



## PAUL CAPONIGRO : Polaroids 1960–1969

*An exclusive gallery exhibition of vintage, one-of-a-kind Polaroid prints made during the artist's tenure with the Polaroid Corporation.*



Bell Pepper Cross Section, Winthrop, MA, 1964



Dried Sunflower, Winthrop MA, 1965



Wet Beach Stone, Lubec, ME, 1961



Sunflower Center, Winthrop, MA, 1965

*"Through this work it was possible, if only for brief moments, to sense the thread which holds all things together. The world, the unity of force and movement, could be seen in nature – in a face, a stone, or a patch of sunlight." - Paul Caponigro, Polaroid Corporation Archive*

Opening Reception With Artist: November 19, 2021, 5–7pm

Exhibition is on view November 19, 2021 through January 15, 2022

Obscura Gallery is honored to debut an exclusive gallery exhibition of vintage, one-of-a-kind Polaroid prints made during Paul's tenure with the Polaroid Corporation in the 1960's. In 1959, Ansel Adams introduced the Polaroid Corporation to Paul's work and that following year Paul became a consultant to the company, testing out their Type 55 negative/positive film, and their Type 53 positive film on his 4 x 5 view camera using a Polaroid back. The 44 images in the exhibition were created in New England as well as Ireland and a majority of the prints in the exhibition were created on Polaroid Type 53, which does not produce a negative and creates a one-of-a-kind positive print. The project came to a close in 1969 with a selection of images created in Ireland, when that same year Paul began his Guggenheim fellowship photographing in that country. Other than exhibiting the work at the Polaroid Corporation and a couple of universities or non-profits this is the first extensive gallery exhibition of this unique work and Obscura Gallery is honored to work directly with Paul in selling all his photographs.

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PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Birches, Vermont*, (cover of *Season's* book), 1969, 3 5/16 x 4.5", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.

In 1988 this project was published by the Polaroid Corporation in the book *Seasons*, which also included a biographical essay written by the photographer and shares the course of his artistic development during these early years – telling the story of how he began his passion for photography at a very young age, alongside his passion for the piano and classical music. Paul recalls how he first worked as a photographer during his army service from 1952-55, during which he was stationed at San Francisco's Presidio in which he met his first mentor, Benjamin (Bennie) Chin, who worked in the darkroom and ended up introducing Paul to the photographic work of the West Coast luminaries Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Minor White and Imogen Cunningham, whom had a profound effect on him because of their work's 'glowing luminosity' and 'strong emotional power'. It was Bennie who helped Paul demystify the Ansel Adams zone system and eventually introduced Paul to later mentors Ansel and Minor of whom he wound up having a long, important relationship with each.



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Winter, Redding Woods, CT*, 1960, 3 5/16 x 4.5", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.

Paul write's in *Seasons*, "I had been inspired by Ansel and Minor but once again found it was necessary to separate myself from the world of ideas and influences and seek my own way into the heart of the matter. Although I respected influence, I looked for its deeper roots in order to separate it from personalities."



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Torn Awning, Marketplace, Boston, MA*, 1960, 3 5/16 x 4.5", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Tree Fungus, Essex, Maine, 1965, 3 5/16 x 4.5"*, unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.

It was when Paul moved back to Boston in 1959 after spending time with Minor White in Rochester, when Ansel Adams came to a Boston gallery exhibition of Paul's nature studies. Ansel himself was a consultant for Polaroid, and brought with him several Polaroid associates to the exhibition, and he suggested they consider hiring Paul part-time. Once he was hired for several days each month, Caponigro tested Polaroid black-and-white film products and cameras, and provided technical feedback on behalf of the community of fine-art photographers. This was a pivotal period in Paul's career, he was finally able to give up doing commercial photography, which gave him the freedom to devote himself full-time to art photography.



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Stone Church Window, Glendalough, Wicklow, Ireland, 1969, 4.5 x 3 5/16"*, unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Breaking Surf #2, Schaudic Point, ME*, 1960, 3 5/16 x 4.5", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.

Paul's tenure with Polaroid in the 1960's was also a very prolific time in his career, as this is when many of his iconic images were made. It's no wonder that the subject matter of the Polaroids parallels many of these images with similar subject matter made in New England at some of his most profound image locations including Connecticut, Maine, and Massachusetts. The Polaroid project resulted in many incarnations of his masterpieces such as nature studies, landscapes and still lifes, while others resulted in new avenues for the artist. This same time-frame brought equal prolific experiences including the marriage to his then wife Eleanor, the birth of his son, John Paul, and the granting of a Guggenheim Fellowship. This grant made it possible for him to venture to Ireland and photograph the mystery of the ancient stones, which is when his tenure with Polaroid ended. Some of his last images for Polaroid were made in Ireland in 1969, and the many other images he made there under the Guggenheim grant eventually culminated into the book, *Megaliths*.



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Sunfish, Concord, MA*, 1960, 3 5/16 x 4.5", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.

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PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Wet Beach Stone, Lubec, Maine, 1961*, 4.5 x 3 5/16", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 55.

Paul Caponigro is best known for spiritual renditions that occur in natural forms, landscapes, and still lifes which culminated into over a dozen books by the artist published throughout the span of his career. Paul had his first solo exhibition at the George Eastman House in 1958 attributed to Minor White's tenure there and from then on he has exhibited at prominent museums and galleries for over sixty years. He has received two Guggenheim Fellowships and three National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grants. In recognition of a career spanning nearly seventy years, and a sustained, significant contribution to the art of photography, Caponigro was awarded The Royal Photographic Society's Centenary Medal and Honorary Fellowship in 2001, and in 2020 was the Honoree for the Achievement in Fine Art presented by the Lucie Awards.



PAUL CAPONIGRO, *Tin Wall*, Chelsea, MA, 1962, 4.5 x 3 5/16", unique one-of-a-kind, vintage Polaroid, Type 53.

**For all the artists' images in the exhibition please visit the website link:**  
**<https://www.obscuragallery.net/artwork/artists/paul-caponigro/polaroids-paul-caponigro/>**

**For more information please contact:**  
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### **THE GALLERY LOCATION AND HOURS**

Obscura Gallery is located in the Santa Fe downtown historic district two blocks east of the revitalized Downtown Railyard district. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11-5pm and by appointment.

Parking is limited. Additional parking is available Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 9:00pm at the State Capitol Parking Facility municipal garage located at 485 Galisteo Street. There is also metered parking always available on Galisteo street next to the Parking Facility.

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