

ARTnews

Reviews: [New York](#)

Ken Heyman

Sundaram Tagore

Ken Heyman began his career as a photographer, accompanying Margaret Mead to Bali in 1957 and, with her, producing two groundbreaking anthropological studies. He went on to publish more than 40 books, and shot countless series for *Life* magazine. Titled "Humanity," this exhibition of more than 100 of his famous images recalled a time when people believed the camera could capture the essence of the human condition.

Although Heyman is not a pioneer—Cartier-Bresson and others had already covered the front lines of world events decades earlier—he has a rare ability to catch the human gesture at the core of political and social occasions. For example, his numerous scenes of children—from a newborn spilling from his mother's womb in *Madison Avenue, Midwife Birthing Clinic* (1963) to a baby tumbling

out of its carriage in *Red Square, Oops* (1964)—seem to unify individuals from diverse backgrounds simply by demonstrating the innocence of babies.

But Heyman may be at his best when he is photographing far less anonymous figures, celebrities, and artists whose vulnerabilities and sensitivities are evident in his candid portraits. *France, Pablo Picasso* (1956) is remarkable as one of Heyman's earliest efforts, catching the artist as a Pan-like figure at a bullfight one afternoon, while *Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller* (1956) shows the newlyweds brimming with warmth and spontaneity. Especially surprising is *Italy, Leonard Bernstein* (1967), which shows the conductor in a come-hither pose.

These heartfelt and moving pictures remind viewers of a time when photographs, not television and Web sites, controlled our impressions of the world and its leaders. Heyman's work, in its thoughtfulness and tastefulness, is strikingly timeless rather than out of date.

—Barbara Pollack



Ken Heyman, *Madison Avenue, Secret Wishes*, 1962, gelatin silver print, 15½" x 23". Sundaram Tagore.