MAÍRA KALMAN

DANIEL HANDLER

HURRY UP and WAIT
You’re supposed to stop and smell the roses, but truth be told it doesn’t take that long to smell them. You hardly have to stop. You can smell the roses, and still have time to run all those errands before the sun goes down and it’s dinner time.
If you can’t get there by yourself, someone might be able to take you. They might be going that way anyway, or more likely you will give them money and they’ll do it.

This is the history of the entire world.
If you had to leave right this minute forever, what would you take with you?

Just this. Just this. Everything.
Jump right in, or wade in slowly.
Advantage to one, it’s over quickly.
Advantage to the other, it isn’t.
Tell me exactly why I should go. I mean, stay. Tell me that.
there is no such thing as waiting for daniel. he is always ahead of me.

every time I have come around the corner or into the lobby or into the room, there he is waiting for me in a crisp shirt (pink?) and an elegant suit (gray?).

once, only once, he was not, and I thought that he must have fallen out of a window or been hit by a bus. I went into a cold, quiet panic.

and then daniel came walking around the corner.

something insane had detained him.

it was not his fault at all. — M. K.

About the same time I met Maira, I made a New Year’s resolution never to run for a bus again. When you run for a bus and miss it, you’re humiliated. When you run for a bus and catch it, you’re on a bus.

I show up half an hour early for everything because that’s how I was raised. When I am meeting Maira someplace I sit and wait but I don’t mind. One reason I don’t mind is that I always have a book with me. The other reason is that it’s worth it. — D. H.

by the way, if you are in a hurry, the only thing to do is slow down. — D. H. / M. K.
The book in your hands is similar to one called *Girls Standing on Lawns* in many significant ways. Both are collaborations between Maira Kalman, Daniel Handler, and The Museum of Modern Art. Both feature a sequence of photographs from MoMA’s unparalleled collection, interspersed with Maira’s tender and surprising paintings, and Daniel’s evocative prose.

The books also match: both are eight inches tall, five inches wide, with identical letter styles (or typeface) and Maira’s distinctive handwriting on the cover. But whereas *Girls Standing on Lawns* exclusively featured snapshots by photographers whose names are unknown to us, this book includes many photographs by photographers whose names we know, as well as a host of other details about what she or he thought, and why she or he made the work. In the museum world, we refer to this as the artist’s intent, and we take it very seriously.

Curators are individuals who collect, preserve, and interpret objects, often those held by public institutions (the root of the word is *curare*, which in Latin means “to care for”). As a curator, I love to make connections between works of art, either by hanging them near one another in exhibitions or reproducing them next to one another in books. If I do this well, my audience learns something, or their curiosity is piqued, or, perhaps, they simply enjoy the art more deeply. But this is also a responsibility: by putting things together I’m implying there is a connection, and occasionally that connection would have been unimaginable to one or both of the artists (separated by generations, by oceans, or just by circles of acquaintances).

So I do my best, in exhibitions and publications, to respect the artist’s intent. Here, however, Maira and Daniel are using the works of art in a different way: they’re making a work of art themselves (what we call an “artist’s book”), so they aren’t concerned if the makers of these photographs would have used the words “hurry” or “wait” to describe their images, or if they would have minded the implied connection to a work on the opposite page.

When one artist uses another artist’s works as the basis for his or her own, it is something we refer to as “appropriation.” You could say, for instance, that Maira appropriates a photograph when she uses it as the inspiration for one of her paintings. And all of the photographs take on new meaning in the context of Maira and Daniel’s book. Some artists enjoy the potential for confusion and will deliberately say very little about what they think their work means, because they want us to come to our own conclusions. Some artists, such as El Lissitzky, whose design for a Soviet sports-club mural appears here, believed that art could change society. He so clearly declared his revolutionary intentions that I’m less comfortable using his image to tell a story about hurrying (even through he had no problem using the photographs of others as layers in his work). But we’ve included it anyway, to highlight this complication.

Sarah Hermanson Meister
Curator, Department of Photography
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Photographs

All works are in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Except where noted, they are gelatin silver prints. The dimensions correspond to the image size with height preceding width.

Cover and page 1
Rudy Burckhardt
(American, born Switzerland, 1914–1999)
Untitled, from the album Photographs by Rudolph Burckhardt; Sonnet by Edwin Denby. 1946–47. 10 1/8 × 7 1/2" (25.8 × 18.6 cm). Gift of CameraWorks, Inc. and purchase.

Page 2
Lee Friedlander
(American, born 1934)
New York City. 1962. 5 1/8 × 8" (13.3 × 20.3 cm). John Parkinson III Fund. Purchase.

Page 3
Michael Putnam
(American, born 1937)

Page 4
Jakob Tuggener
(Swiss, 1904–1988)
Jakob Tuggener, 1936. (Swiss, 1904–1988)
Page 7
Stephen Shore
(American, born 1947)

Page 8
Dorothea Lange
(American, 1895–1965)

Page 9
Anonymous

Page 10
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)

Page 11
Joel Sternfeld
(American, born 1944)

Page 12
Unknown photographer
Untitled. c. 1930. 3 1/4 × 2 1/4" (7.7 × 5.2 cm). Gift of Peter J. Cohen.

Page 13
Unknown photographer
Untitled. c. 1930. 3 1/4 × 2 1/4" (7.7 × 5.2 cm). Gift of Peter J. Cohen.

Page 14
Stephen Shore
(American, born 1947)
Man Stepping from Cable Car, San Francisco. 1956. 9 1/4 × 6 1/4" (23.8 × 16.4 cm). Purchase.

Page 15
Dorothea Lange
(American, 1895–1965)
Man Stepping from Cable Car, San Francisco. 1956. 9 1/4 × 6 1/4" (23.8 × 16.4 cm). Purchase.

Page 16
Harry Callahan
(American, 1914–1999)
Chicago. 1950. 9 1/4 × 13 1/2" (23.3 × 34.8 cm). The New York Times Collection.

Page 17
Garry Winogrand
(American, 1928–1984)

Page 18
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)

Page 19
Garry Winogrand
(American, 1928–1984)
New York City. 1968. 8 1/8 × 13 1/16" (22.2 × 33.5 cm). Purchase and gift of Barbara Schwartz in memory of Eugene M. Schwartz.

Page 20
Rudy Burckhardt
(American, born Switzerland, 1914–1999)
Untitled, from the album Photographs by Rudolph Burckhardt; Sonnet by Edwin Denby. 1946–47. Untitled, from Helen Levitt: Levitt and Joyce Menschel Fund.

Page 21
Lee Friedlander
(American, born 1934)
New York City. 1963. 6 5/16 × 9 3/4" (16.4 × 24.5 cm). Purchase.

Page 22
Dorothea Lange
(American, 1895–1965)
Mother and Child, San Francisco. 1952. 9 1/4 × 7 1/16" (23.8 × 18.6 cm). Gift of the artist.

Page 23
Simpson Kalisher
(American, born 1928)
A Railroad Crossing. 1955. 4 1/2 × 9 1/2" (11.5 × 23 cm). Gift of Gloria Richards.

Page 24
Judith Joy Ross
(American, born 1946)
Man Stepping from Cable Car, San Francisco. 1956. 9 1/4 × 6 1/4" (23.8 × 16.4 cm). Gift of Richard O. Rieger.

Page 25
Joel Sternfeld
(American, born 1944)

Page 26
O. Winston Link
(American, 1913–2001)
Last Steam Locomotive Run on Norfolk and Western, Radford Division. December 31, 1957. 13 1/2 × 10 1/4" (34.2 × 27.5 cm). Purchase.

Page 27
Bill Brandt
(British, born Germany, 1904–1983)
Losing at the Horse Races, Autueil, Paris. c. 1932. 8 1/4 × 6 5/8" (21.3 × 17.6 cm). Gift of Edwynn Houk.

Page 28
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)

Page 29
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)

Page 30
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)
Untitled, from the series Helen Levitt: Levitt and Joyce Menschel Fund.

Page 31
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)
New York. 1983. 7 7/8 × 10 1/4" (19.7 × 27.3 cm). Gift of Marvin Hoshino.

Page 32
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)

Page 33
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)
Untitled, from the series Helen Levitt: Levitt and Joyce Menschel Fund.

Page 34
Helen Levitt
(American, 1913–2009)
Untitled, from the series Helen Levitt: Levitt and Joyce Menschel Fund.

Page 35
Times Wide World Photos
(American, active 1919–1941)
A Famous Fisherman in Action. 1932. 9 1/4 × 7 1/16" (24.5 × 19.7 cm). The New York Times Collection.
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