

DIANE ARBUS

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Diane Arbus Career



- Interest in photography started in 1941
- Family business of photography
- 1956- Arbus quit the commercial photography business.
- Studies with Lisette Model in 1956
- Taught photography in 1960s
- Museum of Modern Art

Diane Arbus Artistic Beliefs

- Images are of those who are normally seen as ugly or surreal.
- “A little bit cold, a little bit harsh.”
- Truth is the difference between what people wanted others to see and what they really did see.
- Showed the flaws in people
- Questions the morality of photography
- She humanized her subjects
- "In photographing the retarded, she waits for the moment of fullest expression of disability: she shows people who are slack-jawed, vacant, drooling, uncoordinated, uncontrolled, demented-looking. She does not flinch from the truth that difference is different, and therefore frightening, threatening, disgusting. She does not put herself above us -- she implicates herself in the accusation."
- "Freaks was a thing I photographed a lot.... Most people go through life dreading they'll have a traumatic experience. Freaks were born with their trauma. They've already passed their test in life. They're aristocrats."

Identical Twins

Roselle, N.J. 1967

- Photograph
- Differences between closest people
- Question yourself



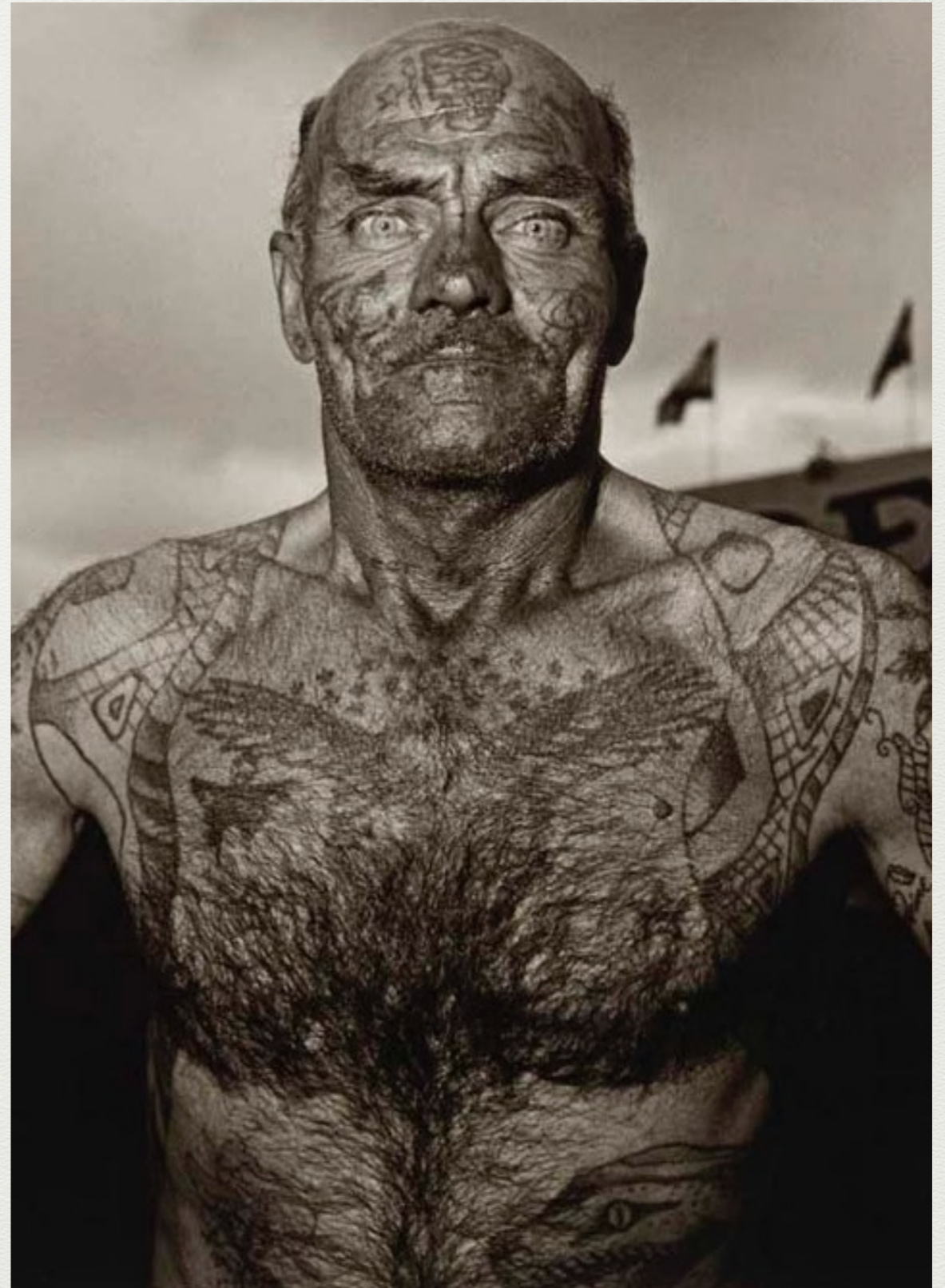
A Very Young Baby, 1968

- Photograph
- Anderson Cooper
- Subject doesn't look at the camera
- Extreme closeup
- Death mask or death portrait



Tattooed Man at Carnival

- Photograph
- Shows uniqueness
- An intimidation photo
- Man isn't a 'carnival freak' and that he has a story to tell.
- A shocking photo

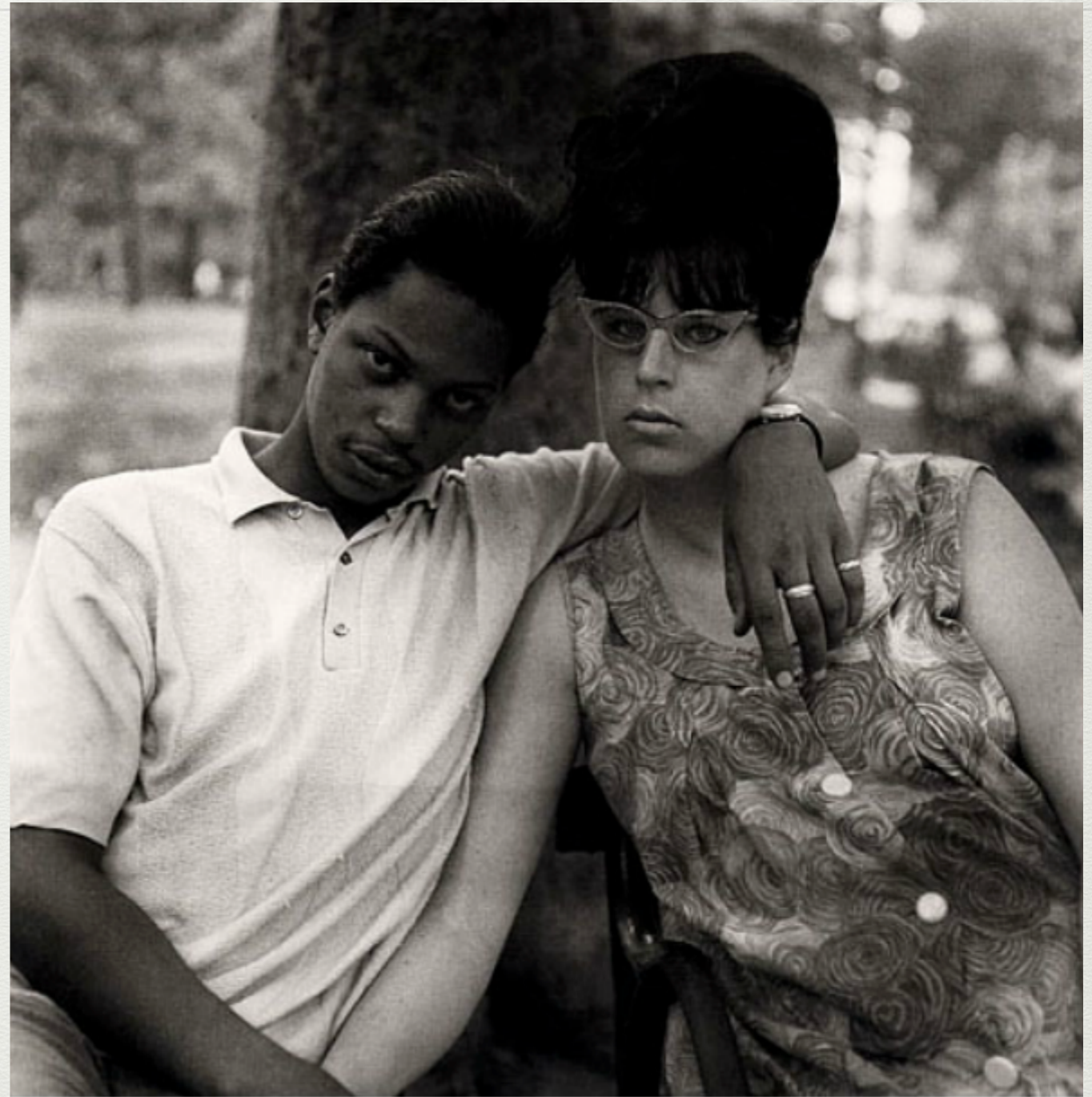


A Young Man in Curlers at Home on West 20th Street, N.Y. 1966

- Photograph
- Featured in her first museum exhibition
- True identity
- Man in drag
- Curious nature
- Importance in life



- Photograph
- Taboo at the time
- ‘Uncommon’/‘unaccepted’ people
- People trying to live their life.
- Brought unaccepted people to a reality level.
- Interracial couple instead of a couple of the same race.



Triplets in Their Bedroom, 1963

- Photograph
- “Objectively and candidly portrays the subjects as they were”
- Social oddities and marginalized characters
- Idea of ‘identical’



- Photograph
- Feels surreal
- No context is given.
- Viewer is left to wonder why they are standing in the middle of an open field.
- Dream/nightmare aura.
- Leaves viewer feeling vulnerable.



A Jewish Giant at Home with His Parents in The Bronx

N.Y. 1970

- Photograph
- Idea of Family
- Uncommon sight
- Metaphorical family



A Naked Man Being a Woman, N.Y.C. 1968

- Gender Identities
- Contrapposto pose
- Theatrical quality to the picture
- Transgender



Child With Toy Hand Grenade in Central Park, N.Y. 1962

- Most celebrated photograph
- Shows awkward tension
- “caught in the moment of exasperation”



Sources

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