

PRESS RELEASE

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**Elliott Erwitt**  
***Found Not Lost***

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Exhibition	13.01.2022 – 05.03.2022
Preview	Thursday 13 January 2022, midday - 9 p.m. Rue Marguerite-Dellenbach 3 1205, Geneva

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Text :  
Elisa Bernard      *"At 90, my work feels different from what I've seen before...  
There's a time for photos that say hello, and there's a time for listening."  
– Elliott Erwitt in 2018*

The exhibition "Found Not Lost" devoted to the American photographer Elliott Erwitt proposes the meeting of two views that the artist has been able to bring to the world.

First, that of the genius reporter from the Magnum Agency, whose daring photographs underline with humour the absurdity of the human condition. On the other hand, that of a man in the last stage of his life who decided, in 2018, to re-examine the photographs taken at the beginning of his career, far from the tumult of commissions.

By revisiting this sea of contact sheets, Elliott Erwitt was able to listen to the voice of the young photographer he was. With this re-examination, it is his vision of the world that he questions.

If most of the artist's photographs have iconic status today, it is because they possess a strength linked to the deep human commitment that emanates from them. It is a look that is interested in the way the living inhabit the world, with all that this entails in terms of incongruity and gravity. It is an attention that makes us think about and understand the environment that surrounds us, with humour as a highlight.

The unpublished photographs, which have long been awaited, have a very special force, due to the melancholy that emanates from them. The languor that pervades these black-and-white scenes differs from the spectacular images of film stars, the acerbic humour of the dog series or the Hollywood-style shots with which we usually associate the artist. They are, on the contrary, images that remain on the margins, captured during moments of breath in the frantic rhythm of the commissions.

Nevertheless, these now rehabilitated photographs exert the same power of attraction on the viewer as the most famous photographs.

Defining his photographs as commentaries on the everyday absurdity that plays out before our eyes, Elliott Erwitt has created through his work an incredible cartography of human emotions.

Perhaps the key to this fascination lies in the fact that these images tend towards that "elusive ideal" of which the artist speaks as a moment when everything comes together.

The exhibition "Found Not Lost" thus aims to bring together images that are already iconic, and on which many eyes have been focused, with images that are new.

**Texte :**  
**Vaughn Wallace**

In his ground-floor studio on Manhattan's Upper West Side, surrounded by cameras, contact sheets, negatives, and ephemera—emblems of his seven-decades-and-counting journey as a working photographer—Elliott Erwitt carries on: a craftsman in adamant pursuit of the telling image.

Elliott is an acknowledged master with nothing left to prove. But like all artists built to last, he knows that even in a career that has gone from accolade to accolade, there is always something to examine, to reassess—always something to see again, for the first time.

In that sense, this is a record of a man mapping an undiscovered country, the hidden world of his own past. Here, Elliott sets aside all of those marvelous pictures of his that have shaped and enriched our visual world, and instead summons hundreds of other images into the light—photos none of us have encountered before.

This re-prioritising of a life's work is, by any measure, no small thing. For a photographer of Elliott's stature and longevity, it's extraordinary. His many familiar pictures have endured for generations because they seem to effortlessly capture life as it unfolds around us, whether that's life lived out loud by the likes of the Kennedys, Fidel Castro, Marilyn Monroe, or Nikita Khrushchev, or lives lived on a more intimate, less public scale, lovers' ecstatic faces framed in a car mirror; a stoic, comical bulldog resting on a stoop after his daily walk in Central Park.

Whatever the subject or setting, Elliott's most celebrated pictures possess an inimitable immediacy—a vision of the world elementally simple yet profoundly nuanced and mysterious.

The visual "one-liners" for which he is perhaps best-known—often humorous, sometimes deeply sober, always surprising—characterise a career marked by an idiosyncratic rhythm. But as it turns out, there was always another powerful, hidden through line in Elliott's work: a shadow motif that Elliott himself wasn't privy to until quite recently.

Imagine, at ninety-two years old, turning back to the thousands of photographs made throughout the many chapters of your career and, on second and third glance, discovering a significance in those images that you missed when you first saw them a few lifetimes ago.

This is precisely what happened to Elliott when, in 2018, after enjoying a major career retrospective, *Home Around the World*, he became aware of a new, unfamiliar heartbeat animating his older work.

Press images



Elliott Erwitt, *Automat. New York City*, 1953  
Gelatin silver print  
21,3 x 31,8 cm



Elliott Erwitt, *New York City*, 1946  
Gelatin silver print  
21 x 30,5 cm

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Obligatory mention : © Elliott Erwitt, courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff



Press images



Elliott Erwitt, *Provence*, 1955  
Gelatin silver print  
30,5 x 20,5 cm



Elliott Erwitt, *Saintes Maries de la Mer*, 1977  
Gelatin silver print  
21 x 31,5 cm

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## BIOGRAPHY

Artist

## Elliott Erwitt

Elliott Erwitt was born in Paris to Russian émigré parents on July 26th, 1928. His formative years were spent in Milan. At the age of 10 his family moved back to Paris only to immigrate to New York a year later, then transferring to Los Angeles in 1941. While attending Hollywood High School he worked in a commercial darkroom processing “signed” prints for fans of movie stars.

In 1948 by good fortune while looking for work on exploratory trips to New York City, Erwitt met Edward Steichen, Robert Capa and Roy Stryker who liked his photographs and took a personal guiding interest becoming significant mentors. The following year he returned to Europe traveling and photographing in Italy and France thus marking the start of his professional career. Drafted in to the US Army in 1951 he continued taking photographs for various publications totally apart from his military duties while stationed in New Jersey, Germany and France.

In 1953 freshly decommissioned from military service, Erwitt was invited to join Magnum Photos as a member by its founder Capa. In 1968 he became President of the prestigious agency for 3 terms. To date he continues to be one of the leading figures in the competitive field of photography. His journalistic essays, illustrations, and advertisements have been featured in publications around the world for over half a century.

While continuing his work as a photographer, Erwitt began making films in the '70s. His documentaries include *BEAUTY KNOWS NO PAIN* (1971), *RED WHITE AND BLUE GRASS* (1973) sponsored with a grant from the American Film Institute, and the awarded *THE GLASSMAKERS OF HERAT* (1979). He also produced 17 comedies and special satire programs for Home Box Office in the '80s.

While actively working for magazine, industrial and advertising clients Erwitt devotes all his spare time toward creating books and exhibitions of his work.

Since the early '50s Erwitt has settled himself in New York, establishing his fundamental base of operations ...although ‘settling’ in Erwitt parlance means “where you are at the moment for as long as you don’t go somewhere else”. Flexibility and adaptation to the requirements of the profession and personal interests have kept him moving about the globe before returning to base.

Elliott Erwitt likes children and dogs.

Exhibitions  
(selection)**2022**

*Found Not Lost*, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Geneva, Switzerland

**2021**

*Festival InCadaqués*, Cadaqués, Spain

**2018**

*The World of Elliott Erwitt*, Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyoto, Japan

**2017**

*Paris - New York, La Hune, Paris, France*

**2016**

*Retrospective. Elliott Erwitt, Fort de Bard, Bard, Italy*

**2012**

*Personal Best, Casa dei Tre Oci, Venice, Italy*

**2011**

*Personal Best, International Center of Photography, New York, United States*

**2010**

*Personal Best, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France*

**2007**

*Personal Best, Art Museum, Portland, United States*

**2003**

*American Beauty: from Muybridge to Goldin, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia*

**2002**

*EE 60/60. Fotografías de Elliot Erwitt, Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid, Spain*  
*Elliot Erwitt, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, Italy*

**1999**

*Museums as Muse, MoMA, New York, United States*  
*'Dogsdogs' Photography Exhibition by Elliott Erwitt, The Barbican, London, United Kingdom*

**1997**

*Elliott Erwitt, International Centre of Photography Scavi Scaligeri, Verona, Italy*

**1988**

*Elliott Erwitt, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France*

**1978**

*Mirrors and Windows, MoMA, New York, United States*

**1977**

*Rencontres internationale de la Photographie, Arles, France*

**1974**

*Photographs by Elliott Erwitt, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, United States*

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**Publications**  
(selection)

*Found Not Lost*, 2021  
*Elliott Erwitt's Scotland*, 2018  
*Pittsburgh 1950*, 2017  
*Cuba*, 2017  
*Regarding Women*, 2014  
*Elliott Erwitt's Kolor*, 2013  
*Kids*, 2012  
*XXL*, 2012  
*Sequentially Yours*, 2011  
*Angel Tree III*, 2011  
*Elliott Erwitt's Paris*, 2010  
*The Art of André S. Solidor*, 2009  
*Elliott Erwitt's Rome*, 2009  
*Elliott Erwitt's New York*, 2008  
*Elliott Erwitt's Dogs*, 2008  
*Unseen*, 2007  
*Personal Best*, 2006  
*Woof*, 2005  
*Elliott Erwitt's Handbook*, 2002  
*Snaps*, 2001  
*Museum Watching*, 1998  
*Dog Dogs*, 1996  
*Between the Sexes*, 1994  
*To the Dogs*, 1992  
*On the Beach*, 1991  
*Personal Exposures*, 1988  
*The Angel Tree*, 1984  
*Recent Developments*, 1978  
*Son of Bitch*, 1974  
*The Private Experience*, 1974  
*Observations on American Architecture*, 1972  
*Photographs and Anti-photographs*, 1972  
*Eastern Europe*, 1965