



Portrait of the artist:  
turtleneck sweater  
by Rostepa Novak  
trousers by Paul Smith

Adrien Brody could have been a magician, and now he's rediscovering his passion for painting. But with a dizzying array of major roles and a new Wes Anderson film coming out, the Oscar-winner explains why this is very much 'a special time'

# ‘Actors are attention seekers. But I’m an introvert’

Interview: KATE DWYER Photographs: DANIELLE LEVITT Stylist: CHRISTIAN STROBLE

**R**oughly a year after Adrien Brody became the youngest recipient of the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role, he sat for an interview and a “glammed-up” photo shoot for the August 2004 issue of *Details* magazine, the now-defunct men’s publication. “The all-American look,” leaning backwards with both hands behind his head and meeting the camera with a gaze both remote and charged. Also on the cover, in all caps: “ADRIEN BRODY LOVES BEING FAMOUS.” Brody never said he loved being famous. It was not something he’d ever expressed. Not only was the coverline incongruous to who he was, but as an actor who’d only recently climbed into the industry’s highest level of visibility, he was still digesting the way his life would change as a public figure. “I was so shocked

by it,” he says now, over breakfast at the Whimby Hotel in New York. “It was so flippant. It just...” He hesitates, as if debating whether to complete the thought, because he is otherwise unfailingly polite. “It made me look like a dick.” Brody is once again sitting for a cover story. He’s come straight from *Good Morning America*, the popular breakfast TV show, and is still wearing “make-believe clothes” lent by a stylist: a white button-up and a denim black over-shirt. His appearance this morning had gone well. “Quick and painless. It was literally two minutes. I mean, it’s a whole to-do, and then you’re on, thinking ‘I hope I don’t blow it!’ And they’re like, ‘Good morning!’ And I’m like, ‘Hello!’ And then they’re like, ‘Goodbye!’ and then I’m like, ‘I love you, thank you!’” Because the show had run smoothly, his publicist had texted me to say he’d be early for our appointment. I arrived early, too, and through the hotel window I could see him pacing the pavement in a leisurely manner with a phone pressed to his ear, enjoying a conversation.

He was talking to his father. When he breezed in minutes later – 6ft tall, a spring in his step – he smiled in an avuncular sort of way, and told his dad he had to go, that he was headed into a meeting, and that he loved him. Brody and I are here to discuss his latest film, *The French Dispatch*, which follows a group of expatriate journalists and the colourful subjects of their features and profiles. I tell him it must be difficult to sit for an interview without knowing how a reporter will paint you. “I believe that you’re listening, and you don’t have your point of view to pitch, and I really appreciate that,” he says, with a shrug. After close to three decades in the film industry, he accepts that speaking to the press is part of his job. Even so, it can be frustrating to “generously give your time and try to share, and then it somehow becomes contorted. It’s not that it’s been edited. It becomes shifted and filtered through all kinds of different points of view. And then, depicted as you. A rendition of you.”

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