



Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album

Burlington Gardens

26 June – 19 October 2014

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Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album at the Royal Academy of Arts will present more than four hundred original photographs taken between 1961 and 1967 by Dennis Hopper, the American actor, film director and artist. The photographs were personally selected and edited by Hopper for his first major exhibition at the Fort Worth Art Center in Texas in 1970, and the vintage prints were only re-discovered after his death in 2010. This will be the first time that this body of work will be seen in the UK.

Although not formally trained as an artist, Dennis Hopper created paintings and assemblages throughout his career and during the 1960s dedicated himself to taking photographs with a Nikon F camera with a 28mm lens given to him by his future wife Brooke Hayward. According to Hopper, his interest in photography began in the late 1950s under the encouragement of James Dean, whom he had worked with on the set of *Rebel without a Cause* (1955) and *Giant* (1956). After living in New York from c.1957-1961, Hopper returned to Los Angeles where he found himself blacklisted in Hollywood and photography became Hopper's main creative outlet. For the next six years he worked obsessively, taking an estimated 18,000 photographs.

Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album presents both a personal visual diary and a document of America's dynamic social and cultural life in the 1960s. The photographs move between humour and pathos, the playful and the intimate, the glamorous and the everyday. They are considered spontaneous, poetic, as well as political and sharply observant. Whether Dennis Hopper was in Los Angeles, New York, London, Mexico or Peru, he was interested in a vast range of themes and subjects. The influential American curator Walter Hopps described his photographs as "small movies, still photographs made on the sets and locations of imagined films in progress."

Hopper took iconic portraits of Paul Newman, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, Jane Fonda and many other actors, artists, poets and musicians of his day. He photographed his family and friends and captured countercultural movements that ranged from Free Speech to Hells Angels and Hippie gatherings, taking in figures from the Beat and Peace movements such as Michael McLure and Timothy Leary. These often playful photographs were counterbalanced by images of tense and volatile events, such as the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery at the height of the African-American Civil Rights Movement, where he accompanied Martin Luther King. About his photographs,

Hopper said “I wanted to document something. I wanted to leave something that I thought would be a record of it, whether it was Martin Luther King, the hippies, or whether it was the artist.”

Both his photography and his growing contemporary art collection led Hopper to be associated with the Los Angeles art world. Hopper and his artist friends Ed Ruscha, Wallace Berman, Larry Bell and Edward Kienholz gravitated to the influential Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles. Throughout the 1960s the gallery hosted a series of exhibitions that came to define the nascent West Coast art scene, while also introducing Los Angeles audiences to the work of East coast Pop artists like Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg and Warhol. Hopper’s photographs of artists, events, happenings and performances are unique in their intimacy and range of cultural subjects and acted as an important link between the film and art worlds.

When Hopper began to work on the film *Easy Rider* in 1967 he stopped taking photographs, although he continued to work across the spectrum of visual arts. However, the vitality and directness of the images taken from 1961-67 and the sense of time and place that they convey during a decade when American society was undergoing extraordinary upheaval, resonated strongly with cultural production of the period. They certainly informed the visual language of *Easy Rider* (1969), whose emphasis on realism and a youth-oriented counterculture, signalled the arrival of the New Hollywood Cinema of the 1970s. Excerpts from the film will also be showing within the exhibition, along with *The Last Movie* (1970).

Hopper’s on-screen performances in films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Out of the Blue* (1980), *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Colors* (1988), as well as his off screen life and persona, made him one of the figures most closely associated with the achievements and failures, as well as the rebellious spirit of the counterculture of the 1960s.

About the photographs

The gelatin-silver vintage prints, both portrait and landscape formats, all have similar dimensions, approx. 24.1 x 16.5 cm (9.5 x 6.5 in.). They also include twenty large-format prints measuring approx. 33 x 22.9 cm (13 x 9 in.). The photographs are mounted onto cardboard and considering they lay undiscovered for thirty years, are in very good condition.

Organisation

Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album has been organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London in cooperation with The Dennis Hopper Art Trust. The exhibition is curated by Petra Giloy-Hirtz, independent Curator.

Publication available in the RA Shop

To coincide with the exhibition Prestel have published *Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album* by Petra Giloy-Hirtz (Hardback £35). With close to six hundred illustrations and contributions from Dennis Hopper and Brooke Hayward, the volume presents the most comprehensive account of Hopper’s photography from 1961-67. For further information about the book please contact Inge Kunzelmann at Prestel: ikunzelmann@prestel-uk.co.uk 020 7323 5004 www.prestel.com

Dates and Opening Hours

Open to public: Thursday 26 June – Sunday 19 October 2014

10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

£10 full price; concessions available; children under 12 free; Friends of the RA go free

Tickets

Tickets for **Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album** are available daily at the RA or online at www.royalacademy.org.uk. Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk

Images

Publicity images for **Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album** can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

Social media

Sign up to Royal Academy of Arts social media channels.

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BFI Southbank

To coincide with **Dennis Hopper: The Lost Album**, BFI Southbank will present **Dennis Hopper: Icon of Oblivion**, a season of the artist's films, throughout July 2014. This retrospective will focus on Hopper's seminal titles from the 1960s, including his collaborations with Andy Warhol, plus significant films from his later period culminating in the landmark *Blue Velvet* and *Colors*. The programme will launch with an In Conversation with Peter Fonda on 2 July. For more information please contact Ilona Cheshire, ilona.cheshire@bfi.org.uk / 020 7957 8986

About the Royal Academy of Arts and Burlington Gardens

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

Burlington Gardens was designed by Sir James Pennethorne (1801-1871) and opened by Queen Victoria in 1870 as the Senate House of the University of London. The RA acquired Burlington Gardens in 2001, re-launching it in 2012 as its new space to exhibit contemporary art and architecture.

For public information, please print 020 7300 8000 or www.royalacademy.org.uk

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