Aneta Bartos

BORN: Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Poland
RESIDENCE: New York, NY
EDUCATION: School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
CLIENTS: Urban Outfitters, *British GQ*, *Surface*, *Big*

Aneta Bartos likens her classic fashion portraits to a David Lynch movie. Using soft lighting and doll-like models posed in 1920s-style clothes, her images have a dark yet dream-like quality, inspired by the work of photographers like Julia Margaret Cameron and David Hamilton.

"I love creating stories that are haunting, tragic and beautiful at the same time," she says. "I try to portray a romantic, moody environment in order to create mystery around the subject."

Bartos has been taking pictures since high school, when she moved to Stamford, Connecticut, from her native Poland. It took her some time to become proficient in the English language, so she turned to photography as a way to relate to others and express herself. Bartos attended local gallery openings with friends and took darkroom classes. "I was always more attracted to photography than paintings for some reason...and for me, the darkroom classes were kind of meditative," she explains.

Bartos adds that though she was always drawn to the glamour and beauty of fashion, she never imagined that she would become a fashion photographer until some friends—aspiring models—approached her to shoot test shots for their portfolios. She enjoyed the shoots so much that she began to approach modeling agencies, asking if they had any new girls who needed pictures. "The agencies never asked me to shoot the girls a certain way; they gave me complete freedom," she says. "I started creating all these sets, buying vintage clothes and dressing them up for the shoots."

Despite a growing list of clients that includes *Surface* magazine, British *GQ* and Urban Outfitters, Bartos describes her success as "gradual" and claims that her approach to her career is as old-fashioned as her pictures. "I created a Web site only recently," she says. "That was an innovative thing for me."

—Maria Wakem