

PRESS RELEASE

ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ, ARNE SVENSON: A ma fenêtre

14 December 2018 - 16 February 2019



André Kertész  
August 17, 1981  
Polaroid SX-70



André Kertész  
August 16, 1979  
Polaroid SX-70



André Kertész  
September 8, 1979  
Polaroid SX-70



Arne Svenson  
Neighbors #12, 2012  
Pigment print  
101,2cm x 65cm



Arne Svenson  
Neighbors #57, 2012  
Pigment print  
112 cm x 75cm

## ANDRE KERTESZ, ARNE SVENSON: *A ma fenêtre*

*Exhibition from 14 December 2018 - 16 February 2019*

This exhibition takes its title from the first French publication of the Kertész Polaroid series: *A ma fenêtre* (Editions Herscher, 1981) and presents two different bodies of work taken in the same city by artists of two generations: André Kertész and Arne Svenson.

**New York city, 1979:** aged 84, André Kertész was emotionally and physically exhausted after the recent death of his beloved wife and lifelong companion Elizabeth. To distract him from his grief, a friend offered him a Polaroid SX-70 camera and, for the next 6 years, the master of black and white photography used it to produce a last great body of work. Taken in his Manhattan apartment just north of Washington Square, many of the photographs were shot either from his window or on the windowsill. Arranging personal objects into delicate, crafted still lives that evoked his love for Elizabeth, Kertész found solace in the little camera and its immediate color prints in which amateurs of his celebrated black and white photography would recognize certain compositional features; nuances of light, form and depth of field, and occasional references to his earlier 'distortions'.

**New York city, 2012:** 33 years later, a younger Arne Svenson would also work from his Manhattan apartment window, recording the living tableaux in the apartments opposite whose window frames were like stage wings with actors ceaselessly entering and leaving the scene. Svenson never photographed faces, preferring a choreography of nameless, archetypal bodies and their interplay with the architecture framing them: the turn of a head, the graceful arc of a hand, the human form barely discernable behind tall curtains. Entitled 'The Neighbors', the series was published in 2015 with a preface by David Ebony.

In the Kertész Polaroid series, the artist's gaze is inward-looking and almost indifferent to the urban landscape outside; it is a backdrop for the tiny still lives crafted by the great photographer that resemble ex-votos on an altar. In contrast, Svenson's large format portraits document the lives unfolding before his eyes. Looking through his window into the dusty windows opposite, Svenson's painterly compositions capture 'still lives', or fragments of stillness and grace in this eternally bustling city.

### **Artiste biography: André KERTESZ (1894-1985)**

Hungarian born photographer André Kertész's artistic career began in 1912 and spanned 73 years. Initially training for a career in the financial world, in 1925 Kertész moved to Paris to fulfill his dream of pursuing a career as a photographer. After a short period of both artistic and personal struggle, his pioneering vision brought him great success and his approach to the medium helped to define the shape of photojournalism in Europe, and subsequently America. In 1936 he left Paris for New York with his wife Elizabeth. Yet from the beginning, his career in the United States proved problematic and his vision, personality, and artistic temperament never found a home there. Unable to return to Europe after the outbreak of WWII, Kertész struggled as he was not able to find steady work through freelancing. In 1947 he finally secured a staff position working for *House & Garden* where he languished for 15 years creating architectural photographs. Although adored by Conde Nast for shaping the look of the magazine, Kertész defined this period as his "lost years."

In 1962, at the age of 68 and deeply embittered by his lack of artistic and commercial success in America, Kertész chose to not renew his magazine contract in order to pursue his art. For the next 23 years, and while his wife Elizabeth's business blossomed, Kertész photographed with the enthusiasm of his early years in Hungary and France. By the mid-1970s, he had reestablished himself as a major figure in the fledgling fine art photography world.

In 1976, just as Kertész's reputation began to soar, his wife Elizabeth fell ill with lung cancer that she battled bravely before succumbing in 1977. Grief stricken, Kertész turned in 1979 to the Polaroid SX-70 camera to express his pain and sadness. By the time Kertész passed away in 1985 his work was honored by artists and photographers and collected by museums and galleries around the world.

### **Artist biography: Arne SVENSON (b. 1952)**

Born in Santa Monica (California) and resident of New York City, Arne Svenson has explored numerous and varied photographic subjects and their expression with a consistent underlying quest for the essence and quietude of subjects, whether they be human, inanimate, or something in between. Svenson is a self-taught photographer with an educational and vocational background in special education. His photographs have been shown extensively in the United States and Europe and are included in numerous public and private collections, including SFMOMA, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Carnegie Museum of Art, and Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. He has obtained grants and awards including the Nancy Graves Foundation Grant (2008) and the James D. Phelan Art Award in Photography (2005). In 2016 Svenson received the Nannen Prize for *The Neighbors* project. He has published several books including *Unspeaking Likeness*, *The Neighbors*, *Prisoners*, and *Sock Monkeys (200 out of 1,863)* and his work was recently exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (*The Neighbors*, 2016) and Western Gallery, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington (2017).

### Galerie Miranda

Inaugurated in March 2018, Galerie Miranda is situated in Paris' vibrant 10th arrondissement at 21 rue du Château d'Eau, close to the Place de la République and 100 metres from the former site, on rue Léon Jouhaux, of Louis Daguerre's wonderful Diorama and laboratory, destroyed by fire in 1839. Art gallery and bookshop specialized in photography, Galerie Miranda is founded by Miranda Salt, Australian who has lived and worked in the 10th arrondissement of Paris since her arrival in France in 1995. The gallery presents international artists who are established in their own country but who have had little exposure in France and Europe, as well as lesser-known bodies of work by well-known artists. The first cycle of exhibitions was inaugurated on International Women's Day and featured prominent women artists Jo Ann Callis, Nancy Wilson-Pajic, Marina Berio and Ellen Carey. The gallery also proposes a curated selection of books in French and English: monographs, artist books, critical texts, biographies and catalogues on photography published by quality publishing houses.

*Galerie Miranda thanks Stephen Bulger gallery (Toronto) and the Estate of André Kertész (NY) for allowing the precious Kertész works to travel to Paris for this exhibition.*

### **Galerie Miranda**

21 rue du Château d'Eau

75010 Paris FRANCE

Tuesday-Saturday 12:00-19:00 or by appointment

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### **PROGRAM 2018-2019**

26 October - 8 December 2018

**CALIFORNIA/MISSISSIPPI : John Chiara**

14 December - 16 February 2019

**A MA FENETRE : André Kertész, Arne Svenson**

22 February - 13 April 2019

**DIRTY WINDOWS: Merry Alpern**

19 April- 8 June 2019

**WOMEN IN COLOUR : Group exhibition**