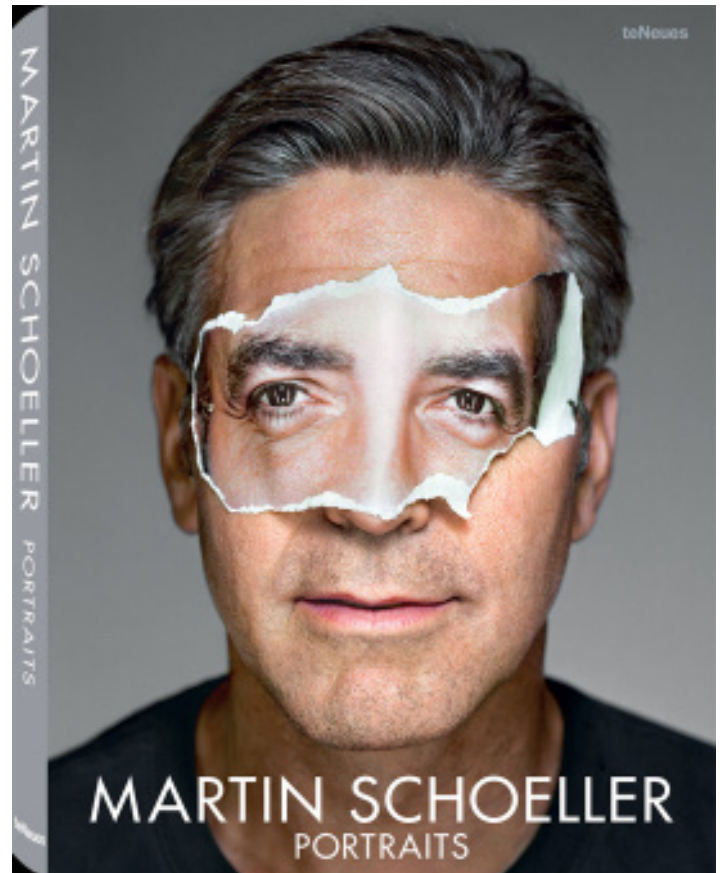


From Zuckerberg to Tarantino, See Martin Schoeller's Portraits

By: Richard Conway | Date: 11/12/2014



When Martin Schoeller was sent to the White House to photograph president Bill Clinton in 2000 for the New Yorker, he knew exactly the shot he wanted: the Commander-in-Chief playing golf in the official residence.

"Him putting in the Oval Office was my main goal," Schoeller tells TIME, saying he wanted to recreate the seemingly casual atmosphere of Kennedy's "Camelot," where JFK junior was photographed inside the Resolute Desk. But there were to be two problems. Firstly, Clinton's main office was off limits, so they had to move to a similar looking space next door. And then a second problem reared its head: the president didn't have any clubs. What to do?

"I have some right here!" Schoeller told the president excitedly, having brought his own clubs and balls, ever-prepared. Clinton couldn't resist: he took the sticks and started playing, much to the chagrin of his publicity-savvy entourage. The resulting image is as candid as it is amusing and features in Schoeller's newest book *Portraits*, alongside several years of his work.

Now, the photographer talks LightBox through a selection of high profile shoots from the title. We hear the story of pro skater Tony Hawk leaping from his kitchen counter at the crack of dawn and Quentin Tarantino apparently blissing out in a sea of doves. There's the tale of an easy going Bill Murray golfing from behind a curtain in a New York hotel room and one of British chef April Bloomfield looking

as if she is being served up as one of her own meals. A native of Germany, Schoeller once worked for Annie Leibovitz, later going it alone to make portraits of people on the streets of New York (he would even set up a working studio on the sidewalk). He got an early break photographing Vanessa Redgrave for *Time Out New York* and worked for magazines such as *Fortune* and *Worth*.

Probably most famous for his close up head shots, he is now a regular photographer for the *New Yorker* and many other publications and has shot several covers for TIME, including Mark Zuckerberg for Person of the Year in 2010 and the May 21, 2012 "Are You Mom Enough?" story. Schoeller's photographic method is known to be one of persistence: he shoots until he catches a subject in an unguarded moment. And for some, the resulting work is notable for its equal treatment of subjects of varying stature. Schoeller's lens, in the words of various commentators, is ever democratic.

"One feels not confronted by the subjects of the pages," Jeff Koons writes in the foreword to *Portraits*. " [Instead], one shares an honest moment with each individual and embraces the truthfulness that Martin presents."

Martin Schoeller is a New York-based staff photographer for the *New Yorker*. *Portraits* is available now. Read Schoeller's LightBox piece *The Photo That Made Me*. An exhibition of Schoeller's work will run at Hasted Kraeutler in New York from Nov. 13, 2014 to Jan. 3, 2015.



TONY HAWK

"It was a crazy day. I had another shoot the night before and I had to drive down at 3 or 4 in the morning. We showed up at his house before sunrise. I had thought skaters are always trying to break rules — jumping off cars. Skateboarding has that bad boy connotation. So I thought he's more of a family man he's a bit older, but still maybe top take a picture that still shows skateboarding culture in a family setting. And when I came to the house and saw this great kitchen counter, I had this spontaneous idea of him jumping off it.

He said 'no!' It was 6.30 in the morning and he didn't feel like jumping off the counter. But I started talking to his wife. And I said 'you would be in the picture too.' And she basically talked him into it. This one picture was the reason I was offered a contract with the New Yorker."

APRIL BLOOMFEILD

"She is one of the very few people I have photographed that I am friends with now. She wasn't quite as famous back then. I read she likes to cook pork and heavy dishes. So I saw this picture of her and she reminded me of a Dutch master's painting. For some reason I saw medieval kind of food. I thought it would be good to turn it into a painting. And to have her head on a platter with these root vegetables. We cut a hole in the table and she stuck her head through it and the plate is plastic though it looks as if it's metal. We used it as if it was a collar to cover up the hole underneath. There is no retouching, that's why I left the body in there."



PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

"It was definitely exciting, but also overwhelming and terrifying. I read up that he is a big golf fanatic. Researching pictures of Presidents, I came across all the ones of Kennedy in the Oval Office with his kids, and these beautiful pictures of the kids playing under the chairs — the idea that their offices become, to some extent, their living rooms. So I came up with the idea of him putting. We didn't have access to the Oval Office but we had the room right next to it.

After I had done all my studio portraits, at the very end I said: 'Mr President would you mind putting a couple of golf balls for me?' And he said: 'Sure, but my golf clubs aren't here.' And I said: 'I have some right here!' I brought them. I handed them to him and he just did it. He was super charming and charismatic."



MARIANO RIVERA

"This was for a Man of the Year portfolio in GQ. It's at old Yankee Stadium. He always prays before games, and I just asked him: 'Would you show me how you pray and he bent down and prayed as if it was before a game.'"



QUENTIN TARANTINO

This was during the days of Kill Bill. I thought of a shoot with white doves. Sort of him being the victim of these white doves -- a [symbolic] mixture of One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest, and the symbol of peace. We had the doves and the gurney and it took a while to talk him into it. There were dove wranglers and [the doves] would fly around and come back. Not all the doves are in this frame, though. There is one dead one which makes the whole thing slightly more sinister."

JOE NAMATH

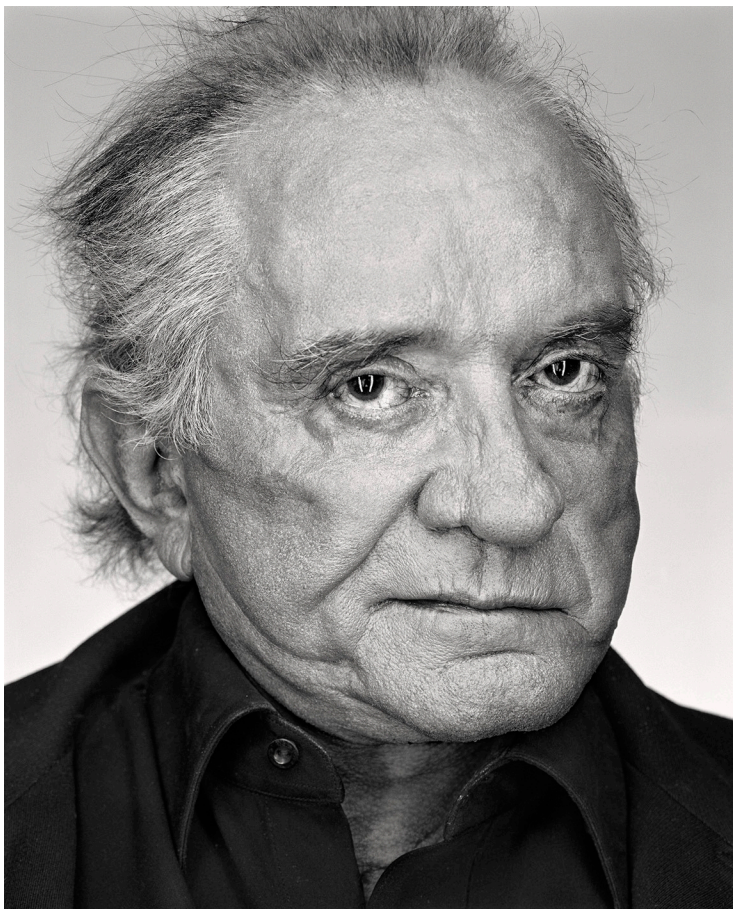
"Again [being from Germany], I had never heard of him before. What retired athletes do, the famous ones, is they often sign baseballs and footballs. I thought: 'How funny would put be if he was beside a pile of footballs signing them?' We set up the balls. It's one frame. There is no retouching on them.

It was for GQ so normally he would be looking sharp in a suit [but] it was in Florida and I brought that robe. He is a funny, outgoing guy, so I thought it would suit him perfectly."



BILL MURRAY

"I was told by his publicist that he might not show up! He did show up and he was very easy going. Again he is also a big golfer, and I thought he has to go somewhere in the hotel room. Something had to be different he had to standing on the bed to hit these golf balls, and then behind the curtain seemed so funny just with his head sticking out."



JOHNNY CASH

"People always say: 'What is your favorite shoot?' I would have to pick Johnny Cash. Because coming from Germany, I wasn't familiar with who he was when I first got the call to go down to Hendersonville, Tennessee to photograph him. But I started listening to his music, and I immediately fell in love with the man. My studio manager was a really big Johnny Cash fan and she begged to come with me. We went down to his house for about 8am to set something up outside the house. And June Carter came up and offered us tea.

The house was so full of things that fans had given to him over the years, there was so much stuff everywhere. I said: 'Mr Cash, can I please take a picture with my assistant next you?' And she stood next to him and broke down crying. She was so overwhelmed. And then he looked down at her and there [were] tears running down his cheeks. Then everyone started crying! It was really a very spiritual moment."

MARK ZUCKERBER

"This was for TIME. It took us a long time to talk him into doing something he's done in the past — fencing with Sheryl Sandberg's son. We asked them if they could fence for us in front of his house. We had a fencing uniform for him, [but] he didn't want to wear it. I told the little boy: 'Why don't you just [jab] him in his belly!' So the little guy just kept on [jabbing]. We spent three days there, wrangling with his people [to get this shot]. He was flattered to be Person of the Year."





CINDY SHERMAN

"She's a really lovely lady. We went to her loft in SoHo, I also had this car on hand. I was thinking that she always photographs herself, she doesn't have any assistants and she dresses up. I wanted to capture that. I love her film series and that inspired this photo."

DR. JANE GOODALL

"This was for National Geographic. So many people in Hollywood make a lot of effort to not age and Jane Goodall just looks so beautiful in this picture. She has this great air about her. So many other people try so hard to look pretty and she does it so effortlessly. We photographed her in a hotel owned by friends of hers. We had this tiny room to set up. We were told that she didn't want a stylist or any hair and makeup. She came by for half an hour sat down and I took her picture."

