

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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**Anatomy of Devotion:
Works by Günter Blum and George Platt Lynes**

June 6, 2024 through July 20, 2024

Exhibition Reception: Thursday, June 6th

The Fahey/Klein Gallery is pleased to present the two-person exhibition *Anatomy of Devotion: Works by George Platt Lynes and Günter Blum*. The photographs on display explore varying relationships between artist and muse and the intimate and complex interactions that fuel creative expression. Both Platt Lynes and Blum utilize photography to investigate a more profound expression of sexuality and the concept of desire through their subjects. The erotic charge in each work is unmistakable. Admiration and yearning are not hinted at but expressly declared. Their cameras transformed into a conduit for narratives of empowerment and self-expression. Both artists convey raw vulnerability while unveiling great defiance of stereotypes and constraints.

George Platt Lynes is recognized today as a master of 20th century photography, influencing artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe and Herb Ritts. Though Lynes was commercially successful in New York fashion and portrait photography, his art practice is largely characterized today by his remarkable photographs of nude men, from the 1930s until his death in 1955. Using inventive lighting, posing, and cropping techniques within his carefully staged studio settings, he was able to visually translate both the physical and psychological nuances of his subjects.

Lynes attended the Berkshire School in Massachusetts and traveled to Paris for preparatory studies shortly after. In Paris, he met René Crevel, Man Ray, and Gertrude Stein, with whom he began a decade-long correspondence. Largely self-taught, Lynes eventually entered Yale University in 1926 and left after his first year to move to New York. Initially exploring writing and bookselling, Lynes soon found his aesthetic through the facility of the camera. His first informal portraits were done in the late 1920s, but evolved to official society photography, contributing to significant museum shows, high-profile fashion magazines, and solo exhibitions. Indeed, his glamorous portraits of literary, film, and art world personalities are indicative of his personal relationships. His friendship with New York art dealer Julien Levy led to his first exhibition in 1932. Eventually, Lynes' commercial success in portraiture and fashion photography enabled him to open his own New York studio in 1933. He later became the head of *Vogue* magazine's West Coast studio in Los Angeles in 1946, where he moved following several years of emotional upheaval in his personal life. There, he photographed celebrities such as Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russel, Gloria Swanson, and Orson Welles.

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Lynes returned to New York in 1948 and focused his photography practice on his private interests, male nudes, and documenting productions of the New York City Ballet. During this time, Lynes also became acquainted with Dr. Alfred Kinsey, an influential researcher on human sexuality who founded in 1947 the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University, now known as the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction. A substantial body of Lynes' nude and homoerotic photographic works were housed at the Kinsey Institute after Lynes' death in 1955.

Günter Blum (1949-1997) was a German fine art photographer best known for his erotic depictions of confident nude women. Born on January 19, 1949 in Mannheim, Germany, he studied graphic design and spent the early part of his career creating magazine, book, and album covers. For many years Günter lived and worked in Hamburg and Paris as a painter and illustrator. In 1978 he moved back to Heidelberg where he also worked as a Professor at the College of Design. He took up photography in the late 1980s, embarking on a series of erotic photographs inspired by Fritz Lang's seminal film *Metropolis* (1927), posing a female model alongside elaborate, large-scale sets resembling machinery. The sets, wardrobe and leather work seen in his images were designed and built by Günter. He loved details and was meticulous when it came to even the small elements in his scenes. Every element depicted in his photographs was planned and handmade for one purpose – to show the beauty of a powerful woman. Blum's work was initially inspired by the likes of Helmut Newton and Jan Saudek but his photography became more focused on edgy, provocative imagery inspired by the exaggerated foundation garments of leather and lace that came into fashion in the 1980's. The influence of punk and the sexual revolution of the 80's is evidenced by one of his most famous photos, *Spiegel Spezial*, a cover for *Der Spiegel* magazine which depicts buttocks wrapped in barbed wire and fishnets. His famous illustrations and photographs were published by *Spiegel*, *Stern*, *Focus*, *Playboy*, and *Vogue*. Günter published 5 books and had numerous successful exhibitions throughout his celebrated career. His work can be found in museums and private collections.

Günter's largest collection of images has been preserved for decades by his greatest model and muse, Sylvie Blum. Sylvie, a photographer represented by Fahey/Klein Gallery, became his wife in the 1990's, and has looked after his prestigious private collection since Günter's untimely death in July 1997, after a long fight with cancer.

Press Photographs & Press Materials are available on request

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