

PRESS RELEASE

LILLIAN BASSMAN

October 20 – December 29, 2007
Opening reception, October 20, 5 – 8 pm

Joseph Bellows Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of fashion photographs by legendary photographer, Lillian Bassman. The exhibition will be on view from October 20 – December 29, 2007. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, October 20 (5-8 pm).

Born in 1917 to an immigrant family, Bassman worked as an artist's model, a textile designer, and a fashion illustrator before ultimately joining *Harper's Bazaar*. It was while she was working as a fashion illustrator in the early 1940's that legendary art director Alexey Brodovitch urged her to work for him at *Harper's*. In 1944, Bassman was appointed art director of *Junior Bazaar* where she worked with photographers such as Richard Avedon, Louis Faurer, Arnold Newman, Robert Frank, and Paul Himmel, whom she had married in 1935.

In 1946, Bassman began taking her own photographs. She experimented in the dark room by printing through tissues and gauzes and using bleach, which created moody, diffuse images. The results of the manipulated images often resembled fashion illustration or painting more than straight photography. By the late 1940's Bassman gave up art direction to focus on her own photography full-time.

Blurred silhouettes, exaggerated gestures, and unusual compositions infuse Bassman's photographs with romance, femininity, mystery, and glamour. Bassman had a unique ability to create elegant and dreamlike images while retaining essential fashion details. Her experimental and romantic photographs were seen in the pages of *Harper's Bazaar* through the 1950's – 1960's bringing a new aesthetic of fashion photography.

Bassman retired from commercial photography in the 1970's. In the early 1990's she began experimenting with her old negatives, bleaching and blurring her early images, creating unique works of art and bringing her once again to the forefront of fashion photography.

For more information, please contact:

Carol Lee Brosseau
carollee@josephbellows.com