

New Yorkers

New Yorkers. There are millions of them. They represent different races, religions and ethnicities, speak more than 800 languages and recognize such diverse cultural values. It's amazing that more than a third of New York City residents – myself included – were foreign born. I meet many of them every day, living in this city that has been mine for many years now. I know few of them personally, I only meet some of them, I come across others. I try to know them, their lives and what they do through my different relationships with them, not just professional ones. I also learn about them through literary descriptions, historical works, paintings, films and photographs. Especially, the photographs that represent them constitute for me, as a photographer, very valuable cognitive material.

I will cite a few photographs that particularly touched me, among many others, widely known and recognized in particular for a unique excellence of genre: "Newsboys" by Hine from his sociological series, "Kate Moss" from Mario Sorrenti's advertisement for Calvin Klein, "Child with a Toy Hand Grenade in Central Park", based on the author's research by Diana Arbus, and "Killer Joe Piro" by Avedon from his portraits.

What are these photographs for me? They are above all traces of reality, testimonies of a unique moment in the existence of their characters: Hine's "boys", Sorrenti's "model", Arbus's "child" or Avedon's "killer". Then they "speak" of the resemblance of real beings and their images and finally – what is so important to me – they acquire a symbolic meaning, in the order of the examples given above: opposition to child labor, a program introduced in America in the 19th century, the contemporary Western concept of beauty and the universal and timeless need to learn about human behavior. In other words, still using the same examples, these 'photographs' finally acquire various documentary and artistic values, thanks to the work, skills and talents of their authors, the famous ones, such as those mentioned above. In addition, it is worth mentioning other photographs depicting New Yorkers, made by equally famous authors such as: Stieglitz, Serrano, Leibovitz, Goldin and so on. There are also thousands of other photographers, lesser known or completely unknown, including amateurs who have made millions of photos of various values, mainly documentaries. Ultimately, these photographs inspire me to an existential reflection: what remains of them and indirectly what remains of humans and all their works.

And now in New York in the mid-20s, these photographs – thinking of all that I have discovered, that has moved me, that has educated me – inspire me and help me to some extent in my photographic work on my series devoted to New Yorkers. What will be the value of my photographs and their destiny?

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