

Donald Lokuta

Donald Lokuta's career as a photographer, painter, teacher, and historian spans over forty years. He has authored and co-authored several books and has written many articles about photography. His own artwork is published widely and has been included in more than 300 exhibitions. Lokuta's works are in numerous permanent collections including the Art Museum at Princeton University, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Museum of the City of New York, the International Center of Photography in New York City, Lehigh University in Bethlehem, The New York Historical Society, the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York City, the Nelson-Atkins Museum and the Smithsonian Institution (National Museum of American History) in Washington, D.C.

During the 80's and 90's Lokuta worked closely with renowned artist George Segal. During that time Lokuta took nearly 15,000 photographs that chronicle the life and work of one of the world's great sculptors. In 1991 he assisted Segal in the creation of three sculptures for the F.D.R. Memorial in Washington, DC. Lokuta was given the honor of being selected to model for the central bronze figure in *The Depression Bread Line*.

Lokuta has had solo exhibitions at HPGRP Gallery in New York; the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton; the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey; Parsons School of Design in New York City; Dabac Gallery in Zagreb, Croatia; Srecna Gallery in Belgrade; the Urban Arts Space, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio and the San Antonio Museum of Art. Lokuta's participation in group exhibitions includes the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; the New York Historical Society; Lincoln

Center for the Performing Arts in New York City; the Columbus Museum of Art in Columbus Ohio; the Front Room Gallery in Singapore; the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City; the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ; the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art in Madison, Wisconsin; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy and the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida. Lokuta is the recipient of twelve grants for his photography, including four prestigious New Jersey State Council of the Arts Fellowship Awards.

Donald Lokuta earned his Ph.D. at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, received his M.A. at Montclair University and B.A. at Newark State College in New Jersey. Lokuta guest lectures extensively and is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

Artist Statement

Coney Island is on the Atlantic Ocean and is known for its amusement park, wide sandy beach and its boardwalk. Its annual summer parade has a sea-based theme and marchers dress as mermaids, fish, lobsters, pirates, sailors, jellyfish, various other sea creatures, and a variety of other costumes, sometimes unrelated to the original theme of the sea. These photographs were made before the start of this annual parade that proceeded through the streets and down the boardwalk of Coney Island, New York.

The parade is a celebration of the beginning of summer. It gives the participants an opportunity to design their own costumes, dress-up and show off their creations. Some marchers are masked as they assume another identity. And in many cases it offers an opportunity to display a side of one's self that is seldom seen. It is always interesting to me to have a window into how we see ourselves.

One of the women that I photographed for this series said, "I was a mermaid! Her name is Katrina: Queen of the Waves. It's my inner mermaid persona."

We all have a persona- a mask that we wear, an image that we put on for society. It is what we want others to believe we are. Like an actor in a play, we design our own roles in life- we are businessmen, politicians, students, teachers, athletes, mothers and fathers. But the image that we create is likely not the real person, although we and others believe it is.

As Carl Jung said, "The persona is a complicated system of relations between individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of

mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual.”

What we portray in daily life is likely not real and the masks and costumes we put on is an attempt to escape from one unreality to another, if only for a short time.

- Donald Lokuta