

# Joan Roth Photography

## New York Israel Global

### **Joan Roth's Biography**

Joan Roth is a street photographer, ethnographer, portraitist, and photojournalist. Since the 1970s, she has made visible the plight of Jewish women around the world, advocated for homeless women, and captured the U.S. Women's Movement through her participation in feminist events, political rallies, and the international Women's Conferences in Nairobi and Beijing. Joan used her photography to affect change for women who wouldn't otherwise be seen.

Joan began her career as a dedicated Black and White Photographer who was influenced by Diane Arbus, Lisette Model and Sid Kaplan. With the advent of digital imaging, Roth's ongoing 35 millimeter black and white negative archival prints transformed into color digital images, creating an added dimension of color photos, giving her later prints a whole new look.

Joan's photos have been exhibited internationally in numerous museums and galleries, as well as showcased in magazines, books, and articles. Joan Roth is also a publisher, and she has produced two ground-breaking books. She published her first book - Shopping Bag Ladies of New York - in 1982, which brought attention to the social phenomenon of women living on the streets, leading to the first shelters for women. She continues to photograph and advocate for homeless women throughout her career.

Her second book: Jewish Women: A World of Tradition and Change, in 1995, was the compilation of her groundbreaking work photographing the lives of Jewish women from Ethiopia, Yemen, India, Morocco, the former Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, the United States, and Israel, among others. Her work on Jewish women included a 10-year traveling exhibit, and she continues to speak and photograph on this topic. Her photographs are widely sought as they capture the ways in which these communities lived indigenously before leaving for Israel and the West. She photographed Jewish women in the former Soviet Union as the photographer for Project Keshet, which revived Jewish life for women in those countries. She has documented the migration of indigenous cultures to Israel and also, Israeli women's efforts for equality and peace between Jewish and Arab Israeli's and Palestinians, and more.

Joan has dedicated herself to documenting leaders in the US Women's movement since the National Houston Women's Conference in 1977. Her work spans decades of Feminist activism including the incitement of the US Jewish women movement, efforts for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and for codifying reproductive rights, the advent of the Dyke Marches and Women's Marches, and the emerging role of great women in the halls of power and influence. She continues to capture the response to the US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights in America and to amplify the voices of women activists.

Joan's work is included in permanent collections in the The Israel Museum in Jerusalem, The Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv, New York Public Library, Museum of the City of New York, among others. Her pictures were included in the 2017 Israel Biennial. Most recently, Joan had the privilege of being paired with the first woman ordained to the rabbinate Sally Prisent as part of the Holy Sparks Project and is currently working on her portrait for the National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC. A new film entitled *A Feminist Lens: The Art and Activism of Photographer Joan Roth* was created by her daughter Melanie Roth Gorelick and filmmaker Pamela French about her life's work in 2022.

Joan, now 80 years old, and a true New York City character, continues to be on the frontlines of amplifying women's voices on the major issues of today through her photographs. She has made a distinct impact on the lives of women everywhere and a contribution to the history of Feminism, while influencing artists globally who walk in her footsteps, cementing her place in a line of photographers who have used film to create art with a conscience.