

## **Anti-Pornography Demonstration, Times Square, New York City, USA**

**Date** 1979

Primary Maker Leonard Freed

## Medium

Gelatin silver print

## Description

This photograph depicts a demonstration by the activist group Women Against Pornography (WAP) that took place in New York City's Times Square on October 20, 1979. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the feminist movement was divided between those who saw pornography as a crime against women that in itself encouraged violence and abuse and those who considered it a healthy expression of sexuality. Before Mayor Rudolph Giuliani restructured Times Square in the 1990s to make it more welcoming to tourists, it was the locus of numerous strip clubs, shops selling erotic merchandise, and pornographic theaters. The political activist Bella Abzug and the writer Andrea Dworkin—two outspoken critics of pornography—are seen at the lower left of the photograph holding a banner that read, in full, "WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY / STOP VIOLENCE AGAINSTWOMEN." By juxtaposing the handmade signs that the women carry and the

billboards above them, the artist opened up a discussion regarding consumption and the provocative ways that women—especially their bodies—are depicted not just in pornography but also in more mainstream media, such as advertising. Leonard Freed, who initially desired to become a painter, began making photographs in 1953. In 1958, he moved to Amsterdam to photograph its Jewish community. From 1961 through the remainder of his life, he worked as a freelance photographer, and in 1972, he joined the well-known agency Magnum Photos, which employed an international roster of photographers and supplied images to a variety of magazines and news outlets. Freed produced twelve photobooks over the span of his career, including Black in White America (1967–68) and Police Work (1980), which reproduced photographs from a body of work he created in the 1970s focusing on the New York Police Department. His photography perpetually engaged with matters of social justice, civil rights, and racial equality. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

## **Dimensions**

Image:  $9.3/16 \times 6.5/16$  in.  $(23.3 \times 16 \text{ cm})$  Sheet:  $9.15/16 \times 8$  in.  $(25.2 \times 20.3 \text{ cm})$