STALEY • WISE GALLERY

Press Release

GENEVIEVE NAYLOR

Brazil to Bazaar

November 19, 2026 - January 9, 2026

Opening Reception

November 19, 6-8pm

Genevieve Naylor was a photographer whose remarkable career was diverse and encompassed photojournalism, portrait, and fashion photography. From her early days as one of the first women hired at the *Associated Press* to a government sponsored assignment to Brazil, she then photographed fashion for *Harper's Bazaar* while also documenting Eleanor Roosevelt for nearly 4 years. Naylor touched all the bases in photography in the golden age of magazines and was a woman of great talent and sophistication, which is apparent in her work as seen in this exhibition.

Born into a distinguished Republican family in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1915, Naylor attended a private boarding school. It was here where she also met her future husband, Ukrainian painter Misha Reznikoff, and her life changed radically.

Despite her conservative background, Naylor eventually moved to New York City with Reznikoff and embraced the liberal bohemian life of Greenwich Village. She studied at The New School and became the protégé of Berenice Abbott, leading to her association with the Federal Arts Project and the Photo League, a cooperative of photographers led by Abbott. At this time, she also worked freelance for the *Associated Press*, *Time*, and *Fortune* magazine and cited Robert Capa, Weegee, and Henri-Cartier Bresson as enduring influences. (Naylor would later meet and photograph Cartier-Bresson and his portrait is included in this exhibition.)

In 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt grew concerned over the growing Nazi influence in South America. Roosevelt began assigning artists such as Naylor and Reznikoff to visit Brazil, fostering cultural diplomacy between the two countries while gaining valuable intelligence for the USA. While Naylor was instructed to photograph and depict the beauty of upscale Brazil and its leisure class, she would eventually turn her camera to a broader view of the country, resulting in thousands of photographs taken over 2 years and a number of which are included in this exhibition.

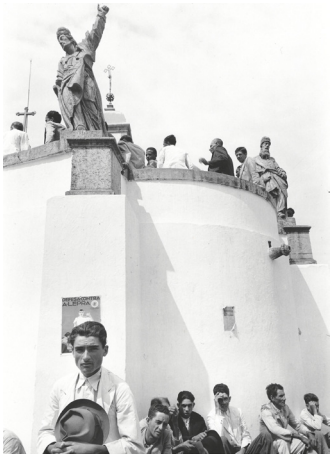
In 1943, the Museum of Modern Art in New York exhibited 50 of these photographs – only the second woman granted a solo photography exhibition at the museum. The exhibition later travelled throughout the United States. Art director Alexey Brodovitch admired the exhibition and hired Naylor to photograph for *Harper's Bazaar*, where she would continue to work for 15 years and joined a growing class of female photographers working for fashion magazines including Diane Arbus, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, and Lillian Bassman.

After Naylor's death in 1989, the book *The Brazilian Photographs of Genevieve Naylor: 1940-1942* was published in 1998 by Duke University Press. These photographs continue to be exhibited in museums throughout Brazil, most recently in 2001. Naylor's fashion photography has been exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and her work is included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Minneapolis Institute of Art in Minnesota, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

This exhibition will run concurrently with the exhibition "William Helburn: Hot Shot!".



Genevieve Naylor
Harper's Bazaar, New York,1946
© Estate of Genevieve Naylor



Genevieve Naylor
Ouro Preto, Brazil, 1942
© Estate of Genevieve Naylor

Press images available upon request.

100 Crosby Street New York 10012 T 212 966 6223
www.staleywise.com photo@staleywise.com