

HAMILTONS

SUMMER – SEVENTIES – SAINT-TROPEZ

4 September – 4 October 2023

Private View: 12 Sept, 6-8pm



Lucilla, La Voile Rouge, 1977© Philippe Garner

Hamiltons Gallery is delighted to announce the exhibition **Summer – Seventies – Saint-Tropez**, the first solo show of photographs by **Philippe Garner**, a figure already well known and respected as a long-standing champion of photography through a fifty-plus years career as an auction specialist and historian.

The images – all shot on Kodachrome film, notable for the rich and vibrant saturation of its colours – take us back half a century to discover now-long-erased traces of an old Provence in and around Aix-en-Provence, where Garner was born. A discrete suite of images made on the now-legendary La Voile Rouge beach of Saint-Tropez capture the spirit of its raffish, chic-bohemian heyday.

Garner explains: *'I was twenty-three when I took the first of these pictures. Thinking back to those years, I recall how driven I already was to make images that captured the essence of all that engaged me.'*

I had spent much time as a child and teenager in the South of France, based in Aix-en-Provence, where my grandmother lived. That region – including Marseille and the coastal resorts to the east of Marseille and their hinterland – became an important part of my life.

In the Seventies, camera in hand, I was able to respond to my fascination with such subjects as the artisanal typography of commercial signage, the emblematic weathered traces of a Provence that was slipping away, the qualities of the summer light, the sensuality of textures – be they of flaking paint, of food, or of tanned skin. It was fundamental to my approach then – and it remains the case for me today – that the technical aspect of my making photographs should be of the utmost simplicity. My challenge has always been to identify and frame the precise subject that could perfectly reflect my curiosity and my sensibility.



Mattress Boy, La Voile Rouge, 1974
© Philippe Garner

Garner has enjoyed a long career as an auction specialist in the fields of photographs and 20th century decorative arts and design. He joined Sotheby's in 1970 after graduating in French and Latin from Bedford College, London. He was instrumental in establishing the modern auction market for photographs. He joined Christie's in 2004, retiring from his full-time commitments as a deputy chairman in 2016 to become a consultant. He continues to play a valued role in bringing major works and collections to auction.



Pressing Pointe Rouge, 1975 © Philippe Garner

Since his childhood, Garner has been fascinated by many aspects of the visual and performing arts. As a consequence, his specific knowledge as a specialist in the history of photography is supported by a wide and rich culture. All this has served to inform and refine his discriminating eye, not only within his professional activity but in the passion that he has invested through the decades in making photographs – a passion that he had, until very recently, kept private.

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