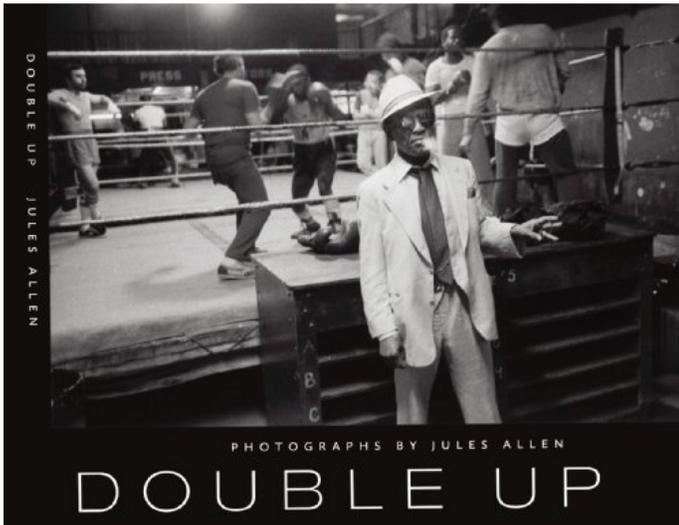


# Jules Allen, Double Up: *Truth & Beauty in the Boxing Gym*

by Mary Ann Lynch

In the book *Double Up, Photographs by Jules Allen* (QCC 2011) and accompanying exhibition, closing at **5pm Saturday, January 5 (Leica Gallery, 670 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 212-777-3051)**, photographer Jules Allen offers his intimate, insider's view of the culture of gym life in the 1980s at the famed Gleason's Gym on 8th Avenue in New York City. Allen is a professor with the Department of Art and Photography at Queensborough College.



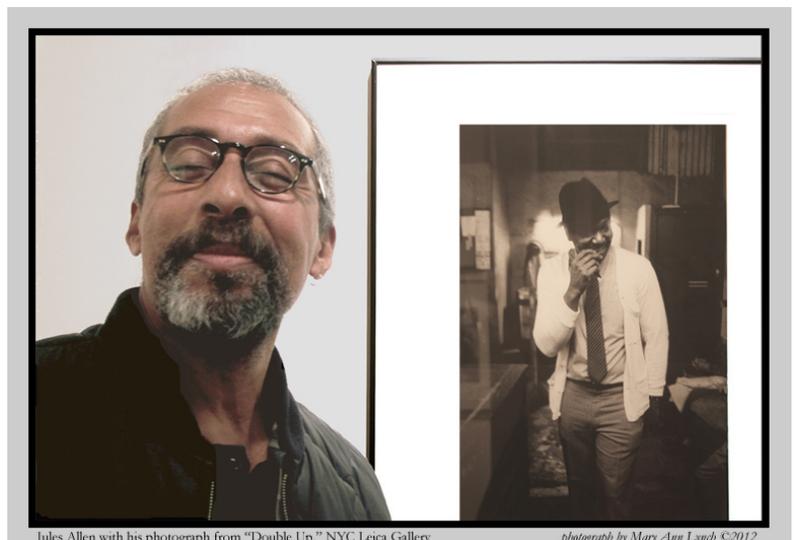
Born in California in 1947 and a Viet Nam veteran, Allen took his first formal course in photography with West Coast portrait/landscape photographer Jack Welpott—student and protégé of Ansel Adams and Edward Weston. At San Francisco State, Allen was drawn to Black Studies and the arts, also becoming involved in the Black Student Union and on-campus strike – that resulted in the creation of the first Ethnic Studies Program in the country. By the time Allen had received his B.A. in Fine Arts in 1973, and his M.S. in Clinical Psychology in 1975, he was well-equipped to make a living. After working a few years in the California correctional system, Allen moved to New York City in 1978. At the top of his list was pursuing his personal vision as a photographer— exploring the contemporary

African-American community and the richness of life, “on its own terms.”

And, what better place to do this than Gleason's Gym in New York City, where he began training in 1983. He notes, “The photographs were made through my participation as both an observer and as an inquisitive amateur-in-training under the guidance of Master Trainer Bobby McQuillen for several years at Gleason's Gym in New York City.” During the 1980s, Allen worked out and photographed, with an eye for the true and beautiful in all that happened naturally around him. “This tightly knit community gathers together athletes, trainers and promoters whose graceful, humane, stark gestures glow with metaphor.”

There is much more to be said of the fascinating life of this man, his noted accomplishments, and the relationships that have enriched his journey – including studies at Hunter College with Roy DeCarava, leading to a Master's in Fine Arts Degree in 1985. *Double Up* (2011) is Allen's third book: “And there's much more to come,” he proclaims: “ a book every two years.”

Put this man on your radar, and if you can rearrange your schedule at this late date, get down to Leica Gallery **before 5pm this Saturday January 5** (Leica Gallery, 670 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 212-777-3051). Meanwhile, you can keep up with Jules Allen at his website: [www.julesallenphotography.com](http://www.julesallenphotography.com)



Jules Allen with his photograph from “Double Up,” NYC Leica Gallery

photograph by Mary Ann Lynch ©2012