

Sunset Boulevard

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Published by Craig Carlson

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Designed by Katie Stapko.



...Every exposure creates a self-sufficient image, which may be ignored until later. (Most, in fact, will be ignored forever.) Each frame that becomes a finished picture joins others to create an unforeseen whole, whose coherence need not depend on any premeditated plan or theme. On the contrary, the group achieves its coherence by articulating a sensibility – a way of meeting and understanding that world...
Excerpt by Peter Galassi, from “North South East West” by Ricard Benson.

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KODAK



"A couple of left turns and the Macy Street Viaduct over the Los Angeles River is all yours."

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Macy Street Bridge, East Cesar Chavez Avenue



Sign Detail, Near Macy Street Bridge



101 Sign, 1031 East Cesar Chavez Avenue



Bus Kiosk With Painted Cholla, 2002 Sunset Boulevard

Work In Progress: Macy Street Bridge Los Angeles, 4-29-12

From Interstate 5 North, I took the 101 North and exited onto Cesar Chavez Avenue. Taking the Cesar Chavez exit will deposit you into the Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles. A couple of left turns and the Macy Street Viaduct over the Los Angeles River is all yours. It is a beautifully constructed bridge built in 1926 and some 31,000 cars use it daily to connect to downtown Los Angeles, sending you by Alvarado Street and Old Town, directly into Little Tokyo.

As always, the chiaroscuro of the day's first light is my partner in image making. Yet, even with the fact that you share this morning with nearly 4 million Angelenos, there is coolness, clarity, and quiet. As the morning ages the light comes up quickly, and certain subjects start to melt into the mid-day sun. Heading north over the bridge to downtown L.A., Cesar Chavez Avenue turns into its predecessor; Sunset Boulevard, my muse.



Corner of North Mission Road & East Cesar Chavez Avenue



Auto Service Repair, 2824 Sunset



Reservoir & Sunset



1463 Sunset, Near The Corner of N. Portia Street & Sunset

Work In Progress: Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, 5-20-12

Sunset Boulevard is a canal of change. Approximately 24 miles in length, the famous strip of pavement roughly mimics the arc of the mountains that form the northern boundary of the Los Angeles Basin. From downtown Los Angeles, it heads northwest to Hollywood, then it corners due west at Hillhurst and N. Virgil Avenues, which bend it straight into the Pacific Ocean. My work as a photographer takes me from Cesar Chavez Avenue (old Sunset) up to West Hollywood, or the part of the boulevard called "The Strip."

Sunset Boulevard is about bus stops with painted Cholas, American Apparel billboards, and defrocked vegetation. It's also about Angelenos, who leave their tagged existence nearly on every wall and nook along the canal. Any unoccupied wall is a harbinger for a movie poster and rows of these identical posters are the boulevard's graphic horizons. Sunset Boulevard is a canal best explored with early morning light and wide angle lens, held level on its axis with tripod.

“...capturing images for “Sunset Boulevard” involves photographing on nearly-abandoned urban streets.”

Ellysian Park

CBS 4214

5872 CBS

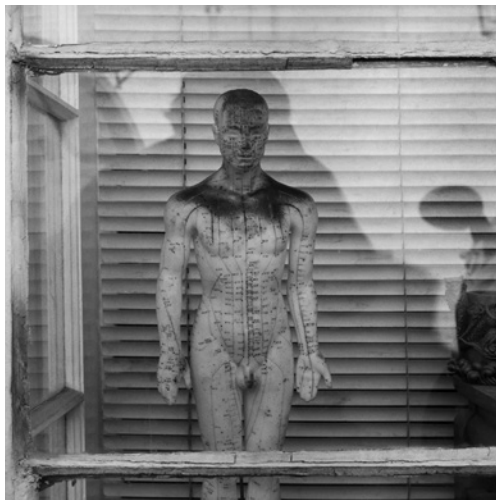
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*(State of Mind Movie Poster & L.A. Dodger Billboard)
Elysian Park Avenue, Near Dodger Stadium*



*(Herbal Medicine Office, Man Figurine) 4443 Sunset Drive,
Corner of Sunset Drive & Sunset*



(Movie Poster Row) 2006 Sunset, Near Alvarado Street and Sunset

Sunset Boulevard, First Post Los Angeles, California, 1-3-12

The process of capturing images for “Sunset Boulevard” involves photographing on nearly-abandoned urban streets. I’ve found that this is best done on holidays that also happen to land on Sundays. Fortunately on these days there are no parking issues; I can pull over, park, shoot, and make U-turns without having to dodge much traffic. The few people I see that early in the morning are mostly homeless, early workers waiting for the bus, or those headed to coffee houses opening up. The morning starts before dawn (this particular time at an IHOP), where I journal into my work binder what I hope to get done. My “working” three-ring binder is separated by tabs identifying the day of the shoot and it will also carry the processed 2 1/4" x 2 1/4" negatives and inexpensive digital proof sheets of each roll of film. At the end of each year, the contents of the binder(s) will be transferred to archival clamshell-style boxes with shooting dates pasted to their spines.

For this project, I am using Mamiya Twin-Lens-Reflex cameras on a tripod and with focal lengths which allow me to shoot from the curb. For farther away subjects I will switch to another Mamiya with a normal lens. Technically, I shoot with Kodak TRI-X-Pan film with a yellow-orange filter to help create more contrast than the directional lighting I love working with. These types of projects help fill the space between the time I can get back to a larger subject or setting, such as Montana. It also allows me to continue looking and working with a minimum budget of gas, film, and an IHOP.

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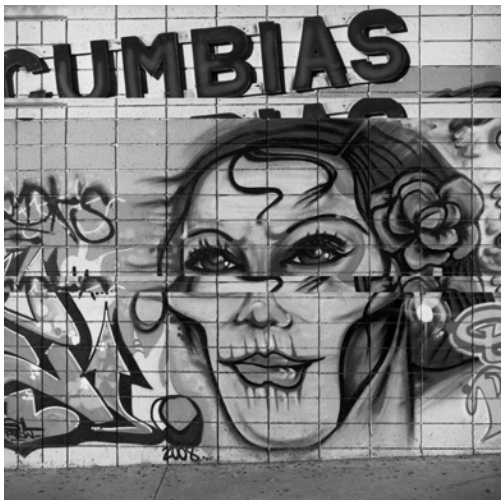
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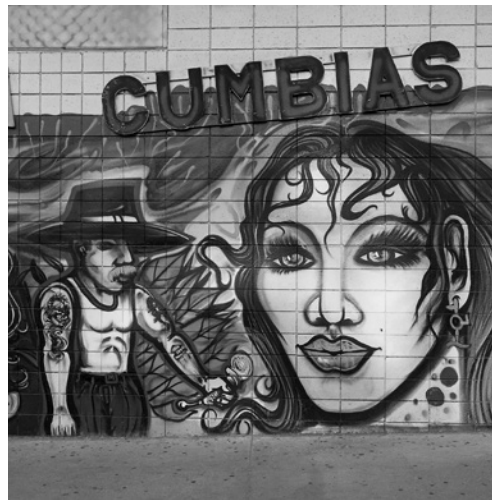




(Painted Chola 1/1/12) Club Bahia, 1130 Sunset



(Same Painted Chola 2/12/12) Club Bahia, 1130 Sunset



(Same Painted Chola 7/22/12) Club Bahia, 1130 Sunset

Work In Progress: Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, 06-24-12

The young Latino boy slept in the fetal position on a discarded couch adjacent to the curb, with both the couch's back and his against the street. His pastel green vomit, which I had just skipped over, had pooled on the sidewalk.

In the very early morning hours along Sunset, small Christian Hispanic Churches the shape of Cracker Jack boxes open up to receive morning worshipers. The congregants wear mostly black, and seem to oftentimes be middle-aged woman without their male counterparts. Besides cars the only other sound this Sunday morning is the breaking of beer bottles by recyclers, and the cleaning out of a bar painted completely black—all of it. The thirty-something Cholo breaking the bottles looked only once at me and then went back to using his left hand to sort dark glass and his right for clear glass. He tossed the bottles in an arc like the flight of an artillery shell, so they would surely break.

Occasionally, a pedestrian will murmur a greeting but will not look into my eyes. If people do talk, all I hear is a soft whisper of Spanish trailing off behind me. Kitchen help open up side doors to Mexican restaurants, and you can hear the smack of stainless steel a half block away...

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Massage
For Your Health
Skin

"The man was wearing one of those flat, wide-brimmed cowboy hats with a Spanish Crown (made with stitched leather). The arch of his hat caused by his posture hid his face from my view."



American Apparel Billboard, Corner of Rampart & Sunset



2105 Sunset, Alvarado & Sunset



Near Sunset Boulevard



Rampart & Sunset

Work In Progress: Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, 7-22-12

It was still early morning. The light haze toward the eastern horizon made the rising sun a perfect yellow tennis ball with fresh fuzz still on it. I felt it was going to be a great morning for photography and for this photographer. Traffic on Sunset was light; so was my spirit.

The man was wearing one of those flat, wide-brimmed cowboy hats with a Spanish Crown (made with stitched leather). The arch of his hat caused by his posture hid his face from my view. He was in the street pushing a baby stroller with swivel-wheels; the front left wheel was broken and swerved the buggy into the curb. Forward progress was made by using the street's asphalt edge against the concrete curb edge to keep the broken swivel wheel straight. Crawling silently northward, he passed me without notice.

Near the Metrolink building, mostly empty buses were making their morning runs with passengers seating themselves as factory workers parked their early model compact sedans into scarce, wedge-like parking spaces.

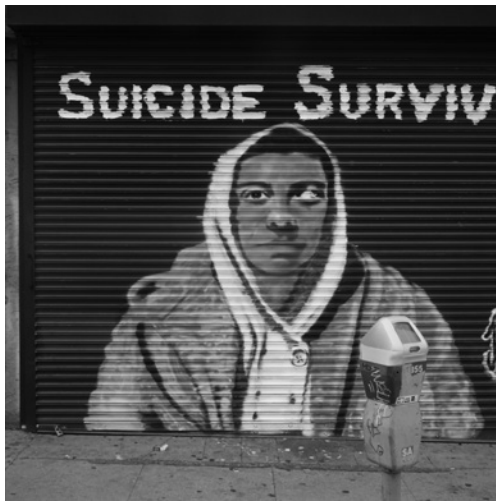
There are few birds in downtown L.A. and fewer trees for them. I wonder if trees have a purpose without birds. Even the raven has not been seen lately. He loves fast food, especially french fries which can be carried away with his strong beak...



"Echoes Under Sunset," Near Reservoir & Glendale Boulevard



3432 East Cesar Chavez Avenue



1528 1/2 Sunset Boulevard



Corner of Echo Park Avenue & Montana Street, Near Sunset

Work In Progress: Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, 8-19-12

I arrived from San Diego early to begin shooting before dawn, and paid \$3.99 cent per gallon to fill up the tank. It was a Metro gas station and the attendant was behind 5 inches of polycarbonate bullet proof plastic with his head down, reading. He never moved until I asked for a receipt.

There was a slight separation in the dawn sky against the building edge as I set up my first shot two blocks from the gas station near a corner of Cesar Chavez Avenue (old Sunset Boulevard). The corner building had a small ledge built into it that held unlit votive candles which stood in front of a large ceramic Byzantine icon of Jesus Christ. My next shot was to reshoot a part of a very early 101 freeway sign which still had small ceramic reflectors outlining the number of the freeway's designated name. The ground around the base of the sign was uneven and covered with discarded clothing and debris. It was difficult to level the ladder to the vantage point needed to make the shot.

The day wasn't an hour old and you could already feel the early-morning August heat starting to build by stepping from shade to direct sun. Early light along Sunset is distributed sporadically by surrounding buildings and the serpentine shape of the street. The earliest morning light on Sunset drops in on the Silver Lake area and then retreats south toward Echo Park. The last of the first light along Sunset falls on Hollywood, again a mix of large and small skyscrapers, temples, radio towers, and fast food signage that obscures most of the light...



Rundy's Barbershop, Cheap Cuts & No Nicks, 4451 Sunset



Echo Barbershop, 1636 Echo Park Avenue or, Corner of Echo Park Avenue & Montana Street



(Scissor Bus Kiosk) 3740 Sunset or, Corner of Lucile & Sunset



On-Ramp to 101 South (Hollywood Freeway), Near Van Ness & Sunset

Work In Progress: Last Post, Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, 01-12-13

It was cold, standing in the early morning shadows of Sunset Boulevard. The early morning light played games with me as I scrambled for the camera to make a shot and found the light had fallen off the subject, and at that particular moment, the direction and quality of the light would have to wait for another photographer's eye.

Sunset Boulevard is a four-lane ribbon of asphalt which connects diverse cultures and neighborhoods together. Sunset starts in the Barrio as East Cesar Chavez Avenue, then northward to the bourgeoisie enclaves of coffee shops and boutiques. And after a dogleg bend in its path, boutiques are replaced with skyscrapers casting shadows on the street-life below; until the ribbon of Broken Dreams finishes with the glamor of "The Strip." In a few months Sunset Boulevard will go through its umpteenth restoration, and my year spent looking at it will become a portal of memories and images.



*Metrolink Building Pedestrian Bridge. One Gateway Plaza,
Near N. Vignes Street*



(Looking East) Chateau Marmont Hotel, 8221 Sunset Strip



(Looking East, Extended View) Chateau Marmont Hotel, 8221 Sunset Strip

Work In Progress: Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, 11-18-12

Early morning light would be held back until mid-morning, but wanting to work on Sunset was bigger than the weather report. Partly cloudy skies left light rain the night before which I drove north through from San Diego. Sunset Boulevard reflects its subtle changes; if you look. Advertisements are renewed for the branding of new desires and old ones the culture shapers do not want you to forget.

It's all around, the meaning of life along Sunset, and It's easy to read because it shouts at you in LARGE Helvetica type. Coffee houses are filling-up and the traffic thickens which chokes you away from your work as a photographer. Late morning arrives and the clouds part a bit to let directional light boldify facts, and in my mind's eye I begin to develop the negatives made on this trip. Do the photographs push forward the meaning for making them or, have I covered this subject with no reason to expose another frame; am I chasing its twilight.

When do you know you have wrestled the truth to the ground and pinned it? Is it truth that throws in the towel or does the photographer decide there is no more of it hiding in his subject. It has been for me almost a year photographing Sunset Boulevard; a project like no other I have worked on. Rather than grandiose individual photographs of great resolve, I have made a hundred small cuts into this street, absorbing its stain into my reality, my camera.



L.A. & Graffiti, Near Sutherland & Sunset, Elysian Park



(Movie Poster Row), Savages, 2006 Sunset, Near Alvarado Street & Sunset



(Forensic Kiss, Abandoned Exotic Car Dealership), Along Sunset



Rundy's Barbershop / Cheap Cuts & No Nicks, 4451 Sunset

Left Panel



Center Panel



Right Panel



Sunset Boulevard—Left Panel

1. No. 5, 500 N. Mission Road & East Cesar Chavez Avenue (old Sunset)
2. 101 Sign, 1031 East Cesar Chavez Avenue
3. To, 500 N. Mission Road & East Cesar Chavez Avenue
4. L.A. & Graffiti, Near Sutherland & Sunset, Elysian Park
5. Keys While You Wait, 1829 Sunset
6. Tortilleria, (3432 East Cesar Chavez Ave) Corner of Alma Avenue & East Cesar Chavez Avenue
7. Detail of Byzantine Painted Icon Christ Head On Ceramic Tiles With Votive Candel (3432 East Cesar Chavez Ave)
8. Planification, 1569 Sunset
9. Family, 2910 East Cesar Chavez Avenue
10. Polla's Segunda, (Used Appliances), 407 N. Concord, Corner of Concord & East Cesar Chavez Avenue
11. (Men Walking) Reservoir & Sunset Boulevard
12. (Painted Chola 1/1/12) Club Bahia, 1130 Sunset
13. (Same Painted Chola 2/12/12) Club Bahia, 1130 Sunset
14. (Same Painted Chola 7/22/12) Club Bahia, 1130 Sunset
15. (Man Walking), Corner of Echo Park Avenue & Montana Street, Near Sunset
16. Macy Street Bridge, East Cesar Chavez Avenue
17. Detail, Cornice, Macy Street Bridge, East Cesar Chavez Avenue
18. (Bus Turning Right) Corner of East Cesar Chavez Avenue & Grand Avenue
19. Topiary Trees (Burger King Parking Lot) N. Grand Avenue & Sunset
20. 9.99¢ Special, 100% Hand Wash & Sealer Wax, Alvarado & Sunset
21. Korean Christian Church, 4975 Sunset
22. Quinceañera Painted Graphic, Logan Street & Sunset
23. (Bus Kiosk with Painted Graphic), 2002 Sunset
24. Church For Rent, (Filming & Events) 1629 Griffith Park Boulevard, Griffith Park Boulevard & Lucile Avenue
25. (Old Face on Building) 1463 Sunset, Near The Corner of N. Portia Street & Sunset
26. Tree & Graffitied Van (From Walgreens Store Parking Lot) Logan Street & Sunset, 1625 Sunset
27. (Broken Sidewalk) Corner of Vine & Selma, One Block North of Sunset
28. (Gated Tree) Between Vignes & Alameda Streets, Along East Cesar Chavez Avenue
29. (Graffitied Tree, etc.) In Front of Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual & Performing Arts
30. (Graffitied Tree, lofs) In Front of Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual & Performing Arts

Sunset Boulevard—Center Panel

31. (State of Mind Movie Poster & L.A. Dodger Billboard) Elysian Park Avenue, Near Dodger Stadium
32. (Scissor Bus Kiosk) 3740 Sunset or, Corner of Lucile & Sunset
33. Echo Barbershop, 1636 Echo Park Avenue or, Corner of Echo Park Avenue & Montana Street
34. 1824 Sunset, Building Facade With Telephone Kiosk
35. Espresso Shop Renovation, Near 1841 Sunset
36. (Corner Strip Mall, Cleaners) 2105 Sunset, Alvarado & Sunset
37. (Massage Your Health) American Apparel Advertising, Corner of Rampart & Sunset
38. (Repose) American Apparel Advertising Billboard
39. Bushmills & American Apparel Advertising, 3022 Sunset, Near the Corner of Parkman Street & Sunset
40. American Apparel Advertising, Corner of Rampart & Sunset, Looking Southeast
41. Art Graphic (Dig Deeper), Corner of Sanborn & Sunset
42. (SkullTattoo Parlor) 1218 Sunset
43. (Herbal Medicine Office, Man Figurine) 4443 Sunset Drive, Corner of Sunset Drive & Sunset
44. Quica Sara Card Reader, 1547 Sunset
45. ("Playing For Keeps,") Bus Kiosk 500 N. Mission Road & East Cesar Chavez Avenue
46. Auto Service & Electric Painted Graphic, 2824 Sunset
47. Abandoned Hollywood Ford Service Building, Rear Alley Entrance Along Hillhurst Avenue
48. Tropical Cafe, 2900 Sunset, Corner of Parkman & Sunset
49. (Detail of Broken Windows) Abandoned Hollywood Ford Service Building, Rear Alley Entrance Along Hillhurst Avenue
50. Car Repair Shop (Razed), Corner of 1300 N. Portia Street & Sunset
51. Out of the Closest Thrift Store, 1724 Sunset
52. Moving Sale, Along Sunset Boulevard
53. Kung-fu Baby Sleeper with Nunchunks, Along Sunset
54. Power Pole, Electrical Service Box & Apartment Clothes Line
55. Hit Big Bargain 99¢ Store, 2112 Sunset
56. Linda Salon, 2600 Sunset, Corner of Rampart & Sunset
57. (Movie Poster Row), Savages, 2006 Sunset, Near Alvarado Street & Sunset
58. (Movie Poster Row with Walking Figure), 2006 Sunset, Near Alvarado Street & Sunset
59. (Movie Poster Row), Snow White & Huntsman, 2006 Sunset, Near Alvarado Street & Sunset
60. (Movie Poster Row), Graffiti, 2006 Sunset, Near Alvarado Street & Sunset

Sunset Boulevard—Right Panel

61. Hollywood Press Building Window, Along Sunset
62. (Forensic Kiss, Abandoned Exotic Car Dealership), Along Sunset
63. Art Linkletter Star, Corner of Vine & Selma, One Block North of Sunset
64. The Laugh Factory, 8001 Sunset Strip
65. Rudy's Barbershop / Cheap Cuts & No Nicks, 4451 Sunset
66. Hollywood Palladium Dance Hall, 6215 Sunset Strip
67. Metrolink Building Pedestrian Bridge, Metrolink One Gateway Plaza, Near N. Vignes Street
68. (Looking East) Chateau Marmont Hotel, 8221 Sunset Strip
69. (Looking East, Extended View) Chateau Marmont Hotel, 8221 Sunset Strip
70. KTLA Broadcast Tower, Corner of Van Ness Avenue & Sunset
71. Major Properties Advertisement & Clothing Billboard, 1841 Sunset
72. "The Gray Movie," Poster, 101 Overpass Along Sunset
73. Denzel Washington Movie Poster & Fence, 1841 Sunset
74. Man with Brief Case Advertisement, Corner of Rosemont & Sunset
75. (Big Bird Paper Cut-out, "Fuck Romney,") Corner of Edgecliffe Drive & Griffith Park Boulevard
76. Two Painted Faces, "Echoes Under Sunset," Underpass, Near Corner of Reservoir Street & Glendale Boulevard
77. Turner's Liquor & Deli, 8850 Sunset
78. (Painted Graphic) Suicide Survivor, 1528 1/2 Sunset
79. American Apparel Advertisement, 1400 Sunset, Corner of Douglas & Sunset
80. (X-Brace Across Two Telephone Poles) Along Sunset
81. Vintage Yard Sale Sign, Corner of Lemoyne & Sunset
82. "In Silence," (Eviction, Bed Frame & Mattress With Posters), 1320 Sunset
83. Hollywood Center Motel, 6722 Sunset
84. Apartment Complex Wall, Along Sunset
85. (Apartment Complex Alley Way with Barred Windows & Parking Poles), Near Sunset
86. (Wall with Graffiti & Palms), 800 N. White Knoll Drive, Corner of N. White Knoll Drive & Sunset
87. (Painted Leaf Graphic & Potted Tree), Echo Park Avenue & Montana Street
88. (Palm Tree Trunk Painted Black), 1582 Edgecliffe Drive, Corner of Edgecliffe Drive & Griffith Park Boulevard
89. (Same Palm Tree Trunk Painted White), 1582 Edgecliffe Drive, Corner of Edgecliffe Drive & Griffith Park Boulevard
90. On-Ramp To 101 South (Hollywood Freeway), Near Van Ness & Sunset

