

Frank Horvat

PLEASE DON'T SMILE

May 19th - July 9th

Opening Reception, Thursday, May 19th, 7-9 pm

The Fahey/Klein gallery is pleased to present, *PLEASE DON'T SMILE*, an exhibition of work by photographer Frank Horvat. The exhibition takes its title from Horvat's recently published retrospective monograph (Hatje Kanz 2015), which documents Horvat's extensive oeuvre, with a focus on his revolutionary approach to fashion photography. The sensibility of a photojournalist combined with his "refined visual humor", set Horvat and his sartorial images apart from those of his colleagues.

Horvat took his models out of the studio and onto the street, removing the make-up and staging typically used for photoshoots. A photographer with an approach and a style ahead of his time, Horvat explains, "My photographs got published, because ready-to-wear fashion needed more realistic photography, and because the editors-in-chief knew it". In turn, Horvat's images helped redefine the role of modern women in society, showing the world a woman "with both feet in life, a true counterpart".

Laurent Rouvrais, Horvat's assistant in the 1970s and 1980s describes Horvat's process, "He wanted them [his models] to find their own attitudes, and when he was pleased with what they found, he would only suggest some small variation, for instance in the way they held their neck, their shoulders, or their fingers. What he wanted them to find by themselves was what he called a presence. As a result the girls in his photographs never looked dumb".

Born in Croatia, Horvat lived throughout different areas of Europe before settling in France in 1955. At a young age Horvat had ambitions of being a writer, but abandoned poetry at the age of sixteen for photography. Horvat remembers, "A classmate persuaded me to swap my stamp collection for a second-hand Retinamat, which he reckoned would be more effective for picking up girls. It did in fact work better than stamp collecting, but not quite as well as a love poem".

Horvat continued to write his view of the world around him with his camera, and his six decades of photographs now read as a collection of "ballads, short stories, and social commentaries....comparable to a momentous novel". From his most iconic fashion images, like the *Givenchy Hat* series for Jardin des Modes, to the behind-the-scenes snapshots taken in the dressing rooms of the infamous Parisian nightclub *Le Sphynx*, Horvat refused to follow the same rules as everyone else, and his photographs continue to surprise and intrigue.

Over his career Horvat has contributed to publications including *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, *Vanity Fair*, *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Elegance*, *STERN*, *Paris Match*, and *Picture Post*. Frank Horvat lives and works in Paris.