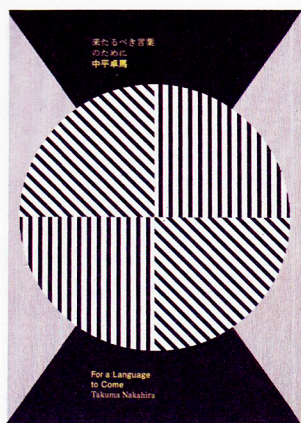


Photobooks

by Sebastian Hau

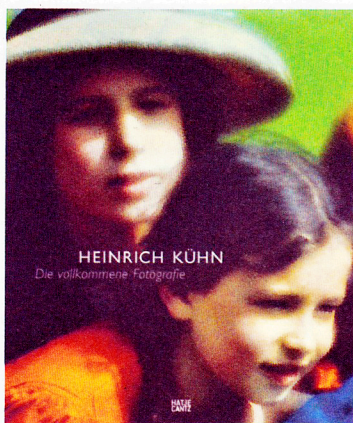
foam magazine #25 traces



Takuma Nakahira For a Language to Come

An aura of mystery has always surrounded this book. Published in 1969, it became a legend in Japan. The original, however, was known to only a few specialists in the West until it was republished by Christoph Schifferli. The third edition was published this year by Osiris in Tokyo and has a cover that is reminiscent of Victor Vasarely. Well printed and with accompanying essays by the philosopher, author and avant-garde artist Takuma Nakahira, this book is an intelligent reinterpretation of a cult publication. Slight changes have been made to its format and it is scaled down in size. When considered alongside the equally radical Provoke classics of Daido Moriyama and the more objective Toshi-e of Yutaka Takanashi, it stands out on account of the programmatic and consistent response it makes to a self-posed challenge, namely to establish photography as an independent language at the cost of everything previously thought or done. The raw pictures with their deep blacks and barely recognisable subjects may repel or entice the viewer, but their power and sensitivity cannot be denied.

Osiris
ISBN 9784990123987



Heinrich Kühn Perfect Photography

Around the year 1900 *pictorialism* was in full vogue and its adherents were everywhere. Today we are rediscovering a second path taken by photographers of that time: early colour photography. The images in this volume are not coloured photographs but dye-transfer prints made in a complicated printing process with three layers of colour. When seen in person they are objects of great beauty. An exhibition and a monograph are now paying tribute to the early Swiss inventor and artist, Heinrich Kühn, whose pictures of family or models appear charming at first sight. A classical sense of order, an exact study of light and colour, and a reserved approach to sitters give carefully balanced photographs. But Kühn did not only photograph walks or idyllic scenery; he cropped and enlarged his pictures until they became almost *pointillistic*. The academic essays and the large selection of pictures make the practice and oeuvre of this photographer accessible even for someone who has grown tired of the pictorialists. The appendix is valuable, since it explains photographic techniques that are often difficult to grasp.

Hatje Cantz
ISBN 9783775725699



André Cepeda Ontem

A striking book with the title *Ontem* (Portuguese for yesterday) has recently been released by the Belgian publishing house Le caillou bleu. André Cepeda is a young Portuguese photographer who for a number of years has photographed the inhabitants of a small district on the outskirts of the city of Porto. Many people here eke out a living only through prostitution and petty crime. The book contains portraits, apartments and landscapes, often in the colours of dusk or under a grey sky. Some portraits reminded me of Chauncey Hare or Jacob Holdt. These are interspersed with pictures of people having sex or trashed rooms. There are also portraits made with great clarity and sobriety. The book seems to show a bare life (Agamben), one that is reduced to an absolute minimum, but it also displays the absolute sympathy the photographer has for his sitters. In an interview at the end of the book Cepeda mentions a couple who found one another only late in life and describes their love under these difficult circumstances. This allows us to understand small details, such as plant pots outside a closed door or a broken window, and we are more willing to accept nakedness and unadorned physicality in the images. This is an important book alongside *Messina* by Pieter Hugo and *Niagara* by Alec Soth as it too uses a new documentary style (flash, reduction, the artistic use of colour) to confront viewers with the inhabitants of a small peripheral world that is more representative of ours than we wish to acknowledge.

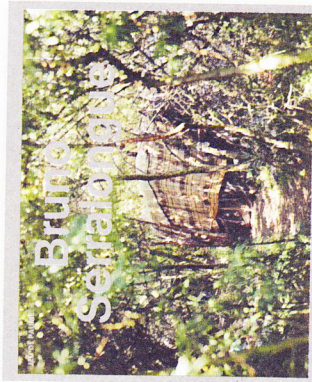
Le caillou bleu
ISBN 9782930537061



Miki Fukumoto
À Paris

Parisian street scenes? After looking at the first two pictures I thought 'cliché!' and almost put this book aside. In the pages that followed, however, I encountered a number of small gems: portraits of friends or acquaintances perhaps, and encounters and discoveries on the street: a garbage bag for example, transparent and almost happy against the light of a sinking sun. Working together with Daido Moriyama and Ota Michitaka, Miki Fukumoto has taken a carefully edited selection of pictures and made this small book, which will delight, amuse and move readers again and again with its casual portrayal of the colour and richness of life in this almost over-photographed city. She pulls this off by showing not only typical French scenes but also several migrants, a wedding couple who look proudly into the camera, a waiter, and a saleswoman. In every case, these people face the camera with an astounding openness. The Japanese publisher Sokyū-Sha develops a different approach for every book; this volume is elegant but simple and shows great affection for a type of photography that tells enthralling short stories in unremarkable scenes and images and with restrained prose.

Sokyū-Sha
ISBN 9784904120057



Bruno Serralongue

Serralongue sees himself as a reporter on a self-assigned mission. Whenever he feels drawn towards a story in the news (a strike in India, unrest in Chiapas, demonstrations in Johannesburg), he travels to the scene, photographs the events and protagonists in an unobtrusive manner, and develops series, exhibitions and books from these pictures. As in the work of Luc Delahaye or Allan Sekula, viewers themselves must be interested and willing to work through stories that often take place outside their worlds. But the images, which appear neither casual nor detached and are taken without tricks or artificial light, are able to satisfy viewers solely by renouncing drama and concentrating on events. In this way they enable us to see beyond the everyday and into distant political developments. Published by Ringier, this book is clean, cool and smooth. When I held it in my hands for the first time, I wanted to quickly leaf through it because it appeared to be repetitive, but that was not the case. As part of a long tradition starting with *American Photographs* by Walker Evans, Serralongue strikes an exact balance between description and narration.

JRP | Ringier France
ISBN 9783037641415

Killed

William E. Jones
Killed

The New York artist William E. Jones searched the Web for images of the Security Administration (FSA) archive (a total of 170,000 negatives) that traces of the private and homosexual lives of its photographers. Led by William Stryker from 1935 to 1945, the FSA's Information Division employed a large number of photographers to make documentary images of American life. Stryker had a clear visual programme and most of the photographers quarrelled with him. Jones found negatives that had holes punched in them. This brutal method was used by Stryker to sort out unsuitable pictures and these pictures make up the majority of the book. In many cases the pictures of Walker Evans, Marion Post Wolcott, Arthur Rothstein, Ben Shahn and others are wonderful scenes of everyday life, portraits and photographic sketches. The holes were punched not along the side but right in the middle of the picture shown, as if Stryker had been trying only to devalue the pictures and the photographers but also to 'kill' the pictures in the photographs. Lavishly published by Andrew Roth, this sober and elegant book brings together the pictures in a mysterious dance. The photographs are reproduced on a black background and appear invigorating and sensuous owing to this reappraisal of an important period in the history of documentary photography. An appendix shows several private photographs from the collection in which viewers can easily recognize sexuality and homosexuality: pictures taken in hotel rooms or at the beach, hidden in an endless number of street scenes.

PPP Editions / Andrew Roth
ISBN 9780971548084