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Louisiana Art & Science Museum sharpens the focus on Vivian Maier, the Mysterious Nanny Photographer

BATON ROUGE, LA - The photographs of Vivian Maier, then an unknown photographer, and the story of their accidental discovery took the art world by storm in 2008. Dubbed “The Mysterious Nanny Photographer” by the press, her full biography has taken a decade to unravel. Beginning January 23, the exhibition Picturing Vivian Maier: A Street Photographer Revealed includes 70 photographs by Vivian Maier along with recently discovered details about Maier’s life to present a more complete picture of her person and inform a deeper understanding of her work. The show will run until May 22.

“This exhibition explores Maier's life story behind her photographs by looking at different aspects of her personhood,” said Elizabeth Weinstein, LASM’s Assistant Director for Interpretation & Chief Curator. “She was more than a nanny; she was also a world traveler, a keen observer, a collector, and most importantly, a skilled and talented photographer.”

Vivian Maier (1926-2009) is best known for her candid images taken on the streets of New York and Chicago in the 1950s and 60s. Her work was found after she failed to pay the rent on storage lockers and the contents were auctioned away. The cache included over 140,000 images comprised of prints, negatives, and rolls of undeveloped film. One of the purchasers of her work, John Maloof, began sharing Maier’s work online where it quickly went viral. Maier never learned of her work’s discovery, dying a few months later at the age of 82.

Few details were known of Maier’s life at the time of her discovery, despite efforts by Maloof and others to learn more about her. Her employment as a nanny was among the first details to come to light when her obituary appeared, leading to the press to refer to her as “The Nanny Photographer.” Indeed, the mystery surrounding her identity has amplified the interest in her work and its discovery in an unprecedented way. Within five years of their discovery Maier’s photographs were exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, published in half a dozen books, and were the subject of a television film and an Academy Award-nominated documentary titled Finding Vivian Maier.
“An unknown, Vivian Maier became a famous photographer almost overnight in part due to today’s ability to share images and information over the internet; yet, her work stands on its own merit,” said Weinstein. “Maier’s photographs are comparable to those of other famous street photographers.”

**Picturing Vivian Maier: A Street Photographer Revealed** presents a selection of photographs from the John Maloof Collection borrowed from the Howard Greenberg Gallery in New York. Sponsored by Entergy, the exhibition was curated by the Louisiana Art & Science Museum with the assistance of Ann Marks, who has written an upcoming biography on Vivian Maier.

According to Marks, the show at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum “uniquely and effectively tracks Vivian Maier’s photographic development and includes some her most iconic images.”

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**About Louisiana Art & Science Museum**
A nonprofit organization housed on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum enhances the understanding and appreciation of art and science for general audiences and students by presenting unique, educational and entertaining experiences that encourage discovery, inspire creativity, and foster the pursuit of knowledge. More information about the Art & Science Museum is available at [lasm.org](http://lasm.org).