

Eric Henderson: Artist Bio/Statement

Eric's work begins with the chance finding of a 1950 Kodak Brownie Hawkeye camera in November of 2003. With no prior experience in photography, he simply thought the camera was "bakelite and beautiful!" when he spotted it on the sidewalk at the always eclectic 'bazaar' at the corner of 125th Street and Park Avenue in Harlem. ("\$5?" "I'll take it.")

"I was all ready to use it as a paperweight, but it turned out that the camera still worked; so, I started experimenting." He shot with it nearly every day, his style being born out of the light play he observed during his nightly wander on intentionally long walks to the subway.

Eric has exhibited at The Studio Museum in Harlem and has earned positive nods from The New Yorker Magazine and El Diario La Prensa, the largest Spanish-language daily in the U.S. Recently, he has been on project tours to Brazil and Morocco, sponsored by Starbucks and a Seattle-based non-profit, OneWorld Now! On these tours, he teaches children to shoot with the Brownie and holds exhibitions of their work. He also works with a growing list of commercial clients and private collectors.

Eric finds the biggest joy in the informal exhibitions sparked by people commenting on the camera. "It starts the most engaging conversations with total strangers, especially those who remember it from childhood. It's a blessing that the photos themselves usually become the conversation after that."

He describes the continuing evolution of his work as a dialogue between the nominal past (1950) and the present. The Brownie was a pop hit in its day, putting photography in the hands of millions for the first time. Purposed in Eric's unique way, the Brownie finds its peculiar and unintended art personality. He shoots primarily at night, only with available light, and in varying long exposures, timed by simple counting in his head.

"In addition to photography, the Brownie has taught me an incredible lesson on how technology sometimes moves; that is, not because we've exhausted it, but rather because we simply want something new. I'm finding the new everyday with this old camera as I chase the insights offered by objects not-so-inanimate when viewed through this lens."

Eric J. Henderson lives and works in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, New York City. He grew up in Dallas, Texas and is a graduate of Texas A&M University and Thunderbird – The Garvin School of International Management.