

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Η ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ ΤΩΝ ΕΥΝΤΑΚΤΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΔΙΑΔΙΚΤΥΟ
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“Women are open and brave”

Pari Spinou



The world's foremost “Photographer of Women” was in Athens yesterday | photo: Marios Valasopoulos

He is a famous fashion photographer who acknowledges that fashion photography is his job – he does it to make a living. But **Peter Lindbergh**'s editorials published in Vogue, Harper's Bazaar and Interview magazines are not glossy or colored, nothing like advertisements.

On the contrary, they are black and white, sensual, disarmingly realistic, innocently provocative.

They depict the natural grace of models, women that look like they are dancing, without much makeup, without a particular mise-en-scène or Photoshop processing.

The legendary “Photographer of Women” was in the center of Athens yesterday – in the middle of tear gases and demonstrations – for the opening of his exhibition at Gagosian gallery.

In a friendly manner, surrounded by his beloved models (most of them naked) captured in the frames of his photographs – Monica Bellucci, Madonna, Stephanie Seymour, Naomi Campbell, Jessica Chastain, Milla Jovovich, Nadja Auermann among them – he talked to us about art and his technique, as well as about what he feels about Greece.

Sunrise and taxes:

“It was during the late '80s when I was photographing Linda Evangelista on the island of Santorini for American Vogue. Influenced by the blue skies and the white houses, the shooting

eventually acquired a more or less touristic flair, but the story we narrated was a good one. In fact, I don't really know much about Greece or the prevalent situation here. I know, though, that the main problem for countries facing financial issues has to do with the central banks that lend money to the governments. You have an active government but as far as I can tell most people don't like paying taxes."

Women Only:

"I definitely prefer photographing women. They are more interesting, more open and brave. I want every one of my pictures to narrate a story. I think that my pictures are timeless because they don't describe a specific period of time, they capture reality and penetrate people."

Black and White Charm:

"What's so striking about black and white photography is how it really helps a sense of reality to come through. After the stock market crash in the United States, photographers used to be civil servants sent by politicians to various parts of the country to depict the new reality – the poverty and child labor. That's why black and white photography is related to the truth in my mind. On the contrary, color images are linked to advertisements and the promotion of various products."

Nude & Porn:

"Nude does not have to be stimulating or voyeuristic, it has nothing to do with sexuality. At least this is how I see it. It can offer you an adventure. The camera captures the chemistry between the photographer and his model. They both change, they get transformed, while the viewer becomes the witness of this relationship."

Intelligent Beauty:

"Aesthetics is important, but a person does not have to be beautiful in order to intrigue me. Penetrating and depicting Einstein's intelligence could be a challenge for example. For the 2006 Pirelli Calendar I photographed young actresses singled out for their talent, not their beauty. It is of course very nice when these two are combined."

A bit of Photoshop:

"I use it for technical reasons. I need to eliminate the effect of digital photography and give the impression of a film, with its poetics and its grace, with its heart."

Peter Lindbergh was born in Lissa, Germany, in 1944. He lives and works between Paris, New York, and Arles, France.

This year, a major retrospective of his work will be presented in Rotterdam and a coffee table book entitled "A Different History of Fashion" will be published, aiming to show his relationship with the top models, his passion for dance and the extent to which he has been influenced by the cinema.

Info: Gagosian Gallery (3 Merlin Str., tel. 210 3640215), until 23 April.