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Chris Marker's 'Koreans, Untitled #38' (1957).

The Chris Marker Estate and Peter Blum Gallery, New York

Chris Marker: Koreans

◆ **Peter Blum**
20 W. 57th St.
212-244-6055
Through Oct. 18

Chris Marker (1921-2012) went with a group of French journalists to North Korea in 1957, four years after the end of the Korean War. They were subjected to some compulsory propaganda, but they were also allowed to wander around a bit on their own. The maniacal regimentation that successive generations of Kims were to impose on their countrymen was not yet in place, and Mr. Marker was able to photograph Koreans in the streets, at work, at home, even dancing. In the 51 untitled black-and-white prints at Blum, it looks like a normal country.

There is a portrait of a pensive young woman, quite beautiful, with her hand to her chin and her eyes cast down. In another picture, a young girl in a jumper stands alone in the midst of an enormous urban plaza. A couple dances with their arms around each other but with some space between them; he is wearing a peaked cap, she has her eyes shut and a dreamy expression. A mass of young women stand wearing white gowns and holding oversized fans, perhaps preparing for a performance. A woman and a girl sit watching a bitch suckling her pups. A woman mechanic services the engine of a train.

All in all, it looks normal.

William Meyers, writer