

An aerial photograph of a beach with turquoise waves crashing onto the shore, creating white foam. The text "FIRST LOOK" is overlaid in large white letters at the top.

FIRST LOOK

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ONDAATJE

ROSEGALLERY SANTA MONICA CA SEPTEMBER 2019

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SEPTEMBER 21 THROUGH OCTOBER 12, 2019

FIRST LOOK is an exhibition of large aerial photographs from David Ondaatje. From the air, these photographs explore familiar and unfamiliar landscapes including remote wilderness areas and share Ondaatje's deep personal affection for the solitude and the tranquility of flyfishing. They take us on a journey from above as we share Ondaatje's unique first look at some of the most beautiful places in his world.

INTRODUCTION

All my life, I have experimented with different cameras, lenses, filters, techniques and settings attempting to go beyond using a camera simply to chronicle a specific moment. Choices we make when taking a photograph can add emotional layers and enable us to capture subjects very differently than what see with the naked eye.

I sent my first camera several hundred feet into the air over five years ago. Instantly, I was excited to photograph a world I had never seen before, and to capture new perspectives on things I had previously only seen from the ground. While I don't have the ability to swap lenses as I do with a conventional camera, I can control camera angle, altitude, shutter speed, exposure and other settings on my aerial camera and of course have the same post-processing tools to make additional choices later.

As a filmmaker, when I first began using an aerial camera, I was happy to focus on shooting video footage as the resolution of early aerial still images was limited. In those first few years, I practiced complex camera moves, learning to execute simultaneous tilt, pan and elevation changes while filming. I captured countless hours of dramatic aerial video footage that was used in several short movies. As the chip size and resolution improved, I began using my aerial cameras more and more for still photography, and can now capture high quality aerial still images and print photographs at very large sizes, up to 8 feet wide.

Setting up and launching up my aerial camera invites curiosity wherever I go. If I am in a populated area, it doesn't take long before I have an audience and am fielding technical questions. When I am on a quiet river in Montana, a remote beach in Belize, or in the British Columbia wilderness, I have different challenges...like finding a place to charge the batteries, avoiding water, and finding a dry spot to take off and land. Wherever I am, I love getting up early and wandering off by myself to photograph the waking world as the day begins. Many of the photographs in the exhibition were taken early in the morning when I was on my own. The changing morning light always brings incredible surprises and I am excited to share some of my favorite early morning memories with you.

I am used to it now, but no matter where I am, aerial photography can be stressful. Time is limited. After taking off, I need to safely navigate the camera into position, often several hundred yards away, then frame the ideal shot and quickly fly it back before the battery runs out. Much of the challenge, unlike conventional on-the-ground photography, is that you don't really know what you are going to see until you get the camera up in the air, and then a flurry of creative and navigational decisions needs to be made very quickly. I am the pilot, photographer, location scout and technician all at the same time. It's all part of the thrill. Every time I first see things from the air, it takes my breath away. Sure, there are nerve-wracking moments and unexpected landings, but for each photograph there is a wonderful story that goes with it.

Photographers have, of course, been taking beautiful aerial photographs from fixed wing aircraft and helicopters for many years. Yet, because of the need for these aircraft to maintain minimum elevations for safety and other zoning reasons, early aerial photographs were often taken from much higher elevations with the camera pointed straight down from directly overhead. Taking a photograph this way looking straight down from very high up provides a very specific and objective viewpoint, one that I find very appealing and have used on many occasions. Most of the photographs in the exhibition, however, were taken with the camera at a relatively low elevation while I stood on the ground nervously experimenting with a variety of angles for a unique perspective. Several were taken on flyfishing trips to saltwater and other remote locations far from Los Angeles, others were taken when I was alone or when traveling with family and friends. Traveling has a way of taking the ordinary and turning it into something wonderful. Our senses are aroused by the unfamiliar. Everything looks new from above and that first look is usually the most memorable.

We live in a beautiful world. This collection of aerial photographs shares my first look at a small part of it.

David Ondaatje

TARPON FLAT
Long Cay, Belize
62.5" x 48" or 44.5" x 34" incl border



WATER ANGEL
Adelaide, The Bahamas
62" x 48" incl border





ROME, PONTE UMBERTO
Rome, Italy
88.25" x 34" incl border

PETTIT LAKE ANGLER
Blaine County, Idaho
62" x 48" incl border





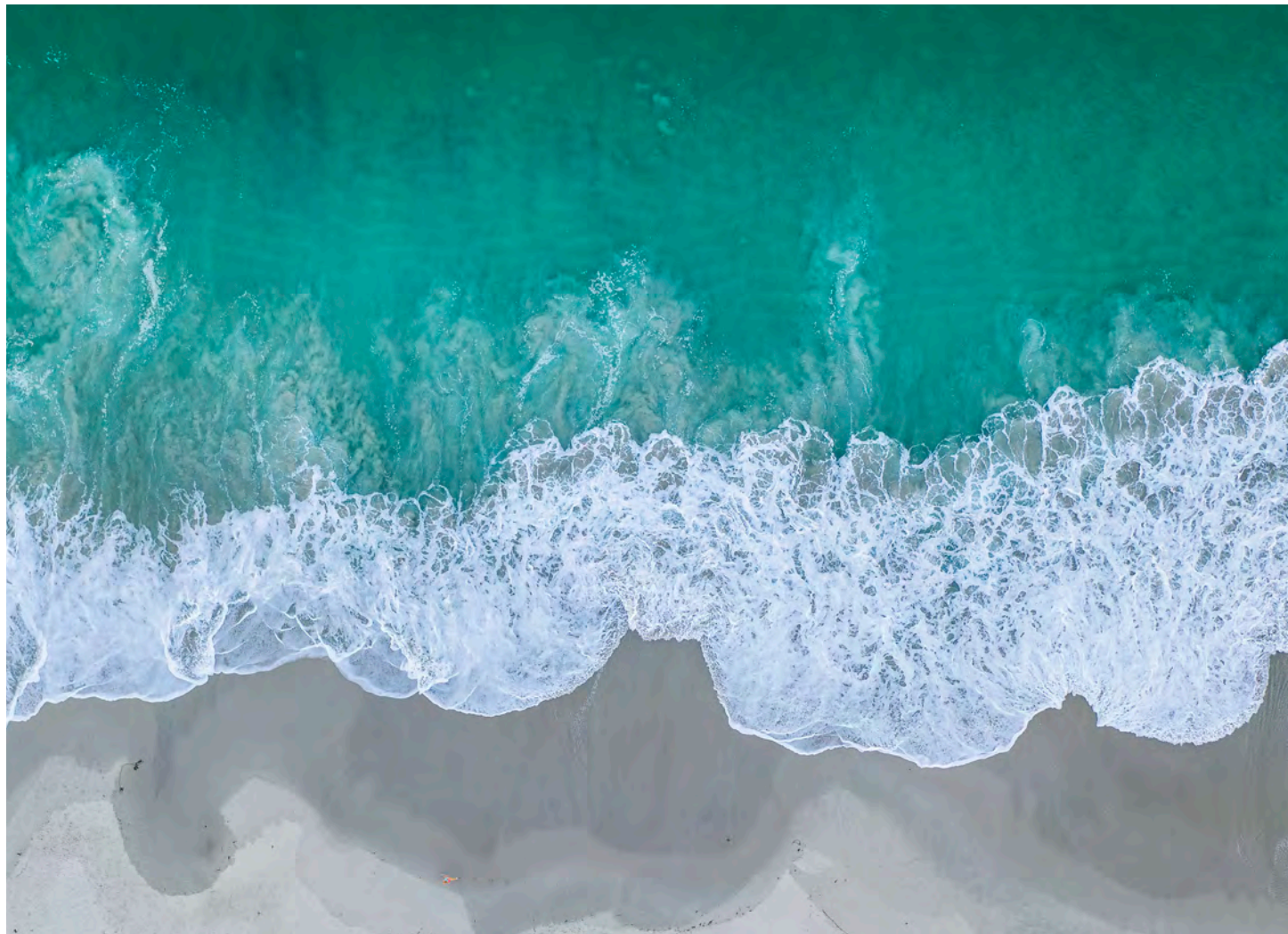
GOSNELL
Morice River, British Columbia
96" x 48" incl border

BULKLEY VALLEY ANGLER
Telkwa, British Columbia
67.5" x 48"



PUNTA ALA DOCK
Punta Ala, Italy
65.5" x 48" incl border





CARMEL BEACH#5-RUNNER Carmel, California
62"x 48" or 44"x 34" incl border



CARMEL BEACH#1 Carmel, California
44"x 34" incl border



CHAIRLIFT
St. Moritz, Switzerland
48.25" x 28" incl border

CORVIGLIA
St. Moritz, Switzerland
62.5" x 34" incl border





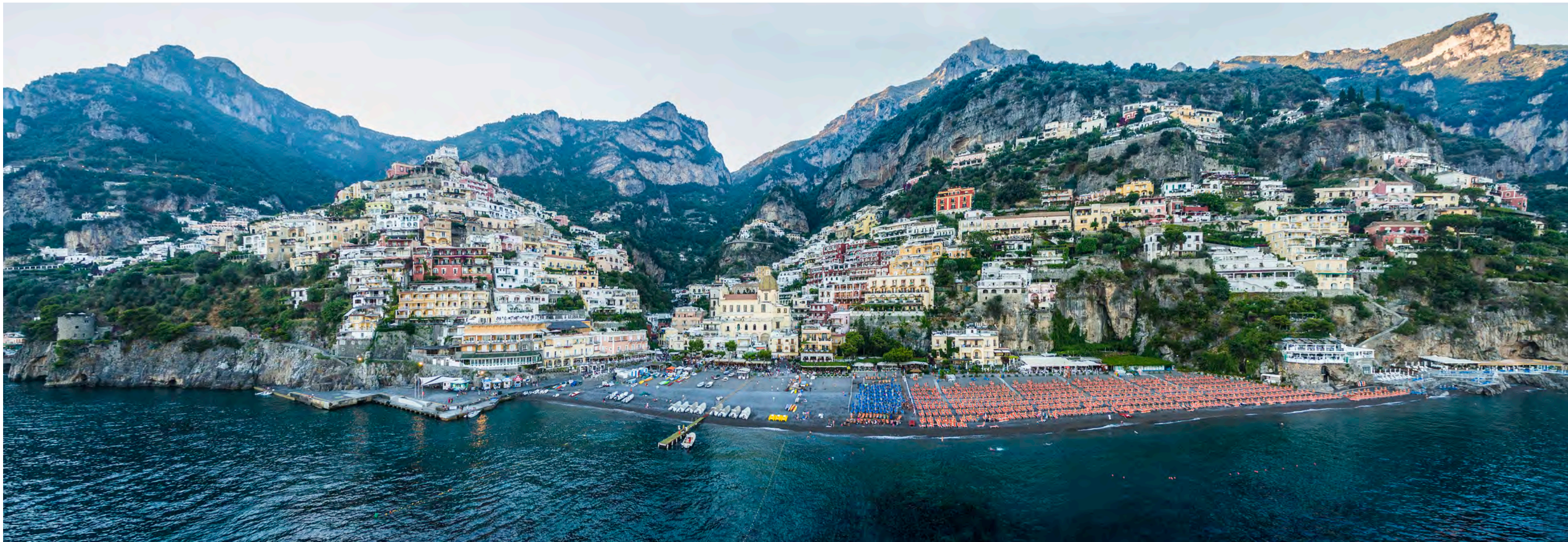
16 SURFERS Laguna Beach, California
51.5" x 34" incl border



19 SURFERS Laguna Beach, California
44" x 34" incl border

THE VARSITY MATCH
St. Moritz, Switzerland
47.5" x 34" incl border





POSITANO Amalfi Coast, Italy
72.75" x 28" incl border

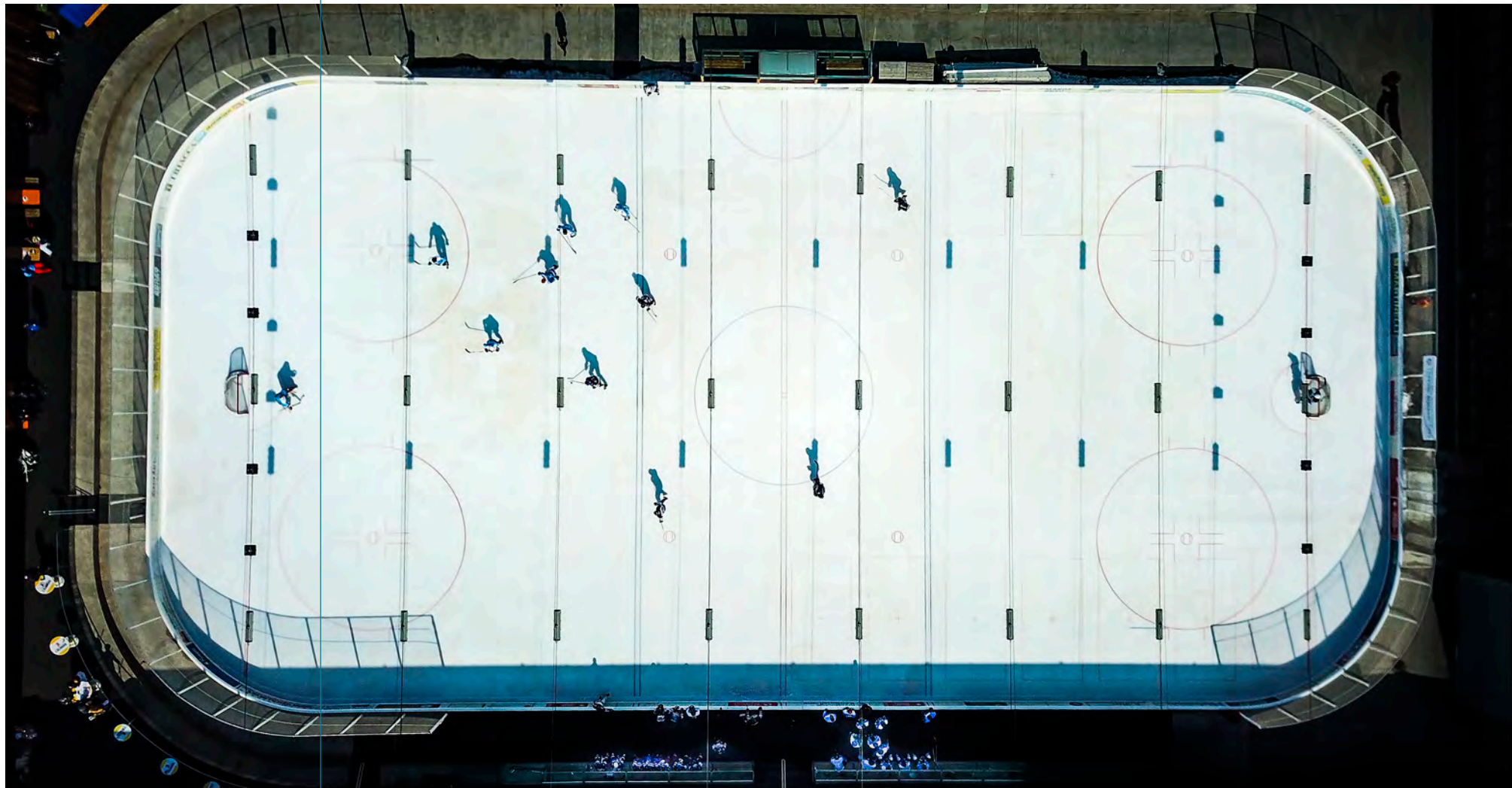
THE GREEN JACKET
Upper Beaverhead, Montana
54.5" x 34" incl border



SKATERS AND SHADOWS
St. Moritz, Switzerland
34.75" x 15" incl border



VARSITY MATCH
St. Moritz, Switzerland
61" x 34" incl border



A portion of the proceeds of every photograph sold during the exhibition will be donated to Human Rights Watch.

The photographs will be available fully mounted and printed in an edition of 5 plus 2 artist proofs. The smallest image, Skaters and Shadows, will be available in an edition of 10 plus 2 artist proofs.

The exhibition is comprised of large photographs of up to 96" wide and between 15" to 48" high. Each photograph is printed on LexjetSunset metallic paper using Viverra Pigment archival inks, face mounted to TrueLife Museum UV acrylic, rear mounted to a thin Dibond aluminum composite layer, and reinforced with an aluminum rear mounting frame. Given the large size, heavy weight and finely cut corners and edges of these mounted photographs, do not hang them above a sleeping area or place them anywhere they might fall or cause injury.

Certain photographs in this exhibition are part of a larger series of images. Additional photographs not on view here are available upon request.

ROSEGALLERY

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