

# RENA BRANSTEN

## GALLERY

### ***Louis Stettner: Photographs***

**March 2 – April 27, 2019**

**Reception March 2, 5-7pm**

Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to announce our first solo exhibition of photographer Louis Stettner (1922-2016). Coinciding with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's retrospective *Louis Stettner: Traveling Light*, curated by Clément Cheroux's (through May 26, 2019), the works in this exhibition represent fifty years of Stettner's prolific career and illustrate many of his most frequented subjects: people in pairs, workers, bodies in transit and rest, and cityscapes. Originally from Brooklyn, Stettner spent much of his life in his adopted home of Paris and his photographs reflect a deep love of both cities. The pleasure Stettner gleaned from roaming the streets in search of images is clear in the work, and the photographs chosen for this exhibition have been sequenced in celebration of that visual journey.

People in couples and pairs pervade Stettner's photographs; born an identical twin, there is a clear sense that he lived always with the awareness of another half. Clément Chéroux states in the introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue *Traveling Light* "This doubling is too pervasive in Stettner's work to be simple coincidence; indeed it is hard to see anything else in them than the poetic transposition of his own experience as a twin." Stettner had a seemingly endless fascination with photographing humans, interacting with each other or in solitary moments, and an acute ability for capturing small acts of tenderness.

Louis Stettner's lifelong dedication to representing the world around him as he saw it in the present moment produced a significant body of images and critical writing. His photographs are informed by his experiences and politics – shaped by having grown up during the depression, observing the fervent antisemitism and the rise of totalitarianism of the thirties and forties, then experiencing the devastation of war as an army photographer and being present at Hiroshima shortly after the atom bomb. Stettner's work demonstrates sympathy for social and economic justice, and manifests in his commitment to photographing common people, workers and disenfranchised members of society. He was active with the Photo League of New York, an influential cooperative of photographers founded in the 1930s, with members including Weegee, Helen Levitt, and Robert Frank.

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Stettner's work has been exhibited extensively internationally, including shows at Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Pompidou, Paris; Whitney Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and is held in several major private and public collections. He died in Paris in 2016.