



GEMINI G.E.L. ^{AT} JONI MOISANT WEYL

Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl is pleased to announce a summer-long exhibition titled “*Photographic Impressions*.” While conceived and installed as a single presentation, the exhibition includes two distinct components: photographs taken by Sidney B. Felsen, the co-founder of Gemini G.E.L., complimented by an exhibition of limited editions printed and published by Gemini that have photography as their predominant element.

The featured exhibition is a solo-artist presentation of over 170 photographs taken by **Sidney B. Felsen**. Felsen co-founded Gemini G.E.L. (Graphics Editions Limited) in Los Angeles in 1966 and soon after began to photograph the artists who came to work in what has become America’s premier graphics studio. His photographs are testament not only to his talents as a photographer, but to the vitality of the relationships he developed with his subjects in the environment of dynamic collaboration that he created at Gemini. Felsen received his first camera for his bar mitzvah in 1937 and studied painting, drawing and ceramics in Los Angeles after his service in World War II. It was in his role as the shepherd for the relationships with Gemini’s artists that Felsen’s “private art” (as identified by Constance W. Glenn in the book of Felsen’s photographs, *The Artist Observed*) came to be known. Felsen is quoted as saying:

Early on I realized there was an intrusive aspect to using a camera while someone is concentrating on the very private, spiritual, meditative moments of making art. I’ve tried to be as invisible as possible while photographing them, and have always used a range-finder camera because of its silent shutter. I’ve always asked permission to photograph; the answer is usually yes, but there have been some noes. I do believe not being intrusive helps, but my better ally has been the close friendships that have developed throughout the years with many of the artists. It’s much more natural to sit with a friend, with a camera in my hand, and start shooting photos than it is to use a hired professional, where there’s a veil between the two parties.



Self Portrait: Sidney B. Felsen with Ellsworth Kelly, 1984; Richard Serra during his proofing session for *Rounds and Ellipses*, 1998.



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Some of Felsen's most fascinating images are artists working on their editions: he aims his camera at the moment when Julie Mehretu is applying spit-bite to her copper plates, David Hockney is drawing a portrait of Henry Geldzahler, Richard Serra is stomping Paintstik onto Mylars, and Elizabeth Murray is surrounded by a wall of her paper constructions *Knottings & Crossings*. His photographs capture the collaborative spirit of the Gemini workshop, with Joel Shapiro and Master Printer Jim Reed examining proofs, Roy Lichtenstein during a proofing session for his *Imperfect* series, Robert Rauschenberg helping printers move a large lithography stone, and Ellsworth Kelly inspecting one of his plant lithographs. Not only that, but Felsen shows us artists and printers enjoying their time together, socializing, laughing, and experimenting. His photographs tell the quiet story of some of the most dynamic moments of creativity in 20th century artmaking.

The editioned prints on view include a selection of works by **John Baldessari, Jonathan Borofsky, Sophie Calle, Ann Hamilton, David Hammons, Bruce Nauman, Robert Rauschenberg, Man Ray, Ed Ruscha** and **Richard Serra**. Perhaps a surprising grouping of artists, all of the works demonstrate how these artists have engaged with photography and incorporated it into their printmaking collaborations with Gemini. Many printmaking techniques involve some element of photography, but these prints share a visible photographic aesthetic.



Man Ray, *Untitled*, 1966. 1-color lithograph, Edition of 125.

Man Ray was one of the very first artists to work with Gemini, and his *Untitled* (1966) is a classic “Rayogram” multiple which sets the course for the exhibition. Twenty-five years later, in 1982, Jonathan Borofsky also works with the possibilities of the photo-negative, selecting his iconic *Berlin Dream* imagery to be printed in photo-reverse, perforating the glossy paper as if it were a postage stamp. John Baldessari's dramatic black-and-white print series, *Hands & Feet*, are inspired by film stills which he has collected over many years, tightly cropping the images to focus our attention on hands that grip and gesture, conveying human intention and mood without any facial expression needed. More colorful photographic works in the exhibition are those by Sophie Calle, Ed Ruscha and David Hammons; for *Tapis de Fleurs* (2014), Calle photographed a montage of dried flowers and notecards sent to her by Frank Gehry, and the resulting image was printed, hand-cut and mounted, creating a shaped object. Ed Ruscha has taken a

photograph of a Brentwood home known for its many artworld parties and, in typical Ruscha fashion, superimposed onto it the words *Unstructured Merriment*. David Hammons, as part of his inclusion in the 2012 Obama print portfolio, used a photograph of a 16th century shrine in Obama, Japan, and creatively invented the appearance of a lenticular image by layering 3 sheets of Mylar screenprinted with imagery in color over a black-and-white lithograph printed on paper.



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Some of the artists have made prints that use their bodies as performative tools: it's Richard Serra's hand we see in a still taken a clip from his seminal 1968 video, *Hand Catching Lead*. That same year, Bruce Nauman was experimenting with the sculptural potential of his body and had himself photographed by Jack Fulton using an infrared camera. Years later, Nauman revisited this project and repurposed these previously unutilized photographs to create his four *Infrared Outtakes* (2006) which are on view. Ann Hamilton has taken photographs of friends by placing small cartridges of film in her mouth (*face to face...*, from 2003), and subsequently has explored other photographic possibilities including "found" photographic "carte de visites" in a series of prints (published 2009), and most recently scanned taxidermy animals in her 2017 series of screenprints. And finally, Robert Rauschenberg, known for his lifelong engagement with a camera, is represented in the exhibition with lithographs and screenprints that have direct transfers of his photographs.

"Photographic Impressions" is on view through August 31, 2018. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm. The summer schedule of Monday–Friday begins on July 2nd. The gallery will be closed July 4th-July 8th.

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