

Howard Goldbaum: Roadside Attraction

Collection IAE2607

Introduction/Abstract

Traveling 15,000 miles in a 21-foot camper in 1987 while on sabbatical, Howard Goldbaum created the photographic body of work "Roadside Attraction." The project sought to capture entrepreneurial spirit in its most varied and vital form.

Biographical Note: Howard Goldbaum

After graduation from the University of Connecticut with a B.A. in English, Goldbaum worked for two years in politics and published his first book, which related the experience, "A Campaign Album." He then entered graduate school at Syracuse University in 1972 and graduated with an M.A. in Communications Photography in 1977. His studies were interrupted by a three-year stint as Chief Photographer for the daily newspaper *El Vocero*, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

In 1977 Goldbaum began a 26-year teaching career at Bradley University, in Peoria Illinois, first as an assistant professor and progressing to full professor and director of the Multimedia Program. In 2003 he accepted a position as professor of journalism at the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno. He entered emeritus status (retired) in 2020. He also worked as a producer and consultant in multimedia in education and industry and won numerous awards for his web sites and virtual-reality environments.

Scope and Content

Goldbaum's artist statement for Roadside Attraction reads as follows: "These prints are selected from the work I completed while on sabbatical leave in 1987. Traveling 15,000 miles, I sought to explore the artifacts and personalities of the American roadway. A "roadside attraction" is an expression of the entrepreneurial spirit in its most varied and vital form. These ephemera of the highway represent an essential human interaction: the presentation of a product, service, or idea in a fashion designed to attract attention.

In the effort to catch the eye of the passerby, there is often little distinction between the hoopla of the carnival sideshow and the imagery of the roadside attraction.

Within the 24 states I explored, I found a great diversity in the substance and style of the roadside. The cultural, climatic, and geographical distinctions continue to intrigue me. I hope to complete additional work on the project in other parts of the country next year.

Aside from serving as the project's title, and a description of its subject matter, 'roadside attraction' also defines the relationship between this photographer and the sense of discovery inherent in the experience of travel."

Materials include twelve 35mm contact sheets with selected positive and negative film for each image; fifty-nine 120mm contact sheets and selected positive and negative film for each image; and twenty-six large-scale Cibachrome prints.

This archive is currently in process.