

PHIL CANTOR

Exploring Alter Egos

STORY AND PORTRAIT BY DAN EPSTEIN



Butterfly Girl/Comic Fest



Naval Officer/Battle of Monmouth



Smiling Mummer/Mummer Parade

Many readers of Suburban Essex are familiar with the work of photographer (and 2023 Best of Essex Winner) Phil Cantor from both his portraits of families, and those made of local business people. Growing up in Levittown, Long Island, he followed a similar path to that of many photographic professionals. He had a darkroom in high school, and later worked for his college newspaper. After college, he worked in the Audio-Visual industry making photographs for the shows, and then branched out into the realm of Corporate and Industrial Communications.

ALTER EGOS Exhibit

You can view these amazing portraits, at the Berkshire Hathaway Gallery in Montclair from September 20 to November 11, 2024.

You can meet Phil Cantor at the opening reception on Friday, September 20, 2024 from 6-8pm.

Moving to Montclair to raise a family over thirty years ago, he was at the forefront of the photojournalistic movement in wedding photography, and shot over 700 weddings in what was a cutting edge style. Now based in a studio in Verona, he concentrates on portraiture.

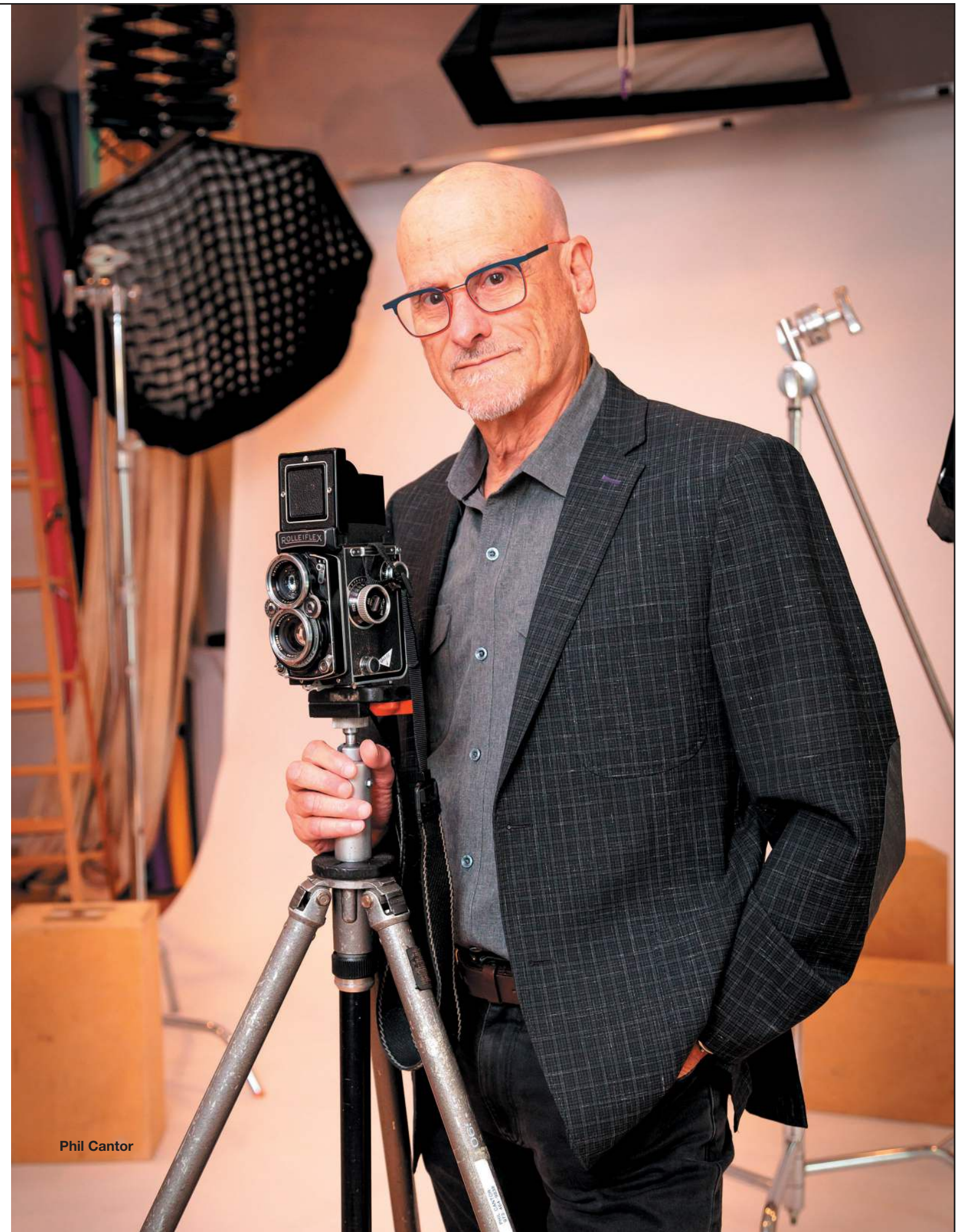
Less well known are the theme-based Fine Art projects he's worked on for years. In 2016 he exhibited *Close Ups*. In that project he made beautifully intimate photographs of very small items, and printed them much larger than life. In 2019, another exhibition, *Line of Work*, featured portraits inspired by the work of photographer Irving Penn in the 1920's. Cantor displayed portraits of 44 local people, from his plumber to the mayor of Montclair, each celebrating that person's vocation.

For the last two years, using a 70 year-old Rolleiflex film camera, Cantor has been photographing people with alter egos. It's

genesis came when he happened upon a Civil War re-enactment at Ringwood Manor and became fascinated by people who found community with other people who shared a common interest in an uncommon culture.

Cantor has made evocative portraits of war re-enactors of different eras, super heroes at ComicCon, Mummies, professional wrestlers, participants at the Coney Island Mermaid Parade, and more. It's a celebration of each participant while they are engaged with a community of like-minded alter egos. Cantor exposes only 3 or 4 frames in the antique camera, while carefully composing the image. There is no cropping or retouching. "There is a joy," he says, "in meeting these people."

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Phil Cantor

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