



NEW RELEASE

Dotan Saguy
Venice Beach
The Last Days of a Bohemian Paradise

Edited by Gail Fisher

Introduction by Jamie Rose, Statements by Gail Fisher, Ed Kashi, Alain Laboile, Aline Smithson, Matt Stuart, Jim Wagner

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A stunning photo documentary about the amazing but endangered culture of Venice Beach

Venice Beach is the 2nd-largest tourist attraction in Southern California after Disneyland. Venice is the birthplace of modern skateboarding and home to the legendary Z-Boys skateboard team.

In capturing the revelations of Venice Beach, Dotan Saguy has created a body of work with unexpected, enthusiastic surprise. His fascination for the colorful, tattooed, costumed community is palpable. His compassionate photographs unabashedly praise the rarity of the unique originals who populate the sands of Venice. With an almost obsessive compulsion, Saguy strives to create perfection using separation and geometry resulting in harmonious scenes of rich detail. His use of layering allows us an insight into the chaos he organizes so beautifully within the confines of the frame.

Unfortunately, Venice Beach sits on the edge of a knife: gentrification and corporate greed threaten to squash the way of life that has defined Venice for decades. Saguy has documented what could be a lost society should the faces you see here be forced to acculturate. Allow yourself to be mesmerized – as Dotan Saguy has been – by this way of life, before it fades away.

Dotan Saguy was born in a small kibbutz five miles south of Israel's Lebanese border. He grew-up in a diverse working class Parisian suburb, lived in Lower Manhattan during 9/11 and moved to Los Angeles in 2003. Saguy pursued his passion for photography after a successful career as a high-tech entrepreneur. His award winning photographs have been published by National Geographic, PDN, Leica Fotografie International, ABC News, etc.

Most recently, Dotan is a proud laureate of the Photolucida Critical Mass Top 50.

Website Dotan Saguy: www.dotansaguy.com

»Venice Beach is an energetic and visually compelling homage to an American institution that represents the eccentric spirit of a place that could only exist in California. Dotan's images are powerful, weird, engaging and at times magical in the moments they have captured and ultimately preserved«.

– Ed Kashi, Photographer, VII Photo Agency

»Editing Venice Beach with Dotan was a remarkable journey; sequencing his gripping photography into a powerful narrative, pairing surprising moments that cried out to be joined, and isolating complicated, layered images that had to stand alone. You will not be able to follow this odyssey of delightful characters without seeing Venice Beach in a different light«.

– Gail Fisher, Sr. Editor at National Geographic and the Los Angeles Times

Exhibition

Venice Arts, Venice, CA

August 11 – September 21, 2018

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Barbara Karpf, barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com or
 Sandra Dürdoth, sandra.duerdoth@kehrerverlag.com
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Press images



1 *Hello Sunshine*. Jenna carefully watches two giant boa constrictors that their owner—a street performer she barely knows—entrusted to her.
© Dotan Saguy



2 *Boy and Snake*. Five-year-old Jackson watches a boa constrictor while another slithers toward his mom Jenna, relaxing nearby in the sand.
© Dotan Saguy



3 *Jingles' Blessing*. The older man, who goes by the name of "Jingles," has been preaching for animal rights and a vegan lifestyle for many years from his booth on the Venice Boardwalk. © Dotan Saguy



4 *Back from Surfing*. After an exhausting but satisfying surfing lesson on a stormy spring afternoon, a group of teens on a class trip walks back from the ocean carrying their surfboards on their heads. © Dotan Saguy



5 *Muscle Beach Gym*. A weightlifter raises a barbell loaded with heavy plates while Ike Catcher performs an aerial handstand at the world-famous Muscle Beach Gym. © Dotan Saguy



6 *Touch of Venice*. A group of young skateboarders gather to smoke marijuana in the early morning sun in front of the iconic Touch of Venice mural on Windward Avenue. © Dotan Saguy



7 *Venice Drum Circle* A young woman dances to the entrancing rhythms at the Venice Beach Drum Circle, as the sun sets over the ocean on a warm summer evening. © Dotan Saguy



8 *Singing in the Rain* A group of young hippies sing on a bench across from the Muscle Beach Gym. © Dotan Saguy



9 *Hippie Van* A lot is going on in this old van parked outside the Venice Beach dog park, where the bohemian lifestyle is in full swing. © Dotan Saguy



10 *RIP Freakshow* The closing of the Venice Beach Freakshow on April 30th 2017 may have been one of the most emblematic moments I witnessed in the gentrification of Venice Beach. © Dotan Saguy



11 *Venice Gladiator* An oiled-up body builder wearing nothing but a speedo enters the stage of the Mr. Muscle Beach contest. © Dotan Saguy



12 *Freedom and the Bird* An improvised performance by Elizabeth—a local artist dressed as a white bird, and Freedom, a homeless musician—spontaneously turns into a group dance as a handful of spectators joins in. © Dotan Saguy