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### **Photo du jour**

A new book by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer David Hume Kennerly captures the dawn of the new millennium.

**by Robyn Israel**

It was a whimsical idea that turned into a major obsession.

The assignment: Take a photograph each and every day in the year 2000, capturing the first year of the new millennium. That was what Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer David Hume Kennerly set out to do three years ago, using just one camera -- a Mamiya 7II -- and one 43 mm lens.

He began his visual diary on Jan. 1 in Washington, D.C., where he captured a forlorn New Year celebrant sitting behind the Lincoln Memorial. He ended it on Dec. 31 in Hawaii, with a shot of the Kilauea volcano, a photograph taken during his family vacation. In between, Kennerly logged more than a quarter of a million miles, traveling through 38 states and seven countries, taking a photo every day.

The end result is Kennerly's fourth book, "Photo du Jour: A Picture-A-Day Journey Through the First Year of the New Millennium," published by the University of Texas Press. Images from the book are currently on display at Modernbook/Gallery 494 in downtown Palo Alto, along with a retrospective of Kennerly's distinguished 30-year career as a photojournalist. This exhibition is hosted by special guest curator Elaine Tajima, a Palo Alto resident who is president and CEO of Tajima Creative, a Menlo Park-based visual communications and marketing-services group.

The exhibition will also feature several images from Kennerly's Pulitzer Prize-winning portfolio, which captured the loneliness and desolation of the Vietnam War in 1972. Other historic Kennerly photos in the exhibition include Richard Nixon's last wave goodbye, taken on the South Lawn of the White House as he left office, as well as a mural size triptych of the People's Liberation Army of China marching in honor of the 50th anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

As a witness to numerous historical moments in the latter third of the 20th century, Kennerly had seen it all. But as he set out to cover his eighth presidential campaign, he sensed that something was missing.

"I had shot so much on assignment. I tended to lose sight of anything en route, on the way to the job. (So) in 2000, I decided to slow down and pay more attention to my surroundings while covering the campaign," Kennerly said in a recent interview at Modernbook/Gallery 494.

The objective, this time, was to capture the "texture of life" surrounding his stories.

"It sounded really easy, but it wasn't," Kennerly said. "I think I pushed myself to a higher level. I had no book deal at the time. I just wanted to do it."

The political photographs are "the river that runs through Photo du Jour," Kennerly said, highlighting images he took of Al Gore,

George W. Bush and John McCain. He recalled getting up really early in the morning on the Gore campaign, where he would photograph five-hour-long "death by discussion" town hall meetings.

"Bush was more fun, believe it or not," Kennerly said. "And politicians can do goofy things. I like to be there when they do."

Another image from the book shows John and Cindy McCain at the end of his presidential campaign. Taken in Sedona, Ariz., the photograph is reminiscent, he said, of the work of Ansel Adams, who was a good friend.

"This is my homage to Ansel -- the big landscape, good foreground," he said. "Just happens there's a politician in the picture."

The diary also captures Kennerly's personal life. One image, taken on vacation in Hawaii, shows his son, Nick, flying off the bed like Peter Pan, with his younger brother, Jack, next to him. There were days, Kennerly recalled, when he would grab his camera and take photographs near his Santa Monica home, which he shares with wife Rebecca, a screenwriter. (Byron, Kennerly's son from his first marriage, attends Virginia Tech and is an aspiring photographer.) Some days were less inspiring than others, but he kept on track, never missing a day of shooting.

When asked to describe his photographic form, Kennerly said he didn't have a signature style.

"I just try to spend time with people and try to figure out who they are."

Kennerly started taking photographs with a Box Brownie camera when he was 10 years old. By then, he already knew he wanted to be a photographer. He recalled growing up in Roseburg, Ore. and described the impact a neighborhood fire had on him.

"I thought that's the perfect job -- you can go to all the fires and car wrecks but you don't have to clean up the mess," Kennerly recalled. "It really rang my bell -- I could be an observer, not a participant."

Upon finishing high school, Kennerly went to work for the Oregon Journal as a staff photographer. The exhibit at Modernbook shows several images Kennerly took as an 18-year-old rookie photographer, including Mick Jagger (shown in concert in Portland) and a young and handsome Lou Piniella, who played minor-league baseball for the Portland Beavers.

"I liked the way he looked," Kennerly said of Piniella. "I thought he was the epitome of a baseball player -- real rugged."

In that same year -- 1966 -- Kennerly shot Robert Kennedy in Portland, where he was making a speech to local labor leaders and campaigning for the local Democratic congressman. The image shows Kennedy's hand-written notes on the podium and casts him in a dramatic light. It was the first time Kennerly photographed a national politician. He discovered the forgotten negative two months ago.

"It's a classic Kennedy shot, the way he looks, " Kennerly said of the image, which is on display at Modernbook. "The Kennedys were very photogenic. There was a real sense of drama."

By 1967, Kennerly was working for United Press International (UPI) and soon became the agency's bureau chief in Vietnam. Two weeks after turning 25, he was notified he won the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography. He wasn't even aware that UPI had submitted the series of eight photos, which had been taken in Vietnam, Cambodia and India.

"I thought it was a big joke, " Kennerly recalled. "These days people lobby (for it) and it's a much bigger deal."

Reality set in two weeks later, when Kennerly was almost killed covering a big battle 25 miles outside of Saigon.

"I still remember it so clearly. It was so close," he said. "I thought, 'What a jerk I am -- I haven't even savored this victory and I'm here, about to get wasted.'"

But Kennerly knew he couldn't rest on his laurels.

"Just because you win a Pulitzer doesn't guarantee success. It guarantees an obit in the New York Times. I knew I had to continue doing what I was doing."

That ambition led to a prestigious post as White House photographer during Gerald Ford's presidency, when he photographed dozens of world leaders. Kennerly has also been a contributing editor for Newsweek magazine, as well as a photographer for Time, Life and George magazines. His three other books include "Shooter," "Photo Op" and "Sein Off."

In 1979, Kennerly photographed Ansel Adams for the cover of Time. That image is not on display at Modernbook, but another image from that shooting session is. The photograph showcases a playful and smiling Adams behind his Technika camera, his hands poking through oversized, lens-free glasses.

"This is the cover that (Time) missed," Kennerly said emphatically. "They should have used this one, but they didn't have the guts. That was really his personality, and it would have been more startling and revealing. (Time used a more straightforward shot that failed to show Adams goofing around.)"

"He is someone I really miss. I introduced him to President Ford. He's probably the only environmentalist Ford ever met. They hit it off. And Ansel was very instrumental in getting Ford to do more for national parks."

"Photo du Jour" includes a photograph of one of Kennerly's friends, photographer Joe Rosenthal, who is most renowned for his photograph of U.S. Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima in 1945. Kennerly captured Rosenthal on July 1, 2000 in San Francisco's Union Square. His back is turned to the camera, imparting a sense of anonymity to the man who, according to Kennerly, shot "the single most important photograph ever taken."

"His picture was the bar we all strived to reach, and I don't think anyone ever has since," Kennerly said. "It's a picture that just underscored bravery, human resolve and patriotism. And it was one frame -- that was way before motor drives."

Rosenthal, a Bay Area resident who is now in his early 90s, attended a May 2 reception for Kennerly at Modernbook. He had lofty praise for Kennerly's work.

"I have my own icons, too," Rosenthal said, referring to Kennerly. "He's a thinking photographer, and I think that as a photographer, that's what you admire about him."

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**What:** A retrospective of works by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer David Hume Kennerly

**Where:** Modernbook|Gallery494, 494 University Ave. in Palo Alto.

**When:** Through June 5. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week.

**Cost:** Admission is free.

**Info:** Call (650) 327-6325 or visit [www.modernbook.com/davidhumekennerly.htm](http://www.modernbook.com/davidhumekennerly.htm).