

Helen Levitt

Until February, 2026

Helen Levitt (1913-2009) began photographing street scenes in her native city of New York in the late 1930s. Her photographs capture the life of the urban setting and especially of the children playing in the streets. In the mid 1930s, Levitt met Henri Cartier-Bresson and Walker Evans and she helped Evans make prints for his famous show *American Photographs* in 1938. She showed him her early black and white photographs of children with their improvised games and chalk drawings and he described the lyrical style of her work as “anti-journalistic”. Helen Levitt took her camera to the city’s poorer neighborhoods, like Spanish Harlem and the Lower East Side, where people treated their streets as their living rooms and where she showed an unerring sense and empathy for the mystery and wry humor of everyday life. In 1940, Levitt’s photographs were part of the inaugural exhibition of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Three years later, the museum also mounted her first solo exhibition, titled *Photographs of Children*. In the course of her artistic career, Levitt also paid great attention to the medium of film, working as an editor and director in the 1950s, after she met Surrealist filmmaker and painter Luis Buñuel.

She collaborated with writer James Agee, whom he met through Walker Evans, on the photography and editing of the documentaries *The Quiet One* (1948), a drama about an African-American boy, and *In the Street* (1948/1949), which deals with life on the streets of Hispanic Harlem, which he directed with James Agee and Janice Loeb. These films influenced the later evolution of documentary cinema, as seen in the work of artists such as Jonas Mekas and Andy Warhol.

She received prestigious Guggenheim Foundation awards in 1959 and 1960, upon which she began to experiment with color photography and created pioneering art in the field. Her color photographs are as direct and unsentimental as her early black and white work, but also reflected those times had changed and people’s private lives had become less visible in the streets.

Index

- A Polish girl** [VIEW](#) 4
1935
- The independence (...)** [VIEW](#) 5
February 1931
- Shepherd and sheepdog in the Pyrenees** [VIEW](#) 6
January 1936
- Lamb resisting (...)** [VIEW](#) 7
April 1934
- The Japanese Imperial Navy battleship (...)** [VIEW](#) 8
May 15, 1934
- Recruits in formation (...)** [VIEW](#) 9
July 1934
- Miquel Badia (...)** [VIEW](#) 10
September 1934
- Children looking at toys (...)** [VIEW](#) 11
December 1934
- Josep Gironès (...)** [VIEW](#) 12
February 17, 1935
- Men dressed as women (...)** [VIEW](#) 13
1935
- Boy with a lamb (...)** [VIEW](#) 14
April 1934
- Town crier (...)** [VIEW](#) 15
February 16, 1936
- Actress putting on makeup (...)** [VIEW](#) 16
1931 – 1936
- Woman praying, Barcelona** [VIEW](#) 17
1931 – 1936

Index

- A couple in a bar, Barcelona** [VIEW](#) **18**
1931 – 1936
- The Barcelona swimmer (...)** [VIEW](#) **19**
1934 – 1935
- Joint rally (...)** [VIEW](#) **20**
October 25, 1936
- At the Aragon front** [VIEW](#) **21**
December 1936
- The Children's Week** [VIEW](#) **22**
January 1938
- The goalkeeper of FC Barcelona (...)** [VIEW](#) **23**
June 1936
- Vicente Carretero (...)** [VIEW](#) **24**
April 1936
- Participant (...)** [VIEW](#) **25**
1930 – 1936



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Mondays: Closed
(except public holidays)
Tuesdays – Sundays
(and public holidays): 11 am-8 pm
Last entry: 7.30 pm

From October 1st
Mondays: Closed
(except public holidays)
Tuesdays – Sundays
(and public holidays): 11 am-7 pm
Last entry: 6.30 pm

Visitors must leave the galleries
10 minutes before closing time

Admissions

Standard ticket: 5 €
Ticket with reduction: 3 €
Free standard ticket: Tuesdays
(except public holidays)
Groups: 3 € / per person

Guided tour (cultural mediation service)

Until September 30th
Wednesdays & Thursdays: 5-8 pm
Fridays & Saturdays: 12-2 pm, 5-8 pm
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2 pm

From October 1st
Wednesdays & Thursdays: 4-7 pm
Fridays & Saturdays: 12-2 pm, 4-7 pm
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2 pm

Information at the reception

Audio guide

Accessible via mobile. Included with
the individual ticket. More information
in the “Tickets” section.

