New York, The Early Years
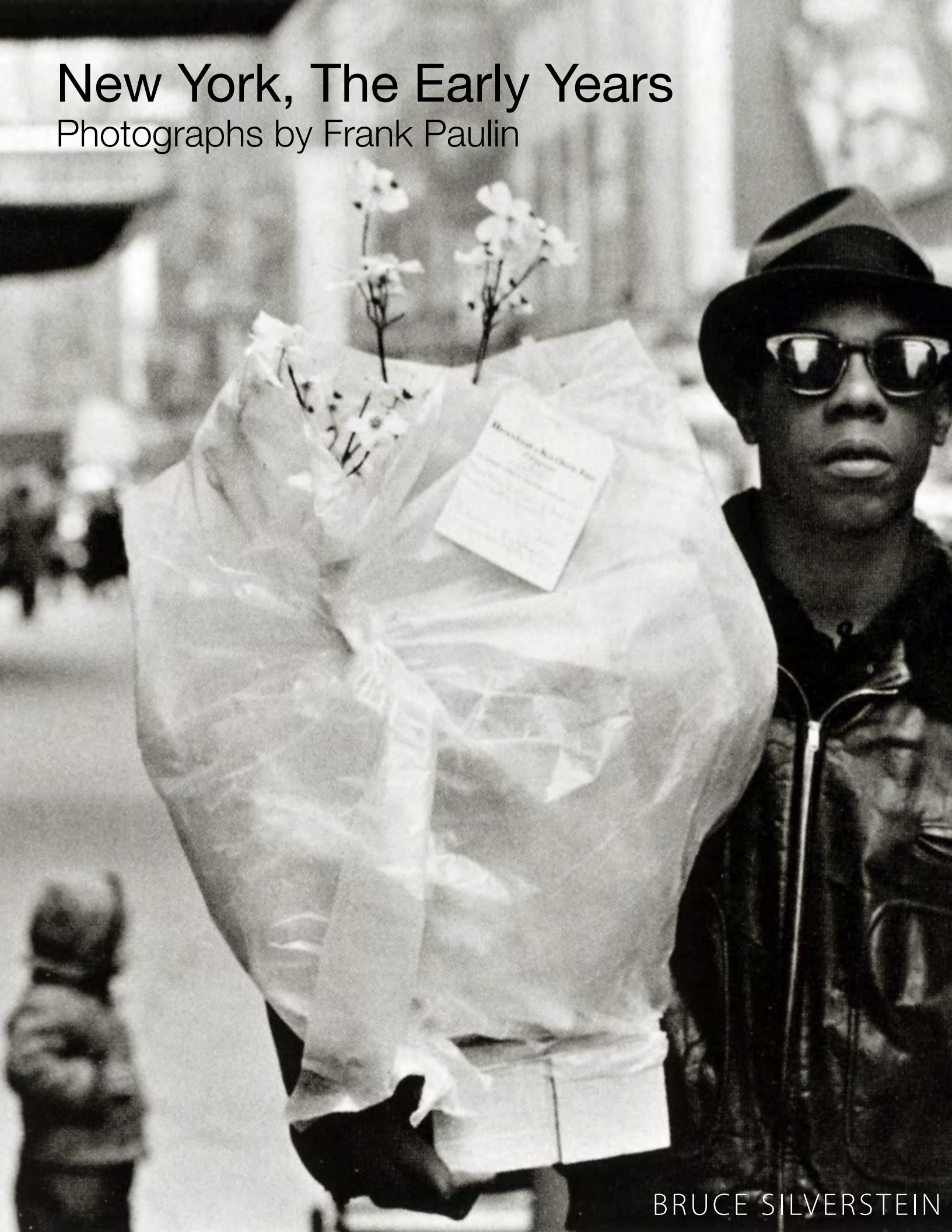## Photographs by Frank Paulin

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Photographs by Frank Paulin

Bruce Silverstein is pleased to present an online exhibition devoted to the photographs of Frank Paulin, predominantly captured in the 1950s on the streets of New York City. Many of these early images by Paulin were featured in a 1957 solo exhibition at Helen Gee's pioneering gallery and café, Limelight—then New York's only gallery for fine art photography, as well as a local hangout for the great photographers of the time. Despite the fact that his 1957 solo show at Limelight predated the recognition of photography as a commonly appreciated medium, admiring reviews for the show appeared in the *New York Times* as well as the *Village Voice*, praising Paulin's 'humor and compassion' and his uncanny ability to perceive irony and record what they referred to as 'poetic accidents.'

Born in Pittsburgh in 1926, Frank Paulin grew up in New York and Chicago. At age 16, he began studying fashion illustration and photography while moonlighting as an art apprentice at Whittaker-Christiansen Studio in Chicago. Two years later, in 1944, he was drafted into the Army Signal Corps where he would spend the next two years developing his documentary style through photographing war-torn German cities.

Returning to Chicago following the war, he enrolled under the GI Bill at the Institute of Design in 1946, arriving the exact same day as Harry Callahan had begun teaching. As a requirement of the school's utopian curriculum, photography was required in order to train its students to think in new ways. Callahan, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Arthur Siegel fostered an environment brimming with potential for experimentation with paper and light. While in school, Paulin held a full-time day job as fashion illustrator at a local art studio and freelanced for department stores throughout the region like Marshall Field's, Mandel Brothers and Charles A. Stevens. Able only to attend classes at night, Paulin remained in school through 1948.

By the end of the 1950s, Paulin had returned to New York where he continued to freelance in fashion illustration. He had also been taking classes under acclaimed art director Alexey Brodovitch at the New School. With most of his days occupied by school and work, he would take to the city's streets at night, stoking his passion for 'grab shots' and often gritty street documentary. Paulin spent most of his time in and around Times Square, which provided him with subjects from all walks of life set against the stunning visual framework of advertisements, neon signs, and reflective store windows. It was during this time that he crossed paths with Louis Faurer, whose own work had been inspired by walking those same streets a decade earlier.

For the next 50 years, Paulin continued to roam the streets finding these 'poetic accidents' expanding his stomping grounds from New Orleans to Paris to suburban America. His images recall a distinct moment in American history, and here, as further distilled through the filter of New York – is a passionate vision that keeps us looking.

Frank Paulin's work is in the collections of many prominent domestic and international institutions including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Milwaukee Art Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Yale University Art Gallery.

Black Man, White Man, Times Square, 1956
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-00094-SP

Candide, New York, 1956
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01252-SP

Couple in Cafe Window, Times Square, New York City, 1956
Gelatin silver print mounted to board
8 3/4 x 13 1/2 in. (22.2 x 34.3 cm)
FPA-01478-SP

Flower Messenger, Times Square, 1955
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01040-SP

Grant's Bar, New York, 1956
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01201-SP

Makeup, Central Park, 1955
Gelatin silver print
20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.64 cm)
FPA-01192-SP

Mask, New York City, 1956
Gelatin silver print
14 x 11 in. (35.56 x 27.94 cm)
FPA-00911-SP

Movie Ticketseller, Times Square, 1957
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01401-SP

Musician Practicing, Central Park, 1956
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-00544-SP

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

New York City, Twin Towers, 1982
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01798-SP

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Our Dream, Queens, 1979
Gelatin silver print
20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.64 cm)
FPA-01529-SP

Queensborough Bridge, New York City, 1955
Gelatin silver print mounted to board
9 x 13 1/2 in. (22.9 x 34.3 cm)
FPA-01437-SP

Shadow Man, 1957
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01525-SP

Staten Island Ferry, 1954
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01209-SP

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Surprised Woman at Saks, New York City, 1956
Gelatin silver print mounted to board
8 3/4 x 13 1/4 in. (22.2 x 33.7 cm)
FPA-00801-SP

The Strange One, Times Square, 1956
Gelatin silver print
20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.64 cm)
FPA-01482-SP

Times Square, 1956
Gelatin silver print mounted to board
13 1/4 x 9 in. (33.7 x 22.9 cm)
FPA-03177-SP

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Untitled (Artist Colony of Greenwich Village, 14th Street), 1955
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01248-SP

Volkswagen, 1962
Gelatin silver print
20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.64 cm)
FPA-00123-SP

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

West Side Story, New York, 1956
Gelatin silver print
16 x 20 in. (40.64 x 50.8 cm)
FPA-01430-SP