

CLAMP

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UNSEEN BIDGOOD: A MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES BIDGOOD

September 15–October 29, 2022

Opening reception:

Thursday, September 15, 2022

6:00–8:00 pm

CLAMP is pleased to present “Unseen Bidgood: A Memorial Exhibition,” consisting of 16 previously unexhibited photographs from the archive of James Bidgood’s career.

James Bidgood passed away on January 31, 2022 at the age of 88 due to complications from Covid-19. A *New Yorker* for over 70 years, he was adored and admired by generations of artists and film connoisseurs.

When Bidgood first came to New York from Wisconsin in the 1950s, he worked as a drag performer and occasional set and costume designer at Club 82 in the East Village. After studying at Parsons School of Design from 1957 to 1960, Bidgood worked as a window dresser and costume designer.

He then went on to work as a photographer for men’s physique publications and began creating his own personal photographs and films that greatly benefited from his talents as a costume and set designer. It was during this period in the early 1960s that Bidgood began working on what would ultimately become the cult film “Pink Narcissus.”



While he lived a modest life in various Manhattan tenements, Bidgood was able to create a wonderland within his pictures, produced in tandem with “Pink Narcissus.” He translated the city surrounding him into a flamboyant queer utopia, driven by his love for everything kitsch.

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Using humble materials in combination with his advanced tailoring skills and aesthetic literacy, Bidgood built a cosmos of queer belonging in his apartment, populated with angelic figures of male beauty, jellyfish, drag queens, altar boys, urinals, and tinsel. Within this space, and in front of his lens, the homosexuals that were ostracized by larger society could be beautiful, glamorous, complex, silly, or simply themselves, transforming into characters from another universe.

At once unabashedly frolicsome as well as sincere and smart, Bidgood's work offers viewers an opportunity to peer into an uncorked imagination and unrestrained vision.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Image: © Estate of James Bidgood; "Bobby Lying in Bed (Bobby Kendall)," late 1960s; Digital C-print, Courtesy of CLAMP, New York.