

the BARE truth...

publishing nudity in hair shots

By Leanne Cutler



WHEN CAROLE HADDAD OF CORCORZ HAIR SENT ME THE NEFERTITI COLLECTION FOR DISTRIBUTION TO MAGAZINES, I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FIRST: THE HAIR, THE MAKE-UP, THE STYLING OR THE MODELS. IT WAS A SUMPTUOUS TREASURE CHEST OF VISUAL ENCHANTMENT AND THIS REALLY DID DESERVE TO BE DISPLAYED TO THE WORLD. THERE WAS ONLY ONE GLITCH. THE MODELS WERE NAKED, ALBEIT BEDAZZLING IN CAREFULLY APPLIED MAKE-UP, JEWELS, METALLIC PAINT, AND TASSELS.

Hair: Carole Haddad
Photography, Make up,
Styling: Richard de Chazal

The collection was unquestionably sexy, whilst still artistic and tasteful. The question was, 'Which hair magazine editors would accept them?'

I let the whole thing sit for a week, hoping some ideas of how to get these shots published would surface. Adding to the PR puzzle was the client brief explicitly stating that the shots were not to be cropped or Photo-shopped. I knew editors would love the hair, but would immediately start cropping for a 'head and shoulders' view.

Thinking about it, there are plenty of good reasons to use nudity in hair photography – discrete, bare 'head and shoulders' framing can highlight the hair, the budget might not extend to a top stylist, or the aim might be to artistically celebrate the beauty of the human form. But how does this all fit if the main focus is to be on the hair? It can present a strategic dilemma if a main purpose of the collection is to be published far and wide.

Part of the solution was to survey editors around the world to get their views. Policies on nudity vary by country.

Take the high-end, international hair magazines, for instance. Australian Image magazine will consider tasteful nudity. Highlights magazine contains no nudity, however nude submissions will be considered in the sister lifestyle publication Noi.se.

Salon magazine (Canada) and American Salon (USA) editors said that they would accept nudity as long as it was executed tastefully, but full frontal or topless photos did not make it to print.

Artistic Director of M.O.D. Magazine Online (USA) Candice Evans said that for the most part, nudity was covered in the shots originally.

"We haven't come along a shot that was revealing in such a poor manner," Evans said. "I believe that if the image appears distasteful on its own then most likely it's inappropriate. But there are ways that certain images can be used so that they aren't taken in the wrong sense. It's a touchy subject but can be worked with."

Ruth Hunsley of Hairdressers Journal International (UK) said that the body would be cropped out if it is overtly nude.

"Our readers don't like nipples so try and avoid these, even through clothes," Hunsley said.

Jarl Martin Garder of

Frisor in Norway said that nudity could be included inside the magazine so long as it was not related to pornography.

"We seldom print hair photography that includes nudity, but it happens," Garder said.

Similarly, Salon magazine in Slovenia and Top Hair in Germany considered photography on aesthetics and style whether exhibiting nudity or not.

Conversely, and as expected, Beauty and Hair magazine in Indonesia would not accept nudity for cultural reason.

Consumer hair magazines, usually based upon headshots and seeking a mass audience, held a 'no nudity' policy across the board.

In summary, nudity in hair collections can limit the possibilities of publication. It also encourages cropping by editors, more so in some cultures than others. All in all, if one of the main aims is to have the shots published around the world, the chances are increased if the model is discretely clothed.

The Nefertiti collection served its main purpose by winning Carole Haddad another Avant Garde award and an international catwalk show in Jordan. Publication was its secondary purpose. However, it looks like Nefertiti will either remain unpublished unless a hair magazine is found that will reproduce it in full or be published outside of the industry.

CASE STUDY: OPALESSENCE BY KRISTINA RUSSELL

Hair Colour - Kristina Russell. Salon - Sable. Hair - Julianne McGuigan. Photography - Michele Aboud. Makeup - Rae Morris. Stylist - Bex Sheers



Original photo from Kristina Russell's Opalescence collection



Kristina Russell's Opalescence collection shot - version modified by the magazine.

In my experience, it's when breasts are boldly displayed, either in the flesh or in see-through clothing, that editors reject shots or creatively edit the nipples out of view.

Kristina Russell's Hair Expo 2010 Colour Technician of the Year collection, Opalescence, was successfully published around the world, but the issue of a see-through top exposing nipples came into play. Editors handled this in a number of ways. M.O.D. Magazine Online used Photoshop to 'blur out' the nipples. Hairdressers Journal International used its usual graphic style of overlapping photos to cover the see-through portion of the photo. If only part of a collection was to be run, some magazines would exclude the 'more difficult' shot (avoiding the need to spend time altering the shot). The biggest surprise of the exercise was that an Indonesia magazine published the shot untouched. Australian magazines ran the see-through top shot in the original form.

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