

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

November 21, 2006

Inge Morath

Filed under: [artists](#) — alecsothblog @ 12:45 am

The terrific blog, [Politics, Theory & Photography](#), alerted me to a new book on Inge Morath. [The Road to Reno](#) promises to be one of the most exciting releases of the year. The book is comprised of pictures that Morath took while she and Henri Cartier-Bresson made an eighteen-day road trip from New York to Reno to shoot on the set of *The Misfits*.

Along with her pictures, the book will include Morath's notes that were "written each night at the table in a motel room that was always in a different place but always looked the same."



Here is the note that accompanies the picture above:

Natural Bridge, near Lexington, Virginia

The road is wide and the cubicle architecture of the drive-ins and the motels is monotonous but clean and quite friendly.

There is a great quietness, the road sinks under trees and the trees undulate into faraway hills and the mountains and valleys. Before Roanoke even starts there are two miles of motel land that are tempting, cubicles. The town is not much and Henri has to have the finder he smashed in the car door cut open in the

hospital so we watch Governor Rockefeller say things about the election in the emergency waiting room until a nurse in a lovely bonnet takes him away.

In the evening, in the restaurant, very clean and waxcloth on tables, a very friendly girl, ketchup and A1 sauce, I order a cube steak. I have illusions of a big piece of meat, something huge. When it is put in front of me it turns out to be another hamburger.



Marilyn Monroe & Arthur Miller ©Inge Morath/Magnum photos

While shooting the Misfits, Morath made memorable pictures of Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller. The two were married at the time, but the marriage was breaking apart. John Huston, the director of the *The Misfits*, wrote about the couple in his memoir, *An Open Book*, (1980):

One evening I was about to drive away from the location – miles out in the desert – when I saw Arthur standing alone. Marilyn and her friends hadn't offered him a ride back; they'd just left him. If I hadn't happened to see him, he would have been stranded out there. My sympathies were more and more with him.

Morath's sympathies were also with Miller. She married him in 1962.



Inge Morath and Arthur Miller at their home, Roxbury, Connecticut, 1962. ©Dennis Stock/Magnum Photos.

- Arthur Miller discusses Morath's 'Road to Reno' [here](#)
- Pictures from 'Road to Reno' [here](#) and [here](#)
- Morath at Magnum [here](#)
- The Inge Morath foundation [here](#)
- Information on the Inge Morath award for women photographers under the age of 30 [here](#)

7 Comments

1. I swear; there were more photographers on the set of the Misfits than actors. Still, they are wonderful photos.

Comment by Kirk Teetzel — November 21, 2006 @ [5:33 am](#)

2. The question of whether words complement or distract from photos is an interesting one... There is also this grant for women photographers: http://www.femmes-journalistes.asso.fr/evenements/evenements_us_04.htm. No age restriction.

Comment by carolyn — November 26, 2006 @ [10:03 am](#)

3. I'm glad this was brought up. Inge Morath is one of those forgotten greats. I'm not sure if this was mentioned already, but there is a great book (Magnum, I believe) on the photographs taken for the Misfits—once, i also saw a fabulous documentary on the movie with accompanying photographs on pbs in a motel in new jersey, but i digress—I firmly urge all to check out Morath's work as well as the The Misfits motion-picture proper. Supurb work. The Misfits was also both Monroe's and Clark Gable's last movie before their untimely deaths, for you trivia buffs out there.

Comment by meica — November 27, 2006 @ [8:32 pm](#)

4. that's a great link to the steidl site, a great preview of the book which i'm anxious to check out. it reminds me of an argument i often have with myself about whether or not a photography project can be completed in such a short time and still be 'great'. all documentary photographers have shot short-term projects, on or off assignment, but as an experienced 'documentary' photographer, is 18 days of shooting enough for a book in your opinion? (i'm reminded of that all-time bad book 'faceless' by david douglas duncan)

Comment by john kerren — November 27, 2006 @ [11:10 pm](#)

5. Thanks for the nice plug, Alec. A friend told me about your post on Morath and it seemed natural to me that you would likely be a fan of her work, although it had not occurred to me before.

Comment by [Jim Johnson](#) — December 3, 2006 @ [12:18 am](#)

6. It's great to see this on your blog Alex. Many thanks!

Comment by [John Jacob/IM Foundation](#) — December 5, 2006 @ [4:45 pm](#)

7. Hi Alec,

is there any Italian photographer you know/like?
Take care,

Nicola Principato

Comment by [Nicola Principato](#) — August 28, 2007 @ [8:38 am](#)