

LADYGUNN

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INSPIRE

DANI MILLER



LADYGUNN X NO.19

KIM GORDON BEAM ME UP
DOJA CAT THE BARBS
DANI MILLER JONNY AND JEFF
NOAH CYRUS PATRICK CHURCH & MUNROE BERGDORF
TIFFANY
BROOKE CANDY
YANDY SMITH-HARRIS

STELLA DONNELLY
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BLEACHED
STEPHEN MALKMUS
NELL TIGER FREE
BEA MILLER
CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE
NOBODY'S BUSINESS
VENUS BEACH

THE WOMEN ZINE PRESENTED BY SPRAYGROUND



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I wish I could wake up every day freshly inspired and ready to carpe diem the fuck out of life. Things would be so much easier if I could somehow find a way to fill the voids, eliminate the stress, distraction, and depression that intermittently fog my life.

But alas, life is not that straightforward is it? There are months where I don't find joy or pleasure in anything. The days to seem drag on like a slow drudge of nostalgia and emptiness that leave me operating on autopilot, an island alone in my mind where I have found refuge in the dark. During those times I'll look around and wonder, "How does everyone do it?" How are these people smiling and laughing and making small talk like it's not the hardest thing in the world to sit upright and say, "I'm good, how are you?"

Then one day I'll find myself singing in the car to Van Morrison, windows down, with a southern breeze against my face and think it's the most beautiful thing in the world. I'll put on my Nikes and want to go to the gym. I'll start to taste again, I'll start to dance again.. I'll think about how much my family means to me, how

every step I take is meant for them. I'll feel lucky to have talented, beautiful and genuine people in my life that I can call friends. I'll hug my husband and never want to let him go.

For someone like me, perhaps even for someone like you, inspiration comes in ebbs and flows just like the waves and the obstacles of life. When I find those moments I revel in them. I thrive in the light of it all, but I would be lying if I said I didn't thrive in the dark ones too.

My therapist says I'm lucky. It's better to feel too much than to feel nothing at all. When my insides swell with that magnetic energy sourced from some body of music or art or person, I do feel lucky. When something truly moves you it's the most wonderful thing you can imagine. When you feel the hairs stand up on your arm, a flush rising to your face or the butterflies in your stomach. That's the part of life that makes it all worthwhile. Those little moments when you levitate with inspiration are the ones that will get you through.

voxo/co/co

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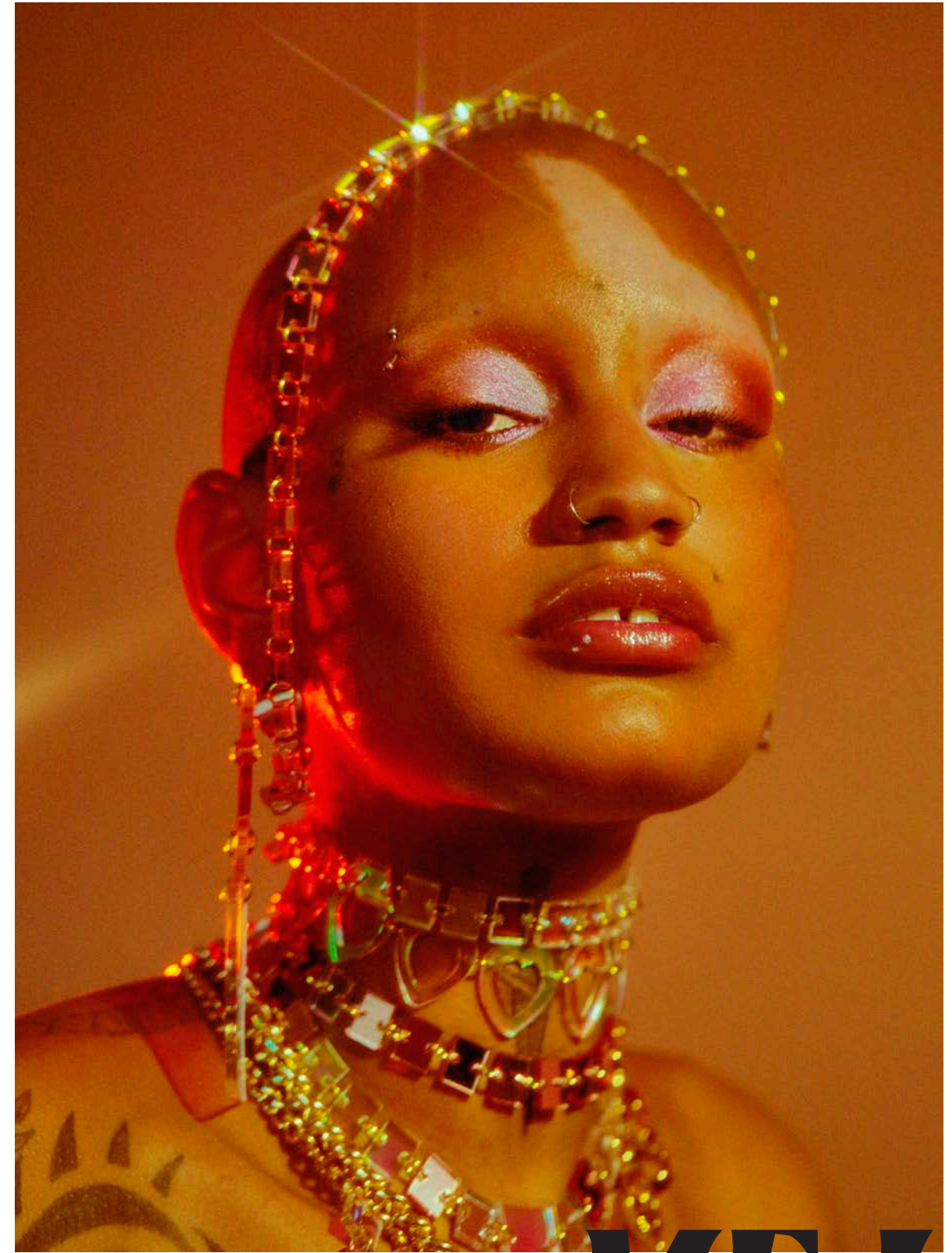
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BEAM



ME UP

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 DIANDRA (SKORPION @ SKORPION MGMT)
 TIARA (SKORPION @ SKORPION MGMT)
 MARY (WILHELMINA @ WILHELMINA MODELS)



From Right: Dress Alena Akhadullina On MARY: Dress Alena Akhadullina Earrings Ben-Amun Necklace Gorjana (Shoes Rene Caovilla) JAKE + JOSEPH J Left Glasses Illesteva Earring Ben-Amun Suit Han (Shoes Nine West) J Right Earring Kenneth Jay Lane Necklace Ben-Amun Dress (Pink) Smythe (Black) Wrist Sleeves Nicole Frank (Stockings Falke) (Shoes Marc Fisher) (Sunglasses Illesteva) Earrings, Laura Cantu. Necklaces, Laura Cantu. Dress, Issey Miyake. Belt, Deborah Drattell. All dresses, L'Momo.



On Tiara: Cape, Simone Ellis.
Sunglasses, Illesteva.
Earrings, Kenneth Jay Lane.
Necklaces, Black Circle with Gold Star Gorjana
Long Gold Chain, Gorjana
Evil Eye Necklace, Glamrocks Jewelry.
Shirt, My Pair of Jeans.
Waist Coat, Flora Dancia.
Skirt, Chae New York.



On JAKE + JOSEPH:
Earrings, Ben-Amun.
Necklace, Deborah Drattell.
Dress, L'Momo J.
Sunglasses, Anna-Karin Karlsson.
Earring, Ben-Amun.
Dress, L'Momo.





Right: Shirt as Scarf, Robert Graham. Earrings, Gorjana. Necklace, Miranda Frye. Jacket, Heike. Dress, L'Momo. Shoes, Daniel Silverstain. Left: Sunglasses, Illesteva. Earrings, Ben-Amun. Jacket, Kochetkova. Jumpsuit, Wedu Fashion. Belt, Deborah Drattell. Pouch, Nicole Frank. Shoes, Daniel Silverstain.

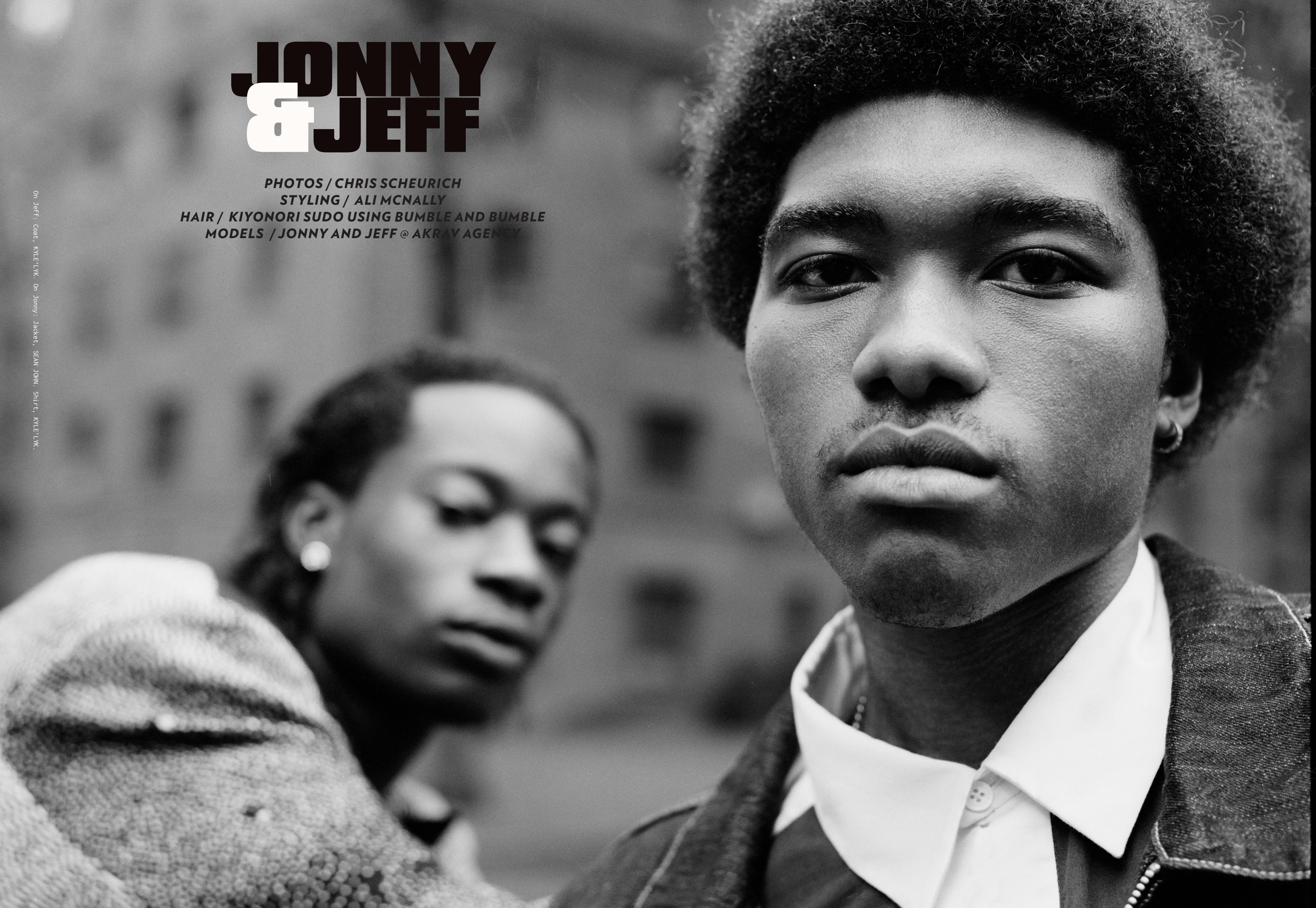


Hat, Laura Cantu. Earrings, Anna-Karin Karlsson. Grey Vest, Kochetkova. Dress, Wilde Vertigga. Deandra Left Hand. Ring, Kenneth Jay Lane. Shoes, Casadei.

JONNY & JEFF

PHOTOS / CHRIS SCHEURICH
STYLING / ALI MCNALLY
HAIR / KIYONORI SUDO USING BUMBLE AND BUMBLE
MODELS / JONNY AND JEFF @ AKRAY AGENCY

On Jeff: Coat, KYLE L.K. On Jonny: Jacket, SEAN JOHN. Shirt, KYLE L.K.





On Jeff: Shirt, KYLE'LYK. Jewelry, MODEL'S OWN.
On Jonny: Jacket, TATRAS. Tank top and jewelry, MODEL'S OWN. Belt, TELFAR. Jeans, KYLE'LYK.



On Jonny: Jacket, SEAN JOHN. Shirt, pants, KYLE'LYK. Shoes, NIKE.
On Jeff: Coat, KYLE'LYK. T-shirt, jewelry, MODEL'S OWN. Pants, ADIDAS ORIGINALS. Shoes, NIKE.

On Jonny: Jacket, TATRAS. Tank top and jewelry, MODEL'S OWN. Belt, TELFAR. Jeans, KYLE'LYK. On Jeff: Shirt, KYLE'LYK. Jewelry, MODEL'S OWN. Jeans, TELFAR.



On Jonny: Jacket, jeans, SCHAEFFER'S HOTEL. Tank top, jewelry, MODEL'S OWN. Shoes, NIKE. On Jeff: Jacket, jeans, SCHAEFFER'S HOTEL. Shoes, NIKE.



AN INSPIRING WORLD: PATRICK CHURCH & MUNROE BERGDORF

DISCUSS ART & CULTURE

PHOTOS / SAVANNA RUEDY
HMU / LUCA PONCE
STORY / ARIANA TIBI
ALL CLOTHING PATRICK CHURCH

Art informs a culture; culture informs our art. The very fabric of our daily lives and experiences have been documented since we understood that cave walls were actually meant for painting. Every line is of importance. As such, Patrick Church has made his way to the surface of art history's tapestry with his modern work, reflective of the young pop art of the 50s and presented in a way that is at once offbeat and universal; vulnerable and tenacious. Patrick Church designs can be found on shorts, canvases, bathrobes, and fanny packs for a distinct world of color and pattern that you'd recognize anywhere.

Putting realism in the context of fearless and fabulous, Patrick Church is a British multi media artist residing in New York city. Fine lines snake between intimate faces and naked bodies, every piece saying so much yet invisibly implying even more.

Founder of the Goddess Platform, Munroe Bergdorf is a model turned activist who was the first transgender model for L'Oreal UK. As a brave voice for many communities, Munroe uses her platform to advocate for empowerment, positive transformation, and a fairer world.

Peep Patrick's latest collection here and keep reading for a friendly conversation between him and fellow Brit Munroe Bergdorf. The well-spoken pair dives neck deep in the realities of today's culture and you'll discover how they stay balanced, and why Satanism isn't what you think it is, and what's inspiring them right now...

Munroe Bergdorf: What is something you recently came to have a fresh perspective on?

Patrick Church: I'm definitely trying to have more balance in my life. Like I've been doing a lot meditation over the past six months and just trying to separate myself from work a little bit. I feel like last year it was like taking over my whole life and I'm trying to like not panic when I'm not working and, and do more things with people that I love. Yeah. You probably felt the same way, right?

Munroe Bergdorf: I think so. I think it's been a really weird decade. You know, social media has really radically changed how we think about things that we were initially just prescribed and expected to take verbatim. So, I'm trying to continue having a fresh perspective on challenging authority or systems: societal systems, societal structures and also to have an open mindset and not exercise my bias. Like, I just watched a documentary on Satanism called Hail Satan on Netflix. Initially like when you think of Satanism think, "Oh my God, evil," but it actually is the antidote to everything that we've been told throughout our life, like the separation of state and religion. I'm not ready to like to announce my Satanism *laughs* but I mean, a sentence in that documentary is "I realized that those colts never actually existed and that the evil existed in the witch hunt itself." So yeah, I'm just really interested in society and trying to keep a fresh perspective on other people's perspectives.

Patrick Church: Yeah, of course. I need to watch that documentary.

Munroe Bergdorf: It's so good. What's inspiring you right now?

Patrick Church: I think inspiration to me always comes from within. Like

I always reflect back to myself, especially with my work process, but for me the root of all my work and is love and human love and human emotion. I think that's what it comes down to. What's inspiring you?

Munroe Bergdorf: I'm inspired by the youth of society. I'm really interested in thinking about what leadership looks like from a younger perspective and all of these amazing climate change activists; especially, you know, young indigenous voices who are the most affected by climate change. I'm really interested in hearing the future voices that are currently marginalized that hopefully won't be marginalized by the time that they grow up. And how they're going to shape the world for the rest of us. So really, you know, I'm interested in that.

Patrick Church: What do you wish the world would change right now in the activism space?

Munroe Bergdorf: I wish the world would understand when to pass the microphone rather than speak over people. Also that you can't expect one woman to speak for all women or one trans person speak for all trans people. I think that it's really important to recognize the importance in diversity at all levels and you know, there's diversity within diversity. There is diversity within the black community.

Patrick Church: Yeah, completely.

Munroe Bergdorf: And what do you wish would change in the fashion space?

Patrick Church: Well, it's funny you were saying about climate change as well because I feel like bigger brands are definitely overshadowing smaller businesses and independent brands are just like the throwaway fashion. It's really not what I'm about. I think we really need to know like where and how our stuff is being made. I produce really small quantities ethically, like I wouldn't produce in China. And a lot of my work is refashioned; as in the leather jackets that I paint, I'll have to vintage. I like to work on other people's clothing as well. It's just that thing of like - throwing stuff away and destroying our climate that just really doesn't resonate well with me.

Ok. Do you feel like your privilege being a beautiful celebrity plays into this space?

Munroe Bergdorf: I mean, define beauty? Um, yeah. I mean I look how I want to look and I think that there's beauty in everything. I think of course I'm a binary trans person, so that's a privilege in itself to not have to have a conversation about they-them pronouns. Cause I can imagine that that would drive me stupidly nuts. That is a privilege in itself, you know, living within the binary. I think that it's a lot easier for people that don't really understand gender to understand a gender transition if there's like, a destination. Whereas if you're a nonbinary person, there's not just a destination. There is not always a destination, but sometimes it's literally the adjusting of pronouns or the adjusting of, um, appearance, but not necessarily my medical transition. So I would say I'm privileged in some respects, but also not in others. I think not having to explain myself in terms of being nonbinary though is a privilege.





TIFFANY

PHOTOS / JINGYU LIN
STYLING / PHIL GOMEZ
MAKEUP / ROBERT GREENE
HAIR / STEFANIE HERNANDEZ
STORY / BRYANNA DOE

If you don't know who Tiffany is, you definitely haven't been paying attention when your mom starts talking about her teenage years. Sure, you might know all about Madonna, Cyndi Lauper, and Paula Abdul. But if you don't automatically include Tiffany in that list of pop icons, you're missing out on a huge component of what made the '80s the '80s.

Debuting her first single at just fifteen years old, Californian-born Tiffany Darwish immediately changed the face of modern pop music with a totally novel concept: a national mall tour. The up-and-coming singer spent the summer of 1987 touring America and doing exactly what all the other kids her age were doing: just hanging out at the mall. The only difference is that Tiffany was cultivating a loyal fan following with her mall appearances, performing hit songs like her iconic cover of Tommy James and the Shondells' I Think We're Alone Now. Suddenly, teenagers weren't seeing Tiffany just because they happened to be at the mall; they were going to the mall specifically because they wanted to see Tiffany. When you picture '80s mall culture, what you're actually picturing is Tiffany's monumental influence on pop culture.

But as much as we associate Tiffany with the '80s, it's not as though she just stopped there. Since that breakout summer when her career began, Tiffany has gone on to be much more than just another flash-in-the-pan teen sensation. She's consistently released albums over the years, jumping genres as the mood strikes her. The Color of Silence (2000) was pure '00s pop that re-introduced us to "modern" Tiffany. Rose Tattoo (2011) was a country album, allowing the singer to go back to her roots and explore the genre that first gave her an interest in performing. Her latest album, Pieces of Me (2018), was a vulnerable yet hardcore rock album that sounded like a personal diary. Tiffany has also forayed into acting, with roles ranging from the voice of an animated Judy Jetson, to a leading role in the Cannes-premiering indie thriller Necrosis, to playing alongside fellow '80s pop star Debbie Gibson in the mockbuster Mega Shark Versus Giant Octopus.

Tiffany says that through all these years, she's really stayed in it for the fans. While at age sixteen the best part of being Tiffany was "the adventure," the forty-eight year old singer says that present day, the fans are one of the best parts.

"I feel most alive on stage in front of my fans," Tiffany says. "The stage is home, where I feel most centered and happy. My fans reinforce my purpose in life," she says. "My fans are the best fans on earth! They have been there with me for over 30 years and I'm always amazed at all the love and support that they show me every day."

As she looks back at her 30+ career in the music industry, Tiffany says that it's difficult to pin down the biggest difference between making music back then and making music now. "The whole industry has changed," Tiffany says. "The way we get music out there, the way it's sold and purchased. Labels really handled everything back then, now the artist is doing all the admin work." Tiffany also thinks that it's harder to be a teen pop star these days than it was in the '80s. "It's evolved," she says, "and I think that's because of social media. So much more information is put out there and there's responsibility in that."

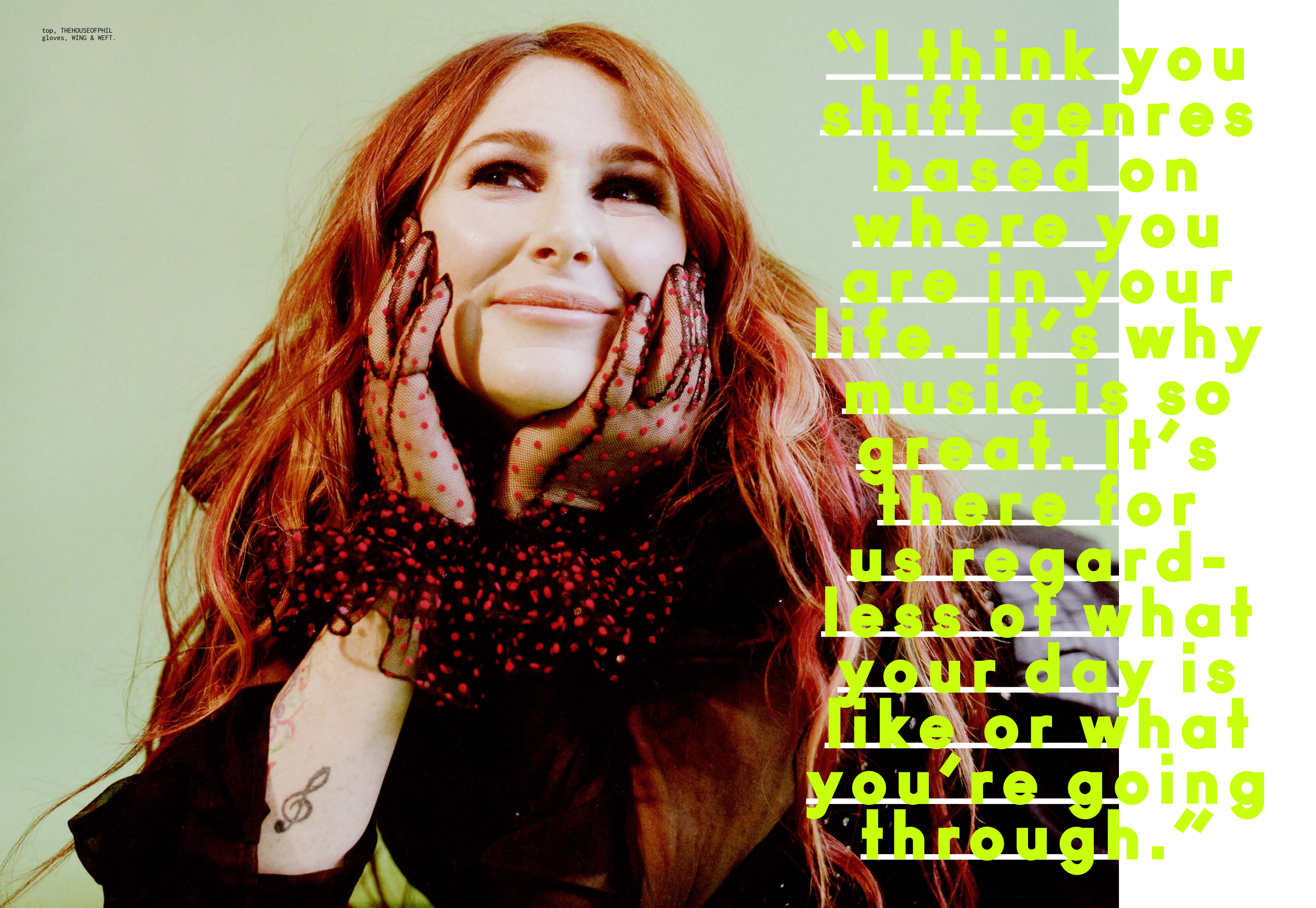
Tiffany is no stranger to the kind of negative attention that we typically associate with celebrities being hassled via social media today. In addition to fending off the advances of not just one, but two deranged stalkers (check out the 2008 documentary I Think We're Alone Now), Tiffany also went through a very public legal battle with her mother and stepfather shortly after her career took off, attempting to declare herself as an emancipated minor at age sixteen. Rather than keeping quiet about these tough topics, Tiffany uses the adversity that she's overcome to inspire further creative expression. She's currently working on a book of her memoirs and of the past, Tiffany says, "We each have that inner strength that gets us through the tough times. When we get through things it makes us stronger for the next obstacles. Also, having faith with amazing friends and family is important."

Tiffany is also working on a new album, to be released sometime in March 2020. "It's my second rock album," Tiffany says. "You'll love it. It's rock and has a little bit of punk rock sound to it." She's not worried in the slightest that fans will be put-off by her evolving sound. "I love all kinds of music, and I think you shift genres based on where you are in your life," she states, explaining why a new sound is nothing to shy away from. "It's why music is so great. It's there for us regardless of what your day is like or what you're going through."



dress, VICTORIA HAYES.
boots, JOHN FLUEVOG.

“I think you shift genres based on where you are in your life. It’s why music is so great. It’s there for us regardless of what your day is like or what you’re going through.”



PHOTOS / LO JACKSON
MAKEUP / ROBERT GREENE
HAIR / JACK IRVIN
STYLING / GABRIEL HELD
HERNANDEZ STORY / STEFANIE

BROOKE CANDY

Brooke Candy is in the midst of a major creative liberation.

After spending many years as an independent artist, releasing singles like “Das Me” and “I Wanna Fuck Right Now,” the self-proclaimed “Freaky Princess” signed to Sony’s RCA Records in 2014, where she planned to release her debut. Instead, she left the label in 2017, which left her feeling suicidal and uninspired. Finally, in the fall of 2019, she released her debut album *Sexorcism* via independent label NUXXE. Now that the album is finally out, one might think she’s taking a moment to soak it all in.

“I feel nothing,” she says of its release. She’s clearly feeling a little burnt out, and rightfully so. Candy co-wrote every track and directed or co-directed almost every music video released from the project so far. Now she’s thinking about her next move, whatever that may be: “It’s like wow, I created this thing, and it took up all my time, and then I made all the visuals for it. It’s all done, now what do I do with my brain? I just start again.”

Though her mind is miles ahead, Candy is still deep in the *Sexorcism* era. She’s released five music videos from the indie project to date, each with a unique song-to-screen translation. For “Nymph,” it’s direct. The track is laden with lyrics “inspired by a sex-crazed fairy or elf” (“I’m suckin’ my unicorn every night / My fairies and sirens be swimming in Sprite”). Its fitting visual follows Candy as a mythological creature (surrounded by others) through a sexual fantasyland forest with waterfalls, Shibari ropes, and near-nudity.

For “Freak Like Me,” a collaboration with singer TOOPOOR, she instead opted for a cheeky metaphor. “I’m not America’s sweetheart, I’m more like Jeffrey Dahmer,” Candy raps on the track. In the video, however, the two artists throw a high-fashion slumber party complete with pillow fights and matching outfits. She opens up about the video amid a coughing fit on the other side of our call.

“Sorry, I just ripped a huge bong load... hold on. Oh my fucking God,” she says, catching her breath. “[For] ‘Freak Like Me,’ you assume spooky, scary, Marilyn Manson, and I kinda just wanna be cute, ‘cause honestly, to me, that’s freaky. I don’t know. That’s my idea of a freakshow,” she adds, sounding a bit more relaxed than before.

But she was stressed earlier in the day following the video’s release, when she decided to read every YouTube comment that appeared under it—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Calling herself a “masochist” for doing so, she adds that she texted another



"I know that if I'm getting hate, fucking Iggy is getting it times a billion. I said, 'Does this break you like it breaks me?' She was like, 'To put this all into perspective, I uploaded my video [with] a live countdown, and it had thumbs down before it was even out,'" Candy reads directly from their text conversation. "People will hate something that doesn't even exist. It's so crazy."

Candy feels that she and Azalea were bred to be the same type of artist, and they do have a lot in common. Both artists are white women who rap, and both found themselves crossing cultural boundaries early in their careers. Azalea was accused of using a "blaccent" and criticized for rapping some racially insensitive lyrics, and Candy often sported long, bright-colored braids as a signature look. They've both had to learn from their mistakes, Azalea a bit more publicly. Candy is straightforward with her regrets: "I definitely would not have braided my hair like that had I known...it just wasn't appropriate. If I could take back anything, it would be that."

The two also shared similar experiences leaving major labels--Candy with RCA and Azalea with Island Records--in favor of independent labels. On Sexorcism, Azalea is featured on "Cum," a '90s house-inspired track with hyper-erotic lyrics ("Make me cum, make me squirt / See my titties through my shirt"). When asked if she thinks their former labels would have let either of them release the song, Candy responds with a firm "fuck no," adding that she wants to make a video with "as many nods to cum as we can get away with without getting blocked."

Azalea and TOOPOOR are only two of twelve artists featured on Sexorcism. Another is Candy's longtime collaborator and friend, Charli XCX, whose penchant for frequent features inspired the rapper's abundant use of them on her own album. The two musicians first paired up on "Cloud Aura," which appeared on XCX's 2012 mixtape Super Ultra and her major label debut, True Romance, a track XCX references in her verse on their Sexorcism cut, "XXXTC." Their five collaborations have helped broaden Candy's audience, and now she wants to use her platform to do the same for other artists.

Candy wants to showcase drag queens, and has even featured RuPaul's Drag Race stars Violet Chachki and Aquaria on the track "Rim." It's another '90s house-inspired track that features silly (and very horny) spoken word verses. ("Why is it bad to feel so good? Isn't it delicious?" Chachki asks on the track.) Candy recalls a conversation in which Aquaria dished to her about how rare it is for a drag queen to be a featured vocalist on a non-drag artist's song: "They're always looked at, but it's never their voice. I mean, the song's 'Rim.' It's not that serious, but it's cool."

Other artists featured on Sexorcism include recent Ladygunn cover star Rico Nasty and Ashnikko, who recently scored a major viral hit on TikTok with her song "STUPID." Candy has worked with many artists on the cusp of major success, proving herself to be a bit of a tastemaker--perhaps most notably so with Lizzo back in 2017. The pair toured together on Lizzo's Good As Hell Tour, and Candy even styled the video for the No. 1 hit "Truth Hurts."

"I have a gift--maybe it's a bizarre thing, where I can just tell when someone is talented and when someone isn't. It's just a gut feeling," Candy details, adding that she believed in Lizzo "when no one on planet earth really even knew or gave a shit." She gushes about how big of a fan of Lizzo's she is, proclaiming, "She literally can do everything. She can actually play instruments. She can actually sing. She can actually rap. She can actually dance. She's actually changing the female form. She is change."

Between the creation, release, and promotion of Sexorcism, Candy also

found the time to get married to her husband, the "love of her life" tattoo artist Kyle England, who she has since moved to New York City with. When I bring up the wedding, however, Candy gets quiet. When I ask if marriage has affected her artistry in any way, she admits, "Well, it's calmed me down quite a bit...I think being married, or having ownership over someone just, no matter what, slows them down. So, I don't know if it can work for me, but we'll see."

As for New York, a city known for its fast pace, Candy feels it's slowed her creativity as well. "All I do is stay inside all day...I've become agoraphobic," she mutters. No matter how free and liberated an artist like Brooke Candy can be, even she can find herself stifled purely by life.

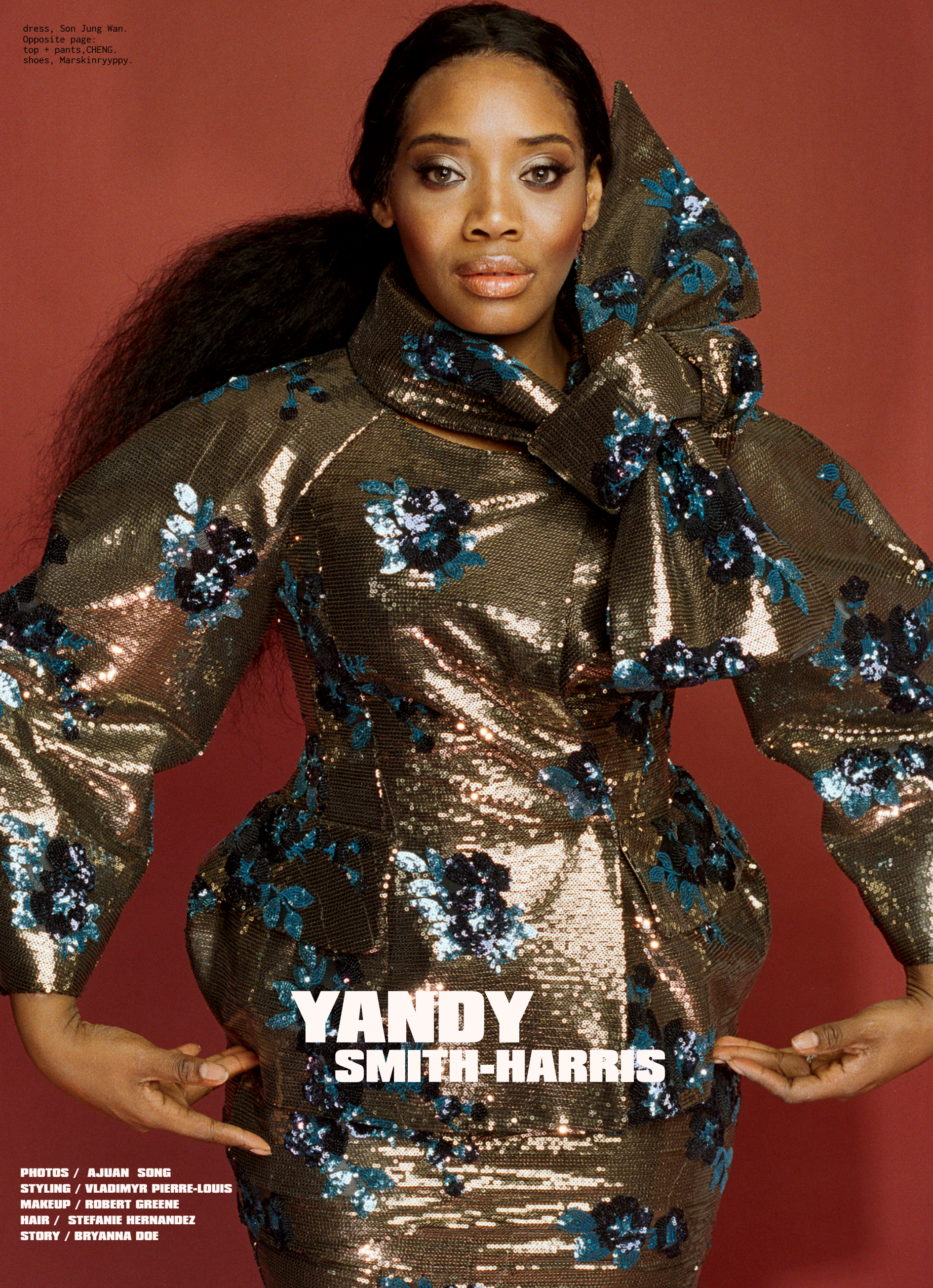
That being said, Candy won't be inside for too long. She's about to embark on the Sexorcism Tour to Europe and Asia (with plans to expand to North America). She's excited about conceptualizing a new show, and she's bringing a new set of dancers on stage with her. She plans to choreograph the show to take her body to new extremes--something Candy has become known for, whether she's performing while tied up in Shibari ropes or rapping while being body slammed in a wrestling ring.

"I think it's just an obsession with pain, and how far I can take my body, and what my mind tells me is enough," she shares about what feels like not only her approach to performing, but her artistry in general. "It's just a test for myself to see what my limits are."

Whether she's recovering from label drama, seeking out new talent, flexing her directing muscles, testing her physical limits, or figuring out how to do it all while dealing with personal hardships, Brooke Candy needs a challenge in order to reach her full creative potential. Lucky for her, she's constantly striving for more, and new challenges will only continue to lend themselves to furthering her ever-evolving artistry.



dress, Son Jung Wan.
Opposite page:
top + pants, CHENG.
shoes, Marskinryppy.



YANDY SMITH-HARRIS

PHOTOS / AJUAN SONG
STYLING / VLADIMYR PIERRE-LOUIS
MAKEUP / ROBERT GREENE
HAIR / STEFANIE HERNANDEZ
STORY / BRYANNA DOE

It seems like everyone has something to say about Yandy Smith-Harris, but by this point she's heard it all.

"I have been called so many different things," she tells me. "And by so many people that have never sat down and had a conversation with me. So the bottom line is that if I don't know you personally, I will not take what you say about me personally."

Depending on your knowledge level of the hip hop scene, you might know Yandy from her work with major musicians Missy Elliott and Busta Rhymes. Otherwise, you'll probably recognize her as a main cast member in VH1's reality drama *Love & Hip Hop*. As a result, nearly every aspect of Yandy's life has found its way onto the small screen and been reblogged and rehashed via social media, including her less-than-glamorous struggles to maintain a home and care for her children family while her partner, Mendecees Harris, serves time in prison on drug charges. Not all of the opinions have been kind, but Yandy is an expert in not letting the haters get to her.

She feels like there are really two ways to deal with being in the spotlight: you can try to close off parts of your life to the public and maintain a semblance of privacy, or you can try to use the attention to your advantage.

"I really try to keep some things private," she says. "But they're not private. It just never works. You have to figure that they're going to find out anyway. So I use it to tell a story. All this stuff that I've gone through with my husband and with my family, I could have tried to keep it secret. But instead I let the world in. I use my life experiences and the things that I would've kept private to tell other people that I'm not perfect, that I'm human. And I go through a lot of the same things you go through as well."

When I ask her to share some of the lessons she's learned after being on reality television for such a long time (*Love & Hip Hop* is aired its ninth season in 2019), Yandy tells me that it all comes back to finding a way to use her celebrity to do good in the world.

"It's been really good for me to have had my awakening on television," she says. "I went through something publicly, and I realized that this is where my passion comes into play. You have to mix your work ethic with your passion, and you figure out what you love. You find your part of it. And there were so many people affected by my story. So many mothers and wives and sisters that had to say goodbye to loved ones. TV was able to capture the hurt and the pain of that. And I started really thinking about bringing healing to a lot of the women and the mothers and the wives, and that is when I realized this is my purpose. This is what I'm here for. I wouldn't have known if I didn't go through those trials. I would not have felt it important to reach back out in that way. And that's kind of what has led me to do so many other things in communities," Yandy says. "Right now I'm a single mom and that is not something that is easy. So I really cater to a lot of women, to single moms. I cater to inner city youth because I understand the struggles of a lot of these kids, who are turning to being drug dealers because they have to make money for their family. Because I was able to get this exposure and I have this huge voice, I need to use it to do something. Television gave me the chance to really get out there in a big way and help heal, and help spread awareness and also to help create opportunities for people to make money."

Yandy isn't just posturing when she talks about giving back to the community. As we're doing this interview, she's in the car with her children on the way home from a school fundraiser in Harlem, organized to help inner city children afford school supplies. She believes that getting involved with schools is one of the best ways to really make a difference.

"Over the past two or three years," she says, "I've been working with teachers and students in an inner city community as well as an alternative school. With a lot of these kids, their main concern is how they can generate income. They don't necessarily believe that American History class or Calculus III is really going to help them be productive in their community. We offer them additional education and hands-on experience from professionals. They're learning entrepreneurship, learning hair weaving, learning tattooing, learning cosmetology, even factory work



learning how to create their own t-shirts, backpacks, hats. For young men, it's teaching them how to really grow up and develop in this community. And *Think Like a Boss* is a class for women, and it's just teaching women how to be leaders. We've done it so far in seven schools, and I have eleven new contracts for high schools. So this school year, I'm trying to figure out how to do it all. I really want to leave a legacy of paying it forward. I think that will help save the world."

As a manager and a producer, Yandy puts the same level of thought into making sure she's contributing to something that's going to make an impact on the world. It's one of the most important things she looks for when choosing artists to work with. "What's really important to me, after working with guests like Missy Elliot or Busta Rhymes, or

even 50 Cent, is always looking for someone that wants to disrupt the market," she says. "Someone that is different, someone that is new, something that doesn't sound like everything else on the radio. That's who I want to work with. We really want you to be different. I love ideas that are out of the box and that don't look like everyone else."

Currently she's really excited about an independent R&B act called Ar'mon and Trey, two brothers working out of Atlanta. Yaandy gushes about how incredible they are and how she's excited to start on a new project with them. She also tells me to look out for their new single with Chris Brown, who she mentions is one of her favorite artists.

"Do you ever get any flack about that?" I ask. "Chris Brown is kind of a controversial figure, right?"

"He is," Yandy agrees. "But I think that a lot of the artists that have ever gone out and been successful have been controversial. I think that they're always a spectacle. Sometimes with creativity, when you're a genius there are other areas where you may be flawed. All of us, really," she adds. "But creative people, you know, there's always that one thing with creative people that's a little off. I think that Chris Brown is an amazing artist. I think that he has really become our modern day Michael Jackson to some extent. He's incredible. I hate all that trails his name, but I do believe in second chances. I'm hoping that whatever it is that he's done, that he's gotten the help he needs and can continue to be an amazing creative."

"It's probably impossible to avoid drama in the entertainment industry," I say. "Is that something you agree with?"

"Absolutely," she says. "Absolutely. As human beings we're multidimensional. We can go to church on Sunday and then have anger issues, or drug or substance abuse problems that we're able to keep closeted. But when you are an entertainer, you constantly have people around you that unfortunately are looking to expose these different things. Sometimes you have to deal with your ailments publicly. And I think every single human being has things that they need to work on, things in our character, things morally, things in our families that we would like the world not to know. But unfortunately when you're a celebrity everything is up for grabs. People really get off on exposing celebrities and their hard times, their trials, all of that. Because it's my pain, your pleasure, and that's just the way it is. I think that's why reality television is so successful."

Yandy shares some simple but powerful advice for others wanting to get into the entertainment industry in any capacity, not just reality television. "Hold fast. Don't quit. Don't give up. As long as you're given another day to breathe, that's another day to be successful. It's another day to help someone. It's another day to breathe life into someone else."

STELLA

PHOTOS / KRISTY BENJAMIN
STORY / KRISTY GUILBAULT

For as long as art and social commentary have coexisted, so has the role of comic relief; when the going gets tough, humor gets going. From Shakespeare to John Oliver, progressive culture relies on comedy to gain a better understanding of our world, and to ultimately cope with that newfound knowledge. Or, in the case of the incredibly outspoken Australian musician Stella Donnelly — whose writing concentrates on critiquing social issues and confronting misogyny — to make her career emotionally sustainable.

"It's a tactic to have a longer career in music — without having a meltdown and wanting to quit, and never get on stage again," Donnelly says. "It can be quite harrowing revisiting those moments, but when there's a bit of comic relief, it just softens that a little bit."

Using humor as a healthy coping mechanism runs in Donnelly's blood. When unable to secure a teaching job, her dad moonlighted as a standup comedian in order to fill his free time, outside of being a stay at home parent. "He's definitely influenced me, I think, just in using humor to connect with people, and using humor to create a comfortable environment for people to exist in," Donnelly says. "I feel like humor is an amazing tool for education, as well." Songs from Donnelly's debut full-length album, *Beware of the Dogs* (2019), employ this method of social education, by criticizing societal convention in the same breath as cracking a joke.

"I think it's always been a tactic of mine to make people laugh so that they can let their guard down," Donnelly says. "It makes it easier for me to perform, as well. When I have to perform songs that talk about rape and sexual assault, and things that have affected me in my life... To be able to disarm myself and the audience, prior to that and after that [is important]."

"Boys Will Be Boys," the song for which Donnelly is perhaps best recognized by, arrived just before accusations were lodged against Harvey Weinstein, and the #MeToo movement was quickly ushered in. The song details a friend's experience with sexual assault, and the harrowing aftermath. Unfortunately, when major social movement takes off, token bystanders are often forced to bear the burden of fronting the issue within their social and familial circles. Whether it's a person of color defending Black Lives Matter, someone of the LGBTQ+ community combating discrimination or a sexual assault survivor voicing their extremity against the patriarchy — it's exhausting to be cornered into a monumental and burdensome role.

Yet, fans and critics alike have proceeded to label "Boys Will Be Boys" as a feminist protest anthem, proclaiming Donnelly as a pugnacious social justice warrior. But, at the end of the day, she's simply an artist inscribing the corruption and brutality that we all currently face.

"It's really important that I'm not the spokesperson for these issues, because, as a privileged white girl, I fucking don't even know the quarter of it," Donnelly says. "I can't speak for all women; I can't speak for male victims of sexual assault. There are so many people that I can't speak for, or that I will never try to speak for."

There's a difference between having privilege and carrying privileged, which is an important distinction that Donnelly makes when speaking out on issues. And while the singer-songwriter is grateful to be given the opportunity to speak her mind, Donnelly is conscious of the potentiality of her posture. "I want to use my platform, while I still have it, and talk about these things," Donnelly says. "I absolutely did work hard for this. ... But at the same time, there are so many people out there who can do what I do ... but haven't been given those opportunities, purely based on prejudice"

Donnelly best captures this sentiment with the album's title track, "Beware

of the Dogs." The vehement thesis magnifies the cultural and environmental destruction of Australia, at the capable hand of its own government. "There's no Parliament worthy of this country's side / All these pious fucks taking from the '99 / Now we'll all endure what the sign told us we would / Beware of the dogs, beware of the dogs," Donnelly shouts, waxing her frustration.

Australia's most recent bushfire season ramped up in June 2019, as several serious fires quickly turned into hundreds — some of which are still burning — primarily in the country's southeast. The scope of damage is catastrophic: millions of acres of land burned, homes and businesses destroyed, sustained injuries and death, endangered animals driven to extinction, hazardous air quality, sinking tourism revenues and millions of tons of CO₂ emissions. And while some factors of this disaster are uncontrollable, white Australians and colonizers have been ignoring Indigenous Australians' deep knowledge of their land, for hundreds of years. Donnelly believes that the government needs to learn about Australia's biological history, in partnership with taking reformative action against cataclysmic climate change.

"I think a lot of Australians are looking at themselves, and looking at what they could do, and how they can adjust — but we need the support of our government. We need those big companies to start paying taxes, and to start looking at the future," Donnelly says.

While the bushfires are a localized issue, the takeaways from *Beware of the Dogs* can be applied globally. Despite numerous incredibly specific references to Australian culture — such as pints of VB, the Kyle and Jackie O show and Southern Cross tattoos — the universality of Donnelly's writing falls on perceptive ears; her tours throughout the U.S., across Europe and even Japan have successfully conveyed her sociopolitical commentary. People from every corner of the world are simultaneously attempting to mitigate the dire effects of political upheaval, climate change and humanitarian inequalities, all of which are lamented and satirized in Donnelly's songwriting.

Being this outspoken isn't always easy, though. "Women will be the first to be accused of being dramatic, whereas men get called amazing story tellers," Donnelly says. Whether employing hyperbolic elements in a fictional character's narrative, or plainly recounting a trauma, Donnelly ultimately aims to create work that resonates with listeners' experiences.

While playing her final set for Laneway — Australia's indie rock touring festival — Donnelly struggled with performing "Boys Will Be Boys" for a care-free audience basking in the sunset. "People are having the best time, and I'm like, fuck, talk about a party starter," Donnelly says. "Like, I'm just going to go up and sing this song now that people probably don't want to hear, and I don't particularly want to play this. It's almost like, read the room, bitch. ... But it always surprises me that people just stay and sing along, and hug each other and cry — dudes hug their friends."

Despite having only an EP and album under her belt, as a solo artist, Donnelly has already established an imperishable ethos that sometimes takes musicians decades to build. The singer-songwriter's candor leaves no room for grey area; audiences at Donnelly's shows know exactly what they're getting into. But Donnelly doesn't feel pigeonholed as a #MeToo spokesperson, or to any particular sound.

"Whatever I write next may not sound like whatever I wrote last time, and people may hate that, but it's so important to nurture that and follow that track," Donnelly says. "And it's better to be going down a track, than just standing at a dead end, not going anywhere."



DONNELLY

ISAAC DUNBAR

PHOTOS / JASPER SOLOFF
STYLING / PHIL GOMEZ
STORY / KOKO NTUEN + BRYANNA DOE

Most teenagers spend a lot of time hanging out alone in their bedrooms. Sixteen-year-old Isaac Dunbar produces music out of his, and it's resonating with fans everywhere.

Isaac is yet another young pioneer in the genre tentatively nicknamed "dark pop," alongside artists like Lorde and Billie Eilish. Isaac's lyrics explore the angst of navigating his teenage years, battling against self-doubt and longing to fit in with peers. His first single, freshman year (2018), gained immediate momentum with teenage listeners and cultivated a loyal following of fans. Isaac followed this single with the moody, almost melancholy self-produced EP balloons don't float here (2019).

These days, Isaac is preparing for the release of his first album since signing with label RCA Records, Isaac's Insects (due in April 2020), as well as getting ready to kick off his first national tour in the same month.

Ladygunn Magazine sat down with the Massachusetts-native to talk about creativity, inspiration, and the unexpected challenges facing a young artist.

Isaac, what are you up to today?

I have to go to Boston because I'm building a home studio. I've been producing music on my computers for the past five years but I've never actually had a studio.

And is it your parents' house? Do you still live with them?

Yeah, I'm not eighteen yet. It's in my bedroom.

That's so cool that it's in your bedroom! I love the idea that the bedroom is a place where you're supposed to feel comfort, where you're supposed to feel like you can get away from everything. I think it's such a beautiful place to create.

For the past three months, I was in L.A. and I've been working with a bunch of producers. Some you might say know more about music, and they're much older and wiser, obviously. But during those sessions, being in the studio, I felt like I never could be my true self and express weird ideas. So now that I'm back home, honestly I feel like I'm going to release my best stuff out of it. Because I just had so many days of sitting in studios where I just feel like I can't truly like say what I have to say, because I have such weird concepts and cool ideas in my head.

That's awesome. And I love how you trust yourself, because I feel like for a lot of people who are just starting out it can be hard trying to say, "Actually, I want to sound like this," and take ownership and be assertive. It can be kind of intimidating.

Definitely. Definitely. And that's why I released balloons inde-

pendently. So I could get as much leverage as I can, so I can stand up for myself to a certain extent. Like, recently I've been going through a couple of weird obstacles with certain creative differences. I'm learning more about fighting for myself.

You got your start on YouTube and SoundCloud. When did you first get on social media?

So I was popping off in some ways in fifth grade, so that was 2014, I think. Then I started popping off a little bit in November 2017. I actually had a Billie Eilish fan account and it drew a lot of attention. I got as many followers as I could and then I posted a song on SoundCloud and it got attention from people.

What was the first song that you posted on SoundCloud?

Pharmacy. Like, I posted stuff on SoundCloud before, but only my schoolmates would hear it. This was the first one where people were like, "Oh, this song sounds good." It was fun.

And how did you get into music?

I looked at this producer, and I looked up what programs he used to make music and what was at his studio. So I went to my local Barnes & Noble, and I recently downloaded it and I taught myself through YouTube tutorials how to compose music and about song structure. I started off making EDM music. I was just so into club music, and I think that influence is still in my music and I think it really jumped out.

Where do you find your inspiration now? Where do you find a good space?

In my bedroom, I'm always just thinking about my phone because I'm constantly getting messages about my music.

Messages from people who are telling you, "Thank you for making the songs. It's really helped me." How does that make you feel?

I just feel so good. I just want to be attentive to my own phone and create my tribe.

Q: And do you feel like you started creating that already? Do you feel like you have your tribe?

A: Yes. It's just so amazing to just see their names every day on the phone. 'Cause I know a lot of artists don't feel that way.

I really like the path that you're on. Keep making the music that you want and pushing for your art and working on yourself. You're going to change a lot of people's lives and your own.

I receive that.



suit, JEREMY WILLARD.
turtleneck, THEHOUSEOFPHIL.
spiked choker, ARTIST OWN.

BLEACHED

PHOTOS / DANIELLE DEFOE
HAIR / JOHNNY STUNTZ
MUA / ROSE HARRIS
STYLING / BRITTON LITOW
STORY / ARIANA TIBI

Pop-punk duo Bleached have released their polished yet vulnerable new album "Don't You Think You've Had Enough?" The album shows a personal new beginning for sisters Jessie and Jennifer Clavin, as this is their first record written and recorded after they each made the decision to become sober. Sharing the insights of their sobriety, songwriting and more, read Bleached's intimate interview below.

"Don't You Think You've Had Enough" is exposed and upfront, driving in the theme of starting over without letting your past define who you are. Their gentle prowess and relaxed edge translates throughout the collection, but this time with slightly less distortion. Every divot in their expression has been explored on this record; the melodies and rhythms akin with one another yet equally individual and uniquely crafted. We hear Bleached stripped down and bereft of any large production until the end of the song, where the rest of the band comes crashing in.

These talented sisters are, both individually and as a unit, entirely one of a kind. Jessie is a kick ass bass player and Jennifer has enough personality to fit into an entire summer pool (that they gracefully fall into with their respective instruments). The two have been playing together since junior high, so a live Bleached show is just as spirited as they are; sweaty connection snaking throughout the crowd as fans sing along to the music like their favorite childhood record. The Bleached just finished their first headlining tour, from London to LA last year.

I got to bond with the duo over sobriety, creativity, and sandwiches.

Who's older?

Jennifer: Me, I am!

When writing, who handles what? Does it fluctuate or do you guys have your roles that you each gravitate toward?

Jennifer: We have a bunch of different ways when we write. We'll write together or we'll write separately, we also wrote with some other people. And then when we recorded, we let Jessie handle all the bass and guitar and I just sang.

Have you guys ever tried to become sober before? Why did you this time?

Jessie: When I was in my teens it was suggested that I get sober. I kind of just wanted to not be a big problem and I would just do a little of that here and there but it didn't hit me until Jen got sober. So 2.5 yrs ago I went to a rehab for a month and I got sober and I'm still sober.

Jennifer: For me, 3 and a half years ago I ended up realizing I had a problem, which the funny thing is I had no idea I had a drinking problem. I was always convincing myself that I was able to function. I would always blame it on being in a band, being a musician, that's how that lifestyle is. And then finally, I just had this really, really scary night that all of a sudden it just came

crashing down. So I reached out to my dad - our dad is 36 years sober. They say it runs in the family, I guess someone could've just told me that my sister and I would have a problem. Hahaha.

Have you guys noticed a change in the way your music sounds before and after sobriety?

Jessie: I feel like when getting sober I became very vulnerable I just got really deep and was checking in with myself. And musically, there were a lot of pedals that were stripped from this recording and it was very clean. Like when recording the guitar, some of those chords were so clean it felt like I was very naked...but it was just kind of stripping away everything and hearing it for what it is without the extreme fuzz and distortion.

Jennifer: Oh definitely. I feel like it's definitely a combination of sobriety and having been in this band for 6 years now. But for me personally, doing this record sober was definitely a challenge because I wasn't able to numb in anyway. It takes so much letting go and so much patience and just believing in yourself. When I look back at 'Welcome The Worm,' I was drinking and doing drugs 'till 6am, would get home, sleep 'till 10am and then have to wake up to be in the studio by 11am.

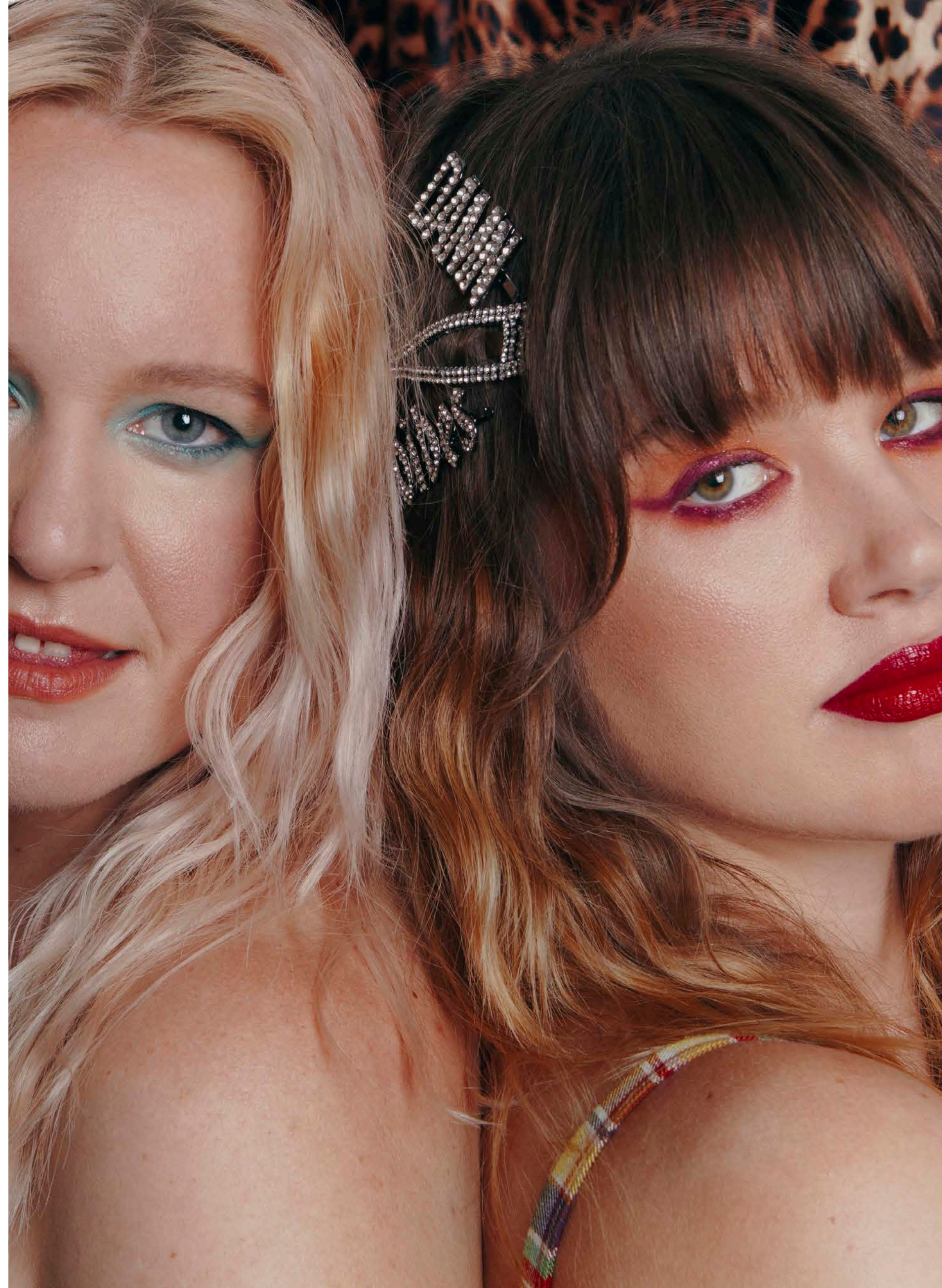
That's beautiful, thank you guys so much for sharing. Some people are able to kind of turn off being creative when they're away from their music or away from their art. Do you guys feel like you guys take your stuff home with you? When you're out of the studio or off the stage do you have this alter-personality that you go to?

Jessie: I really love this question honestly because I recently have been thinking about this, and this is coming through sobriety: I feel like I am somebody who [comes] home and I get creative. I feel like I really do try to put creativity in a lot of different areas. We've grown up in a very creative family where it really feels like it's in our blood to do creative projects. I've been learning through sobriety that it's what keeps me grounded. When I hold back I get really unstable, and I just have to keep putting it out there. It's release, it's therapeutic.

Jennifer: As a performer, I'm really able to turn it off. Like who I am on stage is only who I am on stage. It's a whole form of just letting go and having fun and being in the now. But then it's like...I almost want to even start a weird side punk band...because sometimes I just want something that I can be artistic about and not judge it at all or try to change it in any way. I think as an artist, I need to be able to just really do my art and not have any critiquing involved.

It's almost like having psychic solitude to recharge and live in that space very naturally without influence. It's cool that you guys recognize that, and Jen I completely resonate with the performing comment; when you're on, you're on! Do you guys have any pre-show rituals that you've accumulated over the years to get you in the mindset, etc.?

Jessie: Being in a room together, feeling energy is always helpful. I feel like one of my languages of love is definitely touch. Even if someone just puts their hand on my shoulder it will take away anxiety. And I'll feel good!





STEPHEN MALKMUS

PHOTOS / SAVANNA RUEDY

STORY / KOKO NTUEN

“Do you like beards?”

This is not the most random question I would expect from Stephen Malkmus, but it still takes me by surprise. I mean sure, facial hair can be attractive on a man. I love a good salt and pepper five o'clock shadow, the feel of a grizzly face too busy riding motorcycles or killing deer for a candlelit venison dinner to be bothered to take a blade to it.

My thoughts go rogue for a minute while I think of how to answer. A long brown mane on a mountaineer with rotting food remnants of a cheese variety starts to form an imprint on my mind. A downward spiral of image association follows. I say, “Ew, no,” out loud before I fumble out a story about how my dad shaves his armpit hair and hated my grunge stage. Stephen laughs when he says, “Your dad manscapes?”

Two tall strangers sinking into a black leather sofa is about as Malkmus as Malkmus can get. I only think this because after years of listening to his disjointed music, meeting an almost 6'5 Stephen in the offices of Matador Records while he does press for his latest album is a soliloquy that seems to write itself. Wearing a terry cloth wristband to signify he's ready at any time to pick up a racquet or guitar, our legs bend cricket-like beneath us.

“Two tall strangers / Black couch jangles / She sat, and I watched her take him on down / On a large leather sofa, she was the talk of the toowwn...”

I can imagine Stephen singing this out in his trademark on-key-but-sounds-like-it-should-be-off, post-pubescent hoarse twang. Part Queen, part Nirvana, a bizarre niche that only someone who could sing aloud to both can truly appreciate. He's made a career of making musical limericks that twist the tongue and the soul.

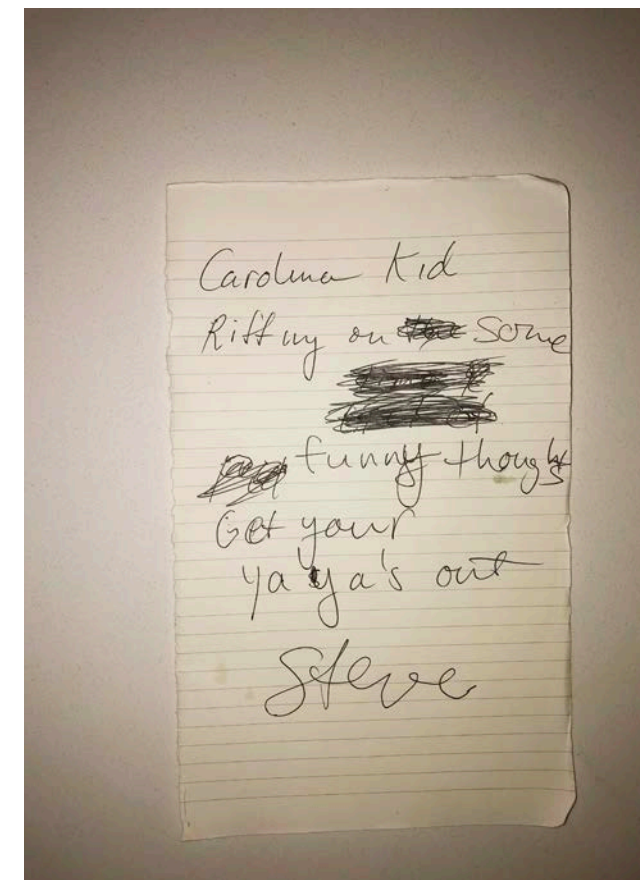
“I'm not a brilliant lyricist, but you know, I can take my time and get someplace eventually,” Stephen says in a semi-bashful way.

During my formative years, Pavement, the Malkmus fronted indie-rock-underdog band of the '90s, would bounce from the walls of my postered rooms with discord that felt like an awkward hug. It was unnerving and consoling all at once, different versions of the same songs recorded, each carrying new angst and message behind it.

This era of music was a perfect soundtrack to my slacker-jock highschool life. It was like an audible fusion of Wes Anderson and John Hughes that existed both on the suburban soccer fields and underbelly rock clubs that a sixteen-year-old could get into if she wore enough eyeliner. Could Stephen and I perhaps be kindred spirits? Even friends in high school? I like to think our affinity for both sports and indie rock would have made us close allies in a different time and space.

“It's not like I was Mr. Cool or anything,” Stephen says when talking about his teenage years. “I mean, I didn't play in the school band. My heroes were groups like, KISS, and I couldn't imagine them doing that. They probably did start with high school, but I just was like, ‘No, you can't.’ I played acoustic guitar at home though. I had some lessons on Spanish guitar. It's not like real cool or anything. I was also playing soccer and tennis. I mean I wasn't a mainstream jock but...”

So maybe I would have just prank called Stephen and secretly had a crush on him. I mean, didn't all girls like tall brooding musicians at that age?



Haiku by Steve, 2020

Pen on paper

Today, although Stephen's broodiness and height remain intact, his music has transcended into a more introspective, existential sound. The Malkmus vibe, part fantasy, part swirly narrative has been a mainstay in the music world for this very reason. Traditional Techniques, his latest feat, is a more insightful side of the musician. The album is a slow dive that sounds like it was recorded with Stephen laying on Moroccan carpets, high on hash while a band of gypsies play acoustic flutes and sliding guitars around him.

It's a sweet record, like a father lending some wayward advice to children navigating this world of expectations and loss. Some inspiration might have been found in his current role as a husband and a dad.

"It's just a different paradigm of existence," he says of family life. "I'm even less self-aware instead of more self-aware. Plus, once you live in Portland, just nothing happens. It just inches ahead and really slowly, like a reverse of a glacier boom melting."

Inspiration comes to Stephen in the same ways a glacier might melt; authentically and massive. He finds fleeting beauty in every moment, other people's music, like sounds and vibrations, the ways sideways might connect, other people's music, books and quotes, and weird associations.

"It could be anything really," He says, "Like an image or like a faded anorak. I think of the type of person who might wear old Patagonia. I'll look in my closet and see an old jacket and think 'I can't wear that anymore really.'" So the person who is still wearing that like gives you an image. That will leave me thinking poetically and I'll just want to put that in my notebook or my phone. Then eventually something will come from all that."

DRESS, MARC JACOBS.
BOOTS, NICHOLAS KIRKWOOD.

NELL TIGER FREE

PHOTO / BY ALEXANDRA ARNOLD
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS / SARAH GARDNER, ARIELLE ARNOLD, TAYLOR MILLER
STYLING / LEITH CLARK
STYLIST ASSISTANT / AUSTEN TURNER
MAKEUP / QUINN MURPHY
HAIR / REBEKAH FORECAST AT THE WALL GROUP FOR SERGE NORMANT SALON
SPECIAL THANKS TO SARAH GARDNER STUDIO
STORY / ARIANA TIBI

The fantasy epic Game of Thrones is historic in the world of TV and cinema, not to mention elemental in understanding meme-culture. With boundless story lines and prodigious cinematography, it is the recipient of hundreds, literally hundreds, of both awards and nominations.

One out of three friends, I wager, have binged the entire series (I am admittedly off-trend), praising the world and characters the show has brought to life. So what does it take to be involved in a series like that? What happens, when at age 15 you're "accidentally" (her words, not mine) cast in a role that is seemingly larger than life? Nell Tiger Free is the charming, talented actress who brilliantly plays Myrcella Baratheon in the illustrious G.O.T. and has been expanding her repertoire ever since.

When I spoke with Nell, she was eloquent, funny, and honest. A ripe twenty years old, her casual, bouncy demeanor reflected her youth but an assuredness capped her sentences. She answered my questions with a matured height, that of someone who - wrapped in a true humble nature - knows who they are.

Now with a dynamic history of on screen appearances, Nell Tiger Free is starring in M. Night Shyamalan's psychological thriller series Servant, in the role of Leanne Grayson or "the Servant." Opposite Lauren Ambrose, Rupert Grint and Toby Kebbell, Nell plays a taciturn, mysterious live-in nanny. A shocking contrast to her personality in real life, Nell admitted that getting into character for Leanne was an inspiring, challenging duality.

We chat with Nell about what it's like on and off screen as a young woman in an ever-changing world of getting into character.

What were the first signs when you were younger that you wanted to be an actress, or that you would become one?

It was never really the plan, to be honest with you, I was scouted when I was 11 at a Saturday Drama club and was asked to audition for something and then I got picked-up by an agency for kids, and then got picked-up by a bigger one. My first audition with that agency was Game of Thrones. So it was an accident!

What has it been like playing Leanne Grayson?

Playing Leanne has been such an amazing experience to me. Getting

into the shoes of that character was such a challenge, but I think I know her pretty well now. It's actually been so rewarding.

In what ways was it a challenge for you?

Leanne is such an introvert, so quiet, and there's so much brooding beneath her; and that's not necessarily my personality. But I think it was finding the balance and the duality with Leanne...because you want to be scared of her and you want to be confused by her; but you also want to empathize with her and to feel an attachment to her. We don't want her to be just the regular horror, psychological thriller antagonist, you know? She needs to be someone that's sometimes likeable and maybe you root for sometimes, so it's quite difficult finding the balance between those two things.

On the note of duality, because social media is so skewed and our realities have become virtual, it can kind of translate into our own lives. As an actress, you almost have a similar situation going on where you have a role and then you have Nell behind the scenes. Do you have any words of wisdom in terms of self-love or self-preservation?

To feel qualified to give words of wisdom I would have to figure some of it out myself too. I think the only thing I try to do is separate my public persona a little bit from myself but not enough that I lose who I am, because I like to think I'm funny. I'm not sure, let me know... [Laughs]

But it's scary having every detail of your life broadcasted all over the Internet. I think some things you have to keep to yourself. There's definitely an element of desperately trying to keep people interested and engaged with you, but God it's so exhausting. When I was a bit younger when I didn't get enough likes on a picture I would delete it, even if I really loved the picture, because the masses didn't deem it worthy enough to be on the Internet. I think many young girls are the same way. In that way, social media can be incredibly detrimental, but on the other hand it's a way that I can connect with people who like the show and really love the stuff

I do. It's definitely a double-edged sword.

I think It's so fascinating the world we're living in, and getting people who do have a platform to comment on it.

I mean I'm 20 years old, I'm incredibly influenced by it, and I feel like the success of the things I do is measured by how many people follow me on Instagram. It's a direct measurement of how worthy you are, how important you are. And I'm completely guilty of watching them go up or down, and they don't really exist in my day-to-day life. It's scary that it has so much control over your life, and probably will for a long time.

And control over your idea of self, that's the worst. Do you feel like you had to grow up quickly because of either social media or your roles?

Yes, absolutely. For me, I started working in the adult world when I was 12, I would take off from school and go shoot something and then I'd be right back in detention again when I got home; around mean girls or boys who didn't like me and this kind of, living in two worlds. When I was younger I very much liked to think of myself as Hannah Montana. But looking back on it now, I was so determined to do it. It seems from that taste of it, I was hooked and I couldn't think of anything else. I think that drive, doing what I did from very young, definitely accelerated my growing up for sure. I was surrounded by adults all the time and desperately wanted to be like them and be respected like they were. Yeah I think I owe a lot of who I am now to the people that I worked with when I was very young.

What do you see yourself doing in the next 5 or 10 years, what do you hope for?

Genuinely I just pray people keep hiring me. [both laugh] I'm not gonna say that I'm gonna sit here and change the world with a song or a movie but I just want to make things that make people scared or make them smile, or that people talk about or can be the start of a conversation. I think that Movies and TV and things like that, they bring people together - Oh my god, that is so cheesy, please don't put that in. But If I'm sad or maybe a boy broke my heart, or I had a falling out with a friend, or anything like that, I watch a movie or I watch a TV show. If I can bring that to people and do it well, and be able to buy food because I'm doing it, then that's kind of the dream, you know? And if it all goes wrong, then I'll marry rich!

What's your favorite thing to eat for breakfast?

I actually have an answer to that: spinach and mushroom on toast with baked beans and hash browns. No matter where I am in the world, I will always try and locate this breakfast.

What were you in a past life?

A dung beetle.

If you were going to write your own movie or your own role or anything like that, what would you write?

I am the president of the world. [laughs] I'd like to tell the story of my mother's life and I'd like to play my mum.

Can you talk a little bit more about that?

My dad is really fucking awesome as well, but my mum is the most amazing person I know and she's been through so much and she's the reason that I do what I do and she's the reason I want to do it well, because I look up to her so much and she had such an interesting, amazing childhood...so I'd love to play her.



DRESS, PATBO.
BOOTS, CHANEL.

TOP, SKIRT AND BELT, LOEWE.
BOOTS, LOUIS VUITTON.





BEA MILLER

PHOTOS / GINA MANNING
STYLING / JINJU LEE
MAKEUP / APRIL BAUTISTA
HAIR / SARKA RYBAR
STORY / ARIANA TIBI



Bea Miller's perspective can be likened to a kaleidoscope. With each turn of the scope, new patterns and colors emerge, revealing to the observer the whimsical, ever-changing nature of the spectacle. Being a "spectacle" is something Bea Miller can attest to. Competing in the X Factor at only 13 years old and signing her first record deal at 14, Miller's career is populated with a collection of personal and professional piques and valleys.

Everything from her liberal upbringing to her struggle in demanding she narrates her own story; though boasting a mere 21 years on the earth, Miller's arsenal of life experiences rivals people 10 to 20 years her senior. In recent years, Miller's fans have seen the young artist grow exponentially, as she sheds false skins and personas unsolicitedly assigned to her. Her sophomore album, 'aurora,' became a testament to the songwriter's gripping perspective, insisting that each song be touched by her original pen, Miller entered an uncharted era of self expression.

Only to be continued by a physical change in appearance (hello flowing, pink mermaid locks) and a slew of highly acclaimed singles in 2019, many of which represent important themes of equality and social justice.

As the new decade settles in, Bea Miller has been busy plotting her next creative excursion. In the meantime we caught up with the prismatic wunderkind, chatting about everything from childhood dreams to her new, fully formed reality.

How did you first discover your voice?

One day I was sitting in my room singing the Adele version of "Make You Feel My Love" and when I stopped singing, I heard sniffing outside my door. So I opened the door and my mom was sitting on the floor crying and she was like "I didn't know that you could do that" and I was like, "What the hell are you talking about?" I was like 9... I always liked singing but at that point I realized that maybe this wasn't just a hobby, maybe I could actually do this. Then my family fell on hard times... and I saw that X Factor was guaranteeing a 5 million dollar prize to the winner of the show so I thought, "Maybe if I win the show, I could save my family" or whatever naive thoughts I had as a kid. Obviously I didn't win but out of that started my music career so I did win in the long run.

But you didn't always want to be a singer... is true that as a kid you wanted to be an astronaut?

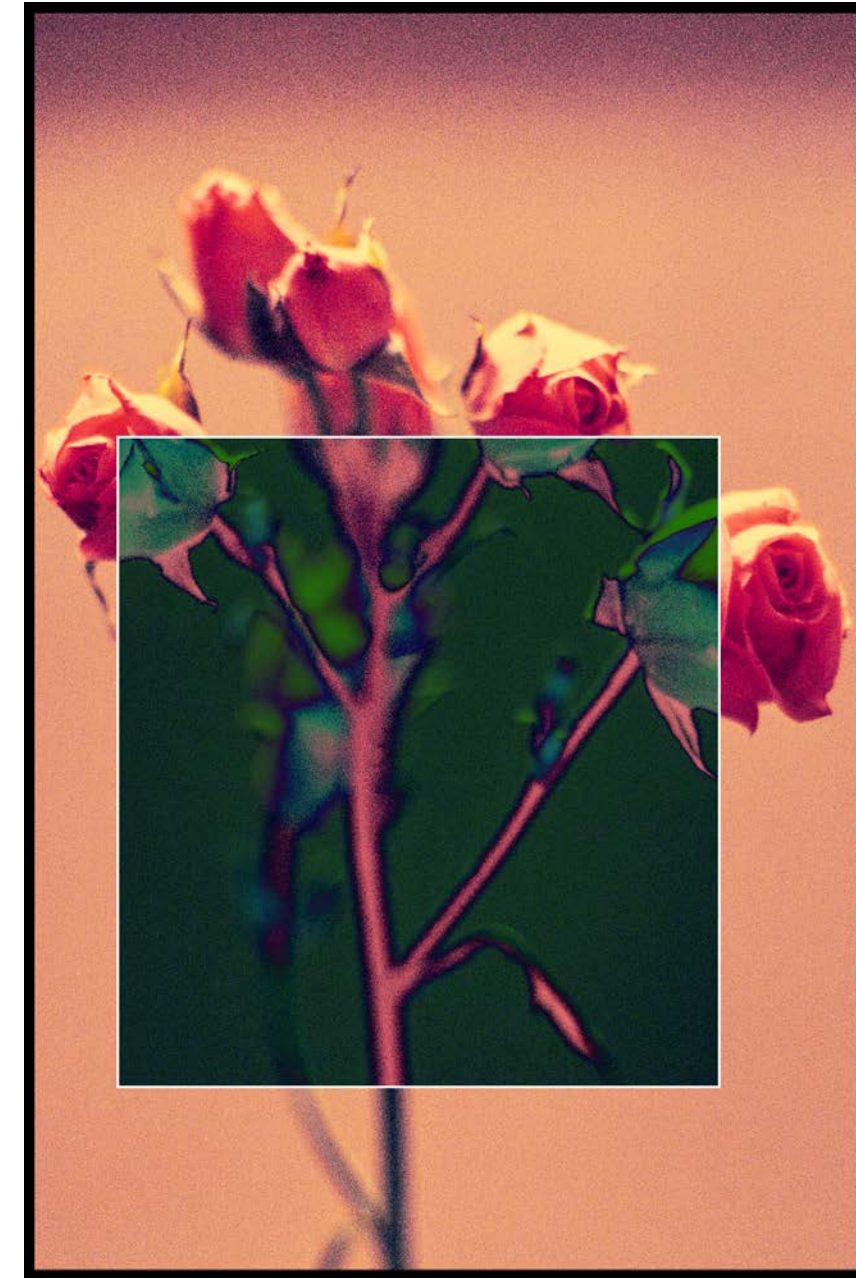
(Laughs) Yes! I am not intelligent enough to be an astronaut but for some reason I thought it was still possible. Until I was like 13, I still had this dream dwindling and my friends were like "Bea, why not? Figure out how to become an astronaut!" So of course we googled "Requirements of being an astronaut" and one of the first things it said was that you have to be at least 5'2" and I'm 5'1" so I started sobbing (laughs). It was unrealistic for me anyway but I fully started sobbing because I was like "Now it's definitely not possible."

Many of your songs champion themes of equality in an unapologetic way. How did your upbringing shape your views on social justice and equal representation?

I grew up with two moms, one of my siblings is non-binary and I have a lot of friends in the LGBTQ+ community and always have... I grew up in a town that was very accepting and had all kinds of families, so I had a very deep involvement growing up with the community. It's very important to me that people who were raised differently than I was understand that we're all people and our sexualities should not separate us. I know that I have a lot of LGBTQ+ fans as well, I think that's amazing and I really want to make music that speaks to them.

Did you ever experience prejudice when sharing your story with the world?

I remember when I first started making music and telling my story, people were really upset that I had two moms. I had never really experienced that before. I had grown people telling me, when I was 13 years old, that I was a sin, I came from a family of sinners and I shouldn't be alive because I had two moms.



How did you handle that emotionally?

I can't even imagine what I would have done if I didn't have such a supportive family. My parents were there for me and they explained to me that unfortunately, this is how a lot of the world views this community. So because of that, I have made it my mission to make everyone feel included in my music and try to spread the message that we are all human beings who deserve respect, equality, and love.

What does 2020 look like for you? Please tell me a full length album is just around the corner...

(Laughs) Yes and no. I'm not necessarily sure what format I'll be releasing the songs that I have but Bea Miller 3, whatever it ends up being, is coming... I'm still trying to figure out how to best communicate what I've been working on and exactly how I want it to be consumed, but we are definitely working on that and there will be new music this year!

TOP + SKIRT, TIA ADEOLA.
EARRINGS, LARUICCI.



CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE

PHOTOS / JASPER SOLOFF
STYLING / PHIL GOMEZ
MAKEUP / KELSEY DEENIHAN
HAIR / LAURA POLKO
STORY / ARIANA TIBI

DRESS, NADYA DZYAK.
NECKLACE, LARUICCI.





“Hi! Where are you right now?”

Charlotte answers the phone, spritely and light, as if I caught her mid air.

“Right now I’m at a fitting for the Vanity Fair Oscar party.” I could almost see her squirming around in her Armani dress, adjusting to the seamstress, surrounded by sewing needles.

Years ago, my brother and I were invited to sing songs for my mom’s French class at Marymount High School, because, well, he was a boy and they were all girls. It quickly became a tradition, then a lesson plan; the last time I was there, in her French IV Honors class, Charlotte sat in the second row, tall and beaming.

“I don’t know if you knew this already, but my mom is Madame Tibi, you were in her French class... we met a couple years ago.”

“Oh my god. No fucking way, HI! Look where we ended up!”

“I’m so proud of you!” I remembered seeing Charlotte in my mom’s class, leaned back in the chair that was still attached to the desk, as if a person’s identity, place, and purpose were one immovable entity. I was eager to get to know this young girl all over again.

Charlotte Lawrence went straight from student to pop sensation in less than three years. Her national debut was at the Hollywood Bowl singing with the Dixie Chicks and she’s been raking up the accolades ever since. “So tell me: what happened?”

“I finished high school online, got my GED! I got offered one of my first tours, and I decided just to follow my dreams.” Charlotte recalled like it was yesterday. “My parents were like, ‘Yeah, we can see, it’s not a hobby anymore.’”

With a voice that bites like honey in coffee, a personality that shines with mystery, and an energy that explodes on stage, Charlotte’s music has made its way onto every major platform you can name, garnering millions of streams. Her music is pop for the masses with a foreboding edge that awakens that sleeping giant within you that wants to be let out. Charlotte’s lyrics are frank and uniquely her own and her latest hit, ‘Jokes On You,’ can be heard throughout the feature film ‘Birds of Prey’ as Harley Quinn’s theme song. It’s nothing short of epic.

Charlotte started singing when she was in preschool. While in the car, her younger brothers would belt out the lyrics while Charlotte would harmonize. She says she always felt sort of different from the other kids, in that she was completely obsessed with music.

“I found this video of myself singing Yankee doodle when I was like five years old. I’m ripping and doing a bunch of runs. I just always had this immense passion for singing...it controlled my mind at all times.”

Now in the studio for her first full length album, Charlotte talked a little bit about her writing process. With a blanket and a smoothie as her studio essentials, she spends her days crafting the next tune.

“I’ve found myself more recently starting with an idea more than anything. But from that I let it flow. I think with songwriting, if

you want it to stay authentic, you should really dive deep into what you’re feeling at that moment and and what you need to say and the rest will come naturally.”

Using music as therapy, Charlotte shared that she pulls from her darker moments to create art, be it visual or sonic. Although she’s an extrovert, she admits that the introvert in her keeps the tough emotions on the inside. Every aspect of the music production process allows her to put the pain into her own words, and release it.

“Love that. A lot of what you write fits so well in the mainstream, but I’ve noticed that you take these risks in your music. Instrumentally your choices are interesting, and there’s even a rock edge. Are there any genres that you think you might explore or go toward?”

“Oh, completely. You know, the only music that I listen to is either older, classic rock music or like, alternative, cool girl. I’m very much influenced by the Chili Peppers, the Beatles and Tom Petty. I started writing and releasing stuff at an age when I didn’t really know how to utilize my passion for [them]. And I’m finally at an age where I can start exploring how to put [those influences] into my music.”

“Speaking of age, both of our generations have been submerged in social media. It’s a poison and a blessing. How does Instagram and social media fit into your life, and how do you feel about it?”

“If I’m going to speak truthfully, I hate social media. I think that it does way more negative than positive. It is not healthy for young kids to be so addicted and obsessed with their appearance and other people’s appearances. I think it’s very damaging to a young person’s mind. But you know, I also have to look at the positive. Without Instagram, I wouldn’t be able to connect with the people that support my music. It’s like I owe my career to my Instagram. You should just own yourself, love yourself and not compare yourself to fake pictures on Instagram.”

“Well said. On a lighter note, you’re going on tour with LAUV and Alexander 23 this summer! Do you have any pre-show rituals before you get on stage?”

“I have to give high fives and say I love you to each of my band members no matter what.”

Charlotte spent her formative years as a model, walking cat walks to and from Paris. After finishing high school, she faced even more lessons on the road. Now embarking on an almost sold out US tour, Charlotte’s life has seen her blossom into a fulfilled, inspired artist and icon.

“[Music] teaches you confidence. I was always a very nervous kid. When I started performing, 10 minutes before [a show] I was about to faint - like shaking. But when I would walk on stage with the mic in my hand, and I would look out into the crowd and it all would go away. It’s a really cool feeling. If I can make somebody feel a little bit happier or a little bit connected to me for an hour, I’m doing the right thing.

With immense gratitude, Charlotte leaves this message for her fans. “It’s okay to feel sad. It’s okay to feel angry. It’s okay to feel all these types of emotions that aren’t shown on social media...I just want people to feel when they see me [perform]. It’s not them and me. It’s us, we experience together.”



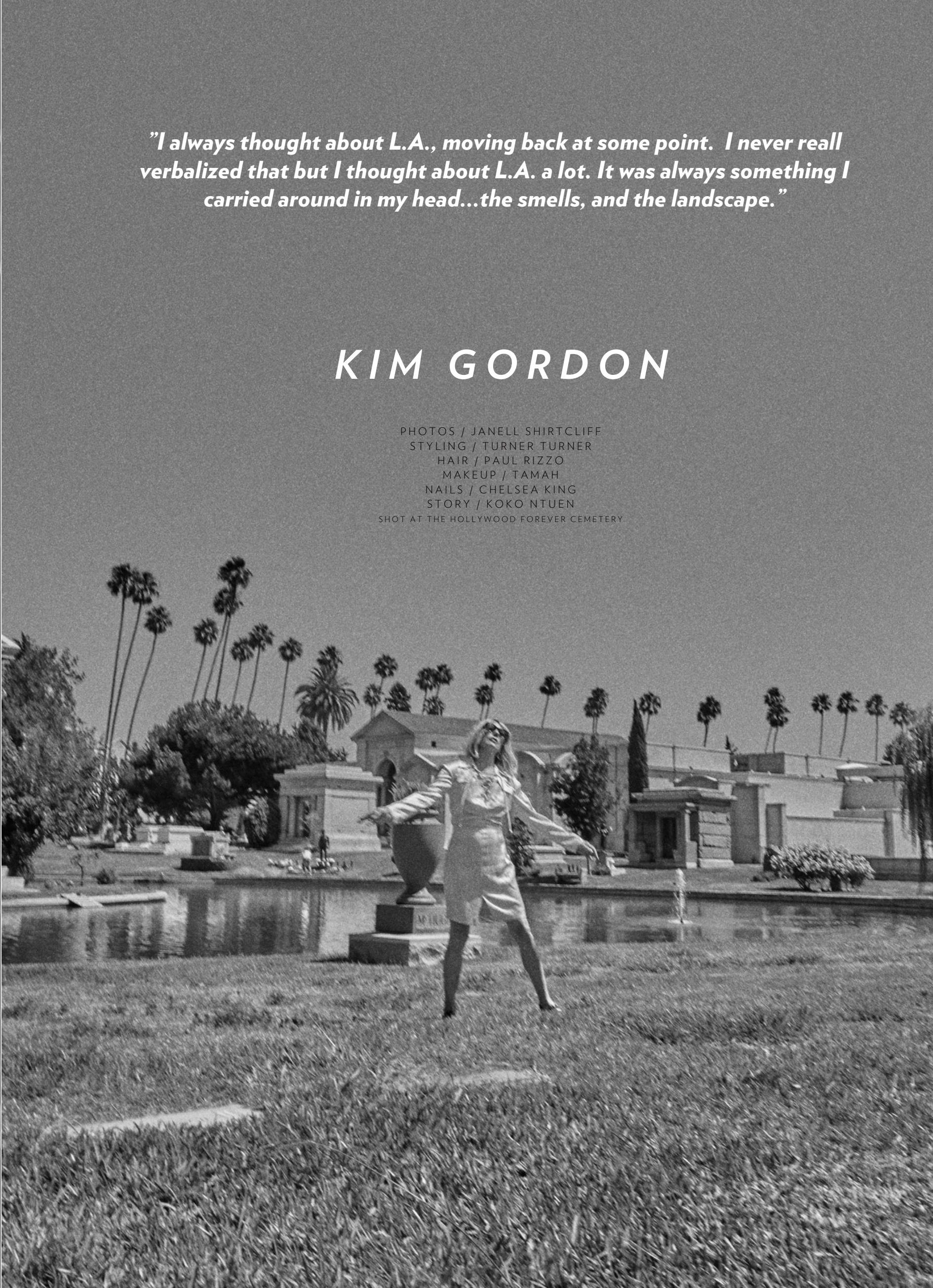
This Page:
Dress, Celine.

Opposite Page:
Dress, Nanushka.
Sunglasses, Celine.

"I always thought about L.A., moving back at some point. I never reall verbalized that but I thought about L.A. a lot. It was always something I carried around in my head...the smells, and the landscape."

KIM GORDON

PHOTOS / JANEL SHIRTCLIFF
STYLING / TURNER TURNER
HAIR / PAUL RIZZO
MAKEUP / TAMAH
NAILS / CHELSEA KING
STORY / KOKO NTUEN
SHOT AT THE HOLLYWOOD FOREVER CEMETERY



I have a confession. I have never listened to a Sonic Youth song from start to finish.

In high school, I knew that to be a fan of Sonic Youth meant that you were a real alt kid, one with exquisite tastes. You probably knew how to skateboard, lived in a brick house surrounded by shrubbery and drove your grandma's rust-tarnished hand-me-down Buick covered haphazardly in carefully curated stickers.

I was sort of a poseur. I wore the blue Sonic Youth tour shirt, the one with the washing machine on it tirelessly. It was the sort of armor I needed to convey the angst I wished the whole world could see. I didn't own the shirt personally. My friends and I took turns wearing it after one of them charmed it out of a junior boy's closet. They were in the kind of relationship where they hadn't kissed yet but he was still giving her rides home from school every day. He was a true fan, reciting lyrics and riffs on his electric guitar while we gazed adoringly at the chunks of hair falling unto his pimpled face. Sonic Youth was a rock and roll jazz I couldn't quite appreciate at the time. The cacophony of sounds and sexy guttural breaths coming from the blonde-too-cool-for-school Kim Gordon was a little out of my TRL pop grunge soundscape.

Those thoughts and insecurities come back in fragmented feelings when Kim Gordon walks unto the Hollywood Forever grounds. She is wearing big black sunglasses and has a busted lip. There's a vague description as to how it happened the night before, either she hit her face on a glass wall or smashed it with the mic. The details are as blurry as they might be if your occupation is "Rock Star."

She commands the sort of attention you give the princess of a small country that has a lot of victories and influence but shrouded with tragedies that gleam as bright and beautiful as crowned jewels. People mingling around on set stand a bit more upright and at attention like hipster cavalry soldiers waiting to spring to action.

I'm announced by her manager and Gordon and I exchange brief pleasantries. Did I ever work with her daughter? Her name is Coco too. "I'm with a 'K!' I try to sound casual but I blurt it out in a way I think shows that I thought about it before, which I have.

Kim Gordon has long sat on a pedestal in the cultural zeitgeist. She created this archetype of cool that is both wildly fashionable and intimidating as hell where girls and boys wanted to be her, fuck her, or dress her, and sometimes simultaneously. When I moved to New York in my early twenties she was one of the reasons that made the city still seem like a fantasy.

Those were some sort of the last golden days of New York. I was young, thin and eager to have my fill of boys who didn't love me and nights that disappeared with substance abuse. Those were the days right before TV On The Radio got really big and we would all sit around getting drunk in Max Fish waiting till close to go chain-smoke on someone's fire escape or crawl into the loft bed of a stranger with a cold mouth. Some days I would get lucky and get to walk past the lines of highly coveted art shows carefully tucked under the arms of a shirtless Dash Snow because he remembered me from some after-hours the night before. And of course, those were the days you might run into Kim and her ex surrounded by models and rock stars at some exclusive alcohol-fueled art opening. "That's Kim Gordon," would riptide through a leather jacket crowd in hushed whispers and fleeting glances.

We meet on a West Coast sun-kissed day with palm trees blowing sweetly while peacocks parade by on the cemetery lawns. It's far from

Western Massachusetts where she called her home for seventeen-years. Nonetheless, the artist looks settled into her Los Angeles raised roots with the wind gently stroking the hairs on our skin.

"I always thought about L.A., moving back at some point. I never really verbalized that but I thought about L.A. a lot. It was always something I carried around in my head...the smells, and the landscape. People talked about the art world changing here, evolving in different ways. So it seemed like a good place and time," Kim says when I ask about the venture back.

It's an interesting time to return. She proclaims it sonically with her first solo album *No Home Record*: a primal collection of songs that seem to come from the deepest and most candid parts of her soul. There is no start or end; just freedom.

Its music for the contemporary ages, like waltzing with the devil, contorting around a flame of flesh, while the world falls apart around you. It's maniacal and at times somber, something of a siren call that could lure even the most hesitant listener into a meditative trance where there are no boundaries; a place in your body where pain and joy can coexist. Movement and music coincide and intersect in the sort of world Gordon has created on *No Home Record*. It's a dizzying affair on the senses that both appease and unnerve, much like a dance of self.

"Well, I am very kind of physically oriented. As a teenager when I took art classes outside of school I worked a lot with clay. I made figures, and at the same time, I was taking Martha Graham dance classes. I think I was really drawn to playing music because of the visceral quality of it moving through space. I've done this dance project with choreographer Dimitri Chamblas utilizing contact improvisation. It was originated by this guy Steve Paxton who came out of Judson Dance Theater during the 70s in New York. It's a technique that uses gravity, you're kind of moving against someone else and flowing into their bodies. I've incorporated my guitar into the whole mess. It's kind of weird but fun."

Gordon's parents were Depression-era minded. Her dad was a sociology professor. Her mother at one point told Kim he wanted to be a poet. Despite growing up in a time of poverty they were unconventionally supportive of her needs to create.

"I think my parents at one point thought I would turn to something more commercial, like graphic design. My brother was a poet and studied the classics. It was kind of a part of his psychosis in a way or became intertwined with it when he became a full-out kind of schizophrenic. I think after that they didn't really care what I did. I think my mom, you know, said something to someone one like, 'I know she can do anything she wants.' It never occurred to me that they wouldn't have my back. Art has always been part of my thinking. I perceive the world visually, maybe I'm more of a sociologist than anything."

She stops and thinks for a minute.

"This friend of my brother when he was 17 was like, 'Don't you have a backup plan in case things don't work out?' And I just told him, 'I'm going to be an artist.'"

Dress, Marc Jacobs.
Belt, Zana Bayne.
Boots, Acne.





Black Leather skirt, Celine.
Green mesh top, Raquel Allegra.





Dress, Sunglasses and Shearling Coat, Celine. Jewelry, Fiat Lux.



DOJA CAT

PHOTOS / NIKKO LAMERE
STYLING / RIO WARNER
MAKEUP / GOTTMIK
HAIR / LEON YESHUA
STORY / JACK IRVIN

It's 5:30 PM, about half an hour before our phone conversation, and Doja Cat just posted her phone number on Instagram...where her millions of followers will see it.

"Well I'm crazy, so I do shit, you know?" the 24-year-old rapper/singer tells me, adding that in under fifteen minutes, she's received more than 5,000 text messages. "People are like, 'This is not real. This is a prank,' and I'm like, 'It's not! It's definitely not!'"

The influx of messages is no big deal to the artist born Amala Dlamini. This connection with her fans is exactly what she wants, and she sets out to achieve it in the same way she approaches anything else: as directly as possible. When she wanted to start making music, she opened GarageBand, created a SoundCloud account, and did it. When she wanted to make a music video, she opened up Photo Booth on her MacBook and did it. When she crafted her stage name, she simply picked two words she liked and did it. She chose Doja, a slang term for marijuana because she smoked a lot of it at the time and thought the word sounded feminine ("Like 'Tatianna' and 'Clarissa', and you know, whatever with the 'a's," she reveals), and she chose Cat because, well, she just loves cats.

Even when she made "Mooo!," her first viral hit, she just did it; its video, filmed in her bedroom with a green screen, a cow-print outfit, and some french fries up her nose, has over 64 million views on YouTube at the time of our interview. "I was in my room making the song, and I thought, 'Whatever, we'll put it out for free, because I don't know if anyone's gonna give a damn about this,'" she explains. She didn't even know if she could legally sample the music of Wes Montgomery, Kelis, and Ludacris, but she just did it anyway, because that's how Doja Cat works--and it's paying off.

Hot Pink, Doja Cat's second full-length album, has quickly propelled her to true stardom. Its lead single, a Tyga-assisted remix of "Juicy" off of her debut album Amala, became her first to hit the Billboard Hot 100 in August 2019. The groovy, upbeat "Say So" soon followed, hitting the chart after the album's November 2019 release.

The success of both tracks has been aided in part by TikTok dance trends--extremely popular TikTok trends. "Say So" has soundtracked more than 15 million videos to date, and "Juicy" has been used in nearly a million. Other tracks, like Amala's "Candy," which has appeared in more than eight million videos on the platform, have benefitted from a ripple effect of virality, proving the true internet power she holds (at least over Gen Z).

Her no-holds-barred personality and direct artistic approach are still present on Hot Pink. "Play with my pussy, but don't play with my emo-

tions," she raps on "Rules," co-written in part by a controversial, yet surefire collaborator: Lukasz Gottwald, a.k.a. Dr. Luke, who's credited on five of the album's tracks, including "Say So" and "Juicy." (Dr. Luke also founded her record label, Kemosabe Records.) And as for the album's production, she picks beats she likes--no matter how they're constructed. "I don't know who Chic is," she says of the sample of the band's No. 1 hit "Good Times" used for her song "Say So."

Doja Cat does what she wants, and her successes--22 million monthly Spotify listeners and 100 million-plus collective views on Hot Pink's four music videos so far--prove that to be an excellent strategy.

I spoke with Doja Cat about Hot Pink, TikTok, and her current relationship with marijuana.

How does it feel to have Hot Pink out in the world?

I feel really happy--happier than I've felt in a long time about a project that I've done. I think the first couple of projects for me were practice, and I felt like I wasn't really fully who I wanted to be. I feel like Hot Pink is an evolved version of myself, and I'm happy to have it out and for people to listen to. The first couple of projects didn't feel that way, 'cause I felt like I needed to keep perfecting each of those individual songs on every single one.

It's your third project and second full-length album to date. Have you been surprised by its major chart success?

Yeah, I'm shocked. I haven't really gotten, in the past, the support that I needed for my other projects. For this project, everybody on my team kind of went head first and just went straight for the jugular and wanted to push it as much as we possibly could, and we did. We're still planning a tour, and everything's looking pretty good. I'm really...I'm not...I am surprised, but I also know I worked really hard, and I see people responding to that and appreciating that, and it's really good to see it doing well.

Back when you were getting started making music, what did you hope to explore in your career, and how has that ambition changed since you've seen success?

When I started, I didn't know how to sing as much as I knew how to make a visual experience. I was making music videos when I was thirteen on my desktop computer. I'd have to unplug it and carry it around to get different shots, and I had a built-in camera, and I did it on Photo Booth. I would do stuff like that...it was more so about the entire picture for me and not just the music, and I really wanted to explore my visually creative side when I started off...still do now.

Hat, BCALLA.
Gloves & Bracelet, Kerry Parker.

Outfit, For the Stars Fashion House.
Gloves, Dead Lotus Couture.



Hat, Di Moda Atelier by Jesse J. Collections.
Bra & Belt, Zayna Bayne.
Dress, Bronx & Banco.



Dress, Kaimin.
Bracelet, Vivienne Westwood.
Pumps, Femmes Sans Peur.



How did you approach creating *Hot Pink* differently than *Amala*?

What's funny is this album--I would say--is a sister album to *Amala* with *Amala* being so versatile; and having different genres; and having different flavors and different moods and different voices and different aesthetics, different musical sounds--I wanted to do that. I want to keep doing that, period. Generally, I just want to never do the same thing over and over and over...that's the truth.

What's different about it from the first album is that my voice is developed, [and] my character has developed. I have more consistency as to which voice I want to choose. People know each of my voices, and I think that's fun. I think that it's just fun to see them pop out when they do [while] listening to it.

You toured with Lizzo back in 2017. What was that experience like?

That was amazing. It was just cool to see her perform. Lizzo's very calculated, and she cares a lot when it comes to her live shows. I don't go out to concerts all the time...she inspired me a lot. She showed me a really cool aspect of having a live show, 'cause when I go out [on stage] I have no dancers, and I just...I pray to god, and I just do whatever I can do.

Did you two get to connect on the tour at all?

Yeah, it was a lot of crazy, silly goose times that we had. She put her elbow on my ass cheek and gave me this really deep tissue massage that I will never forget. (Laughs) And it hurt a lot, so yeah, we connected for sure.

Ever since "Moood!" went viral, it seems like every week a new song of yours is blowing up online, specifically on TikTok with a meme or dance attached to it. Do you watch the videos people make with songs like "Candy" and "Say So"?

I do! I do watch them. (Laughs) I try to avoid TikTok [compilations]. It's just one of those things that unless I feel like I need my daily cringe, dude, I do...but I don't. TikTok's great. There's some really good con-

tent on there. It's really just the second coming of Vine, and I love it for that. I don't own the app, one, but I do watch the dances people make to my songs specifically--which those are fantastic. I love them. I think they're great, very cute.

Have you learned the "Say So" TikTok dance?

I tried to. I failed miserably.

Prior to releasing this album you notably stopped smoking weed, because it was hindering your creativity, but recently on social media, it appears things may have changed. What's your relationship with weed these days?

So I smoke weed, but it's not normal weed. It's a CBD strain, so it's high CBD, low THC. I try to get the lowest form of THC, but to be honest at this point that you're asking me, for the last couple of days or so I haven't smoked any of that shit. It's not good. I've had anxiety. I'm not fuckin' with it. I got one that was too strong, and I fucked up, and now I'm not really fucking with it anymore...but it was nice when I had the right strain.

Obviously you're still in the midst of promoting *Hot Pink*, but what's next for you?

I have a tour coming up--I don't know if I should be announcing that, but I know it's going to happen. I think I can say that the *Hot Pink* Tour is coming. I'm very excited. I'm not telling anybody where I'm going. It's a secret...what else? Lots of festival stuff coming up...possibly some TV shows, possibly some movies. I've been working on my live shows a lot more too. There's choreography, there are all types of different elements that I'm adding that I'm excited for people to see.

Outfit, GUCCI.
Earrings, L. JARDIM.
Shoes, ASOS.



DANI MILLER

PHOTOS / Eric T. White
STYLING / Chelsea Volpe
MAKEUP / Marygene Rose
HAIR / Dylan Chaves
STORY / Catherine Santino

Dress & shoes, JILL STUART.
Turtleneck, HILDUR YEOMAN.
Belt, REDEMPTION.
Pantyhose, THE SOCK MAN.
Jewelry / L. JARDIM



Sex, drugs, and rock and roll. The long-associated hedonistic trio has shaped our idea of musicians' lifestyles and priorities. While there's surely a fair amount of depravity behind certain closed doors, the culture around rock music is changing. With musicians like Dani Miller at the helm of this new era, drugs are losing their appeal.

"I think definitely there's a shift," Miller tells me over the phone. "There's a group of people in LA that are all in punk bands, but they also are sober and go to meetings and connect in that way. So I think that's really cool." Miller fronts Surfbort, a punk band whose name references a bathtub-based sex position that entered the cultural vernacular with Beyoncé's 2013 hit, "Drunk in Love".

Of course, Surfbort's music is nothing like Beyoncé's, but the group maintains respect for the pop diva. Miller holds particular admiration for Queen B; after all, she is a Millennial. "One of my first concerts was Destiny's Child," she says when I ask about the band's subtly irreverent name. "And I just remember being like, 'Oh, my God.' They were so badass and powerful and just killing it."

Miller joined Surfbort when she was just 21, stumbling into a music career by accident. She moved to New York City in 2014 to pursue filmmaking, but found herself singing in a friend's show one night. She instantly fell in love with performing, but was recently clean and had trouble navigating the substance-heavy music scene. "When you're in the darkness of drugs, you feel like that's the only way to do it and that's the only thing that's good," Miller says. "But actually there's a huge supportive community out there that has your back and makes art and has a blast off drugs. [Surfbort] is kind of like my reaction to that, to getting off drugs and still existing in the world."

After a bit of trial and error with bandmates, Miller eventually settled in with punk veterans David Head, Alex Kilgore, and Sean Powell, who she views as father figures. "They just have so much in their brains about music and life. I think building your own family, your own crew of people let you be a freak and support you and really understand you is super important," she says. She later sends me a text to emphasize that her biological family is just as supportive of her. "My real dad was the original dad to let me know it's ok to be a freak and a weirdo," her message reads.

The band's first album, 2018's *Friendship Music*, is a thrashing, sharp-tongued commentary on the current chaotic state of America. Songs like *High Anxiety*, *Trashworld*, and *White People* showcase Surfbort's knack for tackling serious topics without taking themselves too seriously. "I think Surfbort is very about letting out your angst and like all the frustrations in the world," Miller says. "The world always feels like it's imploding. It's just like, 'What is real?' Like, we have frickin' evil people ruling the country. So we're always responding to that." The band's next album, hopefully to be released in 2020, will continue this approach, while also expanding into new territory. "We're always trying to evolve and I don't want to have strict boundaries for sound," she says of her forthcoming music. "So there's definitely going to be classic Surfbort shitty rock punk. But then kind of adding more romance. Ballads and stuff."

Regardless of creative choices, Surfbort's overarching message remains one of acceptance, love, and community. "I just always want our music to just be like another best friend that you're hanging out with,"

Miller says. After coming off of hard drugs, the singer struggled to find a sense of self. But after giving herself space to heal and reflect, Miller emerged clear of mind, stronger and more secure than ever. Now, she lives her life on a mission to spread that feeling to others.

"Some people will be like, 'Oh, wow, you're so confident. Your life rules, you have everything,'" Miller says. "And I'm just like, 'No, I definitely work on it.' I wake up sometimes and I'm like 'I look really weird right now. Do I want to go out?' And then I'm like, 'Wait, I'm sick-looking like this. This is me today, this is what I'm offering today to the world. This is happening.' And then you just push through that off-feeling and it's just all good things."

That confidence is what led Miller to star in Gucci's controversial 2019 beauty campaign, her wild, gap-toothed smile proudly showing off cherry-red lipstick. "I was kind of used to myself, like my dorky smile," Miller laughs. "But when it came out, I really realized the impact. And I realized, 'Wow, this just gave a ton of people an even bigger excuse to just feel beautiful for being themselves.' Sometimes that can be hard. And it also kind of reawakened my own journey of embracing myself and loving myself too."

Miller praises the fashion house's creative director, Alessandro Michele, for shattering beauty standards in such an influential way. "Alessandro's feeling is that the freakier you are or the weirder you are, the better," she explains. "Anything about you that would be deemed weird in a negative way, he thinks is like, prime beautiful. Which is awesome, which is just true."

Through the campaign, Miller also challenges the idea that only a certain type of woman wears or is interested in makeup. "Makeup can be looked at in a negative way, but I feel good when I put it on," she says. "It's exciting. You feel hot even if the lipstick is like on your teeth, it's just like another color in the world." She recalls an early memory with makeup in which she got in trouble in church—not by her parents, but by staff—for wearing blue eyeshadow all over her face. Her approach now isn't too dissimilar; her trademark stage look is exaggerated cat-eye makeup that extends well past her eyebrows. Miller cites punk legends Nina Hagen and Wendy O. Williams as the inspiration behind the dramatic look. "It just makes me feel super empowered," she says. "And then fast forward to today, I show up at shows and they'll be like 30 girls, or even guys, just humans, wearing the same makeup. And it feels so fun."

What started as a childhood game of dress-up has become not only a career for Miller, but a life mission. This goes far beyond smeared-on eyeshadow, of course. Her way of moving through the world fearlessly and authentically is, in itself, an art form. "Oh, I read this quote. I thought it was so cool," she says before we hang up, scrambling to find it. "Everything in life is art. What you do, how you dress, the way you love someone. How you talk, your smile, your personality, what you believe in, all your dreams, the way you drink your tea, how you decorate your home. Or party. Your grocery list, the food you make, how your writing looks and the way you feel. Life is art.' I think that's so dope."



Dress + jacket+ shoes, SAYA ZALEL.
Earrings, STYLIST'S GRANDMA'S
Bodysuit + tights, LYELL.

Yellow jumpsuit, COLLINA STRADA.
Leopard bodysuit, NORMA KAMALI.
Boots, FILLES À PAPA.
Socks, GUCCI.
Tiara, ERICKSON BEAMON.
Earrings, LARUICCI.



dress, ALABAMA BLONDE.
earrings, FARRADAS KNITS.
thong + pasties, RAVE WONDERLAND



NOAH CYRUS

PHOTOS / JASPER SOLOFF
STYLING / PHIL GOMEZ
MAKEUP / KATELIN GAN
HAIR / CLAYTON HAWKINS
STORY / CATHERINE SANTINO



Music is in Noah Cyrus' blood. Her father is, of course, country music's Billy Ray Cyrus, and you surely know her sister, Disney star-turned-pop-rocker Miley Cyrus. Associations with her famous family were inevitable when Cyrus embarked on her own music career in 2016, but listeners quickly came to realize that the now 20-year-old wasn't just coasting on their successes. It's clear, both in her songwriting and the intention with which she navigates her platform, that Cyrus has an innate ability to communicate through music.

"I actually have a piano being brought up to my house right now. I'm really excited," Cyrus breathlessly tells me over the phone, her Tennessee twang loud and clear. "Music is my everything." This is a sentiment the singer will repeat many times over the course of our conversation, proving what I already knew to be true: Cyrus is an artist, through and through.

Her greatness lies in her willingness to be vulnerable, a feat for someone who has grown up in the public eye with little left sacred. "My family might have chosen [fame], but I was too young. I didn't choose. So I was out there and I had all these things being said about me and really, all it did was teach me to hate myself."

This self-loathing fueled years of depression and anxiety for Cyrus, reflected in her debut EP released in 2018, aptly titled *Good Cry*. "I had a really hard time at the end of 2018 going into 2019, which started off the year pretty bad for me with my mental health. I was extremely depressed," Cyrus admits. "I couldn't go into a studio because I was so afraid that people wouldn't like my words. Or that people wouldn't think I was a good writer or a good singer. And you know, I felt really sad for the little girl I used to be that got called Hannah Montana's sister at the age of 7 up until she was 16 and that kind of stripped away her identity. It definitely took its toll on me."

Her downward spiral in 2018 was due in part to her very public and messy relationship with rapper Lil Xan, and what Cyrus refers to as "a really shitty breakup." But she eventually did get back in the studio, churning out what is arguably her best work yet. 2019 brought singles like "Lonely," a gospel-inspired ballad about depression, and "July," a stripped-down confessional documenting the torment and isolation of a toxic relationship. The simple instrumentation and Cyrus' husky-yet-soft vocals on these tracks showcase not only her deeply-embedded Nashville roots, but her ability to tap into emotions that others wouldn't dare go near.

Cyrus has remained painfully honest about her internal struggles, even linking up with the Crystal Campaign to release a clothing line in tandem with her single "Lonely." The funds from the line, called The Lonely Collection, go straight to The Jed Foundation, a non-profit organization that offers mental health services to teens and young adults. "I speak up about this because I know that there's another side," Cyrus says of her mental health advocacy. "I know that there's light at the end of the tunnel now because I fucking made it. You don't have to be alone, you don't have to be afraid."

Throughout all of life's trials, music has been a steady source of empowerment for Cyrus, allowing her to take control of a narrative that so often feels out of her hands. She uses music to articulate her

deepest feelings not only with fans, but with the people in her life. "Whenever I tell my friends about a situation or something, I'll be like 'Here, I wrote a song about it. Listen.' And I'll play it for them," she says. "And they almost connect with me more after they hear me sing about it than when I'm sitting there crying and talking about it. There's something about music that every single person in the world can relate to."

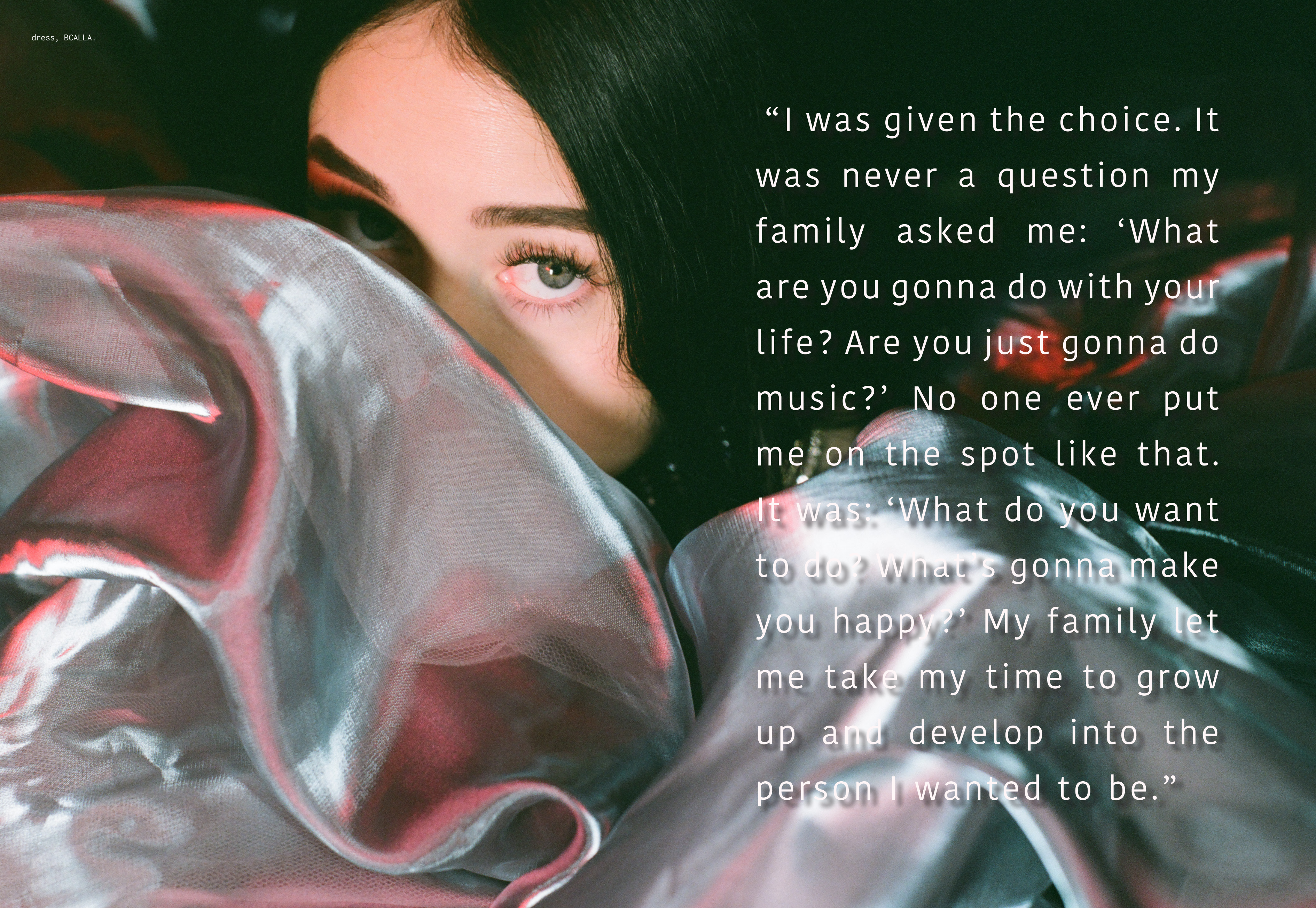
One of the most striking songs on *Good Cry* is "Topanga (Voice Memo)," which is quite literally a voice memo recorded on Cyrus' phone. The singer had been struggling through some emotions, so she asked a friend to come over with her guitar. The pair ended up writing and recording the song in one take in Cyrus' backyard, the crickets singing along. Cyrus' most memorable music is created in this same vein: a single instrument, achingly raw lyrics, and minimal production. "People are coming back to real music," Cyrus says when I ask about her thoughts on the recent "yee-haw" movement. Between fashion and music (you've likely had Billy Ray and Lil Nas X's Grammy-winning hit "Old Town Road" stuck in your head at some point in the last year), cowboy culture is having a serious resurgence in America.

"I love seeing what Post Malone's doing, what Machine Gun Kelly's doing, because they are bringing back real music," she continues. "For me, that's something that comes out naturally when I'm singing. It's more unnatural for me to not have a country inspiration. Cause that's who I am, you know? I'm full-on yee-haw," she laughs.

When she wasn't dodging paparazzi, Cyrus spent her childhood years riding horses in the hopes of competing in the Olympics. Though she ended up pursuing music, she emphasizes that her family never pressured her either way. "I was given the choice. It was never a question my family asked me: 'What are you gonna do with your life? Are you just gonna do music?' No one ever put me on the spot like that. It was: 'What do you want to do? What's gonna make you happy?' My family let me take my time to grow up and develop into the person I wanted to be."

Though, she laments, she has certainly fantasized about growing up "normal." "Of course I'll think about that because that was never, ever an option to me," she says. "When I went to a high school people were surrounding me yelling about my family and all of this shit and I couldn't take it. I got bullied. There was no point. I surrendered and I homeschooled."

But at the end of the day, Cyrus says, "God makes no mistakes", and she's ended up right where she was meant to be. "What I've learned recently is to just not take anything for granted," she reflects. "We're here for such a short amount of time. All that matters is right now and loving where you're at right now. I know there's gonna be dark days. I have bad days all the time. Nobody's perfect. But I'm here to show everybody that it's okay to not be okay, and it's even better when you conquer it."



“I was given the choice. It was never a question my family asked me: ‘What are you gonna do with your life? Are you just gonna do music?’ No one ever put me on the spot like that. It was: ‘What do you want to do? What’s gonna make you happy?’ My family let me take my time to grow up and develop into the person I wanted to be.”



dress, TIA ADEOLA.
spiked choker, UNDERPIN PR.
diamond chain link necklace, MESSIKA.



top + skirt, MARINA LEIGHT
clear necklace + cuff + large ring, ALEXIS BITTAR.

NOBODY'S BUSINESS



Photographer - Leila Fakouri
Model - Tevia Sheridan
Stylist - Jessica Loria
Hair - Angelo Rivera
Makeup - Tami Shirey

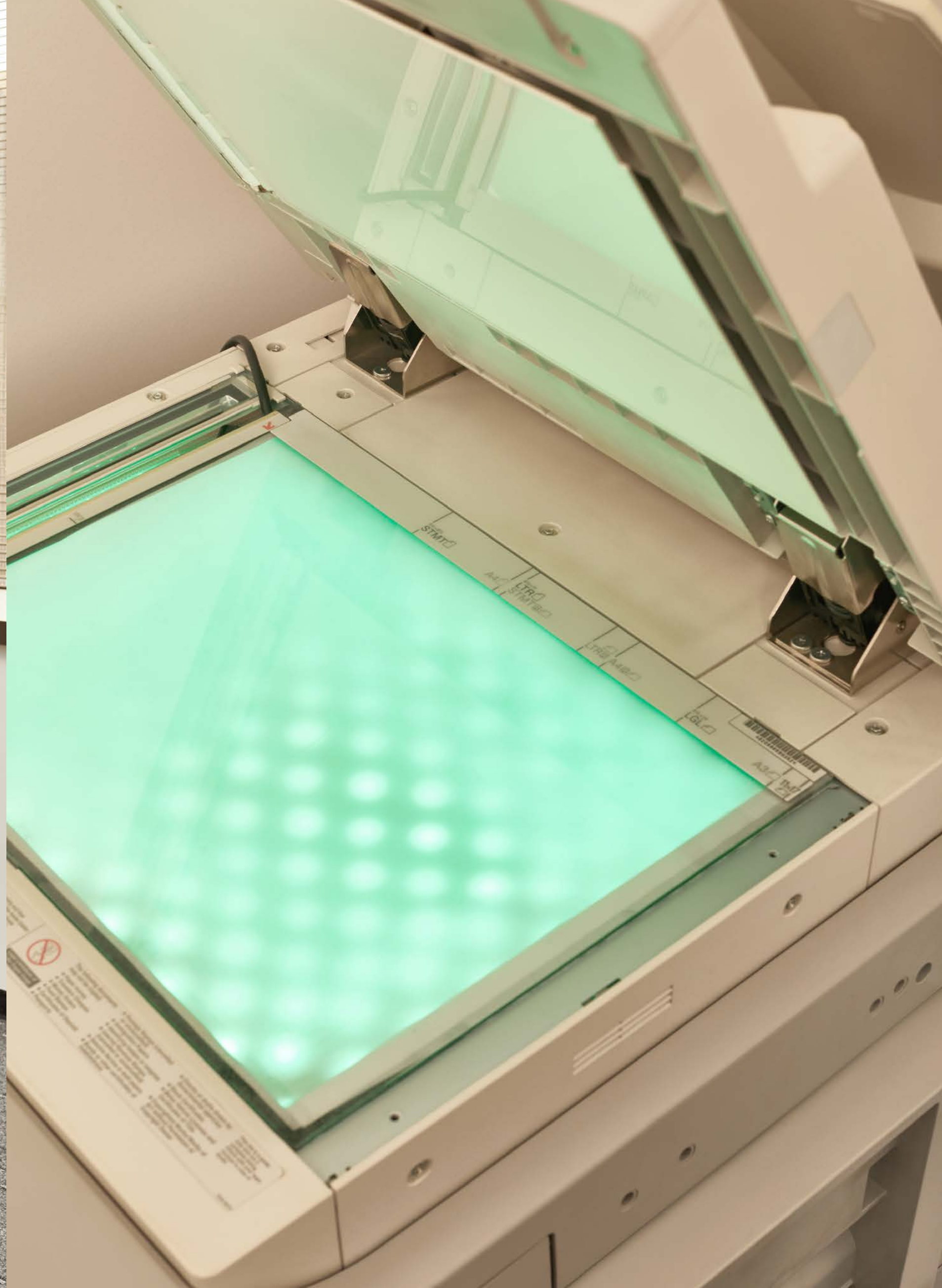




yellow suit, vintage Criscione
purple blouse, Alberta Perretti
velvet bow tie, stylists own
green shoes, Manolo Blahnik
earrings, Moschino



plaid suit, COS
shoes, Pure Navy
blouse, Equipment
tie, Calvin Klein
glasses, Marc Jacobs
Earrings, stylists own





dress, Kenzo.
jewelry, Alexis Bittar.
purple boots, Casadei.



red plaid suit, Christian Dior.
pink blouse, ALC.
tie, Dolce and Gabbana.
shoes, Stuart Weitzman.
earrings, stylists own .

VENUS BEACH



PHOTO + ART DIRECTION / POI KURUCZ | SFX + MAKEUP / PATRICE PUGH
ASSISTANT JAMIN ZHOU | STYLING / JEFFREY SCOTT | ASSISTANT AJALA GOLD
HAIR / SOLANGE DIAS | ASSISTANT / ELIANA KNOBLAUCH

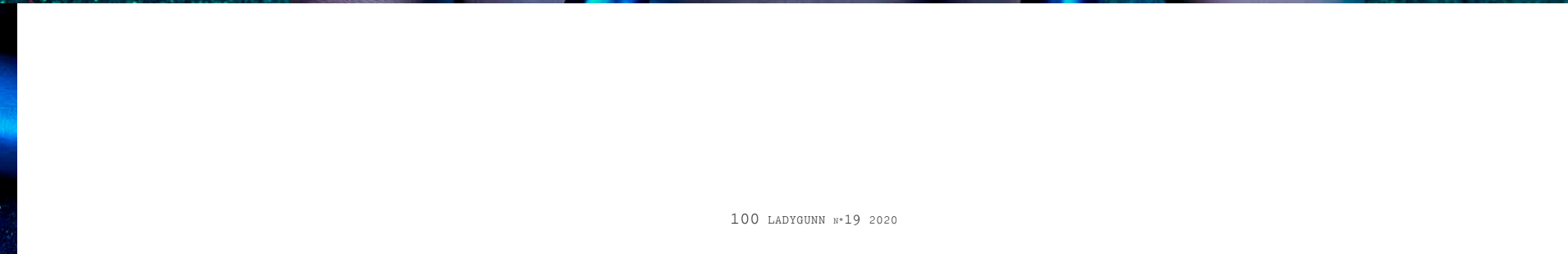
MODELS / DESTINEY WILLIAMS / @GALAXY_WIDE, ALIM YAI / @ALIMYAI, TINA J. / @MIGHTBEHROO, BLAIR BITCH / @BLAIRBITCHNYC,
DESTINEY WILLIAMS / @GALAXY_WIDE, AWEENG CHHOL / @AWEENGCHHOL,, FEMI / @FEMINIRISING, KYONA / @GO_GOLDIE, LILIANE KALIMA / @LILIANEK19, PIERRAH / @PIERRAHH



dress, Vulpinic Vestements.



Shoulder piece, Artifice.







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LADYGUNN

NO. 1 | 2020
INSPIRE

THE WOMEN



SPECIAL EDITION

CAROL CARMEL SHARIFA MURDOCK **SANDFLOWER** NIGELLA MILLER STACIA MAC
MANUELA AGUDELO JENNIFER FROMMER MADELINE NELSON BRYANA JASMINE NOIR
VALENTINA EUSSE YESENIA VALENCIA YAINE ELLEN DONG JESSICA YOUNG

SPRAYGROUND®

WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

DIRECTOR / SANDFLOWER
STORY / PAULETTE ELY + KOKO NTUEN
PHOTOS / JENNIFER MEDINAA
STYLING / BIANCA ARIELLE BAILEY
MAKEUP / DENEY ADAM
HAIR / NIGELLA
ILLUSTRATIONS / MADDY BROOKES
GRAPHIC DESIGN / AYOBADE ADEBAYO

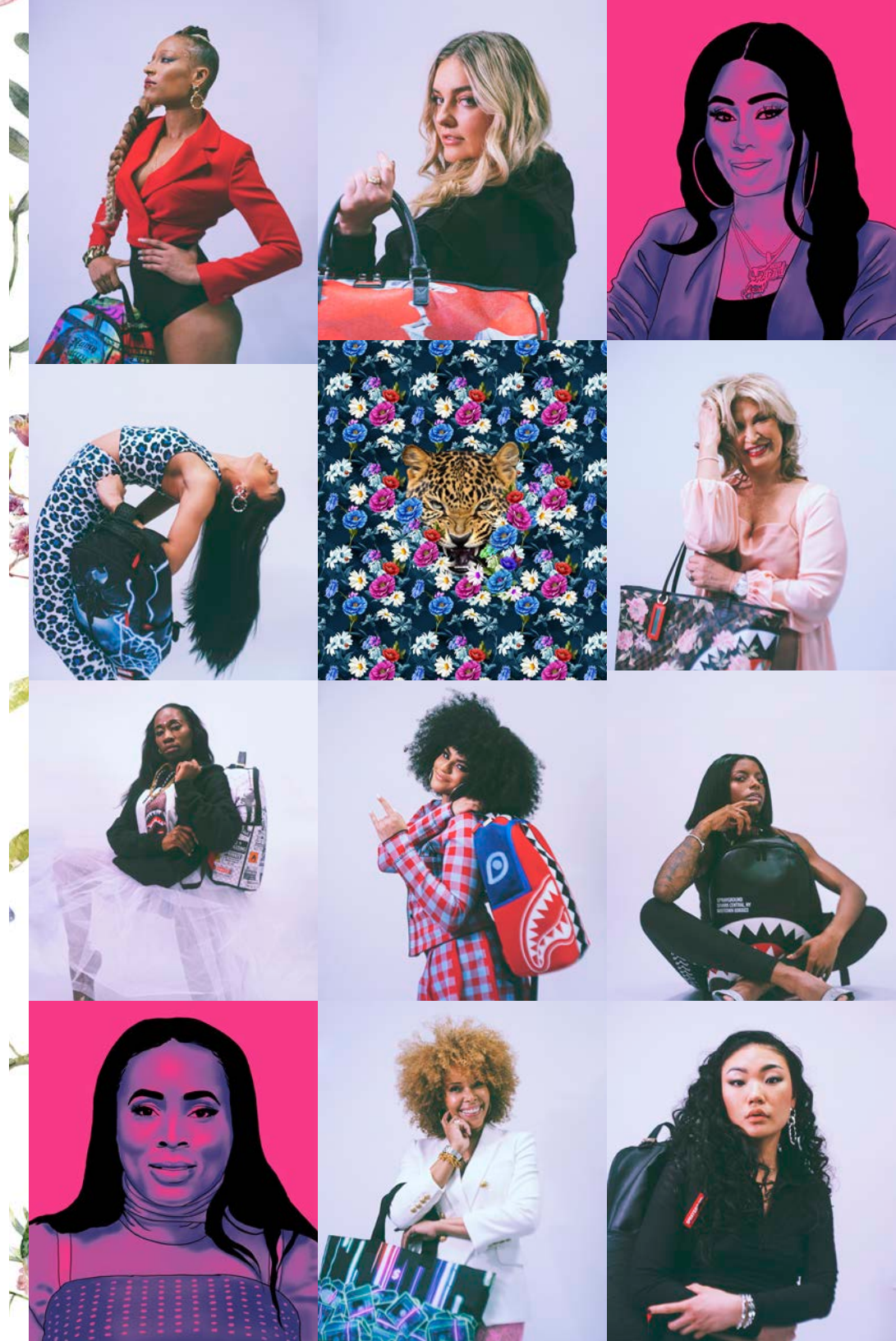
Through art, sculpture, photography and film, men have created the common narrative that women are to be shown off, yet shall never be the ones showing off. But...what happens when a woman throws her own celebration? What happens when the woman sculpts her own life and captures her power through her own lens? Thankfully, as we circle the sun each and every year, the answers to these questions begin to shine brighter and brighter. As we dive into this new decade, we have become diligent and dedicated to celebrating women as the creator of their own art. From CEO's to choreographers to creative directors to daughters, women in every role of every industry are using their experience of oppression as tools to inspire others. In this Women's Month of 2020, women are the subject on the canvas, the artist, and the one getting paid for it all.

To honor the movement toward universal female empowerment, LADYGUNN has teamed up with Sprayground, the world's most innovative accessory and backpack brand, to unzip the truth of what life as a woman is all about. For the fourteen women we interviewed, the weight they carry in their backpack of knowledge is heavy on their shoulders, as they feel they must foster self love and liberation within all of the women that their work may touch. We asked them about women's rights in the here and now and what they're carrying in their toolkit of tenacity. Some spoke to the unjust fate of a woman in the workplace, and some spoke about the unparalleled feeling of self made power. That said, one thing stood out as a common thread throughout all of the insight gathered from these badass women: they all have love for themselves.

When women are not afraid to speak out about the successes of their lives that make them genuinely smile when they look in the mirror, the unified power produced is otherworldly.

Maybe men were right in one thing: women ARE a prize. No, not a prize to be objectified and unwrapped like a gift that is only meant to gaze at. Women are a prize for themselves and other women. They each innately own golden trophies that celebrate the power that they had to prove purely because they live life as a woman. As we interviewed totally different personalities, all united in their self professed pussy power, we uncovered a cosmic energy that is seemingly reserved only for entrepreneurial women.

This month, we celebrate the creativity, connectivity and capability that makes women a wonderful breed of their own. As we explored the lives of **Sandflower, Jessica Young, Nigella Miller, Madeline Nelson-Small, Yaine Ellen Dong, Bryanna, Jennifer Frommer, Manuela Agudelo, Jasmine Noir, Stacia Mac, Sharifa Murdock, Yesenia Valencia, Valentina Eusse and Carol Carmel**, we see that women do not need common ground of industry or office to be so very intertwined. With this interview series, we wish everyone a wonderful Women's Month, and we remind you all to accessorize with self love, community connectedness and a backpack filled with tools to break the glass ceiling and see the sun shining through on the other side.





NAME: SANDFLOWER
OCCUPATION: MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST
SUPERPOWER: TURNING IMAGINATION INTO REALITY

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

Empowerment to me = harnessing the gifts you have inside and giving them to the world without fear.

Empowerment is knowing what you want to achieve is not only possible but necessary. Empowerment is unapologetic love and belief in yourself.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

My definition of Women's rights hasn't happened yet - but to me it's when we don't need a fight for and categorize our rights because it will be ingrained not only in our culture and government - but also in our collective psyche that we are equal beings.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

I grew up in a household where I saw my mother being hit by my biological father. Witnessing domestic violence and being a survivor of that situation shaped my view on Women's Rights when I saw my mother fighting in the courts for legal protection and not getting it. Seeing my mother survive that situation and then watching her use her music and skills to become a champion for other victims of domestic violence shows me that we are not only fighting for ourselves. We are fighting for our sisters.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I love that I don't give up! My grandmother used to say I was hard headed little kid but sometimes that's a good thing. Being able to tune out other people's opinion of your life is a skill. I didn't realize I had that skill until I found my journal from summer camp and saw that I had decided I would be a multidisciplinary artist that makes music, visual art, and meaningful content when I was ten - and that's what I am doing now.

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I do, what I do because I don't want to do anything else. All I want to do is to tap into creativity and share that spirit in every way I can to everyone I can. Music, fashion, art... whatever the medium I have something to say and it's my purpose on the planet to use my skills to bring good energy into the world.

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOLKIT THAT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

I want every woman to have the ability to tune into their inner voice. I'm lucky to have been raised in a family where meditation was a requirement as far back as I can remember. Being able to find that safe space within that gives you shelter from this stormy world. Tuning into your inner voice also protects your imagination and gives you the opportunity to manifest your goals.

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW? :

Fire, Flying, Badass

Jewelry, Third Crown.
Bodysuit, Tia Adeola.
Skirt, Tia Adeola.
Shoes, Kenneth Cole.
Bag, SPRAGROUND.



Earrings, Third Crown.
Top, Adam Selman Sport.
Pants, Adam Selman Sport.
Bag, SPRAGROUND.

NAME: NIGELLA MILLER

OCCUPATION: CELEBRITY HAIRSTYLIST | BARBER | CREATIVE DIRECTOR FF
HAIR | NATURAL HAIR EXPERT | ARTIST

SUPERPOWER: BEING ABLE TO SEE PEOPLE'S REAL BEAUTY, AND PULLING
THAT OUT WITHIN BEAUTY OR CREATIVELY.

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

It means to embody who you truly are. To believe in yourself first and letting that guide you in whatever drives your passion.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

My definition of women's rights is when women have more opportunities, especially black women. The opportunity to get equal pay in the workspace, opportunities to get the jobs we deserve. It's important to be expected and given the credit we deserve. All women and especially as black women we deserve that!

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

What's changed my perspective on women's rights. I think once the numbers were released to the public about how fast black women thriving as entrepreneurs. How we are the fastest growing entrepreneurs in the U.S. that's when I realized that we deserve more. That alone showed me a lot.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR- SELF?

I love that I am a black woman first! I love that I take chances. I push myself every day to be my best self. I'm extremely hard working and I love every bit of it because I'm doing what I love unapologetically.

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I do what I do because I love seeing people happy in their own skin. To be able to show someone what I see is amazing! My job is to show my clients how beautiful they are every day. It can be challenging at times, but it makes me happy.

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOL KIT THAT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

I want every woman to put your dreams first & put everything else second.

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW?

Fearless, Remarkable, Unstoppable!

NAME: JASMINE NOIR

OCCUPATION: DANCER/CHOREOGRAPHER/DANCE EDUCATOR/PUBLICIST FOR POWER 105.1 IHEARTRADIO AND GOOGLE/SPOTIFY PODCAST PERSONALITIES/ OWNER OF PETALS OF NOIR

SUPERPOWER: HEALING SPIRIT THE ABILITY TO HELP OTHERS FEEL EMPOWERED AND GREAT ABOUT THEMSELVES. ESPECIALLY MY DANCE STUDENTS BECAUSE THEY ARE CHILDREN WHO ASPIRE TO LIVE THEIR DREAM.

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

Being empowered means that I can be great at all things I do along with evolving and learning to be better with amazing people around me.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

My definition of women's rights are women having the freedom to live however it makes them feel BEST and always fall into what women are "supposed" to do. It is ok for a woman to be and feel liberated- not controlled by others, her control shall come from herself.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

My mom is a Physical Therapist and a Health Trainer who runs her own business so just watching her I was influenced by the power and strength of a woman.

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW? :

Manifest Positivity and Happiness.



Necklace, Third Crown.
Top+Bag, SPRAYGROUND.

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

Being empowered to me means that I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. If I have an idea or want to meet someone, or create something, the only thing in my way is me not doing it.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

My definition of women's rights is that we have a seat at every table right at the beginning of any meeting, decision, opportunity. That we aren't an after thought, but instrumental all!

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

My mom was a professor and author - watching her make a name for herself was very inspiring as she challenged the status quo to produce her art and make sure her voice was heard.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I love that I'm a people person and love connecting people - I also love that I'm multi-faceted, a shape shifter - can do and be many things at once.

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I love doing what I do because I get to mentor amazing women on my team. I love putting partnerships together with artists and brands and thinking very creatively and out of the box - anything we can dream up, we can make happen.

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOLKIT THAT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

Know to be nice to yourself -- don't give yourself a hard time, be patient. It will all come.

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW? :

Open, Possible, Dynamic.

NAME: JENNIFER FROMMER

OCCUPATION: SVP CREATIVE CONTENT & PARTNERSHIPS, COLUMBIA RECORDS/SONY MUSIC
SUPERPOWER: CONNECTING PEOPLE



Silk Robe, Tia Adeola
Pants, Mola Walker
Shoes, Kenneth Cole.
Bag, SPRAGROUND.



NAME: **MADLINE NELSON-SMALL**

OCCUPATION: CEO

SUPERPOWER: FASTER THAN THE AVERAGE INDIE LABEL HEAD, ABLE TO LEAP CORPORATE POLITICS IN A SINGLE BOUND

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

To me, being empowered means having the confidence, the ability and the control to carry out my work and my mission. My work is to build an all Woman staffed music brand. My mission is, through my work, to ensure every Woman I cross paths with, feels empowered and powerful.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

My definition of Women's rights is very simply having ALL of the same fundamental human rights as Men, all over the World.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

As a very young Woman, I was molested repeatedly and eventually raped by my oppressor. As an adult, in one particular job, I was told many times by my superior to stop being vocal about that part of my past. He said it was a waste of time and no one wants to be around a victim. It was then that I realized the expectation for Women to accept, hide and often continue to allow unchecked sexual aggression at home, at work and in social settings.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I love that I have grown to understand my own power to manifest.

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I do what I do because whenever there is uncharted territory, someone has to be first. I am the first Woman to own a full on music digital distribution company. I am the first to have an all Woman staffed boutique music company. I am the first because I want young Women to know there is no ceiling, especially if you have to build the house, yourself.



LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW?

Worthy, Powerful, Valuable

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOLKIT THAT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

*The Power of Yes. By this, I mean, the power to say **YES** to knowing what they deserve, **YES** to being a powerful leading edge creator, **YES** to breaking down barriers, **YES** to Loving themselves and expressing their true selves, unapologetically.*



NAME: YESENIA VALENCIA
OCCUPATION: ACTRESS AND SMARTFILMS, FILM FESTIVAL MADE WITH MOBILE PHONES CEO
SUPERPOWER: DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

What does being empowered mean to you?

To feel that I can do everything. To feel that the fight is of the valuable ones and of the defeats also, to feel that if there are discipline and impeccability in everything I do, everything can be done.

What is your definition of women's rights?

I believe that they do not exist, or not officially that I know, but I believe that it is fundamental to institutionalize them in the whole world. I believe that women are beginning to win important spaces in the company, but we are yet years old to achieve the rights that have been granted to the men from the beginning of humanity.

That means that it is key to watch for women to have the same opportunities that men have, and we can level the initiators in the policy, entrepreneurship, in the corporate world, etc...

Now, I have had the luck of being

born in a society that cares for women but every time I think of the cultures in which a woman is an object, I believe that I still have a lot to do and to achieve in this lifetime.

What is in your life toolkit that you want every woman to have?

We are "three parts" beings, we are soul, body, and spirit, and I believe that we should feed these three parts at the same level of percentages: 33.3%

What does this mean? that the body is important, it is the house where your feelings and emotions live, it is your first image, it is what you see in the mirror and you should like it, you must accept it.

The soul is where all the feelings, the good and the bad ones are inhabited, where the wars are between the environment and the love, the raby and the terms to do the good and the evil, and only when you identify the feeling that is attacking you, you can resolve it.

NAME: SHARIFA MURDOCK
OCCUPATION: CEO OF ENVSN FESTIVAL & CO-FOUNDER OF LIBERTY FAIRS
SUPERPOWER: TO CONNECT

What does being empowered mean to you?

Being empowered means being in control of my own destiny and thoughts. It means feeling completely comfortable within my own skin

What do you love about yourself?

What I love about myself is that I am hardworking and determined. I always know what I want and how to get it!

Why do you do what you do?

I do what I do because I love to inspire people to do better.

What is in your life toolkit that you want every woman to have?

In my toolkit is time for meditation and wellness. A mentor and a mentee and a strong relationship with family and friends.

Leave us with three words that describe what being a woman is like for you right now?

Motivated. Agile and Determined



NAME: STACIA MAC
OCCUPATION: TALENT MANAGER
SUPERPOWER: THE ABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY ADAPT TO ANY SETTING - PERSONALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY

What does being empowered mean to you?

Being empowered to me means to purposefully strengthen yourself and others; through positive affirmations and actions.

What is something in your life that has happened to change your perspective on women's rights in the world?

My experience in corporate America changed my perspective on women's rights. Previously I felt we had made a generous stride towards equality in the workplace. My personal experiences revealed women's rights weren't a "re-

solved matter" so to speak. In that space, to the contrary, I witnessed the need for further advancements and room for healthy ongoing conversations. I outperformed my male counterparts, despite this fact I had to work harder for promotions, equal pay, and recognition.

By nature, I never give up on anything or being that I am committed to.

What is in your life toolkit that you want every woman to have?

My life toolkit I want every woman to have is confidence, strength, unapologetic individuality and wisdom.

NAME: VALENTINA EUSSE
OCCUPATION: INTERIOR DESIGNER, STYLING, CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOR @SPRAYGROUND COLOMBIA
SUPERPOWER: CREATIVE CHILD

What does being empowered mean to you?

I believe in my qualities and talents to pursue Everything I want to achieve.

What is your definition of women's rights?

We are all equal and should have the same rights and opportunities in any Situation no matter gender or race.

What do you love about yourself?

I love my ability to solve problems. And how I always have a good attitude when there are hard times.

Why do you do what you do?

Because it makes me feel alive, motivates me an everyday day to be better.

What is in your life toolkit that you want everyone woman to have?

My life toolkit is confidence and kindness, both are the perfect combination that will make you succeed.

Leave us with three words that describe what being a woman is like for you right now? :

EMPOWERED+STRONG+CONFIDENT

NAME: YAINE ELLEN DONG
OCCUPATION: ACTOR-WRITER/DIRECTOR STORYTELLER
SUPERPOWER: TOUCHING & MOVING HEARTS

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

To be abundant with love - love for/from myself and others. When I am abundant with love, I am able to give to and receive from the world with courage and grace.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

The right to create and experience one's own definition of a fruitful life, with just as much liberation, dignity, and legal protection that any empowered man has!

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

One event definitely triggered me to cultivate my mind and soul's eyes and I awoke to gain clarity on what it's like to be a woman in the world. I was sexually assaulted when I was 16, and through my experience of surviving, dissecting, understanding and healing from my trauma, I came to understand how toxic masculinity and patriarchy is an insidious disease that's been plaguing the spirits and livelihoods of women (and even other men as well as non-binary and trans individuals) for far too long in the history of mankind. In the heat of battle, I also awoke to witness my own strength and came to understand just how resilient, powerful and special women are. Women are a source and force of life and we are MORE THAN WORTHY of equal rights!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I love that I embody gentle strength. I identify a lot with water and this quote I came across resonates for me. "She is water, powerful enough to drown you, soft enough to cleanse you, deep enough to save you." - Adrian Michael

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I am committed to walking my path as an actor because I find tremendous value in exploring how the craft of acting is an active practice of empathy. It requires a deep sense of self-awareness as well as the awareness of others and ultimately the human condition. Through acting, I'm able to exercise my muscles and share my intimate journey of finding myself in the stories of others who are seemingly different. With that journey comes astounding growth, connection, and fulfillment. What a joy and a blessing!

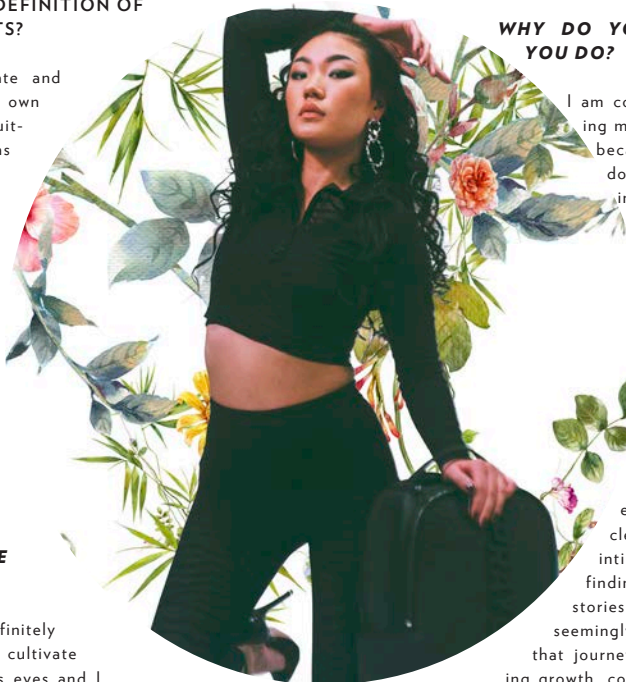
WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOLKIT THAT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

UNCONDITIONAL love for myself. When I love myself, I always want to grow and nurture my existence, even in the face of fear, my own shortcomings, the beatings of this world. We are here to live, learn and BLOSSOM!

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW?:

Blossoming, Compelling, Present.

Earrings, Third Crown.
 Top + Pants, Adam Selman Sport.
 Shoes, Kenneth Cole.
 Bag, SPRAGROUND.



NAME: CAROL CARMEL
OCCUPATION: REAL ESTATE BROKER
SUPERPOWER: INVINCIBLE

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

To me being empowered means I have the ability to face courage whatever life throws way. This feeling of strength did not come easy but took many years to develop.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

I have the ability to make my own choices, without being afraid or apologetic when it comes to decisions about my life, my career or my body.

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

Sadly in my life, I saw my mother and grandmother remain in an abusive relationship because the stigma against a woman seeking divorce was so great they were embarrassed for anyone to know. Because of that, they suffered and their children suffered. Today women have made great strides in improving their lives and their children's lives, if need be on their own, without being judged by society. However, throughout the world there is still much work to be done.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I love that in spite of the mistakes I made, I am blessed with wonderful children and grandchildren. I have worked very hard and am respected in my profession and my community.

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

After my divorce, I became a real estate broker. It was a way to support my family and have a flexible work schedule so I could drive my five children to and from school etc. I have been doing this for over

twenty-five years now and I love the opportunity to meet new people, help them find a home they will love to raise their family in and yes, it still gives me the flexibility to spend time with my wonderful family and friends

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOLKIT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

I want every woman to feel that she is worthy of being treated with respect at all times.

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW.

Confident Inspiring Thankful.



NAME: JESSICA YOUNG
OCCUPATION: CEO AND FOUNDER OF BUBBLE
SUPERPOWER: HAVING GOOD TASTE... BUT LITERALLY...

WHAT DOES BEING EMPOWERED MEAN TO YOU?

Having the confidence to know that you deserve what you deserve if you work hard to get it and truly believe in your right to do so. All this while empowering those around you to have the same belief and ability to make those power moves!

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

Equal opportunity and a seat at the board table !!

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

Most recently fundraising for my company, was pretty eye-opening for it being 2020. Walking into board rooms of all men at the table and seeing the gender gap in the investment community made me want to be more vocal about not only becoming an investor someday but seeking out more women investors for my own company.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

Everything!

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I really do it for my family and want to see better quality food become the norm.

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TOOLKIT THAT YOU WANT EVERY WOMAN TO HAVE?

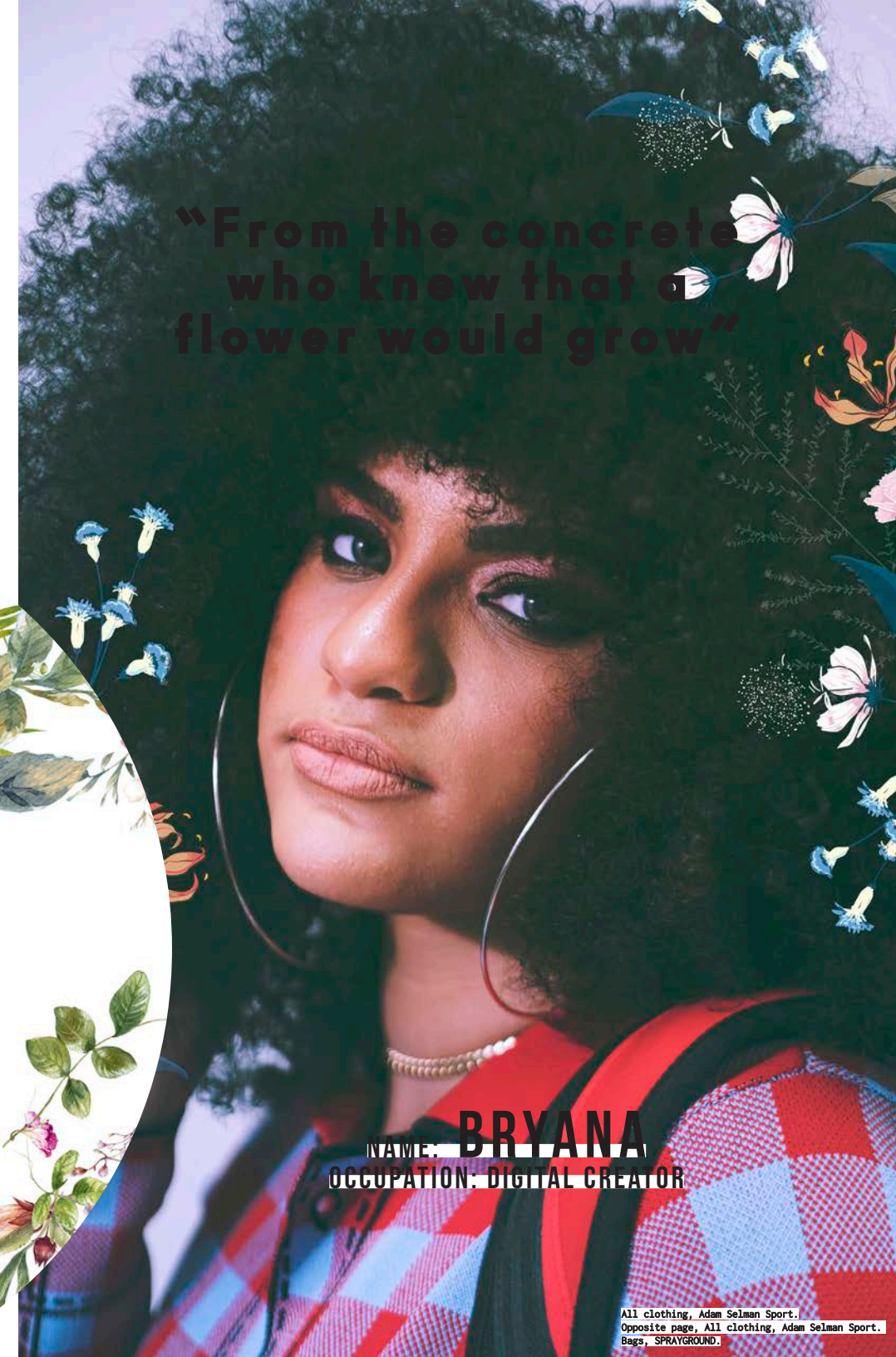
A strong solid network

LEAVE US WITH THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHAT BEING A WOMAN IS LIKE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW?

Present, responsible, and satisfied!



"From the concrete who knew that a flower would grow"



NAME: BRYANA
OCCUPATION: DIGITAL CREATOR

NAME: MANUELA AGUDELO
OCCUPATION: DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER MODEL, RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COORDINATOR, DANCE EDUCATOR.
SUPERPOWER: KALEIDOSCOPIIC MOVEMENT ART

What does being empowered mean to you?

Being empowered means that I have freedom, agency, and autonomy to BE.

What is your definition of women's rights?

I believe in justice more profoundly than "rights", where all people and government are collectively seeking equity for the glorious variations within womanity. Justice for women comes from the people and a government that looks like US and experiences our struggles.

What is something in your life that has happened to change your perspective on women's rights in the world?

The wage gap for Latinx women of color is the largest when comparing to white men. We make between .79 and .83 cents to the dollar. I grew up in a single-parent household to an Afro-Latina mother who had to work 3 jobs to survive. Seeing the gargantuan amount of obstacles she faced to make enough for our family to get by made me realize that we need more action to support women like us. I think of how this narrative is present cross-culturally and cross-nationally, how there is a girl somewhere facing my struggle or worse. None of us are free until all of us are.

What do you love about yourself?

My ability to inundate sunshine into any space I enter. I love that I love to love.

I love my effervescence and colorful personality. I love my strength and my testimony of hard work and resilience. I love my style and my artistic skills. I love my colorful mind my glittery soul and the glorious vessel God gave me.

Why do you do what you do?

COMMUNITY COMMUNITY COMMUNITY!

My goal is to uplift everyone to BE there best for each other for the planet and all living things and for themselves. My work is especially concerned with honoring women of color; telling our stories and giving others the chance to learn from us and our power. My work changes culture. My success is what young children of color look to, I hope they see me and realize that they too can be successful happy and impactful.

What is in your life toolkit that you want every woman to have?

Faith. For me personally, my relationship with Jesus has empowered me within every area of my life.

Community is everything without love and support from one another we got nothin! "Love others as well as you love yourself." Mark 12:31

Invest heavily in loving yourself, taking care of your soul and body

Leave us with three words that describe what being a woman is like for you right now? :

Magical. Scary. Exciting



Earrings, Third Crown.
Top, Adam Selman Sport.
Pants, Adam Selman Sport.
Bag, SPRAYGROUND.

SPRAYGROUND®

