



## **FORT WORTH MUSEUM** SCIENCE AND HISTORY

Fort Worth Museum of Science and History  
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### **“Elvis at 21” a Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Shows Elvis Before He Was the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll**

**Fort Worth, TX** - Freelance photojournalist Alfred Wertheimer was hired by RCA Victor in 1956 to shoot promotional images of a recently signed 21-year-old recording artist, Elvis Presley. Wertheimer’s instincts to “tag along” with the artist after the assignment and the resulting images provide us today with a look at Elvis before he exploded onto the scene and became one of the most exciting performers of his time. “Elvis at 21: Photographs by Alfred Wertheimer,” a new Smithsonian traveling exhibition, presents 56 of these striking images and will open at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History on Saturday, May 25, 2013. Alfred Wertheimer will be at the Museum on Thursday May 23- Friday May 24 and will be available for interviews upon request.

Developed collaboratively by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery and the Govinda Gallery, “Elvis at 21” will be on view at Fort Worth Museum of Science and History through September 2, 2013.

Wertheimer had unparalleled access and documented Elvis on the road, backstage, in concert, in the recording studio and at home in Memphis, Tenn. “Colonel” Tom Parker, Elvis’ manager, restricted contact just a short time later. The photographs document a remarkable time when Elvis could sit alone at a drugstore lunch counter.

“Henri Cartier-Bresson was known for photographing the decisive moment, that moment when everything falls into place,” said Wertheimer. “But I was more interested in the moments just before or just after the decisive moment.”

Wertheimer was up close to capture a flirtatious encounter with a young woman backstage in Richmond, Va. He was in the New York City recording studio on the historic day Elvis recorded “Don’t Be

Cruel” and “Hound Dog.” Both songs hit No. 1 on the charts, the first and only time a single record would achieve this distinction.

Wertheimer also joined Elvis after the recording session as he traveled home to Memphis by train. One image shows Elvis as just part of the crowd surrounding a lunch vendor on a train platform during a brief stop on the 27-hour trip. The anonymity he had during this stop was short-lived; the trip followed a busy few months when Elvis appeared on the television shows “Stage Show,” “The Milton Berle Show” and “The Steve Allen Show.” The photographs of a concert in Russwood Park on his return to Memphis show a young man who now had to have a police escort to get through the crowd of fans between his car and the stadium.

“Elvis at 21” is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalog, titled “Elvis 1956,” available through Welcome Books. For more information, visit <http://welcomebooks.com/elvis1956>.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 55 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit [www.sites.si.edu](http://www.sites.si.edu).

HISTORY™ is a leading destination for revealing, award-winning, original non-fiction series and event-driven specials that connect history with viewers. Programming covers a diverse variety of historical genres ranging from military history to contemporary history, technology to natural history, as well as science, archaeology and pop culture.

Located in Washington, D.C., the Govinda Gallery exhibits one of the largest collections of music photography in the world. Over 30 years, the gallery has organized more than 200 exhibitions of many of the nation’s leading artists. It has featured Wertheimer’s work in several exhibitions, including his first major one-person exhibition in 1997. Visit online at [www.govindagallery.com](http://www.govindagallery.com).

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery tells the stories of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists who speak American history. The museum’s collection of nearly 20,000 works ranges from paintings and sculpture to photographs and drawings. Visit online at [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu) and [reynoldscenter.org](http://reynoldscenter.org).

**About the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History**

Established in 1941, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, anchored by its rich collections, is an institution dedicated to lifelong learning. The Museum engages children and adult guests through creative, vibrant programs and exhibits interpreting science and the history of Texas and the Southwest. The new \$80-million campus opened in November 2009 marking the culmination of an extensive multiyear fundraising campaign. The Museum is open daily, except Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. For more information about the Museum, visit [www.fortworthmuseum.org](http://www.fortworthmuseum.org) or call [817-255-9300](tel:817-255-9300).