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ART IN REVIEW

Lisette Model: 'Reflections'

By KAREN ROSENBERG

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Bruce Silverstein Gallery

535 West 24th Street, Chelsea

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Americans know Lisette Model as a New Yorker, thanks in part to some of her famous students, like Peter Hujar and Diane Arbus. But "Reflections: The Expressionist Origins of Lisette Model," an elegant survey at the Bruce Silverstein Gallery, which has just acquired Model's estate, grounds her firmly in a European Expressionist milieu.

Seen alongside works on paper by Max Beckmann, Lyonel Feininger and others, and accompanied by a recording of Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire," Model's photographs find in New York streets, parks and watering holes a taste of the cafe society of her native Vienna.

You can glimpse the Old World even in her 1940s pictures of Midtown skyscrapers, which are layered with reflections from store windows à la Eugène Atget, and her curb-level shots of feet scurrying along 42nd Street. The vertical cityscapes, in particular, bear a striking resemblance to Feininger's paintings ([seen recently at the Whitney](#)).

Another gallery of street photography has an uptown/downtown feel, moving from two ladies in hats at the Hotel Pierre to a blanket-covered babushka on the Lower East Side. Otto Dix's unsparing portraits come to mind, especially when the subject is grotesquely well fed (as in "Belmont Park Racetrack, New York") or pinched and angular (the woman in "Restaurant").

Postwar New York becomes a veritable Weimar cabaret in the back room, where you can hear atonal strains of Schoenberg and see visceral close-ups of performers and their audiences. In expat haunts like Sammy's Bar and the Cafe Metropole, Model (who was trained in music herself) breaks into a full-throated Expressionist solo.

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