

CLAMP

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Frank Diernhammer

Hollywood Nudes, 1950s - 1970s

November 7 — December 20, 2025

Opening reception:

Friday, November 7, 2025

6 – 8 PM



CLAMP is pleased to announce “Frank Diernhammer | Hollywood Nudes, 1950s – 1970s,” curated by Travis Hutchison.

The exhibition is the first public display of the artist’s extensive archive. Hidden away for nearly fifty years, the collection of vintage photographs, negatives, slides, and 8-mm films was only discovered upon the artist’s death in 2019 at 90 years of age. Consisting primarily of the artist’s private passion, intimate male nudes, the holdings also notably include a very rare original print of a 30-minute 8-mm film of men frolicking at one of the famous pool parties at the Hollywood home of director George Cukor in 1958. CLAMP’s show features original vintage gelatin silver prints, modern gelatin silver enlargements, contact sheets, a video presentation of the Cukor 8-mm film, along with a printed film still.

Born in New York City in 1931 to German parents, Frank Diernhammer was an American citizen. His father was a violinist who auditioned for Arturo Toscanini at the New York Philharmonic. When he was not selected, he moved the family back to Munich the following year.

247 West 29th Street, Ground Floor, New York, NY 10001
Tel 646 230 0020 / clampart.com

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The family survived World War II unscathed, and Frank Diernhammer then enlisted in the US Army working as an interpreter in Germany. In 1948, he left Germany to study photography at the University of California, Los Angeles. He later pursued an acting career and appeared in the 1953 film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* with Marilyn Monroe. Diernhammer is one of the handsome male dancers in the famous sequence from the song “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend.” Throughout the mid-1950s, he appeared on the cast lists of various films in Germany, where he changed his name to Frank Holms. But by 1958, he was back in Hollywood when he filmed the handsome men at one of the infamous pool parties at the home of director George Cukor.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Diernhammer worked for *Women’s Wear Daily* on assignment shooting Hollywood events and celebrity portraits for profiles and interviews. Some of the subjects included Steve McQueen, Paul Newman, Truman Capote, George Cukor, Barbra Streisand, Rita Hayworth, Marlon Brando, Raquel Welch, Clint Eastwood, Robert Mitchum, Allen Ginsberg, David Hockney, Christopher Isherwood, Joan Crawford, Jane Russell, Faye Dunaway, Henry Fonda, Natalie Wood, Ronald Reagan, James Baldwin, Shirley MacLaine, Fred Astaire, Katharine Hepburn, and many more.



All the while, Diernhammer continued shooting photographs of the handsome men he met along the way, including surfers, models, hustlers, and porn stars. Photographing in his home, the images were meant entirely for his own enjoyment. Though a handful did appear in print, they are either unattributed or misattributed to famous photographers of the day, including Bob Mizer. Nonetheless, the archive represents the achievement of a previously unknown, notably prolific, and particularly gifted beefcake photographer working from the pre-Stonewall era up to gay liberation during the sexual revolution of the 1970s.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see clampart.com.

Image 1: © Frank Diernhammer (1928-2019); “Dan,” 1974; Vintage gelatin silver print; 10 x 8 inches; Courtesy of CLAMP, New York.

Image 2: Portrait of Frank Diernhammer, c. 1950s.