



Picture Perfect

There's no-one who knows street-style photography quite like Scott Schuman, the man behind one of the world's most well-loved blogs, *The Sartorialist*. We sat down with him to get the insider view on what goes into composing his beautiful pictures of stylish everyday life.

By Yi-Hwa Hanna

These days, street-style fashion photographers can be found a dime a dozen. In fact, many blogs you'll see portraying "Outfits of the Day" don't even have a human photographer behind them, with the blogger in question using a tripod, remote and a trusty wall to nail that perfect shot of her daily duds. But not Scott Schuman—see, the thing about Scott is that it's not about him, nor the more obvious aspects like where a piece is from. Instead, his focus is on the details. That's how his blog—a global sensation that has seen him shoot groundbreaking campaigns, with a published anthology of his images sold worldwide and his work housed in the permanent

collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography—first began: Real people who dressed in a way that caught his eye, to start a dialogue about fashion and its relationship to daily life. We caught up with the master of street style photography at the most recent edition of Fashion Forward Dubai to find out what makes him click...

WH: To you, what makes a beautiful photograph?

SS: Cameras are so good nowadays that people have to do such little work to take a good photograph. And it's not wrong, but people often just want to capture the moment

rather than take a beautiful picture. You have to look at the light, composition... but then again, a good photo depends on what it means to you as well. I'm self-taught: I didn't even pick up a camera until I was 32. I challenged myself to shoot fashion the way I feel about it, which is why I tried the angles that I did. If what I noticed about an outfit was the back, I'd shoot it from the back. It took me a while to capture what I wanted to say with each one. Ask yourself: Why do you want to shoot that particular thing?

WH: Your subjects all seem to tell a story. How do you give more life to your photos?
SS: Many fashion bloggers have

about six poses, like "walking in a field" or "looking down." You don't have to show a whole look, or be so literal: Try zooming in! To me, the clothes are only a third of what a photo should be; there's also the light, and the person. It's balancing them. I'm always surprised when people take nine shots of one look—if you can't get it right in one shot... you have to try and take what's actually a good picture, otherwise it's just a report of what that person is wearing.

WH: Do trends matter?

SS: I don't go to all of the shows, but I go to a lot of them—I'm

Tried and tested

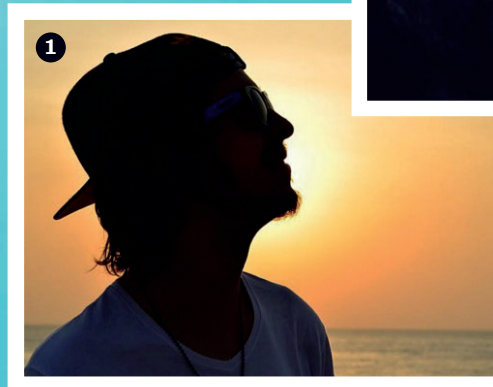
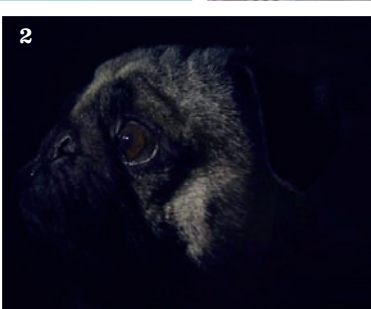
The *WHME* team took Scott's tips to heart—or to our cameras—to help take our Instagram to the next level:

Yi-Hwa Hanna, Editor-in-Chief, @yihwahanna

(1) Cloudy weather is a rarity in Dubai, but moody skies make for amazing light and drama. (2) My friend Christina Luciw took this one of me—the rest of the outfit was beautiful, but it was really all about the shoes. (3) Like Scott, I like travelling off the beaten track. This guy was sat outside a museum in Marrakech in Morocco, and really told, or started a story.

Thais Kelly, Editorial Assistant, @thaiskelly

(1) Scott emphasised how we should use lighting to not just take a picture, but to capture a moment of happiness. Voila! (2) This shot isn't about what I wore, per se, but what my outfit represents: NYC on a brisk winter's afternoon. (3) Going for drama, here I played with lighting and used my pug, Elvis, as my model.



a lot of things with my phone at times. I use Photoshop, a good Canon camera with a 50 lens (it's not too narrow and it's how the eye sees), so what I find, maybe my best piece of advice, would be [to be flexible]: The more dependent you are on certain factors, the harder it is for you to make it work.

WH: What have been some of your favourite places to shoot in so far, and where else is hopefully on the cards?

SS: I love shooting in Milan, Italy in general—it's great, and beautiful, the epitome of the best of everything: Great food, design, classical music, hotels... and that's one element. But at the same time if I was shooting just that it would be totally boring. This time last year I spent two weeks shooting in India, really off the beaten track. I went to Milan right after, and it was great to go from somewhere crazy like India to somewhere serene like Milan. The next places I want to shoot...I want to go to Mongolia, and spend more time in Africa, and in India.

Those are all very difficult places to be in—they're not particularly luxurious—but I think that's also what makes it so great. People really live outdoors, guys get their hair cut outdoors... That's what I'm so happy about with [my new book]: The first one was just Paris, Milan, and where people would pay me to go. But once I made enough money, I could start going to where I wanted to go. I always wanted to have a book that had that kind of mix. The dream is always going to be going to places like [Dubai], or Stockholm or Rio, places that are either becoming very style conscious and have great style, but also places like India where people can live very simply but still with great, unique style. I don't necessarily think that photographs tell a story, but more that they start one for each individual. That's what fun about it: If you showed 100 people the same photo, you'd have 90 different stories. That's what I love about sharing a great image: What you see might be totally different from what someone else sees. ■

very aware of what's happening in fashion, but it never enters into when I'm shooting. I think if anything, if something is already trendy, then it's kind of past trendy, and that's never a factor when I'm shooting. In my next book, there are shots from Peru to Dubai. The key is looking for inspiration and looking for something new. I still wear things that are 10 years old, and I personally never care about being on-trend. I think that's one thing that continues to separate me from other street-style blogs. Many people just shoot things that are pre-validated or just

designer pieces, and that's so boring. It's about having a unique voice and saying: "This is what I want to wear."

WH: What are your thoughts on the style and fashion scene in Dubai?

SS: I've only been here twice, but I think there's definitely elements of [fresh, emerging fashion talent]. Here, it really challenges me because it's different: The way I look at things in Europe is so different from here. At first, I thought "Why are the girls here so dressed up in the middle of the day," but the life here is just

different. There's such a sense here of wanting the best, and that really comes up in the clothes: It's a really successful place and they're really riding the energy of growth.

WH: What's your go-to equipment and editing tool?

SS: I'm very "not technical", and I actually don't do a lot of post production. I like having some wrinkles in there! I really try to get it right straight from the camera so I don't have to do a lot to a photograph. Also, the reality of working online is that you want to turn images around quickly. I also wind up shooting