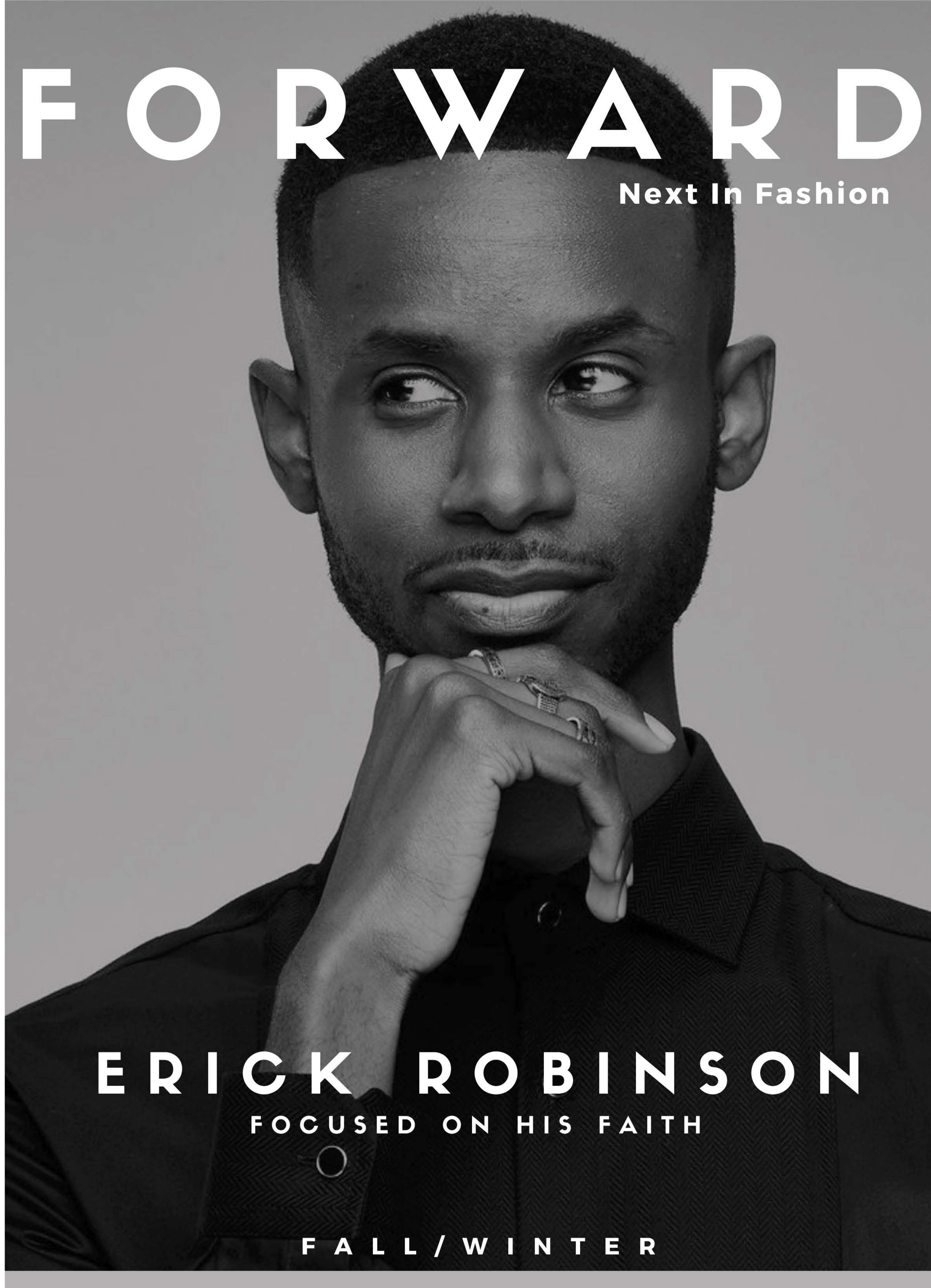


FORWARD

Next In Fashion



ERICK ROBINSON

FOCUSED ON HIS FAITH

FALL/WINTER

FOCUSED ON HIS FAITH

**HOW A 25-YEAR-OLD
PHOTOGRAPHER LANDED THE
COVER OF ONE OF FASHION'S
MOST COVETED MAGAZINES.**

Words by Andrew Browne &
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Erick Robinson has had a meteoric rise as a celebrity and fashion photographer. He has shot musicians such as Janet Jackson, Toni Braxton, and Nick Cannon; reality stars such as Cynthia Bailey and Porsha Williams; and even actresses such as Sheryl Lee Ralph. Erick has been featured in Italian Vogue twice and his most recent shoot, with actress Garcelle Beauvais, landed the cover of Harper's Bazaar Vietnam. How his career has boomed at such a young age is a story of faith and determination. It all started with a discerning eye.

Erick always gravitated towards photography. He looked at celebrities in magazines as a young child and noticed a difference between the beauty shoots and fashion shoots. By high school, Erick took pictures with any camera he could get his hands on. His mom, a real estate agent, noticed his passion for photography he bought him his first camera in 2011, a Canon Powershot.

From that moment, Erick captured everything he saw, from friends at school during their lunch break to practicing shooting angles with close friends after school. Erick quickly learned the power of working with what he had available. The shadows, shapes, and colors in the background became tools take interesting photos.

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Photo courtesy of Erick Robinson

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Erick continued to hone his craft over the next four years. His family moved from Tallahassee, Florida, to Jacksonville where he completed dual enrollment work at Florida State Community College.

By 2015, Erick moved to Atlanta and began building his portfolio. He saved some money and took a trip to Los Angeles. While there, he posted a photo to Instagram and tagged actress Lisa Raye. The impromptu tag led to a phone call with her (a mutual friend shared his phone number with the actress). She liked the picture and wanted to shoot with him. Erick took the job, shot quality images, and sparked a connection with Lisa. The next day, celebrity Lisa Govan called to have her own pictures taken. The quick networking taught Erick the valuable lesson of developing quality relationships.

While others turned to depend on agency representation for steady work, Erick chose to trust his own ability. He did not want to give someone else authority over everything. As a freelance photographer, Erick maintained full control of his career. The move allowed him to build client relationships which led to a steady stream of referral business.

Erick’s full control did not come without major challenges. He often questioned his level of creativity –

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both on and off set – and even his personal identity. To overcome, Erick turned to his faith. He stopped relying on the opinions of others and focused on the only opinion that really mattered: God’s. “People were not supportive, [so] I stopped seeking [them] for the opportunities and I had to go back to my place of prayer,” he said. That prayer helped propel him to the next level. He asked God for resources, divine strategy, and strategic language so he did not make mistakes when opportunities came his way.



Photo courtesy of Erick Robinson for Harper's Bazaar Vietnam

Now, Erick is secure in his status as a famous fashion and celebrity photographer. Confidence in his talents helped him connect with legendary photographers Nigel Barker and Cliff Watts. He described working with them as “surreal,” as both are big inspirations for him. He first met Nigel Barker in 2017 during fashion week in New York. They briefly chatted and kept in touch. Later in the year, Nigel invited Erick to a grand opening in Atlanta celebrating his photography book *Models of Influence*. The pair caught up and took pictures. He even showed Erick how to pose for the camera.

Later, Erick met Cliff Watts after becoming Facebook friends and sharing his admiration for his work via Facebook Messenger. The message was returned with an invite to his home in New York. Erick accepted the invitation and spent time with Cliff talking

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talking about photography. Cliff even shared tips on how to improve his body of work. "To be able to have that much direct access [to] two of my greatest inspirations in regard to photography – it was my greatest blessing in life," he recalled.

Currently, Erick is working on his own photography book, focusing on highlighting powerful and successful Black women in Hollywood. The project is near and dear to him. It will celebrate women that have leverage in the industry and have paved the way for other young women to follow.

A major part of the book will be on celebrating Black women the way they have longed to see themselves in photography. His focus is making sure the lighting, hair, and makeup are all on point. He believes in portraying skin of color as well-polished, with vibrant colors and amazing retouching.

To go from shooting friends after school during sunset, to celebrities for magazine covers, "is an absolute blessing," says Erick. He has made a successful career lensing notable African Americans and showcasing their excellence. When asked to think of his young but powerful career, Erick keeps it simple: "As a photographer, to see my work printed and just appreciated...I'm grateful."

ERICK'S TIPS FOR TEENS

1. The relationship (with a client) is key, beyond anything else.
2. Stay focused. Be consistent.
3. Do not reduce your level of influence according to other people's standards for you.
4. Spend 98% of your time perfecting your craft and 2% asking for support. You want to perfect your craft so you can give people a reason to support you.
5. Wealthy people are not afraid to communicate with other people.
6. (When going to an industry event) You must know how to take control of the room and allow people to feel and see the light inside of you.
7. Networking allows your name to come up in settings where Facebook and Instagram cannot go.

ERICK ROBINSON'S



Q: Who is your favorite designer?

A: Miguel Antoine

Q: Who is your favorite photographer?

A: Cliff Watts

Q: Who is your dream client that you have not worked with?

A: Beyonce

Q: Name an old Hollywood legend that you did not have a chance to work with?

A: Whitney Houston

Q: What was your first luxury purchase?

A: A pair of Louboutin shoes

Q: What is your favorite gift from a client?

A: A pair of Gucci shoes

Q: Who in pop culture influences fashion the most?

A: Rihanna

Q: Name a celebrity that has timeless style.

A: Janelle Monae and Tracee Ellis Ross

Q: Name the most iconic brand?

A: Harper's Bazaar and Vogue

Q: What brand can withstand the next 100 years and why?

A: Essence Magazine because of the way they strongly highlight Black Excellence.

Q: Pick one photo of yours to encapsulate your work.

A: The photo of Janet Jackson with someone covering her breasts. It is timeless and clean and never needed a lot of editing. It captures Janet in her essence and that is what I strive to do.

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