

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

Activity: Moving Encounters



Helen Levitt New York, 1940 © Film Documents LLC Courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

Levitt drew her inspiration from chance encounters with her fellow New Yorkers in the street.

This activity, devised by photographer Ronya Galka, invites you to reflect on the work of photographer Helen Levitt. Riding a bus or tram, you're invited to create a set of candid portraits. The activity is created in the context of the major retrospective *Helen Levitt: In the Street* at The Photographers' Gallery.

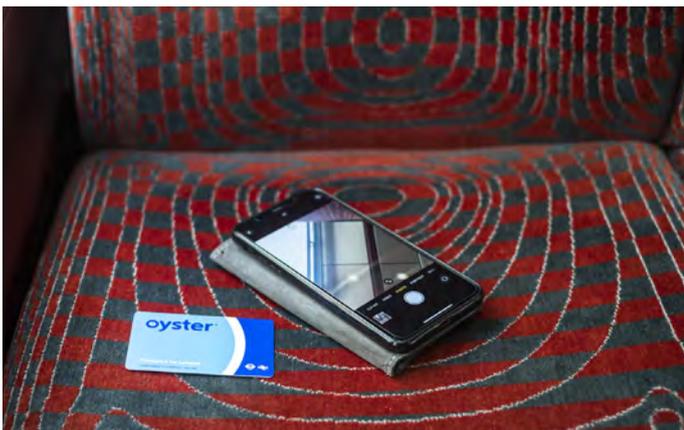
Helen Levitt was a passionate chronicler of city life. Her candid subway photographs, in particular, demonstrate a fascination with the way metropolitan life brings people into close and brief proximity with one another. Helen

This activity invites you to take a series of candid photographs of people you see from the window of a bus or tram journey in your local area. You'll get to tell your very own 'street stories' by taking photographs of the people and scenarios that grab your attention outside the bus window. Then you'll be describing the scene as it unfolded in a few sentences afterwards.

Share your photographs #TPGActivity

You will need:

- Camera phone or camera
- Travel card
- A window seat on a bus or tram
- Quick reactions
- An interest in the people around you



Instructions

Top Tips before you get started:

- It is easier to take your photograph when the bus moves slowly or is standing still since there is less blur that way.
- The rules of street photography are that you should always be respectful and kind. Don't take pictures of people that might embarrass them or make them feel bad - if people make eye contact, be courteous and give them a smile or wave.

1. Catch a local bus and find a window seat

Try to find a window which is as clean as possible and not covered by any stickers or advertising so that you can see what is happening outside.



2. Put your camera to the bus window

Get your camera as close to the glass as possible to avoid reflections in your photographs.



3. Look through the window

Spend some time looking and watch out for anything that interests you like a person or group of people.

4. Now create a series of multiple images with similar subjects

Below are some examples of themes to start you off.

Example 1: People at work



Example 2: Dogs and people with dogs



Example 3: People wearing interesting clothes



Example 4: People walking



5. After the journey, describe what you saw and what made you take the photograph



The little dog kept pulling on the lead until the lady stopped and told him off.



As the lady was rushing down the road, she held her phone tight but wasn't even looking at it.



The man at the bus stop exhaled from his e-cigarette and for a moment it looked like he was fire-breathing like a dragon.



I found the way the man was wearing this safe interesting.

Once you have created a set of images, exchange and review them with your friends. How similar or different does their bus journey look compared to yours?

All photographs © Ronya Galka

This activity is supported by the U.S. Embassy London

