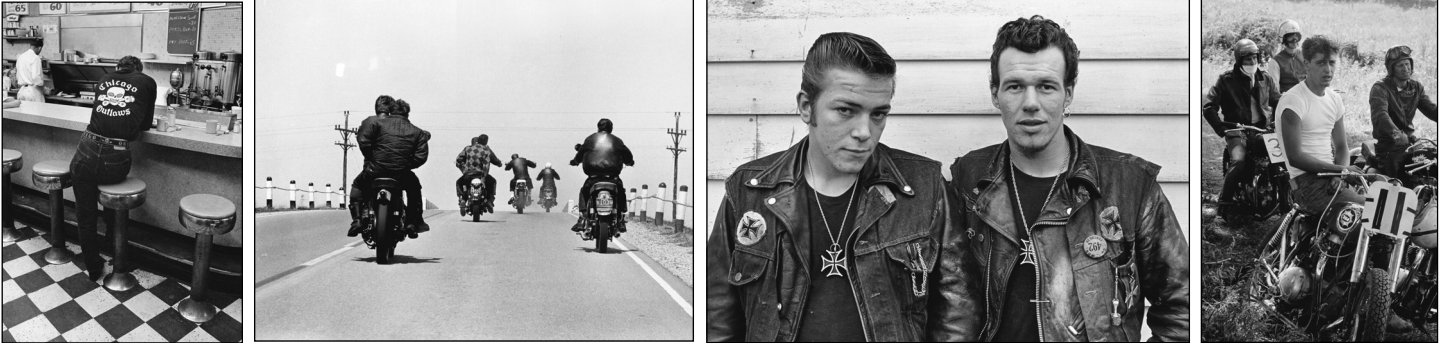


DANNY LYON: BIKERIDERS



[The Bikeriders] is a personal record, dealing mostly with bikeriders whom I know and care for. If anything has guided this work beyond the facts of the worlds presented it is what I have come to believe is the spirit of the bikeriders: the spirit of the hand that twists open the throttle on the crackling engines of big bikes and rides them on racetracks or through traffic or, on occasion, into oblivion.

-- Danny Lyon

A giant of post-War documentary photography and film, Danny Lyon helped define a mode of photojournalism in which the picture-maker is deeply and personally embedded in his subject matter. As such, he is a godfather of sorts to a generation of photographers such as Nan Goldin and Larry Clark. A graduate of the University of Chicago, Lyon began his career in the early 1960s documenting the Civil Rights movement for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In 1963 Lyon returned to Chicago, and, armed with a Nikon, a Rolleiflex, and a seven-pound portable tape recorder, became the in-house chronicler of a notorious motorcycle gang, the Chicago Outlaws. His ride? "A 1956 Triumph with a single carburetor, which other University of Chicago students had put together out of parts that I had first seen in a garage, on a shelf, stored in five-pound coffee cans. It had a black gas tank, a knobby tire on the front, no front fender, and no headlight or muffler. The explosions of the 650-cc engine went straight out the exhaust pipe that ran along its side."

Lyon had first taken up motorcycling as an undergraduate, tearing laps around the University of Chicago's circle drive with fellow enthusiasts. "This wasn't the Hell's Angels," he remembers, "It was the philosophy department." Soon he was attending local races, increasingly with his camera. When he joined the Chicago Outlaws to more fully experience the life, Lyon's peers, Hunter S. Thompson among them, were concerned that he had fallen off the edge. But Lyon was already pre-visualizing his first book – a new kind of photo-story, very different from what appeared in the pages of Life Magazine. Its protagonists were 'philosophers' of a different stripe altogether, such as Lyon's close friend Cal (who joined the Chicago Outlaws after a stint with the Hell's Angels):

"I've seen what most people have read about. Like take the United States, man, I've traveled it back and forth, man, about fifteen or twenty times. Not only from Los Angeles to New York, man, but from Oregon to Florida. You know, just anyplace I'd decide to trip to. So therefore I figure I've got more knowledge up here stored up than half the college kids my age."

Or Rodney:

"Being on a motorcycle don't make you special at all. And a lot of guys figure that it does. It's like that clown pulling out of the tollbooth sittin' in the middle of a lane. He was on a motorcycle, so he felt special. He can sit there. It's a big world, man. If you don't get shoulder to shoulder an' learn to roll with the waves you're gonna get either walked on or awful frustrated. You want to see just what it's like, just step out into a nice big old fat ocean all by yourself in a little rowboat and see just how microscopic you are."

After four years with the Outlaws, Lyon emerged with what has come to be seen as one of the defining photo books of the 1960s, *The Bikeriders*. In hindsight, the importance of this book is hard to overstate. " *The Bikeriders* represented a significant step in 1960s American photography, not only launching an important photographic career, but also giving a younger generation of photographers a spokesman of their own age," Martin Parr writes in *The Photobook: A History, Vol. I*. "Lyon was part of the generation he was photographing, so was able to talk with an authentic voice about his subjects, understanding instinctively not only their hopes and aspirations, but also why they were rebelling against all kinds of adult authority." Indeed, in its mix of realism and romanticism, and in its path-breaking use of the protagonists' own words (such as the above excerpts) juxtaposed with the photographs, *The Bikeriders* helped sear motorcycle counterculture into the American psyche, and was an inspiration for the film *Easy Rider*.

Recently reissued in a third, expanded edition from Chronicle Books, *The Bikeriders* was the first of a dozen influential photo books on various subjects for which Lyon has garnered two Guggenheims, a Rockefeller Fellowship, and NEA fellowships for both photography and film. He has been honored with numerous solo exhibitions including at MoMA, the Center for Creative Photography, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Now, in time for the fortieth anniversary of *The Bikeriders*, art2art is proud to organize this show.

Excerpts from interviews with the bikeriders as well as from Lyon 's own writings are included.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Number of photographs: 50
Frame sizes: 16x20 (40) and 20x24 (10)
Linear feet: 150
Price: \$3800

Additional weeks may be booked for an extra 10% per week.