

## Luntz show champions photo ‘legends’

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The work of Elliot Erwitt, who has been the president of the Magnum Agency twice in his 50-year career and is known for his comedic images of people and animals, is featured in the Living Legends exhibit at the Holden Luntz Gallery.

In keeping with the season of celebration, a new show at the Holden Luntz Gallery celebrates the impact on photograph of eight living photographers united not only by their dedication to their craft, but also by their unique perspectives and technical and creative abilities.

“My sense is that we ought to celebrate living masters,” said gallery owner Holden Luntz, describing “Living Legends: Career Highlights of Eight Master Photographers.”

“These eight photographers are each known for something very different. This is a way to celebrate them and what they brought to the world of photography. The show is all about celebrating the nature of why we make pictures, who makes them and why the nature of taking them changes.”

Historically, a photo’s believability lay in the fact that it was taken exactly as the photographer saw the subject. In the 1940s and ’50s, when these photographers started taking pictures, they did it without today’s digital cameras, computers and advanced printing techniques. They photographed what they saw, composing powerful images at a time when people relied on photographs to be informed about the world.

“These are the people who advanced the art of photography, [and] helped lay down the techniques of photography in the darkroom before there was such a thing as digital photography,” Luntz said. “Images were not seen until they were printed in the darkroom, where there were limitations on print sizes and effects. Most of the work in “Living Legends” will speak to viewers from that era.”

### **‘A moment in time’**

Those featured in the show are Harry Benson, a photojournalist known for his images of subjects ranging from pop culture to the Civil Rights Movement; Bruce Davidson, the youngest member of the renown Magnum Agency who is known for his humanistic documentary photography; Elliot Erwitt, who has been the president of the Magnum Agency twice in his 50-year career and is known for his comedic images of people and animals; Frank Horvat, known for his cutting edge fashion photos in the 1950s; and William Klein, a painter who expanded the techniques of fashion photography.

Also featured are Norman Seeff, who captured some of the world’s most recognizable faces, such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Carly Simon and Andy Warhol in their most unguarded moments; Albert Watson, a graphic designer and filmmaker who shot portraits, fashion and interiors; and Sabine Weiss, the last living legend of the French Humanist School, who championed life’s small and fleeting moments by photographing people going about their daily lives.

“When these photographers were taking these pictures, things only happened once and it was just a moment in time,” explained Luntz. “If you weren’t there, you didn’t see it. Now, with computers and digital cameras, if you can think it, you can create it.”

One legend featured in the show, Benson, would have scoffed in his younger days at the idea of his images in an art gallery on Worth Avenue.

“When I started out, I was just only thinking about staying on the payroll at the end of the week and having a job,” Benson said.

His iconic images of the Beatles’ pillow fight in a Paris hotel room and their arrival at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City for their first visit to the United States are some of his best-known and, for him, nostalgic images.

“A photograph can mean something; it can be happy,” Benson said. “It can start you singing.”

And here Benson starts singing the Beatles’ All My Loving. “Close your eyes and I’ll kiss you, tomorrow I’ll miss you ...”

“It’s pleasant,” he continues. “That’s what photography sometimes is.”

### **Anyone left to photograph?**

His favorite photograph in the show is of supermodel Kate Moss.

“I like that photo because she is looking at me, no matter where I am,” Benson said. “I went into the room where the models were getting ready before the fashion show and she’s getting made up, and she must have been 25 yards away. As soon as I walked in, she looked at me from across the room and I just started walking towards her, and her expression didn’t change the whole time. She looks quite dramatic in that picture and I mention it because the more I look at the picture, the more I like it.”

For a man who seems to have shot every famous person imaginable, can there be anyone left on his dream list?

“Yes, there’s one: (Vladimir) Putin,” he said. “Putin is something special. He’s the most powerful and interesting leader around, meaning he’s got more missiles and nuclear weapons than anyone else ... and he likes to take his shirt off. And he’s handsome.”

Will that picture ever happen? “You never know,” Benson said. “All of the sudden, life can change and I get a phone call and I’m on an airplane. That’s the thing about life, it changes so quickly and every day is different than the day before.

“Just like a picture, it can take on a whole new meaning as time goes by.”