

For Immediate Release:

## **From Pictorialism to Modernism** **The Salon Photographs of Florence Kemmler and Roland Schneider**

Joseph Bellows Gallery is pleased to present rare vintage photographs by California Pictorialists Roland Schneider and Florence Kemmler.

Photographic Pictorialism was an international aesthetic movement, a philosophy, and a style, developed toward the end of the 19th century. The introduction of the dry-plate process in the late 1870s, and the Kodak camera in 1888, made taking photographs relatively easy, and photography became widely practiced. Pictorialist photographers set themselves apart from the ranks of new hobbyist photographers by demonstrating that photography was capable of far more than a literal description of a subject. Through Pictorialist organizations, publications, and exhibitions, photography became recognized as an art form. The idea of the print as a carefully hand-crafted, unique object equal to a painting gained acceptance.

The husband-and-wife team of Roland E. Schneider (1884-1934), and Florence B. Kemmler (1900-1972), were internationally exhibited salon photographers whose beautifully rendered works straddle both Pictorialist and modernist sensibilities. The San Diego couple worked together using the same 3¼ x 4¼ Graflex cameras and identical printing and mounting techniques. Nearly all their photographs were contact printed on warm, brownish black-toned chlorobromide papers.

Their work was recognized by the jurors of both the prestigious Pictorial Photographers of America, founded in 1916 by Clarence H. White, and the Camera Pictorialists of Los Angeles, whose annual international salon was hosted by the Los Angeles County Museum between 1918 and 1945. So respected was this particular event that it drew as many as 2,000 entries worldwide, with only about 200 chosen for inclusion in the exhibition. It's notable that Edward Weston organized the first-ever photography exhibition at that institution in 1916 and undoubtedly exerted a strong influence on the aesthetic philosophy and direction of the West Coast practitioners.

The exquisite salon photographs included in this small, online exhibition represent a range of expression, from a more sentimental presentation, as in Schneider's *Late Extra Edition*, 1932, to Kemmler's embrace of modernism and the trend toward a more progressive approach to the medium, as seen in her *Oil Tanks*, c. 1931.

In turning their cameras on the city's geometric forms and urban life and utilizing unusual perspectives, Schneider and Kemmler reveal their extraordinary flexibility and remarkable skill.

Works by Schneider and Kemmler are represented in the permanent collection of numerous institutions, including the J. Paul Getty Museum; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Norton Simon Museum; The Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.; and the UCLA Library Special Collections.

For questions or inquiries, contact [info@josephbellows.com](mailto:info@josephbellows.com)

Joseph Bellows Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10-4. Appointments preferred.