

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

October 31, 2006

JoAnn Verburg

Filed under: [artists](#) — alecsothblog @ 10:22 pm



Regarding my [post](#) on underappreciated photographers, Gabrielle de Montmollin observed that only one woman made American Photo's list. Among the endless list of women who deserve more attention, I'd like to highlight JoAnn Verburg. I first became aware of JoAnn when I saw her show at pARTs Gallery (now the Minnesota Center for Photography) in 1994. It remains my all-time favorite local exhibition. The salon-style show consisted of hundreds of pictures of JoAnn's husband, the poet Jim Moore. In his [review](#) of the show in ArtForum, Vince Leo wrote:

Like Alfred Stieglitz's portraits of Georgia O'Keeffe or Harry Callahan's pictures of his wife Eleanor, Verburg's photographs of Moore describe the dynamics of their relationship in photographic terms. But instead of Stieglitz and O'Keeffe's heroic individualism or the Callahans natural harmony, Verburg and Moore's photographic encounters are about the furtive pleasures available to those who aren't afraid to look or be looked at.

But this has hardly been Verburg's only achievement. She first made her name in the 1970's with her participation (along with Mark Klett and Ellen Manchester) in the highly influential [Rephotographic Survey Project](#).

Despite having showed at Robert Mann, Pace/McGill, MOMA and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, JoAnn doesn't emphasize self-promotion. As a recent article mentioned, "She doesn't have a bibliography, a biography or a resume, so I can't look up where all her work is. She doesn't know either."

But the good news is that this is all about to change. In 2007 JoAnn will be having a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. You can read about it [here](#). (If you are a collector, I recommend buying now!).

Verburg doesn't have a website, but you can see examples of her work [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

7 Comments

1. Alec, this series on underrated photographers is wonderful. I always loved Mertin's work, and am very glad to see your post on Verburg, and especially happy to see that she has a retro coming up! I've already forwarded the post to my senior seminar class. Of the 23 students in the class, 16 are female and in need of successful role models. JoAnn is certainly a good one.

Comment by [Sybil Miller](#) — November 1, 2006 @ [10:30 am](#)

2. I work as the lead art preparator at the Microsoft Art Collection, and she is one of the most popular artists in the collection, the employees just love the works of hers we have here in Redmond. I'm glad to see you posting something about her, she really is a fantastic artist! Her work makes my job so satisfying!

Comment by [Harold Hollingsworth](#) — November 2, 2006 @ [2:47 am](#)

3. [...] Yesterday I was able to stop into the Museum of Modern Art to see Present Tense, the exhibition of photographs by JoAnne Verburg. What I knew of Verburg's work before seeing it all at MoMA very minimal. In fact, I hadn't even heard of her until Alec made a post last October which painted her as, what he considers to be, another underappreciated photographer—"Among the endless list of women who deserve more attention," he said, "I'd like to highlight JoAnn Verburg." [...]

Pingback by [SHANE LAVALETTE / JOURNAL » Blog Archive » JoAnne Verburg: Present Tense](#) — August 4, 2007 @ [3:27 pm](#)

4. Just came across JoAnn Verburg's photographs on display at MOMA...have not been acquainted with her work...was also intrigued by the similarity of our names and wondered if there were a way to email her or write her???

Comment by [Joanne Verburg](#) — October 22, 2007 @ [6:40 pm](#)

5. Just saw the show at MOMA and was very impressed. I particularly liked her photos of trees, but it was all very interesting.

Comment by [bill benzon](#) — November 4, 2007 @ [3:13 am](#)

6. I saw Verburg's work at the Walker. Hundred's of people lined up to see Frida, but Verburg was the underrated star, I thought. She has an eye for composition and excellent technique, so she's able to make interesting pictures out of banal subject matter. I appreciate this skill since it's a hopeful message.

_Chris

Comment by [Chris Thompson](#) — January 19, 2008 @ [2:02 pm](#)

7. Hi..My name is Fernetta(Fer-Net-ta)..I am a college student at Inverhills Community college..I was looking at your photographs and I love the Digital video of how you was moving around and how it looks like your stuck in the wall..I would like to Talk more about your art work and maybe see if you would like to talk more about your photographs in my photography class..If you would like more info about coming to talk to my classmates or me about your photos you can feel free to e-mail me any time..I would love it if i can beable to take a current picture of you for my photography teacher..Please e-mail if we can chat more about your pictures in person..THANK YOU

Sincerely
Fernetta Cotton

Comment by [Fernetta Cotton](#) — March 1, 2008 @ [4:56 pm](#)