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Marilyn Monroe

LIFE AS A LEGEND

New Dayton Art Institute exhibit chronicles the life of Hollywood's most iconoclastic actress

By Mark Kinsler
E-G correspondent

Her name was Norma Jeane, but she will forever be known by another name.

Marilyn Monroe.

The iconoclastic actress, singer and model would have been 81 this year. Despite her death, the memory of this 5-foot-5-1/2-inch, blonde hair, blue eyed star survives to this day.

"I feel that beauty and femininity are ageless," she once quipped. And judging by her ever-lasting stardom, it would be hard to argue otherwise.

Yet, aside from her posthumous immortality, her life — both public and private — remains an eternal dispute. From the rumors about her affair with then-President John F. Kennedy to her marriage to the quintessential American hero, Yankee Slugger Joe DiMaggio, her turbulent existence is documented in an endless supply of books, articles and Web sites.

To this day, she remains a paradox.

She was either very bright or very dumb; mentally unstable or solidly sane; a helpless victim or willing participant in the course of her life. Even her death is subject to debate.

Marilyn Monroe left behind a few albums, dozens of movies and countless photographs and magazine covers.

She's also left her personal thoughts, conveyed not to a private source like a diary, but rather revealed in thousands upon thousands of interviews.

Now, decades after her death in 1962, her life is once again being put under the microscope. Yet, this time it is not for the masses of celeb-crazed fans, but rather a serious attempt to try to get a glimpse into her life.

During the next two months, the Dayton Art Institute in Dayton will feature the exhibit "Marilyn Monroe: Life as a Legend." This large showcase features more than 200 photographs, paintings, prints and other artist renderings of Marilyn Monroe. The work of about 80 artists, including the likes of Andy Warhol, Allen Jones, Peter Blake and Henri Cartier-Bresson, will be featured, as well as a play about the icon's life, "Marilyn: Forever Blonde." The star of the play, Sunny Thompson, is remarkable in the performance — looking, sounding and moving — exactly as Marilyn herself would have.

The exhibit runs from April 28 through June 24 at the museum.

From Norma Jeane, the little girl with stunning, sparkling blue eyes to Marilyn Monroe the classic, platinum blonde, the fame of this woman is immeasurable. Across the world her name is known, and even in death her fame has grown.

The exhibit truly lives up to every expectation. It shows Marilyn Monroe in all her glory — and "Forever Blonde."

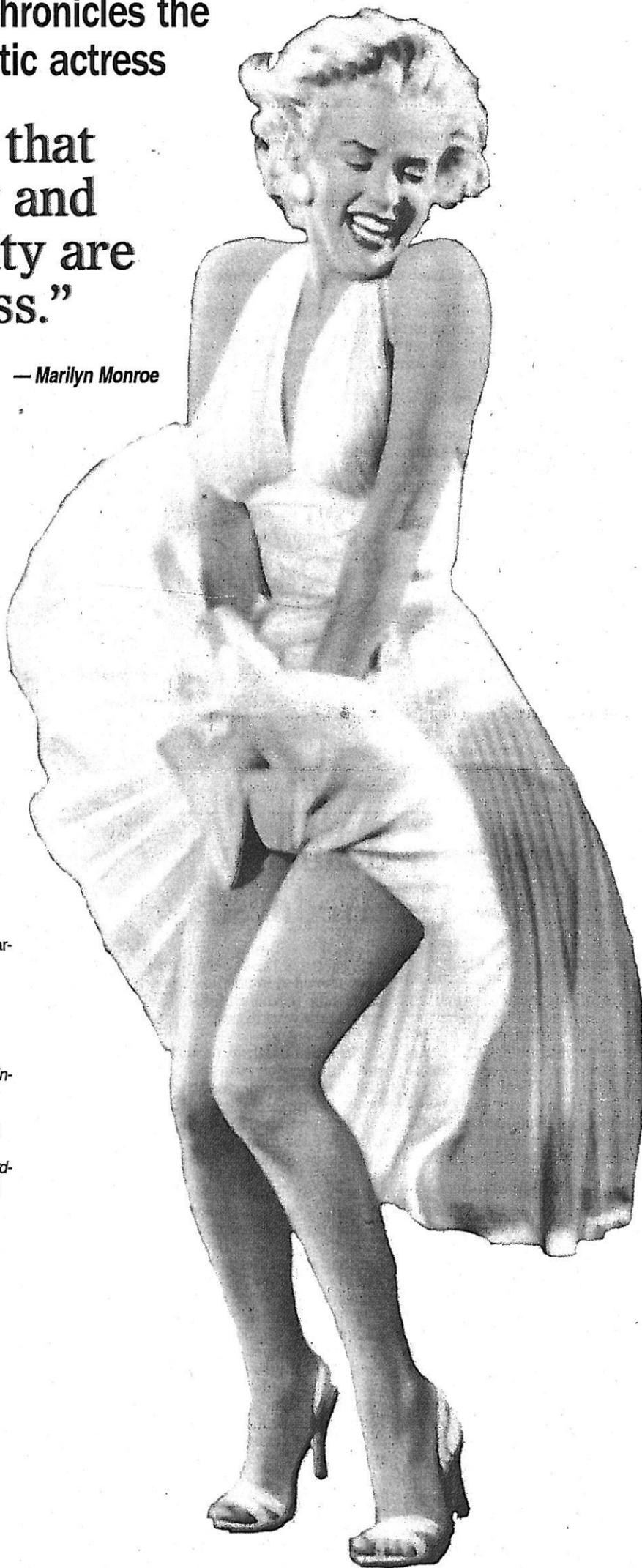
"I feel that beauty and femininity are ageless."

— Marilyn Monroe

If you go

- Marilyn Monroe: Life as a Legend
- Where: Dayton Art Institute, 456 Belmonte Park N., Dayton
- When: April 28 to June 24
- Exhibit Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday through Wednesday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays
- Performances: The play, "Marilyn: Forever Blonde" will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday afternoons and at 8 p.m. Friday evenings.
- Parking: Free
- More information: Call 800-296-4426 or visit www.daytonartinstitute.org.

(The art exhibit runs everyday, but the play does not, so you'll want to schedule your visit accordingly. Be sure to call in advance.)



Extra activities

The Image of Marilyn Monroe in Popular Culture

■ What: Jeffrey Brown, professor of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University, and consulting curator of Contemporary Art at the Toledo Museum of Art, will address the enduring representations of Marilyn Monroe in the media and how the late actress has been symbolized as American culture's ideal form of female sexuality.

■ When: 7 p.m. May 24

■ Cost: \$10 for members, \$12 for non-members. College students admitted free with valid school ID.

Through the Photographer's Lens

■ What: Join Alex Nyerges, former director of The Dayton Art Institute, as he discusses the many sides of Marilyn Monroe as revealed through the photographer's lens.

Monroe seemed most at home in front of the camera. Examine the role of photographs in contributing to the mystique that was Marilyn Monroe and the diversity of the photographers who created them.

■ When: 6 p.m. June 5

■ Cost: \$10 members, \$12 non-members. College students free with valid school ID.

Ticket information

Tickets:
 ■ Museum Members
 ■ Adults
 ■ Seniors (60+)

Exhibit Only
 FREE
 \$14
 \$12

Play Only
 \$12.50
 \$25
 \$24

Exhibit & Play
 \$12.50
 \$34
 \$32