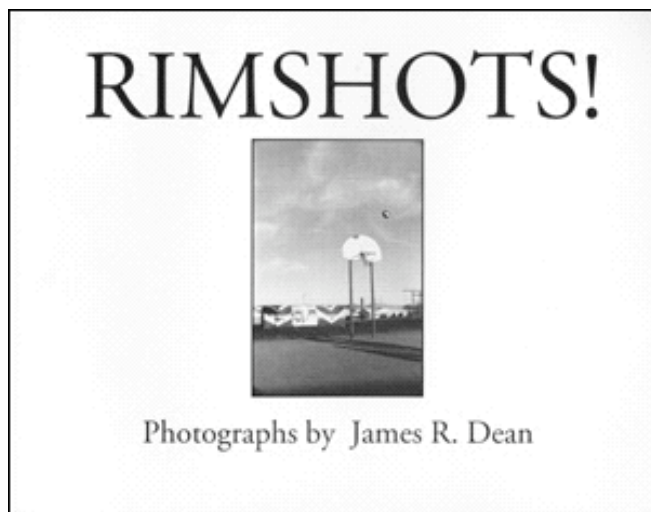


RIMSHOTS!

by James R. Dean

Fifty-five photographs of basketball hoops
with an afterword by Mark Strand



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Excerpt from the afterword

...Which brings us to *Rimshots*! Why would a photographer with a large, encyclopedic body of work narrow his focus to basketball hoops? Dean is as reluctant as Andre Kertesz to explain what it is that motivates his photography. He sees things; he does things, and as Dean is fond of saying, "Everything is everywhere."

Deans rimshots are everywhere from Pursglove, West Virginia to Los Angeles. Between the coasts, and these covers, there is also a generous sample from Deans home turf in the Middle West. The time represented is a period over 20 years. Along the way to other places and other projects, Dean has collected rimshots just as one of his favorite photographers, Elliott Erwitt, photographs dogs on his way to other projects intended to put bread on the table. In the process, Dean, like Erwitt, displays both intelligence and good humor difficult combination in any medium and rare in photography, especially in these decidedly humorless times.

Some, including Dean, have commented on the lack of people in these photos. As a devout snapshotter, Dean would have been only too happy to accommodate some basketball shooters had they materialized. Despite, or perhaps because of the lack of human figures in these pictures, we can still get a very strong feeling for the people who must have built and played in these settings. Like sports psychologists we can imagine the pleasure and the pain of lobbing a ball at these many variations of Dr. Naismith's invention. Imagine the frustration of a young, poorly coordinated child standing on an inclined driveway trying to bank a nerf ball off the cylindrical shape of a pine tree into another tiny cylinder! When an image of a proper basket 10 feet above a smooth flat plane appears, as it sometimes does in Deans rimshots, even viewers who never attempted a layup or jumpshot will recognize the zen of how things ought to be.

Although Dean has narrowed his focus to basketball hoops, the bigger subject of how we live looms in the background. A professional knowledge of architecture and a respect for what photography does best—show the world in all its dimensions—are always present in Dean's work. Dean loves being in the darkroom, but he is in his glory moving around cities, prowling the alleys of small towns, looping through suburban cul-de-sacs or pulling into a farmer's yard. The joy of knowing that everything is everywhere, that everything can be a photo, that he "couldn't make this up, if he wanted to" keeps Dean photographing.

In this little book, despite his good intentions for limiting the subject, Dean has slipped in a very big picture of America. As for the future, readers of *Rimshots*! can look forward to more of everything from everywhere in the photography of James Dean.

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