



JIA AILI'S TRANSCENDENTAL VISION

T-minus two months to 50 years ago human beings first set foot on the moon. I well remember following the trip on TV (though I have a friend who, though alive at the time, doesn't believe it actually happened). With all the hoopla about to begin commemorating mankind's greatest scientific achievement, I saw this relatively small Painting hanging on the wall at Gagosian, West 21st Street, and was suddenly struck by a different feeling. A feeling of what life, on earth, is like today.



Jia Aili, *Astronaut*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 19 11/16 inches.

Buckle up!

Watch your step!

Keep an eye on the sky and the other on where you're about to put your next footstep. And off you go into the great adventure called life in these increasingly challenging times. Heaven only knows where any of us will wind up. Back safely "home," or...

But, this isn't Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin or John Glenn. The uniform is the wrong color. My associate, Lana Hattan, informs me it's early Soviet space pioneer cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, 1934-1968, the first human being to go into outer space, and so, ideology aside, a man who has earned his place among the bravest men who ever lived.



Yuri Gagarin in a possible source image.

Seeing this now, almost exactly 58 years after his flight (April, 1961), I was gripped by the metaphysical aspects of it- as a response to the twin questions of "What is *there*? What is it *like*?" Living in an age when technology is ever so gradually pushing us into "brave new worlds," it takes courage on all of our parts to respond to what's there and what it's like, to take the leap of faith life today requires simply to survive. Oh, and make sure you have your pressure suit, gloves and helmet fully secured to survive the increased traffic of all kinds coming at you from all directions on the streets and even the sidewalks!



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Untitled, 2012-14, 52 x 37 1/2 inches.

Protection suits...technology...nuclear explosions...lightning storms...apocalypse... desolation. All of these things loom as large in the Paintings of Chinese Contemporary Painter Jia Aili as seen in *Jia Aili: Combustion* at Gagosian, West 21st Street, as they do in the modern world- all over the world.

And? In the middle of all of this, there are a number of "humanoid" beings with their heads on fire



Detail from Jia Aili's *Untitled*, 2013, Oil on canvas, 47 1/2 x 81 inches.

A Painter at the peak of his or her talent can seem like someone with their head on fire. The wonderful canvases just seem to flow like a molten stream from their hand to the walls of galleries, museums or their collectors. That's how I felt seeing this show spanning about a decade of Jia Aili's Paintings. Completely enthralled, as I looked closer, there were so many passages in his Paintings that looked like they could be a work of their own. Combined, it seems to me, these passages create an entirely fresh style of composition. Take a look at this-



The gigantic *Sonatine*, 2019, 196 x 393 inches- 33 feet long!

Since there is so much to see in any one of these works, I'm going to focus on one in this piece. The huge, new, *Sonatine*, 2019, strikes me as the Artist's most compelling work among the pieces I've seen on view here or in the monograph *Jia Aili: Stardust Hermit, 2019*. A sonatine in Music, is a shorter sonata, both are musical compositions for one or two instruments in three, maybe four, movements, each in a different style, the whole may last about 40 minutes, more or less. *Sonatine* was also a 1993 Japanese gangster film. Which one of these is referred to here? Your guess is as good as mine, but I'm going with the musical composition definition, particularly because it has four panels and the mood seems to change between them.

"I almost never have a narrative in mind when I'm beginning a work, I start out from pure intuition. But quite a few viewers discover narratives, particularly in the larger-scaled pieces. That made me realize that narrative is about a way of reading-a visual narrative is produced by the order of vision," Jia Aili¹.

Sonatine begins, in my reading, in an unsettling, ominous, quiet in the far left of its four large panels, progressing to otherworldly utter chaos on the right. Along the way, there's a fascinating mix of styles, references, shapes, images and partial images that take the mind in an any number of directions. First, regarding the huge scale, I'm reminded that Jia Aili studied billboard painting, like another great Painter who worked marvelously in huge scale, James Rosenquist, before changes in advertising in northeastern China brought the end of jobs for them. Yet, the motifs here have more to do with a kind of "personal language" than they do with anything that could be called "pop."





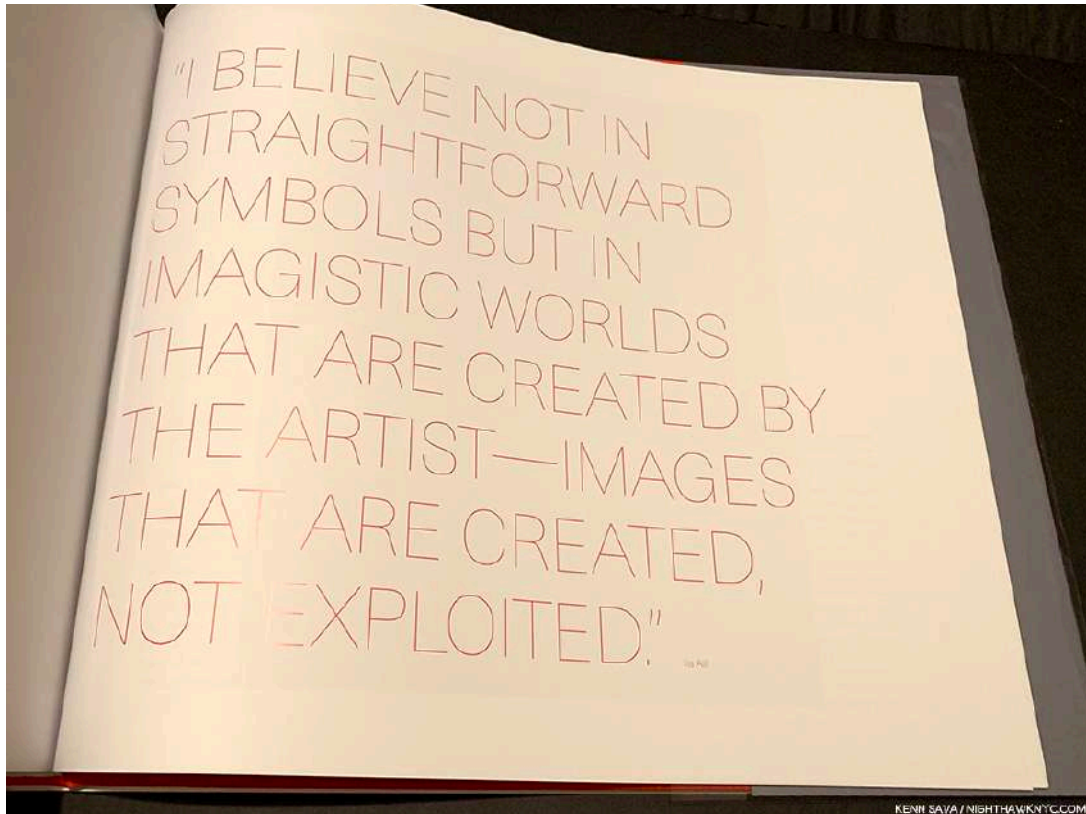
Detail of *Sonatine*, its left hand panel.

Nothing I have read indicates *Sonatine's* four panels should be considered individually. Yet, the more I looked at it, the more each took on a life of its own in my mind. Your results may differ. (Keep that in front of your mind throughout this.) In the left panel, I get the sense of being in a deserted or abandoned shopping center or commercial parking lot, but the odd triangular shape on the far left, almost seems to be sucking the atmosphere up and out of the Painting's upper left corner. Looking very closely, I noticed that the line that extends down to the right, looking like a wall in perspective, faintly continues under the triangular shape. Well, whatever this white shape is, it reminds me of a wall. It leads the eye to a mysterious, distant horizon that contains a signpost or totem of sorts, under a threatening dark sky.



Sonatine, detail of the left hand panel.

Two figures appear, one shadowy about half way down the "wall" on the left, the other a dark shape, both possibly mounted on bikes, otherwise disconnected and at purposes unknown. The dark figure in the rear is being struck by lightning, a recurring meteorological motif in the skies of Jia Aili's work. As I walked through the show, and noted more recurring motifs, I came to feel that these elements make up his dramatis personae. In Jia Aili's case, the way he uses them almost seems like a sort of "code."



From *Jia Aili: Stardust Hermit*

Back in the left center panel, another wall comes in diagonally from the right, serving to move the eye to the left panel's background and then leading the viewer towards the center of the massive work, where things get extremely complicated. Still, i found myself repeatedly drawn back to the mysterious far left panel. I don't know why,



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The sky suddenly clears at the top of the center left panel. Two figures, at least one who's head is on fire, appear, shrouded in a triangular shape that almost entirely covers them. It almost looks like a black hole, possibly to another dimension. Is the second figure, which is grey and appears to be wrapping the flaming figure with a boney arm, a skeleton?



Sonatine, Detail of the far left and center left panels.

It's hard to tell, yet in my reading of the work it is². From looking at the works in this show featuring flaming figures, I came to regard them as living human beings- the flame representing life, being alive, like that in a lit candle. From the direction of the flames, I believe the figure on fire is moving towards the center, though it's main struggle appears to me to be with death, who's desperately clinging to him, as again, a pair of shapes, this time jagged triangles, frame the two figures.



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Sonatine, the center right panel.

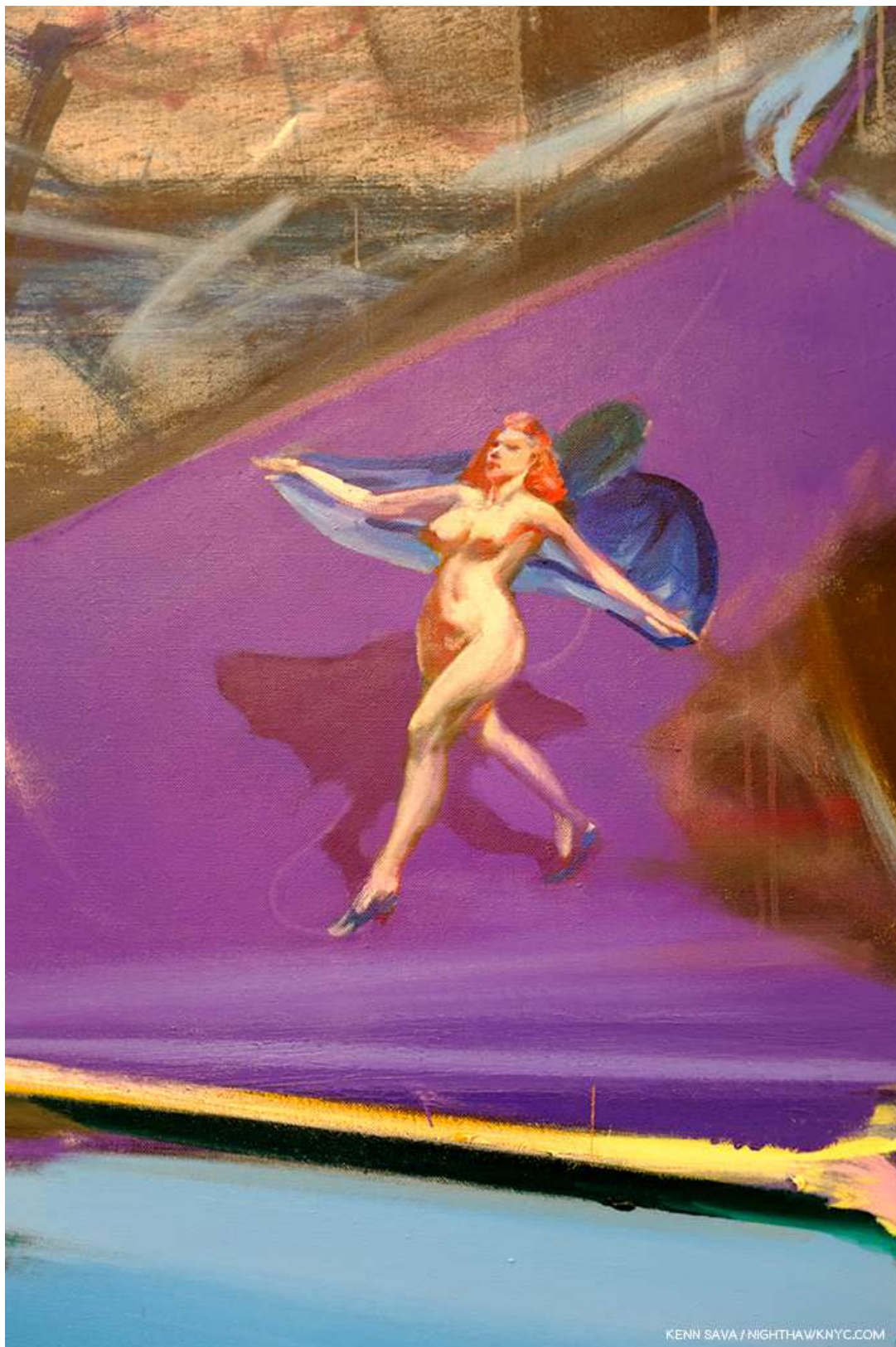
In the center right panel things get sticky. It's hard to tell exactly who is involved or what is going on. A white figure strains in the very center. Why and against what is nebulous at best- at least to me. Just behind him or her, is the figure of a woman holding a large bowl over her head, another recurring motif in the works on view here. Is the figure in white, who appears to be wearing a black helmet with, possibly, a horn protruding from the right top, a threat to her? Immediately to its left is the torso of another figure with a white hat or hood pointed in the same direction, towards the woman with the bowl. What is the woman carrying in the bowl? Life giving water, or food? There's no way of knowing. She appears to be turned slightly to the left, though there's no obvious way for her to move there. This makes me feel she's not an actual "figure," but a symbol- a piece of Jia Aili's

in mid air near the foreground and ending at a point in the mid background. All around them is a cacophony of shapes, colors and partial figures, at least one upside-down, which climaxes in the far right panel.



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Dominating the far right panel is a large figure near the top with a naked torso and a mask. he's sitting on a large white sphere with two horns at each side of the top. This sphere figure also recurs in quite a few places, in varying sizes, throughout the show. It looks to have two nostrils and a mouth with two large teeth extending down. They both appear to be watching what's going on in the three left hand panels.



Hiding near the center of the right panel is a small nude figure. On closer inspection, I realized it's a quote from Edward Hopper's *Girlie Show*, 1941. Why is it here in the midst of all of this chaos? There's no way of knowing from the evidence before us. But, I wasn't able to get it out of my mind for a number of reasons. It's the most literal of any number of influences of other Western Painters that are hinted at in Jia Aili's work.



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Sonatine. Detail of upper center right panel.

on the right looking down on the seemingly insignificant figures below. Except for one element. Taking flight in the middle of the center right panel, a lone balloon rises into the reappearing sunlight. The only person or thing that appears to be escaping, or having hope of doing so.

As I walked through the show, along with all the recurring motifs, I noticed the theme of "escape" recurring as well. It appears in a variety of means. There's *Astronaut*, 2018, which Ms. Hattan believes is Yuri Gagarin. Then, there's this-



The Engine, 2018. 118 x 157 1/2 inches. The means to escape, landlocked on a cart that needs some other means of moving. Seen from the show's entrance.

And this angelic being leaving the scene of cataclizmic chaos to the left in *Frozen Light*, 2017-



Frozen Light, 2017, 125 1/4 by 100 3/4 inches.

Looking at *Sonatine*, or any work of Art is purely subjective and likely to change the very next time I look at it. See what it says to you.



What do you see? Producer and Art researcher, Lana Hattan, the person responsible for NighthawkNYC existing, pondering *Hermit From The Planet*, 2015-16, 157 1/2 by 236 1/4 inches on 3 panels, on March 15, 2019.

Part of the joy in looking at the work of Jia Aili is his sheer creativity and how much there is to see in each of his pieces.



Jia Aili, *Blues, No. 49*, 2018, Acrylic on canvas in 2 parts, 106 1/2 x 165 1/2 inches. The torso in red at the very center reminds me a bit of the anamorphic skull in Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Ambassadors*, 1533.

autobiographical, "about" being an Artist working with the whole of Art History and dealing with the current condition of humanity. The light skies and bright colors, (which almost look like a Pantone chart in the right side of *Blues, No. 49*), alternate with dark, desolate landscapes populated sparsely.



This, and the following two stills below, are from the video produced for Christie's Shanghai 2015 Spring Auctions: The Art of Jia Aili.

Jia Aili grew up in Dandong, a city in the northeastern Chinese province of Liaoning, which directly borders, and faces, Sinuiju, North Korea(!) across the Yalu River.





Untitled, 2013, 63 x 47 inches. The entire, incredible, work, I showed a detail of early on.

The more I looked at it, I wondered if *Untitled*, 2013 was a pseudo- "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." At least, that's the image I have from reading about his upbringing. Frankly, it's now hard for me not to think of it when I look at his work. But, it doesn't end there, which is a good thing for someone who has never been to China. Jia Aili has gone to school on Art History as well and as thoroughly as almost any other Contemporary Artist I've come across recently. The more I looked at this show, which I returned to numerous times, drawn to its unearthly beauty, it's universal imagery, and it's subtle and not so subtle references to a whole plethora of Artists, it became hard not to feel that Jia Aili is "speaking" to, and possibly for, many, many human beings who are living in a nuclear world that's becoming overwhelmed by technology that is just about beyond the ability of anyone to control. This is interesting because though many of the items he shows are familiar, their reality isn't. Everything is slightly different, as in an alternate reality.

more present to me than that of the great Francis Bacon. How else to feel about this-



The earliest work in the show. Jia Aili was about 29 when he painted this. *Untitled*, 2008, Oil, acrylic, mirror, artist's tape on canvas in 3 parts, 118 x 236 inches.

Jia Aili was new to me when I walked into Gagosian on March 5th. By the time I had finished the second room, and seen a total of 9 works, I was enthralled. I left kicking myself for having missed the Artist in town from Beijing at the opening the night before. Looking into him further, I discovered that Contemporary Chinese Art specialist, gallerist Eli Klein, of Eli Klein Gallery, was the first to show Jia Ailia in this country. I asked Mr. Klein how he discovered Jia Aili. He said, "I first heard about Jia Aili in speaking with a curator named Eli Zagury. I have a habit of picking the brains (and eyes) of those whom are working in contemporary Chinese art so I asked him which artists he was into. I can't remember when and where this conversation took place, it must have been sometime in 2008. He may have mentioned a number of artists, but in my subsequent research Jia Aili was the only one who garnered my significant interest. I made it a point to set up a studio visit with Jia Aili the next time I was in Beijing. I met with him there for close to half a day, visiting two of his studios, including one airplane hanger-sized space containing a massive work he was painting which was acquired by the DSL Collection. The visit stuck with me and I kept a dialog open, finally inviting him to exhibit with my gallery in Miami the next December (2009)."

These early works, like *Untitled*, 2008, above, are particularly fascinating to me now, both to trace the evolution of Jia Aili's work, to look for continuities, and to place it in his continuum. Obviously, much has changed, but not everything. Some of the motifs remain. Jia Aili, who turns 40 this year, is now high on my list of Contemporary Painters anywhere in the world. I will be keeping an eye on where he and his Art goes from here. He's already been receiving the attention of others. His *Nameless Days 2* sold for 1.3 million dollars in 2015, though as I've said many times, auction results are meaningless to me when talking about Art- People buy Art for a lot of reasons. I will say, in his case, I think his work is

face of onslaughts from other Artforms and from technology.



Dust, 2016, 177 1/4 x 315 inches. Exactly what it looks like. From a destroyed world? Note the glass ball hanging near the upper left corner just in front of the canvas.

"What a painting expresses depends on more than its image alone. I don't think my paintings are born out of the emotion or feeling of a certain moment; I hope their meaning emerges from a more complete level. For me, the action of painting involves facing specific, delicate matters. I rarely make overall cultural assumptions, I prefer to focus on the relativity and absoluteness of painting, on using color, shape, and structure to create transcendental vision." Jia Aili³

Though Jia Aili comes from a place, and has grown up in an environment, so different from my experience that I can't even begin to imagine them, his vision and talent is such that they enable the Artist, aided by his extensive knowledge of Western & Eastern Art History & techniques, to cut across space and place to speak to humanity- wherever it is. Jia Aili has achieved a universality that is rare in Contemporary Painting. While we live in a time when so much feels unsettled, contentious and downright terrifying. Jia Aili expresses all of this, while staying true to his roots, his influences and his experience.

It's hard for me to think of a more exciting, more accomplished and more promising Painter aged 40 or under anywhere.

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "Bob Dylan's Dream" by Bob Dylan from *Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. When Jia Aili was in town for his show, he spoke to Gagorian Quarterly of being "in New York again, where Bob Dylan, F. Scott Fitzgerald and J.D. Salinger have all lived," while telling a story of his life in 2007 when he moved to Beijing that reminded me of its lyrics-

[Verse 1]

While riding on a train going west
I fell asleep for to take my rest
I dreamed a dream that made me sad

[Verse 2]

With half-damp eyes I stared to the room
Where my friends and I spent many an afternoon
Where we together weathered many a storm
Laughin and singin till the early hours of the morn

[Verse 3]

By the old wooden stove where our hats was hung
Our words was told, our songs was sung
Where we longed for nothing and were satisfied
Jokin and talkin about the world outside

[Verse 4]

With hungry hearts through the heat and cold
We never much thought we could get very old
We thought we could sit forever in fun
And our chances really was a million to one

[Verse 5]

As easy it was to tell black from white
It was all that easy to tell wrong from right
And our choices, they were few and the thought never hit
That the one road we traveled would ever shatter or split

[Verse 6]

How many a year has passed and gone
Many a gamble has been lost and won
And many a road taken by many a first friend
And each one I've never seen again

[Verse 7]

I wish, I wish, I wish in vain
That we could sit simply in that room again
Ten thousand dollars at the drop of a hat
I'd give it all gladly if our lives could be like that

**- My thanks to Lana Hattan, and to Phil Cai and Eli Klein of Eli Klein Gallery.*

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1. Interview in Gagosian Quarterly, Spring, 2019, P.138. [↗](#)

included in the show, titled *Angry Practice*, 2018. [↗](#)

3. *Gagosian Quarterly*, Spring, 2019, P.138. [↗](#)

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Tagged Jia Aili, NYC Art Shows 2019

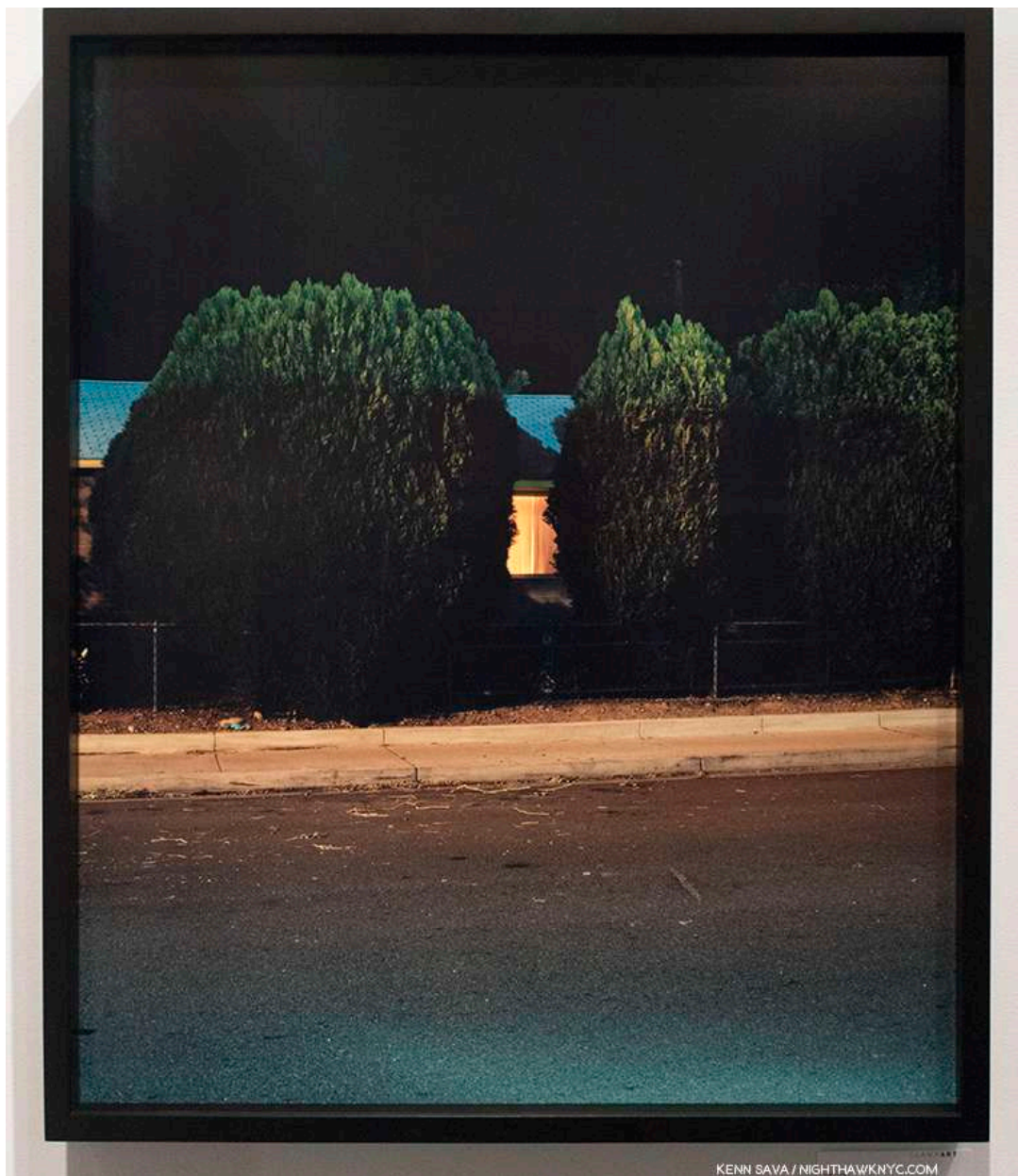
TODD HIDO- BACK TO BLACK

Maybe it was an Lp or CD that had this effect on you. I've been there too many times to count. More recently, it's been PhotoBooks that I've related to.



Todd Hido, *House Hunting*, 2001. 17 by 14 inches. 56 pages containing 26 "carefully selected" Photographs. One of only 4,000 copies. I spent 3 months hunting one. Click any picture for full size.

When I first saw *House Hunting*, it went right through me. It was akin to an album that spoke to you in a formative part of your life- you connect with it when you feel almost no one understands.



Todd Hido, *Untitled #7910*, 2003, seen at AIPAD, 2017.

I've spent most of my life being behind that lone light burning all night long.

But it's more than that, of course. It's a nocturnal portrait of suburban American life as (mostly) seen from the outside, with its partially crumbling picket fences, hanging laundry, it-seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time discount clapboarding slapped on structures that don't meet the floor of anyone's definition of "architecture," and aging vehicles. Home sweet home. Like the Artist, I grew up there, too. I've learned since that I am far from being alone in connecting with it. His "Houses at Night," series, the work that first brought the Artist to prominence when it was released in his first PhotoBook, *House Hunting*, in 2001, saw its two printings of 2,000 copies each disappear into the hands of 3,999 others. It wound up being selected by PhotoBook aficionados Martin Parr & Gerry Badger for inclusion in the third installment of their multi-volume rundown of PhotoBooks they find particularly notable, *The Photobook, Volume III*. It's interesting to me looking back on it now that this work is so popular while not dissimilar work of his illustrious predecessors

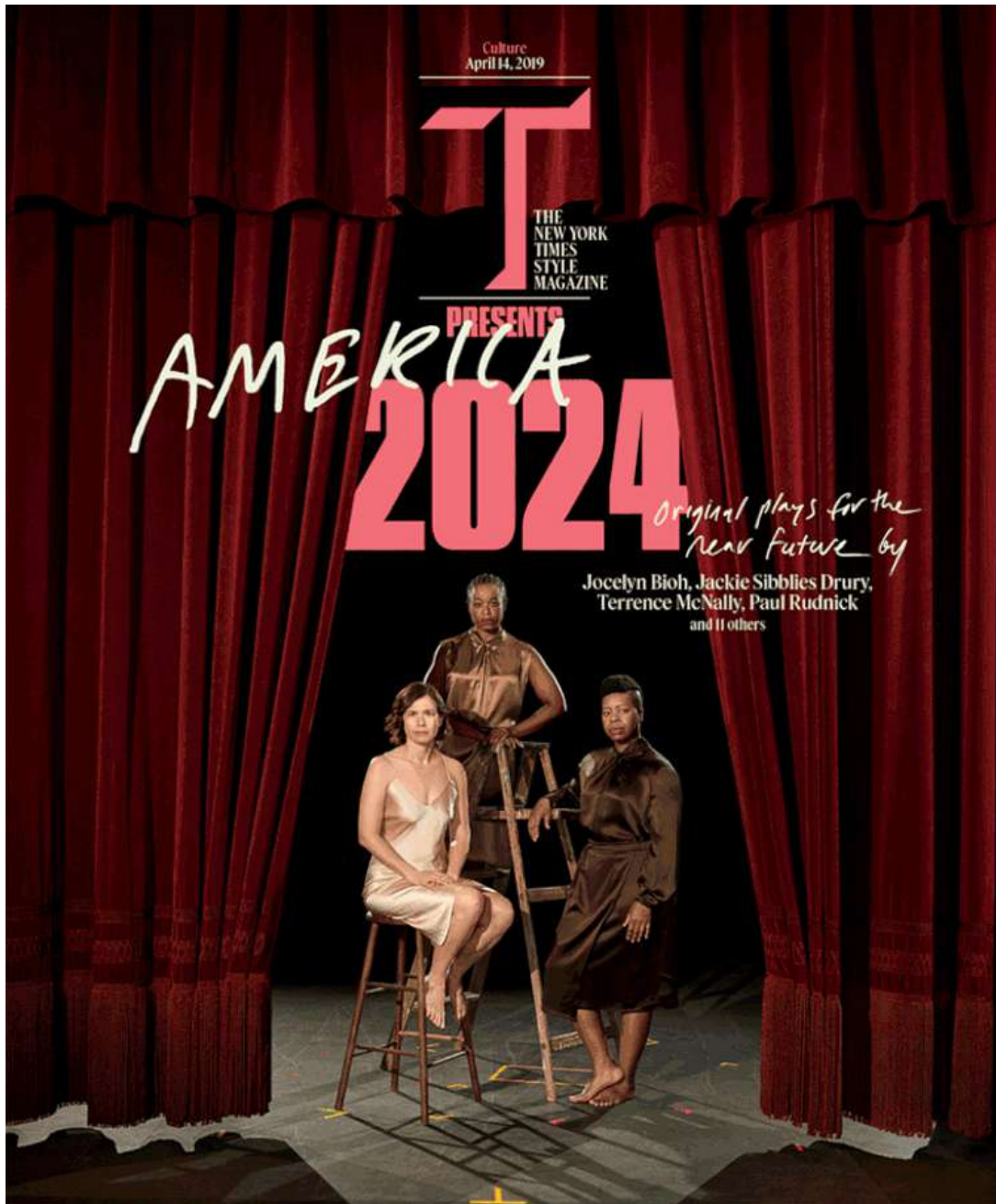
color that explains his series popularity? Or, maybe it's his series has more of those lone lit windows.



Old friends. 12 works from his "Houses at Night" series, published as *House Hunting* and *Outskirts*, include the former's famous cover image, top row, third from left, with the cover image for the excellent Aperture mid-career retrospective, *Intimate Distance* to its left. Seen at Bruce Silverstein Gallery.

Outskirts, a veritable *House Hunting*, Volume 2 followed a year later, but then, with the release of *Roaming* in 2004, a book that purposely "has no homes in it," it became apparent that Todd Hido was "no one trick pony¹." There were some dissenting voices that preferred their desolation with a single light burning in it. *Roaming*, a book whose grey mood is characterized by its clouds and not a night sky, was the first inkling of what was to come, its title almost serving as a one-word summation of his subsequent creative journey. Todd Hido has not been one to stay in one place, artistically, or rest on his, now substantial, laurels. His work, as seen in his books and gallery shows, has continued to evolve, always in fascinating ways. Interiors, desolate landscapes (sans lights, except for his car headlights on occasion, maybe a rising or waning sun), and even portraiture, introduced, gradually, along the way, are now all part of his repertoire. He's now, also, no stranger to appearing in the fashion and editorial media. In fact, when I met him earlier this year Todd Hido was in town to shoot a series *New York Times Magazine* covers and

Aldridge.



Todd Hido, One of a series of 4 *New York Times Magazine* covers he shot for its April 14, 2019 issue.

Each new monograph and each new subject brought new realms, both visually and in terms of the inner vistas Mr. Hido's work stirs up in viewers. After beginning to work with models in 2004, his work with his beautiful and extremely versatile muse, Khrystyna, taking on something of the quality of his own version of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, has been a bit controversial, but for me, as in all of his work, it's primarily interesting for what it reveals of the Artist. *Excerpts from Silver Meadows*, 2013, his last monograph until 2018, is a case in point. Though the titular street ran through his childhood neighborhood, the images include those from other places and other times—"surrogates," as he called them. And that's how I view all his subjects or actors & models—as surrogates.

within, from my own history, as the basis of my work. All of the memories and experiences from my past come together subconsciously and form a kind of fragmented narrative²." Still? NONE of his past work prepared me for what I saw when I walked into Bruce Silverstein Gallery on an appropriately cold winter day to see new work featured in a book that hadn't yet been released titled *Bright Black World* in a show of the same name. The press materials say these works, "are the results of Hido's exploration of the northern hemisphere in the impenetrable depths of winter. The realities of climate change lurk behind in these – the threat of an eternal darkness looming large....Not just a political statement, *Bright Black World* is infused with Nordic mythology, Ragnarok, and the idea of *Fimbulwinter* – a winter that never ends³." And so, the show, and this work, marks more firsts in the work of Todd Hido- work addressing the state of the world, as well as being the first time he's travelled to another country to create it.



#11389-3087, 2014, 30 x 45 inches from *Bright Black World* seen at Bruce Silverstein Gallery.

As I looked at the new work, the first thing that struck me was how gorgeous the prints were. Instantly, THE Todd Hido quote that has stayed with more than any other came rushing back to me...

"I photograph like a documentarian, but I print like a painter⁴."

Here? Though I own four Todd Hido prints (including *Untitled #7910*, seen earlier, alas, none at the size of these), in my opinion, he's taken it to another level. The larger scale of many of them serves to engulf the viewer, who promptly gets lost in the overall feeling and the details. They're extraordinary, and simply have to be seen to be appreciated.

The second thing that immediately stood out for me was that the character of the light has changed. I've never seen darkness quite like this.

"It's been said that Inuits have many words to describe white. As the polar snow caps melt faster than we ever imagined, I wonder how long it will be before we have as many words



#11798-4172, 2017, 30 x 45 inches, is also the cover image for his new PhotoBook, *Bright Black World*.

And? My old friend, the night, makes a return appearance.



The return of the lone light burning at night. #11797-3252, 2017. Courtesy of Todd Hido and Reflex Amsterdam, where a sister show was up concurrently.

In the midst of his incredibly busy life, I am grateful that Mr. Hido found time to answer a few questions for me, both long-standing, and some brought on by his new work. I'll intersperse them from here on. First, since I live my life at night and have long been

it about the night that inspires you?

Mr. Hido replied, "I am inspired by the night for many reasons, but mostly it is because everything slows down and gets quiet. I find that that is when I am able to focus my attention and see the best. Also, there is an atmosphere at night that lends itself to creating the mood that I am interested in."



#11793-9406, 2017, 20 x 30 inches. It could be a production still from countless horror movies.

Coincidentally, as I walked through the show, a random song started playing on my headphones...

"The windows of the world are covered with rain
Where is the sunshine we once knew?"*

#11801-1971, in particular, held me spellbound for minutes on end.



#11801-1971, 2017, a massive 59 x 88 inches, looks SO cold, even hanging it over the radiator isn't going to make it feel warmer.

The sign of human intervention in the landscape disappears as the road turns left, leaving the viewer...? Standing there, I felt the ghost of the great James McNeill Whistler in it, among others, but at almost 7 1/2 feet long, it engulfs you in a sense of cold, and a resulting terror, that was unforgettable.

Hence, my second question- I've long wondered- Are there any painters who have influenced you?

Mr. Hido said, - "I am definitely influenced by Edward Hopper and Andrew Wyeth and of course I love Gerhard Richter, but one of my favorites is Marlene Dumas."



#11756-269. That house looks to be the size of a stone.

These images are, therefore, characterized either by light that is fading, distant, faint, or has completely gone (though in some images it's hard to tell if the sun is setting or rising). Whereas the air was, in my view, unthreatening and calm in the "Houses at Night" / *House Hunting* works, uneasiness, at least, is in the air in almost every one of these *Bright Black World* Photographs.

Exact locations for most of these Photos are not known, but it is known that for the first time Todd Hido went overseas, to Northern Europe, to create some of this work. It turns out that my brother from another mother, NYC guitar legend, Dave Fields, was, coincidentally, on tour in Norway the same day I saw this show. Without explaining why I wanted it, I asked him if he would step out of his hotel one evening and snap a picture of the sky. Maybe the amazing skies of *Bright Black World* are everywhere to be seen there. ? Here's what he sent me-



© FieldsMusicInc. 2019

Dave Fields, *Lystgaard Skjerstad, Norway, November 18, 2018*. A career as a Photographer possibly awaits the brilliant guitarist and singer/songwriter.

There've been subtle differences in each of his landscape projects, from *House Hunting & Outskirts* through those appearing in his subsequent books. *Bright Black World* continues that progression. Everything I've admired about his more recent landscapes- their atmosphere, their "spontaneous" feel that often looks like the shot was taken through a car window (many were), while the car was still in motion (Doubtful. He's a dad.), the almost miraculous combination of elements, enhanced by their "painterly" feel, are all in full effect here. For me, at least, the results are as beautiful, if not more beautiful, than anything I've seen that Todd Hido has done.



#11755-2192. Photographs like this begin to make you understand what J.M.W. Turner might have been seeing that inspired his unequalled sky scapes.

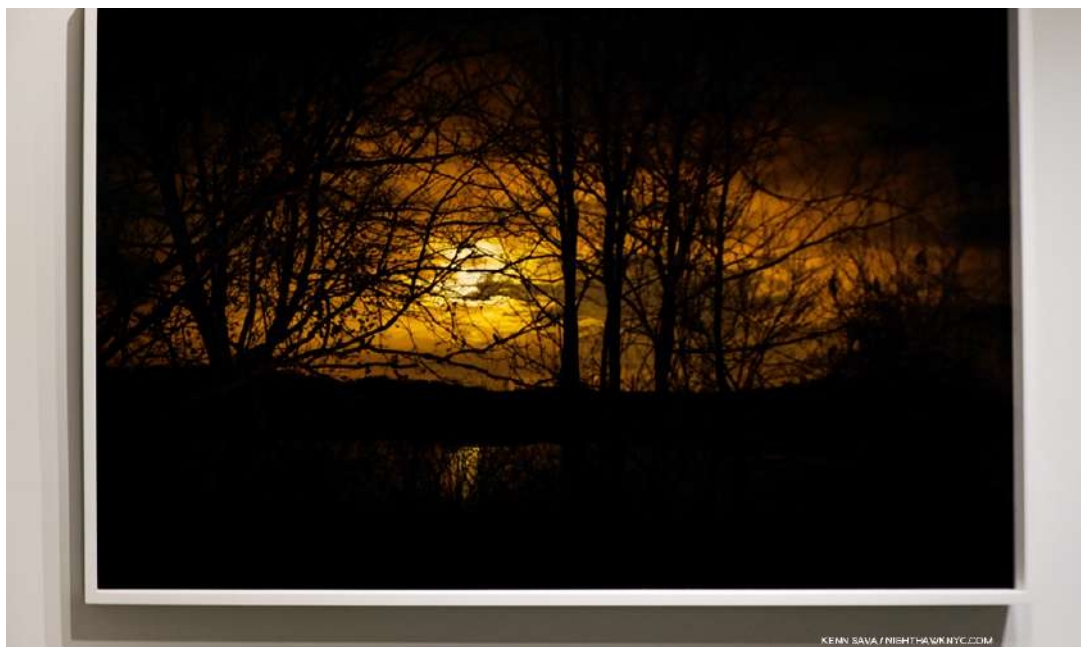
His new book, *Bright Black World*, published, as each of Mr. Hido's now seven monographs have been, by Nazraeli Press, saw its entire 3,000 copy first printing sell out almost immediately. On the one hand this is a testament to how popular Mr. Hido has become, as well as to how well done the book is. On the other hand, it's a bit of a shame that the book is not more readily available for the rest of the world to see, as with so many great PhotoBooks that have gone out of print and become very hard to find or see. It's a huge book- just about 17 inches long by about 12 inches high, and weighing over 3 1/2 pounds, with 108 pages, but, unlike other large PhotoBooks, it's size is entirely necessary to convey the intended feeling seeing the full size prints imparts, as well as a sense of all that is in these images.



#11692-492, 2014.

"The windows of the world are covered with rain
What is the whole world coming to?"*

After Aperture's 2016 mid-career Todd Hido retrospective, *Intimate Distance* (see BookMarks at the end), the Artist felt it was time to begin anew.



#11599-5811, Kent, OH

Kenn Sava (KS)- It's been 5 years since *Excerpts from Silver Meadows*, with the retrospective *Intimate Distance* intervening. You spoke about "closing that chapter," (per reflexamsterdam's site), with *Intimate Distance*. In *Bright Black World* there are elements of things from your past series- rooms in decay, the beautiful denuded trees in inclement weather, a portrait of a woman, and even one or two Photos of buildings with a single light on. Yet the feeling, now, is completely different. It's more ominous, expectant throughout, in my reading. I'm wondering why you chose to end both *Intimate Distance* and *Bright Black World* with the same image (#11599-5811, Kent, OH)?

Todd Hido (TH)- Well, to answer your question it made perfect sense because *Intimate Distance* was a survey and the last part of that book was of things I had never used in a monograph. That image you are speaking of as dark as it is, I find kind of hopeful.

KS- As a dad, was it hard for you to release a (beautiful) book that's this dark, one that references Fimbulwinter and the end of days?

TH- As a dad it was crushing to read Cormack McCarthy's *The Road*, which I happened to delve into when my children were young. They have always called me "Papa" and that is exactly what the child in book called his father. Whenever I read that it always hit home harder. In terms of my own book, I would say that every book I make helps my children. No matter what my outlook may be.



#11804-3243, 2017, 30 x 41 inches.

"The windows of the world are covered with rain
When will those black skies turn to blue?"*

BookMarks-



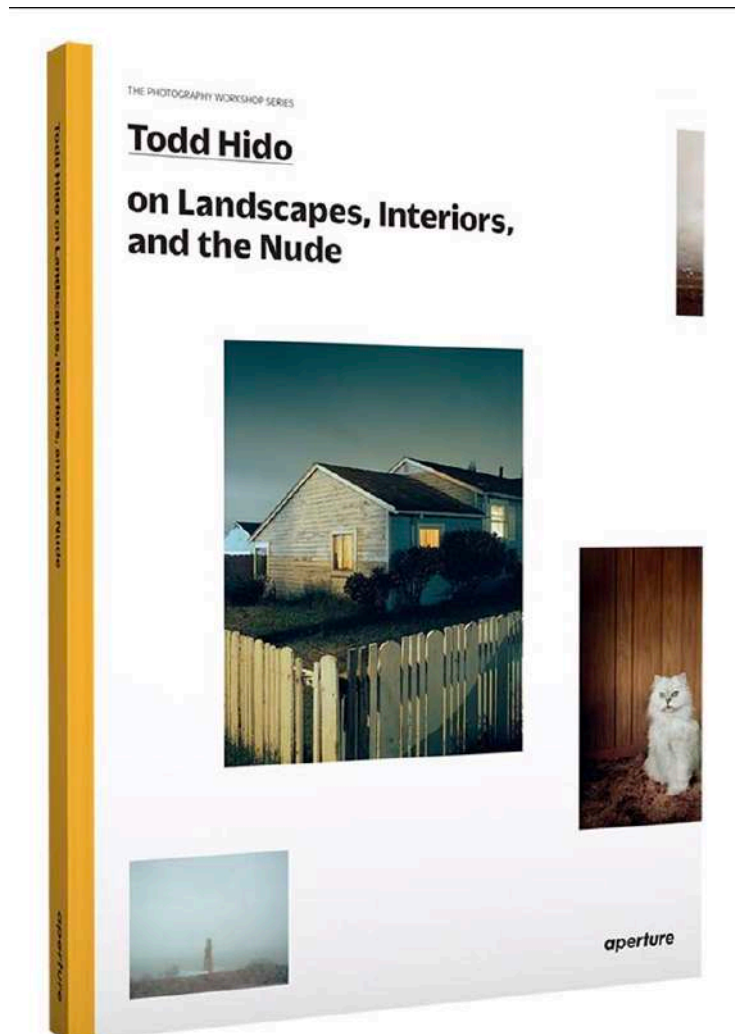
Bright Black World, 2019, published as each of his prior 6 monographs have been, by Nazraeli Press, in a first printing of 3,000 copies that sold out almost immediately. It's generous 17 by 12 inch size wonderfully compliments the expansive nature of the work, as

150.00, 2 times list, on the aftermarket around the world. Waiting to see if there will be a second printing might be wise at this point, as I don't think aftermarket prices are going to immediately rise much higher for perhaps a year, or until it's apparent there won't be a 2nd printing. I will update this paragraph if I get news of a second printing.

Todd Hido: Intimate Distance: Twenty-Five Years of Photographs, A Chronological Album, Aperture, 2016, is the best place to get an overview of the Artist's career and accomplishment up to 2016. Given his classic books, *House Hunting* and *Outskirts* are both out of print and each going for upwards of 400.00, *Intimate Distance* is also the place I recommend to start. It's a very good overview, "roaming" (sorry) over all the series of his work to that point, and so gives a real sense of what he's done, and achieved, in each realm he's worked in (in his monographs), thus far.

Ok, yes, *House Hunting* is one of the great PhotoBooks of the first part of this century, in my view. Published by Nazraeli in a first printing of 2,000 copies in 2001, they vaporized within weeks. The 2007 second printing of 2,000 copies also quickly sold out. Currently, you're looking at 300.00, and up for a second printing, first printings starting at 425.00, both in very good condition in very good dust jackets.

For *Outskirts*, 2002, his excellent second book, which has only seen one printing thus far, copies start at 400.00 (in vg/vg). If you are trying to choose between getting either *House Hunting* or *Outskirts*, my vote would be for *House Hunting*, which is much more in demand and more likely to stay that way.



Photographers, is *Todd Hido on Landscapes, Interiors, and the Nude: The Photography Workshop Series*, Aperture, 2014. Since it contains the most extensive writing Todd Hido has done on Photography to date, it's continually insightful for lovers of his work as well. The introduction is by no less than Gregory Halpern, a one time student of Mr. Hido's, who imparts a classic tale of his experience as one.

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "The Windows of the World" by Burt Bacharach and Hal David, performed by Dionne Warwick.

My thanks to Alison Crosby, Stefanie Williams, Gregory Halpern, Dave Fields, and Todd Hido.

This Post was created by Kenn Sava for nighthawknyc.com
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Thank you!

1. [Todd Hido: Intimate Distance, P.108](#)
2. [Todd Hido on Landscape, Interiors, and the Nude, P.8](#)
3. [Here.](#)
4. [Todd Hido on Landscape, Interiors, and the Nude, P.53](#)
5. [Here.](#)

Posted on May 4, 2019

Posted in [Art](#), [Dave Fields](#), [Dionne Warwick](#), [NYC Art Shows](#), [Photography](#), [Todd Hido](#)

Tagged [NYC Art Shows 2018](#), [Todd Hido](#)

THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW/AIPAD, 2019- COVERAGE PAGE



The Photography Show, Early afternoon, Saturday, April 6, 2019. My thanks to DeShawn for his assistance.

For the third year in a row, I'm proud to bring you the most extensive coverage of The Photography Show, 2019, aka AIPAD, anywhere! This page summarizes my coverage for easy reference. Please see the links below for the pieces I've written on the show- so far-

[The Photography Show, 2019- The Galleries](#)

[The Photography Show, 2019- The PhotoBook Publishers](#)

[AIPAD Focus: Michelle Dunn Marsh](#)

As I write this, I am planning on additional pieces. Stay tuned! This page will be updated as I add them.

My coverage of The Photography Show, 2018 may be found [here](#).

My coverage of The Photography Show, 2017 may be found [here](#).

This Post was created by Kenn Sava for nighthawknyc.com

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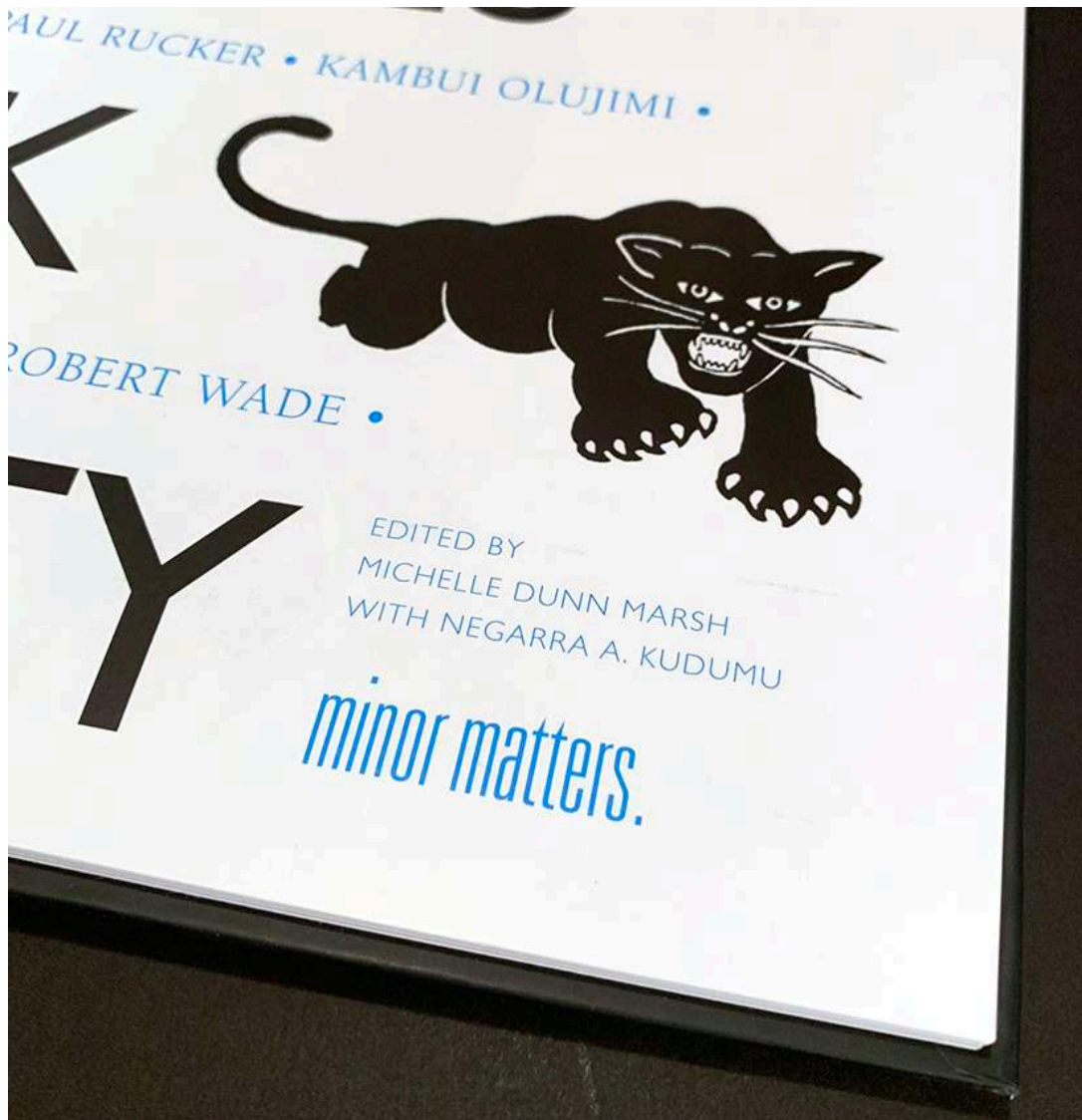
Thank you!

Posted on May 4, 2019

Posted in [AIPAD 2019](#), [NYC Art Shows 2019](#), [Photography](#)

AIPAD FOCUS: MICHELLE DUNN MARSH- SLINGING PICTURES WITH THE BEST OF 'EM

If you love PhotoBooks, the name Michelle Dunn Marsh is either known to you or lurking somewhere in your home on the colophon of one, or more, of the books you own.



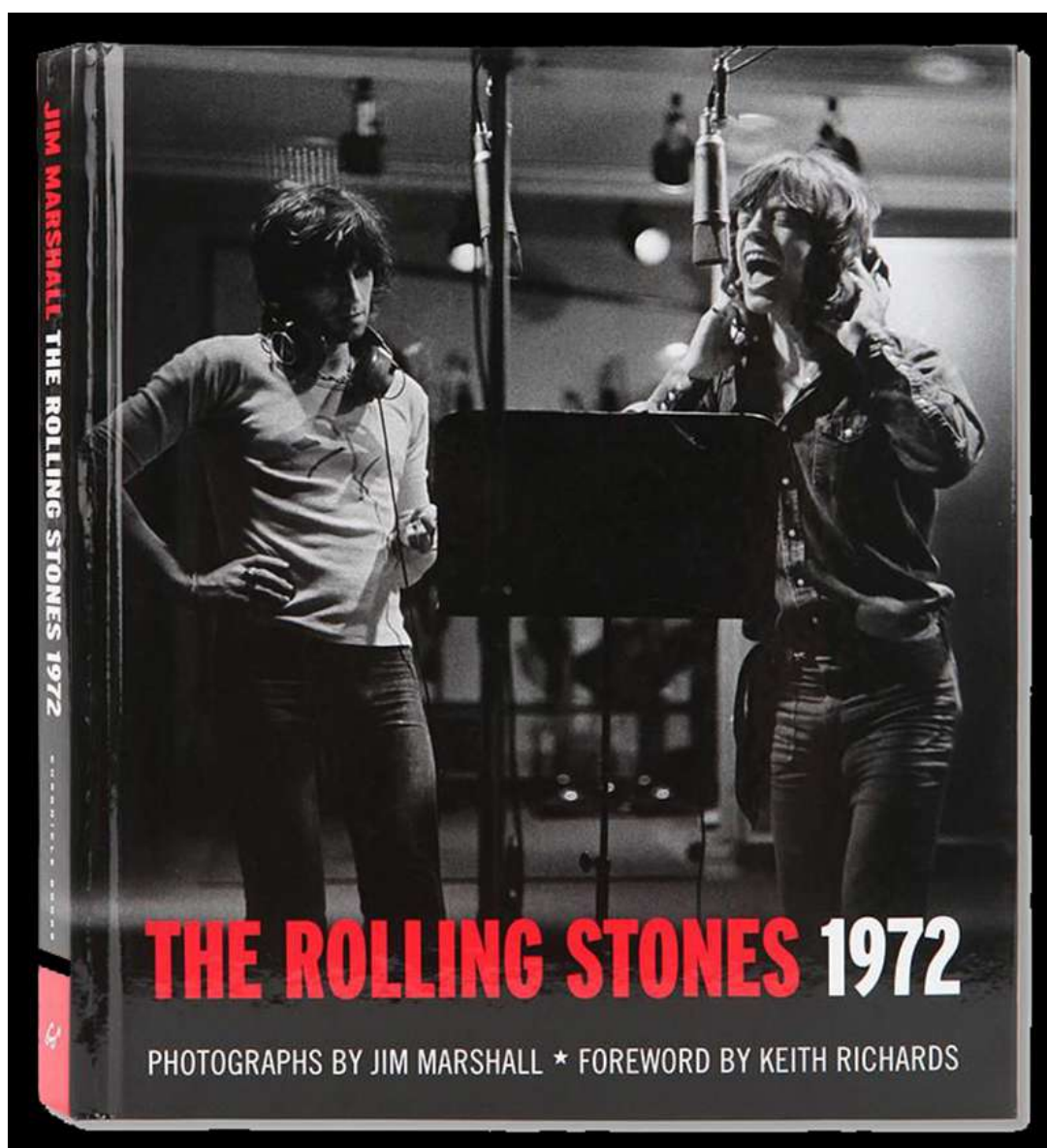
Click any picture for full size.

Michelle is one of the brightest lights in the world of Modern & Contemporary PhotoBooks, a curator of terrific, thought provoking and eye-opening Photo shows, and a self-described "picture slinger," that is, one of the leading independent PhotoBook publishers in the world with the company she founded Minor Matters. It's a status she's

the bigger picture, here's one summary of her career-

"Michelle Dunn Marsh has served in executive and creative roles for the last 25 years. As Executive Director at PCNW (Photographic Center Northwest) from 2013–2019, she also curated significant exhibitions including *Terminal: On Mortality and Beauty*, and *Eugene Richards: 'Enduring Freedom'*, among others. She co-founded Minor Matters, a community publishing platform for contemporary art, and has published 14 books to date. Dunn Marsh spent fifteen years with Aperture Foundation in New York City, was senior editor of art+design at Chronicle Books in San Francisco; and was a tenured professor in graphic design at Seattle Central Community College among other professional endeavors. She has lectured nationally about visual literacy, publishing, and the history of photography. She holds a BFA from Bard College, where she serves on the Board of Governors, and an MS in Publishing from Pace University¹."

And on the day after tomorrow? She rested.



Chronicle Books published *The Rolling Stones 1972*, a 2012 best seller with a foreword by Keith Richards, and Photos by legendary Music Photographer Jim Marshall. It was edited and designed by Michelle Dunn Marsh, one of two test cases for her eventual launch of Minor Matters, she told me.

works endlessly in more roles than you'd think one person could manage, let alone excel at, yet everything she touches is permanently marked by the passion she brings to it. It turns out I wasn't far off. She splits her time between Seattle and NYC. Or, more likely? I think there may be two of her. But, I'll leave that for future researchers to determine.

What I do know is that last year, she curated the special exhibition *All Power: Visual Legacies of the Black Panther Party*, honoring the 50th anniversary of the Seattle chapter's founding, at The Photography Show/AIPAD 2018, where I discovered her. She was back this year behind Minor Matters' table for all five days of the show, where, after having communicated by email, I finally had the pleasure of meeting her. There she was, proudly showing off some of the fruits of her, her team's and her Artist's labor. with a fine and typically diverse collection of PhotoBooks. The respect and esteem the world of Photography has for her was evidenced by the fact that she was continually joined by a steady stream of Photographers, and Photofolks every time I stopped by Minor Matters' table, causing me to give up on getting a picture of her, alone!



So, I opted for this photo-op. Michelle Dunn Marsh, left, with the multi-dimensional Artist, Marina Font, who's unique talents are on full display in her auspicious first book, *Anatomy is Destiny*, seen in the front, second from the right, on April 6, 2019.

However, I'm thrilled to say Michelle somehow found time to answer some questions for me, providing a rare opportunity to get some insights from one of the true movers and shakers in the world of PhotoBooks, and to learn more about this unique lady and her impressive career to date. Without further ado, I am proud to present the subject of my 2019 AIPAD Focus, Michelle Dunn Marsh!

Kenn Sava (KS)- First, I think of you as one of the busiest people I can imagine, a lady who wears many hats. You told me at AIPAD you're making an effort to cut back. So, could you tell us what roles you've decided to focus on these days?

roles highlighting many people in my effort to serve the medium of photography. While I am proud of so much of that work, I reached a point last year where instead of wonder and awe I mostly felt relief at the completion of any given activity (exhibition, publication, lecture, panel) and resignation at what still awaited me on the to-do list. That is not how I want to show up for the work.

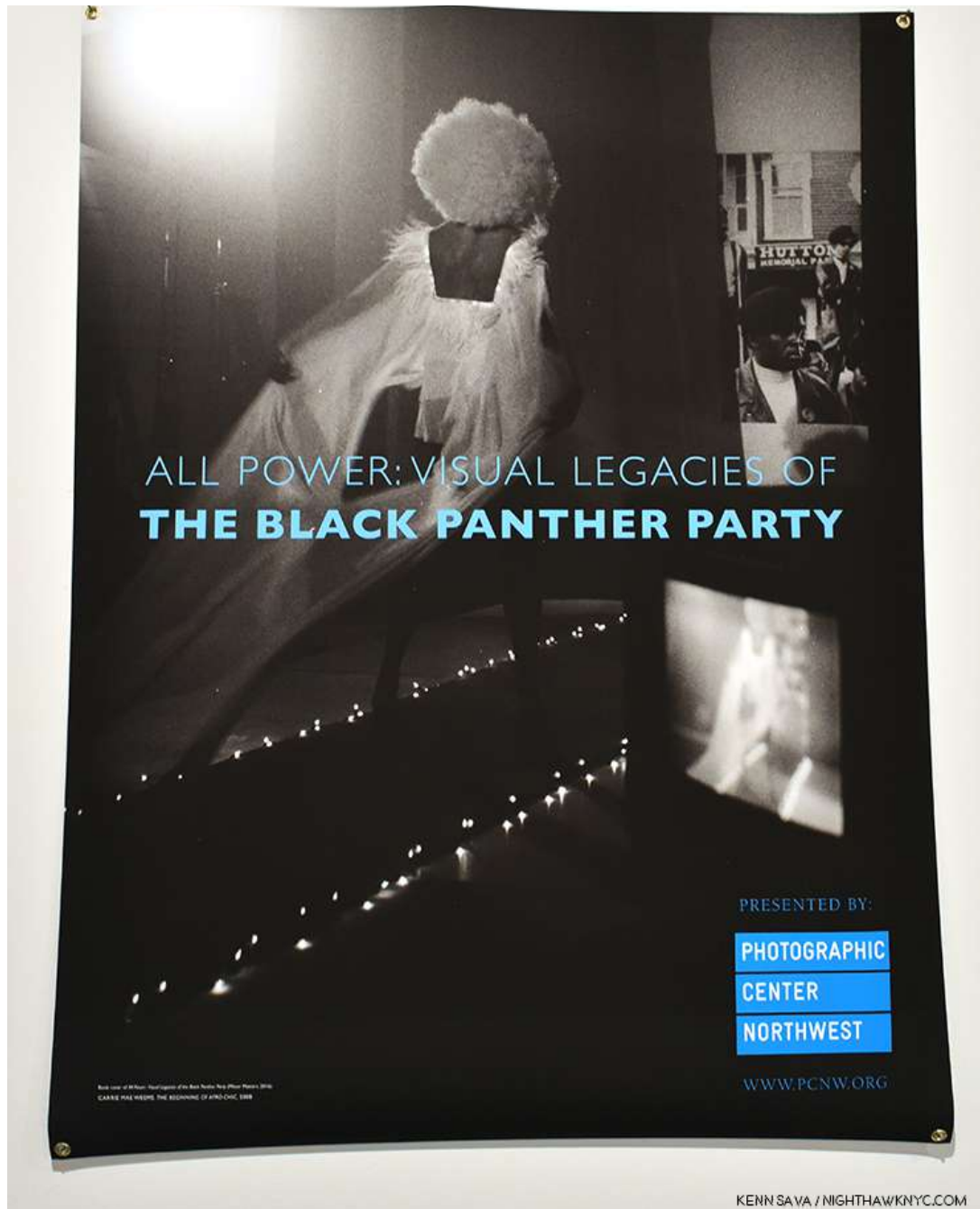
So I gave up a fair amount of authority, power, platform, and countless responsibilities in the role I had at PCNW as Executive Director & Curator to take on a new role, Chief Strategist. I am focusing on potential real estate development of our property to secure longterm financial stability, providing oversight to the staff managing our re-accreditation process that happens every 10 years, and implementing new visual literacy programs focused on our mission to teach people how to see.

My activities and responsibilities for Minor Matters haven't really changed—I have freed up more time to dedicate to them, and to myself. The last few years under the current president have been traumatic; I need to keep myself strong to continue to publish books, lecture, and teach.



Flashback: AIPAD, April, 2018. Michelle curated the special exhibition- *All Power: Visual Legacies of the Black Panther Party*, which was my introduction to her. In this piece, I'm going to revisit her show in pictures as our Q&A progresses for those who missed it.

KS- Speaking of your Executive Director & Curator time at PCNW, I discovered you last year at AIPAD where the terrific show you curated, *All Power: Visual Legacies of the Black Panther Party*, honoring the 50th anniversary of the Seattle chapter's founding, debuted (I believe) before moving to Seattle. That's quite a feather in your cap, curating a show at AIPAD. How did the show come about, and what was the experience like for you?



Carrie Mae Weems's *The Beginning of Afro-Chic*, 2008 (Detail), appears on both the exhibition poster and the cover for the show's *Minor Matters* catalog.

MDM- *Minor Matters* published the book in 2016 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party; the book served as a complement to the tremendous anniversary exhibit Rene deGuzman curated at the Oakland Museum of California. It was an emotional and exhausting and important project, given all else that was happening in the U.S the summer and fall of 2016. My friend and colleague Negarra A. Kudumu ended up co-editing the book with me, and I could not have completed it without her, and without the support of all the artists and contributors.



All Power Installation view. Work by Robert Wade, Gill Baker, Deborah Willis on the left wall, Unknown Photographer, Lewis Watts, and Maikoyo Alley-Barnes, right of quotes from the Black Panther Party Platform and Program.

I knew the Seattle chapter's anniversary would be coming up in 2018, and that PCNW, located in what was once the Central District (the historically black neighborhood of Seattle) needed to engage in some way. I am very sensitive to conflicts of interest between my roles at PCNW, a 501 (c) 3 organization, and Minor Matters. So I went to the board and said that I could work with the nationally-oriented content I had already developed for the book, or we could develop a Seattle-specific exhibition or program for 2018, but that given the circumstances the decision should come from them so it could not be perceived that I was using my position at PCNW to promote Minor Matters. The board unanimously decided that I should develop an exhibition from the *All Power* book, which gave me an opportunity to add some artists I either didn't know or wasn't able to include in the book, including LaToya Ruby Frazier, Sadie Barnette, Ouida Bryson, Christopher Paul Jordan, Jasmine Brown, and someone you've gotten to know well, Kris Graves.



KENNI SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

The "legacy" of *All Power*. I discovered Kris Graves, who I've written about since, when I saw these 4 pieces from his series, *A Bleak Reality*, 2016, revisiting the places where black men were murdered by police, stopped me cold. The so-called "New Topographics" ends here. Installation view, April 7, 2018.

Simultaneous with the show's development, I gave a copy of the book to my friend and colleague Steven Kasher (then of Kasher Gallery, now with David Zwirner). Steve has a wonderful history of exhibiting and publishing work related to the civil rights movement and other social justice issues, and I thought he would appreciate the book. He immediately said, "this needs to be seen in New York; would you want to show it at my gallery?" It was such an immediate and generous response. Many of the people in the book have representation through other New York galleries, so I wasn't sure how that would work out, and said so. And then Steve thought of AIPAD, and asked that I send him the exhibit checklist. The special exhibitions had already been determined, but there was a possibility that one of them was not going to work out.



All Power Installation view of works seen elsewhere in this piece.

I sent him the information, and put the possibility out of my mind. And then in January 2018, I got an email from AIPAD saying they'd like to premiere the exhibition. We had just completed a very complex show in Seattle, *Notions of Home*, and were opening *Jun Ahn: On The Verge*. I'd told the exhibit coordinator that *All Power* would be a simple, straightforward undertaking. Instead in three months we were figuring out how to get the show to New York then back to Seattle with artists spread across the United States, what would be produced and framed where, how it could be crated, for the very small budget allocated. It was insane. And extraordinary.



KENN SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

"Extraordinary" is a word I use to describe the results- the show- one of the more memorable, thought provoking, shows I saw anywhere in 2018, which was full of amazing work- like this, Photographer Unknown, *Black Panthers on the steps of the Legislative Building, Olympia, WA, February 28, 1969/2018*, printed by Steve Gilbert of PCNW.

Not one to miss a perfect opportunity for a segue, when one is offered, to get another perspective on the show, I asked one of the Artists included in *All Power*, Kris Graves, Photographer and head of Kris Graves Projects, what the experience of being in *All Power* was like for him. From Portland, Kris said, "I am honored to have been part of the *All Power* exhibition. It is an important show that traveled a bit but deserved more air time. The world is not kind to artists of color." A fellow publisher, in a statement that would seem to speak to why so many well known Artists (like Carrie Mae Weems, Hank Willis Thomas, and LaToya Ruby Frazier) along with a number of historic and newer Artists deserving wider attention (like Emory Douglas and Maikooyo Alley-Barnes) appear in *All Power*, Mr. Graves added, "I wish Michelle lived in New York but I'm glad she's doing good work in Seattle. She is what the art world needs more of. Caring individuals that understand issues of agency in our society. She makes strong projects and I'm inspired by her. One of her new books is with Eirik Johnson and it comes with a vinyl record filled with new music from him and his friends. That shit is awesome. I hope Michelle and I collaborate sooner than later. I'd do whatever she asked."



Emory Douglas, *Free the G.I.'s*, 1973, as seen in *All Power*.

KS- Michelle, before all of this, as you mentioned, you've had many roles. I see you were involved with the Aperture Foundation, one of the most important Photography orgs in the world. What did you take from that experience?

MDM- I will spend much of my future continuing to explore what I gained from Bard College, and from Aperture. Both were incredibly formative institutions for me. When my tenure there ended perhaps my greatest fear was that that would be the conclusion of my life in photography; thankfully it was not.



LaToya Ruby Frazier's *UPMC Professional Building Doctor's Offices*, 2011, from the series, "The Grey Area," which documents the demolition of Braddock Hospital in her Pennsylvania home town, which she had been involved in trying to save, as seen in *All Power*. Ms. Frazier's work in *All Power* were lent to the exhibition by Gavin Brown's Enterprise.

I started working freelance for Aperture in the fall of 1996, and went on staff six months later, which began a 15-year pattern of full-time, part-time, and freelance employment as a designer, project manager, Co-Publisher of the magazine, Deputy Director of the foundation, and some titles I probably don't even remember. I launched Aperture's first website, in 1997, built with my graduate-school roommate Paula J. Freedman. I worked on its first in-house Macintosh computer to review files in the burgeoning transition to digital mechanicals and typesetting. I sequenced books on the floor of the Burden Gallery with exhibition prints that I later measured top and bottom, left and right, to calculate percentages for how the print needed to be squared and sized for reproduction. I learned from and argued with Michael E. Hoffman, Aperture's impresario executive director, who once handed me a petal of a dahlia to convey what he wanted the jacket design of a book to feel like. I covered his office with an Amy Arbus photograph of a baby that I desperately wanted to be the cover of an issue of *Aperture* I was designing (he laughed, which was rare, but did not approve my cover).

I was most closely mentored by Stevan A. Baron, my thesis advisor in grad school and the head of production at Aperture. He took the reproduction of gelatin silver and platinum photographs as seriously as most great photographers took the photographs themselves. I learned about the past history of photography, and the history in the making through work we were publishing or exhibiting. I learned about, and felt, images that hurt to be seen and needed to be seen anyway. I learned the craft of fine bookmaking, from paper to binding to typography to physical size and how the photographs sit most comfortably on

Aperture's mission and founders established strong ideals that still influence me, and my affiliation there opened many doors.

This will be an endless interview if I continue answering this question. I hope that the work I do today continues to illuminate what I gave to and gained from those years at Aperture.



All Power Installation view. LaToya Ruby Frazier, left, and immediately right of the corner and Emory Douglas, right.

KS- How did you get into the world of PhotoBooks? Where did your love of them come from?

MDM- I was raised Catholic. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Book of John. Gorgeous notion, even thousands of years later through who-knows-how-many translations. The Word was God. So, my love was first for books, because as I saw it books were manifestations of the divine. In college I learned that in ancient Irish culture poets had great power; I felt connected to that lineage as well through my father's people. I was also concerned from a young age with the relationship between photography and memory. Did I love the photograph of my third birthday because it reminded me of that amazing experience? Or was that birthday my favorite memory because I often looked at a photograph of it? I was skeptical of the seductive nature of photography, while also drawn to it.



KENN SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

LaToya Ruby Frazier's UPMC Global Corporation, 2011, from the series, "The Grey Area." To get a sense of what it was like to live in Braddock, PA, at the time, [check this out](#). As seen in *All Power*.

I was introduced to significant photography through the Publications office at Bard, largely due to its director, Ginger Shore. She published portfolios by William Wegman, Thomas Struth, Cindy Sherman, not because they had any connection to Bard but because she wanted people to see their work. She used Wynn Bullock photographs to illustrate science articles. She had only two reactions to a proposed design for a poster or brochure or whatever else I was empowered to work on—"it looks great," or "it looks like sh*t." Elena Erber, the art director, slowly taught me about design, about letting a great photograph do the heavy lifting, about color theory and typography. Soon those women were advising me on what classes to take to further my knowledge—color theory, basic painting, history of photography, tutorials on the origins of modern type.

Andy Grundberg's book *Brodovitch* triggered an awareness of design, printing, content—

Social Graces truly registered with me—the mysterious richness and tonality of the photographs, the warmth of the paper, the placement of the type. I was sitting on the floor of the college bookstore, and remember seeing “Design by Wendy Byrne” on the copyright page. The concept of “design” was still new to me, but I knew then that books could manifest from more than words alone, and whole new worlds opened.

KS- For a publisher making important and beautiful books, why the name Minor Matters?

MDM- There are two primary origin points to our name. The first is Minor White, and yes, I believe that Minor matters. He is a lesser-known figure in our pantheon, and that is unfortunate—his teaching, writing, editing, and photographs deserve greater attention in my opinion.



Given her history at Aperture, which Minor White was a cofounder of, I should have realized *Minor Matters* was a reference to Minor White. This gorgeously produced volume is one of my favorite Minor White books, and I share her feeling that he is unduly overlooked today.

The second is that as a tri-cultural mixed race individual in America, I occupy an insider/outsider space, and from my privileged position I want to honor and lift up my and others’ fringe viewpoints.

I developed my expertise under the auspices of a very respected institution in the history of American photography, working with some of the most acclaimed practitioners. That has granted me great privilege. Yet within that space I have also been at various times a minority—because I am from the west coast; because I am a woman; because I am Caucasian; because I am brown; because I am confident; because I am smart; and mostly because I am polyvalent in a world that struggles to genuinely value multiplicity.



All Power Installation view of Sadie Barnette, *Selections from My Father's FBI File, Government Employees Installation*, 2017

KS- Your pre-sale model of requiring 500 copies to sell at 50. plus 9.95 shipping before it goes into production would seem to serve a number of purposes. In this day of too many books and too much Art in the world, it helps to save our precious trees by making sure there's a demand and desire for the work on the part of the public, while remunerating the Artist with 100 copies of a beautiful, well-produced book. What went into *Minor Matters* settling on this formula?

MDM- It evolved over 20 years in publishing—observing the joys and challenges at Aperture, at Chronicle, drawing from my graduate degree in the business side of the industry, talking to photographers, and honoring what Steve Baron taught me about manufacturing beautiful books for future generations to enjoy.

KS- The process retains a feel of a personal investment on the part of its audience. The first 500 get their names published in the book, and you consider them to be “co-publishers” of the book. That’s pretty cool! Once the book is finished, the “direct” feeling remains—you don’t sell on Amazon, preferring to “privilege and highlight the good taste of independent bookstores,” as it says on your site. I’m in bookstores almost every day and that’s where I discovered your books, after word of mouth told me to look out for them. Being able to physically hold and see a book is priceless, and the only way to fully appreciate all that’s gone into it, in my opinion. How have you managed to survive without depending on the biggest internet platform? What are the benefits you’ve discovered of doing it this way?



All Power Installation view. Robert Wade, upper left, Gill Baker, lower left and Deborah Willis, right.

MDM- When we launched in 2013 we kept getting asked what our “exit strategy” was. Steve comes from the start-up world, so he knew this was code for “when do you think you are successful enough to sell,” or “when do you think you have to pull the plug on your idea?” I had no idea why people kept asking us that. We knew we were not building something to sell! But we agreed that if we launched ten books and none of them made it into print, then maybe our concept wasn’t feasible. We published three of the first five titles we launched.

I am fortunate to have interacted with people like Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, Michael Hoffman at Aperture, Aaron Dixon captain of the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party, and so many incredible photographers, so my idealism does not feel isolated or out of keeping with the people around me I admire. I have also learned from all of them that you have to be willing to put in the time, and do the work.

Selling to bookstores it’s like any other sales situation. We have to establish relationships, keep in touch, follow through, be professional. Thankfully our books do a lot of the work for us—people value them. And I have two decades of experience in publishing, which helps a lot. I know what terms I will offer, what is fair to the bookstores, what is mutually beneficial to them and to us.

Probably the greatest advantage to not being on Amazon is that our price stays the same wherever someone buys our books. That is important to me. We strive to over-deliver at our set \$50 price point. I don’t want to see the book somewhere for \$4.99 when we’ve collectively invested that many times over in resources of time, materials, and cash to create it. I think our audiences understand that, and likely appreciate that we take their purchase price seriously and don’t want to undercut it.



Taste, style, beauty, range and the unexpected...always. Those are qualities that define Michelle's and Minor Matters books, for me. That steady stream of visitors continues in the background.

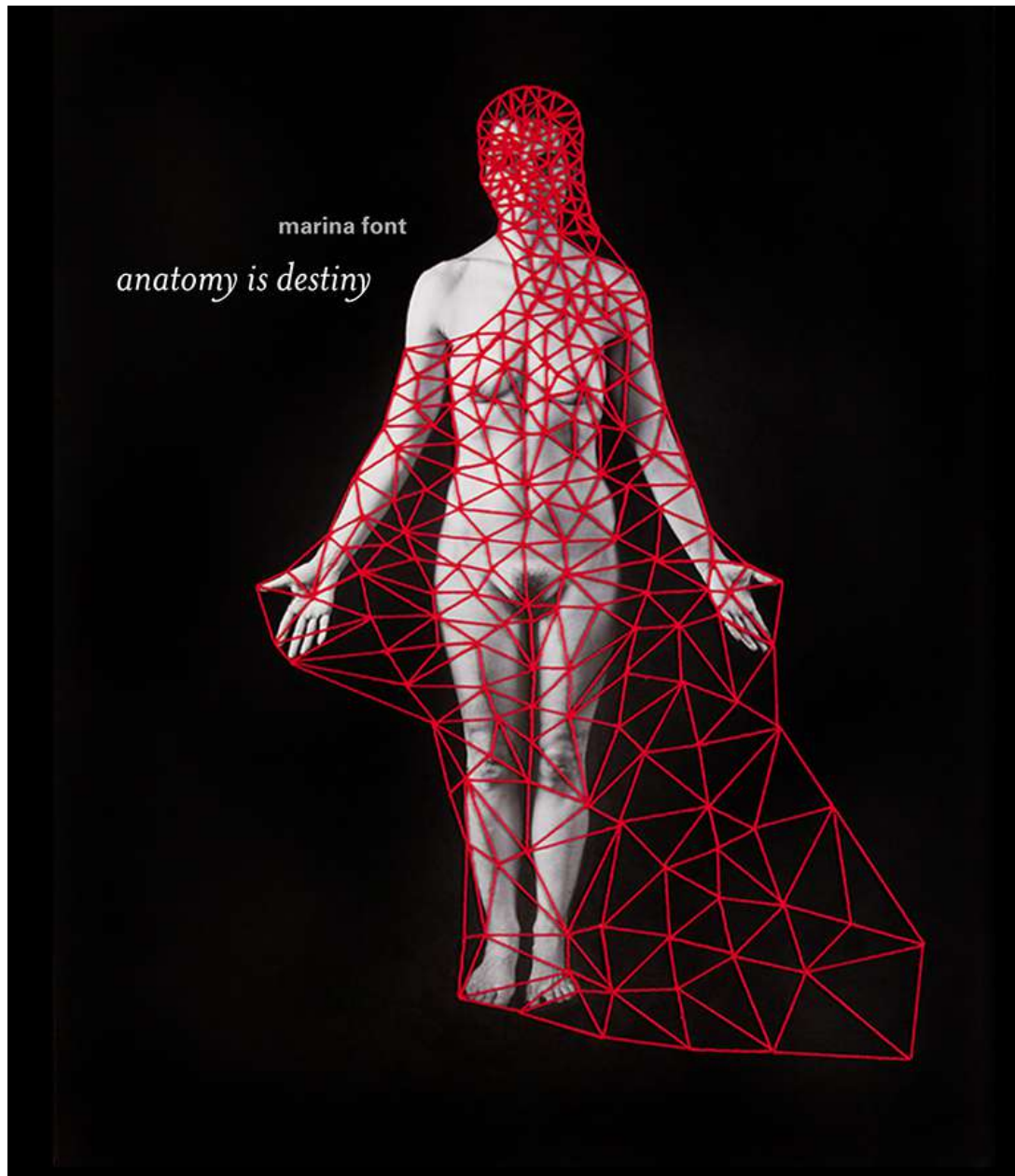
KS- You've seen and continue to see as many PhotoBooks in all stages of development for the last 2 decades as almost anyone else on earth. In that time, digital cameras, the increased use of computers and digital technology have brought about the biggest changes in the world of Photography. Has all of this led to better books in terms of a finished product in your view?

MDM- I respond to work that has clarity, a sense of craft of whatever the medium is being explored, and vision—the tools used rarely matter to me. There is a lot more work being produced in this digitized age, but I see a lot of work by people who are not necessarily curious about the history or future of the medium, and no, the photography, and the books resulting, are not necessarily better.

I think the advances in print-on-demand quality are extraordinary—anyone who wants to see their photographs in book form can do so. That's such a gift to so many creative people! And yet I find that many people who could take great joy in utilizing these advancements are not satisfied by it. It's too bad.

I am turning toward teaching the history of publishing as much as the history of photography, as my world embraces both, and publishing as an industry is still vague to many, or assumed to be "easy," when it fact it long predates photography itself!

At this point, I reached out to the aforementioned multi-talented Artist, Marina Font, to learn more about what the experience of working with Michelle and Minor Matters was like for an Artist they published.



Marina Font, *Anatomy is Destiny*, published by Minor Matters

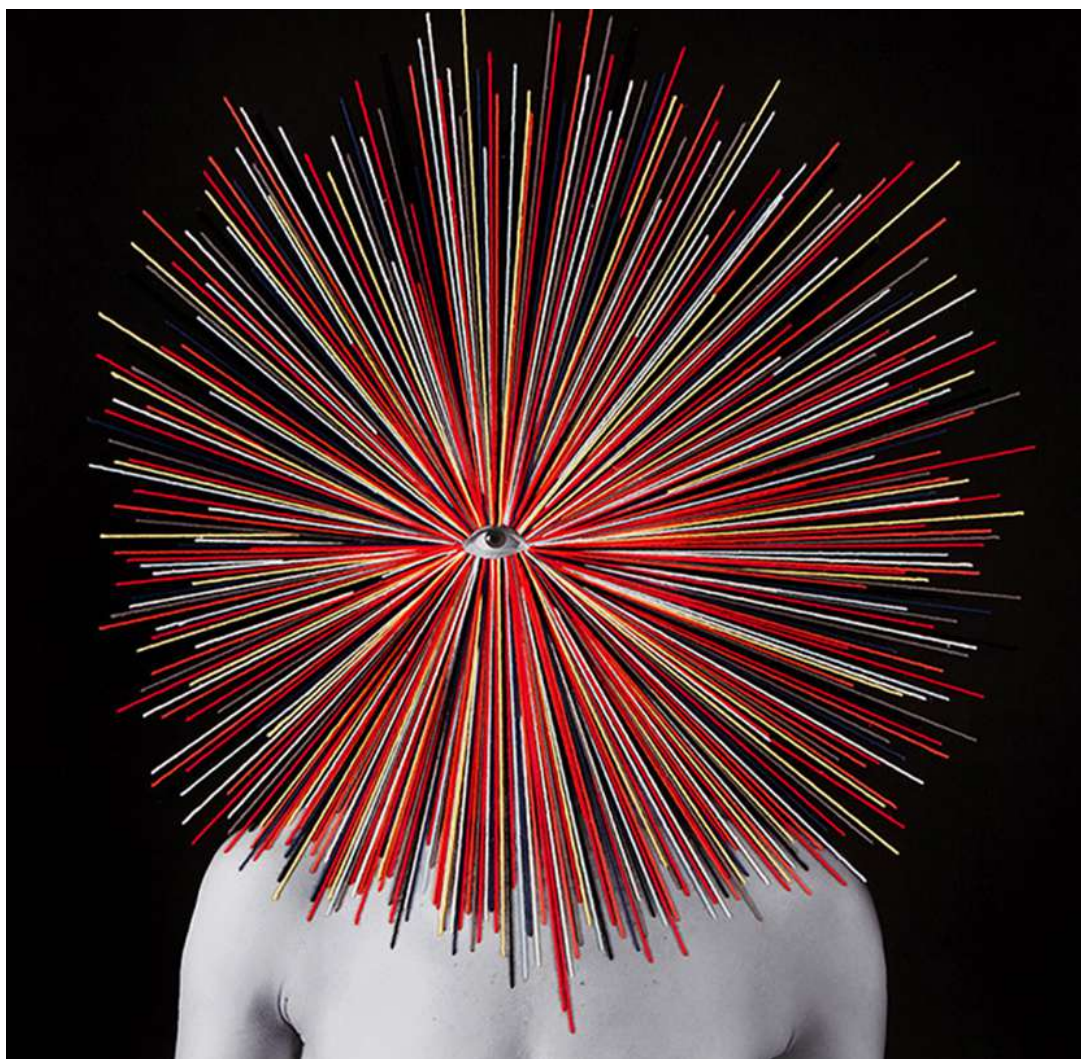
KS- How did you come to know Michelle and how did your project get on her radar?

Marina Font (MF)- Michelle and my gallerist, Dina Mitrani, met in 2013 at the Photolucida portfolio review and became fast friends. Because her involvement with Young Arts, Michelle would come often to Miami and was able to see my last two solo shows at the gallery.

We met for the first time in 2017 at AIPAD, and as the three of us sat over coffee, Michelle proposed the idea of collaborating on the publication of my first monograph. I could not believe it! A year later the book went to print and I am very honored to share that Aperture selected *Anatomy is Destiny* to be on Aperture's Photobook's Spotlight at AIPAD.

KS- What was working with her making *Anatomy is Destiny* like for you?

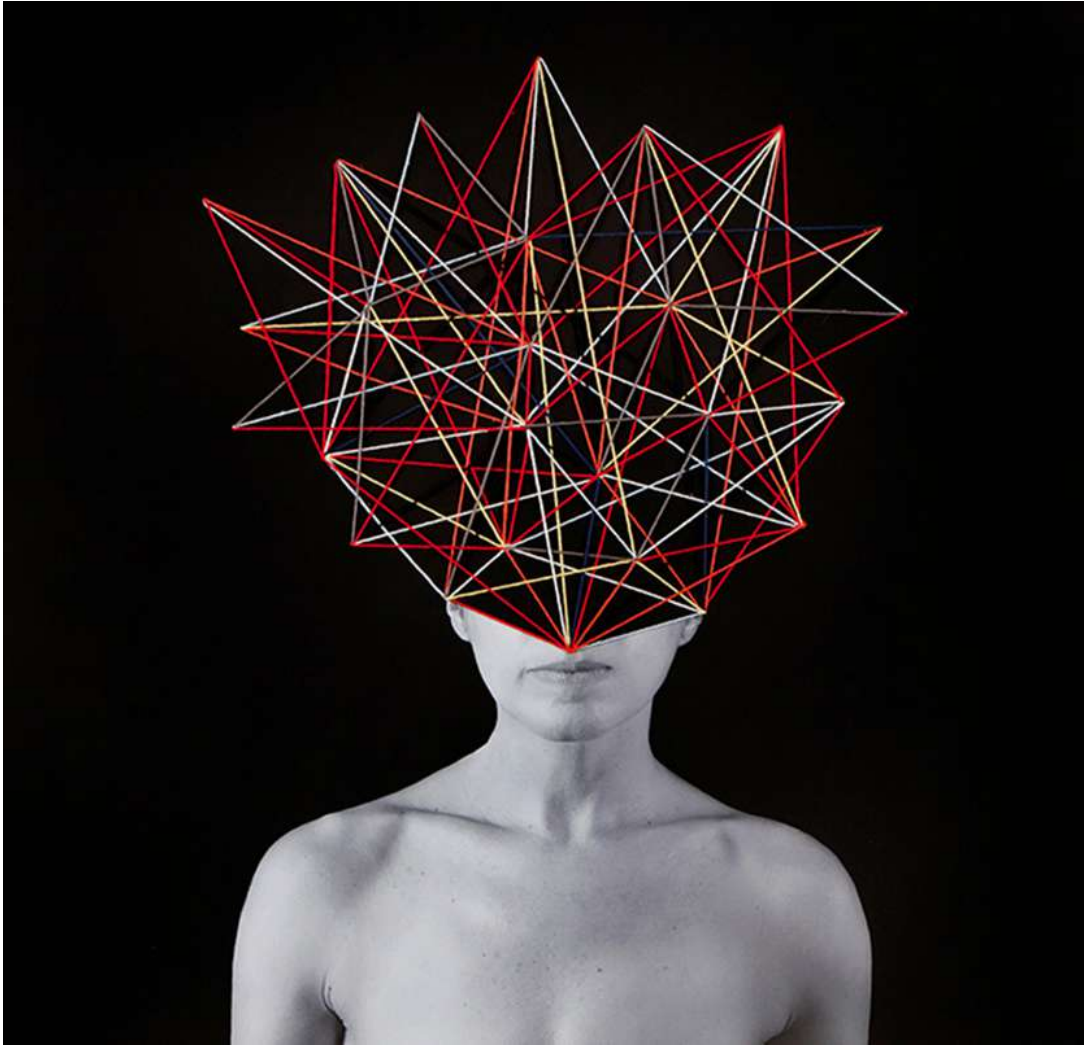
MF- Working with Michelle on the realization of this book has been a dream. Her knowledge and professionalism are impeccable, as well as her openness and respect for



Marina Font, from *Anatomy is Destiny*. The Artist told me this about her background- "Back in Argentina (where she was born), I attended a Design School where I took multi-disciplinary classes, like sculpture, painting and design, and was introduced for the first time to photography. We started making photograms, and since that "magic moment" when I saw an image come to life in the developer tray, I fell in love with the medium. I later joined a local "Foto-Club" and continued to learn there. Once in Miami I completed my Master of Fine Arts in Photography at Barry University in 2009."

The realization of this book presented a couple of challenges: the works presented in the book are a selection of works from two consecutive series that challenge Freudian views of womanhood, and at the same time they challenge the notion of photography. Here are a few reasons why:

– The entire book is made up of 75 works that depart from one single photograph. What makes each work unique is the manual intervention of each photograph with paint, thread and textiles. We really wanted the "materiality" of the work to be properly reproduced in the book.



Marina Font, from Anatomy is Destiny. Marina told me this about her process- "In my latest series, I begin with a printed photograph, and then apply paint, textiles and embroidery to the surface of the image."

– The size of the works range from 8 x 6 inch pieces to works where the body is printed in real scale, so we wanted that to be easily read in the book as well.



Marina Font, from *Anatomy is Destiny*.

Maps" so we chose one of Freud's quotes on gender, "Anatomy is Destiny" to open the conversation.

KS- Michelle, more people than ever before are taking pictures and, by extension, I'm sure that more people than ever before are dreaming of making a PhotoBook, as you touched on. What are the things you wished more people knew before they contacted Minor Matters in hopes of making a book with you?

MDM- I would suggest they take a look at who we've published (there are bios for the authors as part of each book description) and run their own resume or CV against one to three of our authors. Are you at a similar point in your career? Do you have multiple developed bodies of work? Is this your first book or the first in some time? Does your work reflect "the surface of life" today? How would you describe it in terms of that?

And why do you want to be published by us? That's a good question to answer for any publisher you approach.

KS- What's the percentage of books MM publishes versus the total number submitted to you? Has the number submitted been going up the past few years?

MDM- We read what is affectionately known as the "slush pile" monthly when I was at Chronicle; Aperture had two portfolio drop-off periods when I first started there, then one, and now it is a portfolio prize you apply for.

We actually don't take submissions, though I am contemplating an annual opportunity to submit (and people send proposals anyway, but Steve fields most of that).

We do often get recommendations for projects through our authors, other photographers, or colleagues such as curators and gallerists.



All Power Installation view with Carrie Mae Weems, *People of a Darker Hue*, video, left, quotes from the Black Panther Party Platform and Program, right.

KS- At the risk of asking you to choose among your children, which books that you've published are you particularly fond of, or wish more people knew about?

verbose elsewhere so it's good to be silent here.

KS- Since you mentioned freeing up some time for yourself, what "else" do you enjoy?

MDM- That's a work in progress—The Highline Heritage Museum, nearby where I live, has asked to do an exhibition about me through the photographs I live with, which is stirring up all sorts of challenges. How do I sum up the last 25 years in 10–15 photographs? The exhibit is scheduled to open in June so I won't be struggling with that too much longer.

In New York, I like to walk, to see the light bounce off buildings, to eat at my favorite haunts, see my friends, and take in the energy. In Seattle, I am caretaker to two old cars (the 1950 is mine, the 1968 is my sister's) that I drive as often as possible in the summertime. I am also trying to bring the next generation into contact with those old beasts so they can learn to love them, too.

I still read books with words instead of photographs, and would like to do some writing about my family's histories, which I find fascinating (though I might be an audience of one). What else? Music, good food. If I write much longer I'll be back to talking about books or photographs.....



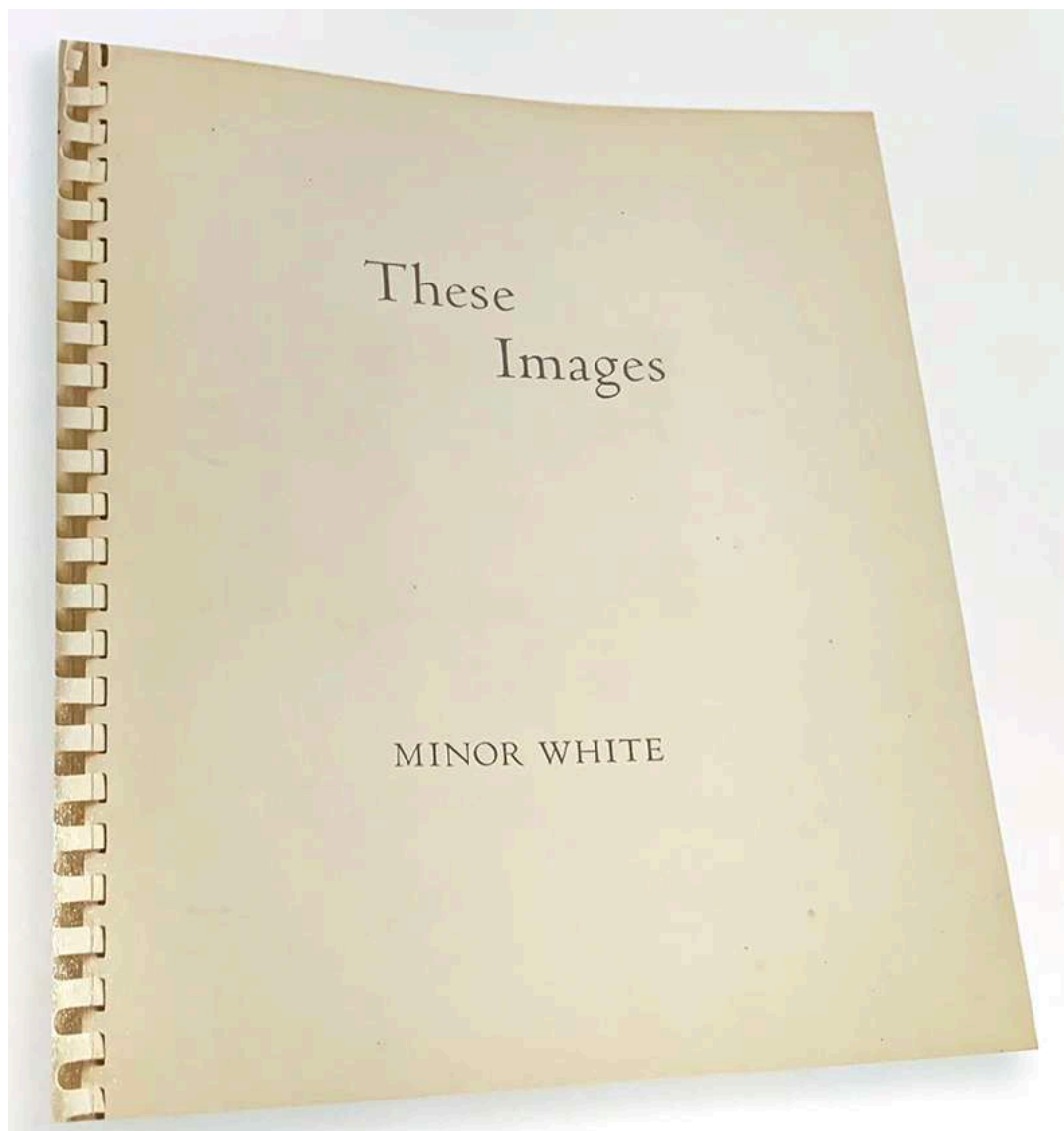
The sign reads "A book is not published until it is sold," a quote from Professor Werner Linz of Pace University,

———Q&A Ends———

Minor Matters represents a breakthrough in a publishing business model that I think we will see more and more companies copying (as some have already in the six years since it she founded it). Emulating a business plan is one thing others can do, benefitting from the experience and hard-earned wisdom of PhotoBook veterans, like Michelle Dun Marsh, who have been doing it for multiple decades. But, to be successful, it seems to me,

the talent to see it through to becoming the best book it can be.

The companies consistently producing the best PhotoBooks each have one. Minor Matters has Michelle Dunn Marsh.



Influence casts an endless shadow. Minor White, *These Images*, 1950, from *The Time Between: The Sequences of Minor White*.

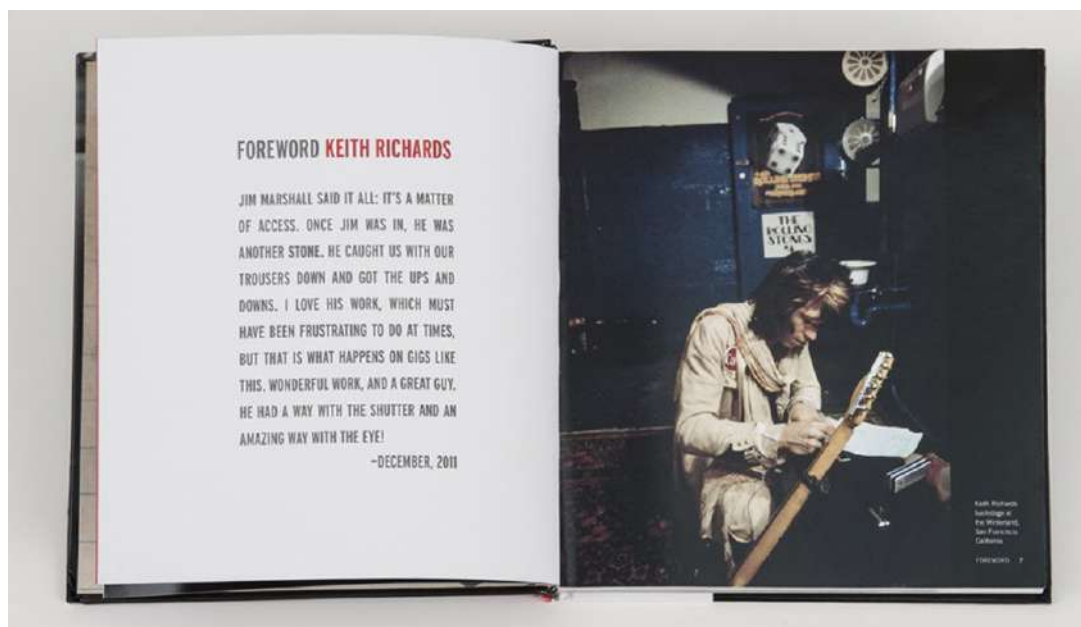
The next time Michelle and Minor Matters “sling pictures” your way, don’t duck- take them in. In the meantime, she’s building quite a legacy that’s becoming major, one that might make even Minor White, smile with pride.

BookMarks-

It’s hard to go wrong choosing among Minor Matters releases. Their catalog is full of quality, and the unexpected, showing a range that might make you wonder if one company published ALL of these books. Right there, in a nutshell, is why Minor Matters is a company to keep your eye on, pay attention to, and consider each one of their releases, like I do.

While you’re at it, why not become a co-publisher of one yourself? In addition to getting a

here.



A spread from *Rolling Stones*, 1972, courtesy of Minor Matters.

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "How Can I Stop," by the Rolling Stones. "How could I stop once I start."

My thanks to Marina Font, Kris Graves, Margery Newman, and Michelle Dunn Marsh.

This Post was created by Kenn Sava for nighthawknyc.com

Please send comments, thoughts, feedback or propositions to denizen at
nighthawknyc.com

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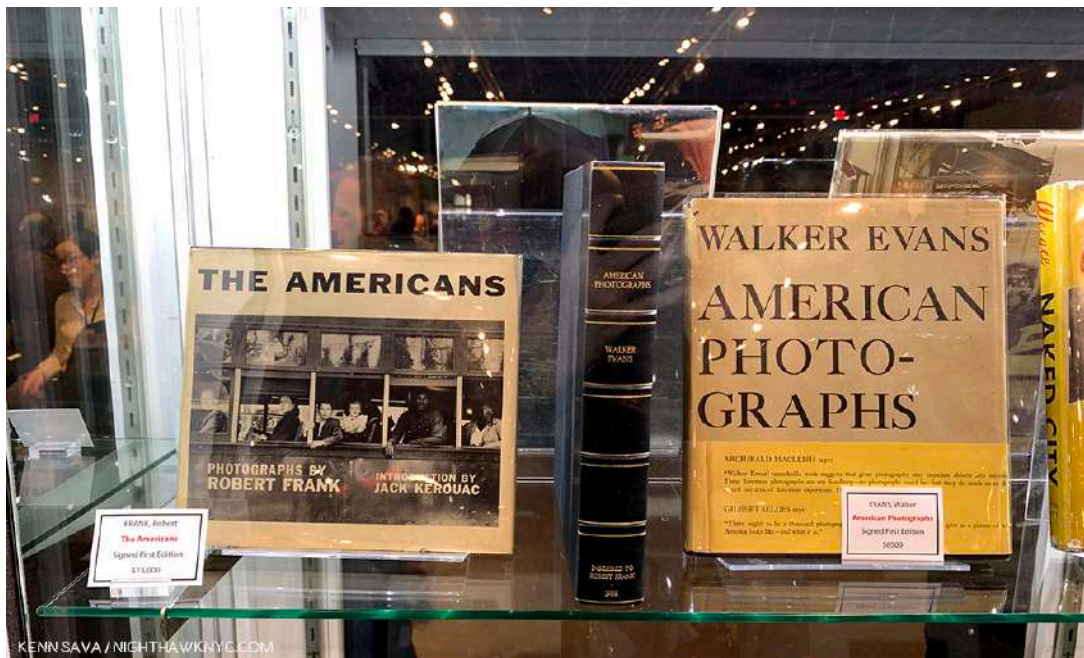
Posted on April 26, 2019

Posted in AIPAD 2018, AIPAD 2019, Art, BookMarks, Kris Graves, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Marina Font, Michelle Dunn Marsh, Minor White, NYC Art Shows, Photography

Tagged AIPAD 2019, Michelle Dunn Marsh

AT THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW, 2019: THE PHOTOBOOK PUBLISHERS

PhotoBooks are a phenomenom.



The twin "holy grails" of American PhotoBooks. Signed first edition copies of Walker Evans's *American Photographs* and Robert Frank's *The Americans*. I knelt in silent homage for a few moments to center myself before venturing into the rest of the PhotoBook area. Seen at Harper's Books. Many editions later? Both books are still in print.

As documented by Gerry Badger's and Martin Parr in their *The PhotoBook: A History* (three volumes), or Andrew Roth in his *The Book of 101 Books*, a truly great PhotoBook is akin to a great album (Lp or CD), a great Film, even a great Novel. It took Walker Evans' *American Photographs*, 1938, and then Robert Frank's *The Americans* (published in France in 1958, the USA in 1959) to realize and reveal to many, particularly to other Photographers, the infinite possibilities of the PhotoBook at its finest¹, to turn it into a medium of expression, an Artform in itself. Echoes of their work reverberated throughout the Publishers and Organizations area of AIPAD.

Since Mr. Frank's *The Americans*, the PhotoBook has seemed to increasingly strike a chord in Photographers, book buyers, lovers of Photography and even the general public, to the point that most big bookstores now have a Photography/PhotoBook section that may even rival their Art section. There are stores that carry nothing but PhotoBooks here and dotted all over the world (I have bought from many of them). In an age when digital media seems to be usurping and replacing everything that's come before, not one major PhotoBook publisher has abandoned physical books (and only a few also release eBooks)!



© KENN SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

I love the smell of freshly printed PhotoBooks in the late afternoon. A view of the popular Publishers and Photo Organizations section of AIPAD, in its new location. Renowned indie TBW Books' table is closest to my camera.

There's some debate about whether Photographs are seen better on the walls of galleries and museums or in a PhotoBook. Interestingly, during his conversation at Sean Kelly on April 4th (while AIPAD was going on), Alec Soth referred to there being "book Photographers and wall Photographers." He then said that he sees himself as a "book Photographer."



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"Book Photographer" Alec Soth's show *I know How Furiously Your Heart Is Beating* of work from his new book of the same name seen up on the walls of Sean Kelly Galley, simultaneously with AIPAD, about 20 blocks south.

At AIPAD, you could walk through the galleries and then look through some PhotoBooks by many of the same Photographers to decide which you prefer for yourself. (By the way

here.) I see points on both sides and so I haven't made up my mind. (Do I have to?) However, I will point out one thing that doesn't help- as you can see in virtually every piece I've done on a Photography show, glare is a continual problem in both museums and galleries. What's not debatable is that PhotoBooks provide countless Photographers a way to have their work seen- and for most of them, it's the ONLY way their work will be seen. Getting gallery representation is a dream for many Photographers I've spoken to the past 2 years. It reminds me of my days in Music, when most Musicians I knew dreamt of getting a record deal. The few who did wound up in debt from having to pay back all monies spent on their behalf by the record company when their records failed to sell as many copies as they'd also dreamed. Be careful what you wish for might have been the takeaway from that experience. Later, as an independent record producer, I found myself in a position not unlike that of many of the PhotoBook publishers I meet and saw at AIPAD- independents who own and run businesses which require the laying out of sizable sums of money on their part to produce a book, who then work hard to sell it in hopes of breaking even and being able to make their next book. And yes, "breaking even" is the term I heard most often from those involved when the subject turned to the economics of publishing.



The Publishers were moved behind the galleries this year.

The big news this year for this group was their repositioning. Last year, they were in the front of the southern side of Pier 94. This year, they were in the back, directly behind the galleries and in front of a food section and seating. This meant you had to walk through the galleries to get to the book section. It allowed for more space around each table, which made it easier for visitors to peruse the items on the tables. I asked a good number of the publishers how they felt about the change and the new location and the consensus was mixed.



Aperture's booth was run by Director of Sales and Marketing Kellie McLaughlin, left, who was on hand for the entire show, while her terrific show, *Aperture Photographs*, tracing 50 years of Aperture's print program, was up in their 27th Street gallery, a mecca in NYC Photography.

Straddling the line, in more ways than one, between the galleries, the publishers, as well as Photographers, was the legendary Aperture Foundation, founded in 1952, one of the most important and respected Photography organizations in the world. They provide support to Photographers in all phases of their careers, which extends into their gallery careers. For these reasons, Aperture's presence at AIPAD is essential, in my view. They were back and their booth was located between the gallery and publisher areas, featuring books, prints and special editions, with their Director of Sales and Marketing, Kellie McLaughlin on hand all five days. If you have any PhotoBooks in your space, the odds are high you have at least one Aperture book among them.



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Lesley A. Martin, right, one of the most well-known editors in Photography hosts Aperture's popular PhotoBook Spotlight.

Meanwhile, Aperture's Lesley A. Martin, the well known editor and publisher of the PhotoBook Review, hosted the popular PhotoBook Spotlight in the adjoining space.

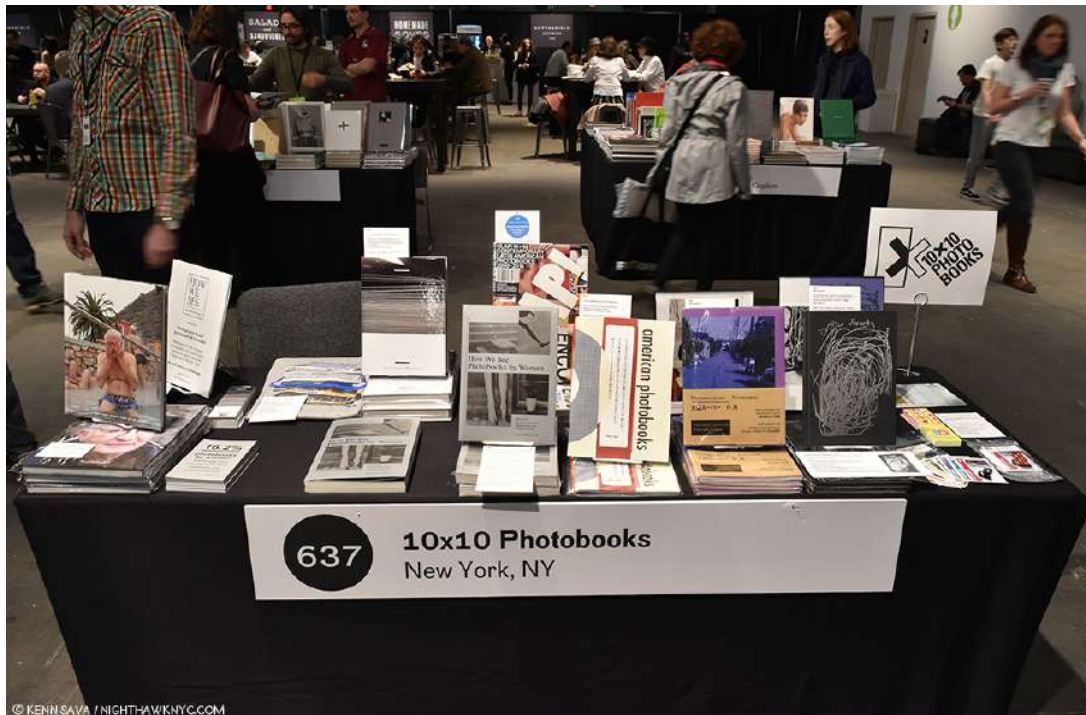


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Light Work packs em in.

Near Aperture was Light Work, from Syracuse, NY, another important Photo organization who boasts a staggering list of the Photographers who have done residences at the non-profit since 1973 that includes Cindy Sherman, Magnum Photo's Matt Black and Gregory

Mae Weems, and the "star" of AIPAD, 2019, Dawoud Bey, among hundreds of others.



10x10 PhotoBooks is another non-profit dedicated to fostering engagement with and among the global PhotoBook community. They also publish fine books of their own, including *10x10 Japanese PhotoBooks*, which I have my eye on.

While non-profits Aperture and Light Work both featured books and prints, among the businesses, perhaps no presenter attending this year's AIPAD straddled the line between gallery and publisher more evenly than Only-photography, of Berlin, Germany, run by Roland Angst.



Only-photography's Roland Angst, to the right of center, in his firm's booth surrounded by classic Photographs

In the gallery section, where Only-photography was situated, Mr. Angst's firm showed off a terrific range of first rate, even historic, PhotoBooks, AND a stunning selection of original prints by the likes of Luigi Ghirri(!), and rare, vintage portfolios by Daido Moriyama and Issei Suda, who, sadly, passed away barely a month earlier, on March 7th, 2019, one month short of his 80th birthday.



The real deal. These original, signed prints by Luigi Ghirri which stopped me in my tracks at Only-photography, were among the highlights of the entire show.

of books by Ray K. Metzker, who passed away in 2014, and Mr. Suda still available (Hurry!). At AIPAD, they debuted their newest book, the beautiful *America Revisited*, by the esteemed Swedish Photographer Gerry Johansson, in a signed & limited edition of 500 copies.



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Roland Angst, left, shows *Ray K. Metzker Unknown* to legendary gallerist, Laurence Miller, Mr. Metzker's friend, dealer for two decades, and one the leading authorities on the work of Ray K. Metzker.

numbered copies containing images selected by Mr. Angst that appeared to be moving briskly. (My recent look at *Ray K. Metzker* at Howard Greenberg Gallery is here.)



A wall of Only-photography's exceedingly collectible books includes titles that are already rising in price.

All the other publishers were in the Publishers and Photo Organizations section.

34 publishers or organizations were on hand this year, down slightly from last year, but that was impossible to tell without a head count as the new space around each table made the area in total feel very high. The main complaint I heard were from those with

to the front, though steady traffic headed to the back to the food area right behind.



The back row of the PhotoBook area.

I witnessed the back tables being “less busy” repeatedly over the 5 days I was there. However, MACK Books was positioned near the back row and their space was continually busy. Then again? For my money, MACK’s recent offerings may be pushing the company to #1 in the world right now. (At least among those books that continually, actually, get released in the USA.) Apparently, a good many others agree, and made a point of stopping by their table. They were rewarded with surprises! Shockingly, among the recent releases on display were copies of *Per Strada* by Guido Guidi and *The Castle* by Richard Mosse, both sold out and currently commanding 200% markups on the aftermarket. Also tucked in the display were two out of print books by Alec Soth, including a SEALED COPY of the extremely rare *Open Manual*, the first time I’ve seen a copy in person. (MACK’s asking price? US\$2,000.00. Their copy does not include the hollowed out old book),.



Look! It's an extremely rare copy of Alec Soth's classic *Broken Manual* hiding between copies of the also out of print *Gathered Leaves*, at MACK.

Right next to it were two copies of his wonderful compilation *Gathered Leaves*, which has been out of print a few years now. MACK super-staffer Morgan Crowcroft-Brown smiled when she replied to my shock saying they were from "MACK's secret vault," and smiled, again, when I asked if I could visit it. The two vintage Alec Soth titles were right next to signed copies of Mr. Soth's brand new MACK release, *I Know How Furiously Your Heart Is Beating*, all of which had disappeared the very next time I looked.



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Chris Pichler, founder and publisher of the renowned Nazraeli Press, one of the leading independent publishers since 1989 was on hand to meet customers and answer enquiries.

Due to the finances involved, most PhotoBooks are printed in very small editions- 1,000 copies of any given book is a lot, and most books printed in editions of that size and larger are left to the bigger publishers, who have the best distribution, to produce. Smaller companies may make 300-500 copies of a book (often less), quickly sell out of it and immediately move on to their next project. You have to be quick if you want to get one of these, and AIPAD is part of a network of book fairs around the world during the year that provide a primary means of keeping up to date with the latest releases. For NYC, the Publishers and Photo Organizations section of AIPAD is the best opportunity all year long in the City to see the largest number of PhotoBook publishers and their wares in one place²



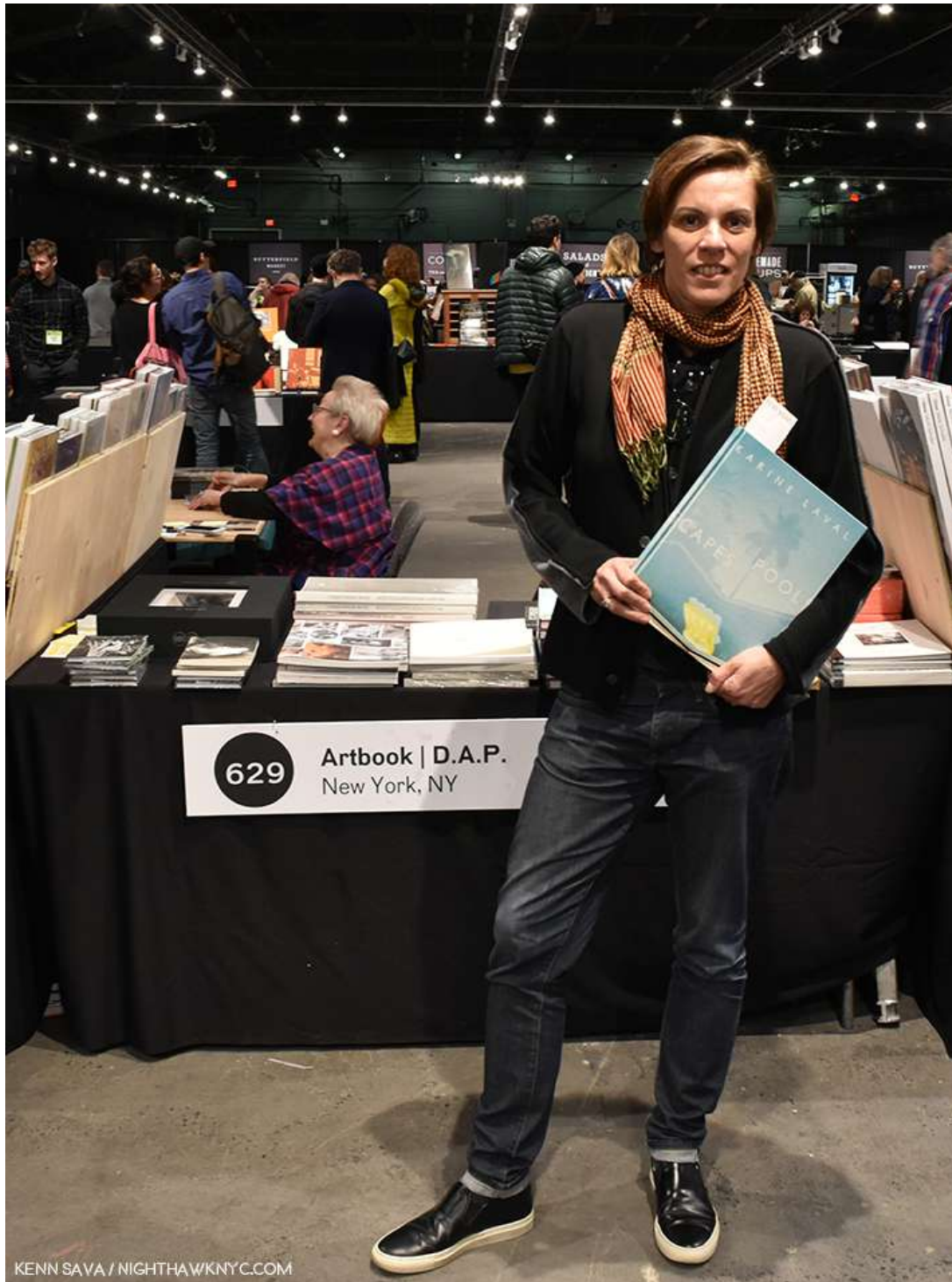
"These guys," the gent belonging to the arm on the right was saying as I shot this picture of Satoshi, left, and Takashi, of Akio Nagasawa, one of the leading contemporary Japanese Photobook publishers who have a longstanding, close relationship with the legendary Daido Moriyama, among many others.

Many familiar faces from the first two years of the publisher participation in AIPAD returned in 2019, led by big names Germany's legendary Steidl, D.A.P., and MACK Books, London, along with Damiani, Nazraeli Press and TBW Books, among the leading independents, renowned Japanese publisher Akio Nagasawa, as well as TIS Books, Yoffy Press, Minor Matters, Kris Graves Projects, Conveyor Editions and Japan's Super Labo. There was so much to see in the Book Dealers, Publishers, and Photography-Related Organizations, I spent about half of my time over my 5 days here, resulting in their own piece in my coverage of AIPAD, 2019.



Chan, have gotten off to a most auspicious start, which includes books of their work and Rose Marie Cromwell's *El Libro Supremo De La Suerte*, a sensation which made my [NoteWorthy PhotoBooks, 2018 list](#) . Both Messers Carpenter & Chan also have wonderful books in the new *LOST II*, seen below.

Any number of Photographers made appearances, once again, at publisher tables supporting and signing their recent and brand new releases. Along with that, company principles were actually on hand during some or all of the run of the show! These included Michael Mack of MACK Books, Michelle Dunn Marsh founder of Minor Matters, Paul Schiek and Lester Rosso, heads of TBW Books, Monika Condrea, Head of Business Development and Communications of Steidl, Nelson Chan and Tim Carpenter of TIS Books and Kris Graves of Kris Graves Projects, providing a unique opportunity to "talk to the boss," make a pitch, get firsthand backstories, or give product feedback.



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Karine Laval holds a freshly signed copy of her first PhotoBook, *Pools*, which presents her decade long study of pools in the USA and Europe, revealing their abstract and representational possibilities in a uniquely difused, vibrant palette, and published by no less than Steidl on April 5th.

Among the Photographers I saw signing books in this area were Karine Laval, at Steidl, Marina Font at Minor Matters, Louie Palu at Joffy Press, Jules Slutsky, Zun Lee, Nelson Chan, Tim Carpenter and Kris Graves signing their books from *LOST II* and Mikhail Mishin, signing *Endless Bridge* all at Kris Graves Projects. There were numerous signings at MACK and others at Steidl that I missed.



Carlo Brady of Photo-eye, Santa Fe, NM, who brought a very nice selection of both new and limited edition books, and also hosted book signings. They had a second booth where they showed prints by Reuben Wu.



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Barbara Bosworth proudly signs her majestic new PhotoBook *The Heavens* at Photo-eye on April 6th. I was lucky to pick up a copy of her wonderful *Moonlight, for Rosemary*, which also features her ethereal skyscapes.

In a space with so many very good books to consider, a few new ones stood out to me. Among the especially NoteWorthy PhotoBooks I saw, the highlight for me was finally getting to see the actual, physical, 20 volumes of Kris Graves Projects *LOST II*, after having written about it at length while it was in production, the first time I've ever written about books I hadn't actually seen.



THE highlight of the new PhotoBook releases at AIPAD, 2019 was the debut of *LOST II*, the 20 volume set(!) published by Kris Graves Projects, almost all of it is seen here, along with its spiffy slipcase.

Having called the set "monumental," I uttered an audible sigh of relief when the actual books impressed me every bit as much as the previews I'd seen. At this point? I strongly feel it's a landmark set for KGP, and I believe it's going to be the most highly sought after publication KGP has yet released, one that will be trading for multiples of the \$350.00 issue price in no time, given only 60 complete sets are being released. Also, if you are interested in the individual volumes? Fewer than 100 copies of each will be available, and after the five days of AIPAD AND the three days of the LA Art Book Fair the week after? I doubt many remain.



Get a good look at it now because with only 60 sets published? You will rarely see it in the future.

Joffy Press got my attention with two new and recent books by documentary Photographer and Filmmaker Louie Palu, *Front Towards Enemy* and *A Field Guide to Asbestos*, two of the most intense and important new books I saw at AIPAD. Both books also stood out for their unique conceptions and production. Mr. Palu was on hand over parts of 2 days to talk about his book and sign copies, and he cordially agreed to answer some questions for me about them. So, I'm thrilled to say that Mr. Palu will be featured in my *AIPAD Discovery* piece for 2019, along with an *AIPAD Focus* feature piece on Michelle Dunn Marsh, founder of Minor Matters publishing company, and the woman who curated the *All Power: Visual Legacies of the Black Panther Party* special exhibition at AIPAD in 2018! Ms. Marsh is a lady who has worn many hats in Photography and PhotoBook publishing over her 20+ year career and is one of those I continually look to for what's new in Photography. I've been wanting to write about her for over a years, so I'm thrilled to be able to bring her to NHNYC readers shortly!

Among other NoteWorthy new releases I saw, TBW Books, Oakland, debuted the new book, *Arena*, by Jeff Mermelstein, a large book that documents the first 350 events taking place at Brooklyn's Barclays Center and Steidl previewed the new collaboration by Teju Cole and Fazal Sheikh titled *Human Archipelago*.

Books were included in some of the gallery spaces, as I touched on in my gallery piece. Danny Lyon signed at Etherton Gallery's booth and Ryan Vizzions signed his new book, *NO SPIRITUAL SURRENDER- A Dedication to the Standing Rock Movement* at Monroe Gallery. While Mr. Lyon's books are well known to PhotoBook lovers, I will mention, again, that Ryan Vizzions' book is particularly NoteWorthy and one to be sought out while copies are available. In his book, Mr. Vizzions Photos are paired with texts written by 6 women of the Oceti Sakowin, who were the first organizers of the movement, adding a depth that no writer who wasn't there could achieve.

Once again, the Publishers and Photo Organizations section of AIPAD proved to be a must-see section for all the reasons I've touched on. Beyond the extremely varied and essential work the Organizations do, PhotoBooks provide an essential compliment to and extension of the galleries, (some of who are involved in the publication of catalogues and monographs on the Photographers they represent and show), enhancing and adding to the images hanging on their walls. When you add in all the other Photographers who don't currently have gallery representation that appear in PhotoBooks, they also serve to complete a picture of what's going on in Modern & Contemporary Photography today. Therefore, the gallery section and the Publishers and Photo Organizations sections of AIPAD work together in ways that, it seems to me, benefits both of them.

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "Photograph" by Ed Sheehan.

Ed Sheeran - Photograph (Official Music Vide...



As I did in 2017 and 2018, I'm pleased to present extensive coverage of The Photography Show, 2019, aka AIPAD. This is part 2 of my coverage of the 2019 show. Part 1, which focuses on the galleries, is [here](#). Two to three more parts are coming. Stay tuned!

My thanks to all the Photographers, publishers and galleries who appear in this Post, and to Monika Condrea and Margery Newman for their assistance.

This Post was created by Kenn Sava for nighthawknyc.com
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Thank you!

1. Yes, as Messers Badger, Parr and Roth point out there are other Americans as well as Photographers in other countries who have made PhotoBooks of the highest quality and importance. [↗](#)
2. Printed Matter's MoMA PS1 NY Art Book Fair is bigger but it is exactly that- it includes Art Books of all kinds, of which PhotoBooks are a relatively small part. [↗](#)

Posted on April 20, 2019

Posted in AIPAD 2019, Alec Soth, Aperture, Art, Kris Graves, Luigi Ghirri, NYC Art Shows, Photography
Tagged AIPAD, Kris Graves, PhotoBooks, The Photography Show 2019

AT THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW, 2019: THE GALLERIES

I love The Photography Show.



AIPAD, 2019, stretches as far as the eye can see- in all directions. There's A LOT to see, and I'm here to see ALL of it. The view early Saturday afternoon, April 6, 2019. My thanks to DeShawn for his assistance with this shot. Click any picture for full size.

After all, the Association of International Photography Art Dealers, who present it, and I, have a core value in common- a passion for Fine Art Photography.



The Photography Show entrance at Pier 94 on the Hudson River, April 7, 2019.

More commonly referred to as AIPAD (as I will henceforth), the show is the only chance all year in NYC for a large segment of the Fine Art Photography world here, or able to get

Photography, for anyone interested in seeing the widest range of Fine Art Photographs presented in one place at one time in town all year long, and for anyone looking for something to hang on their wall that they will want to keep looking at indefinitely.



And? AIPAD is so B I G, there really is something for every taste hanging inside Pier 94.



In 2019, the show was noticeably smaller, though, as you can see, it was still plenty large enough that it really required at least two visits to see all of it, and that's not counting the AIPAD Talks (which included Dawoud Bey, Sarah Greenough, Stephen Shore, and Harry Benson, separately, this year), Aperture's Photobook Showcase, and various book signings and Photographer booth visits, which were ongoing over the weekend. If you wanted to take in some or all of those, too, attendance for the full five day run was the only way. Taking my own advice, over my five long days of attendance, I believe I saw all of it, though I was so busy with the gallery and PhotoBook areas I missed all the talks this year, much to my chagrin.



I love the smell of freshly hung Photographs in the morning.

For me, and I think for most other visitors, no matter how many Photographers you're familiar with? You're guaranteed to add a few new names to your list- and "new names" has nothing to do with their age.



The legendary Danny Lyon, subject of a solo retrospective at The Whitney Museum in 2017, takes a break

Most of all? I love getting to see and meet Photographers. Maybe even get a book signed. After all? If it wasn't for the Photographers? There'd be no show.



The closing day crowd at SoPhoto Gallery's booth, who came all the way from Beijing, China, to show Yaolang Chen.

In the gallery booths, the range and variety of work on view was the best thing about the show. As I was in [2017](#) and [2018](#), I was most impressed by the displays of Photographers not as well known in NYC, or in the USA for that matter, as they are elsewhere shown by galleries who traveled long distances to attend, like SoPhoto and PeterFetterman Galleries.



Fetterman Gallery, Santa Monica, CA.

Others paid homage to the host City with classic reminders of our Photographic past.



All the way from Munich, Germany, Galerie f5.6 brought beautiful and interesting work, as well as these two classic slices of vintage NYC from one of its favorite sons, Saul Leiter.

The NYC Galleries were also in the house, of course, and well represented by long standing big names like Laurence Miller Gallery-



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Ray K. Metzker's extraordinary *Nude*, 1966-74, one of his legendary *Composites* highlighted his long time dealer, Laurence Miller Gallery's, presentation.

Howard Greenberg Gallery-



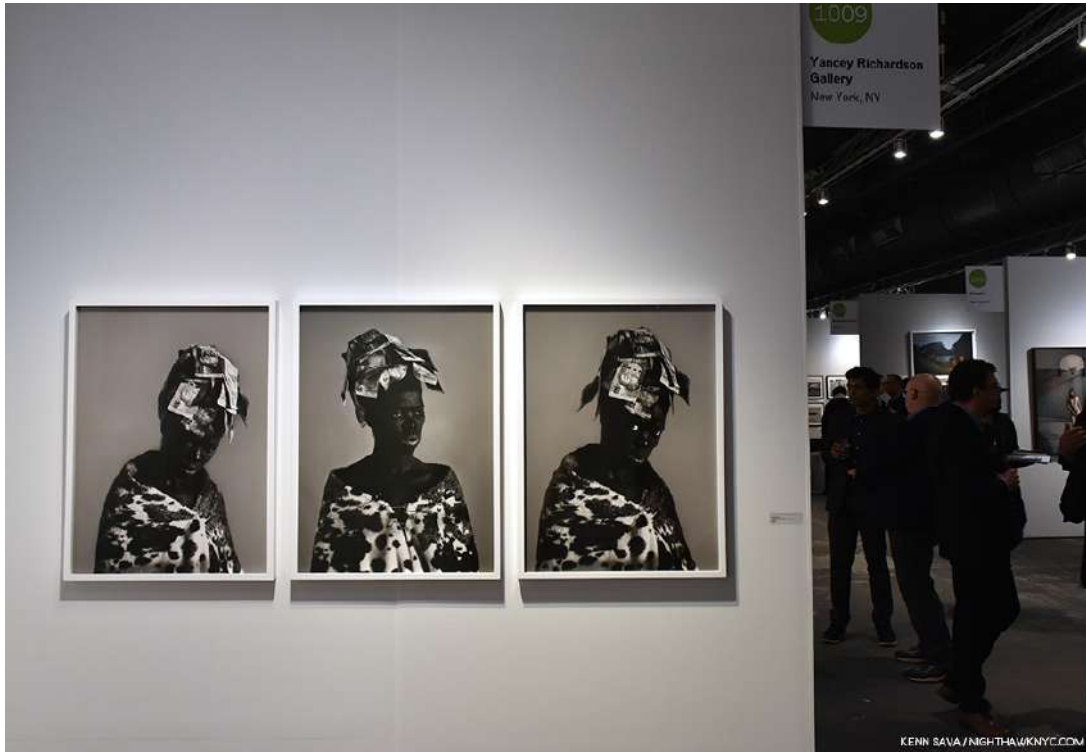
Dave Heath, a new discovery for me in 2019, who quickly became one of my favorites for his powerful, poignant portraits and his superb printing. Seen here at Howard Greenberg.

Edwynn Houk Gallery-



A gorgeous Sally Mann portrait, *Virginia #42*, 2004 flanked by *The Trombone Player #6*, 2018, by Paolo Ventura, left, and *American Dream, Self-Portrait with Alex*, 2018, by Erwin Olaf at NYC's Edwynn Houk Gallery.

Yancey Richardson Gallery-



Zanele Muholi beautifully filled all of Yancey Richardson Gallery's space.

Bruce Silverstein-



Rosalind Fox Solomon, *Selected Photographs, 1975-2011*, featuring a number of images from her recent MACK Book, *Liberty Theater*, which made my NoteWorthy PhotoBooks, 2018, list. Ms. Solomon and Dawoud Bey were announced as winners of the ICP 2019 Infinity Award in February. Seen at Bruce Silverstein.

and newer names, including Elizabeth Houston Gallery-



Nico Krijno at Elizabeth Houson Gallery.

who displayed a fascinating group of pieces by the talented and versatile Nico Krijno.



Stephen Daiter Gallery

But, the consensus "hit" of the show, from all those I spoke with- Photographers, publishers, visitors and other gallerists, was undoubtedly the the work of Dawoud Bey shown by Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago. The group of new landscapes from his *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*, series based on an imagining of the flight of passage along the Underground Railroad, were singled out more than anything else on view by those I spoke with, and his group of four portraits dating from 1989-90 were almost as frequently mentioned. This continues the recent overdue attention given to this 40 year veteran Photographer's work, along with the concurrent show at the Art Institute of Chicago of 25 works from *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*, and the February announcement of Mr. Bey as a recipient of the 2019 International Center of Photography Infinity Award.



Portraits by Dawoud Bey, from left to right, *Young Man at a Tent Revival*, 1989, *A Woman at Fulton Street and Washington Avenue*, 1989, *Couple in Prospect Park*, 1990, and *A Girl With A Kinfe Nosepin*, 1990, at Stephen Daiter Gallery.

As mentioned earlier, Etherton Gallery devoted their main space to a mini-retrospective of the work of Danny Lyon, titled *Danny Lyon: For the Record*.



On view were works from all of his most well-known series, *The Bikeriders* and *Conversations With the Dead*, and *The Destruction of Lower Manhattan*.



Along side others not as well-known



KENN SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

Two works that hint at the range of Danny Lyon over what has been a long and acclaimed career.

Monroe Gallery, returned to us from Sante Fe, New Mexico, showing the work of Tony Vaccaro, graced by the presence of the Dean of all Photographers once again, looking as spry as ever at NINETY-SEVEN! (Tony, WHAT'S your secret??)



97 years young, Tony Vaccaro sits in front of a wall of his historic work at Monroe Gallery on April 6th. Off frame, to the left, he and I are surrounded by a crowd filling the space to see & hear the legend, who I had the honor of speaking with last year.

As joyful as it always is to see Mr. Vaccaro, the discovery for me at Monroe Gallery was the work of independent Photojournalist Ryan Vizzions.



Ryan Vizzions, *Protestors face off with police and the National Guard on February 1, 2017, near Cannon Ball, North Dakota, 2017.* Courtesy Ryan Vizzions.

I happened to walk into Monroe Gallery's booth when Mr. Vizzions was there signing his brand new PhotoBook, *No Spiritual Surrender: A Dedication to the Standing Rock Movement* and discussing both the work on view and his background, both of which held me rapt. Shortly after his father's passing, he quit his job and armed with a Nikon D3300,

March, 2017. After an initial 3 week visit to Oceti Sakowin camp, he was so taken with what he found that he went home, sold everything and headed back. He stayed from late October through the winter and came away with an amazing body of work that, in my opinion, follows right in the footsteps of the finest tradition of PhotoJournalism.



Ryan Vizzions poses in front of a selection of his powerful work at Monroe Gallery's booth at AIPAD on April 6, 2019.

I subsequently found that I'm far from the only one taken by this young man's work. Ryan has already won multiple "Photo of the Year" Awards- in 2016 from *People*, *Artsy.net*, and *Mic.com*. In 2017, from the *Guardian* and *ABC News*. He's also had his life threatened. Now, he's represented by Monroe Gallery. More on Ryan and his story, [here](#). Ryan's book, *No Spiritual Surrender: A Dedication to the Standing Rock Movement* is highly recommended.

Elsewhere around the show, here are some other highlights-



Mary McCartney, Tracey Emin as Frida Kahlo, London, 2000, seen at Staley Wise Gallery



A selection of classic Henri Cariter-Bresson prints seen at Augusta Edwards Fine Art, London, UK.



Brian Clamp, the tall gentleman, center, seen at his ClampArt booth, showing cutting edge work, as usual.



One of the leading Photography gallerists in the South, Atlanta's Arnika Dawkins, left, of Arnika Dawkins Gallery Photographic Fine Art, presented one of her latest finds, Ervin A. Johnson's mixed media portraits, and Jeanine Michna-Bales, who I featured in an AIPAD Discoveries piece last year.



Imogen Cunningham *Agave Design 1*, 1920. Seen at Edwynn Houk Gallery.



Installation view- *A Room for Solace: An Exhibition of Domestic Interiors* Curated by Alec Soth

A discussion of highlights has to include the exhibition curated by world renowned Magnum Photographer Alec Soth, fresh off the release of his newest book, *I Know How Furiously Your Heart Is Beating*, and the opening of his solo show of the same work at Sean Kelly Gallery.



This section consists of Wayne F. Miller, Rebecca Norris Webb (who's married to Alex Webb) and Harry Callahan, left to right.



Mikael Levin, *Onus*, 2000, Sirkka Liisa Konttinen, *Emma Dowds (Step by Step series)*, 1982, Unknown, *Interior of an American Home*, c.1900, Marie Cosindas, *Sailors Key West*, 1966, Bill Owens, *We're really happy*, 1972, from *Suburbia*, Walker Evans *Kitchen in Floyd Burrough's Home, Hale County, Alabama*, 1936



Osamu James Nakagawa, *Curtain, Tokyo, Spring, 2003*, From the series Kai

Mr. Soth selected a fascinating variety of Photographs around the theme, *A Room for Solace: An Exhibition of Domestic Interiors*. His selections from the galleries attending the show was continually fresh and surprising, made all the more fascinating in his carefully considered hanging. Couches and tables in the space added a "homey" touch, but most of all, I was excited to see a Photographer have a chance to select and lay out at least one section of AIPAD, and Alec Soth did a terrific job, in my opinion.

Observations-

I really can't say that over the five days in the gallery section, I heard any complaints. The only issue seemed to be with the carpeting in the booths, which was lumpy in places throughout the show, and seemed to be a bit tricky for those wearing certain types of shoes. I witnessed one stumble that could have been disastrous (for the visitor and the Art), except for a quick extended hand keeping a stumble from being a fall. Outside of that, the only question I heard more than once, and I heard it each day, was where "Where

year and that any issues from prior years were addressed for this year's edition (this, the opinion of some returning booth holders I spoke with, and some I pointed out in the past). The staff was friendly, cordial yet focused, and professional throughout, regardless of the role they had. Security was exceedingly well handled, from a visitor's perspective, both entering and leaving the show. I didn't encounter anyone who had an issue with a staff member throughout the run of the show.

Of course, the biggest issue remains Pier 94, itself. It's in one of the least convenient areas of mid-town Manhattan, barely serviced by mass transit, which makes it hard to get to, or leave, particularly in any kind of inclemency. Here's one esteemed visitor's experience getting there this year. My feeling is this must cut down on attendance dramatically. Perhaps 33 to 50%? Of course that needs to be weighed versus the added cost and size limitations of a different location, something I have no doubt has been considered long and hard. When I asked a variety of those I encountered about the location, all agreed about its inconvenience, but none were willing to sacrifice the size for convenience. I agree with them.

In conclusion-

Any piece such as this can only hope to show only a sample of the many thousands of Photographs on display. The work on view was only a portion of what the galleries actually brought to the show- a good number brought a fair amount of stock with them that wasn't actually hanging on the walls as well. As I walked through the galleries each day, it seemed to me the attendance was steady and the galleries were busy. From the telling "red dots" I saw on name cards, and from the wrapped pieces I saw being carried out, my sense was that business was as good as it was last year. Prices seemed to have edged up, particularly for the "big names" in Modern & Contemporary Photography, but there was plenty of work I saw by Photographers who are well known today that were to be had at quite affordable prices, (and almost all of it was in signed & numbered editions this year, after seeing a number of open editions in prior years).



Alec Soth chose to end his show with Fred Herzog's *My Room, Harwood Street, 1958*, a work that has special resonance for me. After seeing the display of his work at Equinox Gallery's booth, I bought my Fred Herzog at AIPAD in 2017.

Considering the length of the history of Photography, the increasing international exposure for Photographers from all over the world by galleries, PhotoBooks, and the internet, the range and the quantity of Fine Art Photographs available for sale has never been greater. The Photography Show was a terrific opportunity to see a good deal of it in one place, to learn more about Photographers you're interested in and discover new ones, to see how the work of different Photographers looks hanging side by side, to compare prices, and to walk away with something new to hang on your walls.

And I have.

For the third year in a row, I'm pleased to present extensive coverage of The Photography Show presented by AIPAD. As I did in 2017 and 2018, this will include a portfolio of artists

Book Dealers and Organizations area. Two subsequent pieces consist of an "AIPAD Focus" close up look at a leading light in Photography, and at least one (and I am hoping two) AIPAD Discovery piece(s), reprising a popular feature I inaugurated last year, that will focus on a particularly NoteWorthy Photographer previously not known to me. Hopefully, two. Stay tuned!

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "Take Me To The River" by Al Green.

My thanks to Margery Newman.

This Post was created by Kenn Sava for nighthawknyc.com
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Posted on April 17, 2019

Posted in AIPAD 2019, Al Green, Alec Soth, Art, Danny Lyon, Dave Heath, Dawoud Bey, Ervin A. Johnson, Fred Herzog, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Imogen Cunningham, Nico Krijno, Noell Oszvald, NYC Art Shows, Osamu James Nakagawa, Photography, Ray K. Metzker, Rosalind Fox Solomon, Ryan Vizzions, Sally Mann, Saul Leiter, Tony Vaccaro, Tracey Emin, Walker Evans, Zanele Muholi

Tagged AIPAD 2019, Alec Soth, Danny Lyon, NYC Art Shows, The Photography Show

ANDY WARHOL: BUSINESS ARTIST

"So you should always have a product that's not just 'you.' An actress should count up her plays and movies and a model should count up her photographs and a writer should count up his words and an artist should count up his pictures so you always know exactly what you're worth, and you don't get stuck thinking your product is you and your fame, and your aura." Andy Warhol¹.



Andy shopping for products. Bob Adelman, *Andy Warhol at Gristede's Market near 47th Street. New York City, 1965*, near where he lived with his mother. Countless millions went shopping in American grocery stores in the 1960s. Very few made Art out of it before he did. Click any picture for full size.

That being said, leaving the Whitney Museum's *Andy Warhol- From A to B and Back Again*, the first Retrospective in NYC since MoMA's in 1989, I was left believing Andy Warhol's greatest creation was himself.



The use of gold here, and on the exhibition catalog's cover, is interesting. It mimics *Gold Marilyn*, at MoMA, and also reminds of the background color of icons from the Eastern Orthodox and other churches. And? It's a color often associated with money and "value," so could it be a veiled reference to the high prices paid for his Art? Which of these is the intended meaning?

But, no matter how I feel about his Art, even I can't deny that today, it can be said that we are living in his world to a greater extent than we realize. Look around you. His influence is everywhere. His innovations are now used by countless other Artists and businesses.

for her new, loosely defined show-business career. She called herself 'Ingrid Superstar.'
I'm positive Ingrid invented that word²."

The everyday people he made into "superstars" presaged today's television "reality stars." His square portraits are now instantly recognizable as the Instagram standard. Andy Warhol came to define the Contemporary Artist working with a team of assistants at his Factory and his example is to be seen being followed by Artists all over the world today. How often do you see one of his color varied group of (4) portraits or flowers emulated by someone else? And on and on. These are only a few examples. Andy Warhol's influence is incalculable. If it could be totaled, it might well rival that of Steve Jobs among THE most influential people of the past 75 years on our lives today.

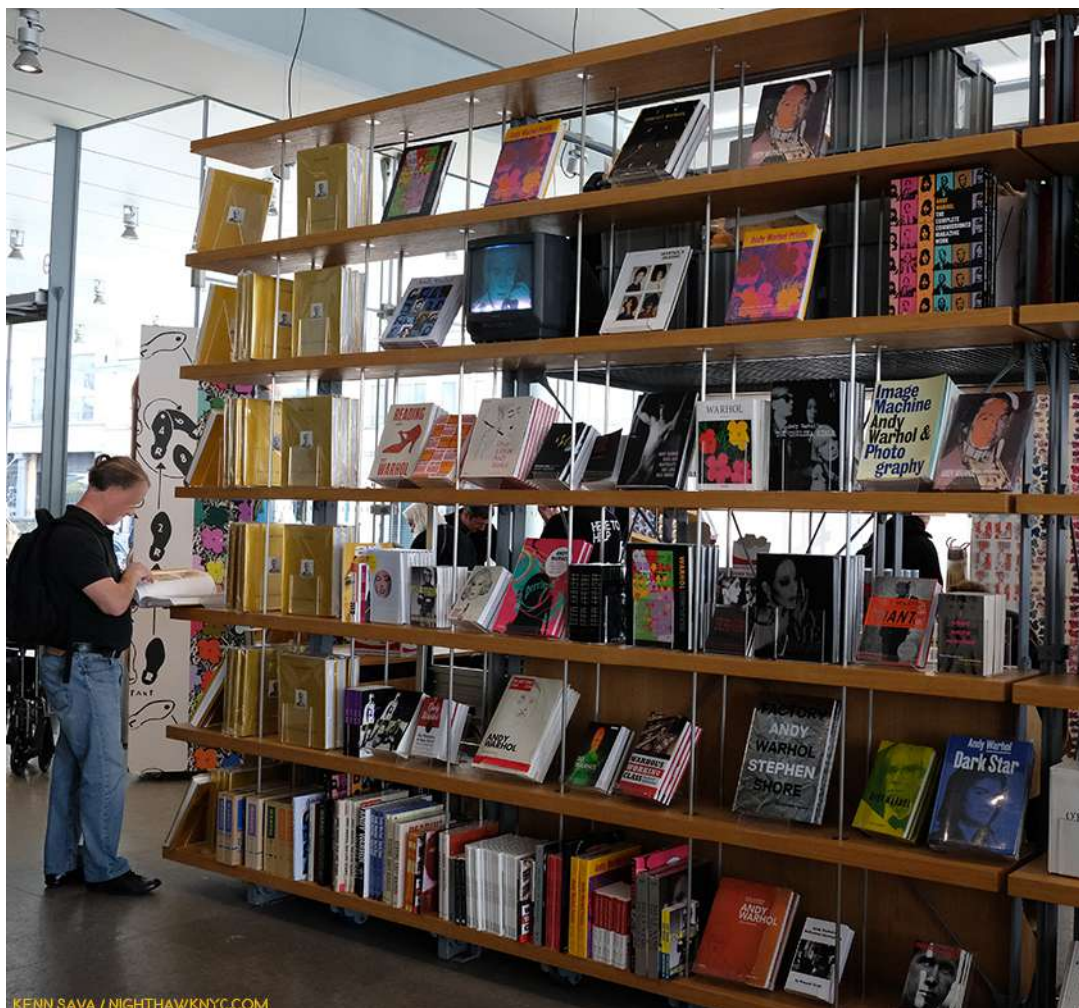


Commodore Amiga computer equipment used by Andy Warhol in 1985-86. Andy's interesting computer Art was extracted from this machine by a team led by the Andy Warhol Museum in 2014! Photo by The Andy Warhol Museum.

But, it was Andy Warhol, not Steve, who said, "A computer would be a very qualified boss³" decades before the time when many people's lives seem to be run by their devices. A-hem. Sometimes I wonder if the internet is nothing but a cyber projection of Andy Warhol's brain.

Artistically, I respect him as an Artist who was continually innovative in so many mediums during his surprisingly short career. Yes, short. It feels like he was around forever, but he was just 58 when he passed away on February 22, 1987. This insatiable creativity now strikes me as a function of his innate ability to see the world in his own way, which led him, continually, in different directions, to try new things, and explore new ways of doing old things.

It seems to me, however, that THIS may be the peak moment of Andy Warhol's influence- the influence of Warhol, the Artist and his Art.



Warhol books, and ONLY Warhol books, seen in the Whitney Shop, March 27, 2019.

I wonder if the level of his fame may, in fact, work against it's longevity from here. Virtually everything he did has been shown, written about, analyzed and assimilated. If you don't think that's true, take a look at this picture I took of part of the book shelves in the Whitney Museum's Shop during the run on *Andy Warhol- From A to B*. I used a 28mm lens and even though I stood more than 20 feet away, backing into the middle of the admissions cue, I still wasn't able to get ALL the Andy Warhol books on sale in the shot. There are books on his pre-Pop work, his newspaper-like work, his portraits, his posters, his prints, his record covers, his career as a publisher, his films, books on the Factory (including one of Photos taken by a teenaged Stephen Shore), a few about his Photography and polaroids, including a collection of Photos of him in drag, AND a multi-volume Catalogue Raisonne of his Paintings (on the far left of the bottom shelf). Oh, and *Andy Warhol: Knives*. ? This is not to mention all the books, by the Artist, and others, about his life, including the infamous, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, published in 1977, which seems to have inspired the name of this show. My copy, bought from the display, is the 46th printing of the paperback. In all my many years of looking at Art books, I have to say the only other Artist who has as many books written about him and his Art is Picasso.



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Start here. In the first gallery, which contains early Pop work, like *Dance Steps*, 1961, and a wall of *Campbell's Soup Cans* in the back.

As I headed to the 5th floor for the main part of the show, I wondered- What's left for the future to learn about Andy Warhol's Art? Given his popularity, I'm sure people will find things for yet more books.



Andy's mother fixed him Campbell's Soup everyday for lunch, including after he became famous, until she passed. The family was poor. Beyond the comfort of the warmth of soup, having a lot of food around represents something of an ideal, a dream, even cheap food, like this soup was at the time, at 15 cents a can. Originally, these Paintings sold for \$100 a piece at his first show at Ferus Gallery in LA, where Dennis Hopper bought one.

As I looked at his Art, it also raised questions. Questions that the passage of time has only intensified.



Brillo Boxes, 1969 (version of the 1964 original). Yes, a copy of a copy. The interesting thing about this work for me is that this "Art is everywhere around us" work of so-called "Pop Art," which helped to mark the end of Abstract Art's hold on the Art world, is based on the Brillo Box design of James Harvey, a moonlighting Abstract Expressionist Painter! Beyond that, and wondering if Sol LeWitt was influenced by it, it's lost on me.

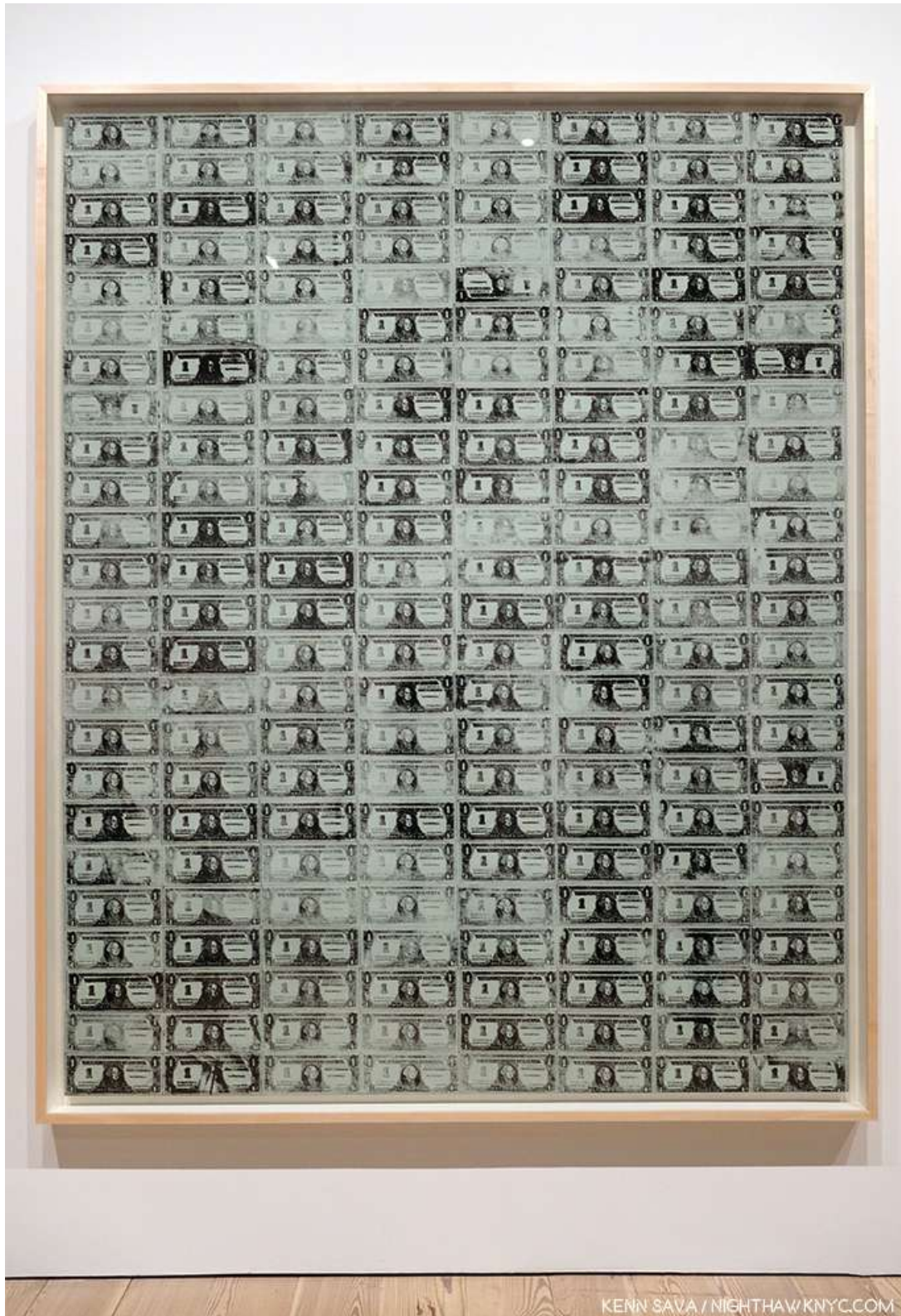
important factor in his achieving success and fame and it may be the most important factor in the longevity of both. Popularity doesn't necessarily equate with quality. Since the future is unwritten, as Joe Strummer reminded us, it's impossible to know what posterity will value, if anything. To this point quality has definitely been a factor. I wonder- Where does that leave Andy Warhol's Art?

Arising at a time (the late 1950s) when the Art world had been fed a steady diet of extreme abstraction by the Abstract Expressionists, Andy Warhol's Art burst on the world with images featuring things, yes, things, that everyone living in the country recognized. Brillo boxes, Campbell's soup cans, dollar bills. His work was instantly accessible in an Art world dominated by Art that was becoming more and more obtuse and remote. I'm not saying Andy Warhol's work was "understandable," or even "more understandable" than that of the Abstractionists, only relatable. Even in today's world where fewer and fewer living beings remember S&H Green Stamps, walking through this show, this seems to still be the case.



Marilyn & Elvis. Andy Warhol was always drawn to stars, and beautiful men. Personally, and in his Art.

But, the world has changed in the, now, 60 years since Andy Warhol's career first took off. A lot of Artists have grown up with what he did and it's become part of their work, even if it's only unconsciously.



129 Dollar Bills, 1962, among the very first uses of silkscreening in Modern & Contemporary Art.

How many Artists have created with silkscreens since Andy Warhol introduced the possibilities of the ancient technique to the modern world in 1962? Even one of the other innovators and endlessly creative pillars of American Art in the late 1950s and 1960s (and after), Robert Rauschenberg, picked up the technique from Warhol. Since, silkscreening

Shirts, among countless other uses.

"I had by that time decided that 'business' was the best art. Business art is the step that comes after Art. I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist. After I did the thing called 'art' or whatever it's called, I went into business art. I wanted to be an Art Businessman or a Business Artist. Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. During the hippie era people put down the idea of business—they'd say, 'Money is bad,' and 'Working is bad,' but making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art," Andy Warhol. (Note- Not to be confused with my capitalization, caps and lowercase usage are Warhol's own, reproduced exactly as the quote appears in *TPoAWP.92.*)



Ethel Scull 36 Times, 1963, jointly owned by The Whitney & The Met, was the first work commissioned from Andy Warhol. It's a work that, in my view, has outlived its cachet as "Art," and one that I don't think posterity will look kindly upon.

Looking at the show, a takeaway for me was the distinct feeling I got was that there was his work, and then there is the work he did on commission (i.e. "Business Art," a term he mentions in *The Philosophy of*, quoted above, but doesn't define). After a while, I thought I could tell even before reading the card or researching the work, which was which- which were the work he did "for himself," which were the works he did on commission, and I came away feeling there is a world of difference between the two. Wait! There's a subject for a book I don't think anyone's written yet! For Andy Warhol, the business of Art was an Art in itself. Few before (maybe Rembrandt, Picasso and Dali in their ways) understood this and used it, but no one before him mastered it to the degree that Andy Warhol did. It's testament to how well he did it that a good many of his commissions, which detract from his other work when seen along side them as *Ethel Scull 36 Times* does in my opinion, hang in museums around the world, at least for now.



The American Man (Portrait of Watson Powell), 1964, a pseudo-companion piece to the Ethel Scull piece, above, and another commission, has aged better and still manages to speak to 2019 viewers.

To be fair, looking at some of his commissions now, we might well see in them a "commentary" by the Artist on matters beyond the mere representation of a given subject. *The American Man, 1964*, commissioned after seeing Warhol's *Ethel Scull* piece, struck me that way. I'm still looking for that in a good many others, though.

After a couple visits, I was able to choose a few works in the great guessing game I like to play, and encourage everyone else to play- "Which works will be considered Art in the future- if any?" I came up with eight including the *Campbell's Soupcans* and the *129 Dollar Bills* already shown. 8 out of the 350 works the Museum says were on view. Personally, I don't believe the passage of the centuries is going to be kind to most of Andy Warhol's Art. Part of the reason for that is his pervasive influence. History doesn't often look back favorably on who was first, particularly in Art. (Quick- Who "invented" oil painting? When I was growing up, I believed what Vasari wrote in *The Lives of the Most Excellent Artists, 1550*, that it was the great van Eyck brothers, Jan and Hubert, who happened to be my first favorite Artists.) More recently there is no consensus and evidence of oil paint may have been found going back to 650AD.) Given the overheated state of his prices (still, in spite of a recent leveling off), his Art is definitely not where I'd put my money now. That ship has sailed. NOTHING goes up forever! Look elsewhere in 2019. (See my Post [On Buying Art](#) for additional considerations, all of which apply to the Art of Andy Warhol.)



Marilyn Diptych, 1962

Let's look at numbers 3 to 7 on my list for the ages (in no particular order). Next, *Marilyn Diptych*, 1962 – The duality of this work painted shortly after Marilyn Monroe's suicide is revolutionary. On the one hand, Warhol shows Marilyn the idealized, beautiful, glamorous movie star, repeated radiantly in a sea of gold not unlike that of the religious icons of the Eastern Orthodox and other churches. On the right hand, the work seems to reference the darker side of both Marilyn's life and death. This work is striking when one also considers that Andy was someone who sought autographs of movie stars as a child. Here, all the illusions of the silver screen are gone.



Thirty Are Better Than One, 1963

Thirty Are Better Than One, 1963, The multiple Mona Lisa as a commentary on the original's visit to the USA at the time present an interesting counterpoint to the da Vinci-even in black & white. This one barely made my list, but given the precedent of other Artist's commenting on or reinterpreting the *Mona Lisa*, like Duchamp, I think it will be of interest indefinitely.



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Nine Jackies, 1964

Nine Jackies, 1964. Something revolutionary in portraiture, the Artist captures the beauty of the Kennedy "Camelot," and the horror and disbelief of what took place on November 22, 1963, as I remember it. A work that relies on the power of the Photograph, it's one of the strongest uses of it in a medium outside of its own.



Mao, 1972

Mao, 1972- Created during the year of Nixon's breakthrough visit to China, Andy Warhol's image takes the portrait of Mao from the infamous *Little Red Book* of sayings and statements by the Chairman, which may have been the most reproduced image in the world at the time. Here, over 14 feet high, it symbolizes the Charman's looming over all things in China, a different kind of manifestation of fame. Andy would make a brief trip, himself, to China in 1982, where he posed for a few pictures looking very stiff and uncomfortable.



Mustard Race Riot, 1963.

Mustard Race Riot, 1963- Without a doubt, the most powerful work in the show, in my opinion, it sold for only \$15,127,500.00 in 2004. "Only," when you consider the current record price for a Warhol is \$100 million (*Eight Elvises*), and when you consider another Warhol *Race Riot*, one that had been owned by Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe, sold for almost \$63 million in 2014. As Artist Hank Willis Thomas, and others, have pointed out, this work looks as prescient as almost anything else in the show. Standing in front of it (which means standing a ways distant since it's 114 by 82 inches), pondering it over multiple visits, I came away feeling that it may be one of the most important works of the 1960s, and for 1963, certainly gave those putting Andy Warhol in the "Pop Art" box pause for thought, pointing out yet again the pointlessness of such terms.

Then? Something occurred to me to sleep top me dead in my tracks. ALL FIVE of these works involve the use of appropriated Photographs taken by others. Did Andy Warhol pay the Photographers for using them?



Gene Kornman, *Photograph (Marilyn Monroe)*, 1953. Publicity Photo of Marilyn Monroe for the Film, *Niagara*.

This subject was not brought up anywhere that I saw in the show. They did mention (and exhibit) the Gene Kornman Photo Andy Warhol used, perhaps more than any other, was originally a publicity shot of Marilyn from her classic 1953 Film, *Niagara*. Also exhibited were the source Photos he used in *Nine Jackies*, which I subsequently learned Andy Warhol was sued over his use of. Charles Moore's 1963 *Life Magazine* Photos were the source for Warhol's *Race Riot* works, including *Mustard Race Riot*. Frankly? For an Artist who was so endlessly creative? That he did this, and did it for so long and so often surprises me. It took lawsuits for Andy and Robert Rauschenberg, who was also doing it,

infringement was not a term that was not as common in Art in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and he had made his name using copyrighted names and trademarks for Campbell's Soup, Brillo, etc., without issue- the companies involved, no doubt, relished the free advertising and attention, so giving his restless creativity the benefit of the doubt might apply here, I think (easy for me to say, I'm not Gene Kornman, who's Photo of Marilyn wound up in Art that's, no doubt, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, if not more, today).

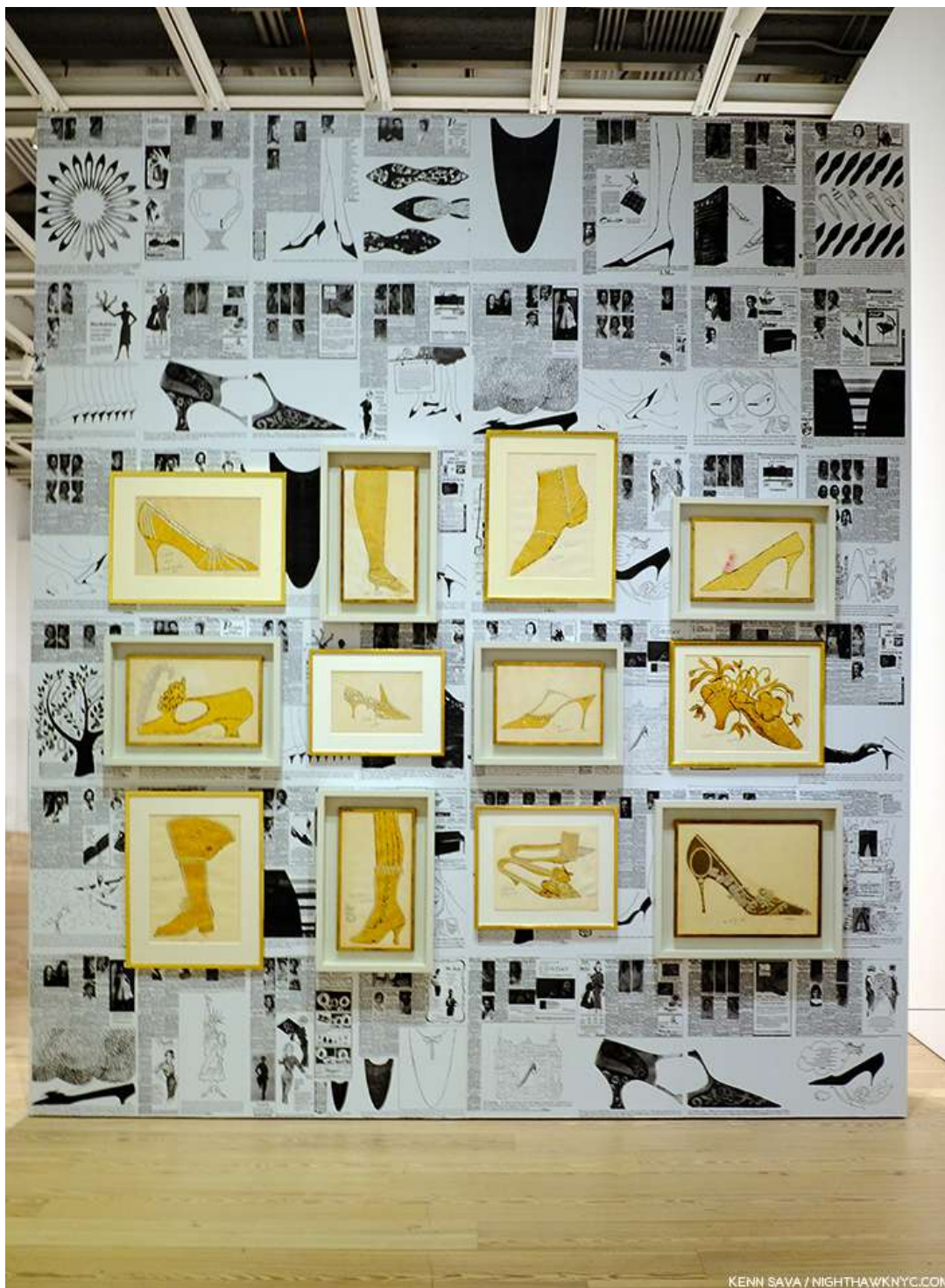
I still think these are powerful works, among the best Warhols I've seen, but this does tarnish them a bit. It's hard to ignore today. But, let's move on.



KENN SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

Self-Portrait, 1950s

considerable amount of time with the Drawings, mostly early, of Andy Warhol displayed here. It's interesting that they reveal a wonderful sense of, and control of, line, which I've long thought to be the most technically difficult part of Drawing. So confident is the young Artist in his line that he dispenses with almost everything else- even parts of the composition! Shading is only hinted at once in a while. Throughout, it's his line that carries the work. This style is reminiscent of one Picasso used in the early 1900s to create works like this. In addition, he shows an economy that makes it fascinating to consider what he's left out, a unique way of using what Artists call "negative space." This Drawing is markedly different from the "scratchy" drawings with halting lines seen in some of his commercial work of the period. He changed his style to fit the subject, and it always worked. He was a very successful illustrator and store window designer. But? Shoes and shoe design held a special place in his heart.



A wall of shoes. In each of the works in gold, Andy created a shoe as a caricature of a person.

It turns out that Andy Warhol had a shoe fetish. A real one, that surpasses the most shoe obsessed of my female friends, which John Giorno describes in graphic detail in the Documentary *Andy Warhol: The Complete Picture!* At 24:30, Mr. Giorno says, "There was Andy Warhol on his hands and knees kissing my shoes..."



Andy's *Truman Capote Shoe*, with calligraphy by his mom, is seen over his *The B.J. Shoe*. Given his shoe obsession, it's interesting that there are no works after this period that feature shoes, as far as I know. Also interesting is that Andy, himself, wore the same pair of paint splattered shoes for 25 years, which are also shown in *The Complete Picture*.

Even in the midst of his intensive period of Drawing for his commercial illustration clients, he was always looking for ways to create multiples of his Drawings. This led to his use of silkscreens. But yes, he Painted. This early Painting is the one work in included that would meet the definition of a Painting for most of Art History- prior to Warhol.



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The charming *Living Room*, 1948.

From there, his Painting skills were used to modify and enhance works in other medium, like silkscreens, in works that were multi-media Paintings.



Self-Portrait, 1966, Acrylic, silkscreen ink, and graphite on linen.

It seemed to me walking through the show that Warhol's Self-Portraits are stronger than just about any of his other portraits. Downstairs on the first floor, an entire gallery was devoted to his square portraits, which alternated between the famous and the already forgotten with a fascinating portrait of his mom almost hidden among them.



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Julia Warhol, 1974, upper right, a year or so after she passed away in 1972. Interestingly, it's in the collection of Roy Lichtenstein, and that's Dorothy Lichtenstein, Roy's wife, below her. To her left is Met Curator Henry Geldzhaler, who was also painted by David Hockney.

Along with fame, Andy Warhol's other big theme was death. It's a subject that makes an appearance early on in his Fine Art career, in works like *129 Die in Jet*, 1962



129 Die in Jet, 1962

It carries on in his *Electric Chair* Paintings, and is an element in his Marilyn and Jackie pieces, both created shortly after deaths- Marilyn's and JFK's. The hold death has on visitors struck me on one visit while I was considering Mustard Race Riot. Given its large size, I had to stand a good distance away from it to take it all in.



front of me, facing to my left. They were looking at this-



Lavender Disaster, 1963.

don't get that. I, for one, don't get the point of multiplying the electric chair. I prefer these, individually-



Both, *Big Electric Chair*, 1967-8, top, 1967, bottom.

And, of course, there were the car wrecks, also featuring repeated Photos, which led into the next gallery, where the equally death-soaked *Nine Jackies* awaited, facing a wall of *Most Wanted Men*, 1964, Andy Warhol's works based on wanted posters that hung at the

eighth and final work on my "Art" list is *Self-Portrait with Skull*, 1978, in which the Artist brings his obsession with death home.



Self-Portrait with Skull, 1978

On the left, the red is hard to miss as the color of blood, and therefore, of life, while the grey/black image on the right recalls those in the *Marilyn Diptych*, which speaks to her demise and death. This work is based on one of Warhol's own Photographs.

Andy Warhol- From A to B and Back Again was a good, but not a landmark show, in my opinion. In NYC, MoMA's *Warhol: A Retrospective* remains the benchmark Warhol show. Part of the reason it's not better is possibly due to the popularity and value of his work making loans very hard to get. After the silkscreen gallery with *Mustard Race Riot*, I felt the rest of the show continually declined, with isolated examples of better work. In much of the rest of it, I felt lost, adrift in galleries of work that either hadn't held up to the passage of time (if they ever did stand out) or that contained ideas manifested on a gigantic scale, like the "piss paintings," that were probably either left in the studio or done on a smaller scale. At this late date in his life and career, to suddenly go fully abstract smacked of running out of ideas, which is something that seems impossible for Andy Warhol.



A camouflaged visitor scrutinizes the left half of *Camouflage Last Supper*.

The culminating gallery with the also gigantic *Camouflage Last Supper* also struck me as a poor choice. Here, Warhol reprises the idea of the multiple Leonardo da Vinci's, this time with 2 huge Last Supper reproductions side by side, which makes a point that escapes me, and then covers them with camouflage, perhaps to try and add some interest to his idea. Camouflage is, in keeping with Andy Warhol's instantly recognizable images, a military artifact and symbol. What that has to do with the *Last Supper* is, also, lost on me.



Andy famously collaborated with Jean Michel Basquiat, as seen here in *Third Eye*, 1985.

And then there were two of his collaborations with Jean Michel Basquiat. Though extremely colorful, looking at them I have as yet to see them as more than each bringing what they do to the work. The feeling of a true collaboration bringing the work to someplace else escapes me...so far, but I know people who love them.



If these walls could talk. The site of Andy Warhol's Factory when it was on Union Square, seen in Winter, 2018. Ironically, the scaffolding seems to be making an "A" for Andy.

Andy Warhol opened the doors to whole worlds of possibilities in the world of Art, and, indeed, the world. In doing so, he taught all of us how to see new possibilities in our work, and our lives. (And I am not speaking about his life or lifestyle in any of this.) There are very few Artists who ever open one new door. For this, the world owes him a debt. A debt

sought out, encouraged, and worked with, young, even beginning Artists, and so played a role in the creation of world renowned Artists including Stephen Shore, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Jean Michel Basquiat, and treated them every bit the same as he did established Artists.

Regardless of what the world comes to think of his Art, these are the contributions of Andy Warhol I choose to remember and celebrate.

BookMarks-

As I showed earlier, a list of books written on and about Andy Warhol could fill a book itself. I have only seen a minuscule number of this vast library. Of those, a few stand out to me, particularly for those looking to keep from having a wall of Andy Warhol books that rivals that in the Whitney's Shop!

The best overviews of his Art I've seen are these two-

Andy Warhol "Giant" Size: Gift Format has been issued in a few sizes over the years since it's first release 10 years ago. Whatever size works for you, this "visual biography," which includes over 2,000 images, remains the best one-volume survey of Andy Warhol's Life & Work.

Andy Warhol: A Retrospective – The catalog for MoMA's 1989 Retrospective. Out of print, it's reasonably priced in hard or softcover on the aftermarket. It remains the most comprehensive overview of his Art, and serves as the catalog for the most exhaustive show of his work yet mounted.

Factory: Andy Warhol by Stephen Shore is a fascinating book for Photography lovers. It preserves, both, the earliest body of work yet published by one of the most important American Photographers of his generation, and the most comprehensive look at Andy Warhol's legendary Factory we have. Wasn't it Andy who said, "It's like an auto wreck you can't take your eyes off of"? If not, he should have.

Finally, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* is a must read, as much for its entertainment value as for its life experience advice, which is given on almost every page, though it's light on Art and technique for Artists looking for a "how I did it." Rumor has it a team "helped" Andy write it, but it's hard to tell from the distant outside if that's true or who did what. It's something of a classic among pseudo-autobiographies, and plays a seminal role in the creation of Andy Warhol, as a work of Art in himself.

*- Soundtrack for this Post is, what else? "Andy Warhol" by David Bowie, who memorably played Andy in Julian Schnabel's Film, *Basquiat*, looking for all the world like he was having a blast doing it.

Oh! PS- Andy? 4,627 words.

This Post was created by Kenn Sava for nighthawknyc.com
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Thank you!

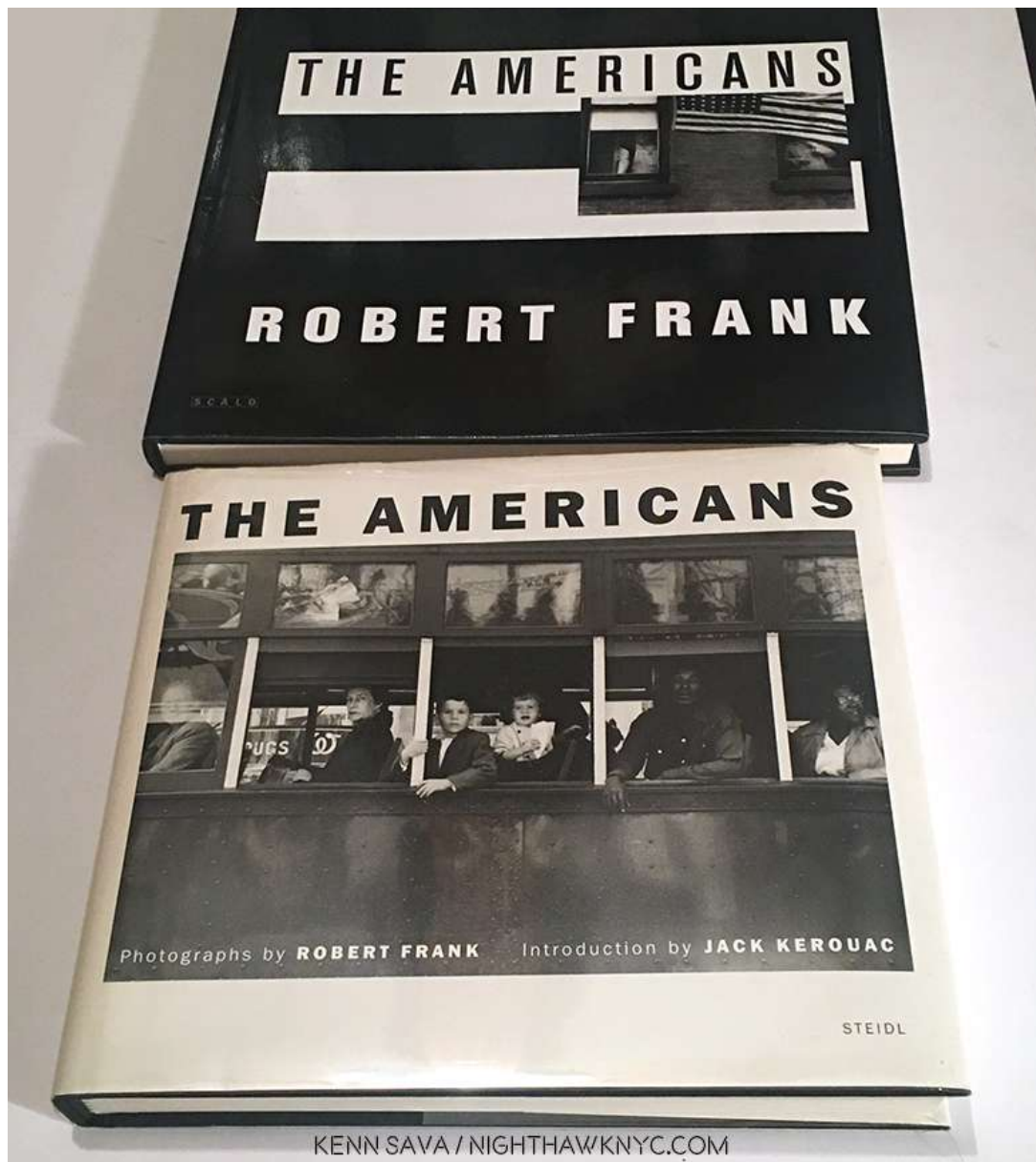
1. *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, henceforth *TPoAW*, P.86 [↗](#)
2. *TPoAW*, P.26 [↗](#)
3. *TPoAW*, P.96 [↗](#)

Posted on April 10, 2019

Posted in Andy Warhol, Art, BookMarks, David Bowie, NYC Art Shows, NYC Art Shows 2019, Painting & Drawing, Photography, Stephen Shore, Whitney Museum

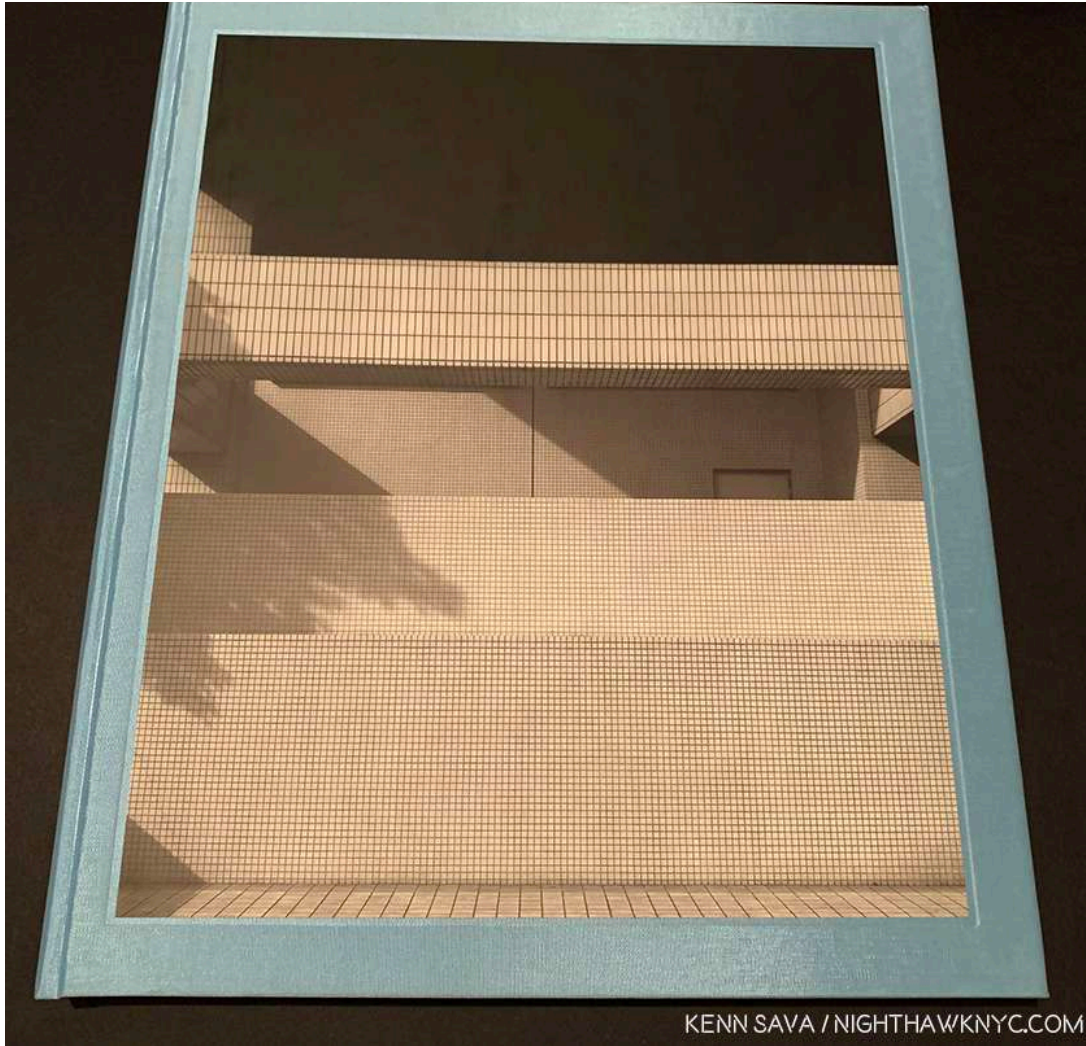
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INTRODUCING NIGHTHAWKNYC ART BOOKS & PHOTOBOOKS FOR SALE



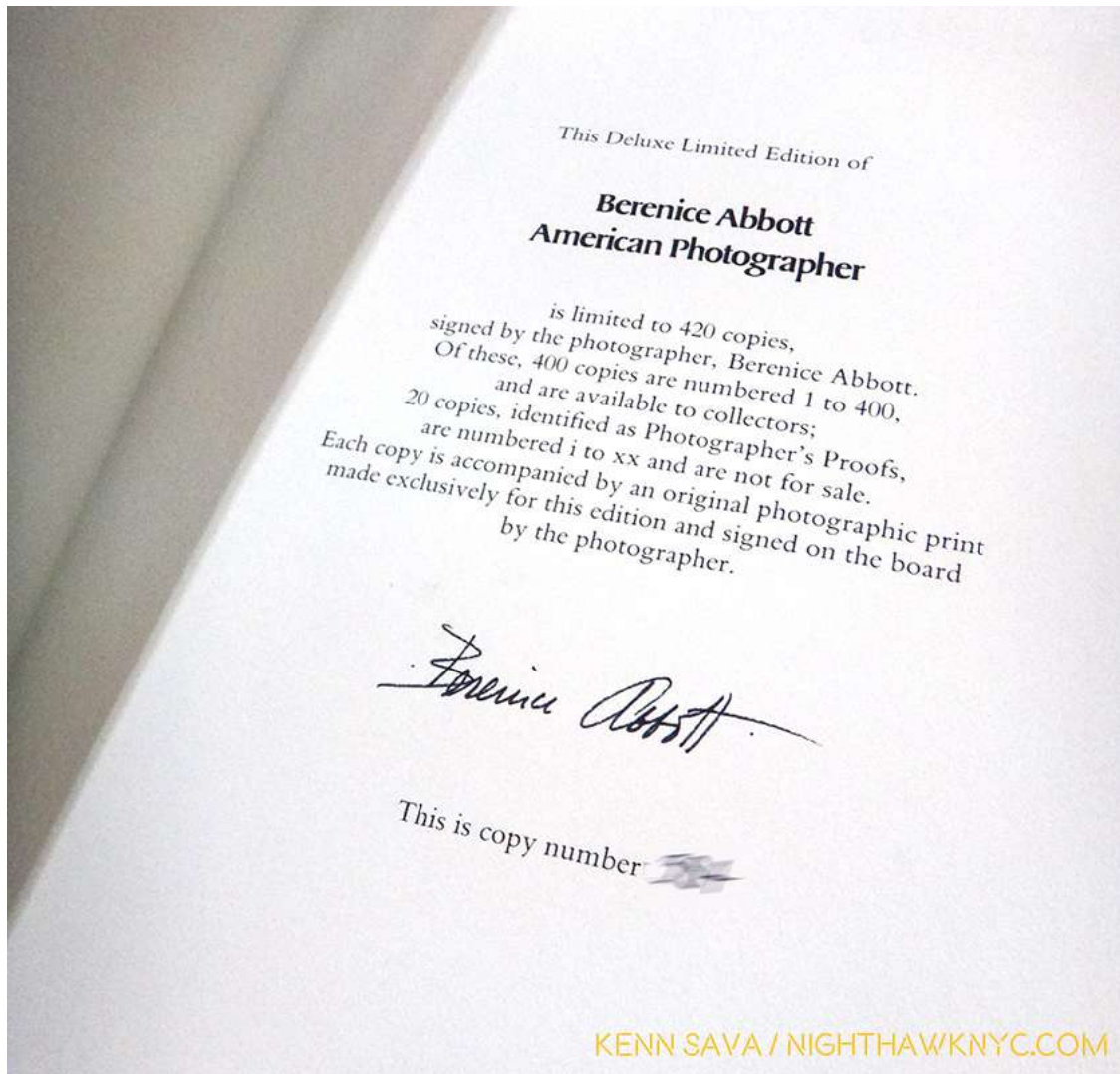
Two editions of Robert Frank's *The Americans*, intriguingly in different sizes. One is signed, the other is a 50th Anniversary Edition. Click any picture for full size.

As anyone who knows me knows, I go through mountains of Art Books & PhotoBooks researching my pieces.

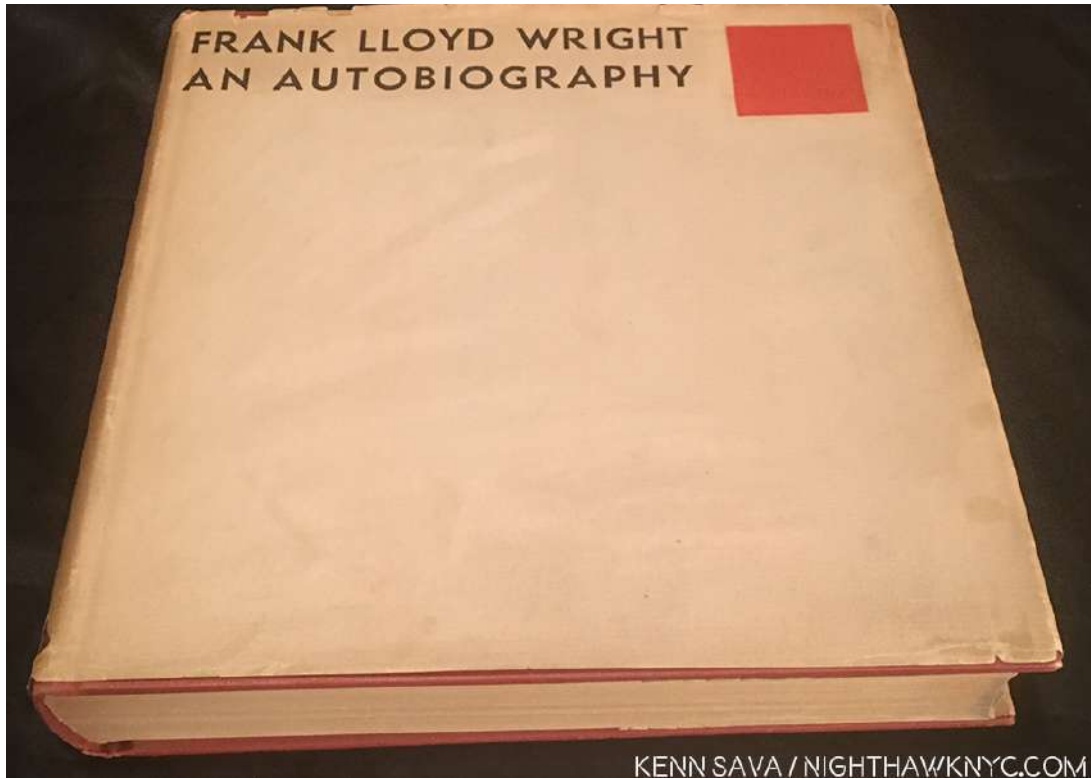


The terrific *Tokyo* by Gerry Johansson.

So, I've decided to sell some of them to make room for others for upcoming pieces. Today, I'm pleased to introduce [NighthawkNYC Art Books & PhotoBooks](#).

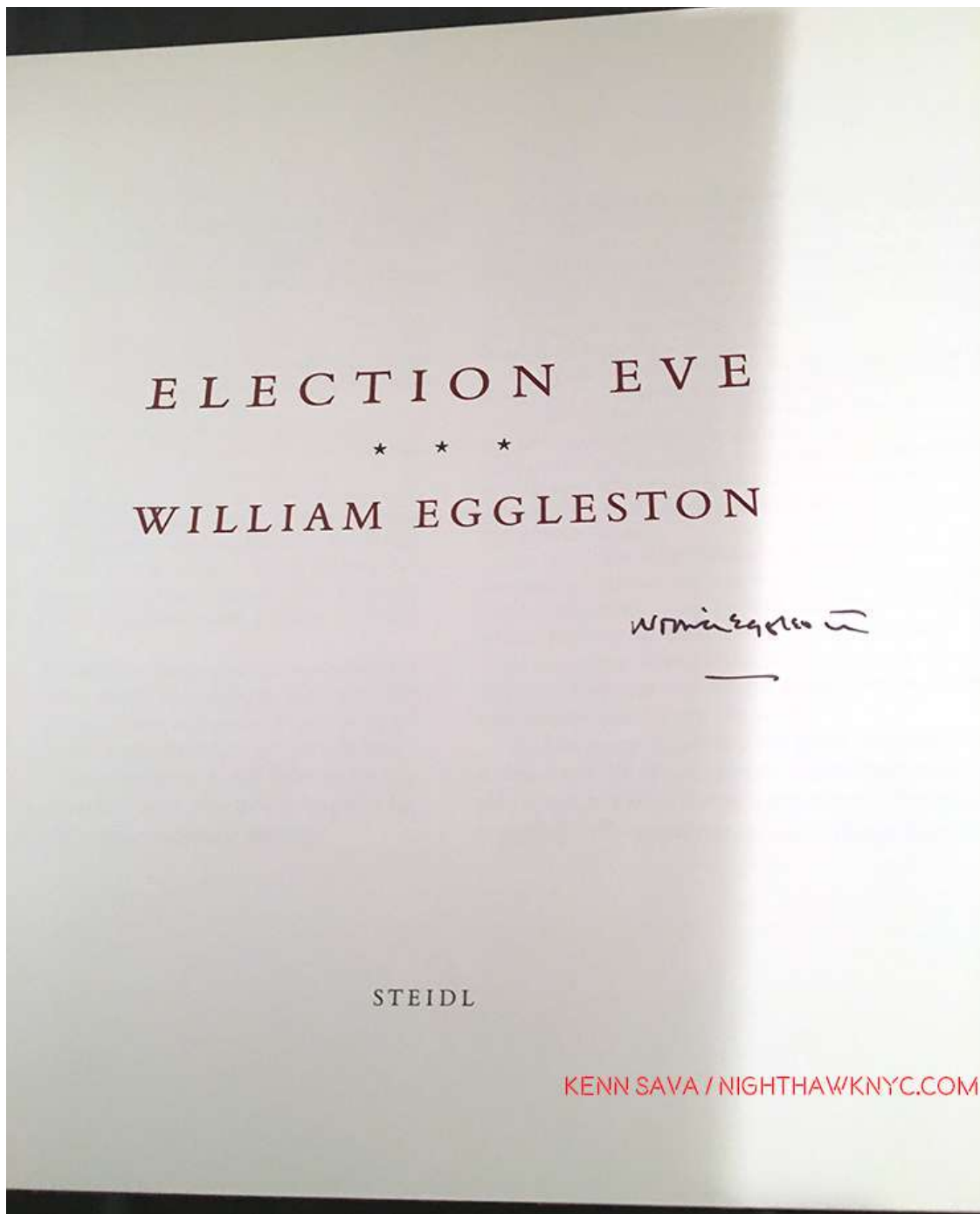


There you will find currently available items on a page that will be updated continually with new titles. Each item listed links to its own page that contains pictures & information about it, its condition, and pricing. In most cases, only one copy of each book is available! Having bought books for many years all over the world, I'm using my hard earned experience to make this as painless as possible for my valued readers.



I'm holding on to this one, from 1937...For now.

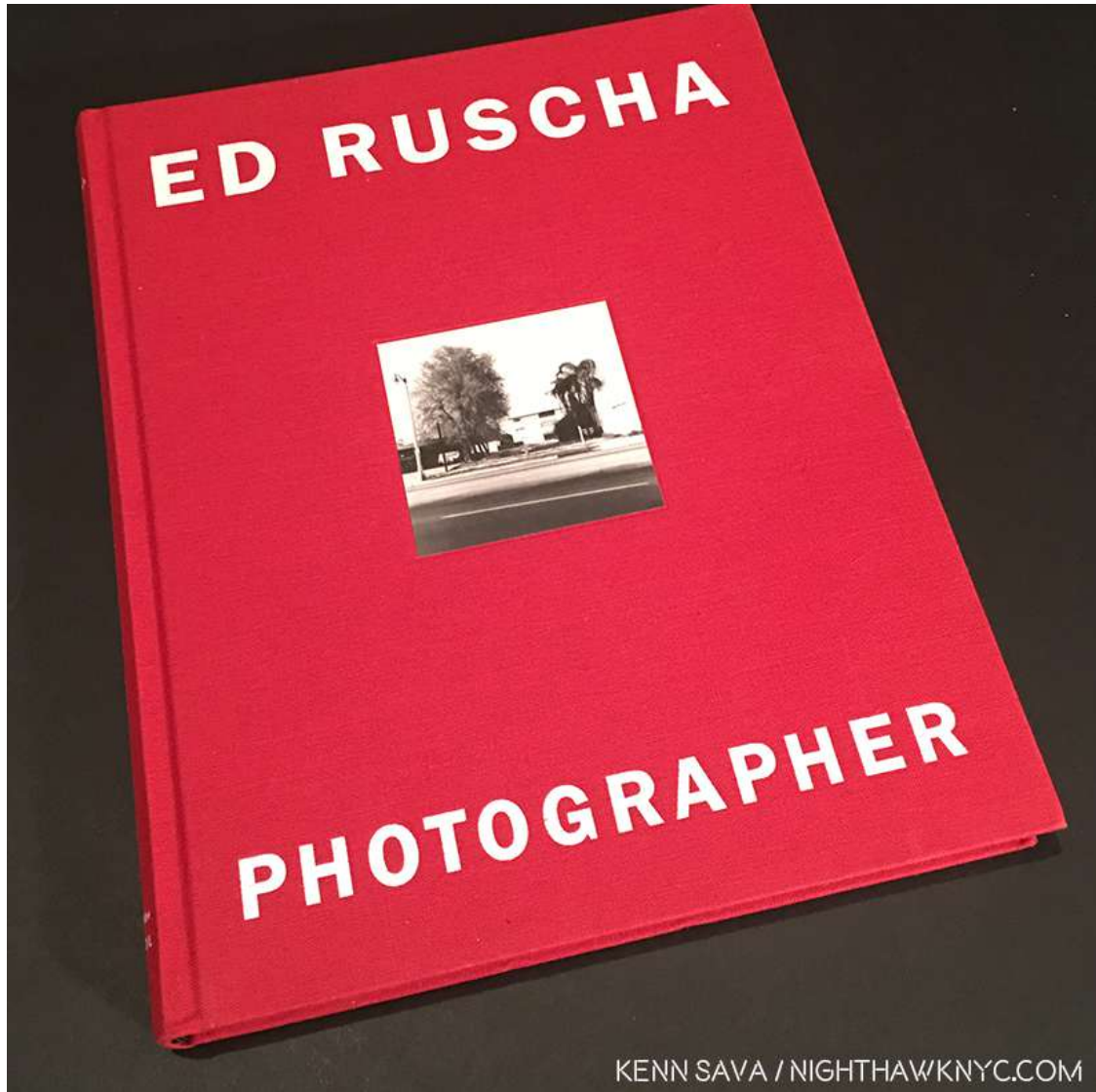
Using the Shopping Cart, payment may be made securely through PayPal, where all of your payment information will remain- let me reiterate, your payment information never comes to NighthawkNYC- it stays with PayPal. All books will be carefully wrapped and shipped within the USA with a Tracking Number.



So, without further adieu?

NighthawkNYC Art Books & PhotoBooks

Take a look, and let me know what you think. And be sure to Bookmark it and check back often. You never know what will pop up there. Oh, all books pictured are, or were, in my collection. Maybe some of these will...



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Posted on March 31, 2019

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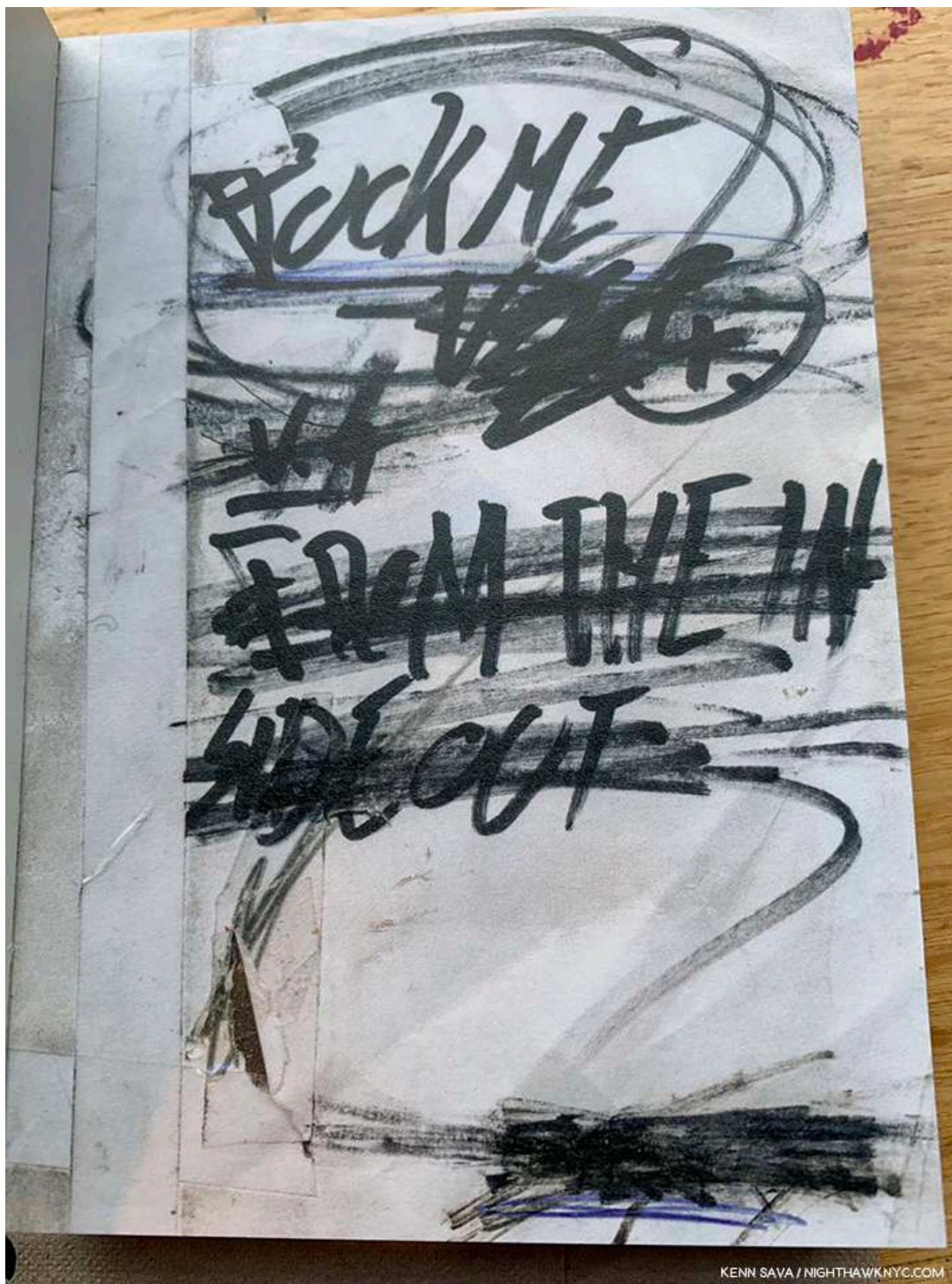
SHY NO MORE! JOSH KERN BREAKS THROUGH

who've dealt with it, it can, at times, feel like you're living in a glass box while life in the world goes on outside. But, shyness isn't something that only Americans suffer with, of course. Josh Kern, a college student in Dortmund, Germany was locked inside of himself by his shyness, with his writing as a means of recording his feelings and thoughts. Like these on his phone a few years back-



"But there's also this endlessly deep pain because I want to express all of this, but have no clue how." All Photos in this Post by, and courtesy of, Josh Kern from *Fuck me*. This one appears in the introductory pages. Click any Photo for full size.

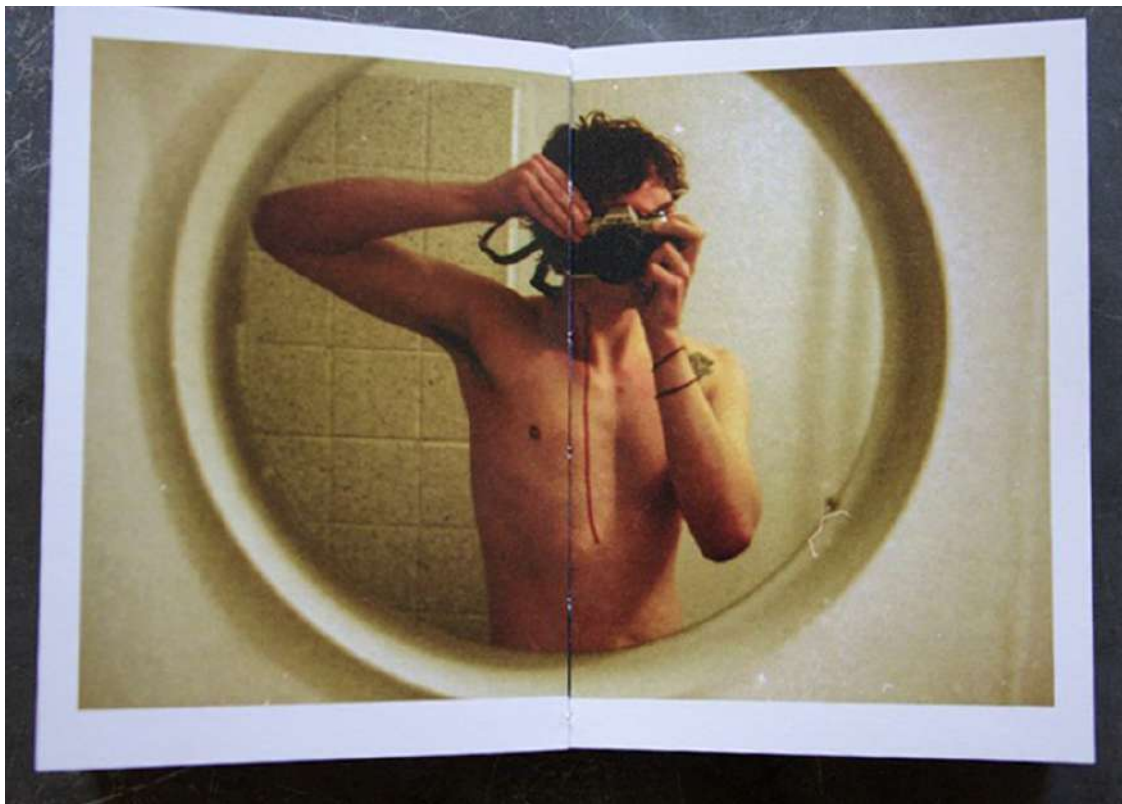
His words record his frustration and yearning to break free. They also record the moment he did. As he recalls in the opening pages of his new, first, PhotoBook, *Fuck me*, "But I discovered a way to do it...I became obsessed with documenting the world around me. My camera was with me everywhere and it somehow became a part of myself. It gave me permission to not be shy and the ability to show how intense and beautiful I perceive life. I found something where I can shamelessly express what I feel, my critical view of our generation and myself and my love for life in general."



The very next page is the defacto title page, reading "Fuck me," with "from the inside out" scratched out.

Having dealt with shyness myself, Josh's way out of it was one that caught me by surprise. One I've never heard recommended.

He picked up his camera.



From then on, it went with him everywhere.



When I think of breaking out of shyness, it looks like this...

And lo and behold, seemingly as soon as he stepped out his door he found himself in a fabulously rich world of sights and incredible fleeting moments in the company of his great group of friends.



And this.

Having taken the first steps of getting out there and creating a body of Photos, he then went further. Josh compiled his work and created a book dummy of it. Then, he started a [kickstarter campaign](#) to fund it's publication. 31 days later, 556 backers contributed over \$20,000. towards its publication.



Personally? I find all of this utterly remarkable. That he was able to break through his shyness and discover himself in the process is an amazing achievement on its own- an invaluable real-life accomplishment that you get no "grade" for.

And then? There's his PhotoBook.



Fuck me's covers reproduce one of Josh's well-worn notebooks that he carries everywhere he goes, and that live his life with him. See BookMarks at the end for info about getting one.

Josh's *Fuck me* was published by Calin Kruse's Dienacht. I asked Calin how he came across Josh and this body of his work. He told me, "Through his teacher, Christoph Bangert, a great photographer himself, and an amazing person. We've known each other for a while, and he knows what I publish and what I like. I had a booth with my books and magazines at the Photobookfestival in Kassel. Josh was there with his school and Christoph, who encouraged him to show me his book dummy. That's the first time I came across his project. I liked it, and I suggested some changes, but we didn't talk about publishing the book together. This was in June, 2018. Very soon after that, Josh started a super successful kickstarter campaign to fund the printing cost, and he asked me in the middle of the campaign if I could imagine publishing it. It was released in September, 2018, so everything went very fast."

Including me. What do I think of it? I find Josh has developed his own style, that while it reminds me of the work of Nan Goldin and Ryan McGinley is resolutely his own. Interestingly, Josh shares a skateboarding background with fellow Photographers Todd Hido, Ed Templeton and Jason Lee, among others, and we see that, and possibly some of the resulting physical damage in his book. Perhaps, it's from the same well-spring of daring that the edge in some of this work emanates from. He has a sharp eye for the intimate moment at its most expressive, which is aided to no end by his personal knowledge of his subjects, which he's able to communicate to the total strangers looking at his work, transmitting bits of insights into them as well. *Fuck me* is a book that works on a number of levels. There's the "breaking through shyness" level- a potentially invaluable example for countless others. Then, there's the "documenting our lives" level. More on this later. Third? There's a level where it becomes apparent how much Josh has learned from his influences and his teachers, assimilated them, and then created his own book. For someone in his early 20s? That's remarkable, too. Having carried it around with me for a few months, I find that it's a book that holds together in a wonderful way, passing through peaks of adventure followed by moments of introspection and repose, a book that positively drips with compassion and love for its subjects.



Fuck me strikes me as something of a throwback- in its technology and its values. It's shot on film, and not one digital or cellular device is seen in any of its subjects hands! It opts for real life, face to face interactions, which in contrast to those that take place online, are photographable and actually worth remembering and seeing again. In the end, *Fuck me* is a book that is a beautiful testament to the joy and intimacy of REAL Friendship, at a time when the word "friend" has been usurped and trivialized to the point that countless millions wonder who their REAL friends are. It's a book that creates its own world (most of the time we have no idea where the action is taking place- it simply doesn't matter), while leaving our world with wonderful images of time and experiences shared growing and evolving, right before our eyes. that most of us only carry around in our memories.

And, ALL of this is even more remarkable when you realize that Josh Kern is STILL a

Photographer, and *Fuck me*—

"Fuck Me" - A Photobook by Josh Kern



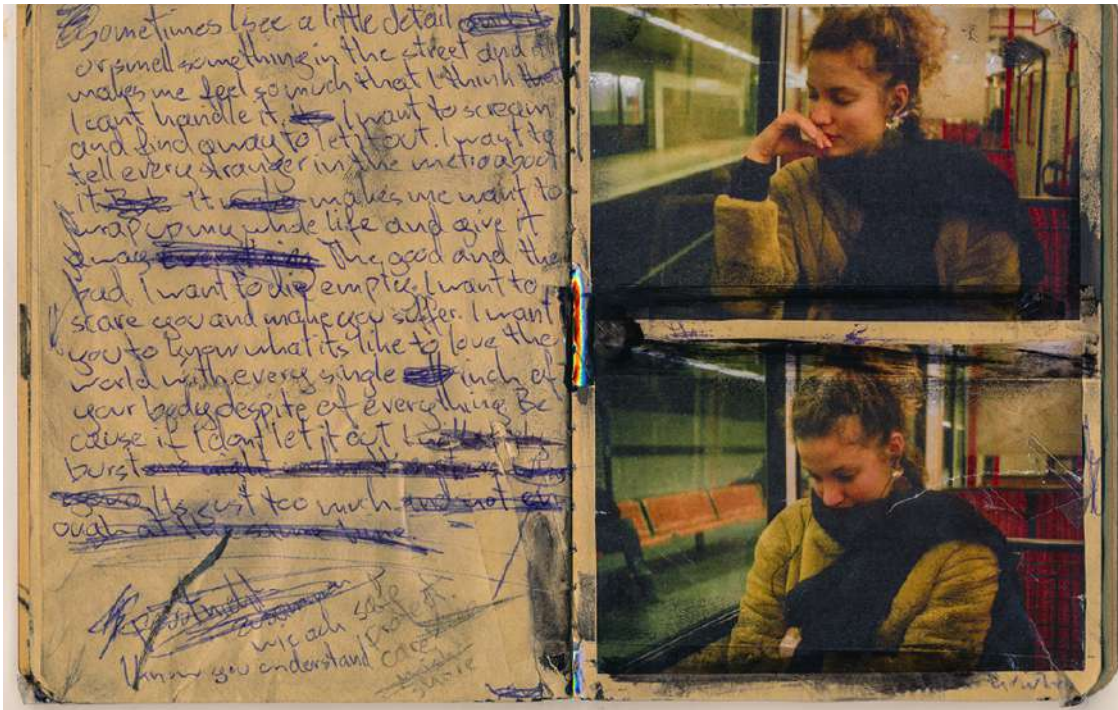
Better still, I'm very pleased to say that Josh agreed to answer some questions for me, taking time from his studies, creating new work and making more history with his friends to do so.

Kenn Sava (KS)- Josh, you've spoken about how "Photography gave me permission to not be shy and the ability to express myself which completely changed my life. If I can only inspire one person to do the same- I'm happy." I'm curious how it happened. A number of the Photographers I've spoken with speak of it as a "solitary" craft, which would seem to reinforce shyness. Could you elaborate on how it gave you permission, how you were able to use it that led up to your breakthrough?

Josh Kern (JK)- My whole life, there have always been a few artists, who made me feel less alone. Whenever I felt like I don't belong here, I turned to their work and biographies and although, most of them are dead, I immediately felt connected. It was like I had an anonymous club of misfits that only existed in my head. It made me believe that in this very moment there must be thousands of other people feeling the exact same things as I do.

When it came to creating my own art, I somehow tried to turn it around. I always felt everything so intensely and I had the desire to share it, but at the same time I was afraid what the people in my life would think about it. If someone would reject my work, that would mean that they would reject my true self, who I really am – and that would hurt a lot.

But I did it anyway and it was completely liberating because I felt like the people around me could finally see me and I don't have to pretend anymore. It probably doesn't seem like a big deal to you, but for me it was everything. I started to believe that connection is only possible through vulnerability.



KS- On your site, you list quite a few of your friends who are artists and creative people. Did they, or others, help you, or was it something you had to do yourself?



JK- I would never have had the courage to share my work to this extent without the support of my friends. It was like, even if everyone hates me tomorrow, I still have them by my side to love, create and express ourselves how we want to. I always decline the common idea of the "lonely artist" and I believe that every great work comes out of a close group of people who support each other, give feedback and exchange ideas.



KS- Was there a moment when you went from being a casual photographer to taking it more seriously? (If it's not related- When did the body of work that became *Fuck me* start?)

JK- No, actually not. I just started taking pictures and since then my love for it increases day by day.

Also, I'm very careful to take my work seriously. I'm not sure how to explain it but I just love when an artist calls themselves an "amateur" because to me it means he or she sees themselves as an enthusiast who creates out of pure love and joy for the act of creating and not for fame or career.

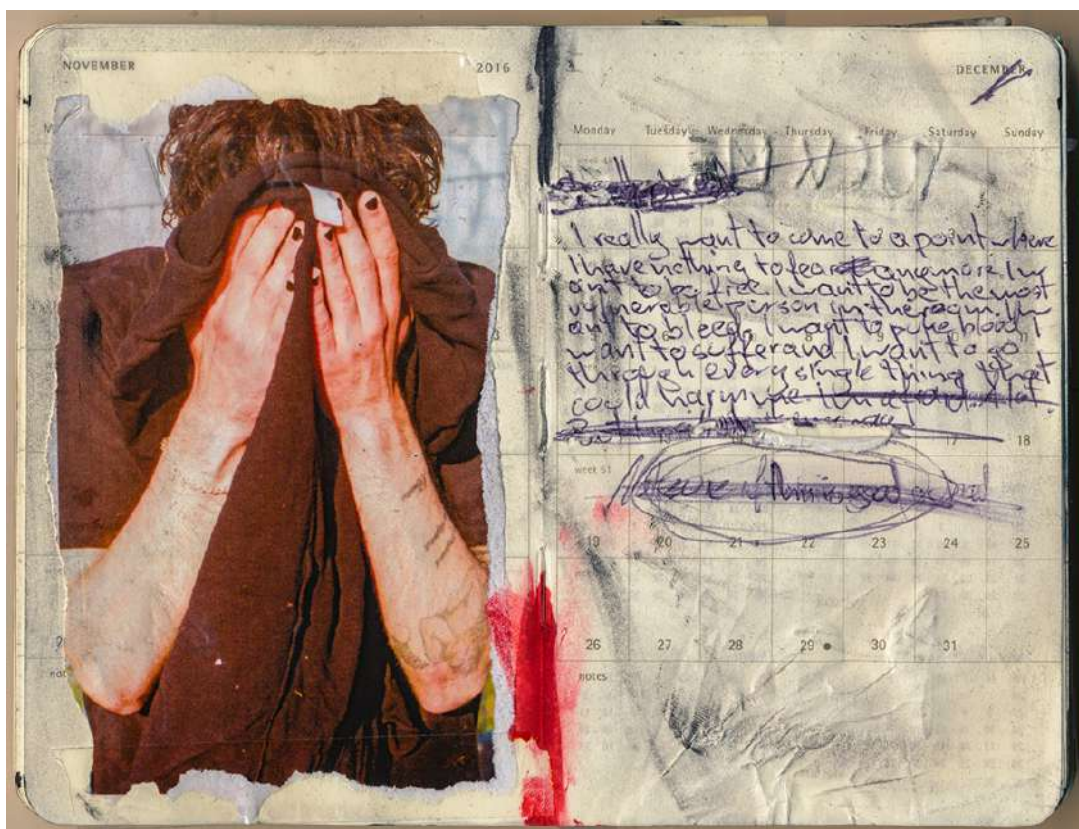


of work into a book, to reach out to the world for funding, as you did. Yet, you sound confident when I read things from that time. It sounds like substantial growth had occurred by that point. Can you speak about how were you able to do it?

JK- It all started in a seminar in the university. I slowly started to show pictures and notebook scans and because of the lovely support of my fellow students and my professor, I found the confidence to show more and more. But I had never really overcome my shyness when it came to people reading my writing while I'm in the same room. So we somehow came up with the agreement that no one reads my words and just looks at the scans as a picture, for editing. I always had in mind that publishing it is something that I will deal with in the future and when the day comes I will just close my eyes and hope for the best.

That's probably also the reason why I sound confident in my writing – although I'm not – because I always tell myself that right now I'm only writing for myself and no one's ever going to see it. I somehow treat the thought about sharing it or not as something completely separate that I will deal with in the far future. I'm even doing this right now. It's funny how we can trick our mind.

But don't get me wrong, it was still one of the scariest things to do. It will forever be frightening to open myself up. But to be honest, I don't even want it to be easy, only interesting and as an opportunity to grow. I guess that's what all this is about for me.



"I really want to come to the point where I have nothing to fear anymore. I want to be free. I want to be the most vulnerable person in the room. I want to bleed. I want to puke blood. I want to suffer and I want to go through every single thing that could harm me."

KS- In the book it appears you are shooting your Friends and people you know a bit. Are you able to shoot strangers, or would that be another step?

photographed all the time and because of that they act natural in my presence.

Also, most of the time I'm very, very nervous around people I don't really know and because of that I have a hard time focusing on taking pictures.

Shooting strangers would be definitely something different, but I'm working on myself and would love to try out new things.



KS- It seems you have a remarkably open and camera friendly group of Friends. Did you get any push back, any "Don't take a Photo of this!" from them?

JK- Yes, they are amazingly open and I feel very, very lucky because of that.

It's really important to me that if someone doesn't want a picture to be published, I simply don't and keep it only for us. Probably because they know this fact, they trust me and don't really care what I'm doing with my camera and I'm completely free to photograph whatever I want.



KS- What are your own rules for what not to shoot?

JK- This is an uncomfortable question because sometimes I feel like I'm an asshole when it comes to this point. But when someone gets hurt and/or needs my help, I put my camera down, although I have to admit that these situations are mostly the shots that I admire the most.

Also, I always have to remind myself to enjoy the time with my friends because it happens that I only see them through my camera, as a story, and it feels like I forget to really live my life and to be present with them.. which is tricky because I feel that I'm the most happy and fulfilled by living my life through my camera.



and to look through a new dummy every few days, it wasn't a surprise to them. But they were all really proud of how it came out, which made me very happy.

KS- We see your iPhone in the book. Can we see a photo of your camera now? I'm curious what it looks like after having been through all of these adventures.



Josh sent this great shot of his Minolta X-300 in response to my request. March, 2019. I'm so glad I asked for it.

JK- I'm really good at destroying my cameras and I always bought a used Minolta for like 20 Euros on eBay every few months again.

I recently got a Nikon FM because I wanted something that lasts a bit longer, but I miss my Minolta and I'm planning on getting one again.

KS- You've mentioned a very wide range of influences from Petra Collins to Ryan McGinley to Luc Delahaye and Jim Goldberg, among Photographers, as well as films, and books. Who's been influencing you more lately (since *Fuck me*)?

JK- Somehow I cant get off the book *Winterreise* by Luc Delahaye, which also inspired *Fuck Me* very much.



From *Winterreise* by Luc Delahaye. I know that my many Russian readers and friends take issue with the way Mr. Delahaye and other Western Photographers show their country. I understand and respect they feel that way. I've never been there. Still? I agree with Josh about *Winterreise*, and I find it to be one of the exceptional PhotoBooks of this young century. Though only published in 2003, I see it's influence in so many books being released today.



Also from *Winterreise* by Luc Delahaye. Along with the pathos, I find quite a bit of beauty in what Mr. Delahaye depicts, and of course, in his work.

I discovered it almost a year ago and still to this day, I take it with me on every trip and flip through it almost every day. The same goes for Hermann Hesse. My love and affection for him increases every time I reread his books and letters.

themselves and their whole being only in order to create. They would die for their work – probably not, but thats what it feels like to me.



Josh Kern, Self-portrait, not included in *Fuck me*.

I'm really missing this mentality in a lot of people today. Somehow I feel like everyone is afraid to take themselves or their work seriously.

I don't want to sound too negative, there are still so many great artists out there, but somehow I cant find anyone that keeps up with these two. At least for me right now.

KS- How about Painters? Are there any who's work has spoken to you, earlier or now?

JK- Although I really admire the art of painting and some of my friends are painters, I never really got into it. But from what I have seen I really like the work of Malcolm T. Liepke.

KS- What do you listen to?

JK- Lately I'm a bit lost when it comes to music. But I will forever stick to Car Seat Headrest, The Strokes, The Cure, The Modern Lovers, Velvet Underground, Wolf Alice and Sonic Youth.



Josh Kern, in his Raymond Pettibon designed Sonic Youth *Goo* cover T, doesn't let brushing his teeth keep him from getting the shot. He wrote this about this Photo- "A Saturday night. We were beaten up by two or three guys and ended up at my place, where I took this photograph. It's funny, but you'd never imagine that Naomi is the kind of girl who won't let people get away with saying shit. She is though."

KS- You've talked about going in a different direction with your second book. Very exciting! Can you give us any hints what it might be like, or how it's "different?"

JK-Ah, yes, haha. Somehow I have a new idea about how I want it to be every day anew. At first, I wanted to dedicate the book to my younger self, with notes in it about what I wish I had known a few years back. Then, I wanted it to be more like a novel, with writing and a story.. and now, I'm back at the classic photobook, with no notes and writing at all. I have no idea what I will come up with next. I just take photographs and create journal like before, make a lot of dummies and try things out. And I'm in love with it. Making books is by far my favorite thing to do.

KS- How do you feel about school now? Has it been worth it for you, or do you feel you've learned mostly on your own by getting out there and creating?

JK- I'm so grateful for studying photography! Not really about the stuff we learn in classes, but more about the people I got to know. There's no other place in the world where you meet so many people who are as passionate about photography as you are. Also, I had a teacher, Christoph Bangert, who inspired and motivated me like crazy and somehow gave me the courage to publish my book. It would have never happened without him and I would have never met him without the university.

KS- From where you are now, what would you say to someone who is where you were, struggling with their shyness?

JK- I can only speak for myself, but finding something that you love and then overcoming the fear of sharing your excitement is everything to me. It's so important to be in love and to stand up for something you truly believe in, no matter what it is. Your problems probably won't disappear because of that, but it will make all this suffering seem like it has its purpose. In the end, you just need something that's worth being made fun of.



Q&A Ends————

I was talking to a photographer friend, one of my old drinking buddies, the other day about Josh's book. I said to him—"Hey, why don't we have photos of our old days hanging out making history? Ours took place in some of the same places Patti Smith hung out in in *Just Kids*. We don't have the photos, we don't have the book."

But Josh Kern does.

In 10 or 20 years, his friends are going to be very glad he took these pictures.

In the meantime, I share Josh's hope that his work will inspire someone else to break out and break through.

BookMarks-

Because I know readers are going to ask, "Ok. Where can I get a copy?" The answer is that as I write this, *Fuck me* isn't available anywhere in the USA (as far as I know). So, I went ahead and bought some extra copies and I am very excited to make them available to my readers- something I've never done in the 3 1/2 years of NHNYC.

Here are the particulars-

Fuck me by Josh Kern

-196 pages

-4.13 x 6 inches (10.5 x 15 cm)

-Offset printing, in full color throughout.

-First edition/first printing, Published by Dienacht, 2018

-Softcover with open stitch binding.

-And no- There is no sex or nudity in it.

\$40. each, including shipping, in the USA.

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Also-A few signed copies are available for \$75., including shipping, while they last.

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A few others- As Josh said, Luc Delahaye's *Winterreise* is a book I, also, recommend. It's out of print, but copies in very good condition still trade reasonably in hard or softcover. While it's somewhat overlooked among recent PhotoBooks by the general public, it's not by other Photographers, including Josh, and this one.

Dan Eldon was a multi-talented Artist/Photographer/Journalist/Humanitarian who was tragically killed in Somalia at the age of 22 while doing his job as a PhotoJournalist for Reuters. When I first saw Josh's book, I immediately wondered what Dan Eldon might have thought of it. I asked Josh in a follow-up what he thought of Dan Eldon's work and he said "Dan is definitely on my list." Dan Eldon created Journals that combined his writing, Photography, ephemera and just about anything into amazingly unique works that have been published since his death. Dan's *The Journey Is the Destination, Revised Edition: The Journals of Dan Eldon* is another classic, in my view, that gets far too little attention. He was an extraordinary man, who lived an extraordinary life that everyone else's would be enriched by knowing about. As Josh eloquently put it above- Dan Eldon was killed creating his work. Far, far too early.

Regarding Josh's fave bands, for lovers of NYC's own The Strokes, check out Julian Casablancas & The Voidz' album, *Tyranny*, if you haven't heard it, which I think is just terrific. One of Mr. Casablancas's big influences happens to be the band I picked for the Soundtrack for this Post...

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "Break On Through (To The Other Side)," by The Doors, the first single released from their first album in 1967, speaking of debuts...

The Doors - Break On Through HQ (1967)



My thanks to Calin Kruse and Josh Kern.

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Thank you.

Posted on March 19, 2019

Posted in "On The Fence", BookMarks, Josh Kern, Luc Delahaye, Photography, The Doors

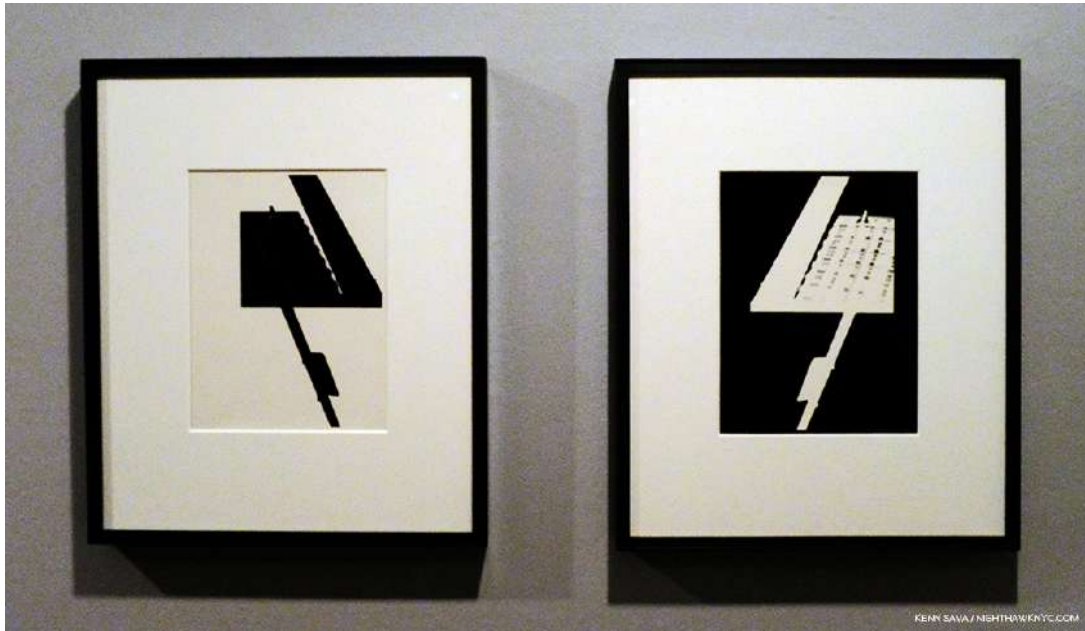
Tagged Josh Kern

OVERLOOKED MASTERS- RAY K. METZKER



Photo for full size.

Fame is a fickle thing. It finds some accidentally, it's unwanted by others who receive it, heaped ad nauseam on a select few while the rest of the world asks "Huh?" And, it eludes still others that the quality of their work would say deserves greater attention.



Both titled *67 AM 26-27, Double Frame, 1967*. All works are Gelatin silver prints, unless noted. Seen on January 23rd. Apparently, these amazing works were created by only partially advancing the film before taking the second Photo (in the bottom half).

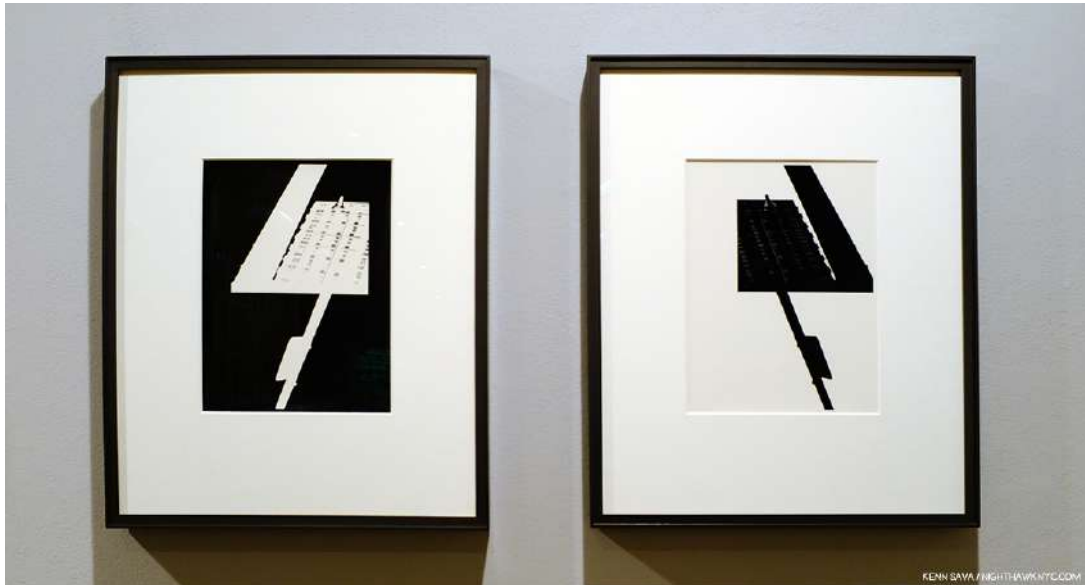
I'm sure we all have mental lists of folks, and Artists, who fall into each of these categories. I've decided to start giving some attention to some of those who reside on my latter list by including them here. My list, of course, consists mostly of Artists & Musicians, people that qualify as the true "reality stars" in my book.

Ray K. Metzker Black & Light

Ray K. Metzker is something of an artistic paradox. He began his career as a teenage photojournalist and achieved international renown in his thirties as an artist who challenged and enlarged our understanding of the photographic image itself. He is a humanist disguised (for many at least) as a formalist; a thoughtful and introspective soul driven by a restless creative urgency. His work grew logically from well-established precedents and influences, but it remains utterly his own. He learned from some of the most respected figures of his day, but his greatest and most liberating lesson was to trust his own instincts. Metzker is patient, pragmatic, and meticulous. Photography has never been simply a profession for him; it has been a way of living, a means of both questioning and understanding the nature of things.

- Keith F. Davis, Senior Curator of Photography, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Metzker. Well, the timing of my listing him first is helped by the impetus of a very interesting show of his work up at Howard Greenberg, *Ray K. Metzker: Black & Light*. I'm relatively new to his work myself, so seeing this show came as a thunderbolt.



Thunder, and lightning. *67 AM 26-27, Double Frame, 1967*, seen again on visit #3, on March 1st. The curators had flipped them from my first visit (see first Photo). I don't know which way I like them better. Do you?

His craft, the strength & purity of his vision, right down to the beauty of his prints, combine to create a unique impression. That vision was extraordinarily flexible. He used it to turn seemingly mundane images into more- pairs, series, composites, the likes of which I'd never seen before. Ray Metzker had a gift of making the seemingly commonplace into a magically unique moment.



12 works from the series *Pictus Interruptus, 1978-80*, Gelatin silver prints.

successful career, but these days his work is something of a well-kept secret. That's a shame because with his continual innovation, it seems to me that his work has something for everyone- except for those dead set against black & white Photography. Though particularly rich for his fellow Artists & Photographers, it strikes me as for anyone who loves the joy of looking. After being represented by Laurence Miller for over 30 years during his lifetime, his estate is now represented by Howard Greenberg Gallery. As seen in their first show at Greenberg, *Ray K. Metzker: Black & Light*, a generous selection of 57 pieces made an air tight case that Ray K. Metzker was one of the masters of his time.



KENN SAVA / NIGHTHAWKNYC.COM

Arrestation 07 06, 2007, Collage of two silver gelatin prints.

Nicely installed in the main gallery, it was possible to look around the room and marvel at all the different techniques on display. Perhaps it was good they were all in the same room so as to reinforce that it was one creative vision behind this extraordinary range. Some of that can be laid at the feet of his teachers, Aaron Siskind and, particularly, Harry Callahan, but I also found a bit of the great Man Ray, who he didn't study with, in his

one of those Artists where you look at his work and immediately start wondering, "Ok. How did he do that?," soon after give up, and just surrender to the beauty and magic before you.



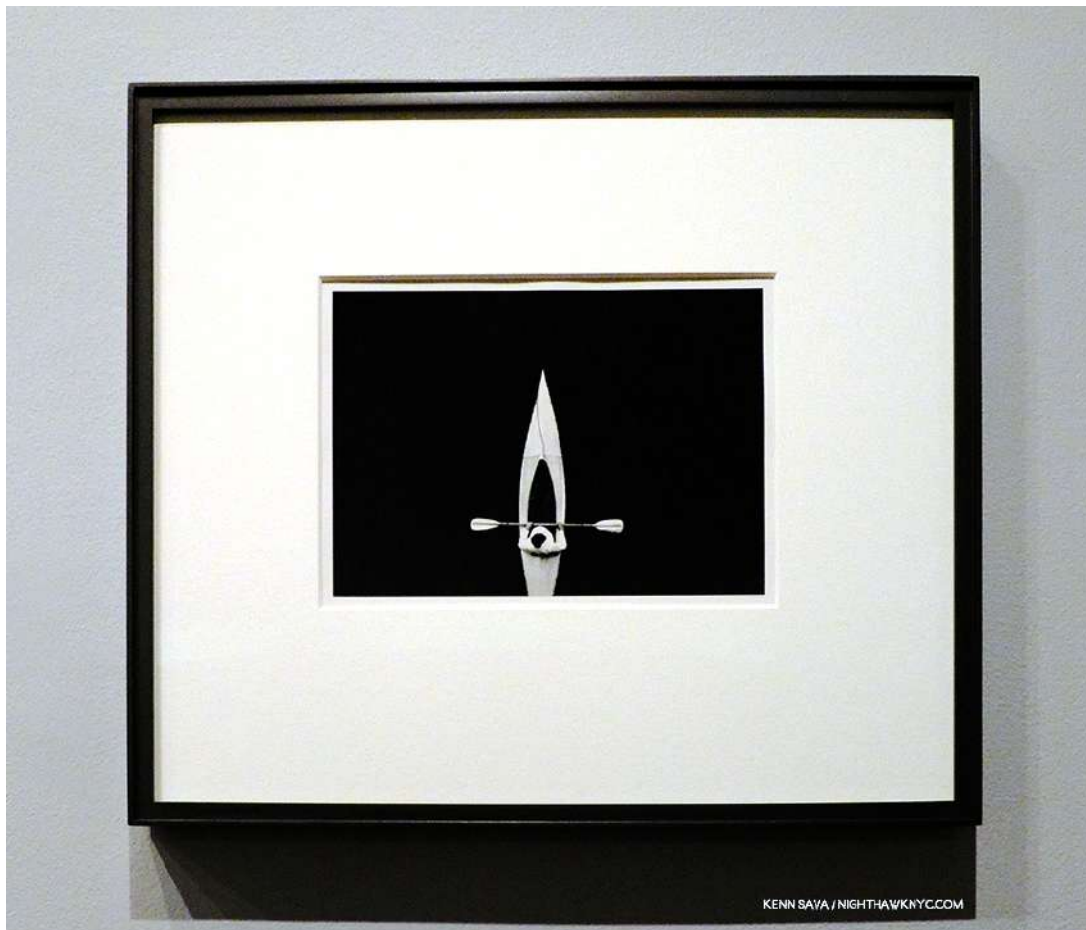
Six works from the *Arrestation Series*, 1996-2007- all Collages of two to five gelatin silver prints.

After seeing recent shows of the work of other sadly deceased Photographers printed by others posthumously, it was a real joy to see the Artist's gorgeous prints, where the mastery of his printing is an essential part of Mr. Metzker's Art. Ummm...Isn't it for EVERY Photographer? Hmmm...(Sidestepping rabbit hole...at least for now.)



As ever, it's interesting for me to ponder what was going on in Painting at the time Ray K. was creating many of these works- 1964-2008. His teacher, Aaron Siskind, had gotten the reputation as being the "Abstract Expressionist Photographer," but though Mr. Metzker uses abstract elements found in the "real world," they're miles apart from what Mr. Siskind did (some of which was on view in a smaller side gallery, so you could compare and contrast on the spot). Collage, and the feeling and effect of collage, appears in a good number of these works, which echoes what Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Ray Johnson and any number of his contemporary Painters were bringing new life to at the time, beginning in the late 1950s, often using Photographs as an element in their work. In the 12 *Pictus Interruptus* works seen above, however, it's only the feeling of collage that's present. Perhaps most of all, it's hard to overlook the possible influence of Andy Warhol, particularly in Ray Metzker's composites, perhaps his most well known works, which were not on view here.

While I'm drawn to everything Ray K. Metzker did, I found myself particularly taken with the gorgeous collection of abstract images on view here.



61 DZ-21, Frankfurt, 1961

One of the remarkable things about Ray Metzker's work is the old mantra verbalized by Constantine Manos- "show us something we have never seen before and will never see again." He does this in work that, as seen here, comes in varying degrees, and types, of abstraction, including some that are only abstract in the unusual way he shows us a scene



63 FO 5, Philadelphia, 1963

While in *63 FO 5, Philadelphia, 1963*, we see a work created in the same year that Ed Ruscha, primarily a Painter to this point, published his seminal and revolutionary PhotoBook, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, that takes a somewhat similar but different, more abstract look at the roadside vernacular.

Aaron Siskind

1940s -1960s



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Aaron Siskind, *Untitled*, 1950, seen in the side gallery.

In them, I see works that hover on the edge between what's come before, (particularly in Man Ray and Aaron Siskind), that looks ahead to the work of Sara VanDerBeek and Daniel Shea.



Sailor Mix, 1964, Collage of six gelatin silver prints.

Ray Metzker quickly moved beyond the influence of Aaron Siskind, Harry Callahan, W. Eugene Smith and the others, while taking threads they started in new directions, and it seems to me, to new levels. He created images in the days before digital file manipulation that are utterly remarkable- both in their craft, but primarily, in their vision.



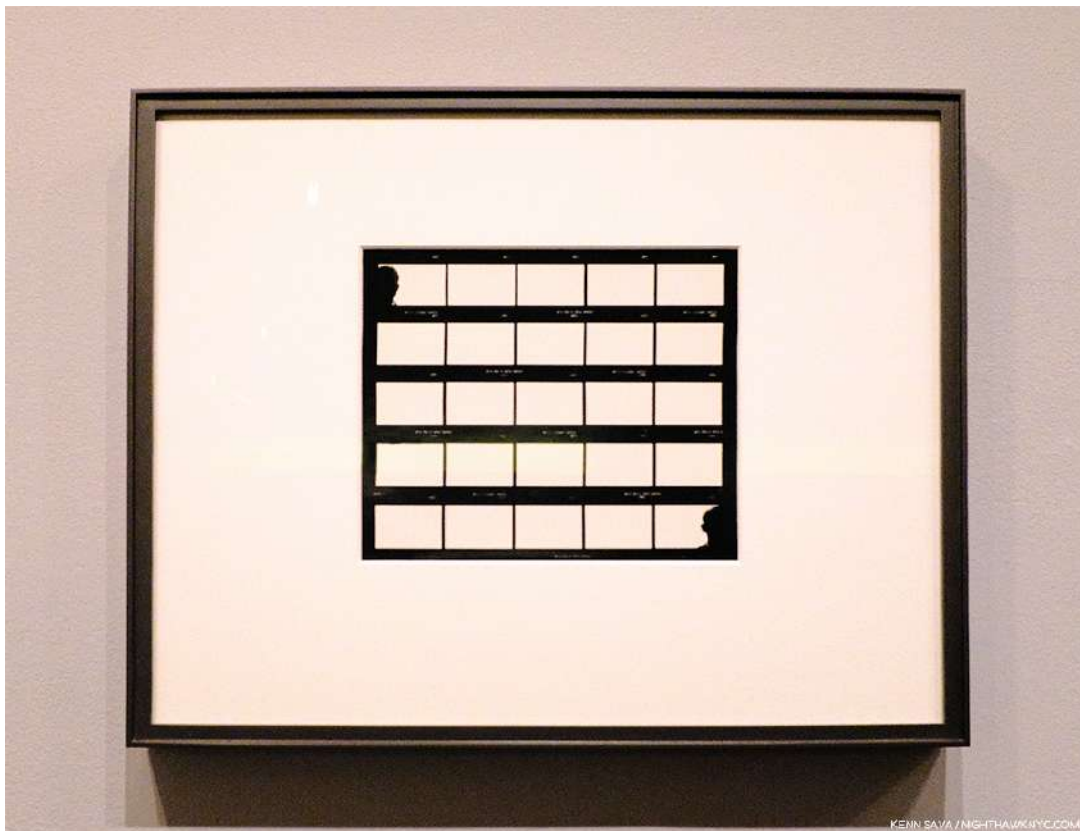
Arrestation 96 07 VII, 1996, Collage of two silver gelatin silver prints.

Though Ray K. Metzker has an exceptional gift for black, darkness and shadow in his work, it's interesting that very few of his Photographs are taken at night, as far as I can tell, generally preferring the extreme contrast of bright against pitch black.



Left to right *Whimsy 7*, *Whimsy A-30*, *Whimsy 2*, each from 1974, each a collage of four gelatin silver prints.

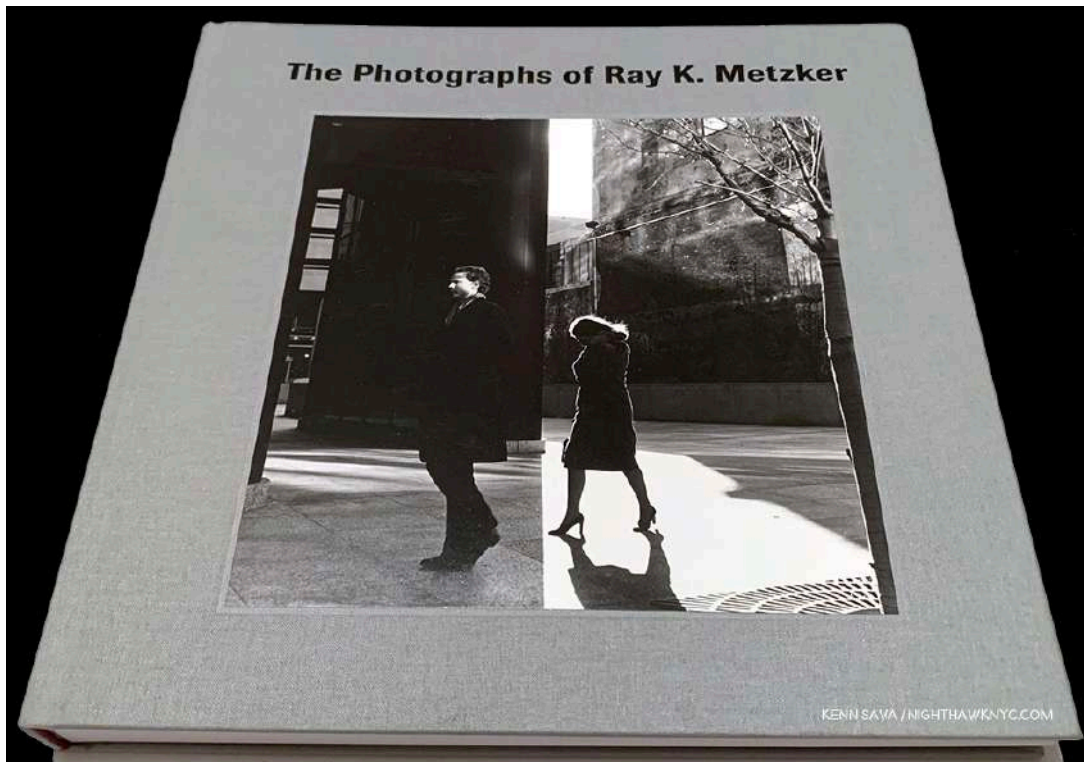
It's interesting to me that while Ray K. Metzker seems to be in something of an eclipse at the moment, his influence is there to be seen in the work of Artists who are gaining notoriety. This makes me feel that time is beginning to catch up to Ray Metzker and that more people will be looking at his work as we move forward.



67 DH, Philadelphia, 1967, a rare Self-portrait.

Black & Light, but most of all, it serves as a wonderful appetizer that I hope made many people dig deeper into the work of this great, continually surprising, Photographer, as it did for yours truly.

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A copy of the rarely seen *The Photographs of Ray K. Metzker* by Keith F. Davis.

Ok, now? It gets sticky. There are two terrific retrospectives of the work of Ray K. Metzker. The problem is both are out of print and expensive on the after market. This is a shame because it restricts the greater Photography world who doesn't know his work from discovering it, exploring it and appreciating it. They are-

-*Ray K. Metzker: Light Lines* by William Ewing, Nathalie Herschdorfer and Ray K. Metzker, Steidl, 2008- *Light Lines* includes the most Ray K. Metzker Photographs yet published in one volume- 180 tritone-printed images, and well over 200 images overall. It also includes an interview with the Artist and what Keith F. Davis in the other book calls, "the most definitive chronology/bibliography to date." Personally, I find the breaking down of the plates section into categories distracting. If this was the Artist's choice, I accept it. I don't like to put any parameter around the work of someone as creative as Ray K. Metzker. Personally? It's one reason I am very glad the second monograph exists.

-*The Photographs of Ray K. Metzker* by Keith F. Davis, Nelson-Atkins Museum, 2012. 116 plates, and somewhere over 150 images over 244 pages, issued in an edition of 2,500 copies. It includes the essay "The Photographic Journey of Ray K. Metzker" by Keith F.

monographs to his name including the classics Harry Callahan: New Color – Photographs, 1978-1987 and Multitude, Solitude: The Photographs of Dave Heath, and the new The Photographs of Ralston Crawford), which breaks down his entire career. As a result, it may be the most important piece yet written on Ray K. Metzker's Photography. It also includes transcriptions of published pieces written by the Artist and a thorough bibliography. Even though it has fewer plates than Light Lines, they are presented in one continuous section- beautifully rendered- and almost all the same size (unlike Light Lines, which includes some smaller Plates), and chronologically. I find this lets your thoughts run free as you turn the pages. It is the Ray K. book I find most often in my hand.

Ideally, you'd want to look through both and decide. You may be able to do this in a local library (my search showed the NY Public Library has neither). My feeling is they both have things to recommend them and you cannot go wrong. Either way you go, currently, the cheapest copy, in any condition, of *Light Lines* is \$200 and up and *Photographs of RKM*, the rarer book, \$300 and up. Nonetheless, both are highly recommended until a new book comes along. It seems unlikely either will be reprinted, though one never knows with Steidl.

There are a number of other books of Ray Metzker's work that specialize in selected areas of it, though these are the only two that cover the full range of this incessantly creative Artist.

If Ray K. Metzker's work is to become better known an in-print & available comprehensive monograph would be essential.

*- Soundtrack for this Post is "Shadows And Light," by Joni Mitchell from her album of the same name.

Joni Mitchell - Shadows and Light



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