

FRANK PAULIN: OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT

January 19 – February 23, 2008

Opening: January 19th, 6 – 8pm

Silverstein Photography is pleased to announce FRANK PAULIN: OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT, the first retrospective exhibition of work by the New York based street photographer Frank Paulin. Featuring over one hundred prints produced during the last half of the 20th century, including over fifty vintage works from his 1957 exhibition at Helen Gee's famed gallery and café Limelight, this exhibition unveils the work of an important American documentarian.

Paulin's education in the arts began at the young age of sixteen when he joined the Chicago-based Whitaker-Christiansen Studio as an apprentice in fashion illustration and photography. Paulin joined the Army in 1944 where as a member of the Signal Corps he began photographing the wartime devastation of German cities.

After being discharged, Paulin returned to Chicago in 1946. Under the GI Bill he continued his education at the Art Institute of Chicago and Institute of Design—the newly created American campus of the famed German Bauhaus School. While there Paulin studied under distinguished professors from the original Bauhaus campus including Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, as well as new American notables Harry Callahan and Arthur Siegel. While studying, Paulin held a full-time job as fashion illustrator at a local art studio and freelanced for department stores throughout the region like Marshall Field's, Mandel Brothers and Charles A. Stevens. Able only to attend classes at night, Paulin remained in school through 1948.

Paulin returned to New York in 1953 where he continued to freelance in fashion illustration. With most of his days occupied by work, he began walking the city's streets at night, stoking his passion for "grab shots" and gritty street documentary. Paulin spent most of his time in and around Times Square, which provided him with subjects from all walks of life set against the stunning visual framework of advertisements, neon signs, and reflective store windows. It was during this time that he crossed paths with Louis Faurer, whose own work was the result of walking those same streets in the late 1940s.

Paulin's early works were featured in a 1957 solo exhibition at the pioneering gallery Limelight—then New York's only gallery for fine art photography, as well as a local hangout for the great photographers of the time. Despite the fact that this exhibition predated the recognition of photography as a commonly appreciated medium, admiring reviews for the show appeared in the New York Times as well as the Village Voice, which praised Paulin's "humor and compassion" and his uncanny ability to perceive irony and record what they referred to as "poetic accidents."

For the next 50 years, Paulin continued to shoot these "poetic accidents," expanding his territory from New Orleans to Paris. Remaining predominantly *out of the limelight*, Paulin and his work have been virtually unseen by the public until now.

Frank Paulin's work is in the collections of the Milwaukee Art Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Yale University Art Gallery. A new book of the same title published by Silverstein Publishing will accompany the exhibition.

Upcoming Exhibition

Rosalind Solomon

March 1 – April 5, 2008