

SAUL LEITER

EARLY COLOR

9 December 2005 – 21 January 2006

Artist Reception

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Accompanied by a new monograph
Saul Leiter Early Color, Steidl & Partners, 2005



New York - Howard Greenberg Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition *Saul Leiter Early Color*, featuring Leiter's photographs from 1948 to 1960 in the Main Gallery and a selection of his early work in black and white in the South Gallery. The exhibition is accompanied by a new monograph, *Saul Leiter Early Color*, published by Steidl & Partners.

Saul Leiter was born in Pittsburgh in 1923, the son of a rabbi and distinguished Talmudic scholar. Leiter's interest in art began in his late teens, and in 1946, when he was 23, he left the theological college he was attending in Cleveland and moved to New York City to pursue his painting. That year he met the Abstract Expressionist painter Richard Pousette-Dart, who was experimenting with photography. Leiter's friendship with Pousette-Dart, and soon after with W. Eugene Smith, and the photography exhibitions he saw in New York, particularly Henri Cartier-Bresson at the Museum of Modern Art in 1947, inspired his growing involvement with photography.

Leiter's earliest black and white photographs show an extraordinary affinity for the medium, and by 1948 he began to work in color. Edward Steichen included Leiter's black and white photographs in the exhibition *Always the Young Stranger* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1953. Leiter's first exhibition of color photography was held in the 1950s at the Artist's Club, a meeting

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place for many of the Abstract Expressionist painters of that time. In the late 1950s the art director Henry Wolf published Leiter's color fashion work in *Esquire* and later in *Harper's Bazaar*. Leiter continued to work as a fashion photographer for the next 20 years and was published in *Show*, *Elle*, *British Vogue*, *Queen*, and *Nova*.

In both his fashion and more personal work, Leiter has made an enormous contribution in the area of color photography. His distinctively subdued color and abstracted forms often have a painterly quality that stands out among the work of his contemporaries. In her book *The New York School: Photographs 1936-1963*, Jane Livingston writes, "The very fact that color becomes the subject of the photographs places Leiter's work in another realm—a realm that is unabashedly artistic." Martin Harrison, editor and author of *Saul Leiter Early Color*, writes, "Leiter's sensibility...placed him outside the visceral confrontations with urban anxiety associated with photographers such as Robert Frank or William Klein. Instead, for him the camera provided an alternate way of seeing, of framing events and interpreting reality. He sought out moments of quiet humanity in the Manhattan maelstrom, forging a unique urban pastoral from the most unlikely of circumstances."

Saul Leiter's work is featured prominently in Livingston's *The New York School* and in Harrison's *Appearances: Fashion Photography Since 1945*. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the National Gallery of Australia; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Milwaukee Art Museum; the Yale University Art Gallery; and other prestigious public and private collections. The Milwaukee Art Museum will be presenting Saul Leiter's first solo museum exhibition in fall 2006.

Upcoming Exhibition: Gordon Parks
27 January – 11 March 2005

For further information, or to request visuals for press,
contact Margit Erb at 212 334 0010 or Margit@howardgreenberg.com
Starting December 8, the exhibition can be viewed at www.howardgreenberg.com