



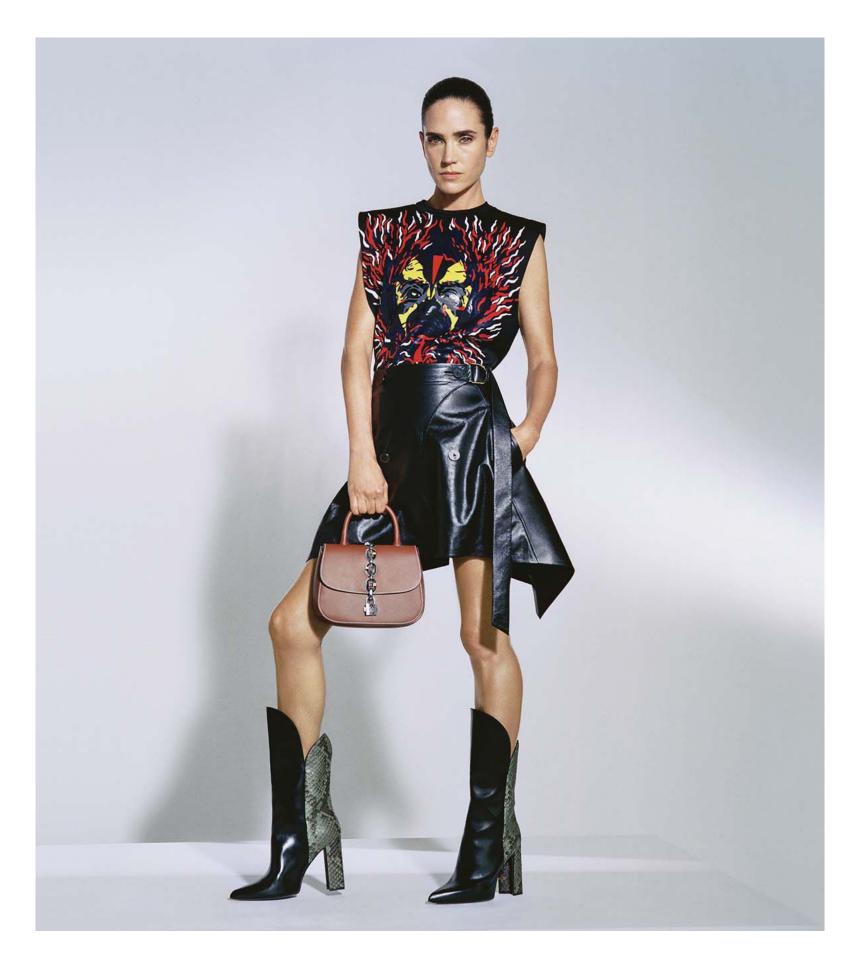








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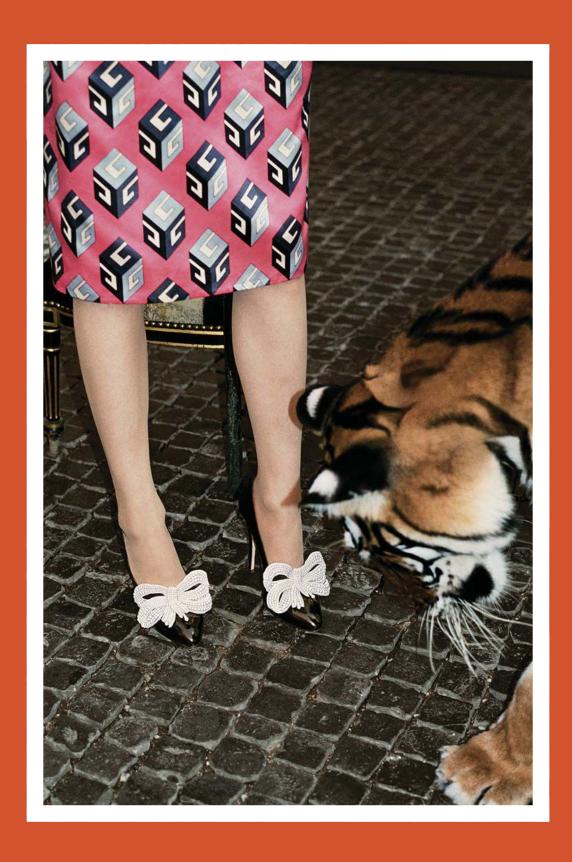


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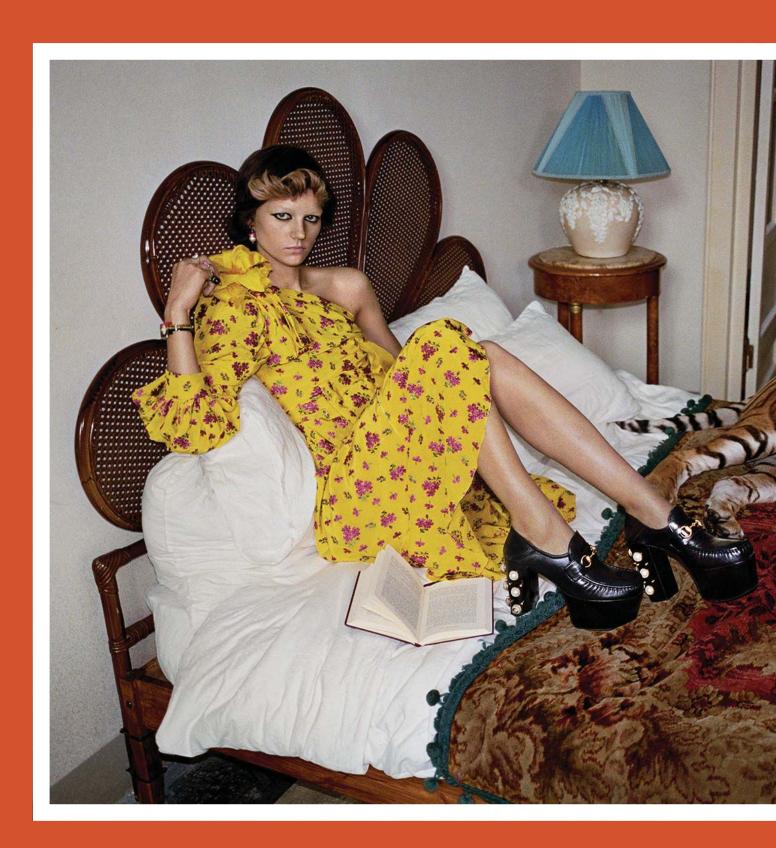


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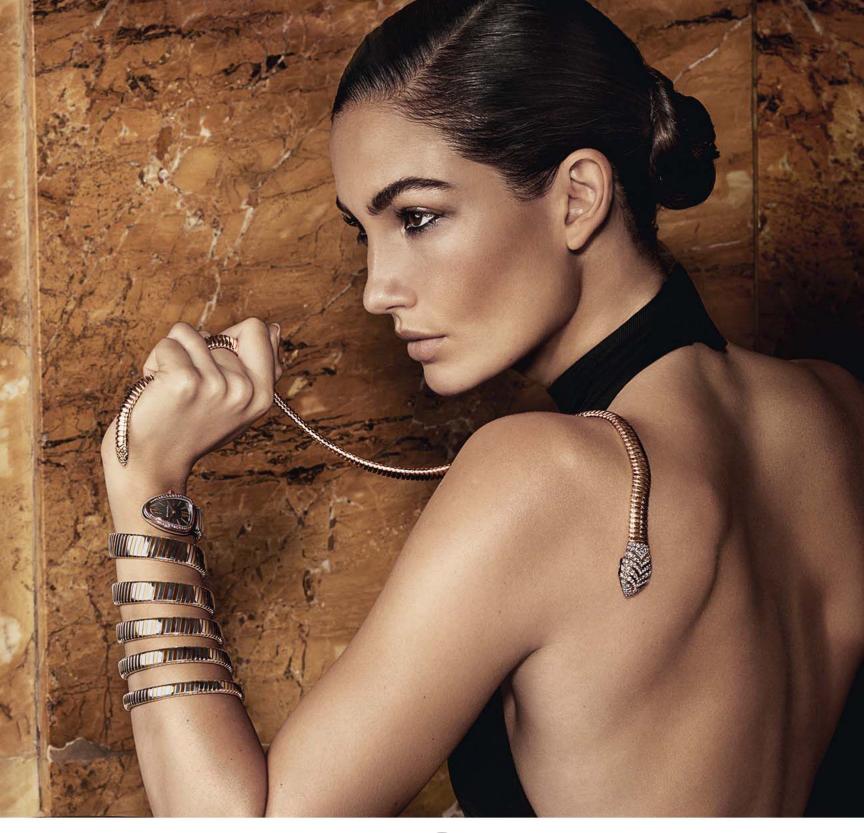








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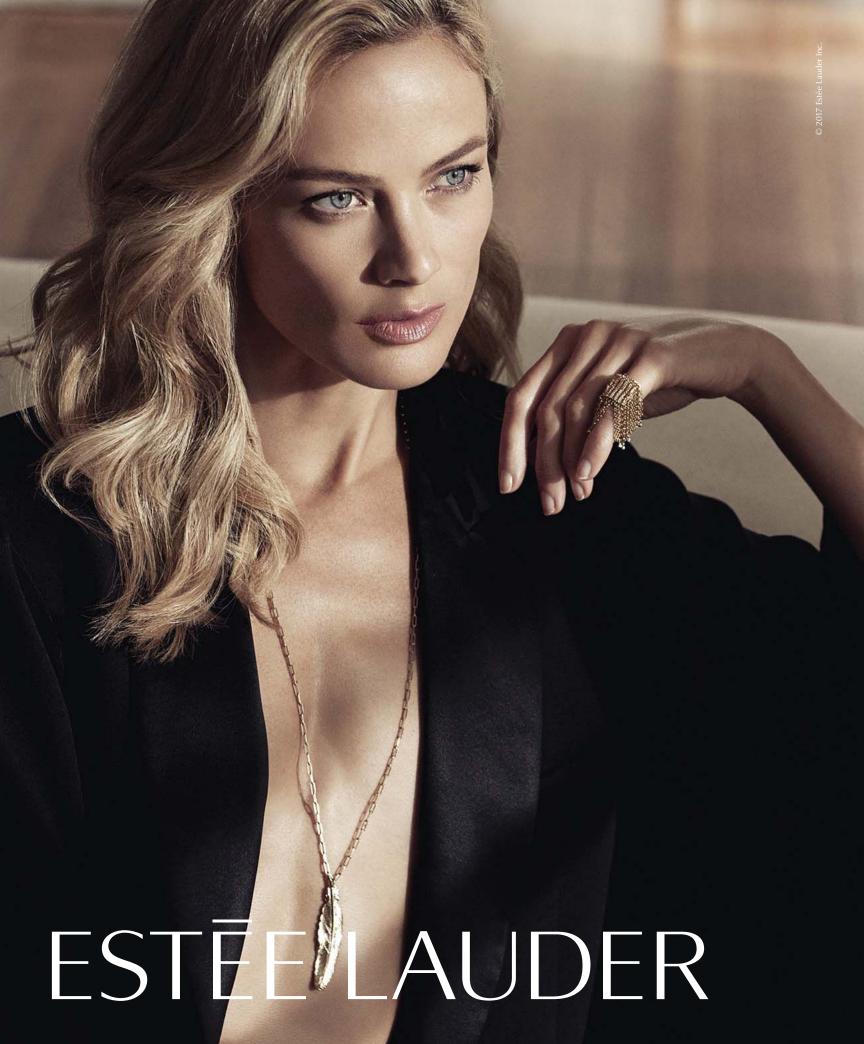


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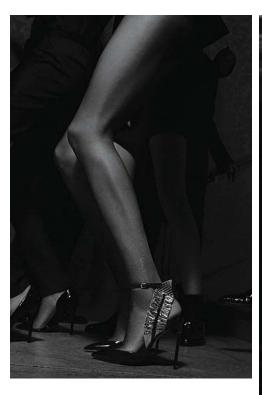
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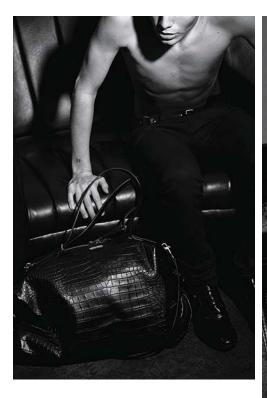




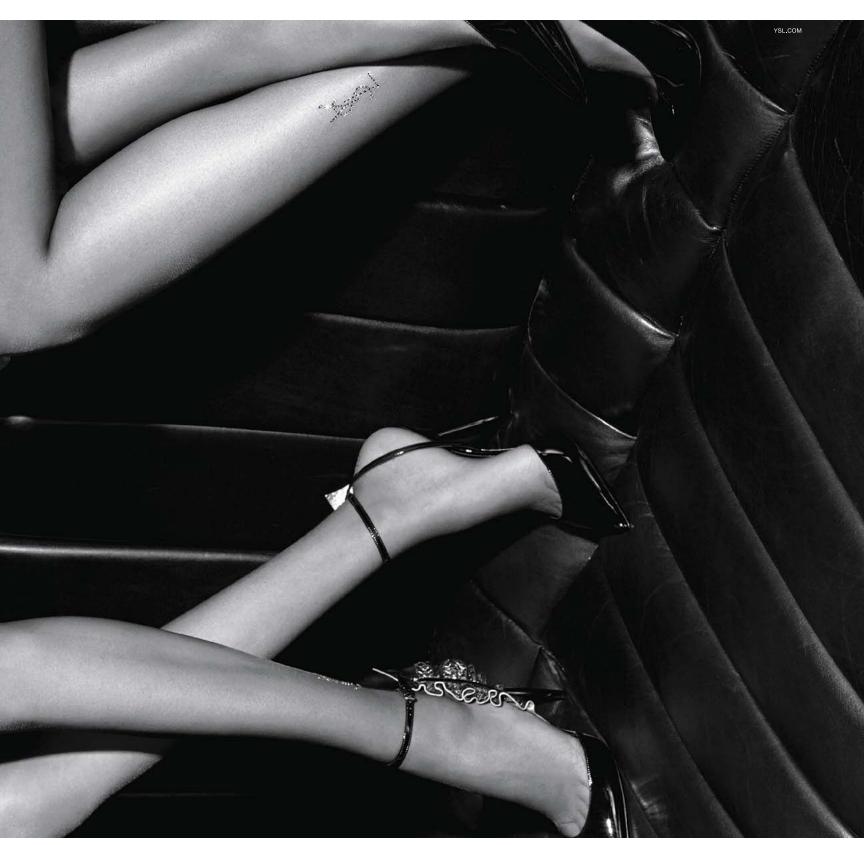




SAINT LAURENT







SAINT LAURENT



SUDDENLY NEXT SUMMER

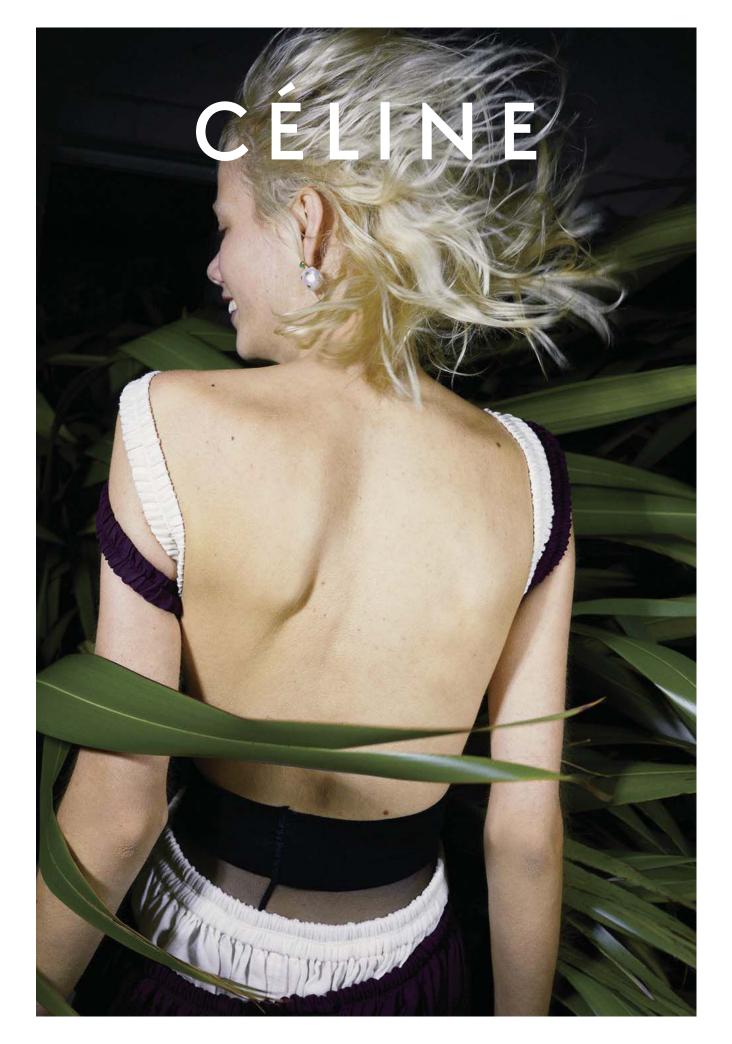
POINT DUME, CALIFORNIA NOVEMBER 24-26 2016 BY ALASDAIR MCLELLAN



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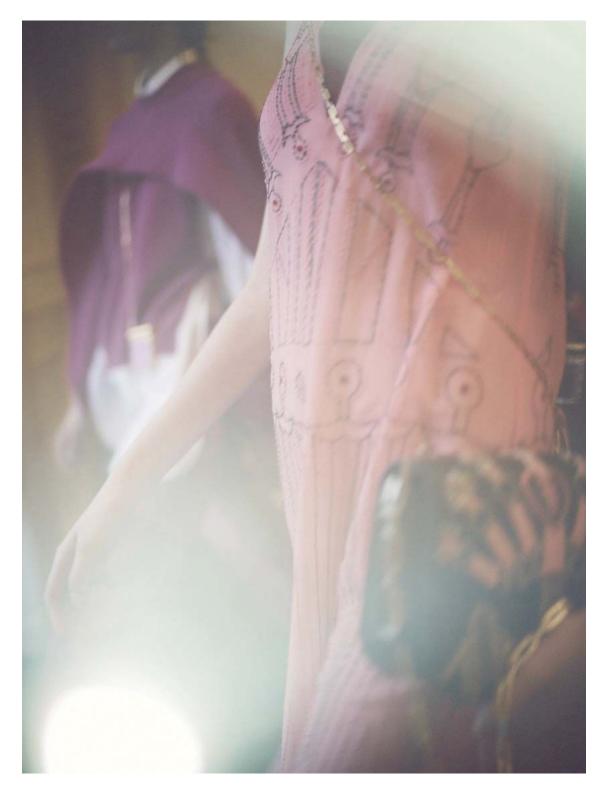


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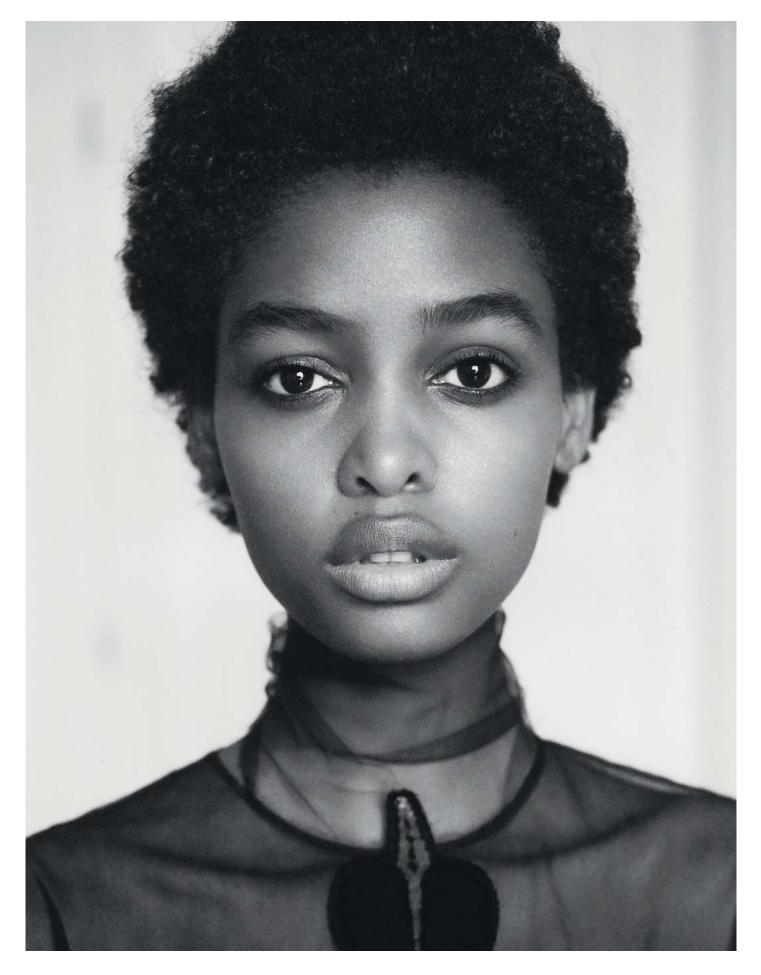


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Georgia O'Keeffe (she of the floral vulvas, southwestern landscapes, and Manhattan skyscrapers) occupies the Brooklyn Museum in Living Modern, which displays the pioneering artist's paintings alongside artifacts from her life.



MARCH 3

Sun Structures, the first album from groovy English band Temples, operated like a time machine that dropped you off in 1960s Liverpool. **Appropriately** enough, the band's second effort, Volcano, goes 1970s psychedelic glam.

MARCH 10

Twenty-seven-year-old British folk singer Laura Marling's wondrous voice reaches new heights on her sixth album, Semper Femina.

MARCH 10

Kong: Skull Island finds Brie Larson, Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson, and John Goodman stranded on a Pacific island occupied by enormous beasts, including, you guessed it, a very, very big ape.

MARCH 14

At once a ghost story, a murder mystery, and a meditation on race, Hari Kunzru's novel White Tears follows two white men who claim to have unearthed a recording by a (made-up) 1920s bluesman, only to be contacted by a collector who says it's real.



New Yorker staff writer Elif Batuman, whose nonfiction is self-effacing,

> shrewd, and brilliant, publishes her first novel, The Idiot, about a Turkish American woman who travels to

> > Hungary on

a quest for love that goes comically and delightfully off track.

MARCH 17

We know how it ends (spoiler alert: happily!), but in Disney's liveaction Beauty and the Beast, Emma Watson and Dan Stevens still make it pretty satisfying to watch the fairy tale play out.

MARCH 17

The Whitney Biennial scrapped last year due to the museum's move to downtown NYC-resoundingly returns, ready

to present a new constellation of rising art stars.

THE IDIOT

TUMAN



Iron Fist, Netflix's latest Marvel series, stars Finn Jones (Loras in Game of Thrones) as the titular Buddhist monk/kung fu expert.

MARCH 29

Broadway previews begin for Lillian Hellman's play The Little Foxes, in which Laura Linney and Cynthia Nixon play scheming sisters in an aristocratic Southern family, trading zingers and, on alternate nights, roles.





MaxMara









Salvatore Ferragamo





Salvatore Ferragamo

THE MONTH IN FASHION



MARCH 5

In addition to fashioning both costumes and red-carpet gowns for stars like Mae West and Ella Fitzgerald, designer Zelda Wynn Valdes created the official uniform of Hef's Playboy Bunnies (8). Explore Valdes's work, along with that of Stephen Burrows, Grace Wales Bonner, and more, at FIT's Black Fashion Designers exhibit, through May 16.

MARCH 6

Up-and-coming Chinese artist Xu Zhen added a little extra glitz to Art Basel Miami Beach with

his enormous mirror graffitied with hip-hopesque gold chains. Now Preciously Paris, the intricate bag line beloved by Queen Bey herself (each handembroidered bag takes 30 hours to create), has released a wearable homage (1).

MARCH 7

Paris Fashion Week is in full swing, and the buzz surrounding hot-ticket shows like Nicolas Ghesquière (4) at Louis Vuitton and Jonathan Anderson (5) at Loewe is almost deafening. Editors and fans alike are wondering whether Rihanna (3) will once again grace the City of Light for her third Fenty Puma presentation. Need a respite from all the commotion? Head



MARCH 1

These are our kind of pinups: For Women's History Month, designer Mara Hoffman has photographed 28 noted feminists including painter Joan Jonas, musician Kiran Gandhi, and civil rights activist/ model Nykhor Paul (right) for her spring 2017 lookbook. See them all at marahoffman.com.



As part of her team-up with French furniture brand Roche Bobois, NYC-based designer Mimi Plange is rolling out a quartet of skateboards in signature prints (2) to benefit education nonprofit Horizons Atlanta. Almost too pretty to take to the streets, they're worthy of mounting, gallery-style, on a wall.

MARCH 20

She's been a muse to designers such as Haider Ackermann

and Alber Elbaz, starred in fashion-loving films (I Am Love, Orlando), and even taken a turn on the runway in Madame Grès for the fashion museum Palais Galliera's Impossible Wardrobe exhibit in 2012. But until now, Tilda Swinton had yet to play designer. Thanks to her current collaboration with

cult fave Korean evewear label Gentle Monster (7), fans can finally buy a piece of her inimitable style.

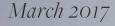












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148 WHERE THE BOYS ARE

What the women's movement needs now is men—feminist men. Rachael Combe reports

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Spring 2017 is here in living color: Mixed prints, athletic gear, and seven shades of gold!

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Spring's best shoes, bags, and jewels make a case for warmweather whimsy in cherry prints, ribbons, and feather detailing

262 CONTEMPORARY ART

Alison S. Cohn reports on the new wave of celeb-beloved contemporary collections

ELLE SHOPS

Presenting 10 totally wearable trends from the spring runways—and which ones to buy now

297 LET IT SHINE!

From flaming lips to pastel brows, Megan O'Neill rounds up spring 2017's best runway beauty. Plus: Model Selena Forrest's dream weekend

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VOLUME XXXII NUMBER 7 NO. 379



Crystal-embellished sheer nylon jacket, price on request, calfskin sandals, \$1,150, all, VERSACE, at select Versace boutiques nationwide. White gold, blue iolite, and diamond bracelet, HUEB, \$8,120. Her own earring. For details, see Shopping Guide.





RALPH LAUREN

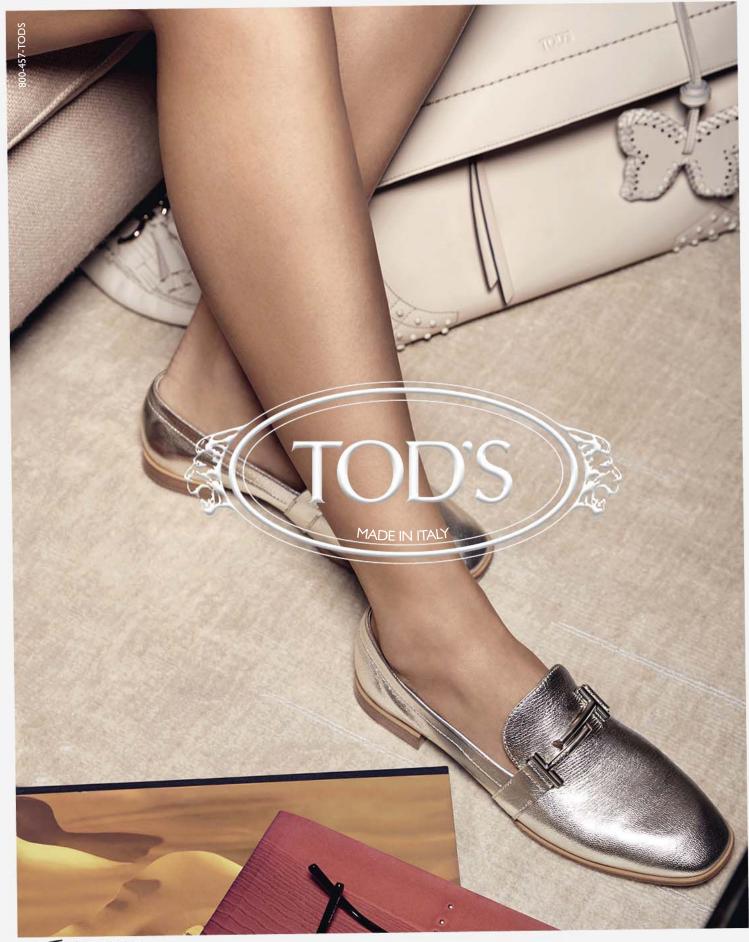
The PEACOAT, 2016 Photographed by Steven Meisel # RLICONICSTYLE





RALPH LAUREN

The RL SAFARI JACK ET, 2016 Photographed by Steven Meisel #RLICONICSTYLE 7:00 pm The Show. Beautiful. Who was that model from Rome?



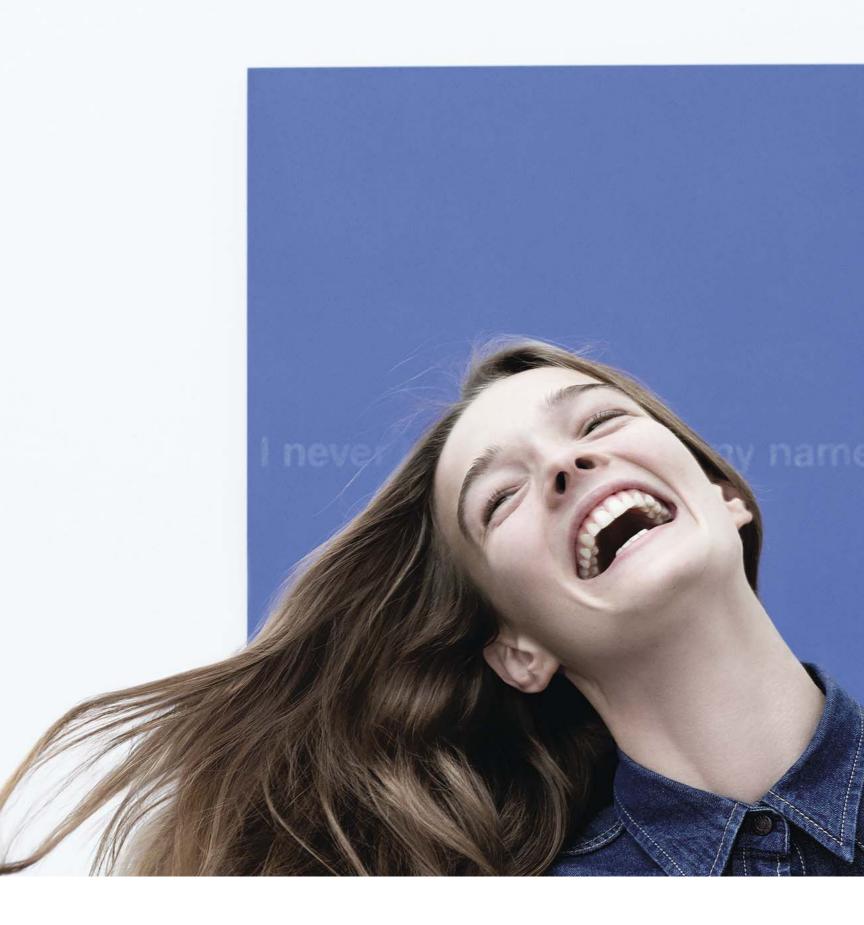
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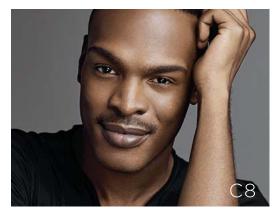




TAYLOR AND ROMEE, 2017



MICHAEL KORS













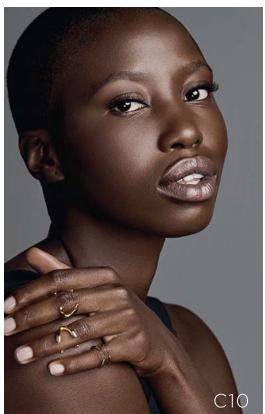




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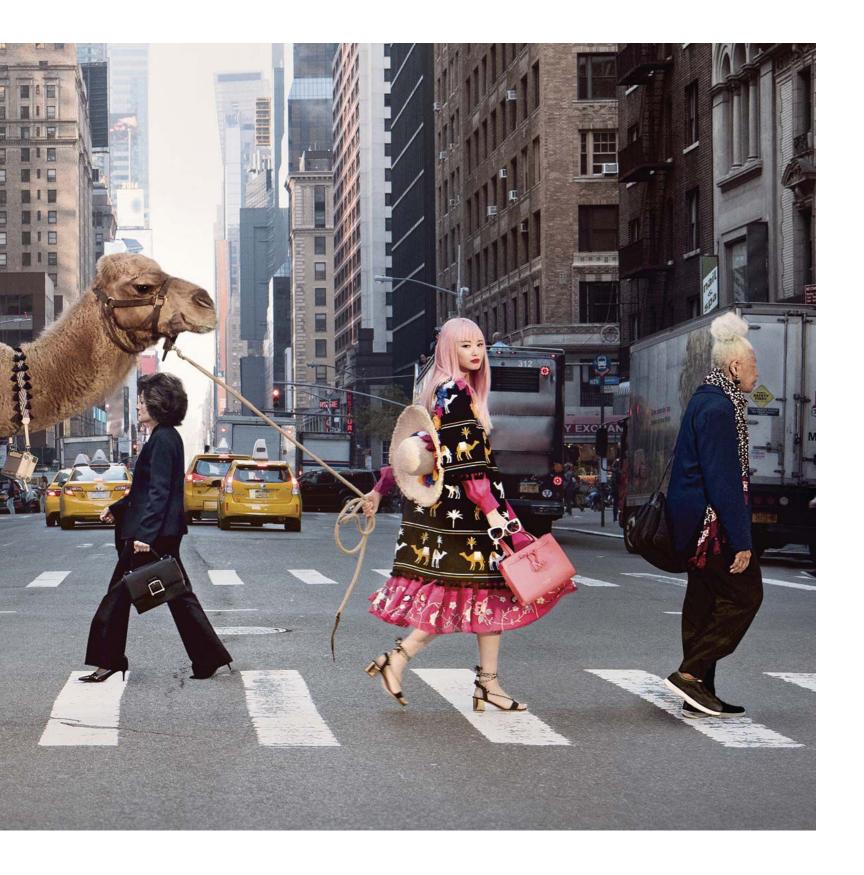


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spotted this on my way to work.







NOUVEAU RICHIE
Nicole Richie gets the last
laugh in NBC's Tina Feyproduced comedy *Great*News. By Jessica Pressler

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STYLE ACROSS AMERICA
The chicest women of San
Fran and Austin share their
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Never wear black again? Anne Slowey says hello to glorious, optimistic color

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HARDER, BETTER, FASTER As even high fashion gets into the athleisure game, Monica Corcoran Harel reports on the science of dressing for success

250 FAIR TRADE

Ace & Jig designers host a community-oriented Cali clothing swap. By Monica Corcoran Harel

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topping album and her

transcendent cool factor,

Solange Knowles has more

than earned her seat at the

table. By Salamishah Tillet.

Photographed by Terry Tsi-

olis. Styled by Samira Nasr

JET-SETTER: CUTTING FOR

Jewelry designer Noor

inspiration in Myanmar.

Fares finds welcome

By Brianna Kovan

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STONE

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THE SIMPLE LIFE
With Uniqlo U, Christophe
Lemaire zeroes in on highstyle, low-cost staples.
By Alex Frank

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THE BELIEVERS Introducing six ecoconscious, collaborative designers to know now. By Naomi Rougeau

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to date on fashion's past
and present

o U, Christophe roes in on high-

A cast of characters proves how cool—and strong!—the hue of the season can really feel. Photographed by Dan Martensen. Styled by Samira Nasr

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TAKE THE A TRAIN
Harlem provides a
backdrop for of-themoment fashion and
a cast of local icons.
Photographed by
Mark Seliger. Styled by
Samira Nasr

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LETTHE DRAMA UNFOLD Fencing jackets and fairytale tulle put a historic spin on gender-bending dressing. Photographed by David Bellemere. Styled by David Vandewal

428

FAIR PLAY

Ashley Biden's new fashion initiative aims to address income inequality. Sound familiar, Dad? By Molly Langmuir. Photographed by Ari Marcopoulos. Styled by Yashua Simmons

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THE BOYFRIEND EXPERIENCE With low-key tailoring and boyish shapes, closet-swapping has never looked chicer. Photographed by Azim Haidaryan. Styled by Simon Robins

442CALIFORNIA, GIRLS Bright off-duty basics take their cue from the eternal



Solange Knowles wears nylon coats from Norma Kamali, pleated pants from Pleats Please Issey Miyake, and stylist's own belt. Photographed by Terry Tsiolis (styled by Samira Nasr; hair by Chuck Amos at Jump; makeup by Jeanine Lobell at Tim Howard; manicure by Gina Viviano; fashion assistants: Yashua Simmons and Kia Goosby). To get Knowles's makeup look, try Crayon Sourcils Sculpting Eyebrow Pencil in Noir Cendré, Les 4 Ombres Multi-Effect Quadra Eyeshadow in Candeur et Expérience, and Lèvres Scintillantes Glossimer in Sweet Beige. All, Chanel.





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GIVENCHY FNCHY ROUGE | The forbidden signature lipstick Alluring Color, Breathtaking Lightweight and Long-Wearing Leave your mark #IWASHERE











cool of surfers. Photographed by Azim Haidaryan. Styled by Simon Robins

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After a bleaching bonanza left her strands fried, Cotton Codinha seeks therapy for damaged hair

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ACCESSORIES Bottega Veneta is reviving its "Lauren 1980" clutch, an *intrecciato* number originally carried by the one and only Ms. Hutton in 1980's American Gigolo, and recently reunited with its namesake on the brand's spring 2017 runway.



287 INTEL LIVES IN PARALLEL

Paul La Farge's hotly anticipated fourth novel, The Night Ocean (Penguin Press), unspools a century-long mystery as seen through the eyes of a pragmatic psychiatrist whose estranged journalist husband has disappeared (and is presumed dead) in the midst of a scandal following the publication of his controversial book. The universe of The Night Ocean is vast, encompassing science fiction, fandom, homophobia, pedophilia, McCarthyism, and the Holocaust. Within its overlapping story

lines is the real-life relationship between American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft and a 16-year-old fan, and the lost summer they spent together in Florida in 1934. In a complex, highconcept narrative littered with famous figures (William S. Burroughs is a recurring face), La Farge leaves readers ever uncertain as to who's telling the truth—and ready for the next twist.

-Cotton Codinha

& Jig VW bus: Laura Dart; beauty products: Devon Jarvis/Studio D



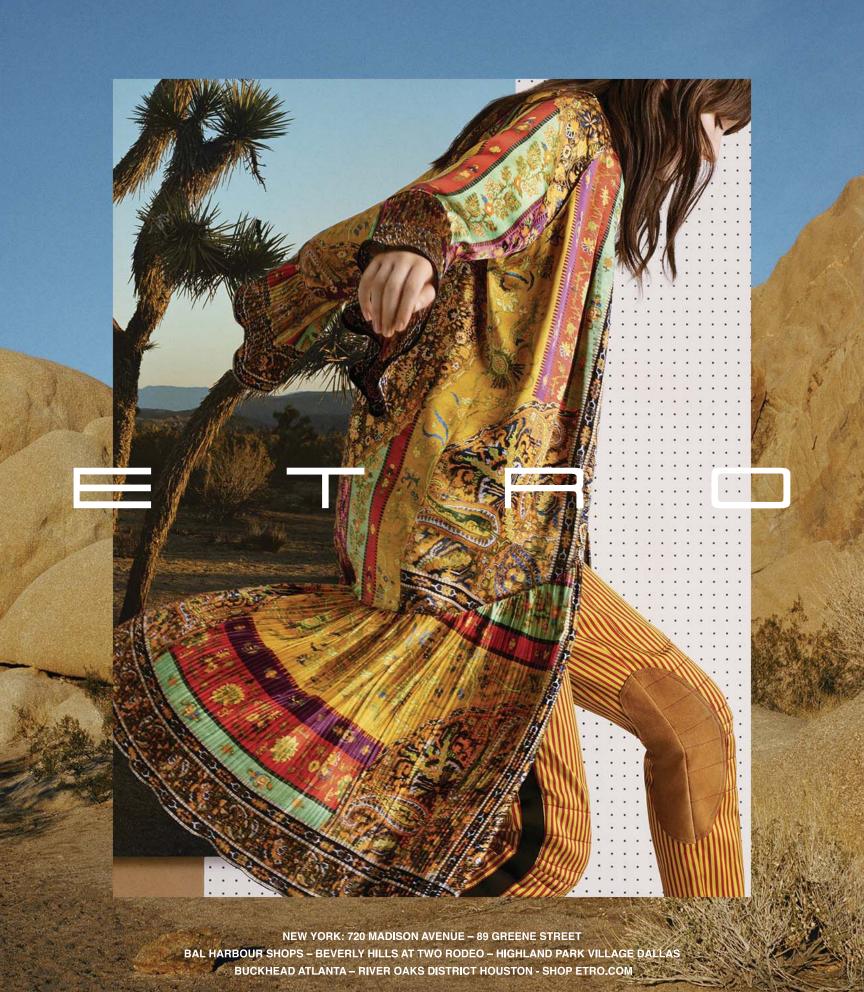








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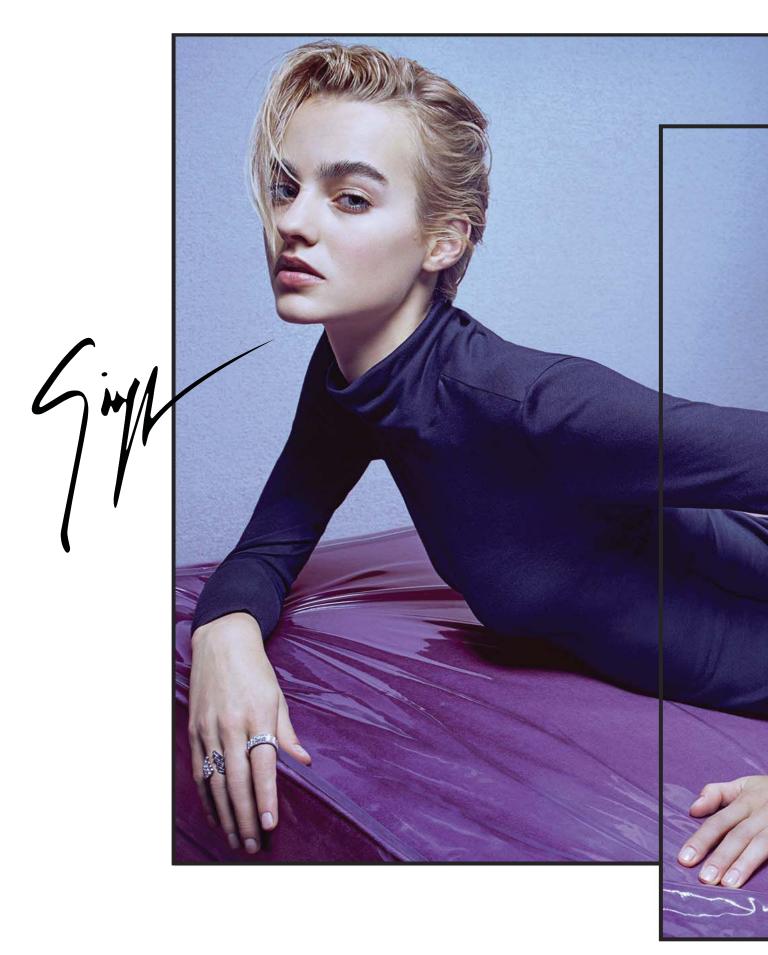


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PISCES

Your ruler, Neptune, syncs up with the Pisces Sun on the 2nd, allowing you to dream big without cynics raining on your idealistic parade. You can make miracles happen with your

wide-eyed charm and unwavering dedication, but with Venus retrograde from the 4th until April 12th, financial discernment is a must. Save up for luxury instead of settling for second best. Romantically, a liberated Jupiter-Uranus opposition could give you cold feet near the 3rd. But the 12th's relationship-oriented full moon will override commitment phobia, while the new moon on the 27th helps you settle down without settling.

TARIES (MAR 21-APR 19) As fantasy and reality blur beguilingly in March, remain the unapologetic rebel. With six heavenly bodies pinging Aries this month, including the 27th's new moon, you could become the leader of a revolutionary new school of thought. On the 4th, Venus turns retrograde, retreating through Aries until April 12th. An old flame may reenter the picture for single Rams, while buried issues could resurface for the attached. Fortunately, Venus helps you deal diplomatically. Your ruler, Mars, hits your money zone from the 9th on, and you'll cash in on your creativity—especially near an industrious full moon on the 12th.

TAURUS (APR 20-MAY 20) March rolls in like a thick fog, but give in to the haze. Meditating and ideating will spawn some divinely inspired gems. The 12th could feel like a bonus Valentine's Day thanks to a richly romantic full moon. Feeling shut down? From the 4th until April 12th, your ruler, beatific Venus, pivots retrograde, helping you heal from past heartache and set smarter boundaries in love; Mars also makes his biennial visit to your sign on the 9th, blessing your independent initiatives. Rally support for your endeavors while the Sun swings through your collaboration zone until the 20th.

I GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 21) On the 2nd, an illusion-shattering merger of the Sun and Neptune helps you gain insider status with an elite coterie. But draw your party lines carefully: On the 4th, Venus embarks on a six-week retrograde, reminding you of the importance of true friendship. Career strides will be major before the 20th, so lean in to your professional progress and stay focused. Cupid, however, could send confusing signals on the 3rd and the 30th. Dropping your guard—and courageously copping to your feelings—is the way to get straight answers from the one you adore.

CANCER (JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Olivia Kilde March 2 With warrior Mars and unstoppable Saturn uniting on the 5th, you'll gain the fight you need to score a major victory in your career. And don't worry: With Mars gliding into your teamwork zone on the 9th, you won't be lonely at the

top. Your love life could easily take a backseat to your professional prowess, but don't let that happen. Venus's biennial retrograde starts on the 4th, making it imperative to feed your emotional bank account with extra TLC. And do take a vacation. With the Pisces Sun activating your wanderlust through the 20th, you could add a notable stamp to your passport book.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG 22) March gets off to a sultry start when the Sun and enchanting Neptune entwine in your erotic eighth house on the 2nd. The magic happens behind closed doors-and may remain an eternal secret. Privacy, please! With six planets in your travel zone, you'd do well to plan a spring excursion. With Venus retrograde from the 4th, this trip could be a healing balm for your love life. Just don't wander too far away from that Wi-Fi signal. With go-getter Mars blasting into your career zone on the 9th, there will be opportunities to ascend the ladder and win the respect of industry influencers.

VIRGO (AUG 23-SEPT 22) With planets pulsing through your partnership zones all month, your urge to merge will be unquenchable. Drop the pleasantries and be vulnerable: You'll magnetize a multidimensional mate—or exponentially deepen an existing bond. But don't invite trouble back into your bed once Venus turns retrograde on the 4th. On the 12th, 2017's only full moon in Virgo spotlights your individual achievements. Modesty, schmodesty! This is the day to promote yourself. Necessity is the mother of invention near the 3rd and 30th, when Jupiter's connection to Uranus and Pluto revs up your enterprising spirit-along with some profitable plans.

△ LIBRA (SEPT 23-OCT 22) March will be a transitional month for many Libras, but deliberate thoroughly before deciding if you should stay or go. On the 3rd, liberated Uranus opposes freedom-loving Jupiter, which could jailbreak you from a suffocating contract—or relationship. But with your ruler, Venus, retrograde from the 4th to April 12th, negotiating new terms is wiser than starting fresh. If it's time to move on, the 12th's full moon lights the exit ramp. This fantasy-fueling lunation can also help you surrender to a true romance. For serenity's sake, stay committed to your health resolutions. Book a few private training sessions after the 9th.

NSCORPIO (OCT 23-NOV 21) Your romantic fantasy league forms swiftly this March as the Sun and soulful Neptune team up in your ardent fifth house. Your typically wary sign will rock the rose-colored Warby Parkers, which helps the hopefuls crack your tough armor. Lusty Mars cruises into your partnership zone on the 9th, nudging you to take the lead with love-or exalt an existing union to a more exclusive status. Spring training begins on the 20th as the Sun sails into your wellness zone for a month. Bring more green to both your palate and your wallet, as the new moon on the 27th gets you pumped about your career.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22-DEC 21) Your ruling planet, Jupiter, will parry two celestial superpowers, bookending the month with intensity and inspiration. On the 3rd, Jupiter's opposition to radical Uranus arouses your activist spirit. Then, on the 30th, a square to Pluto could find you challenging the trenchant old guard. In between these world-changing missions, your romantic life gets a huge reboot as six planets traverse your amorous fifth house. One will be retrograde Venus, from the 4th until April 12th, which could stoke embers with an old flame—or scratch an unhealed relationship wound. Avoid rash moves; the new moon on the 27th illuminates loving resolutions.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22-JAN 19) March's social star map springs you onto the scene, so flutter freely between friend groups. This month's maxim is "Try before you buy." That applies to your love life as well. With frisky Mars zipping into your romance zone on the 9th, Cupid's sampler platter will deliver some tantalizing options. Attached? Add more variety to your shared cultural calendar: DJ sets, nights at the theatah, weekend trips to sister cities. The 3rd and 30th could bring career-defining moments. The challenge? Getting your inner circle on board—and making sure they don't feel abandoned by your busy schedule.

ple, so little time! In March, you'll cement your status as queen of the scene. Organize meetups and get involved in community groups. With the Sun in your money zone until the 20th, mingling with savvy locals will be beneficial for business. Cupid keeps it casual this month, with the exception of the intense—and sexed-up-full moon on the 12th. For unsatisfied Aquarians, this lunation could signal the breaking point of a bad romance. Bye! Mars brings momentum for a domestic mission after the 9th. Set up that home office or make an appointment with a real estate agent to find your dream apartment.





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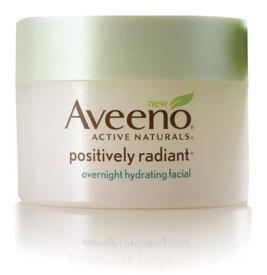


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This Page: AQUA beaded/embroidered maxi dress • AQUA beaded/embroidered bomber jacket, lace inset cami and cargo pant • Sunset + Spring patched denim jacket and Alice + Olivia ruffle dress • Opposite Page: Nasty Gal embroidered bag shown with Sunset + Spring jacket and hundreds more

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HOT-MESS BUSTER

This month's guru, organizing expert **Rachel Hoffman**, will help you turn your home into a clutter-free sanctuary—and keep it that way

"We're often busy, and sometimes we're lazy," Rachel Hoffman writes in Unf*ck Your Habitat: You're Better Than Your Mess (St. Martin's Griffin), her recent organizational book aimed at helping us busy-lazies unclutter our homes. As the book's title suggests, Hoffman's approach to tidying up is blunt, utilitarian, and (it must be said) in many ways the antithesis of KonMariultraminimalist Marie Kondo's viral 2014 housekeeping concept that encourages followers of the movement to make cleaning a special event rather than a regular chore, and to decide whether to chuck items based on whether they "spark joy." If the KonMari system is a strict raw-vegan overhaul, Hoffman's is the epitome of a moderation diet: Do what you can, when you can, and stop beating yourself up about it.

A self-described reformed messy person, Hoffman was inspired to create her own organizational system when conversations with friends inevitably led to the topic of clutter, both physical and mental. What started in 2011 as a blog for her friends (by day, she managed-and still does-a Rhode Island spa) soon swelled to encompass a Tumblr site pushing 90,000 followers, a professional website, and an app, all touting Hoffman's belief in the power of short, frequent bursts of cleaning (as opposed to infrequent marathons) that target not only physical messiness, but the emotional disarray that so often accompanies it. These bursts, which she calls 20/10s-20 minutes of cleaning followed by a 10-minute break-are designed to fit easily into daily life and accommodate readers who have tidiness impediments such as a busy work schedule, a tendency toward anxiety or depression, or coming from a family of hoarders—or who are simply victim to

the traditional gender-role theory: "A very common (but especially obnoxious) assertion is that 'men just don't see the mess the same way women do," Hoffman writes. "There's no small amount of learned helplessness associated with gender roles and cleaning. Let's go back to those god-awful social media memes and eye-rollingly terrible TV commercials poking fun at how men are just hopeless around the house. They don't know how to do laundry! Isn't that hilarious? (No. It's not.)" Hoffman empowers her reader to empower her (insert husband, boyfriend, brother, son, roommate, et al.) to drop the Don Draper act and launder his own intimates.

Drawing from her own experiences with anxiety and depression, as well as feedback from readers of her site and the expertise of professional clutter battlers (including the San Francisco Task Force on Compulsive Hoarding), Hoffman has honed a game plan that breaks down the often overwhelming prospect

of reorganizing an entire house—
or a 300-square-foot Brooklyn studio apartment—into
manageable, regular tasks.
Living in an organized
space really makes a difference, and not just toward
lowering your embarrassment level when a friend
randomly drops by: One poll
showed that you're 19 percent
more likely to sleep well when you
climb into a bed that you made that

climb into a bed that you made that morning; another study showed that women who described their homes as cluttered or brimming with "unfinished projects"

YOU'RE BETTER than YOUR MESS

The author; Hoffman's debut book

showed higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol. If Hoffman has one piece of advice, it's to "Let go of 'perfect' and embrace 'good enough.'"

Just like it would be self-defeating

to expect yourself to go from occasional jogger to marathon runner overnight, it's important to cut yourself a little slack on the home front. Or this month, let Hoffman cut it for you.—*Keziah Weir*

CLEAN HOUSE VISIT ELLE.COM

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MARCH 6 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The first step in the anti-mess battle is changing basic habits—Hoffman will help you clean yours up.

MARCH 13 BEDROOM DRAMA

Hoffman has one nonnegotiable: Make your bed. Every day. This week, she dives into the psychology behind why it can be so difficult—but rewarding.

MARCH 20 Organized Math

Hoffman shares the theory behind the 20/10, why it works, and how to make it work for you.

MARCH 27 Digital Getdown

Chances are, your e-life could use some cleaning, too. This week, declutter your various screens to keep information overload-induced anxiety at bay.



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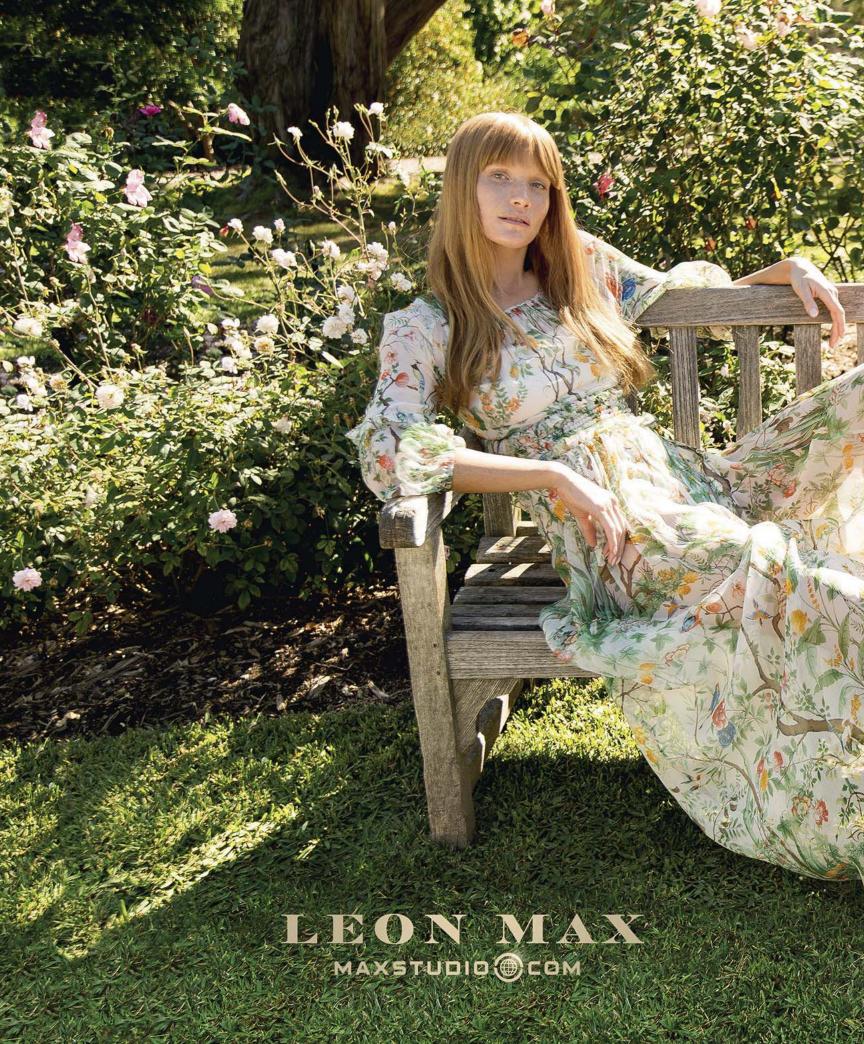
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comedian, an HBO star, and a novelist walk into a fashion show? No, that's not a joke! It's a preview of our seasonal "Front Row Virgins" series, in which we send a spate of Fashion Week novices to take in the runway

What happens when a

and the surrounding scene. This season, we're dispatching comedian Maeve Higgins, Insecure actress Yvonne Orji, and American Housewife author Helen Ellis to waltz in-and report back to us at ELLE.com/ front-row-virgins.

Meanwhile, our own veteran crew will also be on the ground, bringing you news, analysis, and street-style photos from the fall 2017 runway, backstage, and beyond. Catch it all as it unfolds at ELLE.com/ fashion-week.



SPIDERWOMAN'S REVENGE

ELLE.com's columnist is turning grief into art

In late 2014, an unusual obituary appeared in the Minneapolis Star

Tribune. "Purmort, Aaron Joseph, age 35, died peacefully at home on November 25 after complications from a radioactive spider bite that led to years of crime-fighting and a years long battle with a nefarious criminal named Cancer, who has plagued our society for far too long." The obituary was written by Aaron and his wife, Nora McInerny Purmort, while Aaron was



still alive as a preemptive tribute to Aaron's deep passion for comic books, his perfect taste in cardigans, and his love of life. In the years that followed, Nora continued to write, pub-

lishing a book last year, It's Okay to Laugh (Crying Is Cool Too), which chronicled young widowhood and was, as she wrote, "for people who have been through some stuff." (For Nora, that also meant a miscarriage and the death of her father within months of Aaron's death.) As she's found a new partner and had a

baby (all pictured here), she's continued her story on ELLE.com and on her podcast, Terrible, Thanks for Asking, which the Guardian called "podcasting's first real-life weepie." Read more from Nora (a super-

hero herself, in our estimation) at ELLE.com/ nora-mcinerny-purmort.

Follow Nora on Instagram @noraborealis.

Must-Have Accessory: Bally's Suzy Bag

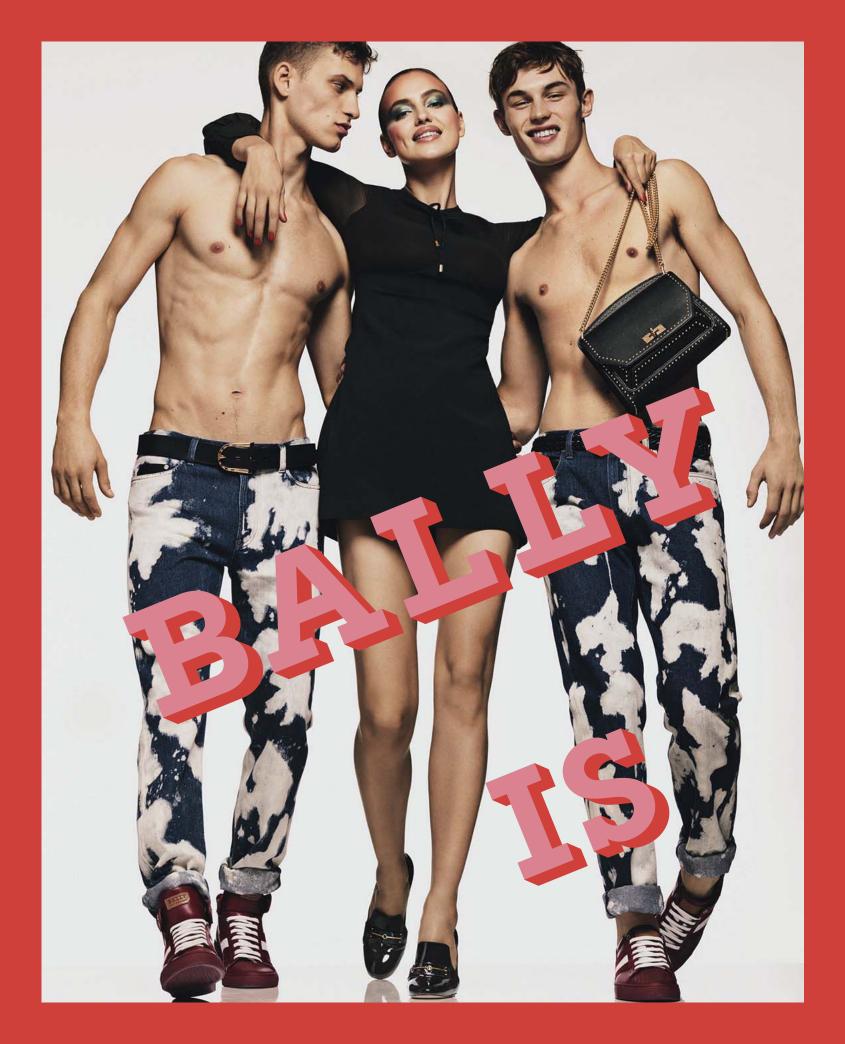




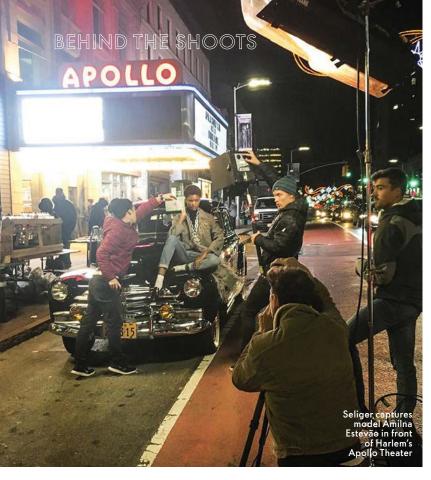
REFLECT YOURSELF Whether upping

the glam factor for an epic night out or adding a hit of shine to a work or brunch look, Bally's new Suzy bag—a petite leather envelope dangling from a rocker-chic chain—can be found on the arms of such tastemakers as actress Cara Santana, filmmaker Vashtie Kola, and poet/artist Cleo Wade (#haveyoumetsuzy). To see these stylish women in action with the brand's full spring 2017 collection, visit ELLE.com/Bally.









HOMETOWN HEROES

Our New York City fashion crew heads uptown to celebrate Harlem's past—and present

"You don't have to go far to find beauty and inspiration," says **ELLE Fashion Director Samira** Nasr, who, with photographer Mark Seliger, dreamed up our 16-page tribute to Harlem, "Take the A Train" (page 394). "There's that whole conversation about New York City gentrification, but Harlem is still Harlem. The characters who made it great are still there—people like Dapper Dan," she says, referring to the legendary '80s designer, who was beloved by clients such as LL Cool J and Big Daddy Kane. His legacy lives on in lyrics from

134 ELLE

Fat Joe ("You can ask Dapper Dan, 'Who was the man?'")

and Jay Z-and on page 285. "Meeting him was a highlight for me," says Nasr, who outfitted Angolan model Amilna Estevão in a Proenza Schouler checkered feather dress for her shot opposite the fashion icon.

The photo shoot took place in early December, with Nasr and Seliger's team of production assistants, hair and makeup artists, and lighting specialists using a 15-passenger van as HQ as they hit up Harlem landmarks like the Apollo Theater and Sylvia's soul-food restaurant. For Seliger, the experience peaked at the last stop of the two-day photographic adventure: "Denny Moe's barbershop in Harlem is an institution," says Seliger, who

> shot Estevão in a Loewe comfy-chic top and trousers among the barbershop's regular Saturday crowd. "It was a bustling, busy afternoon in the barber chairs, but we just kept on shooting."—Brianna Kovan



(page 374), photographer Dan Martensen embraced the color of the



Models who dazzled on camera and off, bopping along to a playlist of '90s hip-hop. rap, and reggae

of studio space at the Hudson River-adjacent Chelsea Piers, where a team of 17 fashion, photo, and production wizards assembled for a total of 21 hours

Clothing racks of appropriately hued looks chosen by ELLE Fashion Director Samira Nasr, from an Hermès crepe jumpsuit to a gabardine Bottega Veneta jacket

magenta suede Manolo Blahnik pumps to psychedelic rainbow Marc Jacobs platform boots



THE AMANDA SHOW

Model Amanda Murphy talks in-flight beauty, career sacrifices, and superior pizza

Age: 28

Home Base: A small Chicago suburb Bona Fides: Murphy, who stars in our gender-bending fashion spectacular. "The Boyfriend Experience" (page 430), attended her first open call at 16 and signed with the modeling behemoth IMG five years later. Since walking exclusively for Prada's fall



2013 season, she's become a runway mainstay, with credits that include Proenza Schouler, Altuzarra, Lanvin, and Carolina Herrera.

CV: For four years, Murphy juggled modeling with part-time work as a Chicago radiology technologist. "I put a lot of tears and sleepless nights into that degree. As a model, I've accom-

plished more than I ever dreamed of, but it still hurt to let that job go," she says.

Skin Secret: The globe-trotter swears by MicrodermaMitt washcloths for

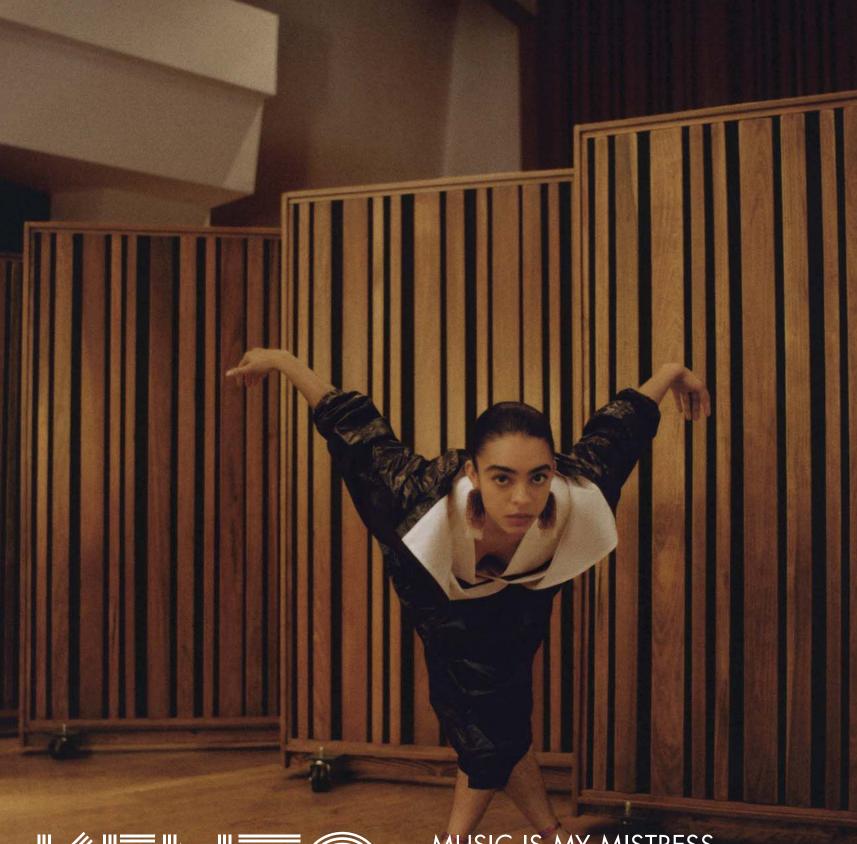
in-flight skin care. "They're small exfoliating cloths that remove all makeup by just adding water, and they're not liquid, so I can put them in

my carry-on." Hot Rec: The Windy City native sure knows her deep dish: She recommends the 45-year-old Chicago Pizza

and Oven Grinder Company, a Lincoln Park staple.

übersteamy Outlander series

Happy Place: Between shoots, Murphy squeezes in time to ride her horses she has four!—a few times a week. She started riding her first horse, Jesse, at 15. "She's full of sass and has a mind of her own," Murphy says. Currently Reading: Diana Gabaldon's



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Tracee Ellis Ross Jesse Williams Kelsey Lu Ish

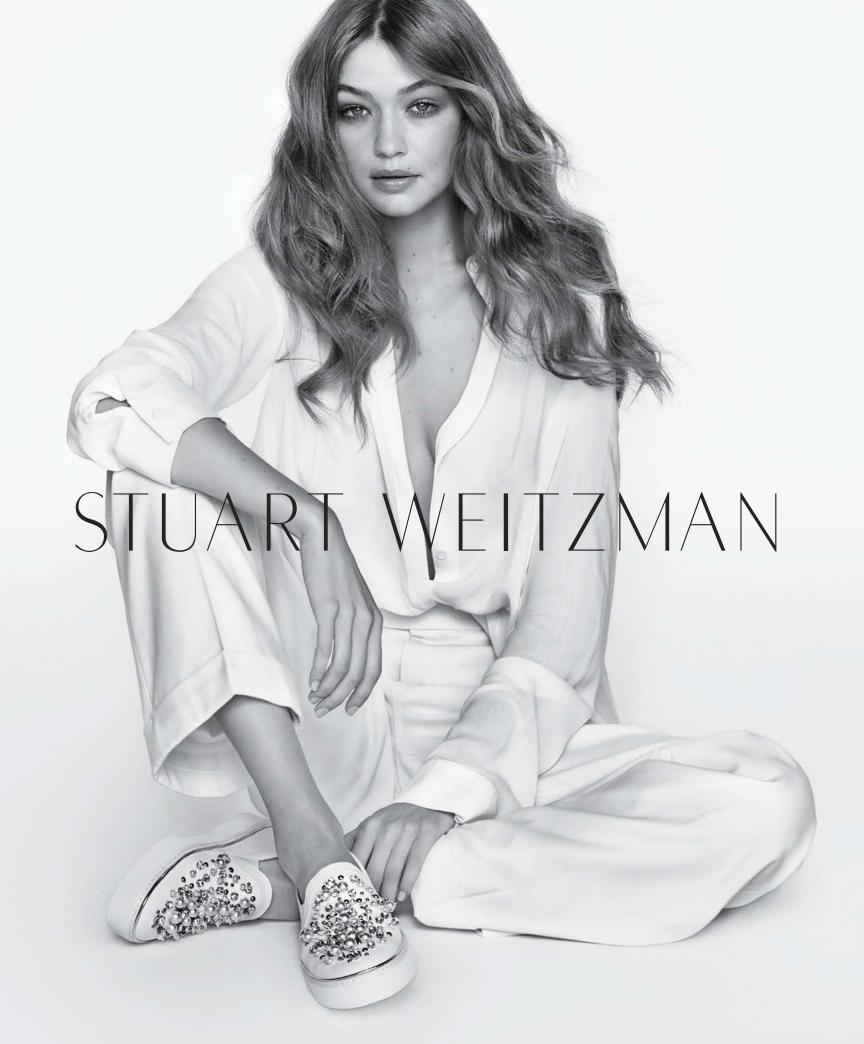




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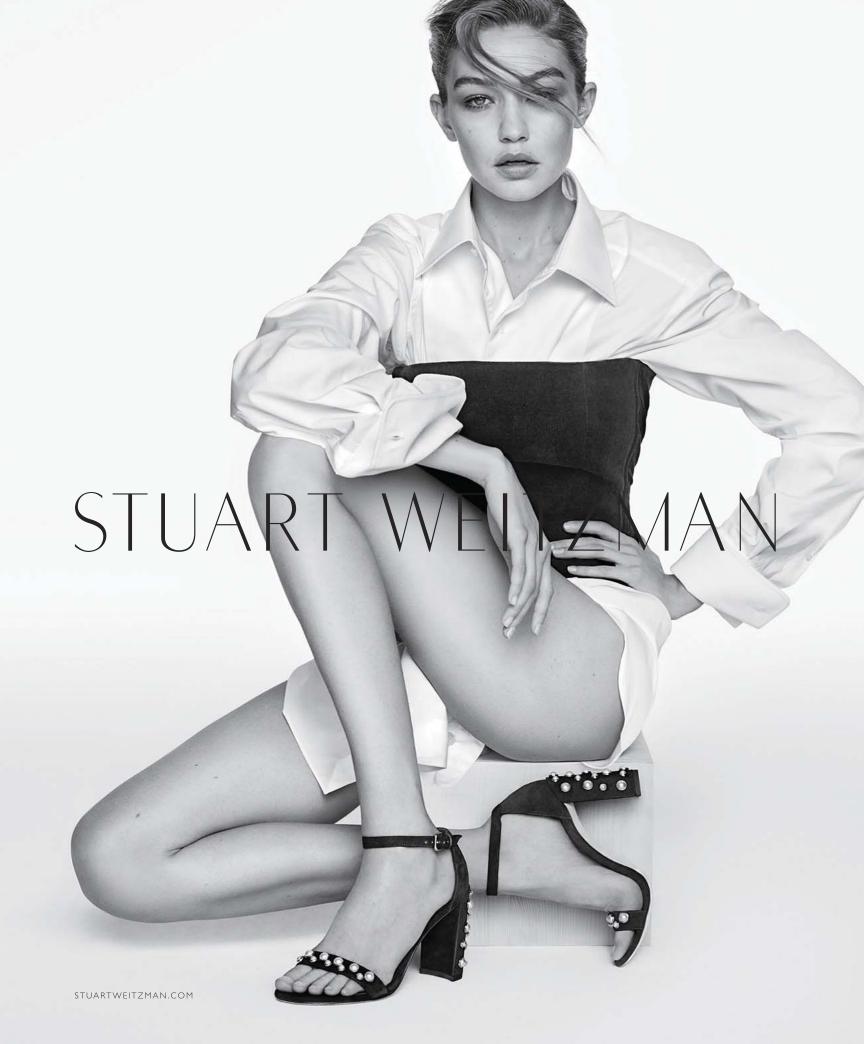




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Audited Media



Recipe for Success

The film La La Land is about to sweep the Oscars, and everyone who's seen it has certainly spun backward through the time machine more than once, reimagining all of those what-ifs and why-didn't-I's and, as David Byrne would ask, How did I get here? Is it nurture/nature? Good luck/bad luck? Sun sign? The work of a higher power? Or maybe it's all about birth order.

I moved around a lot as a kid, as did my mother, so it's almost implausible that we both attended the same grade school, but we did, as did my uncle, my older sister, and my little brother: Flynn Park, in University City, a college town just west of St. Louis. I was the middle child, so everyone in the family but my brother had laid claim to Flynn's halls before I arrived for kindergarten. For the next six years, all I heard was how great everyone in my family was, especially my older sister, who was such a good girl: studious, and so smart, that one, and beautiful, with those long golden curls!

Woe to the child who is constantly compared to a sibling, whether that sibling is blessed with merely better posture (sit up straight! Look at your sister!) or is the most famous woman in the world. I'm not saying I know what it's like to be Solange Knowles, but I do know that when you have a rock star for a sibling, carving out an identity that's something other than a reflection of or commentary on you-know-who requires patience and an immutable sense of self. Solange, this month's cover girl, seems to have an abundance of both, having worked on her charttopping and critically adored album, A Seat at the Table, for four years while quietly raising her son in relative (no pun intended) privacy in Brooklyn and New Orleans. Solange sat down with University of Pennsylvania professor and cultural critic Salamishah Tillet to talk about music, race, motherhood, fame, family—and, of course, Solange's singular style, which she has long been known for. She dresses for a critic of one—herself—mixing forms, silhouettes, and color in a way that has proved downright prescient when it comes to what's on the runway.

And Solange had us vibe-ing red this spring, awash in the color that has lit up the past two seasons, appearing at Balenciaga, Céline, Sportmax, and many more. Of all the Pantone chips in all the world, it is surely the boldest, and the one most imbued with emotion, be it passion, anger, love, desire, fear, drive.... In China, brides wear red to bring them good luck. On the body, throughout history, wearing red demands attention.

But red wasn't the only color making it big this season—pick a color, any color. Or, in the case of Fashion News Director Anne Slowey, pick every color, except gray, black, or boring. This month Slowey finds herself at a fashion crossroads, and, to paraphrase Yankee great Yogi Berra, she took it: In her piece "Rainbow Warrior," she vows to never again don the all-black uniform of ascetics and aesthetes, architects and mourners, even if she did spend the last two decades perfecting it.

Of course, uniforms, whether official or self-imposed, are designed to quickly deliver a lot of information. Police, judges, flight attendants, baseball players—we assume just from their "look," in fashionspeak, that they've earned the right to wear that garb based on the acquisition of a body of knowledge, and that they're comfortable

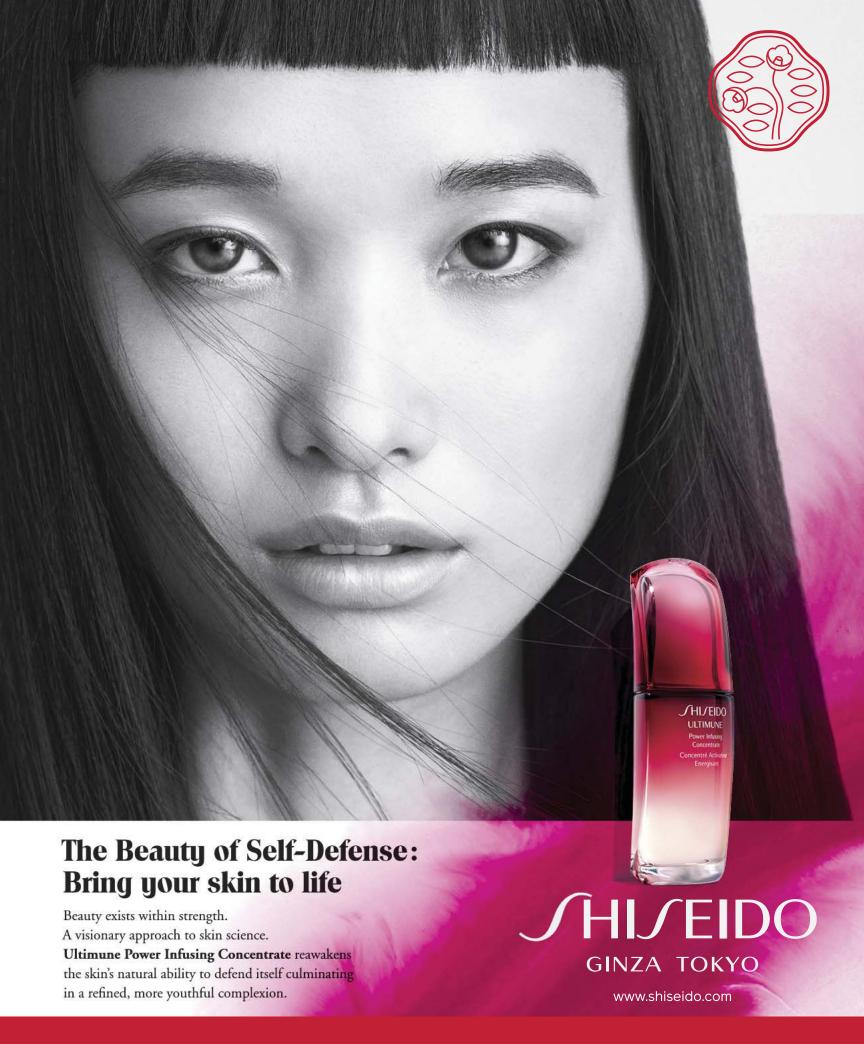
with the expectations and responsibilities that come with it. It's part of a phenomenon known as "enclothed cognition," as writer Monica Corcoran Harel tells us in her piece "Harder, Better, Faster," or the idea that what we wear affects not just how other people treat us but how we feel about ourselves.

Senior Features Editor Ben Dickinson goes even deeper, and actually looks inside the brain (with the help of renowned psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett) to find that, as with most things, context is everything. Women, it turns out, are not too "emotional" to run the world (despite the fact that some older women voters say that's why they wouldn't vote for a female president), and we're certainly not more labile than men. For instance, when men's and women's emotional experiences and responses are studied, researchers can't detect any clear, objective difference in their intensity—even though subjects of both sexes routinely report believing that women are more addled by their feelings than men are, and even when describing themselves! The problem is the stories we tell ourselves: When women get upset, we're being "emotional," at the mercy of our feelings. But when men get stirred up, they're just "reacting" to something in their environment.

Fortunately, Rachael Combe's hunt for more than a few good men led to her searching piece on what it might take to enlist more members of the opposite sex in fighting for what are typically referred to as "women's issues." Maybe some self-interest, to start? As Combe points out, it's well documented that the more parity women have pay, rights, political representation—in any country in the world, the higher the GDP. In other words, the more power women have, the more money and success everyone will have, including men.

We all know what money is, but good luck coming up with a common definition of success. Senior Editor Amanda FitzSimons takes a look at a couple who have created what is, for them, a perfect universe. Running their Michelin-starred restaurant Take Root in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, Elise Kornack and Anna Hieronimus lead such an exquisitely calibrated existence, there is just no room in it for anyone else. Despite intense interest from investors and other fans begging them to expand-to open new locations, write a cookbook, do all of the other things successful restaurateurs do-they refuse to do anything that might allow them to go beyond their 12-seats-a-night service. It's just the two of them making the menus, shopping, setting the tables, cooking, pairing and pouring the wine, waiting tables, taking reservations, washing the dishes, putting out the trash, and locking up at night. It's a hard thing for a lot of people to accept, so acculturated are we, perhaps especially in the United States, to strive to reach the next goal, pushing, winning, more, more, more. Kornack and Hieronimus love their lives just as they are. The heart rules without rules. How could anyone argue with that definition of success?

Colstie



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IT'S SPARKLING ON YOUR HAND AS YOU SIP YOUR TEA
AND HUG OUR KIDS AND OPEN THE DOOR TO
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JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE IN IT?

WILL YOU?



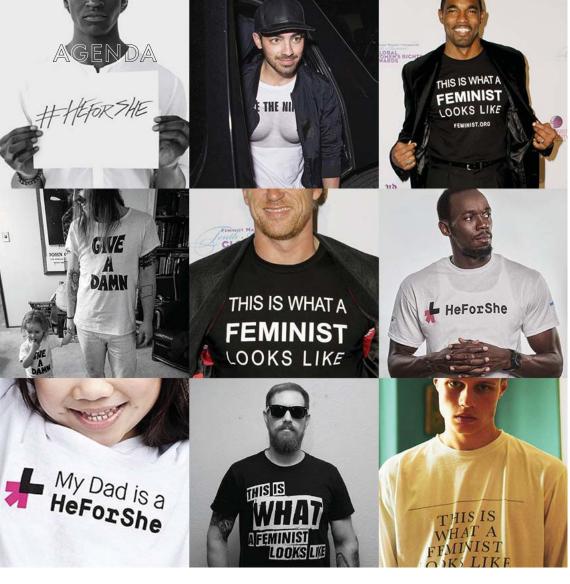
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WHERE THE BOYS ARE

Not nearly as on board with feminism as we'd like them to be, despite nearly incontrovertible data showing that the more gender equality, the stronger a country's economy. **Rachael Combe** reports

I watched Hillary Clinton's concession speech with my two eldest children, Theodore, 10, and Louisa, 8, both her ardent admirers. Toward the end, Clinton said, "And to all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams."

Theodore sat straight up. He reached for the pause button on the remote. "Why did she say that only to the little girls? What about the boys?" I explained that boys had lots of examples of boys who grew up to be president, but girls didn't. He nodded. Yeah, okay, he got it. But when we watched the rest of the speech, he leaned back on the couch, regarding Clinton from more of a distance, no longer caught up in the moment.

Aggrieved manhood has become a hot topic across the ideological spectrum. There are Bernie and his bros on the left, who spent the months after the election accusing Democrats of ignoring economic issues in favor of pandering to women and minorities. On the right, there are the blue-collar white men of the Rust Belt, who've voted for Democrats in the past but last year pushed the swing states over the edge for Donald Trump.

In a PRRI/Atlantic poll taken shortly before the election, Trump supporters were more likely to agree that "society seems to punish men just for acting like men" and that "society as a whole has become too soft and feminine." A study published in *Harvard Business Review* last fall showed that, among Republican men, the segment who believe men face "a great deal" or "a lot" of

discrimination has doubled since 2012, to near 20 percent. The more marginalized the men felt, the more negatively they rated Clinton.

Though Sanders and Trump are separated by a vast policy gulf, they seem to agree on at least one point: The women's movement is an impediment. Trumpers are explicitly hostile to key parts of the feminist agenda, while the Sanders contingent sees feminism as a distraction from what really matters.

The big head-scratcher of all this, however, is that it flies in the face of mountains of evidence that gender equality is one of the most effective ways to lift the fortunes of not only working-class men but the entire country. In its recent Power of Parity report, the McKinsey Global Institute, the consulting giant's think tank, estimated that if all states caught up with those that are most advanced in terms of gender parity (as indicated, for example, by women and men working outside the home in comparable numbers, equitable sharing of domestic tasks, and low rates of violence against women and teen pregnancy), annual GDP would jump by \$2.1 trillion, 10 percent over projected rates, by 2025. This translates to at least 6 million more "quality jobs" for women in rural and urban, and red and blue states.

Further, things could easily go the other way as the Trump administration makes good on its promises to cut Planned Parenthood funding, rescind the Affordable Care Act and its birth control coverage, and put more restrictions on abortion, all of which would limit women's education and employment opportunities, says Lakshman Achuthan, cofounder of the independent Economic Cycle Research Institute. In fact, he says, "It could very likely lead to a recession."

To be clear, McKinsey's economic models don't take work from men and give it to women; the increases in GDP involve money and jobs we're leaving on the table by failing to achieve gender equality. "This means everybody has an increased standard of living," says Kweilin Ellingrud, a coauthor of the report. If women made more, they'd spend more, pumping money into the economy for











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others to earn (by, for example, building the houses or selling the groceries they need). The wealth of families would also swell, giving the girls and boys who are part of them brighter futures.

McKinsey isn't the first group to advance this argument, but it's usually offered as an economic engine for developing nations, not the United States. As Stephen Marche, an essayist and novelist, points out in his thought-provoking new book about gender politics, *The Unmade Bed: The Messy Truth About Men and Women in the 21st Century*, "Politicians who are considering the role of women in the workplace and in society should recognize that they are asking themselves the following question: How poor do we want to be?"

And yet harnessing the political power of men for a feminist revolution seems like a steep climb. In a Feminist Majority Foundation poll last fall, only 33 percent of men considered themselves feminists. On the up side, 54 percent of male Clinton voters identified as feminists; but only 20 percent of Trump men did. And among millennials heralded for their alleged enlightenment sexism has been found, in some instances, to be worse than among older men. A PRRI survey of 18- to 34-year-olds found that only 32 percent of male Democrats identified as feminists, while fewer than half of millennial men in a 2014 Harris Poll reported that they felt comfortable interacting or working directly with a female president, Fortune 500 executive, engineer, or senator. In contrast, a majority of all Americans—and older men—were just fine with female leaders.

When I asked feminist scholar and journalist Susan Faludi-the author of both Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women and Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man—why otherwise progressive men don't embrace feminism, she wondered if part of the problem was the word itself. "There's no equivalent word for someone who supports civil rights, for example," she says. "When you call yourself a feminist, you're assuming an identity. Feminism should be a system of principles and actions rather than a label or a brand, because that gives you the opportunity to hang that brand with all kinds of ugly tinsel." Like, for instance, the canard that feminists hate men. Although Faludi hastened to add that she wasn't counseling against labeling oneself a feminist, she hoped people would start to think of it as a belief system centered on a "larger collective good."

Marche, who appears to be a feminist—

"White male privilege" is a catchphrase, but some men are obviously more privileged than others.

he's written a book pressing for women's empowerment, after all—refuses to identify as such, largely for the reasons Faludi cited: If feminism means women are socially, legally, politically, and economically equal, Marche tells me, then "feminism means 'women are people.' I don't consider that an ism. If you don't believe that, something is wrong with you. 'Women are real people' is a truth, like 'the Earth is a planet.' To say that I espouse it just seems absurd to me. It's like saying 'I'm a gravity-ist.'"

Faludi pointed me to the work of author bell hooks for deeper insight into what might turn off some progressives about feminism. The movement's stated goal is to make women equal to men, but that glides over the reality that "men are not equals in a white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal class structure," as hooks wrote roughly three decades ago. So "which men do women want to be equal to?" Poorer women, particularly nonwhites, "know that many males in their social groups are exploited and oppressed.... They would not deem it liberatory to share their social status."

Though "white male privilege" became a catchphrase last year, some white men are obviously more privileged than others. A recent report from ECRI found that, though urbanites and racial minorities have gained jobs since the recession, white, mostly rural Americans have lost 6.5 million. (Overall, whites still outpace minorities financially.) Because the forces responsible for this economic deterioration—technology, globalization, and "Wall Street greed"—are "largely invisible," Faludi says, dispossessed white men may scapegoat women and minorities, who indeed hold more positions of power than they used to in previous generations, but they still don't hold more power overall.

A central thesis of Marche's *Unmade Bed* is that the social changes already under-

way—women's entrance into the workforce, academic accomplishments, and reduced reliance on men for income and protection—have led to unprecedented gender anxiety. And he sees grotesque gender displays in pop culture and politics—everything from violent porn to the rank misogyny of the altright—as symptoms of that unease.

Faludi adds our new president to the list of symptoms. "Trump's appeal is being a bully boy and having control over women. He's held himself out as representing the traditional man, but he belongs to the ornamental realm of TV and getting your brand out," she says, which ironically "represents one of the greatest threats to traditional manhood: that you can't prove your manhood by doing worthy things. You have to play a man on TV; he's the new click-bait man."

Although the idea may strike beatendown feminists as adding insult to injury once again making it women's job to convince men of our humanity-recruiting men to join the fight for gender equity will probably require some femsplaining. For instance, while the economic case for gender equality is incontrovertible, when I was covering Clinton during her tenure as secretary of state, I noticed that male journalists rarely volunteered to serve as the pool reporter for speeches addressing female economic empowerment. They seemed to file the subject under "Not Real News" or "Doesn't Concern Me." Some of this may have been about the exigencies of news making for a wire service, but the women on the State Department beat showed more interest in hearing the secretary out, even when they weren't likely to file a story about it.

Perhaps surprisingly, Marche, who's Canadian, speculates that Trump might force Americans to process inequality more swiftly. "In Canada, we had Rob Ford [the late Toronto mayor notorious for misogyny, racism, homophobia, and crack addiction], then we all got together, left and right, and we voted for [Prime Minister] Justin Trudeau," a progressive who openly embraces equality between the sexes and has made a point of putting an equal number of women and men in his cabinet, a first for the country.

Marche would like to see feminism rebranded altogether. "We need a theory and political practice of gender that is about men and women together. *Feminism*, as a term, simply doesn't apply," he says. "Is a world where any thinking about gender starts with women necessarily the right approach? I'm not sure that's good for women. And I know it's not good for men."









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"It's been a really, really long time since I've been in an interview," our January cover star, Michelle Williams, told writer Boris Kachka during their interview in Brooklyn. Readers loved getting a glimpse of the ultraprivate actress's interior life—not to mention a cover shoot that gave Old Hollywood glam a modern twist:

"That makeup beat is everything."—chippedpolish, Instagram

"Michelle Williams has a gumption on the screen that she carries over from real life. This article gave huge insight into Williams's world and allowed the public to better understand her motivations in choosing roles. Nothing Williams does is for the sake of attention or for being a household name—her decisions are for herself. The roles she takes are diverse and multidimensional because what matters to her is the role, not the payoff."—Rachel Gonzalez, e-mail

"This is so beautiful!!! Totally tempted 2 chop [my hair]."—sydness99, Instagram

STOP LOSS

One reader felt profoundly moved by memoirist Cristina Nehring's essay on suddenly losing all her hair ("The Bald Truth," December):

"Please give my deepest gratitude to Cristina for courageously and authentically sharing her story with us. There is nothing more healing than to be unconditionally heard, understood, and loved, and in reading about her experiences, I was able to do those things by proxy. I was deeply moved to compassion and inspiration for my own trials with cancer that have left me with a kindred crisis of self-image and identity. Much of what Cristina shared resonated with me and helped normalize the mammoth shift that a radical change in appearance can bring about in one's personal, professional, and even spiritual life. 'Telling people about this condition has become a litmus test via which I detect good people' was one of the most healing sentences of all for me, an affirmation that the real flaw is not in our appearances, but in the hearts of those who cannot get past appearances." -Amore S., e-mail

WHO RUN THE (ART) WORLD?

ELLE's sixth annual Women in Art Issue (December) featured 15 artists, collectors, gallery owners, and curators—Laurie Simmons, Thelma Golden, Jordan Casteel, and more—rocking the visual arts in 2016:

"I'm grateful to have ELLE's list of 15 inspiring women in art in my life."

—Maura M. Lynch of Rookiemag.com

Artist Chloe Wise, who helped conceptualize her portrait featured in the story, posted this message on Instagram: "I am thankful to ELLE for including me.... This



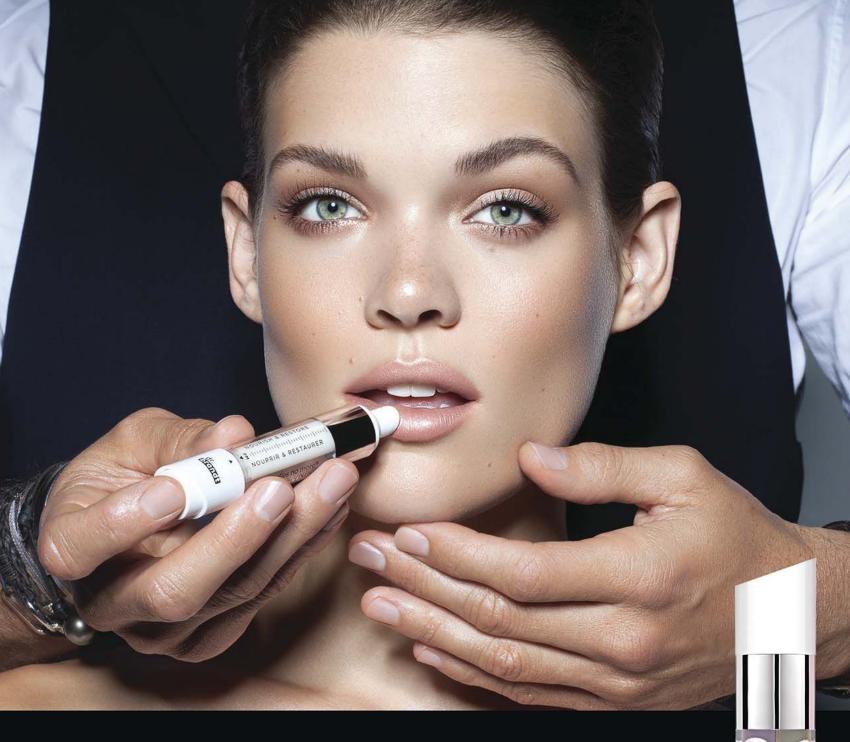
feels like an important time to celebrate women, despite the fact that America has voted against our progress. It is really hard to create right now, but this is not the time to stop creating. It is deeply saddening, frightening, and disheartening to realize we are set to face a major setback in the fight toward gender equality... but we have to fight this with feminism.... Women are the future, obviously!!!!"—@chloewise_



ELLE readers, sound off! Contact us at ELLE, Letters to the Editor, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019; or elleletters@hearst.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

THE WARDROBE MONOLOGUES ELLE Features

Director Laurie Abraham plumbs her own mental depths in "My Stream of Fashion Consciousness" (January): "Abraham speaks to every woman in that even when dressing for the most mundane activities, there is always an internal debate—not because it's difficult, but because your choice is perceived as a direct reflection of your income, creativity, and confidence. I loved her honesty and down-to-earth attitude on not letting the <code>[cost]</code> of your clothes determine how sexy you can feel in them."—Christina Oehler, e-mail



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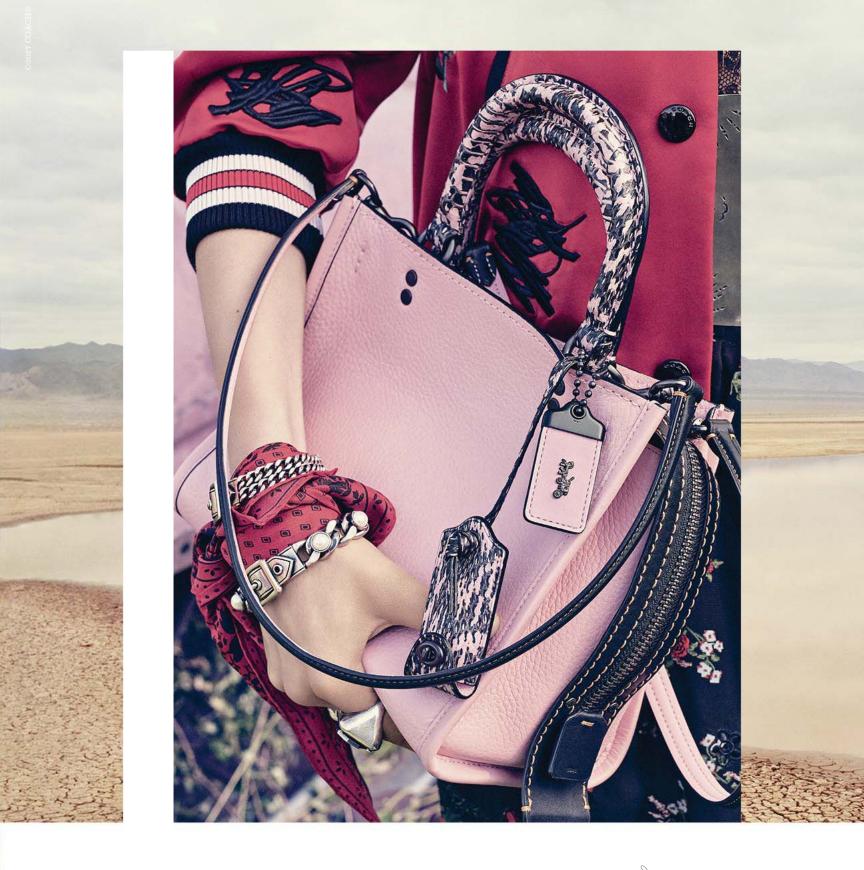
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CONTRIBUTORS



Salamishah Tillet

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND AFRICANA STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA; COFOUNDER, A LONG WALK HOME THIS MONTH: "THE MESSENGER" (PAGE 368)

"I cofounded A Long Walk Home in 2003 with my sister, Scheherazade. Our focus is to use art to empower young people and to end violence against girls

and women."
Listening to:
"I like 'Weary'
and I really,
really like
'Don't Touch

My Hair' from *A*Seat at the Table—I'm
fascinated by Solange
as an artist and a
political figure."



Monica Corcoran Harel

WRITER THIS MONTH: "HARDER, BETTER, FASTER" (PAGE 190) AND "FAIR TRADE" (PAGE 250)

"I LOVE THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND WHAT WE WEAR AND HOW IT MAKES US FEEL. IT'S SORT OF COMMON LOGIC THAT WHEN YOU FEEL GOOD AND YOU LOOK GOOD, YOU MIGHT PERFORM BETTER."

Favorite designer:

"AN L.A. DESIGNER
NAMED NATALIE
MARTIN. SHE DOES
THESE FANTASTIC
BOHEMIAN
CAFTAN DRESSES
IN GORGEOUS
FLORAL-PRINT
FABRICS FROM
BALI. I ALSO
LIKE ULLA
JOHNSON."

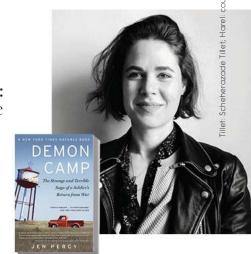


Favorite designer: "Raf Simons." When it comes to personal style: "I find the best-dressed people are the uniform dressers. They've branded themselves aesthetically, and I think that's what makes people's style strong, unique, and personal." Favorite brands: "I like Acne Studios a lot. And I'm into technical wear, like Acronym and Arc'teryx Veilance—pieces that look cool but are also functional." Road not taken: "I grew up bred to be an engineer, doctor, or lawyer."

Molly Langmuir

ASSOCIATE EDITOR, ELLE
THIS MONTH: "FAIR PLAY" (PAGE 428)

Loves to shop at: "Steven Alan and La Garçonne." Listening to: "Solange's A Seat at the Table. I've also had the Francis and the Lights album Farewell, Starlite! on repeat." Reading: "Demon Camp, by Jen Percy, an account of veterans with PTSD who turned to exorcism for help."











nated by gemstones and amulets. Now the Lebanese jewelry

designer seeks inspiration from her travels, such as a two-week trip to Myanmar (formerly Burma) last spring, where Fares and her husband, artist Alexandre Al Khawam, toured cities, lakeside villages, and Buddhist temples. Part of her latest collectioncalled Akasha, the Sanskrit word for "ether"-is drawn from the amulets and silver pendants of Myanmar's Inle Lake region. "I kept coming across pendants with concentric, bulbous circles," Fares says. "They put them on strings, like local amulets, representing the universe and balance." The Paris-born, London-based designer, whose debut collection was picked up by Harrods, developed an interest in prehistoric symbols as an art history student at Tufts

ing her eponymous label in 2009.

DRE: The goldplated Shwedagon Pagoda towers over Yangon, the country's largest city and former capital. Fares stood at the base of the more than 300-foot-tall "crown of Burma" precisely as the setting sun struck the 4,531 diamonds encrusted atop its spire. "We saw the sun's reflection and all the shades of gold and yellow," she says. The 2,500-yearold tiered tower, widely considered the country's spiritual center, is said to hold eight of the Buddha's hairs in a secret chamber.

cess Resort, a boutique hotel located on Inle Lake, a 13.5-milelong freshwater lake in central Myanmar. The hotel offers meditation and cleansing spa sessions, as well as tours of its artisan workshops. Travelers come to explore the region's stilt-house villages and floating gardens all accessible by

wooden longboats-and to sample the local Shan cuisine, a rice-based fare

featuring light curries and banana leaves. "It's delicious, very subtle and refined," says Fares, who also met with silversmiths, weavers, and papermakers who live and work in the lake-adjacent villages.

BIKE: Fares spent the tail end of her trip electric biking around Bagan, a desert city bordering the Irrawaddy River, whose landscape is studded with thousands

of ancient temples and domed stupas. "We biked all the way up to the temples and sat outside," savs Fares of the 26-square-mile archaeological area, which Myanmar has proposed for UNESCO

World Heritage status. On their second day in Bagan, the couple took an early-morning hot-air-balloon ride that offered wide-angle views of the city and the winding Irrawaddy.

University; she then

studied gemology and









Nicole Richie rolls up to the Sunset Tower in West Hollywood at 9 A.M., wearing the same T-shirt she slept in. "I had a wild morning," she says, peering into the mirror and smoothing out the shirt, a soft vintage number featuring reggae musician Peter Tosh, which she's accessorized with a leather jacket, skinny jeans, Chuck Taylors, and so many chunky gold earrings that she'd have to have passed out hard not to notice them digging into the side of her head. "First, I woke up late," she tells me, meaning, like, 6 A.M., as opposed to her normal 5:30 A.M. Then she took a spin around her vegetable garden. ("I have a gardening stage name," she tells me. "My name is Nicki Fresh, and the s is a dollar sign, and I listen to '90s hip-hop.") After that, she drove her two kids to school, where she spent some time volunteering and getting book recommendations from the librarians. "I love books," she says. "Right now I'm really into science. Physics is what I care about."

Hold up. I'd been numbly nodding along, but now my jetlagged brain makes a screeching sound, like a needle being dragged off a record. I'm sorry, what? "Physics," Nicole Richie repeats. I squint across the table, past the enormous bowl of oatmeal that makes Richie seem even tinier than she actually is, to see if she's fucking with me. Her gaze is level; the expression on her face—so familiar after 15 years of living in the public eye betrays not even a hint of, "Yeah, bitch, bet you didn't think I was going to bring up science."

Which is true. I mean, I knew walking in today that Richie, who turned 35 in September, wasn't exactly the same person I remember from back in her early-aughts heyday, when she and Paris Hilton, her costar on the early reality show *The Simple Life*, ruled the Strip—two blond heads of a hydra of celebutantes, for whom a "wild morning" meant spilling out of Chateau Marmont in the wee hours, flashing the paparazzi, and maybe getting a DUI on the way home. I knew that she'd become a mom, married, and traded in her trucker hats and glitter eye shadow to become a sophisticated icon of rich-hippie style—à la Bianca Jagger at Studio 54. And that in 2009, she'd parlayed that ethos into a successful fashion and jewelry line, House of Harlow, that sells at stores like Lord & Taylor.

But I also knew that she was a prankster. This has been evident since *The Simple Life*. Remember the episodes when Richie, then in her early twenties, offered senior citizens a lap dance? Or got frat boys to make out with each other? Or changed the letters on a Sonic sign to read "½ PRICE ANAL SALTY WEINER BURGERS"?

"She's very mischievous," says Justin Coit, one of the producers of *Candidly Nicole*, the scripted reality show Richie created in 2014 for Yahoo (and then moved to VH1), in which she stars as a variation of her former public persona—half Cher in *Clueless*, half Larry David in *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. "She likes

to poke fun at people in ways that really get you but also make you want to give her a hug. She's like an evil genius, in the lightest possible way."

Which is why we are here today: Candidly Nicole caught the eye of 30 Rock producers Tina Fey, Robert Carlock, and Tracey Wigfield, who were impressed enough that they invited her to

read for Wigfield's upcoming NBC sitcom, *Great News*, about a New Jersey news-show producer whose mother ends up getting an internship at her station. Portia, one of the anchors on the show, was written as a kind of millennial monster and a foil to the coanchor, an old-school journalist played by John Michael Higgins. According to Fey, Richie killed it. "Her character is meant to be cool and current in a way that intimidates him, but she also has to be funny and likable for the home audience," she tells me in an e-mail. "I can't think of anyone better than Nicole at delivering both."

The show, which premieres in April, will air in prime time and is packed with big-deal players from the comic acting world (Higgins, who is perhaps best known as the male announcer in *Pitch Perfect*, and Andrea Martin, of *SCTV*, among them). But Wigfield thinks Richie may end up being the breakout star: "She's, like, a scene-stealer."

"Her comedy instincts are great," Fey says. "That is something you can't teach; people either have it or they don't."

Which is why, back at the Sunset Tower, I can't help but wonder if I'm being—to make another mid-aughts reference—punk'd. So, I mumble, how did Richie get interested in, er, physics? She smiles mischievously. "What I used to do," she says, "is I used to go home and watch these science shows, like *Planet Earth*, and—" She lifts a pair of fingers to her lips and mimes taking a drag off a joint. "My mind would be blown."

Okay, phew. So she's not an entirely changed person, either. "I mean, I live in California, so...." She smiles.

By all accounts, Nicole Richie was an evil genius—in the lightest possible way—from the very beginning. Her father, Lionel Richie, discovered her when she was just a toddler, shaking a tambourine onstage at a Prince concert. "She was a hell of a salesperson," the elder Richie once told *Vanity Fair*. "She was an entertainer, but she was looking for approval. It was: 'If you like me, maybe you'll keep me.'"

Nicole's birth parents—the brother and the assistant of Prince collaborator Sheila E., who were in Lionel's social circle at the time—were having serious problems, and when Lionel saw that they weren't giving Nicole a stable home life, he and Brenda Harvey, his wife and childhood sweetheart, asked if they could bring her to live with them in their Bel Air mansion. They eventually filed for formal adoption, and Nicole grew up in the quintessential La-La Land: She had birthday parties at her godfather Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch, took up piano and competitive figure skating, and attended school alongside Hilton and Kim Kardashian. "Nikki—she went by Nikki, by the way—was, like, a cool girl," says Erin Foster, the daughter of music composer David Foster, who worked with Lionel Richie. "She was funny and feisty and fun."

Maybe a little *too* much fun. After her parents' divorce, things "started to go south," as Richie puts it. She started doing cocaine and prescription pills in high school, partied her way through two years of college at the University of Arizona while barely going to class, and spent a month in rehab for heroin addiction. She sobered up just in time to film *The Simple Life* with Hilton, whose sister, Nicky, had backed out at the last minute.

The premise of the reality show was, well, simple—send two spoiled rich girls to live and work on a farm, *Green Acres*-style—but no one was prepared for the enormity of the response. "At

Plastron, price on request, tunic, \$1,890, both, PACO RABANNE. Bracelet, price on request, turquoise ring, \$9,900, both, VAN CLEEF & ARPELS. Rings, both, DIOR FINE JEWELRY, prices on request. Her own earrings. the time, the only other reality shows were *The Real World* and *The Osbournes*," Richie points out. "There was no precedent for 'This is what the game is.'"

Thirteen million people watched the first episode, and overnight Richie and Hilton, who were both 22 at the time, became huge stars, beloved and vilified for their onscreen cluelessness ("What's a soup kitchen?" Richie asked in the first episode) and, soon enough, their offscreen antics, as tabloids, entertainment shows, and infant Internet gossip sites followed them while they cruised around Hollywood with an ever-expanding posse that included Lindsay Lohan, Britney Spears, and Mary-Kate Olsen. In total, there were 56 episodes of *The Simple Life* over the course of

five seasons (the first three for Fox, the last two for E!), but at the time, it felt like it was on 24/7.

Like all parties that go on too long, things eventually turned dark. Richie's weight loss after the first season became a tabloid fixation (she'd been puffy because of rehab, she'd always maintained), and she got tagged as a bad girl for her "scary skinny" frame and her friend breakup with Paris Hilton, the cause of which remains one of the Great Mysteries of Our Time (with "Nicole knows what she did" rivaling "That's hot!" as the most famous catchphrase of the era).

"We laugh about it now, but I was scared to hang out with her," Foster says. "I was a nerd, and I was like, She's a bad girl! She had this reputation."

As the show wound down, both stars were facing possible jail time, Richie for driving down the wrong side of the highway with Vicodin and pot in her system. It didn't seem like it was going to get much better from there. "You know, when a show like *The Simple Life* starts to die down, you think, What's someone in her position going to do? They're going to go down the rabbit hole," Foster says. "But then she made this 180."

Richie says she can't remember which club it was where she met Joel Madden, one-half of the twin brothers who founded the band Good Charlotte. "Hyde?" she says. "Or maybe Guy's, where Samantha [Ronson] had a karaoke night?" Wherever it was: "Three shots in, we knew we were meant to be. I was like, I can't see you, but I loooove you."

She's kidding, she explains after a beat.







an ever-expanding posse that included Lindsay Lohan, Britney Spears, and Mary-Kate Olsen. In total, there were 56 episodes of The Simple Life over the course of The Simple Life over the course of

There were no shots. In conversation, Richie veers between sarcasm and seriousness, which can be confusing. "I think it's kind of self-protective," Coit says. After all, if she makes a joke, she doesn't have to answer the question. At this point, she knows how to play the game.

However her courtship with Madden went down, it was fast. Five months into their relationship, when Richie was still just 25, she discovered she was pregnant, and her wild phase ended so abruptly it makes one consider that she'd actually been in control all along.

"Um, no," she says in response to that question. She then turns sincere: "What I do think was that there was something inside of me that was looking for, like, 'How do I get out of this?'" she says. "And when we knew that we were going to start a family, it was just, like, Okay. This is what we're doing."

Now she and Madden have been together for 10 years, an eternity for celebrities. How do you keep the romance alive? I ask. "Threats," Richie deadpans. "Violence. Screaming." She laughs. "We come from a history, both of us, of having long relationships," she says. Richie was previously engaged to Adam Goldstein, aka DJ AM, who died of an overdose in 2009 at age 36. "You see people through their differences. That's just what you do."

Like Madden, who had a decidedly less gilded childhood in suburban Maryland, Richie is committed to creating a stable home life for their children. "I am strict," she tells me, driving in her black BMW to a West Hollywood showroom to see her latest collection for House of Harlow, named for

her daughter, now nine. (Her son, Sparrow, is seven.) "It's definitely a surprise to me," she says. "I never thought I would be an enforcer. I always tell my kids, I'm actually really fun in the real world. I wish you knew how fun I was."

Richie's kids don't know much about her past yet. "But they will," she promises. "I actually think it will be one of my greatest tools." Her own parents, she pointed out, grew up in Alabama. "When it came time for them to have teenage talks with me, I felt like I was living in a different world," she says. "Like, my mom, she smoked one cigarette in her life."

She pulls up to an empty parking spot in front of what used to be Kitson-the boutique where Simple Life fans used to buy their Swarovski crystal-encrusted Juicy Couture sweat pants-and searches her iPhone for a parking lot. Richie's difficulty with parallel parking was documented in an episode of Candidly Nicole, in which Lionel Richie tries to teach her by making her park between a trash can and a cardboard cutout of himself ("You'd never know I have two DUIs!" she announced triumphantly after acing her eighth try). "I love to laugh. Even if it's at my expense, I just want to have a good time," she says, picking up the thread of our previous conversation. "I do believe that any choice that I made was honestly just out of, like, Let's have a good time!"

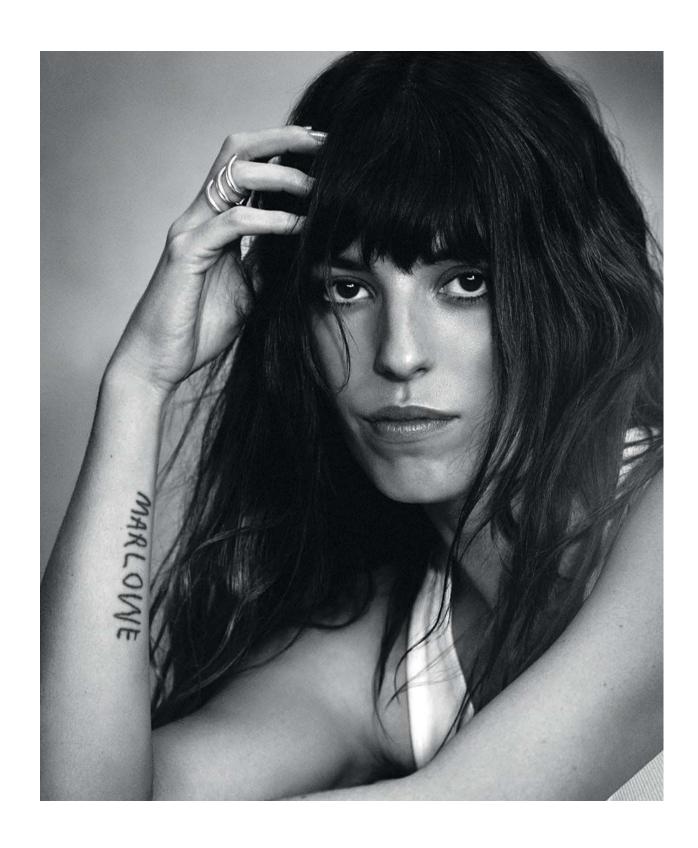
These days, her good times are more likely to include the aforementioned science documentaries than clubs—with the exception of her thirty-fifth birthday, a 1970s-themed

Continued on page 452



HEARTS ON FIRE





J BRAND

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Creative director, StyleChat
@olya dzilikhova

"Women in tech are some of the most intelligent, detail-oriented personalities," says Olya Dzilikhova, soft-pedaling on Silicon Valley's much-maligned personal style. "They understand quality, and they love to be comfortable." Dzilikhova, a former codesigner of cult eco-luxe line Mina + Olya, now eases tech wizards out of their hoodies via StyleChat's mobile app; clients snap pictures of things they like, and she assembles outfits they can share with friends and tap to buy. For a brick-and-mortar view of her style,

(1) Tenderloin-nabe store—an ode to local "understated elegance," with items by Loewe, J.W.Anderson, and Fendi. The Grocery Store has "more low-key options" than its storied big-sister boutique, Susan in San Francisco: yummy cashmere-silk sweaters and R13 denim, plus new designers such as Sara Lanzi. And Scandi minimalist boutique Pia (2), in Jackson Square, is "so different from anything here" but somehow feels "perfect for this city." Refuel at the Chinatown foodie destination Mister Jiu's (3). Her tipple? A gin cocktail with jasmine tea and gentian root called, appropriately, Happiness.





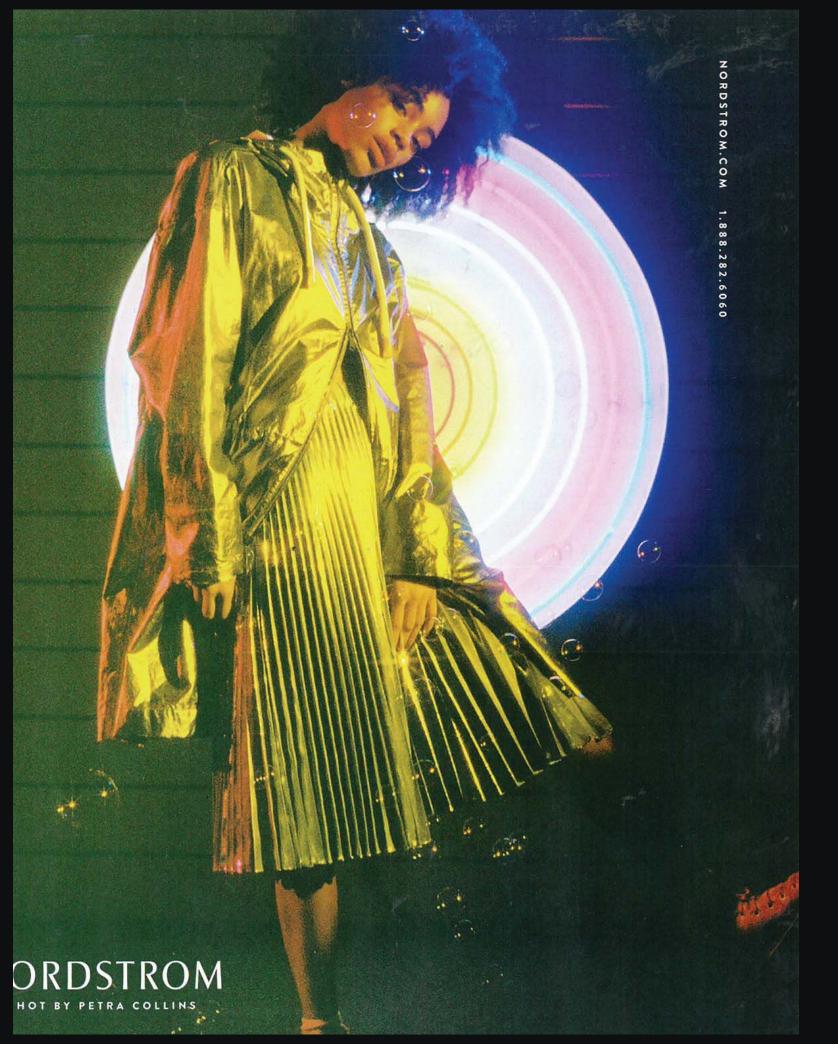


Tyler Joe (styled by Sarah Schussheim, hair and makeup by Erica Camarena), Barneys: Drew Altizer Photography; Mister Jiu's: Kassie Borreson









Naficy in the Alexander Calder: Motion MARIAM NAFICY Founder and CEO, Minted @mnaficy Minted (1), the online emporium for art, home goods, and stationery by independent artists and designers founded by Mariam Naficy in 2007, now boasts an IRL store in the Union Square shopping district, where, she says, "you'll find women as fashionable as any in New York." Just off Fillmore Street—a stretch chockablock with boutiques, including Margaret O'Leary and Steven Alan—indie boutique Anomie (2) is a hidden resource for "simple, boho-chic" pieces by independent designers. The landmark SFMOMA recently reopened after a dramatic three-year overhaul by architecture firm Snøhetta; Naficy favors its Richard Serra sculpture Sequence: "It's dream-

like to enter and walk through the

Artist; Shade cofounder

@azhaayanna

Animation producer; blogger

@windowofimagination

spiral into the middle."

STYLEACROSS AMERICA

UNEXPECTED







Fashion journalism student

@farnazdadashi

EMILY HOLT

Founder, Hero Shop

@holt_sf

"I try to encourage women to wear the fashionable clothes they buy-it's a waste to just keep them hidden in a closet," says Emily Holt, a former NYC magazine editor who moved home to open Hero Shop in the up-and-coming Tenderloin area. Now she stocks Creatures of the Wind and Gabriela Hearst, plus local finds—painted loungewear by Stevie Howell, Nu Swim's minimalist maillots. Just around the corner is the Jessica Silverman Gallery (3), "an early champion of the Tenderloin and among the country's best contemporary galleries," which will exhibit handloomed textiles by SF's own Margo Wolowiec in April. Also nearby: JayJeffers—The Store (4), the local über-decorator's retail outpost, which serves up "moody and romantic" objets and furnishings, like vintage opera glasses and hurricane candle holders trimmed with brass chain. -Reported by Alison S. Cohn



SPOTTED! STYLE ON THE STREETS OF SF



Artist

@rgb_

Cofounder and CEO, Scoutible

@angelaantony



DUFFY STONE

Interior designer @duffystone

Duffy Stone, the woman behind some of Austin's most high-personality retail interiors-spot her handiwork at East Austin boutique Olive, which stocks indie favorites like Alyson Fox and Maryam Nassir Zadeh-says, "there's a definite link between my work and wardrobe. When people see me, they know they're going to get a bright, playful space." (Speaking of playful, she recently had the floral brocade of her Valentino boots recreated on her wedding cake.) Stone sources mod Scandinavian home accessories at high-end design haven Nannie Inez, and straight-out-of-Marfa handmade furniture and textiles at JM Drygoods (3). "Austin's chiced up a lot in the last five years," she says, but "the Texas tuxedo isn't going anywhere." (For a glimpse of one of those, head to the Midnight Cowboy lounge and order a Lone Star.)

NIKISHA BRUNSON

Editor in chief and cofounder, Urban Bush Babes; owner, FolieApothecary @nikishabrunson

Nikisha Brunson may be Austin's coolest local beauty expert-she is both the cofounder (with bestie Cipriana Quann) of website Urban Bush Babes, "an outlet to teach black women how to care for their natural hair and address industry stereotypes," and the purveyor of the small-batch, handcrafted apothecary line Folie. "I've always

loved clean lines and a neutral palette," says Brunson, who stocks up on independent designers (Miranda Bennett and Mari Giudicelli) at insider boutique Kick Pleat (1). One of her favorite watering holes, the midcentury-modern mecca South Congress Hotel (2)—boasting one of the best poolside scenes in town—is right in line with her aesthetic. But, minimalism aside, Brunson is not above braving the out-the-door lines at Austin-founded chain Torchy's Tacos: "It doesn't get any better!"

Stone at Olive boutique Crystal-embellished crystar-embenished coat, \$5,500, blouse, \$1,250, both, LIBERTINE. Jeans, ACNE STUDIOS, \$260. Patent leather platforms, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, \$995.





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WHAT MOVES YOU?



BANANA REPUBLIC

STYLEACROSS AMERICA



TAYLOR CATHERINE BRANDEGER

Marketing director, Mohawk Austin @taydevochka

"Being in a band is the best excuse for wearing the most outrageous items in my closet," says Taylor Catherine Brandeger, a Miami-born musician/ media maven who's honed her musical skills (she plays bass in psych-noir quintet the Halfways) and her style at such iconic Austin music venues as the Parish, the Scoot Inn (1), and, most recently, Mohawk. Her more theatrical ensembles are sourced at SoCo (South Congress Avenue) vintage staples New Bohemia and **Prototype.** When it's time to splurge, Brandeger hits up label lover's paradise ByGeorge (2), heading past the Dries and Alaïa and going straight to the Vada jewelry, designed by local talent Katie Caplener. And after a long day of shopping, Brandeger cools her heels at the bar **Hotel Vegas** or at Mohawk, where the signature cocktail is dubbed the "13th Floor Elevator" for the Austin-born '60s psych-rock band of the same name.

-Reported by Naomi Rougeau





SPOTTED! AUSTIN'S CHICEST HIT THE STREETS



MASHA POLOSKOVA

Owner, Garment Modern + Vintage and Moss Designer Consignment

KRISTEN CHIN Principal, Pom PR @pompublicrelations

ALEX GEHRING Model; bassist/vocalist, Ringo Deathstarr @galexy

MALLORY HUBLEIN Stylist @therebelstylist

BETTE O'CALLAGHAN Poet; "advanced style icon" @bette_o



SHOE × STYLE TREND REPORT —

PRESENTED BY NINE WEST

The perfect shoe can elevate your entire ensemble, or add extra flair to an otherwise ordinary outfit. From your most-coveted statement heel to wear-with-everything mules, your footwear plays a major role in defining your personal style. Here, we take a look at this season's most sought-after trends—and the must-have shoes you need in your arsenal to make each look your own.

Elevated Embroidery

Embellish your style story with touches of on-trend embroidery. Wear with mixed prints to go full-on garden party, or pair with muted tones to let your shoes make the statement.



Unrico, \$79



Dempsey, \$89



Onlee, \$69







MACY'S EXCLUSIVE Taren Backpack, \$89





The New Nudes

Simply timeless. Blush and neutral tones take the season by storm.

Dress up with a monochrome midi dress or down with jeans and a tee.



Andrea,\$89



Scheila, \$89



Gemily, \$89



Zaina, \$79





Le Sport Chic

Gear up. Game on. Street style hits a new level of elevation. Pair your favorite sporty pieces with statement-making must-haves.





Onosha, \$79

Veedah, \$69





Welldone, \$89

Ania Crossbody, \$49





Double Duty Denim

A classic staple. Tried-and-true blues. Mix, match, and mismatch your favorites. There's no such thing as too much denim.





Byron, \$89

Unah, \$79





Appaloosa, \$79

Smoak, \$89









RAINBOW WARRIOR

After decades of a brooding wardrobe, **Anne Slowey** breaks up with the color black in favor of fashion's good vibrations

I've always been drawn to color. As a child in the postmodern '60s, I loved wearing psychedelic prints and neons. Growing up in the '70s, I sported blue-tinted prescription lenses in supersize square frames with Indian-print paisley dresses or shimmering glitter disco dresses. My favorite outfit in high school was a cherry-red poplin mechanic's suit that had a drawstring waist and a gazillion zippered pockets. When I moved to New York in the '80s, I dressed in head-to-toe monochromatic purples, rusts, and pea greens. I painted the walls of my first solo apartment a bright Ellsworth Kelly yellow, until I dated an artist who told me living with the color yellow can drive you crazy.

Then came a career in fashion, beginning with the era of grunge and goth, when Kate Moss was sporting Calvin Klein slipdresses under oversize sweaters (note to Raf Simons: Bring back slipdresses!). I've since spent nearly half my life dressed in the monastic palette of

fashion's front line. Until about a year ago, that is, when I vowed never to wear black again. My new multihued persona has a lot to do with not wanting to look like an extra from *Night of the Living Dead* in front of my kids. But in reality, it all started with the blown lightbulb in my walk-in that I have yet to replace (note to Karl: Chanel night-vision goggles!). What was born of necessity—color being the only thing visible as I pawed through the dark morass of my closet—ended up transforming not only my shopping list but my philosophy toward life.

For a woman who, for decades, considered color to be clownish, and who was once described by culture writer Guy Trebay in the New York Times as a "dark bird" thanks to my late '90s-era uniform—back then, it was all Ann Demeulemeester oxfords and asymmetrical silks, utilitarian Helmut Lang coats paired with elaborately feathered Comme des Garçons skirts, velvet-embroidered or pleated floor-sweeping Prada dresses, and draped

Yohji conundrums—forswearing black was a revolutionary decision, right up there with deciding whether to have children or get a divorce. For years, writing about the Antwerp Six or the Japanese designers I so faithfully bought, I'd reference the Wim Wenders film Wings of Desire to capture the romanticism I associated with what was, I now realize, a protective, if expressive, psychological cloak.

In my mind, my moody garb telegraphed my soulful, artistic self to the outside world. It hinted at my unrealized desires and the person I hoped to become, and shielded me from betraying how insecure I felt both as a person and in my profession. In black, I could appear mysterious and interesting while shrinking into the background—relatively speaking, that is: My dark clothes looked radical next to regular folk but, among the shimmering tableau of fashion cognoscenti, served as a safe haven in which I felt I wouldn't draw too much attention.

Since embracing color, I haven't been placing quite as high a value on how what I wear reflects who I am. Or maybe it does reflect me, but a different version, more carefree in general and specifically about clothing. Instead of giving in to judgment, I try to follow the lead of fashion innovators such as Diana Vreeland ("Think pink!") and Bill Blass, who thought wearing red was the greatest cure for sadness. I couldn't have picked a better time to spin the color wheel, considering how upbeat designers have become in their mixing-and-matching experimentation. There's nothing to fear in spring's sophisticated, kaleidoscopic chorus: With dusty pastels at Rick Owens, neon brights at Sies Marjan, highly saturated prints at Chanel, buttercup yellows at Dries Van Noten, and Yves Klein blues and mints paired with cranberry at Céline, it's impossible not to pick a winner.

And with fashion letting loose with the spirit of a Pantone palette jacked up on steroids, it begs the question: Why has color gotten such a bad rap, at least among high-minded types? Its shady reputation goes way back: Plato found color too potent and seductive, hence its banishment from the Republic in favor of the less deceptive white. Even the Latin term *colorem* has its etymology in *celare*, which means "to hide or conceal."

In fashion circles, however, black has always been held in high esteem. When Louis XIV lured prized Venetian dyers—known for their exquisite blacks—to his court in the seventeenth century, it effectively shifted the seat of fashion to Paris. Queen Victoria, having vowed to wear only black following her beloved husband's death in 1861, created a craze for mourning dress. Even in the twentieth century, despite the dusky pastels of the Art Deco period, modernists such as Mies







van der Rohe and Walter Gropius considered color frivolous. Le Corbusier, who preferred to delineate his structures in stark white, decried that color is "suited to simple races, peasants, and savages." Jeez, what a chromophobe!

the Fendi, Sies Marjan, Céline, and Haider Ack-

ermann spring

2017 collections

In the wake of the Enlightenment, late-eighteenth-century philosophers like Goethe and Kant got turned on to color, riffing on Copernican theories of subjectivity in physiological processes-e.g., an apple may appear red, but that's only because it's reflecting red and triggering a biochemical reaction in the eye. (Goethe went so far as to take drugs and stick needles in his eye to enhance his color experiments.) Bauhaus painter Josef Albers pointed out that if 50 people viewed one shade of red, they would, in fact, see 50 different reds. Truth really is in the eye of the beholder.

Fun fact: If you find yourself arguing about whether something is gray or blue (remember the blue-

versus-gold "dress challenge" that went viral in 2015?), you're 8 percent more likely to be arguing with a white man, since that's the percentage of Caucasian males who are red-green color-blind. According to media studies expert Carolyn L. Kane, PhD, author of Chromatic Algorithms, an academic tract on color in computing and digital art, about half as many African and Asian men are color-blind, while only a fraction (.4 percent) of Caucasian women have the con-

I'd like to think that after all these years in fashion, I have more receptors than shellfish, at least, to rejoice in the finely nuanced shades so popular these days. My own take on wearing color is to avoid rules about what's complementary and what's not. I mix yellows with pinks as well as '80s-era pea greens, rusts, and jewel tones—currently in favor with Gen Z-ers and late-spectrum millennials who are co-opting "bad taste"

values as the new cool quotient. (Is it any

coincidence that the poster boy of '80s ex-

dition. Some women have even

been found to have a fourth color

receptor in addition to the typical

three (red, blue, green). Though,

to put this into perspective, mantis

shrimp have 12 to 16 color receptors.

cess, Donald Trump, is now our president?)

About five years ago, I remember rejoicing at the sight of a little old lady walking down Avenue A in the East Village, wrapped up like a mummy in polka dots and stripes. "I want to be her!" I cried, knowing I lacked such wild fashion abandon. I've yet to embrace such cartoonish garb, but I have learned that if taking risks can bring a smile to someone's face, instead of asking why, I now ask-why not?

Given the political climate, the only color I've been shy of (if momentarily) is red. I quickly got over that with the purchase of a cherry-tomato Comme des Garçons motorcycle jacket. I even went so far as to wear a Caron Callahan red boilersuit—not unlike the one I cavorted in at 15-set off with bright red lipstick, to boot. Add a pair of Céline Africaninspired red-and-black platforms, and there was no chance of being mistaken for anything but the left-leaning liberal I am.

Maybe it's the confidence that comes with age, but all this color has made me feel like I have nothing to lose. I just wish it hadn't taken me all these years to break up with black. The benefits of having fun with fashion far outweigh the security and secrecy afforded by hiding out in that color. While dressing well may feel like the best revenge, dressing without fear provides the greatest joy. So if you see me in stripes and polka dots, know I'm braving the future with my happy-face wardrobe. Or, as my mother used to say, "Better off red than dead."



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HARDER, BETTER, FASTER

Athleisure may be fashion's latest breadwinner, but as high fashion joins the field, **Monica Corcoran Harel** explores the science that dressing the part—on the field and off—ups your game

Inever got the whole collision of fashion and fitness. Why this effort to look chic, when a strenuous workout turns my coarse hair into an eagle's nest and makes my face flush with rosacea like a checkerboard? Yet with the line between sportswear and streetwear increasingly blurred—not only at street-savvy brands like Vetements and Off-White, but also at legacy labels like Versace and Dior—I'm now realizing I was looking at the phenomenon back-to-front.

Sure, of-the-moment trends that co-opt '80s workout gear—tailored sweat pants, full-body hoodies, even Reeboks—possess an obvious cool quotient. But the mash-up of athleisure and ready-to-wear signals a tidal shift for the rest of us, who actually crave comfort-and-efficiency benefits from our wardrobe. Just as male tech moguls have made the hoodie their boys'-club brass-button blazer, women need unfussy fashion that doesn't hinder their mobility.

Over the past few seasons, some of fashion's new guard—Rio Uribe (Gypsy Sport), Shayne Oliver (Hood By Air), and Demna Gvasalia (Vetements)have mined sportswear for their bottom line, but now a slew of high-end designers have upped their athleticwear game for spring 2017, sprinting with these themes as if their livelihood depended upon it (and maybe it does: The mushrooming athleticwear industry is, after all, an estimated \$44 billion business in the U.S. alone, much of it driven by athleisure clothing's popularity). Dior's suiting for spring was fencing-inspired; uniform stripes dominated at Chloé and Peter Pilotto; and colorblocked baseball-jacket silks turned heads at J.W.Anderson, Coach 1941, Kith, and Roksanda. Parachute slickers made headway at Dion Lee and DKNY (despite the postshow departure

of Public School designers Dao-Yi

Chow and Maxwell Osborne). Even Prada riffed on sweat jackets and swimwear, while cheeky Londoner Caitlin Price detailed her tracksuits with pastel silk panels borrowed from jockey uniforms.

For his part, Off-White designer Virgil Abloh insists there's more driving this athleisure behemoth than a craving for comfort. "It's a different time in fashion," he says. "I feel like all of a sudden culturally, I've had to adapt to real people and the decisions that they make to put on clothes.... Right now, fashion is about lifestyle—going to the gym or what you're wearing to Whole Foods or what you're wearing when you're going to eat brunch."

In my mind, hitting my posh Hollywood Equinox wearing an old Lenny Kravitz concert tee with nubby sweats makes me stand out from the coke straw-thin starlets breaking away











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in No Ka'Oi colorblocked "action couture." And while I suspect I'd have a better shot at signing an agent if I left my gym sporting '70s-inspired Gucci leggings or a studded Versace anorak with huge pockets (I draw the line at Christopher Kane's take on Crocs, however), I don't know if a \$700 T-shirt would make me sweat harder in spin class. But it turns out there's plenty to be said for dressing the part. There's even a scientific theory called "enclothed cognition," which, in essence, means that what we wear profoundly influences our psychological processes. (This is where the fashionobsessed would respond, "Uh, duh....") Social psychologist Adam Galinsky, now a management division chair at Columbia Business School, explored this connection in a study in which students donned white lab coats to see if they would score better on tests that measured focus and attention. They did, making about half as many mistakes on tasks set by researchers as a control group did

wearing their usual attire, perhaps giving designer Martin Margiela—who always insisted that he and his staff wear white lab coats and viewed fashion as a Petri dish just waiting to be experimented with—the last laugh. "It's really all about the symbolic meaning we put into a piece of clothing," Galinsky says.

This idea that "you become what you wear" has inspired Stella McCartney for her own ready-to-wear label, as well as her 12-year collaboration with Adidas. The 45-year-old designer has long bemoaned the sad activewear options for women. "I always had this thing that I was ashamed

on my way to the gym if I bumped into somebody I knew," says McCartney, as we sit down for a chat after a sleek L.A. presentation of her new spring 2017 line for Adidas. "I definitely believed that you shouldn't have to sacrifice your style for your sport."

Or your sport for your style, for that matter. Beyond the obvious appeal of aesthetics, McCartney has always suspected that looking good could boost performance—

you know, make you jump higher or swim with stronger strokes, not to mention score points with your boss. Before designing the 2012 Olympic uniforms for Team GB, Mc-Cartney asked the competitors if her suspicion rang true. "Ninety-nine percent said yes," she recalls.

"It's almost like the theory of 'impostor syndrome," says Atlanta-based psychologist Susan Rudnicki, who was also a personal trainer for 10 years. "People work harder if they feel like they're playing a part." Still, actress and Fabletics mogul (and, incidentally, McCartney pal) Kate Hudson, who is her own brand's greatest advertisement, says she lives in Fabletics' high-waisted Lisette leggings and finds the fit motivating: "You think twice about having something fried for lunch if you're wearing leggings that suck you in," she says. Indeed, she told me she is wearing them on the day she calls me for this story. "I have on Lisette leggings in a loud blue splatter-y print, with a cropped black Isabel Marant sweater and my Giuseppe [Zanotti] boots," she says.

This mash-up is perhaps the most modern point of all: Throw on a little performance gear, a sexy boot, and a cool-girl sweater and, these days, you're dressed for everything from a business meeting to date night. And, oh yeah, you could hit a barre class, too.





First up:
Illustrator Julie
Verhoeven's exuberant
thigh-high boots
for Marc Jacobs
tower atop six-inch
platforms



POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
Spirited, bold, opinionated, fun: These are just a few of the adjectives we'd use to describe our favorite looks from the spring collections. It's time to put on your glad rags.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEROME CORPUZ STYLED BY YASHUA SIMMONS EDITED BY JOANN PAULEY

Cotton parka, \$1,200, nylon-blend dress, \$1,400, python and calfskin platform boots, \$6,750, all, MARC JACOBS, visit marcjacobs.com.





STYLIST'S TIP

GLOBAL EXPANSION Mix prints, knits, and plaids for piled-on, boho extravagance

TRY IT WITH



A haute artisanal knit Cashmere turtleneck, BARRIE, \$1,728, collection at Kirna Zabête, NYC



Trousers ready for the Highland Reel Wool trousers, DEREK LAM, \$1,195, visit dereklam.com



St. Marks Place-worthy boots Suede platform, COACH 1941, \$795, visit coach.com



Crocheted sweater, \$1,195, cotton kilt, \$1,525, trousers, \$1,275, silver, gold, and jeweled earrings, \$1,795, bangles and hand jewelry, \$4,995 (per set), studded ankle boots, price on request, all, ALEXANDER MCQUEEN, at Alexander McQueen, NYC.



Wool and silk crepe jacket, \$3,800, pants, \$1,500, cotton T-shirt, \$840, calfskin and suede sneakers, \$920, all, DIOR, at Dior boutiques nationwide. Black stone earrings, ETRO, \$1,092.

FEATHERED FRIENDS

FRIENDS
Op Art prints and marabou fluff? The new sophisticate masters the art of bricolage

TRY IT WITH



An eccentric earring
Gold-plated bead, baroque pearl, and onyx
feather earrings, LIZZIE FORTUNATO,
\$210, collection at shopbop.com



A put-a-bird-on-it cheongsam shape Embroidered-silk top, ATTICO, \$1,872, collection at modaoperandi.com



An ornamented shoe with a low-key heel Crystal-and-pearl-embellished silk satin slingback, ATTICO, \$743, similar styles at net-a-porter.com



r Bumble and bumble, makeup by Laura Stiassni at the Wall Group for La Prairie, manicure by Nori at ArtList, Next Models, fashion assistant: Dara Prant), stills: courtesy of the designers. For details, see Shopping Guide





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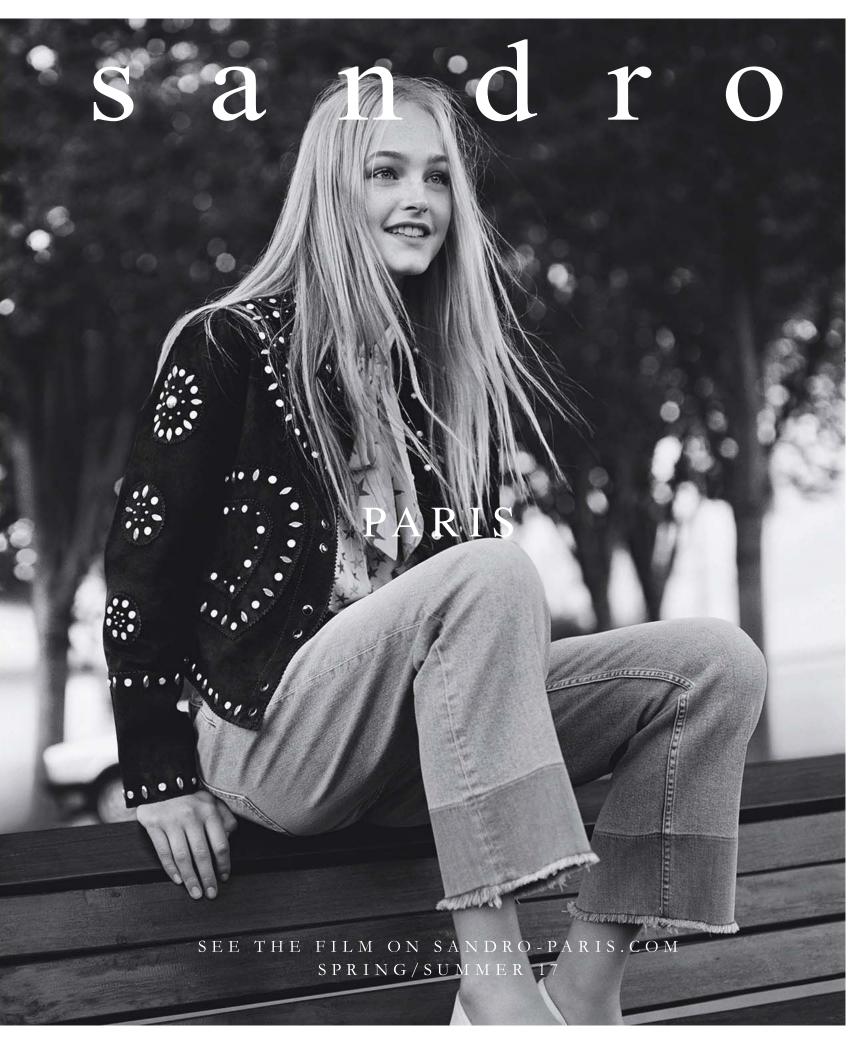




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ELLE 221



Duchesse top, \$5,900, pants, \$1,100, gold ring, \$420, all, GUCCI, visit gucci.com. White gold and diamond necklace, HEARTS ON FIRE, \$25,000. Steel and gold watch on Oyster strap, ROLEX, \$16,900. Silk socks, MARIA LA ROSA, \$32. Patent leather loafers, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, \$895.





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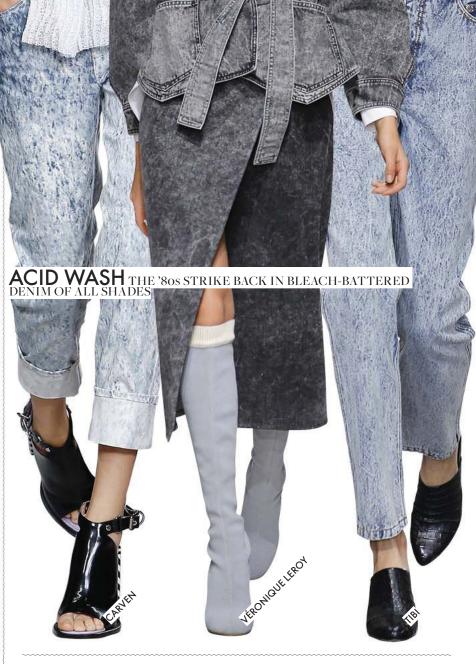


LEGGINGS ARE PANTS Supersleek = superchic



Nylon-blend leggings, DIESEL, \$498, visit diesel.com





TUCKED BLAZERS Style them just like a shirt—sans shirt—for a one-and-done effect













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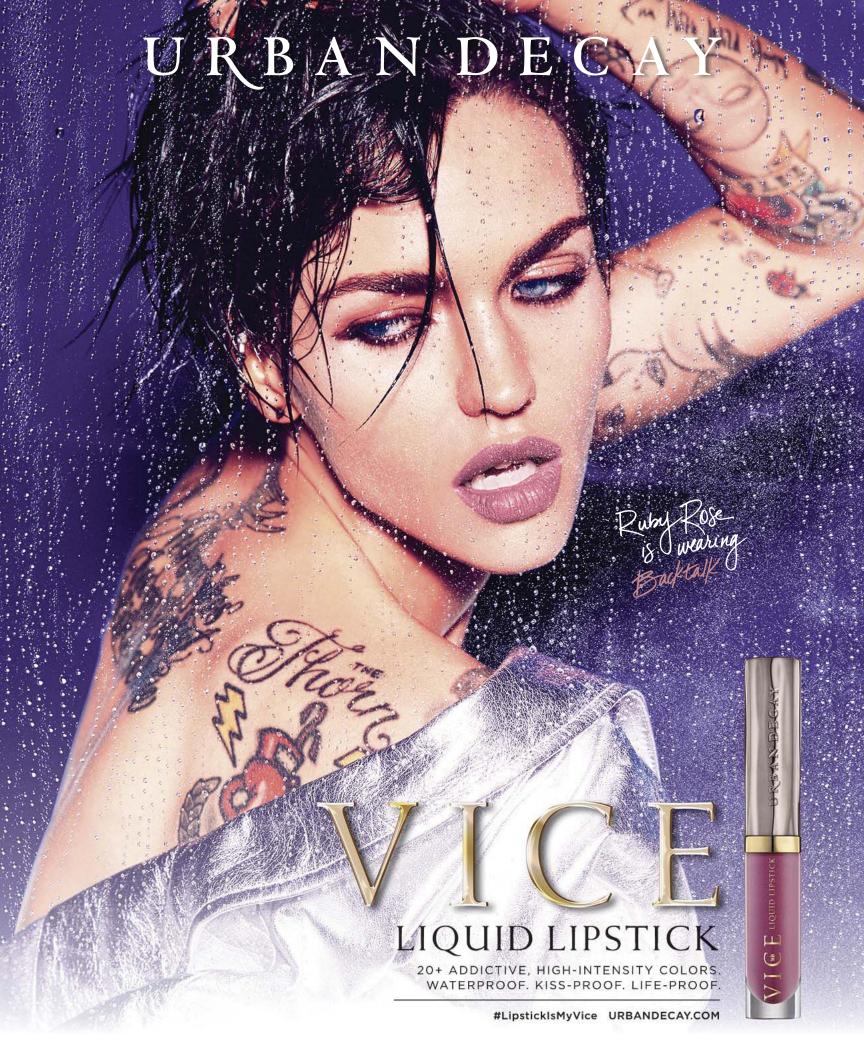




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Gold and malachite watch on alligator strap, PIAGET, price on request, at Piaget boutiques nationwide



Limited-edition white and rose gold, diamond, and pink opal watch on alligator strap, FENDI, price on request, visit fendi.com

Turquoise watch on leather strap, GUCCI, \$980, at select Gucci stores nationwide

THE LADY Pint-size beauties that pack a punch



Stainless steel, diamond, and black mother-ofpearl watch on patent leather strap, DIOR TIMEPIECES, \$4,250, call 800-929-DIOR



PVD gold and diamond watch, GOMELSKY BY SHINOLA, \$1,450, visit shinola.com



Silver-tone finished stainless steel watch, BULOVA, \$225, collection at Macy's stores nationwide



Stainless steel, diamond, sapphire crystal, and mother-ofpearl watch on leather strap, LONGINES, \$1,275, visit longines.com

VALENTINO

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Stainless steel watch on blue alligator strap, IWC, \$5,000, visit iwc.com



Rose gold and steel watch on leather strap, CARTIER, \$5,000, at Cartier boutiques nationwide



Hybrid smartwatch on leather strap, SKAGEN, \$195, visit skagen.com

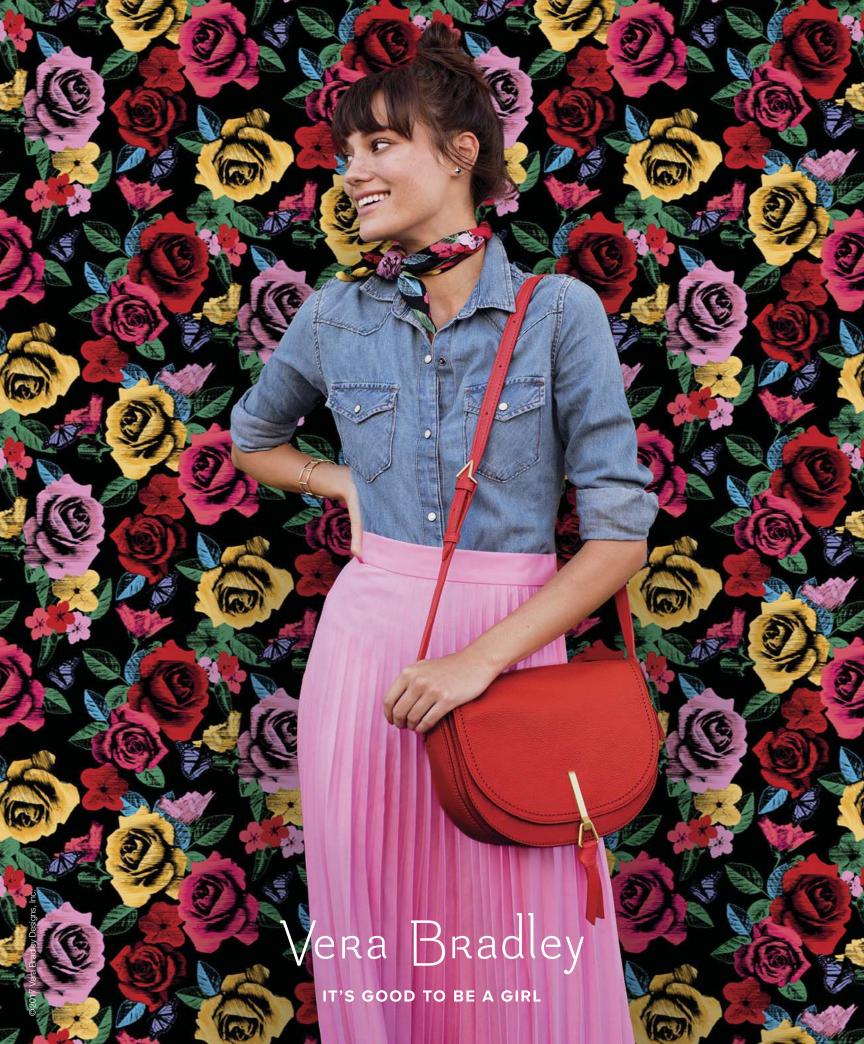


Rose gold and black opaline watch on alligator strap, PATEK PHILIPPE, price on request, at Patek Philippe boutique at Tiffany & Co. stores nationwide



















FAIR TRADE

Ace & Jig's eco ethics and boho vibe have earned them cult status. Now, with on-the-road swap meets, designers **Jenna Wilson** and **Cary Vaughan** are inviting fans to go old-school mobile. **By Monica Corcoran Harel**

Every great road trip needs a stellar soundtrack. For the designers of Ace & Jig, who late last fall covered nearly 400 miles of California coastline in a tricked-out, turquoise VW bus, the musical selection was all about stoking a community of strong women. "We listened to a lot of Tina Turner and Solange's new album-loud-and drank a lot of coffee," says Jenna Wilson, who hit the highway with business partner Cary Vaughan and their creative team to glean West Coast inspiration and host a series of clothing swaps, inviting their followers to shop new Ace & Jig pieces and trade their gently worn favorites from the brand at like-minded boutiques in San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Ojai, and Los Angeles. For years, Wilson and Vaughan had talked about meeting their fans face-to-face and creating a space for everyone to interact. Why a swap?

"It wasn't really our idea. It came from our fans, who already trade our pieces on Instagram," Vaughan says. "We just wanted to bring everyone together."

Wilson and Vaughan go way back. They first met in New York as fashion-design interns in 2001 and later went on to tag-team as creative directors for the contemporary brand LaRok. While each was taking a career hiatus to start families of their own, they also conceived Ace & Jig—its name inspired by their children's initials—and founded the label in Brooklyn in 2009. (Wilson now lives in Portland, while Vaughan works out of New York; they video-chat throughout the day to reference imagery and trade ideas.) Their convention-defying silhouettes, cut in kitten-soft cotton in vibrant hues and whimsical prints handloomed in India, include

wide-legged, pleated gauchos in vivid stripes and supersoft, dropped-waist madras minidresses. To those in the know, these pieces are as instantly recognizable as a Birkin.

On the evening of the L.A. swap, Lauren Dittmer, who works in the wardrobe department of Fox's New Girl, recalls her Ace & Jig lightbulb moment: "I totally remember the first piece I bought, in maybe 2010. It was the Artisan Dress in a turquoise print called Isle." This is the final stop on the crew's weeklong odyssey, and about 80 young women-most wearing Ace & Jig, natchhave gathered at Individual Medley, a cool, artsy boutique in hip Atwater Village, to paw through piles of colorful samples and recycle their old pieces. The vibe feels as folksy as the brand, with women introducing themselves outside the dressing room and gushing over each other's Pamela Love rings and hippie-ish Ricardo Medina sandals. A few toddlers thread through legs as twenty- and thirtysomethings sip California rosé, and one shopper browses via FaceTime for a friend who just had a baby. "Our fans are as passionate as we are," Vaughan says. "I just met a woman who drove two-and-a-



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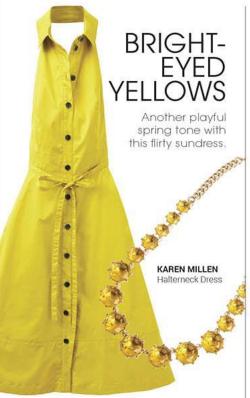
STUNNING SPRING TRENDS

Whether they're making a statement alone or paired with other trendy go-to's, they're sure to leave people saying "I wonder where she got those!"















BANANA REPUBLIC FACTORY STORE Fine Pleated ABK Skirt

SPRING ALWAYS CALLS FOR A CLOSET REFRESH. IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO PICK UP ALL OF THOSE TRENDY STAPLES I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF SINCE FASHION WEEK. LUCKY FOR ME, I CAN FIND EVERYTHING ON MY LIST AT TANGER! SO TRENDY AND ALWAYS AT THE RIGHT PRICE."

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half hours from Ontario to get here." As for the seamstresses offering gratis repairs in the VW, mending tears and replacing buttons, Wilson explains, "Sustainability is the cornerstone of our brand, and doing repairs or swapping is another way to extend the length of the clothes. We try to never have waste."

In this, Ace & Jig is far from alone. The global impact of the fashion supply chain and its hulking environmental footprint is also a hot topic among bigger brands. Last spring, H&M's highend, eco-friendly Conscious Exclusive collection was inspired by the costume archives at Paris's Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Patagonia promotes long-term use with its "Worn Wear" program of free repairs and recycling. Even luxury giant Kering—parent company of Gucci, Balenciaga, and Christopher Kane—operates a Materials Innovation Lab to reduce harmful emissions and source respon-

sible raw fabrics for its labels. But these are all huge initiatives, not to mention marketing points to score a karmic connection with consumers. By contrast, Ace & Jig's homespun approach—like passing out scrap kits at the swaps and encouraging the brand's 57,000 Instagram

followers to trade pieces instead of pressing them to

always buy new ones-has currency on a micro level.

"I wear my Ace & Jig to work every day, and I give everyone a 20-minute spiel

THE ACE & JIG **ROAD-TRIP GUIDE**

SAN FRANCISCO

SHOP: Vintage store Sunchild's Parlour on Haight Street STAY: The Red Victorian, a circa 1904 Haight hotel, complete with "Summer of Love" and "Flower Child" rooms

OJAI

SHOP: The "beautifully curated" boutique In the Field EAT: Tacos al fresco at Farmer and the Cook NIGHT OUT: Caravan Outpost for banjo bonfires and beers in Airstreams

LOS ANGELES

EAT: Fresh Mediterranean pasta and fish, and "the best canelés" at Canelé on Glendale Blvd. PICK-ME-UP: Pastries from Proof Bakery

handmade in India and how they hire women and offer child care," says Emilia Gaskell, 30, who drove down from Fullerton, California, to meet her fellow Ace & Jig fanatics, some of whom she already knows from bartering online. "It's

weird that being obsessed with a clothing brand means that you share other values. It becomes like a movement."

In less than two hours at the L.A. swap, all 50 or so items that women brought from home have changed hands, free of charge, and the piles of one-off samples for sale are mostly depleted. But the crowd lingers, as devotees approach Wilson and Vaughan for a hug or a selfie. "I have lived in L.A. for years, and I've never felt starstruck, except for once when I met Keanu Reeves," says Stephanie Peterson, a professional organizer from South Pasadena. "But I was such a groupie when I met the designers—I have so much respect for them and this brand." Clearly, Ace & Jig's commitment to community, female enterprise, and sustainability holds as much appeal as its woven creations. And based on the success of this maiden voyage, more tours are planned for later this year. "This all feeds into the ethics of what we care about," Wilson says. "We want women to have such a deep emotional resonance with our clothes that they want to pass them along with love."



Molly Burke



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A SIMPLE PLAN

As artistic director of Uniqlo U, Christophe Lemaire is pioneering a new wave of slow fast fashion. **By Alex Frank**

Right around the corner from the Louvre, designer Christophe Lemaire oversees his 15-person team in a stripped-down office with spare industrial fixtures and long wooden worktables. It is a philosophically ideal space in which to create Uniqlo U, a smart, sharp collection of sportswear for Japan's largest apparel retailer.

In 2015, Lemaire, like fellow creatives Jil Sander and Inès de la Fressange, collaborated with the Japanese megaretailer on a capsule collection. It flew off shelves so fast that Tadashi Yanai, the chairman, president, and CEO of parent company Fast Retailing, appointed Lemaire the brand's first high-fashion artistic director. Asked what he wants to accomplish with Uniqlo U, Lemaire says, "I'm interested in something that fits your everyday life—timeless, essential. I'm obsessed with doing the right thing."

Throughout his previous gigs as creative director, first at Lacoste (2000–2010) and then at Hermès (2011–2015), Lemaire has also maintained the beloved namesake label he founded when he was just 26. Now comanaged by Lemaire's girlfriend, Sarah-Linh Tran, 29, the label has a store in Paris's hip Marais district, where the walls are all white,

the curtains are linen, and the clothes-the ideal pleated trousers, the cozy structured sweater, the clean white shirt—appeal to the notion of investing in the perfect (read: expensive) version of a simple item one can wear every day. "People have been realizing that [fast fashion] cannot go on anymore like it used to go-overconsumerism and overproduction are a disaster," the designer says. "You just need a good pair of pants. If you find a good pair, you don't have to change every six months."

Since Lemaire launched his first U collection last year, his mission has been replicating that perfection for the mass audience of a company best known for colorful, cost-friendly T-shirts and puffy down jackets. It helps that the designer is an ardent fan of Japanese workman-

Top right: Denim jackets, \$50-\$70 each, pants, \$40, all, UNIQLO U. Sandals, ELLERY, \$1,250. Right: Water-repellent trench, \$100, poplin jacket, \$50, cotton sweater, pants, \$40 each, all, UNIQLO U. For details, see Shopping Guide.

"I'm interested in something that fits your everyday life—timeless, essential. I'm obsessed with doing the right thing."

ship. "The beauty of details, the honesty of quality, the respect for people—there is a deep understanding of quality in Japan," he says. He especially loves the concept of *iki*. "It's hard to define," he says. "It means being really elegant but not showing off."

U's muted dresses, blouses, and light sweaters must be ultra-iki, then, in that they mix elements of sport, normcore, and tailoring with of-the-moment detailing, all in the sophisticated palettes for which Lemaire is known. Think of it as slow fast fashion: low-priced (though slightly more costly than Uniqlo's main line) and accessible, yes, but with a knowit-when-you-see-it specialness. The designer invokes Charles and Ray Eameses' famous quote, "We wanted to make the best for the most for the least." After all, Lemaire says, "If you do good things, people recognize it. It's a bit idealistic, but I believe it."



THE BELIEVERS

Whether they have an eye for eco-friendly materials, a sense of family tradition, or a soulfulness about fashion that's made to last, this new class of designers places a premium on "fewer, better things"—and a crystal or two for good luck. By Naomi Rougeau



ness partner Karla Gallardo—who shared her ethical, minimalist vision—while both were attending B-school in the Bay Area, the duo scoured the globe in search of superior basics. From Turkish robes (\$95) to heavyweight American-made silk tees (\$155) and Argentine leather totes (starting at \$185), Shah and Gallardo are spreading their gospel of "fewer, better things" at accessible prices, both at Cuyana's permanent outposts in San Francisco and Venice, California, and at seasonal popups in New York and Chicago. *cuyana.com*

HARWELL GODFREY

Despite having spent most of her formative years as a competitive rider, Lauren Harwell Godfrey did not recognize a gap in her own jewelry collection until she began to examine her past of saddles, boots, and bridles more closely. "I gravitate toward really textural, oversize jewelry," says Godfrey, who, by trial and error, taught herself to craft the intricate, equestrian-inspired leather braids that frame large crystals and water buffalo horn in her debut line of sculptural, talismanlike jewelry (\$400-\$1,300). Godfrey's current favorite stone? Quartz, "for its metaphysical properties and complex geometry." Snap up these pendants while you can: Godfrey, for the moment, is still a one-woman show, and her following is growing fast—one twentysomething Los Angelena owns more than 25 pieces. harwellgodfrey.com





PHILIP AYLER

Some people dream about becoming fashion designers. The idea actually came to Ayler Young in a dream. "I had this incredibly vivid dream one night, about a burgundy bomber jacket," says the newbie designer, whose previous career included launching such NYC hot spots as private screening venue Tribeca Cinemas and nightclub The Box. He awoke the next morning to a knock at his door: A stylist friend was holding the bomber jacket. After receiving countless compliments on the piece (a label-less sample), Young, armed with a talented patternmaker and a trove of rare dead-stock couture fabrics from the likes of Chanel, began producing one-off, superluxe outerwear (\$1,495-\$2,495) that is now worn by everyone from Guns N' Roses to Gigi Hadid. philipayler.com





KOJA 🔗

Having grown up in Kazakhstan, current Harvard design studies grad student Diana Zwetzich knows a thing or two about bundling up stylishly. She received her first fur coat ("a full-length shearling number") at the ripe old age of three—a gift from her mother (and now business partner), Irene, who worked for one of the country's top furriers. Zwetzich occasionally designed bespoke pieces for herself via the family connection, but she never considered pursuing design until the day beauty empress Emily Weiss stopped her on a New York City street to inquire about her reversible gray shearling (now available under the Koja label for \$2,595). Zwetzich's colorful shearlings and leathers—all made from materials that are by-products of the food industry—can now be spotted on trendsetters such as Instagram's Eva Chen and fashion consultant Sofía Sanchez de Betak. kojanyc.com







CONTEMPORARY ART

A fresh crop of cool, wearable labels are springing up to lead fashion—not follow it—and they just so happen to be doing it at an approachable price. By Alison'S. Cohn

Stars-they're just like us! Over the past nine months, glamorously low-key options from new New York-based label Cinq à Sept have been popping up on the talk show and premiere circuit, worn by the sort of A-listers who typically dress in designer exclusives. There was Jennifer Lawrence at the Seoul premiere of Passengers in a sporty crop top paired with a floaty pink skirt; Jessica Chastain on *Ellen* in a sheath dress, its straps preslipped to hang just so on the arm; Bella Hadid at the couture shows in Paris in a pair of the brand's super-wide-leg trousers. The truly radical thing: None of those pieces costs more than \$500, and each is available to mere mortals at a store where, chances are, you already shop.

Cinq à Sept (French for "five to seven"), a contemporary line conceived by Jane Siskin the retail visionary behind 7 For All Mankind and the Olsen twins' diffusion line Elizabeth and James-is named for the magic hour when, according to Siskin, "anything seems possible." It debuted at Saks this past June and, from the looks of things, struck gold: The company has projected first-year sales of \$85 million and is now carried in 288 stores, including Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus, and Nordstrom. And it's not alone.

"The big shift in contemporary is that it's becoming far more design led," says Neta-Porter fashion director Lisa Aiken. For years, "it was the bread and butter for many retailers but didn't really bring new ideas to the table." Now, in addition to Cing à Sept, the luxury e-com behemoth has picked up a bevy of midpriced international labels that are setting trends rather than following them. These include Self-Portrait, Londonbased Malaysian designer Han Chong's Instagram-friendly range of guipure lace dresses whose flattering reveal-and-conceal cutouts and sheer overlays are favored by Beyoncé, Kerry Washington, and Chiara Ferragni; as well as the Danish label Ganni, which got a major lift in 2015 from Kate Bosworth, who tagged a photo of herself and pal Helena Christensen twinning in \$570 fauxfur bombers as #gannigirls. A search of the hashtag also pulls up Kendall Jenner and fortless floral dresses and trophy outerwear. "I think we owe Kate a beer for that one," jokes the label's designer, Ditte Reffstrup.

"I call it 'reverse sticker shock," Siskin says of the current wave of designers selling clothes with a mix of desirability and affordability not seen since before the days of street-style stars and digital influencers. Her next words will be music to most shoppers' ears: "We aspire to make a beautiful dress that the customer would expect, based on everything else on the floor, to be \$795—and then she turns over the ticket and sees that it's \$395."

With competition heating up in a category that, for years, has been chugging along while making few headlines, some contemporary-fashion stalwarts are benefiting, too. "I don't think there is a bigger trend right now than off-the-shoulder," Net-a-Porter's Aiken says, "and the

"We aspire to make a beautiful dress that the customer would expect, based on everything else on the floor, to be \$795 and then she turns over the ticket and sees that it's \$395."

first brand we carried it from was Tibi." That label was founded two decades ago, during the heyday of youthful, fashion-forward companies such as Catherine Malandrino and Daryl K. (Remember them? Designers who made cool clothes you wore everywhere and could actually afford?) Tibi survived to win over Generation Selfie, thanks to founder Amy Smilovic's savvy evolution; these days, her signature bohemianism informs not sweet prints, but exaggerated, color-drenched silhouettes that come alternatively exploded or shrunken. As for the brand's recent rainbow of au moment offthe-shoulder tops, Aiken says: "We sold them out over and over again."

"When I started designing in 1997, it was about hopping from designer-led trend to designer-led trend and just putting your spin on it," Smilovic says, pointing to the role contemporary fashion once played, akin to that of today's fast fashion. "One season, it was the baby T-shirt with the bias

skirt, and the next it was the embroidered bomber jacket that everyone got in on." When fast fashion revved up in the aughts, many brands couldn't compete. Shoppers in the market for trenddriven clothes had a hard time justifying the price leap from Zara to department-store contemporary labels, whose quality often wasn't commensurate with their cost.

For companies that did survive—and for those that came along in their wake-there was a need for a new raison d'être, not to mention fresh nomenclature. In the past decade, "advanced contemporary" has become the retailer buzz phrase designating an increasingly crowded space. That's where many department stores put wardrobe-staple brands such as Theory and Vince, plus youngish labels such as Alexander Wang, Rag & Bone, 3.1 Phillip Lim, and Isabel Marant. It's also where vou'll find the current class of buzzy names—Tanya Taylor, Jonathan Simkhai, Ulla Johnson—collections with an elevated aesthetic and price point that's not *quite* as haute as that of designer brands.

Veronica Swanson Beard and her sisterin-law Veronica Miele Beard launched their signature range of interchangeable dickey jackets and complementary tailored pieces, titled Veronica Beard, as a designer brand in 2010. Then they noticed that "there was always double the foot traffic on contemporary floors," Swanson Beard says. So in 2014, they relaunched as contemporary, at a 30 percent lower price point. "We knew we could design classic and cool pieces that women would expect from a designer label, and that would stand out against a lot of the more youthful designers," Miele Beard adds. In August, they opened a Manhattan flagship at Madison Avenue and 77th Street, at the very epicenter of luxury retail—as strong an indicator as any that contemporary also appeals to the high-end shopper who wants to mix it up.

Department stores are wising up to the fact that, for instance, Net-a-Porter shoppers will snap up \$160 Sam Edelman booties alongside their \$1,300 studded Valentino pumps—on the Web, all goods are displayed equally, regardless of price. Translated to bricks and mortar, this means no longer putting designer fashion on one floor and contemporary on another. Bergdorf Goodman is in the process of removing all signage from its 5F contemporary floor to create a more seamless shopping experience. And at Saks's glossy new outpost at Brookfield Place in lower Manhattan, the innovative rotunda layout, in which one department flows into the next, means designer and contemporary brands coexist so you can grab, say, a pair of Monse pants plus one of Self-Portrait's new spliced lace-andcotton blouses in one go. "It's a reflection of how people are actually living their lives on an everyday basis," says Saks fashion director Roopal Patel. "It's not as boxed or compartmentalized as it was 10 years ago."

Indeed, some insiders advocate for banishing the word *contemporary* altogether—can't it all just be good design, regardless of price? But the original #gannigirl, Ditte Reffstrup, takes pride in the distinction: "Being contemporary means being in this moment," she says. "Being relevant."



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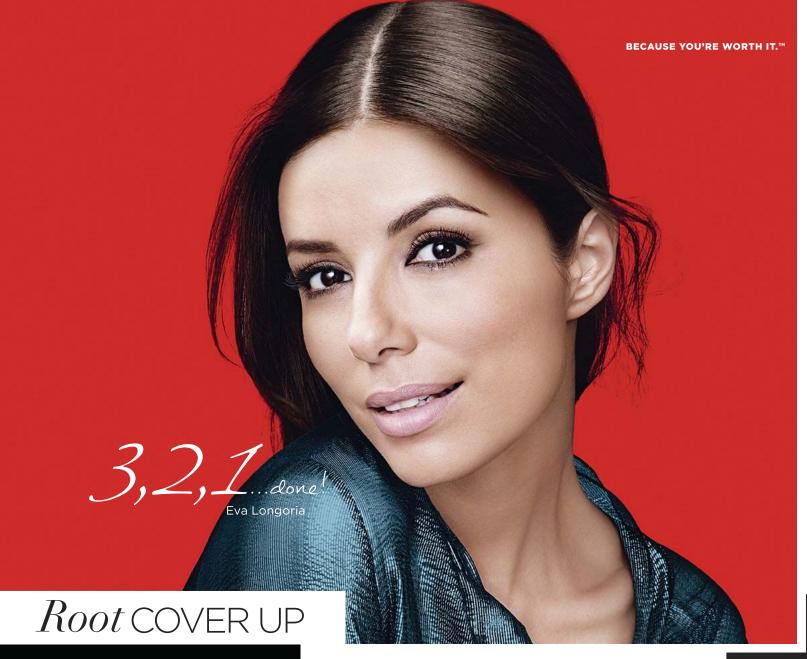
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Viscose-blend top, MILLY, \$285, visit milly.com



Leather flat, PIERRE HARDY, \$895, at Pierre Hardy, NYC



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Suede skirt, DROME, \$615, collection at uffizimoda.com

WEAR IT WITH





Leather sandal, FRATELLI ROSSETTI, \$570, at Fratelli Rossetti, NYC

Runway: Imaxtree.com; Rag & Bone dress, Longchamp skirt, Milly top, and Altuzarr pants: Jeff Harris/Studio D (styled by Anita Salerno for R.J. Bennett Represents). AG and Drome skirts: Richard Majchrzak/Studio D (styled by Anita Salerno for R.J. Bennett Represents); remaining images: courtesy of the designers

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST SPRING COLLECTION **FROM**

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SPEEDY DELIVERY

In our inaugural shopping-news column: Retail innovations that take the guesswork out of getting dressed. Yes, really! **By Naomi Rougeau**



FASTER FAST FASHION!

Since 2013, H&M has sought to bring us high design at low prices via its biannual, limitededition Studio collections of directional pieces made in more upscale fabrications. For spring 2017, Studio will be "see now, buy now" for the first time. Translation: At the very moment on March 1 that the collection is

presented to hundreds of celebs and editors during its exceedingly well attended Paris Fashion Week show, shoppers at home can buy the clothes online. H&M design and creative director Pernilla Wohlfahrt says spring 2017's softly tailored, mostly striped sportswear (modeled here by lookbook star/Polish model and actress Malgosia Bela) "is a collection about love, a positive message of hope and optimism." And upon closer examination, some patterns actually spell out "L-O-V-E," ticker tape-style. Couldn't we all use a little more of that this year? Wohlfahrt also worked

with sustainable, organic cottons and silk jacquards, furthering H&M's ecoconscious efforts.

In addition, the retailer teamed up with the ground-breaking messaging app Kik to create a chatbot that serves as an outfit-building stylist in the palm of your hand. Select the H&M chatbot from the Kik lineup, answer a few simple questions

(is this for a date? How would you describe your style? Do you prefer wide legs or narrow?), and then Kik, well, kicks in, building a look just for you. Kik itself has a whopping 300 million users worldwide. The takeaway: No need for FOMO if you miss out on the Paris fanfare; just hit up the App Store.



What are you going to wear on vacation? PS Dept. to the rescue, with a personal-shopping experience that doesn't require any shopping at all

We've all been there, scrambling to pack for a vacation, only to realize you've "nothing" to wear and no time to look for something new. Enter Memo, the latest service from personal-shopping app PS Dept. Already a favorite of the tech set's most time-stretched and fashion-conscious (clients include top VCs behind businesses such as Warby Parker, and a Rent the Runway cofounder), Memo does the packing for you. For a \$50 fee, the app's stylists pull together a selection of on-trend pieces based on your chosen theme. Is if "Sun"? They're packing Frame Denim and Figue, to name a few. "Snow"? Isabel Marant and Aquazzura. It all

arrives neatly packed into a carry-on by Away, the buzzy new luggage brand that features built-in USB chargers for those of us who are #nevernotworking. Also included: styling tips that detail 20 ways to wear your new loot. Try it all on in the comfort of home, send back what doesn't work, and go, go, go!



STITCH WITCHERY

Following its fall 2017 NYFW debut, Zadig & Voltaire's latest team-up underscores just how big of a hit the French label has become stateside. Joining the ranks of former collaborators Erin Wasson and Freja Beha Erichsen is Brooklyn-based tattoo artist Virginia Elwood of Williamsburg's Saved Tattoo (where Marc Jacobs goes for his body art). Known for her textile-inspired work, Elwood banded together with the brand for a collection of ready-to-wear and accessories embroidered with many of her signature motifs. Should dancing skeletons, pirates, and moody florals be your thing, head to Zadig & Voltaire's brand-new NYC outpost on Broome Street—or to Elwood's Brooklyn parlor to make a more permanent statement.

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ELLE Fashion Director Samira Nasr brushes up on her fashion history

EASY RIDER

Who doesn't love a Perfecto, the classic motorcycle jacket introduced by Schott in 1928? If you're looking for an updated option for the warmer months, this spring designers removed the heavy hardware and created new silhouettes—like a leather jean jacket—that make for great transitional outerwear.





MR. MONOGRAM

"I can't believe you met Dapper Dan!" was the collective Instagram response after I posted the photo above from this month's fashion story "Take the A Train" (page 394). My response: Me neither! A self-taught couturier, Dapper Dan-né Daniel Day—defined '80s hip-hop fashion in his 125th Street atelier, far from fashion's Seventh Avenue epicenter. His bricolage masterpieces, with luxury logos screenprinted onto supersoft Japanese leather and cut in architectural silhouettes which sometimes found him on the wrong side of the law-are on view through May 16 as part of the Black Fashion Designers exhibition at Manhattan's Fashion Institute of Technology. Samira Nasr: When I was growing up in a little suburb of Montreal, no one really looked like me. I'd search magazines for anything that felt familiar. I just wanted to blend in. Then I saw photos of Salt-N-Pepa in your colorblock "Push It" jackets-who were doing anything but blending in. I thought, Who is Dapper Dan? Dapper Dan: Everything

I've done and continue

to do is a reflection of my

community and how they

ask for anything from the industry; I just wanted to buy and sell, and I was even denied that. I've always felt like Sidney Poitier in A Raisin in the Sun: You're not going to let me in? I can do this myself, in a way that reflects who we are. SN: Have you ever created

feel about fashion. I didn't

something and thought, This is my favorite thing ever? DD: One was a black-onblack logo coat with a tuxedo collar, made for Big Daddy Kane. The day that Justice Sonia Sotomayor [then a lawyer at an NYC firm representing Fendi] raided my store to take out all the Fendi stuff—this is probably my saddest and greatest day, all combined-she saw that and said, "Oh my God, this guy belongs downtown." SN: What advice would you give to young designers? DD: The broader your palette, the more exploration you can do in a painting. Go to stores and see all the existing fabrications. You can't create something of your own until you understand what tools you have at your disposal, so that you can reflect your culture

and the way you see style.

BASKET CASE

So struck was then-Hermès chief exec Jean-Louis Dumas by the naïve weekender Jane Birkin brought on a flight in 1981, he was inspired to create the world's first It Bag. Now Bonjour Coco, a small Portuguese company that works with local artisans, has re-created the straw-basket original—each of which takes up to three days to handweave. Check out the ELLE way to rock Birkin's signature carryall on page 394





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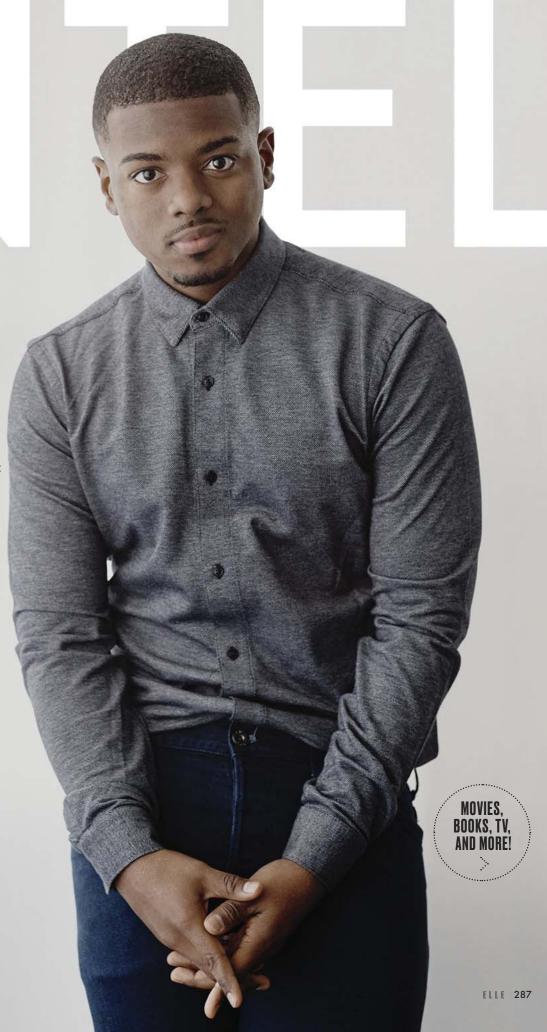
THE FEARLESS FACTOR

As a champion of truth in storytelling, actor **J. Mallory McCree** finds his light. **By Seth Plattner**

Typecasting may be a dirty word, but J. Mallory McCree proves that a little character continuity can be a very good thing. In the sixth season of Showtime's Homeland, he's currently playing Sekou, a devout young Muslim facing terrorism charges after voicing opposition to how the U.S. treats people of his religion. And in this month's From Nowhere, a powerful indie about three secretly undocumented Bronx teenagers trying to secure political asylum papers, his tender but tightly wound Moussa-a Muslim from the Republic of Guinea—powerfully illustrates the all-too-real anxieties of a rarely told side of the immigrant experience.

"These are stories that aren't a part of our everyday lives," says McCree, a Detroit native and Rutgers University grad. "Even for me, as a black man in this country, characters like these opened my eyes and made me go, 'Damn, even I have to appreciate my own privileges.'"

McCree's next project carries a different kind of weight: Netflix's upcoming Marvel series, *The Defenders* (which will join the world of *Daredevil*, *Jessica Jones*, *Luke Cage*, and *Iron Fist*). Naturally, his role is deeply under wraps, but "I *can* say that all these men I get to play, they're fighters," McCree says. "They're smart, and they have no choice but to persevere within the situations they're given. They're reflecting a lot of people's lives right now."





GREAT DAME

Shirley MacLaine returns to light up the screen in the darkly comedic you, that you'd be taken from me early.")

The Last Word. Billy Wilder's ghost approves. By Ben Dickinson

The Last Word kicks into gear when La

At the outset of The Last Word, Harriet Lauler would seem to have—and have had—a picture-perfect life. We're first treated to sepia-tinged images from her past decades, clearly from fairly early in the last century; the film then becomes a ruminative tone poem as she roams her fastidiously elegant suburban home, pausing in pregnant silences, looking out windows. But something's wrong with this picture. Out one window she sees her gardener committing a cardinal sin—trimming her hedges from the top down rather than the reverse—and, commandeering his clippers, she sends him packing. At the beauty salon, she fiddles with her hairdo while the beautician chats idly with her. You get the idea: Lauler is the supremely self-possessed type who knows that if she wants something done right, she's got to do it herself. By the time she sits down to a solitary dinner—with a side of red wine and clonazepam-it's pretty clear that Lauler is clawing at herself from the inside out.

Ah, Shirley MacLaine—it's been way too long! As in, at least a quarter century since we last saw you chewing up the big screen the way you do here. (Although there were

those in my office who shouted out for her performance in 2011's *Bernie*.)

MacLaine has always had a gift for portraying spiky characters. You can trace a fairly straight line from Lauler back to Mac-Laine's Fran Kubelik in Billy Wilder's 1960 triumph, The Apartment—who, when her ardent suitor (Jack Lemmon) declares his love in the final scene, responds, "Shut up and deal." (They'd earlier been playing gin rummy under highly unusual circumstances.) In 1984, she took home the Best Actress Oscar (after her fifth nomination) for playing imperious, contentious, querulous Aurora Greenway, the mother of Debra Winger's doomed character in Terms of Endearment. And just about the last time MacLaine really made show-biz headlines, in 1990's Postcards From the Edge, she played a thinly fictionalized Debbie Reynolds to Meryl Streep's approximation of Carrie Fisher—and lent a brassy, sardonic edge to the role that was at striking variance with the real Reynolds's breezy, Reaganesque good cheer. (It was uncanny, revisiting the film just after Reynolds tragically passed away in December, the day after she lost Fisher, to watch MacLaine utter the line, "Ever since you were a little girl, I had this feeling...I don't know...that I'd lose you, that you'd be taken from me early.")

The Last Word kicks into gear when Lauler's attention turns to the obituaries in the local paper, and she sees that the best notices are testaments to familial love, coworkers' respect, and community admiration. What happens next is a screwball journey involving a newspaper obit writer named Anne Sherman (a wary but game Amanda Seyfried) who's "going to help shape a legacy instead of just transcribing it." And so we're off with Sherman to visit Lauler's ex (a charmingly basset hound-like Philip Baker Hall) and her estranged daughter (an equally thorny Anne Heche). There's a mercenary incursion to a local community center to see whose lives Lauler can touchwhich results in an alliance with a mouthy girl (AnnJewel Lee Dixon), who greets her solicitous attentions by saying, "Oh, I seeit's community service."

Thankfully, Dixon isn't made into a pixie who transforms Lauler, like a modern-day Tiny Tim; she's more like a spunky sidecar on this filmic vehicle for MacLaine to revel in how Lauler takes stock of her long life—and does something to redeem it while she still has time. MacLaine, a born entertainer who turns 83 next month, makes clear here that she hasn't lost a step.

DIRECTOR'S SPOTLIGHT

FRENCH, TWISTED

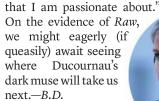
A young director's savage vision enthralls and horrifies audiences

Julia Ducournau has precociously established herself as a charismatic presence at the Cannes film festival—both in 2011, when the French director won, at the age of 27, a jury award for her first short film; and last year, when her debut full-length feature, *Raw*, in theaters this month, won the International Federation of Film Critics prize. She also charmed interviewers at the Toronto International Film Festival last fall—although, according to press reports, some festival viewers of *Raw* had to exit early, traumatized and in need of medical attention.

Ducournau, it must be said, is drawn to dark material, and Raw is a disorienting mash-up of coming-of-age story, psychological suspense, and, at a few crucial transgressive moments, full-on body horror. "I believe that by acknowledging the dark side of humanity," Ducournau says, "you can evolve and learn how to make moral decisions." Justine, Raw's protagonist, as played with beguiling intelligence by Garance Marillier, is an ingenue who's particularly vexed by her dark side, which seems to have its own ideas about evolving. When first seen, she's a timid first-year student being delivered by her parents to the veterinary school that her older sister, Alexia (a smoldering Ella Rumpf), is already attending. As a lifelong vegetarian entirely innocent of sexual experience, Justine is a prime target for hazing rituals and other bewildering experiences, which set her spinning toward psychosexual torment and increasingly unappeasable urges and appetites.

"I like to talk about monsters," Ducournau says. "How you become a monster, and how that can actually free you from something. And I thought it would be interesting to put the audience in the shoes of a real monster." And indeed, we identify with Justine deep into the film—perhaps to the very end—even as we recoil from what she does.

Ducournau is quick to cite David Cronenberg as a major influence, but she also credits Gothic novels and the dark fantasies of writers such as H. P. Lovecraft for inspiration. And, as a former classics student, she enthusiastically talks about the elemental violence encountered in classical and Biblical stories. "I wanted to shape my movie like Greek tragedies because they offer many ways to achieve catharsis-through laughter, tears, and fright—all mixed together." Raw certainly keeps the viewer off balance by working many such contrasting variations on her central theme, which frankly melds carnality and cannibalism in recognizable yet strikingly original ways. Ducournau's next film is about a female serial killer, but she objects that this description is misleadingly literal-minded; she says it's "about metamorphosis, determinism, identity-facets of all these themes







ŻABIŃSKI'S LIST

Jessica Chastain is more radiant than ever in *The Zookeeper's Wife*, based on the true story of how the Warsaw Zoo's directors, gentiles Antonina and Jan Żabiński, hid hundreds of Jews within the zoo and spirited them out of the Nazis' clutches in the darkest years of the Warsaw Ghetto. Director Niki Caro (*Whale Rider; North Country; McFarland, USA*) renders this tale of elegant moral simplicity with vivid realism and sustained suspense.



ONE STEPPE BEYOND

Some boys realize that they're really girls; in Burn Your Maps, the astonishing 10-year-old Jacob Tremblay (Room), as typical suburban kid Wes, decides that he's really a Mongolian goatherd and sets out to persuade his parents (Vera Farmiga and Marton Csokas, both also splendid) that he must follow his dream to Outer Mongolia. Director Jordan Roberts (March of the Penguins) turns this premise into, yes, a tear-stained triumph of the spirit.



CHILD OF THE CORN

The first feature by director Anne Hamilton, who chucked Yale Law to intern for Terrence Malick, is luminous, spooky, magic-tinged. In American Fable, set amid the family-farm foreclosure crisis of the 1980s, Gitty, an 11-year-old girl, discovers that a man is imprisoned in a grain silo and has to figure out what to do about it without ruining her family. Young Peyton Kennedy makes us see the world through her dark, liquid eyes.—B.D.







LUST IN TRANSLATION

Brit phenom **Michaela Coel** hilariously explores sex and topples stereotypes in Netflix's *Chewing Gum.* **Jazmine Hughes** takes a bite

When we meet Tracey, she can barely complete a sentence without being interrupted by one of her own sex fantasies: She straddles her boyfriend, he's groping her chest, her lips are attacking his face. (The Netflix closed captioning just says, "[both moaning].") But back in reality, when we meet her boyfriend, Ronald, he's on his knees thanking the Lord for preserving the couple's virtue: "We will wait until we die, if it brings you glory." Although she too was taught to "save herself" for marriage, Tracey turns to the camera with a look like she might vomit—or, worse, remain a virgin forever.

This is the world of *Chewing Gum*, the British comedy series that quietly arrived in the U.S. last year and will begin its second season on Netflix this month. Adapted by 29-year-old Brit Michaela Coel from her hit 2012 play, *Chewing Gum Dreams*—which garnered her last year's BAFTA for best female comedy performance—the show stars Coel as Tracey Gordon, a 24-year-old London shop clerk raised in a restrictive household and dreaming of a bigger, flashier life. Tracey is blindly confident, lovably misguided, and the most wonderfully libidinous woman on TV.

Over the course of the first season, Trac-

ey's sexual hijinks include an attempt to sit on her partner's face, with her pants on; a disastrous threesome; and literally blowing on a man's penis (because that's clearly what a blow job is, right?). It's in these moments of unfettered sexual exploration that *Chewing Gum* becomes (hilariously) transcendent.

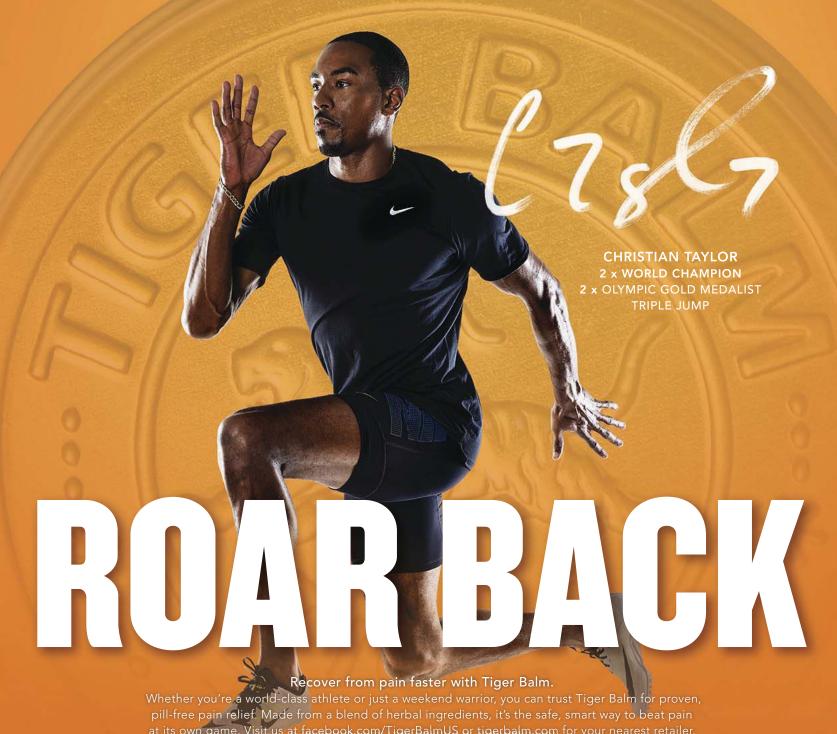
"Tracey is ashamed that she lacks so much experience, but I don't think that's anything to be ashamed about," Coel tells me. "When Tracey sits on Connor's face—that is a moment of purity! She's not holding back; she feels it's what she must do; she does it. It's the happiest you see her."

Despite the Peak TV influx of realistic female characters—from 30 Rock's powerful but pained Liz Lemon to Orange Is the New Black's dozen-plus flawed and dynamic inmates—Tracey still feels radical as a black woman driven by unvarnished lust. While we've become familiar with sex-obsessed characters on Broad City and Fleabag, those women are white. And though we've gotten to know black women with sexual dimensions—Viola Davis on How to Get Away With Murder, Kerry Washington on Scandal, Issa Rae on Insecure—sexual liberation is just one facet of these complicated career wom-

en. For *Chewing Gum*'s Tracey, grappling with sex is not only her chief occupation, it's her raison d'être.

Through Tracey, Coel smartly engages with the two onscreen stereotypes of black female sexuality—the promiscuous jezebel and the sexless, maternal, and often spiritual mammy. "Tracey's constantly pulled between those two ideals," Coel says. "I made her the way she is because I saw a massive gap with women of color, especially dark-skinned women." In Chewing Gum, the "jezebel" is Tracey's best friend, Candice, a BDSM enthusiast; her younger sister and mother, on the other hand, brim with religious zeal ("My dear, your vagina is holy. I will command Satan to leave your nether regions today!" her mother shouts to a passerby). Coel leaves Tracey to navigate the complicated in-between: an inexperienced black woman with a large sexual appetite who is both excited by-and a little scared of—actually partaking in the act.

This character rings true because, in part, it is: Coel says she herself became an evangelical Christian when she was 17. ("I'd masturbate and then want to slit my wrists, I felt so bad.") She's since cooled on organized religion ("Looking back, I'm like, Jesus Christ, Michaela!"), which has allowed her to turn that period into such poignant and entertaining television. And lucky for us, at the start of season two, Tracey, despite her best efforts, is still a virgin.



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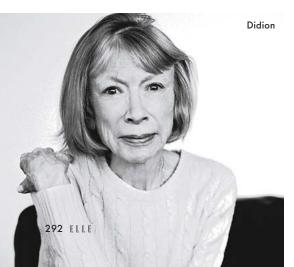
JOAN'S ARC Didion's notebooks of her reporting

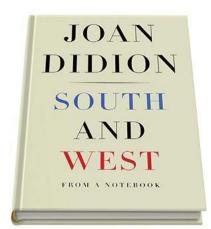
Didion's notebooks of her reporting in the South and California now make for a prescient book. **By Lisa Shea**

In recent years, the prodigiously persuasive writer Joan Didion has published very little and appeared in public even less. Now 82, she has outlived both her husband of 40 years, author John Gregory Dunne, and her only child, Quintana Roo—whose deaths provided her with the most painful and personal of life material and produced the talismanic *The Year of Magical Thinking* and the controversial *Blue Nights*. When Didion writes a book, it's an event.

So the publication now of *South and West: From a Notebook* (Knopf)—a slim, elegant, eerily prescient selection of notes, observations, interviews, and ruminations assembled from a decades-ago car trip she took through Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, and a second, shorter set of notes about California—is cause for celebration. And for inquiry: The book is not new writing, not in the ways her seminal early books were in the times that she reported and wrote them—her 1970 novel about Hollywood, *Play It as It Lays*; her 1979 collection of magazine writings, *The White Album*; and, of course, 1968's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*.

South and West is the product of a conversation between Didion and Shelley Wanger, her longtime editor. Wanger knew of the notebooks Didion kept, filled with her reporting, and that they included material from her trips both south and west. The "California Notes" section of the book has excerpts from an assignment Didion was given by Rolling Stone magazine in 1976 to cover the San Francisco trial of abducted publishing heiress-cum-revolutionary Patty Hearst. She writes that she instead "got quite involved in uncovering my own mixed emotions" about her California childhood-confusions about the lineage of her western roots that she would eventually untangle in her sterling 2003 memoir, Where I Was From. But what's different about the California material in South





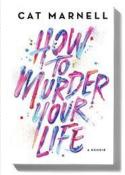
and West is that these are drafts versus finished works (some of this material appeared in the New York Review of Books in 2016). The daily notes, the nightly transcribing, the painstaking and uncanny particularity of her focus provide the reader a rare view of Didion's reporting and writing process, at once informal and immediate, magisterial and indelible, what critic Nathaniel Rich, in the book's introduction, calls the first "glimpse inside the factory walls."

In the chapter titled "New Orleans," we watch Didion ponder what impelled her to go: "There was no reportorial imperative to any of the places I went at the time I went: Nothing 'happened' anywhere I was, no celebrated murders, trials, integration orders, confrontations, not even any celebrated acts of God.... I had only the most ephemeral 'picture' in my mind." She noticed that "in the hypnotic liquidity of the atmosphere all motion slows into choreography, all people on the street move as if suspended in a precarious emulsion, and there seems only a technical distinction between the quick and the dead." In Mississippi, "I bought a cheap beach towel printed with a Confederate flag. It is ragged and gray now and sits in my linen closet in California amid thick and delicately colored Fieldcrest beach towels, and my child prefers it to the good one."

What Didion sussed out, with her tensile feel for the pulse of America past, present, and, it turns out, future, was the South's essentially colonial obsessions with "race, class, and heritage," as Rich comments-values that historically have trumped the West's more redemptive, open-ended pioneering preoccupations. Didion writes: "In the South, they are convinced that they have bloodied their place with history. In the West we do not believe that anything we do can bloody the land, or change it, touch it." With what reads now like a prediction of our newly branded Trump nation, Didion writes, "I had only some dim and unformed sense, a sense which struck me now and then, and which I could not explain coherently, that for some years the South...had been for America what people were still saying California was, and what California seemed to me not to be: the future, the secret source of malevolent and benevolent energy, the psychic center."

TRUST US

This month: Swinging, swinging *from the chandeliers*, and, for ballast, some elegant historical fiction



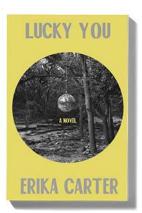
If you're captivated by the irresistible trio of beauty, success, and addiction,

surrender to Cat Marnell's How to Murder Your Life (Simon & Schuster). The xoJane columnist dishes on her previous wild-child ways, from shoplifting to party hopping to spiritual groveling, to finding a measure of humor and grace.

If you've been wondering what an experiment in open marriage might be like, try Sarah Dunn's deliciously inventive novel The Arrangement (Little, Brown), in which Lucy and Owen trade their frenetic Manhattan marital life for an upstate-country open marriage, with refreshing results.



If you're attracted to historical storytelling powered by masterful, exact voices, Jim Shepard's The World to Come (Knopf) will awe and inspire. In "The Ocean of Air," an eighteenthcentury French boy observes "the marvels of the heavens, that immense space where the vital fluid to which we give the name of air flows in all of its diffusion and mobility," leading to the creation of the first manned air balloon.



If your fever dream of going off-grid remains unfulfilled, sublimate with Erika Carter's chillingly adroit debut novel, Lucky You (Counterpoint), about three twentysomethings who, bored with life in a college town, move to the no-paced Ozarkswhere life lessons in sexual tension, isolation, and personal foibles shift into fast-forward. -L.S.

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SKIPPING MILESTONES

How did I get here? On the edge of 40, **Marisa Meltzer** finds comfort and camaraderie in a pair of books—one a novel, one memoir—about convention-defying female adulthood

When I was about eight, I had a book about optical illusions. The one that must have most intrigued me-because it's the only one I can clearly remember—was of a young maiden whose delicate jaw and chin became, when you looked at it the right way, the nose of an old hag. Sometimes that's what my life feels like. Taken from one view, my life is full. I have more friends than I have time to see, an apartment with good natural light and a cute dog living in it, and a job that sometimes entails being paid to go to spas. But if you keep looking, you'll see that I don't own my apartment and I struggle to pay my ever-increasing rent, and in what are probably the twilight years of my fertility, I am so single that the guy I'm seeing would probably be horrified by the idea that we're doing something so formal as "casual dating."

I am slouching towards adulthood. I've never been very good at hitting milestones, but here's one: I'm turning 40 this year. As such, I've been thinking a lot about what my life looks like from the outside, and what it feels like on the inside; about the choices I have made, and those I haven't.

There are some 57 million unmarried adult women in the United States, and every year seems to bring a new crop of books trying to make sense of us. On the celebratory end, we have Kate Bolick's 2015 Spinster and Rebecca Traister's 2016 All the Single Ladies, both of which portray the single life as an empowered choice. On the plight-ofthe-single-woman end, there are Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's Why There Are No Good Men Left (because we educated women are too exacting); Lori Gottlieb's Marry Him: The Case for Settling for Mr. Good Enough; and Creating a Life, by economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett—whose research on the supposed unlikeliness of high-achieving women to have a family (there's a 40 percent chance careerists won't have kids, she says) was later called into question in yet another book, Singled Out, by Bella DePaulo, PhD.

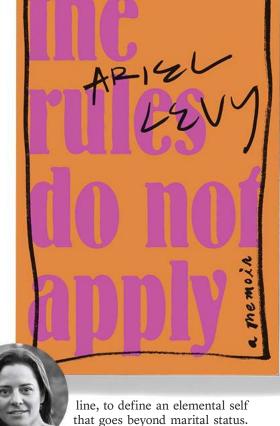
I own all of these books. Yet I have not finished a single one of them. For one thing, being endlessly studied and theorized about makes me feel like a panda in captivity being urged to mate. But I also don't know if I identify with any of the women these books

describe, whether solidly on Team Single or Team Married. As a friend once pointed out, my own life choices—or lack thereof—tend to be more like that Roy Lichtenstein-style cartoon of a woman, head in hand, captioned, "I can't believe it. I forgot to have children!" If I'm neither pointedly choosing to be a wife or a mother, nor proclaiming myself gleefully unattached, where does that land me?

Well, it seems, in an undefined yet increasingly crowded middle ground, as evidenced by two books out this month: Ariel Levy's much-anticipated memoir, The Rules Do Not Apply (Random House), and Jami Attenberg's sixth novel, All Grown Up (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Neither volume, by the way, is a cultural treatise positing some new theory on singledom-which may be why I devoured both, cover to cover, while alone (sad!) in a hotel room on a Caribbean island (fun!). And yet in both I found evidence of, as Levy puts it, "unconventional female life": two women-one fictional, one vibrantly real—who are single, successful, childless (or child-free, depending on your team), roughly my age, and still very much figuring it out.

In Attenberg's deeply enjoyable All Grown Up, protagonist Andrea Bern is stuck in an extended state of adolescence that could, in a different author's hands, be Bridget Jonesian: She's underperforming in a job she doesn't really like, having sex with divorced dads who ignore her when she sees them in public, drinking too much. But Attenberg, whose 2012 best-seller, The Middlesteins, established her as a keen, caustic observer of both family ritual and social taboo, tells much of the story through Andrea's sly asides, as she observes friends and family performing rituals of adulthood-getting married, getting divorced, throwing themselves into their careers. When a friend faux-sheepishly announces a pregnancy by not ordering a cocktail, Andrea grimaces: "There is the subtext that you are lucky because you can still drink, and she's unlucky because she can't drink, she has this dumb baby in her."

Andrea is attempting, on her own time-



in praise of being an unmarried woman. Andrea asks her therapist, "Why is being single the only thing people think of when they think of me? I'm other things, too." The therapist responds with a question: "Tell me who you are, then. What other statements are true?" A woman, a sister, an aunt, a New Yorker, an advertising designer, Andrea says to the therapist. And a drinker, a former artist, a between-the-sheets shrieker, she says to herself. Soon she's on a date with a guy who tells her she should read—you guessed it—the single-lady book. "I stand before him at the entrance to a subway station, in possession of nothing but myself. Myself is

Problem is, everybody's talking

about a new (Bolick-esque?) book

In a phone interview with Attenberg that feels more like a therapy session, I confess to her that lacking traditional benchmarks of adulthood sometimes feels like a thing to celebrate; sometimes it feels pathetic. Attenberg, who is 45 and single, says writing the novel forced her to explore her own relationship with milestones. "I'm not very interested in getting married or having kids. If I added up all the days in the year I wished I were dating somebody, it's, like, three weeks total." (My tally would be more like 12 weeks, but I take her point.) So she set her own milestones: She moved to New Or-

everything, I want to tell him."



leans, adopted a dog—her version of settling down and investing in something other than herself. She may not be a mother or a wife, or a poster girl for singledom, but she has a rich life of her own creation.

Levy, for her part, examines the tension between wanting both a life of adventure and the stability of a relationship—autonomy and intimacy—in The Rules Do Not Apply. Her heart-wrenching memoir expands upon her National Magazine Award-winning 2013 essay, "Thanksgiving in Mongolia," published in the New Yorker, where Levy's a staff writer. She'd taken an assignment in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia; it was to be her last big trip before embarking on the adventure of motherhood. At the time, she was 38 and happily encumbered: five months pregnant, married, a homeowner. Within a month, all of those moorings would vanish-starting with her devastating miscarriage, alone in a hotel bathroom on "the edge of the earth," during a trip she took because she liked "the idea of being the kind of woman who'd go to the Gobi Desert pregnant."

"Thanksgiving" was both exquisitely crafted and surprising—a shockingly revealing personal piece from a journalist until then best known for her piercing magazine profiles and her 2005 book, *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, about the effects of porn culture. I was so taken with the essay when it originally came out that when I happened to

be sent to Mongolia for work soon thereafter, I took a photo of the hotel Levy had stayed in. Looking back, that seems creepy, but I think I wanted her talent to rub off on me, the way one might bid on Jane Austen's pen.

In The Rules Do Not Apply, the author chronicles the construction of the convention-bucking existence she'd always wanted. Levy, by the way, does anything but slouch into adulthood: She finds a way to publish ambitious stories even as an assistant; eventually lands her literal dream job; and, in the middle of a New York City blackout, meets Lucy, the epitome of a life mate, with whom she builds a partnership that reads like my own fantasies come alive-roast chicken for two at the Zuni Café in San Francisco, twilight cocktails on their deck. "We were magic," Levy writes. Which makes it all the more excruciating when she unflinchingly recounts the rapid collapse of that life. After Levy deliberated for years about whether to have a child, enduring the loss of her son—whose tiny, 19-week-gestated self is described in detail, down to his eyebrows—is compounded by the loss of her relationship with Lucy, who had struggled for years with alcoholism. There are trips to rehab, a psych ward, sessions at Al-Anon. Every raw event provides further proof that even when you choose convention and think you've found the answers, there's no guarantee it will last, much less make you "happy." But Levy's book is no cautionary tale. That's partially because she maintains her smart, wry sense of humor; she's still intact. It's also because she just keeps on moving.

Levy starts out, as the book blurb says, as a woman who "wanted what we all want: everything." Late in the book, she writes about asking the New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd if she'd ever wanted children. "Everybody doesn't get everything," Dowd told her. Levy writes, "It sounded depressing to me at the time, a statement of defeat. Now admitting it seems an obvious and essential work of growing up. Everybody doesn't get everything: as natural and unavoidable as mortality." Ultimately, Levy doesn't tell us which parts of "everything" she still wants-though she hints at the start of a surprising relationship. Her upended life looks nothing like what she laid the foundation for, but then, there's no cutoff date by which she has to have it all nailed down.







LET IT SHID

Spring awakening starts now. Lips dazzle in shades of hot fuchsia and flame-lit orange; hair gets teased, tousled, and pinned up to retro-wild perfection; and skin—with the help of a secret luminizing elixir—puts its gleaming-est face forward. By Megan O'Neill



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To those in perpetual pursuit
of the perfect lipstick: This
invigorating rust moonlights as
an ultrafresh cheek stain—and an eye shadow, too

In the same way that second-day hair can be as appealing as a salon-fresh blow-out, a subtle burnish—like the soft-focus look at Erdem's spring 2017 show—can be just as stunning as, say, a kohl-rimmed eye and smoldering-cherry lip situation. Makeup artist Val Garland conjured the flushed sheen by employing a single lipstick, Nars Kiss Me Stupid, lightly tracing it over models' mouths to bestow a barely-there tint, tamping it gingerly on cheekbones (she used a brush to disperse the pigment, conveying a windblown ruddiness), and blending it onto lids until the earthy rouge petered out to a "tea-stained, romantic eye," she says. What's more, Garland usedand loved—the lipstick on *every* model: "It looks good on different skin tones because it's a shade that naturally appears in skin."



IT TAKES TWO

Game changer: Blot hot orange in the center of a red lip to make it two-toned, as makeup master Yadim did at Jason Wu (he used Maybelline New York Vivid Matte Liquid lip color in Orange Shot). "The placement of the orange gives the appearance of fuller lips," he says. Painting top and bottom lips different colors but keeping them harmonious in tone, like the rouge-magenta mouths at Cushnie et Ochs, adds similar dimension and edge.

1. BENEFIT They're Real! Double the Lip Lipstick & Liner in Flame Game. 2. NYX Ombre Lip Duo in Razzle & Dazzle. 3. YVES SAINT LAURENT Baby Doll Kiss & Blush Duo Stick in From Me to You.





PINK LADIES The one rule to pulling off these shadows: Own it.



STARLIGHT, STAR BRIGHT

Makeup guru Monica Marmo swathed lids in M.A.C Eye Shadow in Up At Dawn, "a color with its own light," along with violet highlighter at the inner eye to impart a dusted-in-snowflakes quality. A sweep of Dior Diorshow Mono shadow in Backstage also bestows an ethereal wash.





LINER NOTES

Yes, pink can skew...raw, but "a smudge of pencil creates a nice break between the eye and the shadow," says Artistic Director of Shiseido Makeup Dick Page, who used a mix of Shiseido Shimmering Cream Eye Color in Mousseline (below) and Pale Shell. Alternately, he likes the effect of fluffing pink blush over lids



WILD THING

"Even with the trickiest colors, there'll be a shade that suits you. Experiment!" says makeup expert Pep Gay, who blended fuchsia lipstick from M.A.C Trend Forecast Spring 17 palette around top and lower lash lines. A fittingly vibrant eye pigment for the job: Make Up For Ever Artist Shadow in ME-910 Electric Magenta.



PRO TIP

On dark skin, Page opts for "viole mauves, which show up as more of a true pink" than powder-puff hues do

BACK TO THE FUTURE

From beehives to Scarface-inspired blow-outs, spring hair spectacularly riffs on iconic styles of yore



PRO TIP A just-as-pretty substitute for this high knot: an athleisure-chic braid.



1950s PINNED-UP GIRL

The sculpted front is a portmanteau of a 1950s pompadour and a victory roll—a 1940s style patriotically named in support of the armed forces during WWII (think: one of Gwen Stefani's oft-repeated retro looks, featuring an immense curl atop her head). Oribe Global Ambassador James Pecis emphasizes placing the rolls "to create a square shape, which gives this a more modern look." He blasted roots with dry shampoo "to catch baby hairs," then, after sectioning the top and sides into three distinct segments with elastics, twisted each part to create little bouffants, securing them with bobby pins. ORIBE Gold Lust Dry Shampoo

1960s

SWINGIN' SEX APPEAL Wella Global Creative Director Eugene Souleiman's biascropped wigs at Jeremy Scott were an homage to Vidal Sassoon. He blow-dried the hair with a round brush so that ends curved softly

inward to frame the face, preventing the style from feeling too "geometric." Meanwhile, Garren, the cofounder of R+Co hair care, constructed the roughed-up beehives at Anna Sui—a collision of Amy Winehouse and '60s pop group the Shangri-Las-with a deluge of thickening spray, teasing top pieces "to a great height."

NEW WAVE

1980s

mussing

Splashy customized hair ties, sideways hats, and single earrings all added up to a Tears for Fears-era extravaganza at Chanel. Hair honcho Sam McKnight positioned ponytails below the ear for a "nonchalant" vibe and tamed frizz with John Frieda Secret Weapon Touch-Up Crème. At Cushnie et Ochs, Moroccanoil Global Cre-

> ative Ambassador Antonio Corral Calero employed a curling iron to give ends a swingy inward bend, an effect borrowed from Michelle Pfeiffer's

drug-addled glamazon alter ego, Elvira, in the 1983 cult classic Scarface.

CHANEL Hair Ties in styl-A89428 and A89419

1990s

MINIMALIST SLEEK

The moodboard at Thakoon featured early-'90s ELLE covers

(you know, the ones with the Amazonian models exuding sporty freshness). Hair expert Odile Gilbert doused the entire head with Kérastase

Crème de la Crème for a wet look and scraped lengths up into a twisty chignon, allowing a lone front strand to coil alluringly into the model's face. At Alexander Wang, Redken Global Creative Director Guido Palau sprayed damp

hair with Redken Fashion Waves, diffusing it halfway dry to create a "natty, gnarly" beach-

bum texture.

KÉRASTASE Crème de la Crème Sumptuous Blow-Dry Control Cream

THAT PLATINUM, THOUGH

A star was born as model Jourdana Phillips seized the Saint Laurent spring 2017 runway, revealing her ballsy new white-blond cut. The 26-year-old Texan's secret for keeping things lustrous: an intensely hydrating aloe mask layered over a manuka honeyspiked conditioner, both of which she leaves in all day.

VARIS Small Round Boar Brush

1. HYDROHAIR Aloe Mask. 2. SHEA MOISTURE Manuka Honey & Mafura Oil Intensive Hydration Conditioner.











SATURDAYS

Model **Selena Forrest** can stalk down a runway like a boss, but off duty, the Louisiana-born tomboy prefers to PlayStation and chill in her Gucci flip-flops. Here's how her perfect weekend day plays out.

UP AND AT 'EM: I wake up, realize I actually have some time for once, and go back to sleep. Eventually, I get up and brush my teeth. I wash my hair once a week, so maybe today's

> the day. I don't use shampoo, just conditioner-one from Tresemmé—since my hair gets

dried out backstage. I usually wash my face with water and Aveeno cleansing pads. I use both sides to get all the dirt off, then I'll put on some moisturizer from Aveeno. I've used those forever, and my skin is pretty clear. No makeup—I wear so much for work—just some Burt's Bees on my lips.





1. AVEENO Positively Radiant Daily Cleansing Pads. 2. BURT'S BEES Flavor Crystals Lip Balm in Red Raspberry. 3. TRESEMMÉ Perfectly (Un)Done conditioner. 4. GUCCI GG Blooms Supreme Slide Sandal 5. PlayStation 4.

I have a breakfast bagel with eggs, bacon, and avocado, and I could do some Swiss cheese on that. I want most of the food homemade on my perfect Saturday.

HANGTEN: Imagine a big living room with beanbags and a projector playing PlayStation 4. I teleport my dad [here to New York] to cook ribsshout-out to my dad! I'm playing Call of Duty

with my brothers and my girlfriend. Her name is Aqua. She's Japanese and black; she's very pretty. She's everywhere on the perfect Saturday, or else it wouldn't be perfect. Maybe we'll go to a jewelry store and get custom silver diamond chains or matching grills. I'm wearing a fur-lined onesie with pockets—this isn't a sexy onesie—and my Gucci flip-flops with flowers on them.

NIGHT CAP: My girlfriend and I are on a pretty roof, and we have McDonald's delivered from Paris (it tastes better there). We skydive down and go to the Alexander

Maison Margiela

Wang after party, which was amazing [this season]; he had a 7-Eleven truck giving out food, and people were performing. Anything can happen if you dream big.



BLING TIME

Sultry metallic flashes enhance complexions and look badass on nails



SKIN

Yellow golds, such as the M.A.C Eye Shadow in Goldmine that makeup overlord Tom Pecheux used, give a boost to dark skin, while cool rose golds flatter pale tones.

TIP: Apply Cover FX Enhancer Drops in Candlelight, above, sparingly. Go-for-broke gilded reads as heavy



NAILS

Sally Hansen Global Color Ambassador Madeline Poole streaked tinsel-like Sally Hansen Gilty Party, above, across opaque-white nails. "It has a girliness to it," she says. TIP: Skip topcoat, which squelches metallic luster, Poole says



EYES

By tracing reflective liner, such as Urban Decay Razor Sharp liquid liner in Cuff, right, along the inner lash line, makeup queen Pat McGrath created the illusion of radiance.

TIP: Accentuate the Cupid's bow with Pat McGrath Labs Metalmorphosis 005 silver liner.



Every season, there emerges a look that's to die for, albeit best served on

the runway. "They're dreamy," says Yadim of the faintly purple and yellow brows he created at Gucci using greasepaint. "We bleached the girls' brows beforehand,

which is why the colors showed up so soft." 1. MEHRON Color Cup in Yellow.

2. MAYBELLINE NEW YORK ExpertWear Eye Shadow in Fierce Fuchsia 3. LANCÔME Sourcils Styler for brows.











OOD HAIR?

When cornrows and dreadlocks cameo on the runway, they're a magnet for controversy. But Megan O'Neill is loving—and defending— what she's seeing

"Do you think this is offensive?" a fellow beauty editor (she's white) whispered to me (I'm black). She was referring to the passel of mostly Caucasian models surrounding us backstage at Marc Jacobs,

their hair spectacularly affixed with coils of colorful wool yarn in shades of hazy purple and blue. The look, according to the mastermind behind it, Guido Palau, was meant to evoke "1980s club kids and Boy George." But there was also the empirical fact that each model was now rocking a headful of dreads.

I was the opposite of offended. I was enamored. I loved how the dreadlocks

were piled high into a haywire knot that brought to mind an early-'90s Lisa Bonet (the coolest). There was also something very My Little Pony about the whole thing. Eighties club kid? Eh, I didn't see it.

Neither did those who deemed the look brazenly racist. This, they said in a conversation that's been raging for months via Twitter and blogs, was the latest example of the industry purloining something historically African American without giving due credit. It's true, I'd never heard Palau allude to "dreadlocks" or any other African American reference; but later on, when I interviewed him about the cornrow-adorned, clearly ballerina-esque buns at Dior, he didn't mention ballerinas as something he'd drawn upon. Instead, visions of punkrock skaters had danced through his head, he told me, his eyes sparkling with the zeal of the explosively imaginative. I nodded as he further depicted this breed of urban skater girl, whose earplugs might blare thrashing

music and whose tangly hair is becomingly tinted a garish seaweed green. Maybe she'd shred all day and plop down, breathless, onto a curb, her board tilting against a knee, and absentmindedly twist herself a few braids.

So then one could say the look at Dior, too, is bursting at the seams with cultural appropriation-from the punk-rock skater community. And what about those cornrows-clearly that's a black thing, right? Also, should I let my feelings toward the show be shaped by the fact that the runways in Europe are less diverse than those in America? Yes.

> But in response to the fantasia of borrowed aesthetics, Palau's take makes sense: "If you're an artist or a cook, you take inspiration from everywhere. The result is a collision of styles."

> Here's the thing: When I watch models storm the runway with spiraling braids or a cascade of dreads (each girl at Marc had 55 hand-dyed wool pieces tied into her hair), the first thing I see is a masterpiece-love it or hate it-that a team

of devoted hair gurus labored and fretted over. I see styles that are infinity times more fun to write about than yet another floaty blow-out. I see an ode to my black hair.

DOUBLE THE FUN

The off-label ways that hair and makeup pros use hero products: Genius!



ARCH SUPPORT

To keep hairs in place, Dick Page smooths brows with L'Oréal Paris Elnett Satin Strong Hold Hairspray. TIP: Spritz hair spray onto a clean mascara wand before combing brows.





EYE OPENER

Yadim swapped Maybelline New York Brow Drama Pomade Cravon, a soft taupe, for shadow. TIP: To get this exact tone, stay away from browns with too



HIGH ART

L'Oréal Paris Telescopic Waterproof Precision Liquid Eyeliner paints graphic squiggles on nails (layer on a topcoat afterward), says Jin Soon Choi, founder of her eponymous polish line and New York nail salons. TIP: For negative-space designs. dip the brush in polish remover first





WE'VE STRUCK OIL! When Tom Pecheux—his résumé includes all the glitz: legions of shows, Gucci campaigns, etc.—is addicted to a small-batch, rose hip-spiked face oil, you sprint to procure it. "I massage two drops into the face," he says of treating models with Butter Elixir Face oil backstage. "It makes foundation go on beautifully."





PRACTICAL MAGIC

Cool girls flock to Parisian color pro Christophe Robin not only for his deft mastery of shades ranging from icy blond to deepest ebony, but for treatments that leave hair looking healthier than ever before. **By April Long**

"I don't like those too-modern salons where you feel like you're going to get a surgery," says colorist Christophe Robin, gesturing toward the jewel box-like interior of his new HQ, which is strewn with Tony Duquette malachite-print pillows, luxe art tomes, and canine-themed vintage tchotchkes. If you're lucky enough to be one of Robin's A-list clients—Natalie Portman, Dakota Johnson, Tilda Swinton, raven-haired Eva Green (who is actually a natural blonde), or grande dame Catherine Deneuve—vou'll be discreetly ushered in through a secret entrance just off Paris's Rue Bachaumont. But anyone can feel like a star here: Clients are swathed not in blah-black synthetic robes but in vibrantly hued silk kimonos. There's even a boutique in the front where curious passersby can stop in to wash their own hair, gratis, in a giant seashell-shaped sink.

Ever since Robin's first big break, when, in the late '80s and still only a teenager, he colored supermodel Stephanie Seymour's hair for a commercial, he's marched to the beat of his own drum. He created his unique, innovative line, much of which is based on what he calls "granny recipes"—traditional hair brightening and strengthening methods incorporating natural ingredients-while also working with L'Oréal to develop high-performance athome color. "All of my products are more long-term, so you'll need to use them two or three times to see a big difference, but after that your hair will be stable," he says. "Everyone wants to see results right away, but quick results are often just hiding the problem."



worst things you see? Every day I have a new client who comes in because her color isn't right. Usually, her hair is fried because she wanted to achieve something that was impossible for her hair type, and yet a colorist did it anyway. It's very difficult to work with burned hair, because it's so fragile. I give them a regimen of deep conditioning

to use for a week, then ask them to come back for the color when their hair is healthier.

What process is usually the culprit? Bleach [on] people whose hair is too dark to go platinum. I hate that, because it never lasts long; you have to touch up the regrowth every two weeks, and afterward the hair is fried. Nature does a good job. If you are meant to have dark hair, it looks cheap when you go blond. If you're 18 years old and a pop star, then it works. But not in real life.

Before you color hair, you saturate it in oil. Why? I use my Moisturizing Hair Oil with Lavender. It helps the product grab better, but it's protective at the same time. It equalizes the quality of the hair from root to tip so that vou get a very uniform application of color. It's similar to preparing skin for makeup by moisturizing and making sure the skin is in good condition first. You also avoid using

styling products after color, don't you?
Yes. I don't like styling products. They make the hair very dirty, and some of them, like waxes, grab on, and you can't wash them out easily. Elnett hair spray is the only styling product we use in the salon. I predry the hair a little bit and then spray a small amount of Elnett

onto the roots. It's never sticky; it never makes the hair look dull. Plus, it brushes out, so you don't have to wash the hair.

Do French and American women have different hair goals? Frenchwomen aren't willing to change their color every season. The Parisian brunette wants no mahogany, no warmth in her hair; she likes it a little ashy, so it looks natural. Americans are very particular about their blond, but they're more likely to experiment.



THE ESSENTIALS

- 1. CHRISTOPHE ROBIN Regenerating Hair Finish Lotion with Hibiscus Vinegar "balances the hair's pH to protect color and add shine," Robin says. "It's also antibacterial, so it keeps the hair and scalp fresh between shampoos."
- 2. CHRISTOPHE ROBIN Moisturizing Hair Oil with Lavender can be used prior to color application at home, to protect hair when

swimming, or as a hydrating overnight mask.

- 3. Robin uses a classic MASON PEARSON brush "to detangle and put oil into the hair" before applying color.
- 4. To extend the life of a blowout, Robin loves oil-absorbing L'ORÉAL PARIS Extraordinary Clay Dry Shampoo, which sprays on clear.
- 5. "I'm crazy about the DYSON hair dryer," he says. "It works really well, it's very light, and it's the quietest I've ever tried."







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A new generation of safer and more effective diet drugs is here—and none too soon, as more and more Americans struggle with their weight and the often-serious health consequences of putting on too many pounds. By Joseph Hooper

"When I first started losing weight," Maressa Pyle says, "people would ask, 'What are you doing?' In some ways I almost felt like I was cheating—'1'm taking this pill that's helping me do this thing that I couldn't do on my own.'" Pyle, now 33, had yo-yoed for years on diet and exercise programs. At 5'4" and 168 pounds, she was close to the government's definition of obese: a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above. More than a third of American women fall into this category.

When her ob-gyn suggested that she lose weight if she was serious about getting

pregnant, Pyle decided to add the appetite-suppressant drug Contrave to bolster her renewed resolve to work out at the gym and cut excess carbs from her diet. In three months, she got down to 148 pounds. Contrave isn't a magic pill. Pyle knows—and every medical specialist in the obesity field will tell you—that the meds work, when they work, by making it easier to stick to a diet, not by erasing the merciless reality that to lose weight you must consume fewer calories than you burn.

"If I'm having a crap day and I'm thinking, 'I want ice cream,'" Pyle says, "the medication kind of takes the edge off. But it's still up to me what I put in my mouth."

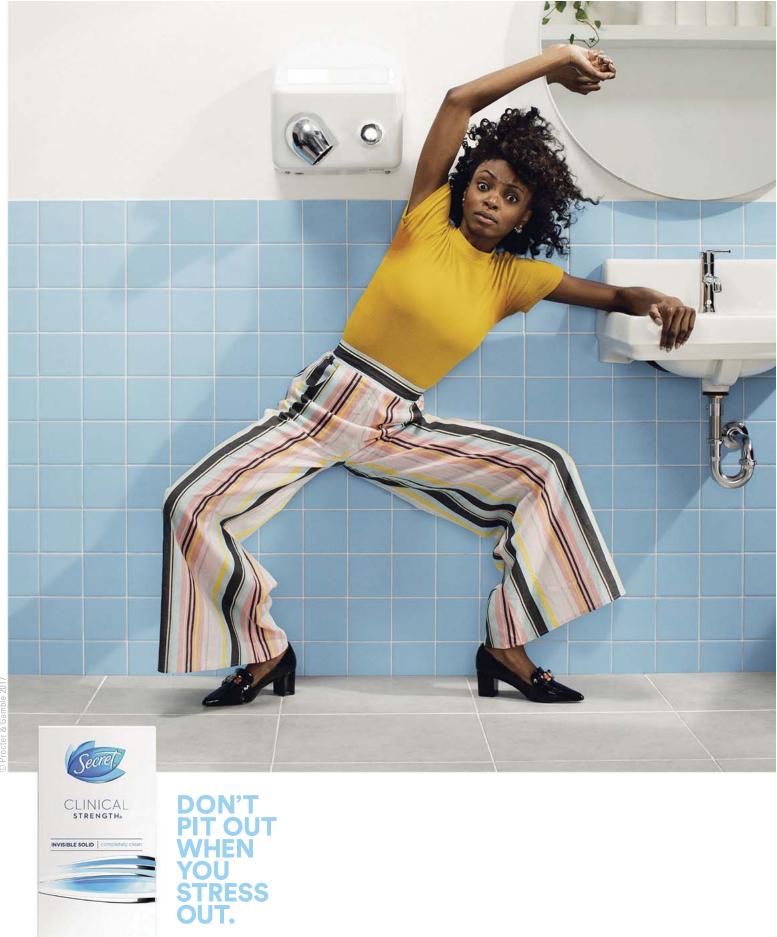
In the past five years, the FDA has approved four new drugs to combat obesity: Qsymia and Belviq in 2012, Contrave and Saxenda in 2014. Pyle is part of a new weight-loss-drug story that many experts thought would never be written: Diet drugs are back, with the government's stamp of approval, even though the track record of such medications has been nothing short of disastrous.

For much of the past century, particularly in the '60s, doctors prescribed powerful, addictive amphetamines to women to control their weight. As recently as 2010, the FDA took one of the few remaining weight drugs, Meridia, off the market because it was found to increase risk of heart attack and stroke. Prior to that came the fen-phen craze of the 1990s, when hordes of patients popped the fenfluramine-phentermine combo that had a powerful weight-loss effect-along with a 20 percent risk of developing potentially lethal heart-valve injury if you stayed on it long enough. Hundreds of reported cases of heart disease and a handful of deaths later, diet drugs in general lost their place in the market and their hold on our imagination.

So why do obesity specialists and the pharmaceutical industry think they've now finally got it right?

"Well, let's say we're getting it righter," says Boston University's Caroline Apovian, MD, who directs Boston Medical Center's weight-loss program. "We have a better understanding of the physiology of weight gain, and we have drugs that hit more weight-specific pathways in the body." The other reassuring thing is that two of the four new arrivals, Qsymia and Contrave, are novel combinations of drugs that have been prescribed for years for problems other than obesity. (Qsymia, which contains the amphetamine-like phentermine, should not be taken by anyone with heart disease.)

Before the FDA would approve the new drugs for weight loss, it required that at least one-third of the subjects taking them in clinical trials in conjunction with a diet and exercise regimen lose at least 5 percent of their total body weight. Five percent may not sound like the stuff of infomercial dreams, but as anyone who has tried to keep weight off will tell you, it's not nothing. (Using the FDA's data for Contrave specifically, we



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might estimate that Pyle lost an extra seven pounds due to the drug—but short of putting a clone of her on the same weight-loss program minus the drug, we can't be sure.) Obesity experts who are bullish on diet drugs say that many people whose bodies respond to a given drug do better than that, and doctors often prescribe different meds until the most effective one is found.

Mindful of the havoc created by fen-phen, a regimen the FDA never approved (or even rigorously studied), the agency has issued clear-cut indications for all four new drugs. To qualify for treatment, you must have a BMI of 30 or above, or 27 or above with at least one comorbidity—that is, a weightrelated health problem, which could be anything from arthritis of the knee to elevated blood sugar. Probably half of adult America could sail across that bar. Pyle didn't technically make the cut, but doctors have leeway to go off-label when they feel it's medically justified. "We run into this gray zone," says her doctor, Ken Fujioka, MD, of San Diego's Scripps Clinic, a top obesity researcher and clinician. "But that said, we all do it."

If nothing else, the research poured into building a better weight-loss drug has given us a better understanding of our eating habits. "Only part of why we eat is hunger," says Donna Ryan, MD, a drugindustry consultant and a senior editor of the journal Obesity. "After you've eaten something, your gut sends satiety signals to the brain," which shuts down your hunger pangs. All the new drugs suppress the appetite: Qsymia, Saxenda, and Belviq do it by either dialing hunger down or satiety up; Contrave, however, desensitizes the brain's reward circuitry. "The other reason we eat is encapsulated in our reward circuits," Ryan says. "You may have a dessert even if you're full, because sweet foods—and savory ones such as chips—have a high reward value."

Qsymia wins for biggest weight-loss advantage—an estimated 10 percent of body weight, according to some experts. A combo drug, its larger component is topiramate, which works on several brain chemicals to calm nerve activity. It was first approved in 1996 as an antiseizure med—brand name Topamax—and later as a treatment for migraines. "Models used it for years to stay thin," says Beverly Hills endocrinologist Eva Cwynar, MD, author of *The Fatigue Solution*, who has developed a weight-management sideline for her upscale clientele. Fujioka admits that our understanding of how topiramate works is

incomplete, but preliminary research and his own clinical experience suggest that it's an effective counter to binge eating. "About 10 to 15 percent of the population will eat very large portions," he says, "and feel very out of control—'I won't eat four or five crackers, I'll eat the whole box,' they'll tell me."

The smaller chunk of Qsymia is none other than the former fen-phen component phentermine, the grandmother of weight drugs, which entered the market in 1959. In reasonable doses, phentermine itself isn't toxic. It's a stimulant similar to amphetamines, akin to those found in ADHD drugs, that works on hunger centers in the brain. "But it does give you a high," Apovian says. "Suddenly you feel like going to the gym or vacuuming all night—so there is some potential for abuse."

Obesity specialists consider Qsymia's 7.5-milligram dose of phentermine a reasonable risk unless you have cardiovascular issues—in which case any central nervous system stimulant is dangerous. This past year, Lomaira, a stand-alone, low-dose

8-milligram phentermine pill for weight loss, also hit the market.

At the standard dose, 30 milligrams, generic phentermine is still prescribed on its own as the budget-conscious, if not overly health-conscious, dieter's friend. According to Weill Cornell Medical Center's Louis J. Aronne, MD, a research eminence and author of the recent Change Your Biology Diet, studies show that the bigger dose yields very little extra weight loss-at a much greater risk of dangerous side effects. Still, Google "phentermine" or "medical weight loss," and up will pop legions of varyingly shady weight-loss clinics happy to sell you full-dose phentermine for cash on the barrelhead—as little as \$30 per month—as well as chat room "phrends" comparing notes on where to score a supply. When I mention the phrends to Aronne, he sniffs, "Our goal is to bring obesity medicine into the mainstream of medicine so it's not seen as some kind of carnival sideshow."

Whereas Qsymia was developed in scattershot fashion, Saxenda is the poster child for a new generation of more targeted drugs. It was synthesized to

mimic a natural gut hormone, GLP-1; a daily shot with a handy inject-a-pen delivers appetite suppression second only to Qsymia.

All the new weight drugs are expensive, but at almost \$1,000 per month, Saxenda is in a league of its own and, like the other drugs, often is not covered by insurance. As is usual in the weight field, however, there are work-arounds: Manufacturer Novo Nordisk also sells Victoza, a 60 percent dose of the same drug (generic name: liraglutide) that's FDA-approved for treating type 2 diabetes. If you're diabetic, your insurance will likely pick up most of the tab. Even if you're not, a doctor can prescribe Victoza off-label for weight loss, at 60 percent of Saxenda's cost.

Contrave is a pure "head" drug, a combo of bupropion (that's the antidepressant drug Wellbutrin and the smoking-cessation drug Zyban to you) and naltrexone (used to treat drug addiction and alcoholism), which work together to blunt cravings: You lose your food "high," which is why Pyle feels she has an easier time just saying no to ice

Diet drugs are back, even though the track record of such medications has been nothing short of disastrous.



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cream. The amount of bupropion you get in Contrave isn't much less than what's in Wellbutrin, which is why, Fujioka says, patients often report a mood lift. The pharmaceutical industry first got the idea for using the drug for weight loss when a significant number of people taking Wellbutrin and Zyban lost weight—the opposite of what you'd expect for someone on an antidepressant or who has just quit smoking.

Finally, Belviq (generic name: lorcaserin), like Saxenda, is an all-new drug. It tamps down appetite by affecting the brain's response to serotonin, much the same way that fenfluramine did. But whereas fenfluramine had a special (and potentially lethal) fondness for serotonin receptors on the heart valves, Belviq acts solely on the brain, mostly on one receptor connected to appetite. No cardiovascular problems turned up in the two years of clinical testing the FDA required before approval. Ironically, Belviq offers the best safety profile and the lowest average weight loss, says Fujioka, but for the patient who doesn't need to lose a tremendous amount, he says, "that's a trade-off I'll take any day."

Fujioka and his peers are up front about the potential side effects yet to be weeded out of the pharma garden:

PHENTERMINE: ESPECIALLY AT HIGHER DOSES, CAN CAUSE INSOMNIA, HEART PALPITATIONS. AND ANXIETY

TOPIRAMATE: DROWSINESS, TINGLING AND NUMBNESS, AND SLUGGISH THINKING (TWO NICKNAMES FOR ITS BRAND-NAME VERSION, TOPAMAX: "STUPEMAX" AND "DOPAMAX")

SAXENDA: NAUSEA THAT'S PRACTICALLY UNIVERSAL UNTIL THE BODY ADAPTS OR THE DOSAGE IS LOWERED

CONTRAVE: NAUSEA, HEADACHES, DIZZINESS

BELVIQ: MILD HEADACHES, DRY MOUTH, NAUSEA, DIZZINESS

But Fujioka is enthused about the net benefits: "With the choice of these four medications, we're actually getting some patients down to normal weight with tolerable side effects, which is a brand-new thing for me in all the years I've been doing this. Now that we've got the right meds and the right doses—this is heaven."

While doctors such as Fujioka, Apovian, and Aronne put at least half their patients on meds, other, more behavior-oriented practitioners and programs are not so keen

At root, this is a debate about the nature of being overweight. Is it a failure to properly manage the calories you take in—or is it, as many obesity specialists repeat like a sacred mantra, a disease?

on drugs; for example, at Wake Forest and the University of Colorado, the figure is about 20 percent. But all experts caution that these drugs are only for those who have tried in a systematic and thoughtful way to modify diet and exercise and failed repeatedly to lose weight or to maintain weight loss—those who, burdened by a difficult metabolism, relentless cravings, or both, can't do it, or can't do it well enough for long enough.

Inevitably, though, there will be more and more people like Rebecca Harris (not her real name). A high-flying Manhattan beauty-industry exec in her early forties, Harris is nobody's idea of obese, but her relentless schedule had, over time, added about 30 pounds to her formerly petite 5'6", 125-pound frame. "I saw a picture of myself from a friend's wedding," she says, "and I looked like I'd stopped off at a gas station before the wedding, gone to the air pump, and filled my face and body with air."

Harris went to a highly touted alternative nutritionist in order to deflate, but that didn't suit her ("I was eating bark shavings," she says, half-facetiously). A little detective work brought her to an internist who prescribed Victoza, the lowerdose version of Saxenda, off-label. The initial nausea was off-putting, she says, but that's gone away, and she has managed to trim down to 129 pounds even though her diet and exercise remain inconsistent at best. "At the end of the day, I'm paying a couple of thousand dollars a year to keep the weight off," she says. "I consider that a good investment."

Obesity specialists, however, consider that horrifying. "If you're looking for a cosmetic treatment to lose weight, it should be totally safe," Ryan says. "You don't subject someone to the risks of medication when her health is perfect." (Pancreatitis is just one rare but real side effect of Saxenda/ Victoza.)

At root, this is a debate about the nature of being overweight. Is it a failure to properly manage the calories you take in—or is it, as many obesity specialists repeat like a sa-

cred mantra, a disease? To Aronne, obesity looks more like a cumulative injury than a failure of willpower. Over time, according to this view, extra body fat damages the sensitivity of the nerves in the gut that after a meal let the brain know our fat stores have been replenished and we don't need to eat for a while. (The gut's primary satiety hormone, leptin, is the key actor here.) The fatter we get, the less the brain is aware of what's going on, and the more pounds we pack on. Just as we treat type 2 diabetes and hypertension with drugs, Aronne argues, we should do the same for obesity. "If someone with high blood pressure stopped taking their medicine," he says, "their doctor would yell at them, 'Don't you realize this is a chronic condition and you've got to take your medication?""

As the debate plays out, it's useful to remember that women are often very good at losing weight with diet and exercise alone. They do it all the time. The reason they have to *keep* doing it is that the metabolic deck is stacked against them: After they drop the pounds, their metabolic rate drops, as does production of leptin. Unless they stay vigilant, some, or all—or more than all—of the weight comes back.

Some experts believe this is where the drugs will find their true place, not only for the morbidly obese but also for those like Maressa Pyle (who, following FDA guidelines, dropped the Contrave when she started trying to conceive) and the legions of women who need intermittent help keeping off weight they've lost on their own. "We can get the weight off in any number of ways," says Holly Wyatt, MD, the medical director of the University of Colorado's Anschutz Health and Wellness Center, who was the medical adviser for the ABC series Extreme Weight Loss. "But if they start to regain, we can put them on a medication temporarily to give them time to reset their lifestyle before the weight comes back on." And if they don't regain the weight, maybe they'll forestall classic complications such as diabetes and hypertension, which would have to be addressed with multiple meds. That's the hope, anyway.



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- Problems with swallowing, speaking, or breathing. These problems can happen hours to weeks after an injection of XEOMIN® if the muscles that you use to breathe and swallow become weak after the injection. Death can happen as a complication if you have severe problems with swallowing or breathing after treatment with XEOMIN®
- People with certain breathing problems may need to use muscles in their neck to help them breathe and may be at greater risk for serious breathing problems with XEOMIN®.
- Swallowing problems may last for several months. People who cannot swallow well may need a feeding tube to receive food and

Read the Medication Guide before you start receiving XEOMIN $^\circ$ (Zeo-min) and each time XEOMIN $^\circ$ is given to you as there may be new information. The risk information provided here is not comprehensive. To learn more:

water. If swallowing problems are severe, food or liquids may go into your lungs. People who already have swallowing or breathing problems before receiving XEOMIN® have the highest risk of getting these problems.

• Spread of toxin effects. In some cases, the effect of botulinum toxin may affect areas of the body away from the injection site and cause symptoms of a serious condition called botulism. The symptoms of botulism include: loss of strength and muscle weakness all over the body, double vision, blurred vision and drooping eyelids, hoarseness or change or loss of voice, trouble saying words clearly, loss of bladder control, trouble breathing, trouble swallowing.

These problems could make it unsafe for you to drive a car or do other dangerous activities.

Do not use XEOMIN if you are allergic to XEOMIN $^{\circ}$ or any of the ingredients in XEOMIN® (see the end of this guide for a list of ingredients in XEOMIN®), had an allergic reaction to any other botulinum toxin products such as rimabotulinumtoxinB (MYOBLOC®), onabotulinumtoxinA (BOTOX®, BOTOX® COSMETIC), or abobotulinumtoxinA (DYSPORT®) or have a skin infection at the planned injection site.

- Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist
- Visit www.xeominaesthetic.com to obtain the FDA-approved product labeling
 • Call 1-866-862-1211

Ask a doctor before use if you

- have a disease that affects your muscles and nerves (such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease], myasthenia gravis or Lambert-Eaton syndrome)
- have had any side effect from any other botulinum toxin in the past
- have a breathing problem such as asthma or
- have a history of swallowing problems or inhaling food or fluid into your lungs (aspiration)
- have bleeding problems
- have drooping eyelids
- have plans to have surgery
- have had surgery on your face
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if XEOMIN® can harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if XEOMIN® passes into breast milk.

XEOMIN is not recommended for use in children younger than 18 years of age.



Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions and all of the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. Using XEOMIN® with certain other medicines may cause serious side effects. Do not start any new medicines until you have told your doctor that you have received XEOMIN in the past.

Especially tell your doctor if you

- have received any other botulinum toxin product in the last four months
- have received injections of botulinum toxin such as rimabotulinumtoxinB (MYOBLOC®), onabotulinumtoxinA (BOTOX®, BOTOX® COSMETIC) and abobotulinumtoxinA (DYSPORT®) in the past. Be sure your doctor knows exactly which product you received. The dose of XEOMIN® may be different from other botulinum toxin products that you have received.
- have recently received an antibiotic by injection
- take muscle relaxants
- take an allergy or cold medicine
- take a sleep medicine
- take a blood thinner medicine

Ask your doctor if you are not sure if your medicine is one that is listed above.

Possible side effects

XEOMIN can cause serious side effects that can be life threatening. See "Warnings." $\,$

Headache was the most common side effect of XEOMIN for treatment of glabellar lines.

Other possible side effects include:

- dry mouth
- discomfort or pain at the injection site
- tiredness
- neck pain
- muscle weakness
- eye problems, including: double vision, blurred vision, drooping eyelids, swelling of your eyelids, and dry eyes. Reduced blinking can also occur. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have eye pain or irritation following treatment.

XEOMIN may cause other serious side effects including allergic reactions. Symptoms of an allergic reaction to XEOMIN® may include: itching, rash, redness, swelling, wheezing, asthma symptoms, or dizziness or feeling faint. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you get wheezing or asthma symptoms, or if you get dizzy or faint.

These are not all the possible side effects of XEOMIN®. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Directions

- \bullet XEOMIN $^{\!\otimes}$ is a shot (injection) that your doctor will give you.
- XEOMIN® is injected into your affected muscles.
- Your doctor may change your dose of XEOMIN^o until you and your doctor find the best dose for you.

General information about the safe and effective use of XEOMIN

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use XEOMIN for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give XEOMIN to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them. You can ask your pharmacist or doctor for information about XEOMIN that is written for health professionals.

Active Ingredient

incobotulinumtoxinA

Inactive Ingredients

human albumin and sucrose

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RESCUE ME

After an experimental sprint through a rainbow of hair color, **Cotton Codinha** looks to a new wave of customized hair care. What is it that she seeks? Salvation for her wrecked strands

I've always had straight hair, and lots of it. Even the most shellacked barrel curls would fall out of my superfine lengths, and I have the bridesmaid photos to prove it. From a styling perspective, my hair, which until recently had never even seen a heat tool, was almost too healthy. Then came an experiment to find my perfect color last spring, and a subsequent gauntlet of dyeing and bleaching. Oh, the bleaching. Five times in under two months-which meant a new color almost every other week. My colorist, a man who's ushered supermodels from dark to platinum and back in three days, begged me to take a break, with faint assurances that I could contemplate bleach again in six months or so.

My formerly virgin hair was now trash. But: Baby had body! Drawing my palm up the side of my temples like some 1940s screen star fluffing her curls gave my new roughed-up, bedhead-like texture a volume that before would have deflated almost immediately.

And then the breakage set in.

I'd been given strict orders to coddle the final color, a deep brown, with frequent deep conditionings, trims, and touch-ups with gloss that would coat the platinum-ravaged strands with color. I nodded obediently, kissed my colorist good-bye (we'd clocked hours together, after all), and then spent my entire summer diving under saltwater waves, sweating in the sun, and ignoring his reprimanding DMs in response to my Instagram Stories. The entirety of my selfcare consisted of haphazardly slapping on a rotation of deep-conditioning hair masks snagged from the beauty closet at work, or dousing my hair in coconut oil and then settling in, towel-headed, for a night of Netflix.

Perhaps it was the turbaned *Stranger Things* binge that inspired my next move, but summer had ended, my access to free Rock-







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 - Infused with Rosemary flower botanicals

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 Dye-free
 Vegan**
- No harsh salts No gluten ingredients[†]

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- * System of shampoo & conditioner vs. non-conditioning shampoo.
- **No animal-derived ingredients or byproducts. Formulas not tested on animals.

† Made in a facility that also processes gluten. ©2017 L'Oréal USA, Inc.



BEAUTYOBSESSION

away Beach saltwater spray was gone, and my hair was undeniably fried. Still on a professionally recommended hiatus from dramatic color, I'd acquired about two inches of healthy roots, which were distinguished from the dyed stuff that the experimental platinum streaks were shining through. But where the roots were looking lush, the ends were looking like, well...I started finding fragments of my hair in books, on my collar, stuck to upholstery.

There are only so many preemptive strikes a person can wage with office scissors at her desk before she starts looking all *Beetlejuice*. After catching my image in my building's elevator mirror one day, I put down the shears, took myself to Chelsea's Serge Normant at John Frieda salon, sat in the chair of Matt Fugate, and told him to please give me the Winona, circa 1994. Except I wasn't as concise as that. What I said sounded something more like, "Matt, I fucked up my hair."

I had gone into the hair-color experiment with open eyes—in fact, I'd emerged relatively unscathed. Under less expert hands, my hair would have surely fallen out. Fugate lightly massaged my

shoulders and assured me that while my hair was "compromised" (stylist-speak for "Cotton, you fucked up your hair"), nothing can't be undone. I presented him with a Pinterest board of images: Wino 4ever, Edie Campbell, and Ralph Lauren Kids models.

"I want to look like a prep-school boy who's overdue for a cut," I said, which perked him right up. We chopped off the unsalvageable ends, leaving me with a perfect homage to the '90s: an ear-length bob with mullet-ish tendencies and a kick of bangs. Styling tips? Fugate, a Kérastase consulting stylist, told me that in this case, the "texture" from the dye (again, stylist for "damage") would work in my favor and I wouldn't have to do much of anything, save make a more concerted effort to mask the fried ends and avoid heat styling, which could cause major breakage on already fragile strands.

For several glorious weeks, the cut worked its magic and my hair looked intentionally messy as I continued to abstain

TRY THIS

To avoid breakage of fine, face-

framing hair, keep

the blow-dryer a soda can's length

from daily hair care (washing only twice a week); I felt cool-

er than I had in a while. Until I hit a speed bump on the road to recovery.

The disparity between my hearty, baby-fine roots and the fried wreckage was growing greater every day, and I didn't have the real estate to chop off more. My "normal" scalp (which hairstylists define as not producing an excess of oil), which had allowed me to get away with not shampooing my parched hair for days at a time, was now getting slick-looking around the crown. And with my supertrendy but supershort chop, my old I-had-no-time-toshower tricks of camouflaging greasy roots with artfully scraped-back buns or braids was reduced to sortof-cloying butterfly clips.

I officially had combination hair—and I certainly didn't want to wait months for it to grow out to achieve uniformity. It was time to

bring out the big guns: I needed to become an expert in damage control.

The market is glutted with suites of products-trios, quartets, entire orchestras of creams and washes and salves-that promise ultimate moisture and volumizing body and frizz control. But here's the thing: Not all frizz is created equal. "There are only so many types of hair-breakage problems, says stylist Ursula Stephen. "You either have dryness or weak hair or damage from color. It's a matter of understanding your hair type and looking for the product directed toward it." Which can be tricky if you've taken your hair through the wringer, Stephen admits. "Girls who've been using relaxer on their hair or dyeing it and are now wearing it natural can have trouble figuring out their hair type-that's just patience and trial and error."

Okay, I have to *psychoanalyze* my hair now? So be it.

When I walked into Muze Salon, located in New York's hair mecca of Chelsea, owner Alexandra Matiz greeted me with a startling object in her hand—her phone. Most salons forbid cell phones on the floor (think about it: You never see a stylist text, do you?), but Matiz was about to take me through System Professional's new EnergyCode Mapping diagnostic feature, and the app was a key part of the process.

The technology is based upon restoring the lipids in the hair to make it stronger and smoother. Healthy hair has about a nine-to-one ratio of keratin to lipids, according to Matiz, so most hair care focuses on restoring and repairing keratin, which gives your tresses their strength and smoothness. But, as Matiz explained, "Lipids are the cement that holds the bricks of keratin together."

The EnergyCode Complex that System Professional has developed is made of four key ingredients: caffeine, which stimulates blood flow to the scalp; vitamin B3 amide, which helps restore moisture to the skin and aids in healthy root growth; histidine, which removes copper buildup from hair (common in communities that have the metal in their pipes) and improves luster; and lipids (oleic acid and glyceryl monooleate), which keep hair smooth.

The pièce de résistance? An in-salon microscope that diagnoses hair. System Pro-



But here's the thing: Not all frizz is created equal.



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- Paraben-free Dye-free Vegan**
- No harsh salts No gluten ingredients[†]

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- * No visible flakes with regular use.
- *No animal-derived ingredients or byproducts. Formulas not tested on animals.

 † Made in a facility that also processes gluten.

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The results are mesmerizing. During the baseline test run, it was possible to see the exact point at which the texture of my hair was changed from the dve. Toward the root, I could see where hairs were coming in healthy and strong, some even doubled up within a follicle, meaning that my hair wasn't thinning. (A follicle gunked up with styling residue, oil, or flakes of skin can become miniaturized, in which strands come in weaker and thinner than before—or not at all-because of the clog.) My ends, however, were scaled and ragged, and the shiny golden medulla-pretty much the marrow of the hair—was fragmented, reflecting breaks in the strand.

Matiz asked me 15 questions prompted by the app to ensure that we were on the same page. If I preferred less volume, for instance, that would be taken into account. "Nobody wants to change their routine dramatically," Matiz said. "We just want to make it better and more effective."

She helped guide my answers to some of the questions, checking my scalp to assess dryness and thinning (an area where people often misdiagnose themselves—clients with fine hair frequently sound the premature alarm that they're balding). The EnergyCode app tabulated my responses and delivered a prescription: a hydrating shampoo, a repairing mask, a color-saver rinse, and Liquid Hair X4L, the

hair-repair serum recommended just for me.

There are more than 174 million possible EnergyCode combinations, and the code is often influenced by geography. (For instance, a high-humidity climate or the hard water of a neighborhood might affect the hair of a whole community.) The data that the app shoots out is empirical—if your hair is presenting, say, strands coated in product residue, a flaking scalp with clogged follicles, and fried ends, the app prescribes a tailored treatment for these symptoms. I had been self-diagnosing myself in a style akin

WHAT'S YOUR DAMAGE?

Find the stylist-approved solution for your combination hair

FINE HAIR + OILY ROOTS = fine Hair + DRY SCALP =



BRITTLE HAIR + DRY ENDS =







"Make sure you're not using a volumizing shampoo," says stylist Matt Fugate. "It's basically just clarifying and stripping the scalp of oil, which will send your head into oil-producing overdrive." Between washes, rinse with water and use a conditioner on the ends, like PANTENE Pro-V Gold Series Deep Hydrating Co-Wash (1), to get moisture just where it's needed. For a one-and-done styling boost, leave-in serum L'ORÉAL PARIS EverPure 10-in-1 (2) treats and soothes scalp and hair with botanicals like Indian lilac, giving hair a

nourishing body bump

between washings.

If a dry scalp and styling residue leave hair limp, a scrub might be the fix. CHRISTOPHE ROBIN's Cleansing Purifying Scrub with Sea Salt (3) can be used as a shampooing alternative and helps even the most sensitive scalp get back to neutral with an added infusion of softening sweet almond oil. Plant-based brand HAIRPRINT's Exfoliating Hair + Scalp Wash (4) uses ground walnut shells and green coffee bean extract to exfoliate and stimulate the scalp and follicles, and donates 20 percent of profits to NoVo Foundation, a charity empowering women.

"Spend your time and energy on masks!" says Unilever stylist Ursula Stephen."If you're going to have color or relaxer, you must take care of it. Get regular trims to stop split ends, and condition." SYSTEM **PROFESSIONAL** Repair Mask (5) can be applied once a week. VIRTUE Recovery Shampoo (6) repairs damaged hair using technology discovered by a Wake Forest University research team (including an Iraq war vet and former National Guardsman) investigating rapid wound healing. The key: whole human keratin, which bonds to strands to patch gaps, resulting in healthy, smooth tresses

"Blow-dry bars rarely use heat protectors," Fugate says. "The breakage looks like frizz, but instead of a mask, you need protection from the dryer." Coat wet hair with shielding KÉRASTASE L'incroyable Blowdry (7) before styling, or comb GARNIER Fructis Damage Eraser Liquid Strength Treatment (8) through towel-dried ends to reinforce strands broken from heat. For hair that's split midstrand, Stephen says it's already too late. "Wash with an ultramoisturizing shampoo until you're comfortable cutting." SUAVE PROFESSIONALS Damage Repair Shampoo & Conditioner (9) loads up on coconut oil to refresh parched hair.

to Googling "headache" on WebMD; this was the specialist I'd been needing.

The stylist, however, still plays an integral role in the application and interpretation of the results. Matiz looked at my prescription and started me on the regimen, right there in the chair. The EnergyCode Liquid Hair serum was cold, but the massage to ensure it was getting to my roots and scalp felt great—I leaned back for 10 minutes in bliss while my head was rubbed full of reparative amino acids and caffeine.

The shampoo was salon typical (heavenly), but when it came to the repairing mask, Matiz painted on the cream only where it was needed, using a brush, as if I were getting fine highlights. She followed up with a second massage to spread the mask to the rest of the scalp (leaving it on

for a shorter time to avoid weighing down delicate strands), then the rinse. The final result was silkier hair than I'd had in ages. But the real test was vet to come—the microscope again. Going in for their follicular close-up, the formerly ravaged ends of my hair looked almost the same as the new hair in the vicinity of my roots, and my scalp was squeaky clean. Each treatment lasts up to five washings and is supplemented by a take-home shampoo and conditioner (used twice a week) that deliver smoothness similar to that post-treatment high note—a rarity, for me at least! But as with all good things, something has to be compromised. My '90s cool-kid cut is looking pretty soccer mom with my return to silkiness. Nothing, however, that a little seawater spray and artful neglect can't fix.







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HAIR LOOKS HEALTHIER AFTER THE 1ST USE'

• Intensely nourishing formula with Apricot Oil • Softness that lasts

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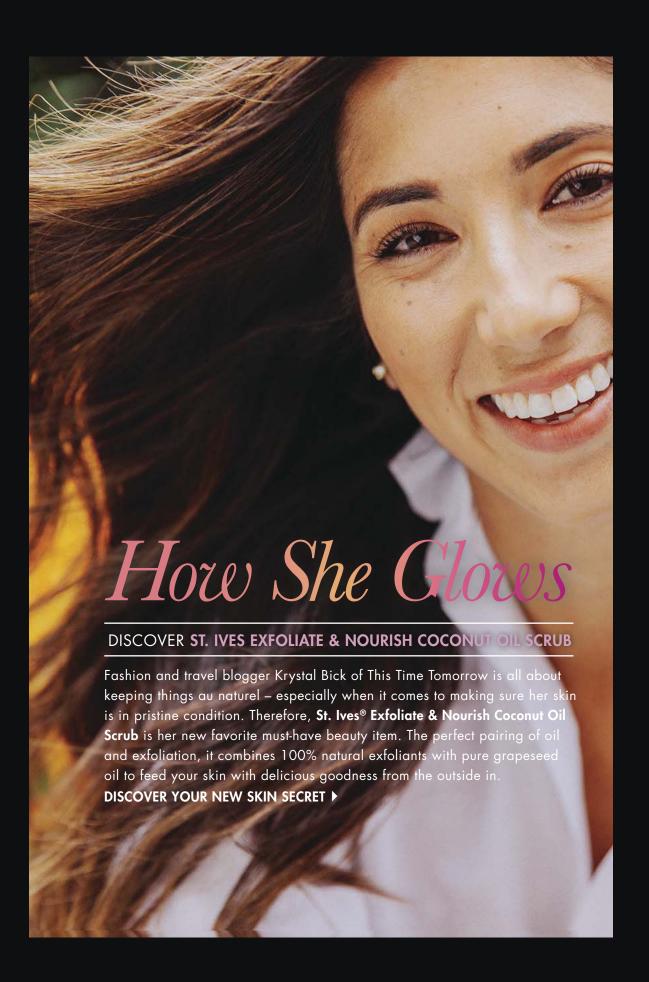
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- * System of shampoo and conditioner vs. non-conditioning shampoo.
 **No animal-derived ingredients or byproducts. Formulas not tested on animals.

† Made in a facility that also processes gluten. ©2017 L'Oréal USA, Inc.









The Inside Scoop

INTRODUCING ST. IVES EXFOLIATE & NOURISH OIL SCRUB

The first ever of its kind in the U.S. is now available in Coconut and Apricot.

The innovative formulas combine the exfoliation of a face scrub with a nourishing formula that works to lightly buffer away dead skin cells and leave your skin feeling more refreshed, renewed, and silky-soft than ever before.

Product Benefits

St. Ives® Exfoliate & Nourish Coconut Oil Scrub combines the exfoliating benefits of 100% natural exfoliants with the skin nourishing properties of pure grapeseed oil for soft, smooth, radiant skin. This particular variant is ideal for women who prefer a moderate exfoliation level.





HOW TO USE

I.
Shake & squeeze into DRY hands.

2. Massage over DRY skin.

3.

Add water to emulsify (oil will turn milky white), then rinse and glow.

*For best results, use 3-4 times a week.





Your Guide To Natural Beauty

Refresh your skin this spring with a few tips from beauty blogger Krystal Bick. Read on to see how she gets that natural glow and why St. Ives® Exfoliate & Nourish Coconut Oil Scrub is the skincare essential she can't live without.





Krystal's Skincare Regimen

- 1. Gently wash face with St. Ives Exfoliate & Nourish in Coconut and pat dry.
- 2. Apply a moisturizer with SPF to keep skin looking extra healthy.
- 3. Spritz a light hydrating mist. Let air dry before applying makeup.





- 1. Great skin is essential to any beauty look. I love St. Ives Exfoliate & Nourish because it gives me a radiant complexion.
- 2. I try to incorporate antioxidants into my diet they help blood flow to the skin and give it a beautiful glow!
- 3. I can't get enough of a great highlighter, but the trick is to use sparingly! Apply to the top of your cheekbones, the outer portion of your eyes, and the bridge of your nose.
- 4. I always find my skin looks best when I have a good workout routine. I've noticed a significant difference in the appearance of my skin post-exercise.

Visit Stlves.com to revive your skin from the outside in.















ENTER SANDMAN

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of American adults aren't logging enough z's on a regular basis. And while we should all start by powering down our circadian rhythm-disrupting devices at least 30 minutes before turning in, we can now reach for a host of new supplements and devices to help us out when counting sheep won't cut it. Olly Restful Sleep gummies (1) summon slumber with a relaxing combo of melatonin, L-theanine (the calming amino acid in green tea), and chamomile, and Perricone MD's Sleep Booster pills (2)

pack a punch of ashwagandha and velvet bean, two herbs that studies have shown to reduce stress. For those willing to strap on a high-tech headband, the soft, ear-covering Sleep Shepherd (3) emits pulsed beats at frequencies believed to lower the brain's bioelectrical signals to a sleep-friendly level, and the Fisher Wallace Stimulator headband delivers a gentle, rhythmic electrical stimulation that enhances the brain's serotonin production (this much-studied therapy has been proven to help not only insomnia but also de-

pression and anxiety).

SOOTHE MOVES

Natural ways to jitter-debug

For awards season, Londonand L.A.-based naturopathic doctor Nigma Talib, ND, takes up residence at the Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, the mecca for press junkets and the ensuing throng of celebs, where she helps calm the nerves of her clients, such as Sienna Miller and Rosie Huntington-Whiteley. Here, her advice for what to eat (and avoid) leading up to a flashbulb-heavy event.

ONE WEEK BEFORE: Avoid dairy, gluten, sugar, and alcohol. Talib says they "can feed the bad bugs in the gut," making levels of the feelgood hormone serotonin dip, which "can cause one to feel anxious."

THE MORNING OF: Add to your breakfast a 100- to 200-mg dose of rhodiola rosea, an herb used in Chinese medicine

with dual energizing and calming properties that was shown in a study overview in HerbalGram: The Journal of the American Botanical Council to decrease situational anxiety. INSTANT CHILL PILL: Minutes before hitting the red carpet, drink water mixed with magnesium powder—Talib likes Natural Calm, perhaps stowed away in a mini python Mark Cross clutch—to quiet nerves and steady heart rhythm.



Short days and cold weather can make it hard to hit the pavement, but a study published in Mental Health and Physical Activity in 2016 might be incentive enough to pile on the performance fleece. A group of subjects in Austria who'd previously been diagnosed with mild to moderate depression participated in three hourlong activities—a nature walk, cycling at the gym, and hanging out while playing board games over the course of two weeks, in July and again in October. Regardless of the season, subjects reported feeling less fatigued and experiencing a stronger improvement in mood after walking outside, compared with the indoor gym sessions and game playing.





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Shake our new two-part blend eye makeup remover and see how it effortlessly dissolves even waterproof mascara in one go – while conditioning your lashes. No harsh rubbing. No stinging. Just super-cleansed eyes and loved-up lashes. Smile. And see how good it feels.







TINY BUBBLE

In a bigger-is-better universe, a Brooklyn duo is intent on keeping their Michelin-starred restaurant (and their world) very, very small.

By Amanda FitzSimons

It's a little before midnight on a Saturday, and Elise Kornack is loading a dishwasher full of plates from the 11-course dinner she's just served at her Brooklyn restaurant, Take Root. Anna Hieronimus, Kornack's wife and the restaurant's only other employee, is in the dining area acting as a de facto coat check for the last of the evening's customers. Even though they're technically in separate rooms, the two are no more than three feet from

each other: With just 12 seats (two two-tops, one four-top, and four seats at a counter), their 750-square-foot space, tucked away on a brownstone-lined side street on the border between Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens, is impossibly tiny, even by Precious Brooklyn standards. As Hieronimus asks one of the last guests what her coat looks like, it's hard not to take in the tableau and think of just how backbreaking it is to run a restaurant, get a

business off the ground, and make a name for yourself in this world.

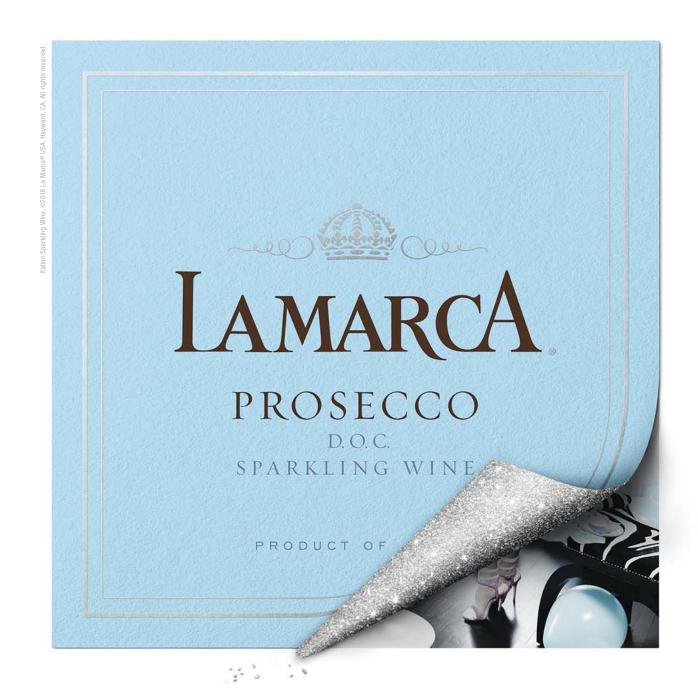
Except that Kornack and Hieronimus already got their big break. Several years ago. In 2015, after less than two years of being open, Take Root-which offers seasonal, nouveau American fare in a format reminiscent of Japanese omakase (i.e., you eat whatever they decide to feed you)-reached a level of recognition that 99 percent of restaurants never come close to. They racked up a James Beard award; received kudos from the New York Times, New York magazine, and ELLE; and, most impressive, earned a Michelin star. The ensuing customer interest prompted one critic to declare that in the foodie world, "there are two types of people in New York right now: those who have eaten at Take Root and those who are trying to eat there."

Yet the expected next beat—in which they spin off into several locations, serve as judges on *Top Chef*, publish a cookbook, and host a podcast—never sounded. Almost four years in, it's becoming clear that Kornack and Hieronimus don't want it to. They remain the restaurant's sole employees, and Take Root is open only Thursday through Saturday, for just one seating per night. (Yes, 36 customers a week.) They haven't even sprung for someone to help with the dishwashing. Which is where Take Root deviates from being the beginning of a success story and becomes a story unto itself about redefining success.

In a culture where bigger is considered better, where "Is it scalable?" is almost a meme, Take Root just might be one of the most radical restaurants on the American dining scene right now, and Hieronimus and Kornack two of its most progressive players.

"What they're doing is incredibly unique in an industry with everyone wanting to be a star or a celebrity chef," says Jori Jayne Emde, co-owner of the acclaimed Hudson Valley restaurant Fish & Game and a friend of the couple's. The conventional wisdom, she says, "is that in order to have brand recognition, you have to roll out multiple concepts. But I don't think that defines success. I think you can have one incredibly special restaurant."

When I meet Hieronimus and Kornack at Take Root one winter morning during off hours, I'm struck by how incredibly marketable they are: attractive and just 29 and 30 years old, respectively; Kornack, with her partially shaved head and trademark glasses, is exactly what central casting would want in a cool Brooklyn chef. But within seconds, it's clear they're wired differently than their peers. While most restaurateurs would be running back and forth from the kitchen





during an interview, serving up a taste of this and that, Kornack and Hieronimus offer...a glass of water. And sit, a tad formally, opposite me at their four-top.

They have the kind of sentence-finishing symbiosis you'd expect from people who spend 16 hours a day together (and sleep next to each other each night). They're also perfect foils for each other. Hieronimus, the more bubbly of the two, is suited to handling the front of house (and everything else outside of food, including the wine program); Kornack, the cerebral introvert, is more at home toiling in the kitchen by herself and prone to comments such as "If somebody's not going to eat something [I've cooked], they're an idiot." Followed by: "Anna's going to be, like, 'That wasn't nice to say.'"

The couple were introduced by a mutual friend at a bar seven years ago. (They married in 2013.) At the time, they'd both just graduated from college (Kornack from Bates College in Maine, Hieronimus from Hofstra University in New York). Kornack had taken a left turn from the fine arts she'd majored in and stints working in art galleries, and was working for April Bloomfield as a lead cook at Bloomfield's West Village gastropub, The Spotted Pig. (She'd later do a short gig as sous chef at Marcus Samuelsson's Aquavit.) Hieronimus, meanwhile, had dabbled in nonprofits and retail and had gotten her yoga-instructor certification.

It took a few years before they decided to open their own restaurant; the idea was born, in part, out of working and living on someone else's schedule. "When we were dating, Elise was getting home at 3 A.M., and I'd have to go out to meet her to see her after work," Hieronimus says. It occurred to them that there was an opening in the market for an establishment that had the theatrics, and control, of a tasting menu without the bucket-list prices or formality of, say, a Per Se. "Those experienc-

es are really special and really fun, but there's this moment of 'Do I feel out of place here?' You look around at the really rich European diners who are dropping, like, \$500 to \$1,000 on a bottle," Kornack says. "We wanted to create something

where people who really wanted to eat good, progressive, creative food could—but they could wear jeans." She set out to de-



From top: Kornack in her kitchen at Take Root; caramelized white chocolate parfait with quince pudding, crispy buckwheat, and cranberry espuma; asparagus with scallop mousseline, scallop roe vinaigrette, and chrysanthemum oil



"The words *always* and *never* are such polarizing words," Kornack says. "The customer is *often* right."

sign a menu, currently at a relatively reasonable \$125 per plate, that, as she puts it, "rides the line between comfort and intrigue." She'll follow a course of fresh-from-the-oven brioche "that's like a hug" with the German root vegetable kohlrabi, which "75 percent of customers have never even heard of."

They were right; there was a market. They get offers—almost every day—for potential investors, cookbook deals, second locations, and "every single food show there is," Hieronimus says. "They always ask to speak to me. They're like, 'Can we convince your wife? Maybe if you tell her it's a good idea, she'll do it.'" Needless to say, they're not interested. "What we've created is this very special, intimate dining experience," she adds. "I think to expand it in any way would change the en-

tire essence of what we've built."

"There's literally no restaurant, not in this city, not in this country, not in the world, where the owner is doing [all the things we do] at the level we're at reputation-wise, I can almost guarantee you," Kornack says. "So in the morning I'm covered in trash water [because] my trash bag is breaking, and then I'm, like, cleaning the floor.

Then I'm also tasting and creating a Michelin-star tasting menu. Anna is watering the plants, sweeping the floor, scraping up some butter that fell down, and

then *also* creating this amazing wine list. For us, Take Root is this space where we can shut everything else out."

They're particularly proud that they have no investors. "A number of chefs I'm friendly with have said investors have been a detriment creatively," Kornack says. "They'll say, 'Oh, you won this award; we need to expand now,' and [the chef] will get stuck doing it because they've signed a contract, and then they're like, 'Creatively, I wasn't ready to do that.' Sometimes that can compromise both the flagship and the expansion."

Take Root is singular not only for its scale. It's also one of fewer than 15 woman-helmed American restaurants to earn a Michelin star, and part of a handful of woman-run elite restaurants to offer a tasting menu (others include Atelier Crenn in San Francisco and Elizabeth in Chicago). "Women are traditionally seen as nurturers; we feel pressure to be accommodating," says Kerry Diamond, cofounder of cult food magazine *Cherry Bombe*. "It takes a lot of confidence to say, 'No, you're going to eat what I make.'"

Their venture isn't just redefining the idea of what it means to be successful; it's also pushing the boundaries of what a restaurant can be in the process. When I dine there on a recent Saturday night, I'm struck by how much it blurs the line between dinner party and restaurant. Hieronimus is playing songs from her iPhone (an eclectic mix that includes Patsy Cline and an unplugged Ed Sheeran cov-

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MAKE EVERYDAY SPARKLE™







Most of us make our way through the world without thinking a lot about what we bring to our encounters with it. **Lisa Feldman Barrett** does—and what she has to say about our perceptions and emotions is pretty mind-blowing. **By Ben Dickinson**

Over the past couple of decades, with little fanfare, psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett has built up one of the world's largest research facilities in her field—Boston's Interdisciplinary Affective Science Laboratory, which she codirects with psychobiologist Karen Quigley. It occupies quarters at both Northeastern University and Massachusetts General Hospital, has an operating bud-

get of several million dollars per year, and employs around 20 full-time researchers. In other words, Barrett is a big brain in the study of the bigness of our brains.

Now, in her first nonacademic book, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), out this month—which has garnered praise from eminent psychologists such as Daniel Gilbert,

Barbara Fredrickson, and Paul Bloom—Barrett makes clear that she sees her lab's work, which ranges from computational neuroscience to anthropology, as a scientific revolution in the making.

What's revolutionary is a new view of how our brains actually work, which Barrett calls the theory of constructed emotion. Most "challenging," as she puts it, is "the idea that people are more in control of their experience than they realize, because we don't feel like we're in control at all. We don't feel like we're the architects of our own experience."

Barrett, a psychology professor at Northeastern who also holds an appointment in psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, begins making her case by critiquing what she calls the "classical view" of the brain and emotions. Since at least the time of Plato, emotions have been viewed as reflexive responses that we struggle to govern via our capacity to reason. Charles Darwin, in The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, translated the classical view into what has become a pillar of modern psychology: that people emote in biologically rooted, universally recognizable ways. Giants of the field, such as University of California professor emeritus Paul Ekman, have built their careers around connecting basic emotionsfear, anger, surprise, disgust, joy-to facial expressions.

Experimental psychology tends to make us think of the experience of perception as similar to that of reactive lab rats. Barrett sees the brain as more like a self-driving car sporting a massive onboard computer. Our brains contain north of 85 billion neurons, each wired to some 10,000 other neurons in various parts of the brain—which means we have hundreds of trillions of synapses, any number of which are firing at any given moment. "What we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell," she writes, "are all simulations of the world, not reactions to it." Our brains are constantly running an internal simulation of our immediate environment and parallel-processing the possibilities of what might happen next. "You don't walk around," she points out, "being surprised all the time."

She recounts an amusing example of simulation at work. Her daughter once threw a "gross foods" party: "We used mashed baby food—peaches, spinach, beef, and so on—and artfully smeared it on diapers. Even though the guests knew that the smears were food, several actually gagged."

The other deeply counterintuitive insight in Barrett's perspective stems from our preju-

dice that, to quote The Police (and millennia of religious philosophy), "We are spirits in the material world." Not true: We are also hugely complex pieces of meat, with hormones, an immune system, an electrolytic equilibrium, and an autonomic nervous system silently running all the biological processes that function without our having to pay the slightest bit of attention to them. Guess what? The brain has to deal with all that internal noise, too, and run an ongoing simulation and predictive system as well. That's called interoception. Barrett writes: "Interoception is your brain's representation of all sensations from your internal organs and tissues, the hormones in your blood, and your immune system." Elsewhere, she adds, "You might think that in everyday life, the things you see and hear influence what you feel, but it's mostly the other way around: that what you feel alters your sight and hearing. Interoception is more influential to perception, and how you act, than the outside world is."

This helps explain why eyewitness testimony at trial, which has come under increasing suspicion as DNA and other scientific evidence has evolved to contradict it, can be unreliable. A witness who testifies that he saw a gun in the hand of the accused when there was, in fact, no weapon may be speaking entirely truthfully. The deception may not be in the testimony but rather in the eye of the beholder.

"Basically," Barrett sums up, "your brain is processing internal and external sensations all the time, and it's making meaning out of them. That's what an emotion is."

A brunette with a disarmingly reasonable manner that belies her unabashedly ambitious claims, Barrett, 53, admires Ekman's "face" work but thinks it has promoted a reductive belief that emotions are merely biological responses triggered by external events. "I think he discovered something really important," Barrett says. "It's just not what he thinks he discovered." She thinks he has created a rich empirical typology of facial expressions linked to a whole palette of fairly universal human psychological experiences (think emojis). But, in fact, people often smile when they're frightened and even laugh in anger, amazed at some scoundrel's sheer gall. To believe these phenomena reflect biological mechanisms, Barrett says, is to misunderstand the complexity of what's going on in our noggins.

She says women in particular are stigmatized by the notion that emotions are rooted in biology, because women are routinely, and negatively, thought of as "too emotion-

"You might think the things you see and hear influence the way you feel, but it's mostly the other way around."

al" in contrast to men. While work at her lab shows no physical differences in how men's and women's brains experience emotions, when subjects were shown pictures of a man and a woman who appear to be unhappy, they typically concluded that the woman was bringing her emotions into the situation, while the man was merely responding to his circumstances.

Psychology was, for a long time, built around experiments presenting human subjects with stimuli under rigorously controlled conditions and registering their responses. But the arrival of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in the 1990s enabled Barrett and her colleagues to study brain images taken before, during, and after stimuli are introduced. What they've seen has fostered a strikingly new understanding of how we generate emotions and perceptions.

It turns out that, in the words of Lucy L. Brown, an esteemed neuroscientist at New York City's Albert Einstein College of Medicine, "There are no centers for things in the brain"—or, more to the point, as Barrett puts it, no "brain blobs" of neurons or neural circuits that we can identify with the activation of specific emotions. We know this because the imaging data from fMRI technology is incontrovertible: Disparate parts of the entire brain are activated at any given moment; there are no definitive "fingerprints" that light up in relation to any emotional—or any other—experience. (Neuroscientists have a wonderful term-degeneracy-for the fact that different neural networks can be activated in essentially similar mental events.)

What do others make of Barrett's ideas? Paul Ekman is understandably cranky about Barrett's critique of his research on facial expressions of emotion: "Ask people who travel," he says sarcastically. "Do they need Berlitz phrase books to understand the expressions on the faces they encounter?"

But another eminent scholar, Tufts philosophy professor Daniel Dennett, who is famous for, among many other things, devising experiments capturing errors and prejudices of perception-shortcomings of simulation, to adopt Barrett's term-enthusiastically endorses her theory. "There's no place in the center or at the top of the brain," he says, "where it all comes together for consciousness—where evaluation happens, decisions are made, experiences are enjoyed, or free-will intentions are framed. This idea of a sort of inner sanctum or a headquarters within the head is wrong. It's one thing to say it's wrong and to trot out the reasons why, which I've tried to do. But it's another thing to ask, well, what's right? How do you get all the work of the homunculus done by lesser entities within the brain?" He says that while various theories about the mind have been floated over the decades, Barrett "has got some good ideas about how to proceed" in showing how we're "bottom-up self-organizers."

One more important concept that Barrett proposes is the idea of improving our "emotional granularity": If we're constantly synthesizing new emotional experiences instead of obeying atavistic circuitry in our heads, then our ability to understand them is crucial to our well-being. It's important to develop the language to explain our feelings to ourselves and others. Barrett says therapists are excited by what this notion means for talk therapy. All of us are, at one time or another, left feeling utterly gutted and helpless by loss, betrayal, crushed hopes; her theory of constructed emotion points us toward understanding that the sooner we comprehend and verbalize to ourselves and others the meaning, dimensions, and consequences of our loss, the sooner we'll be able to pick ourselves up off the floor and formulate useful and compensatory responses to it. Your trillions of synapses are ever at your disposal to aid you in leading yourself out of emotional despondency—it's up to you to use them to conceptualize and construct a way forward. After all, there's no "sadness" circuit imprisoning you in any biologically deterministic way. The neuroscience offers this validation of therapy: Our ability to express ourselves more clearly and articulately about our experience is itself therapeutic.

"A lot of people are hurt by cultural practices that are informed by a theory of emotion that is not as scientifically defensible as we believe it to be. And in the end," Barrett says, "that's the thing that got me to write the book."

JUNK ART

Though male artists have been painting the female nude for millennia, when female artists have dared to make explicit pictures of men, they've been criticized or ignored. Now artists like painter **Nicole Wittenberg** are challenging the status quo—to stirring and gorgeous effect. **By John H. Richardson**

A dude walks into a feminist art show-bada-bum. Yes, that is a fully contained joke. The punch line is taking in a show called The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look at Men (at the Cheim & Read gallery in New York City) and finding yourself confronted by mirror images of the reductive crap men have been throwing at women for centuries. Behind the desk, there's an image of a beach hunk in a smileyface T-shirt, followed by a Diane Arbus photograph of a "male primitive" with tattoos all over his face. The worst is a yellow carcass by Louise Bourgeois that looks like a cross between a melting penis and, as one critic put it, a "smooshed-up kebab" on a carving post. Cindy Sherman offers, instead of her romantic self-portraits celebrating the infinite play of female mutability, a muscle-bound plastic man-doll covered with hair. None of this makes me feel very good as a man. Which, of course, may be the point—bada-bum!

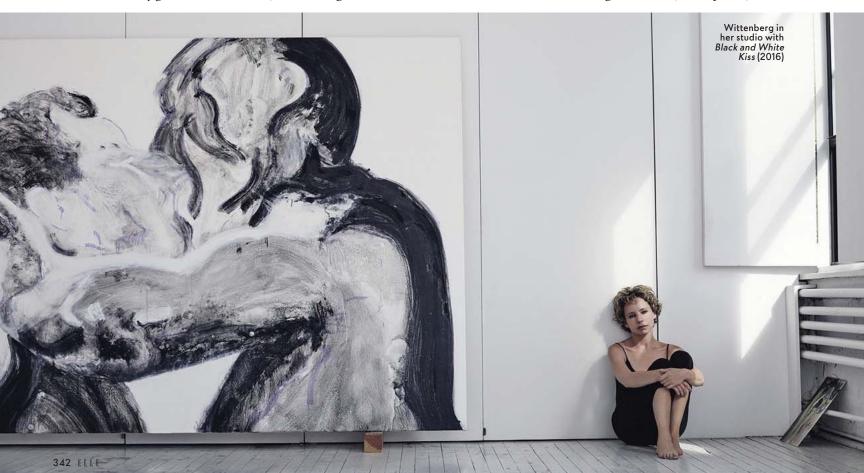
There are a few positive images. Betty Tompkins is represented by one of her blurry sex close-ups, at once romantic and clinical. Grace Graupe-Pillard supplies a lovely realist portrait of a young artist staring into his cell phone. The great Alice Neel has a painting of a blue-jeaned hippie, probably because the gallery couldn't get her brilliant portrait of the fantasist Joe Gould with three penises—even I find that one funny.

And then I see it: a giant erection lovingly encased in a fist and painted in luscious expressionist sweeps of red and white paint. It's heroic, monumental, gorgeous. There are no other colors, just black and white turned red and white by minimalism and lust, which suddenly seem like a perfect match. *Red Handed*, *Again* was the title.

So begins my introduction to Nicole Wittenberg. I track her down on the Internet and

learn that she first came to public attention when she was just 24—and still a student at the San Francisco Art Institute—for paintings about suffering from scoliosis as a teenager. "I needed to know what was wrong with me," she explained at the time. Here's how a critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle* described the result: "The young girl in the painting, naked, slim and pale, has ripped her body open to examine her organs. The image is immediately shocking but also strangely beautiful."

Her subsequent rise came fast—in 2012, the American Academy of Arts and Letters gave her its best young figurative painter award, praising her "unusual imagery and freshness." The Guggenheim bought one of her architectural-interior paintings, which evoke small, spare stages, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acquired her stylized black-and-white portrait of a young woman called Ann. She's been featured in group shows curated by artists such as the prominent figurative painter Alex Katz and 1980s art superstar David Salle, known for his own use of sexual imagery in jumbled canvases that loot art history and contemporary life to celebrate information overload. "She's a rare bird," Salle says when I call to ask about Wittenberg. He praises her commitment to reinventing realism-or, as he puts it, "How



do you describe a form? Traditionally, you do it by accentuating the lights and darks, which Nicole does in a kind of brutal way." And he's impressed with her decision to portray sexually aroused men, a subject that is "actually underrepresented in Western painting in any century," he says. "People think everything's been done, but that's not true." Wittenberg, Salle goes on, "dares herself to do precisely that which scares her."

I find Wittenberg's e-mail address and write her. From the beginning, she's surprisingly personal and chatty: "What's wrong with oversharing??! Isn't that a big part of being alive? I'm so annoyed by how much New York emulates Europe with all these stiff classist social conventions." Occasionally, she mentions inviting me to her studio—but every time I try to set a date, she disappears.

Truth is, I have the fantasy of buying *Red Handed*, *Again* and have been trying to get her to state a price. But she keeps dodging the question. Finally, she hints at the reason: "I must mention, a dick painting may be the most impossible thing to sell, ever."

That surprises me. Isn't modern art supposed to be scandalous? What about the shocks of surrealism and cubism? The outraged crowds at the famous Salon des Refusés show of 1863?

Not when it comes to men, she replies. You can paint all the odalisques-reclining-on-a-couch you want, but the movie rule applies: no "pickle."

Despite the frankness of our exchange, the promised studio visit keeps not happening. I wonder if all the sex talk makes it more unlikely. Isn't that why we cordon off sex, to contain its disruptive power?

Finally, almost as an afterthought, I mention that my wife, Kathy, also paints male nudes, including one with an erection.

Wittenberg writes back in seconds: "Your wife paints dick pics!!??!!!"

I send her the proof. "I love it!" she responds.

Two days later, Kathy and I step off an elevator into Wittenberg's loft. It's a set decorator's dream of an artist's studio: the walls

painted Platonic White, a hammock hanging between two I beams, the neon tumble of Chinatown six stories below. A miniature parrot flies around, occasionally coming to rest, like inspiration, on the artist's shoulder.

We're barely inside when Wittenberg starts peppering Kathy with questions about her own work, curious what inspired the portrait I'd e-mailed, a frontal shot of a naked and obviously lustful young man.

As they talk, I get a chance to observe. At 38, Wittenberg is gorgeous in a low-key way you could pass on the street and only register a few steps later: wide-spaced eyes, full lips, hair chopped short as if she'd cut it herself in a mirror. No surprise that she's modeled for other artists. In manner, she's both intense and California casual, a mixture of her childhood in Marin County (where her father was a lawyer, her mother an interior designer and teacher) and her spiritual home in downtown New York.

These days, Wittenberg says, she finds sources for many of her paintings on Internet sex sites. Although she didn't start painting sexual imagery until 2014, she says she started looking at porn around the same time that she decided she wanted to make art: "I was a virgin when I started watching that stuff. I was like, 'Oh! That's attractive.' Even then, at 13, 14, I already was really interested in the Renaissance artists, particularly Venetian painters like Veronese, Tintoretto, and Titian. They were making a lot of paintings of beautiful women, like a prostitute with gold coins falling on her. Women were shown in this very beautiful, very sexualized way that I thought was mysterious and fabulous."

At the time, Wittenberg was wearing a back brace for her scoliosis. She'd had two major spinal surgeries over a six-year period,

"It doesn't go in the kids' room. It doesn't go in the living room. When you have an aggressive subject matter, it doesn't know its place."



The Countess Zapak (2016)

with long recoveries where she got to gaze out the window and dream. After art school, she spent a year in Italy making sculptures in glass and copying classical paintings, then moved to New York and landed a job staging shows for installation artist Anthony McCall. Working with projectors and moving lights stoked her interest in the function of space and light, ideas she explores in her interior paintings. But her desire to capture a modern sense of urgency prompted her to paint portraits based on images from long-distance Skype conversations with a friend in England.

Then, while diverting herself with the gay site ManHub during a bout of pneumonia, she found herself contemplating sex as a subject. Setting the video to slo-mo, she began drawing the moving images as they crawled across the frame. As it happened, many of the moving images on ManHub were ManSpokes.

This is where I should say something about the film critic Laura Mulvey and her theory about the "male gaze"—that the movie camera itself plays the role of voyeuristic male, implicating all viewers in the act of objectifying women and the world. That's what most of the critics who saw The Female Gaze did. The Daily Beast called it "the best kind of payback," and the New Yorker invoked Freud's idea of schaulust: "the pleasure, always libidinal and sometimes pathological, of looking at someone else." Some huffy webzine scholar even went double jujitsu: Despite the "potential to open up areas of theorizing about how we look at each other as gendered beings," the show failed because it reduced men to "the sign of a phallus," he sniffed. "There are other ways of looking at a woman or a man that do not

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THE PHILOSOPHER QUEEN

For more than two decades, **Rebecca Solnit** has been a favorite of the literati: penning exquisite essays that move between the political and the personal, the intellectual and the earthy. Then came "mansplaining." With her twentieth book due this month, Solnit talks to **Keziah Weir** about life before and after she became a meme

It's a cool October evening, and writer Rebecca Solnit is onstage at Columbia University's Miller Theatre telling a story. She was 19, she says, strolling San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, when she realized she was being followed by "a well-dressed white man murmuring a long string of vile sexual proposals to me." This is a familiar scenario to tonight's mostly female audience; we wait for the punch line: "When I turned around and told him to fuck off, he told me I had no right to speak to him like that." We laugh. But: "It's sort of not funny, because then he threatened to kill me."

Solnit—maximal feminist, ardent climate activist—is a master of exposing the malevolent underbelly of everyday situations. "Telling startling and transgressive truths is funny," she writes in "The Short Happy Recent History of the Rape Joke," an es-

say in her twentieth book, *The Mother of All Questions* (Haymarket). "Or at least we laugh when we hear them, out of surprise or discomfort or recognition." The 11 galvanizing essays in her latest collection include Solnit's choice not to be a mother; a portrait of an American family whose son, Christopher Michael-Martinez, was killed in a 2014 murder spree in Isla Vista, California; and a rigorous study of the ways in which sexism silences both men and women. "This is about everybody," Solnit says of *Mother*. "All of us live in a culture that is attempting to limit the range of our humanity, and so we're all in this liberation struggle."

To call Solnit prolific doesn't capture the depth or magnitude of her work—when her good friend Sam Green, the Oscarnominated documentarian behind 2002's *The Weather Underground*, sees her, he likes

to joke, "Hey, Rebecca, did you publish a book today?" Sometimes, he says, the answer is ves. While she studied art history at San Francisco State University and journalism at UC Berkeley, she's a polymath who's taken on a staggering variety of subjects: from a little-known 1950s West Coast avantgarde art movement (Secret Exhibition: Six California Artists of the Cold War Era, 1990), to Irish history and culture (A Book of Migrations, 1997), to the neighborly altruism that arises in the wake of disasters like 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina (A Paradise Built in Hell, 2010), to her mother's experience with Alzheimer's intercut with a trip Solnit took to Iceland (The Faraway Nearby, 2013).

Solnit's writing is discursive in the way of a Bach organ fugue—each seeming tangent resonates thematically, layering in meaning and feeling to gloriously virtuosic effect. It can be astounding to realize that in just two pages she's woven together a Tang Dynasty artist, a Road Runner cartoon, a mythological creator deity, and her mother's complicated emotional state (The Faraway Nearby)—and that you feel moved, intellectually provoked, and elevated all at once. "He painted a hundred-foot scroll that replicated all his travels in one continuous flow," she writes of that Tang Dynasty artist, Wu Daozi. "He made all his paintings boldly and without hesitation, painting like a whirlwind, so that people loved to watch the world emerge from under his brush." She might as well be describing her own writing.

Yet for a long time, Solnit remained more or less under the pop-cultural radar. Yes, her books were reverently reviewed (Faraway was called a "gorgeously written and insightful book" by Publishers Weekly; Kirkus deemed Migrations "truly exceptional, a paradise for readers of travel literature"), and yes, New York Times reviewer Dwight Garner heaped praise on her in 2009, calling her "the kind of rugged, off-road public intellectual America doesn't produce often enough." But he also labeled her a "West Coast" social critic, a ghettoizing dismissal that her friend Green thinks may have kept her out of the mainstream even as her work was passed around among second-wave feminists, environmentalists, and native San Franciscans as almost a delicious secret. "It's interesting to wonder: If she were a New York writer," Green muses, "would she be Susan Sontag by now?"

She's getting closer. It was in 2014 that Solnit blew up, as it were, with the publication of *Men Explain Things to Me*. The title essay inspired the term *mansplaining*, now



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so ubiquitous it's splashed across T-shirts (behind the universal symbol for "no"). The book has sold more than 100,000 copies, with Lena Dunham pronouncing it "the most clarifying, soothing, and socially aware document I've read on [being a woman] this year."

As Dunham's populist stamp of approval suggests, Men Explain Things earned the now 55-year-old Solnit an enthusiastic new fan base among young women. At a New York Public Library panel in October to discuss the author's work, a woman sitting next to me, wearing a long black dress slit thighhigh, paired with white Nikes, mentions that she's celebrating her thirty-second birthday. "Oh my God," she says breathlessly. "I cannot wait for Rebecca Solnit." Emily Gould—the writer and former Gawker blogger who now runs Emily Books, a website dedicated to "weird books by women"—says Solnit is a favorite of twenty- and thirtysomething feminists. That's in part because she staunchly avoids chastising "the youth," unlike some establishment feminists who, Gould says, "want you to know upfront that they fought and suffered for things you take for granted. That can get in the way of people who should have everything in common understanding each other, or working toward the common cause.'

The title essay of Men Explain Things is based on an encounter Solnit had with an older man at his Aspen house party in 2003; he expounds at great length to her about a recent biography of Eadweard Muybridge, the pioneering stop-motion photographer famous for his image series of a horse galloping-talking over her friend's efforts to tell him that Solnit herself had written the book. "I like incidents of that sort," Solnit writes, "when forces that are usually so sneaky and hard to point out slither out of the grass and are as obvious as, say, an anaconda that's eaten a cow." Peggy Orenstein, the author of last year's best-seller Girls & Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape, likens the essay's reception to the feminist "click moments" of the 1970s, when "something you knew deep in your bones that nobody had ever quite articulated zapped into focus."

I can relate. Raised on the girl-power feminism of the '90s—Spice Girls, *The Vagina Monologues*, Hermione Granger, *Daria*—my friends and I didn't think we needed feminism. We thought the battle for women's rights had already been won. Besides, feminism carried uncomfortable anti-man connotations, amplified by "empowered" female pop-culture icons from



"Why am I not speaking directly to the hopes and fears of this very moment?"

Katy Perry to Madonna, who denounced the term as exclusionary. "I'm not a feminist, I'm a humanist" was a popular refrain. But then, in Men Explain Things, I read about Solnit, six or seven or nine books into her career and still having her own thoughts explained back to her by men. In the same collection, I read her trenchant take on FBI whistle-blower Coleen Rowley, who issued pre-9/11 warnings about Al Qaeda and was ignored by her mostly male colleagues. I read about how an unnamed American university responded to campus rapes by telling young women to stay inside after dark. I started to wonder: Why do I gravitate toward books by male authors? Why hasn't it bothered me that my academic mentors were exclusively men? Why do I feel competitive with my female classmates (and, later, colleagues) but not male? Without being conscious of it, I'd put the men in a different, more exalted category; my definition of "winning" essentially meant taking home the silver, or the bronze. The guys would land three out of four of the top jobs, and they'd dominate the conversationwhether on literature or abortion, whether at parties or in the serious matte pages of the New Yorker. Click.

I meet Solnit for the first time at the 34th Street entrance to the Manhattan High Line—the park built on an abandoned elevated freight-rail line that stretches along the city's West Side—soon after her early October arrival in New York as Columbia University's "visiting artist and thinker." The monthlong residency coincided with the release of yet another book, Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas, the final installment in a series that unearths the lesser-told stories of three major American cities (the other two are New Orleans and her hometown of San Francisco) through artists' renderings of maps and thematically diverse essays by herself and others. The New York iteration, coedited by Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, includes one map that marks the locations and costs of Manhattan's private SAT tutoring centers and schools, alongside public parks and libraries (which are, of course, free), and another that reimagines the subway system with every stop named for an impressive woman-Joan Didion, Alicia Keys, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. "Almost every city is full of men's names, names that are markers of who wielded power, who made history, who held fortunes," Solnit writes. The implicit question: What if we lived in a city that celebrated us?

It was Solnit who suggested that we simply walk from one point to another for our interviews, a welcome but unsurprising choice from such a passionate map lover—and the woman who wrote, in Wanderlust: A History of Walking, "I suspect that the mind, like the feet, works at about three miles an hour." She arrives wearing a black leather cowboy hat, dark boot-cut jeans, and the kind of unfussy, utilitarian sneakers that were an outdoorsy northern California staple long before normcore showed up in East Coast closets. Hers are navy. She keeps her pale blue eyes trained at a middle distance as we walk, except when she occasionally beams them at me or down at the recorder, as though she's just remembered it's there. At one point she'll note, with some satisfaction, that her bright blond hair, which her jealous brunette mother used to call "unfair" while acidly assuring her it would soon darken, is "on its way to turning white without having gone all brown."

Over the many hours (and miles) we spend together, I get used to Solnit's frequent interjections about the scenery that off-board us from one train of thought to another. On the High Line, she stops to peer at a cluster of insects on a handrail that we guess is an entomological orgy (Google later informs me

"The fear of violence limits most women in ways they've gotten so used to they hardly notice."

that it was merely dinnertime for some milkweed bugs). On our last walk, as I'm waiting to meet her in Riverside Park, I spot her taking a photo of the Eleanor Roosevelt monument, her face an expression of pure delight. (According to Nonstop Metropolis, only five of some 150 statues in New York's five boroughs depict real, named women.)

The success of Men Explain Things changed important aspects of Solnit's life. Soon after its release, she became the first female Easy Chair columnist at Harper's magazine since its inception in 1851. Even Beyoncé has given her a shout-out, posting an excerpt from Solnit's deeply personal 2005 investigation of desire and memory, A Field Guide to Getting Lost, which many believe sparked Blue Ivy's name: "The world is blue at its edges and in its depths...the light that gets lost gives us the beauty of the world, so much of which is the color blue."

The best part of her broader acclaim, Solnit says, is that it affords her more time to write. "I'm really lucky now with foreign sales and bigger book sales. I don't have

to do as much teaching and speaking as I had been." And the book that followed Men Explain Things was quintessential old-school Solnit: The Encyclopedia of Trouble and Spaciousness, a sprawling, 300-pluspage collection of essays about everything from cannibalistic Arctic polar bears to atomic explosions in Japan.

Through her writing, Solnit has built a varied network of friends and allies. On her New York trip, she's staying in the empty apartment of installation artist Ann Hamilton, and she has coffee with Emma Sulkowicz, the Columbia University student who carried a mattress with her for a year to protest the school's handling of her alleged rape. "Growing up around queer culture in San Francisco, there's a strong sense of 'Make your own family," Solnit says, "that your well-being depends on many relationships." Though Solnit says she isn't opposed to marriage, she's never done it, in part because she just doesn't

believe in "that pioneer pair-bonding thing where all you need is your husband or wife. It's like a structure built on one pillar, and that pillar can be knocked down."

Nevertheless, Solnit has had several longterm romances and, accordingly, breakups. "You go through one or two or seventeen of those tragedies in your teens and twenties, and then you're like, 'Oh, I'm going to suffer unbearably for a month and feel blue for another three months, then I'm going to be fragile, and then I'm going to be fine." At the moment, she's in an "excellent" relationship, she says. While she once did most of her writing alone at her kitchen table, these days she sometimes writes at her boyfriend's house, too.

As for having children, I dared to ask her the kid question, even though The Mother of All Questions begins with an anecdote about giving a lecture on Virginia Woolf and having the audience engage almost exclusively on whether or not the author should have procreated: "What I should have said to that crowd was that our interrogation of Woolf's

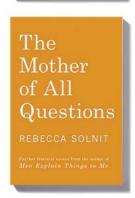
> reproductive status was a soporific and pointless detour from the magnificent questions her work poses," Solnit writes. "After all, many people make babies; only one made To the Lighthouse and Three Guineas, and we were discussing Woolf because of the latter." Now, Solnit says she "might have [had children] under ideal circumstances, but I was around a lot of guys who would have made me a single mother, at best."

Solnit describes her younger self as "a weird, rejected, battered kid." Growing up in a middle-class suburb of San Francisco, she was the sole daughter in a "superviolent, misogynistic" family of four children, she says. Her father, Al, was a county planner with a scathing temper: "One summer evening when I was about nine," she writes in A Field Guide, "my father came home late and found a forgotten glass of chocolate milk gone sour on the kitchen counter.

Waste enraged him, and since I was the principal drinker of chocolate milk, he rushed into my room, flicked the light on, and dashed it in my face as I slept." As for her mother, based on the labyrinthine portrait Solnit sketches of her in The Faraway Nearby, she'd married the wrong manand given birth to the wrong daughter, a girl whom she thoroughly resented because of her striking resemblance to her mother's younger, prettier sister. Solnit says that she spent much of her youth trying to escape her family; as an adolescent, she attended a Buddhist silent retreat with one of her brother's friends, a 19-year-old gay man she deems "the first really kind male figure in my life." While, for most teenagers, 14 days without speaking would classify as a Herculean achievement, "I'd been silent for 14 years," Solnit says evenly, "so two more weeks didn't really make a difference."

Solnit took the GED at 15 and enrolled the following year at the local College of Marin, where she happened upon a pamphlet about study-abroad programs—which offered her a way to extricate herself from both her family and a "creepy older boyfriend." She landed on Paris, in part because she'd become entranced by Romanesque art, but also because she was toying with becoming a model: She was tall and skinny, and thanks to her mother's job at a talent agency, she'd appeared as an extra in several movies (the best known of which was the Invasion of the Body Snatchers). At age 17, armed with a year of basic French, cash she'd saved from a job at a used-book store, and a semester's worth of tuition that comprised her college fund, Solnit enrolled at the American University in Paris. After a few shoots with small-time photographers, she abandoned the modeling plan: "The men in my family did a lot of body shaming, with my father the leader of the pack. It would've been difficult to be judged constantly." Her love of art stuck, however.

When-after a year and a half of fulltime, scholarship-funded study-she returned to California, Solnit transferred to San Francisco State and soon moved into the studio apartment she'd rent for the next quarter century. After graduating in 1981, she enrolled in the journalism master's program at Berkeley while also working at MoMA San Francisco for the then-high wage of \$7 an hour.



Solnit's recent books Nonstop Metropolis and The Mother of All Questions

Continued on page 454

ASK E. JEAN

What to do with a man who breaks up and gets back together with you, over and over? Easy! Defending against an office enemy... well, that's a bit thornier

GETTING-BACK-TOGETHER

MATRIX

DUMP HIM

Intelligent

CALL HIM

© LIFE AND LOVE WITH A BREAKUP ARTIST

DEAR E. JEAN: If I were Adele, all my songs would be about this guy. He's a complex character, a neurosurgeon, wickedly funny and intelligent. After eight months of us being crazy for each other, he broke up with me. I resolved to find someone better, online-dated, met okay men who all seemed to be fighting with their exes, rejected them all, and fell back in with the man who broke up with me. It was a wonderful couple of months, and then he broke up with me again for someone else. I missed him desperately. Two weeks later, he came back to me. It was romantic and fun and lasted another

six months until he broke up with me yet again. That was 10 days ago.

He says he would marry me if a second marriage were in the cards for him. I've already accumulated one ex-husband, but if this fellow were game, I'd try it again. I adore him. He admires me and agrees we have great fun together; we're never short of interesting things to debate. But he's not certain he can com-

mit. I have a wonderful life—children, career, many friends—but I miss him! I'm writing you now because he sent a text yesterday saying to call him and signaling he wants to get back together.

Should I?

PS: Last night I agreed to meet a Tinder guy at a bookstore. I saw him before he saw me, and I basically ran out of the store. I couldn't bear to reject him to his face! I wanted to go home to my kids.

I'm busy. I'm picky. I'm looking for nothing less than the magic I had (albeit temporarily) with my ex. I just don't know why I'm holding on to it so tight and why I don't want to let go.

-Back-and-Forth

Brace Yourself, Forth, Old Girl: A hideous choice is before you. From this moment on, you will be detested by one segment of society: Spiritual leaders, self-help-book floggers, and members of the Advice Columnists' Yacht and Garden Club will never speak to you again if you do call Dr. Neurosurgeon, and I will never speak to you again if you don't.

If the man were a cad, a drunk, a bore, a fool...if he hit you, disrespected you, tried to control you, I'd say: "Get him gone!" And tell you how to do it. But he seems a good egg, or, as you say, "complex, wickedly funny, and intelligent." So call him.

Now, your Auntie Eeee knows this goes

against every syllable of advice from the Miss Lonelyhearts Advisory and Corset Committee. They're forever telling women after a couple of breakups with a chap to "Never go back!" and "Stay strong" (as I myself have advised many times in this column)...as if women are too feeble and oversexed to make the right decisions.

I looked you up. You're about as *unfeeble* as a gorgeous, cul-

tivated, brainy woman can be. So you *know* your affair is romantic, painful, marvelous, and sexy *because* it's so uncertain, right? Enjoy him!

-Ravishing Regards, E. Jean

DEAR E. JEAN: Thank you. I like this idea a lot. But I still haven't called. If he doesn't answer, I'll spend the evening being killed by jealousy, thinking he's sleeping with someone else. Getting back together has its advantages. Seriously, moments that dreams are made of! But is all the anguish worth it?

-Back-and-Forth

Forth, Darling! But you're having more an-



guish *anticipating* "anguish" than feeling actual anguish. It's hard to know anything for sure, so let's spell this out:

If you decide the pain of reveling and laughing and quarreling and flying back to each other and possibly breaking up (again) is greater than the pain of missing him "desperately," "being killed by jealousy," and running away from poor fellows in bookstores—don't call him.

(Though it's famously difficult to guess how much pain you'll encounter, because we're all so ridiculously *loaded* with psychological defenses.)

If, however, you believe the ecstasy of getting back together and giving yourself at least a shot at making a life together is greater than the regret and pain of not giving it another shot, call him.

According to the Ask Eeee mail, many couples break up four or five times before giving in to the enchantments of total reconciliation. And then there's this, with an aunt's love oozing from every word: We must finally consider that after you get back together, you yourself may grow heartily sick of the gentleman. I leave it to you and ELLE readers to decide exactly how long it will take. Time enough, perhaps, for you to meet a chap in a bookstore whom you won't run from.

© ENEMY WOMEN IN THE OFFICE

DEAR E. JEAN: I'm having trouble with my coworker "Jane," a condescending know-it-all who treats me like an intern while at the same time acting all buddy-buddy with me. She's insidious! I don't trust her.

It all started years ago, when I unintentionally insulted her. She was fired as the art director at another company, and I was hired to replace her, and I redid all her work (it was honestly not usable). I believe Jane heard about it. Over the next couple of years, our

regg Delman (styled by Christian Stroble; hair by Eduardo Carrasco at Forc rtists NYC: makeup by Sywia Rokowska at Ford Artists NYC) paths crossed many times at professional conferences. She always pretended she didn't know who I was and that we'd never met.

Now we actually work together, and E. Jean, I cannot stand this woman! She's a phony. She texts me privately over our company message server to ask how my day is going. She shares information about me with our former coworkers ("I told Mary that your husband passed away, and she is so sorry to hear it"). We're not friends! She has no business telling people these private things!

She's constantly telling me how wonderful it is that we "get to work together at last," and continually dropping compliments. I've never encouraged her to be chummy, but I've always treated her with respect. Recently I stopped responding to her—and she will not let me be. She's beginning to affect my attitude about work. I know I need to be careful of her—she's good friends with the owner and founder of our company—but how do I get her to leave me alone?

-Nowhere to Run

Run, My Rock: Don't love her. Don't lunch with her. Don't lend her money. Don't braid her hair at a slumber party. Do watch your back. (And your front, Miss Run—though I suppose it's possible that her former coworkers didn't tell her that you junked her work, and possible that she never recognizes people at conferences, and possible that she's crushin' on you like Emma Woodhouse on Harriet Smith, but...naw.) She's scared of you.

She sees you as a threat. (And women like you, who are quick to recognize threats and dispatch them, *rise* in business, sports, and politics. Lord knows I wish Hillary Clin-

ton had recognized Donald Trump's threat sooner!) As to what lengths Miss Iago will go, it's impossible to guess. I'll just say that her pestering you with compliments is perhaps the least of it. The major signal is her gossip.

And here I pause with the greatest sympathy and tenderness to say how sorry I am that you lost your husband. This woman *using* his death to slather you with her bullshit warmth and false compassion is vile.

So it's a fight. Your talent is your sword. Be polite, be professional, but kill her soppy texts by replying with emoji (no words), by frowning at her compliments, by never giving her critical work information she doesn't need, by never gossiping with her (or about her), and by never, *never* relying on her. Life is rife with enemies. At least you know yours. Keep an eye on her! And let me know how you're faring!

② OBSESSION: AN HONEST APPRAISAL

DEAR E. JEAN: I'm 25, tall, curvy, not ugly, and a painter. I have good friends and a wonderful boyfriend, but for three years now I have stalked the beautiful girl my ex-boyfriend dumped me for. I have long, long let go of any feelings for my ex-boyfriend. She's the one I can't shake.

I'm embarrassed by it. I don't want to be this kind of woman! I check her Instagram and Facebook multiple times throughout the day. Although I have never met her, I feel my insecurities mount with each glimpse into her life. It doesn't help that she's one of those superskinny types with perfect bone structure and a busy social life. So every time I see a new photo

Q: After four years, I found the perfect guy on OkCupid (97 percent match, 6'1", gorgeous, snowboards, in grad school at Columbia), but in the time I spent crafting a witty message to him, he deleted his account! I don't know his name! What do I do?

A: Perfection can be found in every man—the less you know him, the more perfect he gets. (Not meeting him at *all*, of course, will deliver a 97 percent score.) Ask your friends to set you up with a chap who has at least one intriguing flaw. May the odds always be in your favor!

she posts of herself, I fall a little inside. This whole cycle of checking on her makes me feel small, mentally weak, and incompetent. How do I break it?

—Seeking Your Spiritual Guidance

Seeking, My Scallion: To break a stalking habit, the first three rules everybody else (on the Internet!!) will tell you to try are:

- 1. Stay off social media.
- 2. Unfollow her on Facebook and Instagram.
- 3. Delete all apps like Snapchat, YouTube, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Reddit, Pinterest, etc.

Pretty good rules, right? But I don't think any human who has not had his or her phone taken away has ever followed them. Particularly a tall, curvy, ultraclever, fantastic young painter who's so frightened of being a miserable failure that she *makes* herself feel like a miserable failure. So Auntie Eeee is giving you four more rules:

HOW TO REALISTICALLY WEAN YOURSELF FROM THE STALKING HABIT

Let's not kid ourselves here. If you try No. 1, 2, or 3 in the first set of rules, which sound excellent and rather impossible for anyone with a career or a brain (but give them a whirl), you will notice they don't forbid Googling. And the temptation to Google Miss Bone Structure will be *intense*. Therefore....

- 4. You must write down (repeat: write down) three things you love about yourself before you're permitted to Google her. That means three new things every time you so much as glance at that "I'm Feeling Lucky" box.
- 5. Prior to creeping on her friends (the better to see what she's up to in *their* photos), you must walk one mile. (That's one mile, per stalk, per friend. One reason you even *have* feet is to change the direction of your thoughts.)
- 6. Volunteer to help young persons who are being bullied online. Sign up at cybersmile .org. A defenseless young woman who feels she has nowhere to turn would be touched and deeply grateful to hear from you.
- 7. Remember, remember always, that *you* and *your* art can make people feel like miserable failures, and forever posting your good fortune on Facebook and Instagram creates envy, not enthusiasm. Keep it cool. And good luck!

Ask a question! E.Jean@AskEJean.com or Twitter.com/ejeancarroll. Read past columns at ELLE.com/life-love/ask-e-jean/. You can watch videos, write with anonymity, and exchange genius tips on Advice Vixens at AskEJean.com. And if you'd like a date: Tawkify.com.



THE LINDA WELLS REPORT



The coolest new creams: (from top row, left to right) GLAMGLOW Volcasmic Matte Glow Moisturizer; BURT'S BEES Skin Nourishment Night Cream; FRESH Black Tea Firming Corset Cream; L'ORÉAL PARIS Age Perfect Cell Renewal Rosy Tone Moisturizer; AVEENO Positively Radiant Overnight Hydrating Facial; DR. BRANDT DNA Time Reversing Cream; NEUTROGENA Rapid Wrinkle Repair Regenerating Cream; CLINIQUE Pep-Start Hydrorush Daily UV Protector; CLARINS Hydra-Essentiel Cooling Gel; OLAY Regenerist Micro-Sculpting Cream; OLAY Luminous Tone Perfecting Cream; GLOSSIER Priming Moisturizer Rich.





he first time I made any money of my own, I took it straight to the beauty counter and bought myself a lemon-scented cleanser and a skin-scrubbing brush. I was a 13-year-old babysitting machine, and I was on a mission. A few years later, I moved on to Clinique's efficient three-step system, which in my mind is skin care's gateway drug.¹ From there, it was Erno Laszlo black sea-mud soap and Mario Badescu facials, upping the ante with each new treatment and each new paycheck.

Hello, my name is Linda, and I am a skin-care addict.

While makeup is getting all the millennial love in beauty today—with contouring creams, highlighting compacts, eye-shadow palettes, and lip kits selling like mad—I'm here on the other side of the divide to celebrate skin care. Remember skin care? It is the basis of all things right in beauty. My affection for it is proof alone that I'm not a millennial—and let's please not discuss my birth certificate. I

could actually document my life by skin-care milestones: I know exactly where I was when I learned that Retin-A was approved by the FDA. I remember seeing my first wrinkle in the rearview mirror of a cab² and feeling the prick of my first shot of Botox in a dermatologist's office in Paris. I don't just like skin care; I love skin care.

Yet as much as everyone knows that skin health is essential to beauty, it just seems a little, well, boring at the moment. No one gets 1,000-plus likes on Instagram for posts of their daily SPF 30 moisturizer. That may explain the soaring popularity of masks, which look great in photos. Many also originate in Korea, the hotbed of skin-care trends, and give fast, visible results. Women are using them as preparation for makeup, to perk up their skin before a big day at work or a big evening out. The overwhelming drive in beauty for these women is, "I want what I want when I want it," says Karen Grant, the global beauty industry analyst for the NPD Group, a market research firm. "It's almost Machiavellian."

Linda
Evangelista
told me it
was her first
beauty
product
too, so we
have that in
common

l actually kind of liked it



OLAY

DNA or OLAY?

Olay discovered that almost 10% of women naturally look years younger. Now every woman can be ageless. We've newly engineered our products through decades of research with only the best ingredients, helping take years off your skin age in weeks.

Who needs DNA when you have Olay?



hese women are also diving deep into cleansers, perhaps to wash off all the layers of makeup. Many have adopted the Asian habit of double cleansing, first with an oil and then with a more traditional face wash. The new cleansing oils smell like exotic flowers, and they provide something unusual for cleansers: a feeling of comfort and pampering.

To convert this generation to moisturizers, hydrators,³ and even active ingredients, there's a whole army of stealth skin-care products that make skin look better mere minutes after they're smeared on. "Lack of hydration is one of the top issues that can cause something to look older," says Grant. "That's even true with a shoe or a bag." The best of the bunch have an ulterior motive, sneaking anti-aging ingredients in the formula for longterm benefits. The fact that they're designed to appeal on beauty's favorite social-media platform is also a key factor. They're a photogenic icy blue (Neutrogena Hydro Boost Water Gel and Clarins Hydra-Essentiel Cooling Gel), pale pink (Olay Luminous Tone Perfecting Cream), or deep pink (L'Oréal Paris Age Perfect Rosy Tone Moisturizer). "In this skeptical market for skin care, products have to be Instagram-worthy and a delight to use," says Stephanie Guggenheim, the senior marketing director at Neutrogena, where Hydro Boost has been a wild success for those exact reasons.

Women, especially millennial women, want their skin to look flawless—a word that was freighted with judgment for previous generations. They turn more to makeup for this, not to slow and steady skin care. But now, skin care looks more like makeup, and makeup has skin-care ingredients like antioxidants, peptides, moisturizers, and sunscreen tucked inside. "It's funny," says Artemis Patrick, the senior vice president of merchandising at Sephora. "If you ask millennials if they use skin care, they say no, even though they really do. The lines between

Moisturizers
hold moisture
on skin.
Hydrators
deliver moisture
beneath
the skin

3

But remember, the tortoise won the race







skin care and makeup are being crossed." To that end, Olay's Ultimate Eye Cream is tinted. Hydro Boost has blossomed into a whole line of products that includes a foundation and a concealer laced with hydrators. It Cosmetics' best-seller is a CC cream that's rich in pigments and in vitamins, moisturizers, hydrators, and SPF 50. Shiseido's new White Lucent OnMakeup Spot Correcting Serum covers dark spots while it treats them, functioning as either "the last step in skin care or the first step in makeup," says Gisela Ballard, the company's executive director of marketing.

fall the unappreciated areas of skin care today, the least appreciated is anti-aging skin care. I get it. It let us down, overpromising and underdelivering like a slick politician. Antiaging skin care requires diligence and patience. It isn't sexy. Sometimes it also seems to demand an advanced degree in biochemistry. No wonder so many people tuned out. But really, how hard is it to slap on a serum and a cream? "The most important time to take care of the skin is in your twenties and

Not so hard



PRO-RETINOL EYE REATMENT







ILLUMINATING EYE CREAM

OLAY EYES ULTIMATE EYE CREAM

SAGGING SKIN

SERUM







EYES THAT WON'T SHOW YOUR AGE

Olay Eyes. A collection to fight the look of every eye concern: Brighten, Depuff, Lift, Smooth, or Ultimately, all of it.

#AGELESS



The most important time to take care of the skin is in your twenties and thirties.... Most women don't act until they see the first wrinkle.



thirties, because the consequences show in the future," says Rosemarie Osborne, Ph.D., a scientist and research fellow at Procter & Gamble. "But that's when you can't see the changes in your skin. And most women don't act until they see the first wrinkle."

Skin-care marketers have gotten wise to this need to deliver instant gratification, and they also know they have to seduce us into using their products day and night so the ingredients can actually work their magic. Even the big players in the skin-care world recognize the problem and are eager to fix it. "We want to make skin care fun again, removing those things that have made it not fun," says Alex Keith, president of global skin and personal care at Procter & Gamble, which makes Olay.

The researchers at Procter & Gamble focused on studies about women who are exceptional at aging in order to help the rest of us look a little younger. Okay, that doesn't immediately sound like fun, but when they showed me photographs of two 44-year-old women, I snapped to attention. One looked all of 29 while the other had the lines and sagging of a 57-year-old—a full 30-year span. The Olay experts studied the unusually young-looking ones—called super-

agers—even taking punch samples of their skin⁶ to determine its structure down to their genetic activity. Duplicating that hearty young skin became the goal for Olay's reformulated skin-care products.

The biggest behavioral differences of the superagers: 1) They spent little time in the sun; 2) they protected themselves when they did venture outdoors; 3) they never had dry skin; and 4) they had a positive attitude about life. What didn't seem to make a lick of difference, regardless of what we've all read: stress, fast food, carbs, sugar, or drinking eight glasses of water a day. The news made me suddenly crave doughnuts.

o mimic superagers' fresh, plump, even-toned, dewy (should I go on?) skin, Olay looked for ingredients that would boost skin's natural antioxidants and its microcirculation. "If you can improve the circulation under the skin," says cosmetic chemist Jim Hammer, "you have a greater likelihood of having a rejuvenating effect." Olay's new Regenerist Miracle Boost Concentrate and Micro-Sculpting Cream—my personal favorites—contain, among other things,

A sharp cookie-cutter-like tool removes a circle of skin for analysis. In other words not that fun

...and I've written

And I don't even like doughnuts







DNA or OLAY?

Olay discovered that almost 10% of women naturally look years younger. Now every woman can be ageless. We engineered New Olay Regenerist to dramatically reduce the look of wrinkles. See results on day 1, and years off your skin age by day 28.

Who needs DNA when you have Olay?







peptides, niacinamide, an olive-oil derivative, and a carob-seed extract, all proven to work all the way to the genomic level.

aybe to get the next wave of women to use anti-agers, marketers will have to convince them that skin care is an aspect of wellness. If you've ever sipped a green juice, downloaded a meditation app, or squeezed the sweat from your hair after SoulCycle, then you sure as hell should own an antioxidant serum and apply it every day. Skin-care products may not yield the dramatic before-and-afters that win likes, but

they're truly what make the difference in your appearance in the long haul known as life.

Perhaps one way to look at skin care right now is as a spectrum of treatments, from simple and sweet (cleansers, moisturizers, and hydrators) to complicated and painful (Botox, wrinkle fillers, and lasers). Facial salons have moved from the simple end to the more intense side and now come right before dermatologists with places like Skin Laundry offering 15-minute laser and light sessions in a friendly, breezy setting. And while the simple and sweet are getting all the love at the moment, that's bound to change as the years march steadily on. We will all look in the rearview mirror one day and realize it's time to act.

I like
Headspace . . . and I've
used it exactly
twice

OLAY

DNA or OLAY?



Olay discovered that almost 10% of women naturally look years younger. Now every woman can be ageless. We engineered New Olay Luminous to give your skin a remarkably radiant glow. See results on day 1, and years off your skin age by day 28.

Who needs DNA when you have Olay?



We knew she had an indie spirit and a fascinating style all her own. But when Solange Knowles topped charts with the highly personal, bracingly political *A Seat at the Table*, she established herself as a superstar—and exactly the one we need now. By Salamishah Tillet

Photographed by Terry Tsiolis Styled by Samira Nasr

try on four outfits before my meeting with Solange Knowles, untwist my hair, and end up missing my last-minute appointment with a local manicurist. I thought I'd packed the perfect thing—a sky-blue suede dress that reminded me of the bell-shaped frocks that I'd seen the singer and fashion visionary wear and that are for sale on her Saint Heron website. Solange is the epitome of effortless cool, while I'm what you might call a supernerd, an English and Africana Studies professor at the University of Pennsylvania who's far more at home parsing the words of Frederick Douglass than the semiotics of Fashion Week. And a humid, 70-degree morning in New Orleans is no match for my winter wardrobe, not to mention my spiral curls.

I finally settle on a slightly too fitted Tracy Reese print dress and rush out for our lunch date, but as soon as I spot her—forget it. Khaki tie shirt; dark brown, wide-flare linen pants; bright white midheel pumps—her hair tousled, her only makeup sheer lip gloss—Solange is a true original. Her wide smile quickly pricks my self-consciousness, however, and her graciousness remains on display all day: in exchanges with an Uber driver, an oyster shucker, even a wannabe singer who interrupts our lunch. For brief instants, those of us just entering her orbit are allowed to forget how otherworldly she's become.

Until recently, most people probably knew of Solange only as Beyonce's unconventional little sister, a style maven, or a regular on the indie music festival circuit. That changed in late September, when she unexpectedly dropped her third full-length album, A Seat at the Table. Barely a week later, the record hit number one on the Billboard chart, making Solange and her sister one of only

three sibling pairs to have both held that spot (the other two: Janet and Michael Jackson, and rapper Master P and his brother Silkk the Shocker). The accompanying music videos, for the Grammynominated "Cranes in the Sky" and for "Don't Touch My Hair," have together collected as many eyeballs (21 million–plus) as critical kudos: "aesthetically stunning and powerful," in the words of *Time*; "a thematically unified and musically adventurous statement," according to *Pitchfork*. By the end of 2016, Solange had performed on *SNL* and *The Tonight Show*, as well as been named the music consultant for *Insecure*, Issa Rae's breakout HBO sitcom, and a face of Michael Kors's first-ever street-style campaign.

An adventurous blend of R&B, jazz, and hip-hop, A Seat at the Table boldly channels the contradictions of our moment—the stew of pride, disappointment, vulnerability, and anger that African Americans are experiencing in an era marked as much by the election of our first black president as the murder of young black people. The record is sweeping in its reckoning with the nation's vexed racial past and present, yet intimate and unexpectedly gentle.

While Solange says she felt compelled to get *Seat* out into the world after four years of intense, if stop-and-start, work on it—"I just needed it to be *done*"—she sincerely didn't know how it would be received. "Her dad, he said something profound," says her mother, Tina Knowles-Lawson, referring to her ex-husband. "He said, 'This record is amazing, it's beautiful, it's great. But. You don't know how it's going to be taken. It can be taken well, or it can be taken negatively." Just be prepared for the outcome, Mathew Knowles—who'd been spit on and taunted as a boy trying to integrate Alabama's public schools in the early 1960s—cautioned his daughter.





o hear Tina tell it, her youngest child has been an opinionated artist practically since the day she was born. When Solange was in kindergarten, Beyoncé, who's five years older, was forming what would eventually become the girl-group juggernaut Destiny's Child. "We were watching this audition tape," Tina says, "and this one little girl comes on, and she's terrible. Solange shakes her head. She's like, 'No, she ain't got it.'"

The family lived in Houston's predominantly African American Third Ward, where Tina owned a hair salon called Headliners and Mathew was a Xerox medical equipment salesman; he eventually left his job to manage Beyoncé's career and start his own production company, Music World Entertainment. Destiny's Child member Kelly Rowland also lived with them, and Solange attributes her interest in songwriting to being around music all the time but not yet old enough to participate in the expanding family business. "My sister and Kelly were the same age, which is like a built-in best friend in the house; they were extremely close," Solange recalls. "Writing felt like this insular thing that I could go back in my room and express all that I would observe, all the emotions that would arise. It felt like mine, my little thing."

At age nine, Solange entered a statewide United Way jingle contest and won second place (sample lyric: "Sharing is caring! Caring is sharing! Caring is helpful!"). Her fourth grade teacher, "Miss Bethann Droste," as Solange refers to her, told her about the competition, and she's still grateful for her encouragement. "She'd pull me aside various times in the day and give me little affirmations," Solange says. "In the summertime—and I don't know if she was supposed to do this—but she'd pick me up and take me to museums, to the ballet."

Which is not to suggest that Solange was a loner, or immune to the performance bug. Tina remembers how her daughter "killed it" in a local talent show at age six, singing Shanice's "I Love Your Smile." "At the end of the song, the lyric is 'Blow, Branford, Blow,' and Solange decided, on her own, to say, 'Go, judges, go.' And she blew the judges a kiss. The judges went crazy, and of course she won."

Solange put aside her early dream, which was to attend Juilliard and study modern dance, to join Destiny's Child on tour as a dancer at age 13 (she was homeschooled from eighth grade on). She traveled the world with the group, but as much as Solange may have emulated them, Tina says, "It also showed her what she didn't want to do. She didn't want to be a cookie cutter of her sister. When she was little, she used to put on a tutu and cowboy boots and a big hat, and literally Beyoncé would call me and be like, 'Mama, Solange has on a tutu and a fur coat, and she looks crazy!'"

A mother now herself, of a 12-year-old boy named Julez, Solange says her mother's acceptance of her early sartorial flings influences how she deals with her son. "I'm like, 'Come on, we're going to a wedding, you can't just wear soccer shorts,' but then I think back to my mother. Part of it was because she was a working mom, and I was the youngest, and she was probably like, 'This is not important,' but I also think she wanted to nurture who I was trying to shape myself to be."

The teenage iteration of that was what Solange calls her "confused, suburban Rasta girl phase," not that she doesn't have some fondness for who she was then: "It was the beginning of my coming into my identity as a young black woman and wanting to project that on the exterior." It was during that time, at age 16, that she released her first album, *Solo Star* (she's wearing a striped knit Bob Marley hat on the cover). The record was criticized as derivative and gimmicky, and Solange has said that while she "stands behind" her early musi-

cal efforts, "I was on a record label and I didn't have a lot of creative control. Another side of that is just being young and having bad taste. There was plenty of that, too."

When she was 17, she became pregnant with Julez, married his father, her high school sweetheart Daniel Smith, and moved to Moscow, Idaho, where Smith played football at the University of Idaho. "It was one of the most bittersweet moments of my life," Solange says, "because I was so in love with Julez, and having spent a lot of time on the road, I yearned to be in one place, to have the opportunity to really ground myself with him. But it was isolating and lonely, and so cold and dark. And it was just Julez and me most of the time. It was hard to imagine being able to progress in my career in any way."

Four years later, Knowles and Smith had divorced, and she decamped with Julez to Los Angeles to pursue songwriting. She wrote the radio-friendly songs "Upgrade U" and "Get Me Bodied" for her sister's triple-platinum-selling pop/R&B B'Day album, as well as more "soulful, experimental" songs that weren't selling. "That was the moment I decided to be an artist again," she says, which led her to record the eclectic Sol-Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams. A blend of Supremes-inspired pop, ambient electronics, and neo-soul that featured collaborations with CeeLo Green, Pharrell Williams, and Mark Ronson, it won over critics and broke the Billboard Top 10.

By 2009, she and Julez were on the move again, renting a brownstone apartment in Brooklyn's Carroll Gardens neighborhood, where Solange was conspicuous for, well, being inconspicuous. Or so "regular," as the *New York Post* put it, for deejaying at local venues, for stoop-sitting and throwing her son a birthday party in a public park. But regular, Solange-style, also included friendships with Opening Ceremony's Carol Lim and Humberto Leon and indie rockers like Grizzly Bear, not to mention her older sister. "I think she's weirdly a real person," *Paper* magazine's man-about-town Mickey Boardman told the *Post*. "When she needs to, she can be a strong diva, but generally she's supercool." Speaking of which, Solange doubled down on her indie cred in 2012 by working with experimental London-born producer Devonté Hynes on a seven-song, '80s pop-influenced EP called *True*, which again won critical praise.

There's a line in "Cranes in the Sky" suggesting that Solange's peripateticism in her twenties was partly motivated by a sort of emotional questing that, she tells me, was related to her divorce. "A lot of my identity was grounded in our relationship," she says. "We'd been together since we were kids, and that was a transitional period in my life." But she seems to have found her home in New Orleans, where she relocated in 2013. "It's the longest I've lived anywhere as an adult," she marvels. She started her culture site, Saint Heron—dedicated to nurturing a "community of young creatives"—after transplanting there, and in fall 2014 she and her longtime boyfriend, music video director Alan Ferguson, got married at the historic Marigny Opera House. "New Orleans is a place of so much tradition and pride that when you move here, you have to acknowledge that you are an outsider to a very old and reverent culture," says Solange (whose wedding dress, by the way, was the opposite of old-fashioned: a floor-length, galactic-inspired gown by Leon).

She also tells me, with a hint of pride in her voice, that she lives "around the corner from Congo Square," which I happened to make a quick trip to earlier in the day, longing to see the place where enslaved African Americans had gathered to make music on Sundays, their only day off. The square was mostly empty when I arrived, except for a racially mixed group of tourists led by an African American guide who was talking about how slaves from all over Louisiana flocked here for a respite from laws that forbade them from congre-

gating. As public as the merrymaking was, the syncopated rhythms and melodies were a form of doublespeak. The slaves communicated one message to the masters—lightness, joy—and another to themselves: heartbreak, exhaustion, and resistance, all hidden in lyrical double entendres and complex vocal and percussive arrangements.

"That was really a driving force for me, wanting to be close to that place," Solange says. "Because of the storytelling that happened, because of the slaves having this day and bringing anything and everything they could get their hands on—mixing brass with percussion to, literally, create a sound that had never existed before."

ver the last two years, I've become obsessed with anger—not the knee-jerk type, though there's a place for that—but a kind of righteous rage: one that summons up the litany of racial injustices inflicted on me and my people, and spits them back in the face of those who perpetrated them. Yet actually expressing the feeling doesn't come easily to me. I tend to linger in shame, sadness, jealousy, and turn these emotions inward, where they gnaw at me. And it shouldn't be a big surprise to hear that I've been pretty sure my chances of reaping our society's rewards are greater if I allow myself to be eaten alive, as opposed to wearing my rage on my Cynthia Rowley sleeve.

But around the time that Solange wrote the first song for A Seat at the Table, a tune called "Rise," partly inspired by protests following the murders of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray, my fury felt closer to the surface than ever before. Maybe it was because I was a new mother and worried that I couldn't protect my children from the blows of racism; maybe it was because my 26-year-old brother had just died of cancer; maybe it was because an African American teenager was killed in Sanford, Florida, simply for venturing out for Skittles and iced tea. But as the days of anger turned into years, as the mounting death toll of black children, women, and men at the hands of police and private white citizens actually became a way to mark time, I found myself desperately searching for a release valve.

More than perhaps any other African American artist of her generation, Solange has been willing to go there, to attack racism directly and without apology—and thus risk being maligned as an Angry Black Woman. "Let me tell you about why black girls/women are so angry," she tweeted after a group of white women berated her and Julez for standing at a Kraftwerk concert last September, then threw limes at their backs. Solange later posted an essay on her website expanding on the incident, in which, anticipating that she'd be accused of overreacting, she wrote: "You realize that you never called these women racists, but people will continuously put those words in your mouth. What you did indeed say is, 'This is why many black people are uncomfortable being in predominantly white spaces,' and you still stand true to that."

Nina Simone might be our country's most famous ABW. In 1964, she responded to the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four young black girls by composing "Mississippi Goddam." The song quickly became an anthem, galvanizing young black and white activists who joined Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic march from Selma to Montgomery the next year. Known as "the Angry Young Woman of Show Business," Simone paid a huge price for her scathing racial critique. The once in-demand recording and performing artist found that few American concert promoters or record companies would hire her, and she lived her final years in exile in France. "'Mississippi Goddam,'" Solange reveals to me when I tell her I am writing a book on Simone, "is a song that I listened to religiously while making this album."

But if Simone partially shrouded the weight of her rage by giving "Mississippi Goddam" the upbeat tempo of a Broadway show tune, Solange went in a whole other direction. The album conveys a quiet, swelling anger, her voice sometimes barely registering above a whisper. "I did want to create this juxtaposition, politically, of having these very hard, messy conversations but having them stylistically in a way that you can really hear me, and not the yelling, the rage," she ruminates. "I wanted to project in my delivery what I was not achieving at all: peace and having a certain lightness and airiness that could maybe help me get closer to having more light and airiness in my life."

The turning point for A Seat at the Table, Solange says, came a few years ago, after she criticized some white male music journalists who'd taken down R&B singer Brandy's album Two Eleven—"Like you really should know about deep Brandy album cuts before you are giving a 'grade' or a 'score' to any R&B artist," she complained on Twitter. Subsequently, she declined to participate in a podcast about white audiences and artists appropriating black music, prompting New York Times lead pop music critic Jon Caramanica to remark on the radio, "The only reason that Solange's success this past year has even been a thing is because of these same people that she's lambasting.... There would be no Solange interest if all of a sudden people that have not historically been interested in R&B hadn't decided to pay attention to Miguel and The Weeknd and Drake. So you know, first of all, let's talk about biting the hand that feeds you."

Solange couldn't get Caramanica's words out of her head, she says, and as she told interviewer Helga Davis on New York's classical musical station WQXR in December, her whole family was affected. "It haunted my mother to hear someone telling her daughter, 'Don't bite the hand that feeds you.' The racial subtleties—they're not so subtle when you say that to a black woman. Then you connect it by saying, 'Do you know who's buying your records?'"

Solange directly references the exchange in the song "Don't You Wait": "Now, I don't want to bite the hand that'll show me the other side, no/But I didn't want to build the land that has fed you your whole life, no/Don't you find it funny?" But it's in "Mad" and "Don't Touch My Hair" that she wears her anger as armament—displaying not a whiff of pop-princess shininess, or bad-girl sexiness, for that matter. In the videos, on the album cover, and in the ethereal but insistent timbre of her voice, she both beseeches and dares us to absorb the breadth of black pain, the depth of black triumph.

"Mad" was inspired, Solange says, by a conversation with a white woman who "kept bringing up things that were really insensitive." When Solange finally told the woman how off-base she was, she was accused of being—what else?—angry. The song and the record, she hopes, will reassure black women that they're not alone. "So much of my rage had to do with not knowing if other people were also experiencing these things," Solange says. "That puts you in the position where you feel like, Am I trippin'? Am I too angry? Am I being paranoid?" She also wants *Seat* to reach those who "might not understand the inner workings of being a black woman in this country during this time," she says. They might wonder: "Where did your love go? Where did your joy, this gleaming, light, energetic person go?"

Don't touch my crown They say the vision I've found Don't touch what's there When it's the feelings I wear

When I was in my late teens, I'd change my hairstyle with the wind. Some days, I'd wear Afro puffs, others, I'd rock a head wrap,

Continued on page 454



Nylon shirt, \$555, pants, \$485, both, KENZO, visit kenzo.com. Stylist's own belt. For details, see Shopping Guide.

Hair by Chuck Amos at Jump for Pantene; makeup by Jeanine Lobell at Tim Howard; manicure by Gina Viviano for Chanel; fashion assistants: Yashua Simmons and Kia Goosby



Fashion and feminism alike have anointed pink—in all its girly glory—as *the* power move for spring...and beyond. **Photographed by Dan Martensen Styled by Samira Nasr**



From left, on Cait Durra: Dress, \$4,020, stockings, price on request, sock sandals, \$750, all, PACO RABANNE. On Sara Cummings: Sweatshirt, SANKUANZ, \$190. Jeans, LEVI'S, \$168. Pumps, GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI DESIGN, \$1,150. On Sandra Martens: Cardigan, \$4,000, dress, \$1,750, both, CHANEL. T-shirt, COURREGES, \$75, Levi's jeans, RE/DONE, \$350. Watch bracelet, CHANEL FINE JEWELRY, \$4,900. Boots, PHILOSOPHY DI LORENZO SERAFINI, \$990. On Ling Liu: Champion sweatshirt, RE/DONE, \$240. Jeans, FAITH CONNEXION, \$630. Bracelet, DAVID YURMAN, \$16,500. Belt, TRASH AND VAUDEVILLE, \$38. Pumps, MANOLO BLAHNIK, \$595. On Kendall Harrison: Sweatshirt, price on request, pants, \$750, both, GUCCI. Slip-ons, VANS, \$50. On Barbie Ferreira: T-shirt, URBAN OUTFITTERS, \$24. Skirt, BETH DITTO, \$145. Platforms, MIU MIU, \$890. Her own headphones. For details, see Shopping Guide.











On Martens: Crepe jersey dress, CÉLINE, \$2,800, at Céline, NYC. Nylon spandex tights, FOGAL OF SWITZERLAND, \$45.



On Curtiss, left: Beaded silk chiffon and satin blouse, skirt, both, RODARTE, prices on request, collection at Curve, NYC. Rose gold and diamond locket necklace, TIFFANY & CO., \$5,800. Silver necklace, \$290, ring, \$695, both, CHROME HEARTS. Patent leather ankle boots, DORATEYMUR, \$500. Her own earrings and rings. On Brionka Halbert, right: Silk georgette dress, BALENCIAGA, \$1,895. Pink sapphire and rose gold earrings, CHOPARD, price on request. Stretch jersey tights, FALKE, \$125. Suede pumps, MANOLO BLAHNIK, \$725. For details, see Shopping Guide.













On Liu, right: Chiffon and ostrich feather top, \$1,205, skirt, \$1,390, wool turtleneck, \$765, jacquard jacket (tied at waist), \$2,195, all, PRADA, visit prada.com. Cotton socks, FALKE, \$28. Leather sandals, PIERRE HARDY, \$965. On Harrison: Silk shirt, \$890, wool trousers, \$890, leather belt, \$295, shoes, \$795, all, SAINT LAURENT BY ANTHONY VACCARELLO.

Hair by Brian Buenanventura for Kérastase; makeup by Chiho Omae at Frank Reps for Chanel; manicure by Yukie Miyazawa at Kate Ryan Inc. for Dior; casting by Violet Xie at Zan Casting; models: Brandon Bailey at Soul Artist Management, Jonathan Bellini at Wilhelmina, Lulu Bonfils at Wilhelmina, Sara Cummings at Soul Artist Management, Aiden Curtiss at Wext Management, Alewya Demmisse at Women Management, Cait Durra at Heroes, Barbie Ferreira at Wilhelmina, Lara Ghraoui at Wilhelmina, Rose Gilroy at Elite, Brionka Halbert at Next Management, Kendall Harrison at St. Claire, Emily Howe, Ling Liu at Elite, and Sandra Martens at Next Management













With its rich history and fast-changing present—celebrity chefs! \$122 million museums!— Harlem has been at the forefront of cultural shifts for more than a century. With another renaissance still going strong, we capture iconic locals and standout newcomers alike, accompanied by spring's most effortlessly cool fashion. PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK SELIGER STYLED BY SAMIRA NASR





































Right: Linen mélange jacket, \$1,808, cotton mélange tank, \$229, shirt sleeve, \$629, trousers, \$597, waist belt, \$370, leather ankle boots, \$991, all, ANN DEMEULEMEESTER, visit anndemeulemeester.com. Pearl and diamond earrings, BELADORA, \$18,500.

Far right, left: Silk dress, MONCLER GAMME ROUGE, price on request, at Moncler, NYC. White gold, pearl, and diamond earrings, \$17,100, necklace, price on request, all, CHANEL FINE JEWELRY. Gold, amethyst, sapphire, and diamond brooch, JEAN SCHLUMBERGER FOR TIFFANY & CO., price on request. Right: Spinel, tourmaline, diamond, and pearl earrings, NADIA MORGENTHALER, price on request. Pearl and gold bracelets, both, BELADORA, \$3,450. White gold, diamond, and pearl watch, CHANEL FINE JEWELRY, price on request. For details, see Shopping Guide.

Beauty Secret: Keep cheeks modern and rosy with CHANEL Joues Contraste Powder Blush in Rose Initial.







Near right: Silk jacket, \$4,655, wool skirt, price on request, both, DSQUARED2, visit dsquared2.com. Oil-linen waist belt, AGANOVICH, \$828. Pearl, rhodium, quartz, and green foil earring, LARKSPUR & HAWK, \$1,550 (for pair). Pearl and gold brooch, JEAN SCHLUMBERGER FOR TIFFANY & CO., \$11,500. Pearl, diamond, and gold ring, TIFFANY & CO. Pearl, diamond, and gold brooch, JEAN SCHLUMBERGER FOR TIFFANY & CO., price on request. Pearl, diamond, and platinum ring, TIFFANY & CO., price on request. Right: Silk jacket, DSQUARED2, \$4,850. Silk voile gown, ERDEM, \$4,875. Pearl, rhodium, quartz, and white foil earrings, LARKSPUR & HAWK, \$2,100. For details, see Shopping Guide.







Linen jacket, \$2,250, organza silk top, \$1,790, lambskin pants, \$2,790, all, RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION, visit ralphlauren .com. Crystal and glass pearl earrings, \$390, necklaces, \$980-\$2,230 each, bracelet, \$550, rings, \$303-\$375 each, all, ERICKSON BEAMON. Gold-finished metal, glass pearl, and crystal ring, GUCCI, \$875. Leather ankle boots, FAUSTO PUGLISI, \$1,189. For details, see Shopping Guide.





















Far left: Wool top, shorts, cotton jersey tank, all, VERA WANG COLLECTION, at Vera Wang, Beverly Hills. Pearl pendant choker, R.J. GRAZIANO, \$95.
Center: Wool dress, VERA WANG COLLECTION, price on request. Rose gold and quartz earrings, DELIA LANGAN JEWELRY, \$129. Pearl choker, R.J. GRAZIANO, \$125. Right: Wool top, cotton jersey tank, prices on request, wool skirt, \$695, all, VERA WANG COLLECTION. Gold and aquamarine earrings, \$129, quartz earrings, \$129, all, DELIA LANGAN JEWELRY. Black spinel, gemstone, and gold choker, LAGOS, \$1,500. Stylist's own boots. For details, see Shopping Guide.

Hair by David von Cannon at the Wall
Group; makeup by Rie Omoto at See
Management; manicure by Geraldine
Holford at LMC Worldwide for Chanel;
casting by Paul Brickman at Zan Casting;
models: Georgia Fowler at IMG, Alecia
Holtz at New York Models, Hedvig Palm at
Next Models, and Zlata Semenko at Muse;
set design by Anthony Asaro and Kendyll
Legier at Art Department; production
by Harbinger; fashion assistants: Daniel
Gaines, Francisco Ovalle, and Ana Wainer



FAIRPLAY

Ashley Biden—a social worker by profession and daughter of Mr. Vice President himself—continues the family tradition of fighting injustice (in style), with a little help from flash-sale site Gilt. And it all starts with a game-changing hoodie. BY MOLLY LANGMUIR

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ARI MARCOPOULOS STYLED BY YASHUA SIMMONS

y the time Ashley Biden was born, Joe Biden had been a senator for eight years. This brought with it certain perks, but Ashley and her two older brothers, Beau and Hunter, did grumble every holiday season about having to pose for the family portrait that would be sent out to supporters and constituents. But last December, on the rainy day that Biden, with just 45 days left as vice president of the United States, walked into a midtown Manhattan hotel accompanied by his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, and a small fleet of dark-suited Secret Service agents and charming, energetic staffers, roles were reversed. The father was on hand to pose in support of his daughter's latest mission, which he did in true Biden style, warmly wrapping his arms around Ashley and flashing his million-dollar smile. About five minutes in, he noted, "This was always around when the kids would start to complain. I owe her big.'

Livelihood, Ashley's new ethically produced, American-made clothing company, is a project any dad would be proud to get behind. It kicks off with a range of supersoft organic cotton hoodies on sale for just a few weeks, starting February 8, in partnership with the flash-sale behemoth Gilt: The entirety of the proceeds from the debut collection will be channeled to programs that work to alleviate poverty through education, training, and job placement.

Ashley, 35, who is also the executive director of the Delaware Center for Justice, a nonprofit that serves children and adults impacted by the criminal justice system, had toyed with the potential nature and mission of Livelihood for years. One thing that never wavered was the idea of the hoodie. This is partly because Ashley herself—who has a stealth charisma and a fondness for phrases like "heavens to Betsy"-describes herself as a "jeans-and-T-shirt kinda gal." It's also because she appreciates the symbolism of an item long connected to American laborers and more recently to Black Lives Matter. "Livelihood is specifically about income inequality," she says. "And racial inequality and income inequality are directly related."

It's an awareness that runs in the family. As the elder Biden says, "It's mostly income inequality that's motivated my whole career."

Growing up Biden, to hear Ashley tell it, involved a mix of the prosaic and the powerful. She recalls cutting coupons with her mom before shopping at the local Pathmark in Wilmington, Delaware, but also being nine years old and obsessed with the plight of dolphins: Her dad brought her to meet then-Congresswoman Barbara Boxer, who in turn ushered Ashley, armed with self-made posters, to the House floor to lobby for the Dolphin Protection Consumer Information Act. (It passed.) Along with Hunter and Beau, who tragically died of brain cancer in 2015, she grew up traveling to communities on both ends of the economic spectrum while campaigning with Joe, and hearing about the issues faced by Jill's students (a PhD in education, she long taught English and reading in public high schools and now works at a community college). "I got a real sense that some people had a lot, and some had nothing at all," Ashley says. "Even as a child, I had a hard time reconciling the inherent unfairness of it all."

By the time her parents moved into the VP's mansion in 2009, Ashley-who did her undergrad at Tulane, then earned a master's in social work from the University of Pennsylvania-had a job serving kids in the foster-care system. It was disorienting, to put it mildly, to travel from a juvenile detention center to, say, Air Force 2. What did become increasingly clear was how little privileged Americans understood about life below the poverty line, where 13.5 percent of the U.S. resides. "I'd hear about five siblings sharing one burger," she says. "How does a kid do homework when there's no desk or lamp? One of the biggest things I've seen in my work is that a lot of social ills directly result from poverty."

Last June, Ashley introduced her dad for a Father of the Year award from the National Father's Day Council, an honor made bittersweet by the fact that they'd lost Beau a year earlier, at age 46. "I find grief to be maddening, truly," says Ashley, who met her husband of four years, a plastic surgeon, through Beau. "You have days where you're fine, and days when you can't get out of bed."

At the Father's Day event, she met Gilt president Jonathan Greller and piqued his interest in Livelihood. Soon she was traveling to New York so regularly, "I thought she worked for Gilt at one point," Greller says. "That's how much I saw her." Proceeds from the Gilt sale will be used to set up community funds in Wilmington and in Washington, DC's Anacostia, both lower-income areas where Ashley once held summer jobs working with local kids. And because "it drives me crazy that we are constantly reinventing the wheel," she says, Livelihood's website, getinvolvedinyourhood .com, will share evidence-based solutions shown to help alleviate poverty and address issues like gun violence.

In the midst of getting Livelihood up and running came the presidential election. Biden tradition is to spend election night together, but on November 8, Ashley had to work. The clan stayed in touch by phone; when Clinton lost Ohio, Ashley went to bed. "My dad sent a picture that said, 'The sun will rise tomorrow. I love you,'" she says. "Typical Dad. While we should be comforting him, he's comforting all of us."

As the former vice president has said, Beau's death was his major reason not to run. Still, "there's a piece of this that I know weighs on my father," Ashley says. "We were told we couldn't compete with Clinton money, and I was saying, 'Come on, Dad, we can go on campaign finance reform. This could be a grassroots effort!' But at the time, it was too raw." (As for 2020, she says only: "I think my dad would truly be a phenomenal president, but right now it's one day at a time.")

Just before Ashley opened her eyes on the morning of ELLE's shoot—"on a day that, you know, I'm nervous and I don't know where this is going to take me," she says—she saw her brother's face. "I'm proud of you," he told her. It was, she thought, "a true gift." Hours later, on set, Biden recalled a time when Ashley was in middle school and a classmate insulted the man who ran the boiler system. "I got a call that Ashley was being chastised for having gone missing," he says. "I said, 'Well, where was she?' She'd gone down to the basement to find the janitor and apologize. I'd call this her passion, but it's who she's been her whole life."

ТНЕ

BOYFRIEND

EXPERIENCE

From deconstructed trenches to bold-shouldered suits, spring's new take

on old-fashioned tailoring is anything but divisive.

Photographed by Azim Haidaryan

Styled by Simon Robins











Wool-blend coat, \$4,550, sleeveless jacket, \$2,000, leather trousers, price on request, all, CÉLINE, at Céline, NYC. Brass earring, JENNIFER FISHER, \$355 (for pair). Rose gold ring, DAVID YURMAN, \$1,850. Leather handbag, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, \$2,300. Leather and cork platforms, MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION, \$525. 436 ELLE









On her: Crepe coat, GIVENCHY
BY RICCARDO TISCI, \$4,520,
collection at Barneys New York.
Cotton shirt, CLOSED, \$196.
Gold earring, PAIGE NOVICK,
\$1,600. Gold ring, TIFFANY &
CO., \$4,000. On him: Silk canvas
jacket, BALLY, \$2,195. Cotton shirt,
DOLCE & GABBANA, \$745. For
details, see Shopping Guide.

Hair by Charles McNair for R+Co; makeup by Natasha Severino at Forward Artists for Tom Ford; manicure by Emi Kudo at Opus Beauty for Chanel; casting by Violet Xie at Zan Casting; models: Amanda Murphy at IMG and Laurence Geguzis at Two Management; production by Brandon Zagha; fashion assistants: Robert Johnson and Luca Kingston

























NOUVEAU RICHIE Continued from page 166

extravaganza at the Standard attended by Kate Hudson, Jessica Alba, and Cameron Diaz, who married Madden's twin brother, Benji, in 2015. "We do a lot of house parties," Richie says. "I don't know if it's because I was out so much in my twenties, but I do like houses more, because you can do whatever you want, and there's no one outside waiting for you."

Richie and Paris Hilton healed their rift a long time ago, and while Richie maintains they're still friends, these days her circle is heavier on motivated working ladies like HelloGiggles founder Sophia Rossi; Foster, a TV writer; and Katherine Power, a cofounder of the fashion website Who What Wear (and wife of Coit). "We're like one big tornado, roaming around," says Richie, inside the House of Harlow showroom, where the collection she designed for the brand's collaboration with fashion e-commerce retailer Revolve billows off the racks. Like Richie's previous designs, the clothes are the kind of vintage-y, boho-style ensembles that one might wear to an L.A. house party or a '70s-themed birthday party at the Standard. Which is the point. "I always say I design for my friends," she says. "Because they are the coolest people in my eyes, the people I look up to and want to impress and who inspire me."

It was her friends, she says, who gave her the idea to start Pearl xChange, a daylong TED Talkstyle conference for women—now in its third year—that included, in its most recent installment, talks by disparate personalities such as Diaz and former astronaut Jeanette J. Epps. "We naturally gravitate toward people who are like us, but that doesn't help us evolve or grow," Richie says, growing animated as she talks. "We have got to get out of that teenage mentality of, like, 'Oh, she's a mathematician, she's not like me, good-bye.' It's like, 'No, fool. You need to be friends with that mathematician so she can teach you something, and you can teach her something.'"

All of this lip service to girl power might come as a surprise to those who remember Richie calling her former stylist Rachel Zoe a "raisin face" on Myspace. But things have changed over the past decade. "I went to a dinner for Rachel Zoe last night!" Richie offers brightly. "It's been a really interesting journey, and it's been like a marriage for all of us," she continues. "We all live in L.A.; everybody knows each other. We have seen each other go like this"—she raises her hand. "And like this"—she lets it fall. "It's not just me; it's everybody."

With *Great News*, Richie definitely marks the start of a new upswing. At first, the cast and crew weren't sure what to think of her casting. "Worst-case scenario, it was an interesting experiment?" says Beth McCarthy-Miller, who directed three of the season's 10 episodes.

Richie was equally anxious. Going to a job on someone else's schedule was something she hadn't done, really, *ever*, and the type of people she was working with weren't necessarily hip to

the fact that, you know, "Samantha" means Ronson. "I was so nervous—like, these people know each other, and they are all seasoned, amazing comedians," she says while driving back from the showroom. "But everyone was so warm and welcoming." Andrea Martin, who plays momturned-intern Carol, "is so effing funny, I cannot even tell you," Richie says. "She's my size, she's 70, from New York, and she's, like, riding her bike to work. I'm like, What? She is dope."

The feeling was mutual. "She was really willing to jump in with both feet, and as the season went on, she was getting better and better," McCarthy-Miller says. "By the end of it, she was ad-libbing with all of those guys."

"It was, like, the most amazing experience that I have ever had in my life," Richie says. She takes a right onto Sunset. Across the street, the Chateau Marmont looms gothically into view. Encountering this literal monument to Richie's past as she's talking about her present makes me wonder if she ever felt that, in a weird way, The Simple Life actually fulfilled its goal: It took a nascent spoiled brat out of her comfort zone and gave her a taste for new and different experiences. "Yes," Richie says immediately, as though this were what she'd been trying to tell me all along. "I did not always love to learn. I did not appreciate education. But that's what I'm doing now. I love learning; I love surrounding myself with people who can teach me things, who don't do the same thing that I do. I just love it."

She pulls over to the side of the road to let me out at my hotel. "It's so easy to get locked into your world," she says. "But it's so much cooler just having your energy be open and taking in the world around you." With that—and a little bit of awkward maneuvering of the wheel—Nicole Richie pulls out of her parking space and heads off to her next adventure.



TINY BUBBLE Continued from page 338

Sheeran cover of Blackstreet's "No Diggity"), while Kornack is in the kitchen putting the finishing touches on dishes. (She personally delivers each plate to diners, a process that involves ticking through the ingredients of 11 courses to six separate parties.) It's clear Kornack takes pains to think through each course: There's a beetroot and shrimp pastry that she serves in a mini cake dome ("it's a surprise because you don't expect it to be savory"), a roasted onion soup that comes with a side of aromatic oil dispensed in an eyedropper.

When my dining companion compliments Kornack's decision to serve an apple-and-eucalyptus ice cream with a wooden, rather than cold metal, spoon—the better to enjoy its temperature and flavor—the chef beams. It's my friend's genuinely felt sentiment, but it also seems like the polite thing to say. Just as it's expected that dinner party guests will be gracious to

a host, there's an assumption, at least on Kornack's part, that customers should be grateful.

"You're told in every industry that the customer is always right," Kornack says. "And that's the exact opposite thing you should ever go by, because—"

"You should treat customers with respect, no matter what," Hieronimus interrupts her wife.

"Well, *always* and *never* are such polarizing words," Kornack replies. "The customer is *often* right."

(And you're told when you're not: When I arrive at 8:03, I'm reminded by Hieronimus that dinner begins promptly at eight. House rules.)

There may be some magic in taking power away from the customer, because Take Root diners consistently employ a special kind of over-the-top praise. "It's like being looked after when you're sick," said a 2016 New Yorker review with the headline "The Tasting Menu That Cares for You." "It's a rare thing to pay for a meal but feel as if it were a gift," enthused the New York Times in 2013. "It sounds cheesy, but you really feel the love in that restaurant," says Sierra Tishgart, an editor at New York magazine's Grub Street food blog, who ranks Take Root as her favorite fine-dining experience.

"I've been to a lot of restaurants—places like Le Bernardin—and they're excellent. But they don't feel personal," says Jennifer Chan, a customer who has become such a superfan that she's altered travel plans in an effort to score a coveted reservation; she's eaten there eight times. "Take Root feels like coming home to something. There's just a lot of love; I don't know another way to say it."

Undoubtedly, Take Root's decision to stay small has proved a smart marketing strategy. *Lucky Peach*, the food magazine owned by Momofuku's David Chang (a person who knows about scalability), perhaps summed it up best in a write-up of Take Root titled "Two Employees, One Michelin Star." It's a novelty even outside the restaurant industry. Author and branding expert Seth Godin explains: "Since 2000, technology and other innovations have made it easier for businesses to increase yield: 'We've gotta make it cheaper and bigger.' So few companies are asking the right question: 'How do I make it better?'"

There's also something to be said for the unending desire for that which you can't have. It's hard to quantify exactly how difficult it is to get a reservation at Take Root. Its reservation system, accessed through its website, allows customers to book no more than 30 days in advance, starting at midnight—a process that's akin to getting a hot item on Gilt. But, to give an idea of just how fierce the competition is: On election night, while most Americans were glued to cable news, a quorum of foodies was on Take Root's site. By the time Clinton called Trump to concede, dinner for a month from that date was completely booked.

Still, there are limitations to their scale that even the couple cop to. They don't have a plan B if there's an emergency and one of them takes ill. (This has happened only once; they had to reschedule dinner service.) And the smallness can encourage a level of familiarity in their customers that the couple find off-putting. "People will ask us crazy things," Hieronimus says, "from flattering questions like 'I can't wait to talk with you after the meal about how you did this' to 'Are you guys even *making* money?' Like, geez. Really inappropriate."

Money is actually the one topic they find to be most rude. That said, there *are* some financial ad-

vantages to staying small. No support staff to pay and no food wasted. One of the bêtes noires of chefs everywhere is gauging what ingredients to buy and in what quantities—not knowing how many customers they'll serve on a given night or who will order what from the menu. Chefs who can't master this balance inevitably find themselves without a kitchen to run.

In the restaurant business, "the hours are long, you don't have holidays off, and there's not a lot of money in it," says Emde, who owns Fish & Game with her husband, Zakary Pelaccio. "If you find a mate outside the industry, they have to know what the industry requires. My husband and I are not side by side in the kitchen every day, and at this point I don't think that would work for us. Anna and Elise seem to have it figured out."

Yes...but their world is very circumscribed. They live just around the corner from Take Root, arriving at the restaurant six out of seven days a week at 10 A.M. and leaving around midnight. (On days when they don't have dinner service, they're planning menus and paying bills.) "Sometimes it feels like we're existing all on this one block," Hieronimus admits. They once shut down the restaurant for a few months because they had to make some repairs, and because they were exhausted.

Though the couple insist they've decided to stay small not "out of fear," I wonder if this is entirely true. I ask Kornack if she's ever been called a control freak. Yes, she says, and adds, "I always believe that instead of pushing away things about yourself that may have a negative connotation, you should say okay, and just own them."

There's a big gulf between selling out to reality TV and selling out to hire a dishwasher. When I ask Kornack, "Why not just hire a dishwasher?," she replies, "This is a studio, the way I see it. Some people have apprentices who clean their paintbrushes; some don't. When I worked at art galleries on Nantucket, there were some who sold their \$22,000 painting and were like, 'Okay, now I need a staff of three or four.' And there were others who still don't have any staff. That's just how I do it." Later, she says more directly, "I just wouldn't want to have someone in my space." Unless you are Anna Hieronimus, or one of the 12 people who get to partake of this performance art-cum-lovefest-cum dinner-outin-Brooklyn, three nights a week.



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diminish them as merely objects for visual pleasure or ridicule." He thought Wittenberg's painting was "magnificently angry."

But Mulvey's theory, like so many academic theories, is a little dopey. Who says that taking visual pleasure in a woman diminishes her? And Wittenberg tells me she doesn't think her painting is angry. It's more "aggressive," she says, like the work of the male

artists she admires. "That writer is some angry PhD scholar," she says. "He read too many books and forgot to fall in love."

Probably the most famous piece of early feminist art-art with a distinct uplift-the-gender message—was Judy Chicago's 1974-79 The Dinner Party, the installation of Great Historical Vaginas now on permanent exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. But Wittenberg introduces me to a group of female artists of the 1960s and '70s who pioneered the painting of sexually explicit images of men as well, and soon I discover that the art world is in the midst of a veritable ManSpoke renaissance. Early last year, the Dallas Contemporary mounted a retrospective called Black Sheep Feminism: The Art of Sexual Politics, while the Mary Boone Gallery in New York City featured 1960s-era antiwar artist Judith Bernstein under the title Dicks of Death-inspired by the scrawls on the walls of men's bathrooms, she drew cartoon penises shooting bullets or turning into giant menacing screws. Eventually I find my way to the Fight Censorship Group, a girl gang of '60s artists who put this cri de chatte in their manifesto: "If the erect penis is not wholesome enough to go into museums, it should not be considered wholesome enough to go into women."

But Wittenberg's love of sexual material goes deeper than politics or even lust. She's looking for fresh ways to engage art's long history of sexual imagery, from the first cave paintings 12,000 years ago to the lingams of ancient India and the phallic statues of ancient Greece to more modern provocations like Courbet's The Origin of the World, a close-up view of a woman's genitals that is still so upsetting it's been banned on Facebook. She's very interested in technical questions like the contrast between "image and surface," applying high style to subjects that many people consider vulgar. She's also responding to other current artists who are exploring the theme, from Salle and Jeff Koons to Marlene Dumas, a prominent Dutch painter whose earthy subjects range from childbirth to peep shows to, yes, impassioned men. In 2008 and 2009, a Dumas show called Measuring Your Own Grave made an influential splash at both the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. And of course, with frank sexual imagery now available on every laptop and with the porn industry outselling Hollywood, Wittenberg is engaging like a journalist with the hot topics and pressing issues (so to speak) of the modern world. As she puts it, "When you're thinking about sex all the time, it has a funny way of wandering into the picture."

It certainly doesn't hurt that her predecessors are finally starting to sell their paintings; this year, the Carnegie Museum paid \$350,000 for a series of Bernstein's "screw drawings" from the Mary Boone show. Boone's director, Ron Warren, said that while male artists still find it easier to sell explicit work (it's considered "much more aggressive for females to use sexual imagery"), the message of Bernstein's work—its critique of the link between militarism and machismo—made it downright family-friendly. "I saw people bringing in their kids and explaining the work to them."

When I e-mail Bernstein for perspective, I inadvertently stumble into a minefield of feminist politics by starting with a general question about women who paint sex. "Women who work with sexual imagery are often lumped together, when in essence their aesthetic and message are very different," she snaps. Maybe

this is because I enthused a little too much about Wittenberg, who rejects "identity art" and the notion that a woman should paint from a female perspective—the closest she's gotten to that is painting the Fox News building like a vaguely phallic still from a Leni Riefenstahl movie.

Wittenberg put me in touch with Betty Tompkins, who was more fun. Still sounding 25 at 68, she laughed her way through most of a two-hour visit to her SoHo studio. She found rejection by all the male-dominated galleries of the '70s "liberating" because she could focus on what she really wanted, which was explosive imagery. "That was in the back of my mind all the time—a charged image. It was too late to do it like de Kooning and Hofmann—they were my heroes—and I didn't want to be anybody's second place." One day she was flipping through her husband's porn collection, and she framed the shots with her fingers. "I said, 'Now that's a charged image."

By now, it's getting late. I've been in Wittenberg's studio for almost three hours. She never seems to tire. She never sits down. She has shown us paintings of a beautiful naked woman straddling a log and paintings of an orgy based on a porn video she found by searching "after school special"—she likes to use weird search terms like "back to nature" or "grassy knoll" because they generate unusual images.

Once she lands on a video she likes, she'll print out 50 different stills at different moments and play with them, "meshing" one drawing to the next. "I'll spend days just, like, distancing myself from the photograph and living it, until the direction of the emotional content" sinks in. "I'd be like, 'Oh, that image really feels red.' You know?" Sometimes she's chasing something as simple as a shadow, or a curl of the mouth.

Wittenberg takes us to her newest series: paintings of two men kissing so hard their faces almost merge into one. She's done drawings, monotypes, paintings in black and white and in red and white. The latest is the size of a small car and mostly yellow, with streaks of drippy red that look, in an oddly beautiful way, like oozing blood. She wants to express all the "conditions of the kiss: the unwanted kiss, the loving kiss, the kiss of death, the kiss of Judas, the eternal kiss of God." Eventually, she wants to do three faces kissing themselves into a single face.

Finally, at my request, she shows us the series of paintings that led to *Red Handed*, *Again*. She tells the story of the famous painter who first saw them. "I was fussing around, and he took the brush out of my hand and he just pulled it right up as one stroke—'The dick is one thing,' he said. 'Part of painting is making a choice and sticking to it. Commit! Go with your gut!'"

This seems like the right time to ask the question that started this adventure. "You said to me it's the hardest thing in the world to sell these paintings," I say. "So what happened when you showed them to collectors and gallery owners?"

At last, she sits down. The very question seems to sap her energy. But her rat-a-tat answer reveals her true spirit—repeating her favorite word about 30 times in rapid succession, she says that art curators in both Miami and the Midwest asked for one of her paintings and insisted that Miami and the Midwest were ready for explicit male imagery, eager for it, hungry for it, drooling for it. So she sent a painting out and quickly got the message that Miami and the Midwest weren't quite so eager for it or hungry for it or drooling for it after all. "So it's been sent to Miami and back,

I'm inclined to send him the same dick."
Why?

"Because I feel like it's the most digestible one in the studio—it has nice colors, it's kind of a softer image. It's slightly more decorative."

and to the Midwest and back, and now this guy is call-

ing me from Los Angeles for a show in October, and

I look where she's pointing. It's one of her yellow ones, very pretty.

"There doesn't seem to be any real home for any of these," she continues a bit sadly. "It doesn't go in the kids' room; it doesn't go in the living room; it doesn't go in the dining room. Decoration is still an important element for painting, and when you have something with an aggressive subject matter, it doesn't know its place."

But does she intend to keep doing them, I ask, even if they don't sell?

"Yeah," she answers. "I mean, I might die with all these dicks, for all I care."

At that moment, her parrot lands on her shoulder, and Wittenberg breaks into a smile. She takes the bird in her hand and pushes its feathers apart. "Look at those colors," she says.



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Although Solnit, as she says, "looked like a punk rocker and still was not the greatest communicator with people I regarded as grown-ups," she was given the task of researching and writing about major works of art for the museum's fiftieth-anniversary catalogue. When she finished at Berkeley at 23, Solnit was hired almost immediately as a full-time critic by *Artweek* magazine on the strength of her work at MoMA. She was officially a writer.

IT WAS IN THE EARLY aughts that Solnit started to add overtly political essays to her repertoire, writing predominantly for smaller lefty publications. "I give this to the Bush era," she says, explaining how she wanted to address the "incredible despair around me as the war in Iraq broke out." The specific catalyst came during a banner week in 2003: First, New York University convened a panel that brought together neurologist Oliver Sacks, historian Simon Schama, artist Chuck Close, and Solnit to talk about Eadweard Muybridge, that mansplained subject of her then-upcoming book, River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West (which would go on to win a Guggenheim Award). Her book Wanderlust was an answer on Jeopardy ("For \$1,200, this impulse to travel is the title of Rebecca Solnit's book"). And she met Susan Sontag, at a New York Institute for the Humanities lunch. Afterward, Sontag invited Solnit to her apartment, and over hard-boiled eggs with pepper flakes in the famous critic's kitchen, Sontag asked for Solnit's input on a speech she was writing to honor a figure in Israel's anti-occupation movement. At which point Solnit remembers thinking, "Why am I not speaking directly to the hopes and fears of this very moment?"

The impulse birthed Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities, her 2004 exploration of a concept that would become synonymous with the campaign of America's first black president-and which Solnit made available for free as an e-book the morning after Donald Trump's election. (It's since been downloaded 31,500-plus times.) "Here, in this book," she writes, "I want to propose a new vision of how change happens; I want to count a few of the victories that get overlooked.... I want to start over, with an imagination adequate to the possibilities and the strangeness and the dangers on this earth in this moment." The pointillist essays in Hope in the Dark unpack a dizzying array of sociopolitical movements, showing how we got from the raising of the Berlin Wall to its dismantling in just 31 years; from a tiny group of "original activists" in London's nascent abolitionist crusade in 1785 to its flowering a quarter-century later in the U.S.; from the 1930s extinction of overhunted wolves in Yellowstone National Park to their return in 1995. "We are not who we were not very long ago," she writes.

When I reach Solnit at home in San Francisco the week after the election, she's the one who seems to need an injection of hope. "This is a massive disruption and crisis, and a lot of things could come of it," she says. "The scary thing is, a lot of what comes of it is up to us."

IN HER THIRTIES, SOLNIT tells me, she and her brother were chatting about how much they both liked to run in Golden Gate Park. He ran only on back trails, he told her, so he could avoid seeing any cars. She was shocked—she ran only on the main road, because she was afraid of lurking men. This, to her, is perhaps one of the most profound and unsettling differences between men and women: the former's propensity for violence, often against the latter.

A few days before I was to meet Solnit for the first time, one of my college friends-a poet who for a few years postgraduation lived just blocks from my Brooklyn apartment-was stabbed to death, at home, by her male roommate. Almost in spite of myself, I tell Solnit about Carolyn-that was her name. I can't comprehend the young man's violence, I say, as anything but the result of a psychotic break. "Part of what I've tried to fight in my feminism is these stories that are exculpatory," Solnit replies. "If it's white men, they had mental health issues." Obviously some do, she continues, but the automatic assumption "avoids discussing how most violence, of every kind, is largely perpetrated by men," she says. "Mental illness, whether depression or psychosis, just disinhibits men. They follow patterns that are built into the culture."

One cause, she argues, is the "great renunciation" demanded by masculinity. "Emotions, expressiveness, receptiveness, a whole array of possibilities get renounced by successful boys and men in everyday life," Solnit writes in *The Mother of All Questions*. This level of repression is dangerous, she believes, making men both heavily armored and extraordinarily brittle.

I thought of Carolyn so many times over the hours I spent talking with Solnit. The Golden Gate Park story stopped me cold, for one, echoing as it does the famous Margaret Atwood line: "Men are afraid women will laugh at them. Women are afraid men will kill them." In a newspaper interview, Carolyn's murderer said that before he stabbed her he'd been disoriented and had asked Carolyn how to use his cell phone; her response, he said, was to ask if he was okay—and to laugh.

While I'm still reeling from the horror of Caro-

lyn's death, the frame Solnit helped me put around it, her willingness to look at the thing straight on, was comforting. "In my taxi on the way over, there was a little scroll across the TV about a man who killed his girlfriend and himself," she says. "We don't talk about it as a pattern, let alone an epidemic. And we so need to. Things become so familiar they're invisible, and part of what you can do is look at it from the outside. I mean, What will they think of us in the future when it's like, 'We had buildings all over America for women and children to hide from fathers and husbands?""



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and occasionally, I'd go with braids—silky locks or jumbo ones. Once while I was in the lounge at my dorm at the predominantly white University of Pennsylvania, I heard a group of white women expressing wonder at my braids, and before I knew it, and without asking for permission, they were running their hands through my hair. I can still remember recoiling at the touch—their fingers now a phantom limb that makes me dread the day when my four-year-old daughter comes home with a similar tale. So when I heard Solange's "Don't Touch My Hair" for the first time, it moved me deeply. It wasn't a feeling of sadness, or stick-it-to-em thrill at her exposure of the everyday entitlement of white people. I felt seen.

Columbia University African American studies and English professor Farah Jasmine Griffin says Solange's speak-softly approach reminds her of 1970s singers like Minnie Riperton and Deniece Williams, who achieve an electrifyingly intimate effect by singing in the upper reaches of their vocal range. "Quieting things down calls for a kind of introspection on the part of the artist and the listener," she says. "The music becomes more about black interiority, which to me is about humanity." The bombardment of images of violence against black people is "traumatizing," Griffin says, and Solange's "aesthetic reminds us that we are people who have an interior self that needs to be tended to."

Which is not to say, of course, that there's not a place for what Solange calls "powerhouse vocals," her sister's specialty, after all. Remarkably, 2016 was also the year of Beyoncé's protest album, the chart-topping *Lemonade*, which proudly reclaimed the black female experience as it relates to everything from police brutality and Hurricane Katrina to infidelity and fashion. "Beyoncé has become more verbal, and part of that is the influence of Solange," their mother says. "And Solange has become more confident as a musician. They've clearly influenced each other in good ways."

In fact, it doesn't seem too fanciful to say that *Lemonade* and *A Seat at the Table* coexist in delicious and important conversation with each other, like two sisters whispering the inner secrets of black women for all the world to hear.

SHOPPING GUIDE

Nylon coats by Norma Kamali, \$500-\$800 each, at Norma Kamali (NYC), visit normakamali.com. Pleated pants by Pleats Please Issey Miyake, \$540, at Tribeca Issey Miyake (NYC), visit tribeca issey miyake.com.

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PERSONAL VELOCITY

PERSONAL VELOCITY

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RE-THINK PINK

RE-THINK PINK

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Necklace, rings by Chrome Hearts, visit chromehearts.com. Howe: Hoodie by

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TAKE THE A TRAIN

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EET THE DRAMA UNFOLD

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CALIFORNIA, GIRLS
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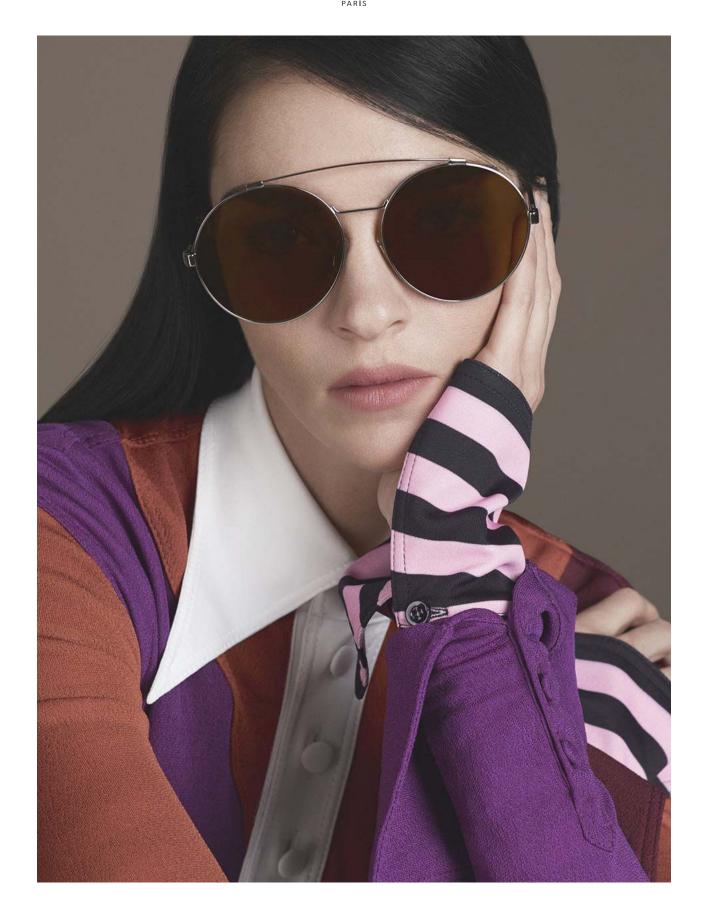


nationwide. Swimsuit by Flagpole, visit flagpolenyc. com. Earing, bracelet by David Yurman, visit davidyurman.com. Watch by Fossil, visit fossil.com. Backpack by Mars Jacobs, visit mariçacobs.com. Key chain by Kate Spade New York, visit katespade.com. Key chain by Kate Spade New York, visit katespade.com. Key chain by Kate Spade New York, visit katespade.com. Page 446: Bikini bottom by Dos Gardenias, visit dosgardenias.com. Dri-Fit socks by Nike, visit nike.com. Sneakers by Converse, visit converse.com. PAGE 446: Bikini bottom by Dos Gardenias, visit dosgardenias.com. Page Language Com. Rey Chains by Kate. Spade New York, visit katespade.com. Key chain by Coach 1944, visit coach.com. Sneakers by Golden Goose Deltuxe Brand, at Golden Goose Deltuxe Brand (NYC). PAGE 446: Swimsuit by Moschino, collection at Saks Fifth Avenue stores nationwide. Necklace by Jacquite Aiche, collection at saks fifthavenue.com. Blanket by Hermés, visit hermes.com. Sides by Fendi, visit fendi.com. PAGE 447: On her: Pullover, strapless bikini top by Missoni, at Missoni (NYC). Earring by David Yurman, visit davidyurman.com. Bracelets by Monica Vinader, visit monicavinader.com. Handbag by Chloé, similar styles at Chloé boutiques nationwide. Slides by Dalce & Gabbana, at select Dolce & Gabbana boutiques nationwide. On him, right: Hoodie by Fenty Puma by Rihanna, visit puma.com. Slides by Pardi, visit fendi.com. PAGE 448-449: On her, near left: Jacket by Balmain, visit balmain.com, collection at Barneys New York, Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). Bikin top, bottom by Dos Gardenias, collection at Barneys New York (NYC, L.A.), Bracelets by Monica Vinader, visit monicavinader.com. Necklace by Tamara Comolli, visit maracomollicom. On her, center: T-Snitt by Christopher Kane, visit christopherkane.com. On him, center: Tank by Missoni, visit missoni.com. Pants by Carhart WIP, visit carhart-wipcom. On him, far left: Wastocat, pants by Gucci, visit gucci.com. PAGE 450: On her: Top, shorts by Giorgio Armani, at Giorgio Armani boutiques nationwide. Earring by D Studios, visit acnestudios.com. Sneakers by Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello, at

Prices are approximate. ELLE recommends that merchandise availability be checked with local store.

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KING OF THE ROAD

Whether running a motorcycle gang or ruling medieval empires, **Charlie Hunnam** does it all with rugged swagger and poetry at the ready. Call it his Manifest Destiny. By Mickey Rapkin

In this spring's slick, Guy Ritchie-directed King Arthur: Legend of the Sword reboot, Charlie Hunnam stars as a scheming street rat whose circumstances are upended when he pulls a medieval sword from a stone. The film may be yet another fantastical retelling of the classic legend, but the story resonates with Hunnam, 36, who was raised in rough-andtumble Newcastle upon Tyne, England, where his father was in the scrap-metal business and his mother, once an aspiring ballet dancer, ran a gift shop. His parents split when he was young, and Hunnam, after being discovered one night in a shoe store, came to the States at 18, married a woman he met on an audition for Dawson's Creek, struggled to find work, got divorced, and then found fame in an unlikely place: starring as the crown prince of a motorcycle gang on seven seasons of FX's gritty Sons of Anarchy. The show was positively Shakespearean in its drama, not unlike Hunnam's life offscreen: Last year, Hunnam-who led 2013's \$411 million-grossing *Pacific Rim* and will play famed British explorer Col. Percival Fawcett in the Brad Pitt-produced *The Lost City of Z*, out in April-was forced to make a public plea via Facebook for his fans to stop harassing his longtime girlfriend, jewelry designer Morgana McNelis. Imagine how intense things could have gotten had Hunnam not backed out of starring in 2015's Fifty Shades of Grey. He cites a scheduling conflict for that departure—but a certain phobia revealed in

ELLE: A few stories I read described your dad as a "gangster." True?

our conversation may point elsewhere.

CHARLIE HUNNAM: No, he was a scrapmetal man. If, say, a coal mine or a shipyard goes down, there's an enormous opportunity to go and strip scrap metal and melt it down. It's incredibly valuable, completely untraceable, and very desirable to steal. Everybody understands that if you fuck around, there will be serious consequences. That's where his reputation came into play. He was very well known. Some might say even feared. But he wasn't into making money illegally, which is my definition of a gangster.

ELLE: How did the town react when you became the face of a Calvin Klein cologne?

CH: I don't know, because I left there when I was 12. I go back occasionally to see my dad. I think everybody is seduced by the film busi-



ness, whether they're tough, salty, Newcastle dudes or young dudes or whatever.

ELLE: You're often shirtless in movies. Has that given you some understanding of what it's like to be a woman in Hollywood?

CH: I never really thought about it in that context.

ELLE: Okay, do you ever feel objectified?

CH: Not at all. I don't view myself that way. I obviously am cognizant of the fact that

being handsome gives me greater breadth of opportunity. I'd hope that what I bring to the table far surpasses just being handsome.

ELLE: Actors often describe sex scenes as awkward. What's the truth?

CH: I try to be sensitive to the fact that we're doing something intimate, but also keep a clear boundary. Because I'm in a very committed relationship, and I'm also cognizant that it's not my girlfriend's favorite part of my job. It's a delicate balance to strike—to be emotionally open enough to have an experience that feels honest between two people but also maintain that it's just for the film. It's not my favorite thing to do. I'm also a germophobe.

ELLE: Wait, seriously?

CH: Yeah. I've been profoundly germophobic since I was a young child. I don't want to kiss anyone but my girlfriend for my whole life. ELLE: Do you remember how it started? CH: When I was maybe eight or nine,

there was a parasite from dogs in the

north of England that, if you ingested it, could turn you blind. We had a thing in schools to educate the kids about the importance of hygiene, specifically around dogs, because we had a few kids who went blind. That horrified me. The point is, everyone thinks it's great to be an actor and get to kiss a bunch of beautiful actresses in films, but I actually hate it.

ELLE: Have you ever used your fame to get out of trouble?

CH: There's definitely a huge number of L.A. police who seem to like *Sons of Anarchy*. When the show was on, I'd ride my bike to work a little faster than California law would allow. And I got pulled over my fair share. It didn't always work, but maybe two or three times I didn't get a ticket. It was very handy.

ELLE: You were cast in *Fifty Shades of Grey* but backed out because of scheduling conflicts. Have you seen the film?

CH: I haven't. I developed a friendship with [director Sam/Taylor-Johnson], but that was a somewhat traumatic experience for me. I didn't want to open that wound.

ELLE: *King Arthur* is a story about destiny. Do you believe in fate?

CH: Yes. I think we can affect our own fates, but there's also a powerful energy that's the universe or God or whatever your unconscious recognizes that helps along your way.

ELLE: Is there a story from your own life that informed that view?

CH: No, but I'll tell you what Henry David Thoreau said: "I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." I think when you live your destiny, you allow yourself to get in touch with your inner essence. What's difficult in life is the economic and social requirements that distract us from bring-

ELLE: Economic requirements! Don't you have, like, 80 pairs of sneakers?

CH: I did at a period in my life. Not anymore.

ELLE: What changed?

ing forth our true passion.

CH: I grew up. I spent an enormous amount of time sourcing the good shit. I needed really limited edition, blah blah blah. Then

I thought, What the fuck am I doing? I took out six or seven pairs that I cared about, and I gave the rest to charity.

JIMMY CHOC L'EAU THE NEW FRAGRANCE



GUCCI

