

**BRUCE GILDEN**

Press Packet

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## **Bruce Gilden**

### **American, b.1946**

Bruce Gilden was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. and attended Penn State University where he became bored studying sociology. In 1968, after seeing the Antonioni film Blow Up, he bought his first camera. Though he took some night classes at the School of Visual Arts in New York he is basically self-taught in photography.

When he was a child Gilden spent hours gazing through his bedroom window studying the activity on the street below. His fascination for street life continued and led him to his first long-term personal projects photographing in Coney Island and then to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

Gilden, who has done extended projects on New York, Haiti, France, Ireland, India and Japan, started exhibiting as early as 1971 and has since shown his work widely in museums and galleries all over the world. The strong dynamic forms and graphic quality of his images and his in-the-face theatrical style distinguish Gilden's original vision.

Gilden has received numerous grants and awards for his work including three National Endowments for the Arts fellowships (1980, 1984 and 1992), a Villa Medici Hors les Murs (1995), New York State Foundation for the Arts Grant (1979, 1992 and 2000), the European Award for Photography (1996) and a Japan Foundation Fellowship (1999).

### Awards

- 2000, 1992, 1979 New York Foundation for the Arts (Artist's Fellowship), New York, USA  
1999 The Japan Foundation Artist's Fellowship  
1996 European Publishers' Award for Photography  
1995 Villa Medicis Hors les Murs Artist's Fellowship  
1992, 1984, 1980 National Endowment for the Arts Photographer's Fellowship

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2007 (April) l'image d'Après, Cinémathèque Française, Paris, France (catalogue)

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2006 Siverstein Photography, New York, USA  
2006 Sala Municipal de Exposiciones San Benito, Valladolid, Spain  
2003 Carla Sozzani Gallery, Milan, Italy  
2002 Fotografisk Centrum, Copenhagen, Denmark  
1997 Royal Photographic Society, Bath, UK  
1993 Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland  
1992 Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, USA

### Selected Collections

- Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
The Royal Photographic Society, Bath, England  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Penn.  
Galerie du Chateau d'Eau, Toulouse, France  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas  
Paris Audiovisuel, France  
Museet for fotokunst, Odense, Denmark  
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden  
Photographic Museum of Finland, Helsinki, Finland  
Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland  
The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia  
Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France  
The Dreyfus Corporation, New York  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York  
National Gallery of Canada  
Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.  
Wilson Centre for Photography, London, England

### Books

- 2006 Fashion Magazine, Magnum Photos, France  
2005 A Beautiful Catastrophe, Powerhouse, USA  
2002 Coney Island, Trebruk, UK  
2000 Go, Trebruk-Magnum, USA  
1999 After the Off, Dewi Lewis Publishing, UK  
1999 Ciganos, Centro Português de Fotografia, Lisbon, Portugal  
1996 Haiti, Dewi Lewis Publishing and Editions Marval, UK & France  
1994 Bleus, Cahier#13, Mission Photographique Transmanche,  
CRP Nord Pas-de-Calais, France  
1992 Facing New York, Cornerhouse Publications, UK  
1990 The Small Haiti Portfolio (Limited Edition), Helsinki, Finland

April 20, 2006

**Bruce Gilden**

April 27 – June 3, 2006

Opening: Thursday, April 27, 6 - 8pm

Bruce Gilden (b. 1946) will have an exhibition of photographs at Silverstein Photography. In this visceral series from the book *GO* (Browns London), and shot on the streets of Tokyo and Osaka, Bruce Gilden captures strange and rarely caught segments of Japanese subculture and underworld.

Typical of his work, Gilden elicits an 'in your face' confrontation between the camera and the subject, who is often fully aware that he/she is the focus of the lens. Accentuated by the use of flash, this combination creates a spontaneously charged yet intimate atmosphere.

In Gilden's hands, the top hierarchies of the Yakuza, Japanese mafiosi, are portrayed as old world gentlemen with the palpable touch of both glamour and danger. The underlings, obsequious servants willing to do anything on demand, are the victims of Yakuza-style justice.

A leading street photographer with a cinematic style, the Brooklyn, New York raised Gilden has received many awards and grants for his work, including the "National Endowments for the Arts fellowships" (1980, 1984 and 1992), the French "Villa Medicis Hors les Murs" (1995), the grant from the New York State Foundation for the Arts (1979, 1992 and 2000), the European Award for Photography (1996) and the Japan Foundation Fellowship (1999).

of the work's unnecessarily large scale, its artifice is weirdly convincing, not as photojournalism but as neorealism cinema. These might be outtakes from De Sica or Rossellini films, or terribly unnerving re-covered memories. Through May 20. (Hated Hunt, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-0008.)

#### Short List

**BRUCE GILDEN:** Silverstein, 535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930. Through June 3. **JOHN WATERS:** Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889. Through May 20. **BETTY WOODMAN:** Proterch, 511 W. 22nd St. 212-633-6999. Through May 27.

#### GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

##### ROBERT ROYD

Found footage of recent events is edited into a macabre, at times comical fantasy in "Xanadu," a suite of projected videos that pair ranting politicians, evangelicals, and self-appointed messiahs with a pounding disco soundtrack. The point is that entertainment culture has become a spiritual supplement for consumerist society (with Disney and Hello Kitty as new objects of worship) and that most promises of salvation in the modern world have ended rather badly. He could have skipped rehashing the usual list of "evil" suspects—Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein—but this visual and aural onslaught makes it chillingly clear that prejudice and hate, rather than peace and love, are the universals by which the world, in all its multicultural differences, seems united. Through May 14. (Participant, 95 Livingston St. 212-254-4334.)

#### GALLERIES-BROOKLYN

##### KEN BUTLER

Butler is a modern anti-Stradivarius, dedicated to constructing stringed instruments not from fine woods chosen for their acoustic advantage but from found objects of every conceivable stripe: rakes, toy guns, fan grilles, saws, brooms, old furniture—even a laptop, a chess set, and hockey sticks. Function is another issue. A separate stash of instruments outfitted with guitar pickups and other enhancements will be brought into the gallery for periodic performances. Most of the objects on view, like his grand pianos made from Styrofoam, egg cartons, and tree branches, perform best as sculpture in the vein of Cubist and Surrealist experimentation. One collage, which includes Man Ray's famous photo of the French chanteuse Kiki as a violin, serves as direct homage. Through May 15. (Sideshow, 319 Bedford Ave. 718-486-8180.)

#### DANCE

##### NEW YORK CITY BALLET

The week is dominated by new works created for the "Diamond Project": Eliot Feld's "Étoile Polaire" and Mauro Bigonazzi's "In Vento" will be performed, and at the spring gala on Wednesday new works by Peter Martins and Christopher Wheeldon will receive their premieres. Both choreographers will be

working with composers they have never used before (John Coigliano and Bartók, respectively), and both musical compositions are concert (Coigliano's Concerto for Violin, based on the music for the movie "The Red Violin," and Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3)—in other words, large, complex works. Martins's piece (also called "The Red Violin") will feature the principals Jennie Sonogy and Sébastien Marcovici (as well as Sara Mearns and Anar Ramasar, both recently promoted to soloists), and Wheeldon has cast Miranda Weese and the dashing Damian Woetzel in his ballet "Eventfall." • May 10 at 7:30 (spring gala); "The Red Violin" (pre-

##### RACHID OURAMDAKE

The French-Algerian choreographer began work on "Les Morts Pudiques" ("Discreet Deaths") by entering the title of Roland Petit's famous ballet "Le Jeune Homme et la Mort" into an Internet search engine. From the results, he's fashioned a sophisticated performance piece for himself filled with vivid, unsettling images of young men and death. Inside a kind of boxing ring made out of three plasma screens connected by transparent plastic tubing, he dons a motorcycle jacket, debately partners a half-size model of himself, and injects colored liquid into blood-

transfusion bags strapped to his body. The tricolored fluid, the North African drumming, and the multiple masks all make for a subtle, shifting display of immigrant identity. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. May 11-13 at 7:30.)

##### MISHOMER DANCE THEATRE

"Throw People," the title of Chris Elam's new two-part dance, can be read partly as an imperative. People are thrown and twisted into human origami and tied into three-person pretzels with only two feet on the ground. Elam's wonderfully strange and unpredictable choreography, however, makes his dancers seem less like people than anthropomorphized beasts. The first section, filled with mock-balletic gestures, suggests the preening animals of "Fantasia." The second, for which Andy Teirstein's score is performed live on eclectic instruments, is rougher; its pas de deux could be between a giraffe and an orangutan. (PS, 122, at 150 First Ave. 212-352-3101. May 11-12 at 8, May 13 at 5 and 8, and May 14 at 5.)

##### HEIDI LATSKY DANCE

All the elements of Latsky's wide-ranging new ensemble piece, "Disoriented"—including the old-time music, the hats, the quivering arms, and Latsky's own turn as a living witness—relate back to her mother, who died of a brain tumor in December, 2004. In the starkly lit sanctuary of St. Mark's Church, surrounded by crumpled Kleenex, three dancers in black fight through stages of suffering and grief while a white-clad Greek chorus of thirty performs a joyful big-band hat parade and Latsky's signature 1993 solo, "Grace." Jeffrey Freeze does a shaky-armed solo to "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg," Nathan Trice and Latsky dance a concentrated duet (guest-choreographed by Sean Curran), and Latsky performs a final, intense solo while an old film of her dancing—pregnant and topless—flickers on the altar. (DanceSpace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. May 11-14 at 8:30.)

##### HRITYAAGRAM DANCE ENSEMBLE

Last season, the choreographer Surupa Sen and her devoted troupe (who live together in an ashram-like setting near Bangalore) dazzled New York audiences with their richly pliant variations on Odissi, a sacred Indian temple dance. Now the company returns with the new "Sacred Space," a collection of undulating solo and group dances exploring Odissi's connections to prayer, tribal cultures, and the romantic Sanskrit ballad "Geet Govind." Dressed in vibrant costumes, the six dancers curve their limber hands and hips to the accompaniment of traditional



"Man Smoking Cigarette, Tokyo," by Bruce Gilden, at Silverstein.

mière) and "Eventfall" (première). • May 11 at 8; "Mother Goose," "Étoile Polaire," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." • May 12 at 8; "In the Night," "Étoile Polaire," and "Western Symphonies." • May 13 at 2; "Mother Goose," "Eventfall," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." • May 13 at 8; "In the Night," "In Vento," and "Symphony in C." • May 14 at 3; "Intermezzo," "The Red Violin," and "Western Symphonies." • May 16 at 7:30 (an all-Balanchine program): "Liebeslieder Walzer" and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center, 212-870-5570. Through June 25.)

##### MOMIX

In Moses Pendleton's 1991 multimedia classic, "Passion," the lush visuals can be arresting: a girl swirls a long red ribbon, dancers bend long poles into gorgeously lit arcs, and bodies are silhouetted against their own umbrellas. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. May 9-12 at 8, May 13 at 2 and 8, and May 14 at 2 and 7:30. Through May 28.)



## ARTS+

Max Weber's still lifes, Page 15

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## The Other Japan

American photographers tend to shy away from the grimmer side of Japan, William Meyers writes. Bruce Gilden, however, sees the big-city streets for what they are.

Americans tend to imagine contemporary Japanese society as a realm of high-tech proficiency, stellar sushi, obsequious politeness, and the mystic wisdom of one hand clapping. Bruce Gilden's show at Silverstein Photography is a brief but powerful display of photographs of Japan — and it is another country. Not that representations of the grimmer side

**BRUCE GILDEN**  
Silverstein Photography

of present-day Japan have been unavailable, but they have been the work of the Japanese themselves. Daido Moriyama, in particular, has photographed grainy enactments of commercial sex, casual violence, and epic trash, portraying big-city life as an endless series of stills from underexposed films noirs. Mr. Moriyama is influenced by Weegee, who during the 1930s and '40s used his Speed Graphic and tungsten flash to memorialize the corpses of innumerable gangsters lying face down in the gutters of New York City's mean streets.

The 11 black-and-white oversized (60 inches by 40 inches) pictures in Silverstein show that Mr. Gilden, too, is indebted to Weegee for his technique. And his subject matter is close to Mr. Moriyama's in "Transvestite Outside Bar, Shinjuku" (1959). (Shinjuku is the section of Tokyo devoted to license.)

This is a pathetic creature. He is in a losing battle with contingency: the happenstance that made him a man, the inevitable attrition of mortality. He wears a miniskirt of black-and-white checkerboard squares, secured at the waist by a broad elasticized belt that seems painfully tight. His legs are encased in stockings of some shiny material and end in shoes secured with an elaborate arrangement of straps. A pocketbook and oversized neckties, bracelets, and earrings complete the ensemble; it would be comic were it not for his face.

Mr. Gilden's camera is pointed down from a position slightly above the transvestite's head, which makes it seem larger than it really is. The face is round, flat-nosed, and high-cheeked. He has enormous eyelashes, heavy eyebrows, and a comically exaggerated cupid's bow of lipstick framing his mouth. Like Weegee, Mr. Gilden uses a flash even when close up, which highlights the subject and separates it from the background. In this instance, the background has repeated copies of the sort of paper sales poster used by cheap discount stores, appropriate for a man who is merchandising himself. His squared shoulders are the last vestiges of a terribly diminished dignity.

Shomei Tomatsu is another of the postwar Japanese photographers who took the measure of what defeat, occupation, Westernization, and the fading of tradition did to his people. New Yorkers had a chance to view his work up close during an exhibition at Japan Society in the fall of 2004. Mr. Tomatsu's "Section Chief, Nagoya" (1958) catches the anxiety of this middle-management type: The subject's face reflects the worries of the office even as he crosses the street. Mr. Gilden captures something similar in



The two gangsters seem as close-knit as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and they have comic possibilities, but they are intent on far less noble adventures.

"Business Man at Lunchtime Outside JR Station, Tokyo, Kaeda" (1996).

This man's face reflects his ledger sheets, the encounters with customers and competitors that have worn him down and hardened him. There are no emotive possibilities left for him. The narrow brim of his fedora and the toothpick between his lips are more expressive than the flesh they adorn. Mr. Gilden's composition is again simple but effective.

The businessman's sunlit face on the left of the frame is balanced with the back of another man's head on the right. Between them is the front of a commercial Nissan truck, and the rest of the picture is filled with just enough buildings, signs, and strung wires to suggest the ambience. Like most of the photographs in this exhibition, this is a bold image, but a delicate reading of a foreign culture.

"Two Members of the Yakuzas, Asakusa" (1998), a study in melodramatic evil, is reminiscent of Mr. Tomatsu's "Untitled [Miyako-jima, Okinawa]" (1973), which catches the macho gesture of a yakuzas man in his aviator sunglasses and white suit as he waits outside a boat station. The yakuzas are the Japanese equivalent of the mafia, criminal organizations that deal in drugs, prostitution, and violence. Their members are sometimes romanticized in films as modern-day samurai, but basically they are thugs. Here Mr. Gilden's flash illuminates the brassy

malice of the senior gangster, who is snarling his cigarette lit by a flunky. We note his plaid jacket, his heavy Rolex watch, his crude features, and his stare (one eye is wide open and the other is a bare slit). The flunky stands close behind and proffers the flame of a gold cigarette lighter. He has big shoulders, a moustache and goatee, and a look that is simultaneously obsequious and arrogant. The two seem as close-knit as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and they have comic possibilities, but they are intent on far less noble adventures.

In "Injured Homeless Man Lies in the Middle of the Street, Tokyo" (1999), Mr. Gilden makes effective use of the flash to highlight a beaten face with stitches like the lacing on a football, and to separate it from the deserted city street in the background. In "Homeless Man in Sleeping Bag Outside a Government Building" (2000), we see only the gnarled toes sticking out from the sleeping bag. The background is mostly black, but it is enough.

Also dramatic in its composition is "Man Smoking Cigarettes, Tokyo" (1999). The subject has a perfectly spherical head and flesh like the Pillsbury Doughboy. He wears a plaid shirt and a paisley kerchief on his head, and a small white cloud of smoke floats overhead. This is an enigmatic and strangely tender image.

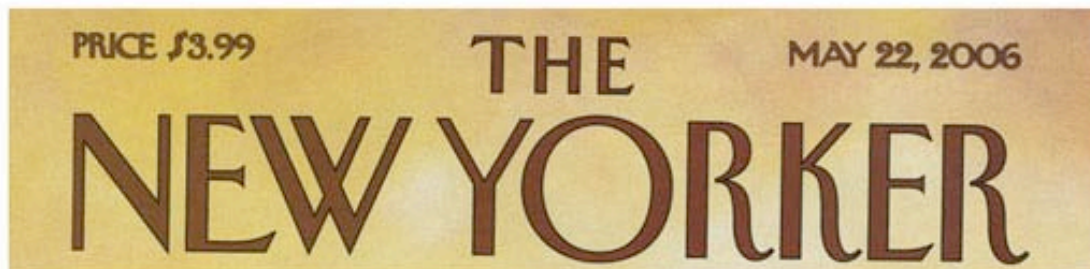
Bruce Gilden was born in Brooklyn in 1946. He has seen the Japanese true, and done both then and as a favor.

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Until June 3 (535 W. 24 Street between Tenh an, Eleventh Avenues, 212-627-3930).



Bruce Gilden, "Injured Homeless Man Lies in the Middle of the Street, Tokyo" (1999), left. Two members of the Yakuzas, Tokyo, Asakusa" (1998), above.



**BRUCE GILDEN**

Known for his high-impact street work, Gilden shows eleven knockout photos taken in Tokyo and Osaka over the recent turn of the century. Big, brutal, and aggressively black-and-white, the work looks like a paparazzo version of Daido Moriyama. Thugs, mobsters, drunks, bums, and one comically tragic drag queen—all larger than life—populate a noir underworld frozen by Gilden's flash into a waxworks diorama. In one picture, a man getting his hair dyed is laid out like a corpse, black liquid dripping from his head onto a sheet of newspaper as if in a bizarre crime scene. Through June 3. (Silverstein, 535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930.)