

**For Immediate Release**

*SOMBRA*,  
A SUMPTUOUS BOOK OF  
MALE NUDES, PORTRAITS & STILL LIFES BY  
FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER RUVEN AFANADOR,  
TO BE RELEASED BY MERRELL MAY 2004

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*Jean Paul Gaultier Contributing Foreword; Exhibitions Planned Worldwide*

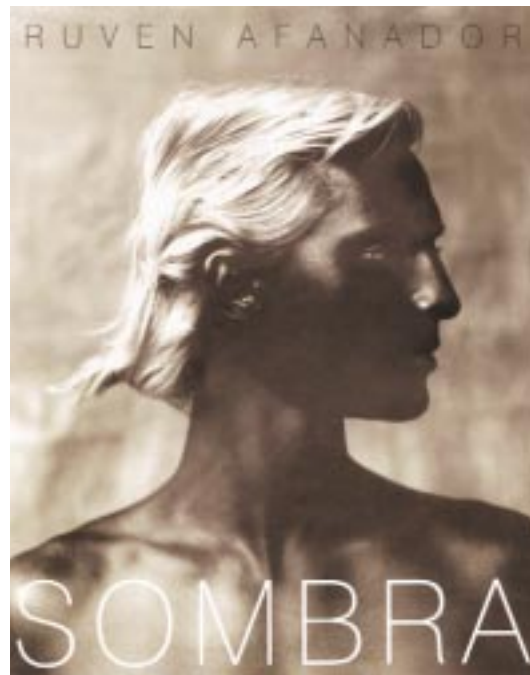
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*SOMBRA*, a sumptuous book of erotic male nudes, portraits and still-life works by award-winning fashion photographer Ruven Afanador, will be released by Merrell in May 2004. Hardcover, with 192 pages, 130 photographs printed in four color and deluxe dimensions of 11 1/4" x 14 1/4," *Sombra* will retail for \$75. Paris-based fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier is contributing the foreword. Merrell of London and New York is a leading publisher of fine books on art, design, architecture and photography.

*Sombra* draws on Afanador's signature theme of the male nude as a sort of female odalisque. His eye inevitably captures the dancery, delicate, feminine details comprising a certain aesthetic of masculine beauty.

Provocative and revealing, Afanador's *Sombra* men are elegant and luxuriant, classical and beautiful in their eroticism. The nudes are paced, at once lyrically and decadently, by Afanador's lush still lifes and portraits inspired by early European paintings.

Afanador's images pay homage to early sources: Nadar, daguerreotypes and the idea of the photograph as precious object, Baron von Gloeden's photographs of young men, Man Ray's solarized images, and early dance photographs of Nijinsky and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.



RUVEN AFANADOR



*Sombra*, the Spanish word for shadow, is a fitting title for this collection of images. Many of the photographs in *Sombra* are solarized in different levels of intensity and printed in metal tones, primarily copper and gold, using formulas taken from old photography manuals. Most of the photographs are bleached before the toner is applied so they achieve a quality that makes them look almost like a drawing.

The still lifes interspersed throughout *Sombra* are inspired by opulent, decadent details from

tableau paintings of food and animals with their skin and feathers still on, the way they still come to the kitchen to be prepared in European and other countries. Ruven Afanador mixed the still life works with the nudes to add beauty, sensuality and other connotations to make *Sombra* lavish.

#### *Afanador A Leading Celebrity & Fashion Photographer*

Ruven Afanador is considered one of the leading photographers working in celebrity and fashion photography.

His work appears in most major fashion magazines in the world as well as in *The New Yorker*. It is frequently seen in all the European editions of *Vogue*, where he is a regular source of covers and inside spreads. Other magazines that publish his editorial work are *American Elle*, *Esquire*, *InStyle*, *Rolling Stone*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Vanity Fair*, *Premiere* and *Vibe*. In October 2000, he was named Best Photographer of the year at the 2000 Trophee de la mode awards in Paris, the highest honor in the field, which is conferred by a jury of over 4000 of the most important names in the fashion industry.

In the fall of 2001, a decade after his work first began attracting widespread attention, he published his first book, *Torero*. A stunning collection of black and white photographs combining fashion, narcissism, Latin traditions and the smoldering beauty of young matadors,



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*Torero* sold out within one year. It became a collector's item within the fashion world, with John Galliano, Jean Paul Gaultier and Christian Lacroix among its most passionate fans.

In 2002, in conjunction with *Torero*, the first series of one-man gallery exhibitions featuring Ruven Afanador's work were held at Throckmorton Gallery, New York; Arte Fino Gallery, Zurich; Instituto Municipal de cultura, Colombia and Foto Museo, Colombia. His work will be the focus of a new series of exhibitions when *Sombra* is launched by Merrell in May 2004, beginning with an exhibition at Throckmorton Gallery in New York during May and June.

A collection of Ruven Afanador's couture and other fashion photography is planned for release by Merrell in fall 2004. Afanador is also preparing a celebrity photography book for release in fall 2005.

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*For more information about Merrell visit [www.merrellpublishers.com](http://www.merrellpublishers.com).*



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