

streets

Photographs by Andrew Feenberg



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Streets

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Street photography is a genre made famous by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau, Bill Brandt, and many others. As its name suggests, a street photo is a more or less candid shot of people on the street or, by extension, in any public setting.

Street photography is closely identified with the history of the Leica rangefinder camera, one of the earliest small 35 mm cameras, preferred by most of the greats in the field. With a Leica or similar small camera, the photographer can wait in unobtrusive ambush for the event worth recording at precisely the “decisive moment.” Most of the pictures in this exhibit were taken with a poor man’s Leica, the original Konica Hexar.

The street photograph shows us something unexpected or inexplicable. It is by its nature a departure from the ordinary, found amidst the ordinary. Most of what we see is so heavily coded culturally that it hardly merits our fixed attention. We move amidst a dull parade of men and women, children, dogs, vendors, beggars, buses and cars, shop fronts and sidewalks, all in standard configurations

that we pass by or through rather than notice. Yet every once in a while something stands out, an unusual interaction, an odd hat, a pratfall or shout, a “hasard objectif” that breaks the continuum of stereotypical images and behavior.

The photographer is drawn instinctively to these odd juxtapositions, visual ironies, configurations of people and things that are disturbing or provocative in their portentous meaninglessness. This is what charms the photographer and brings the camera up to the eye or perhaps inspires one of those unplanned shots from the hip without even a glance through the viewfinder.

A good street photograph provokes thought and even wonder at human strangeness. The pictures on display in this exhibit are a modest attempt to witness this strangeness with humor and sympathy. Each picture has a point, a “punctum” in Roland Barthes' terminology, something that breaks through the clichés to awaken a response. The captions are meant to hint at these points. The viewer must do the rest. But be warned: street photographs do not illustrate any theory; they resist any pregiven order or ideology. They are quasi-random fragments of time and place, life itself in one of its many forms.

- Andrew Feenberg



Success

Tokyo

It's a long way to the top.



Wedding

San Diego, Coronado Island

The city and the sky await the bride.



Romance

La Jolla

The tour we have all been waiting for!



Cine Citta

Rome

Soon to be charming ruins.



Cinema Farnese

Rome

Movie critics at work...



AAH

Amsterdam

Sigh of relief at the end of the road.

Arcades

Paris



Pulp Fiction in an arcade:
A Benjaminian moment.



Street Sartre

Paris

The last line of Sartre's *No Exit* reads: "Hell is other people." Could they be at the bottom of this parkade?



Street Sade

Paris

_____ Follow your instinct, indeed, but not on the No. 63 bus.



Nude

Paris, Carrefour de la Croix Rouge

Street photography is like life: unfair and irresistible.



Getting Cozy

San Jose

Sex, Movies, Scholarship. This is the life!



The Constant Spectator

Paris

What remarkable scenes those stones eyes have witnessed.

The Power of Art

Tokyo



Art makes a drama of these “salarymen” on the way to lunch.



Masks

Paris, Place St. Sulpice

The truth lies behind the mask, or
maybe in front wearing a dirty T shirt.



Mc Do

Kyoto

Friendship:
real and unreal.



Condomania

Tokyo

On this street corner, fake excitement meets real boredom.



Sleez

Paris

Can't she read?



Bon Design

Paris

Good design is a matter of scale.



Big Girl

Tokyo

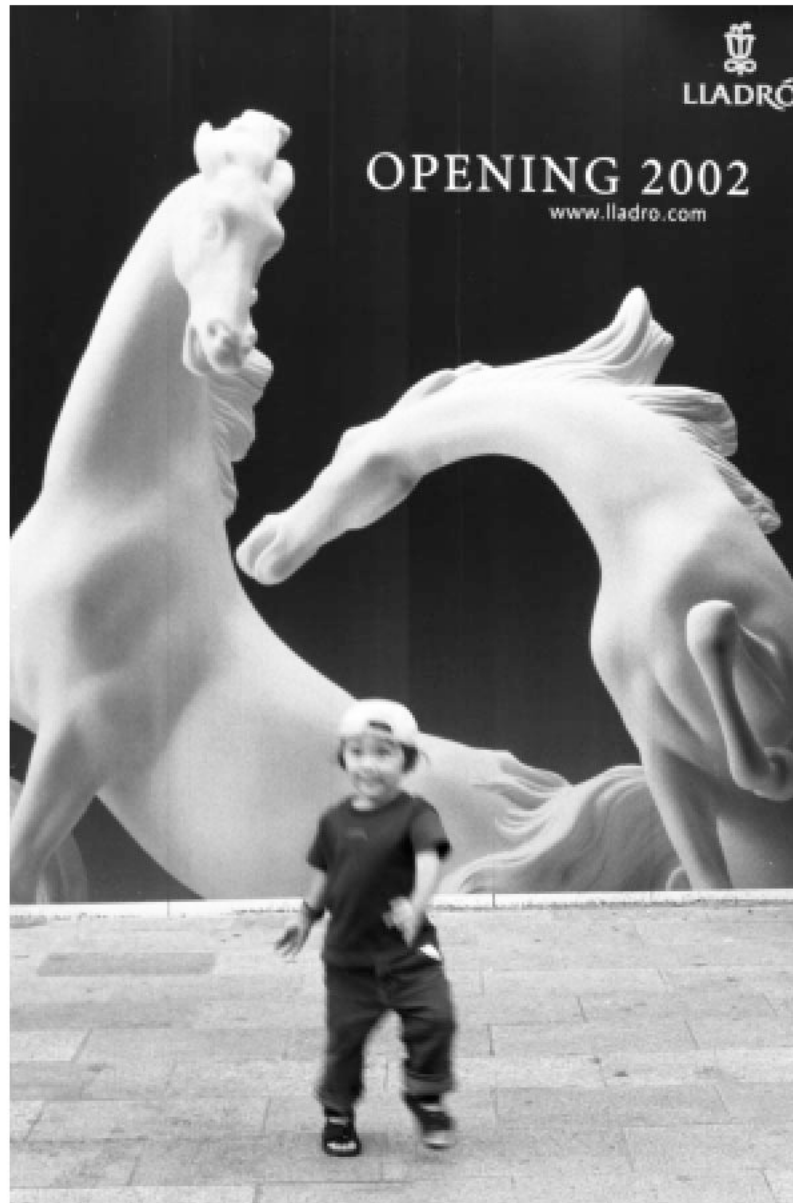
A study in scale: contrasts are emphasized when three dimensions become two.

Zoë

Paris, rue du Cherche-Midi



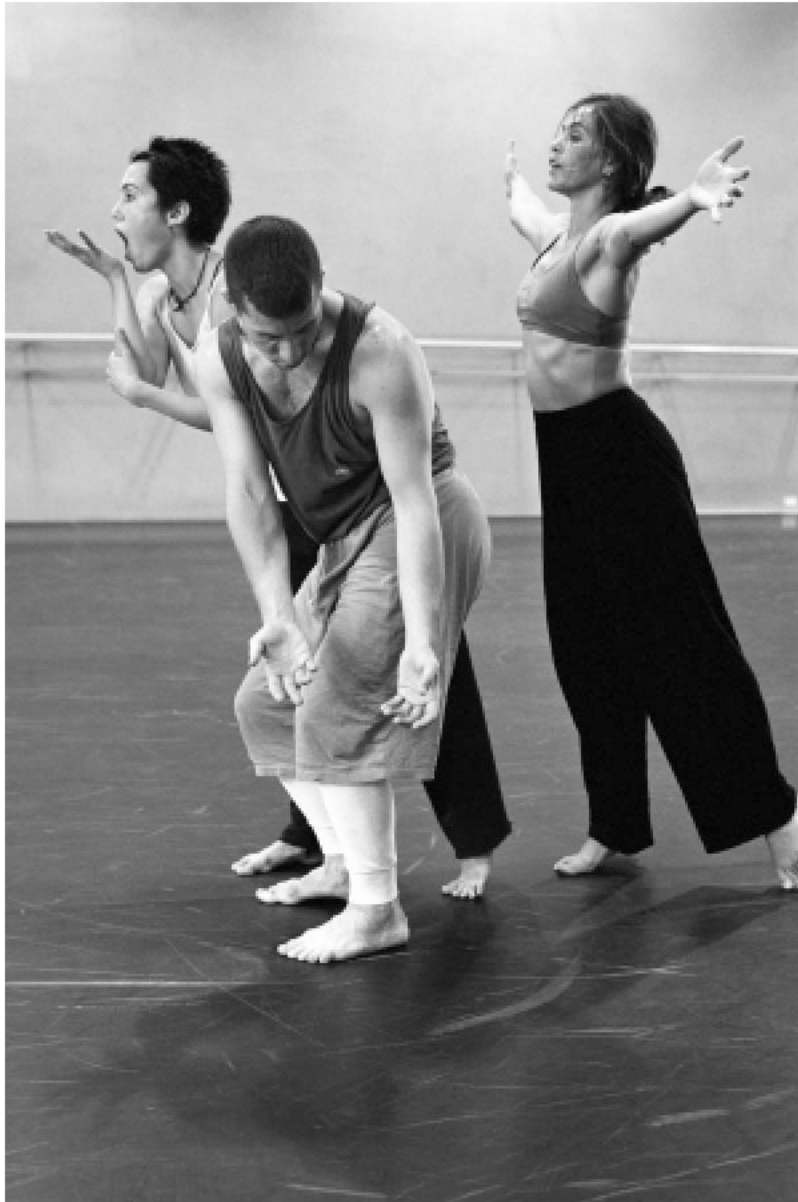
Zoë and her boyfriend: a natural born actress at play.



A Study in Movement

Tokyo, Ginza

Two interpretations
of movement in a
stationary medium.



Time Stopped

La Jolla, UCSD

Immobilized like
a falling drop as it
lands and splits up.



Urban Hieroglyphics

Paris

Dancing graffiti: grace on the sidewalk.



Patience

San Diego

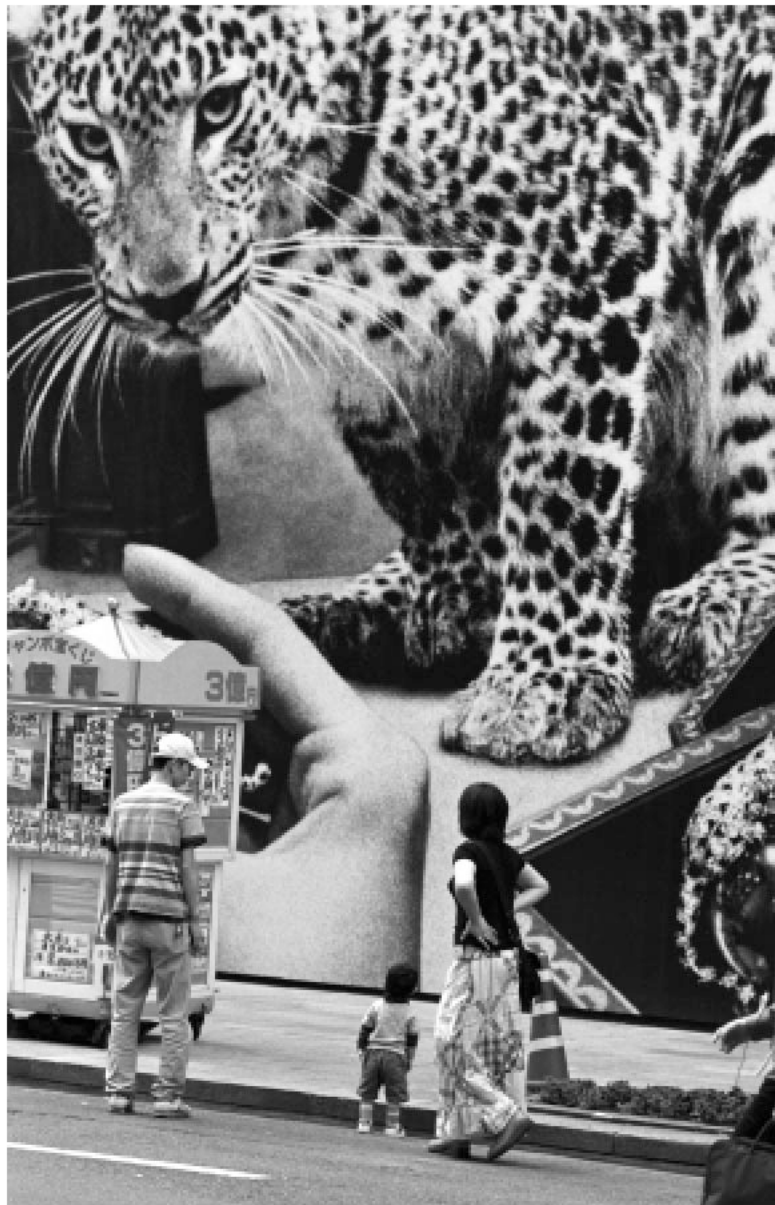
Geometry
of sorrow.



Before the Concert

Tokyo

Four hands, but not in harmony.



Big Cat

Tokyo, Ginza

Here kitty, kitty!



Cat on a Wall

Paris, rue du Regard

But who is that lady?



Kenzo

Paris

Hommage à
Cartier-Bresson:
the curve of the
staircase, the straight
back of the
woman....



Anima

Paris

Watch out! A shadow follows you and reaches out to grab you from behind.



Fashion Goddess

La Jolla

After the show, back into her school uniform and home for cookies and milk.



Hidden Treasure

San Francisco

So precious it glows.



At 12:25 pm on August 11, 1999 a total eclipse of the sun darkened Paris. The day before Paco Rabanne announced that the moon would fall on Paris during the eclipse. Paco Rabanne's shop is around the corner from the site of this photo, which shows a (terrified?) spectator in front of a crowd of amused observers awaiting the end of the world with wine bottles in hand. At the moment of totality, a cry went up: "Paco! Paco! Paco!" followed by the popping of corks and the "Toast of the survivors."

Eclipse

Paris, Carrefour de la Croix Rouge



Three Hands

San Francisco

The hour strikes.



Flea Market

Paris

_____ Would you buy a used teddy bear from this man?



Two of a Kind

Paris

Like master, like dog.



No Future

Tokyo, Takeshita dori

Dire portents from an alien world
displayed on unknowing bodies.



Love Me Tender

Tokyo, Takeshita dori

“Love Me Tender” will soon be like her, slim, stylish, smoking as she talks on her cell phone.



Skates and Skirts

Paris

An unbridgeable generation gap.



Chilling

Cergy

There is always an outsider.



Street Chess

Denver

A strange halo hovers over him as he goes in the for the kill.

The **streets** exhibit opened
October 12, 2004
at the Harbour Centre campus of
Simon Fraser University
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.



Photo: Sharon Weremiluk

Andrew Feenberg is Canada Research Chair in the Philosophy of Technology in the School of Communication of Simon Fraser University. He has taught at San Diego State University, the University of California, Irvine, the University of Paris, the University of Tokyo, Duke University and the State University of New York at Buffalo.

He is the author of *Heidegger and Marause, Transforming Technology, Questioning Technology, Alternative Modernity, Lukács, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory*, co-author of *When Poetry Ruled the Streets*, and co-editor of *Technology and the Politics of Knowledge, Community in the Digital Age, and Modernity and Technology*. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia and La Jolla, California.