



International Center of Photography

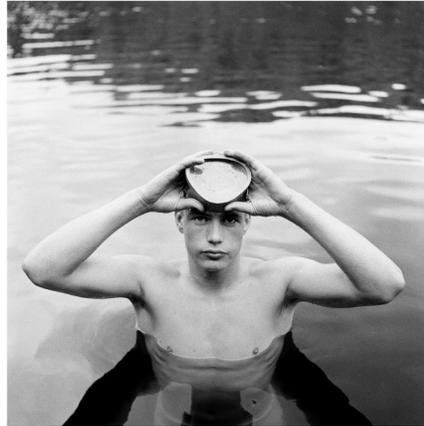
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media release

Alan B. Stone and the Senses of Place



Alan B. Stone
Untitled (rue de la Commune, 'Sailor's Club')
Collection Archives gaies du Québec



Alan B. Stone
Untitled (Scout with mask), 1953
Collection Archives gaies du Québec

On view from
January 29
through
May 9, 2010

Media Preview
January 28, 2010
11:30 am–1:00 pm

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"...the past is a country from which we have all emigrated. . . its loss is part of our common humanity."
-Salman Rushdie

On view at the International Center of Photography (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) from January 29 through May 9, 2010, *Alan B. Stone and the Senses of Place* explores photography's unique ability to revive one's sense of connection to the past, and considers some of the many meanings associated with "place." Guest curator David Deitcher presents the work of the little-known Montreal-based photographer Alan B. Stone (1928–1992) as a case study that considers some of the ways in which people experience, use, and are affected by photographs. This intimate installation of around 75 black-and-white photographs, newspaper clippings, and small magazines proceeds from the assumption that one knows one's past in part through pictures, through identifying with photographs that relate to one's lived experience. A native-born Montrealer, Deitcher's first encounter with Stone's photographs revived memories of the times and places in which he was raised. This exhibition combines a provocative selection of Stone's photographs with contextualizing ephemera to demonstrate that the place one associates with "home" endures at the confluence of time and space, of geography and history, politics and the law, and the vicissitudes of memory, desire, and the imagination.

Stone was a commercial photographer who practiced a number of photographic idioms to earn a living selling pictures to periodicals. But his limited claim to fame stems from his vocation as a shrewd purveyor of beefcake—male pin-ups and physique photographs—that he produced, published and sold beginning in 1953 under the name of the Mark One Studio. Stone ran Mark One out of the basement of the suburban home that he shared with his mother in the Anglo-dominated west end of Montreal—then, even more than now, a city divided by language, as well as by ethnicity and class. Stone was himself a discretely gay man at a time when being exposed as homosexual could lead to arrest, prosecution, disgrace, and even suicide. Adding poignancy to Stone's many photographs of handsome, often muscular young men and boys is the fact that Stone had been afflicted with a debilitating form of arthritis from his early 20s.

As he was photographing male models for Mark One, Stone also documented the streets, ports, and parks of the city. In these enigmatic pictures of Montreal, Stone often employed a distinctly oblique point of view, which permitted him safely to capture the youths, rugged stevedores and other laborers who attracted his attention in otherwise conventional shots of downtown, the Old City and its port, of the Lachine Canal, and the city's parks and suburbs. These photographs, as well as the 18 that he took in December 1951 of newsstands in and around downtown, suggest surveillance, pictures taken on the sly, as if collecting evidence of some unidentified crime. Underscoring the interrelationship between these two seemingly disparate bodies of work, this installation includes period newspaper clippings that attest to the harassment of homosexuals and the pervasive climate of danger and secrecy that permeated Stone's experience of the city. As such, this exhibition underscores the extent to which photographic point-of-view is socially determined.

Stone's photographs and negatives have been preserved by the Archives gaies du Québec. Additional works in the exhibition are drawn from the collections of the Centre d'histoire de Montréal and private collections.

David Deitcher is an art historian, independent curator, and critic. He is the editor of *The Question of Equality: Lesbian and Gay Politics in America Since Stonewall* (Scribner, 1995). His book, *Dear Friends: American Photographs of Men Together, 1840-1918* was awarded a Lambda Literary Book award in 2001. Deitcher is the curator of the exhibition of the same name that opened in March 2001 at the International Center of Photography. He is core faculty at the ICP-Bard Program in Advanced Photographic Studies, and at the Vermont College of Fine Arts.