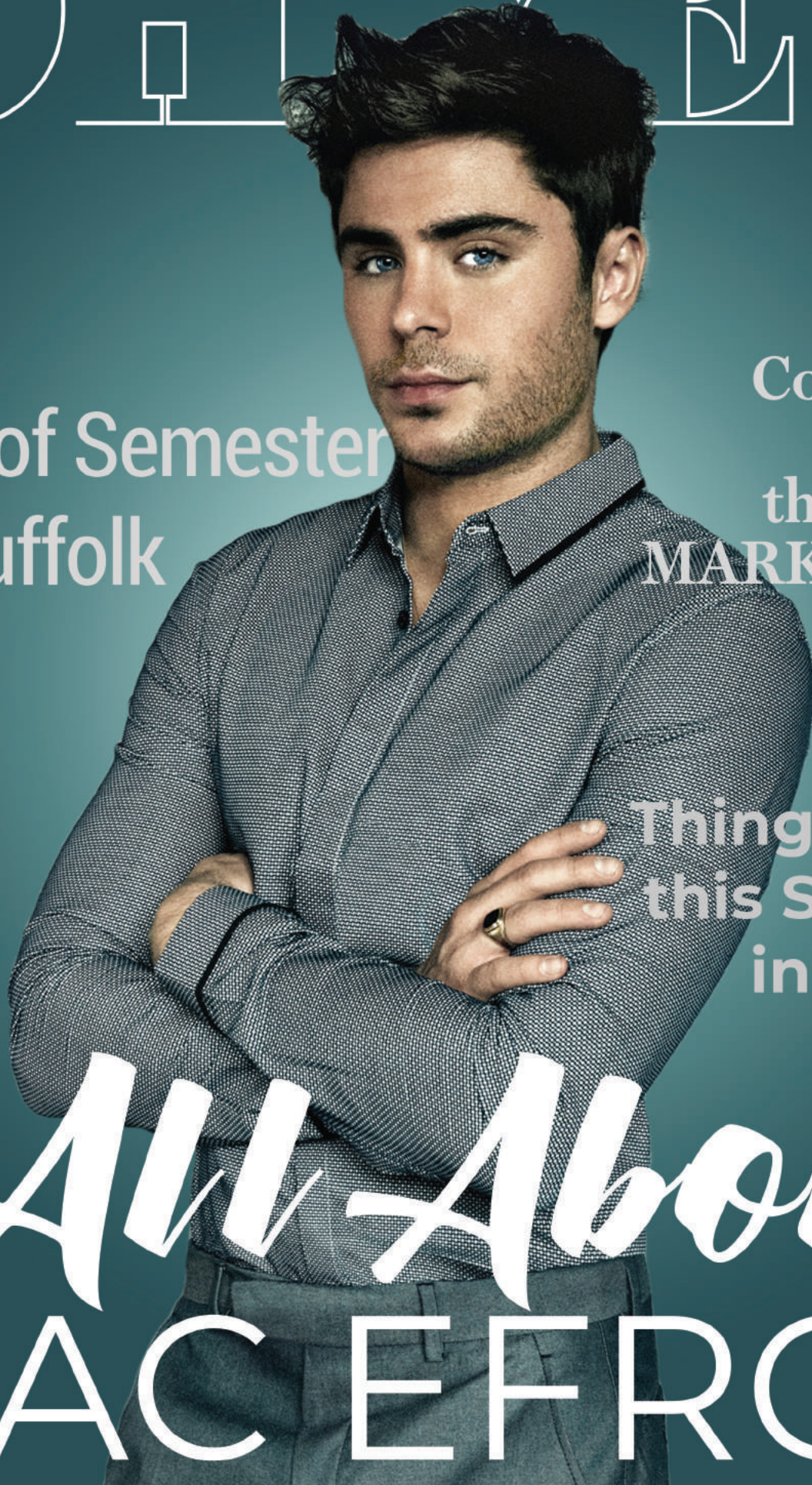


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SPRING 2018



End of Semester
at Suffolk

Connecting
Through
the Lens of
MARK OSTOW

100
Things to Do
this Summer
in Boston

All About
ZAC EFRON

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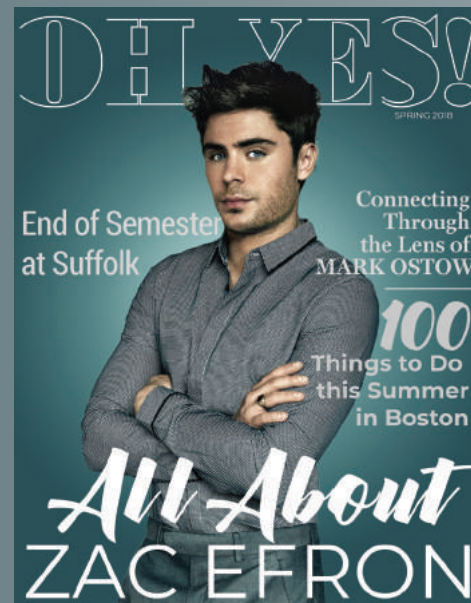
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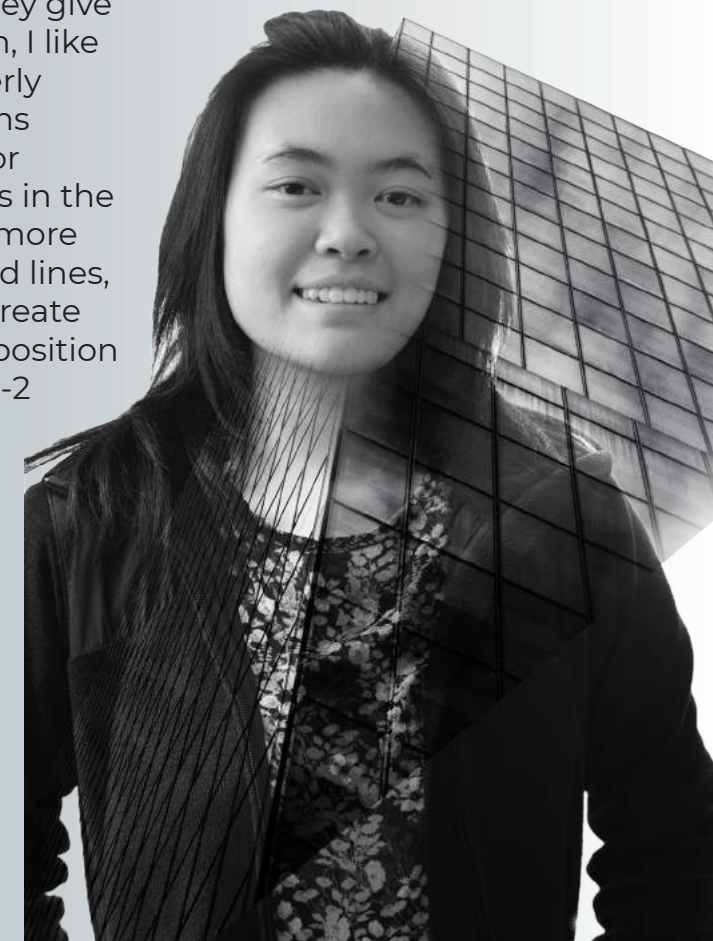
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Biography

My name is Xiaoyan. I am a senior at Suffolk University with a major in marketing and a minor in graphic design. My career goal is to work in a marketing/advertising firm doing design work. I love to travel because I like to explore the culture, architecture, food and people in an unknown city. It excites me every time I go someplace new. In my free time, I like to binge watch The 100 over and over again and search up cheap flights out of Boston. A weird obsession of mine is collecting plants especially succulents/cactus, because they are low maintenance and looks pretty.

My design choices are clean, geometric, and bold. I like colors that are bold and have a character to it. Because they add uniqueness to the overall design. Sometimes I try to play around with the type and graphics to make it more unique and more interesting/active. I also like contrast/complementary colors, because they go well together and pop out more. I just like colorful designs because they give out a positive vibe and makes me happy. In addition, I like clean designs in a way that every elements are orderly placed and with a purpose. Clean and simple designs looks good on the eyes, and they are not too busy for attention. For example, I blurry out the backgrounds in the Photoshop assignment to make the object/person more focus. I also like geometric designs using shapes and lines, because I think if they are used combine they can create an interesting element. Playing with the scale and position can give me a different feeling. Sometimes I spent 1-2 hours playing with the design but in the end, simple design works the best. Maybe I make things more complicated than it should be. For example creating this florist ad, I searched a lot of flower pictures/vectors and different fonts and trying to combine everything together is time consuming especially finding the perfect picture. The same goes for the magazine cover. Because I tried to find a high res image and at the same time I can easily isolate the model with minimum distraction in the background. In addition, the new background needs to go well together. Overall, I spent a lot of time searching. I guess with every design project, research is the most important thing.



OH, YES!

CONNECTING through THE LENS

By Hannah Walters
Photos by Adrienne Mathiowetz

Mark Ostow has always felt comfortable connecting with people through a camera lens. “When I was a child I spent a lot of time by myself,” the renowned photographer and longtime Cambridge resident explains. Growing up in Long Beach, N.Y., 10-year-old Ostow found solace in a camera his grandfather gave him.

“I spent a lot of time wandering the boardwalk taking photos of people,” Ostow remembers.

“I would take the film to the drug store and it would take a week for it to come back, and those weeks ... there was so much anticipation.”

Ostow, now 60, has

photographed some of the most powerful, influential, and even infamous figures in national politics and culture. Eliot Spitzer, actor David Leary, and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin are all former subjects. In 2016, Ostow shot a set of portraits of the Obama cabinet for Politico and a series of the presidential candidates for the Atlantic.

But despite Ostow's early affinity for photography and his tendency to share it with those around him—he started a photography club at his high school and taught

The day after Ostow's father passed away, he answered a phone call from his wife saying that a family friend wanted him to do a shoot.

“She said ‘I know this is a terrible time,’” Ostow recalls. “I’m crying, and I say to my wife through my tears, ‘Tell her yes.’” Ostow looks back at this moment of concurrent destruction and creation as an epiphany: “I was free in some way to say ‘yes’ to being a photographer. It was cosmic.”

The beginning wasn't easy, however. Ostow remembers the way his wife, who passed away five years ago, described the workflow of his early days: autumn is calm, the winter is slow ... and so are spring and summer.

Ostow, who proudly describes his children as “powerhouse individuals,” credits his family for his perseverance: “Having four kids is a strong motivator—I couldn't fail.”

He also credits the Boston Phoenix for sparking the positive feedback loop that is critical for freelancers to achieve solvency. After shooting for the Phoenix, publications including the Boston Globe and the Atlantic began to notice Ostow. Today, Ostow has successfully put all of his children through private universities and is considered one of the most booked photographers in Boston.

I visit Ostow's studio on a snowy, quiet Monday afternoon. It's the sort of space one would imagine for an independent photographer—high ceilings, streams of natural light, and a long wooden table in the center of the room. Black and white photographs of all sizes adorn the walls, while a few framed prints sit gently on the ground, leaning against table legs.

He guides me through the stories behind some of those shots. Each

photography at the local Boys Club—it wasn't his career until his early 30s.

For much of Ostow's life, his father was not supportive of his artistic pursuits. Photography wasn't practical and it wasn't the way to support a family. Instead, he owned a typesetting business as an early adult, maintaining his photography on the side.

It wasn't until personal tragedy struck that Ostow finally made the leap to becoming a professional photographer.



photo, no matter how different the circumstances of its creation or its subject, reiterates a near constant in both Ostow's life and work: connection and serendipity are a must.

“He has sort of a strange face. How do I work with that face?,” Ostow says as he recalls his afternoon trying to photograph Eliot Spitzer.

Ostow met with Spitzer to take shots for the Atlantic as the politician was preparing to run for governor (pre-prostitution scandal).

He and Ostow were hitting it off well: “I set up this black backdrop. I had two hours with him. At that point, we were having such a great time, but I'm getting nothing that's interesting.”

After numerous lackluster shots, Spitzer suddenly looked over his shoulder at Ostow, who had moved off to the side. In that moment, Ostow saw a slice of bright light coming in from a side window and a jumble of books to the right of the black curtain. He incorporated those completely unintentional items into the shot and changed his perspective on Spitzer entirely to create a fascinating image of what would become an infamous man.

“It was a Hail Mary at the last minute,” Ostow says.

Following his intuition in split seconds like these has made for extraordinary photographs, as has his ability to bond with almost anyone.

“I have to give myself 30 seconds to connect. I have to get people to forget about where they are and what they have to do. Sometimes it's impossible, but often it's not,” Ostow explains.

His skillful connection was crucial in convincing Hakeem Jackson—a young former gang member—to be photographed.

He met Jackson at Roca, a nonprofit that provides support to young people at risk of violence or recidivism. Jackson had spoken to a reporter for a story on Roca in Commonwealth Magazine, but wasn't aware he might be photographed and was very hesitant to have his face placed next to his comments.

“I talked to him about how I've been interviewed, and I've been unhappy with how I've been portrayed. It's just a risk you take,” Ostow recalls of their meeting. “I said, ‘I will work with you to get the best photograph of you I can if you give me a little bit of time.’” Jackson

agreed after talking to both Ostow and his Roca social worker.

In the end, Ostow not only photographed Jackson, but became acquainted with his friends, who allowed him to photograph them in class that day. Ostow says that Jackson even asked him if he could work for him in some way—a request that Ostow found particularly moving.

Jackson's portrait shows a steady, intense side eye. A heavy, angular shadow obscures half of his face and all of his body, the darkness punctuated only by the bright white of his T-shirt in the foreground. The shadows make his stare more powerful in its illumination—it also seems to be an artful, even if possibly unintentional, gesture to Jackson's hesitance to share himself with the camera.

The intimacy of Jackson's portrait seems inescapable, as in many of Ostow's portraits. Walking through his studio that afternoon, I look at dozens of faces. It's difficult to break your gaze from each captured moment—every aspect of the photo feels powerfully unreplicable: the light, the context, the thought, the fleeting expression.

The stories he shares are only a handful of the tales that have come out of his shoots. Multiple photographers he's worked with, including current studio manager Marissa Fiorucci, can attest that Ostow has a habit of tossing \$3,500 camera lenses over his shoulder. This playful test of his colleagues' reflexes usually doesn't go awry, unless the person behind him is unexpectedly eating an orange (although Fiorucci miraculously still managed to catch the lens that time).

It seems only natural that Ostow is fascinated with all manners of human connection. In 2003 and 2004 he began several projects to enrich Cambridge and the surrounding area, some of which had nothing to do with photography—namely, Cafe Zing within Porter Square Books.

Ostow was at Porter Square books to celebrate a “naked calendar” Ostow shot for Cambridge Community Television when the owner of Porter Square Books lamented that the space was too small for a cafe space. Ostow leapt at the challenge.

“I talked to my wife, and I wrote a proposal ... the bookstore owner liked that I had so many community connections, and so they let me [open Zing],” Ostow says. Thirteen years later, Cafe Zing has been a beloved fixture in Porter Square, and now even has a sister cafe—Kickstand Cafe, also owned by Ostow—in Arlington Center.

Around the same time that Ostow was becoming a first-time cafe owner, the war in Iraq was imminent. In response, Ostow searched for veterans to photograph and interview.

He approached New England Center and Home for Veterans with the idea of featuring veterans, but he unexpectedly came out of the interaction with a teaching gig. Ostow initially taught a weekly photography class to a group of homeless veterans at the NECHV in downtown Boston, but over time transitioned to teaching a smaller group within in his studio space with Fiorucci.

Ostow also began a summer photography class for teens around that time. The idea was inspired, in part, by his family friend, Rose Friedman of NPR. She remarked that Ostow would be great at teaching young people. Fifteen years later, he's still putting on summer teen workshops.

“I learn so much from the kids, because everything is so fresh and new ... it gives me energy.” Ostow says. The two-week day camp includes

“I have to give myself 30 seconds to connect. I have to get people to forget about where they are and what they have to do. Sometimes it's impossible, but often it's not.”

adventures around the city and creating photography projects. Much of the work focuses on basic principles, such as composition, but also the finer details of how to be a good photographer: never ask the subject to “relax,” or “smile”—they'll simply do the opposite, Ostow explains.

What's next for Ostow? Maybe standing behind a different type of lens. At this point, Ostow envisions creating a documentary-style independent film, much like 2015's “Tangerine.”

“I just want to make one film and see what that's like,” he explains.




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