Degrees of Closeness

Five Artists from Foam's Archive and How Cameras Shape Their Stance



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Intro

Every camera format inherently dictates where the photographer stands—both physically and emotionally. Photographer Robert Capa famously declared, ‘If your pictures aren’t good enough, you aren’t close enough.’ And for decades, that mantra drove documentary photography toward the frontlines, pushing makers to physically press into the heart of the action. But as the contemporary camera has evolved, so too has our understanding of what it means to be *close*.

Proximity is not just a matter of focal length or physical steps; it is a posture of intimacy. It requires trust, permission, collaboration and often a willingness to abandon the safety of the observer’s perch. When a photographer steps into a subject’s personal zone, the camera records the friction of that interaction—the shared breath, the quick glance, the unspoken pact between the one behind the lens and the one before it.

Distance, on the other hand, offers its own power. To step back is to grant the subject room to breathe, frame the surrounding world, and observe without interrupting. Distance provides perspective, allowing us to see the systems, environments, and quietly unfolding moments that intimacy might obscure.

The work collected in this publication asks a simple question: What do we gain—and what do we surrender—when we shift our distance to our subject? Through intimate portraits, wide-angle street scenes, and detached environmental studies, these artists demonstrate that distance and proximity are not just camera settings, but the primary language through which photography speaks. Bringing us closer to history, closer to home, closer to community and closer to ourselves.

This publication was the result of a partnership between Foam and MPB.



Diana Markosian x Canon EOS R5 Mark II





At the age of seven, Diana Markosian and her brother were taken from their home in Moscow to California by their mother, without a chance to say goodbye to their father. Nearly 20 years later, Markosian travelled back in search of him. The series *Father* is a personal exploration of family, loss, and reconnection.

The camera acts as both a protective shield and an investigative bridge between them. Using the deliberate mechanics of her full-frame system, Markosian captures quiet moments in her father's home alongside staged re-enactments of her childhood memories. By physically positioning her lens at a measured, observant distance, her optics turn an overwhelming personal reunion into a quiet, structured exploration—using the frame to search for emotional closeness while honouring years of physical absence.

All images © Diana Markosian



Raphaël Dallaporta has made himself a reputation for his scrupulous methodology and his commitment to documentary. Putting ‘neutral’ images side by side with texts on human violence, he triggers awareness of contemporary situations that often pass unnoticed. For the series *Ruins* Dallaporta travelled to Afghanistan with a team of archaeologists. Using a drone, he took numerous photos of the war-ravaged landscape. In combination, these form a single large aerial picture that also shows traces of ancient civilisations. Past and present come together in this series of almost scientific photos.

The camera choice removes the human photographer from the physical location entirely yet yields an unprecedented visual closeness—revealing fine structural details, soil erosion, and subtle historical footprints impossible to see from the ground. This remote sensing technology bridges vast physical distance, turning vulnerable cultural history into an intimate, forensic study.

Raphaël Dallaporta x Aerial Drone

All Images © Raphael Dallaporta
Raphael Dallaporta is the winner of the Foam Paul Huf Award 2011

Keerthana Kunnath x Medium Format







With her captivating images, Keerthana Kunnath touches on themes like sexuality, queerness, womanhood and mental health which are not often discussed in her homeland of South India. For the series *Not What You Saw* she captured female bodybuilders flexing their muscles, while framing them within the lush landscapes of Kerela. The women, standing solid like rocks, invite the viewer to question preconceptions of what a woman could and should look like—and ask us to think again. 'The title speaks to that moment of realisation as a quiet correction. It acknowledges that what we thought we knew, what we believed to be typical or acceptable, is shifting.'

Not What You Saw tells the stories of Aishu, Bhumika, Jannat, Kavitha, Sandra and many others, who oscillate between domestic life and the weight room. Through Kunnath's lens we observe their bodies transform through intense training cycles, witnessing how setbacks shaped them, and how their goals continue to evolve with their confidence. Empowerment here receives a whole new meaning. By using shallow depth of field and soft optical fall-off, the camera transforms mundane domestic details into deeply sensory, emotional landscapes—inviting the viewer into a space where physical closeness reveals hidden layers of personal truth.

Images from the series *Not What You Saw* © Keerthana Kunnath

Ara Güler x Leica M6



Born only five years after the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Ara Güler documented the evolution of this young nation as it rose from the remains of the Ottoman Empire. For example, the rapid industrialisation of Turkey during the 1950s. Famous for his street photography in his beloved city of Istanbul, he consistently plays with light and shadow in his compositions, creating intimate and surprising snapshots of everyday life. His background in film and theatre influenced his photographic language, creating iconic images like the styles of other internationally acclaimed photographers, such as Bill Brandt, Henri Cartier Bresson and Saul Leiter.

Known as “The Eye of Istanbul,” Ara Güler relied on the swift, unobtrusive nature of 35mm Leica rangefinders to embed himself seamlessly within the daily rhythms of his home city. Güler’s definition of closeness was inherently humanistic; he positioned his body in the middle of bustling coffeehouses, foggy docks, and narrow alleys without disrupting the scene. The quiet shutter and quick zone-focusing of his Leica allowed him to operate at arm’s length from fishermen and labourers, capturing candid, textured glances before the moment dissolved. The camera served as an invisible extension of his presence, yielding warm, deeply personal portraits of urban life.



All Images © Ara Güler / Ara Güler Museum







Cansu Yıldıran × Contax T3

Cansu Yıldıran's series *The Dispossessed* draws on the flexibility of moving between different cameras, from medium-format to compact point-and-shoots. Working in the Doğu Karadeniz region of northeastern Türkiye, the artist photographs family and community members, often using direct, built-in or camera-mounted flash to flatten spatial depth and evoke displacement or disorientation. The series explores gendered relationships to land and inheritance: women sustain homes and landscapes through their labour, while ownership is traditionally passed down through men. As the series has evolved over the last decade, so too have Yıldıran's equipment and relationships with those they photograph. Such deeply personal subject matter—one's family and the land they inhabit—calls for a sensitive approach. In some situations, a medium-format camera offers time and precision; in others, a small, agile camera allows the artist to respond intuitively within a shared moment.

Yıldıran's use of point-and-shoot cameras allows them to work with immediacy within relationships of trust and shared intimacy. The camera's hard light flattens the distance between lens and subject, producing bright, unapologetic compositions. For Yıldıran, intimacy grows through collaboration and the closeness generated by returning—over days, seasons and years—to the same people, themes and landscapes.

Images from the series *The Dispossessed*, 2015–ongoing © Cansu Yıldıran

Camera Overview

Five camera models that allow you to achieve similar degrees of closeness

Canon EOS R5 Mark II



The Canon EOS R5 Mark II succeeds the acclaimed EOS R5, the mirrorless evolution of Canon's legendary 5D series. Built for demanding photography and video, its 45MP stacked, back-illuminated CMOS sensor, powered by DIGIC X and DIGIC Accelerator, delivers 30fps bursts and 8K 60p RAW video. Dual Pixel Intelligent AF with Eye Control locks focus with precision, while in-body stabilisation offers up to 8.5 stops of shake reduction.

View full profile: Canon R5 II on MPB

DJI Mavic 3 Pro [The Aerial Drone]



The DJI Mavic 3 Series offers next-level picture performance. Mavic 3 Pro's triple camera system ushers in a new era of camera drones by housing three sensors and lenses with different focal lengths. Equipped with a Hasselblad camera and dual telephoto cameras, the Mavic 3 Pro is a triple-camera drone that unlocks new shooting perspectives, allowing you to further embrace creative freedom, capture fascinating landscapes, discover photographic storytelling, and create cinematic masterpieces.

View full profile: DJI Mavic Pro on MPB

Hasselblad 907X 100C [The Medium Format]



The 907X 50C mirrorless medium format digital camera consists of the modernized CFV II 50C digital back and the brand new 907X camera body, which connects Hasselblad's photographic heritage and future in one system. With an excellent medium format 50-megapixel CMOS sensor (43.8 x 32.9 mm), the CFV II 50C digital back can be used with most V System cameras made from 1957 onwards, in addition to technical cameras or third-party view cameras.

View full profile: Hasselblad on MPB

Leica M6



The Leica M6 is often considered the pinnacle of 35mm rangefinder cameras. Nearly 175,000 units were made, mainly between 1984 and 2002, and a reissue followed in 2022. Over those decades it has accompanied many of the world's leading photographers. With its simple design and handling, the M6 offers the essence of photography without any fuss. Compact and discreet, with a notably quiet shutter, it has long been a favourite of reporters and street photographers who need to work close to their subjects. Its operation is fully mechanical making it one of the most reliable rangefinders ever made.

View full profile: Leica M6 on MPB

Contax T3



The Contax T3 is a 35mm compact film camera, known for its high-quality optics and additional manual features only found in higher-end point-and-shoots. Equipped with a Carl Zeiss Sonnar 35mm f/2.8 lens, it delivers sharp images with superb contrast. Although this camera offers excellent fully automatic operation for beginners, it will also suit more demanding photographers thanks to its manual aperture selection dial, manual focusing capabilities, and focus lock that overrides the focusing mechanism allowing for very rapid snapshots.

View full profile: Contax T3 on MPB

Artist bios

Diana Markosian (1989)

is an artist based in New York. By encapsulating different styles and mediums, Markosian has created a unique approach to image making. Her first monograph, Santa Barbara, was published by Aperture in 2020 and selected as the top book of the year by MoMA and Time Magazine. She is a regular contributor to Vanity Fair, Vogue and The New Yorker. Markosian's second monograph, Father, debuted at Paris Photo 2024. She holds a Masters degree from Columbia University.

Raphael Dallaporta (1980)

is a documentary photographer concerned with issues addressing human rights as well as less tangible subjects such as the fragility of life. For each project he works very closely with the professionals involved in his subject, a landmine clearer for Antipersonnel for example, a forensic pathologist for Fragile and most recently, archeologists for Ruins. Solo exhibitions include Protocole at Musee de I'Elysee, Lausanne, in 2010, Autopsy, curated by Kathy Ryan at the New York 2008 Photo Festival, and Antipersonnel, curated by Martin Parr at Les Rencontres d'Arles 2004. Raphael Dallaporta is the winner of the 2010 Young Photographer ICP Infinity Awcrd. Dallaporta's work winning the Foam Paul Huf Award, is on show at Foam Amsterdam from 2nd September to 26th October 2011.

Keerthana Kunnath

is a London-based Indian artist who uses her medium to initiate conversations around socio-cultural issues. Through her practice, she tackles themes such as sexuality, queerness, womanhood and mental health which are not often discussed in her homeland of South India.

Ara Güler (1928–2018)

was a prominent photojournalist and a driving force in Turkish photography. Celebrated as 'The Eye of Istanbul', his poignant black and white images of this city's inhabitants, streets and docks remain his most celebrated works. Ara Güler immortalised numerous famous artists and political figures throughout his illustrious career.

Cansu Yıldıran (1996)

is a photographer and visual artist, born in Istanbul and currently based in Basel, Switzerland. Their practice explores belonging, dispossession, identity, and the relationships between bodies, memory, and place. Working across documentary and staged photography, moving image, and installation, they approach image-making as a collaborative process rooted in intimacy and lived experience. Their ongoing series *The Dispossessed*, begun in 2015, traces women's relationships to land and inheritance in the Kuşmer Highlands of northeastern Türkiye, expanding into questions of displacement, language, and collective memory. Yıldıran was selected for Foam Talent 2024–2025 and the World Press Photo Joop Swart Masterclass in 2018. Their work has been exhibited at Foam, Protocinema NY, Coalmine Winterthur, and the Shanghai Biennale. They have been selected for the fourth edition of Photographic Encounters (2027–2029) at Fotomuseum Winterthur. They are currently pursuing an MA in Fine Arts at the Institute Art Gender Nature, HGK Basel FHNW.

About MPB

MPB empowers creators to tell their stories by making pre-owned photo and video equipment more accessible. Whether buying a first camera, upgrading a kit, or giving used gear a second life, MPB makes it easy to buy, sell, and trade equipment. Through its collaboration with Foam Talent 2026, MPB supports the next generation of image-makers, helping emerging photographers share their work with audiences around the world and opening new creative possibilities.
www.mpb.com

About Foam

Foam is an internationally renowned photography museum situated along the historic Keizersgracht canal in Amsterdam. Housed within a restored 19th-century canal house featuring a bright central atrium, the museum showcases all artistic genres of photography—ranging from contemporary and documentary to historical and fashion. Foam is widely known for hosting up to four rotating exhibitions at a time, continuously spotlighting established international icons alongside emerging contemporary artists. Foam also publishes Foam Magazine, an award-winning international photography publication released twice a year that highlights groundbreaking work, thematic portfolios, and critical essays from established and emerging image-makers worldwide.

Colophon

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