Gagosian Celebrates Richard Avedon’s Centenary with Landmark Exhibition
Opening in New York on May 4, 2023

Avedon 100 Brings Together a Historic Collection of Over 150 Photographs
Selected by Key Cultural Figures Including Hilton Als, Naomi Campbell, Elton John, Spike Lee, Sally Mann, and Chloë Sevigny

NEW YORK, May 4, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to present Avedon 100, a landmark exhibition in celebration of the centenary of Richard Avedon’s birth. Opening on May 4, 2023, in New York, the collection of Avedon photographs was selected by more than 150 people—including prominent artists, designers, musicians, writers, curators, and fashion world representatives—who elaborate on the impact of the photographer’s work today.

Avedon 100 documents Avedon’s enduring influence on photography and profound global impression on visual culture. In an installation designed by Stefan Beckman, the exhibition represents six decades of his oeuvre, including the In the American West series and images of the social justice movement, as well as classic portraiture, advertising, and fashion work. It features both iconic and rare photographs, among them several of Avedon’s larger-than-life-size mural prints, as well as exhibition prints created for his 1978 retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The photographs are displayed in loosely chronological sequence, with special attention paid
to visual cadence, together showing how the artist dissolved the lines between photographic genres and cemented the medium’s status as a contemporary art form. In an increasingly digital world, his work is also testament to the artistry of film photography.

Among the many remarkable images on view are Avedon’s rarely exhibited mural featuring multiple images of a dancing Marilyn Monroe, created from a sitting in 1957 that also produced his iconic “sad” Marilyn. His dynamic 1971 portrait of Tina Turner is printed at a monumental scale and was selected for the exhibition by Tonne Goodman. In many cases the link between a photograph and its selector enhances the work’s already powerful impact. Hillary Clinton, for example, has chosen Avedon’s 2003 portrait of her for The New Yorker, while Taryn Simon sought out a 1994 image of Salman Rushdie, inscribed by Avedon to the writer “Yours, in the struggle—Dick,” and loaned by Rushdie for exhibition. Among many extraordinary images selected by figures from the worlds of fashion and film are Miuccia Prada’s choice, a 1979 portrait of thirteen-year-old Texas rattlesnake skinner Boyd Fortin from In the American West, and Emma Watson’s, a 1965 photograph of Donyale Luna, who would become the first Black model to grace the cover of American Vogue.

An illustrated catalogue featuring a foreword by Larry Gagosian and essays by Gagosian Quarterly executive editor Derek Blasberg, poet and professor Jake Skeets (whose uncle, Benson James, is featured in the show), and Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, associate professor of history of art and architecture and African and African American studies at Harvard University, and the founder of the Vision & Justice Project, has been published to accompany the exhibition. The book makes clear Avedon’s significant impact on visual culture through reproductions of photographs that reveal the enormous and fascinating diversity of his subjects, while the full commentary offered by the selectors underscores the breadth and endurance of his inspiration. Over the course of seventeen thematic chapters, the book’s many esteemed contributors discuss their selected images in short texts that reflect their individual passions and areas of expertise. In the chapter “An Enormous Leap,” commentators including Vince Aletti, Sofia Coppola, and Gerard Malanga discuss Avedon’s photographs in terms of motion, narration, and inclusivity. “Era of Enchantment,” a chapter focused on the myriad innovations of postwar fashion, includes meditations on the subject from Rebecca Arnold, Hamish Bowles, Pamela Golbin, and Wendy Goodman. And in “The Right Story to Tell,” David Adjaye, Trevor Baldwin, Awol Erizku, Anna Deavere Smith, and others reflect on Avedon’s crucial visual documentation of the civil rights movement in collaboration with his childhood friend James Baldwin.

Richard Avedon was born in New York in 1923 and died in San Antonio in 2004. Collections include the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and numerous others worldwide. Avedon’s first museum retrospective was held at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, in 1962; many lifetime major institutional exhibitions followed, including at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (1970); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1978 and 2002); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1994); and, posthumously, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebak, Denmark (2007, traveled to Fondazione FORMA per la Fotografia, Milan, Italy; Jeu de Paume, Paris; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; Foam, Amsterdam; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, through 2010). Avedon established the Richard Avedon Foundation in 2004 as the repository for his photographs, negatives, publications, papers, and other archival materials.

#RichardAvedon

Extended through July 7, 2023

Avedon 100
Opening reception: Thursday, May 4, 6–8pm
May 4–June 24, 2023
522 West 21st Street, New York

Avedon 100
Publisher: Gagosian
Publication date: 2023
Contributors: Derek Blasberg, Larry Gagosian, Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, Jake Skeets
Designer: Graphic Thought Facility, London
Printer: Pureprint Group, Uckfield, England
Distributor: Rizzoli International Publications, New York
Format: Softcover
Dimensions: 11 × 12 1/4 inches (27.9 × 31.1 cm)
Pages: 318
ISBN: 978-0-8478-7386-9

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