

Fahey/Klein

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PHIL STERN

Hollywood Big Shots

January 16, 2014 through February 22, 2014

Reception for the Artist: Thursday, January 16, 7 – 9 PM

The Fahey/Klein Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of large-scale photographs from legendary photojournalist and Hollywood photographer, Phil Stern. An intimate chronicler of Hollywood and the Jazz scene, Phil Stern's iconic photographs and remarkable 75-year career convey an extraordinary access and mutual trust between the photographer and his luminous subjects. Phil Stern pioneered a behind-the-scene approach to documenting Hollywood that contributed to an entire era's visual vocabulary of cool and still feels undeniably authentic today.

Phil Stern's career in photography began early on, as a high school student growing up in New York, Stern swept floors in a Canal Street photo studio while working nights taking pictures for the notoriously noir *Police Gazette*. Phil Stern enlisted in the Army in 1942, and joined the ranks of the elite "Darby's Rangers" as a combat photographer. Stern was well known among his war colleagues for putting himself front and center as he documented battles in North Africa and Sicily. The credit stamp "Photo by PHIL STERN", which ran alongside his images in the armed forces newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, became synonymous with a truly genuine image taken under fire by a daring young photographer. Wounded in action, at the Battle of El Guettar, in Tunisia, Phil Stern was awarded a Purple Heart. After returning home to Los Angeles, he was assigned to cover the homecoming of Darby's Rangers for *LIFE* magazine, which helped usher in his second career, as a Hollywood documentary photographer. Phil Stern began working for *Look*, *LIFE*, and *Collier's* to chronicle what would become a shared American history.

Phil Stern's straight forward approach and charming demeanor earned him all-access to President John F. Kennedy's inaugural gala, studio mogul Sam Goldwyn's inner sanctum, on-set lunches with Frank Sinatra, and holidays in Acapulco with John Wayne and Gary Cooper. Phil Stern photographed on over a hundred movie sets, including the legendary films *Citizen Kane*, *A Star is Born*, *The Wild Ones*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *West Side Story*. Stern also became a fixture at studio sessions with Jazz superstars such as Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Art Tatum, and Dizzy Gillespie and shot more than sixty album covers.

"Stern satisfies our affections and erases the distance between his subject and his audience; he draws us intimately close to the American immortals of the 40's, 50's, and 60's, freezing in still frame an embodied cultural history. These are the entertainers, ball players, movie directors, jazz musicians, and Hollywood debutantes who dazzled the pages of countless magazines and weekly readers. Several decades later, where we find an entirely new cohort of American idols, we take a renewed interest in the work of Phil Stern and how his philosophy and approach provided not only a timeless body of work, but also a particular insight to what he considers 'the human element'". ("Phil Stern and the Human Element", Dane Cardiel, *Manor House Quarterly*, Fall 2012)

In 2001, Phil Stern donated his catalogue of extraordinary Hollywood images to the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. His photographs have been collected and exhibited internationally, most recently, in July 2013, "PHIL STERN: Sicily 1943" an exhibition of Stern's photographs documenting the invasion of Sicily at the Credito Siciliano Gallery. At the age of 94, Phil Stern traveled to Catania, Italy to be honored in conjunction with the exhibition. Phil Stern's publications include, *Phil Stern's Hollywood* (Knopf, 1993) and *Phil Stern: A Life's Work* (powerHouse Books, 2003). Phil Stern lives in Los Angeles.