

# ubu

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## SNAPSHOTS: The Extraordinary Ordinary

June 15 - July 21, 2000

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Reception: Thursday, June 15th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

From Thursday, June 15th through Friday, July 21st, New York's **Ubu Gallery** will exhibit "**Snapshots: The Extraordinary Ordinary**." The exhibition is timed to coincide with the showing at *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* of a similar collection, titled "Other Pictures: Vernacular Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection."

Both exhibitions consist of photographs by unknown photographers, most of which have been extracted from family photo albums dating from the early part of the 20th Century through the 1960s. The processes of extraction, selection, collection and presentation have, of course, profoundly changed the way in which these photographs are perceived. By the time they are presented in these exhibitions, they are substantially different from what they were when they were pasted in photo albums as pieces of family history. The collector/curator, through the intervention of his "eye," has, in effect, become a collaborator, if not the artist.

Whereas the emphasis in the Met's exhibition is on the modernist aesthetic and imagery, which reflects modernist principles, the curatorial premise of Ubu's exhibition is that from the most banal of subject matter can come intensely interesting and unusual photographs, many of which validate the Surrealist premise that there exists a creative "collective unconscious." Time and again, one sees the same "mistakes" in Ubu's exhibition, mistakes which, rather than being discarded by their makers have, in fact, been preserved in albums. These recurring motifs include heads cut off in the framing, the photographer's dominant shadow in the foreground, blurred imagery, and accidental double exposures, among others.

In addition to the more than eighty individual photographs which have been taken from albums and matted and framed, the exhibition at Ubu Gallery also includes a display of intact albums, pages from albums, and snapshots as found in their frames.

Critic A.D. Coleman has written an essay for Ubu's exhibition, which contextualizes the snapshot within the broader framework of "vernacular" and "art" photography.