

The Objective Standard
A Journal for People of Reason



Current Weather
38
forecast...

SLEEPY'S
The Mattress Professionals
VISIT SLEEPY'S.COM

Recent Editions - [Fri.](#) | [Mon.](#) | [Tue.](#) | [Wed.](#) | Thu.

January 31, 2008

Search Archives:

Advertise
Subscribe
Contact Us

The New York Sun Real Estate Property
SEARCH
Powered By
ResidentialNYC.com
From the Real Estate Board of New York
CLICK HERE

Out & About
Email Alerts
Photo Gallery

- HOME
- NEW YORK
- NATIONAL
- FOREIGN
- EDITORIAL
- BLOGS
- BUSINESS
- REAL ESTATE+
- ARTS+
- FOOD & DRINK
- SPORTS
- CALENDAR
- STYLE
- TRAVEL

ARTS&LETTERS

- Comment
- Digg
- del.icio.us
- Email
- Print
- RSS
- XML

Fashion's High-Tech Flâneur

Photography

By [WILLIAM MEYERS](#)
January 31, 2008

You can tell they're from out of town because they walk around with their necks craned looking up at the tops of the tall buildings, and block the sidewalks to take smiley pictures of themselves with teeny digital cameras. The real New Yorkers keep their eyes at street level, in part to see where they're going, and in part to enjoy the real sights: other New Yorkers. One amongst us, however, [Scott Schuman](#), also carries a camera. Mr. Schuman wanted "to share photos of people that I saw on the streets of New York that I thought looked great," so he started posting them to his Web log, [thesartorialist.com](#), where they are now seen by approximately 50,000 people a day. Forty prints made from images originally posted on the Sartorialist are currently on display at the Danziger Projects.

The 40 pigment prints are all 8 1/2 by 12 3/4 inches, and were shot not only on the streets of New York, but in [Paris](#), [Milan](#), [Stockholm](#), and [Beijing](#), cities where people have the money to dress well and an audience to appreciate their efforts. But taste, having a "look," is more important than money. Of course, there are wealthy people in New York who spend little on their clothes, as there are others who spend more than is prudent, but it is probably safe to say that the subject of the picture Mr. Schuman shot on Madison Avenue (2006) is not rich; nonetheless he has clearly taken time with his wardrobe.

A man in his late middle age with a graying beard, he stands with his left hand akimbo and his right hand holding a cigarette to his mouth. The dark watch cap on his head is pulled down to his eyes. He wears a light-brown cardigan sweater with a big breast pocket and has only the top one of its leather buttons fastened. The brown-and-white silk scarf around his neck is tucked into the sweater, but his blue, black, and white plaid shirt is left hanging out of his pants. The pants are light tan chinos with the cuffs rolled up above his ankles; the pants are most conspicuous, though, for the patches sewn on the knees. There is one white patch on the left knee, and two white patches run up the thigh on the right; there are additional red and brown patches on the white patches. He wears white socks, and his brown lace-up shoes are badly scuffed.

Mr. Schuman (b. 1948) studied apparel merchandising and costume construction at Indiana University, and has spent most of his time since then selling high-end fashions. He knows clothes, and says he looks at them as designers do when they look for inspiration. In fact, the Sartorialist has become a major influence on design, another instance of the ways in which photography not only records social realities, but precipitates them. The digital technology of Mr. Schuman's Canon 5D, a professional's camera, and the universal access provided by the Internet enormously speed up the process. I lack the fashion vocabulary to adequately characterize Mr. Schuman's sensibilities (although I can see the man on Madison Avenue

ADVERTISEMENT

Yamaha Artist Services, Inc. 20th Anniversary Concerts

Alexander Kobrin
PERFORMS:
CHOPIN & BEETHOVEN

Monday, Feb. 4, 7:30 pm at
Yamaha Piano Salon
689 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor

Tickets:
\$25 per Concert
Senior citizen and student discounts available

YAMAHA ARTIST SERVICES
YAMAHA PIANOS

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION

ADVERTISEMENT

Online Photography Course
Take a Professional Photography Course Online.
Request Free Info!
www.PhotographyInstituteOnline.com

Lifestyle Photographers
Don't let precious moments slip by! Let us document them for you.
www.araisininthesun.com

Related Sun Articles

- [Patient Care](#)
Jan 24, 2008
- [Natural Feeling](#)
Jan 3, 2008
- [The Other City of Lights](#)
Dec 27, 2007
- [The Gift of Inspiration](#)
Dec 13, 2007
- [A Belief in Beauty](#)
Dec 13, 2007

Related Topics

[Photography](#)
powered by

NEW YORK SUN
Real Estate Property
SEARCH
Click Here

Online Extras

About
By Amanda Gordon
Out & About
SOCIETY | Dispatches from the New York party circuit.

CONTINENTAL.COM.
SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD TO BE FAST AND EASY.

Make [continental.com](#) your one-stop travel center.

'Outrage' at Plan To Merge Insurers
ON HEALTH | The mayor criticizes a plan to merge two major health insurers into one for-profit entity.



SEARCH FOR FLIGHTS

From:

To:

Depart:

Return:

[continental.com](#)

has made himself quite rakish on limited means), but his photographs have interest qua photographs.

Mr. Schuman is a street photographer, a high-tech flâneur, whose images stick to a relatively simple format. His subjects are almost all shot standing in a public space. Unlike those of most street photographers, his subjects are not caught unawares but are posed; they look at the camera. Since he shoots in color he prefers a hazy sun that doesn't hide details in shadows. More of his subjects are female than male, most are young and pretty, but not all, and they are of different ethnicities and cultures — a black-hat Chasid in New York and two Muslim girls in burqas and identical white outfits in Stockholm. Within his rigid format, however, he achieves a fair amount of variety, because the clothes are varied, ambiances are varied, and personalities are varied.

In conventional fashion photography, the subjects are professional models who serve merely as armatures for the clothes they wear, manikins who are assigned the outfits in which they pose. But the Sartorialist's subjects have chosen their own outfits, and if the tailors' admonition that "clothes make the man" is true, we are curious to see what these people have made of themselves. We read the clothes as a gloss on who they are. We know from Mr. Schuman's brief interviews with them that they have conscientiously dressed themselves up the way they have, so this is not unfair.

The woman with her hair dyed bright red, rouge spots on her cheeks, and exaggerated Cupid's bow lips wears an enormous orange fur collar over her silver coat (2006). The man in London with a wide-brimmed fedora has set it on his head at a debonair angle (2006). The man in Bryant Park has taken pains with his handkerchief so that it seems to blossom from his breast pocket (2007). A young girl in Paris, maybe on the way to her lycée, has a black wool cap pulled over her head, a black coat, a black scarf wrapped around her face, black gloves, a black dress and rubber boots, but gray woolen stockings (2007).

How much of this is narcissistic vanity and how much creative play? The Sartorialist treats his subjects with the respect urban pedestrians ordinarily accord each other. And, as Mark Twain quipped, "Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society."

wmmeyers@nysun.com

Until February 23 (521 W. 26th St., between Tenth and Eleventh avenues, 212-629-6778).



This Week in New York Business

BUSINESS | A calendar of the week's key business-related events.

Comment on this article

Name:

Email Address:

Email me if someone replies to my comment

Title of Comments:

Comments:

Note: Comments are screened, and in some cases edited, before posting. We reserve the right to reject anything we find objectionable.

[Click here to see the top 25 recent comments.](#)

The Sun

105 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

© 2007 The New York Sun, One SL, LLC. All rights reserved.
Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#)