

## **New York (kids over doorway), 1940**

This is a black and white image, taller than it is wide at 50.5 × 40.5 cm. It shows the entrance to a disused brick building on a city street, animated by five children who are scrambling up and around it.

The camera faces a dilapidated brick building – probably late nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century. Just to the left of centre there is an entrance with tall double doors of panelled wood, now sealed up with sheets of battered black metal. The entrance is framed by a portico held up by stone pillars with simple mouldings. The roof of the portico is a flat panel about a metre deep and 1.75m in length. To the left of the entrance is a boarded up window; to the right, there is an open doorway, covered with a metal grille. Lengths of wood are propped up inside, suggesting that this is perhaps a workshop or a factory. On the wall between the two doorways the words POST NO BILLS are spelled out neatly in white paint, and again, in larger letters just below, followed by a broken phrase ‘...NALTY OF LAW’ – the first part of the word ‘penalty’ having been painted out. Traces of paper on the wall suggest that this injunction has been frequently ignored. Above to the right, on the first floor, there is a boarded up double-height window with an open balcony that could have been used for goods deliveries. Cables run diagonally across the wall down to the balcony, drooping like branches of a tree.

Around the portico, there are five kids, all about eight years old, who appear to be of different ethnicities – black, Latino and white. They wear wide shorts and t-shirts or

shirts. Two boys are standing on top of the portico roof – one, wearing a little brimless cap, stands dead centre, his back to us, legs planted wide – the king of the castle. One arm outstretched, he's pushing back a boy with curly hair and a striped top who is grinning as he playfights with his friend. A third boy crouches on the left-hand edge of the portico, watching intently as a fourth boy pulls himself up towards the roof, finding footholds on the frame of the boarded up window. The last boy is still at ground level but has climbed up onto the base of the right-hand pillar – one leg to each side of it. He holds onto the pillar with both hands and peers round it towards us, with a wary half smile.

[ENDS]