

## EXHIBITION REVIEW: FONSI IANNELLI AT STEVEN KASHER GALLERY

By Kathryn Kearney



People like to give nicknames, but nicknames that stick forever are hard to come by. Alfonso “Fonsi” Iannelli, a native of Park Ridge, Illinois, began his work in photography at his father’s sculpture studio. He received the nickname of “Fonsi” from one of his father’s friends who worked in the graphic arts industry. With a father who took on the roles of industrial designer, graphic designer, and sculptor all at the same time, Iannelli was left with no choice, but to become an artist.

Iannelli served as an apprentice to the esteemed photographer, Gordon Coster who prompted him to open his own gallery in 1940. When World War II began, Edward Steichen, a Luxembourgish American photographer commissioned Iannelli to join the Naval Aviation Photographic Unit, a contingent of the “U.S. Navy employed to document and publicize its operations in order to recruit Navy pilots.” Iannelli started as a darkroom developer but worked his way up to photograph soldiers fighting for the nation.

Given the task to capture the emotions of these soldiers on board, Iannelli strove to really know each of the people he photographed. Iannelli’s photographs were published in a collection edited by Steichen, U.S. Navy War Photographs: Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Harbor (1945). Some of his other photographs were included in the exhibition Power in the Pacific: Battle Photographs of our Navy in Action on the Sea and In the Sky at the Museum of Modern Art in 1945.

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The daily lives of soldiers in World War II, chronicled by Iannelli in photographs convey telling stories about the day to day for young men fighting for the nation. These men truly cared for one another and worked everyday to save their country. They did everything from waking up in the morning to helping out around the ship to preparing meals for dinner to laughing to crying and all of the in between with one another. Iannelli does a fantastic job of capturing the essence of the friendships these men shared. At the Steven Kasher Gallery, over 50 vintage black and white prints from Iannelli's years spent with Navy Seals during war-time will be on display till August 17th, 2017. This exhibition will help you to appreciate friendship, loyalty and this country and all that it stands for--our freedom.