

The Last
Marilyn



KEYES ART
Bert Stern
Marilyn, Dior Dress (Vogue 1962) Photograph
49x43 framed
ed. 36
2017

Gallerist Julie Keyes consults for some of the top collectors and hotels in the world, but the thing she needs closest to her? Her horses. “I bring them everywhere with me. They’re like large golden retrievers.” It was a natural fit for her to have a gallery at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida.

“WE SPECIALIZE IN DEVELOPING COLLECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE CURRENT INVESTMENTS AND ALSO EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT OVER THE COUCH,” notes Keyes.

Keyes turned her honed eye on the work of Bert Stern to present to the public both some of his most iconic and sublime lesser known works.

Bertram “Bert” Stern (1929 – 2013) was born in Brooklyn and became a self-taught photographer who was a military cameraman in the Army in Japan. He took Madison Avenue by storm in the 1950’s with striking advertising images and went on to become an in-demand fashion and portrait photographer, creating iconic images of Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Lauren, Twiggy, Madonna, and Kate Moss. If they were sirens, he danced to their song, and they danced to his lens.

But some of his most famous images were of the legendary Marilyn Monroe.





Stern worked over a three-day period at the Hotel Bel-Air with Marilyn Monroe just weeks before her death, capturing revealing images of the star who burnt out too soon. The resulting images comprised a book "The Last Sitting."

KEYES GALLERY SHOWCASES SOME OF THESE PORTRAITS AS WELL AS THE FAMOUS PROOF SHEET WHERE MONROE HERSELF TOOK A MAGIC MARKER TO X OUT IMAGES SHE DIDN'T FEEL WERE HER BEST REFLECTION.

In the compelling and candid documentary, *"Bert Stern Original Mad Man,"* a film by his wife Shannah Laumeister, Stern says, "I've always loved women. I think being a woman must be very difficult, after all you're always on the inside. Men look at the outside. It's that illusion which is so delicious. Once you break that mask, then you are in another world."

Stern felt that women were goddesses, yet in his photos he had a way of cutting through the illusions to reveal the human being.

Diana Vreeland tapped into Stern's talents for Vogue, and when he said he wanted to photograph Marilyn Monroe, it was actually a first for the magazine. Stern abandoned the studio for a suite at the Hotel Bel Air to create a more personal atmosphere.



Photos copyright The Bert Stern Trust

“ I KNEW THIS WAS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE,”

admits Stern in the film. "I wasn't out to do nudes," he says, "I had thrown scarves and jewelry on the bed. She said to her hairdresser, 'George what do you think of us doing nudes with scarves?' and he said 'Divine.'" Monroe bore the scar from a gallbladder surgery – her inner scars still without manifestation. Yet her magic was undeniable. Stern said she looked straight at him and said, "How's this for thirty-six?"

The shoot accompanied by champagne went into the wee hours and the

resulting photos raw and poignant. But not exactly what Vogue had in mind. The duo met again back at the Bel Air for a second shoot, with clothes, and the striking image of her in the black Dior gown was born. "I saw something of divinity in her," admits Stern, and it shows in the work.

Stern's first sitting with Monroe was in June, the second in July, and the issue of Vogue went to press August 6, 1962. Marilyn Monroe died of a barbiturate overdose the night before.

In the documentary Stern says, "I had no way of knowing what was going on with her – what her demons were, what passions, what pain. I was just a kid that wanted to make out with

Marilyn Monroe. Since I wasn't going to get her, this was the next best thing, or maybe the best thing because it still exists and people want it. They want a piece of that passion I had." And those images exist forever.

The Keyes Gallery has locations in the International Club at the Palm Beach International Equestrian Center in Wellington, Florida, The Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Florida, Palm Springs, California, and the Hamptons, New York. They also have a presence in hotels including the Iroquois and Mandarin in Manhattan.

www.juliekeyesart.com