

ROSALIND FOX SOLOMON

(b. Highland Park, USA, 1930)

Rosalind Fox Solomon (b. 1930), an American artist based in New York City, is celebrated for her portraits and for her connection to human suffering, ritual, survival, and struggle. Fox Solomon's work flows back and forth between the personal and the universal. Her talent lies in her capacity to interpret and photograph both the social elements of the places she travels to, and the obsessions and anxieties that travel with her. Her primary medium has been photography. In the 1980s, she also produced the installations, *Adios* and *Catacombs*. Since the 1990s, she has continued making images. Additionally, she has performed her own texts and poetry on video. Bruce Silverstein exhibited her audiovisual installation, *Scintillation*, in her 2016 solo show *Got to Go*, which also featured 30 prints of varied sizes, hung in erratic salon style. For the past 45 years, Fox Solomon has created challenging bodies of work, shown in nearly 30 solo exhibitions and 100 group exhibitions, and in the collections of over 50 museums worldwide.

Born in Highland Park, Illinois, Fox Solomon graduated from Goucher College. She married, moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and raised two children. She began photographing in 1968, continuing to live and work in the South until she moved in 1977 to Washington, D.C. Solomon studied privately with Lisette Model during visits to New York City.

In the 1970's, Fox Solomon began her work with dolls and manikins, portraits and ritual. She made her first portraits of the ill during a yearlong project in a Chattanooga hospital. In Guatemala, she photographed shamans as well as secular and religious ritual. She also worked on a series of southern portraits, which include President Jimmy Carter and William Eggleston. From 1977–79, Fox Solomon continued photographing artists and politicians, among them Louise Nevelson, Eva Le Gallienne, William Christenberry, and Tony Smith. Her project, *Outside the White House*, was completed during two years in Washington, D. C., when her husband was Administrator of the General Services Administration.

John Szarkowski included her work in the 1978 exhibition *Mirrors and Windows* at the Museum of Modern Art, and exhibited examples from her *Dolls and Manikins* series in the show *Photography for Collectors*. Szarkowski also selected 50 of Fox Solomon's prints for MoMA's permanent collection. Her pictures have appeared over the years in group exhibitions at *MoMA: American Children*, *American Politicians*, *Pictures by Women: A History of Modern Photography* and *The Original Copy: Sculpture in Photography 1839 to Today*. In 1986, MoMA mounted a solo exhibition of Fox Solomon's work, *Rosalind Solomon, Ritual*. Most recently, MoMA included her work in the anthology *Photography at MoMA: 1960—Now*, and curator Peter Eleey devoted a room to a selection of her work at MoMA PS1 in the Greater New York 2015 exhibition.

In the 1980's, she photographed in Ancash, a region in the Peruvian Andes. The remnants of a catastrophic earthquake became a metaphor for the upheaval she was experiencing in her own life. A Guggenheim Fellowship supported this work, which was recognized as an historic document of a forgotten area when it was exhibited at el Museo de Arte de Lima in 1996. She continued her work in the area, over the next 20 years. During the 1980's, Solomon also spent six months in India, as a Fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies. In Kolkata, she photographed sculptures of mother goddess figures that radiate female power. She also photographed Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Ganesh Pyne, and Satyajit Ray.

Along the Road, made in 1985, is one of several single-edition handmade books by Fox Solomon. It includes photographs, drawings, texts and a Tibetan Buddhist woman's apron.

In 1987, hundreds of young men and women dying with AIDS were demonized by society; often ostracized even by their own families. Fox Solomon felt affinity with them. Her own son was living with a progressive kidney disease. She began making portraits of individuals with AIDS, hoping that her pictures might help to remove the stigma attached to those with HIV who were sick and dying.

Tom Sokolowski, director of New York University's Grey Gallery of Art, heard about her project. He had seen her pictures at MoMA, and asked her whether she could complete the work and make prints for an exhibition to open in May 1988. Ten months later, sixty-five of the resulting pictures were mounted for the exhibit, Portraits in the Time of AIDS at the Grey Gallery. Twenty-six of the original large-scale prints were shown again in 2013 at Bruce Silverstein gallery in New York City, and again in the Salon d'Honneur of the Grand Palais at Paris Photo in 2015.

As ethnic violence increased throughout the world, Fox Solomon went to Poland to revisit the Holocaust and photograph the people she encountered. She photographed Belfast children of The Troubles; the wounded of Belgrade, Hanoi and Phnom Penh; and the oppressed and the privileged of South Africa. For respite and contrast, she photographed New Orleans Mardi Gras. In 2006, Steidl published her book, Polish Shadow.

During residencies at Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony and the Blue Mountain Art Center, Fox Solomon assembled and sequenced photographs and texts for Chapalingas, a review of 30 years of her work. In 2003, Photographische Sammlung exhibited her pictures in Cologne, Germany. Steidl published the accompanying book, Chapalingas in English, German and French with 201 full-page reproductions. In 2014, MACK published Fox Solomon's book THEM as part of a project entitled This Place, which explores the complexity of Israel and the West Bank through the eyes of 12 internationally acclaimed photographers. Their highly individual works combine to create not a single monolithic vision, but rather a diverse and fragmented portrait, alive to the rifts and paradoxes of this important and much-contested place. This Place consists of a traveling exhibition, companion publications, and a program of live events. At the Beatrice Theater at SVA, Fox Solomon presented a dramatic interpretation of the work in THEM, accompanied by cellist Sam Im, followed by a discussion of the project with curator and writer Charlotte Cotton.

Fox Solomon began to organize her extensive archive in 2005. It came to the Center for Creative Photography in 2007. The Rosalind Solomon Archive contains a key set of over 900 fine prints, unique books, and other art works, which together with Fox Solomon's original negatives, transparencies, personal papers, letters, business files, scrapbooks, video, audio tapes and other documentation chronicle her long and productive career.

Her work is in the collections of over 50 museums around the world, including the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington; George Eastman House, Rochester; Los Angeles County Museum; Metropolitan Museum, New York; Museo de Arte de Lima; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington; National Gallery of Canada, Ontario; Photographische Sammlung, Cologne; the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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