



Deborah Turbeville: The Fashion Pictures

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / IN PICTURES



Bathhouse, 1975 © Deborah Turbeville, Courtesy of The Wapping Project Bankside London, Staley Wise New York

We pay tribute to the remarkable career of Deborah Turbeville who passed away last week

OCTOBER 28, 2013

TEXT AnOther

Visionary fashion photographer Deborah Turbeville passed away last Thursday October 24 after battling with lung cancer. Here we pay tribute to her remarkable career by revisiting the brilliant Rizzoli monograph that celebrates her most famous works, as well as some lesser-known treasures.

Deborah Turbeville has been described as the anti-Helmut Newton. Where Newton's pictures are vital with physicality and sexual power, Turbeville's are studies in immobility, surreal works shot as though through misted glass. When discussing her favourite city St. Petersburg, Turbeville describes a place "where history has come to a halt, like a streetcar immobilised in ice"; words that can also be seen to resonate through her photography.

Rising to prominence in 1975, Turbeville has remained consistently popular with fashion editors, working continuously with Vogue, Harper's Bazaar and w Magazine, shooting for Ungaro, Karl Lagerfeld and Comme des Garçons, whilst receiving personal requests from personalities such as Jackie Kennedy. Taking photographs for more than 30 years, her aesthetic has never changed. She foregoes clarity and colour to maintain a stony palette which is only occasionally alleviated by shots of gold. Light is used to further the effect: bleaching out an alabaster face, illuminating a hollowed cheekbone, throwing shadows into deeper relief. Her methods of post-production – negatives are scratched, taped and smeared – serve to continue the pictures' disconnection from reality. Order is there, but it is unnatural – there is always an oddness, a discordant note that necessitates a second look.

For this latest monograph, Rizzoli have pulled together the fashion pictures, which include famous stories for Vogue such as Bathhouse from 1975, Women in the Woods from 1978 and Women in Furs from 1984. However the treasures of this collection are the lesser-known works; pages from her Rizzoli commissioned fantasy magazine Maquillage, hitherto unpublished work for Chanel, portraits of Italian royalty, the Venice Carnival, designer Selina Blow and Russian ballerinas. There is dark humour too – an eerie spread of five models in Mrs Rochester-esque attitudes, complete with ragged gowns and dishevelled hair in an attic, are discovered to be wearing five wedding dresses rejected by Princess Diana. Indeed, for all that there is conformity of aesthetic, every feature weaves its own particular web of mystery that continues to compel.

For this latest monograph, Rizzoli have pulled together the fashion pictures, which include famous stories for Vogue such as Bathhouse from 1975, Women in the Woods from 1978 and Women in Furs from 1984. However the treasures of this collection are the lesser-known works; pages from her Rizzoli commissioned fantasy magazine *Maquillage*, hitherto unpublished work for Chanel, portraits of Italian royalty, the Venice Carnival, designer Selina Blow and Russian ballerinas. There is dark humour too – an eerie spread of five models in Mrs Rochester-esque attitudes, complete with ragged gowns and dishevelled hair in an attic, are discovered to be wearing five wedding dresses rejected by Princess Diana. Indeed, for all that there is conformity of aesthetic, every feature weaves its own particular web of mystery that continues to compel.

The book is on general release from Rizzoli in October 2011. To celebrate the release of Deborah Turbeville: The Fashion Pictures, Donna Karan is hosting an exhibition of some of the featured works in their London store on Conduit Street, opening on September 9th, where prints of the work and copies of the book will be available to buy.

Text by Tish Wrigley



GALLERY / 10 IMAGES

Deborah Turbeville: The Fashion Pictures