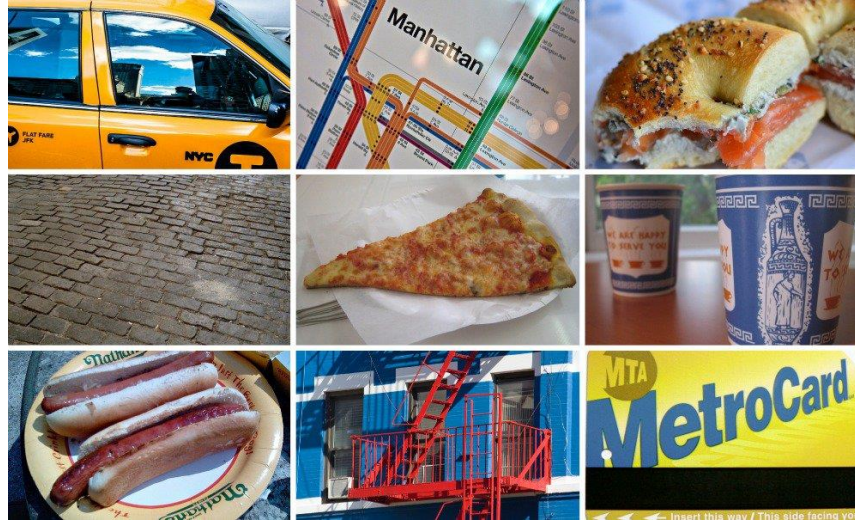




October 16, 2014

A History of New York in 101 Objects: 6sqft Edition



As urbanists we tend to define the city by locations and the historic events that unfolded at them. But what about getting even more specific and looking at New York's past through tangible objects? That's exactly what *New York Times* urban affairs correspondent Sam Roberts has assembled in a new book, *A History of New York in 101 Objects*. And a corresponding exhibit at the New York Historical Society puts Roberts' choices, along with objects from the Society's collection, on view.

We were so intrigued by this idea that we decided to put together a 6sqft version of the list. From preservationists to architects to real estate brokers, we've asked ten people to give us the ten objects that they feel best define New York City's history. There are definitely some favorites that emerged like cobblestones, Metrocards, and pizza, as well as an eclectic mix of items that speak to our participants' personal connections to New York.



Old subway tokens via kolix via photopin cc

Simeon Bankoff

Executive Director, Historic Districts Council

1. Eberhart Faber pencil – Made in Greenpoint!
2. Subway token
3. Terra-Cotta colored street signs – NYC’s historic districts.
4. Comic books – Superman, Batman, and Spiderman are all from New York.
5. Seltzer bottles – When I was growing up, they still delivered these to the house.
6. Dr. Brown’s Cel-Ray Tonic – Non New Yorker’s look at you aghast when you even talk about this stuff.
7. The third edition of the AIA Guide to NYC (1988?) with the orange cover
8. Massimo Vignelli’s subway map
9. Bishop Crook’s lamp posts – They’re retro-futuristic artifacts.
10. La Decision – Most of what a certain generation learned about AIDS, we learned on the subway from Julio & Marisol (and we learned Spanish at the same time).

Karim Rashid

Product Designer and architect

1. Piled up trash
2. Hot dog vendors
3. Metro Cards
4. Yellow taxis

5. The Vignelli subway map
6. MET museum badges
7. Television's album Marquis Moon
8. The inflatable anti-union rat
9. The 'I <3 NY' logo by Milton Glazer
10. Chermayeff 9 sculpture



*Cobblestones via *Bitch Cakes* via photopin cc*

Carter B. Horsley

Editor and Publisher, The City Review

1. Cobblestones
2. Dirigible mast at the Empire State Building
3. Jonah's Whale at the Children's Zoo in Central Park
4. Chock Full O' Nuts date-nut, raisin, cream cheese sandwich
5. Mercury statues atop the sidewalk traffic signal stanchions on Fifth Avenue
6. Horse-drawn fire engines belching steam
7. Third Avenue "El"
8. Backyard clotheslines
9. Jeff Koons' "Puppy" at Rockefeller Center

10. “The Spirit of Communications” statue that topped the old AT&T building at 195 Broadway, then the lobby of its new “Chippendale” building on Madison Avenue, before being whisked away to its new headquarters in New Jersey.

Amanda Davis

Director of Preservation & Research, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

1. Pizza – All was right with the universe the day the New York slice was born. When I see someone outside the city folding their pizza I can’t help but think I’ve spotted a New Yorker.
2. Food cart
3. Bagel – Nothing like a New York bagel covered in cream cheese and lox
4. Nathan’s hot dogs – Anytime I eat one I feel like I’m part of some great New York tradition, no matter how far away I am from the boardwalk at Coney Island.
5. Yankees uniform
6. Bench – In old home videos from the 1960’s, my grandmother and her friends can be seen gossiping away on the benches in front of their apartment building in Brooklyn.
7. Stoops
8. “Granny” cart
9. Black coats – A lot of people notice that seemingly all New Yorkers wear black coats. Come winter time, subway cars are filled with them. We have to be practical: light-colored coats get dirty in a hurry!
10. Bolts of fabric – The Garment District may not be the manufacturing giant it once was, but there are still plenty of fabric stores filled with a vast assortment of textiles.



Katz's pastrami sandwich via roboppy via photopin cc

Tom Cooper

Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker

1. Pastrami from Katz’s

2. Bethesda Fountain
3. Lox from Russ & Daughters
4. The underground streams like Minetta, which creep up every now and then and flood basements
5. Black and white cookies
6. Native grasses at the High Line
7. Iron fence at the Dakota
8. Couches at Frank Campbell's Funeral Home
9. Gargoyles on the Sherry Netherland
10. Pier 59 iron gate, where the Titanic was supposed to dock

Michael J. Devonshire

Director of Conservation, Jan Hird Pokorny Associates

1. Coney Island hot dogs
2. Dutch bricks
3. Egg creams
4. The Spaldeen
5. Yellow cabs
6. The Flushing Remonstrance
7. Inwood marble
8. Street cleaner brush "fingers"
9. The Brooklyn Eagle
10. Rat



Anthora "Greek" coffee cups via banjo d via photopin cc

Yuka Yoneda

New York Editor, Inhabitat

1. The Stock Exchange bull
2. Metropolitan Museum of Art pins (So sad...)
3. Metro Cards
4. Bagels
5. Pigeons
6. Greek coffee cups
7. Cobblestones
8. Anything with Milton Glaser's I <3 NY logo on it
9. Broadway playbills
10. Yellow cabs

Adrian Noriega

Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, CORE

1. Picture with Times Square's "Naked Cowboy"
2. Meat shops (or lack thereof) in the Meatpacking District
3. Co-op purchase application
4. Citibike
5. Page 6 in the New York Post
6. Hampton Jitney

7. Yankee Stadium seats
8. Pizza "Pie"
9. Broadway ticket
10. Graffiti



The NYC slice via ShellyS via photopin cc

Annie Doge

Entertainment Writer, 6sqft

1. Stilettos
2. Apartment rental "package" – Is there anywhere else in the world that requests this much info?!
3. \$1 pizza
4. Free daily newspapers
5. Oyster – Once the heart of the city's economy.
6. Fire escape
7. Opera glasses
8. Takeout menus
9. Scaffolding
10. Oreo – First developed at the Nabisco factory, now the Chelsea Piers.

Elizabeth Finkelstein

Founder, CIRCA Old Houses

1. Elevator – Because it allowed NYC to build up.
2. Anchor – In the early-to-mid 19th century, it was the shipbuilding industry that kept NYC on the map. It was also ships that brought in most of the materials that built the city.

3. Sidewalk – The great equalizer.
4. Corners – Whereas the Philadelphia grid was laid out to be egalitarian, NYC's grid intentionally maximized real estate values. Corner buildings, storefronts, and apartments are still coveted.
5. Five Pointz – The struggle for saving Five Pointz, to me, represented a lot of the current issues at play regarding the great NYC land grab: preservation, art, youth, charity, real estate development. Who does NYC belong to?
6. Bell – Fires were commonplace in old New York, and so were fire bells.
7. Signature – I can't walk down the street without being asked to sign a thousand petitions. What would NYC be without advocates?
8. Beaver – Do the Astors have any place in NYC history? I believe they do!
9. Vinyl Siding – You couldn't force most people to stay in NYC during the mid-century era of "white flight." Those who stuck through it are my heroes. I remember this every time I walk through Greenwood Heights or Greenpoint, which are virtual museums of vinyl and aluminum siding.
10. Stoop – It's cliché, but I do think the stoop is one of the greatest things about NYC. It's as if the streets are lined with beautiful benches, inviting people to sit and stay a while. Inadvertently, they keep eyes on the street.

What do **you** think should be the 101st item?