Weegee

Re-Viewed

With an essay by David Hopkins

Weegee
Weegee Re-viewed
20th June – 5th August 2000

Stills

Introduction

In March 1979, two years after the gallery first opened, Stills put on an exhibition entitled 'Weegee The Famous'. This was the first time that Weegee's work had been exhibited in the UK. Gerry Badger – reviewing that show for the *British Journal of Photography* in April 1979 – commented that Richard Hough (at Stills) concentrated his selection "*upon the essential Weegee of 'Naked City'*" rather than the 'distortions' that Weegee was apparently better known for at the time.

Some twenty-one years later Stills has invited the art historian David Hopkins to curate another exhibition of Weegee's work. This exhibition – 'Weegee Re-Viewed' – attempts to assess the enduring fascination that the work still holds for artists and audiences alike. Hopkins's exhibition, and the accompanying catalogue essay, position Weegee not as an 'oddball' within the canon of American photography but in relation to the rise of mass media in the post-World War II era. He argues that the work acts as a barometer, providing a measure of how the new technologies of the time influenced the way that people thought about themselves and about society. Hopkins makes specific links between Weegee and Andy Warhol and suggests how the work is relevant to artists today.

In the region of ninety images have been selected for the exhibition from a collection held by the Side Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne. A very small number of the images in the exhibition were printed by Weegee himself. The remainder were printed, from the original negatives, by Sidney Kaplan in the late 1970s (who also printed work by Robert Frank and Harry Callahan). Special permission was given for this by Wilma Wilcox (Weegee's 'widow') for an exhibition which originally showed at the Side Gallery in 1980.

Stills would like to thank David Hopkins for his original and insightful essay, and for his considered curation of this exhibition. Stills Gallery would also like to thank Murray Martin, Isabella Jedrzejczyk and Valerie Levitt at the Side Gallery for their generous advice, assistance and support of this exhibition.

'Weegee Re-Viewed' was exhibited at Stills from 20 June to 5 August 2000.

Weegee Re-Viewed

Although surprisingly few exhibitions and publications have been devoted to him, Weegee is a notorious figure in the history of photography, routinely identified with images of gangsters gunned down in early 1940s New York. Two recent exhibitions have helped raise awareness about the actual range of his output: one at New York's International Center of Photography in 1997, the other at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford which finishes early in July this year. However, Weegee continues to be associated primarily with tabloid shock tactics. This exhibition sets out to do something different.

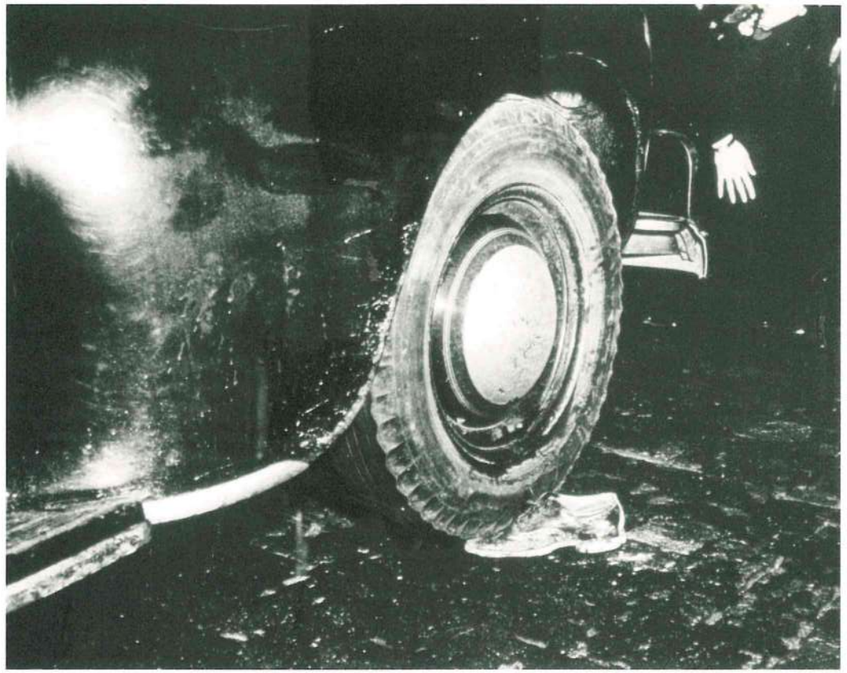
The Situationist theorist Guy Debord, speaking from a radically different vantage point to Weegee, spoke of post-war society as a 'society of the spectacle'. Weegee, as the artist and critic John Coplans first observed, was essentially a voyeur or spectator[1] but he also assumed a position on the side of the spectacle: he was fascinated by the phenomenon of fame and strategically turned himself into a celebrity. This exhibition downplays his morbid side and sees his work as reflecting the permutations of viewpoint engendered by mass culture.

Weegee possibly seems most relevant today for what he reveals about issues of surveillance, the invasiveness of the paparazzi, and our tendency to over-identify with the image rather than the substance of media figures. I say 'reveals' because it would be wrong to imagine that Weegee was self-conscious about what he was doing. In a review of the New York exhibition of 1997 the critic Max Kozloff warned that to see Weegee engaging in an attempt to 'deconstruct the media' would be to mistake Weegee's 'lurid style' for critique[2]. But it is actually because Weegee is so unembarrassed to stare, so much the antithesis of postmodernism's worthy deconstruction of the gaze, that he lays bare the mechanisms linking technology and social looking in the post-World War II era. It was Andy Warhol, as argued at the end of this essay, whose moral ambivalence most closely corresponded with that of Weegee. Artists today, from Cindy Sherman to Gillian Wearing, are still very much indebted to Warhol's vision since he speaks of an uncanny inversion of public and private identity. All of this argues for a re-assessment of Weegee.

Introducing Weegee

The name Weegee was made up. Stories differ, but it derived either from his role as a 'squeegee boy' in the darkrooms of the *New York Times* in the early 1920s (squeegees were used to remove excess water from photographic prints prior to drying) or from the craze at the time for the Ouija board, whose supposedly occult powers of divination Weegee was said to possess. In the latter respect, Weegee's rise to prominence as a photographer was bound up with a hustler's opportunistic and street-wise instincts: there was nothing particularly mystical or occult involved. He had been born Usher (later Arthur) Fellig in 1899 to Jewish parents in the small town of Zlothev (formerly in Austria and now part of Ukraine). The family moved to America, or more particularly the immigrant ghettos of New York's Lower East Side, when Weegee was ten. Fleeing family hardships, he left home early and schooled himself in photographic technique as much through economic necessity as aesthetic vocation. He worked for years as a darkroom assistant first at the *New York Times* and then at Acme Newspictures, an agency which supplied photographs to a number of the leading New York tabloids.

Equipped with an insider's knowledge of editors' needs, Weegee started to peddle his own photographic wares to various tabloids from 1935 onwards. He largely fed the hunger for sensationalism of newspapers such as the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily News*, photographing dramatic scenes of disaster (car accidents, fires – see page 2) or public spectacle (gangster killings, criminals' arrests). Weegee's mythologisation grew from his relationship with the New York police. For years he actually lived in a one-room apartment in the so-called 'shacks' just behind central police headquarters in which journalists congregated waiting for stories to break. In 1938 he was granted the privilege of having a police radio permanently installed in his car: hence his uncanny ability to arrive first at scenes of carnage or tragedy. But his work in fact extended much beyond this, reflecting the whole gamut of New York night life. His themes ranged from observing the wealthy at the Metropolitan Opera to recording the sleeping conditions of 'bums' on the Bowery. (The



Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Car accident*, c1938. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty

two social extremes met at Sammy's, the sleazy cabaret bar on the Bowery which attracted low-life tourists from uptown.) Such imagery satisfied a vogue in the late Depression era for 'human interest' photographs. Essentially reassuring in spirit, they were published in publications such as *PM Daily*, the magazine with which Weegee was most closely associated in the early 1940s.

Weegee's photographic techniques were standardised to ensure maximum contrast of tone (for easy legibility on the newspaper page) and to facilitate rapidity of response to his subjects. His Speed Graphic camera was normally shut down to a lens aperture of f 16 and an exposure speed of 1/200 of a second. Standing ten feet from the frequently harrowing scenes before his lens, he had little time to concentrate on niceties of composition. Since he worked at night or in the early morning he used flash-bulbs, or occasionally flashpowder. His human subjects, frequently caught like stunned rabbits in a headlight's glare, stand out sharply against an implacable inky blackness.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s Weegee had some contact with the left-oriented Photo League organisation in New York, through which he became aware of a growing desire to historicise and institutionalise certain forms of 'documentary' photography as art. In 1943 and 1944 Weegee himself received the accolade of inclusion in two small exhibitions at New York's Museum of Modern Art which set in motion his elevation as one of photography history's decisive figures. Typically capitalising on this success, he decided to disseminate his work in book form, and in 1945 *Naked City* appeared. In a tradition established by Brassai's *Paris by Night* (1933) and Bill Brandt's *A Night in London* (1938), the book brilliantly

Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Metropolitan Opera Men's Chorus Rehearsal*, 1944. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty

caught the demotic edge, and social disparities of New York by night, juxtaposing gritty imagery with Weegee's wry, street-wise commentary.

The book took off and Weegee's career branched out. He quickly followed it up with *Weegee's People* (1946) and then gave up the grind of his newspaper work. In any event the bottom had fallen out of the market for 'stiffs'. In 1947 he moved to Hollywood to advise on a film version of his best seller. He subsequently had various bit-parts in films, but eventually moved back to New York, producing two other books, *Naked Hollywood* (1953) and *Weegee by Weegee* (1961), a couple of manuals of photographic tips, and a few short films of his own. His later photographic work, although strenuously 'arty' (as in the series of 'distortions' produced by methods such as placing curved glass between the enlarger and photographic paper when printing) lacked the bite and purposefulness of his work for newspapers. Haunted as he had always been by the idea of fame (from early on his pictures had borne the stamp 'CREDIT PHOTO BY WEEGEE THE FAMOUS') he now became as much interested in being in front of the camera as behind it.

Voyeurism and Mass Culture: Weegee to Warhol

In his autobiography *Weegee by Weegee* (1961) the photographer reflected on the variety of jobs he had had during his early years in New York as a penniless immigrant. As well as learning his trade in commercial photography, he had managed to persuade a musician at a Third Avenue movie theatre to give him free violin lessons in

Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Woman Listening to Bunk Johnson Concert*, 1944. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty.

return for helping him make 'bathroom gin'. He then put his new-found talents to use in the movie theatre: "*I loved playing on the emotions of the audience as they watched silent movies. I could move them to either happiness or sorrow... I suppose that my fiddle playing was a subconscious kind of training for my future photography.*"[3] Strangely, this memory sets the tone for much of Weegee's work, not just in terms of its acknowledgement of Weegee's desire to manipulate audience emotions but through its invocation of the primacy of a silent visual dimension. Weegee's images are often full of mayhem but his use of flash renders them starkly silent. Sometimes they possess the sharp tonal contrasts of stills from classic early Expressionist films and several commentators have noted their affinities with frames from film noir masterpieces such as Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep*[4].

His photographs often played precisely on the removal of an auditory dimension: hence the photograph of the woman listening to Bunk Johnson in which we scrutinise her face as she listens (see above), or the image of male opera singers in which, with sound 'cut off', we project anger or fascistic exhortations onto the screen of their

Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Children on the Fire-escape*, 1938. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/ Hulton Getty.

features (see 3). Most importantly, though, cinema sets the conditions for Weegee's sensibility in the most general terms. As hinted at above, towards the end of his career, having actually worked in films, Weegee chose to position himself in front of the camera in the company of stars. Regularly included in publications of his output are a set of fascinating Hollywood photographs of the early 1950s in which he appears as a kind of photographer-star, camera and flashbulb in hand, hobnobbing with the likes of Tony Curtis, Marlene Dietrich and Leslie Caron. Perhaps, therefore, he should be seen not so much as part of photographic history, in which he tends to be considered as an abberant or oddball participant, but as a barometer of the changing forms of subjectivity created by the more coercive technologies of mass culture: film and T V.

In terms of American photographic history Weegee represents a distinct break in any case. As already noted, it was not until New York's MoMA showed his work that Weegee's output appeared to embody a self-consciously 'artistic' conception of photography. However, even within this context, his works mark a major shift from the

Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Girl on Life Guard Station*. Infra-red negative. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty.

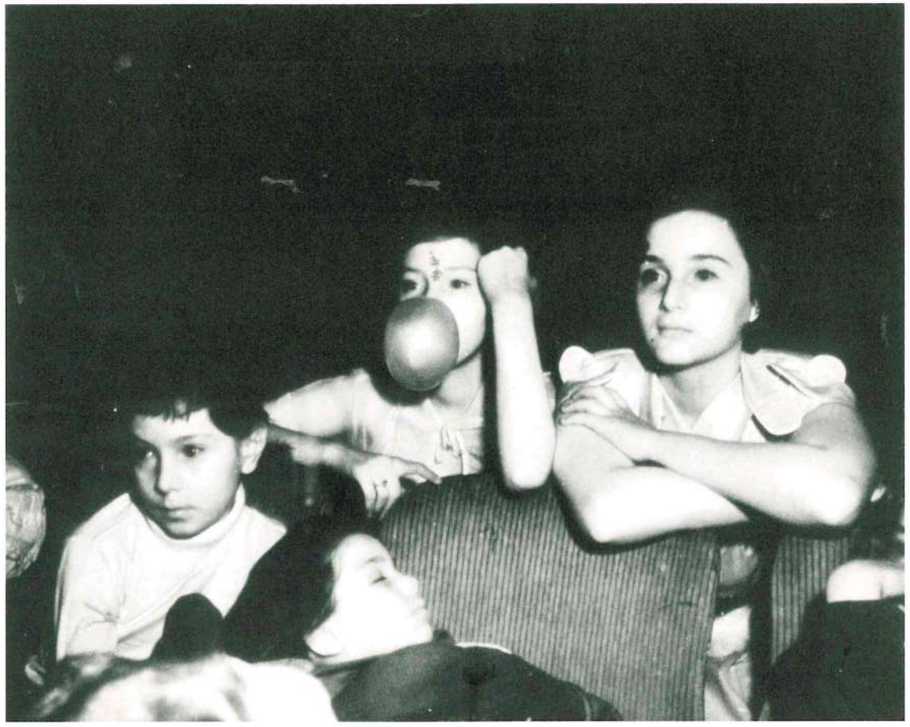
socially-committed aesthetics of Depression-era photographers such as Walker Evans or Dorothea Lange (where the emphasis was on an ethos of objective social witnessing) to a kind of immersion in the social, with no clear moral or ethical position being offered.

Possibly the appeal of Weegee's work for MoMA lay in its ability to prime an audience for new, morally equivocal modes of subjectivity. Weegee himself would undoubtedly have derided such an interpretation. His main concern was simply with making a living. He shuttled between the commercially-driven extremes of the gruesomely spectacular and the humanly consoling. In a period bracketed by the Great Depression and America's post-war emergence as the beacon of Western capitalist values, he did not so much document as participate in the shifts in mass psychology that occurred. But, however pragmatic he was about simply getting his pictures – whether of grisly murders or the effects of a heatwave in the city – he undoubtedly understood the psychological horizon of his practice to be urban alienation. Linking his audience's experience to his own, *Naked City* opens with an evocation of Sunday morning in Manhattan: "*New Yorkers like their Sunday papers... They leave early to get the papers... they get two. One of the standard-size papers... and then also the tabloid 'Mirror'... to... learn all about Café Society and the Broadway playboys and their Glamour Girl Friends. Then back to the room... to read and read... to drive away loneliness... but one tires of reading. One wants someone to talk to, to argue with, and yes, someone to make love with. How about a movie – NO – too damn much talking on the screen... then its even worse to go back alone to the furnished room...*"[5]

Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Harold Horn, Knocked Over Milk Wagon with Stolen Car*, 1941. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty

In its broadest terms, Weegee's output was replete with images of the alienated social identifications that post-war mass culture set up. The complex inter-connectedness of this social sphere emerges as his central theme. Looking across a range of his work, and seeing the fires and murders as part of an overall vision, one is struck not so much by the morbidity as the sheer mobility of his gaze. At one moment he is looking down on poverty-stricken children sleeping on a fire escape (see page 5). At the next moment he is at ground level with the drunks and down-and-outs in the 'cooler'.

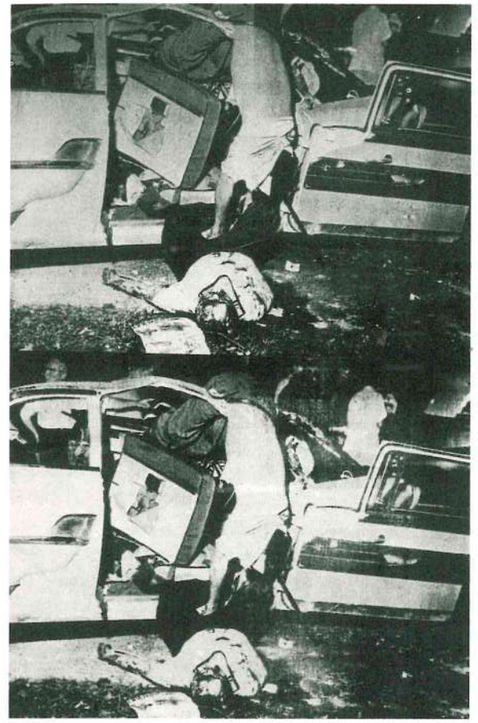
Weegee's own subject position in all this appears to be dispersed as he shifts between projecting onto, identifying with, and objectifying his subjects. Voyeurism is undoubtedly intrinsic to an understanding of him both personally and photographically (the intrusive preconditions of photographic vision have never been more powerfully articulated outside of Paul Strand's famous point blank photograph of a blind woman). At times his voyeurism is that of the oppressor. It is an overt prying: at people beside themselves with grief as relatives or possessions perish in fires, or at the activities of lovers in a cinema who, ironically, are surrounded by people wearing 3-D specs. But he is just as interested in looking at other people looking; losing himself, so to speak, in looking by proxy. The hungry curiosity of crowds is a recurring image in Weegee, but there are some haunting moments when the photographer projects his obsessions onto individual watchers. In *Girl on Life Guard Station* (1940 – see page 6), for instance, he picks out a lone ghost perched above a late night beach littered with lovers. And just as he projects his voyeurism onto other lookers, so they are often shown



Weegee (Arthur Fellig), Children's Performance, 1940. Infra-red negative. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty

lost to themselves, projecting onto hidden performers or stars. There is a fascinating series of shots of audience members at a jazz concert, their expressions ecstatic or orgasmic. *Naked City* also contains a telling sequence dealing with a girl's reaction to a Frank Sinatra performance in 1944. A study in fan hysteria, it pinpoints the mass audience dynamics which later fuelled Beatlemania.

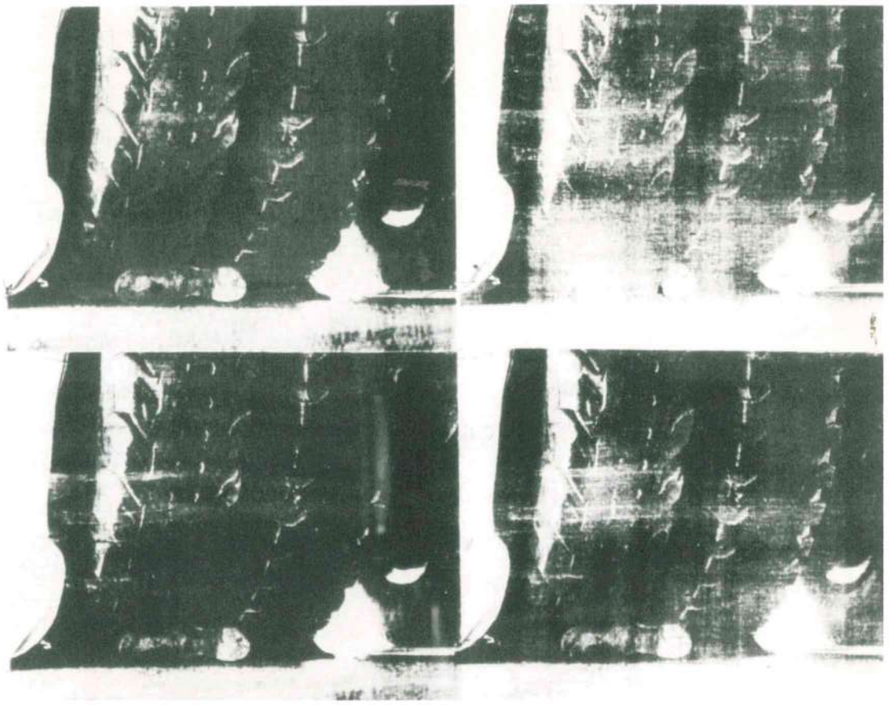
This subtle alternation between the camera's invasiveness, the subject caught unawares in the act of looking, and the further deflection of the gaze on to a further (unseen) object of adulation or desire, is one of Weegee's main interests. Much as he would have found it absurd, such a preoccupation echoes shifts in philosophical notions of human subjectivity in the post-war period. Partly basing his thought on writings by the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty of the mid-1940s, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan described a split subjectivity whereby the human subject is constituted by visuality rather than representing its point of origin: "*What we have to circumscribe... is the pre-existence of a gaze – I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides.*"[6] Taken en masse, Weegee's photographs attest to the ubiquity of the gaze (its 'all-seeingness'), but there are times when its in-roads are filtered or blocked out. Sometimes, as in *Teenage boy arrested for strangling a four year old girl* (1944), the grille of the Black Maria intervenes. At other times people cover up their faces, as in *Arrested for bribing basketball players* (1945). In the more surreal photographs, people actually adopt disguises or present themselves wholly in terms of masquerade. The arrested transvestites stand out as a group among Weegee's subjects in that they often return the gaze, whilst clearly revelling in their assumed identities.



Andy Warhol, *Saturday Disaster*, 1964. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc/ARC, NY and DACS, London 2000

Possibly Weegee empathised more readily than he would have admitted with his transvestite subjects. In terms of the hordes of professional scopophiles like himself – the paparazzi – hostility is more in evidence. The photograph titled *The Critic* is possibly his most overt comment on class difference and depicts a woman from the Bowery scowling at two wealthy, bejewelled art patrons stepping out of their limousine to enter the Metropolitan Opera House. (The woman was deliberately 'planted' by Weegee and a collaborator.) In a related photograph, the glamorous benefactors enter the Opera House lobby to a barrage of press photographers. Observing events from afar, Weegee has little sympathy for the paparazzi or their prey. However, certain later photographs of stars speak fondly to us of an era when it was possible for the famous to be less guarded about press intrusions: a bored-looking James Dean smokes in a Greenwich Village bar; Dylan Thomas is caught in the midst of one of the binges that accompanied his late poetry reading tours of America; Marilyn Monroe proffers a juicy kiss. In a further twist, in the Hollywood pictures Weegee notionally becomes the object of paparazzi attention. Given his early essays in voyeurism, he himself enacts a conflation of invasive modes of looking and the objects to which they are directed.

The collapsing together of public and private positions is implied most powerfully in *Harold Horn, Knocked Over Milk Wagon with Stolen Car* (see page 7). From a viewpoint



Andy Warhol, *Foot and Tyre*, 1963. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc/ARC, NY and DACS, London 2000

'inside' a police car we look at a cluster of spectators who voraciously peer in from the 'outside'. They stare both at us and at the ducking criminal whose 'celebrity' status we fictively share. But the spectators' heads are themselves framed by the car window and, momentarily, we are placed in the position of an audience looking at images on screens.

On the basis of photographs like this, Weegee assumes a pivotal historical role. He seems to occupy a middle position between two markers in the history of mass visual culture. On the one hand he looks back to the cinema's silent era, as argued above; a period that saw the rise of the phenomenon of the cinema star. On the other hand, he presages a form of instability (or self-alienation) in the spectator's position which parallels television's insidious insertion of mass spectacle into the home. (Concurrent with the height of Weegee's activities as a photographer, was the period in which two structures for channeling mass desires into identifications with media figureheads were consolidated. The first, and most innocent, of these was the Hollywood star system. The second, in the wake of the Fascist engineering of spectacle, was the post-war rise of manufactured political consent via the media-manipulation of charismatic leader-figures[7].)

Cultural theorists have noted that this move from the structural dominance of cinema to that of TV follows an essentially 'invasive' historical trajectory. Scott McQuire, for instance, talks of TV as constituting a form of inversion of the relations between 'outside' and 'inside' (or public and private): television, he argues, "*doesn't so much offer to take you there – this is more the promise of cinema with its seductive power to suspend self, body and time – as to bring the there to you. The psychic ambivalence of this contract, and the contradiction between the viewer's involvement in watching and the same viewer's detachment from what is shown, resonates in the duplicity of the term screen. To screen something is to project it as a representation, but it is equally to camouflage or filter what is shown.*"[8] Later, dealing more explicitly with the psychic effects of this, he notes: "*Disavowal plays a critical role in this... the alternation of belief and disbelief characteristic of our ambivalent relations to camera-reality means that anxiety generated via the screen can always be alleviated by dismissing what is seen as 'mere representations'.*"[9] That such alienating processes occur almost as a matter of routine is suggested by an anecdote related by the film-maker John Waters: "*Even as a toddler, violence fascinated me... I was lost in fantasies of crunching metal and people screaming for help. I would sweet-talk unsuspecting relatives into buying me toy cars... I would take two cars and pretend they were driving on a secluded road until one would swerve and crash into the other. I would become quite excited and start smashing the car with a hammer, all the while shouting, 'Oh, my God, there's been a terrible accident.'*"[10]

Commenting on this passage, Michael Warner observes that the young Waters places himself at one remove from his experience by ventriloquising the voice of news reporting. He points out: "*He turns himself into a relay of spectators, none of whom is injured so much as horrified by witnessing injury. His ventriloquised announcer and his invisible audience allow him to internalise an absent witness.*"[11]

It is, of course, tempting to imagine the young Arthur Fellig, future photographer of car accidents, having similar fantasies. But Warner's talk of mechanisms of disavowal and the self-alienating internalisation of mass media structures is peculiarly suggestive in relation to Weegee's remarkable images of children as cinema viewers. On one level, the images Weegee took with an infra-red camera in New York's Palace Cinema around 1940 appear innocent enough (see page 8). Admittedly they correspond to the photographer's fascination with catching people unawares – furtively eating, gloating over the misfortunes of others, or unconsciously scratching themselves – but, with children, such imagery could read as a celebration of animal impulses unshackled by social convention: hence the way the kids suck ferociously on their lollipops, blithely intrude on each other's space and refuse to assume the postures dictated by their seats.

But we have to remember that these images were taken courtesy of infra-red, a technique developed for military reconnaissance missions dedicated to pinpointing enemies in the darkness. Surely there is something sinister about Weegee waiting in the gloom, training his camera on his innocent prey. What is particularly eerie is the way in which the intrusive inroads of the infra-red are inscribed on the bleached faces of the viewers. Just as Weegee's surreptitious flash conjures these phantoms from the gloom, so it masquerades as the light from the screen before them, transforming their faces into livid masks. Momentarily the effect becomes uncanny. Their eyes, turned into black pools, seem gorged with the spectacle they are consuming. Once again Lacan's sense of a gaze that precedes our own seeing – "*that gaze that circumscribes us, and... makes us beings that are looked at*"[12] – is apposite. Invaded by light, the children have the look of either vampires or automata. Weegee clearly had a broader fascination with mesmeric or shocked states and, in his traffic accident pictures in particular, he often pointed his camera at people who have temporarily blanked-out. Such images seem to symbolically screen out or deflect Weegee's voyeurism on the one hand whilst underlining the sheer affrontery of his visual trespassing on the other. But the larger point is that cinematic spectacle (or sensory overload) seemingly eats into subjectivity, rendering its mass subjects semi-robotic and self-alienated.

The early 1950s images of Weegee sidling up to stars could be seen as further indications of this self-alienating trajectory. Weegee is surely ironic to some degree about the fantasies he enacts as he enters into fame's force field. As already suggested, in the 1950s it was TV which most dramatically closed the distance between ordinary people's imaginations and the privileged or exotic lives they aspired towards. (Weegee actually appeared as a guest on five television talk shows between 1957 and 1958). Possibly the emblematic instance of the medium's grip on the mass imagination was one that was not so much exotic as traumatic: the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, in 1963. The American art critic Hal Foster has noted that the kind of technologically-mediated 'mass witnessing' that accompanied Kennedy's death provided the matrix in which the Pop artist Andy Warhol embarked on his series of morbid and emotionally ambivalent 'Disaster' photo-silkscreens of 1962-4 (see page 9). Foster, writing in the wake of an important re-assessment of Warhol by the art historian Thomas Crow, builds up a picture of the notorious Pop artist not so much as an indif-

ferent sponge of consumer pleasures but as a form of social critic. He argues that Warhol's use of repeated images of car crashes in the 'Disasters' symptomatically register both a denial of too-real events (as though a record has stuck) and a re-enactment of trauma. Warhol appears to be exploring the way a shocked subjectivity assimilates (and possibly masters) an excess of emotionally-charged technologically-mediated information.[13]

Needless to say, much of what has been asserted here suggests that Weegee had dealt with the iconography of disaster and the thematics of mass witnessing and shock long before Warhol. Weegee's morbid voyeurism is deeply akin to Warhol's, and it is also surely no coincidence that Warhol programatically produced his early 'Disasters' in tandem with a series of silkscreen portraits of famous personalities such as Elizabeth Taylor, Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe. This suggests that the entire sweep of Weegee's vision, between the poles of tragedy and fame, was succinctly essayed by Warhol. No doubt he flicked through *Naked City*, which itself enacts a kind of levelling out of images of the demotically gruesome and the glamorous, at some point in the 1950s when the book was widely available. At this time he was planning to make a move from the commercial art sphere to art 'stardom' (Warhol worked as a graphic designer in the 1950s) and Weegee might well have been a precedent. Certainly *Naked City* appeared as lot 1593 in the Sotheby's sale of Warhol's effects after his death. Beyond this there was a fundamental personal link between the men: although radically different as personalities, they both had Eastern European immigrant roots. They viewed the American dream as outsiders.

Whether Weegee and Warhol ever exchanged words is hard to establish, but they definitely met; a portrait of Warhol by Weegee, taken in the early 1960s, shows the Pop guru wearing 'shades'. In other portraits Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe emerge as Weegee's subjects as much as Warhol's. There are even certain visual connections between their works. Oddly, Warhol occasionally used reprints of old photographs from police files for his 'Disasters' images and certain of these, such as that used in *1947 White*, actually date from the 1940s. Perhaps he wanted them to have the faint 'film noir' overtones he associated with Weegee. In one instance he used remarkably similar imagery. A rather gruesome photograph by Weegee of 1938 shows a shoe (presumably that of the accident victim concerned) wedged under a car's wheel (see page 2). In 1963 Warhol revisited this travesty of Roland Barthes's 'punctum' in *Foot and Tyre* (see page 10), offering the repeated image of the sole of a shoe sticking out from under a lorry's wheel.

In the final analysis, though, what links Weegee and Warhol is the peculiarly affectless or self-alienated nature of their voyeurism, resulting from shifts in relations between subjectivity and technology. In a recent study of Warhol, Christopher Phillips argues that the outlines of this sensibility had been traced in the writings of a little-known German cultural critic, Günther Anders. Phillips explains that, in a book entitled *The Antiquatedness of Mankind*, published in 1956, Anders had gloomily summoned up the spectre of a world where the proliferation of mass-reproduced imagery meant that 'the real' was "*experienced neither as immediate 'events' nor as mediated 'representations' but as some hybrid of the two*". Phillips continues: "*The result, for the consumer of media culture, is a sense of standing before a world that is never fully present or absent... Faced with what Anders calls the 'ontological ambiguity of a world that seems immediately perceptible to us but from which we are irrevocably separated... we settle into the positions of voyeurs and eavesdroppers.*"[14] It is Warhol, of course, who best fits this diagnosis. But it was Weegee who first charted the emotional terrain.

Looking at Weegee again, through the lens provided by Warhol, he emerges as much more than a colourful 'primitive' of modernist photographic history. If Warhol provides the historical touchstone for much of today's art, Weegee illuminates the cultural processes that formed us.

David Hopkins

David Hopkins lectures on twentieth century art, photography and theory at the University of St Andrews. He is the author of *Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst: The Bride Shared* (Oxford, 1998) and co-author of *Marcel Duchamp* in Thames and Hudson's World of Art series. His new book *After Modern Art 1945-2000* is due out shortly as part of the Oxford History of Art series.

Notes

[1] See John Coplans: 'Weegee the Famous', *Art in America*, September/October, 1977, pp 37-41 (reprinted in *Weegee's New York*, Schirmer, Munich, 1982). Another essay emphasising this aspect of Weegee is Miles Orvell: 'Weegee's Voyeurism and the Mastery of Urban Disorder', *American Art*, vol 6, no 1, Winter, 1992, pp 19-41.

[2] Max Kozloff: 'Mass Hysteria: The Photography of Weegee', *Art Forum*, vol 36, no 7, March 1998, p 81.

[3] Weegee: *Weegee by Weegee*, New York, 1961, reprinted 1975, p 27.

[4] See Alain Bergala: 'Weegee and Film Noir' in Miles Barth (ed): *Weegee's World*, International Center of Photography, New York, 1997, pp 69-77.

[5] Weegee: *Naked City*, New York, 1945, reprinted 1973, p 14.

[6] Jacques Lacan: 'The Split Between the Eye and the Gaze' in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (first published in Paris, 1973), trans Sheridan, Harmondsworth, 1986, p 72.

[7] For an extended account of the social metamorphoses informing the current era of manufactured political consent see Jürgen Habermas: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans Burger, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992.

[8] Scott McQuire: *Visions of Modernity: Representation, Memory, Time and Space in the Age of the Camera*, London, 1998, p 242.

[9] Ibid, p 243.

[10] John Waters: *Shock Value*, New York, 1981, p 24.

[11] Michael Warner: 'The Mass Public and the Mass Subject' in Bruce Robbins (ed): *The Phantom Public Sphere*, MIT Press, 1993, p 249.

[12] Jacques Lacan : 'The Eye and the Gaze', op cit in note 6 above, p 75.

[13] See Hal Foster: 'Death in America, *October*, no 75, Winter 1996, pp 37-60. (Partially reprinted as Chapter 5 of *The Return of the Real*, MIT Press, 1996.) Thomas Crow's essay on Warhol, 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol' appears in *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, Yale, 1996, pp 49-65.

[14] Christopher Phillips: 'Desiring Machines : Notes on Commodification, Celebrity, and Death in the Early Work of Andy Warhol' in *Public Information: Desire, Disaster, Document* (ex cat), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1994, p 43.

Stills was established in 1977 as the first photography-dedicated gallery in Scotland. The gallery rapidly established an international reputation for the quality of its exhibition programme which succeeded in bringing the work of many important international photographers to Scotland for the first time.

In 1997 Stills underwent a major refurbishment which has allowed the organisation to create purpose-built spaces for a dramatically expanded remit of activities. The refurbishment included the establishment of the Richard Hough Resource which comprises a suite of black and white and colour darkrooms, an extensively equipped digital lab and an education room. Stills now provides a wide range of services and support for artists and the community – this includes exhibitions by internationally significant artists, an award-winning programme of education and training opportunities, support for artists in the production of their own work and a meeting place for artists and the wider community. The new facilities at Stills enable the organisation to play a vitally important role in empowering individuals in Scotland to engage critically with the mediums which are rapidly becoming our most common cultural currency.

ISBN 0 9064 5815 5

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Administrator	Stuart Middleton
Gallery Manager	Hannah Firth
Facilities Manager	Colin Andrews
Education Coordinator	Lindsay Perth (temporary p/t)
Trainees/Volunteers	Colin Heggie, Ross Kemsley, Alice Nelson, Sophie Scott, Nina Sverdvik, Louise Trotter, Hester Welsh, Gail Wigley

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Stills is revenue funded by the Scottish Arts Council and The City of Edinburgh Council

Cover image: Weegee (Arthur Fellig), *Tony Curtis and Weegee*. Gelatin silver print. © Weegee 1998/International Center of Photography/Hulton Getty

Publication printed by: Woods of Perth

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