

## Appearances

### Fashion photography since 1945

In 1980 he started to work with 10 x 8 inch Polaroid film, utilizing its inherent tendency to bleach out skin tones to bring a highly individual feeling to his photographs, simultaneously starkly modern and delicately ethereal. The Polaroid technique was easily copied, and his style was widely, if superficially, imitated in Europe. Roversi has described himself as 'an unsophisticated photographer making sophisticated photographs'. The marriage of graphic simplicity with his idiosyncratic technique created a great stir in Paris, and his first prestigious advertising campaign - for Christian Dior cosmetics - soon followed. Although Roversi has worked regularly for Marie-Claire, and for a few years for British and Italian Vogue, it is individual designers who have been his most sympathetic clients. His catalogues for Milanese designer Romeo Gigli are the most extreme expression in fashion photography today of a graceful, fragile beauty.

Roversi's fawn-like girls, especially in his photographs for Romeo Gigli, recall the use of similarly youthful models in the 1960s. Yet, as so often in fashion photography, his images are ambivalent in this respect. Simone de Beauvoir identified Brigitte Bardot with the Lolita syndrome in 1959, but recognized that, in exhibiting herself for the benefit of the male erotic gaze, Bardot reminds men of her inaccessibility, intimidating rather than attracting them with 'haughty shamelessness'. Bardot's face, with its 'forthright presence of reality...is a stumbling-block to lewd fantasies'. Roversi's models appear to inhabit a moment farther back into childhood than Bardot, more gamine than Lolita, their insubstantiality evoking childlike dressing up, the fairy-tale princess. Their almost angelic innocence should certainly preclude 'lewd fantasies'.

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