

Andrea Baldeck presents her second career in a retrospective at Moore.

From medicine to photography

By Edith Newhall
FOR THE INQUIRER

Like many professionals who long to try on another career, Andrea Baldeck, a physician and anesthesiologist who took pictures with a box camera as an 8-year-old and envisioned herself as a future Life magazine lenswoman, never forgot her dream.

Unlike most of those other wishful thinkers, Baldeck actually dropped medicine in the early 1990s to become a full-time photographer. It's no surprise that the bodies of black-and-white work that make up her first large-scale exhibition, "Andrea Baldeck: The Heart of the Matter, a Retrospective," at the Moore College of Art and Design, occasionally bring to mind vintage Life and National Geographic photo essays.

Although Baldeck has made lovely studies of plants, seedpods and shells, and still lifes of objects that speak of the past — Venetian glass, an old coffee percolator — her passion is for travel and foreign places, as demonstrated by her photographs of Haiti, Venice, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.

Her greatest strength, possibly a result of her years of doctoring, is portraiture. She has a gift for inspiring trust in her subjects that is reflected in their eyes, es-

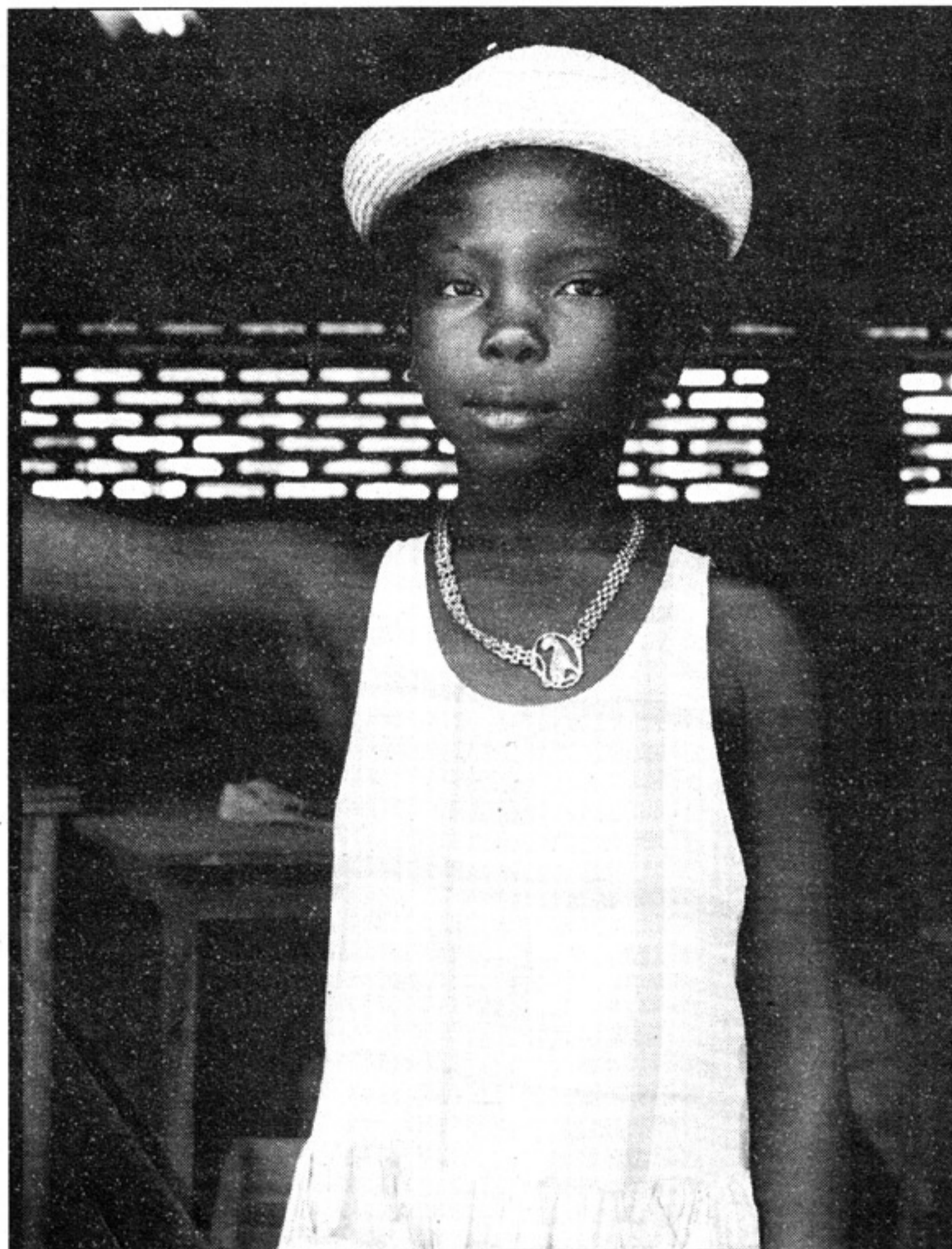
pecially in her photographs of Haitians, who project an uncanny spiritual quality.

Her Venetian series is the least compelling here precisely because it focuses not on faces but on architecture and cityscape, neither of which she is able to infuse with much mystery or drama. Her close-ups of door knockers, and of two figurative sculptures, which portray them as almost eerily lifelike, are the most arresting of this group.

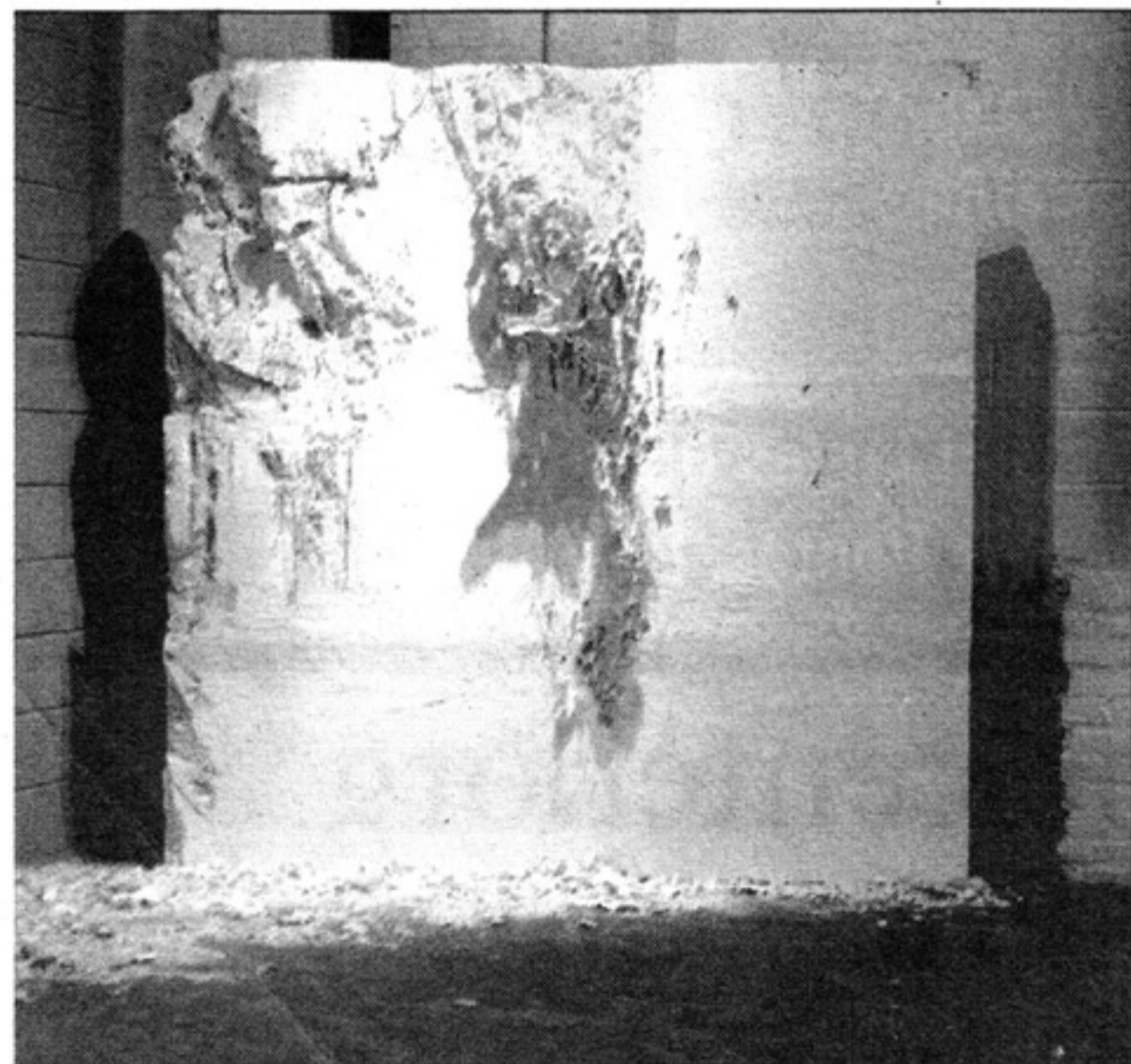
Baldeck clearly has a talent for photography, and an especially good eye for the close-up, but her mature style seems yet to be determined. She's both a photojournalist and a fine-art photographer in this sprawling exhibition, and her best efforts in each genre are often undercut by their proximity to minor, incidental prints.

Still, there is much to recommend this show, not least the tremendous enthusiasm and energy she has brought to her second career. Everyone should get this much enjoyment from work.

Moore College of Art and Design,
20th Street and the Parkway, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays,
noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays, noon to 4 p.m. Sundays. Through March 18.
215-965-4027 or
www.thegalleriesatmoore.com.



Andrea Baldeck's photograph "Byin pré pa rivé (Being near isn't arrival)" is in her retrospective at the Moore College of Art and Design.



Alexis Granwell's "Navigating the Ecstasy II (Wall Piece)" is in a two-person show at the Tower Gallery.

Two at the Tower

The current two-person show at the Tower Gallery in Northern Liberties is all about action — in line, marking and other gestures on paper; in sculpture, and in digital animation.

Hedwige Jacobs' small marker drawings capture the infinite variety possible within one thing, in this case the contours of a female figure that embraces, or becomes enmeshed in, patterns suggesting highways, stairs, fences and the like. Jacobs mixes things up, too, by attaching found patterns, such as cut-out circles or a Levi Strauss & Co. label, to the paper, and riffing on them. Her seemingly effortless touch is particularly evident in a digital animation drawing.

I was reminded of the architecture-derived sculpture of Rachel Whiteread when I saw one of Alexis Granwell's two predominantly white sculptures from a distance, at the back of the gal-

lery. But by the time I got close to "Navigating the Ecstasy II (Wall Piece)," thought more of Janine Antoni's gnawed chocolate sculptures. Constructed from pink foam, wood, wire and fabric, and painted with white latex, the sculpture looks like a section of a plaster wall that has been hacked or sawed (or gnawed) to reveal a cotton-candy interior. By contrast Granwell's monotypes and drawing on layered and torn paper are delicate, obsessive works reminiscent of ant-tunnel patterns, Aboriginal dream paintings, and Cy Twombly. What they do share is a feeling of growing psychological tension and, from deep within the sculpture, its startling release.

The Tower Gallery, 969 N. Second St.,
11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays through
Fridays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.
Through Feb. 10. 215-253-9874 or
www.thetowergallery.com.