



ANTONIA SMALL
LORD HALL GALLERY

ANTONIA SMALL

Photographs

July 24 - September 22, 2017



Pollock. Photography

LORD HALL GALLERY

University of Maine

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COVER *F/V Skipper*. Photography

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ANTONIA SMALL

Photography

This exhibit is a unique glimpse inside the lives of the people of the fishing communities of Port Clyde and Monhegan Island. Through her lens, Antonia Small gives us the opportunity to experience a visual narrative, presented in a deeply rich world of black and white where the intensity and sense of the people are very clearly portrayed.

Bringing her experience as a documentary photographer to bear on the maritime culture that unfolds around her in her hometown, Antonia is able to capture the nuances and details of her subjects with great honesty and beauty. From images of the smooth fog above the waves of churning waters or the calm of a winter day at the edge of the ocean, to the invariable focus of the people engaged in processing the day's catch, Antonia's intimate understanding of the way of life of the fishing world is made abundantly clear.

Laurie E. Hicks
Professor of Art, Curator of Lord Hall Gallery



Net. Photography



F/V Leslie & Jessica. Photography

ANTONIA SMALL

Artist Statement

The tiny village of Port Clyde, Maine, is home to one of the region's last remaining ground fishing fleets.

Part chronicle, part fine art, I began this series of black and white images of Port Clyde in 2009, inspired by the ground fishermen who, in an effort to save their fishery, came together to develop the first Community Supported Fishery (CSF) in the nation. At that time, Glen Libby was still fishing and developing the CSF. Buying fish one day, I asked if I could come take pictures as a long-term project, or until the fate of the fishery became clear. Glen agreed.

My work began on the wharf: fishermen off-loading catch, measuring, weighing, tallying quota under government surveillance. I then followed them to the processing plant where cleaning, cutting, packaging, freezing took place. Later, I began to include other fishermen of Port Clyde and their families and details of the harbor. I received calls from Glen to come see fishing vessel (F/V) *Skipper* hauled out for cleaning, crabs boiling on the coldest day, nets being mended. His sister-in-law called me to help her deliver piglets on a night so cold that piglet-care took precedence



Artist at Work. Photo by Amy Rockett-Todd



over image-making. I invited myself to a burial at sea; went lobstering with Glen's brother, Gary (who lobsters to pay his ground-fishing costs); and attended a wedding and baptism.

Few sane people opt to do what these fishermen do. You have to be a little crazy to cast off the dock lines in the middle of the night and head out into the watery unknown, leaving unpaid bills and anxious hearts ashore, awaiting your success. You have to have a good deal more hope in one day than most folks muster in a lifetime. And that's before all the odds are stacked against you: then, you have to make lemonade.

I am not qualified in the science, industry or policy of today's fishery. I am someone who loves sea-infused places and people. I began this project as an excuse to get closer and listen carefully to a few people who love their work, their lives, their home, and their history, however short or long.

Excerpt above taken from *Caught* (2016) by Antonia Small and Glen Libby

Monhegan Island, twelve miles out to sea, is the year-round home to 56 souls, some of whom choose to fish and lobster through the bitter months of winter.

In 2012, I was invited to show the work in Northern France. My invitation came with a request to “show the people”—I had to convey to my host that the project was about the loss of the people affiliated with this way of life. However, in an effort further show the surviving fishermen’s self-regulating conservation measures, I photographed nearby Monhegan Island’s “Trap Day” (October 1st or thereabouts, depending on the weather), when all the boats set their traps on the same day. Monhegan’s season is October 1 to June 30, a cold winter fishery, all within a two-mile radius of the island. Much like Port Clyde ground-fishermen looking to preserve their livelihood, Monhegan lobstermen have created a set of self-governance rules meant to help their fishery remain sustainable for the long haul.

Overfishing and environmental changes have devastated a once vibrant coast-wide way of life, leaving the men and women of these two small communities clinging tenaciously to what remains of their fisheries. They are adopting new strategies and conservation measures that might allow their children to one day fish the same waters their families have worked for generations.



F/V Ella Christine Leaving. Photography



Propellor. Photography



Ronnie Moving Traps. Photography



Monhegan Trap Truck. Photography



Snow. Photography

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Antonia (Toni) Small of Port Clyde worked as a performing artist before turning her attention to film and then still photography in her mid-twenties.

As a young teen her summers were spent in the company of an uncle, who took her fishing on Mobile Bay—usually in the pre-dawn hours before work. Around the same time Toni discovered photography, she ran away to sea on a tall ship, the HMS *Rose*, and sailed to Europe and back. Soon after, Toni began working as photo assistant to French maritime photographer Philip Plisson, on location in Scotland, before returning to the US to study black and white documentary photography at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Portland, and subsequently, enrolling in the Professional Certificate program at Maine Photographic Workshops in Rockport.

Using, almost exclusively, analogue film cameras, Toni is interested in the relationship between time and her subjects: duration of time for exposures, years of witnessing, and change as a historic reality. Studio projects range from pinhole images and theater for the camera, to documenting her salty neighbors at work. Toni's photographs have been exhibited in the United States and Europe and are held in private collections.



Baptism. Photography



Gary Libby Checking Traps.
Photography

RIGHT
F/V MisKim - Bagging Bait.
Photography

Randy Fish Face.
Photography





Glen Steaming Crabs.
Photography



Bait.
Photography



Fish Cutting - Reggie.
Photography



Betty Libby Picking Crabs.
Photography



Trap Stacks. Photography



F/V Ella Christine Leaving the Wharf. Photography



Gary's Foul Weather Gear. Photography



Capt'n Lee.
Photography



Gary's Hand on the Wheel.
Photography



Gary's Boat in the Harbor.
Photography



Bert "Birdie" Powell.
Photography



Family.
Photography



Father & Son.
Photography



Fish House Details. Photography



Monhegan Village. Photography



F/V Ella Christine's Bell. Photography



Bollard at Night. Photography



Fog Church.
Photography



Anderson Family Playing Cards.
Photography



Fog Sea. Photography

NOTES

COVER. *F/V Skipper*, 2013. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Gary Libby cleans the hull of his brother Glen's boat, *F/V Skipper*. This was January 2013; Glen sold her later that winter. She now fishes out of Port Judith, RI.

PAGE 2. *Pollock*, 2009. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Catch shares were distributed as whole fish for the first few years. Instruction on cutting and cooking were provided.

PAGE 7. *Net*, 2012. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Aboard *F/V Leslie & Jessica*

PAGE 8. *F/V Leslie & Jessica*, 2009. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Trucks come down to the wharf (built with funding from the Working Waterfront program), when the boats come in, then carry the fresh catch across town to be processed.

PAGE 13. *F/V Ella Christine Leaving*, 2012. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. *F/V Ella Christine* leaves Port Clyde Harbor at 11 p.m. to reach the fishing grounds at dawn.

PAGE 14. *Propellor*, 2013. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. The propeller of *F/V Skipper*. To a fisherman this looks like a ton of work and long overdue; to this photographer, it looked like the deep mysteries of the ocean had been brought up to be seen.

PAGE 15. *Ronnie Moving Traps*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Shore crews, made up of family and friends, shuttle the lobster traps from the wharf to the boats when they come alongside for another load to set.

PAGE 15. *Monhegan Trap Truck*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. A truckload of traps, just up the hill from Monhegan wharf on trap day.

PAGE 16. *Snow*, 2007. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Boats used to fish year-round from Port Clyde. For the three years (2014-16) the winter fishery (shrimp) has been closed.

PAGE 18. *Baptism*, 2008. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Angela Anderson and Joseph Pomerleau are baptized by her father Larry, and her uncle, Dougie, in the waters of the Penobscot Bay, on the occasion of their wedding.

PAGE 19. *Gary Libby Checking Traps*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Gary Libby checks his traps in Port Clyde Harbor early one September morning.

PAGE 19. *F/V MisKim - Bagging Bait*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Gary Libby bags bait for his lobster traps. Usually, herring is used, but Gary bought a couple trays of fish racks off his brother, saving himself some money and offering the lobsters some variety.

PAGE 19. *Randy Fish Face*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Randy Cushman has a reputation for a tidy boat and a careful way of handling his fish. I asked him if those were new oilskins: "Na, I've had these for ten years."

PAGE 20. *Glen Steaming Crabs*, 2016. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Glen Libby peers into the crab cooker to estimate if the crabs are done. When they're ready, he'll hoist them out, transfer them to a fish basket to cool, and then the picking begins.

PAGE 20. *Bait*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Gary Libby buys the fish racks from Port Clyde Fresh Catch to use in his lobster traps. A fiscal savings for him, a change of meal for the lobster.

PAGE 21. *Fish Cutting - Reggie*, 2009. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Reggie Montgomery once cut fish for O'Hara's. He came in to give Port Clyde Fresh Catch a hand when they needed help.

PAGE 21. *Betty Libby Picking Crabs*, 2010. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Betty Libby, mother to Glen and Gary Libby, picks crabs at Port Clyde Fresh Catch.

PAGE 22. *Trap Stacks*, 2012. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. The trap stacks at the start of trap day tower over everyone. By day's end they'll all be set on the ocean floor.

PAGE 23. *F/V Ella Christine Leaving the Wharf*, 2012. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Randy Cushman's boat F/V Ella Christine leaving the wharf.

PAGE 24. *Gary's Foul Weather Gear*, 2012. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Keeping dry while fishing North Atlantic waters is critical. Oil skins and boots are second skin to fishermen.

PAGE 25. *Capt'n Lee*, 2009. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Scott Mankinen, crew for Justin Libby on F/V *Capt'n Lee*, waits for the falls to hook up the next tray of fish to haul up to the wharf.

PAGE 25. *Gary's Boat in the Harbor*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. F/V Leslie & Jessica sits alongside the wharf in Port Clyde awaiting ice and groceries for the next trip.

PAGE 26. *Gary's Hand on the Wheel*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Gary Libby's F/V *MisKim* is named for his late wife, Kim. A smaller boat, Gary can steer, haul, band lobsters and re-set his traps alone.

PAGE 26. *Bert "Birdie" Powell*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Birdie (aka: The Hawk) was Randy Cushman's crew for many years.

PAGE 27. *Family*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Kris Coulter and his daughter, Adreanna, catch up between fishing trips. Red, the dog, belongs to Gary Libby.

PAGE 27. *Father & Son*, 2010. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Justin (Buzz) Libby enlists the help of his father, Glen, in building a new net for F/V *Capt'n Lee*.

PAGE 28. *Fish House Details*, 2012. Photography, 27 x 27 inches. Early morning light floods Douglas Anderson Sr.'s fish house in Port Clyde.

PAGE 29. *Monhegan Village*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Monhegan wharf is a busy place the days leading up to trap day.

PAGE 30. *F/V Ella Christine's Bell*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Boats are required to have back up warning signals aboard. This bell would serve to call for help, or alert other navigators, if the primary horn malfunctions.

PAGE 31. *Bollard at Night*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Slipping dock lines and heading out into the night to arrive at the fishing grounds in the morning requires a healthy dose of hope.

PAGE 32. *Fog Church*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. A quiet evening street scene at the end of a busy summer season. The Port Clyde Baptist Church attendance ebbs and flows with the seasons, but the light on the steeple acts as a beacon all year round.

PAGE 32. *Anderson Family Playing Cards*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Sunday afternoon card game at Verena Anderson's dining room table.

PAGE 33. *Fog Sea*, 2012. Photography, 16 x 16 inches. Fog at sea can be as deadly as it can be beautiful.

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