

A Dream Come True

An Interview with Andy Katz



Andy Katz

EDITORS' NOTE At the precocious age of 8, Andy Katz (andykatzphotography.com) discovered his calling when his father brought home a book of black-and-white portraiture by the legendary Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh. Years later, in a twist of fate, Yousuf Karsh would count himself among the proud owners of Katz's own work. Since then, Andy Katz has journeyed to over 90 countries, capturing the beauty and mystery of far-flung locales. He has explored the vast deserts of Namibia, chronicled the disappearing Jewish culture of Eastern Europe, and photographed the rolling hills and verdant vineyards of Northern California, France, Oregon, Argentina and Italy. His camera has revealed the majesty of South Africa, the raw landscapes of Iceland, the vibrant spirit of Cuba, and the timeless allure of India. Named the first Artisan of Imagery for Sony, Katz is one of the world's most collected photographers, with prints and work featured in museums and galleries around the globe, including his own gallery in Aperture Cellars Winery in Healdsburg, California. His work graces the covers of top recording artists' albums, a testament to the demand for his singular vision. With 14 books to his name – including *A Walk In The Park*; *A Portrait of Napa and Sonoma*; *New Zealand: Sea, Earth, Sky*; *Private Reserve*; and *The Heart of Burgundy*, Katz is currently working on his next book, *America the Beautiful*. This highly anticipated collection will celebrate the breathtaking landscapes of the United States, reflecting Katz's ongoing quest to unite and inspire through the lens of his camera.

Will you highlight your career journey?

My highlight is that I get to do what I love every day. From photographing famous people to famous vineyards to the wonders of nature, my job is literally a dream come true.

When did you know that you had a passion for photography?

When I was eight years old, my father brought home a book from the famous Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh. Karsh was known for making spectacular prints where you could almost touch the fabric in the clothes, and every detail was sparkling. A lightbulb went off in my head, and from that point I knew I was going to be a photographer.

Your work often evokes a strong emotional response. How do you approach storytelling through still images?

My biggest job is seeing what I want to capture. The rest is just technical trees and nature, people, nudes – they are all a puzzle that have to be put together. What stays in the frame is what I don't want in the frame. The most important thing in an image is the quality of light – that is the glue that turns a photograph from good to great.

You've photographed all over the world – from vineyards to villages. What are some of the destinations that have impacted you the most?



When I was in my twenties, I was sponsored to travel around the world for a year. I was on an extreme budget that enhanced the trip by putting me in remote places with cultures I knew nothing about. I loved every second of it. This was probably the biggest impact of my career. Realizing there is always something new to photograph – you just need to find it.

What interested you in writing your latest book, *America the Beautiful*?

We all know that this country has been extremely split apart politically. However, the one thing most Americans agree on is that we live in the most beautiful country in the world. I decided to photograph each state for their natural beauty. I did not capture people or buildings – just raw, natural beauty.

With the success that you have achieved during your career, are you able to take moments to pause and reflect on your impact and accomplishments?

I hope I have brought happiness and some awareness from my photographs. If I can evoke emotion in the viewer, I feel like I've succeeded.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in pursuing a career as a photographer?

Go out and shoot often. Challenge yourself with assignments. Get out of your comfort zone. ●



*The Mountain Lake in Fog, New Zealand (opposite page top);
Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado (opposite page bottom);
Cuenca Flower Market, Ecuador (above);
Smoke, India (below);
Devil Proof, Havana (top right);
Tuscan Trees, Italy (bottom right)*

