

# BERT STERN

## ORIGINAL MAD MAN

A film by  
**Shannah Laumeister**

HDCAM, 89 minutes, 16:9, color and B&W,  
Dolby Digital 5.1 and ProLogic 2, English, Documentary



## FIRST RUN FEATURES

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## Synopsis

*Bert Stern: Original Mad Man* is a revealing look at the career of original "bad-boy" photographer and cultural icon Bert Stern. After working alongside Stanley Kubrick at Look Magazine, Stern became an original Madison Avenue "mad man", his images helping to create modern advertising as well as mint the concept of photographer as "star." From his meteoric rise during the "Golden Age of Advertising" to photographing the world's most alluring women in fashion and Hollywood -- including Audrey Hepburn, Bridget Bardot, Liz Taylor, and Marilyn Monroe -- it seemed Stern could do no wrong, until a dramatic fall from grace. *Bert Stern: Original Mad Man* is a story of self-creation; rise, fall and reinvention. It explores creativity, celebrity, and desire through the eyes of a man who got everything he wanted. Almost.



Bert Stern and Marilyn Monroe, "The Last Sitting" shoot

## About Bert Stern\*

Bert Stern, one of the legendary figures in contemporary photography, personified the commercial photographer as cultural hero in the 1960s. Hugely successful in the worlds of fashion and advertising photography, in the late 1960s he operated a studio, not unlike Andy Warhol's Factory, from which he created countless award-winning ads, editorial features, magazine covers, films, and portraits. His name is firmly associated with the golden age of advertising, and many of his images are classics.

Stern's meteoric rise in the 1960s advertising world is represented by such images as his vodka advertisement in which an Egyptian pyramid is seen inverted in a martini glass. Besides working for such clients as IBM, Vogue, Glamour, Life, Revlon, and Smirnoff, he was highly acclaimed for his portraits of celebrities including Gary Cooper and Louis

Armstrong. His portraits of stars ranging from Elizabeth Taylor and Audrey Hepburn to Drew Barrymore, including the spellbinding 1962 “last sitting” photographs of Marilyn Monroe, form a gallery of the most beautiful women of our time. In the 1960s, he became the American prototype of the fashion photographer as media star, and his pictures of models from Twiggy to Iman have become icons to a new generation of photographers. In all of Stern’s works can be seen the remarkable graphic simplicity of his photographic art, as well as his extraordinary rapport with his subjects.

Born in Brooklyn, New York and self-taught in photography, Stern began his career as assistant to art director Hershel Bramson at Look magazine from 1946 to 1948. Between 1949 and 1951, he was art director at Mayfair magazine, after which he rejoined Bramson at L.C. Gumbiner advertising agency, and helped create the modern advertising photograph. In 1954, he opened the first of four studios in New York, the last closing in 1971. Between 1971 and 1975, Stern lived in Spain. Since 1976, he has continued working in New York on personal as well as commercial assignments.

\*by the Art Directors Club in 2006



A masked Bert Stern

## Filmmaker Bios



### **Shannah Laumeister, Director, Producer**

*Bert Stern: Original Mad Man* marks Shannah's first feature documentary. Ms. Laumeister's acting credits include *Bullets Over Broadway*, *The Brady Bunch*, *Nobody's Fool*, and *Diamond Man*. Her television credits include *NYPD Blue* and the HBO Film *61*, directed by Billy Crystal. A published poet, her first book of poetry is titled *Two Women*.

She has performed in three Off-Broadway shows, many small theatrical productions, and wrote and starred in her own one-woman poetry based show, *Below Sunset*, produced by Harvey Keitel. The New York production of *Below Sunset* was directed by Terry George and produced by Keitel at Theaters EST and The Belt Unbuckled. Shannah has been a member of the Los

Angeles Poets and Writers Collective for over ten years. Laumeister previously wrote and directed the short film, *No Destination*, starring Oscar nominee John Savage. The film premiered at The Method Fest and was described by critic Richard Kaplan: "The direction is intuitively raw like something approaching the echelon of what a female counterpart to a Quentin Tarantino would create."

### **Gregory McClatchy, Producer**

Coming from the photojournalism world, McClatchy began his entertainment marketing career producing and editing advertising materials for Kaleidoscope Films Inc., at the time one of the most prolific motion picture marketing agency in Hollywood. He also produced and edited *Terror in the Aisles*, a documentary on suspense and horror films released theatrically by Universal Pictures. Greg left Kaleidoscope to found his own Motion picture advertising company, GMF. He also produced with Andrew Kuehn, (the founder of Kaleidoscope) the documentary *Get Bruce*, released by Miramax pictures.

"Working in motion picture advertising has allowed me to work with a highly talented and diverse group of filmmakers including Jodie Foster, Steven Spielberg, David Fincher, Robert Zemeckis, Patty Jenkins, Sidney Pollack, Gregg Araki, Forest Whittaker, Warren Beatty, Caleb Deschanel and many more. I'm eternally grateful for this kind of unique education," says Greg. In 1998, News Corporation purchased GMF, moving it onto the Twentieth Century Fox lot as its in-house Creative Advertising AV unit. McClatchy functioned as Senior Vice President of Creative Advertising overseeing audio/visual and print campaigns for over 30 Twentieth Century Fox domestic releases.

PIC, ([www.picagency.com](http://www.picagency.com)) the graphics and design company, has led to a variety of assignments including main title design and special graphic content for the documentaries *Fuel* and *Bhutto*. Main title design includes *Ghost Rider*, *State of Play*, *The Bourne Ultimatum*, *Twilight*, *Surrogates*, *The Kingdom*, *Sex and the City*, *Couples Retreat* and *Killers*.

**Jeff Werner, Co-Executive Producer, Supervising Editor**

Jeff Werner is an award-winning director and editor of documentaries, feature films and motion picture advertising. Most recently, Werner co-produced and edited *The Woodsmans*, a documentary about the famed family of artists. He also edited the feature documentary, *The Other City*, stories about the AIDS epidemic in Washington D.C. Both films were invited to premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2010. *The Woodsmans* won Best N.Y. Documentary.

In 2008, Werner co-directed and edited the documentary feature *Kicking It*, with Colin Farrell, which premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival and The Tribeca Film Festival. It had its theatrical premiere in June, 2008 and was bought by ESPN. Werner co-produced and edited the documentary feature *Second Chance Season*, about Nick Young, which premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival in 2007 and aired on ESPN in the fall of 2008. In 2006, Werner co-directed and edited *Mario's Story*, which premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival where it received the Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature.

Some of Werner's other work include editing *The Year of the Yao*; *The Smith Family*, which was recognized as Best Documentary at the Director's Guild Awards and The Peabody Awards in 2003; the Sundance Festival Selection *Go Tigers!*; and Imagine Pictures' *Beyond the Mat*. His editorial work on *The Mirror has Two Faces* marked the fifth film in which Werner collaborated with Barbra Streisand. Werner has also directed the documentary *Camp Scott Lock-Up* for MTV as well as two documentaries for HBO: *The Godfather Family* and *Bloodlines*, the latter having been nominated for a Cable Ace Award. Werner is the winner of several Hollywood Key Art Awards for his work in motion picture advertising.

**Diana Holtzberg, Executive Producer**

Diana Holtzberg is Vice President of Films Transit International, one of the longest running, renowned and respected agencies specializing in the worldwide release and marketing of high profile, theatrical and TV documentaries (features, hours, miniseries, series) that are unique and have universal appeal.

Based in New York and with Films Transit since 2001, Diana executive produces and acts as a creative producer/consultant on a select number of film projects each year in addition to her acquisition, festival strategy and sales work. Some examples: *Genius Within: The Inner Life Of Glen Gould*; *Feathered Cocaine*; *The Art of Failure: Chuck*

*Connelly Not For Sale*, for which she won an Emmy Award in 2009 in the Outstanding Arts & Culture Programming category, *End of the Century: The Story of the Ramones*; *Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust*; *Held Hostage in Colombia*; and *Still Doing It: The Intimate Lives Of Women Over 65*. Diana also has her own company, East Village Entertainment, for her independent projects, and conducts workshops and participates on panels at film festivals and film markets throughout the world.

She is co-author of a book based on *Still Doing It* (Penguin Group/Avery Books), the co-author with Jan Rofekamp of three widely read documentary film industry articles: "The Current State of the International Marketplace For Documentary Films," "Feeling Festive: Strategies for Taking Your Film on the Festival Circuit," and "Distribution To The Max," and she is the credited ghostwriter of a health, fitness and nutrition book *The Warrior Diet* (Dragondoor, 2002). Diana began her career in the magazine business, working at SPIN and then at Inc. and Details. During this time she produced groundbreaking TV specials for MTV and Fox Sports Network.



Bert Stern working

## **Festivals**

Telluride Film Festival, Sept. 2-5, 2011

IDFA Nov. 16-27, 2011

Palm Springs Int'l FF Jan. 5-16, 2012

Thessaloniki Doc. Festival Mar. 9-18, 2012

Int'l Festival of Films on Art (FIFA) Mar. 15-25, 2012

Minneapolis/St. Paul Int'l FF April 12-May 3, 2012

Florida FF April 13-22, 2012

Doc Aviv May 3-12, 2012

Planete + Doc FF May 11-20, 2012

Biografilm Festival June 8-18, 2012

Provincetown Int'l. FF June 13-17, 2012

New Zealand Int'l FF July 19-Aug. 19, 2012

Prescott FF Aug. 1-5, 2012

Bergen Internasjonale Filmfestival Oct. 17-24, 2012

Taiwan Int'l Documentary Fest. Oct. 19-28, 2012

## Credits

**Directed and Produced by** SHANNAH LAUMEISTER  
**Producer** GREGORY MCCLATCHY  
**Co-Executive Producer** DIANE ESTELLE VICARI  
**Co-Executive Producer & Supervising Editor** JEFF WERNER  
**Executive Producer** DIANA HOLTZBERG  
**Edited by** DANNY BRESNIK, PIRI MILLER  
**Music Composed By** STARR PARODI & JEFF EDEN FAIR  
**Associate Producer** APRIL ECKFELD  
**Camera Operators** TONY HARDMON, SHANNAH LAUMEISTER, JOSÉ LOUIS MIGNONE  
**Additional Camera** TOBIAS DATUM, APRIL ECKFELD, JOSH MILLER, CHRIS PRESSLER, BERT STERN, STEPHEN LONGMIRE

### Featuring

BERT STERN | SHANNAH LAUMEISTER | LARRY CHILNICK | JUDITH CRIST | ALBERT D'ANNIBALE | PETER DEAL | JERRY DELLA FEMINA | TRACY DOYLE | DR. GENE GITELLE | CAROL HALEBIAN | ALLEGRA KENT | LISA LAVENDER | LYNETTE LAVENDER | TWIGGY LAWSON | GEORGE LOIS | DAVID MONTGOMERY | NANCY PEARL | JODY QUON | CHARLIE SCHEIPS | LARRY SCHILLER | SAM SHAHID | SUSANNAH STERN | DOROTHY TRISTAN | GEORGE WEIN | TRISTA STERN WRIGHT

### Cast

**Dr. Watt** CLIVE KENNEDY  
**Young Bert** ZAK BARNETT  
**Moderator at Christie's Auction** PHILIPPE GARNER

**Production Assistants** MALCOLM SERRETE, ALLIE ESSLINGER  
**Post Production Services provided by** MOTOR ENTERTAINMENT  
**Production Executive** ANNIE LEEKA  
**Post Production Supervisor** BRYAN GAWRON  
**Asst. Editors** CRYSTAL KAUFMAN, PAUL LINK  
**Post Production Coordinator** JASON NORMAN  
**Visual Effects provided by** PIC, JARIK VAN SLUIJS, PAMELA GREEN

**Re-Recording Mixer** CHARLES DAYTON  
**Sound Design** JEFFREY ALAN PITTS  
**Sound Supervision** MIKE HERBICK  
**Post Sound Coordinator** KEVIN RITTNER  
**Music Supervisor** BRUCE RUBINOWITZ

### "Common Places"

Written and performed by Starr Parodi (BMI)



Published by  
Courtesy of

Esque Music (BMI) & Edensongs West (BMI)  
Parodi Fair / Sonic Doppler Records

**Includes archival footage of**

WOODY ALLEN | TWIGGY LAWSON | LOUIS ARMSTRONG | MAHALIA JACKSON |  
MARILYN MONROE | ANITA O'DAY | CHERYL TIEGS | DINAH WASHINGTON | ALLEGRA  
KENT | BERT STERN | SUZANNAH STERN | TRISTA STERN

Clip clearance/Stock photography/Stock Footage Credits TBD

Bert Stern portrait photographed by IRVING PENN

Special Thanks to TRAVIS HUFF, LON DIAMOND

And a Very Special Thanks to DIANE ESTELLE VICARI, PEPI KELMAN

# TIME

## LightBox

### Out There

Wednesday, April 3, 2013 | By Phil Bicker | 30 Comments

## Bert Stern: The Original ‘Mad Man’

In the early 1960s, Bert Stern was one of the most successful, creative and highly paid photographers of the day. His meteoric rise had seen him produce some of the most original and remarkable images at the inception of advertising’s Golden Age, a seminal documentary film, *Jazz on a Summer’s Day*, and iconic portraits of some of the world’s most famous stars — including the celebrated “Last Sitting” photographs of Marilyn Monroe.

Lauded professionally, and in his private life married to a beautiful dancer, Allegra Kent, with whom he had three children, Bert Stern seemingly had it all.

As the decade drew to a close, he opened and outfitted the first photo super studio where he made photographs for prestigious editorial clients and advertising campaigns — conveyer belt style — working on as many as seven shoots a day. He also began to experiment with his own self-funded “art” projects.

But by the early Seventies Stern’s exhausting, Blow-Up-like lifestyle — fueled by amphetamines and shadowed by overhead costs—had drained him. He was hospitalized; his marriage crumbled. Broke, he left New York for Spain. He had lost virtually everything.

On the theatrical release of a remarkably candid and revealing feature-length documentary on his life, *Bert Stern: Original Mad Man*, *TIME* sat down with Stern at his New York apartment to talk about his passions (women and photography), advertising, inspiration and Marilyn.

Stern grew up in Brooklyn. At the age of 16 he started work in the mail room at *Look* magazine. “I loved that job,” he says — but he was destined for bigger things.

At *LOOK* he met Stanley Kubrick, the magazine’s youngest staff photographer. Stern and Kubrick shared “a mutual interest in beautiful women” and formed a close and lasting

friendship. He also connected with art director Hershhal Bramson and, although he had no formal design training, became his assistant.

Stern left to take a position as Art Director at *Mayfair* magazine, before reuniting with Bramson at the newly founded *Flair* magazine.

While at Mayfair Stern bought a camera, learned how to develop film and make contact sheets.

“Since I was the art director of the magazine I figured I might as well shoot some of the pictures — [so] I became the Art Director and photographer.”

Stern’s trajectory was interrupted by the Korean War. In 1951 he was drafted into the U.S. Army. But Stern never made it to Korea: instead, at the recommendation of an old friend who was already stationed in Tokyo, Stern was diverted to Japan and assigned to the photo department. He learned to use a film camera and made motion pictures of news events for the army while taking stills for himself.

After being discharged from the service at war’s end, Stern was undecided whether to pursue art direction or still photography. *Flair* had closed and Bramson now worked for a small advertising agency, Lawrence C. Gumbinner. He invited Stern to experiment with him on a campaign for Smirnoff vodka. The company wanted to switch from drawings to photography. Stern shot test stills for layouts — which were approved — and when Irving Penn turned down the job Stern was awarded the campaign.

“I bought new a car from the GI Bill of Rights and drove to the white sands desert of New Mexico to photograph Hershhal’s ‘Driest of the Dry’ concept.”

Stern’s first Smirnoff picture won an award. His photo career was launched.

“I liked advertising. There was an opportunity to try different ideas. And we tried to shoot pictures that had never been seen before in ads.”

Walking on 5th avenue with a Martini glass filled with water, for inspiration, Stern noticed the Plaza hotel was inverted in the glass that acted like a lens and turned the image upside down. “I came up with the idea to photograph the Pyramid of Giza upside down in the glass — but I would have to go to Egypt to do it.”

The pyramid photograph is emblematic of Stern’s groundbreaking work and the creative explosion that marked advertising in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In 1962, when he had begun shooting personalities as well as ads, a call from Twentieth Century Fox to photograph Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Cleopatra* took Stern to Rome. Stern was afforded the freedom to do whatever he wanted to do. “I didn’t shoot set pictures,” he told *TIME*. “I tended to want to shoot portraits. Richard Burton — who I had already shot in my studio in New York — was playing Marc Anthony and they [Taylor and Burton] began an affair. I became friends with the two of them and began to hang out with them off set — I would shoot more candid, fun pictures.”

For Stern, taking photographs was like making love — an intense, emotional experience. “I fell in love with everybody I photographed,” he says today.

Around the same time as the Cleopatra shoot Stern received a call from *Glamour* with an offer to shoot for them. “I really had my heart set on working for *Vogue*,” he says, but made a deal with the art director. “If I shot for *Glamour* I could shoot for *Vogue*.”

“At *Vogue* I had signed a contract [that stipulated] I had a certain amount of pages where I could do whatever I wanted. I realized Marilyn Monroe had never been photographed for *Vogue*. I didn’t want to shoot fashion so they sent me to the accessories department and gave me a little suitcase with scarves and jewelry. I thought we’d adapt one of the large suites at the Bel-Air Hotel.”

As Stern writes in *The Last Sitting*: “There were two Bert Sterns. One was the Bert Stern who had been accused of playing it close to the edge... Who had married his first wife with his fingers crossed...who thought his second, real marriage was over six months after it began...who had an appointment with blond destiny. That Bert Stern would gamble everything he had for a night with Marilyn Monroe. The other was Bert Stern, husband father, provider photographer who was going to get the picture, get out of there, go home to his wife and baby, and live happily ever after.”

“After I set up the studio [at the Bel-Air] the front desk rang ‘Miss Monroe is here’ I decided to go down and meet her. I met her [for the first time] on the pathway to the suite. She was alone wearing a scarf and green slacks and a sweater. She had no make up on. I said ‘You’re beautiful,’ and she said, ‘What a nice thing to say.’”

“[In the suite] she looked at what was there and asked about makeup. I said I didn’t think we needed any makeup, but how about a little eyeliner? She picked up one of the scarves, which was chiffon, you could see through it. She looked [at it] and said, ‘Do you want to do nudes?’ So it was her idea.” The photographs were taken during a 12-hour session, which ran through the night until dawn. “She was very easy to work with.”

“I brought the film back to New York and showed them to the the art director, Alexander Lieberman, at *Vogue*, who thought they were wonderful.” Shortly after Stern received a phone call telling him they loved the pictures so much they wanted him to go back and shoot some fashion.

Stern returned to LA and photographed Marilyn for two more days. This time it was much bigger production with a fashion editor and Stern found it difficult to make the same spontaneous pictures. But once Marilyn tired of dressing up Stern got everyone else out of the room, leaving he and Marilyn alone — to make more photos with his original intent. The images from that assignment remain some of the most iconic and intimate celebrity portraits ever made.

Stern submitted his pictures — this time shot in black and white, as opposed to the earlier color pictures — and *Vogue* made the layout with the second sitting only, none of the color nudes were used. “They called me up to see the layouts,” Stern recalls. “There was something haunting about them. That Monday, she died.”

Vogue had sent Marilyn the photos from the first day for approval—it was not usual practice but for Marilyn they had made an exception. “A lot of the pictures she had put markings on with magic marker, directly onto the transparency [to indicate images that didn't reflect her own self-image]. I thought it was interesting but I didn't think I would use them. Then the art director Herb Lubalin heard about [the crossed out frames] and said they would like to use them in a new magazine they were starting, called Eros. They talked to her PR people and they had no objections.”

The same year, 1962, also saw the release of *Lolita*, directed by his old friend Stanley Kubrick. He asked Stern to take some publicity shots for the film. Stern took then 13-year-old actress Sue Lyon and her mother to a five-and-dime store in Sag Harbor, on eastern Long Island, to make the pictures. “I walked into the store and saw all these sun heart-shaped sunglasses and candy canes and other fun stuff that became the props for the shoot. I had not seen the movie but I underlined passages in Nabakov's book that would make picture ideas. I always work with words that become pictures.”

Stern, it seemed, could do no wrong. “I was having a great time. Life was all work, work was all life.” But by the late Sixties, things began to unravel.

As Stern writes in *The Last Sitting*: “The Sixties were the best and craziest decade, not only of America's life but of mine. Those were the years of the jukebox, and the big sound, and the big bucks, and the swimming pool, and the three children, and the townhouse, and the houseboy, and the black library with the Picasso over the door, Dr Feelgood, and the crystal blue Stingray, airplane trips to Fire Island, and the fantasy house with the wishing well, the herb garden, and the eight-foot tall roses Allegra grew while I photographed American beauties in New York”.

His marriage collapsed, as did his health and his finances. “I was broke. I shipped everything I owned into a twenty-foot container and went to Spain to stay with a friend.” His marriage was irreparably damaged, but he returned to New York and set to work, trying to rebuild his life.

Inspired by the PDR (Physicians Desk Reference) he conceived *The Pill Book* — a photographic compilation of different pills which he shot as simple still lifes. The book, of which there are now more than 18 million copies in print, put Stern back on track, and by the late 1970s he was photographing portraits and fashion again.

In 1982, the twentieth anniversary of Monroe's death, Stern published the *The Last Sitting*, a comprehensive edit of his Marilyn pictures, the overwhelming majority of which had not been seen. Vogue ran a 12-page story and this time included some of the images that Marilyn herself had crossed off.

A year later a friend introduced Stern to Shannah Laumeister, a 13-year-old girl he photographed, after which he simply filed away the photos. Four years later, they reconnected for a second shoot. Over the past three decades the two have built a close bond. “Our whole relationship has been sourced through a camera ... and has grown closer and closer [until we know] each other's souls,” Laumeister told *TIME*.

Six years ago, Laumeister turned the tables — and her camera — on Stern and began to make a documentary of his life.

The resulting film, *Bert Stern: Original Mad Man*, is a candid and revealing portrait of the photographer — in Laumeister’s words, it’s “an imperfect movie ... dealing with the controversial nature of who people are. We are all contradictory, and if you turn a camera on anyone’s life they’ll have plenty of reason to hide.”

Laumeister and Stern’s relationship — one of muse and mentor — is intimate and complex, and this unconventional film reflects that. “I wanted to try to keep it that way [intimate, just the two of us], because I felt that would make it special. It mirrored how he got such great pictures — he got everyone out of the room so he could get that personal connection” with his subjects, Laumeister says.

A 50-picture exhibit at Staley-Wise, curated by Laumeister, will coincide with the film’s release.

“He took the quintessential pictures of Marilyn Monroe,” Laumeister says, “and that work can sometimes trump [everything else he’s done]. There are so many more photos, even of Marilyn, and the show is representative of his wider work and ideas.”

As a new season of *Mad Men* premieres, it’s perfectly fitting that the original mad man, Bert Stern, is receiving the accolades that his remarkable life and career deserve.

<http://www.vogue.com/culture/article/flash-back-a-new-documentary-looks-at-the-life-of-photographer-bert-stern/#1>

VOGUE

ART

## Flash Back: A New Documentary Looks at the Life of Photographer Bert Stern

By Antonina Jedrzejczak

In June 1962, **Bert Stern** traveled from New York to Los Angeles to photograph Marilyn Monroe for *Vogue*. By this point, Stern had become one of the most sought-after American photographers, in league with **Irving Penn** and **Richard Avedon**. Eschewing a studio for a grand suite at the Bel-Air Hotel, Stern captured Monroe in black gowns and chinchilla furs, before sequestering the shoot into a separate bedroom. With Stern on pills and Monroe in the nude, it was the negatives from this meeting that Stern mailed to Monroe for review (a unorthodox request, but this was, after all, Marilyn Monroe). She sent them back with many images crossed out in permanent orange marker. Six weeks later, Monroe died, and the pictures, with the now-famous orange Xs, became known as the Last Sitting.

In **Shannah Laumeister**'s new documentary, *Bert Stern: Original Madman*, Stern, now in his mid-eighties, explains of that night, "There were basically two women in the world that interested me, one I was married to, **Allegra Kent**, and the other was Marilyn Monroe." But if Monroe left a strong impression and Kent the more lasting one, it was Stern's interaction with all the women in his life that proved his constant inspiration.

Born in 1929 in Brooklyn, Stern dropped out of school and moved to Manhattan, working as a mailroom boy at *Look* magazine, where he befriended the staff photographer, Stanley Kubrick. By way of luck and ambition, he went from art assistant to art director at *Flair*, before deciding to become a full-time photographer. He transitioned into advertising work, but would straddle the commercial and editorial world throughout his career. For his first *Vogue* cover, he captured **Deborah Dixon** with her mouth open, provoking an inflow of letters with charges of lewdness and an even greater number of newsstand sales.

At the height of his success, Stern grew increasingly dependent on drugs and fixated on his wife, a principal Balanchine ballerina and the mother of his three children. It is a topic Laumeister (a Stern muse and love interest herself) covers in depth. When Kent requested a divorce, Stern plunged into an artistic hiatus and near bankruptcy. In an ironic twist, his comeback began by way of the colorful photos he took of drugs for a reissuing of *The Pill Book*. A return to both advertising (Club Monaco, Stella Artois) and editorial (notably a controversial restaging of *The Last Sitting* for *New York* featuring **Lindsay Lohan**, of which Stern said, "They infringed on another soul and I allowed it") resulted. Though momentous by any measure, for Stern, this second wave, never felt nearly as big as the first.

Candid, and at times almost painful in its level of exposure, Laumeister's film intersperses black-and-white photos of and by Stern with scenes of present-day narration. In the former, he is a massively charismatic, handsome man who seems constantly to be in motion while, in the latter, he is one struggling to come to terms with the halting of the ferocious velocity of his youth. In a final shot, Stern walks around a room filled with archives of his prints stacked to the ceiling. The labels on the boxes read like a star roster of the twentieth century: **Claudia Cardinale, Shirley MacLaine, Jean Shrimpton, Lee Radziwill**. Glancing around before turning off the lights, he notes, "I shouldn't have been so happy so young. I should have saved it for now." Adding, "I'm a prisoner of all the things I've done." Oh, but what a whole lot of things he's done.

*Bert Stern: Original Madman opens on April 5 and will be accompanied by an exhibition of his works, "Bert Stern: Marilyn Monroe 'The Last Sitting,' " many never-before-seen, at the Staley-Wise Gallery at 560 Broadway in New York from April 4 through May 18.*



<http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2013/04/photos-bert-stern-scrapbook-marilyn-monroe>

# VANITY FAIR

SLIDE SHOW - WEB EXCLUSIVE APRIL 5, 2013

## **Being Bert Stern: The Life of a Photographer, Pioneer, and Provocateur**

The tables have turned on famed bad-boy photographer Bert Stern in *Bert Stern: Original Madman*, a documentary directed by Shannah Laumeister, a filmmaker who, like many of the women in Bert's life, began a love affair with the photographer through the lens of his camera. Always in fervent demand on Madison Avenue and in Hollywood, Stern held fast to a belief that "the only boundaries are the ones you make" and went on to revolutionize the conceptual power of photographs in advertising and print culture. Alongside greats such as Irving Penn and Richard Avedon, Stern, now 83 years old, has achieved a level of success that defines him as a celebrity in his own right. Herewith, VF.com presents an exclusive slide show of Stern's iconic photos, including a look into the photographer madman's personal studio guest book. *Bert Stern: Original Madman* opens nationwide April 5, in conjunction with an exhibition at the Staley-Wise Gallery in Manhattan.

<http://life.time.com/culture/when-the-stars-were-bright-bert-sterns-celebrity-portraits/#3>



## WHEN THE STARS WERE BRIGHT: BERT STERN'S CELEBRITY PORTRAITS

They don't make them like they used to. That assertion, although often colored by a rose-tinted nostalgia, seems to hold some genuine truth nowadays, when celebrities are not only a dime a dozen, but are so often seemingly manufactured overnight. In fact, in most cases, it's difficult to even remember what these people are famous for. But who would think that back in the 1960s, the stars of that defining era—stars whom we continue to look back on with wonder—would themselves entertain that very same thought?

The images shown here, taken by legendary photographer Bert Stern for a story that ran in the Dec. 20, 1963, issue of LIFE, depict some of the most prominent actors of the day as they take on the roles of their dream performers. The wonderfully playful (yet somehow near-reverent) series of portraits is testament to the fact that each and every generation grows up with its own heroes. Witness the debonair Cary Grant embodying an unlikely, yet totally convincing, impersonation of Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp, or Paul Newman's gleeful transformation into the swashbuckling matinee idol, Douglas Fairbanks.

While the movie studios had created idols since the days of silent films, a cover of LIFE magazine could make all the difference. And a photographer with a strong relationship with a magazine wielded a lot of influence. In fact, the '60s saw the birth of the photographer as hero, and Bert Stern was the archetype of this new figure. Alongside Penn and Avedon, he was one of the most respected and sought-after fashion, portrait and advertising photographers of the era.

Best known for his iconic "Last Sitting" photographs of Marilyn Monroe, taken six short weeks before her death, Stern photographed the world's most beautiful women—Sophia Loren, Audrey Hepburn, Liz Taylor, Bridget Bardot—and some of Hollywood's most charismatic leading men, like Gary Cooper, Marlon Brando and Richard Burton.

But long before he made those iconic images, he was an ideas man, a pioneer in the Golden Age of advertising. In the early 1950s, Stern conceived and executed

photographic concepts that, for the first time, made advertising as compelling, refined and beautiful as any editorial page.

By the time the photographs in this gallery were made for LIFE, Stern was at the height of his fame—a celebrity in his own right. He made commercials, shot covers for the world's most prestigious magazines and more. Stern was seemingly capable of anything.

In a revealing new documentary, *Bert Stern: Original Mad Man* (which opens on April 5), Stern tells his compelling and extraordinary story—of his passions and obsessions, his successes and his failings, and the stories behind of some of the most remarkable and iconic images of the age.

A 50-picture retrospective exhibition at the Staley Wise Gallery New York (April 4 through May 11) serves to bring light to some of Stern's less-well-known images along with some of his most iconic ones.

Bert Stern is living proof, if ever proof was needed, that they really *don't* make them like they used to.

— *Phil Bicker is a Senior Photo Editor for TIME*