

VICTOR FRIEDMAN



I consider all my work to be fine art, even if it is photojournalism," says New York City-based photographer Victor Friedman, whose diverse range of subject matter reflects his deep and abiding passion for all forms of artistic expression.

Whether it is his series of sensitive and closely observed street portraits, or his amazing constructed still lifes and figure shapes that pay homage to the pioneering work of the early 20th-century European avant-garde, Friedman imbues his work with the soul of a true artist.

"I've always had an interest in art, and started out as a painter, but I was terrible," says the 78-year-old grandfather of five, who has earned his living over the past 50 years as a hairdresser at the Kenneth Beauty Salon at the famed Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Manhattan, where he continues to work to this day.

Friedman recalls first picking

up a camera at the prompting of his wife, who is a painter and needed pictures of her art work.

"The minute I bought the camera, that was it," recalls Friedman. "I don't know what it was but photography just took over. I knew I had found my creative path."

Along with some help and key guidance from a close friend and fellow photographer, George Aptecker, who happened to work as a night watchman at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Friedman taught himself the rudiments of camera and darkroom technique. Within a year both men were chosen to participate in a group show at the Brooklyn Museum, an experience that gave Friedman the confidence and drive to pursue photography as a serious, artistic endeavor throughout his life.

Friedman's new and uniquely accomplished and admired project is his series of constructed still lifes and figure shapes

inspired by the Cubist paintings of Georges Braque, Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso.

"Those images came about from my background in painting and looking at all kinds of art every single day," explains Friedman. "As a result, the figure was always interesting to me, so I decided to investigate the possibilities of creating images combining the figure with Cubist motifs."

Working with cut-up pieces of metal that he collects from junkyards, Friedman sculpts and arranges the pieces in a still life that he then photographs. A second photograph is also made working with nude figures posed and arranged with random objects in a studio setting. After careful evaluation, Friedman then meticulously blends the two negatives to make a single print, which is then toned and often drawn or painted upon.

"My goal with this work is to merge the natural grace and beauty of the figure with the still life, found objects and musical instruments," Friedman explains. "Relying on the techniques of collage as well as on the mysterious surprises that only the darkroom can reveal, I pursue the goal of creating a harmonious image for each photograph."

Formerly represented by The Witkin Gallery, Friedman is currently represented by the June Bateman Gallery, The Old Print Shop in New York City and the Pamela Williams Gallery in Amagansett, Long Island. He has exhibited at the University of New Mexico, The Leica Gallery and the Philadelphia Art Alliance,

among many other venues, has been published in the *New York Times* and *Popular Photography*, and has work in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Museum of the City of New York among other prestigious establishments.

In the fall of 2009, Penguin Press, Viking Studio will publish a new book by Friedman—*The Flag*—which looks at the many ways, both literal and symbolic, that the American Flag is intertwined in our daily lives.

From the perspective of having worked as a photographic artist for 50 years, Friedman says that art remains as meaningful as it did as a young man first starting out in photography.

"I still feel inspired looking at beautiful things," says Friedman. "It helps keep me excited about creating my own work, and I am still thrilled when I create a new image." —Richard Pitnick

■ PRINT INFORMATION

All images are silver gelatin prints in editions of 25-40. Documentary images: 11x14 inches, \$800; 16x20 inches, \$1,000. Figurative/Cubist images available in silver and pigment prints. 22x30 inches in editions of 15, \$1,600; 30x40 inches in edition of 10, \$2,500. Prices increase as editions sell out. Information on vintage work is available upon request.

■ CONTACT INFORMATION

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HANGING OUT THE WINDOW, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.—1972



WHITE SANDALS, CONEY ISLAND, N.Y.—1978



13TH STREET COUPLE, GREENWICH VILLAGE, N.Y.—2006



MAN IN DOORWAY, LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK—1968



MOTHER AND SON, WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK, N.Y. — 1966



MORNING PRAYER, BOROUGH PARK, N.Y. — 2006



TWO LADIES, BRIGHTON BEACH, BROOKLYN, N.Y. — 1981



TWO NUDES - 1988



RECLINING NUDE WITH VIOLIN—1990



HOMMAGE TO PICASSO: LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON—1992