

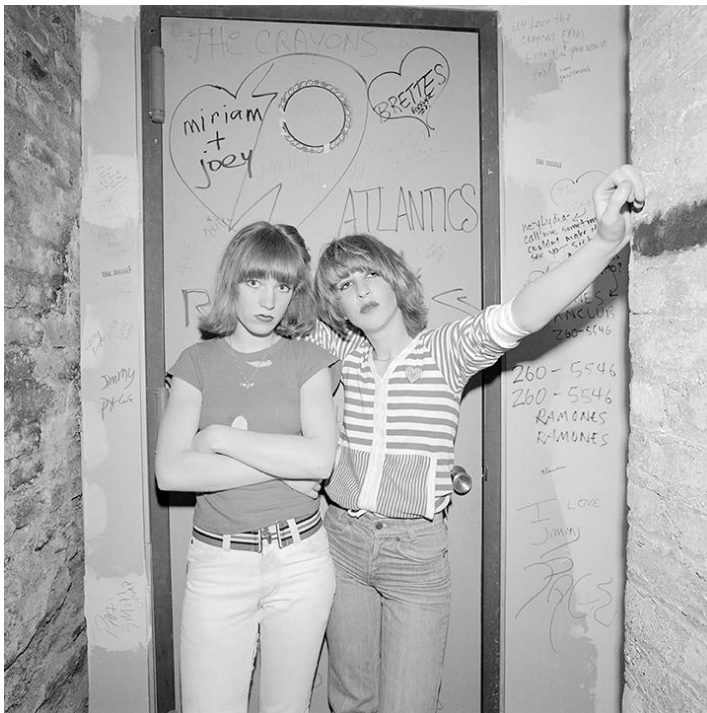
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Exhibition: Meryl Meisler

Chronicler of disco excess and suburban kitsch.

February 25, 2016



Steven Kasher Gallery in New York is to show an exhibition of the American photographer Meryl Meisler. The exhibition will feature 35 black and white prints of her early work.

Meisler's life and work is defined by the contrast between the city and the suburbs. Born in the South Bronx, Meisler was raised in the prosperous Long Island village of Massapequa after her family joined the white flight out of the inner city. After studying illustration at the University of Wisconsin, Meisler returned to New York City in 1975, just in

time to throw herself headlong into the city's burgeoning club scene.

Her style balances an interest in self-expression with the snapshot aesthetic, a trend for capturing supposedly banal scenes from quotidian life. The earliest works on display in the exhibition show her dressed up as various childhood archetypes, including a ballerina and a girl scout. Soon after Meisler started chronicling her friends, family and neighbours in Massapequa. Her images of kitschy interiors and hammy housewives reveal a world of suburban pride, peace and eccentricity.

When she moved to New York, it seems natural that Meisler would gravitate towards nightclubs, another locus of self-actuation. Working as a hostess at The Magic Carpet club while freelancing as an illustrator, she depicted the full breadth of the city's nightlife, from punk and new wave at CBGBs and Hurrah to the decadent disco of Studio 54 and the Paradise Garage. The resulting photographs are both documents of a time and of humanity's propensity for performance.

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Meisler's first monograph, *A Tale of Two Cities: Disco Era Bushwick*, was released in 2014; a second, *Purgatory and Paradise: SASSY 70s Suburbia and the City* appeared the following year. Both are published by Brooklyn-based Bizarre Publishing.