

THE CAMERA AS A CONSTANT COMPANION: THE SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT PRESENTS THE MOST EXTENSIVE EXHIBITION IN GERMANY ON THE PHENOMENON AND THE AESTHETIC OF PAPARAZZI PHOTOGRAPHY

PAPARAZZI! PHOTOGRAPHERS, STARS AND ARTISTS

June 27–October 12, 2014

Press preview: Thursday, June 26, 2014, 11 a.m.

With “Paparazzi! Photographers, Stars and Artists”, beginning on June 27, 2014, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt presents the most extensive exhibition in Germany on the global phenomenon and the aesthetic of paparazzi photography to date. Around 500 works and documents trace the unbroken fascination with star photography and at the same time reflect its influence on the visual arts and fashion photography. The presentation features “icons” of paparazzi photography that have been permanently etched on our visual memory, including Jackie Kennedy-Onassis during an seemingly casual walk through Manhattan, Lady Di fleeing from a frenzy of flashing cameras, or the younger “favorites” of paparazzi such as Paris Hilton or Britney Spears. Besides works by the most well-known representatives of paparazzi photography, such as Ron Galella, Pascal Rostain, Bruno Mouron, or Tazio Secchiaroli, the large-scale exhibition presents positions by artists such as Cindy Sherman, Gerhard Richter, Andy Warhol, Barbara Kruger, Paul McCarthy, and Richard Avedon, who have critically examined and sounded out the specific characteristics of the paparazzi aesthetic. Developed and organized by the Centre Pompidou-Metz, using photographs, videos, paintings, sculptures, work objects, documents, and much more the exhibition tells stories from 50 years of paparazzi photography and sets its sights on the paparazzo himself. The presentation, which has been divided into three chapters, focuses on a profession that is admired and feared in equal measure and which secures its existence for the most part by means of secretly tracking and stalking famous celebrities and has made the tabloid press one of the highest-selling areas in the press sector – always on the scout and with the goal of publishing exclusive pictures of the unsuspected, the ostensibly confidential, and the personal. In the process, the exhibition also reveals the complex relationships and dependencies that occasionally develop between stars and the photographer.

The exhibition “Paparazzi! Photographers, Stars, and Artists” is sponsored by Škoda Auto Deutschland and the Verein der Freunde der Schirn Kunsthalle e. V.

“Since its beginning in the 1960s, paparazzi photography calls into question the relationship between the private and the public and exercises a substantial influence on the aesthetic of contemporary art production. ‘Paparazzi!’ offers the first intense look at the people behind the camera – their impulses, aesthetic, and technique – but also at its reception by the public and people’s insatiable desire for new images and exclusive news”, states Max Hollein, director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt.

The birth of today’s term “paparazzo” is 1960, when a photo reporter of the same name appears in Federico Fellini’s film *La Dolce Vita*; however, the director leaves the audience in the dark about

the origin of the term. One version is that Fellini fused the Italian words *pappataci* (small mosquito) and *ragazzo* (small boy) to form a new artificial world. Another one is that he drew his inspiration from a Victorian travelogue from 1901. Regardless of the fact that the photographer called Paparazzo only plays a minor role in the film, the character and the term have become synonymous with intrusive tabloid photography that transgresses boundaries. It is this kind of photography that fascinates and attracts people, that gives a face to the star cult, and that allows participating in the lives of others – while accepting that personal or intimate situations do not remain personal or intimate.

The three-part exhibition at the Schirn opens with the installation *Interview (Paparazzi)* (2000) by Malachi Farrell. Loud shouts and an intrusive frenzy of camera flashes accompany visitors as they walk over a red carpet that is part of the artwork. Supplemented by a series of contre-jour photographs by Frank Perrin that shows a chasing horde of paparazzi, the viewer is elevated to the status of a star, and the feeling of being focused on by paparazzi becomes real and directly palpable.

The first section of the presentation entitled “Photographers” is devoted to the craft of the paparazzi and its public impact, and it explains the origin of a modern myth. Focus is placed, among other things, on a series of historical photographs, black-and-white images that document the ingenuity of the paparazzi during their often delicate as well as precarious work: including photographers who take to dizzying heights, or those who screw their cameras onto sawed-off rifle butts in order to shoot the *one* crucial motif. Besides photographs by Francis Apesteguy, Tazio Secchiaroli, Michel Giniès, Marcello Geppetti, Jessica Dimmock, and Christophe Beauregard, there are also pictures by the French paparazzi duo Pascal Rostain and Bruno Mouron. These include their legendary photograph of a group of striking photographers in front of Brigitte Bardot’s apartment who are carrying placards in protest over the fact that in 1955 the actress sought the company of the paparazzi, yet ten years later vehemently rejected their cameras. The creative and in part bizarre equipment of the paparazzi can also be viewed at the Schirn: for example, special telephoto lenses, disguises, and camouflage as well as alleged everyday objects such as handbags and cigarette packs with which pictures can be taken agent style. This section also addresses the strong competitive pressure among the paparazzi, the envy, and the resentment that inevitably ensue among “colleagues” struggling to take exclusive photographs that not only bring financial recognition but in the best case turn them into legends. With the aid of a video by Romain Dussaulx and Benjamin Lalande that was shot in Los Angeles in 2006, the exhibition documents what it means to work as a paparazzo and the mentality this profession requires. The public often perceives paparazzi as characters who lack scruples and transgress boundaries; they even refer to each other as “rats” (Pascal Rostain) or “jackals” (Francis Apesteguy). However, the fascination for this profession, even though it is not accorded the same honors as is war reporters or fashion photographers, is unbroken. Excerpts from films by Dario Argento, Federico Fellini, Brian De Palma, or Andrzej Żuławski shot between 1930 and 2004 outline notions about the nature and character of the paparazzo and enable visitors to directly examine the myth surrounding paparazzi. At the same time, the film sequences raise questions about the mostly one-sided image of this profession.

The second chapter of the exhibition, “Stars,” illustrates how every couple of years the paparazzi focus their attention on selected celebrities. The profession of paparazzo is essentially a male domain. However, its victims are preferably female stars. The stories of six world famous icons of

paparazzi photography – Jackie Kennedy-Onassis, Brigitte Bardot, Elizabeth Taylor, Princess Diana, Britney Spears, and Paris Hilton – from the sixties to the present will be used to demonstrate how the style and trends of this type of photograph have changed over the course of its 50-year history. This section presents an extensive selection of photographs by the most famous paparazzi of the twentieth century – from Daniel Angeli, Francis Apesteguy, Ron Galella, Marcello Geppetti, Bruno Rostain, and Pacal Mouron to Erich Salomon, Tazio Secchiaroli, Sébastien Valiela, Weegee, et al. – who pursue highly different approaches in order to get the best shot and who in part maintain friendships or at least lasting love-hate relationships with their alleged victims. For in the cat-and-mouse game between paparazzi photographs and stars, the latter are not just passive victims. Each time they meet the picture hunters, they have the choice to work with them and allow themselves to be photographed accordingly, to refuse, or even to resort to a counterattack. This interaction is atmospherically reflected, for instance, in a series of photographs from the archive of Ron Galella, who is regarded as the godfather of paparazzi photography in the USA. Besides images of Jackie Kennedy-Onassis, smiling into the camera with her windswept hair, who later sued him for stalking and obtained a court-ordered minimum distance, this section also shows bizarre pictures, for example one of Marlon Brando being approached by Galella who is wearing a football helmet, a consequence of a broken jaw and knocked-out teeth during a previous encounter of the two. Yet most stars make do with gestures and facial expressions in order to vent their displeasure with the paparazzi, including Kate Moss, who sticks her tongue out at the French photographer Pascal Mouron, or Iggy Pop, whose obscene hand gesture leaves no doubt about what he thinks about paparazzo Brad Elterman. Beyond such gestures, stars occasionally also get involved in the game with the camera, opening themselves up to it and turning it into an accomplice – an option that is skillfully used for self-marketing purposes, especially by younger Hollywood stars such as Paris Hilton, and is further promoted by agents and journalists who supply information about their “protégés” whereabouts or habits, deliberately making them targets for the paparazzi.

The third part of the presentation is devoted to the artists. The specific circumstances surrounding the work of paparazzi produce a very unique aesthetic that is regularly assumed and addressed by the art world. Thus, speed and improvisation have had an impact on the pictorial composition of their photographs. Stars protecting their faces with their hands or making obscene gestures in the direction of the camera have become symbols of media encroachment. Since the 1960s, this aesthetic has inspired numerous artists from Pop Art to contemporary currents, including Richard Hamilton's work *Release* (1972), which is based on a paparazzo photo that appeared in a British daily and shows Mick Jagger on the way to court wearing handcuffs – a snapshot that has not lost any of its significance even after forty years and is still regarded as the epitome of the swinging sixties. Using a telephoto lens from a distance and a flash from up close results in a flattening effect that artists play with; added to this is deliberate blurring or overexposure. These aesthetic features make Cindy Sherman's iconic *Untitled Film Stills* (1977–80) look like paparazzi photographs taken from an ambush – images that the artist staged in the style of the 1950s in which she scrutinizes the role of the artist as a star as well as the construction of female identity. Artists have time and again been captivated by the aesthetic of star photographs since the beginnings of paparazzi photography: Richard Avedon and William Klein were the first to use it for famous photo spreads in fashion magazines. Numerous artists followed suit, such as the American Gary Lee Boas; the Brit Alison Jackson, who works with doubles of famous people; or the Austrian artists' collective G.R.A.M., who take photographs in paparazzi style. Their works criticize the power of the media as well as the blunders of society or the craving for being close to

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the stars. The highlights of this chapter are works by prominent artists such as Gerhard Richter, Andy Warhol, Paul McCarthy, Barbara Kruger, Juergen Teller, Thomas Demand, or Jonathan Horowitz, who examine the practices of the tabloids by artistically challenging their sensational makeup, trivial contents, as well as their ostentatious layout.

The exhibition "Paparazzi! Photographers, Stars and Artists" was developed and organized by the Centre Pompidou-Metz.

CATALOG: Paparazzi! Photographers, Stars and Artists. Edited by Clément Chéroux. Forewords by Alain Seban and Laurent Le Bon. With contributions by Clément Chéroux, Camille Lenglois, Véra Léon, Max Bonhomme, Michel Guerrin, Sam Stourdzé, Aurore Fossard-De Almeida, Nathalie Heinich, Marion Varino, Nicolas Maubert, André Rouillé, Quentin Bajac, and Frédéric Monneyron. English edition: 320 pages, 482 illustrations, 22 x 24 cm; graphic design: P&J (Laurent Pinon and Aurore Jannin with Sofia Chaoui), publisher: Flammarion, Paris, 2014, ISBN 978-2080201935, price: ca. €38.00 (museum edition), €45.00 (trade edition).

VENUE: SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, D-60311 Frankfurt. **DURATION:** June 27–October 12, 2014. **OPENING HOURS:** Tue, Fri–Sun 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Mon and Thu 10 a.m.–10 p.m. **INFORMATION:** www.schirn.de, email: welcome@schirn.de, tel.: +49.69.29 98 82-0, fax: +49.69.29 98 82-240. **ADMISSION:** €9.00, reduced €7.00, family ticket €18.00, children under 8 free of charge; combi-ticket with the exhibition "Infinite Jest" €16.00, reduced €12.00, children under 8 free of charge. **ADVANCED TICKET SALES:** Tickets can be purchased in advance online at www.schirn.de/tickets. **GUIDED PUBLIC TOURS:** Tue 5:00 p.m., Wed 11 a.m., Thu 7 p.m., Sat 3 p.m., Sun 5 p.m. **CURATOR:** Clément Chéroux. **CO-CURATORS:** Quentin Bajac und Sam Stourdzé. **PROJECT MANAGER SCHIRN:** Katharina Dohm. **SPONSORED BY:** Škoda Auto Deutschland, Verein der Freunde der Schirn Kunsthalle e. V. **MEDIA PARTNERS:** Frankfurter Rundschau, Journal Frankfurt, VGF–Verkehrsgesellschaft Frankfurt am Main. **CULTURAL PARTNER:** hr2 Kultur.

SOCIAL MEDIA: The Schirn will be communicating in the social web with the following **HASHTAG:** #paparazzi **ONLINE MAGAZINE:** www.schirn-magazin.de **FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/Schirn **TWITTER:** www.twitter.com/Schirn **YOUTUBE:** www.youtube.com/user/SCHIRNKUNSTHALLE **INSTAGRAM:** @schirnkunsthalle

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