

The Camera is Cruel: Lisette Model, Diane Arbus, Nan Goldin

Curated by Dr. Gerald Matt

April 8 – June 15, 2022

The Austrian Cultural Forum New York | 11 E 52nd Street, New York

Opening Reception: **Thursday, April 7, 7-9 PM**

Remarks by:

Gerald Matt, Curator, Director of the Vienna Art Institute

Michael Kimmelman, *The New York Times*

Michael Haider, Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum New York



Lisette Model, *Woman with Veil*, 1949, San Francisco. Gelatin silver print.
© 2022 Estate of Lisette Model, courtesy Lebon, Paris/ Keitelman, Brussels.

NEW YORK—The Austrian Cultural Forum presents *The Camera is Cruel: Lisette Model, Diane Arbus, Nan Goldin*. Curated by Dr. Gerald Matt, the exhibition, previously shown at FLATZ Museum in Dornbirn (2018) and the WestLicht Museum for Photography in Vienna (2019), brings together a selection of key works in an exclusive joint presentation of the work of the three iconic photographers. The exhibition is on view April 8 - June 15, 2022. The gallery is open daily, 10 am – 6 pm.

During different phases of the 20th century, Model, Arbus and Goldin recorded the social life of America, which, as a land of immigration, remains to this day a reflection of the wider world. All three were interested in the social dimensions of co-existence, in those living on the margins of society, in extraordinary personalities, and in the eccentric. With the lenses of their cameras, they cast a highly personal glance at people and their disparate living environments as a means of repeatedly questioning the validity of norms and conventions.

As representatives of three generations -- starting with Viennese-born Model-- their works are as much expressions of their times and their particular environments as they are tributes to the plurality of being itself. Model, Arbus and Goldin also redefined, each in her own way, the dialogue between photographer and subject joining a documentary with a highly idiosyncratic approach. Lisette Model could have been speaking for all three when she remarked, in a very assured manner, “Never photograph anything you are not personally interested in.”

It is not only the themes but also the attitude and approach towards social and existential issues that link these three extraordinary photographers. Diane Arbus was, in fact, a student of Model at the New School for Social Research in New York, and significantly influenced by her work. Though Goldin initially looked to separate herself from the cautious distance and coldness of Arbus' pictures --that reflected the spirit of their time-- her work is unimaginable without that of her two predecessors. Each in different time and social context, Model, Arbus and Goldin radically widened and enhanced artistic photography with a new perspective, which leaves social and aesthetic limits behind and shows people and the world in all their diversity and colorfulness.

Special thanks to Dr. Daniel Jelitzka whose wonderful collection made this exhibition possible and to his team and Barbara Briegl.



Left: Lisette Model, *Woman at Coney Island*, 1939, New York Gelatin silver print. Right: Lisette Model, *Singer at the Cafe Metropol*, 1946, NYC Gelatin silver print. © 2022 Estate of Lisette Model, courtesy Lebon, Paris/ Keitelman, Brussels.

Gerald Matt is an Austrian curator, author and as the director of the Vienna Art Institute. He hosts a monthly TV talk with interesting personalities from the cultural, social and political fields. Matt studied law, art history and economy. He is an associate professor at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, where he teaches museum management and has also taught at the CIAM in Cologne and lectured art theory at the University of Innsbruck. He is a senior consultant at Graf & Partner, an art advising company. Matt is member of the board of the Ludwig-Stiftung Austria and curates shows in Austria and internationally (i.e. Shirin Neshat, Vienna Erwin Wurm, Palermo or the 3rd Industrial Biennial Labin, Rijeka European Cultural City). In 2019, he was appointed president of Kunstraum Dornbirn.

From 1996 to 2012, Gerald Matt was director of Kunsthalle Vienna, an institution for international contemporary and modern Art. At the Kunsthalle he organized dozens of groundbreaking shows including Nauman-Beckett, Dali-Bourgeois, Matthew Barney and themed shows on the 1989 and Television. He is a member of museum committees in Bolzano and Bologna and of the temporary Kunsthalle Berlin.

Matt published several books on art and museum management, among them "The art of Museum Management with Contributions of Max Hollein, Chris Dearcon and Others" (2019), "Artists Talk" (2014), "Austrian Art in the 60ies" (2011), "Economia e Gestione di Musei d'Arte" (2011), "Kultura i Pieniadze, Zarzadzanie Muzeum" (2005). www.gerald matt.com

About the Austrian Cultural Forum New York

With its architectural landmark building in Midtown Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York is dedicated to innovative programming, showcasing Austrian contemporary art, music, literature, performance and academic thought in New York and throughout the United States. In addition to presenting exhibitions in its multi-level gallery space and housing around 13,000 volumes of Austriaca in its library named in honor of the late Vienna-born American writer and intellectual Frederic Morton, it hosts over 100 free events per year in its auditorium and supports at least as many projects at partner institutions across the nation.

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