

Palm Beach Daily News

THE SHINY SHEET

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THE MANY FACES OF HIGH STYLE ON VIEW AT HOLDEN LUNTZ GALLERY

By Jan Sjostrom
Daily News Arts Editor

Jim Lee was a young photographer in 1969 trying to make a name for himself in the fashion industry when he shot Ossie Clark, Aeroplane. It remains his most famous image.

In the black-and-white photograph, mirror images of a blonde model wearing a flowing, flowered dress seem to be flying into one another against a black background. A tiny model airplane dives toward each figure.

The image is one of the many iconic fashion and celebrity photographs included in High Life/High Style at Holden Luntz Gallery. Also featured are works by Clive Arrowsmith, Arthur Elgort, Cathleen Naundorf, William Klein, Harry Benson, Patrick Demarchelier, Norman Seeff and Robin Platzer.

Clark was one of the most famous British designers of the mod era. But Lee liked him because “he was one person who didn’t try to tell me what to do with my photographs,” the photographer said recently from his home in London.

Traditional fashion photography bored him. He preferred film.

“I couldn’t bear the idea of a boring fashion shoot that didn’t have content, so I moved into ideas,” he said.

His photographs were ground-breaking and often shocking for the times. In his enigmatic Ossie Clark/Vietnam, for example, a soldier grips a model adorned in a red flowered gown who seems to be in the throes of ecstasy.



Jim Lee flipped the negative to produce mirror images of the model to illustrate a 1969 dress by British designer Ossie Clark. Jim Lee, silver-gelatin photograph 1969, but printed later (40 x 60 inches).

For Ossie Clark/Aeroplane, Lee was inspired by the dress’s irregular cut, which reminded him of feathers. He had the model bend backward and aimed a wind machine at her. Looking at the photograph, he decided she would look better sideways. He added the planes for a touch of humor.

Still, “the composition needed something else,” he said. “I thought if I flipped the negative and had her flying into herself it would make a more graphic thing.”

Most of the images in Luntz's show date from the 1960s to the 1990s, when high fashion figured more prominently than it does now, Holden Luntz said. Many of the photographers got their start in the 1960s and 1970s, when music, art, fashion and cinema cross-pollinated, he said.

“That kind of work is getting harder to find,” he said. “That sense of visual sophistication isn't what's driving young artists in the market or in galleries. Work has become more conceptual and doesn't hold up the same kind of mirror to great fashion and celebrities.”

In addition to being arresting, many of the images suggest a story.

Viewers might wonder why a dashing Kate Moss is standing on a table surrounded by delighted male diners in the photograph Elgort shot of her at Cafe Lipp in Paris.

They might admire the lines in Arrowsmith's black-and-white photograph of a model seated at a counter wearing a form-fitting strapless dress accented by fish-net stockings, net gloves and a winged hat. But they're just as likely to wonder what flavor ice cream she's sampling.

One photographer who continues to shoot high style is Naundorf. She constructs fantasy scenes using couture fashions from houses such as Chanel, Dior, Gaultier, Lacroix, Elie Saab and Valentino.

In her series Noah's Ark, she positions models in couture fashions with taxidermic wildlife, such as the polar bear in a winter woodland scene. The model wears a design by Saab that features a fluffy white hat that resembles a huge snowball — or a bear haunch.

High style? Undoubtedly. And unlike anything else in the show. As Luntz said of his choices, “they all have individual voices.”



This untitled image by Clive Arrowsmith portrays a stylish young woman at an ice cream parlor. Archival pigment photograph, 47 3/4 x 36 inches; paper, 52 x 40 inches.



Arthur Elgort photographed Kate Moss at Caf Lipp in Paris for 'Italian Vogue.' Silver-gelatin photograph 1993, but printed later (40 x 60 inches).



Cathleen Naundorf used taxidermic animals for her 'Noah's Ark' series. This one features a design by Elie Saab. C-type color photograph, 2014 (35 x 51 inches).

If You Go

What: High Life/High Style

When: Today-Jan. 23

Where: Holden Luntz Gallery, 332 Worth Ave. For information: Call 805-9550 or visit holdenluntz.com