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▲ Reflective work … Grete Stern's 1949 work Sueño Nro 7, Quien Será. Photograph: The Estate of Grete Stern, Courtesy of Galería Jorge Mara - La Ruche

Female faces of photography: masterworks at Paris Photo – in pictures

From proto-feminist portraits to avant garde collage, these works blazed trails for women photographers throughout the 20th century

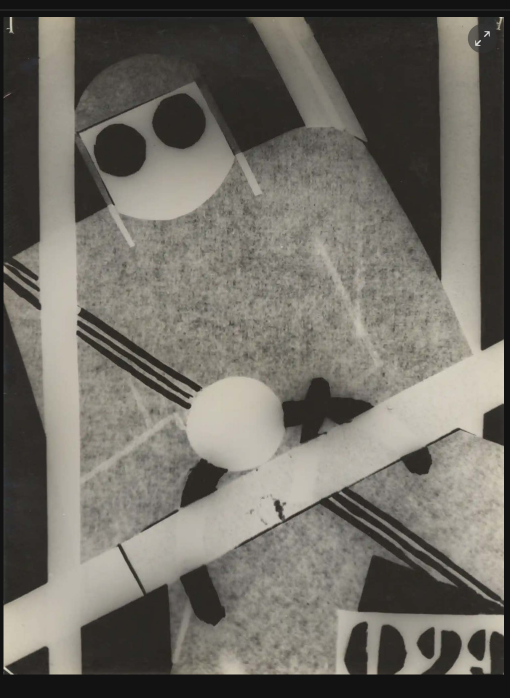
Louis Siroy

Wed 8 Nov 2023 08.00 CET

Alice Lex-Nerlinger: Race-Driver, Berlin, 1926

These powerful images from female photographers stretch across different photographic disciplines and eras – and they are all showing at the 26th edition of Paris Photo. Alice Lex-Nerlinger belonged to the avant garde of the Weimar Republic, producing socially critical collages and photograms that include themes of heroism and man and machine. Kicken Berlin will show Lex-Nerlinger within Sheroes of Photography. *Paris Photo runs until 12 November 2023*

Photograph: Estate of Alice Lex-Nerlinger/Courtesy Kicken Berlin



Tokuko Ushioda: From the series Heading Into Town, 1974/75

Tokyo based photographer Tokuko Ushioda captured young women coming into the city for this series. Ushioda was the recipient of the Domon Ken award, the Photographic Society of Japan's lifetime achievement honour and the Higashikawa International Photo festival's domestic photographer award in 2018

Photograph: Tokuko Ushioda/Courtesy PGI

Genevieve Naylor: Sabine models Claire McCardell designs, Harper's Bazaar, 1946

Genevieve Naylor was born in New York and studied photography under Berenice Abbott before becoming her apprentice. In 1940 Naylor relocated to Brazil where she recorded a virtual day in the life photomontage of all aspects of Brazilian society. Naylor's work was shown at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Alexey Brodovitch, Harper's Bazaar's art director, saw Naylor's exhibition and hired her as a fashion and reportage photographer for the magazine

Photograph: Genevieve Naylor/RAP (Reznikoff Artistic Partnership), Courtesy Augusta Edwards Fine Art

Pilar Aymerich: Housekeeper in the Eixample Courtyard, Barcelona, 1972

Pilar Aymerich was born in Barcelona and after working abroad for years returned to the city to work professionally, contributing to publications such as Serra d'Or, Destino, Triunfo, la Calle and El Pais. Most of her work is published in black and white as a connection to classical journalism. In 2018, the Reina Sofia National Art Museum acquired part of her back catalogue. In 2021, she won the National Photography award

Photograph: Pilar Aymerich/Courtesy of RocioSantaCruz

Grete Stern: Sueño Nro 7, Quien Será, 1949

From the series Suenos (Dreams), these photomontages were produced by Grete Stern for a weekly women's magazine Idilio, from 1948 to 1951. The images were commissioned to illustrate the column El Psicoanálisis Le Ayudará (Psychoanalysis Will Help You)

Photograph: The Estate of Grete Stern/Courtesy of Galería Jorge Mara - La Ruche

Janine Niepce: La vogue des bandes dessinées, France, 1956

Janine Niepce was one of France's first photojournalists. Initially freelance, she went on to join Rapho press agency in 1955, alongside other humanist photographers including Robert Doisneau and Willy Ronis. She was a distant relative of Nicéphore Niépce, one of photography's pioneers

Photograph: Janine Niepce/Roger-Viollet, Courtesy Polka Galerie

Helen Levitt: New York, 1971

One of the most influential street photographers of the 20th Century, Helen Levitt spent decades documenting local communities in her native city, capturing everyday city life in neighbourhoods such as the Lower East Side, Bronx and Spanish Harlem

Photograph: Helen Levitt/Courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

Lotty Rosenfeld: Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento (White House), 1985

A mile of crosses on the pavement. A 1985 art action at the presidential Palace La Moneda, Santiago. One of the most significant Chilean artists of her generation, Lotty Rosenfeld is best known as a founding member of Cada (Colectivo Acciones de Arte) and for an incisive solo practice that interrogated power and the occupation of public space during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet

Photograph: Lotty Rosenfeld/Courtesy Ediciones Puro Chile

Jill Freedman, Untitled (Police officer), 1968

Jill Freedman tagged along with the New York Police Department as they arrested burglars, picked up stray kids and kicked down doors. See more of her NYPD street cops here

Photograph: Jill Freedman/Courtesy Stephen Bulger Gallery

Sarah Moon, KP pour Yohji Yamamoto, 1998

Sarah Moon began her career as a fashion model in the 1960s. Since 1968, she has worked as a fashion photographer and film-maker. Her work has been published in Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Marie-Claire, Life and numerous other magazines. Moon won the International Center of Photography's Infinity award for applied photography in 1985 and the Grand Prix National de la Photographie in 1995. She lives and works in Paris

Photograph: Sarah Moon/Courtesy Michael Hoppen Gallery

Ringl and Pit (Grete Stern and Ellen Auerbach), Komol, 1931

Grete Stern and Ellen Auerbach met while studying at the Bauhaus under the renowned photographer, mathematician and philosopher Walter Peterhans. In 1929 the fellow students opened a Berlin-based photography studio called ringl + pit, named after their childhood nicknames (Grete: ring; Ellen: pit). The duo created innovative, proto-feminist portraits and commercial assignments that defied the conventional German style of the time

Photograph: ringl+pit/The Estate of Grete Stern/Courtesy of Galería Jorge Mara - La Ruche

Erna Lendvai-Dircksen: Untitled (Girl, Amrum Island), ca. 1932-39

Originally studying painting at the Kassel art academy, Erna Lendvai-Dircksen learned photography at Berlin's Lette-Verein before opening her own studio in 1913. After the early days of the Berlin studio, Lendvai-Dircksen pursued her studies of typological portraits throughout Germany

Photograph: Erna Lendvai-Dircksen Estate/Courtesy Kicken Berlin

Wendy Ewald, Johnny watching television, 1981

Wendy Ewald is an American photographer and teacher. Ewald has collaborated on photography projects with children, families, women, workers and teachers. Her projects start as documentary investigations and move on to probe questions of identity and cultural differences. Her work is in the collections of Detroit Art Institute, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Duke University, Rhode Island School of Design and Whitney Museum of American Art, among others

Photograph: Wendy Ewald/Courtesy Stephen Bulger Gallery

Melissa Shook: From the series Daily Self-Portraits, 1973

Melissa Shook was an American photographer, videographer, writer and teacher based in Massachusetts, best known for her self and family portraits and documentary-style photography humanising marginalised people such as immigrants, the elderly and the homeless. She was a pioneer in exploring identity, motherhood and interracial families, channeling the spirit of creative freedom and attending the rise of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s

Photograph: Melissa Shook/Kristina Shook & The Estate of M. Melissa Shook, Courtesy L Patinoiree Royale Gallery Val Bach / Miyako Yoshinaga

Barbara Crane: From the series Beaches and Parks, Chicago, 1977

Barbara Crane was born in Chicago, studied photography in California and completed her art history degree at New York University. She began teaching photography in 1964 and in 1967 joined the faculty at the prestigious School of the Art Institute of Chicago. For this series Crane focused her lens on the local population at leisure in the beaches and parks in the spring and summer from 1972-1978

Photograph: Barbara B. Crane Trust/Courtesy La Galerie Rouge

Martine Barrat: These are the breakers, Block Party, Harlem, 1984

Martine Barrat is a French photographer and videographer. Barrat moved to New York in 1968 and has worked extensively in the ares of South Bronx and Harlem, including the work Harlem in My Heart, presented at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie. This image was named photo of the year in Life magazine

Photograph: Martine Barrat/Courtesy La Galerie Rouge

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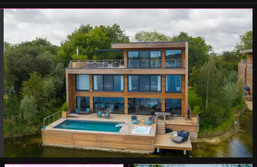

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