



ASHTON SANDERS PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANNA FISHER

DEBBY RYAN PARSON JAMES FRANKIE & THE STUDS LEAH DOU

THE REGRETTES ELISE EBERLE

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NOM RISE

Bonjour Digital

HANDS

it has AUA

New beginnings can come at anytime. Sometimes they are magical spurts of knowledge and growth that expand your horizons and offer a new turn at life. Sometimes they come with a sense of anxiety and fear that are rooted too deep to tap with a finger, beer or a joint. It's like every cell is expanding at the same time making room for things that can be too exhausting to navigate within the mind. The last 4 years have been really hard trying to keep up with the rapid psychological, spiritual growths and callings inside me. This time around back to the concrete jungles of New York, living on a world of political triggers, familial expectations, life long goals and most of all my own inner journey have been a balancing act between barely hanging on and barely staying sane.

The state of the world right now can be a really scary place. The word "resist" has been a word used frequently in this political sphere and a word I've come to rely on and use as a tactic throughout my whole life. I've resisted stereotypes, I've resisted paths set for me, I've resisted the microaggressions of people thinking they were better than me because of race or gender or economic status. I've resisted a world where I had to be a snotty bitch to get anything done. I've resisted the dark underbelly of an industry where people trade their souls for tear sheets and treat everyone in relation to a credit in a movie. Through it all I came out strong and brilliant and black, but tired. It can be really frustrating, mindlessly tiring to get anything done amongst poverty health, and daily world issues. I always try to make my editors letter so upbeat and positive, but I've come to realize that my mask is no less fragile than all of yours. And I'm ready to let it all go.

Sometimes to start over you have to let go. Let go of all the fear, all the anger, all the accusations, let it all go and see how you feel. Nina Simone once said, "I'll tell you what freedom is to me. No fear, Really, no fear." She's right. If we could let go of all the things we are scared of and live from that point on we truly could have a new beginning.

New beginnings bring forth new energies that alert the masses and make new greats. Ashton Sanders to whom this issue is dedicated is one of these new talents that have emerged with beams of light, joy and knowledge. Moonlight is by far my favorite movie of the year and watching him star is a feature that is uncharted in territory that swept Hollywood and festivals by storm with its in depth insight on black love and a black life and sexuality. It was a beautiful thing to watch.

We used this issue as a platform to highlight all the burgeoning talents that we feel are at a new beginning of their careers, life, and stories, Sometimes newness can be tough but we will also be pushing through and trying to make cool shit despite wherever the horizons lay.

Here is to a new beginning. Here is to no fear.

BUNNY HOLIDAY.

Story / Augusta Gail

HELLO:

Photos / Kristy Benjamin





Are you a California native?

No, I'm from Canada!

have you been in LA?

I've been here for 8 years. I came to work at American Apparel, because I was working at one of their stores [as a sales associate] in Canada. And I actually got discovered, because I was wearing a pair of leggings, that like, I'd altered myself, and Dov randomly came in the store and said, "You're not wearing American Apparel!" And I was like, "I am, I just altered them." And then we made the high-waisted leggings. *laughs* So yeah, then he shipped me to Los Angeles and I started working here.

Oh how cool. What were you doing?

so much stuff from Cali Sun & Fun!

Oh I'm so glad you like it! *we have a several long minute discussion about our mutual love for spandex and swimwear*

I love Vivienne Westwood, she's one of my favorite people. I love Cindy Crawford. Oh and Paris Hilton! There's actually a picture of her in my clothes in Galore Magazine which I was stoked about.

What's your favorite style era? I do work a lot! But then when I'm not working I host the party Bouncy Castle at The Lash. And that's super fun - it's like rave music. And then sometimes I make music I go between...it's like I combo 60s and 90s/early 2000s. It's like I slam them together! on the side; and I love styling young artists too. Ooh and I love baking and cooking. And exercising!

The initial sampling and creating of something. And I love looking at fabric, and Right now I'm working on spring/summer. Working on knocking out some new swim, when I see a fabric that I get excited about, I love the feeling of like, ooh what am and I'm going to do some...I get a lot of requests for some of my old styles from Cali I going to do with this? Sun & Fun. So I might update those a bit! Oh! I'm also trying to break into Japan. I love Japan and I love super kawaii, I'm very influenced by that too...and it's pretty It's so cool that you're hands-on with everything. I don't know how you stay cheap to get a retail store there, so I actually might get a store in Japan before here!

organized.

As if Valentine's Day couldn't get any cuter, try celebrating it by hanging out with Bunny Holiday. We're talking cuteness overload. When Bunny walked out to meet me for our interview, she was dressed in a pair of velvet pink leggings (her own design), a white tee, and white sneakers with glitter hearts painted on the front. Her waist-length, brunette curls were tied in two ponytails, and brightly colored hair jewels shimmered pink and blue and gold in the sunshine. Not only did she look adorable, she looked familiar – which I soon realized is because I'd seen her face on mega huge ad campaigns. She used to model for American Apparel, and does most of the modeling for her current brand, self-titled Bunny Holiday. We met up to discuss her fashion line – a colorful, sexy, super fun collection of sheer dresses, mesh body suits, vinyl skirts, and more (all made in the U.S. and made ethically!). We talked about her time with American Apparel, the importance of girl-power, social media's impact on the fashion industry, and wearing swimwear to parties (because, why not?).

I try to keep the wheels on the track. *laughs*

Social media – what are your thoughts on it in regards to being a creator? As a designer and a model, how do you feel about it?

Oh! I love Canada - there are so many awesome people from there. How long

Kind of like, product development and graphics....and I learned about the sewers, I had to go to stores and do all the merchandising. And I did the online merchandising, I was basically trained all around. And then I started modeling at the same time.

Would you say California has influenced your style and your line?

Oh of course! My line with American Apparel was actually called Cali Sun & Fun.

Oh my god *having a girly freak out* that's your line?? I LOVE that line – I have

How would you describe your line? If you had to pick a couple of words. It's kind of like if Barbie went to an outer space rave!

I love that. Coolest Barbie ever. Okay, who are your style icons?

Those are both such great eras, and I can totally see the influence from both. What's your favorite part of designing clothes?

I mean, you have to do it to have a brand right now. I don't love it, but it's part of my work. Sometimes it can be fun. But it has taken over the industry. If you don't have the followers you can't make the sales. You really have to create that following and you have to dedicate the time for it. You have to have your stuff on the girls who are big on Instagram. Which is great! It's a great platform for people to see your stuff. You can use it to your advantage, but it's also highly competitive.

Have you wanted to be in the fashion industry ever since you were little?

Yeah! Totally. Since I was a child, I've been dreaming of having a store. When I was little, my aunt – who does a lot of sewing and knitting – we would make Barbie's outfits together. She totally turned me on to crazy fabrics.

I was looking at the bio on your website, and you describe yourself as being full of girl power, and I just wondered what does that – feminism, girl power, etc. – mean to you?

I guess, I mean, just being powerful as a girl and as a woman. Like, you have to stand your ground with guys sometimes. And in this industry, even fabric venders, all that stuff is run by men. And I'm constantly having to haggle and stand up for myself with these dudes.

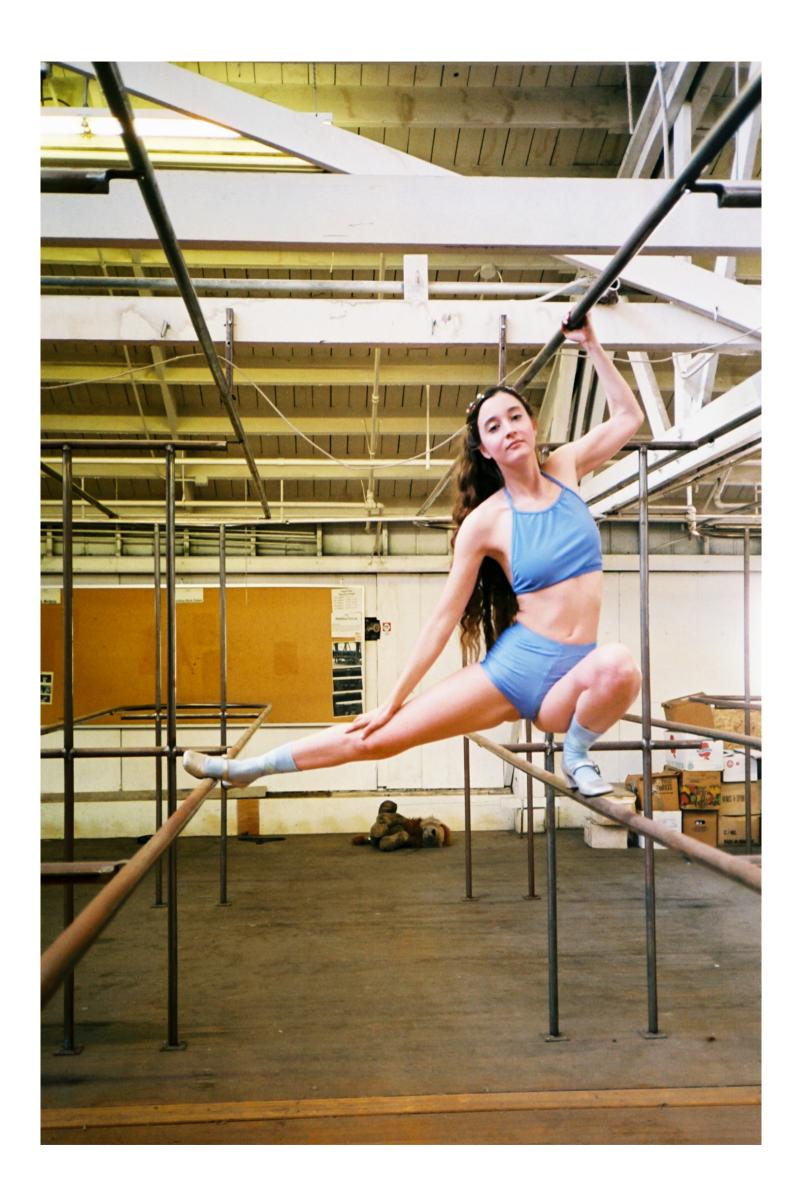
And you're like this tiny, adorable person.

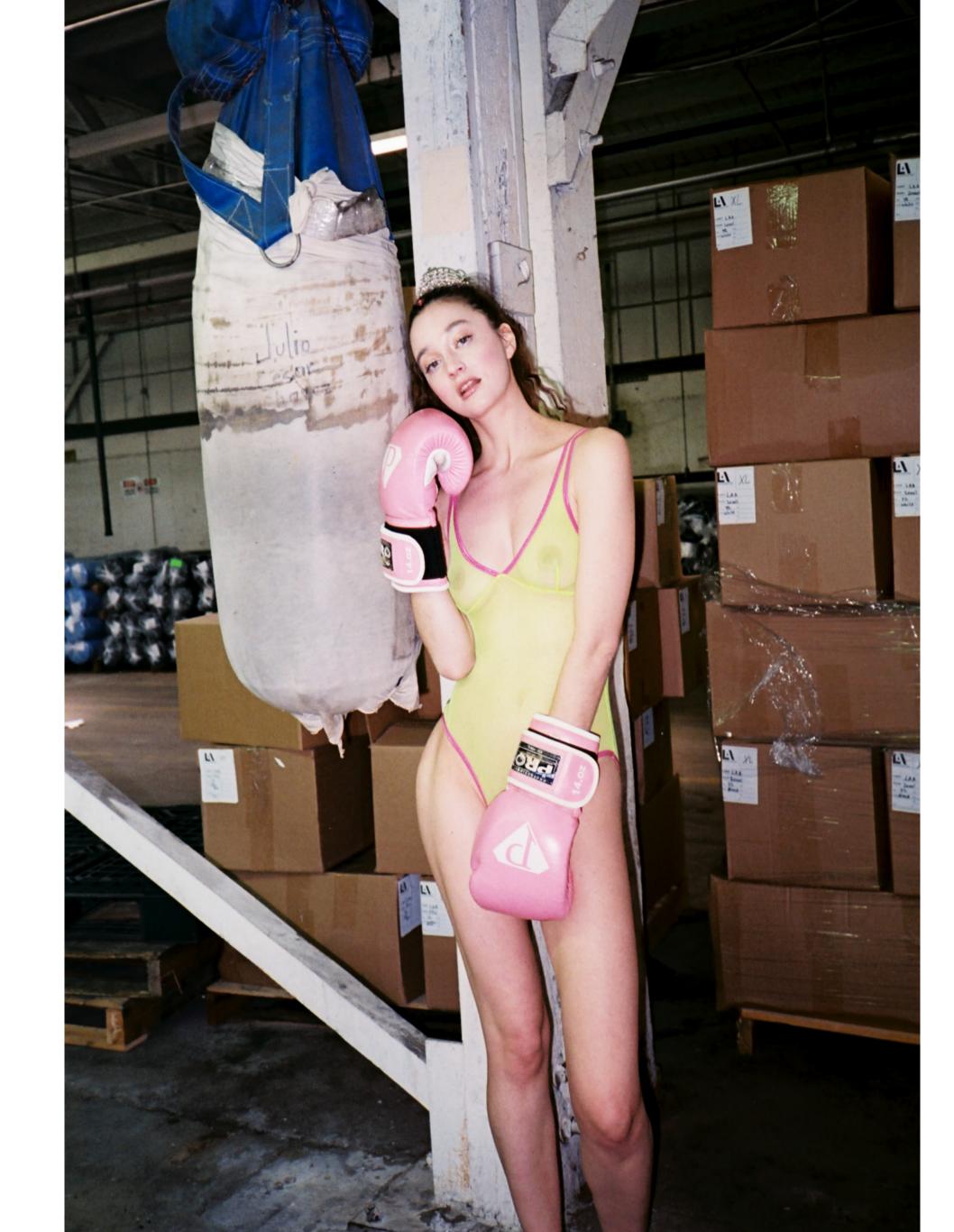
laughs And yeah, I want girls to feel confident and good about themselves. I want them to wear what they feel like, and not be afraid about reflecting their personalities and their styles. You don't have to hide. When I moved here [to LA], I realized you don't have to feel restricted - I mean, I always dressed kind of crazy, but then once I came here I was like, 'I'm wearing swimsuits to parties, as if I give a fuck!' *laughs* That's amazing. That's totally how it should be, so thank you for creating **a** line that allows girls to feel that way.

Okay, so what do you do when you're not working?

All of the good stuff! So what's next? What's in the works right now?





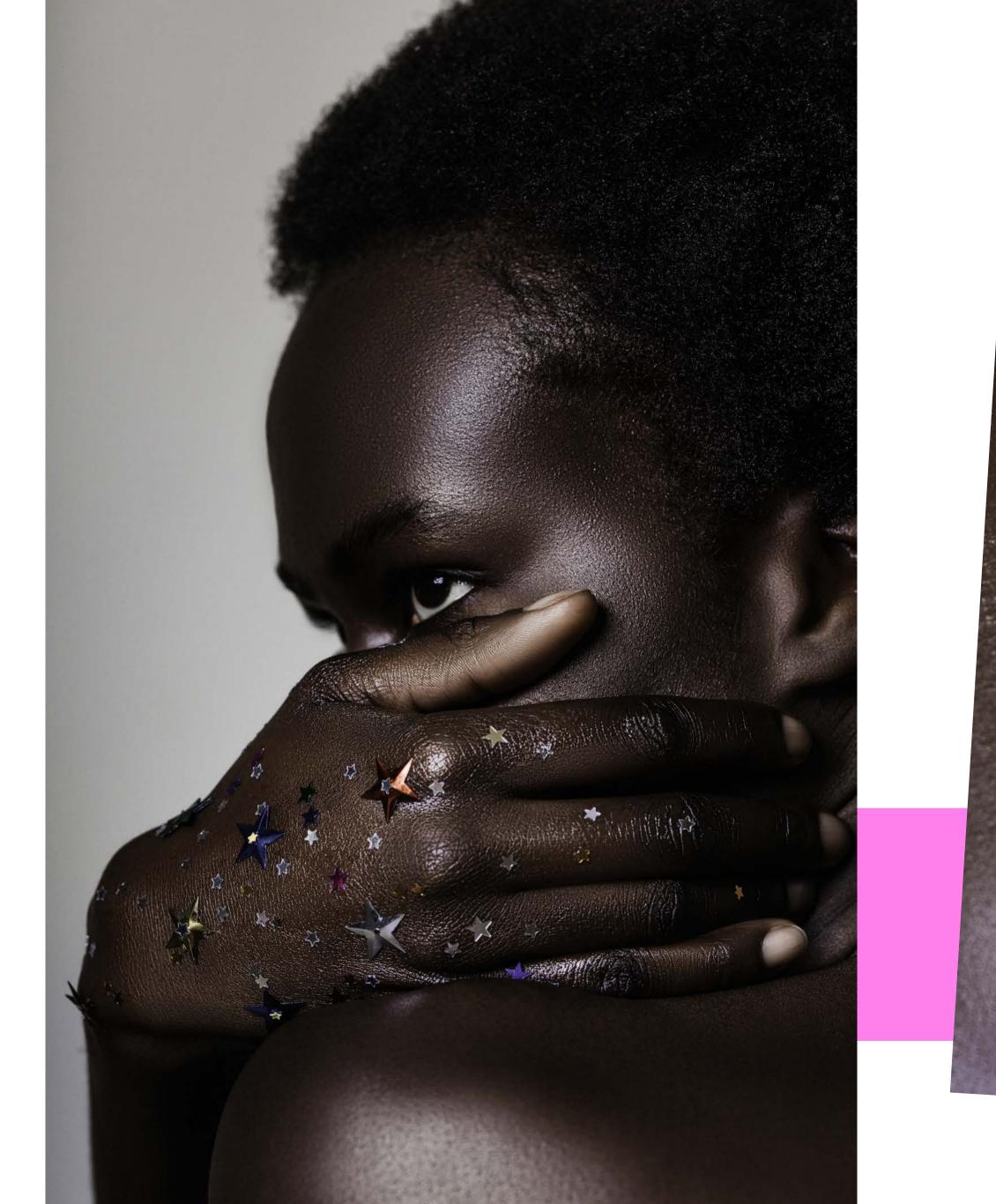






ADS 'STUFF

Photos + Art Direction/ Veronica Formos Hair & Makeup / Carole Méthot Model / Adhel @Richard's International Model Management Retoucher / Liya Kostromina

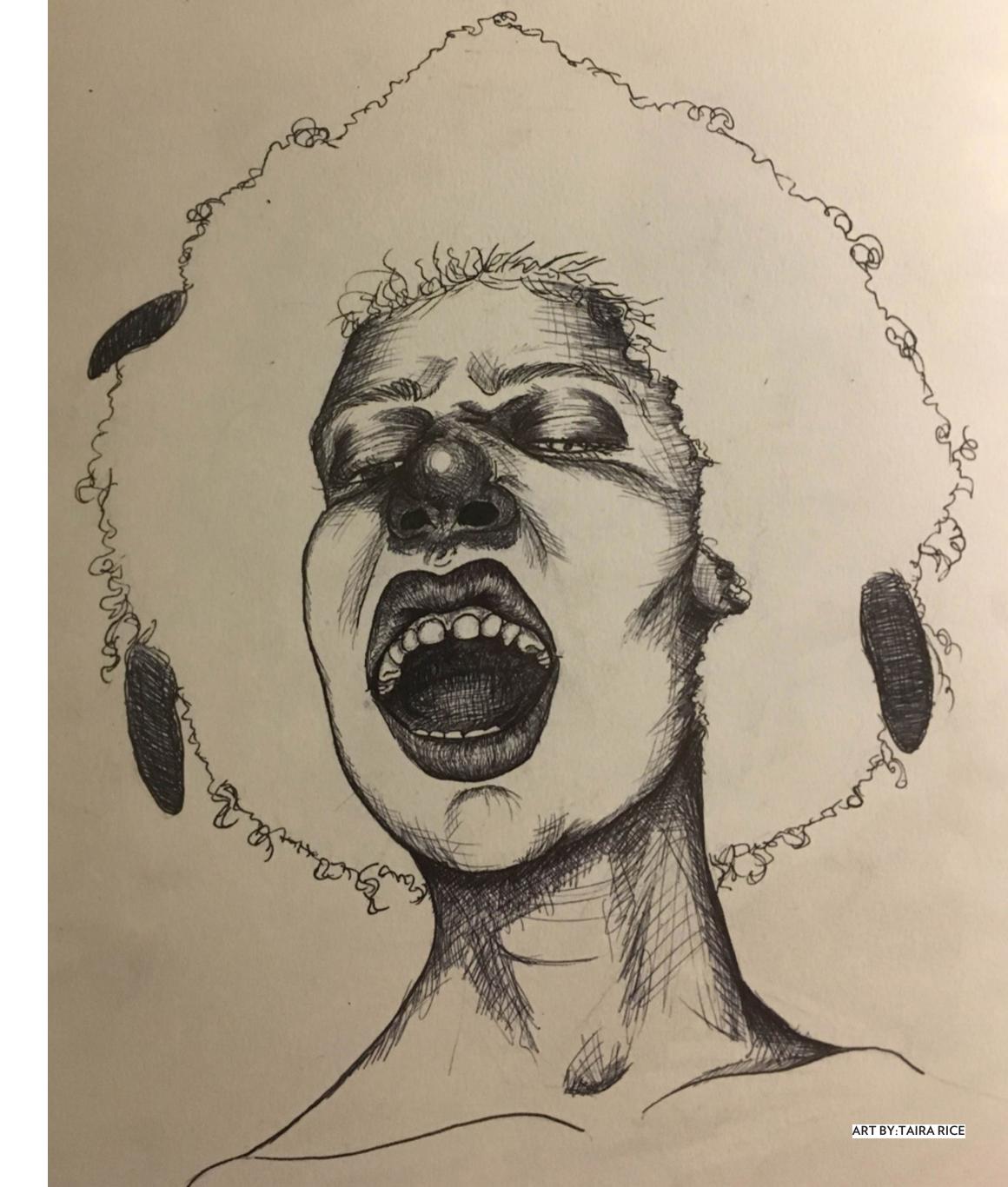






'UPRISE / ANGRY WOMEN' ALL-FEMALE GROUP EXHIBITION, PRESENTED BY THE UNTITLED SPACE + ERA COALITION

story / Alyssa Hardy photos / The Untitled Space Gallery



November 8th, 2016, the night that Donald Trump was elected President of the United States, is a painful date for many to recall. It was surreal, triggering, saddening and everything in between for many women and minorities who felt personally attacked by his campaign rhetoric. One thing, however, that many people including our LADYGUNN team felt, was that art and artistic expression was going to be crucial to healing and making it through the next four years. Enter: Indira Cesarine, a visual artist and curator of UPRISE / ANGRY WOMEN. After the election results came in. Indira wanted to find a way to give herself and the artists around her a voice that specifically addressed the issues that felt most vulnerable to them.

On November 10th, just two days after the results came in, she opened up a submission process where artists could submit work based on the theme. Within one month she had 1800 works of art submitted by over 400 artists. After narrowing the work down to 80, the collection opened at the Untitled Gallery in New York City, to praise from around the world. In light of the recent Women's Marches, where millions of people around the world flooded the streets to protest the administration, pieces in the show like Rose McGowan's, "WOMANSWOMB" and Tracy Brown's, "Dear Patriarch" are more relevant than ever before. Below Indira discusses what went into creating this iconic exhibit and see some the incredible work from the show.

come to be?

INDIRA CESARINE: The day the election results 80 works of art, each by a different artist, which was were announced I felt compelled to start working on really the maximum due to space limitations at the UPRISE / ANGRY WOMEN. Like many others, I was gallery. I think the works speak for themselves. Each totally shocked by the results. I was horrified that our artist brings a unique point of view to the subject and country had elected a future president who openly equally it is very powerful as a collective of artwork. discriminates against so many others. His sexist, racist, xenophobic politics are appalling by any standards. LADYGUNN: What is the inspiration behind your We had elected a man with numerous sexual assault work? allegations against him, who is determined to roll back IC: I attended several protests following the November women's rights, and thinks that "grabbing pussy" is 8th results and was inspired by the passion that brought his prerogative. I felt it was a crucial time for artists the crowds together. I decided to channel my own to have the opportunity to express themselves with works of art responding the situation, that are empow- new series of art elaborating on the history of protest ering to themselves and others. The works in UPRISE to enact change and progression. My oil on canvas / ANGRY WOMEN raise awareness of how women featured in the exhibit "PROTEST" was inspired by in America are feeling right now regarding the situa- some of the recent protests that took place in New tion. I reached out to the ERA Coalition to see if they York City, as well as images from historical feminist wanted to partner with us shortly after announcing the protests in history, including protests for the right to show, and we are looking forward to raising funds via vote nearly 100 years ago, to protests for equal rights, the exhibit for their Fund for Women's Equality.

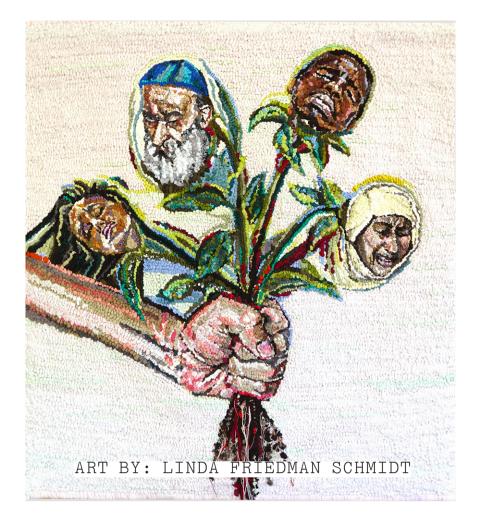
together?

IC: This is actually the first exhibit we have done at The Untitled Space that was open to submissions. ther emphasize the expressions and emotions of the Normally we curate all the exhibits by requesting women depicted. I have always been drawn to black individual artists to participate. I felt it was important and white images, and as an evolution, in my work for the UPRISE / ANGRY WOMEN exhibit to reflect from photography to painting I felt that maintaining how women are feeling right now and to have artists a monochromatic palette would elaborate also on the from all over the country with diverse backgrounds historical references for the painting. represented in the show. On November 10th we Aside from the "PROTEST" painting in the exhibit, posted the exhibit on online as well as to social media. which is the first of an entire series on the subject, l We only had one month for artists to submit work. We have a photo and video series that I have been workgot a phenomenal response from our outreach, with ing on as well as a neon sculpture titled "fuck off," over 1800 works of art submitted by over 400 differ- inspired by the Trumpocalypse. I think political art can ent contemporary female artists. I was very impressed be very powerful, and I feel that as an art activist, I am by the guality of works submitted overall and the pas- motivated to continue creating art that can have a sionate artist statements we received. It was incredibly social impact.

LADYGUNN: How did UPRISE / ANGRY WOMEN difficult to narrow down the works for show as so many of the pieces were powerful. In the end, we selected

anger and frustration with our political system into a abortion rights, and against rape culture in recent times. I took a lot of photos and videos at the protests LADYGUNN: What went into putting the exhibit and also did quite a bit of research, as I wanted the work to reflect the passion and the intensity of protesters. I decided to paint exclusively in black and white, to fur-







Daniela Raytchev, "Liberty" "As a devoted observer of the human condition, my artistic ethos is to capture visual interpretations of the psychological and physical effects of conflicts within so the viewer can relate and reflect on the emotions that arise.

public eye than her identity.

Linda Friedman Schmidt, "Weeding"

"There is a need to reweave our nation's social fabric as it is being torn. My artwork introduces the possibility for this transformation and repair. Discarded clothing is my paint, a metaphor for worn, tired, used, and abused humanity l rescue and transform in my process. I dismantle the fabric of the world and piece it together differently. I assemble, bring together, and combine disparate pieces of people to create an integrated, unified, harmonious new whole. I combine the energy of many into something of beauty, vitality, and hope." My commentary on racism, "Weeding", uses the garden as metaphor for the world... Pointing the finger at people who do not fit familiar patterns of one's own race, religion, gender, culture, morality, or politics and labeling them weeds hides their humanity and justifies their uprooting and destruction. We must cultivate empathy for one another or "united we stand, divided we fall."



Linda Friedman Schmidt, "Weeding"

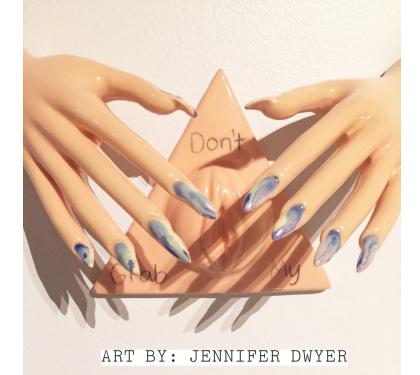
"There is a need to reweave our nation's social fabric as it is being torn. My artwork introduces the possibility for this transformation and repair. Discarded clothing is my paint, a metaphor for worn, tired, used, and abused humanity I rescue and transform in my process. I dismantle the fabric of the world and piece it together differently. I assemble, bring together, and combine disparate pieces of people to create an integrated, unified, harmonious new whole. I combine the energy of many into something of beauty, vitality, and hope." My commentary on racism, "Weeding", uses the garden as metaphor for the world... Pointing the finger at people who do not fit familiar patterns of one's own race, religion, gender, culture, morality, or politics and labeling them weeds hides their humanity and justifies their uprooting and destruction. We must cultivate empathy for one another or "united we stand, divided we fall."



Cara Deangelis- "DONALD TRUMP WITH A CROWN OF ROADKILL" "DONALD TRUMP WITH A CROWN OF ROADKILL" was painted after the Access Hollywood tapes came out, followed by a dozen women's testimonies that confirmed what he said on the tape was true. During those weeks it seemed absolutely impossible that he would ever become elected President. He was elected President despite all his ineptitudes and immorality. I am committed to using my work as a means for social awareness and positive change, in addition to peaceful protest. Our work can make a difference. I believe this exhibit will make a difference, and I would like to be part of that."

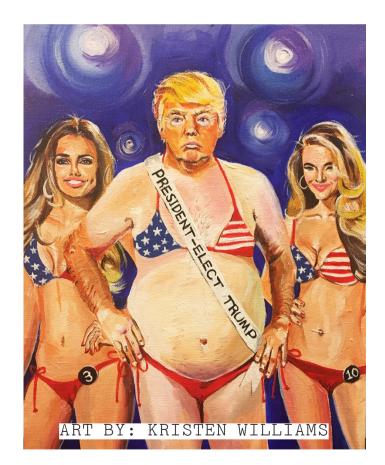
'Liberty' is a reaction to current political situation that has recently magnified issues of sexism, racism and discrimination not only in the US but in our society as a whole. 'Liberty' sculpture objectifies, depersonalizes and dehumanizes women. Based on the Statue of Liberty, it replaces her face and her personality with her vagina as if that part of the body was the most important, as if that identifies her as opposed to her face or her personality. Showing our face helps our integration with the world and is the means of communicating. Hiding it and replacing it with female genitals highlights the fact that a woman's sexuality is given more significance in the

The artwork is a metaphor for bringing the power back to women, crowning the part of our body that defines our gender, with a symbol inspiring contemplation, debate and a protest, of ideals such as democracy, liberty, peace, human rights and opportunity. It reminds us of the ideals that the Statue of Liberty stood for in the past, that women and men collectively still need to fight for, especially now in the times of the current political and social instability that causes anxiety and fear mongering in masses."



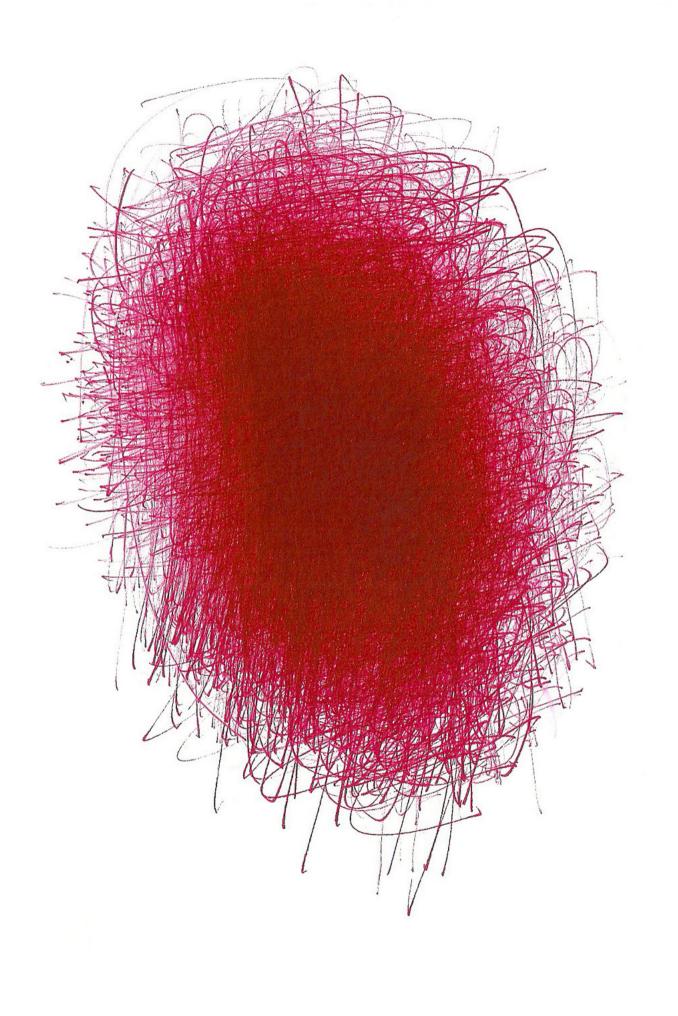
Jennifer Dwyer, "Current Mood"

"Our current political and social climate is arguably the most divisive, chaotic, and turbulent period that anyone of my generation or younger has ever experienced in this country. With the recent election, it's impossible to turn on the news, open a social media app or even listen to podcast without hearing strong discourse. Having always been interested in women's bodies- this election, once again, made it apparent how women's stories of sexual subjugation and violence are socially minimized and repressed as taboo. "Current Mood" was created in response to our President Elect bragging about his ability to grab women's genitalia in an Access Hollywood tape recorded in 2005. He responded to this video by calling it "locker room banter". It's important not to let our president elect's hate speech become normalized."



Kristen Williams, "F\$@KTrump"

"Painting allows me to say those things and convey ideas and concepts that I would not normally speak out loud. I can be bold and unapologetic in my paintings... I'm angry at America for electing a reality TV star, racist, misongynist, to be our new commander in chief, I'm angry at the government for running pipelines through sacred land and contaminating water all for the sake of a dollar or oil or whatever. I'm angry that women in this country still make less money than men, not to mention women of color, make even less. I am angry for so many reasons and the list could go on and on. My way of dealing with this anger is not to pick up a gun, not to fight physically, but to pick up my paintbrush and to put my feelings on canvas." –



ART BY: HYE RYUNG NA







ART BY: RUTE VENTURA

SEX UN PLA STED TEASERAMA

WATCH ON LADYGUNN.COM

story / Tiffany Diane Tso photos / Sarah Schwartz styling/ Sydney Schafer assistants/ Lucas Reilly & Tamyshia Curry makeup & hair/ Katherine Park music by the The Buttertones DP/ Andy Madeleine featuring / Angela Trimbur, Penelope Gazin, Sydney Schafer & Tatiana Louder



KOUA MARINA

Introducing Planet Weird, and the vivacious, titillating women who inhabit this strange terrain!

Sex On Planet Weird: A Twisted Teaserama gives a voyeuristic view into the alternate dimension where these mischievous maidens work What will the upcoming graphic novel series entail? and play. Fret not, fast fans - the video is an introduction to the upcoming graphic novel series, which is going by the same name. Inspired by burlesque stars in the vein of Bettie Page and Tempest Storm, Planet Weird presents its own spin on "Teaserama," one of curiosity and grotesque.

Featured in this short film are a menagerie of talents, including actress and choreographer Angela Trimbur, artist Penelope Gazin, model Sydney Schafer and actress Tatiana Louder. Schafer and Louder are the ladies behind Lil House Productions, who produced the teaserama, which also features music by Los Angeles rockers The Buttertones.

Follow along as LADYGUNN gets a closer look at these female oddities from Planet Weird.

How did you all meet one another?

Trimbur: I held auditions for new squadlings for the dance squad I run, we do halftime dances for women's community basketball. Plucked Sydney right away. Called her "Choker" when referring to her on audition day, because she wore one. She is still in my phone that way. And Penelope sent in a self-taped audition and talked about the first time she had sex was in a patch of poison ivy, and she was covered in welts the next day. I loved her human style.

Schafer: Angela is our captain/choreographer, and Penelope and I are the loyal squadlings that graciously follow her lead. I went to highschool with Tatiana in Las Vegas - crazy I know. What's crazier is that we were never pals until post high school, and now we live and work together!

What inspired this concept for Sex On Planet Weird?

Schafer: Sex On Planet Weird was developed while brainstorming ways to blend our love for eccentric unconventional media (think Tim & Eric meets Eric Andre meets Andy Milonakis - Hello, Planet Weird!) that give us ladyboners. At the same time exploring our love for starlets like Dita V and Tempest Storm.

Louder: SOPW is the precise phrase I used to describe that pizza port, retro sci-fi babe! The novel sprang from that; chicken before egg so to speak.

What and where exactly is Planet Weird?

Louder: Planet Weird is in another dimension! It's an unlicensed mystery assemblage; basically just a bunch of nosy guys with guns. It daylights as a temp agency. Our gals (seen in the film) are the Schafer: I love creating with woman and kissing boys. first ladies on the team.

Gazin: It's located 5–8 cm (2–3 in) up the front (anterior) vaginal wall between the vaginal opening and the urethra and is a sensitive area that may be part of the female prostate.

Louder: SOPW is a series of mysteries and daily life comics. You'll get to see the gang's ride on the struggle bus of acclimating to a new, hard ass job. Just as important, though, are their simple trials and tribulations of being girlz with a z.

What else can we expect to find on Planet Weird?

Louder: Planet Weird has an extensive array of any costume one might need or imagine. Also? Killer 'moothies.

Gazin: ...a dime sized spongey flesh pad.

What else does Lil House Productions have on the horizon, what work do you aim to do?

Schafer: Our aspirations for Lil House Productions include otherworldly cabaret nights and possibly a mini lingerie/performance wear line.

Louder: I'm currently in pre-pro for my upcoming short film, "Les is More." Also, a series called "Wigcap Monologues" might be a treasure to you TCM gals.

What has the reaction been like for this video thus far?

Schafer: There's been mixed reactions. Most people love it and slightly understand the direction we're going in... But there's some friction, which is understood and expected.

Louder: Either pleasure or the appropriate disgust! Just like porn and reality TV, it's the cringe that drives the car. I think our message of illusion gets across either way.

How do you feel the video reflects on the IRL porn industry?

Schafer: This is thought up by women, styled by women and executed by women. I don't know too many other things in the porn industry that is spearheaded by the feminine divine. I hope that changes in the future, and if we keep spreading the love, I think it will

Louder: There's certainly compromises made on gigs as a performer. We wanted to gift ourselves an opportunity to have a candy store of a project. Feminism and leggy dancing are that to me, so off we went.

Anything final comments?

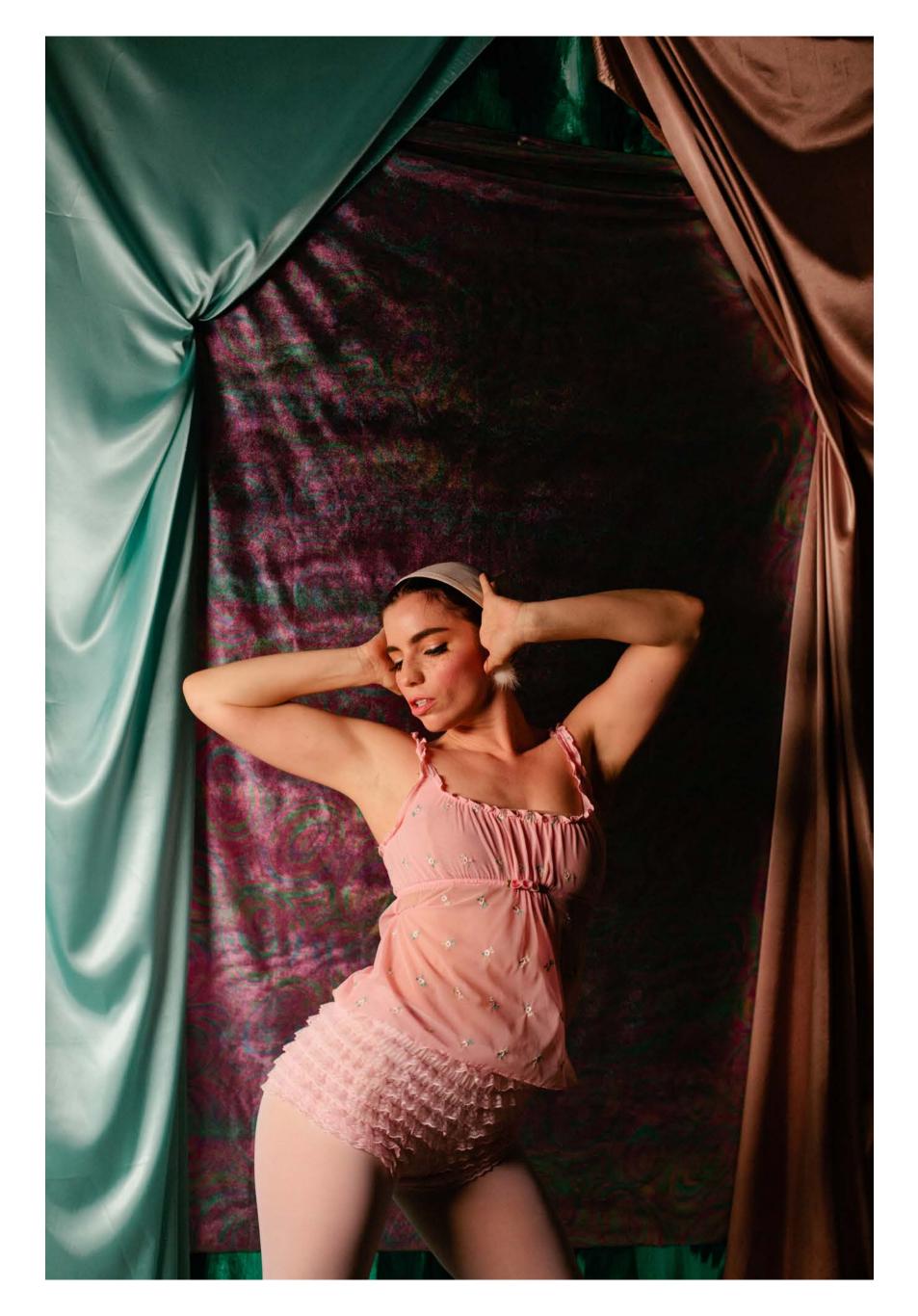
Trimbur: It's always very freeing to take something sexual and make it silly and gross.

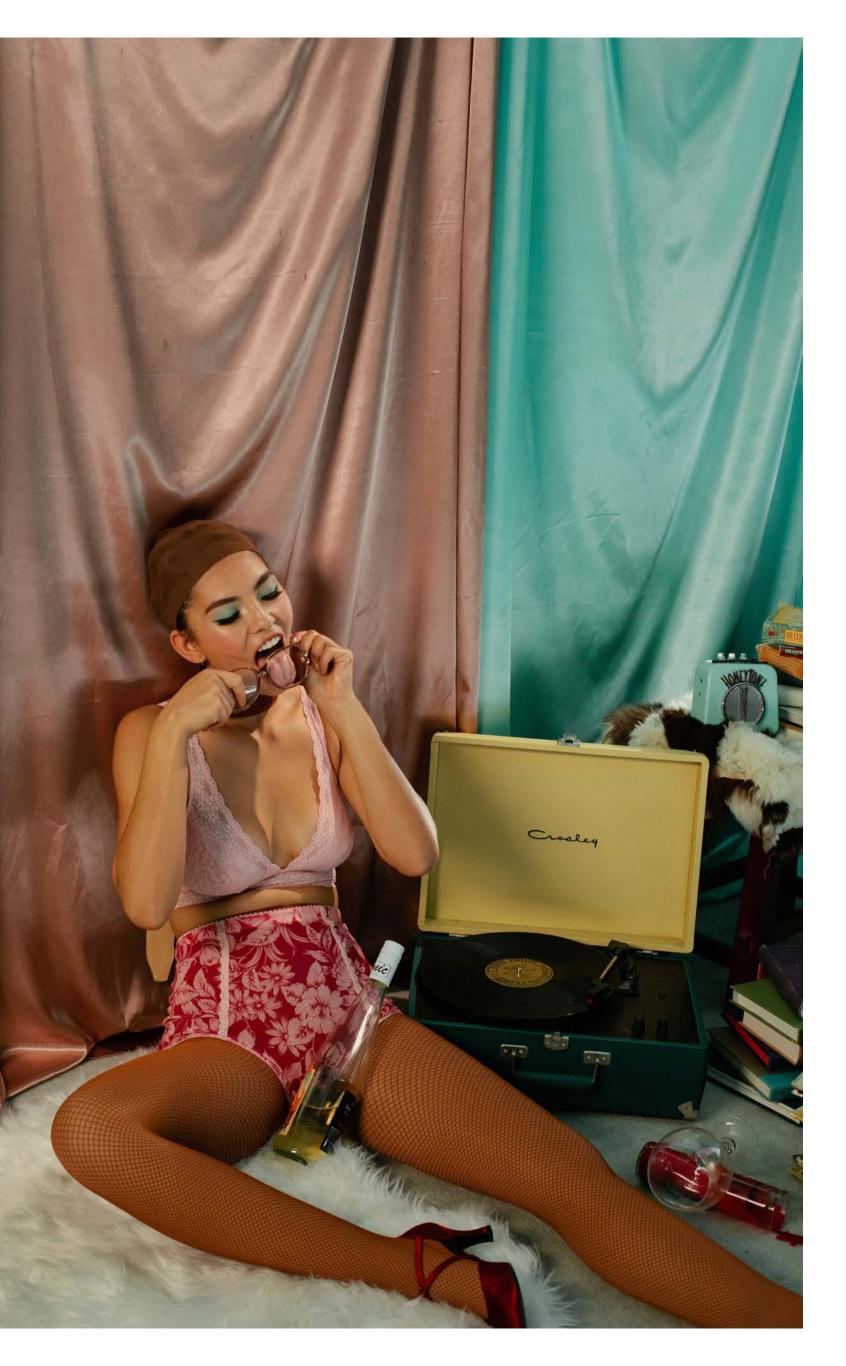
Gazin: I had a 105 fever while filming and almost passed out a bunch.



"I had a 105 fever while filming and almost passed out a bunch..." - Penelope Gazin









Flying Solo, the innovative collective retail space in New York City's Nolita neighborhood, serves exactly the purpose its name implies. It has allowed the 22 designers who both own and operate the space, a way to serve their products in a high-end environment without the upfront costs of wholesaling or starting their own individual store. "It began because we were all frustrated with the industry," founder Elizabeth Solomeina tells me over the phone. She's busy, rushing between appointments but is eager to discuss the exciting brand she's helped build. At the time of the call, fashion week is only three weeks away and the designers were getting ready to put on a group show together for the first time. "As a small designer," she continues, "there's no way you'll have a studio or a store in Soho. If you're trying to reach stylist you have to meet them at a cafe or ask them to come out to Brooklyn. They just don't want to."

A few years ago, Elizabeth realized she wasn't the only designer feeling discontent for how the industry is set up, so she decided to take action. Soon after, with a group of her peers in apparel, accessories, and footwear, Flying Solo was born on Mulberry Street in Manhattan. When you walk into the tucked away storefront, it isn't immediately clear that it's not a typically curated boutique. That is until you see the subtle touches on fixtures throughout the space that say things like "Smile! You Just Met A Designer." It's a phrase that is more than just a cute decoration, all of the designers actually take turns working in the store, manning the registers and selling each other's collections. "We do have a waitlist for clothing designers at this point because we've been very selective." Elizabeth muses, "They have to be an amazing designer but also a great team player. This industry is so competitive but we want to help each other grow, and that's it."

Since the opening, the store has become more than Elizabeth ever imagined. It's put her work in the hands of buyers and stylists whom she feels may never have had the opportunity to see her work. "I never dreamed of being in the magazines that I'm in. I would never have imagined I'd be presenting to Saks," she explained, "plus I have gained so much knowledge from the people around me."

After their successful runway debut on February 10th, it was clear the impact of collaboration in this industry, but it doesn't just stop at the clothes for them. "We want to work with photographers and stylists to give them a way to collaborate. Maybe we'll expand. The possibilities are endless." While Flying Solo may be helping these individual artists stand on their own two feet, it certainly shows the industry that working together has its benefits too.

(www.flyingsolocollective.com)



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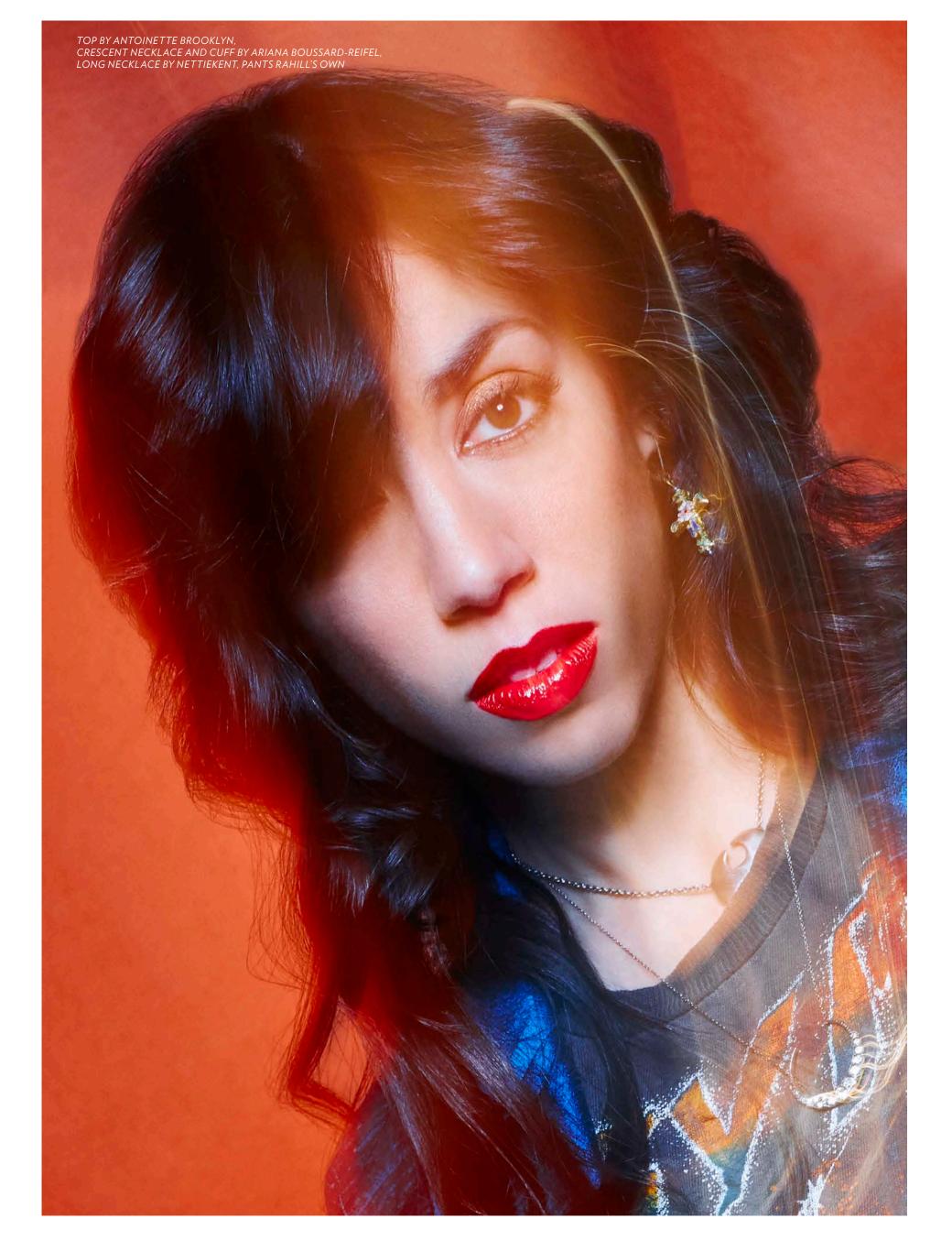
FIRST GENERATION

Photos + Story / Maeghan Donohue Makeup / Tommy Napoli Hair / Anike Rabiu Styling / Shea Daspin

At LADYGUNN, we strive to provide our readers with a fresh take on independent culture, featuring artists, performers, and thinkers who we perceive as living and creating on their own terms, whether that be artistically, socially or politically. But in such a dangerous historical moment where racism, misogyny, homophobia, and xenophobia are so unabashedly and cavalierly flaunted, we recognize the importance—rather, the obligation—of the press to up the ante and wage a relentless counter-attack. LADYGUNN will continue to curate and promote those same vanguard creators, but in this particular climate, the lens through which we bring them to you must be refocused.

With this in mind, we present our First Generation series. We are excited to reveal another side of the artists we know and love, as we talk to them not just about their art but its relationship to their roots, either as immigrants or as first generation Americans. This was initially intended as a brief story, but given the ideological, and now in recent weeks, the legislative assault on individuals of Middle-Eastern descent, we see the need to be steadfastly devoted to highlighting the remarkable accomplishments and contributions of immigrants and of the children of immigrants on a regular





JACKET BY THII, NECKLACE BY ARIANA BOUSSARD-REIFEL, T-SHIRT & EARRINGS RAHILL'S OWN

basis. The irony which seems lost on so many, of course, is that with the exception of Native Americans, we are all immigrants, so even when it feels we don't have a personal stake in this, we unequivocally do.

The morning of my conversation with Iranian miliar with her music, but I had yet to hear Roya. is melodic, dreamy, not entirely upbeat, but also mom and dad are in the graveyard" and of course the refrain, "It's the end times, it's the end..." The song is set against a compelling montage of both nostalgia and devastation atrocity, police brutality, starvation, Nazis, 911, even a clip of our new Commander-in-Chief. I immediately noticed that the video was posted on November 8th, the day after the presidential election, and Rahill confirmed that this was, indeed, intentional, though she wrote the song well before this particular election outcome Full Interview coming soon to LADYGUNN TV!

seemed fathomable. "It was a deliberate move.. we deliberately posted that as our response to what was happening or just having a crazy person become president."

Many artists—musicians in particular—are actively discouraged from speaking with such candor -American artist and musician Rahill Jamalifard, about their political proclivities as it can alienate scoured the internet for samples of her new-mlarge portions of a fan base and thus affect the est project, Roya. Practically everyone I know bottom line. But how can an Iranian artist from in Brooklyn who is a fan of psychedelia loves a Muslim family explain the influence of her cul-Rahill's band, Habibi so I was already fairly fa- ture on her work without also acknowledging the extreme bigotry and injustice toward her peo-What I found—the video for Roya's song End ple in the current climate? Rahill spoke so pas-Times— had me instantly entranced. End Times sionately about the wholly positive influence of her culture on her character and her art as she not sonically dark, which is a stark contrast to showed me photos of her family and artifacts lyrics like "no more children on the playground, **F**from Iran, whilst debunking ignorant American stereotypes of Iranians, gypsies, and Muslims. It would seem this outspoken willingness to champion her culture without hesitation started early, as is demonstrated in an anecdote about vintage clips of soda fountains, children playing, hijab, where she comes to the aid of a taunthome movies documenting bright days spent at ed immigrant classmate. Speaking with Rahil the beach, interspersed with images of historical illuminated the distinctiveness of Iranian culture, its profundity and depth as an artistic influence, but also Rahill's own relatability as an American artist, the essential element to this story, during a time when difference is being exploited every single day by our nation's leaders.

SACRILEGE

story / Gina Tron art / Christina Kenton

I was thirteen. Matt was eight. My dad huffed down the fridge. stairs, grumbling. He picked up the phone. We barely paid attention to him, we were too focused on our show. Then, Spring 2009. I stared at the jumbo ziploc bag, plopped next we heard sobbing. Dad went back up the stairs. Matt and to three tubs of Chobani and a plastic container of my boss' I looked at each other, uncomfortably. We had only heard us that his mom died. We were not emotional about her to me. And, alluring. For days, I stared at it longingly reand my dad's mom was Grandma Tron. She was a short, food wrappers. She was nice enough, I guess.

funeral. Matt and I stood sandwiched between our many room a dozen times or calling out sick to bring my friend At first there was silence. Then, the sobbing of my religious first cousins in line inside the hot Catholic Church. We to get an abortion. All that was during my first month of coworkers. I turned to Jason, who was trying not to laugh, were told to come to the front for some reason. I had no employment, by the way. idea what this ritual meant. I couldn't see over the head of my older cousin as the line moved slowly towards a priest making a speech. Matt stood behind me huffing, com- owned by the Diocese of Brooklyn, I was open minded plaining about the heat. I didn't know what was coming. A few minutes later I saw a small round wafer putting placed being exposed to it would destroy some of the bad cliches into my cousins' mouths. I was confused. But, I assumed I I had about it in my mind. All I knew about the church prishould copy what everyone else was doing. I stepped up to or to my employment was cliches. My brother and I were the priest. He said something about giving me the body of raised Unitarians, the most laid back kind of Christian. We Christ. I then opened my mouth and let him put the smallfawn colored wafer on my tongue. I began chewing it as I prayed a few times in my life: once to the Easter Bunny walked back towards my pew seat. It tasted like a bland ice to get me Mario Bros. 3, once to unbreak my Dad's van cream cone. I liked the way it tasted. I don't know why, but something about it was so satisfying even though it had no unclog the toilet. sugar. Then, I heard my brother. "Ew. Jesus takes like crap."

I turned around to see him sticking his tongue out. It was full of brown colored mush. Wafer mush. Body of Jesus mush. People in the crowd erupted with inappropriate laughter. Tears of laughter were coming out of my mother's eyes. Her creamy white face, which she was covering with her font. hands from embarrassment, was beet red. She later told us, while cry-laughing again, that we weren't supposed to eat control room. those. That we weren't Catholic. That the wafers were only

Spring 1995. I sat on the couch next to my brother, watch- for those who had their first communion. At the time, this ing reruns of the Simpsons on VHS, the episode where made me sad. I wanted to eat a wafer again. For years I Springfield almost built a monorail. The sunbleached egg- craved the taste of Jesus' body. If I only knew that someday shell-white landline rang. My brother and I didn't move. I would have a whole bag of them in my fridge, my work

leftover casserole. The bag was crammed so full, it looked him cry once before. A few minutes later, Dad came back like it would burst. The hundreds of wafers stuffed in the downstairs, with a tomato red face and damp eyes to tell bag, like muscles trying to break out of skin, was obscene death. Matt and I weren't very close with Grandma. We membering the one time I tasted one of the thin wafers. I called her Grandma Tron. My mom's mom was Grandma planned to steal one, maybe at the end of a work day when nobody was looking. I wanted to taste the wafer again. I very short, overweight Irish woman who called my dad Billy had just learned the real name for it, too: the eucharist. and collected salt and pepper shakers. Every time we would But I didn't steal it, or eat it. I didn't even touch the bag visit her cramped house, each surface would be covered of wafers. I felt that it would have been too sacrilegious. in stacks of newspapers, dollar store purchases and empty It's funny that I hesitated and held back on that but I didn't hold back on coming to my first day of work at the Catholic television station on acid, or snorting cocaine in the chapel A few days later, we drove down to Long Island for her bathroom regularly, or snorting adderall in the office bath-

> When I took the job at New Evangelization Television, about it. I thought that I could learn about Catholicism, that went to church sometimes, maybe once a month. I had only windshield after I threw a rock into it, and twice to God to must have gotten sucked into that world. We all know how

I sat on my swivel chair, sipped at my sugary iced coffee, and opened up my inbox. I was two hours late for work again but nobody said anything, as usual. One email was flagged red, titled Mandatory Meeting Today.

"There will be a MANDATORY emergency meeting in the chapel basement today at 1 p.m.," the email said in red

I looked at Jacob, my coworker, sitting across the dark

"You see this email?"

He nodded, with a devilish grin, slowly rocking himself from side to side

An hour later all employees sat in the pews, all with somber faces, waiting to hear what the emergency was about it.

"What, did somebody die?" Jacob whispered to me.

A lady took to the podium. She was short and stocky and was dressed in a navy blue power suit. She looked like a district attorney.

"Hello, my name is Barbara Connell. You may recognize me from the HR office, where I work part time. I also do PR relations for the church, specifically when it comes to sex crime accusations. Monsignor Dempsey is under investigation for breaking child pornography laws. He's being investigated on an international level. We can't get into the details right now, but we wanted to let you know what was happening. We need to come together and brace ourselves for how the community and the media will respond to these very serious accusations.

and whispered, "How cliche." Just the other week he told me that he wouldn't be shocked if someone at our station was arrested for child porn or child molestation. Why does it always have to be kids, we had joked. Why couldn't it be some sort of sexual deviance that doesn't involve children?

Cliche to us. A shock to our religious peers.

"This can't be true. It just can't be," said Harriet, a woman who worked in marketing. She stood up from her her seat, and was visibly shaking. There were tears rolling down her wrinkled, freckled, makeupless face. "Even if it is true, he prevalent spam emails are."

Jacob and I shot each other a glance. Jacob shook his head slowly

Mark, head of the IT department stood up. He let out a big sigh as his hands brushed against his Dockers. His small gold cross necklace glimmered in the light.

"I loved Dempsey as much as anyone," he said solemnly, "but I know through my work experience that child porn is not something that comes to you in a spam email. Maybe that's true with regular pornogrophy. But with child porn, you just can't come across it. You really have to know where



"Home Sweet Home" by Christina Kenton

to look with that."

a bad man," said Harriet. "We all make mistakes. He's done enough to be a monastery." so much good in the world."

"You gotta be fucking kidding me," Jacob mumbled.

"I was watching MTV video awards with my eleven year old daughter the other day," Harriet said, her lower lip trembling. "The lady, if you can even call her that, who hosted bushes and a bench. Vines crawled up its brick walls. the show made this disgusting joke about masturbation. It's no wonder in this day and age with that filth on television, that even a gentle soul like Dempsey would turn to the dark side.

whispered to Jason as we walked back to the control room. "Harriet is ridiculous. How the fuck can you blame the media though for his actions when he IS the media? He owns a television station, for Christ's sake."

"Literally for Christ's sake, "Jacob said loudly. "He was a real stingy motherfucker. Taking all these trips to Thailand too. You know what they say about Thailand."

"What's in Thailand?"

"There's a lot of sex trafficking that goes on there."

"Oh ya?"

"Yes, and he spent, like, months there. Fucking month long trips

Despite what seemed to be overwhelming evidence of his guilt, Dempsey never served any time. Jacob told me he overheard our bosses saying that Dempsey definitely used his credit card to purchase pornography and that he ratted out others involved to get off on charges.

Summer 2009.

"We need more lollipops," said Mick.

"I agree," I said, staring at him wide-eyed, sitting Indian style on my bed, the mattress on the floor. When I looked at Mick, all I saw was an owl. His pupils were swallowing up his emerald eyes. The blacks of my eyes were also sucking up my green. I couldn't stop staring at myself in the the chipped full-length mirror that was attached to the wall of my cramped Brooklyn bedroom. I looked like an owl, or an elf or something inhuman. The ecstasy was starting to high.

I grabbed my purse, and covered my eyes with dark sun- Hello, ma'am," I heard the cashier say. A toothpick of a glasses, and we headed to the bodega. We shut the door of my apartment and then the gated door that protected that door and wandered down my street. Madison Street. gly legs. It was a little past dawn. The sky was purple and pink. The streets quiet, the birds of the lush summer trees that lined church.

"Even if he did do it, even if he's quilty, it doesn't mean he's "I still want to know what this is," said Mick. "It looks large

"Yeah," I said, eyeing the the brick structure setback fifty feet behind the rotund cathedral with its stained glass of Jesus with his arms outstretched, a white dove above his thorny head. The setback building was three stories high, had over a dozen small windows and well groomed yard:

"I wonder if it is still in use."

"Well the church still is," said Mick.

"Just like a fucking religious nut to blame the media," I "You know, I can't even tell what kind of church that is."

"It's Catholic, Gina! Christ! You should know this. You work for the Goddamn Catholic Church."

Mick and I would often pass that church on Sunday morning, on our way home from a coked up night in Manhattan. It always made me feel so dirty to see people going to church when I hadn't gone to bed yet. African American women donning rimmed flowery hats, sky blue ankle-length skirts and black heels with square tips. But it was too early for anyone to be at church this morning. Perhaps the churchgoers were just hopping in the shower, or eating breakfast in their homes, anticipating their morning service.

l thought about all that had happened over the last three months: how me starting work at the Catholic channel seemed to coincide with my drug abuse and dysfunctional behavior. I hadn't been this wild since my first year of colleae

We walked into the bodega, through the door propped open by a single chipped brick. The store's tabby cat strutted out of the door, slithering and leaning its weight around our legs. The middle eastern man who ran the cash said hi, flashing a big white smile, holding prayer beads in his hands. He seemed to be about my age at the time, 25 or 26, and he always seemed to be working. On my way to work, I'd see him. At the end of a horrible coked up night, I'd see him. He was always smiling and never seemed to notice how disheveled I was.

Mick and I perused the aisles, passing dusty packets of ramen on a shelf above a shelf of toilet paper. The fridges glimmered. I eyed the sodas. A Coke seemed refreshing but I only wanted the concept of it. I knew that after half the can, it would just taste syrupy to me. The rest of the wear off, we were definitely coming down, but I looked very soft drinks didn't appeal to me. I wanted lemonade but not carbonated lemonade.

> white woman with sunken cheeks and face lesions walked into the bodega. She was wearing tight jeans over her gan-

I walked up towards the register. The summer sunlight from the streets loud. We bounced and staggered and wandered the propped open door was starting to shine in, cascading past the brownstones and past the corner with the large a shadow on the register. Clear plastic tubs of candies, lottery tickets and cigarettes were stacked around the cashier's

head. I pointed to the lollipop bin full of Tootsie Pops and said "I'll take six '

Mick stood behind me with a vitamin water, a five dollar bill in hand. I unwrapped a red lollipop and stuck it in my dry, pasty mouth. I crumpled up the wrapper and shoved it in my purse to throw away later.

There was some kind of commotion outside.

"No! Fuck you!"

Mick put his wallet in his back jean pocket and we headed out the door into the bright sunlight. A car service car, a black Lincoln Towncar was stopped in the road over a block away, in front of the church, the front door open. A body was hunched over another, hands were entwined. A man fumbled with something in a woman's hands. When their bodies revolved and faced us, I could see it was a phone.

"No!"

"Give me the fucking phone!"

The woman then threw the phone down. It disappeared, sunk into the black space of a gutter. I pulled the lollipop out of my mouth and looked at Mick, whose eyes were focused on the situation like a hawk. Behind us, the addict woman and the cashier stood, also watching. Then, the sound of punching. The man punched the woman in the face and she screamed. She then ran, maybe a guarter of a block away, and the man chased her, his arm around her, somewhat consoling her.

"Hey! Fuck you, man!! Miss," yelled the cashier. "Come here! Here!

The woman behind us mimicked him and said "Here!" But the woman did not come over to us. She instead let the man walk her back to the car and she got in the passenger seat.

"Why?" I said to the air.

The man looked towards us, then manically got into the driver side, shut the door once and it shut on the seat belt. He yelled fuck and then shut it again. Then he peeled out and drove towards the bodega. As he passed us, he began punching the woman who let out a blood curdling scream. From above our heads whirred a glass bottle. It was a lemonade Snapple bottle being thrown by the cashier. It hit the car windshield and shattered but the car did not slow down. As it drove away, I saw the outline of the man punching the woman with his right hand.

I felt helpless and stupid, lollipop in hand. I wished that I had done something more than just stand there. I watched the skinny woman run across the street with her gangly legs. An apartment door opened for her, held by an equally skinny man, half standing in a shadow. The cashier was now on the phone with the police and we were headed back to my dirty, sad apartment.

"And right in front of the church too," I said. "How sacri-



"Exhausted Cow" by Christina Kenton



TOP / MARC JACOBS SKIRT / MARC JACOBS SHOES / MODEL'S OWN

PHOTOS / FRANEY MILLER MODEL / DOMINIQUE @ STATE MGMT MAKEUP / CLARA RAE STYLIST / JAMESON MONTGOMERY

BRA / HELEN LAWRENCE SKIRT / HELEN LAWRENCE JACKET / VFILES SPORT PLUS SHOES / MODEL'S OWN 11

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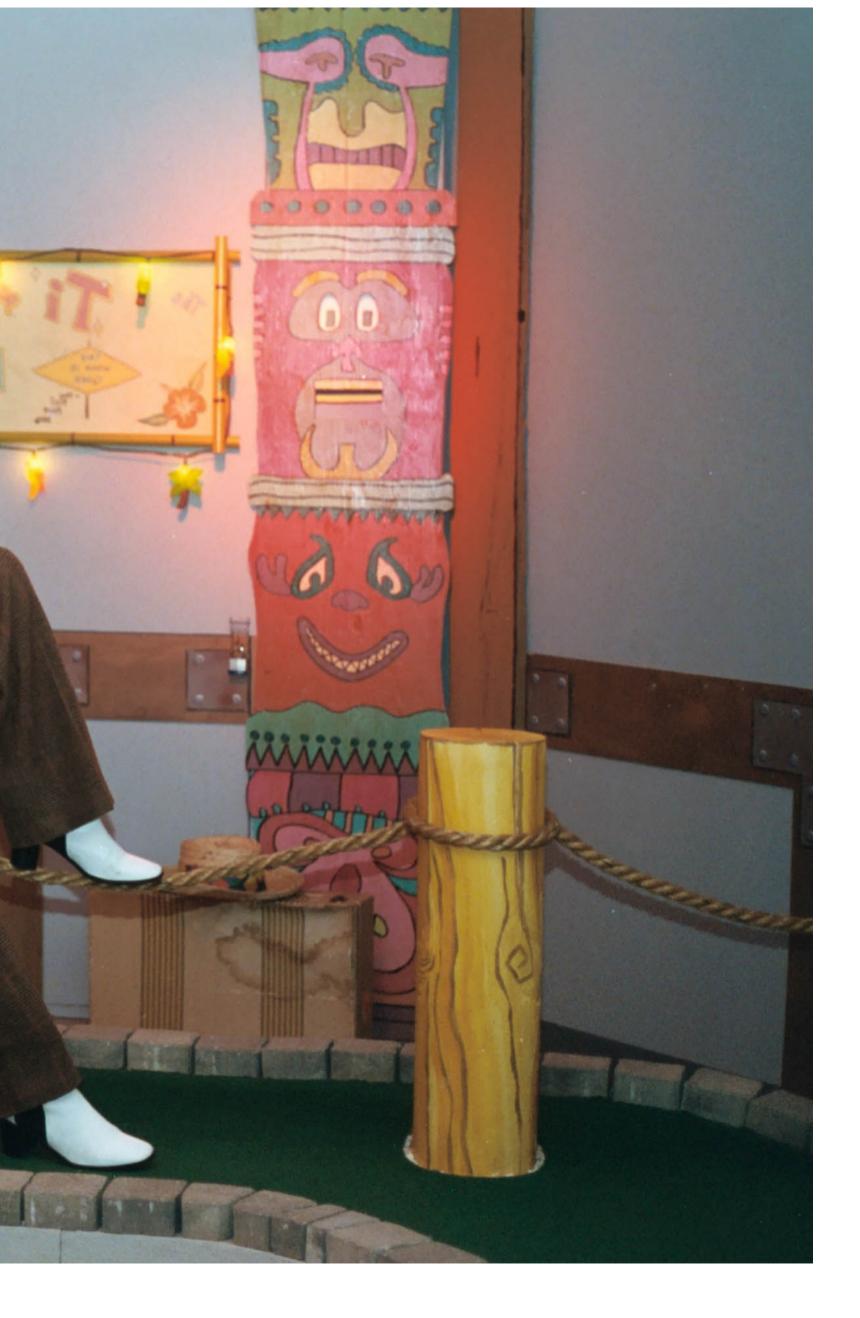




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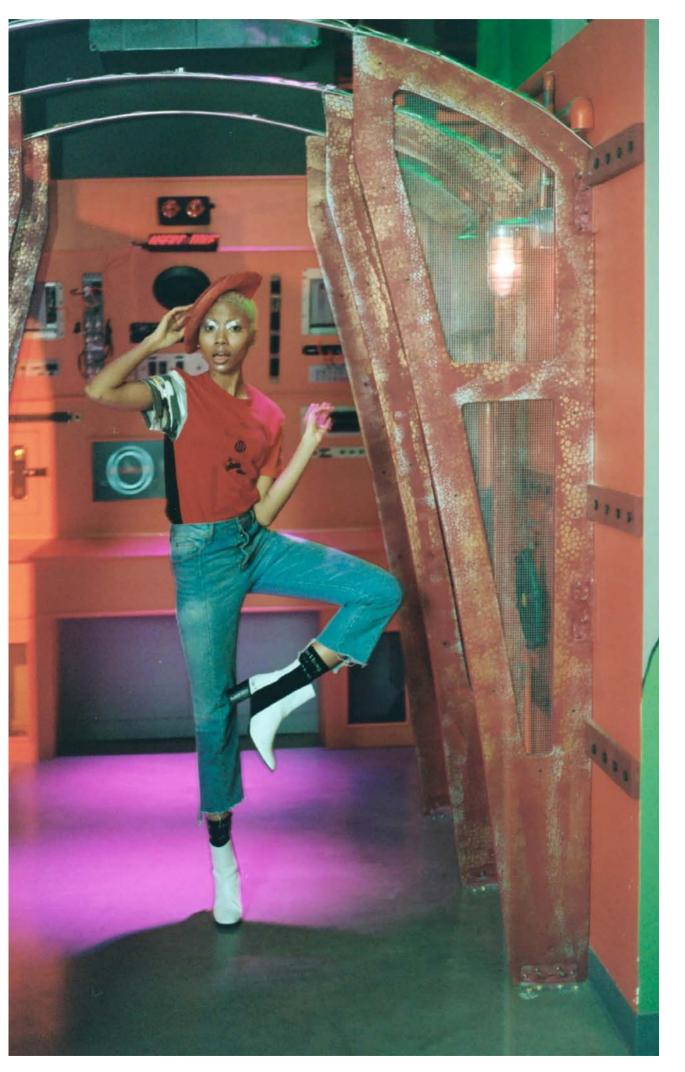
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GLASSES / VINTAGE ROBE / VINTAGE DIOR PANTS / BALENCIAGA SHOES / MODEL'S OWN

HAT / ACNE STUDIOS SHIRT / RICHARD GRAY JEANS / STYLIST'S OWN SHOES / MODEL'S OWN







PHOTOS / SHANNA FISHER STYLING / JESSIE JAMZ GROOMING / SABRINA BATES-WHITED STORY/ KOKO NTUEN

last to the





21-year-old Ashton Sanders is having the time of his life. When we talked on a Los Angeles afternoon, Sanders was a family. From Naomie to Janelle, we're all checking juggling press junkets and script readings gearing up for in with each other to make sure we're doing fine." what's to come next amongst the award circuit madness of Tinseltown. Oscar-nominated Moonlight, the intoxicat- The film weaves multidimensional narratives of ing drama directed by Barry Jenkins might be considered all its enchantingly flawed characters following

Ashton's breakout role but he has been brewing in the Sanders', Chiron Hawkins, through three acts of his limelight for years. life. Set under the misty skies of the deep south. Moonlight drags you into a bleak world of jazz Sanders is an enchanting, fun character to watch, horns and the most intimate roundabouts of human exuding all the best parts of youth, fearlessness, and poise. existence. At times it can feel too exposed, and a bit His sculpture like silhouette, millennial style, and insightful painful to watch in, like sitting through an uncomskater dude like charm has transfixed Hollywood putting fortable family explosion that you are not part of. him on a predictable trajectory of fame and success. 'I am It's a different perspective of life in America that so fucking happy,' Sanders says when I ask him how he too readily goes unseen. It's a film that mixes all feels when he wakes up in the morning. the best part of cinema and story into a cocktail of unrefined psychological experiences, drowning the "Everybody that had that dream of what they wanted to viewer in the complexity of the human condition.

do when they were kids-I'm literally doing this right now. Which is so surreal. It's hard to wrap your head around With piercing eyes and bird-like mannerisms, Sandbecause that doesn't happen often. I feel like we all kind ers guides the audience into the depths of his charof feel the same way, everybody in the cast. I feel like I'm acter's deep pain and quest for belonging. Watching from the outside looking in, you know? But I'm walking in him play Chiron on screen is a cathartic experience these shoes. It's dope, man, so dope. This is my job and uprooting deep instincts that are scarily erotic and I fucking love it. I just booked this project called, Captive real in the most vulnerable of ways. The lines be-State with Focus Pictures and I'm playing the lead in that. tween sexuality, blackness, and male hood become I'm looking to keep my work consistent and doing dope fragile, are exuded by a quiet tenderness. His methprojects and collaborating with great people. Then, I think od approach to characterization pushed him into I'll I continue to have these happy wake ups." withdrawal lasting weeks after filming. Sanders counts scenes in the film with Naomie Harris and Moonlight is a choir of black excellence. Mahershala Ali, Jharrel Jerome as some of the most intense and or-Naomie Harris, Janelle Monáe, Trevante Rhodes and ganic teamwork he's ever been a part of.

Alex R. Hibbert are just a few of the actors that push the film to exponential heights, telling multiple stories of love, "It was definitely a challenging part, but super, super pain, family and self. 'I've never had an acting experience therapeutic and definitely necessary. I learned a lot with an ensemble like this in my life," Sanders says when I mention being completely starstruck by the cast.

Mahershala Ali is someone that has especially been pain." a source of encouragement for Sanders.

The aura of *Moonlight* is that it brings people to-"Dude, he has such a light around him and he's been in this gether in a way that shows that complexity and love industry so long. He's helped me stay positive through it of human life from an experience that has been unall. That's been a big, big help for me. Things can get a charted. On the film opening up a side of life that little iffy, but he's been there to be like, 'Nah, bro, you're brings a delicate romance to black love and life in good. This is where it's at. How you're feeling isn't valid general Sanders says, and at the end of the day, you're gonna be straight.' And Barry has too, and Trevante, and everyone. We're all just "People have been seeing Moonlight and have been

about people. I learned more about people in general. Just on and on with growing and experience. There was pain within that, but it was a beautiful able to rekindle that love or feel or it was refreshing to see after the election. I love hearing all of that because that means I'm making art. That can change the social consciousness or heal the heart of it all. I just wanna continue to make people feel good in times like these. I feel like art is very much important. And them, in the media, are very important. We have the job to... we can either use our celebrity to sit in it or do something about it and make people know that it's gonna be okay."

Growing up in South LA lent itself to experiences that resonated with Sanders, allowing him to capture the tumultuous times of adolescence. In his own childhood, Sanders escaped the emotional stress of his environment through cartoons and Disney films.

"I remember seeing *The Lion King* live at the theater when I was six years old and I think that's what actually inspired me to pursue this. I was six years old, in these balcony seats watching "The Circle of Life," watching these live, big, fucking animals walking down the aisles. It was all just really beautiful. It made me feel like... everything entirely. I fell in love."

Sanders turned to acting as an outlet for his pent up rage stemming from the years of bullying he received in school. "Fuck those people. Fuck them. Fuck bullies," he says. Eventually, Sanders enrolled in Amazing Grace, an all black acting conservatory, which he credits for being the turning point both personally and professionally.

"They taught us acting and dancing, the focus being acting. There was also space for young artists to come together and not be judged, to be ourselves and to be loved. Acting saved my life. The love for the craft brought me to that environment, that environment molded me into who I am today. That's part of every character that I do and every part that I take."

In that setting, he thrived acquiring a variety of theatrical skills that he has been crafting for years.

"What's crazy is that I actually have done more musicals than I've done straight plays and filmography. I started off doing musicals. I was doing musicals up until about my senior year of high school. So, yeah, I do actually sing. I don't tell people that I can, but..." He trails off leaving me with wonder.

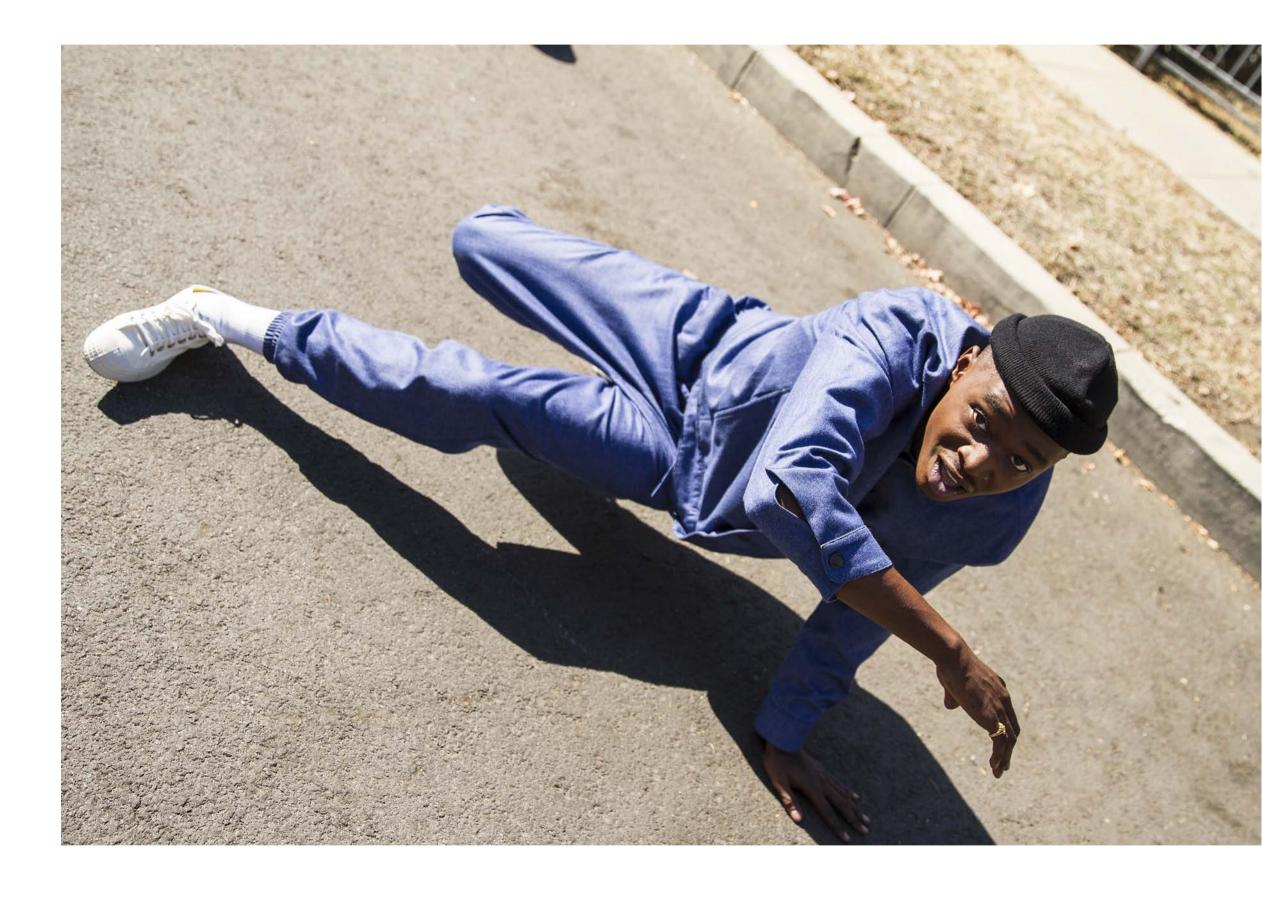
His teenage years are what Sanders remembers the most of his cherished youth.

"I was surrounded by inspiring peers and dope friends and I was creating good art. I was surrounded by my family. I had everything that I wanted. It was really cool. I love LA. I go everywhere else but always come back to Los Angeles. I'm so happy I'm from here. It's very magical. And it's cool to be based in my city doing what I love. That's the way to do it. It's all home. All home."

Despite all of the adversity he has faced coming of age in Los Angeles, Sanders can finally sit back and relish in the enthusiastic support from his friends and family and the new beginnings of fame.

"It's been all up from every aspect. Everybody has been showing love. I just wanna continue to inspire my peers and my fellow artists. Of course, you know, my family is super stoked. They've been really riding this from the beginning. They watched all of this grow. It's kind of like a seed being planted and watching the tree grow. I can't imagine how they feel. My pops is more stoked than I am, so is my mom and my uncle. My entire family is really, really supportive. When you have your close family and your close friends there, that's all you need."

l concur.





SHIRT: FAAN. JACKET: DEUS EX MACHINA. PANTS: IIJIN. SHOES: NOVESTA





SHIRT AND PANTS: GOETZE. JACKET: LANDEROS. SHOES: NOVESTA. HAT: ASHTON'S OWN.







TROUSER- DIESEL BLACK GOLD. BLACK KNIT SWEATER- HATCH. WHITE OFF SHOULDER TOP- CLAUDIA LI. SHOES- DR. MARTENS.



What's the whole whirlwind been like? Having people reso-Leah Dou must have been born with a music note in her mouth. Her parents are music legends, Faye Wong and Dou nated with your music and wanting more? Wei, the Beyoncé and Jay Z of China. As a kid, Leah Dou was immersed in her parent's big stadium lives, harmonious notes It's very flattering! It's satisfying because I did go through a carrying through her family like a ritual. Leah was featured on period where, it was all was all very overwhelming for me, as a her first track, Faye Wong's " (Tong)" when she was just one teenager being in the family that I'm in, and the background year old, by 19 she was doing arena tours opening for Basand everything. It was overwhelming at one point, and I did tille. Her voice carries in a way that hauntingly alive like the sort of want to get away from that. But, that's not why I make soundtrack to an underbelly of a city filled with sinners and music. I make music because I love it. But, to be able to sepasaints alike. rate myself from my background is still something that is like very satisfying and gives me great comfort.

Dou's brilliant debut, Stone Café is an album full of ethere-What did putting out your debut album, Stone Cafe, mean al vocals and wavey rhymes that are reminiscent of the best parts of 90s electro pop. The songs are a high fashion affair to you? that could easily accompany any long legged model down a catwalk or just a lonely girl sitting on the subway waiting for Putting out Stone Cafe, was sort of like a relief because I've had these songs for so long. I think one of the first songs that I her stop. The songs hit you in an intimately charged way that almost make you feel the blood running through your veins. In wrote, I was fifteen or sixteen. I put it out when I was eighteen, so it had been guite a while. It was just a really great feeling to person, Leah is very much the same. She is intimidatingly cool down to the most minute details like her quirky tattoos, her be able to put that out. I didn't really have that many expecstudious elegant nature and how comfortable she seems in her tations. I always find that the more you expect the easier it is body and surroundings. I caught up with in the midst of her for to get disappointed, which I feel like is totally unnecessary, 2017 year while she was working on more tours and a second becaus of that's not why I make music. I worked hard and put together an album and put it out. I was surprised about how it album. did really. I just feel incredibly fortunate. Yea!

music?

I guess as a kid I didn't really notice it as much because I thought that was normal, for me. As I got older I began to realize that it was a little bit different. You know, from other people's lives. I don't know, it was great having music all the time. Playing it the car, playing at home. It's just, its so natural to me, ya know. To have music. Even now I'm not really used to not having music in my life. So, when I'm in the car or when I'm doing anything, I'll always put music on.

I'd probably say that it was when my aunt would put on her favorite records in the car, I'd want to listen to certain songs over and over and over again. I fell in love with like certain songs off her records. That was one of my favorite things to do, be in the car with my aunt and listen to the stuff that she likes.

LEAH DOU PHOTOS / JENA CUMBO STYLING / KIMBERLY NGUYEN HAIR & MAKEUP / LAURA MITCHELL STORY/ KOKO NTUEN

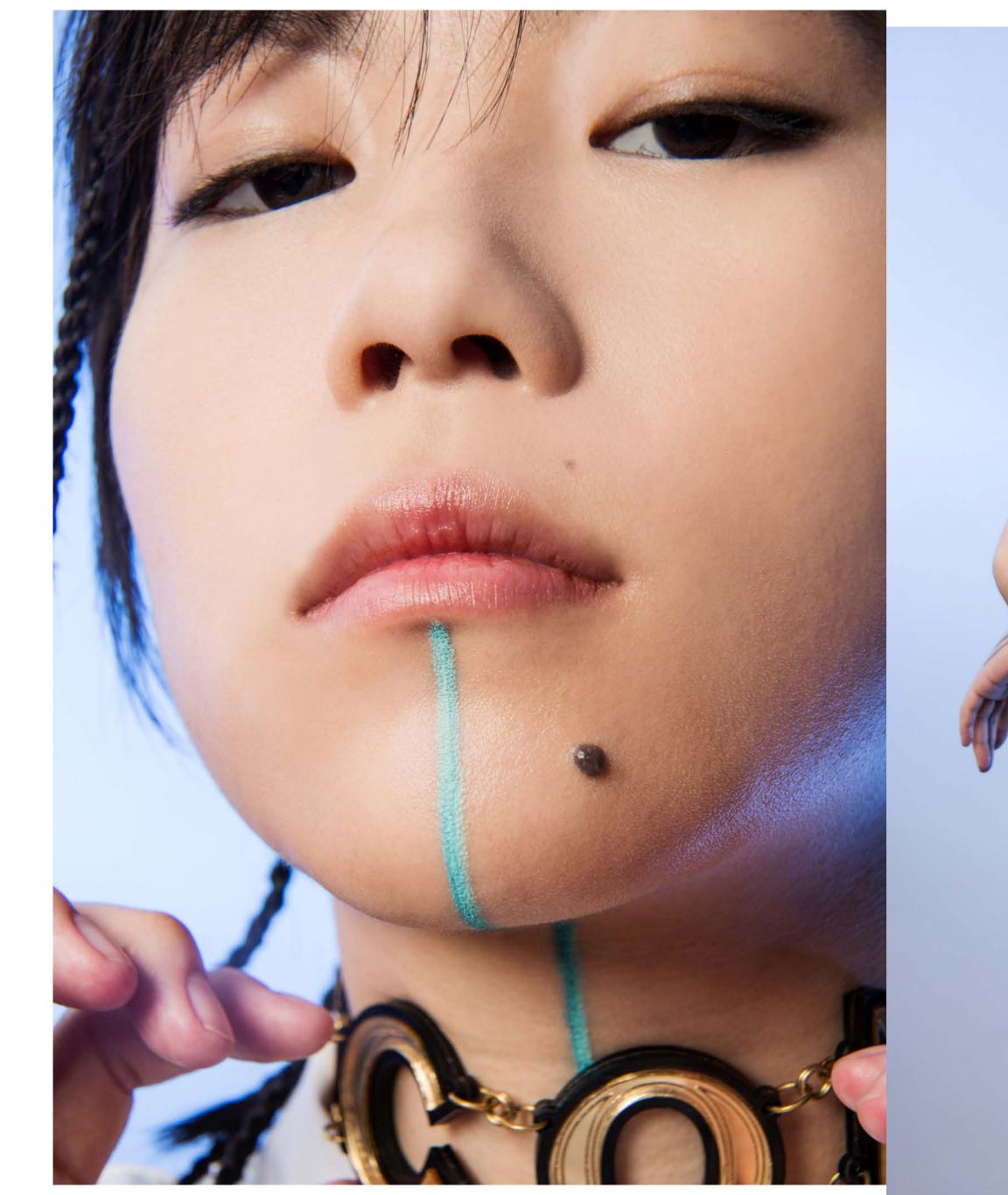
What was it like growing up so closely, like immersed in

Do you remember your earliest memory when you first fell in love with music? When you were like, "I love this song!

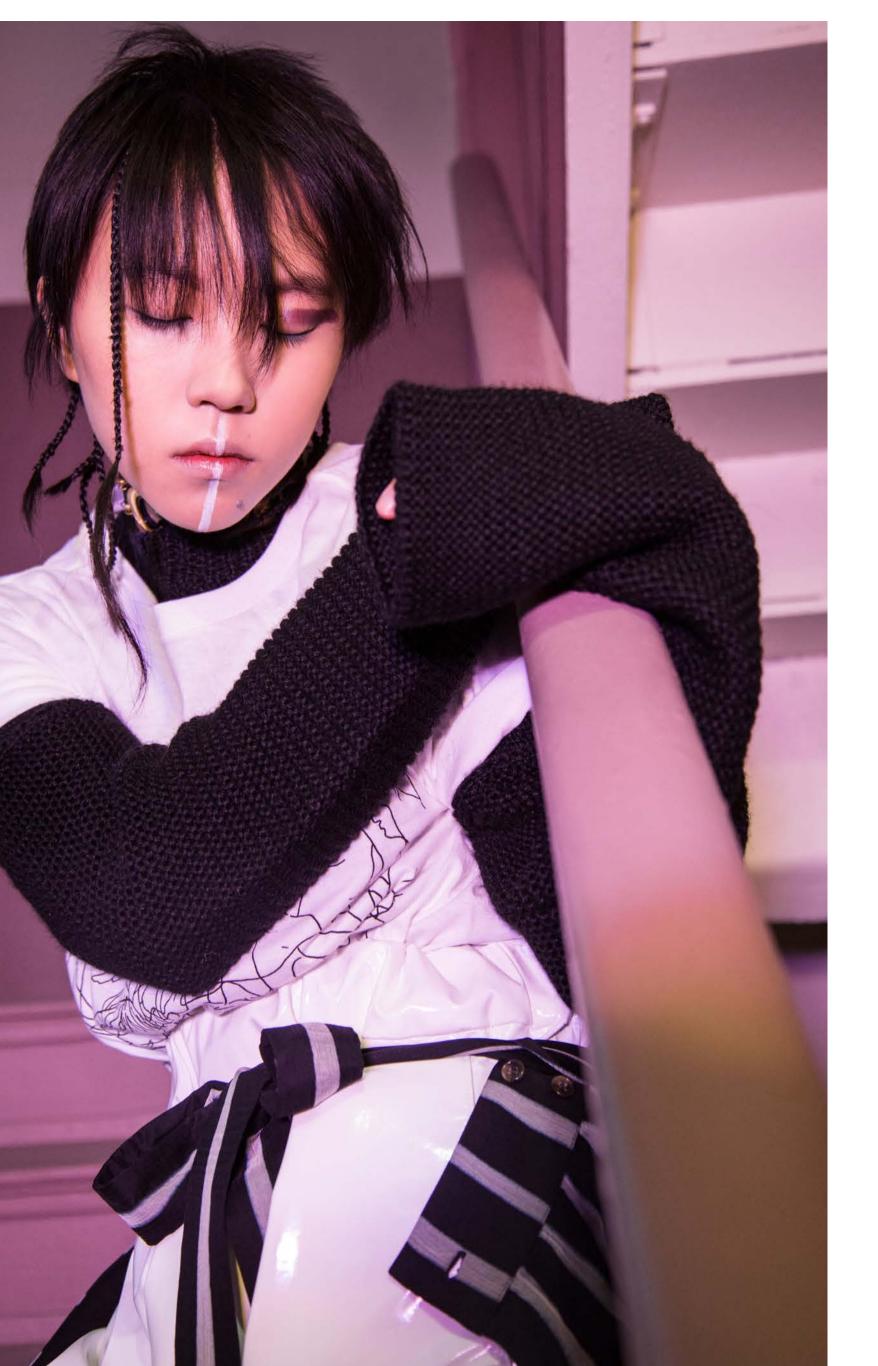
And what's the process like then for your sophomore album? You know your mindset, your chill-zones. Like how do you feel when your working on this one?

Oh, it's completely different! I think it's completely different. For this upcoming album, it didn't take as much time as it did for the first album. The first album took two or three years but this one came together pretty guickly, within like a year. In a way, I feel more attached to it or I could relate more to it, even more than the first album because by the time I put out the second album, I was finding it slightly difficult to relate to. I'm changing and growing as a human being and ya know that happens. So I feel like the second album is very much the present for me and really expresses and conveys the person that I am right now.

77 LADYGUNN/DIGITAL×*s'17*



WHITE COLLARED TOP- CLAUDIA LI. JUMPER- RODEBJER. SWEATER- MARCELO BURLON. SHOES- DR. MARTENS. CHOKER- ISLYNY GRAPHIC T-SHIRT: DEATH TO TENNIS. BLACK KNIT SWEATER: APIECE APART. STRIP SKIRT: NANUSHKA BUDAPEST. WHITE PATENT TROUSER: S'MM. SHOES- DR. MARTENS.





TROUSER- DIESEL BLACK GOLD. BLACK KNIT SWEATER- HATCH. WHITE OFF SHOULDER TOP- CLAUDIA LI. SHOES- DR. MARTENS.



Joan Jett, David Bowie, and T.Rex have big (and often sparkly) shoes to fill, but Frankie and The Studs aren't afraid I've always felt like it's a blessing and a curse. It's a blessing to pull them on. Their sound is gritty and hits between the in the way that my dad is kind of like my mentor. He's like eyes with songs like "High on Yourself" that quickly spark my biggest critic besides myself I've always said, because visions of leather clad bands playing standing room only dive when I'm playing he's like 'you should play it this way'. He venues in the heydey of New York's punk rock scene. really guides me with the music part of it because he knows so much. But, as far as my career I really want to build it myself. But this isn't the early 70s, it's the tail-end of a decade marked When I reach out to clubs and venues about booking shows I don't mention my dad I just want to start from the bottom by its return to 90's fashion and references to 80s synth pop ruling the radio, but if you ask frontwoman Frankie Clarke, because I feel like that's the only way it feels rewarding is if I the world is finally ready to herald in a return to a more glambuild it myself and not piggyback off of his success.

JOHNNY MARTIN, MATT LUCICH

orous brand of rock and roll.

Frankie is arguably the perfect rock amalgamation, daughter **na bring leather jumpsuits back**" and I support you fully of Guns N' Roses guitarist Gilby Clarke, she took her first in that endeavor. What role does fashion play in your life steps on a tour bus and played in her first band at just 11 years old. In the past year, Frankie and The Studs have graced sacred stages in New York and Los Angeles, and with no signs of slowing down, we asked Frankie about life on the left coast, being a second generation rockstar, and what it takes to ignite a glam rock revival.

lywood?

I still love Hollywood, but for me, I've always been kind of torn between New York and LA. For some reason, I thought that So much of what is in fashion right now is a call back to the maybe New York was a better fit for me because of the punk 80s and 90s, why the affinity for the 70s? rock scene there but I spent some time in New York over the summer and I realized that LA was home. LA has so much I like 70s glam rock because of the glitter rock aspect of rock and roll history with The Sunset Strip, the clubs that are course. I love glitter, I love platform boots and leather jumpthere like [Whisky a Go Go] and the Viper Room, which we suits and just the colorful glitz and glamour of it all but it still has that raw edgy gritty feel. I think that glam rock is still relplayed this past month. It's just really cool to play those places and think about what other acts have played there and it's evant today because of the androgyny and gender bending, really inspiring. Ideally, I'd like to spend time in both places, gender fluidity, liberation, rebellion theme of it all. like if I could go to New York when it's not cold (laughs) I'd spend some time there. Are there any artist out right now that you are influenced

FRANKIE + THE STUDS PHOTOS / DANIELLE DEFOE HAIR / TRACI BARRETT @ ART DEPARTMENT MAKEUP / NATHAN HEJL @ ATELIER MANAGEMENT STYLING / SAMANTHA BURKHART @ THE ONLY AGENCY STORY / ERICA HAWKINS FRANKIE + THE STUDS ARE FRANKIE CLARKE, RONNIE SIMMONS,

I know you grew up in Los Angeles surrounded by rock and roll and the glitz and glam that comes along with that lifestyle, does that ever leave you feeling jaded about Hol-

In the band bio, you're referred to as a 'rebel with rock star roll royalty give you added pressure?

I read this quote from you that I loved, it was "I just wanand your music?

For me, I've always been inspired by 70s glam rock and I always felt that the fashion was just as important as the music for that scene, so I've kind of taken inspiration from that. I got into glam rock because my parents introduced it to me when I was really young because they're both fans. It started with T.Rex for me, I love the way that he dresses and I love his music. The leather jumpsuit has kind of been something I adapted and was inspired by Suzi Quatro and Joan Jett of course, but now I'm starting to consider getting one in every color. It's just kind of my thing now.

by or feel are getting it 'right' musically?

blood in your veins' does being the daughter of rock and I really like The Struts, I've seen them play a couple of times, and I like how [Luke Spiller] is kind of like a reincarnation of



PANTS: THE WAY WE WORE JACKET: LEFTHAND SHIRT: MARC JACOBS EARRING: GASOLINE GLAMOUR BOOTS: MARC JACOBS RING: GASOLINE GLAMOUR EARRING: RUNA JEWELRY

Freddie Mercury. They have the rock and roll influence but shows here and there in LA, we played Lollapalooza, then they sound new, they sound current, and I think that's what we played a couple in New York. Really I'm looking forward appeals to younger people and I think it's cool that they can to just going out on the road and getting dirty and being in probably introduce some young people to rock and roll that a van and playing every night and really bonding as a band. way. Maybe some people didn't know who Queen was, but I feel like the more we play the more chemistry we have on because they follow Luke on Instagram, now they know. I stage the more we figure out who we are and what we want think Luke actually said once that he was a really big fan of to say as musicians. I'm excited to see what going on tour The Darkness and he didn't even know about Queen yet, will do and change. but his mom was like 'if you like The Darkness, you'll like We played at a couple different places [in New York] a lot Queen.'

One of the first songs I learned on guitar was "20th Century Boy" by T. Rex so that song has always been in my head. Obviously "Cherry Bomb" by The Runaways. I was introduced to them when I was really young because I had an all girl rock band at the time, and that was really a game changer for me. I was in my all girl rock band and my dad was like 'you should really hear The Runaways' so I listened to them and they really inspired me and continue to inspire me. Joan Jett is my hero.

year?

We haven't really been on a tour but we've been playing

"I like 70s glam rock because of the glitter rock aspect of course. I love glitter, I love platform boots and leather jumpsuits and just the colorful glitz and glamour of it all but it still has that raw edgy gritty feel. I think that glam rock is still relevant today because of the androgyny and gender bending, gender fluidity, liberation, rebellion theme of it all."

I love the sound of your single "High on Yourself." Were there any songs that you heard during your musical education that made you want to play and sing with that gritty directness?

You've been playing shows for the past year now, what

of the crowd that came to the show and the areas that we were in were where that New York punk scene started, so it was really kind of inspiring to be like wow we're where The Ramones, New York Dolls were. There were actually some people that came to our show that were very much involved in the scene at that time and they liked what we were doing. That's cool if we have the approval of the New York punk rockers, we're doing something right.

As far as New Music, what's up next for Frankie and The Studs?

We have three songs up on iTunes and Spotify and we're going to be releasing a new video in January for the song "She's Insane" and we have a new song that we're recording right now that's kind of a different vibe for us, but we're really excited about it. Hopefully, we'll just keep releasing new are you most looking forward to happening in the next songs next year. We're constantly writing and coming up with new ideas.



BILLIE EILISH

PHOTOS / NATALIE NEAL STYLING / KRISTIN CONDIA 1ST ASSISTANT / MONI OTTEHENNING MAKEUP / YASKUKO SHAPIRO HAIR / HAILEY ADICKES STORY/ AVERY STONE

listeners with her wistful debut single, "Ocean Eyes," Now still just 15 years old—and already possessing a voice and vibe that are both ethereal and self-assured—her potential feels expansive. Her latest single, "Bellyache", is proof she's the real deal: written with her older brother, 19-year-old Finneas O'Connell, in Almost two years ago, we were like "Hey, you write their Los Angeles home, the track veers away from who's done a terrible, unfathomable thing—listen to ... We always end up with something we really love. the song below to hear more—but doesn't know why: "Where's my mind," she laments, before answering What's your creative process like? herself: "Maybe it's in the gutter."

We chatted with Eilish about penning "Bellyache," what she's learned from being homeschooled her whole life, and just going for it in 2017.

Hey Billie! How did you get involved with music?

I grew up in singing in [the Los Angeles Children's] great song. choir, so that always helped me with my technique. But I never really started singing; I just sang all the Are your parents musical, too? time. People had to shush me because I sang so much. I started writing music when I was 12: I wanted to write down how I was feeling and put a melody to it, because that's fun. My brother [Finneas] started writing at 12 also. He's amazing-I've never met that type of person who can just write exactly what they're feeling. It's always been really inspiring for me; I always try to many guitars, three ukuleles—it's pretty stacked.

Last year, pop newcomer Billie Eilish snared millions of live up to that and try to write as well as I can because he does.

You now write music with your brother. How did that come about?

and I write, and we both sing, and we live three feet the airiness of "Ocean Eyes," evoking a darker Lorde away from each other in the same house, so let's write over a trap-infused beat. Eilish plays a protagonist together!" So we started writing songs with just us two

Usually, we start from scratch. I just go into his room, and we start playing some chords, and improvising some melody ideas. Improvising is great because you don't have to use [a phrase], but it could be right. We always try to think about if the song sounds good acoustic—if it's just you and a piano—it's a good song. If the song isn't good without production, it's not a

My mom is a singer and a writer. My dad taught me how to play the piano and the ukulele. We have three pianos in our house: a grand piano in our living room, a smaller grand piano in my brother's room, and in the living room, we have a full keyboard. And we have so



You've been homeschooled your whole life. What's something you feel like you've gained from that that you wouldn't have in a traditional classroom setting?

My parents decided to homeschool us because they believe in learning about things that you think are interesting—things that you're passionate about. [Even though I'm not in a classroom], I see a bunch of people and I do a lot of things, and it gives me much more time to focus on what I want to accomplish. In school, I feel like you learn about lot of things you're never going to use, and I feel like that's a waste of your time.

Have you ever wanted to go to traditional school?

A few times! But when I think about it harder, I'm like, "Well, I like doing what I like doing." People are so rude [about it]! They're like, "Oh, so you're homeschooled." And I'm like, "Yeah!" And they're like, "Oh, so what's this plus this times this?" Like, bro, can you not quiz me? You're not my teacher, and I don't go to school, and I'm not asking you to quiz me. So maybe don't.

Besides singing, what's something you love to do?

I've been a dancer since I was eight. I started dancing because I really liked tap dancing, so I started tapping, and then ballet—ballet was not my thing, but it helped my technique!—and then lyrical, contemporary, and hip-hop. It's such a good escape. Whenever I was really upset or something bad happened or I was mad, I could just go to dance and it would all go away. I could just be in myself, and feel how I feel without saying how I feel, which is rare.

The lyrics of your newest single, "Bellyache," are much darker than those in your first single, "Ocean Eyes." What's the story behind the track?

What's something you've learned about yourself since you've started writing music?

["Bellyache" is] flat-out a song about murder. We have a bunch of songs like that: crazy stories about these fictional [situations]. We like to write about stuff we're going though and things that people relate to, but it's also really fun to put on a character and act a certain way. That character [in the song] isn't me—but it also is. The song is really about doing terrible things and not really knowing [why]. We have this whole idea about it—like, you're doing these terrible things and then you're like, "Wait, what am I doing? Why did I just do that? Where is my mind? Maybe it's in the gutter!" [Laughs]

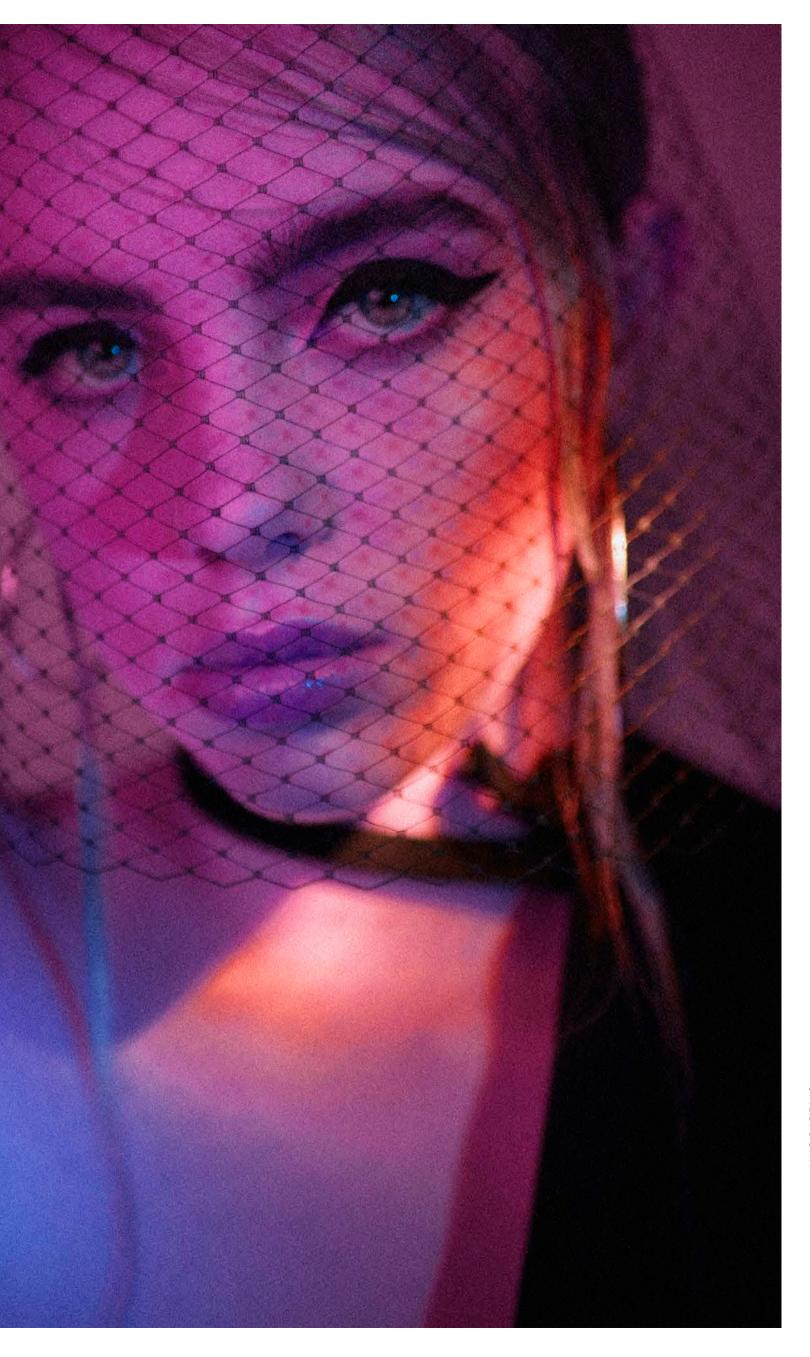
I'm a really deep person. I have a lot of issues. I overthink everything. I over-explain myself sometimes, just to make sure people understand what I mean. But something I've learned with writing music is just to go for it, instead of thinking, "I could say that, but that's not good enough." That doesn't matter. Who cares if it's bad? It's not going to be bad if it comes from your heart. Say it, and then change it, or fix it—but just say it first.

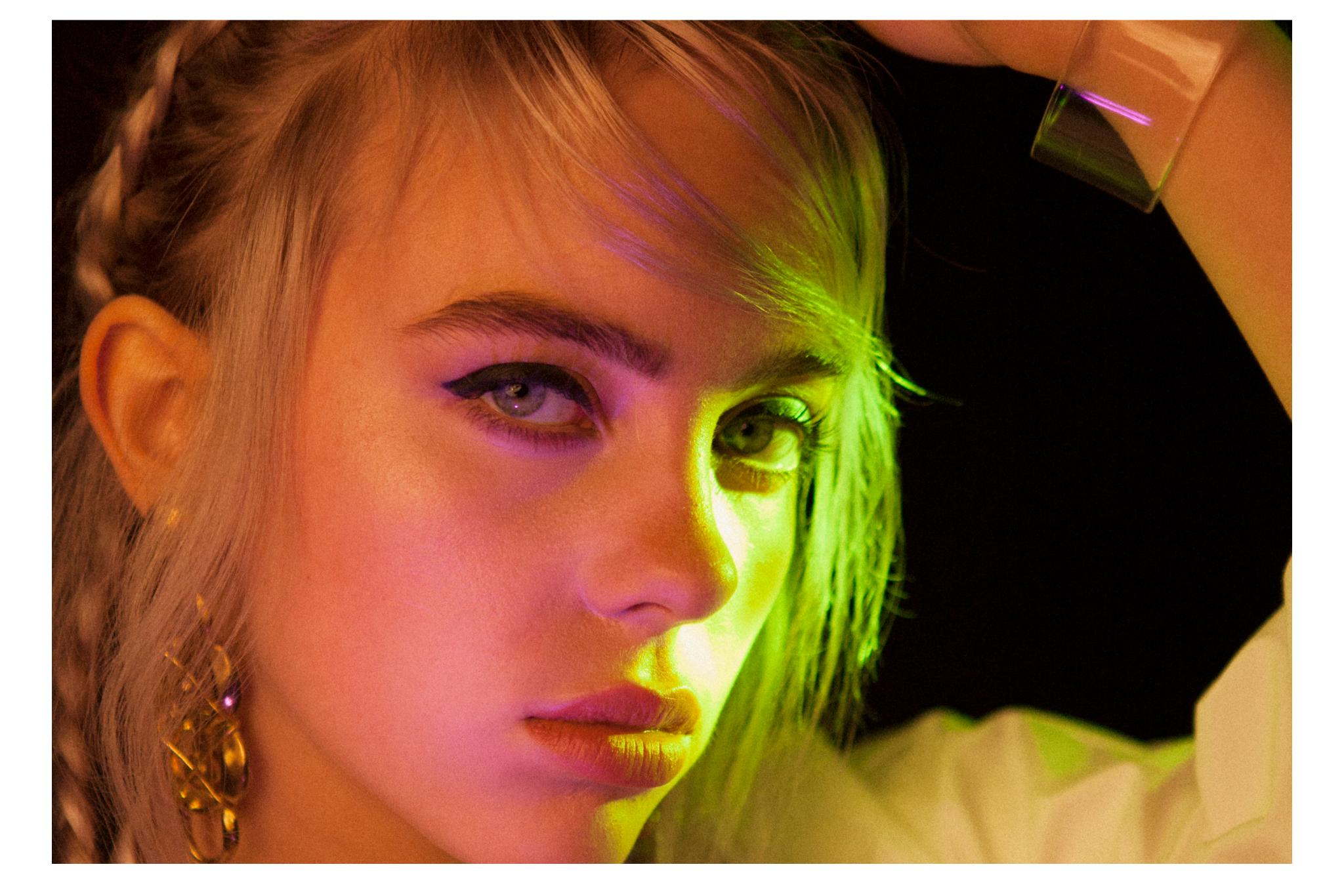
That extends to the rest of life!

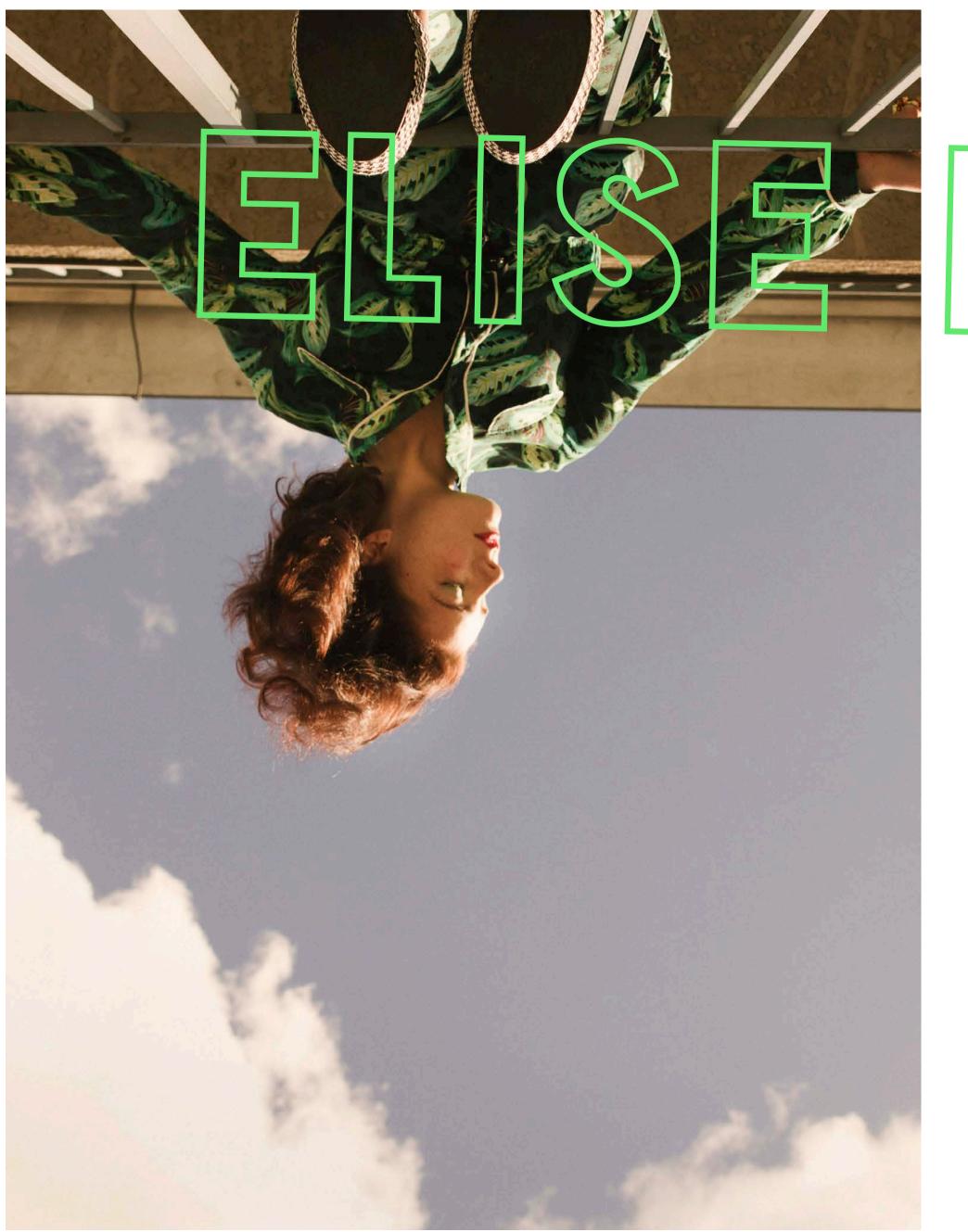
Yeah, I think about this a lot [in life, too]. Wouldn't you rather do something, and be able to tell a story about it? Instead of, "Oh well, that's kind of embarrassing, and I don't really want to do that because I don't want to feel weird in the moment." But that moment's going to pass, and that moment only happens once. And then for the rest of your life, it happened or it didn't. I'd rather have done something and say it was a mistake—or maybe it was the best thing I've ever done—instead of almost doing it. Lately, I've been trying to live by that more ... I'm not a shy person. I do what I want, when I want to do it. I wear what I want and I say what I want. And I don't care who thinks it's bad.



DRESS - ASOS WHITE, LUCITE BANGLE - VINTAGE, SHORTS AND EARRINGS - STYLIST'S OWN









Before Elise Eberle booked the hit WGN Does playing in a period piece project ev- Do you play music? network series Salem, she was simultaneously hosting at a french restaurant, working at a little local bakery in Atwater, and picking up as many catering jobs as possi- I think any project opens a door for disconble, all while juggling auditions with work nection from the real world, it's like Alice in hours. But when she was cast as Mercy wonderland. A beautiful escape. Lewis, everything changed. "It gave me the opportunity to be a full time actress - every struggling actors dream. I feel so incredibly fortunate." She gushes.

Today Elise momentum has not slowed I'm in a long distance relationship so Skype down. Her schedule is more busy than ever. is my savior; also, the internet offers eBay, When we chat she is sitting in her managers which gives me the opportunity to buy craoffice in Echo Park, eating her stress away zy exotic plants (my house currently looks with chocolate peanut butter malt balls af- like a jungle); the abundance of health food ter running around like a headless chicken stores makes my heart go pitter patter (go all day. That morning she tore her house cali!) and also whoever invented kombuapart because looking for her phone, then cha, I love you. as far what I don't like about You also starred Silversun Pickups realized it was in my hand the whole time. modern day life is how everyone is glued to She's a long way from her native state of their cellphones instead of interacting with How did you become such a sought after New Mexico where she spent her youth one another. And believe me, I'm guilty of **music video ingenue**? dancing and living under the dusky skies but it too. her earthy, free vibes are rooted in her uninhibited acting ability that she leaves in every role. Salem is currently in it's last season but moving to Cali? the character Mercy Lewis will always live on in infamy in the horror fandom realm.

We chat with Elise about the role that jump started her career, being a music video muse and what's next in her new beginnings of Hollywood.

Playing Mercy Lewis seems like it could have been so vulnerable, feral at times even. How do you get in the mindset for intense scenes?

l torture myself. I'm method.



PHOTOS DI HENRI AQUIJE STYLING / TRACY CYPROW HAIR & MAKEUP / JACKIE GIDEON @ WILHELMINA STORY/ KOKO NTUEN

ery make you feel disconnected from the real world?

What are some of the things you love most about modern day life and some things you love the least?

I think my answer to the previous question, right time. gives you a good idea...

Mexicans?

I've been questioned why I'm white if I'm New Mexican, if I rode a donkey to school, if there are only dirt roads... But I think the best one l've been asked numerous times is, "Wait... New Mexico is a part of the United States?"

I do! I am a trained classical pianist, been playing since I was 7.

I loved you in the Lumineers video for "Sleep On The Floor," and I love the band too. Were you a fan of theirs before you starred in the video?

I feel quite embarrassed admitting this but no, I only knew one of their songs, but didn't know it was by The Lumineers... Isaac, the director of the Cleopatra music video series, is a dear friend of mine and we've been wanting to work on a project together for a while, so I'm happy this worked out. Though, now I'm a fan! :)

"Dots and Dashes (Enough Already)."

Wow!! What a compliment! Thank you! How have you turned most "LA" since There are so many talented artists in every field out here in LA, and I guess I was just lucky enough to be in the right place in the

What are some stereotypes about New You got a pretty big scar while filming that video. What is your favorite scar and why?

As an actress, you would think the face would be the worst place, but it is my favorite scar. I think scars are so beautiful. I find that girls in particular tend to hide them because it is labeled as an imperfection. Which is so ridiculous. A scar simply means you were stronger than whatever tried to





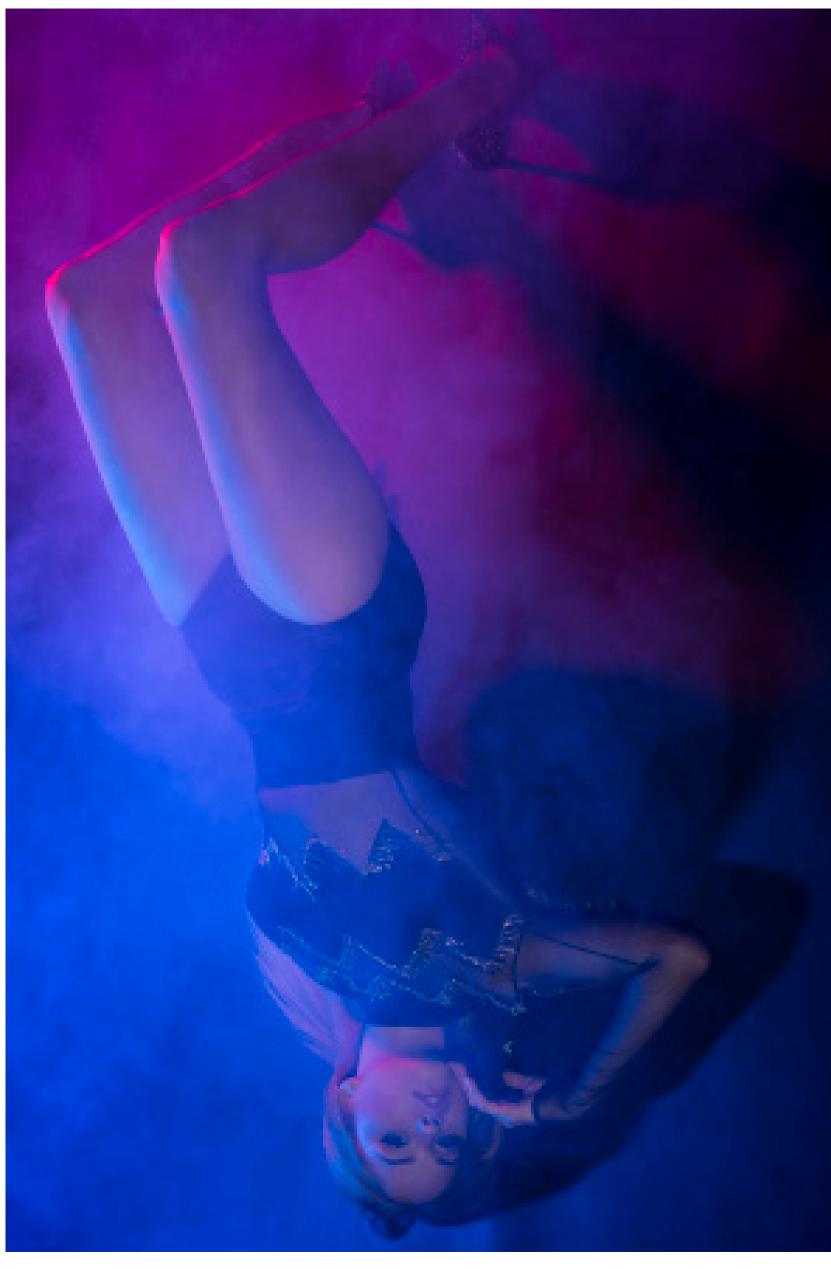
hurt you. It proclaims that you are a warrior. Now, who would EVER want to hide some-thing like that?! What future projects are you working on now that you are super excited about and want to share?

Did you notice your personality change at all after you cut your hair from super long to a pixie cut? It was a feeling I've never felt, both physi-cally and mentally, and all I had to do was shave my head.

What is something you are really good at that not a lot of people know about you?

For my job in high school, I started my own





popular se has had its As most cl up fighting the squeal

As most child stars grow up, they often end up fighting against being themselves, and the squeaky-clean personas of the characters they play on TV — sometimes getting lost along the way. Debby says that "It can be really scary because if people have only seen me in older episodes of Jessie, and it's been several years since that was released, I'm now a 23-year-old woman and I'm going to act and behave like a 23-year-old woman, not like my character where everything is kind of summarized and there is a happy ending and everything works out."

Disney highlighted all the things in Debby that a Disney star should be: she's likeable, funny, caring — not too different than how she is in real life. However, for any of the "real" problems that one may have, Disney has always highlighted problems that are somewhat surface level and candy-coated — and ultimately solvable after a 22-minute episode.

TV & film captures a moment in an actor's career that the public doesn't seem to understand isn't "the right now," or even their actual personality. Debby says, "You shoot something and then months later it comes out, people assume that that's who you are, and they define you based on whatever their most recent input of you is." While she understands that fans will always have an expectation of any public figure, it's still hard when life's real problems hit, and audience members often mistakenly skew the line of actor vs. character.

BODYSUIT AND HEELS - ELISABETTA FRANCHI

DEBBY RYAN

STORY / ANGIE PICCIRILLO PRODUCTION/ AARO ENTERTAINMENT PHOTOS / GLENN NUTLEY TALENT / DEBBY RYAN MAKEUP / SAMANTHA ALTAMURA HAIR / ANDREW ZEPEDA STYLING / ADEEL KHAN

The public eye is kind to no one, especially not child stars. But for Debby Ryan, whose acting career took off starring in the original Disney series *The Suite* Life *On Deck* when she was just a teenager, and later, the popular series Jessie, growing up "Disney" has had its' pros and cons...

For her more public mishaps, Debby is one of few stars that has been quick to recognize her mistakes, and makes no excuses. She says, "I'm really proud of a lot of the ways that I've dealt with things. TMZ doesn't care about the good ways that you handle things, and it's not anyone's job to hold me accountable, but my own."

While other Disney stars haven't made the transition into deeper-diving roles so smoothly, having a few bumps in the road isn't going to stop Ryan from growing and trying to be better — in every way, especially in her career. In her time with Disney, she made sure to take each and every opportunity to learn and make for a better career in this ever-turbulent industry. "They have such a system in place to where it's really difficult to fail, but it's not going to be done for you. In my relationship with Disney, the more that I learned, the more they encouraged me." And while it's maybe easy for some child stars to talk about the things they had to give up for their careers, like their childhood, or their privacy – Debby is quick to say that she was instead blessed with invaluable skills: having Disney allow her to "shadow" directors, writers, producers and the like, so that she could take a larger part in all of her projects. She says "I just automatically started doing things to make the days go faster and easier, which turned into a huge learning experience. If there was something I could do to make the shot funny and interesting, and to where we didn't have to shoot it 47 times... I was happy to help out." She also adds, "They took care of me, but they didn't baby me.

With new feature films in the can and other "Non-Disney" acting projects on the way, Ryan has learned to maneuver picking and choosing projects for the next phase of

her career by remembering what's true to herself. She chose to work on films like the upcoming *Riptide*, which was shot primarily with a female crew in just 18 days in Australia, and the comedy, *Life of the Party*, in which she shares the screen with Melissa McCarthy and Maya Rudolph. She says of her next project goals, "I don't want to look at my goals like a checklist, as in 'do three films this year,' because that's the way to do work that you don't like. That seems like you're working just to work. You have to have full confidence that the project is 100% where you want to go."

Something else that some child stars don't necessarily always do, is use their very large fan base as a forum for a cause, especially with one that is so relevant. Ryan's chosen "cause," is one she created herself: the hashtag, #dopewomen2016, a project that she started in order to celebrate the women around her, their achievements, and their dopeness. A project that will undoubtedly continue into 2017 and hopefully beyond, Debby says, "I think dopewomen this year is going to be one really large ongoing conversation with many different voices and a focus on people that I ultimately respect and look up to." She adds, "2016 was F'd and I need to acknowledge and honor that life's a little bit harder for others. If we cannot support one another and recognize all of our hardships — it's only going to get so much more sadcore."

With her sights set on the future, Debby is throwing herself into her work, not only by remembering and being grateful for what she learned at Disney, but by keeping on top of her game, and celebrating the things around her: "You cannot know enough. You cannot watch enough incredible films, you can never read too many scripts to inform your taste, or research the roles that



do.'

Beyond her immediate future, Debby says she would love to someday direct a project that she wasn't acting in and pushing her limits. She says, "I get afraid of getting out of my league but the truth is, I'm constantly pushing myself to live out of my league. I want to be doing something that scares me. I want to go for anything I put my mind to, and understand that the worst thing that they can say is no."

episode.

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Something else that some child stars don't necessarily always do, is use their very large fan base as a forum for a cause, especially with one that is so relevant. Ryan's chosen "cause," is one she created herself: the hashtag, #dopewomen2016, a project that she started in order to celebrate the women around her, their achievements, and their dopeness. A project that will undoubtedly continue into 2017 and hopefully beyond. Debby says, "I think dopewomen this year is going to be one really large ongoing conversation with many different voices and a focus on people that I ultimately respect and look up to." She adds, "2016 was F'd and I need to acknowledge and honor that life's a little bit harder for others. If we cannot support one another and recognize all of our hardships — it's only going to get so much more sadcore."

With her sights set on the future. Debby is throwing herself into her work, not only by remembering and being grateful for what she learned at Disney, but by keeping on top of her game, and celebrating the things around her: "You cannot know enough. You cannot watch enough incredible films, you can never read too many scripts to inform your taste, or research the roles that you want to play. Every bit that you do and bring into your projects should really feel good to you, as in 'this is actually like me.' The more well-rounded and the more I put into everything, the better I am at what I do."

Beyond her immediate future, Debby says she would love to someday direct a project that she wasn't acting in and pushing her limits. She says, "I get afraid of getting out of my league but the truth is, I'm constantly pushing myself to live out of my league. want to be doing something that scares me. I want to go for anything I put my mind to, and understand that the worst thing that they can say is no."



MAXINE

PHOTOGRAPHY / IDAN BARAZANI STYLING & PIECES BY / JAMIE MCCARTY CREATIVE DIRECTION & PIECES BY / RAEANA ANAÏS HAIR / JAYME J MAKEUP / LAKEISHA DALE





STORY /AUGUSTA GAIL PHOTOS / KRISTY BENJAMIN







When my friend invited me to see The Regrettes, she prefaced it by telling me, "You'll love them. Trust me." And she was right – I loved everything about them. Their wild energy, their message of self-love, their youthful brazenness. I spent the entire show dancing my butt off, marveling at how talented these four teenagers are, and listening gleefully to the no-holds-barred, patriarchy smashing lyrics. I got to ask the four of them – Kydia, Sage, Maxx, and Genessa a few questions, and we discussed everything from the importance of girl power to putting on a kickass live performance.

How was the band born?

Sage - We all met at School of Rock many many years ago and reconnected at a show we were all playing at but in different bands. Then it went from there. Lyd called us up when her previous band fell apart and we started rehearsing instantly.

You guys put on such a great live show – what's the best part of performing live?

Sage – Thank you! I think connecting with the crowd and focusing on the energy you're giving and receiving is the most fun and most important part of having a good time at a show. Go into it with a good mindset and enjoy the experience you get.

What does your song writing process entail?

Lydia - It honestly depends on the situation. A lot of writers have one specific preferred process, however mine is constantly changing. Sometimes it'll start with me just fiddling around on guitar and other times I'll come up with a melody in the shower. It's never the same.

Who are some of your musical icons?

Lydia – Buddy Holly, The Ronettes, Karen O Sage – Queen, Prince, Rush Maxx - Archie Marshall, Phil Collins, The Walkmen

When my friend invited me to see The Regrettes, she prefaced it by telling me, "You'll love them. Trust me." And she was right – I loved everything

Lydia - I think feminism and self-love should be important to everyone, not just females. Feminism for me lets me feel powerful and strong in times when I'm not feeling too good. It means something different for everyone.

How do you balance your musical careers with being teenagers?

Lydia - I'm not gonna lie, it can get really stressful at times, but in the end it's all worth it. I'm a super social person so it's very important to me to spend as much time with friends and family as possible when we aren't touring. School isn't too hard because I switched to a homeschool program, making everything much more flexible.

What's your favorite place to go in LA?

Lydia - I really love Moonlight Rollerway. I'm not very good at roller-skating, but it's just so fun. Also if you ever need/want to go shopping, Magnolia Blvd in Burbank is the BEST.

Sage - Gosh there's so many. Trejos Cantina is a favorite food stop of mine. Is my house an acceptable answer? Hah

Maxx - Hollywood, Melrose and Malibu to name a few.

Genessa - LA's hidden gem/my favorite restaurant is Follow Your Heart Cafe. If you end up in the valley, go there and get a nut burger and soup.

What's up next for the band?

Lydia - Lots of touring and honestly besides that, who fucking knows!

Sage - We are headed to SXSW in March and then we are touring all over the US and even to Canada for a bit! We really want to tour all over Europe and Brazil, and say hi to everyone and explore this earth.

Maxx - Lots of shows, touring, and fine dining.









important to know."

Indeed, Parson thematically transcends race and sexuality, lutely no change in him. Unmotivated, degrading, cocky. and his gripping narrative-driven lyrics speak to universal "Sad Song" was born after that encounter because I realstruggle: "Lyrically I try to be as honest as possible and tell ized how insanely happy I was to not be in that situation stories the way that I remember them. So really my songs any longer. It's not a sad song at all. It's an empowerment are short stories recounting the fucked up things life has record about realizing your worth. I think too many of us thrown at me set to music. My southern drawl, addiction to are afraid to admit we deserve better and we shouldn't be!" gospel choirs and pop melodies just bring it all together." Perhaps the most lyrically compelling moments on The The melding of emotional honesty, resilience in the face *Temple EP* are those that demonstrate simultaneous revof pain, and a relentless commitment to hope continues to erie for religion while also being literally and figuratively pay off for Parson, and keeps his fans inspired to look for iconoclastic. It is such paradoxes inherent in Parson's work light in the dark moments. "I firmly believe no matter how and the bearing of his own internal contradictions that bleak life can seem sometimes, there is always a way to makes him most authentic and relatable. find peace and happiness."

PHOTOS + STORY/ / MAEGHAN DONOHUE GROOMER / RAISA FLOWERS @ KREATIVE KOMMUNE STYLIST / SHANDI ALEXANDER @ THE BROOKS AGENCY

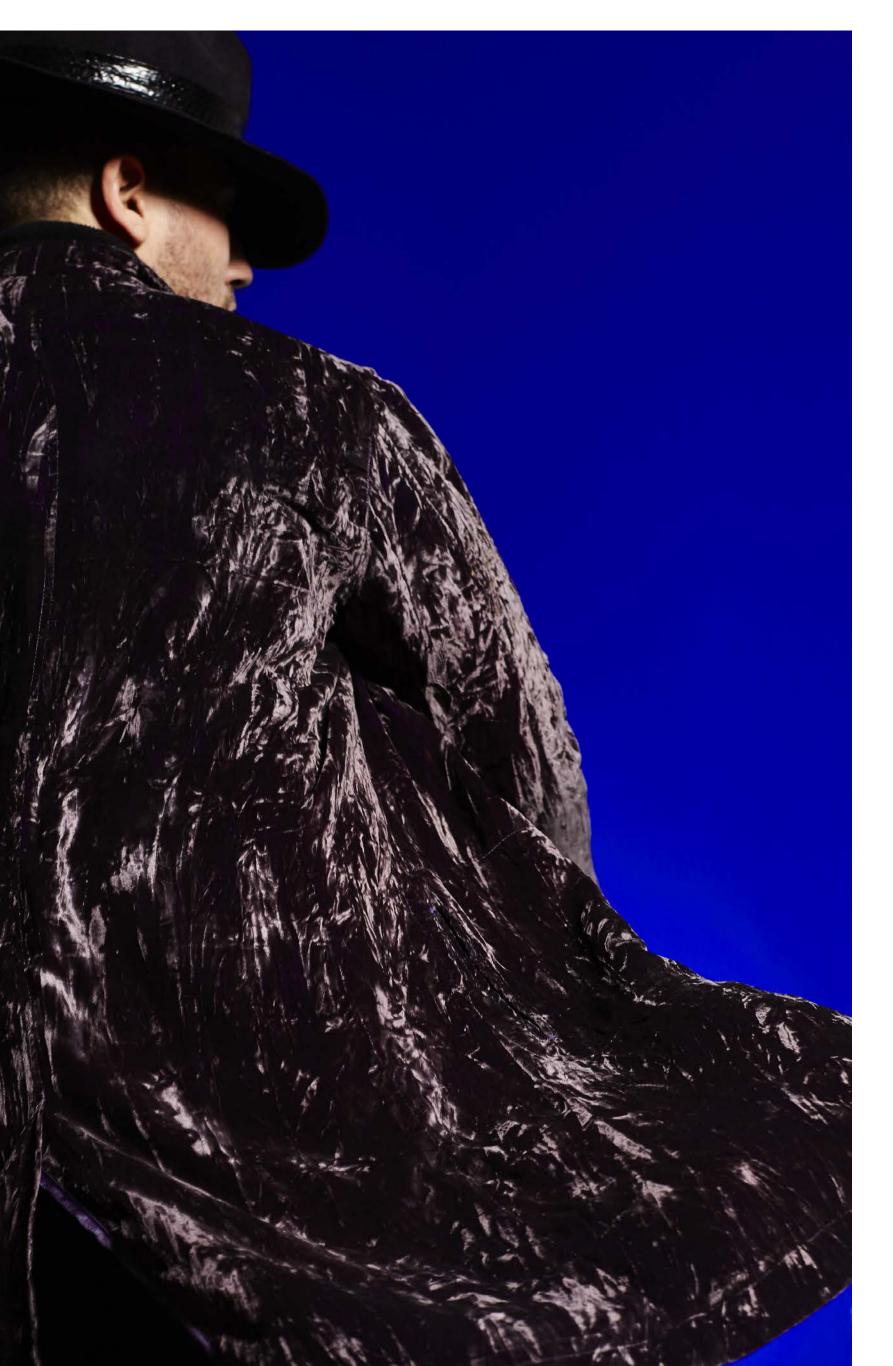
bivalence, and heartbreak. But he's here to tell you there's something better on the other side.

Almost every album review and interview with Parson highlights the fact that he is a gay, biracial man from the South who was raised in an environment heavily saturated with Southern Baptist values. But Parson can't be simply defined by this intersection of columns. The Gospel influence on The Temple EP, released one year ago this month, is undeniable in both sound and imagery, as is the grappling with condemnation of being a certain brand of sinner in that context. But Parson can't be ghettoized. "It does get frustrating," he explains, "because folks do immediately jump to those words [biracial, southern, gay] when describing me. Almost as if that is all that makes me who I am...Yes, they are important facts given what I do and Sometimes it can be limiting because it may give off the message that is all I am or all I stand for. I want to be known as an honest artist that makes material for all people. I want to uplift, inspire, challenge and unite. I'm a man. Not just a gay man. I am an artist and writer. Not just a gay artist and writer. I'm a storyteller with a voice and I think that's

Parson James knows a thing or two about judgment, am- The Temple EP very definitively makes a statement about acceptance and perseverance. There is a lot of strife, but also a great deal of rising up. Getting "bolder", empowerment in doing what you want and need to do regardless of judgment or what is deemed societally objectionable because, as he belts in "Sinner Like You", "Oh mama, we're not alone/Don't know what they do at home/But everybody got a bag of bones". In the final moments, both beautifully and perplexingly, Parson rounds out the EP with "Waiting Game"— the kind of song that is devastating and poignant for any of us stagnating in an unbearably painful situation with no discernable solution. As it turns out, this it "100 percent" his favorite song. "I'll never forget that time in my life. Never losing hope of what was ahead of me, but also in complete pain in that waiting period before I was able to do this for a living. That time of my life taught me how to survive, how to make something out of where I come from, but they don't completely define me. nothing and how to truly appreciate life and the gift that I was given. I cry every time I sing it".

> This past October Parson released "Sad Song", a single from his forthcoming album, which he explains is anything but sad: "It's my little baby bop! This song is basically about the same guy I've written any of my love songs about. I'm learning from our relationship constantly. I ran into him in LA one night and even after all these years I saw abso-





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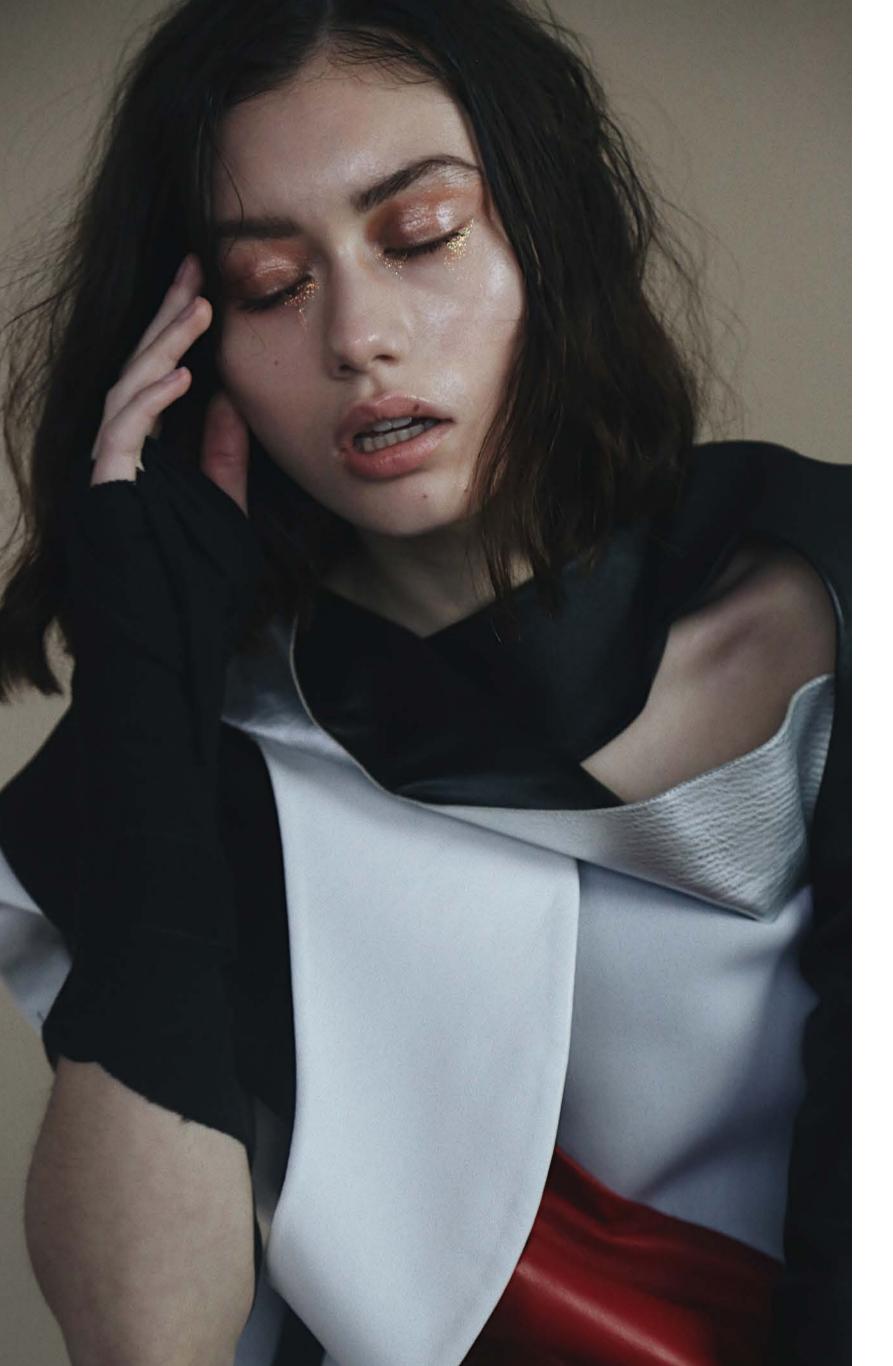
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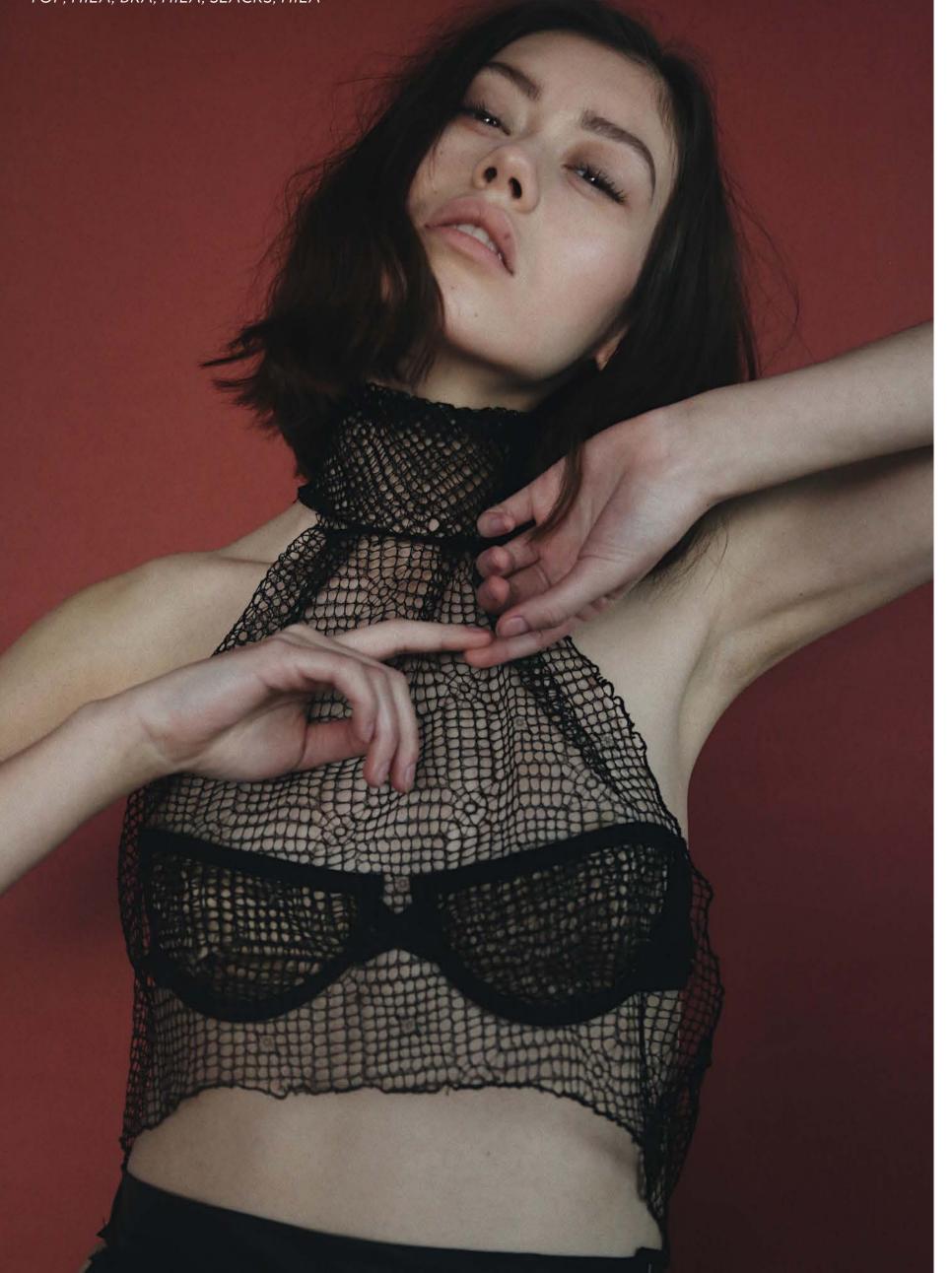




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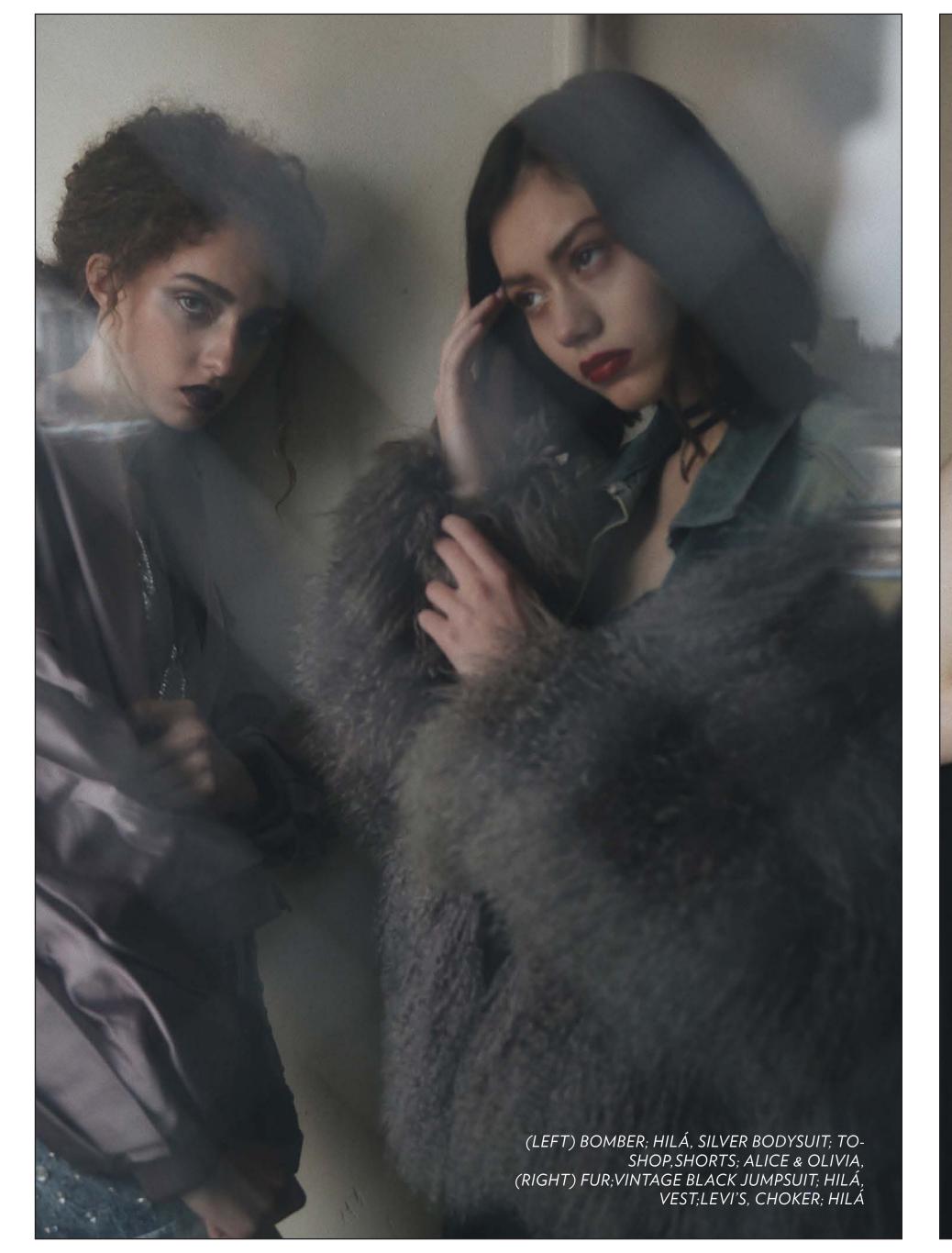


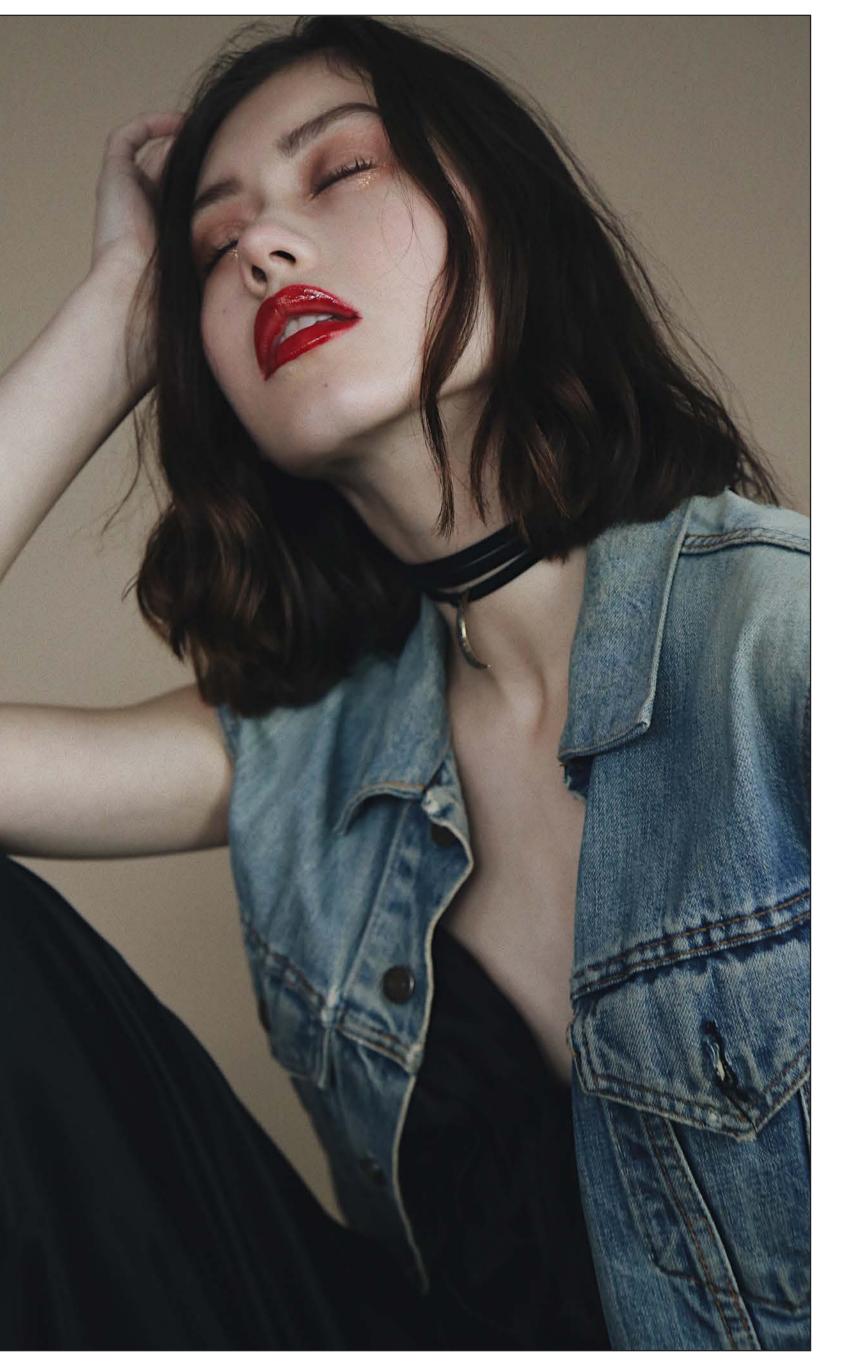




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PHOTOS / GRAHAM WALZER INTERVIEWS / KOKO NTUEN



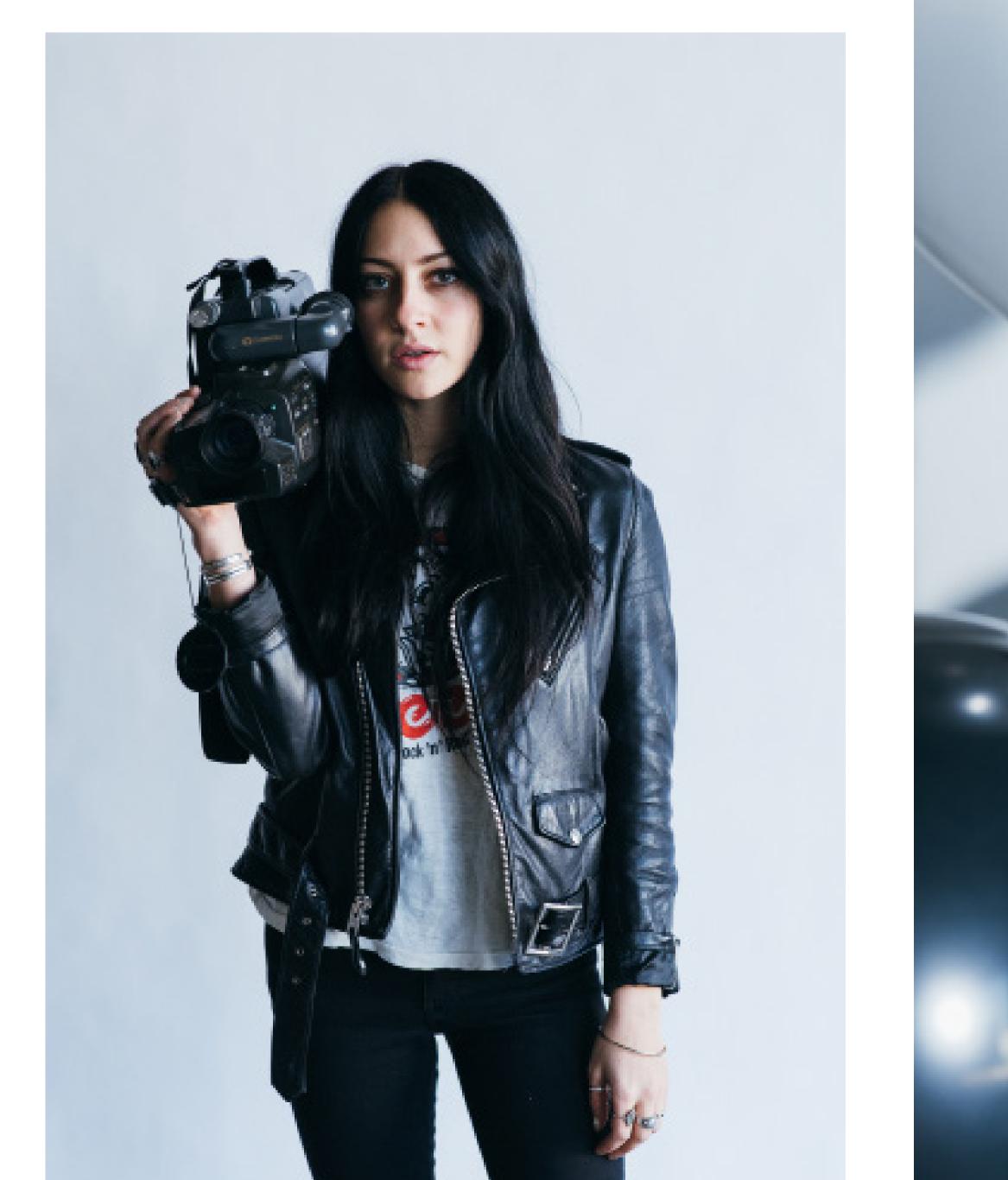


PRESENTS AS A WOOMAN

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OLIVIA JAFFE Occupation: Photographer.

What are your passions? Photography, rock & roll, and the pursuit of truth/knowledge.

What do you think is your biggest obstacle as a woman in today's world? Some men for some reason are still under the impression that we can't do the things they can. They will try and inform our opinions and expectations (or lack thereof) of ourselves, and we cannot be susceptible to that. If we don't think of failure (professionally-speaking, in any field, creative or otherwise) as an option, it's not.

When is a time you were proud of yourself?

I'm proud of myself every time I work hard to produce something I can confidently stand behind.. whether it's taking a photo of someone in a situation I might've had to leave my comfort zone to shoot, or putting together a gallery show, book, or zine, or going on tour for two months and coming home with 75 rolls of film that I pushed through sleep deprivation and constant punishers to shoot.. To see something through to the end, and to be satisfied by the finished product is absolutely invaluable.

What is your greatest accomplishment in your field?

The fact that I get to wake up and be paid to do what I love every day, to me, is the greatest accomplishment of all.

Who is a woman that inspires you? Lauren Dukoff.

What is the glass ceiling to you?

What glass ceiling? We are only constrained by the limitations we place on ourselves. Everything we want is out there for the taking, and it's never been more important for us ladies to get out there and show 'em all how it's done (and to support each other in the process). Don't let the boys tell you no, because there is no "no". We are absolutely limitless. As my friend Corey Parks put it: "There is only one thing that has power over a man... and that, my man, is a woman."

HOLLIS WONG-WEAR

Occupation: Singer/Songwriter/Community Advocate

What are your passions?

l am passionate about the power of stories to transform our world; passionate about finding motivation and momentum in the face of ennui and despair. I am passionate about radical empathy, equal parts resistance and reimagination, and tearing myself away from my screen and being fully present. I love novels, songwriting that tears you open, dancing and deep-belly-laughing with my folks, and the magical properties of noodles.

What do you think is your biggest obstacle as a woman in today's world?

The biggest obstacle for women is the systematic and deep seated ignorance of our agency. Why are the issues that women face "women's issues"? It's because the gendering of our experiences allows men and those in power to continue to deny the urgency of true equity. When we see a room full of suited men with no women in attendance signing an executive order that directly impacts our bodies, we see a denial of our agency in plain sight. Patriarchy gaslights us, tells us we are too much and too needy and too impatient, yet hands us far less than men in power would ever accept.

When is a time you were proud of yourself?

It's hard for me to think of a time I was proud of myself for some reason; I think I'm proudest when I can be the bridge between a person and an opportunity they wouldn't have otherwise had. And my proudest moments are when I completely boss up on a day's schedule in a dozen ways that nobody else will ever know but myself. I guess I'm proud that I've worked for myself for almost seven years without ever having a corporate job, and am endeavoring to live a full life between two cities. I'm proud of myself when I'm a good friend.

Who is a woman that inspires you?

l am inspired by Grace Lee Boggs, a Chinese-American freedom fighter from Detroit whose vision for community organizing centered creativity, love and imagination. She wrote so many beautiful things in her century of life, and one of my favorite quotes of hers, which has never rung more true, is this: "The time has come for us to reimagine everything. We have to reimagine work and go away from labor. We have to reimagine revolution and get beyond protest. We have to think not only about change in our institutions, but changes in ourselves. We are at the stage where the people in charge of the government and industry are running around like chickens with their heads cut off. It's up to us to reimagine the alternatives and not just protest against them and expect them to do better."

ZOEY TAYLOR Occupation

Tattoo Artist & Shop Owner What are your passions? happiness!

woman in today's world? I think that things like not being taken seriously are

that I continue to learn and grow. start.

Who is a woman that inspires you? and survive anything. What is the glass ceiling to you? l accept no glass ceiling in my life.

Art, dancing, adventures, and the constant pursuit of

What do you think is your biggest obstacle as a

behind me after proving myself as an artist. When is a time you were proud of yourself? l am proud of myself every time l take a risk, or go out on a limb and believe in myself. I'm proud of the fact What is your greatest accomplishment in your field? I think my greatest accomplishments are yet to come, but taking over the shop where I "grew up" is a good

My mom inspires me. She is the strongest and bravest woman I know. She taught me that I can do anything,

ROSE MCALEESE

Occupation: Poet, Comedian, Activist, Writer.

What are your passions?

Watching re-runs of Law & Order SVU. But joking aside, I am very passionate about women's rights and immigrant rights. My mother has been a dedicated feminist all of her life. She worked in broadcasting, journalism, and advertising, all male-dominated professions where women were and still are a minority. My mother started teaching me at a very young age the importance of raising my voice and fighting for equal rights.

My father is an Irish immigrant who came to America in 1979. Growing up in Northern Ireland, a state that was ruled by a system of religious and political apartheid, my dad has always reminded me how lucky I am to be born in America. He used to say, "I left N.I. because I didn't want my children to be second-class citizens. And then I had daughters! The struggle is never over." He sacrificed a lot to better himself and provide for my family.

Since I work as a screenwriter, my passion for film is obvious but I am also a huge book nerd. I am constantly reading, at least three books at a time. Writing is my major passion but you can't trust a writer who doesn't read! That's like trusting a chef who doesn't try their own food.

What do you think is your biggest obstacle as a woman in today's world?

I think it's women calling themselves "feminist." So many women I know are afraid of the term. Some women don't believe they need feminism or, because of strong "white feminist" beliefs, they don't think they are allowed in the club, that's it's not "their fight." But that attitude is detrimental to the cause of human rights. Feminism has the root "fem" but it's not just about women. It's about standing up for equal rights for all human beings, whatever their race, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status may be.

I believe another obstacle for women today is failing to support each other. I have been honored and privileged to have many amazing and supportive women mentors to whom I owe a good part of whatever success I've had. But the horror stories I've heard recently, especially in my current field, about women not helping out other women makes me sick to my stomach. When is a time you were proud of yourself?

This is such a cheesy story but it's the first one that popped into my head! When I was 16 I made it onto my first city-wide poetry slam team with YouthSpeaks Seattle. My parents were in the audience for the show but because they had to catch a business flight that same night they had to leave the moment they realized that I had won. When I got home that night there was a new notebook and a bouquet of flowers waiting for me. The part that made me actually cry and feel pure pride was the HUGE handwritten poster my dad made for me that read "YOU ARE BRILLIANT! ROSE IS THE BEST!" It hangs above my bed to this day. Growing up it was sometimes hard for my father to verbally express the love and affection he obviously felt for me, so when ever he tells me he's proud of me, I tear up. Thankfully, our relationship today is happier and healthier then ever. He constantly reminds me how proud he is of me whenever I go back home to Seattle.

What is your greatest accomplishment in your field? I would have to say landing one of five coveted spots in the Universal Pictures' Emerging Writer's Fellowship. When I got the phone call, I tried to play it cool but the second I hung up the phone, I let all my excitement out. I started jumping up and down, fist-pumping the air in true Judd Nelson "Breakfast Club" fashion and yelling out loud "I did it! I freaking did it! A group of complete strangers believed in me!" Keep in mind I was standing on the corner of Sunset and Fountain at the time. The best part was when three dudes riding bikes rode past me and one said to the others, "This is why I love LA!"

Who is a woman that inspires you? Yeah... I can't just pick one.

First, there are the female actress/comedians whom I hope one day to work with or at least have coffee with: Julia Louis Dreyfus, Allison Janney, Lily Tomlin, Leslie Jones, Kate McKinnon, Maya Rudolph, and Janeane Garofalo. Writers that I dream would someday write blurbs for one of my future books include Zadie Smith, Roxane Gay, Angela Carter, Sylvia Plath, Karen Finneyfrock, Tara Hardy, and Octavia Butler. I also deeply admire women who fearlessly fight the good fight, most notably Bernadette Devlin and Angela Davis. And I wouldn't be where I am now without the help, encouragement and pep talks of my mentor and fairy-godmother, Felicia D Henderson, who has always taught me to be honest, speak up, never doubt the value of being who you are and, last but not least, know when to stop complaining and do something about it.

And, of course, there's my mother. Anyone who knows me knows I worship my mother and once you've met her you'll understand why. She put up with so much casual disregard working in environments where she was the only women in the room. She's done nothing but support me. She constantly cheers me and on. Whenever she tells me "Rose, you're an talented, amazing writer, and I am not just saying this because I am your mother." If I respond with "thank you," she immediately corrects me and says "No Rose; you're supposed to say, 'I know.""

I don't say this often enough to her, so I don't think she is aware of how much I am inspired by her, but my older sister has been my hero, my role model and my favorite 24-hour-aday live podcast since I was born. She gave me my first bath (in the hospital!), pushing the maternity ward nurses out of the way saying, "I know to do this." She was 3 years old at the time! My first word was not "Mom" or "Dad" but "Claire." My mom says it came out more like "Caw!" but everyone knew what I meant. Claire is someone who, no matter what life throws at her, always bounces back. She's the pure 100% definition of a champion of truth, justice and the McAleese way. What is the glass ceiling to you?

A silly little metaphor that we need to break.



REVERIE Occupation: RAPPER/MUSICIAN

What are your passions? My passion is life. My music, my art, everything I do is a reflection of the life I live. What do you think is your biggest obstacle as a woman in today's world?

The biggest obstacle being a woman in today's world is probably realizing how possible everything I want to do is. Everything is right at my finger tips & all I have to do is go out & get it. Some people, including myself, are scared to do what they love because they feel they aren't worthy. I am working on that. When is a time you were proud of yourself?

I'm proud of myself every time I breathe in & out. Life is hard. I see so many people around me who give up on their goals & on their life. I struggle with depression & drug addiction & I have my whole life. I have had many friends kill themselves or become druggies & forget how special & worthy they are. Every day that I wake up & go to work, I am proud of myself.

What is your greatest accomplishment in your field?

The biggest accomplishment I have ever done is to save someone's life. Everyday people tell me my music has saved them from addiction, suicide, abusive relationships, feeling alone, self doubt, etc. Every time I hear that, it brings my soul a little more peace.

Who is a woman that inspires you?

My mom. She has done so much for my brothers & I over the years. She is not perfect, & neither is anyone else, & I love her for teaching me that.

What is one "glass ceiling" that you shattered?

Me being alive today is a glass ceiling I've destroyed. I didn't think I would make it past 19 & I'm 26 now. Most of the people I grew up with are in prison, doing long term sentences, some are doing life, some have been killed, some have killed themselves, some have given up on life completely. I'm happy right now, that's another glass ceiling I'm breaking through.





PERIOD-PROOF UNDERWEAR

