Taken From Memory is the result of a 25-year long-time project by American photographer Sheron Rupp. Searching for connections to her own biographical past, Rupp took these photographs in rural America looking to find a piece of someone else’s life to give her a sense of “belonging.” Personal in nature, these photographs offer a stirring glimpse into the life in the commonly disregarded rural areas and small towns between the bustling metropolises of the East and West Coast. Without pretense or irony, without assertion or judgment, Rupp’s impressions from the past also work as a commentary on today’s U.S. society.

“We are a long way from the city, from the bustle of getting and spending. More important: there are no strangers. A visitor might show up, but as soon as she arrives she is present and accounted for. We are in a world free of the anonymous encounters of city life, with no past or future.

Nothing much is happening. Often we are in the backyard, where people are unguarded but not really private. They are at home and at home with each other, and no one pretends to be someone else. Many return our gaze. They are young and old and in-between. If there is no kid in one picture, there will be in the next. The people often touch or hold one another. There are plenty of pets.

The sun is shining. Red things are red and blue things are blue. The grass looks like grass, the dirt looks like dirt, and there is lots of both. The people’s bodies have heft and volume, and their flesh is human. Everything is complete in itself. Our view is never blocked. There is no hint of action outside the frame. We see what there is to see.”

— From the text by Peter Galassi
Press images

1. Marietta, Ohio, 1985 © Sheron Rupp
2. Shawnee, Ohio, 1983 © Sheron Rupp
3. North Lake Park, Mansfield, Ohio, 2001 © Sheron Rupp
6. Millersburg, Ohio, 1984 © Sheron Rupp
7 Trudy in Annie’s Sunflower Maze, Amherst, Massachusetts, 2000 © Sheron Rupp
8 Kingwood Center, Mansfield, Ohio, 2001 © Sheron Rupp

9 St. Albans, Vermont, 1991 © Sheron Rupp
10 Bucyrus, Ohio, 1984 © Sheron Rupp

11 Elkins, Arkansas, 1987 © Sheron Rupp
12 Jean, Huntsville, Arkansas, 1987 © Sheron Rupp