



## THE SCARSDALE INQUIRER Friday, June 16, 2017

# Photographer revisits 1970s scene at Madelyn Jordan

By DANIELLE RIVERA

Acclaimed photographer Allan Tannenbaum lends a bit of dreamlike, disco-era magic to his latest solo exhibit, "Grit and Glamour: The Photographs of Allan Tannenbaum," which will be presented at Scarsdale's Madelyn Jordan Fine Art from June 15 to Aug. 5. "Grit and Glamour" offers an intimate look into an era that birthed icons, with a wide cross-section from "nightlife, to politics and religion, to show biz and the music scene." Tannenbaum's photographs explore New York City as the pulsing hotbed of creativity it was in the 1970s.

Tannenbaum graduated from Rutgers University with a B.A. in art in 1967, but his career launched into hyperspace after he was named chief photographer and photo editor of the SoHo Weekly News in 1973. His work for the paper captured legends at the height of their career and fashion at the forefront of industry innovation.

Yet some of his most celebrated photographs were shot against the clock.

"It's just a split second where something happens," Tannenbaum said, offering his backstage photograph of Dolly Parton and Mick Jagger as an example. "This was probably something that I had maybe 15 seconds to do. It's an instant that you're capturing."

Tannenbaum said his rapport with his subjects made capturing such intimate moments possible.

"I think one thing that comes through in my coverage at the time is I could relate to people," he said. "People felt comfortable with me, the way I worked, the way I moved. So, people come across, in large part, as their natural personas."

Many of these backstage moments are featured in Tannenbaum's fourth and latest book, "Grit and Glamour: The Street Style, High Fashion and Legendary Music of the 1970s." His first, "New York in the 70s," was originally published in 2003, followed by "New York" in 2005, and "John & Yoko: A New York Love Story," which earned him a Golden Medal in the 2008 Independent Book Publisher Awards.

Currently, Tannenbaum lives with his wife, Deborah, in the same Manhattan loft in which he lived while working for SoHo Weekly at the start of his career.



"And it looks like it," Tannenbaum said. "It's not an Architectural Digest Tribeca loft. It's the '70s creative factory."

As iconic as the era became, Tannenbaum admits its significance eluded him at the time.

"You don't even realize it when you're in the middle of it," he said. "We knew there was so much creativity going on, and that the environment, being dirty and dangerous and there not being any money around, was the catalyst to all this creativity."

The city itself was an important and evolving character in Tannenbaum's work.

"It's like night and day, really," Tannenbaum said of the changes to New York since the '70s. "Certainly [it's] safer, it's cleaner. It's got trees everywhere, traffic is organized and all of that. But that creative spark is gone, and we don't have even the cultural icons that were around in New York in the '70s, like Andy Warhol, John Lennon and other artists. Who are they, where are they? That's the big difference."

Such changes are, in large part, why Tannenbaum chose to create "Grit and Glamour." He said he believes revisiting the styles of that era, in particular, is important to the future of



PHOTOS COURTESY ALLAN TANNENBAUM

Patti Smith and John Belushi backstage at Saturday Night Live, 1976 Archival pigment print: 17 X 22 inches. Left, Dolly Parton and Mick Jagger, 1977 Archival pigment print: 10 x 15 in. Paper: 16 x 20 in. Frame: 19 x 24 in. Below, John and Yoko on a Bench in Central Park, 1980 Silver gelatin print: 16 x 20 inches.



that industry.

"Fashion designers and people in that world are always looking for inspiration," he said. "They're always going back to the well. So it was important history, to publish this style book."

While "Grit and Glamour" centers around Tannenbaum's time at the SoHo Weekly News, his photography continued to inspire well after the paper folded in 1982. Deciding he'd had his fair share of New York after eight

years at SoHo Weekly, Tannenbaum wanted to "branch out and do serious photojournalism and see the world."

He started as a staff photographer for Sigma Photo News, moving from coverage of the unrest in South Africa to revolution in the Philippines, and later on to the Arab-Israeli conflict and volcanic disaster in Colombia.

After traveling the world as a photojournalist for decades, Tannenbaum said he believes journalists should consider both their global and local histories while reporting.

"History is a continuance," he said, "so there are things that happened a century ago, or 200 years ago, that are influencing what happens today ... And what a journalist can do is just try to cover it honestly, just be there as a dedicated witness."

Tannenbaum currently works with Polaris Images and the Tribeca Trib. Most recently, he received four awards from The New York Press Photographers Association in their 2011 competition.