

**UNFAMILIAR STREETS:  
THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF RICHARD AVEDON, CHARLES MOORE,  
MARTHA ROSLER, AND PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA**

by

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**Abstract**

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This dissertation begins from the premise that the streets of street photography matter. Streets are considered here as both sites and subjects for this genre of photography. Such an analysis demonstrates that streets are specific cultural, political, economic, and social environments, and that street photography often anticipates the affective quality of their reception by viewers.

A key aim of this dissertation is to articulate a much-needed alternative to the dominant discourse on street photography as codified by Henri Cartier-Bresson, canonized by Garry Winogrand, and uncontested in most existing scholarship on the genre. Without spontaneity, speed, instantaneity, stealth, and mobility guiding the discussion, it becomes possible to redirect the terms of that discourse and to acknowledge that the construction and production of many street photographs

corresponds—or fails to correspond—to the ways in which the street both frames and determines urban experience.

Case-study chapters on the photographs of Richard Avedon, Charles Moore, Martha Rosler, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia address the historical dynamics that animated and complicated the specific city streets that serve as their sites and subjects. Published during the heyday of postwar consumerism, Avedon's late 1940s photographs for *Harper's Bazaar* utilize Parisian streets as deliberate locations of material desire and trade on a nostalgic image of that city. Moore's photo essay for *Life* magazine on the civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham in 1963 capitalizes on widespread awareness of the street as a site of political protest at the outset of a decade that would make the two synonymous. Rosler's removal of human subjects from street photography in her seminal work, *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974–75), prompts the viewer's negotiation and reevaluation of urban poverty and homelessness. And diCorcia's projects in Times Square have yielded street photographs that unite the social and architectural space of urban change in America's most iconic public square.

Taken together, the work by these four photographers provides not only a generational span across postwar American street photography; it offers a survey of types of street photography that diversify, expand, and complicate the existing discourse, thereby necessarily changing the practice of the genre's history.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### The Street as Site and Subject

During an apparently routine walk down the street, a photographer inconspicuously snaps a picture with a compact, handheld camera as quickly as the proverbial blink of an eye. Then another. And another. Later, through careful editing, he will identify on a contact sheet the single frame in which ideal formal composition and spontaneous incident unite.<sup>1</sup> Of the likely dozens of frames exposed that day and recorded on this contact sheet, only one will be selected (figure 1.1). In the current understanding of the genre, that one frame is the street photograph par excellence. The image concisely presents “the decisive moment” of visual contrasts, ironic juxtapositions, and lively vantage points (figure 1.2).<sup>2</sup> Celebrated American street photographer Garry Winogrand exemplifies this paradigmatic practice and the canonical construction of street photography as a genre.

What becomes possible when we consider street photography without the traditional, canonical starting point of the decisive moment or Garry Winogrand? How might street photography be more complexly understood if spontaneity, mobility, instantaneity, speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity did not guide all discussions of the genre? Might alternate approaches more effectively grapple with the depicted streets themselves? What would it mean to more fully address the significance of the street as both site and subject of street photographs? How could scholarship on street photography better attend to the specifics of the urban locations of their making? How might those specifics of the street then inform the reception of such pictures? These are

some of the questions that this dissertation addresses, in the process offering one possible alternative to the dominant discourse surrounding street photography today.

Strangely, the literature on street photography has failed to advance a serviceable definition of the genre that accounts for the street as both site and subject of such photographs.<sup>3</sup> Other articulations of the street, those derived from the disciplines of urban studies, comparative literature, and sociology, tip the balance in the opposite direction: they advance the understanding of streets as specific sites, but they do so without sincere or sustained attention to visual representations of streets, photographic or otherwise. Indeed, art historian and critic Rosalyn Deutsche has argued against art history's broader maintenance of this dichotomy between city and art, as will this dissertation. Distancing the city as subject from the city as represented experience in art only fosters or reinforces restrictive explanations of both the city and the related art. If there is no single, fixed city, how can there be a single or comprehensive understanding of art's relationship to the city?<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, I propose an alternative to the dominant singular conceptualization of street photography. I begin from the proposition that because streets, like the cities in which they are located, have no single, fixed identity or meaning, we should think of photographs taken in and of these streets as correspondingly variegated.

In the framework this suggests, a "street photograph" is not merely a photograph taken on or of any street under a set of prescribed conditions. Rather, street photography necessarily involves an engagement with its site as a specific cultural, political, economic, and social environment.<sup>5</sup> This definition allows street photographs to be something other than formally fortuitous glimpses spontaneously snatched from urban life. Moving beyond this restrictive discourse will allow for an acknowledgment of how the construction and production of many photographs corresponds—or fails to correspond—to the ways in which the street both frames and determines urban

experience.<sup>6</sup> And, to that end, I contend that street photographs should be defined as efforts to represent in photographic form the complex, often collective, and sometimes-fraught experiences of city streets as informed by gender, commerce, race, politics, class, economics, sexuality, and spectacle. Moreover, given a genre that most can “picture” even if they have never previously heard the term *street photography*, I propose that the conditions within which street photographs are received are a vital aspect of the genre. We must attend to how these images came to be known and their impact on viewers. Considering the numerous ways in which aspects of a street photograph’s reception are already inscribed in the image itself will only enhance the differently contextualized history this dissertation proposes. Its four case-study chapters exemplify such an incorporation of street photography’s reception. This dissertation offers a model for an art-historical address of the dynamics that animate and complicate the specific city streets that serve as site and subject in photographs by Richard Avedon (1923–2004), Charles Moore (b. 1931), Martha Rosler (b. 1943), and Philip-Lorca diCorcia (b. 1953).

With each being born in a consecutive decade, a study of this group of photographers offers the opportunity to trace a representative history of street photography in the United States since the 1940s, with the differences between them being as instructive as their common interests. Published during the heyday of postwar consumerism, for example, Avedon’s late 1940s photographs for *Harper’s Bazaar*, for example, utilize Parisian streets as deliberate locations of material desire and trade on a nostalgic image of that city. Moore’s photographs for *Life* magazine of civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham in the spring of 1963 capitalize on widespread awareness of the street as a site of political protest at the outset of a decade that would make the two synonymous. Rosler’s removal of human subjects from street photography in her seminal work, *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974–75), prompts the viewer’s negotiation and reevaluation of urban poverty and homelessness. Finally,

diCorcia's sustained explorations of the individual and collective experience of Times Square have yielded street photographs that unite the social and architectural space of urban change in America's most iconic public square. Among their contemporaries, Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia offer the most salient examples of how street photographs can and do engage the specifics of the streets on which they were made as well as how that specificity informs the affective quality of their reception. The work of Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia also offers a complex range of practices in relation to the canonical one privileged by the prevailing discourse, from unacknowledged to shunned, from contentious to descendent. My case studies on Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia are therefore designed to demonstrate a range of defamiliarizing practices, photographs that presented variously "unfamiliar streets."

As with any dissertation intending to redirect the terms of a dominant discourse, it will be necessary at the outset to explore that discourse and its conception of street photography, in order both to foreground what has been suppressed or overlooked and to act as a methodological foil to my four case studies. To that end, much of this first chapter addresses the history of that discourse, rather than a history of practitioners (though from time to time it will prove illuminating to include some examples).<sup>7</sup> In privileging the work of certain practitioners over and above the work's actual relationship (or lack thereof) to the street, most texts have considered images made on a "street" that is not in fact a street, but "a country lane, a park in the city... or even a subway car or the lobby of a theater."<sup>8</sup> In contrast, this dissertation is committed to a highly literal definition and restriction of 'street photography' to those photographs both made in and representing the city street.<sup>9</sup> Within the context of the history of photography, my study considers the specifics of streets as sites of street photography's production and the attendant artistic process and as subjects that appear and suggest meaning in the resulting photographs.<sup>10</sup> Offering an alternate conception of and approach to the genre

does not require inserting a history of street photography into a social history of postwar America. Instead, as this dissertation will demonstrate, that social history is *always and already* inherent in the very photographs that compose the history of street photography (without foreclosing other histories of the genre). Attending to the *streets* of street photography is therefore one and the same as attending to the cultural, political, economic, and social specifics of urban contexts. First, however, I wish to demonstrate the establishment and persistence of a traditional notion of street photography. Later in this chapter, I balance this with various promising methodological approaches suggested by other texts.

### **Writing the History of Street Photography**

The first historical survey of the genre, Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz's *Bystander: A History of Street Photography*, was first published in 1994. As both a book and exhibition, *Bystander* charts street photography since the earliest days of the medium. As with most sweeping photo histories, it centers on European and American practices, with only occasional reference to street photography beyond those two continents. To date, *Bystander* is indisputably the only attempt at a comprehensive history of street photography.

I believe that one of *Bystander's* most restrictive aspects is its structuring of the history around and through specific practitioners rather than their actual practice. *Bystander's* history originates from street photographers, not street photography. One reviewer at the time critiqued the effect of this emphasis on practitioners, the building up of a kind of "street photographer's profile."<sup>11</sup> Westerbeck characterized street photographers by their "readiness to respond to errant details, chance juxtapositions, odd non sequiturs, peculiarities of scale, the quirkiness of life in the street."<sup>12</sup> Perpetually on the prowl, perpetually mobile, the quest of the canonical street photographer is, for

Westerbeck, what has “made this history great.”<sup>13</sup> The well-rehearsed characteristics of spontaneity, mobility, instantaneity, speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity were deemed crucial to any understanding of the genre. As a consequence of *Bystander’s* emphasis on street photographers over street photography, the specific sites of street photography’s production remain virtually unremarked in the discourse; they are merely “any public space where a photographer could take pictures of subjects who were unknown to him and, whenever possible, unconscious of his presence.”<sup>14</sup> Consequently, *Bystander* remains almost entirely unconcerned with any particular sense of the term “street,” which Westerbeck allowed to transcend the physical confines of the street. “The street as it is defined here might be a crowded boulevard or a country lane, a park in the city or a boardwalk at the beach, a lively café or a deserted hallway in a tenement, or even a subway car or the lobby of a theater.”<sup>15</sup> Even a restriction to outdoor locations is routinely disavowed, and street photography is no longer restricted to cities. Despite Westerbeck’s claim that “the street has an inherent aesthetic,” the range of spaces cited reveals *Bystander’s* inattention to and disinterest in the cultural, architectural, psychological, and social qualities that make each street specific.<sup>16</sup>

Westerbeck’s definition of street photography is even more amorphous than his definition of the street: “[C]andid pictures of everyday life in the street. That, at its core, is what street photography is.”<sup>17</sup> Everyday life, as represented on *Bystander’s* pages, is expansive enough to acknowledge that a human presence is not a necessary feature of this life. “While stop-action images of people are bound to figure prominently in any collection of street photographs, this book also contains many pictures in which there are no people at all.” Everyday life in the street can be represented in street photography through “implication and inference,” a position that Martha Rosler fully mined in *The Bowery*, which is not mentioned in *Bystander* but is the topic of this dissertation’s Chapter Four.<sup>18</sup> More often than not, however, *Bystander* presents street photography

as the (likely urban) observation of a crowd, and, as with many street-photography-related texts, makes a discursive equation of a street photographer with a flâneur, the quintessential and storied observer of city streets introduced in mid-nineteenth-century Paris.

*Bystander* in fact devotes several pages to the flâneur in advance of referencing a single street photograph.<sup>19</sup> The flâneur, as detailed by Charles Baudelaire in his classic 1863 essay, “The Painter of Modern Life,” addresses himself to the challenge of representing the experiences he encounters while wandering in the modern city, a part of—though slightly apart from—its crowds.<sup>20</sup> “For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite.”<sup>21</sup> Baudelaire wrote that the flâneur privileged the “fugitive, fleeting beauty” of his urban experiences, echoing the characteristics long-privileged in the discourse surrounding street photography.<sup>22</sup> As his aesthetic model, Baudelaire recounted the activities, techniques, and methods of the artist Constantin Guys, who selected highly specific moments of modern life for representation via “the technical means that is the most expeditious and the least costly.”<sup>23</sup> To this end, Baudelaire extolled the virtues of pastel, aquatint, and lithography (he never invoked the camera, thinking little of photography beyond its mass appeal).<sup>24</sup> This medium-driven attentiveness to the unique visual forms of the city and to the specific experience of city streets has endeared Baudelaire to nearly every student of street photography. The discourse on street photography has been as focused on practitioners as it has on the characters or “types.”<sup>25</sup> For this reason, Baudelaire’s attention to certain peripheral urban populations (prostitutes, for example) has proven equally compelling to the discourse as the model of his flâneur and Baudelaire’s attention to the processes of a particular medium.

By extension, certain writings by Walter Benjamin have formed another compelling subset of the street photography discourse's obsession with the flâneur, medium-specificity, and street "types."<sup>26</sup> As Graeme Gilloch has noted, "For Benjamin, as for Baudelaire, the hallmark of modern urban experience is the encounter with the crowd."<sup>27</sup> Expanding on Baudelaire's theories, Benjamin's *Arcades Project* (or *Passagenarbeit*) represents an ambitious, long-standing, and ultimately unfinished effort to elaborate on the experience of the modern city: its spaces; the encounters it engenders with crowds; its relationship to time, history, and myth. Benjamin aimed to read the city as a text—or to translate what he saw there into writing—and to articulate the need for new modes of artistic representation to convey the character and experience of the metropolis.<sup>28</sup> In Benjamin's assessment, photography and film offer the ability to record the speed and movement of cities, thereby correlating with the optic experience of the city.<sup>29</sup> Photography and film can also capture those particularly urban "types" of such interest to Benjamin (and, in many cases, to Baudelaire before him)—the flâneur, the prostitute, and the sandwichman—those peripheral or alienated subjects whose existence history might otherwise try to deny, a point that will resurface later in this chapter and will resonate in Chapter Four.<sup>30</sup>

This brief overview of Baudelaire's and Benjamin's interest in the flâneur's observation of the crowd, medium specificity, and urban "types" is intended to explain the reliance of *Bystander* and other texts on these formations. But this discussion also allows me to point to *other* interpretive opportunities embedded in Baudelaire's and Benjamin's writings on the city: namely, the experience of city streets as a collective one; the understanding that street photography may well respond to and interact with such a collective experience; the subsequently identificatory potential in the act of viewing street photography; and a spatially attentive approach to the history of street photography.<sup>31</sup> Later in the essay, commenting on the art of Guys, Baudelaire claimed, "the spectator's

imagination receives a clear-cut image of the impression produced by the external world upon the mind of Monsieur G. The spectator becomes the translator, so to speak, of a translation which is always clear and thrilling.”<sup>32</sup> Baudelaire’s celebration of Guys, then, is absolutely contingent upon the role Guys created for the viewers of his art: the possibility not just to recognize urban experience but to identify with it. The history of street photography, beginning with *Bystander*, has not yet sufficiently accommodated the role of the viewer that is inherent in that same history’s ready references to Baudelaire and Benjamin.

This is not to say that *Bystander* makes no mention of audience or reception; it does, in highly practical terms. Westerbeck considered the publication of street photographs, either in periodicals or in books, as an important form of the genre’s dissemination.<sup>33</sup> His regard for circulation, however, centered on how one practitioner came to know of another’s work and less with how their work became known to a broader public.<sup>34</sup> When Westerbeck addressed street photography’s transition to museum walls—or to the pages of *Vogue* magazine—he acknowledged a more widespread shift in audience and made explicit the class-based implications of that shift.<sup>35</sup> *Bystander*’s various acknowledgments of audience and reception nevertheless avoid any explicit connection with street photography. They could be equally accurate statements about *other* genres of photography, since most photography in the twentieth century circulated and became known through publication. After all, street photography’s transition to museum walls was concurrent with a far-reaching absorption of photography by art museums. For this author, *Bystander* left unanswered at least one question key to this dissertation: how might the appearance and reception of street photography be distinct? This dissertation posits answers to that question, answers that issue from urban experiences and from the role assigned to viewers by all the considered photographs.

Returning to the first sentences of *Bystander*, we find another provocative opportunity within the discourse surrounding street photography: “To most people a street photographer is someone in Times Square or Piccadilly Circus who will take your picture for a fee and send you the print later (or, since the adoption of the Polaroid by such vendors, give it to you right on the spot).”<sup>36</sup> Westerbeck did not elaborate on this vernacular mode of street photography—perhaps because so few of the practitioners are identifiable, and none are exemplary of a practice identified only by the qualities of spontaneity, mobility, instantaneity, speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity. Still, the reference foregrounds street photography’s long relationship to urban commerce. Further, in the revelation that people once privileged, even paid for, their photograph being taken on certain city streets, therein lies an invitation to consider street photography in tandem with the specifics of city streets, an intersection whose critical engagement is at the heart of this dissertation.

Australian photographer John Williams has offered a detailed chronicle of the particulars of this practice in Sydney from the 1930s to the 1950s, when it most thrived, in part due to the widespread availability of handheld cameras—made by Leica, Contax, Rollei, among others—beginning in the 1930s.<sup>37</sup> “Most street photography of the thirties is associated with Leicas (as it is today) and this is reflected in the names of the firms stamped on the back of the postcard sized prints: ‘Leicagraph’; ‘Leicaflash’, and so on.”<sup>38</sup> These businesses coincided with the city’s processing company; they hired the photographers, lent them cameras, and supplied, processed, and printed the film. More specifically, Williams explained:

The actual street photographers were given or rented a camera, a day’s supply of film, and turned loose. Their job entailed photographing as many people as would, willing or otherwise, be photographed. After each picture, the subject would be handed a business card. The card contained the number of the film, the place where the contacts from the film might be viewed (usually a booth in a city arcade) and the time when such contacts might be viewed. If an order was placed for prints the

photographer got a commission. No sale, no income. ...[I]t is fair to deduce that much shooting brought in only few sales. Street photography was a pretty chancy, low paying occupation.<sup>39</sup>

Multiple street photographers carried out this practice in metropolises throughout the world, often identifying particular intersections in the heart of a city, where the sidewalks were most populated. A conservative estimate predicts that if photographers occupied twenty such positions in downtown Sydney, and each took no fewer than twenty rolls of film per day, they would yield a daily output of almost 15,000 street photographs, in a city of approximately one million inhabitants.<sup>40</sup> This enterprise's aesthetic was profoundly shaped by its city dweller subjects, as evidenced by three distinct categories of vernacular street photographs: those of unaware passersby, those depicting uncertain but compliant pedestrians, and those commemorating fully-aware, posed subjects. (Notably, the third category yielded the most consistent sales.) To be able to capture good likenesses of all three types of subjects on the street, zone focusing seems to have been a norm, but so too was the more engaged compositional task of aligning the city architecture's many verticals with the edges of the photographic frame.<sup>41</sup> Belgian-born artist Francis Alÿs has collected street photographs taken in Mexico City from the 1940s to the 1960s, which he displays as a project entitled *Instantáneas*; Alÿs's collection exemplifies the practice, and his selection mimics the range of examples offered as article illustrations by Williams (figure 1.3).<sup>42</sup> These aesthetic choices and the need to market them to subjects who were also potential consumers therefore produced a practice that favored planning and complicity, rather than stealth, if not spontaneity and speed as well. Vernacular street photography also differentiates itself conceptually from canonical street photography with regard to the quality of singularity; the choice of one photograph among hundreds or thousands of other shots taken was left only to the viewer(s), making the work's reception a crucial component of vernacular street photography. As Westerbeck's opening sentence to *Bystander* indicates, that vernacular

practice survived in widespread form into the era of the Polaroid and into today's digital era.

### **Street Photography Unrevised**

Despite *Bystander's* appearance during an era of revision and socio-political contextualization within much art history, art-historical texts since that survey—almost exclusively exhibition catalogues—have continually left the notion of street photography largely unquestioned and therefore unrevised, even when focusing on a more chronologically or geographically restricted history of street photography. This section, addressing briefly four such texts that have arguably consolidated a certain notion of street photography, will demonstrate the oversights and unexplored openings, sometimes substantial, in a discourse that has remained tethered too strongly to a canonical group of practitioners and/or too far removed from an abiding concern for the specifics of the street.

*Open City: Street Photographs since 1950*, Kerry Brougher and Russell

Ferguson's 2001 catalogue takes its name from the English title of a Roberto Rossellini film that debuted in New York City in 1946.<sup>43</sup> *Open City* chose to focus on street photography from 1950 to 2001, a decision made more interesting, given that the second edition of *Bystander* also appeared in 2001 but included only a cursory discussion of post-1970s work.<sup>44</sup> Similarly emphasizing street photographers over street photography, *Open City* offers a "who's who" of the genre. Even if the recitation of canonical figures at times differs from the revised edition of *Bystander's* attempt at the same, I am most concerned with the suppression of particulars or definitions of street photography in favor of the overriding concern with the notion of an open city.

[T]he idea of the open city has survived as metaphor, marking the urban environment as a key source of spontaneity and innovation, authenticity and artifice.... The city offers itself as ready-made composition, constantly

forming new patterns, an endlessly regenerating trove of pictorial opportunity. Yet it can also be an anti-composition, a formless mass, a fluctuation that refuses coherence.<sup>45</sup>

Ferguson's essay treats pre–World War II street photography as an already given entity—“prewar images succeeded in establishing a settled rhetoric that... was impossible to ignore”—an idea reinforced by his deferential quotation of *Bystander's* discussion of Henri Cartier-Bresson.<sup>46</sup> With respect to postwar street photography, *Open City* seems most intent on exploiting the metaphor of the open city as a way to explore divergences with the practice as codified by Cartier-Bresson in his 1952 publication *The Decisive Moment*. As is the case with *Bystander*, *Decisive Moment*, and other earlier texts, *Open City* nevertheless examines street photography as a response to technological developments. “In short, the Leica... provided the street photographer with a cinematic view of the world. From this point on, the photographer could be much closer to Charles Baudelaire's notion of the *flâneur*...,”<sup>47</sup> Although the technologically enabled *flâneur* inspires Brougher's assertion that street photography might be conceived as inhabited by “every artist and camera,” he cited no vernacular examples.<sup>48</sup> And when he does include works from genres not associated with the street (photojournalism and fashion photography, for example) that begin to move in the direction of “every artist and camera,” the work is transformed into canonical street photography by its uncomplicated isolation from original context in *Open City*. Furthermore, Brougher still claimed photographs of suburban and rural areas by the likes of William Eggleston were street photographs, a move no less baffling than Westerbeck's inclusion of country lanes and subway cars.<sup>49</sup> *Open City* thereby perpetuates the discourse's longstanding neglect of city specifics in favor of a canonical street photography practice and practitioners.

Max Kozloff had advocated for a more encompassing notion of street photography in his 1995 review of *Bystander*. His 2002 exhibition and catalogue, *New York: Capital of Photography*, would seem to have provided the opportunity to enact an

expanded notion of the genre within a city-specific history of photography. However, Kozloff maintained certain consistencies with the established discourse: he drew from the existing canon of photographs and photographers; he reiterated *Bystander's* notion that the human figure was not essential to a street photograph; and he failed to discuss *Bystander's* oversight of what such an absence can convey to viewers about the streets that remain in the picture.<sup>50</sup> “By means of the Leica, street photography, previously a cumbersome and conspicuous practice, was transformed into a genre of stealth.... [The resulting images are] grabbed, notational, and intrusive... [in which] metropolitan life is no longer construed by events so much as made up of a succession of sudden glimpses and ephemeral instants.”<sup>51</sup> Yet Kozloff had more boldly suggested a potential expansiveness in the definition of street photography in his 1995 review of *Bystander*:

Street photographs often transcribe a density of incident, proliferating signs, discordant moods and abrupt contacts. Their wide scope can encompass any other genre.... Because of their spontaneous involvement with elusive targets in a changing world, under unforeseen conditions, the chances are that street photographs will as often exceed or outflank the norms of their genre as obey them.... Westerbeck's overall theme is the thrall in which [street photographs] hold us, conditioned by a subtle art that can be likened only to itself.<sup>52</sup>

Not only did Kozloff successfully articulate the potential futility of the genre boundaries for street photography, particularly as discreet from other related genres, he also suggested—as does this dissertation's range of case studies—that we might do well to accept and celebrate this permeability. Despite his petition for the story of street photography to be told differently and an opportunity to do so with the photographs of New York at his disposal, Kozloff ended up reinforcing an assumed and unchallenged concept of street photography as determined by the existing discourse.<sup>53</sup>

*Strangers: The First ICP Triennial of Photography and Video* in 2003 also hinted at the need for a more liberating and contextualizing history of street photography. In the introductory text, the curators claimed:

Simply put, we realized that many artists were leaving the studio and going out into public to engage people who were unknown to them as part of their art-making activity. In an earlier moment in photographic history, this kind of imagery was called street photography. But as we traveled, looking at work and talking to artists, curators, and art dealers, we found a far greater range of art-making strategies than the term “street photography” encompasses.<sup>54</sup>

Rather than consider how such divergent art practices and aesthetics might productively extend our long-unchallenged understanding of street photography, however, *Strangers* set aside analysis of the economic, social, and psychological specifics of such images’ urban settings and fixated only on their human subjects. In order to do this, *Strangers* made the relationship between street photography and documentary photography simultaneously imperative and historical. Street photography has been and continues to be construed as a subset of documentary photography, itself a highly contested term and category.<sup>55</sup> This was the necessary foundation for *Strangers*’ declaration that the contemporary work in the exhibition was, in fact, “postdocumentary,” which Brian Wallis defined as work challenging “earlier constructions and uses of documentary evidence—particularly photography—to describe culture.”<sup>56</sup> While the concept of “postdocumentary” invites a new consideration of street photography, it makes even more apparent the need for a thorough assessment of documentary photography *as street photography*, a task that Martha Rosler set herself nearly three decades earlier in *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*. Quite notably, the *Strangers* catalogue reproduced a number of short essays reflecting the influence of approaches outside traditional art history, each of which stressed or reinforced the authors’ claim that the subjects of the (postdocumentary) street photographs in the exhibition are best understood as anonymous others, as strangers. The essays, reproduced on distinctive yellow pages in the aesthetic of a last-minute insert, included: Georg Simmel’s “The Stranger,” Walter Benjamin’s “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” Alfred Schütz’s “The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology,” Lyn H. Lofland’s “The Problematic World of Strangers,” Julia

Kristeva's "Strangers to Ourselves," Michel de Certeau's "The Immigrant as a Social Figure of Communication," and "The Making and Unmaking of Strangers" by Zygmunt Bauman. Simmel's text, for example, extols the value of the stranger for his simultaneous closeness and remoteness to the group, his pure mobility within the group, and the objective attitude that results from his status outside of the group.<sup>57</sup> The textual and visual focus on the stranger creates an approach to the representation of the street that draws out only the most alienating and isolating, rather than relatable and collective, dimensions of the city street.<sup>58</sup> More vast in scope and implication, however, is the question begged by *Strangers'* argument that being unknown and possibly unknowable is a defining tenet of contemporary urban life—why not attend to other equally significant facts, such as urban economics, desire, politics, and spectacle when addressing street photography?

This same question could be posed to a 2008 exhibition and catalogue on street photography, *Street and Studio: An Urban History of Photography*, in which portraiture, rather than the urban other, is the uniting theme across two "central sites of photographic practice." As curator Ute Eskildsen elaborated, "The city is the social milieu in which the studio, followed by the street, became prospering sites for taking photographs of the human subject."<sup>59</sup> To explore this thesis—and in a distinct departure from *Strangers, New York*, and others—*Street and Studio* ranges beyond art photography to include works more often associated with or relegated to the categories of journalism and fashion. And though Eskildsen sought to attend to the spaces of the city, the constant idiom of portraiture demanded the focus remain on individual subjects.<sup>60</sup> In this way, *Street and Studio* simply joins a longstanding discourse that has consistently struggled, even before *Bystander's* historical survey, to address the specifics of the street as a productive site and expressive subject for photography.

### ***The Decisive Moment Codifies a Practice***

The title of this dissertation uses the phrase “unfamiliar” to counter the ubiquity with which the literature has portrayed what is in fact one particular practice of street photography as though it were representative. Sketched briefly at the outset of the chapter and exemplified in the work of Winogrand, this practice has imposed considerable limitations on understanding street photography’s actual complexity. Certain requirements of that notion of street photography—mobility, instantaneity, spontaneity—have been referenced throughout the genre’s discourse, but they were codified by Henri Cartier-Bresson’s theory of “the decisive moment” in his 1952 book of the same title. Cartier-Bresson additionally identified the practice with the qualities of speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity. The “simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression” defined his practice.<sup>61</sup> And although Cartier-Bresson did not dwell on the streets as the location for so many of his photographs, the accompanying plates in the book made plain that this was the case (figure 1.4).<sup>62</sup> (Among the 63 images in the first of two plate sections that immediately follow the essay in the American edition of the book, 30 were undoubtedly taken on city streets and another 10 suggest the possibility of an urban location.) According to Kozloff writing in 2002, in street photographs resulting from Cartier-Bresson’s decisive-moment practice, “metropolitan life is no longer construed by events so much as made up of a succession of sudden glimpses and ephemeral instants.”<sup>63</sup> Cartier-Bresson’s text, filled with anecdotes, convictions, and directives, became immediately seminal and soon ratified this practice as *the* practice of street photography.

Near the outset of his text, Cartier-Bresson recalled the origins of his practice in 1932, upon first using a Leica camera: “It became the extension of my eye.... I prowled the streets all day, feeling very strung-up and ready to pounce, determined to ‘trap’ life—

to preserve life in the act of living. Above all, I craved to seize, in the confines of one single photograph, the whole essence of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes.”<sup>64</sup> Cartier-Bresson’s language—“ready to pounce,” “life in the act of living,” “seize,” “unrolling”—encapsulates his beliefs in movement, the immediacy of the moment, and split-second decisions of when to release the shutter. His physical movement directly correlated to the world, which “is movement” and requires being “alert” and having “a suppleness of body.”<sup>65</sup> (Others have therefore made much of the need for the speed of a street photographer’s film to match and enhance the photographer’s own speed as he moves.<sup>66</sup>) Attention to the immediacy of the moment is the appropriate response to a medium that constantly addresses vanishing instants (what Westerbeck terms “photo opportunities”).<sup>67</sup> As Cartier-Bresson explained: “We cannot do our story over again once we’ve got back to the hotel. Our task is to perceive reality, almost simultaneously recording it in the sketchbook which is our camera.”<sup>68</sup> In order to determine the decisive moment which unites motion, content, and form, Cartier-Bresson claimed that “the photographer must make sure, while he is still in the presence of the unfolding scene, that he hasn’t left any gaps, that he has really given expression to the meaning of the scene in its entirety.”<sup>69</sup> This relies on a recollection of the frames that have been already snapped in the photographer’s pursuit of a composition that is as decisive in formal terms as the moment it captures.

The absence of a predetermined photograph is also crucial to the practice of street photography codified by *The Decisive Moment* and most subsequent writings on the genre. The lack of predetermined photographs does not, however, preclude constant awareness of the possible compositions unfolding before the camera. Composition is the result of careful, conscientious watching, as Cartier-Bresson explained it:

Sometimes it happens that you stall, delay, wait for something to happen. Sometimes you have the feeling that here are all the makings of a picture—except for just one thing that seems to be missing. But what one

thing? Perhaps someone suddenly walks into your range of view. You follow his progress through the viewfinder. You wait and wait, and then finally you press the button—and you depart with the feeling (though you don't know why) that you've really got something. Later, to substantiate this, you can take a print of this picture, trace on it the geometric figures which come up under analysis, and you'll observe that, if the shutter was released at the decisive moment, you have instinctively fixed a geometric pattern without which the photograph would have been both formless and lifeless.<sup>70</sup>

But what Cartier-Bresson's rhetoric in *The Decisive Moment* fails to acknowledge is the choice of subject—specific streets in specific cities. Regarding such a photograph as *Place de l'Europe, Paris* (figure 1.4), we can ask: Why Paris? Why Place de l'Europe? What is the importance of that location beyond “all the makings of a picture” that might be found there?

Interestingly, Cartier-Bresson advocated a key alteration to an artistic practice that—as espoused in the above excerpt from *The Decisive Moment*—had long emphasized the act of waiting. As much as Cartier-Bresson suggested restraint and composition in advance of the shutter's release, he also encouraged his readers to keep shooting constantly “because you cannot be sure in advance exactly how the situation, the scene, is going to unfold.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, continuous shooting was the recommended practice *even after* a photographer suspected that the decisive moment of the scene had already been captured on film. Those photographers who put Cartier-Bresson's rhetoric into practice to make now-canonical street photographs, like Winogrand in the 1960s, have indeed tended to “make one exposure after another in rapid succession, varying the composition only slightly each time, looking for the image that will be the best expression of the subject matter.”<sup>72</sup> Cartier-Bresson promoted a practice based on one decisive moment but which additionally and simultaneously insisted on a *multiplying* of vision, with photographers shooting endlessly and rapidly in the streets. Thus, *The Decisive Moment's* espousal of the singular street photograph necessarily emphasized the photographer's act of editing subsequent to shooting.

*The Decisive Moment* emerged amid and was shaped by the context of America's booming picture magazine industry, a context with which Cartier-Bresson was intimately familiar by 1952. It informed his emphasis on editing in such statements as: "It is essential to cut from the raw material of life—to cut and cut, but to cut with discrimination.... There is the selection we make when we look through the view-finder at the subject; and there is the one we make after the films have been developed and printed."<sup>73</sup> Cartier-Bresson's co-founding in 1947 of the cooperative agency Magnum Photos also privileged the photographer's selection, establishing image control for photographers in the picture magazine business. Not surprisingly, a sizeable portion of *The Decisive Moment* is devoted to what Cartier-Bresson calls the "picture-story" (this dissertation will refer to it as the photo essay). That section is titled "The Customers," a rhetorical choice made more compelling in the context of this dissertation's emphasis on the reception of street photography via publication, circulation, and exhibition.

"The Customers" establishes that the objective of the photo essay is exactly synonymous with that of the decisive moment practice articulated in previous sections—"to depict the content of some event which is in the process of unfolding, and to communicate impressions"—a co-mingling of practice and reception that most subsequent writings on street photography or street photographers have worked to avoid, dispel, or ignore outright. (Though, as already noted, Cartier-Bresson did not himself note the particular role of the street in communicating such "impressions.") Cartier-Bresson went on to explain the importance of picture magazines' ability to either convey or distort photographers' intentions to their audience via the photo essay.<sup>74</sup> Captions, therefore, "should invest the pictures with a verbal context, and should illuminate whatever relevant thing it may have been beyond the power of the camera to reach."<sup>75</sup> Captions are also notably where the location and context are often disclosed and discussed. Editing and layout of the photographs for publication are done with

readers' interest in mind, so that the more important or interesting a photo essay, the more pages it will be allocated within the magazine. A similar assessment will determine whether a photograph "deserves" a full page or a two-page spread. Thus, a photographer can "scarcely be too appreciative of the layout man who gives his work a beautiful presentation of a kind which keeps the full import of the story; a display in which the pictures have spatially correct margins and stand out as they should; and in which each page possesses its own arch and rhythm."<sup>76</sup> By the time this text was written, of course, Magnum had already been in operation for five years, and the founding photographers were "determined to maintain control over the use of their pictures, right down to the details of publishing and layout, and the debate on the significance of images in the age of information and their use in journalism took on a whole new dimension."<sup>77</sup> More specifically and succinctly, Westerbeck has stated that street photography was personified by Cartier-Bresson and then institutionalized by Magnum.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the "institutionalization" of street photography by Magnum and the informal adherence to it by a multitude of street photographers, Westerbeck resolutely replicated Cartier-Bresson's rhetorical privileging of personal vision and intuition, applying it to Cartier-Bresson to grandiose effect: "A photograph of life on the street by Henri Cartier-Bresson reveals an astonishing beauty, drama, and formal order that we usually feel we would have missed completely without his help. He sees so many things we cannot that we wonder whether the street itself isn't just the product of his imagination...."<sup>79</sup> Again, the discourse skirts the question: why did Cartier-Bresson photograph on certain streets in certain cities? Others in the field, if less focused on Cartier-Bresson, have still reinforced street photography as a single practice, defined by the principles of the decisive moment. To take but one example, Sarah Greenough wrote in 1996 that the lack of emphasis on narrative in Harry Callahan's street photographs

prevents them from being considered street photographs at all; instead, they must be addressed as portraits.<sup>80</sup> While a richness of understanding may result from thinking of Callahan's street photographs as portraits, I lament the continued inattention to the specifics of the street on which Callahan made these pictures. And I question the consistent reinforcement by art historians—over the forty-odd years since Cartier-Bresson's seminal text—that street photography is a singular practice with a litmus test based on the qualities of spontaneity, mobility, instantaneity, speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity.

It is important to reiterate here that even within Cartier-Bresson's own text, there is a struggle to reconcile a unique, distilled vision with a ubiquitous, easily implemented practice. Similarly, the emphasis on personal intuition and the decisive moment—always necessarily *singular*—clashes with his commitment to the photo essay's multiple components of image, text, and graphic layout as well as its eventual reception by an audience. The scholarly tendency toward a reductivist adherence to the decisive moment has simplified (or risked simplifying) *all* street photography to “a series of elaborate riffs, more or less vigorous or sophisticated or poignant” on a practice that Cartier-Bresson enacted since the 1930s and codified in 1952.<sup>81</sup> The rhetoric of Cartier-Bresson's decisive moment has too long been used to foreclose—and to keep unfamiliar—other photographic modes of engaging the street.

### **Garry Winogrand and the Canonization of Street Photography**

In the canonization of street photography that took place in the late 1960s, largely through art museums and specifically through the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA hereafter), Garry Winogrand became the street photographer par excellence. Since that time, little in the discourse on the genre has challenged or disavowed this outlook.<sup>82</sup> As critic Andy Grundberg summarized on the occasion of the photographer's 1988

retrospective at MoMA, Winogrand “in many eyes represents the apotheosis of real-world photography. His pictures have all the vitality, incongruity and inexplicability of daily life.... Largely because of Winogrand, there remains a thread of conviction in the notion that describing the world is photography’s highest calling.”<sup>83</sup> In his 1995 introductory essay to diCorcia’s first monograph, MoMA curator Peter Galassi historicized the “Winogrand effect” that Grundberg encapsulated, and in so doing, voiced concern over the abandonment of street photography as a genre synonymous with Winogrand’s legacy.

For half a century—from Henri Cartier-Bresson to Robert Frank to Garry Winogrand—the open theater of the street has been a favored hunting ground for photography. The photographer’s cloak of anonymity and freedom of action and the street’s smorgasbord of character and incident together made an arena of seemingly endless artistic opportunity. After Winogrand’s death in 1984, however, the arena was all but abandoned. It is too early to know what diCorcia will make of this untended legacy, but photography has none more potent.<sup>84</sup>

*Bystander* chose to stop that history in the late 1960s and early 1970s “since photo history had thereafter become preoccupied with other issues and a different notion of what history itself was, or should be.” This decision was explained in an afterward for the second edition in 2001. The above statement concluded, “[e]xcept perhaps at Magnum, street photography has undergone a kind of diaspora in the last quarter century.”<sup>85</sup>

The process of canonizing Winogrand may have begun with the photographer’s own rhetoric, but it relied heavily on the presentation and interpretation of his practice by art institutions, most especially by MoMA, at a time of dramatic shifts toward the aesthetic isolation of photography. In his 1963 application for a Guggenheim Fellowship, Winogrand wrote: “I read the newspapers, the columnists, some books, I look at some magazines (our press). They all deal in illusions and fantasies.... I cannot accept my conclusions, and so I must continue this photographic investigation further and deeper.”<sup>86</sup> Perhaps because of Winogrand’s self-distancing rhetoric toward picture

magazines and photojournalism, his photographs were first and are still associated with the most personal and domestic of photographs, the snapshot. In 1966, curator Nathan Lyons claimed in his exhibition catalogue for the George Eastman House that photographers like Winogrand were appropriating—in a rather modernist, even Greenbergian explanation—one of the “authentic photographic forms,” the snapshot.<sup>87</sup> Formal and practical affinities are evident. Both Winogrand and the postwar snapshotter employed handheld cameras, usually 35mm (Winogrand used a 35mm Leica exclusively after about 1950). Both often relied exclusively on available light.<sup>88</sup> Both Winogrand and the snapshotter took pictures in a successive, often rapid manner, thus leaving the images more open to chance occurrence or less traditional composition at the moment of exposure and, later, resulting in a variety and quantity of shots that required editing.<sup>89</sup> With these affinities in mind, Alex Sweetman has used the phrase “snapshot aesthetic” to point to Winogrand’s “tilted horizons, close and dynamic wide angle views of street activity, the use of flash to stop action, odd (or funny, sad, touching, stupid, illogical, surreal, etc.) juxtapositions, and a density and complexity of composition that approaches chaos.”<sup>90</sup> These qualities are many of those most prized by the discourse on street photography already discussed in this chapter and are best evidenced by Winogrand’s contact sheets.<sup>91</sup> For example, the 1961 sheet (figure 1.1) charts the photographer’s movement on the streets. Read from bottom filmstrip to top, and within each strip from right frame to left, Winogrand operated from within the crowd, moving along blocks and crossing streets, all the while snapping pictures until the negative numbered 35.<sup>92</sup> After negative 35, his interest becomes more fixed—particularly on a woman standing near a column at Radio City Music Hall—but still in motion, darting to the left and right of his subject, coming in toward her and then retreating (figure 1.5). In what was likely no more than a matter of one or two minutes, Winogrand took fourteen photographs. (In spite of the photographic gymnastics documented on such a contact

sheet, when asked how long it took him to make a picture, Winogrand “pretended to consider the question, and then replied, ‘I think it was a hundred and twenty-fifth of a second.’”<sup>93</sup>) Few of Winogrand’s compositions look alike, even from the same roll of film. Seemingly unlimited combinations resulted from his variable movements, which affect each picture’s framing, and his equally changing subjects, the chance appearances of pedestrians before his camera. Winogrand’s use of a wide-angle lens undid the logic of the horizon line as well as lines perpendicular to it. As the contact sheet shows, this meant that he could include the complete figure of a passing pedestrian, when typically only his or her face would fall within the field of view. Likewise, while still within close range of the figure, the wide-angle lens allowed Winogrand to fill each frame with more urban context than was possible within straight photographic conventions.<sup>94</sup> Despite this increased density of information about urban experiences, Winogrand’s photographs have rarely been discussed in relation to the particular streets on which he shot.<sup>95</sup> Instead, the discourse has emphasized his signature images, casting each one as a decisive moment.

If Winogrand’s taking of photographs is understood as a series of unmediated reactions to the experience of the city street, his presenting of those same photographs was the mediated result of a thorough and rigorous mode of editing. The marks on his 1961 contact sheet indicate the refinement of his editing toward the selection (indicated by a halo of red squiggles) of a single frame from that day’s shoot or roll of film (figures 1.5 and 1.2).<sup>96</sup> Winogrand said, “looking at the contacts is a similar kind of adventure as shooting is.... When I’m photographing, I don’t see pictures.... [W]hen I look at the contact, then I have to ask, is the photograph interesting?”<sup>97</sup> Editing for the singular image of course necessitates the dismissal of other shots, a practice already and widely associated with the photojournalism, advertisements, fashion, and other commercial photography Winogrand so disliked.<sup>98</sup> That similarity may be why Cartier-Bresson

privileged editing in *The Decisive Moment*, but it is also why the canonization of Winogrand's practice by art institutions remains key. In this new context, editing was successfully dissociated from commercial practices and was instead advanced as a crucial element of the street photographer's art. By the time of Winogrand's 1988 retrospective at MoMA, mural-size reproductions of his contact sheets declared as integral to street photography the suppression of other views of the street, treating them as noise that detracts from the perfectly tuned picture. In the exhibition catalogue, Szarkowski evoked postwar street photographers as forbearers to Winogrand: "If their pictures seemed gratuitously casual even by the relatively permissive standards of photojournalism, they also seemed to be lifted directly and spontaneously from the flow of real life; they seemed formed not by rules and calculation, but by intuition and strong feeling."<sup>99</sup> Szarkowski mentioned photojournalism to distinguish street photography (especially Winogrand's) from photojournalism, particularly as a genre identified by qualities such as strength of pictorial narrative, social intuition (echoes of *The Decisive Moment's* rhetoric), instantaneity, and spontaneity (two qualities having been remarked on since at least 1900). In Szarkowski's rhetoric, street photography was effectively extracted from any social sphere it might occupy as well as from the public circulation that had been so crucial a component of *The Decisive Moment*.

By 1963, the year in which Winogrand's photographs were given specific attention in MoMA's *Five Unrelated Photographers*, that institution alone, "through its influential exhibitions and publications, ha[d] with increasing authority set [the] general 'horizon of expectation' with respect to photography."<sup>100</sup> Szarkowski firmly directed MoMA's exhibition programs toward a pointedly modernist presentation of photography, emphasizing each print's formal qualities above all else. In 1967 Szarkowski curated the landmark exhibition *New Documents*, which featured work by Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, and Winogrand. In his introductory text to the exhibition, he claimed: "In the

past decade a new generation of photographers has directed the documentary approach toward more personal ends. Their aim has not been to reform life, but to know it.”<sup>101</sup> It is striking that Szarkowski chose to call out the documentary nature of the work by these three photographers, while failing to mention other similarities such as the consistency with which all three worked outdoors and, most especially in the cases of Friedlander and Winogrand, in cities. This oversight of the urban context of such photographs is all the more striking given that the checklist reveals works titled by the name of the city in which they were made or occasionally, in Friedlander’s case, simply “*Street Scene*.”<sup>102</sup> Such a shift in emphasis eased street photography’s transformation into a group of objects for aesthetic admiration only, simultaneously eliminating any connection to documentary photography’s legacy of social change and any consideration of the cultural, political, or social contexts in which Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand had made their photographs. The aesthetic isolation of Winogrand’s pictures was established and reinforced by their inclusion over the course of the 1960s in no less than eight Szarkowski-curated exhibitions at MoMA. Four exhibitions at the George Eastman House and shows at various New York galleries in that same decade further afforded Winogrand’s photographs an ever-increasing audience.<sup>103</sup>

Street photography trades on the meanings and experiences of cities, not just those of the photographer but, far more importantly, those of its audience. As Winogrand once described it: “You don’t really know what’s happening.... But you do, from your own experience, surmise something.”<sup>104</sup> Consider, for example, Winogrand’s photograph of an older, black man with his hand outstretched toward the disembodied but also outstretched arm of another (seemingly white) man standing outside of the frame (figure 1.6). The relationship between the open palm and closed hand allows the viewer to surmise simultaneously the urban act of begging for and giving spare change; the severely tilted view may encourage the viewer to feel uneasy or ungrounded; and,

finally, the ability to perceive both the begging man's forward motion, as suggested by his bent knee, and the viewer's proximity to the charitable arm—visible in the composition only because of Winogrand's wide-angle lens—heighten the sense that the viewer as much as the photographer (or the person just to his left) is being approached and solicited. Disregarding such effects on viewers and in spite of the fact that Winogrand's photographs were shown in several exhibitions, Szarkowski claimed that from 1960 on Winogrand did not take his pictures for his audience but rather, for himself. "[W]ithout any clear idea of where, or if, a broader audience might exist.... [Winogrand's] essential, supportive audience was often small enough to gather around a café table."<sup>105</sup> In such a statement, Szarkowski disallowed an audience external to the artistic process of creating photographs, effectively consecrating Winogrand's street photography for its formal accomplishments and purity of purpose. The ideologically modernist institutional program of Szarkowski's MoMA canonized Winogrand's street photographs, but it did so at the expense of understanding the genre. Why not ask, when considering *New York*, where in the city, on what street, was Winogrand when he took this photograph? What might it mean that he encountered a begging man there? How might answers to these questions illuminate Winogrand's other street photographs depicting beggars on other New York streets, in other cities?

A recollection of Winogrand's street photographs from the late 1950s to early 1970s by photography dealer Jeffrey Fraenkel in a recent catalogue is telling:

[A]n odd thing is happening to these photographs, right before our eyes. They are becoming historical. Not *art* historical, but historical in the sense of describing in a persuasive manner the feeling of their times.... [W]ith the distance of three decades... Winogrand's photographs [now] lay claim to the 1960s and 1970s in much the same way that Robert Frank's images define the 1950s, and Walker Evans's the 1930s.... I cannot say whether the tenor of the street has changed since Garry's death, or if anyone has depicted more piercingly the slivers of incident that etch human relations. But the pictures have not shed their troubling relevance.<sup>106</sup>

This commentary is not merely an exaggerated expression of the high regard in which Winogrand continues to be held; it also emphasizes how his pictures have become historically of a whole decade. Yet in the time since their making, Winogrand's street photographs have not been historically contextualized and geographically situated so as to address the particularities of the moment and location of their making. This failure of the discourse is also linked to the modernist presentation of photography at MoMA, which Christopher Phillips has characterized as “a flight from history.”<sup>107</sup> Flight from historical context and specifics of location is a nearly universal inadequacy with the discourse on street photography. This dissertation aims to redress that.

### **Promising Approaches to Street Photography**

Preceding sections of this chapter have addressed the prevailing and restrictive understanding of street photography in the majority of photo-historical literature. This section will examine the opportunities suggested by other texts, ranging from one of the earliest writings on street photography to various non-art-historical approaches concerned more broadly with representations of urban experience. The alternate approaches in these texts—considered in tandem with those addressed above—help demonstrate how, when, and in what contexts did the rhetoric surrounding street photography emerge, develop, and arrive at its current entrenchment. I am particularly concerned with the incongruities that exist within this rhetoric that might illuminate other possible conceptions of the genre, such as the one that will be attempted by this dissertation.

The city and its streets have appeared in photographs since the inception of the medium in the early nineteenth century. It took an active and widespread practice of making photographs in city streets, however, before references were made to street photography as a genre, albeit one that was still uncertainly discreet from other genres.

Although there are numerous articles from the turn of the twentieth century addressing the street as a site for making pictures, I have chosen to focus on the most sustained and extensive of these by photographer Osborne Yellott, which is also the first to have deployed the term “street photography.”<sup>108</sup> That phrase serves as the title of his 1900 essay, published in one of many technical and advice manuals that proliferated in the decades after Kodak championed photography’s mass accessibility. Yellott’s “Street Photography” considered broadly the technical craft of photographing out of doors, acknowledging up front that for a growing number of amateurs, the “humor and pathos” of life as found on the street offer subjects “far more interesting than deserted mills or rustic bridges i.e., the everyday life of the streets of his city.”<sup>109</sup> Yellott reinforced the immediacy of the city: “Foremost among the attractions of street photography is the fact that we do not have to travel, or wait for rare opportunity, to find our picture material.”<sup>110</sup> (Ute Eskildsen has noted the importance of the hand camera and the instantaneous photograph encouraging notions of the city as a “self-generating” source of subject matter.<sup>111</sup>) Yellott then delineated two kinds of street photographs: the “pictorial treatment of locality” and the “record of scene or incident which may possess sentiment or merely human interest.” For the first of these, he suggested “an intimate acquaintance with the locality is essential to success.” In the second, for those “representing sentiment, incident, or character, it is unnecessary to strive to represent locality”; Yellott offered Alfred Stieglitz’s *Wet Day on the Boulevard* as an example of this second vein of street photography, a point to which I will return.<sup>112</sup>

After discussing the necessity of a viewfinder for street photography and the selection of a pleasing point of view, Yellott advised the photographer to focus on “one main object of interest in our picture,—something at which a person viewing our picture can look, and feel that we were looking at it when we took it.”<sup>113</sup> Several pages later, he makes a related but crucial aside, stating that, faced with the selection of a single

camera for making photographs on city streets while traveling, he would choose his stereoscopic camera as it is “preeminently suitable” to street photography. “When we see a picture of a person through the stereoscope, we can almost feel that he [*sic*] is standing before us. That is the feeling which we wish to produce in the minds of our friends when we bring home our pictures.”<sup>114</sup> What seems a nod to the armchair travels made possible for many middle-class and bourgeois people by the stereoscope is in fact a remarkable advocacy for the photographic representation of the collective experience of the street. Yellott celebrated the distances, both geographic and interpersonal, that a street photograph could collapse. Yet he also privileged the circulation and reception of street photography. Whether intentionally or not, Yellott’s conception powerfully endorses street photography’s representation of the experiences of metropolitan streets as well as its encounter-producing function for viewers, two key qualities of street photography that would be obscured in the overwhelming majority of later treatises but which this dissertation intends to reassert.

An instructive counterpoint can be found in the contemporaneous rhetoric of one of modern photography’s champions, Stieglitz, particularly his 1897 article “The Hand Camera—Its Present Importance.”<sup>115</sup> There, Stieglitz offered what may be the earliest tethering of photographs made in the street (he did not use the term “street photography”) to speed, spontaneity, and chance.<sup>116</sup> In contrast to Yellott’s more social interest in the street, Stieglitz’s emphasized what street photography could abstract there for artistic possibility. Stieglitz suggested the following practice to other mobile photographers:

In order to obtain pictures by means of the hand camera, it is well to choose your subject, regardless of figures, and carefully study the lines and lighting. After having determined upon these watch the passing figures and await the moment in which everything is in balance; that is, satisfies your eye. This often means hours of patient waiting. My picture, ‘Fifth Avenue, Winter,’ is the result of a three hours’ stand during a fierce

snow-storm on February 22nd, 1893, awaiting the proper moment. My patience was duly rewarded [figure 1.7].<sup>117</sup>

Stieglitz's use of the term "passing figures"—and his suggestion that there are enough of such figures from which to choose the most desirable composition—reveals two basic assumptions. First, the photographer heeding his advice is working on city sidewalks and boulevards. Second, these locations were busy or urban enough to provide ample figural subjects for the photographer to select the most fortuitous compositional arrangement of human activity and city street. But why Fifth Avenue in New York City? What is that street's importance, *beyond* "passing figures," for both Stieglitz and for viewers of the picture?

In *Winter–Fifth Avenue*, the article's accompanying photographic illustration, the moment when "everything" was "in balance" occurred when a horse-drawn carriage made its way toward the photographer, silhouetted, along with its driver, against a snow flurried view along the city street. It is easy to imagine Stieglitz framing the dominant geometry of directional lines formed by wheel tracks in the snow, taking note of the equally angled atmospheric lines of the falling snow, and waiting until the spatial arrangement of the scene was completed by the carriage and driver. What is more striking, however, is his claim that his commitment to the scene warranted three hours; regardless of its veracity, the statement reflects his desire to picture the city street in these weather conditions. On the ground and in the sky, the snow renders the city anonymous, devoid of specificity, and unidentifiable as the economic, social, and personal site in which the scene takes place. For these same reasons, Yellott had assigned another Stieglitz picture to his second category of street photography in which it was "unnecessary to strive to represent locality," Paris in the case of *Wet Day on the Boulevard*. Indeed, as Christopher Mulvey and John Simons noted, the site of *Winter–*

*Fifth Avenue* was one with which Stieglitz had the kind of “intimate acquaintance... [considered] essential to success” within Yellott’s first category.

The way in which a special sense of ‘the Street’ [*sic*] has been constructed for us here is made obvious if we relate the photograph to the original area in which it was taken. What we have, and what we so easily miss, is that this is an image of 5th Avenue, close to where Stieglitz was to establish [his art gallery] ‘291.’ And yet it gives little sense of what was happening in the area in the 1890s, for it was no longer the domain of wealthy houses, but, like Madison Square along the way, it was becoming more and more a *commercial* area, and newspapers of the time commented upon the rapid change in the use of buildings.... As a street, then, the image remains ambivalent and certainly has little to do with one’s sense of a street as part of an immediate urban reality.<sup>118</sup>

As skyscrapers rose in the city and electric streetlights lined Fifth Avenue, Stieglitz’s photographic vision retreated from the urban changes with which he would have had “intimate acquaintance.”<sup>119</sup> Instead, Stieglitz understood and constructed the street in terms of what photography might abstract from it for artistic perfection; *this* is street photography almost entirely divorced from the specifics of the street. However, if consideration is given to the specifics of locality—as invited by Yellott’s treatise—then a new approach to street photography can attend to both image and location, photograph and street, subject and site. This approach is demonstrated by the Mulvey and Simons quotation. Rather than continuing to privilege Stieglitz’s understanding of the street, this dissertation attempts an art-historical revival of Yellott’s notion of street photograph as a “pictorial treatment of locality,” one which responds to the particulars of the street and engenders the viewer’s experiential reception of it.

Mulvey and Simons, professors of English and American Studies, respectively, are but one example of approaches beyond art history that remain attentive to photographic representations of the city. (I remain less interested in art-historical accounts addressing other media such as painting or film, having generally found that the bulk of these texts merely replicate the inattention to the specifics of the street that this chapter has charted in photo-historical texts to date.) In broad terms, I have found

the most instructive non-art-historical approaches to include: the literary, the sociological, and, finally, that of the cross-disciplinary field of urban studies. Given that cities have long represented cultural achievement, condensed human interaction, economic centers, technical innovations, political nexuses, and social dynamics, it should not be surprising that city streets have stimulated so many different disciplines. This section does not represent an exhaustive compilation of such studies; instead, it intends to introduce a range of alternative approaches that have shaped the reconsideration of street photography offered by this dissertation.

One of the most recent titles concerned with street photography is exemplary of the non-art-historical literary approach.<sup>120</sup> Clive Scott's *Street Photography: From Atget to Cartier-Bresson* focuses exclusively on Paris-based photographs made from the time of Atget to that of Cartier-Bresson, exploring "their literary, photographic and painterly partnerships and intertexts."<sup>121</sup> Scott purposefully limited his chronological scope to the era before "that so-called 'hard-boiled' strain of street photography—cynical, gritty, raw—of post-war American photographers" (citing Winogrand). However, it remains unclear how this limitation enhances his goal of uncovering street photography's "selfhood" and whether this period and location are not merely the most proximate chronologically to the practices of "street painting" and "urban writing" so dominantly produced in Paris during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>122</sup>

Scott understandably took issue with the existing discourse's definition of street photography (citing *Bystander*), but declared a lack of interest in approaching street photography as a practice "of commentary on issues of social and cultural importance."<sup>123</sup> Though this dissertation embraces the latter possibility, Scott's outlook allows for an acknowledgment of what the art-historical discourse has left unaddressed: "street photography certainly puts us in a taxonomic quandary, not only because it stands at the crossroads between the tourist snap, the documentary photograph, the

photojournalism of the *fait divers* (news in brief), but also because it asks to be treated as much as a vernacular photography as a high art one.”<sup>124</sup> Scott discussed street photography’s relationship to time and history as a way to posit that it represents subjects (prostitutes and beggars, for example) whose existence cannot be denied.<sup>125</sup>

Yet it remains unclear why the human subjects of street photographs cannot be denied but the historical streets—also subjects in the same photographs—can be denied. Scott addressed this matter:

[W]riting histories of street photography, or mapping the progress of street photography on to the shifts in socio-political history, runs the risk (a) of implying that, if one is patient, a definitive history of photography, as an autonomous and self-sustaining medium, will become possible and desirable; and (b) of giving the viewer obligations to this kind of history against other kinds of history.<sup>126</sup>

Despite the advocacy of alternative or plural histories here implied, there is, of course, also the possibility independent of the need to map histories of street photography onto socio-political histories. Another kind of history—the one enacted by this dissertation—proposes that the second will always and already be inherent in the first. If one attends to the *streets* of street photography, one necessarily attends to broader urban contexts and histories, without necessarily risking the foreclosure of other contexts or other histories. This is the lesson this dissertation has taken from sociological and urban studies approaches to visual representations of the street.

Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau are exemplary of efforts to arrive at a sociological understanding of how people function in cities and the everyday experience of cities.<sup>127</sup> Both were careful to distinguish these daily practices of city dwellers from the purposes, uses, and results of urban planning.<sup>128</sup> Their writings also share a belief that meaning can and does derive from everyday life, all those aspects of life that are “left over” but which in fact encompass life’s intricacies, conflicts, and ideologies.<sup>129</sup> Thus, to a certain extent, everyday life has the potential to produce and reflect commonality.<sup>130</sup>

Lefebvre considered both theory and artistic representation as active sites of knowledge: “The human eye has formed and transformed itself first through practical and then aesthetic activity, and by knowledge; it has become something other than a mere organ.”<sup>131</sup> Because it is located at the intersection of art and the everyday, photography held an appeal for Lefebvre; further, he considered photography a representational tool, a source of information about experiences, which would allow for a better understanding of urban life.<sup>132</sup> Lefebvre’s emphasis on lived experiences as well as his claim that photographic representations of urban life simultaneously result from and shape our knowledge of cities are both fundamental to the goals of this dissertation. De Certeau’s engagement with structuralism and poststructuralism in his exploration of everyday life encourages a more thorough consideration of the social structures that shape our use, experience, and understanding of cities. Such sociological examinations of urban experience as those by Lefebvre and de Certeau represent a theoretical grappling with how cities are shaped as sites of consumer desire, political demonstration, economic dispossession, and social spectacle.

How pedestrians imagine participating in the spaces of the city, of course, is based on (and follows from) how pedestrians actually do participate in those spaces. One of the most popular, influential efforts to chronicle this participation is Jane Jacobs’ 1961 publication, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.<sup>133</sup> As a constructive attack on dominant modes of city planning at the time, her study affirms density above all else in its assessment of research conducted in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C.<sup>134</sup> Observing everyday scenes and occurrences for their inherent principles was, for Jacobs, a way to answer such questions as: “How can you know what to try with traffic until you know how the city itself works, and what else it needs to do with its streets?”<sup>135</sup> The workings of urban sidewalks could reveal much about pedestrian contact, public safety, economic prosperity, and

even (or especially, given the date) racial tolerance.<sup>136</sup> Today, nearly fifty years since Jacobs' groundbreaking study, a forthcoming publication will revisit and reconsider the distinct space of American city sidewalks as used "for political demonstrations and urban greening, promenades for the wealthy and well-dressed, and shelterless shelters for the homeless."<sup>137</sup> Jacobs wrote that cities had served as sacrificial victims to urban planning in part because they were "unstudied" and "unrespected."<sup>138</sup> Similarly, the unstudied and unrespected streets of street photography have languished in the surrounding discourse, and this dissertation aims to bring a social attention such as Jacobs' to an art-historical reconsideration of street photography.

In its attempt to do so, this dissertation is deeply indebted to Rosalyn Deutsche's scholarship, which is ever attentive to some of the non-art-historical approaches charted in the above paragraphs and advocates the more integrated, cross-disciplinary approach afforded by urban studies.<sup>139</sup> Specifically important for the purposes of this chapter, her essay for the anthology *If You Lived Here... The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism* takes art history to task for its categorical conventions regarding the city and art.<sup>140</sup> Deutsche elaborated on the interpretive and intellectual straitjacketing that has resulted from these four categorical understandings: "All connections between art and the city drawn by aestheticist tendencies within art history are, in the end, articulated as a single relationship: timeless and spaceless works of art ultimately transcend the very urban conditions that purportedly 'influenced' them, or that are 'expressed,' 'reflected,' or 'transparently' depicted in them."<sup>141</sup> This dissertation aims to enact an aesthetic, art-historical consideration that is, in contrast to the practice Deutsche described, intently attentive to the time and space of the work's creation in an urban location. Moreover, in demonstrating that street photography always and already embraces its own circulation and reception, this dissertation hopes to suggest a social function for this genre of art. Rather than obscuring the city, which has been standard procedure in so many art-

historical efforts, I propose a function for street photography that begins *in* the city and continues to exist *because of* the constructions and experiences of it.

To the extent that this approach can be characterized as social art history, it is not one necessarily welcomed by Deutsche:

Social art history departs from such accounts of ‘city painting’ by emphasizing art’s reliance on, rather than independence from, the urban ‘context.’ However, social art history merely replaces the model of autonomy with one of ‘interaction’ between art and the city, maintaining an essential division between the two. Traditional Marxist interpretations, sometimes called ‘the new social art history,’ often introduce political categories—such as class—into aesthetic debates. But they, too, posit a fundamental origin and determinate of all meaning, both urban and aesthetic, locating ‘the political’ in a single governing sphere—the economic. Marxist art history thus substitutes an *a priori* separation of art from the city with a predetermined reduction of both to the level of economic relations.<sup>142</sup>

Not only does this dissertation hope to question the assumption that “interaction” between art and the city necessarily maintains an essentializing distance between the two, the topics of the four case-study chapters are intended to purposefully suggest the open-endedness of an approach that does not, in fact, reduce “the political” to the economic sphere. In Chapter Three, for example, I consider the street photographs of Charles Moore, not to enact a Marxist reduction of his work—or the city it depicts—to the “level of economic relations,” but to grapple with a diverse “political” field, from one city’s demonstrations to the politics of racism, from civil and spatial urban disobedience to the mobilization of political sympathy. At the same time, this dissertation remains committed to the detailed formal analysis of street photographs, an analysis that I contend should be possible *without* subscribing to the “aestheticist tendencies” identified by Deutsche. Again taking Chapter Three as my example, I attend to the formal qualities of Moore’s photographs, as determined by aspects of his photographic process such as proximity, equipment, and composition; I repeat this visual exercise toward the chapter’s close in order to address how those same photographs appeared on the pages of *Life*, through

decisions about layout, cropping, scale, captioning, and more. In contrast to Deutsche's New York City-centric writings, I hope for a more open model, one that benefits from grappling with the specifics of multiple cities.<sup>143</sup> For example, Deutsche's model for understanding New York City would have been ill-suited to reckoning fully with Birmingham's construction and maintenance of two separate downtowns—one white, one black.<sup>144</sup> I agree wholeheartedly that one separation of art and city not be substituted for another. I nevertheless argue—from a position deeply committed to the photo-historical discourse—for the productive and illuminating possibilities of multiply and differently oriented considerations of the interaction between art and city.

Another important urban studies model for this dissertation has been Peter Bacon Hales' *Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839–1915*, which considers photography's ability to structure the cities it depicts. While this dissertation focuses on four artists spanning the post–World War II era, Hales's text demonstrates how social history can illuminate any past era.<sup>145</sup> Considering urban photographs prior to World War I, Hales argued that these images correspond to the “picture millions had of an urban future,” thereby suggesting that not only did the city affect its own photographic representation but that these urban photographs shaped forward visions of the city.<sup>146</sup> From this, I argue that street photographs that were carefully constructed to synch experience with desire—this dissertation's most extreme example of which are Avedon's *Harper's Bazaar* photographs, the topic of Chapter Two—just as easily correspond to the picture millions have of urban reality.<sup>147</sup> Also important for this dissertation, *Silver Cities* examines how the dissemination of these photographs informed their function at the time and allowed reception to continue to influence claims made since: “Offering not simply facts but information, they were cultural messengers, and their messages both reflected and defined how Americans saw their cities. More important, they assisted in the process by which American culture

adjusted to its urbanization.”<sup>148</sup> *Silver Cities* stands out for its thorough inclusion of the relationship between photograph, subject, and viewer, making it an important model for a dissertation that aims to acknowledge how the construction and production of street photographs corresponds, or fails to correspond, to the ways in which, for millions, the street frames urban experience.

*Bystander* and street photography texts, then, have missed a crucial component of that genre’s power and resonance in overlooking the question of its reception. Street photography must be understood to exist beyond a moment’s interaction between “a camera, and this subject matter, the street.”<sup>149</sup> How did street photographs come to be known and what was their impact? The four photographers featured in this dissertation were chosen because they intended to make affective pictures, capitalizing on their photographs’ circulation, reproduction in magazines, relationship to text, publication context and/or physical scale in relation to viewers. Their audience was decidedly not “small enough to gather around a café table” but widespread.<sup>150</sup> And although mass circulation was possible before World War II, more people had access to photographic images—including those considered here—because of the postwar rise and expansion of the middle class, a shift which engendered new and multiple modes of photographic circulation, display, and publication. Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia inscribed roles for viewers contemplating their choreographed representations of historical urban experience. Accompanying Yellott’s early prescription that the most successful photographs taken on the street enable their viewers to sense that the subject “is standing before us” is the conviction that such shared vision was apt for representations of the collective experience of city streets.<sup>151</sup> In addition to attending to the particular circumstances of reception for the work of Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia, this dissertation maintains that street photography is best understood when the potentially collective nature of both streets and viewers is taken into account.<sup>152</sup> Street

photography's reception is nothing short of fundamental to our understanding such a vital photographic mode.<sup>153</sup>

### **Case Studies**

Each case-study chapter in this dissertation follows a roughly similar trajectory, beginning with a consideration of a set of generative precedents in order to illuminate the relationship between the work in question and other distinct but related engagements with the street. These considerations of precedent not only re-engage the discourse on street photography in each chapter—suggesting a range of historical practices that have or have not been allowed to inform that discourse—but also acknowledge the preconditions productively elaborated or exploited in the work of these four photographers and/or their audience at the time of the photographs' production and initial reception. Each chapter then offers a process-oriented description of how the photographs were made in the city. This is followed by a careful consideration of the specifics of the streets that are the site and subject of the photographs as well as relevant broader historical context. Each chapter concludes with an exploration of the context in which street photographs by each artist originally appeared to viewers, from choices in editing, scale, captioning, and/or display to reactions encouraged in viewers through a work's appearance and circulation. More generally, the case-study structure allows for the in-depth examination of four understudied examples of postwar American street photography and simultaneously encourages a widespread application of my approach to other photographers, other cities, and other photographs. It is my intent that the four case-study chapters here serve as both a demonstration of and an invitation to a new approach to street photography.

The “unfamiliar” or seemingly idiosyncratic selection of my case studies comprises work by those who might be more quickly, and not incorrectly, labeled a

fashion photographer, a photojournalist, a conceptual artist, and an art photographer. In choosing to focus on the work of Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia, I intentionally sought photographers who translate urban experiences by means more or less interventionist, constructed, or documentary. An artistic construction of the streets may take viewers much closer to that experience than a documentary photograph; likewise, the appearance of a documentary photograph in a magazine and/or alongside text may complicate urban experience more than an interventionist photograph of the streets. Such photographic confrontations must, of course, remain open to multiple readings. (The readings offered in the case-study chapters do not necessarily foreclose other readings in their assumption that the urban-aware postwar viewer knew how to visually engage the street photographs by Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia, however unfamiliar their images remained to both canon and discourse.<sup>154</sup>) It is my hope that the selection of these four photographers provides a survey of types and meanings of street photography in the context of American postwar urban culture, a survey that diversifies, expands, and complicates the existing discourse, thereby necessarily changing the practice of that genre's history.

Each of these artists was born in a different decade but came of age in postwar America, and the photographs addressed in this dissertation were made at intervals ranging from twelve to twenty years; the cumulative effect of these choices is a generational span across postwar American street photography. While Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia have been accorded monographs and significant exhibitions as individual practitioners, only diCorcia has been embraced by the discourse surrounding street photography.<sup>155</sup> Street photographs by Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia are united in their privileging of reception—a crucial component to street photography—in their work's appearance. Far from being merely isolated art objects, these street photographs engage their own reproducibility, audience, criticality, and/or reflexivity.

Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia utilized photography's potential for shared cultural connotations, as evidenced by their photographs' aesthetic processes, choices, and appearance. My case-study treatment of the work of these four photographers, each of whom engages the street with particular motivations, allows for a culturally and historically specific demonstration of new approaches to the street and its photographic representation.

Although Richard Avedon has become widely known for his work as a studio portrait and fashion photographer, it is his late 1940s work for *Harper's Bazaar* that broke new ground in the practice of street photography. With these pictures, Avedon daringly and deliberately located fashion photography on the streets of Paris, making explicit the association of the urban environment with gendered material desire.<sup>156</sup> Nevertheless, these images have been discounted as having little if any significance in the surrounding discourse beyond their ability to sell skirts, hats, and shoes. Published in *Bazaar* as part of a conscientious push for overseas postwar consumerism among American women, Avedon's photographs mine the viewer's familiarity with urban experience, successfully eliciting an identificatory desire for the product on display and the Parisian modernity and nostalgia on which it traded.<sup>157</sup>

When Avedon began making photographs, the second decade of American picture magazines offered an incredible source of work for many photographers, to say nothing of the audience afforded by *Life's* several million readers.<sup>158</sup> But as a new generation came of age in the early 1960s, "the assumptions of their parents' lives were subjected to direct questioning. Without the background of depression and war, a desire for material possessions and family stability proved far weaker for the younger generation. The virtues of suburban life seemed less appealing, and the problems of America were more compelling."<sup>159</sup> Among those problems, perhaps the most pressing were America's legacy of racism and its attendant policies of racial discrimination, both

of which would increasingly be challenged publicly, in force, by the civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s.<sup>160</sup> As Jane Jacobs noted in the section of her 1961 study “The Use of Sidewalks: Contact”: “Sidewalk public contact and sidewalk public safety, taken together, bear directly on our country’s most serious social problem—segregation and racial discrimination.”<sup>161</sup> While the centrality of the street for 1960s social revolutions is almost a cliché, the attendant literature has paid little attention to the centrality of street photography in the establishment of the decade’s reputation.

Demonstration photographs from the 1960s record the street in the decade when it was inseparably linked to collective political struggle. Working for *Life* magazine, Charles Moore photographed the occupation of Birmingham’s streets, sidewalks, and other urban spaces with deep connotations of governmental power. Street photographs documenting revolutions like the one staged in Birmingham enjoyed ever-increasing circulation in newspapers and picture magazines as well as through the rising medium of television.<sup>162</sup> Although there would soon be photo coverage of women’s liberation marches, demonstrations following Stonewall, and widespread protests against the war in Vietnam, it was the civil rights movement that gained steady front-page prominence early in the 1960s.<sup>163</sup> Some of these photographs are among the best-known street photographs ever made, so familiar to many of us that they can be conjured with the briefest descriptions: a black man careening between two attacking police dogs; people knocked over by the water from fire hoses; marchers with picket signs reading “I am a man.”<sup>164</sup> Others, while less iconic, filled the daily visual landscape of any sentient citizen (figure 1.8).

It has always been crucial for this dissertation to address itself to street photographs circulating in the public sphere.<sup>165</sup> Like Avedon, Moore capitalized on his viewers’ ability to recognize the city streets. Unlike Avedon’s photographs, however, Moore’s photographs appeared only and always with detailed news accounts of events

on the ground. Of course, photojournalists are aware of and reference certain aesthetic standards in their photographs, and such standardization "gives the viewer a sense of familiarity—we know these pictures—as well as creating the impress of evidence."<sup>166</sup> Accordingly, Moore formally inscribed his 1963 images for *Life* with an identificatory power, such that viewers have no choice but to find themselves situated, for example, alongside the firefighters ordered to hose protestors off the streets of Birmingham. Attending to Moore's photojournalistic practice in the context of *Life* requires viewers to analyze the captions or text alongside the photographs or their presentation on the page; in Moore's case, this often exposes a tension or disconnect in his photographs' reception, but the identificatory power manages, I argue, to render the corresponding text perfunctory.

In November 1963, civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph spoke at the AFL-CIO convention, declaring: "The Negro's protest today is but the first rumbling of the '*underclass*.' As the Negro has taken to the streets, so will the unemployed of all races take to the streets."<sup>167</sup> Randolph's statement reflects the kind of democratic spatial politics about which Deutsche has written extensively: "When space is pictured as a closed entity, conflicts—and social groups associated with conflict—appear as disturbances that enter space from the outside and must be expelled to restore harmony.... [W]e cannot recover what we never had. Social space is produced and structured by conflicts."<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless, from the 1960s to the 1970s, a rhetoric grounded in identifying and expelling disturbances thrived, such that Stanford Anderson could remark in his 1978 preface to the anthology *On Streets*: "[F]amiliar are the numerous entrenched expressions where 'street' bears a negative connotation: 'on the street,' 'streetwalker,' 'street crime.' Streets then, present problems, and 'street' is used as a metaphor for what is aberrant and fearful in the light of social norms."<sup>169</sup> Large-scale urban homelessness and poverty developed in the 1960s, and Barbara Ehrenreich has noted

that the 1964 declaration of a “War on Poverty” in the U.S. cannot be understood apart from the civil rights movement’s demonstrations in the years immediately preceding that announcement. Civil rights demonstrators were not “passively selected by news photographers, like the exemplars of poverty featured in magazine stories,” whereas the poor were ultimately “less threatening to white, middle-class sensibilities than the swelling black movement.” Thus, the War on Poverty was “a way, almost, of changing the subject.”<sup>170</sup> Those picture magazines that had featured the silent urban poor declined rapidly in the late 1960s, a difficult turn for photographers like Moore. But the simultaneous explosion of art-world interest in photography equally impacted street photography’s conceptualization. As art institutions like MoMA established a fixed canon, postmodern artists like Martha Rosler exposed and challenged such restrictions of the genre.

In Rosler’s *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974–75), photographs of empty streets and her equally pivotal text work together to posit the physical and critical removal of the human subject from street photography. *The Bowery* does not picture its rhetorical subjects: destitute New York City drunks. Instead, purposefully replicating the style of “master” documentary photographer Walker Evans, Rosler photographed abandoned stoops, desolate storefronts, and emptied bottles, representing her subjects and their habits through artifact alone. Each photograph was paired with select words related to drunkenness or drunks, providing an evocative exercise in language. Rosler’s project forces the viewer to negotiate and reevaluate the complicated messages street photography had delivered and could deliver about homelessness and urban poverty in the context of art institutions. As Rosler has acknowledged, “‘The street’ suggests metropolitan locales with deeply divided class structures and conflict, and perhaps where the impoverished and excluded are also ethnically different.”<sup>171</sup>

At the time of *The Bowery's* making, moreover, New York was experiencing large-scale homelessness and was embarking on the kind of urban planning convinced of its ability to control public space so aptly critiqued by Deutsche. The city mixed high-rise culture (celebrated by Robert Moses) and street culture (championed by Jacobs) at a time when the downtown areas of many other American cities succumbed to depopulation. Given these specifics, representations of urban homeless populations took on new connotations that, as the *Street and Studio* catalogue notes, were reinforced by street photography. "The recumbent body not only dominates the picture's horizontal axis, but also *signifies* it: the horizontal line alludes to the existential condition of all those who are out of sync with the city's operating system."<sup>172</sup> Photography's complicit articulation of this position went hand in glove with the conceptual art practices and postmodernist theories of the day, which sought to complicate art's social possibilities and overturn the tradition of decontextualized art objects.<sup>173</sup> Much postmodern art demonstrates the fluidity of representations, meanings, and institutions. Working from this premise, many artists used language, multiple images, and the active interpellation of or accounting for the viewer and context to expand street photography. It is in this respect that Rosler's empty Bowery streets remain exemplary among street photography for insistently shifting responsibility from photographer to viewer.

Of the four artists considered in this dissertation, only Philip-Lorca diCorcia has previously been discussed within the rubric of street photography. As early as diCorcia's first monograph, published in 1995 by MoMA, Galassi wrote of the "untended legacy" of street photography, suggesting diCorcia's importance for the canonical version of that genre's history.<sup>174</sup> (DiCorcia's use of color photography marks a notable difference from the canon and from this dissertation's other case studies.<sup>175</sup>) The body of work that Galassi's catalogue debuted, *Streetwork* (1993–99), was made on the streets of metropolises around the world, including New York City. DiCorcia's next body of work,

*Heads* (1999–2001), was made exclusively in Times Square, the dominant location of the New York photographs in *Streetwork*. Times Square is a place rife with symbolism and history—of its centrality to the city’s identity, of its marriage of spectacle and consumerism, of its fulfillment of social (including sexual) desires, of its collective experience based on those individual desires, of its revitalization, and of its status as an indicator of the increasing presence of isolation, surveillance, and global genericism in American urban life.<sup>176</sup> From a site-oriented perspective, *Streetwork* and *Heads* more forcefully present a challenging contribution to the history of street photography, beyond their lighting and theatricality, as the literature continually suggests. When diCorcia transforms the commercial pedestrian spectacle of Times Square by a photographic process indebted to but distinct from that of canonical street photography, what can the resulting images still tell viewers about that urban experience? Moreover, how do the shifts in appearance from the aesthetics of *Streetwork* to those of *Heads* correlate to the shifts in Times Square from 1993 to 2001? Chapter Five suggests that the viewer must confront street photographs that unite the social and architectural space of urban change that defines Times Square. Thus, not only is Times Square of inescapable importance to diCorcia’s *Streetwork* and *Heads*; September 11, 2001, because of the effects it continues to have upon the reading and reception of *Heads*, bears heavily on the images, both despite of and in addition to diCorcia’s original intentions. As with those by Avedon, Moore, and Rosler, each of diCorcia’s street photographs is a visual nexus of the specific location of its making, the historical context of its moment, and its ongoing reception by viewers.

The choice of these four photographers does not aim to reflect the entire range or complexity of street photography; taken together, however, they offer/embody crosscurrents in the discourse surrounding the genre. Moreover, the case-study chapters devoted to each artist aim to exemplify a new historical approach to the street

and its photographic representation. My intentions mirror those of most revisionist histories: “[The] historiographic championing of forgotten or disparaged works serve[s]... as an anti-orthodoxy announcing the necessity of the constant reinterpretation of the origin and meaning of cultural forms and as a specifically anti-authoritarian move.”<sup>177</sup>

This dissertation maintains that the meaning of street photography to date is only essential insofar as it was codified and canonized to the exclusion of other possible interpretations, some of which had been laid out as early as the first writings on the genre. That is to say, the meaning of street photography—in tandem with the meaning of city streets—should be investigated archaeologically (to recover and preserve its past), memorially (to recall subjects who might otherwise be forgotten), and dialectically (to recognize and illuminate simultaneously the past and present).<sup>178</sup> I attempt to enact each of these models, at least in some fashion, in each of my case studies. As such, each case-study chapter does not assume a definitive or linear account of either the street photographs considered or the urban experiences they depict; instead, each approaches the images and the specifics of their streets from those social-historical perspectives that seem most illuminating. Thus, as detailed in Chapter Two, Avedon’s work engages with the gendered commercialism of postwar couture with a fresh, young, newly initiated vision of Paris that was undeterred by the aftermath of World War II. Chapter Three explores Moore’s photojournalism as indictments of the actions of racist authorities and restorative of widely reproduced street photographs’ role during the decade in American history most synonymous with the streets. Rosler contended with urban economic dispossession in *The Bowery*, a work that Chapter Four explains was purposefully contrary toward art history and the art market but which was also, if less consciously, defiant of the recently canonized tradition of street photography. Chapter Five considers diCorcia’s sustained engagement with a single, iconic urban location, yielding street photographs that map sexuality and spectacle against urban change and “revitalization.”

Each of the four chapters reflects an opportunity, via a practice exemplary of each photographer's generational moment, to think of street photography differently, simply by thinking about streets as specific sites.

A city street is not “a country lane” any more than a city is a small town or a suburb. Cities are large, densely inhabited areas with residences, businesses, municipal governments, public transportation, community spaces, and more. City streets and sidewalks, the locations where Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia made their photographs, are the main public spaces of those cities and they are pivotal to understanding urban experience, as lived and as depicted. City streets and sidewalks are sites of commerce, display, demonstration, inequality, dispossession, power, desire, spectacle, and more, but they are always well used. An observation of Deutsche's is especially apt with respect to city streets and sidewalks: “[N]o space, insofar as it is social, is a simply given, secure, self-contained entity that precedes representation; its identity as a space, its appearance of closure, is constituted and maintained through discursive relationships that are themselves material and spatial—differentiations, repressions, subordinations, domestications, attempted exclusions.”<sup>179</sup> This dissertation understands street photography to be the specifics of the city street made photographic, the city represented as a product of the culture that simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the city. To do this, my study addresses rather than overlooks the particular economic, political, social, and psychological dynamics that energize the site of the city street.

The city street has been a central theme for photographers since the inception of the medium in the early nineteenth century, and the discourse on street photography has existed for over one hundred years, yet we still do not have an adequate account of the significance of this genre. “Unfamiliar Streets” examines how certain American artists made street photographs that assign the viewer a particular and engaged role in visual

representations of historical urban experience. Through the work of Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia, my dissertation posits an alternate history of street photography adequate both to the complex dynamics of urban experience in postwar American life and to the specifics of the city streets on which such pictures were made. “Unfamiliar Streets” ensures an overdue complication of both the genre and the discourse within and against which it is situated.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Better than Real

[T]his is a very different city from the Paris I saw a year ago. There are cars on the streets and a few buses. And the fashions are wonderful.... [The fashions pictured here] take you to Paris, not to the newsreel Paris of disillusion and political unrest, but to the Paris of the designer's dreams.

- Carmel Snow<sup>1</sup>

The [Paris] street scenes, where these women sometimes encounter 'regular' people (an acrobat, a bicyclist), have a strange dissonance: they contrast quasi-documentary backgrounds with the sharp, darting stiffness of the models in their Dior abstractions—geometric skirts... rigidly belled out.

- Roberta Smith<sup>2</sup>

In one picture, a woman stands on a sun-drenched sidewalk, across the street from a building with elaborate wrought-iron balconies and holding a copy of the French newspaper *Le Figaro* high up in front of her (figure 2.1). The paper obscures her face from view, but its lifting suggests the woman is actively looking in the paper for something, giving the photograph a narrative quality. The lifted paper accomplishes other visual feats: first, it allows for the unimpeded consideration of her fashionable ensemble—checked dress, matching jacket, and dramatically belted waistline; second, although the paper obscures some of the architecture behind her, its height privileges a full view of the street on which the woman stands—the gray stretch of paving contrasting with her busy dress, the passing car, a fellow pedestrian. The car is legible but blurred, as does the pedestrian's silhouette on the sidewalk opposite her, though a knee cocked in mid-stride is clearly discernible. Another photograph portrays a woman who, along with a gathering crowd of onlookers, enjoys a performance by a troupe of acrobats, smiling in the direction of the strong man with his barbell hoisted high (figure 2.2). She

stands out and apart from the crowd: she leans on the table placed between members of the troupe, her dark gloved hand contrasts with the tabletop, as do her dark pumps against the paving stones; the line and elegance of her outfit and hat are all the more striking when compared to the other female onlookers; and she is positioned near the center of the performance, set off from the shoulder-to-shoulder line of the crowd behind her. Two buildings enclose the scene, the pattern of their windows suggesting the density of this urban environment.

These are two examples from the more than a dozen photographs by Richard Avedon published in the October 1948 issue of a leading fashion-and-culture magazine of the era, *Harper's Bazaar*. Certainly, like most fashion photographs, each of these pictures illustrates particular items of clothing, in this case ensembles designed by Balenciaga. Against the grain of their time, however, these photographs insistently place fashion—and the models who wore its latest creations—in the city, on its streets, and among fellow pedestrians and spectators. As such, these photographs exemplify the inventive claims Avedon staked in postwar fashion photography from 1947 to 1949 and, as this chapter will demonstrate, the effective impact of staging street photography.<sup>3</sup> In creating street photographs in service to the fashion industry, Avedon infused his images with romantic, nostalgic-yet-modern, suggestions of daily urban life in Paris, exponentially heightening the relatability of his photographs and the viewer's identification with and desire for the products they represented in the pages of *Harper's Bazaar*. Rosalind Krauss has identified the double-page spread as “the most opulent of the typographic theaters of mass advertising.” Furthermore, “The very determination to fill both facing pages with a single image and to close the visual space of the magazine against any intrusion from outside this image/screen is part of this strategy to create the reality effect, to open up the world of the simulacrum.”<sup>4</sup> Avedon's process for his street photographs intended this exact “reality effect.” More so than any of his contemporaries

or predecessors, he dramatically transplanted the site of modern fashion's representation from the studio to the street, a move that was both timely and astute, given the economic and cultural effects of World War II and the American nostalgia and desire for Paris in the immediate postwar years.

### **The Street Photography of Fashion: Precedents**

The decisive nature of the change initiated by Avedon's street photographs can be understood best by way of comparison to the types of images that preceded them. Fashion photography—that group of photographs whose chief purpose was the display or selling of clothing or accessories—came into popular use in Europe and the United States during the 1880s, flourishing alongside and because of the technological developments that allowed for pictures to be easily, efficiently, and inexpensively reproduced in pattern books and periodicals.<sup>5</sup> One enterprising photography firm, Ed. Cordonnier, even began to record the latest fashions worn by society women to such outdoor events as the races.<sup>6</sup> This formula of photographing women from the upper echelons of society—the supposed embodiment of refined elegance and “good breeding”—modeling their own clothes would continue well into the 1940s, made most famous by Baron Adolf de Meyer and Edward Steichen in the leading American fashion magazines, *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*.<sup>7</sup> Their photographs did not aim to capture the exact detail of clothing as revealed by direct, even lighting but to evoke the mood and character of the garment; this often involved elaborate backdrops and dramatic lighting inspired by the Modernist aesthetic of the day. The names of the socialite-models in these photographs were printed in the accompanying captions. Most important for this dissertation, photographs such as those by Steichen created and maintained a clear disinterest in such representations' ability to conjure real experiences or daily life. As Susan Kismaric and Eva Respini wrote of this historical moment:

Their primary function was to describe clothes as they appeared on the model conceived as mannequin, the human incarnation of the seamstress's dress form on which clothes are fitted.... Encoded in such hierarchical values is an implied system of power, morality, good behavior, stability and propriety, and even aesthetic and beauty, to which larger segments of earlier generations automatically aspired, or so it was thought. In these earlier pictures, the power of privilege is understood as absolute, as are the crisp and elegant standards of beauty that are integrated with it.<sup>8</sup>

Fashion photographs by Steichen and the many who emulated his style throughout the 1920s and 1930s aimed strictly "to depict a supremely desirable garment worn by an archetypically desirable individual."<sup>9</sup> Even by the 1940s, this *raison d'être* had shifted little.

One outstanding exception is Martin Munkacsi, who upended the convention of stiff poses, studio settings, and reliance on lighting effects during his first assignment for *Harper's Bazaar* in 1933. Munkacsi's signature style draws on the informality and spontaneity of snapshots: his photographs are animated, set outdoors, and often light-hearted (figure 2.3). (Although Munkacsi remained devoted to medium- and large-format cameras, he has been mistakenly linked to the photographers reveling in the technical development of 35mm roll film.<sup>10</sup>) Munkacsi was the first fashion photographer to consistently abandon the studio, favoring the beach, train station, and a handful of other natural and architectural settings. He was also the first to ask his models to run, jump, and move during a shoot. Together, these innovations allowed his photographs for *Harper's Bazaar* to represent fashion in a manner so convincing and realistic as to make it look like something viewers might expect to see in their own snapshots.<sup>11</sup> Editor-in-chief Carmel Snow recalled Munkacsi's first and most famous fashion photograph, made when he had not yet moved to the U.S., spoke little English, and relied on gestures to convey his wishes to the socialite-model Lucille Brokaw (figure 2.4):

It seemed that what Munkacsi wanted was for the model to run toward him. Such a 'pose' had never been attempted before for fashion (even 'sailing' features were posed in a studio on a fake boat), but Lucille was

certainly game, and so was I. The resulting picture of a typical American girl in action, with her cape billowing out behind her, made photographic history.<sup>12</sup>

Munkacsi brought to fashion a style honed during the 1920s as he photographed sporting events on assignment, first for *Az Est* in his native Hungary and then for the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*.<sup>13</sup> The Brokaw photograph is exemplary of this style. She is depicted mid-motion, which accomplishes two effects simultaneously: it conveys that the subject was full of energy (an exuberant woman full of vitality), and it suggests that there was a reason for or a story behind the motion (her daily exercise routine).

Munkacsi effectively introduced both a modern momentum and a sense of narrative to an entire category of pictures—fashion photography—that had been lacking both of those qualities. He wanted to make images that would “respect the visual and emotional facts of life” as it was lived in the present.<sup>14</sup> Drawing on distinctly modern experience, Munkacsi’s emphasis on movement and realistic non-studio settings opened the door for a more widespread audience to relate to and engage with fashion photography.<sup>15</sup> Despite Sontag’s certainty, Munkacsi’s style, in combination with the fashions it portrayed, proved resistant to formulaic application. As historian Nancy Hall-Duncan noted: “The realistic fashion photograph appeared in the thirties in Europe as well as America. The effects, which worked so well for American sportswear, however, looked somewhat lackluster when applied to Parisian haute couture, and the results are disappointing.”<sup>16</sup> The “disappointing” European results lacked the animation that Munkacsi brought to his pictures as well as his sense of their engagement with a specific site.

That would change with Richard Avedon’s work in Paris, as evidenced by comparing two photographs taken at the Place du Trocadero, one by Avedon and the other by his contemporary Jean Moral (figures 2.5 and 2.6). Where Avedon utilized and occupied the site, Moral merely treated it as a set. While unquestionably depicting his

model outdoors and walking through the plaza in the mode of Munkacsi's realism, Moral's photograph maintains conventions that hark back to a time before Munkacsi's innovations—an uncomplicated view of the garment, attentive to its every detail and to the accessories recommended to complete the outfit. Moreover, as a backdrop, the plaza is emptied of all other pedestrians and, quite significantly, of any information that would situate it in Paris. If Moral cared to locate his photograph there, he relied entirely on the efforts of the columnists and designers at *Harper's Bazaar*, who would situate the photograph just above the prominent name of the coat's French designer, "Dior," and discuss the innovations of its design in the column below.<sup>17</sup> Avedon's photograph, however, centers on the Eiffel Tower, which he rendered out of focus, though not to such an extent that its signature silhouette is mistakable. Pedestrians, also out of focus, traverse the plaza. The camera would have to have been set down on the Place du Trocadero in order to capture, quite close-up and more in keeping with Munkacsi's unconventional views, the step of another pedestrian, a woman wearing a fur-lined pump and voluminous skirt. Thanks to the photographic rendering and flattening of perspective, this shoe has become architecture, becoming more prominent than the Eiffel Tower even as it replicates its structure. In Avedon's photograph, a cultural and national landmark effectively transfers its status as *the* symbol of Paris to the shoe being modeled, which becomes an axis for modern urban lives full of motion. We can read the variously bent legs in the stilled strides of the pedestrians on the plaza, making it all the more crucial that the shoe creases from the flexing momentum of the model's step. Avedon's representation of these fashions may not attend to the entire outfit, but it utilizes a Paris icon and the momentum of the city to new and remarkable effect. If Munkacsi uniquely utilized the beach that Sontag parenthetically referenced, Avedon successfully and evocatively used the other location noted by Sontag—the street. Beginning in 1947, Avedon transformed the street from a relatively generic and

meaningless pictorial backdrop into a timely and desirable representation of modern urban life, as found in Paris.

Avedon's street photographs build on foundations laid by Munkacsi, as Avedon readily and repeatedly acknowledged: "Before anyone else it was Munkacsi's explosive vitality.... He had an eye for physical energy and for those compositional accidents that happen in photographs when the subjects are really going somewhere."<sup>18</sup> Avedon paid photographic tribute to Munkacsi in 1957 (figure 2.7) and penned a memorial tribute in August 1963, in which he recalled the impact of his childhood initiation to Munkacsi's pictures:

[B]ecause my family subscribed to *Harper's Bazaar*, it became my window and Munkacsi's photographs my view. There were over twenty of his pictures on the wall, buckling from humidity and home-made paste,... including *his women*, striding parallel to the sea, unconcerned with his camera, freed by his dream of them, leaping straight kneed across my bed.<sup>19</sup>

Avedon's recollection conveys something of the sense of just how surprising and inventive Munkacsi's photographs were to his 1930s audience. Like Munkacsi, Avedon rejected the model-as-statue fashion photograph and took real experience as his inspiration. As Hall-Duncan noted:

Comparing Munkacsi's famous photographs of girls running down a beach with Avedon's early work, we find a similar improvised and almost accidental quality achieved through blurred motion. Avedon's spontaneity is more orchestrated than Munkacsi's; it is a more complicated and sophisticated version of Munkacsi's innovations. Both share a mood of relaxed spontaneity, but while Munkacsi's origins as a sports photographer are always evident, for his women always remain sportswomen, Avedon's models are in motion in quite a different way. They are filled with carefree exuberance and joyous abandon, with a love of life.<sup>20</sup>

Hall-Duncan rightly pointed to a difference in their use of models, particularly the degree to which Munkacsi's models invoked the 1930s culture of health and fitness. Beyond models, however, Avedon distinguished his photographs by situating them *in* Paris—not against the backdrop of it. The viewer's familiarity with urban experience counteracted

the unusual sight of a model in this setting, signaling a much-desired version of the city, without chaos or difficulties or, perhaps most tellingly, without any sign of the recent war and its effects.

Making photographs in the street to capture something of everyday urban experience was an approach that Avedon had appreciated even before *Harper's Bazaar* launched his career. He recalled seeing Helen Levitt's photographs at MoMA as early as 1943.<sup>21</sup> The preeminent historian of mid-century photography in New York, Jane Livingston, has written: "It is easy to see how Levitt's approach to photographing life in city streets—making each composition a self-contained piece of original choreography, [and] finding the unexpected in the ordinary... —would have struck a chord in Avedon."<sup>22</sup> In 1958 Avedon explained his relationship to street photography:

The trouble was that when I got out into the street, I just couldn't do it. I didn't like invading the privacy of perfect strangers. It seemed such an aggressive thing to do. Also, I have to control what I shoot, and I found that I couldn't control Times Square.... I began trying to create an out-of-focus world—a heightened reality, better than real, that suggests, rather than tells you.<sup>23</sup>

In distinction to an increasingly codified street photography—Cartier-Bresson's *Decisive Moment* would appear within a few years—Avedon's Paris photographs from the late 1940s emphasize the inspiration city streets afforded the young American photographer and made no apologies for having created a practice of controlled street photography, one that necessarily requires us to re-conceive street photography's process and eventual context.

### **Avedon's Process in the City**

This or any assertion about Avedon's Paris street photographs relies on an understanding of how he planned, staged, and eventually photographed the models and locations involved. An effective point of reference is the classic 1957 Paramount film

*Funny Face*, for which Avedon served as “special visual consultant.”<sup>24</sup> Starring Fred Astaire as the fashion photographer Dick Avery and Audrey Hepburn as his newly “discovered” and reluctant model, Jo Stockton, *Funny Face* is in fact based on Avedon’s early career in Paris (figures 2.8 and 2.9). Some aspects of the film depart dramatically from historical and biographical specifics: Paris is not a recently war-torn city; the French fashion houses are not desperate for renewed international support; Avery is not portrayed as a contemporary of Stockton’s but is twenty-odd years older than Avedon was in 1947. Nevertheless, the film’s portrayal of Avery at work in Paris agrees perfectly with all the written descriptions of Avedon’s own method of making such photographs.<sup>25</sup> When Avery has a handful of days to photograph Stockton in Paris, we see him encouraging her with exclamations of praise, verbally creating narratives for her along the lines of “Your love has just kissed you goodbye,” and instructing her to “Run!” across the Tuileries.<sup>26</sup> Avery and Stockton act out photographic shoots in eight different locations. Most of them were unmistakably, identifiably Parisian (the Tuileries, Louvre, gardens at Versailles, Seine, and Palais Garnier opera house) and, as will be discussed later, were Avedon’s *own* locations for his *Harper’s Bazaar* photo shoots in the decade before the film’s creation. To reinforce the viewer’s possible familiarity with Avedon’s photographs and to mimic the photographer’s process from shoot to published image, when Avery completes each shoot with Stockton, the screen becomes a sequence of photographic stills, each one simulating a stage of that process with the image just “shot” in the film. (In contrast to the majority of Avedon’s published photographs, those “by” Avery are shown in color.<sup>27</sup>) In these moments of *Funny Face*, Avery’s/Avedon’s photographic process is emphasized as one that begins in the street and finishes imagining an eventual viewer.

New to Paris himself in 1947, Avedon was determined to represent French fashions as though casually observed on the streets of an iconic city. He elaborately

researched, made detailed plans for, and even rehearsed his Paris shoots of the major French couturiers' semiannual collections. (Assignment to the fall and spring Paris collections was intensely guarded and coveted, and Avedon would cover at least one, and sometimes both, for *Harper's Bazaar*.<sup>28</sup>) As Bernier has summarized:

The whole magazine team spent three weeks to record the showings. Nothing was left to chance. What looked like accident and spontaneity was nothing of the kind. There was not a breath of the reportage spirit. Every last effect was thought out in advance; the concierge in the doorway, the still-unchanged life of the street, the unexpected encounters.<sup>29</sup>

Avedon sought out potential locations, sometimes based on reading about their cultural significance, and he would often make sketches or take preliminary photos of them.<sup>30</sup> He recalled: "Most of the pictures had a historical subtext... and I spent weeks before a sitting documenting it with research and snapshots. Maybe the Marquis had raised a guillotine in a courtyard where I assembled a troupe of acrobats, scattered a bale of hay, and posed a model in a New Look suit" (figure 2.2).<sup>31</sup> The historical specifics of Avedon's sites, as well as his care in selecting them, have been overlooked, as Janet Malcolm remarked: "His photograph, for example, of a model in a Balenciaga suit on a Paris street watching a group of acrobats (hired by Avedon) was accepted—and presumably continues to be accepted—for what it could not possibly be: an amusing, careless romp through the streets of Paris, with an adventitious encounter."<sup>32</sup> I will return to this pivotal distinction between what was and what could be in postwar Paris, particularly as seen through the eyes of the young Avedon, experiencing the city for the first time. It suffices here to reiterate that he put great time and attention into his chosen locations.

Once Avedon had selected his locations, he would pair them with the fashions chosen by Snow. As she noted, "If I think a dress is important... I mark down the number in my little red book and give it to Avedon or Louise Dahl-Wolfe."<sup>33</sup> On site with his model(s), the featured fashions, and other subjects as the photograph's narrative

premise required, Avedon's photo shoots risked—in ways that studio photography never did—revealing the designs. Being on assignment in locations throughout Paris, Dorian Leigh recalled that “[t]o protect the designers, we were wrapped in sheets wherever we went until we were in front of the camera.”<sup>34</sup> That camera was most often a 2 1/4-inch Rolleiflex, such as the one Avery often has around his neck in *Funny Face*. (In the 1950s, Avedon increasingly adopted the stationary 8 x 10 view camera, also visible on the set of *Funny Face* [figure 2.8].<sup>35</sup>) Portable and most often held at chest or waist level in order for the photographer to look down into the viewfinder, the Rolleiflex allowed Avedon to move with his subjects during fairly animated shoots. Its 2 1/4-inch negatives retained more visual information than a 35mm negative.<sup>36</sup> This was crucial, since Avedon frequently cropped his prints to achieve more rectangular proportions, closer to those of a vertical full page or horizontal double-page spread in *Harper's Bazaar*. Avedon struck a balance between the quickness needed on the shoot and the quality of information desired during printing. Avedon's exceptional planning of details from his conscientious location selection to camera choice, from the eventual photograph's imagined narrative to its presentation of the latest designs also extended to his choice of model.

Adam Gopnik has used the verb *cast* to describe the portraits that Avedon would become famous for in the 1960s.<sup>37</sup> Considering the process of Avedon's Paris street photographs of the late 1940s, I would suggest these too were cast, since that verb trades both in the sense that a sculpture is cast from an already-prepared form (akin to his carefully selected locations) and that a model is chosen for a particular role in a performance (for his camera).<sup>38</sup> Although an anonymous and unrecognizable model seems almost impossible to imagine today, it was much the norm when Avedon began working with his models.<sup>39</sup> Beginning in 1947, he repeatedly singled out specific women who spurred his creativity and with whom he worked almost exclusively (this is, more or

less, the entire premise of *Funny Face*).<sup>40</sup> Dorian Leigh, the first of Avedon's models to be widely celebrated, captured his attention for two or three years beginning around 1948. She recalled:

Dick wanted his models to look like real people wearing real clothes; he wanted real expressions on their faces and genuine reactions to their surroundings. Of course, the girls were more beautiful and the settings more idyllic than most real-life situations, but that was the point. An Avedon fashion photograph was just real enough to make a fashion-minded woman feel she *could* look the way the model did.<sup>41</sup>

Along with Leigh, Elise Daniels was another preferred subject from around 1948 to the early 1950s, followed by Dovima.<sup>42</sup> Sontag, ostensibly reviewing Avedon's 1978 exhibition, instead commented more provocatively on broad shifts in fashion. One of these changes was exemplified by Avedon's early fashion photographs:

How it went according to the older idea of fashion: someone, usually well-born or rich, looked marvelous (through meticulous grooming, expensive clothes)... [and f]ashion referred to how [those] people behaved, as well as how they looked. Now, fashion is hardly at all about what people do but almost exclusively about how they appear—and *where they are seen*. It has become something that is almost entirely visual—that is, photographic.<sup>43</sup>

Fashion—its models, its clothes, its pictorial representation—had become aligned with the medium of photography and had simultaneously been positioned, in Avedon's hands, within the quintessential site of modernity and fashion, the city of Paris.

As photographed by Avedon, these women represented a startling revolution on the pages of *Harper's Bazaar* and for fashion photography in general, the apex of which for an early critic was a single photograph featuring Dorian Leigh (figure 2.10). "Dorian Leigh was shown bursting into laughter while throwing her arms around the winner of a French bicycle race. The picture created a sensation in the profession, since embracing sports heroes and laughing had not previously been thought suitable activities for fashion models."<sup>44</sup> Avedon wanted his model to seem realistically engaged with the situation depicted, and he ensured that his lively interaction with the model during the

shoot would create the spontaneous reactions he desired.<sup>45</sup> To encourage their interaction with the location and narrative premise of the shoot, Avedon mimed desired poses to the models or urged them to run, laugh, then run *and* laugh, often while steadily chatting to keep their expressions from being static.<sup>46</sup> The resulting photographs establish a relatable model, what the critic had called “human,” while never distracting from the couture she wore. Reviewing these early fashion photographs, over fifty of which were included in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s 1978 retrospective exhibition, Roberta Smith wrote:

It’s actually in his early work... that Avedon shows fashion photography at its most powerful, and brings it closest to art. These images, taken in Paris almost entirely in the seven years between 1948 and 1955, center on a race of emaciated, extravagantly beautiful women as they move through that city’s streets, casinos, and cafes, elegant escorts often in tow. The street scenes, where these women sometimes encounter ‘regular’ people (an acrobat, a bicyclist) [figures 2.2 and 2.10], have a strange dissonance: they contrast quasi-documentary backgrounds with the sharp, darting stiffness of the models in their Dior abstractions—geometric skirts... rigidly belled out.<sup>47</sup>

Smith rightly pointed to the disparity between the models and the other people in Avedon’s photographs, but in not fully exploring that disparity, she does not extrapolate its likely effect on the readers of *Harper’s Bazaar*. More importantly for this dissertation, in locating another incongruity between the “sharp” or “rigid” shapes of the models’ garments (more on these shapes latter) and the depiction of the city’s spaces, Smith reduced Parisian streets to backdrops like any other that Avedon could have deployed in his studio or that did not importantly and *vitaly* represent Paris.

On his first assignment in Paris in August 1947, Avedon made photographs that could match the self-declared “New Look” fashions Dior was debuting. To showcase the full cut of skirts that season, he photographed one such skirt consistently mid-twirl, drawing all attention to its shape (figures 2.11 and 2.12.) The first photograph (figure 2.11) appeared in *Harper’s Bazaar* in October 1947. Another view of the same Dior

ensemble (figure 2.12), however, was Avedon's favorite; he included it in his 1978 *Paris* portfolio and regularly in publications and exhibitions for the rest of his career.<sup>48</sup>

Importantly, Avedon's preferred shot not only includes the entire outfit, it also grounds the model in a public space (Place de la Concorde) where the stasis of a colonnade's shadow has been replaced by the animated diagonals of at least five other pedestrians, three of whom—young men in suits—turn mid-stride to observe the model. In a photograph published just one month later, the model wears a dark jacket that is tightly fitted to her waist with a flounce of gathered fabric below as well as a full-cut skirt, also dark in tone (figure 2.13). The ensemble's repetition of excess fabric, its contrast with the pale-gray tones of the cityscape, and its depiction from behind all greatly emphasize its highly feminine silhouette. Avedon's photograph depends on his carefully selected dense urban surrounding, both in terms of tonality and content: the street-corner column for the display of posters known as a *colonne Morris*, the Parisian cobblestone, cars, and city buildings.<sup>49</sup>

Avedon took his models to a variety of purposeful sites throughout central Paris: the Marais; the quai along the Seine; Montmartre; Place du Trocadero; Place de la Concorde; the Champs-Élysées; Avenue Montaigne; rue François Premier; Café de Flore; Pont Alexandre III; the Gare du Nord; and the Eiffel Tower.<sup>50</sup> An exhaustive list of the public spaces Avedon used for his shoots would cover nearly every central arrondissement of the city (as well as a few of the outlying ones) and would represent an assortment of cultural, historical, and classed spaces rich with these connotations. Montmartre, during the years between the two World Wars, had been surpassed by Montparnasse as the artistic heartbeat of the city, but retained some of the bohemian character it was renowned for in the 1880s and 1890s (figure 2.14). The Place de la Concorde, historically the site of Louis XVI's beheading during the aftermath of the French Revolution, remains to this day the city's point of convergence during national

celebrations or citywide public protests (figures 2.11 and 2.12). The Champs-Élysées represents a gem among Paris's many *grands boulevards*, the wide, open streets that are the result of the city's modernization by Baron Haussman in the mid-1800s. Many of the major haute couture houses, including Dior, were located among the decidedly high-end shops, auto showrooms, and restaurants along the Champs-Élysées (figure 2.10).<sup>51</sup> The Café Flore was *the* meeting point for "[w]riters and publishers and poets and philosophers and film people... evening after evening," as Carmel Snow declared in her first postwar report from Paris.<sup>52</sup> The Pont Alexandre III was built for the Universal Exposition of 1900, along with Paris's iconic Grand and Petit Palais. And the Eiffel Tower was quite simply, *the* symbol for Paris, so identifiable Avedon could render it entirely out of focus and still capitalize on its meaning (figure 2.5). About Avedon's attentiveness to his locations, Bernier affirmed: "These photographs reflect his romance with Paris: the loving side-look at uneven paving stones, the worn surface of a wall, the curve of a café chair, the watery lights on a bridge, the siphon of soda water on a bistro table, the old-fashioned lettering on a shop front, the art nouveau arabesques over a doorway."<sup>53</sup> Once selected, these locations were often altered, enhanced, or manipulated for their eventual photographic representation: lights would be set up alongside a generator truck if need be, including *klieg* lights most commonly used for cinematic set lighting and strong enough to create the effect of daylight even at night; cobblestones might be wet down to provide glistening atmospheric reflections; and, when necessary, the crowds were kept at bay by the French police.<sup>54</sup>

Avedon even chose to return to some locations, such as the Marais, photographing within its intimate courtyards and historic streets in both 1947 and 1948.<sup>55</sup> In 1947 he created an interaction between a known artist, Christian Bérard, and his model Renée on one of the Marais' cobblestoned streets (figure 2.15). Bérard's perch on the gleaming front fender of a parked car only underscores their presence on the street.

Apart from Bérard's identity as an artist, another signifier of bohemian Paris is the *caves du vin* behind them, as indicated by the lettering just above Renée's left shoulder. (Not coincidentally, Jo Stockton ducks into a *caves du vin* in *Funny Face*, searching for her favorite bohemian philosopher.) For Avedon's 1948 shoot, a courtyard in the Marais was transformed into an intimate arena for a street performance by acrobats (figures 2.2 and 2.15). The intimacy of the space is created by a more or less rectangular arrangement of buildings, which Avedon conveys by shifting the vantage point so that both lengths of the courtyard are shown between the two pictures. Yet he was careful to keep in the frame several stories of windows, ensuring the viewer's sense of a densely inhabited space and the admixture of centuries of urban planning and building that created the unique, complexly layered nature of the city's most historical arrondissement.

Avedon's ingenuity with regard to his Paris locations has been attributed to a rather practical desire to "give a novel twist to what, owing to the coverage by the daily press, will be a familiar story by the time his photographs appear."<sup>56</sup> Certainly, the French houses debuted their designs at the beginning of August, at which time Avedon also photographed them. His pictures would then be worked into layouts that *could* appear in the September issue but more consistently *did* appear in the October issue, making for a standard two-month delay from shoot to publication. These practicalities worked against any immediate impact of the photographs' explicit subject—new fashions. So one wonders why Avedon bothered photographing the collections in Paris at all, instead of having highlights sent to the New York offices? Likewise, the collections could have been easily shot in Avedon's Paris studio in August rather than out *in* Paris.

Clearly, then, the *in situ* character of Avedon's Paris street photographs held value for both *Harper's Bazaar* and their photographer. Controlling his process, models, and locations, Avedon used the streets of Paris to create that "reality, better than real" in his photographs. Not only could he control the particulars and conditions of his street

photographs as needed, the enterprise was facilitated by a city desperate to support his endeavors—lights, generators, wet cobblestones, police and more—and their positive implications for French fashion. The site (and sight) of the city of Paris was deemed significant by *Harper's Bazaar*, as part of its message to its readers. Avedon's undoubtedly Parisian photographs helped elicit the attention postwar Paris needed from the magazine's prosperous American readers. Avedon's street photographs were inextricably linked to the revitalization of French fashion and by extension, of France itself. They conjured and relied on a postwar desire for Paris's particular combination of modernity, fashion, and nostalgia.

### **Fashion and Nostalgia in Postwar Paris**

In *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, Serge Guilbaut offered a succinct account of Paris's wartime occupation that vividly conveys the American reaction to the city's taking by German troops, the aftermath of its occupation, and the dismaying notion that such a cultural center could not or would not defend itself:

When the lights went out in Paris, panic reached as far as New York and beyond into the American hinterland. The American press without exception lamented the abandonment of Paris to the Germans. Lost without a battle, Paris now suffered under the jackboots of the Nazis, but at least it had been saved from destruction. The city of light may have been protected by its culture, but this made it no less painful for American editorial writers to see the symbol of Western civilization calmly abandoned to 'barbarism.' Paris was occupied by German troops on June 14, 1940. For five years life came to a standstill, or rather it soon took another form, hushed, incomplete, half-hidden. Seen from abroad Paris was a ghost town. Americans saw in the fall of Paris the death of a certain idea of democracy. For them Paris stood for the triumph of individualism, for a free way of life made popular by the artists of Montparnasse.<sup>57</sup>

What had been lost was not simply one country's capital but the symbolic cultural center (triumphant haven of "artists") of "Western civilization" (the antithesis of "barbarism").<sup>58</sup>

Postwar Paris exemplified a modernity that was, in many respects, no more than its wished-for representations. During the war and especially the occupation, Paris had

been largely accessible to Americans through its photographic depiction in newspapers, magazines, and newsreels.<sup>59</sup> (Some of the most dramatic examples depict the liberation of the city in August 1944 [figures 2.16 and 2.17]). The beginning of Guy Debord's landmark book of aphoristic text, *The Society of the Spectacle*, is instructive: "#1 The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. All that was once directly lived has become mere representation."<sup>60</sup> In Debord's account, the spectacle is not only characteristic of modern society but shapes it, being ever-present and sought out during society's so-called leisure time.<sup>61</sup> The spectacle's almost always urban context supports and encourages its very forms: news, propaganda, advertising, and other modes of consumable entertainment. To the extent that fashion constitutes a form of consumable entertainment, *Harper's Bazaar* utilized all forms mentioned by Debord in its efforts to report, persuade, and promote various fashionable products to its readers. In this way, Avedon's Paris street photographs in *Harper's Bazaar* served as another form of the spectacle, superbly filling American longing for immediacy, romanticism, and a Paris where the war had taken no visible toll.

While many scholars have equated photography with modern vision,<sup>62</sup> sociologist and visual culture historian Don Slater has particularly detailed photography's relationship to the modern spectacle, a relevant analysis in the discussion of Avedon's postwar *Harper's Bazaar* photographs:

Ironically, if modernity is based on restricting 'believing' to 'seeing,' on the idea that seeing is the only valid basis for believing, then it must constantly generate visual spectacles which inspire belief.... The modern injunction to believe only what one sees, then, confusingly coexists with awesome technical powers to produce convincing spectacles: the ability to transform appearances both in remaking the material world industrially and commercially, and in organising technologies of representation which duplicate the world in realistic exactitude.... A realist film or novel articulates a representational world which we can treat as plausible, as real, because the representations are internally consistent, coherent and the means of constructing the reality effect are hidden from view: we can

treat the representation as a reality because it obscures all those elements which point to it being a representation.<sup>63</sup>

While photography has always been viewed as a “more than plausible” representation of the world, I contend that Avedon’s street photographs create the reality effect Slater described. Avedon made convincing but nostalgic representations of Paris, ones that readers of *Harper’s Bazaar* could believe in; he “obscur[ed] all those elements” that might have revealed their construction.<sup>64</sup> This, of course, places Avedon in defiance of the codified and canonized practice of street photography, so adamantly defined as documents spontaneously and stealthily extracted from daily life. Avedon’s spectacular and constructed street photographs intended for viewers to believe in their depictions and experience of their reality effect. Of course, Avedon’s presentation of “reality, better than real” in these photographs is also a representational denial of the war’s effects on Paris. The implications of this broader social-historical context are born out when we consider the more specific cultural and economic context within and against which Avedon made his street photographs: the postwar French fashion industry.

As Nancy Troy has noted: “The birth of haute couture... has been described as one of the modern period’s most important innovations in the production and social meaning of clothing.”<sup>65</sup> In France, fashion generally and haute couture specifically had long been a major cultural export, earning Paris the reputation of “the international capital of style.”<sup>66</sup> Paris rightly claimed the best designers of luxury garments, a commitment to their manufacture and the system necessary to support haute couture’s production and sales. Alexandra Palmer has helpfully explained the distinct category of haute couture as only those “designs produced by accredited Paris haute couture houses that meet standards set out by the *Chambre syndicale de la couture parisienne* [*sic*].”<sup>67</sup> The most prestigious rank of haute couture houses are required to produce no fewer than twenty-five designs every spring and fall; the largest houses often exceeded

150 designs in each spring and fall collection, and Dior was certainly the most prolific, accounting for more than half the total French haute-couture exports by 1955.<sup>68</sup> Naturally, World War II had curtailed or shut down much of this activity.<sup>69</sup> Wartime clothing demanded inexpensive production, functional design, and adherence to restrictions that often limited everything from buttons to pockets to pleats.

Cutbacks in supplies and labor also affected fashion photography and the magazines it appeared in. The availability and expense of film, lights, props, models, and studio space quickly dictated new practices. For example, Condé Nast allowed his photographers to abandon the previously mandatory 8 x 10 view cameras that ensured infinite detail and to instead use Rolleiflex cameras that were cheaper to buy and required smaller supplies of film.<sup>70</sup> And *Vogue* simply closed the doors to its Paris studio in 1940.<sup>71</sup> More generally (in a context now flooded with daily reports of the latest casualties, battles, and air raids), fashion had to conform to wartime realities by addressing women's roles on the home front and featuring the aforementioned functional garments.<sup>72</sup> This shifted with the war's end. American fashion magazines wanted to support and revive Paris as *the* capital of style it had been in pre-war years. This motivation came to bear directly on Avedon's Paris street photographs, as will be discussed in detail below. For their part, French fashion magazines now wanted to convey, as the editor of *Elle* put it, "the *joie de vivre*, the optimism, the generosity emanating from that.... happy country, [the United States]."<sup>73</sup>

Near the war's end, the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne conceived *Le Théâtre de la Mode*, an international exhibition of 230 exquisitely dressed dolls and elaborate sets.<sup>74</sup> The fashions had been created by designers at the major houses such as Lanvin, Schiaparelli, Balmain, and Lelong, and the sets by artists such as Jean Cocteau and Christian Bérard. Importantly, a number of the sets represented Parisian street scenes or other iconic locations within the city (figure 2.18). The catalogue for the

exhibition declared: “France has suffered greatly from the war and the Occupation.... She has great difficulty in reconstituting her stocks, even for her personal requirements. But her creative genius is intact.”<sup>75</sup> The exhibition opened in Paris just months prior to the city’s liberation, and immediately following, the *Chambre Syndicale* toured it to major European capitals such as Barcelona, London, and Stockholm, knowing that foreign support of French haute couture was an absolute necessity if the weakened system was to survive.<sup>76</sup> The exhibition’s 1946 appearance in New York was in fact partially underwritten by American relief organizations.<sup>77</sup> The exhibition displays were photographed at the New York venue and subsequently featured in the June 1946 issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*. Despite such publicity in 1946 and the first postwar collections by the major houses that spring, Parisian haute couture would not arrive in consistent, regular seasonal quantities until 1947, the year that Avedon first took his street photographs for *Harper’s Bazaar*.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, *Le Théâtre de la Mode*, in tandem with American magazine coverage by the likes of *Harper’s Bazaar*, undeniably helped re-launch the French fashion houses.<sup>79</sup>

By August 1947, when Avedon traveled to Paris for the first time, on assignment for *Harper’s Bazaar* to cover the fall collections, the newly created house of Dior could accurately inaugurate a boldly named set of designs, its New Look.<sup>80</sup> With the February 1947 debut of the New Look, Dior reveled in silhouettes that took full advantage of the design and material restrictions that had been relaxed or lifted following the war’s end.<sup>81</sup> During the war, trousers had become acceptable fashion for women, as had boxy jackets, designs of military simplicity, and skirts just below the knee.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, New Look skirts for daytime wear often measured fifteen inches from the ground in length, and even less for afternoon or evening wear.<sup>83</sup> Of the lush and lavish feminine designs of the New Look, Dior noted: “We were emerging from a period of war, of uniforms, of women-soldiers built like boxers. I drew women-flowers, soft shoulders, flowering busts,

fine waists like liana and wide skirts like corolla.”<sup>84</sup> Soft shoulders were accomplished by dropping seams down the arm, emphasized hips were made possible not only by cinched waists and full skirts but by padding placed under hip pockets.<sup>85</sup> Dior explained these changes as consumer driven: “It was because women longed to look like women again that they adopted the New Look.”<sup>86</sup> A social and cultural explanation, however, is that the enhanced femininity of Dior’s designs matched a demand for women to return to more traditional roles than those fostered by wartime activities.

Regardless of motivation, soon most Parisian designers were showing flowing capes, cloaks, and coats above tightly cinched waists and full, voluminous skirts with longer hemlines.<sup>87</sup> “The ‘New Look’ was more than just a fashion;... the yards and yards of cloth required for Dior’s silhouette, following the enforced poverty of the war years, inspired street riots in Paris. The implications were so controversial that models wearing the new style actually had the gowns ripped from their bodies.”<sup>88</sup> In addition to rejecting material restrictions, these new fashions emphasized femininity and refinement, two less tangible qualities that the practicalities of wartime had logically ignored or overwhelmed.

Writing on the first postwar Paris collections in 1946, Carmel Snow captured the general mood in a trademark string of verbal snapshots that soon became a recurring feature entitled “Note from Paris” (figure 2.19).<sup>89</sup>

These are the first spring showings since the end of the war and the designers have made a tremendous effort. I love France, and I must say that I was a little anxious for them. Everything is so difficult—the shops aren’t heated, the workers are undernourished, the political situation is very tense. Nevertheless, this is a very different city from the Paris I saw a year ago. There are cars on the streets and a few buses. And the fashions are wonderful.

[The fashions pictured here] take you to Paris, not to the newsreel Paris of disillusion and political unrest, but to the Paris of the designer’s dreams.... One can no longer say, ‘French fashion for the French and American fashion for the Americans.’ Fashion is fashion. In spite of the fact that they have been cut off for six years and that very few American films are playing in France today, the French designers have got the feel

of America.... It seems inevitable that we, on our side, will again feel a strong French influence in our American fashions.

Naturally, very few Frenchwomen can afford such prices [\$250 was the average price for a dress from a major house that year]. In fact, there are very few places in France where the naked evening gowns can be worn. But France needs machine tools and farm implements and tractors. In order to buy abroad she must export, and fashion is one of her greatest export products. The success of these spring collections is important to France. Even government people ask me anxiously what I think of the collections. If you've been wondering why luxurious fashions are made in a city where almost everyone is hungry more of the time, that is the answer.<sup>90</sup>

Not only did Snow offer her reader images of a rebounding Paris (represented, notably, by activity in the streets) alongside the difficult conditions there (basic needs, food and warmth, are not being met), she made absolutely plain the stakes of the showings at hand by directly linking them to France's ability to maintain its newly bustling streets and to farm its land in order to feed a hungry nation.<sup>91</sup> This language of hunger and satiation recurred throughout accounts of postwar France, because it described a physical condition of so many as well as an acutely felt appetite for consumer goods from hosiery to automobiles.<sup>92</sup> Snow's notes justify why she, and thus *Harper's Bazaar*, was there to cover these fashion collections, what these fashions could offer American designers and consumers, and what, in exchange for pursuing and purchasing those fashions, would be provided to the French economy as well as French spirits.<sup>93</sup> Snow's "Notes from Paris" did more than describe a new cut to sleeves or skirts; it made those sleeves and skirts desirable *and necessary*.

The year between Snow's first postwar report and Avedon's arrival in Paris had not lessened the cultural and economic stakes but had instigated a new approach to the photographic coverage of the collections, judging by the stiff, old-fashioned, backlit studio photographs by Genevieve Naylor that had appeared alongside Snow's column in the May 1946 issue (figure 2.20). Whether taking a cue from Snow's descriptions of the activity on Paris's streets, or from his longstanding admiration of Munkacsi and Levitt, or

simply from his own awe at experiencing the city for the first time, Avedon began to make photographs that resound with urban energy and heralded a New Look of their own.<sup>94</sup> Never explicitly political but also aware that “[f]ashion photography does not exist in a political vacuum,”<sup>95</sup> Avedon’s images project a carefree and charming life counter to the war-weary existences of most Parisians, if not most Americans. His street photographs for *Harper’s Bazaar* identifiably situated that blithe lifestyle in the city that had defined modernity and fashion for Americans, answering the questions that the war and occupation had posed about Paris’s current and future standing as an international cultural capital. Avedon’s pictures anticipate a more full-blown affection for all things French in 1950s America.<sup>96</sup>

Seeing Paris for the first time in 1947, Avedon knew it only through its photographic and filmic representation, an “accumulation of spectacles,” in Debord’s terms.<sup>97</sup> Avedon himself recalled being struck the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the women and the vision of Paris presented in his photographs and, on the other hand, the different reality of the two.

Well, of course, nobody was dressed like that in Paris and nobody looked like that in Paris and I had no idea what people who dressed like that looked like. So I made it all up out of my own imagination which had been influenced by early films, pre-war films. And these pictures are really a fantasy on the part of a very young photographer who was seeing Paris for the first time and trying to fill it with what everyone’s dreams were and his own dreams were.<sup>98</sup>

There is no question that Avedon understood how this “fantasy on the part of a very young photographer” served the task of his pictures made on the streets of Paris. His willingness and desire to render Paris nostalgically in his photographic representations of the city and its fashions went hand in glove with the larger goal of *Harper’s Bazaar* in those specific years. Although spoken in recorded interviews destined for editing and splicing, Avedon made this plain in a 1995 transcript: “[There] was a mandate from *Harper’s Bazaar* to show—bring back the glamour of pre-war Paris to Americans who

hadn't seen Paris during the Occupation.... [A] mandate from—from Carmel Snow to help the French economy by bringing back the glamour of pre-war Paris.... And my job was to—... I had to do this. It was my job to do it.”<sup>99</sup>

These recollections by Avedon illuminate not only his awareness of the “mandate” from within *Harper's Bazaar*, but the real incongruity of what he was seeing in Paris and what he wanted and needed to picture in Paris. I suggest that his photographs contain a similar ambiguity in his choice to portray women in New Look fashions, with all of their social and cultural connotations of traditional femininity, as active occupants of urban spaces who occasionally interact with others on the street. On the other hand, such complexities in the pictures may be best explained by Avedon's nostalgic photographic suppression of the war's effects on Paris. Avedon's street photographs for *Harper's Bazaar* place the New Look in a Paris that is pre-war—or, more accurately, *non-war*, in the sense that Paris appears as though the war has not happened or wrought any hardships. Both locations and fashions are thus nostalgic, grounded in the past, but presented as both timely (the New Look) and urgent (as detailed in Snow quotation), a temporal complexity to which I will return. Avedon, the young American photographer seeing Paris simultaneously with romantic nostalgia and for first time amidst postwar deprivations, had his finger on the pulse of American culture, desire, and nostalgia. His photographs responded to the complex demands of those years, particularly when their appearance in the context of the magazine is fully considered.

### **The Photographs' Appearance in *Harper's Bazaar***

Throughout the middle of the twentieth century, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* reigned as the leading magazines of the fashion business, an industry that by 1958 was the third largest in the United States.<sup>100</sup> The “trinity” at *Harper's Bazaar*, as Avedon affectionately dubbed it, comprised editor-in-chief Snow, fashion editor Diana Vreeland, and art

director Alexey Brodovitch.<sup>101</sup> All three of them contributed to revolutionizing and modernizing the magazine's look and content until it was distinguished as the most sophisticated and original fashion-and-culture magazine of its day.<sup>102</sup> Snow's early conviction about Munkacsi's animated photographs and Brodovitch's complete overhaul of the magazine's layout, typography, and use of photographs were only enhanced by Vreeland's belief that fashion was about desire, not need: "One cannot live by bread alone. One needs *élan*, chinchillas, jewels, and the touch of a master designer, to whom a woman is not just a woman but an illusion."<sup>103</sup> Vreeland felt strongly about fashion photography's role as a visual catalyst for that desire: "[It] has the basic necessity of showing every line, seam, and hemstitch in a dress. Avedon managed to infuse that kind of photograph with a sense of motion, life, and mood."<sup>104</sup> In turn, Avedon credited her with the magazine's inspired fashion coverage. Nevertheless, for many, Brodovitch's art direction was the most conspicuous and prominent feature of *Harper's Bazaar*.<sup>105</sup> Brodovitch replaced stiff and boxy layouts with ones that stretched and careened across the double-page spread. He employed bold typography and photographs that bled off the page or ran across the gutter, were startlingly cropped, or arranged on the page in unexpected ways. A spread from 1935 includes elements of his unique graphic design: the photograph has been cropped in a trapezoidal shape; the typeface's angularity as well as the text column mirror the lines of the image; and his "empty" white spaces on the pages create visual relief (figure 2.21).

A final spread in *Harper's Bazaar* represented the culmination of an entire process. As an example, consider the appearance of Avedon's photograph of the Perugia show (figure 2.22). First, fashion editor Vreeland selected the shoe, among other fashions, and Avedon went through the process already detailed to create his desired shoot. The resulting photographs were sent to art director Brodovitch, who chose which ones to print, often in conversation with the photographer. The selected

images would then be cropped (if necessary),<sup>106</sup> printed to scale, and arranged within the layout, in this case a full bleed across two pages, which served as the opening spread to the issue's coverage of the French fall collections. The requisite text—"PERUGIA'S BRONZE KID SHOE / EDGED WITH MINK / Shown in the Dior Collection. / Custom-made, I. Miller."—announces this as boldly as the shoe dominates the spread, but never interferes with or encroaches on Avedon's photographic effects of blurred pedestrians and low vantage point.<sup>107</sup> He believed that the best graphic design always responded to and worked from their images; his stimulating, supportive, and collaborative presence at the magazine initiated and sustained an era of unsurpassed photographic quality.<sup>108</sup> With photographers like Avedon, whom he hired in 1945, Brodovitch negotiated the transformation of the original image into the visual anchor of a magazine layout.<sup>109</sup>

Avedon, as Brodovitch's most avid protégé, made photographs always and already attentive to their eventual appearance on the magazine page. Willing to experiment with proportion, cropping, and size, he appreciated the malleability of a photograph's meaning depending on the surrounding information or the choices made in taking, printing, and presenting it. "The minute you pick up the camera you begin to lie—or to tell your own truth. You make subjective judgments every step of the way—in how you light the subject, in choosing the moment of exposure, in cropping the print. It's just a matter of how far you choose to go."<sup>110</sup> Avedon's subjective judgments made throughout his process responded to the eventual published magazine spread. For example, he considered whether the tonality of the fashions pictured against a chosen location would read in the final print as more white (e.g. sky or open spaces), gray (e.g. most architecture or foliage), or black (e.g. night or certain interiors). For almost all of his early Paris photographs, that background tonality would be either gray or black.<sup>111</sup> Before releasing the shutter, Avedon knew the cut of the darkly-toned suit would stand

out sufficiently against the grays of a Parisian *colonne Morris* (figure 2.23). Avedon used a shallow focal plane to simultaneously call attention to the fashions on display and to formally emphasize the urban movement behind them (figure 2.1 and 2.22).<sup>112</sup> These decisions in anticipation of the published appearance contributed immensely to Avedon's goal of "heightened reality, better than real." For similar reasons, Avedon skillfully managed and adjusted his Paris street photographs, ensuring that the model would always be noticed, not in spite of the other elements in the picture but *because of* them.

The success of Avedon's photographs for *Harper's Bazaar* always required that the viewer be able to distinguish those wearing the objects of desire. The model's appearance, or legibility, depended not only on her surroundings but also, when applicable, on the representation of other figures present in the frame with her. One example, appearing on the page facing the photograph of the woman holding *Le Figaro* (figure 2.1), utilizes tonal disparities, blurred background, and accompanying figures to draw the viewer's attention to the model and her garments (figures 2.24 and 2.25). The dark shapes of the outfit on the right, complete with a sleek gloved hand, seem silhouetted against the ranges of gray around it. Similar tonal impact purposefully directs attention to the model on the left, in spite of her turn away from the camera and her outfit's obstruction by elements in the foreground. Facing her, looking directly at her in fact, a third woman pauses mid-stride. Avedon's blurring of her features and clothing indicates that she is not a model but a part of the life of this street or courtyard; her presence echoed and intensified by another figure in the distance who leans against a doorway. Another, perhaps the most banal, example of Avedon's effort to make his model recognizable is his inclusion of men in the frame, as when he paired a model with a male street vendor (figures 2.26 and 2.27). The model is equally set off when photographed with a group of men, as Avedon did in the *Harper's Bazaar* spread featuring Dorian Leigh congratulating the victorious French Tour de France team, who,

as a group, enthusiastically turn their attention to her, thereby subtly suggesting and echoing the direction of the viewer's own attention (figure 2.28).

Avedon's negotiation of the model's relationship to the crowd offers a more visually complicated example, as when he photographed two models watching acrobats perform (figure 2.29). In the image on the left of the spread, the woman stands near the center of the performance area, physically apart from the loose semicircle of the people behind her. In the larger image, Avedon positioned Elise Daniels near the acrobats, set off from the fairly orchestrated linearity of the shoulder-to-shoulder gathering. The clothing of one female onlooker, placed just in the gap between Daniels and the strongman, offers a visual point of comparison, her long cardigan and barely gathered skirt differing from the fitted shape and distinct line of the Balenciaga suit.<sup>113</sup> One writer characterized it as the contrast between "earthy" and "ethereal," "plebian" and "aristocratic," but this is too simple and polarized.<sup>114</sup> Instead of the model-as-goddess presentation (or its earlier incarnation, the socialite-model), Avedon offered up models, who, though still glamorous, are more believable and relatable. In part, he accomplished this by situating them on the streets of Paris, but he was also careful to attend to, and even emphasize, such distinctions as the woman in the cardigan.<sup>115</sup>

A version of this same distinction was evidenced in the machinations of the fashion industry itself. Haute couture involved creating the most exclusive and expensive women's clothing available, a select group that was available to department stores as made-to-order fashions, particularly as a means of reaching the foreign consumer base that supported this important national export. In fact, this information was part and parcel of what *Harper's Bazaar* conveyed to its readers; on pages 176 and 177 of the October 1948 issue, captions indicate that the Balenciaga and Dior suits featured were available domestically at Lord and Taylor, Bonwit Teller, and Marshall Field's (figure 2.29). (Notably, North American commercial buyers such as these were, in fact, the first and

most privileged viewers of the spring and fall postwar collections, ahead of European commercial buyers, who were themselves ahead of most private clientele.<sup>116</sup>) At their core, the photographic representation of distinctions in fashion relied on a viewer's subtle recognition of class differences, as played out in publicly accessible urban spaces of Paris.<sup>117</sup> As Gopnik noted, "The fact that the imaginary life of the women in the pictures are at several removes from any woman's real experience does not alter the poignancy and gaiety of the charade."<sup>118</sup> That said, Avedon clearly preferred fewer removes between his photograph and the viewer's identification with it. Accordingly, at this time, he most often chose to shoot a glamorous model on the city's streets, in its plazas, and enjoying its courtyards and sidewalk cafés, helping achieve that sought-after "heightened reality." His pairing of the model's outfit—the very reason for the photograph—with the location of the photograph continually accounted for the eventual visual reception of both by readers of *Harper's Bazaar*.

Both at the level of Avedon's making of the photographs and of Brodovitch's later arrangement of them within the magazine, the active interpellation of the viewer hinged on the narrative qualities these images could inspire. Avedon, for his part, created and told stories during the shoot and often directed the model's gaze and gestures. His stories might have encouraged her to look over her shoulder or up as if she had suddenly become aware of something (figures 2.13 and 2.26), or she might smile in acknowledgment of another person (figure 2.30). The model's pose—hands in her skirt's pockets, elbows cocked out to her sides, her head turned over her right shoulder—displays the voluminous, fur-trimmed folds of her cape; the sculpting of the cape also mirrors the architectural embellishments of the fixtures on the Pont Alexandre III. In other instances, Avedon's photograph could suggest the continuation of a story at the location of the shoot, as when he photographed Elise Daniels with her head turned, hand gesturing, and mouth open in conversation with someone Avedon has purposefully

removed from the frame, a presence also implied by a second glass of wine on the café table (figure 2.31). Avedon's structuring of narrative and building room for its elaboration and continuation created images that allow for the viewer's engagement and projection. As Barthes noted: "[D]oing the shopping is no longer impossible, or costly, or tiring, or troublesome, or disappointing; the episode is reduced to a pure, precious sensation, simultaneously tenuous and strong, which combines unlimited buying power, the promise of beauty, the thrill of the city."<sup>119</sup> Avedon's on-shoot decisions, anticipating his eventual viewers, were reinforced by the photographic layouts and sequences devised by Brodovitch.

Brodovitch often used two photographs obviously and recognizably made in the same location—where the model and/or her outfit constituted the significant difference—suggesting that either time or pedestrians had passed between the taking of the two pictures. The spread featuring two photographs of the street circus performers in the Marais (figure 2.29) accomplishes this effect. To different ends, so does Brodovitch's arrangement of two double-page spreads reproducing photographs Avedon took in front of some *affiches* on Paris streets (figures 2.32 and 2.33). The photographs in the first example shows two different models—one seeming to linger over her cigarette, the other looking skyward on her way down the street—in front of two separate sections of the same *affiche*. The second spread repeats this technique but introduces a scale change and an intervening image that provides relief from the much stronger graphic elements of the photographs on the right and left. The effect of these two spreads, then, suggests that not only has time passed, but that the different and models and attire are *themselves passersby*, the pedestrians we would expect to pass before these street posters. Brodovitch also used multiple photographs of a single model that were sequenced to suggest a series of moments from the same event, as in the three photographs of Dorian Leigh and the Tour de France team (figure 2.28). On the left

spread, Leigh is shown close-up, ecstatically embracing a single rider. The next photograph, moving left to right across the spread, depicts her still laughing but from a greater distance, in order to encompass three more riders perched on their bicycles. In the final image, the euphoria has passed and the riders have dismounted in order to converse with her on the sidewalk of the Champs-Élysées. The overall effect suggests a time-based shift from the immediacy of a first encounter to a stilled gathering for polite conversation; a narrative unfolds across and in the layout of the pictures. In all these ways, Avedon's photographic allowances for narrative anticipate Brodovitch's decisions as art director that would reinforce that narrative, thus giving viewers the undeniable sense that something had happened just before, just after, or in between the moments presented on the printed page.

Photography's indexical relationship to the actual world and the viewer's widespread faith in its unerring referentiality has ensured that whenever a photograph is viewed, that world—not its particular depiction—is perceived. Barthes summarized this brilliantly by pointing to the consistency with which we say “look, this is my brother,” as opposed to saying “look, this is a photograph of my brother.”<sup>120</sup> Photographs have constantly engaged their viewers, through evocation, imagination, and projection.<sup>121</sup> Driven by the desire to see a photograph's content as a reality to be experienced, a viewer's involvement is only reinforced when looking at a photograph whose meaning is bound up in the encouragement of both a product and its purchase.

An advertising image does just this, and in her critical study charting some historical changes to that category, Maud Lavin noted that the hallmark of postwar era advertising was consumer identification with the product: “That product looks like something I would buy.”<sup>122</sup> A fashion photograph relies on the same operations as those of an advertisement, its goal being to so stimulate desire for the fashions pictured that a purchase will ensue. As Hall-Duncan summarized: “The success of a fashion

photograph depends not only on the desirability of the clothing but on our willingness to believe in and identify with the subject.... [such that] the reality of the photograph will be ours."<sup>123</sup> Even Hall-Duncan fell into the trap she articulated when she failed to qualify the "reality of the photograph" as one likely to have been constructed to *appear* real in the photograph. Nevertheless, she rightly pointed out the extent to which fashion photographs rely on a female viewer's identifications with the models, the clothes they wear, and/or the lifestyles they seem to enhance; their intent is absolutely to effect recognition and familiarity.<sup>124</sup> Avedon relied on that familiarity to increase the viewer's identification with both the French fashions on display and the life that seemed to accompany it.

John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972) contains a useful introductory analysis of the function of what he termed "publicity" images, images that closely relate to the fashion photographs considered in this chapter. Berger illuminated publicity images' complicated relationship to time and, by extension, to the real. They belong to but never address the present moment because "they must be continually renewed and made up-to-date."<sup>125</sup> "Publicity is, in essence, nostalgic.... It remains credible because the truthfulness of publicity is judged, not by the real fulfillment of its promises, but by the relevance of its fantasies to those of the spectator-buyer. Its essential application is not to reality but to day dreams."<sup>126</sup> Approaching Avedon's postwar Paris street photographs with this in mind, the complicated coexistence in his pictures of the shirking of all present tense (save the fashions themselves), the nostalgia of a past-tense Paris where the war has wrought no consequences, and the implication of future fulfillment for the reader as much as for France become clear.<sup>127</sup> As a rhetorical and visual device, publicity intentionally manufactures desire and envy in a viewer who it suggests lacks the very thing on offer. In the case of certain Avedon photographs, that status is given representational form in the woman of the crowd wearing out-of-date clothes (figure 2.2).

Fashion is a cultural system that conveys and constructs meanings through language and image. Fashion institutes, then affirms and perpetuates, social roles and hierarchies.<sup>128</sup> Roland Barthes analyzed this system, specifically its 1958–59 season, as a linguistic code of what he called “written clothing” in his book *The Fashion System*,<sup>129</sup> Barthes’s study intentionally focuses on the descriptive language surrounding the fashion system, though he admitted this limit has deprived the analysis of “the rich resources of photography.”<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, in his appendix on the matter, he noted:

In Fashion photography, the world is usually photographed as a décor, a background or a scene, in short, as a theater. The theater of Fashion is always thematic: an idea (or, more precisely, a word) is varied through a series of examples or analogies.... Fashion dissolves the myth of innocent signifieds, at the very moment it produces them;... it does not suppress meaning; it points to it with its finger.<sup>131</sup>

Some of Barthes’s general observations about fashion descriptions maintain their aptness when applied to fashion photographs. For example, he remarked on the rhetoric’s need to “construct a genuine vision of the world: *evening, weekend, promenade...*” and the resulting narrative’s ability to simultaneously confirm the existence of the promenade and abstract the promenade’s value into an “appearance of *the experience*.”<sup>132</sup> Another important aspect of the fashion system’s function is the placing of the reader in relation to locality, where the clothing proposes a utopian answer to the question: where?<sup>133</sup> Elsewhere in the study, Barthes distinguished between a “utopian elsewhere” and a “real elsewhere.”<sup>134</sup> I want to suggest that in Avedon’s *Harper’s Bazaar* photographs, there is substantial elision between these two categories of locality, where Paris is understood simultaneously shown to exist, a real elsewhere, after the wartime lull of its picturing in fashion magazines and shown as nostalgic, a utopian elsewhere, based on a young man’s imagination as fueled by romantic prewar visual constructions of Paris.

During the postwar era, that identification was made increasingly plausible as fashion itself, like the photographs it relied on, became more democratic. Although magazine readership is difficult to ascertain because each issue is likely read by more than one individual (the “pass-along” factor), there is no question that circulation and sales increased dramatically in the postwar years.<sup>135</sup> The ideal reader of a magazine such as *Harper’s Bazaar* was between 25 and 35 years in age, “tired of wartime deprivation, [and] in need of frivolity.”<sup>136</sup> This was a logical response to America’s postwar economic boom and its burgeoning middle class, whose culture encouraged a generation of women to shop as a part of that “postwar prosperity, conformism in the interest of business and country,” and providing for family.<sup>137</sup> Women’s fashion-and-culture magazines regularly demonstrated to their female readers how best to do this shopping and what to shop for, while disseminating new cultural and social ideals to their boosted postwar readership.<sup>138</sup> As Ross has noted that postwar women were “the subjects of everydayness and as those most subjected to it, as the class of people most responsible for consumption.”<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, for a magazine with the prestige of *Harper’s Bazaar*, the likely readership, by Snow’s own admission, was not able to afford the luxurious goods pictured on its pages. “[T]housands of women [buy] *Harper’s Bazaar* not because they can afford the most expensive fashions we show but because they are fascinated by the new (in styles, in photography, in art, in writing), because they are eager to train their taste, and because they depend on the editors to present *the best* in every field.”<sup>140</sup> Accordingly, the fashion photographs in *Harper’s Bazaar* began to focus on the kind of life supposedly enjoyed by a person who wore particular clothes. This is not to suggest that the clothes were downplayed or less important, but that an effort was made to describe visually (through photographs) and verbally (through captions) the emulation- or aspiration-worthy lifestyle that such clothes suggested.<sup>141</sup>

Captions began to take a more casual tone postwar, familiarly addressing the reader, as in Carmel Snow's "Notes from Paris," or carefully mentioning the location of a particular shoot, suggesting that were she to come to this place the reader, like the model, could look and live beautifully. For fashion photographs, the shift in models played a crucial role, as Kismaric and Respini have noted: "For readers of fashion magazines or viewers of fashion pictures, the relationship to the subject was being changed from that of observer to that of implicit participant. As fashion photographers changed the models from objects into active humans in realistic situations, they began to make the viewer an extension of these situations."<sup>142</sup> Whether described as situations or lifestyles, what the fashion photograph depicted became more identifiable to a broadening audience.

Avedon's planning and construction of his photographs, as well as his collaboration with Brodovitch for the images that appeared in the pages of *Harper's Bazaar*, reveal the depth of his understanding of the implications for viewers, particularly during a time of the democratization of fashion photography's subjects and of fashion itself. Avedon's photographs undertook and accomplished the creation of a reality effect by exponentially heightening the viewer's identifications with them. Even his constructions of a romantic and nostalgic non-war Paris relied upon the viewer's conviction of the reality of their specifics (the locations were not sets, the models' movements seem natural, the suggested narratives seem mundane, etc.). He achieved his reality effect by creating street photographs that could be "treated as a piece of the world, then as a substitute for it" because Avedon recognized that each element in his nostalgic Paris street photographs furthers the viewer's desire to relate to the image, the desire to imagine the photograph's representation as a possible reality.<sup>143</sup>

Avedon decided that to take photographs that would have that "heightened reality, better than real, that suggests, rather than tells you" was to take them on the

Paris street, aligning them with the city as a site of vision, spectacle, and experience. It is this choice by Avedon to select iconic and identifiable Parisian streets as his setting that defines the purpose of these photographs. Identifiably situating these photographs in Paris, particularly postwar Paris, Avedon created images that drew vitality from (and indirectly helped bring vitality to) a city that had defined for Americans modernity and fashion, encouraging viewers to admire, desire, and even purchase the fashions featured there as much as they wanted to believe in the spectacle of a Paris that was simultaneously nostalgically prewar and newly revitalized. Avedon's street photographs for *Harper's Bazaar*, through their reality effect and the viewer's ability to identify with them, also established a longing for the urban experiences of Paris they depicted, the one Avedon constructed in the public squares and courtyards, on the boulevards and streets of Paris.

## CHAPTER THREE

### To Be Involved

The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state legislative body can prudently ignore them. The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South.

–John F. Kennedy<sup>1</sup>

As one of the most prominent sources of visual news, *Life* magazine was instrumental in showing white Americans these [civil rights] struggles and defining the terms of debate.

– Wendy Kozol<sup>2</sup>

Early in the summer of 1963, Andy Warhol created a series of screen paintings based on photographs from a civil rights demonstration taken just weeks earlier in Birmingham, Alabama. His canvases vary both in their repetition and density of the screened images and in their color, from mauve to mustard to red. Each contained the phrase *Race Riot* in its title, such as *Red Race Riot* (figure 3.1), and Warhol casually referred to them as “the dogs in Birmingham” pictures.<sup>3</sup> Assessing the importance of the source imagery for these paintings, art historian Anne Wagner has written:

For a start, *any* picture of black protest was in 1963 emphatically topical, given that black activism had reached a new urgency and visibility under the John F. Kennedy administration and the leadership of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.... But Warhol’s subject was not just generally topical; the specific image he chose for his *Race Riots* were also familiar. They were lifted from *Life*, that mainstay of American photojournalism and prime source for white middle-class impressions of the week’s *actualités*.... The three screens Warhol used in the *Race Riots* came from the *Life* exclusive ‘They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,’ a photo essay by... Charles Moore, a civil rights veteran as dedicated as he was skilled.<sup>4</sup>

Charles Moore’s street photographs were first published in *Life* magazine on May 17, 1963. Millions came to know his images of the Birmingham demonstrations, most especially the narrative sequence showing a black man being attacked—and bitten—by

German shepherd police dogs under the supervision of officers (figures 3.2–3.4). *Life's* readers also came to know another photograph depicting firemen turning their powerful and painful hoses on demonstrators huddled defensively on a sidewalk (figure 3.5).<sup>5</sup> Moore's photographs would be referenced as the quintessential record of racial violence in the United States in the aftermath of the Birmingham demonstrations. Although any photograph of these demonstrations might have sufficed for Warhol so long as it had been widely disseminated at the time, Moore's proximity to the events made his images particularly appealing. Indeed, the *Birmingham News* ran a photograph of Moore in the process of shooting the dog attack (figure 3.6). Yet even without this representation of Moore's mode of picture making, his proximity to the events is evidenced in his own photographs, as when the dog turned its attention to Moore in the third photograph of the sequence (figure 3.4). Moore's Birmingham street photographs conveyed to *Life* magazine's readers the intensity, brutality, and experience of a single, specific public demonstration for civil rights, an event as remarkable for its utilization of city streets as it was for the catalyzing effect its representation in the press had in rallying white middle-class support for those rights.

No era of United States history is more closely associated with the street in its actual events and popular recollection than the era known as "the sixties."<sup>6</sup> The characterization of that decade—then and now—through its political protests, acts of civil disobedience, and public unrest, originated in the struggle for civil rights, in what would come to be known as the civil rights movement or simply "the movement."<sup>7</sup> The popular stereotype of 1950s prosperity and plenty was tested, and eventually replaced, by media representations of 1960s turbulence and public action.<sup>8</sup> Historian Matthias Reiss has characterized such public actions: "All protest marches share certain basic features, most notably the involvement of crowds, the occupation of space, navigation of—usually urban—landscapes, and, as events in the public sphere, interaction with society."<sup>9</sup> The

demonstrations of the 1960s were not the first time Americans had used city streets to seek political and social change, but they were the first sustained, nationwide demonstrations to capitalize on a well established, widely circulating picture magazine press as well as burgeoning mainstream television coverage. Photo-dealer and civil rights historian Steven Kasher has said that these years mark the first time that images of black Americans' struggle for equality, whether televised or published, ever entered many white homes.<sup>10</sup> In the mid-1950s, the movement's earliest demonstrations coincided with television's boom, and those of the early 1960s benefited from television's radically expanded capability to broadcast events live around the globe.<sup>11</sup> *Life* magazine gave prominent photographic coverage to civil rights events in the late 1950s and 1960s, at a time when its weekly issue was, by all accounts, one of the—or *the*—"single most important media organ, seen by more than half the adult population of the US and reaching more people than any television program."<sup>12</sup> Photographic images, and specifically street photographs, played a different role than ever before in depicting and disseminating these demonstrations' ongoing political utilization of city streets. Remarkably, histories of photography have rarely reckoned with these pictures.<sup>13</sup> The literature on street photography has done so even more minimally.<sup>14</sup> Through the example of Charles Moore's Birmingham street photographs for *Life*, this chapter intends to serve as an example of the rich dialogue between what would become the defining site of 1960s demonstrations and the political utilization of streets as a photographic subject with wide circulation and impact.

Demonstrations transformed streets into political occupations and, more often than not, local authorities turned them into sites of violence. During an evening march in Alabama in 1965, for example, police shot out the streetlights so that reporters and photographers could not capture the beatings they inflicted on the demonstrators.<sup>15</sup> More generally, Kasher's impassioned summary of the photographs of the movement's early

demonstrations locates both the movement and the photographs in urban spaces charged with power struggle:

These photographs are about participation, collaboration, struggle, and jubilation. Utopian visions become real here. As if they were allowed, the courageous participants in the movement rode and walked the highways together, sat down where they were not invited, danced in the parks and streets, sang on the stairs of power. They were not allowed, but they did it anyway, making the future happen. Fists and guns were thrust in their faces; clubs, fangs, and jet-streams tore at their bodies; but they did not stop, they went on. These people stood up to power and took some of that power for themselves. As always, power did not concede willingly.<sup>16</sup>

And if this is how urban streets were being used, then the relationship between photography and the streets must be rethought. I contend the corresponding photographs—despite similarities in process with canonical street photographs—offer a crucial opportunity to reverse canonical 1960s street photography’s denial of historical and political contextualization. As much as it has become commonplace to suggest that the history of the civil rights movement—indeed the 1960s in general—cannot be understood without the photographs that documented and disseminated it, this chapter posits that the history of street photography cannot be understood without those very same images of demonstration.

### **Photojournalism, *Life Magazine*, and Precedents**

Dating back to the 1840s, illustrated journalism steadily expanded in popularity until the 1920s, when the technology of handheld cameras, faster film processing, halftone and color printing, and the rotary press made the widespread use of photographic reproductions viable.<sup>17</sup> Modern photo-reportage, or what I will refer to as photojournalism, enjoyed a welcome and ever-prominent place in newly founded weekly American magazines like *Time* (1923), *Newsweek* (1933), *Life* (1936), and *Look* (1937). Although *Time* mostly published photographic portraits in its first decade, Michael Carlebach has noted that the prominence and bold use of photographic illustration in

early and successful issues of *Newsweek* undoubtedly prompted *Time*, the nation's premier news magazine, to reexamine its use of pictures.<sup>18</sup> This created an increased demand for photographers, as curator John Szarkowski observed: "The picture magazines were at the height of their success and confidence, and magazines that had traditionally depended on the written word had come to devote a substantial number of their pages to photo-stories. The greatly expanded market of the postwar years made room for scores of new photojournalists."<sup>19</sup> Still, newsweeklies such as *Time* and *Newsweek* generally continued to use photographs as supplements to their articles. Picture magazines like *Life* and *Look* proposed the reverse; text supported the photographs.

Picture magazines were undoubtedly a more enjoyable, creative way of "telling" the news, though the longstanding debates about content and legibility continued.<sup>20</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, I will restrict discussion of image legibility to the cyclical, reinforcing process that allows viewers to approach new images with an understanding of previously experienced pictures that necessarily inform their understanding of their reception of subsequent ones. Conversely, this reception affects the taking and publishing of new, subsequent photographs. Notions of camera-based truth and documentary realism bear heavily on this process. Art historian and philosopher Yves Michaud has offered a definition of photojournalism—"all photographic or filmic images that appear to reproduce or resemble reality with a particularly high degree of accuracy"—that hinges on such notions in order to call them into question as "constructed objects that exist in a complex relation to reality" and to remind us that they are "a series of signs, generated technologically and controlled by humans, that exist in problematic relation to reality."<sup>21</sup> Given the likely irresolvable difference between a belief in the objectivity of the photographic record and an acknowledgment of the photographer's ability to construct, restrict, or manipulate that same record, Michaud

concluded that images are “always a sample of reality, a part that stands for the whole.”<sup>22</sup> And however helpful this argument may be to a dissertation concerning non-spontaneous engagements with the street as both site and subject, it must be said that the media itself has little need for such nuance, preferring as it does to reinforce and uphold the belief in objective reporting. Howard Chapnick, founder of the photo agency Black Star and a champion of Moore, is but one example. The preface to his autobiography, evocatively titled *Truth Needs No Ally*, offers the equally decisive statement: “To ignore photojournalism is to ignore history.”<sup>23</sup> If Chapnick’s outlook epitomizes the media’s stake in photographs, it also serves as a welcome admonishment to the canon of street photography for its near-total exclusion of photojournalistic street photographs.<sup>24</sup> Moore’s photographs from Birmingham are exemplary in this regard; reproduced and circulated in *Life* magazine, they represent the photographic catalyst of city streets represented as politically mobilized sites.

When Henry Luce, the head of Time, Inc., penned his goals for *Life* magazine, he also outlined its distinction from his company’s flagship magazine. “To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events;... to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed.... To see, and to show, is the mission now undertaken by a new kind of publication, The Show-Book of the World.”<sup>25</sup> *Life*’s editors, many of them from *Time*, understood that by the 1930s news had become “fundamentally visual.”<sup>26</sup> *Life* therefore strove to represent news in visually appealing and creative ways, such as the photo essay, which relied on high-quality photographic reproductions. Another aspect of *Life*’s popularity was its conviction that a better way of life, and therefore a better America, could result simply from the magazine’s embodiment of optimism and confidence. *Life* set out to disseminate news and ideas to what art and cultural historian Erika Doss has called “an ever increasing body of consumers fluent in the language of pictorial communication.”<sup>27</sup> The magazine’s debut issue hit newsstands on November 23, 1936.

*Life* quickly became one of the most widely consumed magazines in the country. Within just two years of publication, it reached a circulation of two million and enjoyed a “pass-along” factor that was sometimes as high as 17.3 nonsubscribers per issue. As a testament to its popularity with the burgeoning middle-class, *Life* received nearly one-fifth of all magazine advertising dollars spent in the U.S. during the postwar years. Despite increased competition from television, *Life* enjoyed a healthy circulation of six million in 1960.<sup>28</sup> Though at no point in its history did *Life* reach a majority of the population,<sup>29</sup> as James Baughman’s research makes clear, “*Life* undoubtedly shaped the political and cultural values of many Americans.”<sup>30</sup> Doss emphasized photography’s role in the process: “Each week, *Life* presented itself to its mainly middle-class readership as the visual theater of postwar national identity.”<sup>31</sup>

In order to do this, *Life* hired dozens of talented photographers for whom landing the magazine’s cover was, according to Doss, the “pinnacle of postwar [professional] success.”<sup>32</sup> The magazine’s masthead also listed photographers above reporters, indicating the value placed on their contributions.<sup>33</sup> *Life* also employed non-staff photographers. For example, Black Star agency often hired out their photographers to the magazine, splitting fees with the photographer, an arrangement that accounted for some 30 to 40 percent of the agency’s business.<sup>34</sup> For those interested in photography, *Life* also proved a pivotal source of published images in its early years.<sup>35</sup> Despite photography’s primacy within *Life*’s mission, its editors considered pictures a straightforward and appealing means of communication; thus, in their desire to foster the image of a homogenous postwar middle-class America, *Life*’s editors simultaneously assumed that the magazine’s readers would absorb the messages of nationalism, capitalism, and optimism that the photographs (and their captions) presented. This tension between photographs and their context can be found on *Life*’s pages—and Moore’s Birmingham photo essay is one such example in which words complicate

matters of photographic message and intent, a topic to which I will return later. Doss concluded that the magazine's ensuing inability to reckon with such photographic and editorial complexities spurred the magazine's end as a weekly publication in 1972.<sup>36</sup>

That *Life's* management failed to recognize the authority of their own crafting of American visual culture is telling; that they assumed that their editorial positions—their words—were somehow more powerful than *Life's* pictures reveals just how much they seemed to have abandoned, or simply forgotten, the magazine's inherently visual mission.... [Of course,] there was never an ideal American middle class, despite *Life's* convincing visualization. But by staying committed to that imaginary vision, *Life* was stymied from committing to anything else or recognizing that the nation, as ever, had abandoned that particular picture and was now engaged in new images of national identity and purpose.<sup>37</sup>

The 1960s images and photo essays by one staff photographer, Gordon Parks, notably embody *Life's* struggle to represent anything beyond a one-dimensional view of the American dream. Although his photographic practices contrasts with Moore's, the two photographer's are similar in their attention to black subjects and American racism. Parks was Moore's senior by two decades and enjoyed a newly prominent photographic *and* authorial byline in issues of *Life* during the early 1960s, the same years that Moore's civil rights images began to appear there. In ways it did not with Moore, *Life* celebrated Parks' personal-as-already-political outlook that informed his uncomplicatedly pleasing photographs. Parks was drawn or restricted (or both) to personal, interior portrayals of black experiences of the civil rights movement; Moore embraced the proximity made possible to him as a Southern white man, resulting in strikingly different photographs.

In 1956, *Life* magazine published the first article of a five-part series on postwar segregation entitled "Freedom to Jim Crow."<sup>38</sup> Beginning with a genealogical tree comprised of photographic portraits, the article identifies a family's normality in their "admixture of white stock" and provocatively declared, "A glance at the faces of the entire group raises this question: Who, or what, is a Negro?"<sup>39</sup> Wendy Kozol has asserted that, given that *Life's* largely white audience was likely influenced by the

magazine's view of black Americans, "[t]o ask this question in 1956, a highly contested moment in American race relations, locates *Life's* representation of race in a historically specific, yet politically ambiguous space."<sup>40</sup> *Life's* political ambiguity often resulted from the disconnect between the magazine's general belief that racial equality, via assimilation, would indicate cultural progress and the messages of specific articles or photographs, which often undermined a more liberal understanding of race. "Freedom to Jim Crow" provides an excellent example; although it was quickly followed by another article by the author detailing the views of Southern segregationists, it was featured on the cover and accorded multiple, expensive spreads of photographs printed in color.<sup>41</sup> All the photographs for the article were taken by Parks, *Life's* first black staff photographer.

Parks's tenure at *Life* began in 1948 and continued throughout the decades in which *Life*, "in its size and aspiration, had no equal."<sup>42</sup> Moreover, *Life* gave prominent coverage to photographs concerned with civil rights issues, even more than *Ebony*, the black-owned general interest magazine aimed at the black middle-class. To be sure, part of this imbalance resulted from *Ebony's* monthly publication schedule in comparison to *Life's* weekly status, but from 1955 to 1965, *Ebony* inexplicably offers almost zero coverage of the civil rights struggles.<sup>43</sup> Beyond such printing and coverage statistics, "*Life* was *the* magazine as far as photographers were concerned.... It was the goal of thousands to work there. *Life* had an edge on every other magazine—it was slicker, it was better known throughout the world," Parks declared.<sup>44</sup> Beginning in the 1960s, Parks photographed and penned a group of autobiographical articles that offer his personal assessment of racism, accompanied by photographs that mirror the circumstances of their making and context. Collectively, these articles helped shape—through both Parks's words and his pictures—the magazine's advocacy for racial equality, and they likely impacted white readership as a more familiar and intimate representation of blacks and civil rights than other contemporary magazines afforded.

The May 31, 1963, issue of *Life* includes Parks's photo essay on Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, "The White Devil's Day Is Almost Over" (figures 3.7–3.9) followed by Parks's own written reaction to black Muslims, "What Their Cry Means to Me"—A Negro's Own Evaluation," which includes more of his photographs from the assignment (figure 3.10).<sup>45</sup> Another pair of articles appeared in the August 16, 1963, issue: the semi-fictional photo essay "How It Feels to Be Black," featuring excerpts from Parks's autobiographical novel *The Learning Tree*; and the documentary photo essay and text entitled "The Long Search for Pride." (figure 3.11).<sup>46</sup> As a black photographer, Parks had access to certain people and situations that a white photographer would likely have been denied, the most obvious example being the inner sanctum of Black Nationalism, including Muhammad's home as well as that of a devout follower, temple prayer, and the men's self-defense courses and women's sewing lessons (figures 3.7 and 3.8).<sup>47</sup>

The photographs Parks made on this assignment demonstrate a different kind of photojournalism than that of Moore, particularly in terms of formal composition.<sup>48</sup> Parks eliminated much of the surrounding context from the frame to the point that it is difficult to discern where Elijah Muhammad is situated (figure 3.7), nor can one see more than a framed portrait of Muhammad in the image that captures the family in a moment of prayers (figure 3.8). This compositional tendency results in images easily categorized as portraits; the same is true of the rare instances when Parks photographed out-of-doors, on city streets. His tightly framed subjects remain the focus whether they are sidewalk sellers of Muslim newspapers (figures 3.9 and 3.10) or a crowd of Harlem demonstrators (figure 3.11). There is notably little action in these pictures, and there is also an absence of white authority figures such as policemen, who are so common in much of the journalistic coverage of civil rights struggles, as evidenced by one of the newspapers in Parks's image (figure 3.10). One might be tempted to explain this by demographics

alone, but at the demonstration in Harlem, Parks could have easily turned away from the interior of the crowd to its periphery, in order to photograph the policemen present “sometimes 50 to a single block” by his own description in the accompanying text.<sup>49</sup> Instead, Parks remained intent on creating intimate pictures that almost entirely disavow the streets on which they were made, streets of activism whether through newspaper-selling or mass demonstrating (figure 3.11).

The same sense of intimacy and proximity also characterized Parks’s written contributions to *Life*. In a diaristic mode, he began “The Long Search for Pride” (figure 3.11):

A few days ago I walked through the worst of New York’s Harlem and was jolted into a new appreciation of what 350 years of oppression have done to my people. The black ghetto has always swarmed with pain, poverty, despair and resentment, but now there was an exultant anger—clearly capable of erupting into open violence. The restless inhabitants, no longer afraid, no longer passively awaiting divine deliverance, crowded the street corners, listening to impassioned voices screaming invective.... I lay in bed that night, moved by the black temper of our time.... It was almost daylight before I finally slept, because I knew—and the knowing made my heart pound—that history had caught up with us.<sup>50</sup>

Focusing on his personal, even physical, reaction to the crowd in the street (the jolt, the sleeplessness, the pounding heart), Parks successfully avoided the agency that one might ascribe to his seemingly accidental presence at the demonstration as well as the specific political reasons for the condition of life in Harlem (poverty, despair, anger) or the demands that might rectify them (anger and violence trump calls for equality in housing, voting, and employment). Parks used a similarly casual, confiding tone to characterize the full sweep of black activism: “with the passiveness of King and the extremism of Muhammad, the Negro rebellion has come alive. Fire hoses, police dogs, mobs or guns can’t put it down. The Muslims, the NAACP, the Urban League, Black Nationalist groups, the sit-inners, sit-downers, Freedom Riders and what-have-you are all compelled into a vortex of common protest.”<sup>51</sup> This excerpt from “What Their Cry

Means to Me” served, as Doss articulated, as “a personal warning to *Life’s* readers about the strong appeal of black nationalism if integration failed.”<sup>52</sup> Considering the sum of these early 1960s civil rights stories by Parks, Doss further concluded: “Whether or not Parks actually intended to pacify *Life’s* [primarily white] audiences in this manner is unknown. What is clear is the degree to which his ambivalence about social and political activism segued with that of *Life* magazine. While visualizing and speaking on behalf of black America, Parks sidestepped direct political engagement.”<sup>53</sup> In overlooking Parks’s distinctly intimate formal tropes and decidedly personal emphasis on decontextualized portraits, Doss failed to account for *Life’s* other, more active and varied, coverage of “direct political engagement,” which Moore’s photographs exemplify.

### **Moore’s Process in the City**

Within a year of beginning his career as the staff photographer for the *Montgomery Adviser*, Moore took a series of photographs of Martin Luther King, Jr., which focus on his arrest for loitering outside the Montgomery, Alabama, court building. These images culminate in a widely published portrait of the burgeoning Civil Rights leader being booked inside the police station (figures 3.12–3.14). Moore’s interest in capturing a sequence that conveys the event’s narrative—rather than emphasizing the single image of King’s booking (figure 3.14), as *Life* did in its September 15, 1958, issue—would become the hallmark of his famous series of photographs of the dog attacks in Birmingham (figures 3.2–3.4).<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Moore’s photographs of King make plain what the single published image cannot: the movement would occupy the streets and, in particular, those public locations holding deep connotations of power such as courthouse, state capitol steps, and the public space outside police headquarters. New visions, nearly all of them photographic or filmic, of these public sites of power would come to populate the press and, therefore, the popular imagination.<sup>55</sup> The same also

held true for photographs taken in the seemingly less loaded public spaces of downtown shopping and business districts.

Recalling another of his early street photographs (figure 3.15). Moore has said:

The editor of the [*Montgomery Advertiser*-owned] afternoon paper, *The Alabama Journal*, told me he heard that there was some trouble downtown a few blocks away. When I arrived, I saw a man pulling a baseball bat out of a bag so I ran as fast as I could to get there just as he swung the bat at a black woman. I made the photograph so hurriedly that it is askew, but that seems to accentuate the violence portrayed.<sup>56</sup>

Although taken quickly in response to the unfolding action—with a dramatically tilted horizon and wide-angle lens effect that would soon become celebrated in the work of Winogrand—the photograph’s sharp focus captures both the instant of imminent attack by the white man and the anticipated attack by the black woman in the center of the picture. It also shows a different white man about to punch another black woman, as scores of black and white pedestrians react to the scene. The picture ran on the front page of the next day’s *Advertiser* and in other national papers.<sup>57</sup> Moore has argued that the *Advertiser* was more liberal than most papers: “The newspaper tried very hard to portray everything fairly. It could have ignored the civil rights story; a very conservative paper would have said ‘We’re giving this troublemaker King too much publicity. Let’s ignore him. Maybe it will die down.’ Well, the Montgomery paper didn’t do that.”<sup>58</sup>

Strikingly, in the case of Moore’s photograph of the attack on downtown Montgomery shoppers, the paper chose to publish the name of the vigilante alongside the picture.<sup>59</sup> As a result, Moore received death threats, and police commissioner L. B. Sullivan openly reprimanded the *Advertiser* for this act. Nevertheless, as the author of Moore’s monograph, Michael S. Durham has noted, “[t]he paper’s editor, Grover Hall, eccentric, fair-minded, and outspoken, managed to put the situation in perspective. ‘Sullivan’s problem is not a photographer with a camera,’ he wrote. ‘Sullivan’s problem is a white man with a baseball bat.’”<sup>60</sup> Moore has claimed this photograph, and the subsequent

experience of its publication, to be the impetus for his decision to be “where the violence was happening, no matter where it was.”<sup>61</sup> His passion for photojournalism merged with his anger about the injustice he witnessed in his home state; in June 1962, Moore quit the *Montgomery Advertiser*, began working at Chapnick’s Black Star agency, and made photographs, often appearing in *Life*, that earned him a reputation as one of the most daring and impassioned civil rights photographers.<sup>62</sup>

Stephen Kasher has consistently reiterated the presence of varying photographers capturing the civil rights movement, as well as their multiple motivations and commitments. Categorically speaking, there were employed journalists (as were Moore and Parks when shooting for *Life*), agency photographers (as Moore was for Black Star), movement photographers (such as Danny Lyon, to whom I will return), and artists interested in photographing the events for less immediate or more personal reasons (such as Richard Avedon).<sup>63</sup> More broadly, there were those operating either within or outside the struggle. Kasher noted that the latter—whether labeled photojournalists or documentary photographers for their commitment to recording events—took the majority of the photographs of the era, but that both outside photographers and those working for civil rights organizations “knew that they were recording crucial moments for a transforming nation. They rarely set out merely to make an ‘objective’ record of historical events; rather, they felt a need to hasten the transformations, to choose a side.”<sup>64</sup> Capturing events that might otherwise have been claimed not to officially exist often imparted urgency and specific points of view to their photographs.<sup>65</sup> Moore, for example, has recalled that Southern police were “ready to fly into any member of the press” and put him or her in jail. Like others, Moore realized that if enough photographers were jailed, there would cease to be thorough or appropriate photographic coverage, making it crucial for every photographer “to avoid trouble” in order to “keep shooting.”<sup>66</sup> Clearly, what civil rights photographers could depict

depended on their ability to be on location, their avoidance of arrest, their willingness to take risks in covering dangerous events, and, most especially, their degree of access to events.

Danny Lyon's civil rights photographs exemplify this. As the first official photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC hereafter), Lyon spent much of his time in SNCC offices, going with members to work the back roads of the South and participating in SNCC demonstrations.<sup>67</sup> As such, Lyon frequently crossed cultural and political boundaries between whites and blacks.<sup>68</sup> Not compelled by a publication deadline or an editor's demands, Lyon often pursued a more personal, expansive, and relaxed mode of picture making. (As with Parks, this accounts for the preponderance of photographs taken indoors, in more intimate spaces and of more private moments.) Lyon roguishly engaged his identity as a SNCC photographer and was able, on occasion, to refute it entirely in order to gain access to the situation at hand. (Such an option was almost wholly unavailable to Parks, and only in part because of his affiliation with *Life*, a point to which I will return.) Lyon's transcript of his June 1963 conversation with members of the state Highway Patrol from Gadsen, Alabama, reflects one such occasion. He introduced himself as a photographer working for a fictional, quasi-fascist Chicago news agency:

(The police spoke a great deal about what we would call police brutality. The more intelligent ones, or honest might be better, seemed troubled and offered elaborate explanations: [electric p]rod poles [for cattle] were more humane than sticks. A local citizen put it this way—they hurt but do not harm.... A larger force could less painfully subdue a demonstrator.... (I noticed that an officer, sitting behind the wheel of his car was going through a pile of 8/10 [sic] photos.) That one's a Black Muslim [sic] I think. See, (pointing to a black and white print of the front row in a Gadsen Mass Meeting), red socks and red tie—that's what they wore in Birmingham. (He said a Birmingham news man was sending them shots. Maybe I could send shots of Danville leaders to check against those in Gadsen?)<sup>69</sup>

Lyon's stunt indicates a dramatic shift in the kind and degree of information he had access to. Reassured by the fact that Lyon purportedly worked for a news agency sympathetic to their racist outlook, the patrolmen were at pains to explain the use of electric cattle prods on humans, and revealed that civil rights photographs—regardless of who had taken them—also served as identifying and incriminating tools for civil rights leaders.<sup>70</sup> Plainly, access to this information, even as part of a ruse, would have been denied to a black photographer like Parks.<sup>71</sup> These subtle manipulations of white identity respond to the fact that access to information was racially-based and -granted.

Moore's identity as a Southern white photographer increased his degree of access and actively shaped his photographs of the street demonstrations. Recognizing that frequent and pervasive civil rights demonstrations in the South required Southern photographers, Chapnick offered Moore a retainer in 1962 if he left New York for his hometown of Montgomery: "I told him I felt one of the great stories in American history was unfolding in the South. He came from the South and understood it. Going back to Alabama to document the events taking place there would provide the chance for Charles to do work he was uniquely qualified for."<sup>72</sup> A small cadre of Southern reporters and photographers shared this qualification, but when they invented a mock press corps dubbed the Southern Correspondents Reporting Equality Wars (SCREW), Moore received the first mock SCREW press badge in honor of his unique and highly risky photographic coverage of the 1962 University of Mississippi desegregation protests.<sup>73</sup> During the "Ole Miss" riots over James Meredith's enrollment—riots that led to a French photojournalist's death—Moore gained access to the besieged university building from which the National Guard defended itself. He was the only photographer, black or white, Northern or Southern, to do so and ended up with a *Life* exclusive for his pictures.<sup>74</sup>

*Life* specifically paired reporter Michael S. Durham with Moore on civil rights assignments because Moore was from the South and Durham was not. When Moore

heard Durham speak with a Northern accent, he reportedly quipped: “At least you look like a redneck. But when we’re together, don’t say anything.”<sup>75</sup> This advice was predicated on Moore’s knowledge of the volatile situations that would arise if their status as *Life* staffers, always presumed to be Northern and liberal, was revealed. Moore had learned this lesson while photographing rallying segregationists on the streets of downtown Jackson, Mississippi, following a speech given in conjunction with Meredith’s imminent enrollment, in which Governor Ross Barnett declared: “I love Mississippi! I love her people! I love our customs!”

I began photographing these three students who were each waving rebel flags. They started waving them at me, which was fine because it made dramatic photographs [figure 3.16]. But then they started jabbing... first at the camera, then at my face... I knocked one flag on the ground. I could tell from the way they were looking that I had committed an unpardonable sin.... [That same evening] the hotel room door banged open and in rushed a phalanx of screaming college students, including this guy with the flag, who came right at me and grabbed me by the collar and began twisting my tie and choking me. I’ve never been able to re-create [*sic*] the obscenities, but it was like, ‘You goddamn *Life* magazine bastards, we found out who you were. You nigger lovers had better go home.’... I have never seen such hate on anyone’s face before.... To him I was worse than ‘a nigger,’ I was a white nigger... and worse than that I was a white *Life* magazine nigger.<sup>76</sup>

Young and white, Moore had enmeshed himself easily among the segregationist Ole Miss students, even while photographing them and their flags, but his aggressive act toward the flag revealed his position as a non-segregationist white Southerner, one affiliated, as the flag-bearer discovered, with *Life* magazine. Until Moore’s aggression toward the rebel flag, however, his proximity and access put him in an ideal location for covering the event *as a participant* and conveying the location and point of view that accompanied it.

Historians such as Kasher have indicated that such confrontations impacted Southern photographers, including those like Moore who had not previously had reason to take a stand on civil rights issues: “Some, even in the South, were angered by the

scenes of racist injustice that they witnessed and came to support the cause of civil rights, insinuating that support into their pictures.”<sup>77</sup> Moore himself acknowledged that he underwent this transformation as a direct result of the violent acts in Birmingham:

Birmingham was in my own state. These were my people.... I'm watching dogs being led into the crowds and the high-pressure hoses knocking people down, and it troubled me, because I love the South. And it opened my eyes to the need for change in the state of Alabama. I saw that we had to become a state for all citizens, that blacks deserved the same kind of chance that I was given.<sup>78</sup>

Moore's revelation, with its overtones of naïveté and condescension, nevertheless indicates the degree to which what unfolded before his camera in the civil rights movement came to affect the way he continued shooting and covering those events. Moore readily admitted that it was only *after* taking some of his first photographs in Birmingham that he realized their import, both personally and historically. Pragmatically, he was most concerned with taking his pictures “without stumbling over something or being hit by the cops,” indicating his tendency to fully insert himself in Southern civil rights clashes like those in Birmingham.<sup>79</sup> Although as a photojournalist street photographer Moore did not choose *where* to make his photographs, as did Lyon, or even—to some extent—Parks, the answers to questions about Moore's location remain paramount. They reveal nuances about his proximity to newsworthy events, to other positions available for coverage, and to the access he had been granted as a Southerner.

On May 3, 1963, Moore and Durham were on assignment elsewhere, but the radio news coming out of Birmingham became too compelling. Driving into Birmingham in the early afternoon, they arrived at 16th Street Baptist Church just as firemen prepared to turn their hoses on demonstrators who had been streaming out of the church all day. Within minutes, Moore would take one of his most notorious photographs, placing himself just behind the firefighter's triangular formation as they

directed a stream of water with a force of 100-pounds-per-square-inch on demonstrators huddled on the city sidewalk (figure 3.5).<sup>80</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff have aptly summarized Moore's process for this photograph:

He wanted to get as close to the action as he could, as close as the firefighters and demonstrators themselves.... He wanted his images to be felt; if the firefighters were going to use hoses, his images had to feel wet.... [He] made his way to a position right beside the firefighters, close enough to touch them. Through his lens he saw the straight, white laser line of water drilling into the upper back of a seated man, who pulled a woman close to shield her from the battering.<sup>81</sup>

Moore was so close to the firemen that he conversed with them (one of them would later confide to him: "We're supposed to fight fires, not people."<sup>82</sup>), he was struck in the leg by a piece of concrete hurled at the attacking firemen, and, finally, he appeared in other photographers' images of this particular attack (recall his appearance in figure 3.6).<sup>83</sup> In other fast-breaking situations, Moore would be physically steered by Durham, who would grip either Moore's collar or belt, so that he would never have to stop looking through his viewfinder and, thus, never stop shooting composed, in-focus photographs. In his recent catalogue on civil rights photography, Julian Cox has noted that this was not the norm: "The blurred forms, harsh contrasts, and grainy quality of many press photographs also directly reveal the conditions under which they were made."<sup>84</sup> Moore avoided blurring and the over- or under-exposing of his negatives by moving only in a controlled manner that allowed all his attention to remain directed to the act of picture making. The absence of graininess in his photographs could also be attributed to this, but it seems more likely that its presence in other press photographs is the direct result of over-enlarging a negative from a handheld 35mm camera. This enlargement would be necessary for the frames taken by other photographers because they were standing at a further distance from their subject than Moore.

Such consistent physical engagement with the action on the street was understandably borne out in Moore's choice of equipment:

There was so much going on at Birmingham, things were happening so fast—crowds would start running off in this or that direction—that the only way I could keep up with it was to run backwards and keep shooting. I wanted to be everywhere. And I didn't want to stand back and shoot it with a long lens. I didn't have much equipment at that time, no lens longer than a 105mm, but even a 105 would have kept me out of the action. No, I wanted to shoot it with a 35mm or a 28mm lens, to be where I could feel it, so I could sense it all around me and so I could get the depth that you get with a wide-angle lens. I wanted to see foreground, middle ground, and background. I wanted to get a feeling [in my pictures] of what it was like *to be involved*.<sup>85</sup>

By 1960 most photojournalists increasingly used only 35mm cameras, though it was common to have multiple camera bodies, each outfitted with different lenses to accommodate different distances and/or set to different apertures to respond to varying light levels. Magazine photographers, as opposed to newspaper photographers, enjoyed more flexible deadlines, could anticipate more space on the printed page for their images, and were encouraged by editors to capture events in multiple frames.<sup>86</sup> Multiple preset camera bodies encouraged this photographic mode. Obviously, however, carrying more than one camera was less than ideal in situations calling for inconspicuous coverage.<sup>87</sup> Moore noted that he had little equipment with him in Birmingham and specifically references only his 28mm wide-angle lens when discussing the photographs made that day.<sup>88</sup> (As for film, Moore recalled that most of his civil rights pictures were taken on Kodak Tri-X film, whose exposure he guessed and adjusted as necessary since there was no time for a light reading and his camera had no built-in light meter.<sup>89</sup>) Proximity in relation to the events he watched through his viewfinder remained paramount for Moore: “My emotional connection is when I'm close up, when I am close in there, up there as close as I can be.”<sup>90</sup>

On the second day that water hoses failed to stop the continual swell of demonstrators on Birmingham's streets, Public Safety Commissioner Eugene “Bull” Connor ordered in police dogs as brutal reinforcements for his overwhelmed men.<sup>91</sup> At an intersection proximate to both Kelly Ingram Park and 16th Street Baptist Church,

where hundreds had confronted the hoses on the previous day, no fewer than five policemen with at least as many dogs occupied the crosswalk. The gathering demonstrators, with their unhurried postures and dry clothes, had the appearance of spectators. Moore captured the moment when one German shepherd announced the division between power and protest (figure 3.2). Moore's photograph, taken at an oblique angle to the crosswalk, depicts a man stopped in the crosswalk, his ripped pant leg pulled back by the attack dog straining against its leash. The policeman controlling the leash looks down, his lips parted perhaps in surprise or command, but neither explanation seems to have called off the attack. In Moore's next frame, the man leans forward mid-stride, while the dog is poised to bite his buttocks and, just behind it, another dog and officer (leash coiled around his wrist to no avail) joins the attack (figure 3.3). Moore has squared himself off perpendicular to the crosswalk, so that those gathered at the left side of the previous frame now appear as a wall of onlookers. By the third frame, the dog under the first policeman's control has turned to face Moore, leaving the attack to the two other dogs, one of which bites the man's right buttock, while the other lunges toward him with bared teeth (figure 3.4). Moore's composition emphasizes the triangle created by the two attacking dogs and the immobilized man, even at the formal expense of the vertiginous horizon line and the foreground interference of the original officer and his dog. As Cox has argued:

Typically, the photographs they produced are valued as historical evidence and for their capacity to effect cultural and political change. That is, their function as social documents is commonly emphasized above their status as critical or aesthetic representations. But occasionally and profoundly, they show us something that we have not seen before—a point of view that prompts us to look at the world, and the subject, with renewed concentration.<sup>92</sup>

The formally-considered compositions of Moore's Birmingham dog attack photographs do just this. The foreground presence of the dog and the policeman (figure 3.4), for example, makes absolutely clear Moore's proximity to the events. Indeed, as Roberts

and Klibanoff have noted, in the first of these three frames (figure 3.2), other photographers shoot from the safety of far curb of the crosswalk, their cameras poised but the immediacy of the scene diminished by several feet of distance from the action.<sup>93</sup> Remarkably, Moore seems to be no less threatened by the dogs and/or officers than those demonstrators who form the backdrop of his second frame.

Many scholars have argued that photojournalists like Moore know the potential to influence their audience exists when framing their compositions. As Michaud has succinctly stated: “Both parties—makers and viewers—know what the other is up to and how they go about it.”<sup>94</sup> In the same catalogue on contemporary photojournalism, Jörg Huber elaborated on the process behind such an outlook, pointing out that phrases such as “emotional impact,” “telling a story,” or “providing context” in fact reflect our “cultural patterns on which the interpretation of communication and information is based... , [and also] act as a filter in the mind and the camera of the photographer: pictures are created as the product of ideological programming.”<sup>95</sup> Moreover, Huber continued, “[a]ctually taking a photograph usually involves acting so quickly that there is rarely time to wait for the ‘decisive moment’ or consider in advance the details of the situation. The requirements of spontaneity and intuition mean that photographers not only respond to the event they are photographing, but also reproduce images already stored in their mind.”<sup>96</sup> Although Huber referred to Cartier-Bresson’s decisive moment, when photographic elements of lighting, subject, point of view, and framing all align to produce a singular and definitive image, he also suggested that some of these components may not be attended to in the demands of a timely, even immediate, reaction. In such moments, the photographer relies on legibility and accessibility, which, in photojournalism, function as circular processes. The codes of legibility and accessibility exist through the replication through existing time-tested genres—such as images of war or political gatherings, two genres whose iconography and language frequently come to

bear on Moore's and many others' civil rights photographs—and through visually recognizable villains and heroes—such as the multiple Birmingham officers and dogs participating in an attack against a single person.<sup>97</sup>

In multiple ways, Moore's mode of picture making mirrors that codified by Cartier-Bresson and celebrated in the work of a canonical street photographers like Winogrand. Moore's ability to convey the experience of being at the Birmingham demonstrations owes a great deal to his aforementioned proximity to the events and his ability to frame the events such that he seems to be the only photographer present, or at least the only one willing to risk full engagement with the events. These are all qualities that have been heralded in traditional street photography. In Moore's case, however, he used them to “insinuate his support” of the civil rights movement into his pictures.<sup>98</sup> Moore has specifically pinpointed the dog attacks as a definitive and irreparable rupture in his (supposedly) detached and objective journalistic coverage of the demonstrations:

My emotional involvement in the story grew as I saw what was happening. The police dogs were what really did it for me. I knew that those high-pressure hoses hurt people—I saw them ripping off their clothes, knocking them down, and rolling them around—but somehow I didn't see them getting hurt badly. But the sight of snarling dogs, and the possibility of dogs ripping flesh, was revolting to me.<sup>99</sup>

Moore continued to photograph in Birmingham until May 7, despite the injury he suffered from the concrete block on May 3. In the intervening days, newspapers around the world carried pictures from the Birmingham demonstrations—all of which made evident that the civil rights movement was an insurrection against the state by its citizens (indeed, it was called the “second American Revolution” in some contemporary commentary)—and Birmingham's police commissioner Connor realized the effect of unregulated photographic coverage.<sup>100</sup> He ordered his forces to arrest Moore and Durham at the slightest appearance of probable cause, and both were eventually arrested for their refusal to obey a police order to cease taking photographs.<sup>101</sup> Moore's commitment to

photographing the violence of his home state certainly earned him a reputation as someone willing and proximate to the movement's events.<sup>102</sup> Following the appearance of his Birmingham photographs as an eleven-page lead story for *Life*, Moore was seen by colleagues as someone who would always be present when, as Durham said, "all hell broke loose. One network television correspondent so admired the way Charles maneuvered in fast-breaking situations that he would tell his crew to watch Moore and to move when he moved."<sup>103</sup> Moore's commitment to his photographic coverage stemmed from his own identity as a Southerner, and it registered in his photographs. "[W]hat I saw covering the civil rights movement hurt me beyond just being angry. I loved the South. I didn't want to know these terrible things were happening. But they were, and I was going to photograph everything I could."<sup>104</sup> Moore's engagement as a Southerner and the impact of his Birmingham photographs can only be enriched by a consideration of the specifics of these demonstrations and of the city streets on which they took place.

### **Birmingham's Civil Rights Demonstrations**

A large, industrial post-Civil War city of approximately 350,000 residents by 1963, Birmingham epitomized segregation. Among Southern cities, it had a significant black population (40%), predominantly working-class, as was the majority white population. Alabama's largest city was referred to as "the last stop before Johannesburg, South Africa," for its notoriously volatile race relations and fierce enforcement of segregation.<sup>105</sup> Birmingham had opted to close all its municipal parks, pools, playgrounds, and golf courses rather than comply with federal orders to desegregate such public facilities. From 1957 to 1963, the city had dozens of unsolved racist bombings in a single black neighborhood (dubbed "Bombingham's" "Dynamite Hill") and even more numerous cross burnings. In May 1961, a Freedom Rider bus was attacked without any police presence or intervention.<sup>106</sup> Public Safety Commissioner Connor had overseen the city's police

force, known for its brutality, for twenty-three years. For civil rights advocates, Connor became the emblematic arch-segregationist; for most whites in the city, he reflected their own hatred of “niggers” who did not “know their place” in a Jim Crow stronghold. President John F. Kennedy had described Birmingham as “the worst city in the south” and, for that very reason, King hoped the Birmingham demonstrations would “break the back of segregation all over the nation.”<sup>107</sup>

Devised by King, Fred Shuttlesworth, the pastor of Birmingham’s 16th Street Baptist Church, and other King advisors during a secret retreat in January 1963, Project C (the C stands for confrontation) intended to catalyze the support of local business elite and the (Northern) steel corporations that employed many residents away from Birmingham’s municipal authorities.<sup>108</sup> The project had three phases: persistent economic boycotts and picketing of white downtown businesses; daily marches on City Hall; and, finally, a swell of choreographed nonviolent demonstrations involving thousands of local youth. The last of these explicitly aimed not only to fill the city’s jails beyond capacity but to provoke Connor’s typical police brutality on participating schoolchildren in the expectation of widespread media, especially photographic, coverage.<sup>109</sup> The cumulative effect of all three phases would garner adverse publicity for the city, its officials, and its policies.<sup>110</sup> The arrests of Shuttlesworth and thousands of anticipated demonstrators would occur only after the economic effects of the boycotts and picketing had registered with Birmingham’s business leaders, and the youth would only participate at the culmination of the project in order to be present when violence erupted.<sup>111</sup> Much of what occurred in Birmingham went according to plan; even Connor’s injunction against the first march, while it postponed the second phase of the project, was a clear signal of Connor’s increasing frustration.<sup>112</sup> As Cox has pointed out, it also allowed Connor to prepare: he blocked off the major intersections near both the white and black downtown business areas using patrol cars and motorcycles; he readied

plainclothes officers (often referred to as posse men in contemporary accounts), uniformed officers, and police dogs; and he requested the construction of special high-pressure water hoses for use by the fire department.<sup>113</sup> On Wednesday, May 1, when demonstrators descended the steps of 16th Street Baptist Church bound for downtown, Connor had police wagons intercept and arrest eight hundred of them, beginning the filling of the jails.<sup>114</sup>

The following day waves of demonstrators continued to file out of the church and into Kelly Ingram Park, a tree-lined block of Birmingham's black downtown district. They filled police wagons, patrol cars, and finally school buses until nearly one thousand were arrested. One group of students, Kasher noted, bypassed Connor's blockades and "carried their picket signs into white downtown, where Connor's harried forces finally caught them."<sup>115</sup> That same day, according to *Time*, firemen deployed the custom-made hoses whose monitor guns forced the power of two standard fire hoses through a single nozzle, creating a jet that peeled bark from the trees in Kelly Ingram Park from a distance of one hundred feet and broke bones at close range. "Black-booted firemen turned on their hoses. The kids fell back from the crushing streams. The water pressure increased. Children fell and lay there bleeding. The march stopped."<sup>116</sup> The hoses would continue being used for the remaining five days of demonstrations. Many in the press arrived in Birmingham that day and the following, Friday, May 3. As Roberts and Klibanoff have summarized, "What they saw, what they wrote, what they broadcast, and, most important, what they photographed... would have a swift and stunning impact on the American people, all the way to the White House."<sup>117</sup>

By the time Charles Moore arrived in Birmingham in the early afternoon of May 3, the expanded demonstrations, as announced by King that morning, had recently begun, with over one thousand youth participating, some as young as six years old. The water hoses forced marchers out of Kelly Ingram Park and off its surrounding streets,

dispersing or containing them for arrest before any neared the white downtown and City Hall. “The jets rolled bodies down the street.”<sup>118</sup> Others hunkered down against the hoses, as in the scene photographed by Moore (figure 3.5). Witnessing the resolve of demonstrators and aware that others were antagonizing his men, Connor ordered in the police dogs in an effort to further disperse the crowd from the park.<sup>119</sup>

The next morning, newspapers across the nation and around the world published photographs of the dog attacks by AP and UPI press photographers, their brutality and immediacy eliciting the public moral outrage for which King and Shuttlesworth had planned.<sup>120</sup> Bill Hudson’s picture of a dog attacking a demonstrator named Walter Gadsen, ran on the front pages of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*, among others (figure 3.17).<sup>121</sup> Formally, Hudson’s photograph presents a static triangle between the black demonstrator, white policeman, and German shepherd; the lines of connection are reinforced by the officer’s outstretched restraining arm, the taut leash in his other arm, and the dog’s upward and forward lunge at Gadsen’s stomach. This photograph quickly hit the AP wire after Hudson took it, and was rapidly distributed.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, Hudson’s image (and other, lesser-known ones like it) crossed national boundaries; published outside the U.S., the dog attack photographs resonated internationally in ways perhaps even Shuttlesworth and King could not have foreseen.<sup>123</sup> Congressman Peter Rodino recalled:

I was attending a conference at Geneva... and the incident of the police dog attacking the Negro in Birmingham was printed all over the world. One of the delegates from one of the nations represented at the conference there showed me the front page of the European edition of the Times [sic] and he was a little more frank then [sic] some of the others, and he asked me, ‘Is this the way you practice democracy?’ And I had no answer.<sup>124</sup>

For the United States, so invested in aggressively projecting its Cold War image as *the* model democratic society, this anecdote gives but a small indication of the foreign embarrassment caused by Birmingham demonstration photographs.

While the world reacted to the images, marches continued on downtown, City Hall, and the overflowing jail. Marches on Monday, May 6, alone resulted in 2,500 arrests, the highest daily total of all the demonstrations.<sup>125</sup> The following day, that same number left 16th Street Baptist in new waves of marches into downtown (figure 3.18). “Yelling and singing, they charged in and out of department stores, jostled whites on the streets, paralyzed traffic” (figure 3.19).<sup>126</sup> Both this report and Moore’s photograph emphasize the demonstrators’ physical occupation of the street and their disturbance of its normal protocols (“jostling,” “charging,” finger-wagging) and its smooth functioning (“paralyzed traffic,” a sidewalk corner so densely packed no other pedestrian use was possible).<sup>127</sup> Moreover, both imply the economic impact of such occupation of the streets, the article mentioning department stores in which such interruptions would have been unwelcome and Moore’s photograph by composing the inclusion of window and door signs advertising to customers, all of which appear behind the impassable sidewalk corner. On other sidewalks downtown, firemen used hoses again in attempts to disperse the marchers since, by Tuesday, no further demonstrator arrests could be made.<sup>128</sup> As before, demonstrators took cover from the forceful hoses (figure 3.20). While taking photographs of these hosings, Moore and reporter Durham were arrested.<sup>129</sup>

Over the next three days, negotiations finally yielded an accord between Birmingham’s merchants and civil rights demonstrators.<sup>130</sup> All public spaces and department stores would be desegregated immediately, equal job opportunities would be ensured, a biracial committee would be charged with the reopening of closed public facilities, and no charges would be brought against the arrested demonstrators. In language that revealed an ideological equation between urban downtown areas and the white “communities” that controlled them, *Life* still triumphantly declared that Project C had “forced white communities to start desegregating their city facilities.”<sup>131</sup> It further pointed out that Project C had violated an injunction against the marches only to applaud

the result: “Dr. King’s demonstrations did take place in violation of Birmingham’s parade ordinance. But the technical legal infraction was far outweighed by the broader right of citizens in a free society to assemble peaceably to seek redress of grievances....

‘Nonviolent direct action’ made the whole community—and nation—hear him.”<sup>132</sup>

Connor’s violence, while abhorred, was cast in positive terms for its visual effect on the printed page: “millions of people—North and South, black and white—felt the fangs of segregation and, at least in spirit, joined the protest movement. The revolution was on—in earnest.”<sup>133</sup> But it was the photographs that—more than King’s strategies and Connor’s retaliations—continued to resonate and reverberate in the coming months and even years.<sup>134</sup> Among the most telling example is *Time* magazine’s issue naming Martin Luther King, Jr. “Man of the Year.” The cover portrait of King depicts him with his shadow cast along an urban stretch of sidewalk—symbolic of the demonstrations that had marked 1963—and chose to republish Moore’s already famous photograph of the firemen (figure 3.21).<sup>135</sup>

On a practical level, the events in Birmingham prompted perhaps the most extensive demonstrations ever across the nation; Kasher cited over 1,000 such actions and nearly 20,000 resulting arrests in over 100 cities throughout the South.<sup>136</sup> On a rhetorical and symbolic level, the events in Birmingham were mentioned in President Kennedy’s first and most vigorous appeal on the matter of civil rights during his televised national address in June 1963, in which he called for the passage of the Civil Rights Act by Congress:

We preach freedom around the world and we mean it. And we cherish our freedom here at home. But are we to say to the world—and much more importantly, to each other—that this is the land of the free except for Negroes.... [sic] Now the time has come for this nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state legislative body can prudently ignore them. The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South.... We face, therefore, a moral crisis, as a country and a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to

increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talks. It is time to act in the Congress, in your state and local legislative bodies, in all our daily lives.<sup>137</sup>

Kennedy's speech plainly stated the impact of Birmingham, and its crafted language incessantly evoked the cities and streets now so closely associated with demonstrations ("ghettoes," "fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city," "repressive police action," "[i]ncreased demonstrations in the streets").<sup>138</sup> More than that, however, Kennedy's language indicates both his own and his audience's understanding of the street's status as image.

The demonstrations in Birmingham also became a touchstone for illuminating the conceptual schism between militant strategies and nonviolent direct action. In Gordon Parks's photo essay "The White Devil's Day Is Almost Over," for example, Elijah Muhammed exemplified this mode of conjuring Birmingham:

There is one thing good about what is happening down there [in the South]. The black man at last can see what the white man is really like, what he really feels about him. Birmingham bears witness to the fact that a white man is a devil and can't do right, what with water hoses stripping dresses from our women and our youth being chased and bitten by vicious dogs. At last the black man realizes he must fight for his rights if he is to attain them. The white man is more vicious than the dogs he sets upon us. He is never satisfied with a black man no matter what his position. You can lie down and let your back be his doormat, but soon he'll get tired of that and start kicking you. "Turn over, nigger! You're laying on the same side too long," he'll say.<sup>139</sup>

Even for those with a less overt agenda, street demonstrations were usefully and frequently evoked, in part because of the highly visual language that would accompany them. Such evocations also and importantly allowed any informed reader, particularly a *Life* subscriber, to picture recent street photographs from the magazine's pages when they read, for example: "Freedom *now!*"—no matter how wonderfully it lends itself to the emotional mood of orator and crowd, no matter how bravely those placards wave above good people softly singing *We Shall Overcome*—is a phrase with explosive potential."<sup>140</sup> Eventually and gradually, the nonviolent direct actions that had characterized the first

several years of the civil rights movement did indeed give way to more aggressive and explosive years.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless those years—with the Birmingham demonstrations as their apex—became the model for every subsequent political and social movement of the next ten years in the U.S.<sup>142</sup> Street photographs like Moore's of the movement's demonstrations visually inspired the continued struggle, having circulated in *Life* and other international publications as records of timely and era-defining events, and thereby engaged that magazine's white middle-class readership, as did Moore's photo essay, in ways that no other records could.

### **The Photographs' Appearance in *Life***

One month after the Birmingham demonstrations, public reaction was still strong. *Life* magazine continued to express concern and its June 14 editorial went so far as to attempt to reorient President Kennedy's domestic and foreign priorities:

The U.S. race problem has changed character... recommitting Americans (again in [Civil War historian Bruce] Catton's words) 'for the rest of time to a much broader concept of the quality and meaning of freedom and democracy than anything they [have] yet embraced.' How we handle this challenge is much more important to our stature in the world than any talks Kennedy can possibly have abroad at this time. We strongly support [the] view that the President should cancel his European trip and tend to these compelling matters at home.<sup>143</sup>

There is simply no question that Moore's photographs of Birmingham gripped the nation; by transcending the local, by compelling sympathetic activism, and by giving photographic form to racist brutality in the U.S., they are arguably the most pivotal of all civil rights demonstration photographs.<sup>144</sup> Following that initial burst of widespread daily newspaper photographic coverage on May 4 and several days of demonstrations that followed, the newsweeklies and picture magazines reached newsstands. None chose to feature Birmingham on its cover.<sup>145</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff have attributed this to a miscalculation regarding the major turning point that Birmingham represented in the

movement, a view “[t]hat changed quickly. *Life* came out with Moore’s shocking photos, and the outrage was renewed.”<sup>146</sup> The title of the article, “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,” seems to anticipate the pivotal nature of the Birmingham demonstrations, if not the role the ten-page photo essay would play in expanding the circulation of and reaction to the photographs.<sup>147</sup>

The number of photographs as well as their sequencing over the pages allocated to them, framing, scale, layout, and captioning all played a role in the way a photo essay appeared to millions of readers and, thus, impacted the perceived meaning of both visual and written content for those readers. I agree with Cox’s assessment of the final, published presentation of Moore’s images in *Life*: “Collectively, Moore’s photo story met the standards of intensity and personal accountability that one expects of a work of art. Despite its undeniable power and shock value as an ensemble, the best of Moore’s photographs transcend the narrative of which they are a part.”<sup>148</sup> I contend that not only did Moore’s photographs transcend the published *Life* narrative, several of them created tension with the surrounding text, confounding editorial efforts at clear meaning-making through captioning and, thus, making it possible for viewers to privilege the photographs’ immediacy over and indeed apart from the text.

Typically, *Life* did not grant bylines either to the writers or photographers responsible for a particular story; when it did, historian Wendy Kozol stressed that it indicated the stature of a specific writer or photographer or, in the case of a photographer byline, the magazine’s privileging of that photographer’s vision on the topic.<sup>149</sup> “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out” was Moore’s first byline, and it seems he had some oversight in the layout of the eleven-page lead story.<sup>150</sup> In two of his spreads, a full-bleed photograph stretches across both pages. Two other spreads feature large photographs that dominate over half the layout. *Life* magazine’s paper and oversize format (in comparison to newsweeklies like *Time*) only enhance a photographs presence

on its pages. If there was any doubt that these pages—perhaps with the exception of the last, single page—were driven by Moore’s photographs, the chosen headings for each spread never overlap the image or interrupt the picture frame save on the opening spread (figure 3.22), where the title and subtitle of the article, along with the *Life* logo is laid over the image bleed.

The piece’s textual substance begins on the next spread; reading from left to right and top to bottom, the text block is encountered only after two dramatic and large photographs of further hosings in Birmingham (figure 3.23). The third spread presents Moore’s three images of the dog attack, the last of which covers nearly one-and-a-half pages (figure 3.24). As Roberts and Klibanoff have summarized: “Dogs that seemed menacing but grainy in newspapers became breathtaking in *Life*, especially when Moore’s series of shots showed how impossible it was to get away from them.”<sup>151</sup> Most of the following spread’s four photographs are portrait-like representations of the demonstrators, while the largest of the four emphasizes the physical occupation of the streets by depicting the equally physical removal of the demonstrators’ by uniformed policemen (figure 3.25). An image of the rally on the steps of 16th Street Baptist Church fills the last spread (figure 3.18), followed by a report on the reactions of Birmingham’s white residents to the events pictured on the preceding pages (figure 3.26). While the text offers one person who supports the demonstrations (but who cannot have his or her name printed for fear of retribution), most voiced anger at the demonstrators and support for continue segregation.<sup>152</sup> This is the context in which readers of *Life* get their first portrayal of Bull Connor as well as another of Moore’s photographs of jubilant, taunting demonstrators who have overtaken and overflow from one of downtown Birmingham’s sidewalks. Considered as a whole, these eleven pages reinforce the potency, vividness, and implications of Moore’s photographs.

Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than the first spread of the photo essay (figure 3.22). Moore's framing of the action, already so immediate because of his mode of photographing, now serves to bring the viewer into the action vicariously. Thus, the viewer is placed in uneasy proximity to the firemen, and the immediacy of the scene now more fully accomplishes Moore's goal (in shooting only with wide-angle lenses) of providing "a feeling of what it was like to be involved."<sup>153</sup> It is important to remember that Moore's photograph appears on this spread in as large a format as was available; it occupies the full span of both pages and cedes little space to *Life's* requisite text components. Such a choice—whether instigated by *Life's* editors and approved by Moore or vice versa—is a lucid illustration of the magazine's commitment to enhancing on the printed page the formal photographic strategies that could "align the viewer's gaze with the camera's and/or the subject's gaze."<sup>154</sup> The article's bold title both prompts the reader's identification with the firemen ("they" decidedly does not refer to the huddled demonstrators) and suggests the utter futility of the firemen's actions, hosing "a fire that won't go out" given the demonstrators' commitment. Already, then, in the opening spread of Moore's photo essay, *Life's* readers were visually and textually engaged. I will suggest in the pages that follow that readers were implicated as well, in a way that no other photograph from Moore's Birmingham shoot could have accomplished.

The heading of the second spread (figure 3.23) featuring two further hosing photographs, announces "PROVOCATION, REPRISAL WIDEN THE BITTER GULF" in a font only slightly smaller than the title spread's heading. The story then begins:

The pictures on these eleven pages are frightening. They are frightening because of the brutal methods being used by white policemen in Birmingham, Ala. [*sic*] against Negro demonstrators. They are frightening because the Negro strategy of 'nonviolent direct action' invites that very brutality—and welcomes it as a way to promote the Negroes' cause, which, under the law, is right. And they are especially frightening because the gulf between black and white is here visibly deepened.<sup>155</sup>

The first photo caption, corresponding to the photograph of demonstrators hugging a building facade, also services the opening spread's photograph by describing the bright white horizontal blast of water so visually dominant in both photographs: "PINNED TO WALL. Pummeled by a shaft of water hitting like a battering ram, three demonstrators reel against a building front. Firemen used high-velocity 'monitor-gun' nozzle."<sup>156</sup> In the facade photograph in particular (figure 3.20) the water takes on a more visceral solidity; viewers can see it indenting the back of the tallest demonstrator, making an arrowlike shape where it makes contact, whereas the stream in the first photograph (figure 3.5) dissipates into a seemingly less threatening spray ("seemingly," because the huddled demonstrators bodies appear to bend beneath the water's pressure, thus giving form to the pain it inflicts). The text on the second spread concludes by linking the fire hoses and the police dogs, thereby preparing the reader to turn the page: "[Desegregation] is what the Negroes in Birmingham want, and they are prepared to go to jail—or to face hoses and police dogs—to get it.... Still the Negroes—aware that they are trying to crack 'the toughest city in the South'—and the police, with their dogs and fire hoses, have set an ominous precedent of provocation and reprisal."<sup>157</sup> On the next spread (figure 3.24), the heading "THE DOGS' ATTACK IS NEGROES' REWARD" appears above and to the left of the three photographs of the dog attacks, the last of which has been cropped (figures 3.2–3.4).<sup>158</sup> Bleeding fully across the right page of the spread and onto half of the left page, this photograph's new cropping carefully aligns each element: on the left page of the spread, a lunging German shepherd with bright bared teeth dominates; the black demonstrator being attacked now visually straddles the spread's gutter, mimicking his physically stretched-out stance between the two dogs; and, finally, the other policeman and dog are now aligned with the right page's rightmost edge, the dog in particular looking squarely out (at the viewer) from the foreground. In short, the presentation of this photograph refines Moore's initial framing of the scene and draws greater attention to

both the aggressors and the victim. The only other element in this spread's layout is a fairly extended caption:

ATTACK DOGS. With vicious guard dogs the police attacked the marchers—and thus rewarded them with an outrage that would win support all over the world for Birmingham Negroes. If the Negroes themselves had written the script, they could hardly have asked for greater help for their cause than City Police Commissioner Eugene 'Bull' Connor freely gave.... This extraordinary sequence—brutal as it is as a Negro gets his trousers ripped off by Connor's dogs—is the attention-getting jack pot of the Negroes' provocation.<sup>159</sup>

This caption, along with others, reveals a disconnect with the photographs (and their presentation, in some cases) that opens an interesting rift in the viewer's likely reception. Where, for example, does the writer of this caption expect *Life's* readers to find the visual corollary to the phrases "attention-getting" or "Negroes' provocation"?

To begin to answer such a question about image-caption tensions, it is important to remember how captions function as part of the picture magazine's meaning-making apparatus.<sup>160</sup> Captions (sometimes in tandem with layout headings) ideally function to assist, direct, or anchor a picture's message and, in the context of reporting newsworthy events, aspire to journalistic objectivity. Despite the fact that images rather than text drove a picture-magazine's content, Kozol asserted that *Life* photographers rarely participated in writing their captions.<sup>161</sup> If this was truly the case for Moore's photo essay—meaning that his most active role was in photographic sequencing, framing, scale, and layout—then it would explain the image-caption tensions in "They Fight a Fire That Won't Go Out." These tensions have prompted a generalized, sweeping debate but little contemplation of their likely impact or result. Kasher is highly critical of the text, even while misstating certain facts:

The article pays lip service to the ideal of equal rights, but its main point is that the violence had been provoked by black movement leaders. The word *nonviolence* is always in skeptical quotes. 'Simmering racial hatred' is attributed to blacks. Not a single black voice is quoted. Instead, the article concludes with a page of sixteen quotes from 'a cross section of

Birmingham's white residents,' all of them critical of the demonstrations.<sup>162</sup>

Kaplan has noted that descriptions of “the movement as a ‘crusade’” and *Life*'s “use of sympathy headlines such as ‘The Dogs’ Attack is Negroes’ Reward’” complicate any unilateral criticism.<sup>163</sup> Though both writers assessed the captions for their intent and meaning-making function, neither considers their direct relationship with the photographs, a relationship that I find fraught with tension and incongruity. Since Moore had, as Roberts and Klibanoff stated, “respected the point and purpose of photojournalistic objectivity... [but] had concluded, through the lens, that there was a right side and a wrong side,” I suggest an assessment of Moore's *photographs* (and his presumed oversight of their appearance on *Life*'s pages), which may prove more productive.<sup>164</sup>

Given the detailed descriptions of the first three spreads, I turn to that final single page for what I consider to be one of the most telling clues to the photographically determined intention of the photo essay (figure 3.26). This page is the first to depict Bull Connor, despite his mention six pages prior to this one. The choice to reserve his portrayal for a text canvassing the town's white residents seems fairly straightforward, but the picture's discrepancy from the characterization of Connor in the text proposes another explanation. His methods are called “ruthless” and the caption suggests a widespread fear of Connor. Moreover, despite the largely segregationist bent of the white Americans' responses on page 36, Connor is the only person quoted using the term *nigger*, which appears in the extended caption for the dog attack sequence: “Ordering his men to let white spectators come near, he said: ‘I want ‘em to see the dogs work. Look at those niggers run.’”<sup>165</sup> The undramatic, non-threatening photograph of Connor has been relegated to the last page, allowing the policemen and attack dogs—Connor's actions rather than his image—to represent him for most of the photo essay.

The final page of the photo essay is also the first page to offer *Life*'s readers an image of black demonstrators that could be remotely considered illustrative of the "provocation" mentioned in the early pages of the piece. Taken just moments before or after figure 3.19, the published photograph depicts a mass of protestors, the front row of whom have their hands raised and index fingers extended in mid-wave. Mouths are open, as if in mid-chant or mid-song, and many wear smiles. The presence of law enforcement is only identifiable by the policeman's cap in the left foreground of the image; this was apparently an identification that *Life* worried viewers would not make when it wrote the accompanying caption: "JEERING MOB. Wagging their fingers at an officer (*left*), youthful Negroes taunt police. Provocation like this, to most whites, is a wide-open invitation to full-scale racial warfare."<sup>166</sup> There may exist some tension between this caption and the image, since Roberts and Klibanoff's interpretation of the image as it appeared in *Life* suggested a conclusion among the magazine's readers that is quite the opposite of "full-scale racial warfare."

The images of masses of well-dressed, determined, smiling Negroes taking to the streets to demonstrate bravely and nonviolently exploded several other myths:... [they were not] lazy, unkempt, compliant, or complacent people... [and] they were not outsiders.... What Americans saw was what Moore's camera found: young, emboldened Negroes openly taunting white police officers, singing and swaying while pointing their fingers sassily in the officers' faces.<sup>167</sup>

Even without Roberts and Klibanoff's alternate interpretation, however, the placement of this photograph *after* those that undeniably and viscerally depict events much more easily identified as "full-scale racial warfare"—fire hoses being used on human beings, dogs tearing demonstrators clothing and flesh—visually makes a mockery of the caption's suggestion that gestures such as finger wagging should be equated with the much-cited provocation. Moore's final photograph visually refutes the proposed textual justifications for any of the events pictured in his photo essay's ten preceding pages. To not reckon with this final photograph and the cumulative visual impact of the photo essay

is to overlook *Life's* mission within the realm of journalism: to be “fundamentally visual.”<sup>168</sup> To do this also unproductively sidesteps the images’ reception by *Life's* readers and others. Not incidentally, this was the magazine’s downfall; its editors came to assume that their “positions—their words—were somehow more powerful than *Life's* pictures.”<sup>169</sup> That rupture is revealed in Moore’s photo essay. His photographs transcend and disrupt the accompanying text as well as *Life's* framework in their reception by a widespread audience.<sup>170</sup>

To be sure, Moore’s photographs of the dog attacks and hosings appeared beyond the pages of *Life*. The hosing photograph received the most media exposure of any image of his from Birmingham.<sup>171</sup> The Birmingham demonstration pictures were celebrated among photojournalists, and the demonstrations themselves became tied to their photographic representation in popular culture and historical accounts.<sup>172</sup> Many contend that they swayed legislators and thereby aided in the 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act.<sup>173</sup> Besides Warhol’s screen paintings from the summer of 1963 (figure 3.1) and their aforementioned reproduction in *Time's* summary of the movement in 1963 (figure 3.21), Moore’s Birmingham photographs were incorporated into commemorative collages, the official memento for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom that August (figures 3.27–3.29).<sup>174</sup> A policeman, Connor, and lunging dog, all from Moore’s photo essay, were reworked into an artistic, even childlike, rendering of a dog with intense triangular bared teeth, the largest of which hold the pant leg of the ensnared demonstrator from Moore’s first photograph (figure 3.2). Another collage in the portfolio was made from a swastika-shaped cut-out of Moore’s firemen (figure 3.5), but the Birmingham streets have been overpainted; and instead of a group of demonstrators huddled on the pavement as in Moore’s photograph, a lone demonstrator knocked down by the fire hoses (taken by a UPI photographer) appears in the collage as the victim of the water stream. That photographs were the determining and most identifiable

representations of the portfolio of five collages speaks to literature scholar Sara Blair's claim that in the wake of demonstrations "photographic images acquired new urgencies and intensities. Photo-text and photographic narrative proliferated, from the pages of *Life* and *Time* to the visual artifacts of Robert Rauschenberg and Romare Bearden."<sup>175</sup> That only photographs published in *Life* were used to create collages—which themselves had to be recognizable in their reinterpretation of their source imagery—reinforces the circulation and impact of that magazine. Wendy Kozol makes plain the racial specificity of *Life's* impact in an epigraph to this chapter: "*Life* magazine was instrumental in *showing* white Americans these [civil rights] struggles and defining the terms of debate."<sup>176</sup>

After all, *Life's* six million subscribers and potential thirty million weekly readers granted the magazine "iconic presence and cultural prestige" and made it one of the most important sources of news media reaching "more Americans than any television program reached."<sup>177</sup> *Life* was singularly aware of the sway it held among the American public, and it is easy to find the editorial for a weekly issue intending to use that sway to affect its many readers.<sup>178</sup> The possibility of having an impact on a "broader audience" was what had drawn Moore away from newspapers and to *Life* in the first place, and he was not misguided.<sup>179</sup> There are multiple testimonials from those drawn to the movement and its actions because of their personal interpretation of images they saw in circulation in magazines.<sup>180</sup> Who were these people? Certainly not *all* Americans were affected by *Life's* photographic coverage of the civil rights movement. Crucially, *Life's* readership comprised a group whose opinion, as Kozol epigraph suggests would have been far less informed about (and likely less sympathetic toward) the movement's struggles: white, middle-class Americans. *Life* even referenced this in its own coverage of the Birmingham demonstrations and their aftermath, while exercising its opinion in hopes of affecting a particular position:

Starting with the Birmingham demonstrations, the new impatience of the American Negro (*LIFE*, May 24) caught President Kennedy and probably a majority of white Americans off guard. This impatience is exacerbated by the Negro's growing conviction that the white man's machinery of justice has failed him. What then is wrong with the machinery of justice and what should we do to fix it? The answers to those questions are the President's most urgent business.<sup>181</sup>

*Life's* modal reader was, more specifically, thirty to thirty-four years old, from the professional and skilled labor classes, college-educated, married, and likely living in a city.<sup>182</sup> Remembering this gives new import to the lead spread of Moore's photo essay (figure 3.22). Beyond immediacy, that opening spread aligned *Life's* audience with the firemen in Birmingham. It was as if they, in Moore's place, were close enough to hear the orders to turn on the hose.<sup>183</sup> In the same manner, the final photograph allows viewers to occupy Moore's place opposite the finger-wagging crowd of demonstrators, giving viewers the possibility to determine if, after all they had seen and read on the preceding ten pages, such an act constituted "provocation" (figure 3.26). (Again, Moore's photographic access and proximity relied on his identity as a Southern white man.) Moore structured these images to allow for such immediacy and proximity; his photo essay amplified those qualities to make possible the engagement and implication in its reception for *Life's* white, middle-class readers. Moreover, as Baughman has noted, those readers were likely to be city-dwellers, giving street photographs of black demonstrators occupying and repurposing urban space the possibility for immense resonance.<sup>184</sup> If *Life's* readers chose not to identify with the crowds pictured, they could certainly choose to align their sympathy with them, thereby actively disidentifying with the white policemen and firemen in Moore's Birmingham photographs. Such street activism may have been banned from the pages of aspirational and inspirational *Ebony*, but *Life's* pages—with such depictions appearing consistently throughout the 1960s, Moore's Birmingham photo essay among them—offered a distinct and *visual* challenge to white, middle-class idealism. Moore's street photographs of the Birmingham

demonstrations—as well as their appearance in *Life's* May 17, 1963, issue—functioned as a part of the struggle for civil rights. The demonstrations treated the streets as political sites. Moore's Birmingham street photographs and photo essay do no less. Specifically, they transform Birmingham's streets into a national symbol for the civil rights movement; more generally, they offer a necessary expansion of the history of street photography as a history encompassing representations of politicized streets.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A Walk Down the Bowery

[A] city embodies and enacts a history. In representing the city, in producing counter-representations, the specificity of a locale and its histories becomes critical. Documentary, rethought and redeployed, provides an essential tool, though certainly not the only one.

–Martha Rosler<sup>1</sup>

Art is social in the first instance. With meaning understood to be geographically, historically, and socially situated, rather than guaranteed by an underlying and stable reality, art may have lost some of the prestige it enjoyed under modernism but it has gained a far greater potent: to participate in the creation of social life. In fact, there was no choice; art is never really outside the city.

–Rosalyn Deutsche<sup>2</sup>

For an artist committed to a thoroughgoing critique of the function of truth, myth, and artistic practice in everyday experiences, photography offers both great difficulty and great potential. As Martha Rosler, one such artist, has noted, “The dual questions of art’s instrumentality and of its truth are particularly naked in relation to photography, which can be seen every day outside the gallery in the act of answering to a utilitarian purpose, in assertions of truth from legal cases to advertising to news reports to home albums.”<sup>3</sup> Rosler also understood that photography, in contrast to other arts, affects a different relationship with its viewers.<sup>4</sup> Within a medium that appears in art world galleries as well as in news reports, she isolated a particular kind of photograph that aims to be both artful and useful: the documentary photograph, particularly its subsidiary, social documentary, which coalesces around its ability to show people, conditions, things, and spaces “as they are.”<sup>5</sup> Taken at face value, these photographs operate with incredible social and ideological power. More precisely, documentary photography, as defined by

Rosler, represents “the social conscience of liberal sensibility presented in visual imagery.”<sup>6</sup> She continued:

Documentary testifies, finally, to the bravery or... the manipulateness and savvy of the photographer, who entered a situation of physical danger, social restrictedness, human decay, or combinations of these and saved us the trouble.... W. Eugene Smith, David Douglas Duncan, Larry Burrows, Diane Arbus, Larry Clark, Danny Lyon, Bruce Davidson, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Walker Evans, Robert Capa... are merely the most currently luminous of documentarian stars.<sup>7</sup>

Rosler’s eventual critique of photographic history was fueled by her own picture taking, which began in the 1960s. Initially, she photographed nature during escapes from the city, searching for transcendence not unlike the prevailing *raison d’être* of the abstractions she painted at the time.<sup>8</sup> As early as 1964, however, she began photographing her walks on the city sidewalks (figures 4.1–4.3). Art historian and longstanding Rosler interlocutor Benjamin H. D. Buchloh recently brought up these early urban pictures, asking, “How did the street photography that you practiced fit in?” Rosler answered:

It was street photography, but not of people. It was photography of streets and vehicles... I wasn’t much interested in making pictures of people, yet I remember one photograph of people sitting on garbage cans on the Lower East Side, signs of poverty [figure 4.1]. Photography was, the art world told us, of a lesser order, mired in temporality as opposed to the transcendent world of painting. So you could deal with it as a practice less mediated, more immediate, than the one the art world had mulled over so intensively. It was accessible and vernacular, and it was low key... as far as I knew then, photography had no critical history.<sup>9</sup>

Rosler’s street photography was no fortuitous accident, as she has made clear in numerous writings and in another recent interview with art historian Molly Nesbit and curator Hans Ulrich Obrist: “Street photography was the ocean in which I swam.”<sup>10</sup> Later in that same interview, Rosler elaborated:

In my urban photographs there was the class romanticism of ruins—always looking for the signs of activity just passed: junkyards, ancient tar wagons, and accumulations of discarded objects.

Obrist: They are street scenes without people?

Rosler: Yes, street scenes without people, as far as I could manage [figure 4.2]. I was interested in the marginal: things at the edge of the East River, decrepit industrial buildings, giant waterfront gravel heaps. But there are also street scenes with people, in 'anonymous' neighborhoods in Brooklyn and the Lower East Side—as long as I am riding past in the car [figure 4.3]. The mediation of the vehicle represents my presence, the walker in the city, in this case, the rider. The passages are actual, not primarily metaphoric.... passages through and out of the urban landscape.<sup>11</sup>

In these same interviews, as well as in her multiple critical texts, Rosler most consistently located within the category of “street photography” the practices of the following: Diane Arbus, Walker Evans, Farm Security Administration (FSA hereafter) photographers, the Film and Photo League (later known as the Photo League), Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander, Helen Levitt, Danny Lyon, New York School photographers of the 1930s through the 1950s, and Garry Winogrand.<sup>12</sup>

In examining even this small sampling of Rosler’s comments on documentary photography and street photography, two things are apparent. First, those photographers whose work she considered to embody street photography are virtually identical to those whose practice she identified as embodying documentary photography.<sup>13</sup> Second, although she located her origins as a photographer in an appreciation of such “street photography,” her conception of the genre proves ineffectual and undifferentiated from documentary photography. Instead, she wrote of street photography as an encapsulation of the essence of all photography (“what photography does—say, street photography[—is]: the representation of bodies in space... with direct reference to time and place.”)<sup>14</sup>; or as the most particular and most egregious of all documentary practices (“There is a long-standing documentary subgenre, namely ‘street photography,’ filling [the] niche of ‘nonresponsibility’ to the subject.”)<sup>15</sup>; or as informative but bereft of social utility (“Despite its often acute revelations of social power differentials... , street photography does not incline toward a calculus of rectification.”)<sup>16</sup>;

or, most inexplicably as “allied with war photography.”<sup>17</sup> Based on the cumulative incommensurability of her specific references to street photography, it is my contention that Rosler has never fully addressed or considered the defining role of the city street in her critique of documentary photography, as her epigraph recommends. Had she done so, she would have found the street and street photography to be integrally linked to her most urgent critical arguments.

To create her critique of documentary—which relied on the urban nature of the practice and which, therefore, I will refer to as urban documentary photography, or “urban documentary”<sup>18</sup>—Rosler posed her fundamental questions and offered a starting point: “How can we deal with [urban] documentary photography itself as a photographic practice? What remains of it? We must begin with it as a historical phenomenon, a practice with a past.”<sup>19</sup> That past contained a number of photographers whose work she wanted to engage with: Charles Sheeler, Paul Strand, Walter Rosenblum, Sol Libsohn, Ruth Orkin, Sid Grossman, Lou Seltzer, Arthur Leipzig, Bernard Cole, Bill Witt, Morris Engel, Lester Talkington, Jerry Liebling, Aaron Siskind, Lisette Model, in addition to all those named above.<sup>20</sup> Taken together, the work of these photographers, she insisted, had “defined the medium in the twentieth century for Americans, especially New Yorkers,” such as herself.<sup>21</sup> She argued that these mostly New York-based photographers gained little from an examination of European photographic history, however much Buchloh might disagree.<sup>22</sup> She studied these New York-based practices as an act of historical archaeology (or genealogy) but even more so as a revelation of their assumptions (e.g. their right to depict the impoverished subject), representational faults (e.g. transforming the individual urban poor into merely representations), and theoretical potholes (e.g. modernist self-absorption). This allowed her to create a roadmap for future urban documentary practice, including her own. From this critical understanding, she advocated against photographers who abstracted their specific

subject matter, so often the poor urban neighborhoods of New York City and their residents. She challenged and unsettled common modes of framing those same subjects for viewers, resulting in her groundbreaking 1974–75 work of urban documentary photography, *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*.

### **Precedents in Urban Documentary Photography**

For Rosler, the history of urban documentary has included “the aggressive insistence on the tangible reality of generated poverty and despair” that would have, at a moment early in the twentieth century, been “newly elevated into consideration simply by *being photographed* and thus exemplified and made concrete.”<sup>23</sup> Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine in particular photographed the living conditions of New York City’s working and immigrant poor, who were concentrated on the Lower East Side (figures 4.4 and 4.5). Riis and Hine intended their images of specific families or children to have a humanizing effect on viewers of higher classes who were not inclined to face the realities of the urban poor. This effect relied on the public circulation of the pictures, as in Riis’s book *How the Other Half Lives* or in the informational pamphlets that Hines distributed. Rosler described such images as “victim photography” for their exploitation of a power differential that offers little agency to the subject.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to the pure sensationalism of much of the journalistic attention to working-class, immigrant, and slum life, the meliorism of Riis, Lewis Hine, and others involved in social-work propagandizing argued, through the presentation of images combined with other forms of discourse, for the rectification of wrongs.... Reformers like Riis... strongly appealed to the worry that the ravages of poverty—crime, immorality, prostitution, disease, radicalism—would threaten the health and security of polite society as well as to sympathy for the poor, and their appeals were often meant to awaken the self-interest of the privileged. The notion of charity fiercely argued for far outweighs any call for self-help.<sup>25</sup>

In his catalogue on New York City photography, Max Kozloff concurred with this assessment, noting Riis’s intention for “viewers to sense the sordid world he described

as threatening to impinge on their own territorial way of life.”<sup>26</sup> Riis’s desire to effect social and economic amelioration for the urban poor—by altering the consciences of the bourgeois class through his writings, lectures, and publications on the topic of tenement reform—nevertheless bypassed the creation of any avenues of self-help in which the down-trodden could affect change themselves. Each person or family among the urban poor was reduced to a representation of social ills, a symptomatic embodiment of the shortcomings of mass immigration, poverty, and urban housing.

This problem of picturing the urban poor led chronologically to a critique of the work of Paul Strand and certain photographers of the FSA. Rosler noted Strand’s efforts “in establishing an iconography of the marginal that afforded them respect through full incorporation into the physiognomy of the human [figure 4.6]. What Strand was after depended on the shock of confronting the viewing public with those considered unworthy of attention.”<sup>27</sup> (That viewing public was the self-selected group of subscribers to Alfred Stieglitz’s journal *Camera Work* or those visitors to his succession of New York City galleries.) FSA photographers found a more widespread audience for their photographs.<sup>28</sup> In the early 1970s, when Rosler was formulating her critique of urban documentary, the FSA’s history had just begun to be discussed and published.<sup>29</sup> Having already known the work of Walker Evans through his *American Photographs* catalogue and having read *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Rosler knew his photographs to be deeply situated in their social context.<sup>30</sup> While Evans and other FSA photographers made an effort to respectfully depict those hard hit by the Great Depression, the circulation of their images raised many questions for Rosler: What kind of exchange between photographer and subject did such photographs represent? How could these photographs claim to ameliorate when, decades later, their subjects were still living in relatively poor conditions? “Are photographic images, then, like civilization, made on the backs of the exploited?”<sup>31</sup>

Rosler's list of predecessors of urban documentary photography is overwhelmingly dominated by photographers affiliated with the Photo League of New York City and/or with what has since become known as the New York School.<sup>32</sup> Her connection to these photographic circles is practical: in the late 1960s, she used the darkrooms at Brooklyn College, which were maintained by students of Walter Rosenblum, the league's de facto president from 1941 to 1951.<sup>33</sup> The Photo League was at the forefront of advancing notions of urban documentary photography through its courses, programs, and exhibitions. Anne Tucker, the league's chief historian since her 1978 exhibition on the group, noted that the league identified, taught, and displayed a type of photography that was just beginning to be appreciated and understood.<sup>34</sup> "The desire for social change and a belief in photography as an expressive medium that could mirror social problems and promote social change became the league's guiding principles."<sup>35</sup> The league thereby extended the legacy of social documentary with their belief that the photographic image could affect greater social change than the verbal arguments or published rhetoric that might surround those very images.

Given Rosler's equivocating oscillation between calling the Photo League photographers "documentary photographers" and "street photographers," it is particularly noteworthy that one historian and intimate of that group, Naomi Rosenblum, has made distinctions between the various terms.<sup>36</sup> However, even she has admitted that by the late 1940s, the league had merged the two practices:

Photographers working on documentary projects often captured the random quality of street life, while the social scenes revealed in chance photographs can be said to constitute a documentation of particular aspects of human communion.... The desire to capture the flux of urban life... sometimes blended with the social documentary projects undertaken by government and private entities. Social documentation shares some of the characteristics of street photography, except that its purpose was and is reformative.... [T]his genre had as its goal the revelation of social inequity or injustice.<sup>37</sup>

As a member of the league and one of its instructors, Aaron Siskind led his “Feature Group” in analyzing picture-magazine photo essays and then creating their own in particular locales in New York City: along the length of Park Avenue; among the tenements of the Lower East Side; and in Harlem. One such project is *Dead End: The Bowery* (1937–38) (figures 4.7 and 4.8). Projects such as *Dead End* were the most visible aspect of the league; individual photographs were exhibited at the league and elsewhere in New York, and all of the Feature Group’s finished photographs were on file at the league, readily available to publications ranging from *Look* to the *Daily Worker* to *Fortune*.<sup>38</sup> While such projects might, as Rosler characterized Rosenblum’s approach, “rescu[e] images of the down and out,” they could not claim to have rescued the down and out themselves.<sup>39</sup> This discrepancy between image and action, she further argued, was partly because of the role of the photograph itself: “The liberal [urban] documentary assuages any stirring of conscience in its viewers the way scratching relieves an itch and simultaneously reassures them about their relative wealth and social position.... One can handle imagery by leaving it behind. (It is them, not us.)”<sup>40</sup> Whatever compunction might have once stirred viewers was now transformed into non-revolutionary moralism and diffuse humanism.

The exposé, the compassion and outrage, of [urban] documentary fueled by the dedication to reform has shaded over into combinations of exoticism, tourism, voyeurism, psychologism and metaphysics, trophy hunting—and careerism.... The liberal documentary, in which members of the ascendant classes are implored to have pity on and to rescue members of the oppressed, now belongs to the past.<sup>41</sup>

This transformation was signaled even within the Photo League in the postwar years, as it focused more attention on photographs as expressions of individual creativity rather than as vehicles of social information.<sup>42</sup> In her critique of urban documentary, Rosler sought to understand and identify the factors contributing to this transformation of photographic import. However explicable in an era of Cold War accusations, the

league's—and arguably also the New York School's—abandonment of its reformist goals in favor of greater individual expression nevertheless coincided with urban documentary's “aesthetic welcome by a more appreciative audience, that of art institutions.”<sup>43</sup>

In 1966 Nathan Lyons curated an exhibition featuring a group of photographers who, he noted, might have been called “documentary” or “social realist” in an earlier time. Their pictures made him wonder: “[W]hat constitutes the meaning of reality in pictures?”<sup>44</sup> While this sounds like a question that could be applied to almost any photograph sharing the documentary impulse, it soon became clear that the photographers Lyon included, particularly Lee Friedlander and Garry Winogrand, were working in a fairly high modernist fashion, representing “ideas” through one of the “authentic photographic forms”: the snapshot.<sup>45</sup> Conveniently, Lyons's group was a reticent one. Lee Friedlander offered this insight into his choice of subject matter: “I'm interested in people and people things.”<sup>46</sup> And, in his typically cryptic fashion, Winogrand commented on his creation of photographs and on their eventual reception: “For me the true business of photography is to capture a bit of reality (whatever that is) on film... if, later, the reality means something to someone else, so much the better.”<sup>47</sup> Lyons offered this elaboration:

The directness of their commentary of [*sic*] ‘people and people things’ is not an attempt to define but to clarify the meaning of the human condition.... The combined statement [of these photographers’ pictures] is one of commentary, observation, aluminum, chrome, the automobile, people, objects, people in relation to things, questioning, ambiguity, humor, bitterness and affection.<sup>48</sup>

These photographs were created from a personal sensibility that aspired to metaphysical commentary on everything from aluminum to affection.<sup>49</sup> As curator John Szarkowski noted: “Photography has generally been defended on the ground that it is useful... [however,] some of the very best photography is useful only as juggling, theology, or

pure mathematics is useful—that is to say, useless, except as nourishment of the human spirit.”<sup>50</sup> This commentary about Friedlander’s photographs may date to 1973, but it reiterates Szarkowski’s declarations in his landmark 1967 exhibition *New Documents*.

Featuring the images of Friedlander, Arbus, and Winogrand, *New Documents* opened with this text:

Most of those who were called documentary photographers a generation ago... made their pictures in the service of a social cause... to show what was wrong with the world, and to persuade their fellows to take action and make it right.... [A] new generation of photographers has directed the documentary approach toward more personal ends. Their aim has not been to reform life, but to know it.... that 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.<sup>51</sup>

Cutting off photography’s connection to the social experience of the world and focusing instead on a visual knowledge of it, photographs by these three artists are aligned with modernist understandings of art as a personal, visual exercise distanced from temporality, social specificity, or narrative. Friedlander’s confounding of spatial clarity through his use of multilayered reflections or complicated compositions performs a visual effect similar to that of a Cubist collage, for example (figure 4.9). Szarkowski heralded what he saw as Friedlander’s “game,” whose sole purpose was to “know, love and serve sight”<sup>52</sup> Nesbit has linked this insistence on vision to both time and language: “[I]f anything, what high modernist’s formalism insists on is that temporality and narrative don’t belong.... It’s all about vision. Keeping the frame static... , taking [the] frame out of time.”<sup>53</sup>

Despite Friedlander’s partial reflection in a storefront window or his cast shadow to indicate his presence at the moment of the photograph’s exposure, there is little to flesh out that presence beyond the city and state named in the image’s title (figure 4.10). These photographs do not aim to inform viewers about the particular character of the city or the social relations of the figures who appear in that city. As Rosler noted in her

critique of his photographs, written the same year she completed *The Bowery*, Friedlander “shows us a sanitized, if unglamorous, uniformly middle-class world,” stripped of both significance and social interactions, and from which, as viewers, “we are kept at arm’s length or further.”<sup>54</sup> Consequently, she posited, “The transiency or mysteriousness of the relations in [his] photos suggests the privatization of the photographic act. The result is an idiosyncratic aestheticization of formerly public and instrumental moves.” Thus, urban documentary’s extraction from the public, social sphere eased its transformation into merely an object of aesthetic admiration and art-market value.

Deftly executed by Szarkowski in the exhibitions and publications program of that style’s stronghold, MoMA, urban documentary photography’s conflation with modernist formalism created ripple effects in the understanding of the social context in which historical photographs had been made as well as in the kind of audience those photographs, and their contemporary iterations, could access.<sup>55</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche has characterized the interplay between these effects and the institutional space of their reception:

Rosler analyzed the depoliticized messages about urban poverty that such photographs convey. These meanings, she suggested, do not emanate from the photographs alone but from their relations with viewers; they also depend on the institutional contexts within which photographic images circulate and which mediate between them and the public. The hierarchical relations of looking inscribed in the act of constituting bums as images—objects of vision—are heightened, Rosler concluded, when such pictures are made for exhibition in museums and galleries or when they are transferred to these spaces.<sup>56</sup>

In her Bowery project, Rosler confronted the “spatial contradictions” between urban documentary photographs of impoverishment and art-institutional contexts of the presumably elite.<sup>57</sup> Treating representations of destitution as art—as in the photographs Rosler examined—only serves to reinforce this polarity as a given. Hanging in the art or museum gallery, an urban documentary photograph is stripped of its context and the

audience is discouraged from considering who the original subjects were, why they were photographed, and what has become of them. Such specificities—and certainly any disruptive intentions—are eliminated as irrelevancies in the face of artistic attention to forms, shadows, or composition. Potentially, and conversely, the audience becomes a point of non-consideration for artists.

Certain photographers in the late 1960s and early 1970s searched for ways to complicate or overturn this trend. On the artistic heels of Pop art's ironic/critical quotation of mass-produced culture and Conceptualism's pursuit of seemingly "deskilled" or "low" art forms, Rosler and others considered and expanded art's social possibilities.<sup>58</sup> This art—made during a time rife with cultural contestations about race relations, the Vietnam War, feminism, and sexual liberation—sought to demonstrate, as Deutsche has explained, "the *fluidity*, not the stability, of aesthetic meaning and institutions. Instead of inhering in self-contained and therefore transhistorical objects that exist in autonomous and neutral spaces, meaning was recognized as a contingent and constantly mutating process of cultural attribution."<sup>59</sup> Working from this premise, context, language, the use of multiple images, and the active interpellation of or accounting for the viewer flooded a new kind of urban documentary practice. It also, I contend, resulted in a new street photograph within that practice.

Having never had the intention of dismissing or discounting urban documentary practice,<sup>60</sup> it was in this art context of the late 1960s and early 1970s that Rosler performed her "historical archaeology" (to borrow Buchloh's term) of urban documentary practice; the tools (not models) she uncovered offered the means by which she would envision a new photographic method, and which would result in *The Bowery*.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, her insistence that *The Bowery* address urban documentary's newly enshrined and self-selected art audience allowed Rosler to capitalize on that audience's awareness of the photographic legacy with which she took issue. It also gave Rosler an

opportunity to reinsert and reevaluate the complicated messages street photography had delivered and could deliver in the context of the art institution.

### **Rosler's Process in the City**

In December 1974, Rosler lived near the Bowery, in New York's East Village.<sup>62</sup> She walked along the street regularly and decided she would photograph it as part of her project critiquing urban documentary photography (figures 4.11 and 4.12).<sup>63</sup> The resulting photographs indicate her pedestrian approach. Taken from the sidewalk, an anchoring element in almost all the photographs, Rosler turned to face the buildings, storefronts, and doorways that lined the Bowery. Most often she would neatly compose the image, so that her camera lens directly paralleled the facade, the corners of windows, stoops, and signs squarely placed in the photographic frame. Infrequently, the photographed scene mimics a less-studied view, a downward glance at the detritus of that particular street, or an oblique look at a specific building's signage (figures 4.13 and 4.14). As Rosler wrote in her earliest description of the project:

The photos represent a walk down the Bowery seen as arena and living space, as a commercial district in which, after business hours, the derelict residents inhabit the small portal spaces between shop and street.... The photographs confront the shops squarely, and they supply familiar urban reports.... There is nothing new attempted in a photographic style that was constructed in the 1930s when the message itself was newly understood, differently embedded.<sup>64</sup>

The 1930s style Rosler referenced is that of the FSA photographers as well as the New York Photo League, but it is most particularly, the photographic conventions and urban approach of Walker Evans.

While it may be true that there are "no saints" in Rosler's critique, Evans's photographs contemplate the city as subject more frequently than his fellow FSA photographers.<sup>65</sup> Comparing Evans to Ben Shahn, who also photographed in cities, Kozloff has noted: "Evans had definite ideas about the city as a crucible of modern

perception.”<sup>66</sup> Straightforwardness, frontality, and detachment—qualities that Rosler utilized in her own projects—characterize Evans’s urban images. Moreover, Kozloff continued, Evans had a “much grander involvement with American storefronts, fire escapes, empty interiors, and door moldings.”<sup>67</sup> This involvement yielded a photographic inventory of all sorts of buildings, but Evans’s vision also lingered on liminal urban spaces, those that were neither building nor street: the suspended commercial signs, the corner-shop window, the stoop. For Rosler, Evans “provided a certain revelation... [about] the urban.” In fact, in this same recent conversation she revealed for the first time:

A direct homage is visible in one of my Bowery photographs: I was very struck by a picture Evans had taken of a store front with a bunch of hats piled up against a window [figures 4.15 and 4.16]. It seemed like a Bohemian inversion of the received discourse about the urban: for him the street was the safe and known place, and the shop interior is presented as a glimmering shadow, a semi-dangerous, unknown space.<sup>68</sup>

In comparing Evans’s photograph and Rosler’s homage, certain differences are obvious. Rosler captured a wider view, encompassing, as usual, the sidewalk beneath her feet. While both images include glimpses of the doorjamb just to the right of the window, Rosler also pictured a grated doorway and a lone dark liquor bottle standing in front of it.<sup>69</sup> More intriguing, however, are the nuances that surface in comparing the windows that each chose to photograph. Evans’s window is piled high with recognizable, if not immaculately presented, commodities; Rosler’s is filled with barrels, crates, boxes, and what look like broken chair legs, a space replete with the sense of chaos, uncertainty, and liminality that Rosler responded to in Evans’s work.

Representational quotation requires the combined act of referencing and subsequent altering of the reference, as art historian Thomas Crow has pointed out in the context of a non-photographic practice: “Any dissenting practice depends for its meaning on the existence—and the strength—of what it opposes.... [T]he typical pop

painting was formally organized sufficiently like contemporaneous abstract painting to make the comparison count.”<sup>70</sup> Buchloh has elaborated on this, outlining the outcome of such quotational practices:

To the degree that the various sources and authors of quoted ‘texts’ are left intact and fully identifiable in truly contemporary montage, the viewer encounters a decentered text that completes itself through his or her reading and comparison of the original and subsequent layers of meaning that the text/image has acquired.... [In the case of Rosler’s photographs of the Bowery,] these conventions are executed by Rosler rather than simply confiscated.... Rosler’s crude attempts to try her photographic hand at mimicking the great urban ‘documentarians’ style is of course... thoroughly disappointing.<sup>71</sup>

Rosler’s photographs are disappointing, as any functioning quotation must be in order to toe the line between being completely “identifiable” in relation to their point of reference and being recognizable as “subsequent” to and “decentered” by that reference. The squared-off frontality of Rosler’s pictures of building facades echoes Evans’s style, even though Rosler never crossed the street to take her photographs; likewise, her fascination with hand-painted shop signs recalls Evans’s attention to the same subject, even if the shop she pictured had long since closed its doors (figures 4.17–4.20).

This complex quality of quotation, Rosler has recounted, was initially lost on Buchloh, who was both horrified and fascinated by Rosler’s use of Evans’s approach: “[He] asked why would I do that? I was surprised: Did you think I was trying to be a great photographer? That intrigued him, but he still couldn’t figure out why would anybody want to do unoriginal, even ugly, photos. I explain that they are quotes. Who are you quoting? You know, that’s not the right question. I am quoting a mode of address.”<sup>72</sup> By “quoting a mode of address,” Rosler capitalized on the open-ended and mutually informing relationship between the quoting objects and those they quote. For those artists who use quotation, or appropriation, in this way, the representation of representation can demonstrate the construction and the contingency of meanings, objectivities, and truths in all contexts of image-production.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, Rosler’s use

of quotation posited photographs that could fail to provide authenticity, an original photographic aesthetic, and victimizing representations of their subjects.

[Evans] knew how to represent something about the ways in which the shop, the street, and people passing by form a unity. That allowed me to extract the people and still have the landscape of the city street, partly because the ghosts of the people are still there, if you will allow me. Partly because they are in Evans's photographs, but also because we already understand what a city street is and what the Bowery represents [figure 4.21].<sup>74</sup>

Rosler referred here to a pivotal component in her project and its relation to historical urban documentary: her photographs are devoid of their expected subjects, in this case, the Bowery's population of vagrant, homeless men associated with drunkenness. Rosler allowed only residual and metaphorical traces of their intentionally "ghosted" presence to remain: the abandoned liquor bottles, crumpled papers, disposable containers emptied of food, and inexplicably abandoned shoes (figures 4.11, 4.12, 4.14, and 4.15). These urban details alone imply the missing subjects. More accurately, her photographs of the setting attempt such a metonymic substitution while still implying that they represent something of "Bowery life," even if they do not.<sup>75</sup> Rosler's refusal to figure a culturally coded human presence questions the supposed sufficiency of the photographic representational practices it dissents from.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, her refusal illuminates how less critical photographs may be tied to—and even uphold—the dominant social power structure that often ensures and perpetuates class, gender, and race differences. In Rosler's hands, then, photography can be seen as "a system of representation, [one] that you bring to bear on other systems," like language.<sup>77</sup> For if Rosler's urban documentary project contests one of the basic components of traditional documentary—the presence of the human figure—it also invalidates another component—narrative—even when the words that accompany her photographs seem to perform the function of explanatory text.

Each of the twenty-one Bowery photographs Rosler selected for the project has a text-photograph pendant, which Rosler typed, photographed, and printed with a filed out negative holder “so you understand that you’re looking at a photograph of typed words” (figure 4.22).<sup>78</sup> Each pair of photographs (Bowery- and text-) was then mounted to a black board approximately ten by twenty-two inches (figure 4.23).<sup>79</sup> Rosler framed twenty-one of these mounted pendants, along with three additional boards that feature only text-photographs. Rosler then strategically sequenced the group of twenty-four boards in an order that is maintained whether the project is displayed as an installation on the gallery wall,<sup>80</sup> as a slide show, or as a book. Rosler’s construction and sequencing of the boards enacts and confounds, elicits and forecloses certain distinctions, readings, and meanings. The first three boards feature only text-photographs, an empty space to the left (figure 4.24). On the fourth to the sixteenth boards, each text-photograph is joined to its left by a Bowery-photograph (figure 4.23). On the seventeenth to twenty-third boards, the positions of text and image are reversed. The final board, which adheres to the layout of boards four to sixteen, features a text-photograph with the name of the project: *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*. There are only a few instances in which the words of the text-photographs seem to correspond directly to their pendant Bowery-photograph (figure 4.25). Far more often, the viewer is left to speculate on the connection between the text- and Bowery-photographs sharing a board, prompting the question that is at the heart of the project’s title: if representation and language are inadequate systems, are there adequate ones?<sup>81</sup>

The linguistic system of the piece, like the visual system it accompanies, follows a specific structure. For the first group of boards (one through sixteen), the typed words are all adjectives, drawn from the popular, shared lexicon that describes stages of drunkenness. Initially somewhat playful and lighthearted, the adjectives reference socially accepted states of tipsiness but darken in tone, conjuring more chronically

intoxicated states, as the first photographs of the Bowery appear.<sup>82</sup> On the seventeenth board, where the position of text- and Bowery-photograph reverses, nouns replace the adjectives, signaling a key shift: these nouns belong “firmly to the Bowery and [are] not shared with the world outside.”<sup>83</sup> Rosler compiled her text from research, both formal and informal, after she completed her Bowery-photographs (figure 4.26). The terms range in reference from food (“pie-eyed,” “pickled”) to industrial processes (“polluted,” “steamed up”), from animals (“up to the gills,” “owl-eyed”) to the military (“soldiers,” “marines”). In a project that enacts a historical critique of representation, Rosler also chose to include now-obsolete, British slang terms, interspersing them throughout the more popular terms. Rosler carefully calibrated the language to increase in seriousness and culminate in “commonly understood, blunt death imagery.”<sup>84</sup> Taken together, these descriptive terms confound the Bowery-photographs alongside them and amount to Rosler’s “suspicion of language, which could not play the saint to photography’s devil. The language in this work does not ‘address’ urban documentary problems; it is not an essay (any more than the photos constitute a photo essay), filled with suggestive, diagnostic, or prescriptive phrases.”<sup>85</sup> Like the Bowery-photographs, then, the texts toy with representations and meanings that remain just beyond reach, evocations never materialized. At the time of the project’s conception, “[l]inguistic theories had become central to artistic debates” and eventually these would take specific account of the relationship between language and photography.<sup>86</sup>

Much of the theoretical work addressing the narrative captions that typically accompany the kind of photography Rosler’s project critiqued also took account of contemporary artists’ uses of quotation and multiple images, strategies intended to change fundamentally the framework of the artwork.<sup>87</sup> Despite her critique of Evans’s and others’ traditional “single-image revelations,” Evans’s sequencing of his photographs provided an inspirational and relevant model for Rosler on this matter.<sup>88</sup>

A strong aspect of Evans's *American Photographs* (and then later of [Robert] Frank's *Americans*) was its powerful sequencing—so much of the meaning of the work is in the interstices.... [Unlike the sequencing of Ed Ruscha's books, where it is one plus one plus one,] in Evans and Frank, it is one plus two plus three plus four, so the actual sequence and the content make a difference.<sup>89</sup>

In Rosler's sequencing, the cumulative effect fails to yield a specific signification, but instead invites critical reflection on meaning making.<sup>90</sup> As viewers of the work try to "read" the sequence of images and words, they are prompted into self-awareness by the resulting disconnects. To borrow Rosler's earlier analogy, then, we might say that *The Bowery*'s sequence is one plus two minus three. The artist's foreclosure of transparent communication serves to foreground the role of the viewer, the social embeddedness of both art and its reception, and thus alters the social and political possibilities of art practice.

Rosler first became interested in the relationship between art and its audience in graduate school at University of California–San Diego in which she had been enrolled for three years before beginning *The Bowery*.<sup>91</sup> Taking a lesson from Minimalism's engagement of its viewer, she appreciated how such art took charge of his or her attention and the possible reading the viewer could make of a work. It was as though, she noted, the work declared: "'Look here now!' Don't look here in order to go somewhere else in your mind.... What does a person bring to looking? and what is the intention of the person that is asking you to look? I think it's the same problem with photography."<sup>92</sup> Photography offered Rosler greater possibilities than other media, because of the viewer's familiarity and identification with the medium. Rosler's refusal to adequately represent her subject in either words or pictures also enacted her refusal of the standard relationship between an urban documentary photograph and its viewer, disrupting easy identification.<sup>93</sup> "[M]y work is a sketch, a line of thinking, a possibility."<sup>94</sup> From it, questions would arise and a conversation would ensue. *The Bowery*

accommodates and even advances the viewer's reflection on the historic and current conditions of the experience of public space. As the epigraph by Deutsche affirmed: "Art is social in the first instance. With meaning understood to be geographically, historically, and socially situated, rather than guaranteed by an underlying and stable reality, art... [can] participate in the creation of social life. In fact, there was no choice: art is never really outside the city."<sup>95</sup> Deutsche's interdisciplinary work provides an indispensable model for thinking of *The Bowery* differently, which is to say, in the context of this dissertation, fully in accordance with its character as an argument about street photography. For Rosler's *Bowery* is not merely a work incorporating photographic images of the street that is its namesake but is a critical representation of that particular street as a simultaneously social and political space, one long inseparable from the problems of urban poverty and homelessness.

### **Poverty, Homelessness, and Gentrification on the Bowery**

Poverty and class awareness emerged in the 1960s on the heels of the economic boom and resulting widespread privilege that characterized the preceding decade. As writer and activist Barbara Ehrenreich has described in her book *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*: "Living in what they took to be the final stage of material affluence—defined by cars, television, and backyard barbeque pits—they believed that this was America. Looking out through their picture windows, they saw only an endless suburb.... From this vantage point the jagged edges of inequality seemed to have disappeared."<sup>96</sup> Michael Harrington's groundbreaking 1962 book, *The Other America*, changed this narrow outlook, reclassifying poverty in America and bringing it to the forefront to such an extent that John F. Kennedy's 1964 State of the Union address declared a nationwide "War on Poverty."<sup>97</sup> For the remainder of the decade, poverty was considered to encompass everything from blue-collar workers (or the working class) to homeless

people. Far from well defined, the poor were popularly understood to be ignorant, lazy, and childlike, fostering assumptions that any assistance would translate immediately into dependence. Rationalizing the poor in this way allowed them to remain psychologically as well as geographically distant from the middle-class populations ensconced by the suburbanization of major cities. “One could easily conclude, as the *New Republic* did in a 1964 editorial, that the goal was not so much to eliminate poverty as to eliminate the poor: ‘they have to go if society is not to be poisoned.’”<sup>98</sup> It was, however, that self-same society that had created this possible “poison” through rapid industrialization and urbanization, the very conditions that produced large-scale homelessness. New York City in the 1960s and 1970s was trapped in a vicious economic chicken-and-egg cycle: its middle class continued to flee to the suburbs and businesses decline to invest and/or do business in the city, culminating in a recession that the local government was eager to reverse.<sup>99</sup> Hard hit by recession, the city’s homeless population numbered 30,000 by 1967 and 36,000 by the end of the decade.<sup>100</sup> Regardless of the precise numbers, one fact remained constant in the 1960s and 1970s: homelessness constituted the “last stop” in the minority status of general American postwar prosperity. In New York City, this population’s relegation to one particular area, the Bowery, rendered it increasingly invisible on a daily basis for all other urban dwellers.<sup>101</sup>

Rosler’s *Bowery* project addresses not just homelessness but drunkenness, and the decade prior to its creation saw radical changes to the laws and procedures involving both vagrancy and drunk and disorderly conduct, the more common charge for New York’s homeless men.<sup>102</sup> A Supreme Court ruling decriminalized vagrancy in 1972, just three years after New York adopted a rigorous non-arrest policy toward its homeless populations.<sup>103</sup> Prior to that time, homeless men would have been arrested for being drunk and disorderly or, if they were simply drunk, as part of the city’s “Operation Bowery” they would have been given “munie tickets” from the municipal department of

Social Services, good for “three hots and a cot” (three meals and an overnight bunk at a Bowery “flophouse” hotel).<sup>104</sup> Munie tickets represented wholesale “street cleaning” operations involving police roundups twice daily.<sup>105</sup> These roundups amounted to somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000 arrests annually in the city, although the numbers reduced dramatically beginning in 1969 as the city’s non-arrest policy marked a dramatic shift in its treatment of homeless people.<sup>106</sup> Not only were they left alone by the police, those men willing to go to shelters now would be taken there instead of to jail.<sup>107</sup>

The years immediately following the implementation of the non-arrest policy simultaneously witnessed a dramatic decentering of the city’s homeless population and an important shift in the public lexicon away from the frequently deployed terms *derelicts*, *bums*, and *drunks*.<sup>108</sup> The newly renamed “homeless” population had not necessarily diminished in numbers but had now “left the Bowery to frequent middle-class neighborhoods throughout the city,” according to an article with a headline declaring: “Whole City Is Its ‘Flophouse.’” This same article comments on the visual impact of decentering, claiming that there “seem[ed] to be more of them than ever.”<sup>109</sup> By the 1980s, homelessness was common throughout the city but still widely misunderstood, most often traced to “severe social dysfunction, manifested as alienation, drug taking, or low self-esteem, thus classically substituting effects for causes.”<sup>110</sup> The economic explanation was thus denied, a particularly cruel example being President Reagan’s musing to an interviewer in December 1988 that people slept on grates in America’s urban centers because they liked it; that same month the Center for Disease Control reported a doubling since 1980 in deaths by exposure to freezing temperatures.<sup>111</sup>

Anthropologist Kim Hopper’s extensive study of homelessness, particularly in New York City, demonstrates how consistently such misperceptions as those voiced by Reagan had dominated the prevailing cultural attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s.

The alleged offense of the homeless poor (aside from the exhibit forced upon eyes that would prefer not to see) is their 'failure' to belong.... The social value of the home is to ensure that the organization of private life plays its appointed role in the reproduction of a given public order. Street people, in effect, reverse the order of priorities.... In the reigning sociological position at the time, the homeless man was bereft of social bearings. He observed no rules except the often ill-serving ones of apparent self-interest, was innocent of any sense of responsibility, professed no allegiances, and pursued a rootless and isolated life.<sup>112</sup>

In the late capitalist economy of the day, only those who considered the homeless poor to be victims could accommodate them. This perception, however more grounded in the financial causes of homelessness, nevertheless fueled the notion that these individuals were "waste products." "Simultaneously worthless and (it isn't always clear how or why) dangerous, the homeless poor were a menace to be eliminated or contained."<sup>113</sup> A particularly choice indication of the notion of spatial "containment" is represented by the city's announcement of plans for its first rehabilitation center for "derelicts": North Brother Island, isolated in the East River.<sup>114</sup>

In her essay written to accompany the 1981 publication of *The Bowery*, "In, Around, and Afterthoughts: On Documentary Photography,"<sup>115</sup> Rosler declared her awareness (and thus the project's intended address) of these contemporary economic currents: "The liberal New Deal State has been dismantled piece by piece. The War on Poverty has been called off."<sup>116</sup> If *The Bowery* project accomplished the tethering of urban documentary practices to class concerns, then Rosler's later project *If You Lived Here...* (1987–89) fully synthesized representation, an understanding of urban space—particularly that of city streets—and homelessness. With a title taken straight from the "back-to-the-city" movement of the 1970s and 1980s and focused specifically on New York City, the project included three discreet thematic exhibitions in 1989: *Home Front*, which addressed housing issues; *Homeless: The Street and Other Venues*, which tackled the problem of homelessness in the city; and *City: Visions and Revisions*, which considered architectural schemes, strategies, and utopias. Devised at the invitation of

the Dia Foundation, each of Rosler's exhibitions coincided with a corresponding forum on each topic, as well as one on artists' housing, and an outgrowth publication in 1991.<sup>117</sup> *If You Lived Here...* aimed for an interdisciplinary "spatial-cultural discourse" where ideas about art, architecture, and urban design commingled with those about the city and public space.<sup>118</sup> Influenced by theorist Henri Lefebvre's notion that modern urban space is not a natural expression of the needs of a society but rather a social product, Rosler wanted the Dia project to better understand homelessness by considering the relationships and processes—social, economic, governmental—that create the urban spaces in which homelessness exists. Deutsche, in her essay for the project, offered a succinct description of Lefebvre's theory of the "production of space," stating that it seeks "to describe the organization and production and accumulation over vast spatial networks during the era of late capitalism."<sup>119</sup> Despite Lefebvre's contribution to a critical understanding of the everyday experience of the city, Deutsche has also pointed out that "discourse about public urban spaces [is still] dominated by authoritarian articulation that endows those spaces with a unity (that they don't have and never had) and whose uses are deemed self-evident and uniformly good for all."<sup>120</sup> Importantly, the question of who makes up this illusory "all"—and who it excludes—lies at the heart of understanding the role of city streets and, for the purposes of this chapter, the critique mounted by Rosler about that urban space and its public.

Decades earlier Benjamin had posed the question "To whom do the streets 'belong'?" and formulated his response: "Streets are the dwelling place of the collective. The collective is an eternally restless, eternally moving essence that, among the facades of buildings, endures (*erlebt*), experiences (*erfährt*), learns and senses as much as individuals in the protection of their four walls."<sup>121</sup> Benjamin's assertion that urban space is variously, even triumphantly, engaged by an unhoused collective refuses the unity of such space (parallel to the effect of Rosler's multiplication of descriptive systems for the

Bowery). Such refusal(s) prove crucial, as Deutsche pointed out, for preventing the perception of “conflicts—and social groups associated with conflict... as disturbances that enter space from the outside and [that] must be expelled to restore harmony.”

Rather, she continued, “Social space is produced and structured by conflicts. With this recognition, a democratic spatial politics begins.”<sup>122</sup> Rosler, coming of age in a decade of demonstrations, when the streets “belonged” to the people, similarly agonized that the street had become merely an imaginary space:

Demoted to a site of surveillance and vehicular passage, the street is abandoned to maintenance services and the occasional spectacle.... [I]ncreasingly, the street is a waste space left to the socially fugitive and the unhoused—those unable to buy or to serve.... It is this ‘empty’ space, to which the destitute are relegated, that is increasingly identified with—or as—‘the street.’ The waste space resides where society used to stand.<sup>123</sup>

Rosler’s concern about the vitality of city streets strikes a familiar cord with the seminal book on the topic, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.<sup>124</sup> Written by Jane Jacobs and first published in 1961, this book, arguably more than any other in the twentieth century, issued a radical challenge to current urban thinking and city planning in New York City and, by extension, all other American metropolises. Jacobs’s study systematically explains that cities were kept interesting, strong, safe, and lively spaces because of the everyday complexity and mixed-use nature of their streets. These were also the very qualities modern planners sought to eliminate with the bulldozers and class-distinct housing so closely associated with gentrification. Gentrification, in turn, further impoverished other urban locations, ones not dissimilar to Rosler’s Bowery of the 1970s.

Gentrification has been variously defined but generally indicates the transition of an urban space from a lower socio-economic class to another, higher one. Thus, from different viewpoints, it can be celebrated as a “renaissance” or decried as a geographic and ethnic “cleaning house.” The term gentrification, signaling the class motivations at

work, also has an obscuring cousin, “revitalization.” But as Deutsche has pointed out: “[this word] reflect[s] nothing other than ‘the sort of middle-class ethnocentrism that views the replacement of low-status groups by middle-class groups as beneficial by definition. ‘Revitalization’ conceals the existence of those inhabitants already living in the frequently vital neighborhoods targeted for renovation.”<sup>125</sup> Moreover, as she and co-author Cara Gendel Ryan argued in “The Fine Art of Gentrification,” gentrification plays a part in a broader “strategy of impoverishment”: “By creating neighborhoods and housing that only the white-collar labor force can afford, the cities are systematically destroying the material conditions for the survival of millions of people.”<sup>126</sup> In both her essay for “If You Lived Here...” and her recollection of the specific circumstances surrounding her Bowery project, Rosler has noted that gentrification is as tied to deliberate social and political state or municipal policy as it is to the fiscal cycles and crises that characterize (always urban) financial centers like New York.<sup>127</sup> Demographically, both Rosler and Deutsche have acknowledged the far more ambiguous and overlooked role of artists in such dramatic reorientations of urban space.

For artists, the image of the city’s mean streets may feed a certain romantic Bohemianism. Yet, because artists often share city spaces with the underhoused, they have been positioned as both perpetrators and victims in the processes of displacement and urban planning. They have come to be seen as a pivotal group, easing the return of the middle class to center cities. Ironically, however, artist themselves are often displaced by the same wealthy professionals—their clientele—who have followed them into now-chic neighborhoods.<sup>128</sup>

Rosler, along with many other artists, lived near the Bowery; by the mid-1960s, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Mark Rothko, Robert Ryman, and Tom Wesselman, among others, had already taken up residence there. Some did so to avoid the Beat-admiring throngs in Greenwich Village, but more were drawn by the plentiful sunlight afforded by the lack of high-rises and “dirt-cheap” rents.<sup>129</sup> “‘Everybody would be aghast at what goes on in the street,’” reported the *New York Times*. “‘The scuffles, the

retching—it's Hogarthian ten times over. But these are the cheapest studios in town. What can we do?"<sup>130</sup> Such awareness on the part of local artists could yield a greater awareness of the representations of gentrification and the forced invisibility of its byproduct, homelessness, in a mode of thinking expanded from Lefevbre's theory of the production of urban space to also account for the production of the city as "visual image", "a representation."<sup>131</sup> Such an approach to the visibility of urban space makes clear the spatial and representational role of the city in creating meaning as much as subjectivities.

Again, Deutsche's writings prove exemplary on the matter and are worth quoting at length:

To challenge the image of the homeless person as a disruption of the normal urban order, it is crucial to recognize that this 'intrusive' figure points to the city's true character. Conflict is not something that befalls an originally, or potentially, harmonious urban space. Urban space is the product of conflict.... The perception of a coherent space cannot be separated from a sense of what threatens that space, of what it would like to exclude.... [U]rban space is produced by specific socioeconomic conflicts that should not simply be accepted, either wholeheartedly or regretfully, as evidence of the inevitability of conflict but, rather, politicized—open to contestation as social and therefore mutable relations of oppression.<sup>132</sup>

It is this understanding of homelessness, class relations, and urban space as sites of structural but under-noticed conflict that infuses Rosler's Bowery project. Removing the so-called "intrusive figure," as Rosler did, calls attention to the persistent absence of harmoniousness in the spaces that remained in the visual and linguistic representations.<sup>133</sup> Rosler's particular critique of the conflicting and conflict-embodying representations of homelessness also works to confront the notion of an urban "waste" population not worthy of concrete historical analysis.

An analysis of the conditions that fostered and maintained homelessness in New York City reveals just how longstanding a problem it was and how particularly tied to the specific geography of the Lower East Side of the city, where the Bowery had functioned

and continued to function as a major thoroughfare. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, three of the most densely populated areas—those with the most tenement buildings—bordered the Bowery: Chinatown to the south, Little Italy (now NoHo) to the west, and New Israel to the east (now the East Village and more reticulated “Lower East Side”).<sup>134</sup> The clustering of overcrowded tenement buildings, as Giamo has noted, not only foreclosed the possibility of a geographic (and therefore social) mixture of the middle class with immigrant populations but also “blurred the boundaries of street, sidewalk, and residence,” (something that Rosler would come to emphasize in her representation of the area).<sup>135</sup>

By the 1970s, New York City’s economy had become focused on maintaining corporate headquarters, financial markets, and international trade.<sup>136</sup> This fostered the professional or managerial class, as opposed to the blue-collar or manual-labor class—the class in which homeless men often found sporadic employment—that had dominated during the city’s manufacturing heyday. The 1973 recession only exacerbated this trend, drawing more distinct lines between those who could afford the city and those who could not. These demographic shifts and economic upheavals inevitably changed the character of related urban spaces. The areas adjacent to the Lower East Side, home to the urban poor for more than a century and slowly gentrifying with artists paving the way for more elite residents, along with the Bowery, that longstanding and consolidated “dwelling place” of the city’s homeless population, marked the epicenter of changes to the production of urban space.<sup>137</sup> *The Bowery* exemplifies an idea Rosler declared central to other urban, later projects: “a city embodies and enacts a history. In representing the city, in producing counterrepresentations, the specificity of a locale and its histories becomes critical. Documentary, rethought and redeployed, provides an essential tool, though certainly not the only one.”<sup>138</sup> Having accounted minimally for the historical aspects of the Bowery in her writing on the project, this chapter therefore takes

her above statement as further indication of the pivotal and purposeful use of the street to *The Bowery*, an “essential tool” more specific and more revelatory than “documentary” indicates.

To be sure, Rosler explained the archaeological appeal of the Bowery location to her and contemporary documentarians:

The Bowery, in New York, is an archetypal skid row. It has been much photographed, in works veering between outraged moral sensitivity and sheer slumming spectacle. Why is the Bowery so magnetic to [urban] documentarians? It is no longer possible to evoke the camouflaging impulses to ‘help’ drunks and down-and-outers or ‘expose’ their dangerous existence.... We can reconstruct a past for [urban] documentary within which photographs of the Bowery might have been part of the aggressive insist on the tangible reality of generalized poverty and despair—of enforced social marginality and finally outright social uselessness.<sup>139</sup>

The productive question to pose is not about the Bowery’s magnetism for photographers, but about its social and historical role in the city’s development such that it became an island of homelessness and despair. Etymologically, the Bowery is an adaptation of the Dutch term *De Bouwerie*,<sup>140</sup> meaning farm-path, and it described the route from the settlement of New Amsterdam, where Pieter Stuyvesant worked, to his farmland and manor house, located at present-day Astor place.<sup>141</sup> Geographically, this one-mile route has been constant since that time.<sup>142</sup> Amenities like hotels and taverns appeared along the route and a townlike cluster around the Stuyvesant manor named Bowery Village boasted a population of about four hundred people by the early 1700s. By the start of the next century, the area had changed markedly and indicated certain urban disparities that would come to characterize the Bowery, even foreshadowing its gentrification and urban class struggles in the 1960s to 1980s.<sup>143</sup>

The proliferation of cheap lodging, the shift in popularity from the haunts of the Bowery to the newer spectacles of Broadway, all invited the sense of the area as a “detached milieu.”<sup>144</sup> The Bowery’s detachment was “not only evidenced in the form of

housing conditions [e.g. tenements], but also in [its] vice and deviance, poverty and destitution, and commerce and entertainment. These forms, which validated the process of segregation, instituted the divergent way of life that existed within the Bowery.”<sup>145</sup> The homeless person embodied the most extreme “divergent” lifestyles on the Bowery, and some 9,000 homeless people sought shelter nightly in the Bowery’s cheap lodging as early as the 1890s. Such a statistic cannot, of course, account for all those who found no shelter and instead slept on the street.<sup>146</sup> Slumming parties also ventured into this detached milieu to amuse themselves in saloons, with names like Hell Hole, Inferno, and Plague, that capitalized on the influx of middle-class money.<sup>147</sup> Even such a limited sampling of the Bowery’s pre-twentieth-century history indicates the extent to which, as an urban space, as a *street*, the Bowery has long embodied class struggles—including destitution and homelessness—as well as the social divisions, if not outright segregations, that are imposed because of them.

Estimations of the homeless population of the Bowery chart how, in the twentieth century, the Bowery was said to have thoroughly “succumbed” to its skid-row status and “bequeathed” to the proverbial Bowery bums who lodged in missions or cheap hotels known as “flophouses.”<sup>148</sup> Between the end of World War II and 1949, estimates range from nearly 14,000 to 18,000 homeless people in the Bowery.<sup>149</sup> Over the next twenty years, these numbers would decline dramatically and then plateau at a steady 3,000 or 4,000 from 1969 until the end of the 1970s.<sup>150</sup> During this period, articles and headlines from the *New York Times* alone—which frequently referred to the Bowery’s homeless populations as drifters, derelicts, drunks, and bums—demonstrate that the very evocation of homelessness depended upon the establishment of their figurative or rhetorical presence on the newspaper page.<sup>151</sup> Other coverage in the largest-circulating local newspaper—as indicator of the collective public imagination—reinforced the idea of the Bowery as a detached and dangerous milieu. From 1970 to the beginning of Rosler’s

project four years later, the headings or taglines in the *New York Times* document the Bowery as the often-sensationalized site of serious crimes: police brutality, rape, murder by shooting and knifing, and a million-dollar burglary.<sup>152</sup> This social and urban otherness of the Bowery had some sociological basis, according to Hopper, insofar as the population was isolated and isolated itself, their deviance explaining and simultaneously justifying their homeless state as well as their urban containment.<sup>153</sup>

The Bowery was at once familiar and alien, a place where poverty, disengagement, and 'antisocial behavior patterns' intersected in a laboratory-like demonstration of what sociologists have commonly referred to as "anomie," in this case lack of adherence to norms held by society at large. For a population untrammelled by the usual ties that bind and reportedly immune to obligations that order, Bowery men were remarkably well behaved, seldom venturing beyond the confines of skid row.<sup>154</sup>

While this explanation is behaviorally and culturally informative, it overlooks some practical reasons why this area functioned so consistently as an urban space for and of the homeless and the destitute. "As an institutionalized skid row, the Bowery had remade itself into a coordinated network of missions, flophouses, labor agencies, lunch counters, restaurants, used clothing outfits, cheap saloons, and pawnshops."<sup>155</sup> This analysis reveals that the Bowery offered the necessities (cheap food and drink, shelter, and places for casual or sporadic employment) called for by the population so readily identified with it.

It is this specific sense of the Bowery, as a "living space, as a commercial district," that Rosler had when she conceived of her Bowery project and on which she elaborated in her 1981 essay. She noted the range of shops, "from decrepitude to splendor, from the shabbiest of ancient restaurant-supply houses or even mere storage spaces to astonishing crystal grottoes" in the elaborate window displays of lighting fixture retailers.<sup>156</sup> Such businesses featured in Rosler's project not only because they shaped the urban landscape of the Bowery-photographs but also because homeless men

inhabited the doorways to these very shops after business hours. In this way, the figure of the homeless retained its ability to “shock” the passerby, albeit here through its visual absence. In the 1970s, Rosler was troubled by the sense that “[n]one of this matters to the street” and, more importantly for the men of the Bowery, she continued, that “none of it changes the quality of the pavement, the shelter or lack of it offered by the doorways, many of which are spanned by inhospitable but visually discreet rows of iron teeth—meant to discourage sleep but generally serving only as peas under the mattress of a rolled-up jacket.”<sup>157</sup> Rosler’s attention to this peripheral urban space—which marked the intersection of street and store, destitution and desire—allowed her to formulate another mode for “representing” homelessness as well as an altogether reoriented form of street photography.

In various texts on and interviews about *The Bowery*, Rosler has consistently referenced not only the historical urban documentary photographs previously mentioned but also those of the Bowery’s homeless men that were contemporary with her project. In her 1981 essay, she referred to the subjects as “drunken bums”; although Rosler footnoted the term with a comment about the “many” examples of images of such men, she cited only Michael Zettler’s *The Bowery*, noting that she saw it only after completing her project (figure 4.27).<sup>158</sup> Zettler’s photographs—particularly with quotations from the men pictured such as “You must learn the art. The art of staying alive and staying drunk.”<sup>159</sup>—seemed to Rosler “its perfect foil” (figures 4.28 and 4.29).<sup>160</sup> In her recently published afterword to her project, Rosler wrote that “the area’s transients, on the street at any hour, were an ever-present, highly symbolic photographic subject for tourists, art students, and nascent [urban] documentarians” and footnoted this observation with an anecdote: “The men on the street repeatedly expressed indignation at being photographed, and on one occasion I had to flee a pursuer who imagined I was photographing him.”<sup>161</sup> Rather than fixating on the example offered by Zettler’s

publication—particularly since Rosler has never quite articulated the nature of its offense and since she in fact included a photographic project reminiscent of it in *If You Lived Here...*<sup>162</sup>—I suggest that it is more instructive to consider the images of men on the Bowery that circulated more widely in the *New York Times*. In tandem with the accompanying captions, headlines, and story content that frequently called these men “tramps” and “derelicts,” such press images created and upheld the common perception that “bums” were, as Rosler claimed, “judged as *vile*, people who deserve a kick for their miserable *choice*.”<sup>163</sup>

The most immediate visual effect of the photographs made for the *New York Times* is the dramatic darkness produced by photographing the Bowery in the raking light of early morning or late afternoon. In a photograph by Neal Boenzi, the doorway of a building where a man lies prone, his leg thrust out into the sidewalk, recedes into impenetrable shadow (figure 4.30). The series of recesses and elements projecting out from the building certainly gives a more visually interesting sense of the facade than would have been possible in flat or overhead light. The photograph assumes all of the drama, mystery, and even danger of the film noir aesthetic. The caption reads: “A typical Bowery drunk—so common, the casual passer-by pays little attention. But official aid is to start soon.” While it may reference and conjure a passerby, no such person appears in the photograph. Instead, shot from a low angle, the sidewalk stretches vast and decidedly empty across the photograph’s lower-most register. The article’s title, “Two-Man Teams to Offer Help to Bowery Derelicts,” may evoke pedestrian assistance for Bowery “derelicts,” but the accompanying text instead conjures drama and despair for passersby who are nonexistent in the lead photograph:

He lay on his back on the sidewalk, eyes closed, legs sprawled, hair matted, face scarred. The only signs of life were the trickle of blood from the gash on his forehead, and his lips, which every five or six seconds puffed out as he exhaled. Above his head, pasted to the streaked and dusty window of Betty’s Tavern, Restaurant, Bar and Grill, was a small

hand-lettered sign: 'Eye-Opener. Wine 15c. 8 A.M. and 10 A.M.' The nameless, homeless, helpless drunk lying in the shattered glass bottles of the Bowery sidewalk on a recent warm October afternoon was ignored by the few pedestrians who scurried by.

In a similar turn, the secondary photograph of the assistance touted in the headline is utterly removed from the urban context, taken indoors, and diminished in scale to the more sinister image of the man lying in the doorway (figure 4.31).

Another photograph, taken in 1970 by Edward Hausner and thus more contemporaneous to Rosler's project, displays the same high-contrast effect of raking light (figure 4.32). The Bowery appears mostly dark, its two depicted inhabitants discernible by the highlights that fall on their hats, slivers of their faces, and the crooks of their garments. The "small bottle of wine" mentioned in the accompanying caption is visible nowhere (but is presumably obscured by the shadows). Nevertheless, this image of a "scene that has long been typical on the Bowery" dominates the other photographs on the page, which uncomplicatedly—and importantly for an article about the social services of the city's "Bowery Project"—depict men at the Bowery Men's Shelter receiving medical aid and the "warm bed" promise of the article's headline (figure 4.33).<sup>164</sup> Exemplified by the two photographs featured in the *New York Times*, the circulating images of the Bowery did not address it as a specific urban space of homelessness.

Widely circulating images such as Boenzi's and Hausner's undoubtedly informed Rosler's project:

A lot of photographers made pictures of Bowery bums. That upset me because I thought it was a false endeavor, that it involved a pretense that such photos were about the people when they were really about the sensibility of the photographers and the viewers. It's an illicit exchange about compassion and feeling and the bums are victims of this exchange between the photographer and the viewer. They provide the raw materials for a confirmation of class and privilege.<sup>165</sup>

For Rosler, the reception of a street photograph cannot be excluded from consideration in its making. This attentiveness to an eventual viewer takes on a more forceful presence when the photographs in question represent a collective social concern, such as the homeless men on the streets of the Bowery. If we do not explore the “exchange with the viewer” and ask “to what end?,” we not only risk but participate in the aestheticization of extreme poverty and suffering. To not consider reception alongside production with regard to street photographs is generally to misunderstand their unique qualities; to do so with these particular street photographs would be to participate in the very photographic legacy that Rosler’s *The Bowery* works to question and undermine.

### **How *The Bowery* Appeared**

Any description of a viewer’s encounter with Rosler’s project must account for its conception as a work for gallery walls (figure 4.34), as well as its existence and circulation in other forms. *The Bowery* was, Rosler has declared: “intended from the start to hang on the same walls as other photographic works, and from the mid-1970s on, it was shown in museums and noncommercial galleries in California and elsewhere.”<sup>166</sup> Following the work’s completion in 1975, she would present the project in slide-lecture format when she was asked to give talks. And although Buchloh’s 1982 review of the work in “Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art” has been cited in this chapter, Allan Sekula’s piece of criticism from 1978 marks a far earlier publication of Rosler’s *Bowery*.<sup>167</sup> “Dismantling Modernism” situates the project among a number of others that Sekula argued are “reinventing documentary,” among them works by their mutual friends Fred Lonidier and Philip Steinmetz. Sekula wrote that Rosler’s *Bowery* suggested “a walk downtown, from Houston toward Canal on the west side of the avenue” and, more to his point, represented the Bowery as “a socially mediated, ideological construction.”<sup>168</sup>

Soon after Sekula's essay, Rosler would be given an opportunity to publish the project in its entirety.

After Rosler gave her Bowery slide-lecture at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where Buchloh was teaching, he expressed an interest in publishing her project, with one caveat. "Buchloh felt that a photographic practice not based on 'originality' would require some justification. I had wanted no introductory text: the work was itself a work of critique."<sup>169</sup> The resulting essay, "In, Around, Afterthoughts," was published as the third work in her 1981 monograph *Martha Rosler: 3 Works*, in which it follows the section reproducing *The Bowery*.<sup>170</sup> The essay revealed the same problematic with documentary photography that had originally inspired *The Bowery*, which the reader would have just paged through. This sequencing was important to Rosler, who strategized the essay's placement after the reproduced *Bowery* project and who wanted the turning of the book's pages to suggest the same temporal awareness as the experience of viewing the Bowery- and text-photographs on a gallery wall (figure 4.34). This translation from installation to sequenced pages, Rosler has noted, came "at the expense of the 'all-at-onceness' of a grid, in which everything is available to the eye."<sup>171</sup> It also meant that many of the readers of her book had little, if any, awareness that a non-book version of the work had been displayed in art institutions. In spite of the multiple formats through which viewers could have come to know and experience *The Bowery*, the crucial effects on its audience remained consistent: their readings of the text-photographs; their projections onto street photographs of a public space emptied of its subjects; the foregrounding of economic disparity in the reception of the work; and, finally, the reconception of urban documentary for an art-aware audience via the work's reception in art circles, whether as an installation, a slide lecture, or an artist's monograph.

Although figures do not appear in the “emptied” spaces of Rosler’s *Bowery*, they are conjured and given form by the words in the text-photographs: “heady,” “bleary-eyed,” “shit-faced,” “bloated,” “stinko,” “paralyzed,” “comatose,” “embalmed,” buried.” Using words so descriptive of bodily experience as to be aptly characterized as “somatic,” Rosler called on the viewer’s knowledge of a shared language.<sup>172</sup> Despite the archaic or Bowery-specific origin of some of the terms, her linguistic “descriptive system” maintains a fair amount of collective referents to drinking, the body, and the possibly dire consequences of one on the other as the words become more descriptive of physical incapacitation (“paralyzed,” “comatose”) and, finally, of fatality (“embalmed,” “buried”). Rosler’s shaping of the text coupled with its activation by viewers stalls assumptions that intoxication is either a “metaphoric state or an essential condition” of the Bowery men it seems to represent or describe.<sup>173</sup> Yet the viewer’s reading of the text-photographs, which allows the voicing of a physical subject, describes but simultaneously fails to adequately represent that subject. Just as with the Bowery-photographs, Rosler’s words offer meanings, but these meanings become relative to each other and to each viewer’s interpretation of them over the course of their reading. Language may be a public or collective “descriptive system,” but it is every bit as unstable a system as representation.<sup>174</sup> Rosler’s interpellation of her viewers via the language of the text-photographs may suggest that a completion, or reversal of the physical absence, of the Bowery-photographs is possible. The viewer’s reading of the language (likely) fails to do this satisfactorily and instead reinforces the words’ susceptibility to interpretation, just as the Bowery-photographs are susceptible to each viewer’s projections about an urban space of poverty.

Insofar as Rosler always intended for *The Bowery* to approximate “a walk down the Bowery,”<sup>175</sup> she also meant for the representation of her experience in that urban space to invite viewers’ recognition based on their experience.<sup>176</sup> Rosler’s use of her

own viewpoint is an opening for an establishment of familiarity.<sup>177</sup> Her walk down the Bowery takes her viewers along the poverty-stricken street. When her Bowery-photograph captures a sign in the window, it is from the vantage point of someone on the sidewalk, addressed by that sign; likewise, when Rosler noticed the debris of intoxication or homelessness, she pivoted her camera down to indicate standing over empty and smashed liquor bottles. Pulled out of a passive position by the formal mechanisms of such Bowery-photographs—a move only enhanced by the interpellation of text-photographs—Rosler's viewers can confront these urban spaces as economically and socially constructed, while also negotiating their projections onto such spaces and onto the identities suggested to inhabit them.

If identity is shaped by representations and is thus constantly in process, then the mode of address of a work like *The Bowery* can affect identity. Deutsche took up this proposition, offering a series of questions that lie at the heart of her scholarship: “How do images of public space create the public identities they seem merely to depict? How do they constitute the viewer into these identities? How, that is, do they invite viewers to take up a position that then defines them as public beings? How do these images create a ‘we,’ a public, and who do we imagine ourselves to be when we occupy the prescribed site?”<sup>178</sup> Most often, these identities and positions as experienced and occupied in relation to urban public space are characterized by difference, the act of seeing an “other” with whom there is no reason to identify or whose position merely serves to confirm the power of the viewer.<sup>179</sup> Photographic historians Peter Bacon Hales and Carol Squiers have in fact both argued that part of photography's initial function—its invention coinciding with massive urbanization in Europe and America—was “born out of a tremendous cultural need... to come to terms with the process of industrialization” and with the new experience of the street “characterized by noise and crowds, the continual proximity of people who were dissociated from one another.”<sup>180</sup>

Addressing the experience of difference as a distinctly class-based one, Buck-Morss has written of typical reactions to the *clochards* of Paris (a ready parallel to the men of the Bowery):

They fascinate us the more their poverty, intoxication, dirt and idleness seem to come from defiance rather than hopelessness. It is their spitting in the eye of bourgeois decorum and their total disregard for its success values to which we, observing from the safe side, feel drawn. Yet to contemplate falling into their vulnerable state evokes a shudder, a fact which the authorities may count on, allowing these street-dwellers as a presence that constrains the rest of us.<sup>181</sup>

In the case of Rosler's Bowery project, the "safe side" referenced by Buck-Morss is the art-going, culture-savvy professional middle class.<sup>182</sup> This is the same class that was the focus of Ehrenreich's aptly-titled study *Fear of Falling* and of which she noted: "If this is an elite, then, it is an insecure and deeply anxious one. It is afraid, like any class below the most securely wealthy, of misfortunes that might lead to a downward slide."<sup>183</sup>

Whether or not she was aware of Ehrenreich's insights, Rosler has aimed to prevent the typical reactions that either refuse to acknowledge common ground between "us" and "them" or to use "them" to justify, reassure, and confirm our sense of "us." Considering her audience as one that shares the same community, Rosler has said: "I aim for the distancing effect that breaks the emotional identification with character and situation that naturalism implies, substituting for it, when it is effective, an emotional recognition coupled with a critical, intellectual understanding of the *systematic meaning* of the work, its meaning in relation to common issues."<sup>184</sup>

Rosler, then, aimed to jettison a single, stable, or unified meaning that could be extracted from the viewer's interactions with her representations. Her work turns viewers' attention to their quest for the photographic subject, that representational presence that might confirm their own coherent identity.<sup>185</sup> Rosler's refusal to picture, and simultaneous impulse to describe, her Bowery subjects, not only focuses viewers' attention on their desire for identification or for differentiation—and their possible failure to locate either

reaction in the piece—but this turn also enacts an urban, photographic version of Bertolt Brecht’s *Lehrstück*, or “learning theater.”<sup>186</sup> As Buck-Morss has explained the class-oriented possibilities of this strategy: “It is one thing to create out of others allegorical figures for one’s own fantasy-projections. It is quite another to see ourselves suddenly from the outside, as actors on a Brechtian stage, where the allegory we portray is the system of capital itself.”<sup>187</sup> In creating a work that addressed the problem of homelessness—and its representation—Rosler used a Brechtian approach to her viewers in order to “move consciousness forward, or to move people toward... the idea of political action.”<sup>188</sup> Rosler’s reconceived representation of the Bowery impedes, complicates, and throws into question not only the messages that the “two inadequate descriptive systems” would seem to deliver but also the viewer’s reactions to the homeless subjects of the piece, whether based on outright identification with them, their perception as an anxiety-inducing “other,” or as representational challenges to a problem within the larger social, political, and economic system.

Despite Rosler’s specific intention for *The Bowery* to circulate within an art-world context, Buchloh expressed concern about its possible failure to do so as installation, book, and slide lecture. Within a year of the piece’s publication in 1981, “Rosler’s position runs the risk of ignoring the structural specificities of the work’s circulation form and distribution system, and of failing to integrate her work efficiently into the reception of current art practice, when the work’s actual claim is in fact radical political awareness and change.”<sup>189</sup> Buchloh’s concern renders a problematic polarity between art institutions and social action, endowing each with a singularity and consistency that only enhances a separation between art and experience. Perhaps even more problematically, Buchloh’s polarity forgets or overlooks the importance of Rosler’s intention to insert “radical political awareness and change” into an art audience by way of representation. “Since the problem of homelessness, like all social problems, exists in a stream of

conflating representations, it is not possible to change social reality without challenging its simplifying overlaid images.”<sup>190</sup>

To counter Buchloh’s statement, I would redeploy that last clause, arguing that it is not possible to change social reality without an audience that recognizes and knows the socially simplified images that are being challenged (and quoted) by *The Bowery*. Rosler’s project risks not failure but success in its restriction to a photo-historically aware viewership. Taking up this matter in her recent interview with him, Rosler said:

It was meant as an art work, hanging on the wall—why else would I bother calling it ‘inadequate’? Who cares about the inadequacy of representation? The general public doesn’t care about inadequacy, the art world and artists care about adequacy of representational systems. The title showed that whatever other people might make of the work, the primary audience was the person interested in the production of meaning through art or language.<sup>191</sup>

By analyzing the interaction between representations and their viewers and then by making that interaction unavoidably intrinsic to *The Bowery*, Rosler upset the modernist model of photographic vision as highly personal and contained within the photographic frame as well as the urban documentary model of “victim photography” as exploitative and rarely socially rectifying. She also proposed an answer to the question “what does homelessness have to do with art?”<sup>192</sup> that addressed, seemingly unknowingly, the specific historic and urban circumstances of street photography.

Rosler’s critical understanding of *The Bowery*’s reception did not at the time extend to an equally nuanced analysis of urban space and has never extended to a reckoning with street photography. This was made most clear in the aforementioned interview with Buchloh, where both she and Buchloh talk about the urban space of the street or about the representational mechanisms of photography, but fail to allow them to intersect in a discussion of street photography. Buchloh stated that *The Bowery* was mostly about photography and less obviously, “if at all, about urban space.” To this, Rosler responded: “The Bowery photos... are... about the production of space in light of

particular social forms. And they... use language to try to de-authorize photography while still not disclaiming it. They aren't about the people in the space but about the space itself as a production of a social system." Corrected further, Buchloh eventually proposed: "So 'inadequate' in that title also meant the inability to represent the actual underlying social structures of those spaces." Rosler replied that *The Bowery* "invokes social space. I didn't realize the degree to which that figured in it for me until somewhat later, but I think now it is quite clear."<sup>193</sup>

Bringing these two conversational threads together has been a tall order for most art-historical discourse, as Deutsche has pointed out (albeit in her essay for Rosler's *If You Lived Here...*): "Viewing the two elements—art [here, photography] and the city—as fundamentally separate, mainstream art discourse [has] adopted an essentializing explanation of each individual element. By endowing the concepts of art and the city with intrinsic identities, art discourse ensured that they remained intact as distinct and separable entities."<sup>194</sup> Where Rosler has failed to even approximate "an essentializing explanation" of street photography (the closest and previously quoted effort being "the representation of bodies in space... with direct reference to time and place"<sup>195</sup>), she has written in more nuanced ways about the street in other art practices: "Some of the new quotational work exists in relation to 'the street.' 'The street' suggests metropolitan locales with deeply divided class structures and conflict, and perhaps where the impoverished and excluded are also ethnically different."<sup>196</sup>

If the street suggests these complicated urban locales, then surely street photography should represent them in suitably complex, even if "inadequate," images. Synthesizing attention to artistic representation, urban poverty, and the sociology and politics of homelessness, I contend that Rosler's *Bowery* offers just such a conceptualization of street photography. This street photography analyzes and problematizes the relations that structure streets such as the Bowery as well as how

such relations can be structured by their representation in Rosler's hands. Thus reconceived, street photography stands in for Rosler's hopes for urban documentary practice. By way of conclusion, I rework a closing passage from her 1981 essay on the project: *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* provides an example of a street photography that incorporates an explicit analysis of society and at least the beginning of a program for changing it.<sup>197</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Analogues of Reality

I couldn't help but think of Giuliani and what he did to New York, the ethos that he established here.... Now, the city is a symbol and a real concentration of capitalist, globalized, mass culture. In some way, the people existing in Times Square seemed a reflection of that to me.

–Philip-Lorca diCorcia<sup>1</sup>

[A]t the heart of this general circulation of signs, the modern individual is confronted with the image of reality rather than reality itself.

–Gilles Mora<sup>2</sup>

*New York* (figure 5.1), from Philip-Lorca diCorcia's *Streetwork* series, and *Heads #03* (figure 5.2) offer two analogues of Time Square's particular and ever-changing reality as a streetscape shaped from the early 1990s to 2001 by commercial spectacle, architectural transformation, and social "revitalization." In *New York* (figure 5.1), two men wearing business-tan overcoats walk down the street, briefcases in hand. The right sides of their bodies are obliquely lit in a manner that seems incongruous with the unremarkable light on the buildings surrounding them as well as the dull, pale gray sky above them. On the wide section of sidewalk where the camera has been trained, another coated figure, seen from behind and all but a silhouette, is preparing to pass them. Other pedestrians, alone or in groups of two, appear scattered on the sidewalks behind and across the street from the main figures, some of their dark vertical forms appearing all the more striking against an oddly brilliant patchwork of barred storefronts that line the street. Some of these buildings can be seen in their entirety, like the boarded building from which the "HAREM" theater marquee juts out over the sidewalk, its white letter boards blank. This contrasts with the marquee on the near sidewalk, just

above the two businessmen's heads, which advertises: "Fiona Shaw/ The Waste Land/ by T. S. Eliot/ Directed by Deborah Warner/ 212-279-4200." Despite the announcement of a seemingly current engagement at this theater, the play's title rhetorically reinforces the expanse of near-barren sidewalk and the disused storefronts.

Although visually quite different, *Heads #03* presents a streetscape no less specific to Times Square than the one depicted in *New York*. No buildings, marquees, or sidewalks are visible; a rich black subsumes most of the picture. In sharp focus, a man wearing sunglasses, a leather jacket, a driving cap, and headphones dominates the foreground. He is shown only from mid-chest up, and a strong raking light calls out his right cheekbone, lower lip, jacket seam stitching, and a triangle of white turtleneck. Behind him, facing the same direction, another man's torso and head appear out of focus and in deep shadow. We can make out his shirt, tie, jacket, and basic facial proportions, but little of what is behind him. There, dappled blurs suggest as many as an additional five or six heads, despite the tight framing of this photograph, some the color of plausible skin tones and one that appears to be wearing a white baseball cap. These blurs and the proximity of the two men convey the compressed, compact social space of a busy city sidewalk filled with pedestrians who randomly must share that space, while still remaining representationally specific to Times Square, as I will argue in this chapter.

Of the four artists considered in this dissertation, only diCorcia has previously been discussed within the rubric of street photography. As early as his first monograph, published by MoMA in 1995, Peter Galassi wrote as though diCorcia was already destined for the codified, canonical version of that genre's history:

For half a century—from Henri Cartier-Bresson to Robert Frank to Garry Winogrand—the open theater of the street has been a favored hunting ground for photography. The photographer's cloak of anonymity and freedom of action and the street's smorgasbord of character and incident together made an arena of seemingly endless artistic opportunity. After Winogrand's death in 1984, however, the arena was all but abandoned....

It is too early to know what diCorcia will make of this untended legacy, but photography has none more potent.<sup>3</sup>

Galassi's catalogue debuted early examples of the *Streetwork* series, which diCorcia had begun to make on the streets of metropolises around the world.<sup>4</sup> In terms of subject, *Streetwork* invited diCorcia's comparison to the traditional luminaries of street photography, and in the intervening years since Galassi's 1995 proclamation, the names Walker Evans, Helen Levitt, and Harry Callahan have joined those of Cartier-Bresson, Frank, and Winogrand. The authors of such comparisons have resolutely identified two crucial differences between *Streetwork* and its street-photography precedents: diCorcia's cinematic staging and his lighting.<sup>5</sup> Canonical street photography has long operated on the slice-of-life assumption set forth in Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment*; with diCorcia, as critic Andy Grundberg has noted, one instead might "ask how much of a given work is staged to look real, and how much of it is truly (or merely) real."<sup>6</sup> DiCorcia's next body of work, debuting in 2001 and entitled *Heads*, extends this line of thinking. And although this chapter considers outlooks such as Grundberg's—as well as the role of the lighting and framing of the pictures—its main concern will be both projects' photographic location in Times Square. From this site-oriented perspective, *Streetwork* and *Heads* more forcefully present a challenging contribution to the history of street photography, one attendant to the social implications of dramatic urban change. When the urban street's appearance in general—and the commercial pedestrian spectacle of Times Square in particular—is transformed by a process of photographing so different from that of canonical street photography, what can the resulting images still tell us about the reality of that social space? Furthermore, *Heads* provokes contemplation of how much of the street must be visible in order to be figured as such in street photographs.

### **The Social Space of the City: Precedents**

*New York* and *Heads #03* have little of the decisive, momentary, or action-laden quality that has been essential in the dominant discourse on street photography, as exemplified by the quotations from Galassi and Grundberg. Certainly, the most animated detail in either picture is likely the mid-step pivot of the main figure's feet in *New York*, but even this gesture appears steadied. (It is perhaps this more subdued representation, with an emphasis on what might be called "stasis," that has led some writers to call these images "street portraits."<sup>7</sup>) Nevertheless, a consideration of certain precedents for diCorcia's work—many of them mentioned above and in previous chapters—advances our understanding of the ways in which *Streetwork* and *Heads* will, I contend, reveal that more than cinematic staging or lighting has set him apart and resulted in street photographs that attend to and embody the specifics of Times Square.

DiCorcia came to photography in the 1970s, and like much of his generation, he was aware of and sought to react to an established artistic legacy. Several of Walker Evans's photographic strategies mark the most historical work to which diCorcia's practice seems indebted. Evans's termed his earliest forays "snapshots."<sup>8</sup> Made almost exclusively in the street, these photographs helped form Evans's characteristic photographic strategies (observation, handheld cameras) and subjects (social interaction, everyday life).<sup>9</sup> "I go to the street for the education of my eye and for the sustenance that the eye needs—the hungry eye, and my eye is hungry."<sup>10</sup> A contact sheet from 1929 (figure 5.3) indicates the combination of varied views and speed that mark Evans's photography of this period. He took multiple exposures of the same, usually unaware subject(s), while varying the formal composition and/or anticipating changed facial expressions from one frame to the next. His conviction that the street held the greatest of expressive possibilities grew from an appreciation of iconic literary modernists such as Flaubert, Joyce, and Baudelaire,<sup>11</sup> and it informed his decision to

work only night jobs, which would leave him free to wander New York during daylight hours making photographs like *Girl in Fulton Street, New York* and *42nd Street* (figure 5.3).<sup>12</sup> Evans privileged being constantly a part of the mundane, everyday happenings of the city streets. With *Girl in Fulton Street*, Evans struck a balance between physical engagement and emotional distance, creating what a crucial role for viewers of his photographs by directly taking up his place on the sidewalk.<sup>13</sup> Evans's early street photographs, as Mora has posited, successfully capture "certain social relations... between signs and the environment... , [and] render the flux into which the city throws anyone penetrating it."<sup>14</sup> Informed by these early pedestrian experiences, Evans captured well the social relations of the street in his Chicago street photographs of the late 1940s.<sup>15</sup> Before discussing those images, it is necessary to pause at another body of work, one heavily referenced in the diCorcia bibliography: Evans's *Subway Portraits* (figure 5.4).

Taken while riding the New York subway between 1938 and 1941, these photographs stand apart from Evans's other work for their surreptitious quality.<sup>16</sup> With his Contax lens peering out between the buttons of his coat and a shutter release cable held discreetly in his hand, Evans made over six hundred exposures of fellow passengers on the bench directly opposite him in the dimly lit subway cars. He exerted little or no control over the camera angle, compositional framing, lighting, or his subjects.<sup>17</sup> The portraits capture the anonymity, respite, confrontation, and distraction of urban commutes. What remains perplexing is the insistence of a number of scholars—especially among those addressing diCorcia's work—that the *Subway Portraits* are somehow defining examples of street photography or street portraiture. For example, Luc Sante in his introduction to diCorcia's *Heads* catalogue sites only two precedents for diCorcia's *Heads*: Evans's *Subway Portraits* and "those professionals who prowled the streets of major cities roughly from the 1930s to the 1960s, photographing likely-looking

pedestrians, primarily rubes and tourists, and offering to sell them prints.”<sup>18</sup> Setting aside momentarily the question of the street, such comparisons rest on the social typing of photographic subjects; the *Subway Portraits* in particular have thus consistently been seen as a collective portrait, a democratic cross-section, of New York City.<sup>19</sup> This emphasis on social types—as read through their skin tones, facial features, clothing, and grooming—allows a ready connection to diCorcia’s *Heads*, a point to which I will return. But that very similarity is, I contend, reinforced in formal terms by the subjects’ placement within the composition (only head, shoulders, and occasionally chest are ever visible) and of the relative isolation of the figures (which are more easily read for being seen in a dark or shadowy settings).<sup>20</sup> In a caption for the small selection of *Subway Portraits* that appeared in the March 1962 *Harper’s Bazaar*, Evans described his fellow riders: “The guard is down and the mask is off.”<sup>21</sup> For Evans, this sense of relaxation and invisibility, however slight or fugitive, seem to crucially distinguish the subway from the city street, which I would suggest demands vigilance, defensiveness, presence, and presentation.<sup>22</sup> The subway also allows the city’s inhabitants to disengage from the crowd. The city street, conversely, requires its pedestrians to almost constantly navigate the crowd in ways both bodily and visual, as we shall see in diCorcia’s work. Given such pivotal differences between these two urban sites, Evans’s *Subway Portraits* remain less convincing for this author as street photographs than his later Chicago series.

Evans made his *Chicago* photographs (figure 5.5) in 1946 and 1947, and they seem to realize an intention he had declared as early as 1934: “[The] American city is what I’m after.”<sup>23</sup> Metropolitan subjects, whether people in New York or Chicago, could function as representations of the city, especially when photographed in public and as part of the urban flux of city streets. Evans made no attempt to hide his camera while making street photographs in Chicago, though he did continue to utilize the fixed vantage point of his *Subway Portraits*. Presetting the exposure and focal distance

allowed Evans to hold his Rolleiflex against his torso and not to look through the viewfinder before releasing the shutter, thus keeping most passersby oblivious to his camera's activity.<sup>24</sup> Taken during rush hour at an intersection located in the heart of Chicago's downtown State Street shopping area, these pictures include some of the urban contextual information that had been so evocative in Evans's photographs from the 1930s. Lampposts, passing cars, street signs, store signs, and building facade clocks appear against the larger backdrop of a modestly scaled skyscraper, whose uppermost cornice is occasionally glimpsed due to the upward angle afforded by shooting from waist-level. This urban setting mattered greatly for a project which Evans summarized as photographs of "consumer women as they go about their business... [and an u]nappealing woman going by with materialism in their [sic] minds and their arms full of packages."<sup>25</sup> Evans wanted his photographs to record the increasing commercial spectacle of the city, as enacted by female shoppers and as evidenced by the boxes and bags they carry.<sup>26</sup> The shoppers of State Street may be seen from below in Evans's pictures, but they clearly occupy the same city sidewalk as the photographer. Evans's vision of the city, which required him to engage quickly and regularly, created a place from which his viewer could also engage that city. This impacted subsequent generations of photographers, and Evans's attention to the intense commercialism, spectacle, and social space of ever-changing urban streets resurfaces in the work of diCorcia.

A selection of Evans's *Chicago* photographs was displayed at MoMA in 1948. The following year, several were published in *U.S. Camera Annual*. Curator John Szarkowski noted, "they were among the most stimulating pictures of the period to the next-younger generation of American photographers."<sup>27</sup> Unaware of Evans's *Chicago* pictures, Harry Callahan in 1949 and 1950 made a series of close-range portraits on the same downtown Chicago streets (figure 5.6).<sup>28</sup> Callahan replicated aspects of Evans's

street photographs but further emphasized the eye-level experience and social space of the street. Callahan's *Chicago* merits brief discussion before moving on to the artist's later street photographs—particularly those using superimposition and those shot in color—that prove most relevant to diCorcia's work.<sup>29</sup> An interview with Barbaralee Diamonstein addresses the evolution of Callahan's *Chicago* project as well as his parameters for the series:

[BD:] Well, in 1950 you had a very good idea. You knew a place where you wanted to be—on State Street in Chicago. You began a series of photographs of large, close-up views of the heads of passers-by on Chicago streets...

[HC:] I photographed them very close. A long time ago, I tried to photograph people walking down the street in Detroit. I couldn't think of any reason why; I just wanted to photograph them. I thought, I'd take pictures of them holding hands and with their arms around each other, shaking hands, or greeting each other. But it just didn't work for me. So I quit. Then later on I realized that what I really wanted was the people walking down the street lost in thought. They had an entirely different kind of expression. And the way I could do this was to use the telephoto lens, walk myself, and photograph them by setting the camera at four feet with a long lens. When their heads filled up the viewfinder, I snapped the picture.<sup>30</sup>

In the resulting photographs, Callahan overcame technical difficulties and the constant upheavals of motion to yield strikingly immediate, high-contrast descriptions of the women's heads.<sup>31</sup> Demonstrably interested in transforming the familiar—namely, the experience of a bustling sidewalk—into something newly seen, Callahan used a combination of exact repetition (the precise technical parameters he set himself) and spontaneous chance (the mobility of both himself and his subjects within the crowd), a process later paralleled by diCorcia.<sup>32</sup> Whether squared within the frame, captured at an angle, or partially cut off by the composition, Callahan's women appear closely encountered, with little to no visual context of their urban setting.<sup>33</sup> Callahan's vision of the city foregoes both the spatial celebration of skyscrapers and the expression of energy (what a literary scholar called in this work "the thick life"<sup>34</sup>) in favor of one that

lingers on a drab downtown of women shoppers whose only social interactions with each other or the surrounding space is as lone navigators. When the photographs were enlarged to 8 x 10-inch prints (or larger) the women's portrayed psychological distance was encountered by viewers as a physical, face-to-face proximity. In a 1952 MoMA installation, the *Chicago* series was hung in a long row on a gallery wall that was transparent above and below, allowing for sightlines to two life-size photographic enlargements of another artist's full-length views of female pedestrians (figure 5.7). Without horizontal spacing between them and at the approximate height of a viewer's head, the installation underscored that visitors were meant to experience the photographs as though they were passing the women in quick succession on a densely populated city sidewalk.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Callahan continued to photograph urban scenes, occasionally in color, and in images such as *New York*, he capitalized on bright, saturated hues to emphasize the physical and psychological isolation sometimes fostered by pedestrian space (figure 5.8).<sup>36</sup> At the time, Callahan was struggling to reconcile his color representation of the city and his perception of it (in color, naturally). He came to regard color as a highly contemporary means of expression, noting for example, that the era's collective palette had been influenced by color television.<sup>37</sup> Another experiment with street photography reveals Callahan's awareness of the growing mediatization—and mediation—of urban experiences. In the 1960s, he superimposed certain of his street pictures with photographs of advertisements or television screens (figure 5.9).<sup>38</sup> In *Providence*, for example, female pedestrians pause on a street corner while the ethereal image of a female personality hovers over their heads and a male television host addresses her from a building facade to the right of the women. Whether or not the two women are shoppers like the women of Callahan's 1950 *Chicago* series, this picture aptly depicts a public sphere in which figures are constantly

“bombarded by visual images” that dictate “how people should look, dress, think, and live.”<sup>39</sup> *Providence* mimics the looming experience of billboards and other urban advertisements, and it impossibly anticipates the future spectacle of stories-high television screens, like those that appear in diCorcia’s *Streetwork*. Considered alongside his photographs of female shoppers in Chicago, Callahan’s superimposed street photographs attest to his desire to not merely reveal the subject of his photographs—his ongoing representation of the street as a site of commercialism and spectacle—but “to intensify it... to capture a moment that people can’t always see.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, one accomplishment of Callahan’s consistent engagement with the representation of pedestrian experience is the suggestion that it could be rendered, not merely observed.

Ten years after Callahan made *Providence*, diCorcia was accepted to Yale University’s MFA program in photography, which was then chaired by a Winogrand acolyte, Todd Papageorge. DiCorcia’s Yale courses introduced him to modern documentary and street photographs, especially those by Evans and Winogrand.<sup>41</sup> Like many photographers of his generation, diCorcia initially turned resolutely away from this tradition. In his 2007 retrospective exhibition catalogue on diCorcia, Bennett Simpson noted, “This move can be seen in broad cultural terms that rhyme with the ‘personal is the political’ attitudes of the 1970s, a shirking of big gestures, abstract ideals, and the confidence that the meaning of America could be found by wandering its streets.”<sup>42</sup>

In interviews diCorcia has elaborated on this reaction to the then-ubiquitous celebration of Winogrand’s photographic process—a process, I contend, that written analyses of street photography have maintained and reified with their over-attention to the serendipitous, momentary shot.

The tradition of photography when I was [a] kid was an image that was supposed to epitomize the peak of the moment. It was about some transformative instant. A good photographer was one who was perceptive or fast enough to catch it. And I made a really conscious effort (for one, because I was never good at doing that) to develop a way of working

where I wouldn't have to. I am not reacting to an instantaneous event. I am either making the event happen or choosing among one of many events that occur every day that are not that dramatic.<sup>43</sup>

One reason I set up photographs is that I like to see the world as the world is. I don't want to see it as a photograph. I don't like to imagine the world as a photograph or a film. When I was in school [at Yale], they kind of force you to do that, because you're forced to produce.<sup>44</sup>

I was gravitating toward film at that time, and it seemed to me that the power to affect people always involved some psychological engagement. I find it hard to have a psychological engagement with a conceptual joke illustrated by a photograph.<sup>45</sup>

This desire to psychologically engage viewers with his photographs plays a key role in the work diCorcia later made in Times Square.<sup>46</sup> DiCorcia's instinct to control aspects of the picture-making process may seem like an opposition to his interest in everyday subject matter, but as Simpson encapsulated: "The pertinent questions to ask of diCorcia's photographs are thus not 'is that real?' or 'how did he do that?' but, in essence, 'what is being depicted—and why?'... [W]hat is the tenor of the reality these works depict?"<sup>47</sup> These questions will resurface in this chapter, but an understanding of diCorcia's complicating of street photography through both his process and his engagement with the specifics of site will only enhance their answers.

If photography has delighted in the clear division between "finders" and "makers," as one art historian has put it, then diCorcia's work has time and again merged the decisive moment of street photography with the technical control of a photo studio, collapsing the boundary between the set-up image and the spontaneous one.<sup>48</sup> Even when photographing transitory or fast-moving subjects, diCorcia did not capitalize on photography's technical ability to record these people on a whim in the manner of the canonical Winogrand. Quite unlike Winogrand or the precedents discussed in this chapter, diCorcia did not share the uncontrolled, unpredictable space of the sidewalk with his subjects. For him, that is a space to be planned and prepared for, similar to how Cartier-Bresson had described compositional planning in *The Decisive Moment*, but his

presence is often not indicated at all. This has proved troubling to those wishing to pinpoint the realism in diCorcia's work; Grundberg's "realist conventions" requires an eye-to-eye (or camera-to-subject) relationship, and a firm planting of photographer/viewer on the street, qualities that diCorcia often disavowed.<sup>49</sup> Such an outlook, however, privileges a sense of authorial presence over any role for or effect on the viewers. For his part, diCorcia has recalled:

One of the reasons I started setting the picture up was I was bad at the traditional way of making an image, which was to seek it out. I also felt that the big art school term 'authorship' should be a part of what a photographer does. I found it hard creating any sense of authorship while attempting to respond to the world instantaneously. By merely reacting to the world, it's hard to give a photograph a form more complex than a mere cipher.<sup>50</sup>

Determinations such as Grundberg's that diCorcia's photographs ultimately refuse the realist conventions for street photography to be an instantaneous cipher and thus overlook those elements—e.g. an incomplete sense of narrative, whether by established Winogrand or diCorcia—that so actively engage viewers of street photography. DiCorcia has asserted that, in his pictures, "the plot, as such, is generated by the realities at play at the moment, which include subjective states, objective observations, the interpretation of the sociopolitical dynamics at work AND the desire to give all these elements unprejudiced freedom from the predispositions that photography naturally creates."<sup>51</sup> DiCorcia's pictures present a suggestion of narrative that may interpellate viewers even as the process of their making refuses their reduction to realist records informed by the photographer's mobility, intuition, and spontaneity on city streets.

### **DiCorcia's Process in the City**

Transitioning from the historical precedents of diCorcia's street photographs to his process of making them, two commentaries from 2001 on the *Heads* series are instructive and worth quoting at length. One was written to accompany their initial

publication, the other in response to their first public exhibition, but both locate them within diCorcia's oeuvre and, particularly, in relation to *Streetwork*.

What began as a refreshing slap in the face of photographic realism (thanks, we needed that) has never lost its theatrical polish. But, as diCorcia's subjects gradually mutated from the intimate to the anonymous, from family and friends to Hollywood hustlers to passersby who rarely even notice that they have been photographed, his fictions improbably absorbed the weight and ambition of what some people still insist on describing as photography's more innocent documentary past. Improbably, but not unintentionally. Looking at these pictures, you might notice that Walker Evans and Harry Callahan have been here before. DiCorcia, who has a firm grasp of photographic history, noticed it too. He went ahead anyway, possibly because he was approaching the territory from a different direction and so figured that it might look different to him—and it does.<sup>52</sup>

This text, Galassi's introductory comments to a portfolio previewing *Heads* in the summer 2001 issue of *Artforum*, charts diCorcia's artistic developments across projects prior to *Heads* while also naming some of those historical precedents already addressed in this chapter. Galassi labeled diCorcia's photographs "fictions," but unlike Grundberg, Galassi proposed their relationship to documentary realism as one more complex than simple refusal.

Another text, Michael Kimmelman's review of *Heads* at PaceWildenstein Gallery in Chelsea on September 6, 2001, provides a fairly typical, if more detailed, description of the series, comparing it by name to *Streetwork*:<sup>53</sup>

Since the mid-1990's Mr. diCorcia has helped to redefine the tradition of street photography (Walker Evans's subways pictures, etc.) Nearly a decade ago he began photographing strangers caught in his strobe light. The 'Streetwork' series turned pedestrians into unsuspecting performers and the sidewalks along places like Sunset Boulevard, and in Tokyo and Paris, into ad-hoc movie sets, the strobes picking passers-by [*sic*] out of the crowds the way spotlights isolate actors onstage. The lights gave their gestures a sudden, baroque gravity and made everything around them seem contrived and weirdly portentous. For the new photographs a strobe was affixed to scaffolding in Times Square; Mr. diCorcia stood farther away than before, using a longer lens. The result: crisp and stark portraits picked out of murky blackness—just heads, no longer cityscapes, the surroundings now blocked by the scaffolding. They are simpler images and more intimate, the paradox of standing farther away being enhanced intimacy.<sup>54</sup>

As Kimmelman's review suggests, both *Heads* and *Streetwork* rely on diCorcia's already well-developed process of constraints: framing the scene, determining the elements of the composition, and planning ahead of the moment of exposure how much of the final photograph would look. Leaving one element of the photographs to chance in *Streetwork*—the appearance of passersby—was a new departure from these constraints and became the dominant element in *Heads*.

DiCorcia's newfound openness to chance dates to 1993, when he made the earliest of his *Streetwork* photographs: "After many years of controlling every aspect of the shoot, of arranging the objects and even deciding which direction the subjects looked, I wanted to see what would happen when dealing with chaotic situations and subjects you can't control.... I was interested in the dramatic possibilities of chance."<sup>55</sup> Within these chaotic situations, diCorcia still maintained certain constraints or "givens," decisions that helped construct and compose—or, *pace* Ansel Adams, pre-visualize—what might occur in front of the camera. These advance decisions included camera placement and angle, additional lighting, and framing the view. (Of course, these decisions about a certain combination of photographic elements precede another one: when to press the shutter release.) "I created the circumstances, but after that, I was at the mercy of whoever passed by."<sup>56</sup> This, for diCorcia, was the appeal of making pictures in the city streets. "Usually I have to focus on one central person or area and hopefully other things fall into place even out of your view. There is a certain energy that exists on the street and you can tell when there is a lot of it and that is to your advantage."<sup>57</sup> Knowing this, diCorcia located his camera in a propitious site for capitalizing on this energy, adjusting the point of view to include those aspects of the urban scene likely to provide the best context for the presence of his potential pedestrian subjects. Quite often, on or approaching street corners proved to be the most favorable location. In

*Streetwork* this location is evident from the white stripes of a pedestrian crosswalk (figure 5.10) or from the positioning of traffic signals and street signs (figure 5.11). Though less immediately evident, the *Heads* photographs were also often taken near street corners, a matter to which I will return. *Streetwork* and *Heads* mix direction and chance, fact and fiction, realism and drama, control and passivity; only the most astute of commentators has embraced this admixture as street photography, thereby disregarding, as Luc Sante claimed, the genre's "ostensible promise"—"to serve up truth, unvarnished, unprocessed, and unpremeditated."<sup>58</sup>

*Streetwork* was diCorcia's first body of work made exclusively on city streets, and he has commented on the specific appeal of searching there for "unfamiliar realities."<sup>59</sup>

When I was doing the street pictures, just being in those cities—Tokyo, Paris, Rio—finding a place within them that was usable, waiting, and trying to be unobtrusive—all things were out of my control.... That was something that brought me back to working on the streets. When I was just doing street pictures you could not quite concentrate on everything that was going around but you knew when something was happening.... If not (in this particular technique), people will just stare at you. One person or a couple see a man with lights and the camera will get the staring look. Whereas when things get chaotic nobody notices you. I almost had to have that. So it defined the places I could work and that project one way or another. I worked on it one way or another almost four years.<sup>60</sup>

Notably, in the same interview, diCorcia distinguished that "with the headshots you had no idea what was good."<sup>61</sup> This further uncertainty associated with *Heads* resulted from key shifts in his photographic "givens." *Heads* was shot in Times Square over the course of two years on a heavily trafficked stretch of sidewalk that was covered by industrial scaffolding.<sup>62</sup> DiCorcia planned the compositions with Polaroids, some of which have now been published and exhibited in their own right and to which I will return later.<sup>63</sup> DiCorcia's camera, outfitted with a telephoto lens and mounted on a tripod, was positioned well out of view, twenty feet or more away from the framed spot. Every composition was limited to the darkened passageway—seemingly omitting all signs of the bustling city—and afforded no more than a chest-up view of the passersby.

DiCorcia's very restricted depth of field rendered in sharp focus only a particular portion of what was already a limited slice of the pedestrian flow.

I was basically totally at the mercy of serendipity. There were so many things that could go wrong technically that would eliminate a good portion of the images.... [Passersby] had to be in a certain spot in a certain moment or it wouldn't work. I couldn't actually see them when I took the picture. (You can't look through the camera since people in Times Square passed too fast.) So I had a mark on the ground and I knew that if people were on that mark the flash would hit them. They might be too tall or too short but that's where they'd be in focus.<sup>64</sup>

In front of or behind the calculated mark on the sidewalk corresponding to the restricted focal plane, everyone and everything fell into soft focus and receded into the darkness of the scaffolding's shadows.<sup>65</sup> In *Heads #23*, a young man in a yellow shirt is only dimly visible behind two girls who have hit diCorcia's sidewalk mark walking shoulder-to-shoulder (figure 5.12). In *Heads #06*, although the young man in a sports jersey is close enough to the mark to receive a good deal of illumination, his features and figure remain blurred, while those of a man behind him are lit and crisp (figure 5.13).

Lighting has too often been simplified as diCorcia's single, identifying modification of canonical street photography. Some examples of this rhetoric: "The unrepeatable spontaneity of the classic street shot was preserved, but the lighting utterly transformed the scenario.;" "Even if diCorcia's work sometimes possesses a certain immediacy... , it is still fundamentally different from most documentary 'street photography.' One should note, above all, his distinctive lighting technique, which involves ambient natural light as well as carefully placed flashes.;" "His theatrical use of directional lighting soon became instantly recognizable as the key visual signature of his work."<sup>66</sup> In both *Streetwork* and *Heads*, diCorcia hid electronic flashes or strobes—synched to his camera via a radio signal remote control device known as a radio slave—suspending them above city sidewalks. The light from these flashes appears only for a fraction of a second, rhyming with the rapid shutter release of diCorcia's camera. Few, if

any, of the subjects in the *Heads* pictures ever knew a photograph had been taken.<sup>67</sup>

The intensity of the flash not only picked out certain elements or figures in the picture, it simultaneously enhanced or created strong shadows in other portions of the image. The highlighting of the lit elements or figures sometimes corresponds with a particularly saturated hue (e.g. the rich mustard and russet of a woman's jacket and backpack [figure 5.11]) or a refinement of detail (e.g. the legibility of the foreground figures' jacket seams [figure 5.2]), but it always sets those elements or figures apart from their surround. The combination of artificial and natural light can appear "somewhat irrational," as diCorcia has described it.<sup>68</sup> The direction of the light source and the location of shadows can quickly lay bare this irrationality, as when, for example, a prewar building facade is aglow with direct sunlight, the source of which must be to the right of the composition, but the highlights on the socks, backpack, and hair of the woman in the suede jacket indicate a light source directly overhead, one originating slightly to the left of the composition (figure 5.11).<sup>69</sup> Likewise, with *Heads* #23, the lighting of the left sides of the two girls' faces is visually out of sync with the lighting of the right sides of the faces of those just behind them in the crowd (figure 5.12). DiCorcia's strobe lighting of the sidewalks also allows his subjects to take on the intense coloring and lighting displayed in the advertisements that surround them. A pedestrian's strobe-lit strawberry blond hair has the punch of a *Lion King* billboard (figure 5.10), and a spotlighting effect on an embracing couple competes with the hot white of a movie billboard, the uplights along its base clearly visible from this angle (figure 5.11).

The irrationality of lighting in diCorcia's photographs has led some critics and scholars to invoke cinema.<sup>70</sup> Others have relied on fashion, and still others have referenced Old Master painting.<sup>71</sup> And many have discussed the overhead origin of the lighting in religious tones: "The lighting suggests organ or Theremin music, suggests thunder and lightning, suggests... the inspection tour of a deity."<sup>72</sup> (The artist himself

remains uninterested in such interpretations, saying flatly that he does not consider his lighting “to be metaphorical.”<sup>73</sup>) In spite of the emphasis placed on diCorcia’s lighting, even among those who have labeled it “dramatic” or “theatrical,”<sup>74</sup> none has remarked on the very fact that the pictures were made in a theater district, specifically that of Times Square, perhaps the only section of New York City so identified with lighting as to have mandatory levels of it. I suggest that such particulars as diCorcia’s chosen location—which I will address at length later in this chapter—inform his lighting and matter greatly to the resulting photographs. Indeed, the irrationality of his lighting seems to have a ready and proximate parallel in theater lighting, which balances spotlighting of individuals with more general stage illumination. To accomplish this, light sources are formulaically deployed to provide various intensities of light to top, back, front, and sides of all areas of the stage.<sup>75</sup> Theatrical lighting systems yield shadows and highlights that would be contradictory or impossible in natural outdoor lighting, the very same incongruity apparent in diCorcia’s *Streetwork* but altogether unremarked upon in discussions of his lighting technique.

In so emphasizing the lighting or declaring it diCorcia’s visual “signature,” critics and scholars have elided specific differences in the lighting’s deployment and effect within the two projects. Most obviously, daylight suffuses the *Streetwork* photographs and disappears altogether in those from *Heads*. Conversely, the contractor’s scaffolding that was responsible for the latter (and for housing the strobe lights) never factored into the creation of the earlier body of work. There, diCorcia’s synched flashes went off “open-air” from their suspended positions on lampposts, traffic signal poles, and street signs. Significantly, then, in *Streetwork*, the lit pedestrians are given the emphasis that everywhere around them is accorded to signs, glass, advertisements, corporate logos, and billboards. DiCorcia compels us to see a romantic couple on the corner even as Times Square itself visually gives over the intersection to neon lights, billboards, and the

Disney flagship store (the *EY* of its branded logo visible just above their heads) (figure 5.11). Likewise, the strobes highlight the gestures of those moving through the Times Square crowd as well as the postures of those simply taking in the naturally lit chockablock signage lining the building facades, multistory advertisements discernible as the street recedes in the composition. In contrast, the *Heads* photographs portray pedestrians moving through a space that initially reads as complete darkness, a void that has subsumed the urban structures and signage so evident in *Streetwork*. No billboards, neon logos, or even scaffolding emerges from the shadowy blacks in *Heads*. The lighting in this series instead works against quick or easy recognition of the figures as passersby on a city sidewalk, a point to which I will return.

In both *Streetwork* and *Heads*, diCorcia planned and executed only horizontal compositions. (To be sure, his careful blocking out of elements within that horizontal frame is more legible in *Streetwork*, where the city's fixed horizons and the verticals of buildings' or billboards' edges are squared to the photographic frame.) The consistent horizontality of the pictures—particularly when coupled with the effects of his lighting—has, as mentioned, led to many an invocation of cinema's poise and drama. Indeed, diCorcia had once gravitated toward filmmaking, and his graduate thesis analyzed two distinct styles of filmmaking. Of the two styles, he was decidedly more influenced by the one that allowed the film's point of view to seem so omniscient as to minimize any sense of authorial presence.<sup>76</sup> As already discussed, diCorcia wanted this non-authorial point of view, and the absence of an eye-to-camera point of view (and thus an eye-to-eye relationship to the subject) necessarily sets diCorcia apart from most preceding street photographers.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps more remarkable, diCorcia did not even look through the camera's viewfinder when taking the *Streetwork* and *Heads* photographs. Instead, he watched possible subjects pass through the framed scene, always with his finger on the shutter release. This leaves little question that the planning of the edges of his frame

were far more deliberate than whatever might fill its center and far more constructed than the edges of point-and-shoot Winogrand photographs or even than those of Callahan's composed-by-chance shoppers. DiCorcia thus intended for the right edge of a *Lion King* billboard to nearly but not quite align with the right edge of his frame, and he also ensured that the buildings opposite the billboard have merely a sliver of presence at the left edge of his frame (figure 5.10). What diCorcia could not imagine was the way two male pedestrians in tan coats would move their arms simultaneously and so similarly. This pictorial echo is one of those "highly tangential incidents," as diCorcia called them, and of which he often "was not even aware" while watching the street from alongside his camera. In *Heads* both the cloak of the scaffolding and the slightly downward view of his camera allowed him to "kind of disappear."<sup>78</sup> DiCorcia has varied the presence of the figures within the photographic frame: in the former series, more of the composition is given over to the urban surroundings, and the figures occupy multiple places in the horizontal register; in the latter, they more fully fill the composition, and they more often appear horizontally centered in the frame.

Crucially, diCorcia never engaged any of the passersby he photographed. Without the cloak of scaffolding, diCorcia said that most people pictured in *Streetwork* did not know they were being photographed so much as they knew he was taking a photograph.<sup>79</sup> In part, this accurately reflects the result in *Streetwork*, pictures dominated as much by the human subjects as by the built environment of the streets of Times Square. "The sky, suggestive of an 'outside' appears jostled away by billboards and awnings competing for space on surrounding facades. Hulks of office buildings, clung to by fire escapes and scaffolds, interpose like giant ships [figures 5.10 and 5.11]."<sup>80</sup> I want to propose that *Heads*, too, reflects this balance between subject and the highly specific urban context of Times Square, even when the latter is rendered more opaque. Times Square does not merely appear in both these projects; it fundamentally informs them.

Always and already a culturally loaded urban site, Times Square was in fact undergoing radical changes at precisely the time that diCorcia was making *Streetwork* and *Heads*.

### **Spectaculars, Sex, and Revitalization in Times Square**

Many people can conjure an image of Times Square, whether from television coverage of the area's New Year's Eve celebration or tourist postcards or its iconic presence in so many films. It is arguably the preeminent, mythic American incarnation of urban experience, if a fairly extreme or spectacular one. Times Square has drawn some of the largest historical public gatherings and has offered the kind of entertainment that has long gone hand-in-hand with commercial entrepreneurship and consumer marketing. Always and already understood in symbolic terms, fantasy has thus entwined itself in most Times Square enterprises, and the square has fostered dreams (or illusions) of fulfillment and freedom, community and anonymity, pleasure and consumption, deviance and familiarity. All this makes Times Square exemplary of the negotiation between spectacular urban fantasies and a functioning urban space, which is never fixed or consistent. Both physical and semiotic changes in Times Square have been the result of complex political, social, and economical interactions—the subject of whole books—but some sense of this will prove useful in contextualizing diCorcia's New York street photographs, which were made both during and following a crucial push in the area's "revitalization." I do not maintain that previous versions of Times Square were better or worse than those photographed by diCorcia. (Author James Traub has rightly noted some of the pitfalls of nostalgia for "a lost idea of urbanness, or of urbanity—for a time, before the advent of television and the suburbs, and before riots and drug wars, when everyone knew that city life was the best life of all."<sup>81</sup>) Instead, the versions of Times Square encountered in diCorcia's photographs are specific to that location and as street photographs comment on the social space of one of America's central urban sites.

Ever since the opening of the Times Tower and the IRT subway... in the winter of 1904–05, Times Square has been a remarkable environment. With its huge crowds, multiple banks of light, layers of enormous signs, this place has been exceptional, maybe even unique, in its physical density.... In its century of life, it has taken one of the primal urban experiences—being in the midst of a physical and semiotic overflow, feeling the flow all over you—and concentrated it and focused it and sped it up and blown it up. The signature experience of being there is being surrounded by too many in the midst of too much.<sup>82</sup>

Formed by the intersection of 42nd Street on an East-West axis, Seventh Avenue on a North-South axis, and Broadway as the primary diagonal exception to the grid, Times Square has long played a critical role in the city's commercial and technological development, partly because Broadway's march from downtown to the Upper West Side is a key transportation route for navigating the city. Broadway was the first street to devote itself exclusively to commerce, eliminating residential buildings and, likely for this reason, was the first street to enjoy amenities such as gas and then electric lights.<sup>83</sup>

By 1904 the area boasted an ever-increasing number of theaters, restaurants, music halls, and other places of entertainment. The *Times*' owner and publisher, Adolph Ochs, celebrated New Year's with a brilliant public relations stunt: an outdoor party with a fireworks show. An estimated 200,000 people crowded around the new Times Tower, transforming the square into the place for New Yorkers to gather for future celebrations, from election results to World Series victories.<sup>84</sup> "Those vast crowds were making Times Square radically different from any of its predecessors—more crowded, more turbulent and volatile, more democratic."<sup>85</sup> Outside New York City, the square was "rapidly becoming known as the crossroads of the world."<sup>86</sup> Moreover, Times Square's combination of urban geography, real estate investment, and public transit spawned a new visual environment.

The lighted sign came to Times Square in 1905, forever transforming an already lively, dense commercial landscape and quickly becoming the square's image to the world of "a city of night where the drumbeat of commerce never relents and the lights

never go out.”<sup>87</sup> In his treatise “Art and Advertising Joined by Electricity,” O. J. Gude, the lighted sign’s enthusiastic supporter, wrote: “Practically all other advertising media depend upon the willingness or even cooperation of the reader for the absorption of the advertiser’s story, but the outdoor advertising sign asks no voluntary acquiescence from any reader.”<sup>88</sup> Times Square’s unique thoroughfare offered decidedly more viewers, and its triangular intersection created an ideal nexus for lighted signs, with sightlines unobstructed in multiple directions. Inventive in their design, enormous in their scale, and powerful in their luminosity, these signs commanded such a presence that Gude coined a new term to better describe them: “spectaculars.”<sup>89</sup> By the 1910s, spectaculars had come to dominate the visual environment. Stacked atop one another on theater building facades and soaring up from the rooftops overhead, their commercial imagery, varied typefaces, and glowing colors created a new visual noise that mirrored the cacophony in the streets below (figure 5.14). After nightfall, Times Square’s blazing and flickering glow underscored its identity as a unique and unequalled urban gathering place.

In the following decade, both New York City’s and Times Square’s centrality to American cultural and economic life was solidified by the widespread success of the Broadway musical.<sup>90</sup> If the spectaculars bespoke (and capitalized on) a mass audience, the Broadway musical and the increasing appeal of movies during the 1920s signaled decisively that mass entertainment reigned in Times Square. Both an early photographic postcard of the “Great White Way” (figure 5.14) and Evans’s *Broadway Composition* (figure 5.15) respond to the predominant visual experience of the square: the glowing mediation of mass culture through the words and lights of commercialism. By 1929 this urban experience greeted over 250,000 people in Times Square nightly.<sup>91</sup> But in 1937 the New Amsterdam Theater presented *Othello*, the last piece of classical theater to open on Broadway for the next forty years.<sup>92</sup>

Times Square reasserted its identity as America's preeminent public square on V-J Day, August 14, 1945. That evening, news of the eagerly anticipated surrender scrolled across the Times Tower before which half a million people were waiting. People continued to flock to the square, and within three hours, a mass of two million formed the largest crowd in Times Square history. Visually, that evening's celebration marked the first time in four years that the square's marquees and spectacles had been illuminated. A newspaper reported the next day on the experience: "Men and women embraced—there were no strangers in New York yesterday."<sup>93</sup> Indeed, there is likely no image more iconic of Times Square, and certainly none that conveys so well the impact of the news and air of jubilation, than Alfred Eisenstadt's photograph taken for *Life* magazine of a sailor kissing a nurse (figure 5.16).<sup>94</sup> Beyond the embrace, this photograph highlights—especially to those not there—the crowds, the spectacle, the celebration that had once again swirled in New York City's iconic public square.

A 1960 *New York Times* front-page article headlined "Life on W. 42d St.: A Study in Decay" is more characteristic of Times Square's representation in the decades following World War II.<sup>95</sup> Urban flight from the city to the suburbs, by residents and businesses alike, impacted many neighborhoods. Sex and drugs were visibly for sale in all parts of Times Square. Long the sex capital of the city, the square by the 1960s had also become the center of gay male prostitution, also known as hustling.<sup>96</sup> Its streets were lined with peep shows and strip clubs, stores for adult videos and dirty magazines, massage parlors and porn theaters.<sup>97</sup> Times Square was seen as a crime-ridden twilight zone in the city, most consistently populated by prostitutes, drug addicts, those seeking sex-for-hire, and alcoholics.<sup>98</sup> Rhetoric about the deviant culture of the square intensified, and by 1981 the *New York Times* was no longer discussing its decline but labeling it "depraved."<sup>99</sup> These and other claims fueled the city's plans to "clean up" the

area, which chiefly meant replacing the sex industry with a more acceptable one. Times Square's revitalization hinged on its commercial redevelopment.

In 1978 the Ford Foundation commissioned a study on Times Square's revitalization, which charted specifically the area's violence as well as its sex market, and drug trade. The study concluded that rises in these four categories prefigured a decline in Times Square's other offerings and contended that "eliminating these businesses through changing the use of the street should cause the undesirable population to leave on its own."<sup>100</sup> The Ford Foundation's study focused on Times Square not only for its so-called decline but also for its symbolic status within the city. The very same impulse informed Mayor Abraham Beame's 1974 choice of Times Square as his target site for fighting crime. He said at a press conference about this initiative: "I want the people of the City of New York to know that I have picked Times Square as a first target because of its high visibility and because of its role as a symbol of New York."<sup>101</sup> The first official plan for that transformation dates to the 1970s, when "City at 42nd Street" was proposed but then rejected by the decade's close. Despite this plan's failure (as well as that of subsequent plans), "City at 42nd Street" gave popular force to the concept that only dramatic change would produce the desired effects, as the Ford Foundation study had predicted.<sup>102</sup> The revitalization of Times Square became the subject of a series of debates and choices about the nature of that change and of New York City, coalescing in the 42nd Street Development Project's plan of the 1990s.

At that time, along a two-block stretch of Seventh Avenue, Eighth Avenue between 44th and 51st streets, and much of the same distance on Broadway, most of the theaters showed exclusively pornographic films or functioned as sex spaces.<sup>103</sup> One such theater, the Adonis, was located at the southwest corner of Eighth Avenue and 44th Street and came under scrutiny. Municipal health inspectors reported "high-risk sexual activities" among patrons of the gay pornographic movie house, without "any

attempts to monitor or control them.”<sup>104</sup> Forced to close its doors, the theater reopened in 1994 as the Playpen, a multifunctioning heterosexual sex destination, the front of which served as a sex-toy and adult video store, the back rooms of which housed peep booths and “live girls.”<sup>105</sup> The transformation of the Adonis into the Playpen coincided exactly with another transformation that was unfolding less than two blocks away.

Located on 42nd Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues, the New Amsterdam Theatre was calculated to be the only theater large enough to ensure a profit once the costs of its renovation were taken into account by its would-be owner, Michael Eisner, CEO of the Walt Disney Company.<sup>106</sup> Eisner toured the theater as early as 1992, considering the venue for a newly conceived product line: Broadway musicals based on Disney’s hit movies.<sup>107</sup> *The Lion King* opened at a fully restored New Amsterdam in November 1997, but only after a lengthy negotiation between Eisner and representatives of the city (figure 5.10). The deal signed on New Year’s Eve 1994 brought together theater, commerce, and sex. The city agreed to pay for the New Amsterdam’s entire renovation, secure two major entertainment companies to lease a good portion of the same block of 42nd Street, and eliminate more than twenty sex shops in the immediate vicinity.<sup>108</sup> In anticipation of just such a deal, the 42nd Street Development Project had released a plan in 1993, declaring its desire to celebrate the “thrillingly unpredictable daily drama” of the area as much as its commercialism.<sup>109</sup> Traub elaborated: “The idea that there need be no contradiction between the drama of the streets and the ring of the cash register, between ‘authenticity,’ and the marketplace, was itself something of a revelation, at least in the debate over the future of 42nd Street.”<sup>110</sup> To carry out this idea, the plan dictated the visual character of all new retail enterprises (e.g. mandatory square footage of lighted signage) as well as those enterprises’ practical interface with pedestrians (e.g. retail hours extended well into the night).<sup>111</sup> Noticeably absent from the

42nd Street Development Project's rhetoric and mandates was one of Eisner's three demands of the city: the elimination of sex shops and porn theaters from Times Square.

Rudy Giuliani won his 1993 mayoral bid on a platform that had been rich with rhetoric about enhancing the quality of life in New York City. This not only involved dramatically increasing the police force and enforcing minor infractions such as public drinking, it also encompassed an offensive against pornography.<sup>112</sup> Times Square felt the impact, and Giuliani's policies ensured the sex-related stipulation of Eisner's New Amsterdam deal would be met. Seen from one perspective, the "new zoning ordinances closed down and scattered the warren of X-rated video stores, movie theaters, and peep shows; aggressive policing cleared the sidewalks, side streets, and parking lots of most of the less seemly goings-on."<sup>113</sup> From another, the mandate to carry sixty percent "family friendly" video inventory made the already small business of running an adult video store so much less profitable that all were forced to sell to the developers waiting to buy.<sup>114</sup> This perspective counters the generalist historians' acknowledgment of the debates about Times Square's revitalization while leaving undiscussed the claims about its effect on gay men and others served by the sex and drug trade of the district. In his 1999 book *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, novelist and critic Samuel R. Delany offered this crucial and different perspective from the likes of Traub.

Demolition of the targeted businesses began in 1995; in October of that year, those remaining were given one year to vacate their space.<sup>115</sup> As these stores closed, the 42nd Street Development Project painted the grates over former storefronts a rainbow of hues. Simultaneously, plans finalized for the four major office towers that would be constructed in place of these businesses. (Even those that were not demolished were repurposed, so that restaurants appeared in former gay sex spaces like the Capri and Eros.<sup>116</sup>) With their initiation in 1995 and implementation over the next several years, these changes ensured a de facto abolition of gay culture in Times

Square. Practices such as hustling and drug dealing, which are less bound to time spent in particular spaces than to transitory encounters in almost any possible location, proved harder to eliminate. Logistically, such momentary actions may never be able to be fully regulated or policed; alternately, these actions cater to human desires that may never be fully restrained or, for that matter, fulfilled by the alluringly commercial displays in the shop windows of the new Times Square's businesses.<sup>117</sup> Regardless of explanation, the purpose for and experience of the area shifted distinctly away from sex, fantasy, and private entertainment toward commercialism, consumption, and desexualized family entertainment.

New York City gave Disney, the first and most widely known leaseholder in the 42nd Street Development Project, its desired neighbors in the tourist shops, headquarters of global corporations, and musical theaters. The aforementioned office towers at 42nd and Broadway, the heart of Times Square, were anchored by leases from Reuters and Condé Nast; other corporate tenants soon filled buildings in the immediate area, including Warner Brothers, Viacom, Gap, and Barnes and Noble. Nearby theaters were restored, following the New Amsterdam's example.<sup>118</sup> Not a part of the deal between Disney and the city, these leases were the result of market demand following the 42nd Street Development Project's plan for the main intersection. The street-level architectural elements of all new development in the area still had to comply with the project's determinations about what would maintain the "character" of Times Square. For example, requisite glass facades would ensure transparency and reflect the lights of the surrounding, also requisite, advertisements. Indeed, the illumination of advertising signs was mandatory, in deference to the spectacular that had so defined the district. "A block long building would thus have to provide at least 16,800 square feet of lighted signage, or about as much as already existed on Times Square's brightest blocks."<sup>119</sup> To quantify the light from such signage, readings were made from existing

signs, dubbed “light unit Times Square” or LUTS, and they became the lowest permissible light level for the area. In many cases over the past dozen years, oversized video screens have helped meet the LUTS requirement. Digital imagery and computer programming have allowed for more numerous, even competing, lighted signs that could appear on the same screen, all of them fleeting and instantly replaceable.<sup>120</sup> Today, these large screens, along with vinyl billboards, cover nearly every building in Times Square whose surfaces are legible from the sidewalks below.

In 1997, just a few years after the initial demolition of the porn theaters and sex shops, Michael Kimmelman described Times Square as a nexus of simulacra: “In the new Information-Age Times Square, where brand names and corporate logos are rewriting the skyline, you can relax in an ‘authentic’ Irish pub before seeing your portfolio on a multistory stock ticker or firing off a few rounds at a virtual-reality shooting gallery. It’s an eclectic, electric streetscape of intense simulation: a hyperreality.”<sup>121</sup>

Kimmelman’s description of the early years of Times Square’s revitalization comes from a photo essay in the *New York Times Magazine*, commissioned from nineteen contemporary photographers and dedicated to the “new” Times Square (figure 5.17). One photographer, Lars Tunbjork, returned to the location of his 1987 mugging and became enthralled with the visual markers of the area’s redevelopment (figure 5.18). In particular, Tunbjork found the painting of the grated storefronts of former pornographic theaters and sex shops a “remarkable effort to make these empty buildings look nice,” despite their imminent demolition.<sup>122</sup> Kimmelman presented diCorcia’s photograph *New York* (figure 5.11) as an update of the famous Eisenstadt photograph (figure 5.16), noting that diCorcia’s image relies on an actual chance occurrence that looked fake, rather than vice versa as was the case with Eisenstadt’s image.<sup>123</sup> More thoroughly than Kimmelman acknowledged or than subsequent authors ever realized, diCorcia’s *New*

*York* understood and accounted for the particularity of Times Square and the centrality of sex, desire, and fantasy—as well as the implications of revitalization—to its identity.

In 1996, three years before *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, Samuel R. Delany published “X-X-X Marks the Spot” in *Out*, a leading magazine of gay culture. Four diCorcia photographs accompanied the article. Like the picture that Lars Tunbjork would make the following year on assignment for the *New York Times Magazine*, diCorcia’s photograph on the article’s first page focuses on the bright, shuttered storefronts of Times Square (figure 5.19). DiCorcia framed the image so that a sequence of the colorful painted grates recedes, a seemingly endless row of shuttered storefronts matched by the broad but empty sidewalk that fills the foreground of the picture. In the upper-right corner of the image, a shadowed overhang juts obliquely into view. That structure and the color pattern of the grated storefronts also appear in the background of diCorcia’s *New York* (figures 5.1 and 5.20): the structure is clearly the marquee of the boarded-up harem on 42nd Street, and the grates are affirmed as a colorful front to a desolate urban area.<sup>124</sup> Other diCorcia photographs included in the Delany article portray those people who would be soon directly effected by the changes to Times Square, like the male prostitutes whose livelihood was threatened by “[m]ore police, and less money” (figure 5.21).<sup>125</sup> Delany’s text reports that hustler Darrell Deckard turns tricks for \$40 or \$50; he was paid less than that for the photograph.<sup>126</sup> This is notable insofar as it seems a reprise of diCorcia’s *Hustlers* series, in which the photographer paid each sitter his going rate for sex (figure 5.22). DiCorcia’s choice to photograph *Hustlers* exclusively within the culturally loaded site of Hollywood—picturing its eponymous Boulevard and Walk of Fame as well as its motels and fast-food drive-thrus—is a compelling parallel to his attention to Times Square at a time of the iconic area’s upheaval and revitalization.<sup>127</sup>

Delany’s *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* features five previously unpublished diCorcia pictures, including views of pornographic theaters and their

marquees, photographed as they would be seen, respectively, from across the street or the sidewalk below (figures 5.23 and 5.24).<sup>128</sup> As much as Delany's book, these photographs record the sex spaces used by men along 42nd Street in the years of impending revitalization. By the time of the book's publication in 1999, for example, Eros I had been transformed into a restaurant, so that diCorcia's circa 1996 photographs for Delany represent an urban landscape that had already ceased to exist.<sup>129</sup>

Bennett Simpson is the only scholar who has indicated an awareness of diCorcia's other Times Square photographs during this period. He addressed Delany's publication of these images: "In *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, Samuel Delany considers how entire episodes of sexual history are legible in the architectural and political fate of neighborhoods."<sup>130</sup> Simpson not only overlooked (or was unaware of) the earlier publication of diCorcia's photographs in "X-X-X Marks the Spot," but he mistakenly, if tellingly, cited *New York* (figure 5.1) as an example of the photographs diCorcia made for Delany. This image, however, appears in neither Delany's article nor his book. Simpson's miscategorization exemplifies how faint the separation is between diCorcia's *Streetwork* series and his photographs for Delany. I want here to suggest a more forceful position regarding diCorcia's Times Square photographs, for both Delany and *Streetwork*: in those pictures, diCorcia visually recorded the reality that united sex, architecture, and urban change at a specific moment in Times Square's history. This chapter's close examination of diCorcia's choice of Times Square as both a location and a subject for his *Streetwork* and *Heads* projects makes that very argument. Before returning fully to those two projects, I am obliged to take account of Times Square on and after September 11, 2001, for three reasons: first, the square was and remains as an icon of New York City; second, by 2001, the district's revitalization had arguably been completed; and, finally, the events of September 11 inadvertently but indelibly shaped the reception of *Heads*, which diCorcia completed that year. In 2001, when the terrorist

attacks of September 11 forever changed the history of Manhattan, Times Square once again functioned as a social nexus, a specific urban location by which one could gauge the city's—if not the nation's—priorities in the aftermath of the attacks.<sup>131</sup>

In a *New York Post* article one month after the attacks, a Times Square street patrol cop described this revitalization in language that, except for its particular contemporary references, profoundly echoed that of the mid- and late-1990s:

[Hope] was in the cafés that used to be crime scenes and it was in the family from Wisconsin that brought their kids here to see *The Lion King*. Most of all it was in the New Yorkers, who had rallied together to reclaim a piece of stolen turf, and now came in droves to show the world they weren't about to hand it back to anyone, terrorists included.... Tough times are surely ahead, but all I need to do is walk down Broadway to know we're going to make it. New York City and Times Square: open for business, better and brighter than ever. Start spreadin' the news.<sup>132</sup>

Business in Times Square had been hurt by the attacks, yet the municipal and state assistance offered to the district was in keeping with the square's iconic and historic representation in the minds of New Yorkers and Americans. For example, New York City purchased 50,000 tickets to Broadway theater productions at a cost of \$2.5 million, while the state implemented a \$1 million Broadway advertising campaign. A spokesperson for Broadway's theaters explained the logic behind the cash infusion: “[A]s long as Broadway's stages were dark, the city itself would look dark to all the world.”<sup>133</sup> Times Square's ability to bounce back to life (and light) became synonymous with the whole city's ability to recover. Mayor Giuliani made an even grander equation to a CNN reporter on New Year's Eve 2001: “Times Square is not just the city's celebration, it's the world's celebration.”<sup>134</sup> As had been the case with the rhetoric surrounding early efforts to rid the square of crime and violence, Giuliani's statement continued to emphasize Times Square as a symbol of New York, for New York, for the nation, and for the world.

By 2001 the revitalization of Times Square was largely complete, transforming the real experiences and imagined fantasies of that urban space. The intersection of

Broadway and 42nd Street now housed corporate offices for Disney, Viacom, Reuters, and Condé Nast. In November the global giant of children's retail, Toys 'R' Us, opened its flagship store, replete with magicians, music, videos, and a sixty-foot tall Ferris wheel whose spokes, predictably, were outlined in neon so as to be visible to passersby on the sidewalks outside the flagship's requisite transparent facade.<sup>135</sup> To many at the time, Times Square seemed transformed into a corporate- and marketing-driven simulacra of its historical identity (albeit a sanitized, family-friendly rendering of that identity). However, this outlook makes claims about a singular reality of Times Square that does not sit well with its complicated past as a place with multiple meanings. With that in mind, Traub considered the question of the square as a simulation of itself in the early years of a new millennium:

To say that Times Square has a 'virtual' dimension is to say nothing more than that it is known through representations of itself as well as through direct experience and that, of course, has been true since people started sending postcards of the place.... But the production of images of itself is much more central to the new Times Square than it was to the old. When 'the media' meant signs, songs, popular magazines and movies, one could say that the media played a central role in transmitting the life of Times Square to the world. But the media are now inextricable from that life.... What makes Times Square so powerful a place, at least in the calculation of global marketers, is that it is so intensely *there*—so dense with people, lights, buildings, history, emotion—while it is also one of the central nodes of the worldwide media network. It is Times Square's actuality that makes its virtuality possible.<sup>136</sup>

Or, as historian William R. Taylor made clear in the introduction to the anthology *Inventing Times Square*, the square's image has always been contrived and determined.<sup>137</sup> Such historical awareness bears fruitfully upon this chapter's contextualized account of diCorcia's Times Square photographs, particularly the reception of the *Heads* series following its debut just days prior to September 11, 2001.

### **How *Streetwork* and *Heads* Appeared**

In order to present his photographs either in book or exhibition form, diCorcia first edited down the number of his negatives.<sup>138</sup> Drawing a parallel to how certain subjects are “picked out by the light” in his street photographs, he has said: “Photography is an editing process. I don’t think I go out looking for things and people who look alienated. I’m not trying to make that point. Perhaps in editing them they wind up that way.”<sup>139</sup> Both projects were shaped by a mode of editing that has long been linked with the spontaneous handheld camera, the continuous release of the shutter, and the totally unplanned urban scene. Only ever employing the second of these at times during the taking of *Heads*, diCorcia’s editing yields not a single, stand-alone image but the definitive group of images. *Streetwork* and *Heads* both function as groups and, as such, the repetition of formal constraints among the component images of the group actually heightens the differences within that group. For instance, a comparison with a *Streetwork* photograph made in Europe (figure 5.25) conveys the relative newness of New York City’s architecture and Times Square’s very particular and unashamed embrace of commercialism and consumerism (figure 5.10). In a more subtle fashion, the difference between one subject’s sunglasses (figure 5.2) and another’s glasses (figure 5.26) is that the latter rewards this comparison with the reflection of a pedestrian wearing a backpack and moving ahead of the main subject in the crowd (figure 5.27).

In *Streetwork* diCorcia’s embrace of an idea of street photography as partly reliant on chance necessitated a more exacting mode of editing in order to attenuate the differences between images and to foreclose dull repetition among them. This explains, in part, the logistical appeal for diCorcia of crowded urban cities, including New York, for the project: the more populated the visual field before his camera, the more potential for capturing someone in an interesting moment or with a compelling expression. In an interview, he described this in relation to *New York* (figure 5.28): “[I look for] people that escape notice but are nevertheless the paragons of society.... It was raining, there were

a lot of people in the street, I walked around with my camera waiting for things to happen... So there comes the guy with the umbrella, the paper, and the cellular phone... he seems to require what's not necessary."<sup>140</sup> DiCorcia selected subjects who, within the chosen setting, represent the experience of the urban street generally and that specific street within Manhattan more particularly.

The "paragons of society" who "escape notice" continue to people diCorcia's photographs in the *Heads* series. In fact, the selection attracted much commentary, since it seemed to be a representative sampling of individuals within contemporary U.S. society. Many critics found it difficult to write about the images without recourse to a laundry list where the subjects in *Heads* became indicators of generic sociological categories. "[There is] an elderly bearded rabbi whose eyes are heavy with age; an amazingly clear-featured young woman who could easily be on her way to try out as a model... ; a grim-faced heavysset mailman; a bald middle-aged man whose dark glasses give him the inscrutable air of a Secret Service agent, and so on."<sup>141</sup> Such types (or archetypes, as some argued) became the emphasis of diCorcia's particular editing process with this body of work.<sup>142</sup> DiCorcia's months of shooting yielded more than 4,000 negatives, and he edited these down to a final group of seventeen images. Many images were dismissed for technical shortcomings: those passersby who the light did not fall on, those who were too short or too tall, and those who filled the frame too minimally or too excessively (figure 5.29). DiCorcia recently published and exhibited a number of such "rejected" images, which underscores his claim that, "the people themselves were not that interesting when you finally took their photographs, and then finding variety within that redundancy was difficult. (I could find a million pictures of people with dramatic lighting, but they all tended to look the same.)"<sup>143</sup> It was something that could not be discerned in the moment of the shutter's release, though of course selection was at work in that moment as well. Instead it required the later scrutiny of expressions (purpose,

exhaustion, contemplation), dress (uniform, sportswear, suit), postures (self-contained, exposed, huddled), and miscellany (water bottle, gold crucifix pendant, map). This social variety is shared by both *Streetwork* and *Heads* and results only in part from the variety of subjects that most city streets provide. But the social variety also represents and is specific to Times Square. Both projects present their viewers with a melee of strangers during the forced cohabitation of urban space, the intimacies of the social space of sidewalks. *Streetwork's* edit depicts the down-and-out, businessmen, street performers, and tourists in that space. *Heads* kept the businessmen and tourists but replaced the down-and-out and the street performers with stylish youth, all seemingly and notably unaccompanied by adults. The strong presence of youth in *Heads*—they appear in five of the seventeen images in the series—marks Times Square's transformation to the clean, safe, acceptable, family- and consumer-oriented space envisioned by the 42nd Street Development Project. This demographic shift matters as much as the democratic laundry list of types in either project, for it locates these pictures resolutely and exclusively in the Times Square of 1993 to 2001.

Although the result of diCorcia's editing can be noted in the widely distributed publications that both *Streetwork* and *Heads* enjoyed at the time of their debut, the differences within each series comes to bear most forcefully in the moment of public display, when viewers can engage in the works physical presentation. In the case of *Streetwork*, portions were first shown in New York and in various European venues, and a full complement of images debuted in New York at PaceWildensteinMacGill Gallery from November 18, 1998, to January 16, 1999.<sup>144</sup> These twenty-odd photographs, each printed to approximately 26 by 38 inches in size, depict a range of international metropolises.<sup>145</sup> Of the five shot in New York City, four were made in the vicinity of Times Square and three unmistakably feature the square's theaters, advertisements, and pedestrians (figures 5.1, 5.10, and 5.11). This accounting matters not just because

of the numerical privilege enjoyed by New York City–based *Streetworks* (four are London-based, three are Paris-based, and so on, but no other city appears five times), but also because of the insistently international audience for the project. Encountering five images entitled *New York*, European viewers were encouraged to see the city—and Times Square—as representative of America, just as Paris represented France.<sup>146</sup> Thus, diCorcia’s *Streetwork* reinforces the popular equation of Times Square as the iconic American urban experience.

*Heads* debuted at Gagosian’s London Gallery from May 2 to June 14, 2001. Printed from digital scans of medium-format negatives, the photographs measure four by five feet. Although some have called the figures in these prints “almost life-size,” the subjects’ heads appear at nearly twice the average size of a viewer’s head.<sup>147</sup> The numbers included in each of the seventeen photographs’ titles are neither continuous (e.g. *Heads #20* in a series of seventeen photographs) nor do they reference the order of the images in their display or publication (e.g. *Heads #01* is not the first photograph the installations or catalogue). This titling and presentation reinforces diCorcia’s assertion that “there’s a dynamic among the pictures... [I] don’t want them to be redundant, or able to be interchanged.”<sup>148</sup> Following their display in London, the photographs opened Pace/Wildenstein’s new Chelsea gallery in September 2001, and both the accompanying catalogue and critical reviews referred directly to the experience of standing before these images. Luc Sante, in his essay for the former, remarked how the scale and presentation of the prints provided “the viewer with an opportunity for close inspection.”<sup>149</sup> The isolated, chest-up view of the subjects in *Heads* mirrors what is visible to pedestrians on crowded urban sidewalks, where no full-figure, head-to-toe appraisal is possible because of the density of bodies in a confined space. This effect is at its most heightened in the gallery when the sense of immediacy and proximity is enhanced by uninhibited looking, but I want to suggest that it comes across on the

pages of the book as well, mostly due to the shadowy but legible figures that often surround the main subject, pressing and compressing our sense of physical space as we contemplate the image. Observing these photographs, we can inspect and scrutinize diCorcia's selected sampling of passersby in ways that are more private and long lasting than on the street itself.<sup>150</sup> DiCorcia has said: "If anyone was there they could not see that—I don't even see that [while on site shooting]." Certainly, this remark confirms photography's technical necessity to our scrutiny of the final prints, but it also reflects the artist's privileging of the beholding of the prints.<sup>151</sup>

DiCorcia's emphasis on the viewer's encounter can be dated to his time at Yale. When contemplating filmmaking, he realized that "the power to affect people always involved some psychological engagement."<sup>152</sup> This kind of engagement seemed absent in the work of the conceptual artists he most admired—Vito Acconci, Robert Cummins, Ed Ruscha, and William Wegman—and often left diCorcia feeling like such work was a puzzle or "joke illustrated by a photograph."<sup>153</sup> DiCorcia wanted viewers of his work to choose how to read a gesture or expression, just as he had chosen the framing and the illumination. As Galassi pointed out in diCorcia's first monograph, "the persuasiveness of documentary realism depends upon the viewer's assumptions that the subject is shown as it existed before the photographer came along. If the photographer is perceived to have broken this implied contract by tampering with the subject, the viewer rejects the picture as false."<sup>154</sup> DiCorcia, Galassi suggested, tampered with the subject minimally, so as to encourage the viewer to perceive the photograph as representative of a recognizable reality. For his part, diCorcia fully intended these photographs to prompt engagement and questioning for their viewers. His most forceful articulation of this appears in his text for the catalogue *Streetwork 1993–1997*:

The world is too elusive to pin down in a photograph. The image has to create its own world, hopefully self contained, *an analogue of reality*, not

a mirror of it. Issues raised in the images are part of their content. That there should be more questions than answers should surprise no one.

Only the deeply deluded maintain that objective reality can define what is 'real.' I don't propose my work as an advanced definition of reality. I know as little as anyone about it. If the pictures stimulate interest, it is probably the subliminal recognition of the confusion we all face when confronting 'reality.' I am only sure that what we see in this world is deceptive, especially in the media. I work on the assumption that nothing is new and nothing is real. That skepticism underlines my strategies as much as the search for any objective truth.<sup>155</sup>

Assuming a largely urban audience for *Streetwork* and *Heads*, the emphatic role diCorcia gave them as interpreters of reality can prompt a change in perception. Both Charles Wylie and Kimmelman indicated this possibility in their reviews, claiming that the photographs foster "an uncanny awareness [of the pedestrian subjects] that viewers may have taken with them as they left the gallery and reentered the streets of New York," and that "[g]ood art makes you see the world differently, as least for a while, and after seeing Mr. diCorcia's new 'Heads,' for the next few hours you won't pass another person on the street in the same absent way."<sup>156</sup> Engaging viewers in a possibly ongoing awareness of their own urban experiences has as much to do with the pictures' relationship to reality as it does with their narrative quality. DiCorcia's images suggest fragments or single instances in a larger and longer narrative constructed by the viewer, who he has called the "narrator" of his photographs.<sup>157</sup> "The more specific the interpretation suggested by a picture," diCorcia has said, "the less happy I am with it."<sup>158</sup>

The absence of a clear narrative pervades *New York* (figure 5.30), in which a man overly dressed for the season with blankets and scarves covering his figure, perhaps one of Times Square's dispossessed residents, puts forward his panhandler's basket for donations while turning head and shrouded eyes to the sky. The reason or meaning of this combination of gesture and glance may be made more resonant with or more confounded by the immediate presence of a sidewalk preacher, who seems to be simultaneously addressing every passerby and no one in particular with his microphone.

One reviewer of this work articulated the narrative in the following way: “A photograph of a homeless person moving along a crowded sidewalk, begging while wrapped in layers of shawls, powerfully conjures one kind of misery that can be experienced in a big city. The story hinted at in this image is set amid a topography of consumption comprising street signs, traffic lights, and advertising billboards.”<sup>159</sup> The viewer’s ability to study the pictures at length and in detail is also a surveillance opportunity. In his text for *The Citigroup Private Bank Photography Prize 2002*, Dan Fox wrote specifically of *Heads*:

Why else would one take time to look at these people if one encountered them on the street?—if they were attractive, maybe, or appeared threatening, perhaps. But diCorcia’s *Heads* evoke an altogether more layered, ambivalent response, for the main part because they encompass facets of us all as we trail through the city streets, egos at the centre of no-one’s attention but our own. The worried brows furrowed across nearly all these faces speak of stressful crosstown journeys—the anxiety to reach home, office, or a familiar face.... Uncannily familiar, they attract our curiosity, never our contempt.<sup>160</sup>

The viewer’s projections in relation to photographic surveillance deserves brief discussion here, particularly since Fox’s remarks—and the *Heads* photographs—appeared at a historical moment when surveillance in the United States had been given new import and license.

Michael Kimmelman’s initial review of the New York debut of *Heads*, quoted above, suggests the behavioral application of surveillance after viewing diCorcia’s work, which also makes us more aware of the means that produced it. Published alongside a large detail of *Head #01* (figure 5.31), the only image on a page of several reviews, the complete second half of Kimmelman’s review reads:

Unaware of the camera, [diCorcia’s subjects] are absorbed in thought or gaze absently; they are how we act most of the time, walking down the street, in a crowd, focused on something or nothing. But enlarged and isolated, their expressions become riddles, intensely melodramatic and strangely touching. Mr. diCorcia’s pictures remind us, among other things, that we are each our own little universe of secrets, and vulnerable. Good art makes you see the world differently, as least for a while, and after seeing Mr. diCorcia’s new ‘Heads,’ for the next few hours you won’t pass another person on the street in the same absent way.<sup>161</sup>

An understanding of social practices on New York City streets underlies these comments. Anonymously walking city streets has been a part of urban experiences there for at least a century; it is the willful and conscious decision to remain unknown within urban crowds that is both more recent and a cultural imperative.<sup>162</sup> Critic Ian Hunt has elaborated on this collaborative code of manners, reiterating the complicity required by what he terms the “contractuality of the eye” in city life: “A sense of collective safety is reinforced more by routinised avoidance of eye contact than by unexpected greetings and familiarity.”<sup>163</sup> This contractuality means that pedestrians only take note in fragmentary ways of other pedestrians sharing urban space with them. The texture of a jacket, the sway of shoulders, or the color of hair on the person just ahead on the sidewalk may be the total visual information available to any pedestrian. Surely, this relates to the speed of movement on city streets, the hurry to leave or arrive somewhere, but it is also an agreement among all to barely or seemingly never look at other pedestrians. DiCorcia articulated: “The street does not induce people to shed their self-awareness. They seem to withdraw into themselves. They become less aware of their surroundings, seemingly lost within themselves. Their image is the outward facing front belied by the inwardly gazing eyes.”<sup>164</sup>

Walking city streets symbolizes both individual isolation and a kind of collective experience, but it is the latter that makes possible urban viewers’ projection before diCorcia’s street photographs—the *Heads* pictures in particular—whether on the gallery wall or in the catalogue. Viewers see the fragmentary details that would have caught their attention as they participated in the collective censoring of public looking, but they also observe the individual isolation that is part of that same experience of the streets. The darkened background in *Heads* accomplishes a visual isolation of subjects, while reinforcing the sense of a fragmentary view of the urban crowd. The subjects’

compositional estrangement ensures and enables viewers' projection onto them, and diCorcia's lighting only furthers this. The same is true of his lighting of the key subjects in *Streetwork*, as when the preacher and the beggar are "picked out" for our more sustained attention and scrutiny.<sup>165</sup> DiCorcia's lighting, then, works against the non-authorial viewpoint. In that his street photographs prompt viewers to scrutinize the passersby pictured yet simultaneously frustrate the eye-to-eye relationship, they are aligned with contemporary photographic surveillance. Indeed, the photographic liberty to make pictures of people without their consent in public spaces is the same one that allows for the monitoring of public passages with surveillance cameras or closed-circuit television (CCTV).<sup>166</sup>

DiCorcia encountered this directly when the subject of *Heads #13*, Erno Nussenzweig, sued him for violation of privacy. As a Hasidic man, Nussenzweig argued that the resulting photograph "compromised his orthodox faith's prohibition against 'graven images'" (figure 5.32).<sup>167</sup> This charge questioned the First Amendment's extension of the freedom of expression and freedom from consent laws into public spaces. As Simpson recently recounted:

After a lengthy trial in the New York State Supreme Court, the verdict sided with the defendant, affirming the protection street photographers have enjoyed since the birth of their medium.... [T]he public realm would remain free ground for artists. This said, the landmark case raises numerous issues about the commerce of images that will undoubtedly persist as public space is increasingly surveilled.<sup>168</sup>

Over a decade ago, the curators of the 1997 Whitney Biennial identified surveillance as a unifying preoccupation among many of the artists, including diCorcia, who had six *Streetwork* photographs on view. DiCorcia and other artists dealt less with the politics of surveillance than with "how you actually experience the process of observing."<sup>169</sup> Of course, the process of observing—as well as the permanent visibility to which it responds—informs what Geoffrey Batchen has called "surveillance-type images."

Importantly, Batchen's writings on these photographers emphasize the role of the viewer's gaze in relation to that of the subject and to that of the photographer. At their best, such photographs can "function as alternately surveillance and *about* surveillance" in the moment of viewing.<sup>170</sup> After all, surveillance always and already implies a viewer, a viewer who will use the images gathered in some way. Neither the viewer-as-a-given nature of surveillance nor its prevalence in daily metropolitan life is new or specific to New York City.<sup>171</sup> But the surveillance diCorcia's photographs allow occurs off the street, lingering over the subjects in detail while standing in an art gallery or looking through a book; on the street, the same visual contracts apply. Like so many canonical street photographs, diCorcia's pictures respond to this urban dynamic when they are encountered by viewers, but they also respond to his viewers' familiarity with the particular location in which they were made.

Times Square encompasses certain opposing qualities: it is at once real and imagined; it is a public site that can be inhabited privately; one can experience Times Square individualistically and collectively; and the square's specificity has, in recent years, come to coexist with a generic urbanness most associated with globalism. With foundations in fantasy and spectacle, Times Square has always reflected the dreams and desires of many—one could say it has been a simulacrum of those dreams and desires—and this continues to inform representations of it today. DiCorcia's photographs in particular reflect Times Square's commingling of history, spectacle, desire, reality, and experience.

While observing that people in public often hide their true character, DiCorcia [*sic*] also began wondering whether something similar was happening to New York itself. 'I couldn't help but think of Giuliani and what he did to New York, the ethos that he established here,' he says. 'The booming '80s were lurid, but there was still a sense of New York as a unique place in the U.S. Now, the city is a symbol and a real concentration of capitalist, globalized, mass culture. In some way, the people existing in Times Square seemed a reflection of that to me.'<sup>172</sup>

This passage indicates diCorcia's ongoing awareness of Times Square, from its rundown character in the 1980s to Giuliani's revitalization program of the 1990s to its diminished specificity at the beginning of the twenty-first century. I contend that *Streetwork* negotiates the transition between the first two of these moments and *Heads* the transition between the latter two, with each project harkening forward or backward to the other.

*Streetwork* relies on the details of architecture, sidewalk commercialism, advertisements, billboards, and traffic to signify New York City, to make it legible as the location of the photographs. Those photographs record Times Square's longstanding association with sex and desire as well as the commerce of the square's "newly scrubbed face."<sup>173</sup> DiCorcia rendered this crucial coexistence, as it played out socially and architecturally. Socially, for example, *New York* reinforces the myriad people sharing Times Square's sidewalks—the beggar, the businessman, the preacher (figure 5.30). Architecturally, the series revels in the juxtaposition of theater marquees and brightly shuttered storefronts of the early to mid-1990s (figure 5.1); it captures the late-1990s cacophony of construction scaffolding that physically makes possible the new requisite reflective and illuminated glass facades of a "revitalized" Times Square while also serving as yet another site for advertisements aimed at consumer desire (figure 5.10). Simpson has noted that diCorcia's settings are "loaded," "especially those he knows best like Times Square or Hollywood."<sup>174</sup> To be sure, the sexual desire inherent to Times Square is not as declarative a marker of this project as it had been for *Hustlers*, but the aim of this chapter has been to contend that this desire becomes legible once the specific history of Times Square has been considered. Even the repression of that desire following the square's revitalization can be located in *Heads*.<sup>175</sup>

The metropolitan details of Times Square, so copious in *Streetwork*, have not entirely disappeared in the dark backgrounds of *Heads*, a point made more evident and

legible by certain Polaroids recently published in diCorcia's book *Thousand*.<sup>176</sup> For example, in the picture reproduced on page 584, one of New York's signature yellow taxicabs passes behind a tangle of pedestrians (figure 5.33). Even without the taxi, the tangle of pedestrians—though more varied in orientation than appears in *Heads*—is the element that allows viewers to read the site of the city. The proximity of subjects' bodies implies the density of dozens of fellow pedestrians that we, as viewers, cannot see; their presence in this social space is and can be visually mapped by others (figures 5.2, 5.12, 5.13, and 5.26). Skyscrapers and traffic are also implied, even in the blurred and darkened details of the backgrounds: in *Heads #13*, there is the unmistakable red glow of a traffic light (figure 5.32); and there remains the suggestion in form and color of a passing taxicab in the distance in several of the photographs (figures 5.12, 5.13, and 5.31). Still, reducing the city to such amorphous elements enabled diCorcia to present the square's pedestrians themselves as reflections of this concentrated urban center of consumerist and globalized mass culture. *Streetwork* seems to have anticipated the more generic, less detailed metropolis of *Heads*, particularly if one looks at two images made at the end of *Streetwork: New York* (figure 5.10) and *Tokyo* (figure 5.34). Language differences notwithstanding, both urban environments match the mandates of the 42nd Street Development Project: transparent-seeming buildings constructed of glass, bright electric illumination, and advertising-as-facade. Only *New York*, however, presents the pedestrians of these spectacular surroundings beholding those recently mandated surroundings. The black man and two white women at the left edge of the composition, the man on crutches in the center, as well as the man whose profile is barely visible at the photograph's right edge, all look directly ahead of them. These gazes are directed at the cacophony of signs before them (and us) or to the masses of people, like them, filling the streets of Times Square, appearing in jumbled proximity to them on this particular street corner.

By the 2001 debut of *Heads* in New York, the encroaching genericism of urban streets was a burning topic of discussion, especially in relation to Times Square.<sup>177</sup> Writing the introduction to his history of the square just a few years later, Traub summarized: "To its many critics, Times Square isn't a place, but a simulacrum of a place, an ingenious marketing device fostered by global entertainment firms. . . [and] the symbol of the hollowing out of urban life, the decay of the particular in the merciless glare of globalization."<sup>178</sup> The timeliness of this sentiment resonated with diCorcia's *Heads*, and reviewers took note, especially those writing in foreign art periodicals for an overseas audience contemplating photographs made in one of the most iconic urban sites in the United States. For example, Italian curator Ilaria Bonacossa identified New York City as "*the* symbol of global capitalism" and Times Square as "the fulcrum of American-style spectacle culture."<sup>179</sup> Given that diCorcia earned a living partly through his commercial photography, he was well positioned to observe the characteristics of a society now inseparable from its consumerism, which will always be at its most concentrated and most visible in urban centers.<sup>180</sup> There, individuals find themselves amidst swirls of advertisements, signs, and pictures intended to fuel consumer desire. As Susan Buck-Morss has described this experience: "Images enter the psyche of the individual, but they are collectively perceived by the mass of passers-by. They 'speak' to those passing, and, in the inverted world of capitalism where things are related but people are not, they become the means through which the isolation of both individuals and generations is overcome."<sup>181</sup> Redirecting Buck-Morss's notion to the art world, where photographs are merely another "thing" through which isolation can be "overcome," it becomes possible to better contextualize the reception of diCorcia's *Heads* in the aftermath of September 11.

In addition to being displayed at PaceWildenstein and being reproduced in numerous art periodicals during and after September 2001, no single *Heads* photograph

likely experienced a larger viewing audience than when MoMA opened its exhibition *Life of the City* on February 28, 2002. *Heads #10* (figure 5.35) was among the 156 photographs included in the exhibition, which was intended as “both a tribute to New York City and an exploration of photography’s role in shaping a community.”<sup>182</sup> The photographs were the most official and traditional component to what was effectively a three-part exhibition. The second part involved a changing display of anonymous tacked-up snapshots of New York, the results of an open call for submissions that would express individual relationships to the city. For the third and final part of the exhibition, MoMA collaborated with *Here Is New York; A Democracy of Photographs*, displaying a digital slideshow of September 11 images on two monitors. MoMA saw *Here is New York’s* accomplishment as an opportunity for New Yorkers to “come together in a time of distress.”<sup>183</sup>

DiCorcia’s *Heads #10*, joined by one of his early photographs as well as one of the few New York images from *Streetwork* not taken near Times Square, hung in that exhibition, surrounded by the photographers and photographs that inform it: Evans’s *Girl on Fulton Street* (figure 5.3), Harry Callahan photographs, and other historical views of Times Square. The *New York Times* review of *Life of the City* concluded by posing a crucial question: “This is the new New York, the mourning, bewildered city, that people are getting to know. But how does it relate to old New York, the city that was before the city was attacked?”<sup>184</sup>

One answer to this question, the very premise of this dissertation, proposes each street photograph as a visual nexus of the specific location of its making, the historical context of its moment, and its ongoing reception by viewers. Thus, not only are Times Square and New York City of inescapable importance to diCorcia’s *Heads*; September 11, because of its effect on the images’ reading and reception, also comes to bear on *Heads*, regardless of and in addition to diCorcia’s original intentions for these

photographs.<sup>185</sup> For most street photographers' work, of course, the realization that historicization and reception are related has not come until long after the work's making. DiCorcia's *Heads* took far less than three decades to "become historical" and "lay claim" to 2001. Just one week after Kimmelman's September 14 review of the exhibition at PaceWildenstein, an editorial decision excluded a key phrase from the compressed text appearing on September 21. DiCorcia's photographs were still "reminders that we are each our own little universe of secrets," but no longer "reminders that we are each our own little universe of secrets, *and vulnerable*."<sup>186</sup> Other reviewers tackled the effect on their reception of the pictures more directly. In *Flash Art* that November, Bonacossa concluded: "Seeing this exhibition for the second time after the tragic events of September 11, I was struck by how these characters took on a more dramatic aura. Each Head seemed a testimony of the depth of sorrow shared by every individual, whatever her/his race or background in a deeply wounded city."<sup>187</sup> And so, revisiting the *New York Times* question about *Life of the City*, diCorcia's *Heads*—as street photographs specific to Times Square and the social space of its streets—have come to embody the relationship "between the new New York, the mourning, bewildered city" and the "old New York, the city that was before the city was attacked."

Given the extent to which New York City is understood as exemplary of American cities—and its Times Square is the most iconic of American public squares—there is little surprise that a September 11 effect would impact all representations of that city and its square. (Recall Mayor Giuliani's 2001 New Year's Eve statement: "Times Square is not just the city's celebration, it's the world's celebration.") Times Square is a place rife with symbolism and history—of its centrality to the city's identity, of its marriage of spectacle and consumerism, of its fulfillment of social (including sexual) desires, of its collective experience based on those individual desires, of its revitalization, and of its status as an indicator of the increasing presence of isolation, surveillance, and global

genericism in American urban life. As James Traub has written, today's "Times Square is every bit as true to its moment as the place was forty, sixty, eighty years ago—that whatever else it is, it's inevitable.... [T]his place, too, is provisional and transitory. The last word on Times Square will never be written."<sup>188</sup> Times Square is ever changing, and much like diCorcia's "analogues of reality" the location prompts as many questions as it does answers.

For this reason, once the specifics of Times Square from 1993 to 2001 as the location of diCorcia's street photographs—whether from *Streetwork* or *Heads*—have been considered, the viewer confronts street photographs that unite the social and architectural space of urban change that is Times Square. DiCorcia's purposeful engagement of the viewer relies on the calculation deployed in the making of his photographs as much as his final presentation of them. Both process and presentation rely on the conventions of realism, chance, speed (qualities of canonical street photography, in other words) in order to transform the urban street's appearance in general and the commercial spectacle of Times Square in particular. DiCorcia's *Streetwork* and *Heads* photographs, made in that specific location, figure the street as a social space in transformation. They are analogues of Times Square's particular reality, the issues of that location a part of their content that should not be overlooked by their easy incorporation into the canon of street photography. DiCorcia's photographs posit that the best photographic representation of the experience of city streets may well be a framing of reality or a construction modeled after reality. The city streets are recognizable to us, primed to receive our projections, precisely because of what the photographer has done to frame or construct them for us in ways analogous to—not mirrors of—our experience of them.

Finally, inspired by the Traub quote above, I want to conclude this chapter with the following assertion, which I hope will serve also as an invitation to others who aim to

write the history of street photography differently: postwar American street photography is every bit as true to the moment of its making as were street photographs from forty, sixty, or eighty years ago. The specific character of the streets—and of the street photography made on those streets—is provisional and transitory, open for continual reinterpretation by viewers. It is in the nature of urban streets both to be changed by and to change those who use and animate them. DiCorcia's photographs support this claim, and they allow us to consider a language and context for these transformations. The last word on street photography will never be written.

## CONCLUSION

### A Few Remarks on Writing Street Photography's Future

This dissertation set out to move the discourse surrounding street photography beyond a prescription based on a handful of formal qualities, such as spontaneity, mobility, instantaneity, speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity. To accomplish this, I have advocated a highly literal restriction of street photography to those images made in and about city streets. Moreover I have advanced a definition of the genre that privileges a photographic engagement with a specific urban site as a cultural, political, economic, and social environment. An expanded and reconceived history of street photography would, I have argued, consider the street equally as site and subject. In performing a critical, archaeological analysis on the discourse surrounding street photography to date, I found the prevailing text, *Bystander*, to be a straw horse in comparison to the aspirations of this dissertation as well as those expressed in one of the earliest writings on the topic. To my own surprise, in the very text that named “street photography” and now dates to over one hundred years ago, Osborne Yellott proposed a conception of street photography that involved representing the complex experiences of urban streets in a way that I have sought to emulate in this dissertation. Yellott called for a type of photograph that responds to the specifics of those streets and that also embraced the perceptual experience of the photograph's viewer. Building on that proposition, I have contended that representing adequately the complex experiences of urban streets necessarily also involves addressing issues of gender, commerce, race, collectivity, class, dispossession, sexuality, and spectacle, among others.

In order to demonstrate such a history, this dissertation has advocated a more open approach than has prevailed since the publication of *Bystander's* history of the

genre. This more open approach is variously indebted to photo-history, art history, sociology, literary studies, and urban studies. Differently deployed in each of the case-study chapters, this approach has relied on close visual analysis of these photographs, with particular attention to the process of their making on the streets, the response of the photographer to the specifics of the street. This approach also details how these photographs appeared to their viewers and the implication of those viewers in a certain kind of response. This interpretive approach recognizes that the manner in which a photograph is disseminated and received is just as important to its public significance as any other aspect of its existence. It has the advantage of addressing a range of related but separate aspects of a given group of street photographs, and does so in a manner that emulates the complex interaction of place, object, and subject that constitutes the “street” as an urban experience.

This dissertation’s critical analysis of the existing street-photography discourse has been used as a foundation from which to discuss four case studies. I began with Richard Avedon’s postwar transformation of the street from a relatively generic and meaningless pictorial backdrop into a timely and desirable representation of modern urban life. Very much against the grain of the time, Avedon’s photographs for *Harper’s Bazaar* insistently place fashion—and its models—on Parisian streets, sometimes among “fellow” pedestrians. In so doing, Avedon exponentially heightened the relatability of his photographs, the likelihood of a viewer’s identification with their representations. Avedon, fully aware of the simulacral power afforded by photographic spreads in magazines, declared his desire for his photographs to offer a “reality, better than real.”<sup>1</sup> His decision to locate images within the city of Paris held cultural significance for his viewers and was inextricably linked to the revitalization of French fashion and, by extension, French culture. More than any of his contemporaries or predecessors, he transplanted the site of modern fashion’s representation from the studio to the street, a

move that was both timely, given the social and cultural changes of the postwar era, and astute, given the particular and practical demands of fashion. To this end, Avedon invented whole cloth a new aesthetic approach to and use for the street in these photographs.

The civil rights movement cannot be historicized without its street photographs. I propose the reverse as well—street photography cannot be historicized without the inclusion of the public demonstrations of that movement. The two are inextricably linked; for example, in the spring of 1963, the movement aimed to elicit aggression by racist authorities on the streets of Birmingham’s “white downtown.” Its leaders knew that if they succeeded, it would fuel greater public outrage as well as more extensive press coverage at a time when the Civil Rights Act was moving through the U.S. Congress. Charles Moore’s street photographs of civil rights protests, then, represent that very history that MoMA “fled from” in its 1960s canonization of Garry Winogrand and from which the street photography discourse has fled ever since.<sup>2</sup> Chapter Three demonstrates a dramatically different context for Winogrand’s street photographs, not only at the moment of the genre’s acceptance into the modernist canon but also at a moment in American history when city streets became visually inseparable from politics. The consideration of Moore’s photographs also clarifies how photographs of streets as a site of social struggle, political contestation, and democratic power both reflected and shaped postmodern aesthetic engagements with the street after the 1960s.

Martha Rosler’s writings on street and documentary photography reveal her conceptual equation of one with the other, as I detailed in Chapter Four. If the street suggests these complicated urban locales, then surely street photography should represent them in suitably complex, even “inadequate,” images such as those Rosler undertook for *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*. To make this work, Rosler relied on the Bowery, a site within New York that had a long history of negative

associations for more comfortable residents of the city, at a time of increased urban poverty. It became the viewer's choice to conjure (or not) the absent subjects based on his or her experiences of city streets. Either way, Rosler's photographs force the viewer's own negotiations of the politics of public space. *The Bowery* repudiates and surpasses the discourse on street photography that had, by the mid-1970s, codified and canonized the qualities of spontaneity, mobility, instantaneity, speed, stealth, intuition, and singularity.

Representing other potentially significant changes to the canonical practice of street photography, diCorcia employed a large-format camera and tripod in a single, fixed location, illuminating unsuspecting passersby with hidden strobe lights synced to the camera's shutter release. DiCorcia himself has commented on his process: "I am not reacting to an instantaneous event. I am either making the event happen or choosing among one of many events that occur every day that are not that dramatic."<sup>3</sup> Both diCorcia's process and presentation rely on the conventions of realism as well as certain qualities of canonical street photography in order to transform the urban street's appearance in general and the commercial spectacle of Times Square in particular. If Rosler challenged street photography by removing its expected human subjects, then diCorcia's *Heads* ask, in part, how much of the street must be seen in order to be figured in street photography. DiCorcia's *Streetwork* and *Heads* photographs, made in that specific location, present the street as a social space in transformation. They are analogues of Times Square's particular reality. For that reason, the issues of that location are a part of their content that should not be overlooked by their easy incorporation into the canon of street photography.

Each case study thus grapples with concerns both aesthetic and ideological. Avedon's photographs for *Harper's Bazaar* use the streets of Paris to achieve a reality-effect as part of a postwar effort to revitalize that city through commerce. The

Birmingham demonstration photographs by Moore attempt to implicate the viewer in this conflict and, as such, provided political momentum to the Civil Rights movement.

Despite the artist's activist and documentary-oriented rhetoric, Rosler's photo-text piece functions as a critique of street photography and that genre's institutional canonization.

DiCorcia's street photographs adopt the visual language of theatrical spectacle within an ever-gentrifying Times Square, the iconic American public square made retrospectively even more so following September 11.

Taken together, these four case studies are dedicated to work spanning from 1947 to 2001, by artists who were each born in a different decade (from the 1920s through the 1950s). This dissertation therefore amounts to a generational survey of postwar American street photography. The selected photographers intentionally included two who have been fully excluded from the existing discourse (Avedon and Moore), one who has been only recently enveloped by it (Rosler), and one whose work was enshrined among the canon even before the series considered in this dissertation had been created (diCorcia). I have not advocated simply that these four artist's practices should be included in an expanded history of American street photography. I have argued that their inclusion must necessarily change the very nature of that history. These four artists consider aspects of city streets so "unfamiliar" to the existing history that they cannot be contained within it. Their street photographs, for example, embody and then convey a gendered consumption of the street (Avedon); a politics of demonstrations that take place on streets (Moore); an economic dispossession of a population living on the streets (Rosler); and a socially and sexually charged spectacle of streets (diCorcia). In short, Avedon, Moore, Rosler, and diCorcia each represent an important shift in the history of the genre, precisely because they have each addressed the street as a charged nexus of specific place, viewed object, and viewing subject.

With that in mind, it is perhaps fitting that this dissertation—as much as the approach it advocates, so grounded in the historical specifics of the locations in which these street photographs have been made—comes to a close on the brink of a more fully globalized new century. Increasingly homogenized, globalized cities call into question the continued viability of the environmental and historical specificity posited by this dissertation. Indeed, it is difficult at this moment to imagine how photographs made during the coming fifty-odd years will render Paris any differently from Birmingham, or New York's Bowery as distinct from its Times Square. Chronologically, this dissertation also comes to a close on the cusp of an ever-more digitized mode of making and sharing all photographs, to say nothing of the ease that digital technologies have brought to the moving lens-based images. It is not for me to say how street photography's history will come to be written to accommodate urban digital surveillance projects like the *Surveillance Camera Project* of the New York Civil Liberties Union (1998) or even a project that always and already mourned the loss of a more historical urban experience like Zoe Leonard's *Analogue* (1999–2006). It is my intention and aspiration, however, that this dissertation's rethinking of American postwar street photography through four exemplary case studies as much as this dissertation's more open approach to street photography's process of creation and mode of reception will inspire other re-conceptions of the genre.

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**NOTES**
**Chapter One**

<sup>1</sup> Although there are exceptions, such as Helen Levitt, there is an overwhelming dominance of male photographers in the discourse on the genre. No texts have substantially addressed the role of gender in the practice of street photography, though a recent essay by Abigail Solomon-Godeau has made a similar point, emphasizing the “masculine” or “appropriative or aggressive attributes of this kind of photographic practice.” Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Harry Callahan, Street Photography, and the Alienating City,” in *Harry Callahan: Variations on a Theme (The Archive, no. 35)* (Tucson, AZ: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 2007), 27.

<sup>2</sup> This intentional reference to Henri Cartier-Bresson’s essay of the same title is a topic to which I will return. See Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment: Photography by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (New York: Simon and Schuster in collaboration with Éditions Verve of Paris, 1952). This is a translation of the French phrase and title of the French edition of the publication, *Images à la sauvette* (Paris: Verve, 1952).

<sup>3</sup> To be clear, there is room in my proposed definition of street photography to allow for what others have termed “urban photography” or city-based “architectural photography.” Benjamin Buchloh, for example, has described these two categories, though without reference to the genre of street photography. See Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Thomas Struth’s Archive,” in *Thomas Struth: Photographs* (Chicago: Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 1990), 5.

<sup>4</sup> See Rosalyn Deutsche, “Alternative Space,” in *If You Lived Here. . . The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism*, DIA Art Foundation, Discussions in Contemporary Culture 6, ed. Brian Wallis (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 47, 58.

<sup>5</sup> I acknowledge here that Solomon-Godeau has recently made a similar demand of street photography in her article specifically addressing the street photographs of Harry Callahan. She wrote: “[We must] acknowledge those variously sociological, political, ideological, or even artistic motivations that contributed to their production. And once we have acknowledged that, the concept of street photography as a discrete genre is already destabilized.” Solomon-Godeau, “Harry Callahan,” 23. Solomon-Godeau’s main emphasis, however, remains street photography’s consistent representation of anonymous unaware individuals without their consent.

<sup>6</sup> This approach allows for a range of photographic practices from seemingly straightforward documentation to fully constructed representations—all of which have the possibility of resonating with reality and experience. Such a possibility has been foreclosed in the existing discourse surrounding street photography. For helping me to articulate this position, I acknowledge Peter Bacon Hales’s *Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839–1915* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> For histories oriented to practitioners more than practice, see Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz, *Bystander: A History of Street Photography*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 2001), 43, 67–72, 105, 179; Russell Ferguson, “Open City: Possibilities of the Street,” in *Open City: Street Photographs since 1950* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art; Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag; New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2001), 9; and Kerry Brougher, “The Camera in the Street,” in *Open City*, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 35.

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to David Travis for conversations since 2004 that helped me articulate this.

<sup>10</sup> By “context of the history of photography,” I do not mean that this dissertation will be concerned with identifying the first street photograph or its origins in Paris or London. For such discussion, see Filippo Maggia, “Instant City,” in *Instant City: fotografia e metropoli* (Prato, Italy: Centro per l’Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci; Milan: Baldini and Castoldi, 2001), 22; and Carol Squiers, “The Stranger,” in *Strangers: The First ICP Triennial of Photography and Video* (New York: International Center of Photography; Göttingen: Steidl, 2003), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Max Kozloff also termed the method of the text “psycho-literary.” Max Kozloff, “Street Scenes,” review of *Bystander: A History of Street Photography*, by Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz, *Art in America* 83, no. 11 (November 1995): 31.

<sup>12</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 34. A note about the authorship of this book: Although all citations appear as “Westerbeck and Meyerowitz,” the introduction to the book explains that “Ultimately, Colin Westerbeck wrote the text... and Meyerowitz acted as editor of the text and shaper of the selection of pictures.” *Ibid.*, 35. The sole exception to this is a conversation between the two men. Therefore, all references to *Bystander*’s prose in the body of this dissertation appear accordingly as solely “Westerbeck.”

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> As with the streets themselves, Westerbeck made only sweeping generalizations of the cities in which so many of his practitioners worked, saying that Paris has “a certain intensity, an air of expectation.” *Ibid.*, 39. There are similar statements about New York that invite but never consider the implication of a particular site or city in the formative role in the making of a street photograph. *Ibid.*, 339. Notably, Shelly Rice criticized these statements at the time for their inattention to the “politics or sociability” of urban streets. Shelley Rice, “The Greatest Show on Earth,” *Afterimage* 23, no. 2 (September/October 1995): 9.

<sup>17</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 34. Less definition than claim, they also wrote: “No images are more rigorously bound to both the contemporary moment and instantaneous vision than photographs are, and street photographs most of all.” *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. Atget is singled out in this instance but, curiously, Charles Nègre, who also made architectural studies and a series on street trades, is described as “prescient” of street photographers. It thus remains unclear when Westerbeck considered street photography to have begun. *Ibid.*, 67–70. I am grateful to Jacob Lewis for multiple conversations about Nègre’s street photographs.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 40–41, 43, 202.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (1863; rept., Da Capo, 1986), 1–40. Although it was first published in 1863, “The Painter of Modern Life” was written between 1859 and 1860.

<sup>21</sup> Baudelaire, 9. In a recent essay, Florian Ebner somewhat complicatedly characterized the flâneur’s vision as “pre-photographic.” Although Baudelaire’s “Painter of Modern Life” was written twenty years after the invention of photography, Ebner’s rhetoric dismissed that 1839 date and instead focused on the arrival of the handheld camera in the 1880s. For more, see Florian Ebner, “Urban Characters, Imaginary Cities,” in Eskildsen, 186–87. Julian Stallabrass has more accurately noted: “Street photography of a kind related to *flânerie* came into being long after Baudelaire’s *flâneurs* and their Paris had passed away.” Julian Stallabrass, *Paris Pictured* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2002), n.p.

<sup>22</sup> Baudelaire, 40.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Baudelaire condemned photography in his response to the 1859 Salon, reprinted in English in *Art In Paris 1845–1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions*, trans. and ed. by Jonathan Mayne (Greenwich, CT: Phaidon, 1965), 144–216.

<sup>25</sup> John Thomson and Adolphe Smith’s *Victorian London Street Life*, put forth as an original group of photographs within the genre of street photography, is arguably little more than a compendium of the socio-economic types found on the streets of London. John Thomson and Adolphe Smith, *Victorian London Street Life in Historic Photographs* (1877; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin dealt most explicitly with Baudelaire’s writings on the city in “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” “Paris Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” and “Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” all in Benjamin *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Baudelaire*, Michael W. Jennings, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 27–133. Additionally, “Konvolut J: Baudelaire” is one section of Benjamin’s incomplete *Arcades Project*. (Benjamin died before completing the *Arcades Project*.) For more on writing and dating of “Konvolut J,” see Susan Buck-

Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 437n1. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" also appears in *Strangers*, 108–09.

<sup>27</sup> Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, in association with Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 134. In the *Arcades Project*, Konvolut J specifically took Baudelaire as its theme, and it was the longest of the Konvoluts compiled by 1940, although other Konvoluts touch on related themes. For example, Konvolut M is titled "The Flâneur." Gilloch noted that the modern city is a source of inspiration for other texts in Benjamin's writings. Arguably, the earliest of these is his 1924 essay on Naples, and his 1929 "Paris, City in the Mirror" is the first to deal explicitly with the French capital.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin's emphasis on the act of observing the city informs the title of Susan Buck-Morss's substantive study of the *Arcades Project*. Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*. Buck-Morss was especially interested in the relationships among the various themes of Benjamin's writings on the city. In his discussion of the vast *Arcades Project*, Gilloch placed greater emphasis on Benjamin's insights about the city, and he later critiqued Buck-Morss for losing sight of this as a result of her Marxist approach. Both Buck-Morss and Gilloch attended to Benjamin's aim of devising a suitable mode of representing the city.

<sup>29</sup> Benjamin would eventually shift away from photography and more decisively toward film, citing its ability to capture time-based experience and to implement shifting, fragmented vantage points. See Walter Benjamin, "One Way Street" (1931), in *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: Verso, 1985), 298. See also Gilloch, 18; Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 49–50, 61.

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed address of these types, see Susan Buck-Morss, "The Flâneur, The Sandwichman, and The Whore: The Politics of Loitering," *New German Critique* 39 (Fall 1986): 99–140. See also Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography," in *One-Way Street*, 240–57.

<sup>31</sup> Other authors have touched on these opportunities to think differently about Baudelaire and Benjamin, and I wish to especially acknowledge Batchen's reliance on a collective, identifiable urban experience when discussing Robert Frank: "These occasional returned gazes accentuate the unobtrusive, matter-of-fact quality of all the pictures in the book, creating a rhythm of looks and counter-looks that approximates the experience any flâneur has when traversing the crowded streets of urban life." Geoffrey Batchen, "Guilty Pleasures," in *Ctrl Space: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ed. Thomas Y. Levin, Ursula Frohne, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 457. See also Bennett Simpson, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia: The Exploded View," in Simpson et al., *Philip-Lorca diCorcia* (Boston: Steidl/Institute of Contemporary Art, 2007), 19; Cadava, 61.

<sup>32</sup> Baudelaire, 16.

<sup>33</sup> This is in contrast to exhibitions, of which *Bystander* references scores, most of them organized by MoMA as one-person exhibitions for a range of photographers from Walker Evans to Cartier-Bresson to Meyerowitz.

<sup>34</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 337–38. Westerbeck noted *Vogue's* "rich" "café society" readership, which this author takes to mean those with disposable income. Readers of *Life* and *Look* are not mentioned nor characterized by Westerbeck.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. Weegee, for example, was one such vernacular street photographer before he began selling his crimescene photographs to New York City newspapers. For more, see *ibid.*, 335.

<sup>37</sup> The earliest indicators of the enterprise date to the early 1930s, which John Williams pointed out coincided with the height of the Great Depression. John Williams, "Double-take on Street Photography," *Photofile* [Sydney] (Winter 1983), 1. My thanks to Geoffrey Batchen for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>38</sup> "By the late thirties, 35mm full frame prints on postcards had become the standard practice. From earlier in the late Depression, the occasional square print, printed on slightly smaller than postcard, and probably made with a Rollei or 'Sports Rollei' (127 size film) can be found." *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* The potential income was limited, given that consumers of such street photographs were generally charged a price equivalent to that of a beer for a single print. For more, see *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>40</sup> For further details, see *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> John Williams pointed out that the avoidance of skewed perspectives can be explained because subjects would have been less likely to buy odd-looking photographs of themselves. *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> For more on *Instantáneas*, see Lydia Yee, “Two-way Street,” in *Street Art, Street Life*, 107.

<sup>43</sup> Rossellini’s impact—and that of neorealist cinema more generally—has been noted by other photo historians, including John Szarkowski in his retrospective Winogrand catalogue. See John Szarkowski, *Winogrand: Figments from the Real World* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988), 12. Patrizia Lombardo made clear the contemporary relevance of such films as they grapple with the dawn of the postwar era when she called Rossellini’s *Roma, città aperta* (1945), *Paisà* (1946), and *Deutschland im Jahre Null* (1947) the “city and war trilogy.” Patrizia Lombardo, *Cities, Words and Images: From Poe to Scorsese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 187. Like Szarkowski, Ute Eskildsen has pointed out how the economic realities of war led filmmakers outdoors. See Ute Eskildsen, ed. *Street and Studio: An Urban History of Photography* (London: Tate, 2008), 179–84.

<sup>44</sup> *Open City* thus arguably picked up where the original edition of *Bystander* left off, concluding as it did in the 1994 version with a discussion of work from the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the epilogue to the 2001 edition of *Bystander*, Westerbeck held fast to his original conceit—the tradition of street photography ended with the 1960s: “the last moment at which the liberal consensus of the postwar period was still intact.” Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 407.

<sup>45</sup> Ferguson, 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* The sentence quoted above leads directly into a quotation from *Bystander* on the imitation of Cartier-Bresson’s practice.

<sup>47</sup> Brougher, 26. Solomon-Godeau has aptly described analyses such as Brougher’s as a “technologically deterministic approach.” Solomon-Godeau, “Harry Callahan,” 23.

<sup>48</sup> Brougher, 33.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, 33.

<sup>50</sup> For more on the absence of human subjects from street photography, see Max Kozloff’s discussion of Berenice Abbott. Max Kozloff, *New York: Capital of Photography* (New York: Jewish Museum; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>52</sup> This final sentence of Kozloff’s review implies the insularity of such an approach and an acknowledgment that such a treatment is particular to Westerbeck’s logic. Kozloff, “Street Scenes,” 31.

<sup>53</sup> It seems likely that such concerns about street photography were replaced for Kozloff with an interest in the potential Jewishness of the practice. His catalogue essay advances this argument as its most far-reaching contribution to the genre of street photography. See Kozloff, *New York*, 5, 69–77.

<sup>54</sup> Christopher Phillips, et al., preface to *Strangers*, 9. For another explanation of this shift, see Barbara Pollack, “Strangers: The First ICP Triennial of Photography and Video,” *ARTnews* 102, no. 10 (November 2003): 153.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Clive Scott, *Street Photography: From Atget to Cartier-Bresson* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Brian Wallis, “Ethnographies of Everyday Life,” in *Strangers*, 181. See also David Levi Strauss, “Strangers,” *Artforum* 42, no. 3 (November 2003): 192–93. Like this dissertation, however, *Strangers* has no interest in the maintenance of categorical boundaries. For example, one could assign the range of works in the exhibition to one or more of the following genres: street photography, portraiture, narrative or directorial photography, photojournalism, and fashion photography.

<sup>57</sup> For more, see Georg Simmel, “The Stranger,” in *Strangers*, 105–07.

<sup>58</sup> See especially Squiers, 13, 18; and Edward W. Earle, “A House with Open Windows,” in *Strangers*, 226–27.

<sup>59</sup> Eskildsen, 9.

<sup>60</sup> For more, see *ibid.*, 12; and Ebner, 192–93.

<sup>61</sup> Cartier-Bresson, 42.

<sup>62</sup> In fact, Cartier-Bresson's *Place de l'Europe, Paris*, is reproduced as a full-page frontispiece to *Bystander*. *Bystander*, however, gives the title of the photograph as *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris*. (Incidentally, these are decidedly not proximate locations within Paris. It is striking that one of the most emblematic of canonical street photographs—and the quintessential illustration of the decisive moment practice—has never been geographically pinpointed within Paris.) Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 28.

<sup>63</sup> Kozloff, *New York*, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Cartier-Bresson, 22.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> One such example: "Now the [35mm handheld] camera was truly an extension of the eye, capable of snatching rapid-fire, sequential frames out of the disorder of the world." Brougher, 26.

<sup>67</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 34.

<sup>68</sup> Cartier-Bresson, 27.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 33. For reason of geometry and proportion, Cartier-Bresson argues against the cropping of images. *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 355.

<sup>73</sup> Cartier-Bresson, 24–25.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 40. Photojournalism as a career occurred to Cartier-Bresson later and he learned the art of the photo essay while looking at colleagues' work at illustrated magazines. In the section of the essay titled "The Picture Story," he articulated what seems to be a contrary process to the one demanded by the decisive moment: "Sometimes there is one unique picture whose composition possesses such vigor and richness, and whose content so radiates outward from it, that this single picture is a whole story in itself. But this rarely happens." *Ibid.*, 22–23.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>77</sup> Jörg Huber, "Reading—Seeing—Understanding: In Praise of Illegibility," in *Covering the Real: Kunst und Pressebild von Warhol bis Tillmans* [Art and the press picture from Warhol to Tillmans], ed. Hartwig Fischer (Cologne: DuMont, 2005), 353.

<sup>78</sup> Westerbeck is careful to specify that this sequence was particular to France; in the U.S., he noted, "the institutions came first, and the individuals who made their mark as street photographers emerged from them." Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 253. Westerbeck does not dwell on the impact of *The Decisive Moment's* U.S. publication and the role it played in codifying (if not institutionalizing) the practice of street photography.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>80</sup> Sarah Greenough, *Harry Callahan* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 55n56.

<sup>81</sup> Kozloff, "Street Scenes," 31.

<sup>82</sup> Ben Lifson provided a witty and caustic example of Winogrand's response to questions about his work's categorization as street photography. See his "Garry Winogrand's Art of the Actual," in *The Man in the Crowd: The Uneasy Streets of Garry Winogrand*, by Garry Winogrand (San Francisco: Fraenkel Gallery, in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 1999), 153.

<sup>83</sup> Andy Grundberg, "The Final 'Facts' of Garry Winogrand," in *Crisis of the Real: Writings on Photography, 1974–1989* (New York: Aperture, 1990), 75.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Galassi, "Photography Is a Foreign Language," in Peter Galassi, *Philip-Lorca diCorcia* (New York: Museum of Modern Art/Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 14.

<sup>85</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 405. Westerbeck also explained: "The whole history of this genre became less focused, more diffuse." Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 36. It should also be noted that *Bystander* was begun as early as 1981. For Kozloff and other reviewers of the catalogue and exhibition, that origin date explained Westerbeck's approach to photographs that, by 1994, were already twenty years out of date. See, in particular, Kozloff, "Street Scenes," 31.

<sup>86</sup> Winogrand wrote this on the occasion of his (successful) application for a Guggenheim Fellowship. Quoted in Trudy Wilner Stack, *Winogrand, 1964: Photographs from the Garry Winogrand Archive*, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona (Santa Fe: Arena Editions, 2002), 273.

<sup>87</sup> Nathan Lyons, ed., *Toward a Social Landscape: Bruce Davidson, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Danny Lyon, Duane Michals* (New York: Horizon Press/George Eastman House, 1966), 6.

<sup>88</sup> Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 15. Like the snapshotter, Winogrand often utilized only available light, but he also became adept at daylight flash photography.

<sup>89</sup> For more, see: David Company, "'Almost the Same Thing': Some Thoughts on the Collector-Photographer," in *Cruel and Tender: The Real in Twentieth-Century Photography* (London: Tate, 2003), 34; and Alex J. Sweetman, "The Death of the Author: Garry Winogrand, 1928–1984," in *Garry Winogrand: Early Work (The Archive, no. 26)* (Tucson, AZ: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1990), 7. Both authors offered a critical distinction between snapshot aesthetics and conventions of the everyday practice of snapshot photography.

<sup>90</sup> Sweetman, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Winogrand's retrospective at MoMA included ten mural-size enlargements of his contact sheets, demonstrating on a grand scale what Grundberg has called "Winogrand's characteristic rapid-fire, almost manic shooting style." Grundberg, "Final 'Facts,'" 76.

<sup>92</sup> Given the presence of negatives numbering higher than 36, it seems likely that Winogrand was shooting re-spooled film. In part because of this, I do not rely on negative numbers to understand the sequence of shots. Rather, because the female subject of the frames at the top half of the contact sheet is waiting for and then met by acquaintances, I believe the sequencing of this contact sheet is from bottom to top and right to left. And because those at the Winogrand archive surmise that someone constructed an unmarked, revised contact sheet for publication in the 1988 retrospective catalogue (see Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 24), I have chosen to privilege what I feel is the "original" order of the frames and film strips, as presented in the archive's contact sheet. I acknowledge Tammy Carter, Rights and Reproduction, Center for Creative Photography, for bringing this to my attention, and I am grateful to Christina Wiles, former Work Scholar, Aperture Foundation, for her patience and assistance with this matter.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 31. Unlike earlier photographers, such as Cartier-Bresson, who likely captured most photographs at 1/60th or 1/30th of a second, Winogrand could shoot at 1/1000th of a second. Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 376.

<sup>94</sup> "Sometimes I'll tilt the frame just because it's the easiest way to include certain things, get more in." Quoted in Carlos Gallonet, "Between the Fleeting and the Infinite," in *Garry Winogrand: El Juego de la Fotografía/The Game of Photography* (Madrid: TF. Editores, 2001), 14.

<sup>95</sup> The Winogrand literature most fully attends to the specifics of the city streets on which Winogrand shot when considering the oddity of Winogrand's Los Angeles work. Company has pointed out that Winogrand's exposures made in Los Angeles (and reviewed posthumously) show "a city that defeated many a street photographer looking for photographic epiphanies with its serial monotony. It seems to have better suited image-makers willing to accept and work with its tedium. One thinks particularly of the photobooks and sign paintings of native Los Angeles artist Ed Ruscha." Company, 35n19. Grundberg has linked the specific difference to the car-oriented, rather than pedestrian-focused, streets of Los Angeles, and many of Winogrand's photographs taken there from the passenger seat of a car. See Grundberg, "Final 'Facts,'" 78; Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 36.

<sup>96</sup> Charles Traub recalled a printing session with Winogrand from 1969 or 1970, where 60 to 80 prints were made in rapid succession without modulation or tweaks to the printing. This suggests that while multiple images from a contact sheet might be printed, it was for the purpose of working down to the single standout image. Author's conversation with Charles Traub (Chair, MFA Photography and Related Media, School of Visual Arts) on November 6, 2008.

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Gallonet, 16. Winogrand most often relied on others to accomplish this winnowing of his work. Sweetman, 5. Szarkowski identified just how integral this process was to Winogrand's practice when discussing the later work: "As Winogrand fell farther behind in the criticism of his own work his technique deteriorated. The last few thousand rolls are plagued with technical failures—optical, chemical, and physical flaws—in 100 permutations. The most remarkable of these errors is his failure to hold the camera steady at the moment of expos. Even in bright sunlight, with fast shutter speeds, the negatives are often not sharp. It is as though the making of

an exposure had become merely a gesture of acknowledgement that what lay before the camera might make a photograph [on its own].” Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 36.

<sup>98</sup> Sweetman, 10.

<sup>99</sup> Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 12.

<sup>100</sup> Christopher Phillips, “The Judgment Seat of Photography,” in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 15–16.

Although MoMA consistently programmed photography exhibitions once the photography department was formed in 1940, few other opportunities for viewing photographs existed in New York City, where just two commercial galleries sporadically showed photography. It should also be noted that Winogrand’s photographs were included in two large group exhibitions prior to 1963: *The Family of Man* (1955) and *Seventy Photographers Look at MoMA* (1957).

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Martha Rosler, “In, Around, and Afterthoughts: On Documentary Photography,” in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975–2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press/International Center of Photography, New York, 2004), 189.

<sup>102</sup> Gilloch, 131.

<sup>103</sup> Additionally, no fewer than three of those 1960s exhibitions organized by Eastman House or MoMA including Winogrand’s pictures toured to national and international venues. For more details, see Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 249–50.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Gallonet, 17. Traub remembered that Winogrand favored the word “anecdotal” when describing his photographs, suggesting an interest in narrative but not narrative sequence. Author’s conversation with Charles Traub, November 6, 2008.

<sup>105</sup> Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 130.

<sup>106</sup> Jeffrey Fraenkel, “Preface: The Winogrand Enigma,” in *Man in the Crowd*, 9–11.

<sup>107</sup> Phillips, “Judgment Seat,” 41.

<sup>108</sup> Osborne I. Yellott, “Street Photography,” *Photo-Miniature: A Magazine of Photographic Information* 2, no. 14 (May 1900): 49–88. Yellott concluded his article: “The use of the camera in the streets is a subject about which it would be easy to write a good-sized book.... There are no books published dealing exclusively with street photography, but the following contain useful information on the subject.” Yellott, 88. Still, given the sheer quantity of periodicals devoted to popular photography in the late nineteenth century, it is possible that an earlier deployment of the term “street photography” awaits discovery. For late-nineteenth-century articles and books that specifically address city streets, see Thomson and Smith; H. H. Williams, “Shooting in the Streets,” in *International Annual of Anthony’s Photographic Bulletin and American Process* (New York: E. and H. T. Anthony, 1889): 281–22; and Alexander Black, *Photography Indoors and Out: A Book for Amateurs* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1891).

<sup>109</sup> Yellott, 50. Within the article, Yellott provided categories and technical tables for different photographic conditions, including “portraits and dark objects,” “wet day photography,” “snow scenes, etc.,” and “clouds, distant sea views.” It is up to the reader to correlate these categories to the stated goal of making pictures of “the everyday life of the streets of his city.” Yellott, 50, 68, 86.

<sup>110</sup> Yellott, 50.

<sup>111</sup> Eskildsen, 11.

<sup>112</sup> Yellott, 50–51. For the second category, Yellott also recommended the photographer “work as unobtrusively as possible.” Yellott, 51. By 1900 there had been enough outrage and disciplinary action taken against prying street photographers that Yellott was quick to differentiate between those images resulting from swift, efficient camera handling and those involving any kind of “hidden or disguised” camera. Yellott, 76. For more, see Batchen, 450–51.

<sup>113</sup> Yellott, 62. For more on the importance of viewfinders, see Yellott, 55; Sir William de Wiveleslie Abney, *Instantaneous Photography*. New York: E. and H. T. Anthony, 1896), 86; and J. Craig Annan, “Picture-Making with the Hand-Camera” (1896), in William Buchanan, ed., *J. Craig Annan: Selected Texts and Bibliography* (New York: G. K. Hall, 1994), 63.

<sup>114</sup> Yellott, 85.

<sup>115</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, “The Hand Camera—Its Present Importance,” in *The American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac for 1897*, ed. Walter E. Woodbury (New York: Scovill and Adams, 1896), 19–27. Prior to this article, Stieglitz had maintained distance from

Kodak's encouragement to consider everyday, personal subjects for the hand camera. (The first Kodak appeared in 1888 with 100 rolled paper negatives, and subsequent versions of the camera introduced the medium to millions; it also, as Batchen has pointed out, "made a 'detective' sensibility the bedrock of popular photography" in that era. Batchen, 451.) "The Hand Camera" is Stieglitz's acknowledgment of its importance.

<sup>116</sup> Like Stieglitz, Yellott addressed the tenants' spontaneity, unobtrusiveness, and mobility for street photographers, but not until four years later. Yellott, 50.

<sup>117</sup> Stieglitz, 25. Stieglitz recalled that between 1893 and 1895 he roamed other (lower) districts of Manhattan, such as Five Points: "I loathed the dirty streets, yet I was fascinated." Quoted in Christopher Mulvey and John Simons, "Citytext: A Theoretical Introduction," in *New York: City as Text* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 21. Mulvey and Simons interpreted this as an indication of Stieglitz's quest for a pure image of the city, one not marked by "dirty" human traces.

<sup>118</sup> Mulvey and Simons, 19. Although these comments address Stieglitz's 1892 photograph *The Street*, I have taken the liberty of applying them to *Winter—Fifth Avenue*, since the latter was taken only four blocks north of where 291 would come to reside.

<sup>119</sup> For clarifying the reactionary nature of Stieglitz's turn-of-the-century photographs, I acknowledge Katherine Manthorne's "John Sloan's Moving-Picture Eye," *American Art* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 80–95; as well as that article's indebtedness to Jonathan Crary's *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

<sup>120</sup> Other literary approaches are listed in the bibliography—I provide annotations for a few of them here—and most demonstrate the literary approach's tendency to dismiss images as mere illustrations to literary practices. (Scott is exceptional in this regard, as is the essay by Mulvey and Simons in their anthology which aims to consider "the ways in which the cultural life of the city is both expressive of the environment and determined by it." Mulvey and Simons, 10.) Another scholar of Literature and American Studies has authored a book about various writings' depictions of cities as whole entities (rather than as an accumulation of details). See Kevin R. McNamara, *Urban Verbs: Arts and Discourses of American Cities* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996). Lombardo, a professor of French and Comparative Literature, has published an inquiry into literature and visual arts concerned with urban reality, given that the experience of the last of these hinges on continuous exchange among a city's inhabitants. I acknowledge her provocative declaration that street photography "exists in the gap between what it is and its reception." Lombardo, 156.

<sup>121</sup> Scott, 210.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 1, 2, respectively. To give some sense of the range of the project, Scott's articulation of the "street-photographic" results from comparisons with the so-called genres he believed closest to it: documentary, photojournalism, painting, and literature. I take less issue with the first two, but the vast scope of painting and literary practices would suggest that Scott was merely linking to street photography the painting and literary practices he knew best. His topically arranged chapters reinforce the impression of a picking-and-choosing approach to all the arts; one chapter, for example, is devoted to "street types," including the "street-photographic nude," notably painted or taken indoors.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. Solomon-Godeau has similarly critiqued *Bystander's* understanding of street photography, "a category so capacious as to be essentially meaningless." Solomon-Godeau, "Harry Callahan," 21.

<sup>124</sup> Scott, 15.

<sup>125</sup> With respect to time, Scott wrote: "The photo-instant is often looked upon as a fragment of time, of evidence, snatched from a continuum, which one can replace in that continuum, so that the continuum gives it back its meaning; alternatively, one can leave the photograph to find a new life for itself as an autonomous image, in which case the instant of taking will become increasingly arbitrary as an instant *in* time, and more significant as an instant *of* time, where the time itself—1929 or 1957, say—matters less and less." *Ibid.*, 45. I contend that street photography both represents a moment from historical continuum and finds independent meaning in its subsequent circulation. With respect to the overlooked subjects of street photography, Scott acknowledged his debt to Benjamin's essay "A Short History of Photography."

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>127</sup> Relevant texts include: Henri Lefèbvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Henri Lefèbvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 1991); Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Mod World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). Further sources can be found in the bibliography.

<sup>128</sup> Urban planning produces, in de Certeau's terms, "the panorama-city... a 'theoretical' (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices." De Certeau, 93.

<sup>129</sup> Lefebvre, *Critique*, 97.

<sup>130</sup> Admittedly, the phrase "everyday life" poses challenges, begging the immediate question, as articulated by Ben Highmore: "whose everyday life?" Highmore's anthology questions the transparency of the everyday, aiming for "a less everyday use of the term everyday life." Furthermore, "Everyday life is not simply the name that is given to a reality readily available for scrutiny; it is also the name for aspects of life that lie hidden." Highmore shares this author's desire to look between and past the assumptions of a prevailing discourse, and I acknowledge the assistance provided by his introduction in spurring the refinement of my conception of the dissertation in this regard. Ben Highmore, "Introduction: Questioning Everyday Life," in *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

<sup>131</sup> Lefebvre, *Critique*, 9.

<sup>132</sup> See Highmore, 14. Again, although *Bystander* rests its definition of street photography on the notion of the everyday, this dissertation takes another approach to the genre.

<sup>133</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

<sup>134</sup> Jacobs omitted Los Angeles from her study, explaining that it was an "extreme example of a metropolis with little public life" in "ordinary living and working." *Ibid.*, 72. More generally, Jacobs charted key models of city planning from the decentrist imposition of order onto old cities (the Garden City plan) to Le Corbusier's social utopian plan for the Radiant City. For more, see *ibid.*, 20–22. For a detailed consideration of the differences in use and planning between older and newer cities, see David Frisby, "Straight or Crooked Streets? The Contested Rational Spirit of the Modern Metropolis," in *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*, ed. Ian Boyd Whyte (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>135</sup> This question was not rhetorical, it was followed with a declarative "you can't." Jacobs, 7.

<sup>136</sup> "The tolerance, the room for great differences among neighbors—differences that often go far deeper than differences in color—which are possible and normal in intensely urban life, but which are so foreign to suburbs and pseudosuburbs, are possible and normal only when streets of great cities have built-in equipment allowing strangers to dwell in peace tog on civilized but essentially dignified and reserved terms." *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>137</sup> Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Renia Ehrenfeucht, *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, forthcoming 2009) n.p. From MIT Press publicity description, accessed online 1/14/09: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?tttype=2andtid=11799>.

<sup>138</sup> Jacobs, 25.

<sup>139</sup> Notably, Deutsche laid bare urban studies' own entrenchment and "idealist presuppositions" that held way in the field "until recently" (as of the article's publication). For more on this critique of historical urban studies, see Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 47.

<sup>140</sup> Deutsche categorized them as follows: "the city as subject matter for art; public art or art works in the city; the city itself as a work of art; and the urban environment as an influence exercised over the emotional or perceptual 'experience' of artists, an experience, in turn, 'expressed' or 'reflected' in works of art." *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 46–47.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>143</sup> Deutsche has advocated this multiplicity, arguing that there is no single, fixed city, but her own scholarship remains closely tethered to New York. See the bibliography for relevant works.

<sup>144</sup> For more on the "white downtowns" of the South, see Chapter Three. For an early introduction to the notion that a city's specifics inform photographs made of it, I acknowledge Tim Griffin's "Private Eye," *Time Out*, September 6–11, 2001, 113.

<sup>145</sup> Hales limited the historical period of his study to 1915 because in a few short years, the U.S. would be declared a nation of city-dwellers. Hales, 3. The 1920 census data found approximately 51% of Americans living in urban locations, then defined as an area with 2500 or more residents. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, "Selected Historical Decennial Census, Urban and Rural Definitions and Data," <http://www.census.gov/population/wwwwithcensusdata/files/table-4.pdf>. [accessed March 3, 2009] Carol Squiers, in her contribution to *Strangers*, invoked the same transition and rapid urbanization of the U.S. in the early twentieth century. Squiers, 13. Ferguson charted a similar social distance in the urban experience but dates it to post-World War II in *Open City*. Ferguson, 9.

<sup>146</sup> Hales, 5–6.

<sup>147</sup> The case-study chapters on Rosler and diCorcia augment that on Avedon to suggest a range of "constructed" images made on city streets. While I disagree with any attempt to exclusively associate such photographs with modernist impulses, Hales's writing provided a source of inspiration for this claim. As the nineteenth century's presentation of photography as fact eventually "gave way to a pragmatic realization that photography's approximation of reality was illusory and that the city was beyond wish, ideal, or dream. The hidden truth of urban photography—that to order the city was to fictionalize it—would become, for the modernist photographers of the twentieth century, a matter for celebration in a new, complex, and artful love affair between photography and the urban world." *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>149</sup> Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 34.

<sup>150</sup> Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 130.

<sup>151</sup> One way to emphasize the intrinsic role of reception is to configure it as part of a triangle of relationships, with the photographer at one point of the triangle, the photographic subject at another, and the viewer at another.

<sup>152</sup> The collective experience of city streets to which I refer in this dissertation is purposefully meant to encompass the accumulation of many individuals' experiences of the city.

<sup>153</sup> I wish to acknowledge Eskildsen's recent proposition that all twentieth-century photography must be contextualized by the history of photographic reproduction, from newspapers to magazines, postcards to books. Eskildsen, 12.

<sup>154</sup> Indeed, the readings of viewers' initial encounters with the work in each chapter will always be subject to revision, given changes in contextual and historical circumstances, but that is no reason to eliminate street photography's reception from the discourse.

<sup>155</sup> It has only very recently been argued that Rosler's *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* should be considered in the context of (or at least proximate to) street photography. The exhibition and catalogue *Street Art, Street Life* make canonical street photography the springboard for later works of art in various media made in and on the street. See, in particular, essays by this author and Frazer Ward: Katherine A. Bussard, "Canon and Context: Notes on American Street Photography," in *Street Art, Street Life*, eds. Lydia Yee and Whitney Rugg (New York: Aperture, 2008), 90–98; Frazer Ward, "Shifting Ground: Street Art of the 1960s and '70s," in Yee and Rugg, 99–104. I am grateful to Lydia Yee for a provocative conversation in the conceptual stages of the exhibition, which takes canonical street photography as the springboard for later works of art made in and on the street across a variety of media. Portions of my essay for that catalogue appear here in revised form.

<sup>156</sup> Avedon has not been discussed in any history of street photography, though Livingston did include some of Avedon's New York street photographs from 1946 in her survey *The New York School*. She claimed that Avedon was practicing "street photography in a manner just as intense, and just as wildly inventive, as any of his colleagues in the New York School," though she never articulated street photography as a shared interest of this loose group of photographers. Instead, Livingston privileged documentary, thereby replicating the omission of urban content and context that Szarkowski had done a quarter-century earlier in his *New Documents* exhibition. Jane Livingston, *New York School: Photographs, 1936–1963* (New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, 1992), 339.

<sup>157</sup> The photographs considered in Chapter Two were made between 1947 and 1952. During those years, approximately 60–64% of Americans lived in urban areas, and *Bazaar* targeted a

readership based largely within those urban populations. (For more on the circulation of *Harper's Bazaar*, see fn 135 in Chapter Two.) U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, "Selected Historical Decennial Census, Urban and Rural Definitions and Data,"

<http://www.census.gov/population/wwwwithcensusdata/files/table-4.pdf>. [accessed March 3, 2009].

<sup>158</sup> *Life* ceased weekly publication in 1972, and *Look* did so in 1971.

<sup>159</sup> Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, eds., *"Takin' It to the Streets": A Sixties Reader: Second Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

<sup>160</sup> Although Cold War–era anticommunist fervor presented another pressing problem, certain authors have linked domestic racial discrimination to the foreign policy against communism, each informing the other. For example, C. Eric Lincoln wrote of his 1964 State Department speaking tour of Europe: "Thus it is that our foreign relations program, or by extension, our inordinate fear of communism, becomes an important liberating factor in the racial struggle at home." C. Eric Lincoln, "The Race Problem and International Relations," *Racial Influences on American Foreign Policy*, ed. George W. Shepherd, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 57.

<sup>161</sup> Jacobs, 71.

<sup>162</sup> Among these three, newspapers frequently maintained an audience larger than that of the other two media combined. James L. Baughman, "Who Read *Life*? The Circulation of America's Favorite Magazine," in *Looking at "Life" Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 43.

<sup>163</sup> For more on the term "movement," see Chapter Three, fn 7.

<sup>164</sup> In this chapter and Chapter Four, my attention to the urban dispossessed replicates some of Baudelaire's and Benjamin's attention to the same topic. Benjamin, for example, viewed the city as a place of suffering and conflict, declaring: "Cities are battlefields." Quoted in Gilloch, 14. Gilloch noted, however, that this outlook allowed Benjamin to increasingly abandon the collective potential of cities, instead adopting a sense of cities as the site of a "dehumanized" urban mass. *Ibid.*, 16, 146.

<sup>165</sup> When this dissertation was proposed, I intended Chapter Three to address the civil rights photographs of Bruce Davidson. I had admired the intimacies his photographs seemed to afford the viewer, particularly those that relied on his access as a white man working in the South. (My dissertation proposal references a Davidson photograph showing a member of the Ku Klux Klan thrusting a rally announcement toward Davidson.) I soon discovered, however, that Davidson's photographs were published infrequently at the time, likely only in the *Saturday Evening Post* and perhaps only on one occasion. I also briefly considered Danny Lyon's photographs for Chapter Three's case study, but his affiliation with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee meant that he photographed as frequently indoors as out. This was not—indeed, often could not be—the case for a photojournalist like Moore, who was expected to cover the action rather than participate in it (or try to do both, as Lyon did). Both Davidson's and Lyon's work made possible my increased appreciation for the importance of Moore's status as a Southern white man. From conversations with Davidson at his studio, February 9, 2006. See also Julian Cox, "Bearing Witness: Photograph and the Civil Rights Movement," *Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2008), 38.

<sup>166</sup> A complication of Cartier-Bresson's practice precedes this quotation: "Actually taking a photograph usually involves acting so quickly that there is rarely time to wait for the '*decisive moment*' or consider in advance the details of the situation. The requirements of *spontaneity* and *intuition* mean that the people taking the pictures not only respond to the event to be photographed, but also reproduce the images already stored in their mind." Huber, 349–50 [emphases added].

<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1965), 975.

<sup>168</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, "Introduction," in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Chicago: Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), xxiv.

<sup>169</sup> Stanford Anderson, preface to *On Streets*, ed. Stanford Anderson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), vii. A *Life* article fifteen years earlier addresses the recent programs of rapid industrialization and urbanization adopted in many American cities—not coincidentally, the same conditions which produced large-scale urban homelessness—declared: "The very questions that

explore this larger story have an ugly ring to them: Why, really, are white people abandoning their big cities?" Theodore H. White, "Racial Collision in the Big Cities," *Life* 55, no. 21 (November 22, 1963): 104. Note the assumption that cities belonged to white people and were a possession to abandon. See fn 144 above.

<sup>170</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 46–47. Ehrenreich elaborated: "In all the debate and discussion that surrounded the beginnings of the War on Poverty—and later, in the endless evaluations of it—the poor had no voice. In fact, their principle virtue, as opposed to the black insurgency, was that they were so agreeably silent." *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>171</sup> Martha Rosler, "Notes on Quotes," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 145.

<sup>172</sup> Florian Ebner contrasted this representation of one urban population with that of another: "It is no coincidence that the *clochard* has been the most photographed urban subject since the advent of the handheld camera. In contrast to the reclining *clochard*, we notice the verticality of the pedestrian whose gait is straight, energetic, rushed, confident, and who is framed by an urban architecture stretching skyward." Ebner, 192.

<sup>173</sup> In 1960 Claes Oldenburg created an installation environment called *The Street: A Metaphoric Mural*. Its poetic manifest read, in part: "I am for an art that is political-erotic-mystical, that does something / other than sit on its ass in a museum.... I am for an art that tells you the time of day, or where such and such a street is. / I am for an art that helps old ladies across the street." Quoted in Burns, et al., *New York: An Illustrated History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 540–41. Bennett Simpson has noted: "This move can be seen in broad cultural terms that rhyme with the 'personal is the political' attitudes of the 1970s, a shirking of big gestures, abstract ideals, and the confidence that the meaning of America could be found by wandering its streets." Simpson, 14–16.

<sup>174</sup> See the full quotation on page 17. Galassi, "Photography Is," 14. See also Thomas Weski, "Contemplation, Pleasure, Understanding," in Philip-Lorca diCorcia and Thomas Weski, *Streetwork* (Hanover: Sprengel Museum Hanover, 2000), n.p.

<sup>175</sup> With respect to color street photography, Keith Davis, commenting on Harry Callahan's work, noted: "In this color-flooded world, black-and-white images run the risk of seeming quaint or antique." Keith F. Davis, "The Rhythms of the City, Continuity and Change in the Work of Harry Callahan," in *Harry Callahan: New Color, Photographs 1978–1987* (Kansas City, MO: Hallmark Cards, 1988), 22. Rosler concurred: "color is now sufficiently normalized that black-and-white imagery may seem mannered and artificial." Martha Rosler, "Post-Documentary, Post-Photography?" in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 225.

<sup>176</sup> In his essay on the history of surveillance photography, Batchen has noted that photographs by "[Cindy] Sherman and diCorcia might be taken as a critique of the art of surveillance photography." His description of so-called detective photography as "the representation of untrammelled reality—the casual framing, haphazard composition, uncontrolled lighting, slice-of-life facticity" could just as easily be a description of street photography, particularly as he invoked the latter in the article. Although not the subject of his essay, street photography may exist in a mutually informing relationship to surveillance photography, Batchen seems to acknowledge, thereby positing that one's history cannot be understood without the other. Batchen, 458.

<sup>177</sup> Rosler, "Notes on Quotes," 135.

<sup>178</sup> This sentence is a rewording of Gilloch's enumeration of the critical models Benjamin outlined as responses to the city. "1. Archaeological: an approach concerned with the salvation and preservation of the objects and traces of the past that modern society threatens to destroy. 2. Memorial: Benjamin exhorts the Critical Theorist to oppose the modern propensity for amnesia, to remember those whose struggles and sufferings in the past would otherwise be forgotten. 3. Dialectical: Benjamin develops his conception of the dialectical image, the momentary mutual recognition and illumination of past and present." Gilloch, 13.

<sup>179</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Chicago: Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, 1996), 325.

## Chapter Two

- <sup>1</sup> Carmel Snow, "Notes from Paris by Carmel Snow," *Harper's Bazaar* (May 1946), 124, 126.
- <sup>2</sup> Smith, Roberta. "Eyes of Richard Avedon." *Art in America* 67 (January–February 1979): 135.
- <sup>3</sup> Although Avedon continued to work on location in Paris, the 1950s found him increasingly moving indoors—first to the decidedly Parisian interiors of cafés, theaters, and restaurants, and mid-decade, more often to his Paris studio (though nothing about the studio signified its location in Paris). (See fn 50 below for more details.) Avedon's transition from the streets of Paris to his studio seems prompted by a desire for greater control over lighting and atmosphere. The transition is well represented in Avedon's book *Made in France: Richard Avedon* (San Francisco: Fraenkel Gallery, 2001). Nancy Hall-Duncan has termed Avedon's studio fashion photographs "locationless" shots. See Nancy Hall-Duncan, *The History of Fashion Photography* (New York: Alpine Book, 1977), 140.
- <sup>4</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "A Note on Photography and the Simulacral," *October* 31 (Winter 1984): 65. I have taken the liberty of redirecting this quote to Avedon's fashion photographs rather than Irving Penn's still-life photographs for the cosmetics brand, Clinique, which are among Krauss's subjects in this essay.
- <sup>5</sup> Photographs were first copied by engravers for *Document photographique de la Maison Reutlinger* around 1881, then printed with the newly refined halftone process in *La Mode Pratique*, and by 1901 the periodical *Les Modes* could rely almost exclusively on photographic illustration. Hall-Duncan, 22, 26.
- <sup>6</sup> The firm reportedly sent copies of such photographs to the ladies they featured, requesting their permission for publication, "a delicate concession to the fact that these fashion shots were candid." *Ibid.*, 30.
- <sup>7</sup> Avedon remarked on this formula, saying that by 1947: "fashion had become a business, and... the days of court portraitists like [George Hoyningen-Huene (1900–1968)], Baron de Meyer, and Cecil Beaton, who belonged to the same gratin as their subjects—aristocrats modeling their own clothes—were finished." Quoted in Judith Thurman, "Hidden Women," in Avedon, *Made in France*, n.p.
- <sup>8</sup> Susan Kismaric and Eva Respini, "Fashioning Fiction in Photography," in *Fashioning Fiction in Photography since 1990* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 12. The apogee of this approach can be found in Irving Penn's best-known work from this period.
- <sup>9</sup> Thurman, n.p.
- <sup>10</sup> Kismaric and Respini are among those who link Munkacsi's photographic style to the method of snapshot photography. Kismaric and Respini 13. A skilled and liberal cropper of his images in the darkroom, Munkacsi required negatives 3 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches and larger to ensure that he would have the level of detail and visual information to support those crops. For more on both his shooting and cropping practices, see Martin Munkacsi, "Think While You Shoot," *Harper's Bazaar* (November 1935), 92, 152.
- <sup>11</sup> Munkacsi encouraged spontaneity. See Munkacsi, "Think While You Shoot," 152. Munkacsi was equally content to orchestrate shoots that would yield such images, as when he employed blowers to make a peignoir seem to blow in a breeze appropriate to the garden setting. See Martin Munkacsi, *Martin Munkacsi* (New York: Aperture, 1992), 48.
- <sup>12</sup> Carmel Snow, *The World of Carmel Snow* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962), 88.
- <sup>13</sup> It is also worth noting the reach of the magazines such as *BIZ*, the most widely read picture magazine in the world with a circulation of two million in the late 1920s. Munkacsi seems to have inherently understood the impact of picture-driven magazines so well that he was one of two men responsible for the maquette of what would become *Life* magazine. For more details, see Munkacsi, *Martin Munkacsi*, 50.
- <sup>14</sup> Quoted in Kismaric and Respini, 13.
- <sup>15</sup> In 1978, writing with hindsight, Susan Sontag posited that fashion photography's embrace of movement and the outdoors had been inevitable. Susan Sontag, "Looking with Avedon," *Vogue* 168 (September 1978): 461.
- <sup>16</sup> Hall-Duncan, 72, 78.
- <sup>17</sup> The important function of the word *Dior* should not be underestimated. As Barthes's lengthy study makes plain, such language describes clothing, comments upon it, and generally "provides

it with signifiers and signifieds abundant enough to constitute a system of meaning.” Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), xi.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Jane Livingston, “The Art of Richard Avedon,” in Richard Avedon, *Evidence, 1944–1994* (New York: Random House in association with the Whitney Museum of Art, 1994), 24n.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Avedon, “Munkacsi,” *Harper’s Bazaar* (June 1964): 64. In this same tribute, Avedon noted that he never met Munkacsi.

<sup>20</sup> Hall-Duncan, 136.

<sup>21</sup> Helen Levitt’s solo exhibition was on view there from March 10 to April 18, 1943.

<sup>22</sup> Livingston, “The Art,” 37. Likely the best examples of Avedon’s struggle to conform to a street photography more in keeping with that of Levitt are the pictures he made in 1949 on assignment for *Life* magazine. Retracted by Avedon at the time because they looked like imitations, these photographs were eventually published in Livingston’s *The New York School* and subsequently in both Avedon’s *An Autobiography* and *Evidence, 1944–1994*.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Winthrop Sargeant, “Profiles: A Woman Entering a Taxi in the Rain,” *New Yorker*, November 8, 1958, 80, 82. This statement dates to three decades before Avedon’s discussion of street photography with Jane Livingston. In 1993 Avedon said to Livingston: “I wanted to get away from everyone else’s subject matter, the man on the street, and deal with things I understood better.... It wasn’t that I didn’t know about people in the street. It’s that I knew something different from what Helen Levitt knew.” Livingston, “The Art,” 38.

<sup>24</sup> The opening credits devote one screen to Avedon’s role and to a smaller note of thanks to *Harper’s Bazaar*, likely as a nod to both Avedon’s participation and for that magazine’s clear inspiration of the film’s fictional one, *Quality. Funny Face*, 1957, produced by Paramount Pictures, directed by Stanley Donen, and written by Leonard Gershe.

<sup>25</sup> See Sargeant, 54, 71–72, 80, 82–83; and Thurman, n.p.

<sup>26</sup> This second, practical directive of Avery’s may have doubled as a tribute to Munkacsi. See Munkacsi, *Martin Munkacsi*, 50. “Run!” was also a frequent command overheard in Avedon’s studio. See Stephen Birmingham, “Richard Avedon: Photographer of Beauty,” *Cosmopolitan* 151 (June 1961): 48.

<sup>27</sup> *Harper’s Bazaar* did publish color photographs from 1947 to 1954, most dramatically and most often on its cover.

<sup>28</sup> In the years between 1947 and 1954, Louise Dahl-Wolfe was the only other photographer assigned to the Paris collections. Early in his career, Snow recalled, Avedon threatened to leave for *Vogue* if he was not taken to Paris for the next collection, despite coverage of that collection having already been promised to another prominent photographer at the magazine. Snow does not date this venture, but claims that the secrecy of Avedon’s presence in Paris meant all his photographs were taken clandestinely. “When they were given three double-page spreads in the Paris issue of the *Bazaar* [*sic*], you can imagine the row with the other photographer.” See Snow, *World*, 203–04.

<sup>29</sup> Rosamond Bernier, “Richard Avedon,” in *Richard Avedon, 1947–1977* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1978), n.p. Edits made to Bernier’s essay by the book’s U.S. publisher struck the word “whole” from the description of the magazine team; indeed, not all on staff at *Harper’s Bazaar* enjoyed the Paris collections on location. Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material (box 23, section II), cuts made by American publisher to the exhibition catalogue and poster for *Richard Avedon: Photographs 1974–77*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 3. Bernier continued: “[Avedon] spent all day on location and all night in a little studio on the rue Jean-Goujon. Paris for him was his little team: the mode, his assistant, an electrician, the aged messenger who brought the big dressmakers’ boxes round on his bicycle. He had no contact whatever with the glittering world that was conjured up in the photographs that would appear in *Harper’s Bazaar*.” *Ibid.* Bernier’s essay manuscript bearing edits for its French translation contains two closing sentences—with pencil strike-through marks—to the paragraph quoted above: “But neither did the people who made the clothes, or the girls who modelled [*sic*] them For them. The day ended in small and very cold rooms where they could never pull on a sweater too many.” Given that this sentence appears—completely unmarked—in the manuscript version with edits by the American publisher, one might conclude that for French readers of the essay, there

was less need to evoke the practical deprivations of postwar life? Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material (box 23, section II), cuts made for Rosamond Bernier Russell's French text for the exhibition catalogue *Richard Avedon: Photographs 1974–77*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 3. Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material, cuts made by American publisher, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Livingston, "The Art," 88.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Thurman, n.p. The "troupe of acrobats" performed for his camera in the Marais, possibly the site of a guillotine (though it is unclear which "Marquis" Avedon is referencing). Possibly, he is attributing to the Marais courtyard the history of the Place de la Concorde, where he photographed more than once and the location of the guillotine that killed Louis XVI.

<sup>32</sup> Janet Malcolm, "Photography: A Series of Proposals," *New Yorker* (October 23, 1978): 132.

<sup>33</sup> Snow, *World*, 195. Dorian Leigh has explained that editors did not simply choose whichever designs they liked best from a couturier's collection for photographic coverage in her magazine. "She had to select those designs that were going to be available in the United States, either as originals or copies, so that the women reading the magazine could go out and buy what they saw and liked." Dorian Leigh, *The Girl Who Had Everything: The Story of "The Fire and Ice Girl"* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 78.

<sup>34</sup> Leigh, 79–80. Of the Paris locations, Leigh noted: "I modeled in outdoor markets, in restaurants, on a street corner near a flower vendor setting up his cart, in theater lobbies, in the park wheeling a baby carriage—anywhere Frenchwomen might be seen." *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>35</sup> Livingston suggested that the Rolleiflex 2 1/4 was Avedon's primary camera until 1969, but the move from street to studio in the late 1950s also paralleled a move to the 8 x 10 camera.

Livingston, "The Art," 59.

<sup>36</sup> Livingston, "The Art," 36.

<sup>37</sup> Adam Gopnik, "The Light Writer," in Avedon, *Evidence*, 103.

<sup>38</sup> On the matter of performance, Avedon wrote that, ideally, the model was a performance herself. "The ultimate expression of this kind of performance—extreme stylized behavior—is of course fashion, where everything—the entire body, hair, makeup, fabric—is all used to create a performance." Richard Avedon, "Borrowed Dogs," *Grand Street* (Autumn 1987): 57.

<sup>39</sup> Regarding the model-as-mannequin in the 1940s, see Kismaric and Respini, 12, also quoted on page 58. Kismaric and Respini rightly pointed to the extent to which models were largely considered in the industry to be only slightly more alive than inanimate dress forms. *Harper's Bazaar* upheld this tradition as late as 1949, as related in this caption text: "Heros [sic] of the French mannequins—the Tour de la France bicycle racers on their triumphal return to Paris." *Harper's Bazaar* (October 1949), 137.

<sup>40</sup> Dorian Leigh recalled that it was standard practice for one model to go to Paris for one season's collections, but that Avedon "always took two, feeling that they gave him more flexibility and stimulated him creatively." Leigh, 75–76.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Sunny Harnett dominated Avedon's work from 1955 to 1956. Suzy Parker and a new string of evermore iconic and famous models working with Avedon ushered in an era of fame and household familiarity for models of the 1960s. (Avedon's sustained and singular depiction of individual models also helped them earn the top pay of their day; Dovima made \$30 per hour in 1950 and Parker \$120 per hour in 1959.) See Mimi Swartz, "The Couture Cinderella," *Vanity Fair*, June 1991, 150; and Hollis Alpert, "The Ambiguities of Suzy Parker," *Esquire*, March 1959, 74.

<sup>43</sup> Sontag, "Looking," 508 [emphasis added].

<sup>44</sup> Sargeant, 82. Sargeant wrongly dated the Dorian Leigh photo to 1950; it appeared in the October 1949 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. For more on Avedon's escapades in Paris into the 1950s, see *ibid.*, 42, 72, 77.

<sup>45</sup> Avedon greatly admired the decisive moment exemplified by Henri Cartier-Bresson, whose book of the same title appeared during the years Avedon was making his Paris street photographs for *Harper's Bazaar*. Livingston, "The Art," 36.

<sup>46</sup> In his studio in later years, Avedon would always play music to suit the tastes of the model and capitalize on the look he wanted in the final photograph. For more, see Sargeant, 54; and Birmingham, 48–51.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, "Eye," 135.

<sup>48</sup> The previously unpublished Paris photographs were first printed for a fine art portfolio made on the occasion of Avedon's retrospective exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in 1978. The press release for that exhibition notes: "Most of the photographs [in the exhibition and portfolio] were taken during assignments for *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, but some have not been published or exhibited before." Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material (box 23, section II), press release for the exhibition *Richard Avedon: Photographs 1974–77*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. n.p.

<sup>49</sup> These kiosks were created by their namesake, Morris, at the end of the nineteenth century. To this day in Paris, their rounded surfaces display posters of upcoming events.

<sup>50</sup> The exhaustive list would include several non-public locations such as Maxim's, the Casino at Le Touquet, Helena Rubenstein's apartment on the Île Saint Louis, the interior of the Café des Beaux Arts, the open-air dining room at the Prè-Catalan in the Bois de Bologne, and backstage at the Folies-Bergère. See, for example, the Paris collection coverage in the October 1949 and September 1954 issues of *Harper's Bazaar*. Kismaric and Respini called these "unglamorous and dicey settings," but they are infinitely more varied, acceptable, and public than either "unglamorous" or "dicey" suggest. Kismaric and Respini, 16.

<sup>51</sup> Oskar Steinheil, ed., *Baedeker's Touring Guides: France including Corsica* (Freiburg: Karl Baedeker; London: George Allen and Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1961), 356.

<sup>52</sup> Snow, "Notes," 200.

<sup>53</sup> Bernier, n.p. Incidentally, edits made to Bernier's essay by the book's U.S. publisher struck this entire paragraph of the essay, a proposed change clearly not implemented. However, that manuscript use the word "on-going" to describe Avedon's "romance with Paris." Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material, cuts made by American publisher, 7.

<sup>54</sup> See Bernier, n.p.; Livingston, "The Art," 50; and Sargeant, 72.

<sup>55</sup> The Marais contains some of Paris's oldest architecture and reflects its early urban plan, making it one of the city's most historical arrondissement.

<sup>56</sup> Sargeant, 72. "Fashion photographs are ostensibly as transitory as last year's style or this month's magazine issue." Hall-Duncan, 10.

<sup>57</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 49.

<sup>58</sup> Walter Benjamin understood Paris in similar terms and recognized similar contributions in his appreciation of Paris-as-capital. In his essay, which lays the groundwork for his extensive and never-completed *Arcades Project*, Benjamin examined Paris by way of its architecture, visual spectacles, world expositions, dwellings, and city planning. Benjamin thus outlined some of the city's contributions to culture and civilization; not surprisingly, the industry of fashion is referenced throughout. Walter Benjamin, "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century," *Selected Writings, Volume Three, 1935–1938* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), 32–49.

<sup>59</sup> Stallabrass has emphasized that street photography was not practiced easily or lightly during the Occupation; permits from the German authorities were required. Stallabrass, n.p. Thus, those street photographs taken for publication by those with permits represent restricted views of Paris.

<sup>60</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 12.

<sup>61</sup> Long understood as a hallmark of the modern, industrial society, leisure time is deeply enmeshed in and even defined by its consumption of spectacles. See *ibid.*, 13, 22.

<sup>62</sup> A short, provisional list would include: Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: Verson, 1983) and *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verson, 1985); Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*; Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990) and *Suspensions of Perception*; and Don Slater, "Photography and Modern Vision" in *Visual Culture*, ed. Chris Jenks (London: Routledge, 1995), 218–37.

<sup>63</sup> Slater, 223, 232.

<sup>64</sup> In his article for the *New Yorker*, Sargeant compared Avedon's Paris photographs to the realism found in theatre. Sargeant, 77. More direct is Livingston's phrase *cinema vérité* to describe Avedon's technique. Livingston, "The Art," 48–50. Semantically, "realism" describes the resulting photograph and *cinema vérité* describes the making of that photograph, but the term "reality effect" intentionally references the act of viewing that photograph and its effect upon reception.

<sup>65</sup> Nancy J. Troy, *Couture Culture: A Study in Modern Art and Fashion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 18.

<sup>66</sup> Valerie Steele used the same term as Guilbaut on the opening page of her insightful history of Paris's domination of the fashion industry from the fourteenth through twentieth centuries. Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 5. More specifically within that industry, the tier of haute couture is widely acknowledged to have emerged in the 1860s in the fashion capital. See Troy, 18–19.

<sup>67</sup> Alexandra Palmer, *Couture and Commerce: The Transatlantic Fashion Trade in the 1950s* (Vancouver: UBC Press in association with the Royal Ontario Museum, 2001), 4. Palmer's book represents a concerted attempt to examine haute couture from socio-economic and cultural perspectives, "what actual worn garments meant in the context of the international fashion system after the Second World War." *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>68</sup> Within haute couture, there are two classes—Couture and Couture-Création—each with their own subdivisions. Every fashion house's status within a class and subdivision is evaluated annually by a jury of Chambre syndicale members. For more, see *ibid.*, 15–16.

<sup>69</sup> The Nazis had initially intended to relocate the entire industry to Berlin or Vienna. The President of the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne, Lucien Lelong, argued strongly against this, thereby keeping intact, if weakened, the French houses. Steele, 266; and Palmer, 16. Not incidentally, the war years saw the first widespread success of ready-to-wear apparel by American designers. Hall-Duncan, 136; and Kismaric and Respini, 13.

<sup>70</sup> Hall-Duncan, 130.

<sup>71</sup> Part of what so distinguished *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* from their competitors is that both had active and concurrent studios in New York, Paris, and London over most decades of the twentieth century. *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>72</sup> For more on this topic, see *ibid.*, 122–28.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 79. The founding or postwar reissue of four major fashion magazines in France was another sign of revitalization for that industry: *Mari-France* (1944), *Elle* (1945), *Femmes d'aujourd'hui* (1950), and *Marie-Claire* (1954). For more, see *ibid.*, 78–81.

<sup>74</sup> For more, see Edmonde Charles-Roux et al., *Théâtre de la mode*, photographs by David Seidner, edited by Susan Train with Eugène Clarence Braun-Munk (New York: Rizzoli in cooperation with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991).

<sup>75</sup> *Le Théâtre de la Mode* (New York: American Relief for France, under the auspices of L'Association Française d'Action Artistique, 1945), n.p. Steele quoted the French Ambassador to London as claiming the exhibition's creation as another form of Resistance: "Let there be no misunderstanding on the part of those who are going to see these evocations of luxury. These beautiful objects are a labour of love on the part of the Paris *midinettes* [expert seamstresses], who made them with frozen fingers in their famished city." Quoted in Steele, 272–73.

<sup>76</sup> Of the necessity to revive the industry, Palmer noted that exports of haute couture were worth 2,000 million francs prior to World War II. Palmer, 19.

<sup>77</sup> See Steele, 272.

<sup>78</sup> In 1945 and 1946, this was not the case, as Palmer noted, because private clients were most often the only clients. (Snow's recollections of the wartime black market for haute couture reinforce this, implicating this "black market" with German sympathizing. See Snow, *World*, 149–50.) Moreover, Palmer dated the revived, steady import of Parisian haute couture to the fall 1947 collections, one season after the New Look's premiere but the exact same season as Avedon's first Paris photographs appeared in *Harper's Bazaar*. Palmer, 23, 28.

<sup>79</sup> *Harper's Bazaar* (June 1946), 80–83. See also Steele, 272.

<sup>80</sup> In her catalogue essay on Avedon's fashion photographs, Bernier suggested that Avedon first traveled to Paris in late 1946, just months prior to Dior's February 1947 collection that debuted the New Look: "[W]hen the French fashion houses began to open up again in 1946–47, American magazines thought it worth while to send people over to report on them. One of these people was Richard Avedon." Bernier, n.p. (Edits to Bernier's essay for its French translation suggested the second sentence of the above excerpt be changed to read: "One of these people was Richard Avedon, who had been sent over by *Harper's Bazaar* and was seeing Paris for the first time.") Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material, cuts made for Rosamond Bernier Russell's French text, 2. I believe Bernier is mistaken based on the published coverage, none of which includes Avedon's Paris pictures until late 1947. The exhibition's press release also touts Avedon's presence at the February debut of Dior's New Look, likely based on misinformation from Bernier. See Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material, press release, n.p. For more first-hand accounts of the New Look, see Steele, 272–75.

<sup>81</sup> Barthes rightly noted the connotations of that season for fashion; "spring is both pure and mythical at once." Barthes, *Fashion System*, 250.

<sup>82</sup> See Steele, 271, and Palmer, 40.

<sup>83</sup> Palmer, 40. Avedon himself recalled an early postwar showing at a Parisian fashion house: "Everyone sitting around on little gold chairs waiting for this great moment, there was this tremendous expectation, there was nothing in the theater equal to it, and five girls came out through the doors with long, full, pleated skirts. I am sure you remember that during the war there wasn't fabric so that all skirts were way above the knee. These skirts were down to the ankles. And the five girls swirled at the same time and the skirts rose as they swirled; it knocked over the standing ashtrays, and people were weeping." Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material (box 23, section II), transcript of and information about acoustiguide for Avedon retrospective 1948–80, University Art Museum, Berkeley, recorded Feb. 11, 1980, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Christian Dior, *Christian Dior and I* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957), 35. Both Steele and Snow have pointed out that the essence of the New Look shapes and silhouettes were apparent as early as 1939. See Steele, 272–74; and Snow, *World*, 158–59.

<sup>85</sup> Palmer, 20.

<sup>86</sup> Christian Dior, *Talking about Fashion* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954), 23. Snow declared that "Dior saved Paris." Snow, *World*, 158.

<sup>87</sup> Steele has noted that some of this sumptuous use of fabric dates to the years of the Occupation to keep the fabric out of German hands. Steele, 267.

<sup>88</sup> Hall-Duncan, 135.

<sup>89</sup> This column appeared in the magazine one or (usually) two issues after the spring and fall collection debuts.

<sup>90</sup> Snow, "Notes," 124, 126, 190, 198.

<sup>91</sup> "Coal was almost non-existent... At five in the afternoon, when all the offices and shops closed because no electricity could be used in them, you could tell the time by the sudden clack-clack-clack of hundreds of wooden shoes on the streets." Wooden shoes were synonymous with wartime leather shortages. Snow, *World*, 151.

<sup>92</sup> Kristin Ross's superb study on the fixations of postwar French consumers and the country's intensified modernization during those years cites several such descriptions of "hunger." Ross, 71–73. See also the chapter in which these descriptions are quoted, "Hygiene and Modernization." *Ibid.*, 71–122, 4–5.

<sup>93</sup> As Berger has written: "Publicity is usually explained and justified as a competitive medium which ultimately benefits the public (the consumer) and the most efficient manufacturers—and thus the national economy." Berger, 130–31. Barthes noted the same drive in "calculating, industrial society," writing: "Why does [Fashion] interpose, between the object and its user, such a luxury of words (not to mention images), such a network of meaning? The reason is, of course, an economic one. Calculating, industrial society is obliged to form consumers who don't calculate." Barthes, *Fashion System*, xi. In fact, Snow's efforts on behalf of France's national economy and the Parisian couture industry were acknowledged in 1949 when France awarded her the Knight's Cross of the Legion of Honor. See Snow, *World*, 168–69. For more on America's

general desire for a newly and “uniformly prosperous France, surging forward into American-style patterns of consumption and mass culture,” see Ross, 13, 9–10.

<sup>94</sup> We may never know what motivated the decisive and dramatic shift in Avedon’s and *Harper’s Bazaar’s* representation of these new French fashions. Rosamond Bernier reported that he was “overwhelmed not only by the city itself but by the world of high fashion with its impassioned commitment to elegance and technical perfection,” Bernier, n.p. Snow not only rewarded Avedon’s talent and innovation by consistently assigning him the Paris collections throughout her tenure at the magazine, but she also wanted his photographs to appear in the magazine as he had imagined them. Avedon told of her recognizing that Brodovitch had brought out his quality as a photographer and of her subsequently telling Brodovitch to publish the work “exactly as it is.” Quoted in Snow, *World*, 209.

<sup>95</sup> The quotation comes from Candia McWilliam’s review of the appearances exhibitions, “From Wasp-Waists to Tubular Belles—*Appearances: Fashion Photography Since 1945*,” *Times Literary Supplement*, March 29, 1991, 14. One explicitly political photograph might be Avedon’s 1948 image of designer Coco Chanel against a wall painted with “*Pourquoi Hitler n’a pas eu sa bomb?*” and “*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*,” which Avedon said was intended “meaningfully.” Though not necessarily referencing Chanel’s Nazi sympathies, it nevertheless bordered on the subversive. Logically, *Harper’s Bazaar* never ran the image. When Avedon did publish it in *Observations*, Chanel was furious but only, he claimed, because it did not flatter her throat. See Gopnik, 109; and Thurman, n.p.

<sup>96</sup> The visual spectacles of major Hollywood box-office hits provide some indication of this mood: *An American in Paris* (1951), *Sabrina* (1954), the aforementioned *Funny Face* (1957), and *Gigi* (1958). The first of these films shot location footage in Paris; the second hinged its plot on Sabrina’s coming-of-age sojourn in Paris; and the last two were filmed entirely in the city. In fact, in response to a Francophile culture, *Gigi’s* working title was *The Parisians*. [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) [accessed February 19, 2007].

<sup>97</sup> Debord, 12.

<sup>98</sup> Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material, transcript of and information about acoustiguide for Avedon retrospective 1948–80, 6–7. Elsewhere, Avedon has referenced pre-war films as something he attempted to “reconstruct” in his Paris photographs of the late 1940s. See Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material (box 44), WNET American Masters Interview with: Richard Avedon, Jan. 27, 1995, tapes 261–66, tape 262 side A, transcript page 8.

<sup>99</sup> Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material (box 44), WNET American Masters Interview with: Richard Avedon, Jan. 27, 1995, tapes 261–66, tape 261 side A, transcript page 15 and tape 262 side A, transcript page 7, respectively. Elsewhere, Avedon had said: It was a very moving time to be there. The French economy depended entirely on the fashion industry, wines, perfumes. The French had just come out of the Occupation, and in American we hadn’t seen for Paris [*sic*]... [W]e as journalists went over with very full hearts trying to bring back to world consciousness—particularly to American consciousness—the glamour of Paris and the beauty of Paris [*sic*] clothes and style. But Paris was a very sad place at that time. There was no food. There was no gas for the cars.” Center for Creative Photography, Avedon Archive Material, transcript of and information about acoustiguide for Avedon retrospective 1948–80, 6.

<sup>100</sup> Sargeant, 49.

<sup>101</sup> Snow edited the magazine from 1932 to 1957. She came to *Harper’s Bazaar* from *Vogue*, where art director Dr. Mehemed Fehmy Agha had taught her to appreciate a more modernist vision and innovative style. Vreeland began her column for the magazine in 1936 and was quickly promoted to fashion editor. Avedon’s claimed that Vreeland “invented the fashion editor. Before her it was society ladies who put hats on other society ladies.” Richard Avedon, “In Memoriam: Diana Vreeland 1903–1989,” *Vanity Fair* 53 (January 1990): 158. Vreeland left *Harper’s Bazaar* in 1962 to become the fashion editor of *Vogue*. Brodovitch was hired by Snow in 1934; his tenure lasted until the year following her departure. Avedon dedicated *Made in France* to this “trinity.”

<sup>102</sup> As already noted, under Snow’s editorship, *Harper’s Bazaar* was widely considered the most reputable and compelling women’s fashion magazine throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Beginning in the 1930s through the 1950s, it published writings by Colette and Virginia Woolf, commissioned covers from Jean Cocteau, Dalí, and Man Ray, and championed a graphic design considered

among the best and most innovative of the twentieth century. Andy Grundberg has called *Harper's Bazaar* "one of the most admired, respected, and prestigious magazines of the 1940s and fifties." Andy Grundberg, *Alexey Brodovitch, 1898–1971* (New York: Abrams, 1989), 59; Hall-Duncan, 12, 68; and Munkacsi, *Martin Munkacsi*, 47.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Sargeant, 49.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Alpert, 76.

<sup>105</sup> By far the most eloquent of these tributes is Truman Capote's. Quoted in Richard Avedon, *Observations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 150.

<sup>106</sup> When it came to publishing Avedon's work, Avedon recalled that: "Brodovitch had brought out my quality as a photographer, and because Carmel immediately recognized it, she said, 'Publish his work exactly as it is.'" Quoted in Snow, *World*, 209.

<sup>107</sup> As a photographer himself and a pioneer of artists' rights over their own work, Brodovitch encouraged the active participation of photographers in all decisions. For further discussion of the relationship of Brodovitch's designs to the photographer's pictures, see Livingston, "The Art," 12, 24, 34. Brodovitch and the photographers he worked with dismissed as myth the idea that any photographer who considered his or her work to be art could never be paid to make that art. For more on this myth, see Owen Edwards, "Richard Avedon Will Sell You This Print," *Village Voice* (September 1975): 85. Avedon distinguished his work for *Harper's Bazaar* as his "creative" work in comparison to his freelance advertising photographs as early as 1958. See Sargeant, 57.

<sup>108</sup> His informal critique-based gatherings, the "Design Laboratory," inspired a generation of photographers to appreciate what strong design could accomplish. Affiliated with the New School for Social Research in New York, the Design Laboratory would regularly gather an ever-changing group of photographers and designers who would present, discuss, and critique each other's work. From 1947 on, Design Laboratory sessions most often took place in Avedon's studio. Although *Harper's Bazaar* was by no means the only U.S. magazine supporting innovative photography in the postwar period, the magazine had proved singularly hospitable on a long-term basis to a certain kind of photographer. By the 1940s, besides Munkacsi, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, and Avedon, photographers such as Lisette Model, Bill Brandt, Brassai, Cartier-Bresson, and André Kertész had begun to appear in the magazine with some regularity." Livingston, "The Art," 34.

<sup>109</sup> Brodovitch hired Avedon in 1945, assigning him to *Junior Bazaar*. See Sargeant, 60.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Livingston, "The Art," 90, in reference to a 1967 interview with Avedon about his photo-collages. Perhaps accordingly, Avedon did not restrict his photographs based on the original format of the negative, the size of photographic papers, or the belief that a particular image required a certain scale. For more, see *ibid.*, 44, 88.

<sup>111</sup> He later said that dark or gray tones "allowed the romance of a face coming out of the dark." Avedon, "Borrowed Dogs," 58. Avedon's contemporaneous photographs made in Italy in 1946 and 1947 show a completely different approach to light and dark tonalities; in the Italian pictures, it seems as though the intensity of the sunlight has blown out any record of the sky in the negatives. Thus, the most famous of these pictures have an ethereal and surreal use of white.

<sup>112</sup> By 1958 a critic rightly acknowledged Avedon's control over and innovative use of "various kinds of blur—blurred backgrounds, blurred lighting, blurred movement by the model." Sargeant, 50. What was not captured by camera while on site, Avedon could later create in the darkroom by printing with tissue paper over part or all of the print. See Livingston, "The Art," 11. Of course, Avedon—like most photographers—also cropped, dodged, and burned his prints in the darkroom. He did most of his own printing until the late 1950s, when he relinquished the darkroom work to an assistant, Frank Finocchio. See Sargeant, 72.

<sup>113</sup> In *Fashion System*, Barthes noted that "Fashion names only very marginal activities: errands, shopping... [as well as] festive situations... absorbed in appearances (dance, theater... excursions, parties, visits)" but, equally telling, that "the absence of occupation itself has the rank of an activity." Barthes, *Fashion System*, 250.

<sup>114</sup> Thurman, n.p.

<sup>115</sup> Time and again, Avedon photographed the most extravagant, luxurious couture in indoor private or exclusive locations, not public outdoor spaces. For more details, see Troy; and Palmer. Models wearing these clothes were depicted either arriving by car (appropriately, never as the driver but in the back of a taxi or chauffeured car) or already indoors, in the semi-private spaces

of socially elite restaurants and clubs: Maxim's, the Pré-Catalan, and the casino at the resort of Touquet. This is not simply a matter of evening wear being more lavish than day wear, because Avedon took photographs at night that present dressier but believable fashions for someone stopping on an amorous evening walk to linger on one of the Seine's many bridges, to take just one example.

<sup>116</sup> Palmer, 18.

<sup>117</sup> Such perceptions by viewers acknowledge that clothing is essentially a form of signification and that fashion is a cultural language through which meaning is constructed, as discussed at length by Roland Barthes in his *Fashion System*.

<sup>118</sup> Gopnik, 110.

<sup>119</sup> Barthes, *Fashion System*, 252–53. Fashion immerses the Woman about whom and to whom it speaks in a state of innocence, where everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds." Barthes noted the peculiarity of this quality to Fashion at the time of *The Fashion System's* research and writing: "it is not found in any other products of mass culture (film, magazines, popular novels), whose narratives are always dramatic, even catastrophic." *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>120</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 5.

<sup>121</sup> Buck-Morss has noted that the act of perception inherent to flânerie is preserved in "the merely imaginary gratification provided by advertising, illustrated journals, fashion and sex magazines." Buck-Morss, *Flâneur*, 105.

<sup>122</sup> This contrasts sharply, for example, with the dominant mode of advertising images in the 1980s, which sought to equate the consumer and the product ("The product is you."). See Maud Lavin, *Clean New World: Culture, Politics, and Graphic Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 70–75, 77.

<sup>123</sup> Hall-Duncan, 10.

<sup>124</sup> Women were the overwhelming audience for fashion-and-culture magazines like *Harper's Bazaar*, and thus the intended viewers of Avedon's photographs. Interestingly, the effect of recognition and familiarity—if not direct interpolation—could occur for a male viewer, as articulated by Sargeant: "This is a composite of mists, glowing lights, the moods of nocturnal revelers, *nostalgic memories* of bars and gaming tables and theatres, and such ephemeral minutiae as the feeling of enchantment at the sight of a taxi in the rain whose door is opened to receive a suave and mysterious beauty, or the moment of gaiety when some lovely girl decides to throw dignity aside, or the magical second in which the casual motions of a beautiful woman are observed secretly across a restaurant table—all fragments of a metropolitan fairyland, glimpsed by ordinary mortals only at times of heightened illusion." Sargeant, 49–50 [emphasis added].

<sup>125</sup> Berger, 130.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 139, 146.

<sup>127</sup> "[Publicity] proposes to each of us that we transform ourselves, or our lives, by buying something more.... Publicity persuades us of such a transformation by showing us people who have apparently been transformed and are, as a result, enviable. The state of being envied is what constitutes glamour. And publicity is the process of manufacturing glamour.... The spectator-buyer is meant to envy herself as she will become if she buys the product." *Ibid.*, 131, 134.

<sup>128</sup> In addition to Barthes's *Fashion System*, see Troy, 11.

<sup>129</sup> Originally published 1967. The study encompassed every issue of *Elle* and *Le Jardin des Modes* as well as forays into others such as *Vogue* for the period from June 1958 to June 1959. As Barthes explained in the foreword to the book, his "structural analysis of women's clothing as currently described by Fashion magazines" chose to analyze the "written system" rather than the "real (or visual) system." Barthes, *Fashion System*, ix.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 301, 303. Earlier in his study, Barthes enumerated two communicative classes in "written clothing," one where "*clothing = world*" with explicit signifieds and another where "*clothing = Fashion*" with implicit signifieds. *Ibid.*, 33–39.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 246–47.

<sup>133</sup> Other questions (and the relationships they propose) as recounted by Barthes are: what? (transitivity), when? (temporality), and who? (personality). *Ibid.*, 249–57.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 251–52.

<sup>135</sup> I have been unable to attain or locate any circulation or demographic statistics from the Hearst Corporation. Additionally disappointing, neither can I attain or locate American comparison figures from *Harper's Bazaar's* most avid competitor at the time, *Vogue*. For example, the historical coffee-table survey of *Vogue* magazine, *In Vogue*, gives no such statistics for the postwar years in which it was *Harper's Bazaar's* leading competitor. In France, however, *Elle* claimed a readership of one in six French women by 1955. Ross, 209n14. See also Norberto Angeletti, *In Vogue: The Illustrated History of the World's Most Famous Fashion Magazine* (New York: Rizzoli, 2006).

<sup>136</sup> It should be noted that Ross is specifically referencing the ideal reader of *Elle*, not *Harper's Bazaar*. Ross, 1. For more, see *ibid.*, 79.

<sup>137</sup> Lavin, 74.

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, Kristin Ross's analysis of this function of magazines and of women as consumers. Ross, 71–105, esp. 77–79, 81.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 77. As Sontag noted, fashion "came to mean something more solemn, more anxious, more middle class: the seriousness of the consumer, accumulating well-made products on intelligently planned shopping expeditions, concerned not to be ridiculous or feel deprived, eager to conform." Sontag, "Looking," 461.

<sup>140</sup> Snow, *World*, 171–72.

<sup>141</sup> The downplaying of clothes occurred later in the history of fashion photography. The recent exhibition catalogue *Fashioning Fiction* charts it to as early as the 1980s, where campaigns by Ralph Lauren featured ponies, cars, yachts, and other material trappings for which a Ralph Lauren outfit would be suitable. Certainly, by the 1990s, this was the dominant approach to fashion. See Kismaric and Respini, 12, 18.

<sup>142</sup> Kismaric and Respini, 15. While Kismaric and Respini's characterization of this important shift proves useful, I take issue with their assignment of the responsibility for that shift to the fashion photographs of William Klein. Klein's most innovative fashion photographs made on the street date to the 1960s, nearly a decade or more after Avedon's work had accomplished all aspects of the shift as described by Kismaric and Respini.

<sup>143</sup> Slater, 233.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Stephen Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954–68* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 98.

<sup>2</sup> Wendy Kozol, "Gazing at Race in the Pages of *Life*: Picturing Segregation through Theory and History," in Erika Doss, ed., *Looking at "Life" Magazine* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 162.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Anne Wagner, "Warhol Paints History, or Race in America," *Representations* 55 (Summer 1996): 110. Wagner drew appropriate attention to Warhol's decision not to use the phrases *demonstration* or *police violence* in his titles. She contended that he chose the title *Race Riot* because the images could not be seen without race and because it allowed his paintings to give American racism a historic form. *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>4</sup> Wagner also noted Warhol's maintenance of the source photographs' integrity. *Ibid.*, 104–05. For more on the image rights dispute that ensued between Warhol and Charles Moore/Black Star, see Gay Morris, "When Artist Use Photographs," *ARTnews* 80, no. 1 (January 1981): 104–05.

<sup>5</sup> I have chosen to use the word *black* throughout this chapter in my own prose but have maintained the use of *Negro* or *nigger* in all quotations. Kasher has pointed out that, historically, "[d]ebates over appropriate labels were heating up in the summer of 1963. 'Negro' was used almost exclusively in the March [on Washington] speeches; only John Lewis referred to 'black people' and 'the black masses.'" Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 118.

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, I use the term *1960s* to refer to the actual decade from 1960 through 1969. That said, I recognize that many scholars consider the 1960s to have come to a

close in 1973 when the U.S. Army made its final withdrawal of forces from Vietnam. See, for example, Terry H. Anderson, *Movement*, xiii.

<sup>7</sup> Like Anderson, I do not use the word *movement* to refer to specific “organizations, leaders, or ideology” but to refer to more widespread, cumulative activism in this era. Unlike Anderson’s text, however, I use *movement* as shorthand for the civil rights movement, the first of all of the decades’ social and political movements. See *ibid.*, xiv–xv.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, this very statement glosses over the inherent complexities of both decades while reflecting the dominant historical perceptions of each. It also acknowledges the role of popular representations in the forming of such perceptions.

<sup>9</sup> Matthias Reiss, introduction to *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century* (London: German Historical Institute; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4. Reiss pointed out that organized street demonstrations—defined as “deliberate and open act[s] of support”—developed in the late nineteenth century in both Europe and the U.S. The history of street demonstrations, as written until and through the 1960s, attended to those preindustrial and early industrial demonstrations addressing class and labor concerns. By 1971 this history expanded to include attention to riots, including race riots, but has not concerned itself with the civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s. *Ibid.*, 1–6.

<sup>10</sup> Previously, the mainstream media “had ignored positive images of African-American life and suppressed portrayals of black political action.” The 1955 lynching of Emmett Till marked the first truly extensive coverage of racist violence for many image-based news organs. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> “In 1953 45% of American households had televisions; just three years later the number had jumped to over 83%. The Telstar I communications satellite began to enable worldwide television linkups in 1962; the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom of 1963, the largest political demonstration in the United States to date, was one of the first events to be broadcast live around the world.” *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>13</sup> In a 2004 introduction to his slide lecture presentation, Moore quoted the head of the Black Star photo agency, Howard Chapnick: “‘To ignore photojournalism is to ignore history.’ And that is something that I am proud to be a part of....” “Civil Rights Movement in Stills: Charles Moore and Benedict Fernandez,” videotaped lecture at the JFK Library and Museum of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation (January 19, 2004): 8:28, [http://forum.wgbh.org/wgbh/forum.php?lecture\\_id=1407](http://forum.wgbh.org/wgbh/forum.php?lecture_id=1407) (accessed October 6, 2008). Beyond establishing Moore’s clear embrace of photojournalism, Chapnick’s maxim offers a particular indictment of photo-history texts that have included only a handful of photojournalistic photographs, if any, in their analysis of the 1960s.

<sup>14</sup> For recent and perhaps the only examples, see Bussard, 90–98; see also Ward, 99–104.

<sup>15</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 165; and Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggles, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 384.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Kasher, *Appeal to this Age: Photography of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968* (New York: Howard Greenberg Gallery, 1994), n.p.

<sup>17</sup> Many illustrated magazines and newspapers were founded in the 1840s, including *Illustrated London News* in Britain and *L’Illustration* in France. By the late 1850s, technological developments made illustration possible for many news publications, complaints were launched about the presumably facile ‘readership’ such illustration encouraged. Huber, 353. Even in metropolitan American newspapers in the twentieth century, photographs comprise nearly one-third of the average content by 1945, fueled in part by news photography agencies, such as AP and UPI, which distributed images more expediently. For more, see Julian Cox, “Bearing Witness: Photography and the Civil Rights Movement,” in *Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2008), 22.

<sup>18</sup> Michael L. Carlebach, *American Photojournalism Comes of Age* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 184.

<sup>19</sup> Szarkowski, *Winogrand*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Some continued to argue that such sources offered only a facile, uneducated version of the news. See Carlebach, 145–46. The debate on the legibility of images—as compared to the

legibility of words—has as long a history as it does theorists. The briefest sampling of such texts could include: Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” in *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32–51; and “Myth Today,” in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 2000), 109–59; Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1978), 217–51; and “A Small History of Photography,” *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, 240–57.

<sup>21</sup> Yves Michaud, “Critique of Credulity: The Relationship between Images and Reality,” in Fischer, ed., *Covering the Real*, 307.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 309. David Perlmutter, who has written extensively on photojournalism, addressed the conundrum of a middle ground somewhat differently: “Paradoxically, the assumed natural objectivity of visual news undermines its adherence to journalistic ideals of neutrality. No newspaper is expected to show both *visual* sides of a story.” David D. Perlmutter, *Visions of War: Picturing Warfare from the Stone Age to the Cyber Age* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 194–95.

<sup>23</sup> Howard Chapnick, *Truth Needs No Ally: Inside Photojournalism* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 7. As already noted, Moore himself used this quotation. “Civil Rights Movement in Stills,” 8:28.

<sup>24</sup> The discourse surrounding street photography has ignored the historical role played by photojournalism, an omission that is not exclusive to the 1960s. Representations of urban demonstrations were not unknown prior to that era. For example, photographs of battles between laborers and police, women marching for the right to vote, and so-called race riots in Chicago all appeared in the press in the year 1919 alone. Carlebach, 147.

<sup>25</sup> Erika Doss, introduction to *Looking at “Life,”* 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Although it was neither the most successful nor to be found in most households, one survey from the late 1930s estimated there were fourteen different readers for every copy printed. By the late 1940s, *Life* maintained three times the circulation of *Time*, reaching one in five Americans over the age of ten. For example, the February 1960 issue boasted a circulation of 6.5 million on its front cover; one month later, that number had increased by 200,000. Even in 1970, two years before its dissolution as a weekly magazine, *Life*’s circulation was strong at 8 million. See also *ibid.*, 2–4; and Baughman, 41–51.

<sup>29</sup> Doss indicated that in the postwar era, *Reader’s Digest* and *TV Guide* exceeded *Life*’s estimated circulation. Doss, introduction, 3. For more, see Wendy Kozol, “*Life*’s America: Family and Nation in Postwar Photojournalism” (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 23–50.

<sup>30</sup> Baughman cautioned scholars against overstating the magazine’s impact and against their own delight in studying *Life* in comparison to other historical news media. Baughman, 48.

<sup>31</sup> Doss, introduction, 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Erika Doss, “Visualizing Black America: Gordon Parks at *Life*, 1948–1971,” in *Looking at “Life,”* 229–30.

<sup>34</sup> Such hiring out also explains the many Black Star photographers who would become *Life* staff photographers. Lili Corbus Bezner, *Photography and Politics in America: From the New Deal into the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 142.

<sup>35</sup> Aside from photography periodicals, the first survey books on the medium appeared in the years just after *Life*’s founding: Beaumont Newhall, *Photography, 1839–1937* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1937); and Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839–1889* (New York: Macmillan, 1938).

<sup>36</sup> Doss cited external stressors such as the “growing fragmentation of mass media into niche markets, and, in particular, the abandonment of broad-based general magazines with mass circulation for narrower, more specialized products oriented to specific audiences.” Doss, introduction, 16. Prior to *Life*, *The Saturday Evening Post* had ceased publication in 1969, and *Look* ended in 1971.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Wallace, “Freedom to Jim Crow,” *Life*, September 10, 1956, 96–108.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Kozol, *“Life”’s America*, 159.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Kozol noted that *Life* was able to encourage their white readers’ responses to Civil Rights issues by focusing on families. So while they freely mentioned genetic mixture of blacks and whites in the past, they suppressed discussion about interracial sexuality then or in the present. See also *ibid.*, 161.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 161–62. The accompanying article was Robert Wallace, “The Voices of the White South,” *Life* (September 17, 1956): 104–20.

<sup>42</sup> Baughman, 41.

<sup>43</sup> Craig Flournoy, “Reporting the Movement in Black and White: The Emmett Till Lynching and the Montgomery Bus Boycott” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2003), 20. My review of all issues of *Life* for the same span of ten years found that only issues in late 1961 and most of 1962 included comparatively few articles on racism (indexed by *Life* as race), blacks (indexed as Negroes), and/or civil rights. And, indeed, Martin Luther King, Jr., described 1962 as “the year that civil rights was displaced as the domestic issue.” Quoted in Schlesinger, 950. Regarding *Ebony*’s lack of any mention of the Birmingham demonstrations in its spring 1963 issues, Wagner has posited: “It was a lifestyle magazine imaging black success and upward mobility: racial demonstrations were definitely out of place.” Wagner, 119n27. This compelling explanation suggests that street activism and street demonstrations could be construed as antagonistic to idealism, and suggests an increased nuance to *Life*’s idealism, since their weekly issues consistently published such struggles.

<sup>44</sup> Doss, “Visualizing Black America,” 229.

<sup>45</sup> “The White Devil’s Day Is Almost Over,” *Life*, May 31, 1963, 22–30; Gordon Parks, “‘What Their Cry Means to Me’—A Negro’s Own Evaluation,” *Life*, May 31, 1963, 31–33, 78–79.

<sup>46</sup> Gordon Parks, “How It Feels to Be Black,” *Life*, August 16, 1963, 72–79; Gordon Parks, “The Long Search for Pride,” *Life*, August 16, 1963, 80–84, 87.

<sup>47</sup> Although Kasher omitted a full discussion of the differences in the access allowed black photographers and white photographers, he did note that those pictures taken by black photographers “almost always convey the sense that they were photographing their own leaders, their own enemies, their own fellow victims.” Kasher included Parks in this, along with fellow *Life* photographer Frank Dandridge, and the many photographers employed by *Ebony* magazine whose work remains rarely seen and minimally published because of permissions and archive restrictions enacted by Johnson Publishing. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 12. See also Ronald W. Bailey and Michèle Furst, eds., *Let Us March On! Selected Civil Rights Photographs of Ernest C. Withers, 1955–1968* (Boston: Massachusetts College of Art, 1992), n.p.

<sup>48</sup> The translation of a specific photographer’s identity into certain formal tropes or types of photographs was not unique to Parks. Danny Lyon’s photographic coverage of the civil rights movement was similarly constrained by the intimate, interior, and/or personal spaces in which Lyon operated as a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Fellow member Julian Bond, in his foreword to Lyon’s book of this material, noted the divide: “Dusty roads were the movement’s most likely location, not Capitol malls and monuments. We all remember fire hoses and police dogs. Danny Lyon makes us remember the people and the forgotten places, too.” Julian Bond, forward to *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*, by Danny Lyon (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 7.

<sup>49</sup> Parks, “Long Search,” 80.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Parks, “‘What Their Cry Means to Me,’” 78.

<sup>52</sup> Doss, “Visualizing Black America,” 236. And yet, despite Parks’s integrationist outlook, his personal, intimate interior photographs for the spreads in *Life*, unlike those by other staff photographers, cannot picture a white or integrated presence in the struggle.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Moore’s photograph of King’s arrest was his first to be published by the magazine and was widely distributed on the AP wires. Kaplan has noted that this image is one of the early examples of “King’s savvy in spreading his message throughout the media” and “is credited with giving national prominence to what had until the mid-1950s been a regional story.” John Kaplan,

“Charles Moore’s *Life* Magazine Coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, 1958–1965,” unpublished manuscript of lecture delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (New Orleans, LA: August 3–8, 1999). [http://eric.ed.gov/ERICdocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/15/d9/aa.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICdocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/15/d9/aa.pdf) [accessed July 30, 2008]; Michael S. Durham, “The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore,” in *Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore* (New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang; Rochester, NY: Professional Photography Division, Eastman Kodak, 1991), 24. (*Life* reprinted the King arrest photograph two years later; see Loudon S. Wainwright, “Martyr of the Sit-ins,” *Life*, November 7, 1960, 124).

<sup>55</sup> Another later example occurred on the steps of the Selma courthouse, where black residents had assembled to register to vote in January 1965. Sheriff James Clark billyclubbed them off the steps while screaming, “You are making a mockery of justice.” “Civil Rights: Difference of Impact; Voices in Mississippi,” *Time*, February 19, 1965, 23.

<sup>56</sup> Ken Lassiter, “Charles Moore: Fighting Back with His Camera,” *Photographer’s Forum* 29, no. 4 (2007): 19.

<sup>57</sup> Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 24; Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 82; and Manuel Rodriguez, “Charles Moore: Civil Rights Photography,” *Photographer’s Forum* 14, no. 3 (May 1992): 37. Rodriguez indicated that the image was also reproduced in *Life*, though I could not locate it in any of the magazine’s issues from 1960.

<sup>58</sup> Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 25. A typical Southern newspaper, the *Advertiser* enacted segregation within its pages, reserving one section of each issue for “Negro news.” In his retrospective catalogue, Durham noted: “Charles, promoted to chief photographer after a year on the paper, once had to threaten to fire a photographer who refused to take a picture for the [Negro news] section.” *Ibid.*, 24–25.

<sup>59</sup> Sunday’s *Advertiser* also reported that the police had not intervened in the attack. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 82.

<sup>60</sup> Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 25. See also Roberts and Klibanoff, 326. As for Moore’s death threats, he has said that one came from the vigilante himself, to which Moore responded: “I told him he should be ashamed of himself, since I knew his family.” Rodriguez, 37.

<sup>61</sup> Lassiter, 19.

<sup>62</sup> For more on Moore’s commitment to the movement as a prompt for a transition in employment, see Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 14, 23; Kaplan, 2; and Pam Kinsbury, “The Civil Rights Movement from Behind the Lens: An Interview with Charles Moore,” *Southern Scribe* (2003), n.p., [http://www.southernscribe.com/zineculture/Moore\\_Charles.htm](http://www.southernscribe.com/zineculture/Moore_Charles.htm) (accessed July 31, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> Moreover, movement organizations often pursued strategies that closely paralleled mainstream press and photo agencies, maintaining staff photographers, distributing their images with press releases, and so on. These organizations were often supported by other unaffiliated photographers like Avedon, and, conversely, agencies such as Black Star and Magnum remained deeply committed to photographing the movement. For more, see Kasher, *Appeal to this Age*, n.p.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Kasher also remarked: “Many of the pictures that turned out to be the most important to the movement—pictures that inspired substantive support—were made by photojournalists who were hardly pro-movement and appeared in publications that were hardly liberal.” Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 11–12.

<sup>65</sup> Both Kerry Tremain and Yves Michaud emphasized the real and potential media suppression even while they discussed images circulated within that same media. Kerry Tremain, “Introduction: Seeing and Believing,” in Ken Light, ed., *Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).

<sup>66</sup> Rodriguez, 37. See also Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 23.

<sup>67</sup> Scholarship on both Lyon’s civil rights images and those by Bruce Davidson declare street photography characteristic of the movement’s activities, but use the genre as a foil for work by Lyon and Davidson. See: Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 38; Deborah Willis, introduction to *Time of Change: Civil Rights Photographs, 1961–1965* (Los Angeles: St. Ann’s Press, 2002), n.p.

<sup>68</sup> It was not uncommon for white photographers or journalists unaffiliated with SNCC to be welcomed in black communities. Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 31. This would change later

in the movement, as already suggested in notes on the Watts riots, but also proved the case within civil rights organizations. Lyon painfully recounted SNCC's vote to dismiss whites as voting members of their group. For more, see Danny Lyon, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*.

<sup>69</sup> Lyon, *Memories*, 70–71.

<sup>70</sup> Kasher has noted: "Some photographers did indeed function as double agents, working for opposing sides simultaneously." Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 14.

<sup>71</sup> Exceptions to this strict segregation of access based on skin color are rare, rely on "passing," and fall outside the scope of this chapter. For one magnificently subversive example, however, see "Civil Rights: 'The Awful Roar'; The March in Washington," *Time*, August 30, 1963, 10–11. Ruses such as the one employed by Lyon were also implemented by white news reporters covering the movement. There was, for example, the so-called Claude Sitton notebook, after the *New York Times* civil rights correspondent, created by cutting a steno pad in half vertically. One such notebook in the reporter's breast pocket remained undetectable by racist mobs; two stacked in the breast pocket bulged like a gun in a shoulder holster, suggesting that s/he was an FBI agent rather than a reporter and encouraging hesitation among mobs that might otherwise be poised to attack. "Or you could go the other way: dress like a white heckler and cram the notebook under your belt beneath a flapping shirttail, and blend in with the mob." Roberts and Klibanoff, 377. As activist Julian Bond stated: "The cameras of reporters, their pads and pens, were seen by segregationists as an invitation to brutality." John Lewis, afterword to *Road to Freedom*, 146. For more on non-Southern reporters assigned to cover Southern civil rights stories, see the chapter entitled "New Eyes on the Old South" in Roberts and Klibanoff, 184–207.

<sup>72</sup> Chapnick, 154–55. See also Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 25.

<sup>73</sup> Kaplan, 9. Roberts and Klibanoff have identified a Southern War Correspondents Club—which may or may not be the same as SCREW—whose mock membership cards read "'Integrated' on one side and 'Segregated' on the other side, so they could flip the card to fit whatever situation they faced." Roberts and Klibanoff, 329.

<sup>74</sup> Black photographers covering civil rights demonstrations were arguably at greater risk than their white counterparts, and did not enjoy the same flexibility of access. Ernest Withers, however, could access little more than the segregated room of fellow black photojournalists. See Bailey and Furst, n.p. Undoubtedly, there were instances when black photographers enjoyed unparalleled access to events happening on the streets, a prime example being the Watts riots in Los Angeles. In its issue devoted to the riots, *Time* noted that a "team of Negro reporters mingled with the rioters, went where no white reporter could, to get the temper of the mob." "Races: Trigger of Hate; Negro Leaders on Violence," *Time*, August 20, 1965, 11. *Life*, too, sent a black reporter to cover the Watts riots; the article indicates the unknown author's sympathy with the black population, but also reveals that he was scared of them for the first time in his life. "Out of a Cauldron of Hate—Arson and Death," *Life*, August 27, 1965, 27.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Kaplan, 13–14.

<sup>76</sup> Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 16. For other incidents of intimidation resulting from his association with *Life* magazine, see: Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 33; Lassiter, 22–23. Moore's assignments resulted in actual bodily harm on two occasions. See Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 31.

<sup>77</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 11–12.

<sup>78</sup> Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 32–33. Other variations on this statement by Moore: "After I saw [the] violence that was happening in Montgomery and other places, that is where I wanted to focus my attention. I was angry. Alabama was my home state.... It made me very angry to know that there were people in my home state who could do what they were doing."; and "For all journalists covering the civil rights story through the sixties, it was difficult, exhausting, and often very dangerous. For me, it was all the above plus troubling and emotional in a personal way because I am a Southerner, too." Respectively: "Civil Rights Movement in Stills," 22:15; and Charles Moore, preface to *Powerful Days*, 6–7. See also "Civil Rights Movement in Stills," 10:15.

<sup>79</sup> This quote is preceded by: "That thought came to me *after* I'd taken the picture. But at the moment I wasn't thinking, 'Boy, I'm shooting something that's history.' I wasn't thinking about the

civil rights movement or politics. Instead, I was focusing my attention on a dramatic situation.” Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 34.

<sup>80</sup> This author’s description based on those in the following sources: *ibid.*, 26–27; Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 107; Roberts and Klibanoff, 316–17; and Kaplan, 10. Kasher claimed the water pressure was 200 pounds-per-square-inch. Kasher, *Appeal to this Age*, n.p.

<sup>81</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 316.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Kaplan, 10. Cox has claimed that Lonnie Wilson’s snapshot achieves an “on top of the action” status exceeding that of Moore (and Bruce Davidson or Bob Adelman, who were also present), but to this author, the photograph simply represents a more protected vantage point, one clearly capitalizing on the protection afforded those situated *behind* such figures of authority. Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 35.

<sup>83</sup> While Roberts and Klibanoff do not publish or give details on the photographs in which Moore appears, I am compelled to believe this by the published photographs of Moore shooting the dog attacks from a position far closer to the action than any other photographer on site. At the site of Moore’s hosing photograph, Roberts and Klibanoff noted that still photographers and television crews populated the area, but most stood at a distance. Roberts and Klibanoff, 316.

<sup>84</sup> Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 25.

<sup>85</sup> Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 28 [emphasis added].

<sup>86</sup> Prior to 1960, photojournalists’ camera of choice was the Graflex Speed Graphic, whose 4 x 5-inch negatives made for wonderful photographic detail but whose size also necessitated a visibly noticeable photographic mode. Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 23. For a detailed history of photographic and press equipment, see Carlebach, 157–62, 166–67.

<sup>87</sup> See Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 44n16.

<sup>88</sup> Moore stated that his photographs of the dog attacks were taken with his 28mm lens. Rodriguez, 39. Moore also specified that he had used a 28mm wide-angle lens to photograph the baseball bat attack in downtown Montgomery. “Civil Rights Movement in Stills,” 51:59.

<sup>89</sup> He has also remarked on the absence of a motor-drive in his camera that would automatically advance his film, allowing for more continuous shooting. Rodriguez, 34.

<sup>90</sup> “Civil Rights Movement in Stills,” 57:54.

<sup>91</sup> Moore and Bill Hudson made their photographs of the dog attacks on May 3, 1963. Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 36. In various sources, however, Moore referred to his photographs having been taken the following day while simultaneously acknowledging that the dogs were reinforcements to the water hoses and an overwhelmed police force. See: Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 28; Lassiter, 22.

<sup>92</sup> Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 20.

<sup>93</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 318.

<sup>94</sup> Michaud, 311.

<sup>95</sup> Huber, 347.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 349–50.

<sup>97</sup> For more, see David D. Perlmutter, *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy: Icons of Outrage in International Crises*, Praeger Series in Political Communication (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1998), xv. Huber has stated it another way: “Certain images—encouraged by competition events such as Press Photo of the Year—have become models and icons to which the agencies and editorial staff, as well as the photographers themselves, refer more or less consciously in their work.” Huber, 349.

<sup>98</sup> This sentence reprises my earlier quotation of Kasher; see page 109.

<sup>99</sup> Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 28. As late as 2007, Moore continued to emphasize the impact of the dog attacks on him: “When I saw the snarling dogs tearing people’s clothes and attacking them, I knew I had to show the world just how bad things had become.” Quoted in Lassiter, 22.

<sup>100</sup> One of the earliest books on the movement chose this phrase for its title: Anthony Lewis, *Portrait of a Decade: The Second American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1964).

<sup>101</sup> Durham has identified this provocation for their arrest. Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 29. Moore has recalled: “We heard later that police commissioner Bull Connor had told his officers, ‘Arrest those g-d d-mn [*sic*] *Life* photographers if they give you any trouble at all!’” Rodriguez, 39.

As a final example from Birmingham of Moore's ability to efficaciously navigate the movement as a white, Southern photographer: he recalls that once in the segregated jail cell, he encouraged the angry segregationists surrounding him and Durham to assume whatever they wished about him, because he "certainly didn't want them to know that we were from *Life* magazine." *Life* posted Moore and Durham's bail, but the magazine's lawyers anticipated a six-month sentence if they kept their court appointment for May 8 and so advised the pair to leave the state as fugitives. It would be nearly a year before Moore could return to the state in which his family lived. *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>102</sup> To paraphrase Moore: "I chose to photograph the violence. Because this was my home state." "Civil Rights Movement in Stills," 1:09:27.

<sup>103</sup> Moore continued to be assigned to cover violence, real and imagined. See: Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 31, 35; Kaplan, 16, 18.

<sup>104</sup> Rodriguez, 39.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 88. As a state, Alabama had successfully squelched any NAACP chapters since 1956. See also Terry H. Anderson, *Movement*, 70.

<sup>106</sup> Mobs had attacked Freedom Riders testing interstate bus desegregation in Birmingham in May 1961. Reporting on the event, *Time* noted the absence of any police to protect against a mob beating the riders with lengths of pipe. The article also drew attention to the fact that the *Birmingham News* had, in 1960, "denounced the New York *Times* [*sic*] for saying that fear and hatred stalked the streets of Birmingham, [but] now conceded that 'fear and hatred did stalk Birmingham's streets yesterday.'" "The South: Trouble in Alabama," *Time*, May 26, 1961, 16–17.

<sup>107</sup> Kennedy, quoted in Roberts and Klibanoff, 320; King, quoted in Terry H. Anderson, *Movement*, 70. Statistics in this paragraph compiled from multiple sources: "They Fight a Fire That Won't Go Out," *Life*, May 17, 1963, 29; "Races: Freedom—Now," *Time*, May 17, 1963, 23; "Beyond Rights to the Issue of Human Dignity," *Life*, May 24, 1963, 4; "Civil Rights: The Sunday School Bombing; Where the Stars Fell," *Time*, September 27, 1963, 18; "Man of the Year," *Time*, January 3, 1964, 16; Roberts and Klibanoff, 320; Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 88; Terry H. Anderson, *Movement*, 70; and Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954–1965* (New York: Viking, 1987), 179. The description of Connor is a reworking of a quote from *Time* (demeaningly) characterizing the city's black population: "Birmingham's Negroes had always seemed a docile lot. Downtown at night, they slouched in gloomy huddles beneath street lamps, talking softly or not at all. They knew their place: they were 'niggers' in a Jim Crow town, and they bore their degradation in silence." "Races: Freedom—Now," 23.

<sup>108</sup> For more background, see Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *Reporting Civil Rights Part I: American Journalism 1941–1963* (New York: Library of America, 2003), 777–94.

<sup>109</sup> Southern segregationists also staged events likely to turn into violent encounters for media coverage. As Kasher has consistently pointed out: "The movement took advantage of the media's greediness for that most valuable of photographic commodities—the image of extreme violence. The violence that engulfed the movement was sometimes warlike, and for the illustrated press these battles filled a gap between the Korean and Vietnamese Wars." Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 13. Organizations were so well aware of the publicity and fund-raising power of photographs, that SNCC, for example, hired Julian Bond as their Communications Director in 1962. Martin Luther King, Jr., strategized the photographic impact of demonstrations, telling one *Life* photographer (Flip Schulke) who had stopped photographing in order to keep racist whites from harming a group of demonstrating children in 1965: "the world doesn't know this happened, because you didn't photograph it.... I'm not being cold-blooded about it, but it is so much more important for you to take a picture of us getting beaten up than for you to be another person joining in the fray." Quoted in Roberts and Klibanoff, 383.

<sup>110</sup> Kasher, *Appeal to this Age*, n.p.; Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 91–93; Roberts and Klibanoff, 314.

<sup>111</sup> Shuttlesworth occupied the front lines of the demonstrations for easy and prominent arrest to affirm the local propulsion of the demonstrations. Roberts and Klibanoff, 314. The boycotts were 90% effective, making merchants that much more eager to bring an end to demonstrations that only further harmed their business. For more, see Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 91. As for the pre-demonstration anticipation of canine attacks (but not the specially constructed hoses), see Kaplan, 10–11.

<sup>112</sup> Schlesinger, 958; Roberts and Klibanoff, 314.

<sup>113</sup> Cox, "Bearing Witness," 37. Kasher also noted the specially made hoses. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 91. Connor was not the first segregationist to use fire hoses against civil rights marchers. In *Time* magazine alone, their use (or threatened use) is noted in South Carolina, Texas, and Alabama as early as 1960. "The South: Youth Will Be Served," *Time*, March 21, 1960, 21; "The South: Freeze and Thaw," *Time*, March 28, 1960, 24; and "The Sympathizers," *Time*, April 11, 1960, 64.

<sup>114</sup> "The South: Dogs, Kids and Clubs," *Time*, May 10, 1963, 19.

<sup>115</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 95.

<sup>116</sup> "The South: Dogs, Kids and Clubs," 19. Most historical and recent sources cite the water pressure from these hoses as 100 pounds per square inch, though Kasher cites 200 pounds per square inch. Kasher, *Appeal to this Age*, n.p.

<sup>117</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 315.

<sup>118</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 95 and also 90; and Schlesinger, 958.

<sup>119</sup> Regarding the use of dogs, the *New York Times* claimed that German shepherds were first sicced on demonstrators in late March 1963, in Greenwood, Mississippi. Roberts and Klibanoff, 312. However, the use of dogs was remarked as early as 1961 in *Life*. "A Look at the World's Week," *Life*, April 7, 1961, 30. See also Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 138. In some cases, the dogs may have more quickly dispersed the crowd than in Moore's photographs of one dog attack. *Time* reported that Connor, upon seeing a policeman holding back white onlookers, shouted, "Let those people come to the corner, sergeant.... I want 'em to see the dogs work. Look at those niggers run." Quoted in "The South: Dogs, Kids and Clubs," 19. *Life* also published this anecdote in its May 17 issue.

<sup>120</sup> Beyond the effectiveness of the canine attacks, these reports revealed to organizers the helpful accident of reporters counting onlookers in their total estimate of participants. Roberts and Klibanoff, 314.

<sup>121</sup> Upon seeing the *Post*, President Kennedy said the Hudson photograph "made him sick." Quoted in Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 8. Others have said he found the situation "intolerable" and stated: "I think it's terrible, the picture in the paper." Quoted in Roberts and Klibanoff, 319–20. Whatever his exact words, it is clear the photograph had an immediate effect and changed the agenda of at least one policy meeting that day to the topic of Birmingham. The Hudson photograph also appeared in *Time* on May 10 and in *Newsweek* on May 13.

<sup>122</sup> Cox, "Bearing Witness," 36. Not surprisingly, Southern daily newspapers did not reproduce the dog attack photographs on their front pages. For the first days of the Birmingham demonstrations, in fact, their coverage focused on the restraint demonstrated and injuries sustained by law enforcement, but such fictions could not be maintained in the wake of national television coverage. Roberts and Klibanoff, 320–21. See also Cox, "Bearing Witness," 37.

<sup>123</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff cited the published response of the *Independent Indian Express* as typical of international reaction in the press: "To turn high pressure hoses on peaceful demonstrators is another act of calculated barbarity which besmirches Alabama, if that state had any reputation left to be besmirched at all." Roberts and Klibanoff, 323. For more on the European reaction in particular, see: Lincoln, 39–59; Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 95–96.

<sup>124</sup> Quoted in Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 90.

<sup>125</sup> Monday night, King declared: "Never in the history of this nation have so many people been arrested for the cause of freedom and dignity." Quoted in *ibid.*, 97.

<sup>126</sup> "Races: Freedom—Now," 24. See also Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 97.

<sup>127</sup> As will be discussed below, a slightly different photograph ran in the May 17 issue of *Life*.

<sup>128</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 97. The segregated jail cells still had room for whites, whether segregationists or press like Moore.

<sup>129</sup> Durham recounted that they were arrested while Moore photographed a woman skidding down the pavement. Durham, "Civil Rights Photography," 29. Roberts and Klibanoff indicated their arrest happened immediately after the doorway photograph (figure 3.17). Roberts and Klibanoff, 322.

<sup>130</sup> According to Kasher, no fewer than 150 reporters representing publications around the world were on hand for the May 10 press conference that announced the accord. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 97. Negotiations were undertaken and similar accords reached in cities across the South—

Albany, Cambridge, Greensboro, Jackson, Nashville, and Raleigh among them. Roberts and Klibanoff, 323.

<sup>131</sup> "They Fight a Fire That Won't Go Out," 29. In the immediate aftermath, King was criticized for his use of schoolchildren in the demonstrations, while Connor was reviled for his violent orders to police- and firemen. *Time's* criticism of both these decisions is exemplary of contemporary coverage: "Birmingham saw a small civil war; whites against Negroes, cops against children, dogs against humans. It began when Martin Luther King, Jr. decided to throw schoolchildren into the Negro battle line. Police Commissioner Eugene ('Bull') Connor, arch-segregationist, viciously retaliated with club-swinging cops, police dogs and blasts of water from fire hoses. There were no winners in Birmingham last week." "The South: Dogs, Kids and Clubs," 19.

<sup>132</sup> "Beyond Rights," 4.

<sup>133</sup> "Civil Rights: 'The Awful Roar,'" 12. As *Time* later reported in its 1964 Man of the Year issue devoted to King: "'The Negroes had created their crisis—and Connor had made it a success. The civil rights movement,' said President Kennedy in a meeting later with King, 'owes Bull Connor as much as it owes Abraham Lincoln.' That was at best an oversimplification; nevertheless, because of Connor, the riots seared the front pages of the world press, outraged millions of people." "Man of the Year," 16.

<sup>134</sup> For examples of this visually loaded rhetoric, see: "Beyond Rights," 4; "Races: Freedom—Now," 23; and "Races: The Revolution; The Next Stand," *Time*, June 7, 1963, 17.

<sup>135</sup> In the article, King is quoted at length, and *Time's* editors declared that the events in Birmingham had "ineradicably changed the course of U.S. life." The article also detailed the Birmingham demonstrations on the page reproducing Moore's photograph. "Man of the Year," 13, 16.

<sup>136</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 114. Anderson specified nearly two hundred Birmingham-inspired demonstrations that took place in Southern cities alone. Anderson, *Movement*, 71.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 98. See also Schlesinger, 966.

<sup>138</sup> This street-oriented rhetoric extended to coverage of the Civil Rights Bill. An article outlining the bill and Robert Kennedy's role in crafting it concluded: "After generations of submission to segregation, they are marching in the streets, chanting 'Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!'" "Races: The Long March; A Legal History of Negro Progress; Life and Death in Jackson," *Time*, June 21, 1963, 17. The Birmingham demonstrations remained a touchstone in the coming months. The Kennedy administration prepared for the March on Washington involving all the major civil rights organizations and an anticipated crowd of over 100,000 demonstrators. "With Birmingham in mind, the attorney general expressly forbade the presence of police dogs." Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 117–19. Birmingham provided a key lesson for King's future strategies as well, and the presence of a violent segregationist local official, Selma's Sheriff James Clark, helped dictate his major effort of 1965, a voting-rights demonstration that would eventually become the march from Selma to Montgomery. Roberts and Klibanoff, 376. For more on Selma, see Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 164; "Selma: Beatings Start the Savage Season," *Life*, March 19, 1965, cover, 30–37; "The Nation Surges to Join the Negro on His March," *Life* 58, March 26, 1965, cover, 30–37; "Civil Rights: The Central Point," *Time*, March 19, 1965, 21, 23–28; and "Civil Rights: Electric charges; 'A Meeting of History and Fate,'" *Time*, March 26, 1965, 19–22.

<sup>139</sup> Quoted in Parks, "'What Their Cry Means to Me,'" 78. King had written in April of nonviolent direct action as a middle ground between complacency and militancy. He declared—by way of an image of the street—that if nonviolence had not been the guiding principle of civil rights efforts to date, "by now many streets of the south would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood." King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," 787. See also Roberts and Klibanoff, 323.

<sup>140</sup> Theodore H. White, "Power Structure, Integration, Militancy, Freedom Now!" *Life*, November 29, 1963, 78. "We Shall Overcome" was a historical song that had served labor movements earlier in the century, but it became the particular anthem to the early civil rights era.

<sup>141</sup> For a summary of this shift, see Manning Marable, *Freedom: A Photographic History of the African American Struggle* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 254.

<sup>142</sup> Such movements include the antiwar movement, women's rights, farm workers' movement, and gay liberation. Additionally, as Kasher has noted, "[i]ts vision and its methods continue to inspire and instruct struggles for justice around the world," so that the anthem of the early 1960s

demonstrations, “We Shall Overcome,” was sung in Tiananmen Square and Johannesburg. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 17. For more on the “ripple-effect” of the early civil rights movement demonstrations and actions to other 1960s movements, see: *ibid.*, 139–42; Lyon, *Memories*; Bloom and Breines, 10; Charles Johnson, introduction to *Road to Freedom*, 17. For more on the intersections of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, see: Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 142; Lyon, *Memories*, 173; Harold R. Isaacs, “Race and Color in World Affairs,” in Shepherd, 36–38; Paul Seabury, “Racial Problems and American Foreign Policy,” in Shepherd, 60–78.

<sup>143</sup> “More Law, Plus Leadership,” *Life*, June 14, 1963, 4.

<sup>144</sup> This claim relies on the timing of the Birmingham demonstrations. By 1964 the movement’s “Freedom Summer” would use such photographs as tools to call meetings, educate, and mobilize rural Southern blacks. See John Lewis, foreword to *Time of Change*, n.p. In 1964 the first book of civil rights photographs, *The Movement*, was also published, featuring works by Robert Frank and Gordon Parks and especially Danny Lyon, among many others. As Sara Blair has asserted, *The Movement* appeared “in the brief moment before the rising tides of black nationalism and state counterinsurgency swept the grassroots activism of SNCC... from historical center stage. Read in retrospect, the text of *The Movement* seems presciently designed to meditate on the contending claims of radicalism and liberalism, nonviolent action and armed struggle, radical nationalism and the ideology of the indivisible American nation.” Sara Blair, *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 212. See also the chapter from which this excerpt comes, “Dodging and Burning: The Writer and the Image after the Civil Rights Era.”

<sup>145</sup> A reporter at *Newsweek*, for example, had discouraged his editors from giving the events in Birmingham the magazine’s cover image by reminding them that both hoses and police dogs had been used on demonstrators in previous confrontations. Roberts and Klibanoff, 322.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>147</sup> The editors’ subtitle admits the sensational quality of the piece: “The Spectacle of Racial Turbulence in Birmingham.”

<sup>148</sup> Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 36.

<sup>149</sup> Kozol, “Gazing,” 160, 178.

<sup>150</sup> Durham claimed that *Life*’s editors had laid out much of the eleven pages by the time he and Moore arrived in New York following their arrest on May 10. Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 30. Journalism scholar and photographer John Kaplan has indicated that Moore was “allowed to supervise” the layout. Kaplan, 12.

<sup>151</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 322.

<sup>152</sup> For more detail, see “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,” 36.

<sup>153</sup> Durham, “Civil Rights Photography,” 28.

<sup>154</sup> Kozol, “Gazing,” 160. In a fascinating example of *Life*’s incessant attention to its audience’s engagement with its printed photographs in the magazine, Bezner pointed out that W. Eugene Smith’s most famous image, *Walk to Paradise Garden*, was in fact initially turned down because the children had their backs to the viewer and were clearly walking away. Bezner, 159.

<sup>155</sup> “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,” 29.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> In his *Race Riot* paintings, Warhol also maintained the original sequence of the photographs, although, like *Life*, he sometimes cropped them. Wagner has emphasized Warhol’s preservation of the narrative sequence. See Wagner, 106–09.

<sup>159</sup> “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,” 30.

<sup>160</sup> Huber posited that press pictures are similar to advertising pictures and references Roland Barthes’s “Rhetoric of the Image” in order to demonstrate how press pictures function with a clear and legible message derived from the correlation between signifier and signified in the photograph (and in the text surrounding it). Huber, 348.

<sup>161</sup> This stands in contrast to other scenarios. AP photographers routinely captioned their own pictures or annotated their versos as an “integral element in the evaluation of the image for publication by newsroom editors.” Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 23.

<sup>162</sup> Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 96. I have already noted that at least one white resident spoke in favor of the demonstrations but could not release his or her name for fear of retaliation. And *Life* characterizes Birmingham as “a climate of simmering racial hatred that has frequently erupted into open conflict.” “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,” 29.

<sup>163</sup> Kaplan, 1. Roberts and Klibanoff provided another example of a more complicated analysis, stating that headlines “did not misrepresent the significance of the Birmingham developments. What King had done was ‘provocation,’ and what Connor had done was ‘reprisal.’” Roberts and Klibanoff, 322.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>165</sup> “They Fight a Fire That Won’t Go Out,” 30.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>167</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 321.

<sup>168</sup> Doss, introduction, 15.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 18.

<sup>170</sup> I am indebted to Huber’s text for encouraging such a pertinent and specific way of thinking about illegibility. “What is meant here by illegibility, then, is not the opposite of legibility, but something that infiltrates legibility, disrupting it, interrupting it and pushing it to its limits.” Huber, 352.

<sup>171</sup> Cox, “Bearing Witness,” 35. In the decades since, Moore’s Birmingham photographs are “among the best-selling of all time at Black Star.” Kaplan, 12.

<sup>172</sup> The photographic community celebrated and recognized Moore for his the accomplishment and impact of his Birmingham photographs, both at the time and since. As the *New York Times* reported, at the 1964 annual awards meeting of the American Society of Magazine Photographers “A special award for Civil Rights coverage went to Charles Moore, a *Life* photographer, for his photographs of Birmingham, Ala., in the May 17, 1963, issue of *Life*.” “Camera Notes: Society Gives Honors to Photographers,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1964, X8. In 1989 Moore won the first Kodak Crystal Eagle Award for Impact in Photojournalism, honoring “‘documentation of a vital social issue [that] has changed the way people live or what they believe.’” Rodriguez, 27.

<sup>173</sup> It is worth noting that although the Birmingham photographs are chronologically and geographically outside of his field of inquiry, Perlmutter’s scholarship complicates such a causal relationship between iconic press images and policy-making. “The allegation that news images have an especially resonant ability to drive, alter, or overturn foreign policy has received currency and generated controversy since the Vietnam War. Among those who espouse such a belief are presidents, members of the foreign policy establishment, and reputable and influential reporters and pundits. In contrast, most mass communication researchers and some journalists and politicians are quite skeptical about any theory of news that posits strong or powerful effects on viewers regardless of informational context, cultural prejudice, or interpersonal influence.” Furthermore, Perlmutter maintained that the effect of unsettling press images may be to relieve spectators of the responsibility to act in response to depicted conditions. Perlmutter, *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy*, 1, 4–5.

<sup>174</sup> Forty thousand of these collages were sold for one dollar each. Kasher, *Civil Rights*, 116; and Kaplan, 16. For their assistance with images, I am grateful to Mark Choate, Special Collections and Aaron Lisec, Manuscripts Researcher, at Southern Illinois University Library—whose library is one of only two in the U.S. that houses the portfolio. No text consulted for this chapter names the artist of the collages, but the signature on each portfolio image as well as the portfolio cover seems to read “Lo Monaco.” Finally, although my illustrative figures appear in black-and-white, the actual collages incorporate the colors red and blue.

<sup>175</sup> Blair, 198.

<sup>176</sup> Kozol, “Gaining,” 162.

<sup>177</sup> Respectively: Doss, introduction, 3; and Kasher, *Appeal to this Age*, n.p.

<sup>178</sup> This chapter already contains one such editorial regarding Kennedy’s trip to Europe in the aftermath of Birmingham. Another example comes from the editorial following his assassination, which concludes: “The long stalemate over civil rights was becoming an ugly stain on our democratic system at the time of Kennedy’s death. Cannot this stain be removed by positive

action now? Let President Johnson lead Congress and the nation on a new adventure in our old tradition of equality. More than any statue such action would be a fitting memorial to John F. Kennedy." "An Intelligent Courageous Presidency," *Life*, November 29, 1963, 4.

<sup>179</sup> Rodriguez, 38.

<sup>180</sup> See John Lewis, foreword, n.p., for one such example. Another compelling response (in this case to televised images of the 1965 attacks in Selma) is George B. Leonard's "Midnight Plane to Alabama," *Nation*, March 10, 1965, 502–05.

<sup>181</sup> "More Law," 4.

<sup>182</sup> Baughman, 43.

<sup>183</sup> As Wagner has so succinctly stated, "When black is embodied as victim, he is the object of an oppressive or lethal gaze; for white to be embodied as viewer is to be the aggressor too."

Wagner, 113.

<sup>184</sup> Baughman claimed *Life's* audience was "much less likely to live on a farm or in a small town." Baughman, 44.

## Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> Martha Rosler, "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint," in *If You Lived Here*, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 52–53.

<sup>3</sup> It must be noted here that Rosler is an incredibly prolific and astute writer on art practice, her own and that of others, both historical and contemporaneous. As such, much scholarship following her articles and interviews seems to merely paraphrase her earlier iteration of matters. Consequently, many of the sources in this chapter are by Rosler. In this instance, Martha Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience," in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975–2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press in association with International Center of Photography, New York, 2004), 42. Elsewhere, she has reformulated this statement as: "It is true, of course, that *all* forms of representation call forth questions of responsibility and perhaps of descriptive accuracy, but those evoked by photographic representation are unique. The apparent truth value of photography and film has made them powerfully effective vehicles for reportage and commentary." Rosler, "Post-Documentary," 209. See also Laura Cottingham, "Martha Rosler: Crossing Borders," *Frieze* no. 13 (November/December 1993): 54.

<sup>4</sup> Photography offered "entry, a point of departure, for most people in the viewing audience. We begin with representation of that which is presumed to be already known... or we do not, because that representation is refused, and then the conversation begins from there." "Martha Rosler in Conversation with Molly Nesbit and Hans Ulrich Obrist," in Inka Schube, ed., *Martha Rosler: Passionate Signals* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz; Hannover: Sprengel Museum Hannover; New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2005), 32.

<sup>5</sup> Rosler has said, "A defining element of a documentary image is its particularity, that it represents a specific spatiotemporal 'what-is.'" Rosler, "Post-Documentary," 217.

<sup>6</sup> This definition continues: "(though its tools are somewhat more diverse and include the 'artless' control motives of police record keeping and surveillance)." Rosler also noted that documentary had "well-articulated ties to social-democratic politics." Martha Rosler, "In, Around, and Afterthoughts: On Documentary Photography," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 175.

<sup>7</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 180.

<sup>8</sup> "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 12.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "A Conversation with Martha Rosler," in *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (Birmingham, U.K.: Ikon Gallery; Vienna: Generali Foundation; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 24.

<sup>10</sup> "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>12</sup> See Rosler, "In, Around," 180; "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 12, 24; Buchloh, "A Conversation," 23, 29, 43.

<sup>13</sup> Those who appear strictly on the roster of documentary and are never mentioned by Rosler in the context of street photography are few by comparison—Larry Burrows, Robert Capa, Larry

Clark, August Sander, W. Eugene Smith, Erich Salomon, and Weegee. Clearly, however, at least two of these, Sander and Weegee, are quite well known for the photographs they made in the streets of New York and Berlin. Aware of the intricacies of categorization, Rosler, in her first explanatory footnote to the term “documentary,” relates that in the postwar era, documentarians are “locating themselves, actively or passively, as privatists (Dorothea Lange), aestheticians (Walker Evans, Helen Levitt), scientists (Berenice Abbott), surrealists (Henri Cartier-Bresson), social historians (just about everyone, especially photojournalists like Alfred Eisenstaedt), and just plain ‘lovers of life’ (Arthur Rothstein).” She goes on to note another subsidiary of documentary, “concerned photography,” as emblematic of “the weakest possible idea of (or substitution for) social engagement, namely, compassion.” Rosler, “In, Around,” 175n.

<sup>14</sup> Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 29.

<sup>15</sup> Rosler, “Post-Documentary,” 226. In this same text, Rosler revisited the characteristic irresponsibility of street photography, aligning it with photojournalism and contrasting it to the “participant-observer model of documentary photography.” *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 225n.

<sup>18</sup> I use “urban documentary” not only to linguistically permeate Rosler’s category of critique but also to distinguish it on the page from “street photography,” which I will continue to use to indicate the larger argument of this dissertation.

<sup>19</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 175–76.

<sup>20</sup> These names compiled from Rosler, “In, Around,”; “Martha Rosler in Conversation,” 12, 24; Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 23, 29, 43.

<sup>21</sup> “Martha Rosler in Conversation,” 24. Rosler was present during the last few years of Limelight Gallery in New York. She asserts that the photographers of the Photo League, in particular, “were of that New York milieu that I shared.” Elsewhere, she has related their practice to “a Jewish self-help tradition.” Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 43.

<sup>22</sup> Buchloh has suggested for nearly twenty-five years that Rosler might have engaged more productively with the political collages of Dada, perhaps best exemplified by John Heartfield. See Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 42–44; Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art,” *Artforum* 21, no. 1 (September 1982): 50. Interestingly, Claude Gintz asserted that documentary is “the grand American tradition which has already considered the ‘street’ as its arena and its theater of operations par excellence.” This indicates either that they agree wholeheartedly with Rosler’s desire to link to a local tradition or, more intriguingly, that Gintz truly sensed something inherently American in the practice of street photography. *New York, Ailleurs et Autrement: Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Allan McCollum, Richard Prince, Martha Rosler, James Welling* (Paris: ARC, Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1984), 22.

<sup>23</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 176.

<sup>24</sup> Victim photography, Rosler made clear in her essay, continued in the present: “Let us consider the Bowery again, the site of victim photography in which the victims, insofar as they are now victims of the camera—that is, of the photographer—are often docile, whether through mental confusion or because they are just lying there, unconscious. (But if you should show up before they are sufficiently distracted by drink, you are likely to be met with hostility, for the men on the Bowery are not particularly interested in immortality and stardom, and they’ve had plenty of experience with the Nikon set.)” *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>25</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 177. Rosler generally favored the photographic practice of Hine to that of Riis. See Rosler, “Post-Documentary,” 219.

<sup>26</sup> Kozloff, *New York*, 15. Kozloff, like Rosler, found Hines a favorable comparison to Riis, chiefly for the way he sided with his subjects, almost always centering them in the frame.

<sup>27</sup> Rosler, “Post-Documentary,” 221.

<sup>28</sup> It is worth noting that another scholar has suggested that FSA photographs were *not* widely disseminated, but published “for the bourgeoisie, whose goodwill was necessary to sustain ameliorating programs.” Kozloff, *New York*, 27. Indeed, there is no doubt about the availability of FSA–photographed images to media outlets across the nation. For a side-by-side comparison of FSA photographic dissemination and the Russian propaganda photography of the same era, see

Leah Bendavid-Val, *Propaganda and Dreams: Photographing the 1930s in the USSR and the US* (Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> Rosler cited William Stott's *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); F. Jack Hurley's *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1972); and Roy Stryker's *In This Proud Land: America, 1935–1943, as Seen in FSA Photographs* (Greenwich, CN: New York Graphic Society, 1973).

<sup>30</sup> See Buchloh, "A Conversation," 33, 37–38; Martha Rosler, "Lee Friedlander, an Exemplary Modern Photographer," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 127; Walker Evans, *Walker Evans: American Photographs* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938); and James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941).

<sup>31</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 185 and 185n. The photographer's gain contrasted with the photographic subject's status quo, if not loss, a dynamic only exacerbated when such FSA photographs became the darling objects of the art market, a topic that will be addressed later.

<sup>32</sup> These were not mutually exclusive affiliations. The Photo League was established in 1930 as the Film and Photo League, a wing of the leftist Worker's International Relief. In 1936 the filmmakers and photographers split into two groups, and the Photo League continued to offer programs, courses, and exhibitions of documentary photography until its demise in 1951, the effectual result of McCarthy-era blacklisting. The New York School is considered to have its origins in the league but outlasts it by twelve years. Its leading figures have been comprehensively addressed by Livingston. See Livingston, *New York School*. For the comparable text on the Photo League, see Anne Tucker, Claire Cass, and Stephen Daiter, *This Was the Photo League: Compassion and the Camera from the Depression to the Cold War* (Chicago: Stephen Daiter Gallery; Houston: John Cleary Gallery, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> For Rosler and many others, it was Rosenblum who "*embodied* New York photography [and h]is darkroom advocates were the vehicle by which his ideas reached me: gritty subjects, tough life out of doors." Buchloh, "A Conversation," 24. Had Rosler not had this direct connection, it would have been hard for her to have accessed information and images of the Photo League as easily as she had those of the FSA. The first retrospective exhibition of the Photo League did not occur until 1978. See Anne Tucker, "Photographic Crossroads: The Photo League," *The National Gallery of Canada Journal* 25 (April 1978): 1–8.

<sup>34</sup> The league's courses, exhibitions, and programs fastidiously addressed the concept of documentary years before Beaumont Newhall would include a reference to it in his historical survey of photography. Tucker made clear just how unusual and important the activities of the league were in a city where there were so few places to see original photographs or even reproductions and before the comprehensive publications. Tucker et al., 10, 14.

<sup>35</sup> Tucker et al., 9. The advanced class entitled "Documentary" had three basic views: "1) photography had a social function, 2) this function had a historical and cultural basis, and 3) photographs should have a personal as well as a social and aesthetic significance." *Ibid.*, 14. The league thus embraced and used the term *documentary*, but considered it interchangeable with social photography. See Enrica Viganò, ed., *Photo League: New York 1936–1951* (Trieste, Italy: Il Ramo d'Oro, 2001), 8; and Naomi Rosenblum, "The Photo League: A Humanist Approach," in Viganò, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Moreover, I suspect Rosler would generally agree with Rosenblum's distinctions. Other scholars have also made note of the impact or constant presence of the street in Photo League images. For example, Tucker recorded that before embarking on individual projects, student in the 1938 "Documentary" class had the assignment of "photographing city streets." Tucker et al., 14.

<sup>37</sup> Rosenblum, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Tucker, "Photographic Crossroads," 7. See also Aaron Siskind, "The Feature Group" (1940), in *Aaron Siskind: Toward a Personal Vision, 1935–55*, ed. Deborah Martin Kao and Charles A. Meyer (Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College Museum of Art, 1994), 27–28; Deborah Martin Kao, "Personal Vision in Aaron Siskind's Documentary Practice," in Kao and Meyer, 15; and Carl Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind: Pleasures and Terrors* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), 27.

<sup>39</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 43.

<sup>40</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 178–79.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 178, 195.

<sup>42</sup> Tucker, "Photographic Crossroads," 7. This shift was signaled by the Photo League's 1947 declaration to become a "Center of American Photography," in a move away from its documentary origins. See Tucker et al., 17. Siskind exemplifies this transition, both in his photography and in his teaching. In 1951, Siskind left the league for the Institute of Design in Chicago, invited by Harry Callahan to join the faculty in a photography program originally championed at the ID by László Moholy-Nagy.

<sup>43</sup> Martha Rosler, "Afterword: A History," in *Martha Rosler, 3 Works* (Halifax, N.S.: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2006), 97.

<sup>44</sup> Nathan Lyons, ed., *Toward a Social Landscape: Bruce Davidson, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Danny Lyon, Duane Michals* (New York: Horizon Press/George Eastman House, 1966), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Lyons, 5–6. Rosler has contended that such works should not be considered as snapshots because they refuse one of its signature qualities, the commemoration of an event, person, or moment.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Orován, "Garry Winogrand," *U.S. Camera* (February 1966): n.p. Lyons quotes this passage in his essay. Lyons, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Orován, n.p. "People and people things" is a response from Friedlander about what he was interested in photographing. *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> In this respect, Rosler has noted, there is something of the romantic artist at work, a negotiation between the world and the self via sensibility. Rosler, "Lookers," 37.

<sup>50</sup> Szarkowski, *Looking*, 204.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Rosler, "In, Around," 189. Rosler noted here that this triumvirate's most relevant aesthetic predecessors are not, as Szarkowski suggested, the social documentarians of the 1930s but rather what she deemed the "bohemian photographers" such as Brassai, Kertész, and Cartier-Bresson. This would seem to align Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand with some of the most canonical street photographers of the 1920s and 1930s. Still, the meaning of Rosler's "bohemian" remains unclear and unexplained.

<sup>52</sup> Szarkowski, *Looking*, 204. Others were also quick to single out Friedlander's relationship to sight, noting his "complete reliance on vision and illusion for its own purposes," in comparison to his contemporaries. Hal Fischer, "The Game of Seeing," *Artweek* (November 10, 1979): 1. Rosler herself has pointed out Friedlander's rejection of the visual "rules" of photographic composition, linking it rightly to an insistence on Friedlander's part on photography for photography's sake. Rosler, "Lee Friedlander," 118–19. See also Buchloh, "A Conversation," 30.

<sup>53</sup> "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 18.

<sup>54</sup> Rosler, "Lee Friedlander," 128, 123, respectively. Rosler was quick to credit Friedlander with refusing to play psychologizing voyeur by suggesting that a photograph can reveal some essential truth about an individual. Nevertheless, the absence of indicators such as "poverty, age, and disability allows Friedlander an unbounded irresponsibility toward the people he photographs." *Ibid.*, 126–27.

<sup>55</sup> Rosler assigned a more active role to photography's cooption by modernist aesthetics, arguing that "[I]t was necessary to the process of its legitimization that photography pick up the torch of formalism and distanciation from real-world concerns." Rosler, "Lookers," 35. This grants an unexplained agency to what she otherwise characterized as an unorganized group of individual practices. Nevertheless, she has noted elsewhere photography's purposeful quotation of more legitimate art forms until documentary reflected the "fragmentation, subjectivization, and the distortion of images stemming from surrealism." Rosler, "Notes on Quotes," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 138.

<sup>56</sup> Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 61. See also Deutsche, introduction to *Evictions*, xvii.

<sup>57</sup> Rosler wanted to work within both documentary and art institutions in order to try and change them. Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 99.

<sup>58</sup> For more on Rosler's thinking on Pop, Conceptualism, and the modernist paradigm, see Buchloh, "A Conversation," 27–33; and "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 12, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 52. Rosler, in relating autobiographical information in interviews, such as her participation in civil rights and anti-nuclear protests, often mentioned the social, cultural, and political factors of the 1960s. See Buchloh, "A Conversation," 23; and "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 6–9.

<sup>60</sup> This is a common misreading of Rosler's essay "In, Around, and Afterthoughts." In the years since its initial publication, she has taken more than one opportunity to point out that any message of abandonment found there is the reader's doing, not hers. See Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 100; Rosler, "Post-Documentary," 236; Buchloh, "A Conversation," 45; and "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 26, 28.

<sup>61</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 38.

<sup>62</sup> In her 2006 "Afterword," Rosler included this footnote next to this information: "A native New Yorker, I was in the midst of a decade of living and studying in San Diego county, with a few breaks of varying length back in New York; this one lasted eight or nine months." *Ibid.*, 94. Rosler lived at the northernmost end of the Bowery; in 1973 her address was 109 St. Mark's Place. See the postcard illustration in Alexander Alberro, "The Dialectics of Everyday Life: Martha Rosler and the Strategy of the Decoy," in de Zegher, 88.

<sup>63</sup> Rosler took the photographs over the course of "a couple of days" but printed and edited them six months later, once she was back in California. Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 94.

<sup>64</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 194–95.

<sup>65</sup> When asked about how self-conscious her relationship to Evans's work was while making her own photographs on the Bowery, Rosler has said that Evans proved "the least Norman Rockwell-like because least small-town oriented." Buchloh, "A Conversation," 39.

<sup>66</sup> Kozloff, *New York*, 24.

<sup>67</sup> Kozloff also noted this contrast: "How different Evans's agnosticism about progress is from Shahn's faith in eventual social improvement." Kozloff, *New York*, 25.

<sup>68</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 38.

<sup>69</sup> Rosler has commented that the presence of the liquor bottle was "almost incidental." "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 22. A photograph such as the one discussed above belies her statement, however, since she could have represented only the doorway and easily kept the bottle out of the frame.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Crow, "These Collectors, They Talk about Baudrillard Now," in *Art and the Public Sphere*, DIA Art Foundation, Discussions in Contemporary Culture 6, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>71</sup> Buchloh, "Appropriation," 52–53.

<sup>72</sup> "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 24. There is another published recounting of this same conversation, which happened after Rosler showed her Bowery project at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design: "There was 'nothing new' about these photos, so why was I taking them? They are quotations, I responded. Of what? Walker Evans? Of a whole tradition, I replied, of primarily U.S.-based documentary photography, which had papered New York in my youth." Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 97.

<sup>73</sup> For more on quotation, see Rosler, "Notes," esp. 133–34, 144. See also Cottingham, 52–55; and Michaud, 306–13.

<sup>74</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 44.

<sup>75</sup> For more, see: Craig Owens, "On Art and Artists: Martha Rosler," *Profile* (Chicago: Video Data Bank) 5, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 30; Rosler, "In, Around," 195; Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 95; *New York, Ailleurs et Autrement*, 24; Alberro, 95; and Cottingham, 54.

<sup>76</sup> It should be noted that many of Rosler's projects from the late 1960s through the 1970s reveal a consistent attention to, as one historian stated, the "problematization of the body and its relation to questions of social roles versus gender essentialism." Alberro, 81.

<sup>77</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 33.

<sup>78</sup> Owens, "On Art," 30.

<sup>79</sup> Alberro has suggested that the backing boards make the "words appear not as captions floating on a page but rather as bounded images, just like the photographs." Alberro, 99–100. Bound they may be, but such a characterization only reinforces the sense that the textual component is non-photographic.

<sup>80</sup> When installed, the sequence unfolds left to right and top to bottom across rows of a grid of variable layouts (6 boards x 4 boards, 4 x 6, or 5 x 5 with a blank position at the end). Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 95. Rosler was well aware of the grid as a significant characteristic of high modernism and as a representational mode for scientific samples. "A grid troubles the work's boundary, and boundedness in general." *Ibid.*, 96. Although I do not wholly embrace the argument, Alberto suggested that the board's imperfect construction enables Rosler to reveal the means of her art's production "not from a lack of technical sophistication but from the strategic decision to draw attention to the constructedness of the work or art." See Alberro, 74, 86, 88.

<sup>81</sup> Deutsche poses this same question. Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 318. Rosler has revealed that there was a second title under consideration during the work's creation in which "insufficient" took the place of "inadequate." See Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 69n.

<sup>82</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 194; Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 96.

<sup>83</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 194.

<sup>84</sup> Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 96.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>86</sup> Rosler has recounted how she was impacted by a 1968 Baldessari, which consisted of a bad photographic composition and the word *wrong* written at bottom: "I had never seen photographic meta-discourse before. Not only did he use a dumb photo, he made a point of it by sticking a word on it." Buchloh, "A Conversation," 38. Elsewhere, she claimed: "There had been few works, if any, in which the text and the photos were of equal weight." Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 94–95. This statement is somewhat problematic since photograph-cum-text projects proliferated in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The short list of such widely-known and significant projects would include: Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966), Dan Graham's *Homes for America* (1966–67), and Hans Haacke's infamous *Shapolsky et al., Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*. Although Rosler acknowledged having seen Ruscha's books (see fn 93, this chapter), I was unable to find any reference on her part to Haacke's *Shapolsky et al.*, an omission all the more surprising given the uproar from the art community in response to its 1972 censorship by the Guggenheim Museum. (For details on the Haacke scandal, see Walter Grasskamp, Molly Nesbit, and Jon Bird, *Hans Haacke* (New York: Phaidon, 2004), 47–51.) Nevertheless, it is true that Rosler's own work of this period had a consistent emphasis on language. In a recent interview, she noted: "I was writing and sending out postcard novels from 1973 to 1976. I began to do video in 1973 or 1974. I made the videotape *Semiotics of the Kitchen* in December 1974 (I dated it 1975). This was the month I photographed the Bowery." "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 20.

<sup>87</sup> Rosler was aware of the critical discourse on photographic sequencing through her readings of Barthes's structural analyses; Benjamin's reflections on captions (his "Short History" in particular); Brecht's analysis of realism; and the Birmingham cultural studies authors. See Buchloh, "Appropriation," 53; Buchloh, "A Conversation," 33; Silvia Eiblmayr, "Martha Rosler's Characters," in de Zegher, 155; and Alberro, 75, 86.

<sup>88</sup> Martha Rosler, "For an Art Against the Mythology of Everyday Life," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 37.

<sup>90</sup> In this respect, Rosler has rightly been associated with a host of other postmodern artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Haacke, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, and Adrian Piper.

<sup>91</sup> In graduate school, Rosler found peers in Fred Lonidier, Alan Sekula and Phil Steinmetz. She studied with Alan Kaprow and David and Eleanor Antin, and her group of peers interacted with students of Fred Jameson and Herbert Marcuse. Buchloh, "A Conversation," 32–3; and Owens, "On Art," 17–22. For a detailed analysis of Rosler's intellectual allegiances, see Philip Glahn's chapter, "Martha Rosler: Refusal, Documentation, and Realism," from his "Estrangement and Politicization: Bertolt Brecht and American Art, 1967–79" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2007), 48–128.

<sup>92</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 28. In the same portion of this conversation with Buchloh, Rosler credited Michael Fried's essay "Art and Objecthood" with stimulating this awareness on her part.

<sup>93</sup> Notably, the artistic intersection of urban setting and documentary photography seems to have been a productive one, and many of the resulting projects emphasize, as Rosler's does, building

facades and urban streetscapes. Certainly, the aforementioned projects by Ruscha, Graham, and Haacke purposefully deployed the “factual” or “straight” aesthetic of earlier documentary photographers, often to underscore the project’s conceptual aim to catalogue, problematize, and/or criminalize the buildings and streetscapes depicted.

<sup>94</sup> Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 31. For more, see “Martha Rosler in Conversation,” 32.

<sup>95</sup> Deutsche, “Alternative Space,” 52.

<sup>96</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling*, 17–18.

<sup>97</sup> See *ibid.*, 8, 27, 29, 42, 47.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>99</sup> As Rosler stated: “Homelessness exists not because the system is not working but because this is the way it works.” Rosler, “Fragments,” 36. For more on homelessness and capitalism, see Buck-Morss, “Flâneur,” 99–140.

<sup>100</sup> David Burnham, “Two-Man Teams to Offer Help to Bowery Derelicts,” *New York Times*, October 7, 1967, 31. Rosalyn Deutsche, “Krzysztof Wodiczko’s *Homeless Projection* and *The Site of Urban ‘Revitalization,’*” in *Evictions*, 47. All estimates of the homeless population, whether nationwide or particular to New York City, unfortunately, are variable and unreliable. As historian Kim Hopper has pointed out, they are “subject to wild discrepancy depending on methods of estimation used, sources relied on, the season of year, and... the intended purpose of the count.” Kim Hopper, *Reckoning with Homelessness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 69. For statistics prior to 1967, see Benedict Giamo, *On the Bowery: Confronting Homelessness in American Society* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 14–15.

<sup>101</sup> For more on this, see Giamo, 26–29.

<sup>102</sup> While there are contemporary references to some homeless women and children, all sources consulted for this chapter agreed that the problem of homelessness in New York predominantly affected white men over the age of fifty. Regarding drunkenness among these men, a 1969 study found that more than one-third of those on the Bowery were “heavy drinkers” in comparison to one-eighth of the control sample (“a low-income, racially mixed neighborhood in Brooklyn”). Francis X. Clines, “Study Finds Bowery Losing Derelicts,” *New York Times*, January 27, 1969, 21.

<sup>103</sup> See Hopper, 6–7.

<sup>104</sup> “Self-Help Is the Goal of a Skid-Row Project,” *New York Times*, July 10, 1973, 33; Dena Kleman, “Remember the Neediest—Share Blessings With Others: Many Poor Who Have Despaired Of Hope Are Helped by 2 Agencies,” *New York Times*, December 14, 1975, 46.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Burnham, 31. These roundups, permissible under New York’s public intoxication laws, were the basis for the slang term still in use today “on the wagon” or “off the wagon.” Maurice Carroll, “No-Arrest Policy Is Hailed on Bowery,” *New York Times*, September 9, 1966, 37. It should also be noted, in reference to the Times’ description of such mass arrests as street cleanings, that this paper, like most in the country, saw the problem of homelessness through staunchly middle-class eyes and thus constructed the popular image of homelessness from that vantage point. For more, see Ehrenreich, 6.

<sup>106</sup> Pranay Gupte, “The Derelict Population Is Declining, But the Whole City Is Its ‘Flophouse’: Derelict Population Here is Declining,” *New York Times*, October 23, 1973, 58; Sydney H. Schanberg, “City to Dry Out Bowery Drunks: Voluntary Center Will Open Downtown in a Month,” *New York Times*, November 22, 1966, 29.

<sup>107</sup> Burnham, 31.

<sup>108</sup> Hopper, 7, 63.

<sup>109</sup> Gupte, 58. Crucially, the “decline” in the New York City homeless population also referenced in the article’s heading stands for a decline since World War II era statistics. In fact, the article says there may be as many as 75,000 homeless people, one of the highest numbers in the range for this period.

<sup>110</sup> Rosler, “Fragments,” 21.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Hopper, 62. The “sociological position” refers to her 1979 study.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>114</sup> “Center for Derelicts to Be Built by City: Center for Derelicts to Be Built By City on Island in East River,” *New York Times*, October 14, 1965, 1, 31.

<sup>115</sup> To be clear, this essay is not considered a part of *The Bowery* and therefore is not the main concern of this chapter. In the context of Rosler's complicated foreclosures of linearity, it is worth noting that the essay was both augmented and complicated by extensive endnotes. Rosler originally intended for these to appear as footnotes, sharing the page with the essay text. Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 98.

<sup>116</sup> Rosler, "In, Around," 178. See also her 2006 description of that era in Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 94.

<sup>117</sup> For more, see Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 62–65; and Alberro, 110. The exhibition was so New York City-specific in its approach and research that Rosler refused to transplant the exhibitions to other locales. See also Rosler, "Fragments," 32.

<sup>118</sup> The term "spatial-cultural discourse" and its characteristics are borrowed from Deutsche. Deutsche, introduction to *Evictions*, xi.

<sup>119</sup> Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 55. Rosler has summarized the phrase as "a phrase coined to signify that the organization of the city and of space in general is neither natural nor uniformly advantageous. Space is, rather, political, inseparable from the conflictual and uneven social relations that structure specific societies at specific historical moments." Deutsche, introduction to *Evictions*, xiii–xiv. See also Rosler, "Fragments," 15–16.

<sup>120</sup> Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 275.

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Buck-Morss, "The Flâneur," 114. Buck-Morss dated this formulation to 1927–29 and noted that in the later 1929 published version of this statement the term is changed from "collective" to "masses."

<sup>122</sup> Deutsche, introduction to *Evictions*, xxiv. Deutsche has also been concerned with those definitions of public space that seek to define it as political space, sometimes termed public sphere, as in the writings of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. To her, their definition too easily focuses on rights at the risk of overlooking practical solutions to public space and, additionally, leads to the worrisome question of "which politics?" are at work in this so-called democratic public space/sphere. See Deutsche, introduction to *Evictions*, xxii; and Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 271–74.

<sup>123</sup> Rosler, "Fragments," 19. Rosler linked this directly with the increase in subterranean passageways and other semi-public, semi-private enclosed spaces in cities, but I think it is an apt indication of the effect of five decades of suburban and exurban sprawl and its attendant car culture on all but the most compressed of U.S. cities and their streets.

<sup>124</sup> Jacobs.

<sup>125</sup> Deutsche, "Krysztof Wodiczko," 12–13.

<sup>126</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification," *October* 31 (Winter 1984): 96. The article notes the political background to homelessness in New York's newly chic art stronghold, the East Village: "Expelled from the economy by Reaganomics, turned out of their homes by state legislation [e.g., New York City owned over 60% of buildings on the Lower East Side, these cast-offs of late capitalism are fast losing the right to survive in society at all." Deutsche and Ryan explained how the Reagan welfare policy's restrictions pushed many working-class into the poverty category and then, by cutting welfare funding, ensured that both the historically poor and the newly categorized poor had little hope of upward economic mobility. *Ibid.*, 92–93. See also Deutsche's discussion of housing as commodity surpassing housing as a right. Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 60–61.

<sup>127</sup> See Rosler, "Fragments," 25; and Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 94.

<sup>128</sup> Rosler, "Fragments," 31. Deutsche and Ryan analyzed this process in the Lower East Side, which had been a working-class neighborhood for over 160 years and had recently become the art phenomenon with galleries and artists living in the area. See Deutsche and Ryan, 91–92. For more on the problem of art's role in the gentrification of the Lower East Side, see Craig Owens, "Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism," *Art in America* 72, no. 6 (Summer 1984): 162–63. It is worth noting that Rosler foregrounded these concerns boldly in *If You Lived Here...* in a way that she either could not or did not with her Bowery project, despite the latter's purposefully restricted presentation to an art-aware and art-involved audience.

<sup>129</sup> See, for example: Bernard Weinraub, "The Bowery Blossoms With Artists' Studios: Area Is 'Hogarthian,' but Has Low Rent and Big Rooms," *New York Times*, January 2, 1965, 21, 22;

Lawrence O’Kane, “The Bowery Awakens To an Upbeat Trend, The New Bowery: An Era of Change, Shops, Theaters and Artists Drift Down the Street,” *New York Times*, October 16, 1966, 1, 12; and Thomas W. Ennis, “Bowery Hotel Where Derelicts Slept Being Converted to Artist Studios: Derelicts’ Homes Becoming Studios,” *New York Times*, August 6, 1967, 1, 6. For an update, see Grace Glueck, “Brightening Up the Bowery,” *New York Times*, July 23, 1972, D24. Most recently, Joy Press summarized this trend. See Joy Press, “An Elegy for the Bowery: The Last Days of Loserville: Once Home to Hustlers, Drunks, and Bohemians, America’s Slummiest Street Has Turned into A New Millionaire’s Row,” *Village Voice*, February 22, 2005, <http://www.villagevoice.com/2005-02-22/nyc-life/the-last-days-of-loserville>, [accessed March 19, 2007].

<sup>130</sup> Weinraub, 22.

<sup>131</sup> Deutsche, “Alternative Space,” 55–56.

<sup>132</sup> Deutsche, “Agoraphobia,” 278.

<sup>133</sup> For the “intrusive figure,” see Christopher Phillips, “The Uses of Strangers,” in *Strangers*, 60.

<sup>134</sup> Giamo, 16.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 18.

<sup>136</sup> In the twentieth century, the class composition of New York City shifted dramatically; the percentage of the labor force made up of blue-collar workers dropped steadily, from 59% in 1929 to 47% in 1957 to a mere 33% in 1980. Deutsche and Ryan, 94–95.

<sup>137</sup> Again, *New York Times* coverage of the gentrification of these two areas is instructive. See Ennis; Olive Evans, “On City Lots, Tomato Plants Are Rising Out of the Ashes,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1975, 22; Glueck; Edward Hudson, “NoHo Residents Resist Loft Rezoning,” *New York Times*, November 9, 1975; Charles Kaiser, “Ban on Conversion to Flats Is Discussed: The Conversion of Lofts Into Flats Is Discussed,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1975, 47, 91; O’Kane; Iver Peterson, “Project in Bowery Is Approved Following 10-Year Controversy: Board of Estimate Supports Cooper Square Plans for New Apartments,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1970, 15; and Weinraub. Press’s 2005 eulogy for the Bowery in *The Village Voice* concluded: “Once upon a time, this wasn’t just a city of winners: The Bowery is proof that New York had a place for life’s losers too.” Press, n.p.

<sup>138</sup> Rosler, “Fragments,” 32. Despite this later quote’s emphasis on urban history, Rosler’s 1981 essay made only quick reference to the Bowery’s history—its name “still describes its country past”—but she never illuminated on this past. Rosler, “In, Around,” 195. Rosler’s analysis of Tompkins Square for her Dia project provides a far more comprehensive model for what I will do in this section than her “In, Around” essay. See Martha Rosler, “Tompkins Square Park, East Village, Lower East Side, Manhattan, New York,” in *If You Lived Here*, 208–16. Had Rosler illuminated the Bowery as she did Tompkins Square—what I aim to do in this chapter—it would have become clear that the history of the Bowery is one—even in its country past of the 1700s and well into its less countrified nature in the 1800s—of contentious class struggles.

<sup>139</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 175–76. The Bowery is likely the archetypal skid row. See Giamo, 27–28; Luc Sante, *Low-Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991), 14; and *Flophouse: Life on the Bowery* (New York: Random House, 2000), n.p. The Bowery is so secure in this identity, Sante noted, that it is the only major street in New York City “never to have had a single church built on it.” Sante, *Low-Life*, 12. The term *skid row* originated in Seattle where Skid Road was the path by which logs skidded downhill to the sawmill below. Soon enough, bars, gambling dens, and flophouses proliferated along that same road. “Siren Song of the Bowery Is Muffled,” *New York Times*, October 23, 1973, 76.

<sup>140</sup> Other sources list the term as “Bouwerji.” “Siren Song,” 76.

<sup>141</sup> Sante, *Low-Life*, 11–12. See also “Siren Song,” 76; and Giamo, 6.

<sup>142</sup> The Bowery originates in Chatham Square and continues one mile north to Cooper Square, where it splits into Third and Fourth Avenues. An offshoot street at Chatham Square was once named “New Bowery” but was changed to St. James Place to have more respectability. Sante also noted that the stereotypical New York accent is the one that originated in the area surrounding the Bowery. Sante, *Low-Life*, 14 and xiii, respectively.

<sup>143</sup> “As early as 1800... , ‘prominent citizens lived on it almost cheek-by-jowl with courtesans, grogeries and manufacturing plants.’ Though the northern stretch of the Bowery, around the

area of the village, retained its highly respectable antecedents, its southern terminus bordered on the first slum of the city [the Five Points area]... Five Points became the immigrant breeding ground for the numerous yellow fever epidemics that raged through the lower portion of the city.” Giamo, 6–7.

<sup>144</sup> In his introduction, Giamo further defined a detached milieu as a “physically, socially, and symbolically world apart from the dominant middle-class culture of urban society... , dependent upon the dynamics played out among the following: urban industrialization and its forms of economic and social segregation; class relations characterized by social distance amidst physical proximity... and the symbolic system of mystification, a rhetorical mode of apprehension which, although professing to expose urban poverty and homelessness, invariably resulted in obscuring both condition and process.” *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. The estimated total homeless population in New York City at this time was 60,000.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 22. This tradition continued in modified form as late as 2003. See Hopper, 6.

<sup>148</sup> By the early 1900s, the Bowery’s population numbered some 25,000 men. This number was undoubtedly higher at the time, given all those who remained unsheltered. This area of the city was so forlorn that in 1916, when the Third Avenue El was reconstructed, the tracks were centered directly over the street, rather than to its periphery as before. This effectively consigned the Bowery to permanent shadow. The numbers of homeless on the Bowery only increased in the 1920s following World War I and the widespread unemployment caused by the Great Depression. Up until 1940, unemployment had so direct a causal relationship to homelessness that “occupancy in the Bowery’s Men’s Shelter... [provided] a reliable index of the rate of unemployment in the [city’s] manufacturing industry.” *Ibid.*, 26–28. Finally, a note about terminology: The polite term for a flophouse is “lodging house” or single-room occupancy (SRO) hotel. Such places offered affordable lodging in shared dormitories or in cubicles approximately four by six feet. *Flophouse*, n.p.

<sup>149</sup> See Giamo, 29; and “Siren Song,” 76.

<sup>150</sup> Hopper cited a legislative report’s estimate of 4,000 Bowery homeless from 1969 to 1975. By 1978 the aforementioned city-wide dispersal is evidenced by her estimate of 36,000 homeless people throughout New York City. Hopper, 61. Giamo referred to 3,000 in 1971. Giamo, 29. This same number appears throughout 1970s newspaper coverage of the issue. By 1980 estimates were down to 2,000. Giamo, 29. By the century’s end, they were down to 1,000. *Flophouse*, n.p. This sharp decline had strong links to housing legislation (in 1955, municipal law forbade all construction of SROs), to gentrification (existing SROs were increasingly zoned for residential conversion into lofts, often explicitly for artists, throughout the 1960s), and, more broadly, to the gradual decentering of the homeless population throughout the city, as discussed earlier in this chapter. See Ennis; *Flophouse*; Giamo; Deutsche, “Krysztof Wodiczko”; and Rosler, “Fragments.”

<sup>151</sup> As mentioned earlier, a shift in the lexicon occurred around 1970, after which time I could locate only one headline using any of these negative terms. See Gupte, 58.

<sup>152</sup> In chronological order, see: “Bowery Man Slain; Youth, 19, Is Held,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1970, 27; Ruby Johnson, “3 Shot in Bowery in Street Battle: Policeman, a Drug Suspect and Bystander Wounded,” *New York Times*, August 5, 1970, 32; “Manager of Bowery Hotel Slain In an Argument Over Cigarettes,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1970, 59; “Bowery Itinerant Slain by Policeman after a Stabbing,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1971, 42; “Real-Estate Agent Slain Near Bowery,” *New York Times*, October 5, 1973, 35; Alfred E. Clark, “Part-Time Student, 20, Raped in Empty BMT Bowery Station,” *New York Times*, January 4, 1974, 26; and Lawrence Van Gelder, “Burglars Here Loot Jewelers Exchange Of Millions in Gems: Burglars Get Millions in Gems at a Jewelers Mart,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1974, 1, 81. A year later an article appeared celebrating a garden initiative at Bowery and Houston streets, quoting a local resident: “This is a marginal neighborhood. It has no identity, and this space gives it an identity and makes it productive. In this atmosphere of human destruction, this is a very nice kind of turnaround.” Evans, 22.

<sup>153</sup> A 1966 study by the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research supported this outlook. The *New York Times* summarized that the way of life prized by the men of the Bowery, characterized by “anonymity, the freedom to move from one lodging house to another and no

responsibility” would not be changed by closing down the businesses of the Bowery. Morris Kaplan, “Closing Skid Row Viewed as Futile: Experts Agree More Would Rise Outside Bowery.” *New York Times*, April 15, 1966, 35.

<sup>154</sup> Hopper, 6.

<sup>155</sup> Giamo, 28.

<sup>156</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 194. She continued, noting also the flophouses “and their successors the occasional unseen living lofts... whose residents must still step over the sleeping bums in the doorway and so are not usually the type who think of having kids.” *Ibid.*, 194–95.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 195. The liminality of this doorway zone—as a vulnerable public space affording a modicum of privacy—is perhaps best impressed by the fact that it motivated teenage boys from the neighborhood to perpetrate a particularly heinous crime. Just eight years before Rosler began her project, on September 16, 1966, “[g]asoline was splashed on the men, Bowery derelicts, as they slept in doorways. Then lighted matches were thrown on them.” Six days later, one of the men, Leonard Benton, died from his second- and third-degree burns. Carroll, 43. See also, in chronological order: “Second Bowery Drifter Set Afire by Youths,” *New York Times*, September 20, 1966, 93; “Five Boys Are Charged With Setting Fire To Bowery Derelicts,” *New York Times*, September 21, 1966, 40; Franklin Whitehouse, “Burned Derelict, an Ex-Cleric, Dies: ‘Forgotten Man’ Set Afire on Bowery Six Days Ago,” *New York Times*, September 26, 1966, 67; and letter to the editor, *New York Times*, October 3, 1966, 46.

<sup>158</sup> Michael Zettler, *The Bowery* (New York: Drake Publishers, 1975).

<sup>159</sup> Zettler, 24.

<sup>160</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 191.

<sup>161</sup> Rosler, “Afterword: A History,” 94.

<sup>162</sup> Rosler, “Fragments,” 34. Rosler summarized the work of Rosenthal as photographs made in the Bronx, where he resides. (Elsewhere, Rosler has lambasted the notion of a privileged “insider” documentary photo.) Rosenthal, like Zettler, incorporated quotations from his subjects into his book. Rosler noted that Rosenthal gives prints to his subjects, though what he expected them to do with the pictures or how this act grants him a kind of absolution in Rosler’s mind, one would be hard-pressed to say.

<sup>163</sup> Rosler, “In, Around,” 191. Following her 1980s remarks on *The Bowery*, Rosler seemed to have become aware of the impropriety of calling homeless men “bums.” She lamented: “Until recently, people who lived on the streets were labeled tramps, bums, vagrants, and derelicts.” Rosler, “Fragments,” 20.

<sup>164</sup> Like the previous article, this text aims at empathy but concludes with disparaging sentiments. Hudson, 31, 58.

<sup>165</sup> Martha Gever, “An Interview with Martha Rosler,” *Afterimage* 9, no. 3 (October 1981): 15.

<sup>166</sup> Rosler, “Afterword: A History,” 94. In a recent interview with Rosler, Buchloh asked her exactly where the work had been displayed during the time since its creation to its publication; Rosler responded: “I don’t keep such records, but perhaps at the 1975 show ‘Information,’ at the San Francisco Art Institute or the 1977 show there called ‘Social Criticism and Art Practice.’ Possibly late in ’75 at the Whitney Museum Downtown. Certainly at the Long Beach Museum in ’77, in a solo show David Ross gave me when he was the director there, and in a solo show at and/or in Seattle in ’78. I showed it at A-Space in Toronto. And I think I showed it at Véhicule Art in Montreal. It may have been shown at one or two other places in the 70s, and it was shown at the Vienna Secession in 1981 around the time the book you published came out.” See Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 44–45. Although Rosler was included in a Whitney Downtown exhibition, its title alone, “Autogeography: An Exploration of the Self through Film, Objects, Performance, and Videos,” suggests that *The Bowery* would have been a highly unlikely inclusion. Far more likely is her 1977 video-performance work “Vital Statistics of a Citizen Simply Obtained,” wherein Rosler herself is on display as the “citizen” of the work’s title. As for the other locations Rosler listed in the interview with Buchloh, I have found no records confirming *The Bowery*’s display there. In the same interview with Buchloh, Rosler made it clear that *The Bowery* was never for sale during this period from 1975 until 1982. Buchloh, “A Conversation,” 44–45. See also Rosler, “Afterword: A History,” 99. Rosler did not work with a commercial art gallery until 1993. Cottingham, 53.

<sup>167</sup> Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)," *Massachusetts Review* 19 (Winter 1978), 859–83. Craig Owens also specifically addressed *The Bowery* early on in his 1983 essay "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, ed. Scott Bryson, Barbara Kruger, Lynne Tillman, and Jane Weinstock (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 177–79.

<sup>168</sup> Sekula, 867.

<sup>169</sup> Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 97. In another recent recollection of the publication's discussion, Rosler has explained her decision to take charge of her own work's interpretation: "As to the Bowery essay, I had neither the desire not the intention to write something about documentary, but Benjamin Buchloh all but demanded it for my book. He said the Bowery work needed an essay or introduction. I resisted, saying, I've done the work, why repeat it in another form? What he said amounted to 'If I didn't get it, no one will. You have to tell us what this work is about.'" "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 38.

<sup>170</sup> Despite being reviewed only once, to Rosler's knowledge, this edition of the book sold out.

Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 99.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>172</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 42.

<sup>173</sup> Rosler, "Afterword A History," 95.

<sup>174</sup> I adapt and complicate here Deutsche's declaration that language is "singularly" public and unstable. Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 323. Jörg Huber's notion of illegibility has also been helpful here, conceived as a tool for "inconclusiveness, fragmentariness, and [the] contingency of understanding." No longer the opposite of legibility, illegibility is "something that infiltrates legibility, disrupting it, interrupting it and pushing it to its limits." Huber, 351–52.

<sup>175</sup> Rosler, "Afterword: A History," 96.

<sup>176</sup> Rosler has, to some extent, also described the work in personally detached terms, as when she wrote of the camera itself turning to photograph her son: "In one image, you can see the blur of hair atop my young son's head, as he walked alongside me; in another frame of the film rolls, the camera has been turned sideways to show him looking down at the focusing screen of his own plastic camera." *Ibid.*, 96n.

<sup>177</sup> This contrasts with a part of Rosler's critique of Friedlander's street photography, which "is not a stand-in for our presence in the real-world moment referred to by the photo but an appropriation of it." Rosler, "Lee Friedlander," 123. In part, Rosler can expect a recognition of her individual walk on the Bowery as a more collective one because, to borrow from Deutsche, public space exceeds the individual but is not necessarily outside the individual. See Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 302–09.

<sup>178</sup> Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 286.

<sup>179</sup> As Brian Wallis has reminded us, by way of Franz Fanon, all public identities are necessarily unfixed, temporal, and relational, shaped, by power relations, external projections, internal anxieties, cultural encounters, and more. See Wallis, 178. See also Phillips, "Uses of Strangers," 60. As a specifically urban problem, the confrontation with the stranger has been theorized by Thomas Keenan in what he called the "phantom public sphere." See Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 325–26. Rosler herself has, of course, long been aware of the power relations in urban documentary. See: Rosler "In, Around," 178; Rosler, "Notes," 146; and Rosler, "Post-Documentary," 209.

<sup>180</sup> Hales 280; and Squiers, 13, respectively.

<sup>181</sup> Buck-Morss, "The Flâneur," 114.

<sup>182</sup> For more on art audience and class divisions, see Rosler, "Lookers."

<sup>183</sup> Ehrenreich, 15. In the preceding pages, she defined the professional middle class as those who must work for a living, are salaried at the managerial level, have lengthy education backgrounds and extensive career credentials. Their earnings generally support home-ownership, sending their children to college, extended vacations, and other luxuries that do not characterize the whole of the American middle class. *Ibid.*, 13–14. A 1969 study found that the pervasiveness of the fear literally and figuratively embodied by the men of the Bowery. Clines, 21.

<sup>184</sup> Rosler, "For an Art," 8. Although unstated, it is likely that Rosler's use of "distancing effect" is directly referencing Brecht's notion of the same, *Verfremdungseffekt*, that he explored in his theories about the necessity of audience's to be aware of theater as a representation of reality.

<sup>185</sup> Deutsche's analysis of Cindy Sherman is instructive. See Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," 299.

<sup>186</sup> Rosler has acknowledged Brecht's role in her critical thinking about art: "As readers of Brecht, we wanted to use obviously theatrical or dramatized sequences or performance elements together with more traditional documentary strategies, to use text, irony, absurdity, mixed forms of all types." Buchloh, "A Conversation," 33, 55. See also Owens, "On Art," 19–21, but for the most detailed analysis of Rosler's relationship to Brecht, see Glahn, "Martha Rosler: Refusal."

<sup>187</sup> Buck-Morss, 128.

<sup>188</sup> Owens, "On Art," 22.

<sup>189</sup> Buchloh, "Appropriation," 50. In this article, Buchloh also noted the importance of Rosler's own position outside the institutional framework and distribution system. *Ibid.*, 56. See also Alberro, 79.

<sup>190</sup> Rosler, "Fragments," 35.

<sup>191</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 45.

<sup>192</sup> I borrow this question from Deutsche. Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 61.

<sup>193</sup> Buchloh, "A Conversation," 50–51. In two publications since that interview with Buchloh, Rosler has again, if somewhat retroactively, advocated for *The Bowery* as an urban study of the street as a social space: "The Bowery project thus becomes a work about territory, habitation, and representation.... I have said from the beginning that this Bowery project is a walk down the street called the Bowery, and thus a walk in the heart of the city, with its social relations laid bare." "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 22, 24.

<sup>194</sup> Deutsche, "Alternative Space," 47.

<sup>195</sup> "Martha Rosler in Conversation," 29.

<sup>196</sup> Rosler, "Notes," 145.

<sup>197</sup> Based on Rosler, "In, Around," 195.

## Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup> Griffin, 113.

<sup>2</sup> Gilles Mora, "Havana, 1933: A Seminal Work," in Walker Evans, *Walker Evans: Havana 1933* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 17–18.

<sup>3</sup> Galassi, "Photography Is," 14. As part of a series to promote contemporary photography in book form, this catalogue did not accompany an exhibition. See Luc Sante's similar claim in "The Planets," in *Philip-Lorca diCorcia: Heads* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2001), n.p.

<sup>4</sup> The street was not the first productive location for diCorcia, nor has it remained an exclusive one. Domestic interiors, populated by friends and family members, are the setting for what he now recognizes as his earliest serious work. A recent body of photographs, *Lucky 13*, captures strippers mid-routine amid the dark veneers and mirrored surfaces of strip clubs. Philip-Lorca diCorcia, *Lucky Thirteen: Philip-Lorca diCorcia* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Several critics besides Galassi have reinforced this artistic legacy. See: Weski, "Contemplation," n.p.; Yilmaz Dziewior, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *Artforum* 36, no. 6 (February 1998): 101; and Andy Grundberg, "Street Fare: The Photography of Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *Artforum* 37, no. 6 (February 1999): 80–83.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 81–82.

<sup>7</sup> This occurred with the debut of the *Heads* series, in which tight framing and dematerialized background draw more attention to the faces than in the *Streetwork* photographs. For example: "Following his *Hustlers* and *Streetwork* series, *Heads* is diCorcia's most recent elaboration on the legacy of street photography and portraiture initially developed and championed by artists including Walker Evans, Harry Callahan and Garry Winogrand." "Philip-Lorca diCorcia: Heads," PaceWildenstein gallery press release (2001), n.p. Variants of this idea appear in the following: Sante, "The Planets," n.p.; Michael Kimmelman, "Art in Review: Philip-Lorca diCorcia, 'Heads,'" *New York Times*, September 14, 2001, E26; and Dziewior, 101.

<sup>8</sup> Evans said that he made “a few snapshots of the streets, but nothing serious” during his time in Paris, using one of his earliest 35mm cameras, “a ‘vest pocket’ tourist camera.” Walker Evans, *Incognito* (New York: Eakins Press Foundation, 1995), 19; and Walker Evans, *Walker Evans at Work: 745 Photographs Together with Documents Selected from Letters, Memoranda, Interviews, Notes* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 9, respectively.

<sup>9</sup> From the late 1920s through the early 1930s, Evans used both a 35mm Leica camera and a medium-format camera with a waist-level viewfinder. For more information on Evans’s style and techniques, see Peter Galassi, *Walker Evans and Company* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2000), 15, 26; Emma Dexter, “Photography Itself,” in *Cruel and Tender: The Real in Twentieth-Century Photography* (London: Tate, 2003), 15–16; Evans, *Walker Evans at Work*, 9; and Mora, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Gilles Mora and John T. Hill, *Walker Evans: The Hungry Eye* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 8. In a late interview, he elaborated on his longstanding relationship to the street: “When you are young you are open to influences, and you go to them, you go to museums. Then the street becomes your museum....” Evans, *Incognito*, 22.

<sup>11</sup> Evans shared these writers’ emphasis on the city as the locus for observing modern life, and Szarkowski noted that Evans first read Flaubert and Baudelaire while in Paris from 1926 to 1928. John Szarkowski, introduction to *Walker Evans* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1971), 9. See also: Evans, *Incognito*, 11, 12; Galassi, *Walker Evans*, 15; Dexter, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Mora and Hill, 34.

<sup>13</sup> This point is a key reason to discuss Evans in this chapter, though I am not the first to make it. Galassi discussed it in the way that we, as Evans’s viewers, can locate the social types in his street photography. See Galassi, *Walker Evans*, 113.

<sup>14</sup> Mora, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Evans also made street photographs in Havana. For details on those photographs, see Mora, 12, 16, 18; Evans, *Walker Evans at Work*, 10, 13.

<sup>16</sup> The final edited group was not published until 1966. For more on the chronology of the project and its publication, see the book that is a reprint of the 1966 Houghton Mifflin edition: Jeff L. Rosenheim, afterword to *Many Are Called* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 199–200, 202–04. See also Luc Sante, foreword to *Many Are Called*, 11. For a complete selection of Evans’s writing about the *Subway Portraits*, see Evans, *Walker Evans at Work*, 160.

<sup>17</sup> Rosenheim, 197; Szarkowski, introduction to *Walker Evans*, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Sante, “The Planets,” n.p. The larger passage from which this is excerpted reads: “The street portrait, unposed, unsought, and unadorned, is less of an artistic minefield than the more panoramic street shot for the simple reason that circumstances make it so difficult. In fact, its history really has only two points of reference. There were those professionals who prowled the streets of major cities roughly from the 1930s to the 1960s, photographing likely-looking pedestrians, primarily rubes and tourists, and offering to sell them prints. And there was Walker Evans, who in 1938 began riding the subway... and photograph[ing] whomever happened to be seated across from him. Evans’s project combined the randomness and anonymity of the street while at the same time allowing each to break free of type and flaunt individuality through a hundred variables of express, posture, ways of wearing clothes, and ways of opening or guarding against the world.” While I aim to problematize the labeling of these photographs with the term *street*, others have questioned their characterization as portraiture. See Galassi, *Walker Evans*, 243.

<sup>19</sup> James Agee hailed the series as such in the text accompanying the first book of the *Subway Portraits*. James Agee, introduction to *Many Are Called*, 15. See also Sante, foreword to *Many Are Called*, 14.

<sup>20</sup> In the 1940s, subway cars were dark brown throughout and dimly lit with incandescent bulbs. This meant that Evans’s exposures, to avoid blurs at such low light levels, were necessarily thin, offering few background details. For more technical information, see Evans, *Walker Evans at Work*, 15; and Mora and Hill, 220.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, *Walker Evans at Work*, 152. Another favorite quote in Evans scholarship has been extracted from an unpublished text he wrote to accompany the subway series: “I remember my

experience as a café sitter in Europe. *There* is staring that startles the American.... I got my license at the [Parisian sidewalk café] *Deux Magots*.... Stare. It is the way to educate your eye, and more. Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long." Ibid., 161.

<sup>22</sup> Geoffrey Batchen disagreed with Evans's position: "An odd claim really [that 'the mask is off'], for never is the guard so up as when one is sitting opposite strangers on public transport. And it is this guarded blankness of expression that Evans did indeed capture with his invasive camera... , a sameness of expression spanning class, gender and racial differences and that even now remains impenetrable and opaque." Batchen, 452–53. Still, if being at your most guarded distinguishes the space of the subway car, what are we to make of the physical and psychological space of a crowded city street?

<sup>23</sup> Belinda Rathbone, "Walker Evans: Lost and Found," in *The Lost Work* (Santa Fe: Arena Editions, 2000), 254.

<sup>24</sup> A few months prior, Evans had used the same three-part formula of set exposure, fixed focus, and no viewfinder composition when photographing people on a street corner in Detroit for the series *Labor Anonymous*. Unlike the *Chicago* series, a blank side of a building almost perpendicular to Evans's position on the sidewalk provided a nondescript background. See Walker Evans, *Unclassified: A Walker Evans Anthology, Selections from the Walker Evans Archive, Department of Photographs, The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Zurich: Scalo, 2000), 189. For Evans, who also listed his subjects' imagined trades in his notebook—"millwrights, watchmen, graders, patternmaker, joiners, plasterers, glaziers..."—individuality was subsumed by social type. Ibid., 188; see also Batchen, 454.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from 1973 interview in Mora and Hill, 270. Notably, when the images appeared in *Fortune*, the shoppers were part of a collage of images of the city, some made in Chicago's train station, outside its theaters, and of its facades. Although the images of the shoppers are tightly cropped, they are accompanied by a quote about the driving force of commerce. Walker Evans, "Chicago—A Camera Exploration of the Huge, Energetic Urban Sprawl of the Midlands," *Fortune*, February 1947, 118.

<sup>26</sup> Mora and Hill argued that Evans, who hailed from suburban Chicago, would have certainly noticed the "profound transformation that the city had undergone." Mora and Hill, 270.

<sup>27</sup> Szarkowski, introduction to *Walker Evans*, 19. See also Mora and Hill, 12, 34, 270; Szarkowski, introduction to *Walker Evans*, 17; and Galassi, *Walker Evans*, 27–29.

<sup>28</sup> Britt Salvesen has proposed that Callahan may have begun making photographs on the street after viewing published street photography. Britt Salvesen, *Harry Callahan: The Photographer at Work* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 28. Callahan's awareness of Evans is not supported by Sarah Greenough. See Sarah Greenough, "The Art of Seeing," in *Harry Callahan* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 55n55.

<sup>29</sup> Having bought his first 35mm camera around 1942 for the express purpose of making photographs on the street, Callahan returned to the subject of urban pedestrians in 1950 in his *Chicago* project. I am not discussing another group of street photographs, also made in Chicago, around 1958–60, because the jarring use of a low vantage point and an extremely wide-angle lens resulted in images far less viewer orientated. This series is addressed by the majority of the Callahan texts in this dissertation's bibliography. For more on the 1942 Detroit photographs, see Barbaralee Diamonstein, "Harry Callahan," in *Visions and Images: American Photographers on Photography* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 14; and "Harry Callahan: A Life in Photography," in *Harry Callahan Photographs: An Exhibition from the Hallmark Photographic Collection*, ed. Keith F. Davis (New York: Hallmark Cards, 1981), 54.

<sup>30</sup> Diamonstein, 15. Callahan explained this project in consistently similar terms. See Sally Stein, *Harry Callahan: Photographs in Color, The Years 1946–1978* (Tucson, AZ: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 1980), 7–8; and "Harry Callahan: A Life in Photography," 54, 60.

<sup>31</sup> For technical details, see John Szarkowski, introduction to *Callahan* (Millerton, NY: Aperture, 1976), 20–21; "Harry Callahan: A Life in Photography," 54.

<sup>32</sup> For more, see: “Harry Callahan: A Life in Photography,” 58; Peter C. Bunnell, *Harry Callahan: The 38th Venice Biennial, 1978, United States Pavilion* (New York: International Committee of the American Federation of Arts, 1978), 18.

<sup>33</sup> Importantly, Greenough has argued that Callahan’s cropping of images removes them from the category of street photography. “By negating obvious expression of emotion, by separating the women from their background, and by focusing only on their faces, Callahan entered their psychological realm and added the introspection, loneliness, and isolation of the individual in modern urban life.” Greenough, “The Art,” 46. Solomon-Godeau has noted: “Callahan’s vision of the metropolis requires the suppression of those aspects of the city that are communal, interactive, and productive of social space and social relations.” Solomon-Godeau, “Harry Callahan,” 27.

<sup>34</sup> Sherman Paul, “The Photography of Harry Callahan,” *Harry Callahan* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 8. Paul found a female-specific urban exhaustion in these images. *Ibid.*, 9. Keith Davis offered a gendered reading of these photographs, decades later and from an altogether different perspective. See Davis, “The Rhythms,” 16–17.

<sup>35</sup> While it is uncertain whether Callahan helped design this installation, he would certainly have approved it. This experience for viewers approximated the aesthetic of his two brief experiments with moving images in 1948–49. Entitled “Motions” and “People Walking on State Street,” Callahan claimed the latter was more successful because “It was just the people walking—walking towards me and across the frame.” “Harry Callahan: A Life in Photography,” 58.

<sup>36</sup> Callahan experienced frustrations with the technological processed of color. The elaborate printing of dye-transfers—combined with his displeasure at the effects of color slide projection, an alternate form of output in those years—discouraged him from taking more than a handful of rolls of color film each year during the 1960s. See Stein, 6, 13.

<sup>37</sup> As Davis later summarized: “In this color-flooded world, black-and-white images run the risk of seeming quaint or antique.” Davis, “The Rhythms,” 22. See also Stein 10, 30–31.

<sup>38</sup> Davis asserted that these were made by running the film through the camera twice (once on the street, one when photographing the ads or TVs), claiming that chance played an enormous role in the resulting picture’s effectiveness. *Ibid.*, 23. Regardless of the method of superimposition, however, the majority of other Callahan scholars argued that he skillfully controlled how the final double composition would appear.

<sup>39</sup> Callahan simultaneously produced another group of superimposed pictures that merge erotic images of women and photographs of building facades “to address the huge gulf between our desires and our reality.” Greenough, “The Art,” 52.

<sup>40</sup> Szarkowski, introduction to *Callahan*, 14.

<sup>41</sup> Notably, when diCorcia arrived in 1978, Evans had just recently stepped down as head of Yale’s photography MFA program.

<sup>42</sup> Bennett Simpson, “Philip-Lorca diCorcia: The Exploded View,” in Simpson et al., *Philip-Lorca diCorcia* (Boston: Steidl/Institute of Contemporary Art, 2007), 14, 16.

<sup>43</sup> This interview also contains diCorcia’s description of his early attempt at Conceptual art. Nan Richardson, “Philip-Lorca diCorcia Speaks with Nan Richardson,” in *Conversations with Contemporary Photographers: Joan Fontcuberta, Graciela Iturbide, Max Pam, Duane Michals, Miguel Rio Branco, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Alex Webb, Bernard Plossu, Javier Vallhonrat* (New York: Umbrage Editions, 2005), 176–77. (Though published in 2005, Richardson conducted her interviews with diCorcia on May 8 and May 18, 2003.)

<sup>44</sup> Lynne Tillman, “Interview with Philip-Lorca diCorcia,” in Galassi, *Philip-Lorca diCorcia*, 103. DiCorcia’s statement—“I like to see the world as the world is. I don’t want to see it as a photograph.”—directly references a frequently invoked Winogrand quote about photographing to see what things will look like as photographs. Elsewhere, diCorcia has said that it took him years to appreciate how “difficult it was to make a Winogrand.” Galassi, “Photography Is,” 10.

<sup>45</sup> Tillman, 94–95.

<sup>46</sup> The intention to affect people through his photographs explains, in part, why diCorcia has so often been linked with the so-called Boston School. Nan Goldin, Mark Morrisroe, Jack Pierson, and Shelburne Thurber—all of whom studied photography in Boston in the mid-1970s, some as diCorcia’s classmates at the Boston School of Fine Arts—made almost diaristic photographs of

friends and relations characterized by a complete lack of contrived or staged practices. The images of family and friends place an emphasis on the viewer's identification with and empathy for the photographic subjects. Although diCorcia's earliest photographs feature his family, they seem to skirt, question, or trouble the possibilities for familiarity so crucial to the work of the Boston School. DiCorcia's control over these early photographs of family and friends ranged from staging scenarios to posing his protagonists to the introduction of artificial or studio lighting. DiCorcia waited over thirty years to organize these personal pictures into a highly nonlinear narrative of his life. This project was published and exhibited as *A Storybook Life* (Santa Fe, NM: Twin Palms Publishers, 2003). On the affective quality of these pictures, see also Norman Bryson, "Boston School," *Boston School* (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art; Allston, MA: Primal Media, 1995), 40.

<sup>47</sup> Simpson, 12–13.

<sup>48</sup> Barry Schwabsky, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *Contemporary* 67 (2004): 27. In one interview, diCorcia commented on the decisive moment: "Tillman: Cartier-Bresson talked about the decisive moment. When I look at *Streetwork* or *Heads*, I see the moment before or after the decisive one, or the in-between moment. DiCorcia: It's not an indecisive moment; it's more that there's no decision made." Tillman, 94.

<sup>49</sup> "[N]o matter how indirect the relation between diCorcia's camera and his subjects, his authorial presence is by no means transparent: These pictures, like all of the artist's earlier work, ultimately refuse the realist conventions of street photography." Grundberg, "Street Fare," 83.

<sup>50</sup> Tillman, 99.

<sup>51</sup> Philip-Lorca diCorcia, "Reflections on *Streetwork*," in *Philip-Lorca diCorcia: Streetwork 1993–1997* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1998), 11. The *Streetwork* project in fact continued beyond 1997, so this publication offers an incomplete survey of the project.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Galassi, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *Artforum* 39, no. 10 (Summer 2001): 169.

<sup>53</sup> In agreement with the date of Kimmelman's review, PaceWildenstein's press release for the *Heads* exhibition lists the dates as September 6 to October 13, 2001. Nevertheless, and somewhat confusingly, diCorcia has made reference to the opening having not happened. See Richardson, 171.

<sup>54</sup> Kimmelman, "Art in Review," E26. In the next three weeks, a shortened review appeared. It read, in part: "Pace's airy new gallery opens with this spectacular show by Mr. diCorcia whose strobe lights placed at street corners have made strangers into actors, their mundane gestures given a sudden, baroque gravity. For these pictures a strobe affixed to scaffolding in Times Square produced stark portraits picked out of murky blackness—just heads on poster-size prints 48 by 60 inches each, high-resolution digital scans. The strobe functions like the light of revelation, a high beam from heaven." See also Michael Kimmelman, "Art Guide: Philip-Lorca diCorcia, 'Heads,'" *New York Times* (September 21, 2001): E32; Michael Kimmelman, "Art Guide: Philip-Lorca diCorcia, 'Heads,'" *New York Times* (September 28, 2001): E36; and Michael Kimmelman, "Art Guide: Philip-Lorca diCorcia, 'Heads,'" *New York Times* (October 5, 2001): E32.

<sup>55</sup> Denis Angus, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia: faire le trottoir [Putting a gloss off things]," trans. Angus and Sandra Petch, *Art Press* 297 (January 2004): 45.

<sup>56</sup> Griffin, 113.

<sup>57</sup> Richardson, 174.

<sup>58</sup> Sante, "The Planets," n.p. See also Galassi, "Photography Is," 14. For a comprehensive list of commentators on *Streetwork* and *Heads*, see the bibliography.

<sup>59</sup> This phrase was used to describe the portion of an earlier body of photographs, *Hustlers*, which he made in the urban landscape of Los Angeles. "Philip-Lorca diCorcia: *Strangers*," Museum of Modern Art press release (March 1993), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Richardson, 173–74.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>62</sup> This technique was deployed in Times Square in "two places mostly." Tillman, 94. One source says the pictures were taken at rush hour, further enhancing the density of the pedestrian traffic. Ilaria Bonacossa, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *Flash Art* 34, no. 221 (November/December, 2001): 93. DiCorcia himself has only said: "It was a busy city street and people were crossing back and forth." Richardson, 173.

<sup>63</sup> Tillman, 94. Some of these Polaroids have recently been published in *Thousand* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2007) and were exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from May 23 to September 14, 2008.

<sup>64</sup> Richardson, 173.

<sup>65</sup> “A lot of people think there was a trigger and that people [on the street] activated their own picture, but it’s not true,’ [diCorcia] reveals. ‘I did it with the shutter. The thing with working with this very long lens is that you can’t really look through it: people pass through it too quickly. So, I had to establish a certain height, a certain frame and a certain point of focus, and the only way that I could tell anyone was there was by looking at a mark that I put on the ground. When someone would hit that mark and I wanted to take their [sic] picture I would. And very often they were out of focus because it was really a matter of inches, the depth of field was tiny.” Quoted in Simon Bainbridge, “Everyday Life,” *British Journal of Photography* 150, no. 7436 (July 2, 2003): 33.

<sup>66</sup> Sante, “The Planets,” n.p.; Dziewior, 101; and Bainbridge, 31, respectively. Certainly, these comments have been made with an awareness of diCorcia’s earlier emphasis on lighting, for a technical discussion of which, see Steve Herne, “‘Download’: ‘Postcards Home’—Contemporary Art and New Technology in the Primary School,” *International Journal of Art and Design Education* 24, no. 1 (2005): 8.

<sup>67</sup> The subjects in diCorcia’s *Streetwork* photographs knew only that he was taking a photograph, since his camera was openly visible. “Josefina: Do they know you are photographing them? Philip-Lorca: They know you are taking a photograph.” Josefina Ayerza, “Philip-Lorca diCorcia,” *Lacanian Ink* 14, [www.lacan.com/frameXIV9.htm](http://www.lacan.com/frameXIV9.htm) [accessed March 31, 2003]. See also Angus, “Philip-Lorca diCorcia,” 45. This was not the case with *Heads*. “NR: But in the Times Square series, the people you photographed had no such option of self-presentation. They were not even aware they were being photographed—not until the moment of photograph, right? dC: Most of the time they weren’t even aware of that.” Richardson, 173.

<sup>68</sup> DiCorcia elaborated: “It is pretty conventional lighting, it is just that to find it there is unusual.” Quoted in Bainbridge, 33.

<sup>69</sup> I am grateful to Larry Smallwood for a discussion of where the incongruity between ambient and artificial light is most evident in this photograph.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Grundberg, “Street Fare,” 80–81; “Philip-Lorca diCorcia,” *Guardian Unlimited* (January 30, 2002), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/story/0,3604,641941,00.html>. [accessed March 31, 2003]. For a discussion of these pictures in terms of urban television shoots with their (generally) lower production values in comparison to set-based Hollywood films, see F. C. Gundlach, *Emotions and Relations: Nan Goldin, David Armstrong, Mark Morrisroe, Jack Pierson, Philip-Lorca diCorcia* (Cologne: Taschen, 1998), 17.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Schwabsky, 27.

<sup>72</sup> Sante, “The Planets,” n.p. See also Kimmelman, “Art in Review,” E26.

<sup>73</sup> The full quote reads: “I don’t consider it to be metaphorical. People have suggested that, or even called it heavenly.” Quoted in Bainbridge, 33. In an interview with Tillman, diCorcia again refuted such metaphors: “Tillman: There’s almost a religious quality. diCorcia: Just because sometimes my light looks like Caravaggio’s, my pictures wind up being associated with religion.” Tillman, 97.

<sup>74</sup> This is not to be confused with “theatricality” in art historian Michael Fried’s use of the term to refer to a theatrical relationship between an artwork and its viewer.

<sup>75</sup> General theater illumination is systematic, symmetrical, and precise. Each area of the stage is lit from overhead, behind (backlights), and the side, as well as obliquely from the front left and front right. This common method allows a lighting designer to sculpt the light for the general idea of a time of day, a season, or emotional reinforcement. Again, thanks to Larry Smallwood for this explanation.

<sup>76</sup> In the framing of a scene, one style recognizes all that extends unseen in the world outside the frame (as in the work of François Truffaut), while the other presents a more sealed-off vision, in which the camera’s point of view dominates and even overpowers (as in the work of Alfred Hitchcock). Galassi, “Photography Is,” 7.

<sup>77</sup> “I rarely put the camera at my height. It’s part of the reason people describe my work as cinematic. It’s a third-person point of view.” Tillman, 94. See also Bainbridge, 32; and Simpson, 19.

<sup>78</sup> Tillman, 94.

<sup>79</sup> See Ayerza.

<sup>80</sup> Simpson, 19.

<sup>81</sup> Traub, “Common of Earthly Delights,” 48.

<sup>82</sup> Marshall Berman, *On the Town: One Hundred Years of Spectacle in Times Square* (New York: Random House, 2006), xxi. As the Berman quotation indicates, two events in 1904 pivotally transformed what had, until that year, been known as Longacre Square: the *New York Times* completed its office building on the triangular island just north of the Square’s intersection, effecting the rechristening of the area as Times Square; and the subway system opened its first branch with a stop at Times Square that would soon serve as a convergence point in an expanding network. Of course, the Times Square subway stop ensured that New Yorkers could easily converge in the area for such occasions—and for entertainment on a more regular basis—even if they lived and/or worked in another neighborhood. The initial line ran from City Hall north to Grand Central, across 42nd Street to Times Square, and then headed up the city’s West Side. (An estimated five million people passed through Times Square via the subway in 1904.) The 1937 addition of the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority bus terminal, completed in 1950, made Times Square an even larger nexus in the city. James Traub, “Common of Earthly Delights,” *New York Times Magazine* (March 14, 2004) 50; James Traub, *The Devil’s Playground: A Century of Pleasure and Profit in Times Square* (New York: Random House, 2004), 20–22.

<sup>83</sup> Gas lights came to Broadway in 1825; electric in 1882. Sante, *Low-Life*, 10.

<sup>84</sup> Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 21. On November 25, 1895 the opening of Oscar Hamemrstein’s Olympia Theater on 44th street had been oversold by 4,000 seats. Those masses became Times Square’s first crowd of record. *Ibid.*, 17–18.

<sup>85</sup> Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 22. The electric streetlights lining Broadway had partially laid the foundation for such transitory crowds, having encouraged pedestrian presence along Broadway at all hours since the mid-1890s, particularly in the stretch between 28th and 42nd streets. Traub reminded his readers that from Thomas Edison’s invention of the incandescent bulb in 1879 into the 1910s, electric lights functioned chiefly as public spectacle not private convenience. *Ibid.*, 14, 44.

<sup>86</sup> Ric Burns, James Sanders, and Lisa Ades, *New York: An Illustrated History* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 293.

<sup>87</sup> William R. Taylor, introduction to *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991), xi–xii.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 45.

<sup>89</sup> Times Square was so overtaken by spectaculars that regulations were eventually imposed, effectively zoning the square as the only city district that could be lit in this way.

<sup>90</sup> While not limited to the theaters of Broadway, the musical found no shortage of venues there, with sixty-six theaters in operation showcasing more than two hundred different productions in 1926 alone. Burns et al., 299, 346–47, 350.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>92</sup> The New Amsterdam had resisted the 1930s trend of theaters being repurposed as movie houses and burlesque halls, but by the advent of World War II, even these latter venues struggled to survive in large numbers, and the area became less exclusively associated with crowds seeking mass entertainment. See *ibid.*, 449. See also Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 91.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 100. See also Burns et al., 478.

<sup>94</sup> Kimmelman has noted that this photograph “was assumed to document what happened serendipitously at the instant the shutter clicked. Of course, all photographs are contrived to the degree that the photographer chooses the image, framing what is to be in and out of it, and Eisenstadt, to insure he’d get the effect he wanted, simply recreated for the camera what was taking place around him anyway. But, if so, he still broke the pact between photojournalist and viewer, creating something that tended toward fiction or theater. In a strange way, it was true at

least to the spirit of Times Square, the epicenter of Broadway.” Michael Kimmelman, “Assignment Times Square,” *New York Times Magazine* (May 18, 1997): 43.

<sup>95</sup> Milton Bracker, “Life on W. 42d St.: A Study in Decay,” *New York Times* (March 14, 1960): 1, 26. A subsection of the article was labeled “Homosexuality a Problem.”

<sup>96</sup> Brothels had long ago followed the theaters to this district, so that by early 1900s, Times Square was the sex capital of Manhattan. See Taylor, xxii–xxv; Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 30, 117; and Bracker, 26.

<sup>97</sup> The last of these, novelist and critic Samuel R. Delany noted, demonstrated particular staying power over the next quarter-century: “For \$1.49 in the ’70s, and for \$5 in the year before they were closed [1995], from ten in the morning til midnight you could enter and, in the sagging seats, watch a projection of two or three hard-core pornographic films.” Samuel R. Delany, “X-X-X Marks the Spot,” *Out* (December 1996/January 1997): 120.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, Burns et al., 552–53.

<sup>99</sup> See Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 124.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 126.

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Daniel Makagan, *Where the Ball Drops: Days and Nights in Times Square* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), xiii. And, as Makagan has elaborated, other American cities have continued into the twenty-first century to look to “Times Square as an urban model for the construction and maintenance of a public sphere” and “for answers to questions about government, entertainment, art, and urban life.” *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> For more on this plan, see Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 131–38.

<sup>103</sup> See Makagan, xii; and Delany, “X-X-X Marks the Spot,” 120.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in David W. Dunlap, “A Seedy Eighth Avenue Landmark, Gone Dark,” *New York Times*, CityRoom blog, September 7, 2007, 10:11 am.

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/09/07/a-seedy-eighth-avenue-landmark-gone-dark/?hp> [accessed April 6, 2008].

<sup>105</sup> In an interview with a Playpen customer, Makagan noted: “[T]his guy located his fantasy in the strip club... as a link to a larger fantasy about life in Times Square in the 1980s.” Makagan, 216.

<sup>106</sup> Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 168.

<sup>107</sup> The first of these would be *Beauty and the Beast*, which became the seventh longest-running show in the history of Broadway but opened before restoration was complete at the New Amsterdam. *The Lion King* musical went on to win six Tony Awards, including best musical, and would sell out performances for six years running. See *ibid.*, 231–33.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 169. Madame Tussaud’s and AMC were the two companies signed.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 165.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Like the one just before it, released in 1987, the 1993 plan dictated lighted signage, transparent facades, extended business hours, and more. *Ibid.*, 165–66.

<sup>112</sup> For more on Giuliani, see *ibid.*, 208–09; and Burns et al., 547.

<sup>113</sup> Burns et al., 553.

<sup>114</sup> Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), xvii.

<sup>115</sup> See Delany, *Times Square Red*, xi; Delany, “X-X-X Marks the Spot,” 172.

<sup>116</sup> Delany, *Times Square Red*, xv.

<sup>117</sup> See Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 214. In 1997 one hustler interviewed by Delany was still turning enough tricks (at \$40 to \$50 each) to remain in Times Square. The district also had the advantage, for another hustler, of keeping him close to his crack supplier. Delany, “X-X-X Marks the Spot,” 172. See also Makagan, 216.

<sup>118</sup> By the late 1990s, global corporations besides Disney had become involved in the theater, most notably Clear Channel Communications. With Disney producing and Clear Channel distributing (and both entities owning theaters), it may no longer make sense to separate the theater lessees in the area from their corporate neighbors. Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 229.

<sup>119</sup> This was the first time in New York history that zoning regulations had been used to require, rather than prohibit, excessive lighting. *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>120</sup> Traub gave a statistic from Spectacolor, the largest sign company in Times Square, which estimates that the cost-per-thousand of a sign in the revitalized district is 1/6 to 1/10 a television network commercial slot. For many, these signs, just like the companies who lease space in the office buildings to which they are affixed, indicate the “Disneyfication” of Times Square. See *ibid.*, 256–57.

<sup>121</sup> The three sections to the magazine were: “Hyperreal,” “Surreal,” and “Real.” Kimmelman, “Assignment Times Square,” 47.

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 55.

<sup>123</sup> “[P]hotography lends itself to the preoccupations of the moment in the art world, including narrative, sex and a brand of surrealism that has to do not with some imaginary universe but, as diCorcia’s pictures illustrate, with the oddness and unbelievability of everyday life. Times Square, of course, has always been linked with sex and surrealism, and still is, even with its new scrubbed face.” DiCorcia’s photographs appear under the “Surreal” section, with the subtitle “Street Theater.” *Ibid.*, 43–45.

<sup>124</sup> Incidentally, the stretch of storefront grates to the left of diCorcia’s photograph for Delany’s article (figure 5.25) is the very same area depicted toward the right edge of Tunbjork’s image (figure 5.24).

<sup>125</sup> Delany, *Times Square Red*, 94; and Delany, “X-X-X Marks the Spot,” 118, respectively.

<sup>126</sup> Delany, “X-X-X Marks the Spot,” 172.

<sup>127</sup> Galassi has discussed the importance of diCorcia’s choice of Hollywood, reminding us of its identity as a “magnetic center of American longing for mobility and success” and of diCorcia’s subjects in the *Hustlers* series as “those who don’t make it [but] are as much products of that longing as those who do.” Galassi also noted hustlers were likely susceptible to AIDS in the early 1990s, their choice as subjects thus loaded with cultural relevance. Galassi, “Photography Is,” 13. DiCorcia later confirmed Galassi’s assertions in his response to Richardson’s inquiry about the link between AIDS and *Hustlers*; “It’s not a direct link in the sense that I thought of it as a response to the deaths, but you do respond in some way and your work is and should be a response to your life and the things that are interesting to you.” Richardson, 174.

<sup>128</sup> Delany’s book also reproduced one of diCorcia photographs from “X-X-X Marks the Spot” as well as two frames from the shoot for that article with hustlers (figure 5.27). In the book’s acknowledgments, Delany thanked diCorcia for “photographs that did not appear with the original article,” making it clear that they were all taken c. 1996. Delany, *Times Square Red*, ix.

<sup>129</sup> Delany mentioned a number of theaters with a similar fate. See *ibid.*, xv.

<sup>130</sup> Simpson, 20.

<sup>131</sup> See *ibid.*, 196–99.

<sup>132</sup> Bernard B. Kerik, quoted in *ibid.*, 200–01.

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 200.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 196.

<sup>135</sup> Within days of opening, the store had become the attraction of the Square, taking over 100,000 visitors each day. Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, 217–22.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 280–81.

<sup>137</sup> Taylor, xi–xii.

<sup>138</sup> Even in his earlier staged *Hustler* photographs featuring paid models, diCorcia reduced ninety different sessions to twenty-one pictures that make up the series. See Richardson, 172; and “Philip-Lorca diCorcia: Strangers,” 1.

<sup>139</sup> Richardson, 175.

<sup>140</sup> Ayerza.

<sup>141</sup> Schwabsky, 29.

<sup>142</sup> Among all the writing on *Heads*, Galassi’s text appeared first and was the first to label the selected subjects “archetypes,” using capitalization to emphasize a representative of a classifiable category: “the Mailman, the Young Blonde, the Rabbi, the Black Executive, the White Teenager, and so on....” Galassi, “Philip-Lorca diCorcia,” 169.

<sup>143</sup> Richardson, 173.

<sup>144</sup> Prior to this, of course, seven of the photographic prints from the series had debuted in his 1995 monographic catalogue by MoMA. Those seven represent his earliest efforts from 1993, the year just after the *Hustlers* series was completed, to 1995.

<sup>145</sup> Twenty-four photographs were reproduced in the accompanying catalogue, though it should be noted that a handful of *Streetwork* images were made during or after this exhibition and, thus, do not appear in this catalogue. Some do appear in the different *Streetwork* catalogue accompanying an exhibition in Germany from January 12 to March 12, 2000.

<sup>146</sup> Los Angeles appears minimally, only in two works, one of which is not identifiable as Los Angeles.

<sup>147</sup> Simpson, 21; and this author in an unpublished typescript, "Tête-à-Tête: The Social Vision in Philip-Lorca diCorcia's *Heads*," delivered as a lecture at the Critical Studies Symposium of the Independent Study Program, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, May 28, 2003. I thank Jennifer González for correcting my scale assessment in her response to my paper that evening.

<sup>148</sup> Tillman, 97.

<sup>149</sup> Sante, "The Planets," n.p.

<sup>150</sup> My sense of private or semiprivate inspection owes a debt to Susan Buck-Morse's discussion of the privatizing of social space in the flaneur's observational relocation from the arcade to the street in Haussmann-era Paris. See Susan Buck-Morss, "The Flâneur," 103.

<sup>151</sup> Charles Wylie, "Streets of Paradox: The Photographs of Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *Art On Paper* 3, no. 4 (March/April 1999): 44.

<sup>152</sup> Tillman, 94. See also Richardson, 175.

<sup>153</sup> Tillman, 94–95. Both Galassi and Simpson offered compelling descriptions of the impact of such art on diCorcia. See Galassi, "Photography Is," 8; and Simpson, 13.

<sup>154</sup> Galassi, "Photography Is," 12. Earlier in the same text, Galassi pointed out that fashion photography's goal is "to embellish reality with the *frisson* of fantasy." Furthermore, "[i]f diCorcia's art alludes to the narrative conceits of the movies, it clearly evokes as well the glossy enticements of the magazines. Consumers and photographers have long shared a conspiratorial knowledge that the artificiality of the magazine world is part of its allure—that the seduction can be all the more delicious if both parties are hip to it, even if the consumer remains blissfully unaware of how the trick was done." *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>155</sup> DiCorcia, "Reflections on Streetwork," 14 and 12, respectively [emphasis added].

<sup>156</sup> Wylie, 44; and Kimmelman, "Art in Review," E26, respectively.

<sup>157</sup> "There is a third person's point of view, sure. There is a narrator who is the viewer." Ayerza.

<sup>158</sup> Galassi, "Photography Is," 6. For more, Simpson, 26n14; Michael Fried, "Absorbed in the Action," *Artforum* 45, no. 1 (September 2006): 335; and Weski, "Contemplation," n.p.

<sup>159</sup> Dziewior, 101.

<sup>160</sup> Dan Fox, "Philip-Lorca diCorcia," *The Citigroup Private Bank Photography Prize 2002: Roger Ballen, Elina Brotherus, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Thomas Ruff, Shirana Shahbazi* (London: Photographers' Gallery, 2002), 59.

<sup>161</sup> Kimmelman, "Art in Review," E26. In later weeks, this review would become a pared-down "Art Guide" listing. That listing, consistent in language, appeared once more alongside a reproduction of *Head #01* on September 28. See Kimmelman, "Art Guide" (September 21, 2001): E32; Kimmelman, "Art Guide" (September 28, 2001): E36; and Kimmelman, "Art Guide" (October 5, 2001): E32.

<sup>162</sup> Sante summarized this experience: "The unspoken rule is that you are to see just enough to keep from getting knifed." Sante, "The Planets," n.p. Griffin has noted: "Every city has its own street dynamics. In Paris, it means sidewalk flirtation between passersby; in Los Angeles, it means being alone for long stretches in a car at 30 mph [*sic*] with a stereo system. And in New York, it means moving in a crowd without looking at anybody else—or at least, not for very long." Griffin, 113.

<sup>163</sup> Ian Hunt, "Contractualities of the Eye," in *Face On: Photography as Social Exchange* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000), 57. See also William Stover, "At a Remove," *Photography Quarterly* 80 (2001): 4.

<sup>164</sup> DiCorcia, "Reflections on Streetwork," 12.

<sup>165</sup> DiCorcia has commented on the alienation found in his pictures as both something he has courted and something he would rather not have define the pictures. “Unfortunately, the conclusion most often drawn about the people in my photographs is that they are alienated. I do not speak to any of them, so I cannot substantiate that. Obviously, urban life is alienating, especially for those with little choice. But, since I choose the elements within my images, maybe it is more me that feels the need to express my own view of the pathos which rules the average life. My work has helped me to formulate that viewpoint and continues to inform it.” DiCorcia, “Reflections on Streetwork,” 12–13.

<sup>166</sup> As Barbara Pollack observed: “[T]oday, with metal detectors, security cams, and lawsuits, the job of recording and participating in chance encounters is far more complicated than it was when Garry Winogrand set up shop in front of storefronts and intersects.” She cited diCorcia as one of “the savviest” of artists doing so today. Pollack, “Strangers,” 153.

<sup>167</sup> Simpson, 21.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 22. At the time of Simpson’s catalogue text, the case was still up for review by the New York appellate court, but this appeal by the plaintiff met with the same verdict. See Philip Geffer, “The Theater of the Street, the Subject of Photography,” *New York Times*, March 19, 2006, 2.29. The appellate court’s decision can be read in its entirety online at: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/431133/NY-State-Court-of-Appeals-2007---Erno-Nussenzweig-very-Philip-Lorca-diCorcia> [accessed June 22, 2008].

<sup>169</sup> Lisa Phillips and Louise Neri, “Inside-Out, A Conversation between Lisa Phillips and Louise Neri,” in *1997 Biennial Exhibition* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1997), 47. DiCorcia’s pictures provide a richness of detail—the texture of a leather jacket or the crisp description of facial expressions—that counteract the anonymity of his subjects. In this respect, of course, they differ enormously from CCTV camera images or surveillance video stills.

<sup>170</sup> Batchen, 448, 457.

<sup>171</sup> As long ago as the 1930s, one New York daily paper would occasionally print an aerial surveillance photograph of the pedestrians and award five dollars to anyone who could locate themselves in the crowd. Sante, foreword to *Many Are Called*, 11.

<sup>172</sup> Griffin, 113. This argument is not the same as the contention that “Philip-Lorca diCorcia is not concerned with national peculiarities, for his choices of location—the world’s metropolises—have universal validity.” Weski, “Contemplation,” n.p. *Hustlers* and *Streetwork* both demonstrate how very attuned he is to the specific identifying elements of the urban environments in which he is photographing, perhaps most especially in the American cities of Los Angeles and New York City.

<sup>173</sup> The phrase is Kimmelman’s. Kimmelman, “Assignment: Times Square,” 44.

<sup>174</sup> Simpson, 20.

<sup>175</sup> For a recent sociological study of streets as gay sexualized sites, see Mark W. Turner, *Backward Glances: Cruising the Queer Streets of New York and London* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003).

<sup>176</sup> DiCorcia has admitted that trying to get subjects in *Heads* to hit the right spot so as to appear in focus was amusingly reminiscent of Times Square’s once-prevalent shooting galleries. See Richardson, 173.

<sup>177</sup> Burns addressed these concerns in his 1999 summary of Times Square. See Burns et al., 533. These concerns were also understood as having national implications. See, for example, Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

<sup>178</sup> Traub, *Devil’s Playground*, xiv.

<sup>179</sup> Bonacossa, 93.

<sup>180</sup> Commercial photography is never so distant from art photography as any in academia or art institutions would like to believe. As Galassi noted in 1995: “DiCorcia points out that any artist who chooses the medium of photography has been familiar with [consumer culture’s] wiles and blandishments—from the blare of the billboard to the furtive secrets of pornography—long before he or she ever picked up a camera.” Galassi, “Photography Is,” 11.

<sup>181</sup> Buck-Morss, “Flâneur,” 133.

<sup>182</sup> The works, on view until May 21, 2002, represented ninety-three artists and were selected by the Department of Photography. “Photographic Celebration of New York City on View at the

Museum of Modern Art,” MoMA exhibition press release (February 2002), 1. This text appeared in slightly altered form in the exhibition brochure: “*Life of the City* is a celebration of New York, a diverse cross section of modern photography, and an experiment in exploring the ways that photographs help to make a community.” “*Life of the City*,” MoMA exhibition brochure and wall text (2002), n.p.

<sup>183</sup> As explained more fully in the MoMA press release: “*Here is New York* was initiated by Alice Rose George, Gilles Peress, Michael Shulan, and Charles Traub. On Sept 28, 2001, in a vacant store in Soho, they began collecting photographs of the events of September 11 and its aftermath. The pictures were scanned into a computer database, from which volunteers could make inkjet prints for display and sale at \$25 each. The ever-mounting proceeds contribute to the 9/11 Children’s Aid Fund and other charities. *Here is New York* rapidly became a place where New Yorkers could come together in a time of distress. A selection from its growing collection of thousands of photographs will be displayed digitally in *Life of the City*.” “Photographic Celebration,” 2–3. The MoMA exhibition brochure read differently: “Perhaps most importantly, the [*Here is New York*] project created a place where New Yorkers could come together.” “*Life of the City*,” n.p.

<sup>184</sup> Sarah Boxer, “Prayerfully and Powerfully, New York City Before and After,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2002, E1, E3.

<sup>185</sup> To be clear, diCorcia has never denied the impact of September 11 on *Heads*; rather, he has described it as something with effects both practical and artistic moving *forward* from that moment. In his 2003 interview with Richardson, diCorcia stated: “What happened was just after September 11th, getting in and out of New York was just awful—everything was. And I found myself up in New Haven where there was no response whatever to what was happening in the world. Of course, it was a pretty overwhelming event to respond to, but there didn’t even seem to me to be much discussion of it there.... It’s just hard to spend that much time and that much effort on [art] that is enormously loaded with pretensions but everyone will admit has little or no effect on the world at large. Even politically correct art has little or no impact on the world. After September 11th that was an issue for me.” Richardson, 169–71.

<sup>186</sup> Kimmelman, “Art in Review,” E26; and Kimmelman, “Art Guide” (September 21, 2001): E32, respectively [emphasis added].

<sup>187</sup> Bonacossa, 93. *Heads* is discussed and illustrated in commentaries on the finalists for the 2002 Citigroup prize in multiple art periodicals. For those with the most extensive commentary on diCorcia, see Francis Hodgson, “City Slickers,” *Art Review* 53 (March 2002): 72–73; Melissa Denes, “Snap Happy,” *The Guardian Unlimited* (February 2, 2002): 24–28. Perhaps one of the most strenuous of the post–September 11 readings of *Heads* occurs in the pages of *The Citigroup Private Bank Photography Prize 2002* catalogue, which commemorates the five finalists named in March that year. (DiCorcia was both a finalist and the winner of the prize, largely on account of *Heads*.) Describing the unselfconsciousness of the subjects, Dan Fox claimed that with this work, diCorcia “recasts it as a moment of epic *heroism*.” Fox, 57 [emphasis added].

<sup>188</sup> Traub, “Common of Earthly Delights,” 51.

## Conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Sargeant, 80.

<sup>2</sup> This references the already quoted characterization of Szarkowski’s modernist presentation of photography as “a flight from history.” Phillips, “Judgment Seat,” 41.

<sup>3</sup> Richardson, 176.

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