

INFINITE

Possibilities

Art and style with
Howard Schatz

By: **MIKE BRANNON**
Photography: **HOWARD SCHATZ**





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conic photographer Howard Schatz has received international acclaim for his work and is one of the most sought-after photographers working today. Over the last 25 years, 23 major books have been published of his work; he has won virtually every award in photography; and he has had over 100 museum and gallery exhibitions worldwide.

Schatz's editorial work has been published in magazines around the world, including covers for Time, Life and Sports Illustrated, and editorials for Vogue, Vogue Italia, GQ Italia, The New York Times Magazine, The New Yorker, Newsweek and Communication Arts. His work has been featured widely in Europe and on *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, NPR, Fox Sports Network and the Discovery Channel.

His clients include Ralph Lauren RLX, Escada, Sergio Tacchini, Nike, Reebok, Wolford, Etienne Aigner, Sony, Adidas, Finlandia Vodka, MGM Grand Hotel, Virgin Records and Mercedes-Benz.

Schatz's fine art is represented in galleries and exhibited in museums in the United States and around the world. He has received international acclaim for his work, which has been published in 22 monographs to date. Among these monographs is *25 Years*, a magnificent 2-volume retrospective of Schatz's photography that was published in 2015. Schatz's 20th book, *Caught in the Act: Actors Acting* (2013), originated from his monthly feature for Vanity Fair.

Some of the actors he has shot include Ben Kingsley, Michael Douglas, Taraji P. Henson, Colin Firth, David Strathairn, Elisabeth Moss, Jeff Daniels, John Malkovich, Pierce Brosnan and Allison Janney.

Schatz was kind enough to share some of his stellar work with 71 for our fifth annual Light + Sound Issue.





“ Inspiration is everywhere.”



71: What got you into photography? Do you have an art background, did you study formally/apprentice or are you self-taught?

HS: I've had a camera and have been making photographs since I was a teenager. I've studied and audited art history courses at NYU, but I am self-taught. I find inspiration is everywhere. I look at and examine everything, including books, magazines, galleries, museums, websites, social media, etc. There are creative people everywhere doing amazing things.

71: How did you develop your eye and sense of light?

HS: I am on a perpetual and perhaps obsessive treasure hunt, exploring infinite possibilities.

71: Do you have a philosophy of art?

HS: I create images to surprise and delight myself.

71: Who/what have been your influences?

HS: I have a library of a few thousand books of photography and art. In every one of them, there has been an "idea."

71: Can you talk about your most intriguing and/or most challenging projects?

HS: If a journey is not "intriguing" or "challenging," it is probably a waste of time.

71: When and where are you most creative? What sparks your ideas best?

HS: My simple metaphor is that of a "creative tree": I'll start with a fresh idea, climb the trunk of a promising tree of idea and come to a branch that seems "fruitful." I go out on the branch, exploring. If there's no fruit to pick, or if the branch is rotten and cracks and I fall to the ground, the landing is soft, which is to say, experimentation and failure are not painful in the exploratory phases. I'll climb up again and try another branch. On occasion, one needs to abandon the tree and even the orchard. But, by thoroughly exploring and focusing tenaciously, such searching can yield great results.

71: What is it about beauty and fashion that intrigues you?

HS: Beauty/fashion is a collaborative art form – a lot like the production of a creative magazine. A group of artists (designer, stylist, hair and makeup specialists, set designer, model, photographer, etc.) join together to collaborate, coordinate and conspire to create an artwork that is original, timeless, magnificent and fabulous.



When there is a clear vision and everyone “gets it,” the result may well be better than any in the group could have imagined on his or her own. It can be a dazzling, exquisite and stunning piece of orchestration, and a sensational surprise for everyone. When this happens, it creates a communal and incomparable high. Fashion work does that.

71: How does your pursuit of fine art photography differ from your beauty/fashion work?

HS: My fine artwork is not collaborative like my fashion and beauty work. I learn from each, which enhances the results of the other.

71: Do you think and/or prepare differently for editorial beauty and fashion versus your fine art shoots?

HS: The biggest trap is thinking about pleasing someone else. It gets in the way of one’s vision and artistic capabilities.

71: What gear (cameras, lenses, studio lighting, drones) do you use?

HS: My work is done mostly in the studio. My primary camera is a Hasselblad, and I use Broncolor strobes.

71: What would you like to pass on to photographers and creators new to the arts?

HS: One must do all they can to believe in themselves. And then find a place for their creations. An artist must say, “Someone out there loves my work. My job is to find that person or venue.”

71: Can you talk about your latest projects and shoots?

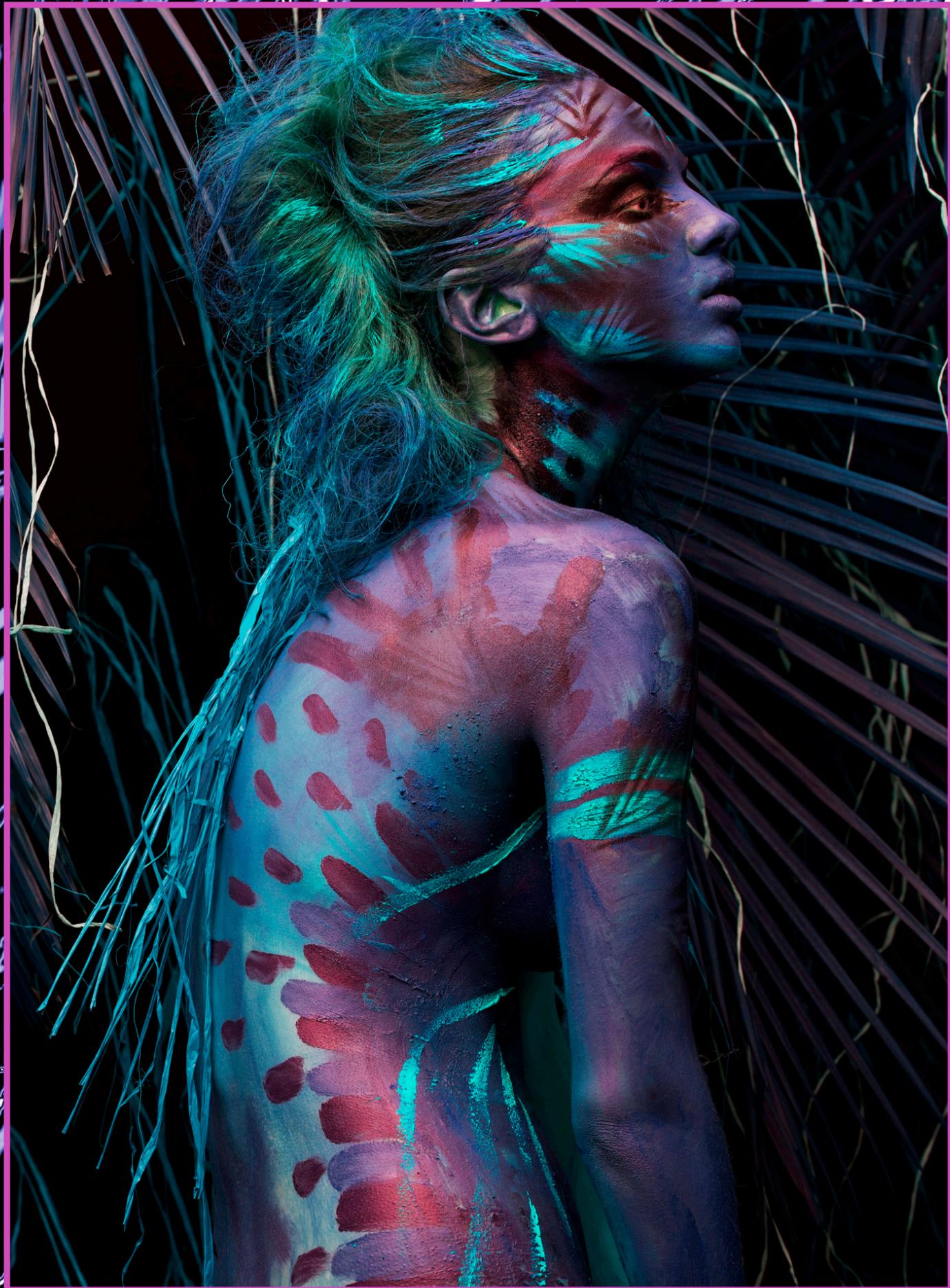
HS: I am project oriented and always work on a number of different projects over the same period of time. These projects are ongoing:

- Portraits of Models
- Dance
- Beauty Body
- The Shape of the NFL
- Growing Up

And I write the weekly Journal ON SEEING, which covers photography, art, imagination, creativity and the pursuit of surprise and wonder at howardschatz.com.

See more from Howard Schatz on Instagram.









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