

GARY LEONARD

Over the past forty years Gary Leonard has photographed the streets and neighborhoods of Los Angeles, recording the famous and not so famous as they navigate the currents of life in Southern California.

Leonard makes his living as a photojournalist. He is the first to say that his career would have little meaning were it not the most efficient and practical method for accommodating his artistic passion to engage and interpret the world around him through photography.

In 1972, after graduating from UCLA, where he was a photographer for the *Daily Bruin*, Leonard covered the Democratic convention and the subsequent presidential election. The turmoil of politics gave Leonard his first taste of professional journalism. Photographing Los Angeles on a daily basis helped Leonard define his vision of photography and his determination to document the history of the city.

Leonard's weekly photo column "Take my Picture Gary Leonard," started in the *LA Reader* in the early 1990s. The column provided Leonard with the opportunity to share his vision of overlooked facets of Los Angeles and to shine a light on ordinary people. In 1998, these insightful photographs, became a book, *Take My Picture Gary Leonard*. His column continues both in the *Downtown News* and on the site, *L.A. Observed*.

Leonard's work has been featured in numerous magazines and newspapers, including *Rolling Stone*, *Interview*, *People*, *Der Spiegel*, *the New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Downtown News*, and several books. His photographs of the Los Angeles music scene were the subject of his first book, *Make the Music Go Bang*, and his images of the construction of Walt Disney Concert Hall, a project that spanned eleven years, were compiled in his most recent book, *Symphony in Steel*.

As a photographer, Leonard has won praise for his extensive work on civic projects such as the Hollywood Revitalization Project and his coverage of the renovation of Echo Park Lake. Leonard has been commissioned three times by the Los Angeles Public Library, twice to photograph the neighborhoods of Echo Park and Encino and once to photograph industry in Los Angeles. A grant from Metro, has brought 3' x 4' photographs by Leonard to the system's Lightbox Program in subway stations across the city.

The history department at the Los Angeles Central Library houses a large collection of Leonard's work, and he continues to add new images on a regular basis. With his unique and comprehensive eye, Gary Leonard preserves what otherwise would disappear: the inclusive, ironic and often transcendent history of Los Angeles.