

WWD

Andy Warhol Protégé Matthew Rolston Taps Eighties Archive for ‘Hollywood Royale’

By Alexa Tietjen

The photographer reflects on his 40-year career, during which he lensed the likes of Prince, Michael Jackson and Madonna.

“My earliest clients were Michael Jackson and Madonna,” says Matthew Rolston. And the list of clients only grew from there.

Hired by Andy Warhol in the late Seventies to shoot for Interview Magazine, Rolston has photographed the likes of George Michael, Sade, Bono, Christy Turlington, Cindy Crawford, Joan Didion and Prince — who appears on the cover of his new book, Hollywood Royale.

Featuring more than 100 portraits taken from 1977 to 1993, the book celebrates the Eighties revival of Hollywood glamour. “In the Seventies, glamour was debased,” Rolston says. “Along came Interview Magazine, Andy Warhol commissioning photographers like Herb Ritts, Greg Gorman and myself in Los Angeles and a new style was born, an ironic take on old Hollywood. It was modern for that time, the Eighties. That set in motion a domino effect that led to the revival of glamour, which we’re in now.”



Michael Jackson, King, Los Angeles, 1985 © Matthew Rolston

Rolston developed a close rapport with Jackson, and in 2007, he shot the pop star in what would become the last photo session before his death. Rolston is also the man behind the following image of Jackson as a king.

“He called me up one day and said, ‘I want to be photographed as a king,’” recalls Rolston. “This was before anybody called him the King of Pop. That happened almost 10 years later — Elizabeth Taylor called him the King of Pop. At his request and his commission, I photographed him as a king. Full regalia, crown, jewels, on a throne. It seems that I was there at the birth of iconography of Michael Jackson as the King of Pop.”

Rolston styled Jackson using pieces from his own closet and personal collection of brooches. “I had a whole thing where I would pin a bunch of brooches on one side of my shirt,” he says. “At one of the shoots, before [Jackson] wanted to be a king, he wanted to wear them. He took them literally off my shirt and put them on him.”

Hollywood Royale, out on Oct. 15, includes essays by Colin Westerbeck, Charles Churchward and Warhol collaborator Pat Hackett.

It will be accompanied by an exhibition opening at Los Angeles’ Fahey/Klein Gallery on March 1.