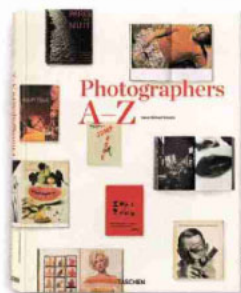




Image ©David LaChapelle/Taschen GmbH

VISUAL PANTHEON, A-Z



Taschen publishes a handsome reference of the most important photographers of the 20th century.

BY LORNA GENTRY

Taschen's latest coffee table jewel, "Photographers A-Z," is a rich addition to any bookshelf and a valuable reference for students of photography. Arranged alphabetically and well researched, the book features 400 of the most important photographers of the 20th century. Of course, some noses will be out of joint about any photographers who

Above: Hans-Michael Koetzle's "Photographers A-Z" features David LaChapelle.

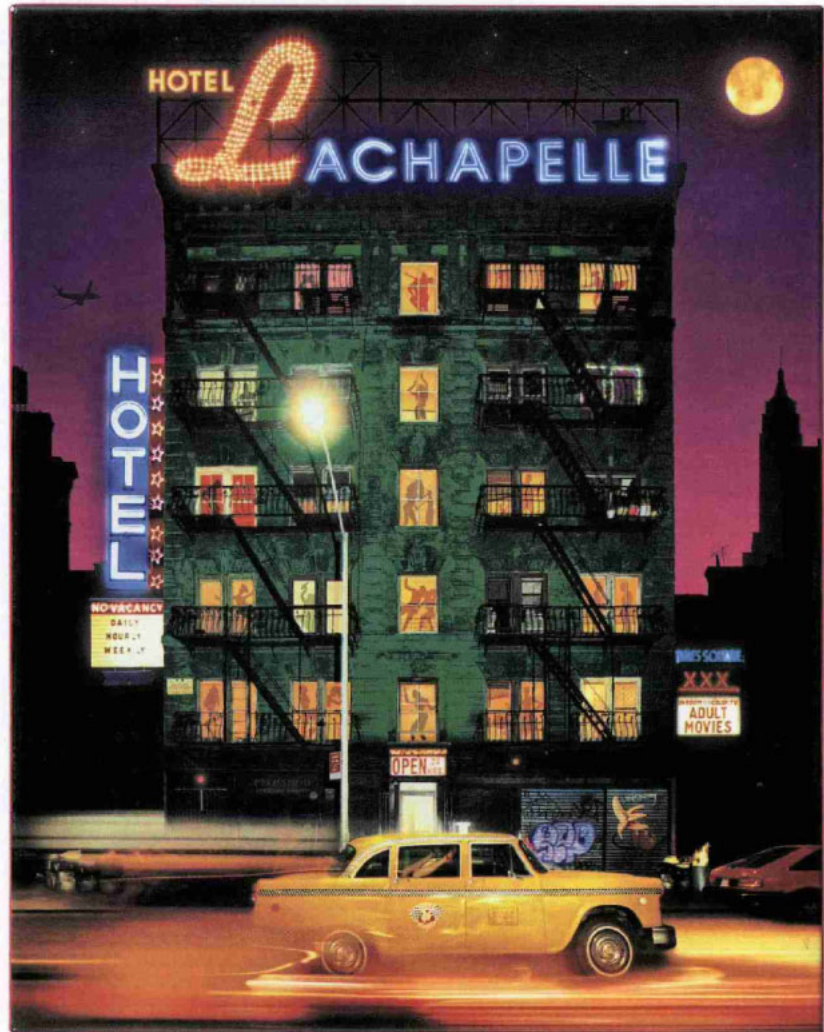
were left out, but author Hans-Michael Koetzle adhered to a strict standard: photo artists who are internationally recognized and discussed, and whose contributions to the medium are without question.

Writing it was a 10-year undertaking for Koetzle, a German author, editor, critic and museum curator. He included photographers from every continent whose work covers the broad spectrum of image-making, from photojournalism, landscape and portraiture to experimental, architecture and fashion. While the photographers differ from one another in myriad ways, they share a common bond: Each has published at least one book.

"I think the revolution of the 20th century was the combination of type and images," says Koetzle on the phone from his Munich office. "All the photographers of the 20th century tried to make a book. Some did one, some did a dozen, but printing a book was their goal." With each entry Koetzle includes pictures of pages from one or two of the photographer's most important books, such as Richard Avedon's "Observations," featuring Truman Capote, and Henri Cartier-Bresson's seminal "The Decisive Moment." Photographic images of magazine pages and journals also liven the work.

Koetzle has been writing about photography for 30 years, yet even he had a struggle finding some information. "There are very few encyclopedias of photography," he says. "Before the Internet, there was very little information at all. However, a good bit of information on the Internet is inaccurate," or riddled with misunderstandings, he says. That was particularly problematic when he was researching the Russian photographers. Koetzle relied on Russian scholars and museum curators to get accurate details about how the photo artists lived and died.

Image ©David LaChapelle/Taschen GmbH



LaChapelle joins artists such as Richard Avedon and Henri Cartier-Bresson in Taschen's latest coffee table book.

Because the photographers are listed alphabetically, various genres of photography sit serendipitously side by side, bringing the viewer fresh insights. Beyond its usefulness as a reference, "Photographers A-Z" is a fascinating picture book. Early reviewers told

him they found themselves repeatedly drawn to the book in the evenings, sitting down with it in their laps, a glass of wine at hand to read a little, but mostly to look at the pictures. For details about "Photographers A-Z," visit taschen.com.