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## A Photographer Captures the Drama of the American Landscape

By *David Rosenberg*



Burk Uzzle, courtesy Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

"America," [Burk Uzzle](#) says, "comes at you hard."

The prolific photographer, who has been a member of Magnum and worked on assignment for *Life* magazine, has been photographing for well over half a century, much

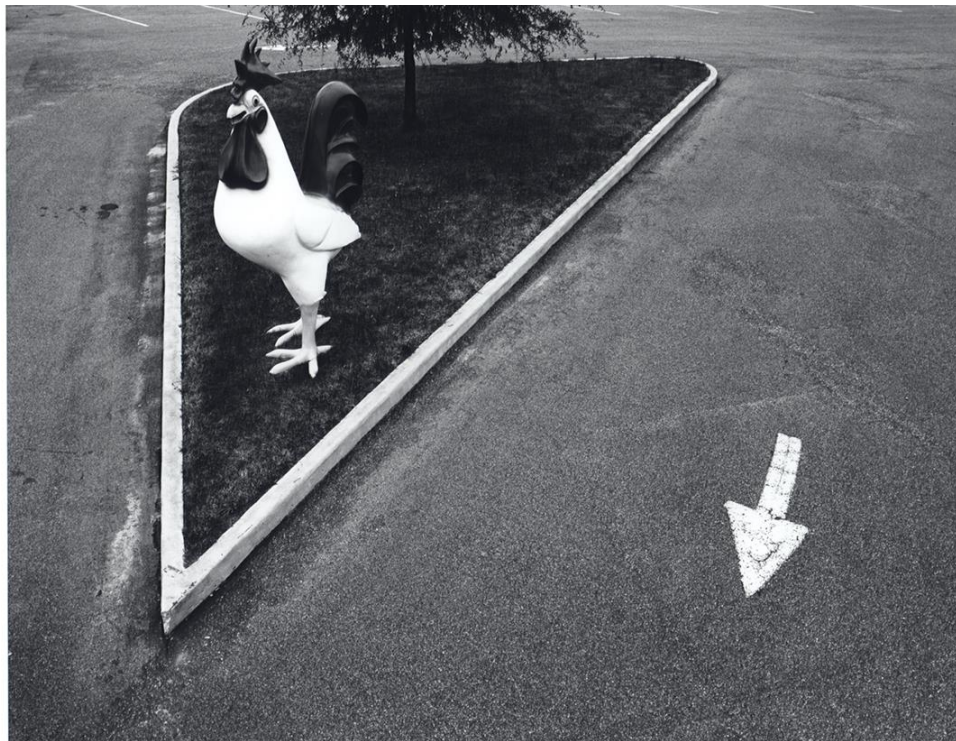
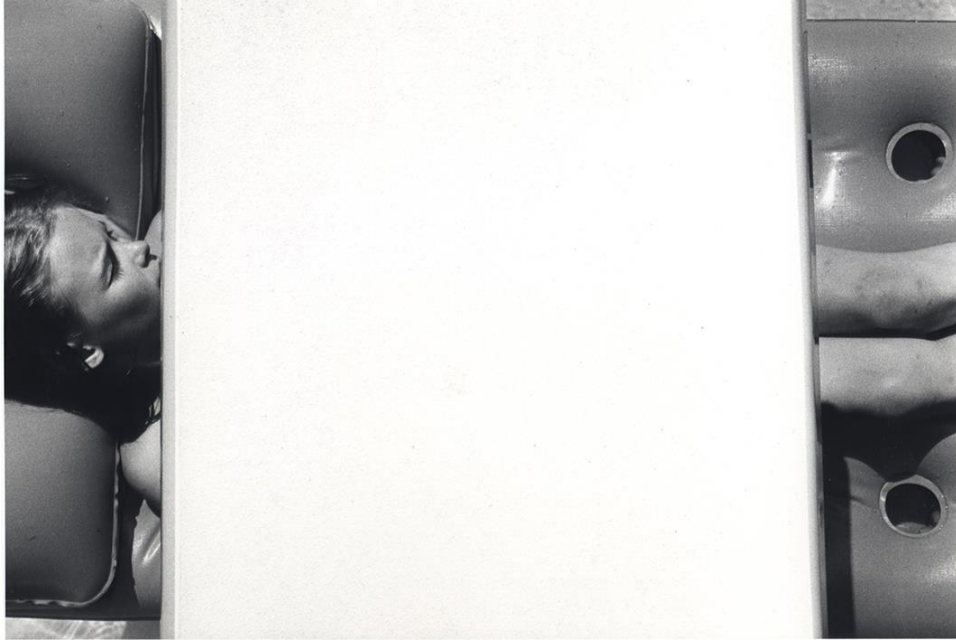
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of it around the United States. He sees America as complex, with movement and collage and disruption; his images celebrate this idea. More than 70 of them are on view at [Steven Kasher Gallery in New York City](#) until July 31, part of the appropriately titled series “American Puzzles.”

“The national flower of America is asphalt,” Uzzle wrote via email. “From the bustling, ricocheting chaos of New York to the aching quiet and stillness of vast deserts, America delivers its drama with theater and extremes.”



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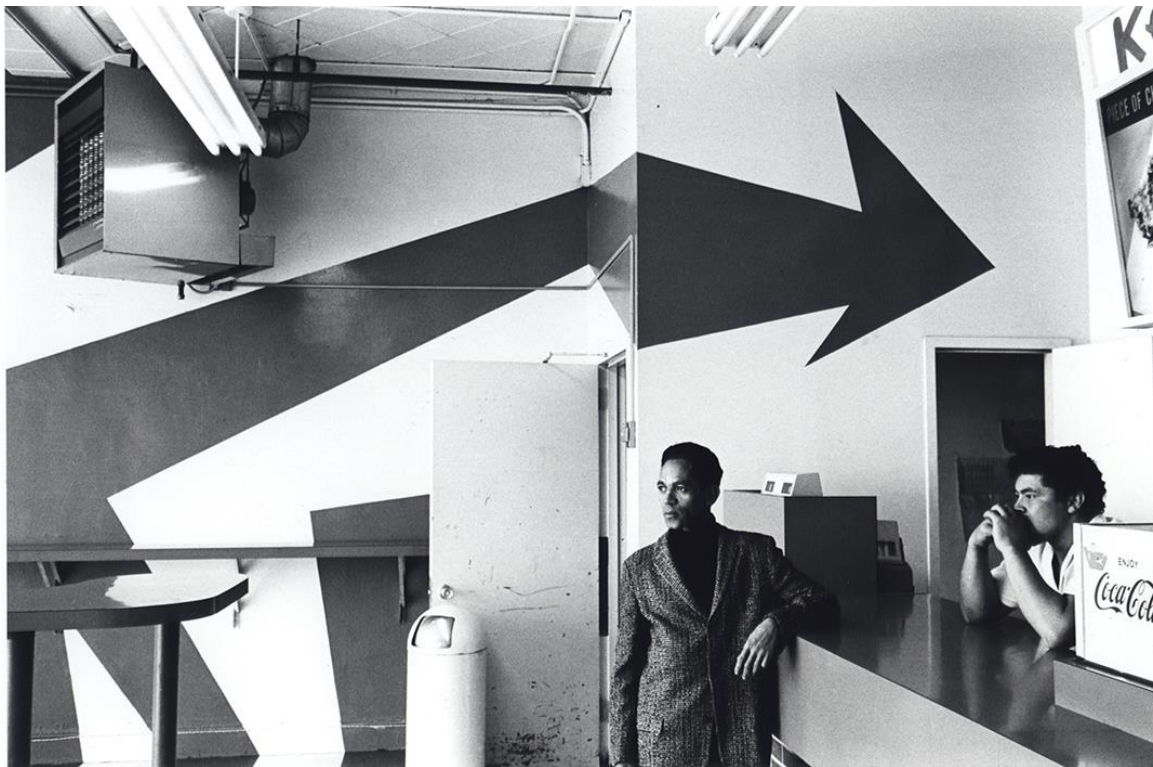
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“With the swirl of the American news cycle and media it’s easy to lose sight of the heroes right in front of us managing to put a life together with lots of grit in imperfect circumstances. America is a study in contrasts: race, economics, religion, beliefs, social history; it is in this vortex that I find my work so satisfying. These are the people I most want to celebrate.”

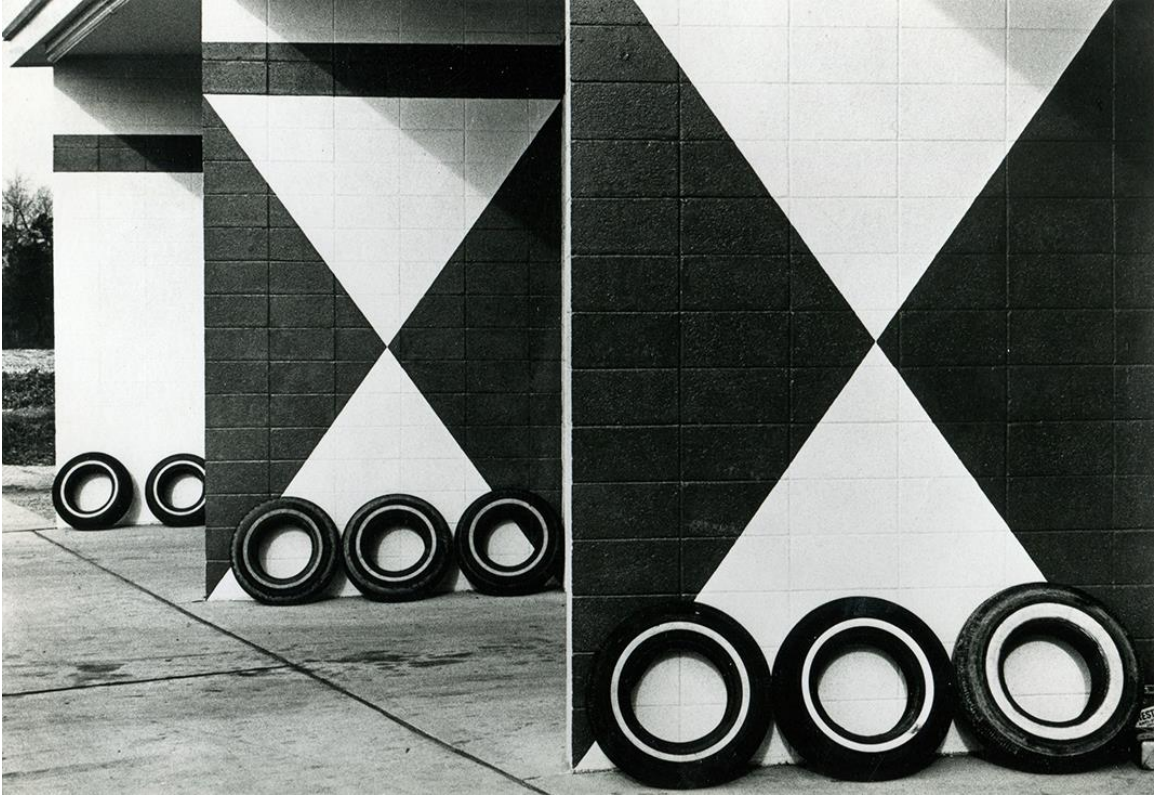
When Uzzle was shooting film early in his career, he would load one camera with color for his clients and the other with black-and-white for himself. He said taking assignments opened up the world to him and gave him the formal education he never had.

Uzzle sees painting, photography, and sculpture as having a lot in common; they all simply use “different tools.” Early in his career, Henri Cartier-Bresson advised him to study the Italian Quattrocento painters but refused to give an explanation why. “From this lesson, I learned to compose with multiple planes front to back as well from side to side,” Uzzle said.

“Photographers have optics and the rhetoric of reality. I do get lost in my own pictures, and often when I revisit them years later I figure out why I did the picture in the first place.”



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