



“Every pair of jeans can be different and at the same time every pair suggests that there still could be the perfect pair which is always illusive.”

Collier Schorr is an American artist born and raised in New York where she lives until today. She is best known for her portraits of adolescent men and women where Schorr plays with realism and youthful fantasy – if there is one piece of clothing related to her work it's jeans. While shooting the campaign it was a revelation to learn that Schorr has a pretty intense relationship with jeans; not only because of her work but personally. So let's talk about jeans and nothing but jeans!

INTERVIEW JINA KHAYYER

How many pair of jeans do you have?

I used to have more when I collected but I sold a lot when I was broke in the early 90's. Probably I have around 20 pairs now.

What's the difference between them?

Every pair of jeans can be different and at the same time every pair suggests that there still could be the perfect pair which is always illusive.

Do you prefer blue jeans or black jeans?

I prefer blue jeans. I like black jeans but sometimes they make me sad. Too dark. Indigo has more life.

Do you ever wear white jeans?

I try. I think white jeans look better on men. But I have one good pair of white and if there is a good pair that's it.

The most experimental jeans color you have ever worn; do you have any green or purple or pink jeans memories?

I have a cobalt blue pair from Tim Hamilton's 2009 runway collection. They are great. But you have to be in the mood.

What is your very first jeans memory?

Sears toughskins in 6th grade and the wondering how many days in a row you could wear them. Or actually, no, Lee's in 5th grade.

Let's say every decade has the one right jeans: what was the one model one needed to wear in the sixties?

The sixties isn't really my time, but my Dad gave me his own off-white jeans once and they were the ones he wore in the 60's. Short, stovepipe fit. No stitching on pockets and a white tab. They were great. Very cool.

How did the jeans style change in the seventies?

I don't remember change. The jeans I wore were always straightleg and came unwashed.

Did you ever follow jeans trends?

I follow people who make jeans. My friend Glenn is a designer and makes great jeans. I have a few of his. Lots of pocket details, rivets, duck cloth pocket lining, waist belt. 18oz denim.

Please describe your favourite teenage jeans memory.

Well, keep in my mind my teenage years were direct located in the baggy jean. 1976-1981. That was the time of preppy New Jersey. All I basically wore were shirts and sweaters from the boys department and khakis and those baggy pants. I still think that proportion, paper bag waist, with a button down and a thin tie (bought from a NYC vintage store circa 1980) is a great look. I don't wear it, but I appreciate it.

Did you ever have to convince your parents to wear a certain jeans?

My parents were relatively young and somewhat counter culture to suburbia. I never thought they didn't look right. My father wore jeans and t-shirts with car logos and windbreakers. Still a good look.

Your worst jeans memory?

For all girls who wear boys' pants the worst memory is seeing what it looked like from behind. So whenever that was and I noticed it, that's the first memory. Jeans generally often look crap on the ass on girls.

Can you ever go wrong with jeans?

All the time in so many ways. But as many ways as you can go wrong you can go wronger with jeans shorts. Total nightmare.

Did you ever customize your jeans?

I taper a lot of my jeans, I've lowered waist bands but that's usually a bad idea. I've patched when needed but I'm not into my jeans being a textured rainbow flag. I think of them as the base. Rather than customize, I just don't wash them and that in a way I think is the new patching. All the wear off habits and the mark of wallets become interesting with time. Some people probably sit and wear away at areas of their jeans to get that contrast, but you can usually tell. Bike riding is the best way to wear in your jeans. I don't usually fold them, but hang them on hooks. After two years I can wash them. And then twice a year afterwards.

Did you wear anything else but jeans while being an adolescent?

The most daring would be a pair of deep purple Gloria Vanderbilt baggy cords. The best. With white jazz shoes from Capezio. The earliest 80's were radical. Then the squad kids went to this famous club in New York – BCBG's – and saw the Clash. I really admired the grease boys in my school, the ones that wore blue jeans and thermal shirts, knit caps and timberland boots. When I was in 9th grade I wore bits of that, but as I got older no, had to conform.

What was the one model one needed to wear in the eighties?

Ripped or rolled up jeans. I don't remember there being much of an option.

Do you collect your jeans?

I find it hard to throw away anything I know I would buy if I saw it jeans-wise. Part of the hoarders mentality. I used to feel secure

looking at stack and stacks of jeans and yet always felt that I never had the perfect pair. Ever. And I know what I am looking for: slightly higher waist and straighter in the hips and of course, nothing feels better than denim with starch starting to mold to your body.

Did you ever cry because your favourite jeans was worn out and you couldn't find the same one again?
No. Because I always hoard jeans.

What was the one model one needed to wear in the nineties?
I guess Helmut Lang. I had great gray ones. And I still have a raw denim jacket with those great long skinny sleeves he did. I always think of the artist Richard Prince who started painting, then wearing his paint splattered jeans all over town.

In which way did the image of jeans change in the nineties, compared to the decades before?
I suppose in the nineties it became as distant as possible from workwear or from alienated youth. The coated jeans of Helmut Lang and Martin Margiela really introduced an idea of luxury that wasn't about the denim but the shape and surface. For me, all I can say is I never wore a flare, I never wore a boot cut and I never subcomed to any LA version of jeans wearing. That would be the one jeans trend that I feel was not unisex and was particularly unsexy to me.

The greatest jeans icons you can think of are?
Steve McQueen and James Dean are without a doubt the best examples of jeans wearers. It's just untouchable. And the poet Frank O'Hara. The great thing about denim is that anyone from the 50's to early 70's was wearing the best denim. All those jeans started off raw and were just worn down to the skin.

Please describe your ultimate jeans fantasy.
There isn't because I have five ideas in my head and I could never say which is supreme. I love ankle length stovepipe black jeans as much as I like 50's Levis as much as I like the new wave of jeans. Generally my fantasy is what I see someone else wearing, probably on any Japanese guy.

Do you like yourself in jeans?
One might as well ask: Do you like yourself? Jeans test that. But when I have a pair, a new old pair for instance, and they fit just so well, fall on the hips in just the right way and the denim still has some crispness to it, then I am incredibly unreasonably happy and obsessed with jeans all over again.

How do you feel when you wear jeans?
I feel like a boy.

Are jeans all you wear when you work?
For the most part yes. I need the pockets and I need to be able to sit on the floor. Once I did fall into a creek while shooting in a pair of raw denim jeans; that was a drag.

Do you wear jeans-shorts?
Everyone who makes pants knows that making shorts is the hardest thing. It's why cut-offs are so difficult. Good shorts are made with a different pattern than pants, so that the leg tapers are the hips. So cut offs generally flare out a bit. It's best to have them tapered a bit. It's really a sore subject; a bit of crisis. It all depends on the body: If you have an ass it's a non issue. If you don't, it's a crisis.

Do you like sharing your jeans?
That's somewhat of horrifying proposition. But I like it if someone gives me their jeans and they are good ones. I would say I am that type.

How often do you wash your jeans?
Almost never.

I have a friend who never washes his jeans but instead puts them in the freezer to kill the germs – ever tried this instead of washing them?
I have. I think everything works but nothing besides washing really works all day. At a certain point in a pair of jeans life washing is fine. They already have their wear marks and shape.

Do you have a special jeans-care-technique? Any tips?
Always hang on a hook. Folding makes the legs too flat. Other than that, it's the one thing we wear to suggest freedom and comfort so do it how you like. But if they are raw and you wash them to soon, you have soft dark jeans which is basically hideous and unwearable. So just don't do it.

Ever pulled up your jeans in a bathtub?
When I was 15 yeah. Totally. And that works. In the country I have hosed myself. I am more likely to wash them and then put them on wet for 30 minutes to make sure they stretch in the right places and don't shrink. Not exactly the most pleasant feeling but the best way to maintain your shape in your jeans. It's an investment.

When you travel, how many pairs of jeans do you put in your suitcase?
Two.

In which way did the image of jeans change since the nineties?
Jeans stand for spending too much money. Jeans stand for seeing your ass in everyones elses ass because too many people wear the same brand. Jeans stand if you don't wash them ever.

Your ultimate favourite pair of jeans today is?
I just never have one. Its illusive. That's why the obsession continues. Also, sometimes the most beautiful jean I have isn't the one I'm really working. I have a vintage pair from Japan. So beautiful, a little torn, someone painted a house in them. Very romantic, slightly full leg, probably based on a 1955 cut. But it's a look and I can't really commit to that right now.

And what's the ultimate basic to complete the perfect jeans look?
White T-shirt and leather jacket or jean jacket. Always has been, always will be.

