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#ExpoShunkKender

Harry Shunk and János Kender
Autoportrait
Italie, around 1966
© Centre Pompidou/MNAM-CCI/Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Fonds Harry Shunk et Shunk-Kender, don Roy Lichtenstein Foundation (2014).
Photothèque RMN-Grand Palais

PRESS RELEASE

SHUNK-KENDER

ART THROUGH THE LENS, 1957-1983

27 MARCH – 5 AUGUST 2019

GALERIE DE PHOTOGRAPHIES, FORUM -1

From 27 March, the Galerie de Photographies at the Centre Pompidou will be playing host to an exhibition dedicated to the joint work of photographers Harry Shunk (1924-2006) and János Kender (1937-2009). The images by both artists of Paris and New York are a priceless record of art from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.

The photographs are a precious documentary source and also true works of art created by the unique vision of Shunk and Kender. This exhibition highlights some of the 500 artists photographed by the duo in original contexts.

Harry Shunk and János Kender first met in Paris in 1957 and quickly joined forces, undertaking commissions for artists and their gallerists. The duo immortalised artistic events in Paris, such as exhibitions and performances, but they also photographed artists at work, either in the studio or at home. In fact, Shunk and Kender got incredibly close to the artists they documented, as is evident throughout the exhibition from the portraits of Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg, all of whom allowed them to get up close and personal, and not just in their studios but also everywhere else that art emerged and flourished.

The duo quickly became close to Pierre Restany and the New Realists, and also made friends with Yves Klein. This relationship produced thousands of shots: Klein and his fire paintings, Klein and the anthropometries, Klein in his private domain, etc. **but, above all, the famous photomontage *Leap into the void* (1960), many of the draft elements of which are on show here.**

Harry Shunk and János Kender also captured images of Niki de Saint Phalle during her shooting sessions, Daniel Spoerri's dinners, and Jean Tinguely and Aman's collections of objects.

They also trained their lens on the poster-ripping of Jacques Villeglé and Raymond Hains, as well as Andy Warhol's first visit to Paris, thus producing photographic records of rare moments.

Shunk and Kender, through their presence at parties, exhibitions such as the Venice and Paris biennials, as well as those organised by the Ileana Sonnabend and Iris Clert galleries, revealed an entire social scene via their photographs. At that time, gallerists built the reputations of artists, who were occupying a new place in the public sphere and at events, and who received exposure and credibility via the duo's photographs.

In 1967, Shunk and Kender followed Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely to Montreal, before moving on to New York, where they were taken in by Claes Oldenburg, whom they had met in Paris during his first exhibition at the Sonnabend Gallery in 1964. Thus, they frequented the American art world working for the alternative press of the day, such as *Other Scenes*, and documenting the great pioneering exhibitions of that time, like *Software* at the Jewish Museum of New York (1970). Also in New York, the duo photographed performances by Yayoi Kusama and Nam June Paik, choreography by Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham, and even the packages and wrapped objects of Christo and Jeanne-Claude.

Finally, at a time when artists were taking over disused industrial buildings as communal living and working spaces, where different art forms intersected and artistic experiences expanded, Willoughby Sharp (1936–2008), co-founder of *Avalanche* magazine, turned to Shunk and Kender to document one of his projects, *Projects: Pier 18*. Performances and installations by 27 artists hand-picked by Willoughby Sharp ran throughout the winter of 1970–71 at one of New York's abandoned docks.

Projects: Pier 18 was shown at MOMA during the summer of 1971. There, Shunk and Kender photographed works created by John Baldessari, Dan Graham, Gordon Matta-Clark, Vito Acconci, Lawrence Weiner, Mario Merz, Daniel Buren, etc.

The images produced by Shunk and Kender in both Paris and New York depict a bountiful artistic context. On both sides of the Atlantic, the duo's photographs helped build the profile of the photographed artist and make transitory works more widely known.

In 2008, the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation acquired the duo's photographs, which it then shared in the form of donations to the Centre Pompidou and several other major institutions. Thanks to how well this archive has been preserved, this exhibition truly captures the zeitgeist of the period: a generation preoccupied with sexual and artistic liberation, constantly on the lookout for new and alternative spaces in which to create and spread the word, under the watchful and complicit eye of this duo.

PRATICAL INFORMATION

PRESS VISIT

TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2019
11AM - 1PM

THE EXHIBITION

CURATORS

Julie Jones, Curator, Cabinet of Photography, National Museum of Modern Art
Stéphanie Rivoire, Head of the Funds and Collections Division, Kandinsky Library
Chloé Goualc'h, Archivist, Fonds et collections division, Kandinsky Library

ADMISSION AND PRICES

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Access: metro Hôtel de Ville and Rambuteau, RER Châtelet-Les-Halles.

Opening times: every day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., except Tuesdays and May 1st.

Price: free access

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GALERIE 0, LEVEL 4

HARRY SHUNK

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GALERIE DE PHOTOGRAPHIES,
LEVEL -1

JOS HOUWELING

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