

1. Miss Natalie, Coldfinger #1, 1975
Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

David came from a typical Baltimore working-class neighborhood. As a younger boy he was constantly ridiculed and harassed, sometimes physically, by most of his peers in this neighborhood because of what he was. Actually, he's quite good looking.

His only dream was to become a Woman, at any cost, which he eventually did, completely. He wanted nothing to remind him of his past as a boy: His image, his name, and all the pain that went with it. Only these photographs remain.

2. A Letter From Jail, 1979
Inkjet print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

3. He Was Junior #1, 1973
Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

4. Frank G., 1976
Inkjet print

Private Collection

Frank lived for years with his mother on S. Decker Street and had his first sexual experience with an older man at an age I won't mention, in Patterson Park on a hot summer's night and "loved every minute of it."

Due to alcohol and drug abuse and an absent father who deserted him when he was 10 or 11, he frequently ran away from home and school. Frank was a very popular hair stylist and a frequent visitor at the Hippo. Back then, patrons

put a lot of inventive effort into designing their maquillage and the persona that went with it; another Universe, never to return. That night he was smiling and ecstatic: "I'm going home with this wonderful man who's going to do all kinds of good things to me."

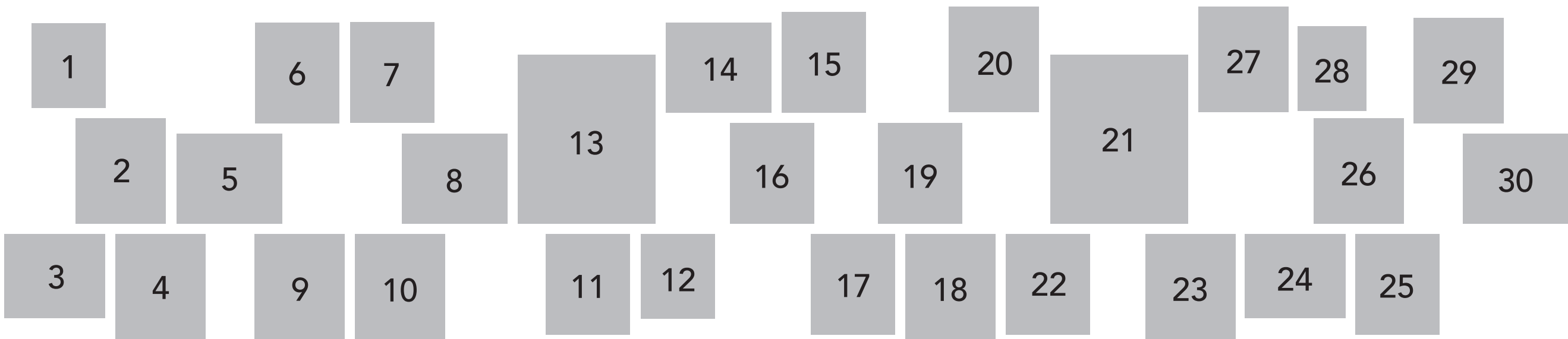
5. Daniel, The Boy on Eager Street, 1976
Inkjet print

Private Collection

6. Toddles, 1975
Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

Todd had too many personalities and the lightest fingers in Charm City. He lifted a window curtain right next to me and I never knew it. He always



carried a big white bag over his shoulder and holy crosses and the sacred implements of the Mass were never safe. Thank God "Miss Toddles" never made it to Rome.

Todd was an early genius of thrift store chic. I took him to dinner and at some point, all the glasses on the table began disappearing until only this large glass pitcher of water was left. And I said, "What about that one Todd?" Ha! I was dining with a master.

Abandoned by his mother at 10 years old and the lonely product of a children's home, his was an outrageous fantasy world, manipulative, cold, and inventive. Todd was on the streets hustling for drugs, cash, and sex before he was 14. Todd's life became increasingly violent and erratic (and what part of his life wasn't erratic) through drug and alcohol use and he died of AIDS about 1986 and not too many people, including Todd, gave a shit.

7. **Great Bird Man, c. 1978**
Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

Ken and his older brother Victor lived in a slim row house on Miles Avenue in Remington, a small working-class neighborhood about 15 minutes away from Johns Hopkins University. He was calm and peaceable, and he and a few friends had built a small hideout in a big gulch by the railroad tracks so they could hang out together and do their thing and mostly get away from it all if they wanted. These were the years before drugs had arrived to ravage the city and street relationships were so much easier, less conflicted, less desperate. Less guilt too, before the emerging "gay identities" began to take hold.

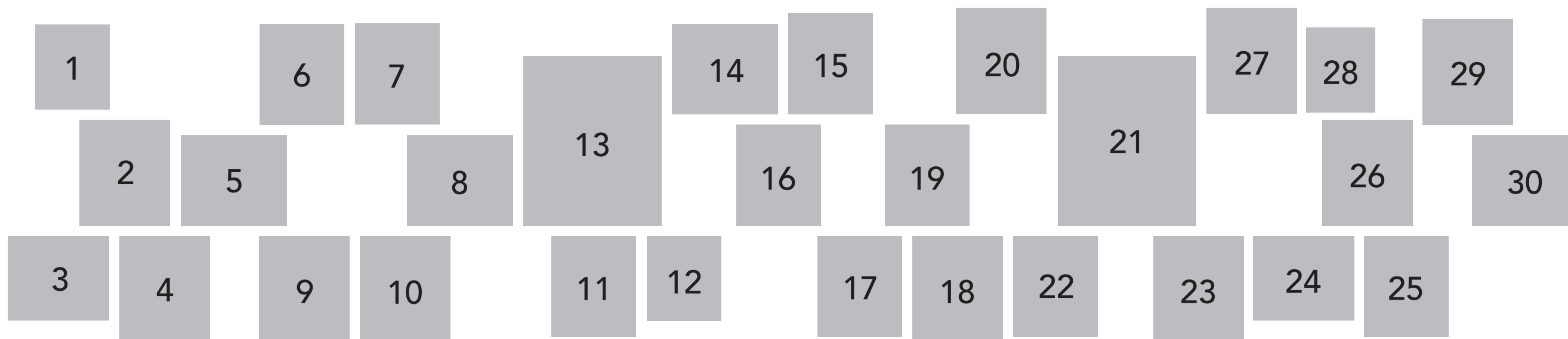
8. **Four Brief Studies of a Wild Woman #4, 1977**
Inkjet print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

9. **Rockers, 1978**
Inkjet print

Private Collection

By the liberated '70's with the easy availability of sex on the streets, the joy of the "sexual revolution" was finally attainable. So much hitch-hiking would often lead to a sexual encounter of some kind, a guilt-free blow job, a pack of cigarettes, a little bit of money, a place to stay or even just a lift itself, was the going rate. Homosexual pornography sold in the light of day so fabulous that today it would earn you at least 3 years of brutal confinement and a public brand for eternity. Bi-sexual boys found the gay



bars more desirable where they could freely express so many more aspects of their sexual personalities. The decomposed corpse of Dr. Alfred Kinsey, so ignored and vanished for so many years could at last completely turn over in its grave, not for bad but for good.

Now, how could any American in his right mind possibly want to go backwards? To fall once again into the jaws of sexual repression and erotic gibberish. It was all looking so good. In fact, it was all looking too good. So, beware.

10. **A Picture of Innocence, 1976**

Inkjet print

Private Collection

Sandy, the mild prostitute at 18. Her haunt was "Eastern Avenue," supplying services to men needing people like Sandy. Initially, a sexually

abused child from "Armistead Gardens," public housing in Baltimore City.

In her room were two framed photographs of terribly deformed children. I didn't ask but they were surely her siblings. Sandy was uneducated. Her only indulgences in life were a few beers and fun with her friends and later on a little witchcraft. For prostitution she earned a few months in prison. Her last years were lived with "Drag Queen Mary" on "Monument Street" and she died in September 1993 of AIDS at age 32.

11. **Jackie, A Life, My Oxygen, 1975/1976**

Gelatin silver print

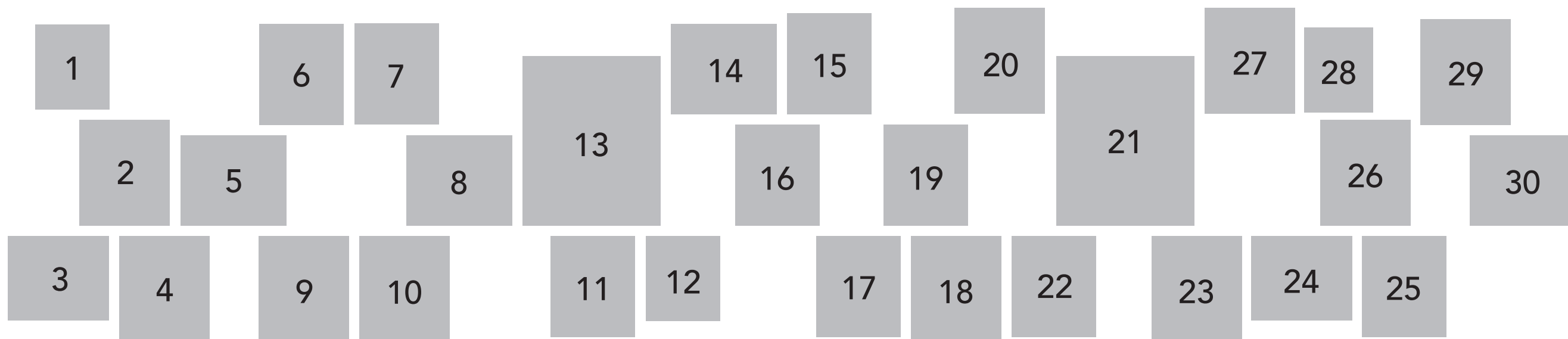
Estate of Amos Badertscher

The '60's, '70's and '80's offered a visual and sexual paradise as far as the streets and the gay bars were concerned and by some "Twist

of Fate" I had been ordained to record it. Not just to record but to survive it! A photographer's dream!

Jackie was one of my best friends. Jackie was talented, creative, charismatic, and self-destructive. But all my best friends, as well as myself, were self-destructive in one way or another and now nearly every one of them, except myself, Dead.

She introduced me to so many people and took me to so many places I would never have known or been to if left to my own devices. Jackie's real passion was "rockers," she had lived with and loved so many. But whenever one of them decided to leave her, she threatened suicide. After her last boyfriend left, she realized she had to get out of Baltimore and escape somewhere else or die.



12. Stoney, 1982

Gelatin silver print

Private Collection

His grandmother had just died, and his 3 sisters all had boyfriends and certainly not interested in Stoney.

One Saturday night in 1982, Stoney was working the Mt. Vernon meat rack. He lived way over on the west side of Baltimore City with his mother. He never knew his father and his mother really loved him, but she was working all day and weekends and even some holidays and the rest of the time either shopping or cleaning and then needed sleep. She had told him that she knew he was “queer” before he was 10 but in a nice way.

13. The Beautiful Hair, 1975

Inkjet print

Private Collection

14. The Philosopher, 1976

Inkjet print

Private Collection

15. Michael and the White Coffee Pot, 1976

Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

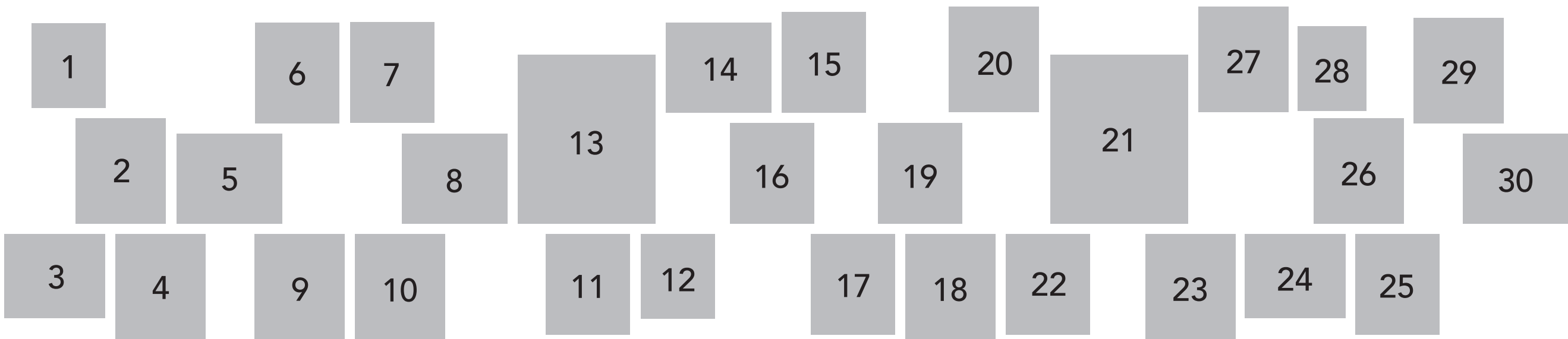
For about 2 or 3 years, Michael, blond and peaceable, always seemed to be in or standing around the “White Coffee Pot” at Eastern and B’way from about 10 ‘til maybe 3 in the morning. He always had his intimate regulars with whom he could easily spend the night. It was as if the “Pot”

was really a second home, assuming he had a first one. He wasn’t going to school, that’s for sure. Not once did he ever talk about a girlfriend or anyone else in his neighborhood. Not once did I ever see him with a companion hustling around Eastern. And his real sexual identity at the time in 1976 was hardly important. I just assumed or wishfully imagined that he was just another straight hustler needing money. Only now, 40 plus years later, did I realize that all his emotional and physical connections were with men.

16. They Called Him Brother #1, 1979

Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher



17. This Guitar Was His Only Friend, 1976

Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

Billy just showed up on the "Mt. Vernon" meat rack, early summer 1976. He was now living temporally with a man in a Baltimore high rise, "Sutton Place," but other times with a friend. But you could usually find him each night in the same areas around the rack or close to Leon's, looking for a pickup after "last call". He always seemed to carry a guitar with him over his right shoulder. That guitar was like his very soul, his only true friend and constant companion in a lonely and loveless life. He was around most of that summer and then he vanished as quickly as he had arrived.

18. Sean of Club Charles, 1984

Gelatin silver print

Private Collection

19. A '70s Fairytale, 1979

Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

Before the Hippo opened, the most popular of the neighborhood bars was the "Pepper Hill" on Gay Street, insanely positioned right next to the Central Police parking lot so the Vice Squad didn't have too far travel in case of emergency!

The Hippo drew a large collection of gay customers dressed as women. "Lena," and her best friend Natalie were just two of the very early patrons. In time Natalie became an actual sex change.

After "last call" at 2 A.M., a lot of the queens would gather across the street making joyful noises, arms and hands flying all over the place, either looking for a loose trick for the evening or becoming bait for the older paying customers driving by. Gay life in the '60's, '70's and '80's was a "Miracle." It couldn't get any better than this!

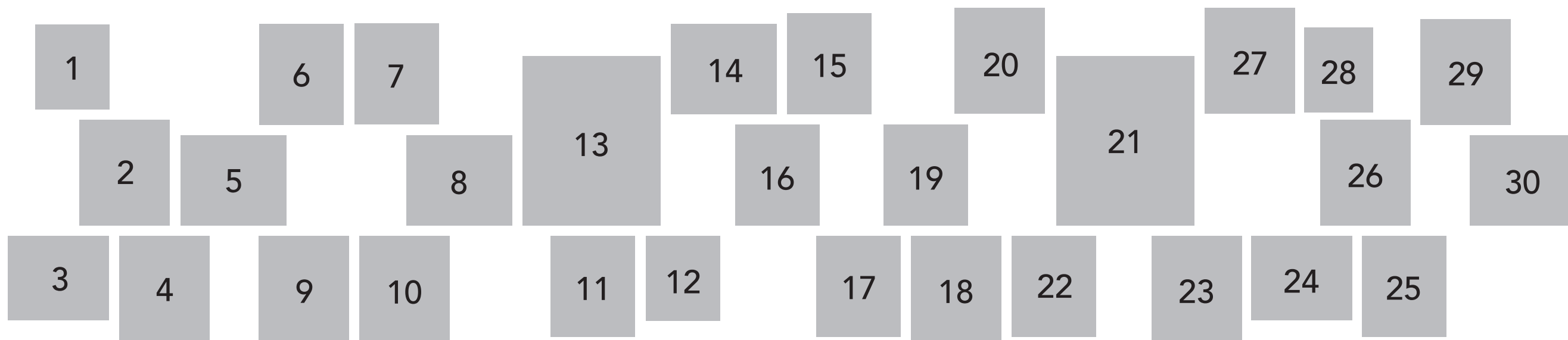
By some twist of Fate, I found Lena again, years later, this time working in a bleak Baltimore City diner, this time dressed as a man! A fairy tale ended.

20. The Small Street Economies, 1976

Gelatin silver print

Private Collection

In Baltimore, street hustling, going back for so many decades, was a city-wide tradition. One



boy initiated another. Fathers and uncles had probably done the same. If you didn't know what was happening, what these boys were doing, it didn't exist. There were no street drugs to speak of, but they were coming.

Roy and his older brother Rob were just 2 of the most popular and consistent boys in the mid to later '70's. On weekends and some weeknights, one of them or both could be found near Clinton Street. They were just looking to make maybe five or ten dollars to finance the weekend.

As far as anyone suspected they were "straight." They probably disappeared from the streets in '78 or '79, about the time when drugs and increased violence effectively shut down traditional practices and location. "Going out" with an older man was the only easy way to experience "same sex" sex. So often they needed a father and the "age gap"

was the whole point of the relationship. Try to explain that one in America.

21. A Punk Boy #1, 1984

Inkjet print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

Robert and his lover Randy were 2 intriguing, beautiful punks on the gay scene around 1984. Both were striking blonds with exploding hair, and they always wore black, resembling two members of an exotic religious order on acid. You hardly ever saw them in any of the usual gay bars and I was simply afraid to approach them. Yet Bob was kind and generous and creative and I learned that he was fascinated by animal bones and pain.

When this duo finally split up, without Randy as an anchor, Bob was adrift and lonely and hardly

employable. Increasingly, he drifted into drug use, especially heroin. Old friendships were ravaged, and he seemed to disappear into the larger sea of Baltimore. He ended his life in 1992 from some kind of overdose shortly after he had been diagnosed with AIDS.

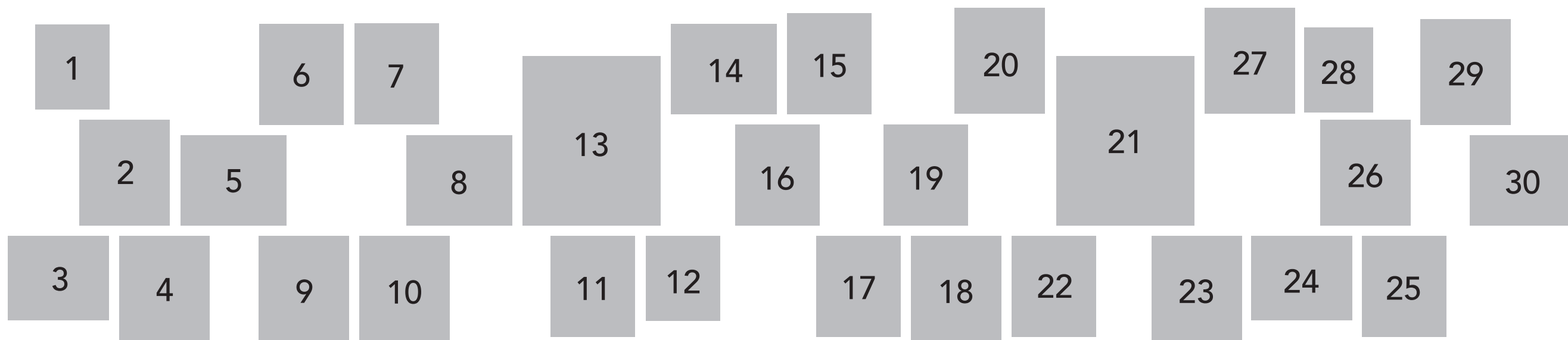
22. The Mild Prostitute, 1979

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23. Some Like it Hot—The Reincarnation, 1985

Inkjet print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

24. West Side, So Quiet, 1978

Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

25. The Architectural Secrets, 1979

Gelatin silver print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

26. A Grand Imperial, Legitimate Dauphine #1, 1982

Inkjet print

Private Collection

27. The Lady in Question #1, 1989

Inkjet print

Private Collection

28. Male Studies—Body Parts, 2003

Gelatin silver print

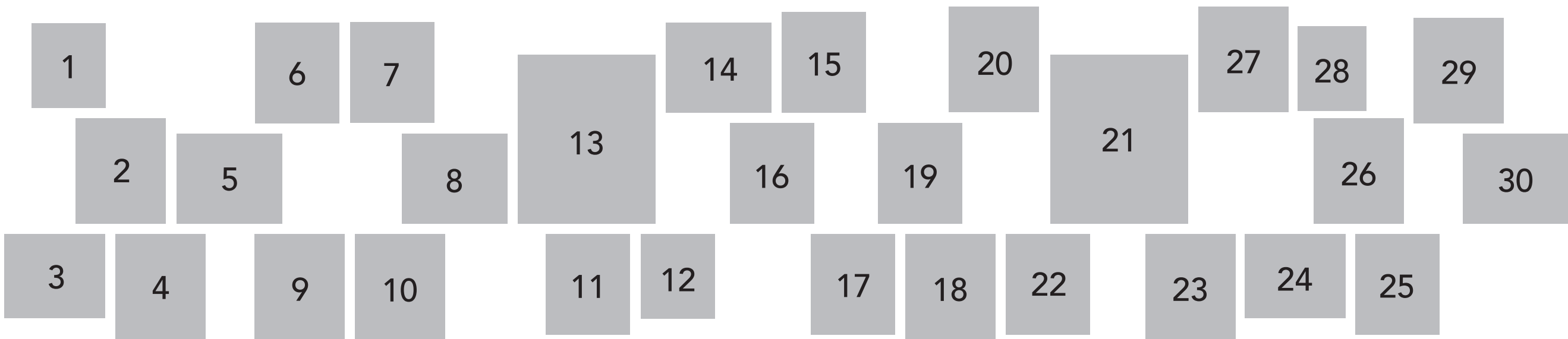
Estate of Amos Badertscher

29. The Lost Bodies #1, 1980

Inkjet print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

He turned up on the northeast corner of Madison Street and Park Avenue in the late summer of 1980. He had just turned 18. He came just to make some money. The beginning of the '80's saw a radical decline in the old-style street hustling as the prevalence of drugs and gay awareness were taking their toll. The type of hustling that replaced it was more desperate and emotionally dysfunctional. It had already become more dangerous.



30. The Visuals and Person Mismatched, 1976

Inkjet print

Estate of Amos Badertscher

Bonnie was a young proud rebellious lesbian in 1976. If it were not for that hat and the striking black leather, you would hardly know she was there. Her best friend Aaron was the first person I knew who died of AIDS. One day he just seemed to disappear inside a hospital and for a long time no one knew exactly why he was there. After he died there were rumors floating around among his friends as to the cause. Later Bonnie fully rejected her lesbian identity that had once seemed so solid, embracing a new life and a larger set of friends: the Salvation Army. Once I saw her on the sidewalk outside the Lexington Market on Paca Street, singing and asking kindly for money.