

ANN PARKER

LOS AMBULANTES:
THE ITINERANT
PHOTOGRAPHERS
OF GUATEMALA
VINTAGE
PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM THE 1970s



*Rope and basket vendors
contemplating being
photographed, 1970s*
gelatin silver print
print 8-1/2 x 5-1/2"
(21.6 x 14 cm) on mount
14 x 11" (36 x 28 cm)



Sisters dressed for annual
fair, Barillas, 1970s
Cibachrome print
20 x 16" (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

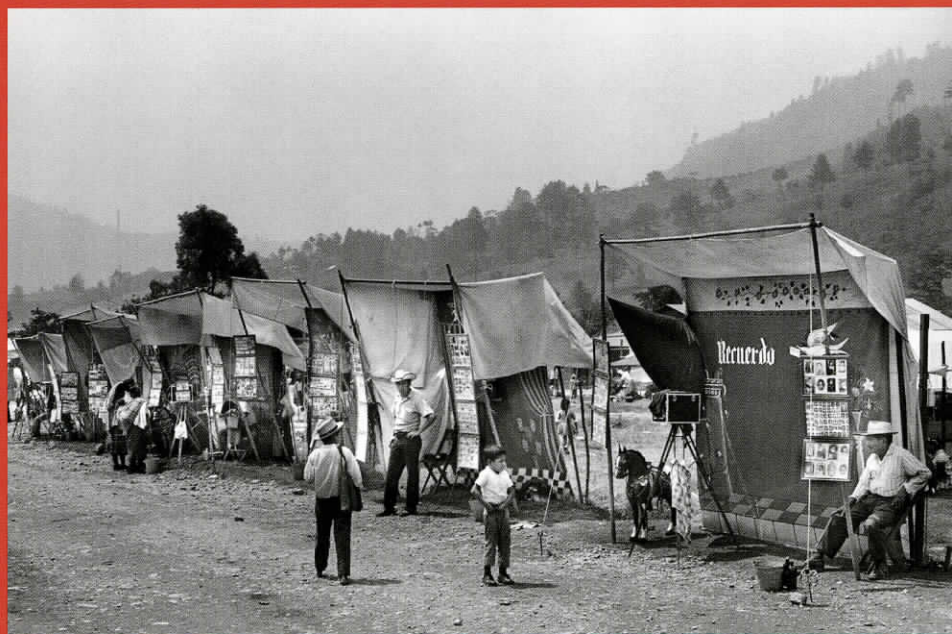




From that auspicious moment in the spring of 1971 when I first chanced upon an itinerant photographer set up in a Guatemalan market place, a door opened to a decade-long search. From the beginning I was intrigued by the intensity with which rural people, particularly in mountainous areas of northern Guatemala, reacted to being photographed. Their almost trancelike expressions clearly showed that for them the camera still retained much of the powerful magic it had possessed in much earlier years.

In our image-glutted society, the psychological impact of facing a camera is greatly diminished. By comparison, many of the subjects who chose to be photographed by itinerant photographers were typically appearing before a camera for the first and only time in their lives. The casual snapshot played no role in their drama, and the rarity of coming before the itinerant's lens was reflected in the resulting portraits. Even such softening details as naively conceived backdrops and awkwardly placed props seemed to heighten rather than diminish the visual outcome.

The role of the itinerant image-maker was simply to supply small cheap photographs, either for identity purposes on official documents or as treasured mementos which would all too soon fade and yellow. More was neither asked for nor received.



For the next decade, during repeated trips to Guatemala,

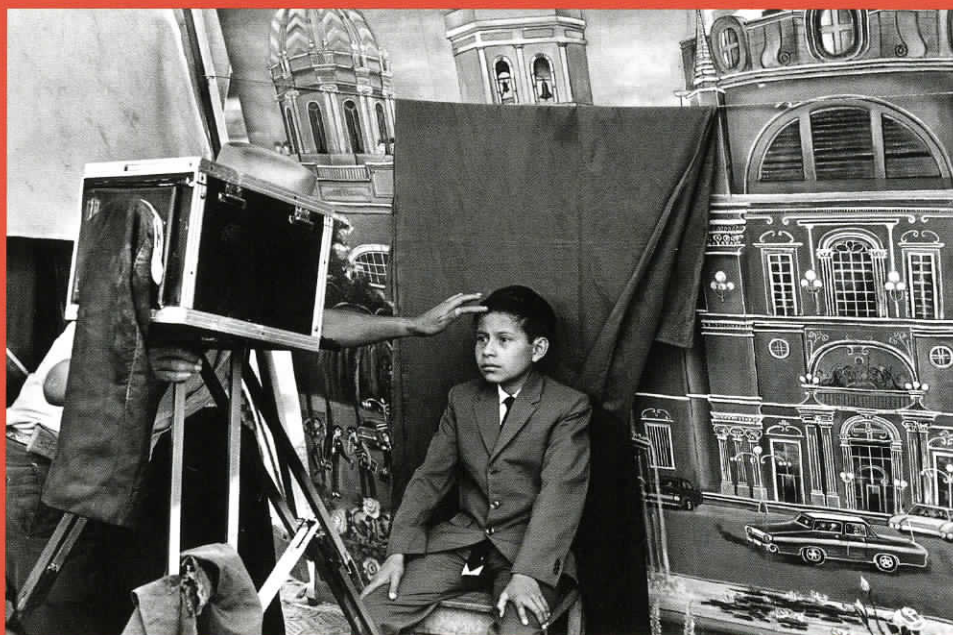
where I traveled to annual fairs for weeks at a time with these roving picture-makers, a day rarely passed without my recording magical blends of the fantasy of the backdrops with the reality of the fair-goers. It was like waiting before a series of small stages for multiple dramas to unfold.

In a kind of partnership with the itinerants, I acted as their photographic spokesperson to record, in a more lasting way than they were able to, the essence of their world. I brought to this task my vision, my photographic knowledge and equipment, and my firm belief in the importance of chronicling this lovely folk tradition which was already starting to disappear and is now rarely found.

My husband, Avon Neal, offered his research skills and impressive knowledge of Guatemalan indigenous life, as well as his constant companionship and encouragement. The photographers extended their acceptance, cooperation, and friendship. Finally, the subjects, unaware of the vital role they were playing, gave the beauty of themselves.

Between 1982 and 1984 the trade edition and the limited-edition books of *Los Ambulantes* were published, along with the portfolio *Itinerant Images of Guatemala*, containing 30 original silver prints. After several exhibitions and lectures, the project was closed, and was rarely looked at until a few months ago.

— Ann Parker



far left, top

Choosing the backgrounds,
Barillas, 1970s
gelatin silver print
print 8 x 12" (20.3 x 30.5 cm)
on mount 14 x 18"
(35.6 x 45.7 cm)

far left, bottom

Photographers' row at annual
fair, Barillas, 1970s
gelatin silver print
10 x 13-1/2" (25.4 x 34.3 cm)

left, top

Photographer directing pose,
Santa Cruz del Quiché, 1970s
gelatin silver print
print 7 x 10" (17.8 x 25.4 cm)
on mount 12 x 16"
(30.5 x 40.6 cm)

left, bottom

Juan Gonzalez, 1970s
gelatin silver print
print 4-3/8 x 6-3/8" (11.1 x
16.2 cm) on mount 9 x 11"
(23 x 28 cm)

right

Recently married couple,
Barillas, 1970s
gelatin silver print
print 9 x 5-15/16" (23 x 15 cm)
on mount 14 x 11"
(35.6 x 28 cm)

far right

Seven daughters, Santa Cruz del
Quiché, 1970s
gelatin silver print
print 9 x 6" (23 x 15 cm) on
mount 14 x 11" (36 x 28 cm)



EDUCATION

- 1956 BFA, Yale University
 1955 Studies with Minor White in Rochester, NY
 1961 Studies with Lisette Model and Joseph Breitenbach at The New School, New York, NY
 1985 Maine Photographic Workshops, Rockport, Maine

SELECTED ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 Deborah Bell Photographs, New York, NY: *Los Ambulantes: The Itinerant Photographers of Guatemala/Vintage Photographs from the 1970s*
 2010 American University in Cairo: *Twilight Visions in Egypt's Nile Delta*
 2004 Babbidge Library, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT: *Hajj Paintings: Folk Art of the Great Pilgrimage*
 2002 Sonoma Valley Museum of Art, Sonoma, CA: *Botanical Metamorphics: The Photograms of Ann Parker*
 1997 American University in Cairo: *Hajj Paintings: Folk Art of the Great Pilgrimage*
 1993 Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA: *Tradiciones: Photographs of Rural Life in Latin America*
 1988 Maxwell Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM: *Los Ambulantes: The Itinerant Photographers of Guatemala*
 1987 El Instituto Dominicano de Cultura Hispanica, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: *Dominican Portfolio*
 1986 Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ: *Recuerdos*
 1986 La Galeria, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: *La Mirada Fotografica de Ann Parker*
 1985 National Museum of Art, La Paz, Bolivia: *Una Calidad de Luz*
 1983 Focus Gallery, San Francisco, CA: *Guatemalan Images and Other Recent Work*
 1982 Santa Fe Center for Photography, Santa Fe, NM: *Los Ambulantes: The Itinerant Photographers of Guatemala*
 1981 Gallery of Graphic Arts, New York, NY: *Ann Parker: A Retrospective*
 1976 Carl Siembab Gallery, Boston, MA: *Itinerant Images of Guatemala*

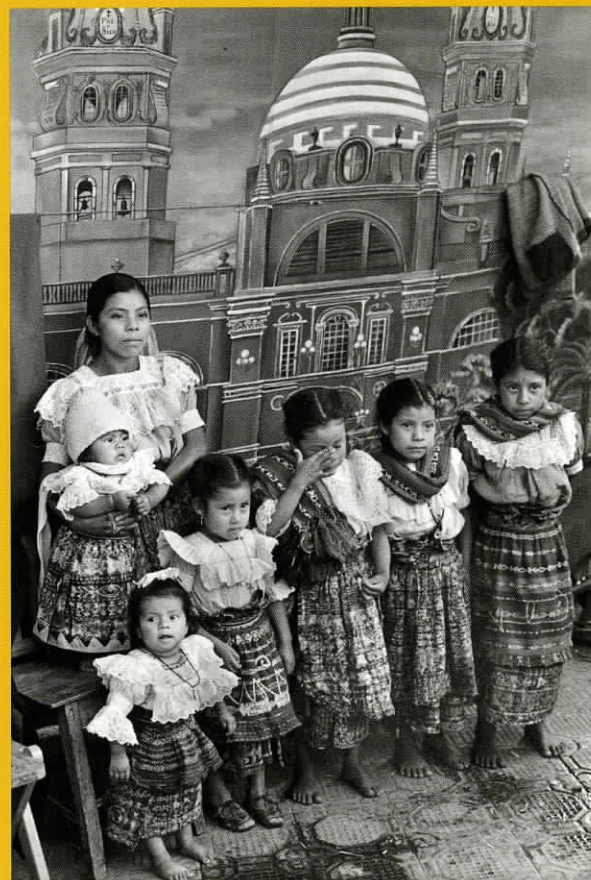
- 1975 Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA: *Images of Portugal*
 1970 Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas: *The Ephemeral Image*
 1970 Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY: *The Ephemeral Image*
 1969 Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM: *18th Century New England Gravestones*
 1966 Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX: *Early New England Gravestones*
 1964 Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, MI: *Early American Stone Sculpture*
 1958 Sterling Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ: *Photographs by Ann Parker*

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1998 Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA: *From the Background to the Foreground*
 1998 Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ
 1976 Mead Art Gallery, Amherst College, Amherst, MA: *New England Gravestones*
 1974 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY: *The Flowering of American Folk Art*
 1967 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY: *Photography in the Fine Arts*
 1963 George Eastman House, Rochester, NY: *Photography '63/An International Exhibition*
 1961 Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY: *Fifty Photographers*

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA
 American University in Cairo, New Cairo, Egypt
 Amon Carter Museum of Art, Fort Worth, TX
 Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ
 George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY
 Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom Center, Austin, TX
 Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
 Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, MA



Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
 Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
 Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, NM
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
 Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA

PUBLICATIONS

Twilight Visions in Egypt's Nile Delta. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009.
Hajj Paintings: Folk Art of the Great Pilgrimage. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press 2010 (Revised).
Los Ambulantes: The Itinerant Photographers of Guatemala. Deluxe edition of 100 copies, bound in Guatemalan Ikat, with signed gelatin silver print. North Brookfield, MA: Thistle Hill Press, 1984.
Itinerant Images of Guatemala. 30 gelatin silver prints in clamshell case, with text by Avon Neal. North Brookfield, MA: Thistle Hill Press, 1983.
Los Ambulantes: The Itinerant Photographers of Guatemala. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982.
Early American Stone Sculpture Found in the Burying Grounds of New England. New York: Sweetwater Editions, 1982.
Scarecrows. Barre: Barre Publishers, 1978.
Cuna Cosmology. Washington, DC: Third World Press, 1978.
Molas: Folk Art of the Cuna Indians. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1977.
Ephemeral Folk Figures: Scarecrows, Harvest Figures, and Snowmen. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1969.

right

Framed board showing
photographer's samples, 1970s
gelatin silver print
print 10-1/2 x 7" (26.7 x
17.8 cm) on mount 18 x 14"
(45.7 x 35.6 cm)

front cover

Portrait with chickens,
Momostenango, 1970s
Cibachrome print
20 x 16" (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

Published by Deborah Bell
Photographs and Paul M. Hertzmann,
Inc. in conjunction with the exhibition
"Ann Parker / Los Ambulantes:
The Itinerant Photographers of
Guatemala / Vintage Photographs
from the 1970s" at Deborah Bell
Photographs, New York, NY,
March 4–April 30, 2016.

Deborah Bell Photographs
16 East 71st Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10021
212-249-9400
www.deborahbellphotographs.com

Paul M. Hertzmann, Inc.
P.O. Box 40447
San Francisco, CA 94140
415-626-2677
www.hertzmann.net

Design: Beverly Joel, pulp, ink
Printing: Meridian Printing

All photographs are vintage gelatin
silver prints and Cibachrome prints.

These and other photographs by
Ann Parker are offered for sale.
Brochure © 2016 Deborah Bell
Photographs and Paul M.
Hertzmann, Inc.
Essay © 2016 Ann Parker
Photographs © 2016 Ann Parker
No images may be reproduced
without the written permission of
the photographer.

