Joel Meyerowitz

1938–present · American

'Light is the revelation of form' — the large format shift and Cape Light



Cape Light series · 1978

> *"Light is the revelation of form — it is the subject."*
>
> — Joel Meyerowitz

KEY WORKS

- Cape Light, 1978 — the definitive color photography book
- St. Louis and the Arch, 1981
- Aftermath: World Trade Center Archive, 2001 — the only photographer with access
- Bystander: A History of Street Photography

CONTEXT

Meyerowitz began as a street photographer in black and white. In the early 1970s he switched to an 8x10 large format camera and color — at a time when color was considered commercial and unserious. Cape Light, made during summers on Cape Cod, changed how photographers thought about color, light, and the American landscape. His observation: 'Light is the revelation of form — it is the subject.' The 8x10 forced him to slow down, set up, and wait.

WHY THIS PHOTOGRAPHER

Meyerowitz connects to Unit 1 (light as subject) and to the large format printing students are now doing on the imagePROGRAF. His Cape Light prints are large, luminous, and the color is the argument. The large format print changes what a photograph is.

10TH AND ST. CHARLES, ST. LOUIS · 1978



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. 'Light is the revelation of form — it is the subject.' Now that you've spent a year studying light, do you agree?
2. Cape Light is a book of color photographs of Cape Cod. There is no single dramatic event — just light, water, architecture, sky. What holds a body of work together when there is no obvious narrative?

MORE IMAGES



St. Louis and the Arch · 1981



Cape Light (laundry), Provincetown



Cosmos, Provincetown · 1976



Gold Column Porch, Provincetown · 1977