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### **Janet Sternburg's *I've Been Walking* is Her Photographic Ode to 2020 Los Angeles**

Los Angeles, CA (July 8, 2021) – *I've Been Walking*, the new monograph from writer and photographer Janet Sternburg, captures the soul of Los Angeles as it slowed to a stop. When the streets emptied in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sternburg donned a mask and gloves and took a camera into her neighborhood of Little Tokyo. She explored the surrounding area, using photographs to capture her journey through the altered landscape. “For a while I walked through Los Angeles’ empty streets, seeing mostly what was desolate,” she writes. “Then I started to see a poetry that I hadn’t always seen in more populated times.” In the following months, signs and traces of life appeared throughout an urban environment that had once seemed frozen in time.

Sternburg is a master of many mediums. She has produced and directed award-winning films such as *El Teatro Campesino* and *Virginia Woolf: The Moment Whole*; written two memoirs interweaving science and history; and edited both volumes of the acclaimed anthology *The Writer On Her Work*, a collection of essays by accomplished female writers. Of her book *Phantom Limb*, Bill Moyers writes “Janet Sternburg has found the perfect metaphor for the tragedy of pain and loss, the ultimate inevitabilities of life.” Sternburg’s photography has been exhibited in gallery shows in New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Mexico, Seoul, Milan, and Bombay.

Her work was recently exhibited in the Chez Anonyme Gallery in Los Angeles in their inaugural exhibition, “The City / La Ville” (May 10 - June 27, 2021). *Overspilling World*, her previous monograph, was published by Distanz Verlag in 2016. Sternburg’s work has inspired writings by numerous other art historians, cultural critics, neuroscientists, poets, curators, authors, editors, and scholars. She is most often characterized as a poetic photographer, using the visual language of images to reveal odd juxtapositions and radical complexities.

*I've Been Walking* applies Sternburg’s attention to perception, memory, and layered experience to the unprecedented pandemic year. In keeping with her previous work, the photographs in this collection do not use digital or optical manipulation—a choice she describes not as a technological aversion but as a conscious practice. This produces photographs that more closely simulate the human mind, flashes of raw awareness in a world of interpenetrating images.

In one photograph entitled *Lace flag*, storm clouds swell behind a bent and cracked parking sign. In *Sunrise gutter*, glittering light reflects from a thin stream of water in the concrete. Sternburg’s ability to notice and communicate these nuances of sensation presents her viewers with an opportunity for deep reflection on the meaning and metaphor of each image.

Philosopher and political theorist Jane Bennet praises the strong presence of line in the photographs of *I've Been Walking*: “a line strides outward, forward, backward, sideways, laying down paths of different speeds and shapes: languid tendril, intense curlicue, billowy fringe, serpentine arch, fractal branch,

recursive fold, diffuse swarm, restless zigzag, straight or detouring arrow,” she writes. “Sternburg gives us [a] site of consolation, that of the lively line which accompanies us wherever we go.”

Although many of its photographs have no human figures, *I've Been Walking* expresses profound humanity, gesturing toward the social and personal resonances of the 2020 shutdown. “I walked photographing what I've come to think of as a kind of fullness— an enlargement of the senses that can be found in the midst of emptiness,” Sternburg says. “I do not mean to turn the griefs and losses caused by COVID-19 into artistic gain. I do mean that we are enlarged when we become part of the landscape of all of us.”

**About the author:** Janet Sternburg was born in Boston, Massachusetts. She is an American writer of essays, poetry, and memoir, as well as a fine art photographer. Sternburg is the editor of *The Writer On Her Work*, the first book of commissioned essays on what it means to be a contemporary woman who writes. It has been continuously in print since 1980, and a twentieth anniversary edition was published by W.W. Norton in 2000. Sternburg lives in Los Angeles and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. She is married to former CalArts president Steven Lavine.

**About the book:** *I've Been Walking* is forthcoming from Distanz Verlag. European countries can order the book now for delivery after its release in June, 2021. It will be available in US bookstores in September 2021.

**Review copies and media interviews:** To request a review copy of *I've Been Walking* or to schedule an interview/event with Janet Sternburg, contact publicist Nanda Dyssou of Coriolis Company at [nanda@corioliscompany.com](mailto:nanda@corioliscompany.com) or 424-226-6148.