



À REBOURS
against the grain

SALON A REBOURS PRESENTS PICTURES THAT KILL – A 40 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF CHARLES GATEWOOD

**** 3rd – 24th October 2008 ****

**** 32 Charlotte Road, Shoreditch, EC2A 3PB****

In October 2008 San Francisco-based photographer Charles Gatewood will return to London for the first time since 1973 to attend *Pictures That Kill*, a forty-year retrospective exhibition of his work. Presented by curators À Rebours, the exhibition programme will include *Performances that Kill*, an evening of Live Art and happenings in the gallery space created in response to the collection by dynamic young live art production company Switch.

This is Charles Gatewood's first visit to London since 1973. His last visit was as a young photographer on assignment to photograph the infamous William S. Burroughs for *Rolling Stone* writer Robert Palmer's interview. A week spent hanging out with Burroughs and long-time collaborator Brion Gysin resulted not only in important photographs (namely Burroughs and Gysin with Dreamachine), but also in a collaboration between Burroughs and Gatewood that became the photographer's first published book, *Sidetripping*.

Sidetripping photographically documents Gatewood's journey through American counter-culture in the early 1970s, from the first Gay Pride marches in Woodstock, to Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and naked parties in New York. With a degree in social anthropology, Gatewood was drawn to documentation, but as a forerunner of photographers such as Nan Goldin, also began to immerse himself in the worlds that he was discovering. As an enthusiastic explorer, participation gave him almost unrestricted access to those worlds and allowed him to establish himself as the chief chronicler of the American sexual underworld, producing images that are infused with a love for the other, the vital, the wonderful and the courageous. Life-affirming, infectious, and historically significant, his work is also uncannily prophetic.

Much of the activity that Gatewood documented on the margins of society in the 70s, 80s and early 90s is now part of contemporary youth culture. Today tattooing is commonplace and pop stars regularly appear in S/M influenced attire. As sexual and body modification practices once seen as radical and taboo become increasingly accepted by the mainstream consciousness, Gatewood's contribution cannot be denied.

Exhibited widely in the States since the 70s, often to considerable controversy - images spray-painted by members of the public, visits to exhibitions from members of the vice squad and exhibitions banned - Charles Gatewood has never shown in the UK. *Pictures That Kill* represents an opportunity not only to see some of his most iconic images in context, but also to acquire a piece of history.

To present this exciting retrospective, Gatewood is working with innovative new company, A Rebours (Against The Grain), who will show the work alongside a curated programme of events commissioned in response to the photographs themselves.

"Are there still areas of the behavioural map marked UNKNOWN? If so, book my passage at once, for it is on these mysteriously familiar journeys that I feel most alive. In these dark worlds I sense no limits. In these forbidden acts I taste the infinite

--Charles Gatewood

For more information, price information or images please contact:

Kate Bowtell
07811 288 600
Kate@ARebours.co.uk

Jane Skuse
07729 533035
Jane@ARebours.co.uk



Notes to Editors

Charles Gatewood selected biography

Born in Missouri in 1942, Charles studied at the local University, graduating in 1963 with a BA in Anthropology, a minor in Art History, and a consuming interest in photography as social documentation.

Moving to Stockholm in 1964 to explore enlightened socialism, and escape the Vietnam draft, Charles found work with a Swedish news organisation, who were eventually persuaded to allow him to photograph for them. He travelled widely in Europe and photographed “hippies, protests, sex, drugs, music”. His interest in people and human behaviour has informed the majority of his work ever since.

New York 1966 and a cheap apartment on the Lower East Side placed Charles in the heart of the tumultuous social upheaval of the sixties. Shooting rock musicians for Rolling Stone, social problems for Saturday Review and protests for the New York Times he quickly became the counterculture photographer of choice.

1978 brought a move to Woodstock, then the Leica Medal of Excellence for Outstanding Humanistic Photojournalism for his 4 year photo essay on Wall Street. His list of interests grows into the 80s with gender issues – particularly the first Gay Pride rally, erotica, tattooing, piercing and other body modification, outlaw bikers and radical artists.

On moving to San Francisco in 1988, Charles again placed himself in the centre of counterculture America. He continues to document the evolution of counter culture movements, particularly body modification, fetish and radical sex. Eight books of his fine art photography have been published, and Charles has exhibited widely – bringing his unique vision to Europe for the first time in October this year.

À Rebours (against the grain)

À Rebours is an art space for innovative contemporary art in all of its forms. Reviving the ethos of the fin-de-siècle salon, combining chic, decadence and subversion, with humour and a lightness of touch, À Rebours exhibits serious and significant work without pomposity.

By Integrating performance into a selling gallery environment and developing new models for the sale and commissioning of live art, À Rebours is setting out to completely break the mould. Expect regular live art evenings and happenings within in association with dynamic performance company Switch. Expect to step through-the-looking glass into a world that intrigues, challenges, disorientates and excites.

www.ARebours.co.uk

Performance company Switch

Switch is a rapidly-evolving vehicle for the creation and sale of live art and experimental theatre. The company is run by London-based artists and curators Justin Allen & Ewelina Kolaczek, working with a cluster of the most exciting live artists practicing today.

Switch artists present work at venues, events and festivals in London and around the UK, including Chelsea Theatre, Queen Mary College, Torture Garden, Live Art Falmouth and Fierce. In addition Switch produce and curate events, including last year's highly acclaimed Spirit + Flesh UK (funded by Arts Council England) and the site-specific series *my site | in space*.

As curators we showcase the work of many established and emerging artists. Current and previous collaborators include Fakir Musafar, Helen Schoene, Robin Dingemans, Mark Butcher, Martina von Holn and Mara Castilho. We are currently developing new strategies for the collection and sale of live art, in partnership with our network of artists.

www.SwitchPerformance.co.uk