

VOGUE

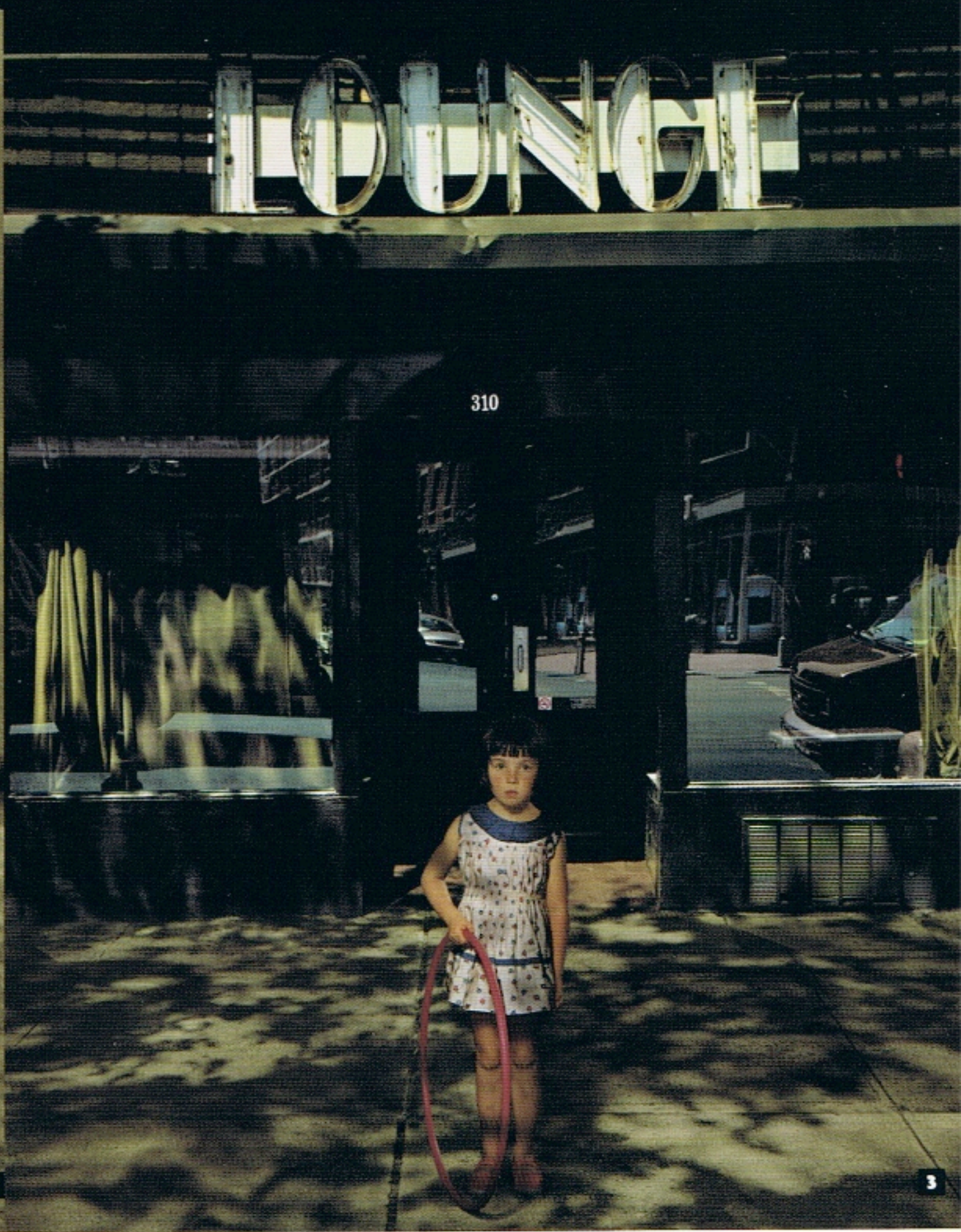
SPECIAL


NRW-FORUM



ALBERT WATSON:
BEST OF
21.9.2008-18.1.2009

+ EDWARD STEICHEN IN WOLFSBURG





“ I DON'T LIKE
SPONTANEOUS
IMPRESSIONS, I PRE-
FER CREATING
AN ATMOSPHERE ”

VOGUE: Do you still work on several projects at the same time?

ALBERT WATSON: Sure! Next week I will direct a TV commercial in Toronto, and then I will photograph the cover of the new album by the hip-hop artist R. Kelly.

What is the secret of good photos for you?

The magical line from the photographer's eye to the final print.

You show several photos from the same shooting in one picture.

I have been using this technique before. Just like on a contact sheet, you don't only see the one picture that I have chosen but also other pictures from the shooting. You see a famous picture like *Hitchcock With Goose*, and next to it two other versions that were taken maybe only seconds later. You learn a lot about the process of the shooting.

One of your photographs of Kate Moss has recently been acquired for a record price at an auction.

It was sold for 54,000 British pounds at Christie's, a shooting I did for the German VOGUE in 1993.

What is the story behind the new and fascinating „Children“ series?

The photographs were created when I remembered my childhood. When I was a little boy, my mother and I went to a department store, and I got lost. I still remember it as if it were just yesterday. At first, I was just confused but then I totally panicked because it was the first time that I was alone, without my parents. I wanted to do a series with children who are alone, and I wanted to create a feeling of being lost. Some scenes take place in the city, others in the middle of the woods.

So there is no mythical story behind this?

What was important to me was to capture the emotional moment when somebody realizes that he or she is in the wrong place, and doesn't know what has happened. The beauty of the pictures also lies in the fact that we used a big technical equipment to work on the visual appeal. By using a format of 2.5 meters you can really enter the world of the children.

Some of the pictures are very iconic, like the „hat blocks“, wooden models that you use to form hats, while other pictures tell a story.

After all, I was a graphic designer for four years. 50 percent of my work is focused on the graphic and iconic look of the pictures and the other 50 percent are influenced by the storytelling character of film stills that comes from directing movies. I don't like spontaneous impressions, I prefer creating an atmosphere.

How do you manage to give your photographs this very sensual feeling, as if you could almost touch the objects?

To be honest, I don't know where this tactile quality comes from. People often ask me this question. It certainly isn't based on a certain technique, it is probably my graphic style.

INTERVIEW: BIRGIT SONNA

PICTURE PASSION

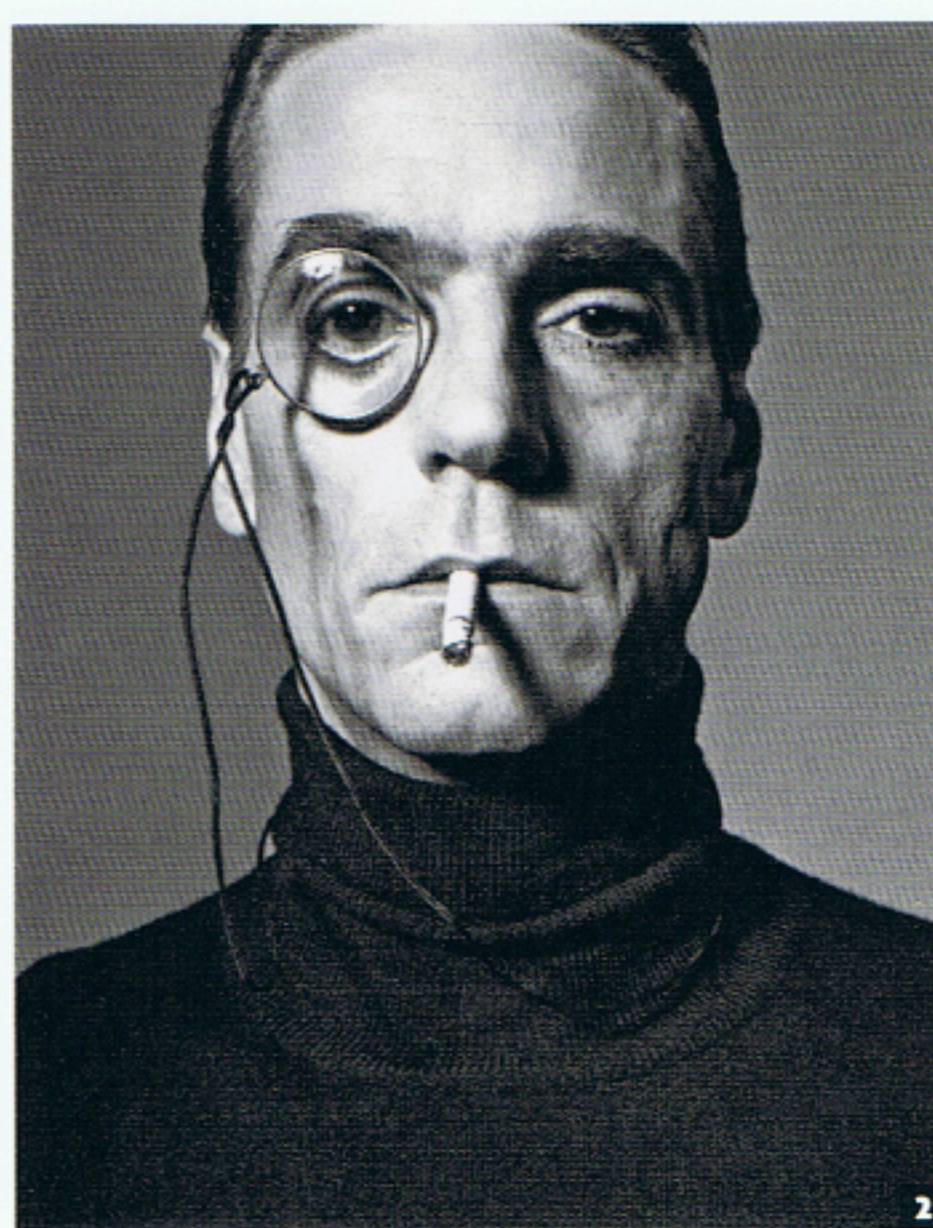
THE NRW-FORUM IN
DÜSSELDORF PRESENTS THE
EXCITING PHOTOGRAPHS OF
THE ARTIST ALBERT WATSON

There are only few photographers who excel in so many different fields. Albert Watson, born in Edinburgh in 1942, wants to reflect the coexistence of diverse genres in today's media age. He now lives in New York, and he takes pictures of landscapes, still life, portraits, fashion and nudes with an almost sculptural impact. A lot of photographs that seem very monumental or even iconic actually derive from the commercial context of fashion, advertising photography or record covers.

SEHNSUCHT / DESIRE Albert Watsons Fotos atmen Weite und erzählen manchmal von Geheimnissen./Albert Watson's photographs are visions of eternity and sometimes of enigma. **1** „15 North, Exit 25“, Las Vegas, 2001. **2** Alasra Ali Biba, Dawra, Morocco, 1998. **3** „Child (31)“, 2008.



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CAMERA HEROES
Fotokunst im NRW-Forum./
Photography at the NRW-
Forum. **1** Herb Ritts: „Alek
Wek“, Los Angeles, 1998.
In Düsseldorf 2001./2001 at
the NRW-Forum. **2** Michel
Comte: „Jeremy Irons“, 1990.
Die Ausstellung startet im
Februar 2009./The exhibition
starts in February 2009.
3 Blick in Mario Testinos
Schau 2007./View of Mario
Testino's show in 2007.



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LOB DES GLAMOUR

DAS NRW-FORUM ENTDECKTE FRÜH
DAS POTENTIAL DER MODEFOTOS

Wenn das New Yorker International Center of Photography 2009 zum Jahr der Modefotografie ausruft, klingt das in den Ohren der Ausstellungsmacher des NRW-Forums Düsseldorf, Petra Wenzel und Werner Lippert, geradezu historisch. Bereits die dritte Schau des 1998 gegründeten Hauses war Peter Lindbergh gewidmet. Seinerzeit ein Wagnis, denn Modefotografie galt nicht als museumswürdig. Heute, 30 erfolgreiche Fotoausstellungen im NRW-Forum später, ist das Genre anerkannt.

Und prompt rüttelt eine neue Generation von Fotografen wie Steven Klein oder Mario Testino, den das NRW-Forum 2007 zeigte, an der sorgsam ausbalancierten Akzeptanz. Der Überschwang des Glamourösen, die Feier makelloser Oberflächen irritiert wieder viele. Auf Albert Watson folgt im Februar 2009 Michel Comte, der hyperelegante Modefotos mit Bildern aus Kambodscha, Bosnien und Afrika konfrontieren wird. Auch eine Provokation – und das ist gut so.

FACES OF GLAMOUR

THE NRW-FORUM DISCOVERED THE
ALLURE OF FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

The ICP has proclaimed that 2009 will be the year of fashion photography. This must sound almost historic to the exhibition managers of the NRW-Forum in Düsseldorf, Petra Wenzel and Werner Lippert. Their museum was founded in 1998 and its third show already was dedicated to Peter Lindbergh. At that time quite a risk, because fashion photography was not considered worthy to be presented at a museum. Today, after thirty successful photography exhibitions at the NRW-Forum, the genre has been firmly established. But again, a new generation of photographers like Steven Klein or Mario Testino (who exhibited here in 2007) are disturbing the carefully balanced acceptance. The exuberance of glamor and the celebration of a flawless surface have an irritating effect on many people. After the Watson exhibition, Michel Comte will follow in February 2009. He will confront the visitors with hyper-elegant fashion photography as well as pictures from Cambodia, Bosnia and Africa. Again a provocation – and that is how it should be.