

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

March 18, 2007

March Madness

Filed under: [lists](#) — alecsothblog @ 1:05 am

I'm working on my Final Four selection but can't seem to get past Nixon vs. Mann in the first round. Who is in your [Final Four](#)?

46 Comments

1. Lots of the interest in the bottom left of the draw.

'Anorak Alec' could be setting up an intriguing clash with William "The Killer" Eggleston in the 5th round; and just above, local fave Zoe could have a tough clash against either the enigmatic Stephen Shore, or the veteran Frenchman HC Bresson.

Other highlights could be Wall v) Mapplethorpe in the quarters, while Harry Callahan seems to have an easy path to the semis.

Comment by [guybatey](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [4:07 am](#)

2. This thing's gonna zip around the Interweb like wildfire. Who can resist working out the match ups all the way through the end? Not sure I would have filled the original seeds in this way, but there must have been some amazing match-ups in the regional tournaments that knocked out the likes of Nadar, Atget, or Christenberry.

After some late night deliberation, my Final Four is Burtynsky, Wall, Callahan, and Evans. Harry Callahan puts up a good fight, but Walker Evans comes out on top in the end. How predictable, I'm afraid.

Comment by [Todd W.](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [7:12 am](#)

3. He spelt the first photographer's name incorrectly - Burtynsky - not a good start. While I'm at it, please please change 'uncatagorized' to 'uncategorized' it's been driving me nuts for months.

My four are Strand - Frank - Sugimoto - Callahan.

Comment by [rob](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [7:38 am](#)

4. Sternfeld (tenacious and determined)
Shore (confident and experienced)
Wall (overwhelming and big up front)
Avedon (eminent and always in the running)

Comment by [Armando](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [9:05 am](#)

5. Not sure if I can post images here or not, but here goes...

...or even a link to the [Photography Family Tree](#).

Comment by [Christian](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [10:30 am](#)

6. Strand, Callahan, Nixon & H C-B

Comment by [Frank](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [11:50 am](#)

7. I'm just happy to see Callahan getting the credit he deserves, go Chicago school!

Comment by [Alex](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [1:37 pm](#)

8.and Aaron Siskind isn't even on the list...the compiler can't be taken too seriously

Comment by [Frank](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [1:54 pm](#)

9. baldessari, eggleston, ulrich, clark. sorry alec, i had to make some tough choices.

Comment by [Greg Wasserstrom](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [3:52 pm](#)

10. Stieglitz (Bjorn Borg), HCB (Roger Federer), Sugimoto (Ivan Lendl), Arbus (Martina Navratilova). But -as in tennis- sometimes the best matches take place before... HCB beats Eggleston (John McEnroe) on one electrifying quarterfinal. Soth (Nalbandian) beats hard hitter Patterson (Andy Roddick) on tiebreak but then is put to sleep (by the river) by the mighty man from Memphis, who takes revenge for the harm inflicted upon his protégé, with characteristic non-chalance...

Comment by Federico — March 18, 2007 @ [4:32 pm](#)

11. Um...

B. Abbot
A. Adams
N. Araki
E. Atget
L. Baltz
B./H. Becher
E.J. Bellocq
G. Bourdin
Brassai
W. Claxton
I. Cunningham
B. Davidson
R. Dijkstra
A. Eisenstadt
M. Epstein
E. Erwitte
R. Fenton
L. Friedlander
A. Fuss
J. Gossage
E. Haas
S. Keita
A. Kertesz
C. de Keyser
J. Koudelka
D. Lange
R. Lee
A. Leibovitz
V. Muniz
E. Muybridge
A. Newman
H. Newton
G. Parks
I. Penn
J. Pierson
R. Polidori
E. Porter
R. Prince
S. Salgado
L. Samaras
A. Sander
A. Serrano
A. Siskind
J. Sudek
J. Szarkowski
W.F. Talbot
J. Teller

W. Tillmans
A. Warhol
Weegee
G. Winogrand
M.B. White

This list does not reflect my personal taste.
But there are some great photographers here...

Comment by [Christian](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [7:31 pm](#)

12. After triple overtime Walker Evans defeats William Eggleston in the first round while throwing 6 different sheet film formats at him, hindering Bill's final shot.

in this tourney, the remaining players are Strand, Evans, Arbus, Sugimoto

while over in the N.I.T. - Atget defeats Friedlander in quadruple overtime through sheer domination of square inch coverage and wooden hardware....

Comment by [mark s](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [7:44 pm](#)

13. Smith vs. Capa IN THE FIRST ROUND!
You're killin' me.

Comment by [ND](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [9:12 pm](#)

14. I'm definitely the Cinderella's Cinderella. I have Arbus, Wall, Evans, and Sternfeld in the final four with Arbus cutting down the net after shooting lights out in a gritty win against Evans in the final.

Comment by [Amy](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [9:14 pm](#)

15. Great to see this is getting such response.
Thing is hilarious, and i honestly went into the idea thinking it would take me 10 minutes to make, next thing i know i spent half the damn afternoon wasting my time on it!

Ooo Amy, Shen had Arbus winning as well...

I think i had Wall, Shore, Gursky, and Michals as the final four.
Shore vs. Michals in the the final game with Michals destroying and lecturing in tagents about the victory after the game...

Comment by [Chad Muthard](#) — March 18, 2007 @ [9:51 pm](#)

16. No offense but while you should be on a list like this most of your photographer blog buddies included here, while nice people aren't in the same league as Diane Arbus or Walker Evans. The whole thing seems like a bit of a circle jerk.

Comment by [l w](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [12:32 am](#)

17. Hmm...
I kind of knew it wouldn't be long until a comment like this was made.

In all honesty my reasoning for making the play tournament in the first place was that I thought it would be a good exercise and tool to use to get further educated and acquainted with some photographers work, whether they be contemporary or legendary. The best part of the bracket is that it puts together a nice little compare/contrast chart where one can look at the differing styles and reasons for making images.

Comment by [Chad Muthard](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [6:14 am](#)

18. who got the biggest trouncing in the first round? my bet is Witkin got whipped by Mapplethorpe.

Comment by [dan](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [9:11 am](#)

19. hmmm.... if Eggleston only takes his customary one shot and then moves on, does he even have a chance?

my bracket was blown to hell when Wisconsin went down.
k.

Comment by [kevin](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [10:59 am](#)

20. Burtynsky gets thrashed by Gursky but then is surprisingly defeated by Tunick.

Smith wins the Capa-Smith bout in the last seconds of the third round. Capa looks good but then falls easily – causing heavy losses for bookies – champagne flows in the heavenly magnum offices.

Frank annihilates Shore in the first round, looks a world beater then gives a disappointing performance against Parr (whose techicolor shorts unnerve HCB).

Last four are Arbus, Evans, Wall and Tunick as a surprise quarter finalist. Arbus wins it, but she does have Sander coaching her.

(Sadly in the film star-photo championship event that follows, Arbus is absolutely destroyed by Kidman.)

Comment by [colin pantall](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [11:15 am](#)

21. Wow this is really hard. micheals, frank, mann, avedon

Comment by [doug mcgoldrick](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [1:24 pm](#)

22. FUUCCCKKKK! Why did I have to draw Arbus in the first round?!?!?

Comment by [Zoe Strauss](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [4:29 pm](#)

23. OH WAIT, I DIDN'T! I'm up against Nan Golden! That's still bad news, but quite a relief.

Comment by [Zoe Strauss](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [4:32 pm](#)

24. Chad, I don't know you, but this bracket is possibly one of the greatest things I've ever seen.

I've got W. Evans coming out on top.

Comment by [Zoe Strauss](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [4:42 pm](#)

25. frank wins every year, doesn't even suit up anymore

Comment by [james](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [8:43 pm](#)

26. this just solidifies the fact that this blog exists for me, the way sports radio does for all of my friends, and yeah Evans probably wins

Comment by [Isaac](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [9:33 pm](#)

27. gut reaction:

struth, eggleston, nixon, callahan

after i thought about it:

stieglitz, frank, wall, arbus

Comment by Dan Otranto — March 19, 2007 @ [9:35 pm](#)

28. WOW! Am i really in the minority by thinking that Nixon/Mann is a blowout in Mann's favor? Her work is so, so good. Hell, even if you wanna compromise and call their work dead even, no one can print like Sally Mann can.

Sally blows by Nixon in overtime.

Comment by Meica — March 19, 2007 @ [9:53 pm](#)

29. My final 4 is: Sterfeld, Eggleston, Arbus and Witkin.

I did the whole thing in just about 4 minutes, I respect all these artists, I just know if think harder, it may take me 5 hours. But I am happy with the result.

The Champion is Arbus.

Comment by Shen — March 19, 2007 @ [10:42 pm](#)

30. By the way, it is really hard to pick Witkin over mapplethorpe, but if I pick Mapplethorpe, Mapplethorpe will against Wall, and Sugimoto... oh, my...Why can't I stop thinking about this...

Comment by [Shen](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [10:46 pm](#)

31. Over in Division II it's Kertesz vs Decarava, and Meatyard up against Levitt.

Comment by [Nick](#) — March 20, 2007 @ [4:49 am](#)

32. I hate this type of matches.

Comment by [jesus](#) — March 20, 2007 @ [5:13 am](#)

33. Difficult. I guess: Frank, Shore, Struth, Paul Graham. Evans and Wall of course. Four is not easy...

Comment by [corinne](#) — March 20, 2007 @ [7:38 am](#)

34. Fun. Just don't take it too seriously. My 4 are Burtinsky, Frank, Nixon & Arbus.

Comment by [Tim Connor](#) — March 20, 2007 @ [11:45 am](#)

35. While it may seem to some that certain photographers are more worthy than others to be listed, like the NCAA Tournament, there are always obscure schools that show up among the power house programs that you expect to be there. I mean really who knew that there was a school called Winthrop, let alone that they have a basketball program that could beat Duke. Schools like Niagara, Jackson State and Central Connecticut State don't stand a chance in winning it all, but they are just happy to be invited to the big dance (or circle jerk).

Final Four:
Baldessari
Evans
Wall
Arbus

Comment by Neal Reiter — March 20, 2007 @ [12:35 pm](#)

36. Should Alec, Ulrich, and Christian Patterson really be on that list?

Comment by Avedont — March 20, 2007 @ [2:12 pm](#)

37. Avedont,

You asked do Alec, Ulrich, and Christian Patterson deserve to be on the list, and here is why I think not. First of all, Ulrich, Patterson, Zoe Strauss, etc. wouldn't deserve to be on the list even if it was restricted to contemporary photographers, and their inclusion in a list like this turns something fun into something absurd. As for Alec, I see it this way: there are great photographers and there are great groundbreaking photographers, and Alec is a great photographer but not a groundbreaking one.

Comment by [Ginny](#) — March 20, 2007 @ [4:41 pm](#)

38. ha! this thread just gets funnier and funnier. In true interweb fashion, irony and absurdity get increasingly taken seriously as more comments get registered.
PS- was this pinched from under a fridge magnet at Magnum?

Comment by rob — March 20, 2007 @ [7:59 pm](#)

39. This is great!

Here are some seasoned vets that show how long it really takes to make a reputation:

Gossage, John
Baltz, Lewis
Adams, Robert
Levenstein, Leon
Meatyrd, Gene
Dijkstra, Reinke
Klein, William
Friedlander, Lee
Moriyama, Daido
Winogrand, Garry
Sherman, Cindy

Comment by seemore — March 20, 2007 @ [9:14 pm](#)

40. Well, this is one of the most questionable discussions I have seen in close to 40 years of looking closely at photographs and other artworks. I'm a big basketball fan (after having a childhood of basketball hating that (surprisingly) lead me into the artworld) and I reject the attempt to make an overlay map of these 2 ways of being/seeing. Just to throw in a monkey wrench, Adolph Wolfli, Ray Johnson, Myron Stout, Jess, Martin Ramirez, (not to mention Mike Disfarmer for those who only look at photographs) or so many other substantial artists who seemed marginal at one point to the art world would never be rehabilitated in the sports world. (The only exception I can recall is the rehabilitation of Negro League stars, which was just an acknowledgement of broad-based racism). That's one element of what makes art valuable to the human race – in a different way than competitive sports – all judgements (and not just "quality" judgements) are mutable. There sometimes seem to be winners and losers in art (though not at all in the neat way of sports scores) – but the judgements are clearly more tentative. (As an aside and an example – I never laughed as hard as when I heard Rosalyn Krauss exclaim in the 80's that those who did not understand her embrace of Man Ray and other sexist surrealists (in light of her previous strict hierarchies) just lacked a sense of humour). One of the few lessons of maturity is seeing

artists who are written off as "out of the zeitgeist" turn out (occasionally) as true visionaries who were following their , (shock) vision.

My personal final four (which would exclude wonderful artists like Harry Callahan who are, unfortunately, dead) might be Sugimoto, Struth, Becher, R. Adams – but there is a great dose of personal preference here (I'm not as personally interested in the post 'decisive moment' tradition as others – or of more emotionally assertive or journalistic perspectives don't diss me for this, just disagree). I'm putting a lot of emphasis on artists who posit a position, and continue to push at it's boundaries. Other names in the grid such as Baldessari and Wall and Eggleston are strong, but I'm anxiously looking for some of the younger artists to consolidate their gains.

Comment by Marc Freidus – March 21, 2007 @ [9:12 pm](#)

41. I don't know what's wrong with my bracket but somehow Frederick Sommer wins it all.

Comment by [Heyward Hart](#) – March 25, 2007 @ [8:10 pm](#)

42. Final 4.

Edward Western
Henri C. Bresson
Hiroshi Sugimoto
Diane Arbus

Comment by [Garry Trinh](#) – April 2, 2007 @ [1:09 am](#)

43. Henry Wessel Jr.
Lee Friedlander
Nicholas Nixon
Walker Evans

Comment by edward – April 2, 2007 @ [1:46 pm](#)

44. oh yeah...

Frank Gohlke

Comment by edward – April 2, 2007 @ [1:47 pm](#)

45. I must first admit to being pretty rusty on the bottom right quarter, but my final four are:

Gursky v Capa
Sugimoto v Ray

The opposing of Burtynsky vs Gursky in round one seemed perennially unfair to the younger contender. Similarly for Eggleston to come up against Capa in round two....

It seems unfair to place Capa against anyone really. He walked the semi and the final as well, all matches played in straight sets. With me as the umpire, his opponents were not just up against his photographs, they were up against the whole life of the man, the whole myth, the entire story.

For he is surely drinking champagne in heaven and looking on us all with angelic pity.....hopefully Cecil Beaton and Bill Brandt are up there with him as well, losing their bets.

RDP

Comment by [robert](#) – April 3, 2007 @ [9:23 am](#)

46. I haven't see the bracket, but no matter, Winoragnd, Friedlander, Evans and Kertesz in final four, Friedlander close over Kertesz in final to win it all. (Quite subjective, but tha't the point, no?)

Comment by Bennett Levine — April 7, 2007 @ [9:56 am](#)