



ARTIST

Vincent Borrelli

TITLE

Restroom, The Texas Taco, Patterson, NY

DATE

1987

DIMENSIONS

15 in H x 19 in W

MEDIUM

Chromogenic Color Prints

CATALOGUE NUMBER

1988.002

CURRENT LOCATION

2024-3C

VINCENT BORRELLI

BORN

1960

BIRTHPLACE

Providence, RI

GENDER

Male

CITIZENSHIP

United States

CULTURAL HERITAGE

European-American

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Artist-in-Residence, 1987

Light Work Grant, 1990

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

Contact Sheet 59
Contact Sheet 68
Contact Sheet 89
Contact Sheet 97
A Just Image: Selections from the Light Work Collection

ESSAYS

As public property encourages the photographer's wandering eye to roam about freely, private property limits the roving eye, but offers a hidden collection of personal treasures. Behind many closed doors, behind a bar or shed, or on the fringes of someone's property lies a wealth of photogenic material. The security of a private living space or workshop reveals a varied and unique world seldom seen in the public sector. The decoration, collection, and design of personal spaces reflect individual beliefs, religion, and fears. While these essential elements of characterization are usually hidden from the public arena, they are the focus of Vin Borrelli's current project. In his month-long residency at Light Work in November 1987, Borrelli introduced a group of people in a photographic series that purposely excluded them by photographing just the environments in which people live and specifically leaving out the individuals themselves, Borrelli captures the essence of a unique personality in a clever guessing game. The viewer of Borrelli's work cannot help but wonder if the people are as interesting as their creative, illustrious clutter. Borrelli feels that his vibrant color images, 'celebrate the richness and diversity of human interests and expression in this country, and offer the viewer a rare glimpse into the private environments of extraordinary people.' Whether he's photographing someone's living room, bedroom, backyard, van, or a shed-decorated as a shrine, Borrelli records the varied interests and sometimes idiosyncratic qualities of people, who, when out of their element might seem quite ordinary. The frames of most of his photographs are filled so that every inch and corner echoes the person's colorful character. Occasionally the individuals get involved in Borrelli's work. Their mediation in the process can add a personal significance to the image and enhance the photographs' suggested meaning. In Big Top, Foxcroft, Maine, a closer inspection of the cluttered memorabilia reveals the artifacts are actively participating in the picture. Chattering teeth and streamers cut across the image disturbing its quiet 'still' life. This interaction of observer and observed heightens the ideals played out in this personal collection. For the last year and a half, Borrelli has been traveling in and around his native New England or taking sabbaticals from his regular job to travel the United States and document special interiors. Locating subjects and convincing them to let you move your tripod, 4 x 5 camera, and strobe inside their private residence isn't always easy. 'Identifying potentially interesting interiors by looking at exterior structures has been a very intuitive process, and one for which there is no formula.' Even without a formula, Borrelli intends to hone his intuition and continue documenting interior spaces in cultural environments other than the United States. He plans to travel overseas and investigate the lives and interior spaces of the people of Thailand. The resulting work is sure to be an enriching and entertaining look at a different culture and its hidden character. D. Rae Sutherland
A 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