SESSION 07 · UNIT 1 — LIGHT & OBJECT · Nov 3, 2026

Lisette Model & Rosalind Fox Solomon

Model 1901–1983 · American, born Austria — Fox Solomon 1930–2024 · American

A teacher's eye, rebuilt by the student who studied under her



Promenade des Anglais, Nice · Model, 1934

KEY WORKS

- Promenade des Anglais, Nice, 1934 (Model)
- Reflection, New York, 1939–40 (Model)
- Guatemala, 1979 (Fox Solomon)
- Untitled, Portraits in the Time of AIDS, 1988 (Fox Solomon)

CONTEXT

Lisette Model trained in music before turning to photography in the 1930s, and brought a musician's sense of exaggeration and rhythm to her work — cropping tight, printing high-contrast, unafraid of an unflattering angle if it told the truth about her subject. After fleeing Europe for New York in 1938, she became known for blunt, confrontational studies: wealthy tourists sunning themselves on the French Riviera, street characters at Sammy's Bar on the Bowery. She later taught at the New School, where Rosalind Fox Solomon became one of her most devoted students in the early 1970s. Fox Solomon carried Model's directness into very different territory — strangers she approached cold, often in vulnerable circumstances: patients living with AIDS in the late 1980s, people she met on decades of travel through Peru, Guatemala, and the American South, always asking them to hold still and be seen exactly as they were. In her final years before her death in 2024, she turned that same unflinching gaze on herself, publishing a book of self-portraits confronting her own aging body. A direct teacher-student relationship like theirs is exactly what today's exercise asks you to reconstruct in miniature: one photographer's way of seeing, studied closely enough by another that it becomes the foundation for an entirely different body of work.

WHY THIS PHOTOGRAPHER

Model didn't teach Fox Solomon a style to copy — she taught her a way of looking, and Fox Solomon spent fifty years turning that lesson into work that looked nothing like her teacher's. When you rebuild today's photograph, you're not trying to make a copy either: you're trying to understand the decision behind it well enough to make your own.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Model taught Fox Solomon directly, for years — and their photographs still look almost nothing alike. What does that tell you about what a great teacher actually passes on?
2. Fox Solomon spent her last years photographing herself. If you had to recreate one of your own earliest photographs today, what would be different — not in the setup, but in what you were willing to show?

MORE IMAGES



Reflection, New York · Model, 1939–40



Running Legs · Model



Sammy's Bar, New York · Model



Guatemala · Fox Solomon, 1979



Chattanooga, Tennessee · Fox Solomon



Self-Portrait, A Woman I Once Knew · Fox Solomon, 2024