

## **RYAN WEIDEMAN IN MY TAXI**

In 1980, Ryan Weideman cruised into New York City to become a street photographer. Having graduated with an MFA from the California College of Arts & Crafts, Weideman already had a style greatly influenced by the great photographers of the period; Garry Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, and Mark Cohen. Yet, after a month in New York City, Weideman's focus turned to more immediate goals – earning money to pay his rent. Soon after renting a tenement on West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street (an apartment in which he still lives), a chance encounter with a neighbor who drove a taxi led Weideman to his newfound profession. To this day, Ryan Weideman is a full time New York City taxicab driver.

From photographing models to poets, drag queens to celebrities, Ryan Weideman has skillfully transformed his taxicab into a highly innovative photo-studio. These hand-held photographs are extraordinary, not only for their technical merit, but also for their density of composition, often including driver, passenger, and subjects beyond the cab windows in a single frame.

In the winter of 1990, a chance encounter would lead to Weidman's defining image as an artist; Allen Ginsberg stepped into the artist's studio. Holding up the receipt for the ride, Ginsberg displayed his newest verse:

“Backseat of a New York Taxi is a human zoo.  
Ryan Weideman taxi-dermist has mounted these  
human species types with humor and boldness  
and precision. A Passenger Allen Ginsberg  
12/2/90”

Ryan Weideman's work is a part of such prestigious collections as the Brooklyn Museum, the Oakland Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago. Weideman's awards include Guggenheim Fellowship Grant (1992-1993,) a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship (1986-1987,) and a NEA Fellowship Grant (1984-1985.)