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UPFRONT

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THE WAY WE WERE

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THE WAY WE WERE

MICHAEL MANGOLD

WHILE TOM JONES wriggled his way into his flare-bottom pants the young woman who designed them, Sylvia Gosse, worked her way down his chest doing up the buttons on the shirt she had also made specially for him. Circling them both was *the* photographer of London during the swinging sixties, Lewis Morley.

Even at the age of 67 and a professional photographer in Australia for all the years since he left London in 1971, Morley still regards himself as an 'Accidental Photographer' - the title of a major exhibition of his work at the State Library.

"I have been responsible for taking the first published pictures of each of three internationally acclaimed models, Jean Shrimpton, Twiggy and Maggie Eckhardt, but I cannot take any credit for 'discovering' them. They were literally put in front of my camera by fate and I just pressed the shutter."*

THE PUBLIC MEMORY

Morley's images from the sixties have been

etched into the public's memory by the fame of the people he photographed. Peter O'Toole, Donald Sutherland, Clint Eastwood, David Frost, Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Barry Humphries, Charlotte Rampling, and John Cleese were among those Morley photographed during the embryonic stages of their careers.

Although less well known, Morley's work in Australia in the 70s and 80s, especially in fashion and interior design for style magazines such as *Belle* and *Pol*, is equally rivetting. His apparent detachment from the events and personalities before his lens provides us today with a window on the way things were rather than the way he as a photographer might have manipulated them to be.

A STRANGE AFFAIR

However Morley did intervene when Christine Keeler refused to appear nude in publicity shots for a movie about the political scandal surrounding her affairs with a Minister of the British Government and a Russian diplomat. He posed Keeler 'modestly' straddling a chair and in the process created a photographic icon.

Morley's exhaustive collection of images from the sixties remained stored in tea chests for twenty years and more after he emigrated to Australia. "It wasn't until I was preparing for the National Portrait Gallery (London) exhibition (1989) that I really started to get myself together to excavate the mountain of negatives lying dead the last two decades."*

COMING OUT ON TOP DOWN UNDER

When Morley arrived in Australia the real impact of what had happened elsewhere in the world was being strongly felt in changing attitudes to fashion and lifestyle. Interior design in particular went through a revolution which once again saw Lewis Morley in the right place at the right time, in this case more by design than accident.

Interior designer Babette Hayes had made the move to Australia several years earlier and was already well connected with local style magazines such as *Belle*. As the heady days of the sixties in London became increasingly sober Morley began to respond to phone calls from Hayes extolling the virtues of the lucky country.

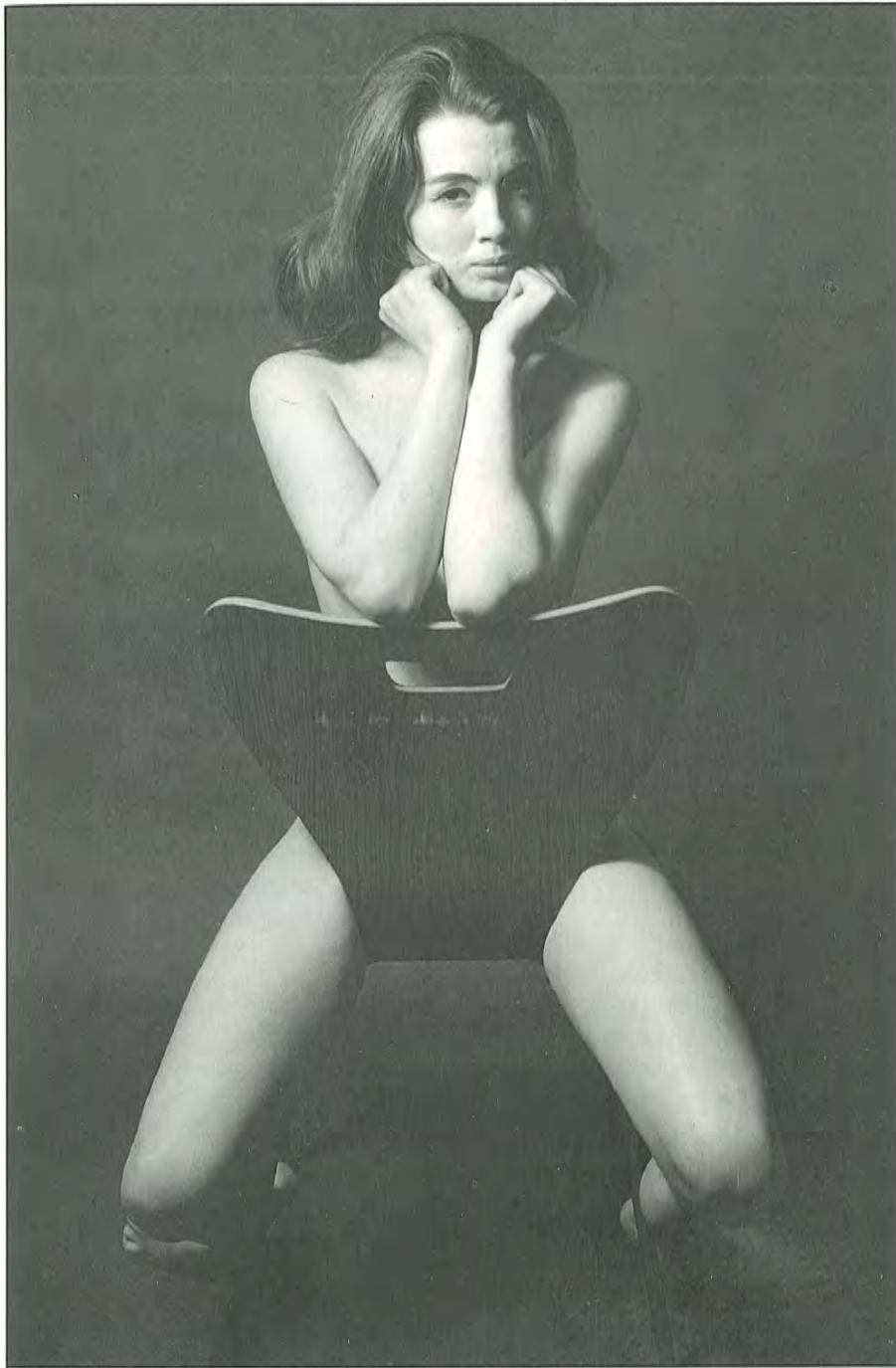
Morley's vast experience across fashion, advertising, travel and public relations helped him gain assignments as did his ability to work quickly and on his own. Ironically the Australian thirst for inspiration from overseas saw Morley take on many arduous assignments overseas to photograph the latest trends in fashion and interior design.

The rise of the youth culture here also led to assignments for newly created magazines such as *Dolly*, *Pol*, and *Bystander*. Other commercial and industrial assignments included those for Portland Cement, Bundaberg Rum and the well known portrait series commissioned in the late 1970s by CSR and



After emigrating to Australia in 1971, Lewis Morley took on many overseas assignments for new style magazines such as *Pol* and *Belle*.

Lewis Morley photographed Twiggy and her manager Justin de Villeneuve at the very start of her career. Twiggy was a hairdresser's assistant at the time.



Lewis Morley's creative use of a chair helped Christine Keeler avoid posing nude without breaking her contract to do so.

exhibited in what was then their Sugar Refinery at Pyrmont.

THE MAGIC OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Add to this the skills of the State Library's curators in interpreting and presenting

Morley's images of faces and places across a period when British Australian connections were still youthfully strong and you have some appreciation of what a wonderful opportunity the Morley exhibition gives us to see the way we were and how we lived.

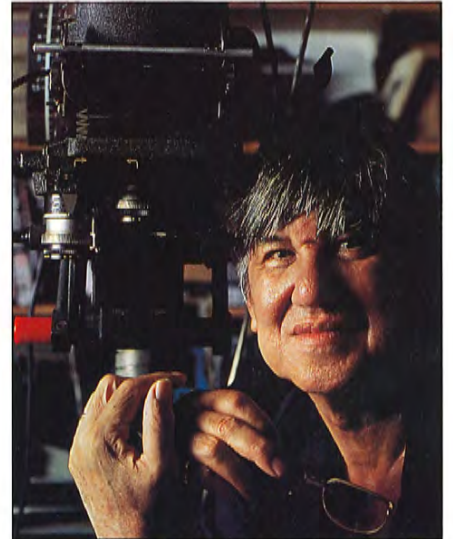
LEWIS MORLEY: ACCIDENTAL PHOTOGRAPHER: 1960 - 1992

In the Galleries

On display from 19 May 1993 to 15 August 1993

Like the fashions of the sixties he photographed, Lewis Morley has been rediscovered with major exhibitions in the National Portrait Gallery London (1989) and now the State Library of NSW.

PHOTO: MARIA THOMPSON



* From Lewis Morley's autobiography *Black And White Lies (Self-Exposures: Some Long, Some Short, Some Indecent)* published in Australia by Collins Angus & Robertson in 1992. The quotations in order of appearance in the article are from pages 103 and 186. *Black And White Lies* is a wonderful appetiser to the State Library's *Accidental Photographer* exhibition. RRP \$16.95. Available at the Library Shop.

C R Kennedy & Company Pty Ltd, Ilford (Australia) Pty Ltd and Colour Development Pty Ltd are generous supporters of this exhibition.