

Mike Brodie



Born 1985 in Mesa, Arizona, Mike Brodie began photographing when he was given a Polaroid camera in 2004. Working under the moniker 'The Polaroid Kidd,' Brodie has spent years traveling the United States, amassing an archive of photographs that make up one of the few, true collections of American travel photography. Brodie made work in the tradition of photographers like Robert Frank, William Eggleston and Stephen Shore, but due to never having undergone any formal training he always remained untethered to the pressures and expectations of the art market.

Brodie compulsively documented his exploration of the tumultuous world of transient subcultures without regard to how the photographs would exist beyond him. After feeling as though he documented all that he could of his subject, his insatiable wanderlust found a new passion, and as quickly as he began making photographs, he appeared to walk away from the medium in pursuit of new adventures.

In 2008, Brodie received the Baum Award for American Emerging Artists and has a forthcoming book, *Failing*, to be published this November by Twin Palms Publishers. *Failing* is Brodie's most recent book after *A Period of Juvenile Prosperity* (cover shown on right) in 2013 and *Tones of Dirt and Bone* (cover shown hereunder) in 2015.

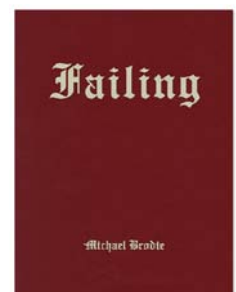


Mike Brodie's first monograph, *A Period of Juvenile Prosperity* touched down more than a decade ago, depicting his fellow rail-riders and drifters in a rebellious and wildfire pursuit of adventure and freedom. "Brodie leapt into the life of picture-making as if he was the first to do it," Danny Lyon wrote about the book in Aperture. Next came *Tones of Dirt and Bone*, a collection of earlier SX-70 pictures Brodie made when photography first led him to hopping freights, when he was known as "The Polaroid Kidd." And then Brodie seemed to disappear from the art world as suddenly and mysteriously as he'd first appeared. Maybe his vanishing was another myth. Maybe it was just a necessary retreat. "*I was divorcing myself from all that,*" he says. "*I was growing up. I was pursuing this other life.*"



In Nashville he became a diesel mechanic. Fell in love. Moved across the country again. Got married. Bought land on the long dusty Winnemucca road Johnny Cash sang about. Started his own business. Built a house. Put down roots. And when that life exploded, the open road called again. Throughout almost all of it, his cameras were with him, and at last those pictures are coming to light.

If Michael Brodie's first monograph was a cinematic dream, ***Failing*** is the awakening and the reckoning, a raw, wounded, and searingly honest photographic diary of a decade marked by love and heartbreak, loss and grief — biblical in its scope, and in its search for truth and meaning. Here is the flip side of the American dream, seen from within; here is bearing close witness to the brutal chaos of addiction and death; here are front-seat encounters with hitchhikers and kindred wanderers on society's edges, sustained by the ragtag community of the road. ***Failing*** often exists in darkness but is tuned to grace. Brodie's eye stays forever open to the strange and fleeting beauty that exists in forgotten places — the open country and the lost horizons that sweep past dust-spattered windows in a spectral blur.



- Rebecca Bengal



"Looking back, it's as if it never really happened. I was never a photographer holding a camera but a vessel to tell a story. It's like it all existed within a dream, and this is just God's plan for my life."

Solo Exhibitions

- 2025 *Failing*, Maus Contemporary, Birmingham, Alabama [upcoming]
- 2014 *A Period of Juvenile Prosperity*, Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris, France
- 2013 *A Period of Juvenile Prosperity*, Stephen Wirtz gallery, San Francisco, California
A Period of Juvenile Prosperity, M+B gallery, Los Angeles, California
A Period of Juvenile Prosperity, Yossi Milo gallery, New York, NY
- 2007 *Ridin' Dirty Face*, Needles and Pens, San Francisco, California
Mike Brodie Photographs, Casa del Lago, Chapultepec, Mexico
Tones of Dirt and Bone, Bonni Benrubi gallery, New York, NY
- 2006 *Tones of Dirt and Bone*, M+B gallery, Los Angeles, California
Homesteadaz, Get This! gallery, Atlanta, Georgia

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2015 *Sitter*, Canzani Center Gallery, Columbus College of the Art & Design, Columbus, Ohio
- 2014 *Collector's Favorites*, Leica Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Only the Good Ones: The Snapshot Aesthetic Revisited, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic
SPACE, Sundance, Park City, Utah
- 2013 *Perchance to Dream*, Andrea Meislin Gallery, New York, NY
- 2011 *idyll*, Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, California
Minor Cropping May Occur: (selected diaries 1962-2011), Lombard-Freid Projects, New York, NY
- 2010 *Personal Identities / Contemporary Portraits*, Sonoma State University, Sonoma, California
BROKEN LINES, curated by Nadia Ismail, Anna Klinkhammer Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2008 *Presumed Innocence*, DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts
- 2007 *Swoon*, *Chris Stain*, *Mike Brodie*, Gallery LJ Beaubourg, Paris, France

Awards

2008 The Baum Award for Emerging American Photographers

Publications

2024 *Failing* [forthcoming, November 2024], Twin Palms Publishers

2016 August 29th-September 8th, 2012, Oakland, CA - Oakland, CA, United States,
Nazraeli Press

2015 *Tones of Dirt and Bone*, Twin Palms Publishers

2013 *A Period of Juvenile Prosperity*, Twin Palms Publishers

Collections

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, SFMoMA, San Francisco, California

Berkeley Museum of Art, Berkeley, California

The Sir Elton John Photography Collection

Selected Bibliography and Press

2015 "Disposable Cameras," Studio Voice, December 2015

"Riding the rails: Mike Brodie's romantic Polaroids of freight-train life,"
O'Hagan, Sean, The Guardian, March 26

2014 "10 Game-Changing Photography Books," Philips, Ed. Highsnobiety, Sept. 4

2013 "Sidestepping the Digital Demimonde," Ryzik, Melena, The New York Times, Nov. 8

"A keen shutter reflex from Mike Brodie at Wirtz," Baker, Kenneth, SFGate, October 4

"Artist in Training: Mike Brodie's Photographs of Life On and Off the Rails," Dyer, Geoff,
Bookforum, June/July/Aug. 2013

PDN, The Photo Book Issue, August (Cover Image)

Phat Photo (JPN), July (Cover Image)

"All Things Considered: Trains, Punks, Pictures And Books You Maybe Shouldn't Read,"
Cornish, Audie, NPR, April 12

"Photo of the Day: King of the Road," Ahearn, Meghan, pdn, March 15

- 2013 "Railroads to Freedom: The drifters living and dreaming on America's freight trains,"
Cooper, Charlie, The Independent, March 8
"Mike Brodie: The Kid Stays In The Pictures," Zhong, Fan, W Magazine, March 6
"After Puberty and Before Manhood: A Period of Juvenile Prosperity," McCauley,
The New Yorker, January 29
- 2011 "The Train Photography of Mike Brodie," Enzinna, Wes, Oxford American, June
"Goings on about Town: Art," The New Yorker, June 19
"Minor Cropping May Occur," Raphael, Sarah, i-D, February 17
"Art in Review: Minor Cropping May Occur," Smith, Roberta,
The New York Times, March 10, 2011
- 2007 "Inside Photography: New Talent, Exception to the Rule," Johnson, Miki,
American Photo, July
"Galleries - Uptown," The New Yorker, March 5
"Mike Brodie: Bound by Tones of Dirt and Bone," HUGE Magazine, Japan
- 2006 "Inside My Head: One Person's Photos," Look Look
"These Birds Walk Publishing," Dailey, Nichelle, Mass Appeal Magazine
"Exposures: Connect Four," Feliciano, Kristina, PDN, November
"Mike Brodie: The Polaroid Kid," Derballa, Bryan, SOMA October