

Crane Kalman Brighton is pleased to announce the first UK gallery showing of **'FotoRamblas'**, a collection of portraits from the extraordinary archive of a photographic portrait studio situated on Las Ramblas in Barcelona dating from the mid-20th Century.

The exhibition will be shown as part of the Brighton Photo Fringe, and along-side the Brighton Photo Biennale, from 3rd October to 9th November 2008.

The archive is a tribute to photography as the social and cultural register of Barcelona, at a time when it was beginning to recover from the disastrous consequences of the Spanish Civil War. It narrates the history of an age through faces that hold many echoes, both individual and collective, of a country that was starting to redefine itself and to live out its new dream – a changing society that longed to shed its puritan millstone once and for all.

In an age when cameras weren't readily available, studio photography acted as a democratic medium for representing individuals and families. FotoRamblas captured in traditional portraits the magic of important social events such as weddings, anniversaries or engagements. These images are perhaps the ones that succeed most in showing the social reality of the Franco era and its principles: the family nucleus, Catholicism, paucity, and fidelity to the regime.

FotoRamblas also specialised in photographing celebrities - actors, performers and musicians, as well as figures from the worlds of boxing and wrestling. These series come across as metaphors for the yearning of an age that demanded new challenges, new images and even new myths. All the models passed through the studio with the same desire to dignify their craft, unveiling their dreams and aspirations in the process.

A sense of nostalgia imbues the collection of images. The sublimated faces, the poses and expressions of the sitters, the canons of bodily beauty of the time, their hairstyles and clothing, but above all their composure before the camera tell of a time long past. The aesthetic distance between now and then proves greater than the time gap separating us from the salvaged images of this world.

A tribute to so many professional photographers, boxers, wrestlers, artists, and even anonymous sitters, this exhibition is also intended to draw attention to the beauty that lies in unusual places.

FotoRambals will run from 3rd October to 9th November 2008 at Crane Kalman Brighton, 38 Kensington Gardens, North Laine, Brighton BN1 4AL. Tel: 01273 697096; website – www.cranekalmanbrighton.com

For further details or imagery, please contact Richard Kalman at enquiries@cranekalmanbrighton.com or telephone 1273 697096.