

WATERSHED

SEPT 19 - NOV 3 2008

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Sunday Smoke and Deputy Sheriff

MAGGIE KNAUS



Sunday Smoke was taken in a bar across the street from Madison Square Garden. It is my watershed image because it jumpstarted my career as a photographer on many levels. I was 22 years old and although I had graduated with a Fine Arts degree, wasn't quite sure what to do with it. This experience literally opened my eyes to the possibility of photographing not only people, but also strangers, and the challenge that comes from finding an image whatever the situation.

It was a cold, rainy afternoon and the bar was surprisingly empty except for this older man who seemed to be in a bit of a stupor. He was completely unaware that I was photographing him, which gave me the time and confidence to take several pictures. And then the sun broke out and light streamed through the dirty windows and I had my shot.



The spontaneity and thrill of "stealing" an image was the beginning of a constant love affair with the decisive moment. Further, this approach has helped guide my work both professionally and artistically. Sometimes after setting up lights and getting just the right angle, something unexpected will happen - like an animal or child walks through the scene - and that unforeseen detail will add another dimension to the image. Other times, when wandering in another city, photographing people has been an introduction to a cast of characters I wouldn't have otherwise met like Mr. Deputy Sheriff.

My second image, Deputy Sheriff, is a man I met while walking in an alley in Chicago. He was homeless but dapper with his cowboy hat and belt. In his bag were all his belongings. When he saw me taking pictures, he stopped and took off his glasses and gave me a look. After speaking with him, he was more than willing to pose but those images were not as interesting as this photograph. He wasn't quite sure what I was up to and that uncertainty led to a more interesting image than when he posed for me. Deputy Sheriff became part of a portfolio of photographs of people in public caught unaware.

That series, taken 10 years after Sunday Smoke, represent a progression of style and technique. The use of colour and actually speaking to my subject offered me a new self-confidence both emotionally and technically which continues to challenge me as an artist to this day.

BIOGRAPHY

Maggie Knaus is a professional photographer and artist originally from Washington, DC. Her favorite topic is documenting her extensive travels, using many non-traditional photographic processes in her work. She has been a photo teacher (at a private high school, and the Smithsonian Institution), a commercial photographer (for the White House Historical Association, and many stock agencies), and an artist (with shows in galleries across the US). In Ottawa, she has shown at the Bruyere Gallery and is represented by La Petit Mort Gallery.

EDUCATION

1995 MFA in Photography
Washington University, St Louis, MO
1986 BA in Photography
George Washington University, Washington, DC

WORK EXPERIENCE

2007 Instructor, School of Photographic Arts, Ottawa, ON
1996-2002 Instructor, The Field School, Washington, DC
1996-1998 Instructor, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
1995-1997 Instructor, Artist Workshop Program, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
1987-Present Freelance Photographer

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007 Palimpsests, La Petite Mort Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2006 Nearby, The Bruyere Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2002 Chasing The Sun, Annisquam Art Gallery, Annisquam, MA
2001 Recent Work, Weichert Realty, Washington, DC
1998 Vietnam, The Vine Gallery, Louisville, KY
1997 Public Glimpses, Private Thoughts, Atlanta Photo Group, Atlanta, GA
Public Glimpses, Private Thoughts, The Target Gallery, Alexandria, VA

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The White House Historical Association, Washington, DC
Fannie Mae, Washington, DC
The Consortium, Louisville, KY
DC Commission on the Arts, Washington, DC

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

1997 Photography Award, Peninsula Fine Arts Center, Newport News, VA
1996 Torpedo Factory Artist Award, Alexandria, VA
1995 Honor Award, St. Louis Design Center, St. Louis, MO
1993 Best of Show Award, Photo 90, Cape Girardeau, MO

PUBLICATIONS

2004- Present Ottawa Magazine

2007 White House History, Journal 20, White House Historical Association

2004 The White House, An Illustrated History, Catheine O'Neill Grace

2002 The White House, Celebrating Two Hundred Years

2001 The White House, William Seale

2001 The Book of Alternative Photographic Processes, Christopher James