After witnessing the second world war’s brutality as a GI, Harlem-born photographer Jerome Liebling returned to New York and captured the humanity of the city’s chaotic streets. He found courage in the faces of children: ‘Sometimes there was a hint of defeat,’ he said, ‘but more often there was brilliance.’ One child, Butterfly Boy, with his overcoat flaring like a superhero’s cape, became a poignant billboard icon.

- Jerome Liebling: Brooklyn and Other Boroughs, 1946-1996 is at Steven Kasher Gallery, New York, until 6 June
Butterfly Boy
New York City, 1949

Coney Island
New York City, 1973
Brighton Beach
Brooklyn, New York, 1976

Charlotte Street
South Bronx, New York City, 1977
Brighton Beach Under El
Brooklyn, NY, 1979

Lunch Counter
Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, NY, 1981
Woman and Hand
Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, NY, 1984

Blonde Woman at Store
Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, NY, 1985
Woman with Scarf
Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, New York, 1985

Women Buying Peaches
Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, 1995
Young Russian Immigrant
Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, NY, 1996