



PRESS RELEASE

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**Slought Foundation, Philadelphia, PA
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***Cool Man in a Golden Age: Alfred Leslie's Film, Installation and Book Work, 1957-2009* illuminates surprising facets of this celebrated painter's practice**

Slought Foundation, Philadelphia, is pleased to announce *Cool Man in a Golden Age: Alfred Leslie's Film, Installation and Book Work, 1957-2009*. The exhibition will be on display in the Slought Foundation galleries from January 14—March 7, 2009 and is curated by Judith E. Stein. The opening reception will take place on Wednesday, January 14, 2009 from 6:30-8:30pm, with the artist present.

A man of diverse talents and prodigious energy, Alfred Leslie (b. Bronx, NY, 1927) is internationally celebrated for both his abstract expressionist and realist paintings. But less well-known are his films, photographs, installations, and writings. The Slought Foundation's exhibition will be the first to illuminate more than a half-century of Leslie's practice in these media. Judith E. Stein's interview with the artist about this work will appear in *Art in America* in January 2009.

Much of the art in *Cool Man in a Golden Age: Alfred Leslie's Film, Installation and Book Work, 1957-2009* has never been exhibited before; not only will the show debut Leslie's most recent films and writings but also present little known earlier work. The exhibition also includes a series of seventeen film posters—one for each of his films— some of which the artist has created expressly for this show. His graphic novella *Attacked by the Heart* (2008) will premiere in several formats at Slought, one printed by Matt Neff for Common Press, Penn Design, University of Pennsylvania.

The Slought exhibition will include two of Leslie's classic films: *Pull My Daisy* (1959), the quintessential expression of the Beat Generation, which he co- directed and co-photographed with Robert Frank; and *The Last Clean Shirt* (1964), a collaborative project with the poet Frank O'Hara, who wrote the text used as subtitles. Slought will debut Leslie's sexually irreverent *Einstein's Secret* (2008), which includes a video adaptation of *Attacked by the Heart*, as well as paintings, sound tracks, and Frank O'Hara's poems, streamed as subtitles.

Concurrent with the Slought retrospective in Philadelphia, New York's Anthology Film Archives <http://www.anthologyfilmarchives.org/> will offer a coordinated program of Leslie's films (February 19-22). Anthology Film Archives is an international center for the preservation, study, and exhibition of film and video with a particular focus on American independent and avant-garde cinema.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Slought is partnering with the London-based publisher Lux <http://www.luxonline.org.uk/> to produce the first DVD of Leslie's films and videos, to be distributed by Microcinema International <http://www.microcinema.com/>. It includes not only *Pull My Daisy* and *The Last Clean Shirt*, but also two new works: *Birth of a Nation 1965* (2008), which incorporates surviving footage from the sixties; and the video *A Stranger Calls at Midnight* (2008), an innovative self-interview that reveals for the first time the back-story to several of Leslie's films, and contains two recently discovered outtakes from *Pull My Daisy*.

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In addition, the DVD includes Richard Moore's rarely-seen 1966 television documentary of a visit to Leslie's studio by Frank O'Hara and their working together on their second collaboration, *Birth of a Nation*. Within months of the filming, O'Hara would die in a car accident and Leslie's studio and its contents would be destroyed by fire. With little of his early work extant, Leslie's status as a pioneering painter and filmmaker has become blurred over time. *Alfred Leslie: Film, Installation and Book Work, 1957-2009* will acquaint a new generation with the breadth of Leslie's artistic practice.

Leslie's series of large-format Polaroid "mug shots," originally numbering several hundred, were lost in the fire. Begun in the fifties, they would influence, along with his later *Grisaille* paintings, the practice of Chuck Close a decade later. Miraculously, Leslie found two Polaroids in the post-fire rubble. Slought will exhibit works based on the surviving portraits of Sam Francis and of Al Held.

In conjunction with the show in its gallery, the Foundation's website <http://slought.org/> will debut *Attacked by the Heart* (2008) as well as *Cool Man in a Golden Age* (1967-1996), his unpublished autobiography-in-verse written in the rhyming scheme Alexander Pushkin devised for *Eugene Onegin*.

The exhibition will contain a new model of *The Jolly*, a monumental kinetic sculpture Leslie devised and fabricated in 1961 for curator Pontus Holten but never installed. *The Jolly Owner's Manual* (1961), a hand-drawn and rubber-stamped artist book, long thought to be lost, will be on view for the first time in the United States in a printed facsimile. Slought will also exhibit a playfully worded scroll response to the *Manual* by the Art and Technology pioneering engineer Billy Kluver, with whom Leslie collaborated on the technical aspects of *The Jolly* installation. In the artist's collection, it has never before been on public view.

Likewise on view for the first time will be three abstract expressionist collages that Leslie designed for the dust jacket of the first American edition of Robert Frank's *The Americans* (Grove Press, 1959).

The relationship between painters and poets of the NY artist in the nineteen fifties was critical and so was the general enthusiasm for social change. Leslie's bookwork on view will include two 1967 drawings for Frank O'Hara poems, plus the rarely seen *Permanently* (Tiber Press 1957), a collaboration with poet Kenneth Koch, for which Leslie created fifteen silk screens based on his collages. The show also includes Leslie's *The Hasty Papers* (1960), a radical literary and political tabloid he edited and published with contributions by Kerouac, Ginsberg, Sartre, Genet among others. A copy of the original newsprint edition will be on view as well as the revised Millennium edition (2000).

This program is made possible in part through the generous sponsorship or support of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, University of Pennsylvania's Department of English and Cinema Studies Program, the Emily and Jerry Spiegel Fund to Support Contemporary Culture and Visual Arts, and the Society of Friends of the Slought Foundation.