

The life and death of a legend

Three years after the tragic death of Bob Carlos Clarke, a book on the photographer is being released.

Exposure: The Unusual Life and Violent Death of Bob Carlos Clarke provides an “oral” history of Carlos Clarke’s life and career, leading up to his suicide in 2006.

Described by author Simon Garfield as “a story about love, suicide, genius, photography, beautiful women and corrosive artistic despair” the book originally started out as a kind of fly-on-the-wall documentary about celebrity, focusing on the agent Ghislain Pascal – now manager of The Little Black Gallery – and four of his clients.

However, Garfield’s attention soon turned to the enigmatic figure of Bob Carlos Clarke, and the book swiftly transformed into an exposé on the rise and fall of Chelsea’s most controversial photographer.

Exposure includes interviews with Carlos Clarke himself as well as a cast of family, friends and colleagues who are all listed alongside their credentials in the front of the book: Lindsey Carlos Clarke, “a wife”, Tamara Beckwith, “a personality”, Simon Le Bon, “a pop star”, Marco Pierre White, “a restaurateur”, and so on.

Made up entirely of snippets of conversation, the book jumps between different times and conversations, making it sometimes hard to follow. What it does provide is an insight into the troubled life of a great photographer and a look at how his life and death affected those around him.

To coincide with the launch of the book, The Little Black Gallery is holding a retrospective exhibition of Carlos Clarke’s works.

The exhibition takes place over both floors of the gallery and features pictures from his 30 year career.

Works on show range from signature erotic images of women to lesser known black and white still life shots and there are a number of works that have never been seen or made available for sale before.

Bob Carlos Clarke: Wall to Wall runs from May 8-July 3 at The Little Black Gallery, 13a Park Walk. T: 020 7349 9332.

Exposure: The Unusual Life and Violent Death of Bob Carlos Clarke by Simon Garfield is published by Ebury Press. £18.99 hardback.



Above: Fairy Bum

Far left: Sticky Fingers

Left: Stones

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“For the purpose of deification, an early death is essential. If you want to qualify as a legend: get famous young, die tragically and dramatically, and never underestimate the importance of your iconic photographs”

Bob Carlos Clarke

