

Picture

Kelly Klein's latest photography



**KELLY KLEIN AT HER HOME
IN PALM BEACH
OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE
FROM LEFT: HORSE SCRATCHING,
BRIDGEHAMPTON, NEW YORK,
2003; KAYLA TRAVERS, NEW YORK
CITY, 2007; DRIED RED ROSES, NEW
YORK CITY, 2014.**

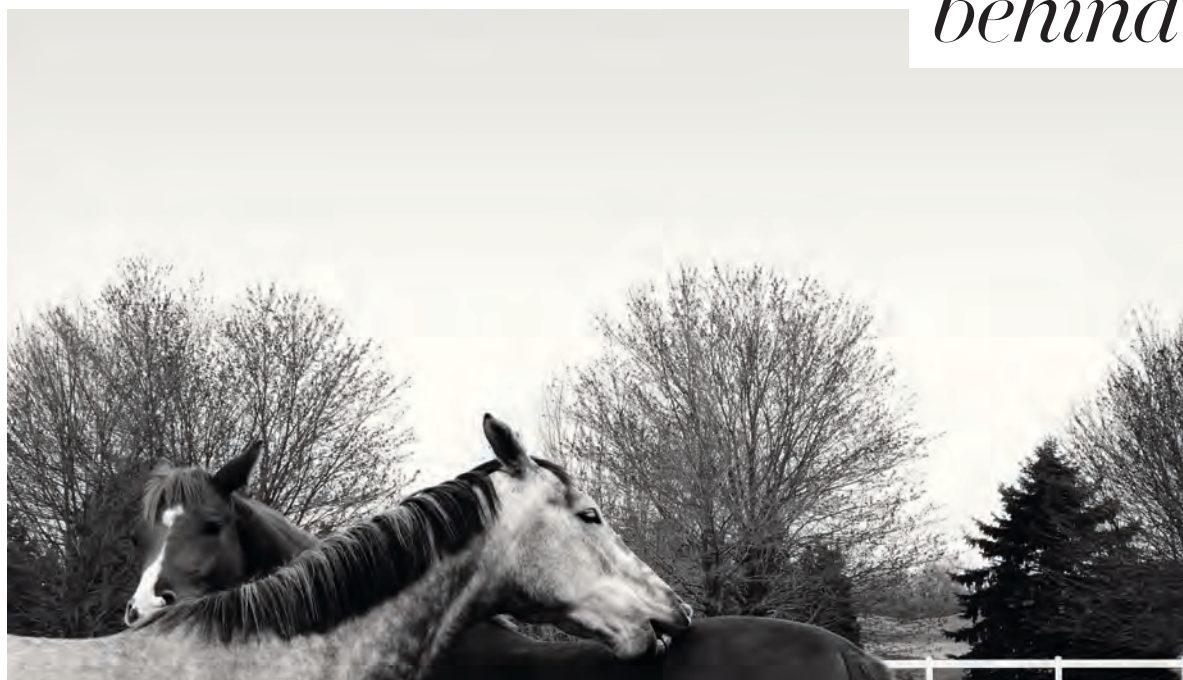
Michael Kors flare leg white pants, Gianvito Rossi open-toe suede sandal, Neiman Marcus, Palm Beach; Céline navy knit cardigan with bell cuffs, Saks Fifth Avenue, Palm Beach.

Perfect

By Michele Meyer

Portrait Photography by Ben Fink Shapiro

*tome reveals her personal experiences
behind the camera*



It's lunchtime in Aspen, and everybody, including Kelly Klein, has taken a break from skiing. On her way to eat, though, something catches her eye: the sight of thousands of skis and poles, arranged in rows in the snow, standing upright without their owners.

Anyone else might just keep walking. But Klein had her camera on hand.

Click.

"Visually, I thought it looked really interesting," she recalls. "I thought it was funny, all these vertical colors."

It's a literal snapshot of the way Klein finds beauty in life. Whether she's photographing supermodel Gisele Bündchen on a Caribbean island or is simply on her way to an afternoon meal, she has an eye for capturing the art of the moment on camera, a talent she's embraced with gratitude.

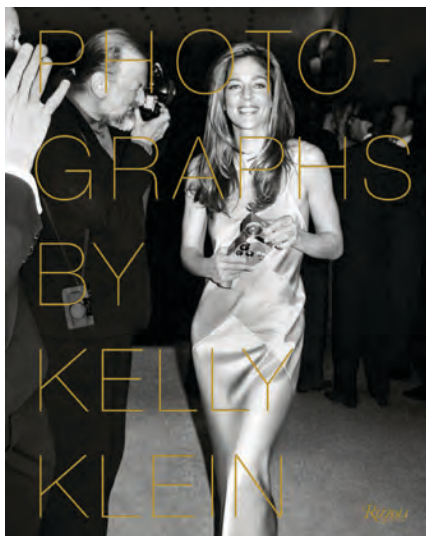
"I'm a very positive person," she says. "I wake up and see beauty."





TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: CAROLYN MURPHY, JAMAICA, 1996; JACQUELYN JABLONSKI, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 2008.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BRITTANY BURKE, MIAMI, 2014; MILLA JOVOVICH, NEW YORK CITY, 1996; CHRISTY TURLINGTON, SAN FRANCISCO, 1996; LIISA WINKLER, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1998.



Gorgeous and lithe at 58, Klein has the natural look of—what else?—a Calvin Klein model: freckled skin, a wide grin, huge blue eyes, and chestnut tousled tresses. Her style is clean across the board, from wearing a Lanvin blouse and jeans with a Stella McCartney coat to adorning her Upper West Side dining room with African spears and an original Andy Warhol.

“The way I dress, decorate a home, or take a picture is very simple, classic, and effortless,” says Klein, who was the design muse of her famous ex-husband, Calvin, with whom she remains friends. “But I hope it has romance, elegance, and a little edge.”

The normally private person gave the world a glimpse of her well-curated life in *Photographs* by Kelly Klein (Rizzoli, \$115), released in October. The most intimate of her seven photo tomes, *Photographs* is the only one that consists of solely her own snaps, spanning 35 years behind the camera.

To select 200 photographs for the book, she had to winnow through thousands, covering subjects far and wide.

“I don’t keep a diary. I take pictures,” Klein says. “These are people, places, and encounters that have shaped me.”

Her book shows a rarely glimpsed portrait of privilege: Calvin naps on a yacht in Mustique alongside tycoons David Geffen, Barry Diller,

and Sandy Gallen. Diplomat Henry Kissinger and *Rolling Stone* publisher Jann Wenner linger after breakfast in Tangier. Fiat heir Lapo Elkann suns on a sailboat gliding along the Italian Riviera.

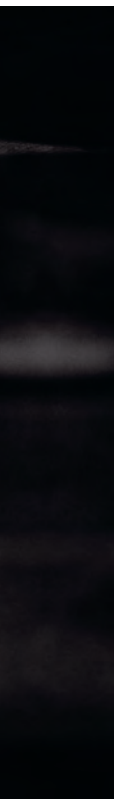
She also interjects dazzling, bold images—some outtakes—she created for *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Interview Magazine*, *Vanity Fair Italia*, and a slew of international *Vogue* magazines. “I strive to show clothes in a beautiful, graphic way, highlighting an interesting shape or color,” she explains. “The clothes determine whether a photo will be moody and rich or light and airy.”

But Klein also exposes the everyday moments, including pictures that were taken on her iPhone and posted to her Instagram account (@KellyAKlein): her 8-year-old son enjoying a Popsicle; her mother, Gloria List, sporting comic sunglasses.

As *Vanity Fair* special correspondent Bob Colacello notes in the book’s afterword, “Cynicism and camp have never been what this All-American girl is about.”

Rather, she stops to admire silver spoons strewn on a table or a basket of eggs in Beijing and shares their allure with viewers.

“I’m very proud of Kelly, her work, and the book,” says Sam Shahid, the former longtime creative director of Calvin Klein. “It takes a lot to put yourself out there. You’ve got to be very strong. You open your soul to everybody, and she’s very wonderful.”



A woman with long brown hair and sunglasses stands in front of a white wall. She is wearing a light pink single-breasted blazer and matching wide-leg trousers. Her left hand is in her pocket, and her right hand rests on her thigh. The wall behind her has long, thin shadows of palm fronds cast across it. To the left, a wooden-framed window looks out onto a garden with white flowers. To the right, another wooden-framed window looks out onto a garden with a large agave plant. The ground is covered in green grass.

“The way I dress, decorate a home, or take a picture is very simple, classic, and effortless. But I hope it has romance, elegance, and a little edge.”

Stella McCartney pale
blush single-breasted
jacket, suit pants,
Gianvito Rossi open-toe
suede sandal, Neiman
Marcus, Palm Beach



Photographs reveals Klein is drawn to far more than surface appeal. Among shots of Naomi Campbell and Milla Jovovich, she also sees beauty in a kimono-adorned elderly woman strolling through Kyoto, Japan. Even the book itself has a deeper purpose: Proceeds benefit God's Love We Deliver, a charity that provides meals to New York City residents who are too ill to cook for themselves.

Klein's eye for the lens was developed over a lifetime of worldly travels, both luxurious and rugged. She treasures not only the polo fields of Wellington and Bridgehampton and the beaches of Santorini and Rio de Janeiro but also the humble homes of the impoverished in Ecuador, Chile, and Cuba.

"I'm drawn to adventure," Klein says. "I love South America, rough and primitive, and beaches, all beautiful—the smell of salt air, the ocean, the moisture."

To make the images in *Photographs* compelling in book form, she turned to Shahid, who has designed the layout of all of her books.

"I love the way he juxtaposed pictures, making each stronger," she says. "He helped me understand that my travel pictures and still lifes inspired me to shoot fashion pictures the way I do. Whether it's a saint in Peru or a close-up of supermodel Christy Turlington's face, they relate."

Shahid, in turn, credits her for the end result. "It was very easy for me, because the work is so good," he says. "There's such a depth, a range, not just one note. You turn a page, and there's a surprise. The rhythm of the whole thing is all her."

With no formal training, Klein leans on her powers of observation and "very good assistants," she says. "I still struggle, but I shoot until I get it right."

Documenting life on camera comes naturally for Klein, but having a photography career was as unexpected as the subjects of her book. Born in Detroit, she moved to Connecticut at age 3 and discovered her first love a year later: competitive horse-riding. She inherited the passion from her father, TV commercial director Tully Rector. At a young age, Klein appeared in a few of her father's advertisements, an experience she says was influential—so much so, she dedicated *Photographs* to him.

When she was 10, Klein moved to Manhattan, where she would attend the Dwight School. As a teen, she maintained a busy schedule working in boutiques after classes and competing as a show-jumper on weekends.

"That really taught me a work ethic," she says. "And horses gave me discipline and took my mind off things."



*"I don't keep a diary.
I take pictures. These
are people, places, and
encounters that have
shaped me."*

snowballed from there.

"Then I shot a cover of Woody Harrelson, then Brooke Shields, and more—and that started my career," she says.

Today, Klein largely divides her time among New York, Aspen, and Palm Beach, the latter of where she custom built a 3,000-square-foot home on the Intracoastal. Like her style elsewhere, the abode is minimalist, featuring cement and glass and shades of taupe and sand.

Klein first came to South Florida 30 years ago to compete in horse shows, when Wellington was full of dirt roads. "I fell in love with the area," she says. "I love the architecture, tropical trees, beaches, weather, and how fast everything grows."

Today, "Florida for me is a quiet place where I get a break," she says. Her schedule revolves around her work and her only child, Lukas, whom Klein and Australian polo player Nick Manifold welcomed via surrogate. She retired from competitive horse-back riding after a 2010 accident, although Manifold is teaching Lukas to ride. "I hope he has a passion for some sport, as I did, but it doesn't have to be horse-riding," she says of her son.

The family enjoys outdoor pursuits like cycling, swimming, and skiing. Klein continues to fulfill her photography career and travel pursuits; the next destinations on her bucket list are India and Africa. But her most important priority, she says, is being a mother.

"My needs are second to my son's," she says. "It's a full life." <<

Klein went on to enroll in the Fashion Institute of Technology, where upon graduating in 1977, she landed a gig as a design assistant for Ralph Lauren. Four years later, she started working for Calvin Klein, where one of her assignments was to travel to Santorini with photographer Bruce Weber to serve as an assistant stylist. Working at both fashion houses may sound glamorous, but "it was very hard," she recalls. "But I got an education that's priceless."

She also impacted the Calvin Klein brand on a much bigger and personal level. She became the iconic designer's sleek muse, the incarnation of his nickname "Calvin Clean." He credits her with suggesting he market men's briefs to women, which purportedly led to \$70 million in sales in 1984. The power couple married at the mayor's office in Rome while on a fabric-buying trip in September 1986. He was 43; she was 29.

But the all-American fairy tale didn't last. The pair separated in 1996, and she left Calvin's business—but with new resolve. Shahid hired Klein to photograph Warren Beatty for the cover of *Mirabella*, and opportunities



**OPPOSITE PAGE: SUNFLOWER FIELD,
SAGAPONACK, NEW YORK, 1989**

Lisa Marie Fernandez ging-
ham cotton-poplin shirtdress,
lisamariefernandez.com

Fashion Editor: Katherine Lande
Hair and Makeup: Marissa Nemes,
artist-management.net, using NARS
Cosmetics
Digital Tech: Lucie Hugary
Lighting Assistant: Alexander Larson
BFS Intern: Abby Earley
Retouching: Eyescapes Labs, New York