

Finding Vivian Maier

Cert 12A

USA 2013

84 mins

Crew

Directors/ Screenplay	John Maloof / Charlie Siskel
Cinematography	John Maloof
Film Editing	Aaron Wickenden
Original music	J. Ralph

Cast

Vivian Maier	Archive footage
John Maloof	Himself
Phil Donahue	Himself
Mary Ellen Mark	Herself
Joel Meyerowitz	Himself
Tim Roth	Himself

Synopsis

New York, 2007. Searching for photographs for a book the history of his neighbourhood, real estate agent John Maloof bought a box of old negatives at an auction.

He quickly decided the pictures were not relevant to his project, but the photos were so striking that he decided to put some of them online, and was selling prints from the negatives on Ebay when he was alerted to their importance.

In 2009 he chanced upon the recent obituary of the photographer, Vivian Maier, and the ball was set in motion for what would become something of an obsession...



Booking Information

Distributor: Soda Pictures

DVD bookings: contact Natalie Ralph

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Available: Now



Reviews

An aptly obsessive study of obsession, *Finding Vivian Maier* sifts through the voluminous work and scant personal details of the titular street photographer, posthumously recognized as a genius of the form and a master of cultivated mystery. That this initially playful, ultimately haunting documentary is co-produced and co-directed by the principal owner and chief curator of Maier's art, John Maloof, raises questions of self-promotion that could never be directed at the subject, who kept her many thousands of photos hidden from view. But Maloof also makes a compelling corollary to the compulsive shutterbug, resulting in the documentary equivalent of double exposure.

Maloof and his collaborator Charlie Siskel strike a deft balance between insider knowledge and universal intrigue, allowing the film to score with Maier cultists as well as the heretofore uninitiated...

... the film's only significant flaw is its failure to elaborate on brief suggestions that Maier's work, first beloved by visitors to Maloof's blog, has remained unpopular among gatekeepers of the art-world establishment — especially when coupled with its climactic images of gallery-goers enjoying the fruits of Maier's (and Maloof's) labour, images that appear to contradict the earlier claim.

Rob Nelson, *Variety*, March 2014

... There's a certain prickly, illicit thrill to regarding art when it's very possibly against the artist's intentions that we do so. Maier's work is often self-exposing – she catches herself frequently in reflections – and shares qualities of piercing curiosity with Diane Arbus, Lisette Model and Helen Levitt. Her photographs have a close-up compassion bordering on the invasive.

The irony is that photography, of all of the arts, has one of the trickiest relationships with human privacy. Nothing, and no one, makes a better case for the unveiling of Maier's work than her pictures themselves. But you do wonder if it was a tacit contract with her subjects, that uncanny spark of a one-on-one connection, that kept her from spilling all their secrets as well as her own.

Tim Robey, *The Telegraph*, July 2014

Awards, commendations, and so on...

Winner of the **John Schlesinger Award** at Palm Springs Film Festival 2014

Joint winner of **Best Documentary Award** at Miami International Film Festival 2014