

MEDIA RELEASE

Scene in a Library

Mary Ellen Bartley

On View — by appointment only: May 6 — June 21, Hours: 2 — 6pm

Opening Reception — Thursday, May 6, 6 — 8pm **RSVP** — info@penumbrafoundation.org

NEW YORK, NY (May 6, 2021) — Penumbra Foundation is pleased to present *Scene in a Library*, a solo exhibition and publication by artist Mary Ellen Bartley.

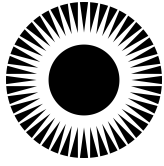
In 2019, Bartley spent six weeks at Penumbra making hundreds of prints, using a toner-based copier machine. All images were forged using the Taubman collection of 19th and early 20th century photographic manuals, treatises, and monographs, housed at the Foundation's location in New York City.

In her image-making process, Mary Ellen Bartley playfully explored the possibilities that the surface of these historical objects offer, both visually and tactilely. The result, *Scene in a Library*, is a limited edition artist book containing 28 images in six *leporello* signatures, a fold out and a photogravure, presented in a foil stamped slipcase. The exhibition displays the publication in its entirety, a selection of copies that were not included in the publication, and a number of the actual volumes used to produce these works.

“Here, in your hands” writes art historian Kim Beil in her text, “is a book of books, an index, a codex. [...] The photographs that last longest are the ones that are hidden from the light of day. They are pasted in albums or bound in books, like secrets. A photograph of a book is a question, whispered with exquisite patience.”

The opening hours for this exhibition are Monday through Friday, 2 PM — 6 PM. Admission is free. Viewing is by [appointment](#) only.

To learn more or purchase the publication please visit: penumbrafoundation.org/collaborations

**About the artist:**

Mary Ellen Bartley is known for her photographs exploring the tactile and formal qualities of the printed book and its potential for abstraction. She has exhibited in numerous institutions including The Queens Museum, The Walker Art Center, Houston Center for Photography, Parrish Art Museum, and The Watermill Center. One aspect of her practice is working in unique libraries and archives where she responds to collections and their habitats. Bartley has realized projects in the private libraries of artists such as Robert Wilson, Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, and most recently the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi. Bartley received a BFA from Purchase College and lives and works in Sag Harbor, New York.

About Penumbra Project Space

The 300 square-foot Project Space offers emerging and mid-career artists a place to present new work. The exhibitions are developed in conjunction with Penumbra's editorial or educational programming.

About Penumbra Foundation

Penumbra Foundation is a non-profit organization that brings together the Art and Science of Photography through education, research, outreach, public and residency programs. Its goal is to be a comprehensive resource for photographers at any level, artists, students, professionals, historians, researchers, conservators and curators. Penumbra specializes in advancing the use of historic and alternative photographic technologies for contemporary image making.

Contact: Leandro Villaro | leandro@penumbrafoundation.org

36 East 30th Street · New York, NY 10016 (Between Madison Ave. and Park Ave. South)

(917) 288-0343 | penumbrafoundation.org | [@penumbrafoundation](https://www.instagram.com/penumbrafoundation)