



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD**

#### **Abstractions 1957-1972**

1 November through 22 December 2007

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present **Ralph Eugene Meatyard: Abstractions 1957-1972**, on view from November 1<sup>st</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007.

Ralph Eugene Meatyard was born in Normal, Illinois in 1925. He lived in Lexington, Kentucky, where he worked as an optician at his shop *Eyeglasses of Kentucky* and photographed in his spare time. Meatyard's friendships with teachers and fellow photographers Van Deren Coke, Henry Holmes Smith, Aaron Siskind and Minor White encouraged him to push the limits of photography. Working outside of the photographic mainstream, his imagery consisted largely of symbolic dramas, set in ordinary, often abandoned places and enacted mostly by his own family.

From 1957 to 1972, Meatyard undertook several different conceptual projects exploring the possibilities of abstraction in photography. The exhibition consists of approximately twenty-five photographs from these lesser-known series of the artist's oeuvre.

With his study of "Zen Twigs" Meatyard examined the mysterious forms of tree branches photographed close-up with a low depth of field. The camera's focus on the twig detail contrasts with the obscured shapes of the background. In his "Light on Water" photographs, Meatyard experimented with luminescent, broken reflections in water. The dramatic bursts of light created by the artist's use of movement produced an effect similar to the free-form qualities of Abstract Expressionist painting. The "No-Focus" photographs reduce groups of human figures to indistinct abstractions. These organic shapes appear blurry and operate outside of the notion of a traditional, photographic portrait. In each of their varying forms, the abstract series affirm the depth of Meatyard's experimentation and creative vision that came to a premature end with his death from cancer in 1972.

**Ralph Eugene Meatyard: Abstractions 1957-1972** can be seen concurrently with the exhibition **Richard Misrach: Night Photographs 1975-1977**.

Fraenkel Gallery is located at 49 Geary Street, 4th floor, San Francisco.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10:30 am - 5:30 pm, & Saturday 11:00 am - 5:00 pm.

For further information and press photographs, please contact Daniel Cheek at 415.981.2661 or [dcheek@fraenkelgallery.com](mailto:dcheek@fraenkelgallery.com).

Illustrated: Ralph Eugene Meatyard *Untitled*, 1959.