

# VOGUE

*Fashion*

## The Fashionable Side of Weegee

*by Lynn Yaeger*



Ann Sheridan, c. 1947

*This Hollywood star, like so many glamorous women of a certain time and place, is sporting a lush mink coat—an item of a once immutable symbol that a woman had arrived. Though still popular, this garment no longer exudes a special power.*

**Weegee**, the renowned photojournalist and chronicler of gritty street- and nightlife, acquired his pseudonym (he was born Usher Fellig) as a result of the supernatural prescience he seemed to employ ferreting out newsworthy events, Ouija-board-like, before they even happened.

From the late 1920s until his death in 1968, he photographed everyone from flophouse denizens to opera lovers, crime victims and their perpetrators. Now, more than 125 of his prints are on exhibit at Steven Kasher Gallery in New York, arranged under such rubrics as “Song and Dance,” “Spectacle,” and “Crime and Disaster.”

There is no section specifically for fashion, but that doesn't mean that these wonderful pictures don't offer, if often unwittingly, an accidental record of the styles sported by the impecunious artists and glamour girls, renegades and bohemians, that were his frequent subjects. Sometimes this information, always rich, is inadvertent and incidental; other times the subjects have quite consciously adopted ensembles that capture and further their unique characters and personalities.

Here, Vogue.com's brief tour of Weegee's works, with an eye to their stylish implications, in the slideshow above.

"Weegee: Naked City" opens today at Steven Kasher Gallery and is on view through February 25; 521 West Twenty-third Street, NYC; [stevenkasher.com](http://stevenkasher.com)  
January 12, 2012 5:24 p.m.



Woman in a Space Helmet Smoking a Cigarette, ca.1950

Though this photo was taken more than a half century ago, its jocular take on extreme costume speaks to an avant-garde sensibility that will characterize downtown social life through the second half of the twentieth century.

Photo: Courtesy of Steven Kasher Gallery, New York



This Sign, Advertising a Short Cut to Beauty, Blinked Two Stories  
Above the Fire, September 2, 1941

The very title of this work points to the stark contradictions that often emerge in Weegee's work—the sign attests to an obsession with a svelte physique that remains unchanged more than 70 years later, but the title also acknowledges the far darker, sadder realities of human life.

Photo: Courtesy of Steven Kasher Gallery, New York



Billie Dauscha and Mabel Sidney, Bowery Entertainers,  
December 4, 1944

This wittily titled photograph depicts a showgirl's method of securing her tips, but of almost equal interest is her shoe. Once solely the province of the stage, metallic footwear now plays a role in livening up daywear.

Photo: Courtesy of Steven Kasher Gallery, New York



Girls at the Bar, ca. 1946

These two young women, obviously a couple, play with menswear ideas that remain fashionable today—their suspenders, boyish jackets, slouchy trousers, and saddle shoes are models of masculine/feminine chic.

Photo: Courtesy of Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

<http://www.vogue.com/vogue-daily/article/the-fashionable-side-of-weegee/>