

# IN THE ARTS

## 'Ed Gallucci: The Crawdaddy Years and Beyond'

Monmouth U exhibit catalogues photographer's prolific career

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Staff Writer

**E**d Gallucci — the nationally renowned photographer whose work will go on display this week at Monmouth University — could have had a quiet, unremarkable life.

In 1964, at age 17, he left New Jersey to study graphic design and photography at the Kansas City (Mo.) Art Institute. He returned three years later, taking a job designing labels for a pharmaceutical company in Union County.

As was the case for many in his generation, this could have been the end of Gallucci's story. A comfortable life, a good job, retirement, pension, grandchildren.

But not long after he started, he was presented with an opportunity that would change his life forever.

His employer, Ciba Pharmaceuticals, was working on a public service project and didn't have the budget to employ a photographer. They called on their new hire to help out and the rest, as they say, is history.

"The new guy always did all the dirty work, and they remembered I had minored in photography," said Gallucci.

"It was a closeup of a hand shot, something about supporting the homeless. I saw my work in print and that was it. I got bitten by the bug."

He quit his job, left New Jersey and got an apartment in Park Slope, Brooklyn, where he and his family had lived before moving to Union County in the 1950's.

For four years, he spent his days working as a photo assistant for professional studio photographers throughout New York City.

At night he drove a taxicab, getting to know the city as he saved money to buy new photography equipment.

Doubt, he said, never even crossed his mind.

"When you're 20 or 21, you're not worried about a damn thing; you just go for it," he said. "I shot all the time. When you're starting out as a photographer, that's what you have to do."

In time, his youthful exuberance and long hours began to pay off.

By the late 1960s, Gallucci's photos were being published in multiple photography magazines. By the early 1970s, his work had been exhibited in two prominent New York City art shows.

In 1970, he walked into the office of "Zygote" magazine and showed his portfolio to editor Peter Knobler, who hired him on the spot as a freelancer.

"They would call me up and say, 'You want to go shoot Rod Stewart? You want to go shoot Muhammad Ali?'"

"I was hooked up with a writer and they would send us out to do an interview. It was good because the writer would take the subject's eyes off of me. Back then, I tried to be part of the background," Gallucci said.



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One of Gallucci's most popular photos features a 23-year-old Bruce Springsteen, taken in 1972.

Working for "Zygote" — which eventually became "Crawdaddy" magazine — Gallucci found the forum and the opportunity to take some of the most intriguing, enduring photos of his career.

His work with Ali, he said, was especially memorable.

"It wasn't another day at work, driving around with Muhammad Ali for a couple days. Definitely not," he said.

"He's an intimidating guy. When we shook hands, I think his hand went all the way up to my elbow it was so huge. But I was very determined to get the shot."

His noteworthy work with "Crawdaddy" eventually led to assignments from "Rolling Stone," "Playboy" and "Penthouse," photographing celebrities and musicians like a 23-year-old, relatively unknown singer-songwriter from Freehold, N.J.

"At the time, nobody knew who he was," said Gallucci. "He was younger than I was. I wasn't that impressed with him, to be honest, because I hadn't even heard his music yet. At the time I was trying to shoot Bob Dylan."

Gallucci's photos of a young Bruce Springsteen stand to this day as some of the most popular work of his 40-year career.

In the years and decades to come, Gallucci would evolve from a New York City freelancer into a first-rate, nationally renowned photographer.

After collaborating with author Michael Grumley on his 1977 book "Hard Corps," Gallucci made the switch to commercial stu-



KATE NAWOYSKI

Ed Gallucci stands in front of his life's work at Monmouth University's Pollak Gallery.

dio photography, shooting hundreds of spreads and covers for "Newsweek," "Fortune," "New York Magazine," "U.S. News & World Report" and many other publications between 1978 and 1998.

Over the last four decades, thousands of Gallucci's photos have appeared in ads, book covers, catalogues, brochures and even on billboards.

Throughout that time he's garnered more than 100 industry awards, including five Andys and two CLIOs.

Today Gallucci is thinking of getting into teaching, while continuing his work and embracing the possibilities offered by digital design software.

Meanwhile, his iconic black-and-white

photos are showcased in museums and on college campuses, where he believes they can serve as a testament to the beauty of film.

"Digital cameras today, they pretty much take over what it takes years to learn as a photographer, and sometimes it gets in the way," he said. "Anybody starting out today should definitely start with film."

"You have to learn to wait for the right moment, the right light. You can't just go snapping away."

Thirty-six of Gallucci's pieces will be going into Monmouth University's permanent collection, where the former pharmaceutical label designer hopes they might inspire a younger generation to pursue their passions the same way he did, all those years ago.

"It's a lot tougher now than when I went in, but it's always been that way," he said. "When I went in as an assistant, all the photographers I worked for said the business had changed, it's not the same, all the opportunities are gone, all of that."

"But it wasn't true. I had a lot success in my life. I made a lot of money doing this. I've had my own business for a long, long time."

"You have to stay young," he added, "you have to learn new things and you have to stay open. If you don't, a lot of good things could pass you by."

"Ed Gallucci: The Crawdaddy Years and Beyond" will be on exhibit through Oct. 17 at Monmouth University's Pollak Gallery on the West Long Branch campus.