

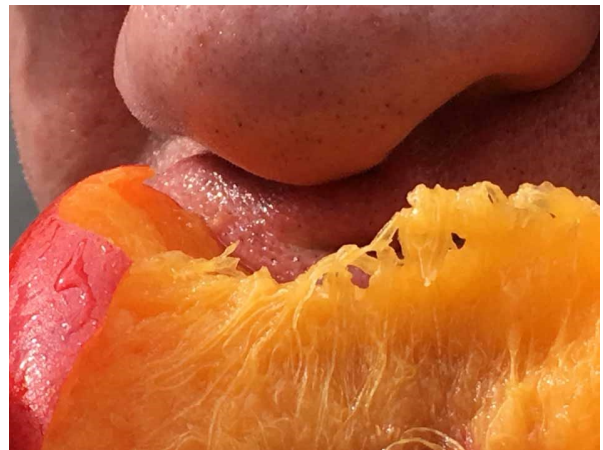
## P R E S S R E L A S E

### Jeff Mermelstein - Hardened

**Opening:** Friday, 15 October 2021, 6 – 9 p.m.

**Duration:** 16 October – 4 December 2021

**Location:** Galerie Bene Taschen, Moltkestraße 81, 50674 Cologne



Jeff Mermelstein, NYC, 2016 (left) | Jeff Mermelstein, NYC, 2016 (right)  
both images: © Jeff Mermelstein + Courtesy Galerie Bene Taschen

**Jeff Mermelstein**, born 1957 in New Jersey, has left decades of work with a Leica camera behind him and made the switch to the camera on his iPhone. In his series **Hardened**, Mermelstein has rediscovered street photography in the age of social media, through unconventional compositions and bizarre objects. **Galerie Bene Taschen** will be presenting the **Hardened** project in the form of a solo exhibition from 16 October 2021.

In this digital age, people portray themselves as street photographers on social networks. Even Mermelstein posts his pictures on Instagram and thus embraces this trend.

Mermelstein is a master of camouflage; he shoots under cover as a voyeur, capturing intimate and absurd moments. The close-up of a man taking a bite out of a peach reveals each and every pore of his face and leads the viewer into his private sphere. Animals, people and objects are, in turn, distorted by blurred details.

Pixelated and blurred objects come to the fore, for instance, the glittering surface of a skateboard, which can only be discerned as such by those in the know. The planes of the image merge, and can only be distinguished from one another and deciphered through close observation. And so, what appears to be a bright tunnel turns out to be the inside of a paper cup filled with some kind of dark soft drink.

Jeff Mermelstein's street photography reveals understated similarities, such as the identical hues of a carrot salad and the embroidery on the shirt of the person eating it. At the same time, it focuses on details that, through its extreme magnification, seem to violate the privacy of the people depicted and reveal every flaw.

The book of the same name, *HARDENED* by Jeff Mermelstein, was published by Mörel Verlag in 2019.



Jeff Mermelstein, NYC, 2016 (left) | Jeff Mermelstein, NYC, 2016 (right)  
both images: © Jeff Mermelstein + Courtesy Galerie Bene Taschen

**About Galerie Bene Taschen:** founded in 2011 in Cologne, Galerie Bene Taschen represents some of the world's leading artists in contemporary photography and painting. The gallery is committed to promoting its international artists through regularly participating in major art fairs such as Paris Photo and Art Cologne, as well as an extensive exhibition programme. In 2011 Galerie Bene Taschen made its debut with LA photographer Gregory Bojorquez; in 2013 it began working together with Joseph Rodriguez from New York. In 2014 the acclaimed Berlin-based photographer Miron Zownir joined the gallery's programme, followed by American photographers Jamel Shabazz and Arlene Gottfried from New York in 2015. The gallery has been pleased to represent New York-based photographer Jeff Mermelstein and German painter Charlotte Trossbach since autumn 2017, and has been working with renowned photographers Sebastião Salgado and Larry Fink since autumn/winter 2019.

**Contact for Information about the Gallery and the Artworks:**

Galerie Bene Taschen | Tel: +49 221 1690 5505 | E-Mail: [info@benetaschen.com](mailto:info@benetaschen.com)  
Web: [www.benetaschen.com](http://www.benetaschen.com) | Opening times: Wednesday – Friday, 1 – 6 pm,  
Saturday, 11 – 4 pm and by appointment

**Press contact:**

Nadine Dinter [PR](mailto:PR) | Nadine Dinter | Fasanenstraße 70, 10719 Berlin  
Tel: +49 (0)30/398 87 411 | Mobile: +49 (0)151 123 70 951 | E-Mail: [presse@nadine-dinter.de](mailto:presse@nadine-dinter.de)