

Incomparable Photos By Incomparable Rose Hartman

By William Ferrall



Photographer **Rose Hartman** has been called incomparable, demanding, and sometimes prickly by friends and critics alike. But nearly everyone admires the exceptional images she has captured throughout her four decades-long career of photographing the habitués of nightclubs and runways.

More than a dozen of her iconic images— her photo of Bianca Jagger on a white horse at Studio 54 is among Hartman's best known photos— are on display at the Hostetler Gallery on Centre Street.

Studio 54 was among Hartman's regular haunts during that club's brief, so-called "one thousand days" of creating the most-talked about night life of the late 1970s. There she snapped the likes of Bianca Jagger, Mick Jagger, Truman Capote, Andy Warhol, Cher, Halston, Lou Reed, Barry Diller, Jerry Hall, Diane von Furstenberg, and many others among the glitterati of the time. If they were there and noteworthy, Hartman caught them in her lens.

Hartman was also one of the early photographers to steal glimpses of the behind-the-scenes excitement at fashion shows, capturing the creative personalities who transformed New York. Her images of the flora and fauna of the "chiffon jungle" were the subject of her first book, *Birds of Paradise: An Intimate View of the New York Fashion World*.

The photographs in **Magical Glances by Rose Hartman** play with ideas of pleasure and infamy in a historical context. Media site Duggal.com writes: "A certain joie de vivre, or joy for living, is immediately evident in the work, most of which was shot amidst the decadent landscape of New York City's nightlife and art world culture of the late 1970s and 1980s... It is clear that she was there, front and center, body and soul. While the images on view feature the people who populated these denizens of culture, the portraits made by Hartman vibrate with Hartman's own artistic styling, linking her to the avant garde, personal style, and freewheeling ethos of the period."

In “The Incomparable Rose Hartman,” the well-executed and captivating 2017 documentary about her life and work, Hartman lives up to her reputation as demanding and sometimes peevish, both in her own time on camera and in observations from those who know her well.

When I interviewed Hartman recently at the Hostetler Gallery, for an upcoming episode of **Bench Talks: Art Speaks** on NCTV18, Hartman proved to be contemplative and gracious—the sanguine artist and raconteur one surmises from her work. She catches singular portraits of her subjects, unlike those from other photographers who either pose their models or capture paparazzi scenes of surprise or embarrassment. Hartman’s work is neither. She catches the casual, sideways glances and intimate moments between lovers and friends. They know Hartman is there and capturing that scene, but they never seem to mind. As if she’s a friend who caught them in an instant, with their public guard down, revealing something most photographers rarely capture on film.



Magical Glances by Rose Hartman continues at [Hostetler Gallery](http://HostetlerGallery.com) at 22 Centre Street. For more information visit HostetlerGallery.com or call 740-591-8180.
