

# Edgy fotog Newton's new work looks like something Kramer proposed

By ALLYSON LIEBERMAN

The writers from "Seinfeld" might want to take note of a book coming out next month.

In a strange twist of life imitating art, the Taschen publishing house has created a book remarkably similar to one created by Kramer, the oddball next-door neighbor on the hit show.

The crafty character who came up with the idea of a coffeetable-book about coffeetables that doubles as a coffeetable will finally see his dream realized.

"SUMO," the latest picture book from famed fashion photographer Helmut Newton, is the brainchild of Benedikt Taschen, founder and president of the German book publisher.

Taschen set out to create the largest book ever published — 480 20-inch by 27½-inch pages weighing in at a lap-crushing 66 pounds — and also the only book to come with a specially designed table to hold up the hefty tome. The table was designed by Philippe Starck.

In the process, he also created the most expensive book on the market: "SUMO" will sell for \$1,500 each.

"It's literally the largest, most expensive book ever to be published," said Liza Burnett, a spokeswoman for Taschen.

Burnett said "SUMO" will only be offered through the Internet (at [www.c.akbari@taschen-america.com](mailto:www.c.akbari@taschen-america.com)) when it debuts Dec. 1, in order to

# IT'S A BOOK, IT'S A TABLE & IT'S \$1,500

keep the book's profile sky-high.

"It's too expensive for stores. Selling it on the Internet makes it more alluring, sexy — more exclusive," Burnett said of the book with a limited edition run of 10,000 signed copies.

Although the idea of a coffeetable book-cum-coffeetable is not new, the publisher says the company's concept is original. Taschen said through a spokeswoman that he thought of the idea himself.

"The book has nothing to do with 'Seinfeld,'" the spokeswoman said. "We think he knows what 'Seinfeld' is. But he certainly never watched it," Burnett said.

Burnett said Taschen came up with the idea as a result of an obscure Ger-



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It's not new to him.

man law that mandates any book over a certain weight must be accompanied by something to make it transportable.

"Benedikt was originally going to design a suitcase and a trolley for the photo book, but when Philippe Starck got wind of it, he

said he insisted that he design a table," Burnett added.

The book, edited by Newton's wife, June, features hundreds of rarely or never-before published images by the sometimes controversial photographer, whose work often appears in *Vanity Fair* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

The publisher will roll out the first 2,500 issues on Dec. 1, and release the rest of the numbered and signed books on April 1.

Astute "Seinfeld"-watchers might remember another episode when the crafty Kramer character created a fragrance that smelled like the beach at low tide that was ripped-off later in the show by Calvin Klein.

"Seinfeld" creators declined to comment.