

Bruce Davidson: Subway

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Bruce Davidson's groundbreaking *Subway*, first published by Aperture in 1986, has garnered critical acclaim both as a documentation of a unique moment in the cultural fabric of New York City and for its phenomenal use of extremes of color and shadow set against flash-lit skin. In Davidson's own words, "the people in the subway, their flesh juxtaposed against the graffiti, the penetrating effect of the strobe light itself, and even the hollow darkness of the tunnels, inspired an aesthetic that goes unnoticed by passengers who are trapped underground, hiding behind masks and closed off from each other." In this third edition of what is now a classic of photographic literature, a sequence of 118 (including 25 previously unpublished) images transport the viewer through a landscape at times menacing, and at other times lyrical and soulful. The images present the full gamut of New Yorkers, from weary straphangers and languorous ladies in summer dresses to stalking predators and homeless persons. Davidson's accompanying text tells the story behind the images, clarifying his method and dramatizing his obsession with the subway, its rhythms and its particular madness.

Bruce Davidson (born 1933) is considered one of America's most influential documentary photographers. He began taking photographs when he was ten, and studied at the Rochester Institute of Technology and the Yale University School of Design. In 1958 he became a member of Magnum Photos, and in 1962 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to document the civil rights movement. After a solo exhibition at The

Yale University School of Design. In 1958 he became a member of Magnum Photos, and in 1962 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to document the civil rights movement. After a solo exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in 1963, Davidson spent two years photographing in Harlem, resulting in the book *East 100th Street*. In 1980, after living in New York City for 23 years, Davidson began *Subway*, his startling color essay of urban life.



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