

**DOUGLAS KENT HALL**

(cover)  
PARIS, 1980  
Silver print

# **DOUGLAS KENT HALL**

February 17 - March 12, 1982

UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY  
State University of New York at Binghamton

© Photographs copyright by Douglas Kent Hall.  
All rights reserved. No photographs may be reproduced  
without written permission of the artist.



## FOREWORD

The work of D. K. Hall contains the type of humor that I respond to—intuitive and improvisational, spontaneous and candid. I'm reminded of experiences of walking through crowds moving my head right and left so that only glimpses of the world I pass through are remembered. The images remembered are strong and formal, sometimes similar to portraits, a tableau of the world caught in a memory.

My own work cannot do these things. The rigors of my studio activities preclude the softness of remembered human affairs. I'm thankful for Hall's input in my life; his candor has taught me a great deal. I only wish he would join the Army.

— Larry Bell

TATTOO: San Quentin Prison, California, 1979  
Silver print

## A TRIP INTO ANOTHER COUNTRY

*Du premier geste de l'enfant montrant du doigt un objet et lui donnant un nom, mais avec quelle intense signification, à l'esprit développé créant une image qui nous émeut au plus profond de notre inconscient par son étrangeté et sa réalité, l'éveil d'un désir est toujours le premier pas vers la participation et l'expérience.*

—Man Ray

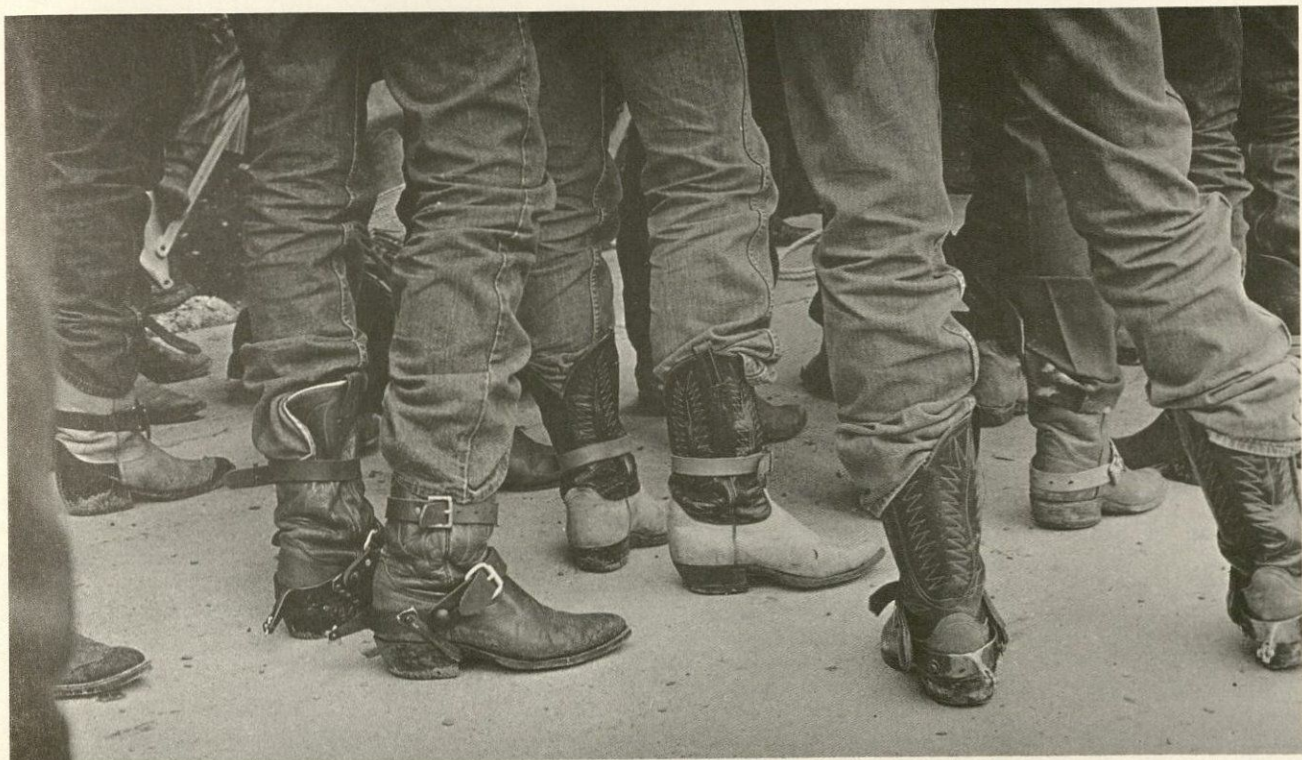
Photography is a mirror as magical and varied in its ability to move and provoke as the infinite moods and turns of light. When we see a great photographic print or slide we are immediately drawn into the life behind it. Some flickering likeness awakens a response in us and we find ourselves pursuing it in the same way we pursue all that is illusive and changeable in ourselves.

In my life the great phenomenon is something I call passing. It is everything and nothing at the same time. Passing is singular and complex, obvious and illusive, trivial and profound. It is the idea or image that dances briefly on the retina or in some shadowy corridor of the mind, then

vanishes before our reflexes can fully capture it. Superficially, passing includes both the line-up and the line, the spectator as well as the parade. It is basic and divine, the micro-instant between the past and the future. It is all that we are—all that I am.

I was told at an early age that time passes, warned that I could waste time. Both wrong, of course. Later, after years of being caught up in this lie, I had to unlearn the principle, just as I had earlier unburdened myself of a cumbersome mythology surrounding something people claimed was God. It was the camera that showed me how false this notion about time was. The split-second blink of the shutter taught me that time does not pass. It is we who pass. We pass through time and waste only ourselves. Time is indifferent to our folly. Time is the one certainty we have, the fixed and constant factor—more concrete, more permanent than space.

Conceivably, then, someone might argue that what I call passing could include anything. But it does not, cannot. Much is lost in time. The big events are not necessarily the major events. The smallest gesture can make all the difference, the



MESQUITE: Texas, 1973  
Silver print



NAVAHOS: Lukachukai, Arizona, 1970  
Silver print

tinest detail can convey the most important information, reveal the primary clue, give the final, conclusive answer.

In my photography the frame on the viewfinder defines its own truth. I hold no prejudices. In my mind, no format, focal length, or film is superior to another. Each has its purely mechanical purpose. However, the 35mm, the wide frame with an uncomfortable crowding at the top and bottom, feels good to my eye; it fits the fugitive nature of my visions and dreams, gives me the necessary limitations to work well, and provides the pressure I need.

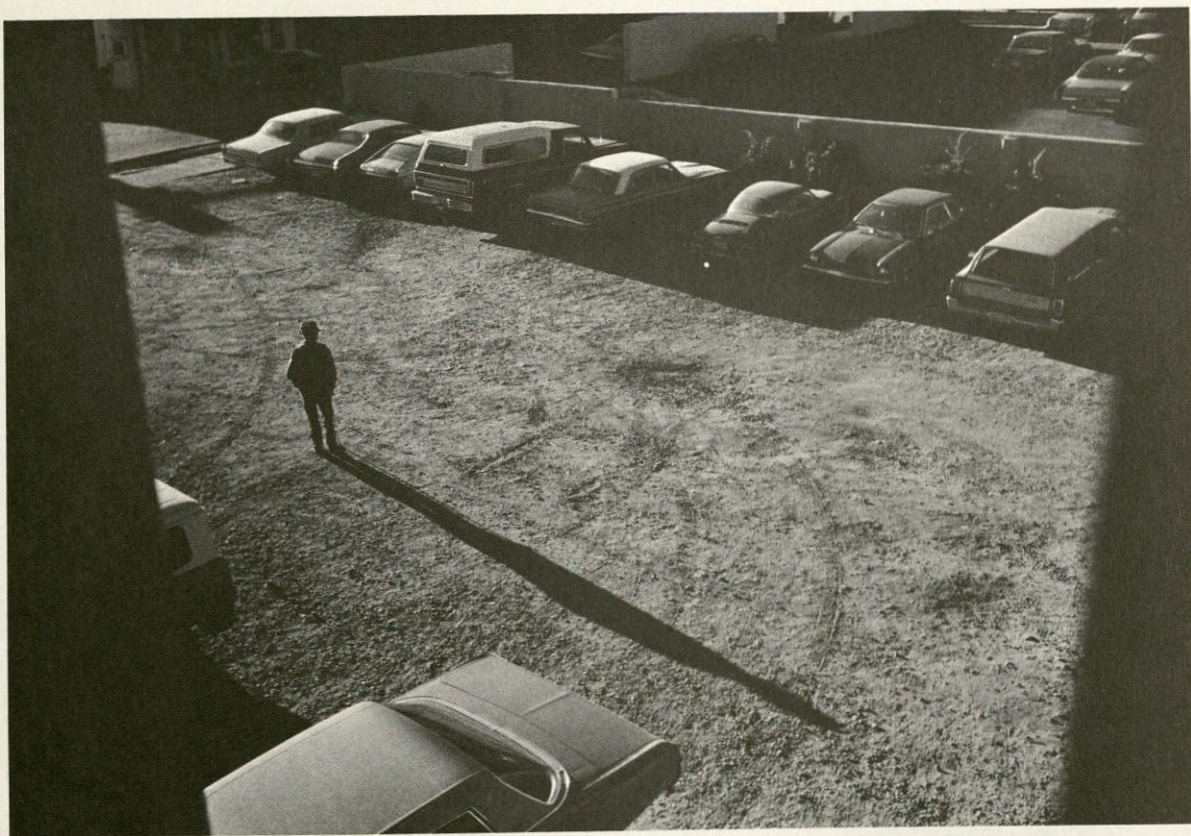
I like rules, parameters, lines of demarcation, all of which give me the absolute freedom to work, to create. Each time I pick up a camera or slide a negative into my enlarger, these rules come into play. There are no accidents, no exceptions. I have trained my eye to respond to action and to depict it in unusual ways that are neither slick nor cute. I have been accused of exploitation. I always hasten to admit it. Exploitation is never my aim, of course, but each time I focus the lens I know I am exploiting

either my subject or myself. I reach out and take or I am given; it is all the same.

I look at each of my photographs as a poetic trip I took into another country. I see in them elegance and dignity, as well as spiritual qualities that run deeper than any camera can see, something as close to the heart of truth itself as I can come. For that, I take only a part of the credit: I was there. The rest is collaboration. The eyes and whatever we mean by sensibility were mine, but the dignity, the natural elegance of line and motion, the raw spiritual beauty that comes through belong solely, absolutely, to the subjects.

I do not believe in art as an end, just as I do not believe in literature as an end. "Art" and "literature" do exist, but for me they exist in some other concept of time, some other space outside of my own. They fit comfortably into something called the realm of ideas and work well in the classroom where they can be examined as ends.

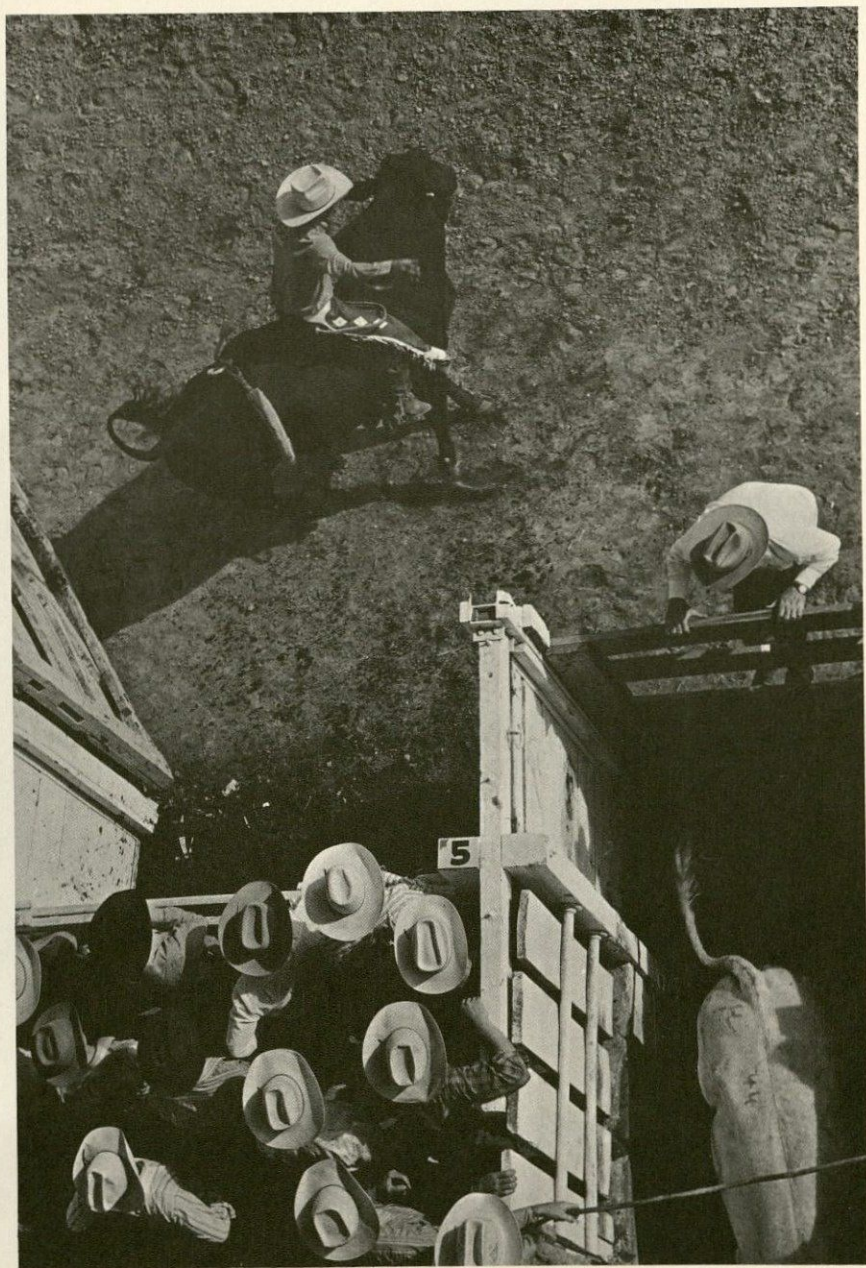
In the same way, I feel uncomfortable calling myself a photographer or a writer, words that sound too much like "art" and "literature." I am,



more accurately, a watcher, an observer. I am surrounded by an alone-ness, which I do believe in, and this solitude forces me to listen constantly to my own mind and trust my impulses. Sometimes I do it with a camera. And I refuse to pass through time unmarked.

—Douglas Kent Hall

THE GUARD: Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1972  
Silver print



BULLRIDING: Pendleton, Oregon, 1974  
Silver print



LOWRIDERS: Chimayo, New Mexico, 1977  
Silver print

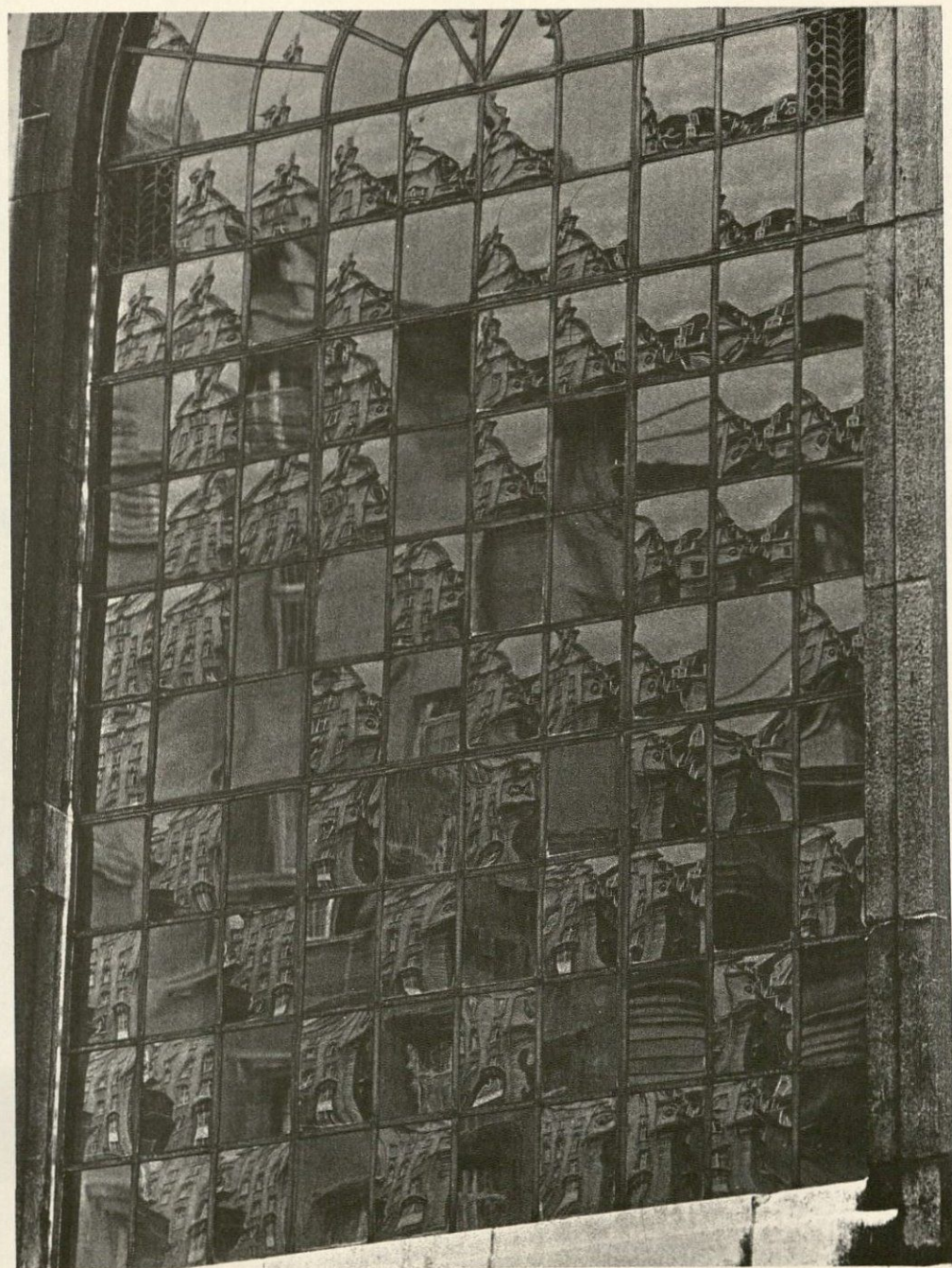


LENA'S LOVE: San Quentin Prison, California, 1979  
Silver print



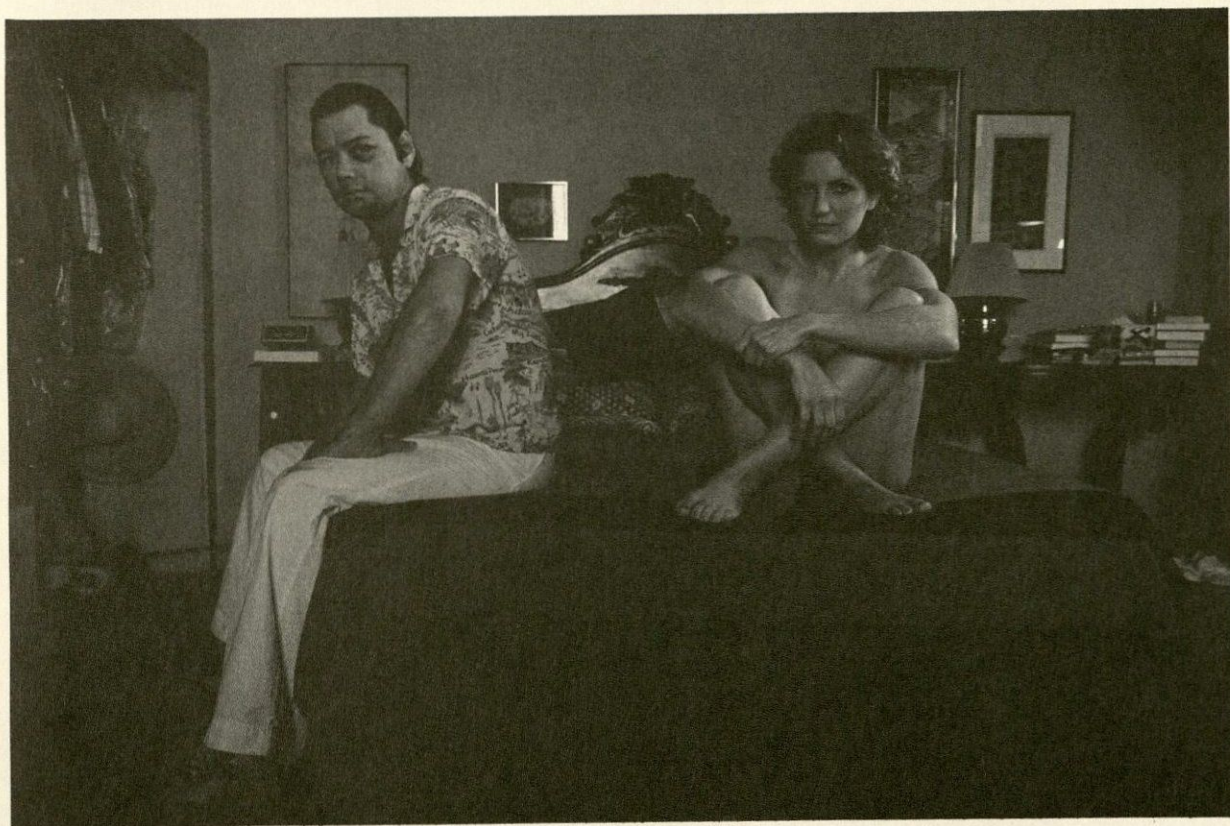
LAST TRIP TO THE BMT: New York City, 1979  
Silver print

(right)  
HOMAGE TO CHRISTOPHER WREN: London, 1968  
Silver print



SANDIAS: New Mexico, 1981  
Silver print





FRIENDS: Alcalde, New Mexico, 1980  
Silver print



MUSCLE BEACH: Venice, California, 1976  
Silver print

Catalog design by Barbara Perkins