

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

August 12, 2007

Assignment: Jump the...

Filed under: goof,jump the sandwich,quizes & assignments — alecsothblog @ 11:12 pm



The Urban Dictionary defines the term *Jump the Shark* as:

To reach the point where the popularity of a show, movie, musician, or any other pop culture icon declines in popularity. Original meaning was the point when a television series shows it has run out of ideas and must resort to stunts to retain viewer interest (refers to an episode of The 1960's TV show, "Happy Days" where Fonzy jumps over a shark while water skiing, see also Jump the Couch).

After last week's Flickr fireworks, I might just be ready to make the leap. But for the next couple of weeks I'm going to be teaching at the San Francisco Art Institute. Since I won't have much time for the blog, I thought I'd hand out an assignment. I'm going to give the same assignment to my students in SFAI:

Assignment: JUMP THE SANDWICH

One of the fascinating things about Flickr is the phenomenon of Flickr groups. A couple of my favorites are Girls Eating Sandwiches and Bed Jumpers:



photos by A.R.E. (left) and Mirandala (right)

Your assignment, if you choose to accept it:

- 1) Photograph a woman* eating a sandwich** while jumping*** onto a bed.
- 2) Post the picture**** here: <http://flickr.com/groups/alecsoth/>
- 3) I will award a prize to my favorite assignment.

*I will consider men with long hair, men wearing high heels or men who wear panties and lingerie

**Extra points will be given for grilled cheese sandwiches and/or UK sandwiches

*** I will consider this activity as an alternative to jumping

****Diptychs will be considered

43 Comments

1. Would you accept a photo of me stumbling on a futon with a turkey wrap?

Comment by Amy — August 13, 2007 @ 12:54 am

2. girls eating sandwiches looks like Willow Wonder from Portland Oregon

Comment by robert — August 13, 2007 @ 4:06 am

3. f.y.i willow wonder has a wonderful blog called Perfect Heart. She is under the urban honking umbrella of geniusness. <http://urbanhonking.com/perfect>

Comment by robert — August 13, 2007 @ 5:24 am

4. That might work Amy, but you have a better chance of winning if you are also holding a gun.

Comment by Alec Soth — August 13, 2007 @ 7:36 am

5. This sounds like fun, now I just have to figure out a way to talk my girlfriend into eating a sandwich while jumping on the bed. I guess I could use the argument that it's for the sake of art.

Comment by mike moreno — August 13, 2007 @ 8:00 am

6. I have this sneaking suspicion that the interests of Conceptual Art may be much better "served" within the realm of Flickr Groups. What impresses me most about Flickr Groups is that they are organic. Institutional critique, with a real voice outside the institution, comes to mind. Not to get serious about "Girls Eating Sandwiches," but I have to say that it is far more thought provoking than something Alison Knowles might have done, or continues to do. (<http://www.aknowles.com/salad.htm>) It doesn't have the raw energy that Stephen Shore might be looking for, but certainly is more clever, than Alison Knowles "Making her salad," whether it knows it or not.

Comment by Ryan — August 13, 2007 @ 9:10 am

7. This pathetic attempt to have your loyal readers jump through your hoops of perversity reminds me of something:

Comment by Paul Shambroom — August 13, 2007 @ 9:44 am

8. Thank you Mr. Shambroom. Next assignment: Contact your local city council and persuade them to visit a nuclear weapons facility in drag.

Comment by EVW — August 13, 2007 @ 10:58 am

9. I take it Alec is doing one as well ?

Comment by steven — August 13, 2007 @ 11:32 am

10. what about a girl eating a hamburger in a shower?

Comment by Harlan Erskine — August 13, 2007 @ 1:20 pm

11. What is the deadline for this assignment?

Comment by Shawn — August 13, 2007 @ 2:07 pm

12. Sorry, no shower burgers (though I'm sure it would be a popular Flickr group).

As for the due date, the sooner the better. If I see a jumping-sandwich masterpiece tomorrow, the contest is over.

Comment by Alec Soth — August 13, 2007 @ 2:13 pm

13. If I were you, I'd stick to photography.

Comment by PeeWee — August 13, 2007 @ 2:36 pm

14. Still waiting to see the jumper shots of you!

Comment by karolina karlic — August 13, 2007 @ 3:21 pm

15. I don't know about girls and sandwiches but I do know that Happy Days was from the 70's and ran right up to 1984, if one can believe that. What about girls eating burgers and drinking malts?

Comment by erik — August 13, 2007 @ 3:45 pm

16. A correction – Urban dictionary is wrong – Happy Days aired in 70's, and it took place in the 50's ... I should know, I grew up watching it.

Comment by Mark — August 13, 2007 @ 3:51 pm

17. Hah, when I am starting to think photography blogs by photographers are very boring and redundant I see something like this. I find it very curious the way you combine the "jump the shark" meaning with your own blog and then with the assignment, haha.

Still, imho there are a couple of things...

- "i end it when i like it" deadline is not very fair. assignments have specific deadlines for a reason...
- it's also more correct to announce the prize in advance
- last but not the least, yeah, a jumper shot from you first would make things more even (esp considering the informal nature of the assignment, the way you lay it out)

Comment by tomé duarte — August 13, 2007 @ 4:09 pm

18. hmm, first you ask us to be your Bumdog, then you suggest we get some girl to do *** while eating a sandwich...

Comment by Amy — August 13, 2007 @ 5:34 pm

19. This has nothing to do with anything, but this dude's pictures make my mouth water
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/scooterfox/>

I don't know any girls, could I use a doll?

Paul

Comment by Paul McEvoy — August 13, 2007 @ 7:09 pm

20. Thanks for the shout-out, Robert!

My friend Freddy started the Girls Eating Sandwiches flickr group, and I have indeed (embarrassingly?) been featured on it many times. My understanding is that she started it in response to all the creepy flickr fetish groups. It doesn't end with sandwiches though, I'm afraid: <http://flickr.com/photos/kmikeym/tags/willowneedsfood/>

Anyway, glad I found your site, Alec. Maybe it is time to take my sandwich eating to new heights, so to speak.

Comment by willow wonder — August 13, 2007 @ 9:35 pm

21. One thing I have always admired about you Alec is not only your ability to raise the intellectual bar for discussion but also turn that discussion into action. you sir, are a true leader of men, even if those men are wearing lingerie, tied down like a mummy and being force fed a sandwich.

Comment by Greg Wasserstrom — August 13, 2007 @ 10:37 pm

22. "Sorry, no shower burgers (though I'm sure it would be a popular Flickr group)."

What if there's a bed in the shower? Does that count? (Nice Uncle Meat reference, btw.)

Comment by Randy Douglas — August 13, 2007 @ 11:08 pm

23. Thanks Greg. As the Baptist preacher Vance Havner said said, "The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps. We must step up the stairs."

If you go here, you'll also see that Havner said this: " "If they had a social gospel in the days of the prodigal son, somebody would have given him a bed and a sandwich and he never would have gone home."

Comment by Alec Soth — August 13, 2007 @ 11:14 pm

24. That Havner site is actually a Parr photograph.

Comment by kate kirkwood — August 14, 2007 @ 1:09 am

25. ... Until he started jumping on the furniture, perhaps.

That Havner site is actually a Parr photograph.

Comment by kate kirkwood — August 14, 2007 @ 1:11 am

26. befuddlement

Comment by w robert angell — August 14, 2007 @ 1:42 am

27. Again with the context issue- - The Flickr photos here in this entry look great on this blog, but I bet I couldn't have dealt with them so well if I saw them on Flickr first.

Same for these: <http://2point8.whileseated.org/?p=240>

It would be swell to explain perfectly why I can't respond well to an image on Flickr (with all the goofy text and links and icons and avatars and so on that surrounds it), and why I have no

problem with the same pictures on Alec's blog. Maybe it has to do with a feeling that the small thumbnails here are suggestions of bigger, *actual* photographs, and so there is a mystery as to what the "real" photos are actually like. They could be 6 feet wide hung on a gallery wall, or published in a magazine like Aperture or something (...Nylon?), or they could be on Flickr. Naturally, they could be all 4.

I guess the lesson might be not to get too worked up over Context and enjoy the picture for what it is and where, but at the same time it is so important.

No easy answers here, but then if it were easy it would not be so interesting to think about.

Comment by John Sypal — August 14, 2007 @ 5:18 am

28. hey alec,

i'm out here in sf — will your stay at sfai include any public lectures?

Comment by rachel — August 14, 2007 @ 11:48 am

29. Sorry Rachel, no lectures this time around. Cheers,

Alec

Comment by Alec Soth — August 14, 2007 @ 5:58 pm

30. If only Philippe Halsman had catered sets we could expect an aerial display of celebrity and delicious deli cuts.

<http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2006/october/indelible.php>

Comment by Robert Holmgren — August 14, 2007 @ 6:24 pm

31. Well Alec, you have come up with the perfect rejoinder as a close to this discussion. I have said it before and I will say it again; Alec Soth, you are truly a great and amazing guy.

For real, as much as one can love someone who they've only met for a few minutes, I love Alec Soth. And I say that with complete conviction and sincerity.

Comment by Zoe Strauss — August 14, 2007 @ 8:06 pm

32. Thanks Zoe, but if you want to prove your love I need to see some aerial Philly-Cheesesteak.

Comment by Alec Soth — August 14, 2007 @ 8:24 pm

33. Dude, it's on.

Comment by Zoe Strauss — August 14, 2007 @ 9:31 pm

34. can't wait to see the results.

Comment by robert — August 14, 2007 @ 10:16 pm

35. How does a UK sandwich differ from a US (or other) sandwich?

[Confused sandwich eater from London.]

Comment by guybatey — August 15, 2007 @ 2:59 am

36. if I make one of these, jump on a bed? does it count?

SANDWICHES

Comment by Farting on Thunder — August 15, 2007 @ 9:34 am

37. ever see these?

http://denis.darzacq.revue.com/la_chute/index.html

so cool. i guess they are break dancers. I imagine you'll get some similar things.

Comment by Johnny — August 15, 2007 @ 12:36 pm

38. all this floating stuff kind of traces back to Siskind's "Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation" series. <http://www.geh.org/ne/str091/htmlsrc3/index.html>

Comment by j zorn — August 15, 2007 @ 1:02 pm

39. So this means your not coming to the opening of the Magnum show at Stills Gallery in Sydney.....?

Comment by garry — August 17, 2007 @ 2:03 am

40. [...] I'm going to accept Sandwich Jumping assignments for another week. Entries should be posted at <http://flickr.com/groups/alecsoth/> by Sunday, August 26th. Soon after I'll announce the winner. Here is what I've seen so far. [...]

Pingback by alec soth - blog » Blog Archive » 'Jump the Sandwich' update — August 19, 2007 @ 11:59 am

41. [...] The 'Happy Days' room at the FantaSuite Hotel in West Bend, Wisconsin. Take the 360° tour here. Speaking of Happy Days, didn't this all start with Fonzie? [...]

Pingback by alec soth - blog » Blog Archive » Location scouting — August 20, 2007 @ 11:49 pm

42. [...] This falls under the you-wouldn't-believe-me-if-I-didn't-link-to-it department. On August 12, a photo blogger named Alec Soth wrote a blog post promoting a photo assignment/contest which he calls "Jump the Sandwich." He requested that readers: "Photograph a woman eating a sandwich while jumping onto a bed." [...]

Pingback by Bed Jumping Sandwich Eaters | — August 23, 2007 @ 1:17 pm

43. [...] A few weeks ago Alec Soth made a post on his blog discussing Flickr groups and issued an assignment with a prize for the winner. The assignment was a merger of two existing Flickr groups, Girls Eating Sandwiches and Bed Jumpers, resulting in Jump the Sandwich, photographs of women jumping on a bed while eating a sandwich. Quirky as it was, it seemed fun and the prospect of a prize was intriguing. I spent several sleepless nights dreaming of winning a complete set of Alec's books, or at least his most recent Fashion Magazine. Originally I misread the assignment as if the photographer was to be doing the jumping. The idea of me jumping on a bed and taking a photo at the same time seemed like more fun so I made both versions. The winner was announced and sadly enough my efforts fell short. It was fun though so I will gladly claim that prize. [...]