

NEW YORK'S PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY PUT UP FOR SALE

When Photograph gallery opened its doors a little more than a year ago, it was touted as one of the most ambitious undertakings of its kind—representing an investment of \$250,000 in a lavish gallery space and a commitment to purchase over a five year period a 6,000-print portion of the W. Eugene Smith archive at a cost of \$1-million. Located just above Light Gallery in New York, Photograph opened with two large exhibitions of Smith's work. Now, as Photograph's first anniversary show hangs on the walls—again, an exhibition of Smith prints—the gallery is up for sale, and the future of thousands of unsold Smith prints is uncertain.

Courtia Worth, director of Photograph, stated that the gallery's owners, a group of investors led by photographer Ken Heyman, decided to unload the gallery because they were "disappointed with the economic forecast." More specific factors cited by Worth were the expensive \$500,000 start-up cost for renovation and the acquisition of the first batch of Smith prints, an inability to keep ahead of overhead expenses that ran

\$20,000-\$25,000 a month, and the floundering market for photographs.

Photograph's formula had been to show reliable sellers—vintage prints or selections from the supply of Smith pictures—alternately or in combination with contemporary photographs. The latter tended to be work by younger photojournalists with an occasional sprinkling of the "experimental"—by artists such as Benno Friedman, Arthur Ollman, Jill Freedman, Mark Riboud, John Gruen, Barbara Karant, Judy Natal, and Danny Lyon. "We wanted to show people who either hadn't been seen or who hadn't been seen for awhile," Worth said, adding that those decisions often proved less than lucrative. "The market for more contemporary work doesn't seem to be that strong," Worth said, "but I have no problem selling a \$5,000 Smith or a \$4,000 Weston."

Why, then, did Heyman decide to withdraw financial support for the gallery? Exactly what expectations did he and his colleagues have for Photograph's first year? According to Worth, the gallery spent roughly \$750,000

during its 12 months in operation and grossed about \$600,000. Considering the amount that went to refurbishing the Fifth Avenue space and the fact that no investor in his or her right mind would expect a new gallery to show a profit in one year, the action of Heyman's group seems curious. When contacted by *Afterimage*, Heyman refused to comment on the matter.

The Smith estate is also looking for a buyer. According to executor John Morris: "We have a number of negotiations in progress, but for the present, everything is very much up in the air." The prints offered by Photograph are, for the most part, duplicates of some 2600 "master prints" housed at

the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, Ariz. Morris estimates that about 4800 of the prints acquired by Photograph remain unsold.

The demise of Photograph is certain to contribute to existing anxieties about the stability of the commercial gallery structure. Photograph's appearance on the scene, which coincided with Light Gallery's decision to close its West Coast branch and to re-trench its New York operation, seemed to demonstrate that some optimism about the future of the photography market existed somewhere. The sentiment was evidently premature.

—David Trend

LETTERS

RE-KLEINING

To the editor:

There have been many misstatements and misunderstandings regarding William Klein's book which Aperture published in 1981, and I am writing to correct additional misunderstandings which may result from Jan Zita Grover's review in your January 1982 issue of *Afterimage*.

William Klein selected and sequenced the photographs, designed the book, approved the paper and the proofs which were the basis for printing the book, and took control over every aspect of the project with one exception. He did not appear at the printer when the book was produced as we had expected him to do.

—Michael E. Hoffman
Editor-publisher, Aperture
Millerton, N.Y.

Jan Grover replies:

I can well appreciate your concern to have the record, already so confused, clarified on your William Klein book. However, I would like to emphasize that my use of "Aperture's decision," "Aperture printed..." in discussing the editing, layout and production decisions on *William Klein/Photographs* was not done in ignorance of Klein's part in creating the book. Rather, I took issue with the results of those decisions—and those decisions could not have been made without the publisher's consent.

As I attempted to point out in my review, I felt that Klein's audience would have been better served had his photographs been presented in another fashion. The final decision on their formatting rested with Aperture; it seemed only appropriate, then, to rest responsibility in you.

—Jan Zita Grover
Albuquerque, N.M.

WNET GAIN

The Television Lab of WNET/Thirteen in New York City has announced the five artists who will receive production support totaling \$70,000 under WNET's artist-in-residence program. In operation since 1974, the re-granting program, funded by the New York State Council for the Arts with additional support from WNET, received 110 applications this year.

The artists and their projects, to be completed by Oct. 31, 1982, are:

Collis Davis, "to produce *Children of Dessalines*, a portrait of the Haitian boat refugees now in detention in New York State" (\$19,000); Gary Hill, "for post-production of *Primarily Speaking*, a work based on a text constructed from idioms/phrases of everyday speech" (\$11,000); Mitchell Kriegman, "to complete a comic story, *My Neighborhood*,

about a man who claims to know everyone in his neighborhood and everything about it" (\$10,000); Mary Lucier, "to produce *Giverny: Memory of Light*, a work exploring light in landscape during changing times of day and season in relation to memory" (\$15,000); Edin Velez, "to produce *Oblique Strategist: A Portrait of Brian Eno*" (\$15,000).

The initial screening of applications was done by Skip Blumberg, Kit Fitzgerald, Carvin Eison, Lillian Jimenez, Barbara London, and David Shapiro. Based on that group's recommendation, a list of 40 semi-finalists was sent for final review to Carol Brandenburg, director of the artist-in-residence program for the Television Laboratory, and her advisory panel—Pablo Figueroa, John Hanhart, Densie Oliver, and Bob Shea.

INSTANT WAR DRAGS ON

Testimony has ended in the Polaroid versus Kodak patent suit. In arguments that began October 5, 1981, Polaroid claimed that Kodak's introduction of its EK-4 and EK-6 instant cameras and film violated 10 registered patents on Polaroid's SX-70 system, introduced in 1972. (See *Afterimage*, November 1981.) In Boston, U.S. District Court Judge

Rya Zobel has requested lawyers for both sides to submit briefs summing up their arguments by May 14. Polaroid and Kodak will have until July 12 for further responses.

Zobel's decision is not expected until fall, at which time the case will probably be appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court.

VIGILANTE SOCIETY

Stolen Art Alert is a new service that will, among other things, help spot and recover stolen photographs. Primarily funded by Sotheby's, the Jerome Foundation, and the Aetna Insurance Co., Stolen Art Alert will issue to dealers, collectors, museums, insurance agencies, and the police a list describing missing works. It will be published 10

times a year. To file a report, one must include a photocopy of the work, and all pertinent information, including dimensions and any identifying marks.

For further information, write: International Foundation on Art Research, 46 E. 70th St., New York, N.Y.

CORRECTIONS

In "Reading the American Landscape," a consideration of Timothy O'Sullivan's work provoked by Joel Snyder's exhibition and catalogue *American Frontiers: The Photographs of Timothy O'Sullivan*, I neglected in certain instances to give credit where credit was due. The words "change or die," used in reference to the American Civil War and to the geological theory of catastrophism, are Mr. Snyder's. The sentence, "Ruskin believed the best way to express the great ideas he thought inherent in nature was to combine minute scientific examination with an overview," is also derived

from Mr. Snyder's phrasing. I apologize for these oversights, and regret any confusion they may have caused.

—Ann-Sargent Wooster

In the March issue of *Afterimage*, in the listing of photography services to the field grants awarded in 1981 by the National Endowment for the Arts, we neglected to include one grant which was awarded as a Chairman's Action rather than by panel review process. It was a non-matching grant for \$15,000 to Robert Delpire to begin cataloguing the work of Robert Frank.

EUGENE SMITH GRANT

Applications may now be made for the 1982 W. Eugene Smith grant in humanistic photography. Jurors for the award will be Richard Clarkson, assistant managing editor for graphics of the *Denver Post*; John G. Morris,

executor of the Smith estate and former picture editor of the *New York Times*; and Robert Pledge, president of Contact Press Images. The amount of this year's grant has been raised to \$15,000. Winners of the two previous Smith grants were Jane Evelyn Atwood (1980) and Eugene Richards (1981). Application forms may be obtained by writing the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund, 170 West End Ave., New York, N.Y. 10023. The deadline is June 15, 1982.

COVER: *Untitled* (1982), by MANUAL. See "Wringing the Goose's Neck One Last Time, or, Painting vs. Photography and the Deconstruction of Modernism," by Suzanne Bloom and Ed Hill, page 9.

CONTENTS

Letters page 2

News

NEW YORK'S PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY PUT UP FOR SALE

by David Trend page 2

COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY ROUNDUP: KODAK, COLD STORAGE, AND CONFERENCES by David Trend page 3

Features

AARON SISKIND AND THE PHOTO LEAGUE: A PARTIAL HISTORY by Anne Tucker page 4

ARTISTS' BOOKS: ALTERNATIVE SPACE OR PRECIOUS OBJECT? by Martha Gever page 6

WRINGING THE GOOSE'S NECK ONE LAST TIME, OR, PAINTING VS. PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE DECONSTRUCTION OF MODERNISM by Suzanne Bloom and Ed Hill page 9

Reviews

MANHATTAN SHORT CUTS by Ann-Sargent Wooster page 15

NUKES AND COMMIES by Marita Sturken page 16

A MIXED BLESSING by Lucinda Furlong page 17

RECEIVED AND NOTED page 19

Growing Season: Summer Workshops

page 21

Sources and Notices page 22

Afterimage is published monthly, except July, August, and September (nine issues) by the Visual Studies Workshop for its members. Editorial and membership offices: 31 Prince St., Rochester, New York. (716) 442-8676. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y. *Afterimage* (ISSN 0300-7472). May 1982, vol. 9, no. 10. Membership in the Visual Studies Workshop is available for \$20.00 per year in the U.S. and \$24.00 per year elsewhere. *Afterimage* is indexed and abstracted by the *International Repertory of the Literature of Art*, and supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Museum Services (both federal agencies), the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. © Visual Studies Workshop 1982.

Board of trustees, Visual Studies Workshop: William Parker (chairman), Carl Chiarenza, Estelle Jussim, Arthur Kramer, Eric Larrabee, Aaron Siskind, Henry Holmes Smith, Anne Tucker, Stan VanderBeek, John Wood. **Honorary members:** Robert Forth, Robert Frank. **Director, Visual Studies Workshop and editor, Afterimage:** Nathan Lyons. **Associate editor (features, reviews):** Catherine Lord. **Managing editor (design, business, news):** David Trend. **Assistant editors:** Lucinda Furlong, Martha Gever. **Book reviews coordinator:** Don Russell. **Correspondents:** Anthony Bannon (Buffalo), Jan Grover (New Mexico), Carole Harmel (Chicago), Mark Johnstone (Los Angeles), James Kaufmann (Midwest), Stephen Perloff (Philadelphia), Marita Sturken (New York). **Editorial staff:** Patricia Byrne, David Creek, Joseph Vitone, Carl R. Yusavitz. **Production staff:** Lisa Bolstad, Ruth Cowing, Cecily Dunham, Greg Eri, Scott McCarney, Ed Reed, Michael Yampolsky. **Membership and retail sales:** Nancy Stalaker Norwood, William Beeney. **Typographer:** Linda Ruhlen Pickett.

Afterimage is typeset on a Mergenthaler digital CRTronic at the Visual Studies Workshop Press.