

# M+B



## BOOK REVIEW: DRIVE

By Benjamin Shahrabani  
January 9, 2015



**The book:** Drive  
**Author:** Andrew Bush  
**Pages:** 146, hardcover

Andrew Bush is an artist, but instead of using a brush, his preferred implement is a camera lens. Born in 1956, in St. Louis, Missouri, Bush studied the craft of photography at Yale University, and today his work can be found in many major collections around the world. From 1989 through 1997, Bush took a series photographs of people driving on Los Angeles's roads, a city well known for its car culture, and other parts of the United States. The collection, known as the Vector Portraits, is published in his book Drive.

Bush captures his subjects, ordinary citizens [and local famous-for-nothing celeb Angelyne!], driving their cars down the road. For the most part, the cars' drivers and occupants are completely oblivious and unaware that someone is observing them through his lens—each photograph was taken from a camera mounted to the passenger side of Bush's own car, often traveling at speed. Consequently, each photograph is taken in the same format. The premise sounds pretty simple, and unassuming, but what makes Drive special is that each photo is truly unique. Yes, Bush captures the same tableau each time, but every detail aside from the format is different: the people, the cars, their expressions. Each composition is accompanied by a caption—"Couple (and children) going northwest at 37 mph on West Grand Avenue in Sun City, Arizona, on a Friday evening in January 1992" for example. Those are the facts, but what about the particulars? One can gaze upon each image and see them. Some people look like they enjoyed having their picture taken—the girl with her eyes closed blowing a kiss. The guy with speakers in his convertible. Others less so. Even so, the images are timeless, each driver caught in an unguarded moment, engaged in a relatable, mundane task—driving.

The book is capped off with an essay by culture critic Patt Morrison, as well as an insightful interview of the author by Jeff L. Rosenheim, curator of photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he discusses the portraits—how people reacted when they realized they were being photographed, how and why he selected them, and more technical aspects of the project. The cars portrayed in Drive are varied, and there are some interesting ones, but you're not buying this book for the cars. You're buying this book for the people driving them, and the moments in their lives immortalized on America's asphalt.