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media release



Weegee, [Girls laughing at movie, New York], ca. 1943.  
© Weegee/ International Center of Photography.

## Weegee: At the Movies!

On view from  
December 16, 2014  
through  
June 14, 2015

Bow Tie Chelsea Cinemas  
260 West 23rd Street  
New York, NY 10011

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Beginning December 16, 2014, a series of photographs by one of the most original and creative photographers of the 20th century will be the coming attraction at Bow Tie Chelsea Cinemas (260 West 23rd Street) to celebrate the theater's reopening.

Fourteen images by Weegee—best known for his tabloid photographs of New York City's crime scenes, urban crowds, and nightlife in the 1930s and '40s—will be on display on the second floor of the theater. The photographs are part of a series Weegee made in New York City theaters in the mid-1940s with infrared film.

From bemused children to entwined couples, lonely sleepers to exhilarated teenage girls, this gallery of portraits constitutes a powerful, unique, and moving tribute to cinema lovers. The passion conveyed in these images—their lyricism, magic, and poetry—remind us of the quintessential role played by the arts, and specifically still and moving images, in our society.

The photographs exhibited here are part of the Weegee archive, representing the largest holding of this master photographer's work, which is housed at the International Center of Photography. The archive containing nearly 20,000 prints, negatives, tear sheets, manuscript drafts, correspondence, and other personal memorabilia.

### About Weegee

Weegee was born Usher Fellig on June 12, 1899, in the town of Lemburg (now in Ukraine). He first worked as a photographer at age fourteen, three years after his family immigrated to the United States, where his first name was changed to the more American-sounding Arthur. Self-taught, he held many other photography-related jobs before gaining regular employment at a photography studio in lower Manhattan in 1918. This job led him to others at a variety of newspapers until, in 1935, he became a freelance news photographer.

(more)

He centered his practice around police headquarters, and in 1938 he obtained permission to install a police radio in his car. This allowed him to take the first and most sensational photographs of news events and offer them for sale to publications such as the *Herald-Tribune*, *Daily News*, *Post*, the *Sun*, and *PM Weekly*, among others.

During the 1940s, Weegee's photographs appeared outside the mainstream press and met success there as well. New York's Photo League held an exhibition of his work in 1941, and the Museum of Modern Art began collecting his work and exhibited it in 1943. Weegee published his photographs in several books, including *Naked City* (1945), *Weegee's People* (1946), and *Naked Hollywood* (1953). After moving to Hollywood in 1947, he devoted most of his energy to making 16-millimeter films and photographs for his "Distortions" series, a project that resulted in experimental portraits of celebrities and political figures. He returned to New York in 1952 and lectured and wrote about photography until his death on December 27, 1968.

Weegee's photographic oeuvre is unusual in that it was successful in the popular media and respected by the fine-art community during his lifetime. His photographs' ability to navigate between these two realms comes from the strong emotional connection forged between the viewer and the characters in his photographs, as well as from Weegee's skill at choosing the most telling and significant moments of the events he photographed. ICP's retrospective exhibition of his work in 1998 attested to Weegee's continued popularity; his work is frequently recollected or represented in contemporary television, film, and other forms of popular entertainment.

### **About Bow Tie Cinemas**

Founded by B.S. Moss in 1900, four generations of family ownership have guided Bow Tie Cinemas from its origins in Vaudeville to its current holdings of fifty-five theaters in the eastern United States. 2015 marks the 115th anniversary of Bow Tie Cinemas and the completed renovation of its flagship Chelsea Cinemas in Manhattan. In addition to a permanent photography exhibit curated by The International Center of Photography, the all-new Chelsea Cinemas' upgrades will include: luxury seating and reserved seating, a new lobby and interior box office, concession stands and enhanced food offerings.

### **About ICP**

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is the world's leading institution dedicated to the practice and understanding of photography and the reproduced image in all its forms. Through our exhibitions, educational programs, and community outreach, we offer an open forum for dialogue about the role images play in our culture. Since our founding, we have presented more than 700 exhibitions and offered thousands of classes, providing instruction at every level. ICP is a center where photographers and artists, students and scholars can create and interpret the world of the image within our comprehensive educational and archival facilities. Visit [www.icp.org](http://www.icp.org) for more information.

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