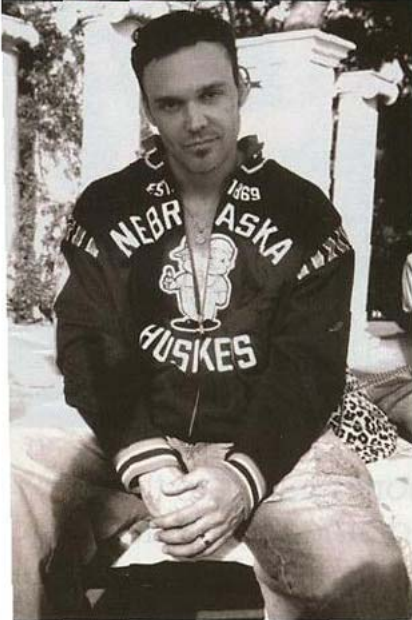


EXPOSED!



Photographer David LaChapelle knows about creating eye-catching extravaganzas. In this **GLAMOUR** exclusive, he explains the inspiration behind his fabulous photographs.
By Naomi Greenaway

He's dangled Robert Downey Jr off the side of a building, squeezed Christina Ricci into a huge glass bottle and tangled Paris Hilton in microphone wire – naked. Photographer *extraordinaire* David LaChapelle has the celebrity world at his camera-clicking fingertips: when he says strip, they strip, jump on a horse, do a backflip and smile for the camera.

The final images are eye-catching and sometimes shocking, but more than anything, David says, his pictures are about capturing beauty. "I look for the beauty in the modern landscape, even in the strip malls. That's the reality of our world and I want to embrace it. Many people find my pictures shocking but I try to make them beautiful. Maybe

I just have a different idea of beauty."

David's career took off when artist Andy Warhol offered him work as a photographer at America's *Interview* magazine. So it's not surprising that, along with reportage photos and erotic paintings, David has several Andy Warhols in his apartment.

"I love the ideology of Pop Art, because it's art for everyone," he says. "That's why I love having my photographs published in magazines. I want them to be an accessible part of culture, not just a commentary on it."

David's photographs have graced magazine covers ranging from Italian *Vogue* to American *Vanity Fair*. Does he have any favourites? "I usually look at them and think, 'What kind of lunatic did this stuff?'" he laughs. "But I guess the pictures I'm most excited about are the ones I haven't shot yet. I love taking chances with new things. My motto is, 'Be safe and you'll be sorry.'"

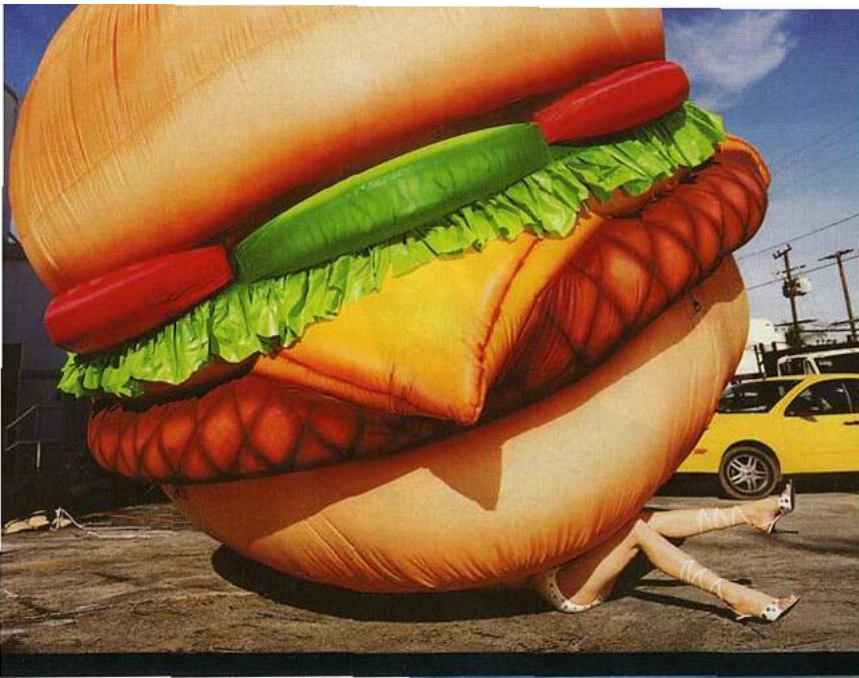
There are few celebrities David hasn't lured in front of the lens. Even Hilary Clinton's said 'cheese!' for his camera. "I shot her as a real estate agent. I didn't plan it that way, but that's what she ended up looking like," he says, breaking into hysterical laughter.

The only icons missing from his portfolio are Elvis and Marilyn Monroe, "but in a weird way I've shot them, too," he says. After all, he did design and direct Elton John's Las Vegas show, which included a video backdrop of a Marilyn look-alike for *Candle in the Wind*. And recently he directed Robbie Williams' music video for *Advertising Space*, in which Robbie does a cracking Elvis impersonation. Other artists who've shaken their booties to David's direction on their music videos include Christina Aguilera, Gwen Stefani, Norah Jones and Moby.

This month sees the launch of *Artists & Prostitutes*, a collection of David's most spectacular work. "When people look at these pictures I want them to feel happy, sad, angry, loving, horny... I want to stimulate them," he says. David's book retails at R13 000, but don't despair if that's not in your budget – we've rounded up some of our favourite shots, so that you can enjoy them, too. ▶



To order *Artists & Prostitutes* go to www.taschen.com



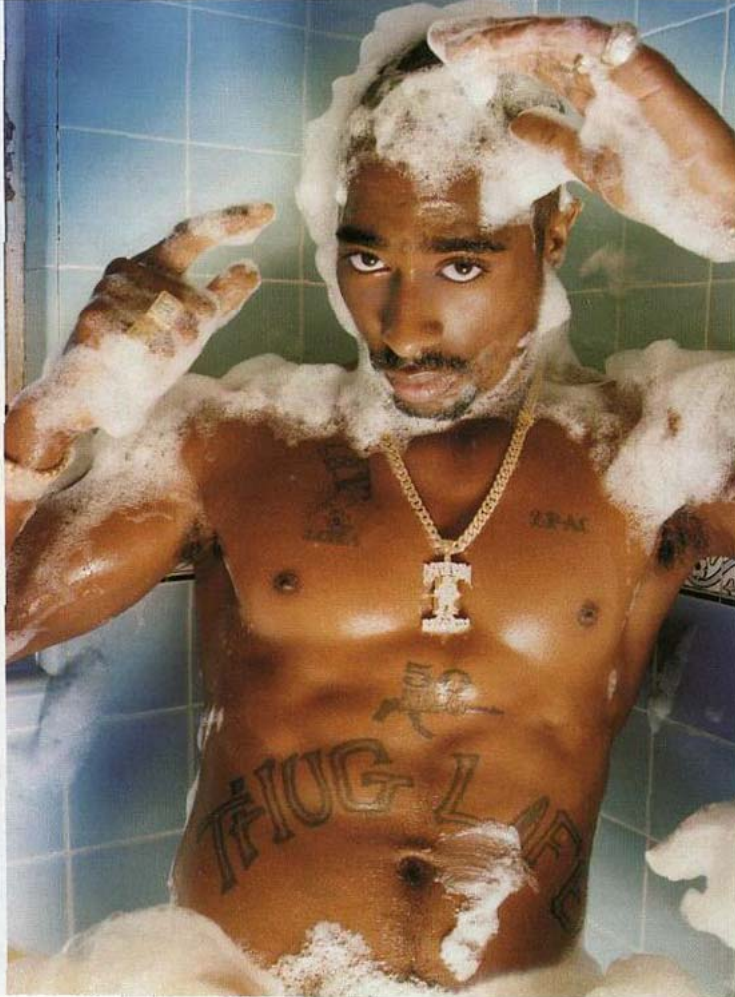
Death by Hamburger

“Americans love meat, but they eat way too much of it, which is why everyone's so huge. The obesity rate here is 63% – unbelievable. I'm a vegetarian as I don't want to eat animals who've suffered. This image was for a shoe story in Italian *Vogue* and I was given free reign. The people at the magazine were surprised and said, 'This isn't you'. It was different to what I'd done before, but I always want to move on and do different things. Now when people look at this, they say, 'It's so you'.”

Tupac Shakur

“I started working with Tupac when he got out of prison and this was taken in the last year of his life, right before he died. He was so collaborative and I really connected with him. He told me I was his favourite photographer, too – which obviously made me happy! I've always admired his sensitive, creative and artistic music. This idea came from an interview he gave while he was still in prison. It was so shockingly honest, it felt to me like he was really coming clean. So that's how I described the shot to him. I said, 'I want to shoot you in the bath washing with suds, coming clean', and he totally understood. It wasn't an over the top idea, it was actually quiet and poetic.”

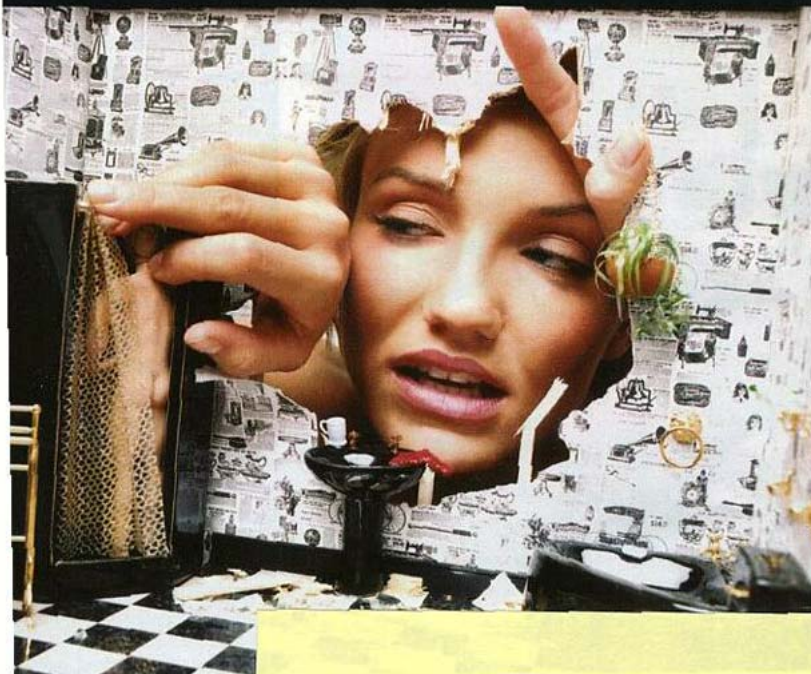
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G INSIDE

Paris Hilton

“ I’ve been shooting Paris since she was 14, so we have a good working relationship. When I tell her what I want her to do she always laughs and thinks it’s cool. This shot was for *Rolling Stone* magazine when she was planning to release a record. Paris loves being photographed, so she was happy to sit there wrapped in cord. When I first met her she was wearing a necklace saying ‘rich bitch’, and that’s exactly what people love about her; she’s wild and you never know what you’re going to get. She’s like a tornado. Paris is great to shoot because she has a sense of humour, she’s an exhibitionist and she’s bizarre. There’s absolutely nothing natural about her, which I think is hot. She’s all white blonde hair extensions and painted suntan. ”



Diaz Doll Hour Cameron Diaz

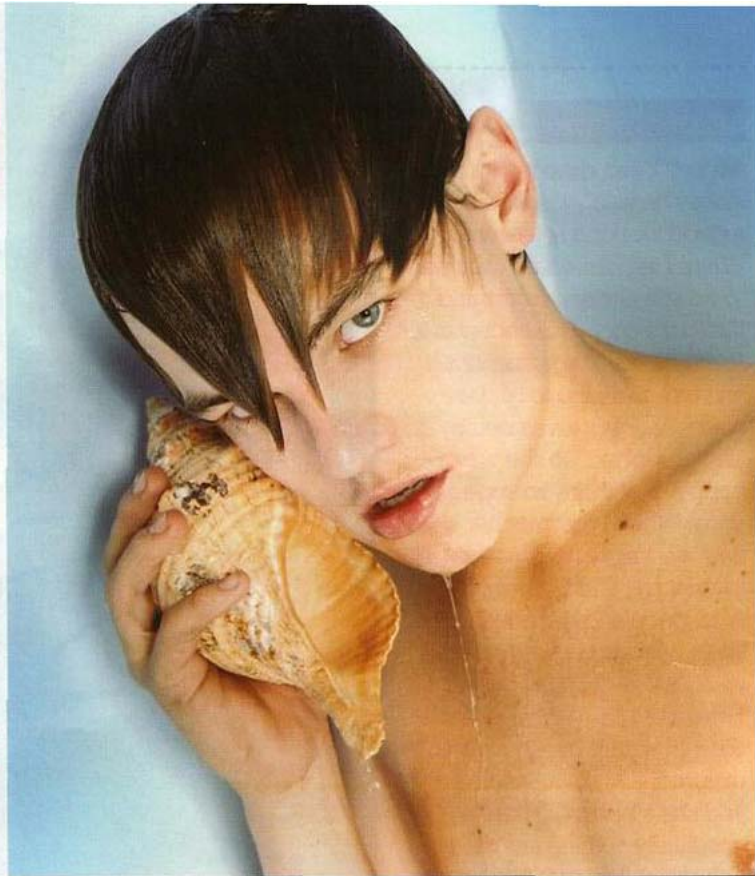
“ The picture is about voyeurism and stalking – but with the star on the other side. I knew Cameron would be the right person for this shot. She’s got the perfect face for it, because she’s pretty and has great features, but she has a naughty giggle too. I also thought she’d be game for it personality-wise. She has a great sense of humour and is very intelligent. Cameron is even more fun-loving than you’d imagine. ”

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DiCaprio
Leonardo DiCaprio

“ This picture of Leonardo listening to the ocean was shot in his pre-*Titanic* days. I thought it was symbolic of an innocent boy listening for the future. At that time he was still quite young and he loved having his picture taken – even though it meant I had to dunk his head in a bucket of water over and over again. There wasn't a whole production team to shoot this – just Leo, an assistant and me. One of my favourite shoots with Leo would have to be the one we did on Hollywood Boulevard with a white horse. Luckily the horse behaved! ”



My House
Alek Wek

“ This was inspired by the artist Christo [famous for photographing buildings wrapped in fabric] and a Miami island he photographed wrapped in pink material. We bought tons of fabric to wrap the house, which wasn't cheap, but we've since used it as a backdrop in the studio. The house is in spandex but Alek is in a silk Christian Lacroix gown. If you ever need to wrap a house in fabric, I suggest you call Christine, my set designer, and invest in a staple gun! ”

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