











Collection Selection Box  
Fashion Photography (1945 – 80)

V&A

# Introduction

This box contains a selection of works by photographers working in fashion between 1945 and 1980. The works chart the development of fashion photography after the Second World War and the popularisation of an increasingly innovative vision. Fashion photography became less inhibited and more instinctive in these decades that brought the Modern era into the Contemporary era.

## Box 2: Fashion Photography (1945 – 80)

			
<p>Erwin Blumenfeld (1897 – 1969) Model and Mannequin American Vogue 1945 Hand-pulled dye-transfer prints from original Ektachromes Museum no. PH.231-1985</p>	<p>Genevieve Naylor (1915 – 89) Fashion by Izod, Wald, Loeb and Hoch American Harper's Bazaar 1947 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.188-1985</p>	<p>Norman Parkinson (1913 – 90) Women's Home Industries British Vogue 1951 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.729-1987</p>	<p>John French (1907 – 66) Skater in a Digby Morton fur trimmed velvet coat and city gentleman Michael Bentley in the background 1955 London Gelatin silver print Museum no. E.220-2011</p>
			
<p>Richard Avedon (1923 – 2004) Carmen (Homage to Munkácsi), coat by Cardin, Place Francois- Premier, Paris American Harper's Bazaar 1957 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.14-1985</p>	<p>William Klein (born 1928) Fashion by Talmack, Molly Parnis and Herbert Sondheim American Vogue 1959 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.708-1987</p>	<p>Saul Leiter (1923 – 2013) Photograph 1959 C-type print Museum no. E.1514-1991</p>	<p>David Bailey (born 1938) Jean Shrimpton at 91 Heigham Road 1961 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.140-1983</p>



Melvin Sokolsky (born 1933)  
Simone wears fashion by Venet  
American Harper's Bazaar  
1963  
Paris, France  
Gelatin silver print  
Museum no. PH.732-1987



Helmut Newton (1920 – 2004)  
Cheryl Tiegs wears George Peter Stavropoulos and Rene Russo wears John Anthony  
American Vogue  
1974  
Hawaii  
Gelatin silver print  
Museum no. PH.246-1985



Gian Paolo Barbieri (born 1938)  
Photograph  
Italian Vogue  
1977  
Gelatin silver print  
Museum no. PH.172-1986

**Erwin Blumenfeld (1897 – 1969)**  
**Model and Mannequin**  
**American Vogue**  
**1945**  
**Hand-pulled dye-transfer prints from original Ektachromes**  
**Museum no. PH.231-1985**



Blumenfeld was an influential and innovative photographer who incorporated experimental techniques into his work. He was initially inspired by avant-garde art movements of the early 20th century, such as Dadaism. As a young man, Blumenfeld declared himself 'the erotic president of the Dada movement', and between 1916 and 1933 he made striking and sometimes Dada-esque montages. Having taken up professional photography in the 1930s, Blumenfeld went on to produce some of fashion's most enduring images, regularly published in magazines such as Vogue and Harper's Bazaar.

After war broke out, Blumenfeld was held in several French internment camps, but fled to New York in 1941 where he worked for the next two decades as a talented innovator both in fashion photography and in his personal work. He continues to inspire new generations of photographers, some of whom have paid homage to him by recreating his greatest images.

The viewer is immediately drawn to the bright splashes of colour in this photograph. The vibrant beauty of the model on the right overwhelms that of the inanimate mannequin beside her. Stunning crimson lips provide the focal point on several of Blumenfeld's most successful Vogue covers. This image presents the timeless quality of Blumenfeld's work. The photograph was published in 1945, but would not have been out of place in fashion magazines many decades later.

**Genevieve Naylor (1915 – 89)**  
**Fashion by Izod, Wald, Loeb and Hoch**  
**American Harper's Bazaar**  
**1947**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.188-1985**



Naylor was an American photographer and photojournalist. She is best known as Eleanor Roosevelt's personal photographer and for her photographs depicting life in Brazil, as well as fashion commissions for Harper's Bazaar and Vogue. She was born in Massachusetts, but moved to New York in 1933 where she married painter Misha Reznikoff (1905 – 71). Here, Naylor studied art and in 1934, inspired by the work of photographers Berenice Abbott (1898 – 1991) and Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908 – 2004), she quickly shifted her focus to photography.

In 1937, Naylor began to work for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), an initiative established by the Roosevelt Administration to combat unemployment following the Great Depression. During this time, she was also involved with many socially liberal causes, such as anti-fascist movements, racial integration and social justice. Her work with the WPA led to a position as one of the first female photographers for the Associated Press (AP). She was transferred to Brazil between 1940 and 1943 on assignment for the U.S. State Department, where she captured vibrant images of everyday life. In 1945, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, mounted a solo exhibition of these photographs.

After the Second World War, Naylor worked for fashion magazines such as Harper's Bazaar and Vogue. She established herself as a successful fashion photographer and enjoyed a career in the industry for over 15 years.

Naylor's fashion photographs reflect her unique approach. Informed by her background as a news photographer, she blended photojournalism with conventional fashion imagery. When Naylor joined Harper's Bazaar, the city's streets were a natural choice of setting. She followed fellow fashion photographer Martin Munkácsi's (1896 – 1963) advice to photograph back views and use unexpected camera angles, such as shooting from a low perspective. In this image, the clothes truly take centre stage. The models, shot from behind, remain anonymous, and allow the rippling folds of fabric, sleek headscarves and strong geometric handbags to fall into focus.

**Norman Parkinson (1913 – 90)**  
**Women's Home Industries**  
**British Vogue**  
**1951**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.729-1987**



London-born Parkinson began his career as a photographer in 1931, working as an apprentice to the Bond Street Court Photographer Richard Speaight. In 1934, he set up the Norman Parkinson Studio with Norman Kibblewhite at One Dover Street, specialising in portraiture. His first solo exhibition was staged in 1935 and included portraits of Vivien Leigh (1913 – 67) and Noel Coward (1899 – 1973). In the same year, he was recruited by Harper's Bazaar to take editorial photographs. During the Second World War, Parkinson served as a reconnaissance photographer over France for the Royal Air Force.

Parkinson embarked on a long association with British Vogue in 1942, becoming one of the magazine's star photographers. From 1960 to 1964, he was an associate contributing editor of Queen magazine. In the 1960s, he began taking official portraits for the British Royal Family. Parkinson was elected Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and was appointed CBE in 1981. In the same year, a major retrospective of his work was held at the National Portrait Gallery, marking his fiftieth year in photography. Parkinson continued to work as a freelance photographer until his death in 1990, while on assignment in Singapore. Throughout his long career, Parkinson charmed his sitters with his idiosyncratic persona and elegant style. He is remembered today as one of fathers of modern fashion photography.

In this post-war image, Parkinson's wife and muse poses immaculately beside a cowman in a flat cap. A traditional game of shove ha'penny is in play on the table in front of them. The original caption in British Vogue read, 'Well Mannered Quality: Wenda Parkinson wears a hand-knitted cashmere twinset by Women's Home Industries. The Public Bar, Hobnails Inn, Little Washbourne, Gloucestershire'.

**John French (1907 – 66)**  
**Skater in a Digby Morton fur trimmed velvet coat and city gentleman Michael Bentley in the background**  
**1955**  
**London**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. E.220-2011**



Born in London in 1907, French became one of the capital's top fashion photographers in the 1950s and '60s. He became the first to develop a technique that allowed photographs to reproduce successfully in newsprint. French devoted much attention to the set and posing of his models, but left the actual triggering of the shutter to assistants, amongst whom were fellow photographers Terence Donovan (1936 – 96) and David Bailey (born 1938).

Many of French's models were debutantes, who later went on to become celebrities and famous social figures. French persuaded editors of national fashion and society publications such as Harper's Bazaar, Vanity Fair and The Tatler to include his photographs in their magazines. His work also featured in newspapers regularly throughout his career.

French's wife, Vere Denning (1910 – 91) was a fashion journalist. Sixteen years after French's death, she donated his photographic archive to the V&A in 1982. The prints are held in the Word & Image Department's Photographs Collection, whilst other archival material is cared for by the V&A's Archive of Art and Design.

French pioneered high-contrast photography, making it easier for black-and-white images to be reproduced effectively on cheap newsprint. High contrast also emphasised the formal qualities of the garments featured in his photographs. French's images often feature witty, tongue-in-cheek compositions, as can be seen here. The hand of the assistant who triggered the shutter is seen at the bottom, whilst the man reading a newspaper in the background appears comically positioned within the scene.

**Richard Avedon (1923 – 2004)**  
**Carmen (Homage to Munkácsi), coat by**  
**Cardin, Place Francois- Premier, Paris**  
**American Harper's Bazaar**  
**1957**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.14-1985**



Richard Avedon transformed fashion photography and portraiture alike, creating an instantly identifiable aesthetic which has influenced countless others. His 'signature' large format studio portraits of politicians, writers and artists render the sitters 'symbolic of themselves', as he put it. His use of stark white backgrounds and life-size printing places viewers in a new relationship to the photographic image – a physical and almost confrontational one. His ability to create visual tension and surprise through unexpected contrasts is unparalleled.

Avedon was born in New York, where he would remain based during his lifetime. He began his career as an advertising photographer in 1944, but quickly started working for major fashion magazines. He brought a new, cinematic vision to fashion photography, which was vigorously promoted by the powerful art directors Alexey Brodovitch at *Harper's Bazaar* and Alexander Liberman at *Vogue*. Avedon enjoyed a successful career in fashion which spanned more than 50 years, and his photographs have appeared extensively in magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar*, *Life*, *Look* and *Vogue*. He became the first staff photographer for *The New Yorker* in 1992 and contributed to *Egoïste* in the years before his death.

In the 1950s a fresh dynamism infected the major fashion magazines as photographers adopted a more spontaneous, photojournalistic approach. Models spilled out onto city streets, studio backdrops were replaced by city skylines. In this photograph from 1957, Richard Avedon photographed a model striding along the Place François-Première in Paris for American *Harper's Bazaar*. She appears mid-step, her Cardin coat billowing behind her. Both feet are off the ground, as though a gust of wind has lifted her into the air. Avedon titled the photograph In Homage to Munkácsi, a reference to one of the first fashion photographers to work primarily outside the studio. Writing ahead of the trend in his 1935 article *Think While You Shoot*, Martin Munkácsi advised: 'Never pose your subjects. Let them move about naturally. All great photographs today are snapshots...'

**William Klein (born 1928)**  
**Fashion by Talmack, Molly Parnis and Herbert**  
**Sondheim**  
**American Vogue**  
**1959**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.708-1987**



Klein is an American-born photographer known for his unconventional approaches to street and fashion photography. Raised in New York, Klein moved to Paris in 1948. He studied under the Cubist painter Fernand Léger (1881 – 1955), whose advice had been to “get out of the studio into the streets... to be monumental.” Klein’s photographs were far removed from the mainstream documentary style of photography in the 1950s. Contrary to many of his contemporaries, he favoured wide angles, soft focus and high-grain film.

Klein returned to New York in 1954 and was soon noticed by Alexander Liberman, art director for American Vogue. Klein worked for *Vogue* for more than a decade and pushed the boundaries of fashion imagery with his striking aesthetic. In 1956, financed by *Vogue*, Klein produced one of the most renowned books of the 1950s: *Life is Good and Good for You in New York: Trance – Witness – Revels*. This was intended, he said, “as a monster big-city Daily Bugle with its scandals and scoops that you’d find blowing in the streets at three in the morning.” In 1958 Klein turned to film-making, only returning to photography in 1980. Klein continues to live and work across artistic media in Paris.

Three models, cleverly multiplied through the positioning of mirrors, pose against the towering New York skyline. The use of the mirrors is twofold; they help create a compelling illusion whilst allowing the garments to be seen from multiple angles. Klein often used wide-angle and telephoto lenses to create images that captured the dynamism of the modern metropolis. Telephoto lenses flatten perspective and emphasise bold form, creating a sense of theatricality.

**Saul Leiter (1923 – 2013)**  
**Photograph**  
**1959**  
**C-type print**  
**Museum no. E.1514-1991**

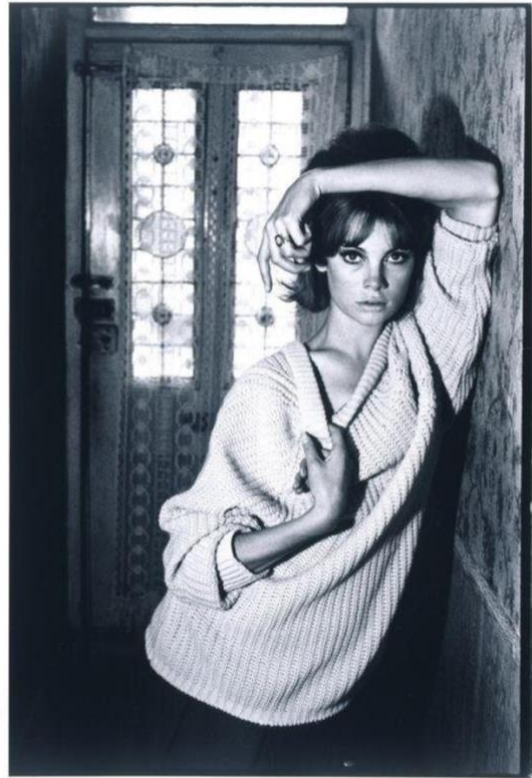


Leiter was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as the son of a Rabbi and well-known Talmudic scholar. Leiter initially followed in his father's footsteps, attending theological school on the path to becoming a Rabbi. However, in 1946 he left his studies and moved to New York to pursue painting. He became friends with artists of the day such as Richard Pousette-Dart (1916 – 22) and W. Eugene Smith (1918 – 78), who sparked his interest in photography. He worked with black and white film at first but began making colour photographs as early as the 1950s, when colour film was still rarely used. Largely using 35 mm Kodachrome film past its sell-by date, Leiter experimented with street scenes featuring his close circle of friends. In the 1950s, he created innovative compositions constructed with abstracted forms that had conveyed a distinctive painterly quality.

Leiter established a reputation as a fashion photographer and worked in this industry until the 1980s. His images were published in magazines such as *Esquire*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle* and *British Vogue*. However, his non-commercial work remained largely unknown. In 2006, with the help of the Howard Greenberg Gallery, a monograph titled *Saul Leiter: Early Colour* was published, establishing him as an early pioneer in the history of colour photography. This book was followed by numerous monographs and international exhibitions that presented the full scope of Leiter's work.

Leiter's photographs incorporate surprising elements, such as reflections and moving vehicles, which suggest the chaos and excitement of the city streets. The end results are often blurred, hazy images, an effect accentuated by Leiter's use of expired Kodachrome film. This photograph depicts the model Carmen Dell'Orefice, who is the oldest working model in the fashion industry. She first appeared on the cover of *Vogue* aged 15 and has continued to be featured in advertising campaigns as recently as 2015.

**David Bailey (born 1938)**  
**Jean Shrimpton at 91 Heigham Road**  
**1961**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.140-1983**

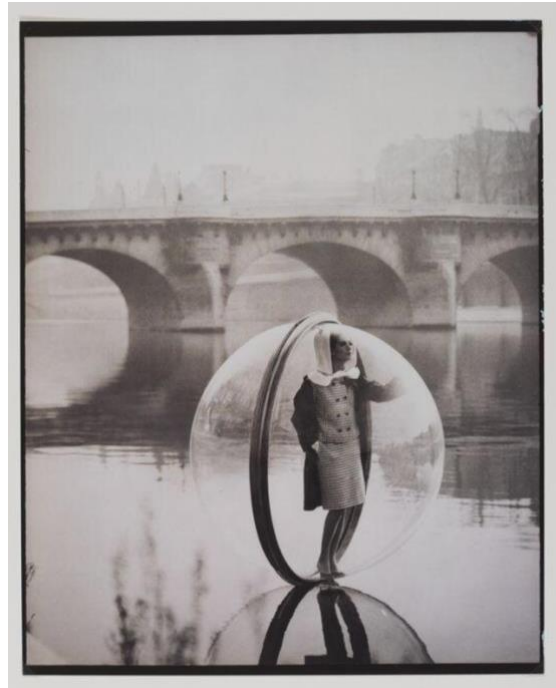


David Bailey has long been one of the most famous commercial photographers in the world. He has worked for magazines and newspapers from *Vogue* to the *Daily Telegraph*, photographing most of the key cultural figures from the worlds of pop music, literature and theatre with a simple and dramatic style. He has remarked that his approach was inspired by the style and free expression of working girls in dance halls.

Bailey began his career as an assistant to photographer John French (1907 – 66), before being contracted to work for *Vogue* in 1960. He helped create the ‘swinging sixties’ portrayal of London, which emphasised celebrity culture, fashion and style. This period of Bailey’s work is epitomised by *Box of Pin Ups*, a portfolio containing poster-prints of celebrities such as The Beatles, Jean Shrimpton, Andy Warhol, the Kray twins and Cecil Beaton. Bailey became one of the most celebrated *Vogue* photographers in history, rapidly rising through the ranks of the magazine’s photographers. He has worked for prestigious fashion houses and shot countless editorial campaigns. Bailey continues to have a successful and high profile career as a photographer and film maker.

Bailey and his contemporaries Brian Duffy (1933 – 2010) and Terence Donovan (1936 – 96) became known as ‘The Terrible Three’. All three worked as assistants to John French in their early careers, but unlike the previous generation of ‘gentlemen photographers’, they were from low-income families. This casual portrait depicts Bailey’s then girlfriend, Jean Shrimpton (born 1942), at his family’s post-war home. Shrimpton was an actress and model, and an icon of 1960s London. This photograph represents an unusually intimate portrayal of a high profile celebrity.

**Melvin Sokolsky (born 1933)**  
**Simone wears fashion by Venet**  
**American Harper's Bazaar**  
**1963**  
**Paris, France**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.732-1987**



Sokolsky is an innovative photographer best-known for his famous 'Bubble' series of fashion photographs. He joined Harper's Bazaar in 1959 with no formal photography training after being recruited by Henry Wolf, the charismatic art director of the magazine. Sokolsky went on to become a major contributor to magazines including *Show*, *McCall's Newsweek*, and *Esquire*. His career as a fashion photographer was brief and intense. Most of his photographs were made for advertising, though he regretted the precise distinction between genres, saying: 'I resented the attitude that "this is editorial and this is advertising". I always felt, why dilute it?'

In the late 1960s, Sokolsky began working as a director and cameraman for television and commercials. He has received 25 Clio Awards and the coveted Director's Guild nomination for his cinematography. In this transition to the moving image, he did not completely give up making still images. Sokolsky continues to have a successful career in film and photography.

Audaciously imaginative, Sokolsky could bestow a magical aura on even the plainest outfits. His famous 'Bubble' series features models floating over rivers and through the city streets of Paris and New York. The photographs resulted from a shoot of the 1963 spring collections for *Harper's Bazaar*, and were published in the magazine's March 1963 issue. The images fold Surrealism into fashion and this series is considered to have started a trend for bolder visions in fashion photography. Sokolsky built the bubble structure in just 10 days, basing the design on a Fabergé Egg and using Plexiglass and aluminium for construction. During the making of this photograph on the River Seine, the bubble was lowered rather too fast onto the water. This resulted in flooding, which ruined Simone's designer shoes.

**Helmut Newton (1920 – 2004)**  
**Cheryl Tiegs wears George Peter Stavropoulos**  
**and Rene Russo wears John Anthony**  
**American Vogue**  
**1974**  
**Hawaii**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.246-1985**



Newton was born as Helmut Neustädter in Berlin, Germany. Newton became interested in photography during his teenage years, which resulted in his withdrawal from schooling in order to undertake an apprenticeship with the photographer Elsie Simon (1900 – 42, known as Yva). Due to Hitler's increasingly violent campaign against German Jews in the 1930s, Newton's parents secured him passage on a ship to China in 1938. He disembarked the boat in Singapore where he began to work as a portrait and news photographer. He was interned by the British army and sent to Sydney in 1940, where he served in the Australian military for five years. Newton settled in Melbourne after the Second World War and opened a photography studio where he focussed on fashion and theatre work. He also gained British citizenship and changed his name to the anglicised Newton.

Throughout the 1950s and '60s, Newton worked prolifically in Melbourne, London and Paris for important magazines including international editions of *Vogue*, *Playboy*, *Elle* and *Marie-Claire*. As Newton's career matured, he focussed primarily on nudes, fashion commissions and portraits. His signature style developed as dramatic, aesthetic and erotic, and his photographs often blurred the lines between different photographic genres.

Two women dance on the edge of a volcano. Physically perfect and swathed in silk, they resemble the goddesses of Mount Olympus. As a record spins beside them, clouds shroud the landscape, adding to the drama of the narrative. Like much of Newton's work, the mood is charged with sexual undertones.

**Gian Paolo Barbieri (born 1938)**  
**Photograph**  
**Italian Vogue**  
**1977**  
**Gelatin silver print**  
**Museum no. PH.172-1986**



Born in Milan, Barbieri is a self-taught photographer who developed an interest in photography at a young age. He has chronicled the changing face of Italian fashion over five decades, from the early years of Italy's ready-to-wear explosion, to the height of the 'Made in Italy' phenomenon.

His first feature was printed in 1963, in the Condé Nast magazine *Novità*, which would later become *Vogue Italia*. This assignment began a long lasting collaboration with the magazine. He was awarded the Premio Biancamano in 1968, as the year's best Italian photographer. In 1978, *Sternmagazine* listed him as one of the best fashion photographers of the age. Barbieri has worked on numerous high-profile advertising campaigns for fashion houses including Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, Valentino and Versace.

Barbieri travelled widely; throughout the 1970s he shot features in Sudan, Venezuela, the Seychelles, Jamaica and India. He also experimented with image making that blended an ethnographic approach with the glamour of high fashion, some of which was published in the books *Silent Portraits* (1984), and *Madagascar* (1994).

Since its launch in 1964, *Italian Vogue* has published strikingly provocative fashion photographs. In this image, fashion and religion collide. Models dressed like religious figures inhabit an interior containing sacred objects including a Jewish seven-branched menorah. Barbieri often evokes historic artworks, in this case Renaissance painting.