

Slim Aarons: High Society

The Getty Images Gallery Collection

5 February-16 March 2008

Crane Kalman Brighton is pleased to present an exhibition of the extraordinary world of photographer Slim Aarons. **High Society** captures the jet-setting rich and famous of American society in the 1960s and 1970s - at play in the swimming pools of Malibu or the ski slopes of Verbier. The exhibition runs from 5th February to 16th March 2008.

The world of Aarons's photographs, where wealthy people lounge poolside, looking effortlessly beautiful, became an iconic look often mimicked in advertising. Renewed interest in his work led to two recent books, and many admirers, particularly among fashion designers such as **Paul Smith and Tom Ford**.

In a career that spanned six decades, Aarons visited many destinations like Beverly Hills, Capri and the French Riviera and photographed the **Kennedy family, Humphrey Bogart, Marilyn Monroe, Grace Kelly**, and other elite jet-setters. Aarons worked without stylists or elaborate lighting, preferring to photograph celebrities in their own clothes and own surroundings.

"Celebrity was more discrete at that point," says **Christopher Sweet**, the editor of Aarons's two recent books. "It's a different, richer portrait of a social world."

Aarons's photography career began not with pictures of stars, but of soldiers. He was born in New York and enlisted in the U.S. Army at age 18. He worked as the official photographer for the United States Military Academy at West Point, served as a combat photographer in World War II and was awarded a Purple Heart. Also during the war, he shot for *Yank* magazine and met some of the era's top photojournalists.

After World War II, Aarons moved to California, where he began photographing celebrities. It was there that he shot his most famous photograph, "The Kings of Hollywood," showing **Clark Gable, Van Heflin, Gary Cooper**, and **Jimmy Stewart** shooting the breeze, and shot for magazines, including *Life*, *Town & Country* and *Holiday*.

In 1974, Aarons published his first book of society photos, *A Wonderful Time: An Intimate Portrait of the Good Life*. It would be followed by *Once Upon a Time* in 2003 and *A Place In the Sun* in 2005.

Aarons died in 2006, but in the last few years of his life, his work, which had been appropriated or paid homage to by so many photographers, was finally back in vogue and recognised again. "I'm not a master photographer. I'm a journalist with a camera," Aarons said. "People forget. It isn't about one photograph, like all magazines publish today. We were storytellers."

Slim Aarons: High Society will run from 5th February to 16th March 2008 at Crane Kalman Brighton, 38 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL.

Crane Kalman Brighton is an authorised agent of the Getty Images Gallery – the world's largest photographic archive – which features much of the defining imagery of the 20th Century.