Recognize the man in the mask? You probably do—it's George Clooney, but he's hiding behind a mask of his own eyes. It's a portrait taken by Martin Schoeller, a photographer who is known for capturing such striking images—most often with some very recognizable faces. (One recent example is his photo of Taylor Swift that graces the cover of Time this week.)

In his new book titled Portraits, Schoeller has compiled 150 photographs from the last 15 years of his career. They range from the classically simple—like a black-and-white headshot of Cate Blanchett or a snap of a grim-faced Clint Eastwood—to the surreal and absurd—like photos of a crazed, blood-spattered Christian Bale or Steve Carell's face wrapped in plastic tape (below).

"The more conceptual pictures—that I still consider real portraits and not gimmicky or goofy—there has to be some idea to them," Schoeller tells InStyle. "The ideas always, hopefully, underline my subject's personality. "And then my serious, classic portraits are more honest and revealing than you would normally see in a magazine."

The cover of Schoeller's monograph features the above image of Clooney and the photographer selected it for a variety of reasons. "First of all, he's one of my favorite subjects," Schoeller says. "He's smart, you talk to him—you don't talk to a publicist. He's very professional, very funny. So I just like him personally—and obviously he's one of the most famous people [in the world]."

"I love the picture of the mask," Schoeller tells InStyle. "His own eyes on his face—it's like the different layers an actor has. It's a conceptual picture but it's still a portrait."

The book's publication coincides with a retrospective show, which opened this week at the Hasted Kraeutler art gallery in New York. The exhibition runs until Jan. 3, 2015; Schoeller's Portraits monograph ($125; amazon.com) is out today.