

NEW RELEASE

Helen Levitt

Edited by Walter Moser, Albertina
 Texts by Duncan Forbes, Astrid Mahler, Walter Moser,
 Christina Natlacen, Bert Rebhandl
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Major retrospective of one the foremost exponents of American street photography

Helen Levitt (1913 – 2009) numbers among the foremost exponents of street photography. As a passionate observer and chronicler of everyday street life in New York, she spent decades documenting residents of the city's poorer neighbourhoods such as Lower East Side and Harlem. Levitt's oeuvre stands out for her sense of dynamics and surrealist sense of humour, and her employment of color photography was revolutionary: Levitt numbers among those photographers who pioneered and established color as a means of artistic expression.

The book accompanying the retrospective of the Albertina Museum features around 130 of Levitt's iconic works. These range from her early, surrealism-influenced photographs of chalk drawings to her 1941 photos from Mexico and the clandestinely shot portraits of New York subway passengers that Walker Evans encouraged her to do in 1938. Many of these photos come from Helen Levitt's personal estate, and this exhibition represents their first-ever public showing.

»Helen Levitt's photographs are easy to read, but difficult to fathom. Taking shape at the end of the 1930s, a decade of economic crisis, and surrounded in New York by the buzz of every kind of celluloid media, they reveal to us something profound about the world – with little comment. A Levitt photograph does not so much narrate as emanate. It communicates the lived experience of the streets rather than urban life filtered by social or political concerns.«

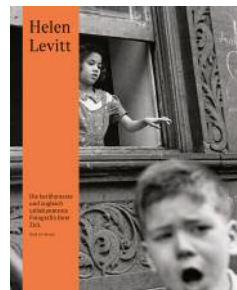
– from the essay by Duncan Forbes

Born and raised in New York, **Helen Levitt** (1913-2009) 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.

Levitt's first major museum exhibition was at the Museum of Modern Art in 1943, and a second solo show, of color work only, was held there in 1974. Major retrospectives of her work have been held at several museums: at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; at the International Center for Photography in New York; at the Centre National la Photographie in Paris, among others.

Exhibition

Albertina, Vienna, Austria
 October 12, 2018 – January 27, 2019



Helen Levitt
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Barbara Karpf, barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com or
 Sandra Dürdoth, sandra.duerdoth@kehrerverlag.com
 Kehrer Verlag, Wieblinger Weg 21, 69123 Heidelberg, Germany
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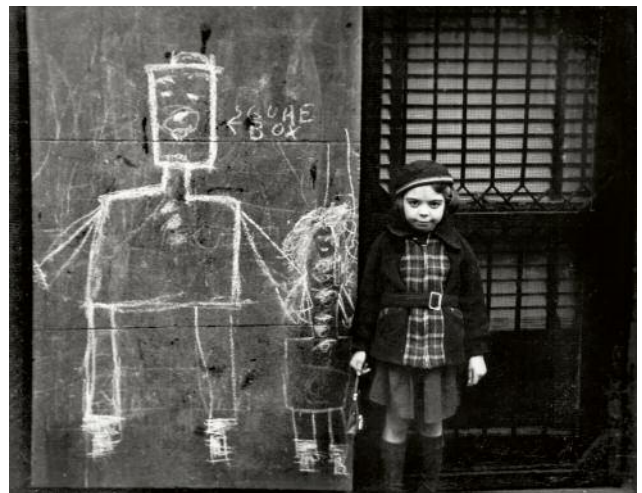
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