

# The Record

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## Tice: Exhibits honor New Jersey photographer

ART REVIEW

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### Photographer is honored for his six decades of excellence

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SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

If New Jersey had a photographer laureate, George Tice would be it. The Newark-born photographer has spent six decades documenting the state's urban, industrial and natural landscapes, from a crumbling street corner in Paterson to a lonely, tilting phone booth at the side of a nowhere road in Rahway. His work is in museums all over the world. He has published 17 books with a new one coming out this week.

In honor of his 75th birthday next month, the Newark Museum has mounted a show that celebrates Tice's contributions, not just as a photographer, but as a master printer, teacher and donor to the museum's collection.

Two other nearby venues are coordinating with their own shows: The Galleries at William Paterson University are showing unpublished works from Tice's photographs of Paterson. The Nailya Alexander Gallery in Manhattan has opened "George Tice: 60 Years of Photography." There will also be lectures, panel discussions and the premiere of a documentary film, "George Tice: Seeing Beyond the Moment," at the Newark Museum on Tice's birthday, Oct. 13 (William Paterson will be showing the film Nov. 4).

Reached at his Middletown home and studio earlier this week, Tice said he was pleased with all the recognition, though he admitted to feeling a bit overwhelmed. He was coping with house guests and a plumbing problem, and was supposed to be leaving soon for an opening party at the Newark Museum. Next week, he was flying to San Francisco for another gallery opening and a lecture at Berkeley.

"I've probably taken on too much," he said. Even before the birthday events, he'd been drawn into a laborious retrospective project. A major museum, which he's not free to name yet, wants to acquire an archive of all his prints, a process that requires drawing up a complete inventory. He's been consumed with the project

for the past several months.

"I'm certainly feeling more and more aware of my own mortality," he said.

That's more than a platitude coming from a man whose artistic work has been an extended meditation on themes of time, change and eternity.

The title of the Newark Museum show and the documentary film, "Seeing Beyond the Moment," is taken from something Tice wrote in 2002: "The great difficulty of what I attempt is seeing beyond the moment; the everydayness of life gets in the way of the eternal."

### No people in photos

His pictures rarely, if ever, have people in them, whether he's contemplating what he calls the "sad beauty" of decaying cities or the grandeur of natural scenes such as the Great Falls in Paterson or the rocks on Garret Mountain in Woodland Park.

In an age when photographers can manipulate digital images, Tice has stuck to 19th-century methods. He uses an 8 by 10 view camera and glass negatives. He develops, enlarges and prints the photographs in the basement studio of his Middletown home.

What makes Tice's work so much in demand?

The wonder of his prints is the range and subtlety of the tones between black and white. In Tice's pictures, you can peer into the darkest shadows and see details. Ditto for the bright areas. In between are modulations in gray that are precise and never fuzzy.

In the Newark exhibit, only a half-dozen of the 32 pictures are Tice's own. There's the eerie nighttime shot of a brightly lit gas station, its small, plastic reality

trumped by the massive presence of a water tower looming behind it. Another night view is of a White Castle restaurant in Rahway, also looking somewhat toy-like with its fake turrets and crenellation.

The show has a photograph by Edward Steichen of a sitting nude stretching her torso, the soft modulation of light defining the gentle contours of her body. The print was made by Tice.

### Gifts to the museum

"I was the last printer of his work during his life and I still own a lot of Steichen negatives," Tice says.

Tice donated this and most of the other pieces in the show to the Newark Museum. Over the years, he says, he has given the museum about 150 other photos, many by other photographers whose work he bought or traded for, beginning in the early '80s.

Some are by friends, mentors or those who studied with him, such as Sally Mann and Tim Barnwell.

The oldest, from 1840, is William Henry Fox Talbot's "The Breakfast Table," which is so pale and delicate that it's protected by a velvet curtain that must be lifted to see it.

The works at William Paterson are new prints of negatives taken years before of Paterson, but which weren't included in the two books he did on the subject.

Unpublished photographs are also the focus of the book, "Seldom Seen," being released this month.

At nearly 75, Tice may not be getting out onto the street with his big camera as often as he did in the past, but one benefit of having worked for six decades is that you can always draw on those archives.



George Tice, *Petit's Mobil Station, Cherry Hill, NJ 1974*

### ART REVIEW

#### SEEING BEYOND THE MOMENT: THE PHOTOGRAPHIC LEGACY AND GIFTS OF GEORGE TICE

The Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., Newark; 973-596-6550 or [newarkmuseum.org](http://newarkmuseum.org).

Through Feb. 9. Schedule: Noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Suggested admission: \$10, children, seniors and students \$6.

#### WITHOUT ADORNMENT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE TICE

University Gallery at William Paterson University, 300 Pompton Road, Wayne; 973-720-2654 or [wpunj.edu/coac/gallery](http://wpunj.edu/coac/gallery).

Through Dec. 13. Schedule: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and select Sundays.

Admission is free.

#### GEORGE TICE: 60 YEARS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Nailya Alexander Gallery, 41 E. 57th St., Suite 704, Manhattan; 212-315-2211 or [nailyaalexandergallery.com](http://nailyaalexandergallery.com).

Through Nov. 5. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Admission is free.