vibrant community here. I challenge the photographers in Eastern cities to rally even more and learn from our friends surrounding the Great Lakes!

For anyone interested in seeing this Boston art energy at work, check out <http://www.bigredandshiny.com>

*Comment by [Leslie Brown](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [8:23 am](#)*

19. if you look, the wikipedia entry has been significantly modified, and for the better. we can see that the term was coined for a small group of photographers who studied together and know each other. that’s great, really. a community of artists in an area is important, and many times it leads to great openings and leaps forward in the art-making process.

before there was no explanation of any philosophical stance or set of values. now, at least we have some idea of what “chicographers” are beyond a short-list of names. we also find out that it is a group of artists who studies together and know each other, and it seems a little egotistical and presumptuous to call yourselves, at the exclusion of so many others, THE chicographers.

i have NOTHING against any of these artists, their work is strong and in some cases significant in terms of contemporary art. but it should also be pointed out that, just like the postmoderns who set out to destroy the old system of heirarchy and elitism, this new trend of banding together may just lead to the same problems the postmoderns faced – namely that they themselves formed a new elite, and in the process became everything they claimed they were against. they became a new elite, far more rich and famous than those they replaced.

*Comment by [john k.](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [10:18 am](#)*

20. JK — Why would any Chicographer dare try to climb a pedestal knowing you are waiting to kick it out from under them?

*Comment by [John](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [2:02 pm](#)*

21. J – why would ANYONE want to climb a pedestal?

*Comment by [john k.](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [2:39 pm](#)*

22. It’s interesting to me how defensive some of you get when your ideas are challenged. John K. has made some solid points, and while he seems to be a bit of an instigator or provocateur, his points have been mostly answered with either sarcastic jokes or subtle put-downs. And whether he’s serious or not, he makes an otherwise boring post very interesting.

*Comment by [Ginny](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [3:09 pm](#)*

23. Ginny,

You make a good point about John K. I think, though, the label "Chicographers" or "Chicographers" has been taken out of context, which is reason for the lack of "intellectual" response to John. K.

Mr. Brian Ulrich coined the term [here](#). Brian has been part of a growing community of contemporary photographers that support each other in various ways. I'd also like to note that he has a healthy sense of humor when writing on his [blog](#).

Excerpt from the "Chicag-raphy" post:

"I hereby officially create the term [Chicag-raphy] in hopes of cashing out at a ripe old age for early retirement (and tall drinks with umbrellas by a beach somewhere)."

I'd like to make two points about the post, more specifically the quote, and why John K. hasn't received as welcome a discussion as was possible.

One, Brian lives in Chicago where it is very cold. Notherners—sometimes referred to as "Yankees" or "Yanks" by Texans like myself—dream about warm weather frequently. So saying he'd like to retire with "tall drinks with umbrellas by a beach somewhere" is somewhat funny. Perhaps it's even worth a quite chuckle.

Mixing the humor of the ending statement in Brian's original "Chicag-raphy" post with the fact that he coined the term "Chicag-raphy" should lead us to believe he was not entirely serious about the label. Yes, serious about using it, but not that it represents a society of exclusivity or a means of rank among other artists.

Two, John K.'s fairly aggressive response was basically out of context the the light-heartedness of Alec's post. As a matter of fact, it was unclear if he was kidding or serious; perhaps he was both. Thus the "sarcastic jokes" or "subtle put-downs."

Jonathan Gitelson's, of what I know of him, personality is that egotistical. \*wink

Overtly aggressive tones rise in online discussions frequently, which has been a source of comment, discussion, and headache for [Joerg](#) and others in recent and past months.

Ryan

*Comment by [Ryan Granzow](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [5:00 pm](#)*

24. instead of 'chicographers' how about a new term – the 'life is good' school of photography. you know, colorful, funny, hipster photography. there, a new term for those wikipedists out there, the life is good school!

*Comment by [john k.](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [5:38 pm](#)*

25. "John K.'s fairly aggressive response was basically out of context the the light-heartedness of Alec's post."

I don't really see much aggression in his post. Whether or not the original post was light-hearted, that's what a blog is, like a conversation that starts one way and takes a turn. Is it that Mr. K said that the Chicographers were "people we never heard of"? It may not be the nicest thing to say, but when you put yourself out there as much as some artists do, you have to take the criticism with the applause.

*Comment by [Ginny](#) — February 14, 2007 @ [5:58 pm](#)*

26. I didn't read any aggression either, at least not from john k.

Personally, I find the chicagraphy thing quite entertaining, there is some good photography amongst it all. Similarly I peruse flickr groups every now and then, maybe one day more flickr pools will have claimed their eponymous wikipedia page.

*Comment by rob — February 15, 2007 @ [10:27 am](#)*

27. that's a great point by the way, about flickr pools. flickr is a significant movement in photography, and there is some amazing work there. dare i say, as good as the Chi...

nah!

*Comment by john k. — February 15, 2007 @ [9:18 pm](#)*

28. how about calling the flickr crowd faux-tographers?

*Comment by [e. merman](#) — February 16, 2007 @ [8:38 pm](#)*

29. Yes Alec, I think we do need a Minneagraphers wiki page. I could use some enlightenment on the photo history of the area.

*Comment by [jaygould](#) — February 22, 2007 @ [11:05 am](#)*