

You See – A Journey to Los Angeles and California

December 20th, 2015 by chiara

You See – A Journey to Los Angeles and California

Christopher Anhalt – Photographs

Stefan Kaetz – Book design

Homeparkpress

Date of publishing – 2014

N° of copies – 40

Dimensions – 15 x 24 cm

Binding – Open thread-stitching with cover

Paper – Metapaper Extrarough White

THE BOOK AS A PROJECT

Which are the 5 indispensable pictures for this book?

Behind the wheel / Pacific Ocean; Aya at Neptune's Net; Malibu1; Malibu2; You See



BD: What is the framed structure of this book?

The book is a travel report, showing 132 black and white photographs in chronological order. Images are grouped into 51 short "sections". Each section is between one and six images long, and introduced by a short caption (date and location). None of the images is more important than any other one, layout is the same for every image.



P: How did you choose your book designer?

I had worked with Stefan Kaetz on my first two books, working with him is efficient and fun. I completely trust him, especially with every aspect regarding typography.



BD: What was your approach to get into the photographic project?

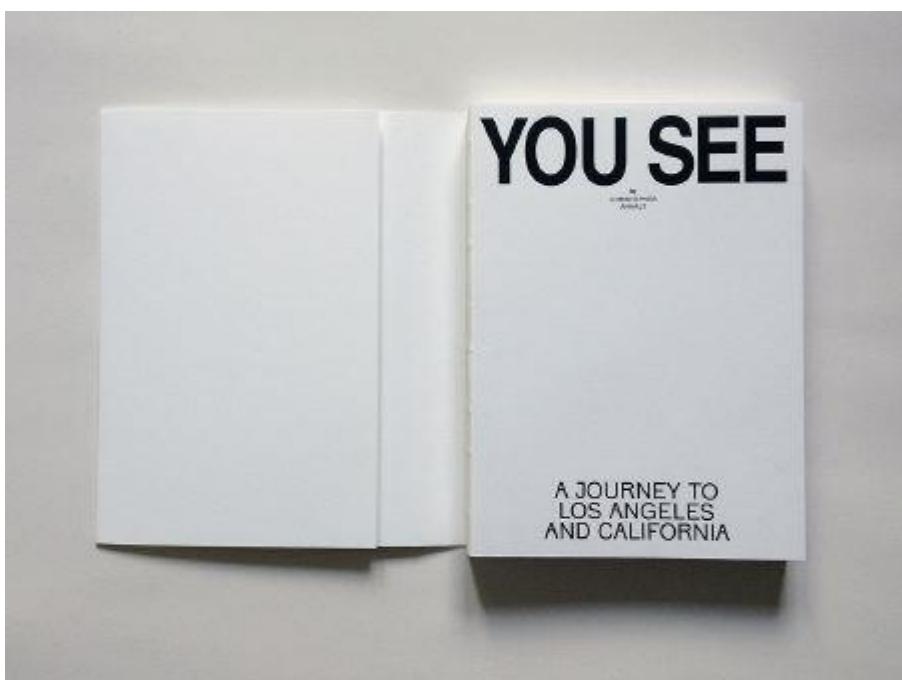
When I began my trip to California, I had a certain idea about how and what to shoot. I did not go there with the intention to work on a “project”, or to shoot for a book. Generally speaking, I am interested in “topics” (subject matter, or more abstract ideas), and I may carry an idea of a book with me. But I tend not to shoot in terms of clearly defined “photographic projects”.



P / BD: How did you develop the work on the book?

After the trip, when I started to scan my images, I easily found an initial sequence of about 40 images which I really liked. Only then I started to think about doing a book. I created a first dummy with about 150 images, and then, after showing it to a couple of friends, I decided that this should be my next Homeparkpress title. The initial sequence went into the final version nearly unchanged.

I created two first dummy versions to make up my mind about the project, two or three empty dummies with the book binder to decide on materials and object character, and then another two or three dummies to finalize image selection, sequencing and typography.



THE BOOK AS A STORY

BD: Which narrative slant did you choose for this book and why?

Given the image material, it was a natural choice to choose a “travel report” theme and stick to a chronological order. I created a first dummy with handwritten title and captions but I realized that this forced the viewer into thinking very much about me, Christopher Anhalt the person. I decided to discard the idea of “authenticity”, and instead, to play with the role of a photographer – e.g. by selecting images that represent a certain mood, or by selecting images that show certain subject matter, in addition to switching back to regular typography.

Trying to introduce a fictional I-narrator, instead of trying to create an authentic travel report (an authentic “self portrait” in a wider sense), was an experiment that I enjoyed.



P: What's the difference between the book and the photographic project slant?

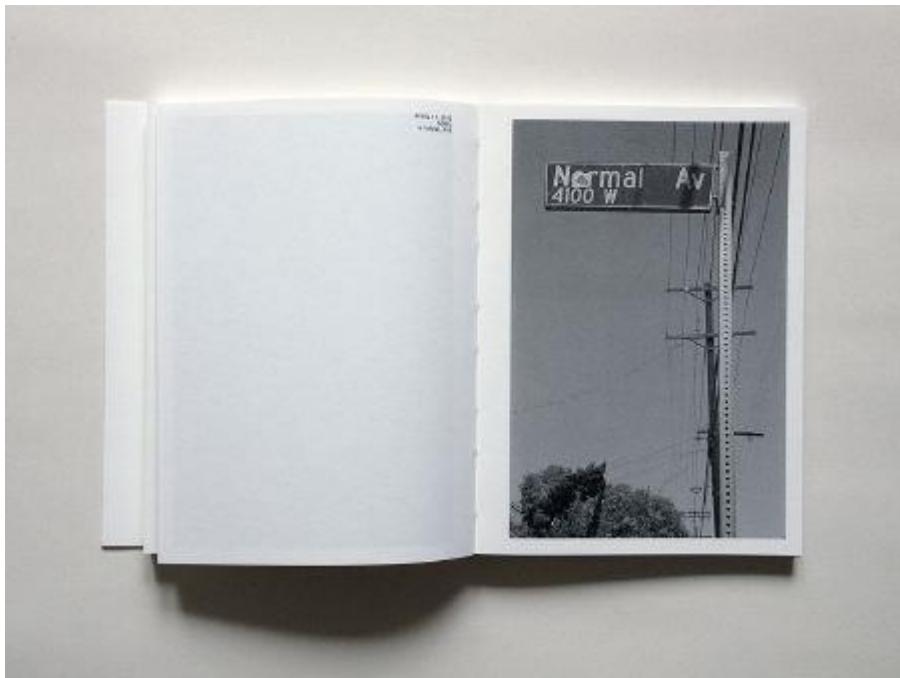
As said, there was not really a “photographic project” to start with. One could say that the “photographic project” was defined by the process of shooting, and that there is some congruence between the structure of the book and the way how the images were shot. Some of the ideas that influenced my shooting also influenced the book.



THE BOOK AS AN OBJECT

BD: How did you choose the materials and the kind of printing?

As usual, there was a defined (limited) budget to begin with. And I knew the book had to be thick, many pages, excellent binding. So it was clear from the outset that the edition size would be small, and hence offset printing would not be an option. I like uncoated paper, I was looking for one that was warm but not too warm. I consulted the printing company with which I had worked before, and checked paper samples that they would recommend. Selecting the book binder was a separate task. We contracted a different company to handle the book binding job.



P: How the materials' choices are connected to the photographic project?

I try to come up with an empty dummy early when I work on a book. Paper, binding, format, number of pages, cover – the empty dummy somehow has to match and reinforce the ideas, the mood and the atmosphere I connect with the imagined result. And vice versa, an empty dummy which just feels right may influence those very ideas. Once there is a valid empty dummy available, all subsequent design decisions become much easier.



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