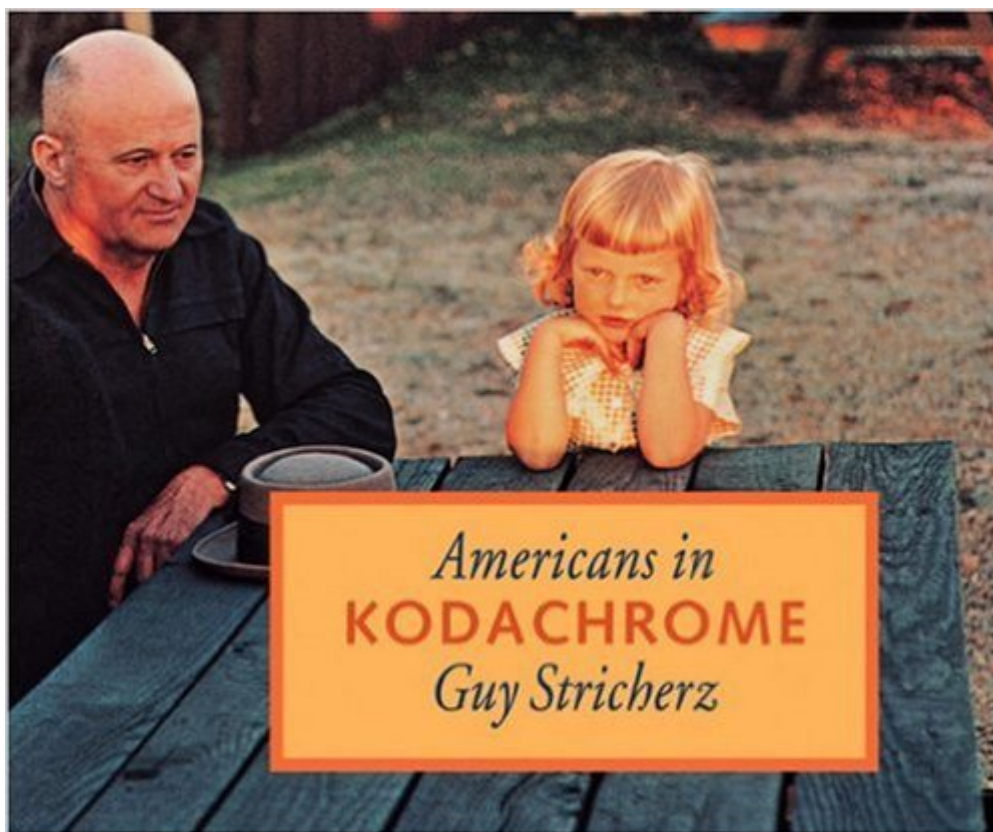


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# Americans In Kodachrome 1945-1965



## Synopsis

Introduced in 1935 as the first modern color film, Kodachrome was used extensively after World War II by amateur photographers equipped with the new high-quality and low cost 35mm cameras. *Americans in Kodachrome 1945--1965* is an unprecedented portrayal of the daily life of the people during these formative years of modern American culture. It is comprised of ninety-five exceptional color photographs made by over ninety unknown American photographers. These photographs were chosen from many thousands of slides in hundreds of collections. Like folk art in other mediums, this work is characterized by its frankness, honesty, and vigor. Made as memoirs of family and friends, the photographs reveal a free-spirited, intuitive approach, and possess a clarity and unpretentiousness characteristic of this unheralded photographic folk art. Conceived as a book and nation-wide exhibition, *Americans in Kodachrome: 1945--1965* is an evocative and haunting portrait of an historic generation of Americans. - Guy Stricherz

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1994 or thereabouts I read an article about an exhibition to feature "snapshots" made by ordinary people using Kodachrome slide film. I sent along a 1960 photograph of my mother for review. Unfortunately it was not accepted and returned to me with thanks. Just a few months ago, having all but forgotten about it, I saw this book being advertised. It is now in my collection and I must say, "wow!". It will definately bring back memories for anyone born in the post WW II years and enthrall those who just love photography. The book is beautifully crafted and printed with heavyweight paper

stock and a dust cover that folds underneath along the length. Highly recommend.

Photographer Guy Stricherz lets his color pictures do the talking, presenting full-page shots in an oversized presentation which contain only a line of description and date for identifier. The effect of the white-bordered presentations in *Americans In Kodachrome* is to draw the viewer's eye to the picture and its underlying background and implications, more than the descriptive word. From farmers with squash in a Virginia field to participants at a Rhode Island river party in 1956 or a Hawaiian beauty contest line-up in 1958, the range of ethnic groups, communities and experiences represented in *Americans In Kodachrome* is eye-catching and spirited.

I have had the great privilege of seeing this project from conceptual stages through its fruition in the form of this wonderful book and the amazing collection of images assembled by Guy Stricherz therein. Not only have I been able to see many of the original transparencies, themselves, as well as some of the tens of thousands of images from various amateur archives from which these images were brilliantly edited and carefully selected over more than ten years time...But I have also seen the magic of the dye transfer prints themselves, which Guy and his talented wife Irene Malli, have lovingly crafted, and how they have given those images a whole new life and have immortalized them for all time. I state this to assure you up front that I certainly do have some bias in writing this review, as I also have the privilege to be able to call Guy and Irene my dear friends. I state this also because it may offer an interesting perspective of having an inside view of this project, as well as how this book brilliantly succeeds in doing justice to Guy's wonderful concept. Culled from the archives of amateur photographers from across this country, Guy has carefully selected those images that will resonate on many levels, with any American who has lived through the 20th century. Immortalized by the legendary song by Paul Simon of the same title, *Kodachrome* slide film was used predominately throughout the period from 1945-1965 by almost every American amateur photographer to document the triumphs and tribulations of day-to-day life. The film itself has a particular color palette and vibrancy that speaks of an entire era to anyone even remotely familiar with it (even though they may not know they are familiar with it). Through the dye transfer process (which is a painstakingly demanding archival color printing process of which Stricherz and Malli remain of the few, and most certainly the finest practicing masters on this planet of that artful craft) Guy and Irene have been able to restore, and subtly transform these images, not simply back to their original splendor, but to a rich and vibrant palette that speaks not only of years gone by, but also to the idea of 'color' as 'content'. The images themselves are sometimes quirky, sometimes

quiet, sometimes loud and brash. Each of them succeeds, not only in preserving a unique, often mysterious, document of time and place and people, but also in engaging us to look and see beyond the subject matter. What is amazing is that these images are snapshots, created by moms and dads, aunts, and grandparents, fishing buddies, and friends of all kinds...people just like you and me (well, I'm disqualified I guess as photography is also my profession)! It is credit to Stricherz' brilliant idea, his steadfast belief in the concept, his tremendous patience, devotion and hard work, and mostly to his keen and discriminating eye for what brings magic to a color image, that this collection of images succeeds on so many different levels. These are not ordinary 'snapshots' by any means! Their magic and mystery will move you. It is a tribute to post war America, and to the Americans who created and lived that life, and to those who created these images. It will delight both the non-photographer, the amateur, as well as those more versed with visual arts. I can say from first-hand experience that I was delighted to see that the reproduction in this beautiful volume certainly does justice to the amazing collection of dye transfer prints that Stricherz and Malli have crafted. I've come to expect nothing less from Twin Palms Publishers who published this book and have done many distinctive and remarkable photography books in the past. Congratulations Guy and Irene - you have realized your brilliant vision and have shared it with the world! Congratulations are also due to those individuals across the country who submitted tens of thousands of photographs for this project, both those whose images were selected, as well as those whose images were not, for it was also through their efforts and contribution that made this collection possible! Buy this book! It is destined to be a classic coffee-table photo book that will seldom see shelf-time! If you get an opportunity to see the collection of dye-transfer prints, which will be in a traveling exhibition, do not pass up that opportunity!

Kodachrome is a way of printing in color that lasts for years and years--too bad that Kodak decided to discontinue it years ago. A friend of mine, Guy Stricherz, purchased all the kodachrome chemical elements and now has a business of making prints that will last 500 years. And, he created this lovely book! Everyone interested in photography will enjoy it.

Most family collections of photos, either black and white or transparencies can assume mythic status if they are the only visual record of their history. Even beat up, creased and torn images rightly become treasured possessions to be passed from one generation to the next. The usual criteria for judging photographs obviously don't apply in the family setting but remove images from that setting and I think it's reasonable to take a more critical look at what you see and it is here I

think many recent snapshot books fail. They display too many out of focus, badly composed and dull photos and perhaps the greatest fault: too many images that show people or situations that are just too personal to those involved to mean anything to an outsider. Fortunately 'Americans in Kodachrome' avoid most of these pitfalls and present some quite remarkably content rich photographs. The ones I thought worked best capture everyday events and pull you into the image. Photos forty-five and six show a 1964 street parade and a 1947 flag raising (both possibly July fourth?) or photos eighty-nine and ninety showing a family portrait from 1960 and another family sitting in the kitchen having a meal. The detail in these four photos is fascinating and most of the book's images have this amount of interest. There are some duds in my opinion: photo sixty-nine of a teenager eating a watermelon, taken at night is not worth a second look. Photo twenty-six of a baby boy's face with a huge bone in his mouth clearly means a lot to whoever took it but virtually nothing to outsiders who might see it. Another reason I like this book is because the photos are presented in a formal photobook setting with one large image per page (in 175dpi) generous margins and a one line caption. Other snapshot books I've seen go for picture book look implying that the contents really are no more than 'snaps'. Fifteen photos from the book appeared in the exhibition Close to Home at the Los Angeles Getty Museum and appeared in the book of the exhibition where they were presented with many black and white photos in a rather messy picture book format. They just didn't have the same appeal and stature as they did in 'Americans in Kodachrome'.\*\*\*FOR AN INSIDE LOOK click 'customer images' under the cover.

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