

Bagerski, and Kim West have been there and worked on my books too.}

Post Tool and I have had a great long-term relationship that goes back to a tiny newsprint catalog they made for a group show 15 years ago. We are able to really flesh out the details, find the very best fonts and typographic treatment that matches the style of the pictures and the mood I want to convey for the book.

One other thing that is important is that when it is time to do new book we start by lining them all up in chronological order, and make sure we are building on to this body of books, and consider all that we have done as a whole, before making the next move.

But I think most importantly we push each other. I push them to do new things, and they can recognize that even though I have never studied design, that I can still walk in, and immediately call it out when it needs to be tweaked more. On their end, they push me to be open to new ideas as well. Like pink end sheets.

It really works.



© Todd Hido, "A Road Divided", book cover

6. *Some of your photographs have been used as cover images for Raymond Carver's books. Do you feel that your work is somehow related to his writings?*

I feel very, very fortunate to have my photographs on the cover of what will ultimately be a whole suite of Raymond Carver's books. And yes, I do feel that my work is somehow related to his writings. There is a kinship. I often read his work and I "see pictures" and think of things I want try to make. In fact, in two of my previous books, "Roaming" and "Between the Two", I had selected Carver poems to be included as I felt like there was something in those poems that really extended my selection of photographs. They didn't literally illustrate them, but what they did I thought was open to them up.

I was deeply flattered when his designer & publisher contacted me about using my photographs to be on the covers of his books.



© Todd Hido / Vintage Books, *Reprints of Raymond Carver's backlist for the 25th anniversary of Vintage Contemporaries*

7. *Larry Sultan has been a friend and mentor as well as one of your teachers at the California College of Arts in San Francisco. Would you tell us something about your experience with him?*

Larry Sultan truly was one of the most remarkable people that I have ever known. I was so fortunate to have been able to study under him and also become his friend and colleague. He was so incredibly articulate about talking about pictures and I learned so much from him about what photography can do and how it can mean something that extends way beyond what you are picturing in your images.

I remember when I first got to CCA back in 1994 he was very happy because myself and a couple of other graduate students at the time were good, old-fashioned photographers. He always said that was very excited about that because ultimately he was too, but he had been doing lots of Public Art at that time, and he relished being surrounded by people that cared about photography so much. He missed it, making pictures, going out and “getting the loot,” he called it.

I can certainly trace moments back in time to graduate school where Larry said something or saw something in my work that really influenced the path that I am on now. I very much miss him and so do so many, many of the people that knew him well or had him as a teacher. He was such an influential figure, especially out here in the West Coast, where many people were able to directly have contact with him on a regular basis.

8. *You once told that you had the chance to see Emmet Gowin's darkroom and how he made his wonderful prints in such a simple space situated in an extra room of his home. What does your darkroom look like?*

My darkroom is extremely basic, in fact it's probably archaic but it works. As with much else in life, it's not really about the tools but how you use them.

I rent space in a commercial photography lab and I use it after hours. I usually go there a couple nights a week and print with my assistant Lance Brewer, and we just print as much as we can for five hours.

9. *In your series “A Road Divided” you photographed through the windshield of your car. Even if we can't see clearly through the glass, we get a perception of vastness, infinity; we try to look beyond the blurry parts of the window.*

*The images consist of two parts, on one hand there is the landscape, which is somehow exterior, and on the other hand the windshield of the car that creates another (interior) space. Do you think that this aspect influences the viewer in his photographic perception?*

Yes, I do think that influences the viewer because, as you mentioned, it's not just a photograph of the landscape but it is a photograph from my personal perspective. I'm somehow in the picture in a way. That is my breath fogging up the window! It has more of an intimacy I think. It has a subjective, diaristic quality and now that I really think about it—it's the opposite of something like an “authorless” objective view, which is most often seen from a higher, uncommon viewpoint.



© Todd Hido, 7557, 2008, from "A Road Divided"

10. All the images in "A Road Divided" are defined by an open horizon, a view that leads to infinity. Do you think that making the photographs in a different landscape (for example in the mountains) would change the meaning of the series?

I'm definitely interested in that open horizon. It's basically the landscape I grew up with in Ohio. That openness and those open roads are the kind of roads I'd ride my BMX bike down going to the next town over.

As for making the photographs in a different landscape, it certainly changes, but not as much as you would think. I have been most recently making that kind of photograph back in the suburbs and shooting homes again with the same kind of treatment. It is exciting to make images that combine elements from two groups of pictures.



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11. You recently worked on a project initiated by Harvey Bengt and the publishing house Kehrer Verlag called "One Day: Ten Photographers". Like the title says, ten selected photographers had to take

*pictures on one single day. Could you tell us a little bit about this experience? How was it for you to make photographs in just one given day?*

At first when they asked me to participate in the project I was a little bit worried, as I've often said to my students "you can't make great art on demand". Great stuff can't be forced and those kinds of situations often turn out poorly. But it was such a great group of people I could not decline participating.

So what I ended up doing was planning it out and re-visiting areas close to where I found good photographs before, so I was not wasting my time driving and just hoping I'd discover something that would work. That is what I usually do, is just drive, and drive, and I enjoy that search a lot but that does not work if you have to come up with a book that can hang with Rinko Kawauchi and John Gossage in just one day.

I also worked with a really great model that I had recently shot with so I knew just what to expect from her.

One thing that I did that was very different was to use a couple of assistants and a professional hair & make up person. I usually work totally alone in shooting my art, but in this case I had to maximize my time so I could vary the looks of the model quickly, so it looked more evocative, and more narrative, like more time had passed.

It was the most planned out shoot I have done to date and I have to say I was really surprised and happy with the results.



© Todd Hido



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*12. Your latest publication "Nymph Daughters" has been published by the Japanese publishing house Super Labo, How did this collaboration come about? Could you tell us something more about the project?*

Yasunori Hoki, who is the publisher of Super Labo, contacted me. He had done a few small books by other artists that I found were interesting, especially one by a favorite artist of mine, Ed Templeton.

The books are almost 'zine like and small editions of 500

I had really wanted to do something that was much more loose and experimental and take chances and risks in a way that you would necessarily do with larger scale projects.

What I ended up doing was exactly that. I revisited some of the sequencing experiments that I had done in a class with Larry Sultan called the Narrative Workshop. This was back in graduate school, where I would combine found photographs with my own photographs to sort of broaden the story in a way. Larry was teaching us about how to use an archive of images and to make something else completely different out of it, very much based on his experience with his classic book with Mike Mandel, "Evidence".

For "Nymph Daughters" I started with a typical 50's studio portrait of a woman who seemed to be a mother to me. And then I had a 1950's newspaper photograph of the immediate aftermath of an automobile accident. I put the mother at the front and the car wreck in the back and set out to bridge the gap between those two photographs.

In doing this I worked off the 1950's theme and style present in the found pictures and had dug up an old pulp fiction book called "Nymph Daughters" I owned that had a great cover—all it had on the it was the title and I just scanned it and represented it. Altered a bit by me with pencil.

For the interior I weaved together a sequence of some 126mm-snapshot photographs that I had recently taken, plus others that I have mostly never shown before, photographs of homes and models and a few other twists that I was excited to work with. Including spray paint. It is racy and ends in tragedy. I think there is a lot of meaning inside of it.

I could see many of these elements popping up in other work of mine.



© Todd Hido, image from photo-eye.com

13. If you would have to choose ten photographs (by ten different artists) for a little book/slideshow, which images would you select?

It's funny that you asked that as I recently edited "Witness #7" that is published by Nazraeli Press & JGS, which is a journal that comes out a couple of times a year where one photographer is in charge of the entire contents of the book.

In the back end I made a section that is just what you mentioned—photographs by other artists put together in a sequence in a book. I ended up photographing books from my own library that are really important to me, and books that I live with, and have often left open to the specific pages that I really liked best.

14. What are you working on right now?

Right now I am getting ready for show in New York of some of my recent portraits and nudes. It will be at Bruce Silverstein Gallery in early 2011.

I am also working on shooting new images that incorporate figures into the landscape. That's something that I've not done that much, to photograph people outside, and I find that to be quite interesting at this point in time.



© Todd Hido

I also made a photograph earlier this year that is at the edge of the water, which is usually a place that I don't shoot much but I'm quite captivated by this picture. I could see myself going and doing many more.

That is how things always start for me—I will make one or two photographs that I don't necessarily fit with my other ones and then I go out and try to build on them. Slowly it adds up into something.



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