

Avedon, Richard (1923-) Encyclopedia Article

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Avedon, Richard (1923—)

Richard Avedon added new depth to fashion photography beginning in 1945. His fashion photographs—in *Harper's Bazaar*, 1945-66, and in *Vogue*, 1966-90—were distinctive in expressing both motion and emotion. Avedon imparted the animation of streets, narrative, and energy to the garment. His most famous fashion image, *Dovima with Elephants* (1955), is an unabashed beauty-and-the-beast study in sexuality. By the 1950s, Avedon also made memorable non-fashion images, including a 1957 portrait of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in vacant melancholy, 1960s heroic studies of Rudolf Nureyev dancing nude, and 1960s epics of the civil rights movement and mental patients at East Louisiana State Hospital. Although Avedon's photographs moved away from fashion toward the topical, social, and character-revealing, the common theme of all his photography has been emotion, always aggressive and frequently shocking.

Further Reading:

Avedon, Richard. *An Autobiography*. New York, Random House, 1993.

Evidence, 1944-1994 (exhibition catalogue). New York, Whitney Museum of American Art/Random House, 1994.