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Rare Low-Altitude Aerials of Paris

Paris In late October 2025, I was granted a rare privilege: authorization to fly over the heart of Paris for a low-altitude photographic mission. Due to the strict P-23 "No-Fly Zone" regulations, such permissions are historically elusive. Since Nadar took the first aerial photographs of Paris from a balloon in 1858, only a handful of photographers have been allowed to document the capital from this perspective.

This mission served as a vital follow-up to my 2019 flight for my Rizzoli book, *Paris From the Air*. While my previous work captured a city in shock—with Notre Dame obscured by tarps—this 2025 flight allowed me to document the cathedral's rebirth and the city's evolution.

On October 25, I took off in a twin-engine helicopter with an open door, I was allowed only an hour within the city ring under a soft, autumnal sky. The flight was so unusual it was written up in the newspapers. The clouds provided a pastel palette, lending a painterly quality to both my signature (straight-down) shots and my panoramic landscapes. Over two hours I captured a Paris that feels both intimate and monumental. My pilot was experienced and was quickly able to get me to my targets, but as time was limited, I had to make decisions and shoot quickly. I had two Fuji 100 MPXL cameras around my neck, and lenses from 32mm to 500mm. I shot 2000 images during a two-hour flight.

An intriguing aspect of this mission was the Prefecture of Police's requirement to blur or pixelate certain sensitive government and military sites. Rather than a limitation, I view this "enforced redaction" as a compelling narrative element, highlighting the tension between the freedom of the lens and the security of the state.