

**Arts**

# Artists Focus on Photography

**FOTOSEPTIEMBRE** kicks off a month-long celebration of cross-cultural expression.

by **Christa Brothers, Owner/Director of Bismarck Studios**

For the last 18 years, the San Antonio arts community has focused on photography month to lead a September celebration. Michael Mehl, the founder of FOTOSEPTIEMBRE USA SAFOTO festival marvels at the event, held at the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Instituto Cultural de Mexico, local galleries and even neighborhood coffee-shops. Photography is sure to take center stage in the Alamo City.

Mehl originally thought of the event as a corridor for an artistic exchange between Mexico and San Antonio, but the celebration has since grown into an internationally acclaimed fine art photography festival.

"I did not anticipate the enormous response from Asia and Europe," Mehl explained. "The exhibits feature now the work of photographic artists from the USA, Asia, Europe, and Mexico."

The Signature Exhibits of Fotoseptiembre are curated by Mehl himself and reflect this trend. This year, they include three exhibits by Swiss artists, one by a Mexican artist, one from a Taiwanese artist, and an exhibit by artists from Los Angeles and Brooklyn.

One of his objectives for the event was an inclusiveness and openness in support of the participating artists.

"It was always seen as providing a platform or an opportunity for ideas to grow and develop and was never meant to be a strict organized, academic, and controlled event," he said. "[It] is an open-source festival, in the true sense of the term. "We provide an accessible, integral system that allows artists to develop their own content in a manner that fits their best interests and the reach of their resources."

By now, FOTOSEPTIEMBRE USA SAFOTO is a much-anticipated yearly event and the community has truly embraced it.

For example, the San Antonio Museum of Art with an exhibit curated by David Rubin (Brown Foundation Curator of Contemporary Art) will feature the work of Adad Hannah from Canada.

UTSA is hosting a series of exhibits on border issues (Mexico-US) with several well-known artists from Mexico and the US in the genre of social documentary. Trinity University is presenting an exhibit of deceased British photographer Jaime

Hodgson's images of Jazz musicians.

Almost all art galleries and even smaller venues, like shops, will exhibit photographic artwork during the month of September in the city of San Antonio.

"The community involvement makes this festival so special and different from other events," Mehl concluded. "We set the tone, the framework, and strive to continuously raise the bar on the quality of the exhibits, but in the end the community as a whole creates the experience."

For more information and a listing of all scheduled events, please log on to: [www.fotoseptiembreusa.com](http://www.fotoseptiembreusa.com)



Curated by Michael Mehl

13 Queens : Mixed Metaphors - Instituto Cultural de Mexico



Credit: Christa Brothers

Christa Brothers, Owner/director of Bismarck Studios.

## About Christa and the Studios

With a degree in the Fine Arts and many years of experience in the art world, Christa Brothers, owner of Bismarck Studios, made it her mission to provide not only all the information and knowledgeable support to all of her patrons, but to also be a resource for all art lovers in the community. For more information and hours, as well as Christa's blog, go to [www.BismarckStudios.com](http://www.BismarckStudios.com)



Credit: Chang Chaoqiang

Michael Mehl, founder of FOTOSEPTIEMBRE USA SAFOTO.

## San Antonio

# City, Community, Art



Curated by Michael Mehl

Lugares Prometidos : Mixed Metaphors



Curated by Michael Mehl

Stage : Mixed Metaphors



Curated by Michael Mehl

Absence of Being : Mixed Metaphors



Courtesy Bismarck Studios

Bismarck Studios Art Gallery (Ansen Seale Exhibit)

## Creating Memories

Mehl wanted to provide opportunities for other participating artists to document their efforts.

"I am a photographer myself," Mehl said. "It was very frustrating to go through all the work and expense of putting a photography show together to only have it seen by maybe a hundred people and then be left with no documentation and recollection of it ever happening. I wanted to create a context, a legacy and memory of some sort that was available to a wide audience."