

Through the mind's eye, style, sense and motion unfold for one of our world's leading photographers, Aryn Nasser. He has skillfully focused his sights on a myriad of images captured in his travels, shooting fashion, celebrities, advertising, travel, nudes and fine art since 1981. His work has graced a wide range of media including the covers and pages of *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Amica* as well as some of the most prestigious advertising campaigns. His sterling credits reflect his drive for creative excellence and understanding of the business spanning his 25-year career. He has photographed couture designer Daniel Hechter's seasonal books and campaigns from 1989-1995; OuiSet from 1992-1998, Austin Reed, fashion designer, from 1999-2003, the French campaign for Morgan, Hermès, to mention just a few.

Born in 1958, in Zanzibar, Aryn developed a global passion for visually experiencing the world around him. He lived in London and Kenya before moving to Calgary with his family when he was sixteen. Growing up, he was surrounded by creative people. His mother is an artist, his father a textile/fabric designer and his grandfather was a photographer, who gave Aryn, his first camera when he was nine years old. Although he lost his camera many years ago, he continued to nurture his love for photography. "Of all the grandchildren, I was the one who shared his hobby of photography with him."

He has studied photography at NAIT in Edmonton, Canada, then opened a studio in Calgary and worked for advertising agencies and companies for a while, gaining experience which led him to his next career adventure: Milan, Italy, style capital, where his passion for fashion began to take flight. 'My schooling had been very academic, but when I went out and worked as a photographer, with the kind of work I've done, I figured out my style and how to create powerful images.'

CF: What inspired you to pursue photography after receiving your first camera?

AN: It was a way for me to loose myself into the world. The part for me that's interesting, is when I'm traveling, I don't focus only on fashion or celebrities, advertising or work like that. I also enjoy doing nudes, erotic art and fine art. Often, when I do road trips, I photograph trees, clouds, or landscapes that are overwhelming at times when I look at it. The beauty is so amazing! There's a spot in Death Valley, below sea level, that's so incredible when you look around, you're the smallest thing in the whole landscape. I love deserts. It's amazing what deserts do. After being in the desert for two hours, you start hearing the silence of yourself and the internal chatter goes away.

CF: You've said that Irving Penn alluded to the idea that 'photography is a way to sort out the junk of the world.' Who are your other inspirations in the area of photography?

AN: The works of Avedon, Bailey, and Helmut Newton.



CF: What kind of camera(s) do you use?

AN: Usually a Nikon or Leica. Now I'm using a Nikon D1X. I've changed over to digital.

CF: You're eyes are like a camera. Do you have favorite things you like to photograph?

AN: I see the beauty in many different things. I can go out, to a shopping center like The Grove. My eyes feast on it, because you see so many beautiful people congregating in one spot. It's finding beauty out of things, because that's a good way to approach life.

CF: Being so visually oriented, how do your other senses interact with this gift?

AN: I enjoy new wave, ambient music, sounds within sounds, like 'Tuxedo Moon', and 'Ghost Sonata' and CTI / Chris and Cozy, that's like a theatrical show that lets your mind travel and build vision and color. It's very trance oriented. You can be working on something, and sound can elevate you to other levels, and you don't even realize it, subliminally it can do things to your psyche. It's very refreshing.

CF: You have been on photo shoots with beautiful models such as Iman, Claudia Schiffer, to Masai warriors. As an artist, what are your concerns when you shoot your subjects?

AN: I am able to keep my subjects at ease and I like to use or create light that makes their skin glow and will reflect a translucent, transparent quality, usually in the early morning or late afternoon, if I'm shooting outside. In the studio, my assistant will set up the lights but I will personally key them carefully for the optimum effect. Photographers like Herb Ritts had his own 'light' as do I.

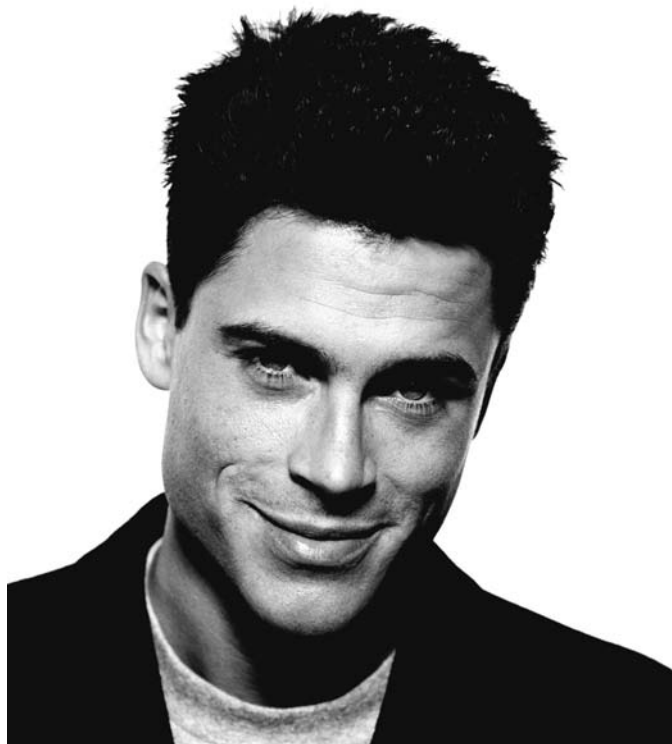
CF: Being something of a sensualist, how is that reflected in your sense of taste?

AN: I love cooking for one thing. It has to be visually pleasing for me and then I know it's right. I enjoy a lot of salmon and seafood, carefully prepared Indian food, if it's not too spicy. My mother's the only one that can do it right.

CF: What about your sense of touch?

AN: I like to feel the fabric when I'm photographing fashion and recently I've been driving up Highway 1, and when I see the redwood forest, I have to go up and just get a feel for the trees, the bark- it's just so lovely. It's hard putting your arms around it and hugging such a big tree. Any time I'm on a production and I'm at the sea, I have to put my hand in the seawater to taste it and get a feel for it. It's my way of thanking the universe. It's a very private thing. I'm born around seawater being from Zanzibar and Mombassa.

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CF: What are your recent projects?

AN: Besides fashion and advertising work, I'm also doing private sessions and working on some fine-art nudes; a personal project. I enjoy doing high profile and private weddings. The package is quite different because I'm photographing exactly like I do my work, which is very spontaneous and passionate. I create these scenes, not like a conventional wedding. There's a story within a story. The final product creates a storybook that turns into a coffee table book instead of a wedding album. It tells their own story in their own way and I lay it out, like I would put out any editorial project. I work very fast and spontaneously.

CF: You're very active on your shoots. Do you also work out?

AN: Yes, definitely. You have to. You get to a certain age and you can't stand up straight and your back goes out, from turning yourself into all these weird positions. Every photographer goes through this.

CF: Do you plan on staying in Los Angeles for a while?

AN: I'm back and forth. I tend to be here, Miami and New York. Some day, I would like to find a house in the desert and settle down.

CF: Aryn is innovative, resourceful and enjoys the challenge to create beautiful, timeless images and dynamic visual stories.

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