

January 2017 In This Issue

Welcome to our very first issue of 2017! We are excited to present you with some stellar photo projects, a top-notch audio interview and more. Here's the rundown:

First up, you are going to be smitten by this month's featured photographer – Juliette Mansour. Juliette never set out to do street photography, but a series of unexpected developments led her to discover it as one of her greatest passions. Listen in to hear more about this talented street shooter with a true learning mindset.

Next, we've got an intriguing project from Andrzej Pilichowski-Ragno called "City Landscapes." If you ask me, it's dark, moody and amazing. It's a compilation of images from various cities, put together to create an "invisible city" that is both strange and familiar. Take your time on this one and let your imagination run wild.

“Roaming Manhattan” by G.H. Strauss is the first of two installments that tell the story of his time as a street photographer who has roamed Manhattan for decades, documenting the people and places that make it the city the whole world dreams of. You’ll see historic images, surreal images and much more.

Next, Jamari Lior tells the tale of “Floral India.” Jamari is a talented photographer and an anthropologist – a vocation that no doubt gives her such keen eyes for capturing a person’s essence in a frame. Her story and images are captivating, especially if you are contemplating a trip to India.

So as not to break tradition, we wrap up this issue with a lovely collection of street photos from around the globe. These images are hand-selected from contributors to the SPM community by Bob (our editor) and folks, they will take you places. Don’t miss ’em!

That’s a wrap for this issue. Until next month, happy shooting!

Staff and Contributors

Contributors This Issue:

- Jamari Lior
- Juliette Mansour
- Bob Patterson
- Andrzej Pilichowski-Ragno
- G.H. Strauss

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- Bob Patterson – Editor
- Ashley Hunsberger – Assistant Editor
- Matt Fuller – Audio Production

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Roaming Manhattan

A Quarter Century of Life and Photos in the Big Apple

By G.H. Strauss

“New York is the continuous celebration of everything.”
– W.H. Auden

The openness, variety and opportunities of New York were a major attraction for me when I decided to migrate from the American heartland to Manhattan in 1964. Another enticement was the creativity and the arts that were vibrant there, all superbly chronicled by *The Village Voice* when it was a great weekly.

New York Scenes

With a musical, artistic family background and a liberal education from Oberlin College, I voyaged to Manhattan from Cleveland, Ohio driving a vintage Opel Sedan loaded with jazz LPs, books, pots and pans. I brought with me a passion for modern jazz and a love of literature and the arts.

These influences were nourished while I was studying at New York University for a PhD in political science and living on East Tenth Street in the (far) East Village in the mid-1960s. Across the street from my not too crummy tenement building was The Peace Eye Bookstore, led by poets and activists Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg. They founded the satirical rock group, The Fugs, whose music and bawdy lyrics contributed mightily to my cultural uplift in those days.

I also heard Thelonious Monk at the Five Spot Café on St. Marks Place and Charles Mingus at the Half Note Club on Hudson Street. Years later, after moving to the Upper West Side and starting my photographic pursuits in 1990, I hung out at J's Jazz Club on Broadway and West 98th Street.

The club was founded by the singer, Judy Barnett, and had an 8:00 PM set with no cover charge, which was really cool for a working stiff with a demanding day job at a midtown PR firm. It was a great listening room featuring young talent, and I photographed numerous groups who played there in the early '90s.

One of them was the Mark Sherman Quartet (see below). Since that time, Mark has gone on to a fabulous jazz career, which he is still pursuing:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Sherman_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Sherman_(musician))



Mark Sherman Quartet at J's (Manhattan, 1993).

After earning my PhD in 1973, I worked in the City Comptroller's Office and then in several public relations agencies, founding my own PR firm in midtown Manhattan in 1995. A couple of years later, I moved it downtown near City Hall. Local culture in City Hall Park was blooming when the weather was good, which was where I found three jazz musicians swinging alfresco one summer day:



Cookin' in the Park (Manhattan, 2010)

Another facet of the arts in New York that intrigued me was its array of museums and galleries. I hung at the Museum of Modern Art's sculpture garden where live combos played cool jazz free of charge on Thursday evenings. An architect friend and I attended gallery openings around town and availed ourselves of heapings of contemporary art along with free wine and cheese, sometimes served with fine crackers.

As my photographic roamings progressed, I started to enter art exhibit competitions and had works chosen for shows in the early 1990s. Not much sold, so I had to schlep framed photographs back to my small apartment on the Upper West Side. Even with a shower/bathtub in the bathroom, a sink in the Pullman kitchen and a bed in the bedroom, there was not a lot of space for my works. But I kept on shooting with my Canon EOS-1 35mm film camera. I did not seek to do anything with some of the images until I went digital in 2010.

I have started to show my work in recent years both in local/regional galleries and online. A highlight for me was exhibiting at the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition summer show in 2014, housed in their huge two-level gallery space in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Four images from my Race and Class Collection were selected for a juried exhibition, *The World Is Out of Order*. In addition, four selections from my Landscapes & Cityscapes Collection and five from the Dogs Are People Too portfolio were exhibited.

One of the pleasures of this show was walking the galleries when much of the crowd had left. I was able to capture the following father and daughter intently viewing contemporary art there (note the heart-warming, subconscious choreography between the two):



Art Lovers (Brooklyn, NY, 2014)

Everyday Surrealism

My outlook and visual interests have been influenced by the works of Monty Python's Flying Circus, Salvador Dali, Luis Bunuel, Marcel Duchamp, S.J. Perelman and the 1920 German Expressionist film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. This brilliant silent movie is noted, among other things, for its radically slanting lines, which are a feature of many of my surreal photographs.

As I roam, I look for happenstances and what serendipity brings me, particularly people and animals that have a surreal and often humorous edge. In life and in spontaneous photography, timing is everything, and here today gone tomorrow. Sometimes I create a surreal effect with an offbeat camera setting, other times by how I frame images and give them titles. The three samples below from my Surreal Images Collection illustrate these various approaches.

My wife and I live near Central Park, and we love its varied seasons. It is constantly abloom with diverse human and animal life.

The following two images were captured in Central Park during the summer. They both exemplify what I call "Sunshine Surrealism." The first one was done with a slow shutter speed and produced a result I was not certain of until I saw it as a Jpeg:

The next photograph is typical of many of my surreal realism efforts. These depend upon what seizes my imagination, how I frame the subject and the title I later create for it.

There is an interesting parallel between the second and third photos in this series. Both feature severed limbs from out of right field, as they say in baseball:

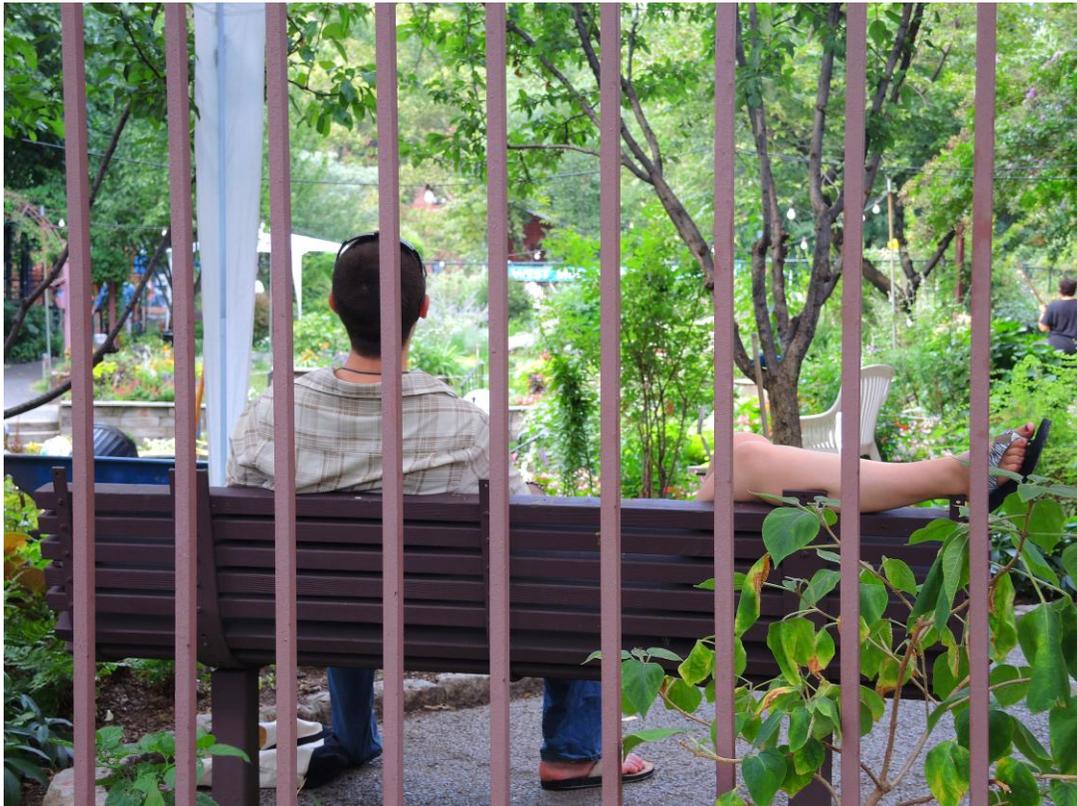


Ghost Rider (Manhattan, 2015)



Good Doggy! (Manhattan, 1991)

The third photograph was taken outside a community garden near our apartment. You never know what oddities you'll find there. Other surreal images are to be found on my web site.



Spare Leg (Manhattan, 2015)

Landscapes & Cityscapes

I was working in a public relations firm in the early 1990s on lower Seventh Avenue, which had a grand outdoor terrace with far-reaching views. One cold winter's day, I stepped out and photographed rooftops both with and against the sunlight. The result was related but strikingly different images:



Downtown Vista I (Manhattan, 1993)



Downtown Vista II (Manhattan, 1993)

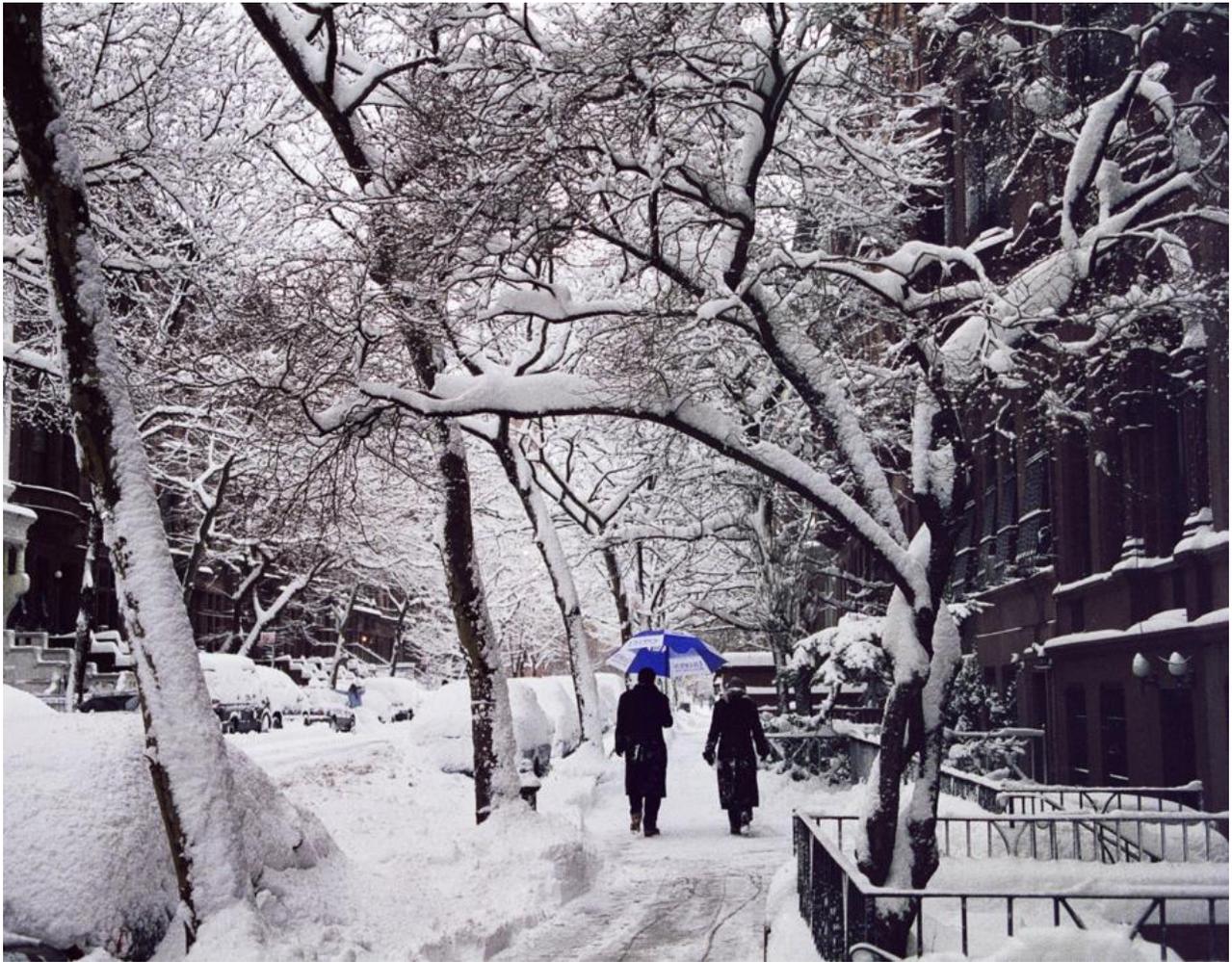
During December 31, 2000, a foot and a half of snow descended from the heavens on New York City. This presented me with an historic opportunity! At eight in the morning, my wife and I flew out of our cozy apartment armed with camera and trusty tripod and headed toward Central Park West. I walked along the sidewalk where I could look down through tree branches laden with the white stuff to the park below. From that vantage point I captured a different kind of view of snowy Central Park:



The Great Snowfall of 2000 – Central Park (Manhattan)

Later that day I ventured out to catch more snow flakes. I saw a couple across the street from where we lived with the man holding a blue and white umbrella as they walked on the sidewalk. They were moving briskly toward Central Park West, so I darted across the street and jogged in back of them until I could stop and snap their picture among the snow-laden tree branches (see below).

Leaping to the present meteorological era, there was another Great Snowfall opportunity for me in early 2016. I was, however, not as spry as in 2000, so I hung out of our living room window and captured a snowy vista in our own backyard. It was dusk, and the snow sculptures had a luminescent cast bathed in falling flakes (see below for The Great Snowfall of 2000 – Couple with Umbrella and The Great Snowfall of 2016 – Backyard Vista).



The Great Snowfall of 2000 – Couple with Umbrella (Manhattan)



The Great Snowfall of 2016 – Backyard Vista (Manhattan)

Central Park in summer is also a fine place to roam. The trees are varied, and their forms fascinate me. A greenery constellation that I saw reminds me of some oriental art:



Oriental Outlook (Manhattan, 2015)

A West Side locale that I photographed one fall day represents an aspect of New York that I love. It's a community vest pocket park tended by neighbors and open to the public free of charge. When I returned a year later, the spell was gone: no bench and no smiling jack 'o lantern greeting visitors. I was saddened but glad I was able to capture that original moment in 2013.

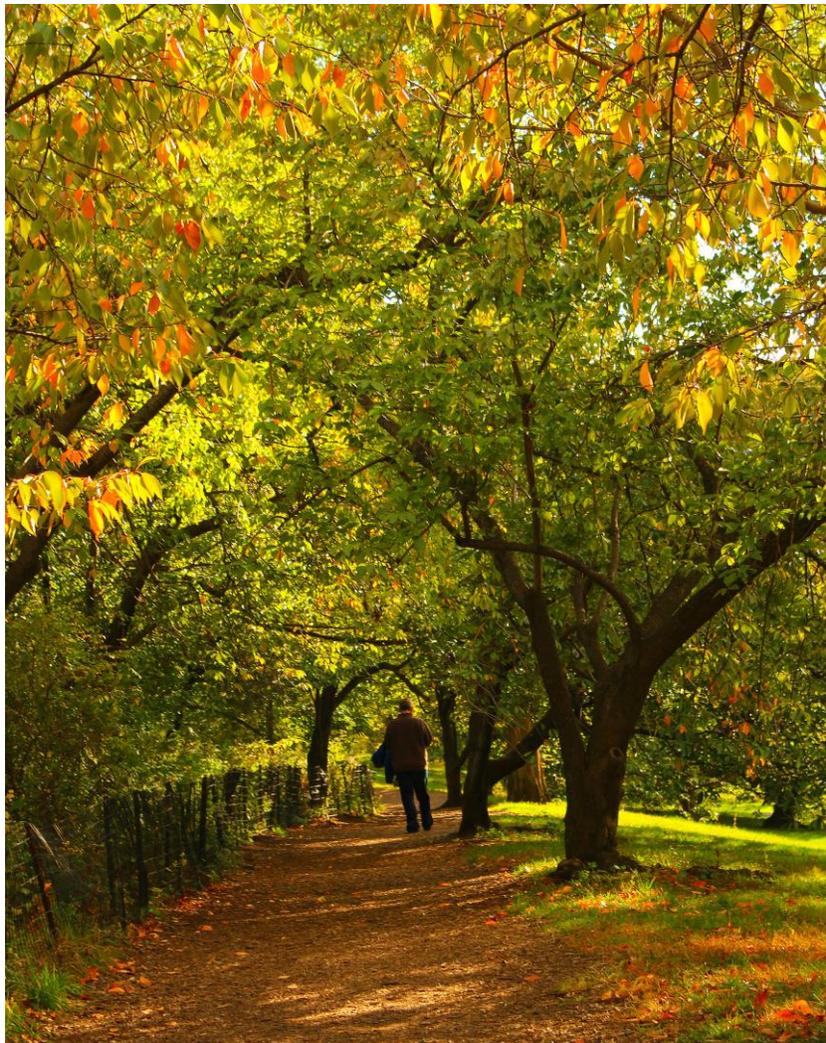


Vest Pocket Park (Manhattan, 2013)

Central Park in autumn can also be quite fine:



Central Park Reservoir View (Manhattan, 2016)



Central Park Wanderer (Manhattan, 2016)

Sometimes I see buildings from a fresh perspective. I was walking to our apartment one cold afternoon when I looked at these towers through a web of tree branches and took this shot:



Latticed Towers (Manhattan, 2015)

Dogs Are People Too

When I was a young sprout growing up in a suburb of Cleveland, my younger sister yearned for a dog. My father bought an adorable brown Cocker Spaniel with a pedigree, and it was named Hub Bub. His toilet manners, however, were less than aristocratic, and he regularly peed on the rug in the sun porch of the house. He also had a predilection for charging into cars when my father took him walking at night. My dad, being a conscientious doctor, accompanied him to the ER of a local hospital for treatment and splints. After awhile, Hub Bub became too much for every one in the family, and he was placed on a farm in Ashtabula, Ohio where he could run free and happy.

Living in Manhattan, I have been surrounded by people and dogs. During my early years doing street photography I snapped an occasional canine photograph. Since my marriage to Annie, my interest in dogs has zoomed. She once owned an adorable, impertinent Shih Tzu who lived to the ripe old age of fifteen, and she points out any Shih Tzu that comes across our path of whatever hair length. They and other breeds have been willing photographic subjects and have provided surreal, merry or sad faces and actions that often catch my fancy. Below are two selections from my Dogs Are People Too Collection:



On a Short Leash (Manhattan, 2014)

The above photo is of a well-kept Shih Tzu who clearly is not happy about the domestic status granted by his well-attired mistress. It has visual rhythms and symbolic touches including the grating between them. The image that follows shows three excited downtown dogs in an uproar about a passing enticement:



Huba Huba! (Manhattan, 2011)

Images of Race and Class

Political liberalism and social concern run in my family. My maternal grandfather was an organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union in Cleveland in the 1920s, and my parents were sturdy New Deal Democrats for many years. I got involved in party politics in New York on the Upper West Side around 1970 and was elected to the Manhattan Democratic County Committee every two years for a decade. I worked in a number of political campaigns as a volunteer, did issues research and wrote position papers, some of which became press releases and candidate speeches. The campaign experience led me to realize that I had good writing and communication skills, which ultimately were converted into public relations jobs and eventually my own PR firm.

As I have roamed Manhattan over the years, I have photographed a variety of subjects reflecting differing situations of race and class, the two often intertwined. The following four selections from my Images of Race and Class Collection are just a sample of what I have discovered and documented. They are not the whole story of race and class, but they signify certain aspects of diverse lives in New York City.

One of the first photographs I ever took was of a black homeless man whom I discovered to my surprise on the sidewalk in a posh area of the Upper East Side (see below). The next two images, of dogs, indicate differing class levels. The fourth reflects some of the best aspects of New York, captured in a summery City Hall Park.



Upper East Side Homeless Person (Manhattan, 1990)



Looking Out on the Avenue (Manhattan, 2011)



Dogwalker with Clients (Manhattan, 2011)



Downtown Chess Match (Manhattan, 2010)

Night Visions

Night is often a cloak for evil deeds, twisted dreams and social inequities. It can also be a time of peaceful meditation, personal discovery and courageous action.

This portfolio, titled Night Visions, consists of ten dark, menacing photographs that I have created, infusing them with symbolic expressionism through special captions and sequencing.

The effect is intended to transcend particular time and locale and to reflect the spirits of the threatened, the disappeared and resisters everywhere.

Following are three selections from the portfolio:



Headquarters Never Sleeps



Urban Shock Troops



Fear

This concludes a brief review of my life and photography to date, focusing on Manhattan with a side trip to Red Hook, Brooklyn. The images shown are samples from my web site (URL below), which also features photos from other parts of the U.S. and overseas. You are invited to visit it and view what else may be of interest. More about my photography follows:

Artist's Bio

I have been doing photography since 1990, looking for spontaneous, offbeat subjects that interest me in various ways. My visual outlook is influenced by my love of the visual arts, modern jazz, surrealism, expressionism and a strong social concern. Many of my images and their titles are symbolic and fanciful, with their presentation and sequencing also designed to add meaning wherever possible.

My work has appeared in national juried group shows as well solo exhibitions in public and private spaces over the years.

Eight images from my *Landscapes & Cityscapes* portfolio were featured in an arts exhibition at a prominent Wall Street law firm during 2015-2016. In 2014, selections from my *Dogs Are People* collection were shown at Koh Gallery, Manhattan; West Side Arts Coalition Gallery, Manhattan; and Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition Gallery, Red Hook, Brooklyn. Four images from my *Race and Class* portfolio were selected for a juried exhibition, *The World is Out of Order*, at the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition Gallery in July 2014.

Among the other venues that exhibited my work in prior years are Westbeth Gallery, Manhattan; Barrett Art Center, Dutchess County Art Association, Poughkeepsie, NY; Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY; Bank of New York Gallery, Manhattan; Books & Co. Gallery, Manhattan.

The April 2015 issue of *Street Photography Magazine* showcased my bylined article, "Surreal Images On and Off the Street," which included ten photographs from my *Surrealism* collection. The annual book, *Best of Photography 2014*, included my cityscape, *Great Snowfall of 2000 - Central Park*. The 2015 edition showed my cityscape, *Latticed Towers*. One of my surreal canine photographs, *Hanging Out in Riverside Park*, appeared in the November 2014 issue of *Street Photography Magazine*.

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Photo of G.H. Strauss



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