

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 10, 2025

**Arne Svenson: *Sock Monkeys and Strays***

**[BOSTON, MA] — Robert Klein Gallery** is pleased to announce an exhibition by acclaimed New York-based photographer **Arne Svenson**. The exhibition brings renewed attention to two of Svenson's most poignant series: ***Sock Monkeys*** and ***Strays***. The show is on view from **December 15, 2025** through **January 31st, 2026**. There will be an artist's discussion on **January 10, 2026** from 2-4pm in *Cahoots with Stoots*, between Svenson and photo historian Jennifer Stoots. This will be Svenson's third solo exhibition at the gallery.

Known for his meticulous, painterly approach and his background in special education, Svenson's practice is rooted in seeking the essence of his subjects—whether they are humans observed from a distance or discarded objects found in the periphery of daily life.

**Sock Monkeys: Portraits of Personalities**

In the ***Sock Monkeys*** series, Svenson treats humble, handmade dolls as subjects of high-art portraiture. Selecting from a massive collection of nearly 2,000 sock monkeys, Svenson used a large-format camera to capture each figure in the style of 19th-century black-and-white portraiture. Removed from the context of play and childhood, the sock monkey becomes an ambiguous stand-in for the human figure. Posed, isolated, and meticulously lit, these figures hover between humor and unease. Their stitched expressions suggest character without biography, inviting viewers to assign emotion, narrative, and even vulnerability to what is, at its core, an inanimate object. This series reflects Svenson's long-standing interest in how

38 NEWBURY STREET  
BOSTON MA 02116  
617.267.7997  
ROBERTKLEINGALLERY.COM

photographic framing can animate the overlooked and provoke complex psychological responses.

## **Strays: The Beauty of the Abandoned**

Complementing the portraits of the sock monkeys is **Strays** - a project featuring portraits of kittens borrowed from a rescue facility in upstate New York. In this series, Svenson focuses his lens on the abandoned and the overlooked—items and beings that have lost their place in the social or domestic order. Like his controversial and celebrated series *The Neighbors*, **Strays** utilizes Svenson’s investigative eye to find beauty and narrative in the banality of the everyday, asking the viewer to consider the history and dignity of the marginalized or left behind. "How can I photograph kittens in a way that would connect to the underlying theme in all my work, which is to cast light on the unseen, the ignored and overlooked. Was there a way to take a portrait of a kitten and not have cuteness dominate the image? Was it possible to ignore those big, entrancing eyes and find the kitten's inner life, his back-story? Did kittens have back-stories?"

Together, **Sock Monkeys** and **Strays** delve into themes of projection, presence, and the thin boundary between observer and observed. Whether confronting a toy imbued with imagined life or an animal navigating its own autonomy, Svenson’s photographs challenge viewers to reconsider how meaning is constructed through looking—and how photography mediates intimacy without narration.

## **About Arne Svenson**

Arne Svenson (b. 1952) is a self-taught photographer whose work has been exhibited at the **Museum of Fine Arts Boston**, **SFMOMA**, **Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver**, and the **Andy Warhol Museum**. He is a recipient of the prestigious **Nannen Prize** (2016) and is the author of several books, including *Sock Monkeys (200 out of 1,863)* and *The Neighbors*. Svenson’s work has been widely exhibited and collected internationally. His photographs are held in numerous private and public collections, and his practice continues to examine perception, surveillance, and the ethics of seeing. His work is characterized by a deep sensitivity to light, gesture, and the ethical boundaries of the gaze.

## **About Jennifer Stoots**

Jennifer L. Stoots is an art appraiser and photo historian with over 30 years of experience in the museum and gallery field and more than two decades specializing in photography appraisal. She appraises documentary and fine art photographs, photographic archives, and contemporary art, and regularly lectures on the economic history of fine art and the photography market, as well as legacy and estate planning for artists. Stoots holds an MA in the History of Art & Design from Pratt Institute and a BA in Art History from the University of Oregon, earned her appraisal credentials from NYU’s Appraisal Studies Program, and is a Certified Member of the Appraisers Association of America.

**ROBERT KLEIN GALLERY** was established in 1980 and ranks among the world's most prestigious showrooms of fine art photography with early exhibitions of Diane Arbus, Annie Leibovitz, Sally Mann, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. The Gallery maintains an extensive and ever-changing inventory of 19th century, 20th century, and contemporary photographs. Participating in international art fairs such as Paris Photo, The Armory Show – Modern, and The AIPAD Photography Show in New York, Robert Klein Gallery provides its contemporary artists with international exposure while exhibiting works by recognized masters such as Ansel Adams, Helen Levitt, and Irving Penn. With 40 combined years of experience and a profound knowledge base, the gallery is committed to serving as a leading platform in the photographic arts.

**Exhibition Details:**

- **Venue:** Robert Klein Gallery - 38 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
- **Dates:** December 13, 2025 – January 28, 2026
- **Artist's Talk:** January 10, 2026 - 2-4pm  
A conversation with Arne Svenson & Jennifer Stoops (photo historian)
- **Media Inquiries** - Contact Steven Harris: [inquiry@robertkleingallery.com](mailto:inquiry@robertkleingallery.com) 617.267.7997