

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE F-STOP



JAY MAISEL

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ABOUT THE
F-STOP

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*It's Not About the
f-Stop Book Team*

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Felix Nelson

TECHNICAL EDITORS
Cindy Snyder
Kim Doty

ART DIRECTOR
Jessica Maldonado

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
© Jay Maisel

BACK COVER PHOTO
Stephen Denton

**COLOR PRODUCTION
SPECIALIST**
Marco Ugolini

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This book is dedicated with love to my wife, L.A., and my daughter, Amanda.



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About the Author

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1931, photographer Jay Maisel's career spans 61 years. He studied graphic design with Leon Friend at Abraham Lincoln High School, and painting with Joseph Hirsch in 1949 and Josef Albers in 1953. He informally studied with photographer and graphic designer Herbert Matter in 1952, and had a class with photographer and designer Alexey Brodovitch in 1955. He began working as a freelance photographer in 1954.

Jay's name has become synonymous with vibrant color photography that uses light and gesture to create countless unforgettable images for advertising, editorial, and corporate communications. In addition, his pictures appear in books and private, corporate, and museum collections. Some of his commercial accomplishments include five *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue covers, the first two covers of *New York* magazine, and the cover of Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*. Included among his many awards for excellence are the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame, American Society of Media Photographers' Photographer of the Year Award, and the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award.

Since he stopped taking on commercial work in the late 1990s, Jay has continued to focus on his personal work. A graduate of Cooper Union and Yale University, he continues his education by teaching younger photographers at workshops, seminars, and lectures around the world, and has developed a reputation as a giving and inspiring teacher.

Jay married his wife, Linda Adam, in 1989. Their daughter, Amanda, was born in 1993.

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Lastly, but most valuable, is the help, handholding, and advice that Matt Dean has contributed. Without his patience and administration, this book would still be random images and notes strewn all over The Bank and me screaming, "Where the hell did I put everything?"

Introduction

Most instructive photographic books tend to dwell a great deal on technique and equipment. This one doesn't.

One of my best friends, Sam Garcia, and I argue endlessly over our differing perceptions of photography. Recently, he said to me, "Photography is not about photography, it is about everything else."

I asked, "Did you make that up?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "I think that is the best thing I have ever heard."

In this book, I tried to talk about "everything else."

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There's Nothing to Shoot

If you're a native New Yorker, you understand that if there is a parking space open in midtown Manhattan, it's illegal to park there.

So having a car in Manhattan is fine...if you keep driving.

Or you can always put it in a parking garage. That virtually defeats the point of taking the car out, because it's a half an hour to get it in and another hour to get it out. Plus, they bang up the car, charge prices that make your eyes bulge, and act as if they're doing you a favor.

My solution? I would have an assistant sit in the car while I ran my errands—seeing art directors, delivering jobs, picking up stuff, film runs, whatever was necessary.

After a while, my assistant started to complain to me, “It's boring sitting in the car waiting for you.”

“Really? You want to be a photographer, why don't you shoot while you're waiting for me?”

Then, IT comes out of his mouth: “But there's nothing to shoot!”

“Bulls#[†, there is always something to shoot, you just have to be open to it. It's always there.”

I told him: “The next place we're going to, I don't have to see the guy, I'm just picking up something. You go pick it up, I'll wait in the car, and we'll see what happens.”

This photograph came while I was sitting in the car, anxiously hoping to make a photograph to make my point. When I showed it to him, he grinned and said, “Boy, I hate your guts, but aside from that, did you get anything else?”



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