

PRESS RELEASE

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‘PARKINSON PHOTOGRAPHS THE AGE OF INNOCENCE’

A new exhibition including rare and previously unseen photographs of children by British photographer Norman Parkinson (1913 – 1990), at Dimbola Lodge, Isle of Wight, 8 April – 3 July 2011.

Curated by the Angela Williams Archive.

Legendary British photographer Norman Parkinson operated in a world of high fashion, shooting for Vogue and Queen magazines in the 1950s and 1960s, but he was also drawn to the carefree innocence of children, capturing a lost era when childhood was an optimistic and untarnished experience.

Curated by Norman Parkinson archivist and his former assistant, Angela Williams, with catalogue text written by the author Fay Weldon, a new exhibition of Parkinson’s images of childhood, ‘Age of Innocence’, offers a fresh insight into his development as an artist and his eclectic choice of subjects. The former home of the Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, Dimbola Lodge on the Isle of Wight, is the setting for this first themed exhibition created by the Angela Williams Archive.

In her introduction to the catalogue, Fay Weldon writes: “Parkinson, like his confreres Bailey, Duffy and Donovan, is mostly known for his spectacular fashion photography, but as with these other great photographers, ‘the fashion shoot’ was only a part of their work. That was what earned them money: not necessarily what most satisfied the keen aesthetic eye of the photographer. In this particular collection of images, all relating one way or another to childhood, Parkinson combines the techniques of photojournalism – catch the moment as it flies – à la Cartier Bresson and Lartigue, with an Irving Penn-like sense of formality. The child is casual, the picture instant, yet the form severely composed. And look for the gremlin – Parkinson complained there was always one in his camera – which sometimes subverts his earnest intentions, and simply entertains.”

Angela Williams, says: “Parkinson was enchanted by the energy and spirit of children before they were burdened by maturity, and in Louis Baring’s book, *A Very British Glamour*, he described hiding by a twisted mulberry tree at the end of his Grandfather’s garden as a 12 year-old boy, when he would peer through the criss-cross wooden fence into the garden next door, captivated by the vision of frolicking girls: ‘girls with loose dresses and a minimum of underclothes running fawnlike everywhere’ or ‘lying around the lawn with languorous ease’. It was these memories, which, alongside his passionate enthusiasm for Julia Cameron’s images of children portraying a romantic innocence, that inspired his own work in this genre. Parkinson recalled: ‘When I picked up my camera years later, I photographed the memories of those well observed weekend girls I had seen through the fence’.”

The exhibition will feature a number of rare Parkinson silver prints taken between 1950 and 1965, some of which have never been exhibited before. All are original, unique and highly collectable prints. Many of the images first appeared in fashion spreads or advertising in magazines of the day, including *Vogue*. The exhibition will also feature vintage prints from the 1979 book, *Sisters under the Skin*, including previously unseen images of Stella McCartney as a child.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- ‘The Age of Innocence’ runs from 8 April – 3 July 2011 at:
Dimbola Lodge Museum, Terrace Lane, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight.
Tel: 01983 756814 www.dimbola.co.uk
- The Angela Williams Archive is a collection of vintage prints by Norman Parkinson, 1950 – 1964. The AWA regularly curates exhibitions and engages in a range of projects to promote Parkinson’s contribution to British photography and to preserve his legacy for future generations. For further information visit: www.angelawilliamsarchive.com
- From 1945 to 1960 Norman Parkinson was employed as a portrait and fashion photographer for *Vogue*. From 1960 to 1964 he was an Associate Contributing Editor of *Queen* magazine. From 1964 until his death in 1990 he worked as a freelance photographer.
- For further information, interview opportunities or images, contact Angela Williams on tel: 01373 812290 or email: angelawilliamsbathuk@btinternet.com
- For reproduction rights of Norman Parkinson images please contact the Norman Parkinson Archive at: info@normanparkinson.com