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Helen Levitt

HELEN
LEVITT



Synopsis

As if ever anyone was born to be a photographer, Helen Levitt was. Looking at these pictures triggers that tingling feeling you get from photographs by artists like Lartigue, Kertész, and Cartier-Bresson: a feeling that the camera is less an expertly operated tool than the seamless extension of a mind and body that are preternaturally alert to the world. • "The New York Times" Levitt's photographs, like her city, though occasionally they rise to beauty, are mostly too quick for it. Instead, they have the quality of frozen street-corner conversation: she went out, saw something wonderful, came home to tell you all about it, and then, frustrated, said, "You had to be there," and you realize, looking at the picture, that you were. • "Adam Gopnik, The New Yorker" Helen Levitt, the visual poet laureate of New York City, published her magnum opus *Crosstown* in 2001 to great acclaim. The book immediately sold out, never to be reprinted, making it a classic volume of street photography for the cognoscenti. Levitt went on to author two smaller volumes, *Here and There* and *Slide Show*, her first monograph exclusively featuring her little-known color work, which have garnered her accolades from around the globe. Most recently, she was named the 2008 recipient of the SPECTRUM International Prize for Photography of the Foundation of Lower Saxony, an honor previously bestowed on such luminaries as Robert Adams and Sophie Calle. Her final book: *Helen Levitt*, was released in conjunction with a retrospective exhibition at Germany's Sprengel Museum Hannover, the exhibit included her most iconic works, intermixed with never-before-seen color work. Combining seven decades of New York City street life with her seminal work in Mexico City, *Helen Levitt's* self-titled compilation features the master works of an incomparable career.

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Customer Reviews

Helen Levitt is deeply respected among photographers. Her work is collected by museums and shown in galleries. I wish she were more widely known. Her street photographs of New York in the '40's are pure art. She had an incredible eye, sense of humor and intuitive sense of the space between the documenter and what is being documented. Her prints were created with great attention to tones of black and white that enhance subject matter and never overwhelm it. This is a beautiful collection. In a world now inundated with manipulated images, spend some time with this book and appreciate this woman's genius for presenting a place in time with simplicity, directness and respect for craft.

I love the photography of Helen Levitt. She captures everyday city life so precisely that it feels as though she's in your head. She finds all those amazing and mundane vignettes you fleetingly see daily on the streets of any city and she forever captures them in her lens and then on paper. Her photos show absolutes and contrasts - old - new, clean - dirty, happy - sad, young - old, and a million nuances of all things urban and alive. Looking at her pictures, you can almost hear the sounds, smell the odors and feel the air. This book holds a large variety of her work spanning several decades, some in color, some black and white. It is printed on heavy, quality paper. Still, it isn't a complete collection and lacks some of my favorites, so I wish this were a series of books, so I could easily collect all her photographs without duplication, and so superbly done. The format is simple: It is a picture book without captions. A short forward hardly tells you anything about her, but it doesn't need to. You can spend the day in her picture city know her intimately through her photographs.

Well, if you're looking at this book, you probably know who Helen Levitt is and you can probably imagine the amazing photographs that are in this book. Helen Levitt was one of the pioneers of street photography, a self taught photographer who eventually began working with Cartier-Bresson, another pioneer of street photography. Mind you, these two photographers represented REAL street photography, not the (pardon my language) crap we see today from the college kids running around with their \$6,000 Leica that Mommy or Daddy bought them. Street photography, unfortunately, has become WAYYYYYYYYYY overdone and destroyed by people with no true "eye" for it. Now we just

see photo after photo of homeless people, stray animals, homeless people with stray animals, etc. etc. Anyway, sorry to get off topic a bit there. My point is, BUY THIS BOOK. This is REAL street photography where talent and hard work are demonstrated through these beautiful prints. And if you truly want to learn what real street photography is all about, this book is a great starting point.

I ordered 5 copies of this book! It was such a pleasure to see all the new images that have never been published. I love Evans forward (brief but articulate), and to see the genius of Levitt through the years makes this my favorite book to date in 2008! I couldn't recommend it more!

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