

## **MARVIN E. NEWMAN**

### *A TASTE FOR MODERNITY*

OPENING ON MARCH 8 FROM 6 TO 9 PM  
EXHIBITION FROM MARCH 9 TO JUNE 2, 2018

From Wednesday to Saturday, 2-7 pm and by appointment



© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York

Marvin E. Newman, the storyteller, Marvin E. Newman the inventor. Marvin E. Newman, the charmer. At the age of ninety, with a mischievous glint in his eye, Marvin E. Newman casually drops a thousand tales that tell the story of American photography from the end of the Second World War to the present day. He's an inquisitive man who embraces the world and never takes himself too seriously. He has photographed everything with great enthusiasm: from street reporting to advertising and sports, from night life to high fashion. Like many photographers of his generation, he has never shied away from any commission. But as he has done so, he has remained staunchly faithful to what he learned in 1949 from his teachers at the Chicago Institute of Design (which began as the New Bauhaus). As he himself says, 'no matter what I shoot, I always photograph for myself'. Marvin E. Newman took especially to heart one of the precepts of that mythical school's founder, László Mohóly Nágý: always experiment and keep experimenting. Leave the beaten paths, embrace new technologies. Impose your vision.

Nowadays, Marvin E. Newman devotes himself to his archives with renewed passion, revisiting his work through the lens of digital prints.

It is with great pleasure that the Gallery is able to present Marvin E. Newman's first personal exhibit in France, with a selection of his work that ranges from the first photographs he made while still a student in Chicago in 1950 to his works from the 2000s. In addition, we are showing *Church on Maxwell Street*, the film he made with his famous colleague, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, in 1951, about the street where Chicago blues was born – a little seven-minute jewel of a film.

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# MARVIN E. NEWMAN, THE INVENTOR

I wanted to begin by writing, 'Marvin E. Newman was born in 1943 at the age of sixteen, in Brooklyn College in New York, to Walter Rosenblum and Berenice Abbott'.

But I could just as well have muddied the waters by stating that Newman was born in 1949 at the famous Chicago Institute of Design to Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind. But let's be serious for a moment: Marvin E. Newman was born on 5 December 1927 in the Bronx, the son of Mr and Mrs Newman. He currently lives in New Jersey.

If you were to ask Newman himself, he would tell you that he sees himself spiritually connected to Lewis Hine, Walker Evans and Harry Callahan. From the first two, and especially from Hine, he inherited a profound compassion for his subjects. A deep humanity mixed with melancholy that is visible in his series *Striptease* from Kansas City in the 1950s, or again in his work on the prostitutes of the rue St.-Denis in Paris in 1960. The link with Callahan is obvious – an aesthetic that comes from the Bauhaus, which is clear in his photos of reflections, dating from the end of the 1940s.

But Newman is much more than a student or a follower. He is quite the opposite. He is an inventor. He is one of those artists who open doors. And not one door, but *many*. Such artists are a rarity! I would not hesitate to put him in the same category as Picasso, who never ceased to invent and reinvent himself. You must always pay close attention to the date of Newman's pictures. Here I am thinking in particular of the photo of the *New York Stock Exchange*. It is difficult not to be reminded of Andreas Gursky's series of photos taken between 1990 and 2000. But Newman's photo was taken in 1956. And in some ways, it seems even more contemporary to me. It is impossible that Gursky was not inspired by it. But it hardly matters. For as well known as Newman's work is, I still feel that people underestimate it, given its importance in the history of photography.

Since I have mentioned the photograph *Bird's Eye view, New York Stock Exchange*, let me talk about Marvin E. Newman, the colour photographer. It is hardly surprising that when discussing his photos of Broadway from the middle of the 1950s, Newman cited another of his professors, the painter Burgoyne Diller, as a source of inspiration. Yes, a painter, not a photographer. Diller can be considered an American student of Mondrian. Taking a closer look at those pictures of Broadway, that is precisely what stands out – broken lines, balance, vibrating colours. The photographs are as much the work of a painter as of a photographer. For Newman, we see the world in colour and not in black and white. In this he is the opposite of Cartier-Bresson.

To return for a moment to a subject dear to Newman – prostitution – the photos he took in Reno, Nevada, in the 1970s are part of a very different aesthetic to those he took earlier in Kansas City and Paris. These later photos are harbingers of an aesthetic that would not truly emerge until the 1980s with someone like Nan Goldin.

So, please be careful: there is not one single Marvin E. Newman, but several Marvin E. Newmans. Or, as with Picasso, perhaps it would be better to speak of periods: the Chicago period, the New York period, the San Gennaro period, the Coney Island period, the Kansas City period, the Broadway period, the Las Vegas period, the Wall Street period, the Sports Illustrated period, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street period, the California period, and so on and so forth.

Marvin E. Newman will forever be astonished. And so he will forever astonish us. Amaze us. Good morning, Mr Newman.

**Olivier Beer**

# TRADE SECRETS

In career terms, photography is an odd game, perhaps the oddest there is. The artist and the working professional employ the same device (a camera), make similar decisions (framing, lighting, lenses, point of view), and confront the same need to bend the medium to their intentions—to find ways to make a picture that hasn't been seen before. Yet the artist is supposed to pursue self-expression, while the professional is all about fulfilling the assignment. Marvin Newman never accepted the division. He once remarked, "No matter what I shoot, I always photograph for myself." It explains why, among American photographers, he has made innovative work in surprising places.

The model of the working photographer, Newman has shot almost every kind of commercial and professional photograph there is, from reportage and advertising to street photography and sports — indelible images, in the classic sense, of the streets of Chicago, the nightlife of Las Vegas, and Inuit ceremonies in Alaska. He even shot fashion, and in the magazine's heyday, *Playboy* bought his photographs.

At the same time, his work has also been included in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the International Center of Photography, and many galleries, including Roy DeCarava's legendary A Photographer's Gallery. Two decades before conceptual photography made its appearance in the United States, Newman created serial images that dealt with photographic representation as theme and variation. But the very diversity of Newman's work and the fact that so much of it appeared in popular magazines, including several that no longer exist, also explain why it has taken until now for his photographs to be recognized as a singular oeuvre and for Newman himself to be acknowledged as a major American postwar photographer.

One person who also believed that photography is one tree with many branches was the artist who would have a profound influence on Newman, even though he never met him. Émigré László Moholy-Nagy founded the New Bauhaus in Chicago, which later became the Institute of Design, where Newman would come to study in 1949. Moholy-Nagy saw no fundamental distinction among any of the medium's uses. For him, the technology opened up new ways of perceiving and representing reality, and the point was to apply that new vision in every situation. This is precisely the gospel that Newman would follow throughout his career, starting under the tutelage of the institute's two most accomplished faculty members, Aaron Siskind and Harry Callahan. As Newman put it, "They taught you to keep your mind open and go further, and always respond to what you are making."

That single idea of pushing boundaries threads through Newman's career; therefore, his early projects in Chicago, especially his graduate thesis, demand a closer look. They predict the kind of approach he would take to all of the photographs he has since made. Its Bauhaus-inflected title was: "A Creative Analysis of the Series Form in Still Photography," and it united Newman's interest in social photography with an impulse to explore the medium. Exhibited, praised, but never published, these terse black-and-white series now look prescient. Angled shadows of pedestrians cut by the grid of sidewalk concrete, shop window displays, manhole covers in close-up, people sleeping on park benches — the photographic groups straddle a line between inventory and musical composition, and between social document and formal experiment. At the same time, Newman also worked for Hull House, a pioneering social welfare organization. He photographed on the street and made portraits of African Americans that, within the confines of social documentary, display an unusual range of approaches. Newman was never one to break visual rules for the sake of breaking them, as Robert Frank did, but Newman's street photographs often anticipate Frank's incisiveness about race in America.

During his early years in Chicago, Newman also met Yasuhiro Ishimoto, a fellow student, and together they made the documentary film *The Church on Maxwell Street*, about a revival meeting in Chicago. The influence of film on the early series projects is exciting. Rhythmically they read almost as filmstrips. The graduate faculty committee of the Illinois Institute of Technology, which had absorbed the Institute of Design, did not see it quite that way and wasn't inclined to award him a degree. As Newman tells it, Harry Callahan was unsure if he could present the thesis. "Aaron Siskind went to Callahan and said, 'Harry, these people will always be trouble. Fight for the kid.'" He did, successfully. (...)

The other defining experience of Newman's years in Chicago was color film. The model language for all art photography at the time was black and white. But Arthur Siegel, a formal pioneer whose contributions to photography are not yet fully acknowledged, was shooting with color film at the institute. For Newman, color was a revelation that made perfect sense. "We see in color, so black and white is technically a handicap for representing the world." Color photographs would not begin to be accepted in the world of art photography for 20 years, but it was already becoming the lingua franca of picture magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, and a few years later the fledgling *Sports Illustrated*. Newman's images would be associated with all three. Even before he graduated, he began a career of innovation in color photography, starting with Kodachrome, that would cross the boundaries between commercial and art practice.

Now that Newman's work is being gathered and presented in this survey, these accomplishments stand out like islands in a broad stream. First and most importantly, he took color photography where it was not used to going: into the street. In the heyday of American street photography, from roughly 1940 to 1965, Americans had become used to a noir world of urban encounters, with sharply etched portraits, quirky scenes, and a dramatic play of light and shadow. By the time Newman left the institute he had already mastered the idiom. But when he applied color, he transformed it. Newman never needed to "translate" from the graphic forms of black and white to the complex temperatures and emotional undercurrents of color. He grasped the need for new compositional strategies. His color is active, even chaotic, challenging the eye as reality does. When he shot his first photographs in Times Square and Broadway in the 1950s, Newman treated the billboards and marquees as the visual carnival they were. He used a backpack strobe to light people on the street and tungsten film for the various light sources. The result has the effect of literally raising a visual curtain on Broadway and on Times Square. What the images lose in mood and graphic contrast they gain in activity and theatricality. In these photographs, lurid and dazzling, a new kind of beauty is born. (...)

During the same period as his more hectic street work, he visited Coney Island in the winter. Shooting with a 35-millimeter camera, he managed to impart to his images of people on the semi-deserted streets the stateliness of large-format photography. To some degree, the sharp-etched shadows and zones of color resemble Harry Callahan's work, and the architectural quality of still observation is akin to Walker Evans's. But Newman could not be content with the austerity of their formalism. Form, yes, but human content was just as important. As he later remarked, "I was thinking of Walker Evans, but I wanted life in my photographs, people— and the written word, signage, just like the Farm Security Administration of the 1930s." (...)

With the renewed interest in street photography among a young generation, the rediscovery of Marvin Newman's work has already begun. His formal intelligence in the service of human sympathy, his acute sense of life's irony and beauty, provide touchstones for photographers. And not just for them, but for everyone seeking to understand, amidst the rising tide of images in the digital age, what photography can communicate about the lives we lead and the world around us.

**Lyle Rexer**

New York-based writer, curator, and art critic  
Introduction of « Marvin E. Newman », Taschen, 2017

# A TASTE FOR MODERNITY

## SELECTION OF WORKS

Marvin E. Newman  
*5 Women, Shadow Series, Chicago, 1951*  
Gelatin-silver print, printed later  
Print size: 20 x 25 cm  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Running Boys, Shadow Series, Chicago, 1951*  
Gelatin-silver print, printed later  
Print size: 19 x 24 cm  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Windy Woman, Shadow series, Chicago, 1951*  
Archival pigment print, printed later  
Print size: 48 x 33 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Winter Boardwalk*, 1953  
Archival pigment print, printed later  
Print size: 43 x 56 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signé et numéroté par l'artiste  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Hobby Horse, Winter Boardwalk*, 1953  
Archival pigment print, printed later  
Print size: 33 x 48 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



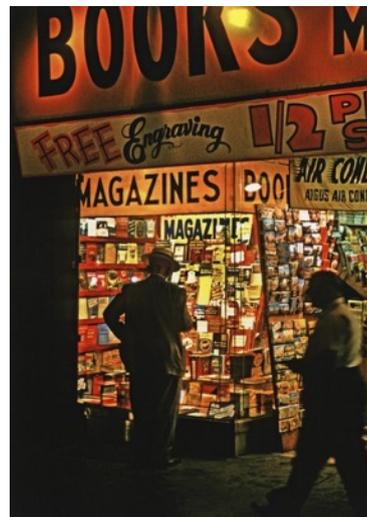
Marvin E. Newman  
*Winter Boardwalk*, 1953  
Archival pigment print, printed later  
Print size: 33 x 48 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Bird's Eye view, New York Stock Exchange*, 1956  
Archival pigment print, printed later  
Print size: 33 x 48 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Time Square Bookstore*, 1954  
Archival pigment print, printed later  
Print size: 56 x 43 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signed and numbered by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Time Square, NY*, 1983  
Cibachrome, vintage  
Print size: 34,3 x 26,4 cm  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Legs, Waiting to Cross, Chicago, 1951*  
Six Archival pigment print, printed later  
Size: (x6) 18 x 14 cm  
Edition of 10  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Man on Park Bench, Grant Park, Chicago, 1951*  
Three gelatin-silver print, vintage  
Size: (x3) 14 x 22,2 cm  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



Marvin E. Newman  
*Mannequin Head, Chicago, IL, 1952*  
Three gelatin-silver print, vintage  
Size : (x3) 24 x 19 cm  
Signed and dated by the artist  
© Marvin E. Newman / Courtesy Les Douches la  
Galerie, Paris & Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York



# MARVIN E. NEWMAN

- 1927** Born in the Bronx, New York, on December 5  
**1949** Bachelor of Arts, Brooklyn College, Economics, Design (Art)  
Studied with Burgoyne Diller, Walter Rosenblum  
**1952** Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Photography, Illinois Institute of Technology (formely the  
Institutue of Design), Chicago  
Studied with Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind

## EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2017** "Black Chicago", Les Douches la Galerie, Paris  
**2016** "Luminaries of the Twentieth Century in Art, Politics and Culture", Fenimore Art Museum,  
Coperstown, NY.  
"Friends and Student Days in Chicago." Participant, group show, Museum of Art, Kochy.  
**2015 - 16** "Sequentially Sought.", Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York, N.  
**2010** "Beyond COLOR." Participant, group show, Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York, NY.  
"Discoveries." Participant, group show, Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York, NY.  
"Passing the Torch The Chicago Students of Callahan and Siskin." Participant, vintage  
photography show, Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago, IL.  
**2009** Lucie Award for Achievement in Sports Photography. "Marvin E. Newman and Yasuhiro  
Ishimoto", Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago, IL.  
**2008** "Marvin E. Newman: The Color Series", Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York, NY.  
**2006** "Marvin E. Newman: The First Decade." Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York, NY.  
**2000** One man show, "Marvin E. Newman, Seven Photo Essays", Keith de Lellis Gallery, New York, NY.  
"American Photographs 1900//2000" Assouline Publishers; two published photograph  
**1999** "Newman and Ishimoto, Reunion in Chicago: Photographs from 1949 - 1952", Stephen Daiter  
Gallery, Chicago, IL  
**1998** "New acquisitions Exhibition", Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.  
**1997** One man show, "Shadows 1951". B//W photography, Keith de Lellis Gallery, New York, NY.  
**1996** "Chicago Photography 1935 - 1965". Major contributor, James Danziger Gallery, New York, NY.  
**1995** "Institute of Design". Contributor, photography show, Museum of Contemporary Photography,  
Chicago, IL.  
"New York Stories". Major contributor, photography show, James Danziger Gallery, New York,  
NY.  
**1994** "Hallmark Collection". Book and Exhibition, The Art Institute of Chicago. I C P Midtown, New York,  
NY.  
**1992** "Paris, France". One year residence, color photography for The Image Bank, subsidiary of  
Eastman Kodak  
**1989** "Life through the Sixties". Participant, photo exhibit, International Center of Photography, New  
York, NY.  
**1988** "The Image Bank", Worldwide Picture agency. Contract photographer.  
**1987** "Christie's Inc.", Fine Art Auctioneers. National advertising photography.  
**1986** "Statue of Liberty, 100 Years", Time Magazine, photographic color supplement.  
**1985** "42nd Street at Night". Popular Photography, June issue. Photographic color portfolio.  
**1984** "New York at Night". Stewart Tabori and Chang publishers. Full color portfolio of Times Square in  
the 1950s.  
**1983** "American Society of Magazine Photographers""", President. Led cultural delegation to China as a  
guest of the Chinese government.  
**1982** "Manhattan". Participant, color photographic show. The Museum of the City of New York, NY.  
**1982** "J.P. Morgan Bank". 1982 - 1987. National advertising photography.  
**1981** "Breaking Ground, Open Spaces Temporary and Accidental". Photographs by Marvin E. Newman,  
text by Brendan Gill. One man show, Municipal Art Society of New York, NY.  
**1973** Arthur Williams Gallery, New York, NY.  
**1956** Marvin Newman,,Roy de Carava's "A Photographer's Gallery", New York, NY.  
**1953** Always the Young Stranger, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

## **PUBLICATIONS (SELECTION)**

**2017** Marvin E. Newman, Taschen

**2009** Abrams Books, "Yankee Colors"

**1979** Newsweek Books, "The Dome of the Rock" 1972, "Vienna" 1981, "The Danube" 1979  
Bonniers Publishing, "Color of Sweden" 1966

## **AWARDS (SELECTION)**

**2009** Lucie Award for Photographic Achievement in Sports

**2006** Professional Achievement Award, Illinois Institute of Technology

**1983** ASMP National President (The American Society of Media Photographers)

**1950** 1st Prize American Photography Magazine

**1951** 1st Prize Time Life Contest

**1966** New York Art Directors Gold Medal for Editorial Photography

## **COLLECTIONS**

The Museum Of Modern Art, New York, NY

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

The Art Institute of Chicago

The National Gallery, Washington, DC

Eastman House Museum, Rochester

International Center of Photography, New York, NY

The Hallmark Collection, Kansas City

The Whitney Museum, New York, NY

The Houston Museum, Texas

The Columbus Museum, Ohio

The Jewish Museum, New York, NY