



Focus: The Secret, Sexy, Sometimes Sordid World of Fashion Photographers

Michael Gross

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *House of Outrageous Fortune*, this gripping account of fashion photography's golden age brings to life the wild genius—the ego, the passion, and the wild antics—of the men (and a few women) behind the camera.

Before Instagram was an art form, fashion photographers were pop culture royalty. From the post-war covers of *Vogue* until the triumph of the digital image, the fashion photographer sold not only clothes but ideals of beauty and fantasies of perfect lives. Even when they succumbed to temptation and excess, the very few photographers who rose to the top were artists above all.

In his follow-up to the *New York Times* bestselling *Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women*, Michael Gross probes the lives, hang-ups, and artistic triumphs of more than a dozen of fashion photography's greatest visionaries: Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, Melvin Sokolsky, Bert Stern, David Bailey, Bill King, Gilles Bensimon, Bruce Weber, Steven Meisel, Corinne Day, Bob and Terry Richardson, and more. From Avedon's haute couture fantasies and telling portraits to Weber's sensual, intimate and heroic slices of life, and from Bob Richardson's provocations to his son Terry's transgressions, Gross takes readers behind the scenes and reveals the revolutionary creative processes and fraught private passions of these visionary imagicians.

Tracing the highs and lows of fashion photography from the late 1940s to today, and weaving together candid interviews, never-before-told insider anecdotes and insights born of three decades of front-row and backstage reporting on modern fashion, this exposé is an unprecedented look at an eccentric and seductive profession and the men and women who practice it on the treacherous, shifting sands of pop and fashion culture, and—perhaps most importantly—the rewards and cost, both terribly high, of translating an artist's vision of beauty for an often cold and cruel commercial reality.

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