

FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY



Smoke and Veil, 1950 by William Klein



Yael/Blue, 2002 by John Goodman

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Avenue of the Arts
465 Huntington Avenue

Through March 25

This show complements "Fashion Show: Paris Collections 2006." It is of interest as a show of photographs rather than a show of fashion photography. The top images cannot be contained within the ghetto of "Vogue" and "Harper's Bazaar." Yes, the usual suspects are here but Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, Baron Adolf de Mayer, Cecil Beaton, Hiro, Helmut Newton and MFA franchise Herb Ritts do not dominate. Well, the MFA does use a bland Ritts for its poster, but the action in this show is elsewhere.

William Klein's close-up of a veiled model letting industrial strength smoke curl from her mouth is a new take on a pose all the rage in late 1940s and early 1950s fashion photography. ~~The British~~ John Goodman's portrait "Yael/Blue" (2003) shows Yael, a favorite model of his, in a royal blue evening dress wearing royal blue lipstick and royal blue marcelled hair. Perhaps Goodman had in mind some sort of homage to Yves Klein. Guy Bourdin's image of a hotel corridor at night plays off shoes to be polished left outside room doors. One of them is an oversize yellow woman's high-heeled shoe. Fashion is perfect for such jokes and they have been sprinkled through this show.

Among the best in show is Louis Faure's "Lingerie" (1962) in which the model is turned three quarters away from the viewer. She is bare assed and her right hand is curled around her neck and spookily distorted as it caresses her hair. Faure merges naughty with nasty. A few seeming effortless images made when he was a teenager by Lartigue are here and so is a knockout George Hoyningen-Huene of a model in a puffy bed jacket. This is a delightful show.

William Corbett