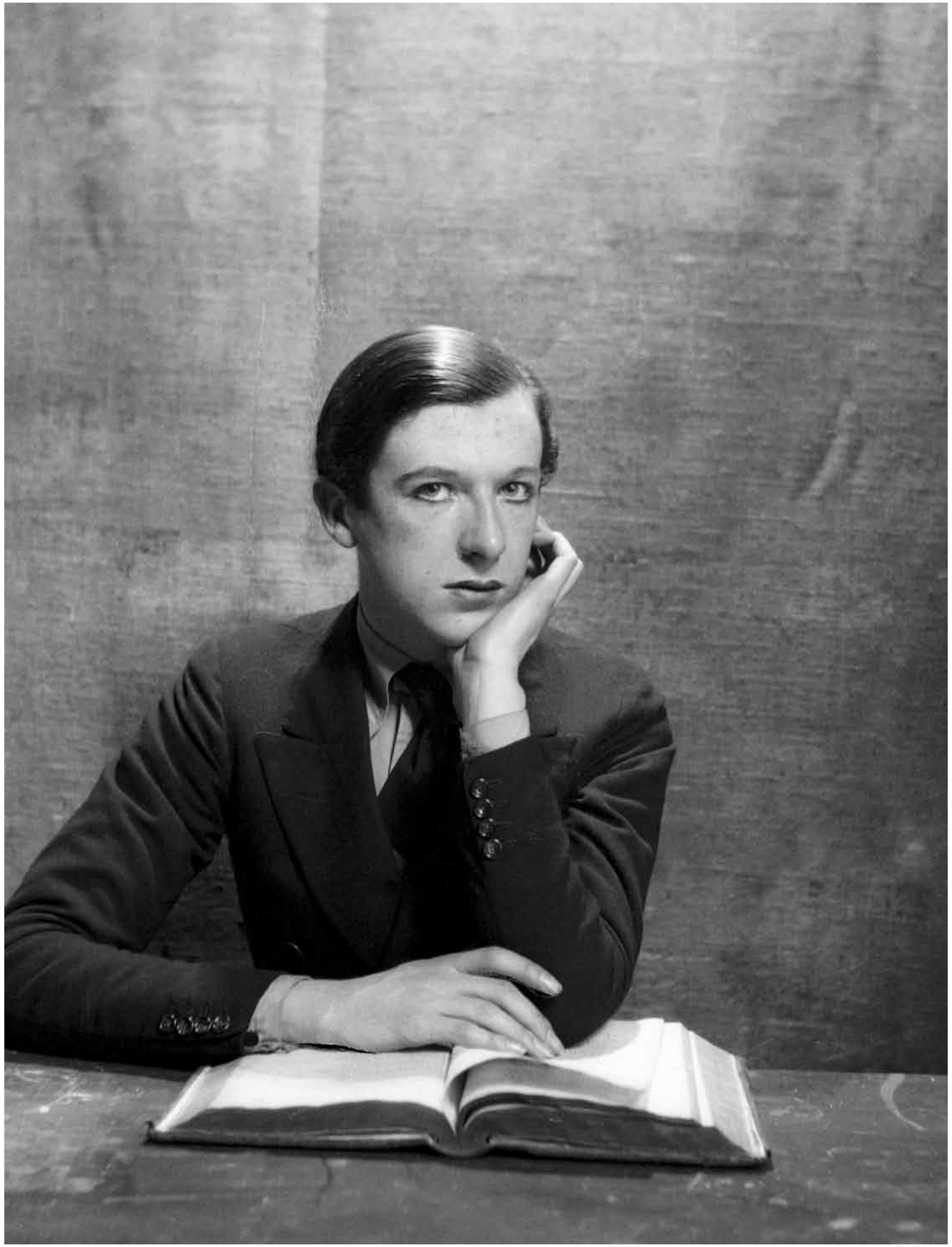

CECIL BEATON

PORTRAITS & PROFILES

EDITED BY HUGO VICKERS

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PREVIOUS PAGE Cecil Beaton self-portrait, 1923
LEFT Contact sheet, Marilyn Monroe, 1956

INTRODUCTION

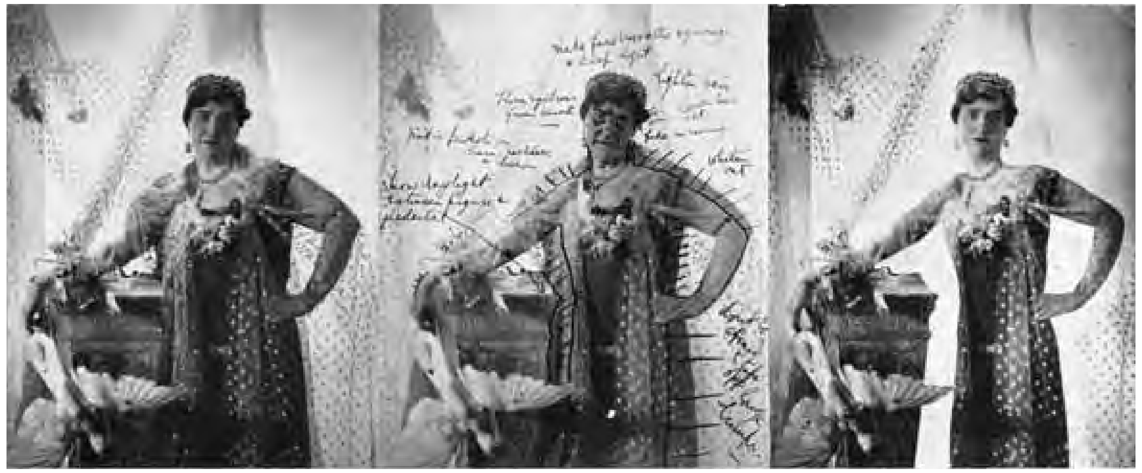
BY HUGO VICKERS

Cecil Beaton died more than thirty-four years ago, but remains as popular and relevant as in his lifetime. Many famous people suffer a dip in their reputations over time, but that has never happened with Cecil Beaton. He has gone from strength to strength with a series of exhibitions in Britain, the United States, Australia and several other countries. In 2012 there were exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert and Imperial War Museums in London and at the Museum of the City of New York. Publications such as *The Glass of Fashion* and *Ashcombe* are being reissued, and now comes this book, *Cecil Beaton: Portraits and Profiles*, which fills a rare gap in the considerable output of books by and about Cecil.

Cecil Beaton was primarily known for having photographed virtually every prominent person in public life in the course of his long career. Everyone from the Queen to the Rolling Stones sat to his lens, the greatest figures from the worlds of society, the arts – authors, dancers, choreographers, playwrights, poets, actors, actresses, magazine editors, directors and musicians – those from the realm of politics, generals, world leaders and statesmen, as well as iconic figures in the world of fashion and high life spanning from the 1920s to the 1970s.

He was a man of great visual intelligence. In his portraits he sought to bring the best out of his sitters. With his love of theatre and style, he liked to place them in a particular context. A queen should sit on her throne, an actor in a stage setting, a fashion designer in their salon and so on. He took trouble to dress the set in advance, placing before his camera the requisite background before posing his subject.

He had a clear idea of how he wanted his world to look and he imposed his visual demands upon them. He was prepared to edit and touch up the final results of photographs in a quest for the best. An example can be found in his 1937 *Scrapbook*. It is an entertaining spoof but it is indicative of what he was capable of doing to achieve his ends.



LEFT Cecil Beaton self-portrait, 1936
ABOVE Before, during and after retouching, Beaton's 1937 *Scrapbook*

It occurred to me that he needed to move out of the background in which he was born. He loved his Aunt Jessie, as seen in his garden at Reddish House towards the end of her life. But his aunt was a rotund old figure, the waist had disappeared, and though jolly and showing a definite resilience to the woes of her life, she did not quite fit his required visual image. What he really wanted his aunt to be was the beautiful actress, Cathleen Nesbitt, a trim figure of porcelain elegance, with her romantic past as the love of Rupert Brooke, likewise photographed in his garden, in 1970. In a sense he achieved that. And, interestingly, by the time she came to stay, such was the aura around Cecil himself that Cathleen Nesbitt was just as thrilled to be in his garden as he was to have her there.

A photographic sitting gave Cecil the chance to examine his subjects. While aiming to bring out their best, he did not look at them through rose-tinted spectacles. He observed faults and then worked to eliminate them. Thus when he saw Audrey Hepburn, he noticed a neck too thin, a chin too pointed and a nose too long and he posed her to avoid these perceived problems. As Audrey Hepburn herself observed:

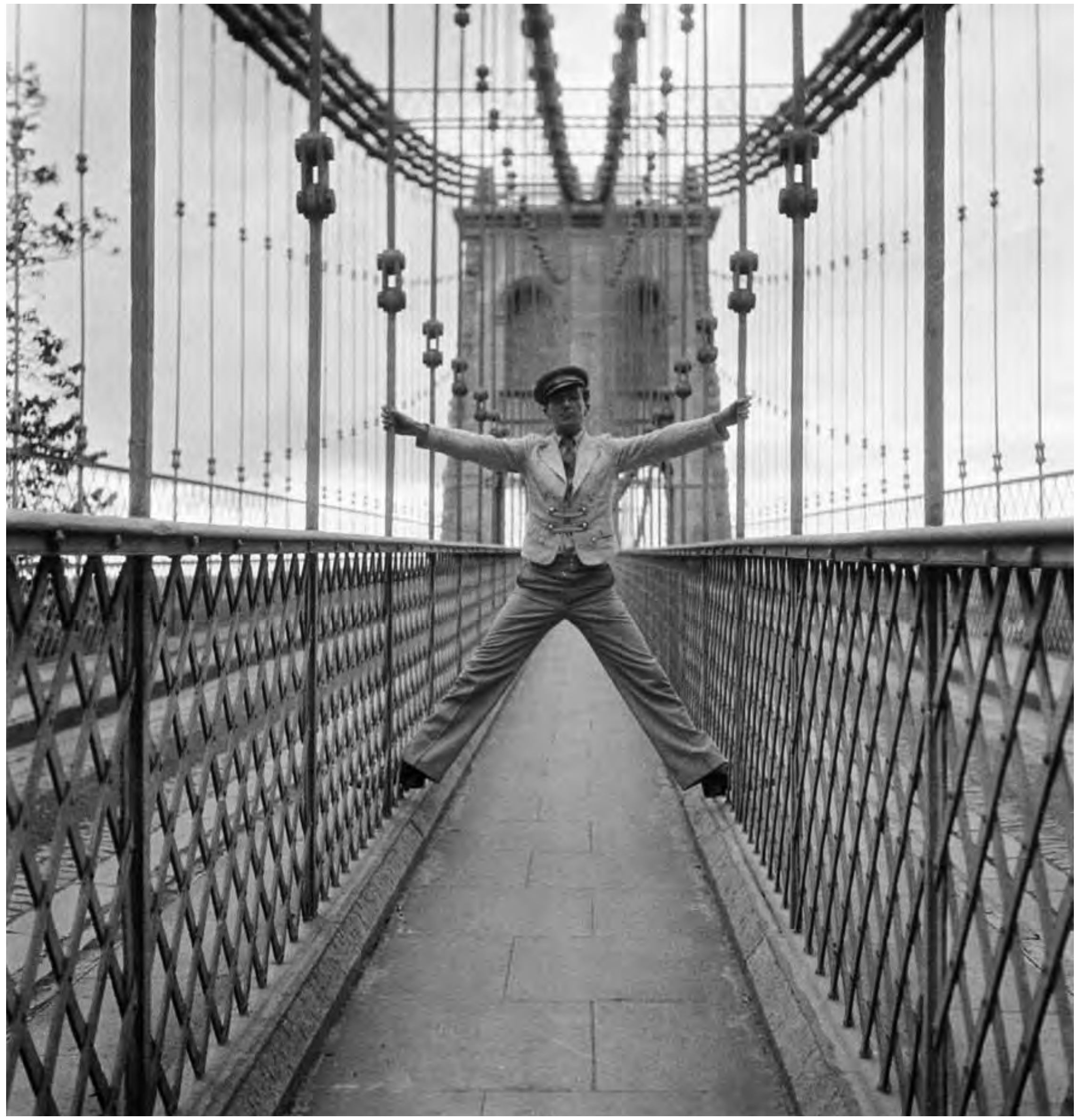
> Owning a really fine Cecil Beaton photograph is like owning a beautiful painting . . . There's nothing terribly unusual about me, but perhaps there was a sensitivity about him and I think he understood me . . . Like every woman and every young child I said I always would have loved to be beautiful and for a moment I was. If somebody loves you very much then they make you feel beautiful and he did it with his tenderness, but also with his art. Between the clothes and the photographs I looked smashing.

While Cecil clicked away with his camera, he also talked. He questioned his sitters and when they had gone, he frequently sat down and recorded his observations. Thus he achieved portraits with both lens and pen.

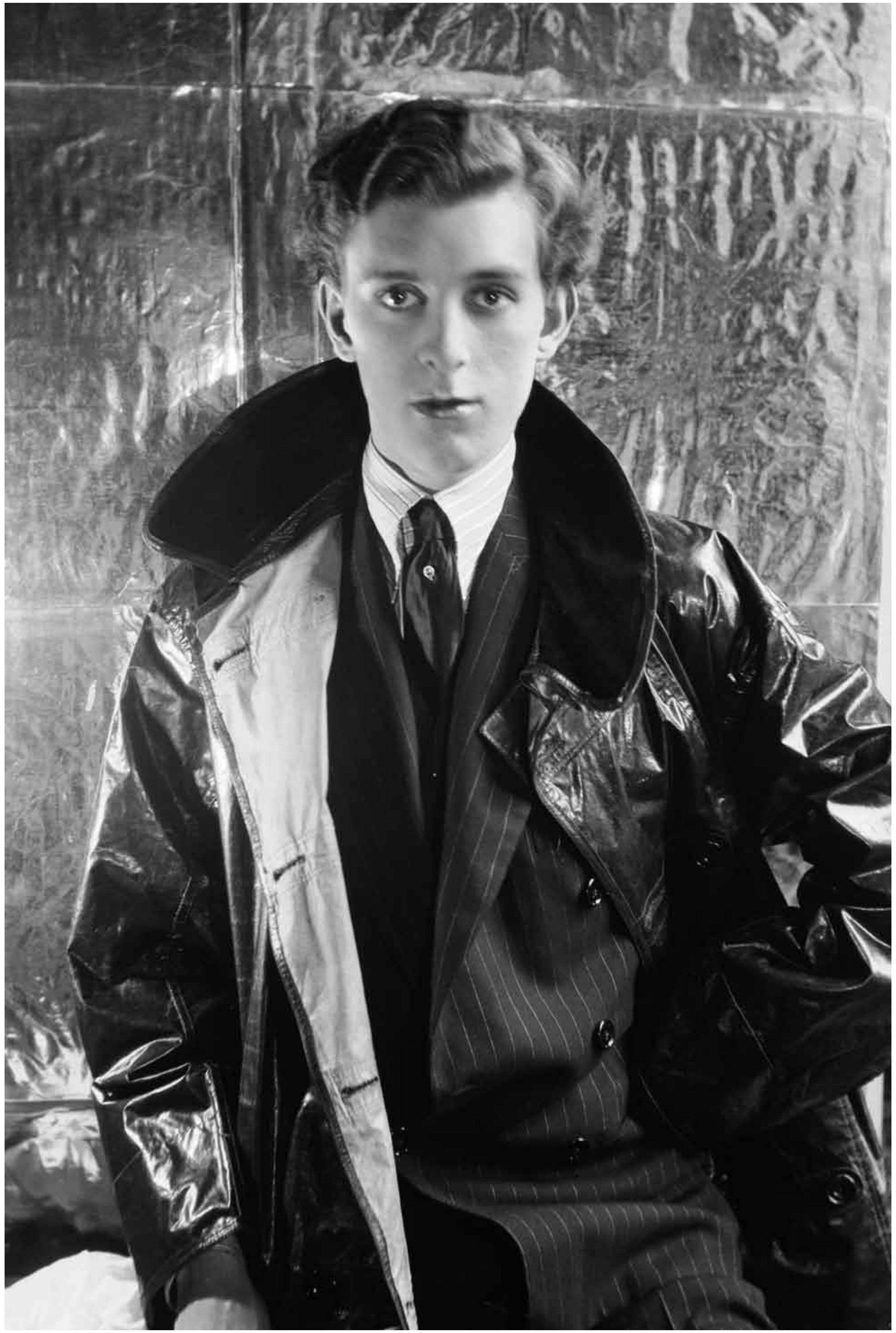
This book presents a combination of these. The photographs are portraits, taken either by his wish or to fulfil a particular commission. The words alongside them were sometimes done as profiles written to accompany the images, sometimes they were notes that he made for his own interest, and sometimes they formed entries in the diaries he kept between 1922 and 1980.

As a photographer, Cecil had access to more or less everyone he wanted to meet – with the regrettable exceptions of Queen Mary and Virginia Woolf. He would spend forty-five minutes or so chasing Marilyn Monroe around his hotel room running off three sheets of contacts. After she left, he would then sit down and capture her in words. Not many artists can do this. It is to his credit that he was able to do both so successfully, a unique combination and an example of his many talents.

Cecil was also an accomplished diarist, artist, interior, set and costume designer. During his lifetime he produced a *Book of Beauty*, a *Scrapbook*, two spoof volumes of royal memoirs, books on the war in many aspects, a memorable study of his favourite house, *Ashcombe*, a *Photo-biography*, five volumes of diaries, photographic portraits as well as books on fashion, ballet and travel. Since his death I have written his biography, further examined his relationship with Greta Garbo in *Loving Garbo*, and edited two volumes of his unexpurgated diaries. There are celebratory volumes of his photographs and catalogues in connection with various exhibitions. This handsome book is different and unique.



OPPOSITE LEFT **Cecil's Aunt Jessie and** RIGHT **the actress Cathleen Nesbitt, in his garden at Reddish House**
ABOVE **Self-portrait on Brooklyn Bridge, 1929**



STEPHEN TENNANT

The weekend party was the first of many to be spent at Wilsford. This Elizabethan-esque manor-house in the Wylye valley, was created by the mystical Lady Glenconner, at this time married to Lord Grey of Fallodon. Living with her was her youngest son, Stephen Tennant, a golden-haired young man who resembled the youthful Shelley. I had first met this remarkably poetic-looking apparition while he rode the papiermâché horses on the roundabouts at the Olympia circus. He was surrounded, as usual, by an adoring group of Guinness girls. He wore a black leather coat with a large Elizabethan collar of chinchilla. As he blew kisses to left and right, he created an unforgettable sight.

Ever since Stephen had published, at a very early age, a book of his poems, *The Vein in the Marble*, illustrated with his own Beardsleyesque drawings, he was brought up, by his mother, to be a genius. Although he lead a semi-invalid life, which no doubt encouraged him to evade the more unpleasant aspects of reality, his health had recently improved; in fact he created an impression of galvanised vitality.

Stephen could give a verbal fireworks display that was brilliantly funny. His ability to make people laugh was brought out, not in repartee, but in declamations on a definite subject, or in descriptions of past experience. Sitting around his silver bed, such critics as Rebecca West, Elinor Wylie and Arthur Waley, would be sent into paroxysms of amusement while Stephen regaled them with fantasies about restocking his reptillery or ordering all the exotic specialities from the bottled fruits department at Fortnum & Masons.

It is always difficult to re-create the humour of the past: so much depends on the timing and the nuances of the performer's personality. And, jokes that strike us as original at one period, soon show signs of becoming dated. Since I never wrote down any of Stephen's flights of inspiration, I cannot vouch for their successfully bridging the gap of years. I can only state that, at the time, they were inimitable. *1961*

Stephen Tennant, 1927

With David Hockney and Peter Schlesinger here, I decided to telephone to see if Stephen would receive us. Surprisingly the answer was 'yes'. Stephen, like a beached whale, was in bed, fatter than ever, his red-dyed hair down his back, his fingernails two inches long, his beard sprouting through make-up. He was in a 'new' bedroom, and it was certainly much cleaner than the one he has occupied for the last year. And when I say 'occupy' I mean it, for he seldom leaves his bed. Daylight was kept at bay. I peered through a slit in the curtains. 'How is your garden, Stephen?' 'I really don't know,' he replied. He was intent on showing us his enormous fan, a black Japanese prey-bird of a fan, and lots of others. 'Could I have this lace one renewed by Duvellroy?' 'I'm afraid, Stephen, they are no longer in business.'

He then showed, from a basket, his jewels, turquoises, Mexican bracelets and rings galore. Nothing good, or to my taste, but he was funny, witty. He soon talked of old songs. He and his servant, George, had been singing old songs such as 'One Night of Love, Two Hearts Entwined'. I laughed too loudly. 'What's funny about that?' he asked, rather waspishly. 'It should be called "The Higher Mathematician's Waltz",' I explained.

He was a little uncertain of me today and spent his energy regaling David and he succeeded. He talked of Thomas Hardy, whom he knew, and told of his first poem. When he completed two lines, Hardy felt he really was a poet. Stephen said his first wife objected to Hardy playing the lute in the summerhouse as she considered it too unconventional and Hardy's pictures did not do him justice. 'He was much more interesting and impressive.' Stephen recited 'Lyonesse', surprisingly word perfect. S. knows much of Shakespeare by heart and quotes readily from many sources. When he reads, he remembers. It is his life. Imagine the loneliness, being by himself in bed all the time!

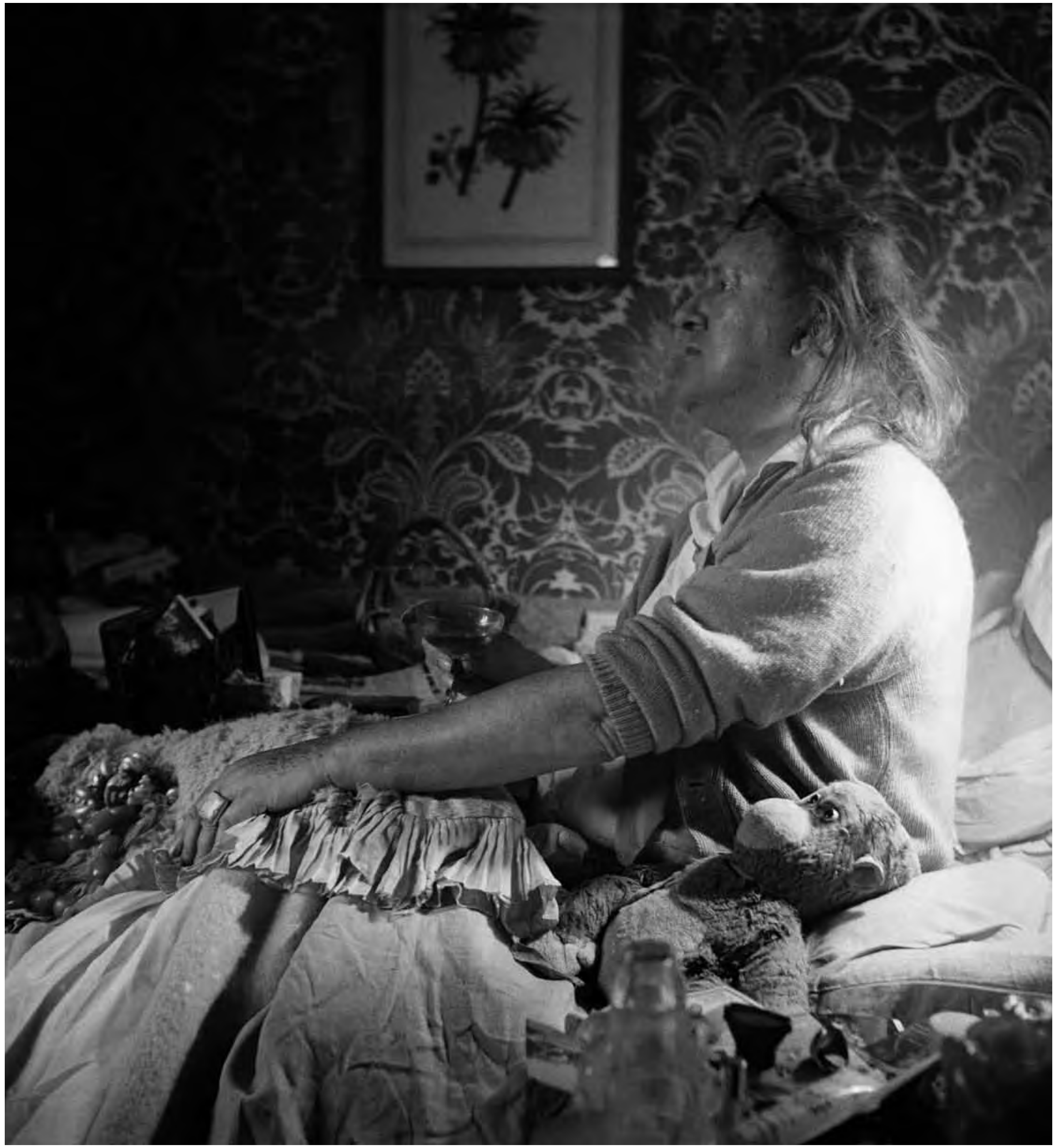
He regaled us with his recollection of America, staying in Palm Beach with Willa Cather, appalled to find Los Angeles was a 'mass of shacks'. Stephen allowed himself to be photographed, therein making a mistake. He said he was regaining his youth. He gave me a photograph of himself, the skinniest person there has ever been, and yet there was no regret in his voice. We drank half a bottle and two quarter-bottles of champagne. We looked at the house hurriedly, and the two boys felt they had never seen anything to compare with it, and would never forget the experience. *June 1971*

THE HON. STEPHEN TENNANT (1906–87)

Stephen Tennant was one of the brightest of the Bright Young People. He was the youngest son of Lord Glenconner and his wife, Pamela, later the wife of Viscount Grey of Fallodon. He was brought up in girl's clothes for the first years of his life. He was artistic from the start and had all the gifts that Cecil sought for himself. He was young, good looking, well connected and full of imagination, though he was too rich to have to make any effort other than to develop his own personality and pursue each and every whim until the next flight of fancy took hold of him.

Stephen studied at the Slade School of Art in London and entertained copious friends at his mother's house, Wilsford Manor, near Amesbury, in Wiltshire. He was at the centre of many of the parties and entertainments of the 1920s and was the lover of Siegfried Sassoon. This continued until in 1929 he fell ill and everyone feared his early death. He took to his bed, and arguably, though not quite literally, never left it for the next fifty-eight years.

He read voraciously, loved the works of Willa Cather and tried to write a novel, *Lascar*, for which he painted numerous proposed covers and composed endless drafts. It became his great unwritten novel. In later life he remained at Wilsford, an eccentric recluse, the willowy figure of youth, now fat and with henna-dyed hair. He died there in 1987.



Stephen Tennant in bed at Wilsford Manor, 1971 & FOLLOWING PAGES dressed as Prince Charming, 1927

Nancy Mitford, 1929

Nancy Mitford

Miss Mitford disproves the rule that lady authors are plain. Her starry eyes are full of wistful surprise; there is a delicious malice in her pretty giggle, fortified by the mocking drawl, the dormitory excitement and blissful slang. Somehow, she has succeeded in making a cult of her personal idiom, has translated the family manner into terms that can be understood and enjoyed by a vast reading public. Needless to say, no one confuses her with her Victorian namesake who wrote about village life. *The Pursuit of Love* and *Love in a Cold Climate* are delightfully feline and acid caricatures of high society. There is an air of refreshing amateurism about her work, yet she has developed her urbane style to such an extent that it is now the subject of *New Statesman* competitions. *1930*

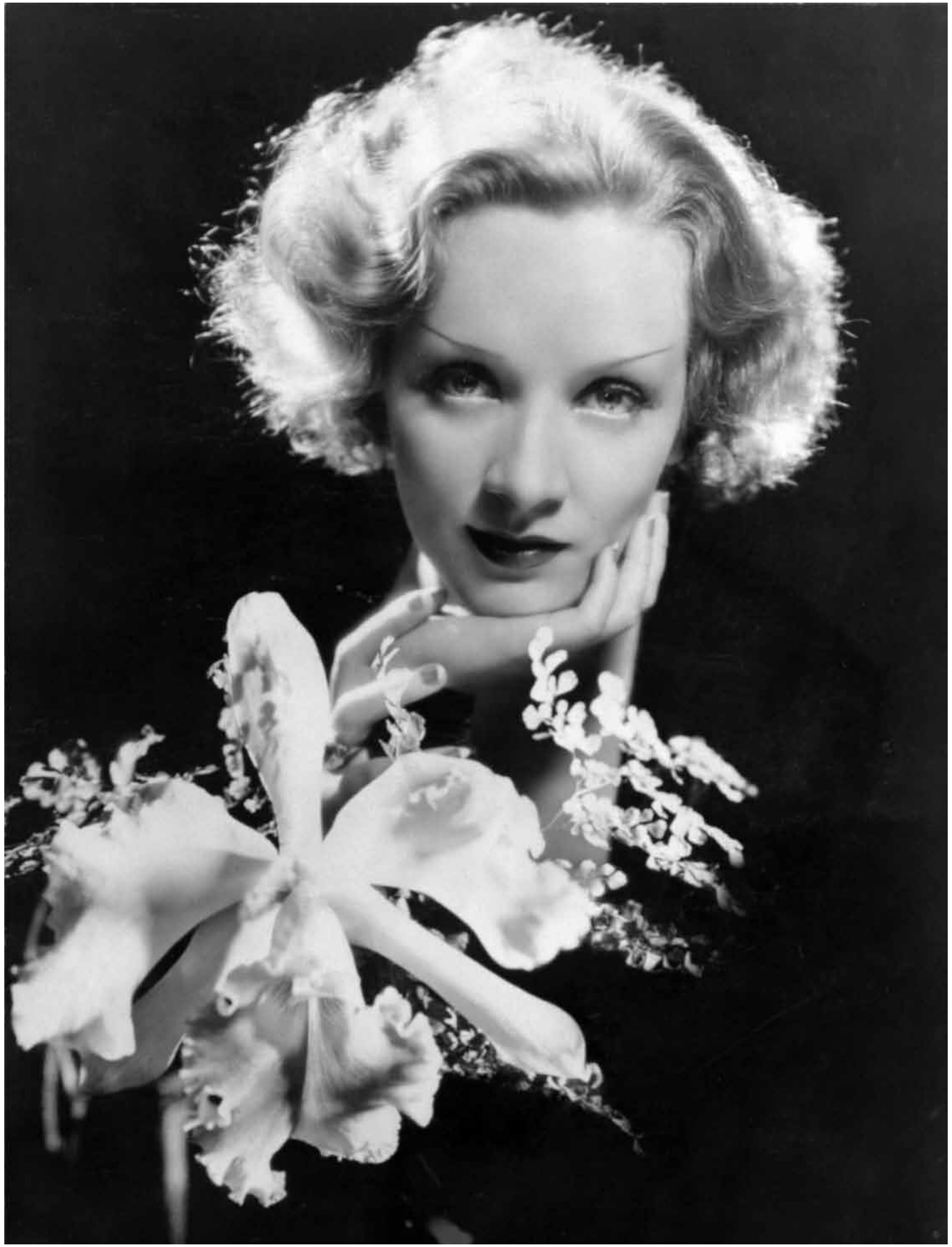
Nancy Mitford has been spared at last. For five years she has been in intermittent torture. The French doctors gave her up, could not discover where the cancer lay, the young men at the Nuffield in Portman Square located the disease in the spine and it responded to treatment, but broke out elsewhere, all over, in fact, and poor Nancy, shriller as well as swollen, went back to Versailles to die. Even so it took a long time. Now she is out of her agony and one feels grateful that my sister Baba's suffering was comparatively short.

Poor Nancy Mit. She was so plucky and gay, but I don't think she had a happy life. As a girl she was without sex appeal. She was unrequited in her love for Gaston Palewski and had to rely on her writing for success. She was very conscious of her fame (in the hospital she said, 'It would be a feather in these boys' caps if they found a cure for me, for I'm very well known, you know!'). She laughed readily, chuckled, gurgled, was a bit governessy in personality (the dry lips, the tiny mouth) and I could never trust her not to sacrifice one for a joke. But she was witty and one laughed a lot in her company. It is awful that the ranks are closing in. But genuinely I cannot *really* admit that my heart went out to hers, but then her heart was a very peculiar one, and not at all like other people's. *June 1973*

NANCY MITFORD (1904–73)

Nancy Mitford was the eldest of the Mitford Sisters and became a well-known novelist. She was one of Cecil's early sitters for *The Book of Beauty*, posed in an Arcadian setting. Just as Cecil captured the world of young English aristocrats in his photographs, so she immortalised many of them in her novels, most notably in *The Pursuit of Love* and *Love in a Cold Climate*.

Nancy's life was made and arguably ruined by her love for Gaston Palewski, who was the prototype for many of the heroes of her books, even when she was dealing with Louis XIV or Frederick the Great. She met him during the war when she was working at Heywood Hill bookshop in London and in 1946 she followed him to Paris. He claimed he could marry her as she had been divorced (she had married Peter Rodd in 1935) but eventually he married Violette, Duchesse de Sagan, with whom he had a son out of wedlock. This broke Nancy's heart. She developed a painful form of cancer and died in Paris in 1973.



MARLENE DIETRICH

Marlene Dietrich off the screen is not the fluffy-haired, phantom houri of the films, who creeps down corridors, wide-eyed, mouth gaping. Away from the photographers, she is less classically beautiful, more exotic, more extraordinary; equally affected, and yet obviously made of flesh, blood, muscle, bone, and sinew.

Most striking of her features is her whiteness, which would put the moon or a white rabbit to shame, even though, as she explains, she uses a powder darker than the colour of her skin. Instead of eyebrows, she has limned butterflies' antennae on her forehead. After watching the spread peacock's tail of her screen lashes, the naked look around her eyes is alluring. Her cheekbones are high and she has an upstanding tip to the end of her nose. Her wide nostrils accentuate the baby's mouth, which always has a jam glisten on it. Her figure is heavier than one had imagined, her head heroically carried on hunched shoulders and, to make her hands appear more slender, she grows her finger-nails quite two inches long. But to describe her in detail is beside the point, for she now *feels* sufficiently beautiful to convince other people, with her panoply of affected surprise and wonder, of moistened lips, tentative shoulder shrugs, and dewy eyes, framed in a setting of mushroom colour, with slightly puffy underlids that make her look as if she were about to abandon herself to a sneeze.

She is self-conscious and throws back her head with a toss of curls, followed by a knowing 'little-girl' look which I have not detected on the screen; with raised eyebrows and lowered lids, she glances down her eyelashes, bares her teeth, and gurgles. She appears to have so much *chienne,* that she seems perpetually to be pursued, and adopts frightened 'orphan-in-the-forest' postures, smoothing her arms from shoulder to shoulder, one knee safeguarding the other.

She talks in a hushed yet husky voice with honey-sweet accents, as if butter could not melt in her mouth. No whispers, no piping from waking birds, no splashing fountains, are more delicate than her sibilant calls to her child, Maria, '*Susse, susse, komm zu mir,*' in contrast to the Marlene of the gramophone records, who sings gutturally, 'Assez, assez, the bed is not big enough.'

That bravura walk is the same Hellenic athlete's stride as in the motion pictures, the right shoulder forward at the same time as the left foot, and vice versa (contra-action is the dancing mistress' definition) but it needs the distance of studio orchards or corridors, not a crowded night club, to show it off to its best, most springing advantage.

She has, or has acquired, the necessary temperament of the film star, never in a hurry; her pace is slow, her perseverance and patience phenomenal. A day is nothing; she will spend twelve hours being photographed in the studio, and, without regrets, tear up every proof next morning, if they are not to her complete satisfaction; and she is the strictest of judges. She is always ready for more photographs to be taken. Once, in Salzburg, I went to see her in her hotel, and took a Kodak with me. She had a cold in the head and no make-up on, but she whipped out of bed and posed in every conceivable position, for two dozen snapshot time exposures, concluding with a pleading attitude on the floor, with her head against the tablecloth, starry eyed, lips apart, yearning towards the empty teacups and the remains of the marzipan cakes above her.

Apparently always at her best, immaculate with the freshness of a recent bath, she is good humoured, a sport. Her film make-up, with refining of nose, shadowing down of ears, and

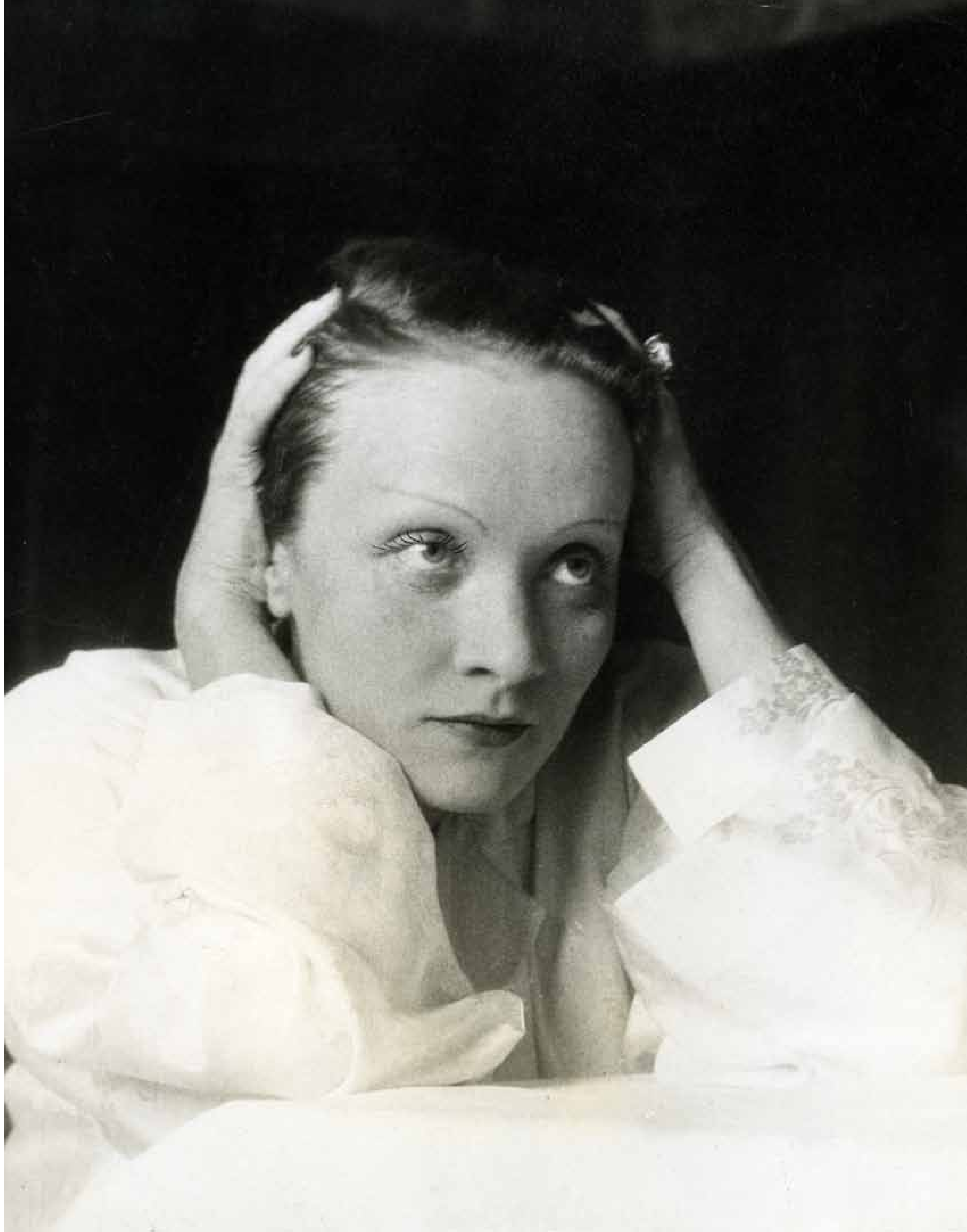
Marlene Dietrich, 1930

accentuation of cheek-bones, takes an hour and a half to effect, and, after each day's heavy work at the film studio, she washes her hair before going to bed in preparation for the next day's shooting, when again, so that they shall photograph lighter, her curls will be covered with gold powder dust. But she enjoys every aspect of the film star's career; no actress is more stagey than she, and, unlike Garbo, she is entirely interested in the effect she makes on her limitless public. She knows that just as much excitement is caused by her absence as when she appears as the *femme fatale,* in the outrageous female impersonator's choice of tulle, black spangles, paradise feather collars, coloured chiffon handkerchiefs, coloured heels to her slippers and fish-tail skirts. She will break any number of appointments without a tremor, and, while those at the cocktail party given in her honour are speculating as to what has become of her, she will be sitting in an ordinary, impersonal hotel room, wearing a dressing-gown, or the exaggerated, mannikin suit of the ventriloquist's doll, a half-empty box of gold-tipped cigarettes on a side table, a bowl of fruit and tomatoes on the sideboard, plucking her eyebrows, stroking her arms, vaguely waiting for a long-distance telephone call, showing an acquaintance her latest photographs or playing her newest gramophone records. She, like the others, talks a great deal about Marlene, but in that quiet, frightened, rather breathless child's voice: 'Do you like that pose? The lighting is very goo-o-d. What do you think of this tune, I had the idea for the lyric myself,' and Marlene sings to the Marlene of the gramophone, rolling her eyes, baring her teeth, her belly slightly swaying. Even if she does arrive at the party, she will leave early, saying, 'I am tired, I have been writing such a lot.' By writing, she means signing her name in the autograph books. She adores seeing her own name in lights and reads all her own press cuttings, for no fan is more enthusiastic about Marlene than Marlene. *1937*

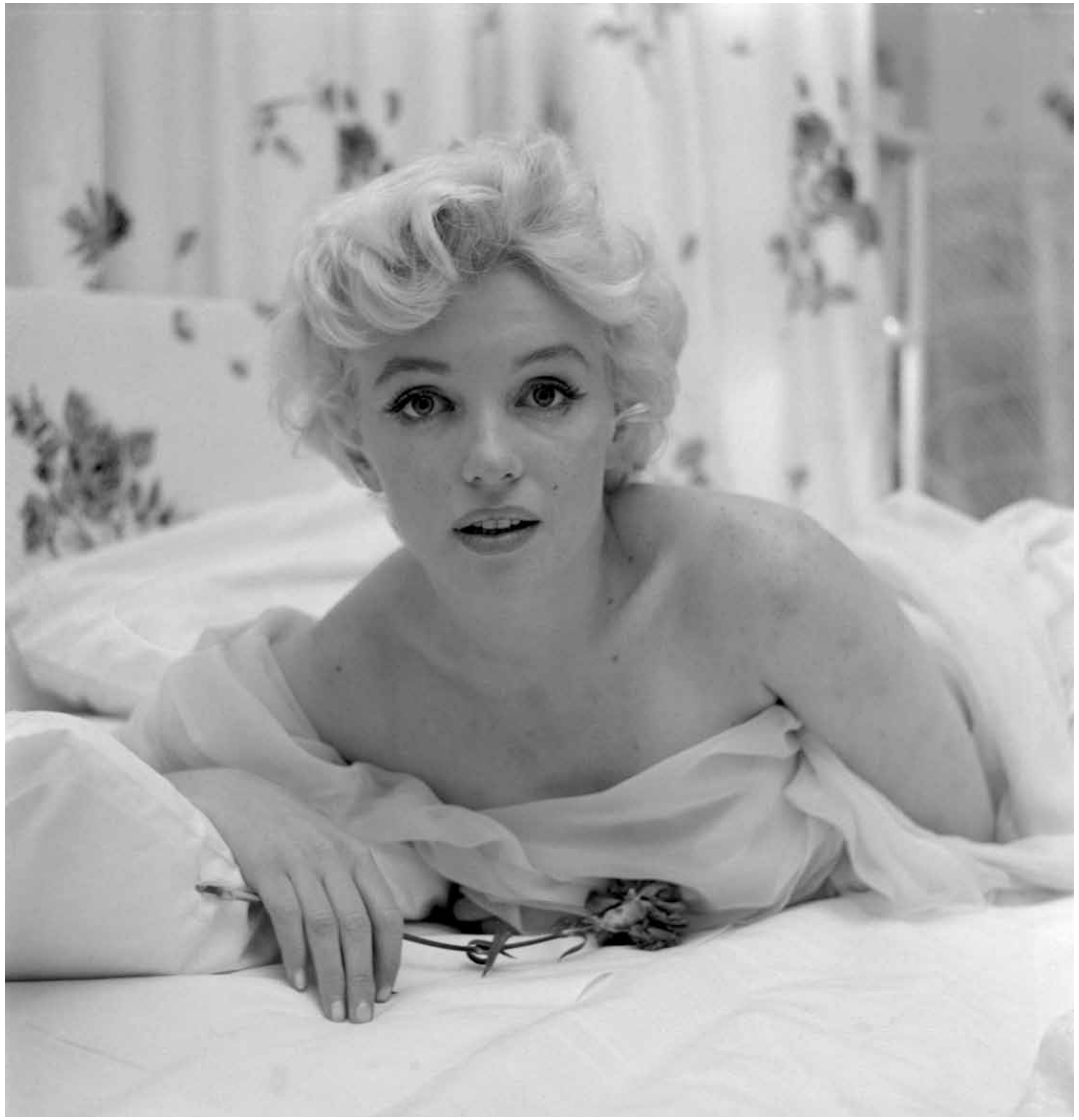
MARLENE DIETRICH (1901–92)
Cecil followed Marlene Dietrich's long career with interest, having first met and photographed her in Hollywood in the early 1930s. Like him, she was a survivor. She was also a highly professional performer. In a 1971 interview in Copenhagen, wearing a pink suit and belying her seventy years, she was asked what she thought her qualities were. She replied: 'Well, I'm patient and I'm disciplined, and I'm good. I think I'm good.'

Her film career began in Germany and took her to Hollywood. There she appeared in a number of memorable films, such as *Destry Rides Again*. If Garbo was a more intrinsically natural star then Marlene was to a degree the imitator. But in the realms of humanity, Marlene won hands down. Garbo was cruel and would not have hesitated to leave her best friend freezing on the doorstep. Marlene would have whisked him in, given him claret by a warm fire, and rustled up some bacon and eggs.

During the Second World War she entertained the troops on the American side, travelling throughout Europe. Then in the 1950s she began a new career as a diseuse. Dressed in a tight-fitting sequin dress, and with a long flowing white fur coat, she sang songs such as 'Lili Marlene' and 'Where have all the flowers gone?' When she could perform no more, she became a genuine recluse in her Paris apartment, talking to friends on the telephone.



Marlene Dietrich, Salzburg, early 1930s



Marilyn Monroe, 1956

MARILYN MONROE

Miss Marilyn Monroe calls to mind the bouquet of a fireworks display, eliciting from her awed spectators an open-mouthed chorus of wondrous 'Ohs' and 'Ahs'. She is as spectacular as the silvery shower of a Vesuvius fountain; she has rocketed from obscurity to become our post-war sex symbol – the pin-up girl of an age. And whatever press agentry or manufactured illusion may have lit the fuse, it is her own weird genius that has sustained her flight.

Transfigured by the garish marvels of technicolour and cinemascope, she walks like an undulating basilisk, scorching everything in her path but the rosemary bushes. Her voice, of a loin-stroking affection, has the sensuality of silk or velvet.

But the real marvel lies in the paradox – somehow we know that this extraordinary performance is pure charade, a little girl's caricature of Mae West. The puzzling truth is that Miss Monroe is a make-believe siren, unsophisticated as a Rhine maiden, innocent as a sleepwalker. She is an urchin pretending to be grown up, having the time of her life in mother's moth-eaten finery, tottering about in high-heeled shoes and sipping ginger ale as though it were a champagne cocktail. There is an unworldly, a winsome naïveté about the child's eyes that, quick as a flash, will screw up into a pair of sexy, smouldering slits and give you a synthetic 'come-hither' look. Just as obligingly, the untidy, flexible mouth, half-parted in springtime ecstasy, will burst into a generous grimace, displaying flawless seed-pearl teeth while the surrounding lips quiver nervously and seem almost shocking in their mobile suggestiveness.

Behind this brilliant, pseudo-fatal façade is the real Marilyn Monroe. She might be the latter-day incarnation of a Greuze portrait, the quintessence of partridge-plump prettiness with full, high breasts, eighteenth-century rump and a putty-modelled face – eyes felicitously wide apart, chin appealingly small, nose created without cartilage expressly for wrinkling up with delight, or for photography (though in profile the urchin is apt to gain the ascendancy).

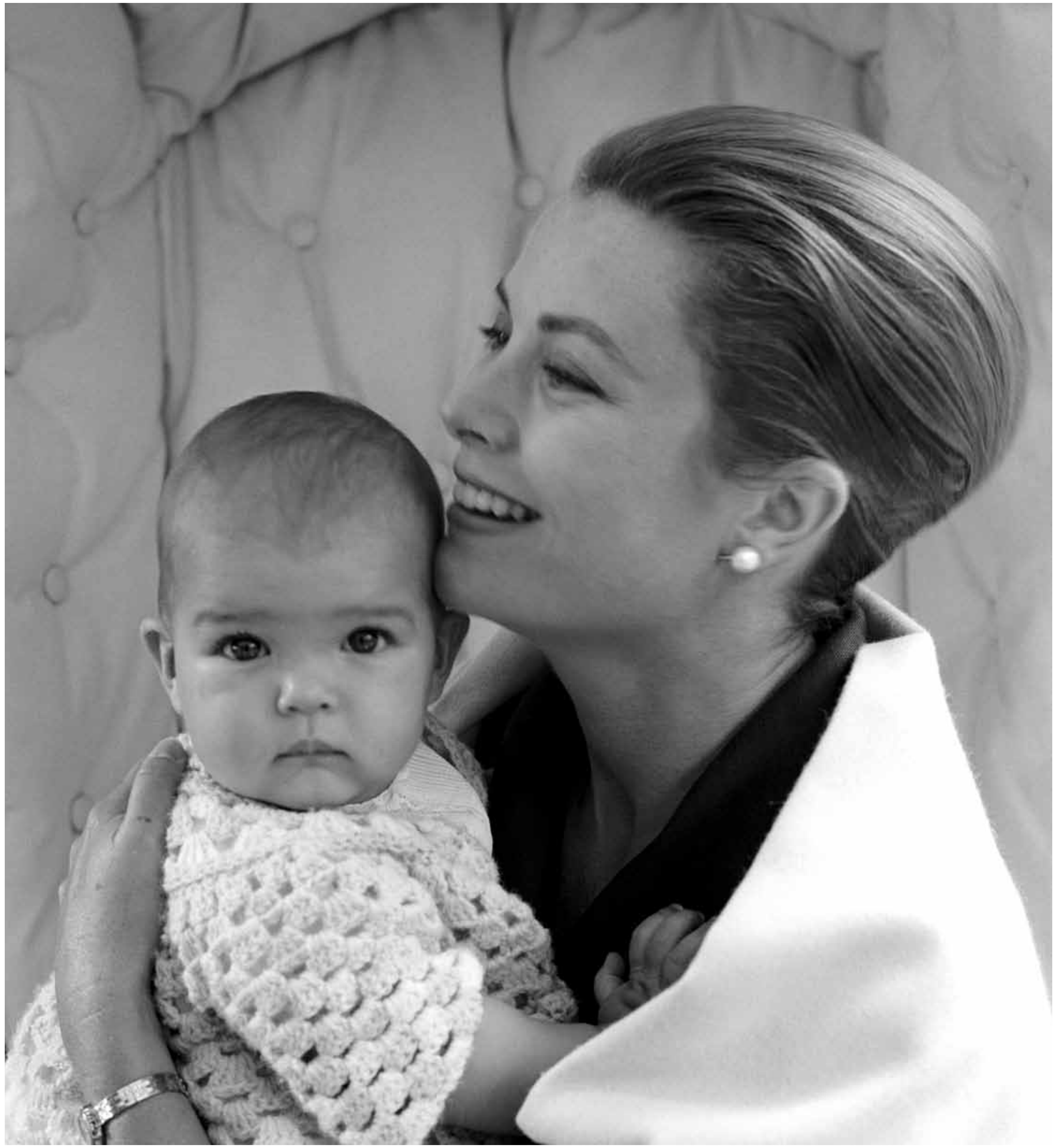
In her presence, you are startled, then disarmed, by her lack of inhibition. What might at first seem like exhibitionism is yet counterbalanced by a wistful incertitude beneath the surface. If this star is an abandoned sprite, she touchingly looks to her audience for approval. She is strikingly like an over-excited child asked downstairs after tea. The initial shyness over, excitement has now got the better of her. She romps, she squeals with delight, she leaps on to the sofa. She puts a flower stem in her mouth, puffing on a daisy as though it were a cigarette. It is an artless, impromptu, high-spirited, infectiously gay performance. It will probably end in tears. *February 1956*

MARILYN MONROE (1926–62)

Cecil only met Marilyn Monroe once, but he made the most of the encounter. She came to his suite at the Ambassador Hotel in New York on 22 February 1956, flouncing in an hour and a half late.

Monroe has become one of the greatest Hollywood legends of all time, her posthumous fame perhaps greater than the considerable interest she attracted during her short but tempestuous life. This is partly due to the mysterious circumstances of her death, and her involvement with figures such as President John F. Kennedy and his brother, Robert (Bobby). Monroe married three times, first to a policeman named James Dougherty, then to the baseball player Joe DiMaggio and finally to the playwright, Arthur Miller. All the marriages ended in divorce.

She played the dumb (though witty) blonde to perfection in films such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *The Seven Year Itch* and *Some Like it Hot*.



Princess Grace with her daughter, Princess Stephanie, 1965

Grace Kelly

A photographic beauty is, quite simply, someone who photographs well. Grace Kelly is a case in point: she is charming and charming-looking, distinguished and well-mannered, with delicate hands and wrists. But if she did not photograph well, we would scarcely stop to look at her on the street.

Though a photographer with experience can tell in advance whether a person will be a good subject for him, it is difficult to generalize on what makes a face photogenic. There are, nevertheless, certain rules that do apply. Almost all of these rules are observed by Grace Kelly's physiognomy. She has, most important of all, a nice nose for photography: flat, it hardly exists at all in profile. This makes things easy, since protruding noses cast shadows and cause difficulty for the photographer. Of course, there ought to be something behind the 'nothing' nose to make a face. It can be observed that all photogenic people have square faces, strong cheekbones and rather square jowls. An actress with few flat planes, or a small surface area surrounding her features, does not photograph well.

In a photogenic face a big mouth is essential. Here again, Grace Kelly has an ideal mouth, with a ready display of teeth. She can show a handsome row of pearls without doing much in the way of a smile – that is, without defining deep lines from the nose. As a matter of fact, the chief interest in Miss Kelly's face is centred around the muzzle. Her mouth, the tip of her nose, her nostrils – all are extremely sensitive. Their beauty is effective against the rugged background of the square face.

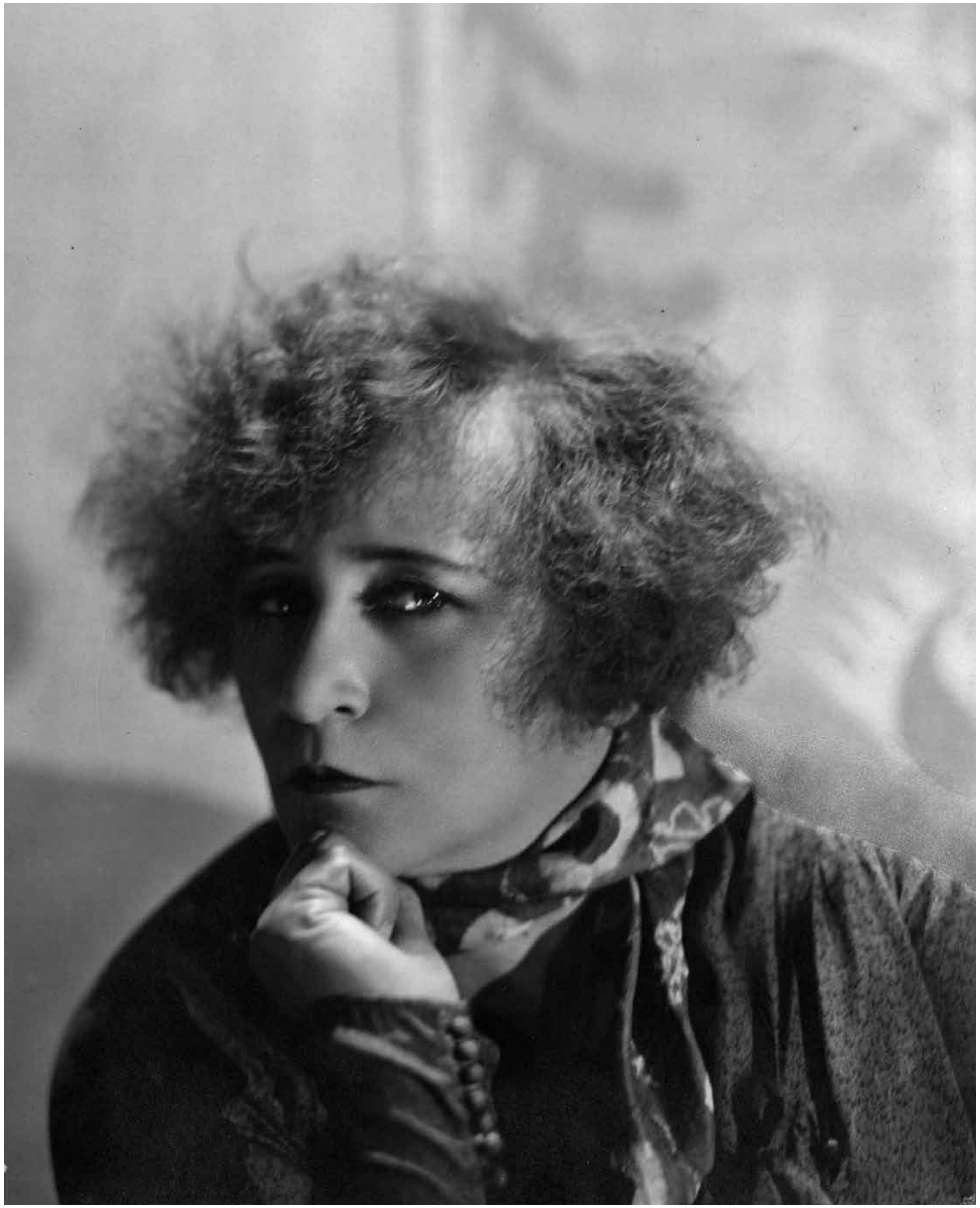
If both sides of Grace Kelly's face were the same as the right half, she wouldn't be on the screen. That side is very heavy, like a bull calf, but the left side is intensely feminine, and creates an interesting counter-point. Then, too, her face is saved from being completely classical and dull by the 'amusement' puffs beneath her eyes. The expressiveness of those little pockets of flesh is one of her important attributes. It goes without saying that an inherent part of Miss Kelly's appeal is the manner behind the face. She has unusually good taste and an unerring sense of comportment. Constance Collier once said of another woman, 'I know she is much too refined to be a lady.' But there is nothing too refined about Grace Kelly. *1954*

HSH PRINCESS GRACE OF MONACO (1929–82)

Cecil first met Grace Kelly in Hollywood in 1954 when he photographed her. She recalled that it was a time when everything was painted mustard yellow. He posed her under a simple lamp. She loved the results. After she married Prince Rainier of Monaco, she invited Cecil to come to Monte Carlo to design the poster for the centenary of the Principality because he epitomised the best of the Edwardian era.

Grace Kelly was an ice-cool blonde of the type favoured by Alfred Hitchcock. In the 1950s she starred in memorable films such as *Rear Window*, *To Catch a Thief* and *High Society*. She met Prince Rainier while on location in the South of France. Their marriage in 1956 attracted global interest as a real-life fairy tale, when a prince married a beautiful star. 'What is Grace going to do with all those camels?' asked her sister, who mistook Monaco for Morocco.

Princess Grace had three children, Princess Caroline, Princess Stephanie and Prince Albert. She died when she lost control of the wheel of her car, driving on the Corniche in 1982. A light went out in Monaco which has never been re-lit.



Colette, 1930s

Colette

Colette had learned in those last years of her life to immunize herself from the stress of a disturbed and disturbing world. 'Madame is busy working and does not wish to see anyone for a fortnight.' I found her in her apartment with its waist-high windows looking on to the gardens of the Palais Royale. She lay abed, muffled with rugs and warmed by hot-water bottles. Nine fountain pens and a dozen sharpened pencils were at her side as she crossed out, rewrote or made additions. She was writing her memoirs – writing, she admitted, like a monster without stop. 'It is such hard work. I must expurgate half my memories and invent the other half.' A woman with a tall hat covered by birds came in from the French Ministry of Information. 'No, I can't write anything for you . . .' But, after a time, Colette promised to produce something that would 'encourage a respect and love for France'. *1944*

COLETTE (1873–1954)
Cecil photographed Colette for *The Face of the World,* and she was the author of *Gigi*, the novella which inspired a Broadway play in 1951, adapted by Anita Loos, and then the 1958 film on which Cecil worked with such supreme success.

Colette based *Gigi* on the real-life love affair between Constant Lee, a handsome Frenchman, and Margaret Davelle. *Gigi* was a relatively daring subject for a musical, involving courtesans and *cocottes* – young Gigi being groomed to be a mistress rather than a wife. Sadly she did not live to see the success of the film. However, Colette is credited with having spotted Audrey Hepburn as a good star for the stage version of *Gigi*, when she saw her in the lobby of the Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo, nimbly switching from French to English.

Colette was born in the Burgundy area of France. She became a trailblazer for the modern woman, the first woman to report from the front line in the First World War, and in her early career on the stage, she bared her breasts. She wrote many stories, amongst which was *Chéri* and several *Claudine* stories. She married three times, first to Baron Henri Gauthier-Villars (a notorious rake known as 'Willy'), then to Henri de Jouvenel, editor of *le Matin*, and finally to Maurice Goudeket. She also had many lesbian affairs, notably with Natalie Clifford Barney.

Pablo Picasso at his home in Mougins, 1965

PABLO PICASSO

Lost somewhere under the débris accumulated in my bedroom were the odd bits of paper scrawled with addresses and telephone numbers. Who would know where I could find Picasso at his secret, unlisted address? Another search brought me near panic before the missing scrap was found. I rushed off in torrential rain to cope with transport difficulties. But on arrival at the Picasso apartment, 7 rue des Grands-Augustins, a sad and rather sinister-looking man, perhaps a secretary or an agent, received me enigmatically. I realised that no one was conscious of my being an hour late. No one seemed to know of my appointment: 'But don't bother; there are others upstairs already.' I went up a small, winding, dun-coloured Cinderella staircase. The first room I went into was filled with huge bronze heads and squat, naked men holding animals sculptured by the painter. In the studio next door dozens of vast abstract canvases were stacked back to back. Further upstairs was a group of visitors, among them Balthus, the Polish painter, here for a morsel of shop talk, an American soldier, and two dealers. Conversation was spasmodic and cursory while they awaited the master. Picasso quietly slipped into the room. His whole ambience was calm and peaceful, but his smile was gay. He showed that he was as pleased to see me as if I had been a close friend. The fact that Hitler had been the reason for our enforced separation now made us fall into each other's arms.

'You've not changed – except for grey-white hair!' He pointed at me; he, too, had gone white. He said that he hadn't reconciled himself to his appearance. 'Have you ?' he asked. 'No,' I replied, 'but there's nothing to do about it except barge on.' 'It's so unfair! It isn't as if one changed and became something else' – he screwed up his face into a childlike grin showing small teeth – 'as if a chair became a piano, for instance. No, it is merely a *dégringolade* – horrible!' But since he was not a movie actor it didn't matter a lot. But nowadays he confessed a hatred of mirrors.

Picasso has recently shown his latest paintings at the Salon d'Automne and his fame has become world-wide. At every kiosk his face stares from the covers of magazines from every country. Perhaps I am foolish to regret the passing of the blue and rose periods, the Cubist, and the neo-Greek, but I find the newest works of boss-eyed women with three noses and electric light bulbs or fishes for hats of an almost appalling violence: they are doubtless diabolically clever, bad-mannered and brutal, with the effect of making every other picture pale in comparison. However, these newest Picassos have caught the imagination of the people, and Picasso said he'd heard the crowds arriving to see them were like those which file past Lenin's tomb – 'and what a strong smell those people have!'

A further posse of visitors appeared and the host talked to them in grand seigneurial manner. In fact, he is quietly delighted and amused with his success which is of film star proportions.

When the visitors departed I asked how on earth he could find time to paint with such an influx of people. 'Oh, it's the victory! It's terrible! I can't do any work since the victory – it's been too big, and all of a sudden the floods have started.' He doubted if he'd ever be able to work again. Perhaps only another war would make him work.

Later I took photographs of the master. For changes of scene we moved from one room to another, ending in the attics with sloping red tile floor, sparsely furnished with a few zebra and other animal skins thrown around - the whole of a monochrome tonality. Here he sat in his small bedroom and posed on the edge of his bath.

Picasso again. Shock to find at least sixty American soldiers and WAACs making a pilgrimage. Picasso is not overwhelmed by his popularity, and the gloomy Sabarthès and some ambiguous servants – like muses in attendance – take charge of the telephone and welcome the pilgrimages. A blonde Frenchwoman with a dashing hat over one eye, acting as interpreter, cornered Picasso in the bathroom (the warmest room in the house) and the GIs started asking questions. 'Mr Picasso, how come you see a woman with three eyes – one down on her chin?' Picasso laughed. 'Mr Picasso, why do you change your style so often?' He was amused to answer: 'It's like experimenting in chemistry. I'm always carrying out my experiments on certain subjects in this laboratory. Sometimes I succeed – then it's time to do something different. I'm always trying to make new discoveries.'

He did not excuse himself for speaking no English, and told the story of two lovers, one French, one Spanish, who lived together happily loving one another until she learnt to speak his language: when he discovered how stupid she was – the romance was at an end. Many GIs brought cameras, also books for signing. Picasso said they were like a bunch of college boys – so *naïf*.

Perhaps partly in order to get rid of them he escorted the soldiers down the street to the neighbouring studio of Adam, a sculptor and engraver. When he returned alone to his place he discovered that some of the GIs had left anonymous gifts: a package of cigarettes by the bed, a cake of soap on the rim of the bath. 'They often do that,' he smiled.

Picasso seemed far removed from the war and spoke of it in fairy-tale simplifications. But when I showed him Ministry of Information photographs of the destruction in London he was obviously moved. '*C'est épouvantable!* And that is happening all over the world ?' I asked if I might do some sketches of him. He sat in profile and laughed that I should not make him look like Whistler's mother. Then a Hindu silence fell between us. He said: 'How refreshing not to talk! It is like a glass of water.' *November 1944*

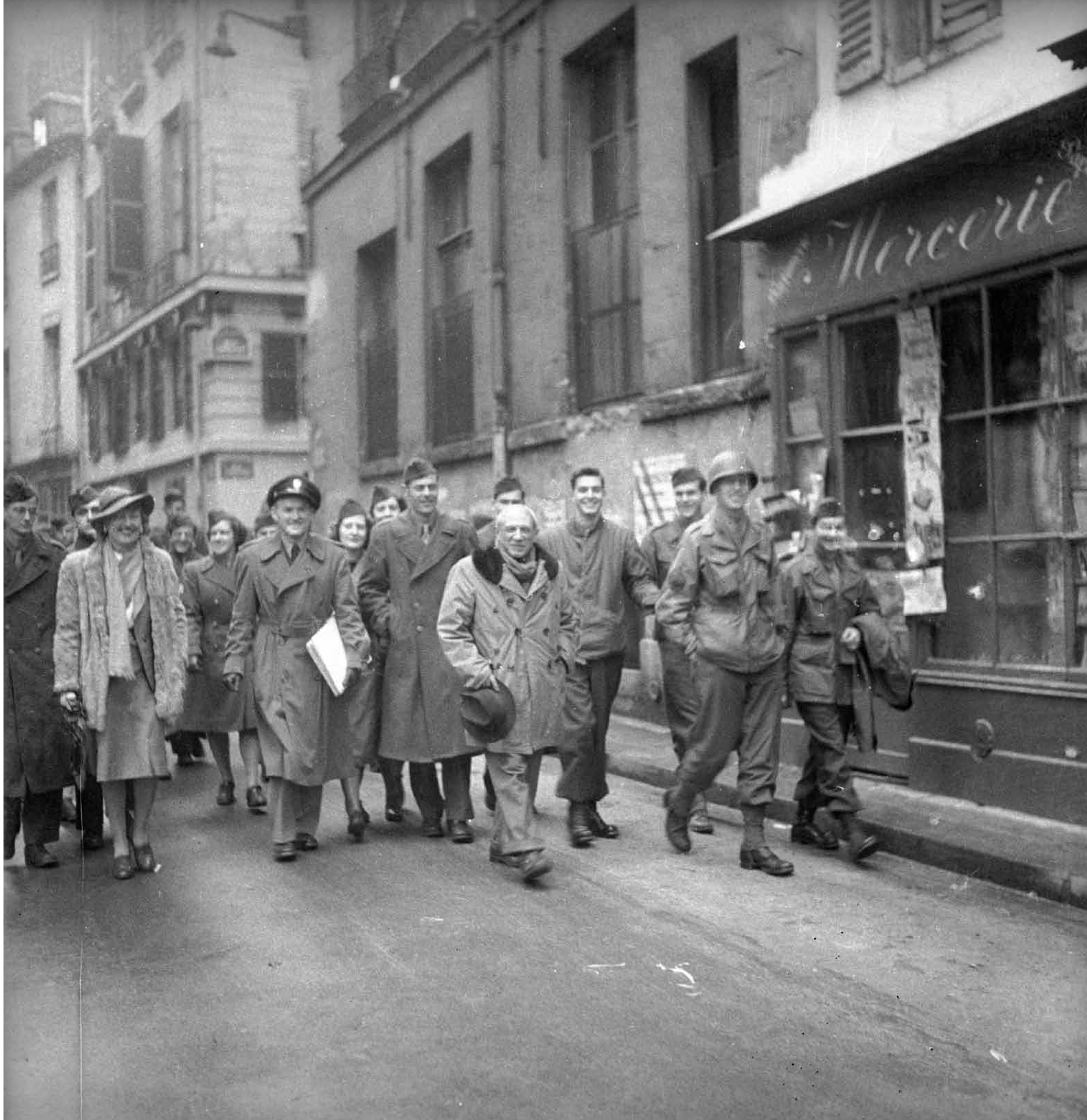
PABLO PICASSO (1881–1973)

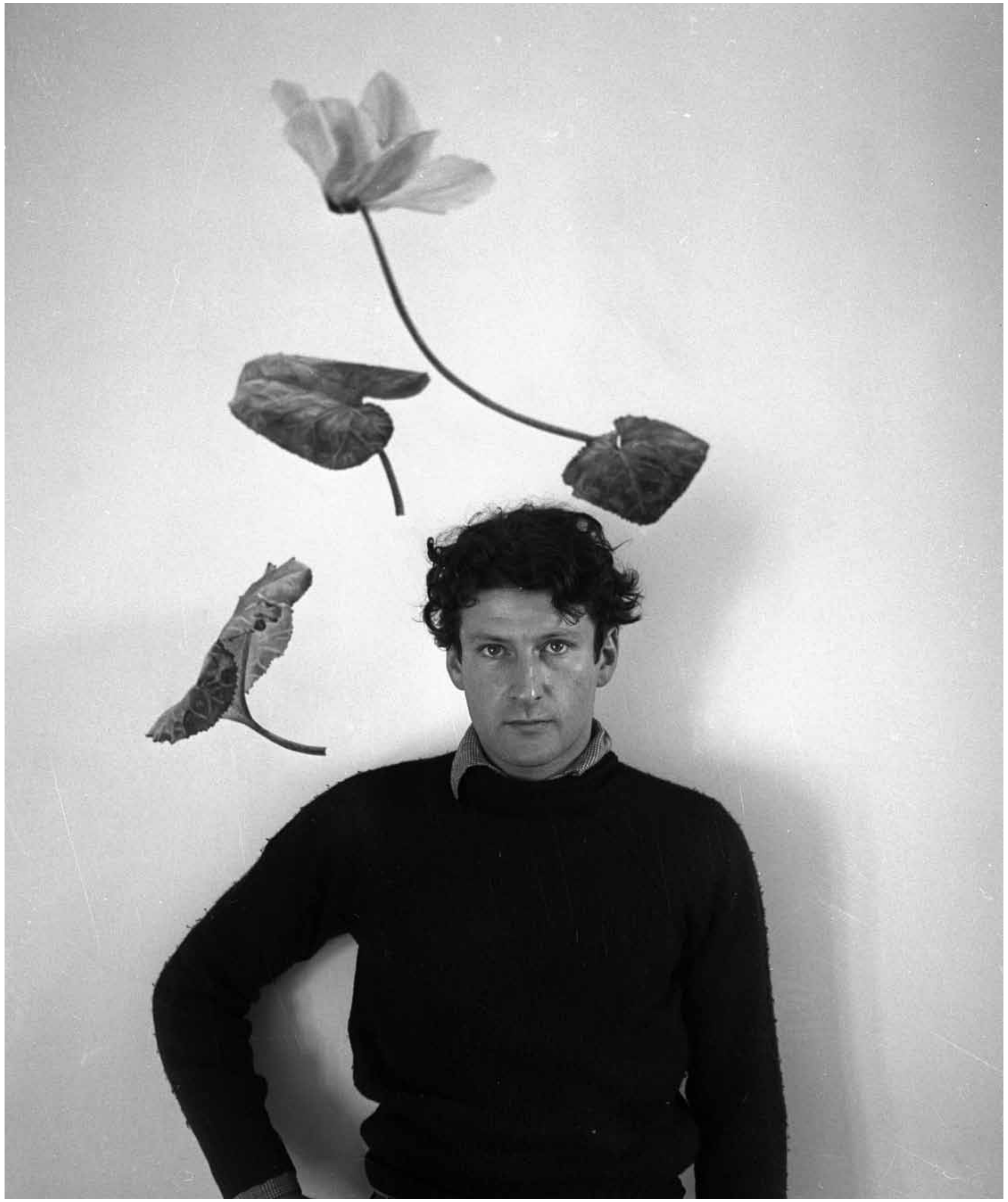
Picasso was one of those whom Cecil photographed several times over a period of many years, first at the rue de la Boétie in Paris in 1933, at the rue Augustins in 1944, and finally at Mougins in 1965. For anyone interested in art, Picasso was a name to be conjured with and Cecil was following him long before they actually met. On meeting him, Cecil was impressed by his 'once seen never-to-be-forgotten stare'. In 1944 the 'black prune eyes stared with their accustomed vigour' but twenty years on 'the famous blazing eyes' were more kindly and understanding.

Picasso was one of the foremost artists of the twentieth century. He co-founded the Cubist movement; he sculpted, made prints, designed stage sets and worked in ceramics. He became a living legend early in his career. He began life as a realistic painter, but several times changed his style as he experimented with different concepts. He had his Blue Period, which was sombre, his Rose Period, when he painted acrobats and harlequins, his African-influenced period, then Cubism, followed by Synthetic Cubism. Later he moved into Surrealism and Neo-Expressionism.

Picasso produced over fifty thousand works of art. He had many wives and mistresses. Since his death his paintings have ranked as some of the most expensive in the world, reaching record sale prices at auction.

Picasso in Paris, 1944





Lucian Freud, 1956

Lucian Freud

Sons and grandsons of great men often live in their shadows; but in the case of Lucian Freud, it is only a matter of genealogical interest that his grandfather happened to be the founder of modern psychoanalysis and gave the world a whole new set of theories to explain the mysteries of human personality. Lucian Freud stands very much on his own two feet as an artist and a phenomenon in British life. Though he was an adolescent when he arrived with his family in England, only the slightest suggestion of a German accent indicates that his origins were other than those of his adopted country, which he loves so well and upon which he has had such influence. He is a true artist and a true Bohemian in the way he lives. London, the 'great, grey Babylon', he loves as dearly as Baudelaire loved Paris, and you are more apt than not to see him – black curly hair, intense and restless eyes, bright woollen scarf or checked trousers of a decidedly *zazou* cut – haunting the little restaurants or jazz clubs of Soho. But he is at home in all levels of society, and might just as well be seen in a dinner jacket at some fashionable restaurant or private house. His painting is intensely personal, running very counter to the mode prevalent among younger artists today. Lucian Freud eschews abstract, impressionistic or expressionistic approaches, and works with a meticulous and poetic realism that is curiously in direct line with the tradition of Germanic painters such as Cranach, Grünewald or other early masters. There is something almost morbid in his calculated distortions: he prefers a dead bird to a live one; his human subjects have a translucent, hyperthyroid stare, as though they were catatonic or bewitched; hair and eyelashes take on a singular intensity, bed-clothes are rumpled, even leaves and twigs are subsumed under some sinister chlorophyll. It would be difficult for others to imitate him, yet his world is very much our world and he takes his place in British painting as a highly personalized talent. He is also, incidentally, a highly colourful human being, whose place in artistic society is assuming an ever-increasing importance. *1957*

LUCIAN FREUD (1922–2011)

Cecil and Lucian Freud were not natural soul mates but Cecil recognised his talent and was amongst the earliest to promote him in New York. Cecil judged Francis Bacon a more daring artist, though he had great respect for Freud. He photographed him four times, once when Freud came down to Broadchalke to sketch him, after which Cecil noted: 'The boy is charming and unexpected and it was nice to have him about the place for several days.'

Freud was one of Britain's greatest figurative painters. He liked to paint portraits which explored the psychological as well as the physical character of his sitters. Often these were grotesque, and sometimes it appeared that he was posing his female subjects as if held in the gynaecologist's stirrups.

Born in Berlin, the grandson of the psychologist Sigmund Freud, and therefore a German Jew, he was obliged to flee Hitler's Germany with his parents and two brothers (with both of whom he was on bad terms). He arrived in Britain in 1933 and was sent to school in Devon, and later to Bryanston. He was married twice, first to Kitty Epstein, daughter of the sculptor, and secondly to Lady Caroline Blackwood, the novelist.

Having eschewed publicity all his life, refusing to give interviews, he eventually succumbed to decades of subtle stalking by Geordie Greig, who revealed much in a posthumous portrait of him, *Breakfast with Lucian*.

Francis Bacon, 1960

Francis Bacon

When I met Francis we seemed to have an immediate rapport. I was overwhelmed by his tremendous charm and understanding. Smiling and painting simultaneously, he seemed to be having such a good time. He appeared extraordinarily healthy and cherubic, apple-shiny cheeks, and the protruding lips were lubricated with an unusual amount of saliva. His hair was bleached by sun and other aids. His figure was incredibly lithe for a person of his age and occupation, wonderfully muscular and solid. I was impressed with his 'principal boy' legs, tightly encased in black jeans with high boots. Not a pound of extra flesh anywhere.

I don't know much about his background, except it is said that at a very early age his father sent him off in the care of a rider to hounds who immediately attempted to seduce him.

Of his many qualities I admired most his independence. I envied his being able to live in exactly the way he wished, and I was impressed by his aloofness from the opinions of others. We went out 'on the town', but I am not good at pubs, drinking clubs and late hours and would fade away just when Francis was about to enjoy himself.

Recently he came to stay, and although I believe he does not care for the countryside, he could not have been a more sympathetic, appreciative and delightful guest.

Francis began the painting of me two years ago. He had just returned from a winter in Tangier where he had been too harassed and ill to paint. But he was then recovered and full of the joy of London life. He was bursting with health and vitality, in his extraordinarily messy, modest drawing-room studio in a most unlikely block of scarlet brick flats in Battersea.

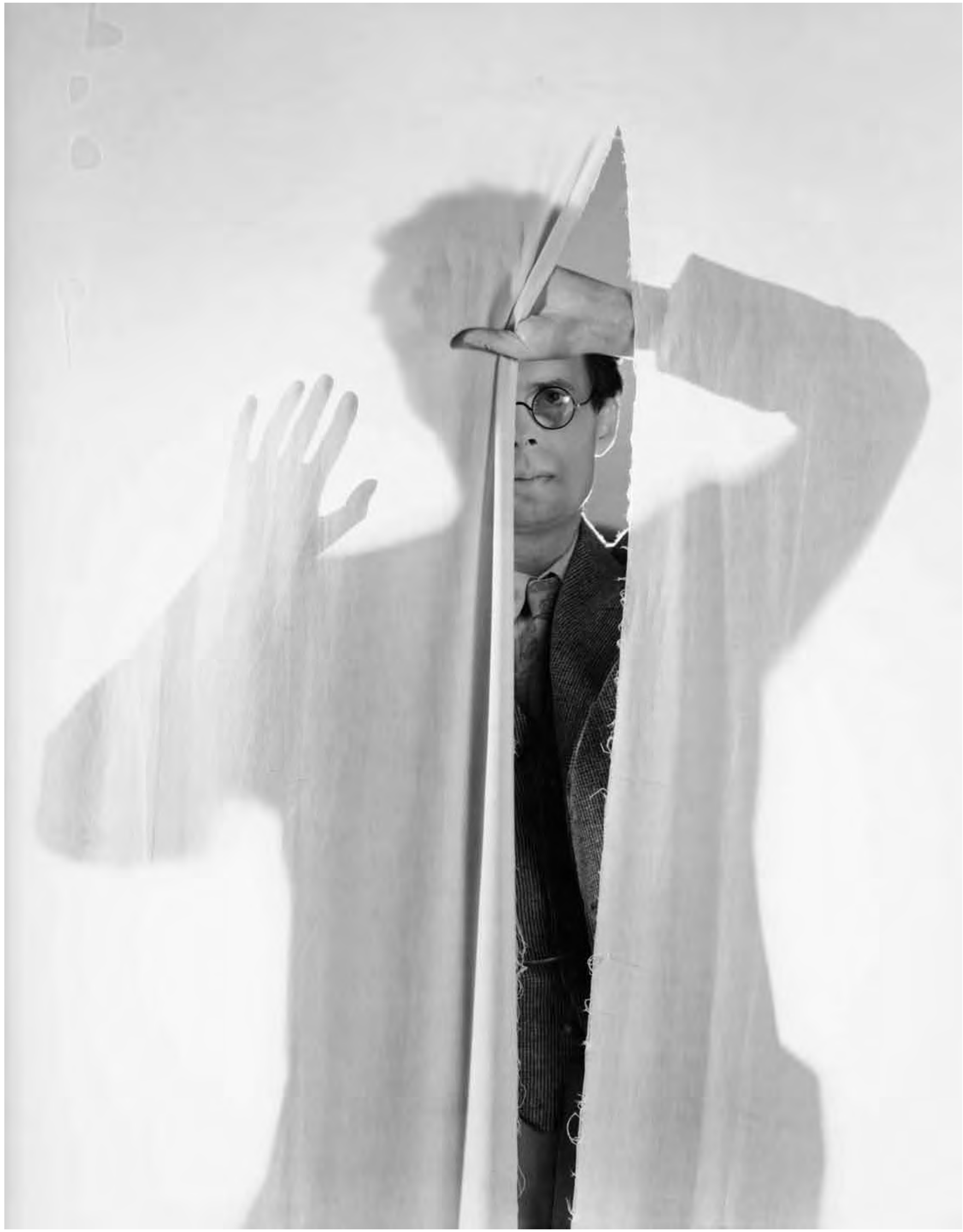
Francis started to work with great zest, excitedly running backwards and forwards to the canvas with gazelle-springing leaps – much toe bouncing. He said how enthusiastic he was at the prospect of the portrait which he said would show me with my face in tones of pink and white. He did not seem interested in my keeping still, and so I enjoyed looking around me at the incredible mess of his studio – a converted bedroom no doubt: so unlike the beautiful, rather conventional 'artist's abode' that he had worked in in South Kensington when I first knew him! Here the floor was littered in a Dostoevsky shambles of discarded paints, rags, newspapers and every sort of rubbish, while the walls and window curtains were covered with streaks of black and emerald green paint. *February 1960*

FRANCIS BACON (1909–92)

Francis Bacon was perhaps the leading modern artist in London in his day, frequently hailed as the greatest artist of his generation and internationally recognised as one of the outstanding artists of the post-war era. Cecil spotted him early in his career. Many years later he sat for his portrait (in 1957 and 1960) but was horrified by the result. Bacon later destroyed the portrait and although Cecil hadn't liked the painting, he wrote, 'I am sorry that the canvas is destroyed and that there is no visible result from all those delightful, interesting and rare mornings.'

Bacon was born in Dublin in 1909 and began painting when he was twenty, though he later destroyed most of his early work. He was banned from his family home at the age of sixteen, moved to London and Berlin and led an excessively promiscuous existence. Even in later life when extremely rich, he continued to favour the Colony Club, drinking heavily.

He rose to fame with his 1944 painting, *Study for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*. He went on to be exhibited at the Hanover Gallery, and, as his fame grew, to have numerous retrospectives. In 2013 his painting, *Three Studies of Lucian Freud,* sold in New York for a record $142.4 million.



ALDOUS HUXLEY

Who is more prolific, more entertaining and thought-provoking than Mr Huxley? From the brittle cynicism of *Point Counterpoint* or *Crome Yellow* that so captured the Twenties, on through the years of his ever-maturing intellect and dedicated search for spiritual truth, he has been an inspiration, a proselytizer and a delight. Novels, biographies, plays, poems, stories, *belles lettres*, brilliant anthologies with interpolated commentaries, even an account of how it feels like to be under the influence of that strange drug, mescaline – all of these writings have bombarded us and enriched our contemporary search for meaning. His absorbing interest in the wisdom of the East has given us a better understanding of Buddhism, Hinduism and related theologies; he familiarises us with the writings of little-known Christian mystics; he weaves much of modern thought and science into a plausible approach that yet eschews dogmatism and rejects easy materialistic scoffings of metaphysical mysteries.

Yet, like many deeply intelligent people, Mr Huxley is simplicity itself when you meet him. He immediately puts you at your ease; he has a quality about him that makes the conversation flow. His appearance today is as lean and asthenic-looking as it was when this photograph was taken twenty years ago. He still maintains the informal grace, the languid elegance of the undergraduate; and though his mop of hair has become grey, time seems to have added a few flattering touches to his appearance – the crane-like beak and chiselled lips so familiar to us in profile portraits now appear to be even more finely carved.

Youthful and almost adolescent in his enthusiasm, he never alarms you with his knowledge, yet brings it out in the most offhand and entertaining way. If, oddly enough, he has chosen California for his home, the products of his pen are still respectfully and enthusiastically received on both sides of the Atlantic. In short, he is an acknowledged dean of contemporary literature, and we his admiring pupils. *1957*

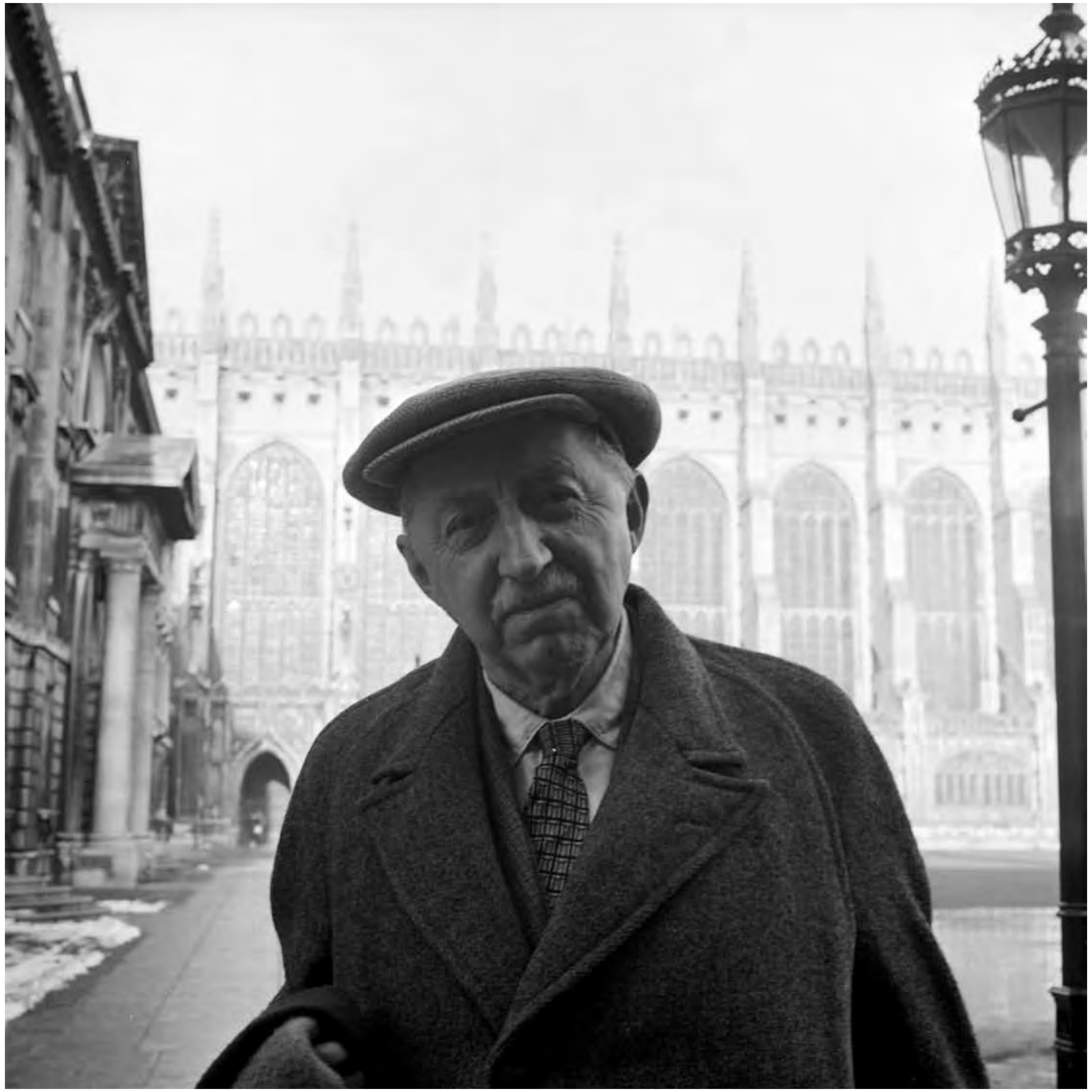
ALDOUS HUXLEY (1894–1963)

Cecil photographed Aldous Huxley shortly after he wrote *Brave New World* (1932), but before he emigrated to the United States in 1937. Cecil found him 'lanky, angular, myopic'.

Aldous Huxley was an English writer and one of the foremost intellectuals of his age. He came from a distinguished family. He was born in Surrey where his father was a schoolmaster and writer. After Eton he read English Literature at Balliol College, Oxford, spending much time at Garsington Manor, home of Lady Ottoline Morrell, whom he parodied in *Crome Yellow*. He became involved with the Bloomsbury Group. The novel that made him famous was *Brave New World*, which explored the dehumanising effects of scientific progress.

He moved to Los Angeles in 1937 with his first wife, Maria, and his son, Matthew. He settled mainly in Southern California, but also spent time in Taos, New Mexico. He became involved in mysticism, a friend of Krishnamurti and a Vedantist in the circle of Swami Prabhavananda. He experimented with psychedelic drugs and described this in *The Doors of Perception*. Through Anita Loos he did some remunerative work for MGM as a screenwriter on films such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*. After the death of Maria, he married Laura Archera in 1956. His own death in November 1963 was overshadowed by the assassination of President Kennedy.

Aldous Huxley, 1936



E.M. Forster, 1962

E.M. Forster

It was a tree-green Sunday morning in August. Lulled by the calm of Cambridge, I walked nostalgically through the gateway of King's College. My mission, like that of Kafka's surveyor, was difficult of realisation. I was determined to find the shy and elusive Mr E.M. Forster in his lair. He lives at the college, as he later explained, because of the 'great comfort'.

I had peppered him with notes announcing my arrival, since an impromptu visit on the previous Sunday had proved unsuccessful: his 'oak was sported', a college phrase meaning that the door was shut. When a resident of the college is away or busy working, he closes the outer of double doors in token of absence or concentration.

On this particular occasion, however, Mr Forster was awaiting me. He received me informally in his bedroom slippers, and I found myself in a room filled with bookcases of many sizes and shapes. Victorian prints in all manner of frames hung on the walls, while curtains as individual as the clothing of a Renaissance crowd bordered each Gothic window – differently coloured materials ranging from dark green cloth to faded, Rosetti-like tapestry-cretonne; a flexible lamp, like a modernistic spider, together with standard book-rests, bespoke the comfort of easy reading. My host seemed, to my perennially Aesop's eye, like a mixture of an owl and a kitten. In profile, however, he took on a cosy, rodent-like look. I watched his unique gestures – how he cocked his head instead of turning it – and marvelled at the sensitive, almost feminine wrists.

Presently, Mr Forster brought out some African sherry, which we drank while talking of Cambridge and Kinsey. He was quite upset when I mentioned that Dr Kinsey had died the day before (though it was already eleven in the morning, Mr Forster had not yet read the Sunday papers).

During our random conversation, I saw that the novelist's sense of humour was always ready to respond to the comedy of human foibles. Most astonishing was his utter lack of a sense of his own importance, and his willingness to indulge in small talk. A curious and alive man, he is not at all in a cul-de-sac or backwater, though his major work, as everybody knows, was written many years ago. Outside the fashions and dictates of the restless world, E.M. Forster asserts the calm and charm of his personal vision, his 'room with a view' in a darkly tormented age. *1957*

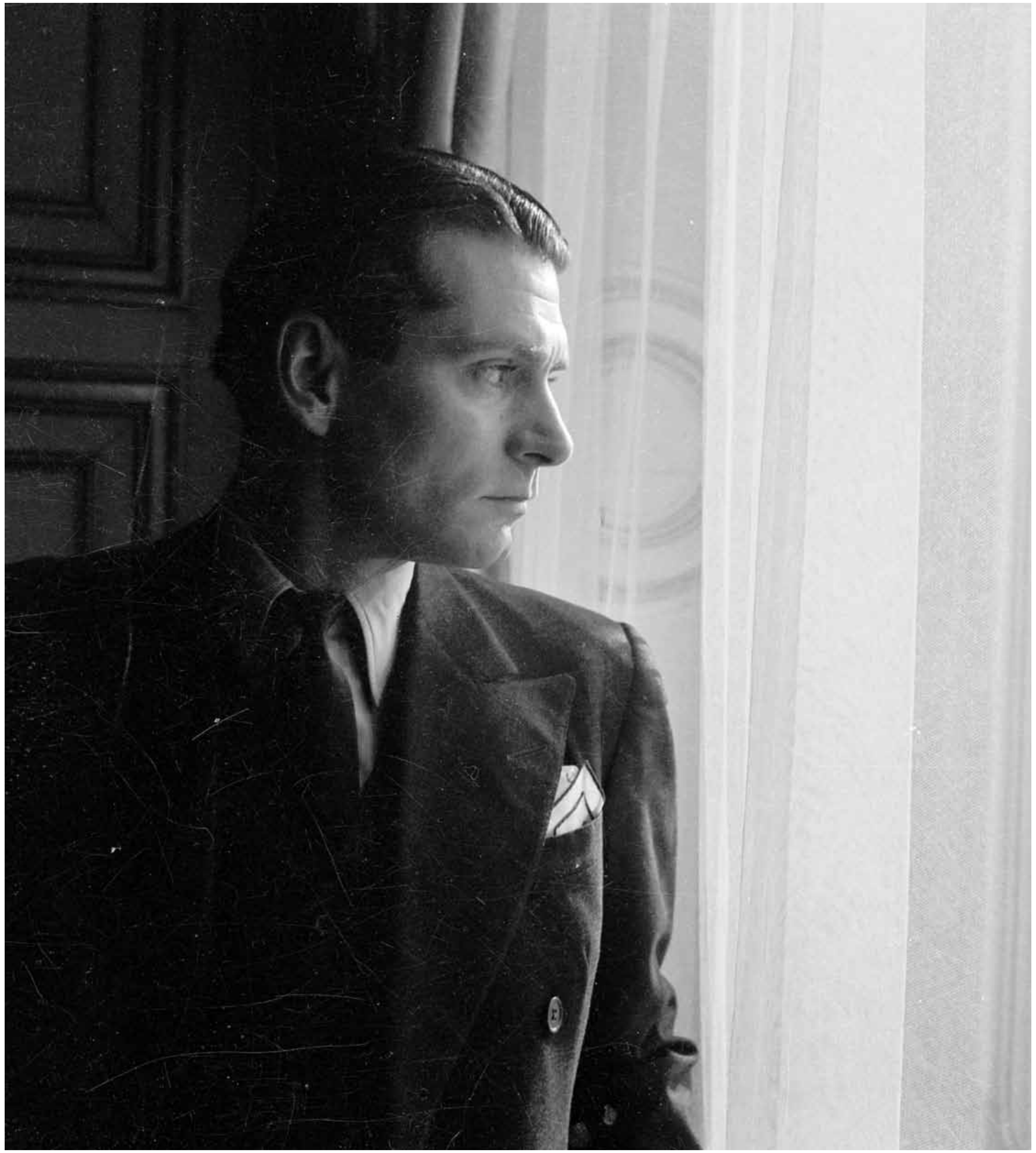
E.M. FORSTER (1879–1970)

Cecil photographed E.M. Forster with his bedpan in view in his rooms at Cambridge. They only met occasionally.

Forster was a novelist, essayist and biographer, respected for his ironic approach and his interest in questions of class differences. His five novels were *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *The Longest Journey*, *A Room with a View*, *Howard's End* and *A Passage to India*. His controversial homosexual novel, *Maurice*, which he wrote in 1913 and 1914, was published posthumously in 1971, under the supervision of Christopher Isherwood.

Forster's great love was a policeman named Bob Buckingham, whom he first met in 1930, but who later married a nurse. After some turmoil, Forster maintained a close relationship with both of them.

All his life he was involved with King's College, Cambridge, where he had been an undergraduate. After being elected an honorary Fellow of King's in 1946, he spent the rest of his life at the College, leading a relatively quiet existence, though he actually died staying with the Buckinghams in Coventry in 1970. He was ninety-one.



Laurence Olivier, 1947

Laurence Olivier

Undoubtedly an actor in the grand style, Sir Laurence Olivier has the added distinction of being the most acclaimed British theatrical personage in our time. His roles in both American and British films have won him a wider audience than the theatre alone could possibly have done, though the theatre is his first love and he has never deserted it.

The voice is nothing short of a magnificent sounding box, capable of great range in emotional expressiveness and meticulous in its sibilant precision. With a brilliant and intuitive knowledge of theatrical effect, Olivier can create strokes of studied *bravura*. His tenure with the Old Vic embraced many roles, from Oedipus to Harry Hotspur (surely the stutter was an inspired stroke of genius).

Olivier's rubbery mask of a face is admirably suited to the plastic changes afforded by makeup, and he can be a Justice Swallow or an Archie Rice with equal artlessness. With the passing years, he has shed most of his mannerisms, widened the register of his voice and acquired full solidity and power. Faced with such a polished, mature actor, we are apt to forget that the seeming ease of effect is the result of years of study and learning. Sir Laurence has never ceased being a student, devoting endless hours even to the apparently simple problem of walking around a chair on stage.
1957

LORD OLIVIER (1907–89)
Laurence Olivier is generally dubbed the greatest stage actor of his generation. He also made memorable films such as the wartime *Henry V* (not only as producer, director but also as star) and *Richard III*, in which he plays the King as a villainous hunchback. He played numerous Shakespearian parts on stage, and in later life had success in plays such as *The Entertainer*.

Olivier was married three times, first to Jill Esmond, whom he left with an infant son for Vivien Leigh, the pair becoming a golden couple of the theatre. He preferred to act with her on stage as he then dominated, while she was a more natural film star as witnessed in films such as *Lady Hamilton*, after which Olivier, nothing if not competitive, made sure he did not act with her on film again. His marriage to Vivien proved tempestuous and he finally left her and married a younger actress from the contemporary theatre, Joan Plowright, and had a further son and two daughters.

In later life he ran the National Theatre. The stage was Olivier's world. A friend once said to him: 'Larry, why don't you put on a false nose and be yourself.' Off stage he was less impressive. Cecil fell out with him over the alteration of some costumes in *A School for Scandal*, something Cecil would never forgive. He was created a Life Peer by Harold Wilson in 1970 and had the Order of Merit.

Julie Andrews, 1959

Julie Andrews

Julie Andrews, an almost unknown girl who had the talent and luck to land the whopper of the part of Eliza, was almost unbelievably naïve and simple. She was angelically patient at the many fittings of her clothes and never expressed an opinion. One day, due to exhaustion at rehearsals, she keeled over in a dead faint while fitting her resplendent ball gown. A Dixie cup of cold water was enough to revive her and she reproached herself that her mother, back home in Walton-on-Thames, would be ashamed of her. 'Oh, Mummie, what a silly girl I am,' she kept repeating.

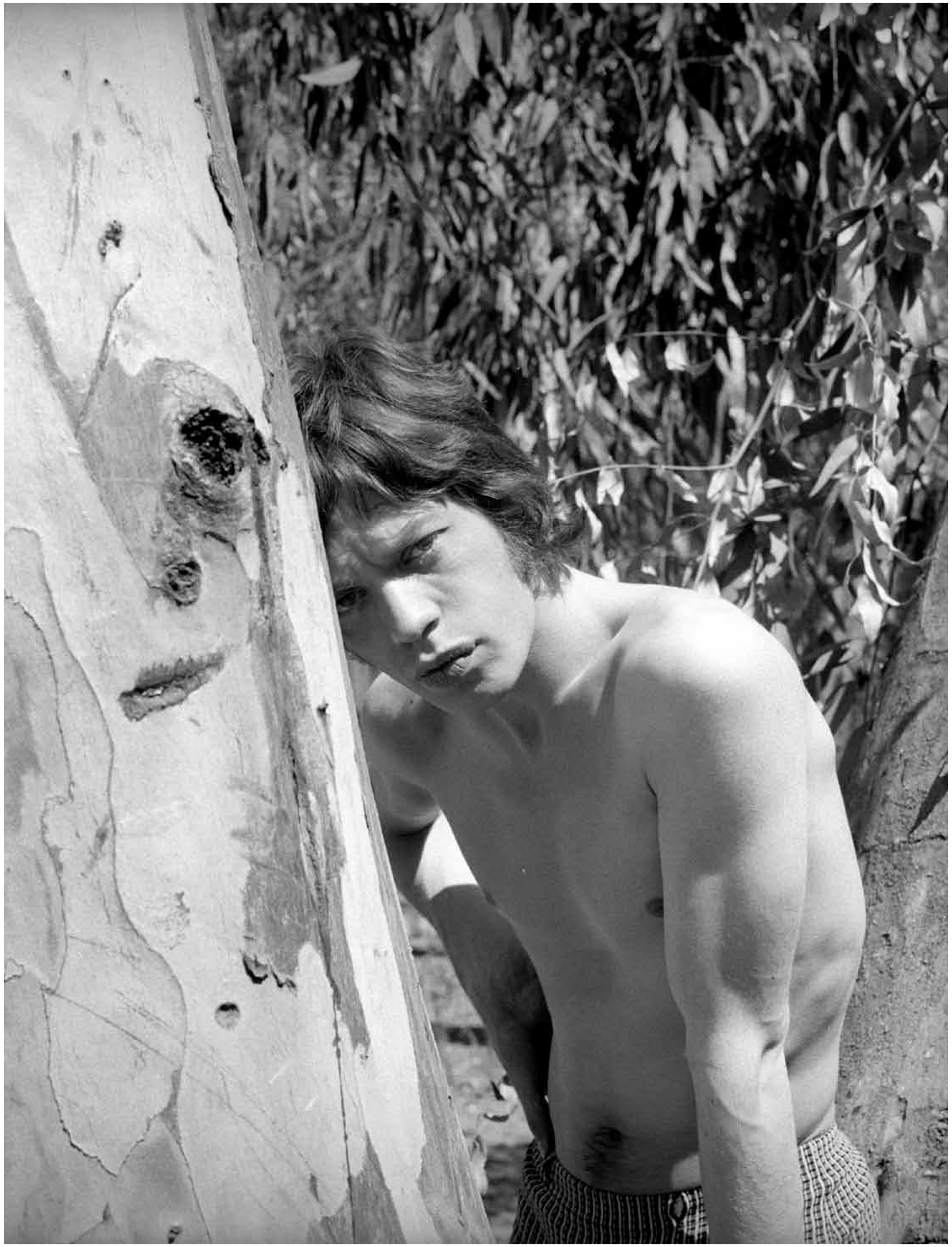
One evening when we had seen enough of Julie's performance to know that she was absolutely perfect for the role, I rather impertinently said that she must try always to remember this most wonderful moment in her career, when she was just about to burst on the world as a star. It was typical of Julie's modesty and professionalism to say in a somewhat Eliza-like phrase: 'The only thing that matters is if I do it right.' She did!

At twenty, this wistful new star appropriates the attention of all telescopes. Pretty, appealing and even heart-breaking in a milk-and-roses way, she is nevertheless calf-like in her stubborn refusal to acquire sophistication off-stage. Miss Andrews has, nevertheless, enough of the rugged cockney theatricality to give her complete and instinctive authority behind the footlights. She can ignore the rules of posture, and thrust back her receding chin; but once she is in the limelight, we are captivated by the plaintive cooing that issues forth from sweetly slanted lips. Her diction and phrasing are extremely personal, and she knows how to belt a ballad across with a vaudevillian authority. *The Boy Friend* put her forward, and *My Fair Lady,* in which we watch the metamorphosis from gamine to lady of poise, has clinched the promise of a theatrical personality who has all the talent and drive, but hardly the innate grace and elegance, to make her into a Gertrude Lawrence of her day. *March 1956*

DAME JULIE ANDREWS (b. 1935)

Julie Andrews was the star of *My Fair Lady* on stage in both New York and London. Cecil first met her when he was overseeing her costume fittings for the New York version of the play. Andrews was quite intimidated by him, especially after a photographic session where he had appeared to encourage her, only to tell her: 'Of course, you are the most hopelessly unphotogenic person I have ever met.' Matters did not improve when after a difficult first night in New Haven, when she had sustained the whole performance, he burst into her dressing room, picked up a yellow hat that she had worn the wrong way round, and stuck it on her head, declaring: 'Not that way, you silly bitch – this way!' at which point she nearly burst into tears.

Andrews hoped to have been picked to star in the film of *My Fair Lady* – and she deserved to be – but the part went to Audrey Hepburn instead. However, she landed the role of Maria in *The Sound of Music* and the star part in *Mary Poppins*.



MICK JAGGER

On the Tuesday evening I came down to dinner very late, and to my surprise, sitting in the hall, discovered Mick Jagger and a sleepy looking band of gypsies. 'Where is my friend the art dealer?' I asked. Robert Fraser, wearing a huge black felt hat and a bright emerald brocade coat, was coughing by the swimming pool. He had swallowed something the wrong way. He recovered and invited me to join the others for a drink and then by degrees, for an evening out.

It was a strange group, three 'Stones', Brian Jones and his girlfriend, Beatnik dressed Anita Pallenberg, dirty white face, dirty blackened eyes, dirty canary yellow wisps of hair, barbaric jewellery. The drummer, Keith, an eighteenth-century suit, black long velvet coat and the tightest pants, and a group of hangers on. I was intent not to give the impression that I was only interested in Mick, but it happened that we sat next to one another, as he drank a vodka collins, and smoked with pointed fingers held high. His skin is chicken breast white, and of a fine quality. He has enormous inborn elegance. He talked of the native music, how the American had played him records of a Turk from near here, which music included the use of pipes that were the same as those that were heard in Hungary and were also the same that were used in Scotland. He liked Indian music. He would like to go to Kashmir, Afghanistan, would like to get away. England had become a police state, with police and journalists prying into your lives. Recently twenty policemen had invaded the house of the drummer in the country to search it for dope (no charges have been made). The papers had written completely false accounts. He was going to sue *The News of the World*. He'd done nothing to deprave the youth of the country. He liked to get away from the autograph hunters. Here people weren't curious or badly mannered. I noticed he used quite old words, he liked people that were permissive. By degrees the shy aloofness of the hopped-up gang broke down.

We got into two cars (the Bentley I was in had driven from Brian Jones's house in Swiss Cottage to here, and the driver was a bit tired and soon got very drunk. The car was filled with Pop art cushions, scarlet fur rugs, sex magazines).

We went to a Moroccan restaurant, tiles, glasses, banquettes, women dancers. Mick preferred to be away from the other tourists. He is very gentle, and with perfect manners. He indicated that I should follow his example and eat the chicken in my fingers. It was so tender and good. He has much appreciation and his small Albino fringed eyes notice everything. 'How different and more real this place is to Tangier, the women more rustic, heavy, lumpy, but their music very Spanish and their dancing too'. He has an analytical slant and compares what he is now seeing with earlier impressions and with other countries.

I was fascinated with the thin concave lines of his body, legs, arms. Mouth almost too large, but he is beautiful and ugly, feminine and masculine, a 'sport', a rare phenomenon. I was not disappointed, and as the evening wore on, found him easier to talk with. He was sorry we'd not been able to converse when we met at that fancy dress party (Christie's). How could he remember? He asked: 'Have you ever taken LSD?' – 'Oh, I should'. It would mean so much to me. I'd never forget the colours. For a painter it was a great experience. Instead of one's brain working on four cylinders, it would be four thousand. You saw everything glow. The colours of his red velvet trousers, the black shiny satin, the maroon scarf. You saw yourself beautiful and ugly, and saw other

Mick Jagger, Marrakech, 1967

people as if for the first time. 'Oh, you should take it in the country, surrounded by all the green, all those flowers. You'd have no bad effects. It's only people who hate themselves who suffer'.

We walked through the decorated midnight souks. He admired the Giacometti-like drawings, loved the old town, was sad at the sleeping bundles of humanity. Brian Jones said he had not seen such poverty since Singapore. Mick was full of appreciation for the good things we saw, the archways, the mysterious alleyways.

The sky spangled with stars. Again we bundled in the cars. Again the gramophone records turned on at volume. By now the Moroccan chauffeur in front was quite drunk and driving on the wrong side of the road. I was quite alarmed as to whether we would get home safely. We all trooped up to our bedrooms on this floor. Gramophone records turned on, but by now it was three o'clock and my bed time. They seem to have no magnetic call from their beds. They are happy to hang about. 'Where do we go now? To a night club?' – 'It's closed' – 'Well let's go somewhere and have a drink'. Never a yawn and the group had been up since five o'clock this morning, for they motored throughout the day through the desert from Tangier with the record players blaring. It is a very different way of living to mine. It did me good to be jerked out of myself. Mick listened to pop records for a couple of hours and was then so tired that he went to sleep without taking off his clothes. Only at eight when he woke, did he undress and get into bed and sleep for another couple of hours.

At eleven o'clock he appeared at the swimming pool. I could not believe this was the same person walking towards us, and yet I knew it was an aspect of him. The sun, very strong, was reflected from the white ground, and made his face a white podgy, shapeless mess, eyes very small, nose very pink and spreading, hair sandy dark. He wore Chanel *Bois de Rose*. His figure, his hands and arms were incredibly feminine. He looked like a self-conscious suburban young lady.

A lot of good humour. I took Mick through the trees to an open space to photograph him in the midday sun, thus giving his face the shadows it needs. He was a Tarzan of Piero di Cosimo. Lips of a fantastic roundness, body white and almost hairless. He is sexy, yet completely sexless. He could nearly be a eunuch. As a model he is a natural.

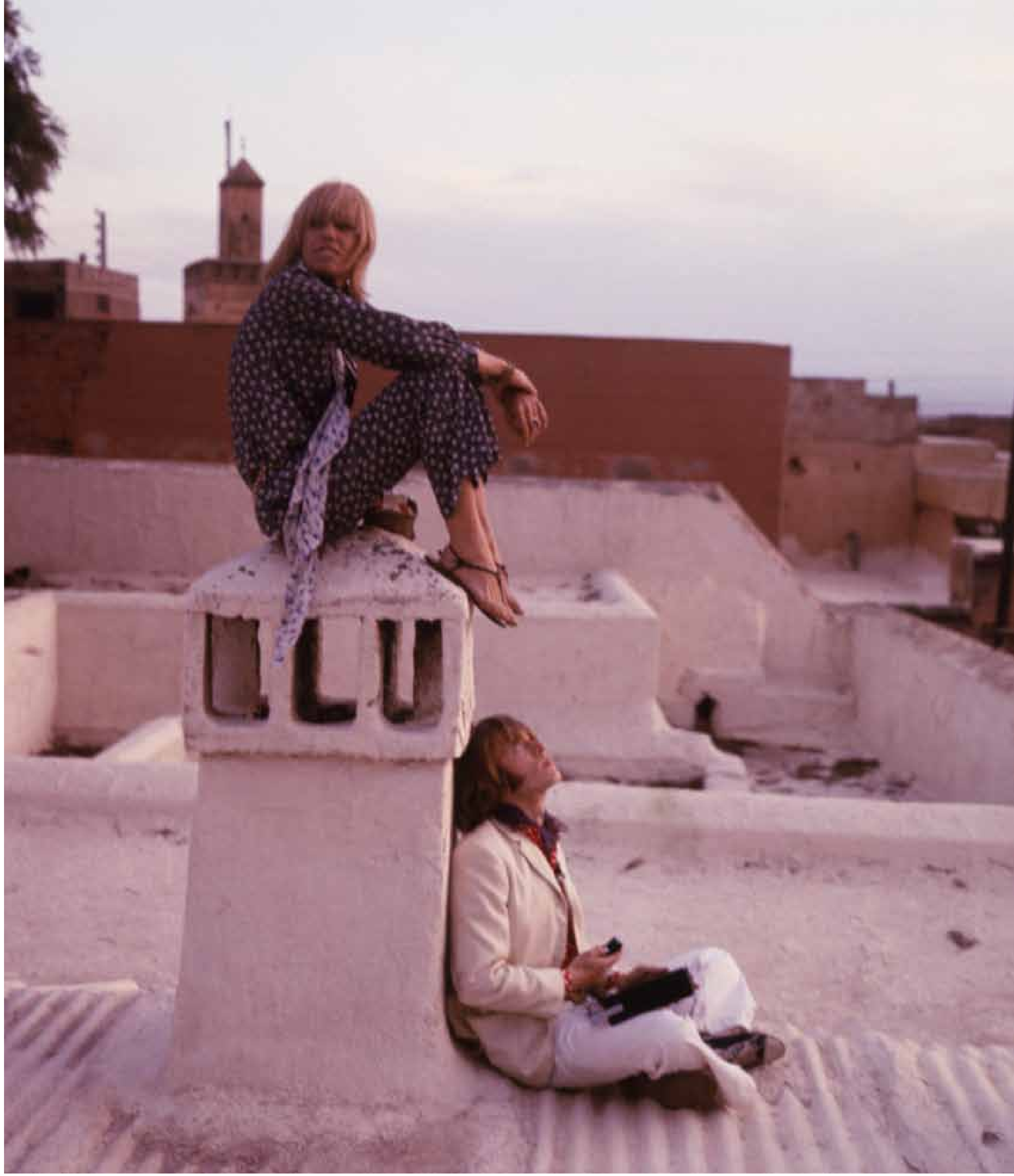
There are moments when little is said but a few grunts, tough banalities, but much is sensed. I feel he is his real self. I watched him walk through the series of glass front doors of the hotel, and look back for the driver, his hand on one side, the picture of grace, and something very touching, tender and appealing about him. *March 1967*

SIR MICK JAGGER (b. 1943)

Cecil relished the Rolling Stones for their originality and for their evident enjoyment of life, echoing what some of his generation had done in the 1920s. Cecil was so excited by Mick Jagger that he painted him from a photograph. He longed to meet him but when he did so, dismissed him for having no conversation, thought his 'marvellous face' was only for photography, and was convinced (wrongly, for once) that he would be a has-been by the age of twenty-five.

Cecil had his best chance to observe the Stones when three of them materialised at the Mamounia Hotel in Marrakech where he was staying in March 1967. He was not especially interested in Keith Richards or Brian Jones – to the point that he mistook Richards for the drummer and named the latter Brian Forbes in his diary. But Mick Jagger engaged his closest attention.

Jagger was a kind of over-energised monkey with his pneumatic hips and thick, sensual lips. The Rolling Stones formed in 1962, with Jagger on vocals and harmonica, Richards on guitar and back-up vocals, and Jones on guitar and harmonica. Jones had been the most prominent of the group, but presently Jagger and Richards took over. Jones succumbed to alcohol and drugs, and shortly after leaving the Stones in 1969, he was found unconscious in his swimming pool in Sussex, and died shortly after being rescued.



Brian Jones and Anita Pallenberg, Marrakech, 1967