

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE

The Power of the Female Gaze*

Opening: Wednesday, October 4. 7-9pm.

Address: Calle San Lorenzo, 3. (Metros Tribunal /
Alonso Martínez). Madrid.

From October 4, 2023 to October 28, 2023

Hours: M-S: 11am-2pm / Th-F: 4pm-7pm.

This October marks the 10th anniversary of the passing of the prominent American photographer Deborah Turbeville. And during this month, Bernal Espacio Galería will present for the first time in Spain a remarkable collection of thirty of her vintage photographs, which will showcase an exceptional panorama of one of the most influential editorial photographers of the 20th century.

Turbeville's images are evocative, difficult to date at first glance, and seem dreamlike to our twenty-first-century eyes, a very different representation of feminine beauty from the highly sexualized works of her male contemporaries.

The Photo Elysée Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, will inaugurate a major retrospective of her work curated by Nathalie Herschdorfer in early November. Additionally, the prestigious publisher Thames & Hudson will release a new monograph of Turbeville's work in November, focusing on her renowned photocollages.

*As custodians of the Deborah Turbeville Estate, MUUS Collection is proud to support this exhibition.



“In my pictures, you never know, that’s the mystery. It’s just a suggestion and you leave it to the audience to put what they want on it. It’s fashion in disguise.”

—Deborah Turbeville (1932-2013).

Deborah Turbeville's photographs (1932, Stoneham, Massachusetts-2013, NY) possess an enigmatic allure, evoking a sense of melancholy and mystery. With her unique artistic vision, Turbeville weaved a visual narrative that transports viewers to ethereal realms where time stands still and emotions are palpable.

Through the use of muted tones, soft lighting, and introspective compositions, Turbeville captures the essence of solitude and introspection, inviting viewers to contemplate the depths of the human experience. Her photographs are beautifully unsettling, resonating with a sense of longing and a profound connection to the human psyche. Each image tells a story, leaving an indelible impression on the observer and reminding us of the power of visual storytelling.

Turberville began her career as a fashion editor at Harper's Bazaar in the 1960s but soon shifted her focus to photography. Her work was characterized by a dreamlike quality, with softly focused images and a muted color palette. She often used unconventional locations and settings, such as abandoned buildings, to create a sense of mystery and drama in her photographs.

Turberville was known for her ability to create images with a touch of mystery and dramatic flair, often using uncommon locations and desolate urban landscapes as backdrops for her photographs. Her images featured models dressed in elegant and sophisticated clothing amidst an apparently decadent and abandoned ambiance, creating an interesting and captivating visual contrast.

In addition to her distinctive visual style, Turberville has also been praised for her ability to create images that are simultaneously beautiful and evocative, conveying a sense of nostalgia and melancholy. Her photographs often contain a feeling of solitude and isolation, leading some to interpret her work as a reflection on human vulnerability and the transience of beauty.

American photographer Deborah Turbeville defies classification. She belongs to no school nor movement. Her unique visual signature has been recognizable since her emergence as a major talent in the 1970s. Her images are evocative, difficult to date at first glance, and seem dreamlike to our twenty-first-century eyes, a very different representation of feminine beauty from the highly sexualized works of her male contemporaries.

Today, Turberville is considered one of the most influential fashion photographers of the 20th century, and her unique style continues to inspire photographers and designers worldwide.

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE

BIO

Deborah Turbeville, an American artist and photographer, transformed the world of fashion photography through her groundbreaking, dreamlike, and melancholic imagery. Born in Stoneham Massachusetts in 1932, Turbeville moved to New York following her schooling with an intent to work in the theater, but was instead discovered by the American fashion designer Claire McCardell, who hired Turbeville as an assistant and house model. While working for McCardell, she met Diana Vreeland, then the famed editor of Harper's Bazaar; their introduction eventually led to Turbeville being offered a job as an editor at the magazine.

Disinterested in the editorial work she was doing at Harper's Bazaar and later at Mademoiselle, she purchased a Pentax camera in the 1960s and began experimenting with photography, ultimately enrolling in a workshop taught by photographer Richard Avedon and art director Marvin Israel in 1966. Following their tutelage, she began her career in photography, primarily working for fashion magazines like Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and Mirabella, though she didn't consider herself a fashion photographer.

Her most controversial photograph, Bath House, New York City, 1975, part of a swimsuit photoshoot for Vogue, featured five models, slouching and stretching in an abandoned bathhouse. The nature of the picture, so unlike the staid fashion imagery of the time, prompted a public outcry. Undeterred, Turbeville continued to produce images with an element of decay; she would routinely make efforts to distress her printed photographs, to give them an aged, slightly disintegrated appearance, further amplified by printing with faded colors and sepia tones. She also regularly produced collages of her work, turning her images into physical art objects.

In 1981, Turbeville was commissioned by Jaqueline Onassis, then an editor at Doubleday, to photograph the Palace of Versailles, particularly the disused rooms that were off-limits to tourists. The resultant book, Unseen Versailles, won an American Book Award, among other critical praise for its rare look into the palace's decaying grandeur.

In addition to Unseen Versailles, Turbeville published many renowned books of her photography, notably: Studio St. Petersburg, The Voyage of the Virgin Maria Candelaria, and Newport Remembered. She has also had books published posthumously, including Comme des Garçons 1981, a series of photographs she took during the 1980s in collaboration with the fashion house and its designer, Rei Kawakubo.

Turbeville died in 2013, having left an indelible mark on the world of photography; she is often credited with transforming fashion imagery into avant-garde art.

Links about Deborah Turbeville

<https://aperture.org/editorial/the-strange-and-beautiful-world-of-deborah-turbeilles-photo-novella/>

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/deborah-turbeilles-haunted-fashion-photography>

<https://www.muuscollection.com/collections/deborah-turbeville>

<https://www.muuscollection.com/essay-templates/deborah-turbeville-passport>

<https://www.muuscollection.com/essays/deborah-turbeville>

http://www.bernalespacio.com/files/La_fotografia_de_moda_y_la_puesta_en_esc.pdf