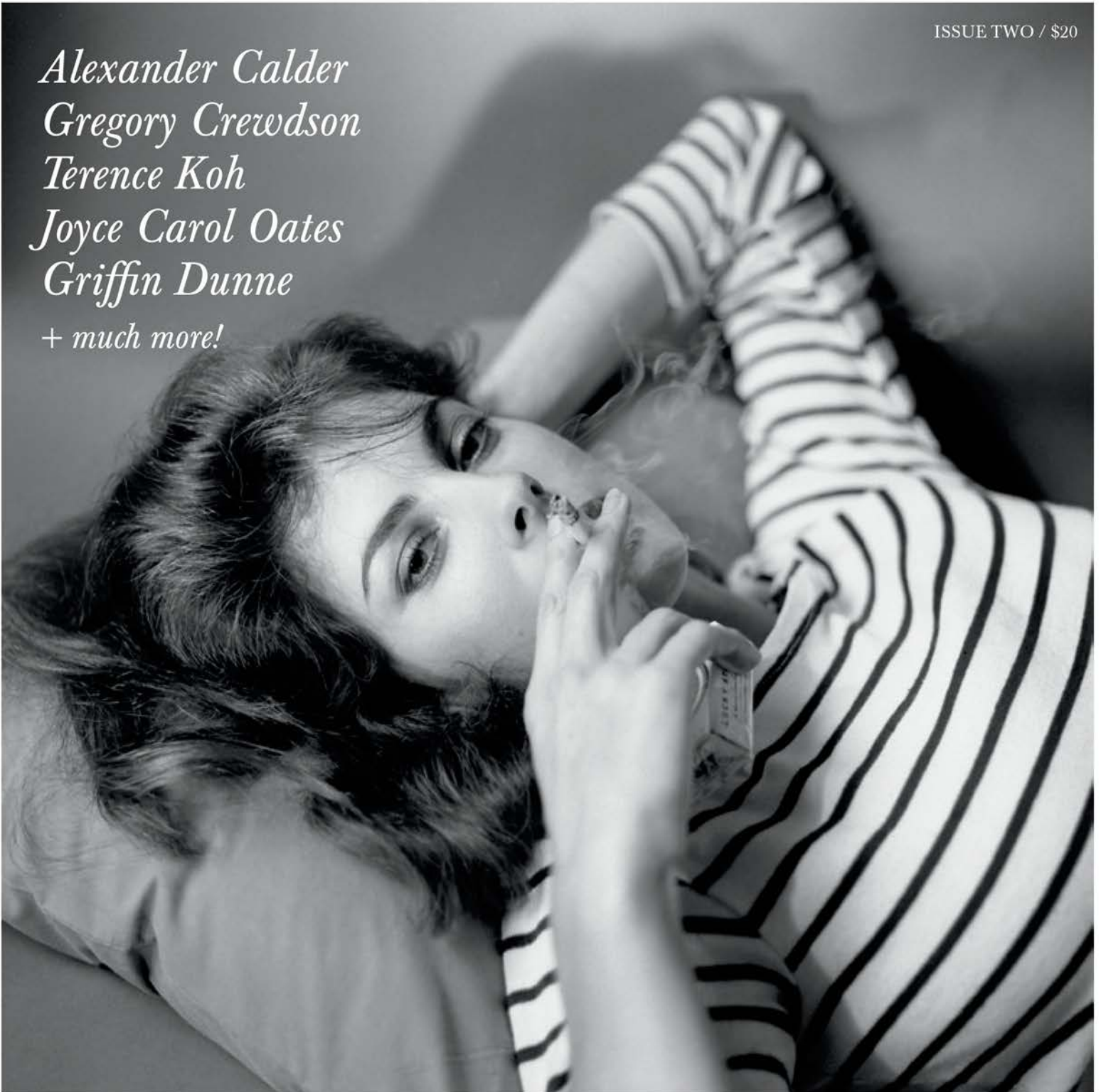


UpstateDiary

Insight & Inspiration From Our Creative Landscape

ISSUE TWO / \$20

Alexander Calder
Gregory Crewdson
Terence Koh
Joyce Carol Oates
Griffin Dunne
+ much more!



Academy Award Winning Director Kathryn Bigelow. Photographed by Jeannette Montgomery Barron.

Jeannette Montgomery Barron

Photographer



Her portrait of Cindy Sherman (1984) hanging above work by Dawn Clements.

“You know how when you ask an Italian how they cook something and they say “Sale, pepe, olio”? That’s kind of the way I feel about my photography: I don’t need many ingredients.”



In bed with Jeannette: “I love taking naps.”

“I never did plan on being a portraitist, it just sort of happened. It became a kind of addiction.”

– On photographing some of the world’s most famous artists.

Books by Jeannette Montgomery Barron mentioned in the interview:

“My Years in the 1980s NY Art Scene” (2014, Collezione Maramotti and Silvana Editoriale)

“Scene” (2013, powerHouse Books)

“My Mothers Clothes” (2010, Welcome Books)

This UD feature has been made possible by the generous support of JamesBarronArt.com

ON HER PLACE:

“A bit remote but peaceful.”

ON HER PORTRAIT OF ACADEMY AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR KATHERINE BIGELOW:

“I was introduced to Kathryn by my brother, Monty. He and Kathryn were gearing up to jointly direct “The Loveless”. We all hung out together in NYC in 1980 and 1981, took road trips and watched old movies together. I think Kathryn and I had talked about some great photos we had seen of Jean Seberg and Brigitte Bardot and those were the inspiration for this photo.”

ON PHOTOGRAPHING SOME OF THE WORLD’S MOST FAMOUS ARTISTS:

“I never did plan on being a portraitist, it just sort of happened. It became a kind of addiction.”

ARTIST MOST INTIMIDATED BY:

“I wouldn’t really say I was intimidated by William Burroughs but just slightly frightened when I walked in his front door and saw a table lined with shotguns. Why didn’t I know he was making “shotgun paintings”? I was in and out of the door within about 15 minutes but I got a good picture.”

ON SITTING FOR FRANCESCO CLEMENTE AND ALEX KATZ:

“That was always fun. I also sat for David Seidner back in the day. More recently Gregory Crewdson asked my husband and me to be in one of his photos in his “Sanctuary” series, shot in Rome. I am standing in the Cineciita entrance booth and James is in a car outside. It was great fun and an honor to be directed by Gregory.”

THE BEST AND THE WORST PART OF THE ART SCENE IN THE ‘80S:

“Drugs.”

ON HOLDING ON TO MEMORABILIA FOR HER BOOK “MY YEARS IN THE 1980S NEW YORK ART SCENE”:

“You can ask anyone who knows me well that I immediately try to get rid of anything I don’t need! My family makes fun of me for this. But somehow I kept all of that 1980’s memorabilia. And I’m glad I did.”

WORK PROCESS:

“I try never to work with an assistant because it sets up a different dynamic between the subject and me. I talk a bit with the subject, try to put them at ease and once I have my camera focused, I try to look at them in the eye instead of through the camera lens, at least for some of the shots.”

ON APPEARANCES:

“It’s funny but I get the feeling that people are sometimes more comfortable if I come through the door with a few suitcases full of equipment. I rarely use more than my camera and a light though. But I bring all of that stuff along anyway just to make everybody happy. You know how when you ask an Italian how they cook something and they say “Sale, pepe, olio”? That’s kind of the way I feel about my photography: I don’t need many ingredients.”

ON HAVING A REMEDY FOR SELF-DOUBT:

“Unfortunately I don’t or I would market that remedy and make a fortune. Self-doubt is a rough ride, isn’t it? Like a grey day that won’t end. I always envy people who are very sure of themselves. But that will never be me.”

LEAVING THE CITY:

“My husband, James, was the one who actually decided that our family needed to leave NYC. We left in 2003 and moved to Rome, Italy for eleven years. Then we returned to our home in CT in the fall of 2014. I love NYC but it’s much too frenetic for me. I need quiet and space to create, mentally and physically.”

HER FEARS:

“I worry that my life is going by too quickly.”

WHY ARTISTS LEAVE THE CITY:

“There are a lot less distractions in the country and more time to just buckle down and get work done. When I lived in the city I could make up a million excuses not to work. The other thing about the country is that in most cases you can have a workspace that’s much better than what you could have in the city.”

ON DOCUMENTING HER LATE MOTHER’S DESCENT INTO ALZHEIMER’S:

“It helped me process all of the emotions I felt while witnessing my mother lose all of her memories. I was grateful I could help retrieve some of them for her.”

PHOTOGRAPHING HER MOTHER’S CLOTHES:

“My mother was a real dresser — she wore and loved designer clothing. She had many closets in her home that were filled with these clothes and in her later years she “visited” them daily.”

“So, when my mother was moving away from her home to a smaller place, I decided to take photographs of all of her clothes so she could have a sort of catalogue of everything. But the most amazing thing happened when I showed her the photos: she started remembering where she had worn each dress, what party she had gone to, with whom she had danced. At that point the project took a different turn and it

became a way to try to help my mother retrieve her memories, and a way for me to cope with the fact that she had Alzheimer’s disease. “

WHAT SHE WOULD RATHER NOT DEAL WITH:

“Numbers — I am terrible with numbers.”

TRANSFORMING HER SPACE:

“We are building a barn with studio space for me and a viewing space for James, who is an art dealer and curator. My studio will become our kitchen — it’s really the best room in the house where everybody always wants to be.

HER INSPIRATION TO CREATE “TOUGHER” PORTRAITS:

“Age. It’s not that I want to take unflattering portraits — I never wanted to do that. It’s about getting to some kind of truth.”

HOW HER THOUGHT-LIFE TRANSLATES INTO HER WORK:

“I am a pretty spiritual person — I think that probably comes out in my work. Again, it’s about wanting to get to the essence of something, not just the surface.”

ON WHY THERE ARE MORE FINANCIALLY SUCCESSFUL MALE ARTISTS VS FEMALE:

“That’s a long story and I’m not sure if I can answer it well. But it’s a sad and well known fact.”

WHAT’S ON HER MIND:

“The state of the world at this moment. It’s frightening. Guns in America, global warming, racism — these are all things that worry me.”

“And you know that great line of Andie McDowell’s in ‘Sex, Lies and Videotape’? ‘I just... I’ve gotten real concerned over what’s gonna happen with all the garbage. I mean, we’ve got so much of it, you know? I mean we have to run out of places to put this stuff eventually.’ That’s another thing I’m worried about. “

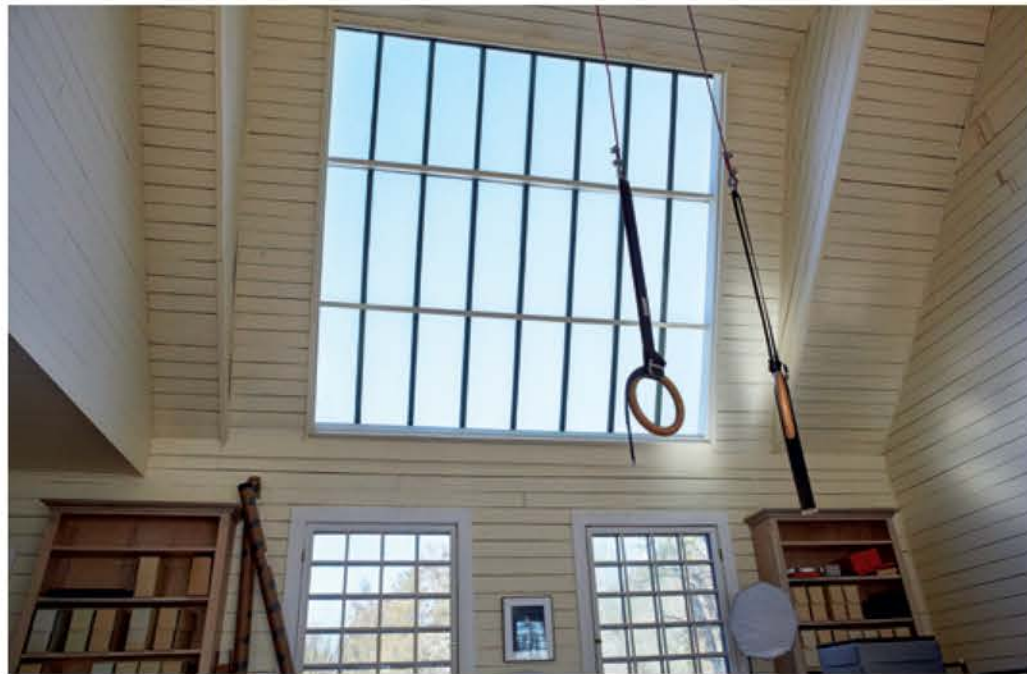
CURRENTLY WORKING ON:

“An exhibition of my photographs and short films of Rome which were taken with my iPhones. They will be shown at The American Academy in Rome in October 2016 (Barron was an Artist in Residence at the Academy in 2007), and a new body of mirrors: a continuation of my previous mirror photographs — these new ones are in color. And I’m always taking portraits ... “



1. Robert Mapplethorpe, 1987.
2. Barbara Kruger, 1984.
3. Jenny Holzer, 1984.
4. Moira Dryer, 1989.
5. Andy Warhol & Jean Michel Basquiat, 1985.

6. Gaby Hoffman, 1987.
7. William Burroughs, 1985.
8. Beatrix Ost and Adelheid Ost, 1987.
9. Bianca Jagger, 1983.



Tracey Emin, 2010

Previous page: A glimpse of her home and studio.