

The New York Times

by Ken Johnson, June 21, 2012

Street Hustlers, in All Their Glamour and Grit

In Paris in the mid-1950s the Swedish photographer Christer Strömholm (1918-2002) gravitated to the red-light district around the Place Blanche, where he was drawn to a subculture of cross-dressing young men, many of whom worked as prostitutes to earn enough money for sex-change operations.

In their world, Paris in the '50s, it was against the law for men to dress as women in public, and living as they did, semi-underground, they were subject to all the usual threats: violent prejudice, addiction and disease. Some went on to have long and happy lives as women; others did not make it. If you did not know that Strömholm's subjects were genetically male, you could easily take them for women.

Some of them appear nearly as beautiful as any fashion model or movie star of that era. There are pictures of some in their underwear or nude in which they do not look so feminine, but Strömholm was not out to puncture any illusions they may have had about themselves. Mostly they appear as they presumably would have wanted themselves to be seen.



SABRINA



VICTOIRE