

MUSÉE

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

Musée Magazine: Friends and Lovers at Shulamit Nazarian

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PaJaMa, George Tooker and Jared French, Provincetown, n.d. Vintage silver print. Framed: 8 ¼ x 10 ¼ in. Artwork: 4 ¼ x 6 ¾ in. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles.

The Shulamit Nazarian Gallery presents *Friends and Lovers*, a cross-disciplinary exhibition that examines the subtle intricacies of expression within intimate relationships. The show highlights both established and emerging photographers, including Peter Hujar, the PaJaMa collective, Clifford Prince King, Daniel Gordon, Star Montana, and Widline Cadet. Together, they capture fleeting moments of affection, allowing the private to be shared with the public and personal experiences to become universal. Whether romantic, platonic, or familial, the power of human connection is palpable in the idyllic portraits of *Friends and Lovers*, evoking the emotions and memories of the audience and reinforcing the ubiquitous themes of love and partnership.

Widline Cadet embraces whimsy in *Nan Letènite (In Eternity)*. Known for her work on the complexities of the Black diaspora and her exploration of her family's history, Cadet produces a photograph imbued with nostalgia. She skillfully accentuates the similarities between two young Black girls who wear matching blue gingham dresses, a motif inspired by Cadet's old school uniform. The girls lay together on a pile of rose petals scattered in the grass, their arms in identical positions as they covered their faces from the sun. This mirroring effect intensifies their closeness, giving the impression that they are one and the same. They face each other, engaged in a private conversation about matters we can only imagine, appealing to our sentimentality and evoking memories of our innocent childhood moments. Cadet's honest portrayal of innocence possesses a timeless quality, perfectly reflecting the title of the piece, *Nan Letènite (In Eternity)*. The girls seem to exist in an ethereal state, reminding us of a past we no longer experience but remember wistfully.



Widline Cadet, *Nan Letènite (In Eternity)*, 2021. Archival Inkjet Print. 40 X 32 In. Courtesy Of The Artist And Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles.

In *Our Last Blunt Together*, Clifford Prince King depicts the delicate ways we display intimacy and romantic desire. A man's tender stare lingers on the lens as he smokes out of another's hand. He lies shirtless in bed, evidently familiar with his partner, who shares the blunt gently, resting his fingers on the subject's face. Their relaxed demeanors create a peaceful atmosphere, yet the title of King's portraiture conjures a bittersweet, melancholic mood. The audience is aware that this exchange may be a fond memory of a now-concluded relationship. Yet there remains a naive hopefulness that their relationship is forever steadfast. The tranquility of the scene is so tangible that we wish for the beauty of their bond to last, revealing our innate cravings for constant connection.



Clifford Prince King, *Our Last Blunt Together*, 2019. Archival Pigment Print On Canson Rag Photographique 310gsm, 30 X 20 In. Courtesy of the artist, STARS, and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles.

Peter Hujar's *Zachy and Gamal Sherif (Twins)* portrays the close-knit kinship between twin brothers. One rests his arm with ease around his twin's shoulder, intertwining to the extent that they appear physically linked. Their similarities in their features and expressions amplify their likeness, giving the audience the impression that they belong to one another. However, their outward appearance is not entirely the same, as the twin on the left wears a black shirt while his brother dons a white one. This contrast evokes the concept of yin and yang, stressing that although the twins are different people, they are complementary forces. Their interdependence is a bit mystifying, almost fantastical, but we feel a sense of satisfaction as we see them fitting together effortlessly. This deep, familial relationship is further intensified by the twins' comfortable stillness, confidently facing each other and engaging in a captivating silence.



Peter Hujar, *Zachy And Gamal Sherif (Twins)*, 1985, Printed 2018 By Gary Schneider. Pigment Print, 2/10. Signed, Titled & Dated Verso In Pencil By Stephen Koch, Director Of The Peter Hujar Archive; Estate Stamp Verso; Signed By Gary Schneider Verso In Pencil. 14-5/8 X 14-5/8 Inches. Courtesy Of The Artist And Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles.