

Elliott Erwitt's Co-op and Photo Studio Are Listed on Central Park West

Mr. Erwitt, who died last year, moved to the Brentmore more than 50 years ago. His estate has listed the co-op for \$11.5 million and the studio for \$2.3 million.



By Vivian Marino

Vivian Marino writes about prominent residential sales and exclusive listings.

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Elliott Erwitt had already gained worldwide renown for his memorable photographs of the famous and whimsical when he settled into his grand apartment at 88 Central Park West in the late 1960s.

His home, on the eighth floor of the 12-story Brentmore co-op, at the corner of West 69th Street, cost around \$75,000 at the time, according to one of his six children, Jennifer Erwitt. “It was a big stretch to make that purchase,” she said. “He was successful, but I don’t think he was really wealthy.”

By the early 1980s, as his wealth grew, along with his vast collection of copyrighted images, he also created a ground-floor photo studio in the building, converted from a dentist’s office. He kept countless photographs and books (he authored a couple of dozen himself) in the studio and would arrange photo shoots there as well as private sales of his works.



Elliott Erwitt photographed numerous celebrities, political leaders and other luminaries during his long career, but he was often celebrated for his witty and moving snapshots of people from all walks of life.

Rick Smolan

With Mr. Erwitt’s death last November at age 95, both properties are now being sold by his estate. The asking price for the residence is \$11.5 million, with \$11,428 in monthly maintenance, and the studio is \$2.3 million and \$8,380 in maintenance, according to the listing broker, Ann Cutbill Lenane of Douglas Elliman Real Estate.

“It’s in estate condition,” Ms. Lenane said, noting that little had been done to either unit in the last several decades. (The residence did receive a few coats of paint over the years, and early on, new windows with seating were installed in the living room.) “But you can make it an extraordinary space,” she added.

The Brentmore was erected in the Lincoln Square neighborhood of the Upper West Side in 1910 and converted into a co-op in 1959. It has been home to many well-known residents, including Sting and his wife, Trudie Styler, with whom Mr. Erwitt often socialized, and the photographer Annie Leibovitz, who recently sold her duplex there.

Mr. Erwitt's residence, overlooking Central Park and measuring around 3,350 square feet, is configured with three main bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms and two staff rooms, along with a laundry room, formal dining room and an extra-large living room. The studio encompasses roughly 2,630 square feet, with four sizable rooms that were used as offices, meeting spaces or for photo shoots, plus a full bathroom and powder room. Stairs from the studio lead down to the building's lower level, where Mr. Erwitt kept a 356-square-foot darkroom and storage area.

"He used to love his commute from the eighth floor to the lobby," said Ms. Erwitt, who fondly remembers time spent at the apartment as a child and young adult. "My parents were divorced, so I went back and forth. I spent weekends there and in East Hampton, where he also had a home and kept a studio." (The home in the Hamptons is on the market for \$3.75 million.)



Mr. Erwitt photographed two of his daughters, Sasha and Amy, sitting near the living room window while a giant Snoopy floats by during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 1988. Elliott Erwitt/Magnum Photos

One of Ms. Erwitt's favorite memories of the Manhattan apartment, she said, was watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parades with family and friends from the living room. In 1988, Mr. Erwitt, with his typical humor, famously captured a giant Snoopy drifting past a window with two of his daughters seated nearby.

Many prewar architectural elements remain in both the residence and studio, like the hardwood floors and moldings and the coffered and beamed 11-foot ceilings. The kitchen in the main apartment still retains the original glass and wood cabinetry.

Mr. Erwitt's home and studio are filled with an eclectic mix of furnishings, artwork and mementos from extensive travel for his commercial and fine art commissions. He collected everything from quirky Asian masks to life-size mannequins (among his favorite subjects to shoot). "He would never decorate," Ms. Erwitt said, "he would just get stuff and figure out where to put it."



The apartment has three main bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms and two staff rooms. Nial Schroder

Many of his photographs hang on the walls of both units. Over the years, the French-born Mr. Erwitt, a member of the independent photographers' collective Magnum, shot a wide range of celebrities for various magazines. Among them, Marilyn Monroe, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Che Guevara. One of his most recognizable images was the 1959 "kitchen debate" between President Richard M. Nixon and the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

Mr. Erwitt was known for his shots of subjects from all walks of life. The 1953 image entitled "Mother and Child," exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, showed a woman on a bed lovingly gazing into her baby's eyes. (The woman was Mr. Erwitt's first wife, Lucienne Matthews, and the infant was their daughter Ellen.)



Mr. Erwitt kept his studio on the ground floor of the Central Park West co-op building and a darkroom in the basement. Elliott Erwitt/Magnum Photos

Dogs were also a favorite subject, including his own, Sammy, a cairn terrier.

"I always thought of his pictures as New Yorker cartoons — he was amused by humanity in general," said Jennifer Erwitt's husband, the photographer Rick Smolan. The couple, creators of the "Day in the Life" picture book series, are now forming a foundation to ensure that Mr. Erwitt's work will continue to be available in New York and galleries around the world.

