

## CHECKLIST

Raindrops at Bergdorf, 2002, Archival giclée print  
60 x 40 inches\*

Winter Garden, 2002, Archival giclée print  
60 x 40 inches\*

Bus Shelter, 2002, Archival giclée print  
42 x 28 inches\*

Saks, 2002, Archival giclée print  
42 x 28 inches\*

Rockefeller Center, 2002, Archival giclée print  
60 x 40 inches\*

Nina Hair Center, 2003, Archival giclée print  
60 x 40 inches\*

Prada, 2002, Archival giclée print  
42 x 28 inches\*

Grand Central Cafe, 2002, Archival giclée print  
42 x 28 inches\*

Ta Bom Ties, 2003, Digital Chromogenic print  
Available: 40 x 60 inches and 53 x 80 inches\*

Ernst & Young, 2003, Archival giclée print  
28 x 42 inches

Sketcher's, 2003, Archival giclée print  
40 x 60 inches\*

Grand Slam, 2002, Archival giclée print  
28 x 42 inches\*

Chelsea Flea Market, 2002, Archival giclée print  
42 x 28 inches\*

American Express, 2002, Archival giclée print  
40 x 60 inches\*

Tomato, 2003, Archival giclée print  
40 x 60 inches\*

M & J Trimming, 2003, Archival giclée print  
40 x 60 inches\*

Nasdaq, 2002, Archival giclée print  
40 x 60 inches\*

Dino's Parking Garage, 2002, Archival giclée print  
40 x 60 inches\*

\*Measurements are height by width

# KASHYA HILDEBRAND GALLERY

531-539 West 25th St.,  
New York, NY, 10001, USA  
Tel: (212) 366-5757  
Fax: (212) 366-4747

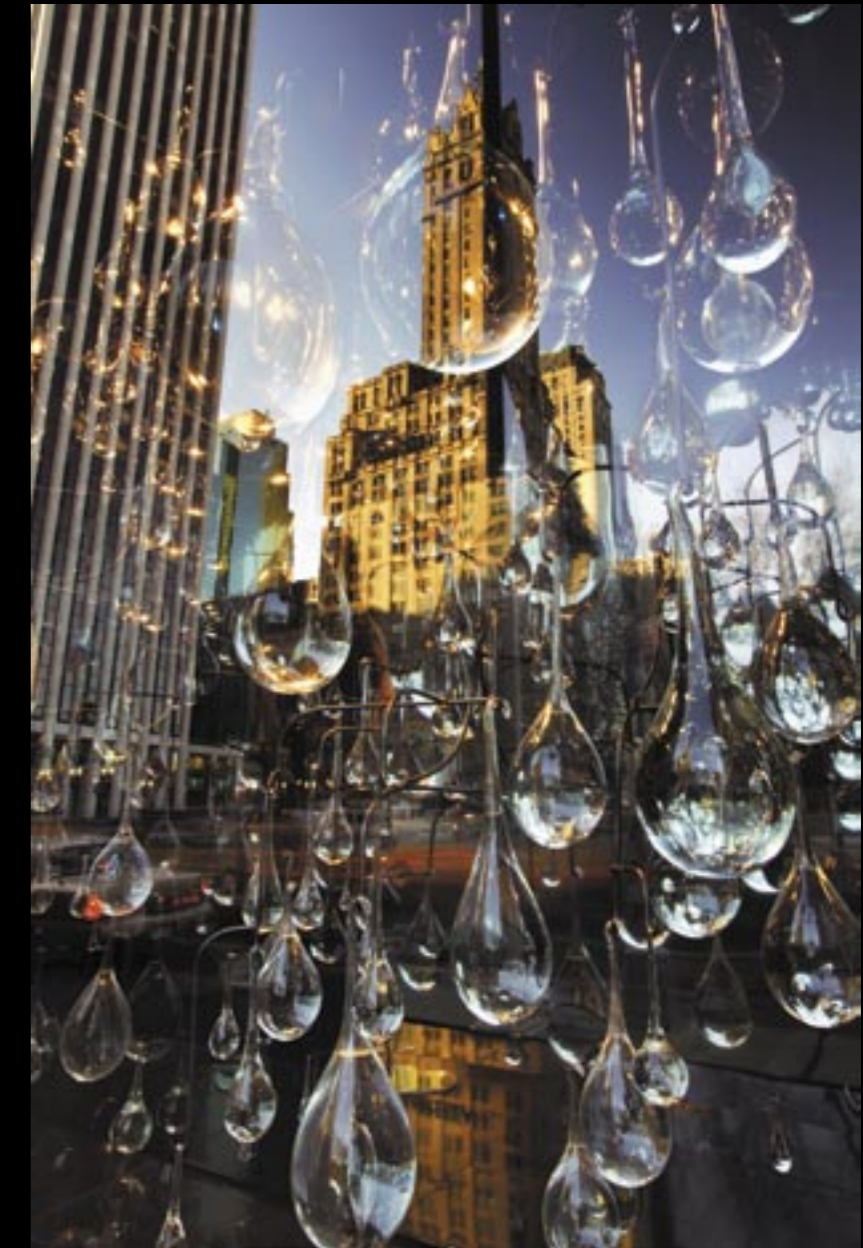
Gallery opening hours:  
Tuesday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
or by appointment

5, rue Etienne-Dumont,  
1204 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: (022) 310 72 32  
Fax: (022) 310 72 33

info@kashyahildebrand.org  
www.kashyahildebrand.org

Kashya Hildebrand and Daneyal Mahmood  
invite you to the opening of the exhibition:  
**September 18, 2003**  
6-8 P.M.

531-539 West 25th St., New York, NY, 10001



Raindrops at Bergdorf | 40" x 60" | Edition of 5 | 2002 | Archival Giclée Print

**JEFFREY AARONSON**  
SUBCONSCIOUS CITY | SEPTEMBER 18 - OCTOBER 18, 2003  
Guest Curator: Margaret Mathews-Berenson



## SUBCONSCIOUS CITY

New York City has proven to be a rich source of inspiration for photographers for over a century. Visually complex, often confounding, New York presents a challenge to any artist drawn to its dense, bustling thoroughfares, dizzying glass towers, and sparkling reflections. Lured by its multiple personalities and mercurial beauty, amateurs and professionals alike have made New York their subject. Street life in its myriad moods has been recorded by Lewis Hine, Berenice Abbott, Ben Shahn, Ernst Haas and Gary Winogrand, to mention just a few. Yet few photographers in recent years have produced images that speak with a new voice and offer us a chance to experience the City in new ways.

Jeffrey Aaronson's recent series of color photographs of reflections — shot on the streets of New York and printed by his own hand without digital manipulation — offers a rich bounty of unexpected surprises and a fresh vision of the city. For the past two years he has



Saks | 42" x 28" | Edition of 5 | 2002  
Archival giclée print

quite literally "stalked" his subject, seeking to expose the **Subconscious City** he has come to know through his deliberate, self-imposed wanderings. Focusing his lens at close range on window glass and mirrored surfaces, he captures what he refers to as "found moments" that hover somewhere between the real and the surreal. Like a spy glancing quickly at reflections in shop windows to see if he is being followed, Aaronson searches the realm of the immaterial for a momentary discovery or revelation.

His perambulations have taken him from east to west and from lower Manhattan to midtown. As the cityscape passes before him, a multi-layered portrait of the City emerges — from the elegant windows of Bergdorf's, Prada and Saks to a crowded souvenir shop in Times Square. Here, in the faces of people frozen within his reflected scenes, are fragmented, chance narratives of rich and poor, contentment and desire, anxiety, alienation, and vulnerability. In *Bus Shelter*, a young woman in a print ad averts her eyes from view. Reflections in her head swarm with images from the street — car lights twinkle on her cheek, a bicycle rider veers towards her mouth and a "Get Paid Cash" sign with its tear-off tabs flapping is both an emblem of the indomitable spirit of entrepreneurship and a symbol of economic uncertainty.



Winter Garden | 60" x 40" | Edition of 5 | 2002  
Archival giclée print

A photojournalist of international renown, Aaronson has long held a fascination for events of significant social and political impact. Though he has traveled all over the world on assignments for *Time*, *National Geographic*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *Newsweek*, among others, he is perhaps best known for his coverage of China. From the 1989 student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square to Britain's return of Hong Kong, his colorful photographs of today's China expose the many contrasts of a rapidly changing nation: A young girl with incense cones on her chest calmly undergoes an ancient Chinese treatment for asthma, while smiling waitresses in Beijing dressed in brand-new Coca-Cola uniforms eagerly look toward a more modern future. Largely self-taught, Aaronson learned on the job, and, drawn especially to developing countries, he built a vast repertoire of images of those he encountered on his journeys around the world, from Europe to Asia to Africa.

While the **Subconscious City** series is Aaronson's first foray into the realm of fine art photography, his editorial work has always transcended pure reportage. Vibrant, fully saturated color and carefully orchestrated compositions distinguish his work in both arenas. Yet there are differences. He sees his recent investigations into the lives of New Yorkers as "pseudo-contrived documentaries." Though real enough, they are also his own creations. Unlike his editorial work, which often depends on building relationships with his subjects, the **Subconscious City** series finds him shooting anonymously — his subjects unaware that they are being



Ta Bom Ties | 53" x 80" | Edition of 5 | 2003  
Digital chromogenic print



Dinos Parking Garage | 40" x 60" | Edition of 5 | 2002  
Archival giclée print

scrutinized. And, while the work speaks of this city and its inhabitants, it is also a personal diary or visual account of Aaronson's own daily discoveries.

Many of Aaronson's photographs in this series reveal the City's obsession with consumerism. Each is titled after the location or name of the store whose window is featured. In *Saks*, an elegantly attired mannequin in needle-sharp, high-heeled shoes presents a startling contrast to the casually-dressed family of three who stroll into her rarified world from the teeming street outside. *Prada* — with its jumble of complex layers of reflections — brings us face-to-face with a window-washer inside the store. Headless mannequins appear to be breaking through the boundaries of the vast expanse of glass. While the clash between the City's have's and have-not's is certainly one of the subjects in these works, Aaronson's reflections also speak of the City's humanity. Reflected buildings appear to have diminished in size, making them less imposing, more in harmony with human scale.

Particularly striking for its quiet beauty is *Raindrops at Bergdorf* where hand-wrought glass vessels filled with water and suspended at various levels were featured in the 2002 Christmas display. Like so many tear drops, they were poignant reminders for Aaronson of all that New York had lost the year before. Yet, somehow these glittering raindrops, which reflect the statuesque

grandeur of the GM Building and Sherry Netherland Hotel, simultaneously allude to the City's vulnerability and reinforce its towering aspirations.

Other photographs in this series elicit similar emotional responses. The American flag, so ubiquitous in the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, is a powerful presence in many of the **Subconscious City** photographs. This evidence of newfound patriotism can be seen in *Rockefeller Plaza*, *Grand Slam* and *American Express*. *Winter Garden*, however, with its reflections of downtown landmarks such as the Woolworth Building, is less obvious in its subliminal message, but equally eloquent. Photographed on the day the newly restored Winter Garden atrium reopened following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, it speaks of a city determined to rebound from tragedy.

Among Aaronson's most compelling images are those in which reality is obscured by pattern and abstraction supercedes the concrete. Framed mirrors in *Chelsea Flea Market* bring nearby buildings into close view, conflating the monumental and the intimate. Similarly, *Ta Bom Ties* fuses reflected architectural detail with a multitude of richly patterned ties, which become one with bricks, doors, windows, and sky. In *Dino's Parking*



Bus Shelter | 42" x 28" | Edition of 5 | 2002  
Archival giclée print



Chelsea Flea Market | 42" x 28" | Edition of 5 | 2002  
Archival giclée print

*Garage* the familiar Day-Glo palette of graffiti conforms to the undulating curves of a black Mercedes that glistens in the aftermath of a light rain shower.

Aaronson's **Subconscious City** photographs are entirely fleeting in nature — one-of-a-kind moments. Each day sunlight and shadow create new reflections and by now, most of the store window displays that he once photographed are long gone. Yet, with a click of the shutter, he stills the restless and inexorable flow of the City, leaving us with a journal that is both personal and universal, material and immaterial. Seeing his photographs may inspire us to look more closely into the magical depths of reflected surfaces and search for those instants when fragments of New York City appear more surreal than real — taking us out of ourselves into the solitude of the unconscious mind where the cacophony of city life dissolves into silence.

**Margaret Mathews-Berenson**  
New York, August 2003