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'Venice Beach': Bohemian pageantry on the boardwalk

Follow Yahoo News Photo Staff July 27, 2018



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Taking flight

On the windiest day I ever witnessed in Venice Beach, a homeless man waits for an evening bus to take him to a downtown shelter. He kills time by feeding seagulls from a bag of chips, amused by the fact that the birds can barely move due to the violent winds. Suddenly the man realizes that one of the seagulls is within reach and jumps to catch the struggling bird. He misses, but for a split second, looks like he

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Over the past three years, Los Angeles-based photographer Dotan Saguy has spent hundreds of hours documenting the diverse culture, people and pageantry of the iconic Venice Beach boardwalk. He was irresistibly drawn to the free-spirited, anti-materialistic and inclusive nature of the world-famous location, which he found to be a breath of fresh air in contrast to Los Angeles's sometimes homogenized, celebrity-obsessed culture.

Saguy hung out with his subjects for many hours at a time so he could learn about their passions and struggles and gain their trust. As a result, he became part of the Venice Beach family of local artists, transient hippies, tattoo-covered surfers, oiled body builders, street performers, skateboarders and local vendors, among other Venice denizens. He photographed them in raw, candid moments that are unique to the human landscape of this last bastion of unadulterated freedom.

Unfortunately, Venice Beach is sitting on the edge of a knife: gentrification and corporate greed threaten to squash the way of life that has defined Venice for decades. Median home prices in Venice are now over \$2 million, and the cost of renting a 2-bedroom apartment has skyrocketed to around \$5,000 monthly. The regulars are starting to move far away in search of affordable housing. Saguy knows that he has documented what could be a vanishing society. It is his hope that his book *Venice Beach* will help bring awareness to the issues at stake before this amazing way of life is left to fade away.

Dotan Saguy was born in a small kibbutz five miles south of Israel's Lebanese border. He grew up in a diverse working-class Parisian suburb, lived in Lower Manhattan during 9/11 and moved to Los Angeles in 2003. Saguy pursued his passion for photography after a successful career as a high-tech entrepreneur. His award-winning photographs have been published by National Geographic, Photo District News, Leica Fotografie International and ABC News, among other publications. Most recently, Saguy became a proud laureate of the Photolucida Critical Mass Top 50.

Venice Beach will be published by Kehrer Verlag in August 2018. An accompanying exhibition will run at Venice Arts Gallery in Venice, Calif., from Aug. 11 to Sept. 21, 2018.

Photography by Dotan Saguy

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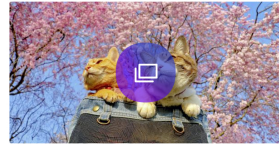
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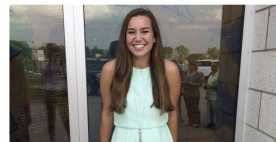
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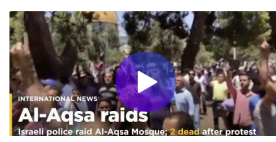
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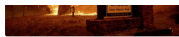
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