

SPERONE WESTWATER
257 Bowery New York 10002
T + 1 212 999 7337 F + 1 212 999 7338
www.speronewestwater.com

Beddie, Alainna Lexie. "The Wonderful, Rarely Seen World of William Wegman." *www.nytimes.com (T Magazine)*, 24 August 2017.

T THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

My friend lives near the photographer William Wegman. She knows this because one day, while walking her dog on the sidewalk, she heard a man addressing his pair of Weimaraners, Flo and Topper. And any self-respecting New Yorker with a love for canines and art would know instantly, as she did, that it was William Wegman. His dogs, always Weimaraners and always with very distinctive names, are famous. They have been since the '70s, when he first began photographing them.

It all started with Man Ray, his beloved dog (named for the Dada artist) and first muse. Together, the two collaborated on photographs and videotapes until Man Ray died from cancer in 1982 — the same year *The Village Voice* named him the "Man of the Year." It's not surprising that the creature was humanized by the press: Wegman captured Man Ray doing mundane, humanlike things, like drinking a glass of milk or receiving a school report card.

Wegman has owned several Weimaraners since, each of whom have patiently allowed him to dress them up in elaborate costumes and snap their pictures for the artist's countless books or gallery shows. And over the years, he took many more photos than he published. "I went through boxes and boxes of pictures that I never bothered to look at after taking them and found kind of a treasure, and some really interesting situations," says Wegman. "Some things that I thought I never did before, I found out I had done before. And other directions that I sort of abandoned were interesting. My poor memory — I forgot what I had been doing!"

A majority of those gems make up a new book, "William Wegman: Being Human," out in October. In the meantime, beginning September 5th, many never-before-seen Polaroids from the collection will be on view at Sperone Westwater in New York.

In advance of the show, Wegman allows T to publish some of the found images here for the first time. He also shares with us, in his own words, a little memory about the creation of each.

SPERONE WESTWATER
257 Bowery New York 10002
T + 1 212 999 7337 F + 1 212 999 7338
www.speronewestwater.com



“Uphill,” 1990. © 2017 William Wegman

That’s with my dog Batty and she’s riding a bike. And how did I do that? If you look really closely, you will see a kickstand. What you don’t see is that the kickstand is supported by a flat stone. It makes it pretty secure. Almost every one of my dogs can do this because it’s really simple: the dog is really just sitting.



“Wolf,” 1994. © 2017 William Wegman

That’s with Batty’s mother, Fay, and for some reason I grabbed a lot of Halloween things to make these various characters, transforming the dog from one animal to the next. This one worked pretty well. I particularly like the pose: the kind of standard dog sit pose.

SPERONE WESTWATER
257 Bowery New York 10002
T + 1 212 999 7337 F + 1 212 999 7338
www.speronewestwater.com



“Whisper,” 1998. © 2017 William Wegman

There was a moment when I was dressing dogs up as various characters, and a lot of that had to do with the vertical nature of the Polaroid camera. It's always 24 by 20 inches vertically, so I had to get the dog up into the area since you don't carry this camera around like an SLR; you bring the subject to it. And so I started to put the dogs on stools and pedestals to bring them up, and that's when I first started to dress them.



“What to Do,” 1995. © 2017 William Wegman

A pretty funny one, wouldn't you say? I set it up with Fay Ray in this case, at her desk, and just detailed it with that little pad and so forth. I think Fay has a particularly good look in this one, don't you? The title probably could have been better because she's really looking at the person, it's more like, “How can I help you?” not “What to Do.”

SPERONE WESTWATER
257 Bowery New York 10002
T + 1 212 999 7337 F + 1 212 999 7338
www.speronewestwater.com



“Lighting Director,” 2002. © 2017 William Wegman

We went to Shubert Theatre in New York. We were going to be doing the Tony Awards poster. It didn't pan out because they said, “What! We can't have dogs in the Tony Awards poster!” So the person that commissioned me to do this was sort of embarrassed about it.



“Léger,” 1998. © 2017 William Wegman

It looked a little bit like a Léger, in terms of colors, that's why I titled it that. It was 1998, and that year I had kind of an aversion to anthropomorphic characters, so I decided to do something that looked more like modern art. I actually had people hiding behind the dog holding up these colors to achieve this; it was before Photoshop.

SPERONE WESTWATER
257 Bowery New York 10002
T + 1 212 999 7337 F + 1 212 999 7338
www.speronewestwater.com



“Garden,” 2002. © 2017 William Wegman

I imported some plants from my wife’s garden, and I lit it from behind so it kind of glows. It looks almost like a sunrise. When you bring a subject close to this camera, the depth of field gets very narrow, and I think I played around with that.



“Seated Figure,” 1996. © 2017 William Wegman

People say, “These poor dogs! How can he do that?” Well the dog’s just sitting there. But the person is sitting with a dog on her lap, crouching down, not to be seen except her hands and legs, right? You can kind of see her head poking through slightly on the right.

SPERONE WESTWATER
257 Bowery New York 10002
T + 1 212 999 7337 F + 1 212 999 7338
www.speronewestwater.com



“On the Way,” 1995. © 2017 William Wegman

Isn't it sweet? It's actual mother and daughter, Fay and her daughter Batty. It was toward the last year, as it turns out, of Fay's life. So it was almost like she was — maybe it's a bit maudlin and melodramatic — but I was thinking that she was sort of teaching her or addressing her in some sort of maternal way.



“Hansel and Gretel,” 2007. © 2017 William Wegman

That's Candy and her daughter actually. It's two girls. But Candy's sort of boyish so I cast her as Hansel, and Gretel is played by Penny. And the set was lent to me by the Met Opera; I did a series of Opera pictures for them. This was the painted backdrop that they used in the “Hansel and Gretel” opera. And the costumes as well. They lent me those, too.

Interview has been edited and condensed.

“William Wegman: Dressed and Undressed” will be on view at Sperone Westwater from Sept. 5th through Oct. 28th. “William Wegman: Being Human” (\$25, Chronicle Books) is available for preorder now, and on bookshelves beginning Oct. 3rd.