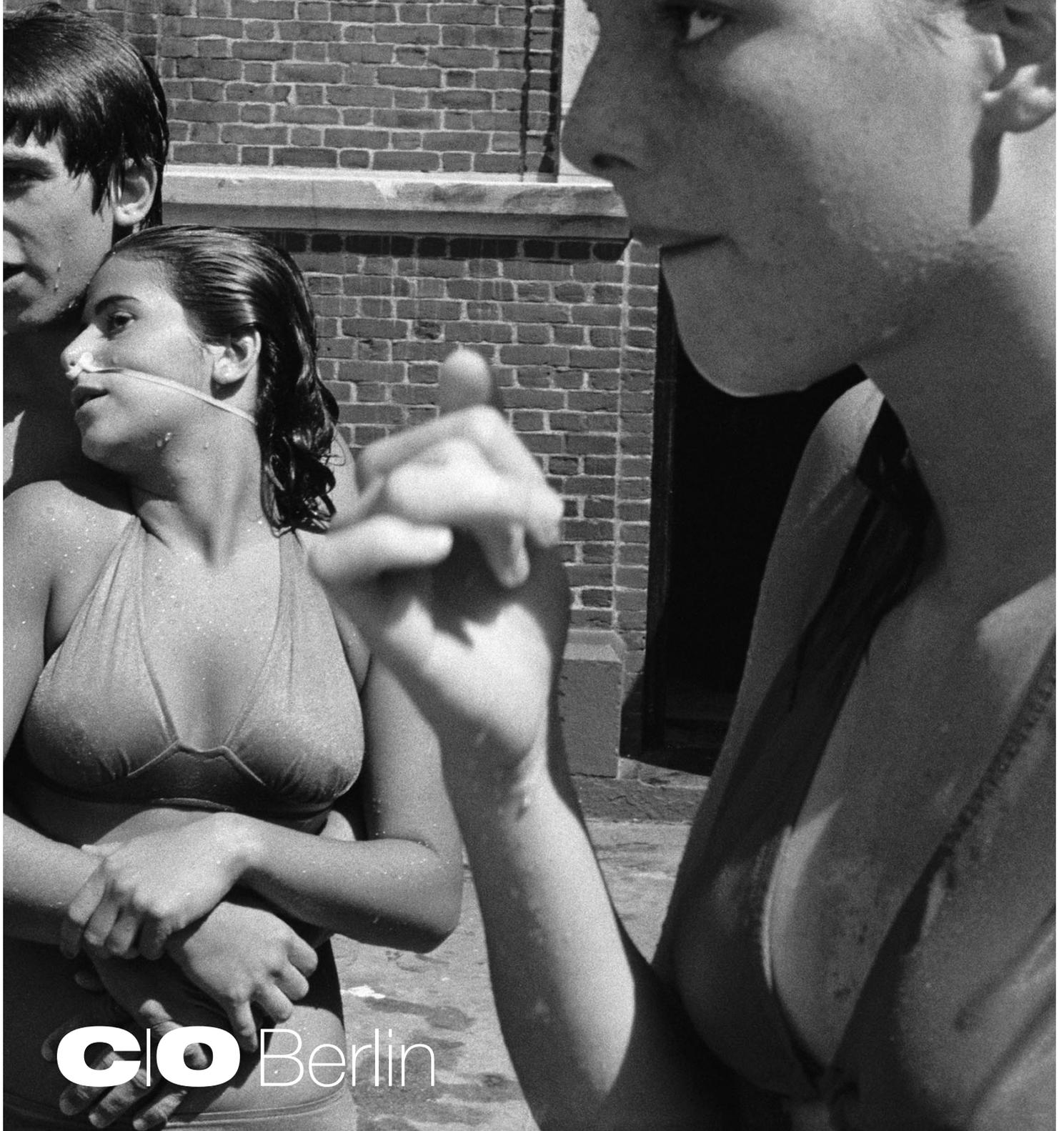


# SUSAN MEISELAS

Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022



**clo** Berlin

# PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, March 17, 2022

## SUSAN MEISELAS

Mediations

C/O Berlin presents the retrospective **Susan Meiselas . Mediations** from **April 30 to September 9, 2022**. The **opening** will take place at **20:00** on Friday, **April 29, 2022**, at C/O Berlin in the Amerika Haus, Hardenbergstraße 22-24, 10623 Berlin.

*„How do you work as a photographer? There’s always this uncomfortable, unequal balance of power. How do you break that down? How can it become a dialog?“ – Susan Meiselas*

Eyes seething, mouth contorted in a scream, body exuding destructive energy. In his left hand, he holds a rifle—in his right, a lit Molotov cocktail that he is poised to hurl into the enemy camp. Over the decades, Susan Meiselas’ 1979 photograph of a guerilla fighter in Nicaragua has become an international symbol of revolution and resistance against oppression. The image is etched in our collective visual memory and has been reproduced ad infinitum in graffiti, on posters, and on t-shirts. But what remains of the photographic message when the relationship between photographer, subject, and the story behind the picture has been dissolved in the commercialization of the image?

The exhibition *Susan Meiselas . Mediations* is the first retrospective in Germany of the Magnum photographer’s over 50-year oeuvre—from her early portraits of neighbors to intimate shots of strippers to her iconic photographs from crisis and war zones. The American photographer’s works, many of them long-term studies, cover a broad range of themes and countries and draw attention to minorities and conflicts that are often overlooked by the global public. Today, Meiselas is considered to have paved the way not only for politically engaged photographers who carefully document, reflect on, and contextualize their work, but also for photographers who work collaboratively with their subjects.

In her series *44 Irving Street* (1971) and *Porch Portraits* (1974), Meiselas explored different realities of life in the United States. Two decades after the start of the US civil rights movement, these works illustrate the persistence of inequality in living conditions. In her photographic essay *Carnival Strippers* (1972-1975), Meiselas took an approach that was sensitive, empathetic, and interactive in portraying the everyday lives of women who earned their living as striptease dancers at fairs across the northeastern United States. In her long-term study *Prince Street Girls* (1975-1992), she documented the lives of a group of pre-teen girls in New York City, following them through adolescence and into adulthood. With *Archives of Abuse* (1991-1992) and *A Room of Their Own* (2015-2017), Meiselas created works opposing domestic and family violence.

# **PRESS RELEASE**

Berlin, March 17, 2022

In her long-term project *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History*, beginning in 1991, she documented the genocide of the Kurdish population in northern Iraq, under the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and then gathered a visual record with diverse historical materials to portray one hundred years of the Kurdish diaspora.

To this day, Susan Meiselas seeks direct contact and dialogue with the people she portrays. Her approach is collaborative and includes her subjects' perspectives. She carries out visual field studies, sometimes over periods of many years, in which photographs seldom stand alone. Instead, they appear alongside interviews, sound recordings, videos, archival material, and notes. These collages not only reveal the underlying contexts of the images, they also invite reflection on the photographic practice itself, on bearing witness, on the hierarchies in the photographic act, and on the reception and dissemination of images.

With *Susan Meiselas . Mediations*, C/O Berlin presents the largest retrospective of her work ever shown in Germany. The exhibition includes around 250 photographs and video installations from the 1970s to the present day. The book *Carnival Strippers Revisited*, published by Steidl Verlag, has been released in tandem with the exhibition. Curated by Felix Hoffmann, C/O Berlin Foundation.

In collaboration with Magnum Photos. Made possible by C/O Berlin Friends e.V. with additional support by the Volkart Foundation.

**Susan Meiselas** (b. 1948, Baltimore, USA) studied at Sarah Lawrence College and received her Masters in Education from Harvard University. She has lived and worked in New York since the 1970s. A documentary photographer, Meiselas joined the photo agency Magnum Photos in 1976 as one of its few women members. She became internationally known for her coverage of the revolution in Nicaragua (1978-1928). Her works are shown in the world's most important museums—including the Jeu de Paume, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2018), and Kunsthaus Wien (2021-2022)—and published in numerous books. Meiselas has received many major awards, including the MacArthur 'genius' award (1992) and more recently the Royal Photographic Society's Centenary Medal (2006), the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize (2019), and the first Women in Motion Award (2019) in recognition of her outstanding career.

# **PRESS RELEASE**

Berlin, March 17, 2022

## **Susan Meiselas**

Mediations

### **Exhibition**

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **Opening**

Apr 29, 2022 . 20:00

### **Press Tour**

Apr 29, 2022 . 11:00

### **Opening hours**

Daily . 11:00–20:00

### **Admission**

10 Euro . reduced 6 Euro

### **Organizer**

C/O Berlin Foundation

Amerika Haus . Hardenbergstraße 22–24 . 10623 Berlin

Tel +49.30.284 44 16-0 . [www.co-berlin.org](http://www.co-berlin.org)

[www.facebook.com/coberlinphoto](http://www.facebook.com/coberlinphoto)

[www.instagram.com/coberlin](http://www.instagram.com/coberlin)

[www.twitter.com/coberlin](http://www.twitter.com/coberlin)

#coberlin

#SusanMeiselas

### **Press contact**

Magnus Pölcher

T +49.30.284 44 16 41 . [press@co-berlin.org](mailto:press@co-berlin.org)

### **In collaboration with**

Magnum Photos

### **Made possible by**

C/O Berlin Friends e.V.

### **Additional support by**

Volkart Foundation

# PRESS IMAGES

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022



# **PRESS IMAGES**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

**All images** © Susan Meiselas . Magnum Photos

**01** Sandinistas at the walls of the National Guard headquarters, 'Molotov Man', Estelí, Nicaragua, July 16, 1979 **02** Motorcycle brigade, followed by a crowd of one hundred thousand people, leading Los Doce (The Twelve), Monimbo, Nicaragua, July 5, 1978 **03** Lena on the Bally Box, Essex Junction, Vermont, 1973 **04** Tentful of marks, Tunbridge, Vermont, 1974 **05** Youths practice throwing contact bombs in forest surrounding Monimbo, Nicaragua, 1978 **06** Carol, JoJo and Lisa hanging out on Mott Street, Little Italy, New York, 1976 **07** Dee and Lisa on Mott Street, Little Italy, New York, 1976 **08** Son of Elsie Smith, Salters, South Carolina, 1974 **09** Self-portrait, 44 Irving Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971 **10** Pebbles with Enzo and Tina at the Carmine Street pool, Little Italy, New York, 1978 **11** Road to Aguilares, El Salvador, 1983 **12** Family members wear the photographs of Peshmerga martyrs, Saiwan Hill cemetery, Erbil, Northern Iraq, 1991

A selection of max. four images may be used free of charge at one time, three months before beginning and until the end of the exhibition in the context of editorial reporting only. They must not be used for commercial purposes or shared with third parties.

They may not be modified, cropped, or printed over. Please always include the correct copyright notices and retain the captions supplied with images. Publications must mention C/O Berlin, the artist, and the exhibition.

Editorial note when referring to C/O Berlin:

C/O Berlin is an exhibition space for photography and visual media. We are a non-profit foundation unconstrained by commercial concerns. As such, we would appreciate if the word "gallery" was avoided when reporting on C/O Berlin. Many thanks!

**Contact** Magnus Pölcher . [press@co-berlin.org](mailto:press@co-berlin.org) . +49.30.284 44 16 41

# EVENTS

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

## **APRIL**

Apr 30, 2022 . 13:00

### **Artist Talk**

With Susan Meiselas . Magnum Photographer  
Bieke Depoorter . Magnum Photographer  
Moderation . Felix Hoffmann . Chief Curator . C/O Berlin Foundation  
Ticket 10/6 euro (incl. exhibition)

## **MAI**

May 1, 2022 . 17:00

### **Artist Tour**

With Susan Meiselas . Magnum Photographer  
Moderation . Felix Hoffmann . Chief Curator . C/O Berlin Foundation  
Ticket 15/11 euro (incl. exhibition)

# WALL TEXTS

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

Eyes seething, mouth contorted in a scream, body exuding destructive energy. In his left hand, he holds a rifle—in his right, a lit Molotov cocktail that he is poised to hurl into the enemy camp. Over the decades Susan Meiselas's 1979 photograph of a guerilla fighter in Nicaragua has become an international symbol of revolution and resistance against oppression. This image is etched in our collective visual memory and has been reproduced ad infinitum in graffiti, on posters, and on T-shirts. However, what remains of the photographic message when the relationship between photographer, subject, and the story behind the picture has been dissolved in the commercialization of an image?

In her perpetual exploration of the subject and ongoing development of narratives, the US-American photographer embraces a large spectrum of subject matter and countries in her work, ranging from war, human rights issues, and cultural identity to the sex industry.

C/O Berlin's presentation of the exhibition *Susan Meiselas . Mediations* is the first retrospective in Germany of the Magnum photographer's over fifty-year oeuvre—from her early portraits of neighbors and intimate shots of strippers to her iconic photographs from crisis and war zones. The US-American photographer's works, many of them long-term studies, cover a broad range of themes and countries and draw attention to minorities and conflicts that are often overlooked by the global public. Today Meiselas is considered to have paved the way not only for politically engaged photographers who carefully document, reflect on, and contextualize their work, but also for photographers who work collaboratively with their subjects.

In her series *44 Irving Street* (1971) and *Porch Portraits* (1974), Meiselas explored different realities of life in the United States. Two decades after the start of the US Civil Rights Movement, these works illustrate the persistence of inequality in living conditions. In her photographic essay *Carnival Strippers* (1972–75), Meiselas took an approach that was sensitive, empathetic, and interactive in portraying the everyday lives of women who earned their living as striptease dancers at fairs across the northeast of the United States. In her long-term study *Prince Street Girls* (1975–92), she documented the lives of a group of preteen girls in New York City, following them through adolescence and into adulthood. With *Archives of Abuse* (1991–92) and *A Room of Their Own* (2015–17), Meiselas created works opposing domestic and family violence. In her long-term project *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History*, beginning in 1991, she documented the genocide of the Kurdish population in northern Iraq, under the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, and then gathered a visual record with diverse historical materials to portray one hundred years of the Kurdish diaspora. Meiselas experiments again and again with various approaches to extend her work in different directions: photographic essays, installations, books, and films.

# **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

Susan Meiselas continues to seek direct contact and dialogue with the people she portrays. Her approach is collaborative and includes her subjects' perspectives. She carries out visual field studies, sometimes over periods of many years, in which photographs seldom stand alone. Instead, they appear alongside interviews, sound recordings, videos, archival material, and notes. These collages not only reveal the underlying contexts of the images; they also invite reflection on the photographic practice itself, on bearing witness, on the hierarchies in the photographic act, and on the reception and dissemination of images.

C/O Berlin's *Susan Meiselas . Mediations* is the largest retrospective of her work ever shown in Germany. First presented at the Jeu de Paume in Paris in 2018, it was expanded and adapted for C/O Berlin by chief curator Felix Hoffmann. The exhibition includes around six hundred photographs and video installations from the 1970s to the present. The book *Carnival Strippers Revisited*, published by Steidl, has been released in tandem with the exhibition. All works and documents presented in the exhibition belong to Susan Meiselas.

In collaboration with Magnum Photos. Made possible by C/O Berlin Friends e.V. with additional support by the Volkart Foundation.

**Susan Meiselas** (born 1948, Baltimore, USA) studied at Sarah Lawrence College and received a master's degree in education from Harvard University. She has lived and worked in New York since the 1970s. A documentary photographer, Meiselas joined the photo agency Magnum Photos in 1976 as one of its few women members. She became internationally known for her coverage of the revolution in Nicaragua (1978–82). Her works have been presented in exhibitions at the world's most important museums—including the Jeu de Paume in Paris (2018), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2018), and the Kunsthaus Wien in Vienna (2021–22)—and published in numerous books. Meiselas has received many major awards, including the MacArthur "genius" grant (1992) and more recently the Royal Photographic Society's Centenary Medal (2006), the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize (2019), and the first Women in Motion Award (2019) in recognition of her outstanding career.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **PANDORA'S BOX 1995**

Susan Meiselas's series *Pandora's Box* was taken in an S&M club in New York and, to a certain degree, it can be thought of as a sequel to *Carnival Strippers*. She linked the images to the testimonies of the people involved: the manager, the mistresses, and the clients. In this small place, she discovered yet another relationship to pain and violence focusing on controlled acts of violence producing self-inflicted pain: "At 'Pandora's Box' I was witnessing an individual choose to participate in what looked from the outside like a violent act. But it represented play in a controlled setting where the man could say, 'Mercy, mistress,' and it stopped. Still, I found that challenging. And as with *Carnival Strippers*, it was the power relations that really captured my attention—women who wield a kind of power that is suspect to others."

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **EL SALVADOR 1978–1983**

Meiselas's photographs of El Salvador capture the violence of the country's military dictatorship and the civil war that followed the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front's coup d'état in 1979. More than eighty thousand people, mostly noncombatants, were killed by death squads or "disappeared" during the twelve-year conflict.

Meiselas returned to El Salvador several times, creating unflinching, primarily black-and-white pictures that portray the tension between the military and the civilian population in addition to the ways life continued in the face of ongoing violence. She also documented the aftermath of several high-profile events. Her photographs of the El Mozote massacre of one thousand civilians by the army, for example, were published in the *New York Times* in 1982 and were later used as evidence in congressional debates to halt US military aid to El Salvador.

Meiselas worked to raise awareness of the plight of the people living in Central American conflict zones as well as the current and historical role of the US government in those conflicts by publishing her pictures and those of other photographers working in the area and by organizing traveling exhibitions.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **WOMEN IN THE US ARMY 1975–1976**

When the United States Army transitioned from the draft to an all-volunteer force in the early 1970s, female enlistment dramatically increased. Women had been in the US Army since 1942, but their roles changed as participation grew, and there was debate about their preparedness for the front lines. Susan Meiselas was photographing women who did striptease at county fairs at the time and began to consider other roles available to women and why women might choose to participate in military service.

In 1976 Meiselas photographed basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the first of two US Army bases to integrate women. Each new recruit passed through boot camp, a rigorous six-week training course, before being assigned to a specialized field. Meiselas sought to understand the women and their choice to join the military by following their lives inside and outside of training. As with *Carnival Strip-pers*, the pictures are grainy and immediate—offering a sense not just of the physical exhaustion but also of the hygiene courses and dorm rituals that were part of each woman's day. While some of the photographs were published in the New York-area newspaper *Newsday* in 1978, this is the first time these photographs have ever been exhibited.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **44 IRVING STREET 1971**

In her photo series *44 Irving Street*, Susan Meiselas focused on her immediate surroundings. She made portraits of each of her neighbors at the boarding house where she lived while pursuing a master's degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the northeast of the United States.

Each portrait shows the subject in a spot of their own choosing at home. Some of the photos are exhibited with a short text written by the person depicted.

Even for this first photography project, Meiselas chose to involve her protagonists in the process. "When I gave my subjects a print and asked them to write about how they saw themselves in my pictures, more often than not their words told a tale that the images alone did not relay."

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **PRINCE STREET GIRLS 1975–1992**

“I was riding a bicycle through my neighborhood in Little Italy nearly thirty-five years ago. Suddenly, a blast of light flashed into my eyes. Its source was a group of kids standing with a mirror, focusing the sun on my face, nearly blinding me. That was the day I met the Prince Street Girls, the name I gave the group that hung out on the nearby corner almost every day.”

Susan Meiselas worked on the *Prince Street Girls* over a period of seventeen years. In the series, she captures the gradual transformation as young girls become young women; over the years the adolescents began to participate more and more actively in the photographic documentation.

The interaction between the person portrayed and their surroundings has always been a key aspect of Meiselas’s photodocumentary work.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **PORCH PORTRAITS 1974**

In the mid-1970s Susan Meiselas explored an area in South Carolina where she worked as a photography teacher. She took portraits of people of different ages in front of the small wooden houses that are typical of the South. The inhabitants posed for the photographer in their yards or on their porches. As Susan Meiselas recalled in 2018, “I would drive down a road, see a house, stop my car, and hope that someone would open the door. I hadn’t planned what I would say. I began by explaining that I was teaching photography in the local elementary school, that I was from the North, and would like to take their photo. I didn’t really know why.”

As a young white photographer, she came into contact with people for whom the reality of everyday life was very different from hers. The United States had only abolished racial segregation ten years previously, in 1964.

Meiselas sent each person she portrayed a print of their photograph. For Meiselas, this was a key aspect of the project since the photographs bear witness to the encounter, the exchange, and the mutual trust between the photographer and those portrayed.

The *Porch Portraits* gradually became the *Lando* project. Lando is a small town in South Carolina that had developed around a cotton mill. When Meiselas began her community project, the mill had just closed. She took photographs of the families living there and along with the local population, creating a “visual genealogy” that consisted of the portraits of the town’s inhabitants and pictures from their family albums.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **CARNIVAL STRIPPERS 1972–1975**

In her fundamental photographic essay *Carnival Strippers* Susan Meiselas explored the realities of life for striptease dancers who earned a living at fairs in the northeastern United States. Over a period of three years, Meiselas documented the women's working lives and the girl shows from various perspectives. Meiselas's stunning individual portraits capture the women's pride and resilience, but also their vulnerability. This series of works is complemented by audio recordings, notes, letters, and objects.

Meiselas's approach was similar to that of a field study: "I wanted to see the whole world of the carnival strippers from within, as well as looking out ... Feminists at that time perceived the girl shows as exploitative places and thought the women were victims. But I was more interested in seeing how they were seen within their world, and hearing what the women said about themselves rather than what other people said about them. I was drawn to know what motivated them."

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **MEDIATIONS 1978–1982**

The focus of this exhibition consists of works in which the artist questions the use of the photographic image. Without an assignment of any sort, Meiselas went to Nicaragua in 1978 to cover the popular insurrection following the assassination of the editor of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. “I am not a war photographer in the sense that I didn’t go there for that purpose,” explained Meiselas. “I’m really interested in how things come about and not just in the surface of what it is.” Over three decades, in times of war and peace, Meiselas returned to the sites where she took the original photographs, using her book *Nicaragua: June 1978–July 1979* (first edition, 1981) to find the people she had photographed and record their testimonies, resulting in her third film on Nicaragua, *Pictures from a Revolution* (1991).

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **THE LIFE OF AN IMAGE: MOLOTOV MAN 1979-2009**

Susan Meiselas first gained international renown for her coverage of the Nicaraguan insurrection in the late 1970s. In 1978, without an assignment, she traveled to the Central American country to document the protest demonstrations triggered by the assassination of the editor of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. The uprising was directed against the corrupt Somoza family, which dictated Nicaraguan politics between 1936 and 1979, backed by the United States due to its openly anti-communist stance.

The Nicaraguan insurrection, spearheaded by the Sandinista National Liberation Front social revolutionary party, attracted international attention and was supported worldwide by solidarity movements, including those in West Germany and the GDR. In the age of the Cold War, the idea of a humanely considerate socialism such as was gaining strength in Nicaragua became a political vision beyond the spectrum of capitalism and communism.

Susan Meiselas's installations *Mediations*, with photographs from 1978 to 1982, and *The Life of an Image: Molotov Man* (1979–2009) retrace the history of the images she took during the Nicaraguan revolution. They showcase the photographs in the various media contexts in which they have been featured since then. Some of her photographs became iconic images of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The installations retrace the history of the images she took and the contexts in which they have been published or reappropriated. In 2004 she installed large murals of photographs taken during the revolution in the very places where she had captured everyday life during the turmoil. This was a way of questioning the value of the images over time by triggering collective memory. This specific on-site process formed the central theme of the film *Reframing History* (2004).

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

### **ARCHIVES OF ABUSE 1991-1992**

A ROOM OF THEIR OWN  
2015–2017

In the early 1990s, Susan Meiselas was invited to take part in an awareness-raising campaign in San Francisco about domestic violence. Working with the San Francisco Police Department, she focused on documenting violent crimes, both visually and in text. “The records gathered revealed a history of scars that were beyond what I ever might have imagined or pictured,” noted the photographer retrospectively. “I decided to work with what already existed, instead of generating my own photographs. Then I agreed to go back to the victims and get their permission to use this material for my collages.” Several such collages of police reports and crime scene photographs were created in this way. One motif was put up at bus shelters in San Francisco.

*A Room of Their Own* is Meiselas’s most recent work on the subject of domestic violence. At the invitation of a nonprofit organization she worked for two years in the Black Country, a multiethnic, postindustrial region in the West Midlands, England. Together with the residents of women’s refuge shelters, Meiselas created visual narratives of their life stories, which were compiled as a book and subsequently published. The aim of the project was to empower the women to tell their own stories in their own words and, in the process, strengthen their feeling of self-worth and their identity. The anonymity of both the women and the locations was to be preserved.

For the photographer, it is never about “stories” or the best picture. Rather, Meiselas’s empathy and her respectful way of observing people gave the women ample room to open up and talk about themselves.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations  
Apr 30, – Sep 9, 2022

### **KURDISTAN SINCE 1991**

*Kurdistan* (1991–2007) is a multimedia project comprising photographs, videos, documents, and oral accounts collected by the artist. This archive of collective memory reveals the history of a people dispersed throughout the world. Meiselas originally arrived in northern Iraq to document Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign of genocide against the Kurds launched in 1988. She felt that contemporary photographs could bear witness to a crime by imaging the exhumation of a mass grave of individual remains. The victims, however, were Kurdish civilians who could only be portrayed through the past century of images that revealed their aspirations for a Kurdish homeland.

Meiselas explains her interest in the images and documents that she compiled to make this work: "I became preoccupied by the idea that 'pictures are made and taken away,' so a culture might not get to see itself. There is also the issue of what happens after an image is made. I began to backtrack to Western archives and family collections to discover where a photograph of a Kurd might be—out in the world, lost, buried in a depository. Then I felt an additional sense of responsibility to repatriate what I had found. The burial released the metaphor for uncovering Kurdistan, which lives in the act of digging. The digging unleashed an obsessive gene that drove me to search for what had gone missing, and what remained unknown. The trawling through the archives was parallel with the witnessing and the actual exhumation of graves."

The installation includes a story map, to which the accounts from a diaspora Kurdish community are regularly added (through participatory workshops), making each exhibition site-specific.

## **WALL TEXTS**

Susan Meiselas . Mediations

Apr 30 – Sep 9, 2022

Kurdistan is the historical settlement area of the Kurds—a people without a country— and stretches across western Asia, in such countries as Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. *Kurdistan* is also the title of Susan Meiselas's multimedia project comprised of photographs, videos, documents, and oral accounts the artist has been compiling since 1991.

This long-term project began when Susan Meiselas, in collaboration with Human Rights Watch, collected evidence of the genocide committed against the Kurds under Saddam Hussein. "I was stunned by what I saw. I had never witnessed such a complete and systematic destruction of village life, even in ten years covering the conflicts in Central America," the photographer recalls.

For years, Meiselas returned to the region time and time again, eventually broadening her investigations to all parts of the world to find out more about the personal stories of displaced Kurds and those who had had to flee. In collaboration with the Kurds living in the diaspora, she created textual and visual forms designed to make their individual stories more tangible. A vast archive was thus created over the years, which Meiselas published as an online platform akaKURDISTAN (since 1998) and then as a book (*Kurdistan*, 1997; second edition, 2008).

In the exhibition, the project is presented as a large story map—an archive that preserves the collective memory and the history of a people scattered all over the world, highlighting the role of photography in the writing of history and the practice of remembrance. The results of the workshop with Kurds living in Berlin that Meiselas held in April 2022, shortly before the exhibition opened, are also incorporated as booklets. Through her close collaboration with a multitude of people, Susan Meiselas reveals individual stories hitherto unheard, stories that come together to create a unique narrative of many voices.