

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ave Pildas — Happy Birthday!

Elisa Leonelli · Tuesday, September 17th, 2024

On Sunday, September 15, a few dozen close friends of Ave Pildas gathered at his home and studio in Santa Monica to celebrate his 85th birthday.



Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 1976

I told the story of our long friendship in “[Street Photography by Ave Pildas](#),” a 2015 article for Cultural Weekly about an exhibit of Ave’s Hollywood Blvd B&W photographs from the 1970s at L.A.C.E. gallery.



Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 1976

Ave had asked me to write the introduction to *Photomat*, one of his small books, so I interviewed him.



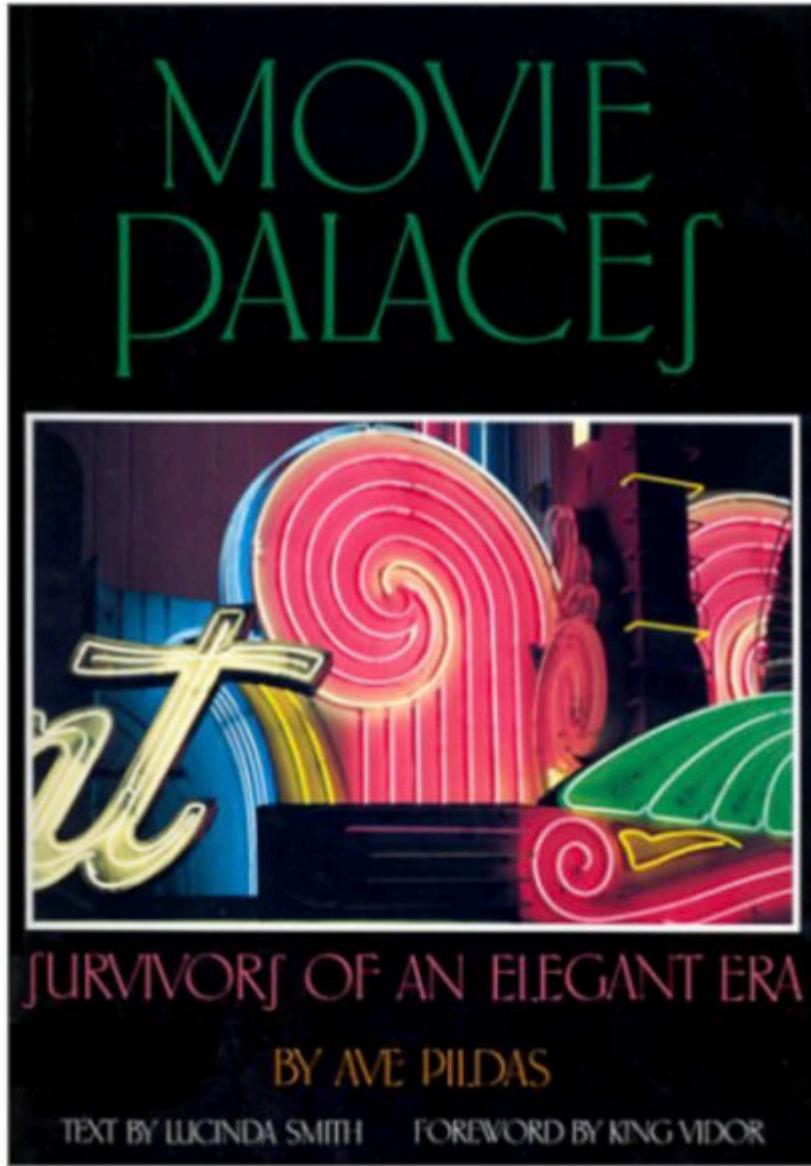
Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 1976

In the fall of 2014, Ave had invited me to talk to his Otis College students about my B&W Street Photography from the 1970s. That inspired the [presentation of my work](#) that I gave at the LA Library in June 2015. It began with photographs from a February 1976 walk that Ave and I took together along Sunset Blvd to chat up people and take their picture.



Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 1976

On January 1, 1977, Ave and I woke up early to photograph the Rose Parade, after going to Pasadena a couple of days before to document the preparation of the flower covered floats.



I have on one of my bookshelves a signed hardcover copy Ave's 1980 book *Movie Palaces*, next to his 2022 book *Star Struck*.

I remember attending a book signing at Arcana for this one, and chatting with Ave's wife of 29 years, artist Phyllis Green.



Elisa with Ave. November 1980

In November 1980, Ave was among the dozen close friends invited to my 33rd birthday party.



Ave Pildas © Elisa Leonelli 1983

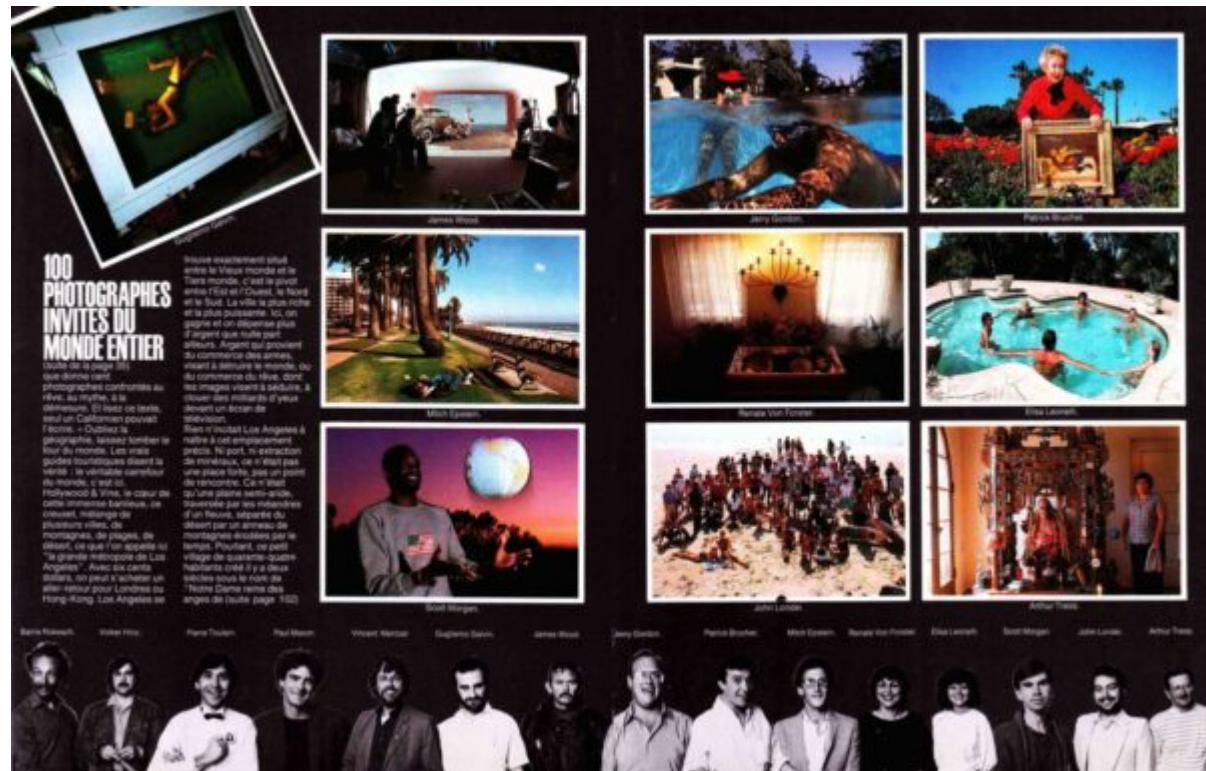
In Summer 1983, I met Ave in Arles, Provence, at the [Rencontres de la Photographie](#), where a selection of my slides was projected in the square, having traveled there with photographer [Franco](#)

Fontana, from our hometown of Modena.



Jean-Robert Ave (c) Elisa Leonelli 1983

Ave was traveling through Europe in a van with his Rossignoli bike. See Ave next to my French photographer friend [Jean Robert Franco](#), who had driven from Paris.



In 1984 Ave and I were chosen with 100 other photographers to contribute to the book *24 Hours in*

the Life of LOS ANGELES. Several other friends participated: Loretta Ayeroff, Craig Dietz, Gusmano Cesaretti, Robert Landau, Victor Landweber, Gary Leonard, Lloyd Ziff, as did more famous photographers like Moshe Brakha, David Hockey, Robert Mapplethorpe, Tim Street-Porter, Raul Vega, William Wegman. One of my photographs of the nudist resort Elysium in Topanga Canyon was published on a two-page spread. Its founder [Ed Lange](#) was a photographer. See above an article in Photo magazine.

Ave Pildas thanked me when I singled him out with Yoram Kahana as the two [LA](#) photographers “who became my friends and gave me invaluable advice” on my [Photographs by Elisa Leonelli](#) blog.

THEN

.....

B&W JAZZ PORTRAITS FROM THE 60s



NOW

.....

RECENT COLOR STREET IMAGES



AVE PILDAS PHOTOGRAPHS

Opening Reception • August 7, 2014 • 6-9pm



3519 W 6th Street, LA CA 90020 • contact@theperfectexposuregallery.com
T 213-381-1137 • Hours: Tues - Sat 10 am - 4 pm

In 2014, having reached my mid 60s, I decided to take portraits of my friends, most of them also seniors. I started with Ave, who suggested the digital camera I should buy, a Sony A 6000. I met him at the Perfect Exposure gallery where Ave’s 1960s B&W photographs of jazz musicians were exhibited, next to his recent color work.



Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 2014

I collected all these photo sessions in a website — [click here](#) to explore it.



In 2023, Ave's director friend Patrick Taulère completed a documentary, *Ave's America*. Artist Richard Michael Conti composed the soundtrack. It's available on Amazon, [click here](#) for the trailer.

I mentioned Ave in articles I wrote about [John Van Hamersveld](#) and [Lloyd Ziff](#) in 2024.



Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 2024

For his birthday party, Ave set up his Sony camera and 3 strobes inside light boxes to take portraits of his friends against a mottled grey backdrop and painted floor. I photographed Ave with my iPhone feeding pizza to his Doberman Gizmo.



Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 2024

Happy birthday dear Ave!

This entry was posted on Tuesday, September 17th, 2024 at 6:30 pm and is filed under [Photography](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.