

CHARLES DESMARAIS *Art*

A witty shooter's classic photos

"I'll always be an amateur photographer," Elliott Erwitt told Britain's Guardian some years ago. That spirit of curiosity, of doing something purely for the joy and love of it, is forever embodied in the 88-year-old photo-journalist's work.

Even a picture made nearly 30 years ago, of a bulldog at the foot of his mistress, is fresh with humor and mischief. The dog before the camera may actually have been young, but a stocky, jowly creature in a picture can only suggest advanced age.

The poor old guy with the sad eyes looks at his svelte companion with an

Elliott Erwitt: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. through May 27. Free. Robert Koch Gallery, 49 Geary St., S.F. (415) 421-0122. www.kochgallery.com

"New York City" (1989) remains fresh with humor and mischief.

eager lift of the head, but a resigned squat. Once, he would have been up for anything; now he is no more than a voyeur.

The Robert Koch Gallery, in its fourth show with the artist, will feature 28 of Erwitt's witty photographs. The exhibition opens with a reception on Thursday, March 2, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The show runs through May 27.

*Charles Desmarais is The San Francisco Chronicle's art critic.
Email: cdesmarais@sfgate.com
Twitter: @Artguy1*



Elliott Erwitt / Magnum Photos 1989