

B E N R U B I G A L L E R Y

THE FAMILY ACID

Roger Steffens (b. 1942) is a Brooklyn, New York born actor, author, lecturer, reggae archivist, photographer and producer. Steffens began photographing while serving in Vietnam. His work in the Psychological Operations Unit lead him to found a refugee campaign for which he was awarded a bronze star. Steffens is widely considered a foremost authority on the history of Reggae music. He is the author of six books on Bob Marley and Reggae history, and his lecture *The Life of Bob Marley* has been heard at hundreds of venues including the Smithsonian Institute, the New York Public Library and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (its first and most frequent speaker). From 1979 through 1987, Steffens co-hosted the award winning and nationally syndicated KCRW radio show *Reggae Beat*. Steffens has also worked extensively in film and has contributed narration to such films as *Forrest Gump*, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, *Wag the Dog*, and the Academy Award winning documentary *The Flight of the Gossamer Condor*. Steffens photographed extensively throughout his life amassing an archive of over 400,000 images the near entirety of which had never been seen publicly before 2013 when his children, Kate and Devon Steffens, began publishing them on Instagram under the name **The Family Acid**. *The Family Acid* (published by S_U_N_ 2015) is the first book of Steffens' photographs.

Bio from the Sun publications website:

Roger Steffens started making photographs while serving in the Psychological Operations division in Vietnam, a time in which he began a journalistic record of his surroundings marked by an increasingly psychedelic lens. Spanning 40 years of Steffens' life and culled from over 40,000 chrome photographs, **The Family Acid** presents his often transcendent vision and life as a psychedelic pioneer on the order of Timothy Leary and Hunter S Thompson beginning with his work in Vietnam and moving through his ever revolving circle of friends and characters made up of rastas, beatniks, musicians, artists, gonzo journalists, his family, and himself. The portraits, scenes, and freewheeling experimentation with the medium of photography coalesce into a body of work that both parallels and defines the countercultural ethos of Steffens' generation.

Excerpt from The Guardian:

"... a 50-year relationship with the camera that resulted in an extraordinary archive of images that trace his life and times – and document a pivotal period in American history, beginning in the mid-60s, when the United States first started to question itself, and young people began to “drop out” and raise families on the fringes on society. Steffens was one of those people.”

SOLO EXHIBITION

2016 *The Family Acid*, Benrubi Gallery, New York, NY