

Meet Esteemed Fashion Photographer Mark Oberlin

Written by Interview by Jackie Stahl

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There's no need to tell you, LA-based Fashion Photographer Mark Oberlin has talent. His photographs speak for themselves. Oberlin's creative vision has landed him shoots for prized, national magazines like *Vanity Fair* and has allowed him to capture notable celebrities, like "Glee" star Heather Morris.

Now let's get personal with the man behind the camera...



What made you decide to become a photographer?

I actually started out as a fine artist. I was painting and showing in galleries. I had taken photography in college and would periodically take photographs of family and friends. I had started taking photos of my sister, Laura, in my first photography class. We had all these basic photography assignments that I wasn't interested in, so I'd get her all dressed up and we would do little fashion shoots for my assignments instead. Over the years, whenever we'd get together for a family vacation we'd do a shoot. For a number of years that was the only photography I was doing, along with shooting some photos of friends. Two of my friends who I photographed submitted the photos to an international, oversized coffee table magazine on arts, culture and photography called *Blue*, which used the photos for the cover and did a spread of the photographs on the inside pages. After that I started submitting to more magazines and started to get more covers and editorial photo layouts. That's when I decided to become a professional photographer.



What are your favorite subjects to shoot?

Fashion is my favorite thing to shoot. I like to create beautiful and dramatic images. I always try to have a story or feeling I'm trying to capture. It doesn't have to be super literal, but I like to have a character in mind when I'm shooting.

Tell us about your most coveted experience as a photographer. Any famous subjects?

The second time I had my photographs in a magazine was for the cover of a national magazine called *Instinct*. It was shot in LA at a big studio, with an art director, editor, assistants, stylist, hair and make up. I'd never done a shoot with all that production and knowing it was going to be a cover of a magazine that was sold on magazine stands across the country was a huge thrill.

It's always a thrill to see a celebrity I've shot on TV, in a movie or performing. I recently shot Heather Morris who plays Brittany on "Glee" and the singer Akon.



What was it like shooting for *Vanity Fair*? What other publications have you shot for?

Shooting for *Vanity Fair* was a great experience. I've also shot for *Industry*, *Beverly Hills Design and Life*, *Eliza*, *Gloss*, *Blue* and *Instinct*

If you could shoot any supermodel, who would it be?

If I had a time machine, Linda Evangelista, although I would still love to shoot her now. I'm quite fond of Lara Stone as well.

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What kind of camera do you use?

EOS-1Ds Mark III Digital SLR Camera

Do you find making a living as a photographer in this economy very challenging? Name some specific challenges you have faced.

The economy has definitely changed things in fashion. Fashion designers and magazines do not have the money they used to. Before the economy had it's downturn, a large number of people were pouring a lot of money into fashion. With TV shows like "Project Runway" and "America's Next Top Model", there was this huge interest in pursuing fashion. Many people were starting their own fashion lines and magazines. A lot of that has gone away. It has made me to start reaching into different markets like entertainment and music. What I've found is, it pays a lot more! So this economy in some ways has actually helped me expand my career as a photographer.



What techniques/tips/advice would you share with a young photographer trying to break into this line of work?

As a photographer, it can be a long road to fame and fortune. It's a lot of hard work and diligence. Shoot as much as possible. Find your own voice and pursue what interests you visually. Don't try to do something that's hip and trendy because you think someone else will like it. If you really love what you're doing and are excited about the images you're creating, other people will be too.

What inspires you as a photographer?

Trying to capture a sense of passion in life. Take a gorgeous model, in amazing garment, in beautiful light, in a dramatic setting and capture it. Try to create a little world where everything is fabulous, at least for a moment.

For more on Mark Oberlin photography, please visit www.markoberlin.com.