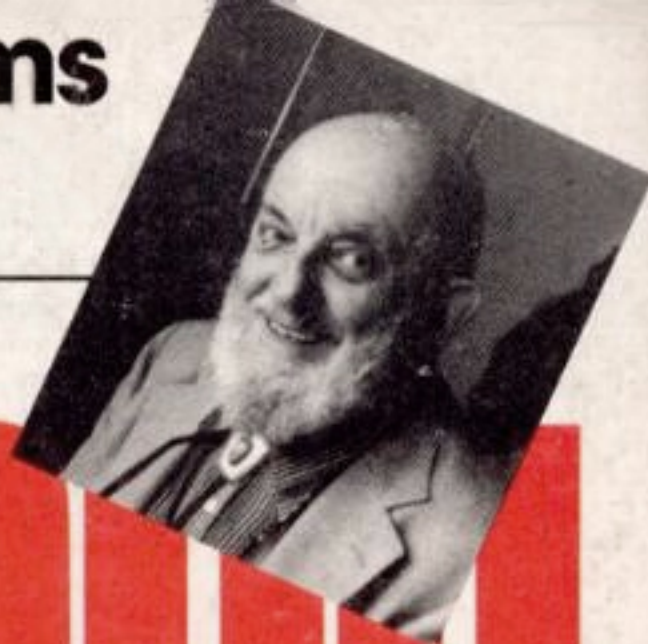# Learn from a Master: How Ansel Adams Made His Most Famous Photographs

popular photography
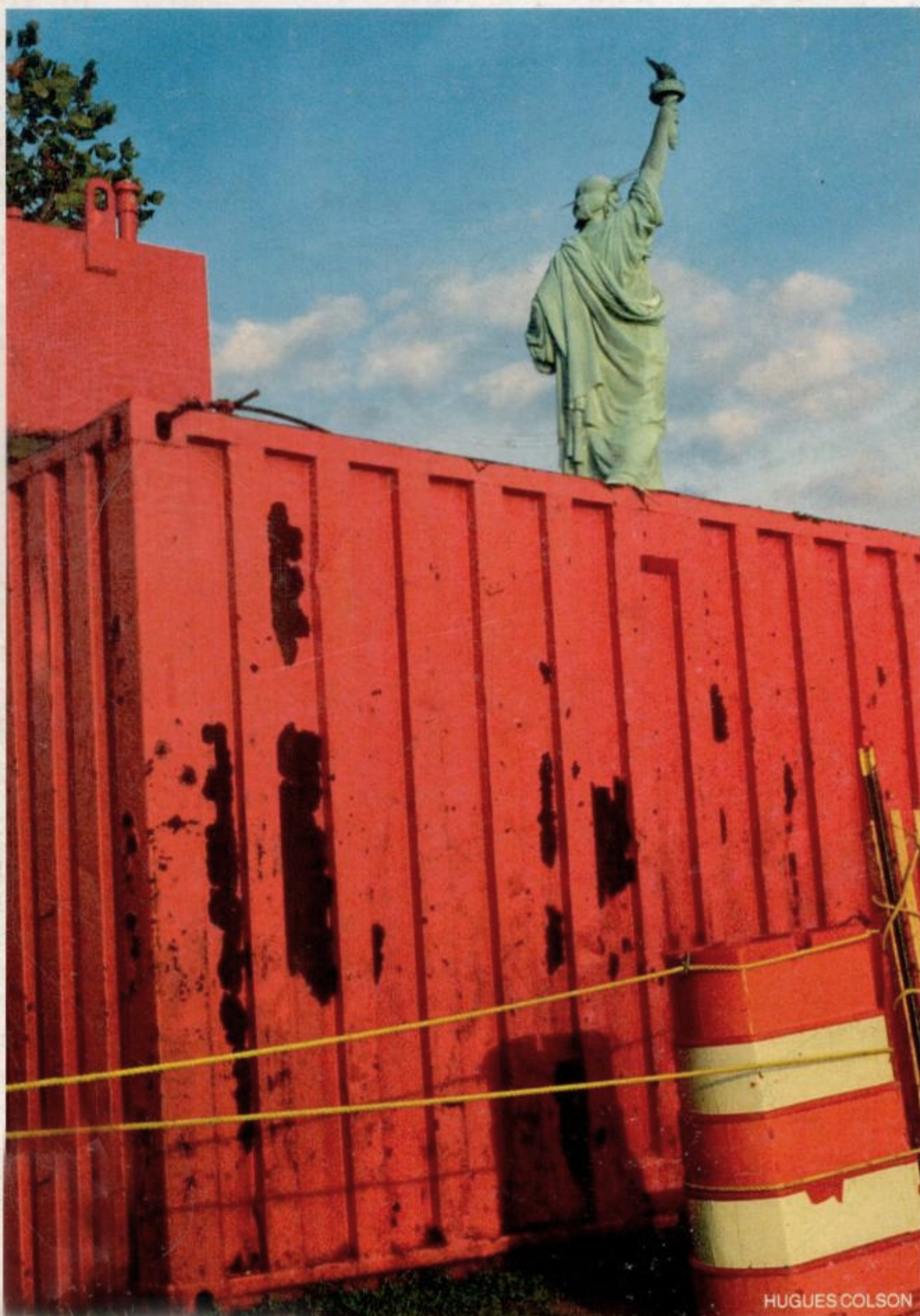
AUGUST 1983 • $1.75

**Test Report:
The restyled
Olympus OMG**

**Ultrawide Lenses:
Love 'em or
hate 'em, here's
how to use 'em**

**Darkroom:
Best way yet to
choose the right
color-printing
filter?**

OLYMPUS

HUGUES COLSON

SHOWS WE'VE SEEN

By Harvey V. Fondiller

Portraiture by Bern Schwartz; a 3D camera in the hands of professionals; MOMA's "Big Pictures"

It's not at every photo exhibit that a critic renews an acquaintanceship with a duke whose photograph is on display, but this was a special occasion: a preview of *Focus on Great Britons: Portraits by Bern Schwartz*, Lever House, New York (April 15-May 12).

I'd met the Duke of Marlborough years ago at Blenheim, his ancestral home. It was there that he was photographed by Bern Schwartz; "the most professional of all those who have ever photographed me," noted His Grace. He added that he and his wife knew "a lot of the people in these pictures, and I'm amazed at the likenesses he caught."

"He's a genius," enthused the Duchess in a rare reversal of English understatement.

Bern Schwartz (1914-1978) was an American businessman who dropped out of college after a year and eventually made a fortune in manufacturing and export. When he was 60, he decided to pursue his boyhood interest in photography, immersing himself in the subject with the singleness of purpose that guided his business career. He studied privately with Philippe Halsman, who said he never had a more enthusiastic or dedicated student.

Schwartz photographed Lord Louis Mountbatten, Rudolf Nureyev, Twiggy, Henry Moore, Golda Meir, Henry Kissinger, and hundreds of other celebrities in politics, science, and the arts. The late Kenneth Clark wrote in the foreword to a book of his portraits that these photographs "portray for us a section of English society in the 1970s as vividly as the photographs of Mrs. Cameron portrayed the society of the 1860s."

In portraiture, a photographer can aim to please the client, or himself, or posterity. I believe that Bern Schwartz attained all three of these objectives.

The headline of this business tycoon's obituary in *The New York Times* read: "Bernard Schwartz, 64, Portrait Photographer."

(Other exhibitions of the photographer's work were on view at the International Center of Photography, New York, April 8-May 29; and the Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, April 30-June 12.)

As a snapshot camera, the Nimslo 3D produces effective stereo prints. Paradoxically, in the hands of experts this 3D process appears to be counterproductive. When the negative-color film is greatly enlarged, more becomes less. (*Three-Dimensional Photographs*, Castelli Graphics, New York, April 12-May 4).

A Nimslo camera and film were made available to each participant, who selected one or more images for enlargement to 8x10. (Nobody can make a print but the company; "you press the button—Nimslo does the rest.")

At the preview, the wall-to-wall champagne-drinking crowd included numerous notable photographers, including Pete Turner, Eve Arnold, Lisl Dennis, Victor Schrager, and Eve Sonneman. While they and their friends traded pleasantries, I looked at the pictures. Soon I was seeing double—and it wasn't from the effects of the champagne. Even closing one eye didn't help much. The backgrounds of many of the photographs appeared like ghost images on a TV set.

Stereo is supposed to enhance the depth perception between near and far. But multiple images usually appeared, regardless of how the prints were viewed. The only thing that seemed clear was that the amateur model of the Nimslo four-lens camera and large-format prints are technically incompatible.

From an artistic viewpoint, when I saw a cemetery scene with a stone dog wearing stereo glasses, I'd *had* it. (The photographer seemed to be promoting the late—and by him lamented—canine, Man Ray.) Another example of pictorial idiocy: a print of a nude, masked guy, lacking any trace of 3D. Only a handful of the photographers succeeded in utilizing the medium's potential.

You may
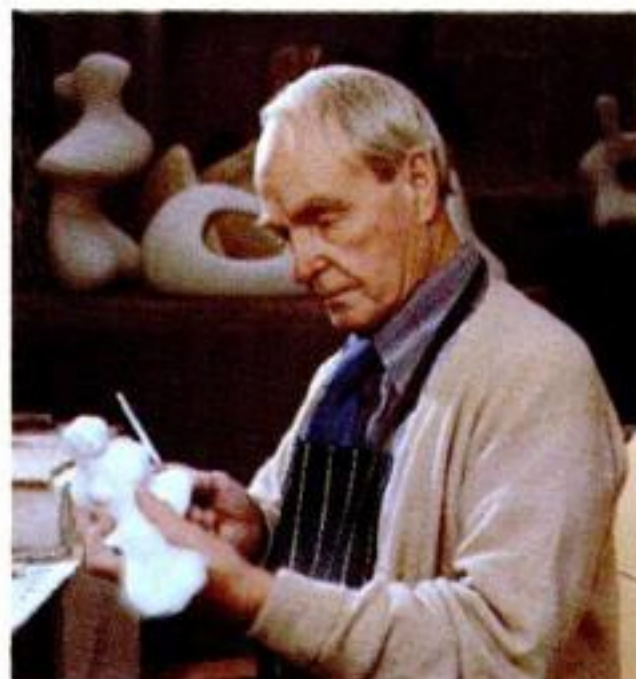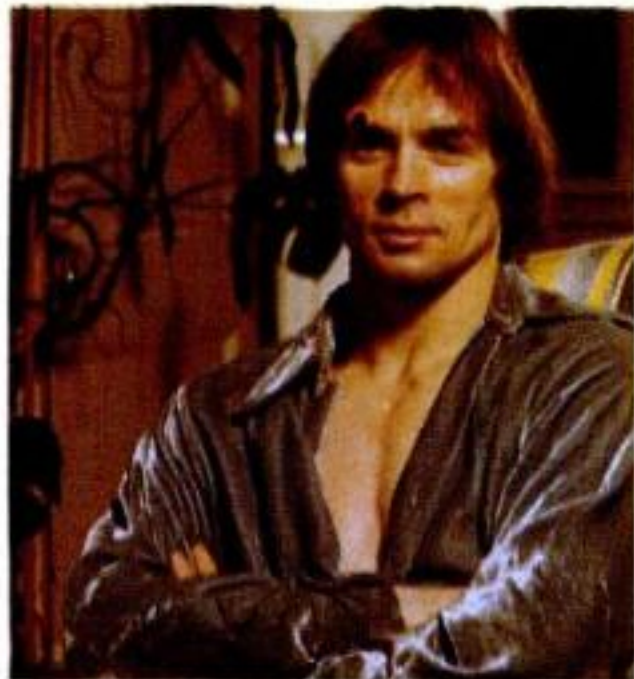
Bern Schwartz, l. to r.: Rudolf Nureyev, Twiggy, Henry Moore