

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

For Immediate Release

Beyond COLOR: Color in American Photography, 1950-1970

September 16 - October 23, 2010

Opening: September 16th, 6-8 pm



Bruce Silverstein Gallery is pleased to present, **Beyond COLOR: Color in American Photography, 1950-1970**, a re-examination of a pivotal period in photography's short history, when the artistic relevance of color in fine art photography had yet to be determined. The exhibition unites works for the first time by many of the "first generation" practitioners of color photography including artists Marie Cosindas, Arthur Seigel, Harry Callahan, Eliot Porter, Saul Leiter, Marvin E. Newman, Pete Turner, Ruth Orkin and Ernst Haas. Other highlights include images exhibited for the first time by Magnum's first female member, Inge Morath, as well as a special slide projection of color images by Garry Winogrand, images that were never printed by the artist. **Beyond COLOR** attempts to reclaim this moment of photographic history that only today has begun to receive critical attention.

After the conclusion of World War II, innovations in technology combined with the public's desire to "see the world as it is" resulted in an explosion in the usage of color imagery by the mass media. By 1951, commercial color television broadcasting had begun, and in 1954, half of all American films were made in color. In the early 1960's color imagery was so prevalent that National Geographic magazine introduced a new era when it became the first major American periodical to print an all-color issue. While color photography during this period was widely embraced by mass culture—advertising and journalism— it continued to suffer from second-class status in the fine art world when compared with images in black & white. For most in the fine art establishment, black & white photography represented the medium of choice, steeped in a century-old tradition it was easily accessible and affordable to artists, and possessed known archival stability. For this reason, few artists chose to work in color and even fewer produced finished prints. Although color works had begun to selectively appear in museum exhibitions, most notably at the Museum of Modern Art, where single artist exhibitions of works by Eliot Porter (1943), Ernst Haas (1962) and Marie Cosindas (1966) were displayed, academic and institutional attention and support for this new technology was scant.

Over the past forty years, work in color created by artists during this formative period has received little attention. Most critical analysis through writings and exhibitions have focused on color work created during the 1970's and 1980's after the now famous Museum of Modern Art exhibition, *Photographs by William Eggleston* (1976), curated by John Szarkowski. This MoMA exhibition set the groundwork for defining a new purpose for color photography – one that focused more on the conceptual implications of the photograph and its creation, and away from the formalistic attributes of the image as well as the attention to color itself. The effects of Eggleston's exhibition and Szarkowski's essay reverberate to this day.

With a certain distance from this era when color photography was new-- its place in the art world no longer a question--this exhibition offers a crucial consideration of works created during this period and encourages a new perspective on the significance of these artists' contributions to the history of photography.

Upcoming exhibition:

Michael Wolf

October - December

Opening: Thursday, October 28, 6-8pm

André Kertész

October - December

Opening: Thursday, October 28, 6-8pm