

TECHNOLOGY & VISION

It comes as no surprise that **Rocky Schenck**'s photographs look like paintings. Schenck's great-great grandfather and his brother, who immigrated from Germany to the Texas Hill Country where Schenck grew up, were both romantic painters. Schenck himself was selling his own paintings by the time he was 13, and he went on to major in art at North Texas State University. But when Schenck left college to move to Hollywood, photography became his sole medium. He used it to make portraits of stars such as Nicole Kidman and Uma Thurman, often with the soft-focus, haute-glamour look of 1930s studio glossies, on assignment for such clients as Columbia Records, Gilbey's Gin, and *Vogue*. All the while, though, he was creating his own dark, mysterious photos, the cream of which are collected in *Rocky Schenck/Photographs* (University of Texas Press, \$45), due in November.

Schenck fashions his shadowy world by old-school pictorialist means, diffusing the scene with various lens attachments (including homemade filters) and heavily manipulating the surface of his negatives and the prints themselves. "Each print requires hours of hands-on attention," he says. "I do it in the privacy of my own home, sometimes with a margarita and an old film on the TV." Schenck has a self-deprecating good humor that he attributes in part to his photography. "If I am sad or depressed or melancholy," he says, "I can wander somewhere with my camera and usually turn my mood around by stumbling upon something unexpected and wonderful." —RUSSELL HART