

# Merry Alpern

## *Dirty Windows, 1993-4*

Exposition 'solo show' sur Paris Photo  
Grand Palais, 12-15 Novembre 2026



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À l'automne 2026, la Galerie Miranda présente à Paris Photo l'emblématique série *Dirty Windows* de Merry Alpern, la première fois que cette œuvre majeure est exposée dans le cadre d'une foire d'art. Pour cette présentation exceptionnelle, la Galerie réunit des tirages argentiques d'époque ainsi qu'une sélection de tirages argentiques contemporains, réalisés par l'artiste et dévoilés aux collectionneurs et au public pour la première fois.

***Dirty Windows:*** Durant l'hiver 1993-1994, la photographe Merry Alpern se rend dans le loft new-yorkais d'un ami, situé dans le quartier de Wall Street. Il l'emmène dans une pièce au fond de l'appartement ; depuis la fenêtre, un étage plus bas, elle aperçoit une minuscule fenêtre de salle de bains d'où s'échappent les basses lourdes d'une musique de boîte de nuit. Elle réalise qu'elle a vue sur la salle de bains d'un club de strip-tease clandestin, où « des courtiers en bourse et autres hommes d'affaires aisés remettaient des centaines de dollars et de la drogue à des femmes en string et lingerie de dentelle noire ». Fascinée par ce spectacle, l'artiste commence à photographier la scène à l'aide d'une pellicule noir et blanc très sensible, conférant aux clichés une esthétique rappelant celle des peep-shows, ou du film noir.

Plus tard, dans un entretien, Merry Alpern a été interrogée sur ce qu'elle avait ressenti en photographiant ces scènes, en tant que femme photographe. Elle a répondu : « Bien que la notion de "regard féminin" ne m'ait jamais vraiment intéressée, en tant que femme, je pouvais projeter certaines de mes propres expériences sur cette pantomime derrière la fenêtre... En contrepartie, il y avait une expérience anthropologique : observer des scènes tout à fait ordinaires dans le monde des hommes. Observer les habitudes de salle de bain du sexe opposé fut une révélation. »

En 1994, Alpern obtient pour cette série une bourse auprès de la NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) mais son travail — tout comme celui d'Andres Serrano et de Barbara DeGenevieve — est par la suite rejeté et vilipendé par des conservateurs cherchant à discréditer l'institution. Cette controverse suscite un vaste débat qui, paradoxalement, contribue à faire connaître l'œuvre.

Aujourd'hui, des tirages de la série « *Dirty Windows* » figurent dans d'importantes collections privées et muséales, notamment celles du Whitney Museum of American Art, du San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, du Museum of Modern Art (MoMA, New York), du National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington DC) et du Museum of Fine Arts de Houston. Des œuvres de la série ont été notamment exposées en 1996 à la Fondation Cartier à Paris, dans le cadre de l'exposition collective « *By Night* » ; en 2010 à la Tate Modern, lors de l'exposition « *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera* », où l'ensemble de la série (37 tirages) a été exposée. Plus récemment, elles ont été présentées dans l'exposition « *Public, Private, Secret* » à l'ICP Museum de New York, 2016-2017.

La Galerie Miranda nous invite à reconsidérer cette série sous un angle contemporain. Réalisées avant l'avènement des réseaux sociaux, ces images à la fois poétiques et brutes de la face cachée de New York demeurent d'une pertinence intacte, soulevant de multiples questions sur l'exploitation sexuelle des femmes, le consumérisme, le pouvoir, la finance, la surveillance et le regard féminin.

Merry Alpern est représentée exclusivement par la Galerie Miranda.

### Lecture:

[Interview Merry Alpern / Pauline Vermare, ICP](#)

[Review Artforum, 1995](#)

[Copyright Merry Alpern vs. Jacques Audiard, 2026 \(Le Monde\)](#)

# Merry Alpern

## *Dirty Windows, 1993-4*

Solo exhibition at Paris Photo  
Grand Palais, November 12–15, 2026, Booth B52

In the autumn of 2026, Galerie Miranda presents Merry Alpern's iconic series *\*Dirty Windows\** at Paris Photo—the first time this major body of work has been exhibited at an art fair. For this exceptional presentation, the gallery brings together vintage gelatin silver prints alongside a selection of contemporary gelatin silver prints produced by the artist, and previewed at Paris Photo.

***Dirty Windows:*** During the winter of 1993–1994, photographer Merry Alpern visited a friend's New York loft in the Wall Street district. He took her to a room at the back of the apartment; looking out the window, she spotted a tiny bathroom window one floor down, from which the heavy bass of nightclub music drifted out. She realized she had a view into the bathroom of an illicit lap dance club, where "stockbrokers and other wealthy businessmen handed over hundreds of dollars and drugs to women in thongs and black lace lingerie." Fascinated by the spectacle, the artist began photographing the scene using high-speed black-and-white film, lending the images a *film noir* aesthetic.

Later, in an interview, Merry Alpern was asked about her feelings while photographing these scenes as a female photographer. She replied: "Although the concept of the 'female gaze' never really interested me, as a woman, I could project some of my own experiences onto that pantomime behind the window... At the same time, there was an anthropological aspect: observing completely ordinary scenes in the world of men. Observing the bathroom habits of the opposite sex was a revelation."

In 1994, Alpern received a grant from the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) for this series, but her work—like that of Andres Serrano and Barbara DeGenevieve—was subsequently rejected and vilified by conservatives seeking to discredit the arts institution. This controversy sparked a widespread debate that, paradoxically, helped bring the work to public attention.

Today, prints from the *Dirty Windows* series are held in major private and museum collections, including those of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA, New York), the National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington, D.C.), and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Works from the series were exhibited at the Fondation Cartier in Paris (1996) as part of the group exhibition *By Night* and at Tate Modern (2010) in the exhibition *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera*, where the complete series of 37 prints was shown. More recently, they were featured in the exhibition *Public, Private, Secret* at the ICP Museum in New York, 2016-17.

Galerie Miranda invites us to reconsider this series from a contemporary perspective. Created before the advent of social media, these images—at once poetic and raw—of New York's hidden side remain strikingly relevant, raising numerous questions regarding the sexual exploitation of women, consumerism, power, finance, surveillance, and the female gaze.

Merry Alpern is represented exclusively by Galerie Miranda.

### Further reading:

[Interview Merry Alpern / Pauline Vermare, ICP](#)

[Review Artforum, 1995](#)

[Copyright Merry Alpern vs. Jacques Audiard, 2026 \(Le Monde\)](#)

Merry ALPERN (1955, USA)

## BIOGRAPHIE DE L'ARTISTE

Merry Alpern est une photographe américaine contemporaine, connue pour son œuvre controversée et son utilisation de la photographie de surveillance. Née le 15 mars 1955 à New York, elle étudie la sociologie au Grinnell College, dans l'Iowa, mais quitte l'université avant d'obtenir son diplôme afin de se consacrer à la photographie. Sa première exposition personnelle a lieu en 1989 au Camera Club of New York et documente la lutte d'un couple sans-abri, dépendant au crack, dans leur combat pour survivre. La série est largement diffusée et reçoit de nombreux prix et bourses aux États-Unis. En 1999, à la suite de la série *Dirty Windows*, Merry Alpern réalise la série *Shopping*. Munie d'une minuscule caméra de surveillance et d'un caméscope dissimulé dans un sac à main discrètement perforé, elle parcourt alors grands magasins, centres commerciaux et cabines d'essayage, cherchant à capturer – chez elle comme chez les autres femmes – cette quête obsessionnelle de l'achat parfait.

Aujourd'hui, ses œuvres font partie de collections majeures aux États-Unis et en Europe, notamment : le Museum of Modern Art (New York) ; le Museum of Fine Arts de Houston (Texas) ; l'International Center of Photography (New York) ; le Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Californie) ; le San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (Californie) ; le Whitney Museum of American Art (New York) ; le Baltimore Museum of Art ; le Brooklyn Museum (New York) ; le New Orleans Museum of Fine Art (Louisiane) et en Europe, la Collection FC Gundlach (Hambourg, Allemagne) ; la Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain (Paris, France) ; la Koerfer Collection (Zurich, Suisse) ; ainsi que le Wilson Centre for Photography (Londres, Royaume-Uni). Merry Alpern vit et travaille actuellement à Brooklyn, New York.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Merry Alpern is a contemporary American photographer known for her controversial work and her use of surveillance photography. Born on March 15, 1955, in New York, she studied sociology at Grinnell College in Iowa but left before graduating to dedicate herself to photography. Her first solo exhibition took place in 1989 at the Camera Club of New York, documenting the struggle for survival of a homeless couple addicted to crack cocaine. The series was widely circulated and received numerous awards and grants in the United States. In 1999, following the *\*Dirty Windows\** series, Alpern created the *\*Shopping\** series. Armed with a tiny surveillance camera and a camcorder concealed inside a handbag with a discreetly cut opening, she roamed department stores, shopping malls, and fitting rooms, seeking to capture—in herself as well as in other women—that obsessive quest for the perfect purchase.

Today, her work is held in major collections across the United States and Europe, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York); the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Texas); the International Center of Photography (New York); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (California); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (California); the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York); the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Brooklyn Museum (New York); and the New Orleans Museum of Art (Louisiana). In Europe, her work is represented in the FC Gundlach Collection (Hamburg, Germany); the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain (Paris, France); the Koerfer Collection (Zurich, Switzerland); and the Wilson Centre for Photography (London, UK). Merry Alpern currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

## MERRY ALPERN

Née: New York, 1955  
Education: 1973-1977 Grinnell College, Iowa (Sociology)

### Collections:

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX  
National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA  
International Center of Photography, New York, NY  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.  
Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI  
Koerfer Collection, Zurich, Switzerland  
FC Gundlach Collection, Hamburg, Germany  
Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX  
New Orleans Museum of Fine Art, New Orleans, LA.  
Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Foundation Cartier Pour l'Art Contemporaine, Paris  
Wilson Centre for Photography, London, England  
The Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY

### Monographies:

Alpern, Merry. *Dirty Windows*. (Berlin: Scalo, 1995), *livre épuisé*  
Alpern, Merry. *Shopping*. (Berlin: Scalo, 1999), *livre épuisé*

### Solo and two-person exhibitions:

- 2025 "Huis Clos" Merry Alpern and Jo Ann Callis, Galerie Miranda, Paris
- "Dirty Windows" McGlynn's Staff Accommodation, London (organized with Tramp.s and Magma Journal)
- 2022 "Société / Spectacle", Merry Alpern and Harry Gruyaert, Galerie Miranda, Paris
- 2019 "Dirty Windows", Galerie Miranda, Paris
- Merry Alpern and Ellen Carey, inauguration of the Villa Benkemoun, Arles
- 2016 "Borrowed Light: Selections from the Shear Collection", Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY
- 1999 "Shopping," Bonni Benrubi Gallery, Inc., New York, NY
- 1997 Mesaros Galleries, Morgantown, WV
- 1996 G. Ray Hawkins Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- Shapiro Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1995 "Dirty Windows," Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York, NY
- Michael Nagy Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 1989 "A.J. and Jim Bob," Camera Club of New York

### Group exhibitions:

- 2025 "Le Passage du Commerce", Kunsthalle Winterthur, Switzerland
- "Suddenly There Was Nothing" Harkawik Gallery, NYC
- 2024 "Social Bodies" Galerie Miranda, Paris
- 2023 "Presence: The Photography Collection of Judy Glickman Lauder", Norton Museum of Art, Florida
- 2022 "Cabinet of Queeriosities" The Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY
- 2021 "More Than You Notice: Photographic Reflections of Humanity and Socialization"

- 2019 "Women in Colour" Galerie Miranda, Paris  
"Shopping" Photobastei, Zurich, Switzerland  
"Anonymity" Kunst Haus Wien, Vienna, Austria
- 2013 "Privacy", Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt  
"Memphis Social", The Hyde Gallery, Memphis, Tennessee
- 2011 "Seeing Now: Photography Since 1960" Baltimore Museum of Art  
"Eye Wonder: Photography from the Bank of America Collection" National Museum of Women in the Arts
- 2010 "Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera Since 1870", SF MoMA, Fundacion Canal, Madrid
- 2010 "Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera" Tate Modern, London
- 2009 "Sexy and the City - New York Photographs" Yossi Milo Gallery, NYC
- 2009 "Picturing New York: photographs from MoMA" High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Irish MoMA, Dublin
- 2008 "Darkside Photographic Desire and Sexuality Photographed"; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
- 2007 "A New Reality: Black and White Photography in Contemporary Art from the Goldstein Collection"  
Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ  
Work from the Koerfer Collection, The Cultural Forum for Photography, Berlin, Germany  
"Los Colores de la Carne", Diputación de Granada, Spain
- 2006 20/30 Vision: An Anniversary Celebration; Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York, NY  
"Full House Views of the Whitney's Collection"; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
"The Heartbeat of Fashion"; The House of Photography in the Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany  
"New Art. New York: Reflections of the Human Condition"; Hangar 7, Salzburg, Austria  
"The Office/ In and out of the Box" Dorsky Gallery, Long Island City
- 2005 "New Art. New York: Reflections of the Human Condition"; Trierenberg  
AG Gallery, Traun, Austria  
"After Hopper"; Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NY  
"Women by Women in Photography: Part II; Cook Fine Art, New York
- 2003 "Furtive Gaze," The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, Chicago, IL
- 2002 "Anxious Omniscience: Surveillance in Contemporary Cultural Practice," Princeton Uni. Art Museum  
"Vision from America", Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
"Sexuality and Voyeurism", Wayne State University, Detroit, MI  
"CTRLSpace: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother," ZKM:  
Center for Art & Media, Karlsruhe, Germany  
"Life of the City", MoMA, NYC
- 2001 "Border Stories," IX International Biennial of Photography  
Palazzo Bricherasio, Torino, Italy  
"Trade: Wares, Ways, and Values in World Trade Today," Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
- 2000 "For Your Eyes Only," Byam Shaw School of Art, University of Essex, UK  
"Private Investigations," Presentation House, Vancouver, Canada.  
"Still Light," Beadleston Gallery, NYC  
"Photograph + Monograph," Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NYC  
"Air Conditioned: Interiors," Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NYC  
"Immodest Gazes, " Fundacio la Caixa, Barcelona, Spain  
"Alfred Hitchcock," The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada;  
"Alfred Hitchcock," The Pompidou Centre, Paris, France  
"As It Is," Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK  
"Border Stories," Fondazione Italiana per la Fotografia, Torino, Italy
- 1999 "More Than Meets the Eye," Triennial of Photography, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg  
"Trace," Flipside, New York, NY
- 1998 "Under/Exposed," Stockholm Underground (catalog)  
"Evidence: Photography and Site," Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio.  
"L'escale du Directeur, " Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, France  
"Rear Window," Galerie ARPS, Paris, France  
"Prostitution," Paul Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1996 "Collection in Context," Thread Waxing Space, New York. Catalogue  
"The Comic Depiction of Sex in American Art," Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich, Germany  
"By Night," Fondation Cartier, Paris, France  
"Never Walk Alone," The Photographer's Gallery, London, England  
"Secrets," The Friends of Photography, San Francisco  
"Humor in Sex," Andreas Binder Gallery, Munich, Germany
- 1995 "Recent Acquisitions," The Museum of Modern Art, NYC

- "The Photographic Condition," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
"Monitors: Re-viewing Cultural Expression," School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
1994 "The Uncensored Celebration," Pulliam Deffenbaugh Gallery, Portland, OR  
1992 "More Than One Photography: Works Since 1980 from the Collection," Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
1991 "Recent Acquisitions," The Museum of Modern Art, NYC

#### Awards:

- 1995 The Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Competition  
1990 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship  
1988 Leica Medal of Excellence  
1988 University of Missouri, Pictures of the Year (Magazine Picture Story)

#### Galerie Miranda à propos

Parisienne depuis 1995, la Franco-Australienne Miranda Salt fonde en 2018 sa galerie de photographie au cœur du 10<sup>e</sup> arrondissement de Paris. La Galerie Miranda représente des œuvres photographiques et des artistes reconnus dans leurs pays mais peu connus en France ou en Europe — souvent, mais pas exclusivement, des femmes. Inaugurée le 8 mars 2018, à l'occasion de la Journée internationale des droits des femmes, la galerie propose une programmation pointue avec des artistes tels que Merry Alpern, Jo Ann Callis, Ellen Carey, John Chiara, Chuck Kelton, Chloe Sells, Arne Svenson, Terri Weifenbach ou encore Nancy Wilson-Pajic. Aujourd'hui, la galerie représente plus de vingt artistes contemporains ainsi que certaines œuvres historiques. Active avec des foires et des pop-up, la Galerie Miranda est également une librairie, proposant une sélection pointue de livres consacrés à la photographie.

#### About Galerie Miranda

A resident of Paris since 1995, Franco-Australian Miranda Salt founded her photography gallery in the heart of the city's 10<sup>th</sup> arrondissement in 2018. Galerie Miranda represents photographic works and artists who are acclaimed in their home countries but little known in France or Europe—often, though not exclusively, women. Inaugurated on March 8, 2018—International Women's Day—the gallery presents a curated program featuring artists such as Merry Alpern, Jo Ann Callis, Ellen Carey, John Chiara, Chuck Kelton, Chloe Sells, Arne Svenson, Terri Weifenbach and Nancy Wilson-Pajic. Today, the gallery represents over twenty contemporary artists as well as select historical works. Active in art fairs and pop-up events, Galerie Miranda is also bookstore, offering a curated selection of books dedicated to photography.

#### Pour plus d'informations :

Miranda Salt  
Fondatrice et Directrice  
Galerie Miranda  
miranda.salt@galeriemiranda.com  
www.galeriemiranda.com

Informations pratiques :  
Galerie Miranda  
21 rue du Château d'Eau 75010 Paris, France  
Du mercredi au samedi 14h-19h ou sur rendez-vous



*Merry Alpern 'Dirty Windows' installation à la galerie, hiver 2025*