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Throughout the 1980s, as America's downtown districts declined in importance and the "big-box" stores began their slow march across the country, malls became increasingly central to American popular culture, dominating the social life of a large swath of the population. In 1989 Michael Galinsky, a twenty-year-old photographer, drove across the country recording this change: the spaces, textures and pace that defined this era. Starting in the winter of 1989 with the Smith Haven Mall in Garden City Long Island, Galinsky photographed malls from North Carolina to South Dakota, Washington State and beyond. The photos he took capture life in these malls as it began to shift from the shiny excess of the 1980s towards an era of slackers and grunge culture. *Malls Across America* is filled with seemingly lost or harried families navigating their way through these temples of consumerism, along with playful teens, misfits and the aged. There is a sense of claustrophobia to the images, even in those that hint at wide commercial expanses: a wall or a ceiling is always there to block the horizon. These photos never settle or focus on any one detail, creating the sense that they are stolen records of the most immediate kind.

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Michael Galinsky: Malls Across America Michael Galinsky Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Memories of American Malls

Hyperallergic.com

by Alicia Eler on October 18, 2013

CHICAGO -- I remember my first mall -- Lincolnwood Town Center just north of the Indian and Hasidic Jewish blocks of small business on Chicago's Devon Avenue. Too far to walk and just close enough that driving there with my grandma was a treat not a chore, the two-floor mall was my young girl consumer dreamhouse come true -- giant windows, epic food court, brightly lit storefronts, and carts that sold cheap fake gold jewelry. In the center of the mall, a fountain of mermaids spouting water from their tails welcomed visitors to toss in shiny pennies -- make a wish and hope for something, and then keep shopping. My grandma and I stopped going to the mall when Waldenbooks closed and I began arguing with her about the clothes she picked out for me at Carson Pirie Scott. But the memory of that mall stayed with me for years after my girl breakup with it. A symbol of American consumer culture and capitalist empire glorified into a one-size-fits-all space, the mall is more American than apple pie, and shinier than that penny I just threw into the suburban lake-like fountain.

In Michael Galinsky's project *Malls Across America*, the artist unearths a series of photographs from 1989 that he shot of malls from New York to South Dakota and Seattle. Inspired by the likes of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and photographer William Eggleston, Galinsky first wandered into the Smith Haven Mall in Garden City, Long Island, and started shooting. Fascinated by the coming together of disparate people and social groups, as well as the more mundane aspect of rampant consumerism, Galinsky followed up with a mall-filled road trip to be compiled in a book forthcoming in November; it will be published by Steidl-Miles.

"When I started the project I was looking at the malls as the new 'town square,'" Galinsky tells Hyperallergic. "The theory that I was going with was that the mall was designed to replace the downtown, thereby making the public sphere a private sphere that was climate controlled."

In a 1991 report entitled "A Brief History of the Mall" published in *Advances in Consumer Research* Volume 18, researchers Richard A. Feinberg (Purdue University) and Jennifer Meoli (Indiana University of Pennsylvania) note the evolution of the mall and its original intention as a 'community center':

Shopping malls didn't just happen. They are not the result of wise planners deciding that suburban people, having no social life and stimulation, needed a place to go (Bombeck, 1985). The mall was originally conceived of as a community center where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social

interaction (Gruen & Smith, 1960). It is safe to say that the mall has achieved and surpassed those early expectations. In today's consumer culture the mall is the center of the universe.

American consumer patterns have since changed with the proliferation of big box stores that simultaneously drive away small businesses, pay abysmally low wages and try to block workers from unionizing. Compared to the havoc of contemporary big box hellishness, present-day malls have taken on that nostalgia for the 'simpler shopping days.'

Not that the mall was ever actually a community meeting center, a place where young adults could learn about building healthy relationships with the self and others. Inside the mirrored rooms of the Claire's at the Lincolnwood Town Center, where as a young girl I got my ears pierced and learned the accessories of femininity. Galinsky's documentation of the malls from yesterday bring back memories of the first time we learned that consumerism isn't anything it's advertised to be -- but it's still glossy and as magazine picturesque as ever.

11 Never-Before-Seen Photos Of Malls In The Early '90s

In 1989 a twenty-year-old photographer named Michael Galinsky drove across the country to photograph malls.

Starting in the winter of 1989 with the Smith Haven Mall in Garden City Long Island, Michael photographed malls from North Carolina to South Dakota, Washington State and beyond. The photos he took capture life in these malls as it began to shift from the shiny excess of the 1980s towards an era of slackers and grunge culture.

www.buzzfeed.com

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/mjs538/photos-of-malls-in-the-early-90s>

October 23rd, 2013

Matt Stopera

Mullets, tie-dye and shopping at Tape World: New book sheds light on the American mall in the 1980s - and the off-duty style of shoppers that defined a generation

By MARGOT PEPPERS

PUBLISHED: 15:02 EST, 30 October 2013 | UPDATED: 15:59 EST, 30 October 2013

Malls have been a staple of American culture for decades, representing suburban consumerism in its most basic form.

Malls have been a staple of American culture for decades, representing suburban consumerism in its most basic form.

In a new book called *Malls Across America*, photos taken during the 1980s reveal how little has changed in the esthetic of these shopping meccas - although the fashion and hairstyles of shoppers tell a different story.

Photographer Michael Galinsky was just 20 when he began driving across the country in 1989, capturing these pictures from shopping malls in different states for a college art project.

In an extract from his book, Mr Galinsky writes that his college photography teacher at New York University encouraged him to travel across the country after she saw photos he had taken at the local mall in Garden City, Long Island.

In 1989, he embarked on a road trip to the West Coast with a friend, and by the time they got to San Francisco they had visited over a dozen malls and even more thrift stores and antique shops.

While the tiled floors, artificial plants and brightly-lit stores are recognizable features of malls to this day, the customers' hairstyles and fashion reveal the era these photos were taken in.

One of the photos from his journey shows two teenage boys playing old-fashioned arcade game Golden Axe, with shopping carts and a brightly-lit storefront window in the background.

With their hair worn in mullet styles and their T-shirts tucked into their high-waisted jeans, these boys look every inch the typical late-Eighties teens.

Mr Galinsky told Today.com in 2011 that the time period is just as significant as the physical setting of his photos.

'At the time, the mall was the new public space, the new community center where people would interact.

'This was pre-Internet, pre-cellphone, there was smoking in malls, it was before the Gulf War. It was this weird moment in time where things were getting ready to change.'

Indeed, one of the most noticeable aspects of the images is their lack of cell phones, iPads and other technology that play such a large role in our lives today

Another detail that reveals these photos are relics from the past is that several of the subjects are smoking inside the mall.

In one such photo, a woman perches on a sofa puffing on a cigarette while children play by a water feature in a shopping mall lobby.

The signs for shops like Tape World and Musicland also reveal a bygone era, as do the boxy television sets being sold at one of the stores.

The Hidden Art In Mall Sprawl

In a new book, a Brooklyn photographer documents shopping centers during a cross-country trip.

By STEVE DOLLAR, Wall Street Journal,

Nov. 14, 2013 3:42 p.m. ET

A monthlong trek taken 23 years ago by Brooklyn-based filmmaker and photographer Michael Galinsky has now become an unexpected cultural statement. "Malls Across America," newly published by the German art press Steidl, chronicles an expedition to photograph the public life of shopping malls from Long Island to Washington state.

"This is more than a laugh at 1980s clothing, it's a document of an almost undocumented world," said Mr. Galinsky, 44 years old, the co-director (with wife Suki Hawley) of such documentaries as "Battle for Brooklyn" and "Horns and Halos." "This was the summer between Guns N' Roses and Nirvana and you can feel the energy of that," he said.

At the time, Mr. Galinsky was a 20-year-old religious studies major at New York University who had shot a roll of film at the Smith Haven Mall on Long Island for a photography class project. A professor encouraged him to take more. "I had a really crappy Nikon FG-20 with a really crappy lens," he said, "and I had just read 'On the Road.'" So off he went.

Inspired by the work of photographers such as Robert Frank, William Eggleston and Lee Friedlander, Mr. Galinsky took an anthropological approach to the project. "I was a punk-rock guy and I hated the mall," he said. "But I didn't want to make fun of people." He recalled thinking at the time that, "If Robert Frank was going to do 'The Americans' now, he wouldn't be shooting in diners, he'd be shooting in malls. Because that's where everyone is. And he'd also be doing it in color."

The galleries weren't impressed. "They laughed at me," Mr. Galinsky said. "At that time, they were into art that was all about the artist."

So Mr. Galinsky shelved the images. But in late 2010, he posted some of them on Facebook and sent a batch to the vintage photography website Retronaut. "Even though I'd thought not much of them, they immediately became very popular when I was wasn't looking," said Chris Wild, who runs the site in Oxford, England. "I

use them now in almost every presentation I do about Retronaut," he added.

Encouraged by thousands of "likes" and the viral spread of the images across the Internet, Mr. Galinsky launched a Kickstarter campaign to help self-publish a book. Then New York-based designer Peter Miles saw the photographs online. "Michael did the right thing in forgetting about them for 20-odd years," said Mr. Miles, who got "Malls Across America" published through his arrangement with Steidl. Mr. Miles also designed the book. "Looking at them at the time you probably wouldn't have seen so much as you do now," he said.

Glimpsed in hindsight, mundane scenes of shoppers strolling past long-defunct businesses ("Tape World" is in one image) or teenagers hunkered around videogames take on a surprising philosophical weight for the way they both evoke a contemporary era and its passing.

"They're not the center of our cultural sphere anymore," Mr. Galinsky said. "They're not new and shiny. We've moved on, and now we have the Internet. The opportunity to do something that nobody else is shooting is gone now."

Spotted! People find loved ones in amazing 1989 mall photos. Benjamin Solomon TODAY.com contributor November 14, 2013.

When filmmaker Michael Galinsky went looking in a desk drawer one day in 2010, he'd all but forgotten about a series of photographs he'd taken in malls across America back in 1989.

What he found was a time capsule that has since carried people around the country on a wave of nostalgia, as they relive the 80's through his photos -- even finding themselves or loved ones in his images.

Galinsky, who shot the photos as a freshman at NYU, saw them go viral that year after posting them online, and was able to raise \$13,000 on Kickstarter to publish the images as a book.

"It was pretty shocking," Galinsky told TODAY.com of the interest in his photos. "It was clearly striking a nerve with people."

Released late last month, his book "Malls Across America" is already backlogged on Amazon, leading the photos to once again burn up the Internet.

And in the process, something strange has happened that really shocked Galinsky: readers started to identify the people in the photos.

"So your gonna think this sounds crazy but im sooo sure that im the guy in picture 11 on the article," Jamie Rutina wrote in a message Galinsky shared with TODAY.com. "You cant see my face cuz im looking down at something, but I know its me, the hair is mine, the coat, the stance/mannerism. I was 20 yrs old then."

"The 'jock' on the left is my uncle! Number 62," wrote another fan, after spotting a picture posted on Facebook.

Another man recognized his father in one of Galinsky's photos, just hours after returning from his father's memorial service.

"That photo...is of my parents," David Walczak wrote, in an email Galinsky shared with TODAY.com, of a photo of a couple on an escalator. "I recognized them as soon as I saw it. The really shocking thing is we had my father's memorial on November 7th, and visited his grave on the 8th...It really feels like my Father chose this vehicle to let my family know he is in a good place."

"It's really powerful to see yourself randomly in that way. It's shocking," Galinsky says, of people who see themselves or people they know in his photos.

And while he has confirmed some of the subjects, he says that most times people mistakenly see themselves, seduced by the casual quality of the film and the forgotten moments he haphazardly captured. "The photos really do feel, for everybody, like their family photos," he explains. "Everybody does see themselves in it."

The project began when Galinsky happened upon a Long Island Mall with a college girlfriend and found inspiration for a color photography class project. "We walked in and I said, 'This is the project.' It was this vibrant, crazy, public space filled with interesting people, and colors, and light," he remembers.

Later that year, with encouragement from his photography professor, Galinsky set out with a friend and his cheap Nikon FG-20 on a cross-country road trip and captured life in 15 different malls.

He shot covertly, without his subjects' knowledge, inspired by street photographers like Robert Frank and Garry Winogrand.

"Even though there were a lot of big personalities and big colors I wasn't setting out to make fun of anybody," he says. "I think that's why it's working so well [now], because it just feels of the time rather than about the time."

Galinsky tried to exhibit the photos, but their amateur quality meant he only got one chance to display them--at a rock show--before they were lost to a box. He turned his focus to his band, Sleepyhead, and eventually his career as a documentary filmmaker.

"For me it was always intended as a book but I wasn't able to do it for 25 years," he says, compares the work to folk art. "In 25 years it accrues meaning with time's passage."

After they spread like wildfire, Galinsky says he stopped feeling ownership over the photos, and that they're now part of the Internet's DNA.

"Once they went viral they really are no longer mine in the same way," he admits. "They have just become part of the discussion. They've become something that is identified with that time frame."

More than two decades ago, photographer Michael Galinsky captured the big hair, bad clothes and overall bodaciousness at malls around the country.ame."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Margaret Clayton:

The book untitled Michael Galinsky: Malls Across America contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy way. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was compiled by famous author. The author will take you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice study.

Marina Tijerina:

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Stacie Schneider:

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