Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Street Photography by Ave Pildas

Elisa Leonelli · Tuesday, August 18th, 2015

I became friends with Ave Pildas shortly after moving to Los Angeles in 1973, and when I was ready to express my creativity through photography, he provided encouragement and practical tips.

The 70s were an exciting time for LA. I was welcomed into a group of talented artists: writer Eve Babitz, magazine editor Coleman Andrews, graphic designer John Van Hamersveld, visual artist Paul Ruscha, performance artist Lowell Darling, photographers Don Peterson, Antonin Kratochvil, Brian Leatart, Gary Krueger, and many others.

I lived in Beachwood Canyon and rented a studio on Yucca, so Hollywood Boulevard was my downtown, one of the few streets in Los Angeles where people walked and you could observe a varied humanity. It was one of Ave Pildas favorite places for his street photography. A selection of his B&W photographs from the 70s is now exhibited at L.A.C.E., an art gallery not coincidentally located at 6522 Hollywood Blvd.

Street Photography was a popular style in the 70s; it had been inspired by Henri Cartier-Bresson,

who photographed in post-war France and Italy, his stated goal to catch the “decisive moment” with his noiseless Leica.

Pildas explains that it was a much more naive time for photography 40 years ago, when very few people owned a professional camera, than now, when everybody can take a picture with their cellphones; so most of the people he asked, agreed to have their picture taken. Recently he has gone back to shooting in B&W, with his digital cameras, and he teaches a class on Street Photography at Otis College.

Last fall Ave asked me to speak to his students about my B&W Street Photography work from the 70s, so this summer, when the LA Library invited me to give a talk for their “Photographer’s Eye” series, I chose those photographs as the theme.

If you want to see this photo exhibit by Ave Pildas, don’t delay, it closes on September 13; and while you’re there, why not take a walk on Hollywood Blvd with your camera? You may get inspired and create some interesting images.

To see some more photos, click on reviews from The Guardian and Zocalo.

Ave Pildas (c) Elisa Leonelli 1976

Top image: Woman 2 Pix (c) by Ave Pildas

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