

## News Release

### Horst: Photographer of Style

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This autumn, the V&A will present the definitive retrospective exhibition of the work of master photographer Horst P. Horst (1906-1999) – one of the leading photographers of the 20th century. In his illustrious 60-year career, German-born Horst worked predominantly in Paris and New York and creatively traversed the worlds of photography, art, fashion, design, theatre and high society.

*Horst: Photographer of Style* will display 250 photographs, alongside haute couture garments, magazines, film footage and ephemera. The exhibition explores Horst's collaborations and friendships with leading couturiers such as Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli in Paris; stars including Marlene Dietrich and Noël Coward; and artists and designers such as Salvador Dalí and Jean-Michel Frank. Highlights of the exhibition include photographs recently donated to the V&A by Gert Elfering, art collector and owner of the Horst Estate, previously unpublished vintage prints, and more than 90 *Vogue* covers by Horst.

The exhibition will also reveal lesser-known aspects of Horst's work: nude studies, travel photographs from the Middle East and patterns created from natural forms. The creative process behind some of his most famous photographs, such as the *Mainbocher Corset*, will be revealed through the inclusion of original contact sheets, sketches and cameras. The many sources that influenced Horst - from ancient Classical art to Bauhaus ideals of modern design and Surrealism in 1930s Paris - will be explored.

Martin Roth, Director of the V&A said: "*Horst was one of the greatest photographers of fashion and society and produced some of the most famous and evocative images of the 20th century. This exhibition will shine a light on all aspects of his long and distinguished career. Horst's legacy and influence, which has been seen in work by artists, designers and performers including Herb Ritts, Robert Mapplethorpe, Bruce Weber and Madonna, continues today.*"

Horst's career straddled the opulence of pre-war Parisian haute couture and the rise of ready-to-wear in post-war New York and his style developed from lavish studio set-ups to a more austere approach in the latter half of the 20th century. The exhibition will begin in the 1930s with Horst's move to Paris and his early experiments in the *Vogue* studio. Among his first models and muses were Lisa Fonssagrives, Helen Bennett and Lyla Zelensky. Vintage black and white photographs from the archive of Paris *Vogue* will be displayed alongside garments in shades of black, white, silver and gold by Parisian couturiers such as Chanel, Lanvin, Molyneux and Vionnet.

The exhibition will then focus on Horst's Surreal-inspired studies and collaborations with Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli. Fashion photographs will be shown with trompe l'oeil portraits and

haunting still lifes. Horst excelled at portraiture and in the 1930s he captured some of Hollywood's brightest stars: Rita Hayworth, Bette Davis, Vivien Leigh, Noël Coward, Ginger Rogers, Marlene Dietrich and Joan Crawford, to name a few.

Horst travelled widely throughout the 1940s and 1950s to Israel, Iran, Syria, Italy and Morocco. An escape from the world of fashion and city environs, his little-known travel photographs reveal a fascination for ancient cultures, landscapes and architecture. On display will be works taken in Iran such as the *Persepolis Bull*, Horst's powerful image of a vast sculpture head amidst the ruins of a once magnificent palace, and images documenting the annual migration of the nomadic Qashqai clan.

Detailed studies of natural forms such as flowers, minerals, shells and butterfly wings from the project *Patterns From Nature*, will be shown alongside a series of kaleidoscopic collages made by arranging photographs in simple repeat; his intention was that these dynamic patterns could be used as designs for textiles, wallpaper, carpets, plastics and glass.

Horst was admired for his dramatic lighting and became one of the first photographers to perfect the new colour techniques of the 1930s. A short film of him at work in the *Vogue* studios during the 1940s will be shown with an introduction to his peers including Lee Miller, Cecil Beaton and Irving Penn. The advent of colour enabled a fresh approach and Horst went on to create more than 90 *Vogue* covers and countless pages in vivid colour. A selection of 25 large colour photographs, newly printed from the original transparencies from the Condé Nast Archive, will demonstrate Horst's exceptional skill as a colourist. These prints feature Horst's favourite models from the 1940s and 50s, such as Carmen Dell'Orefice, Muriel Maxwell and Dorian Leigh, and will be shown together with preparatory sketches, which have never previously been exhibited.

In the early 1950s, Horst created a series of male nudes for an exhibition in Paris for which the models were carefully posed and dramatically lit to accentuate their musculature. The series evokes the classical sculpture that Horst so admired throughout his career. During the 1960s and 1970s, Horst photographed some of the world's most beautiful and luxurious homes for *House and Garden* and *Vogue* under the editorship of his friend Diana Vreeland. A three-sided projection and interactive screens will present these colourful studies. Among the most memorable are the Art Deco apartment of Karl Lagerfeld, the three lavish dwellings of Yves Saint Laurent and the Roman palazzo of artist Cy Twombly.

In the latter years of Horst's life, his early aesthetic experienced a renaissance. The period also witnessed a flurry of new books, exhibitions, and television documentaries celebrating his work. Horst produced new, lavish prints in platinum-palladium for museums and the collector's market, selecting emblematic works from every decade of his career, which will be showcased as the finale to the exhibition.

-ENDS-

## NOTES TO EDITORS

- The V&A is open daily from 10.00 to 17.45 and until 22.00 on Fridays
- Tickets £8 (concessions available). To book tickets, visit [www.vam.ac.uk/horst](http://www.vam.ac.uk/horst) or call 020 7420 9736 (booking fee applies)
- The exhibition is curated by Susanna Brown, Curator of Photographs at the V&A
- The exhibition has four primary lenders: The Horst Estate; R. J. Horst; The Condé Nast Archive in New York; and the archive of Paris *Vogue*. It also includes photographs and couture gowns from the V&A's own collection
- The V&A is home to the oldest museum photography collection in the world, designated the UK's National Collection of the Art of Photography and spanning the whole history of the medium

### About the Horst Estate

Together with the bulk of Horst's original prints, the Horst Estate holds Horst's original negatives and transparencies, and his notebooks, scrapbooks and other records.

### About Condé Nast Archive

Condé Nast is a premier international media company renowned for producing high quality content for influential audiences across the world. The company's portfolio includes some of the most iconic titles in media: *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Glamour*, *Brides*, *GQ*, *The New Yorker*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Details*, *Architectural Digest*, *Wired*, *W* and *Teen Vogue*. The Condé Nast Archive, with locations in New York, Paris, London, and Milan, houses millions of original photographs, illustrations, magazines, and ephemera dating back to 1892. Included among the collection is more than 5,000 Horst photographs created during his six decades as a staff photographer.

### Travel Partner American Airlines

American Airlines is supporting *Horst: Photographer of Style* by providing transatlantic flights. American Airlines sponsors visual arts, theatre, music, dance and film in the UK. For more information on American Airlines and their involvement in the Arts, contact the press office at [polly.tracey@aa.com](mailto:polly.tracey@aa.com)

**Support for the V&A is more vital than ever. Please help us by acknowledging the exhibition supporters American Airlines.**

### Exhibition Publication

To accompany the exhibition, the V&A will publish *HORST: Photographer of Style* (edited by Susanna Brown), with a foreword by Editor in Chief of American *Vogue* Anna Wintour and essays by a team of international contributors (£40 hardback). For PRESS information, contact Julie Chan on 020 7942 2701 or [j.chan@vam.ac.uk](mailto:j.chan@vam.ac.uk)

**For further PRESS information about the exhibition, please contact Zoë Franklin or Lily Booth in the V&A press office on 020 7942 2497 / 2502 or email [z.franklin@vam.ac.uk](mailto:z.franklin@vam.ac.uk) / [l.booth@vam.ac.uk](mailto:l.booth@vam.ac.uk)**

**A selection of high resolution images is available to download from <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>**



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