

SPRING

# FASHION

By Amy Larocca

FEATURING

### Naomie Harris

in the glow of Moonlight

AND

Jessica Lange plays Steinem, Kahlo, de Beauvoir, Mae West, and more. A PORTFOLIO BY Sandro

(The Beheaded)

Queen of Vogue Paris

(The Real)

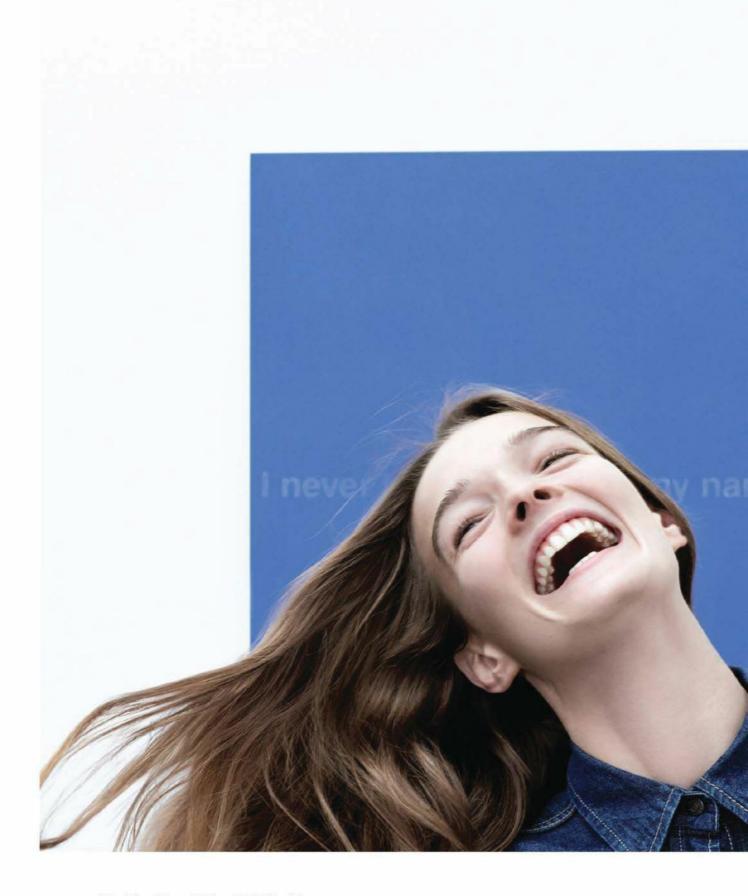
Princess of Vogue Arabia

Viva Fleabag

Stan Smith, Human Shoe



What Is Trumpism, Really?







### **CALVIN KLEIN**









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FEBRUARY 6-19, 2017

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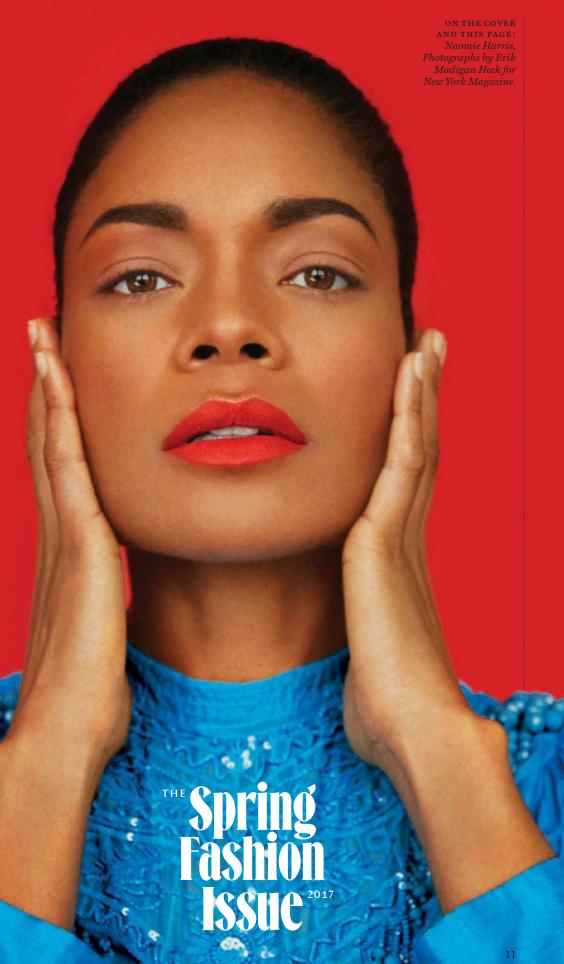
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spotted this on my way to work.









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-BEN BRANTLEY, THE NEW YORK TIMES



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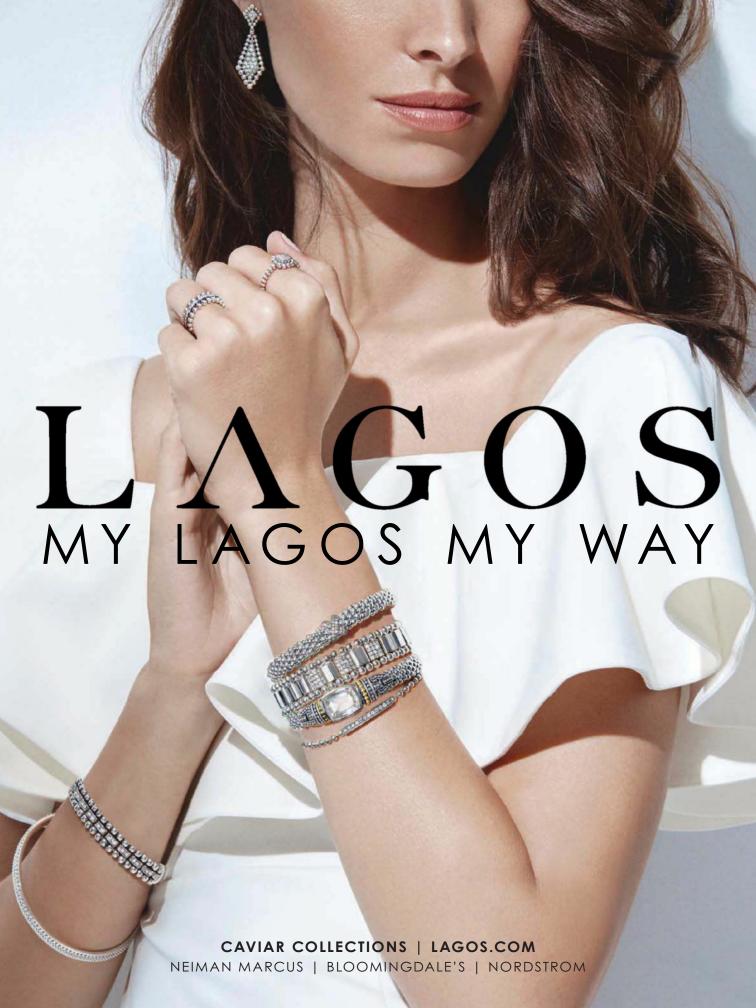
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FEBRUARY 6-19, 2017



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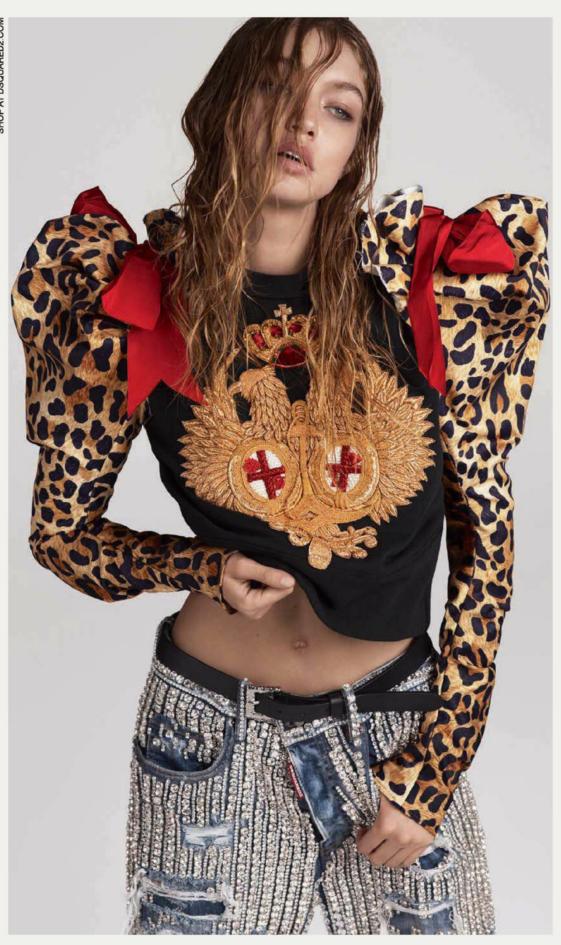




- "America, in other words, is the country of both Obama and Trump, of the very best and the very worst, and its future is never settled but constantly remade," Andrew Sullivan wrote in his love letter to his adopted home ("America Is Still the Future," January 23-February 5). Victoria Neilson, the legal director at Immigrant Justice Corps, thought the essay did "a remarkable job of describing everything that is right and wrong with America as only an immigrant—a gay, HIV-positive outsider for whom citizenship in the United States was a deliberate choicecould do. The lifting of the HIV ban and the promise of equality for gay immigrant families seemed to be harbingers of greater justice in the American immigration system. Those of us who believe that every immigrant deserves a chance to live the same American Dream are very concerned that excluding the most vulnerable and building walls around our country will not only strip our immigration system of its humanity, but also eviscerate the promise America itself holds to the rest of the world." And several readers, in fact, challenged whether the rest of the world can still share Sullivan's faith in America as Trump reshapes foreign policy. Commenter nbb wrote, "This is an illuminating piece ... but it doesn't touch upon how the recent events feel for the rest of the world, in particular in Europe, where I live, the other half of what we used to call 'the West.' I am afraid that even if the U.S. itself may rebound from its Trump experience, the damage to how America is perceived by its traditional allies may be irreversible."
- New York Magazine's latest issue also included a reflection from Michael Idov on what he learned living in Putin's Moscow ("Life After Trust," January 23-February 5). "Want a sneak preview of what your country could be like after a few vears of the new administration?" weighed in the Awl. Russian journalist Alexey Kovalev had a visceral response to the piece-especially to Idov's descriptions of the fading of Russia's political resistance. "I myself moved back to Russia in early 2012, inspired by the anticipation of imminent change that swept over Moscow in the weeks following the flawed parliamentary elections. The euphoria I felt at mass rallies and reignited political debates was unprecedented, but the feeling was shortlived. It's tempting to describe what followed as a 'state crackdown.' But from within Russia it feels more like prolonged domestic abuse." Still, some readers wondered, does America deserve to feel so self-righteous about its democracy in the first place? "Step past the flashy title and apply this to institutions in America that have lost public faith," @davekartunen tweeted. "Say, the Chicago PD?"
- As Donald Trump rounded out his administration with "a murderers' row of financiers, mostly loyalists and donors," Jessica Pressler gave a portrait of some of the Wall Streeters who bet heavy—and as it turned out, smartly—on Trump's victory ("Long on Trump," January 23-February 5), including many with Goldman Sachs on their CVs. Nomi Prins, a former managing director at Goldman and the author of *All*

the Presidents' Bankers, responded, "Over the past century, there has been a consistent, symbiotic relationship between presidents and bankers. Together, they have influenced domestic and foreign policy. So when Trump struck a chord at the heart of American populist discontent, the fact that he cast himself as the people's billionaire was irrelevant to his elite entourage. The men that interjected themselves into his power orbit are not dysfunctional outliers; they are rich bipartisan opportunists. Trump is no different from the wealthy cabinet members with which he is surrounding himself. What drives these men is their backgrounds of privilege and their lust for power." Bloomberg's Matthew Monks pointed out that there are historical antecedents for those poised to profit off Trump: "People forget: Goldman legend Sid Weinberg made a similar killer bet on FDR in the '30s." But UCLA professor Peter James Hudson, author of *Bankers* and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean, argued that, even in comparison to their financier forefathers, the members of the new administration are exceptional: "Pressler illustrates in vivid, almost pornographic detail, the corrupt culture and the corrosive personalities of Donald Trump's inner circle. The robber-barons and financial titans of the Gilded Agethemselves no strangers to corruption and egregious glad-handing of politicians in the lobby of the Willard Hotel-must be hanging their heads in shame at the actions of their latter-day incarnations."

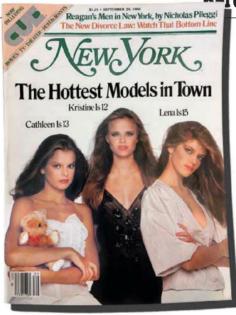
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# **DSQUARED2**

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### Reread



**September 29, 1980** 

### Were You Too Young for This?

Thirty-six years later, we asked the girl on the left. By Christopher Bonanos

**"Gathleen Is 13."** During the disco era, you could scarcely open a glossy magazine without finding a story about fashion models. Coverage of the too-fast-too-rich-too-thin life came with appealing pictures attached, and maybe some titillating tales of sex and cocaine and men with their shirts open to the fifth button. In 1980, *New York* ran a cover story about a trend that skated right up to the edge of creepydom, if not over it: Elite Models and other agencies had begun signing barely pubescent young women. "Pretty Babies," the story was headlined, after the title of Louis Malle's controversial movie starring a 12-year-old Brooke Shields (she, too, ended up on a *New York* cover). The three young women are right at the intersection of little-girlishness and womanhood, fully made up with hints of cleavage but inescapably of junior-high age.

The story, though, isn't a pervy one. "Pretty Babies," by Mel Juffe and Anthony Haden-Guest, contains a heavy dose of hand-wringing. Marita O'Connor, an editor at Mademoiselle, notes that "some of these girls are just children. I don't really approve of bringing them into this crazy business at that age," and asserts that she's avoided hiring them: "I don't think it's necessary." A few modeling agencies' representatives are similarly skeeved out; "We seem to be moving into a Lolita syndrome" is how Wilhelmina's Bill Weinberg puts it. Even Elite's John Casablancas admits that he's heard magazine editors say, "She's beautiful, but, my God, she's only 12.

Cathleen Ess, the girl at left on the cover above, was 13. Today her married name is

Cathleen Lamar, and she does not have a bad word to say about life in the glamour trenches. "The modeling years were fantastic. I wouldn't have traded them for the world," she says. "I had the time of my life; I traveled the world. It's a tricky, dangerous business, but for me it worked out. At the end of the day, it exposed me to so much."

During her modeling career, Lamar's mother and father granted her a degree of freedom that seems breathtaking. She graduated from high school early in order to spend three summers in one of Elite's model apartments in Paris; she lived in Milan on her own at 17. She was also studious enough to get into



Cathleen Lamar today.

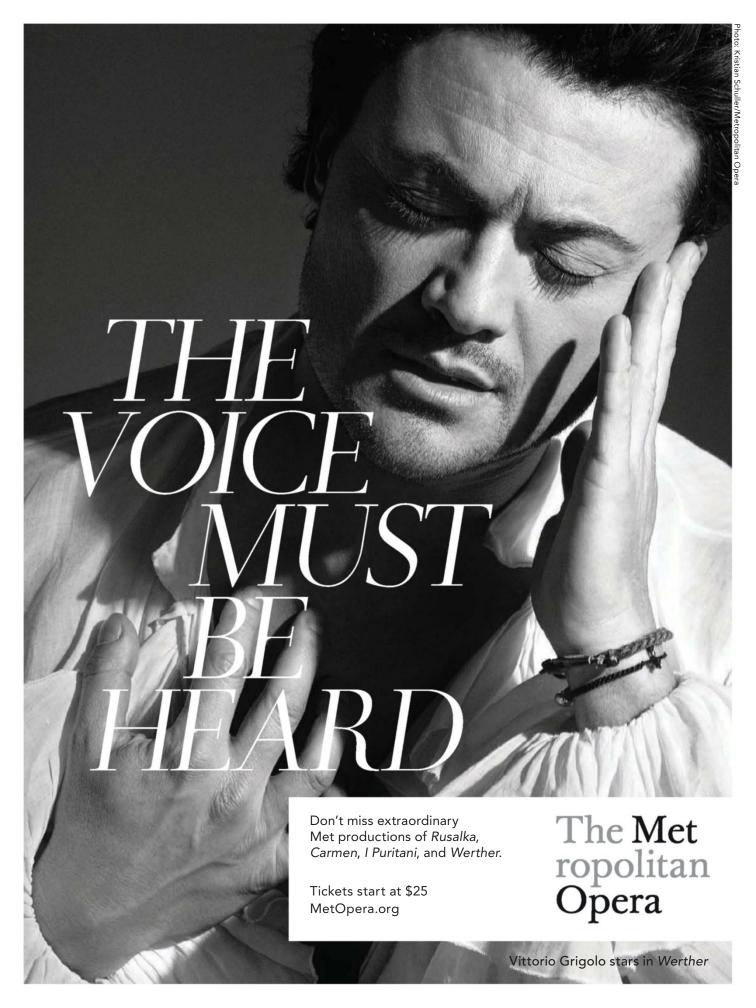
Columbia. "I got accepted with the idea that I'd continue modeling and then realized that the idea of modeling and the Ivy League don't really jibe." (It paid the first year's tuition and expenses, though.) "I graduated with a B.A. in political science but went on to work in the fashion business-moved to London, worked as an assistant buyer at Harrods, moved back to New York and worked at Norma Kamali, then Adrienne Vittadini." She got married, had three sons, and runs a high-end admissions-counseling business called Get the College Edge-"after proving my formula, with three boys at MIT, Cornell, and MIT!" She lives in Florida and Westchester, going back and forth as business demands.

There was, of course, a certain amount of bad stuff going on in the modeling world. A 60 Minutes report in 1988 focused on Jean-Luc Brunel, at whose agencies models had reportedly been drugged and raped by predatory agents. Young models today work under laws like those governing child actors, with regular breaks and earnings put in trust. Lamar says the misbehavior she saw at the fringes of her circle was more gardenvariety: "I was exposed to a lot of stories about girls who maybe chose the wrong path because they think it's their ticket to sleep with the booker, or to sleep with the head of the agency. Did it work out for them? Not in most of the cases I saw." And, she is quick to add, exceptionally pretty girls who are not models often end up in the same traps.

She herself avoided the precipice. "Obviously there were times where they wanted a little less clothing than I was comfortable with, and when the coke was passed around. The dangers and allure of that older-playboy crowd, flying you to Monte Carlo, skiing in the Alps ... But I'm a strong person." Her family's guilelessness may even have helped her out. "About modeling, my mother was just kind of oblivious. When I was 19, I remember [the agency] said, *Cathleen*, *you have to drop five pounds*, and I got home and told them, and they said, 'Why? You look fine.' They were not caught up in the game.

They did think it was fantastic that I was flying to Japan, flying to Mauritius. Financially, it was obviously very beneficial, but they didn't see it as a long-term career, ever." And then, she volunteers, without being asked: "Would I let my daughter model? Uhhh. I think that's why God gave me three boys."





# PHOTOGRAPH: NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

# Intelligencer

INSIDE: New York's Yemenis protest / Ranking Trump's picks / Trump's Black History Month / Refugees, denied / ISIS and the ban



### The National Interest: Jonathan Chait

### The True Purpose of Trumpism A culture war sold

A culture war sold through the rhetoric of jobs and security. THE CHAOS OF Donald Trump's opening weeks should not come as a total shock. The first president with no experience in government, surrounded by a chief of staff, a chief strategist, and a sonin-law who also lack any government experience and who seem to be competing ruthlessly with each other for power, is not a formula for quick success. The administration's incompetence manifested itself most visibly in the rapid execution of a cruel, overbearing immigration restriction that provoked protests nationwide and even grumbling from some Republicans in Congress.

At another level, though, the travel ban might be seen, from the ideological perspective of the people who crafted it, not necessarily as a failure at all. Despite its ostensibly narrow scope, the operation was extraordinarily ambitious, designed to send a message to the world about who Americans are, who can become American, and, most especially, who cannot. The mayhem, inconvenience, and heartbreak it caused were in fact its very intent.

There are three different aspects of the Trump presidency at play. One is simply characterological: The president's distinct troubled-adolescent behavior pattern, which, via regular bouts of insult-spewing, braggadocio, ignorance, extravagant promises, wild lies, and absolute intolerance of criticism, frequently throws the policymaking process into disarray. The second component, and the largest, is standard Republican policy, developed in Congress and conservative think tanks for decades, which Trump has begun to implement fairly smoothly. The administration has already nominated Neil Gorsuch, an orthodox movement conservative, to the Supreme Court; it has frozen regulations and green-lit pipelines and snapped back government support for foreign organizations that provide abortions.

The final and most mysterious element—the one that created the travel ban-is Trumpism. This is the ethnonationalistic aspect of the president's governing ideology, which springs both from Trump's own impulses and from ideas nurtured by a handful of his closest aides, including Steve Bannon, Stephen Miller, and several staffers brought over from the alt-right publication Breitbart. Trumpism combines an instinctive belief in zero-sum relations between countries with a narrow and retrograde definition of American identity. And a key aspect of Trumpism is surprise. This is partly due to circumstance: There are no offthe-shelf Trumpist agendas that the White House can immediately translate into policy. But in developing their plans, Bannon and Miller have cultivated a maximum amount of secrecy, reportedly conscripting GOP legislative aides who hid their work from their own bosses and shielding most of Trump's own Cabinet from their plans.

The executive order halting admission of refugees and cracking down on immigration from seven Muslimmajority countries was a narrower codification of the "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" that Trump had promised during the campaign. The implementation was a fiasco. Tens of thousands of travelers en route to the U.S. found themselves blocked, detained, or even deported by Customs agents. Families were separated, children and elderly people terrified. Parents of a 4-month-old with a serious heart condition had to cancel their baby's planned heart surgery in Oregon. On and on the tragedies mounted. Beyond the humanitarian costs, the toll on business and intellectual life was immediate. A Danish archaeologist was allegedly denied admission to the U.S. because he excavates ancient sites in Iraq. A computer-science-department staffer told one reporter his university had lost 11 Ph.D. candidates to the ban.

The confusion spread worldwide and made a statement of its own. A pillar of Trumpism is the refusal to distinguish between peaceful and violent Muslims. Trump has said "Islam hates us," and when asked if he distinguishes between radical Islam and the religion as a whole, he brushed off the distinction: "It's very hard to separate, because you don't know who is who." Bannon has repeatedly emphasized his belief that Islam as a whole poses an existential threat to Christianity. ("Islam is not a religion of peace," Bannon has said. "Islam is a religion of submission.") Trump has falsely implicated the entire Muslim-American community in the terrorist attacks of domestic radicals in San Bernardino and Orlando. Trump advisers have depicted the threat of radical Islam as "multidimensional and multigenerational"—that is, pervasive and intrinsic to all Muslims. From 1975 to 2015, immigrants from the seven excluded countries killed This Just In ...

"The Trump administration is working to scrap a program tofight extremism in favor of one focusing on extremism among Muslims. a source familiar with deliberations in the White House said Wednesday ... Officials in the new administrationsee the refusal to focus the program on radical Islamic extremism as needlessly'politically correct' the source said -CNN. Feb. 2

a total of zero Americans in terror attacks on U.S. soil. And vet Trumpists see terrorism as a pervasive, invisible threat that spreads within Muslim communities. Punishing innocent Muslims for the threat posed by terrorists is not a side effect of their policy but an expression of its tenets.

The collateral damage to academia and tech firms from the ban may, too, have been part of the point. There is a plausible argument that low-skilled immigrants depress wages for workers in blue-collar fields and that their numbers should thus be reduced. But leaked memos suggest the administration is designing crackdowns on highly skilled immigrants, despite mounds of evidence showing that such immigrants increase incomes for Americans of modest means. Bannon has denounced what he calls "progressive plutocrats in Silicon Valley" and complained that "engineering schools are all full of people from South Asia and East Asia." Describing his vision for Trumponomics after the elections, he enthused, "It's the greatest opportunity to rebuild everything. Shipyards, ironworks, get them all jacked up." There is no economic analysis identifying shipyards and ironworks as promising sectors for public investment. His mind simply runs automatically toward nostalgia for the manly work of an older generation.

Trumpism is a culture war sold through chimerical economic and security gains. Michael Anton, a nationalsecurity staffer in the administration and a key Trumpist intellectual, wrote an anonymous essay during the campaign predicting that Trump's election would stanch what Anton called "the ceaseless importation of Third World foreigners with no tradition of, taste for, or experience in liberty." America has long been defined—unlike France or Germany or Japan or Russia—as a country lacking a singular race. The ambition of Trumpism seems to be to create a blood-and-soil American nationalism, an identity from which Asian, Muslim, and Latin American immigrants are excluded permanently.

It is widely known that very few Republican elites share this Trumpist vision. What's grown clear since the election is how little this matters. Traditional Republicans would prefer to build a coalition for their small-government policies that would attract immigrant communities, but they will take any coalition that presents itself. Paul Ryan's professions of love for tolerance and openness before the election reflected the calculations of a politician who expected his nominee to lose and was planning to repair the anticipated damage to his party's brand. The ideas that deeply troubled Ryan when articulated by a losing presidential candidate sound far more acceptable when articulated by a sitting president who promises to sign his fiscal bills. "People close to Ryan and the White House say the Speaker shares an easy rapport with Steve Bannon," reports Politico.

Trumpism's greatest vulnerability lies not in the buried qualms of his Republican partners. It is in the American public. January was a month of citizen protest unlike anything this country has witnessed in decades. After the travel ban was announced, mass outpourings at airports-many spontaneous—beamed around the world a message perhaps just as potent as the one the president delivered. Previous American presidents have espoused America's openness and belief in harmony, but it took Trump to inspire Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others to join together in demonstrations of patriotic, ecumenical solidarity. At the moment, they are the strongest defense of the American idea against an ideology determined to thwart it.



Everything reduced but the thrill...

### THE OUTNET.COM

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### Protests: Bodega Patriots

New York's Yemeni community makes its voice heard.

By Alexa Tsoulis-Reay

ON FEBRUARY 2, more than 1,000 Yemeniowned bodegas—as well as Yemeni-owned cafés and restaurants—shut down from 12 to 8 p.m. so shopkeepers could attend a rally to protest the Trump administration's immigration ban. News of the event spread largely via word of mouth and social media, drawing a mostly Muslim crowd of thousands. (Among the non-Muslims was a Brooklyn high-school teacher who came to support his Yemeni students, many of whom work in bodegas or have parents who do.)

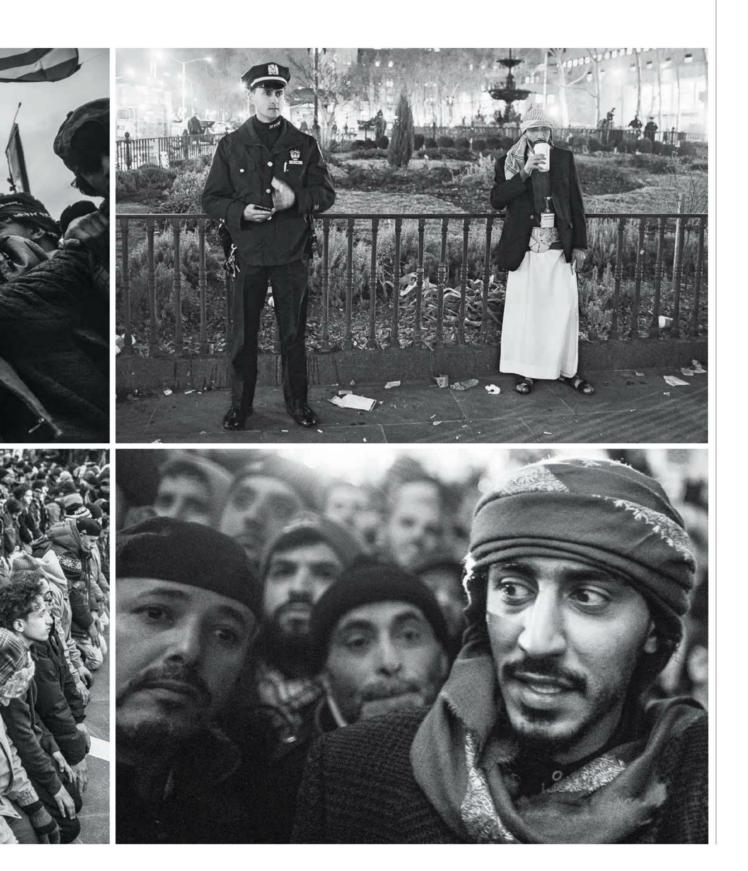
One protester was 26-year-old Abduelah Mohamed, a contractor who had spent the weekend at JFK, where his aunt had been detained by Customs and Border Patrol. He'd moved to New York from Yemen when he was 12, but his sister-in-law had just been told that her long-awaited visa interview was canceled. "This is the first time I've seen action like this, and it's scary," he said. "People are already wary of me, and they will look at me with even more suspicion now."

"We came here to be united and to be seen," said Ishraq Almontaser, a 21-year-old Yemeni-American makeup-and-henna artist from Brooklyn. "This is all about basic humanity. We pay our taxes. We go to school. We work. We are the future, and we want him to see that we won't put up with this." When Almontaser heard about the strike, she immediately Snapchatted the details and put them on Instagram. "I wanted Trump to see as many of the young generation as he can," she said.

There was at least one counterprotester, a bearded man with an American flag with Trump's face on it, who yelled a slur at the crowd. "I think that was my first actual racist attack in New York City," said Maira Khan, a second-generation Pakistani-American. Her friend gave her a pat on the shoulder. "Don't worry, I'm going to go get this on video," she said. "We'll turn that racist into a meme."







### **Parlor Game:**

### **Race to the Bottom**

The staff of Daily Intel ranks the worst Trump-administration appointees.

#### JONATHAN CHAIT'S PICKS

1. MICHAEL FLYNN National Security Adviser: This exercise requires one to strip away policy considerations and focus on: "Are we all going to die because of this guy?" The most dangerous is Flynn—Russophile, avowed hater of any information that questions his beliefs, and fan of far-right white nationalists. 2. STEVE BANNON Chief Strategist and Senior Counselor: Crazed Breitbart-ian ethno-nationalist who has previously expressed a "Leninist" desire to bring the entire system down. 3. SCOTT PRUITT EPA Administrator: Much less likely to destroy all human life within four years; more likely to do so within a few centuries.

#### ED KILGORE'S PICKS

1. JEFFERSON BEAUREGARD SESSIONS III Attorney General: The Justice Department has vast discretion, for good or ill, in enforcing federal laws. There is every indication that Attorney General Sessions would turn the priorities of his department upside down, prosecuting imaginary voter fraud instead of real voter suppression. 2. SCOTT PRUITT EPA Administrator: He's a borderline climate-science denier with close ties to the fossil-fuel industries whose interests are fundamentally at odds with the national and global interest in, well, survival. 3. BETSY DEVOS Secretary of Education: Another fox in the hen house, she ranks third only because the federal role in education is too limited to enable her to fulfill her career-long goal of replacing "government schools" (as her husband calls them) with publicly funded private and especially religious education.

### ERIC LEVITZ'S PICKS

**1. BEN CARSON** Secretary of Housing and Urban Development: He is not the worst nominee from a consequentialist perspective. But he is the most wholly unjustifiable. Carson has no experience in managing a government bureaucracy, let alone in the field of urban development. This is a man who believes that there is a broad scientific consensus that aliens built the pyramids—but that this consensus is wrong, because the biblical Joseph built the pyramids with help from God. He also believes efforts to track patterns of racial discrimination in housing are reminiscent of "communism." 2. TOM PRICE Secretary of Health and Human Services: Tom Price is the anti-Carson: a pick whose badness stems from his competence. As author of many of the House GOP's health-care proposals, Price is wholly qualified and also deeply committed to increasing the number of Americans who die from curable illness. 3. ANDY PUZDER Secretary of Labor: An audacious betrayal of the "forgotten" working people. Puzder is a fast-food CEO who's been an avowed opponent of minimum-wage increases and a champion of replacing workers with robots.

### REBECCA TRAISTER'S PICKS

1. NIKKI HALEY Ambassador to the U.N.: All Trump's picks are chilling; to pick the worst feels like suggesting that the destruction of the planet is somehow worse than the rollback of our human rights. All I could manage was a list of least-bad Cabinet picks. Haley won because as governor, she took the Confederate flag down in South Carolina. Of course, in her first speech on the job, she talked about "taking names" of those "who don't have our backs." 2. James mattis Secretary of Defense: He has denounced the use of torture. Which is a piteously low bar, and meaningless since Trump is obviously not consulting him. 3. REX TILLERSON Secretary of State: There is not a third-least-bad pick. I mean, I heard that Tillerson might not hate gay people. Congratulations to Rex; he must be a real mensch. Too bad he is a lifelong oil-industry baron with extensive business interests in Russia.

FAKE NEWS

### Imagining the Remainder of the White House's Black History Month Schedule

By Rembert Browne

FEB. 6: Keynote address: "Blacks Can Be Racist, Too," by Charles Barkley.

FEB. 7: First Annual Blackface Ball.

FEB. 8: Performance of Porgy and Bess starring Ben Carson and Omarosa Manigault.

FEB. 9: "So About That Harriet Tubman \$20 Bill Rumor ...": A Conversation with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

FEB. 10: Film screening: *The Birth* of a Nation (1915).

FEB. 11: TBD chicken event.

**FEB. 12:** Film screening: *Hidden Fences* (2016).

FEB. 13: "The Future of the Nonviolent Black: A Conversation With Ray Lewis and Sheriff David Clarke."

FEB. 14: "Black Love: Celebrate Valentine's Day With **Donald** and Melania."

FEB. 15: "'Still I Rise': Cam Newton Reads the Classic Maya Angelou Poem, Followed by a Discussion on Why He Never Knelt," moderated by Frank Luntz.

FEB. 16: Stacey Dash meet-and-greet (tips accepted).

FEB. 17: "The Sugar: A Look Back at All the Great Blacks Who Have Gotten Diabetes and Still Found a Way to 'Keep on Keepin' On."

FEB. 18: "What It's Like to Be a Black Woman in America: A Discussion with Kellyanne Conway, Ann Coulter, and Dinesh D'Souza."

**FEB. 19:** Film screening: *Crash* (2004).

FEB. 20: Postal Service unveils its new Steve Harvey stamp.

FEB. 21: Kids' Day (bring your child for a photo op with the bust of Martin Luther King and Steve Bannon).

FEB. 22: First annual "All Lives Matter Including Blacks but Not Only Black Lives Matter" rally.

FEB. 23: "From Marian Anderson to Candy Carson: A Celebration of Legendary Woman Singers Who Are Blacks."

FEB. 24: "White Men Can Jump: A Celebration of White Dunkers in the NBA and How They Ended Racism."

FEB. 25: "Black Hair, Don't Care: A Celebration of Black Hair" (admission is \$100, or \$200 to touch various black hair).

FEB. 26: "If You're a Christian Black, You Have to Love Donald Trump or You Will Go to Hell: An Electrifying Sermon by TBD Black Megachurch Preacher."

FEB. 27: President Trump announces his plan to build ships that will take you back to Africa.

FEB. 28: Announcement of March, May, August, and November as White History Months.



### **Notebook: A Syrian Family Torn in Two**

For Doha Allahham, 42, a refugee living in Bayonne, New Jersey, Donald Trump's executive orders on immigration have left the fate of her children in the balance. By Joshua David Stein and Julia Rothman



Ali Kaddour with his mother, Doha Allahham; his father, Esmail Kaddour; and his brother Mazen. Not pictured. His older siblings, Mohamad and Noor, who were unable to emigrate with the rest of the family



ъ "I HAVE FOUR CHILDREN: Noor (26), Mohamad (22), Mazen (16), and Ali (10). Our family is from Yalda in Syria. In 2012, when the war broke out, Ali was in kindergarten. He stopped going to school when the bombing got bad. Eventually, we moved to Damascus. My husband, Esmail, was a grocer, but we left his store behind. There was no food anyway. ¶ We thought the city would be safe, but then Ali's school was bombed. Many of his classmates were killed. He saw everything. That's when he developed a stutter. We all became traumatized. My hands began to shake. My husband's heart condition worsened. I told him that we would either die from a bomb or from the anxiety. In 2014, we sold nearly everything, fled to Bangkok, and applied for refugee status with the UNHCR. In Bangkok, Ali had a really hard time. He had seen too much. One day, he tried to jump off the balcony

of our seventh-floor apartment. We took him to the hospital, and they put him on medication. ¶ The U.N. said they could settle us in the U.S., where my sister lives, but that I could only bring my younger children. The last time I saw Mohamad and Noor was August 16, 2016. When I left them in Bangkok, I said, 'I'm going to leave my soul with you. Only my body is going.' They told me they understood. They knew Ali needed me more. After we settled, we began the process to bring them to join us. When the ban was announced, my husband stopped breathing. We had to take him to the hospital. Noor and Mohamad have heard nothing from the UNHCR. The system is completely frozen. I think of what I'll say to them, if they ever arrive. I'll tell them that we believe in this country and that there are people here who will defend us. Then I'll tell them I love them, again and again and again."



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49 minutes with ...

## Rukmini Callimachi

Heading to the airport with the New York *Times'* ISIS expert.

BY ANDREW RICE

ROUND 7:30 P.M., three hours before she is scheduled to depart on an overnight flight to Jordan, Rukmini Callimachi sends me a text message. "I'm so sorry but I'm running really late," it reads. Callimachi, one of journalism's foremost experts on the grisly activities of ISIS and other extremist groups, is still at home, waiting for

a last-minute load of laundry to dry. By the time she picks me up, on a corner outside her office at the New York Times Building, it is just two hours until take-off. She is unperturbed, greeting me with a warm smile as I join her in the back seat of the Kia sedan. A backpack, stuffed to a rocklike density, is wedged between us. She's rushing off on a monthlong reporting trip to the Middle East—her first

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since President Trump injected the region with even more chaos and mistrust.

The previous Friday, Trump had issued his executive order banning travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations, including the ISIS strongholds of Syria and Iraq. In the shocked aftermath, Callimachi, whose Twitter account is usually devoted to discussing national security and ISIS—and sometimes debating the group's many online sympathizers—posted that she found herself "in tears at the news." She says she thinks the order is "flawed from so many angles," one of which is intensely personal for her. She was once a refugee.

As our Lyft driver, a bearded young man named Nejat, navigates through Times Square, Callimachi tells the story. In March 1979, when she was 5, Rukmini, her mother, and her grandmother boarded a train out of Romania. The communist regime of Nicolae Ceausescu tightly restricted travel, but her mother had managed to obtain passports by citing the need to visit an ill relative in Paris. "What she believes is that the authorities made the calculated decision that 'Oh, two women and a child, that seems legit, they really are going to just go and come back," she says. "My dad basically sacrificed himself. He stayed back." After a stressful passage through Hungary, where they were nearly detained by authorities, they ended up in Switzerland, where they were awarded asylum. The Romanian government punished her father, a skilled pediatric surgeon, by transferring him to a remote village.

"The five years of my life in Switzerland was a pretty dark time for us," Callimachi says. "We suddenly had a label on us. We were refugees, and we were immigrants, and the worst of all was that we were from Romania." In conservative Lausanne, she would hear the Swiss vell at her mother, cursing about ces putains de roumainsthose "fucking Romanians." But her disquieting immigrant experiences have since informed her reporting on jihadists, many of whom grew up in Europe, relegated to the fringes—as she was—by ethnic prejudice. "There's something about their life where they're at some level not fitting in," she says. "And that seems very human to me."

To Callimachi's mind, the United States—she moved to California after her grandmother married an American—always seemed different from Europe: a place, she wrote on Twitter, "where \*anyone\* from anywhere can arrive and can belong/thrive." She became a citizen and later a foreign correspondent, earning a finalist nomination for the Pulitzer Prize while reporting for the Associated Press in West Africa. She was living there when Barack Obama won the

presidency in 2008, thrilling the continent. "The next day, when I walked to work, and we were walking past the vegetable sellers and the taxi vendors, everybody was doing that "L'américaine!" and thumbs-up," she says. She recalls being summoned to a press conference by the newly reelected president of Senegal, who delivered an hours-long harangue against the press for suggesting he might lose. "I remember sitting there as a young American reporter, seeing this spectacle and thinking, This would never happen at home."

The events of the past year, though, have shaken such assumptions of superiority. The night after Trump signed the travel ban, Callimachi went to the home of a friend who was hosting a dinner for a Syrian refugee couple. The husband, trained as a chef back home, had prepared a Middle Eastern banquet. The Arabic speakers at the party tried to explain to the perplexed refugees what was happening at airports all around the country, where people like them were being detained and outraged protesters were rallying. But no one could quite believe the news. "I've gotten emails and messages from dismayed friends who are trying to get some clarity on what this means, and of course I don't have clarity myself. I don't understand where this is going to lead," Callimachi says.

Though she often travels into the field, Callimachi is best known for her investigations into the ways ISIS recruits fighters and spreads propaganda via online social networks. It used to be that would-be terrorists traveled to remote camps to be trained to carry out acts of violence, but today, a jihadist never has to leave his com-

To those who long for an apocalyptic war between Islam and the secular West, Trump's confrontational moves look like the fulfillment of a prophecy.

puter. That is why Callimachi, like many terrorism experts, thinks the travel ban is likely only to aid the extremist cause. Although ISIS has yet to release an official statement, the militants she monitors were celebrating on Twitter and in their Telegram channels. Some were happy that Trump appeared to be tearing down American democracy from within. "The other line of commentary," Callimachi says, "is that this just shows the great evil of America for what it really is. This is what they knew America always was, and now the mask has been taken off." To those who long for an apocalyptic war between Islam and the secular West, Trump's confrontational moves look like the fulfillment of a prophecy.

The Kia swings up a concrete ramp and stops in front of the terminal, and I help Callimachi wheel a pair of large suitcases to the counter for Royal Jordanian Airlines. Women in head scarves are clustered around the elastic entrance to the check-in line. Families are hugging, saying good-bye.

"When you look at President Trump's tweet where he says that we didn't tell anybody because otherwise the bad guys would come in," she says. "Who are these 'bad guys'?" The vast majority of people who have been arrested in America for ties to 1818 have been citizens or permanent residents; since 2001, there have been few cases of terrorist attacks mounted by foreign visitors. "Omar Mateen: born here. San Bernardino, half of the couple was born here, the other was from Pakistan—a place that's not on the list," she says. "The point is to keep us safe, but the people who are doing this are overwhelmingly not from these countries. And at the same time we are aggravating our relationship with the very partners that we need." Callimachi is a reporter, but she knows that once she lands in the Middle East, she will be the one facing questions. "You know, when you're an American living overseas, your country's foreign policy is basically tattooed to your forehead," she says.

In December, shortly after Trump's election, Callimachi visited the city of Mosul, where the Iraqi army is engaged in a bloody street-by-street battle to drive out ISIS. "Iraqi troops are dying in large numbers," she says. And now the United States, their supposed ally, has labeled these allies personae non gratae. "I've been with Iraqi troops and with the Peshmerga and have seen how they are fighting for Mosul and the price that they're paying," she says. "It's got to be pretty insulting to have a place on this list."

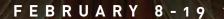
Now Callimachi is returning to witness the consequences. Her flight is boarding, and she gets in the security line, American passport in hand.



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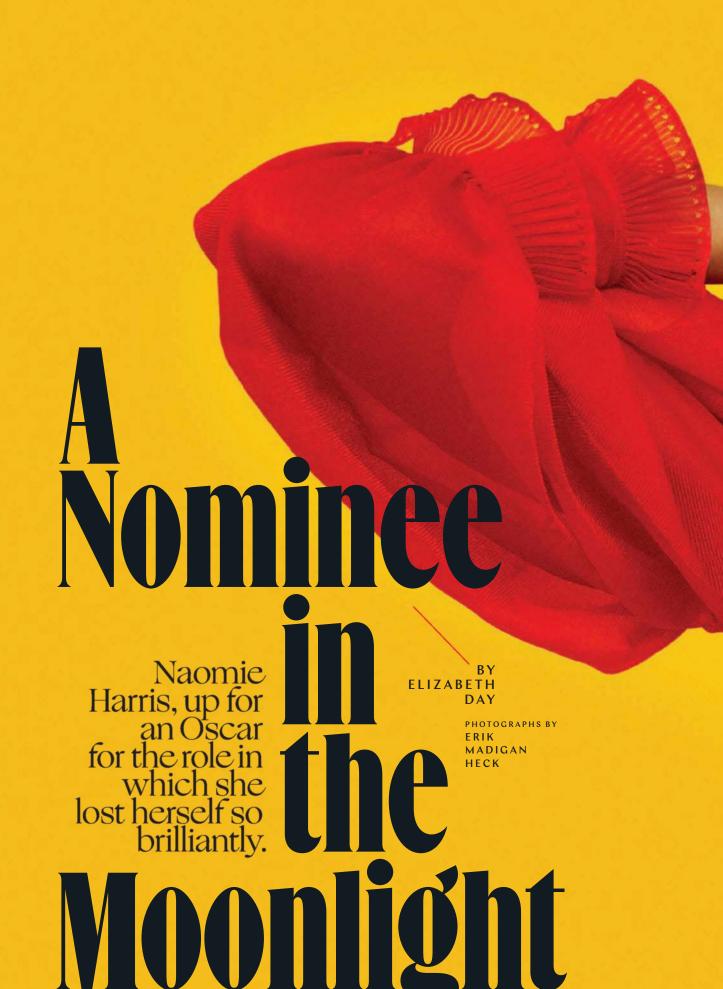
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N ANOTHER SETTING, you could imagine Naomie Harris as the perfect Girl Scout. Teachers doubtless would have said she had a good head on her shoulders. Over lunch in London, she drinks only sparkling water, having been a teetotaler for all of her 40 years. "I'm so Miss Control Freak," she admits. "I could never imagine being drunk or losing control like that. That's my worst nightmare."

This makes her performance in Barry Jenkins's Moonlight even more extraordinary. Harris plays Paula, the crack-addicted mother of Chiron, a bullied gay boy growing up in Liberty City, Miami.

She shows us Paula both as a woman trying to hold down a job and as someone in the grip of disease, the tendons in her neck straining as she screams at her son. She did plenty of research into crack addiction and worked with an accent coach over Skype. But first she had to let go of "a lot of judgment" about Paula. And to be convinced that this wasn't going to be another portrayal of a black woman crushed by forces beyond her control.

Harris has always been determined not to fall into stereotyping. Her back catalogue bears this

out—she played the survivor of a viral apocalypse in Danny Boyle's dystopian 28 Days Later, Winnie Mandela in the film adaptation of Long Walk to Freedom, and the wink-wink-nudge-nudge Eve Moneypenny to Daniel Craig's 007 (Harris was the only Moneypenny ever to be bestowed the privilege of a first name).

It was Jenkins who convinced her, explaining that both his own mother and the mother of Moonlight's original playwright, Tarell Alvin McCraney, had been crack addicts. "During the time that I was shooting, Barry said that that was the hardest period, because he had to really relive aspects of his childhood that he wanted to forget," Harris recalls. As Jenkins told the Daily Beast last year, "When you have this amazingly well-trained thespian performing so well that she starts to look like your mom ... at that point it became this different thing. We were living out this therapy session I did not want to have.'

Susanna White, who directed Harris in the 2016 adaptation of John le Carré's Our Kind of Traitor, thinks the acclaim she has garnered for her role in Moonlight is long overdue. "In Moonlight, you can really see her raw ability as an actress because you're not distracted by her appearance," she says. "I think in the past, her beauty may in some ways have distracted people from what a talented actress she is ... I completely lost Naomie in that role. I totally forgot it was her. I was transfixed."

As it happens, the day after Harris and I have lunch, Moonlight will scoop up eight Oscar nominations, including hers for Best Supporting Actress. There will also be a lot of media chatter about how refreshing it is to see so many people of color among the nominees after last year's #OscarsSoWhite campaign.

"I know that everyone thinks this year is a response to that whole campaign," Harris says carefully. "When, in fact, these films were in production or preproduction for years before all of this. So they aren't actually a response to that whole argument. So I don't like the way that they're *used* as a response to that. And people are saying, you know, 'Isn't it amazing in a year how things have changed as a result of that campaign?"

She cautions against such complacency. As the child of immigrants (Harris's mother came to Britain from Jamaica at the age of 5; her father hails from Trinidad), she is "massively" worried by the anti-immigrant rhetoric of politicians in both America and Britain: "Because the whole foundation of these countries-America in particular—is based on immigration. Britain wouldn't be the country it is without immigration. So it's madness. It just seems so retrograde to talk about these ideas now, at a time when the world is just becoming smaller and more interconnected. And now, to want to take a step backward, almost to the dark ages, where, you know, 'We want monocultures and mono-races,' it just seems really ... yeah, regressive. And very sad."

I ask about her own experiences with racism. "The only time I've ever experienced racism—I'm talking about blatant racism—was in France when I was called a 'nigger' by a bunch of kids and hit on the head." She was 16 and on a student exchange. "It was really shocking. I had never heard that word. I mean, I had heard it, but not used against me ... I just thought, What idiots. I didn't even feel afraid."

Such fortitude comes in no small measure from her mother, Lisselle Kayla, who was 18 when she had her. Harris's father left before she was born. So for a long time, it was just the two of them in their modest council flat in North London's Finsbury Park. Starting when Harris was 5, her mother put herself through university. She couldn't afford a babysitter, and one of Harris's earliest memories is of sitting quietly with coloring books while her mother took notes during a sociology lecture.

"I remember being so inspired by her work ethic, the vision she had for herself," Harris says. "My mum used to collect these plates because she always said, 'One day, we're going to live in a really nice house and we're going to be able to use these plates."

For years, her mother stacked them, unused, in the kitchen cupboards. "And then," Harris recalls, "at 15, we got our house. And my mum finally pulled out these plates."

She wells up at the memory, waving her hand in front of her face until the tears recede.

Harris always wanted to be an actress but doesn't have a clear idea of where the ambition came from. By the age of 9, she was getting parts in children's-television dramas. When she went to an all-girls school in Marylebone, she already bore the sheen of fame.

"There was a lot of jealousy. I was a weird child because I was sort of well known," she says, "but then I was very shy and very introverted, so I think that just wasn't a good combination ... It made me a target for bullying. Just no one wanting to be my friend. The head bully saying, 'Nobody's allowed to speak to Naomie today."

This is said without any self-pity. "I think she has an internal confidence, however insecure she might be, like us all," says Danny Boyle. "She knows she's worth it. And she is! I'd cast her in a heartbeat as anything, really." Boyle remembers Harris filming one scene in 28 Days Later in which she was required to hack an infected man to pieces. "And it's merciless! And then she's kind of elegant again in the next moment."

I ask Harris how she feels about the Academy Awards. She gives an apprehensive smile.

"It's not going to happen. It's Viola [Davis]'s year, you know?" But will she write a speech, just in case?

She laughs. Harris recently witnessed another British actor, Tom Hiddleston, tie himself in earnest knots with his Golden Globes acceptance speech, in which he told a garbled story about his humanitarian work in South Sudan. A shot of Harris's seemingly unimpressed face became an internet meme. Hiddleston later apologized.

"I really sympathize with Tom," she says, "because I think it's so easy, under the pressure of those moments ... to find yourself going down the path of telling a story and as you're telling it, think, This is not what I want to say, it's not how I mean it to go, but you're kind of trapped on that train and you can't stop ... And then ridiculing a person for that ... I just think it's so mean!"

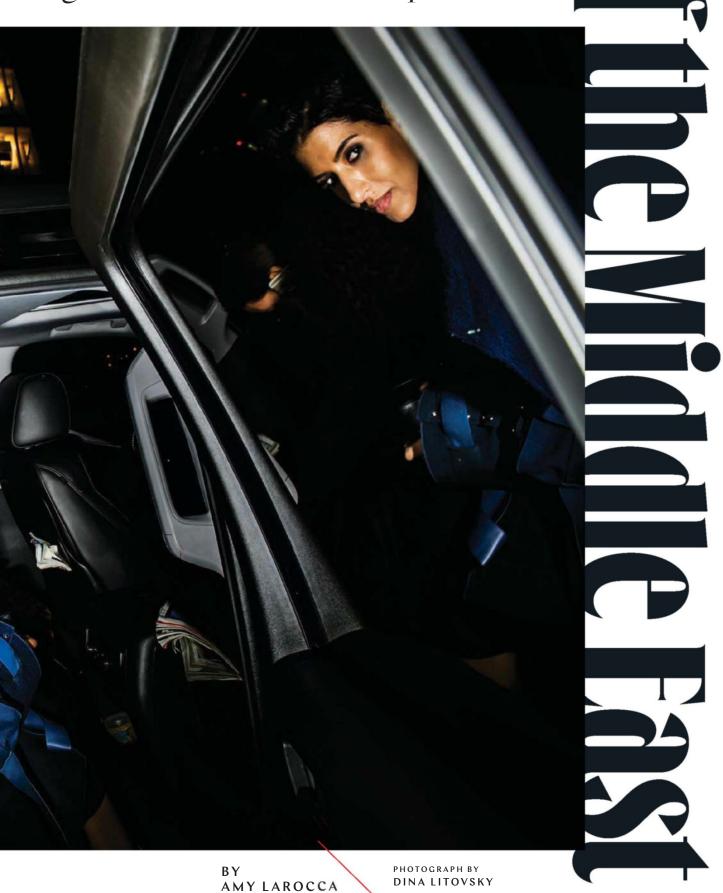
After a bit more prodding, Harris concedes that she will be writing a speech. Like all the best Girl Scouts, she wants to be prepared for every eventuality.



The first-ever editor-in-chief of



'Vogue Arabia' is literally a princess.



There are certain people who were ust made for

and as Princess Deena Aljuhani Abdulaziz tells it, she is one of them. The 42-year-old Saudi Arabian was born in California and spent her life moving between the Middle East and the United States as her father, a prominent economist, taught at universities in Ann Arbor and Boulder. Her first magazine was England's Tatler, which she initially encountered at the age of 6, and her interest just took off from there. "Look," she says one December afternoon in Pier 59 Studios at Chelsea Piers, "I discovered fashion and I never looked back. And when I first discovered Vogue, I was like"—she takes a long, dramatic breath—"There are other people that do this!"

Abdulaziz has a throaty voice with an accent that's hard to place. She enunciates her words hyperclearly and has a theatrical way of announcing things, a sort of Diana Vreeland lite. She points and jabs her index finger—at the sky, at her audience, at herself—a lot. "I created mood boards before I even knew the meaning of the words," she says. "I would be so inspired by something André Leon Talley wrote in his 'Style Fax'—remember that?—and I would say, 'Qui êtes-vous, Polly Maggoo?, what is that?' 'Slim Aarons's coffeetable book, what is that?' And then I would pursue it. Like crazy. And remember, this is before the internet! I would study every publication cover to cover—I was just hungry for it, hungry for every single thing about fashion."

Abdulaziz takes a final sip from a cup of green juice and calls an assistant over to ask for another. There's hip-hop on a loud sound system and three models in satin evening gowns posing against a seamless backdrop while a scruffy guy in a T-shirt snaps away. There's a harried Italian aristocrat in sneakers, a ponytail, and no makeup hunched over a laptop and talking on a cell phone, tracking down samples held up somewhere. It's a proper, old-fashioned fashion shoot, and Abdulaziz, the first-ever editor-in-chief of Vogue Arabia, is practically vibrating with delight. It seems as if she might just levitate off the sad leather couch where we are chatting right up to the ceiling, over the ignored (but for the tea bags) catering, past the assistant steaming dress after dress on a collapsible rolling rack, to shout to her childhood self, "Deena, it happened! You are Polly Mellen! You are Phyllis Posnick! You are an editor of Vogue!"

"I DIDN'T GROW UP with a Vogue of my own," Abdulaziz says, "one that reflected my identity, that reflected my background, my area, my authenticity. So for me to actually be present for that? It makes it very, very beautiful."





 $Photograph\ by\ Farah\ Al\ Quasimi$ 

The print edition of *Vogue Arabia* will be available this spring. It's a politically charged moment for a debut, with the entire world observing the chaos of Trump's immigration ban—issued following a campaign of openly anti-Muslim rhetoric that included the suggestion, just after the Khans made their appearance at the Democratic convention, that Muslim women are not permitted to speak. (This past summer, closer to the center of the fashion world, the French city of Nice, among others, briefly responded to a terror attack by banning women from wearing "burkinis" on the beach.)

Abdulaziz declines to comment on political issues several times over the course of our meeting, insisting that she does not view her role that way. But it is clear that she is frustrated by what she sees as the very limited ways in which the West treats Arab, and Muslim, women—frustrated that the accomplishments of her friends are often overlooked, that while Middle Eastern women are welcome in fashion as long as they spend huge amounts of money, this welcome comes with limits (and, frankly, prejudice). She fears that many in the West see Muslim women as a monolithic emblem of oppression, and she is emphatic that nothing is so simple. "Arabs have been responsible for making couture stay in business from the late '60s through today," she says, giving an impressionistic picture of recent fashion history. "And, you know, back during the Gulf War, the couture houses were on the verge of extinction because the Gulf customer wasn't coming to Europe to shop, because of the war, yet nobody acknowledges their contribution to an art form. It bothers me to no end. I would like to shed light that we have actually been around way before other emerging areas came into the picture, and I'd like to understand why we are undervalued and looked on as people who just spend money. That bothers me. Of course it does. For good reason.

## "I'd like to understand why we are undervalued and looked on as people who just spend money. That bothers me."

"There are several couture houses that almost take pride in the fact that the designer doesn't sit down with the Gulf customer that is ordering a couture dress from scratch," she says. "I see these designers hanging out with people who don't buy anything, so you tell me. I have to say, I don't really blame the designers in this instance; I blame the customers for taking it. Does the Gulf client like the privacy? Yes, they do. Do they want to be announced? No, they don't. But I need them to be valued and appreciated, and it doesn't have to be in a public manner. And they are not. And I'm sorry, but I really have a big problem with that."

Vogue Arabia has already launched online, Vogue's first-ever digital-first edition (it started up this past October). So far, the site looks similar to other vogue.coms—a mix of fashion and culture and celebrity coverage. The first original feature was a film by Elisa Sednaoui, a model, in conversation with the designer Elie Saab in his elaborate, romantic gardens in Beirut. It was followed by footage of Gigi Hadid speaking Arabic and another film by the photographer duo Inez and Vinoodh, as well as ten to 15 posts a day on topics including Alicia Keys's best turban moments, a new, hijabfriendly hair salon in Brooklyn, and which "nude"-color shoes work best with olive skin. Early pages from the print edition of Vogue Arabia indicate that the clothing featured lies somewhere between the British and French Vogues where modesty is concerned. (The French still love nothing more than printing a nipple; the British and Americans do not, and tend, in the end, toward a fairly conservative ideal.) Abdulaziz is looking for models who reflect the region, a task she concedes is difficult, as many Muslim families see the profession as "one step from harlot," but as the world changes, she is hopeful that this, too, might change.

The magazine was not, of course, some blind bet; the region's luxury-retail sector has been booming for a few decades, as Abdulaziz (or anyone who has shopped along the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris or the Via Montenapoleone in Milan) could tell you—a rival to the Asian markets for couture businesses ever more reliant on non-Western clients. According to Thomson Reuters, Muslim consumers spent \$243 billion on clothing in 2015 (11 percent of the global market); the figure is predicted to reach \$368 billion by 2021.

Almost every major luxury brand has a big, flashy presence in the Arabian Peninsula, and Dubai in particular has become a great destination for luxury-product launches: Chanel unveiled its cruise collection in Dubai in 2014, when Karl Lagerfield called the city "the next step, the new reality." Marc Jacobs launched a fragrance, Decadence, at the Dubai Mall with Adriana Lima and threw a party on the 31st story of a big hotel there, and when Swarovski wanted to stage a show of couture pieces in honor of its 120th anniversary, it did that there, too. It's a fashion-friendly place, even in the instances where the only visible items are handbags, shoes, and nails, a place where shopping is sport and outdoor promenades are increasingly being replaced by zillion-square-foot indoor malls.

But the road to a magazine was not straightforward. In 2007, a Middle Eastern publishing conglomerate approached Jonathan Newhouse, the head of Condé Nast International, about launching an Arabian edition to serve the Gulf region. He rejected the idea in an email that was quickly leaked to an Emirati newspaper, which published it in full-evidence, to many in the Middle Eastern elite, of a kind of pervasive Western Islamophobia according to which the region is perceived as monolithic, reactionary, and sexist (and which takes no account of the elite's globe-trotting extreme wealth and opaque-to-Westerners cosmopolitanism). Newhouse's email acknowledged that the area held many potential readers but warned that they "unfortunately live in the same general region as some of the most militant and violent elements ... Within the Arab

world, or to be more accurate, the Muslim world, there is an element which accepts Western values. There is also a powerful fundamentalist, religious element that rejects Western values. This element rejects freedom of expression, equality for women and expression of sexuality, to name three values associated with our publication ... Our company has no wish to impose its values on a society that does not fully share them. And we do not wish to provoke a strongly negative, even violent reaction ... So I will simply avoid it by never entering the market. And I will sleep better at night."

Whatever the politics, the logic of that market could not be ignored for long, and the opinion of Condé Nast evolved. It began testing the market in 2013 with Condé Nast Traveller Middle East and later a local edition of Architectural Digest, both published with a licensing partner in Dubai. They were successful endeavors, getting some material from syndicated international editions and creating the rest with a local staff. And with its new restaurants division, Condé Nast had already begun to expand into the region with the Vogue Café, a little velvet-roped rectangle within Level, a 96,000-square-foot shoe store inside the 6-million-square-foot Dubai Mall. At the Vogue Café, you can order a "Vogue Superfoods Salad" or enjoy the finger sandwiches that come with the "Quintessential Vogue Afternoon Tea" in the shadow of a chandelier made of iconic covers of Vogue Italia.

"By having a presence in the Middle East already, we had a better understanding of the region, its challenges and intricacies," explains Karina Dobrotvorskaya, who runs the newmarkets division of Condé Nast International. "There is a huge appetite for luxury and for fashion, impressive local fashion talent, amazing digital penetration and social-media engagement. While the region has long been very conservative about women in public, it is getting more open, and younger Arab women in particular are getting out in the world more." Designers have already caught on: Dolce & Gabbana launched a collection of abayas last year, using the same luxurious fabrics as in the main collection. They are available at Harrods (where, incidentally, Abdulaziz met her husband, with mutual friends, in the food hall) in London for between \$3,000 and \$7,000. Net-a-Porter features a Ramadan edit (Valentino silk pajamas, Oscar de la Renta maxidresses, many of them in the four-figure range), and on the lower end, Uniqlo offers a collection of well-cut, inexpensive tunics and hijabs.

FIRST MET ABDULAZIZ in 2004, outside Barneys in New York. She was well dressed but normally so for the neighborhood, an uptown woman out for a stroll in expensive but quiet versions of things: a Prada T-shirt, Miu Miu shoes, an Hermès bag. I was scouting for a photo shoot for this magazine's "Look Book," and we stopped her and asked her

to pose. She declined at first, citing privacy concerns to do with her family. A picture in a magazine? Never! But her husband, the Saudi prince Sultan bin Fahad bin Nasser bin Abdulaziz, whom she married in her early 20s, encouraged her, and we took her picture right there on 61st Street. She was a young stay-athome mother of three who traveled regularly between her home in Rivadh and New York. She wore a ponytail and enjoyed the occasional hot dog. Within a few years, she was attending

fashion shows in Paris and Milan; she had opened D'NA, a members-only boutique in Riyadh dealing in designers previously unknown in the region: Acne, Haider Ackermann, Marni.

"I had always wanted to be an editorial stylist," she says, "but no job as such existed in the Middle East. It wasn't realistic for me to even think of moving full time to the United States to become a stylist, but I always had that itch. That was my ultimate dream. I mean, come on! That Polly Mellen story with Avedon and Nastassja Kinski and the serpent she's putting on the cuff and not putting on the cuff? Stop." Her knowledge of photo shoots is almost scarily comprehensive. She puts out her hand, closes her eyes, clutches her chest, lowers her voice to something between a purr and a growl. "Looove." But she's gotten off track. She physically shakes herself back. "But that was not realistic, so it was like, Okay, what are we going to do now? I thought maybe the closest thing to being a stylist was to intern for a department store. I tried to get hired as an intern at a department store in Riyadh, but the head buyer would not hire me; she said I was overqualified. So I had this conversation with my family and they said, 'Why don't you do it? We're going to support you.' My father invested in my business and he said, 'You will succeed.' Trust me when I tell you I had no business plan. I was like, 'I'm just going to do it,' and that's exactly what I did.'

The business was, almost immediately, a success. "It came very naturally because apparently it takes me 15 minutes to know exactly which looks I'm going to order. I thought it came naturally to everyone! But no, I just have it. A hunch. Because I was selling to my society. And nobody understands that world. Most buyers at that time, and to this day, were nonnatives, and that is actually a big problem. They are American, or European, or even if you're from the Middle East, the region is so big you just might not get it right. If you've got a Lebanese buyer buying for an Abu Dhabi client, they're not going to get it. Me? I'm there, I'm going to the same parties, I'm selling to my friends."

When Abdulaziz is home in Riyadh, most socializing is segregated by sex, she explains, which means the fashion stakes are even higher. "Let's face it," she says, "who do we really dress for?" At these female-only parties, members of the country's elite often wear full, current runway seasons hidden beneath abayas until the doors are closed, and some of the women in Abdulaziz's set even employ makeup styles to replicate the accompanying runway beauty. "She told me, 'Every single night, it's basically the Met Ball," says one American friend who visited Abdulaziz in Riyadh.

> "You're never going to see an Arab girl trying" to look like the French—lank hair, no makeup," Abdulaziz explains. "I mean, no. That is not what we do." She laughs. "Who thinks it looks better to not wear makeup?" She shakes her head at the inanity.

> As Abdulaziz traveled the fashion circuit on but never, in the West, in an abaya or a hijab.

> behalf of D'NA, her style became more adventurous. She got a very short haircut, began wearing the exaggerated silhouettes of designers like Rosie Assoulin and Rodarte. But that was happening to everyone on the fashion circuit then. The street-style photographers demanded an upping of the game, and Abdulaziz was one of the women happiest to comply, always impeccably groomed and dressed and endlessly photogenic. She became the face of the Middle East to many who had only a vague sense of the region as a place where much fashion was bought, sold, and worn. She dressed modestly, by the standards of the fashion world,

Here was a woman fashion women could relate to, and her high profile made her an obvious choice when Condé began hunting for someone to helm its magazine. She sold her boutique (which had expanded with a second location in Doha) and started commuting to the magazine's offices in Dubai in 2016.

Many members of her social circle in Riyadh are somewhat scandalized by the public figure Abdulaziz has become. "You have to understand," she says, "it's still basically like Mrs. Astor's 400, or whatever that was. Everyone loves to be private." But, she points out, her teenage daughter's friends (many of whom are in the process of applying to American and European universities) "think I rock."

THE DUBAI DESIGN DISTRICT is a low-slung, semi-finished office park off a highway near downtown. The ground level has been leased to restaurants, cafés, and boutiques, and the upper level, the thinking goes, will be where Dubai's creative class takes office space. There's a concept store called Lighthouse, which sells pretty books and design objects and bars of Mast Brothers chocolate, and outside of that is "Runbase," an Adidas-sponsored fitness popup where exercise classes take place on the roof and cheery American voices can often be heard shouting instructions through



A look from Dolce & Gabbana's hijab and abaya collection, which debuted last year.

a loudspeaker about bending, extending, and engaging one's core to the instrumental bits of Beyoncé songs. The crowd is dizzyingly international and dizzyingly well-dressed—as far as I can tell, anyway, there are more covered women on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn than there are in the design district, and it's all so go-go, all so like the office on a beautifully cast sitcom, that it's momentarily disorienting to notice that the menus have no alcohol.

Vogue's offices are in Building Nine, which is anchored by the Harper's Bazaar café (which has paleo- and South Beach Dietfriendly selections on the menu), within the headquarters of Nervora, the local company that succeeded in purchasing the license in 2016. Nervora is run by Shashi Menon, a 31-year-old Indian-American from Southern California who began working in the UAE straight out of college as a consultant. He liked the lifestyle: His first employer put him up in five-star hotels and hooked him up with a nearly unlimited travel budget, all of which was a dream come true for a brainy 22-year-old who was excited to see more of the world. He transitioned into working with the government of the UAE on initiatives to bring media companies to the region-CNN, for example—but eventually found working for the government too slow, so he recruited his "nerdiest" friend from California,

and together they launched Nervora, initially as a middleman securing local advertising for foreign websites. Condé Nast was the first publisher they signed up, and the first ad they sold was Chanel. "It was such a small market," he says, "the inventory was basically a throwaway. It was either unmonetized or undermonetized, and we basically said, 'Hey, we have a no-risk way for you to go make some money from an area you don't even care about."

In fact, Menon might be as important a part of the Vogue Arabia story as Abdulaziz. By 2012, he had persuaded Condé Nast International to let him publish an Arabic version of style.com, with the assumption that he would syndicate at least a third of its material from the American version. Within two months, they were publishing 100 percent original content. "It turns out that it was important to come in and feel indigenous," Menon says. "We didn't want to be perceived like a big Western brand trying to dictate a Western cultural framework

on a region that is quite different. Everything was more successful when we did it from our own point of view. The terminology can be a little different, the point of view that you take, the cultural references, the idioms ... There's just so much nuance to how language is used, and very subtle things can make a big difference." Focus on the Hadids, for example, instead of the Jenners. Understand the relevance of the eyelash in beauty posts. And on and on.

Menon continued publishing style.com/arabia. But in 2015, Condé Nast announced that the original style.com would close and then reemerge as an e-commerce site as part of that company's desire to change its digital game. While Condé Nast migrated style .com readers to vogue.com, Menon prepared to do the same with his license: He kept his style.com readers as long as he could, and then began redirecting them to Vogue Arabia. The reader base was there, he knew; he'd already floated a trial balloon. "In a lot of ways," he says, "it was like giving birth to a teenager."

AS THE VOGUE brand has evolved worldwide—Arabia is its 22nd edition—its relationship to the industry it covers has changed. It no longer exists to report on the industry so much as to bolster it, work in tandem with it. The Fashion Fund model, which began in New York under Anna Wintour, in which young designers are mentored by veteran members of the industry, now exists in many of Vogue's markets, including the Middle East, and Abdulaziz takes her mission as a mentor seriously. She wants the world to know her friends, in particular the young women with their own businesses. ("My friend was just appointed to a very high government position in Saudi Arabia, and it's not so uncommon," Abdulaziz says with a certain amount of frustration. "But you will not hear about that!")

She again brushes off suggestions that her intentions are political—"I respond to talent!" she says—but many of Vogue's potential readers are excited by the idea of a magazine with the desire to show off the work of Arab women. Of course, the correction to Western prejudice represented by Vogue Arabia is itself a quite narrow one: For all of the potentially "feminist" implications of such a publication, Vogue is, as a brand, fundamentally about, and for, the elite, perhaps even more so in an Arab world so deeply divided between the jet set and the parochial poor. But still, the feminist instinct and the sense of sisterhood are strong. "My friends and I were talking about Vogue Arabia over dinner last

> night," says Sunny Rahbar, the co-founder of the Third Line Gallery. "We thought it would be amazing if the first six covers were all clothing by Arab women designers."

> In that spirit, Abdulaziz takes me downstairs to meet Nathalie Trad, a 31-year-old Lebanese handbag designer whose offices happen to be in the building. "She's kind of like my fairy godmother," Trad says of Abdulaziz. "Well, it's because I like the product!" Abdulaziz says. "And let me tell you that one night I was having dinner with my late friend Zaha Hadid and she said, 'What is that?,' and I emptied it out and gave it to her and then I texted Nathalie and said, 'I'm sorry to inform you, I have lost your sample. But wait till you hear who has it!""

"I certainly did not mind!" says Trad.

Next we're off to the designer Faiza Bouguessa's offices on the 18th floor of a high-rise downtown. Abdulaziz has been a big supporter of the brand since it began.

"I had this concept to merge cultures," says the blonde-haired Bouguessa, "through a line of clothing inspired by the traditional, long silhouette. There were either custom-made, very luxurious abayas or ready-made, cheap abayas—there was nothing in the middle. No ready-to-wear, elegant store for that. Some of my clients hate the abaya, but the love of the culture is still very strong."

Last September, Abdulaziz wore a floor-length oxford-blue wrap dress with cherry-red trim to the Proenza Schouler fashion show in New York. She paired it with red Aquazzura wild-thing sandals and a red Chanel bag, and her photograph was published in British Vogue. Although Bouguessa had not yet set up her e-commerce website at the time, her office was flooded with phone calls requesting the garment, and it immediately sold out. How many of the women bought the dress because it was an abaya, and how many in spite of that, didn't really matter in the end: It had been a tremendous boon for Bouguessa. "There's such a potential for that internationally," Abdulaziz says, like a proud mother. "There are millions of women who dress modestly and love fashion. And here's the thing about abayas, here's the thing about hijabs: How do I feel when I wear them? Honestly? It's a chic garment. I feel like Grace Kelly."



Abdulaziz wearing an abaya by Bouguessa at the Proenza Schouler SS17 show in September.



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Phoebe Waller-Bridge makes dark, funny television, which means a lot of people think she has an agenda. She does. But not theirs.

BY NOREEN MALONE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILLY & HELLS







HERE'S SOMETHING REALLY pedophilic about those," murmurs Phoebe Waller-Bridge, staring at four miniature, perfectly red apples nestled tightly in plastic wrap at a central-London Marks & Spencer, where she is shopping for a dinner party she's to host that night for elderly relatives. "I need to make a fucking kick-ass fucking meal so my husband will be like, 'Av, av, check this ricotta hotcake out."

Waller-Bridge is given to sexualizing food, among other things; she opened her 2013 Edinburgh Fringe Theatre Festival one-woman show, *Fleabag*, by declaring that she'd just ordered a "very slutty pizza. The bitch is dripping and that dirty little crust wants to be in me." When she turned the show-about a single 20-something maneuvering through relationships (familial, romantic, and sexual, the last two treated as often separate categories)—

into a six-episode television series for BBC3 last year, she changed the opening to a scene in which her character is forced by amorous circumstance to consider the possibly above-average size of her rectum. Perhaps inevitably, when it arrived on Amazon this fall, Fleabag was hailed as the latest woman-helmed, anti-heroine and/ or raunch comedy, a list that includes everything from Bridesmaids to Trainwreck to Girls to UnREAL, a mad-lib mash-up of all that feminist blogs and Twitter trolls alike get most excited to discuss. These groupings do not exactly thrill Waller-Bridge, though she's admiring of her peers. "If you go into the mainstream with a female perspective that seems to resonate with a lot of people, you have a political agenda imposed on you, you are told that you are a feminist," she says. The direct influences Waller-Bridge cites are nearly all male-Louis C.K., the original Alfie, Bret Easton Ellis, even one particular scene in East of Eden in which John Steinbeck dispenses with a character's life in a single tragic sentence—yet she's rarely compared to men. "Since you said those things about women, therefore you are a role model and an icon and you can't fuck up now because you have to be sensitive to something political," she says. "And everything a comedian wants to be is funny. Attaching something political to someone whose art has nothing to do with politics is fucking unfair. It's like putting rocks in the pockets of somebody who's just gone for a nice swim. They're going to fucking drown! That's why all women in the media sink eventually, because they aren't sinking, they've been drowned!"

Fleabag, in fairness, is risqué, though rarely in a predictable way. Waller-Bridge's character (whom fans tend to refer to as Fleabag, since she is never named) masturbates to a video of Barack Obama giving a speech about democracy; her stepmother puts on an art show that includes an installation of penis molds, including Fleabag's ex-boyfriend's and father's; she imagines, at one point, that a dog is hitting on her; she runs into a hookup at the store while buying tampons and quickly switches out supers for regulars. And it's full of wickedly sly jokes about the female condition, dark in a classically British way. In the first episode, a feminist lecturer (played by Waller-Bridge's real-life mother) asks who in the assembled crowd would give up five years of their life for a perfect body. Fleabag and her sister are the only ones in the audience whose hands shoot up, reflexively, before they exchange embarrassed looks and lower them back down.

But the series is, at its core, about grief—and the complicated ways grief and sex can be intertwined. Fleabag is mourning the death of her best friend, Boo. (It's more emotionally horrific than



that, but watching that unspool is at the heart of the series, so I won't be a jerk and spoil it.) In almost every episode, she gets into low-key madcap trouble born of a complicated stew of selfdestructiveness, nihilism, and the kind of defensiveness that usually only grows up to protect something very tender.

Boo's death is seen by everyone in Fleabag's life, including Fleabag herself, as the proximate cause of her sadness, but there are clues suggesting that her unhappiness began earlier, perhaps when her mother died of breast cancer and her father remarried. Fleabag has a sweet, vulnerable, off-and-on doormat of a boyfriend who finally breaks up with her midway through the series, after which she is unmoored, free to be as wanton as the pain she feels. ("The thing I really got off on," Waller-Bridge says, "was putting a female character out there that was all-knowing about sex and one step ahead, who knew what the guys were thinking before they thought it and yet still played slightly dumb to them. Oh God, it brought me so much pleasure.") Fleabag sleeps with an extremely handsome man, whom she delights in mocking a little for his vacuousness ("When did you realize you were so good-looking?" she asks. "Shit





got real around 11," he replies. "Aunts got weird") while clearly enjoying having snagged his attention. Then there's the bucktoothed man who picks her up on a bus. She steals a 20 from him while he's not looking, trots him out at a family party as her plus-one when she feels acutely in need of an I've-got-my-life-together accessory, then joylessly screws him in the failing café she owns. The only time she is shown orgasming is from masturbation; she even pushes her boyfriend off her during sex to do so. "I have a horrible feeling that I'm a greedy, perverted, selfish, apathetic, cynical, depraved, morally bankrupt woman who can't even call herself a feminist," she says to her father. Believe it or not, the character is sympathetic, especially when she breaks the fourth wall, as she often does.

It's often assumed that when a woman writes a story about a woman, the material is autobiographical rather than imagined. Waller-Bridge will cop to some similarities with Fleabag. "I was gettin' about," she says crisply, then laughs. "I was a real cynic, a real broken romantic." And certain bits in Fleabag are ripped directly from life, she tells me, like a particularly memorable sequence in which she escalates a pledge with her boyfriend that they surprise

each other every day; she dresses up as a ninja, grabs a giant kitchen knife, and startles him in the shower (in real life, Waller-Bridge was the showerer and her husband was the knife-wielder, but says she reacted exactly like the character, by crying and, strangely, apologizing). A scene in which Fleabag's sister—who in her own words has "two degrees, a husband, and a Burberry coat"—orders only a tomato sandwich, was a loving tweak at Waller-Bridge's own sister. Later, when we meet up with Vicky Jones—a director who is her frequent collaborator, best friend, and the real-life inspiration for Boo-I ask her how much of her friend she sees in Fleabag, and Jones goes into a long answer about the skill with which Waller-Bridge sees patterns in people and how she approaches art from an analytical perch, at the end of which Waller-Bridge says gleefully, "Well dodged!"

"Okay, you want the dirt," Jones says. "We had some fun for a few years, what feels like forever but was probably about six years. We went out, we had a lot of sex, we met a lot of people, we had really great nights where we'd wake up the next day—"

Waller-Bridge cuts in. "We didn't have sex."

"Oh, no, no."

"We were so close, we didn't need to," Waller-Bridge says. "Everything else was there, but lots of people thought that we must have been having sex, because we loved each other so much. It was more like, Why don't you guys just do it?

Jones nods. "It was so much about talking into the night, with an increasing, building honesty about who we were."

Jones is blonde, thoughtful, and gentle-seeming. A friend of theirs once described the pair as being each other's subtexts, which Waller-Bridge loved. "My early plays are all about romance and love and people finding one another in the end, and Vicky's are these dark perverted fucked-up things," Waller-Bridge explains. "Vicky's always crashing around in these lovely floral dresses telling everyone how amazing they are, and I'm habitually a bit more caustic."

Waller-Bridge had only just met her now-husband, the documentarian and journalist Conor Woodman, when she began writing Fleabag, and she did it essentially by imagining what her life would be like if Jones died. "The story is of a friendship that means so much to them both," says Jack Thorne, a playwright who's worked with both women, "and as she was writing that, she was falling in love with Conor, and so in some ways *Fleabag* is about being pulled away from friendship, the abandonment of them that happens when you do fall in love." In other words, rather than seeing Fleabag as a dark look at what other emotions can come into play when you separate sex and love, you could see it as a dark valentine to the kinds of relationships that don't need sex to be love.

ALLER-BRIDGE, 31, is nearly six feet tall, with the looks of a pre-Raphaelite muse whose hairdresser told her it was time to lighten things up with a chic bob. She has a mobile face and is sunnier and more open than her onscreen character, but like Fleabag, she's given to a running commentary on the absurdity of events unfolding around her. She swears like a sailor—or maybe a posh Brit—and usually in ser-

vice of superlative, sincere praise. Her brother makes "fucking badass" sandwiches; the actor, Hugh Skinner, who plays her boyfriend, is a "fucking genius"; a friend's project is a "fucking beauuuuuutiful play." On the day we meet, she wears a linen tweed trenchcoat and red lipstick in a shade not dissimilar to the one Fleabag wears with such aplomb and regularity that the Hairpin tracked down the show's makeup artist to find out just what products created the look. (For the record: "a blend of oils, waxes, and pigments," based on a m.a.c color called Dare You.)

In film and television, dishevelment—or aggressively come-hither clothing—often signals that a female character is in emotional distress; meanwhile, a general Apatovian shambolicness has become almost de rigueur for female anti-heroes, their sloth and discomposure reimagined as an act of equality. But Waller-Bridge's heroine jogs, applies for a small-business loan, attends an all-women silentmeditation retreat, and is completely pulled together on a physical level, stylish in a very precise, understated way. (When her makeup smears, it is such an unusual and arresting moment that someone decided it ought to be on the poster advertising the show.) The character's own allure, at least sexually, is something she rarely doubts. When Waller-Bridge was hiring directors for the TV adaptation (Jones had never worked in television), "we kept meeting all these young bucks who were like"—she begins a macho growl—"Hey, yeah, we'll put the camera up her ass. It's a sexy grubby world she lives in." She switches to a higher-pitched, proper voice, an imitation of herself. "No no no, it's very clean, very stylized.' I felt very panicky." She eventually hired "a bungling gent," married and in his 50s, who said to her, "Oh for God's sake, darling, I am Fleabag."

Waller-Bridge's work is shot through with barbs about the way looks change a woman's relationship to the world. She takes particular delight in turning her self-perceived flaws into jokes. "Well, you know I've always been insecure about my face," Fleabag tells Boo as they talk about what they'd like to change in themselves. "There's nothing wrong with your nose!" replies her friend. Partly, Waller-Bridge says, her preoccupation with objectification (self- and otherwise) came out of her younger self. "The 'Pizza is a dirty little slut' bit is something I find really funny," she explains, "but it was rooted in her just thinking that's how you value everything, and that's how she values herself. Throughout a lot of my 20s, my sexual allure and power was one of the most important things about me, my currency. I did really panic and found myself just moisturizing all the time."

Meanwhile, an early, "pure" relationship had ended, and her next boyfriend watched a lot of porn. She began to join in, with what she describes as a mixture of sexual empowerment and creeping selfdoubt about what he was getting onscreen that he couldn't get from her. She kept watching after they broke up, until she realized that it was making her feel bleak. "I was starting to see women in a different way. Just shamelessly objectifying them on the tube," she says. "I don't think I would have ever written Fleabag if I had bigger tits." A moment later, she adds: "It's a really dark thing to say."

We're in line at Urban Outfitters, where she's holding a couple of Christmas gifts: 52 Things to Do While You Poo, for her younger brother, Jasper, who manages bands, and The Little Book of Feminism, for Jones. ("It's actually a really good book," she says. "At first I was cynical: 'You can't have a little book of feminism'.") "I had these wonderful friendships with brilliant women, but how is it that these happy, empowered, sexually voracious women around me are all sad? How does that work out?" She pauses, almost like she's processingand rejecting-the conservative idea that there is a direct link. "It comes down to your relationship with your self, doesn't it?" she says in a jokey therapy voice, then adds, more seriously: "It really does."

Fleabag's title is taken from Waller-Bridge's family nickname, Flea. She grew up in Ealing, a leafy part of West London. Her family was close—her mother works for the Ironmongers' Company, a charitable institution, and her father worked in finance, co-founding the Tradepoint stock exchange (the two divorced when Waller-Bridge was in her late teens). "She was always going to be an actress," says her sister, Isobel, one year older, who is now a composer for film and television and did the score for Fleabag. The two girls would choreograph dances to Ace of Base and put on elaborate radio plays, complete with DIY sounds effects like crunching gravel to signal the approach of a character. "We always had such an open and noisy household full of people, and we were encouraged to present things," says Isobel. "It was a bit von Trapp. I'd play a piece on the piano; Phoebe would read a monologue." Isobel remembers with particular fondness one very dark piece, about a woman brutally hurt in a car crash, that her mother insisted Phoebe perform on Christmas Day.

After turning down a spot to read English at Trinity College Dublin, Waller-Bridge studied at the prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where, she told the New York *Times* last year, she became bored with playing "crying girls who had just had an abortion or were having a bath" and complained to the head of the academy. She was subsequently cast as a bearded cross-dresser. Soon after graduation and applying to law school, Waller-Bridge met Jones, then a struggling director a few years her senior. They'd been around the same Soho writers' bar nights, and Waller-Bridge walked up one evening to express her admiration and drop off a paper copy of her CV. Jones cast her in one of the first paying gigs she got as a director: a vanity project mounted by a woman who'd come into a bunch of money after a car-accident settlement and requested that her handsome plumber, who'd never acted before in his life, play the romantic lead opposite her. Eventually, Jones was fired, and the play's funder asked the assembled cast if anyone else wanted to go with her. Waller-Bridge walked out, and their deep friendship began. They

founded DryWrite, a theater company that put on shows at the Soho Theatre, and began working on their own short plays, ten minutes long. In the mornings, they'd walk several miles from Kensal Green along a canal to Soho, talking the whole way about life and work. It was, in a way, through Jones that Waller-Bridge got together with her husband. They'd encountered one another at a bar, briefly, years earlier, which she really didn't recall when she got a Facebook message from a man who'd seen a play she was doing. The part called for Waller-Bridge to spend much of the role in a bathtub ("All legs and ass," she says) and he sent a flirty note saying, in effect, he'd love to see if he could recognize her with her clothes on. "In a classic example of Vicky's humanity, while I'd read it and gone, 'Oof, creep,' she read it and went 'Aww.'" Waller-Bridge looked up his photo. "I went on one date and basically never left."

Waller-Bridge wrote Fleabag in three weeks in a "splurge," then edited by performing it for Jones (who directed the stage version). "If she laughed, it was in. If she gasped, it was in. If she said 'We can't do that, it was in. But if the moment her face started screwing up, like, Mmm ..., it was out." A BBC executive caught a performance at

Edinburgh and decided—"within five minutes," he says-that the show could work on TV. Around the same time, Waller-Bridge's earliest attempts at playwriting, those tenminute plays, became the germ of Crashing, a Channel Four ensemble comedy-now streaming on Netflix—about six friends who all live as boho-chic squatters in an abandoned hospital in London. Both hit the airwaves, coagulating into what's officially known as "a moment." It was as if the world had become "Technicolor," says Waller-Bridge. The Guardian's readers voted Fleabag the second-best TV show of the year. British Vogue called her up to ask, "Darling, how do you feel about shorts?"; in the resulting fashion spread, which Waller-Bridge finds hilarious, she is carrying a skateboard and wearing roller skates. "I got so many messages from friends who thought I'd elected that look." She scrolls through her iPhone to gleefully show me. "Every time I see the rails of my photo shoots it's like Dr. Seuss, or as if they've skinned Muppets," she says. She scrolls farther, determined to find a dress a stylist had suggested for a big interview. "The guy was like, 'I love it. It's like really fashion-forward." In the photograph,

she is posed with her arms up, like a tree, wearing an ironic expression and a dark-green dress with extremely three-dimensional ruffles on its top half. "I was like, 'Yessss, very forest-forward."

In December, Soho Theatre remounted the theatrical version of Fleabag for two weeks, which sold out nearly instantly. She's talking about bringing the one-woman show to New York and is considering whether she has enough left to say about the character for another season. Film4 has commissioned her and Jones to write a movie together (they haven't settled on a subject), and BBC-America asked her to adapt a series of novellas about a female psychopath and the MI6 agent tracking her into Killing Eve. "It's a female relationship I've never seen before," Waller-Bridge explains. "I'm incredibly drawn to this woman who has relinquished herself of all guilt and shame in this world. I feel liberated being around women who are liberated. I'm fascinated by how I will feel in a decade because I know in my heart I will feel better, and despite what the world is throwing at us-'You will be less important, less vital, less significant'—I also know in my fucking bones I'm not going to care as much."

> N A MILD December evening after our shopping expedition, I meet Waller-Bridge at a Kensal Green pub called Paradise, where she, Jones, and Amy Morgan, the lead actress in a new play of Jones's called Touch (and a longtime friend of both women) are gathering. They've just finished a Sunday Times Magazine photo shoot to promote the play (about a 33-year-old woman who moves from Wales to London) and are enjoying the afterglow

of camera-ready hair and makeup among a crowd of people dressed as if they've come from work as bankers or lawyers. Waller-Bridge is in a long black dress, but has snuck on a pair of scuffed white sneakers.

It had been the Times journalist's last day on the job, so the trio had begun with Champagne over lunch. "Loose lips sink ships!" Waller-Bridge shouts happily, raising her vodka soda, then starts reminiscing about their early days in London theater. "I was raped

> horrendously in one," says Waller-Bridge. "Raped over a sofa! That's the first thing I ever saw her in," replies Jones affectionately. "My dad was in the front row. I was like, 'Dad, did you like it? Did you like it?'" Waller-Bridge laughs hard. "I said to him once, 'Dad, I've got a play.' And he said, 'Are you naked?' 'No.' 'Are you being raped?' 'Nope.' 'Can't wait, darling, really psyched!'"

> Jones considers. "Fleabag doesn't have any nudity or any gratuitous sex, because if there isn't a good reason for it ...'

> Waller-Bridge finishes her sentence. "Bumps the audience out into a new reality."

> Jones nods. "You start worrying about the actor and you think about the cameras."

> "I'm always excited!" says Waller-Bridge. "I want to see what people's tits look like."

> "I bet they think there's nudity in Fleabag," says Morgan.

> "All the time, yes. I had this interview where this guy was like, 'You were trying to grab people's attention with the nudity and the explicit sex," says Waller-Bridge. "There's a bit of Hugh Skinner's bum in the shower, but come on, give the people what they want!" She gets a phone call and steps out-

side. "That was Mummy," she says lightly when she comes back in. Jones tells her what she's missed. "We solved feminism! I've never

thought of it more clearly than I have in this conversation." "Funny women on TV have been around for ages," says Morgan.

"But if it's not about a woman having sex, it's not called feminist, it's called a sitcom."

"Because people, not just men, are afraid of women talking about sex," Jones continues. "And so it's a backlash, effectively."

Waller-Bridge nods. "It's also a way of simplifying a whole conversation by putting one blanket over it."

"And simplifying women's stories, which is so fucking horrifically ironic!" says Jones.

"Vicky always said to me, when I was getting too into the darker side of Fleabag and I was like, 'Oh God, this just is a show about sadness, she was like, 'No, never forget, at the end of the day, this is a show about the glory of being a woman," says Waller-Bridge. "And in the glory of being a woman, the darker bits are involved."





Top, from left: Olivia Colman, as the stepmother; Phoebe Waller-Bridge, as Fleabag; Sian Clifford, who plays her sister, Claire; and Bill Paterson, as their father, Bottom: Waller-Bridge with Jenny Rainsford, who plays Boo.



Stan Smith the man & Stan Smith the sneaker.

BY LAUREN SCHWARTZBERG

> PHOTOGRAPH BY JOÃO CANZIANI



Think I'm



## a shoe

## The island of Hilton Head in South Carolina is shaped like a sneaker,

and Stan Smith lives on the laces, right off the river. Inside his house, the six-foot-four retired tennis player with the straightest back I've ever seen walks out of the second of his two closets and into the living room carrying five pairs of Stan Smiths, the sneaker, but he still can't find the one he's looking for. He has 40 pairs in 30 different styles, more or less.

The sneaker's fame—and its longevity—takes even its namesake by surprise. You see, the Stan Smith is really the most basic of all possible sneakers. Its narrow white leather body is cushioned at the front with an almost-orthopedic round toe. Its three understated Adidas stripes are nearly missable perforations, as if they don't care to be recognized, and it has just two spots of color, most classically in green: a tab on the back of the ankle and Smith's face printed on the tongue. They are essentially anonymous, the saltine cracker of tennis shoes. They were endorsed by Stan Smith just after he won his first Grand Slam singles title in the summer of 1971 and just before he won his second, and last, the next year. He was, in other words, no Serena Williams, not even a Rod Laver.

Nothing about Smith or the simple design of the sneaker itself—neither has changed much since 1971—explains how Adidas was able to sell 7 million pairs by 1985. Or how that number had grown to 22 million pairs by 1988. Or why Footwear News named it the first-ever Shoe of the Year in 2014. Or how it surpassed 50 million shoes sold as of 2016. Or how the sneaker grew far beyond its start as a technical athletic shoe and became a fashion brand, its basic blank slate evolving and taking on new meaning and purpose.

In the United Kingdom, soccer fans in Liverpool and Manchester fight over who got into Stan Smiths first. In Greece, Smith says, where it is traditional to give babies white shoes on the day of their christening, Stan Smiths became the white shoe of choice. There's a professor of theoretical physics in Sweden who owns more than 200 pairs. Both Will Arnett and Hugh Grant have said they kissed their first girl while wearing Stan Smiths. Stan Smith the man once met a reporter from *GQJapan* who told him he's worn his eponymous shoes every day for the past 13 years. (Smith's response: "I said, 'You gotta be kidding me.") More recently, they've been taken up by Céline's Phoebe Philo, as well as Marc Jacobs, A\$AP Rocky, and North West, coming to define both a retro and minimalist movement in fashion just a few years after they were sold on the bargain shelves.

"Margie!" Smith calls out to his wife of 42 years, who's planning his surprise 70th-birthday party in the kitchen. "You know that shoe with the white bag? Do you know where that is?'

Smith's U of blonde hair is brushed perfectly down, as is his

mustache, which he's had since he could grow it, except for a few weeks when Adidas happened to take the picture that would go on to appear on the tongue of every Stan Smith shoe. His red-and-gray-checked shirt is neatly tucked into blue pants that match his blue suede Stan Smiths. It's his eyebrows that stand out, the only unruly thing about him; each single hair living its own best life, swooping in and curling out, flailing like one of those blowup guys outside a car dealership, just trying to find somewhere to land.

For the community of the sneaker-obsessed, there is an event called "unboxing"-its closest relative is porn. It goes down on YouTube: A reviewer, or whoever's first to get his hands on a new release, analyzes the sneaker from the moment he opens the shoe box. The person comments on how it looks tucked into the packaging, how it feels when touched for the first time, examining and fawning over each of its new and improved features.

Smith seems to know about this. Margie brings him the shoe, and he leans forward from his plush floral-printed chair toward the white bag, which also has his name on it, and begins the unboxing ceremony. "So this is kind of neat."

He pets the bag, rubbing it between his fingers: "This is a parachute material." He uses both hands to take the shoe box out and then slides one palm across the top. "And there's a special white box, with three stripes made of holes, just like my shoe." He opens the box: "You see this paper? They had special wrapping paper made with my signature on it." It's the same signature you'll find on all Stan Smiths; there's a single, extra-tall S that acts as the first letter for both his first and last name, a firsty-lasty so sure of itself it is ever connected in writing. Finally, he lifts the paper and pulls out the shoe. It's the very pair of structured white leather sneakers with a green back tab and three understated stripes you can't walk but five blocks in New York without seeing.



But here the leather is grayer and thicker. The picture on the tongue is different too. Smith has a mustache in it, as he does sitting in front of me today. He looks much older. "So they sent me this shoe with my current picture." He smiles wide. All his teeth show. "I like the old one better." Smith is the only person in the world who owns this pair. They were sent to him in January 2014, in the very early stages of what has become the greatest sneaker-revival story of all time.

Y LIFE, TIMING-WISE, has been magical," Smith says from the grandpa chair in his living room. As a tennis player he was more lucky than legendary, picking up a racket for the first time in high school and only quitting basketball to pursue it full time as a senior. The year Smith turned 16, he says, the amateur-tournament age group changed from 15 and under to 16 and under, so he remained at the top for an extra year. The year he graduated from

college, 1968, tennis turned pro, so he could start making money on the same tournaments he'd already played in school as an amateur. And then, soon after his first Grand Slam singles title, Adidas happened to be looking for an American player to represent its shoes.

The sneakers weren't even designed with Smith in mind. Adidas heir Horst Dassler made them in 1965 for the French tennis player Robert Haillet. (Some juicy history: The brand that eventually became Adidas was started by Horst's father, Adi, and his brother, Rudolf. The two outfitted Jesse Owens for his four gold medals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. But the brothers fought. Rudolf had an affair with Adi's wife, and the company split. Adi Dassler shortened his name and opened Adidas—in Europe the first syllable is still emphasized—and Rudolf left to start Puma across town. To this day, the rival sneaker companies are both headquartered in the 23,000-person town of Herzogenaurach, Germany, where the two Dasslers grew up.) It was the most technically advanced tennis sneaker of its time, one of the first made of leather in a field of canvas, with a herringbone bottom designed for use on clay courts.

When Haillet retired in 1971, the young Dassler decided to replace him with Smith, who he thought could help anchor the brand in America. Smith wasn't a strange choice at the time: He was 24 years old, had just won the U.S. Open, and was ranked the No. 1 player in the world, and when Dassler approached him, he was about to sign with Converse in a multiplayer deal.

With his Adidas contract, Smith became one of the first American tennis players to receive an endorsement deal. It was the very beginning of the modern brand-athlete pairings that would, a little over a decade later, lead to Michael Jordan's very own Air Jordan line, and three decades after that, to LeBron James's reported \$1 billion lifetime endorsement deal with Nike. But when Smith was playing, none of that existed yet. If you made it to the Roland Garros main draw, you would get "six shirts, a vest sweater, a regular sweater, socks, and that's about it," he says, counting the items off on his fingers. "You wanted to get in the main draw, so you could get the full set of clothes."

His agent, Donald Dell, negotiated the picture of Smith's face on the tongue, a savvy move that made the man inseparable from the sneaker, but Haillet's name remained on the shoe until 1978, when Smith took over for good. It was by then the premier tennis sneaker. Smith remembers being beaten by opponents wearing his face on their feet. "I didn't think it was appropriate," he says. There was an Argentine player named Ricardo Cano, Smith recalls, who was signed to another brand but wore Stan Smiths anyway and drew the other company's logo on the side of the shoes. The Stans were just that much better.

Smith retired from tennis in 1985. How the sneakers, 43 years after their creation, became suddenly ubiquitous is a case study in how "cool" is created and disseminated from image-makers to mainstream consciousness. In the mid-'90s, while Nike consumed the American sneaker market, a small circle of offbeat celebrities and influential marketing professionals latched onto the shoe as a sort of anti-fashion fashion statement, part of a Waspy, but not too Waspy, vintage style they helped pioneer: tucked-in Brooks Brothers shirts with ill-fitting corduroys or khakis. It helped if you drove a vintage Mercedes.

Stan Smiths fit perfectly with this aesthetic. Here was a shoe that you could buy new, but it looked the same as it had in 1971. The skateboarder Rick Howard wore Stan Smiths in a 1993 skate video sponsored by Girl Skateboards, a company cofounded by Spike Jonze. Mike Mills, who recently directed 20th Century Women, but back then designed album covers for the Beastie Boys and Sonic Youth, was more into Rod Lavers, another Adidas tennis sneaker from the '70s, but his friend Roman Coppola, who founded the ad agency the Directors Bureau and who later wrote Moonrise Kingdom with Wes Anderson, preferred Stan Smiths. "I've owned a few pairs over the years, but don't remember any specific movement or discussion around it," he says. His sister Sofia Coppola wore them, too. By the early aughts, branding experts such as Andy Spade, who had launched and popularized his wife Kate Spade's company, were starting to reinterpret the retro-nostalgia look for the likes of J.Crew, Warby Parker, and Shinola, to great financial success.

Then came Phoebe Philo, the creative director of Céline. In March 2011, Philo took her bow on the Céline runway at the end of the fall-winter ready-to-wear show in Stan Smiths along with low-slung black trousers and a gray turtleneck, hair tucked in. The timing could not have been better. Philo was at the peak of her influence and power. Every editor and professional fashion woman from New York to London to (Continued on page 140)



For a brief time, I was the queen of French fashion. Then came the guillotine.

BY JOAN JÚLIET BUCK

## PHOTOGRAPH BY RUVEN AFANADOR



## In the fall of 1970, the look was Distressed Peasant.

I concocted an ankle-length suede outfit, its laced bodice complemented by laced platform boots, my head wrapped to suggest Ottoman harems over a base note of *shtetl*. I was almost 22, I'd been a fashion assistant at *Glamour* in New York, and I knew my stuff. Guy Bourdin arranged for me to meet the editor-in-chief of *Vogue Paris*, Francine Crescent, about a job.

At the *Vogue* mansion on the Place du Palais-Bourbon, the doors were the same midnight blue as our front door at home in London. I knew this was where I belonged.

Francine Crescent was a woman around 40 in a canary-yellow suit. The neckband of her sheer white sweater had the texture of a gauze bandage, the "ac" of the André Courrèges logo like a Band-Aid floating askew over her collarbone. The look was so far from Distressed Peasant that I wondered if she knew what year it was.

When she looked up from the pages of my portfolio, she saw a sneering turbaned Levantine in torn suede.

"You do fashion, but you edit and you write, also?"

I nodded. "Oui."

"But, in French also?"

"Yes," I said patiently, "but these are American and English publications, so they asked me to write in English."

With a frown, she exclaimed, "Ah! But—you are a professional!" I modestly lowered my eyes.

The editor-in-chief closed the book, shook her head sadly, and said, "We have no room for professionals at *Vogue*. And anyway, I've already hired a young woman for the job. She's an ambassador's daughter, so she has good taste." (Winston Churchill's grand-daughter, I would later find out.)

I marched out of her glass enclosure, past the thin-lipped editors in kilts with lapdogs under their desks, making as much noise as possible with my platform boots. *I'll be back*, I thought, *you'll see*.

I became features editor of British *Vogue* at 23, *Women's Wear Daily's* correspondent in London and Italy, was put under contract to American *Vogue* in 1980, published my first novel in 1982, and in 1985, I moved to Paris to finish my second one while writing for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, ensconced in the little clique around Yves Saint Laurent. And that's when the publisher of *Vogue Paris* invited me to lunch at Maxim's.

"MAXIM'S," PIERRE BERGÉ said when I told him. "At lunch?"

"Maxim's," Hélène Rochas said. "That's a little vulgar in the daytime."

The publisher—a prince of Polish lineage—unfolded his napkin, ordered two glasses of Champagne, asked if I wanted to edit *Vogue Paris*, and added, "If you say yes, you could eat lunch here every day."

I told him that I'd been approached once before. "You were too young then," said the prince.

I said I didn't want the job.

"You're an artist," he said. I picked at my coquilles Saint-Jacques.

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Yes, I thought, I am an artist in a garret who can borrow Saint Laurent couture anytime she wants and would never be caught dead eating lunch at Maxim's. I might be a serious writer if I could finish my second novel and write a third one. I am American Vogue's French-speaking creature, Vanity Fair's French-movie-star correspondent. I don't want the play-pretend power of a magazine editor. I have play-pretend bohemia instead.

I went back to New York and played up Paris. In my black tights, perfect shoes, and tight Saint Laurent suits, an Hermès shawl thrown over one shoulder, I dropped names no one recognized and presented myself as an imported luxury object. It was preferable to being seen as a single woman of 40 who couldn't get started on a third novel. I resented being taken at face value, but that was all I was offering. I had affairs.

I prayed that something would happen to liberate me from the infernal cycle of writing profiles to pay for new dresses to wear to old parties, but I was passive in the trap, a patsy. I was in bed on heavy doses of parasite-killer when I heard that the editor of British *Vogue*, Liz Tilberis, had decamped to *Harper's Bazaar*, and I called Si Newhouse to ask for the London job.

"We thought you didn't want to edit a magazine," said Si.

"I'd do anything to get out of New York," I said too frankly.

"The job's taken, but we'll keep you in mind," he said.

Eighteen months later, Anna Wintour called, breathy and confidential. She told me to expect a call; it turned out to be from Jonathan Newhouse, the head of Condé Nast International. He wanted to talk to me about *Vogue Paris*. We met, and I told him what I thought. There wasn't enough to read. French women were intellectual snobs, curious and educated; the magazine should be on their level.

"What about fashion?" he asked.

"French women know how to dress for an assignation," I said. "They want to know what to wear when they're not having sex."

Snowflakes thumped on the air conditioner outside, my study smelled of kitty litter, and I had three movies to review for *Vogue* and a profile of Mike Nichols to rewrite for *Vanity Fair*.

The phone rang. After six months of silence, it was Jonathan Newhouse.

"Would you like to come to Paris to edit French *Vogue*?" he asked.

I hadn't worked in an office in 16 years, I'd never had a staff, I had no relationships with photographers or designers beyond Karl and Yves, but because my family left Hollywood for Paris when I was a toddler, I spoke French like a native. The only thing I really knew was *Vogue*. Maybe it was time to run one of my own.

"Why not?" I said. Sometimes when there's too much traffic in the street, the only way to get across is to close your eyes and hurl yourself in.

I called my parents to tell them I'd accepted the job.

"Darling," my mother said, "remember, you're going to have to wear shoes during the day. High heels, every single day. And what about your nails?"

I polled my editor-in-chief friends for advice. Button your lip. Every issue you do should be your first and your last. Don't make decisions until you have looked and listened. Fire first. Do the first six months BUCK'S COVERS



Sept. 1994



Dec. 1994-Jan. 1995



Dec. 1998-Jan. 1999

without a budget. Keep your own counsel. Act as if you have friends and not enemies. Control your natural tendencies. In his white apartment in a tower by the East River, Alex Liberman, the artist and creative director, gave me further instruction.

"Avoid, at all costs, Visions of Loveliness," he said. "They're cheap." "I'd like to revive the wonderful pages they did before the war," I said, "the illustrators, the artists."

"Forget the past," said Alex. "Only Today counts. Today and tomorrow."

The way he said it, Today had a capital letter. I hadn't seen more than a few fashion shows since the '70s. Once my appointment was announced in April 1994, I caught up with Today at New York Fashion Week. Wearing a secondhand Burberry raincoat, I darted through the tents at Bryant Park, sat down in the front row next to Grace Coddington, and took out my compact to powder my nose.

"Don't ever do that!" hissed Grace. I put the compact away. First row, on show. Don't show weakness. Smile. I glanced at Grace. No, she wasn't smiling. Set mouth in firm expression of—another glance at Grace—incipient disgust. Really? I looked at the other faces, frontrow faces, second-row faces, PR-girl faces, photographer faces, famous-guest faces. Everyone looked miserable.

If the tents were any measure, there were going to be some bad energies floating around. I packed some cedar smudge sticks to wave about in the manner prescribed by Native Americans and ordered new clothes from Jean Muir in London. I didn't want to look as if I belonged to Karl Lagerfeld or Yves Saint Laurent.

My office in the Vogue mansion was one floor above the fashion room, and my desk had no chair. Alone in my office one lunch hour in my first week, I lit a smudge stick to clean out the atmosphere, oblivious to the fact that burning cedar smells very much like pot.

Vogue was a stroboscopic world where people finished my sentences for me, agreed before I had phrased a full question, nodded as if I were always right.

What photographers would we use? No matter whom I chose, I was going to hurt strangers, acquaintances, and people I loved.

"I always knew that I was really Vogue," Mario Testino said across the tiny desk. "I am Vogue, and Vogue is me."

Everyone who worked for us had to believe that they were Vogue, that Vogue was them, to make up for our tiny budgets.

I WANTED COLOR. The fashion editors wanted edgy. "Fashion is an attitude," explained Carine Roitfeld. Like all the others, she wore a little sweater, a straight skirt, and stilettos. They were all proud to be above what they called the diktats of fashion. They weren't bourgeois dupes who aspired to couture and diamonds. They were free women. They were de gauche. They were anti-fashion.

Carine was six years younger than I. A pointed face, freckles, thin lips, flat hair, and green eyes; how odd: Our eyes were the same color. I looked into those eyes and had the unbidden certainty that Carine would replace me in this job. So that's who you are, I thought. A neutral fact, it left me unmoved.

At night I went to bed with mock-ups of covers for my first issue. Whichever one I still liked in the morning would be the choice. Photocopies in my bed instead of a man. I was a *Vogue* nun.

At the early-morning breakfasts with advertisers, I sometimes caught, creeping between the collar of a Charvet shirt and a pink neck, the lingering odor of bodies in the night. Well, you're doing it, I'd think, so people are still fucking, and you didn't shower, you dog. Some men dropped hints, but I had only the vaguest grasp of kinship patterns, the complex chains of exes, and didn't want to risk sleeping with an enemy.

"I need some French clothes to wear at the couture," I told the fashion director, Brigitte Langevin.

"All you need is a Burberry trench, some jeans, and some T-shirts,"

she said, eyeing my black priest's tunic from London that had been pissing her off for weeks

"Burberry is English; jeans and T-shirts are American."

"But it's a very Jane Birkin attitude," she said. "She's a French icon." "She's English," I said.

"But the Hermès bag is named after her," said another editor brightly.

"Prada," suggested someone else. Italian. And Gucci. Gucci? The handbags? Yes, there was this young American designer who was a friend of Carine Roitfeld's, Tom Ford; in fact, she styled his shows, and he was doing wonderful things. Such as? Little sweaters, little skirts. And Jil Sander, Jil Sander was cool.

"That's two Italians, an American, and a German," I said. "Who is actually French?"

"Hermès," said one. But Hermès was designed by a German and a Vietnamese-Italian, with a Belgian about to take over.

No one was French, Karl least of all. So they could all stop bitching about the American at Vogue Paris.

That was why I decided I'd dedicate my first issue, September, to the French woman: "La Femme Française." It sold better than any issue had in years, but I kept getting these little "La Femme Française"? questions, as if I'd done something really sick.

"We died laughing over your 'Femme Française' cover," an art director said years later.

"What was wrong with it?"

"It read like a rallying call to the far-right wing. It was as bad as if you'd put the words 'National Pride' on the cover. It looked like a poster for the National Front."

Yves Saint Laurent's friend Charlotte gave a luncheon for me. Yves had become bloated and vast. He was 58; his face hadn't aged, but his hair had turned to wood and rose from his forehead in hard

## If the tents were any measure, there were going to be some bad energies floating around.

ridges. Sitting on my left, looking like a carved Austrian bottle stopper, he gave out intermittent, uncertain giggles and smiled sweetly.

"Remember the time we danced all night at New Jimmy's?" I asked.

"All night," he said. "You wore an antique paisley shawl."

Lemon mousse arrived on 18th-century plates; Yves grabbed my hand with an urgent plea. "Do you remember my phone number?"

"Of course," I said. "How could I ever forget your phone number?" "Would you tell me what it is? I can't remember."

I'd been close to Karl Lagerfeld, had stayed with him on the Rue de l'Université in 18th-century rooms lit only by scented candles set on the floor between taffeta curtains, slept under the ostrich-feather canopy of a lit à la polonaise, while he sat up all night drawing, writing, and reading. He, too, was an only child. He was as cerebral as he was gossipy. He'd adore and then loathe the same person in less than a week. He was critical of the living, enchanted by the dead, and thought his hands were ugly. There had been tangos and waltzes and fancy-dress balls, whispers behind his fan, long letters and longer phone calls, projects for movies that never happened, and, always, a deluge of clothes, and an equal deluge of books-all 18 volumes of George Sand's correspondence, of which I read only four.

I gave the first big party during couture. Isabelle Adjani peered through the door, fled, and called me from the street to say, "I can't go in. Too many models."

In 1995 and 1996, at the height of an economic crisis that threatened the French way of life, daily strikes paralyzed the country for months. Fashion was a frantic carnival to counter the gloom. John Galliano's first couture show for Givenchy was held in a football stadium. There were toreador hats, golden epaulets, floor-length white coats, bias-cut burgundy gowns, kimonos, his tropes; Galliano took his bow in a beaded Plains Indian vest. At a Louis Vuitton party, supermodels wove between steamer trunks the size of houses, dodging live camels, panthers, tigers, and dancing bananas.

Now that I had the semblance of power, time had the shape and speed of a bullet train, but it was filled with waiting. The Paris collections made Milan look like a holiday; many more shows, many more obligations, fashion houses whose ads paid for our existence. The shows were short, the waits infinitely longer: an hour, two hours, sometimes more. When there was nothing left to gossip about, no more rivals' shoes to inspect from across the way, everyone fell into a sullen private silence; witless from boredom, the occasional front-row editor would run a finger along her chin to check for hairs. Then the music would begin.

The culmination of six months' work for the designers, each show was a short paroxysm that lasted at most 12 minutes. Lights, music, girls, no plot. Nylon. Satin. Tulle. Nylon. Bouclé. Mesh. Models with new breasts so flattened inside sheer nylon tops that they looked like sunny-side-up eggs.

After each show I ran backstage to say the same set of words in French, or in English, on-camera for Fashion TV. I had to think in heels, fast, and stick with first impressions. Brilliant. Génial. Ugly. Moche. Cool. Cool. Great. Génial. Lame. Débile. Fabulous. Génial. My vocabulary grew as pointed and tiny as my attention span. Génial. Génial. Débile. Génial.

Toni Morrison was teaching at the Collège de France and needed shoes. I took her to Christian Louboutin, where she sat on a small sofa, her dreadlocks a crown of gray snakes, every pair of flats in the store set out before her feet in tribute. A man watched her through the window and then came in.

"You have the Nobel Prize and you're buying shoes?"

"Every woman needs good shoes."

Since 1969, every Christmas issue had been done by a guest editor, beginning with Françoise Sagan and ending with Nelson Mandela. It's hard to top Nelson Mandela, so I did away with guest editors. Instead the December issue of 1994 celebrated "One Hundred Years of Cinema"; we went on to dedicate others to "Music," "Theatre," "Love" (which the French staff took to mean sex), and one to "Quantum Physics," which probably cost me my job. Our best, most playful issue took the theme of "Art," inspired by a Constructivist Chanel collection of Karl's. All our contributors played the glorious game of make-believe with joy, except Mario and Carine, who found our imaginative effusions hard to take. I'd forgotten not everyone is good at charades, that some people don't even want to play.

Carine demonstrated our aesthetic differences by showing me her apartment. "You have so many things, you must see how I live."

Her nothing was infinite square meters of fine parquet overlooking the Esplanade des Invalides, the most expensive real estate in Paris. She took me around the way a child shows off her room, proud that there was nothing to see. No books in the living room, nothing on the tables, nothing in the kitchen. Everything in her apartment was behind closed doors.

"I don't like mess, it's confusing. I have only a few things," she said. Fashion was her element, which made her immune to the lure of beautiful things. That was her strength.

AFTER MY MOTHER'S DEATH, I moved my father to Paris and set him up in an apartment so as to surround him with evidence of prosperity and success, his or mine, it didn't matter. As I went into

my seventh year at Vogue, the magazine turned brown and sad. I was an inventor, not a manager, and I'd lost interest in fashion. If I'd been alone I would have quit, but the job was the only way I could perpetuate the glorious illusion I'd created for my father.

In the fall of 2000, Jonathan Newhouse asked me to meet him at Caffè Cova in Milan before the first fashion show. Shrieks of lightning hit the parking lot at Linate Airport, but the flight from Paris had been smooth. I sheltered flat against the plate-glass wall waiting for the car and wondered where this storm had come from. I told myself it wasn't personal.

The lightning and rain created traffic jams in Milan that made me late to Caffè Cova. When I arrived, I apologized for the weather.

He sat on a corner banquette beneath a display of porcelain, wearing new glasses that made him look like Rodchenko.

The teacups shone in the glass case behind him; the brass fittings on the mahogany glowed around us in the muted clatter of high heels and waiters' shoes and teaspoons in china cups and distant bursts of steam nozzles foaming cappuccinos in the front room. I could feel the tight armholes of my narrow tweed coat, the tug of the pink velvet seat against the crêpe of my dress, my platform shoes tight over my toes. My laptop was at my feet in a Gucci case designed for me, next to my Prada bag. New look for the new season, every label in place.

"I want you to take a sabbatical, starting today," he said.

"On the first day of the European collections? I can't do that." "Two months, starting now," he said.

Sudden stillness. Ice water in my veins. Guillotine. It's over. What did I do?

I sat completely still. Every second counted, because every second was the last second of being who I'd become. To make this pink linen napkin last forever in just this shape, this cup always brimming with foam, this sugar cube half-unwrapped, this spoon at this angle on the tablecloth, stop time in this turn of now, expand the stillness of this second to fill the room and stop the next one coming, to stop the next thing being said. I was amazed at how I could stretch out inside time and stop it, until I couldn't anymore, and I heard the next words.

'This is where you're going. They have very good therapy there." Jonathan handed me a piece of paper with "Cottonwood" written on it in neat capitals. My refusal to go, it seemed, would constitute quitting. If I went, if I obeyed, I could go on taking care of Dad.

I'll need the therapy to get me over losing my job. How thoughtful.

"I'll go," I said. "But why?"

He leaned forward and said he didn't want me to end up like one of his London editors who'd died of a cocaine overdose after an orgy with hookers in 1995.

Cocaine, orgy, hookers: This wasn't some therapy place. Cottonwood must be a drug rehab.

"I don't do drugs," I said. "I don't even drink. You know that."

"It's just two months, then you'll come back. I'm doing this because I'm your friend."

"Either you're my friend, or you're setting me up. I choose to believe you are my friend," I said.

Then, having demonstrated how gallant I could be, I said, "I'm late for Prada," and before he could stop me I rose and carried my two bags through the steam and crowd of the front room, out into the rain to the waiting car, and on to the Prada show, where I stared at the shoes on the feet of the editors across the runway, and then at the shoes on the feet of the models on the runway, until it hit me that my opinion of the shoes, the dresses, the models, the hair, had entirely ceased to matter. When the show was over, the front-row editors headed backstage to congratulate Miuccia Prada. I walked very slowly the other way, out onto the street.



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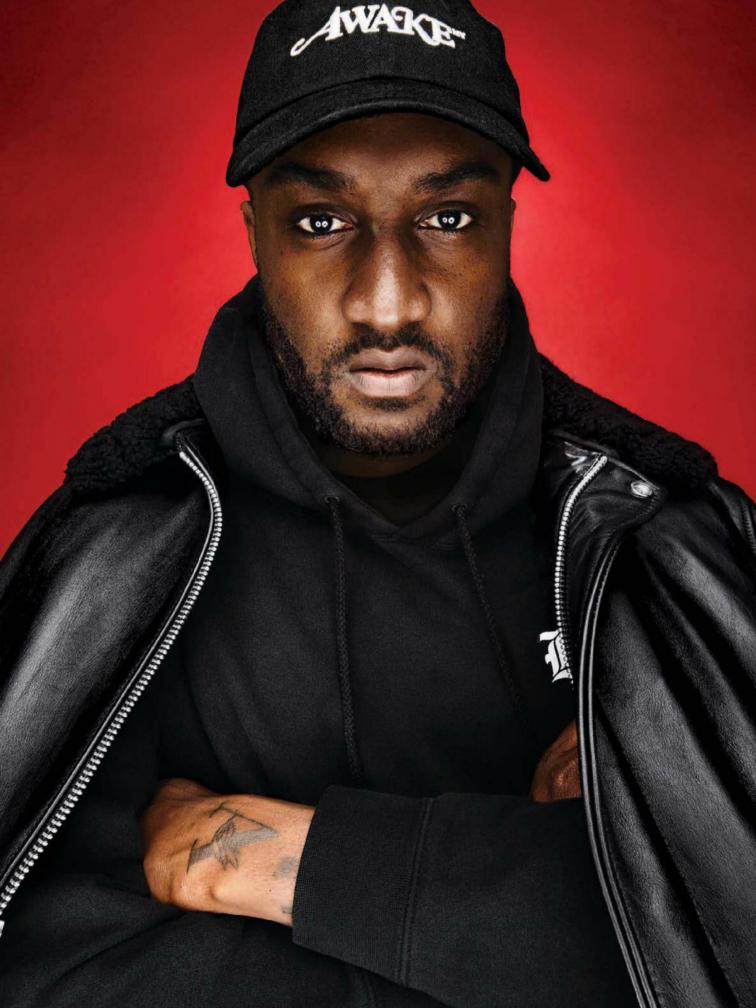


## Mhathe

BY CARL SWANSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOBBY DOHERTY

### His hautestreetwear but the clothes aren't the point.





IRGIL ABLOH LIKES to talk. He possesses an unusual, notquite-sure-if-he-means-it talent for the gnomic monologue, holding forth on how he is "kicking dents in culture" and represents a kind of fashion that is "post-Tumblr, poststreet style," and how his lauded label Off-White isn't fashion exactly but rather a "platform" for his being a "creative." But then it makes a certain sense coming from a designer, itinerant DJ, and social-media super-

connector who has been a member of Kanye West's inner circle for nearly 14 years, dating back to the era when West was still close enough to his middle-class frustrations that he wrote a song about being talked down to at his retail job.

Today, Abloh is West's "creative director," advising him on everything from tour merchandise and album covers to set design, if not yet on his political aspirations, and occasionally making peace between members of his posse, acting as, in his own words, a kind of "camp counselor." The two are so close that when West decided he wanted to learn more about fashion, in 2009, he brought Abloh along with him to an internship at Fendi.

As it turns out, the 36-year-old Abloh might have learned more than West. In the last few years, Off---White c/o Virgil

Abloh™ (all those typographical peculiarities are important to him) has become one of the most talked-about brands in fashion, an "elevated" which is to say, lavishly produced and pricedstreetwear brand sold at Barneys, Selfridges, Bergdorf Goodman, and Colette, as well as four of his own boutiques, located in the usual global shopping cities (Tokyo, Hong Kong, Beijing, and Singapore; he has an ambitious New York location he's just figuring out now). It's among a newer breed of labels, like Hood by Air and Vetements, that claim their power in the digital hype-o-sphere and consumer marketplace by keeping in constant contact with the barely-20-somethings who sanctify street-fashion codes-even if those kids themselves can't necessarily afford to buy many \$573 hoodies.

Abloh is tall and friendly and a bit sly, and the first time I heard him talk was last November at an event in Soho at a shop called Apolis—which is supposed

to translate as "global citizen" and describes itself as "a socially motivated lifestyle brand that empowers communities worldwide"—where Barneys "creative ambassador" Simon Doonan was moderating a conversation between Abloh and the artist Tom Sachs. It was after the election but before West had had his breakdown and quit his tour, complaining of exhaustion, and Abloh, perhaps worryingly, told the young crowd in Zeitgeist-y'90s-wear that he'd gotten only two hours of sleep the night before. He'd flown in from DJ-ing in Las Vegas, he said, acknowledging that the fact that he doesn't sleep much "definitely is going to catch up to me." Abloh, whose wife and two kids live in Chicago, says he flies over 350,000 miles a year, which means he's usually somewhere else, a traveling salesman for an idea of himself, which is a kind of accessible, aspirational citizen of the world.

As was evident from the Apolis audience, many members of whom were drawn from his 650,000 Instagram followers, Off-White is a brand-as-clubhouse, a meeting place for the fashionably like-minded. "He has a sixth sense in terms of hearing what the kids want," says Oana Stanescu, of the architecture firm Family, which designs his stores. Right now, what they want is a blend of skate culture, heavy metal, and a hefty dose of vintage '90s mix-andmatch. For men, there's a \$544 red tartan shirt tagged with Off-White's trademark diagonal slashes, and a \$2,462 baggy hooded leather jacket with a poncho vibe. Stanescu's firm worked with Abloh to design that Wagnerian mountain set for Kanye's 2013 tour. They later bonded during the Versailles leg of the Kimye wedding. She says the stores are meant to be hangout zones, galleries, and party spaces as much as sales floors. "When the stores open, people line up" to meet Abloh, who occasionally DJs the events.

Bruce Pask, men's-fashion director at Bergdorf Goodman, remembers hosting an event for Off-White. The store was thronged with young people. "'Oh, I'm going to hang with my kids," he recalls Abloh saying. "They feel the honesty in it," Pask says. When one of the kids couldn't afford to buy an Off-White T-shirt, Abloh took a Sharpie to the shirt the kid was wearing and Wrote THIS IS AN OFF-WHITE T-SHIRT on it. Esquire recently called him the "chief in the vanguard of a new kind of fashion populism." This is cultural production these days: a customer-service operation where the metric is "relevance" and is driven by "likes" more than by some personal artistic vision. Or as Abloh likes to say, "There's no line between a designer and consumer."

"I hate being up onstage with a microphone," he told the crowd at Apolis. "I am, basically, the same as you guys, only I've done a bunch of stuff." His main motivation is to live up to their expectations—which means, essentially, living the life they all wish they

could. There's a self-empowerment vibe to it. "A big part of his mission is to expose these kids to things they might not otherwise be exposed to," says Stanescu. In other words, he's trying to help kids do whatever they want to do, as soon as they want to do it, to "jump the timeline" of their lives, as he says. On February 6, he'll give a talk at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture titled "Everything in Quotes," for which he promised, via Twitter, that he would be "giving up every single code I know on how to make a living not 'working' and by being creative instead." A dog whistle for the vouth if there ever was one.

THE PRECOCIOUS, sensible son of Ghanaian immigrants raised in Rockford, Illinois, who studied at the University of Wisconsin and married his highschool girlfriend, Abloh is a very well-mannered fashion disrupter. He calls his charming, unflag-

ging self-mythologizing swagger-blather "intellectualizing the mundane." Get him going, and he drops references to Caravaggio, the Birkin bag (he owns a dozen of them), Peter Saville, the Bauhaus. He's big on "modernism."

That night at Apolis, Abloh recalled how, growing up, "I think I was asleep for a while. My first degree was in structural engineering, which is super-boring. [My parents'] dream was to have a kid who graduated from college. So I was DJ-ing and skateboarding, and the least I could do was be an awesome kid."



From Off-White's spring 2017 men's show.



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His college roommate and future best man, Gabriel Stulman, now a Manhattan restaurateur (he owns Joseph Leonard and Fedora), recalls Abloh arriving at school with a set of DJ turntables. He "devoured magazines" like GQ and wasn't afraid of wearing colors: "He had this Ralph Lauren leather jacket in college with a lion's head emblazoned on the back and two neon-orange stripes," Stulman recalls. "I would try to wear it, and it wouldn't look right on me." Plus, "He was always great at accessorizing. I remember the first double-G interlocking belt. He would buy a Gucci belt which cost \$250, and we're like 20." And he rocked the buckle on his hip. The two bonded over music: "Wu-Tang Clan, first album; De La Soul; A Tribe Called Quest," Stulman recalls. "OutKast and that track 'Rosa Parks." They threw parties at local bars, with Abloh DJ-ing. Then they would take the money they made and go shopping.

Abloh took his first art-history class the last year of college, learning about the Renaissance and Caravaggio. "It flipped my head backward," he says. "I'd spent so much time thinking practical things." As the son of immigrants, he'd always tried to be respon-

sible. He'd never considered doing something purely creative. "I felt that a random black kid from the suburbs of Chicago shouldn't be doing that." But he did it anyway, going to graduate school at the Illinois Institute of Technology for architecture. While there, in 2003, he started working for Kanye, designing merch. A few years later, Abloh and some friends had a blog called The Brilliance! on which they interviewed each other. He was asked, "What pushes you to create the next thing?" He responded, "It's that pursuit of causing excitement in an audience ... The notion that somehow the next design will be 'it' gives me that ... 'can't stop, won't stop,' Diddy kind of attitude."

The internship at Fendi in 2009 helped solidify the idea that he could create fashion, too. Abloh, by his own account, grew up worshipping at the altar of Air Jordans and the skatewear brand Supreme. He still wears them both: If he's not wearing his own clothing, he's in Supreme, right down to his boxer shorts. One of the times I met him over the past few months, he was in a special pair of Jordans he'd designed himself, set off with orange plastic zip-tie industrial gadgets, which looked like something between an anti-theft device and a house-arrest ankle bracelet but apparently were inspired by something he saw on an airplane.

"That's my thing: It's part of my industrial-design language, the readymade," he tells me. "You know, I would say Duchamp is my lawyer." He goes on. "I'm translating things which have been proven as fact in art and translating that into fashion, streetwear. I like the idea of finding different unused parts of industrial design in 2017. What haven't we seen? What can it offer to fashion, or design, or both?" Even before Off-White, he was experimenting with reappropriation: After the Fendi internship, he started screen-printing on \$40 dead-stock Rugby Ralph Lauren flannel shirts and selling them for \$550. He called the line Pyrex Vision.

He is always in pursuit of what comes next, multitasking to the point of distraction ("I'm not paying attention, but I am listening," he tells his friends). That said, "Fashion is kinda a joke," he says. "I don't get too bogged down in the clothes. For me, it's one big art project, just a canvas to show that fashion should have a brand which has someone behind it who cares about different contexts. Social things." This authenticity hunt, more than anything else about Abloh, seems exhausting, a boundaryless focus group. (DM him!) "Brands try to have a voice" on social media, observes Stanescu. "And it never works because it is never real, it comes from a branding machine. With Off-White, it's all Virgil's voice."

N DECEMBER, I saw Abloh in Miami Beach during Art Basel. He was there DJ-ing, giving talks, and premiering his furniture, including a tablewhich, given that it was partially held up by a pile of gravel, wasn't terribly useful as a table—at the Design Fair. He was half an hour late for breakfast, at the Edition Hotel, but when he arrived, he got right to it. Talking.

"My big premise is current culture, the young people providing content, you know," he says. He goes on, wondering, "Are we young designers,

living up to" our potential? Or "are we just making things which are cool? Are we past the threshold of artistically viable, and in the threshold of incredibly important work? And I think that me as a creator, that's my drive, actually. I don't think I've achieved anything. I'm trying to learn by doing and get this crescendo, I guess, of making culturally important things in the same way that Basquiat or Warhol did."



Abloh and Kanve West at the Hood by Air spring fashion show in 2013.

Okay, sometimes his intellectualizing of the mundane can sound like mundane intellectualizing. To wit: What is Off-White? "Never deciding. Staying in between two things, not trying to go left or right. That's my magic: That's how I get the balance between is it chic or is it street? Is it Canal Street or is it Madison Avenue? The ultimate, I think, is Phoebe Philo at Céline, because it is so layered." And that's where he sees himself: in these interstitial spaces, presumably posting on Instagram from them.

I ask him about his table. "The table isn't all that functional," he admits. "There are functional things about it. The feet are like a stack of drywall and a stack of stone. My goal was to blur the line between furniture and a piece of art." So where would you use it? "I'd put it in a design studio. Or an agency. But also if I was superrich and wanted to own a nonfunctional table." He looks around with a little smile on his face, clearly pleased to be somewhere he didn't expect to be, so far from where he grew up.

Recently, I'm looking at his Twitter, and he's giving a bit of advance notice to his followers: "upcoming fw17 women's Off-White<sup>™</sup> collection titled 'NOTHING NEW' showing in paris, france march 2nd at 9 pm palais de tokyo, youth invited."

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### **Vertical Stripes**

More prisoner than fisherman



Erdem, at barneys.com.



Chloé, at nordstrom.com.



Proenza Schouler, at 121 Greene St.; 212-420-7300.



Marques' Almeida, at Opening Ceremony, 35 Howard St.; 212-219-2688.



Monse, at Saks Fifth Avenue.



Sacai, at Saks Fifth Avenue.



**Gucci,** at 725 Fifth Ave.; 212-826-2600.



Fendi, at net-a-porter.com.



Rag & Bone, at rag-bone.com.



Etro, etro.com.

### **OLIVE DRAB**

Louis Vuitton, at 1 E. 57th St.; 212-758-8877.

Full-body khaki.

M ARK TWAIN called khaki "an ugly and odious and appropriate disguise, of yellow stuff such as quarantine flags are made of, and which are hoisted to warn the healthy away from unclean disease and repulsive death." Aldous Huxley agreed: "What a hideous color khaki is," he wrote in Brave New World.

(1) Marc Jacobs, at 113 Prince St.; 212-343-1490. (2) Emporio Armani, at 717 Fifth Ave.; 212-209-1902. (3) J.Crew, at jerew.com. (4) Salvatore Ferragamo, at 655 Fifth Ave.; 212-759-3822. (5) Kenzo, at Opening Ceremony, 35 Howard St.; 212-219-2688. (6) Coach 1941, at 685 Fifth Ave.; 212-758-2450.

















Michael Kors Collection, at michaelkors.com.



Balenciaga, at 148 Mercer St.; 212-206-0872.



Loewe, at loewe.com.



(1) Rag & Bone, at rag-bone.com. (2) Vetements, at net-a-porter.com. (3) Chloé, at Bergdorf Goodman, 754 Fifth Ave.; 212-753-7300. (4) Tory Burch, at 797 Madison Ave.; 212-510-8371. (5) Coach 1941, at 685 Fifth Ave.; 212-758-2450. (6) Alexander McQueen, similar styles at alexandermcqueen.com. (7) Miu Miu, at 11 E. 57th St.; 212-641-2980. (8) Salvatore Ferragamo, at 655 Fifth Ave.; 212-759-3822. (9) Fendi, at 598 Madison Ave.; 212-897-2244.







3



### GINGHAM

Subverting a staple.

INGHAM WASN'T ALWAYS checked—it began as striped fabric imported from India, Indonesia, and Malaysia—the crosshatches arrived in the 18th century. Traditionally, it's a symbol of innocence, which only makes it ripe for subversion.

(1) Peter Pilotto, at matchesfashion .com. (2) Carolina Herrera, at 954 Madison Ave.; 212-249-6552. (3) Dolce & Gabbana, at 717 Fifth Ave.; 212-897-9653. (4) House of Holland,  $\operatorname{at}$  $house of holl and. co. uk. \, (5) \, \textbf{Molly}$ Goddard, at Dover Street Market, 160 Lexington Ave.; 646-837-7750.







### '80s Shoulders



Nouvelle society looks began to make an irony-saturated return. Not only the gilt, poufs, and mini-hemlines of the era but those showy shoulders, too. In *Backlash*, Susan Faludi chronicled the political underpinnings of this new style, including Christian Lacroix's "baby doll"—themed collection. Back then, Arnold Scaasi said that the ultrafemme look was "a reaction to the feminist movement, which was a kind of war." But the looks weren't just about gender; they were about class. The ostentatious styles were perfect for flaunting wealth, whether worn by Susan Gutfreund, Pat Buckley, or Gayfryd Steinberg. As Tom Wolfe later told the New York *Times*, the aesthetic was "we're going to show we have money."

### OVERSIZE EAR GEAR

Mismatched and gigantic.

N ANCIENT TIMES, earrings were predominantly for men. The Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen and the Buddha are believed to have worn ear décor, and Shakespeare was depicted in paintings wearing an earring, too. Later, pirates are fabled to have worn them to mark their voyages or as a superstitious attempt to cure seasickness.

**▼ MISMATCHED** 



J.W. Anderson, at j-w-anderson.com.



Erdem, at erdem.com.



Saint Laurent, at 3 E. 57th St.; 212-980-2970.



Dior, at 21 E. 57th St.;

at 725 Fifth Ave.; 212-826-2600.

**▼** OVERSIZE

Altuzarra, at altuzarra.com.



Proenza Schouler, at 121 Greene St.; 212-420-7300.



**DSquared2,** at 166 Spring St.; 212-966-3487.



**Delpozo,** at delpozo.com.



at us.versace.com.



### The New Suit

Skirts, trousers, Helmuts.



at 21 E. 57th St.; 212-931-2950.



Givenchy, similar styles at givenchy.com.



Versace, at us.versace.com.



T WAS ONCE SAID THAT WOMEN in suits were attempting to fly beneath the radar, to blend in. But this was the year of Pantsuit Nation—even Beyoncé wore one during a pre-election

concert for self-described "pantsuit aficionado" Hillary Clinton. Fashion-wise, this season saw

at 870 Madison Ave.; 212-535-3703.



Chloé, at 850 Madison Ave.; 212-717-8220.



Michael Kors Collection, at michaelkors.com.



Bottega Veneta, at 650 Madison Ave.; 212-371-5511.



Louis Vuitton, at 1 E. 57th St.; 212-758-8877.



Max Mara, at 813 Madison Ave.; 212-879-6100.



Chanel,

at 15 E. 57th St.;

212-355-5050.

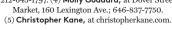


### SHEER

Nipples on display.

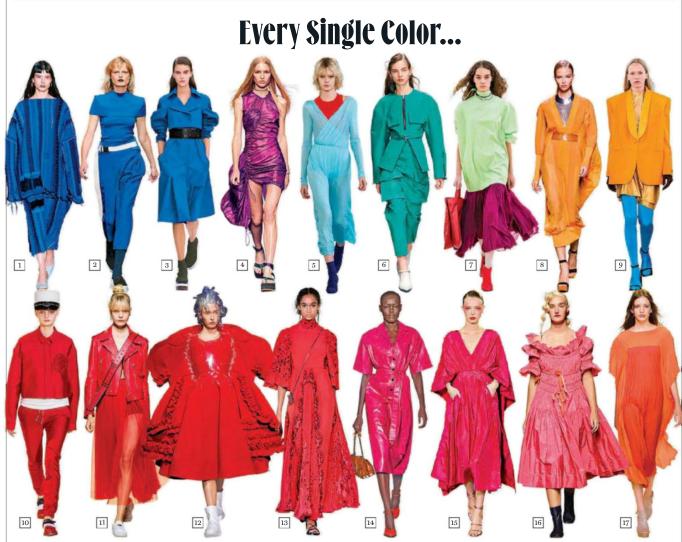
ARIE ANTOINETTE once posed for M Vigée Le Brun in one of the first known sheer dresses, the chemise à la reine. Made in Britain, it threatened the French silk industry. By 1800 came a more daring  $\dot{a}$ la sauvage, a sheer gown worn over a body stocking. In the 1910s, the X-ray dress (a name coined by designer Jean-Philippe Worth) became the target of bans.

- (1) Lanvin, at 849 Madison Ave.; 646-439-0380.  $\mbox{(2) Dior, at 21 E. 57th St.; 212-931-2950}.$
- (3) Alexander McQueen, 747 Madison Ave.; 2-645-1797. (4) Molly Goddard, at Dover Street Market, 160 Lexington Ave.; 646-837-7750.









(1) Acne Studios, at acnestudios.com. (2) DKNY, at 420 W. Broadway; 646-613-1100. (3) Salvatore Ferragamo, at 655 Fifth Ave.; 212-759-3822. (4) Versace, at us.versace.com. (5) Emilio Pucci, at 855 Madison Ave.; 212-752-4777. (6) Marni, at 161 Mercer St.; 212-343-3912. (7) Céline, at 870 Madison Ave.; 212-535-3703. (8) Balmain, at Saks Fifth Avenue, 611 Fifth Ave.; 212-753-4000. (9) Balenciaga, at 148 Mercer St.; 212-206-0872. (10) Moncler Gamme Rouge, at 650 Madison Ave.; 646-768-7022. (11) Dior, at 21 E. 57th St.; 212-931-2950. (12) Comme des Garçons, at 520 W. 22nd St.; 212-604-9200. (13) Valentino, at 693 Fifth Ave.; 212-355-5811. (14) Bottega Veneta, at 650 Madison Ave.; 212-371-5511. (15) Kenzo, at Opening Ceremony, 35 Howard St.; 212-219-2688. (16) Molly Goddard, at Dover Street Market, 160 Lexington Ave.; 646-837-7750. (17) Akris, at Bergdorf Goodman, 754 Fifth Ave.; 212-753-7300.

THE MOST famous yellow dress of the year has to be the vaguely '50s frock that Emma Stone wears in the poster for La La Land, a film whose costumes, by Oscar nominee Mary Zophres, embrace every color of the rainbow. But yellow has long been a filmic trope: Natalie Wood wears it in the makebelieve wedding sequence of West Side Story, as does Doris Day in Lullaby of Broadway, Audrey Hepburn in Funny Face, Catherine Deneuve in The Young Girls of Rochefort, and Ann Reinking in Annie. But for Zophres, it wasn't about the genre: "She looks stunning in the color (and not everybody does)."

# **BUT MOSTLY YELLOW**

(1) Chloé, at 93 Greene St.; 646-350-1770. (2) Emilio Pucci, at 855 Madison Ave.; 212-752-4777. (3) Moschino, at 73 Wooster St.; 212-226-8300. (4) Rick Owens, at rickowens.eu. (5) Hermès, at 691 Madison Ave.; 212-751-3181. (6) Erdem, at barneys.com. (7) Gucci, at 725 Fifth Ave.; 212-826-2600.





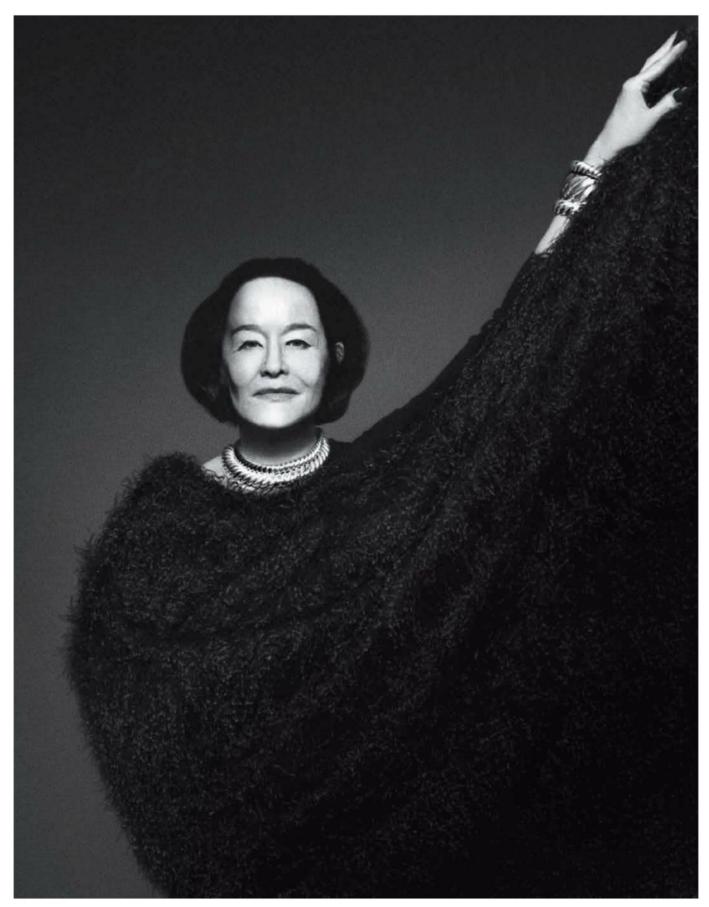


# ndary





*As* Gloria Steinem 1972



As Diana Vreeland 1977



As Frida Kahlo 1939



Simone de Beauvoir





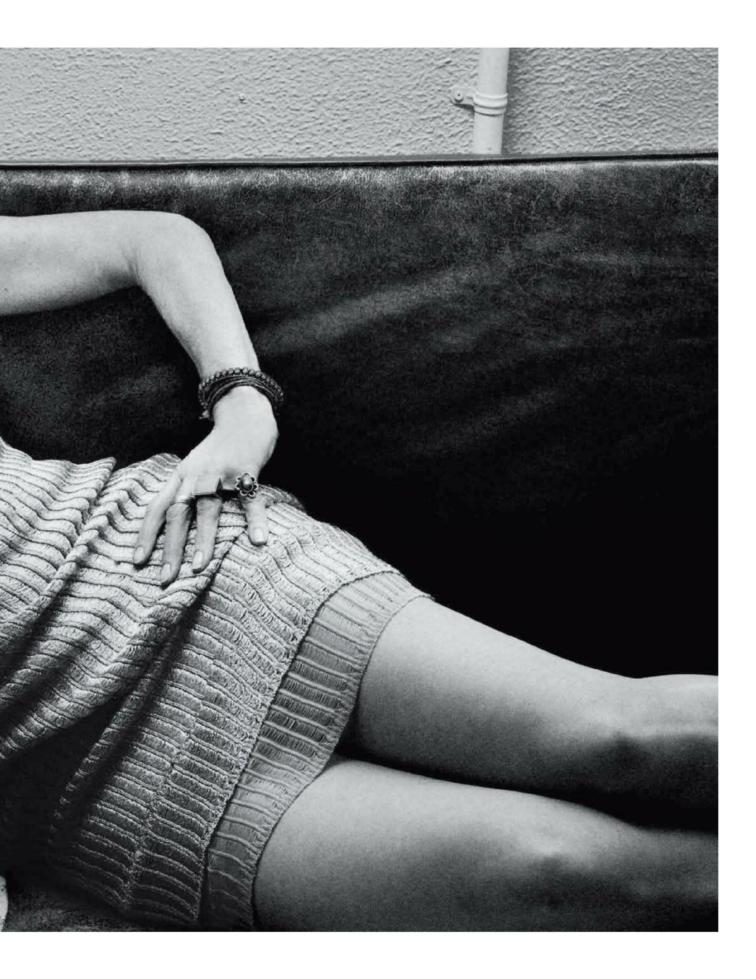
As Mae West ca. 1936



As Georgia O'Neeffe 1948



As Janis Joplin 1968



**ESSICA LANGE** was typecast once, so she knows what it's like. In her first big movie, the 1976 Dino De Laurentiis remake of King Kong, she played the stranded starlet and reluctant love interest of a giant mechanical ape. After the film was panned, Lange didn't really get another chance to prove herself until 1981, when she landed the lead role in *The* Postman Always Rings Twice opposite Jack Nicholson. Everyone who saw her in that film agreed that she was vulnerable and intense and brilliant and powerful—a serious actress, not the sexpot in a Pebbles outfit they'd initially taken her for. Except that sexpot in a Pebbles outfit was what the Kong part called for, and back then, Pauline Kael was alone among critics in recognizing the complexity in her dumb blonde "so innocently corrupt she's as childlike as Kong himself," an out-of-touch dreamer "with an instinct for the main chance."

Eventually, of course, she turned out to be Jessica Lange, known for her nerve-jangled vulnerability and nakedly emotional performances. But that early indignity, and probably others just like it, shaded her later roles. Lange's heroines are often simultaneously crushed and galvanized by injustice, hypocrisy, double standards, and double binds. She's aware of the elaborate mousetraps the world lays for women, and of how women negotiate them, and what that does to their psyches. As an actress, she's always been drawn to lonely, misunderstood heroines-misfits and outcasts and other marooned souls. A handful of those roles have been based on real-life people with seemingly nothing in common but this.

Lange and I are talking in a West Hollywood hotel. Outside is a torrential rain of biblical proportions. It's the morning of the inauguration, and the day before the Women's March on Washington, which makes her recall her first big protest, in Paris, in 1968. Had she not had to work on Saturday, she would have marched, too. But instead she's going to be photographed as eight legendary women artists, rebels, and trailblazers, transforming herself into—using all the tricks of modern Hollywood-Frida Kahlo, Gloria Steinem, Georgia O'Keeffe, Janis Joplin, Diana Vreeland, Marlene Dietrich, Mae West, and Simone de Beauvoir at their most iconic. The women she chose are powerful and visionary; women who changed the world. She is photographed as Steinem just as Steinem is speaking in D.C. It is the next best thing to being there.

In Feud, Ryan Murphy's new anthology series on FX, which airs next month, Lange has taken on another icon: Joan Crawford in her twilight years, after the roles have begun to dry up and the debts have started to mount. Writers aren't writing scripts for women, so she starts casting around for source material. When she comes across Henry Farrell's camp-horror novel What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?, she sends it to director Robert Aldrich, who needs a hit and recognizes its potential in a pre-feminist, post-Psycho marketplace. The only thing is that they need Bette Davis to come onboard, but Joan and Bette hate each other. The other caveat: No studio wants to make a movie starring two old broads.

Feud stars two film legends playing aging film legends who, in an attempt to revive their flagging careers, decide to play a couple of forgotten film legends: Baby Jane Hudson (Susan Sarandon as

Davis), a deranged former child star of the '20s, and Blanche (Lange as Crawford), her once-glamorous, now-paralyzed and abused older sister, a former screen goddess who longs to escape her disturbed caretaker's clutches. A matryoshka doll of nesting self-referential narratives, it's a perfect metaphor for the plight of women in Hollywood tucked into a microcosm for women in society. In this infinite hall of mirrors, progress is just an illusion. "I don't think that much has changed in Hollywood for women," she says. Nor does she think that much has changed on a national political level, with the election representing a "last gasp" of "white patriarchal society holding on for dear life."

Over her career, Lange has now played famous women including Crawford; the movie star Frances Farmer; the dowager of Grey Gardens, "Big" Edie Ewing Bouvier Beale; and the country singer Patsy Cline. For her, embodying such characters always starts with research, and the physicality is crucial. "You do study every breath, every beat, but it can't just be imitation." With Crawford, "we tried to do similar makeup and hair, of course, but that was the extent of the mimicry. And the voice. She had a very melodic way of speaking. It would rise and fall, and it was studied."

Crawford was groomed as all stars were in those days, taught how to speak, walk, and stand. She was always "on." "She used to say, 'If I go out, I'm Joan Crawford.' So, it's rare that you see a moment where she lets that guard down. She has way too much at stake," Lange says.

To really play Joan Crawford, in other words, you have to play Lucille LeSueur, an unloved, uneducated, abused former chorus girl out of San Antonio, Texas, who handed herself over to be re-created from scratch, by MGM, as the imaginary Joan Crawford, a persona she used as a shield her whole life.

"What's interesting about it is you have to find those fissures, whether it's just something that registers behind the eye, or in a gesture. There's one interview, I think she's at an airport and she's drunk, and she's trying really hard to keep the MGM-speak, you know. I've beeeen and haaaave. And at one point some children come toward her and—I had to listen to it over and over again to make sure that I really heard it—she turns to them and she says [in a distinctly Texan accent], 'Well, hah're yeeew?' It was like, so right below the surface." CARINA CHOCANO



Marlene Dietrich ca. 1930

### The Key

S ANDRO became interested in the process of re-creating iconic photos with "Malkovich Malkovich Malkovich," a 2014 series in which John Malkovich starred in images inspired by photographers including Gordon Parks and Diane Arbus. For this project, photographed on January 21, as Gloria Steinem addressed the Women's March on Washington, Sandro and Jessica Lange paid homage to Steinem and seven other personal heroes.

### **GLORIA STEINEM**





Steinem, photograph by Mary Ellen Mark, 1972
On Lange: Sweater by Jil Sander Navy, at jilsander.com. Vest by Katherine Hegg
of Knit Nirvana, to order at 708-771-5292. Pants by Tommy Hilfiger,
at tommy.com. Belt by Figue, at figue.com. Boots by Stuart Weitzman, at stuartweitzman.com.
Vintage rings. Makeup by Dior and Marc Jacobs.

### FRIDA KAHLO





Kahlo, photograph by Nickolas Muray, 1939

On Lange: Shawl by Ralph Lauren Collection, at ralphlauren.com. Shirt by Proenza Schouler, at matchesfashion.com. Dress by Kate Spade New York, at katespade.com. Necklaces by Tiffany & Co., at tiffany.com. Headpiece by Wilhelm, at wilhelm-nyc.com. Ring by LFrank, at Ifrankjewelry.com. Earrings and coin necklace, both vintage. Makeup by Giorgio Armani.

### GEORGIA O'KEEFFE





O'Keeffe, photograph by Philippe Halsman, 1948
On Lange: Hat by Yestadt Millinery, at yestadtmillinery.com. Coat by DSquared2,
at 166 Spring St. 212-966-3487. Shirt by Michael Kors Collection, at michaelkors.com.
Scarf by Brunello Cucinelli, at 136 Greene St.; 212-334-1010. Custom brooch by Cicada Pi,
to order at 708-628-3199. Makeup by Giorgio Armani, Dior, and Marc Jacobs.

### SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR





De Beauvoir, photograph by Gisèle Freund, 1948
On Lange: Shirt by Equipment, at equipmentfr.com. Tie by Brooks Brothers. Skirt by Prada, at 575 Broadway; 212-334-8888. Shoes by Jimmy Choo, at jimmychoo.com. Bracelet and earrings by Elizabeth Locke, at 968 Madison Ave. 212-744-7878. Watch by Cartier. Hosiery by Wolford, at wolford.com. Makeup by Giorgio Armani.

### DIANA VREELAND -





Vreeland, photograph by Bill King, 1977
On Lange: Coat by Max Mara, at 813 Madison Ave.; 212-879-6100.
Necklace and bracelets by David Yurman, at 712 Madison Ave.; 212-752-4255.
Sweater by Theory, at bloomingdales.com. Makeup by Giorgio Armani.

### MAE WEST





West in Go West, Young Man, ca. 1936
On Lange: Coat by Philosophy di Lorenzo Serafini, at albertaferretti.om. Stole by Pologeorgis, to order at 212-563-2250. Dress by La Perla, at laperla.com. Necklaces and cuff by Chanel, at 15 E. 57th St.; 212-355-5050. Pendant necklace by Cartier, at 653 Fifth Ave.; 212-446-3400. Ring and earrings by H&M, at hm.com. Makeup by Dior, Giorgio Armani, Marc Jacobs, and MAC Cosmetics.

### MARLENE DIETRICH





Dietrich in Morocco, ca. 1930
On Lange: Jacket, pant, and shoes by Saint Laurent, at ysl.com. Shirt by Tom Ford, at tomford.com. Bowtie, pocket square, and cuff links by Brooks Brothers, at brooksbrothers.com. Hat by Baron Hats, at baronhats.com. Vintage ring. Makeup by Dior.

### JANIS JOPLIN





Joplin, photograph by Jim Marshall, 1968 On Lange: Dress by Missoni, at 1009 Madison Ave. 212-517-9339. Vintage necklaces, rings, and bracelets. Makeup by Dior, Giorgio Armani, Marc Jacobs, and MAC Cosmetics.



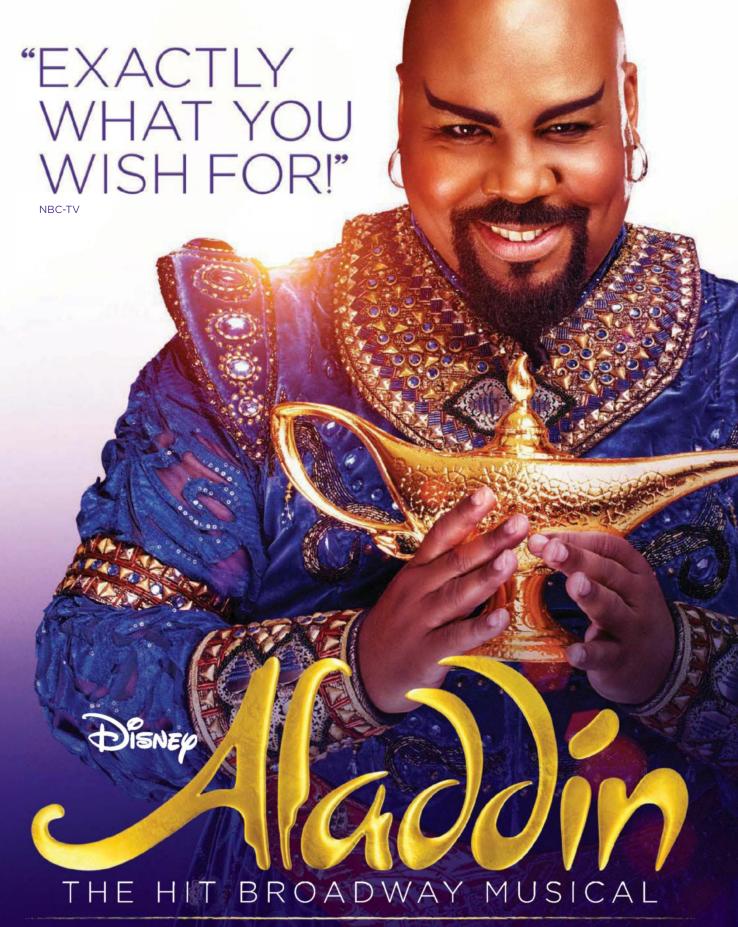
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# BEST BETS

# MICROMARKET

>> Four new Victoria's Secret alternatives.



EBERJEY: Guava-colored supersoft chemises (\$86) and lace racer-back bralettes (\$60). Opening in March; 13 Gansevoort St.



THE GREAT EROS: Millennial lingerie like latex bodysuits (\$380) and geometric lace panties (\$48). 135 Wythe Ave., Williamsburg.



GIORGIA: Paladini's red lace couture bra-and-panty sets from Bologna (\$340) and camisoles from Turin (\$75). 345 Greenwich St.



THE RACK SHACK:

Tutti Rouge bras with detachable cage straps that go up to size 38HH (\$70). 155 Central Ave., Bushwick.

### CLUSTER

**▶** MB45, promising 45-minute hair and nails, joins central Tribeca's speed-beauty district.



Skin Laundry: The 15-minute Laser & Light facial vaporizes dirt and brightens skin (\$65). 112 W. Broadway.



Heyday: 30-minute facials include skin analysis, customized exfoliation, a targeted treatment mask, and eye and lip moisturizing (\$60). 92 Reade St.



original quick blowouts (\$45) and updos (\$90) in 35 to 45 minutes, plus a scalp massage if you have a little more time. 180 W. Broadway.

MB45: Signature maniand-blowout combos have a gel option and four blowout looks, all completed in 45 minutes (from \$65). 93 Worth St.

# SIDE BY SIDE

>> Two new celebrity boutiques, from a Real Housewife and a Canadian rapper.

Person

Style

Store



KYLE | ALENE TOO



OCTOBER'S VERY OWN 54 Bond St

Real Housewife Kyle Richards visited an Alene Too store in Florida and asked to become a partner.

Drake and his co-manager Oliver El-Khatib blend concert merch with streetwear.

ZCD Montreal silver sneaker slides (\$398) and Ramy Brook tops with

flared arms (\$345). A lavender ombré wall

with gold shelving and chain-mail accents; regular designer appearances.

Black hoodies with embroidered gold owls (\$158) and limited-release collaboration Jordan 12s (\$225).

Gallerylike white walls with clothes floating off gold racks; carpets with gold owls for selfie-taking teens.

### 2x2

# Sculptural Vases

For your Valentine's flowers.

## BOUQUET





Food52 x Hawkins New York hand-cut textured vase. \$40 at food52.com.



littala Aalto Finlandia Emerald. \$195 at finnstyle.com.





Ikebana \$18 at urbanoutfitters.com.



Kora, \$294 at ahalife.com.

## MOVING IN

On March 1, Dimitrios Fragiskatos will open Anyone Comics (1216 Union St., Crown Heights).









 ${\it `Imanaged a Midtown'}$ Comics store for seven years, but I'm all about community building. Here, I have a basement that's big enough to host events, like signings with the artists, and there are also three offices I'll be renting out as studios for comicbook artists. Upstairs we'll have all the new Spider-

Man (\$4) and X-Men (\$4) comics grouped along the shelves by publisher, a space in the center for art books like Art of Richard Corben (\$30), and I'll also sell graphic novels, including a surrealist one by Dean Haspiel called Beef With Tomato (\$10), about growing up in drugaddled Alphabet City."

## TOP FIVE

→ Max Poglia co-founded The Space NYC (99 Scott Ave., Bushwick), a menswear store and workshop, for his accessories brand Poglia and Ascari Bicycles, opening February 15.



"This horse catchall (\$110) was cast in solid brass from a piece originally owned by my grandfather. He used it as an ashtray in his dry-goods store.'



"Each of these bikes (price upon request) is handmade to order with exotic woods, even the air pumps and brake levers."



"Our knives (from \$270) are made of repurposed steel, wood, horn, and bone, which all react to the weather. It's about not having total control."



"Our leather bag (\$485) has a classic look with a useful twist: You can hold a longbrimmed hat or newspaper between the front straps."



"There's a little solid-brass fist that connects the top and bottom of this hat stand (from \$365). It's a great functional accent piece."

THE LOOK BOOK

### **CELIA DRAYCOTT** High-School Sophomore

How's sophomore year treating you? Good, I have a free right now. I go to Saint Ann's, and there are just no words to describe it. I love it here. But I have nothing to compare it to, since it's the only school I've been to.

So what are the kids into these days? Well, politics and social justice are huge among my friends. Especially after the election. Everything from bashing Trump to other stuff. As for fashion, the '80s are extremely in. Turtlenecks and high-waisted jeans. Patches, pins, and embroidery are huge-I recently embroidered an eye onto the back pocket of my jeans. And then for social media, I just got off Instagram, and I'm not on Facebook. Nobody is on Twitter. I am on Snapchat, though. And there's this  $\ \, \text{new app called Houseparty.}$ Basically, you're just FaceTiming with up to eight people, and anyone you're friends with can join your call. So, like, my friends and I will all be at home doing a Houseparty, and some random person three grades below will join in. INTERVIEW BY ALEXIS SWERDLOFF





Sugarfish

# The Shake Shack of Sushi

L.A. import Sugarfish wants to democratize the fine art of *omakase*.

BY ADAM PLATT

HE FIRST TIME I attempted to secure an evening table at the new Flatiron outpost of the famous L.A. sushi destination Sugarfish, the friendly gatekeepers at the front of the dark, narrow room said the wait would be at least two hours. When I returned at lunchtime on a snowy weekday during the holiday rush, the two hours had barely budged at all to an hour and a half. Which is how I found myself, many weeks later,

after several more false starts, finally sitting down at the packed little bar at four o'clock on a gray winter afternoon. Everyone was on their phones, including the gentleman next to me, who was talking loudly to someone in Por-

tuguese. A little farther down, a woman worked two phones and looked up eagerly when her teatime fix of yellowtail and albacore arrived. "I am soooooo addicted!" she said to her server in tones of giddy delight. "We're all so addicted!" he cried.

The legend of Sugarfish's founder, Kazunori Nozawa, and his legions of addicted admirers precedes him to New York, of course. Back in the '80s and '90s, he was one of the originators, with chefs like Masa Takayama, of L.A.'s ascetic

omakase school. And like Jiro's famously anonymous establishment inside a random subway station in Tokyo, these stern practitioners operated, for the most part, out of modest little bolt-holes in random strip malls. They frowned on the more ornamental aspects of the Americanized sushi experience (dragon rolls, gouts of soy sauce on everything, actual menus, etc.) and used only the finest ingredients, which they doled out in rigid little set-

course omakase bites. Over time, acolytes of this chaste omakase experience spread the gospel to influential non-sushi chefs, like David Chang, who helped launch a generation of effete, boutique tasting rooms across the land.

Nozawa's original operation was in Studio City, but as prices soared and fish disappeared from the seas, he looked for ways to democratize his purist vision and bring it to the masses. The answer, with the help of a savvy restaurateur named Jerry Greenberg, was Sugarfish, which has turned, in a few short years, into a multioutlet, L.A.-sushi version of Danny Mever's Shake Shack. Like Meyer, Nozawa and his partners took a complicated dining process and pared it down to its addictive

essence. Instead of the usual parade of delicacies, they offered a few durably popular, quality favorites (yellowtail, salmon, tuna, shrimp, scallops). The lordly sushi master was replaced by a crew of diligent kitchen serfs in the back who wore Sugarfish-logo caps and turned out the chef's famous *omakase* options with a practiced, short-order efficiency.

Like at one of those gimmicky sushiconveyer-belt operations, these dishes are served by twos, on little white plates, with a minimum of fuss or frills, and they cost roughly half what you'd expect to pay for your fix of vellowtail or high-grade tuna belly at one of the grander sushi joints around town. The first thing to pop up before me at the bar, after ritual servings of ginger and wasabi and a slightly weathered-looking helping of "organic" edamame, was some palatable, prerefrigerated tuna sashimi sprinkled with scallions and a little too much ponzu sauce, and the yellowtail, cut in Nozawa's trademark plump, square slices. The rice under the fish was loose and vinegary and faintly warm, and although the fish wasn't of the highest quality, it was cool and fresh enough, and the combination of the different soft textures made for a nice bite.

This mingling of freshness and texture, with a spritzing of palate-tingling acid, is one of sushi's essential (and, ves, addictive) pleasures, and Nozawa and his team do an admirable job navigating a middle path between the cheap (often fake) deli sushi experience and the increasingly absurdly priced realm of the high-roller *omakase*. But like a house band running endlessly through the same set of songs, they tend to

Sugarfish 33 E. 20th St., nr. Broadway 347-705-8100 sugarfishsushi.com

\*\*\*\* ETHEREAL

\*\*\* EXCEPTIONAL

★★★ EXCELLENT

★★ VERY GOOD

★ GOOD

NO STARS NOT RECOMMENDED





# HEALTH

My motto? Don't age gracefully, age ferociously.

Rejoining the USA Men's Water Polo team was a bold decision for an athlete pushing forty. To compete at Rio in one of the world's toughest endurance sports, I knew I would have to train harder, eat smarter, and be more prepared than ever before.

Lucky for me, the team's Official Snack helps fuel all of my goals.

For Merrill's story and more stories from real people, go to AmericanPistachios.org.



One of life's tastiest pleasures. Farend tepear.

Merrill Moses THREE-TIME OLYMPIC ATHLETE USA WATER POLO GOALKEEPER, RIO 2016 FATHER OF TWO

The POWER POSTACHIOS

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THE DISH

# again and again. Most of the components of the iconic \$51 "Nozawa Trust Me" omakase were notable for their uniform, almost marshmallow texture, which in many cases masked any semblance of real flavor. The sesame-speckled salmon was remarkable for its pleasing appearance, and like the yellowtail and the precut toro sushi, the alba-

hit the same numbingly agreeable notes

core had an admirably smooth texture, although once you worked through the garnish of scallions and the buzzy dose of ponzu, it tasted of nothing at all.

It's possible to stray from these stolid omakase options at Sugarfish, but in sushi, as in life, you generally get what you pay for. When I returned on another afternoon (after a three-hour wait) with a sushiaristocrat friend who remembered being glowered at by a cranky Nozawa back at the original restaurant in Studio City, we sampled some pale, weirdly desalinated salmon eggs and several bites of what the aristocrat classified as "grade C" tuna belly. All the items on the meager "specials when available" section of the menu were gone, except for some Santa Barbara uni, which had the consistency of watery, artisanal toothpaste. The pearly sweet shrimp was the best of these slim à la carte options, we both agreed, along with one or two of Nozawa's famous hand rolls, which now have their own restaurant in L.A. Order them rolled, and not sliced in pieces, however, to avoid the softness of the rice and your chopped toro (or scallops, or

# California Kasha Varnishkes

Gerardo Gonzalez isn't the first person you'd associate with kasha varnishkes, that Ashkenazi Jewish specialty of toasted and boiled buckwheat groats and bow-tie pasta, slicked with oil or schmaltz and flavored with caramelized onion. But the California-born, Mexican-American chef fell for the dish as soon as he tasted it at B&H Dairy. For the lunchtime riff he serves at his Chinatown restaurant, Lalo, Gonzalez takes inspiration from his mom's parsley-and-mushroom salad, substituting goat's-milk Gouda for Pecorino and cremini

for her button mushrooms. But it's the kasha that makes it—crisped in browning butter, adding airy crunch to the parsley and agrodolce-coated noodles. Lemon vinaigrette brings brightness, and a poached egg turns the salad into a meal.

R.R. & R.P.

On the lunch menu at Lalo, \$12; 104 Bayard St., nr. Baxter St.; 646-998-3408



One star for the clean, uncluttered conception and another for the prices. Minus a star for the dining experience, the ridiculous wait, and the middling range and quality of the fish.

cooked lobster) blending on the

described as "a gentle mush."

plate into what the aristocrat

## BITES

IDEAL MEAL: The "Nozawa Trust Me" set-course menu, with sweet shrimp, large scallops, and a cucumber hand roll on the side. NOTE: Late lunch is by far the easiest time to get a seat, although the best option of all is carryout, which should be up and running in a few weeks.

**OPEN:** Lunch and dinner daily. **PRICES:** Set menu, \$27 to \$51; à la carte, \$5.25 to \$16.

Gonzalez includes slivers of one of his favorite cheeses, Midnight Moon, for its "caramelly notes."

He browns the butter and fries the kasha simultaneously, achieving a flavor and texture heretofore unbeknowns to unsuspecting varnishkes.

The egg is a \$2 add-on. "Tm used to eating fried eggs with kasha varnishkes at lunch counters," says Gonzalez, like any self-respecting New Yorker. says the chef, who prizes creminis' earthiness. Equal parts kasha and flatleaf parsley,

Farfalle pasta

is coated in soft-

cooked onions

and two kinds

of vinegar.

kasha and flatleaf parsley, the salad pays tribute to one his mother used to make—"almost the epitome of a California salad,"he says.

"The mushroom

theme ties it together,

# MEATPACKING DISTRICT

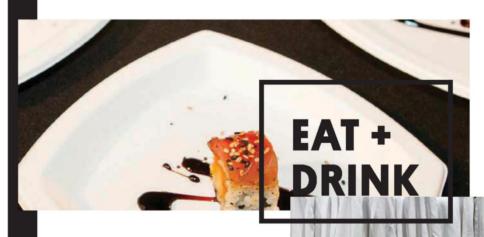
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**OPENINGS** FOOD



# Norman

29 Norman Ave., at Banker St., Greenpoint 347-966-2092

CONSIDERING that Swedish chef Fredrik Berselius came to local prominence at Kinfolk Studios, a mixed-use space in Williamsburg where the first incarnation of his restaurant Aska was located, it's not entirely surprising that he's been enlisted to operate Norman, the café, bar, and bakery inside A/D/O, a new design incubator in Greenpoint. "For me, food and restaurants are part of a creative process," says the chef, who will run the place with Agern owner Claus Meyer, New York's leading proponent of Nordic cooking. Where there are Scandinavians, there is sea buckthorn, and the soured-milk product ymer, and hearty porridges, and pickles and preserves, and Norman has all those things, prepared by chef Andrew Whitcomb, late of Colonie. It also has a daily-changing lunch special, accompanied by salad or vegetables, which Berselius envisions as a nourishing, affordable alternative to the workaday sandwich.



# **Daily Provisions**

103 E. 19th St., nr. Park Ave. S. 212-488-1505

WHEN DANNY MEYER found a new home for Union Square Cafe, the lease included the space next door. And so what had been Duke's Original Roadhouse is now Daily Provisions, a takeout shop and café serving breakfast and lunch, with plans for dinner come spring. There are crullers and breakfast sandwiches, salads and rotisserie chicken, and all manner of hot and cold Joe Coffee drinks. But these tempting distractions might disguise the shop's true identity: as a showcase for the naturally leavened breads baked on site from freshly milled, Maine-grown grains. The basement bakery—a first for Meyer's restaurant group supplies all of Union Square Cafe's and Daily Provisions's rolls, focaccia, baguettes, caraway ryes, and USC sprezzatura, the house loaf. (You may recognize that last one as miche, but Meyer has christened it after the Italian word that means making something very difficult look easy.)

# The Q-Line Gourmet

BY ROB PATRONITE AND ROBIN RAISFELD

FTER A DECADE-LONG construction nightmare, the recent completion of the first phase of the Second Avenue subway has turned the area along the route, a seeming culinary wasteland of bro bars and Buffalo wings, into something of a gastronomic hot zone. Chalk it up to accessibility. The other night, we hopped on the 1 train at Canal Street, a half-block from our office, transferred to the Q at Times Square, exited the station at Second Avenue and 83rd Street, and sauntered all of 300 feet to a terrific Italian restaurant we'd been meaning to try-practically door-to-door service. Here, then, a brief guide to where to go and what to eat after riding the Q.

# **JEAN CLAUDE II**

### 1343 Second Ave.

Always ahead of the curve. Jean Claude lacovelli, the poor man's Keith McNally of '90s-era Soho, has brought his budgetbistro concept uptown.

### **SZECHUAN GOURMET**

### 1395 Second Ave

The burgeoning Sichuan chainlet has supplanted the former Szechuan Chalet, Chengdu chilled noodles and double-cooked pork in tow.



**BOHEMIAN SPIRIT RESTAURANT** 321 E. 73rd St.

There are three takes on schnitzel at this Czech café inside the Bohemian National Hall—veal, pork, and chicken—four if you count the fried, bread-crumbed slab of cheese called smazeny syr. PHOTOGRAPHS: MELISSA HOM/NEW YORK MAGAZINE (OPENINGS). MAP BY JASON LEF



## **BUDAPEST CAFÉ & RESTAURANT (A.K.A. ANDRE'S)** 1631 Second Ave.

The poppy-seed strudel alone is worth a trip. Good stuffed peppers, too.



schweinshaxe, kartoffelpuffer, and many more delicious, gutbusting, hard-to-pronounce German delicacies since 1939.



### TWO LITTLE RED HENS 1652 Second Ave.

Judging by the line snaking out the door one recent afternoon, you'd think they were hawking Black Tap milkshakes. But no, the more sophisticated sweet tooths who crowd this 25-year-old bakeshop are here for Brooklyn blackout cupcakes, New York cheesecake, and Michigan sour-cherry pie.



### **X BAR BISTRO** 316 E. 84th St.

Does super-soigné bistro cooking stand a chance in the land of pub grub? With the brand-new X, Danny Brown, whose eponymous wine bar had a good run in Forest Hills, aims to find out.

### SCHALLER'S STUBE 1652 Second Ave.

Everything at this hot-dogstand annex to the adjacent Schaller & Weber, the last of Yorkville's once-ubiquitous schinken shops, is deliriously good, including bauernwurst topped with goulash-spiced chili and chopped raw onion.

**CITY SWIGGERS** 

Multi-hyphenate beer shop-

something fresh on tap, and

BYO dinner from Schaller's

Stube around the corner.

beer bar-neighborhood

social center. Sample

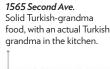
320 E. 86th St.

H 86TH ST



### SAN MATTEO PIZZA **ESPRESSO BAR** 1739 Second Ave.

The Naples-style pie is great, but go for a panuozzo, a supersize pizza-dough panino of sorts that's like a piadina times ten. (San Matteo Pizzeria e Cucina, a larger spinoff, has opened nine blocks south, at 1559 Second Avenue.)



**AGORA** 

SANDRO'S

306 E. 81st St.

Roman like that

No one cooks classic

master of the pasta

pot Sandro Fioriti.



# **ORWASHER'S**

308 E. 78th St.

Interspersed among the pumpernickely old-world repertoire, you'll find au courant loaves leavened with starter made from natural yeasts residing on the skins of locally grown grapes.



Everything you could ask for in a craft-beer-bourbon bar and then some: 135 whiskeys, a frequently changing draft list, and housemade tater tots.

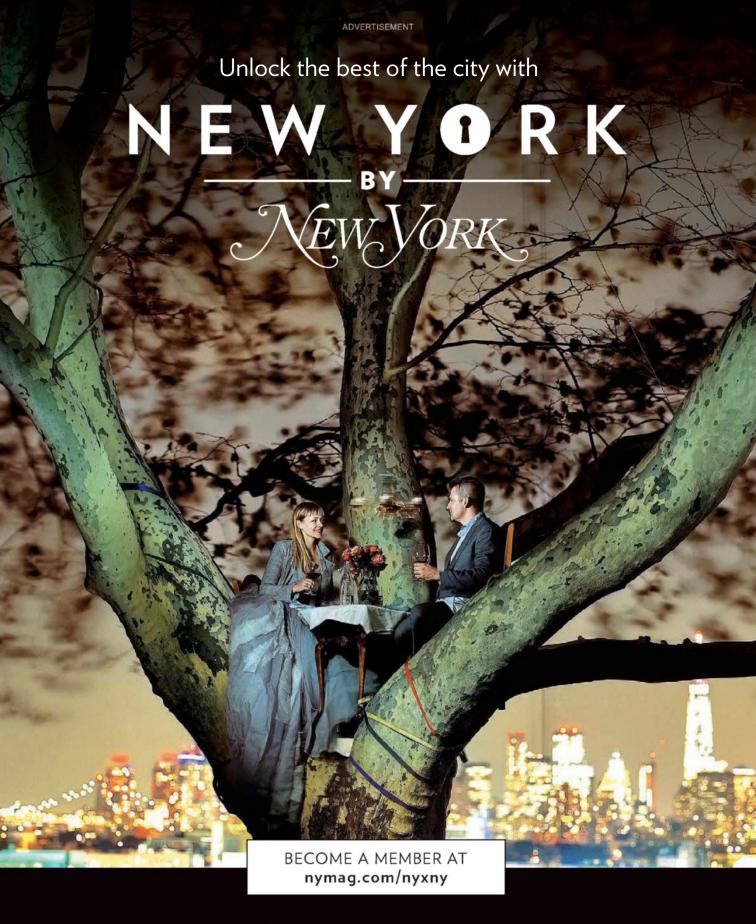
### 83 1/2 345 E. 83rd St.

The locals who mob this Sicilianslanted trattoria would probably like to keep it a secret, but Vincenzo Mangiafridda's eggplant-Parm "meatballs," carciofi fritti, and housemade pastas are too good for that.



# 1724 Second Ave.

Year-old, pint-size branch of the terrific Kips Bay restaurant with a knockout biryani deluxe and muchtalked-about onion bhajjias.



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Why Aaron Taylor-Johnson, fresh off a surprise Golden Globe, is just as happy to watch the Oscars from home. *By David Marchese* 

HERE WAS RELIEF when my wife told me that I hadn't been nominated," says Aaron Taylor-Johnson on the day after the Academy Award nominations were announced. This, of course, is not normally the sentiment you'd expect from a performer who's been passed over, especially one coming off a major awards win. But the English actor, who's married to Fifty Shades of Grey director Sam Taylor-Johnson, already received a Best Supporting Actor Golden Globe for his unsettling turn as a sadistic West Texas drifter in Tom Ford's Nocturnal Animals, and you may remember his earnest reaction: Wide-eyed and shaking his head in disbelief as he walked to the stage, Taylor-Johnson looked as surprised as everyone else that he'd won over the favorite, Moonlight's Mahershala Ali. Now, after having been overlooked by the Academy—which honored his co-star Michael Shannon with a Best Supporting Actor nomination—he can relax and sit out this last stretch of the famously frenetic awards-season schedule. "Coming home from the Globes with an award was brilliant, but I've been promoting *Nocturnal* for six months," he says. "As an actor, you prefer to put that kind of energy into something creative. It was good to finally step off the train. You do kind of go, I'm losing my mind."

Taylor-Johnson is still getting over the fact that he's being considered for awardworthy roles, let alone winning awards for them. Prior to *Nocturnal Animals*, he was best known for 2010's satirical superhero film *Kick-Ass* and 2014's *Godzilla* reboot. "Whenever I read a script," he says sheepishly, "I start recasting the role that I might play. I'm like, 'God, this should be played by Domhnall Gleeson, not me.' I was reading something recently and thought Mark Rylance should be in it instead of me. Then someone was like, "The part is a bit younger than Mark Rylance."

He was just as uncertain about playing *Nocturnal Animals*' Ray Marcus, a character darker and uglier—in body and spirit—than any he'd tackled before. Indeed, upon hearing that Ford wanted to cast him as the film's unhinged figure of evil, Taylor-Johnson remembers feeling "slightly perplexed." At one point, he even approached his director and said, "I don't think I can give you what you need; I'm not good at it." Thankfully, he says now, "Tom saw something in me."

Over email, Ford shared that he was initially hesitant about casting Taylor-Johnson out of fear of screwing with their friendship. "I've known his wife for over 20 years and I see them socially," he explained. But then, "we were having dinner one night, and Aaron was acting out a story—he just switched into something, and there was a moment, a glimmer, and I thought, *You could totally be Ray.*"

To help embody Marcus, Taylor-Johnson immersed himself in research about serial killers and consumed an ungodly amount of cigarettes and beer. "I wanted to feel toxic from the inside out," he says. "My wife is very loving and supportive—but it was definitely great when I finished the shoot." In preparation for his next role, as an Iraq War sniper in Doug Liman's *The* 

# "Whenever I read a script, I'm like, 'God, this should be played by Domhnall Gleeson, not me.'"

Wall, due out in March, Taylor-Johnson contacted American Sniper star Bradley Cooper, who put him in touch with former military sharpshooters.

A big reason why he's been happy to jump off the awards-season promotional train is that Taylor-Johnson, at only 26, has experienced more than his share of difficulties with the press, mainly having to do with regularly being asked to explain the 23-year age gap between him and his wife. (A question that likely would never come up if their genders were reversed.)

The couple met when she directed Taylor-Johnson—they combined last names when they married in 2013-as a young John Lennon in 2009's Nowhere Boy. "The attention was intrusive," he says. "But having to deal with that early in my career probably got me to a place where I can more quickly just go, 'Oh, fuck it' instead of wanting to rip someone's head off for asking questions I don't like." Still, "I'll never be Jennifer Lawrence or Tom Cruise," he admits, "someone who can hold a movie and then be charming and charismatic doing promotion. I haven't got what they've got. But at least I'm now comfortable just being myself."

Taylor-Johnson doesn't have a next project lined up yet-he only does one film a year so that he can spend the rest of his time with his wife and their four daughters, two of whom are from her previous marriage. But he's already felt his stock rise post-Globes. "The experience is all still very fresh," he says. "But there's definitely a feeling of 'Strike when the iron's hot.' I know it'll blow over eventually, but there's been more meeting people from studios. It's an interesting position to be in where you're suddenly getting considered for projects." And as for how he wants to spend the industry capital he's accrued? "I want to work with great directors. I've picked films based on the script or the character and seen them collapse because the directors were not strong visionaries."

Surely, as a human being, let alone a Hollywood actor, Taylor-Johnson must've felt a twinge of envy, too, seeing his castmate Shannon get an Oscar nomination. Or even felt a tiny sense of competition as they both made the awards-season-circuit rounds? "Quite honestly," he says, "and maybe this is because it's the first time I've been involved in this process and didn't know anything, I didn't have any of that. I didn't feel like, Oh, my PR team and his PR team are rivals. Who can get the best press? Who can get the best gossip about what the critics are really thinking? And Michael's been a gentleman. He's only ever congratulated me on my success."

Taylor-Johnson does cop to one reason why he's covetous of more trophy opportunities. "An Academy Award is still something to work toward," he says. "It would've felt a tad greedy to get a nom from them this time around." Then again, the award he's already got will have some lasting benefits. "You know when you see trailers," he says, "and it'll say 'Golden Globe winner' and then the actor's name? That's awesome. It's like a stamp that says THIS IS A FILM WITH A REAL ACTOR."



Showrunner Noah Hawley, Aubrey Plaza, and Dan Stevens on the set of Legion.

# Super Ambitious

With *Legion*, FX and creator Noah Hawley are hoping to craft a sophisticated cable drama from the stuff of comic books. Is there room in prestige TV for superheroes? *By Abraham Riesman* 

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 ${\tt LEGION}\ debuts\ February\ 8\ on\ FX.$ 

T'S RAINY AND COLD, and one of the actors on *Legion* is confused about whether he signed up to be on a superhero show. He's about to do another take of a scene in the new FX drama, in which a telekinetic named David Haller—played by the svelte and stubbled Englishman Dan Stevens—executes a wild display of his psychic powers. The other actor stands in the mud of a remote forest roughly 40 miles from Vancouver and points at Stevens's chest. "Is that"—the actor wiggles his index finger at a geometric shape on David's T-shirt—"your superhero insignia?"

It's a reasonable question. The show circles around David, a character who goes by the nickname Legion and who is brand-new to TV but who's been wreaking havoc across the Marvel Comics universe for decades, often appearing with the X-Men. *Legion*, the TV show, as envisaged by showrunner Noah Hawley, is designed to ask the

question: What would a superhero story look like if you stripped away almost all of the superhero-y stuff? There are no capes or spandex uniforms. There are no laser blasts or secret identities. Superhero adaptations have conquered the multiplex, the networks, and the streaming outlets, but *Legion* has bigger ambitions than that. It hopes to establish a beachhead for superheroes in the land of golden-age prestige cable.

IT'S FITTING THAT the next step for superpowered fiction is coming from the X-Men stable, because that's where the current Superhero Boom began. Legion is executive-produced by Lauren Shuler Donner, whose husband, Richard Donner, pioneered the modern live-action superhero movie with 1978's Superman. She has also, since the early 1990s, been the shepherd of the X-Men characters' film and TV rights for Fox. Back then, she was a veteran producer of decidedly unsuperheroic flicks like Pretty in Pink, St. Elmo's Fire, and Free Willy. Fox was understandably interested in the rights for the X-Men, especially given the success of a children's animated series, and Donner snapped them up from Marvel.

*X-Men*, directed by Bryan Singer in 2000, was a smash hit that caused a chain

reaction of superhero movies from an array of studios. Donner's franchise never went away, either: The X-Men cinematic universe has spawned nine films to date, with a tenth, Logan, on the way next month. But by early 2015, she feared that the franchise she'd built, co-stewarded by writer-producer Simon Kinberg, was eating itself and that the entire superhero genre was fast approaching a change-ordie moment. "Our mandate always was, 'Don't repeat yourself," Donner tells me. "I just drive Bryan and Simon crazy because I would say, 'We've used a character that had been in two of the other movies. There's 40, 45 years of X-Men comics. There's enough stories to never have to repeat ourselves!" One of those unexplored characters is David Haller-a minor player created in 1985 by writer Chris Claremont and writer-artist Bill Sienkiewicz-whose psychic abilities include incorporating other people's minds into his own.

Donner felt the ideal place for an ambitious experiment was on prestige cable. She set her sights on Fox-owned FX, home of unconventional fare like The Americans; American Horror Story; and Hawley's breakout hit, Fargo. Donner and Kinberg approached Hawley with an existing pitch. He made a counteroffer. "Noah said, 'Can I just take a character and run with it?" Donner recalls. "I said, 'Absolutely.'"

Running with it, in this case, meant bucking convention and potentially alienating viewers used to spoon-fed narratives about the Avengers, Batman, and their long-underwear ilk. Watching the initial episodes of Legion can be a chore and quite deliberately so. When we meet David, he's spent most of his life being treated for schizophrenia because he hears voices; as we learn, they may be a manifestation of psychic powers that we see only in brief, confounding flashbacks. His every waking moment is a burden, and Hawley wants to drag you down with him. "I was interested, after Fargo, which is very objective storytelling, in doing something subjective in the sense of, here's a character who either has schizophrenia or he has these abilities," he says. "He's a haunted house, and the things that he's seeing, the things that he's hearing, they might have a logical explanation, but he doesn't know that."

IF THERE ARE logical explanations for what the hell's happening in *Legion*, they certainly don't appear in the first few episodes. From a distance, the initial plot is sort of coherent: David's abilities flare up

# Anticipation Index

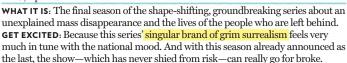
What we're excited about right now.

WE BELIEVE IT was Albert Einstein who developed the famous formula: Anticipation = Time (x) Hype / Caveats, though we may be mistaken on that. Here, in the latest edition of our entirely scientific ranking of stuff we're looking forward to, we have a new No. 1, a rising No. 2, and a possibly indefensible No. 7.

.... Anticipation Mounting .... Anticipation Waning .... Worthwhile Revisit .... Long-Awaited 🟅 ... Good Pedigree 📳 ... Return to Form 🐞 ... Cautious Optimism 👹 ... Topical 💹 ... Sense of Closure

# The Leftovers

HBO, April 16



Killers of the Flower Moon, by David Grann

Doubleday, April 18

WHAT IT IS: A true-crime thriller about murders in the Osage Nation in the 1920s. GET EXCITED: Because Grann's book, No. 3 on the last index, edges up thanks to a run of five-star reviews on social media.

Amélie: A New Musical

Walter Kerr Theatre, in previews March 9

WHAT IT IS: The cult-hit French film about an irresistible gamine hits the stagewith songs! GET EXCITED: Because theatrical escapism is just about the best kind of escapism there is—and it's impossible to imagine a Broadway performer better suited to inhabit Audrey Tautou's signature role than Phillipa Soo, whose last gig, as Eliza Schuyler in the original cast of Hamilton, was near impossible to see.

## Star Wars: The Last Jedi

Disney, December 15

WHAT IT IS: The latest in a moderately successful series exploring an obscure intergalactic religious sect. **GET EXCITED**: Because it finally got a full title. But mostly because director Rian Johnson (Brick, Looper) is the exact person you want inheriting the reins for the franchise, even if you don't yet realize it.

The Handmaid's Tale

Hulu, April 26

WHAT IT IS: The 1985 dystopian classic from Margaret Atwood gets the Hulu series treatment. GET EXCITED: Because the book is great, and the show looks promising. CAVEAT: Our anticipation for this, No. 1 on our last index, has waned ever so slightly, if only because it feels, post-inauguration, like we're living in this cautionary tale, so maybe we don't want to also watch it.

### The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, by Arundhati Roy Knopf, June 6

WHAT IT IS: A new novel—and the first in 20 years—from the celebrated writer. GET EXCITED: Because Roy's debut novel, The God of Small Things, won universal acclaim and the Booker Prize. This surprise announcement from Knopf immediately jumps to the top of summer reading lists (so you still have a few months to finish the new George Saunders and Killers of the Flower Moon).

**Baywatch** Paramount, May 26

> WHAT IT IS: The legendary docu-series about oceanic emergency response gets a cinematic reimagining. GET EXCITED: Because ... okay, we should probably feature a hot Sundance film here, but come on: Right now, we really need something fun and stupid to look at for two hours that isn't also threatening to strip our civil liberties. The presence of the Rock gives hope: After neo-camp gold like Pain & Gain, he's earned the benefit of the doubt. CAVEAT: It's Baywatch.

JUST MISSED THE CUT: Blade Runner 2049; Priestdaddy, by Patricia Lockwood; HBO's The Deuce; Taylor next album, probably dropping this year and, we hope, featuring a track about Kanye and Trump









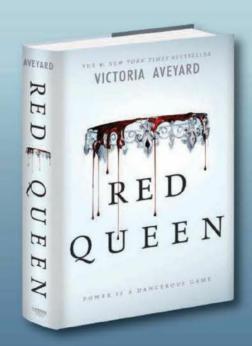


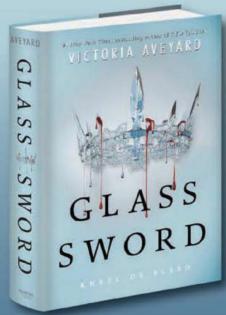


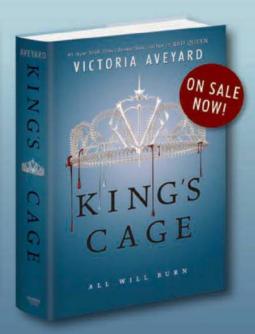
# DON'T MISS A SINGLE PAGE OF THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING

# RED QUEEN SERIES

BY VICTORIA AVEYARD!







# ALL WILL BURN

WHEN BLOOD TURNS ON BLOOD, AND ALL ALLEGIANCES ARE TESTED, THERE MAY BE NO ONE LEFT TO PUT OUT THE FLAMES...

disastrously while he's in a mental institution, and he joins a ragtag group of fellow genetic abnormals, who enlist him in their struggle against shadowy government forces. What drew Hawley to David was the notion that the character would allow him to poke at reality. "I wanted to explore identity as a product of narrative," he says. "The fact that you're sitting there today, telling yourself: This is who I am, and it's based on the fact that in high school this girl broke up with me, or I overcame this obstacle in my 20s, and that taught me this. What if all those experiences were false?"

"This show exists in Noah's head in a way that I've never dealt with before," says production designer Michael Wylie. "Usually on a show, the creator will say, 'It's kind of this and it's kind of that and this character's arc is from here to here.' We didn't really get any of that at all." I ask Jean Smart, the character actress and Fargo alumna who plays the mutants' den mother, how Hawley described the show to her. "Well, he didn't, really," she says. "I just kind of went on faith, you know." To communicate his vision, Hawley provided his cast and crew with found images and broadstroke tonal ideas, often at ungodly hours. They all speak of his notorious 3 a.m. emails, in which he'll send around pictures of early-20th-century trick-ortreat costumes or declare that he's decided what color an extra's jumpsuit should be. "I think he never stops," says costume designer Carol Case. "Or at least his brain never stops."

The result is something that owes an obvious debt to Stanley Kubrick-the show's mental institution is called Clockworks Psychiatric Hospital—as well as to influences ranging from Tarkovsky's Solaris to David Lynch's Mulholland Drive. Yet Legion feels eminently of the present moment as well. This is partly because it's a marriage of two of modern entertainment's dominant modes: prestige-cable auteurism and tales of paranormal do-gooders. But it's also a fitting fable about the crumbling of the American mind, inside of which warring and unyielding voices shout so loud that the concept of objectivity seems too much to hope for. The character of David-like Hawley and the show's producers—takes a leap of faith into the unknown and, in the process, accomplishes a giant evolutionary step forward for the superhero genre. A statement David says a few minutes into the first episode might well serve as Legion's mission statement: "Something new needs to happen soon."





# The One Piece Our Art Critic Can't Stop Thinking About

By JERRY SALTZ

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ANOTHER COUNTRY (AFTER JAMES BALDWIN) is currently on display at the Petzel Gallery.

CREATED IN THE aftermath of the election, Glenn Ligon's conceptualist text piece is officially titled AnotherCountry (After James *Baldwin*), but it reads simply ANOTHER COUNTRY. Right now, that phrase resonates with pathos, fear, familiarity, and fury. It's always there in America, this "another country"—we once fought a civil war to preclude that splitting from happening. In 1949, at the dawn of a different civil-rights conflict, Baldwin deepened, ironized, and weaponized this idea, protesting the "self-righteous, virtuous sentimentality" and "ostentatious parading of excessive and spurious emotion," which he diagnosed as "dishonesty, the inability to feel," and an "aversion to experience." As for Ligon's sign, it is neither protest nor poetry. Each viewer reads it differently. Some will take pride in this new "another country" that has apparently risen. Others will feel this another country dawning with a foreboding that we in America haven't experienced since the times of Lincoln and Martin Luther King.

# The Apprenticeship of Marin Ireland

The theater world's best-kept secret may not be a secret much longer. By Rebecca Milzoff

> ON THE EXHALE opens in previews on February 7.



HEN MARIN IRELAND graduated from drama school in 2000, she had to choose between two jobs: She could go to Vermont to play Bianca in The Taming of the Shrew, or she could join the cast of the playwright Adam Rapp's Nocturne at the American Repertory Theater. Bianca was Shakespeare, "what I thought my career would be," Ireland says today. For Nocturne, on the other hand, "I was just told, 'We don't have the script. You may have lines; you may not. And you may also be nude the entire time you're onstage."

Naturally, she signed on.

"You've gotta go with the sparky thing," Ireland says with a shrug, and that might as well be the motto for everything she has done since. (For the record: She was nude in Nocturne and didn't speak at all.) Ireland, who's in her mid-30s, is well known in the theater community as an actress who wholly animates her characters' essences while always communicating a keen intelligence. Her 2009 Broadway debut in Neil LaBute's Reasons to Be *Pretty* earned her a Tony nomination, and she won glowing reviews as a Polish immigrant in last year's Off Broadway Ironbound-which was even more impressive given that she'd stepped into the role with just over a week of rehearsal after Gina Gershon departed the production. Yet she's generally avoided the ingénue route, consistently leaving an impression in roles big (a homegrown terrorist on Homeland) and, more often, small but memorable (Lena Dunham's passiveaggressive classmate on Girls; Chris Pine's ex-wife in Hell or High Water). Now she's enjoying a lead role opposite Giovanni Ribisi on Amazon's dark comedy Sneaky Pete and starring in a onewoman play, Martín Zimmerman's On the *Exhale*, at the Roundabout Underground.

"I never thought I would legit get asked to do it," she says of the play, which she'd performed during its development. "I figured I was a placeholder—like, this is the perfect play to offer any super-famous person!" A year ago, she read before a live audience the play's only role: a woman of undefined ethnicity, between the ages of 30 and 50, who relates a horrific experience with gun violence and its aftermath. "I remember feeling the audience, and I was excited but petrified," Ireland recalls during a conversation at Café Orlin, near her East Village home. "It felt like a thriller: You have no idea where we're heading as the play goes along. Where is she? Is she telling the truth?" Since then, learning Zimmerman's script (which is written in verse and in the second person) has been "a demon parade," Ireland says with a laugh. "It's just you and all those voices. Having to run lines to a wall is so lonely and strange and disorienting."

Ireland is fond of referencing a Charlie Kaufman screenwriting lecture "that's exactly the way I think of being an artist. He's like, 'I agreed to do this because I don't know how to do it. I wanted to give you the experience of seeing someone fumble.' That's such a touchstone for me, working on this play. I am not Elaine Stritch. I am not Carrie Fisher. I am not Judith Light—all of these people who have done wonderful one-person plays."

She's become "very small pen pals" with Kaufman after auditioning for a film of his in 2011 that was never made, and she did manage to corral Light at Amazon's Golden Globes party for advice. "She was like, 'I know exactly where you are. Have you recorded it and played it back to yourself every night?' 'I hate the sound of my voice, how can I do that?' 'You have to do it. It's the only way.' 'I'm scared out of my mind!' 'Of course you are! I was never not scared.'" Light offered Ireland her number to text during said scary moments. "I haven't done it yet," Ireland says. "I feel like I'm saving that."

Ireland read for Exhale during a break on Sneaky Pete while the show switched showrunners (the pilot was developed by CBS; co-creator David Shore was later replaced by Justified's Graham Yost). She's still in a bit of shock that, for the first time, she's the female lead. Though she grew up in California, it felt far from Hollywood, in a small town she describes now as "farmland and a mental hospital." She vividly recalls the early days of her acting career, "auditioning in these L.A. rooms full of models, thinking, I can't compete with that, and not only that—but I don't want to. I want to be the one having the adventures." Sneaky Pete's Julia "isn't the perfect love interest. She's weird and makes mistakes; she's bad at her job. She's having the adventures with the guy." The show's already been renewed for a second season, and the cast-including Bryan Cranston and Margo Martindale-is filled with quasi-recognizable, reliably solid character actors like Ireland herself. She admits she sometimes wonders whether, like longtime peers Pablo Schreiber and Michael Shannon, she will get a big breakthrough moment.

"You go, Oh, could that happen for me? Will it? You can't make it happen," Ireland says. "I try to look at people like Amy Ryan and Sarah Paulson and think, It's okay that I'm not a 25-year-old skyrocketing to the cover of Vogue. The times when I can remember that Judith Light and I can feel like colleagues for a moment, that I can call Margo Martindale when I'm freaking out about a TV show, when Charlie Kaufman is writing to me-I sort of feel like that's what I've always wanted." Of course, there's a good reason she's working with this caliber of collaborators. As Onthe Exhale's director, Leigh Silverman, says, "Marin understands how important it is to let an audience have the feelings. She isn't interested in spoon-feeding emotions. She holds out her beating heart, and she dares you to look."

### **TERMS OF ART**

Worthwhile additions to your cultural lexicon.

By Kevin Lincoln



# "Gun Fu"

JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2 opens February 10.

### THE DEFINITION

Gun fu is the art of precisely choreographed fight scenes in which heavily armed combatants move with the fluidity of Jackie Chan while firing off bullets with the abandon of Rambo—

"the shootout as dance number," in the words of critic Stephen Hunter. *Gun fu* has its roots in kung fu, the cinematic martial-arts genre that came out of Hong Kong in the 1970s and, thanks to the virtuosity of stars like Chan and

Bruce Lee (and, arguably, the disco hit "Kung Fu Fighting"), became a worldwide phenomenon. A decade later, Hong Kong director John Woo took that stylized approach and added guns—ergo, gun fu.

USE IT IN A SENTENCE "I really enjoyed the *gun fu* in the first John Wick movie, so I'm looking forward to how the sequel advances the art form."

### THE BIG PICTURE

John Woo's main innovation in action films-in contrast to the steroidal extravaganzas sweeping America during the '80s-was to treat gunplay as an aesthetic, and not just frenetic, experience. If Sam Peckinpah invented the modern movie gunfight in The Wild Bunch (and pioneered the editing techniques that helped render it), Woo heightened the choreographic precision to a point where weaponized combat became balletic art. And if Woo was Peckinpah reimagined

as modern dance, then The Matrix. released in 1999, was Woo reimagined as Pop Art. With The Matrix, the Wachowski directing duo combined Woo's stylized choreography (and trademark slo-mo) with innovative FX embellishments such as their famous "bullet time" effect. Subsequent gun fu directors have adopted the trick of shooting action sequences at 22 frames per second, rather than the traditional 24, giving their fight scenes a crisp quality that's almost subliminal in effect. Another

innovation: gunshots that are added using CGI rather than using blanks, meaning gunfights can happen in tight quarters. In 2014, Lionsgate had a box-office success with John Wick, a Keanu Reeves action vehicle about a finely dressed assassin avenging the death of his beloved dog. (To be clear, it was a really cute dog.) The film earned a cult fandom and is now a franchise: John Wick: Chapter 2 opens this month. The initial film is both a superb gateway into, and advancement of, the art of gun fu.

IMPRESS-YOUR-FRIENDS FACTOID The two men responsible for staging the *Matrix* trilogy fight scenes—stunt coordinators Chad Stahelski and David Leitch—directed *John Wick*, and Stahelski directed *John Wick*: Chapter 2.



Jon Hamm, cast member,  $MARJORIE\ PRIME$ 



Jessica Williams, cast member,  $THE\ INCREDIBLE\ JESSICA\ JAMES$ 



Peter Dinklage, cast member, REMEMORY



Judy Greer, cast member, WILSON



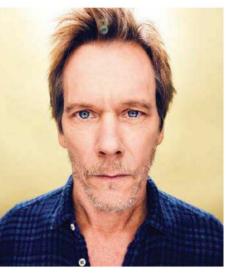
Jack Black, cast member, THE POLKA KING



Kumail Nanjiani, cast member and co-writer, THE BIG SICK



Jurnee Smollet-Bell, cast member, UNDERGROUND



 $\textbf{Kevin Bacon}, \ cast \ member,$ I LOVE DICK



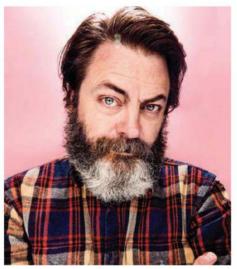
Laura Dern, cast member, WILSON



Elle Fanning, cast member,  $SIDNEY\ HALL$ 



 $\textbf{Lakeith Stanfield}, cast \, member, \, c_{ROWN}$ HEIGHTS and THE INCREDIBLE JESSICA JAMES



Nick Offerman, cast member, THE HERO



Michael Showalter, director, THE BIG SICK

# The Sundance Bunch

Photographs by BOBBY DOHERTY

New York set up a photo studio at this year's Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Here are a few people who dropped by.



Connie Britton, cast member, BEATRIZ AT DINNER



John Cho, cast member, COLUMBUS



Mary J. Blige, cast member,  $\overline{MUDBOUND}$ 



Parker Posey, cast member, COLUMBUS

# CRITICS

Matt Zoller Seitz on Big Little Lies ... Christian Lorentzen on George Saunders's Lincoln in the Bardo ... David Edelstein on The Salesman and The Lego Batman Movie.



TV / MATT ZOLLER SEITZ

# **Bad Moms**

Murder comes to bougie Monterey in Big Little Lies.

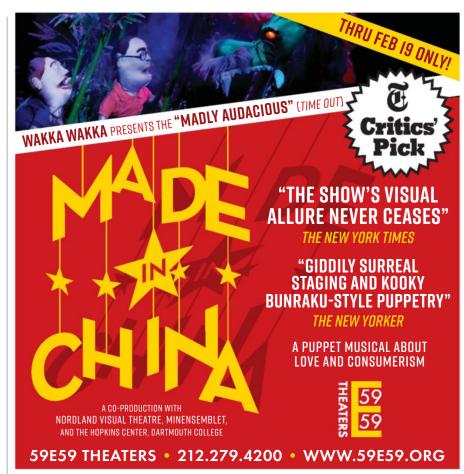
"I JUST HAVE A very low tolerance for injustice," announces Madeline Martha Mackenzie (Reese Witherspoon), one of the heroines of HBO's Big Little Lies. But "injustice" might be too strong a word in the context of her world, which is so ritzy it makes the milieus of even the more privilege-saturated HBO series (including Girls and Divorce) seem austere. Adapted by David E. Kelley (The Practice, Ally McBeal) from the

novel by Liane Moriarty, this addictive, often corrosively funny social satire and murder mystery is set in Monterey, California, an enclave of rich tech gurus, hedge-fund managers, lawyers, and the like. "Injustice" here is either a political cause that you write tax-deductible checks to solve, or a localized spat between parents projecting their psychological baggage onto their kids, who attend a public-school district so awash in wealth that it might as well be a coalition of pri-

vate academies. The show's other three leads—Laura Dern's queen bee, Renata Klein; Nicole Kidman's Celeste Wright, who's stuck in a passionate but volatile marriage to a domineering stud (Alexander Skarsgård); and Zoe Kravitz's Bonnie Carlson, a much younger woman of color who married Madeline's ex-husband, Nathan (James Tupper)—are also obscenely rich but carry themselves with the granolaand-yoga-mat intensity of suburban soccer moms. The only working-class regular character is Shailene Woodley's single mother, Jane Chapman, a wary loner who moved to Monterey with her young son. Except for that pesky killing, the injuries depicted here are of a type you're more likely to see on a CBS sitcom, but the characters treat them as struggles for the soul of American life and give rousing speeches about the necessity of addressing injuries to themselves and others: say, a fight over the appropriateness of staging *Avenue Q* at a community theater or a first-grade rift over a birthday party that widens into a feud that Ken Burns could chronicle with handwritten letters and fiddle music.

The latter crisis is sparked when Jane's boy, Ziggy (Iain Armitage), stands accused of choking Renata's daughter, Amabella (Ivy George). Because we never see the incident, we don't know whom to believe. Kelley and series director Jean-Marc Vallée (Dallas Buyers Club) treat the Ziggy-Amabella controversy as a small-stakes version of the show's season-long murder mystery, a sometimes tantalizing, sometimes exhausting narrative conveyed through police interviews and elliptically edited bits that could be flashbacks or flash-forwards, depending on the context. The cutting, credited to multiple editors, is reminiscent of such scrambled-chronology touchstones as The Man Who Fell to Earth and The Limey. We initially don't know who died, when, or which person or persons killed them. The community is both appalled and thrilled by the death: During fragmented interviews with a detective played by Merrin Dungey (a nearly wordless character associated with a Zippo that she clinks open and shut but almost never lights), parents and school employees sound like reality-show addicts dissecting a finale in tweets.

The characters' self-seriousness puts Big Little Lies on the comedy-drama tightrope and gives it a push. It's not a perfect balancing act, and there are times when the show falls off the wire. The writers and filmmakers are adept at staging moments that respect the characters' passions while raising an eyebrow at their ridiculousness; but when the show outright mocks them-for instance, ending a spat between Madeline and her current husband, Ed (Adam Scott), by having him turn out the bedroom lights with a clapper-it's bitchily cathartic but too much. And the repeated shots of waves breaking on beaches might verge on Sundancestyle art-house overreach even if the characters didn't treat them as metaphors. ("Who knows what lies out there beneath the surface?" one asks. "The great unknown," she decides.) Big Little Lies' storytelling is all about surprise (revealing details through editing) rather than suspense. And while this specific storytelling mode, the extruded whodunit, was introduced to American audiences 20 years ago on Murder One and refined since then (notably on Bloodline and How to Get Away With Murder), it's been done so often in this binge-watching era that it has lost its capacity for surprise. Plus, there are times when you get so wrapped up in





the private despair and public pettiness of Madeline, Renata, Celeste, Jane & Co. that when the series reminds itself to tend to its crime-puzzle elements, it suddenly seems less special.

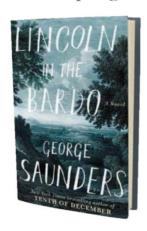
Big Little Lies is still a must-see because of its extraordinary actors, all of whom bring either new shadings to the sorts of characters they've played brilliantly before or show new sides of their talent. Scott is a revelation as Ed Mackenzie, a put-upon nice guy who worries that Madeline's resentment of her ex-husband might be a coded admission that she still adores him and considers Ed a "consolation prize"; Scott is such an attentive listener that you know what Ed is feeling even when his back is turned. At first, Madeline plays like a grown-up-and-disappointed version of another Witherspoon character, Election's Tracy Flickall proclamations and rushing about—but Witherspoon invests her with such coded sadness (always channeled into crusades and can-do passion) that she never becomes a caricature, and once you're three or four episodes in, you're rooting for her. Dern's Renata is a tough-talking lawyer who's married to a high-powered executive (Jeffrey Nordling) and power-walks around the school with the bone-deep entitlement of a Game of Thrones queen, but in her own mind, she's a good-hearted ruler who only wants what's best for her kingdom; that this is always also what Renata wants is, of course, a coincidence. Woodley and Kidman have quieter, subtler roles that are more about hiding than revealing emotion, but they're as impressive as the others. Only Kravitz's Bonnie is ill-served at first, deployed mainly as a nice-gal foil for resentful Madeline, but she deepens, too; an early highlight is a sexy dance at a children's birthday party that she didn't intend as a sexy dance.

When you think back on the series, though, it may be Kidman whose face you see. A specialist in playing secretly miserable suburban women in a diverse array of movies—including Eyes Wide Shut, Birth, Rabbit Hole, and remakes of Invasion of the Body Snatchers and The Stepford Wives-she captures hidden anguish so delicately that when she melts onscreen, the show averts your eyes for you, cutting to a wide shot or to another character's reaction. Midway through episode four is a marriage-counseling session that fixes on Kidman and Skarsgård in a wide shot on a couch. Whether Kidman is talking or listening, she's the one you look at, because you know her character is going to crack and you're just waiting for the moment, but her pain is so palpable that it's hard to take. These shots go on much longer than you expect for a TV series—45 seconds to a minute—and are so intense that when the show cuts away to a close-up of the therapist (*Deadwood*'s Robin Weigert), it's as if you had no idea your head was being held underwater until you were allowed to come up for air.

**BOOKS** / CHRISTIAN LORENTZEN

# George Saunders's First Novel Is Very Weird

Lincoln in the Bardo is set in Buddhist purgatory.



GEORGE SAUNDERS'S FACE isn't on any coins, but the post office issuing a Saunders stamp someday seems plausible. He's not quite as beloved as the president who strides glumly through his new book, but for a writer, his approval ratings are high.

Lincoln in the Bardo is Saunders's longawaited first novel. Formally it has little in common with the dozens of heartbreaking and hilarious stories—many of them nearfuture dystopias or outright science fiction—that have made him one of the most adored and influential American writers of the past three decades. It has even less in common with conventional historical fiction. Nor does it slot with other pop-cul-

tural manifestations of the cult of old-time American statesmen like, say, *Hamilton*. It's narrated by a gaggle of ghosts speaking to us from the Tibetan Bud-

LINCOLN IN THE BARDO BY GEORGE SAUNDERS. RANDOM HOUSE. 343 PAGES. \$28. dhist limbo. That's what the bardo is, the earthly spiritual dimension where souls (not quite the right term) linger until their next incarnation—it's okay, I didn't know what the bardo was either until I picked up the book.

Saunders took his inspiration from an actual historical episode and injected the Buddhism himself. The Lincolns had four sons, and only the eldest, Robert, survived into adulthood. The second son, Eddie, died in 1850, at age 3, perhaps of thyroid cancer. Willie and Tad lived in the White House with their parents, and both came down with typhoid fever in 1862. Tad survived (he died nine years later in Chicago at age 18), but Willie died-he was 11and was interred in a crypt in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown. That his illness coincided with a grand banquet at the White House compounded his parents' guilt. His father was devastated and more than once visited the crypt to hold his son's corpse. Those visits are the seed of Lincoln in the Bardo.

It's a premise loaded with pathos but thin on dramatic tension. Of course, there's the noise of history just outside the frame, the war raging beyond the Potomac. But what provides the novel with its action, with most of its characters, with its moral weight, is the bardo itself. There are rules that govern this spiritual interzone, but in effect it's a free range for Saunders's imagination. And once the novel picks up steam (about halfway through), the story turns into one of the sort Saunders has been telling his entire career: a rescue and an escape.

Put crudely, the scenario goes like this: The souls in the bardo have a dim knowledge of the state they're in. They can tell that there's a difference between themselves and the living (referred to as "people from that previous place" or "those of that ilk"), but with one exception: They don't quite realize that they're dead. Their memories of the lives they lived are patchy, and they're subject to elaborate hallucinations (or are they visits from angels?). They can't leave the confines of the cemetery and its "dreaded iron fence." The ghosts of three men-Hans Vollman, Roger Bevins III, and the Reverend Everly Thomas-take an interest in the ghost of Willie Lincoln. They recognize him as a sort of prince, and they know that because he's so young, he shouldn't be with them for long. (He should move along, we sense, to his next incarnation; with most ghosts of the young, they say, it happens within a matter of hours, or less.) But he's lingering because he expects his parents to come and collect him, so he won't leave, not that he knows how. Something about this isn't right, and a cocoon starts to form around the boy's ghost, a carapace itself made of demonic souls. As if things weren't too far out, the ghost of Hans Vollman walks into the president's body and is able to read the grieving father's thoughts: Lincoln wants his son to go on to "some bright place, free of suffering." The way to make this happen, Hans intuits, is to have the son enter the father's body so he'll get the message and leave the bardo. A real caper ensues.

Whether Willie Lincoln will leave the bardo is something of a McGuffin, however. What, then, is this novel about? In whole, it's Saunders's American Book of the Dead. The novel belongs less to the Lincolns than to the ghosts who tell the story. Hans, Roger, and the Reverend do most of the talking, but dozens of others have speaking parts, and we glimpse bits of their life stories, often delivered in snappy, contentious dialogue. The novel has two narrative modes: monologues and dialogues by the ghosts with the speakers named at the end of each block of text, and fragments from primary and secondary accounts, letters, diaries, memoirs, and contemporary and modern histories (hello, Doris Kearns Goodwin), many of which have been modified or fabricated by Saunders. The effects of this polyphonic approach can be dizzying.

It's also disappointing. Saunders is one of the most thrilling prose writers alive. Across several collections, he's reinvented his style many times, but in a number of his classic stories, we hear the voice of a good-hearted and fucked-up American loser. I can't be alone in having hoped to hear some version of that voice blown out and sustained over the course of a novel. Tough shit. I came to think of the ghosts of Lincoln in the Bardo as the ancestors of Saunders's modern and near-future hard-luck cases, and until things get antic in the bardo, the voices of most of the ghosts, especially Hans Vollman's, have a formal air that cuts nicely against the supernatural goings-on.

This is all highly imaginative, as you'd expect from Saunders, but it can be hard to follow and tricky to keep in your head until you've internalized the ways of the bardo. It doesn't help that each block of speech is attributed with a footer rather than at its start. Many of the ghosts tell their own stories, and these sorrows accumulate in lyric and often comic detail. When Lincoln returns to the crypt, the ghosts gather in a crowd around him. These include the ghosts of former slaves buried in a nearby mass grave. A racial "standoff" follows, but soon the ghosts "enter" Lincoln in a "mass co-habitation." Lincoln, who seems to think in Buddhist terms ("Two passing temporarinesses developed feelings for one another," he thinks of his dead son), takes on the quality of a savior for the ghosts who enter him. As the ghost of the slave Thomas Havens thinks of it:

'He was an open book. An opening book. That had just been opened up somewhat wider. By sorrow. And-by us. By all of us, black and white, who had so recently mass-inhabited him. He had not, it seemed, gone unaffected by that event. Not at all. It had made him sad. Sadder. We had. All of us, white and black, had made him sadder, with our sadness. And now though it sounds strange to say, he was making me sadder with his sadness, and I thought, Well, sir, if we are going to make a sadness party of it, I have some sadness about which I think someone as powerful as you might like to know."

The "sadness party" in the cemetery is the redemptive climax of this visionary and suspenseful but also sentimental and cartoonish novel. Lincoln emerges as a paradox: both a savior absorbing the suffering of the souls in the crypt, ushering many of them off to the next place, and the maestro of the national fratricide, sending thousands to their graves. Saunders has spoken publicly about his own Buddhism, and it animates the commencement speech he delivered at Syracuse and published as a souvenir book, but until now we haven't thought of him as a religious writer. Perhaps behind all of his stories of rescue and escape, God was there all along.



The Salesman

MOVIES / DAVID EDELSTEIN

# **Attention Must Be Paid**

Asghar Farhadi delivers again with *The Salesman*.

GREAT NEWS! Probably because of our imperial president's ban on citizens of certain countries entering the United States, New York and L.A. audiences have shown up in droves for this year's Academy Award-nominated Iranian film *The Salesman*. The writer-director, Asghar Farhadi, has announced that he won't even hazard Customs—and why should he? He'll get so much more mileage out of all the people who'll fulminate on his absence.

The movie itself argues for worldwide jihad. Just kidding! It's another of Farhadi's deeply empathetic films about modern Iranian society—what separates men from women and the government from its people. It's oblique, of course. An Iranian can't directly criticize the regime unless he or she relocates to, say, the United States. Oops: That one's off the table!

THE SALESMAN

RECTED BY ASGHAR FARHADI. COHEN MEDIA GROUP, PG-13.

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE. DIRECTED CHRIS MCKAY. WARNER BROS PG



The movie centers on a brutal assault on the actress who plays Willy Loman's wife in a Tehran production of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. The woman, Rana (Farhadi's longtime collaborator Taraneh Alidoosti), is washing up in the bathroom of her new apartment when she hears the buzzer from downstairs and thinks it's her husband, Emad (Shahab Hosseini). So she unlocks the door and returns to what she was doing. Bad move. When Emad does get home, he sees blood everywhere. He finds Rana in the hospital, where the wounds on her face are being stitched. She won't talk about what happened, not then, not later. The nature of the assault, the assailant, the motive-it's a blank to be filled by Emad's churning fear.

That blank is central to Farhadi's films. His Oscar-winning *A Separation* turns on an unseen event, a woman's tumble down a staircase. Not knowing what happened broadens the film, so that we have to reckon with the social forces that put that woman on that staircase. In *About Elly*, a young teacher disappears while vacationing at the beach. As her friends learn more about their guest, the focus subtly shifts to the trauma of her life as a single woman in modern Iran. As much as whodunits, Farhadi makes whatdunits and whydunits.

In this case, one of the whys is rooted in Tehran's economy. *The Salesman* opens with the near collapse of the couple's lovely building, seemingly the result of a plague of reckless citywide development. Their new, shabbier apartment has items belonging to the evicted previous tenant and her small child. She apparently had "clients," meaning johns, and Emad suspects the person who assaulted his wife might have been one. When he finds a set of keys on the floor and the van they belong to parked nearby, Emad wants vengeance. So did at least one male viewer I know of.

The inaction in the middle section is excruciating. Rana's devastation lingers—she even insists on showering in her old, condemned apartment—but she doesn't want to go to the police. Slowly, we see the parallels between her attacker and the events of *Death of a Salesman*, in which Willy is destroyed when his son discovers him with a mistress. It's difficult to say more without giving away the long climactic confrontation. I drew few breaths during the last half-hour.

Hosseini—who plays a youngish Willy Loman in the stage production—makes the fevered Emad an increasingly tragic figure, while Alidoosti's wordless despair gives the movie's final section so much of its power. Farid Sajjadi Hosseini plays an older man who shows up late and all but owns the movie. 'Nuff said.

Back to that presidential ban, which reads, among other things, "the United States should not admit those who engage in acts of bigotry or hatred (including 'honor' killings, other forms of violence against women ...)." Sounds good to me! Alas, it does not cover what Harry Shearer on *Le Show* persists in calling "our freedomloving friends in Saudi Arabia"—incidentally the birthplace of most of the 9/11 hijackers. *The Salesman* could not have been made in Saudi Arabia. Think of it: Welcoming an artist like Farhadi with open arms would be a real blow to a repressive fundamentalist regime. Go figure.

MANY FILMS OPEN on a high and drop off, but you'll rarely see a plunge as vertiginous as the one in The Lego Batman Movie. The first 20 minutes kill. The ultragruff voice of Batman (Will Arnett) provides a running commentary on the doomy music and various fancy studio credits, after which the Dark Knight confronts a prisspot Joker (voiced by Zach Galifianakis) who longs for Batman to call him his most specialest enemy. But given his tragic orphanhood, Batman is commitmentaverse, even to his foes. He sings a song about being the "darkest knight." Then he sits in his cowl in his empty manor (the house is interchangeable with the Batcave), crunches on microwaved lobster thermidor (shells and all), and snickers at Superman's sentimentality. The early sequences bring out the hilarity of the conception. These childish Lego blocks with their limited range of expression are the perfect antidote to the last four Batman movies' solemnity. The enterprise might be opportunistic— DC will laugh at itself for a few hundred million-but whatever razzes Christopher Nolan's and Zack Snyder's deep thoughts on vigilantism is to be cherished.

And then the jokes stop landing, as if the B-team of screenwriters (there are five credited) suddenly took over. The last hour is like a night at the comedy club after the headliners have left and the room has the smell of stale beer and flop sweat. Batman's odyssev from lone bat to family man becomes sincere. The clingy Robin is funny for a while, but even a good gag can only stand repeating maybe nine or ten times. Barbara Gordon adds little and Alfred the Butler (Ralph Fiennes voices him) less. It might also be that the first 20 minutes have spoiled us and led us to expect a level of surrealistic rug-pulling that would be difficult to sustain. When they bring in the eye of Sauron and the Daleks, it feels less gonzo and more like ... I hate to say this because there can be no greater defamation ... Batman & Robin.

# FASH/ON FORWARD





# Tell us about your first encounter?

I stumbled into a meeting my dad was having with Matthew, to ask for insurance money for a theater project.



**Bryce Dallas** Howard



I loaned her some money. She still hasn't paid me back.

### Matthew McConaughey

I don't owe you a thing. You gave it to me fair and square!



Bryce Dallas



The interest is going up. [Laughs.]

Matthew McConaughey

PREMIERE OF GOLD HOSTED BY THE CINEMA SOCIETY AND WILD TURKEY. AMC LINCOLN SQUARE AND THE PALM COURT. JANUARY 17.





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The CULTURE PAGES

ToTwenty-five things to see, hear, watch, and read.

FEBRUARY 8-22

# 1. Watch Girls

The beginning of the end.

HBO, February 12.

The premiere of the sixth and final season of Lena Dunham's lightning rod of a series is titled "All I Ever Wanted," and regular viewers know it's no spoiler to hint that that might be fraught with irony. Hannah (Dunham) and her friends have been split apart and uncomfortably reconfigured many times over the years, but it's clear that the incipient arrival of their 30s is going to wreak changes that their affinity for each other can't overcome. MATT ZOLLER SEITZ

# 2. See Ivan Morley

Painting's pliability never ceases to amaze.

Bortolami, 520 West 20th Street, through February 18. Stepping into the space between sewing, embroidery, painting, pattern decoration, and advertising-all with a kaleidoscopic psychedelic twistare Ivan Morley's densely packed images that come at the eye with relentless optical power and physical sensuousness. Every painting is a world, an undergrowth of great formal decisions and a fantastically dexterous touch. JERRY SALTZ

# 3. See The Salesman

Play within a play.

In theaters now.

The great Iranian director Asghar Farhadi follows his excellent features About Elly and the Oscarwinning A Separation with The Salesman, a 2017 Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Language Film. (Farhadi is also in the news for announcing that even if he is granted permission to enter the country for the ceremony, he'll be boycotting in protest of Trump's immigration executive order.) It's a formally disciplined yet emotionally raw portrait of a theatrical couple in the process of performing Death of a Salesman in Tehran while their lives are deformed by struggles that both echo and challenge Arthur Miller's tragedy. As usual with Farhadi, the storytelling is so superb you're not aware of watching an "art movie." DAVID EDELSTEIN

THEATER

# 4. See Joan of Arc: Into the Fire

Now you'll know how she felt.

Public Theater, February 14 through April 16.

Four years ago, the Public produced Alex Timbers's terrific staging of Here Lies Love, a discooratorio about Imelda Marcos by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim. Now the Public reunites Timbers and Byrne for a rock-concert retelling of the life of the Maid of Orléans. JESSE GREEN

# 5. Go to Village of Love Tunes to mend a broken heart.

Music Hall of Williamsburg, February 14.

Players on the city's rock-and-roll scene celebrate Valentine's Day with this annual covers bash. Among many others, Eleanor Friedberger of the Fiery Furnaces and Vivian Girl Cassie Ramone try out their favorite love songs. Proceeds benefit Planned Parenthood of NYC.

# 6. See Tribute to Andrzej Wajda

Considering a master of world cinema.

Film Society of Lincoln Center, February 9 through 16.

We lost a giant in 2016 in the Polish director Andrzej Wajda. He brought a vein of tragic neorealism to Polish cinema in the 1950s with his war masterpiece *Kanal*, and he captured the early stirrings of the Solidarity movement in *Man of Marble*. Man at war was his endless subject, which makes *Danton*, his portrait of the French Revolution, even more fascinating than its French counterparts.

D.E.

BOOKS

# 7. Read The Skin Above My Knee

In the key of life.

Little, Brown, February 21.

Marcia Butler's original and lyrically written memoir charts her rise from oboe prodigy to freelance professional on the international classical scene. Transportive portraits of Carnegie Hall concerts share space with memories of childhood trauma and gritty slices of life from 1970s New York.

DANCE

# 8. See Michelle Dorrance With Nicholas Van Young

MacArthur winner steps out.

Guggenheim Museum, February 16.

The tap dancer Michelle Dorrance's dynamic performances are as notable for her quicksilver steps as for the way she seems to transform into a live percussion instrument. Here, Dorrance will be joined by dancer Van Young, members of her

# **CURRENTLY STREAMING:**VALENTINE'S DAY EDITION

Vulture picks the best movies for the most loaded night of the year.

Medicine for Melancholy (Netflix)
Years before filmmaker Barry Jenkins racked up awards for Moonlight, he filmed this gorgeous, naturalistic take on the one-day romance. It's the rarest of movies about love, pairing deeply felt emotions with smart, incisive conversation

### Adventureland (Netflix)

about race

A coming-of-age story that'll make anyone nostalgic for their crappy summer jobs. Jesse Eisenberg is a comp-lit grad who falls for a pre-Twilight Kristen Stewart while they work at a run-down amusement park.

### The Best Man (Hulu)

A jewel of the genre, with a deep ensemble cast that boasts Taye Diggs, Nia Long, Morris Chestnut. and Sanaa Lathan.

## Atonement (Netflix)

This adaptation of Ian McEwan's celebrated novel won't make for an especially happy February 14, but if you're in the mood to weep, it doesn't get much sadder than a pair of starcrossed lovers torn apart by World War II.

### The One I Love (Amazon Prime)

A homespun sci-fi movie that's as thrilling as it is romantic, *The One I Love* is tailor-made as counterprogramming for Valentine's cynics.

company Dorrance Dance, and musicians to create a "performative soundscape."

POP

# 9. Listen to Prisoner

New country blues.

Pax-Am, February 17.

Every genius has a muse, and for North Carolina singer-songwriter Ryan Adams, it's heartbreak. Adams's new album *Prisoner* is, among other things, a chronicle of a crumbling marriage. It's also a confident refinement of the Tom Petty vibes of his 2014 self-titled album and the best thing he's put out in a decade.

CRAIG JENKINS

TV

# 10. Watch The Missing

Family values.

Starz, February 12.

What if Joan Allen's ABC drama *The Family* hadn't been such a mediocre disaster? *The Missing*'s second installment nicks the premise (a kidnapped child returns to a distraught family) and gives it an upgrade, adding more doubt, detectives, and decent twists. It's gripping, heartwrenching, and sometimes hard to sit through.

BOOKS

# 11. Read The Refugees

Voices from afar.

Grove.

With his whirlwind Pulitzer-winning novel *The Sympathizer* in 2015 and his nonfiction





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## SWEEPS

# David Yurman's Beyond Perfect Contest

In the lead-up to Valentine's Day, David Yurman is granting one winner a couple's trip to L.A. including a professional photo shoot. To enter, post an image on Instagram that represents your real, unique relationship and tag it with #DYbeyondperfect. For full entry requirements and official rules, visit the URL below. Then check out David Yurman's Beyond Perfect wedding collections for a spark of romantic inspiration.

nymag.com/beyond-perfect-contest
DAVID YURMAN

exploration of war and memory *Nothing Ever Dies* in 2016, Viet Thanh Nguyen is on a prolific tear. He continues his book-a-year pace with *The Refugees*, nine stories of Vietnamese-Americans torn between cultures.

### THEATER

# 12. & 13. See Bad With Money and Patti Issues

Over the top.

The Duplex, February 19 and March 19.

Actor-monologuist Ben Rimalower takes things to extremes. His diva worship of Patti LuPone led to a catastrophic falling out with his idol; his compulsive spending led to a sideline in prostitution. But those extremes also led to the creation of two classic/crazy/funny monodramas that return to the Duplex this month and next. Onstage, at least, they crash through the wall of "too much" into a realm pretty close to art.

J.G.

### ART

# 14. See Sergei Eisenstein: Drawings 1931–1948

Love, Russian style.

Alexander Gray Associates, 510 West 26th Street, through February 11.

It turns out that one of the most inventive filmmakers who ever lived, the great Russian avantgarde genius Sergei Eisenstein, also made more



### WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?

At the premiere of Gold, Vulture asked the cast and crew which television shows they're obsessed with.

~~~~~~

# **Edgar Ramirez**

"My all-time, ultimate obsession is **House of Cards**. It's so classic, it's so epic, and it's so relevant."

### Matthew McConaughey

"I don't watch much TV. But I watch the national championships, the games. That's the best reality TV going: **sports**."

### Bryce Dallas Howard

"Ken Burns's **The Roosevelts** on PBS. I love being reminded of the great leaders in our past."

# **Corey Stoll**

"I went through **The Crown** in about 24 hours. Every single actor is so good and so perfectly cast."

### Stephen Gaghan, director

"Mr. Robot and Silicon Valley. These guys are inventing the future in real time." than 5,000 drawings. Here's a collection of the more sexual ones-think scenes of self-fellatio and couplings in every combination. Had Stalin seen these, he would surely have had the filmmaker sent to the Gulag.

TALKS

# 15. Go to Divided in a Diverse City

Museum of the City of New York, February 8.

Journalist Sarah Maslin Nir curates this monthly conversation series bringing together two New Yorkers from different backgrounds to discuss issues of city life and culture. This month, journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones and City Councilman Brad Lander explore diversity and racial segregation.

# 16. Listen to DROGAS Light

1st & 15th Productions, February 10.

Chicago rap whiz Lupe Fiasco promised us three whole studio albums last year but then sort of retired, as he is wont to do when things don't go his way. February's release of DROGAS Light is a reasonable middle ground: 14 new songs featuring guests including Rick Ross, Big K.R.I.T, and Ty Dolla \$ign.

THEATER MUSIC

# 17. & 18. Listen to Falsettos and Dear Evan Hansen

Songs of the season.

Ghostlight; Atlantic.

Two highlights of the fall Broadway season have now spawned cast albums that couldn't be more different. Falsettos is a musical with almost no spoken dialogue, so the recording is tantamount to the full heartbreaking experience. Dear Evan Hansen is quite the opposite: a chance to hear a suite of beautifully crafted songs outside the context of the show's dominant-and exceptionally fine-book.

BOOKS

# 19. Read The Edge of Everything Escape to the underworld.

Bloomsbury.

This YA thriller by former Entertainment Weekly editor Jeff Giles checks all the boxes for crossover appeal: a sassy, independent heroine, a mysterious bounty hunter with supernatural powers, and a gushing blurb from Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson. Smartly written fantasy with depth.

# 20. Watch Humans

The singularity is here.

AMC, February 13.

While you wait for more Westworld, make friends with the slowly-becoming-sentient synths of Humans. Their lives are no theme park, raising all sorts of questions about consent, procreation, workers' rights, refugees, and so-called human rights. Still, season two, featuring a nuanced Carrie-Anne Moss, has humor and a heart.

# 21. See Richard Mosse's **Heat Maps**

Below the surface.

Jack Shainman Gallery, 513 West 20th Street, through March 11.

Using a super-long-range camera classed as a weapon by international law, Richard Mosse takes us to the front lines of the refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe. The images, which show heat rather than visible light, skip the details we expect from photos and invite reconsideration of the crisis.

# 22. See Candida

We could make it together.

Symphony Space, February 13.

This 1894 George Bernard Shaw love-triangle comedy is about an idealistic poet named Marchbanks who falls in love with Candida, the brilliant wife of the socialist Reverend James Morell. Project Shaw brings together a terrific cast for a rare reading of a key prefeminist (or postfeminist?) work.

# 23. Watch Doubt

Believe the hype.

CBS, February 15.

Katherine Heigl stars as an attorney at a prestigious law firm, run by an Alan Dershowitz-style legal legend (Elliott Gould), who's assigned to defend a charismatic but elusive and unreadable client (Steven Pasquale), a pediatric surgeon recently accused of murdering his girlfriend more than two decades earlier. This sounds like a bundle of legal-show greatest hits that can't miss. It is, and it doesn't.

OPERA

# 24. See The Fool

Adventures in chamber music.

The Kitchen, February 9 to 11.

Raúl de Nieves and Colin Self's experimental opera bursts forth in Technicolor with wild costumes and striking set design, telling an allegorical tale of the personal journey from lost to found.

TALKS

# 25. Go to @Macaulay Author Series: A Meatloaf in Every Oven

In praise of comfort food.

CUNY's Macaulay Honors College, 35 West 67th Street, February 9.

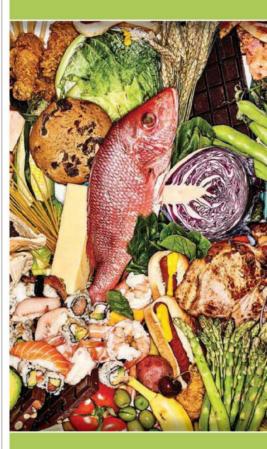
Frank Bruni and Jennifer Steinhauer of the Times present their new book of recipes, personal anecdotes, and history devoted to the all-American ground-beef loaf. They'll be in conversation with food expert Chadwick Boyd.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

Paris was shopping at Céline between the shows. Kanye West had just name-dropped her in his comeback album, My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy, and was so completely bewitched by her ideas that he performed wearing women's Céline. It was right after the label came out with the luggage bag but just before it became the only bag that seemed to matter. At this height, Phoebe Philo on the runway wearing Stan Smiths was like a gift. Here was something Philo did that everyone could copy for only \$75; you could even buy a pair on Amazon. The shoes took on a new meaning. J.Crew started carrying them. The Stan Smith became fashion's most important sneaker.

At the time, though, Adidas saw things a bit differently. While the sneaker was becoming popular in the fashion world, it was still sold almost exclusively in sporting-goods stores and often at a discount. "We weren't really happy with how it was seen and where it was found," says Torben Schumacher, Adidas' vice-president of product. Adidas wanted to recalibrate how the shoe was presented.

To do that, Schumacher and Adidas decided to take the sneaker entirely off the market. "The idea of not having the model wasn't really something that went down well," says Schumacher, especially since it was just starting to get recognized by this new trendsetting crowd. (Smith's first thought: "That's interesting. I don't really like that too much.") Still, Schumacher and his team at Adidas spent a year and a half convincing the rest of the company of the merits of the plan. Adidas couldn't truly reintroduce it to a new higher-end clientele, Schumacher argued, if it was still readily available in the bargain bin. "We wanted it to get the respect it deserved and the conversation about it that it deserved and for it to be seen as a commodity item," he says. "We thought it needed something bold and drastic to prepare everyone for the story again." By the time Adidas stopped selling the Stan Smith to places like Foot Locker, the company already had a plan of how and with whom it was going to bring it back. In 2012, the sneakers disappeared.

They began reemerging, subtly but purposefully, the next year—notably in the November 2013 issue of *Vogue Paris*, for which Gisele Bündchen posed naked, apart from white socks and Stan Smiths ("One of our sons saw that, we had no idea," Margie says. "It was funny"). On January 15, 2014, they went back on sale in higher-end, fashion-focused stores like Barneys New York and the Parisian boutique Colette, still for under \$100. They were instantly devoured. Later that year, Philo formally announced the Stan Smiths return, once again wearing them while taking her runway bow, this time with wide-leg pants and a camel sweater.

The trickle-down was immediate. In 2015, Adidas sold 8 million pairs of Stan Smiths. Adidas won't confirm how many it sold in 2016, but some industry experts throw around numbers like 15 million—more than double what it moved in the shoes' first decade of existence—the same side part and crooked smile leading them wherever they go.

Smith is the first to recognize Philo's importance. He brings her up on two different occasions over the course of our time together. "She was one of the first to start wearing the shoe," he remembers. "And then Pharrell Williams," who basically bowed to Smith when they met at the U.S. Open this summer and now regularly designs his own versions of the sneaker, as does Raf Simons. "Those cost like \$400 or something, and it's the same shoe! It's really weird, actually."

For Smith, the sneakers are far more successful, monetarily, than he ever was in his tennis career, during which he made "\$1.7 million, or something like that. I read it once," he says. "The shoe has certainly been more than that." In the beginning he collected an annual sum for his endorsement. These days, though, he's paid in royalties.

Smith's contract with Adidas expires about every five years (he'll sign next in 2018). So why does Adidas keep Stan Smith around? Why does it need him when it has Phoebe and Gisele and Pharrell and Raf and Kanye? Turns out this 70-year-old former tennis player, who was really more of a doubles star, who has eyebrows like the flailing blowup guy at car dealerships, is the only thing that makes its shoe the original. Which is especially valuable when everybody else in the business is trying to knock off its success.

Adidas was able to fend off a spot-on copy from Skechers, but there is no patent protection on the white leather tennis shoe. Common Projects essentially built a brand getting as close as it possibly could to the Stan Smiths and selling them for \$300. Prada makes a version, and so do

Rag & Bone, Isabel Marant, Saint Laurent, and Gucci. But Adidas's version has Stan Smith. "I keep telling people I'm a fashion icon," Smith says, then tilts his head back and laughs.

HILE STAN SMITH the shoes are having a moment, Stan Smith the man is keeping busy as the touring pro at Sea Pines Resort, a gig he's had for the past 45 years. He has a hospitality group that plans programming during tennis majors, and he's the president of the International Tennis Hall of Fame. He's starting to work on a book about his shoe's great comeback. He has four kids and ten grandkids.

He's also the co-founder of the Smith Stearns Tennis Academy, where fifty 12-to-18-year-olds from around the world trust Smith and his coaches with making them good enough to play college tennis. These days, he gives personal lessons only when he wants to, staying after class to help players work on their serves and shouting out advice, like when to go in for the volley. All the kids call him Stan. For Christmas, he gifted a pair of signed Stan Smiths to each one of them.

And, of course, he has that endorsement deal with Adidas, where he's very likely been on the payroll for longer than anyone else working there today and where he's committed to making appearances at about eight events a year. In the past two, he's been to Dubai, Amsterdam, Athens, Tokyo, Paris, London, and New York, delighting people just by showing up.

He knows that you probably didn't know that he's an actual living person, or that if you had at one point heard that he was a tennis player, you most likely thought he was already dead. "I'd love to sit here and say the success of the shoe has been totally because I'm such a great guy or I'm such a great player or whatever. But, you know ..." So what is it like when a shoe named after a man is way more famous than the man born with the name himself? To have your name mean so much beyond who you actually are? When you Google Stan Smith, only one of the first 100 images are of the man.

Once, when Smith was in Rome and he saw his shoes in all black for the very first time, he decided to buy a pair, the first time he'd ever done so. "I used my credit card," he says, looking for recognition, but "the guy was not impressed." Now he's taken to walking into the Adidas Originals store in Soho whenever he's in town and introducing himself, just to get a reaction. "The guys are surprised," he says, but "they know me now."



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# The "More" the Merrier

New York Crossword by Cathy Allis

| 1   | 2        | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   |     | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  |          | 11       | 12  | 13 |          | 14  | 15  | 16       | 17       | 18       |
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| 27  | Т        |     |     |     |     | 28  |     |     |     |     |          | 29       |     |    | $\vdash$ |     |     | 30       | $\vdash$ |          |
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| 128 | $\vdash$ |     |     |     |     | 129 |     |     |     | 130 |          |          |     |    | 131      |     |     |          |          |          |

### Across

- 1 Andy Warhol's genre
- Pre-1917 ruler
- 11 Clock-setting std.
- 14 Cap Rembrandt wore
- 19 Expresses one's views
- 20 Other: Sp.
- 21 Organ with a drum
- 22 Hold forth
- Slashed some durable pants?
- Authentic southern dish?
- Irish character actor Milo 27
- Tennis's Nastase 28
- 29 Capital of Ghana
- 30 Aficionado
- Conjecture about a full-fringe 31 hairdo?
- Public image 36
- A caddy may hold it
- 40 Audio buy
- Mont Blanc, par exemple 44
- 45 Toasty
- Aquarium buildup 47
- Succotash bean 51
- 52 d'(headwaiter)
- Did an optician's job? 54
- 58 Looped handles "Phooey!"
- 61 Twangy-sounding
- Luau souvenir

- 63 Solidly packaged kids' dexterity game?
- Stops
- 69 James and Jones of jazz
- 70 Conducted
- 71 "Religulous" satirist Bill
- 73 Seyfried who debuted in "Mean Girls"
- 76 Singer Bice's inner circle, as a young child?
- 81 Great Lakes' Canals
- San Antonio landmark
- 85 Many a staffer
- 86 Avid
- 87 Cowboy's words on ditching some worn-out clothing?
- Out-and-out
- 92 "¿Cómo usted?"
- 93 Offspring
- "Wait just
- Forearm bone
- Become misty-eyed
- 101 Jamaican music genre 103 Prioritizes, in emergency rooms
- 105 Near divers with decompression sickness?
- 110 Stooge with a bowl cut
- 113 "Who can that be?" response
- 114 Wander
- 115 Milne marsupial mom

- 120 In a field of plants that flavor
- 122 Itchy condition affecting comedian Samantha?
- 124 Coat under varnish, often
- 125 Air safety grp.
- 126 Chief
- 127 Countercultural cartoonist Crumb
- 128 Flat-rental sign
- 129 Actor Mahershala of
- 'Moonlight'
- 130 Carmaker of yore
- 131 Egg rating

### Down

- Somewhat, in scores
- 2 Numbered composition
- 3 Essence
- 4 Starting stake
- Treatment sites for users
- Prufrock poet's monogram
- Useful row of icons
- Narrow groove
- 9 Passionate
- Coll.-dorm VIPs
- 11 Insinuate
- 12 Protest of a sort
- 13 Halt in hostilities
- "The African Queen" co-star

- 15 Drop the ball
- 16 Game changer?
- Ides rebuke
- Try out
- 24 Aetna competitor
- 26 Lover of Psyche
- \_you one!"
- 33 Paraphernalia
- 34 Polio-vaccine developer
- 35 Sharp bark
- 36 Initial strategy
- 37 Anglican denom., here
- Done over, as photos
- 41 Cambodian cash
- 42 Roast VIP 43 Camel caravan's stop
- 44 Key with three sharps: abbr.
- 46 Air-kiss sound
- 48 Boomers' kids, for short
- 49 Nabokov-title heroine
- 50 Greek goddess of dawn
- Athlete's downtime
- 55 "SNL" alumna Cheri
- 56 Kind of chip
- 57 Unexpected hit
- 59 Crime-lab sample
- Some NFL linemen 64 Novelist Calvino
- 65 It flies, or hits flies
- 66 Ready for use
- 68 Hallway runner, say
- T-shirt-label abbr. 72 Prez on a five
- 73 Good point
- 74 Caribou's cousin
- 75 Vital heart vessel
- 76 Set of points
- Simpsons kid voiced by Yeardley
- Identical, to Yvette
- Keystone State founder and family
- Miss, in Mex.
- 83 S. Hawking has lived
- with it
- XL squared
- 88 Like an endangered avis
- 89 Multitude
- 90 Egyptian cross
- 91 Biting
- 95 Cat now named Yusuf Islam 96 White-tailed sea eagles
- 99 Pressing
- 100 "Hunny"-loving bear
- 102 From on high
- 104 Request
- 106 Home of the brave, briefly 107 Largely Hindu Himalayan
- land 108 Mother-daughter authors
- Anita and Kiran
- 109 Ox, goat, or sheep, e.g.
- 110 It's square-rigged on a brig 111 The "O" in FAO Schwarz
- 112 List-ending Lat.
- 116 "Dancing Queen" band 117 Indigence
- 118 "Pretty Woman" star Richard 119 "The Thin Man" dog
- 121 Hurry, quaintly
- 122 Med. provider group ...
- 123 ... and what one of its ltrs. means

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sees himself as "Thomas Cromwell"

The claim, in court, that five paintings stolen from the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, worth \$107 million, were thrown in the garbage.

And it's hard to do anything but read the news, keen on social media, and feel more and more agitated.

Spineless Paul Ryan and

other power-mad former

Trump skeptics.



HIGHBROW

Standing up for what America stands for, on the streets ...

Patricia Bosworth's ridiculously memoir-able life, in her new memoir.



.. And **within the government**, from Sally Yates to the 1,000 State Department staffers who signed the dissent cable.



the record numbers of people supporting it.

The ACLU, and

The Liar, at Classic Stage Company, David Ives's mercilessly allegro "translaptatión" of a 17th century French comedy.

Justice Smith in MCC Theater's grimly sparkling Yen.

Keith Krumwiede's fanciful myth of the McMansion, Atlas of Another America.

Raoul Peck's film IAm

Not Your Negro.



New York's Gabriel Sherman's useful backgrounder on Roger Ailes and how we got here, *The Loudest* Voice in the Room, now in paperback

The city launches its One Book, One New York project to get everyone to read the same book at the same time. And maybe we can all be on the same page.

Mahershala Ali's SAG Awards speech (not to mention that astonishing acting he did)

crazy-face

men's show was

a little love

note to New



buildings on East

Broadway are being

torn down for a new

modular apartment

building that likely won't last quite that long.

Oh, for the days when Homeland and Scandal

seemed far-fetched. Both

SPICABL

DE

Russia is set to decriminalize

"battery within families" within

cértain parameters.

The chaotic

thuggery of this

administration ..

In Quebec City, a reminder of how weak

people can be egged into

radical violence by

irresponsible onés.

were directed by black people.

A new study showed that fast-

food packaging often contains

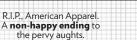
can cause **health problems**. You know, beyond the ones from the fast food itself.

grease-resistant chemicals that

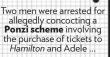
Oh, and 24 is back, you know,

to make sure we stay on our toes

about that Muslim terror threat



A USC study showed that **5.6**• percent of the top-grossing
Hollywood films of the past decade



Meanwhile, Hamilton doubles the number of its \$10 (just one Hamilton!) same-day tickets-by-lottery.



York. Beyoncé's post-Lemonade twins. Glad things are



working out with you guys.





Molly Burch's lovely, anachronistic single 'Wrong for You.'



without all that sexist sexiness (but the same great ... **food**?)



The Dregs, a comic set in Vancouver, about gourmet cannibalism.





Hoots, the Hooters offshoot





Azealia Banks stands up against actually accomplished artists who dare to criticize Trump, posts Rihanna's phone number on Instagram.



The Ohio Pork Council, making us worry that we're going to **run out of bacon**. I'm not sure we could've handled that.

LOWBROW



Astor Place's new snack cube (though it should serve Borgburgers).





# GUCCI

