

Natural light, coastal water, washing lines and the contours of the human body: Mona Kuhn's formal approach to photography is a simple one. But it's effective.

as her multicultural heritage is reflected in her choice of subjects, so her work is suffused with the wanderlust of the seasoned globetrotter.

The images in this series were shot in France, Portugal, Brazil and California. Kuhn travels light, taking only her

Hasselblad and her hope for the assistance of "the majestic star" and only light source – the sun. "It's really all about collaboration," she says. "I try to bring out the things the models have revealed to me about themselves.

Ultimately, all my photographs are the product of a friendship with

This series sees an elongated ribcage take on the curved proportions of a seashell, while languid figures hunched over sheets of rippled water connote fantasies of returning to the womb

– or turning into Narcissus.

"I come back to the human form for answers, for feelings, for understanding," Kuhn muses. "To me, the nude is a mirror of our fears and desires – the pleasure and pain of life. My interest is to create a photography

Text Reed Massengill

Mona Kuhn

With minimum fuss but maximum feeling, Mona Kuhn traces the shape of the human body across three continents.

Believing in the sanctity of the relationship between photographer and subject, Kuhn is reluctant to capture images of people she doesn't yet know: "I come from the point of view that to make a really meaningful image, you need to know not just your craft but also the person you're photographing."

Born in Brazil 30 years ago to parents of German descent, Kuhn now resides in San Francisco, where in 1996 she received her MFA from the Academy Of Art College. And just

the person in front of the camera. One of the things I hope comes across is that I care about these subjects as people."

Kuhn has participated in a number of group shows over the past several years and her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in San Francisco, São Paulo and Berlin. "It's been getting a respectful response, which is good," she says. "I don't think the viewer is seeing them as nudes that objectify the subjects; they see more than just the body itself."

of content that is atemporal and universal in theme, like the way I feel when I think backwards and forwards in time." ✦

