

JAMES HYMAN

FINE ART AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Another Country: Vintage Photographs of British Life by Tony Ray-Jones

11 September – 11 October 2013



James Hyman is delighted to stage an exhibition of rare, vintage photographs by Tony Ray-Jones to coincide with the opening exhibition of the Science Museum Media Space, *Only in England, Photographs by Tony Ray-Jones and Martin Parr*, in September 2013.

Tony Ray-Jones had a short life. He died in 1972 aged just thirty. But the pictures that he left behind are some of the most powerful British photographs of the twentieth century. His work of the late 1960s and early 1970s documents English culture and identity and brilliantly

captures this period in English public life. Inspired by what he learnt in America in the mid-1960s, from photographers such as Lee Friedlander and Joel Meyerowitz, Ray-Jones was keen to make 'new' photographs of English life, which did not read simply as documentary, but also as art objects. As he explained in *Creative Camera* in 1968: *'the spirit and the mentality of the English, their habits, and the way they do things, partly through tradition and the nature of their environment and mentality.'*

The acclaim that Ray-Jones received after his death, especially from other photographers, testifies to the respect of his elders and his contemporaries. Bill Brandt praised the "very pronounced style all of his own" and lamented that "his death, at such a young age, is a terrible loss to British photography". Jacques Henri-Lartigue praised Tony Ray-Jones as a "fantaisiste": "young, free and whimsical with, in addition, a very sound technique and a vision of fire that was full of humour, truth and a sense of poetry" and Paul Strand praised his "remarkable formal organisation" and declared: "I found the photographs of Tony Ray-Jones very outstanding. In them I find that rather rare concurrence when an artist clearly attaining mastery of his medium, also develops a remarkable way of looking at the life around him, with warmth and understanding."



These tributes are to be found in the most important book of Tony Ray-Jones work, *A Day Off. An English Journal*, published in 1974. They are included in a beautiful essay in which Ainslie Ellis, one of the photographer's earliest champions, addresses not only the photographs but also Ray-Jones's photographic process. Ellis stresses that what mattered to Ray-Jones was not just taking the picture, but also the creative process of deciding which pictures on a contact strip to print, and then making a master-print, from which all subsequent prints would be matched. We are, therefore,



delighted that this exhibition should include many of the pictures reproduced in this celebrated book and that it present exclusively vintage prints, which, in a number of identifiable cases, are the actual photographs that Tony Ray-Jones exhibited in his lifetime.

Often playful and sometimes despondent, what Ray-Jones produced was unlike anything which came before, and was the catalyst for a generation of New British Photographers.

All works are for sale.

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