

NEW YORK POST

NEW YORKERS *EXPOSED!*

By Reed Tucker, November 18, 2014

Take it from us: Celebrities are so scrutinized, analyzed, poked and plumbed that getting anything new or interesting out of them is an uphill climb.

Which makes the photos of Martin Schoeller all the more remarkable.

The German-born, New York-based celebrity photographer specializes in whimsical portraits that manage to put a fresh spin on familiar faces. An exhibition of Schoeller's work recently opened at Chelsea's Hasted Kraeutler Art Gallery, where it will be on display through Jan. 3. He also just published a massive coffee table book, "Portraits" (teNeues, \$125), containing his best work.

Here, Schoeller dishes on the stories behind six photos of famous locals from his new tome.



P. DIDDY, WALDORF ASTORIA, 2010

"I was in . . . Times Square, and I saw this building-sized poster of P. Diddy advertising his Cîroc vodka. I was thinking, 'This guy is so vain. Everything he does, he puts his image on [it]' . . . I had this idea about this guy thinking of himself as the greatest person to walk the planet, and I thought, what would be more vain than painting yourself surrounded by naked models? . . . He's surrounded by naked women, and he's just painting himself. We're making a little fun of him. I'm surprised he did it. I'm not sure he saw it coming, or maybe he didn't care. Or maybe he just thought, 'I'm being surrounded by naked girls. Awesome!'"

MARC JACOBS, HIS SOHO OFFICE, 2008

"I always research my subjects beforehand and try to get a sense of what they are like. What struck me about Marc is that he's more lighthearted, more playful [than is typical] for the fashion industry. I thought, let's do something kind of silly that still feels spontaneous, not too set up. We went to his office in Soho, and the prop stylist had brought all these balloons. I thought it would be a long shot that he would play with a balloon. I said, 'Oh, hey, why don't you stick this between your legs?' He said, 'Sure, why not?' He had a grin, but I asked him to downplay it a bit, that his expression should be serious. Fashion is all about selling sex, so I think this is a good symbol."





MICHAEL STRAHAN, EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ, 2008

"I don't watch football or any sports. I heard that he had a good sense of humor. I'm so tired of these shots of football players standing in their gear and trying to look all tough. I thought it would be great to have him hanging out at a tailgating party and getting his fans ready for the game. We got a range of model cards from all these wannabe actors, and I just picked a wild bunch, a big variety. [For the gaps in the fans' teeth] we just put a little black tooth paint on them."

ROBERT DE NIRO, NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM, 2013

"When I got the job to shoot him, I thought of him [as] the quintessential New Yorker. On the other hand, he's also this uber-famous person. So [to] contrast being in this vivid, lively city and being that famous of a person, I thought it would be great to have him in a typical public space where everyone ignores him. What's more public than the subway? But it's literally impossible to get a permit to photograph on the subway, and I was a little nervous taking him ... I was afraid people would start asking for autographs and disrupt the photo shoot. So we went to the Transit Museum in Brooklyn. They have a modern subway train. That's where we ended up shooting. That's my assistant sitting right next to him. We had a couple props for him. I thought the funniest would be him eating a banana, [but] the chips are subtle and still really funny."





TINA FEY, CENTRAL PARK'S WOLLMAN RINK, 2003

"I had told her about this idea beforehand, because we needed to bring in a crane to lift her up. Special-effects people had to come in with a harness. The rink wouldn't close the place down, but said, 'You can do it in that corner.' Tina wasn't quite as famous as she is now, so the other people would skate by, check it out for a minute, then skate away. It's New York. I don't think Tina ever skated. She wobbled out there, was in her harness, and we lifted her up. When the original picture appeared in GQ, we [Photoshopped out] the cables to make it look like she's jumping in the air. I thought it was more endearing leaving the cables in, showing the setup."

STEPHEN COLBERT, A HIGHWAY ON-RAMP NEAR 39TH STREET, 2009

"I love Stephen Colbert. I think he's a genius. He's playing a character who thinks he is America. This was shot a couple years ago when everyone was talking about the economy. Everyone was always saying, 'America is going broke.' We thought it would be funny if Stephen went broke and was homeless. I almost got arrested because the street wasn't closed. Some Port Authority officer had screamed at us, even though there were no cars going by — maybe one every couple of minutes. This officer wasn't very happy and called the cops. By the time they came, we'd cleared the streets. They might have recognized Colbert, but if it had been Robert De Niro, I think the cops would have been more impressed."

