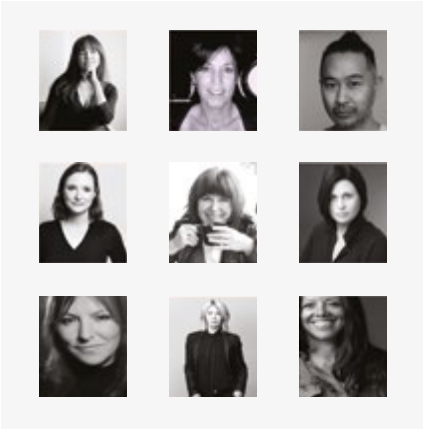


SUMMER INSPIRATION



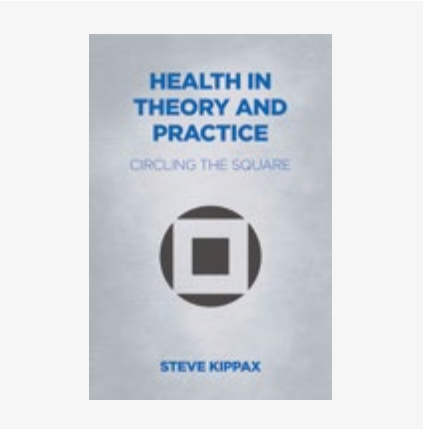
This summer, I’m very excited to be a judge on the Attracta Beauty Awards, featuring industry hair and make up artists with years of experience. At the annual awards ceremony in London, Attracta invites a panel of experts to speak and discuss subjects that are topical in beauty – people who are passionate about evolving beauty and how to make a difference when we communicate beauty with love.

BY KIM BROWN
Beauty Director



I thought I’d reached peak basket until I found myself wandering under a canopy of raffia at the Loewe installation at Milan design week. Dangling above my head like low-hanging fruit, JW Anderson’s baskets were far too tempting to resist. You see the thing is I realise that rather than an annual summer fling, I’m actually committed to baskets as a year-round staple. It’s not uncommon for me to turn up to a meeting with one in my hand in the depths of November. If basketry obsessions are striking a chord with you, I assure you they don’t come better than this.

BY TWIG HUTCHINSON
Design Editor



This summer I’m eschewing the material in favour of delving deeper into finding balance. Steve Kippax’s *Health in Theory and Practice* provides a fascinating look into natural methods of health preservation as opposed to the disease management approach of conventional medicine. For the spiritual aspect, visit to London’s Kim Alexis, renowned psychic medium, clinical hypnotherapist, crystal healer and past life regressionist. My visit with her threw up some surprising information but left me with a deep sense of peace and empowerment.

BY NICOLA KAVANAGH
Editorial Director



To add even more sparkle to my summer travel schedule, I’ve found a perfect pair of diamond hoop earrings. You see, they come with detachable white Akoya pearls for wearing during the daytime, which makes two pairs of earrings in one. As a little extra, you can even purchase a black pair of Tahitian pearl drops, which can be worn in the evening. They are designed by D.Ammo who are famed for designing and manufacturing the finest pearl and diamond jewellery, and I discovered them in the window of Michael Rose Jewels while zipping through Burlington Arcade, London. And then I knew, they had to be mine.

BY AMANDA BERNSTEIN
Travel Editor



I’ve worked like a maniac this year (and last year too). This Blue and White poly tote by Comme des Garçons is going to be both my season treat to from me to me, as well as my beach buddy this summer.

BY REGNER RAMOS
Space Editor



Long summer days – and even longer nights – call for a solid look. I’ll be relying on Surratt Beauty for awesome colours and high-tech textures. Created by make-up artist Troy Surratt, who trained with 1990s legend Kevyn Aucoin, the long-awaited collection of soft lip crayons and smudgy eyelid lacquers will no doubt create a stir this season. Inspired by Surratt’s cosmetic finds during trips to Japan, the sleek black cases and clever product design – think pencils with refillable cartridges and double-sided batons – add another layer of polish. Better still, the packaging is fully recyclable.

BY ALLIE BISWAS
Art Editor

A MOMENT IN TIME

Glass meets the documenters of fashion history
BY EMMA HART



KATE MOSS, JULY 1994, BACKSTAGE GUY LAROCHE. PHOTOGRAPH: GUY MARINEAU

It’s been said by some that behind-the-scenes fashion photography is a dead art form. With digital photography superseding analogue and the impact of social media demanding instant uploads, film and polaroid photographs are becoming obsolete. But while digital photography is appealing for its accessibility, speed and ability to take hundreds of pictures within seconds, we believe an iPhone can never capture a moment as film can. A physical photograph is an indelible, spontaneous, unfiltered snapshot of history. In celebration of the greatest period of backstage fashion photography, we are looking back to the golden era of fashion, meeting the greatest photographers of the 1980s to the early 2000s, with industry legend Guy Marineau re-

presenting the 1980s and the birth of the iconic French maisons, fashion icon Roxanne Lowit the depicting ‘90s and the dawn of the supermodel era, and photography luminary Thomas Zanon-Larcher capturing the new generation the noughties. These visionaries weren’t merely at the forefront of the greatest fashion era, working closely with the greatest designers of the time, they immortalised it. Through their pictures, we can see how the most iconic collections in history were perfected. We see how beautifully photography and backstage complement each other, and, despite the difficulty of working in low-lighting and the chaos of such a hectic environment, how it has produced some of fashion’s most famous pictures.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CAMERA

Guy Marineau, the man who captured the greatest era of fashion on film



LAETITIA CASTA AND YVES SAINT LAURENT, 1999

On acquiring his first camera at the age of ten, French photographer Guy Marineau destroyed his mother's dreams for him to become a banker but marked the beginning of his 40-year-long career. Initially finding his way into photography as a reporter, Marineau was introduced into the fashion industry by a photographer friend and was immediately hired in 1975 by an American fashion newspaper, *Women's Wear Daily*. A newcomer to the industry, Marineau was dazzled by the world he had entered, having unknowingly walked straight into fashion's "golden era", where hedonism was the norm and almost every excess was permitted. Before too long, Marineau was travelling the world, and was quick to encounter Yves Saint Laurent, sparking a friendship which led him to

become Laurent's personal photographer for over 30 years.

Later becoming a photographer at *American Vogue*, Marineau covered 90 per cent of all shows every season, frequently travelling between Paris, Milan, New York, and London to capture designers, working alongside fashion greats, including the likes of Karl Lagerfeld, Claude Montana, Christian Lacroix, Gianni Versace and, of course, Yves Saint Laurent. Coloured with the energy of the late 1990s, his backstage photography didn't just document the designs, but focused a lens onto the beautiful and the outrageous.

Glass talks to the photography legend to discuss his most memorable moments backstage, how fashion photography compares today, and how his military service influenced his career.



JEAN CLAUDE DE LUCA LES HALLES, PARIS 1979

I understand that when you got your first job with fashion newspaper *Women's Wear Daily*, you knew very little about fashion. How did you feel about becoming suddenly submerged into the fashion world?

I met Gérald Driansky, the director of the Paris office of *WWD*, on August 15, 1975. I presented him my book that contained a lot of various images and a dozen images of fashion made for friends; he was seduced by all, fashion, portraits, decoration, travel and still life. He hired me on the spot. Two weeks later, I had to do my first report for *WWD*, it was the premiere of Just Jaeckin's movie, *Histoire d'O* in a cinema on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. I obviously knew about the existence of couturiers like Paco Rabanne, André Courrèges or Yves Saint Laurent, but that was about all. At the Fairchild Publications office, on the rue Cambon near Chanel, I immersed myself in dozens of past issues of *WWD* and there I really met this world. And I liked it.

Navigating fashion week in the 1980s must have been like stepping into a whole other world. It was a time when fashion was its most creative, with legends like Saint Laurent, Montana, Alaïa, Gaultier, Miyake, Valentino all breaking new ground with their explosive ideas. What was the energy like backstage?

Yes, the 1980s fashion week was completely different from today, be it backstage or during the parade itself. There were no special instructions for the models, a vague choreography and free access to the backstage. At the time of parades at the Cour Carrée du Louvre, there was between two parades a break of two or three hours, and we had lunch at the Canteen with light technicians, carpenters sets and models. The atmosphere of the parades in Paris was inspiring, the rhythm, the light, the music, the champagne gave a great energy to the models who returned all this on

the podium and we had only to seize these moments.

Backstage was not organised or controlled like now. You could go there freely, look at the tone of the collection, talk with the girls to watch them get their hair done and make up themselves, there were very few pro make up artists at the time. Depending on the time of the parade you could have a coffee or a glass of champagne.

During your career you have captured countless celebrities, models, and fashion icons. Can you tell us what stands out to you as some of the most memorable moments?

I remember a long stay in Australia in 1988 during the bicentennial of this country where I made a beautiful series of portraits of Gianni Versace, in the shade of the eucalyptus of the Boonoke Ranch, the property of Rupert Murdoch, and Sonia Rykiel shearing merino sheep with Ottavio Missoni. An evening at the Sydney Opera House or the nine invited creators presented their collections in the presence of Lady Diana and Prince Charles. How not to make beautiful pictures in such a context?

I have other fun memories too, in Saint Tropez I had just photographed Brigitte Bardot discreetly in the store of an antique dealer and she chased me and threw at me two candelabras she had just bought.

You worked during a golden era when many of the famous maisons were being created. How do you feel that the fashion world today compares to the one in which you worked?

In my opinion, Karl Lagerfeld's death really marks the end of the true creators; when I speak about true creators it is for me, those who created their own House and worked there until the end, with their own style and their way of conceiving fashion. Of course, there is still Jean



AZZEDINE ALAÏA, PARIS 1989

Paul Gaultier, the only real survivor of this incredibly creative period. Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Lacroix, Christian Dior, André Courrèges and so on. All these creators have made fashion, their fashion, without reservation or marketing considerations.

At first there was really Haute Couture, reserved for an elite and very few photographers. We had a duty of confidentiality and discretion with respect to the models presented. Little by little, Prêt à Porter became popular and more profitable because the world of Haute Couture was really associated with people who had a lot of money and it gradually disappeared. Today houses like Dior or Saint Laurent make more money with the RTW and accessories.

For me, the real couturiers are no longer there. The investors have, at the death of the founder, bought a name, a label and hired creators coming out of British or Belgian schools. They are getting younger, have very lucrative contracts, but have very strong profitability obligations and many prefer to retire after two or three years. We are far from the solitary work of Yves Saint Laurent, dictated only by his talent, his mood, and the colours and scents of Marrakech.

Do you keep any interest in fashion today?

No, the fashion of 2019 really does not concern me. It became something other than what I knew and lived. There is no longer like the origin, true creators owning their own House and making it live by their talent. Today the market is globalised, there are fashion weeks everywhere now. The creators chosen by the big groups are young because their creations must address young people. What they are asked is to develop the brand. The Paris of the years 1975–1995 was probably the most interesting for the creation, fashion and fashion photography.

I really liked this period. The couturiers that I met in those years have almost all disappeared today and this new generation of creators no longer uses the same codes. They must popularise their products. Their parades are boring, a succession of girls (not even beautiful and without charisma) who walk one behind the other satisfied with their leanness because the new creators think that a garment “falls” better on a skinny girl.

In 1967, you were in an infantry regiment near Bordeaux, where you discovered you were a skier sniper. Do you feel you utilise this particular skill in some way when taking fashion photographs, especially backstage, which requires you to fast and accurate?

My military training as a sniper – speed, precision, discretion – was much used in my career as a photographer, whether backstage or on the catwalk and even in some reports. I remember a reflection of Claude Lelouch the filmmaker, who one day when I photographed his wonderful Hotel in Normandy for the *W*, said to me: “You make your photos in the same way that I realise my films.” I was very happy to be able to apply these military techniques to fashion shows.

In the 1980s, I was the only photographer who had to work with two cameras at the same time. A Nikon F3 with a 300 mm charged in black and white and a Nikon F3 with a colour loaded 180 mm. The black and white was for the *WWD* and the colour *W*. When the model came out of the backstage and arrived on the catwalk, I shot a first burst in 300 mm in black and white, I changed the case and finished the course of the mannequin to 180 mm in colour.

It was necessary at the same time to focus, choose the right light, the right diaphragm and reload all 36 views. It was quite complex,

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: GUY MARINEAU



VALENTINO, 1979

a little tiring, but I always did well. The pictures were pretty and the most important they were liked by John Fairchild, my boss.

Who were your favourite designers to work with?

Without any doubt, during my career as a fashion photographer I have had a passion, an admiration and a great respect for Yves Saint Laurent. Of all the great couturiers that I met, it was him, Pierre Bergé and his team, who were most loyal to me. I met Yves Saint Laurent during the previews of September 1976, on Avenue Marceau, I did not know then that Pierre Bergé and Yves Saint Laurent had split up and that there was a conflict between them. I found this man deeply endearing, timid and reserved. Silence often took place in the big living room, we were expecting to hear details from his very soft voice about the models who passed by – Kirat or Mounia and that he was chosen for the cover of the *Women Wear Daily*, before I photographed them.

For me, this world was a new adventure in which I would step on tiptoe. I did not know that so many doors would now not stop opening and closing. I loved the man, I loved his work, his vision of how to dress women’s bodies, to give them colours according to the seasons. I loved his freedom to dress woman with those meticulous details; his ability to dress them with bustier dresses; crossed straps in the back; in short dresses and skirts in an urban sexy way also dress with “the drape” inspired by Marrakech colours of the sun going down.

I loved his sumptuous haute couture collection from 1976 “Les ballets Russes”. We loved to see those evening dresses for women with their flying skirts and flanged pumps; their lips red like a thousand kisses;

their eyes turned to America, in trails of the scent Opium. I was a man who “loved women” and Mr. Saint Laurent had the talent to make them naturally beautiful and photographing them became a real pleasure.

Many of your photographs have a beautifully candid and spontaneous feel. Can you tell us what is your creative process for capturing a stunning photograph?

I became a photographer because Beaux Arts made me think too much about school and this academic side was boring for me and my self-taught character. I do not know if I became an artist, I have always thought only of making images.

Paris was a city conducive to the photography of fashion shows in the 1980s. It was a city in motion with exceptional creators, innovators who were happy to show their creations. Show photography requires concentration, enthusiasm, and the discipline of a precise mind; it is an immediate operation of the senses.

My catwalk pictures are unpretentious, not calculated, not organised. I took what I was given – the light, the girls, the rhythm. The model arrived on the catwalk, I knew I was going to have them for only 30 seconds and I had to capture what she was going to show me – her freshness, her smile – the clothes that she wore, her gestures, all with a light on the catwalk. Making the images today, that I made at that time, would be impossible today; in shows these days, the girls walk behind each other without expressing the slightest feeling or gesture.

BY EMMA HART

NOT IN THE BACKGROUND

Roxanne Lowit, the woman who became as much a celebrity as those she photographed



DANCING DIVAS, JERRY HALL AND TALITA, YSL, PARIS 1979

Roxanne Lowit never planned to be a photographer. Graduating from the Fashion Institute of Technology with a degree in Art History and Textile Design, it wasn't the typical route towards fashion photography for the New York native. However, it was actually through painting that she discovered a preference for capturing an image, rather than spending hours working on a portrait. And if anything, her skills in portraiture have helped her craft her distinctive photographic style. While many backstage photographers attempted to fixate on a feeling of spontaneity, Lowit has created a world of dreamlike portrait-style backstage photographs.

Lowit started taking backstage photographs in the

1970s, before the backstage was widely captured, when her friend Jerry Hall would sneak her backstage in Paris. Since then, Lowit has become a celebrity in the fashion world in her own right, having photographed models including Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington, and has even worked on advertising campaigns with fashion houses such as Dior and Vivienne Westwood. Capturing some of the world's most prolific fashion moments, Lowit brought a lens to the fashion industry, immortalizing some of its most outrageously iconic decades in the wonder of black and white film.

Glass speaks to Lowit about working within a male-dominated industry, the makings of a great backstage image, and her most favourite backstage photographs.



SPEAKING, HEARING AND SEEING NO EVIL, LINDA EVANGELISTA, NAOMI CAMPBELL, CHRISTY TURLINGTON, THE PLAZA HOTEL, NYC 1989

Throughout your career, you've captured some of the world's most iconic figures, including Kate Moss, David Bowie, Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol and Naomi Campbell. As someone who puts a lens to the fashion industry, how do you feel celebrity culture has changed over the three decades of your career?

Though celebrity culture has definitely changed over the decades, celebrities are still just people too. Some are surrounded by handlers and it is harder to connect with the person behind the entourage. Others, when they see me, they stop for a hug and a chat while I snap their photos. Some of my fondest memories are going to Cannes and other film festivals. I would see so many people, some I have known for years and are my friends, and we go out to dinner. Celebrities like David Bowie, Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol always had time for me and my camera. I remember this one time I was shooting a story for *Allure* magazine and our location was at a big benefit party. David Bowie was there at his table; I asked if I could do a quick shot for the story, and he graciously agreed. Chandra North was there and I told her to whisper in his ear. She was just beginning her career and I am sure she couldn't believe her luck. I shot off half a roll, said, "I got it" to Chandra and "thank you" to David.

Photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt said, "It is more important to click with people than to click the shutter." Do you feel this was integral to your career as a fashion photographer?

I agree that it is important to connect with your subject matter. Stronger connections make better photos. I definitely was able to get more out of the models backstage; they would give me more because they knew me and liked me. They were always happy to see me — that shows in the photos.

As a backstage photographer, you've worked behind the scenes with countless brands. What are your most memorable moments working backstage?

Every season, every decade, every designer has a memorable moment. To me a memorable moment is when someone is being true to themselves and that everything comes together, and it's like wow! That was incredible! There is always something new, always something to amaze. I think the trick is to have the ability to see the beauty that is there and capture something exciting.

What was it like working backstage in the 1980s and '90s? What were your favourite shows and why? Do you feel that fashion has become more commercialised and lost a lot of the excitement and energy?

There are so many fantastic shows from that era it is really hard to choose one. I love the classics such as Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino, Chanel. But what really inspires me is the fantastic fantasy of designers such as Thierry Mugler, John Galiano for Dior and Jean Paul Gaultier. I love when a fashion show was a "show" — a spectacle of beauty and wonder and dreams.

You've said before that backstage photography as a field has blown up since you started in the late '70s. Why do you think there's been a rise in interest in capturing fashion backstage?

I think everyone is fascinated with behind the scenes. Backstage is an insider's view. Caught moments of the designer fixing a look, a model zipping up her friend. To witness not only the transformation, but the community backstage: to see the masters at work, to see the models as real people, relatable. For me being backstage was liberating. I could walk around and interact and capture my own vision, group models together or get a better angle on the dress, rather than just the models walking on the runway. It was my vision, my interpretation.

You didn't study photography, instead studying art history and textile design. In some way, do you feel you bring your skills as an artist to the field of photography?



JOHN GALLIANO WITH MODELS BACKSTAGE, DIOR, PARIS 1997



POTASSA DE LA FAYETTE AND SALVADOR DALI, RESTAURANT LAURENT, NYC, NEW YEAR'S EVE 1979



KATE MOSS, CHANEL, PARIS 1996



THREE MODELS IN A TUB, NAOMI CAMPBELL, CHRISTY TURLINGTON AND LINDA EVANGELISTA, VERSACE AFTER PARTY AT THE RITZ, PARIS 1990

Absolutely. In studying art and art history you study composition and light, which is also a big part of capturing a great photo. Learning about art trained my eye and gave me an advantage.

Your photography is permeated with a sense of intimacy and warmth, with one of your most famous behind the scenes photographs being Naomi Campbell, Christy Turlington and Linda Evangelista in a bath tub. What is your process for capturing such stunning and intimate images?

Photography is my passion. I am always looking for a great moment to create and capture. There I was at the Versace after party at the Ritz-Carlton, when I saw this luxurious tub and thought it was the perfect setting for the three muses of the time, Linda, Christy and Naomi. I asked them to get in. They were having the time of their lives, laughing and giggling. I took several shots and that was it. The location was stunning and the moment asked to be created. The intimacy is between the models, friends in a tub, after all what’s more intimate then sharing a bath?

What are some of your favourite pictures you’ve captured?

I have so many, but I guess if I had to choose it would be “Three Models in a Tub” and “Hear No Evil”. Three Models in a Tub captures both the over the top decadence of the ‘90s and unadulterated carefree joy of youth. In Hear No Evil these are not three monkeys, these are three beautiful young women, at the height of their careers, rocketed to superstardom. They are both playful, unexpected moments.

You’ve said before that initially you were underestimated as a photographer because you didn’t fit the typical look of the burly, ultra-masculine paparazzi. In a field dominated by men, how do you feel the attitude towards female photographers has changed throughout the decades?

I’m not sure it has changed. Being a woman photographer is definitely challenging, but I am sure many women in many fields would say the same. I also found advantages in my career being a woman. I first got backstage because of the models – they took me with them as their “hairdresser”. I doubt they would have done that had I been a man. Also being a woman I was allowed to be and stay backstage. In the ‘90s when there were more backstage photographers at the shows, I was still the only woman. They would allow us backstage for hair and make up, but when the dressing began they would usher the photographers out, all but me.

You began capturing backstage photos in the late 1970s, when your friends, including model Jerry Hall, would sneak you backstage to shows. What was the energy like backstage at these shows?

The shows in the late 1970s had a very carefree energy. It felt like we were pioneers of a new era. It was really about expressing one’s creative side. It had yet to become a corporate industry.

Who are the most interesting people that you’ve photographed and why?

I find the most interesting people to photograph are creative people, people who march to the beat of their own drum, people who emanate a joie de vivre, and of course people who enjoy having their photo being taken.

Final question, if you had to summarise what you think makes a great photograph, what would it be?

A great photo tells a story that people can relate to, one that makes you want to know more. A story that needs no translation. A story that transcends time.

BY EMMA HART

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: ROXANNE LOWIT

THE INVISIBLE MAN

Thomas Zanon-Larcher talks us through capturing some of the most iconic collections of the new millennium



ANNE VALERIE HASH, ÉCOLE DES BEAUX ARTS, PARIS JULY 2006

Capturing over 30,000 backstage photographs throughout his career, Thomas Zanon-Larcher is the invisible man of backstage photography of the 2000s. The Italian-born photographer prides himself on his ability to be unseen behind the scenes, a spectator amongst the chaos of the backstage, and is renowned for his ability to capture the intimacy of a moment. Having worked with fashion houses including Yohji Yamamoto, Alexander McQueen, Dries Van Noten, Martin Margiela, Hussein Chalayan and Lanvin to name a few, the artist travelled across the globe to capture some of the early 2000's most famous designs.

Spinning a story through his lens, he is renowned for his distinctively cinematic approach to photography, as

in his collections such as *The Lady From The Sea*, made in collaboration with his friend and colleague the late Jules Wright, the theatre entrepreneur who set up the Wapping Project art space, and he transfers this to his backstage work with ease. While many photographers are concerned with capturing each singular look, he is focused on finding the fleeting split-second moments among the madness backstage. Possessed with an eye for these special moments, his photography does more than snapshot fashion, but visualises the energy of the decade.

After viewing his extensive collection at his home in Wapping, east London, *Glass* spoke to Zanon-Larcher about working among the greats, the rise of digital photography, and the seeming “death” of backstage photography.



NICOLAS GHESQUIÈRE FOR BALENCIAGA, RUE DU CHERCHE MIDI, PARIS OCTOBER 2007

Throughout your career you've worked with countless legendary designers, including Yohji Yamamoto. What was the energy like working with Yamamoto?

With Yohji I had a very long-running collaboration – as I was the only backstage photographer allowed where the fashion was at his shows. In London it's a bit different, but in Paris normally what happens (the things always evolve and change) you have the beauty area where the models get their hair and make up done, and then usually with the beauty shows the area where all the dresses are and the clothes are separate. What used to be the case is that there are a lot of photographers allowed in the beauty area, and much fewer where the models get dressed. But with Yohji, I was the only one allowed where the models would get dressed.

How come you were the only one?

I guess it happened because I met with him, he trusted me, but how that happened was I had an exhibition in 2007 in the fashion museum in Antwerp, and that was a show which transferred from London from Wapping to Toronto. And then, before that happened, I had a meeting with the Antwerp people, and they knew Yohji, so I was able to set up a meeting because they were interested in having someone photograph Yohji. So they looked at my work at the time, and they liked the work, and then, at the beginning, they let me go to menswear.

What was it like working with such a prolific designer like Yohji Yamamoto?

It was very special. There was a certain quietness backstage. Some of the other shows, like Yves Saint Laurent and Gucci, there was a lot of waiting, and there was a certain build up in terms of energy,

a kind of nervousness. But with Yohji it was kind of “fluid”, I don't know quite how to describe it, they would get dressed and he was there, cutting and fixing the clothes. Then they would just start walking out. The walking out was almost like a very seamless continuation of him doing the last fine-tuning backstage. It was different from other shows. Most of the team was Japanese and they have a certain way to behave. You could sense the respect they had for Yohji. They would step back and it was very different. Every show I've done has had a very different energy – whether it be Dries Van Noten, or with Yohji it would be very silent, people would speak very silently. Then, Stella McCartney was a bit more lively. McQueen was super charged.

How else did it compare backstage with Alexander McQueen? What was the mood?

With Alexander McQueen, there was always a potential for failure because they had such complicated sets. There were these moving parts and dresses which would disappear, then before going live there was a sense of nervousness, because these things can go wrong potentially.

It was more stressful?

Yes, and you could sense that.

I've read before that you attempt to bring a sense of storytelling to your photography. Do you think you incorporate that into your backstage photography?

Yes, I think what happened was it was the other way around. I was doing backstage before I started working with Jules Wright, and backstage the way I was doing it, what the models do is completely natural because they are just doing what they're doing. If the intent is honest, then



STEFANO PILATI FOR YVES SAINT LAURENT, GRAND PALAIS, PARIS OCTOBER 2009

it’s believable. I was looking for natural movement in the image, and yet being able to direct actors or performers or models. When I later worked with actors, they would play out characters. But, when I was a backstage photographer, I didn’t have those tools, “How do you direct it properly through just external posing?” So you give them a character, you give them intent, you give them objectives, so that it could be the other way around. Back-stage enabled me to have this fluidity and movement without necessarily directing the model.

Would you say being able to go about as a spectator, completely unnoticed is the most important skill in back-stage photography?

I think for me it was important, because of what I was looking for in those photographs, yes. I wouldn’t say generally, that’s up to each photographer. What I did notice, when I was doing this, there were photographers doing a similar thing, but mainly black and white. They would work without flash as I did, but it requires a lot of skill and colour balance later if you photograph in colour. Black and white is a lot easier; with colour it is so much more difficult to get a pleasing image. There was nobody else doing it, but then later on I noticed this became a thing, especially with photographers who were shooting with digital, but I think they were looking for a certain honesty, which is not only about posing. When I was doing it, it wasn’t so common.

So why didn’t you want to shoot black and white?

I did some black and white. For me I wanted to shoot in colour because it was more difficult. I remember I did a Gucci show, and it was when Frida Giannini was still with Gucci, and they did two shows back to back, one for the press, one for the buyers. The backstage area where they would

get dressed was a very narrow, long sort of corridor. It was very difficult to move, the models had their racks there and you had almost no space. There was so little light. I remember after the show, it was a big commission to photograph all of the brands, Bottega, McQueen, and of course Gucci. I had to get one iconic shot, so in a way it was more difficult because I had to get a shot they thought was really amazing and very special. I remember after the show I was very grumpy, because there was almost no light. But in a way that’s what kept me going. It’s this combination of all these figures and no light and if you miss it, you miss it. It’s the adrenaline for me, working at the limits of what the camera was able to do.

How do you feel backstage photography of the noughties compares with backstage photography today?

I think the access is completely different. There were very few backstage photographers, and they would often do many shows. Now there are so many – everybody takes photography, they film on the iPhone, whatever takes pictures. An iPhone camera is also very good – you can take a good photograph or a video. They give you a very good quality in low light, so they allow you to get very good shots, if you have an eye. What also happened, a lot of younger photographers, not just the case with backstage, are starting to use film again. Because digital can seem very generic, and it has a specific very generic look. If you don’t want to have that look, you have to really work for it. If you have an iPhone 10 (which I do) the images might look very similar. That’s why people who are doing digital are trying to move away, and use film or polaroid again.

Working throughout the 2000s, how do you feel the rise of digital photography has affected behind-the-scenes fashion photography? Especially as you shot on film and polaroid.



DRIES VAN NOTEN, ÉCOLE DES BEAUX ARTS, PARIS JULY 2006



NICOLAS GHESQUIÈRE FOR BALENCIAGA, RUE DU CHERCHE MIDI, PARIS OCTOBER 2007



FRIDA GIANNINI FOR GUCCI, PIAZZA OBERDAN, MILAN FEBRUARY 2007



ALEXANDER MCQUEEN, PALAIS OMNISPORT, PARIS MARCH 2007



ALBER ELBAZ FOR LANVIN, HALLE FREYSSINET, PARIS MARCH 2010

The availability of digital, mobiles and all that, enabled very different images. Before, you had to have a good understanding with film, and a very basic understanding with phones. There are very advanced digital cameras nowadays. Of course, you do need a very good understanding if you want a great shot, but you can take a good shot without much technical skill (let's call it) in photography. That acted as a multiplier, the effect you have, with hair and makeup, they are all backstage photographers in a way, as long as they can get a place. In that sense, you could talk about maybe the inflation of images, that would be a good word.

Do they therefore devalue? I'm not saying that's true. It's just something you could ask. I think there is something in there, they potentially devalue the exclusiveness of the images, because they are not exclusive any more. I think they are also disposable. Simply because there are so many, the only other thing I would like to add, with digital you can take as many pictures as you want. When you work with film, you could maybe get six sheets, so you have to be very concentrated. With digital, unless you are very, very disciplined, it can get lost. I have seen people backstage, people from *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, and they say to me "Oh now I never miss a shot, I never miss a look", but with film, I would miss some looks, but I'd have a few really great shots. Pretty much all of them have said this to me.

I hear a lot of people talking about the death of backstage photography. Would you say backstage photography has changed for the worse?

It is difficult to give a simplistic answer. It's like with many things, they change. When someone has a voice, they might have a way to tell something very specific in that environment, no matter what the means are, they might work with many more people, but I don't think it's the case that there won't be anybody who produces something that has a lasting impression or stands the test of time. I understand though.

I was speaking to Charlotte Cotton, a famous fashion writer, and she was saying fashion goes in these sort of waves, of a great "era", and then it gets a bit muddled, and then exciting again. It happened towards the end of the '90s, all these great photographers, and then it became a bit more, perhaps dull, and then it picked up again. But, I think it's not just backstage, the whole way fashion works has changed. I think the problem is that creativity isn't infinite. If you're just non-stop in terms of putting out something new, you run out of steam. None of them can invent amazing things every three months, it's just not possible.

BY EMMA HART