

Spectrum



BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES

Unvarnished celebrity, by Jonathan Becker

CELEBRITY EXPOSURE

For more than 30 years, Jonathan Becker photographed the biggest names of society, politics and the arts for Vanity Fair. His candid images are part of a new book, and here, Becker talks us through each picture. Cover: Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, Vanity Fair Oscar party, 2000. 'They were the

hot couple. At that moment she was at her most narcissistic, and even Tom is in the shadows.' These pages, left: Hilary Swank and Sean Penn, Vanity Fair Oscar party, 2010. 'She is doing everything to draw attention to her chest and Penn hasn't noticed.' Top right: Christian Lacroix, haute-couture

show, Paris, 1998. 'The models are going onto the runway, so it's the last moment to put a final touch on them.' Bottom centre: Elizabeth Hurley and Elle Macpherson, Vanity Fair Oscar party, 2000. 'At these events, people are drinking and tend to lose their inhibitions. I was surprised about this

pose myself.' The choreographer Martha Graham with Madonna and Calvin Klein, backstage, New York, 1990. 'Martha was my godmother, and this would be her last production. There were a gazillion photographers, but, for the whole time, she didn't take her eyes off my camera'





DOGGED SURVIVORS

Left: Jocelyn Wildenstein at home in New York, 1998. "She has a sort of charming madness about her. There's a sense of high drama and high humour, which is so appealing." Above: Nancy Reagan at home in Bel Air, California, 2009: "That's outside her house—I put the chair there on the lawn. She's looking back, which is what she has to do most these days, and there's a lot to look back on. I was really touched by her because she's alone. The whole world knows who she is, and she's vulnerable because of it." Right: Ryan O'Neal at Farrah Fawcett's apartment, Los Angeles, 2009. "This is all about the details. It was a very sad moment: Farrah was in the hospital, terminally ill. She never came out. He was morose. To me it's also a portrait of decadence: there are two Andy Warhols on the wall, one of Farrah's eye and one of Ryan's lips"





THE WAY THEY WERE

Left: Arthur Miller and his photographer wife, Inge Morath, at home, Connecticut, 1991. "I always think that writers' lives are like scenes in their own theatre. And I see that in this image." Top right: Dennis Hopper with family at home in California, 2010. "That was a very moving afternoon, because he was dying. All the family was there. They had buried the hatchet and

they all wanted to be in this picture." Below left: Christopher Hitchens, Vanity Fair party, Washington, 1999. "I liked him very much. I think that moment is no more than my identifying with him as an observer. And also as a smoker." Below right: writer Mario Vargas Llosa, Peru, 1989. "At the time he was running for president — he had strong convictions."





SUPER GROUP

Above, from left: Audra McDonald, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie Smith, Wynton Marsalis, Eric Clapton, BB King and Willie Nelson, behind the Apollo

Theater, New York, 2003. "The picture was my idea, to put music legends in the back alley of the Apollo Theater. Originally, Ray Charles was going to be

in it, but all these other guys were late. Ray left, so Larry Fishburne got the seat." Top right: Courtney Love, Vanity Fair Oscar party, 2001. "This is at the

entrance to the party. It's a great moment for anyone who likes extra attention, like Courtney. I have rarely seen anyone unhappy at that event"





PLAY TIME

Above: Dustin Hoffman at the Beverly Hills Hotel, 2004. "It was very hard for me to get permission to close the hotel pool and photograph there. And then Dustin's dog did something in the pool and they had to drain

the whole thing." Right: Vanity Fair editor Graydon Carter at home, Lake Waramaug, Connecticut, 1998. "That was on a weekend at his house. In a way, Graydon is the story. He's larger than life and has so much going on"



Clockwise from top left: Martin Scorsese and the author Fran Lebowitz at the Vanity Fair Oscar party, 2005; David Bowie, Damien Hirst and Julian Schnabel at the Gagosian Gallery, New York, 1996; Mick Jagger and the agent Charles Finch at the Vanity Fair Oscar party, 2008; Willem Dafoe and the producer Mitch Glazer at the Vanity Fair Tribeca Film Festival party, New York, 2006; Uma Thurman and Diane von Furstenberg at the Cannes Film Festival, 2004; Robert Altman, celebrating his Oscar for lifetime achievement, 2006

All photographs by Jonathan Becker.
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WORDS BY
EMMA BROOMFIELD

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