

Press Release

**A RETROSPECTIVE IN ROME CELEBRATES
THE LIFE AND WORK OF AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER
MILTON GENDEL IN TWO EXHIBITIONS**

MILTON GENDEL: A SURREAL LIFE

Museo Carlo Bilotti – Aranciera di Villa Borghese, Rome
5 October 2011 – 8 January 2012

MILTON GENDEL: PORTRAITS

American Academy in Rome
19 October – 30 November 2011



Milton Gendel, *Leo Castelli*, New York, 1982

Rome – The first complete retrospective dedicated to the career of American photographer and art critic Milton Gendel (b. 1918) will take place in Rome at the **Museo Carlo Bilotti from 5 October 2011 to 8 January 2012** and at the **American Academy in Rome from 19 October – 30 November 2011**. Both exhibitions are curated by Peter Benson Miller, Barbara Drudi and Alberta Campitelli.

The primary focus of the retrospective is Gendel's sophisticated artistic sensibility as it has developed in the medium of photography over the last half century. *Milton Gendel: A Surreal Life* comprises a display of eighty-five autograph photographs and will be complemented by several of his drawings and prints from his time in the Surrealist orbit. Also included are works by artists in Gendel's circle, including Alberto Burri, Toti Scialoja, Tancredi, Afro, Ettore Colla, Mimmo Rotella, Jean Hélion, Robert Motherwell, Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning, John Rudge and Stanley William Hayter.

The works will be exhibited together with documents and objects from Gendel's archive, which underline his friendships and close collaborations with these artists.

The retrospective traces Gendel's work from his affiliation with the Surrealist exiles in New York in the 1940s though his long-time connection to Italy, where he has lived and worked for over sixty years. There, he has remained an important catalyst for the exchanges between American and Italian art as the Rome correspondent for *ART News*, among other publications. Gendel helped found The *Rome –New York Art Foundation* – located on the Tiber Island in the gallery space beneath Gendel's own apartment – a cornerstone of the fertile art scene in the Italian capital between 1958 and 1962. In fact, the *Rome New York Art Foundation* and Gendel himself were so closely associated with the international avant-garde in Rome in the late 1950s that director Michelangelo Antonioni filmed the opening scenes of his groundbreaking *L'Avventura* (1960) in Gendel's apartment.

Reasserting Rome as an important cultural laboratory during the postwar period, Gendel's photographs are also profoundly marked by Gendel's origins as a Surrealist. Witty photographs depict the inhabitants, fountains, markets, architecture, and environs of Rome, as well as other areas of Italy. Imbued with the seductive flavor of the *dolce vita*, they often capture chance encounters and odd juxtapositions, removing objects and people from their familiar surroundings.

The exhibition also presents two important, but less well-known episodes in Gendel's career. While serving in China and on the island of Formosa (present day Taiwan) in 1945-46 in the immediate aftermath of World War II, Gendel photographed traditional customs and daily routines in the midst of social and political turmoil; he also documented the mass repatriation of Japanese soldiers and civilians. Indebted to Gendel's confident eye, these photographs comprise a rare photographic essay by a foreigner in China during the period; they make their first appearance in this exhibition and catalogue. In 1950, Gendel traveled to Sicily with Marjory Collins, who was commissioned by the U.S. State Department to photograph the infrastructure constructed under the Marshall Plan. Inflected by documentary photography as well as masterpieces of neo-realist Italian cinema, Gendel's images of agricultural workers and market scenes in Sicily record customs that disappeared shortly thereafter.

The exhibition ***Milton Gendel: Portraits***, which runs from 19 October until 30 November at the American Academy in Rome, will present a selection of iconic portraits, further evidence of Gendel's lasting friendships with artists, writers, and notable collectors. These include such figures as architect Philip Johnson, artists Alighiero Boetti, Enzo Cucchi, Willem de Kooning and his wife Elaine, Piero Dorazio, Salvador Dalí, Fabio Mauri, and Maurizio Mocchetti; collectors Peggy Guggenheim, Giuseppe Panza di Biumo, and John Paul Getty; critics and historians Harold Acton, André Chastel, John Pope Hennessy, Tom Hess, Mario Praz, and Sacheverell Sitwell; art dealer Leo Castell; writers Patrick Leigh Fermor, Georgina Masson, Iris Origo, Eugenio Scalfari, and Evelyn Waugh; as well as royals, aristocrats and socialites Anna Laetitia Pecci Blunt, Lady Diana Cooper, Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Margaret, Lord Snowdon and André Leon Talley.

Both exhibitions will be accompanied by a handsomely illustrated catalogue, in separate English and Italian editions, edited by Peter Benson Miller and Barbara Drudi, designed by Büro Sieveking, and published by Hatje Cantz Verlag in Ostfildern, Germany. Featuring texts by Peter Benson Miller, Barbara Drudi, Alberta Campitelli, Lindsay Harris, and Marella Caracciolo Chia, the catalogue will explore the diverse aspects of Gendel's fascinating career and his enduring relationship to the Eternal City.

The exhibition is organized by Zètema Progetto Cultura with the patronage of the United States Embassy in Italy, the Embassy of Italy to the United States, and the American Academy in Rome, and is promoted by Roma Capitale, Assessorato alle Politiche Culturali e Centro Storico – Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali.

Images Available Upon Request

INFORMATION

Exhibition	Milton Gendel: A Surreal Life
Venue	Museo Carlo Bilotti-Aranciera di Villa Borghese Rome Viale Fiorello La Guardia
Dates	5 October 2011 - 8 January 2012
Opening hours	Tuesday through Sunday 9am – 7pm; ticket office closes at 6:30pm; Closed Mondays
Admission	Full price 8€; Reduced 7€ (reductions and no fee tickets granted in accordance with Italian legislation)
Information	+39 060608 (Every day from 9am to 9pm) www.museocarlobilotti.it
Press	Zètema Progetto Cultura, Fabiana Magri +39 06 82077386 +390340 4206813; f.magri@zetema.it

Exhibition	Milton Gendel: Portraits
Venue	American Academy in Rome Via Angelo Masina, 5
Dates	19 October - 30 November 2011
Opening hours	Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from 5pm to 8pm
Admission	No fee
Information	+39 06 584 6431; www.aarome.org
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