

For Immediate Release

Howard Greenberg Gallery

Gay Block

LOVE: South Beach in the 80s

March 29 – April 27, 2013



New York – Miami's South Beach, before it became an international scene, is the focus of an exhibition of portrait photography by Gay Block, on view at Howard Greenberg Gallery from March 29 through April 27, 2013. *LOVE: South Beach in the 80s* depicts a time when Jewish retirees led simple lives in affordable Art Deco buildings. The exhibition will be held in HGG Two, located next to the main gallery at 41 East 57th Street in New York City. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, March 28, from 6 to 8 p.m.

From 1982-1985, Block interviewed the elderly residents of the Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach, wrote down their stories, and photographed them. *LOVE: South Beach in the 80s* features more than 20 archival inkjet prints of these former inhabitants of South Beach in their sunny paradise.

As Block writes, "When I first went Miami's South Beach in 1982 it was love at first sight. I was awed by the beauty of the small Deco hotels, but even more by the old people sitting on the porches. The first night, when I stopped at one of those porches after dinner, I knew right away that I would return again and again to talk with and photograph them. Here were the *bubbes* and *zaydes* (grandmothers and grandfathers) I wished I'd had."

Among the highlights in the exhibition are *Untitled (Good Friends)*, *South Beach, Miami*, a portrait of two elderly women walking arm in arm by the beach, protected against the sun with floppy hats, sunglasses, and paper shields covering their noses. Their camaraderie is matched by the men in *Untitled (Three Men on a Bench)*, in suits and elegant white hats, chatting while waiting for a bus. In one portrait, an older woman wearing red lipstick makes a fashion statement with a leopard print hat and coat. Another portrait of a woman standing next to an open window, *Untitled (Earlobe)*, depicts a woman who told Block she survived the Holocaust.

Work from the exhibition can also be seen in Block's book, *About Love: Gay Block Photographs and Films 1973-2011*, published by Radius Books last year.

Gay Block was born in Houston in 1942. She is known for her work with writer Malka Drucker on *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust*, both a book and traveling exhibition, which has been seen in over 50 venues in the U.S. and internationally. In 1992, it was exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Block began working as a portrait photographer in 1973, her subjects the residents of her Jewish community in her native Houston. She later expanded this work in the 1980s to include portraits taken in Miami's South Beach and at Camp Pinecliffe, a girl's summer camp in Maine.

For over 30 years she documented her mother using photography, video and prose. *Bertha Alyce: Mother exPosed* was published by UNM Press in 2003. Also published that year was *White Fire: A Portrait of Women Spiritual Leaders in America* with Malka Drucker. In 2006, Block re-photographed the women who were girls in her 1981 series from Camp Pinecliffe 25 years earlier. Block's photographs can be found in museum collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. She lives and works in Santa Fe, NM.