



Craig's' List

I approach Craig's imagery with a good portion of formal tolerance. That isn't in anyway an attempt to open up or enter a dialogue with his pictures looking for a side exit; I simply find it necessary in order to see the paradoxical qualities inherent in the formalities of his technique.

There seems to be a rather predatorial approach to the way he advances on some of his subjects while at other times, (and these are the moments when he seems most serendipitous and hence engaging for this viewer), he stumbles upon a moment that creates fortuitous content and utilizes the cropping tool in photo-shop to make it seem intentional. That bite is what he gets for sending me these images in bundles of 10s and 20s (like an novice wall street drug dealing above the Inwood area trying to launder his purse), each no smaller than 4000 to 6000KB and on my 2003 Dell Inspiron with at best 2GB of memory, he had the audacity to complain about the limited email capacity of my yahoo account. See what he sent when invited to submit a "Statement" of his activities.

Make no mistake, this guy is talented and caresses my sensibilities and exposes my desires and prejudices quite well. In fact I think it is in light of his rogue modus operandi that he exploits some hysterical, horrifying, titillating, moving and exasperating jpegs that I've ever seen from a dude with a job in such a monolithic iconoclastic crib on 5th Avenue.

Coincidentally as in the case with the Austrian artist Deborah Sengl, who was featured in the prior edition of R-Town *Extended* here last week in The New York Optimist, issues of camouflage and adornment in the attempt to disguise and metamorphosis run conspicuously parallel to Craig's Metropolis. Included or rather extracted from the 1000s of pics sent are what I would describe as Delinquent heroes of urban fairytales, loiterers of the fairgrounds, side-job, self endorsed actors/models, some impressive guerilla dancers and a few handicapped players with more to them than seemingly apparent.

For instance, just try towing your boy friend in a manual wheel chair while you're in your motorized edition along 8th Avenue enroute to apply for another extension of MediCade benefits. Or the image where I am reminded of what it's like to start the day making sure it ends having enough to get dinner yet making sure it begins *with the right of passage for every New Yorker*, a 16oz cup of coffee with lots of sugar in tow only to drop it because you're coming out of the shelter and you can't keep your belongings there so they come too. These are just a few images of courage and insistence running rampant in this Craig's town.

An interesting irony in Craig's pics is that he really is attracted to some of his subjects who are sheath in tattoos and just happened to be spotted hanging out at a "hot spot" or are found in "vogue" in the park seemingly "Camera Craig" ready. Yet and perhaps this is what is most interesting for me, is that the object of his craving at times ends up the target of his derision seemingly unbeknownst to himself. It's as if he is uncovering spies among us and the unveiling of their cover may prove fatal in this hyperbole of cool. Yet these are cute girls and

I myself am pleased that these spies's were dispatched from Middle America and points east if for nothing else but to make their immediate radius more tolerable in this great city.

Not all fall in scorn through the view finder of his camera. Take for instance the images of the dance troupe at the base of the (?) bridge that imbues such a sense of camaraderie and conviction it can only stem from the eye and sensitivity of Craig's respect for dance as a viable art form and the wealth of the region to produce such power and the inspiration to perform.

At the end of the day, I confess (like a decadent necessity) that I can't get enough of his stuff that goes well beyond some of the *Bubble Gum Chick Licking Lollie Pop* imagery that appears in this article. I mean this Princeton grad has a good job, is married and cares for his son. And in the course of his gaining sustenance for his spiritual survival we are the plenty and the fortunate for his aspirations.

I like Craig's NY a lot. I'm from here and this is where I met him when he was in real estate some 20 years ago. Its big and so full of "US" that even regions seemingly outside it's borders carry the torch in the attempt to belong, escape, disguise, acquire and re-invent and is so clearly illustrated and effervescent in Mr. Feder's portrayals.

Sometimes Craig you surprise me at other times you annoy me and once in awhile you make me proud to be a New Yorker in Wien.

Alexander Viscio



PS: And just for the record, I do have a pair of vintage Puma sneakers and use each day a splash from my \$28. 100ml. bottle of Origin facial moisturizer which as punishment is confiscated at JFK each time I travel.