



Guy BOURDIN

NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN IMAGES
FROM THE GREAT SURREALIST
FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER—IT'S
NEVER NOT A BOURDIN MOMENT

Over the course of his career, one of the most original fashion photographers to emerge in Europe after World War II, Guy Bourdin, amassed a vast collection of personal ephemera that offers deep insight into his process. “My father would keep everything,” his son, Samuel Bourdin, says. “From his late teens to his death, he never ceased to create and explore. Drawings, paintings, sketches, notebooks filled with potential ideas for photographs, photographic plates from the early '50s, vintage prints, thousands of rejects from the shoots—he could shoot 30 reels of film for one image. The discoveries are endless.”

Guy Bourdin died in 1991, at the age of 62, in his

native Paris. For the past 15 years, Samuel, in collaboration with Louise Alexander Gallery, has been sifting through those rich archives. Among their discoveries are never-before-published Polaroids that help to fill in the master's approach during a revival of interest in his work. There is currently a Bourdin retrospective on view at Fotografiska in Stockholm, and in the spring, Steidl plans to release *Guy Bourdin: Untouched*, which draws from his early, black-and-white photography. While Bourdin was most clearly indebted to surrealism, “his influences were very diverse,” Samuel says. “From pop culture to high art, American comic books from the '50s and '60s, hyperrealist painters,

classic filmmakers like Erich von Stroheim, horror movies, Pre-Raphaelite painters, classical music, James Brown.” It's a wide array fit for a vibrant artist. “I found one quote of his summarizes his attitude towards life,” says Samuel: “Better to live five minutes of happiness rather than an entire life in a conventional way.” —RACHEL SMALL

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