

CLAIRE AHO: STUDIO WORKS 19 APRIL - 21 JULY 2013

18 February 2013

The Photographers' Gallery presents *Claire Aho: Studio Works*, the first solo international showcase of Aho's photographs, a pioneer of Finnish colour photography and a key cultural figure in her homeland. This exhibition will focus on Aho's 1950-70 studio based works, displaying images from the world of advertising, editorial and fashion, alongside original Finnish lifestyle magazines featuring her cover pictures. Brightly coloured, formally inventive and full of wit, Claire Aho's photographs capture a distinctive era in Finland's history while maintaining contemporary vitality and relevance.

Claire Aho started her career as a documentary filmmaker before eventually setting up her own commercial studio in the 1950s – a formative time in Finnish design. Whether capturing her models in amusing poses or meticulously composing still life scenes, Aho's cutting edge approach to image making was a reflection of the bold and lively atmosphere prevalent in the creative sector in Helsinki at the time. Her prolific, quality output across a broad range of industries created a demand for her services among leading commercial brands and publications, making her one of the most prominent photographers of the period.

While running her own studio Aho remained in complete control of the space, commanding every stage of the production from casting, styling and construction of sets to liaising with designers, manufacturers, magazines and advertising agencies. This exhibition will look at Aho's inventive working methods and practices within the studio environment as well as her relationship to the models, objects, forms and patterns depicted. Photographs will be hung in loosely themed groups complemented by vintage publications, placing them in the broader context of how they were disseminated and used. Occasional glimpses in the pictures of the machinations of the studio – lighting gear, colour charts, the casual artist portrait – will further enhance the photograph's journey from initial conception to its various commercial applications.

Brett Rogers, Director, The Photographers' Gallery said: *We are delighted to be able to introduce the work of Claire Aho to a new audience outside her native Finland. Claire Aho's pioneering vision and innovative approach to colour re-energised editorial and fashion photography in Europe during the mid-50s and late 60s. Her work resonates with contemporary artists such as Roe Ethridge, Michele Abeles, Owen Kydd and Bryan Dooley whose staging of the image serves to re-examine the language of editorial and advertising photography.*

The Photographers' Gallery
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Notes for Editors

Claire Aho

Claire Aho (b. Finland, 1925) is the granddaughter of the celebrated author Juhani Aho and painter Venny Soldan-Brofeldt. She was given her first camera at the age of ten by her father Heikki Aho and learned the basics of composition as a child by photographing her grandmother's paintings. At the age of 15 she sold her first photograph which was published by the Finnish Magazine Suomen Kuvalehti. Aho began her professional career in the early 1950s as a news camera operator in the renowned documentary filmmaking company owned by her father and uncle, Aho & Soldan. As Head of Colour Photography processing at the firm, Claire began a lifelong and rigorous engagement with colour. The only female cinematographer in the field, she also filmed the 1952 Olympics, and was later hired by Warner Pathé News, New York as the only female photographer among 400 men. Aho maintained a successful commercial studio between 1950 and 1970 in her own name, working prolifically for Finnish news periodicals, lifestyle and fashion magazines, as well as directly with manufacturers and designers. She produced fashion, interior design and portraits for advertising, editorial, catalogue and magazine covers. Aho's photographs of muse and model Carita Järvinen launched Carita's international modeling and film career. Aho ran her own gallery Atelier Beckasin in Helsinki during the 70s. Her recent exhibitions include *Claire Aho - Helsinki 1968*, Helsinki City Hall's Virka Galler, 2010 and a major retrospective at Kunsthalle/Taidehalli, Helsinki, 2011. Her publications include *Helsinki - Daughter of the Baltic* (1957), *Claire Aho - Helsinki 1968* (2010) and *Claire Aho - Makupaloja* (2010). Claire Aho currently lives in Stockholm. www.claireaho.com / www.ahosoldan.com.

naturally I just noticed that I forgot to mention her exhibition 'Claire Aho - Helsinki 1968' which was held at the Helsinki City Hall's Virka Galler 2010

Film Screenings (at the ICA): Aho & Soldan

24, 25, 26 & 29 May 2013, various times

To coincide with the exhibition The Photographers' Gallery together with the Institute of Contemporary Arts present the UK premier of a series of pioneering Finnish documentary films. The programme includes work by Heikki Aho (1895-1961) & Björn Soldan (1902-1953) and Claire Aho. See ica.org.uk for further details.

Artist talk

Saturday 20 April 2013, 15.00

Claire Aho discusses her practice in conversation with Art Director Anne Braybon.

£7/£4 concession. To book tickets please contact the information desk on + 44 (0) 207 087 9300 or book online at www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk

Visitor Information

Opening times: Monday - Saturday, 10am - 6pm, Thursdays, 10am - 8pm,
Sunday 11:30am - 6pm

Admission: free

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Press information

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