

Eighties New York

by Frank Horvat

Opening: Thursday, Feb 8th 2018 from 6 to 9 pm
Show: February 9th - April 7th 2018

FIFTY ONE

Gallery FIFTY ONE is proud to present its new show by the renowned Paris based photographer Frank Horvat (Abbazia, Italy, today Opatija, Croatia, 1928), featuring images from his series 'New York Up and Down, 1982-1986' that are shown to the public for the first time.

Horvat, celebrating his 90th birthday this year, can look back on a diverse career as a photographer, excelling in fields ranging from fashion and advertisement to photojournalism, nature photography and intimate portraiture. A true globetrotter, Horvat travelled the world sending his images to prominent magazines such as Life, Picture Post, Revue and Paris Match along the way. In 1955 the artist settled in Paris, where he extensively documented the city street- and nightlife and took his first steps as a fashion photographer. By directing his models out of the studio and into the streets, photographing them amidst real life situations, Horvat brought about a revolution in fashion photography that would be influential throughout the twentieth century, until today.

His numerous wanderings often led Horvat to New York, a city that kept on inspiring him with its ever-present diversity and dynamics. His 1980s series 'New York Up and Down' is a personal homage to the vibrant metropole in all its facets, from 'posh' ladies suntanning in Central Park or sipping coffee behind a café window, to shabby graffiti-clad subways and homeless people seeking a place to sleep. At the time New York suffered high criminality rates and many neighbourhoods had virtually become no-go zones. By choosing to point his camera at the highs as well as these lows, Horvat managed to capture the specific atmosphere and raw reality of eighties New York.

This nostalgic trip down memory lane to a city that no longer exists, is reinforced by the grainy quality of the prints and the typical Kodachrome colours. For Horvat, who seldom used colour and this almost exclusively for his personal projects, the bustling life in the Big Apple encouraged him, for the first time, to fully explore the possibilities of colour photography.

Through the years New York has inspired many great photographers. Joel Meyerowitz, Bruce Davidson and Saul Leiter are just a few of the grandmasters of street photography who proclaimed the city as their favourite subject. Horvat, who never permanently lived in the city, benefited from his outsider position to create a series of images that could still surprise the viewer. Drawing from his background as a fashion photographer and photojournalist, he was able to establish both an aesthetic and humanistic portrait of this over-documented metropolis. While observing with curiosity and wonder everything that crossed his path, he diligently assured himself a place in the history of street photography.

After being selected for the legendary exhibition 'The Family of Man' in The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1955, Horvat's work has been exhibited worldwide. His photographs are included in prominent collections such as the Centre Pompidou and the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, the Eastman House in Rochester, New York, the Ludwig Museum in Cologne and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

This will be the first solo exhibition of the series 'New York Up and Down' worldwide. A selection of the series has previously been shown by Gallery FIFTY ONE at Paris Photo 2016 and The Photography Show 2017 to great acclaim.