

# gravy.

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## About the Artists

### **Saleem Ahmed**

Bio: Saleem Ahmed is a photographer and professor based in Philadelphia. His creative practice incorporates elements of documentary storytelling, family history, writing, and bookmaking.

Book Inspiration: *The Last Days of W* by Alec Soth

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### **Jaime Alvarez**

Artist Statement: As a Puerto Rican, now living in the US for the majority of my life, I still feel like everything around me can only be understood through the lens of a camera. I always feel like I'm a perpetual outsider.

The camera allows me to take the real world and reexamine its context within a frame. Whether I'm photographing around my neighborhood of Fishtown, or in Spain when visiting distant family, I find new places and have the urge to collect it as an image.

Bio: Jaime Alvarez is a Puerto Rican artist that is living and working in Philadelphia, in a converted Pickle factory with his family and two dogs. His work has been shown in Toronto, New York, Philadelphia, Austin, Delaware, Washington DC, Detroit, and San Juan PR. Jaime teaches photography at University of the Arts and at Fleisher Art Memorial in Philadelphia.

Book Inspiration Title: *Contemporary Suburbium* by Ed & Deanna Templeton.

I f\*cking love this book. It portrays a suburban community and the youth surrounding it in black and white. Portraits, landscapes, and details of suburbia bound in accordion style, where Deanna has one side, and Ed has the other. Its beautiful, a little raw, simple, and lovely object.

IG and Website

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## **Evan Demianczyk**

Artist Statement: I make photographs of landscapes. People are largely absent from my photographs, as I primarily focus on the physical and mental environments people live within or in which they are confined and survive. Despite the aforementioned absence of people in my photographs, I photograph their character, socioeconomic backgrounds, memories, humor, hopes, tenacity, and struggles in the often overlooked, story-rich banality displayed throughout the places they inhabit. Sunlight finds the people of these peripheral scenes deserving of its warm kiss or heated scorn, and I document the proof of this short-lived romance.

Bio: Evan Demianczyk is a photographer based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but was raised in Lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and born from a mother native to the Democratic Republic of Congo and a Brazilian-born Ukrainian father. Influenced by the contrasting geographies and particularly unique and political history that brought about their existence, Demianczyk is interested in using photography and retrospective writing to connect idiosyncratic relations among geography, time, and the self by developing language, dialogues, and narratives from elements that generate visual landscapes. Demianczyk is a 2013 summa cum laude graduate of Temple University's College of Education and is a public school teacher in the School District of Philadelphia.

Book Inspiration Title: *After Tonight, Everything Will Be Different* | Written by Adam Gnade | Published by Three One G, Bread & Roses Press

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## **Matt Hurst**

Artist Statement: My work is heavily inspired by the pioneers of color photography and their own explorations of the American landscape. While much of my past work focused on the abandoned relics of the past, my current photographic work aims to preserve a record of the places that may disappear in the near future, before they're forgotten for good.

Bio: Matt Hurst is a documentary and editorial photographer from Philadelphia, PA. His 2014 joint show with Katie Reynolds entitled "Beyond White Pines" focused on the abandonment of honeymoon resorts in the Pocono Mountains.

Book Inspiration Title: *American Independents* / Curated by Sally Eauclaire

This book is a curated collection featuring the work of eighteen color photographers who focused on color photography in an era where it was still coming into its own as an art form. It features an eclectic mix of work from photographers who are almost household names, such as William Eggleston and Stephen Shore, in addition to less well-known artists whose work is difficult to find elsewhere. Being able to see these varied approaches to capturing the American

landscape all in one place was hugely inspiring to me when I first discovered this book, and it is still one that I revisit frequently to rekindle that feeling.

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## **Kara Khan**

Artist Statement: Burn This Book is part of an ongoing project that started in 2017 as an attempt to understand America's obsession with its own flag and to highlight the contradictions that surround it. Burning a flag, for example, is both the only respectful way to discard a flag and the most disrespectful act against it, depending on who is holding the fire. Along the way Burn This Book has become an outlet for the seemingly never ending rage inducing acts of the US government. Read it, keep it, and always know it's there for you when the only thing you want to do is burn something down :)

Bio: Kara Khan is a Philadelphia based photographer and installation artist committed to creating work that encourages collaboration, interaction, and direct action.

Book Inspiration Title: The Americans Robert Frank, The American Monument Lee Friedlander, and 26 Gasoline Stations Ed Ruscha

IG and Website @socialledamerica and @popuppolaroid

## **Neil Kohl**

Artist Statement: The March on Washington for Gay & Lesbian Rights on October 11, 1987 was the first large-scale protest I covered as a fledgling news photographer. It was eye-opening, and it changed my perspective on many things. Protest can be unifying and cathartic; it is deeply necessary but not sufficient to bring about change. Over the next 30+ years I've continued to photograph demonstrations and recently completed covering the recurring demonstration Tuesdays with Toomy through its 6 year history.

Bio: Neil Kohl is a photographer who lives and works in Philadelphia. He made his first pinhole camera at the C.C.A. Baldi Middle School in 1978.

Book Inspiration Title: Rules for Radicals by Saul Alinsky.

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## **Lorin Klein**

Artist Statement: I love primary colors, natural light, hand painted signs, and the Jersey shore. The highlight of my childhood summers was going to the Seaside Heights boardwalk, a portion of which caught fire in 2013 and was subsequently rebuilt. This boardwalk is often very crowded, so photographing it in my style means waiting for when the pedestrian traffic subsides.

Bio: Lorin Klein [they/them] is a non-binary photographer living in North Philly and working up and down the east coast. They grew up in central New Jersey and moved to Philadelphia in 2003 to pursue their Bachelor of Sciences in Design and Merchandising at Drexel University. Since then, their career has taken many paths and led them to the occasional wonderful destination. In 2023 they graduated from Temple University with a Master of Social Work and are especially interested in gender-affirming care.

Book Inspiration Title: Lorin loves mixing the everyday and the absurd, and was inspired by Snail World: Life in the Slimelight, a book given to them by Katie Rey.

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## **Katie Rey**

Artist Statement: My goal is to evoke the feeling of nostalgia in my work. I love spending a warm sunny day down the shore and often find myself daydreaming about my favorite spots. To capture this feeling I photograph iconic places from the past that have brought joy to generations of people using pre-exposed film with warm saturated hues and unique light leaks. As a storytelling technique I fuse together multiple fleeting images with double exposure and prism lens.

Bio: Katie Reynolds is a South Jersey based photographer and art educator whose work often embraces the surreal. Katie defines her style using a Nikon FE2, experimental film, distorted lens filters and key techniques such as double exposures that utilize natural lighting.

Book Inspiration Title: The Wildwood Days of Doo Wop By Michael Jasorka (Bombshell Comics) and New Jersey Fan Club By Kerri Sullivan Link: <http://www.kerrisullivan.com/njbook>

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## **Juan Soto**

Artist Statement: Although much of my work mainly consists of landscapes, I also enjoy capturing the essence of different aspects of life, new or old. From abandoned buildings, old school cars, classic American signs, to even the fluctuations of every day acts of people in street photography. Capturing these kind of moments is what I learned to understand what American culture signifies and represents, as well as the trends people tend to follow.

Bio: Juan Soto is a 27 year old film photographer born and raised in Philadelphia. Growing up he witnessed and experienced many different changes throughout the city, as well as the neighborhoods. Since officially starting his photography journey in 2021, by noticing the changes he gained new perspectives that helped him understand and come to a realization of what the city has to offer. From traveling to the row houses of Olde Kensington to the suburban playgrounds of the greater Northeast area, he's come to realize the fluctuations of not only different people, but as well as different cultures. By much observation he understood the importance of documenting the places and feelings many philadelphians experience, and to gain a new appreciation of the historical aesthetic the city had all along.

Book Inspiration Title: William Eggleston "Election Eve" published by Caldecott Chubb

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## **Emma Stern**

Bio: Emma Stern lives and works in Philadelphia, PA. She studied photography at Drexel University, where she met fellow photographers Katie Tackman and Ben Riley. Together, they created Gravy Studio + Gallery in 2010 to help promote the work of local artists and build community around a shared love of the lens. Emma currently works at Bethesda Project, a nonprofit that provides shelter, housing and supportive services for adults experiencing homelessness.

Book Inspiration Title: American Prospects by Joel Sternfeld

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