

Michel Comte - Biography 1/3

1953 geboren in Zürich. Ausbildung zum Kunstrestaurator. Als Fotograf ist Comte Autodidakt.

1978 erhält er seine ersten internationalen Aufträge, Anzeigenfotos für die Pariser Modehäuser Ungaro und Chloé.

1979 Uebersiedlung nach Paris. 1981 geht Comte nach New York, wo er für die amerikanische Vogue arbeitet; später bezieht er in Los Angeles Domizil. „Ich muss immer auf Risiko leben“, kommentiert Comte seine Wanderlust. „Wenn ich kein Risiko mehr spüre, ziehe ich sofort weiter. Das habe ich wohl von meinem Grossvater (dem Schweizer Luftfahrtpionier Alfred Comte) geerbt.“

Bei Modeaufnahmen lernt Comte das Fotomodell Dominique Kamber kennen und lieben; 1986 wird geheiratet. Die beiden haben zwei Söhne, Diederik und Brandon.

Im Editorial-Bereich arbeitet Comte hauptsächlich für den Condé Nast Verlag (Vanity Fair, Vogue). In dieser Funktion porträtiert er unzählige Stars der Kunst-, Entertainment- und Sportszene von Demi Moore, Sharon Stone, Kim Basinger und Jennifer Lopez über Robert Altman, Sting und Heremy Irons bis zu Julian Schnabel oder Jeff Koons.

Werbekampagnen u.a. für Armani, Dolce&Gabbana, Gianfranco Ferré, Moschino, Versace, Celine, Nike, Revlon, Lancôme, Mercedes und Jaguar.

In den letzten Jahren beschäftigt sich Comte neben Porträt- und Modeaufnahmen auch verstärkt mit Reportagefotografie. So bereiste er den Tibet ausgiebig und als Fotograf für das International Rote Kreuz die Kriegs- und Krisengebiete im Irak, in Afghanistan und Bosnien.

In Zusammenarbeit mit dem Internationalen Komitee vom Roten Kreuz (ICRC) entstanden diverse Charity-Projekte mit internationalen Stars und dem Schmuckproduzenten Pomellato. Im Jahr 2004 gründete Michel Comte seine eigene Stiftung, die Michel Comte Water Foundation, welche als steuerbefreite, wohltätige Stiftung unter Aufsicht der Schweizer Regierung steht und zum Ziel hat, Menschen in der Dritten Welt sauberes Trinkwasser zugänglich zu machen.

2005 beginnt Comte mit seinem ersten internationalen Filmprojekt als Regisseur einer grossen Hollywood-Produktion.

Im Verlag Schirmer/Mosel erschienen im Jahr 2000 eine grosse Werkbiographie von Michel Comte sowie der Fotoband „Aiko T.“, 2002 im Steidl Verlag ein Fotokunstabuch. 2003 publizierte Random House den Band „Schumacher“ mit Aufnahmen aus der über 10jährigen Zusammenarbeit Comte-Michael Schumacher.

Internationale Ausstellungen mit Arbeiten von Michel waren zu sehen im Guggenheim Museum in Venedig, im Centro Internazionale di Fotografia in Verona sowie in der Pinakothek der Moderne in München.

Michel Comte - Biography 2/3

Michel Comte is among the most prolific photographers alive. Born in Zurich in 1954, he was discovered in Paris by the fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, and since Comte's career has enjoyed a meteoric rise. His work has been seen in countless important international magazines and was shown in major museums and galleries all over the world. Highly in-demand in advertising, fashion, and portraiture alike, Comte has worked in almost every genre of photography. Whether it's reportage or fashion, he has remained ever true to his approach and has over the years created his own inimitable signature style.

Some of Comte's photographs are truly memorable, unforgettable even, encapsulating the essence of his approach to photography. For more than 30 years now, this autodidact has received commissions from labels like Ungaro, Dolce & Gabbana, and Nespresso, creating iconic advertising imagery; while embracing his photographs are representative alike of the visual aesthetic of the past three decades. Comte has portrayed famous personalities from the worlds of art, film and show, as Sophia Loren, Tina Turner, George Clooney, Louise Bourgeois or Carla Bruni. All faces we've seen many times before, but Comte's mastery lies in creating images of celebrities that evoke the feeling as if one were seeing them for the first time, capturing their allure in an almost mythical image.

However, Comte has not just committed himself to the world of glamour but has constantly also portrayed the other side, through which an extensive body of documentary photography has come to be, characterised through the same balance between spontaneity and iconic presence as his portraiture. The secret of Comte's work lies in his curiosity and sheer fascination in human beings: their variety, distinctiveness and eccentricity, with his approach allowing him to produce images as unique as the individuals they show.

"Zurich Open" shows a series of Michel Comte sport stars portraits, some of them never seen before; others already have become iconic images such as Mike Tyson's hand with boxer glove carrying a dove.

Michel Comte - Biography 3/3

- 1954 Born in Zurich, Switzerland
- 1978 Comte receives his first international photographic assignment for Paris based fashion labels Ungaro and Chloé
- 1979 Comte leaves Switzerland and moves to Paris
- 1981 Comte relocates to New York, where he begins to work for the American Vogue, later settling down in Los Angeles
- 1981-2011 Editorially Comte works mainly for Condé Nast. He not only works as a fashion photographer, but also a celebrity photographer, portraying stars from the worlds of fashion, art, entertainment, music and sports. His subjects include Demi Moore, Sharon Stone, Kim Basinger, Jennifer Lopez, Robert Altman, Sting, Jeremy Irons, Julian Schnabel and Jeff Koons
- 1999-2011 Comte has traveled to in war zones and unstable regions such as Tibet, Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia as a photographer for the International Red Cross. He has developed various charity project in collaboration with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)
- 2003 Photographs the campaign for his own fragrance, Michel Comte Shared Water
- 2004 Founds the Michel Comte Water Foundation, a charitable foundation to help provide access to clean drinking water for people in developing countries
- 2007 Comte begins his first international film project as director of a Hollywood production
- 2010 Photographerslimitededitions.com, Vienna, Austria
- Zurich Open, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2009 Museum of Design, Zurich, Switzerland
Young Gallery, Fine Art Photographer, Brussels, Belgium
NRW-Forum, Dusseldorf, Germany
- 2008 Galleria Gottardo, Viale Stefano Franscini 12, Lugano, Switzerland
Axel-Springer-Passage, Berlin, Germany
Espace de l'art Contemporain, Mouans-Sartoux, France
St. Moritz, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2007 Vogue Russia, Moscow, Russia
Pobeda Gallery, Moscow, Russia
Hotel Suvretta House, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2006 Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany
- 2005 He Xiang Ning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China
- 2002 Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2001 Touring exhibition to Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Germany
Camera Work Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Hamiltons Gallery, London, England
- 1995 Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *The Gisele Exhibition*, Guy Hepner, New York, USA
- 2014 *Supermodels – Then and Now*, Camera Work Gallery, Berlin, Germany

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 Galerie Andres Thalmann, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2018 Kunsthuis, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Camera Work Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2017 La Termica, Malaga, Spain
- 2015 Galerie XXI, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2014 Elipsis Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
Kunst Haus Wien, Vienna, Austria
- 2013 Camera Work Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Contemporary Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey
Au Premier, Zurich Hauptbahnhof, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2012 Contemporary Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2011 Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Crescendo Fotografico Triennale Di Milano, Milan, Italy
Lu.C.C.A. Center of Contemporary Arts, Luca, Italy

PUBLICATIONS

- 30 Years and 5 Minutes*, teNeues, Kempen, 2009
Badenfahrt, AT Verlag, Aarau, 2008
Schumacher, Edition Francaise, SZ Verlag, Munich, 2007
Schumacher, The official Inside Story, SZ Verlag, Munich, 2006
Michel Comte. The Classics, I-Management, Lachen, 2004
Michel Comte. On Women, I-Management, Lachen, 2004
Michel Comte. On Engadin, I-Management, Lachen, 2004
Aiko T, Steidl, 2000
People and Places With No Name, Steidl, Göttingen, 2000
Twenty Years, Schirmer/Mosel, Munich, 1999