



PAVILLON  
POPULAIRE

UK

7 OCT. 2020  
10 JAN. 2021

# THE NEW YORK SCHOOL SHOW

NEW YORK  
SCHOOL  
PHOTOGRAPHERS  
1935 - 1965



## EDITORIAL

Built in 1891 by architect Léopold Carlier, the Pavillon Populaire has been a key place for struggles and celebrations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the 1907 winegrowers' demonstrations to those of 1968 and 1971, as well as the jubilation that welcomed the Popular Front's ascent to power and the end of the two world wars, the venue has been part of all of Montpellier's major encounters with contemporary history.

A major art form and a key witness to our times, photography naturally found its place there, more than ten years ago, thanks to an ambitious program of exhibitions proposed by the City of Montpellier. These welcoming and accessible exhibitions explored the different possibilities of photography, be they artistic or documentary. Each year, thousands of visitors enjoy the opportunity to discover or rediscover the artistic vision of some of the greatest artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. These exhibitions invite all of us to consider the power of images, now so ubiquitous, the role they play in the constitution of our inner worlds, and the complex ways our societies use them.

At the beginning of 2020, the Pavillon Populaire showcased the Parisian Humanist school movement through the artworks of the lesser-known – but perhaps most original – of its members, Jean-Philippe Charbonnier. The photographer's sensitive approach, while filled with poetry and humility, was also realistic and critical, betraying his radical outlook on the world.

The "New York School Show" provides a striking contrast. At the same time that the Parisian Humanist school emerged in Europe, a radical artistic movement was developing in the United States, and its members – photographers, painters, graphic designers, poets, dancers, musicians... – sought to transcend the current aesthetic codes that had been made obsolete by the tumultuous upheavals of the Great Depression and the Second World War. While most French photographers offered a vision of the world split between a sweet, sometimes

naive, ideal and a realistic depiction of their time, a whole group of American artists created powerful and ground-breaking original images, revolutionary in their form: this aesthetic divide redefined the meaning of modernity in photography.

To demonstrate this striking comparison and showcase the richness of American street photography, more than one hundred and fifty masterpieces by twenty-two of the greatest American photographers are presented in Montpellier as part of this exhibition. I would like to thank the Howard Greenberg Gallery for this considerable and prestigious loan, which made this exhibition possible. A historical repository of world-famous collections, the oldest and most important gallery of photographic art in the United States, enabled the Pavillon Populaire to host for the first time in Europe a project specifically dedicated to celebrating the New York School's contribution to the photographic art.

It is this trailblazing spirit, this openness to the world and to the diversity of artistic forms that have made Montpellier a great city of culture. It is this trailblazing spirit which will energise our action in the years to come, and will serve as a driving force for the cultural policy that we will implement. At the service of all.

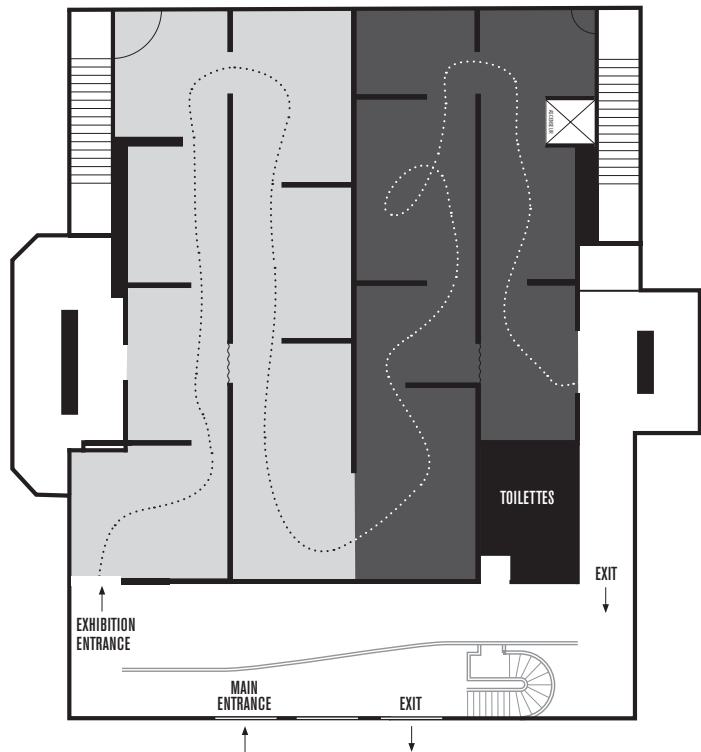
I hope you enjoy discovering and sharing this experience and all its wonders.

### **Michaël Delafosse**

Mayor of the City of Montpellier

President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole

# EXHIBITION MAP



## GROUP I

- 1- Ben Shahn
- 2- Lisette Model
- 3- Helen Levitt
- 4- Sid Grossman
- 5- Leon Levinstein
- 6- Ted Croner
- 7- Morris Engel
- 8- Ruth Orkin
- 9- Arthur Leipzig
- 10- Sy Kattelson

## GROUP II

- 11- Louis Faurer
- 12- Robert Frank
- 13- Diane Arbus
- 14- David Heath
- 15- Homer Page
- 16- Don Donaghy
- 17- William Gedney
- 18- Saul Leiter
- 19- David Vestal
- 20- Dan Weiner
- 21- William Klein
- 22- Bruce Davidson

7 Oct. 2020  
10 Jan. 2021

# THE NEW YORK SCHOOL SHOW

NEW YORK  
SCHOOL  
PHOTOGRAPHERS  
1935 - 1965

## GROUP I (period 1935 - 1948)

Ben Shahn  
Lisette Model  
Helen Levitt  
Sid Grossman  
Leon Levinstein  
Ted Croner  
Morris Engel  
Ruth Orkin  
Arthur Leipzig  
Sy Kattelson

## GROUP II (late 1940s - 1965)

Louis Faurer  
Robert Frank  
Diane Arbus  
David Heath  
Homer Page  
Don Donaghy  
William Gedney  
Saul Leiter  
David Vestal  
Dan Weiner  
William Klein  
Bruce Davidson

The “New York Photographic School” is not a self-proclaimed movement. This name was first used by photography historian Jane Livingston who, in 1992, published a book that brought together a sixteen-strong group of photographers who had worked in the streets of New York between 1936 and 1963. These photographers all shared a number of qualities and ideals which gave a new sense of specificity to American documentary street photography: formal freedom, personal lyricism, concern for social change, and questioning of traditional documentary forms, in particular with the appearance of the “photographic snapshot” aesthetic. All of this was infused with the new cultural context in America, that of “abstract expressionist” painting, abandoning European pictorial models, and the intrusion of Surrealism. But it was also coloured by the troubled times of the Depression, World War II, and eventually by the post-war economic expansion and vitality of the USA. The ever-vibrant metropolis of New York City was the playground for these new photographers.

The exhibition presented at le Pavillon Populaire takes up Jane Livingston’s concept, and expands its scope and roster of artists to twenty-two. It attempts to shed light on the transition between the late 1930s Depression-era documentary photography (that was especially marked by the documentary practice of the famous and political *Film & Photo League*), and the new generation which, from 1967 (the date of the MOMA exhibition/manifesto, “New Documents”), launched the unstoppable movement of renewal in American photography that was spearheaded by street photography and lasted for almost the next two decades. New fields in the investigation of reality were opening up to photographers, thanks in particular to the invention of Leica cameras by Oskar Barnack (1929) and, consequently, the new-found freedom of exploration that 35mm film allowed. This “instant photography”, enabled by this new medium and offering a new way to capture reality, brought about an aesthetic break, both in Europe and in the United States. Walker



Leon Levinstein  
*Coney Island (Old Man Lying in Sand), vers 1955*  
 © Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York

Evans, in New York, from 1929, Ben Shahn slightly later, Henri Cartier-Bresson, in France, from 1932, and the Swiss Gotthard Schuh, almost at the same time, all explored its new rules and potentials.

Following their lead, the first generation of the “New York Photographic School” was formed. Many of its members belonged directly or indirectly to the *Photo League* (such as Ted Croner, Sid Grossman, Lisette Model, Morris Engel...), were of Jewish descent, and were active during the economic crisis of the 1930s. They also followed the formal influence of the European avant-garde — Cubism and Constructivism for Leon Levinstein, or Surrealism for Ruth Orkin and Helen Levitt. The central figure of this initial group was Sid Grossman, who co-founded the *League*. After the war, his political commitment, but also the flexibility of his photographic choices, made him move away from a strict documentary point of view in favour of

an aesthetic of bodies and their relation to the environment, exemplified in his series created on and around the beaches of Coney Island. Grossman had a clear impact on the other members working in the streets of New York, at that time and later. The *choreography of city-dwelling bodies* eventually became prevalent among most photographers affiliated with the group. Ted Croner, as to him, embodied the movement's ability to capture New York's very specific life energy. His "Taxi, New York, 1947 or 1948", unstopably emerging and hypnotically shimmering, evokes both the feverish modernism of the post-war period, as well as the nocturnal and atmospheric quality typical of the "film noir" of the time.

The second generation of New York School photographers developed at the intersection of two contexts: a metropolis in full economic recovery, bursting with post-war optimism and a new longing for expressive and formal freedom, that of the *Beat Generation*, eager to break codes deemed either outdated or ineffective in translating a teeming urban reality. This was first done by breaking down barriers between genres. *Street photography* no longer asserted itself as a subculture, and would make a foray into fashion — the latter would also return the favour. As William Klein rightly put it, "Fashion magazines were our art magazines". Diane Arbus, Louis Faurer, Saul Leiter and William Klein's practices, either in their nascent years or while they were active street photographers, partook in fashion photography. This resulted in an increased graphic sophistication for most of them, which also revealed William Klein and Saul Leiter's training as painters. The former, with his European artistic experience, used his Leica in a less orthodox fashion while photographing the streets of New York from the mid-1950s, brutally framing them in ways never seen before then. Leiter, mixing black and white with experimentations in colours, delivered a subtle interpretation of the occurrences created by urban objects, bodies and cityscapes, in superimposed planes, like a continuous flickering of the gaze on surfaces and their interstices. These images often border abstraction.



Louis Faurer  
*Twins, New York, 1948*

© Louis Faurer Estate, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



The deconstruction of the classic photographic print process also happened at this time, under the impetus of members of the New York School, such as William Klein, Diane Arbus and Robert Frank. It first affected the very concept of framing. If some were still tempted to centre on their subject, most did not care to, filling the image edge-to-edge like William Klein, applying the model of “all over” so dear to abstract expressionist painters. Or they would play with the successive embeddings that reflections allow, pushing the main subject into the background (Louis Faure or Don Donaghy). But, above all, the appearance of high sensitivity films in 1940 profoundly changed the nature of shooting, making even the worst lighting conditions manageable. Everything was therefore in place, technically, to widen the field of recordable subjects, in darker settings without the intrusion of flash. These “*moody pictures*” took over street photography, becoming a distinctive feature, as can be seen in Bruce Davidson’s late 1950s photo essay on the “Brooklyn Gangs”. Its qualities make it a dark, grainy, blurry, “poor” photographic object, defying the laws of good photography hitherto dominant, and bring it closer instead to bad amateur photography, to a “failed” snapshot, the codes of which it borrowed. Robert Frank, William Gedney, or Diane Arbus, in her early period, all exemplify this in their work.

It is perhaps Bruce Davidson, through “Brooklyn Gang”, who best synthesized the spirit of the New York School, along with that yet-to-come aesthetic of “emergence” (Lee Friedlander or Garry Winogrand). It was necessary to highlight this missing link of American documentary photography, for which the photographic can never allow itself to be reduced to the anecdotal.

Gilles Mora



Ted Croner  
*Sharpie in Cafeteria*, 1946 ou 1947  
 © Catherine Croner, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York

“The members of the New York school simply used their tools for new ways to make images. Look at the photographs. You will see a language uniquely well suited to their explorations into the human condition. You can feel how they pushed the photographic envelope to better understand, as well as asking new questions, about who we are and what we are made of.

Howard Greenberg

# BIOGRAPHIES

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## **BEN—SHAHN (1898-1969)**

Highly regarded as a social realist painter and graphic artist, Ben Shahn was born in Czarist Russia to a family of wood carvers and carpenters. In 1906, his family fled to the United States and settled in Brooklyn. Shahn studied at New York University and the National Academy of Design where he slowly gained recognition as a painter and graphic designer. In the early 1930s, Shahn shared a Greenwich studio with photographer Walker Evans, from whom he learned much of the technical craft of photography. It was not long after that Shahn began to split his time between taking photographs and working on his paintings and drawings.

He attended street demonstrations and picket lines regularly and photographed the unemployed and homeless. As in his paintings and drawings from the period, and later in his photographs for the Farm Security Administration (FSA), between 1935 and 1938 along with Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Arthur Rothstein, Russell Lee and others,

Shahn was drawn to scenes of human interest. He sought out spontaneous expressions in his subjects in striking, thoughtful compositions with an incredible freedom in his compositions. Utilizing unusual perspectives, Shahn often used a right-angle viewfinder attached to his camera which allowed him to look down while taking photographs of subjects unaware of his right.

At the end of his lifetime, Shahn had achieved international acclaim for his paintings but his photographic work remained mostly unknown until the landmark exhibition, “Ben Shahn as Photographer” at Harvard’s Fogg Art Museum just after his death in 1969.

## **LISETTE—MODEL (1901-1983)**

Lisette Model was born in Vienna, Austria, where she studied piano and compositional theory with Arnold Schönberg before moving to Paris. She discontinued her musical career in 1933, and discovered photography through

her sister Olga and her friend Rogi André, André Kertész’s wife. She decided to become a full-time photographer soon after, and in 1937, served a short apprenticeship with the French photographer Florence Henri. The next year, she immigrated to New York City, where she came into contact with important figures in the photographic community, such as Alexey Brodovitch and Beaumont Newhall. Her photographs appeared regularly in *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Cue*, and *PM Weekly*. Model was among the group of photographers included in “Sixty Photographs: A Survey of Camera Aesthetics”, the 1940 inaugural exhibition of the Museum of Modern Art’s Department of Photography. Model also taught photography and was a tremendously influential teacher, her most famous student being Diane Arbus.

Model’s best-known work consists of series of photographs she made with a 35-millimeter camera, of people on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice and on the streets of New York’s Lower East Side. Her work is notable for its emphasis on the peculiarities of average people in everyday situations, and for its direct, honest portrayal of modern life and its effect on human

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character. As one of the most influential street photographers of the 1940s, Model redefined the concept of documentary photography in America, and through her roles of teacher and lecturer she shaped the direction of postwar photography.

## **HELEN—LEVITT (1913-2009)**

Born and raised in New York, Helen Levitt has made most of her photographs in the city’s streets. Her interest in photography began in 1931; she learned darkroom technique while working for a portrait photographer, and by age sixteen had decided to become a professional photographer. She was especially inspired by the photographs of Walker Evans and Henri Cartier-Bresson, both of whom became friends. Following Cartier-Bresson’s lead, Levitt bought a 35-millimeter camera and settled on the subject matter she would pursue for the next forty years: community street life, especially the activities of women, children, and animals. In 1939, her images began appearing in many photographic magazines. Beaumont and Nancy Newhall mounted her first solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in

1943. Three years later, Levitt was granted a photography fellowship by the museum. Her work found devoted advocates in Walker Evans and James Agee, the latter of whom wrote the text for her first monograph, *A Way of Seeing* (produced in the 1940s, but not published until 1965).

In addition to the black-and-white images for which she is known, Levitt has been an active color photographer since the 1950s. She is celebrated for their perceptive depiction of everyday life in New York City's close-knit neighborhoods of the 1940s and 1950s.

### **SID—GROSSMAN (1913-1955)**

Sid Grossman was born in New York. During his high school years in The Bronx he became an avid photographer and joined the Camera Club. In 1936, with the photographer Sol Libsohn, he founded the *Photo League* whose purpose was to use and promote photography as a tool to effect social change. The League offered lectures and classes, provided darkrooms, produced photographic exhibitions and projects and published a monthly bulletin called *Photo Notes*.

As the director and teacher at the League, Grossman had a tremendous influence on a large number of students who studied with him including Weegee, Lisette Model, Leon Levinstein, Ruth Orkin, Arthur Leipzig, Rebecca Lepkoff and numerous others. The *Photo League* ceased to function in 1951 when some of its members were unjustly accused of participating in subversive political activities by Joseph McCarthy in his campaign against "anti-American activity."

Grossman enjoyed his most productive years as a photographer just after World War II. He photographed Coney Island in the summers of 1947 and 1948 and the San Gennaro festival on Mulberry Street in Manhattan's Little Italy in 1948.

His later work focused on the landscape and people of Cape Cod and was published posthumously in the 1959 book entitled *Journey to the Cape*.

### **LEON—LEVINSTEIN (1910-1988)**

Leon Levinstein was born in West Virginia. He was enlisted in the army in 1942. Shortly after his discharge from the army in October 1945, he moved to New York City to work as an art director in his cousin's advertising agency. In 1947–48 he studied with John Ebstel and Sid Grossman at the *Photo League*, and then in 1948–51 with the painter Stuart Davis and Alexey Brodovitch, artistic director of *Harper's Bazaar*, at the New School for Social Research. In the 1950s and 1960s, his work was published extensively in major magazines such as *Popular Photography* and *U.S. Camera Annual*, and won *Popular Photography 1952's International Photography Contest*. Edward Steichen, renowned photographer and curator at the Museum of Modern Art recognized Levinstein's talent: Levinstein's photographs were included in nine group shows at the Museum of Modern Art.

Leon Levinstein rarely worked on assignment and never made photography books. He earned his living as a graphic designer, not as a professional photographer, and generally remained aloof from the art world.

This lack of broader recognition did nothing to slow him down, and he continued to photograph throughout his life.

Levinstein's work has a graphic virtuosity. He would skulk through crowds, blend in, and observe things that others would miss. Photographing strangers at close range, Levinstein captured the back alleys of New York City framing the faces, flesh, poses, and movements of his fellow city dwellers: couples, kids, beggars, prostitutes, families, society ladies, and sunbathers. Levinstein is best known for his candid and unsentimental black-and-white figure studies made in New York City neighborhoods from Times Square and the Lower East Side to Coney Island and Harlem.

### **TED—CRONER (1922 -2005)**

Ted Croner was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and grew up in Charlotte, North-Carolina. After joining the army during World War II, Croner worked as an aerial photographer with the United States Army Air Corps stationed in the South Pacific. In 1946, Croner went to New York. Shortly after that, he enrolled in Alexey Brodovitch's photography class



at the New School for Social Research. Perhaps Croner's best-known work, *Taxi – New York* (1947-48), was taken while he was a student in Brodovitch's legendary "design laboratory".

In 1948, Edward Steichen, then the director of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, chose to include Croner in two exhibitions at the Museum: "In and Out of Focus" and "Four Photographers" which included three other photographers: Bill Brandt, Harry Callahan and Lisette Model. Other exhibitions of Croner's work followed. As he continued to accept commercial work at magazines like *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, Croner pursued his own photography, producing vigorously experimental, cinematic images of cafeterias, solitary diners and the city after dark.

Interest in Croner's work was revived with the publication of *The New York School: Photographs, 1936-1963* by Jane Livingston in 1992 which followed the 1985 exhibition of the same name at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC.

## MORRIS—ENGEL (1918-2005)

Engel was trained within the *Photo League*, a photography collective formed in 1936 and which was, until its closure in 1951, the driving force of New York photographic art. Its members included Leo Hurwitz, Aaron Siskind and Helen Levitt. Paul Strand, Elisabeth McCausland, and Berenice Abbott taught there. Abbott, a great city photographer, adept at seizing the moment, clearly had a great influence on Engel.

During the war, Engel joined the Navy, where he was commissioned to photograph the conflict, leading him to take part in the Normandy Landings. His fame grew quickly, and he was soon regarded as one of the country's greatest photojournalists. As early as 1944, he was one of the few photographers to be exhibited at MoMA. He then turned his attention to cinema and directed *Little Fugitive* in 1953, soon followed by *Lovers and Lollipops* and *Weddings and Babies*. Engel was one of the first directors to embrace the notion of independent cinema. His films offer magnificent walks through New York, and, from Little Italy to Chinatown, from the Statue of Liberty to MoMA via Macy's, his

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camera immerses the viewer in the very fabric of the city and its atmosphere.

## RUTH—ORKIN (1921 -1985)

Ruth Orkin was an award-winning photojournalist and filmmaker. Orkin grew up in Hollywood in the heyday of the 1920s and 1930s. At the age of 10, she received her first camera. She began by photographing her friends and teachers at school. At 17 years old she took a monumental bicycle trip across the United States from Los Angeles to New York City to see the 1939 World's Fair, and she photographed along the way.

Orkin moved to New York in 1943. She worked for all the major magazines in 1940s. She took portraits of many of the worlds' greatest musicians of the time including Leonard Bernstein, Isaac Stern, Aaron Copland, and many others.

In 1951, *LIFE* magazine sent her to Israel with the Israeli Philharmonic. Orkin then went to Italy where she took her most famous picture, "American Girl in Italy" (1951). On her return to New York, Orkin married the

photographer and filmmaker Morris Engel. Together they produced two feature films, including the classic *Little Fugitive* which was nominated for an Academy Award in 1953. From their New York apartment overlooking Central Park, Orkin photographed marathons, parades, concerts, demonstrations, and the beauty of the changing seasons. These photographs were the subject of two widely acclaimed books, *A World Through My Window* and *More Pictures From My Window*.

## ARTHUR—LEIPZIG (1918-2014)

Arthur Leipzig was born in Brooklyn, New York. He began his career in photography when he enrolled in a class with the *Photo League* in 1941. Initially attracted by the school's low darkroom fees, he was convinced that he wanted to seriously pursue documentary photography within two weeks of studying with its founder, Sid Grossman. Leipzig was an active member of the *Photo League* until 1949, learning from the work of Paul Strand and William Eugene Smith. In 1942 he became staff photographer for the magazine *PM*. In 1946,

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Leipzig worked for a brief stint at International News Photos before beginning a successful career in freelance photojournalism, traveling on assignments around the world and contributing to such periodicals as *The Sunday New York Times*, *This Week*, *Fortune*, *Look*, *LIFE*, and *Parade*.

Leipzig shot thousands of rolls of film over five decades, producing beautifully constructed yet socially powerful photographs that take a sincere look at street life. Among the most memorable are photo essays on children's street games, city workers atop the Brooklyn Bridge, Coney Island, and V-Day.

Leipzig has been included in many museum group exhibitions as "Family of Man" (1955) at the Museum of Modern Art, as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Photography as a Fine Art" (1961-62).

### **SY—KATTELSON (1923-2018)**

Sy Kattelson was born in The Bronx, New York City, and attended Stuyvesant High School. While working as a delivery boy for a camera store on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, he first became aware of the possibility of working

professionally as a photographer. A German refugee couple who were the owners of a studio to which he was making a delivery, encouraged him to pursue photography. Rather than wait to be drafted, in 1942 he volunteered for the Air Corps as a corporal aerial cartographer, developing film taken from aircraft to assess the success of their bombing runs. At the war's end he was redeployed to France where he worked as an army publicity photographer.

Upon his return to the United States, Kattelson joined the *Photo League* where he served as an executive member and teacher until it disbanded in 1951.

From 1953 to 1955 Kattelson worked as a fashion photographer for *Glamour*. He photographed the first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954. In 1958 he became a color darkroom technician and manager at a large commercial color photography lab. In 1961 he moved to Woodstock, New York, where he founded the Tinker Street Cinema, at the time one of the few art house cinemas outside a major urban area.

### **LOUIS—FAURER (1916-2001)**

Louis Faurer was born to immigrant parents from the Russian/Polish border and spent his early years in South Philadelphia. He began studying at Philadelphia's School of Commercial Art and Lettering in 1937. He also worked freelance, painting advertising signs and lettering posters. That same year, Faurer purchased his first camera. Faurer never attended classes in photography, except for a brief course he took in the military.

In the late 1940s, Faurer and several of his colleagues from Philadelphia opened studios in New York. Like many photographers of his generation, Faurer sought employment working for magazines, but unlike his photojournalist peers, who pursued careers at such publications as *LIFE* magazine, he gravitated toward fashion photography. In 1947, he was invited to join the *Harper's Bazaar* magazine's staff. The new magazine also hired Robert Frank, a recent immigrant from Switzerland, and the two immediately struck up a friendship that would last for fifty years.

During the 1950s, Faurer began to focus more on his professional

assignments than on his own personal street photography, working steadily for magazines such as *Glamour*, *Charm*, and *Seventeen*, *Vogue* and *Mademoiselle*. He created most of his fashion photographs in the studio.

In 1968, Faurer moved to London and then to Paris to escape trouble with the Internal Revenue Service and conflict with his wife. He returned to street photography in Paris, but his photographs from this period lack the clarity of vision that marks his work from the 1930s through the early 1950s. When he returned from Europe in 1974, he tried to resume photographing the streets of New York, but both he and the city had changed. In the fall of 1984, as he was exiting a bus, Faurer was struck by a car. This serious injury effectively ended his career as a photographer. He died in 2001 in New York.

### **ROBERT—FRANK (1924-2019)**

Robert Frank was a Swiss photographer and documentary filmmaker, who became an American binational. He turned to photography, in part as a means to escape the confines of his business-oriented family and home, and trained under a

few photographers and graphic designers (Jakob Tuggener and Gothard Schuh) before he created his first hand-made book of photographs, *40 Fotos*, in 1946. Frank emigrated to the United States in 1947, and secured a job in New York City as a fashion photographer for *Harper's Bazaar*. He soon left to travel in South America and Europe.

In 1955 he received a Guggenheim fellowship to travel across the United States and photograph all strata of its society. He took his family along with him for part of his series of road trips over the next two years, during which time he took 28,000 shots. 83 of these were selected by him for publication in *The Americans*, which was first published in 1958 (*Les Américains*) by Robert Delpire in Paris. The book changed the nature of photography, and remains perhaps the most influential photography book of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Frank later expanded into film and video and experimented with manipulating photographs and photomontage.

## DIANE—ARBUS (1923-1971)

New York-born photographer Diane Arbus, née Nemerov, was only fourteen years old when she met Allan Arbus. They got married four years later and began working together as fashion photographers. Diane would play the role of stylist and approach agencies while Allan would take the photographs.

Around 1956, Diane Arbus started working independently and creating portrait series. Three years later, the couple separated.

Diane Arbus was awarded two Guggenheim fellowships, in 1963 and 1966. Her work was exhibited in MoMA in 1964, then again in 1967 for the exhibition “New Documents”.

Diane Arbus was fascinated by the marginalised, the monsters, the freaks, the mentally ill. She was attracted to the circus and to those who are different. She painted a portrait of an extraordinary America, inviting a reflection on identity and appearance, which led her to photograph transvestites and others who wore heavy make-up or forms of disguises. The people she photographed would pose looking straight at the camera, indicating their collaboration with

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the artist. The models' gaze sucks the viewer into the image.

Severely depressed, Diane Arbus took her own life on the 26 of July 1971, in Greenwich Village.

## DAVE—HEATH (1931-2016)

Dave Heath started out photography in the late 1940s. He briefly studied art at the Philadelphia College of Art and at the Institute of Design in Chicago, earning a living as an assistant to commercial photographers. In 1959, while living in New York, he studied under the famous photographer and reporter William Eugene Smith. Subsequently, his work was strongly influenced by Smith's humanist tone and the importance he attached to photographic storytelling.

The American street, be it in Philadelphia, Chicago or New York, where he moved in 1957, allowed him to refine the framework for his research: “My pictures are not *about* the city but *from* the city. I've always seen it as a stage and I've always seen the people on the streets as actors, not acting out a particular play or story, but somehow being the story itself. [...] Baudelaire

called the *flâneur* the one whose purpose is to *endow the crowd with a soul.*”

Heath came to prominence with the 1963 exhibition (and the eponymous 1965 publication) *A Dialogue with Solitude*, a moving series of black and white photos that address the theme of contemporary isolation. In the 1970s, after moving to Toronto, he began experimenting with Polaroid technology and produced a series of narrative works, under the title *Songs of Innocence*.

In 2018, LE BAL, in Paris, presented his first major retrospective in France.

## HOMER—PAGE (1918-1985)

Homer Page was born in Oakland, California and became interested in photography as an adolescent. He enrolled at UCLA and then transferred to UC Berkeley and studied art. In 1939, he met Christina Gardner, a photography enthusiast and married her a year later. Through Gardner he came to know Dorothea Lange, who was a family friend. Gardner also worked as Lange's assistant for a number of years.

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By 1944 Page was working full time as a professional photographer, and in 1947 he taught photography at what would become the San Francisco Art Institute, where Ansel Adams was director of the department of photography along with his assistant, Minor White.

Through Lange, Page came to know Edward Steichen, who had taken over the photography department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Page was included in various exhibitions Steichen mounted at the museum. In 1948, having moved to New York, Page received a Guggenheim Fellowship. In his application, Page said his goal was to “photograph the qualities of the relationship between urban people and the cultural forces which surround them.” He also proposed creating a book of the work. Due to various circumstances, Page never was able to publish a book of the pictures he made during the year of his fellowship, but worked as a successful photojournalist, affiliating himself with Magnum for a short time, before settling in Connecticut later in life.

## **DON—DONAGHY (1936-2008)**

American street photographer Don Donaghy was a fourth-generation native of Philadelphia. He studied commercial art at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art but found himself uninterested in pursuing a career in the commercial industry. Donaghy was drawn to the streets of Philly with his camera, where he dedicated himself to street photography.

Among the artists within the hoard that he collaborated with were Robert Frank, Weegee, and Richard Avedon. Donaghy kept true to himself and created work that sought to express personal truth about life and art.

His photographs have been published in *The New York School: Photographs, 1936-63* and *The Last Photographic Heroes: American Photographers of the Sixties and Seventies*. Among being internationally exhibited for most of the 20th century to today, Donaghy's work is in the permanent collections of establishments as the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Public Library, and the Museum of Modern Art.

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## **WILLIAM—GEDNEY (1932-1989)**

William Gedney grew-up in upstate New York and then moved to Manhattan at the age of nineteen to attend the Pratt Institute. It was there that he discovered his interest in photography. In 1955 he graduated and worked at Condé Nast for two years before leaving to pursue his own work. Gedney moved to a low rent neighborhood in Brooklyn, working freelance and taking on part time jobs. In 1961, he was hired by Time Inc., where he focused on layout of photographs for the publication. Over the next three years he saved enough money to travel to eastern Kentucky, finding his way to a coal-mining town. For almost two weeks he lived with and photographed the Cornett family.

During the mid-1960s through the 1970s, Gedney was awarded four major art grants including Guggenheim and Fulbright fellowships. The first of these made possible a cross-country trip through the Midwest to California. He settled in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, where he photographed the drifters passing through this communal neighborhood. Shortly thereafter, Gedney was offered positions

teaching photography at both Pratt and Cooper Union. He remained a member of the faculty at both schools for the rest of his working life. A few months after he began teaching, he received his Fulbright grant and left on his first of several trips to India, which had a lasting effect on him. He died from complications related to AIDS in 1989. Le Pavillon Populaire in Montpellier gave him his first retrospective exhibition (*Only the Lonely*) in 2018.

## **SAUL—LEITER (1923-2013)**

Saul Leiter was born in Pittsburgh. Leiter's interest in art began in his late teens, and though he was encouraged to become a Rabbi like his father, he left theology school and moved to New York to pursue painting at age 23. In New York, he befriended the Abstract Expressionist painter Richard Pousette-Dart, who was experimenting with photography. His friendship with Pousette-Dart and soon after, with William Eugene Smith, expanded his interest in photography. Leiter's earliest black and white photographs show an extraordinary affinity for the medium. By the 1950s, he began

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to work in color as well, compiling an extensive and significant body of work during the medium's infancy. His distinctively subdued color often has a painterly quality that stood out among the work of his contemporaries. In the late 1950s, the art director Henry Wolf published Leiter's color fashion work in *Esquire* and later in *Harper's Bazaar*.

Leiter's first exhibition of color photography was held in the 1950s at the Artist's Club, a meeting place for many of the Abstract Expressionist painters of that time. However, over the next four decades, Leiter's noncommercial work remained virtually unknown to the wider art world. He continued to work as a fashion photographer through the 1970s. Leiter is now held to be a pioneer of early color photography, and is noted as one of the outstanding figures in post-war photography.

## DAVID—VESTAL (1924-2013)

Born in California, David Vestal went to study painting at the Art Institute of Chicago between 1941 and 1945. He moved then to New York to pursue a career as a painter.

He began studying photography with Sid Grossman at the *Photo League* in 1947. He developed an approach that set him somewhat apart from other New York School photographers: he took single pictures - most of them strongly composed - instead of working on projects or series, and he did few assignments. The majority of his street photography and cityscapes were made in New York.

A lifelong educator, he taught at Parsons School of Design, the School of Visual Arts, and at Pratt Institute. Since the early 1960s, David Vestal has been an active writer on photography and an editor of photography journals as *Popular Photography*.

His work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago, among other institutions. He is represented by the Robert Mann Gallery in New York.

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## DAN—WEINER (1919-1959)

Born in New York City, Dan Weiner studied painting at the Art Students League in 1937 and at Pratt Institute from 1939 to 1940. While at Pratt, he joined the *Photo League*. Through the League he was exposed to the history of documentary photography and the work of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine, and he became familiar with the photographs of Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Brassäi. In 1940 he taught at the *Photo League* and opened an advertising studio.

During World War II, while in the US Army Air Corps, he discovered the 35-millimeter camera. His experiments with small-format photography led him to close his studio in 1949 and dedicate himself full-time to photojournalism. Throughout the 1950s, with his wife, Sandra Weiner, also a photographer, he produced features for publications such as *Collier's* and *Fortune*. His chronicle of the civil rights struggle in Montgomery, Alabama, are among the most effective records of those dramatic events. In 1956 he traveled to the Soviet Union, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland to document lifestyles

of people there; he planned to publish a book of those journeys, but was killed in a plane crash while on assignment in 1959.

## WILLIAM—KLEIN (1928- )

William Klein was born in New York City. After graduating early from high school, he began studying sociology at the City College of New York. In 1946 he joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany. After relocating to Paris in 1948, he continued his studies at the Sorbonne.

In 1954, Alexander Liberman — then the art director of *American Vogue* — asked to meet with him. He thus began his foray into fashion photography, as well as his well-known photographic essays on various cities. Shooting for *Vogue* during a brief return to New York, Klein let loose on the city, taking fashion photography in a whole new direction. He captured the beautiful and the grotesque all within wide-angle and telephoto shots. Taking models out of the studio and onto the streets, his revolutionary techniques pioneered a new vision.

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Widely acknowledged as a significant innovator in the history and design of the photo book, Klein published his first book at Les Editions du Seuil, *Life is Good and Good For You in New York* in 1956, which won the Prix Nadar the following year. Capturing the rough and tumble of daily life, Klein's brutally honest images caused a major sensation. Three more books were published, each with photography from a different city, *Rome* in 1958, followed in 1964 by *Moscow* and *Tokyo*.

In 1958, Klein began to explore the moving image, creating his first Pop film, *Broadway by Light*. He went on to produce feature films and documentaries including a satire about the fashion world, *Qui Êtes-Vous Polly Maggoo?* (1966); *Far From Vietnam* (1967); *Muhammad Ali, The Greatest* (1969); and *The Little Richard Story* (1980). His last film to date, *Messiah* (1999), reveals on an epic scale a summary of the themes present throughout his artistic career.

Klein continues to live and work in Paris, France.

## **BRUCE—DAVIDSON (1933- )**

In a career spanning more than half a century, Bruce Davidson is known for his dedication to the documentation of social inequality. Davidson attended Rochester Institute of Technology, as well as Yale University, where he studied with Josef Albers. He was later drafted into the army and stationed near Paris, where he met Henri Cartier-Bresson, one of the founders of the renowned cooperative photography agency Magnum Photos.

After his military service, Davidson worked as a freelance photographer for *LIFE* magazine and, in 1958, became a full member of Magnum. From 1958 to 1961, he created such seminal bodies of work as *Circus* and *Brooklyn Gang*. In 1962, he received a Guggenheim fellowship and immersed himself in documenting the American Civil Rights Movement. In 1963, the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented his early work in a solo exhibition, the first of several.

In 1967, Davidson received the first grant for photography from the National Endowment for the Arts. For two years, he focused his lens on the neglected, poverty-stricken block of East

100<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan. The photographs were exhibited at MoMA in 1970, and remain one of his most acclaimed bodies of work. In 1980, he explored the vitality and distress of the New York City subway. From 1991 to 1995 he photographed the landscape and layers of life in Central Park. More recently, he followed this exploration of nature to Paris and Los Angeles, carefully examining the relationship between nature and urban life.

He currently lives in New York City, and continues to make photographs.



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Mayor of the City of Montpellier  
President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole

## Agnès Robin

Deputy Mayor of Montpellier  
in charge of Culture and Scientific Culture

## Gilles Mora

Artistic director of the Pavillon Populaire  
Curator of the exhibition

## Howard Greenberg

Curator of the exhibition

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Together, they were thus able to bring to life, thanks to their friendship and mutual understanding, the shared photographic agendas they have been committed to since the 1970s.

Cover :

Ted Croner, *Taxi, New York, 1947-48*  
© Catherine Croner, courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York

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Friday 8 Jan. at 4 pm

### EXHIBITION BOOK

« The New York School Show. Les photographes de l'École de New York 1935-1965 Editions Hazan - 24,95 € On sale at the Pavillon Populaire



David Vestal

West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York, NY, December 1958

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