

Ryan Schude Artist Statement

As part of an ongoing series exploring the relationship between photography and literature, this collection has taken direct inspiration from Patti Smith's memoir "*Just Kids*." A single turning point in her life which marked the transition of a meandering factory worker from New Jersey with aspirations to become an artist in New York City, Patti writes a poignantly detailed account of boarding the bus that started it all.

"It was a big blow that the fare to New York had nearly doubled since last I'd traveled. I was unable to buy my ticket. I went into a phone booth to think. It was a real Clark Kent moment. I thought of calling my sister although I was too ashamed to return home. But there, on the shelf beneath the telephone, lying on thick yellow pages, was a white patent purse. It contained a locket and thirty-two dollars, almost a week's paycheck at my last job.

Against my better judgment, I took the money but I left the purse on the ticket counter in the hopes that the owner would at least retrieve the locket. There was nothing in it that revealed her identity. I can only thank, as I have within myself many times through the years, this unknown benefactor. She was the one who gave me the last piece of encouragement, a thief's good-luck sign. I accepted the grant of the small white purse as the hand of fate pushing me on.

*At twenty years old, I boarded the bus. I wore my dungarees, black turtleneck, and the old gray raincoat I had bought in Camden. My small suitcase, yellow-and-red plaid, held some drawing pencils, a notebook, *Illuminations*, a few pieces of clothing, and pictures of my siblings. I was superstitious. Today was a Monday; I was born on Monday. It was a good day to arrive in New York City. No one expected me. Everything awaited me." - ©Patti Smith*

Bio:

Born and bred in the greater Chicagoland area, Ryan Schude cut his teeth climbing trees, riding bikes, and trying not to raise Cain. Living and working up and down California since 1997, his solo exhibitions include Paris, France (2008), Santa Monica, California (2014, 2019), Istanbul, Turkey (2014, 2017), and Seoul, South Korea (2020). While large scale, tableaux vivants have become a cornerstone, he continues to apply the narrative tradition to a range of approaches in portraiture and motion pictures.

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