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Betsy Karel

America's Stage: Times Square

Main description

In *America's Stage: Times Square*, street photographer Betsy Karel uses five New York City blocks as a metaphor for urban America today. Her premise is that many of the major trends of our society are present in Times Square: globalism, consumerism, ubiquitous sexualization, hucksterism, surveillance, narcissism. All are compressed and amplified here. In Karel's photos fantasy parades as reality, corporate interests invade almost all public spaces, and Times Square becomes a vivid, almost hyper-realistic, form of theatre.

Biography

Betsy Karel was born in New York City in 1946 and today lives in Washington D.C. Karel worked as an award-winning photojournalist in the 1970s. In 1998, after a hiatus of nearly 20 years working as a professional photographer, she participated in "The Way Home," a national exhibition on homelessness in America. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of The National Gallery of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Yale University Art Gallery. Steidl has published Karel's *Bombay Jadoo* (2007), which was shortlisted for the 2008 Deutscher Fotobuchpreis.

Bibliography

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