

photograph

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Allen Frame, *Frank and Dan, NYC*, 1982. Courtesy the artist and Gitterman Gallery

REVIEWS

Allen Frame: Whereupon | Gitterman Gallery

BY DAVID ROSENBERG, SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

Titled simply, by subject and location (all but one were taken in New York City), the photographs in *Whereupon* are a mix of candid shots and portraits, infused with a familiarity that often comes through when someone in the friend group is a photographer.

Black-and-white, gelatin-silver vintage prints taken between 1977 and 1992, Allen Frame's photographs include friends, the photographer himself, and a few recognizable faces, including William Burroughs and Cookie Mueller. All are presented without hierarchy or linear narrative.

The photographs capture New York City when it was a much different, more bohemian place, evoking a sense of nostalgia and youth (the rundown apartments, the ubiquitous cigarettes). In the same way that Nan Goldin's diaristic, color images reflected her life in New York City, so too, do Frame's black-and-white photographs (an image of Goldin is included in the exhibition). But a sense of formality in Frame's compositions and the ways in which he plays with light are a juxtaposition to the casual nature of his subjects.



Allen Frame, *Cookie and John*, NYC, 1981. Courtesy the artist and Gitterman Gallery

Frame's subjects rarely seem pressed for time. In *Peter and Susan in my apartment, NYC* (1977), Peter lies in his underwear in what feels like a makeshift bed; a book is open next to him as he looks to engage with Susan, who seems preoccupied. They interact in a space that is physically tight and emotionally distant. That sentiment is a through line in this collection, and Frame seems content to leave it up to the viewer to interpret where his subjects are headed: About to go out? Just coming in? Ready to connect or to separate?

Still, there is a precision to these images, on view through November 5, a sense that Frame is deliberately investigating those liminal, transient moments in our lives. It's hard not to look at these images and consider how they would have been taken and edited today, in a world in which our every moment is captured and shared. What is wonderful about the images in *Whereupon* is that we don't need to know more. We have been given an introduction to the lives of these subjects, and that feels like enough.