

JOHN COHEN
THE 10th STREET ART WORLD, 1957- 1963

December 2, 2016 – February 11, 2017



Alfred Leslie Carrying Painting, 1959



Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg, 1959



Tanager Gallery Opening, 1959

L. Parker Stephenson Photographs is pleased to present an exhibition of **vintage and early photographs** by John Cohen that capture the creativity of **the most pivotal period in American art of the twentieth century**. Cohen's intimate views from the late 1950s and early 1960s bear witness to the vibrant and overlapping communities of **artists, filmmakers, poets** and **performers** active at the time in New York City. His recently published book, ***Cheap Rents... and de Kooning*** (Steidl, 2016) provides further context to the scene. Please join us for an **opening reception and book signing with the artist on Thursday, December 1st from 6-8pm.**

**. . . New York's Tenth Street is to the twentieth century
what Paris was to the nineteenth: the art center of the world.**

– Gene Lichtenstein for *Esquire*, September, 1959

After WWII, energized by inexpensive and available real estate, a hybrid community of artists, musicians and writers cohabited along New York's East 10th Street. **Abstract Expressionists** Philip Guston and Franz Kline mingled at nearby **Cedar Tavern** with Mercedes Matter, Aaron Siskind, James Brooks and Jack Tworkov. Art News editor Thomas Hess led lively discussions at The Artists' Club. Exhibition openings at nascent artist-run spaces like **Tanager, Reuben, Brata and March galleries** were brimming with artists, critics and historians. Poets Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso romped to the rhythm of Jack Kerouac's lyrics while gallerist Richard Bellamy and painter Alice Neel posed piously for Robert Frank's camera in his and Alfred Leslie's now iconic **Beat** film, *Pull My Daisy*. Allan Kaprow and Red Grooms staged early **Happenings** with Claes Oldenburg, Lucas Samaras, Bob Thompson, and Mary Frank engaging with eager audiences.

John Cohen (b. 1932) was a witness to this extraordinary era of experimentation and transition as well as a participant. After graduating from Yale University School of Art in 1957 (studying under Herbert Matter and Josef Albers), Cohen settled around the corner from Tanager Gallery on East 10th Street, across a courtyard from Willem de Kooning and next door to Robert and Mary Frank. In Jed Perl's words, Cohen produced a "definitive photographic impression of a hell-bent, headstrong time" as one of a new generation of photographers "mixing gritty stylizations of film noir with a Dadaist playfulness". *

Cohen's archive of films, photographs, music recordings, and other historic ephemera was acquired by the **Library of Congress** in 2011. His photographs reside in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, the Morgan Library and Museum, the New York Public Library, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, and in the Victoria and Albert Museum, among many other notable museums. Eight monographs of Cohen's work on Peru, Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie, Kentucky and the roots of American folk music have been published in recent years by Steidl. Signed copies are available at the Gallery.

Coinciding with the Gallery's exhibition, New York University's **Grey Art Gallery** will present ***Inventing Downtown: Artist-Run Galleries in New York City 1952-1965***, an exhibition and accompanying catalog, both of which feature Cohen's work. In addition, **Anthology Film Archives** will host a **two-day program of Cohen's films, January 28th-29th**. This past summer the **Centre Pompidou** in Paris included two dozen of Cohen's *Pull My Daisy* photographs in its ***Beat Generation*** exhibition which opens at the Center for Art and Media - **ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany** this month.

* Perl, Jed. *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century*. Knopf, 2005.

For additional information or to request images, please contact the Gallery at +1 212 517-8700 or by email at info@lparkerstephenson.nyc