

the eye of photographie
Galerie Christian Berst Art Brut : John Kayser

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John Kayser, sans titre, 1970, photographie argentique, tirage vintage, 12.5 cm x 8.8 cm, courtesy christian berst art brut

On the occasion of **Paris Photo 2024 Christian Berst Art Brut** gallery presented around seventy photographs as well as Super 8 videos by **John Kayser**.

Unreleased edits of videos were shown on two screens. If nude photography allowed 19th century artists to do without live models during the execution of a painting, one might wonder to what extent John Kayser (1922-2007) similarly sought to create a medium to endlessly prolong the emotions he experienced during these posing sessions.

Like the photographs of painters, Kayser's images were not initially intended to leave the secrecy of the studio. As fascinating as they are, the hundreds of photographs and Super 8 films created between 1959 and 1976 by this Los Angeles aerospace company employee both provoke and raise questions.

How can we understand his fascination with the most delicate bodies in contact with the most diverse and sometimes most incongruous materials ?

As if the weight these bodies could exert made them more alive, and thus more desirable.

As if the ritual of stomping on or lacerating flowers and books with a stiletto heel intensified the sense of transgression. However, Kayser's photographs and films also compel us to consider them within their time, in a society tightly bound by puritanism that condemned them to secrecy. Beyond the sensuality and playful aspects they contain, these images invite us to reconsider the disruptiveness of art in relation to moral or social order. It is art's ability to move us, both physically and emotionally, that is at stake here.

John Kayser lived and worked in Los Angeles, California. Starting in the 1960s, Kayser created photographs and films that were only discovered after he died in 2007.

His home and the streets of Los Angeles were the setting for private rituals that reflects his obsession with feminine beauty.