

Introduction to Robert Zuckerman. 4:12 min. RZ Portrait by Raymond Elman. Music: Billy Torello.

Robert Zuckerman: Photographer and Planetary Inhabitant

By Raymond Elman

Will Smith calls him ‘Picasso.’ Jerry Bruckheimer, Denzel Washington and Michael Bay vie to have him on their film sets. Arnold Schwarzenegger introduced him to President Bill Clinton by saying, “This is Robert Zuckerman, the best photographer I have ever worked with.”

As a photographer in the motion picture industry, Robert Zuckerman’s images have become the advertising and publicity campaigns for such films as “The Crow,” “I Know What You Did Last Summer,” “Any Given Sunday,” “Training Day,” “Terminator 3,” “Bad Boys 2,” “National Treasure,” “Transformers,” “Pursuit of Happyness” and “The Great Debaters,” among others, as well as television series including “The Shield,” “Rescue Me” and “Nip/Tuck.” He has done recent album cover and movie poster photography for Will Smith and was invited to be the personal photographer for the family of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz.

Whether on or off the set, his connection is to emotional content, to the feeling present in the subject and in the moment. Zuckerman has photographed countless weddings, family portraits, and pregnancy pictures – anything where there is spirit and love in the room, from the inner city to the mansions of Malibu.

His book *Kindsight* (Kindsight Press, LLC) is a collection of photographs and accompanying texts by Zuckerman illuminating the richness of everyday life encounters and experiences. From taxi and bus drivers to waitresses to plumbers to kids at a playground – even to cats – *Kindsight* shows the extraordinary within the ordinary. James Crump, renowned fine art publisher and curator, says “Zuckerman’s portraits are infused with an uncanny sense of hope and spirit in the post 9/11 era.” The book includes forewords by, among others, Will Smith, Debra Winger, poet Michael Lally and novelist Elaine Kagan. It is currently on the PEN American Center’s “Best Book Read This Year” list.

Since the publication of *Kindsight*, Zuckerman has spoken to student and youth groups across the country, initiating workshops in which students use photography and writing together – as in the book – to connect with the richness of life around them. He has spoken at Authors at Google, been featured in a PBS story, and was a panelist at the KidsRisk Symposium at the Harvard Medical School in Cambridge, speaking on empowering youth through positive media modalities. He is sought as a mentor by aspiring artists worldwide.

Among other credits, Zuckerman has photographed campaigns for United Way and City of Hope. He co-produced the ground breaking, award-winning documentary “Video From Russia: The People Speak” (1984, directed by Dimitri Devyatkin) which ran on ABC TV and then on A&E for three years. He directed and produced the New York City portion of the official “Hands Across America” video in 1986. He is a graduate of UC Berkeley and the American Film Institute.

“For me, photography has become an integration of life and craft. Through photography I am able to give value to people’s lives and derive value in my own life, beyond making a living.”

– Robert Zuckerman

The videos below are organized by topic and run between 30 seconds and 8 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 3:13 min.



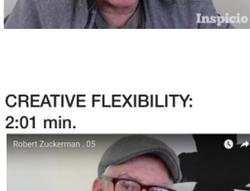
Tell us the story of the Al Pacino photograph on the wall behind you.

EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 0:40 sec.



What is your earliest memory of art in any form, and where did that occur?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 2:40 min.



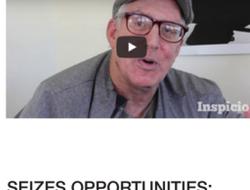
What led you to photography?

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 2:01 min.



What did you learn in school that still informs you today?

CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 1:55 min.



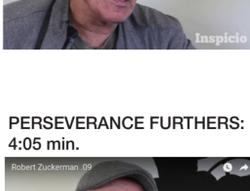
What type of photography were you doing before you started to work in the Film Industry?

SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 8:00 min.



What was your transition from doing your own experimental photography into working for the Film Industry?

CRITICAL THINKING: 0:24 sec.



What do you know now that you wish you knew when you first started your career in photography?

PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: 4:05 min.



What were your best and worst experiences in the Film Industry?

SERENDIPITY: 2:40 min.



What role has serendipity played in your career?

SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 0:59 sec.



What were the circumstances behind your photographs of people like Leonard Cohen, Maya Angelou, and Allen Ginsberg? I assume that they weren’t arranged by Hollywood.

CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 0:25 sec.



Please describe the evolution of your relationship with Will Smith.

CRITICAL THINKING: 2:15 min.



What does a film production company do with your photos?

COLLABORATION: 1:11 min.



It sounds like getting photography work in Hollywood is very relationship-dependent. It’s not about having outstanding social media.

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 1:13 min.



Once you switched to digital photography, did you start using Photoshop to optimize the way the actors look?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 2:02 min.



Describe your Hollywood experience as you started to lose mobility due to your genetic disease. Could you work from a wheelchair or do you have to be mobile?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 1:49 min.



Once you lost your mobility, could you have employed and directed other photographers, and used your relationships to get business?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 4:45 min

How did your “Kindsight” project get started?

**PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS:
3:41 min.**



Tell us about the “Kindsight” book.

**VALUES LEARNING
DISCIPLINE: 1:57 min.**



Writing concisely for “Kindsight” can be more difficult than writing a few thousand words. How did you develop your writing skills?

**SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES:
4:17 min.**



Please describe your evolving relationship with the owners of The Betsy Hotel.

SERENDIPITY: 5:02 min.



What has been the role of serendipity in your artwork?

**COMMUNITY VALUES:
2:08 min.**



What’s your sense of the Miami art scene, and how much do you engage with Miami photographers?

CRITICAL THINKING: 1:54 min.



What role should a university play in the development of photographers?

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 1:05



You’ve recently changed equipment to a smaller less complicated camera. How does that change the outcomes of what you do?

**COMMUNITY VALUES:
3:14 min.**



Describe some of your community outreach programs.

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:
2:12 min.**



Many people in Miami who love you only have known you in a wheelchair. What kind of person were you before losing mobility, and how has your disease changed you?

EMPATHY: 1:42 min.



You have a very healthy view of death.