



## PANOPTICON GALLERY

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *"A Way of Being"*

### Images by Jon Edwards

January 15-March 3, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 15, 5-7 PM

November 6, 2008, Boston, MA-Panopticon Gallery is pleased to present "A Way of Being", which consists of moving black and white images of life in coastal Maine taken by Jon Edwards. The exhibit depicts the dignity and tenacity of a people who—by either choice or by lack of opportunity—live with the isolation and hard economics of island life.

The subjects of these images quite literally live off the land. Summer is spent fishing, harvesting seaweed, gardening, and repairing buildings. Fall is spent harvesting produce and splitting firewood. Winter is spent in quiet reflection while holed up next to the woodstove. Spring starts the cycle all over again, and is spent readying gardens and repairing boats and lobster traps.

Over the five years in which he worked on this project, Edwards developed close friendships with his subjects as he worked along side them as a lobsterman, seaweed harvester, and carpenter. "Guided by his acute eye, generous heart and keen mind, Edwards returns again and again to capture on film his appreciation and understanding of [his subjects] circumstances," states Bruce Brown, Curator Emeritus of the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport, Maine. He adds that the images manifest visually Edwards' "own beliefs about the merits of honest hard work gleaned from the earth, the nobility of holding fast to a self-reliant style of life in the face of incessant demands to keep up with constant change, and the rejection of pursuing material wealth as a chief purpose in life."

Not surprisingly, Edwards processes his film and prints his own work by hand in the traditional darkroom. He deliberately prints his images dark and with high contrast to intensify their emotional impact. He hopes the heightened reality of these images will cause viewers to reflect upon how their own way of life differs from that of these subjects.

Edwards practiced civil rights and environmental law for over twenty years before pursuing photography. In 2007, he received an MFA in Photography from Rockport College (Maine Media Workshops). That same year he was named one of the Top 50 Photographers in the Critical Mass Competition and he was awarded an Aaron Siskind Foundation Individual Photographer Grant. In addition, his self-published book, *Photographs of Jon Edwards*, won first prize in the proposed book category from the Prix de la Photographie, Paris. Edwards resides with his family on the coast of Maine and divides his time between his photography, his legal practice, and organic farming. Like his legal work, Edwards wishes for his photographs to "contribute in some small way to social justice and human progress."

### **About Panopticon Gallery**

Founded in 1971, Panopticon Gallery is one of the oldest galleries in the United States dedicated solely to photography. The gallery specializes in 20th Century American photography and emerging contemporary photography.

Panopticon Gallery is located in the Hotel Commonwealth at 502c Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. It is conveniently situated near the Kenmore Square T stop on the Green Line. Driving directions are on the gallery web site. The gallery is staffed Tuesday through Friday, 10 AM to 6 PM and Saturday, 11 AM to 5 PM.

### **Photo Captions**

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"Praying to the Pie Gods" © Jon Edwards courtesy of Panopticon Gallery, Boston, MA

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"Eggs" © Christian Waeber courtesy of Panopticon Gallery, Boston, MA