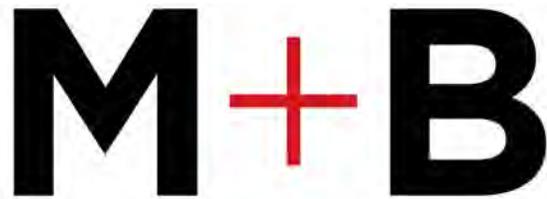


JOSEPH SZABO

Press Pack



JOSEPH SZABO

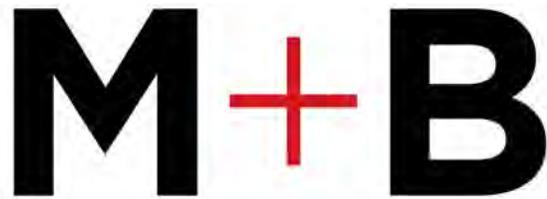
BORN 1944
Lives and works in Los Angeles

EDUCATION

1968 MFA | Pratt Institute, New York, New York

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 *Coming of Age in America: The Photography of Joseph Szabo*, The Heckscher Museum of Art, New York
- 2010 *Jones Beach*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Jones Beach, Gitterman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2008 *Jones Beach*, Michael Hoppen Gallery, London, UK
- 2007 *TEENAGE*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
- 2005 *TEENAGE*, Michael Hoppen Gallery, London, UK
- 2003 *TEENAGE*, Colette, Paris, FR
TEENAGE, Paris Photo, Louvre, Paris, FR
- 2002 *Jews of Brooklyn*, Long Island University, Brookville, NY
- 2001 *Jones Beach*, Firehouse Gallery, Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY
- 1993 *Jones Beach*, Long Island University, Salena Gallery, Los Island, NY
- 1988 *Almost Grown*, International Photography Hall of Fame & Museum, Oklahoma City
- 1986 Sea Cliff Gallery, Sea Cliff, NY
- 1983 SOHO Gallery, New York, NY
- 1979 *Almost Grown*, Drew University, Madison, JK
- 1978 *Almost Grown*, International Center of Photography, New York, NY
Almost Grown, Jorgensen Gallery, University of Connecticut, CT



SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 *Car Culture: Art and the Automobile*, The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY
- 2012 *Portrayal/Betrayal*, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA
- 2000 *Presumed Innocent*, Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, FR
- 1984 *Recent Acquisition*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
- 1983 *10th Anniversary Exhibition*, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey
- 1982 *10th Anniversary Exhibition*, Mid-Town Y Gallery, New York, NY
Perceptions, National Art Alliance, New York, NY
- 1980 *American Vision 1980*, N.Y.U. Galleries, New York, New York
- 1979 Venezia '79 Biennial, Venice, Italy
- 1975 *Coming of Age in America*, Mid-Town Y Gallery, New York, New York
- 1974 *Artists of Suffolk County*, Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York

MONOGRAPHS

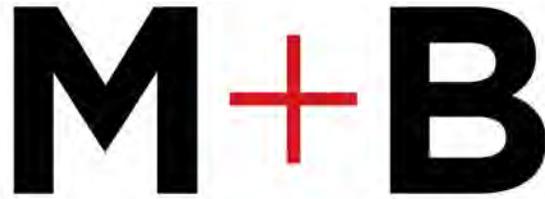
- 2010 Jones Beach, by Joseph Szabo, Abrams Books
- 2003 TEENAGE, by Joseph Szabo, Greybull Press
- 1978 Almost Grown, by Joseph Szabo, Harmony Books

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- 2014 *A Social Portrait in Writing*
- 2013 *Graphite Interdisciplinary Journal of the Arts*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2016 Woo, Kin. "Almost Grown," Dazed & Confused, August 8, 2016
"The International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum (IPHF) Announces 2016 Inductees – Briding Photography's Pioneering Past with its Fantastic Future," Yahoo, August 19, 2016



Lowry, Rachel. "A Day at the Beach: The Photographs That Moved Them Most," TIME LightBox, August 12, 2016

Weitekamp, Rossana. "From Malverne to MoMA: An Interview with Joseph Szabo," Malverne Herald, January 14, 2016

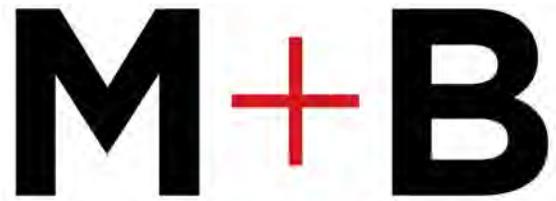
- 2014 "Joseph Szabo: Young at Heart," Huck Magazine, Visual Essay No. 12, September 8
- 2015 Bengal, Rebecca. "Why Joseph Szabo's Rolling Stones Fans Matters to Fashion, and Beyond: The Photographer on How He Gets the Picture," Vogue, May 22, 2015
Soccimarro, Antonio. "Almost Grown," Forget Them, 2015
Wagley, Catherine. "Rolling Stones Fans: Joseph Szabo," Hunger TV, April 9, 2015
- 2012 "Coming of Age in America: The Photography of Joseph Szabo," TIME Lightbox, January 12, 2012
- 2010 "Jones Beach," Dazed & Confused, 2010
- 2008 "Jones Beach," London Sunday Times Magazine, July 2008
- 2003 "TEENAGE," Vanity Fair, New York, November 2003
"TEENAGE," Numero Homme, Paris, September 2003
"TEENAGE," PDN, New York, November 2003
- 2002 "TEENAGE," Doingbird #3, Australia
- 2000 "Sophia Coppola's Photography Collection," Les Inrockuptibles, September 26, 2000
- 1987 "Mothers and Daughters," Aperture, 1987
Silverman, Ruth. "Athletes: Photographs 1860-1986," Knopf
- 1982 "Photographic Children," Time-Life Library of Photography
- 1981 "The Summer Show," Camera Arts
- 1977 "The Family of Children," Ridge Press

AWARDS

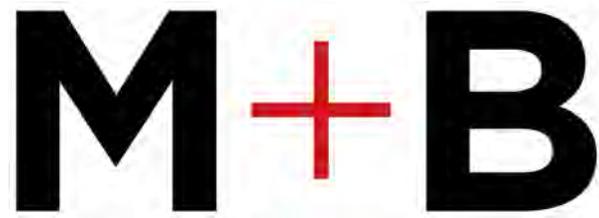
- 1999 PIEA
- 1984 Photography Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts

COLLECTIONS

International Center of Photography



Metropolitan Museum of Art
Museum of Modern Art
Bibliothèque National in Paris
Brooklyn Museum
Hofstra University
Center for Creative Photography
George Eastman House Yale University



JOSEPH SZABO

Press and Press Releases

Almost Grown

Photography Joseph Szabo
Interview Kin Woo



When Joseph Szabo turned his lens on students at Malverne High in the 1970s, he offered a timeless glimpse into the pleasures and pains of awkward adolescence. Uncovering this world of yearning love notes and secret glances once more, he presents unseen images from the era proving why, in the words of Cameron Crowe, “nothing lasts forever – except high school”

Opposite page: teenage guy sitting on school steps waiting for next class, 1975. This page: teenagers coming to school from lunch break, 1977



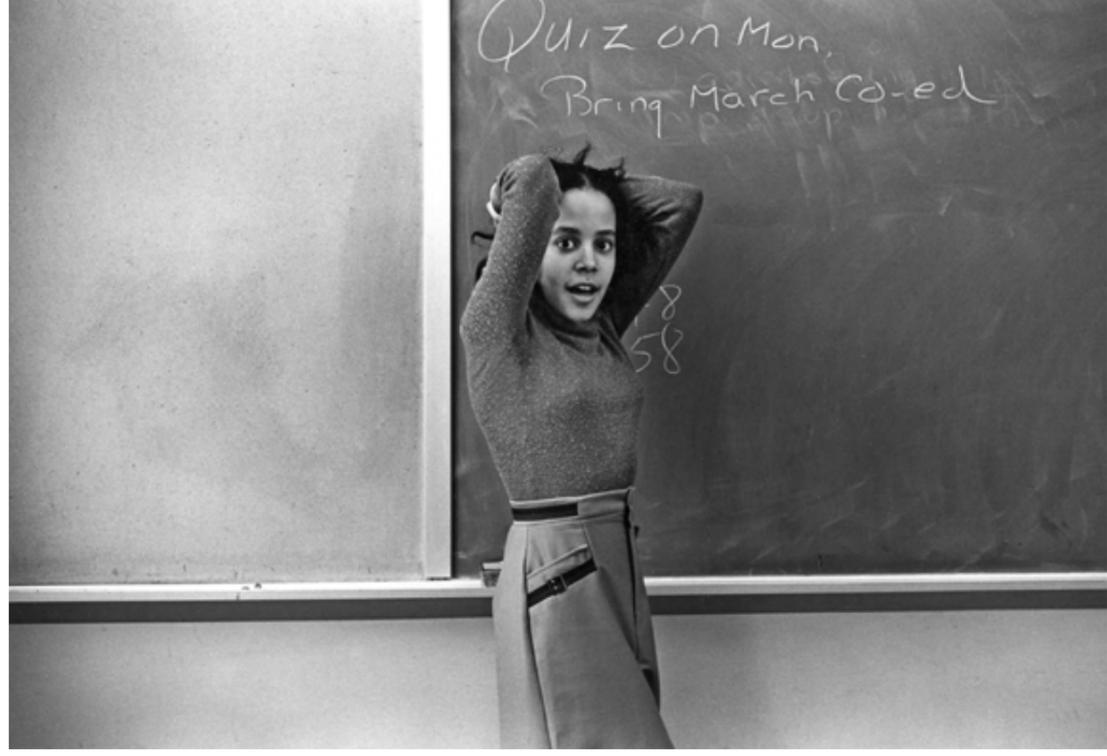
“When I was an art teacher in New York in the early 70s, I came to the conclusion that I had to connect with the students in order to be a good teacher. I was always there with a camera. I would have lunch and then I would go out and photograph. If I had a free period I’d be out there with the students, talking with them, photographing them. I would go out on a Friday night with some of the guys, and they knew that whatever I saw, whatever I photographed, it stayed just with us, and I wasn’t going to tell anybody about it. That started the whole process.

At this time there was a big rock’n’roll revolution. Students were listening to The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and all the many groups that were out there. That music certainly informed their lives, and when I started the photography classes at Malverne High School, I realised we were going to be in a dark room most of the time, printing pictures, developing negatives. So I had a radio on in the background. Listening to their music, I started to understand a little bit about their mentality.

At the beginning, I suppose I photographed students that looked a certain way. And then I realised that I really

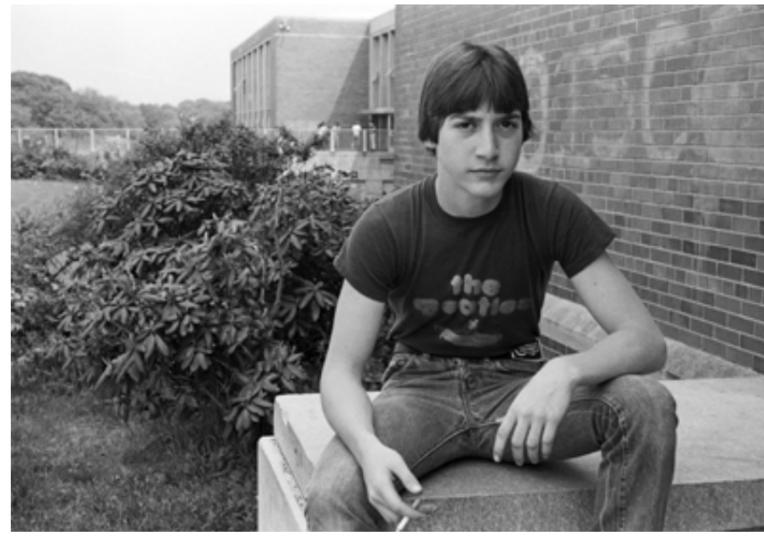
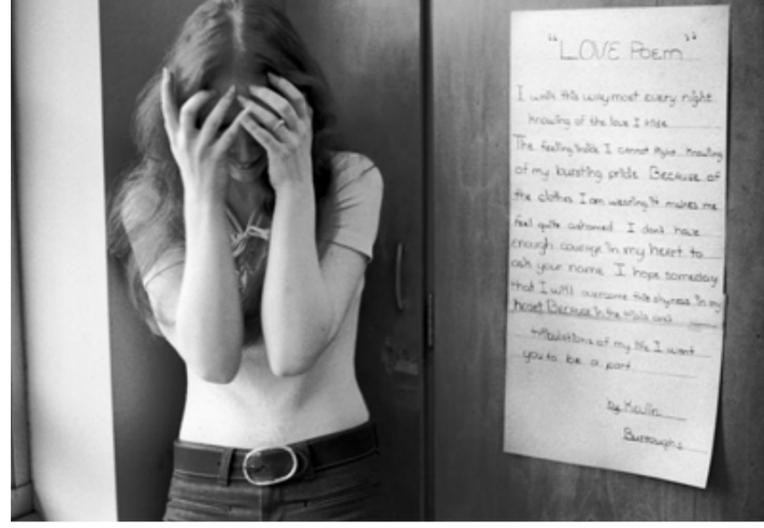
needed to be inclusive, I needed to open up to every student, not just the good-looking students or the stars of the school, but to everyone, no matter what they looked like. To me, every kid has a star quality, and I wasn’t going to just pay attention to the ones that were popular. I was always trying to see the beauty in the individual. One of my students remarked one time, ‘Mr Szabo, when you take pictures of us, you see things in us that we don’t see.’ I was always looking under the surface, trying to capture the emotions they felt.

In photographing the students, I would see myself in them – there’s that autobiographical element. After all, teenagers are always teenagers – they’re rebellious quite often, that’s their nature. But by the same token there’s something quite beautiful about them, with their youth and their enthusiasms, and those are two of the things that I identified with. As you get older, you think about your high-school days – what you were like then. There’s always something about high school that comes back to you.” – *Joseph Szabo*



Top: girl in home economics class caught in a candid moment, 1979. Bottom: teenagers between classes sitting on high-school steps, 1975

Top: teenager with Beatles t-shirt sitting on high-school steps, 1982. Middle: shy girl in art class next to her hand-lettered love poem, 1973. Bottom: teenager on Halloween outside of high school, 1982





Top: Tom resting in a park after final exams, 1981. Middle: girl by high-school garage doors, 1977. Bottom: girl sitting on school steps between classes, 1983

Teen couple on Friday night, 1977





YAHOO!

The International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum (IPHF) Announces 2016 Inductees - Bridging Photography's Pioneering Past with its Fantastic Future

August 19, 2016

Today, in honor of the International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum's (IPHF) 50th anniversary and World Photo Day, the IPHF announced its 2016 class of Photography Hall of Fame inductees. Eight photographers or photography industry visionaries that embody the spirit, artistry and innovation of modern photography have been selected for induction, including:

- **Ken Burns**, documentary filmmaker
- **Ernst Haas**, 20th century professional photographer
- **Steve Jobs**, former Apple Inc. chairman and CEO and technology pioneer
- **John Knoll**, co-creator of Adobe Photoshop
- **Thomas Knoll**, co-creator of Adobe Photoshop
- **Annie Leibovitz**, portrait photographer
- **Graham Nash**, creator of fine art digital printing, photographer and musician
- **Sebastião Salgado**, documentary photographer and photojournalist

Inductees were selected by a nominating committee made up of IPHF representatives and distinguished leaders in the photography industry. To be eligible, inductees must have made a notable contribution to the art or science of photography, having a significant impact on the photography industry and/or history of photography.

"As we look ahead to the next 50 years of the IPHF, we are honored to continue to recognize and celebrate photographers and industry professionals that have made significant contributions to the profession, helping to shape and define modern photography," said Patty Wentz, executive director of the IPHF. "This year's inductees represent the perfect combination of innovation and artistry; bridging photography's pioneering past with its fantastic future."

The IPHF is the only organization worldwide that recognizes and honors those who have had a significant impact on the evolution of photography. Past inductees to the Photography Hall of Fame include Ansel Adams, George Eastman, Edwin Land, Edward Steichen, and 65 other esteemed professionals.

Inductions will be held at the Induction and 50th Anniversary Celebration Event on Friday, October 28 in St. Louis, Mo. For details, contact Patty Wentz at 314-479-2698 or Patty.Wentz@iphf.org.

As a Hall of Fame and Museum, the IPHF has work from more than 500 artists, 5,000 historical cameras and more than 30,000 photographs in its permanent collection. More information on the International Photography Hall of Fame and inductees can be found at www.iphf.org. Additionally, leading up to the Induction and 50th Anniversary Celebration Event, the IPHF has teamed up with the World Photo Day organization to profile one inductee on the organization's blog each week.

About the 2016 inductees:

Ken Burns is an acclaimed American documentary filmmaker. Among the many films he's produced and directed are *The Civil War*, *Jazz*, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, and, most recently, *Jackie Robinson*. His next project, scheduled for broadcast on PBS September 20, 2016, is *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War*. Burns' films incorporate a distinct style of using archival photographs, panning across and zooming in on them to create a sense of motion that engages viewers. The style prompted Apple Inc. to create in their iMovie and Final Cut Pro programs the "Ken Burns Effect," so users could achieve the same results Burns uses in his documentaries.



Ernst Haas (1921-1986) is acclaimed as one of the most celebrated and influential photographers of the 20th Century, and considered one of the pioneers of color photography. In the 1950's he began experimenting with Kodachrome color film and went on to become one of the premier color photographers of the decade. In 1953, Life featured his groundbreaking 24-page color photo essay on New York City, the first time such a large color photo feature was published in the magazine. In 1962, a retrospective of his work was the first color photography exhibition held at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Throughout his career, Haas traveled extensively, photographing for Life, Vogue and Look, to name a few of many influential publications. Haas has continued to be the subject of museum exhibitions and publications such as "Ernst Haas, Color Photography" (1989), "Ernst Haas in Black and White"(1992) and "Color Correction" (2011).

Steve Jobs was an American inventor and entrepreneur who cofounded Apple and led it to become the world's most innovative company. Steve helped create products that revolutionized the creative world and became essential tools for designers, filmmakers, music producers and photographers. Passionate about photography both in his work and personal life, his most profound contribution to the artistic community and the world is the iPhone which, in less than a decade, has changed both the art of photography and the industry around it.

John Knoll is the chief creative officer at Industrial Light & Magic and co-creator of Adobe Photoshop. He also is the sole inventor of Knoll Light Factory, a digital lens flare generating software. Today Photoshop is the industry standard in digital photo editing, allowing photographers to digitally alter and manipulate photo files to create extraordinary images. John created Adobe Photoshop along with his brother Thomas, and together the Knoll brothers have revolutionized the photography industry and completely changed the way people create and edit images.

Thomas Knoll is an American software engineer who co-created Adobe Photoshop with his brother John. Knoll created the first core image processing routines for Photoshop in 1988, and when his brother saw them he encouraged Thomas to bundle them into one package. Since licensing Photoshop to Adobe in 1989, Thomas Knoll has continued to work for Adobe creating updates to Photoshop and Photoshop related products. His recent work includes the Camera Raw plug-in for Photoshop, the develop module for Adobe Lightroom, and the DNG file format.

Annie Leibovitz is an American portrait photographer whose bold use of colors and poses has become her trademark style. Leibovitz began her career as a staff photographer for Rolling Stone magazine where she helped define the magazine's look. She was the first woman to have a show at the National Portrait Gallery when her exhibition was shown in 1991. Some of her notable portraits include Demi Moore for the cover of Vanity Fair, Caitlyn Jenner for the cover of Vanity Fair, and a portrait series of Queen Elizabeth II.

Graham Nash: In addition to his prodigious talent for music, Graham Nash is also a renowned photographer, collector of photography, and digital imaging pioneer. In the 1980s, Nash began experimenting with digital images, but soon found that there was no printer capable of reproducing what he saw on his computer screen. Nash began searching for a printer that was capable of reproducing high-quality images and eventually discovered the IRIS printer. In 1991, he founded Nash Editions, a fine art digital print company that further adapted the IRIS printer to print high-quality digital photography and art prints as large as 3 feet by 4 feet. Nash Editions is recognized by the Smithsonian Institution for its role in the invention of and accomplishments in fine arts and digital printing. Its original IRIS 3047 printer and one of its first published works - Nash's 1969 portrait of David Crosby – is now housed in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Graham Nash also is a two-time Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee with Crosby, Stills, and Nash, and with the Hollies. His new studio album This Path Tonight was released April 15, 2016, and he is set to embark on an U.S. East Coast tour beginning Sept. 23.

Sebastião Salgado is a renowned documentary photographer and photojournalist with a deep love and respect for nature while also sensitive to the socio-economic conditions that impact human beings. He has traveled to over 120 countries for his projects. He is perhaps most known for his long-term social documentary projects. Among them: Workers (1993) documenting the vanishing way of life of manual laborers across the world, Migrations (2000), a tribute to mass migration driven by hunger, natural disasters, environmental disaster and population explosion, and most recently GENESIS (2013), an epic eight-year expedition to more than 30 countries to rediscover the mountains, deserts, oceans, animals, and peoples visioned as they must have been at the dawn of creation. Salgado has been the recipient of numerous awards and has been a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador since 2001. Salgado is the author of eight books and soon the forthcoming "Kuwait: A Desert On Fire" (Taschen) which documents the battle to extinguish the environmentally devastating oil fires in Kuwait started by fleeing Iraqi forces at the end of the Gulf War.

M+B

TIME
LightBox

A Day at the Beach: The Photographs That Moved Them Most

By Rachel Lowry
August 12, 2016



Joseph Szabo
Priscilla, 1969

"When my wife and I first moved to Long Island, a friend suggested I visit Jones Beach because of my love of photographing people. The ever changing variety of people, faces, bodies and expressions, decade after decade, always fascinates me. Priscilla seems to embody strength and determination and the quality of a timeless image."

Beach day is more than an activity; it's an event, a summer tradition. From the era of layered Victorian bathing suit to today's bikini and speedo days, the timeless weekend activity continues to entice outdoor lovers to kick off their heels and ditch the suit and tie for some prime sand time. And for photographers, the beach is a captivating place.

"I keep returning to shooting beaches all around the world," the British photographer Martin Parr tells TIME. "I am tantalized by the similarities and differences in how each country regards their beaches. I love the spatial aspect of how a beach works, it has become my favored shooting location, and like a lemming I keep being drawn back to this subject."

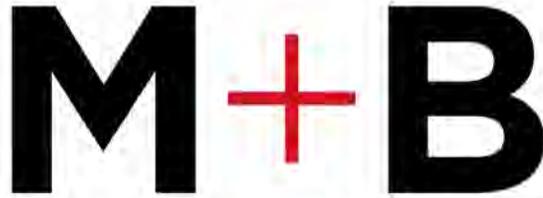
Over the years, photographers have returned to the bustling beaches to frame some of the world's most charming human moments: photographer Arlene Gottfried's humor in contradiction at Riis Beach framing a nude body builder with a Jew, at Coney Island; Harvey Stein's iconic man in a bow tie nods its head to a disappearing way of life; Parr traveled to India, capturing a quiet woman catching early morning rays, oblivious to the hustle of fishers behind her. Joseph Maida's Hawaiian beaches examines the varied shores of layered identities, while Gillian Laub turns nostalgic to the childlike whimsy of beach play.



To Joseph Szabo...

I remember eighth grade as the year I fell in love with photography. My father had gifted me his old Canon camera and I took to wearing it slung around my neck like Lydia in *Beetlejuice*, ready to flip open the lens-cap and zero in on whatever subject caught my whim (back then, mostly boys sulking in wooded areas). This was, of course, way—way—before cell phones made immediate picture-taking a ubiquitous task. Obsessed with this new medium, I took a simultaneous deep dive into the work of far more accomplished photographers, eager to develop a visual vocabulary of images that spoke to me. As it turned out, those images all emanated from the '70s. There was Peter Hujar, and his classically composed portraits, like the one of Warhol superstar Candy Darling on her deathbed, limbs akimbo, a single rose at her side; and Cindy Sherman and her "Untitled Film Stills" series, which saw her morphing from desperate housewife to B-movie star. There were Deborah Turbeville and Chris von Wangenheim at opposite ends stylistically of the fashion photography spectrum—her vision, hazy, grainy, and pastel-tinted, and his, glossy, brazen and blown-out—and Francesca Woodman, whose eerie self-portraits had a haunting quality that would feel prophetic of her untimely death. But perhaps because I was on the cusp of teenage-dom myself, it was

- Joseph Szabo who sounded the most intense clarion call—a photography teacher at Malverne High School on Long Island in 1972, Szabo made teenagers (many of them his students) the subjects of his documentary-style work. While his stark, black-and-white images serve as a compendium of '70s style, all bell-bottoms and taut concert tees and feathered hair, the feeling they capture of those years when we are simultaneously reckless and terrified, at once innocent and bubbling over with sexual desire, is timeless. Today, in the age of the selfie when we are bombarded with images so contrived they have become devoid of emotion, Szabo's work, freewheeling and unhearsed, feels more joyful and alive than ever. A true snapshot of what it's like to be a teenager in any decade. *FV*



From Malverne to MoMA: An interview with Joseph Szabo

By Rossana Weitekamp
January 14, 2016

“It’s just amazing how all this stuff happened, when nothing was ever planned,” said Joseph Szabo, who taught a photography class during most of his 27 years at Malverne High School. “My whole goal was to do a good job teaching, keep the kids interested and have a little fun.”

In 1972, Szabo was hired as an art teacher, and eventually he started a photography class and club, and became a photo adviser to the yearbook and school newspaper. “It gave me an unofficial license to photograph any student, any place, at any time,” he said.

Thanks to the courses he took at the International Center of Photography in Manhattan, he learned how to use photography as an art form and as self-expression. “I then brought all of that knowledge back to the classroom,” said Szabo, who began taking pictures of his students. He would photograph them, documentary style, in the hallways, while they took tests and outside, while they joked with their friends.



Photographer Joseph Szabo stood next to a copy of his iconic work, “Priscilla” during a Herald visit to his studio last week.

In an age before parental consent was a consideration, he established such trust with his students that they invited him to concerts, to the beach, to their house parties — and quietly encouraged him to take pictures. “By photographing my students, it was a way to indicate to them that I thought they were OK,” he said.

Szabo took thousands of pictures of his students over the years, and when he retired in 1999, he thought his work was done. But it was only beginning.

He went through his archives with several people outside the high school who had shown an interest, one connection led to another, and before long his career as an artist began to blossom. Szabo, 71, is now a world-renowned photographer whose works are part of permanent collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum and art galleries throughout the U.S. and Europe. He has sold photos to celebrities including Sophia Coppola, Ben Stiller and Jack Black. And much of his success, he says, can be attributed to his Malverne students, who gave him inspiration to practice his art while he taught there.

M + B



Szabo's photo, "Marianne and Tom," is part of a permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The photo is of Malverne residents Marianne and Tom Malone as teenagers at Malverne High School. A copy is currently up for auction through the International Center of Photography.

One of his photos that is owned by MoMA, called "Marianne and Tom," show his students Tom Malone and Marianne McKeon sitting in a car. The two, who married several years ago, recalled Szabo fondly. "He had a way of getting into your heart and soul, and made you feel good about yourself," said Tom, who has stayed in contact with Szabo since he graduated from Malverne High in 1982. "I've cherished his friendship since I was 17 years old."

Malone added that it was "a little surreal" knowing that a photo of him and his wife is owned by the museum. A signed copy of "Marianne and Tom" is being auctioned off next week by the International Center of Photography to raise money for scholarships. The photo, a gift from the artist to the ICP, will have a starting bid of \$500.

Two students who had a substantial influence on Szabo's post-teaching career were the editors of the 1978 yearbook, Chris Davies and Bill Carraro. That June, they asked him if he'd like to go to a Rolling Stones concert. When Szabo said yes, he recalled, the boys said that would be great, because they had the tickets, he had the car, the concert was in Philadelphia — and so he was driving.

When they arrived at John F. Kennedy Stadium, Szabo thought he would have a great opportunity to photograph the band, but the 90,000 people who packed the stadium made a good shot impossible. So he took pictures of the crowd instead.

More than 30 years later, he compiled his best photos from the concert in a book called "Rolling Stones Fans," published in May 2015 by Damiani Editore. The event was marked with a book signing at the Strand Bookstore in Manhattan.

Davies and Carraro went on to pursue careers that incorporated photography: Davies founded Wine Country International magazine, and Carraro became a Hollywood producer who worked on such movies as "The Golden Compass" and "Tower Heist."

Szabo published several other books of photographs, including "Jones Beach," "Teenage" and "Almost Grown." "Jones Beach" includes what Szabo calls his most iconic work, "Priscilla," which has been shown in the Brooklyn Museum.

"I stepped onto the beach, and she was there for not even a minute," he recalls of the photo. "... I took one, two shots, looked down at my camera and then up again, and she was nowhere. Not on the beach, not behind me, not on the boardwalk. She was almost like an apparition." The photo graces the cover of the indie rock band Dinosaur Jr.'s 1991 album "Green Mind."

What's next for Szabo? "I'm looking at my Jones Beach photographs and thinking of putting together a collection of lifeguard photos," he said. Last summer, he said, he went through 25 years of contact sheets and began to edit them for a book. Most of them were taken at Jones Beach's Central Mall.

"Photography just turned out to be a way to connect everybody, especially teacher with student," Szabo said. "Without it, I would've been just another pain-in-the-butt teacher who was trying to get you to get your work done."

Szabo, who is married, has two sons, and five grandchildren, and lives in Amityville.

M+B

VOGUE

Why Joseph Szabo's Rolling Stones Fans Matters to Fashion, and Beyond: The Photographer on How He Gets the Picture

By Rebecca Bengal
May 22, 2015

In the summer of 1978, Joseph Szabo hopped in a car with two of his high school students and, along with 90,000 other fans, headed to Philadelphia to see the Rolling Stones play. Szabo came to JFK Stadium armed with a couple of Canon cameras, a Rolleiflex, and a bag full of film, but he never aimed his lens at the main stage; his interests were far afield. Looking now at those pictures, collected in a new book, *Rolling Stones Fans* (out Tuesday from Damiani; see a slideshow below this story), it's clear that some of the most resonant photographs of that day are not of the band at all, but of the crowds in the stands who essentially mirrored their image: In the fans, Szabo found his own answers to Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, strutting on the sidelines, caught up in the pure thrall of the concert experience.

Szabo's work has always possessed that unlikely, unconscious quality—he's frequently associated with music even though he doesn't photograph musicians; his books *Almost Grown*, *Teenage*, and *Jones Beach* are revered by fashion editors and photographers—Bruce Weber, Juergen Teller, and *Vogue's* Grace Coddington among them—even though, as he says, "I never thought a lot about fashion."



Photo: *Rolling Stones Fans* by Joseph Szabo, published by Damiani

It's this aura of anti-fashion, and of not-thinking, that comes across in Szabo's pictures and makes them so compelling. It's also part of what makes him so unknown, at least by name: While Joseph Szabo might not ring a bell, his pictures are immediately recognizable. There's the indelible shot "Priscilla," for instance, the long-haired, androgynous-looking twelve-year-old tough with a cigarette dangling from the curl of her lip, hitching up her jeans, part Scout Finch, part Huck Finn. It's the most famous of his photographs and it became one of the most striking album covers of the nineties, for Dinosaur Jr.'s *Green Mind* (one story has it that Kim Gordon suggested the shot to the band because she said "Priscilla" reminded her of guitarist J Mascis).

Szabo's photos of teenagers were "an absolute reference" for Sofia Coppola, who collects his prints and turned to them for visual inspiration when she began adapting Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides*. "Joseph Szabo knows this well. Nothing lasts forever, except high school," writes *Almost Famous* director Cameron Crowe, another fan. Grace Coddington, who first got to know his work via *Teenage*, writes in the foreword to *Rolling Stones Fans* how she was "immediately struck by how unselfconsciously elegant his subjects were. Though sometimes defiant, they have a confidence and a cool aloofness about them. It is a kind of freedom I long to capture in my fashion stories for *Vogue*."

M + B

“The way they’re dressed, it can tell you a lot, but it’s not the whole story,” Szabo says recently over coffee in Manhattan. Levi’s and Wrangler are about as designer as it gets in his pictures—and yet all over them is a desire to be cool and stylish, as his young subjects grow up and transform and try on different identities and versions of themselves. They exist somewhere in between Dazed and Confused, Heavy Metal Parking Lot, and Over the Edge. “I never thought a lot about fashion; it was more intuitive. I’ll just get the photograph and look at it later and figure it out if I need to figure it out. I was thinking the portrait, the expression, the feeling, the mood. Fashion was definitely secondary.”



Backstage
Photo: Courtesy of Joseph Szabo

Szabo’s own teenage years took place in Toledo, Ohio, in the early sixties, to a soundtrack of Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry, and with a Catholic education; the Long Island kids he encountered as a young, fresh-out-of-Pratt art teacher in the seventies were of a new era and a different world. He wasn’t quite sure how to reach them, and he didn’t know if he’d stick with the job for long. Photographing his students turned out to be the thing that allowed him to do both. At the time it was a fairly radical move—no one at school was taking their picture apart from the yearbook mug shot, no one was giving their lives this kind of attention. The camera altered the classroom dynamic, creating a more equal relationship that hadn’t existed before, Szabo says. “It’s not just teacher, student. It’s human to human. That’s what photography did. I was on their level, and for them, but I was also the teacher.”

At Pratt and later, at ICP, Szabo had immersed himself in documentary and street photography—Cartier-Bresson, W. Eugene Smith, Garry Winogrand, Diane Arbus; he was especially impressed by Helen Levitt’s New York City photos (“I thought, boy, she really has a way of getting the inside shot”)—and he applied those methods in the halls of Malverne High School. Shooting in black-and-white, and developing and printing the film himself, he made pictures of his students in the classroom and out, leaning against their lockers, hanging out on the front steps, in the bleachers, making out on the hoods of their cars in the parking lot. He captured all the markers of the seventies—the bell-bottom jeans, the tight sweaters, the band T-shirts, the shearling jackets, the Afros, the feathered hair—an accidental fashion archive. The pictures are a period piece, but they also feel timeless and universal; the true world of Szabo’s photographs is not any single decade, but the teenage years as a whole.

For a long time, Szabo didn’t exhibit or publish the pictures he made at Malverne, though he’d mail prints to the kids. “There was just something about their faces and their expression,” Szabo says. “They didn’t try to hide it. It was the gift of the student to me to show this and let me photograph this. And that made for a closer relationship in terms of trust.”

His students invited him to make portraits in their own worlds, at home: “The picture, with the cardboard still on, the way I’d sent it, would be taped up on their bedroom wall.” They invited him to their parties: “I did everything on the up and up; I’d say, hey can you check up with Rona or whoever and see if it’s OK if Mr. Szabo comes and takes photographs? So I’d go to their parties, I’d go to their bars—it’s funny, one of the bars they went to was owned by Tony Danza and his buddies. And of course there were all these young kids coming in—this was the seventies.”

Eventually, of course, they invited him to their shows too, a natural progression—“The concert just followed that idea of seeing their lives beyond the school’s walls,” Szabo writes in Rolling Stones Fans. He drove two of his students from Long Island to the concert. The Stones were on tour for Some Girls, which had just hit number-one, and Peter Tosh and Foreigner were opening that day: Despite the downpour and the mud that afternoon, or perhaps because of it, the energy in the air was raw and exciting. “It’s really shown in some of the photographs, especially the guy dancing, the guy soaring,” Szabo says. “The speakers are blasting, the people are tuned into it consciously and unconsciously. The music always helps to transport them to where they want to go.”

M + B

Szabo and his photo students had arrived the night before, staying in the same hotel as the die-hard fans. "Every door was open," he says. "It was all, Hey, man, you want anything? It was one big party. You need to fit in, but at some point you go to sleep because the real show is the next morning."

Because his subjects here were strangers, the way they are when Szabo takes his cameras to Jones Beach, where he made the famous "Priscilla" picture, he had to rely on outward, surface cues. Sometimes it was as simple as a T-shirt or a scarf—"I like the bandannas, they were very much of the time; I like the two gazes here"—but often, as with so many of his photographs, it was something more elusive and fleeting as youth.

"I think, Are they beautiful? Are they interesting? Are they interesting but not beautiful?" Szabo says. "You just look at the face, you look at the person, and right away there's something that clicks. It's just intuitive. You don't have time to analyze it or it's gone."



Marianne and Mary Kay
Photo: Courtesy of Joseph Szabo

The sense of closeness in the Teenage photos transmits here: in the photographs of tuned-in and tuned-out fans, in lost and tender and jubilant scenes. They are pre-street style, pre-Internet, pre-Coachella; as Grace Coddington says, they're "a reminder of life before cell phones and selfies and It Bags and all the paraphernalia of concerts today." There are models for today's perfect selfie shot, hands crisscrossed in the back pockets of each other's jeans; there are covetable denim jackets; there is great hair and great leather; there are dirt-spattered dancers in the pit; there is a real and pure unrehearsed, unselfconscious, unhashtagged joy in the photos, an experience lived largely in the moment and captured mostly in memory, and what, really, is cooler and more fashionable than something that elusive and impossible to contain? For the fans that day, Szabo just happened to be there at the right time to witness it all.



Photo: Rolling Stones Fans by Joseph Szabo, published by Damiani



JOSEPH SZABO



ALMOST GROWN

Joseph Szabo (Toledo, 1944) is an American photographer. His work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennial, the International Center of Photography, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Brooklyn Museum, among others. Szabo's work is in the collection of many prestigious institutions and has been published in magazines and newspapers such as the New York Times, Vogue Hommes International, New York Magazine, Newsday, The New Yorker and the Los Angeles Times – to name just a few. He has photographed teenagers for almost 40 years. "You try to capture life in the moment that speaks to you [...] They are fleeting—one moment it's there and then it's gone." His images capture the nuances and emotions of adolescence, and document his subjects in moments of uncertainty, reflection, longing, bravado, exuberance and awkwardness, as they dip a toe into the waters of adulthood. In 1969 he shot a picture of a young girl with a cigarette at Jones Beach, one of his most intense images; it ended up on the cover of the Dinosaur Jr. album Green Mind. As he says in the interview that follows: Priscilla... "was like a lightning bolt that struck me that day."

Interview by Antonio Scoccimarro

Helen Levitt, (Top) NYC (*Spider Girl*), 1980. Courtesy Laurence Miller Gallery; (bottom) NYC (*halloween*), ca. 1942. Courtesy Laurence Miller Gallery



AS

Starting from the very beginning, your first memories, let's try to shorten your life into a time lapse. What has happened between 1944, the year you were born, and the present, in your practice and experiences, particularly with respect to your photography?

J S Toledo, Ohio. Catholic school education. Attend art classes at the Toledo Museum of Art. Art classes at Central Catholic High School, 1958–62. Join the high school photo club, become yearbook photographer. In 1966, BFA, BGSU, major in sculpture with education certificate grades 1–12.

Married 1966, Nancy P. Szabo, move to New York, Pratt Institute, major in photography. Discover Helen Levitt's book *A Way of Seeing*¹. Realize poten-

1. Helen Levitt (Brooklyn, 1913 – New York, 2009) was an American documentary photographer. *A Way of Seeing*, the first collection of her photographs, was published in 1965.

tial of photography as medium of expression. Discover Henri Cartier-Bresson. Discover Brassai's Paris of the 1930s. Make a decision to find an artistic direction with photography, not realizing yet what my subjects would be. Discover all the New York museums and photo galleries.

Move to Long Island. Start teaching junior high school art. In 1970 take advanced workshop course with Ken Heyman in New York, "How to Photograph People." Attend Cornell Capa²

2. Cornell Capa (1918–2008) chose the phrase "concerned photographer" to describe those whose work showed a humanitarian impulse to use pictures to educate and change the world, not just to record it.



Cornell Capa with camera. Courtesy International Center of Photography. © Yvonne Kalmus.

Cornell Capa © International Center of Photography 1960



Photographer Lecture Series at NYU. Discover Concerned Photographer, take courses at ICP, 5th Avenue, 94th Street. Become more immersed in documentary photography, attend lectures by world-renowned photographer. Courses with Fred Ritchin.

Start photographing teens at Jones Beach in summer 1969. In 1972, start photographing my high school students. Start to exhibit photographs in New York. Am included in ICP's *Fleeting Gestures: Treasures*

of Dance Photography exhibition³, 1979. Included in Venice Bi-

3. The exhibition *Fleeting Gestures: Treasures of Dance Photography* was curated by Ruth Silverman at the International Center of Photography in New York; it offered a look at photographers' fascination with dance, from its classical form to its many social variations between the 1850s and the present.

ennale. Publish *Almost Grown* in 1978 with Alan Ziegler, foreword by Cornell Capa. More exhibits of teenage work. Start to have photos accepted in various museums with the help of Ruth Lester and Cornell Capa. Teach at ICP for fifteen years. In 1984, receive NEA fellowship in photography. Work represented by Gitterman Gallery, Michael Hoppen Gallery, M+B Gallery, Jackson Fine Arts. Photograph at Christa house for a project on the dying poor of Long Island.

Books: *Almost Grown*, 1978; *Teenage*, 2003; *Jones Beach*, 2010; *Rolling Stones Fans*, 2015.

A S

In an interview once, you made a simple but fundamental statement: "When you photograph someone, you're saying, 'I'm photographing you because I like you.'" Can you try to express your relation with your subjects, and this kind of "love" relationship in the world of photographic research?

J S "I photograph you because I like you"⁴: It's important to

4. As in "Talking with Joseph Szabo", by Tim Murphy, *Newsday Long Island*, NY, 2010

get as close as possible, but know when to back off when either party is feeling uncomfortable. I've always been a teacher as well as a photographer, and there is a need for patience and to allow students/subjects to reveal themselves, as in a moment of privacy in front of a mirror. I become the reflector of their emotions. There is an absolute need to establish trust. Be one with your subject. The relationship should be comfortable, trusting, loving, sympathetic.

A S

What about your predilection for "losers"? You've devoted your lifelong research to the investigation of the weaker ones.

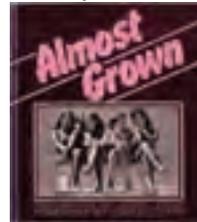
J S My goal was and is to be inclusive, not exclusive, with teens and other people I've photographed. Early on, I might have

had a narrower vision, but then realized each person, no matter what their look or social status, was of infinite value. Each of us needs attention, love, and care, not just the popular kids. The “winners” already get plenty of attention. I came to feel more and more that the “losers”—and all of us—should feel that we’re liked and valued by others. Each flower has its proper time to blossom. For some it’s early in life, and for others it’s later.

Alan Ziegler wrote in his intro to my book *Almost Grown*⁵

5. Joseph Szabo, *Almost Grown* (photographs by Joseph Szabo and poetry collected by Alan Ziegler), October 1978, New York: Harmony Books. As Cornell Capa wrote in the foreword to Szabo’s first book, *Almost Grown*, “Szabo’s camera is sharp, incisive, and young, matching his subjects.

One can use many adjectives: revealing, tender, raucous, sexy, showy... in Szabo’s hands, the camera is magically there, the light is always available, the moment is perceived, seen, and caught.”



Joseph Szabo, *Almost Grown*, 1978, Cover.

that a line from a Joe South song, “Walk a mile in my shoes,” was something I aspired to in my understanding of teenagers. My strengths, I’ve discovered, include connectedness and empathy. By “empathy,” I mean sensing emotion in others and trying to feel what they feel.

A S

Is there any connection between this tendency and your personal story?

J S My personal story, as I look back, has had its ups and downs. But overall I’ve been greatly blessed. My attitude is to keep on trying. If I fall, I must get up and continue moving forward. With enough effort, sooner or later I’ll find some success. I’ll prevail. Remember the motto on the high school lockers that went something like, “Winners never quit and quitters never win”? We must find and live our strengths. We must build on our strengths and minimize the focus on our weaknesses. Mirror yourself on the heroes, the leading characters, in your life.

A S

Have you been mirroring yourself on the protagonists of your pictures?

J S We all have our heroes. We have them in our childhoods, adolescent years, adult years. These are family members, friends, stars on the movie screen who we admire and wish to emulate in some way. If we emulate good, positive qualities, we then sometimes influence others in positive ways—often ways we’re not even aware of.

A S

You have described a generation fighting silently for their space and the attention of the people around them, whether those people are their relatives, teachers, or friends. What is the future you were imagining for the protagonists of your pictures?

J S Growing up is a struggle. Life is a struggle (didn’t Zorba the Greek say that?). The struggle to discover who we are, to find our strengths and weaknesses. To search and discover the direction we should take in life. When I was at the Pratt Institute, one of the big questions posed by my professor was, “What is your direction?” I didn’t quite know at the time. And all I could do was pray, “Please God, give me a direction.”

Joseph Szabo, Priscilla, Jones Beach, 1969.



When I started to photograph my students in the 1970s, that was the beginning of my direction. That direction was true, and it lasted for four-plus decades.

At present I am busy looking through all my past work in hopes of discovering “new unseen” pictures that might become part of my legacy.

Regarding the futures of the students I photographed, I could never know what they would hold. As time went on, I learned of their successes, marriages, children, failures. Being in touch (via Facebook and email) with many of my past students from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s—it’s such an honor to be thought of and still connected.

A S

Is there a single picture you can point to as having been a turning point in your career? The one that influenced all of your following production?

J S Yes, that photo is Priscilla, a young girl with a cigarette at Jones Beach, 1969. That photo was like a lightning bolt that struck me that day. After the exposure was made, I looked down to make sure my camera setting was correct. Then, as I looked up, Priscilla was gone, nowhere to be seen on the beach or the boardwalk. I often wonder, Why was that photograph given to me? What did it mean? I guess we both know the answer. To get that photograph meant that I had to go to a place I had not been, to leave the comfort of my chair and seek out new things and people, where they exist, on their turf. This takes a bit of courage. But we must all go outside ourselves to find, meet, and discover others and share ourselves. We need to close the gap between ourselves and others.

A S

Is there a story of one of the protagonists of your pictures you're still particularly connected to?

J S Yes, I'm proud to still be connected to two students in my 1970s high school photography class, Bill Carraro and Chris Davies. They are the ones who made possible the pictures that are in my new book Rolling Stones Fans.

Bill has achieved much success. He is an executive producer in motion pictures and has worked for Paramount, MGM, Universal, New Line, and 20th Century Fox. His films include Terminator, Robocop, Tower Heist, and The Wolfman.

Christopher Davies has held senior management positions with such industry leaders as GMI and Bronica. He cofounded Challenger Photo, the U.S. agent for Billingham Camera Bags, and Widelux Cameras. He launched Wine Country Network and is the editor and publisher of Wine Country International magazine. He photographed the first LEED-CS Platinum Pre-Certified high-rise building west of the Mississippi with more than five thousand photographs.

A S

What's your relationship with the photographic medium nowadays? Has the continuous production and consumption of images undermined the value and evocative power of a shot?

J S Yes, for sure. How many millions upon millions of self-ies do we need? Our culture is a narcissistic one. And unfortunately, images that startle and help to make us and society change tend to be negative images, like the athlete who beat his girlfriend in an elevator. That was broadcast over and over on TV to draw our attention to the violence in society.

A S

Who are the contemporary photographers you are most connected to, either personally or artistically?

J S There are many. To single one out, I'd name Sebastião Salgado. His work says so much about the times we live in, and is done with great artistry. All of his work, from *Genesis* to *Africa, Sahel: The End of the Road*, *The Children: Refugees and Migrants*, *Migrations*, *Workers*, and *An Uncertain Grace*. They are all powerful examples of the best in photography.

Sebastião Salgado, *The Yanomami*, 2014. © Amazonas



M+B

HUNGER TV

ROLLING STONES FANS: JOSEPH SZABO

April 9, 2015
By Catherine Wagley



"THE CLOSER I GOT TO THE STAGE WHERE THE STONES WERE PLAYING THE MORE IT WAS LIKE "SARDINE CITY."



"THE SHOW JUST WASN'T UP ON THE STAGE. IT WAS DOWN ON THE FIELD AMONG THE PEOPLE."

Photographer Joseph Szabo is best known for his candid and intimate images of youth culture in the 60s and 70s, photographs that capture the freedom and vulnerability of youth, and can't help but provoke a reaction in viewers. And while these images may be his most famous, they by no means the whole body of his work.

Szabo's teenager images began when he was a teacher at a high school, and they lead him to places where his subjects frequented – the school halls, the beach and, most notably for this series, concerts.

"Two of my students – seniors at the end of school year in June – had got hold of some Rolling Stones tickets for the concert in Philadelphia", he remembers.

"They were excellent students, they had respect for me and I had respect for them. They came to me one day and said, "Mr. Szabo, how would you like to go to a Rolling Stones concert?" I was definitely interested and they replied, "that's great because we don't have a car." So I drove us all to Philadelphia. It was my first ever rock concert. I thought it was unbelievable."

In these ensuing photographs Szabo once again works his magic, capturing the feeling of a time long gone, but, thanks to the likes of him, not forgotten.

Rolling Stones Fans by Joseph Szabo will be published later this month by Damiani

M+B



"IT WAS VERY FORTUNATE THAT I WENT BECAUSE IT WAS ONE OF THE LAST TIMES THAT A PERSON WITH A CAMERA COULD (LEGALLY) COME IN AND TAKE PHOTOS."



"THERE WERE SOME SITUATIONS WHERE I WOULD GET A HOSTILE LOOK FROM SOMEBODY. AND I MOMENTARILY QUESTIONED MYSELF, "DO I TAKE THAT PERSON'S PHOTOGRAPH OR NOT?"

In a bid to close the 1970s generation gap, high school teacher Joseph Szabo found a way to stay forever young.

I think I first picked up a camera in high school. I was enrolled in the art programme and I started using photography as a tool to connect to everything that was going on - the yearbook, the newspaper, the photography club, the social events and all the different kinds of people. Photography gave me access to everything I wanted to be a part of.

After I graduated in sculpture at the University of Ohio, my wife and I moved to New York City and I was accepted at the Pratt Institute. They suggested I take a course in photography and that's where I really learned that photography was a lot bigger, more important and more expressive than I could have ever imagined. I began to discover photographers that were true artists - like American photographer Helen Levitt, who walked the streets of New York in the '40s and '50s and photographed how people were living at that time. Her photos had so much power and so much emotion. They made me feel like that was a direction I wanted to pursue too.

Shortly after, in the early '70s, I got a job at Malverne High School in Long Island, but I didn't think I'd last very long. Most of the students had no interest or excitement for high school and I was finding it really difficult to work there. After a couple of months I kind of reached crisis point and I knew something drastic had to change. I decided that if I was going to be there any length of time I would have to make my classes as interesting and fun and exciting as possible, so I brought my camera to class to photograph the students in an attempt to connect with them. And of course that made all the difference.

Photographing the students at Malverne taught me to go back in my own mind to try and remember how it felt to be a teenager. I started to understand that it was very important to have an emotional connection, to have real empathy, with my subjects. And in trying to see things and understand things from their eyes, I actually began to open up to their point of view. I shared their enthusiasms and also their difficult moments. When they were sad or upset or not quite right with the world, I shared a feeling with them about that. And when they were excited and thrilled I was tuned into that too. If I ever started to experience burnout, which is common for teachers, I would photograph the students more to stay connected with them. It kept me young. And that was a wonderful thing because by the time I retired the students couldn't believe that I was going. They just wanted me to continue.

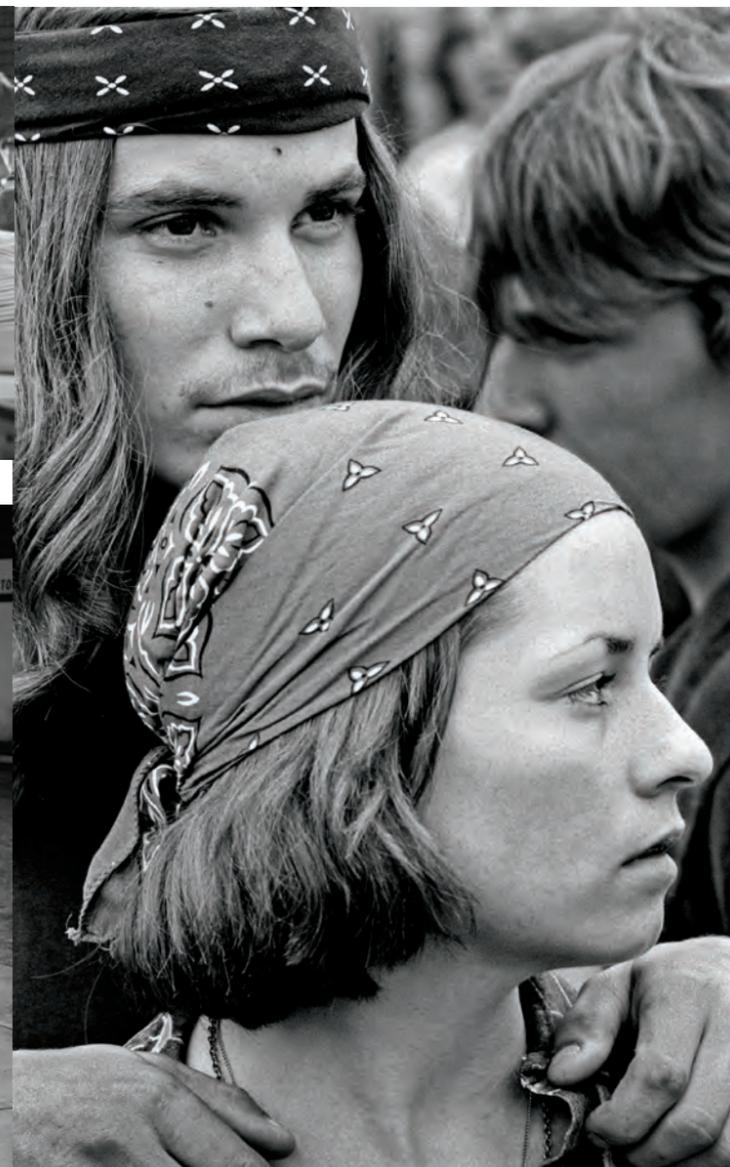
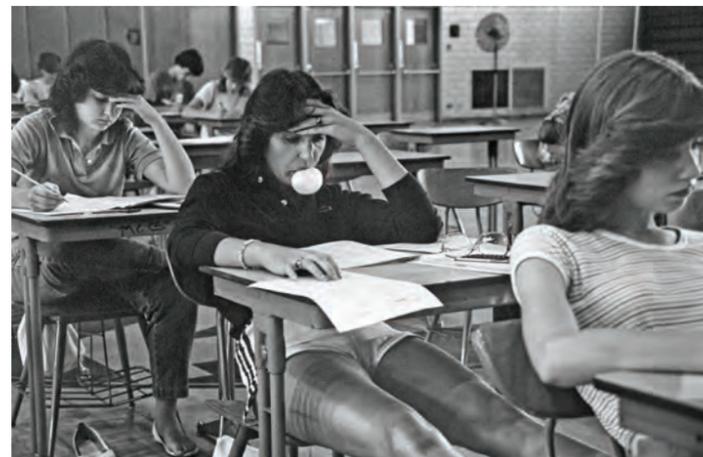
JOSEPH SZABO

YOUNG AT HEART

I never had any agenda with my photography - it was never a money-making thing, it was just about connecting with young people - and so I think my photographs have a sort of authentic or genuine quality that a lot of people seem able to relate to. I have always tried to capture these very personal moments, in an honest way, to show people doing exactly what they're doing. They could just be sitting on the school steps smoking a cigarette or they could be hanging out of a car door waving their hands and saying, 'This is the last day of school and I'll never come back here again!' They could be jumping in the air for excitement because of the music they're listening to or they could be like one of my all-time favourites Priscilla - the little girl smoking at Jones Beach - who expresses something about girlhood as well as something about a certain kind of maturity and experience. All these subjects and moments mean so much to me. They helped me understand people and allowed me to connect with them over the years. I hope they mean something to other people too. JOSEPH SZABO

josephszabophotos.com







M+B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOSEPH SZABO: JONES BEACH

June 10 – August 14, 2010

Artist's Opening Reception and Book Signing: Thursday, June 10, 2010 from 6 to 8 pm



M+B is proud to present *Jones Beach*, an exhibition of black and white photographs by Joseph Szabo. Images of tanned muscle men, catwalk-like displays of beach wear, heavily oiled skin, masses of sprayed hair, and all the pageantry of adolescence reveal the dynamics of a beach that was a true melting pot of humanity. The opening reception for the artist on Thursday, June 10 from 6 to 8pm will include a book signing for Szabo's forthcoming monograph titled *Jones Beach* with introduction by Vince Aletti published by Abrams Books. The exhibition will run from June 10, 2010 to August 14, 2010.

Somewhat of an expert on the subject of teenagers with his previous works *Almost Grown* and *Teenage*, Szabo began shooting at Jones Beach one summer when his usual subjects – his photography students from Malverne High School – were no longer readily available. He chronicled the public and the private lives displayed on this ocean playground that is one of the world's busiest beaches. Even if we weren't there to enjoy the good weather and excellent people watching we have these photographs, which turn a captive eye to the urban masses who came out to celebrate their weekends, holidays and summers. *Jones Beach* reveals the forces in motion at such a theater of humanness, from moments of quiet introspection to flashy exuberance. Called the "people's palace by the sea", Jones Beach is still a unique space very different from the commercial appeal of Coney Island or the privileged seclusion of the Hamptons. On this democratic stretch of sand and ocean class, race, and other potential divisions were temporarily forgotten and Szabo's sympathetic lens was there to capture it all.

Joseph Szabo is an internationally acclaimed artists whose previous bodies of work have influenced and been admired by an entire generation of photographers, directors and taste-makers. Szabo was born in Toledo, Ohio in 1944. He studied photography at the Pratt Institute where he received his MFA in 1968 and went on to teach photography at Malverne High School in Long Island and at the acclaimed International Center of Photography in New York City for over 20 years. His work can be found in the permanent public collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Yale University (Connecticut), International Center of Photography (New York) and the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, among others. This is Joseph Szabo's second exhibition with M+B.

Location: M+B, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90069
Show Title: Joseph Szabo: Jones Beach
Exhibition Dates: June 10 – August 14, 2010
Artist's Opening Reception and Book Signing: Thursday, June 10, 6 – 8 pm
Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm, and by appt

For more info, please contact Shannon Richardson at M+B at (310) 550 – 0050 or shannon@mbfala.com

#

M+B



THE NEW YORKER

**GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
JUNE 7, 2010**

JOSEPH SZABO

Szabo, whose empathetic photographs of Long Island teen-agers have attracted a cult following, shows pictures made at Jones Beach during the past four decades, along with shots of fans at a 1978 Rolling Stones concert. His choice of black-and-white film aligns him with such photographers as Danny Lyon, William Gedney, and William Klein, and, like them, Szabo tends to be an engaged observer, with a particular interest in the fleeting pleasures and pains of the young. At Jones Beach, he's always attuned to body language, both subtle and blatant, and his keen eye for personal style turns many of the rock-concert shots into great, if unintentional, fashion photographs. Through June 12. (Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.)
- Vince Aletti



Embrace, Jones Beach (2007), by Joseph Szabo, in his exhibition at Gitterman.



THE NEW YORKER

JULY 4, 2005
AUGUST 8 & 15, 2005

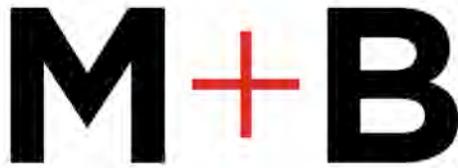


"A Lifeguard's Dream" (1972), from a show of photographs taken in the nineteen-seventies by Joseph Szabo, at Gitterman.

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

JOSEPH SZABO

Szabo was a teacher at Malverne High School on Long Island when he took the photographs in "Teenage," and one wonders how this project affected his classroom technique. With a combination of anthropological detachment, parental tenderness, and not a little awe, Szabo made regular forays into a world where adolescents ruled. The pictures he brought back may not be revelatory, but they're sweet and funny and often dead-on. The look is high seventies, but the tribal rites are timeless, and in nearly every shot Szabo manages to connect with a boy or girl whose anxiety, arrogance, pain, or self-absorption seems particularly undefended and touching. Through Aug. 6. (Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.)



TEEN SPRIT

The Independent, May 9, 2004

Photographs by Joseph Szabo

Text by Robin Muir, London

In 1978 in New York, Harmony Books published a slim, almost square format paperback of black and white photographs of American teenagers. With its title rendered in fat, toothpaste-pink letters and its shiny, plum-coloured wrapper, *ALMOST GROWN* was entirely of its time. Sold for \$5.95 – and considerably less when remaindered – as the 1970's turned into the 1980s, it became a familiar sight in seconds bins in London bookshops, its cover flapping, its spine broken.

Today, to a generation of young British and American fashion photographers, this modest book has become a cult classic, unobtainable at almost any price. Used as a point of reference, *ALMOST GROWN* captures that all-too-fleeting instant between childhood and young adulthood. For the first time a photographer had succeeded in documenting that strange time of life and its irrational codes of behaviour, with taste, wit and sympathy- and had done it with brazen naturalism. And that photographer was Joseph Szabo, a high-school teacher on Long Island.

According to the photographer Bruce Weber, it was in the late 1980s that Grace Coddington of *British Vogue* suddenly noticed that “all the young fashion photographers were looking at Joe’s photographs as their bible”. One, Mark Lally, sowed it to another Jason Evans (both became influential photographers for *I-D* magazine). Evans enthuses about Szabo’s “fascination with Americana, the fashion detail and his attention to the individualism of his students” though it took him nearly a decade to find his own copy “in a junk shop in Camden in 1993”. Terry Richardson, one-time enfant terrible of *Vogue*, introduced Szabo’s work to gallery owner Michael Hoppen; Juergen Teller and his collaborator Venetia Scott referenced Szabo’s *mise-en-scene*; a campaign for Levis jeans by Craig MacDean paid homage. And so it went on.

So what of the photographs that prompted Weber to label them “remarkable”; that caught the imagination of Dinosaur Jr. for the cover of their album Green Mind; that captivated Sofia Coppola enough to base the look of her film of The Virgin Suicides around them; that prompted Cameron Crowe to remark that “Nothing lasts forever – except high school.” Well, the photographs are remarkable and timeless and resonate still in a new, larger compilation TEENAGE that continues Szabo’s document into the 1980’s and 1990’s. As the gallerist Michael Hoppen, puts it: “Joe is gentle and perceptive and looks for the good in his subjects...it’s all about interpretation: when you decide what and how to shoot. Joe sees the other side and his subjects love him for it.” He was the flipside to the urban sleaziness of Larry Clark’s 1971 book Tulsa.

Born in 1944 in Toledo, Ohio, Szabo taught art and photography at Malverne High School on Long Island and his subjects were his pupils. The trust they invested in their teacher allowed him to show teenage life as it hadn’t been seen before. “I felt I was saying,” explains Szabo, “that this is what teenagers are really about, whether you want to admit it or not. They need your attention and care and love. ALMOST GROWN is a celebration of the teenage experience rarely witnessed by parents.”

His milieu was the campus carpark, the beach, the freeway, and as Szabo was also that quintessentially American phenomenon, a “yearbook photography supervisor” he had licence to photograph whenever and wherever he wanted. As a result he was able to “connect on a personal level with all kinds of students, so that they knew I cared and a trust could be developed. This trust is what allowed for the collaboration when making photographs of the students in the hallways, classrooms, hanging out on the streets, making out at parties. I became a much better teacher because I was tuned into their lives.” Szabo’s pictures told of things that had remained, for the most part, uncaptured on film: the importance of peer acceptance, the almost pathological significance of clothes, the stylistic urgency of cigarettes, heavy mascara, convertible cars and Billy Idol, all of which meant, for that time in life, almost everything.

It all started, Szabo explains, because “I was a bit depressed and found a gap between myself and the students that needed to be addressed. There had to be more fun and excitement here, along with good discipline, or I’d never last as a teacher. So, out of inspired intuition, I brought my camera to school and started to photograph the students. It did the trick. I was starting to connect with my students and they with me. I think they felt that I was giving them a special kind of attention they needed. And this was especially important with the ‘losers’ ...they needed the attention more than the ‘winners’. So my approach was to

make school more exciting for all and close the gap more and more between adult land teenager.”

Because Szabo had no axe to grind, no dark side, no agenda, his photos show teenagers at their most beguiling, in moments of almost heartbreaking tenderness against the backdrop of an era when, as one commentator put it, teenagers were “less overtly commoditised”. As the Village Voice writer Vince Aletti observed: “the see-sawing between adolescent melancholy and exuberance. The resulting photos register every nuance of those mood swings, along with a sweet, self-conscious sexiness in period-perfect clothes that make TEENAGE a fashion stylist’s dream.

“I had started photographing teenagers for two reasons: one to get to know them better and become a more effective teacher,” explains Szabo who retired from Malverne High school in 1999. “Two: to give me a subject to explore in depth and in a way that few photographers have done... In general, going to their turf was always a little uncomfortable, but once I was there and settled in, it was exciting. My general rule was no drugs and no sex...but right on with rock’n’roll.