

Looking to the present, looking to the past - Series 2 - no. 2 - Street photography

RPS Looking to the Present, looking to the Past Lecture 2, Series 2, 27/11/20
L Street Photography.

What is Street Photography

- Authenticity
- Participation
- Commentary
- Nostalgia
- Engagement
- Documentary
- Man: Shopping
- Voyeurism

Lars Daguerre
Jacob Riis
Eugene Atget

1/ The Happy Street.
L ASD - US.
- Individualism
- Conformism
Consumption
Rituals
} The ideal society

The family of Man
- Edward Steichen - Modern day examples.
- Every day Africa. - Brian Owens - The continents

2/ The 'Real' Street.
L Social Realism - Ann Perry - First Afro American Woman to tell her story
William Carlos Williams - 'The Great American Novel'

- Helen Heart - US
- Robert Mapplethorpe - UK
- William Klein - 'Made in New York'
- Leon Hershenson - isolating body parts, from below.
- Robert Frank - 'The Americans' - look at the NY times analysis.
- Ann Perry - 'The Street'
- Mishka Henner - 'Les Américains'

3/ The Personal Street
L Doris Arbus
Lee Friedlander
Garry Winogrand
} Make from social documentary, to know life on the Street.

- Mark Cohen - 'Smash + Grab' - isolated body parts
- 'The Cut-up Street' - Extreme Close-up
- Bruce Gilden - 'The Aggressive Photographer' - Photographs people who are left behind - invisible.
- Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen: Bylker. - about the community, people's reaction to the photographer

4/ The Surveillance Street
L Weegee
Sophia Calle
Jens Klein
Yozimozo, the Park

- Eugene Metindes - Shizuka Yokomizo - 'Dear Stranger'
- Sophie Calle: Suite Vénitienne - Jens Klein
- Kohji Yoshizuki
- Mishka Henner

5/ The Staged Street
V. Viana, Mavel
Nikki B Lee
Norman Parkinson
Shoichi Aoki

EGG
Philip Harca de Garcia
Mohamed Bourassine
Paul Graham

Edouard Dayle
Trent Parke

Street Photography



What is street photography

'If we assume that persons have a right to control over their appearance in the same way that they have a right to control over their bodies, then it follows that a subject's informed consent should be obtained before their image is published. Informed consent embodies two requirements: (i) the subject must be told how their image will be used and, (ii) the subject must understand the possible consequences of such use.'

<http://l.droppdf.com/files/HzYs7/encyclopedia-of-photography.pdf>

Arguments for and against

- Authentic
 - Participation with the community
 - A commentary on how we interact with the world around us
-
- Photography nostalgia
 - A refusal to engage
 - Dumbass man-snapping
 - Voyeurism



The dilemma of the street
no people?

The First Photograph with People in was a Street Photograph: Boulevard de Temple by Louis Daguerre

Jacob Riis

The Street as Social Control

"The beauty of looking into these places without actually being present there is that the excursionist is spared the vulgar sounds and odious scents and repulsive exhibitions attendant upon such a personal examination."
(from pdf below)

Jacob Riis: Street Arabs

(see www.csun.edu/~vcspc00g/604/rtwigg-intpq.pdf
and Abigail Solomon-Godeau: Who is Speaking Thus?)



Eugene Atget

Psychogeographer or surrealist?



Henri Cartier-Bresson

The Decisive Moment?



1. The Happy Street
2. The 'Real' Street
3. The Personal Street
4. The Surveillance Street
5. The Staged Street

1950s America

- Individualism
- Conformism
- Consumption
- Paranoia

- What lies beneath the surface
- This question forms the basis of the work of photographers such as

- See the short stories of Richard Yates or John Cheever
- Watch the films *The Sweet Smell of Success* or *The Swimmer*

1. The Family of Man

- Christian Dior new look and Avedon - commercialism
- The Family of Man
- Niall McDiarmid
- Richard Renaldi
- Everyday Africa



Post-War Feel Bad Post-War Feel Good: The Family of Man

- 503 photographs
- On universal themes such as love, family, death
- Expression of humanism post World War II
- Showed at Moma
- Curated by Edward Steichen
- Images by Elliot Erwitt, Nat Farbman and Alfred Eisenstadt

'The scholarly reception of The Family of Man is greatly influenced by Roland Barthes who in 1957 criticized the exhibition for an essentialist depiction of human experiences such as birth, death, and work, and the removal of any historical specificity from this depiction.

Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," in *Mythologies*, transl. by Annette Lavers (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972), 100-102.

<https://fkmagazine.lv/2018/07/02/the-family-of-man-the-photography-exhibition-that-everybody-loves-to-hate/>



Dorothea Lange – Spring in Berkeley

- 2) Later, Allan Sekula viewed the exhibition as a populist ethnographic archive and “the epitome of American cold war liberalism” that “universalizes the bourgeois nuclear family” and therefore serves as an instrument of cultural colonialism.

Allan Sekula, “The Traffic in Photographs,” *Art Journal* 41, no. 1 (1981), 15-25. tographs and imposing his own narrative.

<https://fkmagazine.lv/2018/07/02/the-family-of-man-the-photography-exhibition-that-everybody-loves-to-hate/>



Christopher Phillips, on the other hand, criticized Steichen for silencing the voice of individual photographers by decontextualizing their photographic narrative. ↑

<https://fkmagazine.lv/2018/07/02/the-family-of-man-the-photography-exhibition-that-everybody-loves-to-hate/>

- Neokonkwo protested against the way in which the exhibition, according to his statement, depicted all non-Europeans, and especially Africans, “either half clothed or naked” and as “social inferiors” – as victims of illness, poverty, and despair, while white Americans and Europeans were represented mostly “in dignified cultural states – wealthy, healthy and wise.”



Ariella Azoulay has argued that the exhibition can be viewed a visual equivalent to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights



Niall McDiarmid





Richard Renaldi: Touching Strangers





Everyday Africa



Ley Uwera, Beni, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Brian Otieno: "Dancing in the Streets, Kibera"



<https://www.dw.com/en/everyday-africa-street-photography-beyond-the-stereotypes/g-48902978>



Tom Saater, Nigeria



Zinyange Auntony

2. The 'Real' Street

- Social Realism
- Ann Petry
- William Klein
- Leon Levenstein
- Robert Frank
- Mishka Henner???

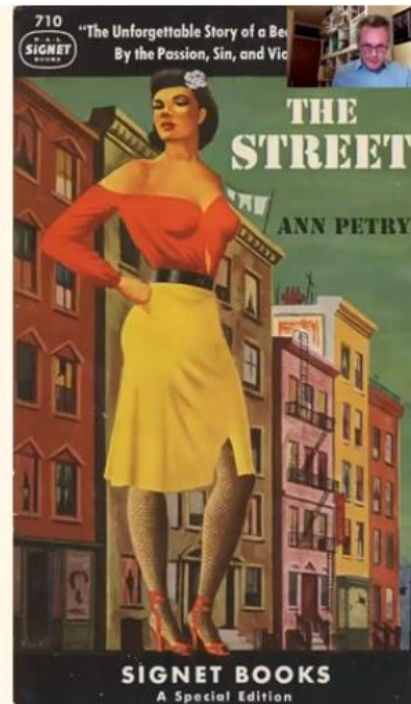
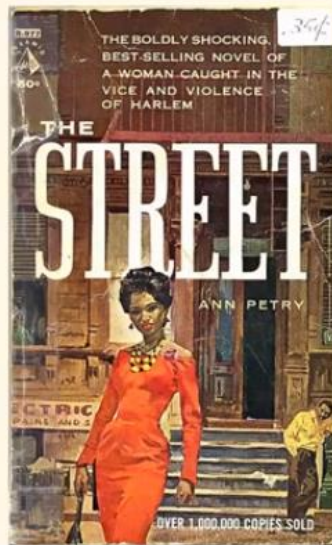
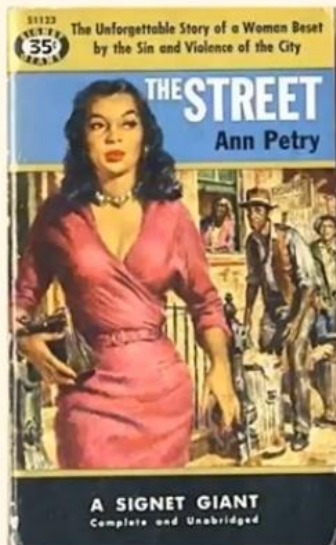
Social Realism



Umberto D.



The Street by Ann Petry



Helen Levitt





'Levitt's photographs undercut precisely these reigning myths of the child as an unproblematic personification of innocence and symbol of respectable family and social life (though her work displays no lack of tenderness toward its subjects).'

;The difference in her account emerges from the sophisticated ways in which she uses space—visual, geographic, and social—to inflect her subject. She insistently organizes her pictures around specific sites of urban life: the stoop, the doorway, the window, the vacant lot, and the curb. The transitional zones of urban geography provide the framework of her photographic messages.'

<https://americansuburbx.com/2011/12/helen-levitt-childs-play-in-helen-levitts-early-photographs-2009.html>

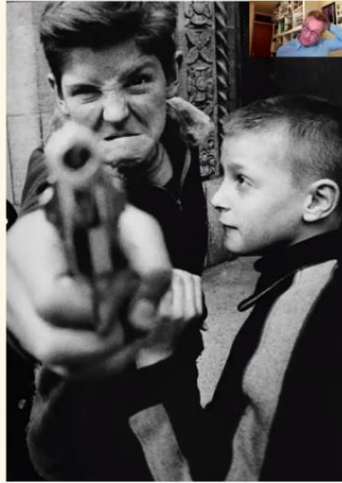


Roger Mayne



William Klein

The Hostile Photographer?



Made New York book in 1955

Laid out on Vogue Xerox machine

High energy/antagonistic

In your face

Hated fashion

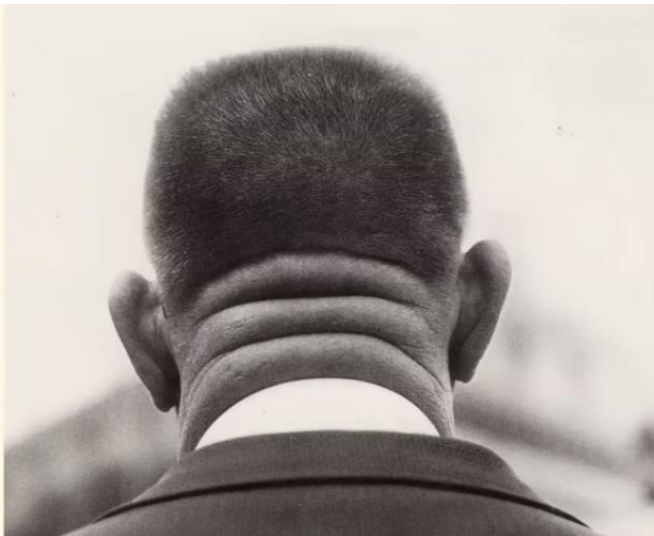
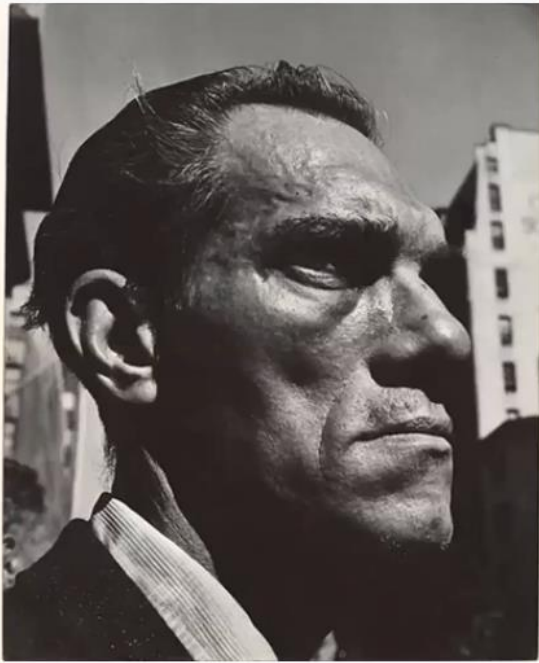
Moved into film



Leon Levenstein



<https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/leon-levenstein/all/all/all/0>



Robert Frank



‘In many of Frank’s photographs of the late 1940s and early ‘50s and the work that went into *The Americans*, the inscription of the self parallels film noir’s foregrounding of subjective experience or interiority.’

Ann Sass (1998) Robert Frank and the filmic photograph, *History of Photography*.



'Walker Evans was among the first to recognize how unusual Frank's photographs were. In 1957 he wrote about Frank's photography, "It is a far cry from all the woolly, successful 'photo-sentiments' about human familyhood.,

<https://jnocook.net/frank/frank.htm>



The Americans

But a look at the overall plan of the book reveals it to be more like a perverse parody of Edward Steichen's 1955 catalogue for the exhibition, "The Family of Man." It covers the same range of topics but from an altered viewpoint that reverses the implicit argument that the political system proceeds from the individual.'

<https://jnocook.net/frank/frank.htm>



'In 1957 Frank voiced his disagreement with the proposition that photography was assumed to be understood by all, "even children." It becomes obvious then that the hidden argument of *The Americans* is that photographs are in fact generally misread and misunderstood. Ample proof lies in the concordance of organized disharmony of the book, a fabric of intricate connections woven into a jubilant display of intellectualism which almost displaces the grim subject matter at the surface.'

<https://jnocook.net/frank/frank.htm>



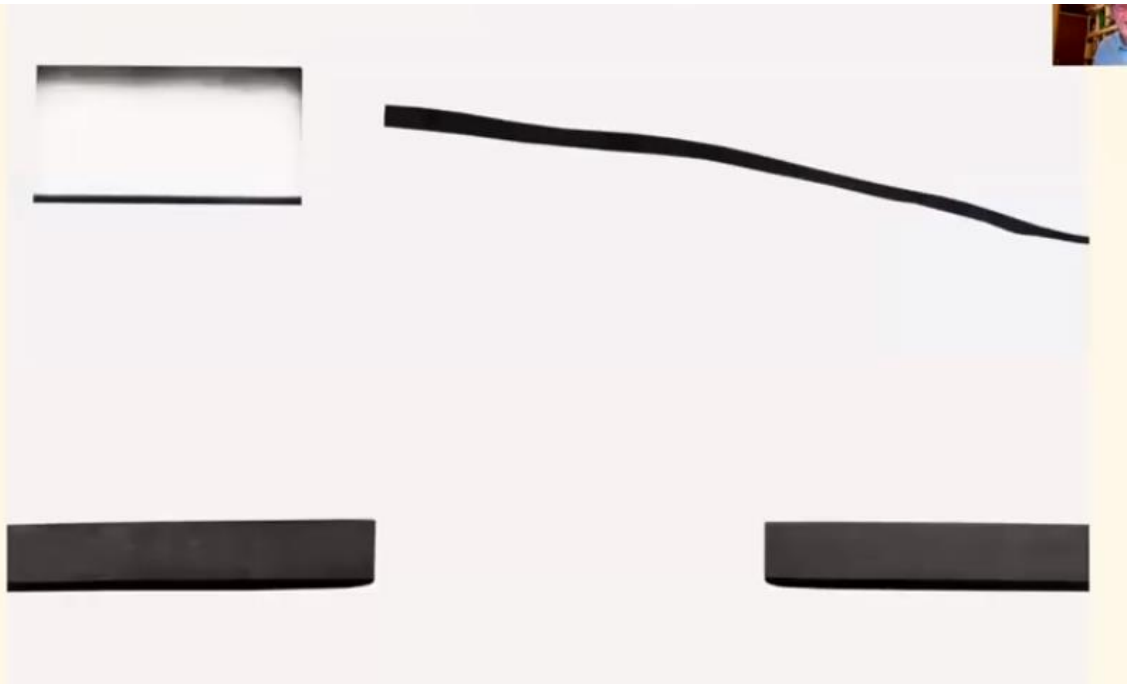
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/12/arts/design/robert-frank-americans.html>



And we are back to Ann Petry and the Street

“And while you were out working to pay the rent on this stinking, rotten place, why, the street outside played nursemaid to your kid. The street did more than that. It became both mother and father and trained your kid for you, and it was an evil father and a vicious mother...”

Mishka Henner: Less Américains



3. The Personal Street

- New Documents
- Mark Cohen
- Bruce Gilden
- Sirkka-Liisa Kontinen

1967: Moma: New Documents

- Diane Arbus
- Lee Friedlander
- Garry Winogrand
- More personal view of documentary.
- Developed on themes of Robert Frank's *The Americans*
- Developed the idea of photography as 'poetic'
- Had a focus on the gaze, body and the individual view
- List of images in show: <http://www.graphicgreg.com/blogpix/PhotoList.html>
- Original press release: https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/3860/releases/MOMA_1967_Jan-June_0034_21.pdf?2010

The Museum of Modern Art

1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018 (Circle 5-8000) Gallery Modernart

NEW DOCUMENTS
February 28 - May 7, 1967
Wall Label

Most of those who were called documentary photographers a generation ago, when the label was new, made their pictures in the service of a social cause. It was their aim to show what was wrong with the world, and to persuade their fellows to take action and make it right.

In the past decade a new generation of photographers has directed the documentary approach toward more personal ends. Their aim has been not to reform life, but to know it. Their work betrays a sympathy -- almost an affection -- for the imperfections and the frailties of society. They like the real world, in spite of its terrors, as the source of all wonder and fascination and value -- no less precious for being irrational.

This exhibition shows a handful of pictures by three photographers of that generation. What unites them is not style or sensibility; each has a distinct and personal sense of the uses of photography and the meanings of the world. What they hold in common is the belief that the commonplace is really worth looking at, and the courage to look at it with a minimum of theorizing.

The portraits of Diane Arbus show that all of us -- the most ordinary and the most exotic of us -- are on closer scrutiny remarkable. The honesty of her vision is of an order belonging only to those of truly generous spirit.

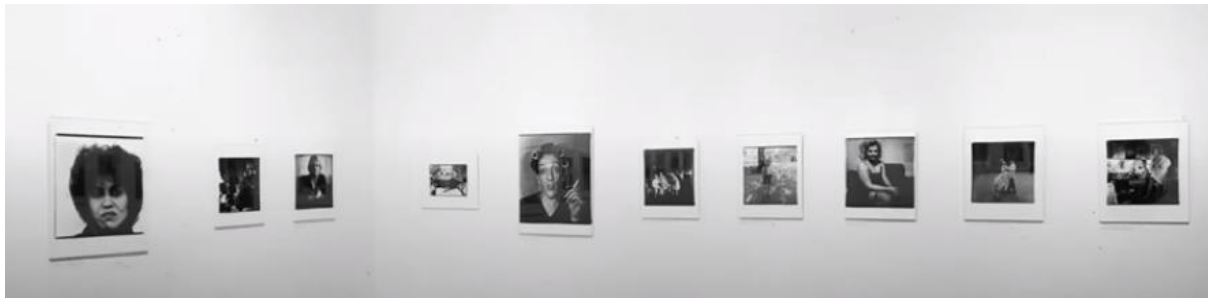
Lee Friedlander, standing at a greater emotional distance from his subjects, reconstructs our world in precise and elegant metaphors, showing its people in and through their most valued environments: their homes and offices and shops and pagan grounds.

Gerry Winograd's jokes, like those of Beckett, are no less serious for being funny, and, in the best sense, vulgar. His taste for life, being stronger than his regard for art, makes him equal even to the task of confronting the comedy of his own time.

These three photographers would prefer that their pictures be regarded not as art, but as life. This is not quite possible, for a picture is, after all, only a picture. But these pictures might well change our sense of what life is like.

John Szarkowski

<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3487>



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Garry Winogrand



Lee Friedlander



Diane Arbus



- p.33: 'Her work shows people who are pathetic, pitiable, as well as repulsive, but it does not arouse compassionate feelings.'
- p.35 'The authority of Arbus's photographs derives from the contrast between their lacerating subject matter and their calm, matter-of-fact attentiveness.'
- p.36 'Pain is more legible in the portraits of the normals... the boy in Central Park clenching his toy hand grenade.'
- p.37 'Most Arbus pictures have the subjects looking straight into the camera. This often makes them look even odder, almost deranged.'
- p.41. 'The camera is a kind of passport that annihilates moral boundaries and social inhibitions, freeing the photographer from any responsibility toward the people photographed.'





Smash and Grab: Mark Cohen



The cut-up Street



- Isolated Body Parts
- Extreme Close Up
- Became more difficult as time progressed

See also Hannah Hoch on collage



Smash and Grab 2: Bruce Gilden

The aggressive photographer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRBARi09je8>



- Territorial
- Exploits anonymity of street
- Aggressive
- Extreme Framing
- Street Fighter
- Moved onto extreme close ups



Maybe?

“These people that I photograph are out there,” says Gilden. “I didn’t invent them, I didn’t put make-up on them. They are who they are, pimples, warts and all. When you take a little camera, it becomes a threat. When the photographer takes a picture, it can go further, it becomes a document. But there’s something beautiful in how these people look, their soul, and I don’t believe you can change anything in the world that’s not right if you don’t look at it. It can’t stay invisible.”

“And that’s what struck me, because I’m afraid to die. At the end of the day, I’m photographing me. All these people are me. If you make the wrong choice, this is what you can become, this is what can happen to you. And lots of time it happens to people who are nice people, who aren’t bad people.”





Sirkka-Liisa Kontinen: Byker







4. The Surveillance Street

- Weegee
- Sophie Calle
- Jens Klein,
- Yozimozo, the park,

'The cinematic style of film noir (as it is encapsulated through selected film stills of stories based on early popular detective thrillers), and the street work of Arthur Fellig (Weegee); works that all trespass on death and crime.'

Blu Tirohl: Forensic Photography, Film Noir, and Fellig:
Scenes Excavated by the Night Prowler



The generalized image of film noir as it relates to the photographic image is the general flavor that this article tries to make visible for discussion (see Figure 1), in particular the “high expressionist” version of the city as shadowy, menacing, and indecipherable



Weegee, [Anthony Esposito, booked on suspicion of killing a policeman, New York], 1941. © Weegee/International Center of Photography (Weegee Portfolio 27)



Eugene Metinides



Sophie Calle: Suite Vénitienne



Kohei Yoshiyuki

The Street Voyeur

- Observes public space
- Voyeuristic
- Infra-red film
- Intrusive



Mishka Henner

The Virtual Street

Also see

Doug Rickard,

Michael Wolf

And others



Shizukja Yokomizo: Dear Stranger



"Dear Stranger, I am an artist working on a photographic project which involves people I do not know.... I would like to take a photograph of you standing in your front room from the street in the evening".



Jens Klein: Hundewege (Images from a Stasi archive)





5. The staged street

- The Self
- Fashion
- Art
- Politics
- The Cinematic
- Literature

Viviane Maier



Mirrors and Windows

On Atget and Stieglitz

'The distance between them is to be measured not in terms of the relative force or originality of their work, but in terms of their conceptions of what a photograph is: is it a mirror, reflecting a portrait of the artist who made it, or a window, through which one might better know the world?'

-- John Szarkowski, 1978

Nikki S. Lee



<https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/nikki-s-lees-shapeshifting-art-cultural-appropriation-1202682096/>

Norman Parkinson



Shoichi Aoki



College Student: 19
Jumper: Second-hand
Trousers: Jean-Paul Gaultier
Shoes: at Binary
Trousers: at Takyodo

EGL



Philip Lorca di Corcia

The Spotlit Street

'I never Talk to them... I don't ask their permission. I don't pay them... And eventually...I got into trouble'

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=bpawWnInXJo



Mohammed Bourouissa

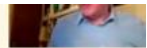


The staged street

- References Atget geographically
- References contemporary politics
- Racial elements confronted
- Ambiguous
- Relates to geography



Paul Graham: The Present



Eammon doyle



Trent Parke

