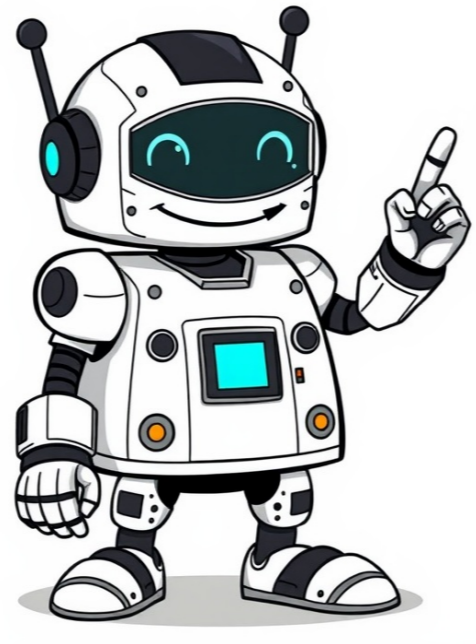


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Jock Sturges, a renowned American photographer born in New York City in '47, has built a reputation for his large-format nude portraits of adolescents. His black and white images, often shot on US and French beaches, have sparked controversy due to their explicit nature. Yet, he remained committed to capturing the essence of these young subjects, frequently accompanied by their families. Sturges' works are now showcased in prominent international collections, such as those found at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, International Center of Photography, and Musée de l'Élysée. A selection of his vintage gelatin silver prints, including "Bettina, Jean, Julie et Marie" (1991) and "Marine" (1987), feature in this article. One notable example of Sturges' artistry is the photograph "Sara, Montalivet, France (1998)". This small gallery show card, added to The Michael Aaron Gallagher Fine Art Collection in 2021, captures a young woman's subtle expressions and body language. With its mysterious emotional quality, this image stands out from what would otherwise be a blank stare. The photographer's work continues to be the subject of debate among some viewers, but his prints remain highly regarded within the art world. Sturges' pieces are held in the permanent collections of institutions like The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum, and the Bibliothèque Nationale. His influence extends beyond photography, inspiring a new generation of visual artists who aspire to achieve what he has with an 8x10 camera. Born into a family of photographers, Sturges studied his craft at Marlboro College and the San Francisco Art Institute. His ethereal images have been published in several books, including "The Last Day of Summer" (1992) and "Fanny" (2014). In addition to these publications, The Collection features a range of art memorabilia related to Sturges' work, such as gallery invitation show cards and postcards featuring his photographs. ===== Jock Sturges, a photographer renowned for capturing the beauty and essence of his models, has had many of his subjects continue to pose for him over the years. His photographs not only possess an artistic quality but also serve as a time capsule, documenting specific moments in history. The Collection features two stunning examples of Jock's ability to create powerful and unique pictures, showcasing the evolution of his models' expressions over time. One iconic postcard from Galerie Bodo Niemann in Berlin, Germany, depicts Fanny taken on the beach in Montalivet, France in 1995. Her piercing stare and dramatic posture make this one of Jock's most striking photographs of her. The postcard was acquired by the Russell Levin Gallery and added to The Michael Aaron Gallagher Fine Art Collection in 2025. The middle photograph of Fanny, taken in 1996, is a poignant example of Jock's ability to capture the emotional depth of his subjects. In the forward of his photography book "Fanny," Jock writes about this picture, which was taken a year after her mother's tragic passing. The image shows Fanny standing with one hand flagged out to the side and the other clenched in a fist, conveying the pain and loss she experienced. Another model featured in The Collection is Adèle, whose three 16" x 20" photographs were taken in 2000, 2001, and 2002. Jock's letter to Michael explains that Adèle was holding petanque balls in one of these photos, highlighting the versatility of this popular French game. A unique triptych in The Collection presents three versions of a Jock Sturges photograph of Lidiwine, taken in Orleans, France in 1988. The main focal point of this display is a 16" x 20" portrait of Lidiwine, accompanied by a small framed postcard featuring the same image. The Artist's Legacy is also reflected in the work of Vanessa, who discusses Jock's photography in an interview for the documentary "Line of Beauty and Grace: A Documentary About Jock Sturges" (2009). Her comments highlight both the beauty and criticisms of Jock's work, which often lead to people feeling that his photographs are too good-looking or saccharine. The Collection features several beautiful pieces taken on the beach in Montalivet, France, showcasing Jock's ability to capture the essence of his subjects. The debate surrounding Jock Sturges' work is as polarizing now as it was when he first began taking pictures, with some people seeing him as a pioneer in his field and others dismissing his art as exploitative. Like many great artists throughout history, such as Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Jean Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol, and Banksy, Sturges pushed the boundaries of what was considered acceptable in photography. However, unlike some modern artists who prioritize shock value over skill, Sturges' reverence for his subjects and technical expertise are unmistakable. Sturges' photographs have been exhibited in various sizes, with prices ranging from \$3,200 to \$20,000, depending on the edition number. In 2011, one of his prints sold at Christie's for \$40,000. His work is not only recognized for its technical merit but also sparks intense debate about its subject matter. In an interview, Sturges reflected on his experience working in Montalivet, France, where he would often take photographs of nude adolescents. He described the process as "just how we live here," suggesting that his subjects were not exploited but rather treated with respect and dignity. However, this perspective is not shared by everyone, and some critics have accused him of exploiting his subjects for artistic gain. Sturges' own words from a 2022 letter to Michael Aaron Gallagher highlight the importance of continuous learning and growth: "The eye is forever training." This dedication to his craft is evident in the high-quality photographs he produces, which are both aesthetically pleasing and thought-provoking. A recent development has brought renewed attention to Sturges' work. He was charged with statutory rape and indecent assault after a woman came forward alleging that he had sex with her when she was 14 years old and he was 28. The incident allegedly occurred in the mid-1970s while Sturges worked as a counselor at Northfield Mount Hermon School. Sturges' case goes from high-profile exhibition to guilty plea after decades of controversy ===== The career of photographer Sturges has spanned numerous high-profile museums, yet his work has faced intense scrutiny over allegations of child pornography. In the 1990s, FBI agents raided his San Francisco home, confiscating thousands of photograph negatives, camera and computer equipment. While Sturges was not indicted on child pornography charges, he has since faced further legal action. A recent plea in Franklin Superior Court marked a new chapter in the case against former Northfield Mount Hermon teacher John "Jock" Sturges, 74. He pleaded guilty to an unnatural and lascivious act on a child under 16, a charge that carries a three-year probation sentence. Sturges was ordered to undergo sex offender treatment and stay away from his victim, who first came forward when she was 14 years old. The two had formed a bond over photography, with Sturges bringing her on shoots and eventually persuading her to pose for topless and nude photographs. Prosecutors say Sturges then engaged in sex with the girl in both his darkroom and in the woods. The victim has since spoken out about the lasting impact of their relationship, describing how it led to a complete nervous breakdown and extreme anxiety. Sturges' photos have been exhibited globally, but he was originally charged with statutory rape in 2017 before pleading to lesser charges. Simple Plan and his work on child pornography ===== They're simply a celebration of beauty," he said of his photos in an interview with The Associated Press in 1997 when the Christian group Focus on the Family was campaigning to have his books banned in Pennsylvania. "We commend the survivor for her courage in coming forward and exposing the defendant's misconduct," said Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan. "Fortunately, the passage of time did not prevent the Commonwealth from holding the defendant accountable for his crimes, and achieving some measure of justice in this case." Jock Sturges, photographer known for his controversial images of nudist colony residents ===== John Sturges, an American photographer born in 1947, has been the subject of controversy throughout his career due to his images of nude adolescents and their families. He graduated from Marlboro College with a BFA in Perceptual psychology and Photography, and later received an MFA in photography from the San Francisco Art Institute. Sturges primarily works with a large 8x10-inch-format view camera and has been known to work with film. His subjects often include California residents Misty Dawn, whom he shot from when she was a child until in her twenties. Much of his work features the family at communes in Northern California and at the Atlantic-coast naturist resort CHM Montalivet in Vendays-Montalivet. However, some of his photographs have been deemed controversial in the United States. In 1990, his studio was raided by FBI agents, and in 1998, attempts were made to classify two of his books as child pornography. The controversy surrounding Sturges' work has led to protests and lawsuits throughout the country. In 2021, he pleaded guilty to an unnatural and lascivious act with a child under 16 and was sentenced to three years' probation. Despite the controversy, Sturges' work has been featured on the covers of several novels, including those by Jennifer McMahon and Karl Ove Knausgård. The band Ride also used some of his photographs on their releases. Jock Sturges: A Life of Photography and Perseverance ===== After graduating from high school in 1966, Jock Sturges was faced with a difficult decision: go to college, be drafted into the Vietnam War, or actively evade conscription. He chose to enlist in the US Navy, an experience that although not enjoyable, taught him valuable skills and sparked his interest in photography. Sturges' time in Japan as a Russian language communications specialist exposed him to new cultures and interests, leading him to teach photography at special service facilities. His talent and dedication eventually earned him the role of base photographer. After leaving the Navy in 1970, Sturges pursued his passion for photography, working with notable figures like Richard Benson on a cross-disciplinary degree in perceptual psychology and photography. He continued to work in Vermont, teaching and photographing, before shifting his focus to large-format view camera photography. In 1978, Sturges made the bold decision to relocate to California, embracing its meritocracy and new opportunities. His commercial work focused on classical dance, fashion, and portraiture during the winter months, allowing him to dedicate summers to personal projects exploring life, young women, and mothers and daughters in West Coast communes. Throughout his career, Sturges has remained committed to his artistic vision, producing a body of work that showcases his unique perspective and skill. Jock Sturges - A Fine Art Photographer's Life ===== Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting tomorrow and discussing our strategies, Jock Sturges has come a long way since receiving his Master's Degree (MFA) from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1985. Though he likes to describe it as the least useful thing he ever did, spending eight thousand dollars on it, he's made a career out of fine art photography. For 21 years, he lived in the same address in San Francisco, where he honed his craft and developed a passion for naturist resorts on the Atlantic coast of France. Jock Sturges currently resides in Seattle, Washington with his wife, Maia, who is a hardworking medical student. He continues to work on fine art photography, mostly done in France, which has become a second home. His recent publications include five major books in the last eight years, including two with Aperture, one in Japan with GAKKEN, and most recently, two with Scala of Zurich, Switzerland. His photographs borrow significantly from classical periods in both photography and nineteenth and early twentieth century painting. Represented by 25 galleries in eight countries, his work is also found in the collection of many of the world's museums, including The Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and The Frankfurt Museum of Modern Art in Germany. Jock Sturges travels to photograph, lecture and teach throughout the world, but is reliably to be found working on the beaches of France almost any late summer afternoon. A monograph of his recent work is envisioned for Autumn, 2001. =====