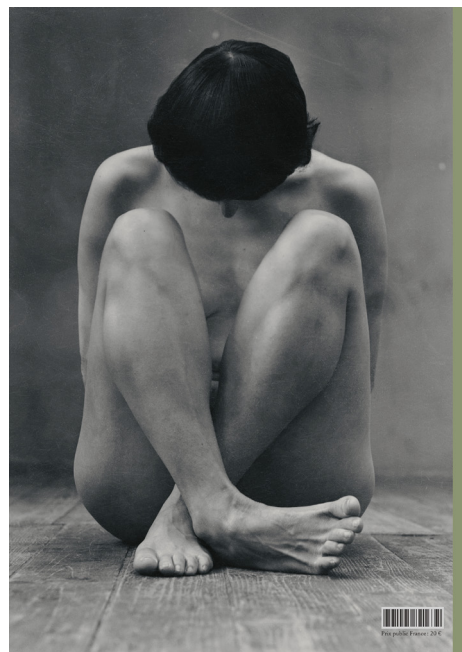
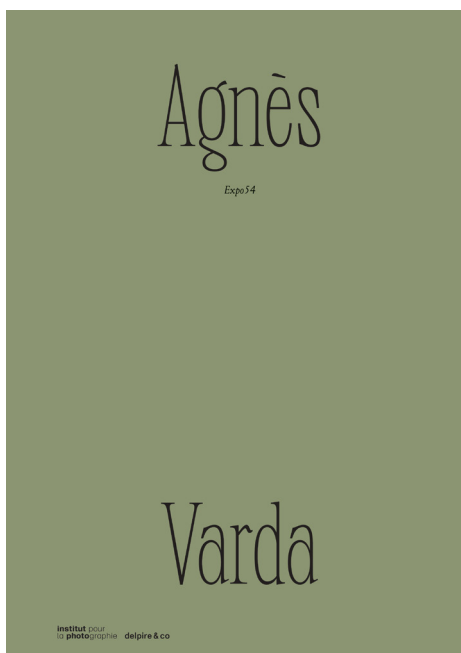


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EXPO54

Agnès Varda

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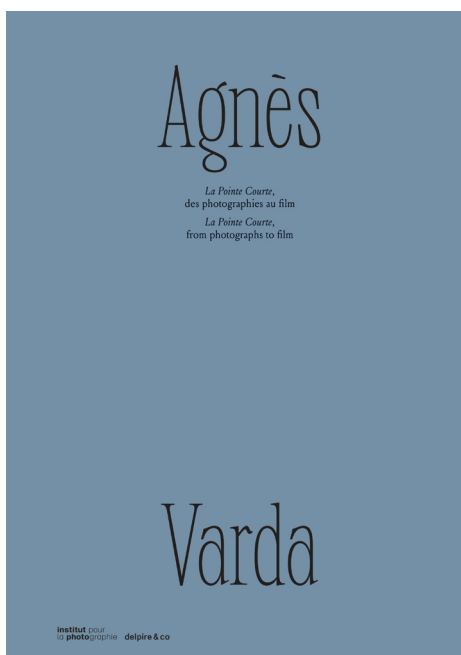


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LA POINTE COURTE

Agnès Varda

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For Agnès Varda, 1954 was a pivotal year during which she staged her first solo exhibition, *Expo54*, and made her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, partly conceived through her photographs.

EXPO54

The legendary exhibition that bore witness to the birth of an artist

LA POINTE COURTE

From photographs to film



Agnès Varda, circa 1955

Carnets is a collection created by the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, in collaboration with the publishing house delpire & co, as part of its mission to promote the work of the photographers whose archives it holds.

In June 1954, Agnès Varda opened the doors of her house on Rue Daguerre in Paris's 14th arrondissement. In the courtyard, she presented a selection of portraits, nudes, and still lifes hung directly on the walls. Her favourite subjects were her street and her neighbours, such as Alexander Calder, whom she met through Jean Vilar. Visitors to the show discovered images whose striking style heralded the aesthetics of Varda's entire career.

Varda's humour and love of words were already apparent: the personalization of everyday objects through what she called her "funny faces"; heart-shaped potatoes almost 50 years before they featured in her documentary *The Gleaners and I*; the first images of Sète where the photographer grasped key elements, arranged perspectives, and played with shapes and textures to the limits of abstraction. The exhibition was Agnès Varda's invitation to discover what she saw with her "curious eyes".

In 1954 with *La Pointe Courte*, Agnès Varda produced a radical film whose alternating artistic and realistic style did not escape the notice of discerning film lovers at the time. The film's artistic independence broke with the codes of contemporary cinema and saw it described as a precursor to the New Wave.

To prepare her film, the young director began by making a meticulous selection of the 250 or so photographs she had taken in Sète between 1952 and 1954. The result was nine plates of reference and location photographs that inspired scenes, atmospheres, and even still shots in the film, which she detailed in a carefully written script. These were not photographs taken on the set or during the shoot, but rather images that pre-existed the idea for the film and contributed to its conception. Her favourite subjects and motifs were further borne out by the recent rediscovery of period or late prints, reflecting her preferences and revealing a vision.

Agnès Varda had a special attachment to Sète. Sétoise by adoption, having first lived there as a teenage refugee during the Second World War, she returned every year until the early 1960s.

After studying photography at the École de Vaugirard in 1949, Agnès Varda moved to Rue Daguerre in Paris where she set up her own studio and laboratory. A portrait and theatre photographer, she also worked on commissions and photojournalism abroad. In 1954, which would prove a pivotal year, she held her first solo exhibition and made her first film, *La Pointe Courte*.

She gradually put her photographic career on hold and devoted herself to her film work, including *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1961), *Le Bonheur* (1964), *Vagabond* (1985), *The Gleaners and I* (1999), *Les Plages d'Agnès* (2008) and *Varda by Agnès* (2019). More than 30 exhibitions in France and around the world have been dedicated to the work of Agnès Varda, who described herself as "an old filmmaker and a young visual artist".

Press images

EXPO54



Agnès Varda, *Nude*, contact print, 1954 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Agnès Varda Archives, on long-term loan to the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, Lille



Agnès Varda, *Mardi Gras*, exhibition print mounted on hardboard, 1954 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Collection Rosalie Varda, courtesy of Nathalie Obadia



Agnès Varda, *Small Dog Old Paris*, contact print mounted on hardboard, 1949 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Agnès Varda Archives, on long-term loan to the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, Lille

Press images

EXPO54



Agnès Varda, *Calder and Family*, contact print, 1954 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Agnès Varda Archives, on long-term loan to the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, Lille



Agnès Varda, *Funny Face IV (bathroom fittings)*, exhibition print mounted on hardboard, c.1952 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Collection Rosalie Varda, courtesy of Nathalie Obadia

Press images

LA POINTE COURTE



Agnès Varda, *Wood at La Pointe Courte*, exhibition print mounted on hardboard, summer 1952 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Collection Rosalie Varda, Paris



Agnès Varda, *Valentine Schlegel and Monsieur Mestre on the Bridge*, vintage print, 1947-1948 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Collection Rosalie Varda, Paris



Agnès Varda, *Reflection on the Quays in Sète*, vintage print, 1950 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Collection Rosalie Varda, Paris

Press images

LA POINTE COURTE

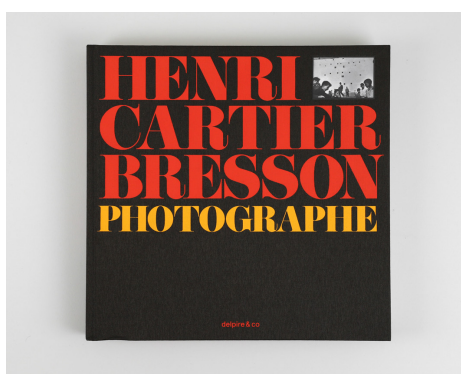
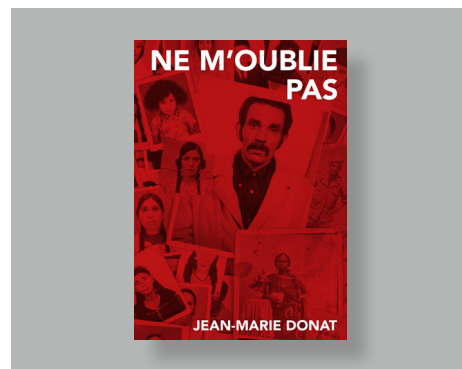
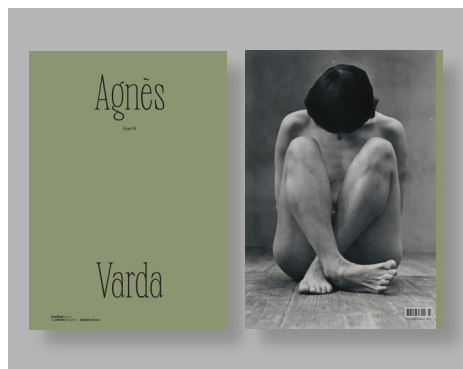


Agnès Varda, *La Pointe Courte*, sheet of contact prints, March-April 1953 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Agnès Varda Archives, on long-term loan to the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, Lille



Agnès Varda, *Joueurs sur le Canal*, exhibition print, summer 1952 © Estate of Agnès Varda – Collection Rosalie Varda, Paris

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delpire & co

Located at 13 Rue de l'Abbaye in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris, delpire & co is a publishing house, bookshop, gallery and meeting place. It works to create challenging photographic projects, unique photographic writing, encounters between text and image, curatorial research, the discovery of new talent and forgotten works, political viewpoints, and sensitive self-expression.

institut pour
la **photographie**

An initiative of the Hauts-de-France Region in collaboration with Les Rencontres d'Arles, the Institut pour la photographie demonstrates the Region's determination to anchor the photographic image in an area with a strong cultural identity through an internationally renowned institution in the field of photography.

The Institute is designed as a place for resources, distribution, exchange and experimentation, with the aim of developing a photographic culture among the general public and supporting research and creation. After three exhibition programmes in 2019, 2020 and 2021, the Institut pour la photographie marked a crucial stage in its development with the arrival in 2021 of its first archive collections of major figures in French photography: Bettina Rheims, Jean-Louis Schoellkopf, and Agnès Varda.

These first three collections, with their distinct aesthetic approaches, reflect the diversity of photography as a discipline, as well as its technical evolution from analogue to digital. These archives are also an important resource for the critical study of our society from the 1940s to the present day. The Institute's library is now one of the world's top-ten reference collections for the history of photobook publishing, thanks to the donation of over 26,000 works from the private collection of mathematician Lucien Birgé.

The Institut pour la photographie temporarily occupies its future building, which will soon undergo an ambitious renovation designed by architects Berger&Berger. Project management is led by the Hauts-de-France Region.