



As “a neurotic Jew at heart,” Kenny Schachter arrives at the airport one to two hours before his flight boards.

THE SEASONED TRAVELER

Kenny Schachter

The artist, art dealer, curator, and writer reveals his travel routine

APRIL 22, 2023

For the past 30 years, Kenny Schachter has been, at various times, an artist, an art critic, an art dealer to other art dealers, a teacher, and a curator. Born on Long Island, based in London for decades, and now back in New York, Schachter has been called “the art world’s enfant terrible,” as a Sotheby’s press release once described him. It’s partly because of his witty, often merciless critiques of the art world. See his Artnet dispatch from this year’s Frieze Los Angeles: “With all the hype and glamour surrounding the event, one might have thought they were attending a daytime awards show for Instagram influencers rather than an art fair.”

Schachter spends much of his time on airplanes, traveling to art fairs and shows. Here, he answers our questionnaire about what he packs, eats, and buys while traveling.

Last flight you took?

To South Carolina, to participate in [Beeple’s](#) inaugural studio-exhibition complex, where I’ll be showing two new videos.

Favorite airline?

They are fungible inasmuch as they all pretty much suck the same. Even Emirates, whose planes used to be a bit of an oasis of luxury as compared to the rest, is now in a state of decay and entropy like my grandma’s house.

What do you wear to the airport?

I never change (personality or dress mode)! I am forever clad in Adidas’s finest vintage polyester track pants—no matter the occasion—along with a V-neck sweater layered on top of a long-sleeve T-shirt on top of a short-sleeve T-shirt.

How long before your flight boards do you get to the airport?

I'm a neurotic Jew at heart, so that would be (at least) one to two hours. Ugh.

Check bags, or carry-on only?

Carry-on only.

You know what drives me nuts? I'll tell you anyway. No matter where you sit on a plane, everyone in front of you will leave their luggage in the overhead bin until the people in the five rows in front of them have fully exited the plane.

Can someone explain that to me? I'd say just to annoy the crap out of me, but that sounds solipsistic.

What do you bring in your carry-on?

None of your business! Just kidding: more Adidas track pants, more short-sleeve T-shirts, more long-sleeve T-shirts, and more V-neck sweaters. Obviously.

T.S.A. PreCheck, or regular?

T.S.A. when I remember. Which reminds me!

What do you buy in the airport terminal?

If I am really, really early, a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich. Mmmmmmm.

What do you do while waiting to board?

Scroll, of course.

Do you take any drugs or alcohol for the flight?

S.O.B.E.R., but, damn, I used to. I once took so much Xanax and gin after I dropped an article on Artnet [that] I lost my passport between my plane seat and customs. Oops. Forty-five minutes later it had been turned in by a random passerby. I gather that would qualify as a bottom.

Item you can't fly without?

The only thing I am addicted to more than my phone is my laptop! If it's more than a week, I bring two.

First class, business, or coach?

Business, but, Christ, have rates escalated. Premium economy is the new business class.

Window, middle, or aisle seat?

Aisle. Simply to get off faster!

How do you pass the time on the plane?

No movies, reading a collection of old newspapers I've hoarded, or ... scrolling.

Do you buy Wi-Fi?

Duh! And can we talk about how fucked up it is to pay \$30 to \$100 for service that works intermittently (at best), so much so that I regularly lodge complaints. Until, that is, I resort to buying some more service the next time around.

Do you eat plane food?

I am not a foodie and eat the same shit every day. I couldn't care less. My favorite is a good old-fashioned cheese sandwich and Cheez-Its—any day of the week. Seconds, please!

Best drink to get on a flight?

Agua con gas. I don't drink. Black coffee, but now I stopped that too.

Do you talk to the people sitting next to you?

Depends how desperate for attention I am. And/or lonely.

Keep shoes on or off?

Ew. Shoes off only across the Atlantic.

What do you do when turbulence hits?

I'd cross myself, but I am not sure which direction to start in.

Worst part of the flight?

Getting off. As you can see, I'm not big on patience.

First thing you do when the plane lands?

Act like I am late for my connecting flight, when there is in fact no connecting flight; all but pushing everyone else out of the way when, for the most part, I only want to rush home to be re-united with my art.

Advice for travelers?

Don't.

Kenny Schachter's solo show at the NFT Gallery, in New York, opens May 18. His first solo museum show will go on at Francisco Carolinum, in Linz, Austria, beginning September 5