



CONTEMPORARY IMAGES IN PRINT SINCE 1915

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Streets of Philadelphia: Photography 1970-1985

September 10 – November 21, 2009

James B. Abbott, Robert Asman, Gary Lee Boas, Randl Bye, Don Camp, Jack Carnell, Paul Cava, Harvey Finkle, David Graham, Tom Gralish, Nancy Hellebrand, Charles Isaacs, Julie Jensen Bryan, George Krause, Paul McGuirk, Ray Metzker, William Owens, Stephen Perloff, Thomas Porett, Rosemary Ranck, Paul Runyon, Laurence Salzmman, Stephen Shore, Jack Tinney & William Earle Williams

Wednesday, September 9

Gallery Talk by John Caperton, Curator: 5:30pm; Opening Reception: 5:30-7:30pm

PHILADELPHIA: The Print Center presents *Streets of Philadelphia: Photography 1970-1985*, the first overview of street photography made in Philadelphia during an era which was critical in forging the city's contemporary identity. Capturing an era that began with jubilant preparations for the Bicentennial and ended with the tragic MOVE bombing, the show reveals the city at a time that is distinctly different than today. The exhibition brings together the work of over twenty widely celebrated photographers and features many excellent works that have not been shown publicly in nearly thirty years. The more than fifty images displayed in *Streets of Philadelphia: Photography 1970-1985* create a diverse and complicated portrait of the city.

While photography has been used to document life in the street since its invention, by the 1970s street photography had become a richly diverse and critically acclaimed genre of its own, with a number of recognized masters. During that decade, many photographers focused on the familiar, everyday details of the street and subject matter that seemed commonplace and unremarkable. The 1970s was also the first decade in which color photography began to receive attention as a legitimate artistic medium. There has been a recent resurgence of interest in American street photography from that time and the aesthetic of these works continues to wield significant influence on contemporary fine art photography as well as having a pervasive presence in advertising imagery.

Many of the photographs in the exhibition depict Philadelphia as a harsh, alienating and challenging place. **Ray Metzker's** cityscapes, which have come to be known as masterworks, are dramatically stark, showing isolated figures moving between canyon-like skyscrapers. **Tom Gralish**, a long-time staff photographer for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, received a Pulitzer Prize for his harshly honest photo essay on the life of the homeless in winter in Center City. Other photographers in the exhibition captured the raucous exuberance of the city during those years. **William Earle Williams'** views of crowds at the premiere of *Rocky* are affectionate and riveting. **Charles Isaacs'** scenes of South Street show youths dressed to the nines in the latest fashions of the early 1980s. **Gary Lee Boas'** snapshots of visiting movie stars capture a time when celebrities were worshipped. A sense of irony and satire pervades much of other works, including **Paul McGuirk's** wryly humorous depictions of historic re-enactors in a bustling city.

Streets of Philadelphia: Photography 1970-1985 will be on view at The Print Center from September 10 to November 21, 2009. On Wednesday, September 9 there will be gallery talk by John Caperton, Curator, The Print Center at 5:30pm and an opening reception from 5:30-7:30pm.

In conjunction with the exhibition, two public events will be presented:

Film Screening with Secret Cinema: *Trick Baby*

Thursday, October 15, 7:30pm

The Print Center is partnering with Secret Cinema to present a screening of the 1973 film *Trick Baby*, which was shot in many locations in West Philadelphia. This hilarious action film about two con men running from both the cops and the mob gives a glimpse back into a very different time in Philadelphia's history. The film will be introduced by **Irv Slifkin**, author of *Filmadelphia: A Celebration of a City's Movies*.

Panel Discussion

Thursday November 12, 6:00pm

Hosted by The Print Center's Curator, **John Caperton**, this panel will include **Miles Orvell**, Professor of English and American Studies at Temple University and author of the *Oxford History of Art: American Photography*; **Stephen Perloff**, a photographer whose work is included in the exhibition and the editor *Focus Magazine*, *The Photo Review*, *The Photograph Collector*, and *The Photographic Art Market*; and **Zoe Strauss**, a Philadelphia photographer whose gritty documentary photographs of the city have received international attention, including inclusion in the Whitney Biennial. The panelists will discuss the legacy of the works on display in the exhibition, the era they represent in Philadelphia's history and their relationship to the history of street photography and to work being created today.

The Print Center supports printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and encourages the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms. The Print Center presents a variety of programs for the public including exhibitions; The Print Center Gallery Store, which offers the largest and most diverse selection of contemporary prints in Philadelphia; the longest running annual international competition for prints and photographs in the country; and an extensive series of education programs and special events.

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