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# Herb Ritts: L.A. Style



## Synopsis

Herb Ritts: L.A. Style traces the life and career of the iconic photographer through a compelling selection of renowned, as well as previously unpublished, photographs and two insightful essays. Herb Ritts (1952–2002) was a Los Angeles-based photographer who established an international reputation for distinctive images of fashion models, nudes, and celebrity portraits. During the 1980s and 1990s, Ritts was sought out by leading fashion designers such as Armani, Gianfranco Ferré, Donna Karan, Calvin Klein, Valentino, and Versace, as well as magazine editors from GQ, Interview, Rolling Stone, and Vanity Fair, among others, to lend glamour to their products and layouts. Largely self-taught, Ritts developed his own style, one that often made use of the California light and landscape and helped to separate his work from his New York-based peers. From the late 1970s until his untimely death from AIDS in 2002, Ritts's ability to create photographs that successfully bridged the gap between art and commerce was not only a testament to the power of his imagination and technical skill, but also marked the synergistic union between art, popular culture, and business that followed in the wake of the Pop Art movement of the 1960s and 1970s. An exhibition of the same name will be on view at the Getty Center from April 3 through August 12, 2012; at the Cincinnati Art Museum from October 6 through December 30, 2012; and at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida, from February 23 through May 19, 2013.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A decade after his passing, the Getty Center is hosting the traveling Herb Ritts exhibit, L.A. Style.

The title of the show this monograph chronicles the career of the late photographer, and captures Ritts' ability to bring the distinct feel of his native California to life. It's his unique version of California, a dry black and white background upon which to capture new compositions of the human body. Probably best known for his commercial work of the '80s and '90s, in which he helped usher in the rise of the supermodel with his fashion campaigns and made some amazing music videos like "for Madonna," Ritts' most lasting contribution to fine art may be his male nudes and close-up portraits of the body in motion, which feature prominently in the book. A now famous photograph of Djimon Hounsou features the model-actor in profile, looking like a classical sculpture--except for the dead octopus on his head, its arms dangling down like dreadlocks. Also included is the justly famous and coveted image "Stephanie, Cindy, Christy, Tatjana, Naomi, Hollywood," a 1989 shot of five nude models, and examples of the manner in which Ritts was able to gain the confidence of famous stars and produce unique portraits. Ritts, who grew up next door to actor Steve McQueen, learned his easy rapport with celebrities from a young age. A largely self-taught photographer, he saw his career take off with pictures he snapped of the actor Richard Gere in tight jeans, taken on a 1977 road trip. Credited with developing a style of photography that seemed to reveal something private and internal about his famous subjects, Mr. Ritts earned the trust of his models. "I did Playboy with Herb two times," according to supermodel Cindy Crawford.

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