Cultural Daily

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What caught my eye of two street characters

Maurice Amiel · Wednesday, May 22nd, 2019

“Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your generous donation …” — your friendly sidewalk sweeper

P. by name is an old acquaintance through frequent sidewalk encounters exchanging banter for a donation, and now posing for a portrait, seated in front of a well-trafficked book store entrance.

At Christmas, he will bring his own seat, placing it strategically facing the street, he will have a longer beard and wear the usual red outfit, ringing a bell … generally accepted and well rewarded in the spirit of the season.

His street sweeping role is probably temporary, one of his many antics to stage the charity asking.

What has caught my eye, in carefully examining the photograph, is the fact that the sign is used in lieu of the usual cup held up to collect the charity; that cup can be seen on the bench tucked by his side as if it had returned to being an ordinary liquid holding cup, not a beggar’s charity collecting instrument.

The man in the aviator sun glasses, blue sweater and pink pants, checking the traffic.

The man in the aviator sunglasses, blue sweater and pink pants checking the traffic

Seated at a table in an exterior shallow alcove of the local fast food joint, the blue and pink outfit of the fellow cannot but attract the attention of passers-by, across the driveway leading to the car order window.

Now draw an imaginary line going from the heart shaped coffee ad above the man’s white cap, to the car tail light, then to the pregnant lady hip-hugging red sweater and you have a *suggested triangle* overlapping the square restaurant window, itself referencing the square frame of the image.

The French photographer Doisneau, known for his famous photograph, “Le baiser de l’Hôtel de ville,” used to claim that when a geometric structure is suggested in a photo, it is bound to catch one’s eye.

End words

Note how the bright red spots of the car tail light and of the pregnant lady's hip hugging sweater can, alternatively, be combined with the man's white cap to form a tighter triangular grouping, *bringing more "visual grist" to the viewer's eye and to his/her sense of being part of the scene!*

Credit all images to Maurice Amiel

Permission to take and publish the feature image was verbally granted by P.

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