Tina Barney

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The New York Times

Tina Barney: The Photographer's Origin Story

With a show at Kasmin and a new book of rediscovered photographs, both called "The Beginning," the ethnographer of the elite reflects on finding her voice.

HILARIE M. SHEETS
FEBRUARY 24, 2023

Tina Barney's self-portrait, 2023, in her Watch Hill, R.I. home, taken with her 8-by-10-inch view camera. She finds still-lifes at her home a relief; she doesn't have to chase people to get them to pose.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

Tina Barney was home alone in Watch Hill, R.I., during 2020 and needed a Covid quarantine project. While many were cleaning their closets, the acclaimed photographer exhumed about 1,000 35-millimeter negatives shot in the late 1970s and early ’80s, when she was learning the basics of her craft at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Idaho and turning a lens to rituals and relationships among her affluent circle of friends and family.

Without a proper light table, she spent months editing images shot largely during summers in Rhode Island and New York — many recognized only now as interesting by her mature eye. More than 50 early photos, most never before shown, will be included in a show at Kasmin Gallery in Chelsea, opening March 2, and in a forthcoming book from Radius. Both are titled “The Beginning” and together they capture an artist in the act of finding her voice.

Barney recently welcomed a reporter to the Gramercy Park apartment she’s had since 1983. That was the year she got divorced, returned to her native Manhattan with her two teenage sons after a decade in Idaho, and debuted a 4-by-5-foot color print in the exhibition “Big Pictures by Contemporary Photographers” at the Museum of Modern Art, whose institutional support she called “life-changing.” In the 40 years since, she has become internationally renowned for vivid portraits of her intimates — as well as European aristocrats and celebrities — all framed within their own rarefied milieus. These theatrical tableaus crackle with telling gestures, microexpressions and visual tensions both humorous and psychological.

Tina Barney, “Amy, Phil and Brian,” 1980.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

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Tina at the opening of her first show at The Potatoe Gallery in May 1977.Credit...Mary Rolland.

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“I was very timid and I think humble because I knew I didn’t know anything,” she said, assessing her development, at once intense, matter-of-fact and modest. Peter de Lory showed her how to print black and white and at a larger scale than the standard darkroom trays would allow by using garbage bags to immerse 20-by-24-inch sheets in liquid chemicals. Mark Klett taught Barney his perfectionist approach to color printing. Duane Michals and Nathan Lyons dropped in to lead workshops.

“I did everything very seriously,” Barney said, describing a “double life” balancing child care with the arts center (now called the Sun Valley Museum of Art). “It was almost like working on adrenaline. I couldn’t believe how much I wanted to learn.”

In an era when street photography by Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander ruled, Barney roamed the insular world of old money she knew best. Her photos in “The Beginning” offer candid, off-kilter views of leisure time at the pool, golf course, water park, art gallery. She cropped the heads off three preppy men at a wedding, zeroing in on their similar dress and hand gestures in a 1977 black-and-white image, “The Suits.”

Tina Barney, “The Suits,” 1977.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

“I wanted to focus on the way the East Coast people held themselves,” she said. These extemporaneous images give a tantalizing glimpse of what’s to come in her more formally composed portraits, from 1982 onward, when she began directing her subjects where to stand or where to look, to emphasize the stories she had in her head, but also waited for something natural or unexpected to happen. (Directing, a word she uses, is distinct from the elaborately-staged tableaus of photographers like Gregory Crewdson or Stan Douglas.)

Sarah Meister, executive director of the Aperture Foundation, was fascinated by the fluidity Barney preserved from this era as she moved on to a cumbersome, large-format camera, which can take an hour to set up.

“The scale and ambition at which she was making pictures in 1982 was absolutely in the vanguard,” Meister said of Barney’s celebrated breakthrough work. “Her capacity to marry that scale with the spontaneity of a snapshot aesthetic gave it such a unique place in the field.”

Barney arrived in Sun Valley in 1973 not knowing a soul. Born Tina Isles, she grew up on Manhattan’s Upper East Side with paintings by Renoir and Degas in her family’s formally decorated apartment — her father was a descendant of art collectors and the founders of Lehman Brothers; her mother was a fashion model turned interior designer.

Tina Barney, “Hot Tub in Snow,” 1979.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

Describing herself as a terrible student at the all-girls Spence School, she was turned on to art history by her teacher, Margaret Scolari Barr, the wife of MoMA's founding director, Alfred Barr. She dropped out of college after three months and at 20 married John Barney. They quickly had two children; it was his idea to raise them out West. "I didn't want to go," she said, "but in those days you did what your husband told you to do."

Discovering the arts center in Sun Valley felt like finding "civilization," she said. What started as a hobby became an obsession.
In workshop critiques, she felt defensive when people commented that the world in her pictures was one they had never seen. Barney was still figuring out her theme but didn't want it to be about "a richie-rich life," she said. "It had to do with human connection. I thought people didn't show enough affection."

In "Hot Tub" (1979), the face of a woman, topless in the water, is blocked by a wooden handrail jutting across the foreground, severing her from two background figures. In "The Art Gallery" (1980), a flower arrangement on a coffee table obscures a woman sitting on a sofa, while a man turns away and looks toward a painting. What could be viewed as compositional mistakes are the drama of these pictures — an off-balance quality that becomes a hallmark of later photos.

Tina Barney, "Waterslide in Fog," 1979.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

Everybody was talking about feminism in the ’70s, Barney said, but “I just couldn’t buy it.” Yet she shot a mother fully dressed, sitting uncomfortably on the ground poolside with a baby strapped to her back, flanked by two little girls heading blithely out of each side of the frame. “I must have started thinking about things like that because I wouldn’t have made this picture otherwise,” she mused.

A favorite of Barney’s is “Waterslide in Fog” (1979), where adolescents stream toward the camera on a dreary day, for their turn down the serpentine ride. They might just as well be queuing for the apocalypse. “There’s something very tragic about these people going in the line,” she said. But she kept such thoughts to herself at the time.

For the last image of the book, from 1980, she finally found the courage to direct a narrative playing out in her head. A classic Barney image, it shows a pool in Bel Air, Calif. She posed her son Phil on the diving board, arranging his friend Amy on one side of the receding turquoise rectangle and Amy’s father on the other. Barney judged the result “stiff,” but it set her on a trajectory that would result in “Sunday New York Times” in 1982, one of her most famous images.

Tina Barney, “Sunday New York Times,” 1982, one of her most famous images.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

In it, a large intergenerational family gathers informally around a morning table strewn with the newspaper. Reading, talking, daydreaming, they seem oblivious to Barney — in a corner with her new view camera under a black cloth, shouting instructions. “People are moving and things are loose,” she said.

“We’re from very different backgrounds with regard to race and class, and yet there is an overlap in our approach to the domestic space,” Lawson wrote by email. “I sense Tina and I both have an affinity for decoration/decorum, or lack thereof, and how it can become its own subliminal subject playing on our psyche — whether it’s the wallpaper, patterned carpets, the romantic paisley curtains that often surround the figure.”
If Barney’s pictures of cloistered privilege in a largely white world seem out of step with the current social-political tenor of the art world, they continue to fascinate, rather like watching “The Crown” or “Succession.”

Nick Olney, director of Kasmin, said he sees currency in Barney’s work “because it is showing some of the trappings and customs of these worlds of privilege and also its limits, this isolation that exists.”

An early Barney photo, “Jill and Polly in the Bathroom,” 1987. She set up her view camera in the bathtub to take this shot of her sister and niece. Only an intimate would have had access to this private space.Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

In recent years Barney has created series on athletic rituals and New England landscapes with their inhabitants. Lately, she's begun to work on what she is calling "still life" — details of her home in Rhode Island, taken with her larger 8-by-10-inch view camera; she finds it a relief not to have to chase people to get them to pose.

She flipped through several early results. Some show her pink chintz wallpaper and upholstery, familiar from early pictures. Others are tightly cropped slices of things hanging on her walls, creating strange optical illusions.

"I just like the abstracting; it's very experimental," she said. "The process is exciting and I can feel my brain working really hard. I think that's what everybody's looking for."

"Siblings," 2015, from a project Barney began that year titled "Youth." She followed most of the kids each summer until last year to "see the changes in them."Credit...Tina Barney; via Kasmin.

US edition
The Guardian

Tina Barney's best photograph: Picasso at my sister's wedding party

Interview by Dale Berning Sawa

June 28, 2018

The Reception by Tina Barney. Photograph: © Tina Barney. Image Courtesy of Paul Kasmin Gallery

My sister Jill has been in many of my photographs, but this is the one-in-a-million shot. I took it on her wedding day in 1985. After the ceremony, which was held in a church in Manhattan, we went back to our aunt's apartment on Park Avenue. When I was a child, my aunt would have us all over for Christmas dinner, so her home was very much a part of our family, although I hadn't been there for a long time.

The reception was an intimate affair, maybe 50 people, mostly family. It wasn't loud. There was no music. My aunt was older. It was fairly staid, formal even, although Jill might remember things differently. My most salient memory of that day was that she married the most perfect person you could ever find. We were all very happy.

This was a candid shot. There was no time to think about anything, barely time to focus. I don't even remember if I asked Jill, who is wearing the gold dress, to stand up. And while that is an important Picasso on the wall — Angel Fernandez de Soto, from 1903 — I hadn't intended to shoot it. Jill just happened to be sitting in front of it.

I wasn't really intending anything much. First of all, this was a party and I was a guest. And I didn't have assistants. I was just walking around with my camera on a tripod, the flash on top, carrying some film holders between my legs or something. I do remember asking Andrea, the woman with the red hair, to turn. And I probably told my half-brother Paul: "Look at Jill." But it all happened in seconds. The flash froze that stare on Jill's face just as she got up.

Look closely and you'll see the similarities between her and the angel in the lamp directly behind her: the clasped hands; the legs rendered visible by the flash; the dress itself, a golden lamé masterpiece by Arnold Scaasi; and the way Jill's headdress melds with the floral arrangements behind to mimic the angel's halo.

There were further coincidences: the three apples in the painting on the right, echoing the three figures; and that fortuitous slit going up the back of Andrea's dress, breaking what would have otherwise been a very solid rectangle of white in the foreground. The whole palette! I mean, how about finding a redhead whose hair matches the walls?

I know Jill's face well, having photographed her so often. We are only 13 months apart, almost like twins, except that we're so different. She is as uninhibited as I am controlled, and she has always had great style. I can't remember if I showed her the pictures after her wedding. My family weren't all that interested in my photography. I think they just thought: "Oh, here comes Tina again with her camera." They were happy I was doing something, but I could have been a lawyer or a doctor or something. They certainly weren't sitting there anxiously waiting to see the results. Actually, I don't think I've ever had anybody anxious to see my pictures, probably because I rarely shoot anyone obviously self-conscious or vain.

Which is not to say that shooting the wedding wasn't scary. It was very scary — because I had such high expectations. I still do. Just recently, I photographed a woman who had appeared in several of my works from long ago. I hadn't seen her in 30 years. The dreams and hopes I had for that image! You just never know if those dreams are going to come true.

ARTFORUM

Tina Barney

Kat Herriman

February 16, 2018

Tina Barney, *4th of July on Beach*, 1989, chromogenic color print, 30 x 40".

I found myself in the shoes of a voyeur, visiting Tina Barney's landscapes here at night. Through the evening-lit gallery glass, the photographer's frozen frames of summer looked more sinister than they had during a daytime trip. Her seemingly clichéd pictures of the seasons — as we see in works such as *Drive-In* 2017, *Tennis Court*, 1988, and *4th of July on Beach*, 1989 — are so obsessively formal that they bring out the shiver beneath nostalgia's blush. Barney serves up an ice-cream headache — a sweet, saturated world in which one is constantly seduced by sumptuous details yet held at a chilly distance. But this only exacerbates the desire to enter the glistening reality of her prints. While the earliest work in the exhibition is from 1988, one would be hard-pressed to figure out the exact years all of her images were taken. Barney's photos feel impossibly consistent. It's as if linear time had collapsed into the blur of New England's collective memory, a kind of whitewashed forever. A departure from Barney's usual portraiture, the exhibition reveals a different aspect of the artist's practice — one that's focused on outdoor space and the way its beauty reflects our values. Of course, like all pretty things, nothing is as harmless or as luxurious as it seems, and in the artist's landscapes one sees the way expectation laps away at the myth of the quaint Yankee beach town.

ELEPHANT

Tina Barney's Timeless Photographs of America

"I've always maintained that not much has changed in all the years that I've been photographing, and this is really living proof." Tina Barney brings together images spanning three decades in a new series, exploring the nostalgic pull of a familiar place. Words by Louise Benson

February 12, 2018

Bay Street, 1989 © Tina Barney. Courtesy Paul Kasmin Gallery

Time stands still in the photographs of Tina Barney. She has made a name for herself photographing the wealthy elites of America's East Coast, notably her own family and friends, since 1976. Taking us into their homes and intimate surroundings, she reveals her eye for the fashion and interiors that shape them. Heavy fabrics and deeply coloured walls frame her subjects as they stand for the picture, casual in their familiar environment but posed for the click of the camera. Barney upholds a long history of portraiture, from Titian to Rembrandt, frequently choreographing the resplendent scenes that she captures selecting what to include and what to leave out. The resulting images are infused with a powerful sense of nostalgia, and it can be difficult to put a timestamp on them. Elegantly dressed women and handsome men move amidst large and beautifully decorated houses, expressive and poised. They are suggestive of the stories that animate our lives, domestic dramas hidden behind closed doors, as idiosyncratic and restless as they have always been.

A comprehensive monograph, Tina Barney, was recently published by Rizzoli USA, spanning her four-decade international career. While going through her archives last year for the book, she came across a series of 8×10 landscapes, snapped in the summers of 1988 and 1989 and then forgotten. "When I wasn't photographing people I wanted to keep working, and it's always hard to find people to photograph, so I decided to try some landscapes," she recalls over the phone on a cold January afternoon. The images take a wider view of the Rhode Island life that she knows so well, moving beyond the interior space of the home. Suburban roads, detached houses and rocky beaches are rendered in a bare palette of pale greys and blues, interspersed with bursts of bright colour. The rediscovery of these photographs prompted Barney to embark on a new series of landscapes — the first time in over thirty years that she has departed from portraiture.

Her new photographs of Rhode Island reveal that remarkably little has changed in the area, or at least that Barney has a knack for uncovering the timeless details of a place. She has chosen to pair together the two landscape series for an exhibition at Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York, blurring the old and the new into one. "Many people couldn't figure out which images were taken when," she confirms, echoing the nostalgia that runs through her portraits. "I don't think a lot of people realize that in some of the pictures I'm standing almost in the same place thirty years later. I've always maintained that not much has changed in all the years that I've been photographing, and this is really living proof."

What is it that she looks for when composing her photographs? Her eye for colour and lines is distinctive, and I am curious about how this translated from portraits to landscapes. She considers my question quietly for a moment; Barney is consistently precise in her responses, quietly at ease when taking the time to articulate herself. "In my interiors, you can use the furniture to make an interesting structure — or you can use the people themselves. Out there in the world, I am not using lights and have no control over the situation. I can't move it or change it, I can just move myself. So it's really structural reasons that I might choose something over another, and the light and the weather."

An American flag unfurls prominently in one photograph, while in another it can be spotted flying above a white flat-roofed house. Barney's images are inextricably American, and I enquire about her relationship to the country today. Has it changed since she first began her photography career? "I can't really make any comment on the rest of the United States because I just don't know it well enough. I just can say that I feel as if I know this place that I've lived in and photographed in, Rhode Island and also border state Connecticut, pretty darn well. I have a deep-seated feeling about the place and care about it, and that's what's important," she says. "When I first began photographing at the age of twenty-eight, I did that because I felt that whatever was around me was going to disappear, and what's comforting is that it really hasn't."

"I have a deep-seated feeling about the place and care about it, and that's what's important." She continues: "What these pictures from 2017 are saying is that, really, nothing has changed. Maybe there are no telephone booths on the street anymore, or maybe the telephone wires and poles have been taken down for aesthetic reasons. Of course styles change, but because there are really no specific people you don't see the ageing of people. I know that some of the people who were in those pictures from the eighties are gone, but that's not the focal point. So let me just say that I feel the

same, but because of so much time passing I have an even stronger feeling of nostalgia, or caring about the place, that I want to protect it and save it and keep it."

We focus now on this pervasive sense of nostalgia, so strongly upheld in Barney's landscapes from the 1980s to today. I ask, is this something that is very important to your work? "Very," Barney responds firmly. "If you look up the definition of nostalgia, I think it says 'a longing to go back to a past time.'" She pauses, and then: "Can you look it up while we're talking? That'd be fun to see." I search for it online as she continues to speak: "I think that most people would agree that nostalgia is a sad feeling. It's not a happy, joyful feeling. It's a feeling of longing, yearning to go back to the past." I cut in to read out that it is apparently derived from a Greek compound that originally meant pain or ache. "Oh, I love it!" she exclaims. I find a definition for nostalgia that explains it as a sentimentality for the past, particularly for a period or place with happy personal associations. "Oh, that's really interesting," she says. I suppose that longing, while it might be for happy times, is not a happy experience in itself.

"I think that most people would agree that nostalgia is a sad feeling. It's not a happy, joyful feeling. It's a feeling of longing, yearning to go back to the past."

"I agree with all of the above, and that's exactly what it is," Barney says, emphatically. "But along with that, because you want to go back to a happier time, you want to keep it that way, the same way that it was in the past. You know, those feelings I had when I was twenty-eight, that's pretty young. So it's not because I'm older now, back then I thought the same things I do now. That feeling that you're going to lose something, something so good, and then you're not going to have it anymore. And then, that draws into politics, finance and all kinds of things." We reflect on specific images in Barney's Landscapes series, each of which tells its own story of the comings-and-goings of Rhode Island communities. Individuals fade into a bigger picture of an all-American town in Parade (2017), while The Tennis Court (1988) has a voyeuristic edge to it.

Barney has always observed her subjects with a certain intimacy; she maintains a fly on the wall proximity while remaining hidden just out of sight. Her photographs have a painterly quality; they are rich compositions which observe structural patterns and colour. She has a roaming, curious and precise eye, much like her conversational style. The Landscapes hold onto this elusive quality, pausing a moment in time that would otherwise slip away. They prompt us to remember and to imagine, to revisit and to look again.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

Tina Barney with Phong Bui

Phong Bui

February 7, 2018

Tina Barney, *Amy, Phil, and Brian*, 1980. Chromogenic color print. © Tina Barney. Courtesy Paul Kasmin Gallery.

Although I've followed Tina Barney ever since I first saw an exhibition of her work in New York in 1990, and having met in passing at several social gatherings in Chelsea and elsewhere, it wasn't until recently Tina paid a visit to the *Rail* HQ for lunch and to meet our staff that our acquaintances turned the page. Due to the recent, handsome and comprehensive monograph *Tina Barney* (Rizzoli, 2017), with an introduction by the artist herself and an afterword by Peter Galassi, along with Tina's current exhibit *Landscapes*, which includes a group of new and never-before-seen works at Paul Kasmin Gallery (Jan. 17-March 3, 2018), and a small volume of her works on paper (self-published, 2016) I had not been aware of her practice of making drawings and watercolor paintings related to her photography, which she has been doing since the early 1990s I visited Tina's apartment in Gramercy Park for a lengthy conversation about life and work, and everything in between.

Phong Bui (**Rail**)**:** You were exposed to contemporary photography in your early 20s as a volunteer on the Junior Council at the MoMA…

Barney: Which is now called Junior Associates. I knew nothing about photography whatsoever. I had never heard of Ansel Adams, Walker Evans, Irving Penn, Diane Arbus, among others, but that was where and how I became interested in learning about photography. Then by the early '70s, I went regularly to the three existing photography galleries at the time, Light Gallery, Witkin Gallery, and Robert Freidus Gallery. Charles Traub, Victor Schrager, Marvin Heiferman, Janet Borden were all working in those galleries.

Rail: That was how you first met Janet! [Barney's gallerist from 1983 – 2014]

Barney: Yes, while she was working for Robert Freidus.

Rail: And you began collecting photographs on a very small scale.

Barney: Yes, I bought, for example, Imogen Cunningham's *Triangles* (1928), Edward Weston's *Cabbage Leaf* (1931), Robert Frank's *Butte, Montana* (1955), also works by other greats like Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Walker Evans, etc. This was all when photographs cost $200.

Rail: That was roughly around 1971, '72.

Barney: Right, because I got married and moved with our two young sons, Tim and Phil, to Sun Valley in 1973, and I never thought of myself as a photographer – except for having taken family snapshots on occasions and putting them in albums. That was the extent of it.

Rail: Was there any other formal education leading to your discovery of photography, I mean before taking workshops with Frederick Sommer, Duane Michals, Nathan Lyons, among others at Sun Valley Center for the Arts from 1976 to '83?

Barney: I went to Briarcliff Junior College for three months but then dropped out. At 19 I lived in Florence, Italy, to study the Italian Renaissance. Next I audited art history classes with Meyer Schapiro at Columbia University, Barbara Rose at the New School of Social Research, which were all interesting and useful. My brother Philip, who began to collect in his early twenties, was instrumental in suggesting shows at galleries like Sidney Janis and André Emmerich, for example. My first photography teacher in Sun Valley was Peter de Lory. I started learning how to print in black and white, and began to take pictures of my family and friends, especially during the summers in Rhode Island, with a Pentax, which is more or less the same subject matter that I'm still interested in today: family tradition, ritual – not so much portraiture – because I wanted the pictures to be about affectionate gestures of the human body, what people wore, how they interact with each other in their domestic surroundings, and so on. Mark Klett became the head of the photo department at the Sun Valley Center for Arts and Humanities. He taught me how to print in color. And he also used a 4×5, so I learned about the importance of using a view camera in the early '80s.

Rail: Such pictures, including *Sunday New York Times* (1982), and *Beverly, Jill, and Polly* (1982) are good examples of what you were trying to attain at the time.

Barney: Exactly. Also, a friend encouraged me to enter a juried exhibition at the Boise Art Museum (1982), and Patterson Sims was the judge. He gave me an award for *Sunday New York Times* and *Beverly, Jill and Polly*, which was a real encouragement.

Rail: Were you aware of the landmark show *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960*, curated by John Szarkowski in 1978?

Barney: Yes, it was an important show even though my family and I were in Sun Valley. I remember all the photographer friends I knew still talking about the show, even years later. I still have the catalogue.

Rail: It was a survey of recent photography, at least to that point in time of 17 years, for which Szarkowski argued the medium no longer had the need to thrive on the old friction between "straight" or direct photography and "synthetic" or manipulated photography. Instead, he proposed two new formal ploys: one is the "mirror" being a romantic expression of the photographer's sensibility as it is free to project itself onto the objects and sights of the world; the other is the "window" as a framing device through which the exterior world is explored in its full magnitude. To demonstrate these differences, he painted various shades of grey walls for the works that refer to the subjective idea of the "mirror," which includes Bruce Davidson, Danny Lyons, Ernst Hass for example; and the equivalent variant of white walls for the objective "window" that features works by Diane Arbus, Gary Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, William Eggleston, Ed Ruscha, just to name a few.
Barney: What's interesting about what happened in the '70s is so pivotal, so monumental, and you have to go back and wonder, why did this all happen? Some people thought that it had to do with all of a sudden showing work in galleries and that that changed the way people looked at photographs, as opposed to looking at them in a book. Others felt the '70s was a period of freedom and thinking a great deal about your own narrative, the notion of, why did Larry Sultan, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Sally Mann, myself, and others start photographing our families? And you just don't really know because there's so many different facts that come into why a movement happens. And you as a student, of course, start following your idols. Which I don't think I really did. I somehow was on my own. I got through the clichés pretty quickly, partly because as soon as I moved out west I realized that my life was very different.

Rail: It's interesting how the theme of nature or landscape has been depicted or represented, first as frescoes on the walls of the cramped, small Roman apartments as early as the first century B.C. to provide a sense of release from the stress of daily life's annoyance. The same can be said of the impressionists who went to the countryside to make landscape paintings. The point is nature has always been depicted by those from the cities, almost rarely by those who are in the countryside. Perhaps it's the opposite in your case: it took you being from home, when you were in Sun Valley, to long for the warmth of people and the social scenes of your East Coast life.

Barney: I never thought of it in that perspective. I was homesick for sure.

Rail: Well the word "homesick" was initially a Swiss dialect, which expressed the deep longing for the mountains.

Barney: I certainly know if I hadn't left home, I would have never understood it in the way that I did. Even though I remained in my own country, home still seemed so far away to me; I might as well have been in another country.

Rail: Was there one first picture that revealed such sentiment?

Barney: There's one picture in the book called *The Flag* (1977), in which three children are pulling down the American flag, and they're dressed in these very East Coast clothes that are very telling of their preppy background. I thought it was a strange ritual of pulling down the flag every evening. That's when I was beginning to feel as if I was on to something, and it was only because I brought those pictures back to Sun Valley, and people that did the workshops thought these were different than everything I did up until then. I was very insecure that people were interested in the fact that they were about the upper class and always was very protective of that environment because they were much more than that to me. They were much more about tradition and ritual, and because of the specific place that I live in, the ability to be able to keep the house so that you could see the history of an entire family existence. That history was precious to my sense of belonging.

Rail: So much was written about your upper class, Anglo-American life, for example, A.M. Homes referred to you as an anthropologist of photography of this specific milieu.

Barney: That's a compliment to me. I love watching Margaret Mead films, reading Claude Lévi Strauss the idea of following a group of people for thirty, forty years fascinates me.

Rail: Like Michael Apted's *Up* series!

Barney: Yes, an absolutely wonderful series.

Rail: One of my favorite quotes by Joseph Butler the 18th century British theologian/philosopher who hated John Locke's theory of personal identity is, "Everything is what it is and not another thing." The world will collapse if one feels of where he or she belongs to, be it a nation, a race, a class, or even a cult. It's something we can't easily get away from.

Barney: That's one of the reasons why I've always been grouped together with Nan Goldin, Philip-Lorca diCorcia and Larry Sultan. Curators have put us in shows together for all these years, and I don't know what they've taken from it except that we stayed at home, we arranged imagery, some of us used lighting, we're all American, the prints were big, and most of them color. So there were all those things in common. But I think whoever wrote about all those shows, whoever curated all those shows could have done more. I think *Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort*, curated by Peter Galassi at the Museum of Modern Art, is one of the most interesting examples, and that's because of his intelligence and understanding.

Rail: That was in 1991. An amazing show and an amazing text, and catalogue. The title says it all about suburban life.

Barney: It sure was how photography has changed so much now, but the subject remains the same, except for new interpretations.

Rail: In your case, as Peter wrote in his afterword, you contributed to important collective trends that shifted the commitment to make larger prints with larger cameras. For the longest time, a handheld camera was the preferred tool because of its maximum ability and speed, also adding color to the prints, and of course the emphasis on personal milieu and domestic life as a subject matter.

Barney: Well, the fact that we used a view camera to be able to see all the details, is what was such a shock. That was revolutionary. I also think that when you look at any art movements throughout the history of different cultures in any kind of medium, people were always doing similar things at the same time.

Rail: True, like Nan Goldin is working on one thing; Cindy Sherman is working on another thing, yet, they share the similar "pleasures" and "terrors" of domestic comfort. I like what you had said of Cindy being a great actress.

Barney: She is. Few have given her the credit.

Rail: Though whereas in Cindy's pictures, the reference to film noir of the '50s and '60s was pretty evident, not to mention the dramatic play of light and shadow that amplified the sense of suspense and mystery, your work seems to explore the history of painting, as you've frequently talked about, especially with 16th and 17th century Italian and Dutch painting.

Barney: First of all, my family is full of art collectors. I was surrounded by art my whole life. My mother was a model, then became an interior decorator, which added the elements of fashion and design to my sensibility. I should mention my maternal grandfather was an amateur photographer who took pictures of our family at all family related events: birthdays, holidays, weekend visits, etc. He also did all the printing in his own dark room.

Rail: Perhaps your attraction to a similar subject matter may have been initiated on some subconscious level from your grandfather?

Barney: I'm sure. I also think having lived in Florence, Italy (it was very typical, in the '60s, for American girls to go and live with an Italian family to study), was exposed to the wealth of the Renaissance and Italian painting at the Uffizi, and other museums like Palazzo Pitti, and churches, including Santa Maria Novella, San Marco, etc. in Florence. The experience of seeing those great works of art becomes an integral part of your visual memory. Anyone who has seen me work knows that I work very fast, and I never know when an image from my memory is going to reappear and influence the results. As I'm taking a picture, I don't say, "Oh, gee, that looks like a Paolo Uccello."

Rail: Like how you once spoke of Uccello's second panel of the famous diptych *The Battle of San Romano* (1432), how the broken lances on the ground along with the crossbows were carefully constructed to lead the viewer's eyes to the background. Did you use a similar function for the ropes on the boats to the dock in the picture *Boating Nantucket* (1979)?

Barney: Yes, it only occurred to me afterward that I found these parallels or similarities. It's just all there, as if you're speaking a language that you know intimately. That's what I compare it to just like you're speaking you're not aware of everything you say. Then, when I get the contacts back, that's when I make these discoveries. Well that's having it work as far as the composition. There's that, but then you have to deal with the technical concerns. Is the lighting right? The last icing on the cake is, what is happening to the people?

Rail: The narrative itself.

Barney: The narrative, the communication. What are my prerequisites? What do I really want? How can I get all these elements in one picture, which can take years. Nine sheets of film every two years.

Rail: How many photographs would you normally take per summer, which is the time you prefer to take your pictures?

Barney: I tried since the early '80s to take 300 photographs a summer, which is hard to do. I used the 4×5 with a flash, as if it were a handheld 35mm camera. I started using eleven bags of lighting equipment by the early '90s. And the change was huge I could get much better resolution. I could get into the back of the rooms better, but in other ways, it slowed me down. It takes an hour to set up, so then I had to really work at getting those candid moments right. It was much more difficult, so there were pluses and minuses.

Rail: How do you go about directing people?

Barney: It depends on the people, and on the situation. I used to just let things happen, asking people to hold still because I didn't have lights. For example, in *Sunday New York Times* (1982), I'd yell out, "One-one-thousand, two-one-thousand," etc. And so the father at the head of the table looks a bit stiff, but then those who didn't listen to me yelling out some were out of focus they went on with their business as usual. So that's luck. And that's also because there's so many people in that picture that you sometimes get some impromptu things happening. As I started being interested in using fewer people in the picture, because I knew that I had done the choreographed tableau to death, I began eliminating people in the late '90s, as you can see in the book. It became more like portraiture, and however difficult and challenging, it still keeps me interested today one person confronting the camera and what to do with him or her. You asked me about directing. It's such a fine line that most of the time it has to do with the structure of the picture. I can't possibly say I want you to feel this way, I want you to feel that way. So while you're saying, "please move over there," or "hold this or that pose," you then might get something that could be revealing, and that's just chance. I don't direct like a movie director, saying, "I want you to think about when your mother died so you can look sad." It doesn't happen like that.

Rail: I know that you're very resistant in revealing why you do what you do, choosing a certain subject matter rather than another. You wanted to protect a sense of mystery, and the autonomy of the action.

Barney: That's the part that's interesting it's the phenomenon. Some have asked, "How did you know I was having this fight with my husband?" Well, I didn't. [Laughs.] Sometimes that's the viewers providing their own interpretation. But then you get glances or expressions that transcend everything that is universal. This is when it becomes an interesting portrait, which is a give and take between both the photographer and the subject.

Rail: What about titles, which in some cases, they were simply entitled after the protagonist's real names like *Mark, Amy, and Tara* (1983), *Beverly, Jill, and Polly*(1982), or *Marina and Peter* (1997), for example, whereas in others they were titled after either the objects or the ambience of the space like *The Orchids* (2003), *The Orange Room* (1996), *The Hands* (2002)? How do you mediate between the two tendencies to give titles to different pictures?

Barney: I hate giving titles to each photograph, so I've never really thought about it too hard. I always want it to be something very general, so that I don't narrow the interpretation. And it usually happens after the picture is made. I think this happens to most other artists as well. First of all, to get from the point of taking the pictures to choosing the one I'm going to make five feet, is a very long amount of time. So the last thing I do is choose the title, because it doesn't interest me. But then, through time, they have a certain style to them. I use titles, for example, like *The Young Lady* and *The Little Sister*, because they seemed more appropriate for these formal pictures. But yes, in other cases where the ambience of the space is the focal point, for example, a young man standing in front of a yellow wall with an empty frame behind him, *The Yellow Wall* becomes the title.

Rail: That makes sense. Who among the photographers, when you began showing your work in the mid '80s, whose works you share some pictorial affinities or you simply admire?

Barney: William Eggleston. Of course, Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander were really important to me, because what they each did was so new and different: the inclusion of everything in the frame; the looseness. Lee Friedlander, like Stephen Shore, is someone I will never completely understand, and I don't really want to. There's a complexity there that is so interesting and magical. They have an understanding of the way the camera sees that I don't think 99% of the people who look at them do. It's very sophisticated, in the way that minimalism is to me, that I have no words to even explain, it's so complex. And let's say Lee, for instance, is dealing with shapes and forms, which become so much more interesting than the actual subject matter. The fact that they're black and white allows you to focus on the graphics, rather than being distracted by the subject matter. I always tell students to turn the photograph upside down, so you get away from the subject matter and really see the forms. Those are the parts I might learn from looking at any minimalistic work.

Rail: What about artists who have emerged in the last one or two decades?

Barney: Neo Rausch interests me because of his imagination and how he composes his images to create such specific and strange narrative in each painting. And the colors are just as unique and

spectacular. I also like Luc Tuymans for the total opposite reason: minimal use of image, and a simple, tonal yet equally strange palette. As for photographers, Thomas Ruff and Thomas Struth were very important to me. Ruff's large faces were a huge influence. What he's done as time's gone by, what his fascination with the camera can do, and the different sort of photographic games he plays. Struth too, because of the family portraits he did at the beginning, but also the museum photographs.

Rail: Do you crop your images?

Barney: I don't crop at all. Why would you drag around this huge 8×10 camera and then crop part of the image? The idea of cropping to me is sacrilegious. But now with digital photographs being a new language, in which all sorts of manipulations are welcomed and embraced, it's all about, in the end, getting what you want that counts. For me, it has to do with time, how in that split second, I get the pleasure of intense focus on things that happen at the edge of the frame. In other words, up to this point I haven't paid much attention to digital technologies, but seeing the Stephen Shore show at MoMA changed my mind. Those digital prints look so fantastic.

Rail: I noticed that in your current exhibition, *Landscapes*, at Paul Kasmin Gallery, there's one new size, relatively small, 20×24 inches, compared to your two classics, 48×60 inches and 30×40 inches.

Barney: Exactly, and that's a big change for me, because for many years I only did 48×60 inches and 30×40. I feel like we've seen the big color pictures long enough. I always wanted to make a smaller photograph, but I just didn't know how to go about doing it. I've often walked into a group show and gravitated toward the smaller works of art, and I never really could understand why. I mean it has to be a strong work if it holds up in a big room. So this time I decided to make these 20×24 inch pictures, and I'm really glad I did. I think it makes you look at the larger ones differently, and then the smaller ones become almost like objects. So I really enjoyed having made and included them in the show.

Rail: Like *Drive-In* (2017), *Bay Street* (1988), and *Tennis Court* (1988)!

Barney: Exactly.

Rail: How do you mediate with scale, Tina?

Barney: Well, I wanted big pictures because I wanted the viewer to be able to see all these little objects, the beauty of the fabric, the texture of someone's skin, the clothes they wore, etc., and of course the specific environment they inhabit. It's like a writer who describes every inch of a room. I wanted to invite the viewer to come in. What I've experienced in photographing these landscapes was the sense of looking at this huge expanse in the distance, for the first time. It was a wonderful feeling in some sense, but in another sense I had no control of what was out there, which is new for me, but also what to do with it all. Where to stand, where to begin, of not having kind of structural devices to help me, no ceiling, no walls, no furniture, and that was just a very difficult and interesting sort of puzzle.

Rail: How to frame it . . .

Barney: How to frame it, what to do with the sky, how much space for the sky, or the ground, and then the color, so much grass, so many green trees all of that drove me crazy. With these new landscape images, I learned that you have less control over what happens in the narrative. It is more about overall composition, which is an interesting shift.

Rail: They're not your typical Tina Barney pictures for sure. Were they taken in different times?

Barney: Some were taken in the '80s, for example, *4th of July on Beach* (1989), and some are from last summer, like *Bike Parade* (2017), which looks like a train set because it was taken from high above.

Rail: Next question is: how do you respond or react to the space between people when they pose for your pictures?

Barney: *Amy, Phil, & Brian* (1980) is a good example because it was the first time I directed someone in a picture. I used a Pentax 35mm, handheld camera. I wanted to show the space between the people and how I thought the family was too far apart, both emotionally and physically. The family didn't show enough physical affection towards each other. So I had my son, Phil, stand on the diving board in the middle, with Amy on the left and Brian on the right. It's like a triangle that ties the three of them together. Similar visual devices are used throughout my work. I made good use of the hammock netting through the children's faces as another way to bring them together in *Ada's Hammock* (1982). The formation of the girl's legs in *Diane, Mark, and Tim* (1982) appear distorted but they lure you into the picture very effectively. I took this picture with a flash on the top of my 4×5, which was a huge deal. The composition of *Graham Cracker Box* (1983), on the other hand, was a nice accident. My friend had just gotten back from playing tennis, the kids were there, all the dishes were on the table. All I did was move the Graham Cracker box to the edge of the table because I wanted this feeling beware, this seems perfect but things can fall apart.

Rail: The only stable form in the picture is the girl with the crossed arms on the right.

Barney: True. I asked her to sit there, while everyone else was immersed in their activities.

Rail: Of course, I notice there are repetitions, some characters who appear in several pictures.

Barney: You see them grow up. Like in Michael Apted's *Up* Series, from *7 Up* to *56 Up*.

Rail: In regard to the title of your 1997 book *Theater of Manners*, I thought of (Johann Kaspar) Lavater, who proposed in his study of physiognomy that a person's facial expression or type of posture corresponds with his or her inner psyche.

Barney: I do have a general interest in physiognomy, partly because I wonder if, let's say of a father and a son, the son has the exact same physical expression on his face as his father does is that genetic, or physical, or imitative? There's no way to know for sure. I think it's imitative, but why do

people want to look or act like their father, their sister, their brother? That really fascinates me. As you can see in the pictures of the *Europeans*, they were so formal there was no way I could tell them what to do. I just realized that the way they held themselves and presented themselves was far more interesting to let them do what they wanted to do, no matter how stiff they were. The gestures and the way they held themselves might have been imitative of the portraits they were surrounded by in spectacular homes, and houses, or castles. I really like the little girl with her two hands around her waist while standing on the chair.

Rail: The title *The Little Sister* is perfect. She's the one with the personality indeed.

Barney: I agree. And the objects that appear in that space were just right.

Rail: Last question: what's the impulse that drove you to draw the figures? Were they drawn from life or photograph?

Barney: It began as filling time in between projects, in between shoots. I'd make sketches after my own pictures as ways to register the images differently than how they appear in the photographs. It's as though I'm giving them different movements and atmosphere, which in turn I became more sensitive to the subtleties of their gestures, postures, their presence essentially.

COLLECTOR DAILY

Tina Barney: Landscapes @Paul Kasmin

Richard B. Woodward

February 5, 2018

© Tina Barney Image courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery.

The places in Tina Barney's modest show of landscapes are easier to recognize than the year or even the decade in which the photographs were taken. The rocky beaches and white clapboard architecture in several scenes are identifiable as coastal New England, one of the insular communities (along with Manhattan and the south shore of Long Island) that she has mapped often during her career and claimed as her own material and emotional territory.

The inhabitants that she depicts in these small towns (or is it one small town?) are mainly upper-middle class. They don't appear to be suffering economically, at least not outwardly, or boasting about their prosperity either. Tennis is played on tree-shaded backyard courts; family sailboats line the docks in the harbors. The 4th of July is the most celebrated holiday here, observed with parades and

picnics at which men and women pull out their Revolutionary War dress from closets and trunks. Only Ralph Lauren is as fond of the American flag as decorative element and winking cultural signifier as Barney.

When these photographs were made, though, is more baffling. I doubt anyone would be able to differentiate without a caption the five dated late '80s from the six dated last year. *Fun Slide* (2017), for instance, has the same palette (yellows and reds) and vernacular subject (an ocean-side amusement that attracted many photographers in the '70s color who were enthused about color. The short-skirted uniforms worn by the cheerleaders standing on the track in *High School Band* (2017) could be from the 1950s.

One reason for our temporal confusion is that landscapes are supposed to be "timeless." Land, sea, sky, and weather predominate in all of these scenes. The other reason may be cultural: the people and things that populate Barney's towns are averse to change, whether ostentatious or minimal. East Coast WASPS are like Iowa farmers: they don't keep up with New York fashions or buy the newest model automobiles and are proud of their willful disdain for such matters. Visual clues that in other places help us fix or approximate the time a photograph was taken are missing. If clusters of McMansions are springing up like toadstools on the Rhode Island shore and in some zip codes they probably have over the last 30 years Barney has chosen to ignore them. Her affectionate gaze is focused on a pace of life that is conservative with a small c.

Barney is renowned for her portraits, and for her studiously arranged interiors that enhance or contradict the expressions and gestures of the portrayed. But leafing through her excellent retrospective book, published last year by Rizzoli, I was surprised how often she has taken her 8×10 camera out of doors, into gardens and school yards, beside swimming pools and on to porches in these small East Coast towns.

What separates the photographs in her book from the ones in the show is her distance from people and things. There are no faces on individuals in these landscapes, only the movements of groups and crowds. The New England coast, having been settled since the early 17th century, has not been a wilderness in living memory. The socially designed landscape is therefore more pronounced than the untamed natural one.

Only three of the photographs here (*Thunderstorm,* 1988; *Dusk*, 1989; and *The Rocks*, 2017) acknowledge the superior power of the ocean and the sun. Water is nonetheless a motif is most of the pictures, either as the magnetizing foreground around which these communities continue to gather or as something glimpsed or inferred, as in *Drive-In*(2017), where the sandy soil and scrubby bushes and a patch of blue in the corner indicates the location. The title of *Bay Street* (1988) tells us where we are. Barney often uses long sagging lines (of hammocks, sailing tackle) as compositional unifiers, and that's the case here, too, where long parallel shadows of two telephone wires run down the center of a street. It takes a minute to realize they are the imprints of the same telephone wires that span the street.

The River (2017) is the most accomplished image in the show. A sparse and loosely organized group families and some Revolutionary War reenactors has mustered on a green and brown lawn beside a river. A splash of deep cranberry red on a Japanese maple blends with darker green hues. What's

going on is not at all clear, although a drummer carrying an American flag is near the center of the action. Barney's camera stands far and high enough away that whatever tensions there may be among the participants are invisible. From this distance, they seem as homogeneous and amiably inclined toward one another as an assembly of strolling aristocrats in a Watteau *fête galante*.

This is new territory for Barney. Unable to rely on the human guideposts that have served her so well in the past, she doesn't seem entirely at ease integrating so many stray elements on such an open scale. Maybe the way forward is allowing a few expressive figures into scenes that would more fully develop a socially informed view of her neighbors and of her New England second home.

photograph

Tina Barney: Landscapes at Paul Kasmin Gallery

David Rosenberg

February 2, 2018

©Tina Barney, *4th of July on Beach*, 1989. Courtesy Paul Kasmin Gallery

Tina Barney titled her exhibition, on view at Paul Kasmin Gallery until March 3, *Landscapes.* For a photographer known primarily for her photographs of human beings namely, of New England's upper crust this feels like a departure. But upon closer inspection which the large prints, taken with an 8×10-inch camera, invite the photographs are more about a slice of America's social landscape than a geographical one.

A few of the 11 images on view don't include people, like an empty, lonely-feeling drive-in theater or a quiet street at dusk. But most feature a smattering of tiny subjects who stroll past sailboats, play tennis, march in high school bands or cheerlead, hang out at a beach, and gather at picnics and parades. Barney tried her hand at shooting landscapes in the 1980s, but then largely abandoned the genre until recently. Photographs from both eras are included in this exhibition. Where her portraits feel both intimate and symbolic of the affluence of the 1980s, the images in *Landscapes* have a Norman Rockwell feel about them in their celebration of American traditions. A few cars and smart phones give clues to the eras during which these images were taken, but otherwise, little seems to have changed. Three decades may have passed since Barney created these landscapes, but, as we watch her subjects

CULTURE
MAGAZINE

Tina Barney takes her photography on the road

Kat Herriman

February 2, 2018

BIKE PARADE, 2017. © TINA BARNEY; COURTESY OF PAUL KASMIN GALLERY.

Tina Barney's photographs have an intimacy that displaces the viewer. Standing before one of her prints, one enters a paradox. Her subjects strangers, family, friends, artists are at once intensely close and impossibly distance as if the composition formed vitrine rather than a two-dimensional plane. This breakdown between subject and viewer is only intensified by the self-awareness of Barney's subjects who often stare directly into and seemingly through the lens.

Of course Barney never stares her subjects in the eye. In fact, in working with 4 x 5 and 8 x 10 cameras, the photographer has spent her career looking and choreographing a frame that is permanently upside down. "I'm used to it," she says. "It doesn't fazed me anymore but it does still affect the image and how I construct it."

In her most recent body of work, "Landscapes," now on view at Paul Kasmin, Barney tests her formal and technical skills by changing up her subject matter from humans to space. "It required a different

kind of attention," Barney says. "I've always thought about domestic environments but the space was always secondary and in these images it is the main character."

Photographed in a coastal Rhode Island town and Connecticut, Barney's images of tennis courts, beaches and parades capture a pastoral New England that disconcerts with its Elysian sheen. This is in part a function of the natural lighting which Barney had to contend with on a technical level like never before; typically she controls her environments with powerful flashes.

"It challenged me to think differently about the formal qualities of an image," she says. "I would have to commit to a space, a composition, but I couldn't guarantee how the light might change. The truth is that there is always chance in photography."

Usually in Barney's work serendipity comes in the form of her subject's postures and expressions, but in the case of "Landscapes," it is the interplay of light and object. The work highlights the photographer's keen eye for color and the way she uses it to reveal the abstractions all around us. Take for example, *Drive-In*, 2017, which calls to mind minimalist paintings with its stretch of dark green amidst a field of tan as much as it does memories of the summer. "I'm not concerned with documentation," Barney says. "It is about the relationships between a million details."

Like *The Europeans*, Barney's early 2000s series documenting continental aristocrats in their homes, "Landscapes" deals with the collapse of emotional and physical space. The images traffic in a hyper-reality that makes the rest of reality feel impossibly dull and distant. One desires to enter the frame, melt into the twilight, the crowd and yet something stops you. Perhaps it is that creeping sensation that someone on the other side wishes the same. Barney's work is a mirror that calls on the viewer to decide whether everything is as simple and as real as it seems.

aperture

American Prospects

Tina Barney zooms out in a new series of landscapes.

January 30, 2018

Tina Barney, High School Band, 2017. © the artist and courtesy Paul Kasmin Gallery

Known for her lush and precise portraits of upper-echelon American families, Tina Barney, in a new body of work, has reimagined her subjects at a distance. In Landscapes, her current exhibition at Paul Kasmin Gallery, she pans out from the individuals themselves, placing landscape at the forefront. Although many were taken in the last year (with a few, previously unseen works from the '80s), Barney's East Coast landscapes strike a similar mood as her previous work. In an interview from 1995, Barney noted that her photographs "are based on nostalgia, not only on the nostalgia of this place as opposed to the West Coast where I was living, but also nostalgia for my own childhood." More than two decades later, in these large-scale color prints, Barney depicts classic scenes celebrating American traditions: Fourth of July parades, state fairs, tennis courts, beachside barbecues, and a high school sporting event sprinkled with cheerleaders and marching band players. Barney's landscapes expand upon the theatricality of American wealth and prosperity, and widen the stage she has been working on throughout her career. Even in the most still moments or sparsely populated scenes, these works appear choreographed by tradition.

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

Snapshot: 'Tina Barney Landscapes'

The American photographer, famous for her tableau-style portraits of upper-class East Coasters, exchanged sumptuous interiors for the great outdoors

Kitty Grady

January 26, 2018

'Tennis Court' (1988) © Tina Barney

Compiling her latest monograph, American photographer Tina Barney stumbled across some forgotten landscapes she had taken near her Rhode Island home in the 1980s. The discovery prompted Barney, famous for her tableau-style portraits of upper-class East Coasters, to exchange sumptuous interiors for the great outdoors. Last summer she spent weekends driving through New England, snapping verdant, sunny scenes with her 8x10 camera. Although expanding her field of vision, Barney's hallmark style remains. She captures candid moments between family and friends as well as what she calls "American traditional happenings"such as Fourth of July parades, high-school marching bands and drive-in cinemas. "I'm stretching the word 'landscape'. I was trying to get away from people, but I just can't resist having a few sprinkled in," she says.

MUSÉE
VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

Exhibition Review: Tina Barney, "Landscapes"

Billy Anania

January 25, 2018

Tina Barney, "Bike Parade," 2017. Courtesy Paul Kasmin Gallery © Tina Barney

Tina Barney's new "Landscapes" series at Paul Kasmin Gallery shows another side of the American photographer's diverse body of work. Known for her extravagant portraits of the upper-class milieu, Barney instead focuses on suburban streets, beaches and architecture.

Photos from this series were taken in the 1980s and in 2017, when Barney decided to revisit the format. These landscapes share similarities with much of her best-known work in their composition and scale. Within each sweeping frame, Barney includes an array of subjects such as amusement park rides, athletic events and abandoned drive-in theaters. She walks the line between seclusion and celebration, simultaneously conveying the tranquility of solitude and the comfort of other people.

The opening reception was held at Paul Kasmin Gallery on Wednesday, January 17. © Nicole Angeles
But even when athletes and partygoers populate her photos, Barney stays true to the landscape format. No one subject holds precedence over any other. Rather, the overall scene and its many components

form a singular vision. This is clear in "Bike Parade," a sunny street scene from July 4, 2017 with pedestrians, cars, balloons and freshly mowed lawns. Similarly, "4th of July on Beach" from 1989 evokes the clamour of neighborhood parties, and the breezy leisure of a summer holiday.

Taken with an 8x10" view camera, Barney's landscapes widen the scope of her subject matter but remain true to her style. The colors in each photo are highly refined, emphasizing the contrast of surface layers. Embedded in each piece is a sense of nostalgia, an homage to places and the people who inhabit them.

THE CUT

A Photographer's Portrait of New England Landscapes

Carolyn Twersky

January 17, 2018

4th of July on Beach, 1989. Photo: Tina Barney/ Courtesy Paul Kasmin Gallery

Tina Barney is known for her colorful, ultra-glamorous photographs of socialites and wealthy families, many of whom she met while growing up in New York City and Long Island. Last summer, for her latest project, the 72-year-old artist took her 8 x 10 camera outside to capture New England vistas. Her images of sandy beaches and quiet small-town streets are featured in the new exhibition "Tina Barney: Landscapes," opening today at Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York.

Shifting from portrait to landscape photography was a new, welcome challenge for Barney. During her usual portrait sessions, she stands a few feet from her subjects with complete control over the room's lighting. These outdoor shoots, which took place in Rhode Island and Connecticut, were entirely different. "I was under the command of nature," she said in an interview. Which meant "trying to get rid of massive amounts of green and the sky, and deciding where to stand, where to put the camera."

The gallery show includes scenic, spontaneous shots that Barney took in the '80s as well. Juxtaposed with her older pictures, the new images from last summer take a planned, carefully executed approach. After this show, Barney says she'll return to portraiture for the foreseeable future. "I feel like I can say I doubt I'll do it again," she said. "But you never know. Something weird might happen."

THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

November 17, 2017

Land of the Living

by KATE GUADAGNINO

Tina Barney, "Bike Parade," 2017 chromogenic color print edition of 5
©Tina Barney, courtesy of Paul Kasmin Gallery

While making selections for her recent monograph, out from Rizzoli this past September, the photographer Tina Barney came upon some long-forgotten landscape images she'd taken around her Rhode Island home in the late 1980s. Barney's work has always been about place, but has until now favored indoors settings — often the homes of upper-class East Coasters — over natural ones. "I saw them and decided: I'm going to try this again," she recalls. She soon developed a weekend routine of driving from town to town through New England with her 8x10 large-format camera to scout locations; next month, her new work, along with some earlier landscapes, will be on view at Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York.

Recentering her perspective proved an interesting challenge for the mostly self-taught artist. "A good portion of my pictures are narrative, but these are formal puzzles," she says. "The sky is a big problem — how much room to give it, because it sort of takes over." She also had to rethink light ("I'm used to bringing my own") and scale, printing the images at different sizes so that some take on the look of miniature paintings: In one, the gravel lot of a drive-in movie theater stands empty, its giant screen a blank white. In another, distant sunbathers enjoy a rocky beach. But these are adamantly not the sort of pictures intended to emphasize man's smallness in the face of nature. Barney is too interested in human life, and in what she calls "American traditional happenings," for that. This summer, she captured a Fourth of July parade, with children biking in the street with balloons, and recently photographed a high school marching-band practice from the bleachers above. "I'm stretching the word 'landscape,' " Barney says. "I was trying to get away from people, but I just can't resist having a few sprinkled in."

both intimate and symbolic of the affluence of the 1980s, the images in *Landscapes* have a Norman Rockwell feel about them in their celebration of American traditions. A few cars and smart phones give clues to the eras during which these images were taken, but otherwise, little seems to have changed. Three decades may have passed since Barney created these landscapes, but, as we watch her subjects participate in various rituals, they appear to be frozen in time.

Unlike her portraits, there are no photographs taken inside people's homes, so the opulence and other markers of wealth are absent. But in the context of the current social climate, including debates about wealth, privilege, race, and social status, these insulated small-town scenes feel out of touch. For better or worse, this series shows us a part of America that has never had to question how it fits into the landscape.

the PARIS REVIEW

September 26, 2017

By Joseph Akel

TINA BARNEY, *SELF-PORTRAIT*, 2014.
TINA BARNEY, *JILL AND POLLY IN THE BATHROOM*, 1987

For the photographer Tina Barney, proximity to, and membership in, the upper class has come to define her body of work chronicling the life of the patrician set. Her images, taken over some forty years, are at once a choreographed glimpse into the lives of the leisure class and candid meditations upon universal themes of family. Barney's recently published an eponymous monograph—with an introduction by Peter Galassi, the former curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art—comes at a time when economic inequality is at the forefront of people's minds. Here, she reflects on the critical reception of her work, the importance of time in her photographs, and the role of family in creating them.

INTERVIEWER
You've noted many times in past interviews that you've never consciously set out to photograph the "upper class." You were, in your words, "photographing family and friends." How do you respond to those who discuss your work within the context of wealth, of social status?

BARNEY
I never really think about it. It's the viewer, the writer, the critic, who puts that subject matter on me. It's almost not interesting for me to talk about it, but then, people are so fascinated by it that I guess it must be interesting. My fascination is with the repetition of traditions and rituals. The idea that families, no matter where they come from, kind of do the same thing. They get up, they make breakfast, they go to school, they come back, they have Christmas, they have Halloween.

INTERVIEWER
Where do your photos fit within the climate of America today versus when you were exhibiting them in the eighties? It seems to me that the eighties embraced wealth, and that that attitude changed after the 2008 financial crisis.
BARNEY
Let's just say it's not the tools that are different, it's the props.

INTERVIEWER
Perhaps, because of the intensive setup involved in shooting on large format, your images possess a tension between the composed and the candid, the staged and the spontaneous.

BARNEY
You got it. They're kind of sloppy. Really, if you go back and look at images from the eighties, there are so many photographic mistakes that most people wouldn't keep, and that's the difference I would leave the mistakes. I think that's why they look unpretentious and believable.

INTERVIEWER
Speaking of timing, your photographs seem to exist in this perpetual summer.

BARNEY
That's because it's the best time to photograph, right?

INTERVIEWER
You've said before that when you first began taking pictures, you photographed what was in front of you your family. But why have you continued to photograph them?

BARNEY
I felt I hadn't finished answering a question. It just kept on getting more interesting. The deeper I went, the more interesting it became. It's like a drug. I just can't stop. I could go on forever and ever. I could keep photographing. I haven't finished yet. It just isn't finished.

INTERVIEWER
How do you see your images connecting with millennials, with the younger generation?

BARNEY
I have absolutely no idea. I hadn't thought about it. I have a terrible feeling, because I mentor at the School of Visual Arts, that people that age already don't really care about my photographs. I think they're interested in things that go fast, and in otherworldly experiences.

INTERVIEWER
If you ask me, Newport, Rhode Island, can be otherworldly, too. Last question why do you prefer printing your images in such large format?

BARNEY
In my big prints, I want everybody to be able to see the detail of the quality in the pictures. Of course, my photographs aren't monumental at all when you compare them to the other things happening in photography now. But back in the eighties, it was a big deal. And for me, it was in order to see more. That's all I wanted to do.

https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/09/26/tina-barneys-embarrassment-riches/#more-115980

VOGUE

Tina Barney Has Always Illuminated the Inner Lives of People and Homes With Her Photographs

by Madeleine Luckel
September 15, 2017

Since the early 1970s, Tina Barney has been an adroit observer of individuals. Barney, a renowned photographer whose work is included in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), The

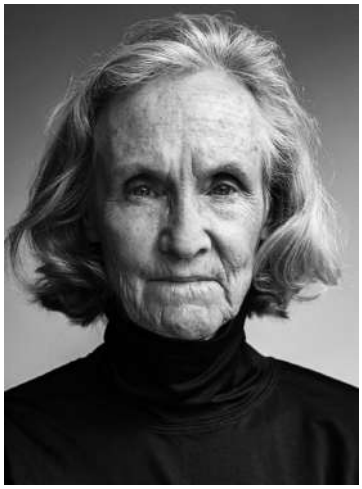
Whitney Museum of American Art, and many more such institutions, began her career by photographing mainly upper-class East Coasters. Barney personally knew many of her early subjects, whom she positioned time and time again within their own homes. Her riveting portraits, photographed in color, now make up a three-decade-plus body of work. And this month, Barney's oeuvre has been compiled into its most comprehensive book to date.

Tina Barney is out from Rizzoli September 19. With an introduction by the artist herself, and text by Peter Galassi, the former chief curator of photography at MoMA, it's a must-buy for any contemporary photography enthusiast. The book's first chapter, "Home," shows Barney's subjects in the interiors which they inhabit. (Later chapters, including "Abroad" and "Performance" are all chock-full of such photographs as well.) It's these intimate settings, and the couches, curtains, and chairs that make them up, that help Barney's images come to life.

Take, for example, Barney's self-portrait, which was featured in *Vogue* magazine alongside an accompanying profile of the artist. Barney is pictured in a sunset-toned, cozy living room, where the color of her walls, upholstery, and skirt, somehow seem to match distracting the viewer's eye from the thin cord that moments before allowed the photographer to do her work. That image does not appear in this forthcoming publication, but the interiors-set photographs that do also often hint at or directly reveal the rituals preformed in such spaces. There's "Jill and Polly in the Bathroom," a mise-en-pink, if you will, in which hairbrushes and cosmetics litter a nearby sink top. Then there's "Sunday New York Times,' one of Barney's most well-known works. The image shows a family crowded around a dining table, all engrossed by the day's paper. Taken in 1982, the image resonates deeply, but also reflects a ritual that is sadly growing more and more obsolete. But the thing about that photograph that will never feel anachronistic, is the hubbub of family life that often centers in such rooms. The inner lives of average people, seen in situ.

Above, a look at some of Tina Barney's interiors-set photographs featured in her upcoming book.
Tina Barney *(Rizzoli), by Tina Barney and Peter Galassi, will be published September 19, 2017.*

Interview



Photographer Tina Barney Captures The Lives Of The Upper Crust

by A.M Homes
Photography by Sebastian Kim
September 12, 2017

Tina Barney is an American icon. For 40 years, she has been making photographs that depict the upper crust, rendering the psychological landscape of rarefied social strata with painterly precision. It's a world familiar to the artist, who grew up in New York among tribes who attend certain schools and summer in certain places; whose houses are called cottages; and whose gestures, habits, and even hairstyles are passed from generation to generation.

Barney's jarringly intimate yet large-scale images draw the viewer deep into a well-manicured world that encompasses both mundane and stylized expressions of class. The magic of her pictures lies in the tension between the emotional interior of her subjects and her own complex visual compositions, which seem to tear at the highly polished surface whether it be the East Coast apartments and country homes of her early work; her baronial, blue-blooded *The Europeans* series (1996-2004); or her

most recent project-in-process, *Youth*, which focuses on teenagers, some of whom are descendants of past subjects. Inside every Barney image is a disarming trust between the photographer and her muse.

This past May, I sat down with Barney in her Manhattan apartment, where we talked about everything from whether or not wealth has changed much in the past four decades it has not to the enormous evolution of photography. One of the most telling moments during our time together was unspoken: midway through our conversation, Barney got up to get something, opening a closet that was filled equally with towels, linens, and prints of her photographs a perfect articulation of her love for the domestic, and proof that the art and the artist are indivisible.

Despite describing herself as a private person, Barney is warm, engaged, and generous about the work of others no small gift when she's just finished work on a major monograph covering her many decades of shooting interiors, locations, and the American and European elite, out this month from Rizzoli. And as willing as she is to travel through time and talk about all that she has accomplished, there is a distinct enthusiasm, a twinkle in her blue eyes, which suggests that bubbling beneath the surface is all that she has yet to do.

A.M. HOMES: I think of your work as being very anthropological. It's beautifully photographic, but also psychological.

TINA BARNEY: Oh, it is. At least I hope it is.

HOMES: How would you describe the evolution of your relationship to the world you chronicle?

BARNEY: In 2015, I started photographing the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of some of the people I had photographed in the past with an 8×10 camera which in itself is a whole different way of taking pictures. It slows you down. It makes you think. It's much more meditative. I'm at the point now where I don't really have an agenda. I kind of let things flow, and there's not a narrative. It's usually one or two people, and I'm not trying to choreograph them as I did in the past. I'm really just trying to see what's going on in their minds and in their faces. Shooting these great-grandchildren, who are

around the age of 15, is fascinating to me, because they're right on this fine line between still being children and starting to become themselves.

HOMES: Right. It's a kind of awareness that's simultaneously there and not.

BARNEY: The idea of the portrait itself is my great love. The questions and answers in it can go on forever and ever. It is what happens in the eyes or with a tilt of the head. I keep going because it's too interesting to stop. And with these new subjects, it really seems as if nothing has changed from their parents' time. The conservatism is extraordinary to me; just compare the way they dress to the way their parents dress. There are still no tattoos or piercings, which is interesting to me. Why does everyone who lives in one place dress alike, look alike, eat the same thing, and decorate the same way?

HOMES: For me, the phenomenon you capture isn't that different from what Diane Arbus captured in her portraits.

BARNEY: Some of the people she photographed weren't so far apart from mine in terms of where they came from and lived, and yet it really looked like they were from different planets. Nan Goldin was also interesting to me in the beginning. I don't know if I ever told her this, but I wanted to switch lives with her for a week.

HOMES: That would have been amazing.

BARNEY: Wouldn't it? I would not have made it. [*Homes laughs*] Not physically. I couldn't have stayed up late enough.

HOMES: You're polar opposites, in a way, but you both think a lot about color.

BARNEY: Well, color is very important. That comes from style. My mother was a fashion model and an interior decorator, so that was me imitating her. My closest friend's mother was the same way, and her taste rubbed off on me, too. It's a domino effect of taste permeating through people.

HOMES: Many of your photographs are also studies of interiors, with echoes of color from one room to another or the patterns of curtains next to a vase. They almost become Dutch paintings.

BARNEY: I started photographing interiors because I didn't know how to shoot people. I was using a 4×5 view camera, and if you're inside, the exposure has to be long because you need more light. I couldn't have people sit for that long. When I did start putting people in pictures, I had to have them hold still and I would be yelling out, "One one thousand, two one thousand …" Someone finally introduced me to lighting, and the technical aspect caught up to my dreams about narrative. Those narratives, from early on, had to do with keeping the family together. Then I started to orchestrate these family members being together, getting physically closer, and showing affection. Those pictures from the '80s are the most well-known. And then I got tired of that, so I shifted to vertical portraiture, which was very much influenced by Thomas Ruff. When I got to Europe in 1996, right away I realized I couldn't tell these people what to do because they were so formal, so poised and regal. They were fairly intimidating, even the ones I might have known a bit.

HOMES: There is something slightly performative about those European pictures. One has the sense of them kind of coming in and being like, "This is how I will be today," as opposed to the American families, where it feels more casual.

BARNEY: I've always said that the Europeans subconsciously knew how to pose because of the culture or tradition of having your portrait made. They were surrounded by these portraits, and subconsciously they were already posing for them.

HOMES: I'm curious about what happens as you shoot. Do you know when you've taken the shot that will be the keeper? In the family portraits, it seems like it's the moment when things are slightly out of order, when something has happened or is about to happen that throws things off-kilter.

BARNEY: That's a very good point. In doing this book, I went back and looked at the outtakes. There aren't any good ones. I usually know when I take the picture. There's always some kind of un-self-conscious thing going on, so that it doesn't look like they're there for the sake of having their portrait taken.

HOMES: You don't get the sense of people guarding themselves, which you often see in portraiture.

BARNEY: I sometimes get commissioned to photograph families, and they see the results and say, "Oh, I look terrible." And that's when I realize the difference between the people I choose and the people who choose me.

HOMES: Do you remember the series that Cindy Sherman did in 2008, in which she portrayed art-collector types? I thought she did it so brilliantly to the point that, even though the characters

were fictional, certain people would see themselves in those photographs in awful ways. She captured the essence of certain personalities that felt very authentic.

BARNEY: She sure did. I often think people don't give Cindy enough credit for being a great actress.

HOMES: I've never heard anyone say that, but I think it's totally true.

BARNEY: From those very first black-and-white images, where she's standing on the road, she's so un-self-conscious. I'm just guessing, but I feel like there are elements that most photographers would consider mistakes in both her pictures and in mine, but that we both didn't tidy up. We keep that sense of something being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

HOMES: That's what makes them so wonderful. It's very brave to leave the mess in the frame.

BARNEY: It was so scary to come out with those pictures about the upper class. If you look at the reviews at the time, the critics only focused on their own fascination with the upper class. They never talked about the actual pictures. And that killed me, although I don't think they were being nasty. I think they were just saying this was the first time anyone had revealed the upper class, and then they went on to describe it, but they never talked about the things in the work that were really interesting to me. That will always sort of identify me, but on the other hand, that's why I made them big. I wanted people to be able to see the cereal box, the kind of dress, the kind of curtain. Those details fascinated people. I compare it to when audiences first saw that TV series *Dallas*, their being fascinated by a world they did not know.

HOMES: It's so striking and disarming to be confronted by a family portrait printed big.

BARNEY: Definitely. It's very revealing.

HOMES: Your work has so many painterly elements to it, but you're not a painter.

BARNEY: No, but I have been surrounded by art all my life. My mother was a terrific artist. The fact that my pictures are about families is kind of motherly.

HOMES: [The writer] Grace Paley acknowledged that women often write about the domestic and the intimate interior, while men write about big social landscapes, although that's not really true anymore. When you shoot your subjects inside, how close are you to them physically?

BARNEY: I am close to these people. I wasn't in the first years because I wanted to show the interiors. But then each year I got physically closer because I wanted the picture to feel more personal. But wherever I'm photographing, I still feel as if I'm looking from a distance. I'm really a voyeur, examining everything. I don't mean I'm being critical. But even as I've grown closer, I'm backing up

to an extent. I myself am very private. I keep my distance. Some of that has to do with fear of letting somebody in and them knowing too much about me.

HOMES: That part of intimacy is always hard. Was the recognition you received as an artist difficult for you?

BARNEY: Very much so. I never thought that my work was going to become well-known. It started happening slowly, without my realizing it. But when I did, it was terrifying. I still can't believe that people let me photograph them. The trust is amazing. But I've always put them in a context that is dignified, and that's really important.

HOMES: What are your thoughts on iPhone photography?

BARNEY: People aren't really looking at the result. And they don't print it. So to me, it's almost not a photograph. It's like looking in the mirror. It's a tool I don't relate to at all.

HOMES: But has it changed your subjects' relationship to you? I imagine it's even changed people's natural gestures when they know they're being photographed.

BARNEY: That depends on your definition of gesture. I've thought of it literally as what you're doing with your hands or your body, which suggests what you're thinking about or who you are. Some of that is hereditary and handed down, and some is newly learned.

HOMES: You took a photograph of two generations of hands [*The Hands*, 2002] shot in front of a painting in an interior that is beautiful. I once sent my mother a photograph of my daughter when she was very young, and my mother said, "She has your grandmother's expression on her face right now." I loved that.

BARNEY: I also think people imitate actors things they've seen in a movie or on TV, and before you know it, they're doing something with their face or their mouth. It's from some actor they think is cool. They might not even know they're doing it, which is kind of funny.

HOMES: To me, you are the best at capturing what I would call a psychosocial expression of history and of experience and of class.

BARNEY: And the history of a particular family. I feel as if most people are pretty much the same within a certain class, due to the schools they attend and the way they are raised.

HOMES: You are like the Margaret Mead of photography.

BARNEY: Oh my god. I used to be so interested in anthropology that I'd go to the Margaret Mead Film Festival, and they'd screen these old black-and-white movies with women sitting around in a circle. The subtitles would have them saying, "My husband, he's so lazy. He never takes out the garbage." It's exactly the same thing happening in Greenwich, Connecticut, with women in their Prada clothes. I know that's very simplistic but

HOMES: But it's also basic human behavior. Is ritual or tradition important to you?

BARNEY: Oh god, yeah, especially the repetitions of birthday parties and christenings and weddings, and going out to buy a pumpkin or a Christmas tree. I think kids love those repetitions because they're comforting.

HOMES: Even if stuff is going badly, those are the things we do. As an artist, what do you feed on? What do you consume for your own artistic life?

BARNEY: I look at art all the time. I go to the museums and galleries every week. That really is like food for me. And I go to the movies a lot. Lately, I've been trying to work in film, some Super 8, which I find hard but also enjoy. I'm filming the people I've photographed. It's silent, and I'm curious how they look when they're talking. I don't know if I want to show it. But I've been working on a number of other projects. I'm finishing up *Youth*, and I've been doing landscapes, which I haven't done in many years. I photographed some nudes for a couple of years that I might go back to.

HOMES: Maybe a nude in a landscape?

BARNEY: Actually, nudes are much more interior to me. But you never know. I also draw and paint. For 20 years, I've been drawing and painting snapshots from my family, as well as from my own work. I do them in pastel, watercolor, crayon, and pencil. Nobody knows about that. Even me. I always forget all about it.

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

WSJ.
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

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STILL LIFE

TINA BARNEY

The celebrated photographer shares a few of her favorite things.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TINA BARNEY

"I BOUGHT THE FIREPLACE from an antique shop in New York City in 1967, when I first decorated this house. It's all one piece (not including the blue tiles). Most of the objects on the mantel are gifts from family and friends or antiques I collected in the 1970s while driving around Rhode Island with girlfriends. The tiny glass bowl on the left is from my sister-in-law. The large silhouette is by Robert Cumming. The tiny red bird pin in front is a great memory from my friend Judith Freeman's wedding. She gave each bridesmaid a pin. Then there are the photos. The one in a little blue porcelain frame is of both my sons and niece from 1971. There's a photograph of my parents behind the figure in the orange coat on the right. It's one of the last photographs of them before they died. Down below, you can see a ceramic block on the hearth. It's a gift from the first friend I made in Sun Valley, Idaho, when I moved there in 1973—she died in a plane crash in the mountains. My son gave me the blue ball-shaped candle. I've never lit it. I got the blue relic to the right from an old house in Rajasthan while on a Guggenheim Fellowship in India in 1991. I was living with an Indian family with my friend Judith—the same friend who gave me the pin—while we worked on a project together. I think if you tried to bring something like that back today you would get in trouble! I got the bicycle toy as a birthday present from someone I met in China. I was doing a project there in 2006. I even kept the box because it's so beautiful. To the right of the fireplace, on the wall, is a monotype by Mark Tobey; it's the abstract one with dots. Above that is a little antique, and above that is a Joan Nelson painting. My work as a photographer started off very much focused on the house and the family—the objects that are passed down from generation to generation interested me. My monograph *Tina Barney*, which will be published next month, spans four decades of my work. To this day, I might still photograph the same room I photographed in 1977, and nothing will have been moved and nothing much has changed."
—As told to Thomas Gebremedhin

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

AD
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Tina Barney Reflects on a 40 Year Career Photographing Friends, Family, and the Occasional Aristocrat

A striking new book captures the domestic lives and social rituals of certain East Coast families and Europe's upper classes

August 15, 2017

Text by David Foxley
Photography by Tina Barney

Amy, Phil, and Brian, 1980.

"I think it's ridiculous," says the American photographer Tina Barney, having been asked about claims that she's the preeminent documentarian of 1980s WASP culture. "It's certainly not what I was thinking about—I was thinking about my life, a place that doesn't change, that has history to it. I hope it's a bigger idea than just being a certain type of person."

That bigger idea—spanning a prolific career lasting some 40 years—is the subject of a stunning new tome, ***Tina Barney*** (Rizzoli New York, $100), due out in September. Barney concedes that although very few of her subjects in the first two decades of her career—a period in which she spent the bulk of her time and energy shooting close friends and family—include *actual* WASPs, there is a certain, in her words, "Ralph Lauren–prep school" vibe.

Looking back at that work from the mid-'70s through the early '90s, which collectively represents HOME, the opening section of the new book, she says: “The early pictures were very much more emotional, personal, and could never be replaced. They’re so much about my life, my family, the people and houses that are important to me.”

The Reception, 1985.

One such personal image is *The Reception*, which Barney took of her sister at her wedding in 1985. “I was trying to say how I felt about my sister, and that’s a big order to fill—very emotional and exciting at the same time,” she explains, drawing a contrast to images that she took some years later, a series of continental aristocrats, grouped under a section titled ABROAD. “I was so in awe of it all, the concerns were different,” she admits of her European subjects, comparing the series to a different novel written by the same author. “People were standing still, you couldn’t move them, they looked much more formal in every way.”

Sunday New York Times, 1982.

Barney, who has used the same Toyo 4x5 field camera for most of her photographs since the early ’80s, points to the 1985 work *Sunday New York Times* as one of the most significant in her oeuvre. It was among the first times she took a studied portrait of this scale (four by five feet), with this number of subjects (12), and for the sake of a purposeful narrative. She placed the subjects carefully around the table, “screaming and yelling at people to hold still.”

The Young Men, 1992.

No matter how studied or meticulously planned her compositions, Barney credits a degree of good fortune for making certain ones transcendent. In the 1992 image *The Young Men*, when the three subjects, brothers preparing to head out to a party for the evening, appear to be miming the three wise monkeys ("see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil"), she happened to click her shutter at just the right millisecond. “It’s really a miracle at that point,” she says. “An absolute miracle.”

From start to finish, her portraits now stand in large part as Barney’s personal record of the various social and cultural shifts that have occurred since she began snapping pictures, with a 35-millimeter Pentax, in 1976—and without the assistants and eight heavy bags of equipment on which she’s more recently relied.

As the photographer writes in the introduction to her book, "When we look at ourselves in the mirror, we really can't see what we look like. The only way we can examine ourselves, or the history of our lives, is through photography.”

Marina's Room, 1987.

Jill and Polly in the Bathroom, 1987.

The Portrait, 1984.

Diane, Mark, and Tim, 1982.

John's Den, 1985.

The cover of *Tina Barney,* published by Rizzoli, September 2017.

http://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/tina-barney-book

i-D

Inside The Inner Circle of Europe's Old World Elite

by Matthew Whitehouse
April 12, 2017

It's been just under a fortnight now since Theresa May triggered Article 50, sending the UK hurtling towards a cliff edge and leading many to question where Britain fits in the great landmass known as Europe.

It's worth remembering that when the founding nations of the European Economic Community (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany) first got together in 1957, Britain initially said, "I'm alright, Jacques". It had fought a Great War. It had a great Commonwealth. It saw itself as different. What's more, that's how the rest of the continent saw it, too. When the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, belatedly began making eyes at Brussels in the early 1960s, Charles de Gaulle famously said "non." Britain was "insular", he described, with "very marked and very original habits and traditions."

We know how the rest panned out, with Britain finally hooking up with Europe in 1973, only to vote to tear away again last year. But the question still remains: Is Britain detached from the continent culturally as well as physically? Or are there similarities that stretch across la Manche?

It's an idea partially explored in Tina Barney's epic *The Europeans*. An eight year Grand Tour of Austria (1996), Italy (1996-1998), England (2001), France (2002), Spain (2003), and Germany (2004), *The Europeans* sees American-born Barney photographing the inner circle of the continent's Old World elite. Capturing country straddling similarities and shared cultural characteristics, it is a study in the cross pollination of heirs, heirlooms and Herrs. An examination of what it is, exactly, that makes Europeans, Europeans.

How did you begin The Europeans project?

All I needed was one or two people to say the same thing and I was like, wow, that's an interesting idea. I'd applied as a visiting artist to the American Academy in Rome and I happened to make one or two friends that were Italian and would help me find people to photograph. And it really dominoed from there. I never ever thought it would be an eight year project or I'd go to six different countries. I thought this was just going to be a one off trip. Then when I got there it was so fascinating. The Italians would say, well, my sister is married to an Austrian. Or my sister or brother is married to a Spaniard. That's when I began to realise these countries are all connected.

Did you spend much time with your subjects or was it all quite quick?

Very quick. There were some people that I spent the night with, but they were generally as quick as if I'd done an editorial job. Hello, how are you, then go in, set up the lights, take the picture and leave. A one time kind of shot. And I never saw them again in my whole life. Probably never will.

Your photographs have such a formal aspect... What inspired this?

If you go back to my book the *Theatre of Manners*, that's how it all began. A frustration about trying to create an interesting structure in the photograph, because I felt that the photograph was such a boring, flat piece of paper. I was obviously borrowing from the Dutch 17th century painters, but also mostly the Italians, and I sort of thought, oh, why not try to do that in a photograph? Directing the pictures to form a narrative and trying to create an interesting visual space, structure wise. What I didn't know was going to happen when I got to Europe was that these people and settings would be so intimidating because of their formality. Their extreme sense of manners. Everyone knows that Americans are just much more casual. In every sense of the word. And so I realised very quickly, I couldn't possibly direct these people to do anything different from what they are.

Why do you think people are still so interested in the pictures?

The only thing I can think of is, you know when people were obsessed with watching television series like *Dallas*? Or even now when they're watching *The Tudors* or anything like that? These pictures were of a life that I think Americans, not really dreamed of, but that was their ideal of a royalty or a grand life. One that I think Americans have looked up to since the beginning of history.

Did you come to see Europe as a coherent entity or did it remain separate countries to you?

Oh, that's a very interesting question. I think there are things that are very similar. And usually it had to do with a taste, that was probably borrowed from as far back as you can go. As people travelled they would say, oh, I like that, I'm going to do that too. And one of the things which is kind of funny and superficial is the yellow wall. A certain coloured yellow wall is in many countries. So things like that, but also I think the idea of the family probably goes through all the countries. The idea of keeping the family home. The respect for the mother and the father. The eldest son.

Do you have a favourite image?

I probably do, which I never usually say. But you know, so much time has gone by. What interests me more, probably than anything I ever do, is portraiture. And I think there's a photograph called *The Granddaughter* and one called *The Young Lady*. One is from Germany, the other's from France. That one, *The Hands*, of the boy in the blue and white shirt with his father. There's something about children. I think getting through to a child that age is usually impenetrable. But if you have the right subject, you can't figure out who they are, but you can go to a place that you can't in real life by looking at them in the flesh. And it's usually through the eyes. That's pretty fantastic.

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Tina Barney: Friends and Family

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For over three decades the photographer's large-scale family portraits have made private, domestic moments public.

When Tina Barney began working as a photographer in the late 1970s, she didn't set out with the idea of taking family pictures. She was looking for pictures that had an interesting dynamic, and the family her own and other people's was where she found it. Working around people who were used to her, despite the presence of her large camera, gave her access to private areas where small visual dramas might unfold. The very familiarity of the domestic surroundings in her case, the comfortable interiors of wealthy middle-class New England brought with it a sense of intrusion; the

viewer was present at a scene not intended for public view.

'Tina Barney: The Europeans' opens at The Frist Center of the Arts on January 19th 2015. Many of her pictures catch their subjects seemingly unawares. Some have their backs to the camera; others are lost in conversation or involved in some action off the frame. The viewer has to navigate through her pictures, like entering a roomful of strangers where nobody notices your presence and the conversations carry on. These are not family snaps where everybody jumps to attention and smiles. And yet her pictures have the spontaneity and chaos we associate with snapshots, though in their framing and spatial complexity they owe more to the traditions of 17th-century Dutch painting.

This picture, "Sunday New York Times", is one of Barney's most famous, and though it might look as if she came upon the scene by chance, there was nothing serendipitous about it. For one thing, as she explains, she always uses a heavy 4x5 large-format camera. "You have to realise, I don't find anything. I'm dragging six bags of equipment that sometimes takes an hour to set up." So she wasn't there by accident.

To talk about the picture, she has to go back to 1982. "In 1982 I am so untechnical, I don't know what I'm doing. I can barely get out of the car without tripping over myself. The camera's heavy, these are long exposures. I'm yelling at the people to hold still so they're not out of focus. I don't know how to use lights at that time. I decide to put the father at the head of the table but I'm yelling at him to hold still, while the telephone is ringing and the balls are bouncing and the kids are screaming. This is a very strong personality, this man, and he could very well say, 'Tina, forget it, get out of here.'" But he doesn't. This was a family she knew, she'd selected them with care.

"I chose that family because they knew photography, they knew what a 4x5 camera was. They were a crazy, funny, uninhibited, unaware-of-the-camera-type family. I walk in, there's crazy stuff happening. Nobody stops to pose and say 'cheese' in front of the camera and that has a huge amount to do with it. My sister is the same."

Her sister Jill is one of the subjects of another well-known Barney picture, "Jill and Polly in the Bathroom, 1987": the two women in their matching pink bathrobes with the chintzy drapes. The picture is anchored by strong verticals and diagonals that frame all the complicated details within it: the mirror image, the scattered accessories, the precariously balanced hairbrush, the lotions and potions, and the long view through the window to the tiny dog-kennel (another miniature interior) across the lawn.

These two pictures set the benchmark early on.

"I was so driven," she says. "It was like someone had possessed me. You know 'Sunday New York Times' was beyond my dreams. And then I blew it up to 5ft . . . " (This was when large-scale photographs were relatively new.) "It met up to my standard and believe me, since then, I don't get too many.

“I had this hunch, I bet every artist or every athlete has this goal you would like to get up to. And these two pictures met up to what my dreams were. And then, of course, [the challenge was] to get one again. So ‘Sunday New York Times’ is sort of like that first picture or painting that an artist makes that it takes you 40 years to get back to, because so much is accident.”

Later, she also began working in black and white. “I think it was just to try something different. It was a challenge, a puzzle, seeing graphically in a different way. Those pictures are kind of strange. They have a sort of Bergman feel to them. I wasn’t really thinking about family at that point, it could have been apples or pears, though I’m always interested in people. I’m really more interested in the formal parts of putting the picture together.”

Over the years, she’s gone back to photograph the same people her friends’ families and her own. “The reason to go back to them is that they kind of don’t care. Even when my pictures got into the Museum of Modern Art, they still didn’t really care. They never got egotistical about it. They basically probably just wanted to get it over with. I’m sure most of the time, if you asked them, they’d just say, ‘Oh God, we’ll do it for her . . . ’ They’ll do it but it’s so part of our lives, and I don’t bother them for more than 45 minutes, you know, every so many years.”

What few people realise, Barney says, is the speed that she works at, despite the cumbersome view camera. “When I was shooting those pictures I was feeding that film in so fast it’s like a motor drive. Most people never use a 4x5 that way. And until this day I am so fast, people cannot believe that I’m already done. I go bam! bam! bam! bam! My assistant is feeding me the film at a rapid rate, turning that film-holder over, ‘Give me another!’

“So that’s how you get that snapshot look. And you know, I’m doing this upside down, so I’m not really looking if the baby bottle is underneath the table, or this is over there and that. I can’t do that, otherwise I miss the shot. There are these accidents that make it look like they’re snapshots. It’s a funny combination of all those different things.”

Photographs Courtesy of Tina Barney and Paul Kasmin Gallery. Tina Barney is represented by Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York. ‘Tina Barney: The Europeans’ opens at The Frist Center of the Arts on January 19th 2015.