

STEVEN
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GALLERY



PARADISE & PURGATORY: SASSY '70S SUBURBIA & THE CITY

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Paradise & Purgatory: SASSY '70s Suburbia & The City juxtaposes intimate images of home life on Long Island alongside NYC street and night life – the likes of which have never been seen. Quirky, nostalgic and a bit naughty, it's a genuine cultural capsule of a decade that captivates today's generation. The photos and stories illustrate Meryl's coming of age: The South Bronx, suburbia, The Mystery Club, dance lessons, Girl Scouts, the Rockettes, the circus, school, mitzvahs, proms, weddings, gay Fire Island, the Hamptons, feminists, happy hookers, CBGB, Punks, Disco, After Hours and Go-Go Bars, Jewish and LGBT Pride, street life, home theatrics, holidays, friendship, family and love. She had to photograph it to make sense of it all, to hold onto the time, to release and now finally share it. The '70s were sassy, but also sweet, and so was Meryl

Meryl Meisler's introduction to purgatory and the importance of being open-minded, not pre-judging people, began with a 1957 childhood incident, being told "You can never go to heaven, the best you can do is purgatory" because she was Jewish. That's when Meryl learned about purgatory, and the importance of being open minded and not pre-judging people. Meryl moved to NYC in 1975, with her first paycheck she bought an antique edition of Dante's Purgatory and Paradise illustrated by Gustave Doré. She needed to "own it" and take back the power.

Carrying her medium format camera everywhere with great delight – Meryl photographed the world she knew on Long Island– donning childhood uniforms and costumes for self-portraits, comedic insider views of family and friends homes, the hilarity of her parents' Mystery Club circle. "Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise," declares Dante in Paradiso. Many viewed '70s NYC as hell, purgatory at best. With an open mind and heart, Meryl found paradise photographing the streets and nightlife of The City, many so wild she never dared to show them until now.