

# PDN's 30 AT 10



COURTESY WILLIAM LAMSON

## 2005 WILLIAM LAMSON GOES VIDEO

Since he was selected for the 30 in 2005, William Lamson has been having way too much fun. At least that's what the playful nature of his photographs and videos suggest.

In one video, for instance, Lamson attempts to keep balloons aloft by blowing on them, only to have them pop as they inevitably come into contact with the spiked mask he is wearing. In another, dressed in a suit of tin armor, he attempts to shoot a can off his own head with a BB gun.

Lamson credits the Bard MFA program he completed in 2006 with inspiring a paradigm shift from taking pictures to making pictures. Freed from constraints of convention, he has been exploring and experimenting with a vengeance.

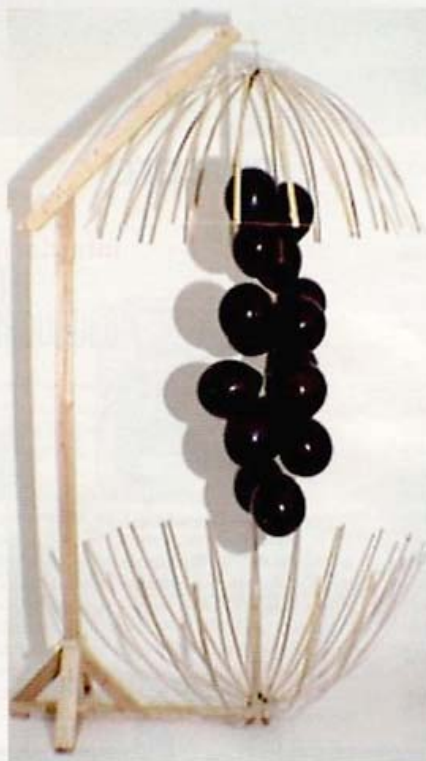
Where Lamson's earlier works ran to landscapes in the *New Topographics* vein, for instance, his "Me in America" series consists of conceptual self-portraits-in-landscapes, little still performances in which he inserts himself into pictures in odd and interesting ways—hiding behind a curtain, submerged in a pool or doing a handstand in the middle of a road. "It was a break from the way I'd been working," Lamson explains, "finding an interesting landscape and finding ways to integrate my body into it."

Lamson's video projects have been even more inventive, evincing a spirit of amateur scientific experimentation. In "Emerge," submerged helium-filled balloons pop to the surface of Jamaica Bay, drift along the surface and then lift off into the air. In "Fall," a helmeted man dressed in white "falls" through the black space of a wind tunnel. In "Shoot Out," Lamson uses a contraption he built to catapult balloons filled with chalk dust into the air and then shoots them with BB guns.

Lamson has been supporting his wacky performance projects by selling stock photographs from his travels through Getty Images, but he now worries that the plummeting prices of high-quality digital cameras is undercutting the prices paid for stock photography.

"I can work full speed making stock pictures, but I'm competing for a smaller and smaller part of the market."

Though he has 2008 all booked with new video ideas, Lamson has also returned to still photography, most recently "playing with materials off the street" by photographing his own constructions: balloons fastened to a telephone pole, a "ladder" of bananas tied to a tree, a mattress stuffed into an old tire. Way too much fun!



ALL IMAGES BY WILLIAM LAMSON

Above and left: Still images from Lamson's inventive, conceptual video work including "Shoot Out" and "Vital Capacity."

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