

The Flamenco Project

Flamenco, the deeply emotional and complex music of Andalusia, has attracted significant international attention since the early 1900s.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed an unprecedented wave of committed and adventurous musicians traveling far from their homes and cultures to experience flamenco first-hand in the pueblos of Andalusia. Many not only lived the life and studied the music, but also documented their experience at its source with photographs, audio recordings and film. It was an extraordinary period of cross-cultural exchange made possible by the generosity and openness of many of the great flamenco artists of the 20th Century.

The Flamenco Project is dedicated to assembling, preserving, exhibiting and publishing these unique documents of that memorable time.

The Project is currently enjoying a 3-year exclusive sponsorship under the auspices of the cultural foundation *Cajasol | Obra Social*, which is hosting and organizing multiple exhibitions in Spain. A 192-page catalog/book was published in July of 2010 along with a limited edition, 10-print collector's portfolio. The Project is soliciting offers for international venues and is seeking a permanent institutional home for its multimedia collection.

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The Flamenco Project

Background

The 1960s were years of political turbulence and dramatic awakening for young people in Europe and the US. Exciting new music was being created, reflecting and providing voice for the changing values of the times.

Artists were also making pilgrimages to other cultures in search of musical and spiritual resources to compliment or supplement their own. They ventured to India, Japan, North Africa, Cuba, and South America. The world had become an open resource for those willing, capable and adventurous enough to explore it. The Beatles were influenced by Indian ragas; the "Concierto de Aranjuez" inspired Miles Davis. Among these young, cultural pilgrims was a handful that went to Spain in search of the art and spirit of flamenco.

They arrived with energy and enthusiasm. A few also brought personal cameras and tape recorders, coming not as professionals looking for material to appropriate or exploit, but because they loved flamenco.

Much of Spain under Franco's dictatorship existed as an agrarian society, economically undeveloped and relatively affordable for more affluent world travelers, allowing students to spend months and, in some cases, years living among the flamencos, studying the music, hosting fiestas, paying and transporting artists to perform together in intimate, supportive and respectful surroundings. Due to the generosity and openness of the flamencos – many of whom were gypsies – these students were accepted into the artists' social spheres and were invited to events otherwise closed to outsiders. They were not a political or social threat to the families and were completely supportive and respectful of the music. An anomaly in the fabric of daily life, they were a compliment to the artists' world.

Those who had tape recorders made audio recordings of these fiestas. Discreetly recording the music was generally condoned and often encouraged by the artists. They also took photographs, mostly amateur photographs, like one would take on vacation of family and friends. Many of these images were extraordinary in content as well as in their own artfulness, yet their technical quality varied widely, and not all have survived to this day.

These were students of guitar and *cante*, ethnomusicologists, self-proclaimed aficionados or social partners just along for the ride. For those attuned to the power and integrity of the music, there was no better place to be. They returned to their home countries with experiences that would change their lives, memories they would never forget and friendships that would be sorely missed. They also spread awareness of authentic flamenco around the world.

Aside from José Manuel Caballero Bonald's 1964 seminal field recordings *Archivo del Cante Flamenco*, José María Velázquez-Gaztelu's monumental TV film project, "Rito y Geografía del Cante" broadcast between 1971 and 1973 and the occasional local radio station's recording of festivals, these foreigners were among the very few individuals making informal documents of flamenco art. Memorable performances of many great artists, including those who were never recorded professionally, are to be found on their tapes.

These documents create a picture of flamenco as a way of life, experienced through the eyes and ears of those foreigners who came to see and live it as such.

Flamenco Now

Although the phenomenon of the "foreign invasion" of the 1960s and 70s ended with political and economic changes in Spain, foreigners still ventured to the Meccas of flamenco, continuing to enjoy the music and photograph seasoned and emerging artists. Currently, the flow of cultural and musical influence has reversed course: flamenco has embraced Jazz and even Hip-hop as major influences...and we now have "flamenco nuevo" born again as commercially viable, flamenco-inspired *world music*.

Project Goal

The material in the Collection is wholly owned by the individual contributors. The Project is a temporary construct created and maintained by the Editor Steve Kahn to administer and present the material. It is the intent for the Collection to be exhibited along with original audio recordings of fiestas and films, accompanied by a full catalog and a limited edition, 10-print portfolio available for collectors. Furthermore, it is a goal for the work to be acquired and archived by one or more institutions dedicated to the preservation, study and exhibition of these documents of the great legends of flamenco.



Photographs

The Flamenco Project consists of a growing collection of more than one hundred fifty images culled from the work of 16 non-Spaniards who loved the art of pueblo flamenco. They have seen things as others have not, and their images bring a fresh point of view to the visual history of the flamencos from 1960 to 1985.

Christopher Carnes (USA – deceased) William Davidson (USA) Ruth Frazier (USA) Dick Frisell (England/Sweden - deceased) Ira Gavrin (USA) David George (USA - deceased) Paco Grande (USA/Spain) Jane Grossenbacher (USA - deceased) Mark Johnson (USA) Steve Kahn (USA) Robert Klein (Germany) George Krause (USA) Charles Mullen (USA - deceased) Daniel Seymour (US - deceased) María Silver (USA) Phil Slight (New Zealand)

Audio Recordings

Selections from four flamenco juergas recorded in Morón de la Frontera by Steve Kahn, previously unpublished. 1967-68

Artists: *Diego del Gastor, La Fernanda de Utrera, Perrate de Utrera, Curro Mairena, Fernandillo de Morón, Luis Torres “Joselero”, Andorrano and others.*

Films

Daniel Seymour's long-lost 17-minute "Flamencología" filmed in Morón de la Frontera and Setenil de las Bodegas, 1969-70;

Tao Ruspoli's contemporary narrative "Flamenco: A Personal Journey" recording his encounters with flamencos old and young, and the revealing links between the two generations, 1998-2002.

Writers

Various articles, essays, personal impressions and anecdotes by non-Spaniards who lived the life during this unique window of opportunity as well as by those Spaniards whose insight and knowledge have contributed to the greater appreciation and understanding of the music and cultural exchange during this period.

Robin Broadbank, José Manuel Gamboa Rodríguez, David George, Mica Graña, Steve Kahn, Nina Menendez, Carl Nagin, Lorin Piper, D.E. Pohren, José María Velázquez-Gaztelu, William Washabaugh, Remy Weber, Estela Zatanía, Brook Zern and others.

About The Editor

Steve Kahn is an internationally known commercial and fine art photographer whose work has been exhibited, published and collected worldwide. Already a student of classical and flamenco guitar in 1967, he traveled from New York to Morón de la Frontera, on leave of absence from a doctoral program in physics, in search of Diego del Gastor and the art of pueblo flamenco. His three-month break grew into a two-year adventure that changed the course of his life. He lived among the flamenco artists, absorbing what he could of Diego's musical genius and shot a few photographs before his camera was lost. Upon returning to the States, he dropped out of academia to pursue a career as a freelance photographer.

Forty years later he is still shooting pictures and still playing the guitar. Recently he started to wonder, "What happened to all those photographs of the flamencos that I have seen in broken frames and taped to refrigerator doors over the years? Are they lost, destroyed, or forgotten in dark closets somewhere? Where are they now?" He set out on a quest to find them, and over the next seven years recovered more than one hundred fifty images, collected numerous anecdotes and digitalized many wonderful fiesta recordings.

Steve has brought together his music experience and digital photography skills to make this collection into a superb body of museum-quality work. He has scanned the original negatives and prints, restored the images and produced archival prints for exhibition and preservation.

Steve Kahn's photography website: <http://www.stevekahn.com>.

About PHOTOVISION and the Prints

Steve Kahn has been working closely with Ignacio González, director of PHOTOVISION publishing and digital print studio and exclusive distributor in Spain of Legion digital printing and fine art papers. As production partners in the exhibitions and book, they have brought together their critical experience, aesthetic judgments and different cultural perspectives into a genuinely collaborative effort. Photographer and master digital printer Alejandro Sosa made the exhibition prints at PHOTOVISION in Utrera (Sevilla). The prints were made on Legion Entrada Natural Rag (300 gsm) paper using an Epson 9800 wide format inkjet printer.

PHOTOVISION's website: <http://www.photovision.es>.

Collector's Portfolio

This limited edition Portfolio consists of a selection of ten archival pigment prints on Entrada Natural (300 gsm) photo-rag paper, encased in a 22" x 17" (55,8 x 43 cm) black presentation folio. There are fifty sets and ten artist proofs in the edition. Edition numbers 1-50 will be available for purchase as of August 1, 2010. Included in the Portfolio are images by Christopher Carnes, William Davidson, Ira Gavrin, David George, Jane Grossenbacher, Steve Kahn, Robert Klein, George Krause, Maria Silver and Phil Slight.

The Book: *Flamenco Project Una ventana a la visión extranjera 1960-1985*

Publication Date: July, 2010

Publisher: *Cajaso | Obra Social*

Editors: Steve Kahn and Ignacio González

22x25cm, 192 pages, 105 reproductions

ISBN: 978-84-92704-24-8

Depósito legal: M-27355-2010

Distributor: <http://www.agapea.com>

Exhibitions

January 20 – February 26, 2011

MEIAC, Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo de Badajoz

June 30 – August 29, 2010

Sala de Exposiciones VIMCORSA

Ayuntamiento de Córdoba

May 7 – June 13, 2010

Palacio Provincial Claustro de Exposiciones: Diputación de Cádiz

January 9 - 22, 2010

International Flamenco Festival of Nimes, France

Slideshow Presentation

November 6 – 22, 2009

Sala de la Cultura: Utrera (Sevilla)

September 19 – November 1, 2009

Cajasol Plaza San Francisco y Sala Imagen: Sevilla

December 12, 2008 – February 1, 2009

Sala Cajasol: Jerez de la Frontera

Exhibition Prints and Installation Documentation

Flamenco Project Images and Photos (Gallery):

http://stevekahn.smugmug.com/Flamenco-Project/Flamenco-Project-Expo-Prints/9860061_DdAnK/1/679615374_LgW7X

Installation Photos – Flamenco Project – CÓRDOBA

<http://stevekahn.smugmug.com/photos/swfpopup.mg?AlbumID=12856472&AlbumKey=DJ3FR>

Installation Photos – Flamenco Project – CÁDIZ

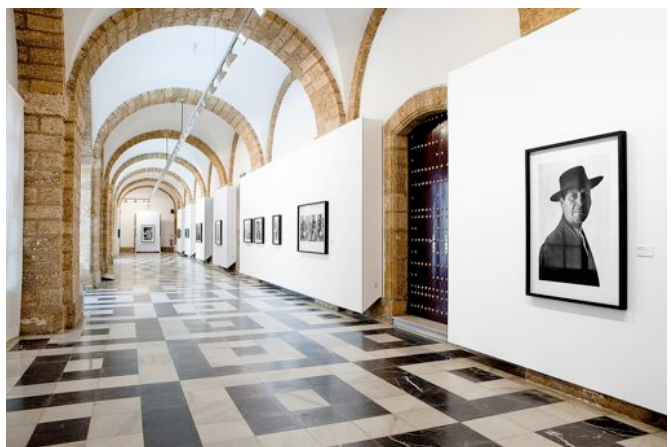
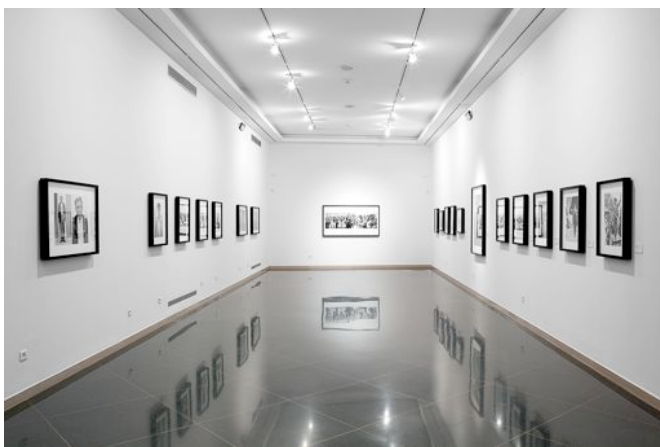
<http://stevekahn.smugmug.com/photos/swfpopup.mg?AlbumID=12186806&AlbumKey=k6Loq>

Installation Photos – Flamenco Project - SEVILLA

<http://stevekahn.smugmug.com/photos/swfpopup.mg?AlbumID=9816847&AlbumKey=rdYLj>

Installation Photos – Flamenco Project - UTRERA (Sevilla)

<http://stevekahn.smugmug.com/photos/swfpopup.mg?AlbumID=10285982&AlbumKey=EMET6>



Reviews

Fermín Lobatón, Diario de Cadiz; February 2, 2009

['Flamenco Project' abre una ventana a la visión extranjera](#)

Jerez Jondo; February 1, 2009

[Cuando el arte flamenco era mucho más que dinero.](#)

Fermín Lobatón, El País (Andalucía); September 20, 2009:

[El flamenco visto desde lejos](#)

Ángeles Castellano Gutiérrez, El País / Babelia; October 3, 2009

[Los flamencos de al lado](#)

Awards / Premios

Los IX Premios "DEMÓFILO" de Arte Flamenco de la Fundación Machado (2010)

AWARD FOR FLAMENCO HERITAGE: to *Cajasol* | *Obra Social* for its active interest and support of flamenco culture during the bieniel 2009-2010, including among others its programs "Jueves Flamencos" and its sponsorship of "Flamenco Project".

Los Premios de la X Convocatoria Cultural Internacional del Festival del Cante de las Minas (2009)

VISUAL ARTS: "Flamenco Project, una ventana a la visión extranjera 1960 - 1985", a project dedicated to assembling, preserving, exhibiting and publishing of unique audiovisual documents reflecting a foreign perspective on flamenco; curated by Steve Kahn and sponsored by *Cajasol* | *Obra Social*.

