

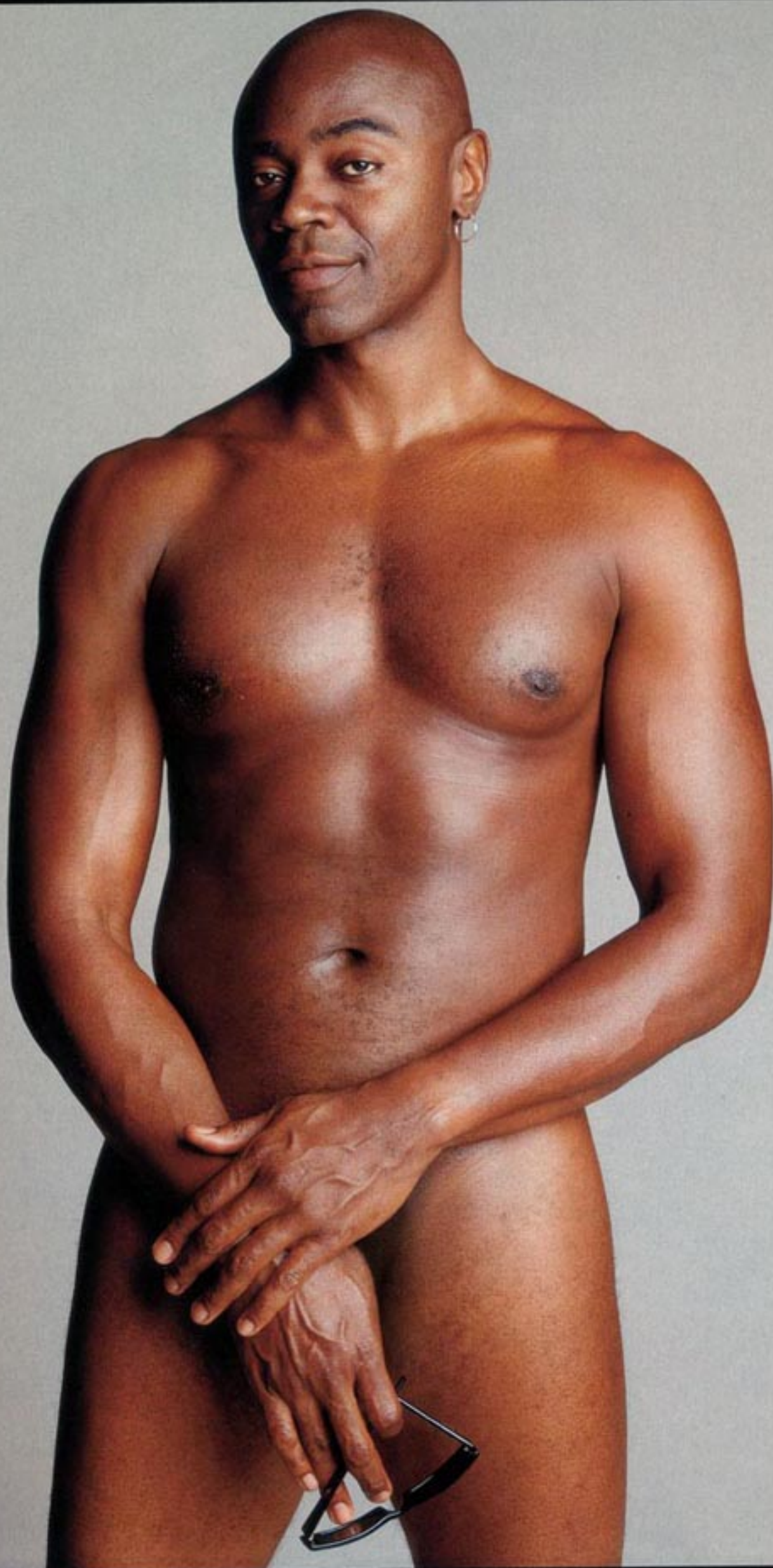
This page: A
Greenfield-
Sanders portrait
of porn star
Gina Lynn.
Opposite page:
Actor and
director Sean
Michaels.

BEST BOOKS

FAMED
PORTRAITIST
TIMOTHY
GREENFIELD-
SANDERS
UNCOVERS
THE TRUTH
ABOUT OUR
NEWEST
CELEBRITIES—
PORN STARS.

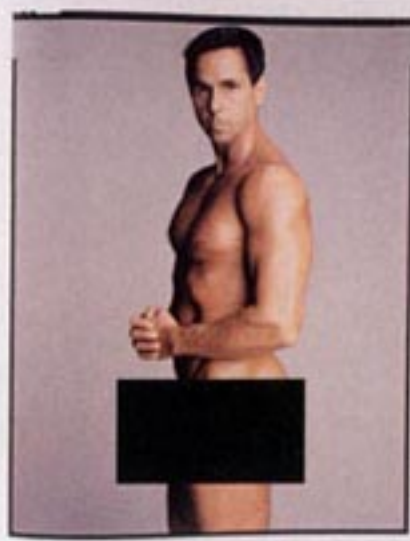
BEHIND THE XXX DOOR

To capture the noted and elite of our culture—he has famously photographed artists, critics, actors, and writers—Timothy Greenfield-Sanders relies on photography's ability to isolate, objectify, and glamorize. But his latest project presented particular artistic challenges. Two years ago he began photographing a different type of cultural figure—porn actors, in states of dress and undress. It meant shooting nudes, something he'd never done. It also meant photographing subjects already famous for baring all for public consumption. What power would a portraitist have to reveal more? "They f--- on film," says the photographer, "so there are not a lot of secrets left." Nonetheless, Greenfield-Sanders has produced a collection of images that intriguingly unites high and low culture—he describes the project as "class meets ass." The result is the most-talked-about photo book of the year, *XXX: 30 Porn-Star Portraits* (Bulfinch Press, \$35). Its release this fall coincided with a major exhibition at New York City's Mary Boone Gallery, a behind-the-scenes film airing on HBO, and even a soundtrack CD from the film, attesting to the modern cultural allure of porn. On the following pages, Greenfield-Sanders talks with *AP* about the creative decisions behind the project and interviews two of his subjects—porn superstars Nina Hartley and Tera Patrick—about what photography can uncover, and what it can conceal.



This page: Greenfield-Sanders's shot of Christy Canyon. Opposite, top: Actor and director Peter North (left) and former actress Sharon Mitchell. Bottom: Greenfield-Sanders on set.





FOR GREENFIELD-SANDERS, GETTING THE MONEY SHOT MEANT MAKING HIS NUDE SUBJECTS COMFORTABLE ON SET. HERE HE TELLS AP HOW HE DID IT.

You've shot many notable people in America. How did the idea of shooting porn stars occur to you?

It really goes back to 1997 when I saw the film *Boogie Nights*. That inspired me to think about porn stars as a group. My first idea was to photograph them clothed, not naked, because I thought, from watching the film, that they might be interesting as people. I'd never thought of them as people before that—you objectify them, because that's what porn does. I didn't do much with the idea, though, until 1999, when I actually met a male porn star. He came here and posed for me, clothed, and then he said, "Let's do a nude now." I was taken aback and immediately thought of doing it in the same pose as he'd done with clothes.

In your HBO film about the project, you say you'd never shot nudes before, and that shooting porn stars made it relatively easy for you, because they were used to taking their clothes off.

Right. That's important to all this. I was so uncomfortable, and they were so comfortable, that I quickly learned to be comfortable with nudity. My goal as a photographer is always to make my subject feel comfortable. I do that in a million different ways, with little tricks. From the moment someone walks into my studio I'm watching everything, every gesture.

The juxtaposition of the nudes and the clothed shots seems to reveal a lot about the individuals.

I think it's interesting that these people almost all look more relaxed without clothes than with. It's who they are, what they do.

How does this project fit into your entire body of work?

In a number of ways. For one thing, it's a series. A lot of my work—at least my exhibition work—has been series. I did a series on artists from the 1950s, a series on art critics, a series on the East Village art scene. I always think that way, inclusively. **It's interesting to think about when you**

did this—the Bush administration had come in, the religious right was in ascendancy, yet porn was never bigger. Is porn mainstream now?

I don't think porn will ever be mainstream, but porn stars as celebrities are. I have a theory about how that happened: It's because of Howard Stern. His whole thing is talking to people outside the mainstream and making them celebrities. And



once you're a celebrity, you're part of the pop culture. At the same time, artists were beginning to use porn and pornographic imagery in their own work. *Boogie Nights* came out with mainstream actors like Mark Wahlberg and Julianne Moore playing porn stars. And of course publishers began to see the potential of porn stars. Jenna Jameson's autobiography is on the bestseller list.

You interview the actors for your film and for the book. And many of them are very articulate and interesting.

I don't know how to say this without being condescending, but my preconceptions about porn stars were very clichéd when I started. But I found them to be exceptionally smart, some intellectually, but all of them smart in the sense that they're driven and know what they want. And they're very open—there's no spin with them, which I loved.

Let's talk about the actual photo sessions. Did that openness affect how you worked with them as a portraitist?

Very much. A lot of factors caused these pictures to end up looking the way they do. For instance, you want to vary the poses, to be interesting. So a session would start out with a conversation with the star about what they considered their best feature—butt, breasts. That would help dictate a pose—let's come in closer, or let's be full length because your legs are great. For the men, of course, it was about their penises. And most of them insisted on *not* being shot totally flaccid—they didn't want to let down their audience.

Something occurs to me. Do you know the TV show *Nip/Tuck*? It's about plastic surgeons, and each episode begins with them asking a client, "What don't you like about yourself?" But you were asking these people, "What do you like about yourself?" It's about esteem.

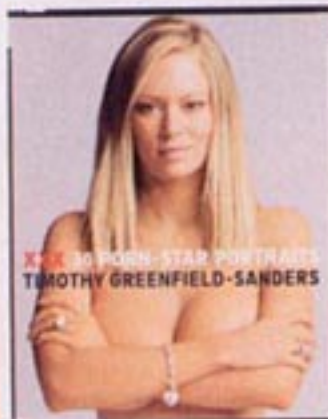
I love that show. You know, I always try to make people look the way they wished they looked, the way they want to see themselves. It's not that I'm trying to glamorize them; these are not glamour portraits. They're very real, very dignified, and powerful. It's almost like these porn stars were looking into a mirror and seeing themselves and saying, "Hey, I look pretty good today." That's the point I'm trying to get to.

You shot everyone in color...

In the beginning I also did some black and white, but it looked arty to me. *(continued on page 96)*

GREENFIELD-SANDERS TALKS TO TWO SUBJECTS, PORN STARS NINA HARTLEY AND TERA PATRICK, ABOUT THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY—AND THE ART OF SEX.

MÉNAGE À TROIS



Timothy Greenfield-Sanders: I have been asked by *American Photo* magazine to talk to you both about photography. Let's start with Nina. Tell me your view of our photo session together...

Nina Hartley: It was really fascinating to be seen with a completely different kind of vision than my normal experience. Normally when I'm photographed, it's all about overt sexuality. But to have a different sensibility take a look at me helped me see myself in a new way.

And Tera, what were your thoughts?

Tera Patrick: I really appreciated that you approached us from such a human standpoint. In our industry, my job is to promote fantasy, and I felt that this was one of the few times I was able to be Tera Patrick, the girl. Actually, Tera Patrick, the woman. You first shot me without makeup, and nobody's ever captured that side of me before.

Well, I think the project transcends the stereotypes of who porn stars are. For me it was very much about bringing out the humanity of this group of people. When I met you, Nina, and Tera, too, I was astounded at your comfort in front of the camera. What is different about being photographed for stills, as opposed to being filmed by a video or movie camera? How do you prepare for a still shoot?

NH: Still pictures pose a different set of challenges

because each image is frozen in time, allowing the viewer to pore over it as often as he or she wishes, for as long as he or she wishes, to catch flaws or errors. So it's micromanaging: shoulders back, stomach in, chin this way, expression that way. Because you're capturing a moment, you're trying to be in the moment, trying to be centered in yourself so you don't look tense, all the little details that a professional model has essentially learned to look for in a photograph of herself.

TP: You really examine yourself. Usually there's so much pressure to get that perfect picture—that perfect spread shot, that perfect arch of the back. There's so much pressure on you to be such a perfect little piece, of, excuse me, masturbation material.

Tell me about box cover photography and working with nudie magazines.

NH: Box covers and production stills are shot five to seven times during the filming of a sex scene. They are moments when the action completely stops. The still camera comes in and we take the requisite number of soft-core shots and hard-core stock shots, and then we resume activity. All this time you are trying to look elegant and beautiful, caught in the middle of passion.

TP: And really slutty.... Imagine going through a scene, especially a sex scene where your mind is racing, you are obviously having physical feelings and in the middle of all of this you stop for stills! Often it's hard to go back to that moment with the

person that you're with. And that person is probably feeling that the still camera just stole his or her youth, stole the moment, stole the edge.

Remember, you're working with another person and working off the chemistry of another person.

Do you get paid for the still work?

NH: No, still work is part and parcel of the gig.

TP: The lucky thing is, I own my own movies now, and the stills. I use them on my Website. I get double usage out of them.

So you hire a photographer who is paid a day rate as a work-for-hire to shoot the images, and you own them?

TP: Right, and then I use them to promote myself on the box covers, and of course I send them out promotionally, for flyers and posters. I got tired of seeing my image exploited without making any money off of it. Now I'm making all the money.

Tera, you've done professional straight modeling. Tell me about how you started.

TP: The modeling I had done before I got into porn was fashion modeling, not nude modeling. I didn't know the poses for nude modeling. My first nude job was for *Playboy*. I got thrown into this big studio with all these big lights, this whole crew, the wardrobe, the makeup, the lighting, and that was just for a test shoot. I was 22. I worked in nursing for five years, and I knew nothing about nude modeling. All I knew was that I wanted to be in *Playboy*, I wanted to be one of those girls that men looked at, that men dreamed about. But I couldn't move myself elegantly. Every five minutes they came in and bent my leg this way or my toe that way. Luckily, I'm a quick study.

I consciously tried with XXX to allow the stars to look the way they see themselves. What are your responses to your portraits? How do you see yourself in them?

NH: My husband had a completely different reaction to it. He liked my clothed shot a lot: I'm smiling a little bit, I look happy, I look accessible. My nude portrait is not smiling, my chin's up just a little bit, my head's turned just a little bit, and to me it looks as if I'm daring you to say something. But my husband sees confidence. Other people see me differently than I see myself. One thing that's nice about art is that you get to project onto it what you want.

Tera, what was your reaction to your portraits?

TP: I saw myself as someone who had grown up a lot. I looked at my picture and said, "You know, this is not the scared little" (continued on page 96)



Left: Nina Hartley.
Right: Tera Patrick.



©TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS/COURTESY ILLUMINCH (2)

GREENFIELD-SANDERS

(continued from page 61) The color is more real, a little more porny. And going with the light gray background in each shot was a great decision. I've usually gone with dark backgrounds, because the subject pops out. This background is almost like a skin tone. It's very cool.

You shot them in your New York City studio with your antique Deardorff, and also in L.A.?

Yes. I have an 8x10 Deardorff field camera for traveling. In my New York studio I used my 70-year-old Deardorff 11x14 camera with an 8x10 reducing back. I shot on Kodak Ektachrome 100 color transparency film. It's my usual lighting—no backlight, just a single giant Elinchrom softbox with two heads powered with two Profoto 2,400-watt-second packs. Normally we shoot at f/32, but depending on the bellows factor we might open it up a stop.

The portraits are beautiful, but they're not just pretty. With this big camera that you use, you also exposed all the little flaws.

The photographs, really, are a combination of reality and gloss. The key is to get just the right mix, and I think we did it. —JEFFREY ELBIES

BEST BOOKS

MÉNAGE À TROIS

(continued from page 62) girl that came into the business wondering what her life was going to be like." In the clothed picture, I wasn't wearing makeup; I look like a little girl playing dressup and have fun. In the nude, I see myself as a woman who's just living out her dream.

NH: Timothy, in your portraits, I love your completely unadorned backgrounds. It's just what it is. And I like that you did the project in color.

There is an old joke: What's the difference between porn and erotic art?

NH: The lighting.

That too, but I was going to say that porn is in color! Another difference between porn and erotic art is that porn is in focus.

NH: Gloria Leonard has said that the difference between erotica and pornography is the lighting. In this view, "erotica," by concerning itself with things beyond the display of body parts in contact, such as lighting, mood, and story, could be deemed more "artistic" or "classy" than pornography. As long as porn is showing the naughty bits in contact, it's done its job. Many people have trouble with its lack of shame or "taste," and use that as a reason to trash it. I like the term "pornography," because it is value-neutral. ■

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

(continued from page 94) **How many trips did you make for your book?** Several, over the course of a few years. The longest trip was six weeks. The bulk of the pictures were done on that trip.

Tell us about your equipment.

Everything was shot with an 8x10 camera. It's made by a guy named Dick Phillips—it's called an R.H. Phillips & Sons camera, and it's very lightweight. I shot on color negative film and did some lighting for interiors. But I never had assistants with me, or anything like that. I wanted to keep it simple.

How did you meet the people you photographed?

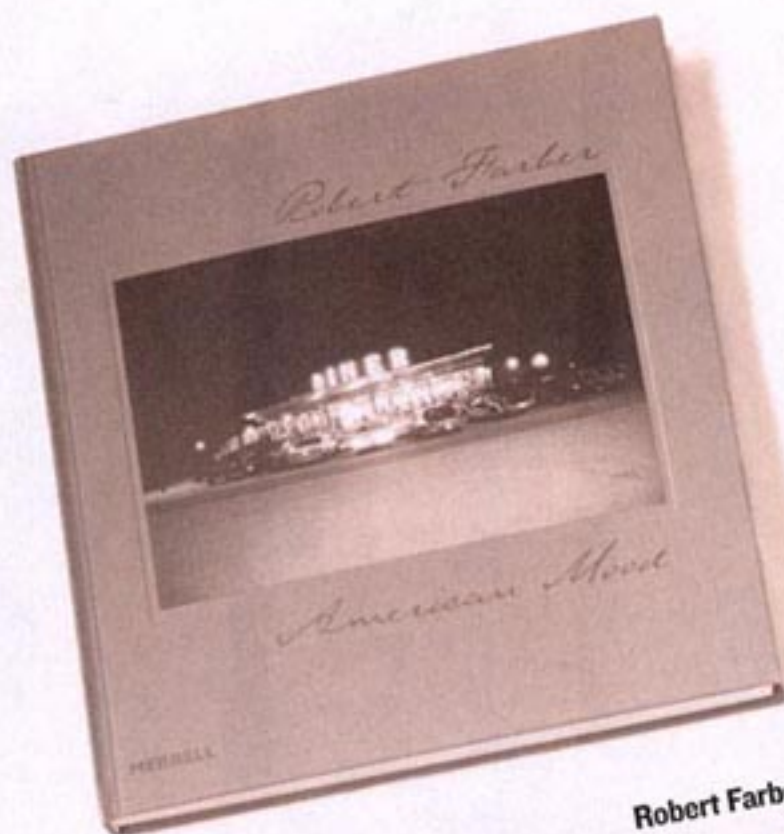
When I approach people, my camera is always still in the van, so I'm talking to them as people. Sometimes I'll just see someone walking down the street, and I'll hop out and start talking to them. I'm drawn to people the same way I'm drawn to any subject—I try to stay attentive to my own curiosity. If I see something or someone that snags my eye, I listen to that and follow it. And I found that people enjoy the interaction. I often asked people what their dream was. I found that it was a quick way into people's lives.

One of the most remarkable portraits is the shot of Charles, from Vasa, Minnesota. Tell us about that image.

He had this odd house that was built up high into the sky. So you'd see it as you drove by. I just drove up. He gave me a tour of the house, and eventually we ended up at the very top, where he's got a little glass room that he calls his cockpit. He sits up there and he would make these airplanes with his daughter. So I ended up photographing him on the roof. The image was used for the Whitney Biennial poster. It captures just what I was after—Charles is a real dreamer type.

In a sense, all the people in the book are dreamers.

It's exciting to me that all these people in all of the places I went, from the north all the way down to Louisiana, are making creative lives for themselves. —JEFFREY ELBIES



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AMERICAN PHOTO BOOK COLLECTION, 2004: Official Rules

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. Send a postcard on or after December 13, 2004, with your name, address and phone number to American Photo Book Collection, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. Entries must be postmarked no later than February 28, 2005. One card per person only.
2. This contest is open to legal residents of the 50 United States and D.C., 13 years of age or older, except employees of the Sponsor, Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S., Inc. and members of their immediate families.
3. Entries that are lost, late, illegible or incomplete for any reason will not be eligible.
4. One winner will be selected at random from all eligible entrants. The odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. The winner will be notified by mail. Return of any prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and selection of an alternate winner.
5. The winner will receive a copy of each of the books appearing on page 57 of this issue. Approx. retail value ("ARV"): \$600. Prize will be awarded.
6. No substitutions in prize or cash will be allowed except by Sponsor.
7. Liability for any applicable taxes will be the sole responsibility of the winner.
8. For winner's list, mail a self-addressed, stamped envelope after February 28, 2005, to: American Photo Book Collection, 2004, Attention: American Photo magazine, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

win your own Library

It's become something of a tradition around here to look at the best photography books of the season in this issue. Another tradition we're continuing in this issue is to seriously upgrade the personal library of one lucky AP reader. To win the eight photo books featured on the following pages (the covers are at right), send a letter or postcard to Book Collection 2005, *American Photo*, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. All entries must be postmarked by March 1, 2005. (See official rules for entering on page 96.) A winner will be chosen at random.

That winner will be receiving one of the most wide-ranging, enlightening, and interesting mixes of books we've ever seen. There is photographer Timothy Greenfield-Sanders's controversial portraits of 30 porn stars, who, if they aren't quite mainstream, are in fact pop-culture figures. There is a remarkable collection of rare color photography gleaned from the archives of the Depression-era Farm Security Administration, providing a rich view of an America that is no more. There is photographer Alec Soth's tender and beautiful look at a modern America that is often overlooked—the particular America that has taken root along the mighty Mississippi River. And there is much more. Today, if you want to see photography in its many forms, you need to look at books. (Magazines, by and large, simply can't run it all without offending the tastes and moral strictures of increasingly sensitive audiences and adver-

tisers. Our portfolio of Greenfield-Sanders's nudes makes use of both "soft-core" images the photographer made for the press and other shots with carefully placed black bars to hide offending aspects of the human anatomy.) Photographers of all kinds look to books as an important way to reach new audiences and to take their careers to new levels. (If you're considering publishing a book, check out Workshop on page 52.) The greatest photography books are stirring commentaries on the world we live in, as well as indelible repositories of history. They are also beautiful objects in themselves that heighten the pleasure of pictures. In selecting this year's recommended books, we considered all those criteria.

Also in this issue (beginning on page 16), we pay tribute to three photographers who passed away in 2004: photojournalists Carl Mydans and Eddie Adams, and the legendary Richard Avedon. I knew Carl and his late wife, Shelley, and considered them two of the greatest spirits in photography. Eddie, through his famed photojournalism workshop, helped inspire new generations of photographers. I worked with Dick Avedon on several projects for this magazine, including the special May/June 1994 issue devoted entirely to him (now available online at americanphotomag.com). I was never less than astonished at his creative energy and graceful support of a young editor who had a lot to learn. All three will be missed, and remembered. Their photos will see to that.

David Schonauer

David Schonauer, EDITOR IN CHIEF

