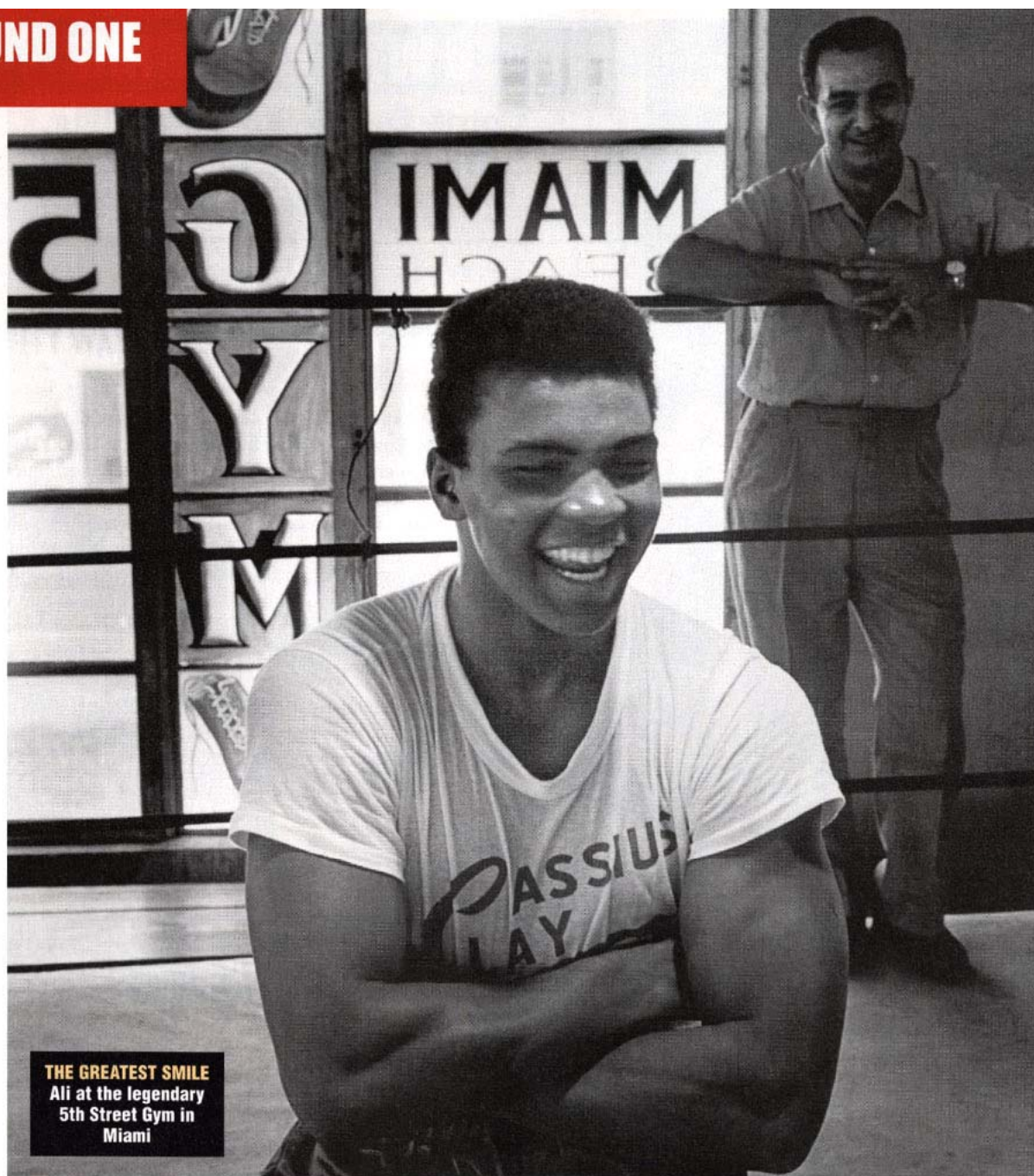


ROUND ONE



THE GREATEST SMILE
Ali at the legendary
5th Street Gym in
Miami

PHOTO FLIP SCHULKE

A Tribute To “The Greatest”

It's so enormous, over 20 pounds, that you can be overwhelmed by it. Then you open it, start turning the pages, and forget about its vast size because it's so engrossing that you might not come back up for air from *Greatest Of All Time: A Tribute To Muhammad Ali* for another three or four hours.

The pictures leap out and are riveting, almost three-dimensional in scope and the way they are displayed in this balanced, thoroughly entertaining, authoritative look back at the life of Muhammad Ali, published, edited, and directed by Benedikt Taschen.

While it's essentially a photo, coffee-table book, the writing is masterful with passages from a who's-who gallery of the all-time best writers from the last century, including Norman Mailer, Jim Murray, George Plimpton, Gay Talese, Mark Kram, Alex Haley, Gary Smith, and Tom Wolfe.

Add those fabled writers with the many behind-the-scenes, vivid shots from Neil Leifer and Howard Bingham, Ali's best friend and confidant, and you have quite possibly one of the most gripping portraits of “The Greatest” ever produced.

The massive 650-page voluminous reflection comes at a somewhat steep \$150 price, but it's been marked down from the limited 1,000 editions of the book released in 2003 that weighed 75 pounds and cost \$15,000, which were signed by Ali and Bingham and contained four gallery-quality gelatin silver prints. This version contains the same material as that version did, minus the autographs and prints.

What you can't help but sense throughout the book is that Ali was the sun of many people's galaxies—photographers, writers, entertainers, women, men, blacks, and whites—but mostly he had an uncanny ability to connect with fans.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRIBUTE

Internationally renowned sculptor Michael Kalish, who got his start turning license plates into works of art, has created a unique sculpture of Muhammad Ali. The sculpture, which was unveiled on March 25 and displayed at Nokia Plaza in Los Angeles until April 9, is made of 1,300 punching bags, suspended from a 22-foot-high installation made of stainless steel cable and aluminum pipe.

Kalish, who has also created sculptures of The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Charlie Chaplin, and other pop icons, was approached by Ali and his wife, Lonnie, in 2008, who asked him to create a private, original sculpture of the three-time former heavyweight champion. Kalish said he got his inspiration for the Ali-project concept while falling asleep one night.

Working in conjunction with the Oyler Wu Collaborative, a Los Angeles-based architectural company, the sculpture took three years to complete. It will be displayed at other locations, but the places and dates had not been released as of press time.

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

The viewer has to stand in front of the sculpture to realize it is Ali

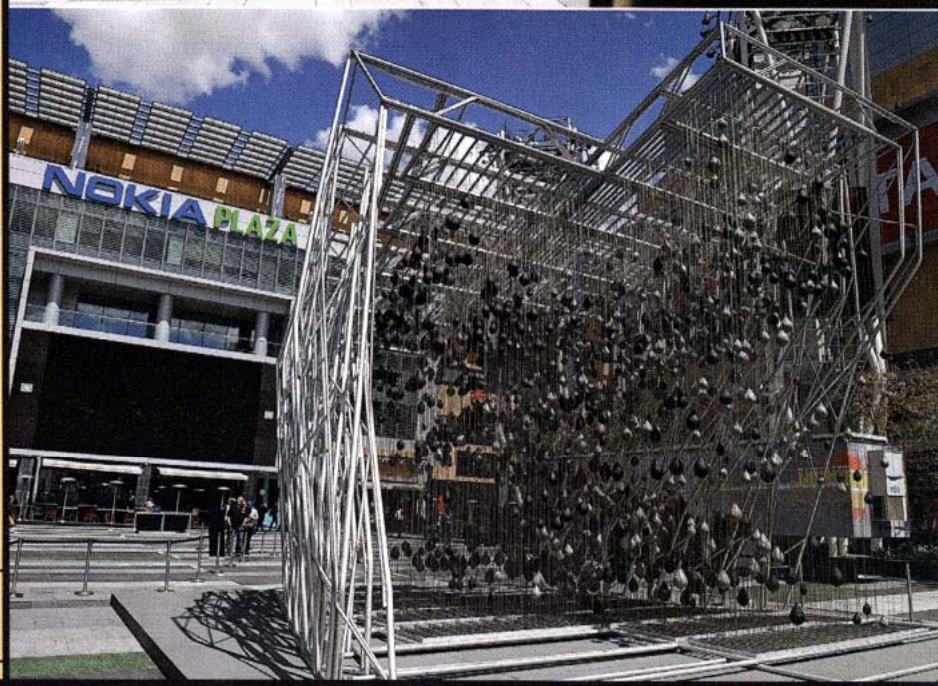
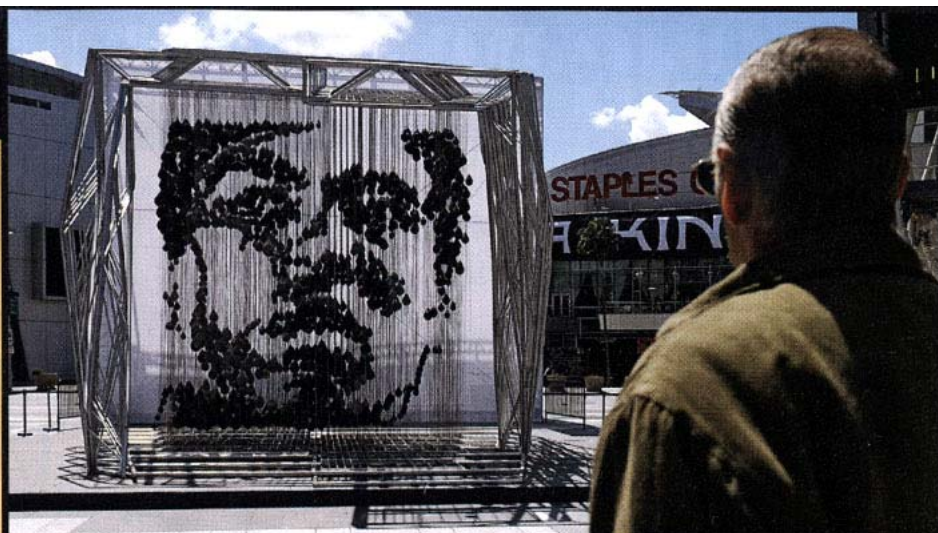
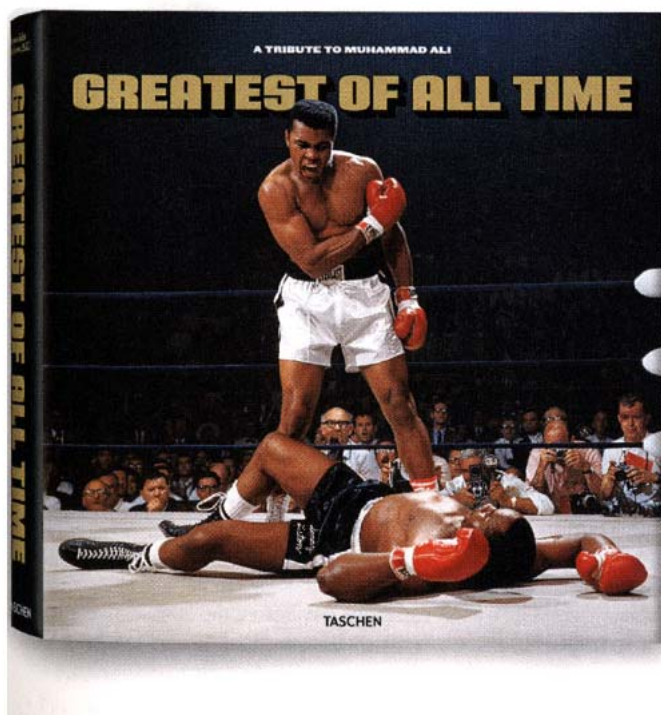


PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



There are numerous shots of Ali with everyday people, mingling out on the streets of Los Angeles, running with children on the dirt roads in Zaire, and standing on a Manhattan corner, next to a red light with no one seeming to pay attention to him. These weren't mock publicity shots that you'd see today with superstars. The images are vibrant and sincere. The book captures what made Ali so special, that tangible, magical cord that connected him to people, which is somehow lost between today's sports giants and the time when Ali ruled the sports world.

"Ali was and is one of a kind," said Bingham, who remains close with Ali to this day. "There is no one like him, and there won't be anyone like him anytime soon. I just happened to be the luckiest man in the world, and I have the best friend in the world, Ali. The book was Benedikt Taschen's idea, and I'm very honored to be a part of it. It has everything in it, it's Ali from A-to-Z, and it covers everyone and everything in his life. I'm just very fortunate to be part of it and one of the co-photographers with Neil Leifer to put this together."

Bound in a special carrying case, this keepsake is a treasure chest for any Ali fan. It's big, but then again, that's befitting when it comes to the personality and imprint of Muhammad Ali.

—Joseph Santoliquito