



**Fields of Dreams:
North American Baseball Stadiums
by Photographer Jim Dow**

**CASTELLANI
ART MUSEUM
OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY**



Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, California Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles was built in 1962, and maintains a status as one of the best places to play and watch a baseball game. An abundance of good weather, fanatical attention to maintenance and detail, and a corporate attitude that suggests it knows it's in the entertainment business, add to the glamour and ambiance. Sandy Koufax played here. Vin Scully announces games here. "Dodger Dogs" are sold here. Hollywood comes here.

In March of 1953, the citizens of Milwaukee, aware their city was on the verge of obtaining a National League baseball franchise, attended an open house at their empty but ready stadium. The first game of the Milwaukee Braves, if it ever occurred, would be weeks away, but they nonetheless went to a part of town known as Mockingbird Hill and walked through the gates of the ballpark. Ten thousand people were there, wandering the building, sitting in the seats, imagining and wishing for a game on the field.

In Jim Dow's photographs of American ballparks past and present, that feeling of anticipation persists. No people are present but the stadium is standing by. Momentarily the crowd will enter; the electricity will be switched on; men with bats, balls, brooms and rakes will take the field. The game of baseball, which goes back to at least 1845, will begin again. There is historical significance in these works of art. The majority of the buildings posing for the camera have since been modified, abandoned or demolished. The useful life of these outdoor public spaces is typically 40-50 years. Stadiums built during baseball's construction boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s, captured here, have lately had dates with the wrecking ball. Thus many of the photographs are of structures that only exist in memory (the Yankee Stadium depicted here was razed just days before the photograph was attached to the gallery wall).

Certain of Dow's subjects have been the beneficiary of constant maintenance and a kind of architectural idolatry, hence their staying power, in memory and

in reality. Boston's Fenway Park and Chicago's Wrigley Field are the major leagues' last link to an era during the 1910s when it was acknowledged the sport was here to stay, and deserving more of steel-and-concrete venues than fire-prone bleachers. Also included in this collection, are the ephemeral multi-purpose ballparks of the 1970s derided as "concrete ashtrays." Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and St. Louis had nearly identical venues for baseball (also useful for football, rock concerts and other attractions), all gone now and replaced by single-purpose structures designed with more of a baseball ethic and ethos—a "retro" feel, with enhanced opportunity to part with discretionary income throughout the building.

The stadiums (or stadia) depicted here tend to be part of their city's urban landscape; they take up city blocks of downtown Cleveland and Pittsburgh, or are tucked into residential sections of Baltimore or the Bronx. Compared to the ballparks that succeeded them, they seem to lack the visual excitement of wall-to-wall advertising; however meaningful these old yards are as architectural statements, they seem to realize they are merely large and iconic vessels for the ritual called baseball. Dow's photographs capture their subjects without crowds, on-field thrills or scoreboard numbers. For one last time, in most cases, the stadium is the star.

Ed Adamczyk is a member of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), and the Village Historian of Kenmore, NY.



Wrigley Field, Chicago, Illinois Opened in 1914 for the Chicago Whales of the short-lived Federal League, the Cubs moved in, in 1916, and have been there since. Named for Philip Wrigley, the chewing-gum magnate and former owner of the team, the stadium is small, iconic and beloved by its city. It is famous for its hand-operated scoreboard, the ivy on the outfield walls (first planted in 1937), and for its traditional lack of stadium lights. Major league baseball began night games in 1935, but none were at Wrigley Field until lights were installed in 1988.



Yankee Stadium, New York, New York Yankee Stadium was baseball's La Scala, its Westminster Abbey, from 1923 to its closing. It was replaced by an across-the-street stadium of similar design but 21st century amenities in 2008. Built in the Bronx, it has been the home of the most vaunted franchise in all of sports, 37 World Series, and visits from Nelson Mandela and three Popes. Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra, Joe Dimaggio, Reggie Jackson, Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez, and dozens more of baseball's best have played here. The World Series' only perfect game (wherein no opposing player makes his way on base for the entirety of the game — 27 men up, 27 men down) was performed here by the Yankees' Don Larson, in 1956 against the Brooklyn Dodgers. If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.



Fenway Park, Boston, Massachusetts Opened the week the Titanic sunk and still in use by the Boston Red Sox, Fenway Park is a jewel in baseball's crown. Small and intimate, and built into an urban block, it is a dollhouse of a stadium and one of the few left standing in America from the days when baseball emerged from county fair-styled bleachers to stadia of concrete and steel. The iconic wall dubbed "The Green Monster" shortens left field because a city street passes behind it (and was once painted blue with the slogan "Lifebuoy stops B.O." on it). Ted Williams, Carl Yastrzemski and Carlton Fisk, all played here.



Candlestick Park, San Francisco, California San Francisco resident Joe DiMaggio was once asked about Candlestick Park. “They should put a match to it,” he said. Built on an isolated promontory, it was noted for wind (pitcher Stu Miller was literally blown off the mound in the 1961 All-Star Game), cold and foggy night games, and its resilience to the 1989 earthquake that interrupted the World Series between the Giants and the Oakland As.



Busch Stadium, St. Louis, Missouri In the shadow of St. Louis' Gateway Arch (which is honored in the design of the stadium roof), the Cardinals' Busch Stadium was emblematic of the all-purpose “concrete ashtray” design of the late 1960s. Circular in shape and able to accommodate baseball, football, concerts and other events (none perfectly but all adequately), Bob Gibson pitched here, most notably in the 1968 World Series against the Tigers.



Veterans Stadium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Similar in layout to those in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, Philadelphia's Veterans Stadium opened in 1971 and was gone by 2004. “The Vet” specialized in baseball, football and rock concerts. It had seven levels of seating and many on-field injuries. Its playing surface, upholstered in AstroTurf, was considered the hardest surface in major league sports.

Using multiple color images taken with a camera that utilized 8 x10 inch negatives, Jim Dow created highly detailed panoramas of North American stadiums offering an unusual view of the ballparks as seen from a fan's point of view. Dow's vision resulted in "astonishing, disturbing, and wholly unexpected" images of the empty spaces. "I have an old-fashioned, romantic approach to picture-making and architecture," Dow said, "I'm not interested in making specimens; I'm interested in synthesizing an experience."

A baseball stadium, Dow felt, "symbolizes the enduring attraction of the sport itself as opposed to the changing fortunes of the players." These works not only evoke his passion for monumental architecture but also his admiration for the game of baseball. Photographed in the absence of crowds or dugouts full of players, the images signify a feeling of anticipation as well as recollections of grand memories.

Jim Dow (b. 1942) earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Fine Arts in graphic design and photography from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1965 and 1968 respectively. An early influence was Walker Evans's seminal book *American Photographs* (1938). Dow recalls the appeal of Evans's "razor sharp, infinitely detailed, small images of town architecture and people. What stood out was a palpable feeling of loss ... pictures that seemingly read like paragraphs, even chapters in one long, complex, rich narrative." Dow has taught photography at Harvard, Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. He first gained attention for his panoramic triptychs of baseball stadiums with a project that began with an image he made of Veteran's Stadium in Philadelphia in 1980.

Dow's work is found in numerous museums, private and corporate collections including: Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA; the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Castellani Art Museum, Lewiston, NY; the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ; the Fogg Museum, Harvard University; the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA, the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England.

His photographs have appeared in many publications including *The New York Times Magazine*, *Playboy Japan*, and *American Photographer*. Among his many commissions, Dow has created photographs for the FleetCenter at the Boston Garden Corporation. Dow has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New England Foundation for the Arts and has been the recipient of numerous grants.

Selected excerpts from artdaily.org and the online archives of the Art Institute of Boston, Lesley College and artdaily.org.

Baseball's Beginnings

Americans began playing baseball in the early 1800s on informal teams, using local rules. By the 1860s, the sport was unrivaled in popularity, being described as America's "national pastime." Alexander Joy Cartwright (1820-1892) of New York invented the modern baseball field in 1845. Along with the members of his New York Knickerbocker Base Ball Club, Cartwright devised the first universally adopted rules and regulations for the modern game of baseball.

Baseball was based on the English game of rounders which became popular in the early 19th century in the United States, where the game was called townball, base, or baseball. The first recorded baseball game was in 1846 when Alexander Cartwright's Knickerbockers lost to the New York Baseball Club. The game was held at Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey. In 1857, the first organized baseball league, the National Association of Base Ball Players, was formed.

Intercollegiate Baseball

The first known intercollegiate baseball game took place on July 1, 1859 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, between squads representing Amherst College and Williams College. Amherst won, 73-32. This game was one of the last played under an earlier version of baseball known as "Massachusetts rules," which prevailed in New England until the "Knickerbocker Rules" (or "New York Rules") developed in the 1840s and gradually gained acceptance. The first ever nine-man team college baseball game under the Knickerbocker Rules was played in New York on November 3, 1859 between the Fordham Rose Hill Baseball Club of St. John's College (now Fordham University) against (the now defunct) St. Francis Xavier College.

Longest Game in College Baseball

The longest college baseball game was played between Texas and Boston College on May 30, 2009 during the NCAA Division I Baseball Championship regional tournament in Austin, Texas. Texas, which was designated as the visiting team, despite playing on its home field, won the game 3-2 in 25 innings. The game lasted seven hours and three minutes.

Exhibition Checklist

Alameda County Stadium (Oakland Stadium), Oakland, CA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 31 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2002.

Anaheim Stadium, Anaheim, CA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.875 x 31.5 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2004.

The Astrodome, Houston, TX, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11.25 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2004.

Busch Stadium, St. Louis, MO, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 31.5 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2001.

Candlestick Park, San Francisco, CA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.5 x 31 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2003.

CNE (Canadian National Exhibition) Stadium, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 31 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2002.

Comiskey Park, Chicago, IL, 1982. Color photograph, 11.625 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2001.

County Stadium, Milwaukee, WI, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 31.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2005.

Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, CA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11.25 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2001.

Fenway Park, Boston, MA, 1982. Color photograph, 10.5 x 32.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2005.

Fulton County Stadium, Atlanta, GA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 31 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2005.

The Kingdome, Seattle, WA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11.125 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2003.

The (Hubert H. Humphrey) Metrodome, Minneapolis, MN, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.875 x 27.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2004.

Jack Murphy Stadium, San Diego, CA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11 x 31.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2003.

Memorial Stadium, Baltimore, MA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 13.375 x 31 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2004.

Municipal Stadium, Cleveland, OH, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11.25 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2004.

Olympic Stadium, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1982. Color photograph, 11 x 27.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2006.

Rangers Stadium, Arlington, TX, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.875 x 31.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2003.

Riverfront Stadium, Cincinnati, OH, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 30.75 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2002.

Royals Stadium (Kansas City Municipal Stadium), Kansas City, MO, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11.375 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2005.

Three Rivers Stadium, Pittsburgh, PA, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 10.75 x 31 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2001.

Tiger Stadium, Detroit, MI, n.d. Color photograph, 11.5 x 26.75 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2005.

Veterans Stadium, Philadelphia, PA, 1980-1981. Color photograph, 11.25 x 26.75 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2006.

Wrigley Field, Chicago, IL, 1982/1991. Color photograph, 11 x 31.25 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2003.

Yankee Stadium, New York, NY, n.d. Color photograph, 11.625 x 27 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2005.

Batting Helmet Ice Cream Cups (Calfee Park), Pulaski, Virginia, 1991. Color photograph, 11 x 11.375 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2007.

Cover Photo

Tiger Stadium, Detroit, Michigan The Detroit Tigers and Tiger Stadium were everything Detroit was in the 20th century—loud, brash, successful, huge, an outsize team in an outsize stadium. Opened in 1912 and lasting until 1999, it was a dilapidated and neglected ruin of a building by its end, and hung around as a monument to local history until its demolition in 2008. Ty Cobb, Al Kaline and Hank Greenberg played here.

Acknowledgements

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Fields of Dreams: North American Baseball Stadiums by Photographer Jim Dow premiered at the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University in 2010 and will travel to the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory, Kentucky in 2012, with additional venues to be announced. This exhibiton was organized and traveled by the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, and was curated by Michael J. Beam, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions.



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