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GALLERY

THE NEW YORK PHOTO REVIEW COM

CULTURAL ICONS

Fred W. McDarrah

Save the Village

By Norman Borden



Fred W. McDarrah, "Women of the World Unite, Women's Liberation Demonstration" 1970

For those interested in the cultural and political history of New York City during one of its most creative and turbulent periods—1958 to 1979—you will be enthralled by the more than 130 vintage prints in this sprawling exhibition of Fred McDarrah's work for the Village Voice.

As the Voice's only staff photographer for more than 20 years, McDarrah captured many of the Downtown scene's artists, writers and performers who later became cultural icons. He photographed peace marches, hippie be-ins, gay rights demonstrations and parades, the Weather Underground bombing on West 11th Street, and countless politicians—from Mayor John Lindsay to Mario Cuomo, Ed Koch and Robert Moses.

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*Fred W. McDarrah, "Allen Ginsberg on Central Park Bandstand,
5th Avenue Peace Demonstration to Stop the War in Vietnam," 1966*

McDarrah considered himself a photojournalist rather than a fine art photographer and the pictures here will only confirm that. His photographs are straight portraits: artists at work in their studios, musicians on the bandstand, other celebrities, and an array of casual street portraits of the soon to be famous like Bob Dylan hanging out in Sheridan Square.

Intriguing also is the sheer diversity of McDarrah's subjects. He captured everyone, from Mel Brooks and Robert Kennedy to Tennessee Williams and George Lucas, Woody Allen, Mario Puzo, John Lennon, Arlo Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Muhammad Ali, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Lee Krasner, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jasper Johns, and yes, even a young Donald Trump and his father, Fred.

There are pictures of the Café Wha, the closing of the Cedar Tavern, and of demonstrators in front of the Stonewall Inn, among other historical events.

This exhibition is like a time capsule. For those who were here back in those days, the pictures jog the memory, and for those who weren't, they are a window on a way of life long gone.

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Fred W. McDarragh, "Demolition of Artist's Studio, Greenwich Avenue, May 19, 1960"



Fred W. McDarragh, "Susan Sontag at Mills Hotel Sex Symposium" 1962