

# "FRAGILE PAPER TIMESHIPS"

## EXHIBITION GUIDE

*All photographs in the [exhibition](#) are by Joel Meyerowitz (American, b. 1938) and were made using a Deardorff 8 x 10 field view camera and chromogenic negative film.*

### LIGHT

These two images of Cape Cod houses “bookend” the decade explored in this exhibition and represent important tenets of Meyerowitz’s work from this period.

In the earlier image, a second floor window of a Cape house glows yellow-gold from an interior lamp. Meyerowitz’s sensitivity to the color and quality of light transforms this somber, inanimate subject into one with a burst of energy. Meyerowitz first championed color photography over black-and-white in the mid-1960s, believing the latter to be insufficient for conveying sensation and emotion. “[Black and white] expresses light as a matter of intensity,” he wrote in *Cape Light*, “there is no meaning attached to [it].” This is a point well taken when one imagines this photograph in gray tones. Meyerowitz’s adoption of the Deardorff field view camera in the late 1970s was motivated by a desire for even greater detail in his color work. Capable of producing strikingly nuanced images, this 45-pound vintage device creates an 8 x 10-inch negative with every exposure.

In the second image, soft, temperate light streams through an alley between two houses. On the Cape, removed from the atmospheric pollution of New York City, Meyerowitz discovered the way in which light permeated objects and materials. “The Cape often speaks to me as a space between two buildings,” he noted. His photographs from this period reflect an interest less in forms or objects than in spaces, or what he calls “fields of force” created by light.



PROVINCETOWN, HOUSE, LIGHT, 1979

Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



RIGHT OF WAY, FENCE, GOLD LIGHT, 1989  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print

## STILL LIFE

Still lifes in art are often highly constructed images, made up of objects that have been carefully arranged according to an artist's desired composition or narrative. For a photographer interested in atmosphere and sensation, the genre of still life was a rare digression in Meyerowitz's work from this period. "I've never been one who, like Cézanne, could set up a still life on a tabletop," he has noted. "I'm more comfortable finding things as they are, having been left there by the whims of others, to show me their charms." The slow pace of photographing with the heavy, 8 x 10 view camera contributed to Meyerowitz's occasional discovery of scintillating still objects, such as the dewy remnants of a dinner party left out overnight, or a pile of verdant lettuce leaves drying on a kitchen towel.



STILL LIFE, WINDOW, 1985

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print



FOUNTAIN, SPAIN, 1983

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print



EARLY MORNING STILL LIFE, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



TRADING POST, FLORIDA, 1982  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print





TABLE, CABIN, 1984  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



YOSEMITE, HOTEL, CHAIR, VINES, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print

## LANDSCAPE

The sheer size of Meyerowitz's 8 x 10 view camera precluded the spontaneity with which he worked previously, when using a 35mm point-and-shoot device. It transformed his photography from one of quick decisions and sudden, eye-catching formal relationships to a more patient, contemplative practice. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Meyerowitz's views of the horizon line in different locations and at every hour of the day. With its fixed tripod and rectilinear gridding of the objects in its frame, the 8 x 10 camera stabilized the photographer's viewpoint. Explaining his resulting revelations, Meyerowitz wrote "even in the simplest of visions; a tree nearby, a layer of bushes behind, a house further on, a dune beyond that, the sea behind everything, [with the large format camera] all of these layers were coherent and visible in a way that I hadn't experienced before."

Meyerowitz's *Bay/Sky* series focuses on a swathe of land, sea, and sky near his summer home in Provincetown on Cape Cod. These serene, painterly photographs explore the effects of light on each layer and particle of that landscape.



BAY/SKY SERIES, JETTY, 1983

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print



BEACH, DUSK, STORM, PROVINCETOWN, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



RED HOUSE, TRURO, 1982  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



BAY/SKY SERIES, DUSK, 1985  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



LONGNOOK BEACH, FIGURES, 1984  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print





LONGNOOK BEACH, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



PROVINCETOWN, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



MARSHES, TRURO, 1982  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



PAUL THEROUX AND HIS BOAT, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



BAY/SKY SERIES, BEAMS, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print

## ARIEL

Meyerowitz's subjects became more personal during summers on Cape Cod: his own friends and family, his neighbors' yards and houses, his kitchen table. He described the season in his diaristic photo-essay *A Summer's Day* as the time when "I stare into space as long as I can. I look deeply into other faces. I lie in the sand and in the grass, feeling for what it felt like the first time. Summer...is a time for taking in."

The photographer's sense of time is implicit in his images of his daughter, Ariel, experiencing her own summer days. In one photograph, Ariel looks contemplatively into the distance; she stands in a self-assured pose, her bare legs deep in beach grasses. The composition recalls works by another Cape Cod artist, Edward Hopper (1882-1967), the subject of major exhibitions in the early 1980s. Speaking about Hopper on a panel at the Whitney Museum in 1981, Meyerowitz observed, "It seems to me that Hopper was a man who liked to take his time. Running through all his paintings was the quality of time and waiting: people in their rooms, houses in their light, the endurance of things, the lengthening of the moment." Meyerowitz's photographs on the Cape suggest a similar impulse to lengthen, savor, and capture moments.



ARIEL MEYEROWITZ, 1981

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print



ARIEL IN GRASSES, TRURO, 1983

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print





ARIEL, 1983  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print

## PORTRAITS

Some of Meyerowitz's earliest photographs were of people bustling through their daily commutes, standing on street corners, or sitting in New York City subway cars. His work from the early 1960s to the late 1970s is filled with images of incidental relationships between anonymous people, spotted quickly and captured instantaneously with a point-and-shoot camera. Beginning in 1981, equipped with the larger format view camera, he photographed human subjects with a greater level of intimacy. On the Cape, he made portraits of his friends and family by the shore, focusing on subtle gestures and the quality of skin and hair in sunlight. He took a particular interest in redheads, even putting out a call in the *Provincetown Advocate* for subjects fitting that description. Meyerowitz noted that "like film itself, redheads are transformed by sunlight." His subjects' confident, frame-filling poses belie the fragile nature of their appearances, which are utterly contingent upon innumerable variables: the temperature of the light, the moisture in the air flowing through clothes and hair, and how squinting eyes affect the shape of one's face at the photographic instant.

## OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE EXHIBITION



PITTSBURGH, MAN ON LADDER, 1984  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



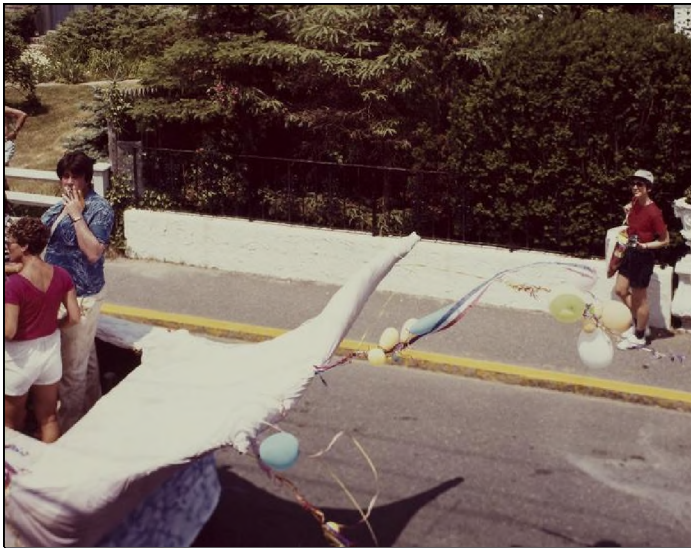
TRUCK AND FLAG, PITTSBURGH, 1984  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



PITTSBURGH, CARNIVAL AND TRAIN, 1984  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



THREE RIVERS PARK, PITTSBURGH, 1984  
Meyerowitz, Joel  
American (1938- )  
Vintage chromogenic print



JULY 4TH PARADE, PROVINCETOWN, 1983

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print



BARN, AHOSKIE, N.C., 1982

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print





ALONG THE ROAD, N.C., 1982

Meyerowitz, Joel

American (1938- )

Vintage chromogenic print