

HAMILTONS

THE BEST | 3 June 2021 – 13 August 2021



'The Best' is a revolving exhibition celebrating the re-opening of UK galleries and the near 40-year history of Hamiltons Gallery's representation of some of the most illustrious photographers in modern history. Visitors will have a chance to see the exhibition evolve over its duration and can expect to see 'The Best' of what photography has to offer from Irving Penn, Richard Avedon, Helmut Newton, Mario Testino and more.

After a particularly tough year for everyone and months in lockdown, we have sincerely missed visiting galleries, perusing museum exhibitions and travelling to art fairs around the world. 'The Best' is a celebration of the freedom we so cherish to experience art again in its many manifestations.

'The Best' will present iconic images by some of the mediums most influential artists. The exhibition will encompass works by important 20th Century practitioners, to exceptional Post-War, fashion and contemporary images. The photographs will feature rare, museum quality prints, as well as new or iconic pictures we believe to be outstanding examples of work by some of our represented photographers with some guest appearances by artists the gallery admires.

The exhibition is also a tribute to the gallery's history of propelling photography to the forefront of the art market. At the time of the gallery's founding in 1977, the photography market as we know it today was only just starting and the superstars of the medium had only just begun to sell their pictures. Icons of the industry like Helmut Newton or Richard Avedon could scarcely have imagined they would have pictures in the world's most important museum and private collections or that their pictures would achieve seven figure price records.

Hamiltons was one of a handful of institutions who strove to shine light on the importance of the medium both in modern history and as a genre of art collecting. The gallery still works to shed critical light on these photographers' work – as they were created and as they evolve over time.

'The Best' will focus on excellence in the medium; both for the pleasure of the viewers we have so missed walking through our doors as well as for collectors who are seeking new and significant additions to their collections.

HIGHLIGHTS

RICHARD AVEDON



Richard Avedon, The Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Waldorf Astoria, Suite 28A, New York, April 16, 1957

© The Richard Avedon Foundation

Richard Avedon is one of the most important photographers of the second half of the 20th Century. During a career that spanned 60 years, his portrait and fashion work defined the medium of photography. More than any other photographer, he successfully worked to erase the distinction between photography and fine art. Whilst many know Avedon principally as a fashion photographer, his portraits have had an enduring social and political legacy. Whether of cultural icons such as this image of The Duke and Duchess of Windsor, his portraits are unidealized, timeless and critical. Throughout his life, Avedon maintained a unique style of portraiture that combined the rigor of the studio with the spontaneity of projects on location. Working sometimes for magazines, and often for his own account, he photographed portraits of people from every field and all walks of life.

PIETER HUGO



Pieter Hugo, Abdullahi Mohammed with Gumu, Ogre-Remo, Nigeria, 2007

© Pieter Hugo

Pieter Hugo is arguably the most well-recognised South African photographer working today. As part of the post-Apartheid generation, Hugo uses photography to represent marginalised and disempowered people usually considered 'Other' in Western culture and academia. In his photographs, Pieter addresses class, identity, violence and privilege by photographing relegated groups throughout Africa. His images feature Nigerian hyena tamers, the blind, albinos and survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In his series 'The Hyena and Other Men' Hugo photographs a small community of entertainers who kept and performed with their wild animals. This picture of 'Abdullahi Mohammed with Gumu' is considered the best from that series.

HERB RITTS



Herb Ritts, Versace Dress (Back View), El Mirage 1990

© Herb Ritts Foundation

Herb Ritts gained a reputation as a master of art and commercial photography through the 1990's. In his life and work, Ritts was drawn to clean lines and strong forms as seen in this magnificent image, 'Versace Dress, Back View' in which supermodel Christy Turlington is pictured wearing a backless, black silk dress which surrealistically highlights the curves of her body. This graphic simplicity allowed his images to be read and felt instantaneously. Social history and fantasy were both captured and created by his memorable photographs of noted individuals in film, fashion, music, politics and society. This print is one of his most iconic pictures and a print of the image is held in the collection of J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Please contact anna@hamiltonsgallery.com for press enquiries and credit information.

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13 Carlos Place London, W1K 2EU +44 (0) 207 499 9494

www.hamiltonsgallery.com