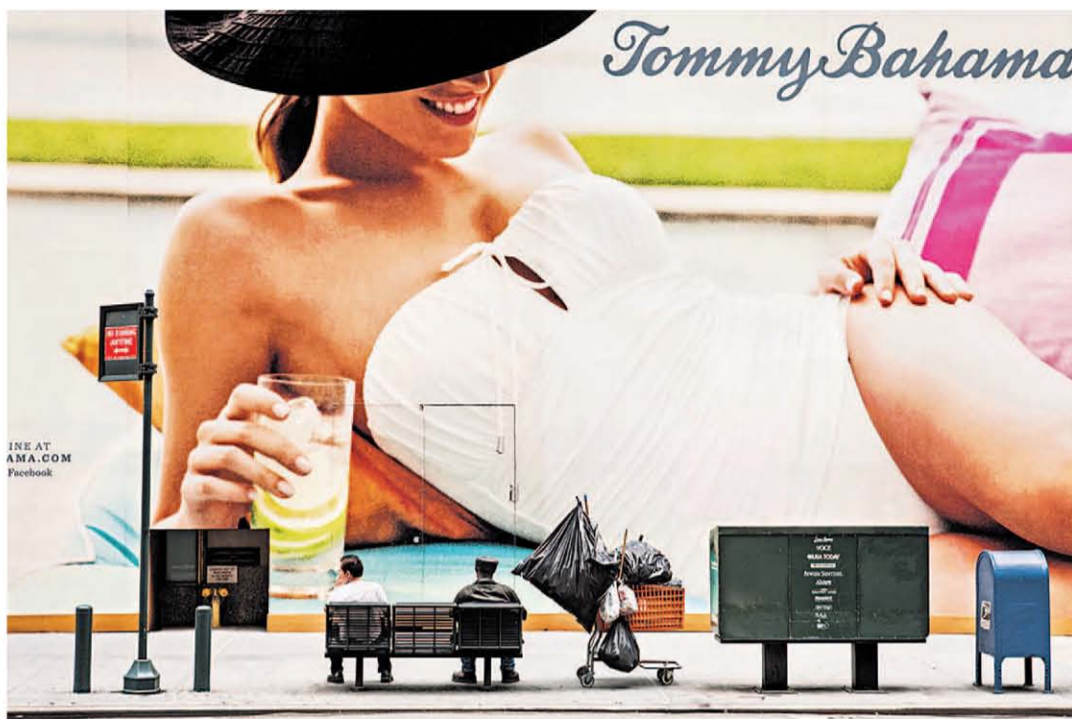


Album

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATAN DVIR



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATAN DVIR/POLARIS IMAGES

Avenue of Dreams, and Hot Dogs

IT WAS LIKE “Attack of the 50 Foot Woman” everywhere, except the women weren’t exactly attacking.

They were lolling, they were prancing, they were luxuriating, sun-kissed and giant, atop yachts and beneath palm trees. Natan Dvir, an Israeli photographer, was struck by the images as soon as he arrived in New York in 2008. As big as billboards, they sat at street level and stretched skyward for stories, giant ads heralding name-brand shops that were coming soon.

“I was totally baffled by this,” said Mr. Dvir, 40. “Everything was moved to ground level, and it literally changed our urban landscape.”

So Mr. Dvir, who has a master’s degree from the School of Visual Arts, began shooting photos of the sleek ads, as well as the mere mortals shuffling by, resting or scraping out a living on the sidewalks below.

In one, two men, one with a shopping cart over-

flowing with plastic bags, sit on a bench facing an outsize young woman clad in a swimsuit, poolside, nursing a tall iced drink.

In another, a hot dog vendor in a sweaty T-shirt leans over his cart, with a giant, impeccably turned-out blonde as a backdrop.

For Mr. Dvir, the pictures, currently exhibited at the Anastasia Photo gallery on the Lower East Side, capture the stark contrasts of American consumer culture.

“These ads are creating some kind of virtual dream world, a virtual reality, and when you compare it to what happens in reality — there’s a huge difference, sometimes a mind-boggling difference,” Mr. Dvir said. “That kind of lifestyle, that kind of mind-set, is not attainable. But this is how we frame our culture. And our culture says these are the right dreams to have. And I wonder . . . are they?”

CARA BUCKLEY



Among the towering Manhattan advertisements that have captured the imagination of Natan Dvir are, clockwise from top left, ones for Tommy Bahama (2012), Juicy Couture (2008), Aritzia (2012) and Zara (2008). At left is a photo of a Zara ad on Fifth Avenue at 52nd Street (2011).