



**VAST TROVE OF PHOTOGRAPHS RESCUED AND PRESERVED BY  
THE ROY LICHTENSTEIN FOUNDATION IS BEING DONATED TO  
MAJOR INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S., FRANCE AND ENGLAND**

**Unparalleled Visual Record of an Era in Modern Art Will Be Shared  
Through a Five-Way Gift to the Getty Research Institute, MoMA, the  
National Gallery of Art, Centre Pompidou and Tate**

NEW YORK, NY, December 19, 2013 —Dorothy Lichtenstein, President, and Jack Cowart, Executive Director of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation today announced that the Foundation is giving approximately 200,000 black and white prints, color prints, negatives, contact sheets and color transparencies and slides from its invaluable Harry Shunk and Shunk-Kender Photography Collection to five major institutions, making permanently accessible an unmatched record of an entire era in the visual arts. The donation is the first of its kind, establishing a consortium among the institutions that will both receive and share the materials—the Getty Research Institute, The Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, Centre Pompidou and Tate—and is notable for spanning the Atlantic, as did the careers of the photographers themselves.

The collaboration of Shunk-Kender (Harry Shunk and János Kender), based first in Paris and later in New York, took the core group of photographs from 1958 to 1973. The collections also include photographs taken by Shunk alone in earlier and later years. These images offer a sometimes intimate and sometimes formal view of more than 400 prominent artists in their studios, at events such as openings and in the midst of their performances. They provide an historic document of the artworks of the period in the context in which they were first shown and are often irreplaceable as the only existing record of ephemeral artworks and actions. In some cases—such as the celebrated Shunk-Kender image of an airborne Yves Klein, *Leap Into the Void* (1960)—the photographs are themselves acknowledged as the work of art.

Frequently published but rarely credited and all but forgotten except by a few specialists, the photographs were in danger of being scattered after the death of Harry Shunk in 2006. The Foundation stepped in and acquired the photographs by purchase between 2008 and 2012 from the Estate of Harry Shunk and others. The Foundation has preserved, catalogued and digitized the photographs, established a

free online archive of them and made them available as appropriate for reproduction in scholarly publications. Working with the consortium members over the past year, the Foundation has arrived at a division of its collection into five parts.

A very abbreviated list of the photographs' subjects might include Vito Acconci, Arman, Joseph Beuys, Lee Bontecou, Trisha Brown, Alexander Calder, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Merce Cunningham, Lucio Fontana, the Gutai Group, Eva Hesse, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Yayoi Kusama, Joan Miró, Bruce Nauman, Barnett Newman, Nam June Paik, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Man Ray, Robert Rauschenberg, Lou Reed, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol and Lawrence Weiner. Although Roy Lichtenstein is among the artists captured, the Foundation has acquired, organized and now gifted the photographs for what they represent as a whole, and not for the relatively small role played in them by Lichtenstein himself.

“We have been told that this is the first time that a foundation established by an artist has devoted its resources to a body of work by other artists and we are, of course, pleased to have established such a precedent,” Jack Cowart stated. “When this archive came to our attention, we recognized that an irreplaceable part of art history and future scholarship was at risk of being lost. We believed that in honoring the legacy of Roy Lichtenstein, the Foundation should also address the era in which he worked—an era that is preserved in astonishing fullness and vivid detail by Shunk-Kender and Harry Shunk. We feel very fortunate that we can now donate these riches to five outstanding and supportive institutions. We are, as always, deeply grateful to Dorothy Lichtenstein and the Board for making this possible.”

Dorothy Lichtenstein stated, “Roy, with his characteristic modesty, would have preferred that his foundation not be only about him and his art. I am delighted that we were able to acquire this collection. With their utterly unique documentation of the lives and works of overlapping generations of European and American artists of the 1950s through the 1990s, these photographs are going to be a priceless resource for the institutions we have selected and for the countless people those institutions serve worldwide.”

### **About the Consortium and the Gifts**

The leading institution in the consortium and recipient of the largest body of gifts is the Getty Research Institute (GRI). It will receive approximately 183,000 items: a near-complete set of 19,000 prints, 12,000 contact sheets, 126,000 negatives, 26,000 color transparencies and slides, all of the digital assets including the low- and

high-resolution images, as well as the inventories. The J. Paul Getty Trust will also manage the photographers' copyright, as gifted from the Lichtenstein Foundation. The other four institutions can also handle requests and permissions for academic uses of their holdings.

Centre Pompidou will receive approximately 10,000 prints as well as low- and high-resolution images representing most of the artists, events and exhibitions seen in the GRI materials. The Pompidou will actively share this key set with Tate for research, publication and exhibitions.

The National Gallery of Art will receive a complete set of approximately 2,300 prints of all the Christo photographs in the collection. This material dating from circa 1960 to 1976 has been selected because the National Gallery already holds a significant body of work by Christo and Jeanne-Claude spanning more than four decades with the Herbert and Dorothy Vogel Collection.

The Museum of Modern Art will receive 638 prints, including a set of 5 prints of Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void* and 92 prints of Yayoi Kusama's happenings *The Anatomic Explosion* and *Mirror Performance* (both 1968, New York). The highlight of the MoMA gift is a near-complete extant set of photographs of the *Pier 18* exhibition (1971). Organized on an abandoned pier on the Hudson River, *Pier 18* was a monumental performance project conceived by Willoughby Sharp. An invited group of 27 artists including John Baldessari, Mel Bochner, Daniel Buren, Dan Graham, Gordon Matta-Clark, Dennis Oppenheim, Richard Serra and Michael Snow created ephemeral performances or projects on the pier, which Shunk-Kender photographed. MoMA then mounted an exhibition of the photographs, which were, and are, the only contemporaneous record of the event and the individual works.

The Roy Lichtenstein Foundation will temporarily hold the remaining prints, documents, books, ephemera and photography equipment that have not been distributed to the consortium members. The Foundation intends to offer further gifts from this material to the consortium or will place them with other interested institutions.

### **About the Photographers**

Harry Shunk, whose name was also spelled Schunk and Schunke, was born on October 4, 1924, in Reudnitz, Germany, near Leipzig. Conscripted into the German army at the start of World War II, he was taken prisoner and interned in England and after the war eventually made his way to Paris, where he met János (Jean) Kender.

János (Jean) Kender was born in Baja, Hungary, on July 6, 1937. He fled to France in 1956 in the wake of the Hungarian uprising and the following year met Harry Shunk. Beginning in 1958, the two men worked as partners, formally crediting all their photographs as a new identity: "Shunk-Kender." They left Paris for Canada in 1967 and then relocated to New York City. In late 1973, they formally dissolved their creative partnership.

Shunk died in his home and studio in Westbeth in New York City on June 26, 2006. Kender died on December 5, 2009, in a welfare hospice in West Palm Beach, Florida.

### **About the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation**

Beginning operation in 1999 in accordance with the wishes of the artist and his immediate family, the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation's mission is to encourage and support a broader understanding and experience of the art of Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) and of the contemporary art and artists of his time. The Foundation aspires to carry forward the artist's interests and legacy to many subsequent generations of art audiences and the general public. The Foundation focuses not only on expanding the roles and development of artist-endowed foundations but also on the broader implications of Lichtenstein's art with its global relations to historical process, critical fortune, museums, galleries, collectors, critics and students, young and old.

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### **Media Contact:**

Amanda Domizio, Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors  
212-583-2798 / [domizioa@finnpartners.com](mailto:domizioa@finnpartners.com)