

Deborah Bell Photographs

PRESS RELEASE

Marvin Lazarus Portraits of Artists 1950s-1960s January 15 - March 21, 2026

Deborah Bell Photographs presents an exhibition of portraits of artists from 1950s and 1960s by the self-taught photographer Marvin P. Lazarus (American, 1918-1982). The exhibition features 37 vintage prints of artists in their studios, including Alexander Archipenko, Millton Avery, James Brooks, Stuart Davis, Giorgio de Chirico, Willem de Kooning, Marcel Duchamp, Jimmy Ernst, Philip Evergood, Fritz Glarner, Adolph Gottlieb, Philip Guston, Hans Hofmann, Jack Levine, Man Ray, Joan Mitchell, Evsa Model, Louise Nevelson, Barnett Newman, Isamu Noguchi, Robert Rauschenberg, Ad Reinhardt, Milton Resnick & Gino Severini. All prints are vintage gelatin silver prints made by the photographer and have not been exhibited for some 20 years.

Lazarus was a lawyer and Assistant Attorney General of New York State who left his legal practice in 1962 to become a full-time photographer. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Lazarus would break away from his Manhattan office in order to photograph artists whose work he admired. He would plan his vacations in Europe around artists he wished to photograph. Many of these portraits of American and European painters and sculptors of the Abstract Expressionist and Pop Art eras were published during the 1960s and 1970s in prominent exhibition catalogues, artists' monographs, and art journals. In 2004 a selection of his photographs was featured in the exhibition *Side by Side* at the Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, New York.

In the feature about Lazarus published in the Fall 2004 issue of the journal *Esopus*, Founding Editor Tod Lippy writes:

...in 1958, Lazarus picked up a copy of Rudi Blesh's Modern Art USA. It featured profiles of various New York artists, from the European émigrés who had arrived in the city before World War II to the Abstract Expressionists whom they influenced (and who made New York the undisputed center of the postwar art world). The book galvanized Lazarus: "I decided then and there that I would photograph them, so people like me would not think of artists only as legendary names living in exotic places like Paris." ... From 1959 to 1962, when he decided to leave his law practice and become a full-time photographer, Lazarus kept a journal. In it, he

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recounts many of the conversations he had with artists during their sittings, often revealing glimpses into their personalities, creative philosophies, and working methods.

For example, Lazarus's journal entry for May 19, 1960 relates his impressions of Marcel Duchamp, whom he photographed often:

Visited Marcel Duchamp to show him the pictures. I was pleased that he liked them, so I gave him a whole set, which I think he appreciated. [Duchamp's hands] are never still, but they are seemingly never in motion. They glide from one arm to the other; they are suddenly clasped together. In a moment he is leaning his face on an outstretched finger. A finger to his lips. A hand on an elbow. I sat there and watched a choreography which almost hypnotized me. One would think this endless motion would be distracting, but to the contrary: One feels a fantastic feeling of calm and repose. It is the face; the calm backdrop of his face which coordinates all these motions into the man.

Lazarus's prints are in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Exhibition on view through Saturday, March 21, 2026

Gallery hours: 11am-5pm, Thursday through Saturday

High-resolution scans are available to the press. For further information please contact Deborah Bell Photographs by telephone at 212-249-9400, or by email at info@deborahbellphotographs.com.