

THE THIRTY TWO INCH RULER / MAP OF BABYLON

JOHN GOSSAGE



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11.14.12 – 12.29.12
OPENING 13.11

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LWS GALLERY PRESENTS *THE THIRTY TWO INCH RULER/ MAP OF BABYLONE*, PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GOSSAGE FROM NOVEMBER 14TH UNTIL DECEMBER 29TH.

You Should Spend Some Time at Home

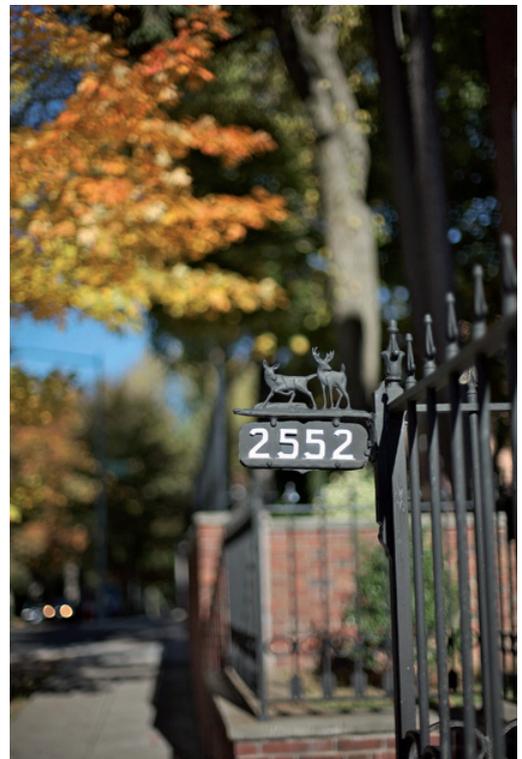
I started to think about these pictures on September 12th, the day I first became aware that Donald Rumsfeld was my neighbor.

I live in a place where I am most comfortable, a place that has given me guidance into how to proceed on many projects. The darkness of «Stadt des Schwarz» was first seen and thought about in a nighttime driveway on 24th Street. The attitude of «There & Gone» is in opposition to the feelings of comfort felt on my walks through Kalorama. It's a touchstone place, for current and future reference.

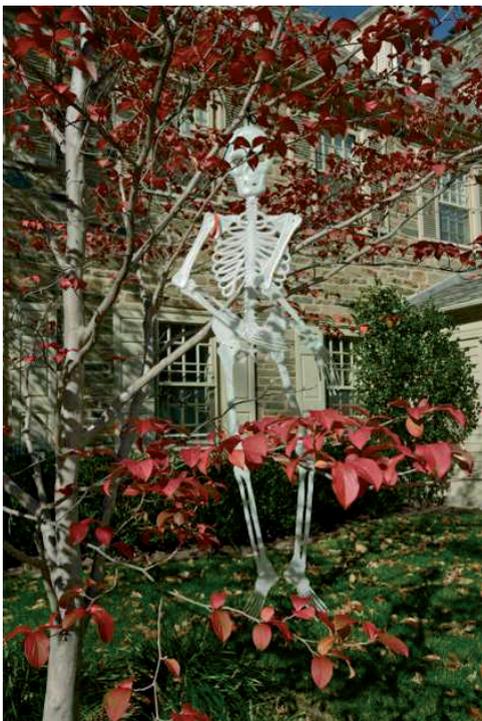
Home.

On the days following the 12th, I slowly became aware that it was important that I photograph here. I thought I might try to work on the drift of privilege, and the numbness and dislocation it engenders. Kalorama, in particular, is unique. It is an area of Washington that is designated for embassies, ambassadorial residences and private homes, it is protected 24/7 by at least three overlapping police agencies: the Executive Protection Service (which guards the diplomatic corps), the Washington Metropolitan Police Force, and the National Park Service. There is also the occasional personal of Department of Defense bodyguard. It is seen as a safe and pleasant place to walk, visit or live, at any hour of the day or night.

A place of beauty and calm that you might choose to live in, if you could. A place that makes visual the affectations of wealth and political power.



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I need things to be visible to be able to work. That seems like an obvious statement, but so much slips by unexamined, without a chance for reflection, that I wanted to state it. Washington is a city that, in its most famous aspects, is profoundly non-visual. What you see is not what you get. So this chance to drift through these places carrying a critical eye, allows me (in the photographic equivalent of the third person, at least) to confront my own desires and prejudices, as well as those of my neighbors.

So this story might be one of a great and easy mistake: to think that what you want is what everyone wants, and should have. Or possibly a graver delusion: thinking that you might have enough power to make that happen.

But, if we have been lucky recently, this can now reside as just another of my «history” books. If not, old habits, as we are told, die hard.

John Gossage
January 1, 2009

JOHN GOSSAGE

He was born in Staten Island, New York City in 1946 and at an early age became interested in photography, leaving school at 16 and taking private instruction from Lisette Model, Alexey Brodovich and Bruce Davidson. He later moved to Washington, D.C. to study, and subsequently received a grant from the Washington Gallery of Modern Art which allowed him to remain in the city and refine his photographic technique. He has shown his photographs in solo and group exhibitions since 1963 and his work is held in numerous private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the Sprengel Museum in Hanover, Germany, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal.

John Gossage is noted for his artist's books and other publications using his photographs to explore under-recognised elements of the urban environment such as abandoned tracts of land, debris and garbage, and graffiti, and themes of surveillance, memory and the relationship between architecture and power.



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