

# Paolo Roversi's fashion photography captures all five senses

*This story is part of "Masters of Experience," a series exploring the world's most original experiences, as told by the visionaries who crafted them.*

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Credit Courtesy: Paolo Roversi

Italian fashion photographer Paolo Roversi has been taking portraits in the same Paris studio for more 30 years. And, speaking with him about his craft, it seems no coincidence that the space was once a painter's atelier.

"For me, photography is all five senses," Roversi said in a phone interview. "It's not just the visual. It's also the smell, touch, taste and sound. You might hear music when you look at a photo, or feel the wind. It's a window to the imagination."

Roversi has brought together more than 100 of his portraits in "Dior Images: Paolo Roversi." Created in collaboration with Christian Dior, the coffee table book features the likes of Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell wearing dresses from the fashion house's archive -- all captured with the signature photographic blur Roversi pioneered in the 1990s.

"I feel more when the photos are not sharp, that's why," he said. "In my work, there is nothing rational or logical ... It's about instinct and feelings."



Kate Moss wears Christian Dior Haute Couture Spring-Summer 2015, designed by Raf Simons  
Credit: Courtesy Paolo Roversi

This philosophy seems a far cry from Roversi's photojournalist beginnings. In 1970, he got his start shooting for the Associated Press, for whom he photographed Ezra Pound's burial in Venice. Two years later, he moved to Paris and started working for Elle magazine. It was there that he was introduced to the work of Helmut Newton, Guy Bourdin, Richard Avedon and Irving Penn.

"I loved the fantastic quality of fashion photos and the beautiful design of the clothes," he said. "It brought a sense of elegance to aesthetic beauty."

Shooting models in his Parisian studio is more than just showing off beauty, youth and couture, however: "It's a reciprocal exchange between the model and I of spirit, personality and style," he said. "It's always very special for me to take a portrait of someone. It's not just a little picture."



Naomi Campbell wears Christian Dior Haute Couture Autumn-Winter 1996, designed by Gianfranco Ferré Credit: Courtesy Paolo Roversi

With some models, that exchange can be electrifying to witness. Speaking to a memorable photo from the book is a shot of Campbell from 1996, wearing a Dior dress designed by the late Gianfranco Ferré, Roversi said: "Naomi moves in a beautiful way and can put anything on and it becomes magic," he said.

For someone so wrapped up in beauty, one has to wonder if he approaches photography like a form of poetry.

"No," he said, laughing. "It's just photography."