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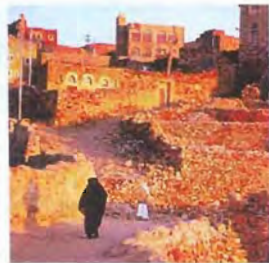


# THE RADAR PEOPLE

BY AMANDA LESTER TRAVELING  
RHETT TURNER PORTRAIT BY LARA ROSSIGNOL  
ALL OTHER PHOTOGRAPHY BY RHETT TURNER



*Clockwise from left: Photos by Rhett Turner include Portrait in Patagonia 2008; Girl That Looks Like a Vermeer Painting 2007; Sunset in Shahrak 1, Yemen 2007; Glacier Viedma Patagonia, Argentina 2008; Sunset on Moai, Rapa Nui 2008; Fitz Roy Mountain Patagonia, Argentina 2008*



## STRAIGHT SHOOTER

*Just back from Yemen and Easter Island, documentary filmmaker and photographer Rhett Turner shares never before seen snaps on the eve of his next gallery show.*

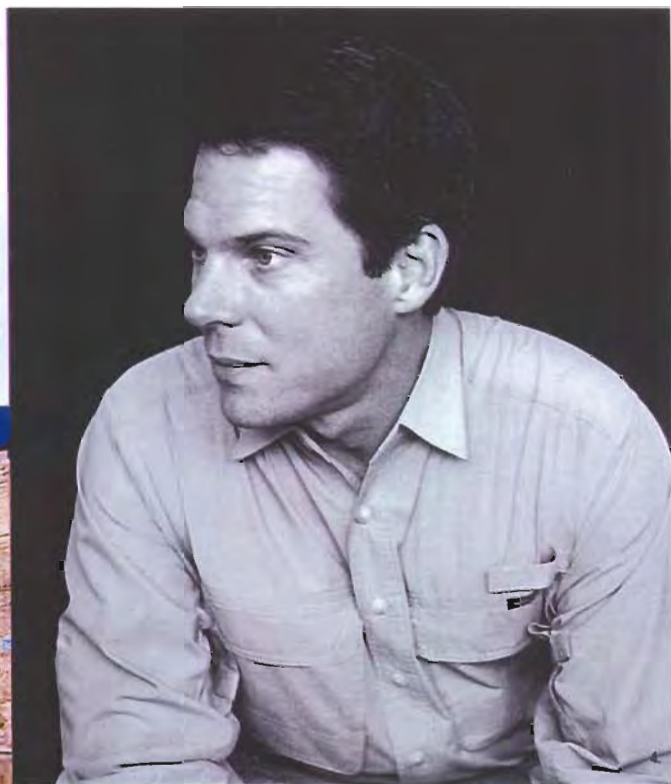
When you first meet Rhett Turner, one word that comes to mind is dashing. Not necessarily because of his slim, athletic frame and brilliant blue eyes or his fast-paced, confident style, but because he is forever on the go, likely to dash off to a distant and exotic country on a whim. "I always want to see something different," he says as he hands over his ever-ready passport. We quickly count 47 countries he has visited since 2007. Ghana, Brazil, Butan, Nigeria, Ecuador and India top the long list of memorable destinations, and as we speak Turner is dreaming of one day exploring Esfahan, the old Persian capital of Iran.

For more than a decade, the son of media mogul Ted Turner has used his camera as a means of capturing and communicating the common humanity of other far-away cultures. "I shoot the things people [Americans] don't get to see very much," he says. "It lets them know that all people everywhere are like us."

Always the adventurer, Turner, who is 42, confesses an early affinity for *National Geographic* magazines and traveling. Of course, growing up as the son of Ted Turner not only meant frequent opportunities to travel, but also unique ones, like dinner aboard the *Calypso* with Jacques Cousteau. Turner

was just 15 years old when his father picked up the Jacques Cousteau series from PBS and subsequently sent him to the Amazon with the crew. "My dad always exposed us [his sisters and brothers] to an international perspective," he says. "He bought all the great documentaries. We went to Australia and to the Goodwill Games in Russia. All of these experiences inspired me to want to be able to explore, tell stories and demystify the world."

Turner studied business administration at The Citadel before joining Turner Broadcasting and CNN. He discovered his love of photography while in Japan working for CNN's Tokyo bureau in the early '90s. In 1994 he enrolled at the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design for a degree in photography, film and video. He launched his own production company, Red Sky Productions in 1999, and served as CONTINUED...



1. *Girl Wearing Red Hijab in Amran, Yemen* 2007. 2. *Mt. Torres Del Paine Patagonia, Chile* 2004. 3. *Call to Prayers* 2007. 4. *Photographer and world-traveler Rhett Turner*

...CONTINUED president, producer and cameraman, and focused on documentary films for global television audiences and private corporations. Among his favorite projects: *Pollinators in Peril* about the plight of the endangered honeybee and *Avoiding Armageddon* about the threat of weapons of mass destruction narrated by Walter Cronkite.

When we follow up with Turner by phone, he tells us he's in Tanzania with CARE, but he cannot talk long. "We're going to dinner with Sarah Michelle Gellar," he says. Partnerships like these have allowed him to also travel the globe with other VIPs, including former President Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center, to produce a series of documentary projects that have closer ties to home.

Last fall, a selection of his large-scale images from a Middle Eastern jaunt to Libya in 2005 and later to Yemen in 2007—a trip Turner spontaneously decided to embark on while standing in Southern Sudan talking to his wife, Angela, via satellite phone—were on exhibit at Atlanta's Bell Lowe Gallery.

Now Turner is considering works for inclusion in a second Lowe Gallery exhibition, slated for a fall 2008 show in the Santa Monica gallery. The photos will include ones Turner shot in Patagonia and Easter Island at the southeastern-most point of the Polynesian triangle, and made world famous for its monolithic Moai statues created by the ancient

Rapanui people. "I got it all," Turner says as he flips through image after vivid image of the giant, historical statues. "It was amazing walking next to where the Moai have been carved out of the mountain, and everything just stopped," he says. "There is a stop motion effect to the whole area."

The trip to Easter Island wasn't Turner's most remote journey; that distinction goes to his 2004 trip to Antarctica. And while he claims that walking the Perito Moreno Glacier in Patagonia was his most memorable experience, he admits that Yemen and Libya didn't leave his mind for months after he got home. "The colors were amazing, and so were the people."

Back in Atlanta, Turner spends his days at the Turner Building downtown surrounded by photographic reminders of his travels. Step off the elevator and immediately you are drawn into breathtaking landscapes of Libya, portraits from Ethiopia and cityscapes from North Korea, all photographed by Turner. He spends his free time with Alexandro, his 8-year-old son, skateboarding, fishing and checking out Zoo Atlanta and the Georgia Aquarium. By night Turner attends galas in support of groups like the Georgia Conservancy, Jane Fonda's G-CAPP, the Diabetes Foundation and UNICEF.

But waiting in his travel bag is a pair of broken-in khaki pants and a lightweight shirt, his passport and of course, his Pentax camera. Bag in hand, he's ready to race to the next corner of the earth, not just for adventure's sake, but to capture the face of our common world experience. **A**

Red Sky Productions, 404.875.8102 or [www.redskyproductions.com](http://www.redskyproductions.com). Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, 404.352.8114 and Santa Monica, 310.449.0184 or [www.lowegallery.com](http://www.lowegallery.com).