Diane Arbus

• **Synopsis**

Diane Arbus was born on March 14, 1923, in New York City. An artistic youth, she learned photography from her husband, actor Allan Arbus. Together, they found success with fashion work, but Diane soon branched out on her own. Her raw, unusual images of the people she saw while living in New York created a unique and interesting portrayal of the city. She committed suicide in New York City in 1971.

• **Early Life**

Born Diane Nemerov on March 14, 1923, in New York City, Diane Arbus was one of the most distinctive photographers of the 20th century, known for her eerie portraits and off-beat subjects. Her artistic talents emerged at a young age, having created interesting drawings and paintings while in high school. In 1941, she married Allan Arbus, an American actor who fostered her artistic talent by teaching her photography.

• **Unique Photography**

Working with her husband, Diane Arbus started out in advertising and fashion photography. She and Allan became quite a successful team, with photographs appearing in such magazines as *Vogue*. In the late 1950s, she began to focus on her own photography. To further her art, Arbus studied with photographer Lisette Model around this time.

During her wanderings around New York City, Arbus began to pursue taking photographs of people she found. She visited seedy hotels, public parks, a morgue and other various locales. These unusual images had a raw quality, and several of them found their way into the July 1960 issue of *Esquire* magazine. These photographs proved to be a spring board for future work.

By the mid-1960s, Diane Arbus had become a well-established photographer, participating in shows at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, among other places. She was known for going to great lengths to get the shots she wanted. She became friends with many other famous photographers, including Richard Avedon and Walker Evans.