



International Center of Photography

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media release



Richard Avedon
Dorian Leigh, hat by Paulette, Paris, August 1949
© 2009 The Richard Avedon Foundation



Richard Avedon
Jade Parfitt and Esther De Jong, ensembles by Galliano, New York, March 1998
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AVEDON FASHION 1944–2000

On view from
May 15
through
September 20, 2009

Media Preview
May 14, 2009
11:30 am –1:00 pm

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The centerpiece of ICP's Year of Fashion, *Avedon Fashion 1944–2000* will be on view at the International Center of Photography (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) from May 15 through September 20, 2009. The first exhibition devoted exclusively to Richard Avedon's fashion work, it will occupy the main galleries of the museum and include some 175 photographs from throughout his productive career, as well as original magazines showing his work in context, and material demonstrating his creative process. The exhibition has been organized by ICP Curator Carol Squiers and Adjunct Curator Vince Aletti, with the cooperation of The Richard Avedon Foundation, and will be accompanied by a catalogue published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Richard Avedon is the most significant and influential photographer to have taken fashion as one of his subjects. He began working for *Harper's Bazaar* in 1944, when he was only twenty-one, and revolutionized fashion photography, dispensing with its prevailing mannered and statically posed formulas and introducing a more youthful, spirited, and distinctly American style. Inspired by Hungarian photographer Martin Munkacsy and encouraged by legendary *Harper's Bazaar* art director Alexey Brodovitch, he took models out of the studio and photographed them in motion to exhilarating effect. His collaborative efforts with Brodovitch allowed Avedon a great deal of freedom in composing his photographs, as well as a great degree of *Harper's Bazaar* editorial control over the use of his images. Working in Paris in the 1950s, he spun a cinematic narrative around the couture collections with his revolutionary outdoor images, evoking a vision of Paris at its most glamorous and intoxicating in what was still a grim postwar city. The extended narrative was one of his most imitated innovations. He was as inventive as he was prolific, constantly pushing the boundaries of what was acceptable in fashion photography, such as his inclusion of models who were Asian and African American, and his avant-garde pop culture references. His two decades at *Harper's Bazaar* are remarkable for their inventiveness and originality, as well as their breathtakingly hectic pace.

By 1957, little more than a decade into his career, the unmistakable hyperkinetic sensitivity of his work had become well known, as had the growing myth of Avedon himself. He was the inspiration and visual consultant for Stanley Donen's film *Funny Face*, with the Avedon role played by Fred Astaire, and his reluctant model played by Audrey Hepburn. Avedon was the epitome of the modern fashion photographer—charming, sophisticated, and suddenly as famous as his celebrity portrait subjects. More so than any other fashion photographer, Avedon reflected the mood of the moment through his work, from postwar optimism to Pop exuberance. He was sensitive and responsive to the new sense of power, determination, and freedom gained by women during the mid twentieth century. His favorite models had character and a collaborative spirit, and he not only encouraged them to express it, but he made them famous for it. While at *Harper's Bazaar*, he helped Suzy Parker achieve a level of renown rare for models, and after following former *Harper's Bazaar* fashion editor Diana Vreeland to *Vogue* in 1966 (where she was editor in chief from 1963–1971), many more previously anonymous models were given prominent credits and fame through his images. A new cult of celebrity bloomed for Jean Shrimpton, Lauren Hutton, Twiggy, Penelope Tree, and Veruschka, ushering in the age of the supermodel and raising the profile of fashion photography within popular culture.

Avedon's work at *Vogue* became more provocative in response to the sexual revolution of the late Sixties and Seventies, but his most memorable and exciting images from this period are of models in motion—sprinting across the page on a headlong rush into the future with the trademark “Avedon blur,” where fast shutter speeds captured figures mid-motion. Although Avedon remained at *Vogue* until 1988, he did little editorial photography in his final years there, only picking it up again for extended sequences in *Egoïste* magazine and, later, features in *The New Yorker* as their first staff photographer, including “In Memory of the Late Mr. and Mrs. Comfort,” a sensational 1995 color portfolio set in post-apocalyptic ruins. Avedon's last major narrative, this portfolio will be included in the exhibition in abbreviated form, along with key examples of his witty advertising work for Versace and Dior. Throughout his nearly seven decade career, Avedon's images were infused with an undeniable sense of personal style and a unique take on the importance of fashion in our lives.

CURATORS

Carol Squiers, Curator

Carol Squiers has been a curator at the International Center of Photography since 2000, and is an adjunct professor in the ICP-Bard MFA Program in Advanced Photographic Studies. She has organized six exhibitions for ICP, including *How Human*; *The Art of Science*; and *The Body at Risk: Photography of Disorder, Illness, and Healing*, and was co-curator of the *First* and *Second ICP Triennials of Photography and Video*.

Since 1978, Ms. Squiers has written for a wide variety of publications, including *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Vanity Fair*, *Aperture*, *Art in America*, and *The Village Voice*. She was the curator of photography at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center from 1980–1984 and the Senior Editor of *American Photo* from 1990–2000. In 1981, Ms. Squiers received a National Endowment for the Arts Art Critic's Fellowship.

Ms. Squiers has edited two anthologies—*The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography* (Bay Press, 1990) and *OverExposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography* (New Press, 2000)—and has contributed to numerous catalogues. These include: *Partners: An Exhibition from the Collection of Ydessa Hendeles* (Haus der Kunst and Walther König, Cologne, 2003); *Laurie Simmons: In and Around the House, Photographs 1976–78* (Carolina Nitsch Editions, N.Y., 2003); *Peek: Photographs from the Kinsey Institute* (Arena Editions, Santa Fe, 2000); *Barbara Kruger: A Retrospective* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1999); and *Police Pictures: The Photograph as Evidence*, (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1997).

Vince Aletti, Adjunct Curator

Currently the photography critic for *The New Yorker's* “Goings on About Town” section, Vince Aletti was formerly a rock critic at *Rolling Stone*, photography critic for *The Village Voice* from 1987 to 2005, and that paper's art editor from 1994 to 2005. He received the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award in Writing in 2005.

Mr. Aletti is a regular columnist for *Photograph*, a contributor to *Aperture*, *Interview*, and *Photoworks*, and one of the two featured writers of *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century* (2001). He wrote moving tributes to Helen Gee and Richard Avedon for *The Village Voice*, in addition to his weekly reviews of New York museum and gallery exhibitions.

In 1998, Mr. Aletti was the curator of a highly praised survey exhibition of art and photography called *Male*, which was followed up in 1999 by *Female*, both at Wessel + O'Connor Gallery in New York. In conjunction with those shows, he was the co-editor of the Fall 1999 “Male/Female” issue of *Aperture*, featuring his interview with Madonna, which was later anthologized in *Da Capo's Best Music Writing* (2000). In 2000, he was the co-curator of an exhibition called *Settings &*

Players: Theatrical Ambiguity in American Photography at London's White Cube 2 gallery, and the following year he organized a show of Steven Klein's fashion work for the Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne, Switzerland. In recent years, he has contributed essays and interviews to books about photographers Marc Cohen, Michael Thompson, David Hilliard, Ingar Krauss, Jackie Nickerson, and Kohei Yoshiyuki.

CATALOGUE

A full-color catalogue by publisher Harry N. Abrams, Inc. will be released at the time of the exhibition. It will feature critical essays by curators Carol Squiers, writing about Avedon's prolific, inventive early years at *Harper's Bazaar*, and Vince Aletti, who will cover Avedon's equally influential later career at *Vogue*, *Egoïste*, and *The New Yorker*. An additional essay surveying Avedon's portraiture in relation to his fashion photography will be contributed by Philippe Garner.

Avedon Fashion 1944–2000 (Harry N. Abrams, Inc.)

9 ¾ x 12 ¾ in.

400 pages; 300 plates; 60 text illustrations

Cover: Paper over board (with lenticular eye)

Yolanda Cuomo, Designer

The designer of the exhibition and the accompanying book, *Avedon Fashion 1944–2000*, is Yolanda Cuomo, head of Yolanda Cuomo Design. An art director, designer and educator, Cuomo has collaborated over the last two decades with a variety of artists and performers, including Richard Avedon, Twyla Tharp, Laurie Anderson, and Gilles Peress. She is the art director for *Aperture* magazine and has designed numerous books and exhibitions, including *Diane Arbus Revelations*, the first major retrospective of Arbus's work since 1974, organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2003. Cuomo teaches at New York University in Manhattan.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION & SUPPORT

The exhibition was organized by the International Center of Photography with the cooperation of The Richard Avedon Foundation, New York; Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; and Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York. This exhibition and its catalogue were made possible with a major lead grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. Additional support was received from the ICP Exhibitions Committee, National Endowment for the Arts, Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Clémence and William von Mueffling, Mary Ann and Frank Arisman, *Harper's Bazaar*, The John and Annamaria Phillips Foundation,



BAZAAR

