

SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAM OF THE “ROMAN VISHNIAC: PHOTOGRAPHY, 1920-1975” EXHIBITION

TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION

8 May 2015, 4PM - 5.30PM - Maya Benton (the exhibition's creator, The International Center of Photography), translation into Polish.

24 May 15 June, 5 July and 30 August, 4 PM - 5.30 PM

- Dr Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito (Deputy Director of Exhibitions and Museum Collections, POLIN Museum) Admission on the exhibition ticket, reservations required.

LECTURES

14 May 6 PM - Dr Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito, (POLIN Museum): Many faces of Roman Vishniac

21 May, 6 PM - Lech Lechowicz (Lodz Film School - PWSTiF): From Berlin to New York - Vishniac and German and American photography in the first half of the 20th century

25 June, 6 PM - Dr Kamila Leśniak (The Catholic University of Lublin - KUL): “The hero of our times”. The ethos of a reporter in the humanistic photography

27 August, 6 PM - Dr Tamara Sztyma (POLIN Museum): Polish Jews of Roman Vishniac - a photographic creation and the social reality

SEMINAR

18 June, 10. AM - 5. PM - Photography as a document of life

A monographic exhibition of Roman Vishniac, a photography classic and author of popular images of Jewish life in Eastern Europe produced mostly in the 1930s, offers an opportunity to reflect upon the role of photography in the 20th century. The seminar, attended by historians and theoreticians of photography, will focus on the credibility of documentary photography as a source, and its dependence on circumstances and context in which the photographers operate. Apart from Vishniac, other documentary photographers of the 20th century will be discussed, including Alter Kacyzne, Menechem Kipnis, Moses Worobiejczyk, Zofia Chomętowska, Benedykt Jerzy Dorys, Jerzy Kosidowski, and Wojciech Wilczyk.

ZOOM AT POLIN - THE LONG NIGHT OF MUSEUMS

16 May, 7 PM - 1 AM

Program of this year's Long Night of Museums will include various events related to the exhibition of Roman Vishniac's photography displayed at POLIN Museum between May and August.

We will involve the Long Night of Museums' visitors in the process of creating photographs and, based on selected examples, will try to interpret their meanings. We will also discuss the role of photography and photographers in shaping images of minority groups. We invite you to a studio organized in cooperation with the Academy of Photography, to film screenings, workshops, meetings with photographers and a concert. We also invite you to co-create a multimedia installation. For a detailed program, please visit www.polin.pl/noc-muzeow website and check out our Long Night of Museums flyer. Reservations required for selected workshops.

FILM SCREENINGS

Film series: “Photo-biographies”

We invite you to a documentary film series presenting four outstanding photographers: a US portrait artist. Annie Leibovitz, a US portrait artist affiliated with the *Rolling Stone* magazine; Bert Stern, an advertising photography star who began his career in the 1960s; Helmut Newton, a fashion photography genius and Vivian Maier, a recently discovered street photography artist.

28 May

6 PM - Annie Leibovitz: *Life Through a Lens*, dir. Barbara Leibovitz, 2006, 90 min.

8 PM - Bert Stern, *The Original 'Madman'*, dir. Shannah Laumeister, 2011, 93 min.

29 May

6 PM - *Seeking Vivian Maier*, dir. John Maloof, Charlie Siskel, 2013, 83 min.

8 PM - *Helmut by June*, dir. June Newton, 1994, 54 minutes

Open-air photo-cinema

In June, a series of open-air film screenings will take place at the Willy Brandt Square at the back of the Museum. The series' theme will be relations between cinema and photography, films in which camera's eye focuses on a photographic camera lens, paying homage to its predecessor. We will present ambitious, quality cinema and a great classic: *Blow-Up* by Antonioni.

1 July, 9.45 PM - *Blow-Up*, dir. Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966, 111 min.

8 July, 9.45 PM - *Rear Window*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1954, 112 min.

15 July, 9.45 PM - *Palermo Shooting*, dir. Wim Wenders, 2008, 124 min.

22 July, 9.45 PM - *The City of God*, dir. Fernando Meirelles, 2002, 130 min.

29 July, 9.45 PM - *Smoke*, dir. Wayne Wang, Paul Auster, 1995, 112 min.

MASTERS OF PHOTOGRAPHY - MEETINGS

A series of meetings with leading Polish photographers, outstanding authors of journalistic, press and artistic photography: Tadeusz Rolke, Witold Krassowski and Tomasz Tomaszewski.

21 June, 5.30 PM - Tadeusz Rolke. He bought his first photo camera during the Warsaw Uprising, fascinated by black and white war photos published in German magazines. He began his professional career in the 1950s; he documented the reconstruction of Warsaw and political rallies. He was inspired by photography of the moment and its master, French photographer Cartier-Bresson, as well as by Roman Vishniac and Alter Kacyzne. Tadeusz Rolke documented 60 years of the Polish and European history on his negatives.

26 June, 6 PM - Witold Krassowski. Proponent of traditional black and white photography, two-time winner of the World Press Photo Award. He documented political transformation of Poland in the years 1989-1997 as well as events occurring in Mongolia, Afghanistan, Tanzania and the United Kingdom. Several of his reports have been published in the British *The Independent daily*. He lectures at the Faculty of Media Art at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts.

12 July, 5.30 PM - Tomasz Tomaszewski. He deals with press photography and published his works in major Polish and foreign magazines including: *Stern*, *Paris Match*, *GEO*, *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Fortune*, *Vogue*, *Die Zeit*, and *Elle*. For 20 years, he has cooperated with *The National Geographic* magazine in which he published 18 photographic essays. He has been acting as the main consultant of its Polish edition since 1999. Tomasz Tomaszewski teaches photography in Poland, the US, Germany, and Italy.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY - MEETING WITH AN EXPERT*

13 May, 6 PM

During the meeting with photography historian Joanna Kinowska we will discuss various possible functions of photography. Can it fight stereotypes, change the way of thinking and shape attitudes? We will discuss the social function of photography also in the context of Roman Vishniac's photographs. Reservations required

VIEWS OF DIVERSITY - PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP*

9 and 13 May, 12.00 noon

Two-part workshop inspired by the Roman Vishniac's photography exhibition. Participants will look for traces of the Jewish minority's presence in Warsaw. The workshop will be led by Adam Pańczuk. Reservations required

THE ART OF SEEING -WORKSHOP*

28 maja, godz. 18.00

Participants will analyze the photographs and discuss ways to decode the information included in them as well as the photographer's intentions. Roman Vishniac's photographs will be amongst those analyzed. The workshop will be led by Marta Miskowicz from the Museum of History of Photography in Krakow. Reservations required

MUSEUM OPENING HOURS:

Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays: 10 AM - 6 PM

Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays: 10 AM - 8 PM

Tuesdays: closed

Temporary Exhibition admission:

Adults PLN 12

Concessions PLN 8

All events accompanying the temporary exhibition are free.

Reservations are required for selected events.

We also offer joint tickets (Core Exhibition plus temporary exhibitions) and group tickets. The complete offer is available at www.polin.pl or at the museum's ticket office.

Online booking and ticket purchases: www.bilety.polin.pl

Telephone information:

22 471 03 01

(Monday to Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM,

Saturday and Sunday, 10 AM - 5 PM)

Group ticket reservations:

22 471 03 34 (Mondays to Fridays, 9 AM - 5 PM)

Roman Vishniac: *Photography, 1920-1975* is organized by the International Center of Photography, New York. It is made possible with support from Mara Vishniac Kohn, whose generosity founded the Roman Vishniac Archive at ICP, and from The Andrew and Marina Lewin Family Foundation, Estanne and Martin Fawer, The David Berg Foundation, The Righteous Persons Foundation, The Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Olitsky Family Foundation, the ICP Exhibitions Committee, James and Merryl Tisch, The Koret Foundation, Caryl & Israel Englander, and several anonymous donors.



vishniac.icp.org
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www.eeagrants.org, www.norwaygrants.org

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Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are by Roman Vishniac
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Joint institution of culture:



[Interior courtyard of a home on Nalewki Street, a shopping district in the Jewish district of Warsaw], ca. 1935-38. © Mara Vishniac Kohn, Courtesy International Center of Photography



Roman Vishniac

Photography, 1920-1975

8.05.-31.08.2015

POLIN
MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY
OF POLISH JEWS



Roman Vishniac: Photography, 1920–1975

More than any other photographer, Roman Vishniac's images have profoundly influenced contemporary notions of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Vishniac created the most widely recognized and reproduced photographic record of that world on the eve of its annihilation, yet only a small fraction of his work was published or printed during his lifetime. Known primarily for this poignant record, Vishniac was in fact a remarkably versatile and innovative photographer. His body of work spans more than five decades, ranging from early engagements with European modernism in the 1920s to highly inventive color photomicroscopy in the 1950s and '60s. Roman Vishniac: Photography, 1920–1975 introduces a radically diverse body of work—much of it only recently discovered—and repositions Vishniac's iconic photographs of Eastern European Jewry within a broader tradition of 1930s social documentary photography.

Born in 1897 to an affluent Russian-Jewish family, Vishniac was raised in Moscow, where he studied zoology and biology. He immigrated to Berlin in 1920 in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution. As an amateur photographer he took to the streets, offering witty and wry visual commentary on his adopted city while experimenting with new approaches to framing and composition. As Vishniac documented the Nazi rise to power, foreboding signs of oppression soon became a focal point of his work.

In 1935, he was commissioned by the European headquarters of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC)—the world's largest Jewish relief organization—to photograph impoverished Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Faced with rising unemployment, widespread poverty, antisemitic boycotts, and the tightening of immigration restrictions throughout the 1930s, the AJDC needed to establish new machinery for administering relief and new avenues of fundraising to support it. Photographic images offered limitless, affordable reproducibility, and could be used in slide lectures, brochures, appeals, and annual reports throughout America and Western Europe. After seeing Vishniac's work on German-Jewish relief organizations, the AJDC hired him to undertake dozens of trips to Eastern Europe. Over the following four years, his photographs played a crucial role in communicating the AJDC's message, and they would ultimately become the last extensive photographic record by a single photographer of Jewish communities that had existed for centuries. Vishniac's four years of work on the project yielded the celebrated images that have largely defined his photographic legacy.

The majority of Vishniac's published photographs of Eastern Europe depict privation: children and families suffering under the crippling effects of war, dislocation, boycotts, and antisemitism. Many others illustrate the philanthropic activities of the AJDC such as children's camps, free loan societies, soup kitchens, schools, and health organizations. And while Vishniac is often associated with images of rural villages and small



[Roman Vishniac holding his Rolleiflex camera], ca. 1935–38, unidentified photographer.
© Mara Vishniac Kohn, courtesy International Center of Photography

towns, or shtetlach, most of his photographs record urban poverty in major cities like Warsaw, Krakow, and Lodz. Vishniac's work for the AJDC echoes the contemporaneous projects of American photographers like Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn, Arthur Rothstein, and Walker Evans. In the same years that the Farm Security Administration sent photographers to the American South and West to document those affected by drought, depression, and migration, Vishniac was sent east by the AJDC. Today, Vishniac's work stands alongside the best social-documentary photographers of his era. His unpublished work imparts a much more complex and nuanced perspective on Eastern European Jewish life, and reveals a much more versatile—and modern—artist.

Arriving in New York on New Year's Eve 1940, Vishniac opened a portrait studio, working to make ends meet by documenting American Jewish communal and immigrant life, while establishing himself as a pioneer in the field of photomicroscopy. In 1947, he returned to Europe and documented Jewish Displaced Persons'



Warsaw, 1936 Roman Vishniac
© Mara Vishniac Kohn, courtesy International Center of Photography



Camps, the efforts of Holocaust survivors to rebuild their lives, emigration and relief efforts, and the ruins of Berlin.

[Dzieci w szkole żydowskiej, Mukaczewo], ok. 1938-1935
© Mara Vishniac Kohn, courtesy International Center of Photography

Roman Vishniac: Photography, 1920–1975 is a comprehensive reappraisal of Vishniac's total photographic output, from his early years in Berlin through the postwar period in America. The exhibition is drawn from the Roman Vishniac archive at ICP and serves as an introduction to this vast assemblage comprising more than 30,000 objects, including recently discovered vintage prints, rare moving film footage, contact sheets, personal correspondence, and exhibition prints made from his recently digitized negatives.

Maya Benton, kurator Archiwum Vishniaca
International Center of Photography