

STEVEN  
KASHER  
GALLERY



## Finding Life in the Shadow of a Dog

November 3, 2016



Shot on rough ground, Thomas Roma's black and white pictures of the shadows of dogs at play look a bit like cave paintings, where featureless silhouettes distill the doggy essence of each animal. Roma's images are collected in *Plato's Dogs*, published this week by powerHouse Books and on view along with several older series at Steven Kasher Gallery in New York City, in a show opening tonight and on view until December 23.

Tiny or looming, leaping or sniffing, the shadows of these dogs seem to be having a good time. In some, bits of corporeal dog are included in the frame—toes and tails and snouts, or whole bodies delicately connected to their shadows, or detached mid-leap. Working in a dog park near his a Brooklyn home, Roma used a sort of oversized, homemade selfie stick to make the images, mounting his 35mm camera to an 8-foot painter's extension pole outfitted with an extra long cable release. Angling his camera over and above the dogs, Roma captured the distorted and simplified shapes made by the low angle of the sun. In the book's introduction, Roma's son, Giancarlo T. Roma, describes the photographer at work: "Armed with this contraption, he alternately looked like a shepherd leading his flock with the pole as his staff, and a madman chasing the dogs around with some sort of homing device."

The project began when the family took their standard poodle, Tino, to the Dyker Heights dog park. Roma describes his father's inspiration there: "Something about the combination of the stark light—perhaps due to the park's elevation and the lack of tall buildings around it—and the fleeting quality of the shadows, long and wild as they flashed on the dusty ground, translated into a new opportunity for him, while for the rest of us, preoccupied with our actual dogs, it was just another day at the park. For my father, it was ineffable, except, as he imagined, to his camera."