



ARTIST

Larry Fink

TITLE

Benefit Corcoran Museum, Washington, DC, February

DATE

1975

DIMENSIONS

7.25 in H x 7.25 in W

MEDIUM

Gelatin Silver Print

CATALOGUE NUMBER

1976.006

CURRENT LOCATION

1620-3B

LARRY FINK

BORN

1941

BIRTHPLACE

Brooklyn, NY

GENDER

Male

CITIZENSHIP

United States

CULTURAL HERITAGE

European-American

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Lecturer, 1976

Light Work Gallery, 1976

Workshop, 1976

Light Work Retrospective Exhibition, 1985

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

Contact Sheet 90

Exhibition Catalog: Light Work Retrospective

A Just Image: Selections from the Light Work Collection

BIOGRAPHY

Working as a professional photographer for over fifty-five years, Larry Fink has had one-man shows at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of Modern Art amongst others... Larry was the recipient of the Lucie Award for Documentary Photography in 2017, and in 2015, he received the International Center for Photography (ICP) Infinity Award for Lifetime Fine Art Photography. He has also been awarded two John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships and two National Endowment for the Arts, Individual Photography Fellowships. He has been teaching for over fifty-two years, with professorial positions held at Yale University, Cooper Union, and lastly at Bard College, where he is an honored professor emeritus. Larry's first monograph, the seminal *Social Graces* (Aperture, 1984) left a lasting impression in the photographic community. There have been twelve other monographs with the subject matter crossing the class barrier in unexpected ways.

(circa 2020)

ESSAYS

In 1970, Larry Fink began photographing what he called the 'privileged classes' of New York City. Often as a guest, sometimes as the official photographer, he documented the sophisticated party-goers at private gatherings, museum and gallery exhibition openings, and fashionable discotheques. Suspended in the light of the camera's flash, the people depicted in Fink's large, graphic photographs are socially interacting. A gesture, a smile, a surreptitious glance, even the sweat on an arm or a wrinkle of skin, give detailed evidence of the psychology of desire, sensuality, disappointment, or ennui. 'Larry Fink's work is, in a very real sense, autobiographical. It comes out of his own involvement with the situations and individuals he depicts, and I think his work shows a highly unusual commitment to photographing people. Above all, Fink is concerned with making photographs which record, as clearly as possible, the subtle unfolding of emotions which determines our identity,' notes Susan Kismaric, assistant curator of photography and director of the exhibition. Larry Fink was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1941. He attended Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and The New School for Social Research in New York City. In his teens he studied photography privately with Lisette Model and Alexey Brodovitch. A committed photography teacher for more than fifteen years, he has been a visiting professor at Yale University and the recipient of two Guggenheim fellowships in photography. 1979A Just Image As it plays out in the headlines, justice means equality, fairness, and the rule of law. Yet beyond the events broadcast on television and the news alerts flashed instantly to laptops and PDAs, there is a large realm of justice that eludes reporters. Throughout daily life - at home, in school, doing errands, tending children, making dinner, playing sports - perceptions of justice often float just below the radar. The Light Work Collection offered plentiful proof that photographers frequently make images of routine daily life and its relationship to a sense of justice. However, as members of the Fine Arts 395 "Art and Identity" class noticed, scholars seldom extend the concept of justice into aspects of living that are legal, but sometimes ethically questionable. Counselors, social workers, and therapists seem to take over where the justice system stops. Nevertheless, the line between the legal system's purview and personal life is not fixed. Class members were careful to insist that the law is often less subtle in its grasp of situations and unaware of complexities than are the images included in this show. Nowhere in the law is it written that by embracing a stereotype one can sometimes achieve influence skin to contesting the mold. Thoughts and feelings such as these coalesced as the subject of this exhibition. Work and family emerged as sites where what is fair is not always what is equal. , and what is equal is not always fair. However fair or unfair, the triumphs and annoyances one experiences at work mostly fall below the threshold of the law. It is conventional wisdom, not the IRS, which suggests that wealth carries no guarantee of happiness. Creating this nuanced exhibition about justice in everyday life led the class into hearty and un-nuanced discussions about the slights, snubs, and rebuffs of an ordinary day. The students chose the title *A Just Image* for this exhibition before they read about the expression in Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*. With the phrase, he and they recognize that art coaxes the world of appearances to create symbols signifying ideas for which there are no words. Just an image becomes *A Just Image*. Mary Warner Marien *A Just Image: Selections from the Light Work Collection* is the result of a collaborative effort by thirty-one Syracuse University students enrolled in Professor Mary Warner Marien's "Art and Identity" course. The exhibition examines the Fall 2007 Syracuse Symposium theme of justice. The students chose images from the Light Work Collection, considering the personal and societal meanings of justice. They have created an interactive exhibition, where, as the students write in the exhibition catalogue, "ironically... the viewer is still judging." *A Just Image* invites viewers to explore the photographs and rethink their definition of justice. As the students of the "Art and Identity" course discovered, though justice is a universal concept, it does not necessarily carry the same meaning for everyone. This can be seen in the different perceptions of stereotypes, families, occupations, and leisure activities, which are some of the topics examined by the class. According to the students, "The Pictures we have chosen require more than just superficial judgment; they require the viewer to acknowledge their own stereotyped projections." Roslyn Esperon