

REVELATIONS

Christian Patterson has a good look at the everyday.

by LEONARD GILL



YOU MAY HAVE SEENT IT, but have you had a look at it? A good look at the jukebox inside the Lamplighter bar in Midtown? Or the fluorescent lighting inside Cozy Corner, the barbecue joint on North Parkway? Or Skateland roller rink as seen from its parking lot?

Christian Patterson not only had a good look; he had his camera, and he made photographs of the above scenes. Then he exhibited those photos in a show at the Power House in Memphis in 2005. And that's not all he showed. Picture a stove with its gas burners going full-blast and a discarded sign above that reads "Revelation 21:8." That's the stove inside Patterson's apartment when he lived in Memphis, and the photograph is one of 47 color plates -- including those shots of the Lamplighter, Cozy Corner, and Skateland -- inside Patterson's *Sound Affects*, the photographer's first monograph, published in Germany and available through Dashwood Books.

Patterson, who grew up in Wisconsin, is now based in New York (Brooklyn, to be exact), but he was in Memphis from 2002 to 2005 in order to work with an internationally known photographer he greatly admires: William Eggleston. The admiration (and affinity) shows in Patterson's work. *Sound Affects* -- with an introduction by Memphian Robert Gordon and an essay by Susanna Ott -- focuses on the everyday and often overlooked, the offhandedness of the subject matter an invitation to closer scrutiny. And if the subjects at first don't grab you, Patterson's eye for color -- neon-bright to downright lurid -- will.

How does a self-taught photographer go from office worker and musician in New York City to assistant at the Eggleston Trust in Memphis?

As Patterson told interviewer Peter Feldhaus of the Sonic Blog this past May, the move into photography was a "very natural, organic process," and it was Eggleston's work that "really blew {him} away."

So in 2001, at the age of 30, Patterson visited Memphis and met with the famed photographer and his son Winston. Then he made a "strong case" to work as assistant and archivist at the Eggleston Trust. A planned stay of six months ended up lasting three years.

"In Memphis, time moves a bit more slowly," Patterson told Feldhaus. "You can see and feel a certain history" -- a musical history if you're tuned into, as Patterson is, to what he calls "the musicality of everyday life."

That "musicality," according to the images collected in *Sound Affects*, extends to a woman in curlers at a Memphis laundromat, an alleyway near Bill's Twilight Lounge, the twin white-washed signs in the driveway of the Summer Twin drive-in, the candy-colored streamers of a used-car lot, and teh red-caped wonder himself: Robert Raiford of Raiford's Hollywood Disco.

For more information on Christian Patterson and on *Sound Affects*, go to his website, christianpatterson.com. The book comes in a limited edition of 700 copies and a special edition of 60 slipcased copies, including an 8 x 10 inch print, signed and numbered. To order, go to dashwoodbooks.com.

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IMAGES FROM CHRISTIAN PATTERSON'S *SOUND AFFECTS*

