

Feature: Top 20 Celebrity Photos of 2019, by Joe Arce of HollywoodChicago.com

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 6, 2020 - 1:57pm

- [10](#) [2]
- [2019](#) [3]
- [25](#) [4]
- [Best](#) [5]
- [Buddy Guy](#) [6]
- [CM Punk](#) [7]
- [Eddie Redmayne](#) [8]
- [Entertainment News](#) [9]
- [Geddy Lee](#) [10]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [11]
- [Jeff Goldblum](#) [12]
- [Joe Arce](#) [13]
- [John Travolta](#) [14]
- [Jon Favreau](#) [15]
- [List](#) [16]
- [Loretta Swit](#) [17]
- [Michael Shannon](#) [18]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [19]
- [Photography](#) [20]
- [Photos](#) [21]
- [Pictures](#) [22]
- [Portraits](#) [23]
- [Rachel Dratch](#) [24]
- [Robert Downey Jr](#) [25]
- [Russ Tamblyn](#) [26]
- [Salmon Rushdie](#) [27]
- [Ten](#) [28]
- [Top 20 2019](#) [29]

CHICAGO – The year 2019 was when everyone, including myself, seemed to struggle to focus. Politics suddenly appeared to be all consuming when we have an administration as George Orwell predicted, trying to convince so many not to believe their own eyes.

“What you are seeing and what you are reading is not happening,” proclaimed the President in July. This eerily echoed Orwell’s warning. “The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears ... it was their final, most essential command.” Meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief was enthusiastically tweeting out images with his head badly photoshopped onto different bodies.

Last year 98 celebrities posed for my lens, and a fashion accessory – both on and off the red carpet – became quickly apparent. A modest poem about that trend ... If you were a fashionable male/One worshipped by the masses/And you posed for my lens last year/You were probably wearing glasses.

Maybe this was more than mere coincidence or a simple fashion statement? Perhaps it was an unconscious call to desperately hold onto our sight and senses. For what is an artist if not the sum of their own unique vision? Proper vision is defined by the ability to sharpen the focus and resist the blurring of our truth.

As we bid farewell to 2019, hopefully I can share some of my own particular vision as I present my Top 20 Celebrity Portraits of 2019. As per every year, the ranking of these portraits are based on a combination of the star power wattage of the subjects, the artistic results and the difficulty of landing the quarry ... especially vying against those budding smart phone celebrity stalkers who may wish to play along at home. Let’s begin!



20. E.G. Daily, Voiceover Artist



E.G. Daily, Singer and Voiceover Artist

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

I don't think I made it past the opening credits of 1983's "Valley Girl" without being instantly smitten by E.G. Daily. Long before she became Hollywood's voiceover golden girl ("Rugrats" as Tommy Pickles, Buttercup of "The Powerpuff Girls" or the voice of "Babe" the Pig), her stunning looks, quirky character roles and unique voice were demanding notice. From her starring role in Rod Stewart's "Young Turks" video (1981), to performing her own song "One Way Love" in the 1985 film "Better Off Dead," to Pee Wee Herman's jilted seductress named Dottie in that same year, E.G. was suddenly everywhere.

Her vocal chops landed her a record deal, with four singles that landed on the dance charts, and musical performances on both "American Bandstand" and "Saturday Night Live" in 1986. In addition, her songs landed on numerous movie soundtracks including "Scarface" and "Thief of Hearts." If there ever was a 1980's triple threat it was E.G. Daily. Her film and television roles are often short, but like the petite actress herself they are always mighty and memorable.

In 2003, Daily appeared as a contestant on NBC's "The Voice," and people were shocked that the voice of Tommy Pickles could sing like a nightingale. I was only surprised she didn't win it all. I remember watching her performance on "American Bandstand," and even back then I swore to a friend that one day she would grace my lens. Last year that dream finally came true. Of all the celebrities I photographed in 2019, she was the only one I was actually nervous to meet and I'm not afraid to "Say It, Say It" (Daily's number one U.S. Dance chart hit in 1986).

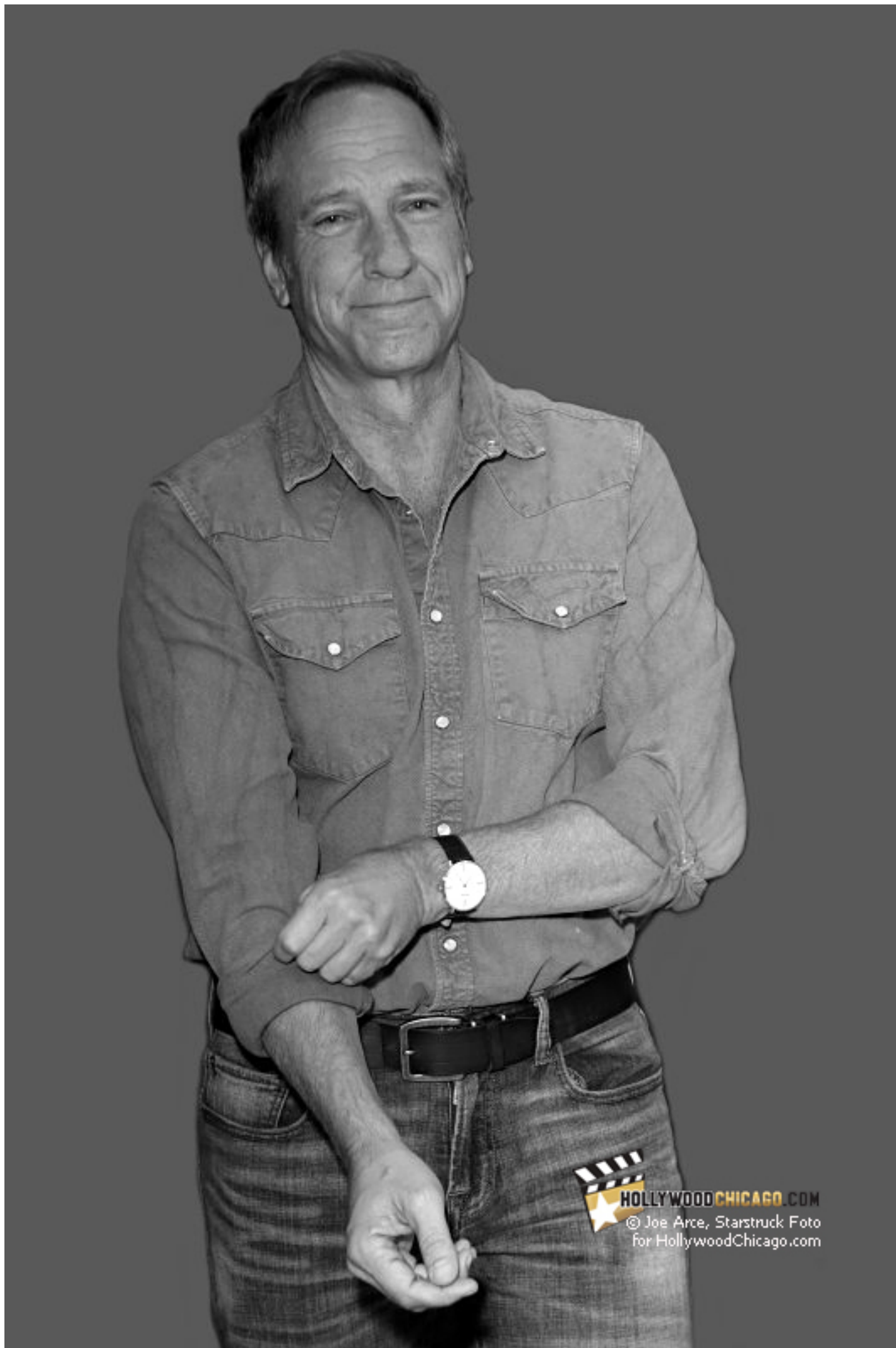
**19. Aisling Franciosi, Actor in THE NIGHTINGALE**

Aisling Franciosi of 'The Nightingale'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Aisling Franciosi, without a doubt, was one of 2019's rising stars. The 26-year-old Irish actress was awarded that honor by both the Berlin Film and The Chicago Film Critic Festivals for her tour de force breakout performance in "The Nightingale," directed by Jennifer Kent. The Australian film, set in 1825, created a firestorm of controversy for its honest and brutal depiction of colonial atrocities, especially violence against women and the native Tasmanian population.

Franciosi's character was an Irish convict in servitude, and sets out on an epic journey of revenge after she and her family are sadistically brutalized ... in scenes for many almost too difficult to view. Her performance as a woman driven over the edge and trying to cope with the resulting PTSD is simply some of the best acting I've seen on screen in years. If Franciosi doesn't secure an Oscar nomination, it will be almost as horrendous a crime as what befalls her character onscreen. The former star of "Legends" and "The Fall," as well as (spoiler alert) Jon Snow's mother on "Game of Thrones," is my pick for rising star of the year as well.

**18. Mike Rowe, TV Host**

TV Host Mike Rowe

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Mike Rowe has never been afraid of a dirty job. As an on-camera apprentice, he's literally castrated a sheep with his teeth, waded through a filthy fecal sewer system, pumped out Porta-Potties and more recently defended the President on FOX News. From 2003 through 2012 the nearly fearless TV host of The Discovery Channel's "Dirty Jobs" and CNN's "Somebody's Gotta Do It" has championed the blue collar working man. Rolling up his sleeves with his humorous-but-practical "get ur done" attitude, the former Eagle Scout and first Critics Choice TV Award winner for Best Reality Show Host has also appeared on Sesame Street accepting Oscar the Grouch's Dirty Job Challenge ... Rowe hilariously was tasked with organizing and counting the Muppet's stinky cheese collection and rotting garbage, before giving a mud bath to Spot (Oscar's pet pig) in triumphant jubilation.

My direction for Rowe was far less dramatic, but just as celebratory. All I needed him to do was roll up his sleeve backstage before my lens, right before his sold-out appearance at North Central College in Naperville, Ill. (he was promoting his book "The Way I Heard It"). That simple metaphor was enough for the perfect shot. Not exactly a dirty job, but for a working photographer it was nice work if you can get it ... at least that's the way I see it.

★ 17. Former Pro Wrestlers CM Punk and AJ Lee



CM Punk (Phil Brooks) with A.J. 'Lee' Mendez

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Photo for HollywoodChicago.com

It seems like the winning move for former pro wrestlers is to transition their act to the big screen ... Dwayne (The Rock) Johnson is currently the highest paid actor in the entertainment industry, for example. Dave Bautista and John Cena have both made successful transitions, and now a new challenger is stepping into the "actors ring." Former WWE Champion and Chicago's own CM Punk (AKA Phil Brooks) has made his onscreen debut with a starring role in the horror film, "The Girl On the Third Floor." His performance was smashing, and he got surprisingly good reviews. He also appeared in another horror film in 2019 called "Rabid."

I photographed Brooks and his wife, former WWE Diva Champion AJ Lee (A.J. Mendez Brooks) just before the premiere of his acting debut film at The 55th Chicago International Film Festival in October. The couple tag teamed my lens with a raw no-holds-barred portrait that hit all the right moves victoriously.

★ 16. Podcaster and Actor Marc Maron

