

AnOther

MARIE TOMANOVA'S ELECTRIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUNG NEW YORKERS

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Marie Tomanova, *New York New York*

In 2019, Czech-born Marie Tomanova honed her craft photographing New York's diverse inhabitants – from couples relaxing in the comfort of their homes to people partying in the city's various nightlife venues. A selection of these images were brought together in her debut photo book, *Young American*, which was published in 2019. Two years later, the photographer is back with *New York New York*: a new book that captures the young people of the city that has inspired her like no other, eventually “allowing her to become”.



Marie Tomanova, *Harley & Poster Boy*, 2019

“There is a dream here, in New York, and the young are not afraid to follow it, to be themselves, to find themselves, and to be open,” Tomanova tells AnOther. “That sense of openness and connection with others as well as with the overall human experience is something vital to my work.” Described by the photographer as “a landscape of youth and a portrait of place”, the monograph looks at the mythic pull of New York – the city that gave us Robert Mapplethorpe, Patti Smith, Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and so many more – as a way of exploring Tomanova’s own journey of self-discovery.

“I came to the United States after finishing a master’s degree in painting in Czech Republic,” says Tomanova. “I had always wanted to be an artist but I was so discouraged by the lack of support and outright sexism in my painting programme that I left the idea of being a painter behind, very disillusioned.” Among the people that convinced her to pursue a career in photography were art historian Thomas Beachdel, who wrote the introduction to *New York New York*, and fellow image-makers Francesca Woodman and Ryan McGinley, two of her greatest inspirations.

In this new, more mature portrayal of New York – comprising over 145 pictures, taken over the past five years – the photographer distills her subjects’ lust for life, reminding her – and us – why people move to the city; why she moved there and what she was like when she arrived. For Tomanova, it was a means of looking back at the person she once was, and the one she has since become.

“Tomanova left her family farm in the small border town of Mikulov in the Czech Republic and came to the United States in 2011 and to New York in 2012, alone, knowing no one,” writes Beachdel in the introduction to the book, which is published by Hatje Cantz and also features a foreword by Kim Gordon. “It is easy to forget the moments of pain and difficulty that can loom in the process of finding oneself in a new place. The antidote is to focus on the dream, the motivation; to build a world in which to find a place of belonging.”



Marie Tomanova, *Jadell, Nisoni, Jordan, Vinny, Sal & Oju*, 2020

Speaking over email, the photographer recalls the countless walks she's been on around the Lower East Side – the neighbourhood she calls home – Manhattan, and Chinatown. She talks about treasuring Sunday night sunsets, drinking coffee on Essex Street and how she came to recognise her younger self in her interactions with other young New York dreamers. “*New York New York* is about freedom,” she writes. “It is about being yourself. It is about finding yourself. It is about taking risks and not caring. It is about dreaming without limits.”

New York New York by Marie Tomanova, published by Hatje Cantz, launches on 29 September at Dashwood Books and is followed by Tomanova's solo exhibition at C24 Gallery in Chelsea opening on 7 October.

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