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ALEX BEAM

With time, history has a way of fading

I'm good on dates. Every Nov. 11, I'm tempted to write a column about what was once the momentous date in the young history of the 20th century: the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. World War I, which exterminated the male youth of several European countries, had finally ended.

Of course, I remember Nov. 22, the day John Kennedy was assassinated, and I carry some odd chronological baggage as well: Aug. 22, the date of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, and April 22, Vladimir Lenin's birthday. (Quite near Adolf Hitler's and William Shakespeare's, as we date types know.)

In 1941, Franklin Roosevelt told both houses of Congress that Dec. 7 was a "date which will live in infamy." It lived in infamy for several decades, and not much longer. The jazzed-up, 2001 movie "Pearl Harbor," with earthquake actors Josh Hartnett and Kate Beckinsale, didn't fare very well at the malls. Reviewer Roger Ebert wrote that "the filmmakers seem to have aimed the film at an audience that may not have heard of Pearl Harbor, or perhaps even of World War Two."

A final example: In 1883, 500,000 New Yorkers jammed the streets of Manhattan for the 100th anniversary of Evacuation Day, Nov. 25. That was the day that the hated British redcoats abandoned the city, ending our Revolutionary War. Let's go to New York now and find one person who remembers what Nov. 25 is all about.

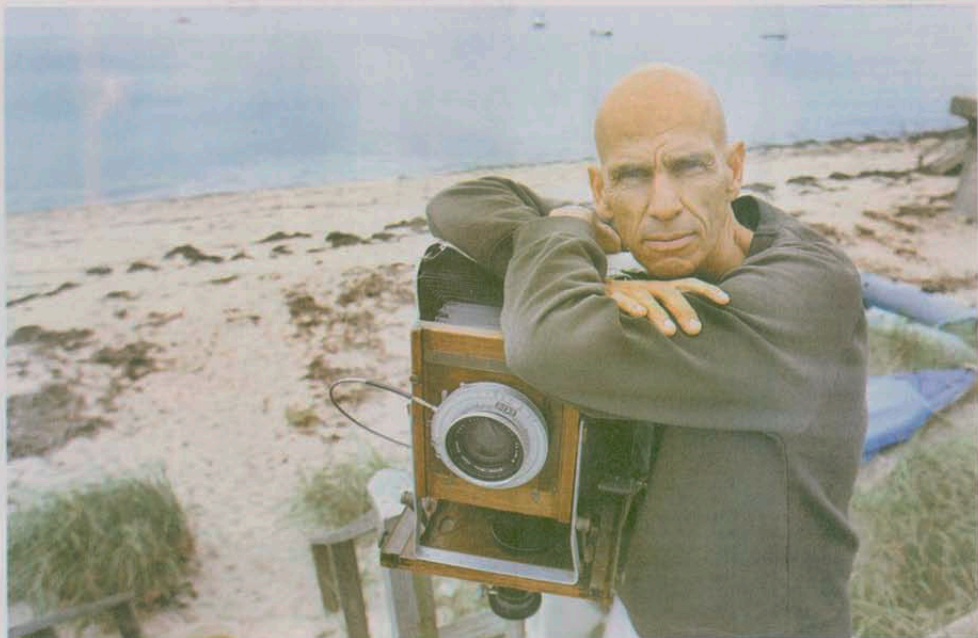
Today is a terrible day for most of us, and unimaginably worse for families who lost loved ones in the Sept. 11 attacks. The date will resonate for months and years to come. I think the Republican Party will try, and probably succeed, in winning at least one more election on the strength of our remembrance. Eventually, they will try this strategy, and they will lose. Stripped of its political and rhetorical utility, the date will become less important.

Shakespeare crafted a beautiful, rousing speech for his fictional Henry V, in the hopes that no Englishman would ever forget St. Crispin's Day, Oct. 25, 1415, the day of victory at Agincourt over the French. But Shakespeare knew that, in time, Henry's warriors would die off, and other wars would follow "All shall be forgot," Shakespeare's Henry tells his men. And it was.

It seems unimaginable, but in less time than it took two generations to forget Pearl Harbor Day, this day, too, will be forgotten. The "war on terror" will continue to be pursued, with varying degrees of success and conviction, by the next administration or two. But different concerns will arise. The pessimists can legitimately worry about global warming, or an energy shortage, or about the ever-increasing likelihood of a regional nuclear war. The optimists — and I'm sure there are some — might look to the transformation of Europe, from Agincourt to the euro, as a model for future political collaboration among nations.

Sadder things than Sept. 11 will come, and happier ones, too.

In 1992, I wrote a column about visiting a playground with two children and tripping across a memorial to a 20-year-old girl who died in the Lockerbie bombing of Pan Am Flight 103. "It is impossible to tell the boys why anyone would blow up a plane in midair," I wrote. "Then and now, it is impossible to imagine how the parents can ever be compensated for



TOM HERDE/GLOBE STAFF

AFTERIMAGES

For Joel Meyerowitz, recording the ground zero recovery effort was a personal and public need



Eddie, a mechanic, stands by a grappler, March 30, 2002.



Smoke from ground zero rises into a sunny sky, Oct. 28, 2001.

By Mark Feeney
GLOBE STAFF

PROVINCETOWN — Like most people, Joel Meyerowitz can remember where he was when he first heard about the World Trade Center attacks. He was in Chatham.

More than most people, the attacks had a special significance for him. Meyerowitz, 68, lives most of the year in New York's West Village, 2 miles from the site of the Twin Towers. And as one of America's leading photographers, he had often shot them — most recently, six days before 9/11.

Meyerowitz, who has a house in Provincetown, headed back to New York as soon as travel into the city was allowed. The next day, Sept. 17, he got within four blocks of ground zero. Out of professional habit, he carried a camera. When he took it out, a policeman clapped him on the shoulder. "No photographs, buddy, this is a crime scene!"

"I would like to find her and thank her," Meyerowitz says five years later.

MEYEROWITZ, Page B7

In 'Coronado,' Lehane lacks his usual depth

By Clea Simon
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Boston's own Dennis Lehane specializes in the voices of the underclass. In bestsellers such as "Mystic River," his uneducated, poor, often abused characters act on thoughts only half comprehended, responding to impulses born of inchoate rage or fear in ways that will never satisfy their original furious hungers. At his best, he gives us deft portraits

Cirque du Soleil reaches higher



His photos are record of city's recovery

► MEYEROWITZ
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Irritated by the policewoman's order, Meyerowitz went on a mission: to record with his camera the recovery effort at ground zero. He spent nine months taking more than 8,000 photographs, 400 of which are gathered in a new book, "Aftermath: World Trade Center Archive." Meyerowitz discusses the book Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge.

"Photography is like that," Meyerowitz says. "You're in the right place at the right time and you think to have your camera ready, cocked, no lens cap, in your hand, and something happens, and, you know, you're there. . . Her poke was the perfect Zen-master poke. It just hit me."

The images show the recovery effort at ground zero with startling clarity. In part, this was because Meyerowitz mostly used (as he has for 30 years) a large-format view camera, which takes pictures with extraordinary richness of detail. That clarity is also owing to Meyerowitz's strongly documentary intent. He wanted his camera to take it all in, for history: workers, rubble, the surrounding skyline, the smoke-ridden air.

"What I wanted for viewers," Meyerowitz says, "was that you could step into that space, almost like a diorama at the Museum of Natural History."

Meyerowitz says this in a cottoy rasp that betrays more than a trace of his native Bronx, and as he talks he makes slow, curving gestures. It's almost as if, without a camera to cradle, he needs to keep his arms occupied.

At once energetic and meditative, Meyerowitz seems oddly ageless: a kid masquerading as an old man. The boniness of his frame and faunlike face give him a stripped-down appearance, but there's a robust physicality to his speech. It's fitting that his shaved head and prominent ears make him look a little like the basketball player Reggie Miller. Meyerowitz goes after ideas as if they were loose balls, fast and headfirst. He thinks as much as he sees. And he's articulate in a way that's rare among visual artists.

The interview takes place in Meyerowitz's studio. It's barely 20



JONATHAN SMITH/PHAIDON PRESS VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joel Meyerowitz was the only photographer credentialed to document ground zero after the Sept. 11 attacks. He donated 1,000 of his images to the Museum of the City of New York.

yards from the ocean. A hammock hangs outside the door. A foghorn sounds, gulls squawk. Ground zero seems very far away.

Thanks to the intervention of New York City parks commissioner Adrian Benepe, a family friend, Meyerowitz became the only photographer credentialed to work at ground zero. Even so, he had to scramble to stay on the site. As the need arose, he'd forge passes on his office computer. And members of the police arson and explosives squad, who'd befriended Meyerowitz, ran interference for him.

"A lot of people wanted to take photographs [at ground zero], but his motivation was to create an archive that would be in the possession of the city," Benepe says. Meyerowitz has donated a thousand of the images to the Museum of the City of New York.

"He's one of the few photographers who has a sense not just of space and light and landscape but the interplay of people in space," Benepe says. "His work throughout the years has been people in space, people in spaces."

Still, Meyerowitz might not have seemed suited to document ground zero. His best-known book, "Cape Light," captures the luminosity of Cape Cod with a rav-

ishing sensitivity to color and texture. He's brought the same abilities to such other soft-edged subjects as redheads, flowers, and Tuscany.

Meyerowitz was supposed to be working on the Tuscany book when he was at ground zero. He used the advance to support the ground zero project, and eventually mortgaged his house and took out a business loan to keep it afloat. "We ran out of money so many times," he says.

Yet New York had shaped Meyerowitz's photography long before the Cape had. He started out as a street photographer, hanging out in midtown Manhattan, his Leica at the ready. The photographic instincts he'd honed in the '60s, for city life and on-the-fly composition, stayed with him when he switched to color photography and a large-format view camera in the '70s.

"It's a perfect match among the elements of his career," Colin Westerbeck, a friend of Meyerowitz's and a photographic historian, says of the ground zero project. "He brought to the view camera the sensibility of a street photographer."

Meyerowitz would spend 12-hour days at ground zero, usually starting before 11 and not leaving

much before midnight. Traveling by foot, he'd lug some 25 pounds of camera equipment, along with the protective gear worn by all personnel at the site. He found the experience as exhilarating as it was exhausting.

"When I first started to do it, I just couldn't get enough of it," Meyerowitz says. "I'm almost embarrassed to say, it was so vitalizing to me as a person and as an artist. I felt young again. I felt a passion I'd felt in the '60s, when I couldn't wait to get back out on the street."

Meyerowitz says that the very fact he felt a larger responsibility as a documentarian freed him up as an artist. "I was probably never more at ease making photographs," he says, "because I subsumed some aspect of my normal working methods. I felt this thing is going to write itself. I did not want to editorialize or in any way inflate it with a personal sense of drama or the profound."

Meyerowitz continues to feel the impact of his experience at the site. "I have a weird connection to ground zero," he says. "I get within a few blocks of it and it's as if I can smell it. Even though there's nothing to smell, I get that memory whiff of dust and burning and all of the combinations that were blended, all those things burning. It all comes back to me."

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