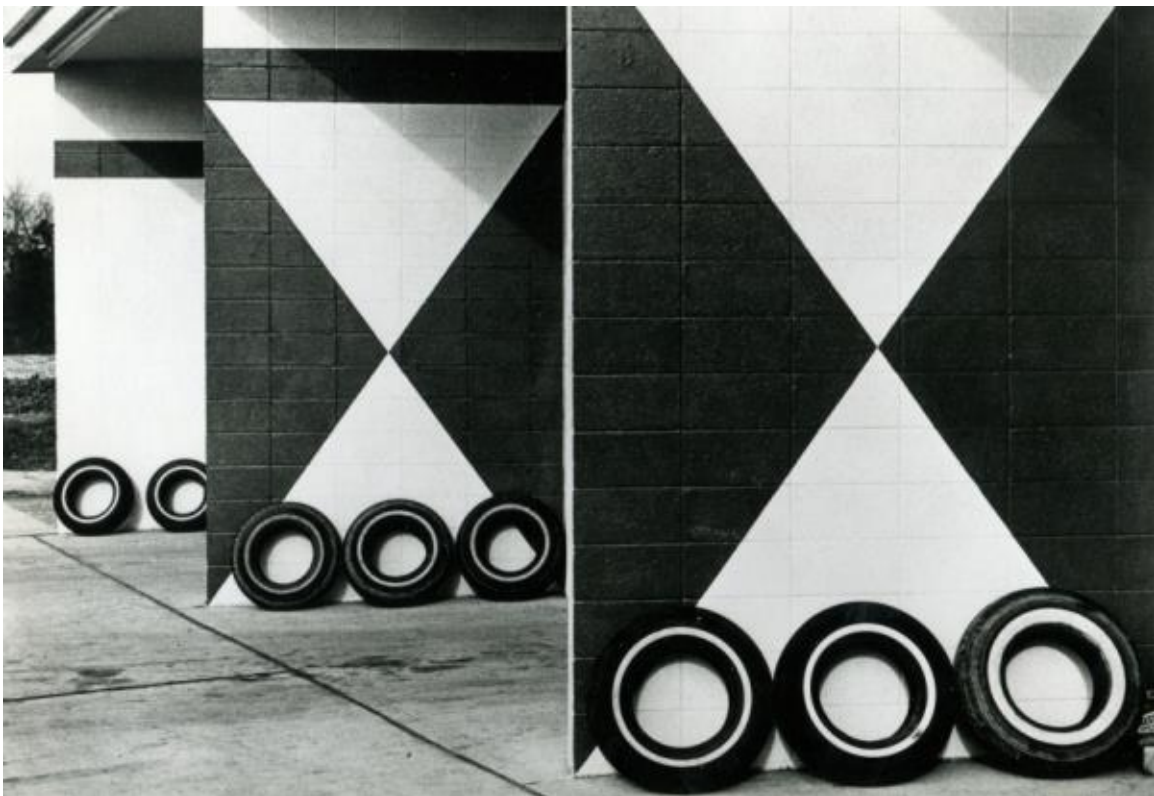


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photograph

Burk Uzzle: American Puzzles

Steven Kasher Gallery, New York



You may be forgiven for not having heard of Burk Uzzle, but once you've seen [Steven Kasher Gallery's](#) show of his black-and-white photographs from the 1960s through the 2000s (on view through July 31), you won't have any excuse for forgetting him.

Uzzle's career mirrors that of some of the best-known photographers of his generation, and yet his is not a household name. In 1962, at 23, he became *LIFE's* youngest ever contract photographer. Just five years later, he became a member of Magnum Photos. In the years since, he's photographed some of the most important events of our times — the Woodstock Music & Art Fair, the funeral of Martin Luther King, Jr., the Cambodian

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War — and built up an impressive collection of images that show America in all its splendor and strangeness.



Like the best observers of this country, Uzzle displays an intuitive sensitivity to our national incongruities and harmonies. His subjects are classic Americana: beaches and parades, small towns and highways, a mix of the impossibly vast and the deeply local that gets at the heart of life here. Uzzle's perspective combines the best qualities of those who've undertaken similar enterprises — the wit of Garry Winogrand, and the stylistic approach of New Topographics photographers like Robert Adams — while maintaining a certain Uzzle-ness that makes him entirely original.

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His sheer range of expression is striking. On one wall, you'll find the dark irony of *Football Team with Smokestacks*, a wholesome scene complicated by a mysterious, looming darkness. Turn a corner and you'll face the absurdity of *Wow Cows*, which fills the frame with fake cows standing in a field. Elsewhere, Uzzle's images are a mix of melancholy, wonder, and pure aesthetic exploration.

Uzzle's talent is undeniable, so it's hard to explain, at 76, his relative obscurity. Hopefully, solo shows at the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Ackland Art Museum and the Nasher Museum of Art next year will help put him in his proper place among the greats of American photography.

— *By Jordan G. Teicher* 06/28/2015