

# HANK O'NEAL



Portraits 1971-2000

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Portraits

Exhibition curated by Susan

Essay by A. L.

Commentaries by Hank O'Neil

September - October 2000  
Sottolungo Gallery, Wilkes University  
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

# A C K N O W

I first met Hank O'Neal, a.k.a. Rollo Phlecks, in Paris while hurrying along a Left Bank quay on a cold, rainy afternoon. Or rather, it was in an obscure secondhand bookshop near St. Marks Place. Or at a poet's home in the East Village. Or a cowboy bar in Texas. Or a jazz club. He was there doing research for his next book or listening to an artist whose CD he'd produced or photographing celebrities or operating clandestinely for the CIA. He was on a cruise ship somewhere in the Caribbean, and he was talking with a legendary horn player.

Hank was born in Kilgore, Texas, in 1940. After high school, he matriculated at Syracuse University, graduating in 1962. The following year, while working on his master's degree, he was recruited by the CIA. After Washington, he moved to New York City where he continued to work for the Agency until 1976, or so I understand. Yes, I'm assuming as these activities must have been—images of a young Robert Redford in *Three Days in the Condo*. In 1970, he became an adjunct instructor at The New School. While continuing his affiliation there, he also became active with the choreographer and dancer, a modern dance company he directed. His interest in music was manifested not only in his activities as a musician for the banders, but also in the recording studios. One of his partners then was Marian McPartland, whose *Piano Jazz* is now a regular label when he continues to read.

Somehow, during these years, he wrote *The Eddie Condon Scrapbook of Jazz* (1973) and *A Vision Shared: A History of American and the World, 1925-1942* (1976). These were followed by *Deborah Akheft, Photographer* (1982), "Life is painful and nasty and so is she" (in my case it has only been painful and nasty), *Quinn* (1990), and *The Ghosts of Hollywood* (1991). He also wrote *Black and White* (1991), a book about the Club publication of the time, and *White King's Men* (1995). His most recent work, *Alvarez*, at least was a great read. He was thirteen years old when he won a Bronie Award in a contest for a book by Albert Einstein about who he should instruct him in its use. The promise fulfilled in a single half-hour.

Logically, all these various activities have provided him with access to a wide variety of authors, and celebrities. Many of them are in the book.

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Catalogue design: John  
Typeface: Elg

ISBN 0-912945-20-4



accompanying commentaries. Despite the subjects and genres in which he travels, Hank nonetheless maintains a certain “down-home” and is expressed in a

It has been a great pleasure working with Hank O’Neal. Serving as both artist and communicator, Hank provides unique perspectives on his photographs. Every picture tells its story, but the story is sometimes quite unexpected.

We are grateful to A. D. Coleman for his insightful essay, which combines his vocation and avocation—his knowledge of photography and a love of jazz—with a sympathetic and appreciative understanding of the human qualities that make creative activities possible. Thanks to Jennifer Alise Stroup who, despite her many editorial duties at *Wilkes Magazine*, took the time to read and comment on the manuscript; to the staff of the press for their black-and-white printing; and to Ken Leiberman for his help in color printing. The contributions of Andrew J. Sordoni, III, benefactor and friend, cannot be overestimated. Shelley Shier, Hank’s wife and business partner, has provided unflagging support. Nancy L. Grand has participated actively in all aspects of this exhibition and, indeed, has seen it through to completion as catalog designer and redactor. John Beck’s contributions to this and the other catalogues produced during my tenure as Gallery Director deserve recognition and my thanks. Finally, I would like to thank several colleagues at Wilkes University—Christopher Breiseth, Patricia Heaman, Robert [?], Michael Lennon, and James McFryman—the members of the Advisory Commission, and the Friends of the Sordoni Art Gallery for their support and help.

Stanley I Grand

## IN THE STUDIO AT THE TIME OF THE PORTRAITS OF HANK O’NEAL

by A. D. COLEMAN

Seems to me it’s time to retire the term “Renaissance man.” Aside from its unacknowledged gender specificity and the unavailability of any useful feminine equivalent, it’s a term that speaks of a distant historical period in which it seemed possible for an industrious individual to become informed about almost everything of real importance from that particular nexus of culture, a variable to the educated mind.

Centuries ago, in another country, you could believe in this possibility. Today, with the true birthing of a new century—and a new millennium—we’ve come much further. We’ve had Renaissance men and their counterparts, those unacknowledged “Renaissance women,” of whom there were more than we could have imagined. Standing as we do on their shoulders, we have a clearer view of what they did of the vast extent of what we don’t yet know and of just how much we won’t ever have time to learn, no matter how hard we try.

Moreover, while we may aspire to synthesis, convergence, some ultimate “theory of everything,” no sooner does any form of art or field of scientific inquiry emerge than, as if by mitosis, it begins to subdivide and balkanize itself relentlessly. The resulting tendency, which has become a habit, is to become a hawk, indeed, on one’s own little patch of ground.

What, then, should we call those among us who, like Hank O’Neal, insist on involving themselves in multiple disciplines and endeavors and find ways of fitting them all together? A friend and colleague of mine, Richard Kostelanetz, uses the word “polymath” to describe such restless multitasking. He defines it as “Lazlo [?], and [?].” Man Ray, John [?], and [?] are like “Renaissance men” which suggests “compassing of all extant disciplines.” “Polymath” denotes a concern with and pursuit of many knowledges—a more interdisciplinary epoch!

So let’s define Hank O’Neal as a polymath. He’s made his mark on our era by his recordings and his paintings, but his most important mark is in the comparatively humble role of facilitator and presenter of the work of other musicians. He has since 1968 produced hundreds of recording sessions—not only for the *Wilkes University* record label, but also for the most part, on seasoned musicians from the *Wilkes University* record label.



between 1940 and 1960, their careers loosely bookended by the late Howard Chandler Christy and Benny Goodman orchestras on one side and by Miles Davis's "birth of the cool" ensembles on the other.

Chiaroscuro, O'Neal's own label—founded in 1970, originally generating LPs and nowadays producing CDs—has evolved into an astoundingly deepening archive of the music of the past, with a distinctive roster of younger artists. More than half of the musicians inducted to date into The American Jazz Hall of Fame have recorded for this label. In sponsoring, amassing, and making publicly available the contents of a wine cellar of classic jazz, O'Neal has recorded these greats, respectively, knowing that they would be under optimum conditions and with extraordinary concern for and fidelity to their individual genius, often placing them in combinations never before attempted.

This devoted art—especially for the musicians involved—clearly affirms a preservation and documentation of the medium of jazz past, present, and future by the mid- and late-career virtuosos who've found themselves shunted aside in the major labels' enduring search for novelty. Beyond that, it amasses a repository of invention and elaboration of styles and ideas on which generations of musicians will henceforth. And, of course, it provides a steady flow of an eager audience. As significant as a fitting tribute to the man O'Neal claims as a longtime friend and mentor, the legendary John Hammond, who discovered (among others) Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Bob Dylan, and Bruce Springsteen.

In the 1950s, the approaches to jazz that most attracted O'Neal (which Chiaroscuro and his other jazz projects continue to explore) were called "mainstream" to distinguish them from traditional jazz, previously known as Dixieland, whose original inventors and performers were by then dying out, and to separate them from "third stream" or "new thing" jazz, the then-radical investigations of Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, and others.

Small surprise, given this passion for mainstream jazz, that the photography in which O'Neal has aligned himself comes from the heart of that medium's modernist phase—roughly coterminous with abstract expressionism, overlapping it on some creative and conceptual levels. Certainly, these two periods, both of which were in the twentieth century—profoundly shaped their times and the cultures in which they emerged and took root. In notable fashion they shaped each other as well. (The list of photographers who speak at length eloquently about the relationship between their imagery and thinking is endless.)

O'Neal's photography earned his reputation as a researcher, historian, and biographer. It is known for his study of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers' critical biography of the late Berenice Abbott (whom he considers his mentor in photography and who, like John Ford, became into a close personal friend) and his disquieted investigation of the decades in which photography became the central visual medium of the modernist movement, as well as of the emergence of jazz—and, more broadly, of aleatory, improvisational music.

I used the term "facilitator" earlier to describe O'Neal's many professional activities because he's directed them, in a most self-effacing way, at furthering the creative work of others. Yet the role of photography, design, project coordination, small-group diplomacy, archival work, and so on, are all difficult-to-track media, and all of them are. Not to mention the fact that O'Neal is also a musician, a writer, and a collector of books, records, and paintings, and photography have all molded my life in deep ways. Not to mention the fact that I'm particularly intrigued

bassist Milt Hinton, and (if O'Neal is to be believed) the trumpeter and composer Dizzy Gillespie. O'Neal's music is the same. Yet O'Neal himself is something more than merely a capable, capable, and persistent assistant manager. Though he never chose to earn his living with photography, or to declare himself a working artist in the medium, O'Neal's photographic work is not merely a hobby.

O'Neal works with equal ease in both black and white and color, and does his own black-and-white printing in his own custom-built darkroom.

O'Neal's camera work is not merely a hobby. He has used a camera when I was twelve or thirteen, and a few years ago he bought a Leica camera. He never had a camera before, and he says that he never had a camera before, and even that it was a fairly primitive affair. He considers himself to have truly begun his photographic work in 1970.

Liza Stelle—daughter of folk-farmer-bandleader Ed Stelle and an accomplished, if little-known, photographer in her own right—used to work. (A rare portrait of her is in the book.)

Much of O'Neal's photographic work has been devoted to documentation of the live recordings and studio sessions he produced for Chiaroscuro, generating images for use on album covers. He has also published a book of photographs that he publishes under the name of Chiaroscuro. He uses a Leica camera that he used for many of those record cover images.

O'Neal makes cityscapes and other kinds of photographs, but I'd venture to suggest that he's a realist at heart. His photographs are almost always of human beings, and whether they're in a formal or posed pose, they tend to be transactional. The subjects are people he's met, often people he's worked with, and not infrequently personal friends as well. (The latter distinction lives on the redundant: it's hard to imagine working with this man—an outgoing, gregarious, infectiously enthusiastic, and generous man—without becoming his friend.) In most cases his subjects are present with him in the moment of the photograph—aware of him, conscious of the camera, collaborating willingly in the making of an image.

It's that instant of connection to these other strong personalities—almost all of them in the arts and humanities—to which O'Neal attends most closely. His work does not concern itself with formal or experimental image structure; instead, it prioritizes photography's unique capacity to render the illusion of the presence of another living being and thereby to create the viewer's imaginary sense of direct contact with that spirit. Each image, he says, is a record of a day in my life, interacting with fascinating people.

What I find most interesting about O'Neal's work is that it's not just a collection of photographs, but a collection of people who've proven central to the culture of the United States. It's not just a collection of photographs, but a collection of people who've proven central to the culture of the United States.

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types: the New York Jew, the writer in the intellectual, bohemian milieu in which I grew up. The blind Reverend G. W. Davis, whose portrait I made in 1971, was a blues player on West 70th Street in Manhattan during the 1930s and 40s. Cab Calloway, Perry Parrott, Gene Muligan, Woody Herman, Count Basie, and all the others who've made music at O'Neal's instigation since 1960, before his lens.<sup>10</sup> As well as Liza Sosenko (of whose New York exhibition in 1971 I appear to have been the only reviewer), Barbara Morgan, Berenice Abbott, Brassai, and Harry Lunn, the last-named a dealer in and collector of photographs, all of whom (save the reclusive Liza Sosenko, who I set out on a quest to find in the 1960s, and the Italian, Yugoslav, and Cuban émigrés on Abbott), Donald Sutherland, Buckley, Jr., Elie Wiesel . . . people who've come to loom large in the consciousness (not to mention the collective unconscious) of our time.<sup>11</sup>

For the most part, the portraits produced with what O'Neal describes as "an old wooden view camera" are "not the result of a portrait session, the use of which is slow and exposes [lasting] one or two hours. . . . A serious camera does have an effect on most people": the equipment is visible and dimly so, enough, but, for those on both sides of the lens, the making of a portrait envelops the occasion in a bubble of slow time. Not as slow as the time frame of a painted portrait, of course, as exemplified in O'Neal's 1964 portrait of Soyer painting a portrait of novelist and essayist Saul Bellow. It is, as it were, of a portraitist and his subject. Turns out that the Soyer-Bellow project didn't succeed, so this brief, partial glimpse of the work program may be the only historical record of that failed encounter.

O'Neal is a portraitist in the best sense. There is a story behind each photograph and together these stories constitute the best thing about the exhibition. Those in whose company the images in this exhibit and certainly enhance them. But, unlike the normally mute amateur snapshots in a family album that require written captions to explain who and what they are, O'Neal's own and speak for themselves. To look into the microcosm of O'Neal's patient, attentive portraits is to see oneself standing before or sitting across the table from these diversely gifted people whose achievements are on the record and embedded in the zeitgeist, within the twentieth-century world as we see it, the poorer and certainly not the same.

Many of O'Neal's subjects are now gone, some of them long gone. Others remain, their work will continue to contribute to U.S. and world culture well into the new millennium. Yet I think it does them no disservice to say that, with few exceptions, even the living and hale among them will most likely be remembered for what they accomplished in the twentieth century rather than the one to come. Their contributions are already historic, their visages in motion, traces of the century in which they were born. As for O'Neal, who seems to prefer to remain behind the scenes, pseudonymous, even anonymous (I've never seen a self-portrait), he is not likely to achieve the status of recognizable icon. He is, however, a polymath whose activities stretch deep into the coming decades.

Though their own lives are increasingly as the raw material from which historians and photographers are necessarily chroniclers and historians, they inevitably engage with, and describe the immediate present, no matter how they do it. In the best sense, then, as a portraitist and as a chronicler of the history of jazz, O'Neal depends regularly on sources that are immediate events and direct witness

always much prefers the parlance of the blues to that of the jazz. . . . He has lost his eyes and ears, heard it all firsthand, with his hands and feet, and his witness came only in their own authentic, unmediated experience and understanding of the music. . . . made it difficult (though not impossible) for anyone else to do. . . . from the "NAS" team. I know of no serious photographers to date who have taken such a long time to make a single frame. . . . the therefore absent in spirit from their own work. Hank O'Neal, however, was truly "in the studio at the time" for all his subjects and for all his photographs. Which means you're getting these rich

NOTES

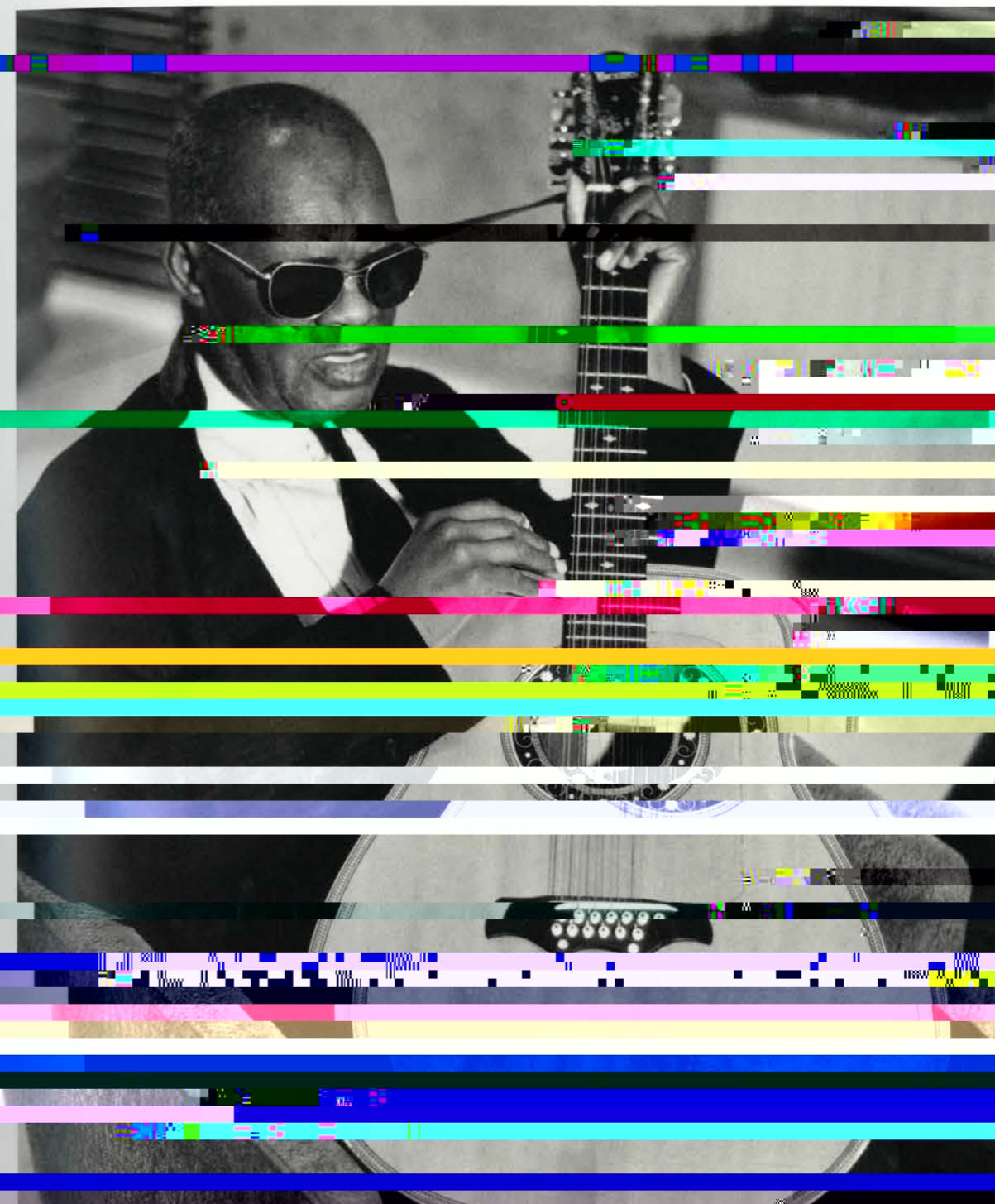
1. Kostelanetz himself exemplifies this fluency, having generated not just a vast body of critical writings on almost all forms of avant-garde twentieth-century art but also substantial corpuses of his own experimental work in poetry, fiction, visual theater, and film.
2. "I stopped [playing the piano] when I was about nine. My parents gave up on me, and sold the piano. . . . I was moved," O'Neal said once.
3. For a look at the growing catalogue of this work, see [www.earofscotjazz.com](http://www.earofscotjazz.com).
4. Hank O'Neal, *A Vision Shared: A Classic Portrait of America and Us, 1925-1970* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).
5. Hank O'Neal, *Berenice Abbott: American Photographer* (New York: Greco-Hill Fine Arts Press, 1952).
6. He's also built up a serious collection of photographs and photography books.
7. Ginsberg's and Hinton's photographs have been widely exhibited and published. O'Neal has a cabinet full of five cameras. I wonder where the sixth is. . . . I had a New Jersey cabinet maker build me a cabinet full of five cameras. I wonder where the sixth is. . . . I had a New Jersey cabinet maker build me a cabinet full of five cameras. I wonder where the sixth is. . . .
8. You'll find a selection of those images at [www.jazzspot.com/Photos/1971-1972](http://www.jazzspot.com/Photos/1971-1972).
9. O'Neal's 1971 portrait of Liza Sosenko privately produced but not published.
10. O'Neal's portrait of and interviews with forty-one jazz greats.
11. O'Neal has trained a few young photographers themselves: Brassai, Ginsberg, Eastwood, Buckley, and Wiesel. . . . He has had numerous fires in the fire over the course of their careers.
12. O'Neal, *A Quiet Obsession: Portrait of Donald Sutherland* (New York: Greco-Hill Fine Arts Press, 1970).



Reverend Gary Davis (1971)

The Reverend Gary Davis, sometimes called Blind Gary Davis, began his career in 1971. I was just beginning two new jobs as a photographer and recording engineer. I was lucky that year because a man I was working with on a regular basis had a little about photography and engineering. He had founded Fairchild Camera and Instrument in the late 1920s and developed Fairchild Recording Products since the mid-1930s. I first met Sherman in 1968, and he encouraged me to start a recording studio in his home at 17 East 65th Street.

A number of my friends had fun ideas for recording projects, but they were always short on funds. I helped them whenever I could with a free session at Sherman's. Some good records were made, and there were some great photos. I was always at the ready, and the day I recorded Reverend Davis for Biograph, I asked him to pose for a portrait between takes. Or maybe it was at the end of the session. It was a long time ago, March 17, 1971. This is my favorite photograph from that session.





*Brassaï (1973)*

The date was May 12, 1973. It was a stormy day in New York, and Maggie Condon and I were dashing between raindrops to get to the opening of the Brassaï show at

the Museum of Modern Art had published in 1968.

There was a crush of people at the gallery, many photographers and fans, but probably a few folks trying to get out of the rain or perhaps looking for free wine and cheese. Lee Witkin was, as always, and introduced us to the show. I was pushed aside by others who wanted to shake his hand or get an autograph. I had decided about looking at the show, and then I spotted Brassaï in the other room, standing in front of a photograph by Jeffrey Silverthorne. I got as close as possible and managed one snapshot before he moved away. I was standing on the ground on the



Barbara Morgan (1977)

My first serious photo book, *A Vision Shared: A Tribute to the Farm Security Administration Photographers and Their Work*, was published in November 1976. Some of the unexpected dividends from its publication were gallery exhibitions, symposiums, and wonderful parties. Barbara Morgan's first gathering, just a moment or two after publication. Most of the living FSA (Farm Service Administration) photographers and many of their friends attended. A few months later, in May 1977, Art Rothstein hosted a party at his home in New York City. Photographers and their friends showed up, in

The weather was nice and much of the party took place outdoors. Barbara was wearing what must have been her best party dress and jewelry—I remembered them from the party she'd arranged a few months earlier. She held still for a quick snapshot. What she was wearing reminded her about the dress. What she was wearing





*Berenice Abbott (1979)*

In November 1979, Berenice Abbott and I were hard at work, developing the book that would be published as *Berenice Abbott: American Photographer* in 1982. It was a bright, sunny Sunday afternoon. We were working upstairs at my Christopher Street recording studio when Berenice suddenly announced it was time for her to head back to her home in northern Maine. It was easily a ten-hour drive—even for

her, whose average speed was 100 miles per hour. She hurriedly gathered up her things and put on her coat and hat. On an impulse, I asked her to let me take a picture. She said, “but you’ve got to hurry.” We were both indoors, where in those days I had a studio view camera set up under a wonderful skylight in front of my wall of clouds. Film holders were always at the ready to catch a possibly fleeting subject.

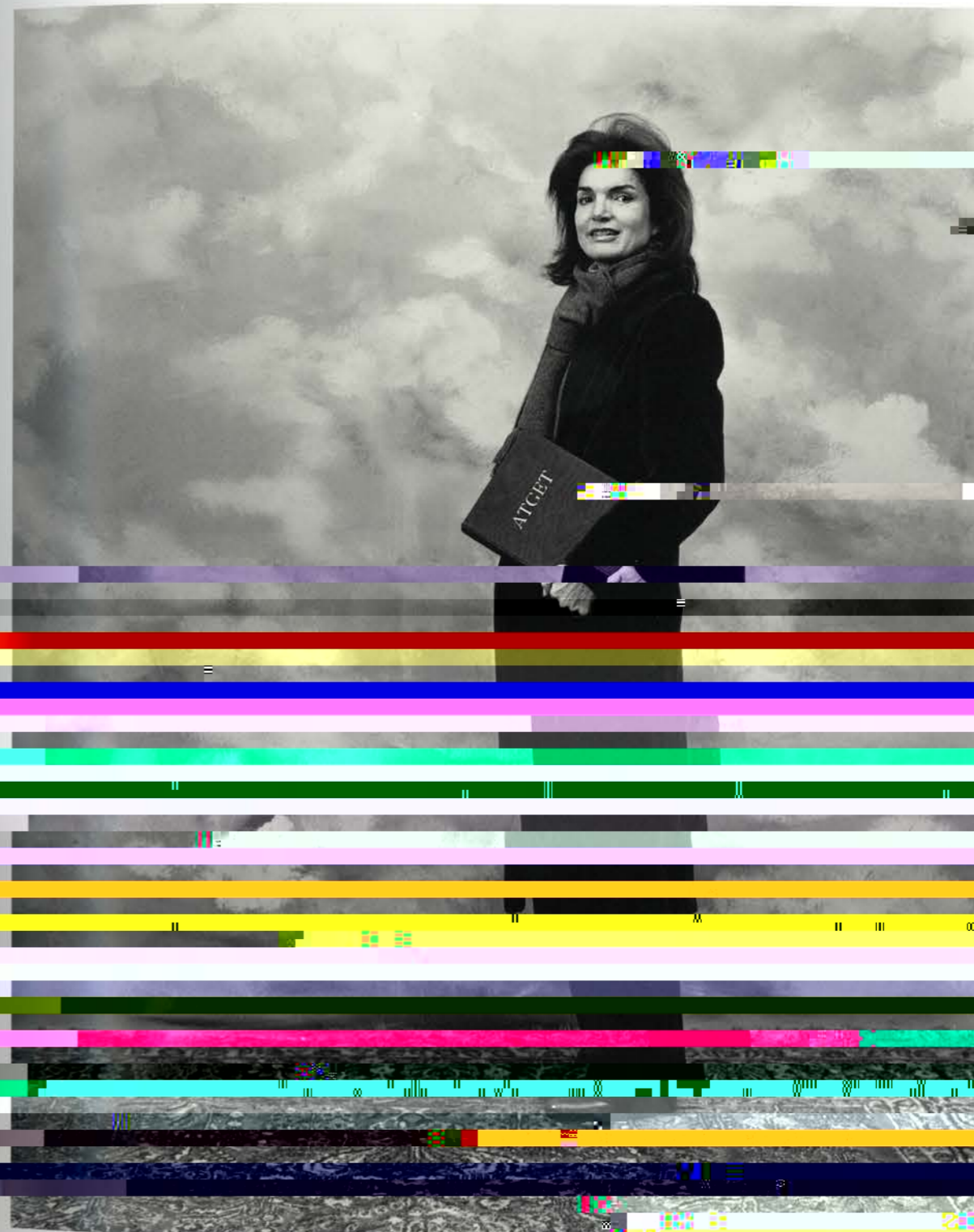
My favorite, although there is a funny one when she’s holding a large, glowing plastic goose that was used as a studio highlight (her idea, not mine). Berenice liked most animals, even plastic ones, better than she liked people. She was gone, racing back to northern Maine at the speed of light. She probably arrived before I had finished processing the film.



Jacqueline Onassis (1979)

I met Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in 1978. She was a remarkable woman, my experience of no one like all the others that has been written about her for the last forty-five years. In December 1979, when this photograph was taken, Berenice Abbott and I were doing together. Jackie (yes, we did call her Jackie) was out of town. She had been in the city for her first visit. She wanted to look at each of Berenice's photographs very carefully and make a reasoned decision.

We worked for a few months and then she asked me which in reality meant looking at pictures by people other than Berenice. I took her to my apartment and she carefully looked at everything that was in the room. Then she spotted Henri Jonquières' book, *Atget: Photographe de Paris*, which she asked to borrow. I said I'd be pleased to let her keep it as long as she wished—but only if I could take a portrait of her holding it. To which she immediately agreed. The Deardorff and film holder were already set up. I made three exposures: a front view, a side view, and one with her assistant, Ev Renard, like Berenice's side view of Atget, just as I like the side view of Ms. Onassis.

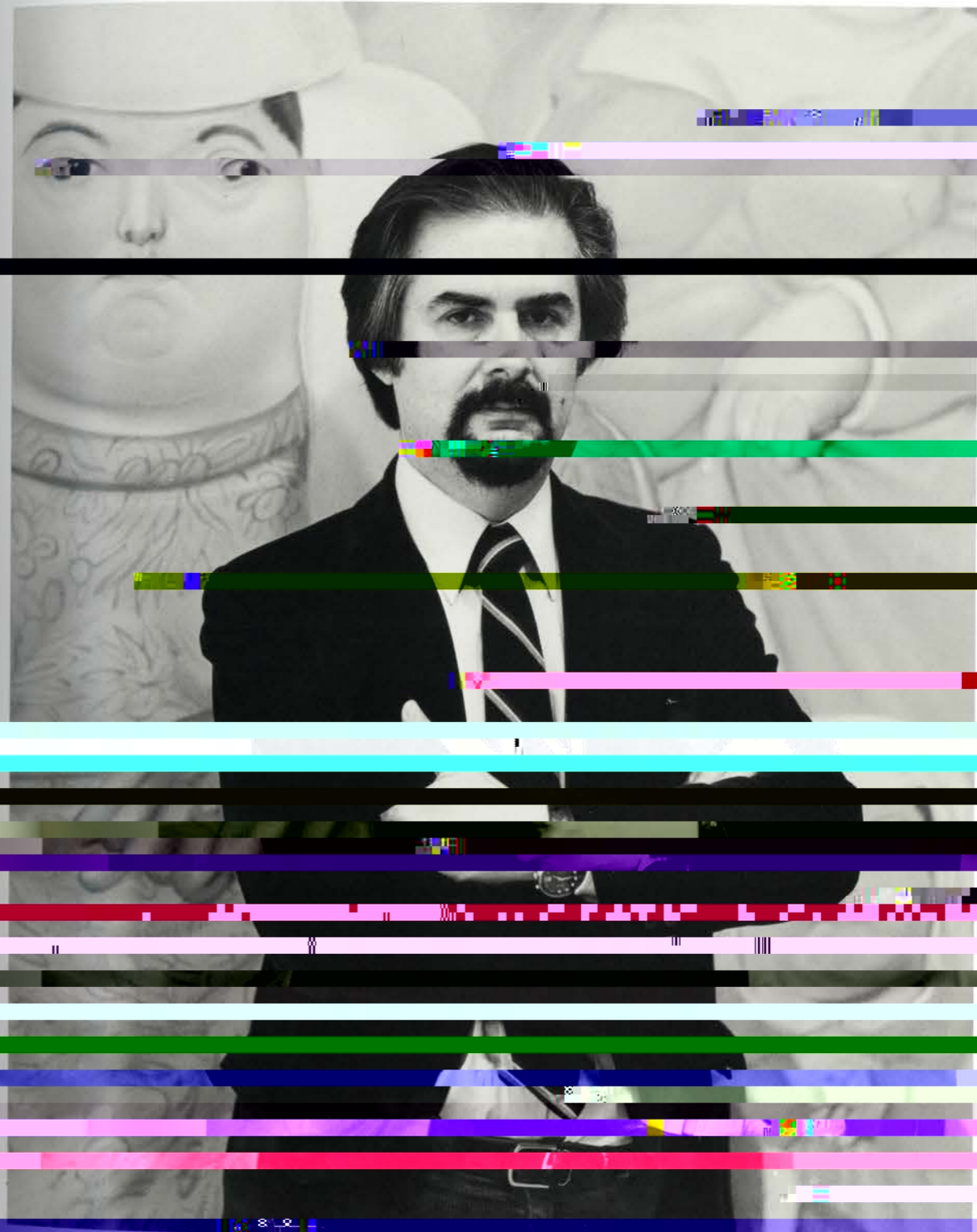




*Fernando Botero (1980)*

In the my recording studio, Down interview about Embrosulo Records. Jazz was his avocation—he was writing a piece for *Swiss Air* magazine about independent jazz labels, and he wanted to feature some of my recordings. I was happy to have the publicity.

It was documentary filmmaker and that jazz criticism was just a hobby. Erwin learned equally well that I was interested in photography as I was in jazz, which led to my helping him on various film projects in New York. He had already made a film about the Colombian artist Fernando Botero, but when Botero had a sculpture show at the Marlborough Gallery in October, I called him to take some still photographs for his film, and he called me to take some still photographs. Botero was very intense but a wonderful subject. He willingly posed in front of one of his paintings.

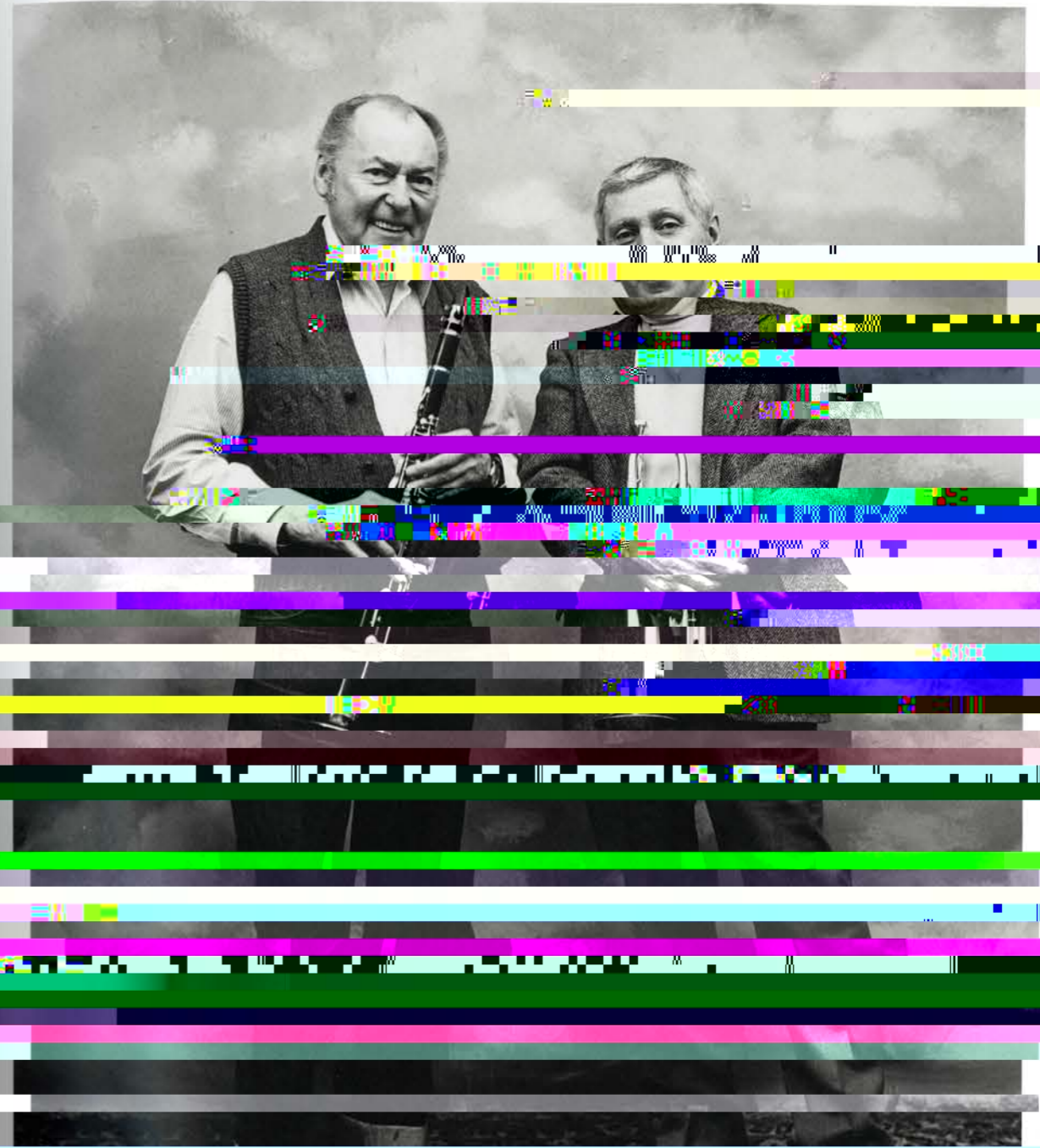


Woody Herman/Ruby Braff (1950)

By March 1950, Woody Herman and Ruby Braff already enjoyed long and fruitful careers. (Woody had just released *Sentinel* [MCA].) The two had come together that year to make their first and only joint recording at Downtown Sound for an as-yet-unnamed, unincorporated band. I was trying to launch with the band a music promotion agency. It was his idea to combine these two exceptional artists, in much the same way he'd combined Woody and Earl "Fatha" Hines in 1941 to create the classic *Music for Tired Lovers*.

No one was tired that day. Woody played and sang magnificently, and Ruby, of course, was equally wonderful. There were smiles all around when the recording was complete. Before the heads were packed in their horns, I took a photograph of the two on a 35mm cover. I took most of the photographs that day in color, with a Rolleiflex, but the old wooden Deardoff was also in place with black-and-white film holders ready for exposure. I took two of each man individually and then a couple of duos. This is the first of the duo's take.

It took seventeen years for what was released in any form. Woody and Ruby finally appeared as a CD on *Bluebird* in 1967. The color photographs were first on a CD booklet, but this is the first time the full version of the black-and-white portrait had been published.





*André Kertész/Hank O'Neal (1980)*

André Kertész lived at 2 Fifth Avenue Village, just a short walk from the Village Gate. At the time, I regarded him as the most poetic photographer I'd ever encountered. Looking at photographs for a quarter of a century, I haven't lost my mind.

In those years, André was slightly past his prime as a photographer, but that didn't stop him from pursuing his vision. One day he came to Downtown Sound to take photographs of Joe Venuti and his band. He had a Polaroid camera and was developing a body of work that was

to his apartment from my studio on 8th Street and remember how along the way I stumbled upon a pair of shoes on the sidewalk. I picked them up, and when I arrived at the studio, I showed them to Hank as a joke. He put them on and I took a snapshot. Then he took the glasses for my camera and took one of me.

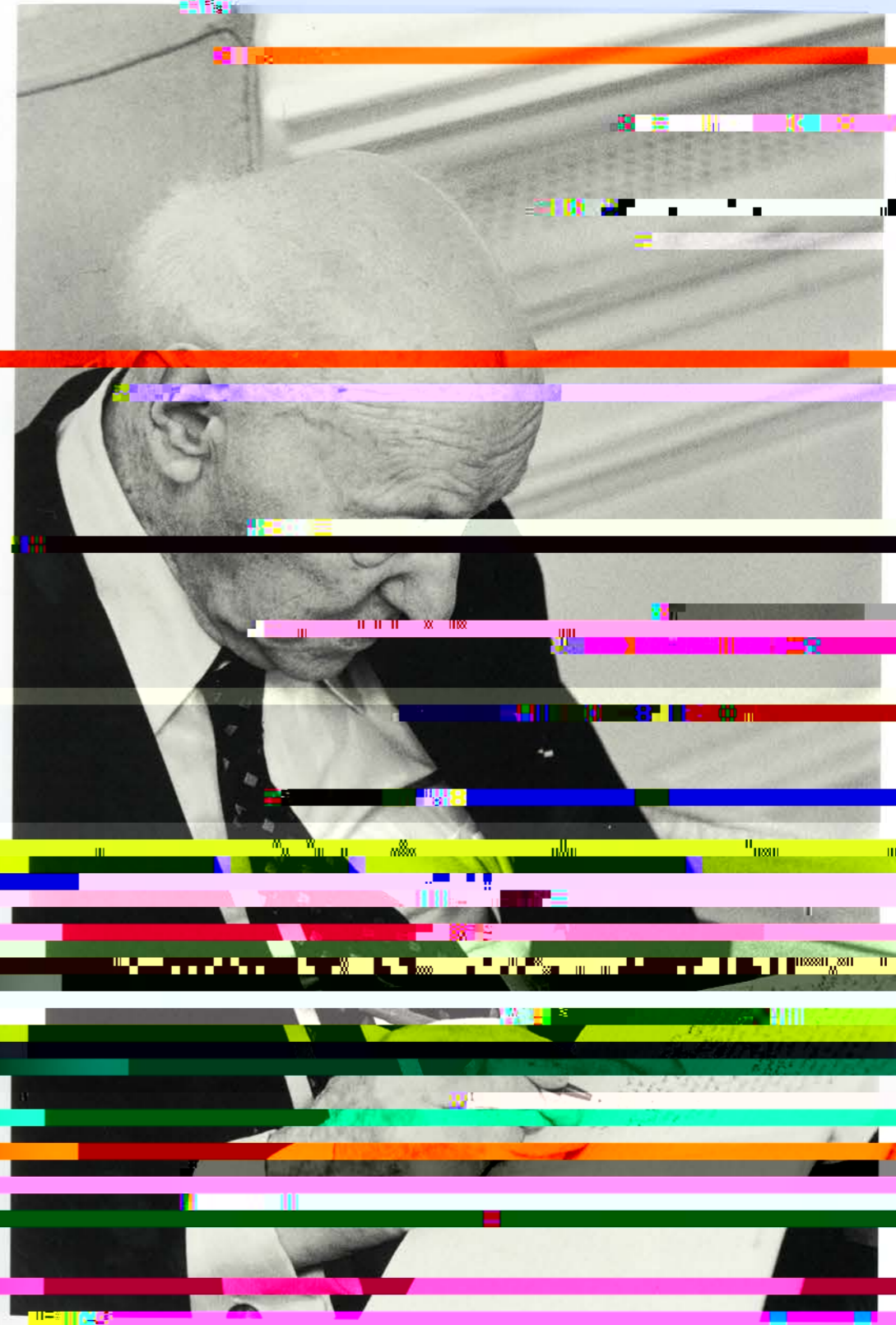




*Isaac Bashevis Singer (1983)*

In 1983, Erwin Leiser produced a film about the Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac B. Singer. Singer's Upper West Side apartment was made inside the apartment. On the last day of shooting, Erwin wanted to do a silent sequence of Singer writing. I decided to make a

I loaded my camera on a tripod, framed it the way I wanted, and shot twenty exposures. The camera moves from frame to frame in Singer's hand. I then made three 16" x 20" enlarged contact sheets and mounted them on rag board—one for Erwin, one for Singer, and one for myself. I asked Singer to sign my copy, which he did. I gave it to him to display the copy I gave him and put it on the wall. I had a Chagall to replace, but I did have a blank spot on the wall, where the contact sheet has remained since. This portrait is one one of the twenty.

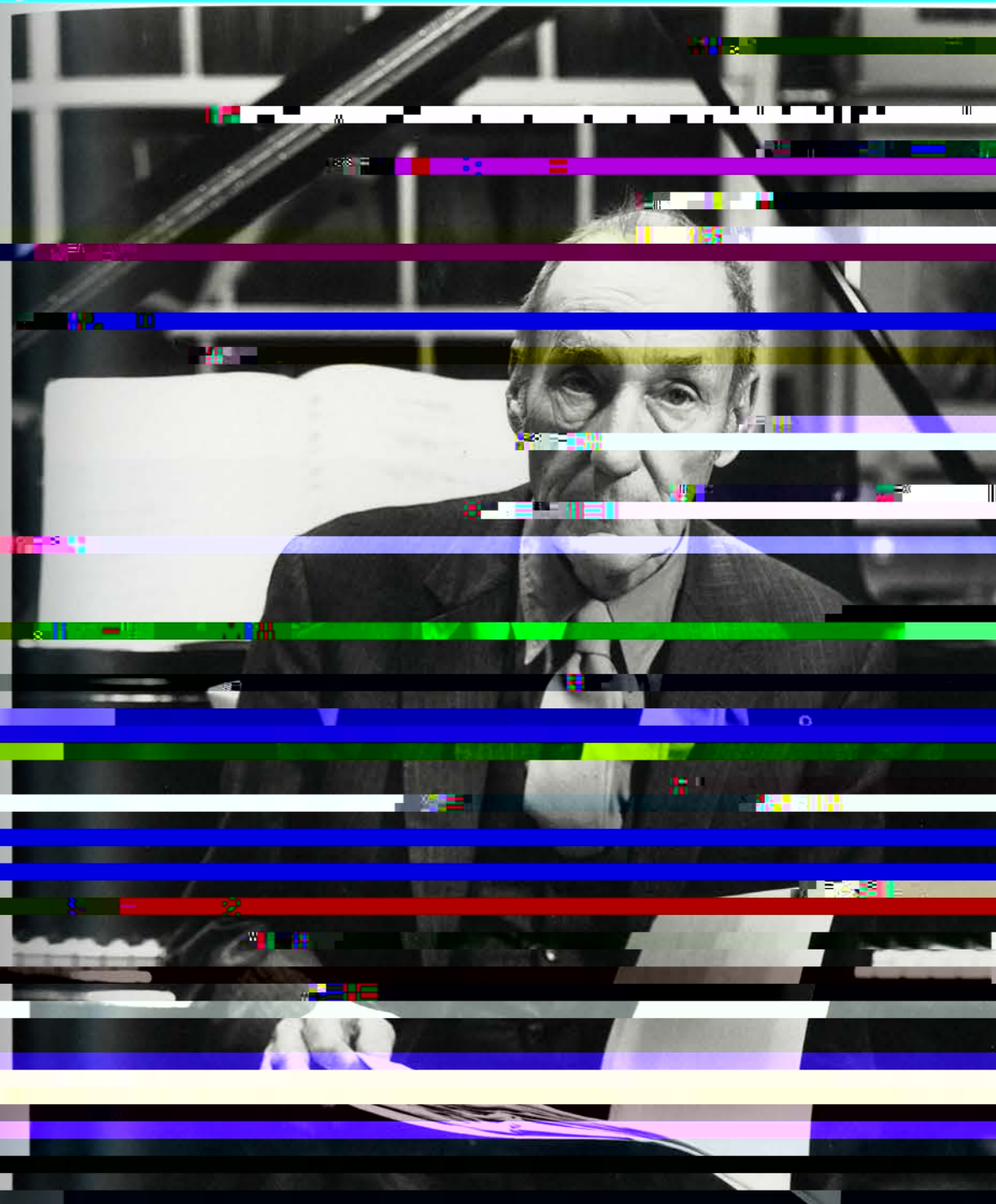


William S. Burroughs (1987)

William S. Burroughs reached his seventieth year in 1984; that  
February he arrived in New York City for a week of celebrations.  
I had a studio (which I rented in '85) and I turned it over to  
over to William for his use so he could have a comfortable home base

It was a wild week, full of  
visitors, and many opportunities to take photographs  
documentary or still  
crammed our bookshelves, did a little target practice with a high-  
powered air pistol, and generally had a fine time.

Toward the end of the week, I asked him if he'd slow down for a  
minute so I could take a formal portrait with my old Deardorff. He  
was only too happy to oblige, and I moved the Steinway around to use  
as a backdrop. Just as we were getting up, both as formally attired as William. We  
took lots of photographs, by day, night, and individual. This is my  
favorite of William's. I don't know which manuscript he was writing

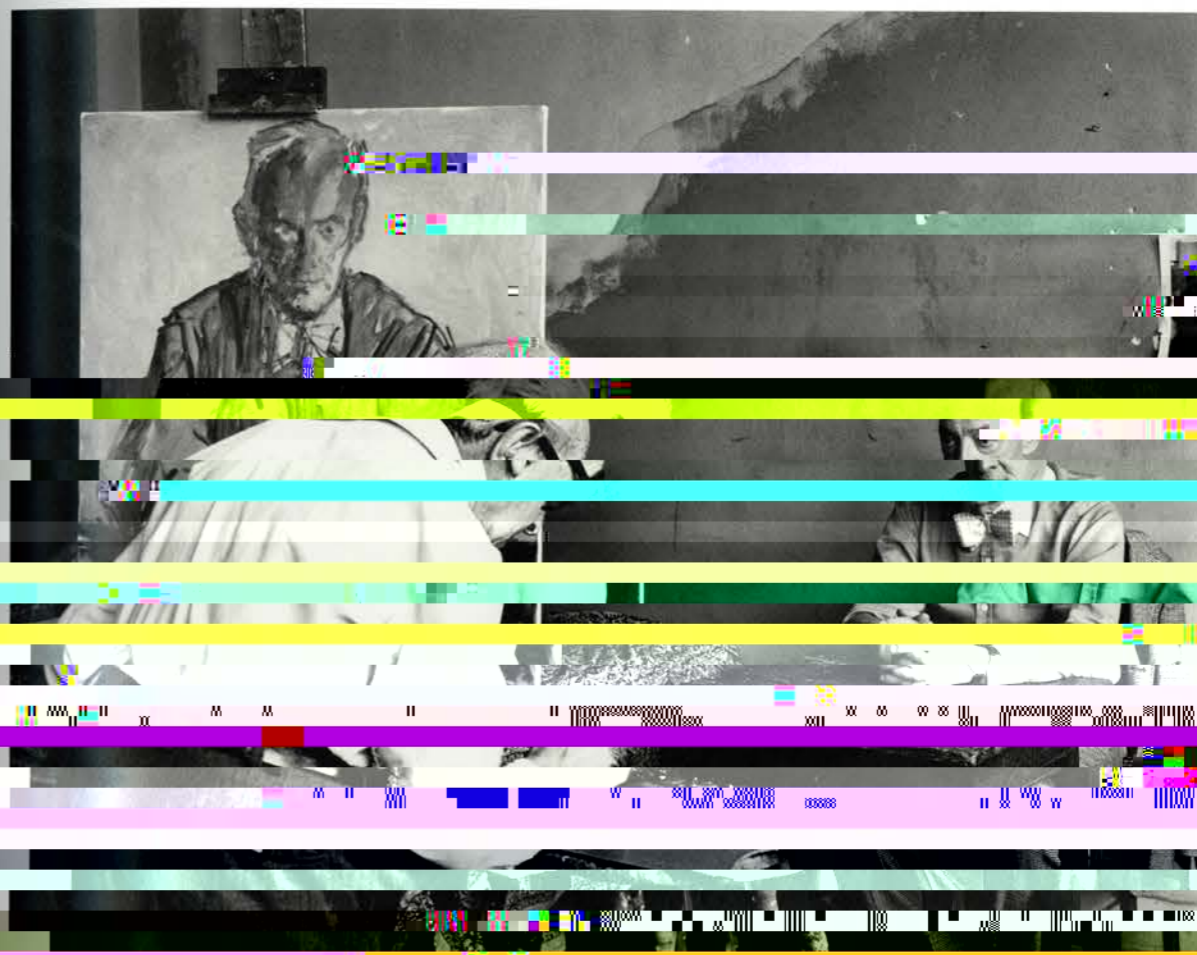




*Raphael Sover: Saul Bellow (1985)*

I was very fond of the wonderful painter Raphael Sover. I met him... with Berenice Abbott, so he knew I wasn't a hoodlum. I took photographs in his studio on West 74th Street on many occasions, and in 1985 I suggested it might be fun to work together on a portrait of a famous subject. Raphael Sover's idea was to document the process of painting. Raphael thought this was a good idea, but he didn't know about the subject for the portrait. The ideal subject had turned up: Saul Bellow. It sounded good to me.

This portrait is my favorite from a series of black-and-white and color photographs I took. The only one that was never completed. Bellow simply withdrew. Raphael never told me why; and as far as I know, his portrait was never finished. A pity; it is in its unfinished state.





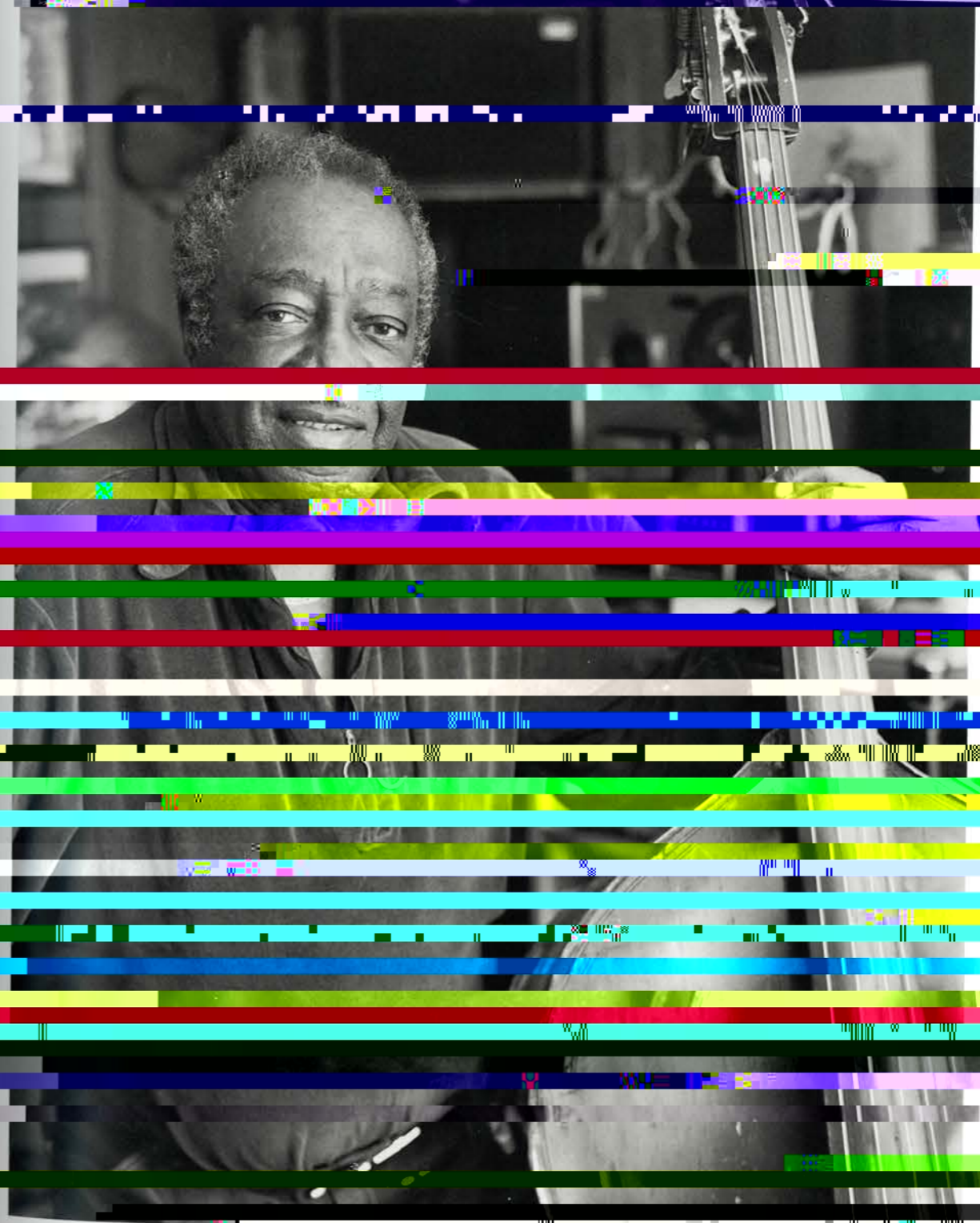


Milt

Les Pockell was my editor for two book projects when he was at St. Martin's Press. He had a great sense of humor and a great sense of style. One day he called me and asked if I had any good ideas for a book. I did. My project was called *The Ghosts of Harlem*, comprising the words of people who had been active uptown when it mattered. Les said he could sell the project on the title alone, and he did. I began taking photographs with my Deardorff camera and recording interviews. I was dry on the contract.

In the first year of working on the book, during which I took a trip to Japan. After he told me he was going to leave the company, I was told that no one even telephoned. The book was finally published in 1997 by Filipacini.

I began to take photographs of jazz bassists. Milt Hinton, the dean of jazz bassists. Milt was born in 1909, but in 1987 he was just a kid of seventy-seven. As usual, he proved to be one of the most interesting people I ever met. I didn't know. This photograph was taken in the basement of his home in St. Albans, Queens, about ten feet from his darkroom, where he'd been processing his own photographs for about half a century. Milt knows a lot about cameras, how to take a good picture, what's involved, and how hard it is. He didn't let me once as I dug under the focusing cloth.

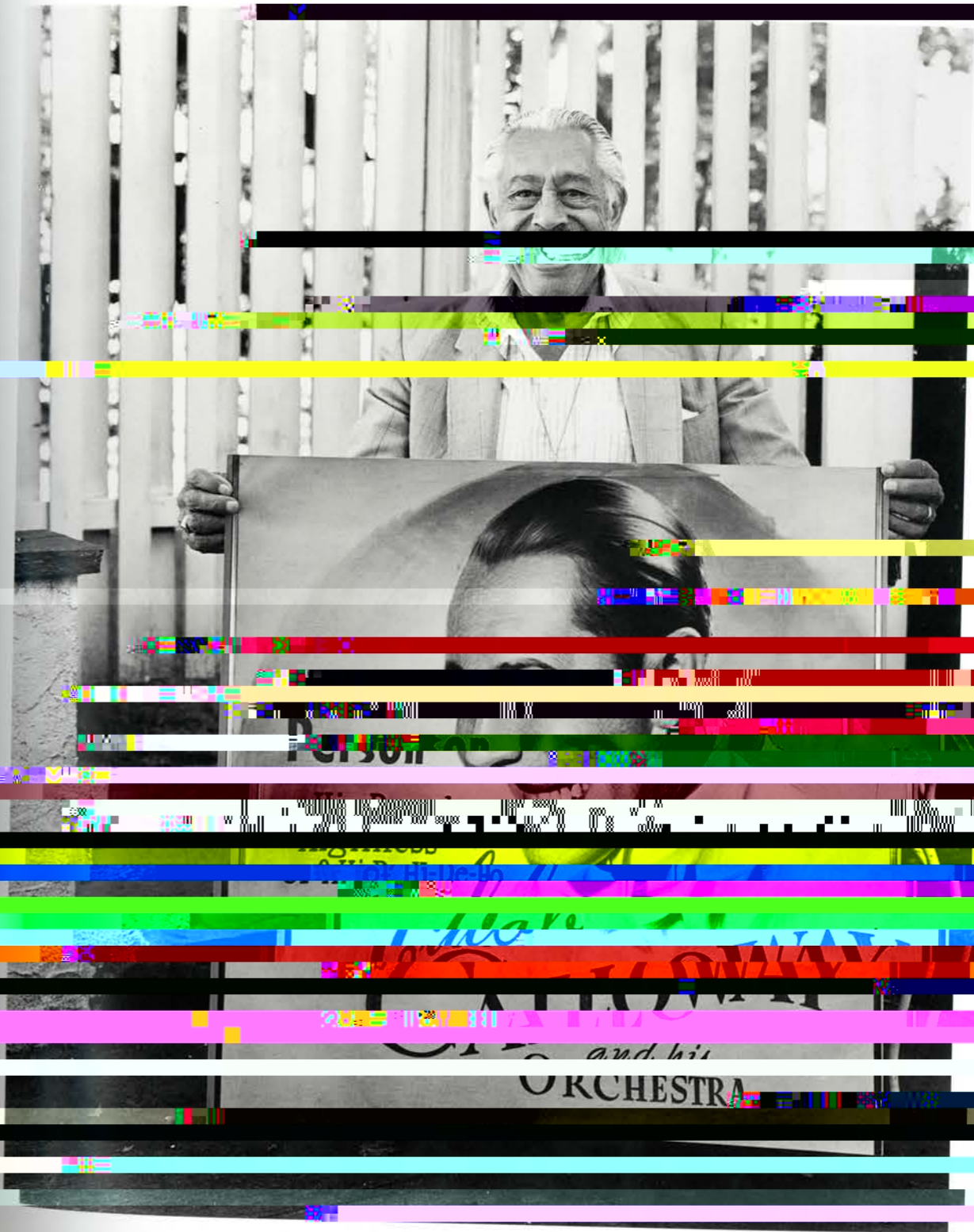


*Cab Call* (1971/77-81)

We presented Cab Callaghan in the 1980s. In the summer of 1986, Shelley Smer had a great idea for a Broadway show that would feature Callaghan. She got the attention of a prominent Broadway producer; and in a discussion, we all journeyed to White Plains, New York, to discuss

he asked if we would do it. Of course we would. Once I saw it, I knew it would make a fine prop, and Cab obliged without hesitation. I feel this is one of the real winners in *The Ghosts of Harlem* project.

The show didn't work out. Shelley was about ten years ahead of her time. When Broadway got around to doing a Broadway show with "Sing, Sing, Sing," it was ten years too late for Cab.





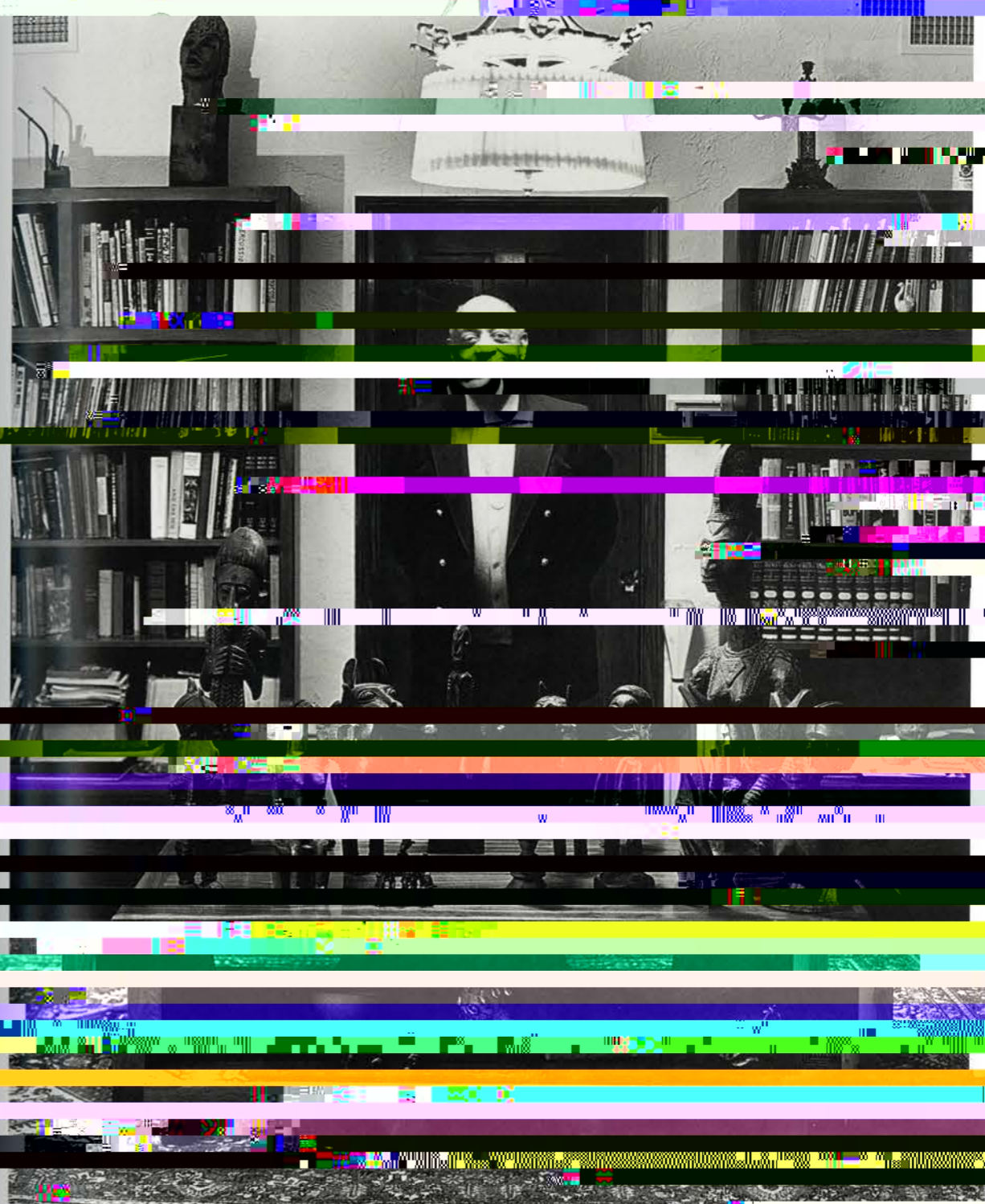
*Benny Carter (1987)*

Benny Carter lives in a house in the Hellbender Hill area. The only structure higher is a 25-story water tower. He not only holds various longevity records, but he also may hold the record for the fastest descent from a house on Skyline Drive to sea level. I was in the car that day, the same day my wife, may have been used to him racing to the... and I was...

Benny wanted to have a good Chinese meal before we got down to business. Hilma, Shelley, Benny, and I got into his roomy Rolls-

royce. On the way to the... roads, he mentioned something about needing to get the brakes serviced. So...

...with... portraits, posing with some of his collection of African sculpture, of which he's justly proud. Like Milt Hinton, he is an iron man, still... writing arrangements... on August 8, 2000.

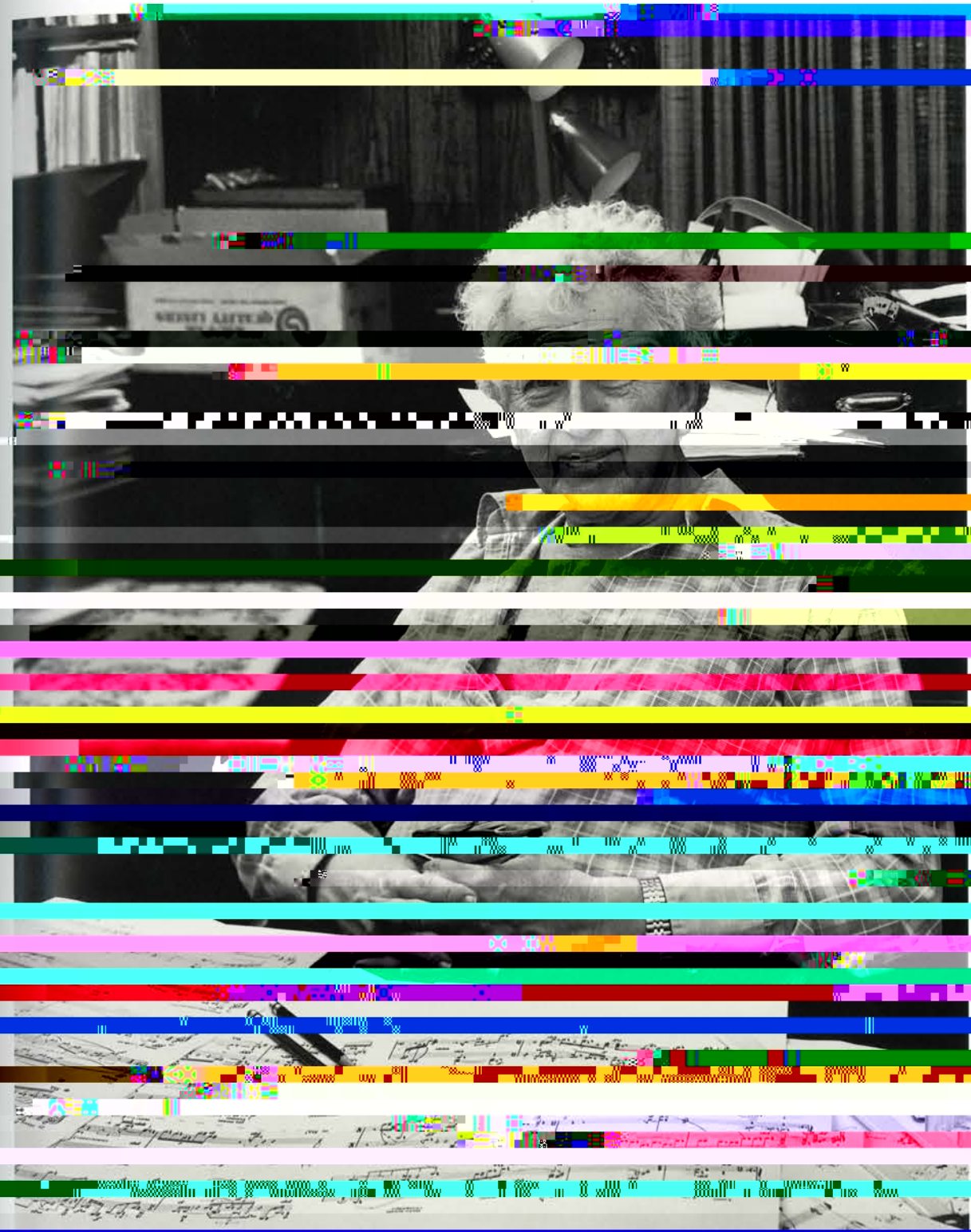




Mel (1916–2007)

Mel Powell was easily the most intelligent person I've ever met. He was so remarkable in so many ways that it would take dozens of laundries to make the lists. I was first introduced to him in 1986 by telephone, courtesy of his old friend Ruby Braff. That year, Mel came out of a thirty-year retirement as a jazz musician to perform at The Floating Jazz Festival. It was then that I learned about his paintings. I hadn't seen any of his work, but I surmised that it had to be exceptional. Everything else about Mel was, why not the paintings.

The first people I approached to help with the exhibition were the people who were approached to help with the exhibition. The show was scheduled for the Sordoni Art Gallery at Wilkes College, October–November. I went to his home to look up the work, interview Mel for the catalogue, and take some photographs. I sensed a unique opportunity to photograph Mel in his room. I bothered Mel for about three days and then, on the last day, suggested it was time for the photographs. We retired to his music room, actually a converted garage. The room was full of music—instruments, acoustic and electronic; sheet music, old and new; recordings; reels of tape; and photographs of his mentors—all this and more was scattered about. In the foreground of the photograph is a piece of paper holding his newest composition. It is in the foreground of my favorite portrait from that day. Incidentally, this image was used in the catalogue for the exhibition at the Sordoni Art Gallery in 1987.





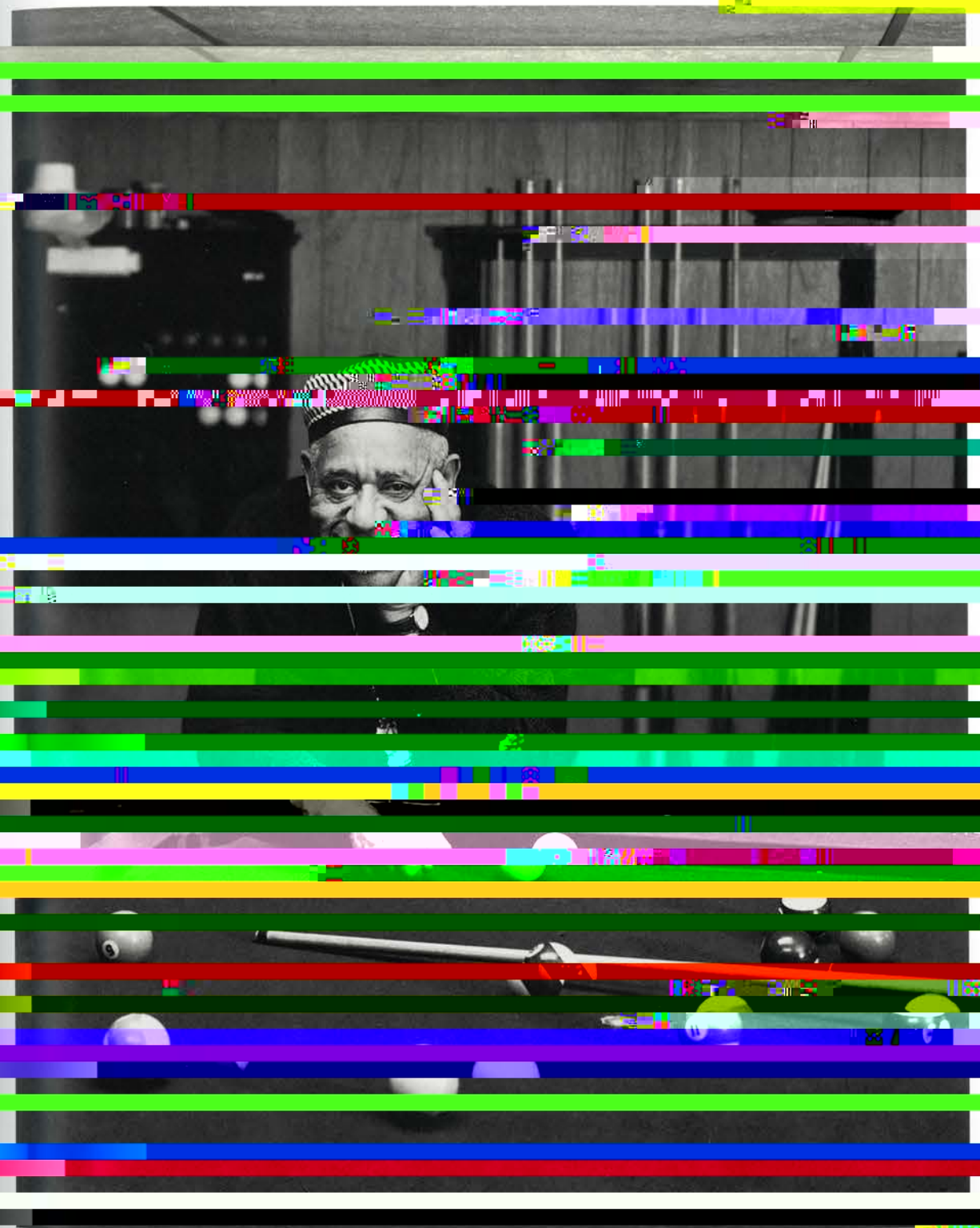
*Dizzy Gillespie (1990)*

I've been in awe of Dizzy Gillespie since I heard him as a teenager. I saw a photograph of him in his school album, and I hung it with pictures I'd cut out of magazines. Sometimes your heroes are not only a wonder, but also a great role model. Dizzy was a great role model. He was never a bad word about anyone. He was a major part of many of our music.

occasions. Dizzy and his toys had been confined to the basement.

floor. Downstairs, however, was Dizzy's domain, complete with sound equipment, his cameras, a piano, a drum kit, and a little mock bar in one corner, stacked with a bar and pool table. Algotre, Charlie Parker, and I hung behind the bar.

Dizzy loved cameras, was a good photographer, and I was intrigued with my old wooden camera. I took it into it on that day in 1990. And this photograph is not a setup. The balls were on the table. We positioned the camera, and when we were finished, we knocked them around some more.

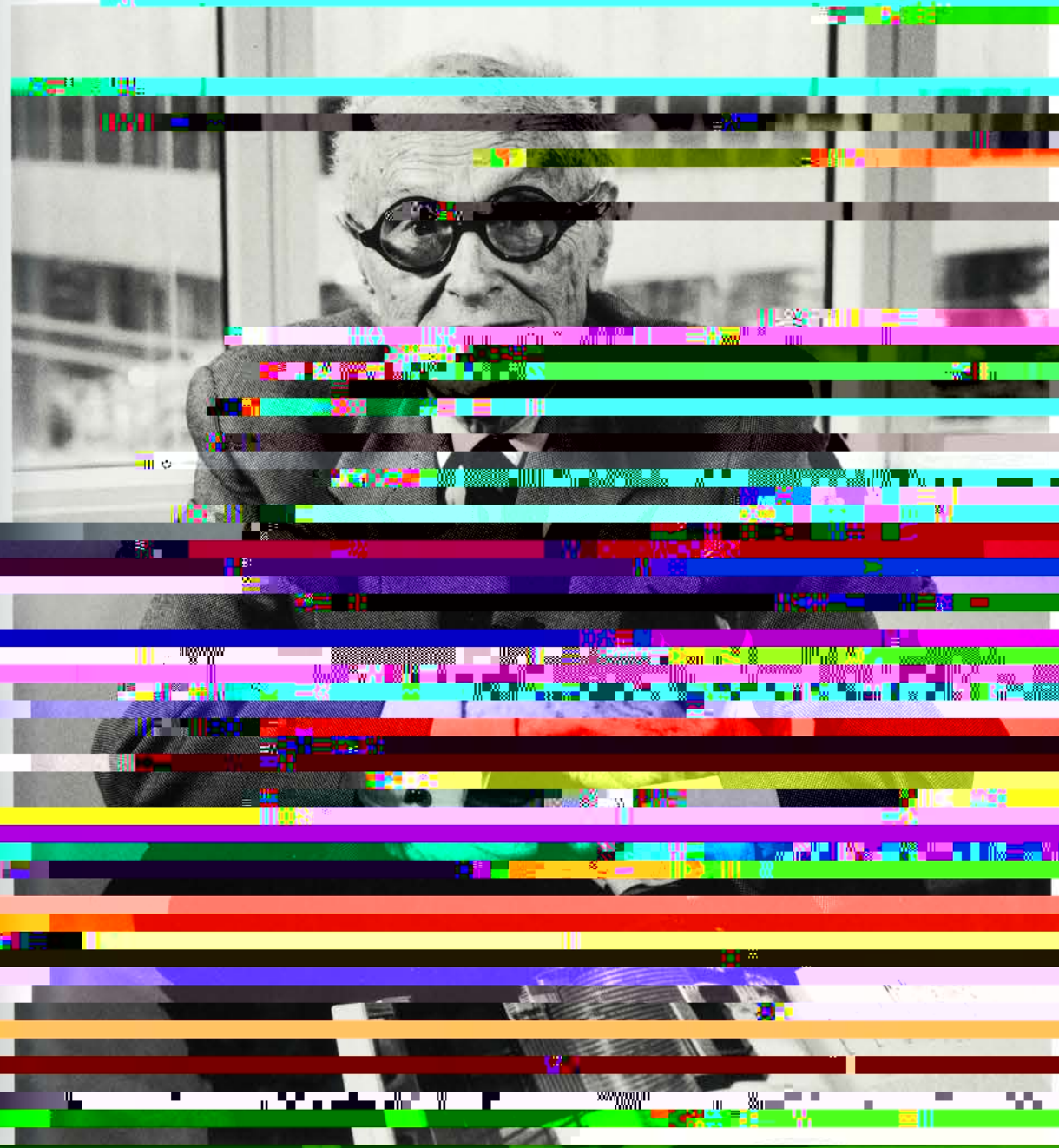


Philip Johnson (1990)

I first became aware of Philip Johnson through a review in *Artforum*. Johnson had been very helpful to her in the early 1930s, when she was first attempting to launch her *Changing New York* project. At the time, Johnson was the head of the Museum of Modern Art. All he managed to do was give Berenice the mailing list of the museum's hundred or so most prominent benefactors. Berenice wrote letters to each one, asking to raise money for her project. She collected \$50

with my friend

There had been controversy surrounding Johnson and the show, and Erwin Panofsky's review in *Artforum* was particularly scathing. I don't know if the record was straightened or not, but the interview was terrific—Johnson was on his feet, and Berenice, and (since I was her friend) portraits. The building shown in the portrait is the building in which the portrait was taken.



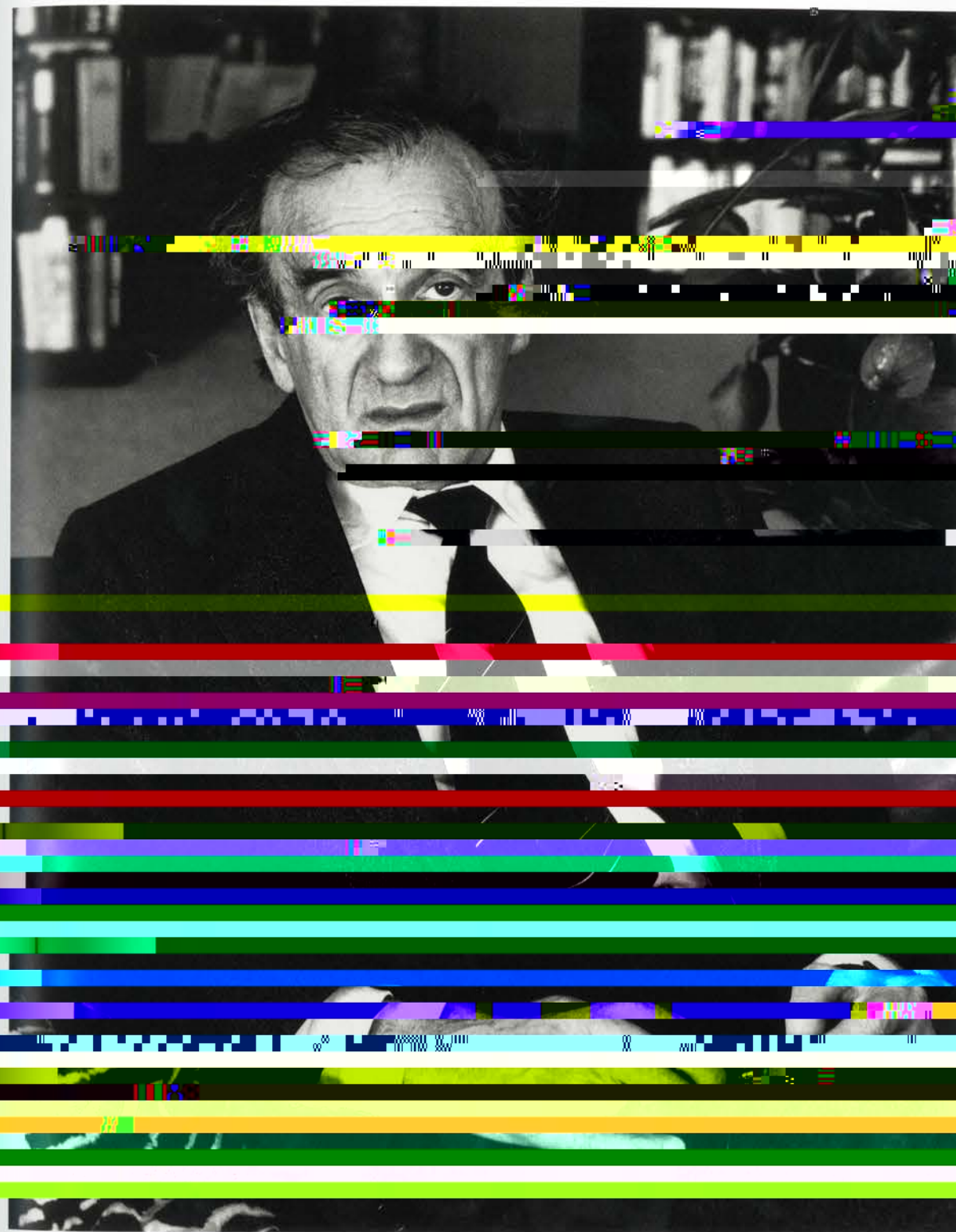


Elie Wiesel (1927–2005)

In March 1979, I wrote Wiesel and he responded and said he was cooperative for a good portrait of Elie Wiesel. Could I stop what I was doing and help him? He said yes. I was only too happy to oblige.

I had some photos of Wiesel's great-grandfather but I had a long conversation about music before we took the photos. The conversation ranged from Baroque to various kinds of Jewish folk music, which was interesting. I told Wiesel I wanted to send him a tape I had just recorded of a song entitled "Palestina" which I was sure would fascinate him. Later, I sent him a copy. It was right.

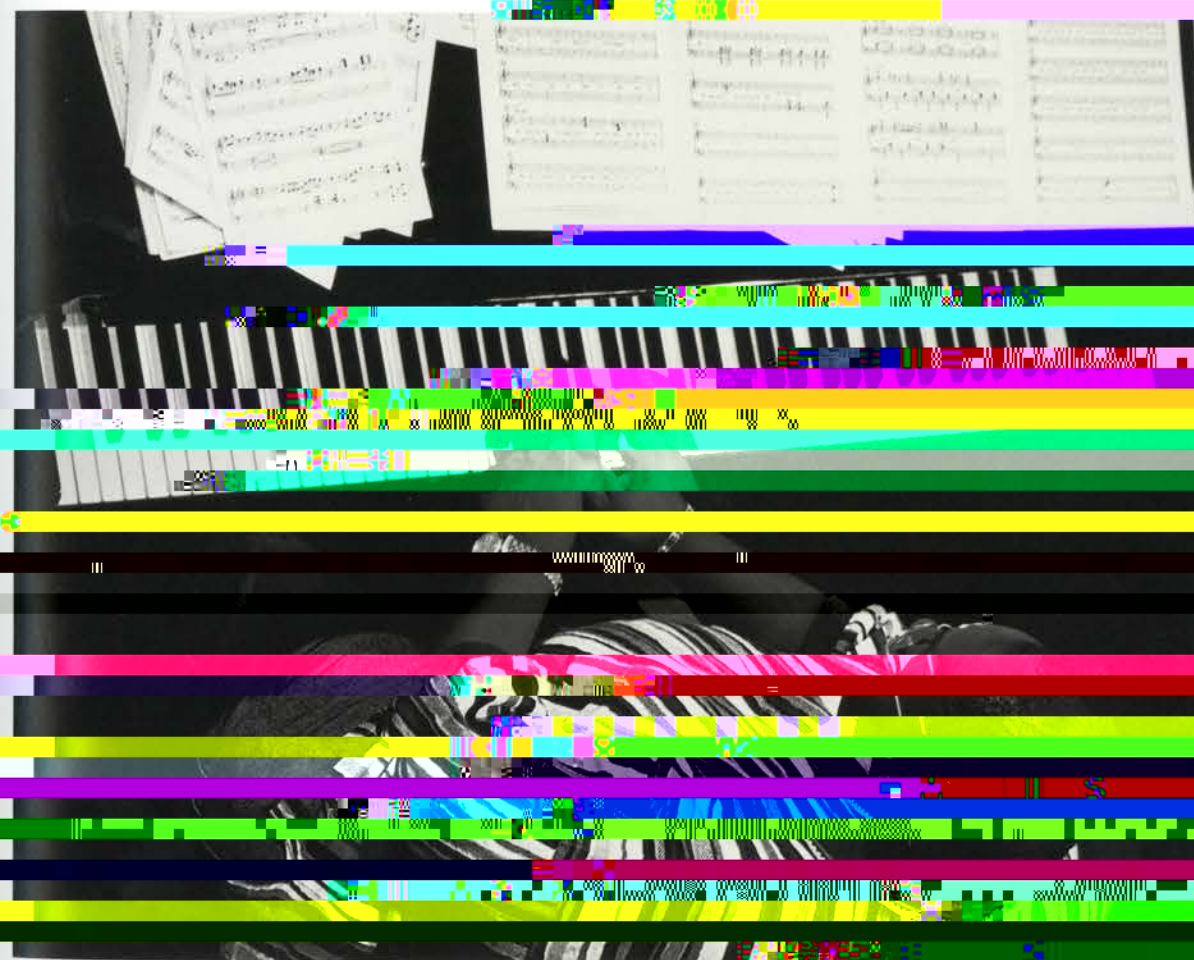
I only had one roll of film, and all the images were interesting. This one seemed appropriately serious, befitting to his work. A week or so later I took him some of the finished slides, along with a copy of *Souls on Fire*, his marvelous book on Jewish mystical thought. I gave a copy signed to one of Shelle's aunts, who was very ill. Wiesel wrote me a few lines in his last days.



*Cyrus Chestnut (1998)*

In July 1998, Oren Jacoby telephoned and said he would be directing a film celebrating the music of Duke Ellington, featuring the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. We had talked about the project for many months, but now it was reality. The band would feature Wynton Marsalis, there would be star soloists and a bevy of dancers, and the project would be taped at The Supper Club on West 48th Street. He thought there might be some good photographic opportunities, and I did as well.

If someone had set out to dress Cyrus Chestnut in an interesting photograph, it would have been a challenge. The photograph was just a rehearsal, so he was dressed casually; but I saw the opportunity immediately. I went into the balcony above the band and took two or three pictures looking down at all the stripes, the keyboard, and the sheet music. You know immediately when you have a good shot.





Harry Lunn (1990)

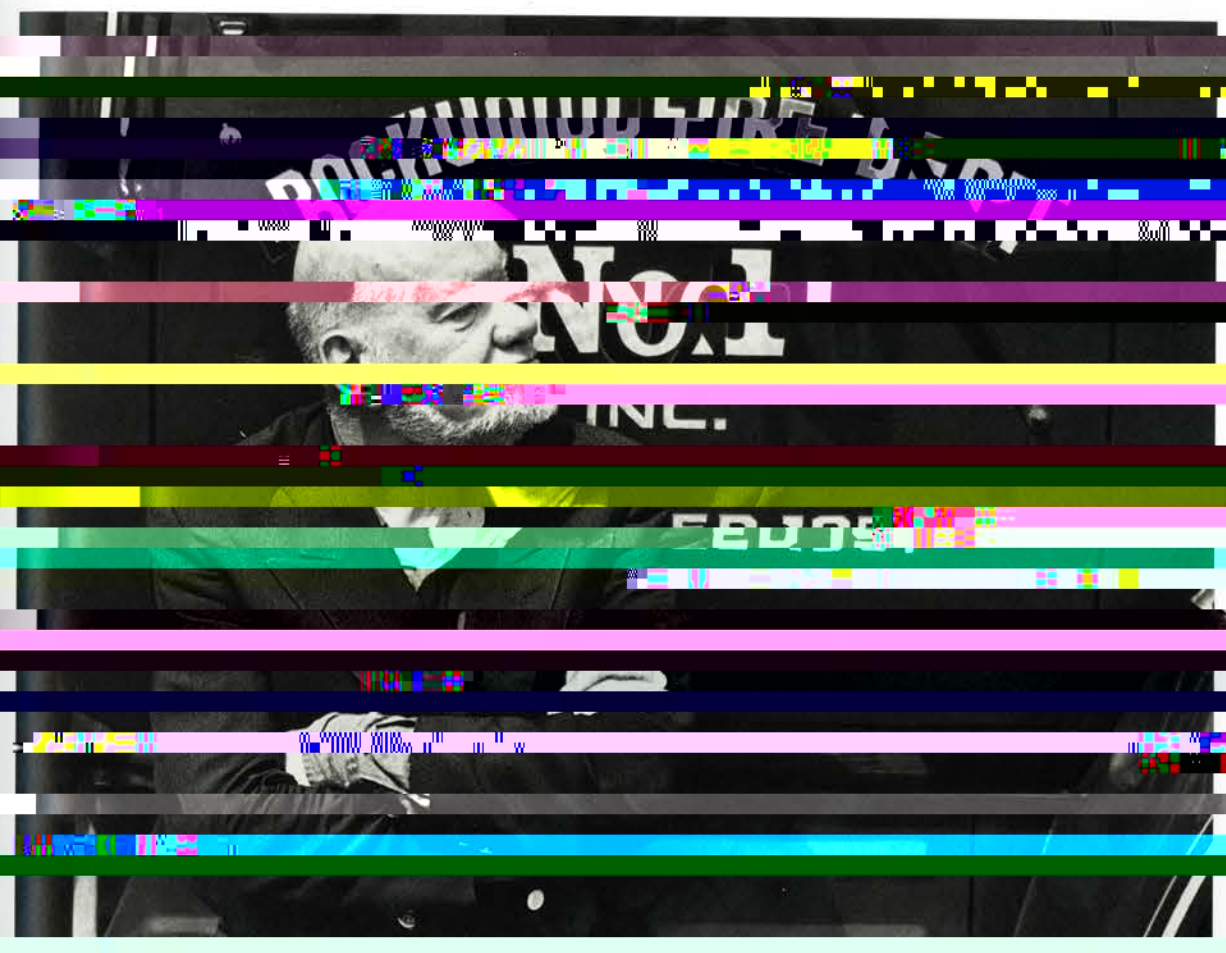
financially viable market for  
was more important or influential than Harry Lunn. I met Harry  
through Berenice Abbott just as he was beginning to become seriously  
involved with her work. We remained friends on various occa-  
sions project together.

This photograph marked the end of a long  
Sometime in the early 1980s, we established the ritual of spending July  
17th with Berenice in Maine. This was her birthday, and it was a good  
excuse to get away and find new ways to be in the world and  
obligations. The last birthday party was in July 1998 when Berenice  
turned ninety-three; she died in December of that year.

She would have been one hundred in July 1998; and at the urging  
of Susan Blatchford, about a dozen of Berenice's closest friends  
gathered in northern Maine for a celebration. A friend from  
came in from France, armed as always with the newest fragrance from  
an appropriate perfumery on Boulevard Haussmann. He was in good mood  
spirits but ill health.

We arrived in the morning and went  
ahead to the small rural cemetery in Blanchard where Berenice is  
buried to see if everything was in order. At the end of the  
cemetery and I was as if I had never when I spotted a small  
overgrown marker inscribed simply "Harry L." I called to Harry; he came  
over and had a look, reached in his pocket, took out the perfume, and  
gave the little marker a gift from Paris as he planned to do with

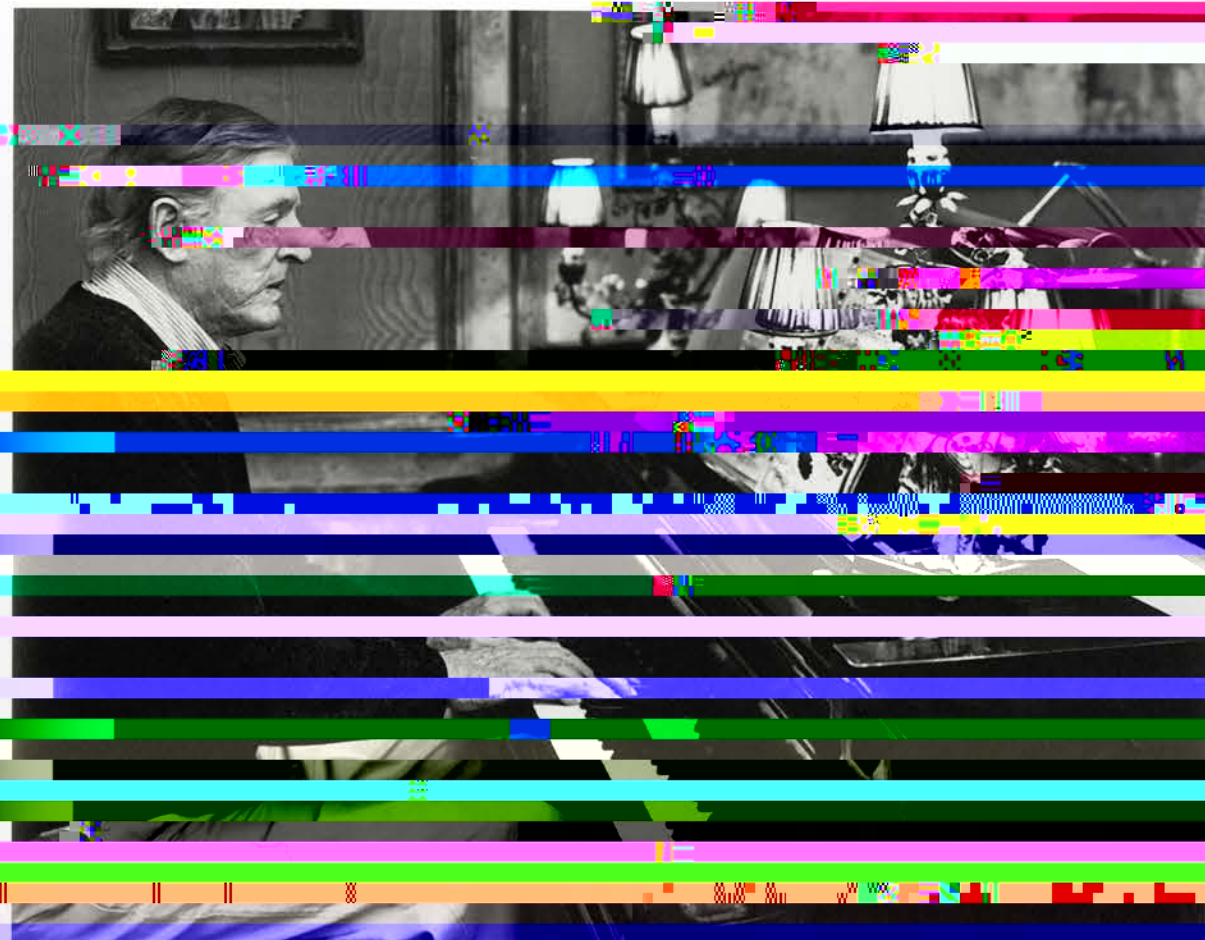
We didn't return to New York immediately, and a day or so later  
decided to visit Mt. Kisco, halfway up Moosehead Lake. On the way,  
in Rockport, I spotted an abandoned fire engine. I thought Harry  
sitting on the running board would make a nice portrait. He obliged...  
Not too many days later, on August 14, Harry was on his way to his  
home in Normandy. He collapsed  
later, never regaining consciousness. There will be no more birthday



William F. Buckley, Jr. (1999)

I've known Bill Buckley since the early 1970s. Our common link is music, in general and the pianist, Dick Wellstood, in particular. Bill wrote liner notes for a Wellstood album I produced in 1973 to promote it. Nearly a quarter of a century later, it was about time for me to take my Dear Bill to his home to take a portrait with a musical subtext.

My idea was to photograph him at the piano, an old Bösendorfer piano built in the 1890s. It was a nice idea, but complicated by the dimmed light in the room. I set up the camera and added a small quartz light I often use in low-light situations. Then I told Bill to begin playing. I turned on the light and it only took about ten minutes before it blew all the lights in his prewar apartment. Fortunately, I'd managed to get the shot. When the lights came back on, Bill continued with a Nikon and a flash.



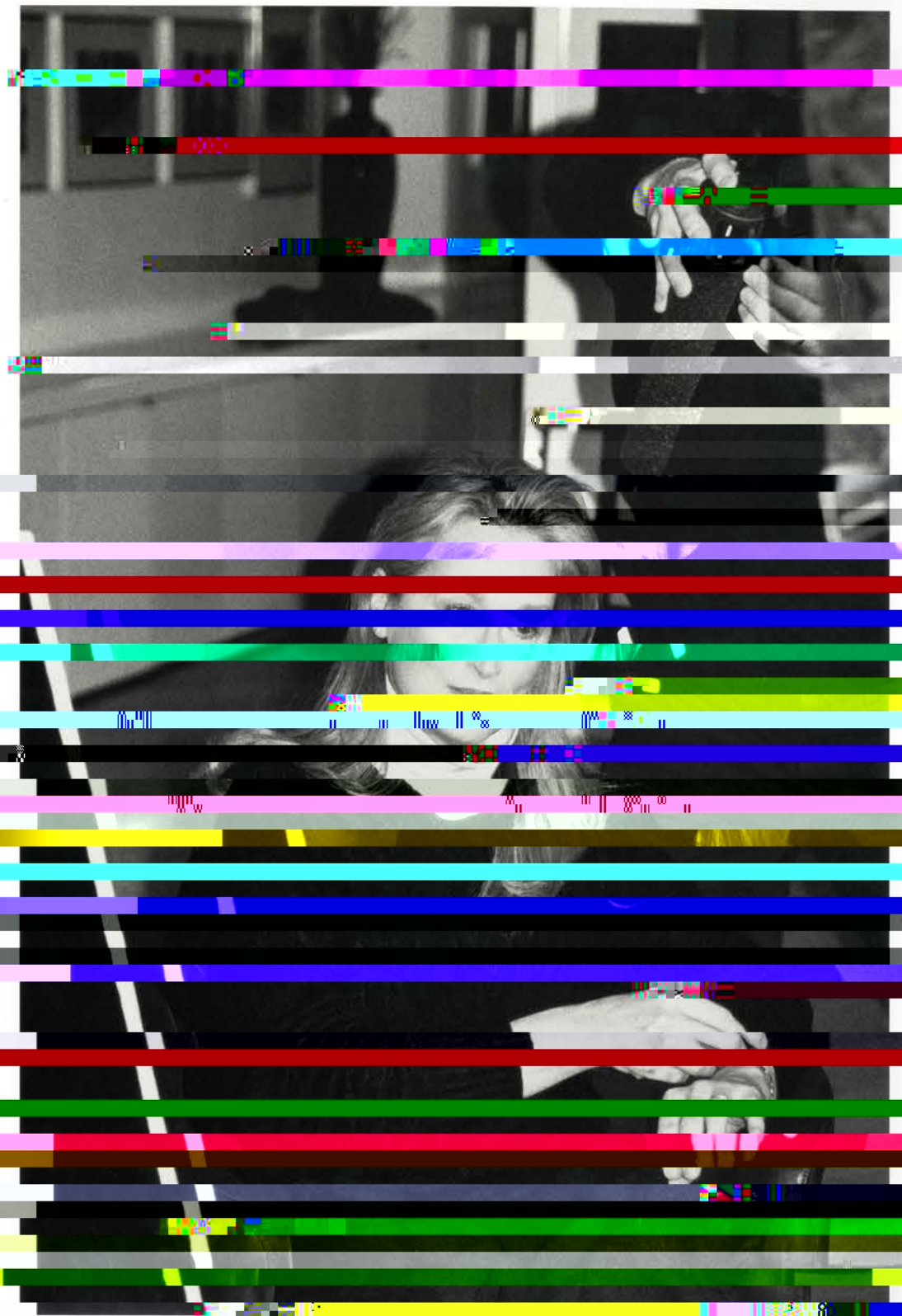


Meryl Streep (2000)

In mid-1999, an old friend, the producer-director Bruce Ricker, telephoned to say he was just getting the paperwork in order to produce and direct an American-made film focusing on the long-time friend Clint Eastwood. He wanted me to be the photographer on the project. Filming wouldn't begin until there'd be many interesting people to photograph. I began loading my cameras.

The first day of shooting was February 8, at my 830 Broadway office. On that day, Meryl Streep walked over from her house on 12th Street and talked on camera for an hour, giving a marvelous interview. I've seen her as herself, but this is the best of them all. I took pictures before the camera rolled or when tape was being changed. I like the casual feel of this one—she's totally unaware of the camera, thinking about what the next question might be; but it isn't my favorite from that afternoon.

At the beginning of the interview, Shelley Shier's Cavalier King Charles spaniel, Qi, had run into the room. Meryl was pleased, greeting Qi with "Hello, precious." A dog on the set is regarded as good luck, even if the set is the dog's home base. After everything was over, I asked her if I could take a picture of her with the dog. Meryl got down on the floor and began playing with the dog, who played back vigorously, licking her face with joy. She was beaming, the dog was excited, neither one was acting.





*Clint Eastwood (2000)*

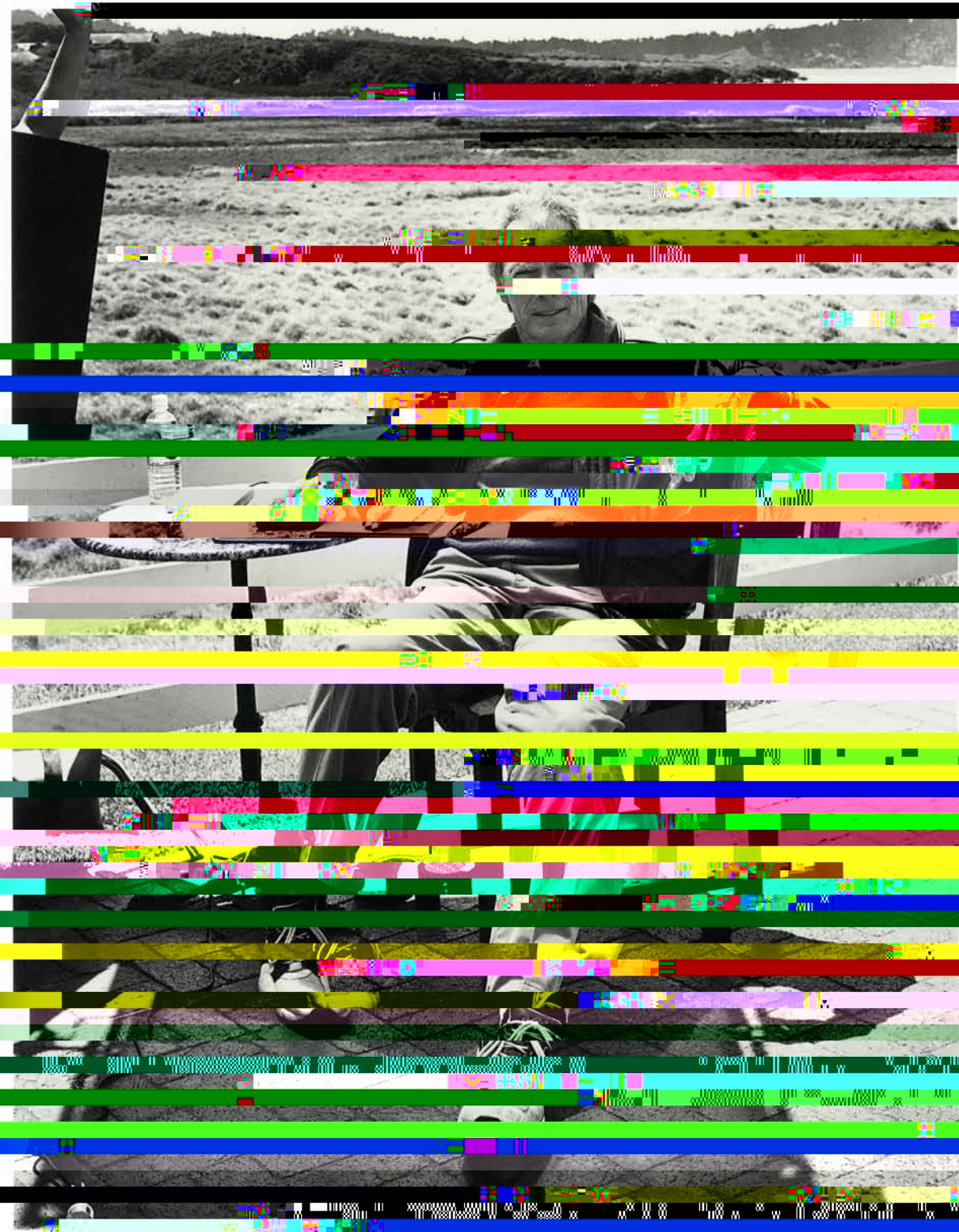
My first interview with Clint Eastwood was on October 1996 during his performance at Carnegie Hall. Bruce Ricker had asked Arthur Elgort and me to be the still photographers for all the rehearsals and the concert. As much a jazz fan as I, so we had a grand time.

The next occasion was at Clint's Mission Ranch in Carmel, California, on March 25, 2000, at the occasion of a portion of the American Masters shoot. It was approximately a ten-hour exercise, one that was utterly fascinating.

There were two on-camera interviews scheduled for that day — one outside, overlooking Point Lobos to the south, and another inside one of the ranch buildings. I had to choose to set up the Deardorff outside, where it would be more casual, with good light,

I took pictures with my Rolleiflex and Nikon throughout the interview, but at the end, around mid-afternoon, I decided to take a couple of semiserious photographs with my old camera. Clint looked at me and said dolefully, "I don't want to have my picture taken with an old camera." He must have seen my sudden sad expression, because he laughingly added, "I was only kidding, I like your old camera." I told him about it later. What do you want me to do?" I suggested he just sit back down in the chair. He was used, during the interview. Later that night I told him about the camera during a four-hour dinner.

As I was getting ready to take the picture, I thought of how Brassai once said, "I don't know how many pictures he planned to take of Lawrence Olivier." I said he planned to take three or four, which is usually ever needed. I did him one or two better. I took just two. Both came out fine, but I like this one better.





*Ute Lemper (2000)*

A portrait can be very different. Ute Lemper, falls into such a category. I had no idea I'd take

In March 2000, Shelley Shier and I were the guests of two friends, Margaret Whitton and Warren Spector, at a benefit for the New York Shakespeare Festival. I usually take a small Contax T vs to functions. I was seated right at the lip of the small platform that no idea the featured performer was Ute Lemper, an artist I greatly admire. Suddenly an onstage announcement was made, and almost instantly she was standing right in front of me, singing "Morität" from Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*. Her second selection was Mischa Spoliansky's "The Vampire." She does look a little like a vampire in this photo, but it was taken during "Morität." It is the only one I took while she was performing.



Donald Sutherland

Berenice Abbot once told me that no matter where I wanted to take a photograph, I'd never have enough room. It was almost true on the afternoon that I took the photograph of Sutherland. I had to shoot the end of his segment for the DVD.

Sutherland was in a hurry that day: He was leaving the stage star in a production of a new play, *King Lear*, at the Savoy on London's West End, and he had to knock off two interviews. The first was to create some extra material for a projected DVD release of *Mash*; the other was for the *East End* magazine. The interview was scheduled to take place in a hotel room in Santa Monica; the set had been laid out by the magazine's photographer. I had to be as close as possible, with the interviewer's chair about an inch from the wall.

Directly in front of this chair, no more than three feet away, was the chair for Sutherland. The two chairs were surrounded by lights reflecting surfaces, and a large video camera. To complicate matters, Sutherland's publicist insisted he only had a few minutes for the filmed interview and said he didn't want to be interrupted.

Fortunately, the interview went very smoothly. Sutherland was charming and was unconcerned about photographs. I managed to slip into the interviewer's chair, getting as far away as possible, and took about three shots. I was so close his face filled the frame. The whole process lasted less than one minute.





# CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Reverend Gary Davis, 1971 17 East 65th Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Pentax)	Gerrit Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Palace Theater, Albany, New York chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	Michael Moriarty, 1980 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	William S. Burroughs, 1984 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)
Don Ewell, 1973 Warp Studios, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Grace Dantas, 1977 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Hannibal Peterson, 1978 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	André Kertész, 1970 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	Hans Falk at his Woodstock Hotel Studio, 1984 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	
Don Ewell, 1975 Warp Studios, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Joan La Barbara, 1977 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Perry Robinson, 1978 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Jaqueline Onassis, 1978 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)		
Earl Hines, 1973 Warp Studios, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	The Witkin, 1977 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	Joe Turner, 1970 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (2.8 Rolleiflex)			
Joe Venuti/Zoot Sims #1, 1973 Warp Studios, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Leo M. O'Neil, 1977 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	Margaret Whitton in Lucy Seward Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	Marlborough Gallery, New York City gelatin silver print	an appearance on the David Letterman Show, 1982 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)
Joe Venuti/Zoot Sims #2, 1973 Warp Studios, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Barbara Morgan, 1977 New Rochelle, New York gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	Berenice Abbott, 1979 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (4" x 5" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	Woody Herman/Ruby Braff, 1980 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	Gerry Mulligan, 1982 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	1984 95-100 Broadway, New York City gelatin silver print (2.8 Rolleiflex)
Jess Stacy, 1974 Warp Studios, 173 Christopher Street, New York City chromogenic print (2.8 Rolleiflex)	Liza Stark, 1977 Lake Hebron, Maine gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	John DeVries, 1970 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5" reducing back)	George James, 1980 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	Allen Ginsberg at the French Embassy with John Cage, Nam June Paik, and Merce Cunningham, celebrat- ion of the reopening of the school for non-dramatic dance, 1985 Downtown Sound, 173 Christopher Street, New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)	St. Mark's in-the-Bowery New York City gelatin silver print (35mm Nikon)

Doc Cheatham, 1986  
New York City  
gelatin silver  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with  
reducing back)

Cab Calloway, 1986  
White Plains, New York  
gelatin silver  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with  
reducing back)

Clayton Kopp, 1986  
Queens, New York  
gelatin silver  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

St. Alban's Church,  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

William F. Buckley Jr.,  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

Gloria Steinem, 1986  
Apartment, 1986  
East 12th Street, New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with  
reducing back)

Los Angeles  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Aboard S/S Norway, St. Regis Theater,  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

William F. Buckley Jr.,  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

Allen Ginsberg After the  
His Uncle, 1986  
East 12th Street, New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with  
reducing back)

Allen Ginsberg After the  
His Uncle, 1986  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(2.8 Rolleiflex)

Englewood, New York  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Allen Ginsberg At Home  
Manuscript, 1986  
East 12th Street, New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with  
reducing back)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Andy Kirk, 1986  
Harlem, New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Janet Jones, 1987  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Elie Wiesel At  
New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(2.8 Rolleiflex)

gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Raphael Soyer At His Studio, 1986  
West 74th Street, New York City  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

Van Nuys, California  
gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)

gelatin silver print  
(35mm Nikon)

gelatin silver print  
(5" x 7" Deardorff with a 4" x 5"  
reducing back)



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Funding for this exhibition and catalogue is provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through grants administered by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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