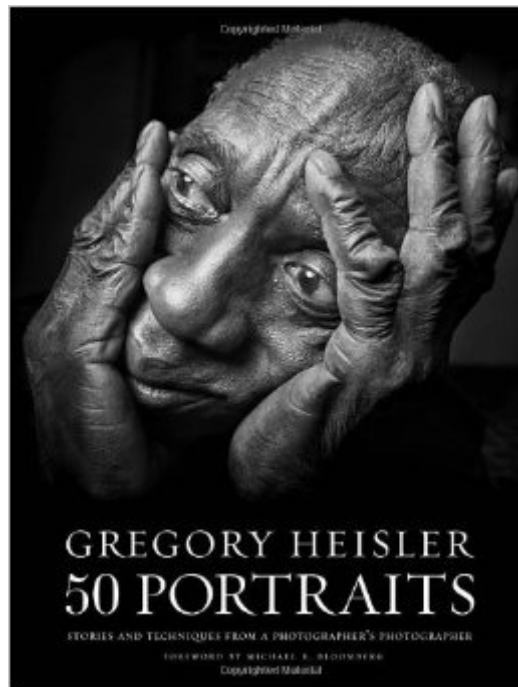


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Gregory Heisler: 50 Portraits: Stories And Techniques From A Photographer's Photographer



Synopsis

In this first-ever showcase of his work, Gregory Heisler, one of professional photography's most respected practitioners, shares 50 iconic portraits of celebrities, athletes, and world leaders, along with fascinating, thoughtful, often humorous stories about how the images were made. From his famously controversial portrait of President George H.W. Bush (which led to the revocation of Heisler's White House clearance) to his evocative post-9/11 Time magazine cover of Rudolph Giuliani, to stunning portraits of Julia Roberts, Denzel Washington, Hillary Clinton, Michael Phelps, Muhammad Ali, and many more, Heisler reveals the creative and technical processes that led to each frame. For Heisler's fans and all lovers of photography, Gregory Heisler: 50 Portraits offers not only a gorgeous collection of both black-and-white and color portraits, but an engrossing look at the rarely seen art of a master photographer at work. With a foreword by New York City mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'50 Portraits: Stories and Techniques from a Photographer's Photographer' is remarkably open and honest, both from emotional/personal and technical/photographic points of view. And as beautiful as the photography is, you will not find the pictures the main takeaway from the book. That last sentence feels strange and somehow sacrilegious to write, but it is absolutely true. And the title is actually a good representation of the book's focus. The pleasant surprise is that he is actually a very good writer, and you can hear him sitting and talking with you as you read it. This is not a lighting

book. Although, to be sure, there is a lot of lighting information in it. Perhaps more value in lighting education than any book I have ever read. What this is, is a 360-degree experience. Each of his fifty portraits gets its own little mini-chapter. The segment leads off with the photo, run full-page if vertical and double-truck if horizontal. The accompanying copy begins with the thought process leading up to the photo -- all of the thousand little things that happen before you press the shutter. You are there, with him, inside his thought process. And in so many of the portraits, I could see the multiple instances in which I would have failed to come up with the solutions to make great pictures. It's disheartening, in a sense. Like watching someone effortlessly navigate all the way through a video game that had repeatedly stopped you. Except, it's not effortless. What you get from this is a true sense of the work ethic (or "thought ethic?") that being a great photographer requires. And there is so, so much pre-thinking that goes into consistently being able to make great photos. That may be the biggest takeaway from this.

Years ago, when I was starting out as an adventure photographer, I asked a mentor of mine to recommend a book. He suggested Galen Rowell's "Mountain Light". I read and I read, looking for hard, technical information that I could replicate on my own adventures and came up utterly empty. How could a photography book be so devoid of this valuable information? It was only years later, after I'd gotten over (or at least more comfortable with) my obsession with the technical bits of photography and going back to that book, that I began to understand the opportunity I'd missed. Heisler's "50 Portraits" is exactly that sort of book. Though you can get the technical info by digging into the back, you would totally miss the best this book has to offer in doing so. The real gift is reading Heisler's words. Image by image, he tells the story behind every capture in intricate detail. From the initial assignment call and pre-visualization of the concept, to the stomach-churning stress of the sometimes chaotic moments preceding the final capture, when all of his plans seemed to be falling down around him like the fractured walls of an dilapidated building - this is the insight that no quantity of cookie-cutter workshops could ever provide. Subject interaction, achieving the proper emotion, selecting the context to match the sitter - all of this and more are what makes up the real value of this book. There is no shortage of info out there about light modifiers, daylight balancing, broad lighting vs. short lighting and so on. But great photography is about so much more than that - it's about the whole creative process and knowing which of all those tricks will work best to compliment a person or an environment and why.

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