

WILLIAM KLEIN

PRINTS 1955-2007

30 MARCH-26 MAY 2007

New York City – The Howard Greenberg Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of photographs, graphic design, and paintings by William Klein. The exhibition will feature Klein's earliest photographs, including work from his book [Life Is Good and Good For You in New York](#), his Painted Contacts series from the 90's and work recently published for Harper's Bazaar. On May 14th, William Klein receives the coveted Life Time Achievement Award from the International Center for Photography Infinity Awards. **The public is cordially invited to attend an artist's reception on Thursday, May 9, 2007.**

Photographer, painter, filmmaker, graphic designer William Klein is one of the most controversial and influential artists of the twentieth century. Klein's 1956 ground-breaking book, [Life Is Good and Good For You in New York](#), captured the chaos and urban madness of a city with his explosive, iconoclastic vision. Klein's black, Dada humor and method of taking pictures broke conventional rules as he experimented with flash, wide angles, confrontational close-ups, instinctive grab shots and harsh printing methods. In 1955 he began a relationship with [VOGUE](#) magazine which would last ten years, creating a new aesthetic combining graphic, satiric style with the absurd.

William Klein was born in 1928 and grew up on the upper west side of New York. He graduated from City College at the age of eighteen and then served for two years in the U.S. Army in Europe, which included one and a half years at the Sorbonne. He settled in Paris, where he has lived ever since, and began his career as a painter. Klein studied briefly with Fernand Leger, and was doing hard-edge, geometric painting and graphic design before he began experimenting with photography.

Alexander Liberman, the legendary art director of Vogue, saw Klein's early abstract photographs in Paris and offered him a contract for special projects in the magazine, and to finance photographs for a portfolio on New York. In 1954 Klein came back to New York, after six years away, and created a photographic diary of his return. Still very new to the medium, he developed a technique without taboos using the wide angle lens, blur, grain, high contrast, cock-eyed framing, accidents, and other techniques gave his work a dynamism and intensity that have never been matched. Unable to find a publisher in this country, his book Life is Good and Good For You in New York: Trance Witness Revels was published in France in 1956. It won the Prix Nadar and became a legend in this country for its radical photography and innovative design.

In the years following, Klein completed other major photographic books: Rome, 1956; Moscow, 1959 and 1960; and Tokyo, 1961. To finance his personal work, he published fashion photographs for Vogue in 1955-65, which were so inventive that they transformed the field of fashion photography. In 1958, Klein made Broadway By Light, probably the first Pop Art film. (It was the opening segment of the Beaubourg Pop Art exhibition in Paris). This was the beginning of his remarkable career in film which continues to the present and includes the titles: Muhammad Ali The Greatest, 1964-74; Who Are You, Polly Maggoo?, 1966; Far From Vietnam, 1967; Mister Freedom, 1968; The Panafrican Festival, 1969, Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther, 1970 The Model Couple, 1976; The Little Richard Story, 1980; Mode in France, 1986; and In and Out of Fashion, 1993 among others. In 2000 Klein completed his most recent film, Messiah.

The Painted Contacts, a continuing body of work begun in the 90's, was based on a series of films that Klein developed examining the inner workings of great photographer's contact sheets. The films inspired a series of unique works Klein produces from his own contacts, created with enamel paint in primary colors as variations on every photographer's process of using grease pencil marks to indicate his choice. The result is an up close exploration of the creative process and a new art object.

William Klein temporarily abandoned still photography for more than 10 years while working on his films, but he went back to photographic work while continuing to make films in the 1980s. Since that time, he has completed the books Close Up, 1989, Torino 90, 1990, In and Out of Fashion, 1994, New York 1954.55, 1995 (a re-worked edition of the 1956 book) and Films, 1999. Klein completed a surprising Paris in 2001 with major exhibitions at Maison Europeenne de la Photographie and other European museums. In 2005 Klein produced his latest book, Retrospective, to accompany the highly praised exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris 2006. In the March 2007 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* Klein produces his latest portfolio of work including happenings with Karl Lagerfeld, Marc Jacobs, Miuccia Prada and others.

For further information, or to request visuals for press,
contact Ali Price at 212 334 0010 or ali@howardgreenberg.com
Starting March 30th, the exhibition can be viewed at www.howardgreenberg.com