

Susan Eley  
Fine Art

YOUNG IN THE HAMPTONS

Photographs of the 1950s & 1960s by John Jonas Gruen

September 18-October 31, 2013

Opening Reception: Wednesday, September 18, 6-8 pm

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“How good it was to be young and in the Hamptons!” writes John Jonas Gruen, who was indeed young and in the Hamptons during the golden years of the 1950s and 1960s. Gruen, a leading photographer and art and music critic of the age, documented this mythical era with hundreds of black and white photographs of legendary painters, poets, actors, musicians, composers and conductors, taken over many summers throughout these decades. Young, sexy and carefree, these were the towering figures in their fields, before they even knew that they were. These were the artists who gave birth to the painting movement of Abstract Expressionism, the literary style known as the New York School of Poets and the Minimalism of mid century composers.

Selections from this photography series have been shown in galleries in Southampton and Miami, but this upcoming exhibition at Susan Eley Fine Art will be the first showing in a New York City gallery of these portraits as an entity. The some 45 photographs--on view from September 18-October 31, 2013--have been carefully selected with Gruen and his assistant/co-editor Sam Swasey. Many of the images were published in 2003 in the book *Young In the Hamptons*, and the Whitney Museum of American Art owns about 300 images from the series.

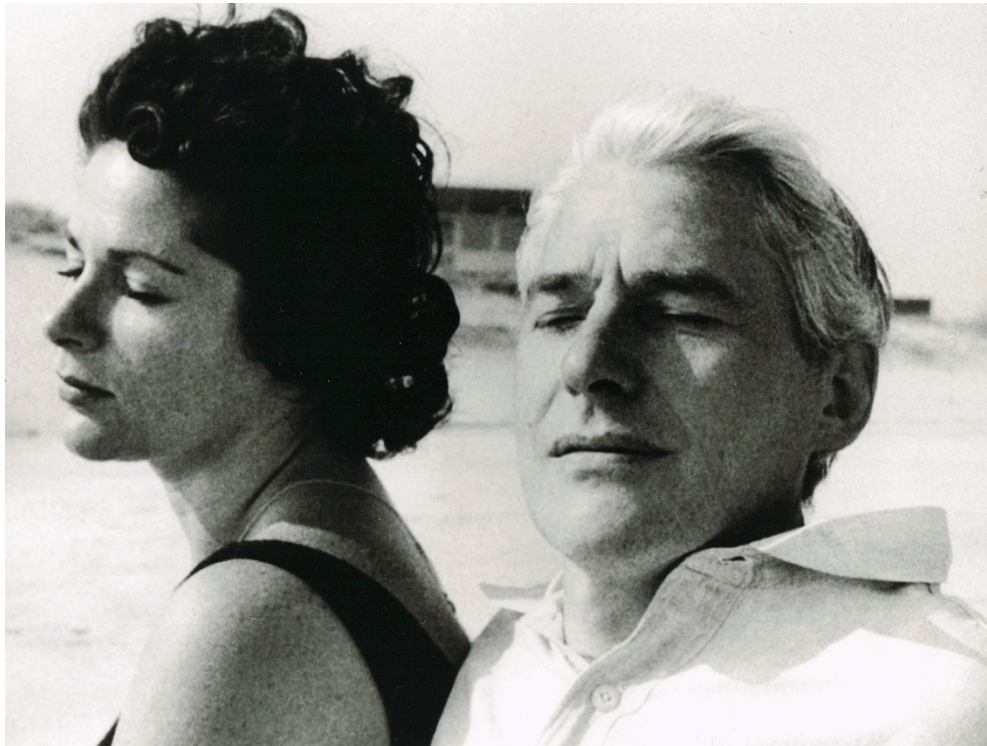
Among the subjects featured are painters Willem de Kooning, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, Larry Rivers; poets Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler; playwright Edward Albee; composer Leonard Bernstein; pianists Robert Fizdale and Arthur Gold; acting teacher Stella Adler and art dealer Tibor de Nagy. Gruen chooses not to show us these great figures toiling solo in front of their canvases, typewriters or at their pianos, but instead, with friends, lovers or spouses, reveling in their magical Hamptons' moments. Gruen reveals days filled with beachgoing, cocktails and croquet on the lawn, lounging and laughing with cigarettes and drinks. They are shown embracing, playing at the beach and sitting side-by-side on the wicker furniture with tousled hair, sun-kissed skin and broad smiles.

While Gruen was witness and observer to it all, he was also one of them. At this time he was an art and music critic for *The New York Herald Tribune* and also began his passionate pursuit of black and white portrait photography. He developed this love of photography at his previous job with the French firm Rapho-Guillumette as an agent for French and American photographers.

Many of the photographs were taken at Gruen's summer home in Water Mill, which he and his wife, artist Jane Wilson, purchased in 1960 with funds from Wilson's sale of a large painting to MoMA through Tibor de Nagy Gallery. Gruen and Wilson enjoyed the camaraderie of being with like-minded artists, breaking ground together, sharing ideas and forging new paths. This was a time of true cross-fertilization, professionally and socially. "We drank, we smoked, we made love," as Gruen recalls with great nostalgia, and even greater esteem for his beloved family and friends.



Julia's Third Birthday, Water Mill, 1961



Ruth Kligman and Willem De Kooning, Water Mill, NY, Flying Point Beach 1959





Kenward Elmslie and Jane Wilson, Westhampton, 1966