

ALBERT WATSON

A TOUR DE FORCE OF STYLE BECOMES A PRINTING MASTERPIECE

“The main reason I wanted to do a book,” says Albert Watson, “was to see if I have a recognizable style.” Anyone who’s seen Watson’s work for Levi’s or the Gap, or tracked his 270-odd *Vogue* magazine covers, could have reassured the great fashion photographer that he has a vision all his own—but then we might not have had *Cyclops* (produced by Callaway Editions for Bulfinch Press, \$75). Watson’s first book is a lavish, outsized, coffee-table tour de force. Its 246 black-and-white quadratones—reproductions with a richness that only master engraver Richard Benson could achieve—show a side of Watson that his fashion followers never see, from portraits of inmates in Louisiana’s Angola prison to still lifes of Moroccan sexual fetishes to landscapes of standing stones in his native Scotland. “I tried to make the book change on every page,” he says. “But I think there’s a certain strength of graphics, an iconographic thing, that runs through it.”

The bristling, deep-toned mystery of Watson’s photography would have made *Cyclops* (a reference to the photographer’s one good eye) edgy enough. But the book’s “rock and roll” typography (by graphic designer David Carson) and mix-and-match sizing and framing (from hairline rules to platinum-print brush marks) give it an almost percussive visual quality.

—RUSSELL HART

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALBERT WATSON

Left: “Christy Turlington, 1990.”
Right: “Michaela, Montana Dress, 1989.”



