

A person wearing dark blue work pants and brown work boots is walking on a vast, sandy beach. The person's legs and feet are in the foreground, moving from left to right. In the background, a dense city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible under a clear sky. The word "IMMIGRANTOPOLIS" is written in bold, yellow, italicized capital letters across the middle of the image.

***IMMIGRANTOPOLIS***



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## **IMMIGRANTOPOLIS**

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# *IMMIGRANTOPOLIS*

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Christine Osinski (USA) - Ferry To Ellis Island, NYC

# Immigrantopolis, or short deliberation about migration, city and photography

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As the history of photography shows, the phenomenon of a city fascinated photographers since the beginning of this form of art. The cityscape and the phenomena occurring in the urban space (e.g. social inequalities, poverty, urban processes, transformations of the specific districts, social movements, cultural life, etc.) were topics eagerly tackled by photographers and permanently became a part of the canon of not only documental but also artistic photography. What is more, they also became a part of photographic experience currently referred to as social (sociological), anthropological or ethnographic. "Photography is speech expressed in images" stated Andreas Feininger, one of the most talented photographers of 20th century and a pioneer of modern documental photography, in his "Philosophy of Photography". Referring to these words, we can assert with the full conviction that the presented photo album is a story not only about a city but also a story about unique actors of the urban scene - immigrants. It is a combination of the cityscape and themed photography. A story that aims at showing the peculiarity of a city as an environment for the lives of immigrants, illustrating parts of immigrant reality in the urban space and presenting the social groups which in the everyday city life are often unnoticeable. In other words, using basic functions of photography which are ontological authenticity and cognitive functions, we want the recipient to confront the immigrant reality in the urban space and make it more familiar to him.



Marion Post Wolcott; Migratory packinghouse workers waiting around post office during slack season. Belle Grande, Florida (1939?), Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017754233/>

Why is it important? Because we live in the “age of migration” with progressively more global reach, and as the leading researchers of the migration processes Stephen Castells and Mark J. Miller anticipate, the “migration age will continue”<sup>1</sup>; the migration processes will have enormous consequences: social, cultural, economic, political and it will influence the nature of the cities which emigrants choose as their destination.

The history of migration processes is basically an interrelation of the history of the city development and creation/transformation of gigantic metropolises. Since the times of the first mass migrations happening in the second part of 19th century, emigrants headed mainly for industrialized and urban areas, as the scientific literature stresses their significant role in the transformation of urban space and the development of the cities themselves.

The modern days are not much different from the past in this respect. Throngs of migrants (the data of United Nations Populations Division from 2017 estimate 258 million emigrants i.e. 3.4% of the world’s population<sup>2</sup>) choose cities as their destination. For instance, in New York, a city with a long history of immigrant influx, the immigrants constitute 40%<sup>3</sup> of the population and from a few decades there have been upward trends in this respect. Different examples involve European cities: in London the immigrants constitute 36.7%, in Vienna – 31.4%, in Dublin – 21.1%, Brussels – 44.4%. The influx of immigrants is not only experienced by the big cities and capitals but also smaller urban areas, which is exemplified by the city of Torre Vieja, located in the south-east of Spain where



Dorothea Lange, Migrant mother, Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California (1936), Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017762891/>

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1. S. Castells, M.J. Miller, *Migracje we współczesnym świecie* (The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World), PWN, Warszawa 2011, p. 21

2. International Migration Report 2017, United Nations, New York 2017 [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017\\_Highlights.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf)

3. The Newest New Yorkers. Characteristics of the City’s Foreign-Born Population 2013 Edition, NYC DCP 2013 at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/nny.shtml>

nearly half of the inhabitants are newcomers from different countries<sup>4</sup>. What is more, in Europe in recent years immigrants are hosted by the countries so far deemed as sending countries or transit countries such as Poland or Czech Republic. Thereby, the immigration population of Prague, Warsaw or Cracow has been increasing.

Immigrant population of cities consists of various categories of persons: legal and illegal; those who came of their own volition and forced migrants: refugees and those who seek asylum described by Z. Bauman as “wandering nomads, not of choice but by the heartless fate’s judgement.”<sup>5</sup>; those who came seeking profit or improved life quality and those who were persuaded to migration by the family circumstances, education or desire to explore the world. Among them, there are blue-collar workers and highly qualified professionals, representatives of various professions and business sectors. Persons who choose permanent migration and those who stay in one place for a while. As a consequence of immigrant influx the cities change. They become, as outlined by the Swedish social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, more and more heterogenous. Their ethno-racial structure change, becoming more and more varied. In the socio-spatial dimension, the most visible element is the concentration of immigrants in the specific districts of the cities and creation of immigrant/ethnic local communities in the areas. The communities, often called ethnic enclaves/neighborhood form a kind of a substitute of the world they came from and because of that they create a safer and more comprehensible world. Often they are a framework in which ethnic shops, clubs, societies and houses of worship

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4. Based on Eurostat data; report titled: “Urban Europe – statistics on cities, towns and suburbs – foreign-born persons living in cities”, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban\\_Europe\\_%E2%80%94\\_statistics\\_on\\_cities,\\_towns\\_and\\_suburbs\\_%E2%80%94\\_foreign-born\\_persons\\_living\\_in\\_cities](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban_Europe_%E2%80%94_statistics_on_cities,_towns_and_suburbs_%E2%80%94_foreign-born_persons_living_in_cities)

5. Z. Bauman, *Obcy u naszych drzwi (Strangers at Our Door)*, PWN, Warszawa 2016, p. 23

etc. are created. The model examples of such areas are ethnic districts of New York. And so, for instance, Lower East Side will remain a "Plymouth Rock" in the history of American Jews, a "shtetl in the macrocosm"<sup>6</sup>. The nearby East Village is in turn the area of concentration of Poles and Ukrainians. It is there, on the 7th street where Ukrainian Ethnic Festival is held annually, as well as and Corpus Christi procession, organized by the members of Polish diaspora; Polish and Ukrainian restaurants operate along religious parishes and the classical byzantine St. George Ukrainian Catholic Church changed the landscape of the whole district. A part of Brooklyn, Brighton Beach is now called *Little Odessa*, a cluster of persons of Russian and Ukrainian origin. One also has to list *Little Italy* and *Chinatown* of Lower Manhattan. Immigrant enclaves, not unlike skyscrapers, have permanently become a part of New York's landscape, becoming an urban phenomenon themselves. The concentration of migrants in the specific districts can be also observed in Europe. For instance, in Berlin, the districts chosen most often by foreigners are Mitte, Neuköln, Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. In London, immigrants from outside of European Union most often settle in Newham or Brent, and those from the European Union most of the time cluster in the areas of Westminster or Haringey<sup>7</sup>. The manner in which ethnic communities function in the urban areas, the variety of social situations in their areas and created (and/or recreated) customs co-determine the uniqueness and inimitable nature of the city. The immigrants themselves are embedded in the cityscape, changing it constantly, becoming a part of the local/urban collective memory. Immigrants as one of the groups of actors of urban scene cocreate

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6. H. L. Feingold, *Zion in America. The Jewish Experience from Colonial Times to the Present*, NY, 2002 and H. R. Diner, *Lower East Side Memories. A Jewish Place in America*, Princeton 2000

7. Info based on: Eurostat titled "Urban Europe - statistics on cities, towns and suburbs - foreign-born persons living in cities", [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban\\_Europe\\_%E2%80%94\\_statistics\\_on\\_cities,\\_towns\\_and\\_suburbs\\_%E2%80%94\\_foreign-born\\_persons\\_living\\_in\\_cities](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban_Europe_%E2%80%94_statistics_on_cities,_towns_and_suburbs_%E2%80%94_foreign-born_persons_living_in_cities)

history and modern social urban reality. As such it is impossible to outline and capture a picture of modern city without capturing its migration context.

The source of inspiration for the discussed subject is the collection of photos by A. Feininger, who while travelling on the streets of lower Manhattan roughly in the middle of 20th century captured everyday life of European immigrants who settled in the area and built their communities: Italians, Germans, Greeks and Jews<sup>8</sup>. Although this subject was not the main one in the works of A. Feininger, these several photos show important issues related to social life of contemporary immigrants. Through showing nuances of common, routine, everyday situations, the pictures introduce the recipient to the broader spectrum of social problems and reveal spatial and interactional schematics of social relationships (and more pointedly – they show specificity of human/immigrant behaviors in the urban space). Because A. Feininger is not a pioneer of creating visual representations of immigrant groups, some thought need to be given to the roots of such type of thematic photography. One needs to seek them in the social photography practiced since the end of 19th century, which main task was to record social contexts and describing the social situation of a human and processes taking place in the society. The subject matter appeared in the works of pioneers of social photography – Jacob Riis (1849-1914) and Lewis Hine (1874-1940). The former was famous for photos of immigrant slums and poverty



Lewis W. Hine, Italian family living 428 E. 116th St., 2 floor back. They were so illiterate I couldn't get their names. Have been in U.S. only one month. Mother is learning to make lace for factory near by. Location: New York, New York (State), 1911, Library of Congress.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2018676925/>

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8. The photos are, among others.: "Greek coffee house on Mulberry Street, New York, New York, 1940" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Untitled: [German Shop on East 86th Street]"(collections.mcny); "Untitled [Chines: View of three Asian men in front of shop](collections.mcny);" Graffiti - Shadow Man" (collections.mcny); "Korean Writing - Midtown" (collections.mcny); "Chinese Writing - Canal Street" (collections.mcny); "Example of the Beauty of Foreign Graphic Symbols" (collections.mcny); "Supplies arriving at a Pell Street, Chinese Grocery Store" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Two ladies on the Lower East Side, 1940" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Hebrew Books Store, 1940" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Weaving & Stotting' - Jewish shop, Lower East Side, Manhattan, New York, 1950." (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Chinese vendor on Mott Street, New York, 1941" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Mordecai Grossmark's Hebrew bookshop on the Lower East Side, New York City, 1940" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Chinatown: Billboard, 1940" (J. Paul Getty Museum); "Italian Store on Mulberry Street, New York, 1940" (J. Paul Getty Museum)

in the parts of Lower Manhattan published in his most influential book "How the Other Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York". The latter created moving reportages on children's work in the factories and the fields, presenting the plight of immigrants, which is expressed in the 1905 photo "Immigrant woman from Eastern Europe". The works of J. Riis and L. Hine had an enormous influence on the public opinion and contributed to social reforms, among others, abolishing children labor in the US for children under age of 14. Around the same time George Bretz (1842-1892) took photos of working miners in the mines of North-East Pennsylvania, the occupational group consisting at the time of immigrants from Eastern Europe. In the Inter-war period, the subject matter was a part of the federal Farm Security Administration (so called F.S.A. project), that aimed at documenting the situation of farmers from the middle states affected by the Great Depression. 11 photographers involved in the project in the period of 8 years took ca. 270 thousand photos. Among them, famous works of Dorothea Lange (1895-1965): "Migrating Mother" and Marion Post Wolcott (1910-1990) - "The emigrant family at the Homestead farm, Philadelphia, 1939". In the case of D. Lange one needs to mention her separate photographic project showing Japanese Americans who were unjustly interned by the federal government after the hysteria outbreak that accompanied the beginning of warfare between Japan and the USA<sup>9</sup>. More works focusing on the subject of migration were created in the second half of 20th century. In 1964 a few works dealing with the subject matter were a part of 555 photos collected in the project "World Photo Exhibition, subject: What is Human?". Its promoter was Karl Pawek - photography theoretician and the chief editor of the "Magnum" magazine. The authors are Jasper Hørm ("Italian district in NYC"), Aart Klein



Lewis W. Hine, Two Portuguese girls working in Royal Mill, River Point, R.I. Younger girl, Mary Fartado "Works on lace." Been in mill 3 years. Other girl 3 years too. they do not speak English. Location: River Point, Rhode Island., 1909, Library of Congress.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2018674418/>

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9. N. Rosenblum, *Historia fotografii światowej (A World History of Photography)*, Wyd. Baturu Grafis Project, Bielsko-Biała 2005, s. 383

("Indonesian Child in the reception center in Netherlands") and Abisag Tülmann ("Italian seasonal worker in Frankfurt Main"). In the 1970's Anders Petersen and Ove Holmquist created photographic report on everyday life of gastarbeiters in Sweden. Swedish immigrants were also a subject for Maragareta Klingberg who photographed laborers from Turkey and Easter Europe working on the fields and in the forests of Northern Sweden. Ken Light made the public opinion aware of Mexican immigrants seeking work in the USA and Dinu Li took photos of illegal Chinese immigrants in the Northern England. Particular attention needs to be given to photographic representation of refugees. The subject is taken on by the photographers very often and its popularity increased in the recent years mainly through so called migratory crisis in Europe. The pictures of refugees usually show the tragedy of humans, their helplessness, suffering and pain. They are not only a visual document of the phenomenon but above all they aim to shock the consciences of the recipients, move the public opinion and compel the moral reflection. As an example I will mention the names of only three photographers who deal with the subject, whose works are now a part of history of photography: Fazal Sheikh, famous for the portraits of refugee families living in the camps and the photos of Somalian camps in Kenia; Chan Chao – the author of the series of portraits of Burmese refugees and last but not least, Sebastião Salgado whose black-and-white photos of migrants and refugees were published in books such as "Exodus", "Migrants: Humanity in Transitions" or "The Children: Refugees and Migrants".

Taking a closer look at the short presentation of achievements of migration photography, one can come to a conclusion that most often it comes as a side-project tackled while working on a broader problems e.g. poverty, work conditions etc. It was very rare to combine the subject with a phenomenon of a city and show the interrelations of both phenomena through the photos. The photos collected in this tome as a complementary unity seem to fill a certain niche. They bring to attention different categories of migrants in the urban space, various manners of its usage and transformations, different aspects of presence and

activities of members of immigrant groups. Photos are not attempting to ignore the positive, common, everyday and they do not ignore that which is negative, moving, emotional. They are a story – with all its nuances – about the immigrant urban life – embedded in pictures. According to A. Feininger’s philosophy, they are a preservation of a subject matter – and quoting Susan Sontag, one could state more forcefully “homage to the subject matter”<sup>10</sup>.

The presented book includes more than 200 works from 71 photographers from various European and non-European countries, which are divided into eight sets by the subject matter. The structure of chapters is not incidental. As the visible issues seem to be a frequent subject of sociological and anthropological studies, while dividing the chapters the interpretational strategies were used, inspired by the sociological knowledge (although we are aware of the fact that we did not exhaust the interpretational possibilities, and some will undoubtedly argue about why certain photos were assigned to certain thematic sections. We leave this issue open for discussion). We intentionally move away from broad commentaries in the beginning of all individual chapters, which are discussed in detail in the academic literature. We will limit ourselves to basic information on the given subject, leaving the rest to visual erudition and imagination of the audience. The first chapter, titled **“Portraits of Immigrants”** tackles the most general and at the same time basic photographic subject of portrait. The literature outlines that the portrait is socially conditioned image, a social document and a beginning of a digression about a human. It also fulfills the role of a message and informs the recipient about the position and social

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10. Susan Sontag, *O fotografii* (On photography), Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warszawa 1986, pp. 141-142

role of the portrayed individual or group in a concise manner<sup>11</sup>. In the second chapter **“Immigrant neighborhoods”** we introduce the recipient to the world of abovementioned ethnic districts and enclaves which form in the urban areas and which are the most tangible and visible aspect of transformation of urban landscape by the immigrants. In the sequence **“Daily life and leisure time”** we present the photos showing the domain of immigrant everyday life, routine, intimacy, familiarity, everyday activities, chores and habits. The domain in which different aspects of immigrant identity manifest and through which we can recreate the specifics of lifestyles of immigrants, their relations with the surrounding reality and even describe more complex phenomena. The chapter **“Immigrant Communities “Festivity”** includes pictures that show activities that in the immigrant urban lives are unusual – they are festive in nature, they occur infrequently. They include, among others, celebration of various festivals, holidays, commemorations, participation in ethnic parades and festivities, the time of celebration. It contributes to our insight in the customs and practices of individual immigrant groups, in the elements of their tradition and culture and the manners in which their ethnicity and national/religious membership manifest. The photos collected in the chapter **“Occupational activity”** present immigrant labor market which is most often very divided. Immigrants are often thought of (and described in writing) as the groups of people who occupy lower paid professions and are in the lower positions of social ladder. They often work in the specific business sectors (e.g. construction, care for the elderly, sanitation services, restaurant or hotel service) at the same time forming ethnic niches in the labor market. For instance, in Spain, Latinos are most often construction workers and European migrants are industry workers, In reality



Lewis W. Hine, Immigrants in night school.  
Location: Boston, Massachusetts. 1909 Library of Congress.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2018674497/>

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11. See: M. A. Potocka, *Fotografia. Ewolucja medium sztuki*, Wyd. Aetheia, Warszawa 2010, pp.107-108 and N. Rosenblum, *Historia fotografii światowej (A World History of Photography)*, Wyd. Baturo Grafis Project, Bielsko-Biała 2005, p. 562

however, migrants can be found in various business sectors; they are characterized by different level of human capital and for that reason their professional statuses are also varied. Their reflection can be found in the photos in the chapter. The works in the chapter **“Social relations and migrant’s practices”** give insight into domain of activities and pursuits of migrants, their behaviors in the urban space. This part attempts to touch upon this most “living” part of social life, namely social activities and interactions. The photos in the chapter “Ethnic Mobilization” are a visual description of social phenomenon defined exactly as ethnic mobilization. American researcher Susan Olzak defines ethnic mobilization as a “process by which groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity (for example, skin color, language, customs) in pursuit of collective ends”<sup>12</sup>. Generally, ethnic mobilization understood in that sense combines with the possibility (potential) of the group to act in the public domain, its pursuit to change its status or position in the social space. The following chapter, entitled **“Refugees”** confronts the audience with the issue of exile – a specific type of forced migration. It is estimated that currently in the world the problem affects 26 million people and the countries that host the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers are Turkey (3.1 million in 2016), Jordan (2.9 million), Palestine (2.2 million), Lebanon (1.6 million) and Pakistan (1.4 million)<sup>13</sup>. The photos collected here show persons who left their current countries of residence because of persecution, war, violence, conflicts and chaos. They communicate their situation in the urban space. The last part of the album – the appendix titled **“Authors’ note”** includes the commentaries of the authors of photos. Due to the nature of the structure of the book we decided not to include them in the indi-

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12. Olzak Susan, Contemporary Ethnic Mobilization, Annual Review of Sociology, 1983,p. 9

13. International Migration Report 2017, United Nations, New York 2017 [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017\\_Highlights.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf)

vidual chapters leaving the recipients alone with the photos: with the possibility to interpret, feel emotions and reflect. The descriptions in the appendix are a set of answers to all possible questions and doubts.

In his "Philosophy of photography", A. Feininger stated that his books are not meant for everyone. Presumably "Immingrantopolis", due to its subject matter, is also not meant for everyone. We hope however, that it will appeal not only to those interested in photography and art but also to the world of academics, people interested in sociology, anthropology, ethnography (sociology and visual anthropology included) because the collected works reflect phenomena vital for the above-mentioned fields of study. I will not mention here the ongoing discussion about the position and the role of photography in the social sciences that has been taking place for several years or the question if the social reality is describable by the means of photography. The significance of visual education need not be proven. The sight, as George Simmel, one of the founding fathers of sociology noted in the end of 19th century, is the most important sense for the social researcher. And thanks to photography, as Andre Rouille stated "we see so much more"<sup>14</sup>.

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14. A. Rouille, *Fotografia. Między dokumentem a sztuką współczesną (La photographie.)*, Universitas, 2005, p. 35



#01

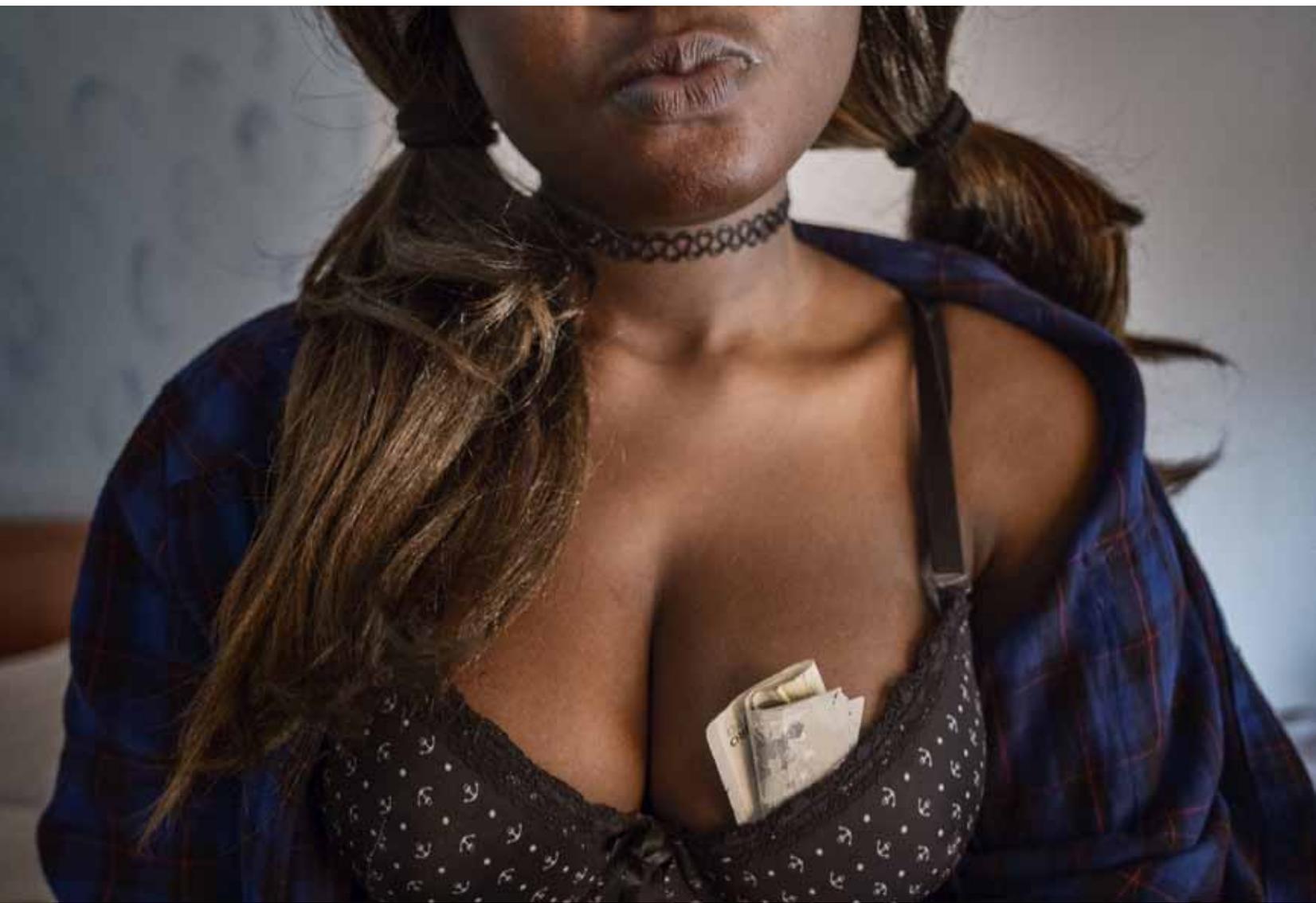
# PORTRAITS



Larry Silver (USA) - Bronx Street Scene, NYC 1952

Larry Silver (USA) - Subway N.Y.C. 1950





Carlo Barberio (Italy) - *Thank God For My Life*

A black and white close-up portrait of a man with a full, light-colored beard and mustache. He is wearing a dark, textured fur hat and a dark coat with a high collar. The background is blurred. In the top right corner, there is a white text box containing the name and title.

Alexander Pfeiffer (Germany)

*Souls Of Berlin*

Alexander Pfeiffer (Germany)  
*Souls Of Berlin*





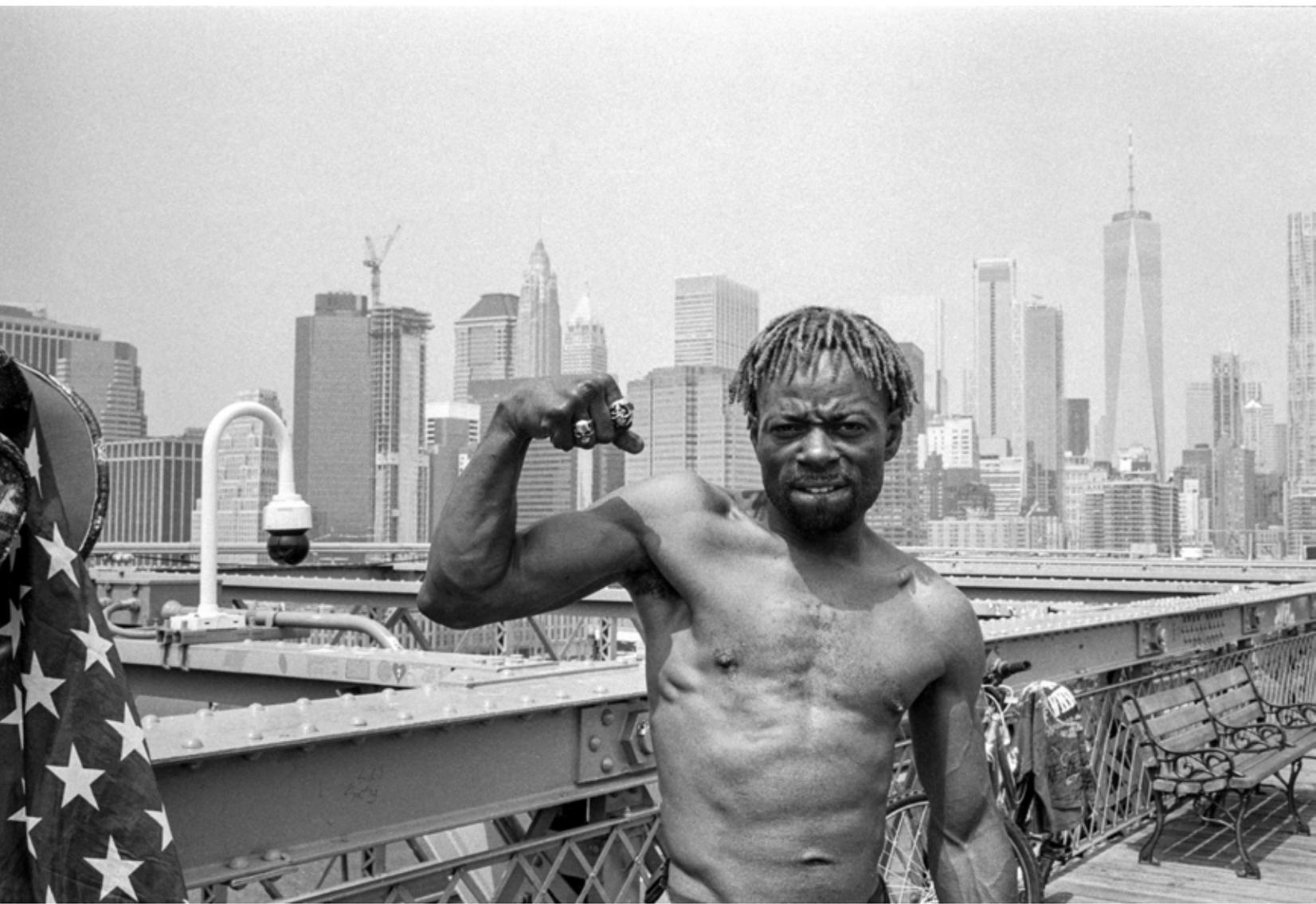
Carlo Silva (Italy) - *Festa Della Donna*



Guido Caltabiano (Italy) - *Felix from Nigeria*



Luigi Avantaggiato (Italy) - *Where The West Sets*



Mariolino Laudati (Italy) - Brooklyn



Mariolino Laudati (Italy) - *Ellis Island*