

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

January 2, 2007

10 things I liked in 2006

Filed under: [lists](#) — alecsothblog @ 9:32 pm

The Walker Art Center asked me to come up with a top ten list for [their blog](#). I decided to go with half photography, half other stuff:



Lobbyist in Green, by Tim Davis

1) Photography (book): [My Life in Politics by Tim Davis](#)

Tim Davis is too smart to be a photographer. But his eye is too good to be anything else. A great book.

2) Photography (exhibition): [Peter Hujar at PS1](#)

One of my favorite photographers at one of my favorite places to look at art – does it get any better? Actually, yes. Stephen Shore's [American Surfaces](#) was exhibited across the hall.



Hymenoplasty Cosmetic Surgery, Professional Association, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The hidden patient in this photograph is a 21-year-old Arab woman living in the United States. In order to adhere to cultural and familial expectations regarding her virginity, she had her hymen reconstructed.

3) Photography (editorial): [Taryn Simon: New York Times Magazine](#)

Sometimes I come across work that is so good that it makes me downright jealous. This happened with the recent New York Times Magazine portfolio of new images by Taryn Simon from her project, An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar

4) Photography (website): [Conscientious](#)

Why does an astrophysicist in Pittsburg have the most comprehensive information on new photography? Assuming astrophysics is more demanding than being a Starbucks barista, where does Jöerg Colberg get the time?



When 2nd Lt. James Cathey's body arrived at the Reno Airport, Marines climbed into the cargo hold of the plane and draped the flag over his casket as passengers watched the family gather on the tarmac, by Todd Heisler

5) Photography (single picture): [Reno Airport by Todd Heisler](#)

Heisler's picture of a Marine being removed from a commercial plane beneath the gaze of fellow passengers was published in 2005 but not seen by most until 2006 when his project, *Final Salute*, won the Pulitzer Prize. This remarkable image is perhaps the best portrait of America in 2006 – the year we finally looked out the window (and in the mirror).



Storm, by David Bates

6) Painting: David Bates

In a year when dozens of fine-art photographers exhibited work from Katrina, the best art to come out of the disaster was made by a painter.

7) Radio: The David Johansen Mansion of Fun Show on Sirius Radio

I do a lot of driving. I listen to a lot of radio. The former New York Dolls singer David Johansen is the best D.J ever.



still from Sweet Land, by Ali Selim

8) Film: Sweet Land

Over the last year I only saw one movie in a theater...but it was a really good one. After 16 years of preparation, the Minnesota writer/director Ali Selim shot this film in 24 days. Unafraid of sentimentality with a real-life pace, this is a film to be savored.

9) Music: Solomon Burke, Nashville

Is Burke's voice a moan, a wail, or a croon? Whichever it is, I understand why he sings in Valley of Tears, "People stand in line just to hear me cry."

10) Fiction: The Road by Cormac McCarthy

This year I listened to two audiobooks by Cormac McCarthy: The Road (2006) and No Country for Old Men (2005). In both books McCarthy takes the 'thriller' and strips it to the bone. The raw and urgent writing (along

with the gravelly voice of Tom Stechschulte) drives the listener into an almost subterranean universe. I don't think I'll ever get *The Road* out of my system.

- See some other excellent Top 10 lists from the Walker [here](#)

12 Comments

1. Hey, nice list Alec, got some things I wanna bookmark there. I never knew David Johansen had a radio show, I really got to look into that!

I recently got (downloaded) a few episodes of Bob Dylan's Theme Time Radio Hour show on XM Radio and it's pretty fantastic, you should check it out if you haven't already.

Hope your new year is filled with wonderful surprises.

Talk to you soon.

Comment by Danny G — January 3, 2007 @ [1:50 am](#)

2. It is a great decision to have Tim Davis' book as your first choice on your list. The image you posted is my favorite image from his MOCP show. It totally describes the political trail and the drive people have in impacting our so called, "Democratic Society". I have never seen Todd Heislars' images before and enjoy the content and depth of his photographs. I might just have to look into getting a Sirius radio "outfit", considering I am as well on the road all of the time. -CC BFA student

Comment by [Aron Gent](#) — January 3, 2007 @ [2:41 am](#)

3. Man.....forget about looking into David Johansen's radio show, Taryn Simon's work is where it's at! I wish I could purchase those pictures in book form.

Jealous? That's an understatement.

(the work was just too good, had to drop you another line)

Comment by Danny G — January 3, 2007 @ [3:35 am](#)

4. thanks for alerting me to taryn simons new work. it's truly amazing.

Comment by charlie — January 3, 2007 @ [6:25 am](#)

5. interesting choice in tim davis's "My Life in Politics" for Best Book, especially with books like "Sweet Earth" by joel sternfeld and "Chronologies" by richard misrach coming out this past year.

Comment by john kerren — January 3, 2007 @ [12:40 pm](#)

6. Just to be clear, the title of the list is "10 Things I liked." Just as I only saw one movie in a theater (and didn't mention some incredible Netflix rentals), I didn't purchase too many photography books from 2006. I haven't seen the "Sweet Earth" book (though I very much enjoyed the exhibition) and haven't spent time with "Chronologies."

I have a new respect for the task of putting together lists. It is truly daunting – especially the exclusionary aspect. But as silly as it is, I kind of like doing it. It is a good excuse to put on the thinking cap.

Comment by [Alec Soth](#) — January 3, 2007 @ [12:56 pm](#)

7. My boss has a signed print of your #5 in his office. It's an awesome photo.

Comment by [Steve Miller](#) — January 3, 2007 @ [9:37 pm](#)

8. "My boss has a signed print of your #5 in his office. It's an awesome photo."

kind of a gruesome photo to have a signed and hanging on a wall in an office.

Comment by john k. — January 4, 2007 @ [1:25 am](#)

9. [...] While working on my Top 10 list, I realized that I only watched one movie in a theater in 2006. My New Year's resolution was to make more time for the big screen. Tonight I made my first outing to see Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006). I doubt I'll see a better movie this year. Like Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (also on my Top 10 list), *Children of Men* is a masterpiece of bleak and breathless storytelling. It is also equally relevant. "It imagines the unthinkable," Manohla Dargis wrote in the *New York Times*, "What if instead of containing Iraq, the world has become Iraq, a universal battleground of military control, security zones, refugee camps and warring tribal identities?" [...]

Pingback by [alec soth - blog](#) » [Blog Archive](#) » [Top 10 addendum](#) — January 6, 2007 @ [10:49 pm](#)

10. Thank you for including Burke's "Nashville" !!

Comment by Tomm — January 9, 2007 @ [4:03 pm](#)

11. [...] Interior Design is reporting that The International Association of Art Critics has announced their picks for the best of 2005-2006. A lot of the list I didn't see, so I can't comment that much on them, but as the gallery I intern at represents him, I am excited to see David Ireland on there for Best Show in a Commercial Gallery Nationally. The Rauschenberg exhibit at MOCA I am bit (just a bit) surprised about. I was good, but I don't know about best of the year. Same for the Richard Tuttle at the SF MOMA; it was good, but not great. I do have to say that I am surprised that the Matthew Barney exhibit at the SF MOMA didn't make anyones list, such as Artforum, (although a show at MOMA made their list) Art Fag City or Alex Soth. Posted by ibartholomew Filed in Uncategorized [...]

Pingback by [Ian Bartholomew](#) » [Blog Archive](#) » [AICA Announces Best Exhibitions of 2005-2006 Season](#) — January 12, 2007 @ [7:59 pm](#)

12. #3 made me laugh. I clearly remember the day (was it December?) when I also opened the *New York Times Magazine* and felt downright jealous of Taryn Simon. Can't wait to see her show at the Whitney in March.

Comment by [Annabel Clark](#) — February 1, 2007 @ [11:11 am](#)