

F A R A G O

John K.
Women

28 January - 5 March 2016

Opening 28 January 7 - 9 pm

Thursday - Saturday 12 - 6 pm
and by appointment

FARAGO is pleased to present *Women*, an exhibition of photographs and films made by John Kayser in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Kayser's house and the streets of Los Angeles were stage for the private rituals that defined his obsession with female beauty. His story is one of secretive creation and subsequent discovery. The details of his life prior to his death in 2007 are limited to a fragmentary collection of notes, papers and documents. Born in 1922 in North Dakota, Kayser lived most of his life in California, first in Pasadena as a child and then in East Hollywood throughout his adult life. He served briefly during WWII as an armorer in the 18th Bomber Squadron, a military position that corresponds to his life-long employment with Northrop Aircraft Incorporated in Los Angeles, first in assembly and later as a technical illustrator.

The vague specifics of his biography, however, are supplemented only by visual details within the photographs themselves. We see the contours of the inside and outside of his suburban home, the cars he collected and the locations in and around Los Angeles that he frequented. We even see the artist himself posed in a few candid self-portraits. This must certainly be the man that co-workers, casual friends and close family members knew best. But who, then, is the John Kayser who made photographs, Kodachrome transparencies and 8mm films over a period of 20+ years, all of women, clothed and nude, indoors and out?

At a glance one might say he was an artist with an obsessive eye for the perverse, but for every picture that verges on the pornographic there are countless others that are evidence of his repeated efforts to stage, direct and record an isolated moment of beauty. What makes Kayser's work so singular is a set of peculiar props and ritualistic scenarios that are repeated over and over in the photographs. This repetition extends to the women themselves, many of whom appear over the course of several years, engaging with the same props, set against the same backdrops and often times wearing the same clothing or pair of shoes. Through photography, Kayser chose the most direct yet enigmatic form of creative record keeping, one that rarely provides answers but instead leads only to more questions.

- Myles Haselhorst