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Pocket Square - Aaron Britt Archive

Bloggers celebrate chic looks on street

Aaron Britt Sunday, April 4, 2010

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Gautam Sodera / The Avant-Gardist The Avant-Gardist A photo from Gautam Sodera's blog captures a USF law student looking stylish on the 5 bus.

Ask any stylephile about his Internet perambulations and invariably he'll tell you he looks at the Sartorialist.

Though some maintain that the street-style snaps of photographer and blogger Scott Schuman are cherry-picked from a small revolving cast of the couture cognoscenti, the impact the Sartorialist has had on the fashion world is unquestionable: a regular GQ photo gig, a book of his work published, not to mention street-style shutterbugs racing to their laptops in droves.

I had a beer with Schuman last October when he came to town, and he described his inspiration thusly: "I try to take beautiful portraits in which the subjects happen to be well dressed."

He called himself an enthusiast and a romantic who tries "to shoot people in the romantic way that I see them, to record what has seduced me about them in that moment."

Street fashion photography is hardly new - you might say the Seeberger brothers kicked things off in French beach towns at the turn of the 20th century - but few formats seem to lend themselves so readily to the rapacious documenting of and commentary on the current fashion scene.

San Francisco's techie terrain has proved fertile ground for street-style blogs. Perhaps the most recent is Gautam Sodera, who gave up a real estate gig to blog full time at the Avant-Gardist and aid fashion-strapped gents with his styling service Mem Fashion.

The Avant-Gardist launched on Jan. 1, and Sodera claims the Sartorialist as his inspiration.

"He's really image-focused, and such a phenomenal photographer. There's not one blog

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with that level of quality out there," Sodera said.

Though he knows what he likes when spotting well-dressed men on the street - "clean-cut is what I'm generally attracted to" - Sodera said he doesn't rely on his eye alone, noting he's had to learn to be a photographer. **Mai Le** lays claim to the city's longest-running street style site - **Fashionist** started in 2007 - and her archives warrant a proper perusal. Her site "was born out of the idea of asking people why they're wearing what they are," she told me on a recent evening at Ritual Roasters.

"I have a quirky aesthetic that walks the line between tacky and not tacky," she elaborated, saying that the choice of whether to ask a person if she can take their photo "is a quick decision. It's really whatever catches my eye."

How best to wind up on her site, lads? "I always compliment men who wear clothes that fit them," she said. "That and color. I like men who aren't afraid of color. Essentially I'm looking for people who make an effort, who look like they thought about what they would wear today."

JT Paradox and **Dyanna Pure** (*noms de blog, bien sur*) of the **SF Style** differ from Le on that point. "We don't shoot people who look like they woke up and decided they wanted to have their photo taken," Pure told me. Paradox started the SF Style in 2008 in hopes of documenting the daily diversity and style of San Franciscans.

Though they show more women than men, they dedicate a post to the gents each Monday - "Man Morsel Monday" - and if you can get past the confectionary nomenclature, it's a good resource for men seeking sartorial inspiration. The fellows featured range from slim-suited mad men to the latest in hipster chic.

"I love the idea that guys will look at the site and think, 'Oh, so that's what a cute guy looks like' and then copy them," Pure said.

Paradox and Pure's quick tips for catching their eyes: "the fit of the clothes; overall grooming and bearing; originality."

Street style blogs

Fashionist: www.fashioni.st.

The Avant-Gardist: www.theavant-gardist.com.

The SF Style: www.thesfstyle.com.

The Sartorialist: www.thesartorialist.blogspot.com

New York Style: www.misttermort.com.

Cycle-centric style: www.copenhagencyclechic.com.

Sign up for Aaron Britt's RSS feed or e-mail him at style@sfgchronicle.com.

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From Around The Web:

- Front Row: The Sartorialist Blog Is a Victim of Knockoffs
03/31/2010 - nytimes.com
- Virtual Bromance: Best Male Bloggers
04/01/2010 - vivanista.com
- Chris Kidd added a discussion
04/01/2010 - fashionindustrynetwork.com
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