



Press KIT

**Rick Castro: Baal
Retrospective . 1986 – 2025**

September 5 – October 11, 2025

Opening: Thursday, September 4, 7 – 9.30 pm

Semjon Contemporary, Berlin





Rick Castro – Baal Retrospective . 1986 – 2025

We are pleased to announce the first German solo exhibition of the US-American photographer Rick Castro from Los Angeles.

His first works have already been presented in three group exhibitions at Semjon Contemporary last year and this year.

Early on, Rick Castro was in close contact with well-known colleagues whom he met as a stylist. The world of fashion and the queer scene in Los Angeles made a deep impression on the young Castro. The godfather for his first camera choice was none other than Joel-Peter Witkin, for whom he also worked as a stylist.

The street and its protagonists, Santa Monica Boulevard, which represents a completely different world beyond the glamor, captivated him early on. His portraits and interviews with local hustlers were unparalleled and established his fame in the community and beyond at an early stage (see also the film *Hustler White* by Bruce LaBruce and Rick Castro, inspired by his series of works and shown at the Berlinale in 1996, among others). Last year, the book *S/M Boulevard* was published from this group of works in collaboration with All Night Menu.

Rick Castro's interest in what is beyond the mainstream is also expressed in his visual language. The subjects can be harsh, grotesque, sexy and discomfiting, but the result pays tribute to the seemingly offbeat, and thus amounts to a declaration of love and an explanation. Rick Castro opens our eyes to a life beyond the beautiful norm, and yet there is beauty in his work! He celebrates it. He himself describes his work as hard glamor.

Collaborations with and for Gore Vidal, the Dalai Lama, Cartier and Rick Owens, Bottega Veneta, among others, testify to his multifaceted quality.

Semjon H. N. Semjon, Berlin, July, 2025





Artist statement

When I think back of my beginnings with photography, it was all a desire to present my own vision. For approx. 13 years or so, I'd been working as a wardrobe stylist for numerous photographers, art directors editors and commercial producers. I worked everyday 16-18 hour days. Because there was no time, had few friends and little to no social life. At least that's how it felt.

I was interested to create my personal vision from start to finish. I owned a basic instamatic camera, and fooled around with that. While staying with one of my clients, the art photographer Joel~Peter Witkin in Albuquerque, NM, I asked him to suggest a camera for me. Mr. Witkin took me to his favorite camera shop, (there was only one) and selected a Nikon FG. He thought this would be perfect for me, since it was as basic as they come.

During July of 1986, I was working with photographer Albert Sanchez. During a break I took aside a new model I had discovered and brought into the shot.

A young, inexperienced Anthony Borden Ward, now known as Tony Ward.

I took Tony to the side of the studio and turned the set up light against the garage wall. I asked Tony if he would model leather gear a friend had made for me. Beautiful thick leather harness, gauntlets, mask and cod piece. I created a horsey tail from an old wig.

The results were pleasing to me, so I decided to continue pursuing photography.

Since I had been working with fashion and costumes for so long, I assumed my photography would follow that subject. But when I looked at the results of my first few sessions they were harder than that. They had a docudrama, realistic look. A hard glamour.

I liked what I saw, so continued in that direction.

Since I already had a "mainstream" career, I decided to keep photography as my art. I would create whatever I wanted without restrictions from outside sources. This freedom was most important to me.

The collection presented here represents just a few of my images from 1986-2025. Some have never been seen.

I chose the title with the awareness of what it represents; honorific owner.

I proudly own my vision.

RICK CASTRO: BAAL – Retrospective (1986–2025) is my first solo exhibition in Germany. It will not my last. "Ich bin ein Berliner."

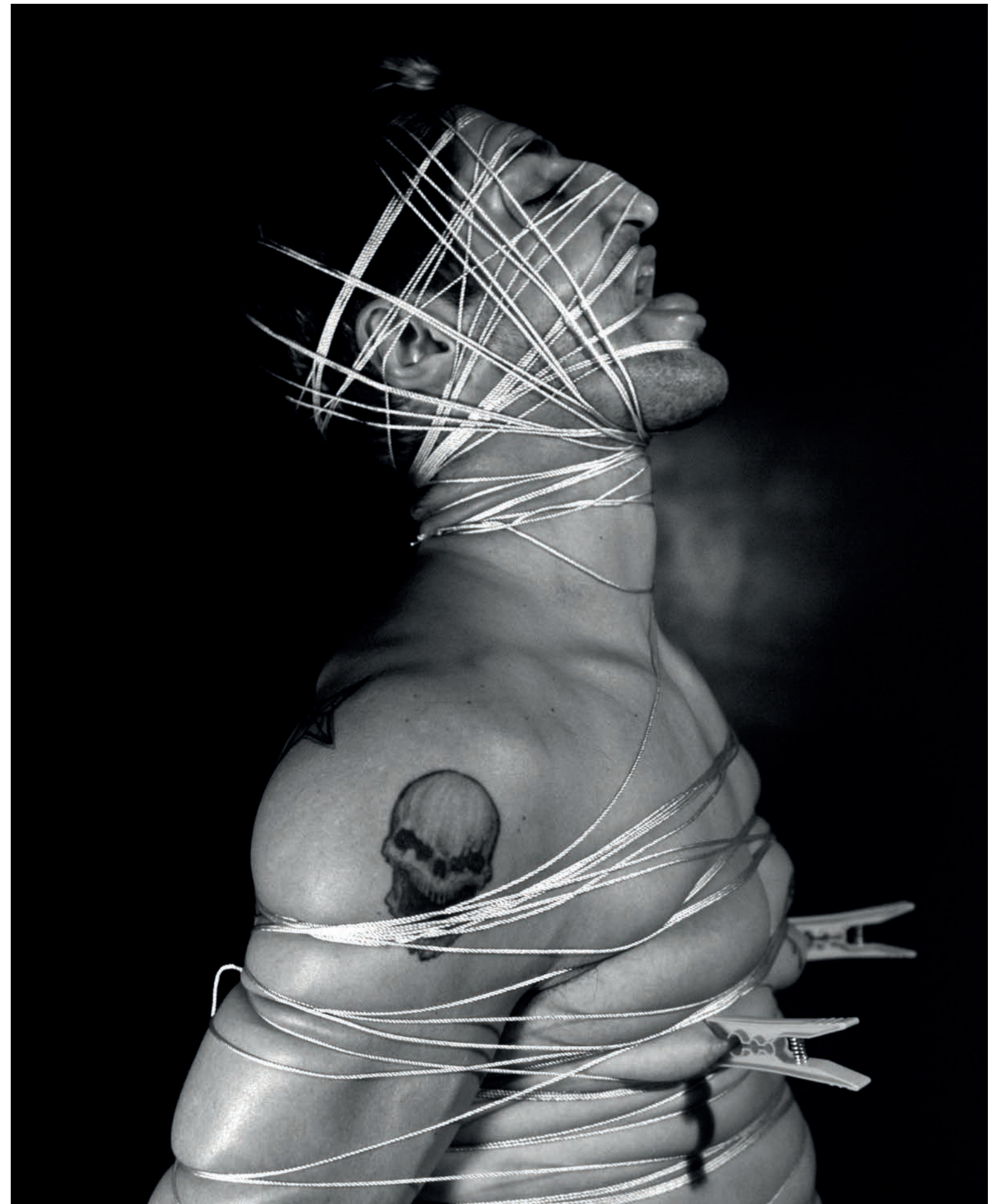
Rick Castro, June 2025

Double page: *Calligula's House Party No. 2/6*, 1989/2024, 68,9 x 101,6 x cm (27 x 40 in), matte fiber print

Left side: *BAAL*, 2024, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (8 x11 in), archival digital print; Edition von 6



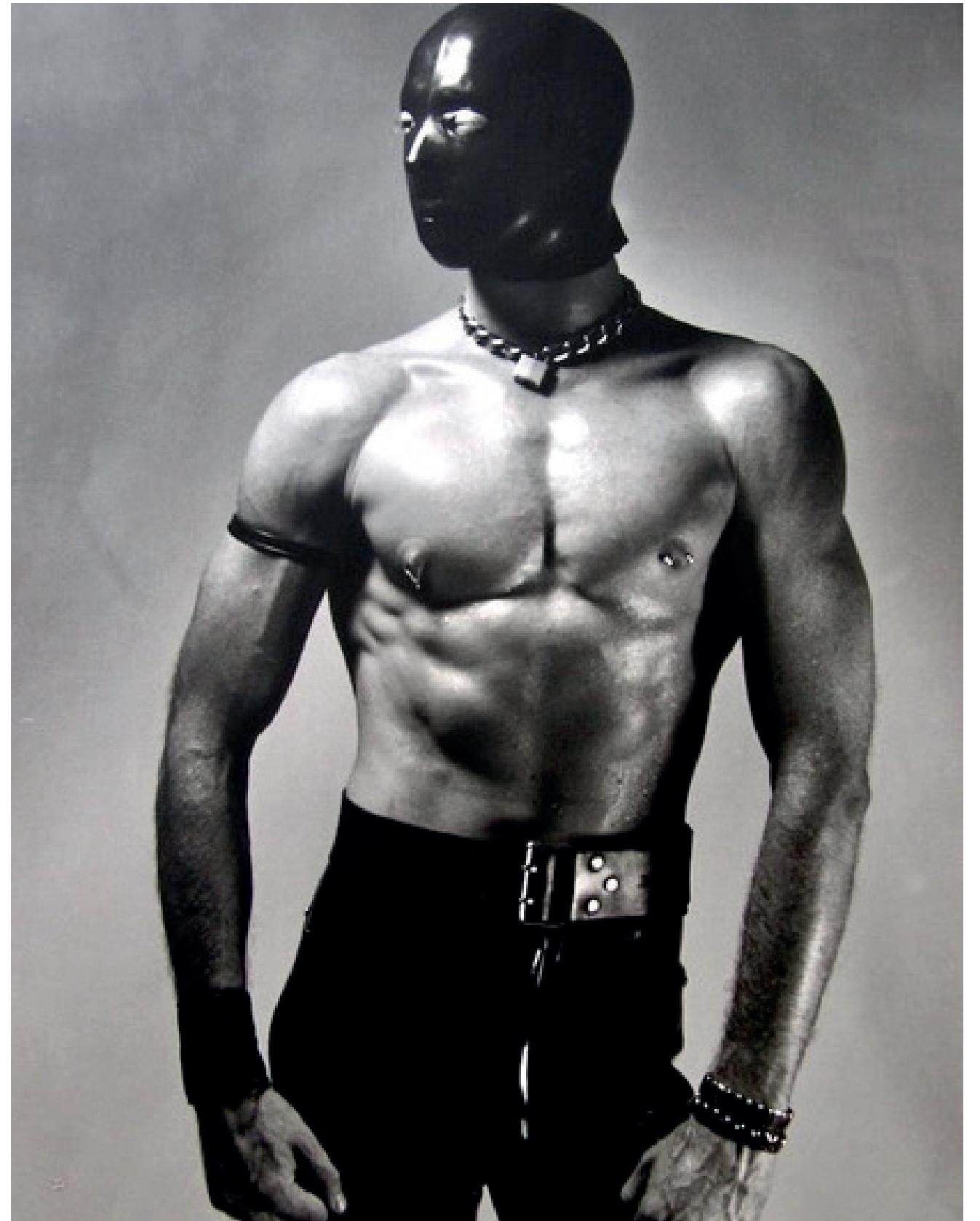
Japanese Bondage Buddie, 1997, 23 x 22,4 cm (9 x 8.9 in, motif), 36 x 27,9 cm (14.2 x 11 in, sheet size), silver gelatine print, unique



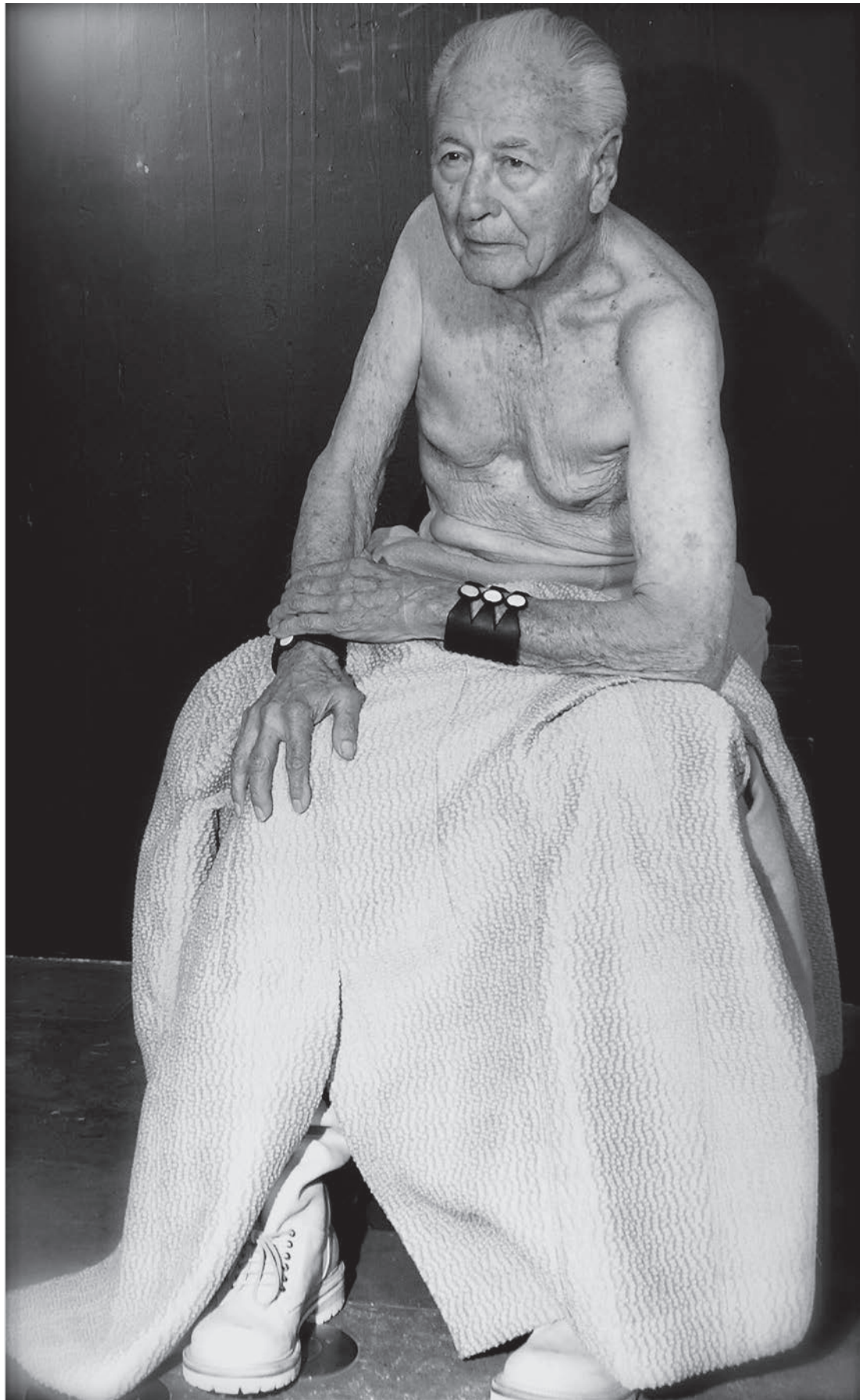
Tony Ward in String Bondage, 1996, 50, 8 x 40,6 cm (20 x 16 in) vintage matte fiber print; unique



Portrait of Sympathy, 2014/ print 2024, 50,8 x 60,2 cm (20 x 24 in), archival digital print; edition of 6



Rubber Executioner, 1991, 50,8 x 40,6 cm (20 x 16 in), vintage matte fiber print; unique



Portrait of Al Castro for Rick Owens, 2014, 27,4 x 21 cm (11 x 8 in) , archival digital print



Anubis, 1997, 27,4 x 21 cm (11 x 8 in), archival digital print



Hodini's last trick, 1992, 50,8 x 40,6 cm (20 x 16 in, sheet size), silver gelatine print, unique



Bed time, 1991, 50,8 c 40,6 cm (sheet size), silver gelatine print, unique (private collection, Berlin)

RICK CASTRO

American photographer, filmmaker and writer known for his work focusing on fetish and desire.

A third generation Los Angeleno, he was born in 1958 and began his career as a wardrobe stylist and clothing designer. His clients over the years included Bette Midler, Tina Turner, Karen Black, David Bowie, Herb Ritts, Joel-Peter Witkin, George Hurrell, and Michele Lamy. He styled editorials for magazines like Interview, GQ, Rolling Stone, and Vanity Fair.

During 1986, Castro became a freelance photographer at age 29, working for Frontiers, The Advocate and Drummer magazines. His first solo exhibition, *Mass Murder and a Cute Boy*, (1987) was at the original, Different Light Bookstore in Silverlake, CA. Over the years Rick had numerous national and international exhibitions including NYC, Brooklyn, Hudson, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, San Diego, Detroit, Phoenix, Paris, Lille, Tokyo, London, Berlin, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Melbourne, Amsterdam, Milano and Venice.

Rick Castro has created photographic portraits for Producer Alan Poul, actor Guillermo Diaz, pornstar Peter Berlin, writer Gore Vidal, director Kenneth Anger, musician Alice Bag, performance artist, Ron Athey, model Tony Ward, drag terrorist Christeene, fashion diva Michele Lamy, and the 14th Dalai Lama. Rick has created editorial photos for Christian Dior Homme, Cartier jewelry, Bottega Veneta and Rick Owens.

In 1994 his VHS interviews of male street hustlers on Santa Monica Blvd in Hollywood inspired Bruce LaBruce to produce the film *Hustler White*, (1996). The two then collaborated on this project as co-directors/writers. *Hustler White* was a great success internationally and is listed by the Los Angeles Times top 100 underground films of the 20th century. Rick also directed a documentary about the furry culture organized online and now somewhat mainstream for MTV called, *Plushies & Furies*, (2001) scoring #2 in the ratings.

Other films include, *Automolove*, (1991), *Fertile LaToyah Jackson* video Magazine #1 & 2, (1993,1994), *45 Minutes of Bondage*, (1993), *Three Faces of Women*, (1994), *Another 45 Minutes of Bondage*,(1996), ANTEBELLUM2013,

ANTEBELLUM2014, ANTEBELLUM2015 and ANTEBELLUM2016. Rick also created the short doco/drama *The Dark Waters of Hotel Cecil*, (2017).

Rick was the West Coast editor/photographer for Studio Publications *Blue*, *Black & White*, *The Masters based in Sydney*, Australia from 2000 to 2007. He was a contributing photographer & writer for *Another Magazine* UK, 2019-2021, and *Document Journal*, NYC, 2020-2022.

Rick Castro’s film *Hustler White* is archived at UCLA Legacy Projects. Castro’s books are archived at Liberia Elinsulto, Mexico City. His books and photographs are archived by the Alfred Kinsey Institute, Ind, UCLA library, Westwood, Chicago Leather Museum, IL, One Institute, USC, Leslie/Lohman Museum, NYC, Tom Of Finland Foundation, Echo Park, Palais Galliera, Musée de la Mode, Paris, and the Getty Museum, Brentwood.

Three books have been published of Rick’s photography, *Castro*,(1990) published by the Tom of Finland Foundation, *13 Years of Bondage*, (2004) Fluixon Editions, and *S/M Blvd: Photographs of Street Hustlers and Remembrances-1986-1999*, (All Night Menu), 2023.

Rick is the creator and curator of *Columbarium Continuum* by Rick Castro, his unique museum in the historic Columbarium at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. Hours- 9am–4pm daily.

Rick was presented as an In Person editorial for *Sleek Magazine*, Berlin, 2024. He was one of 11 artists featured in the historic first queer issue of *Los Angeles Magazine*, June 2019.

From 2005 through 2017 Rick founded and ran Antebellum Gallery Hollywood. The first art gallery dedicated exclusively to fetish as art.

Rick received the *Artist Hall of Fame Award* from the Tom of Finland Foundation in 2015.

Rick Castro lives and works in East Hollywood, where he daily blogs-

rickcastro.antebellum@gmail.com

instagram.com/castrick

bsky.app/profile/eigilvesti.bsky.social

antebellumgallery.blogspot.com

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Columbarium Continuum by Rick Castro, Hollywood Forever Cemetery, daily 9 am–4 pm, ongoing

2025
Rick Owens: *Temple of Love*, Palais Galliera, Musée de la Mode de Paris, June, 28th, 2025, through January, 4th, 2026

_re_flection, group exhibition, Semjon Contemporary, 6/13- 7/12, 2025

Queer Lens: A History of Photography, the first all GLBTQ+ art exhibition at Getty Center, June 16th through September, 28th, 2025.

Rick Castro’s photography presented by Galeria HGZ at ZonaMacó, February 4th~ 9th,2025, CDMX

Braver New World solo exhibition in Mexico City, CDMX February 7th~10th, 2025.

BizArt, Zurich Switzerland, Jan 9th~12th, 2025

2024
Copy Machine Manifesto: Artists Who Make Zines, Brooklyn Museum, NY, thru 31, March, 2024 and Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver BC, 11, May through 22, September, 2024.

Trece Vidas de Rick Castro, Galeria HGZ, Queretaro, MX, 8th~ 11th, August, 20024. First solo exhibition in Mexico.

sex sells – beyond the historical matrix, Semjon Contemporary, Berlin, July 5 – August 3, 2024

Vitam Picturarum, WeHo Pride- Long Hall Plummer Park, West Hollywood, Ca, 14th- 24th, 6 2024.

RICK CASTRO: SM BLVD, Tom of Finland Art & Culture Festival, Halle am Berghain, Berlin- 31, May- 2, June, 2024

The Photographers Eye,slide show and lecture, Los Angeles Central Library-LA, 2/21/2024

2023
Copy Machine Manifesto: Artists Who Make Zines, Brooklyn Museum, NY, 11/15, thru 2/15/ 2024.

Queerish, Ruth Williamson Gallery, Scripps College, Claremont, 10/28 thru 12/15/2023

RICK CASTRO FOREVER, the historic Columbarium, Hollywood Forever Cemetery, Hollywood, 10/5-11/30/2023.

Queering the Lens, Getty Center, lecture and photographic slide presentation June 7th, 2023

Collective Memory Installation, Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles, Grand Park, 3/4 thru 3/18/2023.

2022
AllTogether: Archives from Tom of Finland Foundation, Community Centre, Paris, 5/5-7/23/2022.

AllTogether: Archives from Tom of Finland Foundation, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy 3/10-7/17/2022.

2021
Mildred Pierce Has Risen From the Grave: selected photographs from my archives, 1986-2021, 11/14/2021

Queer Communion: Ron Athey, Participant Gallery, NYC, February, 20, 2021, and ICA Los Angeles, August 16, 2021.

REFORMATION: First exhibition since the plague, Hollywood Hills-8/13/2021

2020
LA Noir, Lisa Derrick Fine Art, Chinatown, LA , 4/4-5/2/2020

Feral, Lisa Derrick Fine Art- Chinatown, LA, 2/15/2020

LOVE4LOVE – Queer Biennial, Ace Hotel, LA, 2/8/2020

Round Hole/Square Peg, Long Hall West Hollywood, CA, 2/8/2020

PHOTOLA, Barker Hanger, Santa Monica, 1/30/2020

2019
Ex Voto: Santisima, Lisa Derrick Fine Art- Chinatown, LA, 10/5/2019

Tom of Finland Art & Culture Festival, Tom House, 10/4/2019

Homosurrealism, Touchon & Co. Gallery, LA, 8/23/2019

Interiors Cast: Rick Castro/Elliot Reed, MiM Gallery, LA- 7/2019

RICK CASTRO: GLORY HOLE, Tom of Finland Store, 6/2019- 10/2019

Goddesses & Gods, Lisa Derrick Fine Art- Chinatown, LA-6/2019

Glendale Out, Ace/121 Gallery, Glendale, 6/2019

Rick Castro: Fetish King, Tom of Finland Foundation, Echo Park, 4/2019

Joys Of Sin, Lisa Derrick Fine Art- Chinatown, LA-3/2019

2018
Rick Owens: Subhuman, Inhuman, Superhuman, La Triennale di Milano, 1/1/2018

WRITINGS

Cruising The Exorcist-, Spunk Journal, 2023

The Dreamachine- Document Journal, 2020

The Plague Diaries- Document Journal, 2020

My Date With Joe Files, Document Journal, 2020

Fire, Fascists and Trump Caravans, Document Journal, 2020

Stefanie From El Serreno, Spunk Journal, 2019

The Sheet Cake, Spunk Journal, 2018

EDUCATION

Art Center College of Design

Santa Monica City College

Los Angeles Trade Technical College

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Creator and curator, *Columbarium Continuum*, Hollywood Forever Cemetery, ongoing

Contributing photographer & writer, Document Journal, 2020- 2022

Contributing photographer & writer, AnOther Magazine, 2019- 2021

Owner & Founder, Antebellum Hollywood Gallery, 2005- 2017

West Coast Editor, Studio Magazines, 2001- 2008

Contributing photographer, Drummer Magazine, 1989-1998

Contributing photographer, Advocate Magazine, 1989- 1994

Contributing photographer, Frontiers Magazine, 1988- 1994

Clothing designer, Lamy Men, 1987-1989

Art director & assistant, Joel-Peter Witkin, 1985-1990

Wardrobe Stylist, Herb Ritts, 1980- 1991

Clothing designer, I Love Ricky, 1978-1981

Fashion Illustrator, California Apparel News, 1977-1978

FILMS

Director, producer & writer, *The Dark Waters of Hotel Cecil*, 2017

Co-director, writer still photographer, *Hustler White*, feature film, 1996

director, writer still photographer, *Plushies & Furries*, documentary, MTV- 2001
Director, producer & writer, *45 Minutes of Bondage*, 1994

Director, producer & writer, *Another 45 Minutes of Bondage*, 1995

Director, producer & writer, *Fertile LaToyah*, Jackson video magazine #2, 1994

Director, producer & writer, Fertile LaToyah Jackson video magazine #1, 1993

Director, producer & writer, *Three Faces of Women*, 1994

Director, producer & writer, *Automolove*, 1992

BOOKS

S/M BLVD: Photographs of Hustlers & Remembrances 1986-1999, 2023

13 Years of Bondage, 2004-Fluxion Editions

CASTRO, 1991, Tom of Finland Foundation publisher

Queering the Lens: A History of Photography~catalog, 2025, catalog, Getty Museum

Rick Owens: Temple of Love, 2025, catalog, Rizzoli

AWARDS

Lifetime Achievement Award, Tom of Finland Foundation, 2014

Best film, (Hustler White), Lille Film Festival, France, 1996

COLLECTIONS

Getty Museum

Alfred Kinsey Institute for Sex Research

One Institute

Leslie/Lohman Museum

Legacy Projects, UCLA

Tom of Finland Foundation, LA

Libreria El Insulto

Chicago Leather Archives & Museum

Palais Galliera Musee de la Mode

Triennale de Milano

Clive Barker

Rick Owens

Ron Athey

John Schuning and Gregory Ross

Fernando and Mao Andrade

Kevin Retting

Kevin Comer

Ruben Esparza

Durk Dehner

SR Sharp

Ken Ellens

Joseph Rodota

Philip Pirolo

Six Carter

Jeff Corley

Houston Traher

William Wei

Jan Knesse

Benjamin Assayag

Tyler Cassidy

Mike Dhondt

Rinaldo Hopf

Florian Hetz

Marcel Alcalá

Pierce Wyss

Johanna Went

Ben Arellano

Mauricio Padilha

Marc Ransdell

Zachary Augustine

Martin O’Brien

Rob Hemming

Georgea Regout

Marcus Bastida

Lucy Bastida

Aaron Tilford

Michael Lett

David Karnes

Rikki Niehaus

Damien Wood

Francesco de Simone

Alison Veit

Kathleen McConn

Neil and Erik Bertelsen

Semjon H.N. Semjon and Frank Zimmer

Estate of Robert Manardi and Trent Dunphy

Estate of Ken Burns

Estate of Tim Campbell