

**Prior to the creation of Gemini G.E.L., I was a print collector, primarily of works by European artists. In late 1965 and early 1966, Stanley Grinstein, who was my best friend, Ken Tyler, a lithography printer, and I decided to start a print studio in Los Angeles to work with artists and establish friendships with them. There was no thought that we expected profits. This was a different time — there was no art market.**

**Within a few years, the core roster was formed. We were a young company working with several of the most accomplished artists of the time. They were mostly from the East Coast and came because of Gemini but also because they loved Los Angeles. We continued adding new artists, and Gemini's position in the art world grew in importance.**

**I began taking photos of the artists working in the studio, as well as traveling and at play. This led to a collection of over seventy thousand photos that are now part of the Getty Research Institute's collection, the result of a gift from Ellsworth Kelly and Jack Shear. I could think of no better place for my photographs, where they can be used to expand knowledge of the Los Angeles art scene and Gemini's place in it.**

**▶ 2025**

**— Sidney B. Felsen**

# Artists and Printers at Gemini G.E.L.

**Felsen's photographs are born of an intimacy with his**

The spirit of Gemini is best captured by the word "collaboration." It's about artists and printers working hand in hand to create works of art. This same spirit prevails when I take photos. I've always felt there's a trust and friendship extended by the artists and printers in allowing me to share so many remarkable moments. It has been a privilege and an honor to have them as my subjects.

—Sidney B. Felsen

**subjects. For over five decades, he has chronicled the life of the Gemini workshop, conveying with great empathy the joy and demands of the creative process. He has documented the expertise, labor, materials, time, and care that sustain every project, capturing how Gemini's modes of making transform with each artist. An artist's engagement can be direct, physical, and improvisational, or staged, mediated, and measured. Technical conventions can be**

**rigorously followed or reinvented to new, experimental ends. At times the studios are charged with dynamic energy, while at others they are stilled by solitary contemplation. They can be alive with color or resolutely monochrome. Scale can be monumental or restrained. In their ability to hold this entire artistic enterprise, Felsen's photographs attest to a trust in and acceptance of his lens.**



# Felsen and Photography

Between my twenty-some years in art school and being around Gemini, I got the spirit of what it is to be creative—how demanding it is and the importance of the creative moment. “Silent” and “invisible”: those are the two words I thought I had to live by. One compliment that I really appreciated is “I didn’t even realize you were taking my picture.”

—Sidney B. Felsen

In the 1950s, Felsen, an accountant, enrolled in drawing, painting, and ceramics classes at local schools. His creative practice came into focus when he started photographing artists at Gemini. Felsen had cultivated an interest in photography since his childhood in Chicago and his teen years in Los Angeles. His

first camera was a Kodak Retina, a bar mitzvah gift, and as a GI in Paris he purchased a Contax at a flea market, “liberating” it at the end of World War II. Felsen began taking photographs at Gemini with Contax cameras and later switched to Leicas, favoring range finders for their quiet shutters. He has worked in digital since 2008.

 2026



# Gemini G.E.L. (Graphic Editions Limited)

Gemini has always been a family business. Rosamund Felsen, who remains an owner, and Kay Tyler were Gemini's first curators, and Elyse Grinstein helped with communications. The Tylers left in 1973. Now, the next generation is in role—my wife Joni has been part of Gemini since 1977, and in the past decade my daughter, Suzanne, and Ayn and Ellen Grinstein have joined as working partners.

—Sidney B. Felsen

Since its inception, Gemini has championed a boundless sense of possibility. Within its first five years, the artists' workshop and publisher of limited-edition prints and sculpture produced groundbreaking editions by Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Ellsworth Kelly, Jasper Johns, and Roy Lichtenstein, earning a reputation for dynamic, generative collaboration. Today, this innovative spirit endures, as Gemini works with world-renowned artists who embrace broad-ranging visual languages and technical approaches. Recent artists include Julie Mehretu, Analia Saban, and Tacita Dean. To date, Gemini has invited seventy artists and engaged 155 printers, publishing close to 2,700 editions.

## Frank Gehry and Gemini

I certainly can say they have been a support system over the years, from the basics when I was starting, and when I did their studio, their gallery. They are just good friends. I relied on them.

— Frank Gehry on Felsen and Grinstein

Gemini moved to its current location at 8365 Melrose Avenue in 1968 and approached Frank Gehry (American, b. Canada, 1929) to design an addition around 1976. In these years, Elyse Grinstein, an architect, worked in his office. The GRI's Frank Gehry Papers document the project: a two-story building with spaces for an artist studio, a printmaking workshop, and a gallery, dedicated in 1979. The building—a white stucco-clad box pierced, expanded, twisted, and transformed through exposed stud framing, unpainted plywood, and angled expanses of glass—playfully embraces the architectural vernacular of Los Angeles. Gehry has also collaborated with Gemini on prints and editioned sculpture since 2001.



## Reasons to Come to L.A.

Artists loved various aspects of Los Angeles, including the light, the Pacific Ocean, palm trees, and swimming pools. They had a fascination with Hollywood and its movie stars, and the burgeoning California cuisine, and lifelong friendships developed between the artists and those communities.

—Sidney B. Felsen

In the 1970s, Felsen made “Reasons to Come to L.A.,” a series of photographs documenting the city’s sites, with a focus on its urban and social landscapes. He sent these to artists on the East Coast, hoping to “romance” them to collaborate at Gemini. Los Angeles has been an enduring source of inspiration to local and visiting artists working at Gemini.



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# First Came a Friendship

Our friendships with artists were, and are, an important part of Gemini's working relationships. They are kind, generous, intelligent people, with great senses of humor. They have strongly and positively influenced my life, and I have endeavored to capture that influence and our friendship in my photographs.

—Sidney B. Felsen

**Felsen has said when photographing artists, “first came a friendship.” Friendships with and among artists have animated Felsen’s photography and equally sustained Gemini, shaping it to become more than just a workshop and publisher, but a creative community where art is embraced as a way of life.**



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# The Archive as Diary

Studying Felsen's archive, I followed his journey from Gemini, across Los Angeles, and to destinations around the globe. As a curator with an interest in printmaking technologies, I found the workshop photographs revelatory. They constitute an unparalleled resource about Gemini's artists and printers, providing insights into such far-reaching topics as process and collaboration and the rise of printmaking since the 1960s in the United States.

Felsen's personal story was equally compelling: that of a life shared with and devoted to artists. He documented their professional milestones, from exhibitions to commissions and awards. He also captured the depth of their personalities in candid shots of the everyday—breaking bread, celebrating birthdays and weddings, listening to live jazz, and enjoying family holidays and fishing trips.

In collecting archives like this, the GRI seeks to support knowledge creation and preserve the unique legacies of the many individuals they represent. Such resources gain meaning through new research and the diverse perspectives brought to their study.

—Naoko Takahatake, Exhibition Curator

▶ 2035



**There's a lot of tension in the workshop when proofing is going on, and I think humor eases that tension—the artist wants to get away from what they're concentrating on and just have some fun. These photographs appeal to me because they speak for the fact that a person is relaxed and willing to clown around in front of my camera. It's some form of their acceptance of me as a photographer.**

—Sidney B. Felsen

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