PRESS RELEASE

MARTIN PARR

Fashion Faux Parr

30 May – 12 July 2025

Galerie Nicola von Senger is pleased to announce another exhibition of works by renowned British photographer Martin Parr: *Fashion Faux Parr*.

Martin Parr is one of the most important voices in contemporary photography. Famous for his keen eye for the everyday, the absurd and the profoundly human, he combines documentary precision with fine humour and an incorruptible sense of social contrasts.

His interest in photography was awakened at an early age – encouraged by his grandfather, a passionate amateur photographer. After studying at Manchester Polytechnic (1970–1973), Parr developed a visual language that is deeply rooted in British documentary photography and at the same time playfully overcomes its boundaries. Since 1994 he has been a member of the legendary Magnum Photos agency; his work has been exhibited worldwide, and his achievements have been honored with the title *of Commander of the Order of the British Empire*, among others.

Parr's photographs are visual essays: sharply observed, precisely composed and always with a wink. Everyday scenes become tableaux in which consumer culture, social rituals and visual overstimulation merge into subversive visual worlds.

The exhibition *Fashion Faux Parr* is dedicated to a terrain that fascinates and irritates Parr in equal measure: fashion. Works from over three decades are on display – from editorials for international magazines to conceptual series from Senegal. Parr does not document fashion, he dissects it. His photographs expose productions and at the same time celebrate their bizarreness. For him, fashion does not become a décor, but a mirror of social mechanisms: an expression of identity, desire and cultural codes.

Fashion Faux Parr moves between catwalk and reality, between pose and personality. Parr penetrates the gleaming façade with a critical, humorous eye – precise, ironic and visually surprising. The fact that even luxury brands hire him for campaigns is a paradox that only underlines his relevance.

The exhibition shows that where others only see style, Martin Parr discovers the human – and the quiet comedy of everyday life. Between applied photography and artistic reflection, a visual world unfolds in which fashion becomes a medium of analysis – and the visible becomes a mirror of a society.

"It's a bit subversive, a bit mischievous," says Martin Parr. "I photograph fashion the way I photograph everything – with my eye."

His first steps in fashion photography began rather by chance: "I had never thought about fashion before – until I was suddenly invited to do it. I thought it could be fun. And it was actually fun."

In 1999, Parr received his first fashion assignment – the Italian *Amica* magazine sent him to Rimini. The place, known for its lively spa culture and visual abundance, turned out to be the perfect backdrop for Parr's photography: "I had never been to Rimini before. The city was fascinating – vibrant, visually appealing, a great place for fashion photography."

Some of the photographs taken there are now among the key works of *Fashion Faux Parr* – they are part of the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue.





As early as 2005, Martin Parr published a publication *Fashion Magazine*, the cover of which he adorned himself with a mocking wink – an ironic commentary on the self-staging and surface aesthetics of the industry.



Parr's conceptual approach is particularly striking in those works in which he deliberately breaks the aesthetics of luxury fashion with everyday contexts. An exemplary example of this is a series of photos taken in Senegal: For an accessory series, Parr staged high-priced designer objects – including a Louis Vuitton cigarette case worth over 2000 pounds – on improvised jewellery trays from local retailers, flanked by cheap costume jewellery from Chinese mass production.



The striking juxtaposition of exclusive branded goods and supposed triviality subtly exposes the constructedness of material values. By deliberately displacing the luxury items, Parr creates a visual friction that challenges conventional hierarchies of prestige and meaning. The symbolic charge of the object is delivered to the gaze anew – removed from the familiar codes of representation, embedded in social reality.

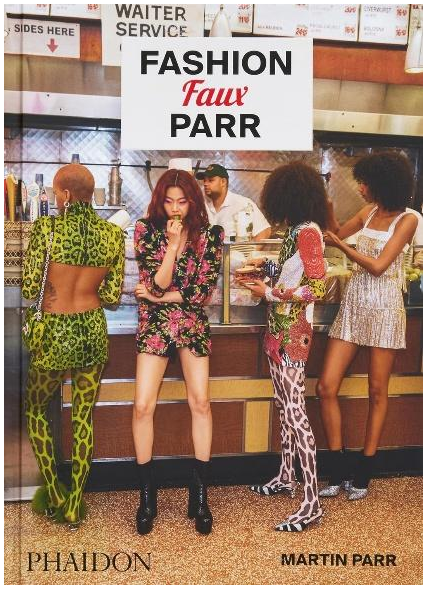
Such interventions are characteristic of Parr's photographic approach: with mischievous seriousness and conceptual clarity, he subverts common patterns of perception and opens up new perspectives on the visual rhetoric of fashion. The exclusive becomes readable anew in the mirror of the everyday – not devalued, but demystified.

"For the first time in this work, I have actually consciously arranged people in the picture. Normally I photograph my subjects as I find them – without intervention, without staging. But with this shoot I had the freedom to change, shift and design things in a targeted manner. I was able to involve both real passers-by and professional models. Some of the people depicted did not even know that they were being photographed – this results in an exciting mixture of staging and spontaneity.

A good example of this is a picture taken in the Guggenheim Museum. On the left of the picture is the model, in the background there are paintings, and on the right are two women we hired as extras. I have positioned each individual figure in the room with great care. The composition was important to me – the balance in the picture, the interplay of foreground, background and people. I think the result is quite successful. I particularly like the idea of the two women discussing the works of art they are looking at in depth – even if that was part of the staging, of course."



In retrospect, it seems almost inevitable that Martin Parr has also been received and appropriated by the fashion world in the last ten to fifteen years. His brightly colored, highly saturated photographs, interspersed with ironic refraction and sociological acumen, anticipate an aesthetic that has increasingly prevailed in fashion photography: an aesthetic of overabundance, of calculated irritation, of deliberate distance from the claim to authenticity of classic fashion staging.



The exhibition is accompanied by Martin Parr's new publication by Phaidon "Fashion Faux Parr".

For further information and images, please contact info@nicolavonsenger.com

We look forward to your visit!