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Shamus Ian Fatzinger ***Personal Frontier***

Exhibition on view:
June 22 - July 28, 2012

Opening Reception:
Friday, June 22, 7-9pm

Civilian Art Projects presents Shamus Ian Fatzinger: *Personal Frontier*, a series of photographs created from negatives found in a cardboard box belonging to his mother.

The twelve photographs that comprise *Personal Frontier* tell the story of Fatzinger's childhood and his family's move west. This story starts in the early 1970's, when his father, Howard Wilmer Fatzinger, III, a decorated Vietnam veteran, met Shamus' mother, Rebecca McGahey (sixteen at the time). It was at this time that Shamus was born.

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The family's move west was inspired by stories circulating in the New Jersey zinc mine where his father worked: Stories of big money in mining uranium, deep under the deserts of New Mexico. Three weeks after hearing these stories, the family and their bloodhound, Aspen, loaded into a Mercury Monarch station wagon (purchased with \$200 worth of quarters) and headed west toward Grants, New Mexico.

The idea for this exhibit began when the artist found a cardboard box containing his mother's 110- and 35-mm negatives. He scanned them and began posting them on Facebook.

His discovery included old negatives, some in plastic sheets, most loose; mixed up, scratched, and bent by years of transport and storage. According to the artist, "before digital photography, film was processed and we usually received a stack of 36 or 24 prints. The best photos ended up behind the static-charged plastic pages of a photo album. I knew my mother's photo albums well, and seeing their negatives was like seeing old friends. But the ones that didn't make the album were like a peek into the deepest part of my brain that held so many memories. Like some wonderful grab bag containing our lives, this box revealed to me an amazing visual history and told the story of the chance my parents took when they decided to go west."

Shamus Ian Fatzinger is a staff photojournalist for the *Fairfax County Times*, a suburban division of The Washington Post Company. He lives in Hyattsville, MD with his wife Marian and two cats. This is his first solo exhibition with Civilian Art Projects. Special thanks to Rebecca McGahey and other anonymous authors of the photographs.

Please contact the gallery for additional information or images.