

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

**Desire to See:
Photographs by Agnès Varda**

February 29 through April 13, 2024

Exhibition Reception: Thursday, February 29th

Exhibition Walk-through with Rosalie Varda: Saturday, March 2nd

The Fahey/Klein Gallery is pleased to present “*Desire to See: Photographs by Agnès Varda*”, the first exhibition in the United States dedicated exclusively to Agnès Varda’s photographic work. This retrospective exhibition delves into the rich photographic history of the French New Wave filmmaker and provides a comprehensive visual narrative of Varda’s life and creative pursuits through a diverse selection of photographs spanning from vintage lifetime prints developed and printed by Varda to newly discovered posthumous works.

“*Desire to See: Photographs by Agnès Varda*” showcases Varda’s self-portraits, offering an introspective look into the artist’s identity alongside portraits of fellow artists (Alexander Calder, Salvador Dalí, Delphine Seyrig, Federico Fellini, Catherine Deneuve, Luchino Visconti, and more), highlighting her radical vision and passionate engagement with the world. Documentary photographs from her extensive travels through diverse locations such as Cuba, China, and Los Angeles, as well as her beloved home in Paris, illustrate her keen observational eye. Varda’s photographic career predates her filmmaking and intersects fluidly throughout her six decades of creative pursuits. Still photographs often influenced and inspired her films, as is the case of *Le Pointe Courte* and *Ulysse*, and likewise filmmaking was the subject and context for her still photographs. Varda’s eternally free spirit guided her restless curiosity and imagination while defining a strong, clear, experimental, feminine voice visible within every frame.

Agnès Varda, (1928 – 2019), was a film director, screenwriter, photographer, and visual artist. Born in Belgium, she studied art history and photography, working as a professional photographer before making her first feature film in 1954 at the age of 26, the ultra-low budget independent film *La Pointe Courte*. Her pioneering work was central to the development of the widely influential French New Wave film movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. Drawing on art history, literature, and philosophy, her films, photographs, and art installations focus on documentary realism, feminist issues, and social commentary with a distinctive experimental style. Throughout her life she maintained a fluid interrelationship between photographic and cinematic forms.

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Varda produced some of her most significant work in Los Angeles. Moving to L.A. in 1967 with her husband, filmmaker Jacques Demy. Living in Beverly Hills, driving a convertible, and mingling with movie stars and directors, among them Harrison Ford, Jane Fonda, and Michelangelo Antonioni. Varda made three films in L.A., *Lions Love (...and Lies)*, *Uncle Yanco* and *Black Panthers*, films made in response to Varda's keen awareness of the politically and socially charged times of the day. Agnès Varda returned to L.A. alone in 1981 to film *Murs Murs* and *Documenteur*, intent on turning the mirror back into the City of Angels.

During the last 15 years of her life, Agnès Varda continued to explore ways to bring her work into totally new and exciting contexts. In 2003 Hans Ulrich Obrist invited Varda to participate in the Venice Art Biennale with *Patatutopia*, a three-screen video installation complete with 700 kilos of potatoes, giving her renewed vigor and engagement. She was now "not an old filmmaker but a young visual artist."

In 2017 Varda joined forces with French photographer and artist, JR, to make *Faces Places*, an unlikely collaboration in which the two traverse rural France in search of lost traditions and changing mores. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

In 2015 Varda was awarded the Palme d'or d'honneur for lifetime achievement at the Cannes Film Festival. She received an honorary Oscar in 2017, becoming the first female filmmaker to receive the award. Varda died in Paris in 2019 at the age of 91.

The work of Agnès Varda is featured in many international collections such as: the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain (Paris), the FRAC Lorraine (France), the MoMA (New York), the Musée Paul Valéry (France), the CAFA Art Museum (Beijing China), the Institut Culturel Bernard Magrez (France), and LACMA (Los Angeles), Le Centre Pompidou (Paris).

Director's Inspiration: Agnes Varda is currently on view at The Academy Film Museum, Los Angeles until January 5, 2025. *Viva Varda*, a retrospective organized by the Cinémathèque Française will open at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, July 2024. *Hans Ulrich Obrist Archive, Chapter Three: Agnes Varda* is at LUMA Arles, Arles, France through May 2024.

"*Desire to See: Photographs by Agnès Varda*" is curated in collaboration with Rani Singh.

Press images available on request

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