

DIANE ARBUS
PHOTOGRAPHS, 1956 – 1971

GALLERY GUIDE

Diane Arbus: Photographs,
1956 – 1971 is organized by
the Art Gallery of Ontario

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DIANE ARBUS

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1956 – 1971



May 11 - September 17, 2023

In 1956, photographer Diane Arbus (1923–1971) marked a roll of film with the number 1 and her career as an artist began. Over the next 15 years, she produced a body of work that would revolutionize not only the portrait genre, but the medium of photography more broadly.

Working mostly in and around New York City, Arbus selected her subjects—couples, children, nudists, suburban families, circus performers, and celebrities, among others—for their singularity. “I would like to photograph everybody,”

she declared in a letter to a friend in 1960. Arbus aimed to describe, in vivid detail, a range of human difference, at a moment when visual culture strove instead to emphasize uniformity.

This exhibition, drawn from the Art Gallery of Ontario’s collection, presents the full chronological arc of Arbus’ work. From the early, intimate 35mm format prints to the sharply focused square format she embraced after 1962, these photographs allow us to trace the artist’s evolving vision as part of a changing social landscape.

WELCOME TO THE EXHIBITION

Highlighting the artist's evolution over 15 years, *Diane Arbus: Photographs, 1956-1971* presents a sweeping chronological account of Arbus's career. The exhibition opens with an arresting self-portrait from 1945 and follows with images from 1956, the year Arbus decided to seriously pursue photography. Early works in 35 mm reveal an artist fascinated by the range of humanity and life as it unfolded on the street, while later works created using a larger format mark her emergence as a mature and compelling artist. Arbus created many of her most iconic works in this direct, sharply focused signature style. Please begin your journey heading left in the gallery, and use the map provided to follow the chronology of the works featured in this exhibition and further described in this gallery guide.

Please note, there is strictly no photography allowed inside the exhibition.

If you have any questions, please feel free to engage with one of our Gallery Attendants or volunteers inside the exhibition.

A series of Diane Arbus publications are available in the Contemporary Calgary gift shop. Kindly leave this Gallery Guide behind for the next visitor to use. A digital version is available at the QR code below.



NOTE ON THE TITLES

The titles of the photographs are as Arbus gave them in her lifetime, including punctuation, abbreviations, and terms that are no longer currently in use as attitudes around gender, race, ability, and other forms of difference have evolved.

NOTE ON THE PRINTS

Diane Arbus printed her own photographs over the course of her career. After her death, the photographer Neil Selkirk was commissioned to make prints for her 1972 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Other than Arbus herself, he is the only person ever to have printed from her negatives. All photographs in this exhibition were printed by Arbus, unless noted as “printed by Neil Selkirk”.



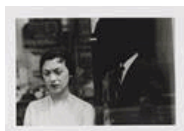
Child in a nightgown, Wellfleet, Mass. 1957

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/755



Woman with a headless dummy, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

Arbus and her husband, Allan, ran a fashion photography studio throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s; she was the stylist and he was the photographer. Though they found success with the studio, neither partner was creatively fulfilled. In 1956, Arbus left the business to pursue her own ambitions as a photographer. She marked this decisive move by labelling a roll of film and its corresponding contact sheet “#1.”

2016/858



Barbershop interior through a glass door, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/678



Girl in a plaid snowsuit making a face, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

While Arbus was establishing herself as an artist, she was also raising two children—Doon (born 1945) and Amy (born 1954). From early in her career, Arbus was fascinated by children, whom she viewed as agents of imagination and transgression. In turn, they posed for her in moments of play and defiance.

2016/590



Man behind a passerby, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print
38.9 × 30.6 cm (15 5/16 × 12 1/16 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016
2016/474



Woman carrying a child in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)
Anonymous gift, 2016
2016/846

wall 2



Little girl in a swing, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016
2016/468



Movie theater usher standing by box office, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016
2016/505



Fire Eater at a carnival, Palisades Park, N.J. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016
2016/622



Family at Easter, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

In 1956, Arbus enrolled in a photography class taught by Lisette Model, a Swiss photographer who had immigrated to New York City in 1938. Model encouraged Arbus to focus her vision as a photographer. Arbus later recalled, “It was my teacher, Lisette Model, who finally made it clear to me that the more specific you are, the more general it’ll be....”

2016/609



Lady on a bus, N.Y.C. 1957

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

Arbus photographed this woman at least twice. In one shot, the subject gazes out the window; in another, she faces Arbus head-on. This print is the second view. Many street photographers go to great lengths to remain unnoticed, but Arbus distinguished herself by making direct portraits of the people she encountered. She sought out such interactions and showed a willingness to personally engage with her subjects.

2016/479



Smirking girl in boots on a playground bench, N.Y.C. 1957

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/912



Female impersonators in mirrors, N.Y.C. 1958

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

As early as 1956, Arbus photographed drag performers at clubs in New York City. Her access to the dressing rooms of these underground spaces offered intimate views of the performers’ transformations. Arbus’s photographs often rely on the outward appearances of her subjects to reflect the constructed nature of personal identity—in this case, gender.

2016/616



Woman in a bow dress, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/847

wall 3



**Carroll Baker on screen in “Baby Doll” (with silhouette),
N.Y.C. 1956**

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/753



Trapeze artist in flight, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print

28 × 36 cm (11 × 14 3/16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/769



Couple eating, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/60/1



Girl Scout with a big book bag, N.Y.C. 1956

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/451



Kid in black-face with friend, N.Y.C. 1957

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/659



Empty snack bar, N.Y.C. 1958

gelatin silver print

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/560



“Frankenstein’s Daughter,” 1958

gelatin silver print

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

Arbus, an avid moviegoer, made several photographs in movie theatres. She wrote, “It always seemed to me that photography tends to deal with facts whereas film tends to deal with fiction.”

2016/580



Audience projection booth, N.Y.C. 1958

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/730



Two girls on the beach, Coney Island, N.Y. 1958

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

Coney Island attracted all sorts of people: sunbathers, swimmers, families, carnival workers, and photographers—Arbus among them. With her 35mm camera, she regularly photographed the crowds and spectacles. As this photograph reveals, Arbus began getting physically closer to her subjects around this time. This up-close view of two young women brings their arresting and aloof expressions to the fore. Coney Island would remain an enduring source of inspiration for Arbus.

2016/956



Sleeping monkey in a cage, N.Y.C. 1958

gelatin silver print

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/908



Corpse with receding hairline and toe tag on the table, N.Y.C. 1959

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

In May 1959, *Esquire* magazine commissioned Arbus to produce a photo essay for an upcoming issue dedicated entirely to New York City. When she proposed her project, she wrote, “I will go anywhere.” And indeed she did, visiting the Grand Opera Ball as well as the city morgue, where she photographed corpses. Editorial work like this project provided access to places not usually open to the public. “The Vertical Journey: Six Movements of a Moment within the Heart of the City” was published in the July 1960 issue of *Esquire*, and included a variant of this photograph.

2016/545



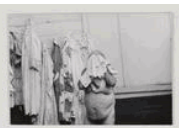
Woman and a dwarf backstage at the circus, N.Y.C. 1959

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/842



Woman in a bathhouse covering her face, Coney Island, N.Y. 1959

gelatin silver print

28 × 35.5 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/789



Elderly woman with pearls and a sheer white wrap
alone at a dining table, N.Y.C. 1960

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016
2016/559

wall 4



A couple at a dance, N.Y.C. 1960

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016
2016/708



The Backwards Man in his hotel room, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

“Joe Allen is a metaphor for human destiny—walking blind into
the future with an eye on the past.”

—Diane Arbus (1961)
2016/937



Dwarf lady on stage, Coney Island, N.Y. 1960

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

This is a rare example of Arbus printing a 35mm negative in full and leaving a black border around the image as evidence that the negative has not been cropped. The approach marks a shift in her printing style. Throughout her career, Arbus experimented with the borders that surround her images. These technical shifts often signaled a larger movement in her practice, whether she was pursuing new subjects or defining a new style.

2016/557



A boy practicing physique posing at the Empire Gym, N.Y.C.
1960

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016
2016/665



Wax museum axe murderer, Coney Island, N.Y. 1960

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Anonymous gift, 2016

“Still and always, in the murky half light behind chickenwire, murderers and their victims grapple silently and ambiguously for their last lasting time in the scuffed shoes and crumpled stockings and faded wallpaper of their hell where nothing ever happens or stops happening. A man cuts up his mistress, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor smile faintly, a five year old girl gives birth to a baby, a child is raped in a stone quarry and James Dean looks sheepish. The fee is 30 cents but babies are admitted free and everyone tiptoes about, nervous and rapt and polite as if they are in church.”

—Diane Arbus, “Horror Show” (unpublished, around 1961)

2016/835



Many clowns in a car, N.Y.C. 1960

gelatin silver print
27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/476



Couple arguing, Coney Island, N.Y. 1960

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

“In the beginning of photographing I used to make very grainy things. I’d be fascinated by what the grain did because it would make a kind of tapestry of all these little dots and everything would be translated into this medium of dots. Skin would be the same as water would be the same as sky and you were dealing mostly in dark and light, not so much in flesh and blood.”

—Diane Arbus

2016/600



Dead pig with human arms in the background, N.Y.C. 1960

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016
2016/553

wall 5



Bearded Lady seated in a bra, Hubert's Museum,
N.Y.C. 1960

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

Hubert's Dime Museum and Flea Circus was located in a basement underneath an arcade, close to Times Square. In 1926, the *New Yorker's* "Talk of the Town" column described the establishment as a museum that "solves in part the problem as to where freaks are when they are not in the circus." Hubert's had attracted other photographers, Lisette Model among them, but Arbus was the first to foster meaningful relationships and produce a trove of photographs of the people she met there. Bearded Lady is among many performers from Hubert's who appear in this exhibition.

2016/683



Headless woman, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016
2016/645



A very thin man in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016
2016/716



Female impersonator on bed, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/614



Three-headed twins in a jar, Coney Island, N.Y. 1961

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/767



Senior make-up artist at his desk, NBC TV, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/904



Woman with bangs, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/802



Jack Dracula lying by a tree, N.Y.C. 1961

gelatin silver print

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

In the proposal for her second photographic essay, Arbus described her subjects as “characters in a Fairy Tale for Grown Ups.” The result was “The Full Circle”, published by *Harper's Bazaar* in November 1961. In that text, her account of the performer Jack Dracula verges on the mythical: “He must stay in the shade because the designs on his back contain a dye which turns poisonous on prolonged exposure to the sun. He can out stare any stranger and causes a sensation on the subway, looking large, proud, aloof, predominantly blue-green, like a privileged exile.”

2016/463



Five Gold Star Mothers at Memorial Day Ceremonies,
N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/578



A rock in Disneyland, Cal. 1962

gelatin silver print
27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/673



Three female impersonators, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print
27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)
Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/757



Muscle man contest with onlooker, Cal. 1962

gelatin silver print
27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)
Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/886

wall 6



Clouds on screen at a drive-in movie, N.J. 1961

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
40.6 × 50.8 cm (16 × 20 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/597



Child with a toy hand grenade in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

The Museum of Modern Art in New York purchased a print of this now iconic photograph in 1964. As part of the acquisition process, Arbus had to fill out a questionnaire which asked for her “Special Field of Interest in Photography.” She answered “a kind of contemporary anthropology.”

2016/593



Penelope Tree in her living room, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/521



A castle in Disneyland, Cal. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/706



The Junior Interstate Ballroom Dance Champions, Yonkers, N.Y. 1962–1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

“If as it is often said, you can’t win, it is perhaps because when you do you have so much to lose. The Queen of the Kumquat festival has her season, Mr. Universe is only as famous as he is anonymous. Miss No-Cal will get fatter and the Olympic record will be surpassed. The Sweepstakes Winner is everybody’s mark, the Top Box Office attraction becomes less so, the Freckle King grows up and the champion gets to be the fall guy. To put it a little gloomily, winning could be called the mark of Abel.

It would be beautiful to photograph the winners of everything from Nobel to booby prize, clutching trophy, or money or certificate, solemn or smiling or tear stained or bloody, on the precarious pinnacle of the human landscape.”

—Diane Arbus, 1962 Notebook (No. 8): text for a project on winners

2016/870



Man and a boy on a bench in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/486



Woman at a counter smoking, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/844



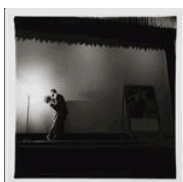
Marcello Mastroianni in his hotel room, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/491



A couple kissing on stage, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/709



**Child skipping rope at the Puerto Rican Festival,
N.Y.C. 1963**

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/871

wall 7



Christopher Isherwood, Cal. 1962

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/594



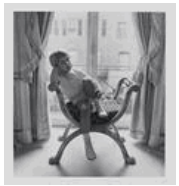
Short female impersonator seated at a dressing table,
N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/906



Boy in white, N.Y.C. 1962

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

In 1962, Arbus returned to a Rolleiflex camera she had used in 1956 and then set aside. These three photographs, all from that year, highlight her confidence with this 2 1/4-inch format.

2016/694

wall 8



Two boys smoking in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

“I wanted to see the real differences between things... between flesh and material, the densities of different kinds of things: air and water and shiny. So I gradually had to learn different techniques to make it come clear.

I began to get terribly hyped on clarity.”

—Diane Arbus

2016/951



A house on a hill, Hollywood, Cal. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/712



Lady in a rooming house parlor, Albion, N.Y. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/477



Soothsayer Madame Sandra, Cal. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/926



Pin-up collection at a barber shop, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/525



Norman Mailer at home, Brooklyn, N.Y. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/516



Couple on a pier, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/603



A Jewish couple dancing, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/713



David Nemerov on his deathbed, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/552



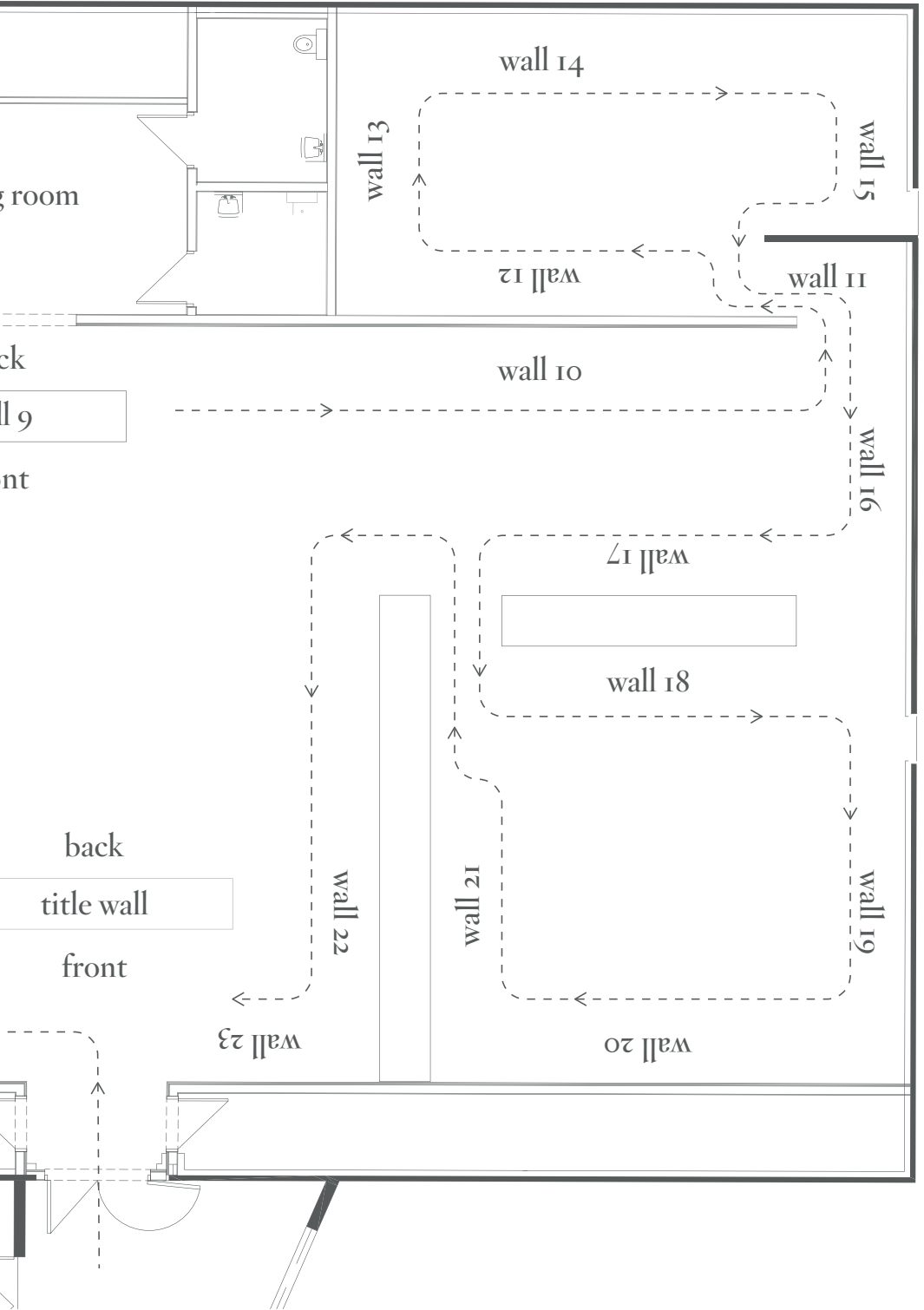
A Puerto Rican housewife, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

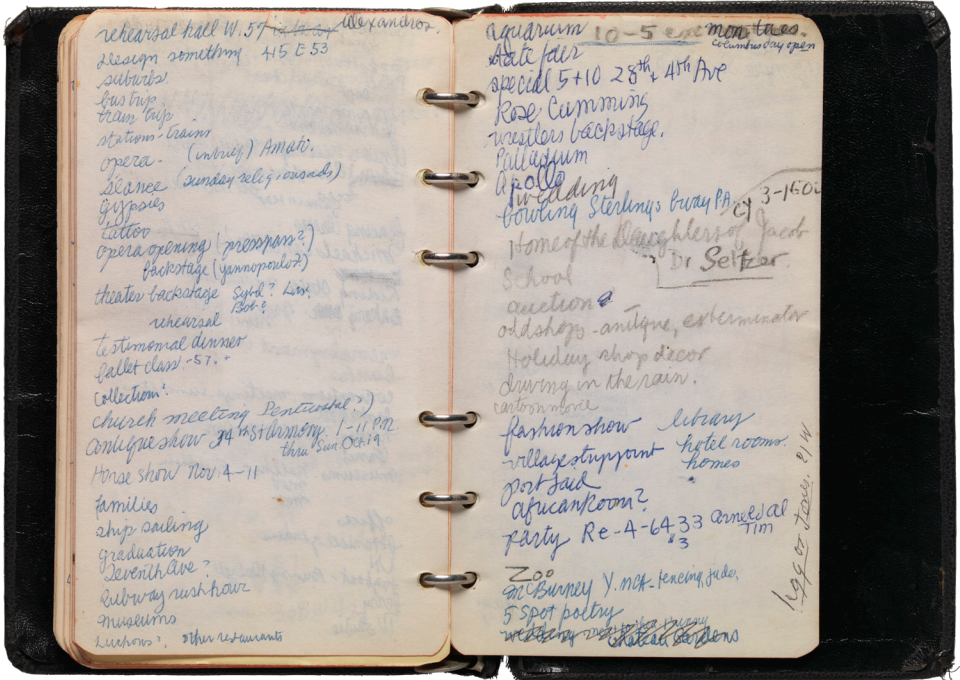
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/672



Wall graphic:
Notebook from 1959

Courtesy Diane Arbus Archive, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Wall graphic:

Reproduction of 1962 Guggenheim Application

Courtesy Diane Arbus Archive, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Diane Arbus

Plan for a Photographic Project

American Rites, Manners and Customs

I want to photograph the considerable ceremonies of our present because we tend while living here and now to perceive only what is random and barren and formless about it. While we regret that the present is not like the past and despair of its ever becoming the future, its innumerable inscrutable habits lie in wait for their meaning. I want to gather them, like somebody's grandmother putting up preserves, because they will have been so beautiful.

There are the Ceremonies of Celebration (the Pageants, the Festivals, the Feasts, the Conventions) and the Ceremonies of Competition (Contests, Games, Sports), the Ceremonies of Buying and Selling, of Gambling, of the Law and the Show; the Ceremonies of Fame in which the Winners Win and the Lucky are Chosen or Family Ceremonies or Gatherings (the Schools, the Clubs, the Meetings). Then there are the Ceremonial Places (The Beauty Parlor, The Funeral Parlor or, simply The Parlor) and Ceremonial Costumes (what Waitresses wear, or Wrestlers), Ceremonies of the Rich, like the Dog Show, and of the Middle Class, like the Bridge Game. Or, for example: the Dancing Lesson, the Graduation, the Testimonial Dinner, the Seance, the Gymnasium and the Picnic and perhaps the Waiting Room, the Factory, the Masquerade, the Rehearsal, the Initiation, the Hotel Lobby and the Birthday Party. The etcetera.

I will write whatever is necessary for the further description and elucidation of these Rites and I will go wherever I can to find them.

These are our symptoms and our monuments. I want simply to save them, for what is ceremonious and curious and commonplace will be legendary.

PLEASE RETURN
TO
JOHN SIMON GUGGENHEIM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF
J.S. GUGGENHEIM Fdn.



Child selling plastic orchids at night, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/70



Russian midget friends in a living room on 100th Street, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/532



Burlesque comedienne in her dressing room, Atlantic City, N.J. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/747



Three Puerto Rican women, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/942



Triplets in their bedroom, N.J. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/869



Teenage couple on Hudson Street, N.Y.C. 1963

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

This portrait of a young couple would become the lead image of the 1967 exhibition *New Documents* at New York's Museum of Modern Art. In this landmark show, curator John Szarkowski sought to make a statement about new directions he saw in photography and brought Arbus together with Lee Friedlander and Garry Winogrand. Szarkowski introduced the exhibition: "In the past decade this new generation of photographers has redirected the technique and aesthetic of documentary photography to more personal ends. Their aim has been not to reform life, but to know it, not to persuade but to understand."

2016/934



Bishop by the sea, Santa Barbara, Cal. 1964

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

"On a cliff overlooking the Pacific, in a cemetery in the sun, a small lady in damask robes with hair of phosphorescent pink holds aloft a styrofoam cross encrusted with smaller crosses and raises her eyes till they pale at the vision of Jesus Christ. She is called Bishop Ethel Predonzan of The Cathedral of the Creator, Omnipresence, Inc. Christ, she declares, has summoned her there to Santa Barbara, California, all the way from Astoria, Queens, to await His Second Coming on December 4th of this year."

—Diane Arbus, "The Bishop's Charisma" (unpublished, 1964)

2016/734



A flower girl at a wedding, Conn. 1964

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/710



Blaze Starr in her living room, Baltimore, MD 1964

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/738



James Brown at home in curlers, Queens, N.Y. 1966

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

Arbus collaborated with her daughter Doon on four magazine assignments. The first of these was “James Brown is Out of Sight,” with text by Doon and photographs by Diane. It was published in the *Herald Tribune* Sunday magazine on March 20, 1966. Arbus’s style and approach were in line with the principles of New Journalism, which expressed the subjectivity of the journalist. As *Esquire* founder Arnold Gingrich observed, “The photograph plays a dual role as historian and commentator.”

2016/650

wall 11 (media gallery)



Wall graphic: contact sheet Washington Square Park 1965

Courtesy Diane Arbus Archive, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

wall 12



Lillian and Dorothy Gish in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1964

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/480



A lobby in a building, N.Y.C. 1966

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/714



Mrs. T. Charlton Henry on a couch
in her Chestnut Hill home, Philadelphia, Pa. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/512



Mr. and Mrs. Howard Oxenberg, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

Harper's Bazaar hired Arbus to photograph married couples for the feature "On Marriage," published in May 1965. Nine portraits were selected, including this one. In one of her notebooks from that year, Arbus recorded a comment made by Mrs. Oxenberg: "mystery in a marriage helps preserve an otherwise impossible relationship."

2016/507



A family one evening in a nudist camp, Pa. 1965

gelatin silver print

Sheet: 50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/668

wall 13



Two friends in the park, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/953



Sharon Goldberg, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print

35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/905



A husband and wife in the woods at a nudist camp, N.J. 1963

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Gift of Jay Smith, 2016
2016/669



Two friends at home, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

Grants and fellowships provided Arbus with recognition and much-needed financial assistance that helped her to pursue photography seriously. In 1965, she applied once again for a Guggenheim Fellowship, proposing a project called *The Interior Landscape*. “The Fellowship enabled me to go far enough to find the way to go further,” she wrote: “I have learned to get past the door, from the outside to the inside. One milieu leads to another. I want to be able to follow.” Pictured here are the same two friends as those in *Two friends in the park, N.Y.C., 1965*.

2016/952

wall 14



Girl with a cigar in Washington Square Park, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016
2016/639



Mia Villiers-Farrow on a bed 1964

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016
2016/499



A young man and his pregnant wife in
Washington Square Park, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/724



A young Negro boy, Washington Square Park, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/725



Girl and boy, Washington Square Park, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Private collection, Toronto

In the summer of 1965, Arbus spent a lot of time in Washington Square Park, making many photographs and writing lyrical descriptions of her encounters. She reflected: “I got to know a few of them. I hung around a lot. They were a lot like sculptures in a funny way. I was very keen to get close to them, so I had to ask to photograph them. You can’t get that close to somebody and not say a word, although I have done that.”



Woman and her son, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/843



Woman with a locket in Washington Square Park, N.Y.C.
1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/859

wall 15



Couple in bed, N.Y.C. 1966

gelatin silver print

27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/547



A young girl at a nudist camp, Pa. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

This photograph was included in the Museum of Modern Art's 1967 exhibition *New Documents*. Arbus often visited the exhibition. In a postcard to a friend, she wrote: "Now there is a show ... 30 of my photographs at the modern museum. I long for you to see it. It is so beautiful, all in a splendid room and people stare into them, hundreds of strangers as if they were reading. I stand there for hours watching people watch the pictures and listening to what they say."

2016/722

wall 16



Identical twins, Roselle, N.J. 1966

gelatin silver print

36.2 × 36.2 cm (14 1/4 × 14 1/4 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

This photograph is arguably Arbus's best known. In her lifetime, it was recognized for its compelling power—it was selected for the exhibition *New Documents* and for Arbus's limited edition portfolio. The twins also grace the cover of her posthumously published 1972 monograph. The photograph has permeated pop culture, most notably as the inspiration for the twins in Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* (1980).

2016/445



Transvestite showing cleavage, N.Y.C. 1966

gelatin silver print
35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.)
Anonymous gift, 2016

This photograph was presented in the Museum of Modern Art's 1967 exhibition *New Documents*. Much of the critical attention given to this three-person exhibition focused on Arbus's work. As David Vestal wrote in *Infinity* magazine, "She photographs individuals who in one way or another depart from conventional behavior or appearance, but she does not emphasize their 'abnormal' or 'freak' character. Instead, she concentrates on showing—with dignity, seriousness, and sympathy—how much they have in common with the 'normal' people around them. It would be wrong to say that Diane's people are less normal than the rest of us. They may just be more open and direct, more vulnerable, more visibly human than most people."

2016/768



Girl in a shiny dress, N.Y.C. 1967

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

"I work from awkwardness. By that I mean I don't like to arrange things. If I stand in front of something, instead of arranging it, I arrange myself."

—Diane Arbus

2016/631

wall 17



Four people at a gallery opening, N.Y.C. 1968

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/625



Photographer posing communion boy, N.Y.C. 1968

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk
50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)
Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/524



Woman with eyeliner, N.Y.C. 1967

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/860



Seated man in a bra and stockings, N.Y.C. 1967

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/535



Puerto Rican woman with a beauty mark, N.Y.C. 1965

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

Arbus began making large prints on 16 x 20-inch paper in preparation for her first major exhibition, *New Documents* in 1967. This new approach allowed her to render her subjects as life-size or larger and heightened the visual impact of the picture—as in this photograph, which was included in the exhibition at this larger size.

Peter Bunnell, a curator of photography at Museum of Modern Art between 1968 and 1972, reflected: “It seems to me, what disturbs people more than the subjects of these pictures, is the intensity of their power to dominate us, to literally stop us in mid-life and demand we ask ourselves who we are.”

2016/527

wall 18



Two girls in matching bathing suits, Coney Island, N.Y.C. 1967

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/955



Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr. on her front lawn,
Atlanta, Ga. 1968

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/509



Woman with veil on Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C. 1968

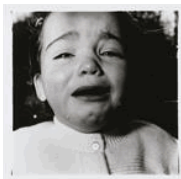
gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/760

wall 19



A child crying, N.J. 1967

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/707



Topless dancer in her dressing room,
San Francisco, Cal. 1968

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/945



Man at a parade on Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C. 1969

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/444



Jorge Luis Borges in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1969

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/657



Five children in a common room, N.J. 1969

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

In 1969, Arbus received permission to photograph at a number of state institutions in New Jersey that had custodianship of individuals with developmental disabilities. She attended a dance in March and an Easter Parade in April. These visits prompted Arbus to undertake a new project in July, which would continue until the end of her life in 1971, a group of 66 photographs now simply known as *Untitled*. This photograph is one of the earliest in the series: a rare interior view, likely made at the coeducational Woodbridge State School. The children are together and yet also in their own worlds. The one boy standing observes Arbus across the room, cupping his hand around his left eye perhaps to form a kind of telescope.

2016/623



Woman in a floppy hat, N.Y.C. 1970

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/848



Charles Atlas seated in his Palm Beach home, Fla. 1969

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

In 1967, Arbus caught the attention of two editors from *The Sunday Times Magazine* in Britain. From 1968 onward, they assigned her numerous projects that required travel. For a piece called “But ladies, I am 76 years old,” she went to Florida to photograph Charles Atlas—a bodybuilding tycoon. The caption published below the photograph reads: “Atlas in the brocade drawing room of his Palm Beach summer home. He reads astronomy books and runs by himself.”

2016/754



A very young baby, N.Y.C. 1968

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

“I have been photographing babies which is odd and absorbing. Also the pictures are getting bigger. Some are life size or more. That is fun. Like making people instead of photographs.”

—Diane Arbus, letter to Carlotta Marshall, 1967

2016/717



A naked man being a woman, N.Y.C. 1968

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

Arbus's contact sheets reveal that this portrait is in fact one in a series that documents the transformation of “Catherine Bruce” into “Bruce Catherine.” The series starts and finishes outside on a park bench; the subject is at first a woman, Catherine Bruce, and, by the end, a man, Bruce Catherine. In the series, Arbus photographed Catherine Bruce at home between curtains, as if on stage. When Catherine Bruce's brother first saw the photograph after his sibling's death, he remarked: “[Catherine Bruce] was able to show the world—like it or not, this is me. I'm sure he was tickled pink to have the pictures taken.”

2016/715



Untitled (3) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/823



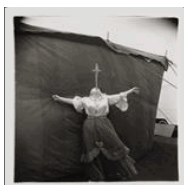
South Bay Singles Club, couple on a couch 1970

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/927



Albino sword swallower at a carnival Md. 1970

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

Arbus made this portrait while on an *Esquire* magazine assignment to photograph a carnival in Hagerstown, Maryland. She had photographed circus performers in the early 1960s, and so this was a return to familiar territory. It was a particularly productive shoot and Arbus ultimately printed six portraits, including this one and *Tattooed man at a carnival, Md., 1970*, which is also on view in this gallery.

2016/664



Untitled (8) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/830



Couple in their living room hugging 1971

gelatin silver print

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

Arbus met this pair at a dance and described them in a letter as “an incredible heart-stopping handicapped couple. He is retarded and terribly tall and thin and she is radiant, maybe three and a half feet tall with curly red hair like Maureen O’Hara (and tiny limbs and crutches)... Never saw anything like that.”

2016/548



Untitled (9) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/831



Untitled (26) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/819



Untitled (49) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/827



Tattooed man at a carnival, Md. 1970

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

2016/932



Dominatrix embracing her client, N.Y.C. 1970

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

2016/606



Mexican dwarf in his hotel room, N.Y.C. 1970

gelatin silver print

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

Marvin Israel, art director and friend, encouraged Arbus to create a limited edition portfolio of photographs to offer for sale. A box of ten photographs with a custom Plexiglas case that doubled as a frame became available in 1971 and included this portrait. The editors of the influential magazine *Artforum* also ran a piece on Arbus's work in their May 1971 issue, the first cover feature of a photographer in the magazine's history. They reproduced six of her works, this portrait among them, which has helped to make it one of her most recognizable photographs.

2016/443



New York skyline in a lobby, St. Petersburg, Fla. 1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Phil Lind, 2016

2016/515

Untitled (1) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Robin and David Young, 2016

“Some of the ... pictures are exciting but I must go back a lot. I am plagued by mysterious technical problems, like trying to make my sharp pictures blurred but not too much so. Having great trouble balancing strobe and daylight when used together especially on gray days but sometimes this nutty method seems just beautiful to me. And very different. It is a little agonous. A thousand misses but when it all of a sudden works I recognize it is what I wanted without precisely knowing I wanted anything.”

—Diane Arbus, letter to Allan Arbus, 1969

2016/961



wall 22



Untitled (7) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/759



A young man and his girlfriend with hot dogs in the park,
N.Y.C. 1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

2016/723



Untitled (6) 1970–1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

In the fall of 1969, Arbus was so enthusiastic about the new pictures for her series on residents of New Jersey institutions that she wanted to do a book. As she wrote to ex-husband Allan Arbus in November 1969, “it’s the first time I’ve [sic] encountered a subject where the multiplicity is the thing. I mean I am not just looking for the BEST picture of them. I want to do lots.... And I ought to be able to write it because I really adore them.”

2016/829



Feminist in her hotel room, N.Y.C. 1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

Germaine Greer became a voice for a new generation of feminists with her book *The Female Eunuch*, published in 1970. *New Woman* magazine commissioned Arbus to make this portrait of Greer. Reflecting later on the photo session, Greer commented: “Arbus waited me out. Nothing would happen for minutes on end, until I sighed, or frowned, and then the flash would pop.” Arbus herself wistfully noted of the session that Greer was “fun and is terrific looking but I managed to make otherwise.”

2016/618



Veteran with a flag, N.Y.C. 1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Anonymous gift, 2016

2016/832

wall 23 (end wall)



Couple talking on a path, N.Y.C. 1970

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Sandra Simpson, 2016

Arbus actively reconsidered her approach to her work throughout her career.

In 1970, she was keen to “make the pictures more narrative and temporal, less fixed and single and complete and isolated, more dynamics, more things happening.”

2016/604

title wall (back)



A woman with her baby monkey, N.J. 1971

gelatin silver print; printed by Neil Selkirk

50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.)

Gift of Jay Smith, 2016

Arbus made this portrait as part of her assignment on love for *Time-Life Books*.

She included the following caption: “This is Mrs. Gladys (‘Mitzi’) Ulrich ... with Sam, the baby, a stump-tailed macaque monkey... The original Sam hung himself by accident. It was hard for her to tell about it.... ‘It’s God’s Will. If you’re deserving, you’ll find what you’ve lost. I’ve had a wonderful life and a lot of love. I can’t say I’ve missed out on love.’”

2016/720

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