

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Erwitt, Elliott. *Personal Exposures*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988.

Erwitt, Elliott. *Snaps*. London: Phaidon, 2001.

Papageorge, Tod. *Public Relations/Gary Winogrand*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977.

Szarkowski, John. *Winogrand: Figments from the Real World*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988.

CHECKLIST

Elliott Erwitt, American, born 1928

Monkey Paw/St. Tropez, 1968

From the portfolio *Photographs: Elliott Erwitt*

1968, published in 1977

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Hunter, PH.978.28.5

Larry Fink, American, born 1941

Greetings from Jean Sabatine, December 1983

1983

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Barbara and Robert Levine, Class of 1954, Tuck 1955,

PH.2000.1.14

Tod Papageorge, American, born 1940

Alice in Wonderland

1978

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Elaine and Gerald D. Levine, Tuck Class of 1963, PH.997.54.9

Tod Papageorge, American, born 1940

Zuma Beach

1979

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Elaine and Gerald D. Levine, Tuck Class of 1963, PH.997.54.3

Garry Winogrand, American, 1928–1984

Woman with Net Shirt in Crowd

From the portfolio *Garry Winogrand*, number 2 of 15

1980

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Dr. Stanley Kogan, Class of 1952, PH.986.75.1.2

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HOOD MUSEUM OF ART

Designed by Christina Nadeau, DPMS



Tod Papageorge, *Alice in Wonderland*, 1978. Gift of Elaine and Gerald D. Levine, Tuck Class of 1963

RELOOKING AT PHOTOGRAPHS, DECIPHERING THE DETAILS

When selecting the photographs for this installation, I was drawn to those that could be read on multiple levels. While the immediate images are arresting on their own, the subtle details we notice after a closer examination make them all the more intriguing. While I did



Larry Fink, *Greetings from Jean Sabatine*,
December 1983, 1983. Gift of Barbara and Robert Levine,
Class of 1954, Tuck 1955

include some incongruous, idiosyncratic, or startling detail that catches the eye and then invites the viewer to carefully study the entire composition. In some of these photographs the unusual juxtaposition of details is funny; in others, it is bewildering. All of them, however, are composed to reflect life's peculiarities.

The image of a large, middle-aged woman with a playful expression on her face and a gun in her hand is at first alarming and then so curious it makes the viewer look again. In *Greetings from Jean Sabatine* (1983) by Larry Fink, the dark female figure contrasts sharply with the domestic interior around her, creating a bold, arresting photograph. The questions remain, however: why has this woman aimed to

notice some thematic connections between the photographers' work—for example, the interest in everyday life shared by all of the photographers, or Papageorge and Winogrand's particular delight in human interactions—my main intent in combining these disparate images was to engage viewers in a process of visual analysis. I chose the works in this installation because they all

shoot the photographer with a gun, and why has he aimed to shoot a photograph of this spectacle? The photograph does not answer these questions on its own. I find this photograph easy to accept on a superficial level as a humorous image, but when the viewer thinks about *why* the photographer chose to take the picture, it takes on greater significance as a representation of Fink's photographic interest in funny occurrences.

Similarly, the action taking place in Elliot Erwitt's *Monkey Paw* (1968) seems easy enough to understand at first glance: men in a boat are engaged in conversation. Yet if we look closely we see that the photograph derives its title from the monkey paw that rests on the side of the boat, and one of the men is actually scrutinizing the creature (whom we cannot see). Erwitt rarely staged his photographs, and from this image we get a sense of the spontaneity that engaged him. Like Fink, Erwitt enjoyed photographing unusual events, and this image contains numerous details of a group of individuals who interact while some spectacle occurs just a few feet away from them. The viewer isn't given any real clue as to the actual events, and the various details lead to many possible interpretations.

Tod Papageorge took this interest in documenting group behaviors at public events to another level with his photographs. *Alice in Wonderland* (1978) is a public image with a multitude of details that make it more intriguing. A young girl climbs into the lap of a sculpture of Alice while an older, somewhat mannish figure in a dress and holding a cosmetic compact is seated on a mushroom by the Mad Hatter. In the foreground a young boy plays with objects on the sidewalk, and many of these objects, like the box of Social Tea Crackers, reference a tea party (like the one that takes place in the story by Lewis Carroll). However, next to the Mad Hatter are a British Airways bag, a radio, and what might be a poncho or some other bags. The presence of these items, a figure who is so ambiguous as to cause discomfort, and innocent children at play is difficult to contextualize and understand.

Thus, all of these photographs require a second or even third viewing in order to see the many details the photographers have chosen to include. As was said of Erwitt's work, "The really daunting aspect of all this is that it may take us several minutes to understand how the composition works its magic, but [the photographer] had to grasp it in a millisecond" (Erwitt 2001, 78). Viewers cannot gain an understanding of the entire context surrounding these photographs, even after scouring the details for some guide as to how they should be interpreted. As a result, these detail-plentiful, eye-catching photographs become compelling enigmas, though their focal points provide some insight into the individual photographer's interests. Erwitt and Fink enjoyed humor, and Papageorge enjoyed interpersonal relationships characterized by juxtapositions. Although these photographers did not handpick every single aspect of the situations photographed, they carefully selected the moment and details captured within the frame. While we as viewers must spend more time engaged in a looking process, the photographer grasped the important elements in a mere instant.

Lisa Casey '05
Education Intern

Elliott Erwitt, *Monkey Paw/St. Tropez*, 1968, 1968. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Hunter

