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Master of All He Surveys

By HORACIO SILVA | October 3, 2010



Italian 'Vogue,' New York City, 1994

Albert Watson's eye rarely rests on one thing for long. For over four decades, he has refused to settle in one camp, allowing the breadth of his vision and the variety of his work to take in the worlds of fashion, portraiture and reportage. Likewise his sittings have ranged from supermodels to prisoners, from athletes to aristocrats. Add to the list advertising campaigns for clients like Prada, Estée Lauder, Revlon and Gap and it's not hard to see why he is considered such an elastic virtuoso. The graphic intensity and epic intention of Watson's images are now on display in "UFO: Unified Fashion Objectives" (Abrams; \$135), a retrospective book of what he considers his best work. (Images from "UFO" are also on show at Hasted Hunt Kraeutler, 537 W. 24th Street, from October 21.) While some of his subject matter has been relegated to the cultural periphery, Watson's ability to dazzle the eye and transcend the immediacy of his art form endure.

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Gabrielle Reece, Italian 'Vogue', Christian Dior, Paris, 1989.