40 SHELLY SILVER Excerpts from 'What I'm Looking For'



This is the first photo I take – or maybe it's this one.

Anyway, I can start here, with a small boy waiting at a stoplicht. I can almost feel the winter air on his skin. I have a preoccupation, an obsession, with time. I want to stop time. We all do.





I take photos of strangers I see on the street, and strangers who contact me through the Internet. What I'm looking for... I want to see each detail, each wrinkle, each line.





Online, My profile is '100th of a second.'

I WRITE:

I'm looking for people who would like to be photographed in public revealing something of themselves – physical or otherwise. No other relationship will take place outside of being photographed.

He is the first one who answers. He's the first one.

We meet at Starbucks, he signs a release form, we order nothing.

I photograph him, but I don't know what he's doing here; what he wants to show me.

I feel lost. I go home. I keep looking.

HE WRITES, but he doesn't want to meet. SHE WRITES: I want to meet you. I want you to photograph me naked, playing pool. I wait for her at Starbucks. She never arrives; she stands me up. I want control.

To see the same movement repeated over and over. I want time to be liquid, flowing forward and back. Then to stop.

So I can see between these gaps to what's missing. To what I'm looking for

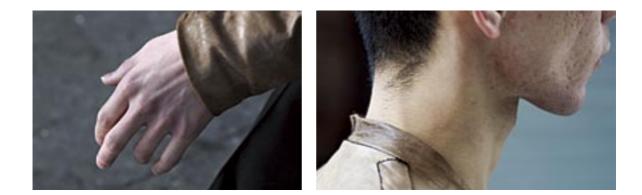
HE WRITES from London: I saw your profile and found it very inspiring. The idea of exposing something, whatever that means, in public, very much intrigues me.

HE WRITES: I think you have in mind what I have in mind.

He calls me 'his director.' He wants me to tell him what to do. I want him to show me what he *wants* me to see.

We struggle. He sends me these.

Like a boy playing with a small headstrong dog. Not dangerous, just unruly. I can't show you the rest.



HE WRITES again from London: You've fallen a bit quiet over there. Not to complain, but you must entertain your model. He sends me pictures, I can't show you. Or, perhaps I can...

We meet again at Starbucks. This time he's wearing a black wool coat. We talk about fantasy. He says he has none. He says he has something to tell me, but he can't tell me yet.

HE WRITES: Meet me at the northwest corner of Worth and Church Street at 10:25 pm.

HE WRITES:

You have to trust me, if you're expecting me to trust you, a strange 46 year old woman met on the Internet, who won't even tell me her goddamn name, let alone her phone number.

It's 7 degrees out, and snowing. He's wearing only socks and underwear. He says, 'The brave are in front of the camera, the cowards, behind it.'

A man shouts from the parking lot: 'Hey lady! Take the picture already!' Last night he explodes for me. I'm sorry, this is all I can show you. How was he able to capture this liquid moment, now frozen. A culmination of desire, precision and luck. What I'm looking for.... I want to see every detail, every hair, every line.

