

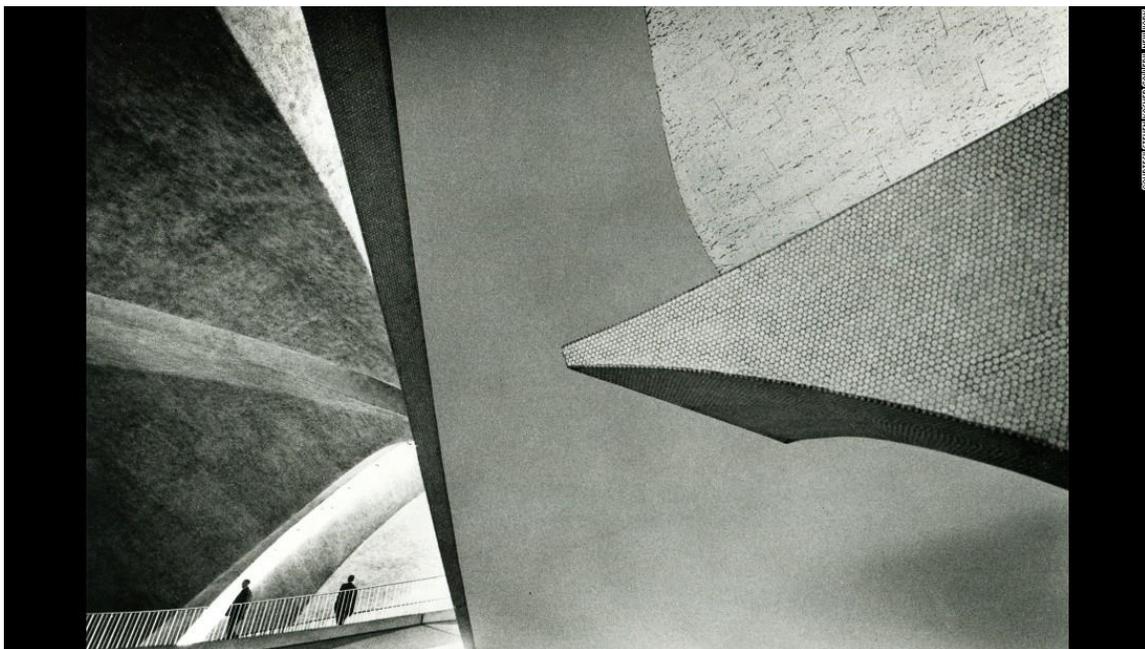
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Uzzle's 'Puzzles': 'You can't make this stuff up'

By Jamie K. White, CNN

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"Kennedy Airport," a photo circa 1967, is part of Burk Uzzle's new "American Puzzles" exhibit. The exhibit in New York offers up a timeless American experience- but maybe not the photos you're used to seeing.

(CNN)What do you love about America?

For photographer [Burk Uzzle](#), it's every inch of the sprawling country -- from sea to shining sea.

His latest exhibit, "American Puzzles," spans several decades, personalities and states, offering up a timeless American experience.

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But you won't see bright lights and skyscrapers in his photos.

"The idea of hanging out with fancy rich people doesn't interest me," he said.

Uzzle is more taken with photographing strangers standing around a fairground restroom (No. 2 in the gallery above). Even the most mundane scenarios make a fantastic picture, according to Uzzle.

"There's a joy of seeing, there's a joy of being alive," he said.



Photographer Burk Uzzle

His photos offer an alternate reality, different from how we usually see things: The backside of a football team instead of the front. Half of a car instead of a whole.

In photo No. 12 above, there are two large statues of what look like abandoned circus animals in the front yard of a trailer. What are they doing there? Your guess is as good as his.

"I can't explain our civilization," he said, "but I can giggle about it."

His work is seasoned with humor and whimsy, which hints at the kind of guy he is: Someone who says everything with a wink and a smile.

"I believe in having fun with the camera," he said.

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He's traveled all over the country taking photographs, even working at the illustrious Life magazine during the 60s. But recently he's come back to where he started -- North Carolina. His first job was freelancing at a Raleigh newspaper in 1955, and now he lives in Wilson, which he describes as a "little screwball town."

"I'm a country boy," he said. "I'm very interested in ordinary people."

He said his favorite thing to do is drive up and down country roads, avoiding the interstate.

That's where he happens upon scenes in the "American Puzzles" series.

"You can't make this stuff up," he said.

No matter how silly, how obscure or how ordinary his subjects, he loves them just the same.

"I love the world as I find it."

[Burk Uzzle](#) is an American photographer and former president of Magnum Photos. His exhibit, "Burk Uzzle: American Puzzles," is on view at the [Steven Kasher Gallery](#) in New York from June 11 until July 31.