



HOWARD GREENBERG GALLERY

For Immediate Release

**Lives & Still Lives:
Leslie Gill, Frances McLaughlin-Gill, and Their Circle
May 25 – July 7, 2017**



Frances McLaughlin-Gill, *Untitled (Lisa Fonssagrives-Penn)*, c. 1950s



Leslie Gill, *Composition of Objects on Windowsill*, 1937

NEW YORK – Photographs by Leslie Gill and Frances McLaughlin-Gill will be on view together for the first time at Howard Greenberg Gallery from May 25 – July 7, 2017. The Gills shared a passion for photography at the intersection of fashion, design, and fine art in the 1940s and 1950s. With a circle of famous friends and colleagues, they led glamorous careers in the rarified worlds of Condé Nast and Hearst. The exhibition presents images by Leslie Gill who was active from 1935-1957 and Frances McLaughlin-Gill who produced work from 1943-1993, as well as work by their close contemporaries Erwin Blumenfeld, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, Paul Outerbridge, Gordon Parks, Norman Parkinson, Irving Penn, and Man Ray. *Lives & Still Lives: Leslie Gill, Frances McLaughlin-Gill, and Their Circle* is curated by Elisabeth Biondi, an independent curator and former Visuals Editor for *The New Yorker*. An opening will be held on May 25 from 6-8 p.m.

When they married in 1948 in New York City, Leslie Gill (1908-1958) and his wife Frances McLaughlin-Gill (1919-2014) were both accomplished photographers. Leslie Gill's work was appearing in the pages of *Harper's Bazaar*, and Frances McLaughlin-Gill's photographs were in *Vogue*. Both Gills contributed a fresh and much needed new perspective to editorial photography.

Leslie Gill was greatly admired for his innovative approach to still life photography, pushing beyond the boundaries of standard editorial images, into the realm of fine art. At Hearst, he collaborated with *Harper's Bazaar's* legendary art director Alexey Brodovitch on ideas, design, and innovative layouts for his pictures.

McLaughlin-Gill was appreciated for her vivid, cinematic, and spontaneous approach to fashion photography, and her thoughtful reflections of the multifaceted lives of women, which was unique at the time.

The Gills would have just ten years together, as Leslie Gill died three months after their only child, Leslie, was born in 1958. As their daughter has noted, "Leslie and Frances' work resides in rare moments between the staged and the spontaneous. When viewed alongside their circle of friends, the images demonstrate how the emergence of new technologies (strobe and high speed film) can have a rapid ricochet effect between artists. It was a moment when a new medium and a new generation entered a discipline, and on the way, shifted the focus."

"Leslie Gill and Frances McLaughlin-Gill were perfectionists. Their work differed, but they shared an ambition to create unique pictures that reflected their personalities. Leslie became a photographer when as art director at *House Beautiful* he did not get the pictures he wanted for his layouts. In his still lifes, his impeccable taste and focus on details made them photographic icons. Frances McLaughlin-Gill was an instinctual artist in the way she photographed the contemporary and more emancipated post WWII American woman, which continues to be an integral part of fashion photography," noted Biondi.

Irving Penn, who was a friend of the Gills, said in 1959 when referring to Leslie Gill's work, "A group of younger photographers responded to Gill's talent as soon as he appeared on the scene. Many remained in later years frankly imitative. Many more, influenced, went on to other types of work bearing the mark of Gill's inspiration. From this group grew the present American school of still-life photography, the influence of which is seen in areas far removed from the immediate one with which Leslie Gill was personally concerned. A man of cultivated visual tastes, Gill was half painter, half photographer. A feather, a piece of old wood, an egg, had for him a meaning beyond themselves."

Alexander Liberman, the dominant creative force at Condé Nast for decades, hired Frances McLaughlin when he was art director of *Vogue*. He noted in 1959 "Not only was Franny's work for *Vogue* classic, it was pure, the kind of photographic vision that bordered on improvisational theatre, catching the model's face at a sensitive moment rather than following an artificial grammar inherited from European fashion photographers who were the stars of the moment. Her pioneering concepts made her a key photographer."

About Leslie Gill

Known as the father of modern still life photography, Leslie Gill elevated editorial images to classical compositions, becoming an artist in the process. He graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with honors in 1929 and studied with the artist Charles Hawthorne. In the

midst of the Depression in 1932, he was hired as the art director of *House Beautiful*. One of his first obstacles was finding a photographer who could creatively translate the articles into images to accompany them. Taking matters into his own hands, he acquired his first camera and within three years was making photographs that were published in the magazine. In 1935, he opened his own photography studio and made magazine covers and editorial images for *Harper's Bazaar* and later *Life*, *McCall's*, *Town & Country*, *Flair*, and *Holiday*. His technical abilities attracted attention, and he was among the first to experiment with color film from Kodak, strobe lighting, and the Hasselblad camera. In 1984, a traveling retrospective of his photographs opened at the New Orleans Museum of Art. His work is in the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the New Orleans Museum of Art, among others.

About Frances McLaughlin-Gill

Frances McLaughlin was born in 1919 in New York City and raised in Connecticut with her identical twin sister Kathryn. In 1941, the sisters entered *Vogue's* "Prix de Paris" and were among the five finalists. In 1943, she became one of the first woman photographers to be hired by *Vogue*, bringing a new natural focus to fashion photography. She also worked with *Glamour*, *House & Garden*, and *British Vogue*. She is the author of a number of books, several published with her sister. She also made films as an independent film producer and director and taught at the School of Visual Arts in New York. In 1995, an exhibition of her work was held at Hamilton's Gallery in London. Her work is in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the International Center of Photography, New York; Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; the Cleveland Museum of Art; and the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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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