

MARC SELWYN FINE ART

Figures in Transformation: Harry Callahan & Robert Heinecken
January 14 – February 18, 2017



Robert Heinecken, *Soft Head (Proof #1)*, 1964
Harry Callahan, *Eleanor*, Chicago, 1948

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is pleased to announce *Figures in Transformation* featuring Harry Callahan and Robert Heinecken. This exhibition will focus on how the two artists' surprisingly parallel approaches to the female figure illuminate their common techniques and conceptual concerns. While the results are often elegant and seductive, both artists conduct radical experiments with abstraction, heightened contrast, motion, appropriation and projection, challenging preconceived notions about the production of photographic images and the sanctity of the negative itself.

As Luke Batten, Director of the Heinecken Estate explains:

“Harry Callahan, the photographer and Robert Heinecken, the appropriator, are two artists we do not normally speak of in the same breath. On closer inspection, as artists and teachers, they shared similar agendas in their use of the camera and a variety of experimental actions. Each artist reveled in the malleability of the positive and negative image through a series of compelling bodies of work. The joy of this exhibition has been selecting classic images of both artists with Marc Selwyn and adding unexpected, lesser known works. These images reveal a hidden Callahan who expanded his practice in the mid-1960s by appropriating nudes and “pin-ups” from the very sources we often associate with Heinecken. At the same time, we reveal the earliest images created by Robert Heinecken where Callahan’s influence and pioneering work a decade earlier enabled Heinecken to stretch the boundaries of his photographic practice. With both artists, we see a re-imagining of how the physical negative can function and an explosion of newfound freedoms. The negative becomes a point of departure for experimentation instead of a sacred object, and that is their liberation.”

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Harry Callahan (1912-1999) began photographing as an untrained amateur in 1938 while working for the Chrysler Motor Parts Corporation. After attending a lecture and workshop by Ansel Adams in 1941, and a meeting with Alfred Stieglitz in 1942, Callahan decided to devote his energies to photography. In 1946, Callahan's talent was noticed by the Museum of Modern Art for his first exhibition and soon he was invited to teach at the Institute of Design in Chicago (formerly known as the New Bauhaus) by Laszlo Moholoy-Nagy. After 15 years in Chicago, he moved to the Rhode Island School of Design to establish the photography department where he would remain until his retirement in 1977. Callahan's work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions at institutions such as Museum of Modern Art, New York, Centre Pompidou, Paris, National Gallery of Art, Washington and Center for Creative Photography, Arizona. Additionally, Callahan is included in significant museums worldwide, such as Art Institute of Chicago, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen and Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, among others.

Robert Heinecken (1931-2006) pushed the boundaries of the photographic medium, breaking through aesthetic and technical limitations of the genre. As the New York Times wrote in the artist's 2006 obituary: "Instead of treating photographs as the autonomous creations of their makers, as did Ansel Adams and other postwar tastemakers, he viewed them as forms of cultural iconography that reflected the commercialism and venality of contemporary life. Heinecken attended the University of California at Los Angeles where he received his master's degree in 1960. The University hired him as a professor of photography where he remained for 31 years. In 1963, he founded the photography department at UCLA and helped found the Society for Photographic Education in 1964, serving as chairman in 1970 and 1971. In 2007 Heinecken's work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago and a 35-year retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1999) that toured to the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art that same year. Most recently Heinecken had a museum retrospective *Object Matter* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2014, which travelled to The Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles CA.

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. For additional information, please contact Alisun Woolery at (310) 277-9953 or Alisun@marcselwynfineart.com.