artnet Auctions Presents the Norman Parkinson Photographs Sale

artnet Auctions is proud to feature the Norman Parkinson Photographs Sale, an auction of a select group of vintage fashion photographs.

Born Ronald William Parkinson Smith, the photographer took the name Norman Parkinson in the 1930s while working as a portrait photographer. In 1935, he began photographing fashion for Harper’s Bazaar, moving on in the 1940s to work for British, American, Italian, and French Vogues. He also worked for Queen magazine in the 1960s. In the 1950s, Parkinson developed his advertising work through agencies such as Young & Rubicam. A member of the pioneering generation of fashion photographers, Parkinson was also one of its great innovators, especially due to his choice to take
his models out of the studio and into the world at large. The photographer’s career spanned over half a century, from the 1930s to the 1980s.

The Angela Williams Archive is comprised of vintage photographs given by Parkinson in 1964 to his then 23-year-old assistant Angela Williams. At the time, the photographer was closing his Twickenham studio to relocate to the island of Tobago. A part of the collection was first exhibited in 1997 at the Fox Talbot Museum in Lacock, England. On the occasion, Philippe Garner wrote: “The discovery of this fascinating group of photographs from the late 50s and early 60s turns the spotlight on an important period in his career. The photographs are alive with an extraordinary sense of style, vitality and flair, which were unique to Parkinson at that moment in British photography.”

The Norman Parkinson Photographs Sale features a dazzling image of Lady Caroline Montagu-Douglas-Scott wearing a Norman Hartnell dress on the day of her wedding to Ian Gilmour. This piece, estimated at US$5,000 to 7,000, was photographed in the Great Hall of Syon House, the residence of the Duke of Northumberland. The image was photographed for Vogue in 1951.

The auction also features a pair of advertising images for the Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire car from 1958, featuring Pagan Grigg and Robin Tattersall. One photograph is set outside the Dorchester on Park Lane, while the other shows the subjects leaving a cinema on Leicester Square. Both pieces are estimated at US$4,000 to 6,000.

One of the most striking images in the auction is the scintillating photograph of Jean Shrimpton wearing a dress and jewels from the Christian Dior Boutique. This work is estimated at US$4,000 to 6,000. In another highlight from the sale, the model Carmen Dell’Orefice appears in a sun-filled image for "New Holiday Looks - In the Bahamas," which was shot for the July 1959 issue of Vogue. Dell’Orefice is pictured wearing a delightful summer outfit by Kay Perry as she stands on a power boat moored in Nassau Yacht Haven. This piece is estimated at US$3,000 to 5,000.

The selection rounds out with an image that evokes the dawning of the new mod era of the 1960s; this piece features the former Miss Sweden, model Greta Quiberg, wearing a somewhat demure Mary Quant dress. This photograph, estimated at US$4,000 to 6,000, was taken at a time just before hemlines were hiked and patterns became bolder.

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