

Visitors view Peterson's 9/11 prints.

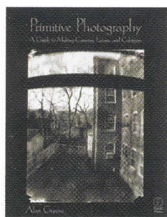
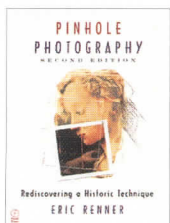


© GRANT PETERSON

If you've ever constructed a pinhole camera from a cardboard box, you never get over the fact that a photo can be made without a lens—and with something so crude and simple.

The **Polaroid Pinhole Photo Kit** (below, about \$100) is one of the best introductions to the photographic process we can think of. It may not have the shabby charm of a pinhole camera, but it provides the basic components, including an integrated 3 1/4 x 4 1/4-inch Polaroid pack film holder, a box of Type 669 color film, and a stick-on exposure time guide—so you don't need a darkroom to get lensless pictures. You can get the kit through the Pinhole Resource (505-536-9942 or pinholeresource.com), an archive and clearinghouse that also sells founder Eric Renner's

Pinhole Photography: Rediscovering a Historic Technique (Focal Press, \$40), the finest pinhole primer we know. Even more ambitiously retrograde photographers should get Alan Greene's intriguing **Primitive Photography: A Guide to Making Cameras, Lenses, and Calotypes** (Focal Press, \$30), which explains how to make your own wooden cameras plus the basics of calotype.



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technology & VISION

On the morning of September 11, Grant Peterson was about to shoot a still-life assignment in a Broadway studio, but his plans changed when he looked out its eighth-floor window and saw Manhattan's landmark World Trade Center towers on fire. Pointing his classic Sinar Norma 4x5 view camera away from the tabletop and out the window, he began systematically exposing the sheets of Fujichrome Astia that he had already loaded into his film holders. Keeping his cable release slack so he wouldn't transmit his own horrified shaking to the camera, he took 16 photographs as the towers burned and collapsed, never stopping to change his composition. "I didn't think the pictures would be any different than most other people's, so I didn't develop the film for four days," says Peterson. "But when I finally got them back, I was shocked by their clarity."

Like many photographers who witnessed the unimaginable destruction of 9/11, Peterson felt the need to do something with his pictures. "I had to come to grips with this experience, and presenting the pictures to the public seemed to be the only way," he says. "But I wanted to do something different from all the published images I was seeing." So Peterson, who pioneered the use of digital technology in advertising photography, chose four of the 16 frames—images that

showed the two towers burning (9:08 A.M.), the south tower falling (9:58 A.M.), the north tower falling (10:28 A.M.), and finally a swatch of clear blue sky where the towers had stood (10:29 A.M.)—and scanned them on his aging Optronix drum scanner to create massive files of over two gigabytes apiece. Working with digital guru Leo Chapman, he spent several weeks retouching the images in Photoshop (at a whopping width of 32,000 pixels) to minimize distracting changes in the angle of the light. Then Peterson collaborated with New York City's Autograph photo lab to output the files as mural-scale 5x9-foot inkjet prints, using a new Mimaki wide-format printer with ChromaZone Ultra Gamut inks and Glossy White Film (a 60-inch roll version of Pictorico's Photo Gallery Hi-Gloss White Film).

Having debuted this February at the New York Historical Society in an exhibition that will travel, Peterson's prints are epic landscapes that offer an astonishing level of detail—one we haven't seen in any other pictures of that black day. (As you study them more closely, you can see tiny human observers gathering in growing numbers on the intervening rooftops.) They have a postmodern neutrality that, combined with their size, recreates their subject more powerfully even than the day's remarkable photojournalism, which seems melodramatic by comparison. "The news media just couldn't show this catastrophe in the way the people of lower Manhattan experienced it," says the photographer.—RUSSELL HART



EXHIBITION

GRANT PETERSON'S
EXTRAORDINARY DIGITAL
PRINTS PROVIDE A
NEW VIEW OF TERROR.

9/11 IN DETAIL

Peterson's views of the destruction of the World Trade Center towers on display at the New York Historical Society.



Photography's preoccupation with September 11 has, with the exception of a few grassroots exhibitions, taken the form of published photojournalism. But for Grant Peterson, a well-known advertising photographer who lives within shooting distance of Ground Zero, magazine and newspaper reproduction simply couldn't capture the physical and emotional magnitude of the event as it was experienced by Manhattan's masses. So Peterson, who photographed the fiery collapse of the twin towers from an eighth-floor Broadway studio,

wanted to do something altogether different with his pictures. Working with four of the 16 4x5 transparencies he shot on that crystal-clear fall morning, Peterson created a series of extraordinary 5x9-foot digital prints. Shown here on display at the New York Historical Society, his prints depict the event with a scale and level of detail that is horrifically riveting. Despite their seeming objectivity, they are a powerful response to the emotional photojournalism of the day. To find out how Peterson created his prints, see *Technology & Vision*, page 73. —RUSSELL HART