



John Kayser
Untitled, 1971
Kodacolor print
5 x 3.5 inches

John Kayser: Direct Contact

October 14 to November 29, 2015

Opening reception: October 14, 6-8 PM

John Kayser knew what he liked. A man of refined, if unconventional tastes, he spent twenty-five years directing and photographing women in various poses, outfits, and settings—seeking out a particular moment in time and space when a woman’s body makes contact with some other thing. That moment must have held an almost sacred place in his conception of beauty, and was the driving force behind his work as an artist, photographer, and filmmaker.

Kayser’s home and studio contained a multitude of props, clothing items, and sets that he used while photographing his models. He met his subjects in a number of different places—at work, art club meetings, bars, and strip clubs. After what must have always been a colorful negotiation, the women were directed, photographed, and filmed in both public and private settings wearing multiple outfits and in various poses. The same models appear in works many years apart and different women wear or are placed in similar scenes.

Kayser was born in 1922 in North Dakota, but lived most of his life in California, first in Pasadena as a child and then in East Hollywood up to his death in 2007. He served briefly during WWII as an armorer in the 18th Bomber Squadron, a military position that corresponds to his lifelong employment with Northrup Aircraft Incorporated in Los Angeles, first in assembly and later as a technical illustrator. The majority of Kayser’s films and photographs were made between 1960-1985.

The photographs and films on view were discovered after the artist’s death, and we are just beginning to piece together his life story and understand the complexity and depth of his vision and practice. As we continue to view and explore this material, the image of an obsessive and sophisticated aesthete comes into focus. Kayser’s photographs are decidedly not portraits of women, but of a precise moment. An artist infatuated with his own brand of beauty, he spent the majority of his spare time constructing and documenting versions of that moment, occasionally participating in them, but always directing them into being.

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Art brut is an expression of individual mythology, conducted outside the realms of mainstream culture by people who exist in society’s constructed alterity, and returns us to the metaphysics of art where the creative impulse attempts to elucidate the mystery of being in the world.



John Kayser
Untitled, 1971
Kodacolor print
5 x 3.5 inches



John Kayser
Untitled, c. 1960-69
Artist-printed silver gelatin print
10 x 8 inches



John Kayser
Untitled, 1974
Kodacolor print
5 x 3.5 inches



John Kayser
Untitled, c. 1971-79
Kodacolor print
5 x 3.5 inches

WORKSHOP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Joy Diversion, 2015
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 17 inches

Charles Andresen: Pigmented Rectangles

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Opening reception: October 14, 6-8 PM

For almost three decades, Charles Andresen has poured, flung, and dropped acrylic paint onto stretched canvases. Despite the seemingly static nature of such a process, the results have been an unfolding and expansive series of exciting visual explorations. The initial experiments had unmixed spoonfuls of viscous paint hurled onto non-porous screens, and after drying, peeled up and collaged onto the support like puzzle pieces. A few years later, fluid lines were squeezed from bottles over tinted acrylic gel resting in a polystyrene basin. Scooped up with a putty knife, these "throws" were deposited onto a horizontal canvas, creating rich fields of undulating patterns. The palette has ranged from black and white and grisaille through pastel tints, earth tones, bright prismatic hues, metallic pigments, and even translucency.

In his recent works, the colored gel in the tub has been inscribed with marks of darker paint from various utensils. Upon impacting the canvas, the blobs stretch and splay out, amplifying the lines and gridded dots into a gradating chiaroscuro with suggestions of volume. Although capable of being taken in at a single glance, the paintings activate perpetually fresh readings on each successive viewing.

Andresen's work achieves that painterly paradox of deep space and visionary imagery fused with the chunky materiality of an impasto surface. Despite the relatively small size of the pieces in the current exhibition, the effect of each is nothing less than monumental.

Charles Andresen was born in Arizona. From an early age he was fascinated with the still-thriving art, culture, and ceremonies of the region's Native American tribes. While still a teenager he became the art critic for *Phoenix New Times*, the local weekly newspaper. Intending to become a realist oil painter, he moved to Philadelphia to attend the oldest art school in the country, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. However, once on the East Coast in the 1980s, Andresen fell under the sway of the new painting that was emerging from Europe and New York and discovered his method of "throw painting" during his last year at the Academy. The artist lives and works in New York City.

Workshop at Christian Berst is devoted to the exhibition of contemporary artists engaged with the works or ideas present in the gallery's program, recent discoveries, and immersive installations.

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