

MEDIA RELEASE

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Jonas Mekas

Frozen Film Frames: Portraits of Film Makers

May 18 to July 27, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 18th, 2:00 to 4:30 pm

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present *Frozen Film Frames: Portraits of Film Makers*, which will highlight a variety of Jonas Mekas' still-framed photographs. There is a public opening reception on Saturday, May 18th from 2:00 to 4:30 pm.

Jonas Mekas, known as the *Godfather of avant-garde films*, contributed greatly to the international art world and the American art scene throughout his lifetime. The Founder of Anthology Films in New York..., the filmmaker, poet, writer, curator, and artist. Jonas Mekas captured moments that we all cherish in art history, in American history, in life... from film producers, Salvador Dali, the Kennedy's, Warhol, Yoko Ono and John Lennon, Elvis Presley, the World Trade Center... to then more personal, special moments of nature, his family, being human, celebrating life and cherishing each experience to the fullest. Jonas made a major contribution to the art world and has been greatly missed since he passed away on January 23, 2019, at 96 years old. There were many events celebrating his life since then, including "Homage to a Happy Man: Celebrating Jonas Mekas (1922 – 2019)" at St Mark's Church, exhibitions throughout New York and *Jonas Mekas 100* which was the international program of exhibitions and events celebrating the 100th anniversary last year.

Jonas Mekas was born in 1922 in Semeniskiai, Lithuania. In 1949 he emigrated to the U.S. together with his brother, settling in New York. He has been one of the leading figures of American avant-garde filmmaking playing various roles: in 1954 he founded Film Culture magazine; in 1958 began writing his "Movie Journal" column for the Village Voice; in 1962 co-founded the New York film institution, Filmmakers' Cooperative (FMC) and in 1964 the Filmmakers' Cinematheque, which eventually grew into Anthology Film Archives. His own output varies from narrative films (*Guns of the Frees*, 1961) to documentaries (*The Brig*, 1963) and to "diaries" such as *Walden* (1969), *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1975) and *As I was Moving Ahead*, and *Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2001). Known as an icon of contemporary American Culture, Mekas documented the era that promoted peace through his acclaimed independent film and still frame photography, which features Yoko and John in *Happy Birthday to John* and *Bed-In*. His films have been screened extensively at festivals and museums around the world. In 2005 he represented Lithuania at the Venice Biennale; the exhibition was noted with Special Mention prize for extraordinary presentation of contemporary classic art. Mekas has received many awards worldwide and has had countless museum exhibitions in almost all continents.

Deborah Colton Gallery first debuted Jonas Mekas in the solo exhibition *Film Framed* in 2005. In 2007, Jonas Mekas was also included in the group exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery, *Chemical City*. Since then, Deborah Colton Gallery has continued to exhibit and represent Jonas Mekas, including with her projects with OUTPOST NYC DCG that she co-founded in 2009. Additionally, Deborah Colton has served on the Anthology Film Archives Advisory Board for over a decade now. Colton co-curated a similar exhibition to this current *Portraits of Film Makers* exhibit with Richard Herskowitz at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in 2015, and she has helped with several other Mekas projects nationally and internationally.

"It has been my great honor to support Jonas Mekas and Anthology Film Archives over the years due to my deep respect for Jonas and everything that he believed in, with Anthology being the most highly regarded institution in preserving, exhibiting and promoting avant-garde, independent film, dating from its origins, up to the present and beyond" states Deborah Colton.

Deborah Colton Gallery is an international contemporary art gallery, based in Houston, Texas since 2004, and initiates projects throughout the United States for their artists. Deborah Colton Gallery also has OUTPOST NYC DCG, an east coast-based arts initiative, which includes LA, New York and international Jonas Mekas projects.