

Bert Stern

Marilyn

16 September—10 October 2013

In late June 1962, just six weeks before Marilyn Monroe's untimely death, Bert Stern took almost 2,600 photographs of the American star over three daily sessions at the Bel-Air Hotel in Los Angeles. Published in *Vogue* after the actress's death, this photo shoot later became known as *The Last Sitting*.

Stern's photographs carry a rare sensual and human vibrancy. Never before had the star allowed a photographer such intimate access, and Stern's camera captures a revealing, naked portrait of Marilyn the person—a fragile, lonely, flawed woman who would die tragically a few weeks later.

"Marilyn Monroe was great. She was sexy, beautiful and funny—the perfect all-American girl. I loved her," said Bert Stern.

In front of the camera, Marilyn transformed into a chameleon, fully immersing herself into whatever role she was meant to play, be it a classic movie star dressed in a lavish fur coat, a pure, virginal character sheathed in an immaculate white veil or a true sex symbol wearing nothing but pearls or diamond necklaces, silk scarves or chiffon roses.

The exhibition features seven archival prints on paper six of which have been uniquely enhanced with gemstones, pearls, Swarovski crystals and silver flakes, adding new depth and energy to these iconic portraits of America's most famous actress. All the photographs were printed and embellished earlier this year under Bert Stern's supervision, only several months before he died.

Bert Stern was born in 1929 in Brooklyn, New York. Self-taught in photography, he began his career as assistant in the art department of *Look* magazine in 1946. Hugely successful in the worlds of fashion and advertising photography, he operated in the late 1960s a studio from which he created countless award-winning ads, editorial features, magazine covers, films and portraits. In all of Stern's works one can recognize the remarkable graphic simplicity of his photographic art, as well as his extraordinary rapport with his subjects.

Bert Stern passed away on 26 June 2013 at the age of 83 leaving behind an impressive body of photographic work.

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