

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

July 31, 2007

Kohei Yoshiyuki (and nine other reasons I love Yossi)

Filed under: artists — alecsothblog @ 11:52 pm



from the series *The Park*, 1973, by Kohei Yoshiyuki

I've made a point of not writing about the art business on this blog. But I have to make an exception for Yossi Milo. Here are just ten of the reasons I love Yossi:

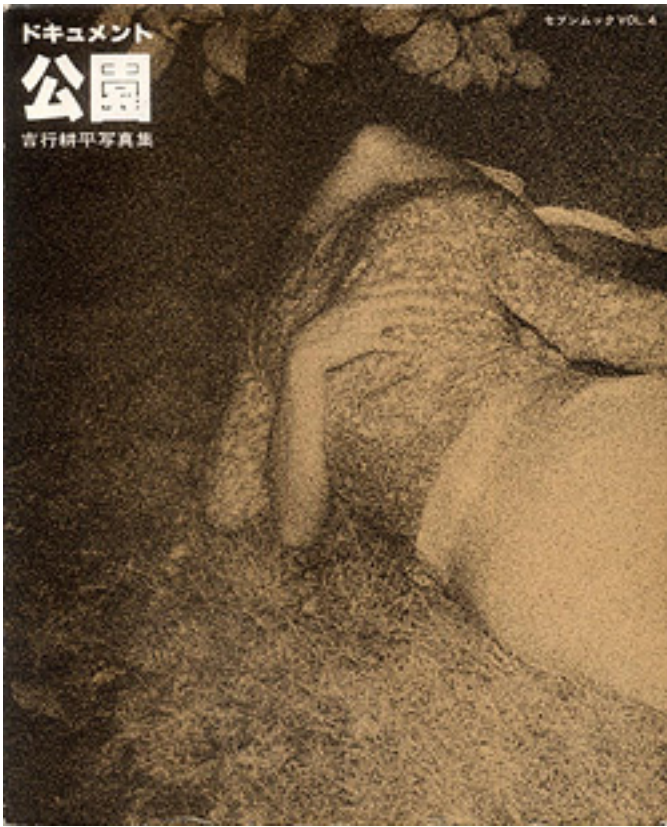
1. Because he shows one of my favorite established photographers: Nicolas Nixon.
2. Because he shows one of my favorite young photographers: Allesandra Sanguinetti
3. Because he doesn't care about labels. For all of his success with Loretta Lux and Simen Johan, he still shows documentary work.
4. Because on October 25 he'll be debuting Taj Forer's sweet and understated photographs.
5. Because he included one of my pictures in his June Bride exhibition
6. Because he's always good to the Minneagraphers (Katherine Turczan, David Goldes)
7. Because he shows my friends Lise Sarfati and Eirik Johnson.
8. Because he is just so sweet.
9. Did I mention he shows Nicolas Nixon?

10. Because he keeps unearthing great stuff. The latest is the work of Kohei Yoshiyuki. Taken with infrared film and flash in various Tokyo parks, these pictures show people gathering for furtive sexual encounters, both heterosexual and homosexual. More strange than the sex are the spectators:



from the series *The Park*, 1973, by Kohei Yoshiyuki

Along with exhibiting Yoshiyuki's work (September 6 – October 20), Yossi will be publishing his book, *The Park*, this fall. The original version of the book, *Document Park*, was published in 1980 with an introduction by Nobuyoshi Araki:



In *The Photobook, A History, Vol. II*, Parr and Badger write that Document Park “is a brilliant piece of social documentation, catching perfectly the loneliness, sadness and desperation that so often accompany sexual or human relationships in a big, hard metropolis like Tokyo.”

14 Comments

1. you are bright

Comment by robert — August 1, 2007 @ 12:52 am

2. Alessandra Sanguinetti's series 'The Adventures of Guille and Belinda and the Enigmatic Meaning of Their Dreams' is absolutely stunning. My new fave.

Comment by guybatey — August 1, 2007 @ 6:56 am

3. Thanks for the link...I admire the work of Nicholas Prior, too.

Comment by Suzanne — August 1, 2007 @ 7:26 am

4. That looks like a book worth picking up. Your boy Taj makes some serious "Steiner school" work. I like it.

Comment by Sam Logan — August 1, 2007 @ 9:21 am

5. I've always been meaning to visit his galler, now I'll have to make it a priority.

Comment by mike — August 1, 2007 @ 10:27 am

6. What a love story.

Comment by Zoltán — August 1, 2007 @ 11:47 am

7. wow. I see so many things i have never seen before on your site! I used to go to central park and such places to try to photograph park sex spots but I always lost my nerve. I did it by accident once when i was photographing cemeteries and did not know Brompton was a cruising spot and some guys got really aggressive with me so i pretended to not know english but boy was that scary. but to go into a park sex place at night and shoot with flash??? that takes, um. and the crawling spectators. wow.

Comment by Lisa — August 1, 2007 @ 4:02 pm

8. Perhaps, am the black sheep among'st here..

I can appreciate the novel element upon first image (really do !)

(A secret act, deer in the headlights like)

Upon viewing more of this series

leaves me kindof listless, depleted of some un named nutrient.

This is a familiar sensation in lots of photography now

in my black sheepish opinion.

Comment by molly — August 1, 2007 @ 4:18 pm

9. Speaking of the art business, I thought readers (within reasonable proximity to New York) might be interested in catching the last few days of an exhibition in which your work is included...hope you don't mind the unsolicited link !

Comment by Jenni Holder — August 1, 2007 @ 6:54 pm

10. Those photos by Kohei Yoshiyuki are great. Can't believe I've never heard of him before. I'll be first in line to buy the reprint of the book. There is an honesty in photography that is so blatantly voyeuristic. Another series I like very much is 'Dirty Windows' by Merry Alpern.

BTW, to Lisa who refers to him using the flash at the sex park – the flash had a filter that only allowed infra red wavelengths to pass through. The human eye is not sensitive to this light so no one would have seen it. However he was using infra red B&W film that would expose the reflected light. Weegee did something similar in New York cinemas in the '50s.

Also I get the sense that the sex park wasn't such a scary place. It looked like everyone was in it together so I suppose that one more perv snapping away with a camera in the dark would have fitted right in.

Comment by Michael W — August 2, 2007 @ 8:50 am

11. Dear black sheep,
Yes it's hard to speak out loud a minority opinion, or to oppose an opinion leader.

I think Kohei Yoshiyuki photographs are formally very strong, and obviously everybody is interested in the topic he deals with. Sex sells, sex is business. Congratulations to the gallerist. It is fascinating to look at the "real thing" and the "making of sex" you never can see. And it's even more fascinating not to see everything. To have to guess, to have to imagine. Pornography is different. There form is nothing, and there is no space for imagination at all.

I think the nutrient you are missing is emotion.
This series is not about emotion, not about love. It is about the mechanics of voyeurism and sex.

A sheepish salute to you.

Comment by Zoltán — August 2, 2007 @ 2:30 pm

12. I agree. Yossi Milo is amazing. Thanks for this great post — and I'm so happy you wrote about Taj Forer — I didn't know about him but his work is lovely.

Comment by joanna goddard — August 3, 2007 @ 6:27 am

13. May I add an 11th reason. Because Yossi's enthusiasm for his artists and their work is both intense and honest.

Comment by John Hass — August 6, 2007 @ 7:52 pm

14. [...] The exhibition will also include photographs from Mr. Yoshiyuki's 1978 companion project, Love Hotel. The artist accessed some of the unerasable videotapes made by clients of one of Japan's infamous rooms-by-the-hour hotels and photographed the still images. The resulting pictures are grainy abstractions of faceless, nameless people caught, mid-act, in lovemaking. (See commentary here.) [...]

Pingback by Kohei Yoshiyuki at Yossi Milo Gallery, Sept 6 - Oct 20 : Gallery Wire — August 28, 2007 @ 8:06 am