

HOW KORMAN DOES IT



Steiner analyzes Broadway's famous glamor photographer and takes a look at his file of semi-nudes.

FROM TIME TO TIME I get letters from readers asking why I don't do a story about Murray Korman's photography. So I have investigated Korman, and here are my findings.

Korman's the man whose pictures you see outside the musical shows and in girlie magazines. Maybe my correspondents would like nothing better than to go through Korman's photo files, but after the first 1000 prints I got bored. Except for the high spots—some of which you see on these pages—they all looked alike.

After four hours of looking I was dizzy. I figured that no man could take such pictures for 17 years and not get satiated with the lusciousness and bored by the sameness of the girls. I figured that all that kept Korman going was the profit motive.

For Art, Not Money

But when I went to his studio on Broadway I found I was all wrong. Taking pictures—his Art—is far more important than money.

At work, Korman is a crazy, 220-volt, enthusiastic jumping-jack with a wise-cracking, and self-winding talking machine inside.

He works from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at his Madison Avenue studio taking society folks. From 3 until 8, 9, 10 p.m. or even 2 a.m. he's at his Broadway studio shooting the show business. He's been at it 17 years—never taken a vacation. He shoots 600 to 2000 negatives a week and his staff of twelve turns out from 3000 to 10,000 prints of them weekly. He's not married but four times he's almost been.

In the three hours I watched him he had four sittings, and each one of them was a super—equal to three. What's more he kept them all going at once—in one small studio—with one camera.

While he posed and shot one girl he kept a second girl satisfied by describing the wonderful poses he had for her and kidded a third girl into thinking she was going to be through in five minutes. Meantime he answered telephone calls, argued with his business manager brother Harry; gave directions for lighting to his assistant, conferred with the bookkeeper; gave orders to the dark room; and kept telling me how to write this story.

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IN KORMAN'S SIDEWALK SHOWCASE is this portrait of Jane Manners, twice life size. Haughty expression (hard-to-get), open lips (fires burn within), elegant hand pose (grace) make what Korman says is his all-time glamorization high.

Sweethearts All Around

Thirty times an hour he said, "Let's see your teeth, dear—the white ones." Sometimes he'd vary it with; "... the green ones." "Wear a truss, and be happy" was another favorite. His best gag was: "Let's see your eyes, dear, all four of them." That meant: open your eyelids and shove out your breasts. Every other word was: 'darling, honey, sweetheart, dear'."

Finally his main sitter, who had been draped over one of the cubistic forms in a position that would wreck a football player, got up stiffly. She staggered toward the dressing room and her street clothes saying: "I'm a broken woman from Murray Korman." Said Korman, in a stage Russian brogue "For Art you moost soffer." —**RALPH STELNER.**



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