

## UNIT 4

## Évaluation

- “Shaw’s images capture the Kennedy family in a relaxed and candid style [...],” says Amy Thornett, curator of Proud Central’s exhibition *Life with the Kennedys: Photographs by Mark Shaw*. “The photographs from Hyannis Port are particularly reminiscent of the ‘American Dream’ [...] portraying them as the ‘perfect’ American family.”
- 5 Taken over a period when JFK<sup>1</sup> went from senator to president, Shaw’s photographs offer an unprecedented view of the Kennedys’ lives, which was made possible through the close relationship he fostered with the family. Indeed, the photographer was profoundly affected by the president’s assassination, but maintained a friendship with Jackie. Thornett describes a particular 1962 shot “depicting Jackie on a private cruise, leaning playfully over the side of the boat while holding Shaw’s camera. Sometime after JFK’s assassination, Jackie borrowed Shaw’s camera equipment again and returned it with a heartfelt note, confirming that their friendship was still a close one.” It’s this undeniable warmth between subject and photographer that renders Shaw’s images so unique and intimate. This was an era before presidents and politicians had official photographers to document their lives and careers; Thornett notes that “JFK was the first president to hire a Chief Official White House
- 15 Photographer; Cecil Stoughton”. “Whereas in previous presidencies, all official photographs had been taken by a selection of military photographers,” she explains, “JFK understood how necessary it was to have documentation of inside the White House in a world that was becoming so strongly influenced by the media.”
- A black and white shot of JFK that features in *Life with the Kennedys*, entitled *JFK on the dunes near*
- 20 *Hyannis Port*, was purportedly a favorite of the president’s. “The photograph was taken as part of a larger photoshoot set around the coastal region of Hyannis Port,” where the family spent holidays. “While other images from the shoot focus on the intimate family relationships shared between the Kennedys, this image stands out for its solitary depiction of JFK amongst the reeds. [...] A hub of family events and vacations, Shaw captured the politician unusually alone at the idyllic Massachusetts
- 25 retreat; the photographer describes the family there as “together, always celebrating birthdays, parties, anniversaries, conscious of outdoor life, the beach and the air” in his seminal 1964 photo-book *The Kennedys*.
- JFK, who was senator at the time, appears pensive and calm, “relaxed and glamorous”, though Thornett identifies some tension in Shaw’s photograph. [...] Describing how the image has become “symbolic”
- 30 of JFK’s time in office, the curator continues: “Remembered for his unique charm and wit, the president seduced America with his fresh young face and willingness to rejuvenate American politics. The portrait hints at a man grappling with his responsibilities as both the leader of the United States and as a father.”

Belle Hutton, , 2018

<sup>1</sup> John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963)

### Compréhension de l’écrit

- What was original in the way photographer Mark Shaw represented the Kennedy family and JFK?
- How did his links to the Kennedy couple influence his work?
- How did Mark Shaw sometimes portray President Kennedy? Why?
- To what extent was the Kennedy era a turning point in the representation of American presidents?

### Expression écrite

Choisissez l’un des deux sujets.

**Sujet 1** : How far can the media go to inform the public about the private lives of politicians?

**Sujet 2** : Do you think that a president’s private life must be made public? Why (not)?