

# BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

For Immediate Release

Pete Turner: *The Color of Light*

March 16 – May 13, 2023



Pete Turner, *Texascape*, 1968, Archival pigment print

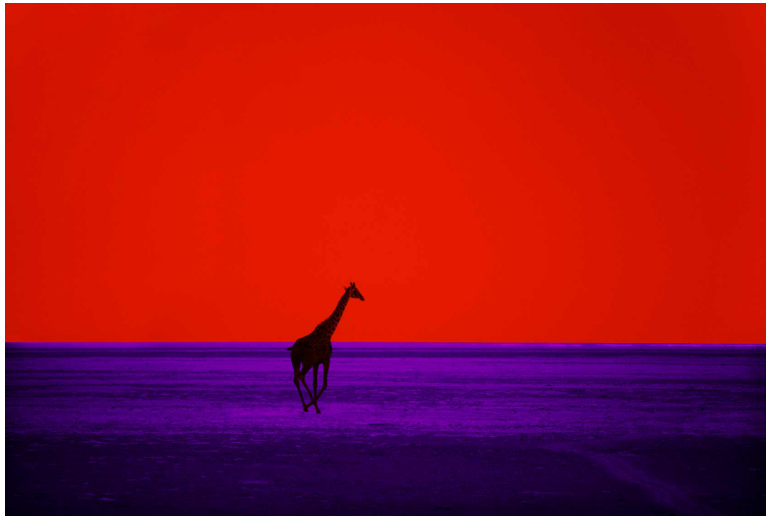
Bruce Silverstein Gallery is pleased to present *Pete Turner: The Color of Light*, an exhibition celebrating one of history's pioneers of color photography.

Featuring a selection of Pete Turner's most iconic photographic images from the 1950s to the late 1990s, *The Color of Light* will display many of the artist's most celebrated works and offer plenty of surprises; it is a visual feast of discovery and wonder with images depicting classic Americana, other-worldly landscapes, and hyper-surreal abstractions. Fusing never-before-seen saturated color with striking and often complex compositions decades before the advent of Photoshop, Turner would not just set a new high bar for the limits of commercial photography of the day but also come to influence countless artists of his generation and after, including David LaChapelle, Annie Leibovitz, Steve McCurry, Joel Meyerowitz, Martin Parr, and Albert Watson. His reputation and reach were so significant that in 2000 *PDN* voted Pete Turner one of the 20 most influential photographers.

Pete Turner (1934-2017) began his photographic career at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Upon graduation, Turner served with the Second Signal Combat photography team at the Army Pictorial Center in Long Island City. During that time, he began to explore his growing interests in the undiscovered possibilities of color photography, utilizing the military's photo lab to experiment with the type-C color process, which was in its infancy. Turner quickly saw success in his color photography with his first photo essay on Barnum and Bailey Circus in 1958 for *Look* magazine. Not long after, Turner's unique imagery would become ubiquitous, appearing in magazine spreads from *Sports Illustrated* to *Esquire*, major advertisement campaigns for Bacardi, General Motors, and AT&T, and on over 100 hundred record album covers ranging from *Coltrane*, John Coltrane 1962, to the *Greatest Hits*, Steely Dan, 1978, to Jorge Pescara, *Grooves in the Temple*, 2005.

Over the next 50 years, Turner developed his unique style of vivid color, often utilizing polarizing filters, colored gels, and multiple exposures to produce unnatural effects that bordered on the fantastic and surreal that the critic A.D. Coleman would define as an "indescribable otherness."

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Pete Turner, *Giraffe*, 1964 Archival pigment print

This was a radical departure for an era that highly regarded black and white photography as superior to color for holding artistic value. Yet, Turner's use of color and composition allowed him to capture a wide range of subjects in new and exciting ways. He photographed everything from jazz musicians to landscapes to abstract compositions, pushing the boundaries of appropriate subject matter for color photography in the commercial and fine art world.

"The color palette I work with is really intense," Turner stated in a video produced by the George Eastman House, the photographic museum in Rochester that exhibited his work in 2006 and 2007, *Empowered by Color*. "I like to push it to the limit." George Eastman House first purchased his work for their permanent collection, *Rolling Ball*, in 1960.

In 1967, the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibited Turner's most radical image of the time, *Giraffe*, sending shockwaves through the photographic canon. *Giraffe* illustrated his growing interest in manipulating color and bringing saturated hues to his work. "Nobody was using primary color photos," he told *PDN* in the late 1990s, "and *Giraffe* is a combination of magenta and red, a very powerful image that manipulated color far beyond what color photographers were thinking they could do at the time." The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the photo that same year. Weston Naef, curator of photography at the museum, called him "The Dr. No of color photography" and acquired twelve of his most iconic dye transfer prints for the museum.

In 1986, Harry Abrams published Turner's first monograph, *Pete Turner Photographs*; in 2000, Gordon Parks wrote the introduction for *African Journey*, Graphis. In 2006, Rizzoli published a book of his jazz album covers entitled, *The Color of Jazz*, introduction by Quincy Jones. His work has been shown globally through his advertising campaigns and numerous solo and group exhibitions. He has earned numerous accolades, including the prestigious Outstanding Achievement Award from the American Society of Media Photographers. His work is held in private and public collections, including the Amon Carter Museum of American Art and the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth, Texas; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California; the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York; The Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France; the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan; and the International Center of Photography, New York, New York.

*Pete Turner: The Color of Light* opens Thursday, March 16th, with a reception from 6 – 8 pm. For more information, please contact [inquiries@brucesilverstein.com](mailto:inquiries@brucesilverstein.com) or go to [www.brucesilverstein.com](http://www.brucesilverstein.com).