

Flash photography

New York's **Rose Hartman** is bringing her glamorous coterie to Amsterdam, via a new exhibition of her photos.

Pippa Metcalf talks to the celebrity image-maker

If I must describe my work in one sentence,' says celebrity photographer Rose Hartman, speaking on the phone from New York, 'it's capturing an intimate moment in a public situation.'

And what moments they've been. They span more than four decades of celebrity glamour, particularly the New York glitterati nightlife of the '70s and '80s. Think Bianca Jagger on a white horse in an off-the-shoulder Halston jersey shift, riding into her Studio 54 birthday party. This is the high society world of supermodels, superstars and the super-rich – the sylphs and celebrities of the glossy magazine.

These are not the deer-in-the-headlights shots of a paparazzo, nor the smile-at-the-camera line-ups of the society pages. Evidently you can't stop a celebrity from turning towards a camera, but the most memorable photographs are those where there is no eye-to-lens contact. Bianca looks at someone off-camera; Jerry Hall is chatting to Andy Warhol; Audrey Hepburn's warmth is directed at Hubert de Givenchy, who is planting a paternal kiss on her forehead. We get the heady feeling that we, too, are on the spot, observing – as Rose Hartman was.

She honed her style antennae poring over *Vogue* in her teens, but went on to teach English. In the '70s she gave this up to follow the tug of New York's edgy SoHo art and clubbing world, working as a reporter. When the photographer didn't turn up for an assignment she decided to take matters into her own hands, and the rest is a huge oeuvre of fabulous images, many of which completed the circle and appeared in magazines like *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar* and, yes, *Vogue*. They're housed as a special collection at the library of the Fashion Institute of Technology.

A tireless networker, Hartman is keen to stress that she is always a guest with full permission to photograph; good to know in these times of Leveson Inquiry and intrusion of privacy lawsuits. If you couldn't help googling 'Kate's tits' last month, it's good to know that we can refuel our inquisitive fantasy, guilt-free, with Hartman's new book 'Incomparable Women of Style' – as hefty as its subject are lithe – with the appropriately incomparable Linda Evangelista tripping along to

a Versace after-party on its cover.

As a bonus for Amsterdam, there's a complementary exhibition, at the newly reopened Ravestijn Gallery, of a selection of Hartman's photographs. Many of those on display there are in the book, but some – often more candid and unconventional ones – are not. Hartman explains: 'For example, for the book they chose one of Sophia Loren with Valentino looking very, very lovely. For the exhibition they chose one where Sophia is smoking a cigarette – there's a hand going toward her face to light it. She doesn't look beautiful, but you'll never have seen a picture of her like that.'

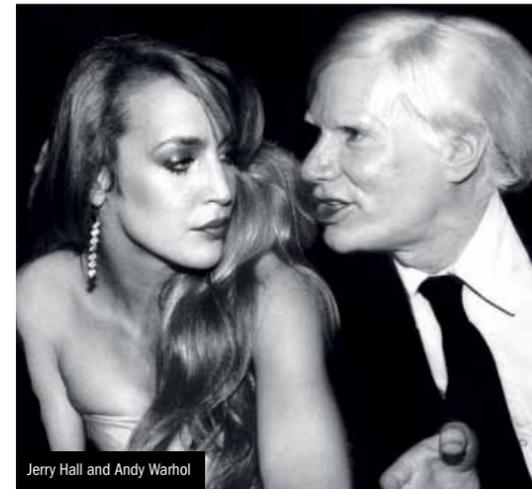
For one weekend, Hartman will be on hand to divulge more and to sign her book. She's already stayed in Amsterdam for a month this year, more to experience life in a foreign city than to search out style. Which is just as well; she says she'd never seen so many women all wearing the same thing – namely, cut-off blue jeans. But she did love Café George on the Leidsegracht, with its New York brasserie vibe. There, she says, she spotted a good many well-dressed women.

I guess we can't hope to compete. In the 'jet-set' chapter of 'Incomparable Women of Style', the very names are incantations of money, privilege and glamour. But beyond the Astors, Hearsts and Hemingways, anonymous fashionistas pop from the pages with just as much sass and style – and some oh-so-'80s hints of Boy George, Madonna and Billy Idol.

The feeling of intimacy and personal involvement is strengthened by the fact that Hartman has captured particular favourites again and again through the years – Iman with David Bowie in 1992 in a picture which should be a blur, it's so full of movement and laughter; Imam seven years later, glowing on the arm of Isaac Mizrahi. Anna Wintour, never a hair out of place, appears year after year.

And you can't help noticing the role the cigarette plays in those heydays of style and elegance. There is a 1979 black-and-white shot of Tiffany designer Elsa Peretti and Factory stalwart Fred Hughes in profile, inhaling at the same moment. It is a ballet of splayed fingers, arched wrists, relaxed concentration – and a fur coat tumbles into the foreground.

'Incomparable Women of Style' shimmers with



Jerry Hall and Andy Warhol



Sophia Loren

images the likes of which we may never see again. 'It's all changed,' Hartman sighs. 'The young starlets and models could never compare in a million years to Linda, Naomi, Christy – with their charm, originality and beauty beyond beauty.'

The Ravestijn Gallery Westerdoksdijk 603 (530 6000/theravestijngallery.com). 3 Nov-30 Dec. Mon-Fri 09.00-17.00, Sat from midday. *Time Out Amsterdam* hosts 'An Afternoon With Rose Hartman', Sun 4 Nov, 16.00-18.00.