



HOWARD GREENBERG GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Sy Kattelson

January 12 – February 11, 2017



Sy Kattelson, *Man with Cane*, 1950. Gelatin silver print; printed c.1950, 8 1/2 x 13 1/8 inches

NEW YORK – The first solo exhibition in nearly 20 years of work by Sy Kattelson will be on view at Howard Greenberg Gallery from January 12 – February 11, 2017. The show of 45 photographs focuses on street photography made in New York from the 1940s and 1950s and includes work from the 1980s through 1990 that has never been on public view. Kattelson, 93, who studied with Sid Grossman and Paul Strand, is known for his association with New York’s famed Photo League. An opening will be held on Thursday, January 12 from 6-8 p.m.

Many of the images in the exhibition were taken on the streets of New York, where Kattelson captured his subjects in the gritty urban environment. His portraits often show a moment of introspection or contemplation.

As Sy Kattelson states, “I try to be as unobtrusive as possible, looking for those moments when people are focused in on themselves. And I try to find settings where this inwardness is contrasted by the dynamics of the city, by taxi cabs rushing past, by advertisements, the perspective of the street, and by the other people in the same space, everyone in their own thoughts.”

Despite differences in technique, a similar vision can be seen, even among those photographs taken 35 years apart. A link is evident between *Man With Cane*, 1950, where the image is divided by store windows, and *14th Street*, 1953, where the break is caused by the frame between two adjacent negatives. A similar composition shows up in work from the 1980s and 90s, such as *Bus, Line, People*, 1990, a double exposure, and *Untitled (street and shadows)*, 1990, a diptych with reflections. In each photograph, the people framed by the network that the city creates.

Among the images not made in New York is one of a woman selling fruit in Mexico in 1956 showing Kattelson's playful geometry, capturing numerous diagonal lines surrounding his sensitive portrait. Another depicts a pair of women with white gloves, pearls, and proper handbags warily watching New Yorkers getting off a bus in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1950.

"When I go out to shoot I'm always looking for something, for a specific idea that I have. I wait until I find it. I don't take a lot of photos. I try to put as much information as I can into each photo. That's what interested me in reflections – in storefront windows and the windshields of cars. This eventually led me to the double exposures, and to the prints where I butt together two different images," explains Kattelson.

About Sy Kattelson

Sy Kattelson (b. 1923) was born in the Bronx and attended Stuyvesant High School. While working as a delivery boy for a camera store on 43rd street, he first became aware of the possibility of working professionally as a photographer.

Rather than wait to be drafted, in 1942 he volunteered for the Air Corps as a corporal aerial cartographer, developing film taken from aircraft to assess the success of their bombing runs. At the war's end he was redeployed to France where he worked as an army publicity photographer.

Upon his return to the United States, Kattelson joined the Photo League. His work was represented in the original *This is the Photo League* exhibition of 1948 and the *New Workers* exhibition of 1949. He served as an executive member and teacher at the Photo League until it disbanded in 1951. After the disbanding of the League, Kattelson remained close to Grossman and co-edited and printed carbos for Grossman's posthumous 1959 book *Journey to the Cape*.

From 1953 to 1955, Kattelson worked as a fashion photographer for *Glamour* and for *Fashion and Travel*. He photographed the first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954. In 1958, he became a color darkroom technician and manager at a large commercial color photography lab. In 1961, he moved to Woodstock, NY, where he founded the Tinker Street Cinema, at the time one of the few art house cinemas outside a major urban area.

Kattelson's photographs are included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C.; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture; The National Gallery of Canada; and The Musee d'Art Moderne, Saint Etienne, France.

A companion exhibition of the work of Sid Grossman, a teacher and close friend of Kattelson's, will be on view in the main gallery, also from January 12 – February 11, 2017.

About Howard Greenberg Gallery

Since its inception over 30 years ago, Howard Greenberg Gallery has built a vast and ever-changing collection of some of the most important photographs in the medium. The Gallery's collection acts as a living history of photography, offering genres and styles from Pictorialism to Modernism, in addition to contemporary photography and images conceived for industry, advertising, and fashion. Howard Greenberg Gallery is located at 41 East 57th Street, Suite 1406, New York. The gallery exhibits at The ADAA Art Show, The Armory Show, The Photography Show presented by AIPAD, New York, Photo London, Art Basel, Paris Photo, and Art Basel Miami Beach. For more information, contact 212-334-0010 or info@howardgreenberg.com or visit www.howardgreenberg.com.

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Press Contact:

Nicole Straus Public Relations

Nicole Straus, 631-369-2188, 917-744-1040, nicole@nicolestrausr.com

Margery Newman, 212-475-0252, MargeryNewman@aol.com