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# imaging **edge**

PHOTOGRAPHY  
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LIFESTYLE

## PORTRAIT PRO BRIAN SMITH

Achieving  
Success,  
One Icon  
At a Time

## THE CELEBRITY ISSUE

### GADGETS + GEAR:

Sony's Latest  
Compact  
Cameras  
Dazzle Pros

### FIELD TEST:

Full-frame  $\alpha$ 7R sets  
new standards for  
compact cameras

Presented by Sony and the publishers of *Popular Photography* & *American Photo*



## ON THE JOB / 2

The head of Sony's digital cameras division sees a future filled with products no one has imagined before.

## GADGETS + GEAR / 8

Sony debuts smallest and lightest Full-Frame  $\alpha$ 7 &  $\alpha$ 7R, plus power-packed Cyber-shot RX10.

## WHO'S NEXT? / 10

Ben Folds is a platinum-selling musician—and a gifted photographer who keeps it real with his Cyber-shot RX100.

## FIELD TEST / 12

Can the compact, full frame  $\alpha$ 7R really compete against top DSLRs? Pro photographer Dan Monick was astonished by the answer.

## EXPERT INSPIRATION FEATURING

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Sony Artisan of Imagery Brian Smith says it's the little breaks, not the big one, that lead to success.

## INSIGHT / 18

How celebrity photographer Linda Solomon uses photography to ignite the imaginations of disadvantaged children.

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To create eye-popping realism for new PlayStation 4 games, the technology of choice was the Sony  $\alpha$ 99 DSLR.

## TEST DRIVE / 22

Mobile pro Vivienne Gucwa shares her images and experiences with the ground-breaking Cyber-shot QX100.

## CHAIN REACTION / 24

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On the cover: Actor Samuel L. Jackson by Sony Artisan of Imagery Brian Smith. Above: Music producer David Guetta by Brian Smith.



## A PORTRAIT OF SUCCESS

Sony Artisan of Imagery Brian Smith says photo careers are built one little break at a time.



People usually think photographer Brian Smith is kidding when he tells them that winning a Pulitzer Prize was just a small career break.

"It helped," he says. "It was the thing that got me in the door to see magazine photo editors. That led to freelance assignments, which led to other assignments."

Photography careers don't happen overnight—at least the careers that last, says Smith, whose work has been published in newspapers and magazines such as *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Rolling Stone*. "It's all about the small breaks," he says.



**1** Sony Artisan of Imagery Brian Smith is known for his versatility. **2** Of his portrait of actor Oliver Platt, Smith says, "Sometimes all you need is a great face." **3** Actors Richard Schiff (at left) and Peter Gallagher found Smith amusing. **4** A dozen exposures were required to capture sitcom star Kelsey Grammer's quizzical expression.



Feature photography for "Art & Soul" by Brian Smith in Partnership with the Creative Coalition and Sony.







Karol & Redd: © Brian Smith; Ervitt & Smith: Photo for "Art & Soul" by Brian Smith in Partnership with the Creative Coalition and Sony



"You become noticed for something you do, and then you use that to do more."

You could say that Smith's first little break came when he was in high school and was hired by the local newspaper to cover sports. Later, while studying photojournalism at the University of Missouri, he landed an internship that led to a job offer at the New Orleans Times-Picayune. His work there soon brought him another job, at the Orange County Register in California. And that is where, at age 25, he won the Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography for his coverage of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

A few years later, after covering international news for the Miami Herald, Smith launched his freelance career, creating the magazine work

he is best known for today—portraits of actors, politicians, and athletes that are at once stylish and telling. Many of those images, and the stories behind them, can be found in his 2012 book *Secrets of Great Portrait Photography: Portraits of the Famous and Infamous*. The book evolved from talks that Smith, a member of the Sony Artisans of Imagery group, has been giving at the PhotoPlus Expo event in New York since 2010.

Each little break along his career path has led to new challenges, says Smith—and to new opportunities. "Everything new you do, you bring something back," he says.

For more on Expert Inspiration, go to [imagedge.com](http://imagedge.com)

**1** Smith focused on mentalist and memory expert Jim Karol from a distinctive point of view. **2** Famed photographer Elliott Erwitt, says Smith, taught him that it is possible to make viewers smile while also feeling a connection with the subject of a photo. **3** For his portrait of Las Vegas burlesque star Ms. Redd, the backdrop color was a no-brainer. **4** Actor Jimmy Smits basking in the glow of old-fashioned Hollywood glamour.

## CASE STUDY: The Perfect Portrait Lens

Brian Smith's kit includes his workhorse cameras—two Sony α99 full-frame DSLRs—and his favorite lens for portrait photography, the Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T\* 24-70mm f/2.8 ZA SSM zoom.

"If I could have only one lens to work with, I would be very happy with it," he says. "For me, as a portrait photographer, it's the perfect range. If I want a lot of environment around the subject in a horizontal portrait, 24mm is about as wide as I want to go. I'll shoot a lot in the 35mm-to-50mm range for a

full-body or half-body shot. And for tight portraits I love shooting at 70mm. It makes the session a little more intimate—you're in close with the subject, having a little conversation, and not shouting from across the room."

Recently, Smith has also been shooting with the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX1, a tiny full-frame camera with a fixed 35mm lens. "I love its image quality, and the experience of shooting with a fixed 35mm lens," he says. "It makes you concentrate on seeing and moving to find the picture."