

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

www.marianneboeskygallery.com

**I.G.Y.**

Curated by Todd Levin

May 22 – July 30, 2010

Opening reception May 22, 2010, 6-9pm

Curator Statement

In 1952 the International Council of Scientific Unions declared 1 July 1957 through 31 December 1958 as the "International Geophysical Year" (or I.G.Y.) because cycles of solar activity would reach a high point during that period. In 1954 this council called for artificial satellites to be launched during I.G.Y to map Earth and study the cosmos - and as a result, the Space Race was initiated.

In the visual arts, two competing exhibitions took place precisely a half century ago in NYC within two months of each other. The Guggenheim Museum opened its "Inaugural Selection" on 21 October 1959, and the Museum of Modern Art opened the "Sixteen Americans" exhibition on 16 December 1959. The former exhibition acted as the initial summation of a collecting vision rooted in established objective and abstract work of mostly well known artists, while the latter exhibition pointed the art world towards the work of newcomers (six of the sixteen artists in the exhibition not yet having had a one person exhibition), including artwork using objects and images drawn from the detritus of daily life.

*"Tomorrow promised to be not just another day, but a new dawn. The era's rising young political star, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, would run for president on a slogan of 'Leadership for the '60's' - the first time that the future was defined in terms of a decade, which presumed to hold out both menace and hope but in either case great change. Kennedy presented his youth as a virtue - yet another reversal of the norm - describing himself as a man 'born in this century,' keen to explore 'the New Frontier.' These currents were quickened by a series of expansive government edicts. The new United States Civil Rights Commission ordered a series of investigations on racial discrimination in voting, housing, and education. The Supreme Court issued rulings that lifted restrictions on free speech and literature.*

*"This enchantment with the new also galvanized a generation of artists to crash through their own sets of barriers - and attracted a vast audience that was suddenly, even giddily, receptive to their iconoclasm. New comedians--'sick comics,' some called them--satirized the once-forbidden topics of race, religion, and politics. Brazen novelists loosened the language and blurred the boundaries between author and subject, reportage and literature. Rebellious filmmakers shot improvisational movies outside the confines of Hollywood studios. Jazz musicians improvised a new kind of music that broke through the structure of chords and pre-set rhythms. A new record label, Motown, laid down a jazz-inflected rhythm and blues that insinuated black culture into the mainstream, inspired baby-boomer rock 'n' roll, and supplied the soundtrack for the racial revolts and interminglings that lay ahead...*

*"Yet the thrill of the new was at once intensified and tempered by an undercurrent of dread...panic over fallout shelters, fears of a 'missile gap,' and an escalation of the Cold War... It was this twin precipice--the prospect of infinite possibilities and instant annihilation, both teetering on the edge of a new decade--that gave [the era] its distinctive swoon and ignited its creative energy."*

Fred Kaplan, excerpted from *1959: The Year Everything Changed* (Wiley & Sons, 2009)

## **ARTISTS**

Josef ALBERS  
Pierre BONNARD  
Alexander CALDER  
Jay DEFEO  
Robert FRANK  
Wally HEDRICK  
James JARVAISE  
Jasper JOHNS  
Fernand LÉGER  
Alfred LESLIE  
Richard LYTLE  
Robert MALLARY  
Louise NEVELSON  
Robert RAUSCHENBERG  
Julius SCHMIDT  
Kurt SCHWITTERS  
Richard STANKIEWICZ  
Frank STELLA  
Jack YOUNGERMAN

## **I.G.Y.**

Standing tough under stars and stripes  
We can tell  
This dream's in sight  
You've got to admit it  
At this point in time that it's clear  
The future looks bright

On that train all graphite and glitter  
Undersea by rail  
Ninety minutes from New York to Paris  
Well by seventy-six we'll be A.O.K.

What a beautiful world this will be  
What a glorious time to be free  
What a beautiful world this will be  
What a glorious time to be free

Get your ticket to that wheel in space  
While there's time  
The fix is in  
You'll be a witness to that game of chance in the sky  
You know we've got to win

Here at home we'll play in the city  
Powered by the sun  
Perfect weather for a streamlined world  
There'll be spandex jackets one for everyone

What a beautiful world this will be  
What a glorious time to be free  
What a beautiful world this will be  
What a glorious time to be free

On that train all graphite and glitter  
Undersea by rail  
Ninety minutes from New York to Paris  
(More leisure for artists everywhere)

A just machine to make big decisions  
Programmed by fellows with compassion and vision  
We'll be clean when their work is done  
We'll be eternally free yes and eternally young

What a beautiful world this will be  
What a glorious time to be free  
What a beautiful world this will be  
What a glorious time to be free

words and music by Donald Fagan  
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