The Flag Project
Celebrating New York

In Spring 2020 we launched The Flag Project, Rockefeller Center’s first crowdsourced art initiative that showcased people’s love for New York at a time when we needed it the most. We invited artists of all abilities to help us dream up new ways to celebrate NYC’s diverse culture, vibrant energy and strength through an exhibition of brilliantly bold hand-designed and illustrated flags.

One year later, that same spirit of community and courage is as strong as ever. How best to mark it? By reprising The Flag Project of course! We called on New Yorkers from the Bronx to Rockaway Beach, state natives to global residents, iconic artists to undiscovered talent, to share their love for our city and celebrate its shapes, faces and textures of urban fabric, this time through the medium of photography.

Partnering with Aperture, the pioneering New York foundation and publisher of fine-art photography, we invited Executive Director Chris Boalt to select 83 photographs from over 1,200 submissions - 83 outstanding examples of the beauty and humanity of New York. Each selected image was transformed into an 8-foot by 5-foot flag and proudly flown together as an exhibition at Rockefeller Center. This collection of visual love letters to our city and testament to human connection is the latest expression of our long-standing commitment to free public art at Rockefeller Center.

We are so proud to fly these beautiful works of art for all to see, in the heart of New York.
The Flag Project Map

Flags are arranged in alphabetical order according to the artists' last names.

† Channel Gardens & 5th Avenue

45 Rockefeller Plaza

D-K

A-D

49th Street

1 Rockefeller Plaza

North Esplanade

The Rink

Fountain

D

Prometheus Sculpture ➔

45 Rockefeller Plaza

50th Street

D

Fountain

L-S

49th Street

T-Z

Entrance to 3D Rockefeller Plaza ➔

The Flag Project Exhibition Overview (window display) ➔
Aperture, a not-for-profit foundation, connects the photo community and its audiences with the most inspiring work, the sharpest ideas, and with each other—in print, in person and online. Created in 1952 by photographers and writers as “common ground for the advancement of photography,” Aperture today is a multiplatform publisher and community, engaged with photography as a language of ideas and committed to the medium’s contributions to the urgent issues in society and contemporary culture.

“Thank you to the 1,200 photographers who submitted photographs for The Flag Project 2021. It was a moving experience to see them all, and to read everyone’s words, which all spoke in different ways about how New York City inspires them. As we prevail through COVID, many spoke of love, and how we might look after each other better, as a city and a community, in future. I looked for pictures that conjured the positive and creative spirit of the city, and its humanity, sometimes choosing more personal pictures, rather than the obvious landmarks. I hope this chorus of photographs—and people—flying over Rockefeller Plaza may move those who experience it.”

-Chris Boot
Executive Director, Aperture Foundation


New York was both the birthplace of American photography, and the setting for its early commercial and technological developments. Today it is home to a huge community of photographers utilizing smartphone devices, professional-grade cameras, and everything in between. Aperture Foundation’s Chris Boot invited nine acclaimed New York photographers to be featured alongside the public submissions. Their photos are inspired by New York and reflect the unique spirit of our beloved city.

page 10  Kwame Brathwaite
12    Renee Cox  
14    Elliott Erwitt  
16    Roe Ethridge  
18    Nan Goldin  
20    Ryan McGinley  
22    Susan Meiselas  
24    Duane Michals  
26    Tyler Mitchell
Kwame Brathwaite

Biography

Kwame Brathwaite’s photographs were specifically intended to shape the course of American visual discourse. His photographs foreground how artistic and political vision can affect change in popular culture and how popular culture can affect change on culture at large. Brathwaite’s work demonstrates the power of photography as an essential cultural tool in the dissemination of new political ideas, its power to stage visual metonc and its ability make language visible.

This collaboration between Graphic Designer, Robert Gumbs, Photographer, Kwame Brathwaite, and members of the African-Jazz-Art-Society and Studios (AJASS), was created as a visual representation of the Black is Beautiful movement. This image, featuring the Grandassa Models, was first distributed by AJASS as a poster in 1970. This iconic image that exemplifies art as activism continues to inspire and empower.
Renee Cox

Biography
Renee Cox received her BA from Syracuse University and MFA from the School of Visual Arts. She is an associate professor at Columbia University and has lectured at Yale College of Art, New York University, and Parsons School of Design, to name a few. She lives and works in Manhattan and Amagansett with her husband, and their dog, Dogon.

Renee Cox makes photographs, collages, and installations that draw on art history, fashion photography and popular culture. Cox’s work is a celebration of the spectrum of the black female body. Her work challenges how women are seen respective to time, place and the intangible spaces between representation and reality.
Elliott Erwitt

Biography

Elliott Erwitt is a photographer and was born in Paris in 1928. His formative years were spent in Milan and at the age of 11 his family moved to Los Angeles.

In 1948, Erwitt met Edward Steichen, Robert Capa and Roy Stryker in New York and they became significant mentors. He joined Magnum Photos as a member in 1953.

While Elliott actively works for magazine, industrial and advertising clients, he devotes his spare time toward creating books and exhibitions of his work.

Elliott Erwitt likes children and dogs.
Roe Ethridge

Biography: Roe Ethridge (American, born 1969) takes equally from his work as a commercial photographer and artist. Blurring the lines that separate the two, Ethridge creates images that are simultaneously generic and intimate, often treading between humor and cynicism. Functioning in tandem, these motivations coalesce into an ongoing investigation into the mechanics of photographs, and their ability to both retreat into the personal, and expand to relay collective experiences.

Apple with Black Glove, shot October 17th, 2020 in Rockaway Beach.
Nan Goldin

Biography

Nan Goldin was born in Washington D.C. in 1943. She lives and works in New York City. One of the most important and influential artists of her generation, Goldin has revolutionized the art of photography through her frank and deeply personal portraiture. Over the last 45 years, Goldin has created some of the most indelible images of the 20th and 21st centuries. Since the late 1970s, her work has explored notions of gender and definitions of normality. By documenting her life and the lives of the friends who surround her, Goldin gives a voice and visibility to her communities.

Jimmy Paulette on David’s Bike, NYC, 1991
Ryan McGinley

Biography: Ryan McGinley is a New York-based photographer. At the age of 21, he became the youngest artist to have a solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art. His early work focused on the intersection where the queer community met skateboarding & graffiti culture. Over the last decade, McGinley has road-tripped continuously throughout the United States to create work that incorporates the human body within the American landscape. McGinley frequently has solo exhibits and museum exhibitions around the world.

‘Red Kiss’, 1999 is one of McGinley’s earliest works, taken the first year he started creating photographs.
Susan Meiselas

Biography

Susan Meiselas is a documentary photographer and a member of Magnum Photos since 1976. She is the author of Carnival Strippers, Nicaragua, Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History, Pandora’s Box, and Encounters with the Dani. She has co-authored two collections: El Salvador: Work of 30 Photographers and Chile from Within.

Meiselas is well known for her documentation of human rights issues in Latin America. Her photographs are included in American and international collections. In 1992, Meiselas was made a MacArthur Fellow. She is presently the President of the Magnum Foundation. The Magnum Foundation supports, trains and mentors the next generation of in-depth documentary photographers.

The photograph of Lisa & Dee is from a project called the Prince Street Girls, a group who hung out on a corner near my home in Little Italy. At the beginning, I was making pictures just to share with them. These were incidental encounters, moments that we met after school, on the street or in the market.

I was the stranger who didn’t belong. Little Italy was mostly for Italians then. Most of these girls have their own families now and are no longer living in the neighborhood. We would never have imagined then that we would continue to know each other 45 years later.
Duane Michals

Biography
Since 1968 Duane Michals has been around the block a few times, and is still in transit.

This photo was taken in 1968 in New York. Everyone fled the train when I walked in dressed like Santa Claus in July.
Tyler Mitchell

Biography

Tyler Mitchell (b. 1995 Atlanta, GA) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He is a photographer and filmmaker working across many genres to explore and document a new aesthetic of Blackness.

In 2019, Mitchell held his first solo exhibition, /Can Make You Feel Good/, at Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam where he showed new photographic and video works including his film Idyllic Space. An iteration of the show traveled to the International Center of Photography in New York in 2020. Mitchell published an eponymous monograph with Prestel Random House in conjunction with the exhibition, further exploring his take on a Black visual utopia.

Untitled (Family Time in the Park), 2019

Seven young black folks playing in a park. The boy in the right foreground is running while flying a kite. Two other boys at the left foreground are sitting next to each other—laughing.
The Flag Project

Selected Work

Tanya Ahmed
New York, NY
Native American children dancing in a powwow at the Queens Farm. I’d like this image to be a flag because it reminds us that these children are themselves connected and have connected us to both the original traditions of the first New Yorkers and to the future promise of a NYC that they will shape.

Zachary Allaire
Manchester, CT
I took this street photograph shortly before the 2020 COVID lockdown. To me, it represents the joy that is NYC. I believe this picture should be included in The Flag Project 2021 because we could all use some true smiles and laughter after a difficult year.
**Gus Aronson**  
**Bronx, NY**  
This is a photo I made on 100th Street in front of the FDNY Battalion 11 Firehouse of a memorial to 9/11 First Responder Victims. Referencing Walker Evans’ Studio, my photo both memorializes these first responders, but also calls into question how photography plays a role in our collective memory. As Brendan Ember of Aperture writes: “One delicate image in ‘Tokens of an Unlived Life’ is a grid of headshots of firefighters. Their names, like some of their impressive moustaches, reveal only the slightest biographical detail. In this year’s fever dream of sieves and statistics, Aronson’s picture seems to ask: Are these men still with us? Who have they helped (or harmed)? Who have they loved?”

**Boy Radio**  
**Brooklyn, NY**  
My photo is derived and inspired by an oil painting titled Fallen Angel by Alexandre Cabanel. I made this image based on a conversation I had with a friend about contemporary angels and saints in current times when it seems as though the world might be lacking a bit of spiritual representation. The original image is of a long-haired, crying angel; his face buried slightly in his arm, which I interpreted as a means of self-protection. I leaned, literally, into the fantasy of this story with Boy Radio as the subject.

**Harper Bella**  
**New York, NY**  
In this portrait, are some of the members of the Wyandanch Volunteer Ambulance Corp. in Wyandanch, New York. “Flower of Honor” commemorates the black and brown essential workers who have kept their communities thriving amid the COVID-19 crisis. Throughout the media, reports have shown statistics of the exponential death and unemployment rate amongst African-American and Latino individuals throughout New York. However, there is a lack of acknowledgment for the black and Hispanic employees working continuously despite the dangers. The truth of this edginess is seen in this image of diverse, smiling, cheering, energetic New Yorkers.

**Calleen Cavanaugh**  
**New York, NY**  
This image was taken on a sunny spring day in 2020 as I walked along Fifth Avenue which is one of my favorite places to shoot. I was drawn to the eyes on display in one of the retail stores off of Fifth. I believe that this picture would make a fitting exhibition flag, as it represents a true NYC scene with these eyes viewing the flags at the Rockefeller Center Plaza.
Christine Cirker & Cal Vornberger
New York, NY
I’m submitting this on behalf of my friend, Cal Vornberger, who has passed. This is my absolute favorite moment in one of my favorite places. A family of robins, nested in the Romeo & Juliet statue in front of the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park, (heart) New York when I look at this photo and I know others will, too.

Elianel Clinton
Bellefonte, NJ
In 2017, I was heavily inspired by a news story that came out about Giovanni Melton, a 16-year-old gay teenager who was shot by his own father. Today, many people within the LGBTQ community are being killed, harassed, and treated unfairly simply because of who they choose to love or what gender, if any, they identify as. I set out to create a visual message of hope and hardship, letting them know they are not alone and others share similar experiences. I feel this flag would help bring awareness to Giovanni’s story and to my community’s daily struggles. Shining a light on the severity of what we regularly deal with in hopes for a better and brighter change for our future.

Learon Coleman
Kensington, NJ
‘African Love Story’ (the series which this photo came from) was actually taken in NYC. It tells that NYC is everything. It’s beyond what we just see. No matter what you think, it’s always more. I believe love is universal, doesn’t matter your gender, race, culture, age or beliefs. This photo shows that. Love is everywhere in the big city, you just have to open your eyes. That’s the reason why it should be placed for the world to see and feel.

Steven Molina Contreras
New York, NY
This photograph is of my immigrant family in New York. It depicts images that are connected to El Salvador and Peru. As an artist, I revisit our history, focusing on the distance, resilience and touch that continue to shape our lives in the U.S. but also within the context of being in NY. It is also a place that has given us the opportunity to look forward to a day in which we can hold one another together, permanently. I’d like to share our story, showing how we use photography to reclaim the land and images in which we are portrayed, as a way of moving and looking forward.
Grace Copeland
New York, NY
Ms Emma was born and raised in Harlem and passed away this year due to medical complications. This picture perfectly captures her spirit and love for her neighborhood.

Don Cunningham
Los Angeles, CA
Art Director, Andy Blake. Model: Roy Anthony Brown (aka) ROY INC.

Joseph Dalton
New York, NY
This photograph, taken during a protest march through Manhattan, held me in the moment. This woman showed me the solidarity of us New Yorkers. One woman standing with her hand up, mask on, shopping trolley in front and the background of inspiration. We marched through the pandemic, through the hurts and in the struggle united as one good mob—New Yorkers.

Anna Mia Davidson
Seattle, WA
This image is from my long-term portrait project about American Muslim women. I'd like to see this image fly as a flag at Rockefeller Center to represent inclusion, celebrate each other, and help combat Xenophobia.
Brian DeCicco
New York, NY
In stark contrast to the iron fire escapes, this vibrant rose caught my eye on my many walks throughout New York City. Nowhere else in the world does nature and city life combine quite like Rockefeller Center.

Camille Dela Cruz
Edgewater, NJ
This was taken during the lockdown of 2020 when I thought of using my sparklers and my camera to spread some positivity and show my love for New York City despite the pandemic. It’s a little thing for some, but I realized it’s worth looking at during these uncertain times. I’d like to see this photo as a flag to serve as a reminder that almost a year ago, things were really uncertain and tough, but through holding on and looking at the brighter side of things, love and life prevails.

Cyril Delettre
Winchester, MA
Photos are taken very quickly, in a kind of automatic writing, where the emotion of the place prevails over the aesthetic research. The deconstruction-reconstruction of space captures the flow of information, decomposes it and superimposes it. The report then becomes more emotional and narrative than informative, the crushed decor delivers latent images: a new city emerges, a kind of Babylon and it is still New York. The city lends itself magnificently to this game: geometric structures come to life with a very human fragility.

Rose DeSiano
Brooklyn, NY
Originally created and exhibited in a Hank Willis Thomas’s Forfreedoms.org exhibition, this work has been reframed into a flag. I continue to use public art as a method of advocacy and activism. By placing these lesser known NYC monuments in the center stage of Rockefeller Center, my flag honors the unsung members of NYC history. Inviting native New Yorkers and visitors alike to dig deeper into the complexity of our past, engage and inform themselves of the need for equity in representation. My organization and juxtaposition of these iconic statues reimagines the monuments in a conversation grappling with these inequities and unjust pasts.
DOEprojekts
New York, NY
Farmers’ Markets were deemed “essential” in the summer of 2020. We loved going to many fruit, vegetable, bread and baked goods stands. A bright produce display with “NYC Garden” chalked below caught our eye – and will surely catch the eye of visitors to The Flag Project at Rockefeller Center.

Itamar Dotan Katz
Brooklyn, NY
By transforming a familiar object, his black and white film image of the chandelier at the Museum of the City of New York, aims to spark imagination, using light alone to create a feeling of traveling far away through time and space, or diving into ourselves.

Amanda Raquel Dorval
Maple, NY
I took this photo at a Dominican hair salon in Washington Heights, Manhattan, in 2019. Dominican hair salons are a NYC staple, and many women go to these salons for the social outlets they provide (in addition to a killer blowout style!). They are a hub for NYC Latin American women to chat, gossip, laugh, vent and be themselves. This particular salon is managed by my father’s wife’s sister. The shop has managed to weather the pandemic and is still in business; like many other small businesses in NYC, they are struggling to keep the shop going as this limps on.

Hilary Duffy
New York, NY
At The Hydrant is a photo essay about a block in Harlem that represents community spirit and improvisation during the summer of Covid. Three female community leaders develop programming for masked-up residents to use the street safely.
Lauren von Eckartsberg
New York, NY
This is a photo I took on 6th Avenue back in 2019 before the pandemic was on our minds here in New York. This image now feels nostalgic for me because it takes me back to a time that now feels like an entirely different era, when I would walk around midtown on my lunch break and take images of the people and places I’d see around me.

Stefan Falke
New York, NY
New York City, September 2nd, 2020
From my book project entitled “Keep Going New York II”

Andy Fernandez
Arlington, VA
I was visiting a friend in Chelsea and took this photo on my morning run. I would like to see this as a flag because the hijab is representational of the diversity of New York City.

Leslie Fratkin
New York, NY
I think that this audience, looking up at the concert stage, perfectly exemplifies the energy, the passion, the very spirit of all New Yorkers.
Devyn Galindo
Los Angeles, CA
Devyn Galindo is a Queer Chicanx, Taino-Saint photographer based in Los Angeles, California. Born in Garden Grove, California, but having grown up bouncing from state to state, she feels fearlessly nomadic and travels frequently. She would describe herself as honest, impulsive, an adventure seeker and a risk-taker. Devyn documents the lives of her friends, emerging from the Chicano scene in Los Angeles. Exploring her own identity as a queer scene artist during the current political climate has become an obsession that has led to their first publication, We Are Still Here, which launched in November 2016.

Camille Garzon
New York, NY
Vibrant and lively how New York City is.

Nikolaos C. George
New York, NY
The New York Public Library’s mascot, the lion, Patience, wearing a COVID mask. Why a Rockefeller Center lag? What better emblem of the fortitude (the name of the second NYPL lion) of NYC during these trying times?

Camilo Godoy
New York, NY
This photograph is from my project ANGELS. This project consists of black and white photos of my friends and lovers engaged in moments of love and lust. This photo was taken in my studio in Brooklyn.
Sidharth Gopinath
Brooklyn, NY
There’s something spectacular about being on the train as it emerges above-ground, into the golden light of early evening. It’s a moment when dreams feel possible and the city feels like the place you’re meant to be. It’s deeply humbling. This photo of a stranger looking out of the subway window at the city below them, instead of using their phone or a book, felt like the embodiment of that feeling. New York has been through so much this past year, and this photo reminds me of what it feels like to have one’s dreams fostered by this city. It would be an absolute privilege to spread that joy and that hope by having this on a flag. Thank you for this opportunity.

Margot Guralnick
Bronx, NY
My assemblage is a celebration of the city as a welcoming mat and place for everyone. I have a daily practice called Dog Walk Diary in which I gather leaves, twigs, and other finds and make something ephemeral out of them that I capture in photos. This creation, featuring found items in the process of sprouting, became an unexpected banquet for squirrels.

Serge Hamad
Fort Lee, NJ
This image shows a Yellow Cab still on duty in NYC just before Sandy’s landfall. “Braving The Storm” – Just the spirit of New Yorkers.

Michael Hay
Mehlville, NY
It’s not a very common view of the city, from a distance the image is almost the texture of NYC. It can be viewed and understood if the flag is blowing in the wind or not. It makes you think about what you are looking at and can be just as enjoyable to observe when there is no wind… it’s THE TEXTURE OF MANHATTAN.
Jimmy Hayde
Denver, CO
Manhattan Tenement: In the 1860s, my great grandfather arrived by boat from Ireland and settled into Hall’s Kitchen. My grandparents, parents, brothers, and myself were all born and raised in Hall’s Kitchen in tenements very much like this one. I would love to see this image fly in Rockefeller Center because the Center represents what tourists come to see and believe about New York. No one ever considers that New York was nurtured in the hope and desperation within these tenements. A great deal of American art, food and culture sprang from these tenements — even Rockefeller Center itself was built on the bones of these tenements.

Janice Hoffmann
Yonkers, NY
“It’s our pleasure to serve you.” An anthropora coffee cup is named after the Greco-Roman amphora, an ancient container — and is a New York City artifact that used to be found at every corner bodega and local diner and still can be seen on shows like Law and Order, Madmen, Sopranos, and Blue Bloods — it’s a throwback to a simpler time.

Miyoshi Iwasawa
New York, NY
Riding at the Coney Island Park is always a dream for me and it almost became true when I visited there for the first time but it was closed. I was so sad then felt the nice breeze from the ocean, it comforted me so much. I promised myself to visit here again! Remember seeing the tower clearly, this photograph became my “Memories of Coney Island”.

Elizabeth Ann Kahane
New York, NY
Saint Patrick’s Day Parade, 2012. One of NYC’s oldest and greatest traditions. The parade began over 200 years ago in 1762, 14 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. There is a saying that on St. Patrick’s Day everyone is Irish. The truth of this adage is seen in this image of diverse, smiling, cheering, energetic New Yorkers in all their imaginative green attire.
Kevin Kim
Brooklyn, NY
I've always admired city diner scenes in movies and this photograph captured such a beautiful moment and feeling of living in the Big Apple.

Bob Krasner
New York, NY
I spent much of the COVID lockdown creating images that reveal my never-ending obsession with NYC, my favorite city, where I live. This is not something new; I just had more time - a lot more time - to indulge in my favorite activity. This image of Rockefeller Center is presented in black and white, with a composition that reminds me of the photography of the past, but I haven’t found an image that presents this building in quite this way. It would be wonderful to see this on a flag waving in view of the real thing.

Shane Lavalette
Syracuse, NY
This photograph celebrates both struggle and resilience in the face of challenges and represents the strength of New Yorkers.

Hodo Lee
Seogwipo, South Korea
New York is famous for its skyscrapers. In this photo, one of those skyscrapers is being built by laborers who also stand for very busy New York and humanity. I want to share this image since it is giving us the feeling of unity.
Caroline Mardok
Brooklyn, NY
In honor of Black Trans Queen Jean. For the exposure and visibility of all Trans people, the new frontier of tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Part of a series on Black women leaders of social change.

Heather McCutcheon
San Diego, CA
Taken on a five day blur of a trip to NYC — crouched in the back of a taxi with newly made friends. I saw the driver’s deep, dark eyes in the rear view mirror contrast against another bright yellow cab on the road in front as we pulled away. Elbows in the way of the other passengers, I whipped my camera out and took the frame, preserving the detail.

David McGlynn
New York, NY
This image represents the promise of a free and happy life in our great, progressive city. It is celebratory, with a proud, in-your-face attitude, like NYC itself.

Wiafe Mensah-Bonsu
Brooklyn, NY
‘Pride Bunnyies, West Village’ I’d like to see this photo of a group of friends celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Pride in matching costumes go up at Rockefeller Center because it shows how diverse and fun NYC is.
Natrice Miller  
Roswell, GA  
Matching short sets, fresh braids and afternoons spent double-dutching and playing hand games like Miss Mary Mack is what summers were made of for many Black girls growing up in the ’70s, ’80s and ’90s. This image on a flag in Rockefeller Center would be a beautiful representation of Black childhood in New York City’s urban neighborhoods like Brooklyn and Harlem. It’s a reminder of the past and an ever-changing present.

Nadia Nascimento  
Brooklyn, NY  
This was taken on Christmas Eve, the first Christmas spent away from my family in Canada while I waited on my green card approval. Despite all missed and longed for traditions of home, we decided to make new ones: to have a hot dog and hot chocolate on Fifth Ave, singing Christmas carols to the Rockefeller Center Tree and share in the wonderment of the storefront windows with our fellow New Yorkers. We are blessed to be a part of the greater New York family and to start new traditions here with the people we love. (In photo, my 2-year-old daughter, Nova Moore.)

Rengim Mutevellioglu  
Brooklyn, NY  
Two young women in masks on a Citi Bike enjoying a pandemic summer in Grand Army Plaza. My neighborhood in Brooklyn has been my stronghold this year. A largely residential neighborhood, neighbors really came out for each other and never let me feel alone despite distancing six feet apart. Prospect Park’s vibrancy especially has been a huge help, and these women really embody the good days of the summer.
Melissa O’Shaughnessy
New York, NY
This image, taken on 34th Street in 2018, feels like it belongs on a flag: the checks and lines a visual metaphor for the stars and stripes. The energetic clash of color and pattern is a reminder of what the streets of the city used to feel like, and a ray of hope for what it can be again when the pandemic is a thing of the past.

Maximilien Pardo
Long Island City, NY
Traffic Lights and Magic Shadows - I arrived in New York during fall 2020. Drained by COVID-19 pandemic, the City that never sleeps became the shadow of itself at daylight. Between ghost streets and cold shades, certain traffic lights seemed to have captured the sun, and guided me through obscure and faceless avenues and cityscapes. Looking up, my confined imagination bloomed, dreamed and glided in quest of a brighter tomorrow.

Richard Phibbs
New York, NY
Zappy was three when he arrived at the Humane Society of New York, with a painful ear infection and a coat so matted it had to be shaved off. Now he runs circles around the garden of gallery owners Ronni and Peter, and goes to work with them every day. “We have a steady flow of people coming and going. Zappy charms them all.” This portrait of Zappy was how Zappy found his new home. It was shot at the Humane Society of New York’s headquarters on E. 59th Street, by Richard Phibbs, for Zappy’s profile, posted online.

Walter Plotnick
Eriez Park, PA
Surprise Inside Series - My photographic collages serve as a metaphor for anticipation, those moments when the unknown is being revealed. Pivotal moments when life turns a corner into new and exciting places, a brightening of our awareness that brings us fully into the moment of discovering what’s next. New York City is one of those moments. The implied act of unboxing the box, releases the energy of the occupant, allowing them to take flight. The people and objects confined within, through the simple act of untying, are exposed revealing what was previously hidden.
Richard Renaldi
New York, NY
I submitted this photo because it was made in New York and clearly it is about love. It’s from the early 1990’s and has a nostalgic feel. I also think it is a graphically strong choice.

Elissa Salas
Bronx, NY
Black women deserve to be celebrated every day. Cherly blesses us with a smile reminding us that despite the odds, we are rich in culture, love and style. This is for the hustlers who wake up every day and go get it.

Stefan Ruiz
Brooklyn, NY
Family portrait of the House of Xtravaganza, thanks to Grandfather Jose Xtravaganza.

Kristina Shakht
Brooklyn, NY
I feel like love in the past year did win. We came together as a country through several crises and supported each other. Love wins and it should be a reminder to all.
Neeraj Sharma
Mehah, AZ
Human interaction

Brian Bowen Smith
New York, NY
What started out as taking a drive to snap a few photos, in my old girl, ‘Pearl’, a classic '58 Ford F100, has grown into a multi-faceted cross-country project of a lifetime. The journey conveys the new normal of social distancing while documenting the soul of American culture during the Covid-19 World Pandemic. At a time when a mandated quarantine plagues our beautiful country, this project encompasses the raw essence of the human condition, our sentimental traditions, as at its core, the heart of our people—from sea to shining sea.

Joey Solomon
Brooklyn, NY
Not only did I make this image in Manhattan, but it represents the living community I am a part of as a native New Yorker, young artist and gay man. When I look at my photograph, it makes me feel empowered and proud to be who I am.

Gisella Sorrentino
Brooklyn, NY
In this double exposure, taken with a medium format film camera, I used the hands as a sign of creativity and labor. The image wants to symbolize how New Yorkers can empower and free themselves thanks to new ideas and hard work.
AJ Stetson
New York, NY
The resilience, solidarity and activism of New Yorkers has rarely been on display as prominently as it was during the protests of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd. This LGBTQ Black Lives Matter march up Eighth Avenue in NYC on June 18th, 2020 was one example of the commitment of the people of his city to express their convictions for racial justice and equal rights. It would be a great honor to have this image presented at Rockefeller Center as one visual example of the diversity, resilience, and engagement of New Yorkers.

Maria Sprowls-Cervantes
Brooklyn, NY
I long for the summer freedom that we experience in New York City. Children are at their happiest, enjoying the pockets for play in the city. This image makes me happy and nostalgic. No one is wearing a mask. We are not afraid of being too close to each other. It’s an unplanned choreography of everyone coming together. It’s a New York City ballet.

Frances Isabelle Sy
Staten Island, NY
“Sweet Victory” — something that many New Yorkers have been waiting to experience since the beginning of Donald Trump’s presidency. This image captures the collective joy and sense of triumph that strangers shared on one another at Washington Square Park on the day that Joe Biden won the 2020 Presidential Election. I hope to see this image as a flag at Rockefeller Center because it symbolizes the unity and harmony that New Yorkers—from close family members to strangers—share with one another in spite of difficult times.
Amy Touchette
Brooklyn, NY
“I have to be an optimist because I am alive.” — James Baldwin, New Yorkers are nothing if not resilient. While the city’s ethnically diverse population is what makes it so culturally vibrant and creative, people of color tragically continue to experience hardships and injustices simply due to the color of their skin; yet, somehow, they persevere.

Annah Trunick
New York, NY
I think it is an iconic view of the overlooked upland. I take this ride every day and appreciate the quick above-ground peek you get while riding the 1 subway.

Damon Webster
New York, NY
A rally called We Are Muslim, Too, exemplifying how we are all in this together, side by side.

Shen Wei
New York, NY
The peach blossoms symbolize life and unity, a sign of good luck and joy.
Ruvan Wijesooriya
Brooklyn, NY
This photo was taken last summer of my daughter in Macy’s Park, BK, running through the water. There is an elated feeling you get from running through water in the summertime in NYC. The water is like a warmhole momentarily able to take you away from everything – the city, its heat and life’s problems. I like to think my daughter found a place between outer space and inside of a rainbow.

Sally Wolf
New York, NY
This picture is a personal favorite from a photo shoot I did a month after I finished chemotherapy in 2016. I wanted to capture the unexpected beauty I found in my bald head so I hired my favorite photographer, Daphne Youree. Spontaneously lifting my wig triumphantly above my head, 30 floors above the intersection of Broadway and 23rd. I truly fell on top of the entire world. Less than 2 years after this picture was taken, my cancer returned and metastasized. All things considered, I am doing extremely well. This photo is one I regularly look at to remind myself that, even during our darkest days, we can all radiate so much golden light.

Natcha Wongchanlaw
Forest Hills, NY
For me, this is like a magical moment. Snow falling like stars, filling the land and trees with white snow in sharp contrast to the dark pond and birds, besides two people enjoying it in the cold. This is not usually a scene of New York City and I would like to share it with the world that New York City has more interesting and beautiful things than just a big and busy city.

Matthew Zweigbaum
Syosset, NY
This photograph was taken in Bryant Park in the Summer of 2018. I think it shows the strange and beautiful qualities that make New York City really shine.
Thank You

to all of the participating photographers.

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Margot Guralnick
Serge Hamad
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Janice Hoffmann
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Kevin Kim
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Shane Lavalle
Hoda Lee
Caroline Mardok
Heather McCutcheon
Ryan McGinley
David McGlynn
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Wiare Mensah-Bansu
Duane Michals
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Ruben Natal-San Miguel
Melissa O'Shaughnessy
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Walter Platnick
Richard Reinaldi
Stefan Ruz
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Kristina Shankt
Neejaj Sharma
Brian Bowen Smith
Joey Salaman
Gisella Sorrentino
David Specter
Maria Sprawis-Cervantes
AJ Stetson
Frances Isabelle Sy
Amy Tauchette
Annah Trunick
Damon Webster
Shen Wei
Ruvan Wijesooriya
Sally Wolf
Natsha Wongchanglaw
Matthew Zweigbaum

And thank you to the other 1,200 photographers that submitted their images. We loved reading your personal stories and viewing your photos that capture the essence of our great city. Thank you for sharing with us.

"Rockefeller Center celebrates the very best of New York year-round, so it is especially meaningful to be working with Aperture, a leading voice in photography, in presenting these incredible activities that honor the City, its rich history, and its promising future, free and open to all. The Flag Project is the latest way that New Yorkers - and everyone around the world - can share their creativity and their love for New York at Rockefeller Center. We were proud to launch this public art project last year and are thrilled to continue the tradition in a new way. The Center began as an ambitious dream, and as the City continues to recover from the pandemic, it is imperative that art and culture, which will inspire the next generation of great dreams, lead the way. These exhibitions and offerings aim to show just how special and diverse this City is, and that New York will always be the cultural capital of the world."

-EB Kelly
Tishman Speyer Managing Director overseeing Rockefeller Center

TISHMAN SPEYER

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