

# David Bailey and *Blow-Up*



# 1966 contexts

---

- Threat of nuclear war (Cuban Missile Crisis)
- The Vietnam War
- LSD
- Retro culture
- Young people's increasing economic marginality

# 1960s music

- Shift in popular music: Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever"; Stones' "19<sup>th</sup> Nervous Breakdown"
- love songs for "the unloved, the despised, the rejected": e.g., "Eleanor Rigby," "Walk on the Wild Side" (BBC documentary)
- Studio work supersedes live shows: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonelyhearts Club Band*
- 1966: the last year that singles would outsell albums

# Countercultural contexts

- youth culture of Swinging London
- photographers create the scene and document it
- art cinema = fashion + sex + rock music + ambiguity + metaphysics
- art cinema is commercially viable
- censorship standards loosening in literature as well as film (*Lady Chatterley*, 1960)

# Countercultural contexts

---

sexual liberation

the Pill (1961)

decriminalization of homosexuality (1967)

“classlessness”

outsiders in the 1950s become insiders in the 1960s

EastEnders

Jews

Gays

drug use: altering perception

# David Bailey

- The model for all of Swinging London
- Lower-class boy dominates a previously posh field
- Flaunts his wealth and expensive cars
- Sleeps with beautiful models
- Had a “look,” a personal style
  - ▣ Jeans
  - ▣ Leather jacket
  - ▣ Long hair

# Cecil Beaton, the previous model



# an iconic Beaton photo





# Twiggy by Beaton



# David Bailey



# David Bailey in his studio, 1960s



# Bailey's style

- Photo shoot as erotic dance
- Bailey calls his tripod a “three-legged phallus”
- Bailey as El Cordobés
- Bailey's e-type Jaguar car
- Discovers Jean Shrimpton, the first supermodel

# Jean Shrimpton, 1965



# Jean Shrimpton



# Jean Shrimpton at home



# Catherine Deneuve, 1968





# Paul McCartney & John Lennon, 1965



# Mick Jagger, 1965



# Marianne Faithful



# Michael Caine

---



# The Kray Twins



# Vuitton ad 2013



Set Design: Daniel Buren © Louis Vuitton 2013

Sold exclusively in Louis Vuitton stores and on [louisvuitton.com](http://louisvuitton.com). \$40 000

LOUIS VUITTON

# *Blow-Up*



# Antonioni in London

- Surveyed London photographers
- Painted streets black
- Dyed the pigeons
- Bold primary colors on hydrants and house fronts
- Paid extras to get high for the pot party (5-day shoot)
- Wanted no blue skies



# Patterns in *Blow-Up*

- distractions
- first impressions are wrong
- fashion as a uniform or costume
- postponed understanding
- narrative ruptures
- unanswered questions
- ambiguous relationships
- visual fragmentation; pieces of things
- mediated communications

# As a treatise on the camera

- four ways to use a camera
  - ▣ fashion photography (capitalist tool)
  - ▣ social critique (“neorealist” documentary)
  - ▣ capturing nature (beauty, love, lyricism)
  - ▣ exploiting people (paparazzo)

relation to truth

All create false images

appeals to voyeurism (the peeping Thomas)

# As a treatise on the camera

- “The greatest danger for the filmmaker consists in the extraordinary means the medium provides in order to lie.”
  - Michelangelo Antonioni

# Legacies of the 1960s

- Records, films, plays, photos, paintings
- Fashions: sexy, practical, fun, affordable
- Resistance to racial and sexual discrimination
- Decriminalization of homosexual behavior
- Banning capital punishment
- Reform of divorce laws
- Relaxation of censorship

# Legacy of Swinging London

- “Forever after, you would have the license to dress, express, and entertain yourself, give yourself over to sensation, investigate a wider world or the things beyond it. . . . If Swinging London was a place where you got a hip haircut and outfit and danced the latest step to a groovy new 45, it was also the place where you opened your mind to a better world” (Levy, 319)