

Laurence Jackson Hyman

The Living Theatre performing “Paradise Now” at Bennington College, 1968

**A triptych of three archival prints
made from 35mm negative film**

Opening Bid: \$ To Come

Artist’s Statement:

It’s amazing how fifty years can put a patina on things and events. When The Living Theatre Company came to perform at Bennington College in the spring of 1968 they took the place by storm. They were the hottest, wickedest, most outrageous, radical, award-winning experimental theatre group in New York at the time, and were instrumental in developing off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway as legitimate presences in American theatre. On worldwide tours they would shock and provoke audiences with their intense theatrics combining anti-war protest, anarchist ranting and pacifist universal-love appeals. Their best-known play, “Paradise Now” was a semi-improvisational piece involving audience participation and a fair amount of nudity. By today’s standards it seems somewhat mild, almost naive, though the emotional speeches and rage against oppressive government tactics do not seem at all out of place half a century later. Then it was the Vietnam war, with its detested draft, and napalm drops. This was near the climax of the sixties, when suddenly it seemed possible and even inevitable that one day hunger, mass sickness and war actually could be eliminated worldwide, and peace would reign.

I had previously seen The Living Theatre in New York performing “The Connection,” featuring alto saxophonist Jackie McLean, where the audience could wander in and out while the performers on stage—waiting interminably for their drug dealer to show up—go about amusing themselves as they might

in real life, practicing their instruments, playing cards, cursing, reading, talking, even napping, oblivious to the audience. But when Julian Beck and Judith Malina brought their Living Theatre production of "Paradise Now" to Bennington College's Carriage Barn in 1968, none of us were quite prepared for its in-your-face style of theatre-is-life performance.

BIOGRAPHY:

Laurence Jackson Hyman is an editor, writer, photographer, publisher, film producer and jazz musician. The eldest son of Shirley Jackson and Stanley Edgar Hyman, he was born in Manhattan and grew up in North Bennington, Vermont, where he attended high school and later graduated from Bennington College in 1964. His childhood was immortalized in many of his mother's published short stories and two humorous books about the family: *Life Among the Savages* and *Raising Demons*. In the mid-1960s, after working as a reporter and photographer for several major newspapers, he became the Director of Publications at Bennington College and later also taught still photography and darkroom arts there. In 1966 he founded *The Bennington Review* which quickly came to national prominence.

In 1970 Laurence moved to San Francisco and founded Woodford Publishing, which during a 30-year-span became an internationally-known sports and art-book publishing house. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, has been interviewed twice in *The New Yorker* online, among many other publications, and has been the subject of a BBC film. Currently he manages the Shirley Jackson literary estate. In 2017 he served as Executive Producer on a feature film adaptation of Jackson's "We Have Always Lived in the Castle" which recently had its World Premiere at the 2018 LA Film Festival. Laurence's still photographs have appeared in numerous books and magazines, and many of his 1960s black-and-white photographs are collected by The Bennington Museum. Laurence lives with his wife, Cynthia, and their dog and parrot in Western Sonoma County, California. They have four adult children and seven grandchildren.