

# A life brought into focus

Socialite Tamara Beckwith used to beg Bob Carlos Clarke to take photos at her parties. Now she's setting up a gallery in his memory. By **Charlotte Cripps**

The original "It" girl Tamara Beckwith, Lindsey Carlos Clarke, the widow of the late celebrity photographer, Bob, and his former agent Ghislain Pascal are a team. They are standing in their new photography gallery in Chelsea, which currently looks like a bomb site, but is due to open later this month in memory of the photographer, who committed suicide in 2006. There will be a Bob Carlos Clarke room downstairs with an ever-changing selection of his work on show and a dining room, with decadent purple carpet, for collectors' "supper clubs".

"I know it's not only about him, but Bob would have been so chuffed that we are opening a gallery," says Beckwith.

Upstairs, the first show, *Most Wanted*, will include works by Carlos Clarke, Nadav Kandar and others who have a strong bond with the late photographer, such as his friends John Swannell, John Stoddart and Barry Lategan. There will also be Japanese portraits by his former assistant Paul Plews.

Beckwith, 38, who is nearly eight months pregnant and who frequently graces the covers of *Hello!*, as well as writing features about her friends for the society magazine, is discussing champagne for the launch party with the caterer. She refers to herself, with a giggle, as social director of the gallery, but adds: "This is not one of my whims. It's not like, 'I'm having a gallery this week.'" Lindsey Carlos Clarke, a former Sun silk model, who was with the photographer for 30 years, is the creative director. They have chosen the photographs together for the first show, which include Carlos Clarke's classic back shot of a girl, *Black is My True Love's Heart*. "We met in the hot summer of 1976. He was dating a friend of mine and turned up one day to show me his photographs, and although it wasn't romantic to start with, the plan was hatched and our lives were inextricably linked forever," says Lindsey. "He was a cross between a teenage

boy and a Victorian school teacher. He liked danger but then also liked taking a cup of cocoa to bed and to feel safe."

She is still angry with her husband, who in March 2006 walked out of The Priory and threw himself in front of a train in Barnes, south-west London. He had been suffering from depression and his mental health deteriorated further following the death of his great friend Patrick Lichfield, six months previously. The couple have a 16-year-old daughter, Scarlett, who is also a photographer.

Beckwith lives with her husband, the Italian construction heir Giorgio Veroni, in the same Chelsea street as Carlos Clarke. She first met Bob and Lindsey when she was a 19-year-old wild child. She once dragged him on a fashion shoot to her parents' house in Cannes and even persuaded him to take photos of her 30th birthday and Christmas party the year he died. "He'd say,

"I'm not a paparazzo' and you'd have to beg and promise sexual favours to get him to do it," she says.

"Team leader" Pascal owns the PR company Panic, which has represented Beckwith for 12 years. He met the Carlos Clarks through Beckwith in 1996 and became Bob's agent in 1999. He now manages the photographer's estate. For Lindsey, who was once

told by an astrologer that she would own a gallery, the idea came to fruition at the end of last year as prices for his photographs crept up. "Why try and get them into other galleries when we can do it?" says Pascal. "Bob had a phobia about galleries. He always thought they were ripping him off."

In February, Beckwith came across a former letting agency, in Chelsea's Park Walk. "We knew it had to be Chelsea - Bob was such a Chelsea character," says Beckwith. "There is an element that it's around the corner, that it's familiar and friendly. It's not an imposing Mayfair gallery." It's not all about selling super-famous photographers either - "although they are all coming out of the woodwork for the first show," says Pascal.

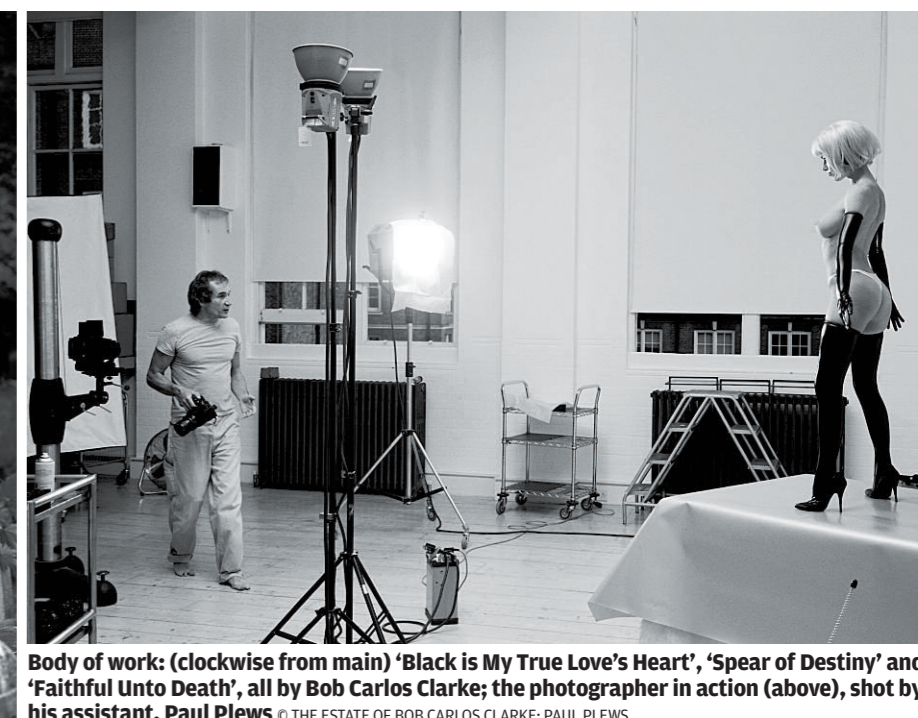
Prices for the photographs will range from £500 to £30,000. The first show includes an ethereal shot, *Floating*, by fashion photographer Alistair Taylor-Young, as well as sepia prints of landscapes by the film-maker Jake Polonsky. There are also ghostly images by the Norwegian photographer Anja Niemi.

"I know most of my friends will like a Terry O'Neill - that's if they don't already have one," says Beckwith. "I prefer celebrity portraits to landscapes. At home I've got Marilyn, Elvis, and Joan Collins - not cheesy but classic black-and-white photographs. I got given an Andy Warhol and Edie Sedgwick for a wedding present - but I would have been thrilled with a Dolly Parton."

For Lindsey, dealing with other photographers is a big change, having worked solely with Bob for 30 years. "Bob would never let me buy other people's photographs," she says. "I have one photograph of Mick Jagger by David Bailey at home - but only because Bob swapped it with him for something else."

Time has run out and Beckwith has to fly off to get to a glitzy event at The Berkeley hotel. "I have the busiest schedule," says Beckwith. "Mind you, I'm more organised these days, aren't I, Ghislain? I even file my copy on time for *Hello!*. It's a miracle! I know which favours I can call in for the gallery - but I'm not going to over-commit."

*Most Wanted*, The Little Black Gallery, 13a Park Walk, London SW10 ([www.bobcarlosclarke.com](http://www.bobcarlosclarke.com)), opens 28 November



The A team: (from left) Lindsey Carlos Clarke, Ghislain Pascal and Tamara Beckwith, in front of their new gallery in Chelsea DAVID SANDISON

Body of work: (clockwise from main) 'Black is My True Love's Heart', 'Spear of Destiny' and 'Faithful Unto Death', all by Bob Carlos Clarke; the photographer in action (above), shot by his assistant, Paul Plews © THE ESTATE OF BOB CARLOS CLARKE; PAUL PLEWS