

# SPEAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHY

13th Edition



Helen Levitt, *New York*, 1980

## Rethinking the Historical Subject of Street Photography: From Helen Levitt to Keizo Kitajima

This talk investigates the “living ‘who’” of street photography, conceived in relation to others in the street and the relentless motor of historical change. Exploring the work of key practitioners – including Helen Levitt, Lisette Model, and Keizo Kitajima – I want to complicate recent accounts that position street photographers narrowly as mediators of a “psychological gesture,” or as exemplars of documentary photography’s “subjective turn.” Rather, what might it mean for the street photographer to be understood as insistently social, as inexorably temporal? How are we to account for her evolution as an historical subject? The talk concludes with a conundrum: if during the course of the twentieth century the street photographer became photography’s liberal democratic subject par excellence, is anything resembling street photography even possible today?

**Duncan Forbes** is a curator and writer based in Los Angeles (US), where he also works at the Getty Research Institute. He was previously Director of Fotomuseum Winterthur (CH) and Senior Curator of Photography at the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (GB). His publications and exhibitions include *Provoke: Between Protest and Performance: Japanese Photography 1960–1975* (Steidl, 2016), *Beastly/Tierisch* (Spector Books, 2015), *Manifeste! Eine andere Geschichte der Fotografie* (Steidl, 2014), and *Edith Tudor-Hart: In the Shadow of Tyranny* (Hatje Cantz, 2013). Recent essays have appeared in *Helen Levitt* (Kehrer Verlag, 2018), *Another Kind of Life: Photography on the Margins* (Prestel, 2018), *Camera Austria International* (AU), *ZUM* (BR), and *History Workshop Journal* (GB). He is currently a Research Fellow at the Canadian Photography Institute.

## Duncan Forbes

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6:30pm

York Amphitheatre, EV 1.605  
1515 Sainte-Catherine St. W.  
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*Lectures are free and open  
to the public.*

*For more information, please visit  
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