AN UNTOURIST IN NEW YORK CITY
DECEMBER 2021–JANUARY 2022

Gillian J. Furniss | Elizabeth Public Library | Exhibit Room 3rd Floor

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**Artist Bio**

Gillian J. Furniss was born and raised in New York City. She currently lives in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

She creates prints, drawings, watercolor paintings, digital street photography, and papercutting. Her screen print *Lotus Flowers, No. 4* is in the Permanent Collection of The Art Students League of New York.

Furniss is a public school art teacher in Elizabeth, New Jersey. She was an Adjunct at Kean University.

She is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts College of Art & Design, and Teachers College, Columbia University.

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**Artist Statement**

I call this body of work *An Untourist in New York City* because I do not chose to take photographs as a vacationer. Even now when I spend a brief time in New York, I frequent the spots where most locals spend time: the subways, the sidewalks, the movie theaters, the inexpensive restaurants, the neighborhood parks. All of the photographs here are of chance encounters with people in public spaces. Despite being an urban landscape there are plants everywhere. They act as time capsules to indicate the seasons.

These photographs were taken in New York in 2015 using my iPhone 6. I was born, raised, and worked in New York for many decades. After I moved far away, I took many photographs just to capture the atmosphere of this vibrant city. I walked on sidewalks along my favorite routes uptown and downtown and crosstown, sun or rain, day or night, and captured scenes. There is privacy in the urban landscape because there are so many people outside going about their business, unaware of your individual presence. You can find solitude by going for a walk in a park, or going to the

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**Contact Info**

Please visit my website at [www.gillianfurniss.com](http://www.gillianfurniss.com)
movies by yourself. It is not unusual to strike up a casual conversation with a stranger only because you share the same space for a few minutes. Public transportation makes this possible because you are close to another person, bumping into their space for a brief moment in time.

The French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson influences my work. His style of “street photography” using small format cameras still influences photojournalists to this day. He explained about capturing a split second in time that is worthy, not a second before or after. If you miss the opportunity to capture the geometry of the scene, then you have to seize another picture. In The Decisive Moment: Photographs and Words of Henri Cartier-Bresson (1973) he states, “The most difficult thing is on your own country. You know too much...when it’s on your own block, it’s such a routine, it’s quite difficult to get out. When I’m going...places where I am all the time...I know too much and not enough and to be lucid about is the most difficult. But your mind must be open. Open, aware.”