

Margo Rosenbaum: Some Portraits

Organized by Tif Sigfrids

Exhibition dates: May 27 – June 26, 2021

Reception for the artist: Thursday May 27, 3-7 pm

The group of eleven photographs, presented here, were taken between the years 1974 and 1985 and represent a sliver of the artist's plenteous encounters with artists, musicians, and writers through her involvement in various American art and music scenes. Margo Newmark Rosenbaum (b. Los Angeles 1939) studied painting at the San Francisco Art Institute with Richard Diebenkorn and Elmer Bischoff. After finishing school, she moved to New York City, where she met her husband Art Rosenbaum, also an artist and budding folklorist. The photographs here were taken during their travels throughout America, recording music or during extended stays in Europe related to Art's professorship at The University of Georgia.

Narrowing down the show to eleven photographs was challenging. Looking through Margo's extensive collection of images, it's obvious that there is a story you'd like to hear attached to every single one. The pictures come from a different time period, literally, but also recall the days when you could look up a stranger's number in the phone book and call them out of the blue to see if you could pay a visit. Hard to imagine now. When I asked Margo how she met Ed Kienholz, she said, "Art and I were in Berlin and we were interested in his art, so we looked him up." When I followed up by asking if he came to the door without his shirt on, she said, "as far as I remember." This is also difficult to imagine these days.

Over the years, many of Margo's pictures were used as album artwork or as documentary accompaniments to the folk music Art recorded. The image of Howard Finster, presented here, was used as album cover artwork for the 1984 Smithsonian Folkways release "Howard Finster: Man of Many Voices". The photos have the same transportive quality that Art's field recordings do in that they are intimate reflections of art created in domestic settings. You could almost get the feeling when you look at the picture of Peggy Guggenheim, taken in Venice in 1978, that Margo was just spending time with Peggy on her porch.

I've spent a lot of time visiting Margo and Art since I moved to Athens three years ago and there has never been a shortage of stories to accompany our visits. It's possible that it may exhaust the reader of a press release to go into detail here explaining the circumstances behind each image in this show. However, carrying on the theme of *looking up*, I would encourage anyone curious to know more (especially about the photos of the musicians who you might not be familiar with) to look them up. I was interested to learn about the connection between an encounter with James Baldwin and the Georgia Sea Island Shouters that took place in Italy, but I will let her tell you that story. Just look Margo up, she'd be happy to explain.

Margo Newmark Rosenbaum lives and works in Athens, Georgia. Her photographs have been widely exhibited and published in The New York Times, Newsweek, and The Old-Time Herald. She was recently a featured photographer in The New York Review.

Tif Sigfrids is a gallerist based in Athens, Georgia. She operates out of spaces in Comer, Georgia and New York City.