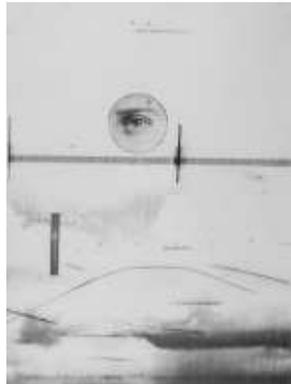


SIX FROM THE SEVENTIES

The Last Years of Modern Photography

An exhibition curated by Rick Wester



William Larson



Michael Bishop

June 17 - July 31, 2004

New York - On June 17, **Howard Greenberg Gallery** will present the work of six photographers whose reputations were established during the 1970s, reflecting the varying expressive forces of the period. Several have not shown their work in New York since then or have been overshadowed by their aesthetic offspring. "Six From the Seventies" includes work that predicts aspects of Post-Modernist approaches, such as appropriation and recycled imagery; the freestyle collage possibilities of the coming digital age and the essential documentary and personal modes that characterize the decade. The photographers included are **Michael Bishop, Frank Gohlke, William Larson, Michael Martone, Joel Meyerowitz** and **Bea Nettles**.

Before there were departments dedicated to it in most major museums, photography fought a long battle for acknowledgement as a valid art form. Seemingly, it had its own history championed by few collectors and worshipped by only a small cadre of brave curators. This fight for recognition took a turn around 1970 when galleries dedicated to photography began to open with a sales network spreading across the country and soon, Europe. The 1970s was a fervent time for photography that saw an adolescent medium of expression grow into maturity, only to be altered forever by the aesthetic and philosophical revolution of Post-Modernism.

Michael Bishop's strict formalist color studies are derived from the unlimited subjects afforded by the vernacular landscape, as Walker Evans found before him and Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth did afterwards. Armed with hand held cameras and a hunter's desire for unsuspecting prey, Bishop sought out corners of American scenery others had effectively ignored: construction sites, billboards, parking lots and unmarked roadside vistas. His use of color is paradoxical. Intense fields of saturated color are also intentionally flat and unemotional, leaving the viewer with the responsibility of deciding the importance of the content.

Frank Gohlke is one of the original ten photographers included in the 1975 landmark exhibition, "New Topographics, Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape". He has, for thirty years, been a

prescient photographer of the American industrial, urban and rural landscape. "New Topographics" is often cited as a seminal influence on contemporary photographers and is key to the contemporary understanding of landscape photography reflecting the anti-heroic scenic view. Gohlke will be represented by a selection of the black and white imagery included in "New Topographics" and other works. Currently scheduled for the summer of 2005, Gohlke will be the subject of a solo exhibition and publication of his Mount St. Helens volcano studies at the Museum of Modern Art. The following year, a retrospective will be held at the Amon Carter Museum. Howard Greenberg Gallery is now Frank Gohlke's exclusive representative.

Experimentation in photography is as old as the medium itself, but it reached a climactic apogee in Europe between the World Wars. Proponents of the avant-garde, such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, used photography's basic elements, light and chemistry, to create camera-less images known as photograms. **William Larson**, an artist and educator, adapted this approach to the technological age by experimenting with a predecessor of today's fax machine known as the Dex 1 Teleprinter. The works to be included in "Six From the Seventies", the first electronically collaged images, are comprised of visual and audio transmissions and presage Photoshop and digital imagery. Unlike the fax transmission technology of the 1980s these images are permanent and of high resolution, created out of carbon embedded in a stable paper base. These electronic drawing/collages were executed by sequentially transmitting six to ten separate signals onto the same sheet and therefore record several different components simultaneously.

Every decade will have its artists that shine and then fade from view but leave a body of work so powerful that subsequent rediscoveries serve as reminders of the power of unique visions. **Michael Martone** was best known for the body of work of intensely personal and surreal images contained in his 1973 Lustrum Press monograph, Dark Light. A visual diary without words, Dark Light epitomized the use of photography to create personal archetypes that resonated throughout the 1970s. The works included here are taken from an unpublished memoir that documents in words and images the artist's life from his birth through 1984. This manuscript, "Notes From A Moving Ambulance," contains nearly 200 photographs and over 50 pages of text. Only a small selection will be included.

One of the most successful photographers working exclusively in color in the 1970s was **Joel Meyerowitz**, known for his atmospheric eye and attention to light and form, usually the province of black and white photography. Before Meyerowitz created his widely regarded Cape Light and similar projects, he was entranced with creating street photographs that pushed the realm of the "decisive moment" through the inclusion of color. One of the deans of contemporary color photography, Meyerowitz created large scale color photographs in the now nearly extinct dye transfer process that established his reputation as a significant contributor to a legacy began by Kertész and Cartier-Bresson and carried through by Frank, Winogrand and others. Meyerowitz's influence on contemporary street photography is felt in the work of photographers such as Philip Lorca-diCorcia and Jeff Mermelstein.

The sixth artist in the exhibition is **Bea Nettles** who throughout the decade resolutely defied the conventions of photographic image making by employing what were considered "alternative processes". By using non-silver based photography, Nettles could execute imagery based less on the re-presentation of reality than on her imagination and political posture in the feminist era. These works, produced through combining images and selecting pigments in a process known as "Kwik Print," are fantastic visions of interpersonal relationships, dreams and memories. More painting than document, these unique works are a bridge between the pre-Modernist musings of the Photo-Secessionists and the Post-Modern appetite for recycled images. Several of these images were published in her 1979 book, Flamingo in the Dark (available at the gallery, \$30.00, regular edition; \$65.00 for artist's edition).

The public is cordially invited to an opening reception for the photographers at the gallery on Thursday, June 17th from 6 to 8 pm.

For further information, or to request visuals for press, please contact Rick Wester (rick_wester@mac.com) or Margit Erb (margit@howardgreenberg.com) or by calling (212) 334-0010.