

MINOR IMPACT

*Sixteen photographers who were
influenced by **MINOR WHITE***

Paul Caponigro
Walter Chappell
Carl Chiarenza
Peter DeLory
William Giles
John Goodman
Nicholas Hlobeczy
Henry Horenstein
Kenneth Josephson
Peter Laytin
John Daido Loori
Nathan Lyons
Marion Patterson
Marc PoKempner
Eugene Richards
Jerry Uelsmann

Curated by John Goodman

*Howard Greenberg Gallery
41 East 57th Street, NYC*





MONTAUK 1968

The atmosphere at Minor's place was quite beautiful. A spirit of cooperation mingled with good music, creating an almost dizzying kind of special perfume that we all inhaled.

PAUL CAPONIGRO



TWO WORLDS, ABANDONED OVEN Rush-Mundon, NY 1957

The whole situation (describing a portrait session Minor did of him) became totally extraordinary lasting over an hour during which he (Minor) made six exposures, changing darkslides with a reassuring smile or a nod of the head. ... We drove back all the way in silence. He showed me proofs a few days later but would not discuss them. They were pictures of someone I would come to know years later, in 1957 in Rochester, already wearing my clothing.

WALTER CHAPPELL



SEVEN SETTINGS I 1990

A significant point behind all of the above was Minor's conviction that a photograph is a piece of paper with tones which *may* reference what existed in front of the camera/photographer's unmoving, single-point perspective. A photograph may comment on, refer to, reality, but it cannot reproduce reality—whether the maker's intent is documentation, commentary, or poetry. It is this understanding that takes photography out of the mistaken notion (which came with the invention/discovery) that a photograph is a detailed, mechanical, reproduction of whatever the camera "is pointed at"—which is why most photographs provide only surface reference to what may be centered (with little or no regard for what surrounds that centered object, person, or event) on the piece of film or paper. Once this is understood, the maker is free to use the tools of the medium to control what shall be shared with viewers (as in music, poetry, prose, painting, etc.)...

CARL CHIARENZA



DESERT TRACKS Pyramid Lake, Nevada 1988

I was Minor's assistant at Hotchkiss School workshop, Connecticut, 1973. One of the exercises he used with students that I still remember was to close your eyes and visualize yourself standing in an empty room, then gather your self up (in your mind) and walk to another room, which was empty except for a likeness of yourself, whom you must then ask a question. He used this as way to make people take a step back, then look back at their own intensions and look to themselves as a guide.

PETER DELORY



BLACK HOLE 1973

In an intensive never ending workshop the early part of 1958, we tried out everything Minor knew: hypnosis, meditation, zen, gurdjieff, dancing, automatic writing, astrology whatever worked. Looking back I remember Scotch-on-the-rocks worked best.

WILLIAM GILES



SOLITAIRE The Times Square Gym 1993

Minor always said
“the photograph
waits for the photog-
rapher it has chosen.”
JOHN GOODMAN



MEDITATION ROOM #2 Boston 1975

He never behaved as a teacher toward me; in fact he treated me as a peer—and to this day I truly wonder why. It seemed to me he treated me as the photographer I might become, but how he could have had that notion, I have no way of knowing.

NICOLAS HLOBECZY



FRANCES Jamaica Plain, MA 1971

In 1969, I took a 10-day workshop with Minor White at his home in Arlington, MA. Minor was a follower of the philosopher Gurdjieff (“What is the sense and significance of life on Earth and human life in particular?”), and he injected much of Gurdjieff’s beliefs into his classes. This did not sit well with me, as I wasn’t very spiritually inclined. About halfway through the class, I’d had enough and screwed up the courage to tell him. Minor listened and then told me I shouldn’t quit the class, because I’d already paid and I wasn’t getting a refund. Then he gave me a piece of advice that’s most influenced my long career as a teacher. He told me I might just learn something, if I had the right attitude. “Just take from the class what’s useful for you and throw out the rest,” he said. And that’s exactly what I did. I learned to take a little of this and a little of that from Minor and later teachers, and then put the mix to best use for me—and hopefully for my students.

HENRY HORENSTEIN

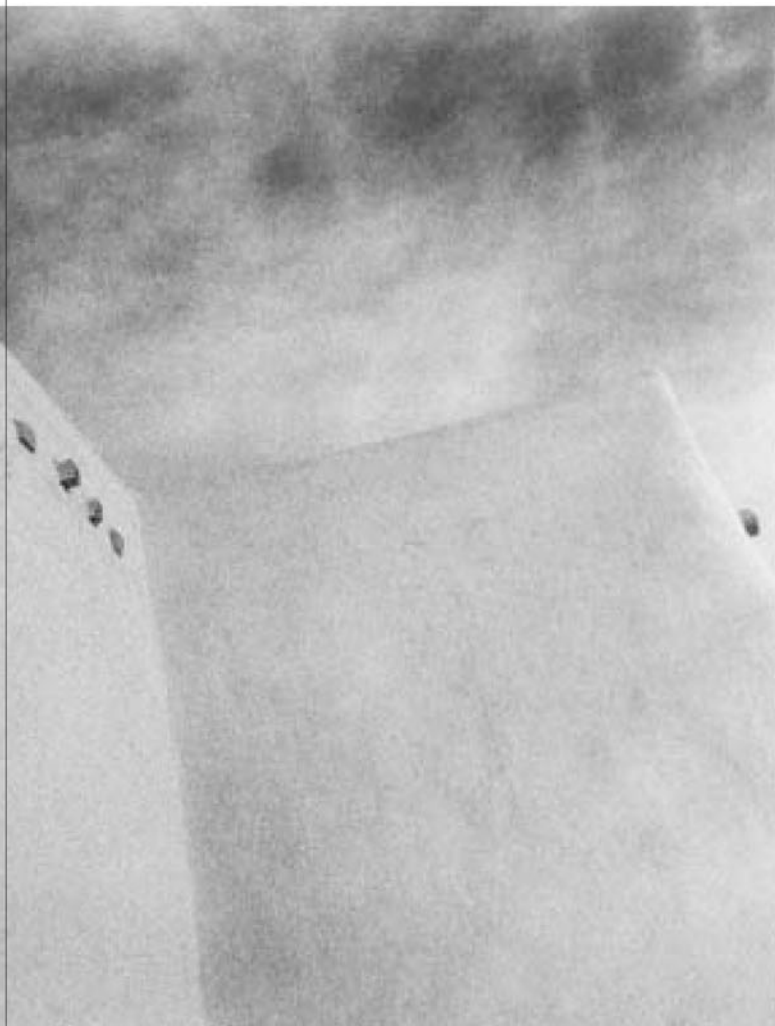


HONOLULU 1968

Minor taught me not to be closed minded...to accept surprises and things that come along...to be open minded.
KENNETH JOSEPHSON



ST. FRANCIS CHURCH Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico 1982



Minor was one of the most unselfish and generous individuals I have ever known. Not only did he house me and my girlfriend while I participated in his infamous one-year private workshop, but he only required food money of \$15 a week and household chores and upkeep. Three meals a day and room were provided. He did not charge anyone a fee for that one-year private workshop. We used his personal darkroom, had access to his library, and generally had a year of intensive training with a minimal amount of “outside” pressure. He even helped me get a part-time weekend job at MIT so I could earn that food money. It was a young photographers dream.

PETER LAYTIN



HEAD FORM 1978

The days that followed deepened my appreciation for Minor and his teachings. Something had opened in me, and the techniques and activities of the workshop started to make sense. Minor was guiding us to go beyond simply seeing images. He was inviting us to feel, smell and taste them. He was teaching us how to be photography.”

As I was leaving, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for Minor’s teaching that I did not know how to requite. When I said this to Minor he simply said, You’re a teacher right? I nodded. “Well then teach.”

JOHN DAIDO LOORI



MY DADDY DRIVES A PONTIAC 1965

Minors ability and willingness to switch roles from teacher to student is a lesson I have carried with me through almost fifty years of my own teaching: to always retain the ability to become the "student."

NATHAN LYONS

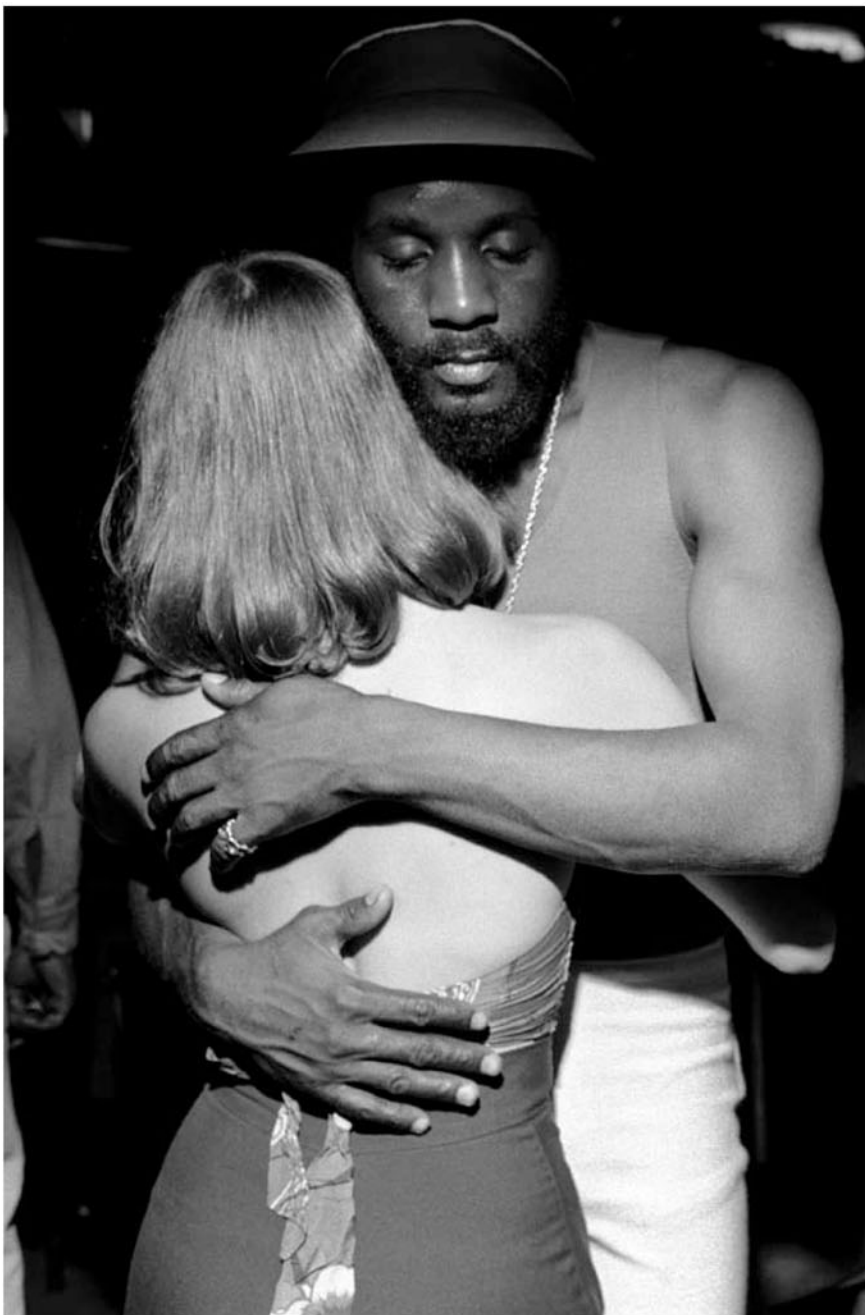


BOWLING BALL BEACH, DUSK 1998



Minor was very heavy into symbolism, which after working for Ansel in Yosemite and taking 2 classes from Dorothea was quite a departure. I I didn't immediately respond, but I found Minor's teachings to become more and more important over the years. One of his assignments was to photograph letters of the alphabet, not literal ones but shapes that resembled letters. After doing that I kept thinking about what my personal alphabet consisted of: pine needles, water, shadows, granite and light.

MARION PATTERSON



"DREAMING" THERESA'S 1974

Sitting in Minor's upstairs office, his mane of white hair lit by the sun reflected off slate tiles on the roof of the old MIT armory building, his piercing blue eyes poring over my prints, my heart was pounding.

I'd hitchhiked to Cambridge from Chicago with my portfolio in a cardboard folder and my journal and a Leica in my backpack, hoping the man who'd written so beguilingly in *Aperture* about photography as a tool in individuation, becoming oneself, could help me connect my interest in Jungian psychology and my passion for making pictures.

He read my photographs as though they were dreams. He saw my isolation, my search for identity, my ambitions and insecurities—and my need to connect with the world through photography.

He invited me to join the graduate seminar the next autumn, so casually I didn't really believe it, and my dream of becoming a photographer had begun to come true.

We began with the basics—the zone system—learned to translate tones from nature thru film to paper, learned to follow the light, explore the shadows, master our impatience and our craft. We danced to the images Minor projected. We searched for resonance with our subjects.

We were not "artists," certainly nothing like journalists, we were "creative photographers" using the medium to discover our selves, altering exposure, contrast, framing to reveal some kind of truth. Searching for spirit.

Not much later, back in Chicago, I began to journey into the culture of the blues – descending into a dark, noisy basement where the initial chaos of music, motion, emotion, and altered states gradually sorted itself into comprehensible patterns. Issues of Blackness and Whiteness transcended the steps of the grey scale. Spirit and soul were conjured every night, and some few of their traces were captured on film.

Still, the inherent ambiguity remains: are these mirrors, messages? whose spirit inhabits the images? Who is the dreamer dancing whose dream?

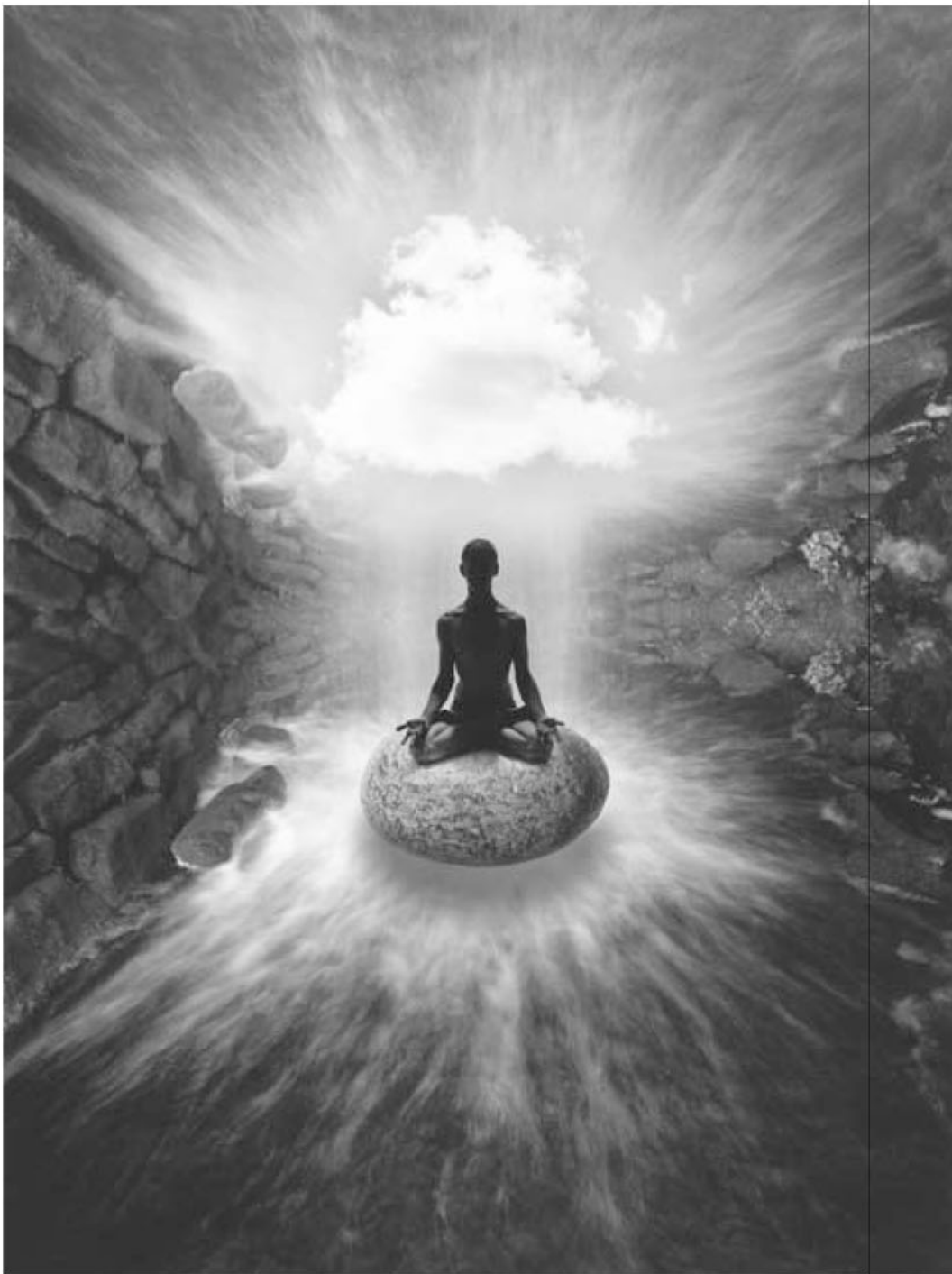
MARC POKEMPNER



BLIND ELDER Guinea 1988

Minor taught by experience and ideas rather than by exterior materials and information. He talked about a total creative process. This meant you had to live the life of what you were going to become rather than simply adopt a certain style of photography.

EUGENE RICHARDS



STONE MEDITATION 2008

There is a Zen saying
“when the student is ready
the master appears.”

JERRY UELSMANN

MINOR

IMPACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The truth is Minor's impact was major and pervasive. I hope someday it will be possible to include the many other accomplished photographers influenced by Minor White in a larger more inclusive exhibition.

I want to thank the following for their help with Minor Impact: Stephen Daiter Gallery, Fotosphere Gallery, Robert Klein Gallery, Scheinbaum and Russek, Bruce Silverstein Gallery, Peter Wach Gallery, Karen Haas MFA/Boston, Robert Haiko, Nathan Hlobeczy, Robert Parsons, Alyssa Giacobbe, Tim Whelan, the sixteen photographers: Paul Caponigro, Walter Chappell, Carl Chiarenza, Peter DeLory, William Giles, Nicholas Hlobeczy, Henry Horenstein, Kenneth Josephson, Peter Laytin, John Daido Loori, Marion Patterson, Marc PoKempner, Eugene Richards, Jerry Uelsmann, my wife Jeanne for conceiving the idea, my sons Jason and Jared Goodman for their enthusiastic support, Nathan Anderson, Karen Marks and a special thank you to Howard Greenberg for providing this opportunity for which I am forever grateful. —**John Goodman**