

Nick Knight (*1958, Great Britain)

7th of April – 4th of June 2016

Christophe Guye Galerie proudly announces a solo exhibition of one of the world's most influential and visionary photographers: Nick Knight. The Swiss premiere showcases a cross section of Nick Knight's creative work from the last two decades. Beside a selection of his most iconic photographs, an assemblage of his award-winning fashion films will be on view, as well as one of his „photographic sculptures“; a porcelain sculpture of Kate Moss with its delicate and refined features employs the very same approach and the same techniques that he uses in photography.

Questioning the ethos and conversation around conventional beauty ideals, he continuously pushes the boundaries of what it means to be beautiful and how to shoot beautiful images. Even in his return to glamour, Nick Knight's photographs are raw and fierce, and yet angelic. In Nick Knight we see an artist who is perpetually pushing his images. As the world around him changes, and as technology evolves, he responds. This is what keeps Nick Knight's photography remaining dynamic and fluid; and while it is about fashion, his images capture the evolution of the medium itself – never losing sight of the medium as an art form.

Nick Knight has continuously empowered women through his imagery. In *Sander* (1997) the model, Tatjana Patitz, remains strong, fierce and feminine despite her downward gaze and obscured face. Juxtaposed with the sheerness of the fabric and delicate colouring, Knight's image for the Jil Sander 1992 campaign celebrates the balance of women's strength and fragility, and like the designer Knight set the standards for 1990s minimalism through sophisticated lines. He continues this approach with the work *Naomi* (2007), a portrait of iconic British supermodel Naomi Campbell. It also marks Knight's initial exploration of incorporating painting into his photography. Using the camera, light, and new printing techniques, Knight creates a fluid image with a richness and lushness often seen in abstract paintings to pioneer an entirely new genre of fashion photography. In this unique composition, sharp photographic lines of Campbell's body, merge with fluid washes of white paint. Drawing inspiration from visionaries like Art Deco-era fashion illustrator Erte, or mid-century, high-contrast fashion photographer Lillian Bassman, Nick Knight's *Alexia* (2012) featuring model Alexia Wight explores this visual genealogy, fusing an old school, high fashion glamour visual with a futuristic and highly technical aesthetic, just to name a few.

Born in London in 1958, Knight studied photography at Bournemouth & Poole College of Art and Design. He graduated with a distinction in 1982. In 1985 his first book, *Skinheads*, won him the Designers and Art Directors Award for Best Book Cover. Yohji Yamamoto's art director Marc Ascoli commissioned Knight for 12 successive catalogues in the late Eighties - at a time when Yamamoto campaigns were breaking new ground. Knight made fashion history in November 1993 by adapting ring-flash photography to capture Linda Evangelista for a landmark, post-grunge cover of *British Vogue*. Since then, his work has graced no fewer than 36 covers. He has shot advertising campaigns for Jil Sander, Louis Vuitton, Calvin Klein, Yves Saint Laurent, Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen and Christian Dior to name a few. He has also shot record covers for David Bowie, Paul Weller, George Michael and Massive Attack.

Knight's work has been exhibited at institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum, Saatchi Gallery, The Photographers' Gallery, the Hayward Gallery, the Tate Modern and recently the National Portrait Gallery. In 2010, he received an OBE in recognition of the contribution he has made to the arts over his illustrious career.