

KEITH DE LELLIS
GALLERY

FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

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**MID-CENTURY AMERICAN:
VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE
INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY YEAR BOOK**

APRIL 12 – JUNE 15, 2016

As a photo editor for the *British Journal of Photography*, the *Photography Year Book*, and *The Times* of London, Norman Hall helped to elevate photography to the respected art form that it is today. Hall served as an editor of the *Photography Year Book* from 1954 to 1963. Through his careful curation of this yearly publication, Hall celebrated established and emerging photographers alike for their ability to "record the truth, not just because of any natural regard for principle but because they know that people who see photographs like to believe them" (Hall, *Photography Year Book*, 1962). This exhibition features American photographers' images from Hall's collection of works submitted to *Photography Year Book*. A true photographers' publication, images were submitted and printed with full technical details on equipment, exposure, and development.

Many of the photographs in this exhibition, and the majority of Hall's selections for publication, focus on human interest. From fashion shoot outtakes to *LIFE* magazine assignments, many of these images were made for the printed page, to be featured in magazines and newspapers, but Hall and his audience valued them as works of art. The photographs in his collection provide a glimpse into the mid-century mindset of America and the larger world. He considered photography to be "the one true international language," (Hall, *Photography Year Book*, 1962) with the ability to reveal the similarities between people across the globe.

Reminiscent of Steichen's groundbreaking *Family of Man* exhibition – and indeed featuring some of the same artists – Hall's collection attempts an encyclopedic sampling of photographic styles and subjects. The American photographers captured universal moments that took place in their own homes and on unfamiliar streets. Many of the images were part of a series or photographic essay, and Hall chose the most appealing and thoughtful photographs for his books.

At this time, the proliferation of photographic magazines such as *LIFE* helped to create a wider audience for photography. On the gallery walls, one will find acclaimed professional photographers such as Ansel Adams, Ruth Bernhard, Louis Stettner, and Bob Willoughby. In addition, as in Hall's publications, the works of lesser-known photographers are featured alongside those of the established image-makers, and prove to be of equal technical and conceptual quality.

Mid-Century American will be on view at the Keith de Lellis Gallery through June 15, 2018.

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