



### Ken Heyman: **A Career Retrospective**

Ken Heyman has photographed the unknown, the famous, and the infamous for more than 50 years in more than 60 countries. He encourages us to identify with people we seemingly have nothing in common with and to recognize that no matter what our differences, we share many similarities too. Together, the exhibitions at CEPA Gallery and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery explore what being old, being happy, being alone, being mysterious – what being human – truly means.

*Ken Heyman: Being Human* is a 50-year retrospective of images that explore the heights and depths of what being human means. Over 100 images from various photojournalist assignments are on view, as well as selections from his major bodies of work including, *Family*, *Hipshot*, and *Willie*.

On view at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery is *Ken Heyman: Pop Portraits*, a collection of 30 photographs from Heyman's *Pop Art* series. This exhibition also includes photographs of artists from the permanent collection.



Ken Heyman: **Being Human**  
June 16 through August 26  
Opening Reception: June 16, 7:00 – 10:00 pm (FREE)  
Market Arcade Atrium, 617 Main Street, Buffalo

#### CEPA Gallery

Founded in 1974 by and for artists, CEPA Gallery is a comprehensive not-for-profit art center dedicated to promoting the photo-related and electronic arts. With programs in visual art exhibitions, public art projects, artist residencies and education, CEPA strives to foster the creation and presentation of new work, educate the region to contemporary art trends, and encourage a continuous dialogue between artists and community. To learn more about CEPA, including gallery, darkroom, and digital lab hours, visit [www.cepagallery.org](http://www.cepagallery.org).

#### Albright-Knox Art Gallery

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, one of the nation's oldest public arts organizations, has a clear and compelling mission to acquire, exhibit, and preserve both modern and contemporary art. It focuses especially on contemporary art, with an active commitment to taking a global and multidisciplinary approach to the presentation, interpretation, and collection of the artistic expressions of our times. In an enriching, dynamic, and vibrant environment that embraces diverse cultures and traditions, the Gallery seeks to serve a broad and far-reaching audience. Visit [www.albrightknox.org](http://www.albrightknox.org) to learn more.

Ken Heyman: **Being Human** is presented with major support from The Baird Foundation and generous gifts from the following: Balbach Family Foundation, Nancy Brock and Scott Goldman, The Buffalo News, Kate and Steve Foley, Linda Gellman/Click Photography, Holly and Jordan Levy, Ron Schreiber, Aaron Siegel, Herb Siegel, Travers Collins & Company, and Leslie and Howard Zemsky.

CEPA Gallery is funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Baird Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, East Hill Foundation, Edwards Foundation Arts Fund, Erie County Cultural Funding, Erie County Youth Bureau, Experimental Television Center, JP Morgan Chase, Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, Marks Family Foundation, M&T Bank, John R. Oishei Foundation, Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Printing Prep, Delaware Camera, and CEPA Members. CEPA programs are made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

All photographs are courtesy Degen-Scharfman Gallery, New York.  
Creative donated by Travers Collins & Company.

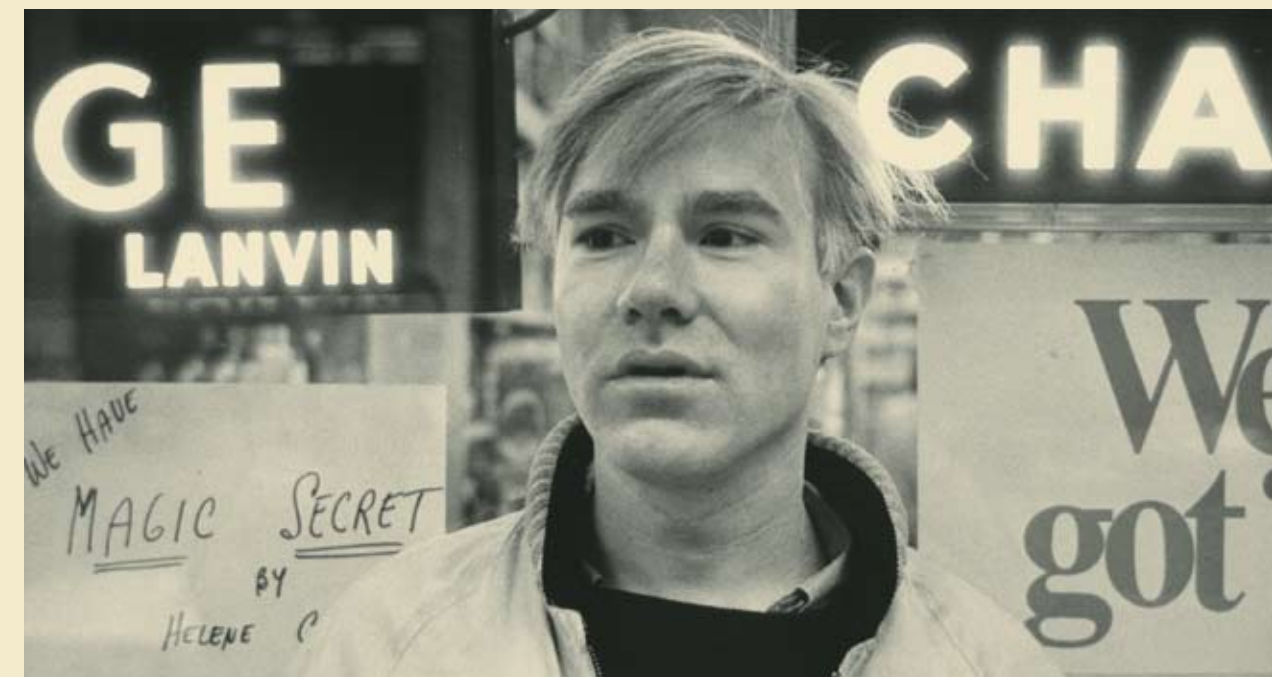


Ken Heyman: **Pop Portraits**  
June 15 through August 26  
1285 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo



## being human

Discover the man who showed us what it's like to be amazed, to be revolutionary, to be human. Discover Ken Heyman.



## Ken Heyman: A Life

By Neil Printz, May 2007

**Getting Started** In a chronology of his life that Ken Heyman wrote by hand, the first entry begins on January 10, 1954, the day he was discharged from the U.S. Army. Soon after, he was readmitted to Columbia University, where he took courses with such legendary figures in the social sciences as the anthropologist Margaret Mead and the sociologist C. Wright Mills. Heyman records that photography interested him as a hobby at this time, but that he was serious about social work. That fall, he began to work at a settlement house, where he met Donald White, the leader of a Harlem street gang. Their relationship developed into a project for a book that Heyman worked on until White's death in a Federal prison in 1963: *Teenage Gang: the Imperial Knights of Harlem*. The book was never published, but this was the material that first captured the attention of Margaret Mead. It launched a twenty-year friendship and collaboration that lasted until Mead's death in 1978 and resulted in two books, *Family* (Ridge Press, 1965) and *World Enough* (Little Brown, 1976).



*They Became What They Beheld*, a collaboration with the anthropologist Edmund Carpenter and Heyman's last book of the 1960s, is the antithesis of the big picture book. It is idiosyncratic and anti-establishment, more in tune with the radical, participatory esthetic that we have come to associate with the sixties. One of my favorite images is the first, a sort of syncopated group portrait in a cemetery in which the figures, clustered or solitary, stand upon or beside grave stones. At first glance, the group almost seems to have been posed. It is an enigmatic picture, that doesn't lose any power when Heyman informs us that he took the photograph on the day John F. Kennedy was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. What struck him was the way in which the people standing on the stones already looked like statues. Seeing, as Carpenter argues and Heyman continually shows us, is a condition that changes us each time we look.



**Willie** Donald White left a distinct echo in Heyman's work in a book entitled *Willie*, published the year White died (Ridge Press, 1963, with text by Michael Mason). Willie, a child of the streets, or rather of one street in Hell's Kitchen where he would spend his day, is Donald White's natural child. Willie is only four years old, yet he is charismatic and street-wise, vulnerable and nurtured by the inhabitants of the street, framed by his confined world. On five occasions over the course of a month, Heyman visited Willie's block and took photographs of him. "We communicated, we didn't converse," Heyman noted in his book. Indeed, *Willie* is the memento of a friendship—as photography often is—and much like Donald White, Heyman found in Willie, the protagonist of a social narrative.

**Working with Mead** *Family* was the product of a seven-year collaboration that began in 1958 when Heyman accompanied Mead on a field trip to a village called Bayung Gede in the highlands of Bali. Mead's chapters are structured according to relationships of kinship, association, and human development. The parallels among Heyman's pictures are like questions posed by the same interlocutor. We might think of this as Mead's voice, asking, for example: How do mothers care for their children? As she bathes her child, cultural differences inform each photograph. Differences not only in resources or custom, but in the way each mother touches her child. Does she stand above or squat beside her child? Does she face or support her child from behind? Does she stroke or play with her child? Or does she approach the task briskly and with determination?

Eighteen years after their field work together in Bayung Gede, Heyman and Mead returned to the area in preparation for *World Enough*. On his first day out, Heyman photographed a crowd of children, looking at the photos he took in 1958. None of them had ever seen a photograph before. "This was Dr. Mead's favorite picture," Heyman recalled, "She used it as a photomural covering the entrance to the Margaret Mead Hall in the American Museum of Natural History," where she was a curator of ethnology from 1946 to 1969. For Mead, photography was not only a vital instrument of recording, but of a way of seeing. It is revealing that in the photograph by Heyman of which she was so fond, the disturbance outside the frame that animates the crowd of children is photography itself.

**The Sixties** During the late 1960s, Heyman was commissioned to produce photographic essays about Pop Art (with John Rublowsky, Basic Books, 1965), Lyndon Johnson's Great Society (*This America*, with text by Johnson, Ridge Press, 1966), and Leonard Bernstein (*The Private World of Leonard Bernstein*, with John Gruen, Ridge Press 1968). The photographs of Bernstein offer privileged glimpses of the celebrated conductor. We see him shaving in his underwear in his New York bathroom, warily eyeing the camera in the mirror; or backstage, dressed in a tuxedo, quickly but passionately, pressing his lips to the cufflinks given to him by Serge Koussevitzky just before he goes onstage. Heyman's book establishes a palpable intimacy with its subject; it is as if we have been admitted into a magic circle. Like Willie or Donald White before him, Bernstein is a magnetic force, but he appears before the camera fully formed, the impresario of his own life.



**Heyman's Hipshot** Heyman's handwritten chronology of his life abruptly breaks off in 1981, during a period of crisis when his photography had come to a virtual halt. This would change when Heyman began to use an automatic focus camera with a fixed, wide-angle lens that he learned to aim at arms length, usually at ground-level. In 1985, *Aperture* published a group of what Heyman calls "hipshot" photographs, a method he still practices, although he now shoots in color. By choosing not to look through the viewfinder and frame what he saw into a picture, Heyman ceded a certain control as a photographer, but succeeded in reinventing himself as an artist. He reveled in getting closer to his subjects, "too close" as he says, to maintain journalistic distance or the niceties of the frame.

Margaret Mead once remarked, rather astutely, that Heyman photographs relationships. By this, she surely meant the relationships between people. We might extend the coordinates of Mead's formulation by adding that Heyman photographs the relationship between the photographer and his subject, between the subject and himself.

Unless otherwise cited, all comments by Ken Heyman are quoted from a bound portfolio of images and texts assembled by Heyman under the title "Revelations through Photography," that he generously made available to the author in preparation for this text.