

**H**ELMUT NEWTON was a photographer with an international reputation but a very modest estimation of his own talent. "Some people's photography is an art. Mine is not, I'm just a gun for hire," he told Newsweek magazine.

Nevertheless, his work was so distinctive that it changed the face of fashion photography. Where Cecil Beaton had set the

standard with his highly styled fragile beauties, Newton's women were strong, sexual and confrontational.

He was born in Berlin in 1920 and escaped the Nazi terror by taking a job as a press photographer in Singapore in 1938. He spent the war in the Australian army and in 1960 moved to Paris where he joined French Vogue. He also worked

for Playboy and he was the first to bring a distinctly erotic subtext to high fashion photography.

Helmut Newton: A Gun For Hire (Taschen, £19.99) is a striking selection of his pictures including some of the last he ever took.

The picture above shows Kate Moss modelling the Yves Saint Laurent 1993 Spring Collection.

Newton died in a car crash in Hollywood last year, aged 83.