



John Randolph Pepper, has lived and worked between Rome, Paris and New York. When he turned twelve he was given his first camera, a Pentax, by his father who taught him the basics of photography. At fourteen, he apprenticed with Ugo Mulas and had his first photograph published in Newsweek magazine.

For 30 years he has balanced a career between theatre, film and photography. In 2009 Pepper began the work for his book (and subsequent traveling shows) *SANS PAPIER* (2011) while he was at The American Academy in Rome. In Pepper's work the recurring theme is people and their nature and people and the world around them.

EVAPORATIONS began at the Paolo Morello Studio Gallery in Palermo (2014) and subsequently has been to Officina della Zattere (Venice 2014), Rosphoto National Gallery (St Petersburg 2014) and is currently traveling throughout Siberia (Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Yekaterinburg, Samara 2015) and will arrive in Moscow in 2016 as well as in New York.

Currently working on his next project and future book (to be published in 2016) *Deserts and Droughts* Pepper is investigating desert landscapes and their effect on time, history and people. In his new work the question of whether man's presence, has inexorably altered the landscape or whether the land is close to what it was before mankind arrived - the land under the "landscape" potentially still pristine, pure, untouched - is explored. Is it possible the land survived as a separate living, entity in spite of man having been upon it?

www.johnrpepper.it



VLADIVOSTOK ARKA GALLERY 24.06/25.07 - 2015

IRKUTSK STATE ART MUSEUM 7.08/06.09 - 2015

NOVOSIBIRSK STATE ART MUSEUM 17.09/18.10 - 2015

OMSK STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 10.11/06.12 - 2015

EKATERINBURG GALLERY OF MODERN ART 16.12 - 2015 / 25.01, 2016

SAMARA February / March - 2016

MOSCOW GALLERY OF CLASSIC PHOTOGRAPHY 25.05/03.07 - 2016



A traveling exhibition in Russia
June 2015/June 2016

JOHN R PEPPER EVAPORATIONS



*To exist is simply to be there;
those who exist let themselves
be encountered.*

Jean Paul Sartre





John Pepper's photographs are about the possibilities of the encounter, about witnessing moments of life never meant for the camera or for memory. He is an observer, often from afar, who depicts human life in its essential form – detached from time and cultural specificities, and typically, alone. Pepper follows in the decades-old practice of the street photographer, carrying a 35-mm camera on travels in many parts of the world, wandering and waiting for situations to present themselves. He maintains the classic tradition – some would say, now archaic – of working exclusively with film cameras and black-and-white film, framing his images through the viewfinder, and presenting them as they are revealed on the negative, with no form of manipulation. In the digital era, his choice to remain steadfast with this approach is a declaration of willful determination. Pepper makes his work in the public sphere – along streets and alleyways – often along shorelines, and only occasionally in interior spaces. He is at heart an existentialist who practices photography as a way of grappling with human existence on its own terms, neither romanticized nor dramatized. The human form is central to his project,

it is more commonly framed in a way that seems incidental. There is no story to be told or lesson to be learned, no moment of epiphany. But this happened – a certain confluence of human action, light, and landscape, that became crystallized once the photographer pressed the shutter of his camera. Pepper evinces a relation to time that is quite different from most other street photographers who seek to capture a fleeting moment of time. The ability to stop time, or to record a fraction of a second, has always been one of this medium's hallmarks. But Pepper's photographs appear to more closely record a lasting moment, time slowed down, and the figures in the compositions made inert when pictured through the camera lens.

Pepper's refusal of time is also evinced in the way he tends to behold the world, unconcerned for the moment, for fashion, or for any kind of journalistic sensibility. It is difficult to determine a possible date for most of these photographs. Some simply exist outside the need for time. Instead, Pepper frames his images in a way that skirts time, conjuring moments that could have existed decades ago. In transcending the here and now, he reveals something more telling, more lasting, about the individual, human interaction, and public and private behavior. "We are all actors of our own lives," Pepper once wrote. And by extension, we may be actors in the lives of others. One issue that the documentarian and those working with the camera in the public sphere have long grappled with is their relation to the subject. For Pepper, the lack of relationship with the subject, the denial of collaborative authorship, is essential to his practice. He notes that the people within the picture frame are integral to the image, and yet they are only part of it. For Pepper, the real relationship is with the camera, with the overall image that can be created.

Elizabeth Ferrer



Good photography, or any other manifestation in man, comes from a state of grace. Grace comes when you are delivered from conventions, obligations, convenience, competition, and you are free, like a child in his first discovery of reality. You walk around in surprise, seeing reality as if [it is] for the first time...

Sergio Larrain

