

MAGNUM  
P H O T O S

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# BRUCE DAVIDSON & KHALIK ALLAH

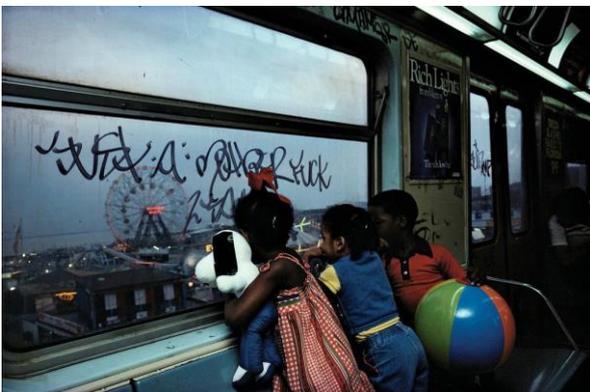
## *NEW YORK*

Magnum Gallery  
68, rue Léon Frot, 75011 Paris, France

21 October – 18 December 2021

Press View: Thursday, 21 October, 10 AM – 12 PM

Vernissage: Thursday, 21 October 2021, 6 – 8 PM



Left image: USA. New York City. 1980. Subway. © Bruce Davidson/ Magnum Photos.

Right image: USA. Harlem, New York City. 2014 © Khalik Allah/ Magnum Photos.

Paris — The Magnum Gallery is honored to present Bruce Davidson and Khalik Allah: *NEW YORK* from 21 October to 18 December 2021. The exhibition inaugurates Paris' new gallery located in the 11th district and for the first time, brings together the work of two Magnum photographers who, generations apart, explored New York City's energy through their lenses.

Bruce Davidson and Khalik Allah offer two visions of urban life, above and underground, captured at different time periods, through two distinctive yet parallel viewpoints. The exhibition, which predominantly features Davidson's vintage prints, explores themes of humanity, street life and perception, while highlighting the effects of transmission.

In 1980, Davidson found a new source of inspiration in the New York subway. It was a challenging and dangerous location, but the photographer managed to retrieve striking and colorful images of passengers from this dark underworld. "Color in the subway was different. I found that the strobe light reflecting off the metallic surfaces of the

defaced subway cars created an iridescence I had seen in photographs of deep-sea fish thousands of fathoms below the ocean surface, glowing under electronic flash, never having been exposed to light before." His underground expeditions eventually culminated in the publication of *Subway* in 1986, a seminal, epoch-defining series that served as both a captivating study of light and color as well as a historical document of an elemental part of New York.

Davidson paved the way for new generations of photographers including Khalik Allah who, more than 40 years after the publication of *East 100th Street*, shed light on a community in distress, riddled with poverty and addiction. Allah cites Davidson as one of his major influences and specifically focused his lens on the black community frequenting the corner of 125th Street and Lexington Avenue. Beginning in 2012, Allah would return to this corner, shooting only at night. Through the flash of his camera and vibrant colors, he sought to restore the dignity of the dehumanized inhabitants of this area of the city. The resulting pieces are vibrant depictions of humanity. In *Souls Against the Concrete*, published in 2017, Allah comments: "This body of work is about redemption, strength, and resilience amid addiction, poverty, and street life."

When considered together, the work in these series are characterized by the same degree of directness and proximity with their subjects. There is neither judgment nor sentimentalism. These works do not impose any moralist vision; on the contrary, they convey honest empathy and rely on genuine immersion, placing the author on the side of his subjects. Highlights in the exhibition include both color and black and white prints including striking portraits from the late 1960s and *Subway* views from 1980 depicting individual statuesque poses in the streets and casual scenes featuring people inside the cars.

Davidson and Allah offered a testimony of their time, respective places and moments in New York. If the gathering of their photographs shows the mutations and changes experienced by the city over time, it also attests to the immutability of many things, the city's energy and, notably, the precarity experienced by certain communities of the city. Above all, these works are an ode to New York: the quintessential 'melting pot,' a city in whose history and posterity the grains of possibility are engraved.

#### BRUCE DAVIDSON

Bruce Davidson began taking photographs at the age of ten in Oak Park, Illinois. While attending Rochester Institute of Technology and Yale University, he continued to further his knowledge and develop his passion. He was later drafted into the army and stationed near Paris. There he met Henri Cartier-Bresson, one of the founders of the Magnum Photos. When he left military service in 1957, Davidson worked as a freelance photographer for LIFE magazine and in 1958 became a full member of Magnum. From 1958 to 1961 he created such seminal bodies of work as *Circus*, *Brooklyn Gang*, and *Freedom Rides*.

He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1962 and created a profound documentation of the civil rights movement in America. In 1963, the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented his early work in a solo show. In 1967, he received the first grant for photography from the National Endowment for the Arts, having spent two years witnessing the dire social conditions on one block in East Harlem. This work was published by Harvard University Press in 1970 under the title *East 100th Street* and was later republished and expanded by St. Ann's Press. The work became an exhibition that same year at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In 1980, he captured the vitality of the New York Metro's underworld that was later published in a book, *Subway*, and exhibited at the International Center of Photography in 1982. From 1991-95, he photographed the landscape and layers of life in Central Park. In 2006, he completed a series of photographs titled "The Nature of Paris," many of which have been shown and acquired by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Davidson received an Open Society Institute Individual Fellowship in 1998 to return to East 100th Street. His awards include the Lucie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Documentary Photography in 2004 and a Gold Medal Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Arts Club in 2007. Classic bodies of work from his 50-year career have been extensively published in monographs and are included in many major public and private fine art collections around the world. He continues to photograph and produce new bodies of work. Davidson was inducted into both the Leica Hall of Fame in 2018 and the International Photography Hall of Fame in 2019.

## KHALIK ALLAH

Khalik Allah is a New York-based photographer and filmmaker who practices Camera Ministry with an eye as open as his heart. The resulting work has been described as “street opera” and noted for its beautifully visceral humanity.

After a number of short films that reflect relationships formed through portraiture, Allah advanced his artistry with the feature length documentary *Field Niggas* (2015), shot at nighttime on the corner of Harlem’s 125th St. and Lexington Avenue. This corner also served as the basis for his first photography book *Souls Against the Concrete*, published by University of Texas Press in 2017. Allah continued with *Black Mother* (2018), an ecstatic expression of reverence and realities across Jamaica. This award winning film has been seen in festivals, museums and schools around the world; further released in the UK and the US through distributors Dogwoof and Grasshopper Film. Allah’s films are available on the Criterion Channel.

Khalik is currently at work on his second photo book from 125th and Lexington. He became a Magnum Nominee member in 2020.

## MAGNUM PHOTOS

Magnum Photos represents some of the world’s most renowned photographers, maintaining its founding ideals and idiosyncratic mix of journalism, art and storytelling. Magnum photographers share a vision to chronicle world events, people, places and culture with a powerful narrative that defies convention, shatters the status quo, redefines history and transforms lives.

For nearly 70 years Magnum Photos has been providing the highest quality photographic content to an international client base of media, charities, publishers, brands and cultural institutions. The Magnum Photos library is a living archive updated regularly with new work from across the globe.

Magnum has documented most of the world’s major events and personalities since the 1930s; covering industry, society and people, places of interest, politics and news events, disasters and conflicts.

With presence in Paris, London and NY, Magnum Photos reaches a global audience and has established itself as the authentic, storytelling photographic brand. It remains loyal to its original values of uncompromising excellence, truth, respect and independence.

## MAGNUM GALLERY

Today, Magnum Photos has two galleries: one in Paris located at 68, rue Léon Frot, 75011, and one in London, at 63 Gee Street, EC1V 3RS.

Please contact +33 1 53 42 50 00 or email [gallery@magnumphotos.com](mailto:gallery@magnumphotos.com) to book an appointment.

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