

# **The Bronx**

It was suggested to me that I show work in "Fashion Moda Museum" that would be related to the neighborhood. Fashion Moda is located at 2803 Third Avenue in the South Bronx. I decided to go there everyday, from 2 pm to 5 pm, for an undetermined number of days. I waited for men and women, whom I didn't know, to come in. I asked certain of them to take me to a place of their choice, wherever they wanted, in the Bronx. I took a picture of them in this environment which has special significance in their lives. I wrote a text describing the situation. From Thursday November 6 to Friday November 14, 1980, when I decided to conclude the work, eight people participated.

The pictures and commentaries are an account of what happened. The day before the opening, I hung the photos and the texts on the wall. That night, an unexpected and providential collaborator broke into the gallery and covered every possible surface with graffiti.

APOL  
SONIX



Thursday November 6 at 2 pm I ask William Scott, 15 years old, who frequents Fashion Moda, to take me any place he would like in the Bronx. He accepts. We walk for 20 minutes and arrive at Yankee Stadium on River Avenue. He likes the place because there is usually lots of excitement there, like 50,000 people saying Boo. While I take his picture in front of the Stadium, he yawns several times. He becomes more involved when I finish photographing him. We speak of baseball, the Indianapolis Racetrack, funny cars and stock cars. He says he noticed that the French people love to drive. When we separate at 3 pm, he shakes my hand and kisses me on the cheek. He says I'm his pal.

~~THANKS~~  
WILLIAM





Thursday November 13 at 2:15 pm two men come into Fashion Moda. I ask both of them to take me wherever they want in the Bronx. They immediately accept. Bob, 27 years old, tells me: "If you really want to get my personality, let's go to any Bank in the Bronx. I used to have a bank account. I would like another one, to be married, so my wife wouldn't have to feel less than she really is. She could always be the woman she wants to be. I'll have a bank account. I'll go to the University. That's me. I can do it. Whatever a normal man does. I'll do it twice." While we walk in the direction of the Chase Manhattan on East 149 and Courtland Avenue, I ask him what he does. He simulates boxing. I ask him if he wants to be a boxer. He says he wants to be God. He knows a boxer that can be decent when he wants and vicious when he wants. ..."This man physically stands out. Emotionally when you are around him, you can feel his heart. He is a little more than a man" As we walk he turns around to see if someone is following him. He says he's paranoid. We arrive at the bank and for one picture he pretends to write a check. He make his friend to take a picture of me sitting on his lap. At 3:30 pm we separate. He says: "I have spoken. Now I'll have to live up because I told you. I'll be better than them. I'll have as good area as they do. I want you to come back to see. It is reality, there is no lying involved. Everything we say we can do.





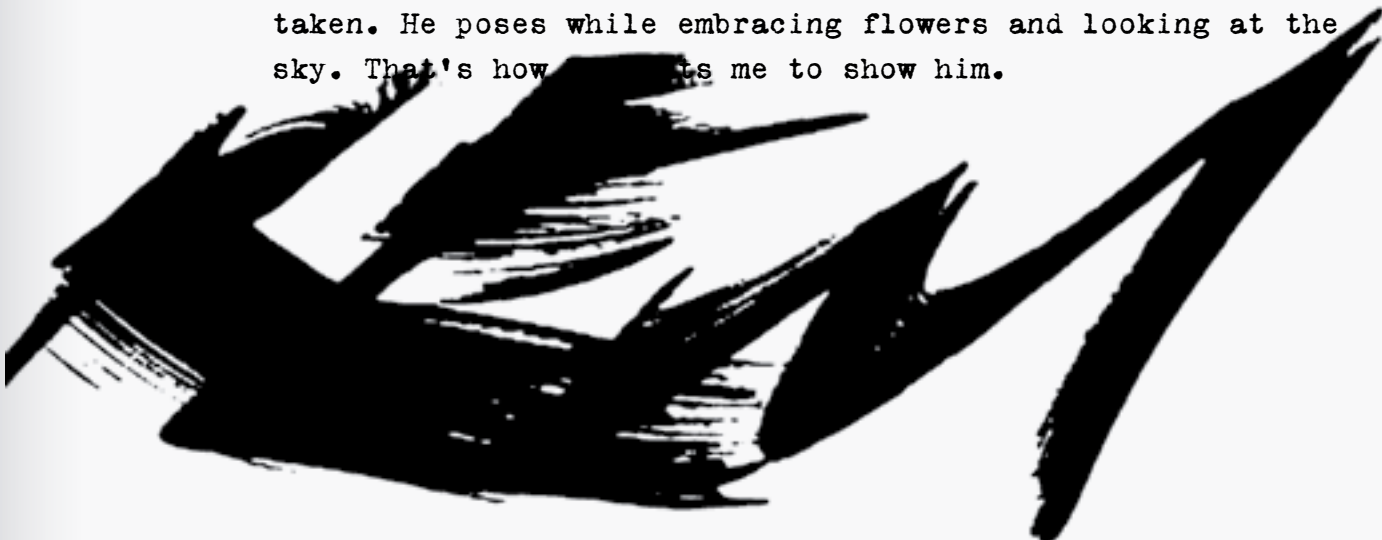
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ROSE TOP SHAX

Friday November 7 at 2:15 pm a man come into Fashion Moda. I ask him to take me to a place, in the Bronx, that he hates or likes. He replies he like love better than hate. If he hates a place, he doesn't want to go there. He would also prefer to do it tomorrow; so that he can dress up and make a list of the places he'd like to go to. He says: « there are a lot of places that I love. » He has a problem deciding where he'd like to take me. After ten minutes thought he proposes: "Botanical Garden" I agree. He wants to ask the opinion of the two women and the man who are at Fashion Moda. He says: "is it a good choice? Would you do this?" The woman says: "that's dynamite!" "It is a good pick" says the man. At 2:30 pm we go. In the street he stops 3 men and 1 woman to tell them the story and ask them about his choice. He exclaims: "See how they liked it! It is better than Tankee Stadium where this guy took you yesterday." We take a cab. He wants to know if I am trying to capture emotions. He tells me his name is David and he is 28 years old. He spent 27 years in the Bronx. He says he works with his brother and they shampoo rage. He even did a job for Joanne Woodward, he did the floor of her new studio. "She is a very nice person!" We arrive at the Botanical Gardens. He runs. I can hardly keep up with him. He exclaims: "Look at the trees how green and beautiful Every flower you can think of!" He keeps repeating "Look" and "Wait to see." He finds a free entrance to the green house. He still runs and discovers the places where he wants to have his picture taken. He poses while embracing flowers and looking at the sky. That's how is me to show him.





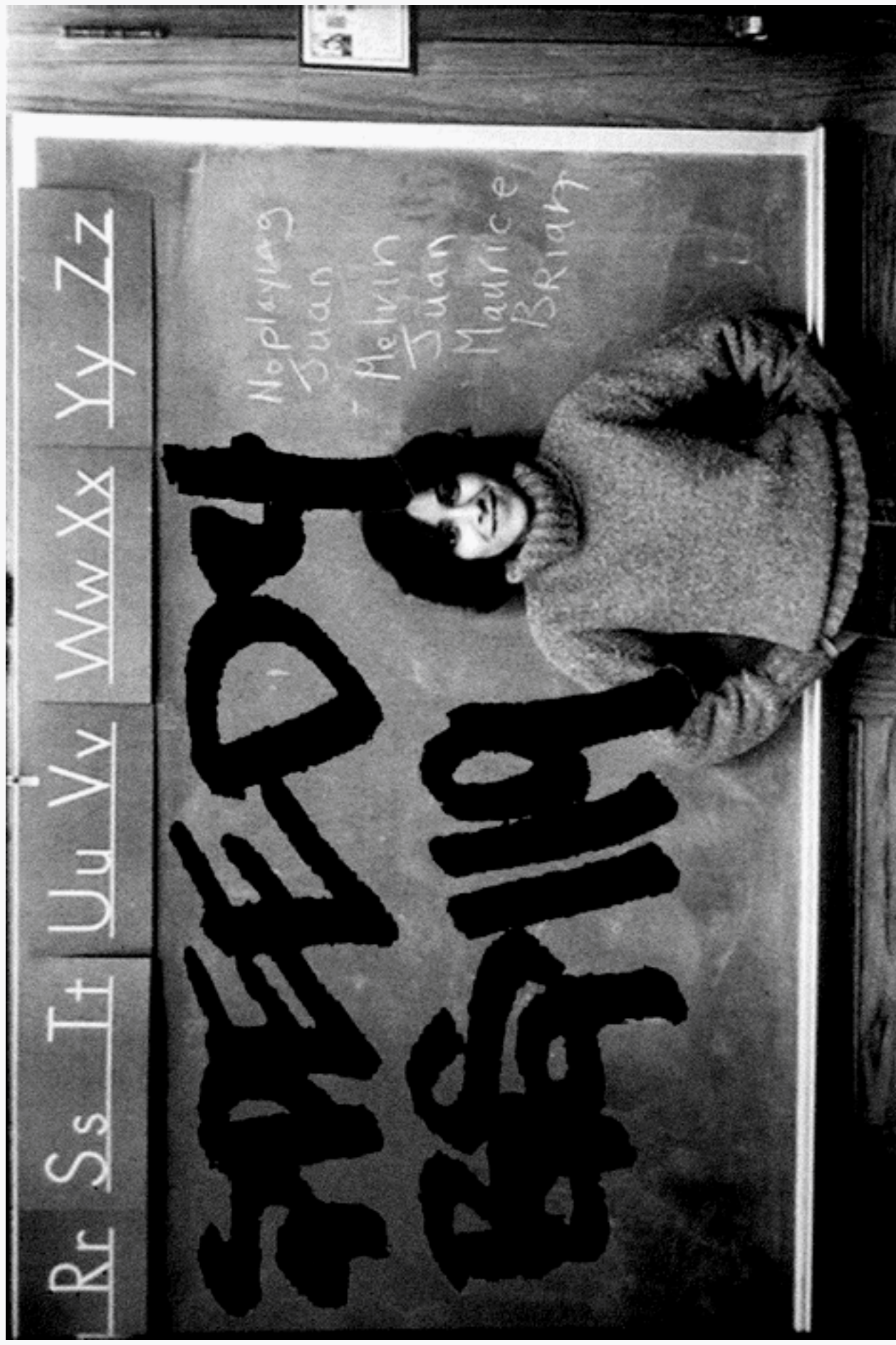


Wednesday November 12 at 2:30 pm I ask Maryanne Nieves, 17 years old, who frequents Fashion Moda, to take me to a place of her choice in the Bronx. She immediately accepts. She says she is going to take me to her grammar school. Since she graduated, 4 years ago, she has not been back. After 5 minutes walk we arrive at the "Immaculate Conception" on 151 street and Melrose Avenue. We go to the office of the secretary of the principal. The secretary says: "Your face is familiar." Maryanne says her name. The secretary asks about her mother. They exchange a few words. We are allowed to take pictures in the classroom. Maryanne seems moved. She didn't expect the same faces to be there but they were. She remembers she used to like to jump rope and that she cried on her first day of school. She says: "my highlight of going to school was when I got my graduation ring. It was a step up in life." She also shows me the church of the "Immaculate Conception", the exact spot where she was baptized and the confessional she used to go to. We separate. She smiles.

**FASHION MODA**

*APR 1992*







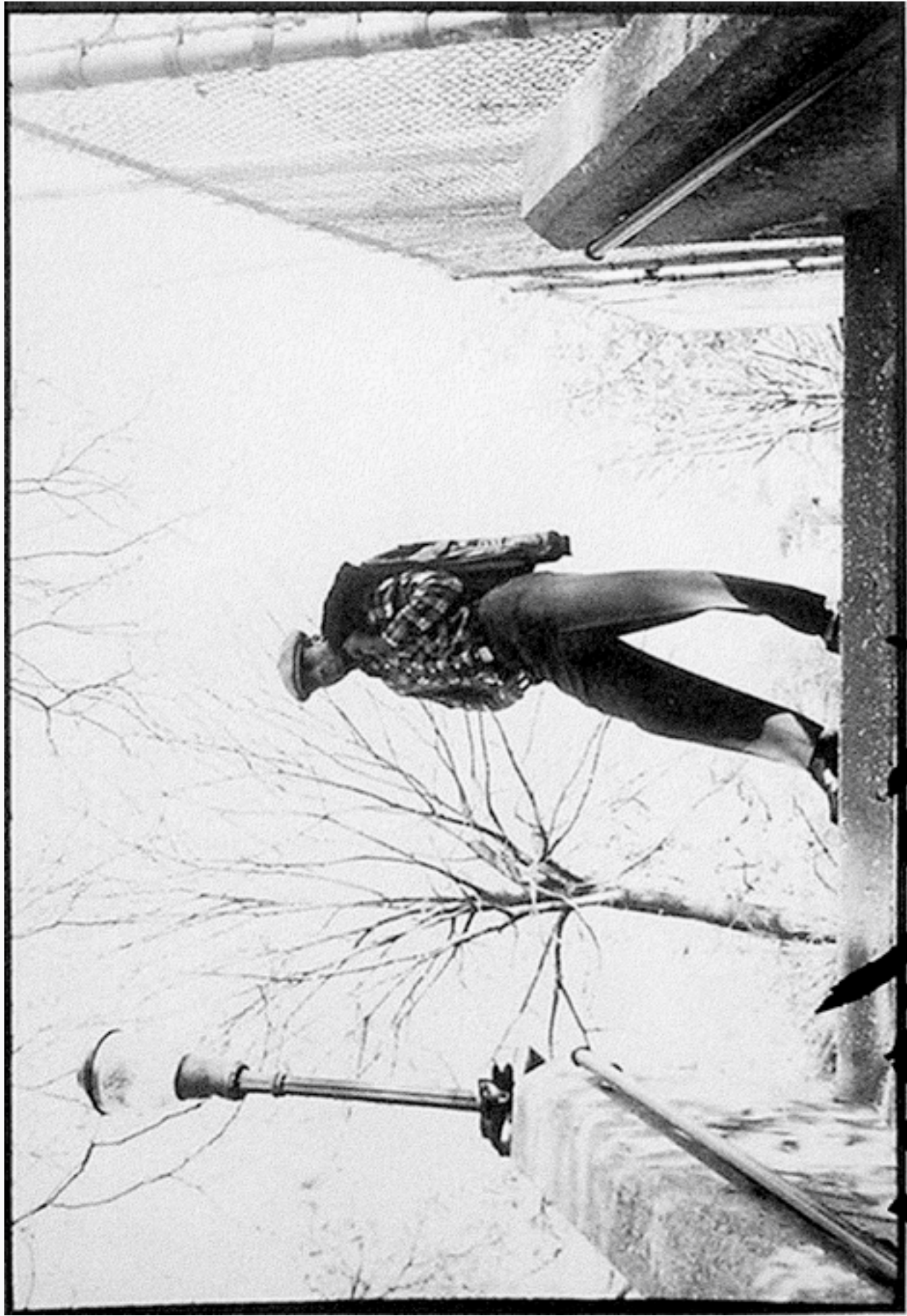
Thursday November 13 at 2:15 pm two men come into Fashion Moda. I ask both of them to take me wherever they want in the Bronx. They immediately accept. Curtia Hayes, 25 years old, is a hair stylist. He says he would have been a model but he is a little too short. He gives me his address: 2425 Williamsbridge Road ... and his telephone number. He decides to take me to Francigo Park on East 133 and Grand Concourses. He says: "This is a place where I feel almost to nature." He would have liked to have his picture taken under a weeping willow tree but there is none. He wants me to take a picture of him from a low angle, looking up, so that he can feel he is on the top of the world. I do it. For another picture, he makes a peace sign. The encounter is very friendly and sans. It 3:30 pm we separate. He'll come to see the pleasure.

2000

2000

2000

1954



Thursday November 13 at 4 pm a man comes into Fashion moda.  
I ask him to take me wherever he wants in the Bronx. He accepts  
and says « Come on. » We take the bus n° 26. His name is William.  
He is 37 years old. I ask him what he does. He answers: "this  
and that." He adds: "I'm on a methadone program. We have  
free drugs in this country." I ask him where he takes me. He  
says "the address was 1530 Milford Place. It is the house where  
I was born and where I lived for 22 years. Then I went away.  
I went to jail. For 7 years. For armed robbery with a toy gun."  
His mother stayed in the house until the destruction of the  
building in 1971. He says: "this destruction is like a plague,  
one infection from one building to another. You'll be surprised.  
It looks like a country after a war." He says that when a  
white person comes to the neighborhood, it is either a policeman,  
a dope peddler or it is a mistake. On the way he shows me  
Charlotte Street where President Carter visited. We arrive at  
a destroyed and deserted area. He says: "This is my block."  
He stands up in front of the window of an empty building and  
says: "this was my living room." He takes the opportunity to  
pay a visit. I wait outside. At 5:30 pm he takes me back to  
the nearest subway station. He says: "Can you do me a favor."  
I help him out.

WILLIAM





Tuesday November 11 at 4:30 pm three women com into Fashion Moda. I ask on of them to take me wherever she wants in the Bronx. She thinks about it for five minutes, and then accepts. Her name Is Lill. She is 33 years old. She says she can take me to the land that the pope blessed when he came to the Bronx in 1979. The land is situated on Morris Avenue. She says she doesn't like the Bronx because she suffered to much there. But she likes this land... "The pope blessed it and they are going to build new buildings for people to live "little more decently." I take pictures of her. She asks me if another I could photograph her posing in seductive attitudes and clothes. She says she'll come to see the pictures and will try to find out more information about the land. She asks me if I'd like to warm up a few minutes with her in the waiting room of the nearby hospital. I decide not to go. We shake hands.

10/19/79  
BQ/19  
ATK/19



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Friday November 14 at 2 pm a woman comes into Fashion Moda. I ask her to take me wherever she wants in the Bronx. She readily accepts. Her name is Sahara. She is 22 years old and has spent her last 10 years in the Bronx. She wants to take me to a bridge on 161 street and Eagle avenue. We ride the bus. She says she remembers the Bronx before it was destroyed, when everything was up. She says she designs clothes but now she is disenchanted with this. "It is a competitive and racist field." We got off the bus and cross a destroyed area. She shown me an empty corner and tells me there was a shop there, where her mother used to buy chicken. She couldn't stand the smell of the chicken. We arrive at the bridge. She tells me why she took me there: when she was young, she was very mild and passive and the other kids threatened to beat her up. ... "They would bit my hand because they wanted my lunch money." She said she would sneak out the back door of the school and no one would catch her. She would go home by way of the bridge. It was her escape route. She adds: "If it was not for this bridge, I would have been beaten up many times... my first solution is still to run." She enjoys being photographed. Afterwards she takes me to her old school, to the playground, and to her apartment.









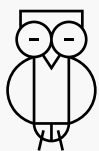
CALLE, Sophie.

*The Bronx.*

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