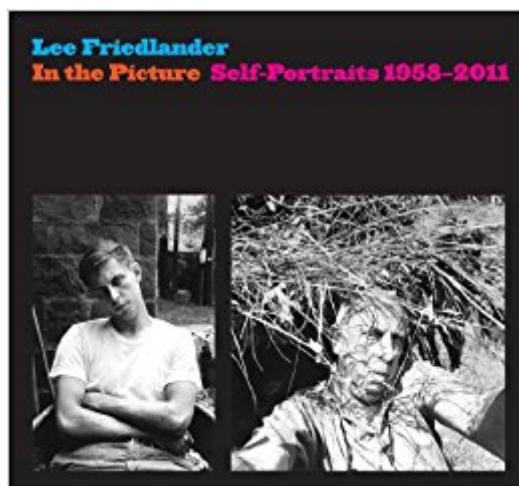


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In The Picture: Self-Portraits, 1958-2011



Synopsis

Lee Friedlander (b. 1934) has been tackling the challenge of self-portraiture throughout his prolific career. What began as an unorthodox investigation of the genre has become a masterful engagement spanning five decades. In this extraordinary compilation, which includes hundreds of previously unpublished pictures, we follow the famous photographer through the years as his personal and creative lives unfold and intertwine. Produced to the highest production standards and featuring over 400 duotone images from his first self-portraits, taken with cable release in hand, to recent images of the photographer with his family and extended network of friends. In the Picture explores Friedlander's various guises throughout a rich and colorful life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Through decades of keen observations of the American cultural landscape, Friedlander has been methodically, relentlessly and endearingly documenting himself. In the Picture . . . celebrates the pleasures of looking back at a life well seen." New York Times, Top Ten Photo Books of 2011 (Top Ten Photo Books New York Times) "What makes this latest (and, one hopes, not last) volume of self-portraiture exceptional is its inclusion of five decades of work and many never-before-seen images. . . . An excellent choice for photographers who wish to explore techniques of self-portraiture and readers interested in learning more about this great American photographer." Michael Dashkin, Library Journal (Michael Dashkin Library Journal)

Lee Friedlander is a photographer based in New York City. Richard Benson is a photographer and former dean of the Yale University School of Art.

This is Friedlander's third book of self portraits--the first published by Haywire Press in 1970 (45 images), the second published in 2000 by Fraenkel Gallery (77 images)--but any fan of Friedlander (or any photographer) knows that there are more images that didn't make the early edits--there is never enough money or courage to do it right the first time around...This volume contains 376 images, all of them containing the image of Friedlander, his shadow, or his reflection. Considering how hard most photographers work to remove their own image from the picture (journalism tries to push the illusion that the photographer is an impartial observer), the presence of a shadow or a reflection is jarring. But even more unsettling is the way Friedlander presents himself--as himself--mostly boring, fat, and old (and sometimes a bit pig-headed)--the anti-hero of a non-movie. The flow of the book--from a young rake projecting his image onto women's bodies (often his lovely wife's, but sometime a cardboard cut-out), to a father and a grandfather enjoying the company of his family, to his failing body after heart surgery--but always surrounded by friends, always looking for the joke--makes us grateful that Friedlander has shared so much of his image with us. Anything worth doing is worth overdoing--and this book is worth having. Buy it while you can. Friedlander will not always be with us. But we can hope that he has a forth self portrait book yet to come--when he turns 90, three times bigger than this one...

Lee Friedlander, more than any other photographer, makes the finest visual jazz. His work is witty and erudite, and astonishing in its endless variety. He is as prolific a printmaker as Picasso, and like Picasso seems to be immune to the limitations of age. "In the Picture", though, is rather disappointing as a whole. It starts with a sublime collection of Friedlander's 35mm self-portraits, but somewhere midway gets bogged down with an overweight series of the artist with (fill in the blank). Even with the captions, these pictures seem to blur into each other, and without the captions they are simply unremarkable. There are still lightning bolts here and there: in one eerie photograph Friedlander himself becomes the landscape and it is the shadow of his camera and tripod that seems to be animate. But this is a book that really deserved better editing. Slimmed down even by fifty pages or so it would gain some of the same energy as the marvelous "Family" published by Fraenkel in 2004.

Haven't previously been a Friedlander fan, but that appears to be my fault for not trying. This book looks to have a narrow focus, but there's so much that fits in as far as thematic range, and with a page count this deep, there's a lot, lot, lot to look at. I, for one, am not complaining. I'm not the best person to speak to whether this book is a better example of Friedlander as far as the collection goes, but I have to comment on the printing, which is about as wonderful as I've ever seen. True matte printing, not one where the denser areas pick up shine, makes each page almost as satisfying as holding an actual print in one's hands. The book is being cleared out right now at \$10 a pop. You'd be a fool to pass it up at this price.

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