



PRESS RELEASE

Andy Summers – A Certain Strangeness

Works from 1979 to 2018

From July 28 to October 5, 2022, the Ernst Leitz Museum Wetzlar is presenting a comprehensive display of works by the British photographer and musician Andy Summers.

Wetzlar, 7th June 2022. His guitar riffs are legendary; and as a brilliant musician and composer, he ensured that the sound of The Police was unmistakable. Born in Blackpool, UK, in 1942, Andy Summers is a multi-talent, whose creativity as a photographer has also caused a sensation for over forty years. He has been developing a unique photographic body of work, which he sees as a mental and visual counterpart to his music. For him, music and photography belong together: “The qualities I am looking for are musical. That is the condition. You think of music in terms of harmony, line, shape, volume, quietness, dynamics... I think all of those terms can be translated into photography.”

It all began on tour in September 1979, when The Police were experiencing their first great success in the USA. “Sitting in a mid-town hotel room in New York, watching American television and running my hand up and down the neck of a battered Telecaster, it came to me that I should get a real camera,” Summer explains. Though he mentions the idea very casually, it was to be of momentous importance: “Our band, The Police, was moving fast in the US. It was fun; but sitting around and staring at the walls of hotel rooms was boring, and we needed diversions.”

Fortunately, right from the start, photography has always been more for Summers than just a distraction from the monotony of eternally identical hotel rooms. As we examine the early motifs, the particular way in which the budding photographer perceived his surroundings, and consequently his life, is already in evidence. His preferred themes are street scenes in American or Japanese metropolises, and fascinating moments in South American cities. They reflect an urban surrealism; the “special strangeness” that arises, when we question the seemingly

familiar. The camera is the perfect instrument with which to do this. It was a decisive tip, given to him by the photographer Ralph Gibson, that made Summers opt for a Leica. With an M4-2, he was to completely rediscover photography: “I was hooked immediately. I felt that the Leica slowed down my picture taking; made it more meditative; made me think more, before pressing the button—with this camera, I felt as if I was finally stepping onto the true path,” he remembers.

The Ernst Leitz Museum is now presenting an exciting overview of Summers’ work, with around 150 images showing densely composed, often reduced, magical moments that were captured on journeys in South America, the USA and Japan. A second group of pictures is closely connected to his experiences while on tour with The Police. The viewer gets a sense of being right there on stage; but also backstage, and in the tour bus. At the height of the band's career, Summers’ pictures provide insight into the frenzy of success; yet, also, into the melancholy and silence of lonely night-time excursions into the metropolises where he happened to be. Like a nostalgic scout, he looked for the poetry of the night, often experimentally expressive, but also full of quiet stillness. The unifying elements found in all of his pictures are a precise composition of the images; the deliberate cropping of the motifs; and the subtle wit that is always present. His photography reflects the same stylistic crossover that he prefers in music.

After the band finally said farewell, in 2008, Summers continued his career as a solo musician. Photography, however, had become an essential part of his life. The Leica M4-2 was joined by a Leica M Monochrom. His multi-layered and powerful, yet equally sensitive, oeuvre is now here to be discovered in all its richness in this exhibition.

More information about the opening times at: www.ernst-leitz-museum.com

Andy Summers, was born in Blackpool on December 31, 1942, and grew up in Bournemouth. He was eleven years old when he started playing guitar. Working alongside Sting and Stewart Copeland, he became the world-famous guitarist for The Police, from 1977 to 1984. The band members still reconnected time and again, and toured the world, once more, in 2007. Summers’ successful solo career produced numerous albums; he also composed film music, collaborated with countless musicians, and performed as a multimedia artist.

Summers gained his first experiences with photography as a beach photographer in Bournemouth, when he was a teenager. From 1979 onwards, he returned intensively to photography. His pictures have been frequently exhibited and published. The photo book *A Certain Strangeness* appeared in 2019. In parallel to the photography exhibitions planned throughout Europe, Andy Summers and his multimedia show *Harmonics of the Night* will tour Europe in 2022/2023. www.andysummers.com

Please find further information at:

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