



Performance

What: *Flash Cars*: an exhibition by Murray Cammick
Where and when: Black Asterisk Gallery, August 3-31

Night moves

As a young photographer, Murray Cammick captured the zeitgeist of Auckland on a Saturday night. A new exhibition pays homage to his work, writes **Dionne Christian**

In the 1970s when a young Murray Cammick wanted to escape his parents' Glendowie home, he'd drive his Morris Minor into the city, park it in the back streets of downtown Auckland and, armed with his SRL Minolta camera, wander Queen St photographing its V8 scene. Then a student at Elam School of Fine Arts, he says there simply wasn't that much else to do — not a lot of decent TV; pubs closed at 10pm and movies finished around the same time. So Cammick sought out quarry of a different kind: the boys — and girls — who drove from the 'burbs, mainly West Auckland, to cruise along Queen St in their V8s.

"I was in love with Americana — I still am — and Queen St was so quiet that it actually looked like small-town America when everybody went home," Cammick recalls, saying the film *American Graffiti* was a huge influence.

Describing himself as "shy" and "naive", the-then born-again Christian would ask if he could take photos. He says it was a time before cameras were ubiquitous and many were only too happy to preen and pose and let him snap away.

"I thought it was about the cars, but it was actually about the people in them, and they are what made the photos. Really all I would do was to push the button."

During those years — Cammick says it was about 1974 to 1981 — he became accepted by the car enthusiasts, probably because he was ever-present and always returned the following week with postcard-sized photos to hand out to those he had snapped.

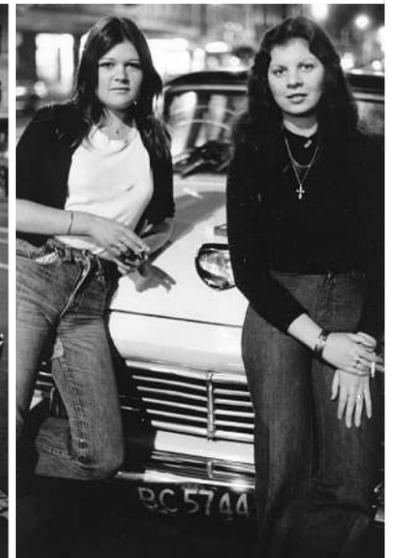
Even after he helped establish *Rip It Up* magazine in 1977, Cammick would photograph concerts then wander down Queen St to photograph cars and people. He never used a flash — "which is why I never took photos of burn-outs" — and he concentrated on the cars and those in them.

"Now that I'm older, I wish, of course, I'd been more interested in the surroundings; the context instead of the detail."

Cammick thought he'd lost some of the negatives for the pictures, estimated to number around 3200. A chance meeting in 2014 meant he recovered many and was then able to think about an exhibition.

A specialist in silver gelatin printing, Jenny Tomlin, was able to print the negatives which were still in pristine condition. The result is the exhibition *Flash Cars*, which debuted at Darren Knight Gallery in Sydney and now comes to Auckland.

It will feature 45 of Cammick's images, spread across three rooms at the Black Asterisk Gallery.



Top: *White car cruising by Civic Theatre:* A cool pillarless 1960 Ford Galaxie glides past the Civic Theatre, driven by David Herbison; above left: *Galaxie rear lights FF 3895:* Blond-haired Peter Saripu is visible, seated in his car. The fab 1961 Ford Galaxie rear lights are scene-stealers. *Portrait of two girls in front of their Ford BC5744:* "Girls had cars too," says Cammick. "These two were regulars in Queen St, the driver of the car is on the left." Left: Beautiful brothers Keri and Violet Pratt from Glen Innes. Below: Murray Cammick out and about on a Saturday night, taking photos.



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