

pearl press



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This issue of Pearl Press features work from:

Judith Hornbogen, Christian Delfino, Jeremy Ackman, Dustin Randall Keirns, Richard Milne, Bradley Polen, Benjamin Littler, Michelle Meyer, Charlotte Drury, Lindsay Baloun, Jen Klockner, Victor Isaac Alvarez, Michelle Ann, Grace Lin

Cover image: Charlotte Drury

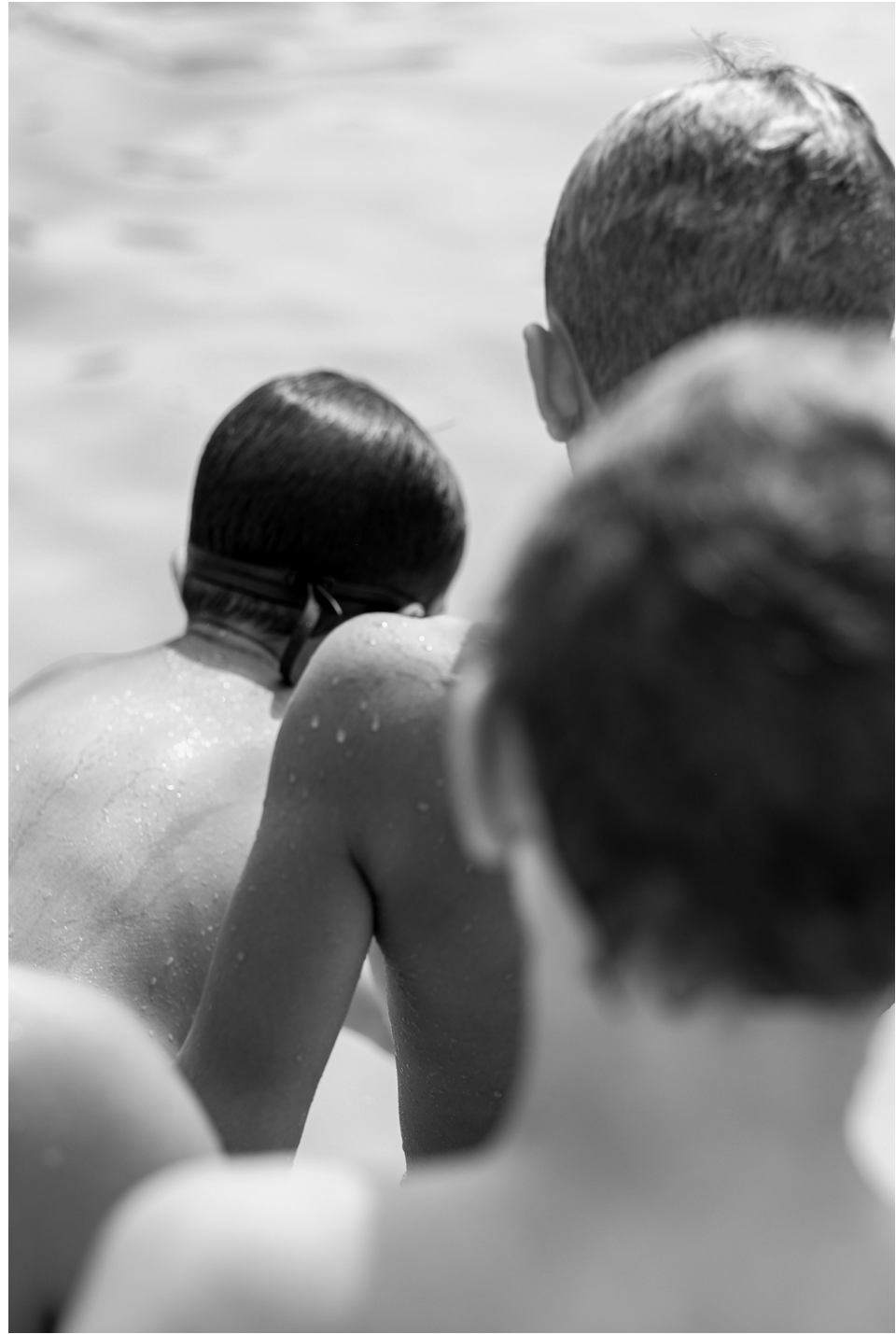
Curated by: Delilah Twersky



Tenisový areál #2, Vyšehrad, Praha 2023: Judith Hornbogen



Hydrators: Christian Delfino



Summer Camp: Jeremy Ackman



Summer Camp: Jeremy Ackman



What Goes Up: Dustin Randall Keirns



Kayleigh's Complexion: Dustin Randall Keirns

GRACE

When I first saw him
arms, especially the right one, nearly reaching his knees
long lashed large eyes gazing low in humility
he seemed from a different time

Flannel uniform draped over gangly frame
cap pushed back, a pleasant smile
comfortable as a well-worn shoe for an 11-year-old boy
a fit like a lifelong friend

Aromas of spit tobacco, green grass, dirt and sweat
hung in the dugout air
as he ambled over slowly
cleats crunching split sunflower shells

“How ya doin’ mister”
poured off his tongue like syrup
“Good”
was all I could muster

He reached around to the back pocket of his baggy pants
and extended a booklet
gray, red and yellow:
“Here, you might enjoy this”

Entranced I barely gave it a glance
blurting “Thank you mister” as he moved away effortlessly
pausing briefly to turn and smile again
before disappearing into the clubhouse

Home I poured over those 96 pages again and again:
“Pitchin’ Man, ‘Satchel’ Paige’s own story”
as told to Hal Lebovitz
25 cents

Copyright 1949
indeed
he was from a different time
“My God!” came to mind

One of the greatest stars in baseball once
here a dozen years later, age 55 or so
with the nondescript Beavers in my hometown
still playing the game

Never did see him again in the flesh
but thrilled when I read he made the show one more time
three shutout innings for Kansas City
at the age of 59

“Three innin’s is just like an appetizer”
he said in Chapter 21
no doubt he could have gone more
if they’d let him

Though he’s long gone now
those innocent days call out often
burnished by passing time
oh to see him again

Richard Milne



Starling Marte: Bradley Polen



Chris Acker and Nick Shoulders Downtime On Tour: Benjamin Littler



Summer Camp: Jeremy Ackman



High Noon: Dustin Randall Keirns



Summer Camp: Jeremy Ackman

MY UNCLE VICTOR

Sees

nothing
but a mirror, he does.
Sees only his face
as he looks at others, he does.

Loves

the mockingbird
he does, its talent
for mimicry,
its breeding proflifery.

Imagines

more
and more
of himself, his body,
his voice, he does.

Circles

the small bowl of sweet cherries
set on a holiday table, their delight
meant to be shared.
Snatches them up, he does.

Announces

with amusement, he does,
that there's never enough,
that the winner-takes-all,
he does.

Michelle Meyer



Untitled: Charlotte Drury



Untitled: Charlotte Drury



Soccer, from the stands: Lindsay Baloun

TEAM

it was about all of us together,
wearing the same color
each with our own smiles
and dominant foot

there was Lindsay
and Erin
and Claire
and Erica
and all of you

all of you were my friend
all of you made me laugh
and at one time, passed me the ball

on the field in Freehold
in Princeton
in Tuckahoe
in Cranberry

my feet have not grown much

I still think of you
holding me up in ways I did not realize

some of us got hurt
and we'd surround you
we'd tell you it was going to be okay
and we'd take their number

I have this memory of leaving practice once
and getting in my car to drive myself home
we were all old enough to drive ourselves home all of a sudden
and we were in the parking lot, with our long socks,
our slides
our lanyards

yelling across the spots to each other -
laughing
so much joy we let out,
together

Jen Klockner



Untitled (Bekah, after): Victor Isaac Alvarez



BLISS

An empty beer bottle is passed out
next to an empty field
where football games are played
on crisp fall Sundays.

Across the street neighbors pull rakes
over decaying leaves
during halftime
the right time

to empty another cold one
and toss the ball with the kids
who are all dreaming
like their parents used to

about making it big someday
emptiness
so foreign to them
so mercifully unknown.

Michelle Meyer

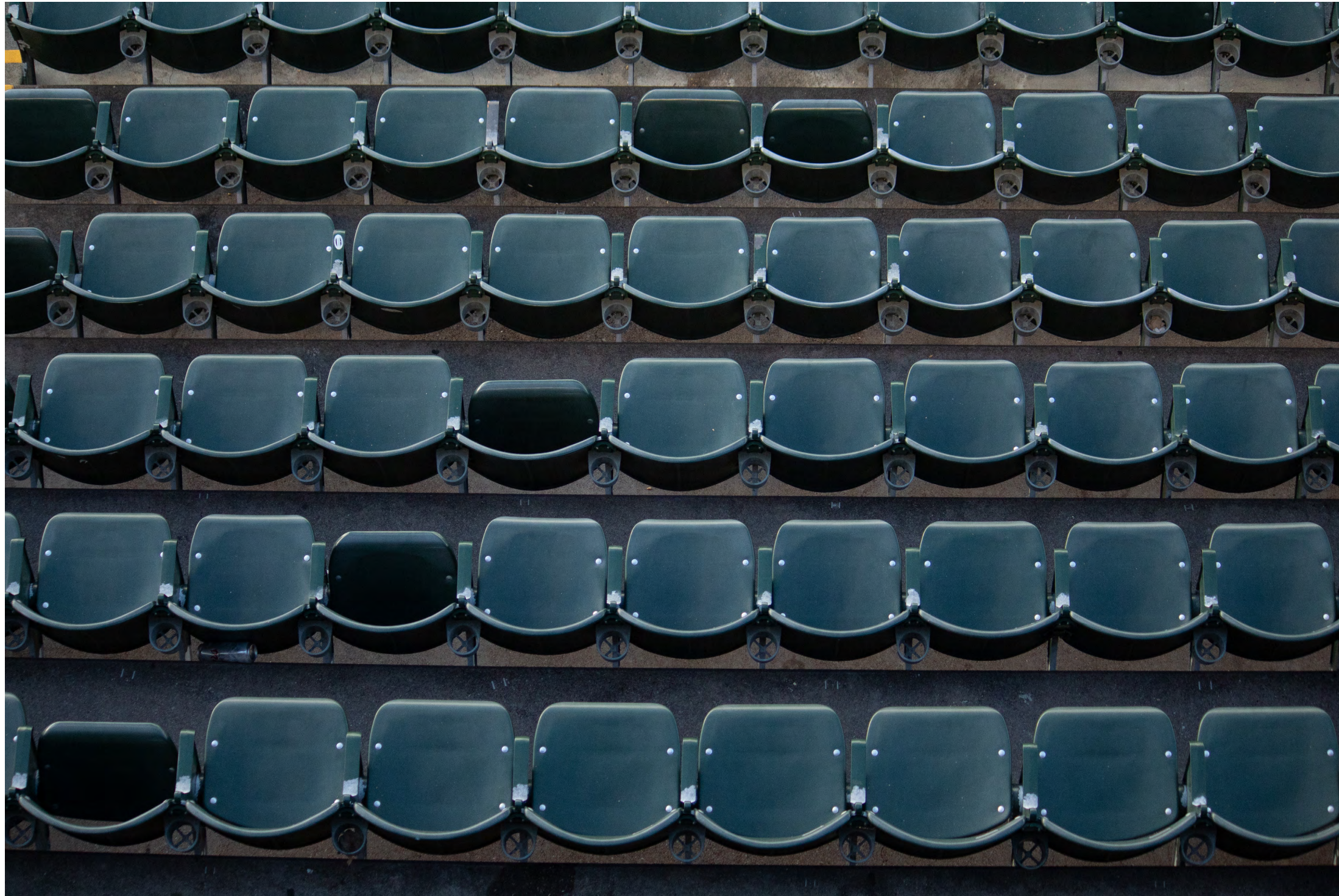


Tournament: Michelle Ann

WATCHING THE WORLD SERIES AFTER WORK

Happy hour means two dollars off drafts and the drink feels unlimited. We wince at its metallic bite, but sludge left by yeast clogging taps imparts a sweet aftertaste. We sink into a wooden booth, where bodies, sweaty with emotion, have left layers of buildup, and seats are soft from stickiness. Dust particles swim around us, visible in the glow of the low sun that sheds its last ray through the only window in a dark room. Everything is dirty, buzzing, noisy. Television screens are already obscured by the haze. But we're thirsty and the good stuff won't go unnoticed. The outbursts come as if on cue. "Get it! Let's go! Hell yes!" We cheer, dance, drink, lost in the swirling moment. Livelihood has been scraped from shared exhaustion. At the end of the night, we hug.

Grace Lin



Empty Seats in Oakland: Bradley Polen

THE SHOW

“Is this enough?” the kiosk attendant asked me. She held up a caulking gun that pushed out ribbons of sour cream. The nachos taste good when they come in a plastic helmet; the truth is I dream about them. Looking down from my seat in the grandstands, a superstar stands in the center of the arena. I like to think that his body absorbs the energy I give off - shoving nachos in my mouth, salsa spilling out of the corners of my lips - but my acuity, my mental focus, my strength, are all for him. He'll carefully relocate every ounce of my energy to his right arm, forearm to wrist to the palm of his hand, before pushing it all out through his artfully contorted fingers, looping his right leg around to maintain balance after releasing a ball that travels at a velocity unreachable by any living creature. I didn't know bodies could do that. Certainly not mine, which could not find a napkin to wipe the food bits off my face.

Grace Lin



Untitled (a boxer helps her friend): Victor Isaac Alvarez



Termální bazén, Karlovy Vary 2023: Judith Hornbogen



Untitled: Charlotte Drury

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Delilah Twersky
Pearl Press
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