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David LaChapelle on the Downfalls of Modern Art (VIDEO)

Text by Holly Fraser



The photographer David LaChapelle needs little introduction. Since Andy Warhol offered him his first job at Interview magazine back in 1984 he has become the last word in the genre for many.

LaChapelle is best known for his celebrity portraits -- from singers and performers like Michael Jackson and Elton John, to Whitney Houston and Courtney Love -- and is also known for his use of humour and surreal, sexual styles. His is a style that is often copied (most recently by Rihanna in her S&M video, for which LaChapelle sued), but is never matched.

Yet, in recent years, LaChapelle has moved away from celebrity culture and the glamour associated with it, in pursuit of art with a deeper meaning, showcased in his latest exhibition 'Earth Laughs in Flowers' at London's Robilant + VOENA gallery. "I feel a responsibility when I'm making photographs. There's more expected of a picture hanging on a gallery wall than a picture in a magazine. I take that seriously and I try to be very clear when I don't think a lot of contemporary art makes that attempt," LaChapelle told Crane.tv.

The artist continued: "There's always clever art being made and there's always something novel being made and I don't think that's enough anymore. I would hope that artists are moving in a direction of creating work that doesn't add to the confusion of the world, but actually enlightens us. And those answers need to come from the artists."