

**Vogue** November 2017, United Kingdom

# VOGUE

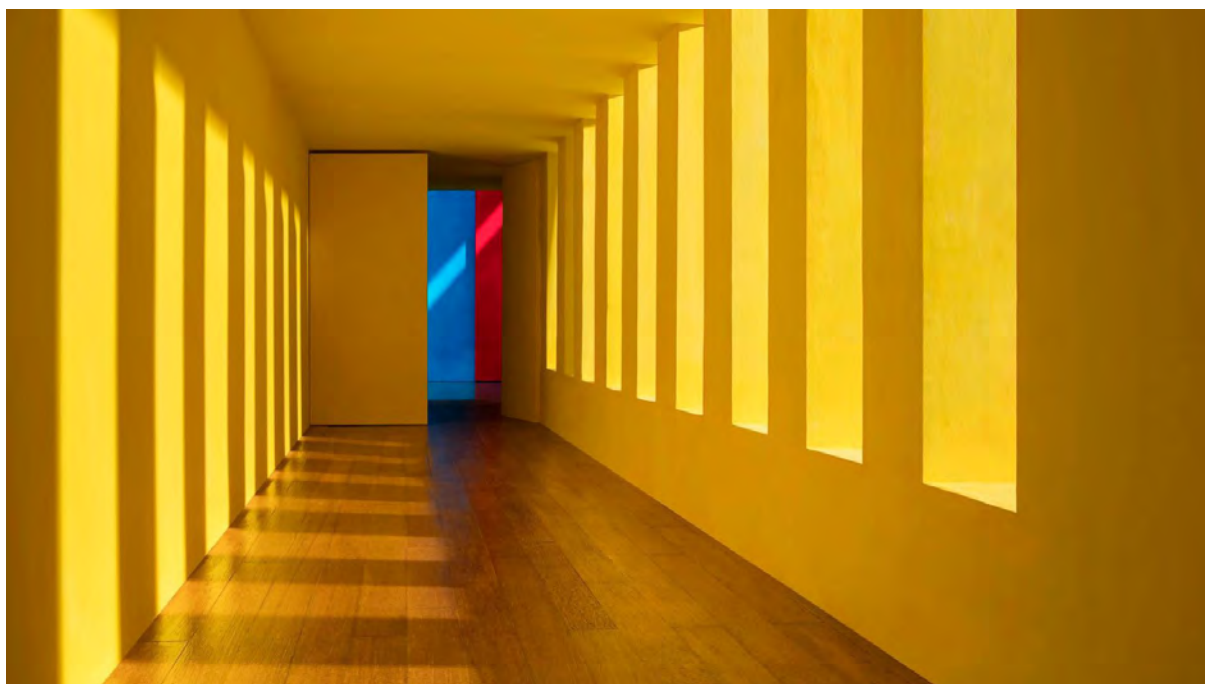
by SUZY MENKES

Thursday 9 November 2017

**FASHION**

## Karl Lagerfeld: An Eye on Photography

The fashion legend chooses his favourite images from the vast display at the Paris Photo exhibition at the Grand Palais



Karl Lagerfeld's choice: Yellow Passage by James Casabert, 2017. Visitors to Paris Photo 2017 can follow a trail through the exhibition hall of images selected by Karl Lagerfeld

CREDIT: JAMES CASABERT, COURTESY OF THE CALVINE KLEIN JEREMY MATHISON

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**T**he flourish of a signature in black pen and ink, the letters tipping slightly to the right, reads “Karl Lagerfeld 2017”. And those spidery letters seem to pop up everywhere in the huge space at the Grand Palais in Paris, devoted to the annual exhibition, Paris Photo (until 12th November).



Karl Lagerfeld's choice: Christy Turlington, by Patrick Demarchelier (1990), wearing a rose hat by Jasper Conran

CREDIT: ANDRE DONNACHOUSSA, COURTESY OF CAMERON WORTH

“Today, photography is part of my life – it completes the circle between my artistic and professional restlessness,” Karl said, to explain the backstory to these signatures marking his interest or approval. They create a winding path through the thousands of artworks on display from a global selection of galleries.



To my inexpert eye, the Lagerfeld choices seem to be as restless as he describes himself. Here is a relatively predictable image for Lagerfeld to choose as one of the most powerful fashion designers of the 20th and 21st centuries: Elsa Schiaparelli floating among flowers, photographed in 1934 by Ilse Bing (Gallery Karsten Grieve, Paris).



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♥ 482 J'aime ● 9 commentaires

Karl Lagerfeld choice at Paris Photo. Ilse Bing Homage to Schiaparelli 1934

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Its awkward romance is perhaps a good fit in a photographic mind's eye, with Karl's choice of a forest, resembling something from the fable of Sleeping Beauty, created in pigment print by Sandra Kantanen for London's Purdyhicks Gallery.



What about that period car leaning like a drunken driver on the steep streets of San Francisco in 1960? I have never seen Karl at the wheel nor noticed any interest in cars.



But perhaps the moody, filmic story-telling of the image by Ed van der Elsken (from Annet Gelink Gallery) fits with another storybook photo by the same photographer: a picture of a Paris street, metro station included, with a mechanic at the tipping point of a ladder as he works on a street clock (Howard Greenberg Gallery).





I have often sensed a dream-like vision of the past in Karl's photography, which never appears in his deliberately forward-looking fashion designs. But in these scattered choices of images there seem to be other elements, such as a sense of dark poetry or something that is so hard to achieve: pure beauty. The choice of Paolo Roversi's 1988 vision of feminine innocence, double images of a body covered and naked, is one such example of pure beauty (at Pace MacGill Gallery).





Is there a leaning towards fashion in Karl's choices? I cannot judge without another visit to the exhibition, put together by hundreds of different galleries and displaying so many visual creatives. Or maybe all will be revealed when I see the forthcoming book of Lagerfeld's choices, *Paris Photo by Karl Lagerfeld*, to be published by Steidl.



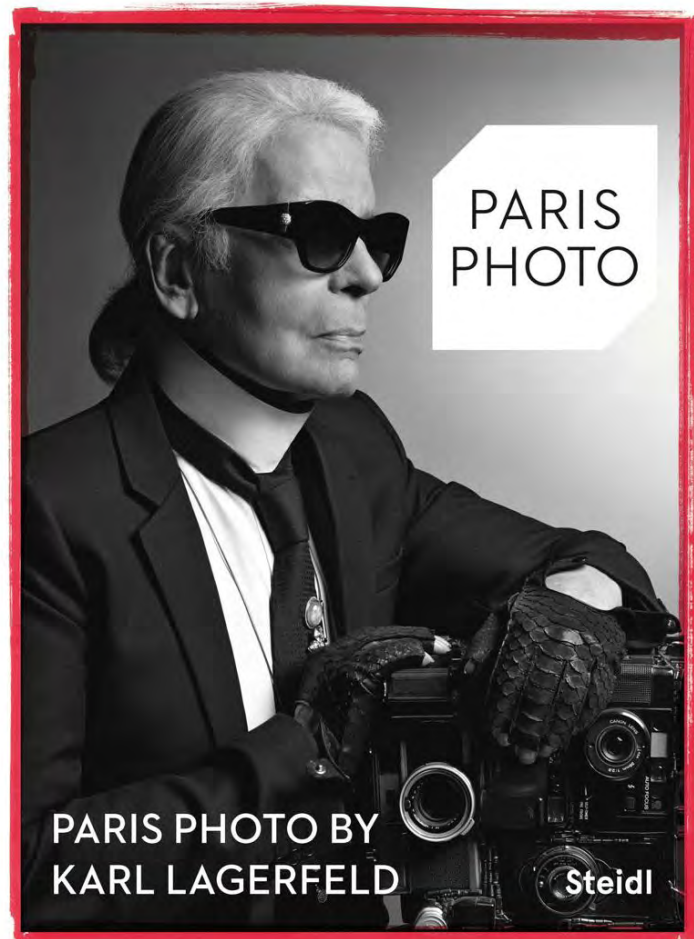
Karl Lagerfeld's choice: *Geothermal Stones* by Liz Nielsen (2017)

CREDIT: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND NEXT LEVEL GALERIE, PARIS

The idea of interjecting Karl's eye at Paris Photo is an original way for the public to contemplate the artworks exhibited by the many gallerists and curators while at the same time discovering Karl's aesthetic universe.



And as we are discussing the creative eye, one of his selection is a relatively recent image by Irving Penn from 2001, dubbed “Mascara Wars”. Printed on Fuji Crystal Archive paper, it shows a “dragon lady” version of spiky lashes (from Pace/MacGill Gallery). This skewered vision of beauty shows a forest of lashes surrounding a glassy, blood-shot eyeball. Nature, with a difference that Lagerfeld must relish.



A book with images and essays of Karl Lagerfeld's selection of images from Paris Photo 2017 will be published at the end of November

CREDIT: STEIDL

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