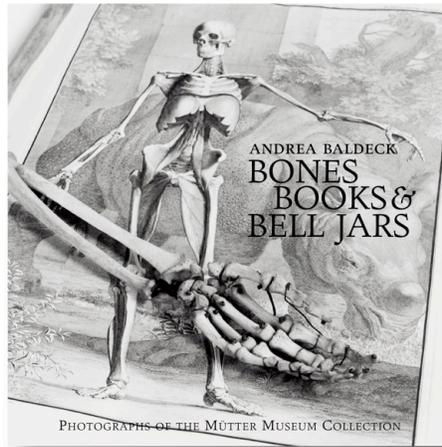


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Press contact: Jeany Wolf, 917-655-2555
jeanywolf@earthlink.net

BONES BOOKS & BELL JARS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MÜTTER MUSEUM COLLECTION
BY ANDREA BALDECK



NEW BOOK INTERPRETS “CABINET OF WONDERS”
FROM 19TH CENTURY MEDICAL MUSEUM
March 2012 Publication Date
March 9, 2012 – December 2012 Exhibition

Bones Books & Bell Jars, a new photography book by fine art photographer Andrea Baldeck, offers a contemporary fusion of art and medicine, recalling an era when artists and physicians collaborated to educate aspiring medical students and share information with other medical practitioners. Baldeck was given free rein to mine the Mutter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia’s vast collection of pathological specimens, anatomical models, surgical instruments, illustrated textbooks and other 19th century artifacts, to create her “cabinet of wonders” inspired still life photographs. A companion exhibition opens March 9, 2012, on view through December 2012 at the Mutter Museum.

Baldeck wends her way with a sense of wonderment through the off limits hallways and cabinets closed to the public. She shares her own aesthetic pleasure from a uniquely informed perspective: two decades earlier she left the operating room and a career as an internist and anesthesiologist, to enter the darkroom as a photographer.

“Behind the scenes...in locked rooms ranging from basement to attic, dwell a trove of artifacts, specimens and texts,” writes Baldeck in the Introduction. “To gain access to these is a singular privilege, a journey through time and across a continuum of the healing arts.... What follows is an experiential account of...keeping company with the past...to produce still life photographs that reflect on the roles of art and science in documenting the history of medicine.”

Baldeck conjures up a past describing tools found in the museum's Mobile Storage room: "Some speak of a time before the germ theory of disease and asepsis, when elegant tools might be casually wiped clean and replaced in velvet-lined boxes, awaiting use on the next patient, like the field kit of a Civil War surgeon..." Moving on to the Bone Room, she contemplates the wax models and skeletons, and the flesh-and-blood patients they represent: "The strange juxtaposition of fleshless bone and boneless flesh in this sequestered space speaks wordlessly, yet compellingly, of affliction and mortality."

Baldeck's lyrical black-and-white photographs are meant to engage the eye, stimulate the imagination and provoke thoughts and questions. A common denominator pervades then and now—the desire to “advance the science of medicine and lessen human misery.”

For a preview and more information, visit: <http://bonesbooksbelljars.com/>

About the Author

Born in a rural village in western New York, Andrea Baldeck began photographing with a simple box camera at age eight, imagining herself a *Life* photographer canoeing through the jungle to meet Albert Schweitzer. This interest and dream pervaded years of musical study at Vassar, medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, and practice as an internist and anesthesiologist. On medical trips to Haiti and Grenada, camera and stethoscope occupied the same bag. In the early 1990s she left medicine and began work as a fine art photographer in black and white. During the following decade, her portfolio grew to accommodate portraiture, still life, and landscapes, as featured in her books *The Heart of Haiti* (1996, second edition 2006), *Talismanic* (1998), *Venice a personal View* (1999), *Touching the Mekong* (2003), *Closely Observed* (2006), *Presence Passing* (2007), and *Himalaya: Land of the Snow Lion* (2009). Since 1996 she has exhibited widely in the U.S. and abroad, and her images are found in museums and private collections.

About The College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the Mütter Museum

The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the oldest professional medical organization in the country, was founded in 1787 when twenty-four physicians gathered “to advance the science of medicine and to thereby lessen human misery.” Throughout its history, the College has provided a place for both medical professionals and the general public to learn about medicine as both a science and as an art. The College is home to the Historical Medical Library and the Mütter Museum, America's finest museum of medical history, which displays its beautifully preserved collections of anatomical specimens, models, and medical instruments in a 19th-century setting. The Collection began as a donation from Dr. Thomas Dent Mütter, who was determined to improve and reform medical education. At the time Mütter was a student at University of Pennsylvania's medical school, students were not allowed to work with patients or assist with medical surgical procedures. His disappointment with American teaching techniques drove him to Paris to receive hands-on training. Upon his return to the States, Mütter assembled the collection and offered it to the College with a \$30,000 endowment. The donation stipulated that the College had to hire a Curator, maintain and expand the collection, fund annual lectures and erect a brick building to house the collection.

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Photographs of the Mütter Museum Collection

By Andrea Baldeck

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