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Paul Kessel

The Last Stop

Photographs of Coney Island

Curated by Harvey Stein

September 7 – 30, 2017

Reception: Thursday, September 7; 6-8pm

Thursday – Saturday, 1-6pm & by appt.

Drummer Girl, 2016, 20 x 24 ins

East Village, NYC: Umbrella Arts Gallery is excited to present its second solo exhibition with [Paul Kessel](#), *The Last Stop: Photographs of Coney Island*. Curator Harvey Stein, Director of Photography at Umbrella Arts Gallery, award winning photographer and instructor at the International Center of Photography, selected over 24 images for the exhibition covering several years of Kessel roving the storied boardwalk.

After a life time as a clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst and university teacher, just before Kessel's 70th birthday in 2008, he began taking classes at the International Center of Photography. Since 2011 Kessel has been a street photographer with over 20 group exhibitions, winning numerous awards including being named one of Lens Culture's Top 100 Street Photographers 2016 and *Popular Photography's* June 2016 issue featured Kessel's *True Believers* series.

With camera in hand, Kessel spends about five hours daily traveling the streets of New York City in search of images. Sometimes it happens randomly, other times he will stake out an area that has the right elements of close proximity, multiple layers and captivating lighting. That moment when the elements align with a subtle context, he intuitively takes the shot. Kessel's photographs often invite the viewer to engage in the experience of the image.

Current exhibits include: winner of Juror's choice [PH21 Gallery](#), Budapest; group exhibit and publication South x Southeast Photo Gallery and Magazine, Georgia; *Portals* on [PhotoPlaceGallery](#) and recently [Aviary](#) curated by Paula Tognarelli, Director of The Griffin Museum, MA. This past July, Kessel gave an [in-depth interview](#) (scroll down to "In the Press" section). Kessel is a native Manhattanite.

"Paul Kessel, one of my favorite street photographers, chronicles situations that otherwise would be familiar scenes, bringing the viewer into the drama unfolding through his unique framing. His work reminds me just what I think photography is all about."

Elizabeth Avedon, Independent curator and correspondent for L'oeil de la Photographie.

"Paul Kessel's work is a totally fresh look at a common subject. I really like his work. His photos really need to be seen and I am glad he has this opportunity to show his work in New York." Roger Ricco, co-founder and partner of Ricco Maresca Gallery, NYC.

"Paul Kessel's compassionate, dogged pursuit of his voice as a street photographer gives me great joy as I see sparks of clarity and beauty emerge." Jeff Mermelstein, author of "Sidewalk", "No Title Here", and "Twirl/Run".

"Paul Kessel truly captures the harried, hyper, longing soul of New York City. Whether it is Coney Island, Fifth Avenue, Williamsburg, Times Square, or Soho, his street photos put you smack in the middle of moments that always feel as real as they are beyond the ordinary." Russ Rowland, commercial and award winning fine art photographer.

"Paul Kessel's bold complex compositions, beautiful rich palettes, and engaging everyday subject matter make for a perfect storm of street tales seeped in today's culture." Amy Touchette author of "Shoot The Arrow" and photographer, photography writer, and educator.

"Much of Paul's professional life was spent as a psychologist and psychoanalyst. When you look at his street images, you can see the same impulse at work-the frame captures people exposing themselves through their wardrobe, gestures, and expressions. Moreover, Paul's images reveal the cameraman as much as the subjects, someone who is insatiably curious about public personas and what they reveal both individually and collectively." Phyllis B. Dooney documentary photographer and author of "Gravity is Stronger Here".

"Paul manages in his Coney Island photographs to capture spontaneous moments within an elegant composition that often provide the viewer with the emotional experiences of the subjects." Jack Simon
, street photographer and member of Burn My Eye Collective, San Francisco.

"Paul has a gift for photographing those magic Coney Island moments when energy, idiosyncrasy, and beauty collide."
Michelle Rick, Street photographer.

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Untitled, 2016, 20 x 24 ins