

L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

What's new, Kristian Schuller? Interview by Nadine Dinter

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Nadine Dinter

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I first “met” **Kristian Schuller** way back when, on an early season of *Germany’s Next Top Model*. He stood out as the photographer who really pushed the aspiring models to their limits.

Fast forward a bit, and our paths kept crossing in the Berlin photography scene, especially at major photography shows where everyone mingles. One day, we started talking, and decided to stay in touch.

Last year, I had the pleasure to work with him directly, and with his upcoming shows in Graz and Coburg, it was the perfect time to catch up and discuss what’s new.

Nadine Dinter: Your schedule is basically non-stop. Berlin, New York, L.A., photo shoots, TV shows, exhibition openings... What was on the “menu” this week?

Kristian Schuller: I’ve just sent off the last images for our exhibition in Graz, am finalizing a concept for a client in Atlanta, and am brainstorming ideas for an editorial in New York next week.

Your work will soon be shown in Graz, Austria. What do you have in store, and what can visitors expect?

KSCH: We have just had our wonderful vernissage of the current exhibition “Dream Worlds” with Jaeger Art in collaboration with the Stahlberg Collection in Coburg. Now all our attention is on the presentation in Graz. This project is the craziest thing I have ever done in terms of exhibitions. The size of the pictures and the enormous dimensions of the hall have an incredible effect. We are working with light boxes measuring 2m x 3m and 3m x 4.5m. Works from the last 15 years are on display, with a focus on fashion stagings and portraits. Christian Jungwirth, the initiator of this project, has presented us with a great challenge.

***Anton’s Berlin* is the title of your latest book, published in 2020. It’s now set for re-release in an updated version. What updates were made, and why?**

KSCH: *Anton’s Berlin* is my latest book. The Graz exhibition inspired us to completely revise and reissue my earlier book, *Tales for Oskar*. It will be published by Brandstätter in Vienna in a few days.

In *Anton’s Berlin*, you portrayed individuals from the Berlin nightlife scene. How did these portraits challenge you or require a different approach compared to your typical celebrity portraits?

KSCH: I don’t overthink it – I approach each subject directly, explain my idea, and am friendly and upbeat. Whether the person is famous or not doesn’t matter in that moment – they expect me to engage with them as equals. That’s the beauty of the intimate moment of a photoshoot – you forget everything else.

How do you prepare for your photo shoots? Do you and Peggy, your creative partner, stylist, and wife, sit down together to brainstorm and discuss ideas, then come up with a concept?

KSCH: Exactly! We carefully consider what we want to achieve, how we should do it, and the story we want to tell. Good preparation allows everyone on the team to do their best on set, giving me the freedom to playfully explore the theme together with my subject.

Have you ever had a photo shoot that initially seemed easy but turned out to be challenging, where you just had to buckle down and push through it?

KSCH: Yes, I know those situations: You gear up for what seems like a nice walk, but after three hours of hair and make-up, she steps out, and you suddenly realize you've got a problem! And when there's a star in front of you pressed for time, and a magazine expecting 14 pages and a cover from you, that's when the tap dance begins!

You're a regular guest and contributor on Heidi Klum's show, *Germany's Next Top Model*. Which challenge and photo shoot is your favorite? Have you noticed any changes in the quality and commitment of the models over the years?

KSCH: We've had some exciting shoots: with elephants in LA, setting up a huge scaffold on the beach in Cape Town, and using parachutes in the desert... When you bring strong content, and the young models sense the enthusiasm, motivation isn't an issue. Over the years, the dream of becoming a social media star has become more prominent. In the beginning, the catwalks of the world were their ultimate goal.

What's next for you after *Graz* and the re-release of your book?

KSCH: We're focusing on the next book, slated for publication in 2025, along with two more exhibition projects. Apart from that, it's the usual madness.

What's your advice to aspiring fashion photographers?

KSCH: Don't let yourself get discouraged, never give up, and don't let go of your dreams!

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23 May – 31 August 2024

Messe Congress Graz • Hall A • Fröhlichgasse entrance

and

KRISTIAN SCHULLER

TRAUMWELTEN

presented by Sammlung Stahlberg und JAEGER ART

until June 14, 2024

at Projektraum Münzmeisterhaus

Ketschengasse 7, 96450 Coburg

About the books:

Kristian Schuller, **Tales for Oskar**, published by Brandstätter Verlag, release date: 20 May 2024, revised version with unpublished photographs, ISBN: 978-3-7106-0837-7, size: 24 x 30 cm, 208 pages, price: 40,00 EUR

Kristian Schuller, **Anton´s Berlin**, edited by Nadine Barth, Texts by Ingeborg Harms, Graphic Design: Katharina Sörgel, English 2020, 208 Pages, 150 Ills., Hardcover, size: 305 mm x 261 mm, ISBN: 978-3-7757-4671-7, price: 48,00 EUR

**Check out www.kristianschuller.com
and the artist's IG account [@kristianschuller](https://www.instagram.com/kristianschuller)**