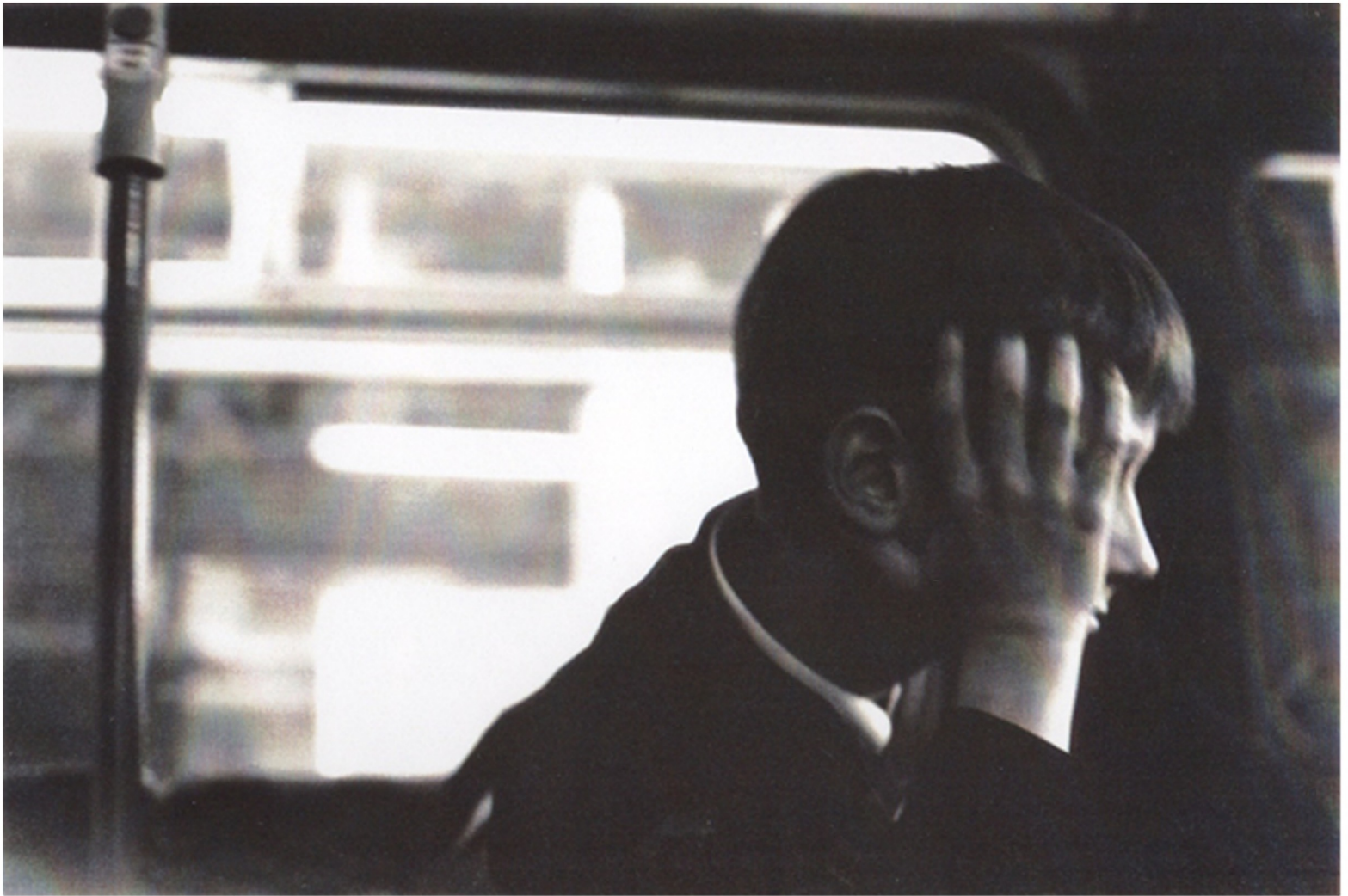


moments



100 photographs by john fraser

moments

100 photographs by

John Fraser

Published in eBook format by eBookit.com
<http://www.eBookit.com>

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ISBN: 9781456625634

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Cover design: John Fraser and Barbara Bickle.

Moments is for
Will Fraser and Findlay Muir

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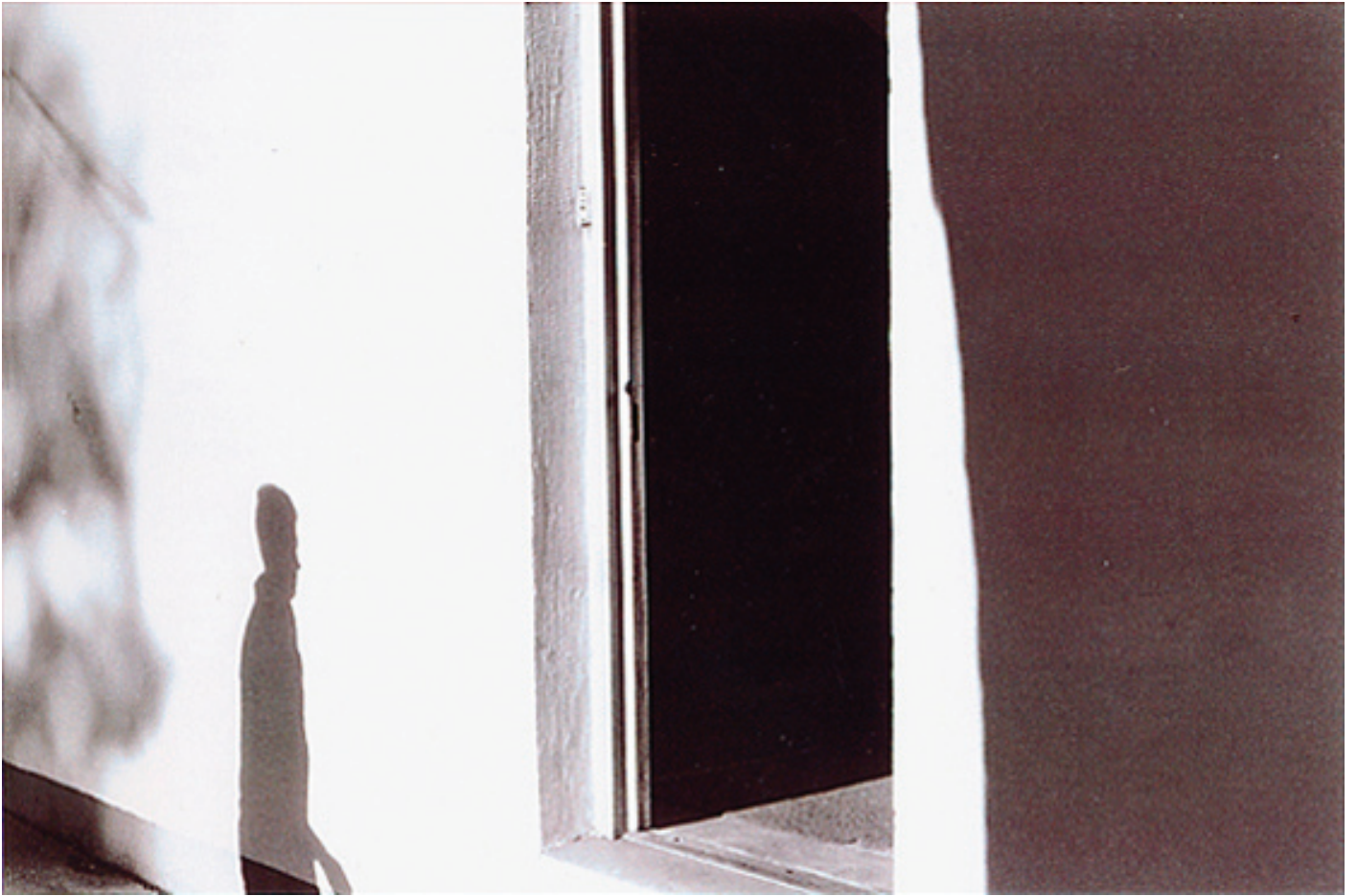
About the photographer

Fr, France. It, Italy. Mn, Minneapolis. NS, Nova Scotia. NY. UK.

prefatory



NS '95



NS '96

testament



Fr '64



Mn '60



Mn '59



NY '61



NY '61



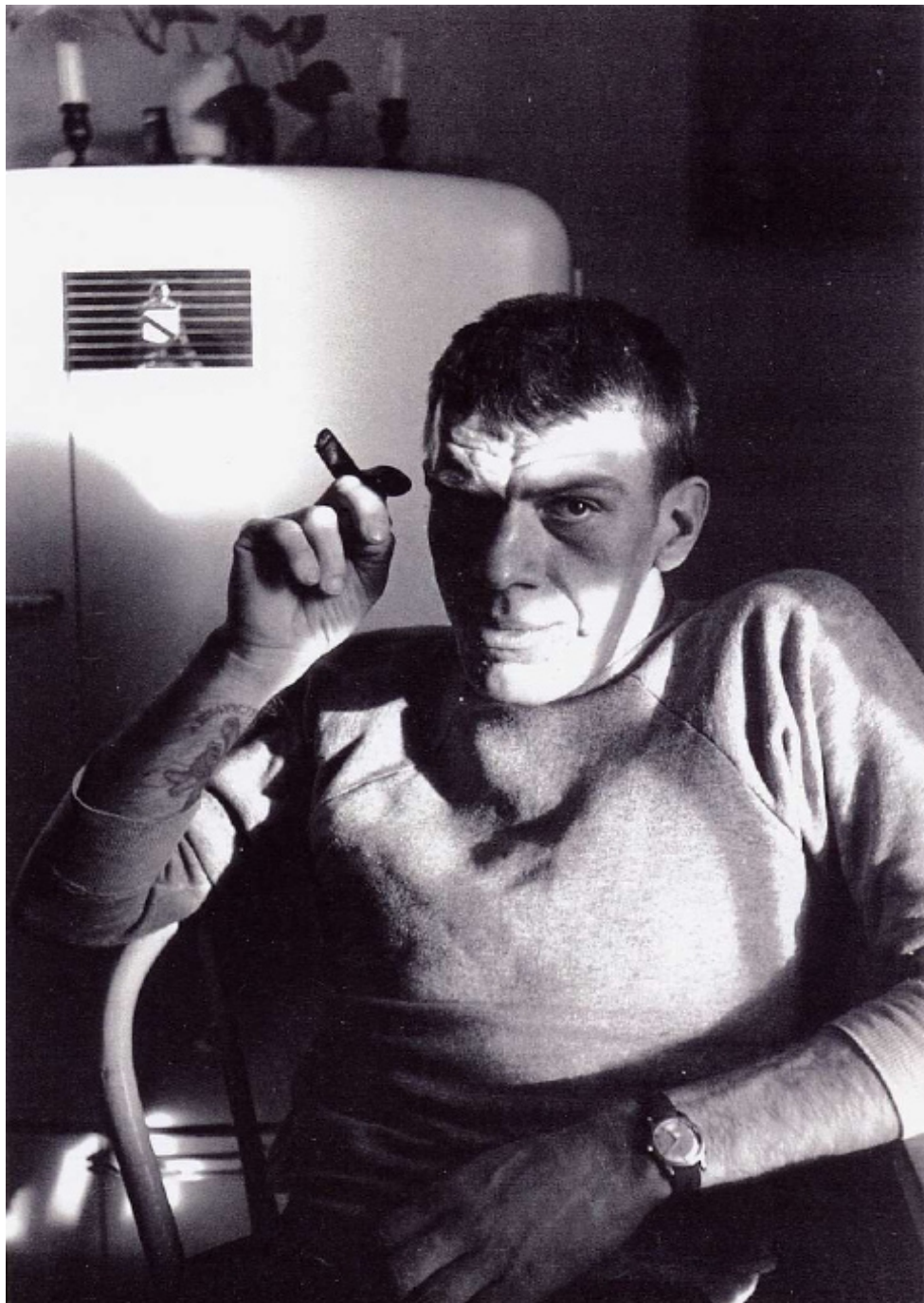
NY '61



Fr '62



UK '62

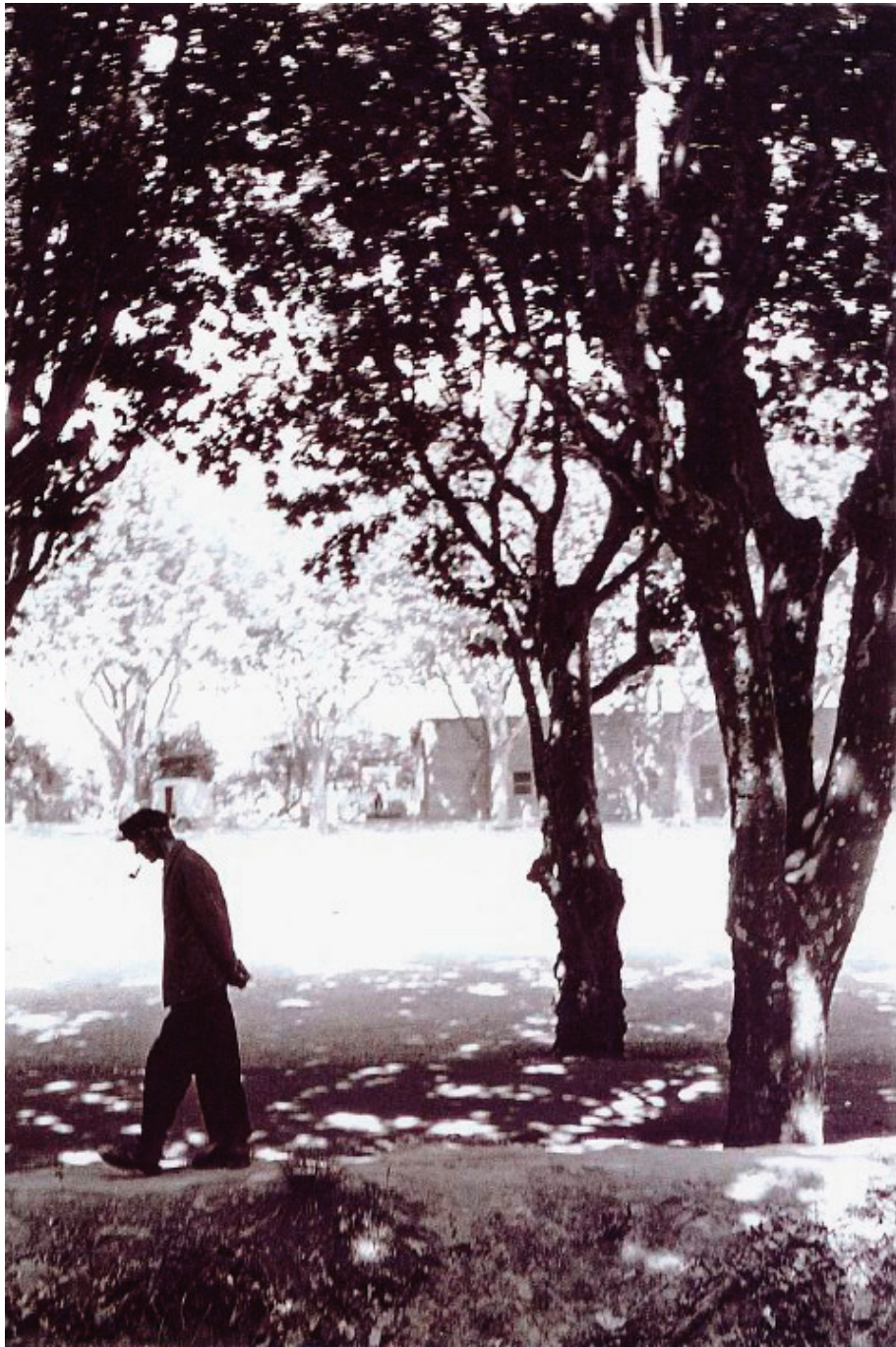


Mn '60



Mn '61

then



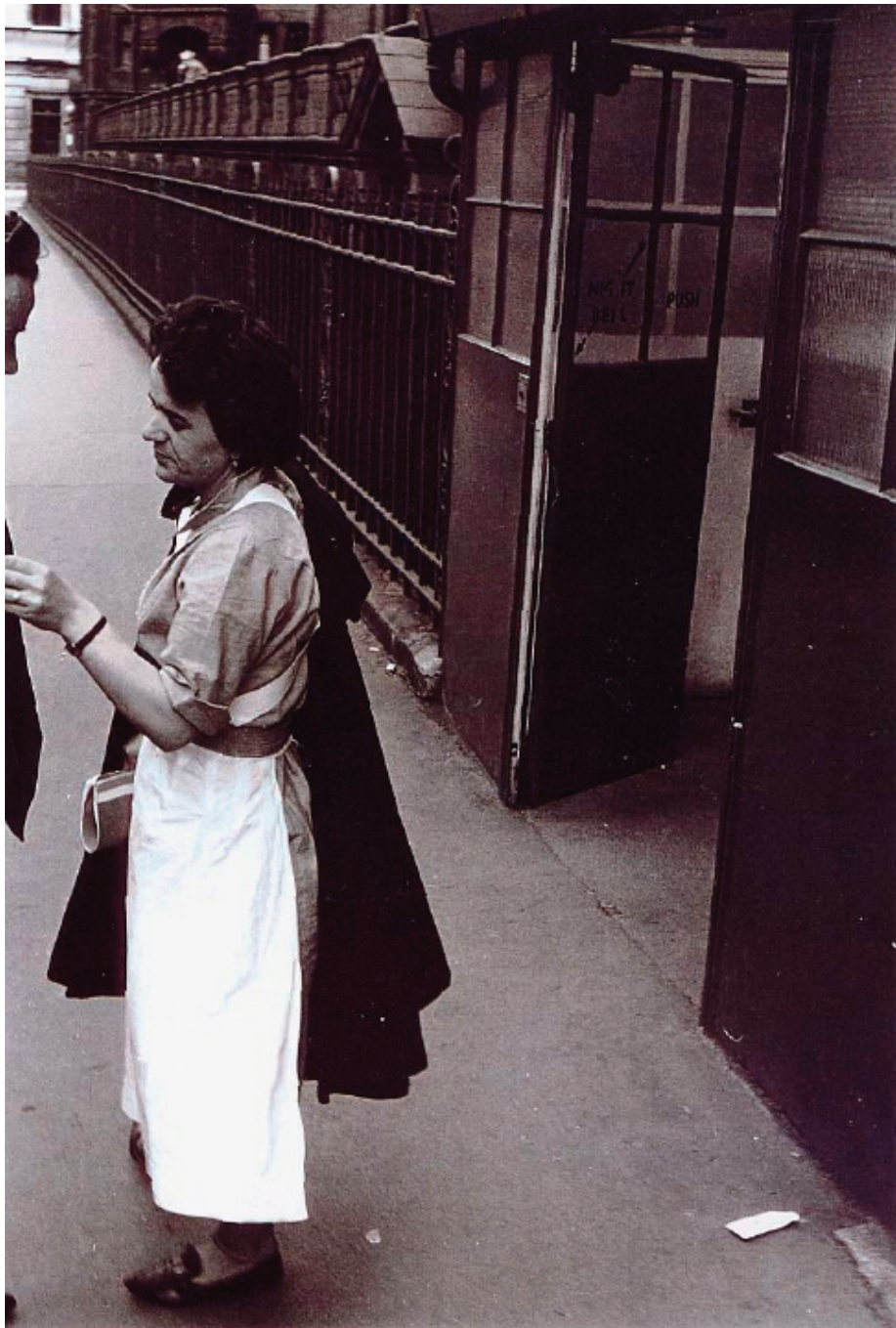
Fr '62



It '57



Fr '62



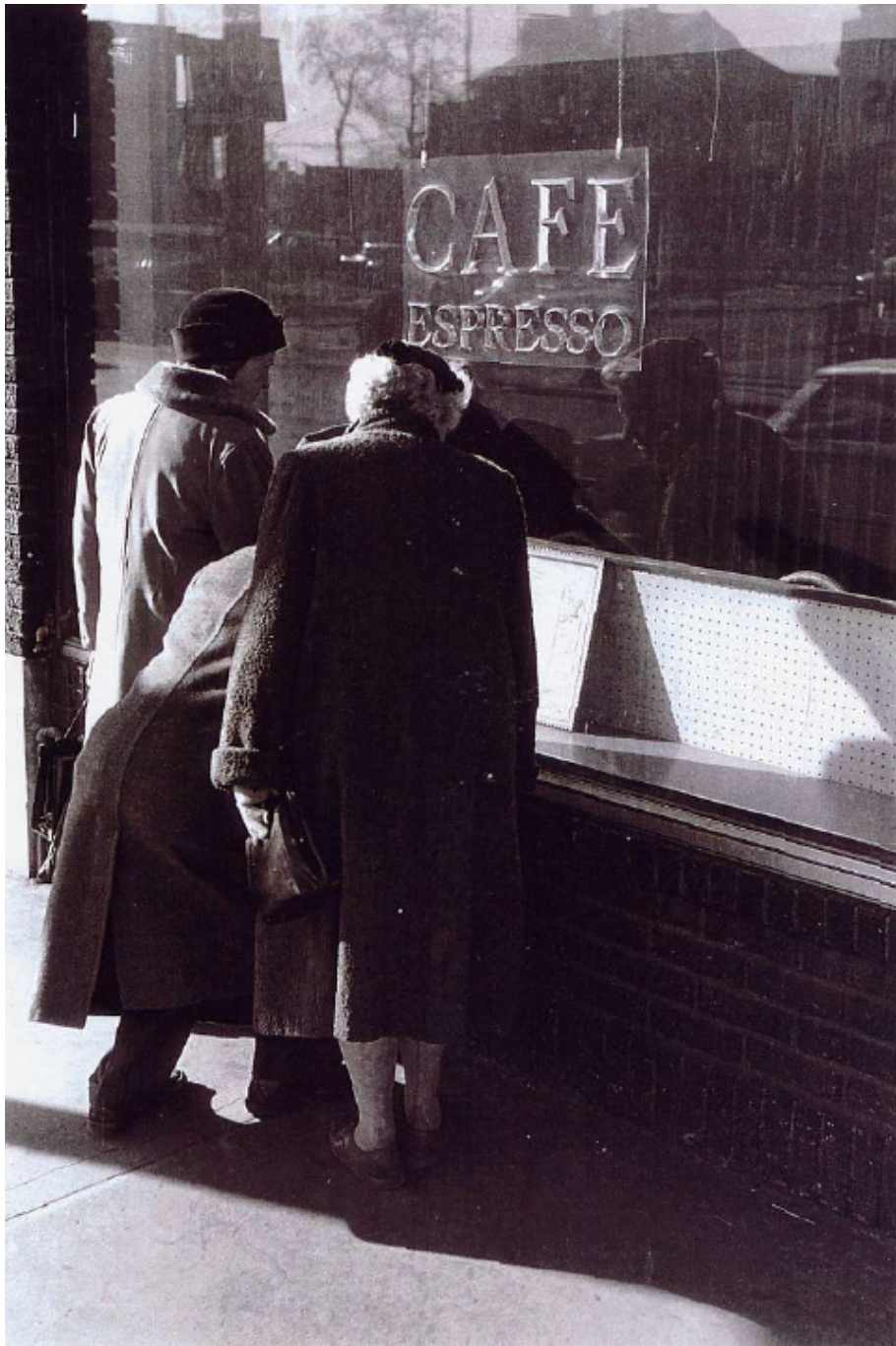
UK '62



NY '61



Fr '64



Mn '57



Mn '58



Mn '59



NS '62



NS '62

others



Mn '60



NS '61



UK '62



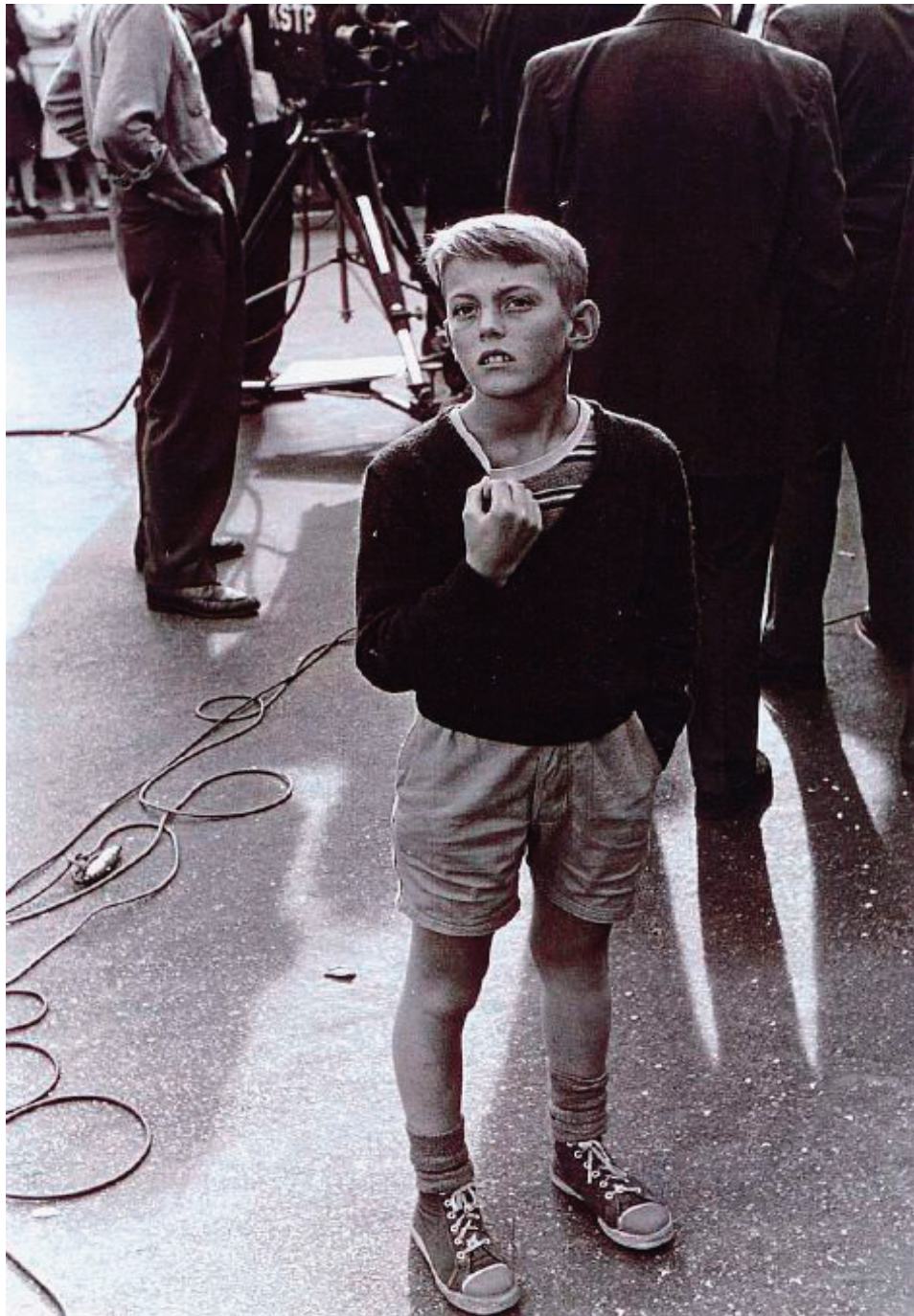
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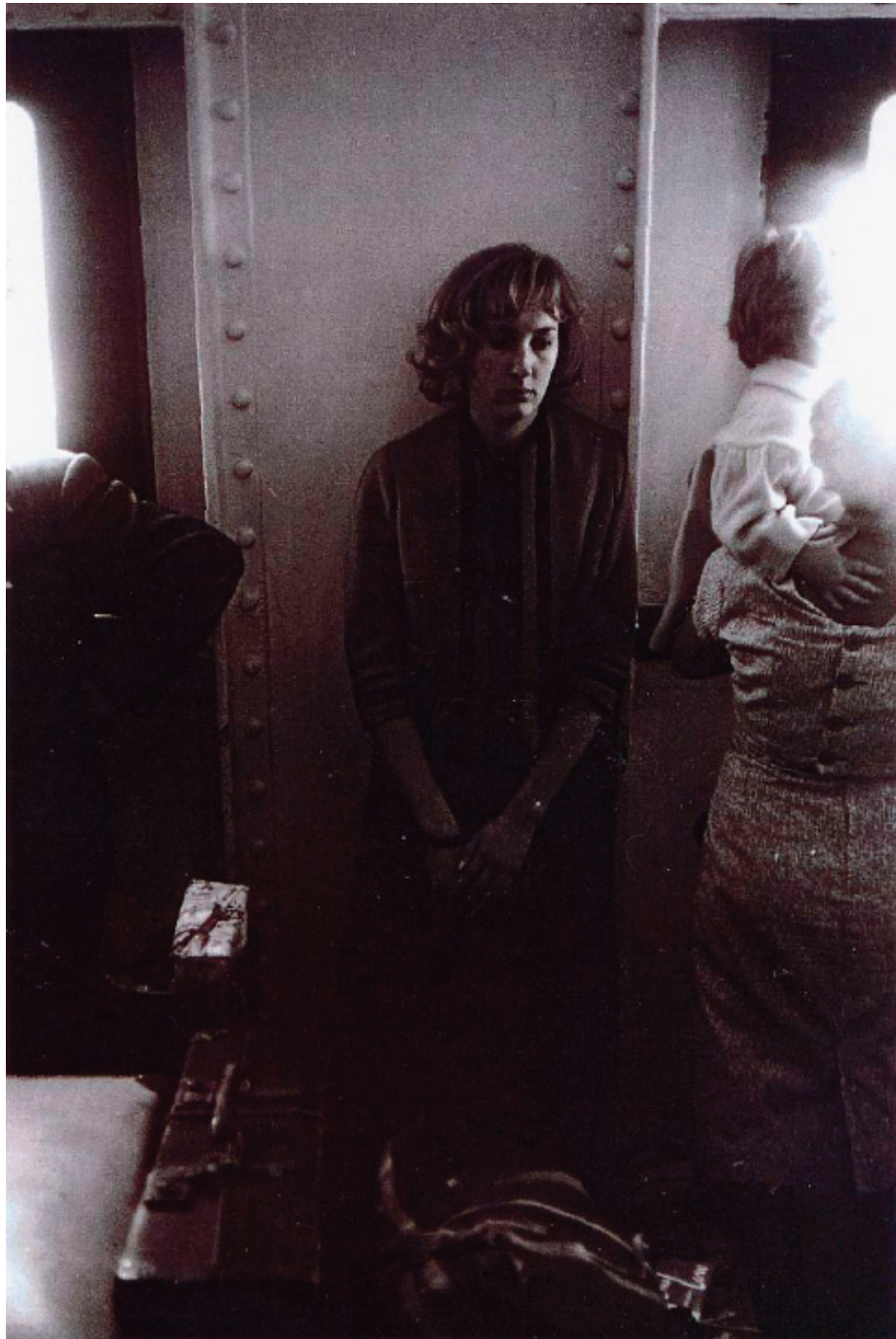
Mn '60



NY '61



Mn '60

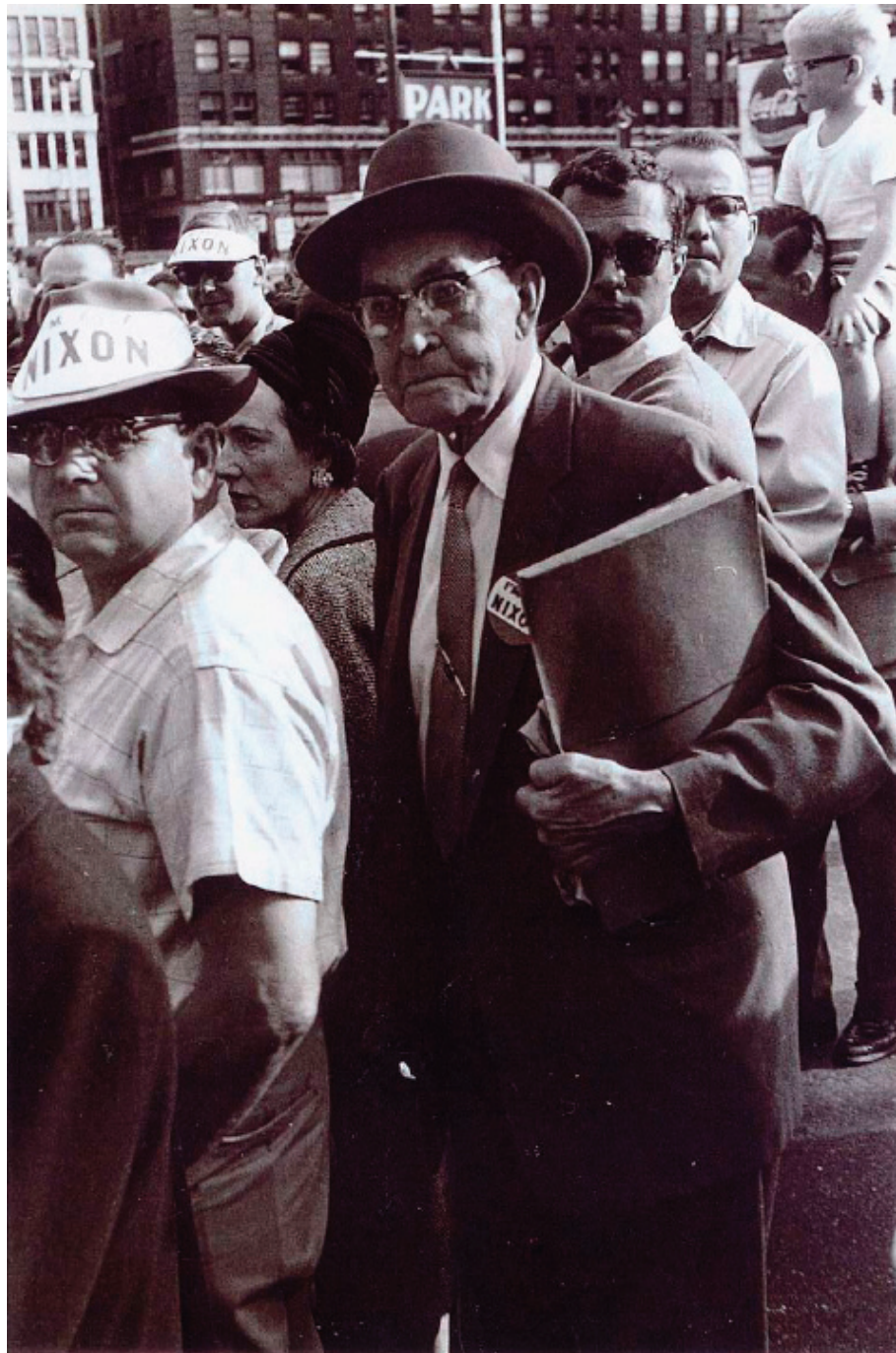


NY '61

campaign



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60



Mn '60

species



NS '95



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



NS '95



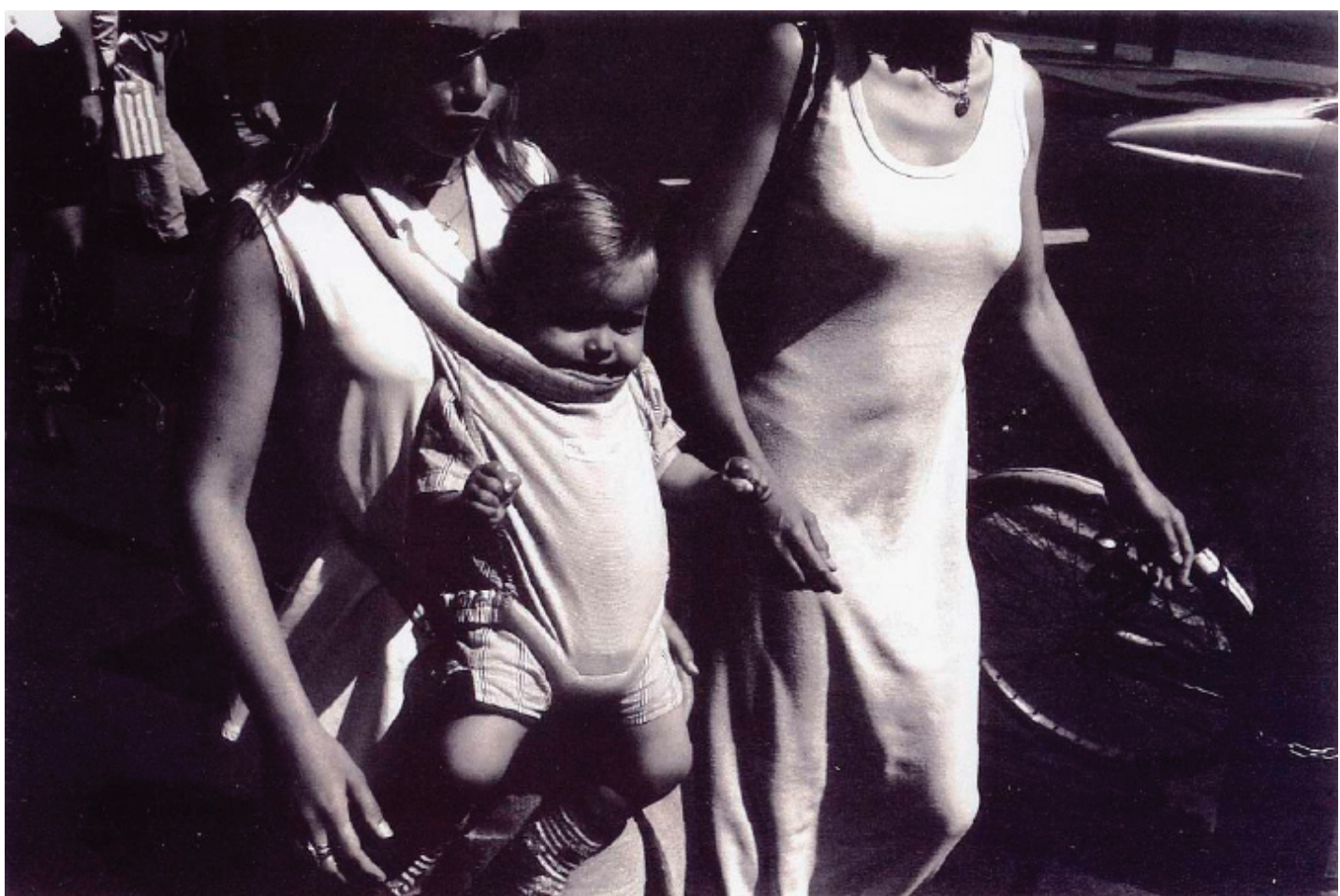
NS '96



UK '96



NS '96



UK '96

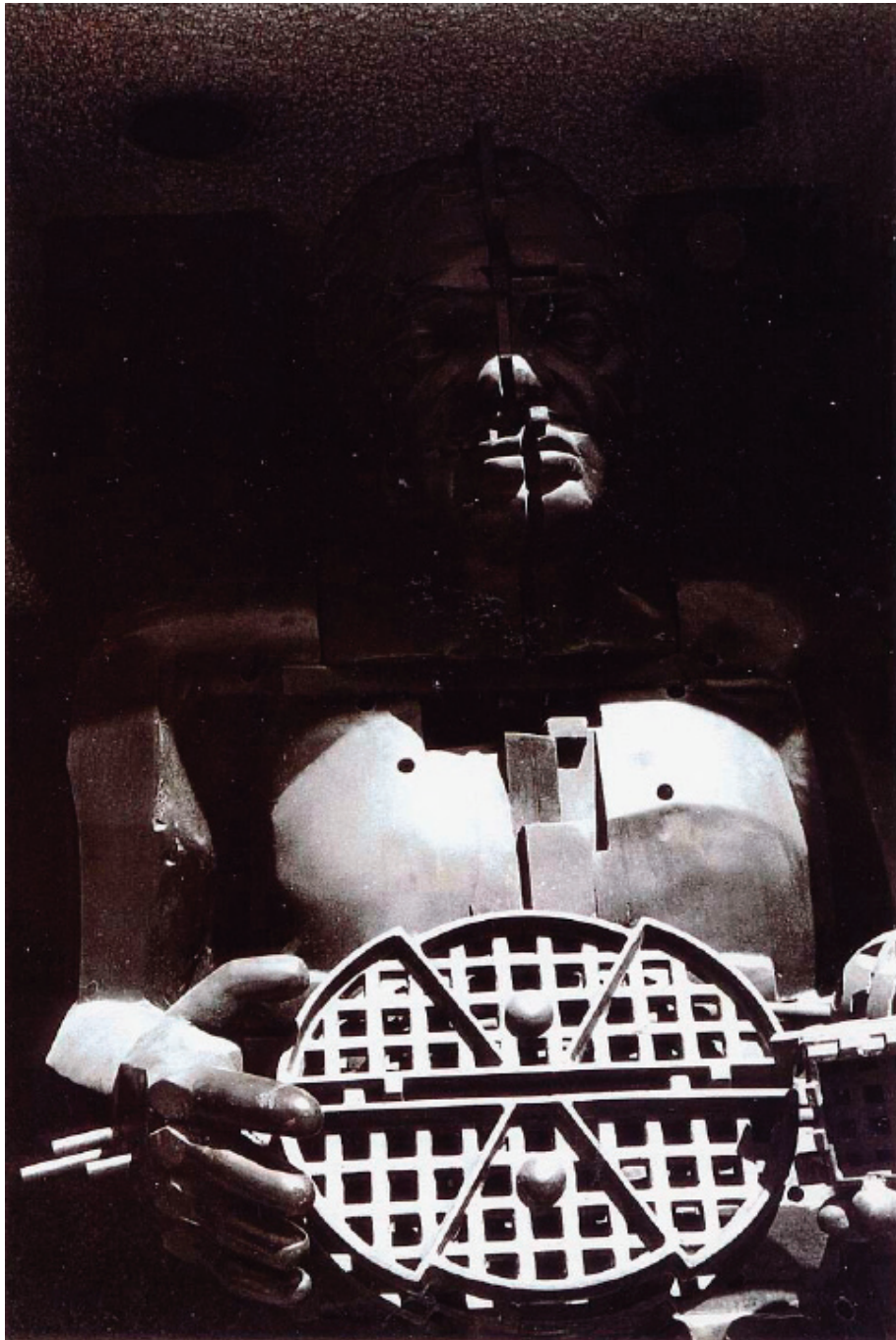


UK '96



NS '97

shadows



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96

postcards



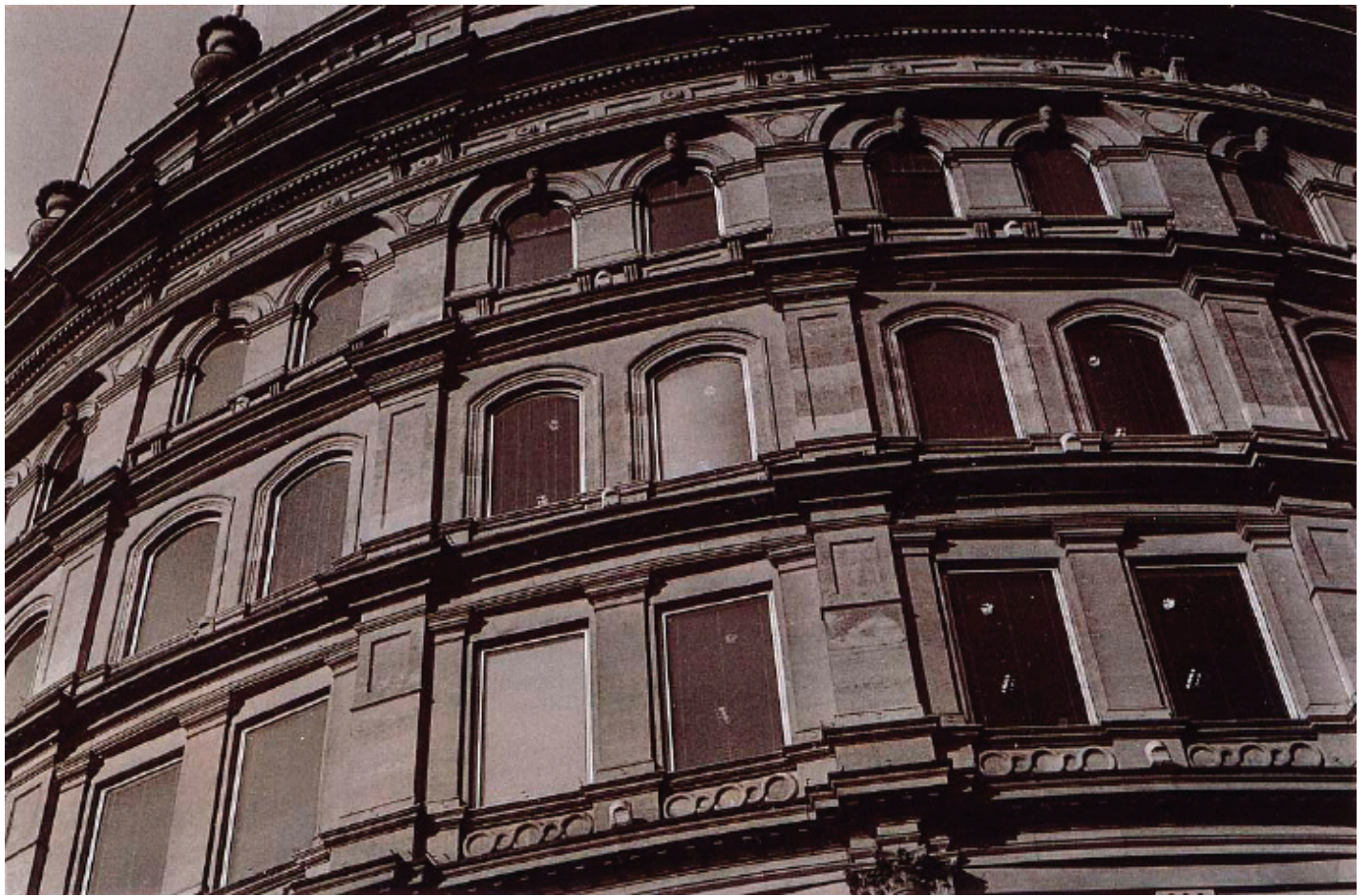
UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96



UK '96

erotics



NS '97



NS '97



NS '97



NS '97



NS '97



NS '97

girls



Fr '64



Mn '59



Fr '66



Fr '66

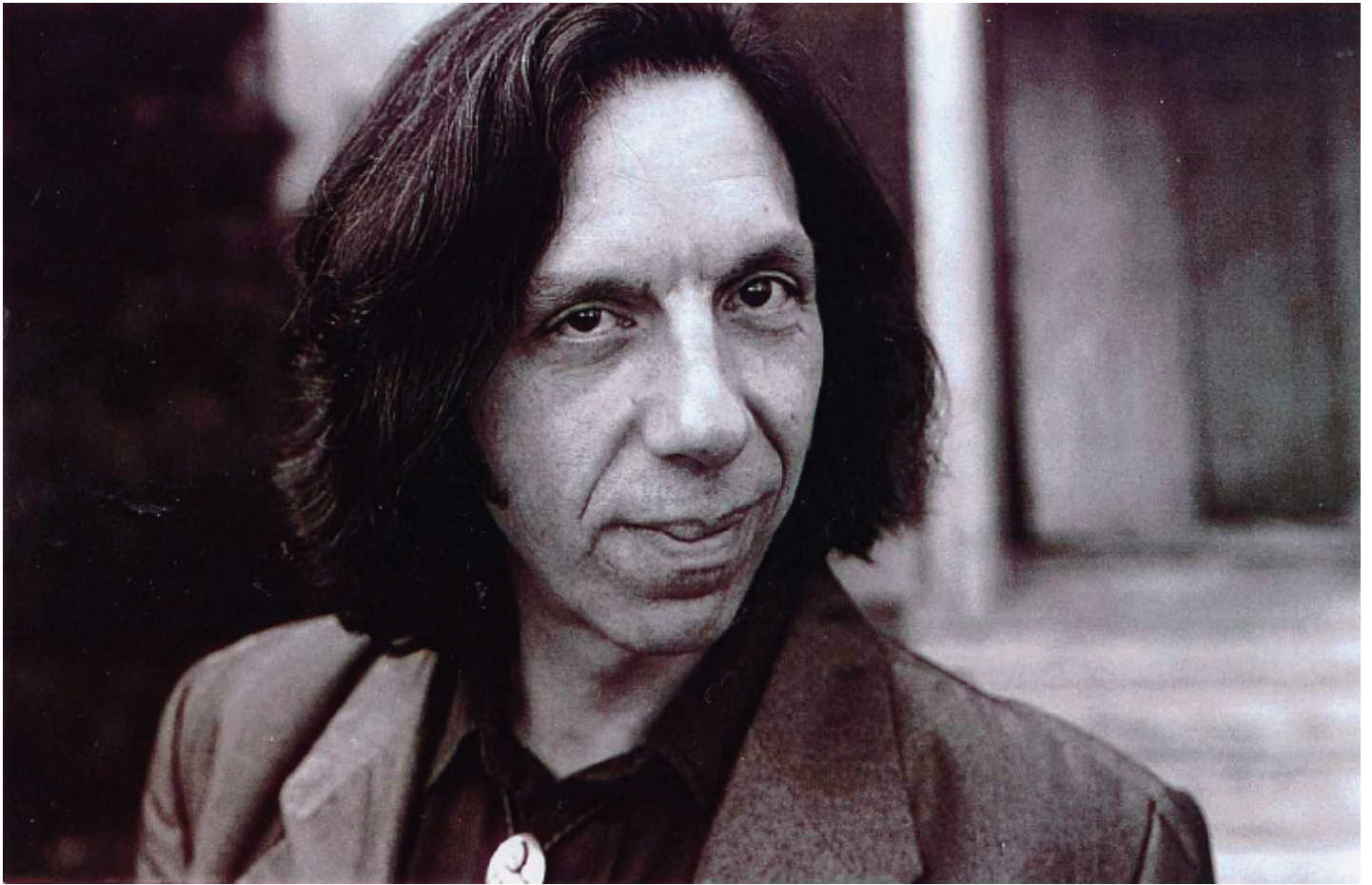


UK '62

blues



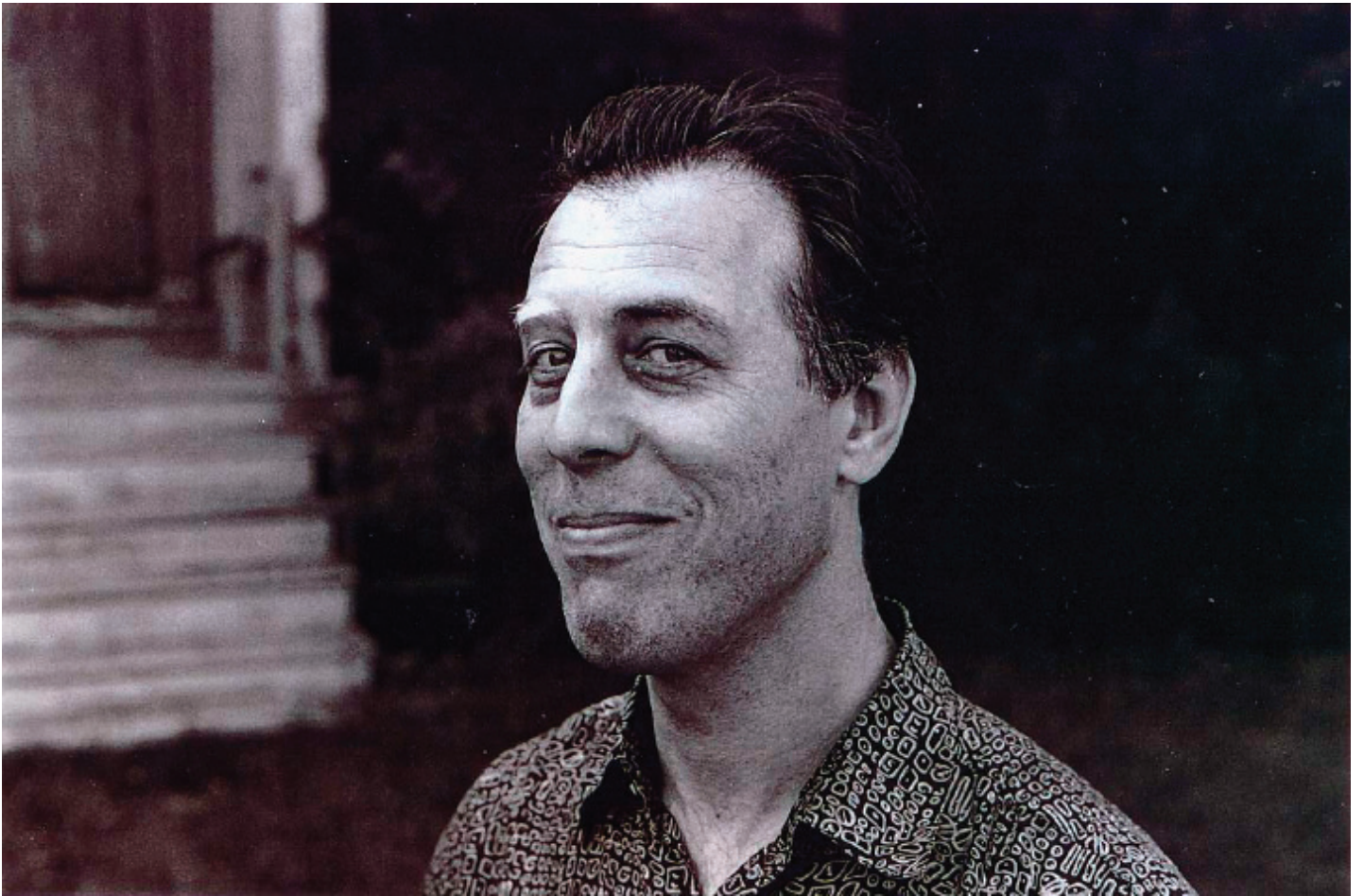
NS '99



NS '99



NS '99



NS '99

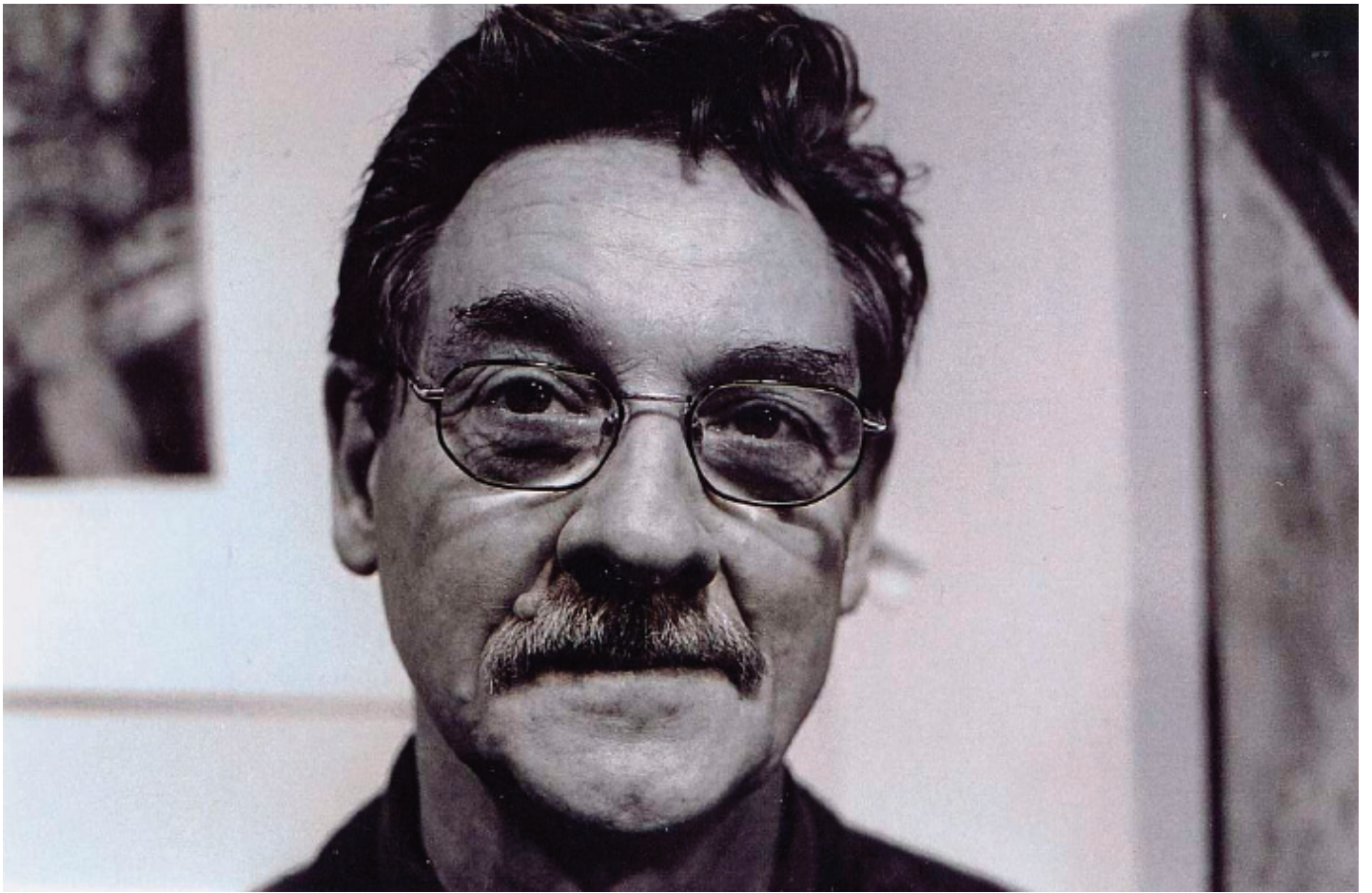


NS '99

selves



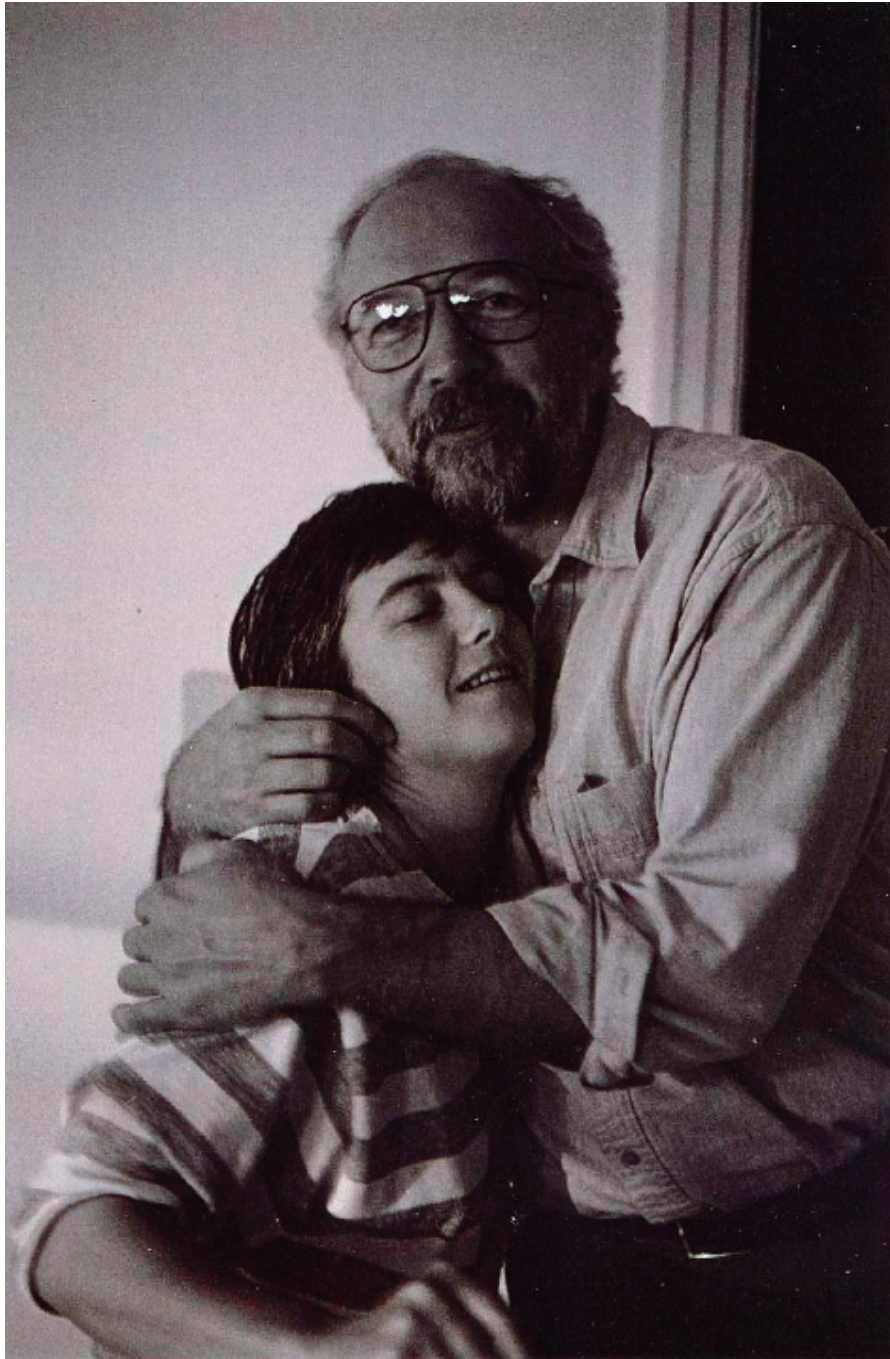
NS '96



NS '97



NS '96



NS '96



NS '96

artist



NS '67

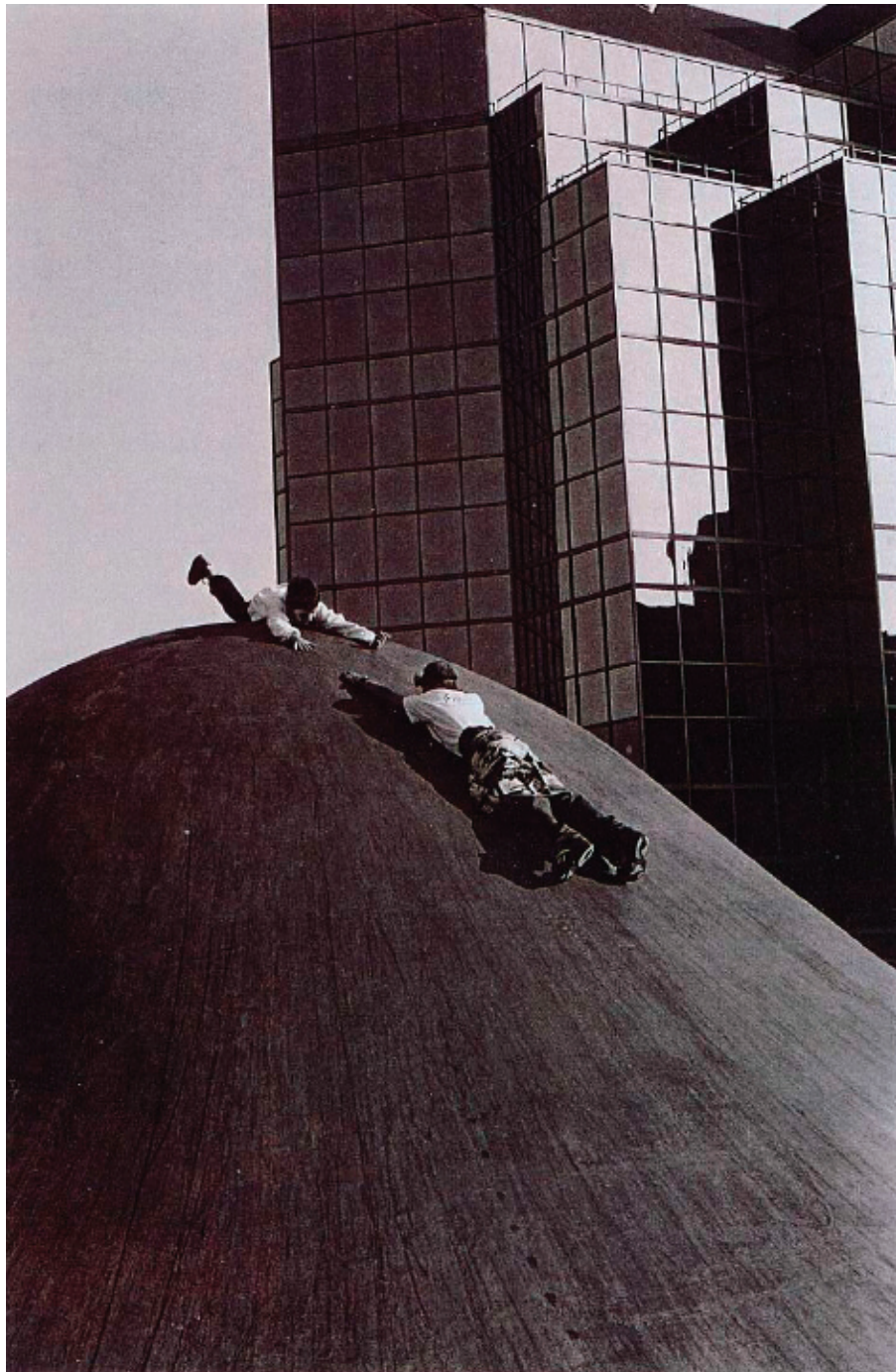


NS '67

sun



UK '62



NS '95



NS '96



NS '96



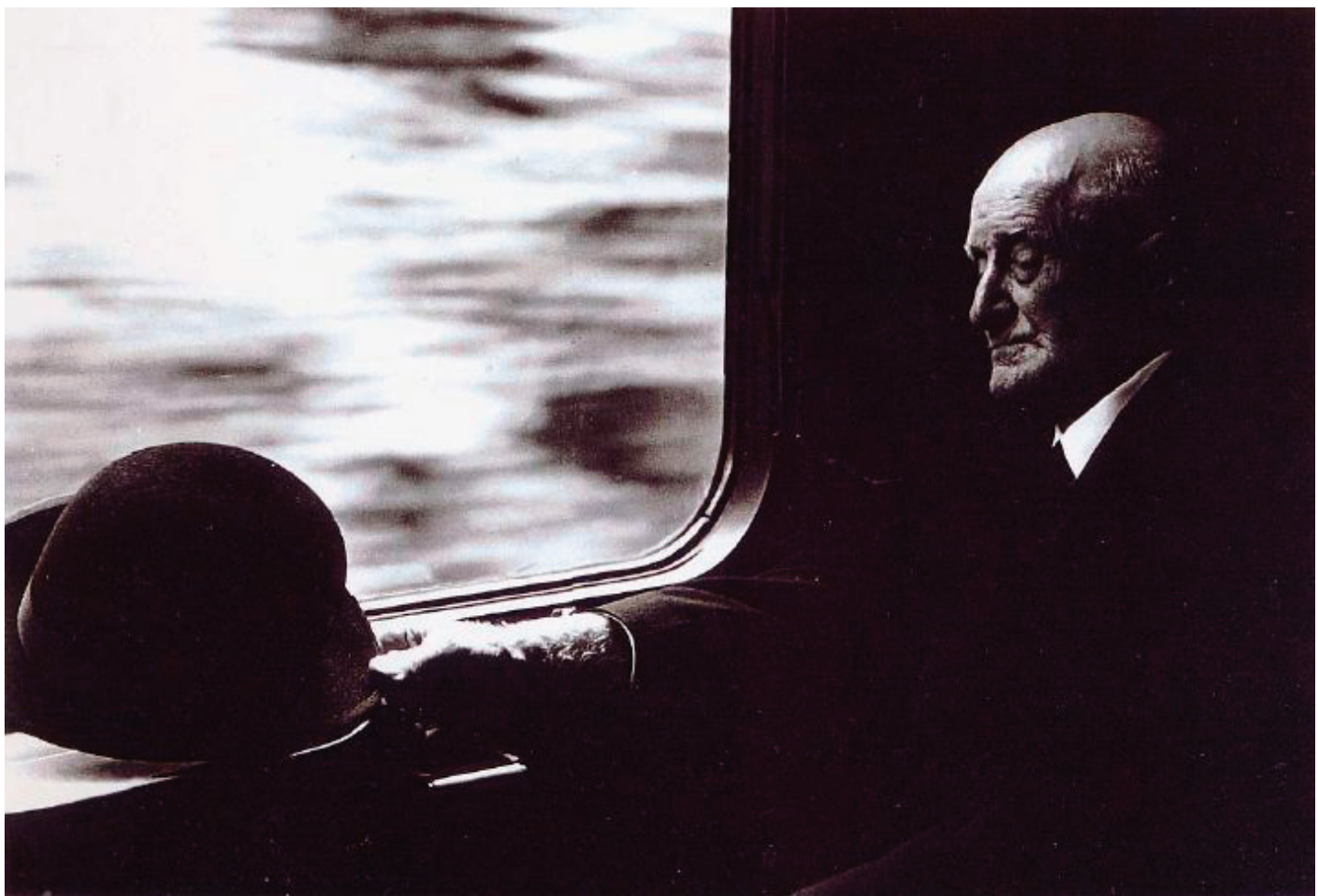
UK '96

Sun

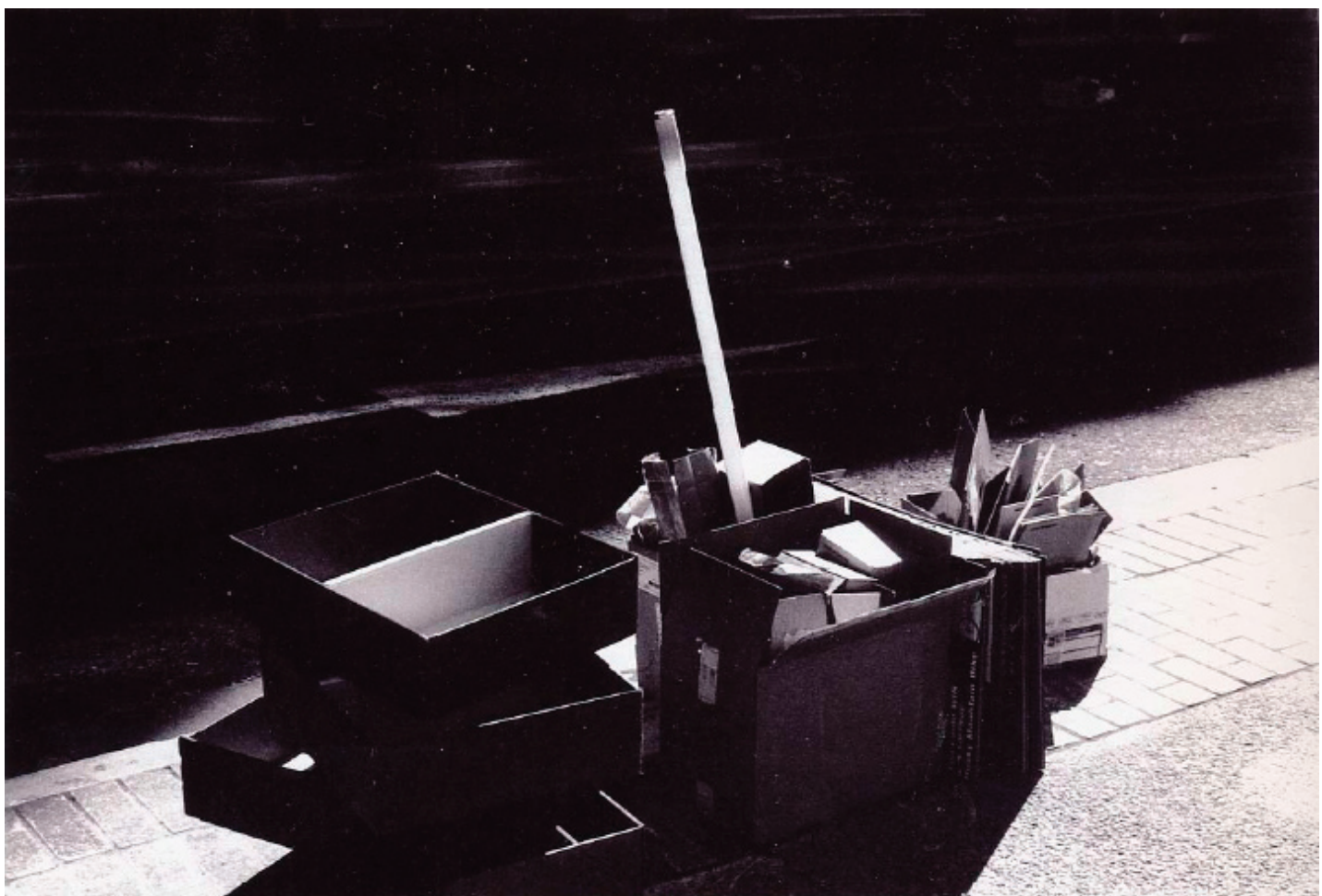
Photographs by John Fraser

A Throwaway Book

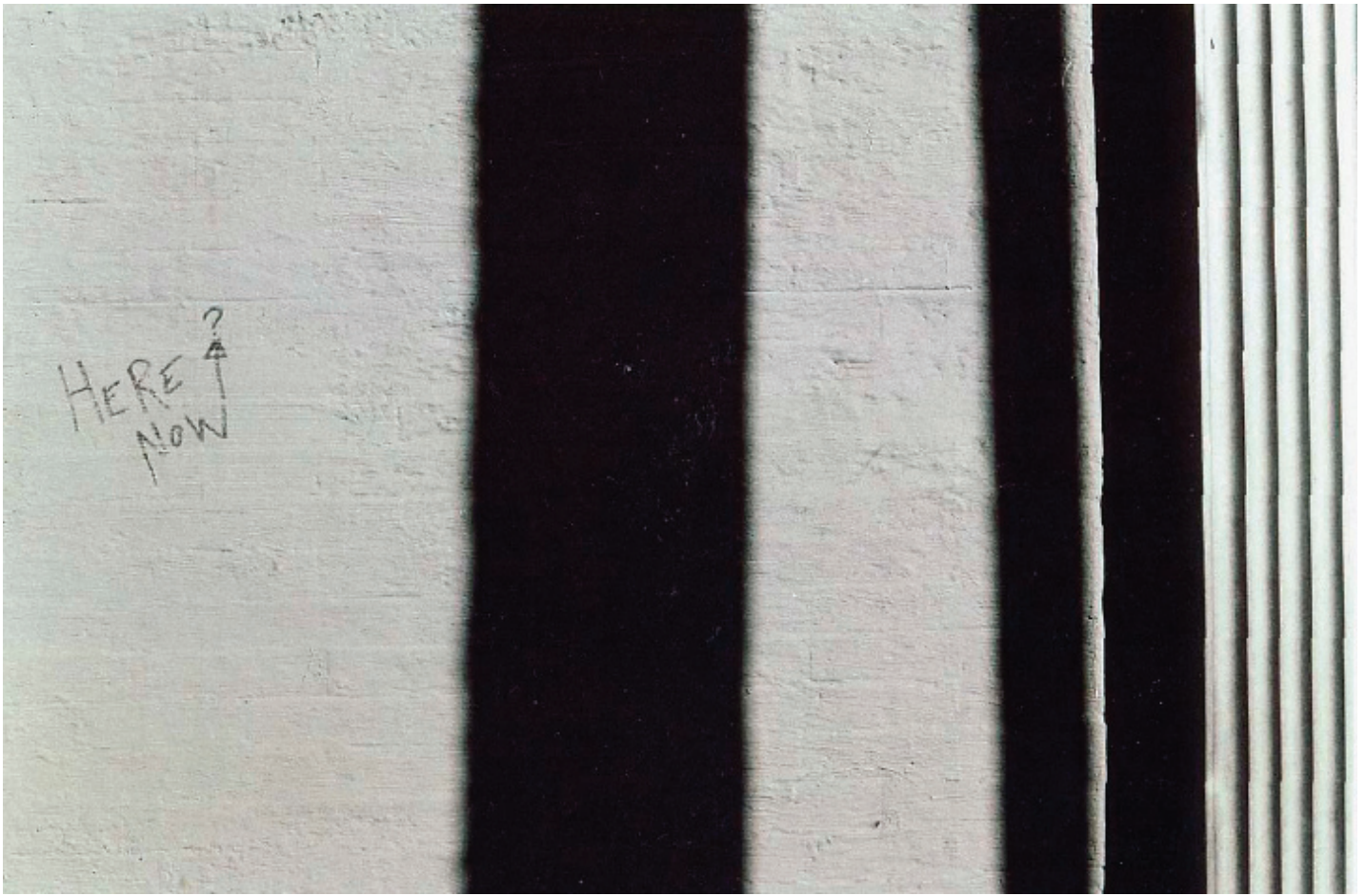
lagniappe



UK '62



NS '96



NS '96



NS '96

Moments: Afterword

I

I started doing photography seriously in 1956, kept at it for a dozen years or so, and returned to it in 1995 for five more. I am grateful for the encouragement, sometimes brief, sometimes extensive, some of it years ago, of a number of people, among them Carol Lind Geary, Allen Downs, Jerry Liebling, Jim Clark, Joselyn Grassby, Findlay Muir, Richard Robertson, Ian Colford, Collette Saunders, Dan O'Brien, George Georgakakos, and Rob and Joyce Stevenson.

Three debts go particularly deep: to Carol Hoorn Fraser, whose informed and generous eye was always there in the old days for the darkroom harvest; to Robert Eugene Wilcox, an exemplar of photographic integrity, who conveyed so much, so gently, in so few words; and to David McGimpsey, without whose enthusiasm a number of images wouldn't exist at all.

My thanks also to photographer Findlay Muir, whose liking for a number of my images encouraged me to persist with *Moments*, and to Will Fraser, who in the summer of 1999 gave me a new identity as a still photographer for a couple of documentaries that he was making.

When I began, the classic Leica was the most beautiful camera in the world for me, and Henri Cartier-Bresson was my idol. I was relieved when I learned later that he would sometimes shoot several hundred pics in a day. I'd assumed that those unforgettable images presented themselves to him like game whirring up with every step of the hunter.

II

“Snap shot--1. a hurried shot fired with little or no aim; quick, offhand shot.” Of course you may miss. I've taken acres of boring pictures. But without that split-second seizing of the moment, you won't get the ones that make it all worthwhile. And you have to be ready. Until those tiny rectangles are enlarged you won't know the exact expression on a face. A configuration had flickered before you, saying, “Take me!” Zen time.

Photos are prints, not windows; compositions in black and grey. And, like haiku, needing to be shared, co-creatively. Images can be near-identical, form and content sibling rivals, printing decisions multiple. Over the years, a long filtering. Some pictures stay alive and unimprovable, others fade, others again (re-viewed later) speak to you as they never did at the time.

Encounters, relationships, sometimes close to the horns. The photographer here, now, always, at this instant, tripping a shutter. Cartier-Bresson, Riis, Evans, Brassai,

Lange, Kertesz, Weegee, Klein, Frank, Arbus, others, others. A major tradition. Indispensable.

Of course you have to be a bit crazy--obsessed with seeing, discovering, uncovering, horrified by the thought of losing the unique moment from timidity or fumbling. Terminal scopophilia! And when the sun comes out, where else do you head but to the darkroom, where the light you left behind gets hyper-distilled under the enlarger?

Camera obscura: “a dark chamber with a lens or opening through which an image is projected onto an opposite surface.” The primal thrill—being inside, in the dark, looking at the outside world miniaturized and silent on a table around which you’re standing with others.

All this was pre-digital, of course.

III

I began in 1956 with Carol’s Argus C3, graduated the following year to a used Leica IIIB with the classic 50mm f3.5 Elmar lens, and traded that in in 1961 for a IIIG with a 50mm f2 Summitar lens. When I returned to photography in 1995, it was with a Canon EOS Rebel with the Canon EF 50mm f1.8 lens, a lovely camera. My basic film in the Fifties and Sixties was Kodak Plus-X, in the Nineties the much improved Tri-X. I used available light and did my own printing. There was no cropping.

IV

In 1998, in a valedictory spirit, I went through my black-and-white photos, picked twenty-five of them, and had them printed in a book of my designing called *Testament*. Roxanne Smith, herself a photographer, did the photocopying with me at Carsand-Mosher Photographic, whose darkroom facilities I was using. Wayne Dickson printed the textual parts at Kinko's Copy Centre. Twenty-five numbered copies were made, with semi-stiff paper covers and spiral bindings, I gave most of them away to friends.

Later that year, and on into 1999, I officially registered myself as Throwaway Books, and did twenty more little books using the same basic design, this time having everything handled at Kinko's—the textual parts by Wayne, the images by Karen Vincent. The Xerox machine was set for automatic colour copying, which produced the clearest images with the fewest difficulties and resulted in some interesting aleatory toning. Ten copies was the normal printing. I gave a lot of those copies away too.

In 2004 I began putting sets on my website, www.jottings.ca (Visuals). Almost all the images here come from there.

2004 - 2015

fraserj@eastlink.ca.

About the Photographer (1928 -

John Fraser was born in North London, went to Oxford, moved to the USA thanks to Mike and Norma Zwerin, did a PhD in English at the University of Minnesota (where he and the artist Carol Hoorn got married), and taught for thirty-some years in Nova Scotia. Since then he has created the large website www.jottings.ca, and published several eBooks.

In Minneapolis, thanks to Carol's Art Department contacts, he acquired the rudiments of photography. He used the Photography Department's darkroom. Jerry Liebling and Allen Downs occasionally glanced at prints of his. He gained the friendship of Robert Eugene Wilcox, that man of total humorous integrity who ended his life after an operation took photography away from him. Irwin Klein, also dying tragically, was a fellow graduate student, but they spoke only occasionally, and never about photography. Fraser became acquainted with the work of Strand, Evans, Atget, Frank. Later he looked at lots of work by others, thanks to Harvey Zucker's wonderful SoHo bookstore A Photographer's Place.

Downs and Liebling used a shot of his to accompany a *NY Times Magazine* piece about their satirical brief documentary *Pow Wow* showing the University marching band practicing in the rain. Jerry invited him to bring his Leica to a slaughter-house shoot that fell through at the time. Later, Fraser's "Atget and the City" (1968) "brought

a new level of scholarship to the discussion of Atget's work" (John Szarkowski, MOMA). The *Yale Review* published his "Photography and the City." Several of his handmade Throwaway Books are in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

He gave up photography at the end of the Sixties because of the demands of an academic career. Twenty-five years later, acquiring the lovely lightweight Canon EOS Rebel and being able to use the excellent Carsand-Mosher darkroom facilities gave him a new lease on photographic life for a few years.

Over time he took lots and lots of pics with insufficient content or botched form, and wasted acres of printing paper. But the 50mm lens meant that you couldn't count on the camera to create an illusion of energy, and he didn't crop or do fancy printing. Occasionally content and form came together, and the felt life was there that it was all about.

2015