
"Anne Daems: 72 Girls and Some Boys Who Could Be Models/Shirana Shahbazi."
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The independent presses J&L Books and A-Z Public Limited Editions employ different methods to distribute their limited-run publications. J&L Books (jandlbooks.org) publishes in runs of 1000-2000 copies, producing 2-5 new titles per year with mostly emerging artists. They are based in Atlanta and New York, and boast several notable art world names on their Board of Directors.

J&L has just released a monograph by Belgian photographer Anne Daems titled *72 Girls and Some Boys who Could be Models*, which she photographed while on a residency at ISCP in midtown Manhattan. It's a wonder she found only 72 in a city where everyone could be Someone. The impressions of glamour she gleans from strangers are tempered by the tension of watching and being watched. Midtown is famously fraught with security cameras, and Daems' action highlights the voyeurism inherent in this ubiquitous surveillance. Her beautifully-composed snapshots are often blown-out, sometimes out of focus, and her subjects rarely face the camera – in short, they defy the conventions of good portraiture. Even so, there is cinematic power in the natural poses and the unselfconscious beauty that she captures.

The book contains an interview with Daems by Dan Graham, an influential American artist who has been a mentor of hers. It is difficult to tell who is interviewing whom. Clearly the cross-generational exchange of ideas has had an impact on both artists' work. In their conversation, Daems comments on "in-between" spaces that exist in every major metropolis, and which factor significantly in this New York body of work. Though the Manhattan backdrop is familiar, the moments she catches transcend location to focus on universal themes of consumption, self-image and personal freedom.

A-Z Public Limited Editions (azple.com) distribute their artists' books only online, leaving it to readers to produce hard copies. Printable PDFs are available on A-Z's website for a limited time. A-Z has published both emerging artists and well-known international artists such as Lawrence Weiner, Cao Fei and David Shrigley. Editor Mirjam Varadinis hopes to democratize the distribution of artist's editions, while at the same time preserving value by time-limiting access to the works.

A-Z published an edition by Iranian-born Swiss photographer Shirana Shahbazi in 2006. Shahbazi seems to be interested in the residues of pastoral images that appear unexpectedly in urban contexts. With their rounded corners, these photographs feel like postcards from a world of distant memory. They are characterized by loneliness in the sense that each scene feels remote and somehow foreign. Many of her photographs are taken in Iran, and it may be that this feeling reflects her uneasy relationship to her country of birth. She is looking for signs of life and hope in simple, everyday sights.

A-Z has produced seven books so far, and their most recent by Bulgarian artist Nedko Solakov was released this past summer. Their books feature both photography and drawing. Shahbazi's book was downloaded 2,268 times during its 3-month run, to countries as diverse as Costa Rica, Cambodia and Vanuatu. Evidently online distribution of books is a viable strategy to reach broad audiences, even though the quality of the individual printed editions is likely to be uneven. Ultimately, the purpose of artists' books is to distribute artwork inexpensively to a larger community, and in that, A-Z succeeds.