

**ALESSANDRO LUIGI PERNA**

**MICHEL COMTE: PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE SOUL**



Michel Comte is a fashion photographer. This is undeniable. Fashion discovered his talent. Fashion offered him the chance to develop it. And fashion made him an international success. He has repaid her well. He has become one of the world's greatest fashion photographers. He has given to fashion the gift of countless cover images for over more than two decades. But to say that Michel Comte is simply a fashion photographer does nothing to explain who the man is, or what his art means. As a restless spirit, Michel Comte loves to travel, both physically and mentally. But if moving from one place to another in the world is also a part of his job, traveling in his mind is above all a choice. This is demonstrated by the fact that he has for some time added reporting to his glossy photography portfolio. It has been a challenge and a passion that led him to the most dire and "hottest" corners of the world - the Balkans, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. But it also, and especially, is demonstrated by his way of doing photography. This is because, more than being a fashion photographer, Michel Comte is a great portraitist. And in the search for the perfect portrait he has shown his genius. In fact, a great deal of research has been conducted on the subject of his work. Through the years he has exercised his talent in many different forms of portraiture. Not only does he make it a function of the topic. He makes it a function of the subject that he has before him. Because each subject has something unique and personal to express. And each time it may be necessary to invent a way for his subject to express this through and through. The scenography that acts as the background may be a hotel room or a gray background in the studio. The body may be nude or dressed. The photo may be in color or in black and white. The shooting technique may be bold or classic or a dialectical synthesis of the two. The play of possibilities is endless, but always functional. Just like his attitude on the set. When you see him do his work, everything actually happens very quickly. It all seems extremely ordinary. But it is precisely this apparent ordinariness that allows Michel Comte to put his subjects at ease, thus allowing them to be what they are. Because Michel Comte aspires to one single thing. Bringing out the soul of the subject he has before him. The fact that he succeeds is what makes him unique. It is what has allowed him to compose a piece of history in contemporary photography.