

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: NEUE BÖRSE

PETER GRANSER: SUN CITY 6 March – 30 April 2003

We are all getting old, as individuals and as nations; especially in Western Europe, Japan and North America, where the percentage of people living longer lives has risen dramatically in the last half-century. With old age have come industries that cater to the needs of the elderly and, in the United States, entire communities built to serve them. Most are located in the southwest, away from the bothers of shovelling snow, raking leaves, the hustle and bustle of the big cities, or the loneliness of the prairie.

Replete with golf courses, swimming pools, shooting ranges, and hospitals, Sun City was developed in 1960 by real-estate mogul Del Webb, and has since become a bustling community of 50,000 people. Besides having ample funds, residency requirements stipulate that the head of the household must be over 55 and that no one under the age of 18 may stay overnight on the premises. It is a perfect, contained world and an Eden for the aged.

Austrian-born photographer Peter Granser approaches his subjects with humour and a certain respectful distance. At the risk of caricature he presents the denizens of this retirement community in all their ebullience. Still, the images are fun and full of colour. Granser shares the *joie de vivre* of the retirees at their socials, dance contests and swimming



Peter Granser, Man with Bag, 2001, photograph. Courtesy: the artist

lawn. Death and illness are only hinted at in a

few photographs.

The exhibition in Frankfurt took place in the Stock Exchange, and for those pensioners of Sun City who have seen their portfolios

drop in recent years, there must be a bit of

irony in that. Yet for those living out their twilight years in the blinding light of the American Southwest. Sun City doesn't seem

such a bad place to be.

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