

MARY FELLOWES

Writer, Stylist & Creative Director

WRITTEN WORK

Fashion, Lifestyle, Arts & Entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURAL FIGURES

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HEART, SOUL AND RITA

With A Long Awaited Second Album Emerging, A British Pop Singer And Style Icon Reveals Her Inner Tomboy And Deep Compassion

BY MARY FELLOWES

The irony isn't lost on British national treasure Rita Ora—in some ways England's answer to Gwen Stefani—of insisting to me, while wearing dazzling jewellery and cocktail dress, that she is pure tomboy; I didn't see that coming, nor her initial down-to-earth directness and honesty, and she has this interview—to promote her second album—to convince me. From following her during the last decade mainly via a heavily publicised image—in-your-face, highly stylised, hip-hop meets high fashion (imagine if Gwen, Rihanna and early J-Lo had a bling style baby with a British sardonic twist), glossier than glossy hair and make up (Hollywood golden era updated with a street twist) coupled with a contagious yet ultimately

frivolous party-perfect pop sound—I could have been forgiven for assuming a likely diva.

And even if she was a diva, she would have earned the right to some of it, not just for her recording career but other on and off-screen endeavours. Often compared to Jessie J, Little Mix and Rihanna (my Spotify account confirmed this), she is one of music's hottest names with a relatively short trajectory: following a cameo in both Jay-Z's 'Young Forever' video and Drake's promo for 'Over', she exploded on the British scene in February 2012 with her vocals for DJ Fresh's single "Hot Right Now" which hit number one in the UK. Her debut album, *Ora*, announced while supporting Coldplay on

tour and released that summer, debuted at number one in the United Kingdom. As well as going on to release a stream of widely acclaimed chart topping U.K. singles, at a gig in New York she sang a cover of Destiny's Child's 'Say My Name' in front of Beyoncé, was signed by Jay-Z for his Roc Nation label (she is no longer with it), performed her own Academy award-nominated song at the 2015 Oscars, sung at Glastonbury (headlining that festival is a future goal, as is collaborating with hip-hop legends such as Outkast, Q-Tip and Method Man).

And soon we have the next chapter, a new studio album that has had her fans waiting five years since the last. 'When I started out I was a "pleaser",

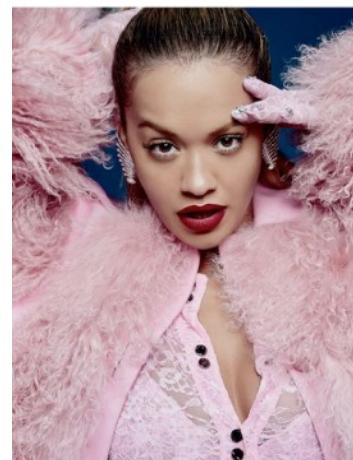


she tells me in a deep throaty voice with a bad-girl original West-London street accent. 'Before it was just party tunes, but when I saw people supporting my movement, I thought "*I have to write something proper!*"' And to do that, in what emerges as typical grassroots Rita style, she discarded her record label's

guidance on collaborators for the new album and co-opted a group of hard to track down, edgy young song writers who then came to London, and instead of a week stayed for over a month working with her. ‘We are all the same age: so I told them about my life, we just got drunk and made music!’

The youthfulness of that gesture contrasts hugely with her non-musical achievements, a relentless schedule of other high profile, multi-talented commitments which testify to the public adoration (which her social media stats testify: an impressive 6.52 million on Twitter, 12.1 on Instagram). From judging on *The Voice* and *The X-Factor*, a cameo in the first *Fifty Shades of Grey*, collaborating on custom designs for Adidas and Tezenis, starring in advertising campaigns for household name brands including Calvin Klein, Roberto Cavalli, Coca Cola, DKNY, Superga, Galaxy and Rimmel. The next goal—which actually seems totally feasible—is to get the call from Versace to pose for their campaign, whom she admires for ‘respecting young new faces

and crazy people’. She is that girl the public—and fashion industry alike—cannot seem to get enough of, who seemingly can do no wrong, that multifaceted, multi-talented burgeoning icon on the cusp of major global fame who has natural multi-purpose star quality, and knows it.



It’s not bad for a girl who was born in Yugoslavia (now Kosovo), whose parents fled when she was a baby, who grew up in humble West London terraced housing. It is this background however that to me is the driver behind it all, illustrated by one performance

in particular: singing at the vigil for Mother Theresa, who like Rita was also of Albanian origin. ‘It was surreal, she muses. ’It had more impact on my family than me: seeing the war...getting us out, moving to London: a triumph, a stamp for our country. My parents were like “*this insane, we ran away from our country and now you are putting a stamp on this legend*”. The Vatican: it was like a dream.’

So winding up as an honorary ambassador to Kosovo in 2015, aged twenty-five, is mind-blowing. For her, if she can represent the country to its fullest, that’s ‘everything’. To the point she has started a program to develop an educational platform for young creatives and performers there. ‘It’s so huge: not a lot of us make it out to achieve our dreams.’ It would make her paternal grandfather proud; a film director back home who was ‘one of the biggest believers; the only person who thought I could do something in entertainment.’ Her first professional performance was a role in a laundry powder commercial in her teens. ‘I

showed Grandad [the commercial] and he was so happy—imagine if he saw me now! I think her eyes are welling up.

I also grew up in West London—we agree how Notting Hill post-movie makeover is alien and vanilla, for her ‘bougie’ (a British shorthand for bourgeois) and has distrusted from what was essentially a rough and ready, wholly inspiring area, full of on-the-cusp-danger and the creativity that always subsequently emerges. ‘My group of friends were visionaries who wanted to be different. We bought Burberry from Wembley market and wore them with a Prada bag! She looks at me earnestly. ‘Our prints weren’t real, but we owned it’.

Style-wise back then, it makes sense that other influences were equally makeshift. ‘Rock ‘n’ roll and punk—I was obsessed with that attitude. My dream was to have a fan base like punk, who would die for you, like a cult...the Sex Pistols, Joan Gett, that tough attitude in the women and men: I am not a girlie girl—my

mannerisms aren't girlie,' she reminds me firmly. I wonder if her impeccable style and glossy image is just a mask, that belies and distracts from that tough, streetwise survivor—and immigrant, even though that word now carries derogatory overtones, it does give context to her fearlessness.

Although today she is miles from that, always camera ready. I can't resist the fluffiest, most shallow question of all: her beauty regime: Nars concealer, foundation mixed with an illuminating liquid, eye drops. That consistent red lipstick? Mac's Ruby Woo and now of course Rimmel's 'Rita' red lipstick, named after her. She describes it all flippantly, as if they are just details she doesn't really believe in, just necessary tools. And then the self-deprecating tomboy comes out again. 'I can't live without Kiehls anti puff stick for the eyes, she exclaims, laughing voraciously. 'I have *reaaaally* bad circles!!' She opens a perfectly formed mini black Chanel trunk bag to reveal them all and relays how Chanel holds a key lightbulb moment

memory. 'When I first met Cara [Delevigne] we were two skanky girls' and then suddenly they found themselves together at a Chanel runway show. '...sitting there front row like "whats going on?"...now we evolved into these women. Clothes do that to people. They have power if you let it in.'



When I ask about alternate careers, if for some reason she could never sing again, sartorial powers continue: aside from being a creative on a magazine, she would pursue styling. She has deep admiration for Baz Luhrmann's wife, Catherine Martin, who has

worked on the majority of his productions, calling her '*maaaaaajor*'. 'Wardrobe on films, I have a project actually coming up where I am working on something like it.' Actually when you examine her style, from paparazzi street-style to red carpet and promo, you can see she understands not just clothes but more critically the image they make, that every outfit is perhaps just a costume.

I ask if with endless public attention, she stays sane—or not? She is immediately unequivocal that 'it's cool that artists are speaking out about depression and anxiety: its a real thing. I was one of those kids that suffered both, aged seventeen. Everyone does [suffer], creative people more as they are so passionate, on the go all the time...you don't have time to think so all the problems go *eughhhh*.' Although she has found ways. I assumed she might have been at the recent Tommy Hilfiger stadium like fashion spectacle that raised the bar higher than ever for fashion and entertainment to fuse.

Instead she was away at a meditation course: Transcendental Meditation is her sanity's mainstay, using mantras. But perfectly mixed with that down to earth homegirl we already know: she loves going to West London pubs, vodka or gin being her poisons. 'I recently went to a friend's thirtieth birthday in a pub next to a Chinese takeaway so we got fortune cookies after. Everyone looked at me like, "*Don't you have security?*"' But you sense she is too grounded, too real to be seduced by an entourage unless it was strictly necessary.

That mini entourage on set are checking their watches and hinting a departure. We get back onto philanthropy: I really want to know if her compassion has been strategic box checking, generated by marketing people, or if it comes from the heart. I suspect the latter. 'I never did it for acknowledgement—just things that happened naturally and were personal...my mum had breast cancer so then I got in touch with Unicef, which escalated into me doing an event for Grenfell Tower [the

London public housing tower that burst into flames and caused a national tragedy which is still highly active in the collective British public mind]. ‘I am about to go to my youth centre to surprise kids I grew up with.’ She chuckles again. ‘Hopefully they will know who I am.’ On which she invites me to join her.

And there we are, minutes later, across the street from that first humble home which she points out to me with pride. (Today she lives in a nearby townhouse, with friends

including singer Paloma Faith and actor Idris Elba in proximity; she jokes that she is mortified that her musical collaborator Ed Sheeran bought the house she really wanted.) The interior is not fancy: quite the opposite. The centre was developed to help children build skills in a socially deprived area. Rita used to record music in here. Her body language since we arrived has changed. She seems younger, childlike—vulnerable even.

Yet the cameras from a British television network kick in and

she squares up and clicks into professional mode. Then a small group of young girls arrive and turn shy around her, evidently not sure how to deal with someone who for them is presumably a goddess. She ruffles the curly hair of one, joking that she might need to borrow some of it. The little girl seems overwhelmed, eyes lit up. A former mentor, Rupert, welcomes her with a tight hug; he jokes that ‘Rita is still the same, and as extravagant as back then— just wiser now’, and explains it was always evident she was a rising star.

She jokes that he still tells her to ‘shush’, and later, after explaining to the television cameras that he gave her the facilities to make music, looks at him squarely in the eyes muttering, ‘It’s good to be home’. And you get the genuine sense that despite the fanfare around her, this actually, genuinely, still is home for her, and always will be.

THE FALL



14th March 2017 by Jolyon Webber

The Fat Jew, Equal Opportunity Offender

Forget all you know about big, brash and outrageous. This is Josh Ostrovsky, the social media sensation whose desire to offend knows no boundary. And there's no off switch either.

Photography by Darren Keith - Styling and Words by Mary Fellowes

Did you have one of those brilliantly troubled, rebellious friends in high school? The irresistible rabble-rouser with a sky-high IQ who did what civilians wouldn't dare? Josh Ostrovsky, aka The Fat Jew, who has an audience of 9 million on Instagram alone, is that guy. If you aren't familiar, he is a 34-year-old, 6ft-tall, rotund, shameless Manhattan man-child with sculptural "hair-ections" who lies in a bath of ramen noodles snorting the flavour powder with his intern, drives around New York in a convertible with a llama, teaches spinning classes to the homeless on Citi Bikes and poses half-nude at Halloween for the Daily Mail with a peroxide wig, nappy and dummy as the Kardashians' latest (unborn) baby. And reputedly gets paid five-figure amounts per branded social-media post to pull said stunts off.

His found content-based memes and video clips are a cocktail of what shouldn't work: low-grade imagery depicting mundane people, animals and celebrities in random antics, with slang captioning so perfectly profane it is a miracle he hasn't been on the wrong end of law enforcement, although its representatives are apparently among his ardent fans: "There are definitely some Kardashians following me. Brooke Shields, which is tight. Obviously, my shaman, Stanley Tucci, and soooo many cops!" Lest his output sounds purely puerile or banal, underpinning it is razor-sharp social observation and a mirror to our politically (in)correct selves that is so uncomfortable yet so honest and on point, and so blazingly funny and absurd, his social-media feed is moreish roadkill.

Asked to sum himself up in one sentence, he tells me, "If the Wu-Tang Clan gangbanged Bette Midler, that baby would be me." Funny but true. He is an unlikely, beguiling combination of classic Woody Allen/Seinfeld-esque heart-on-sleeve Jewish neurosis and hoodlum rebellion made

manifest with rapid-fire rapper backchat. His outspokenness allows us to project or explore our most politically incorrect inner thoughts; his relatable faux-anxiety resonates with our own insecurities and fears. For the record, he is charming in person: disarmingly articulate, passionate and unabashedly friendly – vulnerable even, but not fragile, and stream-of-consciousness open. He's not angry or "on the spectrum", which is what I had assumed and confessed as much to him. "Ha! Yeah, I love it when the first thing people say when we meet is, 'I gotta tell you... you're not retarded!'"



Apart from social media superstar, what exactly is he? In an interview with Vulture.com, he argued, "I'm a satirist. I'm a commentator. I'm a performance artist. I'm an idiot." His main goal, he tells me, is "to offend nerds and white people on the internet, who are offended by basically everything". To this end, he is the natural successor to that other great American cultural outlaw JD Salinger, and his avatar Holden Caulfield, protagonist of *The Catcher in the Rye*. The controversial 1950s novel, banned in many schools and several countries for profane language and explicit material, examines the hero's loss of childhood innocence after being expelled from multiple schools and wandering

around New York exploring prostitution, perversion and immorality. Its subsequent popularity was coined as Catcher Cult in the media and the book was described by one critic as the one "all brooding adolescents had to buy, the indispensable manual from which cool styles of disaffection could be borrowed". If that isn't an antecedent to Ostrovsky, nothing is.



As well as shock, Ostrovsky delights in continuing to surprise and outwit pigeon-holders, by "doing stuff that confuses the shit out of people". For added exposure or likely just self-amusement and research, he joined the special talent roster of One Management (Helena Christensen, Nicki Minaj, A\$AP Rocky, Poppy Delevingne and Courtney Love). To poke fun at entitled Hamptons revellers, in 2015 he started a pink wine brand called White Girl Rosé, now a liquor-store mainstay, adding to it last holiday season with a white wine named Family Time Is Hard. "I'm not a comedian. I make rosé and, like, do plus-size modelling. I'm trying to be in dog shows... Like, I'm trying to pop up in really weird spaces."

What if he had been operating before the internet? He takes a long, reflective pause. "A cult... real linen robes... luring runaways or people in emotional turmoil. Or cool crime." Or writing porn, which, he laments, has all been done. "If you thought of women who ride around on giant tarantulas and fuck dudes in outer space, look it up – I swear it already exists". I suggest he is the natural successor to Voltaire and Regency-era provocateurs who spread salacious gossip via what was surely the early analogue social media: 18th-century pamphlets. He says it's the biggest compliment anyone has ever given him.

Ostrovsky's trajectory hasn't been plain sailing, though. Much has been made in the media in recent years of the theft of jokes he posted as his own while on his ascent to fame. Once exposed, comedians and naysayers came out in their droves and a contract with Comedy Central was dropped. His defence at the time was that the internet was effectively the wild west, with no precedent for joke ownership, adding fuel to the fire. Nonetheless, he apologised, corrected wrongdoing by crediting all sources and has continued to soar.

A unique voice plus genius humour plus ability to tap into the zeitgeist plus relentless determination equals prevailing success. Much mockery has also been made of his absurdity in general, which he is the first to embrace. "I don't even really know where the joke is at this point, it's become my actual life," he says. But to be as prolific, lucrative and as followed as he is takes more than slapstick or accident. That starts with himself, which is the key to getting behind the phenomenon he is. "I just aim to continue to offend, but my offensiveness is equal opportunity. I talk about my small, rock shrimp-shaped penis! I make fun of myself first and then you next."





MEGHAN MARKLE:
ACTRESS, UN
ADVOCATE, AND
ONLINE EDITRIX

by Mary Fellowes
Photography by Tommy Mendes

While living on both coasts (New York and Los Angeles) and in two countries (thanks Toronto), Meghan Markle works hard to defy what she calls “the mystique of being an actress.” The daughter of a Republican and an African American Democrat, Markle brings beauty and brains to her role as Rachel on *Suits*. And given that much of her childhood centered around being on television sets with her father who was a director on the longstanding comedy *Married with Children*, acting was a natural choice for Markle.

But acting wasn’t the only choice. When not filming *Suits*, Markle spends much of her time on The TIG, a lifestyle website she founded to share her love of

travel, food, fashion, and beauty. And as a new advocate to UN Women, she joins the ranks of fellow actresses like Emma Watson and Angelina Jolie, known for both their body of work *and* their activism, which Markle has been involved in since age 11 when she went head-to-head with a dish soap manufacturer over their misogynistic advertising slogan and won.

With no manager (yet), Markle most definitely still does things her way. She’s a powerhouse while being effusive, self-deprecating, and resolutely human. We caught up with her at the World Bar at the Trump World Tower in New York and talked about fitting in, working at the

United Nations, and being more than just a “fluff character that wiggles around in a pencil skirt.”

Mary Fellowes: Evidently you are a polymath. How do you find time to fit in so much?

Meghan Markle: If you’re passionate about it, you make it work. But if you’re riding a wave, the wave will crash, so you still do have to find time for yourself — even if that’s just 20 [minutes] of meditating or a bath.

MF: You don’t lead the traditional existence of an actress. Do you ever feel like a fish out of water?

MM: There’s a lot of crossover that sometimes doesn’t make sense because it’s not conventional. With The TIG I’m very hands-on — it’s my baby. I

wanted to do the outreach at the onset, so I did everything; but then people found it very surprising because it doesn’t support the mystique of being an actress. It’s a learning curve and uncharted territory — especially with social media and the Internet being the Wild West. There’s no rules, you just figure it out everyday.

MF: Do you think for actors with strong political beliefs and conviction, social media has made it harder or easier to get your message out?

MM: Social media is so incredibly important, especially if it’s used correctly. The danger comes when people think they did enough by retweeting. But what’s the call to action? ... I’m fortunate

as an actor that my profile is higher so what I do tweet about, people listen. But it's really important to understand if something on social media moves you, don't just retweet it, DO something about it. Actually physically, tangibly, get involved it some way.



MF: Right now we're sitting across from the UN. Tell me about your role there, how it came about.

MM: It came about from what I did on The TIG : as well as food, travel, fashion, it was really trying to reshape the idea of beauty beyond the physical. I write a lot of think pieces about women's empowerment or equality and I put them in [the Beauty category](#). After I had written a piece on Independence Day about personal independence, I received an email from the Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of UN Women

saying that they really liked what I was putting up, what I was using it for, and they wanted to work with me. I didn't believe it at first!

MF What happened next?

MM: I wanted to see what they were doing at ground level. It was important not just attach my name to an organization, even if it was the UN. I called and said, "I have a week off from filming, can I come work in the office for a week?" They replied that no one had ever asked that. I offered to fly myself there and back and work nine to five, and told them I wanted to shadow meetings and see what really happens. So I went to New York, every day in work attire, which is very funny because as an actress you don't have much suiting.

MF: What did you wear? Did you have to go out and buy suits?

MM: I borrowed a lot of stuff from my character Rachel's closet on *Suits!* I went to the costume department and was like, 'Can I grab some looks? I don't have things to wear to the United Nations!'

MF: I love that your two seemingly opposing worlds perfectly collided – what next?

MM: I went to morning briefings with the UN Secretary General's team and began understanding the pillars of the organization so I knew where I wanted to invest my time. As well as theatre, I studied International Relations at Northwestern and used to work for the US Embassy at Buenos Aires, which helped my decision to work on women's political participation and leadership. It's a space I feel comfortable in and am really excited about the future of, especially with the very strong possibility of Hillary putting her hat in the ring for office.*

MF: How did it all take shape initially?

MM: Once we realized that would be a comfortable fit for me, I went on a week's learning mission with the UN to Rwanda because it has the highest percentage of women in the parliamentary system of any country in the world. Sixty-four percent — unbelievable, given that 20 years ago they had their genocide. So I met female senators and went to a refugee camp to meet with women at the grassroots leadership level.

MF: Who are your female heroes? Who has inspired you to be a strong woman?

MM: Of course if I didn't say my mother, she would kill me! She is ambitious and fiercely independent. And I remember reading when Madeleine Albright was on bed rest with her second pregnancy, she was like, 'Well I can't do anything, I'll learn how to speak German now!' and I thought, 'That's my kind of woman!'

"I WENT TO THE COSTUME DEPARTMENT AND WAS LIKE, 'CAN I GRAB SOME LOOKS?' I DON'T HAVE THINGS TO WEAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS!"

MF: Do you think there is a glass ceiling for women's political participation?

MM: I would hate to think that there is [a glass ceiling]. Although often people find it more interesting to talk about women's fashion than the work that they're doing in the world. But on the same token, you think about the op-ed Angelina Jolie wrote just a week ago....

MF: In The New York Times, about her cancer?

MM: Exactly. Amazing to be that vulnerable and open and willing to share that kind of information. And Emma Watson launched the He for She Campaign and that was everywhere and it still has a lot of momentum. I get asked more about a blow out or a lip gloss than I do about the work that I'm doing and I hope that will change. Which is why The TIG is really about defining this idea of beauty. Sure if you want to find out about the best lip gloss for your skin tone, I'll plant it in there because I hope when you come back looking for something similar, instead you'll find a think piece about the beauty of being an empowered woman. That's all I can do.

MF: You have just started filming the fifth season of *Suits*, which is set in a man's world. Are you drawn to the show because of its relatively cerebral nature, rather than being fluffy – also because your character's not a gender typecast?

MM: Yes, she's not just the girlfriend. I don't necessarily see it as being a man's world – the partner of the firm, who would typically have originally been

written as a white male, is a black Cuban woman played by Gina Torres. What I love about my character specifically is she has incredible intellectual prowess. She's pretty ambitious in terms of her career. It is endlessly more interesting personally for me to play that character, especially when it's seen as a role model, rather than to just be some fluff character that wiggles around in a pencil skirt.

MF: You grew up in Hollywood – with your father being a director you spent a lot of time on set for his show *Married with Children*. Did it put you off acting or become a case of that's just what real life is?

MM: I did not think I would become an actor — that cliché of an LA-born and raised girl. But I did love the camaraderie that you find on a TV set; it becomes a small family and it was just what people did because it's where I came from.

MF: What have been like the biggest hurdles and the biggest rewards in creating The TIG?

MM: Trying to balance the time and finding content that speaks to me. But the return on investment is from a soul

satisfying place. I have young women run up to me on the street — five years ago it was 'Oh my god, I love Suits,' which still happens, but now they're like, 'Oh my god, I love The TIG!' And as an actor, when you spend so much of your time saying other people's words believably for a living, to have a forum where I say my own words and they resonate is the biggest payoff I could have ever imagined.

"I GET ASKED MORE ABOUT A BLOW OUT OR A LIP GLOSS THAN I DO ABOUT THE WORK THAT I'M DOING AND I HOPE THAT WILL CHANGE."

MF: Obviously you write a lot, which female writers have inspired you?

MM: I mean I love Arianna Huffington – Fanatics and Fools. And Rachel Maddow's Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power. I love smart, savvy women. Of course I don't spend all of my time being incredibly intellectual.

MF: What do you do when you're not being intellectual?

MM: I was about to say I watch *Jeopardy*, but that is not the right answer! But I love it! And I have two dogs, they're both crazy little rescue pups. I love throwing dinner parties — grilling in my backyard and drinking copious amounts of rosé.

MF: What else do you give yourself permission for – a manicure, going dancing?

MM: Manis and pedis and fittings, getting your hair and makeup done – it sounds so glamorous and fun, but I do it everyday for work. I prefer discovering new restaurants and off the beaten path travel – that's very much from my mom. She was a travel agent.

MF: What about elsewhere in your life? What or who else keeps the show on the road?

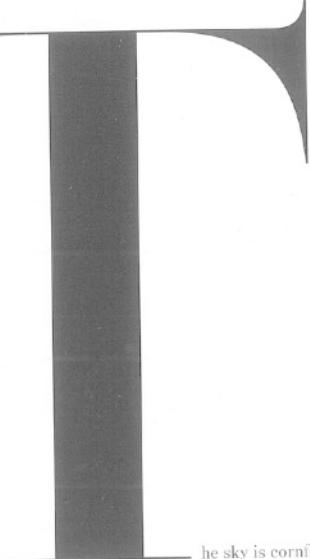
MM: The team keeps things going – the anchor. I like a very small group around me. It's hard for me to loosen the reins because I like people to know that I'm invested. I've had my theatrical agent for over a decade and he's amazing, as is my lawyer. I don't have a manager. But give it a year; if it continues to expand the way it does, I'm sure I'll need someone else!



FERRY ACROSS THE CASPIAN

Lounge lizard, rock legend, immortal crooner – and art collector. The breadth of talent of Bryan Ferry, the Roxy Music frontman, is laid bare as he visits Baku.

Words by MARY FELLOWES
Photographs by RICHARD GRASSIE



The sky is cornflower blue, seagulls laugh raucously overhead, and the city is glowing golden in the sunshine, gently humming along to its own rhythm. In a land full of mysticism, luck has joined us. A good omen for Bryan Ferry, the legendary British singer and songwriter, who is about to arrive for a whistlestop tour of the Azerbaijani capital.

Ferry is coming as a guest of the London jeweller Stephen Webster, and their double act – Webster does the party and shows the gems, Ferry performs – is becoming a regular sight around the world. It may sound like an unlikely pairing, but both are dandies in their own ways. British working-class boys done good and still pushing on relentlessly. Or unable to let go for fear of what happens when the music stops, perhaps?

It is now a well-oiled machine – they have embraced Ukraine and Georgia together already. The formula is this: a staged murder mystery to kick off celebrations (this week's

will see 20 sculpted Azerbaijani men in British police uniforms), a glittering party for the great and the good – with a lot of big hair and very big precious stones.

Webster will play the charismatic compère in a loud but expensive velvet jacket, and one of music's most enduring heart-throbs

'IT WOULD BE EAT TO PRESERVE THE BEAUTIFUL OLD BITS OF BAKU AND TO CREATE A FANTASTIC MODERN CITY WITH NEW BUILDINGS.'

will belt out hits from his glory days in Roxy Music, one of the defining bands of the 1970s, which retains a status that eludes rivals. Roxy Music appealed to punks, new wavers, rockers, crooners and swooners alike; the mysticism of Ferry's voice and lyrics, his suaveness tinged with uncertainty, have defined the category of graceful rock star of the ages. Yet Ferry never behaves like a rock star – not these days, anyway. He has the air of a distinguished poet or a melancholic writer of romantic fiction.

Day two is a white out. Zero visibility and zero degrees. Ferry arrives, concerned the

mercurial weather conditions will induce a throat infection and inhibit his vocals, but he doesn't complain. Maybe it isn't all bad: could he find inspiration here? Azerbaijan is proud of its musical tradition, especially jazz. 'I do like music from other cultures,' he says. 'I used to love Indian, Moroccan and Arab music. I loved tuning in if I was travelling.'

I mention the fact that Azerbaijan is hosting the Eurovision Song Contest. 'Really? Well there you go.' He chuckles into the ether. Ferry finds the idea that each country has its own song 'charming'. He once wrote a track called 'A Song for Europe' – still one of his best songs performed live. 'It made me think of Venice and Paris – music of the past, really – in contrast to a lot of other stuff I have done inspired by African-American music. It felt very international, and cute, to call it "A Song for Europe". I wrote some in French, some in Latin, to show I was smart.'

The next day his voice holds out. The performance can go ahead. He is happier. His blue eyes are dancing again. 'Nice being somewhere – exotic', far away... somewhere I haven't played before.' The word Baku 'resonates a kind of mystery' with him. It envelops him. At lunch in L'aparté, an ornate underground bistro, Ferry's eyes settle on an immaculate gentleman in a black suit at the next table. 'Look,' he says, 'maybe he is an assassin – and that book in the bag – that might contain gruesome details of a plot?' It is as if he is thinking aloud, a softly-spoken stream of consciousness.

Later on we pass traffic police in giant navy capes that billow in the sharp winds as if possessed by a dark force. 'Look! He could be a wizard or something... what spells could he be doing?' His fertile and childlike imagination never seems to rest. Maybe that is one of the secrets of his success? 'I do have to keep working – I don't do relaxing very well,' he admits, a mysterious half smile stopping his reserved, apologetic manner from being irritatingly humble.

Mystery and fairy-tale pacts aside, what would he like to see in Baku for a promising and modern future? He likes the fact that emerging markets are cultivating tastes in contemporary art. And the city itself? 'It has so much space, being by the water – cities close to the water have great openness.' Baku will, in fact, soon boast a 26km waterside boulevard similar to the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, but much, much longer. 'It would be great to preserve the beautiful old bits, and to create a fantastic modern city with new buildings.'

Ferry has come a long way from a small mining village in north-eastern England. In his early performing days he would lurk shyly at the edge of the stage. 'It was a reluctance on my part to be centre stage, but then I realized I had to be more focused and take on a lead role.' Several years earlier, as an awkward art student, he had relinquished canvases in Newcastle for the murkier depths of vinyl. 'When I was leaving school I wanted to be a painter. I didn't realize I had any

*In the State
Philharmonic Hall
(this page and
previous page).*





Clockwise from left: Ferry in the underground bistro L'aparté; in a caravanserai in the Old Town; by a carousel on the Boulevard; in the State Philharmonic Hall; at a hat stall in the Old Town.

talent for music. After I graduated I moved to London. I taught art while writing music.'

Brian Eno, who played synthesizer in the band's first line-up, has summed it up: 'We came out of a context where the accepted mode for pop musicians – and most artists – was to be apparently sincere, committed to one's art... and the other thing was that we wanted to meld our interest in the fine arts – particularly Pop Art for Bryan.'

Nick de Ville, the band's long-term art director, once remarked that Ferry 'builds songs up layer by layer, like a fine artist'. The saxophonist, Andy Mackay, agrees: 'We were about collaging ideas and techniques,' he has said, 'but it was a fairly violent sort of collage.' Recently Ferry has been creating films that accompany the shows, to enhance the mood of each song. What are they like? 'Collages. Sometimes bits of films, kind of ripped from old movies. All things that I like. Some very Pop things, like American cars, old 1950s ads.'

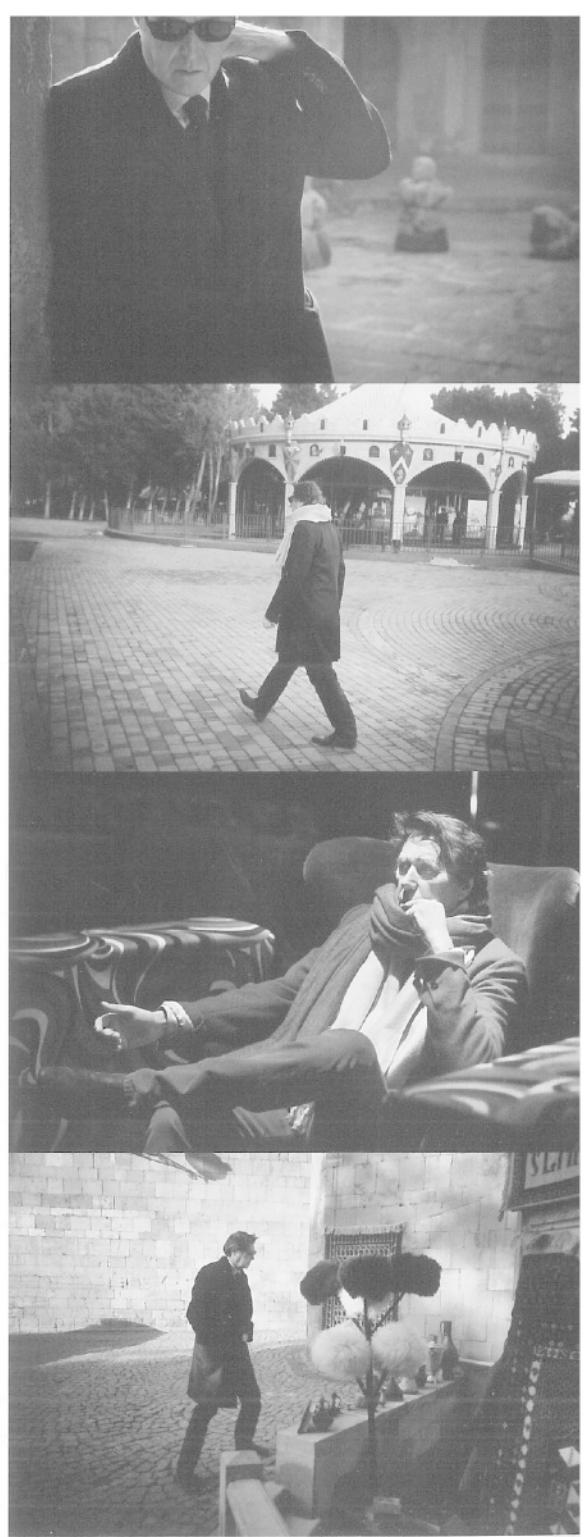
When we catch up back in London Ferry points out a Mark Lancaster painting in his studio, depicting the motif found on napkins in the Howard Johnson's chain of American diners – a 'very subtle and suggestive kind of Pop Art', he says. Lancaster, who taught Ferry at art college, worked with Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol in New York. That must have impressed the students – the tutor as a hero not a bore. 'The Pop Art Americana thing was very much part of what we liked. Right through this period the music we liked was Motown – such as the Temptations, which was a very sexy, very cool kind of music.'

Add to this the fact his main tutor, Richard

Hamilton, was credited with pioneering Pop Art in Britain and also discovered David Hockney at the Royal College, and you start to understand how Ferry's roots have played out across his artwork and imagery. So we know his tutors were hugely inspiring. What about the fellow

students? 'The college I was at had students divided into two sets: one had beards and sandals and were into the Bloomsbury Group and the others all wore white jeans and tried to look like Steve McQueen. They were the Pop kids – I was in that camp.'

The camps may not have been as divided as he suggests. I am starting to notice an inherent paradox within Ferry. On one hand we have Pop Art, Americana, a club full of sex and glamour, which he undoubtedly aspired to be a member of – perhaps to be credible. And then on the other, we have the lesser-known, cosier Bryan Ferry. The farmer's son, taught to love and respect the countryside. The one with impeccable manners – who opens doors for women and pulls chairs out for them at restaurant tables. The elegant and distinguished one who lives between the pristine, elite London borough of Chelsea and rural Sussex. The one who is always immaculately turned out in Savile Row suits (he goes to Anderson & Sheppard) and who was married to an aristocrat for two decades. The one whose son is Master of Foxhounds.





'I HAVE ALWAYS FELT LIKE AN ARTIST WHO WAS WORKING IN MUSIC. I DIDN'T STUDY MUSIC AND TO THIS DAY I JUST PLAY BY EAR.'

from the Modern British movement such as Walter Sickert, Augustus John and Wyndham Lewis. 'The Bloomsbury Group was a bit retro after what I'd been doing but it was a very cosy period to surround yourself in. One of the best things I have is a drawing by Wyndham Lewis of Ezra Pound - it represents that whole period.'

Ferry is an artist through and through. But where did that come from? Was it in his DNA? Did it seem inevitable, like a calling? Maybe the key is a postcard of what appears to be a Surrealist painting depicting a Parthenon lookalike atop a rich green hillside, titled 'Penshaw Monument, County Durham'. This is a faded photograph of the view he saw each morning until he left home. 'I think it was a replica of a Greek temple. It was so different from the horrible streets in a pit village. It was this rather bleak landscape...' It was the old culture that 'did it' for Ferry. 'Growing up, I used to look at it [the folly] and think, wow - that's cool and very big. And it's still there.' Ambition and aspiration were working their magic, back in the early days. It reminds me of Oscar Wilde's famous quote, 'We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.'

If Surrealism was at play in the further reaches of that fertile imagination, it was no doubt fuelled by Richard Hamilton's ties to Surrealism's subversive poster boy, Marcel Duchamp. Even the title of Duchamp's most famous work, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, was appropriated by Ferry for

According to Nicky Haslam, the emperor of haute-traditional interiors and a long-time friend, Ferry is, in contrast to some other rock stars, more likely to 'redecorate a hotel room than to trash it'. He collects relatively safe, figurative artists

an album. But Duchamp's lesser-known *Etant donné*, in which a female form is spread-eagled across a hyper-real outdoor setting, could have formed the foundation for some of his album covers depicting seductive women who simultaneously invite and alienate the viewer with their glamour. Jerry Hall, Marilyn Cole, Kari-Ann Muller and now Kate Moss are all in similar poses in equally hyper-real settings.

Who would he want to be taught by if he were at art school today? 'Richard Prince.' Why? 'He can do very seductive paintings which are very cool, very attractive and very painted... a kind of Pop sensibility.' And Jeff Koons, who is 'quite particular; and not in a kind of "artist-painting-hands-on" tradition. He works with a great team of craftsmen... he's good and quite intriguing.' Ferry also champions Cecily Brown - a newer English semi-abstract artist who lives in America and exhibits in galleries around the world. Is there anyone else who could motivate him as Hamilton did? 'Damien Hirst is very engaging. I'm looking forward to his exhibition. He's an interesting artist, an enquiring mind. I like artists who have some sort of reason behind the passion, some ideas.'

Is it because of this artistic leaning, rather than despite it, that he became so successful? Would he have been more fulfilled if he had remained an artist? No. Because he has always felt 'like an artist who was working in music... because I didn't study music I never felt I was really a musician, and to this day I don't read music - I just play by ear.' What he really likes doing is directing and bouncing ideas off other people. He likes a cooperative venture. 'Even now when I do visual things it is always as part of a team... album covers or videos, most recently the films for the live show we do.' So art was too solitary. This echoes a vulnerability that comes through loud and clear during our time together, a lack of ego - a need to have others' input.

I wonder if he has regrets. 'I should have perhaps produced more visual artefacts over the years - I think I was always a bit lazy.' Is it just a motivational issue? No. Because the art world back then was a kind of 'elitist place in Cork Street. Mayfair - very much a posh person's activity'. It sounds like the same voice as that of the shy musician who stayed at the edge of the stage, lacking in social confidence.

But we shouldn't feel sorry for him. Perhaps he simply 'has it all'. Throughout his career he seems to have found a way to balance his interests in music and art and seamlessly fuse the two worlds. 'I've always preferred hanging out with art people to music people. Maybe it's because I work all day with them... it's part of the collage of people.' So there you have it. His life has been a collage, as he himself admits. But certainly not a violent one. ■



CALIFORNIA DREAMING

A Desert Road Trip With The Kills

BY MARY FELLOWES

When Alison Mosshart and Jamie Hince, two halves of enigmatic musical duo The Kills, enter their go-to Los Angeles diner, people stare... heads turn. Mine too. That electric frisson is ever present. Wherever they are, even for those that don't recognise them, these guys are clearly someone...*something*. It's good to be here again, just as when I first crossed paths with Jamie in London some years back - the same parties and dating Jesse - a mutual musician friend and a confidante to supermodel Kate Moss whom Jamie married in 2011. (I am told that subject is strictly off limits, although it is now publicly known that marriage is sadly over). Then that frisson again when we all reconnected

this winter through Mark (Jamie's close friend who also shot this story) at New York's Bowery Hotel. When I approached a group of nine rowdy renegades, including musical/society couple Robbie Firze and Mary Charteris, Jamie leapt up and shouted, "What's your star sign?". Disarmed, I replied Sagittarius. The entire table gave a boisterous standing ovation: we were all zodiac wingmen - who they apparently always get on best with, professionally and personally.

As I peel back the layers, it becomes apparent this is just how they roll - always doing things their own way, organically. Two fingers to the system. Their first meeting was

poetic happenstance: in 2000, Alison overheard Jamie playing music in a London apartment above her, they then discovered they were reading the same book about Edie Sedgwick (1960's Warhol muse, model and singer) and bonded over a love of analogue recording, leading to their making music on vintage cassette players and a band being spontaneously born. Determined to avoid falling into larger label and music industry traps, they stayed doggedly independent and rarely gave interviews, instead convincing music press to attend their shows. That slow burn approach - let the music speak for itself, retain artistic integrity - is perhaps why they aren't yet a household name; but on the brink.

Between that first meeting and a soon to be released fifth album this spring, together they have released four albums, sixteen singles, fourteen music videos, and a documentary. Their music, described often as garage /punk/rock with a touch of blues and new wave cool, is compared frequently to The White Stripes. To me, a musical philistine, it is sometimes heart breaking, sometimes angry, sometimes energising, always intense. It has been used on films (Contraband; Catch.44; Just Like A Woman starring Sienna Miller), television series (True Blood; The Vampire Diaries) and commercials (Fan de Fendi perfume). They have contributed a cover track to Fleetwood Mac, released a

photo book with long term collaborator, photographer and director Kenneth Capello, and even bought a London home together.

Which all explains how up close over our lunch, an endearing familiarity and affectionate banter falls somewhere between twins and a long married couple: how they jointly navigate through the menu, how I could have sworn I saw Alison's t-shirt on Jamie last week — plausible, as they do share clothes. During our shoot, even with six racks of new season Givenchy, Alexander Wang and Saint Laurent, they even vanished into a private spontaneous frenzy of sharing mutual thrift store finds, which should theoretically threaten the stylist (me). But it fast became apparent for the sake of better pictures, and politics, not to interfere: their modus operandi, work and play being indistinguishable, is one never-ending stream of cross-pollinated creativity, aural and

visual. Hence shooting one other on polaroid and a vintage Rolliflex while our photographer Mark (also one of Jamie's best friends) was setting up lights.



In fact, apart from Alison's pilates and Jamie's Saint Laurent obsession and the usual eating and drinking out (five star hotels and dive bars are equal to them) art in some shape is pretty much all they do with their free time. 2014 saw Jamie exhibit his photography in New York's The Morrison Hotel Gallery. Last year Alison unveiled a series of drawings, paintings and tapestries (which to me suggest an imaginary conversation between Egon Schiele and Jean-Michel Basquiat) in Manhattan at the Joseph Gross Gallery,

depicting her life on the road. True to her tomboyish nature, one was created by driving a remote control monster truck over the canvas; another being autobiographical, titled "Daughter of the American Used Car Dealer".

When I suggest their unique intersection of art, fashion and music makes them the Velvet Underground's twenty-first century successors, they testify their original influence was that - and Andy Warhol, the Factory scene's self anointed deity (who would have adored a former bricklayer once living in squats marrying the world's most famous supermodel). I mention how before our trip, by chance I was listening to their heartbreakingly beautiful 2012 track "The Last Goodbye" when breaking news deemed we must bid farewell to another multidisciplinary musical genius, David Bowie. That last goodbye is loaded for Jamie: in his teens it was Bowie's track *Ashes to Ashes* that first hit him, arrow-like, when other

music belonged to his parents' generation; 'I thought, "There is something different going on here".... When [the Bowie album] *The Man Who Fell To Earth* came out, I went straight out and dyed my hair orange.'

Strike! Being intrigued by their inherent and unique sartorial style, I have been secretly hoping to steer them towards fashion, but sometimes rock stars are supposed not to care about something as trivial. But like Bowie, these two are sharp enough to recognise, and indulge, a unique self-image in a crowded musical landscape. 'People talk a lot about fashion being superficial,' riffs Jamie, 'but something like Bowie's image throws a dart in history... fashion is way more important than people think.' He chuckles and winks; 'Can you imagine Ed Sheehan through the years?! No!'

This is typical him: witty, irreverent, mischievous, spontaneous, minimal verbal filter. A playful extrovert with

infectious boyish insouciance and his heart on his sleeve, especially when showing us videos of his beloved dog Archie. Alison is quieter and watchful, suggesting a fragile interior world. I worry that our interview will read weighted too much towards him, but that dynamic will even out during our shoot: Catlike, Alison's morphs into a coquettish star, a visceral performer, while Jamie's shadow emerges: distracted, vulnerable, self-conscious even.

This push-pull, yin-yang of contrasts makes this (strictly platonic) musical duo so intriguing. I cannot tell who "wears the trousers" — it seems they both do, see-saw style, metaphorically and also literally — Alison's only prerequisite for the shoot was absolutely no skirts or dresses. I double check with photographer Mark, who confirms, adding she even wore a men's suit to Jamie and Kate's wedding. 'I have dressed the same way since I



was a kid - I grew up admiring skateboarders in small town Florida,' she admits proudly. Which explains a refreshing disdain for handbags: she needs her hands free, to be ready for anything; 'I don't want to be weighed down by some weird bullshit thing that will stop me being able to climb a fence'. But she doesn't shop per se, maybe twice a year just impulsively grabs something she falls in love with and repeat buys the same pair of jeans for stage wear. If there is one guilty pleasure though: leather jackets. 'I am like, "Do I need a fiftieth leather jacket?" Probably!', she laughs, 'it's a uniform, a safety net.' (Thus inspired, the next day I went straight to the flea market, bought an oversize men's biker

and decanted the essentials from my handbag into the pockets. I have since felt a blissfully liberated groupie!).

Such is their synergy, no surprise they are also Jamie's passion, and also *bête noire*. 'I had this one leather jacket: each time I wore it , everyone came up to me. It was fucking perfect, early Hedi Slimane for Dior..I had it for years and years, then one night Kate [Moss] borrowed it and lost it...I was like, "uuuggghhhh". He is still hurting from losing that — and others: 'When I was nineteen I painted a leather jacket. I used to paint all over my friends' jackets too....The scene of a cat being tortured, or a skeleton with wings... I was so proud of it, hung it on a chair at a gig — but it went. I still think I am maybe gonna see that jacket one day...' Alison chides him, sisterly, for always losing everything.

He continues waxing lyrical, onto style subcultures such as the Mods, which informed his

first memorable fashion purchase: a trench coat from a classified newspaper advert. 'There was this picture of [British singer] Paul Weller in a cream trench coat looking so stylish - I was like "Whoaaaaah I will wear that to school!". So I saved up for it...But it was actually a fucking laboratory coat with a dressing gown belt!' It didn't stop the quest. He recounts the high risk style stakes of later going later to London's Carnaby Street to find another trench coat and strappy ankle boots. 'I had this fear — that I was going to get comments... I was entering into a subculture [London's avant-garde Mods and Rockers] where you would get your teeth knocked out if you ran into the wrong person — because of the clothes you chose.' Given his hard to pinpoint look and a curious, magpie artistic mind, his style radar naturally spans far wider than just music. 'I might see Hasidic Jews and wonder where they got their hat from... on the shoot I wasn't joking when I said I would

channel Ace Ventura - he looks fucking amazing, the boots, high waisted pants.' Clearly he wasn't joking, if you take a look at his outfit next to Alison in the zebra sweater. Not many would see a style icon in Ace Ventura, let alone pull it off and make it genius, their own.



But everything they do is their own: even the fact he snapped a wrist tendon (an injury that crept up out of nowhere) ironically became a fundamental aspect on the new album: a collection of the music they 'absolutely die for...lot of dub and bass, beautiful old blues songs'. On top of the

presumably deep emotional pain from his marriage to Kate breaking down, excruciating physical pain: six operations total, six torturing months with a cast on. The death knell for any normal guitarist, it forced them to think laterally and partly defined the new musical sound they were searching for. Only the purest artistic minds can turn pain upside down into a successful and original creative driving force; he used whatever he could to write with and played music with one hand — namely a keyboard, and the "circle of fifths," a complex musical theory diagram to explore relationships between notes and scales. His face gets serious. 'It is musical mathematics, a beautiful circle of notes and chords and keys... I was trying to work out how to write songs with this little thing.' The injury's rock 'n' roll resolution suits him perfectly. Picture the scene: one afternoon in London, Jamie chances on a smoke filled house where one of a poker

playing, wine drinking group is a French former punk star and renowned surgeon. Cut to the operating room months later: for his medical team to understand their prestigious patient and wider cultural importance of their work to save Jamie's wrist, the surgeon forces them listen to The Kills tracks on repeat throughout the operation. It worked.

The duo rate France as one of their favourite destinations to play. And Mexico and Brazil - those audiences because the fans get lost in the music. As does Moss hart when performing. The adrenaline of the audience takes her somewhere she can't reach on the sidewalk; 'there is something about the energy... you allow yourself to just go there..sometimes you don't know where you have been, you cannot remember any of it: that's the best show.' Being transported arises again and again thematically: their main inspiration comes from travel. Thankfully, since they seem to



spend more time on the road than off it. For Alison, South America, Los Angeles and Nashville (where she calls home) are favourites. For Jamie, Los Angeles is a favourite (he is temporarily living there), London which was once important to him but is now creatively 'doomed'; Africa where he grew up will always be in his blood (his father was a construction site manager whose work took them from Swaziland to South Africa and beyond), but also the general novelty of travel — 'the things that get you in a new city, things that people who live there don't notice..the colour of

the tiles on roof, the spray paint somewhere...'

No surprise those visual nuances are what spark ideas; this is a band where art work is so important that for one album it took longer to create than the music. A band who flouted a conventional first album cover shoot in favour of D. I. Y. collaged photo booth imagery. I ask how important their sartorial style is to the success of the band. Alison rightly says you have to make an effort, that fans 'don't want to see musicians dressed like roadies'. For Jamie, the way you are visually is increasingly important in today's digital landscape: 'Millions of people are now connected, struggling for individuality in this homogenous mass of social media ... and desperate to find something authentic. You know Bowie wasn't faking it...but the jury is still out on whether Gaga is...' If there is one thing the jury is not out on: that is The Kills are not faking it. They are about as truthful and authentic



as artists can be, reflected also in their surrounding circle which includes Hedi Slimane, British contemporary artist and filmmaker Jake Chapman, cult indie filmmaker and actress Samantha Morton who directed a video for them; and The White Stripes' Jack White who included Alison in his part time band The Dead Weather.

I ask who would be in their dream circle of Factory-esque collaborators — for Alison, Jimmy Hendrix. For Jamie, American hip hop supremo Pusha T. Dream clothing if money no object? For Alison, vintage snakeskin, ideally

Ossie Clarke. For Jamie, also a skin from the past, Lou Reed's leather perhaps. What about other dreams and goals? They claim not to have them per se, just resolutely live in the moment and want as wider audience as possible to enjoy their music - an honourable as artistic ambition as any. What about the dream location to play? They are open, just somewhere they didn't go before that excites them, another adventure. Perhaps Russia? They once played in Sochi for a private event, but do want to go properly. They then realise they are late for the studio...as they exit our diner booth, my mind trails off to imagining how a trip to Moscow or St Petersburg might manifest in their music, artwork, and style. Until that is confirmed, the next best option is to head to Palm Springs' Coachella festival this spring, the first major festival (surely of many to come) they are headlining; not just for the music, but to see performing two wholly unique artists.

FREE SPIRIT

As she ascends from runway to screen, Dree Hemingway shows us around her paradoxical, magical world.

BY MARY FELLOWES

Off the bat, her story could easily be *that* hackneyed cliche: model turned actress, descendant of a cultural legacy (America's greatest literary legend, Ernest Hemingway). In person she is too smart, too kooky, too authentic for that. Enigmatic actually; the girl you wish was both your older and younger sister. I am a little biased: we have been friends since 2010 when I persuaded her to reinterpret Daryl Hannah's character from indie 1980's flick Summer Lovers, for Turkish Vogue - which she did exquisitely. There, she struck me as an independent thinker, self-contained or perhaps self-protecting, healthily ambitious with no need of attention or approval from anyone. The only thing that has changed since then is her ascent to being a bona fide indie actress, someone who was once a

model. Back then aged twenty two, she was thrilled to star alongside the "biggest male model in the world", Jon Kortajarena. This time, now twenty eight, she nominated Josh Beech: British musician and part time male model known for his work with Calvin Klein. A sign she has moved on: her new pseudo love interest and editorial team mate Josh is anti-establishment, cynically humoured, covered in tattoos - in stark contrast to the gleaming ivory tower of high fashion artifice that Kortajarena inhabited.

Not long ago we discovered we were neighbors in a forgotten corner of New York's East Village, the last vestige of Manhattan with eccentrics and artists. I had imagined her somewhere more polished - but that would underestimate her

thirst for the quirky. Happier observing, she gives little away - it can read as impenetrable; so people knowing we are friends often ask me for the inside scoop. This anecdote sums her up: when we were playing dress up at her apartment before heading together to watch Miuccia Prada's collaboration with the Performa Biennale, she kept toying with layered outfits of thrift meets designer, unsettled. Asking her what was up, she just shrugged her shoulders replying, "I's not quite right...I don't look homeless enough yet."

Cut to a few months later : she offers to collect me for this interview because I am stranded without a car, Uber is 3.5x surcharging, and I am delayed with styling the members of a new Bahamian



band Lenny Kravitz has discovered. Most actresses wouldn't play chauffeur, but curious creature that she is, a vintage red SL Mercedes pulled up, and out jumped a soft blonde nymph in white denim overalls atop a grey sweater with what looks like shower sandals and retro red shades. If the look sounds bizarre, it would be on any mortal, but on her it makes sense; in the same way that Chloe Sevigny (whom she has also acted alongside) co-opts bizarre but genius combinations. As we

pull into Fred Segal's parking lot, she takes one look at the No Entry sign and giggles "rules were made to be....broken", orienting a sleek boat of a car into a bay.

Next we come across Sama and Haya Abu Khadra, Chanel muses and international jet set twins who I also know from working with them a year ago for this magazine. We giggle together for a while about recent Coachella decadence and their mutual Hollywood royalty friends who don't need last names. If Fred Segal is predictable, it was time frame necessity rather than choice: Dree originally requested The Canyon Country Store: Laurel Canyon's veritable hippie Mecca which can't have seen a lick of paint or change of staff since the 1970's and reputedly makes a higher revenue from under the counter marijuana than it does almond matcha latte. Classic Dree: happier sitting on the plastic chaired, paint chipped deck of a scruffy country store. The canyons is her spiritual home as well as literal one: wild deer and winding roads, this bohemian enclave was home to The

Doors and Houdini, and its residents today are cult like: if you live in the canyons, you aren't trying to impress. Privacy over glamour. It's full of quietly successful writers and artists, those who have conquered in Tinsel Town but don't need to brag about it.



She comments that she likes my outfit: it's very "London" (pronounced in a Cockney accent). Over dinner she cooked recently (it helps her switch off), she looked me up and down and said, "Oh my God, can we discuss your look? It's like you just took all of your dirty laundry off the floor and threw it together...I love it. I, like, need it.' On set for this

shoot which we conceptualised together (imaginary latter day Slim Aarons anarchists), she and I were riffing on a possible look. Refreshingly, it was too glamorous, not "London enough:" for her. She is anti-glamour, a massive Anglophile. (Her most recent big love story was even with a New York based hipster Brit). That irreverence to style is a red thread through her sartorial approach: she loves London for being "bleached out, truly street...it's what Vetements are doing now and where fashion is going."

Which explains why she is obsessed with Alessandro Michele at Gucci. She is never without a small cross-body logo shoulder bag. In fact, our shoot had to wrap early so she could make it to his dinner that evening...for that she merely scrubbed off the make up look with coconut oil, roughed up her hair with her fingers and slithered childlike into a look his press office have sent over from Milan especially. I point out his world is in some ways very "London". She agrees, adding it is also 'very Wes Anderson'. Naturally, as Margot Tenenbaum is Dree's greatest style icon. Plus Grace

Kelly in *To Catch a Thief*; Katharine Hepburn; Daisy Buchanan's character in *Great Gatsby* (can't you just see Dree as a latter day Mia Farrow?), Faye Dunaway and early Gwyneth Paltrow.

It's no surprise her style icons are from the screen, from bygone days. Performance, backed up by a rigorous knowledge of movie history, infuses her modeling more than any model I have ever worked with (and I have been lucky enough to shoot pretty much every super model there is). "I went to acting school and felt I didn't have enough experience, so I did ballet - I like moving, creating a character. I wanted to be the girl in the magazine who made those images, who helped the girl reading in the bedroom want to find herself ...that's why I am annoying on set, I want to get involved, to make it better, have each shoot be the best it possibly can." She insists it is not about control, even though it can certainly come across as highly stubborn. It did on our shoot. Initially a battle to get her in some looks, her determination was testament to Oscar Wilde's legendary line "the costume



bears upon the very soul of the wearer": whenever I tried to convince her into something she wasn't 100% into, she just couldn't perform for the camera. It wasn't about ego or taste: just alchemy. She justifies it as "I don't want to make same image twice. It's fucking hard." There goes that refreshing voice of image maker and artist, not a fame seeking wannabe.

It is this instinctiveness and deep self awareness of style and character that has drawn the likes of Ines and Vinhood and Bruce Webber to shoot her again and again. In fact, typically of Dree's World, her acting career kicked off when Bruce introduced her to legendary Hollywood manager Alan Mindel. The most authentic voice in fashion photography becomes

professional guardian angel: pure 100% Dree; that charmed life. Oh, and Alec Baldwin spotted the gift too. 'He once come up to me, shook me, saying, " You need to act...tell your boyfriend you need to act". '

I coincidentally had dinner with Alan Mindel a few months ago, at James Dean's old cottage also in Laurel Canyon: he walked in and exclaimed "Oh Gawd, I remember being here so many times getting messy with Jimmy Dean". At the advanced point of his career where he has little to prove, he decided to represent Dree for similar reasons I have listed : her truthfulness, curiousness and intellect. And typically Dree would have *the real deal* as an agent, someone under the radar and authentic, not one of today's cliched, slippery and ruthless Hollywood power players reminiscent of Ari from cult TV show Entourage. They wouldn't wash with her. So perceptive and sensitive, she will see through you immediately, but silently..

That sensitivity can also be a burden. I suggest that feeling

deeply is both a blessing and a curse - she nods in consent, and certainly found it when researching her role as a porn star for indie flick Starlet. 'I did a lot of research on porn - I hated the research as I don't agree with porn: I hate it. But I found new respect for the girls as they were really sweet. I went to porn sets and porn conventions. But there is a darkness in it..' I don't want to point out that she did actually also pose for the relaunch of Playboy, but then I remind myself she was its first star to pose not fully nude. On her terms as usual, turning a cliche on its head and making it her own, owning it even.

As for darkness, what does she channel if needed to cry on camera? Ever paradoxical, she calls on positivity. "You can't fake cry. I channel feelings of complete bliss. I am that person in the movie that when something amazing happens and they get so overwhelmed - it breaks my heart in the best way, and makes me feel so much." The undisputable empath. A tear comes to my eye. Which is why she feels her knocks deeply too. She is

after all still a fledgling actress with a lot to prove, despite and because of her surname. 'It's hard, still a game I am still fighting for. Not like modelling where I was so fucking fortunate to be successful ...' Too right: she has walked the runway for Givenchy, Calvin Klein, Chanel, Topshop among others; been in campaigns for Gucci, Gaultier, Valentino, H&M, Chanel, Ferregamo, David Yurman, Hugo Boss, Tiffany, Gianfranco Ferre and Chloe perfume. Editorially she has graced pages and covers of multiple Vogues, Harpers Bazaar, i-D, Interview, Love, W, Numero, Vanity Fair, and V.

And that was just modelling. Acting wise, she already has twenty projects under her belt and counting. Co-stars have spanned from old timers (Jane Fonda, Jonathan Pryce) to a healthy mix of indie (Kristen Ritter, Jason Schwartzman), even Pamela Andersen. All have been niche independent projects with people she admires, especially Schwartzman. Is she at her tipping point? The challenge right now is for the right role and the right studio: "Some person pretty

high up there just being like , "We fucking like her - let's take a chance on her "...that one chance can be the thing that rockets you. I know I got it....I am good at waiting ...I am patient....' Of course she has "it", it's in her DNA. Not just from one of history's best story tellers (her great grandfather), but her aunt Margot, also an actress who unlike Dree tragically didn't manage to conquer her demons and whose life was cut short after a shadowy descent into alcoholism and other self destruction. Perhaps, I wonder, that's what drives Dree, to carry on the family legend but in contrast to Margot: using the twenty-first century banner of self awareness, a little bumper sticker psychology, inner seeking and self-help.

She testifies that she was inspired by her aunt, and not her mother who is "the first to admit she has no style." Maybe that is why Dree is so secure in herself. There is no evidence of classic dynastic mother/daughter competition such as Judy Garland and Liza Minelli. She won't go deeper into family relations, but does wax lyrical briefly about a

carefree wholesome idyllic Idaho childhood at the Hemingway estate in Sun Valley, rooted in nature.

I mention I used to sit alone as a child and talk at length to our bevy of chickens. Dree bursts out laughing. 'Me too! I loved talking to animals! My parents were like, "We are worried, there is something wrong with her...".' I suggest that grounded upbringing, away from Manhattan's razzle dazzle or LA's dynastic cliques, might parlay into her free spirited approach to style. She disagrees. 'I am not a western girl. I don't own cowboy boots, I don't like them, don't think they are making come back ...the fact people keep bringing them back insults me, they weren't good in the 1980's. I wore Old Navy! There was nothing good about any of my looks.' I refuse to believe it's that simple. Her current irreverent style must have come from something surely? She confesses to a few cute 90's forays, flower dresses and some 'really bizarre ensembles... and a big baggy sweatshirt phase.' She lapses into giggles again about some notable denim moments:

'Frankie B's - super fucking tight jeans: far too low. They had a three inch crotch so luckily I hadn't gone through puberty - or you would have seen everything. Like no, I was not a good dresser: my mom makes fun of me for it.'



Perhaps that naivety and lack of exposure to fashion and style left room to create something for herself, to construct her own version of herself, her own role. For sure: after figuring out she didn't have to subscribe to the uniform of black like all her fellow models on castings once she got to New York ("I realized in the end I was more Virgin Suicides"), she now juxtaposes constantly. Not to make a point, just because it's her being true to herself. She summarizes her style as 'a mix between teenage boy, 1970's and Celine

girl, clean and odd accents'. There go those paradoxes again. Her go to staples for a life constantly on the move (by design as well as for work) are cashmere sweaters, Chelsea boots, white tops, jeans. Plus lots of rings and recently her Gucci bag. Always simple black Moscot sunglasses.

That curious, untamable spirit isn't flustered by non stop travel, actually thrives on it. Buying a home in LA, apart from the obvious work practicality, wasn't to hang out with famous people. She already grew up with fame and drama. She missed 'being outdoors, seeing trees,...I love peace and quite and being by myself. So it's an ideal situation but I need New York and wouldn't give it up...I always say if I had to live in one place I probably wouldn't like the place . If I didn't travel I would be probably miserable.' There is that paradox again. Needing urban to offset rural and vice versa. She admits she needs extremes.

Of course Air BnB and luxury apartment platform One Fine Stay are her new favourite

things. As are Tokyo for its 'attention to detail and vintage' (which she unearthed while filming there this winter : of course she stayed at the Park Hyatt - in fact her character isn't dissimilar to Scarlet Johanssen's in Sophie Coppola's movie Lost In Translation that put that hotel on the map) ; Berlin, Paris and of course London where she and I will be hanging out a few weeks after this interview.

With those inherent extremes, we discuss if she is conflicted, misunderstood. Absolutely: 'when I am being open and playful , people think I am raging party girl which I am not, or that I am trying to hook up with everyone, also definitely notpeople don't know how to figure me out ..that scares people sometimes.

I suggest it maybe intimidates men too. She won't discuss her love life publicly for his article, but rather than being cold, robot like , uptight and boundaried like other actors when you touch on personal life, she turns it on its head. First by describing her greatest loves as her sister, illustrator Langley Fox Hemignway who

she nicknames Long Legs. And 'all the movies I have watched have been my greatest loves... As for men, I have loved all the men and they are incomparable !'. When i press further, she outsmarts me with irony, giggling. "Dating myself is hot...I make myself dinner, sometimes we run a bath, do lotion massages after bath, long walks on the beach with myself, every night we watch the sunset together and it's soooooo sexy....' I take another route: who were her greatest cinematic crushes? Leonardo [Di Caprio] in Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet. 'Young sexy Leo, that film broke my heart and made me fail at having any relationships. I had a big dream of like "that's what it (love) is.' Jackpot: there is that fragility I see through being her friend, what makes her so endearing. As it is underpinned with independence, but she is nonetheless in command of it and protective of it.

Such is her internal barometer, it plays into her hobbies also. 'I stopped watching TV as it made me depressed and I wasn't dreaming any more. I stopped making my own

pictures.' She worries about next generation of kids. "They don't have that experience any more , they don't have to use their imagination." She reads a lot more now, recently Kim Gordon's "Girl In A Band". Next will be JG Ballard's "Crash" which others suggest is heavy, but which she says she will find the lightness in, as a confirmed 'glass half full not half empty" kinda gal.

You can see why I have no doubt she will make it as an actress. She reassures me she will 'never stop learning....It's about character development. '[There are] certain characters I haven't played yet such as period pieces, where I would have to submerge myself into knowing about that world.' With so much of her inner and outer world nailed, there is still a piece of the puzzle missing. I want to know what heaven would look like for her. Unsurprisingly, it a hybrid of her childhood and new home of California: the desert. For others, the desert can be a place of foreboding and deviance (vis a vis hit TV show Breaking Bad, or Wim Wender's Paris Texas) - lonely, where nature is powerful



and threatening. Not for her: ever the optimist, her sandy heaven would be 'full of wild flowers, ... wind blowing...and the perfect temperature,'. With that, it's time up. We are already both late for our next appointments, but we can't resist a quick pirouette around the contemporary floor upstairs at Fred Segal. Dree pulls out a conceptual trench coat reworked as a skirt and an asymmetric floral slip dress. They sum up the two sides of her. I mention they have a London sensibility about them. Hemingway quips back, in a perfect British cockney accent, 'Exactly babe! I'll see ya over there in May', and floats into her red Mercedes. Even though we are on tarmac I could have sworn I see desert dust kicking up as she speeds away.

FOR THE LOVE OF ROSES

Hailey Bennett Whispers Scented Sweet Nothings To Chloe's New Perfume

BY MARY FELLOWES

To celebrate the tenth birthday of the original Chloe Eau de Parfum, the only solution to evolve into a new limited edition was to drill deep into ‘very best raw material in perfume’, says its creator, leading nose Michel Almanac, a classic no-nonsense, articulate, silver fox Frenchman (whose previous accolades include heavyweights from Armani, Gucci, Dunhill, Burberry, to niche players Bond, Le Labo and Acqua di Parma, even Mercedes Benz and Porsche). So exclusive is its magic ingredient, *rose centifolia*, that in his native Grasse, home of “haute parfum” in the South of France, only a mere handful of fields grow it. Into the mix is vanilla for a ‘velvety touch’ and patchouli for ‘added depth’. Hence the new version’s key

note is woody, compared to its powdery floral predecessor.

Its scented, easy glamour carries forward the brands’ classic *je ne sais quoi*, as does its campaign face: twenty nine year old American actress Hailey Bennett—and not just in her Chloe-esque scrubbed, effortless natural look—but serendipitously several unexpected deeply woven ties to the house itself, the new perfume’s olfactory qualities and the narrative of its short promotional film where she drives, free and alone, on a desert journey into the unknown guided by the wind.

Ever the everywoman, Bennett (best known for her performances in Warren Beatty’s *Rules Don’t Apply*, *Girl*

on The Train with Emily Blunt, *Magnificent Seven* opposite Denzel Washington, Chris Pratt, Ethan Hawke, and *The Equalizer*, also with Washington and Chloe Grace Moretz) is well versed at four wheeled abandon; as well as coincidentally once previously driving a vintage Mercedes identical to the campaign’s—around the French countryside, naturally—her carefree, tomboy-shaped upbringing in rural Ohio featured rough and tumble quad bikes and fishing. Which explains why her travel regime is not the typical Hollywood starlet’s extensive indulgence list, just ‘a jade heating mat, tiger balm and epsom bath salts.’ Although she does confess—curled up, make up free—in a cavernous suite in the quintessential

Parisian luxury hotel Le Bristol, to the ultimate indulgence being a bath with the Chloe Eau de Parfum bath essence; ‘divine - like bathing in rosewater.’



She explains how that same childhood was scented with not just ‘quaker oats, my grandma, and vanilla’, but fortuitously it also fostered a love of one single bloom. ‘I loved going into spring because I knew my grandpa would be planting

roses—I have always had a fascination with them because of this; I know it sounds “hokey” but its one of the reasons I love it so much because of that is the heart of this fragrance is roses.’ Other olfactory memories include the smell of fire. ‘Growing up we always had little chimneys and I was fascinated by making fires, singing sessions around a campfire.’ Everyone in her family sings, except a relentlessly hardworking and ambitious mother who ‘cannot carry a tune’ and whose influence still seems to drive her today. ‘We grew up middle to lower class . But she loved beautiful things; she started a company later in life that became successful, as a designer—so she worked her way up, worked for the things she loved.’ And on finding financial success, the first key fashion gift bestowed by her to her daughter was naturally a Chloe bag. Perhaps there are parallels between that pioneering mother and her fascination with the founder of the house of Chloe—‘Gaby, this eccentric woman, immigrated from Egypt to Paris and was a pioneer of ready to wear—this is interesting to me.’

Gaby Aghion’s heritage is cleverly woven elsewhere throughout the new flacon. Fortuny-style pleats emblematic of the Chloé look are reworked as romantic grooves, and around the the bottle neck, a hand-tied bow of grosgrain ribbon woven using a couture technique—requiring an hour to produce just twenty four metres. The stopper has been adorned in gold, and beneath a silver-plated metal plaque crafted by an artisan (the ones personally delivered to our hotel rooms had our own initials engraved—now that’s class). With that in mind, I point to a chain with hearts on around Bennett’s ankle that I assume is Chloe: in fact a treasured trinket from her childhood, coincidentally it just happens to look identical to the sought after brand’s jewelery which often featuring the timeless love motifs. In fact, love itself also connects her to the fragrance—I ask her how it impacts on her when she wears it. ‘Confident and fresh... and... I like to put it on love letters!’

FASHION & STYLE: INTERVIEWS

Gigi x Tommy: Match Made in Heaven

Gigi Hadid's debut collection for Hilfiger hits the perfect surprise note, with integrity.

BY MARY FELLOWES

Let's face it: we all love celebrity, we all love fashion. Truthfully though - do we love it when they collaborate? Do we really believe that actresses toil with fabrics and references? No. Usually anonymous studio assistants assemble a vanilla collection, a talent adds their name via selecting favourite pieces and thus is born a commercial dream. Everyone's a winner: the brand gets a new audience, the celebrity can pretend to have untapped creative skills and sartorial vision, the naive consumers think they are wearing a slice of their favourite star. Except it has zero integrity. So when one of the biggest global fashion brands work several billion dollars (Tommy Hilfiger) pares with a supermodel and social media star (over twenty million Instagram followers, scores of Vogue covers with

Mario Testino and Patrick Demarchelier, the face of Versace, Maxmara, Tom Ford and Balmain - and of course now Hilfiger), why should it be any different? Even Tommy himself whispered his concerns of it rolling down that slippery slope when Gigi first agreed to collaborate.

But this story is different, and endearing: during a pre-assigned one hour collection strategy meeting, Gigi wanted to stay longer, then longer still, until one hour became eight. Then days and weeks became six months of back and forth. Cue Gigi digging through archives, playing with shapes, obsessing over arm holes, bringing her own vintage pieces; the rest is about to be pop culture/fashion history. On which note let's not forget what perfect sense this makes:

Tommy has more entertainment miles under his belt than any peer, is more than the commercial all-American sports and leisurewear trap he has latterly fallen into. Tommy wrote the book on pop culture collaboration: find another who since the late 1980's has dressed or collaborated with the Rolling Stones, David Bowie, Lenny Kravitz, Pharrell, Beyoncé, Britney Spears, Bruce Springsteen, The Who, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Kate Hudson and Naomi Campbell.

In a penthouse suite at Manhattan's Mark Hotel, Gigi stands proudly next to three rails of clothing and accessories and walks me through it, a consummate pro, nervous but excited. Visually, the glamorous tomboy collection straddles nautical Brigitte Bardot in golden era St Tropez



meets 21st century west coast hipster Americana....and...I have to confess...works perfectly. A sensible sea of blues, greys, blacks and neutrals, she wanted the palette to mix and match and cover all style bases. Cue a feminine printed silk day dress with custom Gigi logo amongst anchors and stars with a rope belt; a naval cape/pea coat hybrid; an ivory oversize cable sweater; bomber jackets in fur and nylon (her favourites). And

the critic's choice? Denim overalls - slim cut and sexy with a practical removable black body. Tote bags, chunky ankle boots, custom badges and perfume round off what will have the social media fashion obsessed hoards hyperventilating. Just directional enough, yet commercially viable: it actually is that good.

I still am in disbelief - has she been prepped? I push a little further, yet Gigi has rapid fire answers, bubbly but with full conviction. The cream sweater? 'It's warm and it might have been your grandma's but I cropped it to make it more now.' The detachable overall's black body? 'You can put it under jeans , but you can also wear it as a bathing suit or whatever - the fabric's really nice so it's really close to your body.' The sailor back-pack? 'We took a sailor uniform and pinned it onto the back-pack - that's how we got the shape.'

I later tell Tommy I am astounded how confident, composed and fluid the whole performance is, genuine to a tee. He concurs, full of admiration for her 'great personal taste'. 'I loved the fact

that she has that Californian vibe....a breath of fresh air, the epitome of the all-American girl. She's athletic. She's outgoing. She's smart. She's thoughtful. She's naturally very sweet; and at the same time incredibly beautiful.' I suggest a latter day Claudia Schiffer- apparently I took the words out of his mouth.

When she first walked his runway, the show received 890 million social media impressions, the majority being for Gigi. Cut to an internal discussion at Hilfiger HQ; ' We said let's do a "Gigi thing". We didn't know what the "Gigi thing" was, but she helped us figure it out.' Is it a departure for him, aesthetically? Yes, but he insists Gigi is for him the perfect latter day answer to his prior entertainment collaborations, thus the brand can continue move forward. So far forward that he is also embracing interiors - recently he bought Miami's classic hotel The Raleigh and is redoing it over two years. Another string to a bow he describes as 'fame fashion, art, music, blending entertainment into fashion...I'm always taking that inspiration from fame.' Too right.

As for Gigi's inspiration - we know she scoured the Hilfiger archive and her vintage closet; I ask what else informed the design process. 'I've always grown up doing art, mostly inspired by my parents. My mom is an interior designer, my dad an architect: I always saw them drawing. They let me paint and draw, and wear whatever I wanted and paint on t-shirts!' Her ideal weekend, contrary to the technicolour social life on her Instagram feed, is apparently staying home to be creative. 'I spray paint, I paint, I draw, I do collages on walls.' It all starts to make sense.

I tell her I truthfully love the collection. She blushes and goes into a wide eyed childlike frenzy, eyes darting. "Are you sure, really?" Then we get down to why it means so much to her. 'I'm going to wear all of it...it's all really me and you have to remember how intelligent fans are. As long as you're genuine, which I've always been since the beginning with my social media - they know my style, they know my personality, and

they're going to know if I wasn't in [the Hilfiger HQ] for eight hours. I don't just want them to buy it because it has my name on it, I want them to buy it because they're a fan of my style and this is genuine to it.'

That dedication went into reinventing her vintage pieces too. 'I didn't copy anything from any of my actual pieces that I had; but for example the texture of the fabric. I'd hold the two next to each other and say, "Guys, does this coat feel like this coat?" No. I don't want it to look like the Disneyland version of the vintage.' And the styling informed the design process equally: she thought in outfit terms. Once the skinny jean was done, it informed the sweater and so on. Which makes her not only one of the world's most famous models and social media stars and designer, but also savvy stylist. And one of the sweetest, most humble, earnest and sincere famous people I ever met. With a motto of 'be kind, work hard, make a friend', her fame suddenly makes sense, as does her first collection.

May The Force Be With You

On the eve of Manolo Blahnik's museum retrospective at L'Hermitage this May, the maestro sits for a rare portrait exclusively with Vogue Russia and reflects on four decades and counting as fashion's favourite shoemaker.

BY MARY FELLOWES

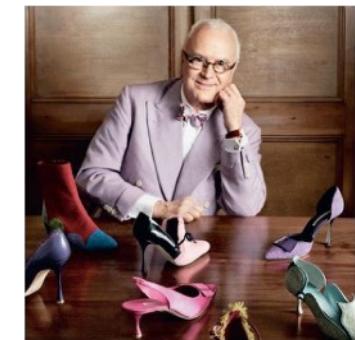
Six beautifully dressed male and female assistants flutter nervously in the cavernous Georgian London building housing the Manolo Blahnik global HQ, evoking eighteenth century royal servants laying a grand wooden table for dinner, candy coloured shoes instead of tableware, per my request. "Could Mr Blahnik be holding court as the head of the banquet, his shoes like disciples in front?" It was approved, but not without much back and forth: he rarely sits for a portrait. The energy in the room shifts sharply for no apparent reason, an electric frisson. And suddenly, the genie in proverbial lamp explodes: there is Mr Blahnik, larger than life and roaring with lilac clad laughter. 'Oh, Darling, it's you! We had such fun when you used

to come here with Issy [fashion icon and former British Vogue fashion director Isabella Blow, my first boss]. That makes me happy, to be with "real" people! He sits down to apply lip balm from an art deco gilded container, and squeals with excitement when I disclose my trousers he is admiring are a part of an original Ballet Russes costume, worn especially for him and to discuss Russia. 'Oh how beeeeeautiful - these things, I tell you - they don't exist today.'

But then spots the table, frowning. 'Quelle horreur! What eeeeeeez 'zis?!' He picks up shoe after shoe in a frenzy, throwing them playfully at the assistants, replacing them without styles he feels are more 'my world' - a theatrical process

of his typical relentless perfectionism that quietly continues for thirty minutes in tandem with our discussion about his forthcoming exhibition, *Manolo Blahnik: The Art Of Shoes*, which soon lands at The State Hermitage Museum amidst a crowded touring schedule including the capital of his paternal homeland Prague, Madrid and Milan where it has just opened. His eyes open wide, 'We have *lines!!* Around the block already!' The show came about in typical Manolo style - he was introduced to Dr Cristina Carrillo de Albornoz Fisac, a former UN diplomat and global curator through 'Bianca' [Jagger, of course].

And how to edit down nearly thirty-five thousand pairs into a



couple hundred to tell his epic story? He relinquished control, stepping in once when he noticed his 'baby I love best' was absent, a stiletto with aluminium heels. 'So modern - one of those girls wore it - Naomi maybe, for a Galliano show perhaps - I don't remember - it was 100 years ago. It was like an aeroplane for the heel' The exhibition's six sections examine his recurring themes: First, 'Gala' : his most imaginative shoes, bathed in



irony and fantasy, including a range for Sophia Coppola's film *Marie Antoinette*. Second, geographical styles inspired by Spain, Italy, Africa, Russia, England and Japan. Third, his fascination with art and architecture. Fourth: nature, examining his passion for the botanical world. Fifth, 'Materials', depicting the elaborate details, rich fabrications and colours used in his unparalleled, exquisite craftsmanship. The final and largest segment, 'Core' is dedicated to the most influential people in his life, past and present: including Anna Piaggi, Brigitte Bardot and King Alexander the Great.

It would be a disservice to himself and mankind were there not a retrospective of one of

fashion's greatest legends, who has received ten major awards as well as been honoured by Queen Elizabeth; for Blahnik is as much a museum worthy artist as accessory designer. His creations, which could contain up to ninety five separate pieces in one shoe and retailing in thirty four countries with three hundred and ten points of sale and thirteen standalone stores, are indisputably artworks in their own right. A highly embroidered one might take a whole day for the stitching alone. He has collaborated with Rihanna, Vetements, Victoria Beckham, British newcomer Grace Wales Bonner among others - if the list seems in-cohesive, the red thread is pure artistic integrity: Manolo bestowing magic dust only on designers who capture his imagination. His process - deliberately ignoring trends, refusing any design assistants, carving the lasts himself from wood, directly overseeing his sketches come to life as three hundred styles a season in the Milanese factories - is nothing but an artist's dedication to a vision and craft. He has turned down numerous offers for expansion and investment, since to just pay the rent and do what

he loves best autonomously is perfection.

For inspiration, it really is anywhere and everywhere; striking recently when attempting a béchamel sauce and noticing the form of the saucepan handle leading to hundreds of sketches. For this winter, a book about remote Scottish islands led him down a path of artisan "Harris" tweed, now fraying in sugary pink pump form in front of us. 'Pictures of oxidised boats and wood on the pages..a whole collection came from that!' He goes on to eulogise voraciously about these traditional crafts and artisans in England and Europe, lamenting the scourge of Chinese manufacturing and terrible effects on quality.

While continuing to rearrange the table, a diktat to his team erupts: 'Please get me the banana shoe. And a picture of the penis table made for Catherine the Great by an admirer!'. His accent is unidentifiable mixed European and haute-aristocratic British, soaring and dipping like a swallow in summer, from staccato to prolonged aria. As I write this article, his speech is impossible to punctuate as rarely

is a sentence finished, a restless mind that flips and darts with no filter, twice as fast as those around him who can barely keep up. A linear thinker would write it off as eccentricity; which would be a disservice. He just runs at a purer, higher wavelength to civilians.



He turns to me. ' She [Catherine] had a wonderful sense of humour. Divine! And many... hmm, shall we say..."bed companions"....!' Alongside Marie Antoinette, she would be his ultimate muse to dress from history. From the present: a dream wearer would be Mary Beard, Oxbridge scholar and legendary classicist. Although for those living he hasn't done badly: Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell are fashion's biggest devotees,

alongside Karlie Kloss who is also downstairs waiting for him - perhaps to borrow something to wear for Natalia Vodianova's Naked Heart event tonight. Continuing on Russian themes, a cherished memory includes sending red shoes to Grace Coddington for Jerry Hall to wear in Moscow for a Norman Parkinson shoot, which only just made the shoot due to airport complications. A key place of inspiration is Moscow's Kuskovo Museum. He loved a lilac bedroom with partially empty walls, where 'the paintings had been taken during the revolution, with just one left...I like to see beauty where people don't see beauty at all.'

The picture of the famous table arrives, some of his team blushing, others trying to hide smiles, him cackling with unstoppable laughter. I ask what is his equivalent of a summer palace, but he doesn't do vacations. He might one day concede for a few balmy days on the Baltic, but otherwise switches off by bunking down alone for long reading sessions in his Georgian townhouse in the west of England, a house which he found by chance with Grace

[Coddington], then owned by a man with a parrot on his shoulder who didn't want to sell it. Typically Manolo found a way, and today every single room houses his collection of shoes, even bathrooms. Which everyone (including men, who he is currently re-introducing classic styles for at retail) can get their own slice of, at St Petersburg's L'Hermitage any minute now.

GUCCI x TROUBLE ANDREW

What happens when you pair the quintessential Italian luxury brand with the artist who has been subverting its logo in graffiti? Meet Trouble Andrew, Gucci's new collaborator.

BY MARY FELLOWES

Outside a Brooklyn cafe, flanked by fried chicken joints and shady immigration attorneys, a group of tattooed skateboarders are rolling cigarettes. A giant black and white Great Dane nearly bowls me over. I check the email from the Gucci press office: "Just to advise Trevor has a large dog". ...So I must be in the right place, even though it doesn't immediately suggest the origin for a global fashion trend with one of the longest wait lists for a bag.

Trouble Andrew (passport name: William Trevor Andrew - he answers to the latter two, was nicknamed Trouble for reasons he will not disclose) walks me through the streets to

his studio. Every third building is a church housed in a shop front - Jewish, Catholic, Christian, Episcopalian - I wonder if Gucci is his religion but don't dare ask yet. While casting bright blue eyes over building skips, he mentions his weathered biker jacket (graffitied with the double 'G' Gucci logo) is from a thrift store in his native Canada, like most of his favourite pieces. He and his mom spent any spare time scouring those stores; he still does today, feeling like he has 'won' when he finds a gem.

We know he is a Gucci muse and collaborator, we know he came from humble Nova Scotia origins - what happened in between, what has got him

(and me) here today? He didn't even finish high school, instead quitting to be a professional snowboarder. He never went to art school, but moved to Brooklyn fifteen years ago, surrounding himself by fellow boarders (skate and snow), artists, musicians and creating art, film and music. He turns the key in the lock to "The Trap House", a moody, garage studio crammed with Gucci graffitied ephemera. Even the entire bathroom and toilet is either defaced (or embellished? - depending on subjective interpretation) with his signature art that has spawned a fashion frenzy.

His dog reappears, herded by one of the skaters - who don't

speak much. Old school VHS and TV sets, pulled from those building skips, are all blaring simultaneously; it's apparently normal. 'A lot of times I just put on a movie, and it'll be repeating for a month in here.' One of his favourite mediums, he has made videos for years; recently for Miley Cyrus. A mannequin is leaning against a wall, draped in a suspiciously counterfeit looking Gucci logo sheet. A former gift from a friend in the Phillipines, he spontaneously created a last minute Halloween costume from it by cutting two holes for eyes and traversing the Halloween madness of New York City. It generated a viral Instagram moment, #GucciGhost. 'I found the

response interesting, and then just started drawing the character a lot'.

The ghost wasn't his first major Gucci moment though. The "lightbulb" moment being after his first big paycheque snowboarding and seeking the ultimate reward. Cut to the local mall with his mom, they stumble on a Gucci watch. The whole experience is like a primitive child first entering a cathedral of candy; the Midas touch that true luxury imbues, and the power and prestige that its ownership bestows on the wearer, awakens in him a response simultaneously profound and visceral. The rest is history. 'It was the moment in my life where I first felt success.'

He is no fashion follower, just an eagle eyed observer of 'the power of brands', the theoretical construct as opposed to the consumption of them. 'I am affected by them the same way most people are; but it's not like I am always following a collection.' These days he is more than following a collection - actually co-designing one. Some pieces

even went from this Brooklyn garage, with a brief layover for customisation at the atelier, to Gucci's winter runway this past February; the company is still deciding exactly how to reproduce most of them for retail. It reminds me of the great debate around Da Vinci drawings and Damien Hirst spot paintings: are they actually by that artist (or in this case, brand) if someone else created them? Maybe it doesn't matter, as long as they come with the right seal of approval, in this case Michele and Gucci? Their collaborative pieces are, in a word, genius. And witty. Take a fuchsia mink overcoat with Andrew's graffiti motifs integrated through intricate dyeing; multiple unisex jackets (bombers or oversized moto) covered in paint, some with a fur collar and wool striped cuffs; the sell out tote with "REAL" in dribbled paint above a discreet embossed Gucci logo - luxury vandalism, if you will. Or vandalised luxury?

How did this come about? From urban pirate, counter-culture graffiti artist and maverick - who plastered his cheeky homage to all things

Gucci on everything from garbage cans to walls - to fashion darling? Was it all planned? 'I almost knew it was going to happen, It was kind of like, sue me or hire me, you know?' A friend was shooting the Gucci look book, so he



seized the opportunity to have them pass under Michele's eyes. 'I sent him over a funny video from in here [the studio] and some pictures of some of the stuff I'd painted...some jackets,' he chuckles innocently, as if he still cannot quite believe it is all actually happening. Some of those jackets are still here now, several even took shape ten years ago. And then? 'A month

later they contacted me, like "Yo, can you come to Rome next week?".'

Initially, Michele housed him in the design studio but his paint smelled too strong, so they made him a home from home downstairs. Wasn't he nervous? 'No! When I first got there we first went to lunch, then went back and I opened up my stuff.' And the Gucci reaction? 'It was like, "Oh I love this" and "Stupendo"!' It makes a great visual I tell him; the historic pristine grandeur of Gucci's HQ festooned with a Brooklyn boarder's subverted brand mockery. What of the actual process? He tells me during sessions there was total creative freedom; in fittings he was 'just be sitting there drawing and making things on my phone.' Even his music set the tone. 'I got them all like listening to this band from Brooklyn called Black Marble. I'd be working in my room and I'd come up and Alessandro, they'd be listening to it upstairs!'

What of his connection to Michele? In theory, one could question what they would have

in common: classically trained romantic visual poet, day-dreaming Italian dandy - and a grungey, self-taught street kid. The unifying chemistry is not a similar aesthetic per se, more a united, overarching vision or philosophy: a lack of any regard for the norm, zero creative constraint, both pushing boundaries way beyond, what for others would seem insanely random and a terrible idea is for these two kindred spirits just logical and obvious. It harks back to the established truth that ultimate creative innovation in all sectors always arises from the most unexpected pairings - of people, ideas, materials, ingredients. It all seems so innocent and pure that perhaps both are just deeply connected with their inner child. Michele's approach is almost childlike in its fluidity, the established rules of a grown-up civilised world tossed aside, like a zany orchestra conductor who unleashes deeper talents in a violinist by having them play the instrument upside down. 'He is just so gentle and welcoming, just floats around - the vibe just felt like when you're skating or playing with a

band... just gelling, having fun. That's where magic happens as you can't play a show or try some gnarly trick on a skateboard - or do anything good in life - based on fear. That's why Alessandro's so dope..why he's made such a big turn around is because he just works completely based on no fear.'

That is another thing they have in common. No fear. For a Brooklyn kid, Andrew is charmingly spiritual, in a down to earth way. 'I'm a strong believer in the energy you put out into the world - if you are positive, you're going to attract those positive things and I've manifested all these great things. I've literally been like, "I'm going to be a pro snowboarder" - I was a pro snowboarder! The only, slightest little bit of fear I have in my life is to not be creative...'

If Michele is a mentor of sorts, who else inspired Andrew? He wasn't surrounded by a thriving art scene back home. As well as skateboarder and artist Mark Gonzales, he followed Stephen Sprouse [the first artist to paint

Vuitton bags] and admired Malcom McLaren [husband of Vivienne Westwood who spearheaded the London punk movement]. When I ask who is the dream person to wear his Gucci pieces, those same names plus rapper Tupac Shakur. I thought he would say his father, who on Andrew's Instagram is in a caravan beaming ear to ear wearing Gucci. 'He actually had a heart attack three days before that!....it is a Gucci jacket, I mean, it is Gucci if I did it, right?' He winks.

A couple hours later I have persuaded him to bring as much from his studio to our shoot next week so we can recreate yet another home from home to photograph him. To be safe, I briefed our set designer to bring garbage cans, TV's and mirrors he can deface. A week later he saunters into the cavernous photo studio on the Hudson River with one of his posse, Will, who makes chain jewelry. They are both hungover. Andrew picks up marker pens and lets his magic roll, wearing a mix of the runway looks we had sent in and his own clothes, both

Gucci and other street brands - his typical esoteric mix that has set Gucci alight. I scream when it seems our set - and half the Gucci runway collection - is on fire. Andrew had actually borrowed the photographer's cigarette lighter and done the classic teenage trick with the spray paint can and is rolling around laughing. No fear indeed. No wonder Gucci is so hip right now.

WOMEN IN FILM, AND IN MAX MARA

When Camel Coats Means More Than Warmth: How Maxmara's support of Hollywood's *Women In Film* Is Pinpointing The Screen Faces Of Tomorrow. Starring Angela Sarafyan and Rita Volk, and Maxmara's own Nicola Maramotti.

BY MARY FELLOWES

Hollywood darling Lupine Nyong'o declared at the star studded Lucy+Crystal Awards, of which Maxmara has been a fourteen year co-sponsor, that they are 'very important: to have half the population on earth under-represented in any industry—it's something worth fighting to change.' Which is a fair summary of the guiding principle for Women In Film—a non-profit dedicated to enhancing opportunities and portrayals of women globally, on and off screen—who are behind the hugely influential awards. This year they honoured Elizabeth Banks and Tracee Ellis Ross among other Hollywood heavyweights, in an electrically charged room of one thousand people—with plenty of tears, and even surprise video-screened cameo appearances from

Michelle Obama and Hillary Clinton. I certainly came away highly emotional and invigorated to spread the message; it has stayed with me some months later as I write this.

Nicola Maramotti, the brand's European Retail Director and wife of Ignazio Maramotti—head of Maxmara and son of the original founder, who was also an early feminist himself—agrees entirely. 'We like this initiative as we want women to be powerful and have the same chances', she told me on set in Hollywood's Sunset Tower Hotel, where for this shoot the brand hosted us in the Townhouse Suite; a split-level apartment with 20-foot-high ceilings, living and dining rooms and powder room, a deluxe four poster bed, and outdoor terraces with

sweeping views of Los Angeles to the south. Frank Sinatra repeatedly proposed to Ava Gardner from the balcony. I am not aware of any marriage proposals during the shoot, but there was a heavy dose of love—female love, and empowerment—amongst all three subjects.

'...We have stood for that [empowerment] since Maxmara was born,' she continues. 'My father-in-law gave women this power—he started with a red suit and a camel coat!' Which is partly why those items serendipitously appear on these pages. It makes sense then for a quietly cerebral brand to achieve that overriding strategic goal is never going to be merely joining the backhand, deal-ridden red carpet merry-go-



round, but 'a real idea—something much deeper'. Which translates to this fourteen year ongoing conversation with sponsorship with Women In Film where Maxmara leverage their media access to spread the message. 'I am in close touch with them all the time...Through these actresses, and the interviews we have got them, the message is to get it well known throughout the world. When you

connect film with fashion - it works well,' says Ms Maramotti.

Hence this being the eleventh year she has personally attended the annual ceremony to present the award which acknowledges an actress at a turning point in her career who also contributes to the community at large and embodies style and grace. Previous winners, which the brand are closely involved in choosing, include Emily Blunt, Kate Mara, Katie Holmes, Chloe Grace Moretz; this year Ms Maramotti gave it, excitedly nervous but shimmering with excitement, to Zoey Deutch—star of 2017 hits *Everybody Wants Some!!*, *Why Him* and *Before I Fall*, whose acceptance speech was Oscar worthy in its graciousness and uncompromising ambition for the bigger cause of women, and a reminder that no matter how many decry millennial's various self involved and tech-ridden habits, if nothing else their self-belief and determination to change the world is ultra-inspirational.

Chances are two other recipients in due course may well be



Angela Sarafyan and Rita Volk (starring here alongside Ms Maramotti); they were on the initiative's list of talent to watch thanks to both pursuing roles that challenge stereotypical Hollywood leading female clichés. When this project came about, WIF, Maxmara and this magazine collaborated on who from the initiative's stable could both represent the cause, be fresh faces in the classic suiting and have a geographical connection to this magazine's core audience.

The enigmatic Armenian born, LA based Ms Sarafyan stars alongside veterans including Thandie Newton, Anthony Hopkins and Ed Harris in HBO's

hit series *Westworld*— a futuristic thriller set in an adult theme park where no human desire is uncatered for (she is also currently filming the second series). As well as roles in The Twilight Saga and Buffy The Vampire Slayer, she also starred alongside Christian Bale and Oscar Issacs she also starred in The Promise, a movie about the Armenian genocide. In person, Ms Sarafyan is as otherworldly as some of her roles. Where others walk, she tiptoes, kitten like. Where others speak, she whispers or quietly breaks into a hushed aria. She oscillates from coquette to intellectual in the blink of an eyelid. With a determined curiosity—not dissimilar to Scarlet Johansson on set—and alarmingly sharp perception, she asked everyone about their lives, picked up on tiny details and facts, asked more questions than she answered. She is that person with a soul so seemingly pure, you sense she knows you better than yourself, sees straight through you. She loves fashion from a character perspective: who she becomes once the zip is fastened is more important than the label. A former child

musician, couture for her is as rich as Mozart or Beethoven.

Ms Volk's relationship to fashion has been informed by coming from humble origins; growing up, for her beautiful dresses were synonymous with a better life. Born Margarita Volkovinskaya in Tashkent, Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, the twenty six year old is in some ways the polar opposite to her co-star for this shoot. She is currently gaining acclaim for her role in MTV's *Faking It*, a comedy about two best friends who come out as lesbians in order to become popular amongst their peers. Her fizzy enthusiasm and all-American blonde, light-hearted friendliness is infectious. She was the first to confess that past public appearances did not make the sartorial grade, and on putting on the Maxmara looks exclaimed with wide eyed surprise: "Wow! You. Made. Me. Cool!" And cool she is—once in situ, she reminded me of a sultry Natasha Poly lowering her eyelids for the photographer. To interview, she pivoted into professional future spokesperson or advocate mode: resolutely articulate and

insistent on the need for women's roles to improve.

Ms Maramotti insists she learned from them during the shoot. 'They became powerful, feminine and exaggerated...they were touching the velvet and shearling..the fabrics were protection for them, they felt secure.' They also both had a lightbulb moment experiencing the clothes. Ms Volk, who confessed nervously on arrival she had never experimented with serious grown-up tailoring later eulogised that they felt 'powerful, simple and elegant...like a costume, you feel better.' Also feeling that they were at once evocative of old Hollywood, it was empowering for her to channel that iconic style yet 'be in a more powerful place socially today'. Ms Sarafyan also felt Maxmara took her to a different world, especially being in the legendary Hollywood heritage steeped Sunset Tower Hotel, evocative of stars like her all time favourite Bette Davis who she feels set the bar so high that she has to constantly push herself to go deeper and harder. 'To see those women eat people for dinner, flirt with their eyes... Maxmara reminded me of

Dietrich, so much power and grace—there is so much strength in that.'



Those famed female stars were part of the beginning of fashion and film's relationship, one that has grown ever more complex in the hundred or so years since Hollywood first began, especially last two decades. Whereas in the twentieth century red carpets were not giant scarlet hued endorsement deal thoroughfares, this century thanks to social media and technology, the mutual power of both industries to leverage each other has woven a complex, insanely lucrative and politically

charged web and hotbed. One thing that hasn't changed however is brands collaborating on costumes. Givenchy and Audrey Hepburn, Giorgio Armani and American Gigolo to name a couple, Marc Jacobs and Sofia Coppola's continuing creative dialogue, right up to Prada for Carey Mulligan's character in The Great Gatsby.

And now, thanks to the small screen overtaking its big sister courtesy of streaming services, fashion is starting to seep intrinsically into television. In fact one of the most successful series in recent history—House of Cards—happens to feature Maxmara, on its famed and feared First Lady Claire played by Robin Wright Penn, whose wardrobe in that role has become synonymous with twenty first century female executive power. Ms Maramotti loves that she is 'really repping a Maxmara woman!...She *is* power!' So powerful is Penn now that she also plays the Amazonian general and mentor to Wonderwoman in the recent epic release: which also happens to be the first studio superhero movie directed by a woman, and became the

biggest US opening of all-time for a female director. Empowerment indeed. Bravo Maxmara!

Illustrations by
PAUL HOLLAND

Interview by
MARY FELLOWES

sultan of BLING

He counts Madonna and Victoria Beckham among his fans, and sells his clothes and accessories in 50 countries. What gives Roberto Cavalli his legendary self-belief?



H

e isn't subtle or discreet. He isn't precise or controlled. In many ways he's exactly what his brand exudes: tanned, brash, and so very Italian. But he has succeeded in designing perfectly 'of the moment' louche, loud, free-spirited glamour for more than four decades. And despite myself, I am falling under Cavalli's spell.

Apparently the secret is to instinctively read women's desires. 'I know what a woman wants when she gets dressed to go out,' he tells me. 'I can appreciate her beauty and design clothes to enhance her best assets.'

Whoever she is, her best assets (and her home, her drinks cabinet – and even her boyfriend) can all be simultaneously touched by fashion's great Midas. The Cavalli empire includes multiple men's and women's fashion lines, homeware, sunglasses, fragrances, a restaurant and even branded vodka and wine. That power is reflected in his celebrity fan base, which in this past year alone has included some of the notable heroes from music, movies and fashion: Kristen Stewart, Halle Berry, Naomi Watts, Jennifer Garner, Kylie Minogue, Madonna, Naomi Campbell and Cindy Crawford, to name but a few. His personal wealth is valued at \$500m, and he sells in more than 50 countries worldwide.

And now Cavalli has added Baku to his roster of international retail outlets. He tells me he feels that the East is 'one of the newest frontiers in fashion, with many new clients and markets... they are introducing the world to a new perspective of luxury. I'm sure the women of Azerbaijan will be great customers, because my style is perfect for them.'

The new boutique is fabulously unusable, designed using lavish materials, such as quartzite mixed with crystal dust to reflect light. Backlit crystal displays sit with

armchairs and ottomans upholstered in python-printed leather.

An upstart dressed to kill, Cavalli gatecrashed a Florentine cocktail party 42 years ago, attended by the elite world of luxury leather, and spontaneously invented an identity: 'I am an artist painting and printing on leather.' The rest is history. Cavalli went away and made the fictional printed leather a reality and, through relentless hard work and shameless self-promotion, ended up the figurehead of one of the world's most sought-after global luxury brands.

Cavalli's more-is-more ready-to-wear collections have always addressed lavish themes: Aspen in the 1960s, *chinoiserie* and corsetry, and Leon Bakst's *Ballets Russes*. It is the shameless courage of his conviction that allows him to dissect and shake up influences and make them his own. The clothes generally walk a fine line between the insane and the brilliant. Of his menswear collection, *Vogue* editor-at-large Hamish Bowles comments, 'Roberto Cavalli's clothes are designed for the kind of males who can wrangle a python and skin it with their bare teeth, all to a thumping dance beat.'

Cavalli is quick to share the limelight with his wife Eva, who he met when he was judging his first modelling contest – Miss Universe Pageant 1977 when Eva was Miss Austria. Today, they design the Cavalli collection together and take their bow as a duo every season. The paparazzi are another fundamental ingredient of Cavalli's shows, ensuring he outdoes all the other designers by miles.

Music has always formed the backbone of his world and its influence is at the core of his success. He tells me that it 'has always been my number-one inspiration. In the Cavalli

'I KNOW WHAT A WOMAN WANTS WHEN SHE GETS DRESSED TO GO OUT. I CAN APPRECIATE HER BEAUTY AND DESIGN CLOTHES TO ENHANCE HER BEST ASSETS.'

world one cannot exist without the other... Music puts me in a good mood. I'm lucky enough to be friends with many rock stars, like Lenny Kravitz, Beyoncé Knowles and Steven Tyler. Fashion-wise, I love them for the incredible way they interpret my style.'

Perhaps the other key to his success is his level of self-belief. He says, 'I have been fortunate enough to live a life full of satisfaction, emotion and happiness. I have learned from the positive and grown from the negative... I would like to be regarded as a man who is passionate about work, creativity and art – and, of course, my family.'

But Cavalli's life hasn't all been a bed of semi-precious embroidered roses. His early



6 AN UPSTART DRESSED TO KILL, HE GATECRASHED A FLORENTINE COCKTAIL PARTY AND INVENTED AN IDENTITY...

struggles and humble beginnings go some way to explaining the devil-may-care bling in his world, both professional and personal. He explains: 'My early life was one of a child born during the war to a family that suffered the evils and atrocities of Nazism and fascism. I grew up on the outskirts of Florence, a street kid who had to overcome the great problem of stuttering.'

If he overcame his humble roots, he has been less quick to overcome the controversy that

has surrounded him in the past decade. In 2006, the fashion world and his fans all held their breath when Cavalli was sentenced to 14 months in prison after he was found guilty of tax evasion. (He never served the time due to a legal technicality and was later cleared of the indictments). He also caused a media storm as the first designer to publicly announce that he wanted Kate Moss as the face of his Spring/Summer 2006 collection, soon after her drug scandal broke. Prior to that, Cavalli courted controversy in the Hindu community when a line of feminine underwear designed for Harrods featured the images of Hindu goddesses. He recently caused a row with Giorgio Armani, calling him a 'little king', and of Chanel he has said, 'Fine, you dress the grandmothers and the mothers and I'll dress their kids.' But it is this level of scandal that makes the legend.

Cavalli says he cannot wait to get out to Baku. Perhaps he will moor his boat, which has bodywork that changes colour thanks to the latest LCD technology, on the Caspian Sea and tear up a storm there too.

Examining Roberto Cavalli initially is bound to generate the odd raised eyebrow. But on closer inspection, it is hard not to admire the legend that he has created around, and of, himself. When Cavalli typically refers to his collection as 'a dream', it's clear that he has a Swarovski-crystal-clear understanding of the transformative power of fashion. He is living proof, after all. ■

THE AESTHETE



Lauren Santo Domingo is an original tastemaker — a 21st century fashion maven with a devil-may-care attitude that's helped her build an empire. At the helm of Moda Operandi, co-founder Lauren oversees one of the web's most important high fashion shopping destinations. We sit down with LSD to learn more about how she entertains over the holidays, and get her picks for this year's ultimate gift guide.

Mary Fellowes: Ok, so the holiday season has descended. Heaven or hell?

Lauren Santo Domingo: Heaven. They say in November you can go to a black tie every night in New York City if you wanted to and often I do... I would much rather be in a party dress than pajamas any day.

MF: What's the worst part of the holidays for you?

LSD: When it ends, such a comedown! It's January then February — cold, dreary and nothing to do.

MF: How do you keep track and stay organized?

LSD: Running out of looks would be a nightmare. So I keep a little note on what I have worn to either a party for childhood friend or book launch of a fashion editor friend, for example — no overlap there so I can dress the same. I'll switch up the hair or the makeup or the accessories so I don't bore myself.

MF: What about getting ready? What's the drill?

LSD: I don't take long at all. I usually get my hair done —

second day hair is better than first day hair so I plan accordingly. And nothing better than third day hair! After four days though you really have to be among close friends and family.

MF: Apart from keeping track of things, what are the other wardrobe rules in the season?

LSD: I subscribe to the "fewer the better" school of fashion. I have one great black coat, a great camel coat and one fabulous fur coat. That is actually one of the reasons I started Moda Operandi — having the ability to get the better things because they last so much longer. And I do the math in my head. Every time I wear something I deduct what I spent on it. So if I see something sitting festering in my closet, I really

make a note of what's wrong with it — is it too fancy or not fancy enough? Is it the color, the style? I think about how I can choose better the next time.

MF: Tell me about shopping during the holiday period. How? Where? When?

LSD: I do everything online; the idea of going into a store almost brings me to hives. I start in January and continue throughout the year, a rushed gift is never good. To me nothing says, "I don't care," more than a scented candle. A lot of the gifts I have given in the past or plan to give this year we now have at Moda Operandi.

MF: What gifts does Moda have?

LSD: We have some really extravagant things and we have really funny things in there too.

There are things for everyone in the family. For kids, there's a giant life-size panda or baby dragon, Del Toro slippers, and an Asprey rocking horse at \$100,000. We have burlesque lessons with Dita Von Teese. Then we have a lot of tech stuff, such as Bowers & Wilkins earphones — the best on the market — or a soft cashmere wrap from Inverni. So they would be the most practical. But sometimes for our customers the most ridiculous things are practical... Maybe there's a child who really does need that life-size panda or a BMW 328 Premium Collector children's car.

MF: What about a holiday season playlist?

LSD: Well, my husband is in charge and he has amazing taste. I'm just the cruise director. I make the reservations, get the friends together and organize the menu and he is the musical director. There are different playlists for every point of the night — one for getting ready, for the car, for the party, for the after party.

MF: Where do you guys go for Thanksgiving? Out East?

LSD: Cartagena in Colombia, and for Christmas and New Year also. I have been going there with my husband since we met in 1998. You go there because you want action, sun, great food and music... and on top of it all, the week before Thanksgiving is their Miss America pageant, which is a really big thing for them — it's their fashion week!

"I THINK NOT RSVPING IS RUDE, CANCELING THE DAY OF IS RUDE, ONLY TO BE TRUMPED BY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS."

MF: So your holiday season for you is a juxtaposition of hot and cold — Fall/Winter and Resort so to speak.

LSD: Correct. So now Resort is starting to come in, and Fall/Winter is starting to go on sale. ... The other day I just received a swimsuit from Lisa Marie Fernandez and a pair of Ancient Greek lace-up sandals and Ellery sunglasses... I sort of forgot I had ordered those things. It is like an early Christmas!

MF: What about wrapping presents — what's your approach?

LSD: I like to change it up every year. A couple of years back it was all craft paper with twine, and last year I found a great Japanese paper — turquoise blue with glitter red lips and polka dot ribbons. This year I found a really cool malachite paper; I loved it so much we ended up doing something similar here at Moda. With the children, all they want is Smurf wrapping paper they can rip through! And I still am nostalgic about those stick-on bows and gift labels so I'll try to use those whenever possible.

MF: Tell me about your perfect holiday menus.

LSD: There's so much room for error if you have a party that the menu is something you want to simplify. I always serve the most simple, basic, delicious food there is including steak, mashed potatoes and string beans. You're not going to come and get weird food like quinoa and salmon. The men are the ones eating so I make the menu for the heartiest in the room so they leave well fed, not for those people who are going to pick at

it. For the women, there is always the table decoration to get excited about.

MF: How about guest lists? How do you achieve the right mix?

LSD: I used to be totally separate about the whole thing but over the years, I've found that New York is really a small town that everyone really is (or at some time was) friends. I recently found out my roommate from boarding school is best friends with one of my favorite fashion designers, so it's at this point where anything goes. And I'm usually "the more the merrier," "bring a friend," as long as they're not boring, because that is just rude.

"TO ME NOTHING SAYS 'I DON'T CARE' MORE THAN A SCENTED CANDLE."

MF: What else is rude?

LSD: I think not RSVPing is rude, I think canceling the day of is rude, only to be trumped by dietary restrictions. I think asking to bring your children can be rude. At my house controversial

subjects are welcome — whether it's politics, religion, the environment, fracking or the Kardashians... all of that is completely welcome and if someone is not getting heated? It's a boring night. So cocktail hour, therefore, really should be two hours. Before sitting down, people need to be a little loose!

MF: What is the rudest gift to bring?

LSD: The rule is that you are never to bring anything that the hostess immediately has to deal with. Give her the benefit of the doubt and assume she has enough alcohol, enough flowers, enough scented candles out in the powder room. People always come with bottles of alcohol and I find it tedious. I would much rather receive an email the next morning, a handwritten note.

MF: Best writing paper for thank you letters?

LSD: Smythson for everyday and Cartier for really special notes. It's no secret; my initials are the way to my heart. Right now I'm working with Dempsey and Carroll on designing a monogram for me for some new stationery. I usually do everything just "LSD" but now I

realize there are some moments when you may want something a bit quieter.

MF: What's your dream gift this year?

LSD: A solid gold iPhone - or that life-size panda!

FASHION & STYLE: COMMENT

WEARING THEIR BELIEFS ON THEIR SLEEVES

This fall, designers are responding to global political turmoil with a collective call to arms: join the conversation or get left behind.

BY MARY FELLOWES

Are high fashion runways a relevant platform for a political comment? If fashion is a superficial medium that allows us to escape our realities, can it simultaneously have the credentials to comment on current affairs, join protests, or express partisan allegiance? To demote fashion to fantasy alone, is to deny the historic foundations of clothing—an unspoken language of sartorial signs and symbols that communicate the tribes we belong to and beliefs we subscribe to. This season, from Dior and Versace (yes, Versace!) to Public School and Stella McCartney, designers all over the globe were of the view that

style is anything but silent. Fashion has finally woken up completely. Please God, let it never drift off to sleep again.

Designers are now using all their platforms, the runway, products and social media, to not only respond to the changes in the world order, but also raise awareness for social issues that are important to them including race, political affiliation, gender inequality and everything in between. It is without doubt one of the *most* energising transformations of the global fashion industry—contradicting its reputation for being removed from the real, wider world, it has begun to utilise its unparalleled

access to an international customer base and mass, global social media audience.

A dedicated follower of fashion, who takes a selfie in their SS17 Dior T-shirt proclaiming *We Should All Be Feminists*—a phrase coined by novelist and activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who was front row at Dior in March—is simply engaging in a long standing theme and political conversation that started a century before, when the corset is widely acknowledged as coming off and when Western women finally got the right to vote, thanks to suffragette's burgeoning efforts. (Their white suits even



reappeared in contemporary symbolic form on Hilary Clinton when she took on Donald Trump in one fierce televised debate.)

On to Christian Dior: in 1947 he unveiled the now iconic New Look at his atelier using a brave 25 yards of fabric. The full skirted silhouette, now synonymous with the 1950s, stood for freedom and glamour so absent during three decades of global war torn

turmoil. Similarly, the 1960's mini-skirt mirrored women's new ownership of their bodies, rights and methods of contraception. The 1970s hippie look was not just about bellbottoms, beads and paisley; actually anti-Vietnam war protest and two fingers up to societal norms by embracing free love. The 1980s punk look spearheaded by Vivienne Westwood and her husband Malcom MacLaren (also manager of definitive punk band The Sex Pistols) voiced the youthquake's frustration with the status quo, the UK's rigid class system and the Thatcher government. The same era saw the rise of the iconic activist t-shirts by designer Katharine Hamnett's, blaring "USE A CONDOM", "WORLDWIDE NUCLEAR BAN NOW", "PEACE". If fashion has been somewhat muted ever since, it ain't anymore.

This year alone, several trends have emerged on the runways but none resonating more than those concerning human rights,

equality and the U.S. Presidency. Opening Ceremony set the political tone to come with their Resort 2017 "Pageant of The People" show, filling the stage with flags representing every country around the world. Activist/entertainers Rashida Jones, Whoopi Goldberg, Jessica Williams discussed the refugee crisis, gender equality and racism before models walked to their own voices discussing those topics in lieu of the usual musical soundtrack. Then at this years' Oscars, Karlie Kloss and Ruth Negga among others wore their allegiances on their seven figure gowns with a small blue ACLU pin.

Onto the fall shows, and New York this past March. Amid Republican efforts to pull federal funding from reproductive healthcare non-profit organisation Planned Parenthood, the Council of Fashion Designers of America showed its unified support for the non-profit by circulating prolific pink brooches throughout the

week. Designers Tommy Hilfiger, Thakoon, Phillip Lim, and Diane von Furstenberg, offered up white bandanas representing inclusivity



and acceptance with the hashtag #TiedTogether to amplify support for the American Civil Liberties Union and United Nations Refugee Agency. Prabal Gurung's runway finale was made up of slogan T-shirts proclaiming "Nevertheless She Persisted," "We Will Not Be Silenced" and "This Is What a Feminist Looks Like" to the sound of a reworked version of John Lennon's classic "Imagine" (whose lyrics encourage the listener to

imagine a world without religious or national borders, living in peace). While Public School showed "We Need Leaders" sweatshirts and red baseball caps re-working Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" presidential campaign slogan as "Make America New York." Mexican line LRS stepped into the madness with underwear proclaiming "Fuck Your Wall" on the back. Tablet Runhof closed their Paris show with jersey tops smattered with "Persist," "Lie to me," "Unpresidented," and Donald Trump's Twitter phrase "Sad!". The brands' co-founder Johnny Talbot summed up the season with his post-show comments to vogue.com: "'With all of the lies, the fake news, and alternative facts, we wanted to do a collection about truth....If you have a platform to say something and you don't, then shame on you."

In London, the hero was Ashish, shouting slogans about on the Trump presidential campaign on

sequinned separates: "More Glitter, Less Twitter" and "Nasty Woman", alongside his take on civil rights, "Love Sees No Colour", and "Unity Through Adversity".

In Milan, Versace dived in head first, literally. Atop of Donatella's signature unapologetic skin-deep glamour, models sported beanies emblazoned with neon 'Equality', while 'Unity' shouted from sleeves or scarves. Angela Missoni's show was populated with over a thousand pink "pussy" hats for guests, models and backstage collaborators culminating in a tearjerking Women March-esque finale with Angela making a heartfelt speech, surrounded by family, and inviting guests to join her in solidarity on the runway.

In Paris, Stella McCartney commented on gender with pointy cone bras melded with masculine tailoring and a choreographed dance with models singing "Don't you f—k with my energy." Talbot Runhof closed their show with jersey tops smattered with "Persist," "Lie to me," "Unpresidented," and Donald Trump's Twitter phrase "Sad!" The brands' co-founder Johnny Talbot summed up the season with his post-show comments to [vogue.com](#): "'With all of the lies, the fake news, and alternative facts, we wanted to do a collection about truth....If you have a platform to say something and you don't, then shame on you."

A full circle finale brings us back to Dior. Even last season, those



popular "We Should All Be Feminists" t-shirts and "Dio(R)evolution" saw proceeds go to Rihanna's Clara Lionel Foundation, confronting injustice, inequality, and poverty and access to education. Dior designer Maria Grazie Chiuri this season expertly fused human rights, race and feminism. The collection's androgynous utilitarian denim and fierce inky

tailoring, topped with black leather berets, themselves a universal symbol for protest—the most powerful look on a black female model which nodded (hopefully intentionally) to the American Black Panther group that defended minorities during the civil rights movement. The white bandana on every seat here was printed with "Feminist: A person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes." I am sure Monsieur Dior would be proud with where the conversation has moved on, and how much scope we now all have to contribute. From a handbag to a hashtag, whatever you do, just don't stay sartorially silent.

JW Anderson x UNIQLO

A Lesson In Sartorial Matchmaking

BY MARY FELLOWES

Jonathan Anderson, founder of JW Anderson and Creative Director of Loewe was the only one on the list when back in October 2016, Yuki Katsuta, UNIQLO's Senior Vice President for Fast Retailing and Head of Research & Design, started developing a concept that would bring together classic British design heritage with UNIQLO LifeWear and its Japanese simplicity, longevity and quality. And no wonder: Anderson, the 32 year old designer from Northern Ireland, has had a meteoric rise since he began showing at London Fashion Week in 2008. His aesthetic—unsettling at times, always utterly new to the point that conceptually it takes audiences a while to digest and re-calibrate—season after season heralds the perfect newness. It holds a mirror to current fashion, pushing

experimental boundaries without ever being sensationalist. Indeed, he is the polar opposite in his aversion to limelight and quiet, studious, intellectual and rigorous approach.

Today he is the only designer in history to have ever been awarded the British Fashion Council's prestigious Designer of the Year award for both Womenswear and Menswear, achieving this record double win under his own JW Anderson brand, which LVMH now owns a minority stake in. Katsuta explains, 'If he said no, for me, this concept would never have happened,' and as the mutual regard was evident from their first meeting, 'after ten minutes we wanted to work together.' Less than a year later, Anderson and Katsuta are unveiling their collaboration in a private gallery space at

London's expansive Tate Modern museum. Anderson is upbeat and enthusiastic to discuss the past year and the result of their creative partnership, "I'm really delighted to be here today," remarks Anderson in his opening words, "I want to talk to people about the collection because I really believe in this project."

It is apparent that this match is one of synchronicity. With Katsuta singling out Anderson and the fact that the celebrated British designer is a long-time dedicated UNIQLO customer, wearing it daily, this fashion retail-designer pairing already has a personal resonance, appreciation and awareness at its core from the outset. 'I think when you buy something, you learn a respect for it. I shop at Uniqlo all the time,' says



Anderson, 'there must be a reason and so I start to understand what that reason is all about.' Also, Anderson is in a way very 'Japanese' in his own way: in person, understated, introverted, fervently polite and humble—and his academic and studious approach to not just his collections but wider collaborations echo the well documented Japanese design

approach of discipline and purity.

Arriving in UNIQLO stores this September, the 33-piece collection has distinct women's and men's offerings that can easily borrow from each other. As Anderson points out, he designed the collection 'through men to get to women' which is seen in the Fair Isle knit sweaters, double-breasted belted trench coat, a wool duffle coat with faux leather JW anchor patch and of course UNIQLO graphic tees with an illustration inspired by one of Anderson's favourite artists, sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzesk.

It is palpable that this collection, and collaboration, was something of a labour of love for Anderson, giving him free rein to bring together a multitude of his treasured cultural references alongside his encyclopedic understanding of British style history—details throughout nod to weathered fisherman jackets or 'early Irish military clothing from the 1800s all the way through to scarves I used to wear at school', explains Anderson. Perhaps the red thread through all of those is overriding functionality,

which would testify to the success of his work with Uniqlo whose stock-in-trade utilitarianism needs no explaining.

So how does the concept of UNIQLO's LifeWear sit so harmoniously in this collection of tweed, tartan and trenchcoats? It transpires that Anderson visits Japan at least once a



year, sometimes twice, to fuel a fascination with Japanese culture he has had since childhood. He recalls coming across a book on Katsushika Hokusai, the iconic Japanese artist and printmaker, while at his uncle's textile company as a child growing up in Northern

Ireland. Hokusai became somewhat of a beacon for Anderson, allowing him to explore and investigate the various teachings that surround Japanese modernity. 'The idea of reducing something to its essence is a very Japanese cultural thing. It can be culturally, textile, or silhouette driven, but it's about the idea of reducing something down so that you can create the most impact' explains Anderson. In this light, it is no wonder that Katsuta identified early on that Anderson was the only man for the collaboration, 'of course I knew him as a wonderful, young, energetic and talented designer. But since I started working with him, I now recognise that he is a deep thinker, he is constantly thinking about how we can create and execute designs that people respond to.' With this much mutual understanding, trust and shared inquisitiveness when making new product, it is no surprise that the process was smooth sailing and brought about seemingly effortless results.

A standout piece that exemplifies the ease and

natural harmony of this collaboration is the signature, and UNIQLO fan favourite, light down jacket. 'In my own brand we have tried many times, and failed many times, to make puffer jackets.' explains Anderson, 'So when I got the call from UNIQLO, the first thing I designed in my head was the puffer.' The jacket is a favourite of Anderson's not only because of his immediate vision but also because the collaboration process allowed him to learn about lightweight technologies from arguably the best in the business. 'The whole point of collaboration is that you collaborate with an individual, or company, or brand, or product, that you want to learn from and they want to learn from you', says Anderson. He would know: as he is already pioneering his own way of collaborating not just with brands such as Converse, but with sculptor Joana Wason on ceramics, artists Ignasi Monreal and Anne Low, illustrator Kelly Marie Beeman, and moreover the highly acclaimed show *Disobedient Bodies* at Britain's Hepworth Wakefield museum. Unlike other designers who

collaborate but often do a readily recognisable and merely more accessible price point version of their own existing designs, the result here is a genius synergy; a simple, exceptionally functional puffer in a quirky quintessential British tartan fabric, which will undoubtedly be a must-have acquisition when it arrives in UNIQLO stores this Fall.

'I hope that one day in twenty years time, I see someone in the street wearing it or I'm out vintage shopping and I find a UNIQLO JW Anderson piece,' remarks Anderson, 'That's the dream'. With such attention to functionality and fabric quality, and beautifully democratic design that avoids the trappings of trends, there can be little doubt that this dream of Anderson's will become the reality for this steady, thought-out and well matched pair. Until then, with this level of thought-out, expert fashion longevity, there is no doubt that any piece from this collaboration is set to be a coveted must-have for the season ahead and any that follow.



Photo by Joe Marquez



Photo by Andrew Boyle

FASHION
2.8.2014

BY MARY FELLOWES

RUNWAY REVIEW: CUSHNIE ET OCHS FW14/15

f v t o &

Imagine if a predatory female spy character—film noir through and through—was re-imagined in an impossible collaboration between **Alfred**

Hitchcock and **Stanley Kubrick**, and you'll get a sense of the **Cushnie et Ochs** show today; a riff on fierce female empowerment, enhanced by sharp **Louboutin** stilettos with cutaway panels in clear vinyl or chrome. Isn't this only appropriate, given that the true definition of stiletto is actually a "knife or dagger with a long slender blade and needle-like point, primarily intended as a stabbing weapon"? Since the greatest **Hollywood** stars of years gone by have oft been swathed in luxe animal skins, this woman's trophy prey appeared in stoles made of fox—cunning predators themselves.

Cutting through the cinema of it all was a theme we've seen at several other shows this week: cowgirl twist. This one in particular was courtesy of uber milliner **Albertus Swanepoel**'s simplified black felt Western hats, and swinging full skirts. The Kubrick 1960s space age vibe came through in dazzling white structured dresses, holographic black leather, and futuristic silver neck cuffs that could double as weapons themselves. Futurism aside, the main focus was impeccably executed glamorous eveningwear in satin, lace, brocade, leather, jersey, crepe and silk satin. Color-wise, black dominated, as only a film noir spy would don. But were this heroine to dress for the premiere of her flick, she would probably opt for the lime or turquoise cocktail offerings to bounce off the red carpet.

Photography by Andrew Boyle, Anthony Cabaero and Joe Marquez



RUNWAY REVIEW: PETER SOM FW14/15

f t p g

According to astrology-obsessed Mr. Means, part of our rocking **MADE** family production team, "Mercury is in retrograde right now—that means communication gets frenzied and unresolved patterns emerge, demanding re-evaluation." That may also be the perfect metaphor for **Peter Som's** show this morning.

Som showed blurred digital prints that could be from another astrological plane: Imagine toned-down abstract shards of **Gerhard Richter's** dragged paint effects floating in a fluid, silky black galaxy. Other prints echoed winter flowers in a post-nightclub haze, and candy-sized crystal embellishments were a nod to the stellar patterns that decorate the heavens above us when midnight falls. Though his show was full of frenzied ideas, it was also resolutely streamlined and wearable. Imagine if **Catherine Deneuve's** innocent character in the movie "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" did a re-evaluation of that movie's classic 1960s closet—keeping the structured angular tunic shapes—but tossed in touches of urbane boyishness; unable to resist the odd slice of theatrical flapper ostrich. But the gentle slipstream of innocence still carried through, thanks to sweet girlish hair swept to the side in bobby clips; and Mod-era round-toed ankle boots. The color palette was a cleverly thought out mélange of tangerine, dove grey, ochre, navy, putty pink and the perfect black—reminiscent of the skies Mr. Means looks to for stars to give divine guidance.

Photography by Koury Angelo, Chris Swainston, Anthony Cabaero and Andrew Boyle

Photo by Chris Swainston



Photo by Andrew Boyle

BY MARY FELLOWES



Photo by Joe Marquez



Photo by Anthony Cabaero



Photo by Anthony Cabaero

URBAN HIGHWAYMEN UNITE AT PUBLIC SCHOOL

There is nothing not to love about **Dao-Yi Chow** and larger than life **Maxwell Osborne** and their cult menswear brand **Public School**, and we at Milk are dead proud to have these CFDA winners here in the **MADE** family. The brand might be relatively new to the scene, but the quality of fabric, advanced cutting techniques, depth of diverse—but subtly infused—references and focused fresh vision explains why their front row included **Anna Wintour**, **André Leon Talley**, **Kelly Rowland**, **Derek Blasberg**, **Micky Boardman** of Paper, Kristina O'Neill and Magnus Berger of WSJ, **Bruce Pask** of "The New York Times," **Jenna Lyons** of J. Crew, **Joe Jonas** and **Swizz Beatz**.

Today, Public School staged their first runway show; introducing a handful of women's looks in an urbane hook up between their girl and boy partners-in-crime. This Bonnie and Clyde were intimidating twenty-first century luxury highwaymen on a determined night-watch mission to enforce a new unisex sartorial code where precision tailoring veers toward elevated sportswear.

They pulled off a clever tension between the simplicity of the pieces and multi-layering—it could have easily been cluttered, but it remained in perfect equilibrium. A scruffy, devil-may-care attitude came via untucked long shirts and relaxed pants, but evened out by immaculate tailoring. Think a double-breasted grey wool jacket over—rather than under—a slim overcoat for him—it shouldn't work in theory, but it felt so right and new. For her? A baggy cuffed culotte, washed plaid shirt or enveloping floor length navy coat.

While their modern day bounty would lurk in the discreet pouches on washed black leather harnesses worn over outerwear, their quick escape into the night would be aided by the perfect modern sneakers—a thick white rubber sole topped by simplified plain dark leather and needle thin laces. If the devil is in the detail, then this duo's dark streak came out up top. In addition to face-framing long black leather do-rags, the fierce black fedoras nodded to Hasidic Jewish shtreimel. This twisted Bonnie and Clyde are certainly married in style. It seems school's in right now.

BREAKING THE ICE

At long last, the puffer jacket has hit a fashionable stride.

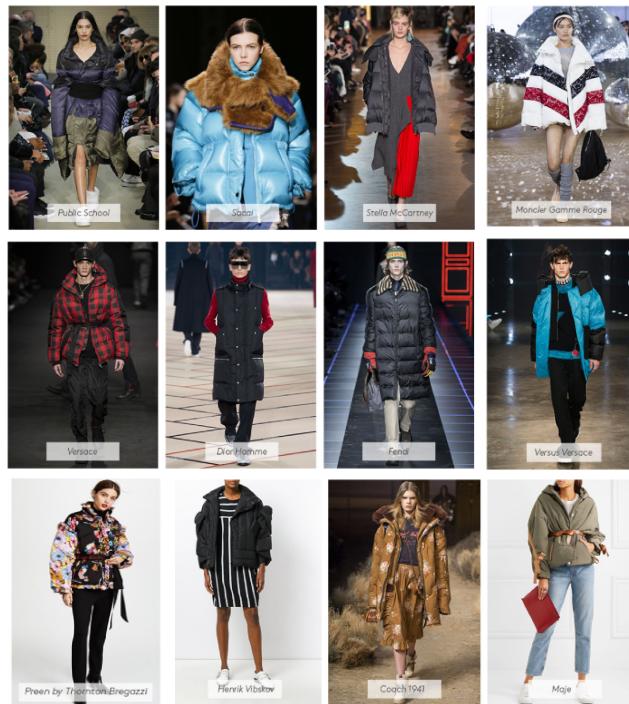
BY MARY FELLOWES | STYLE

December 15th, 2017

The humble puffa (or puffer) jacket. Consistent with necessity being the mother of invention, its inception was 1936, its creator one Eddie Bauer who needed to stave off hypothermia out fishing, patenting it as the "Skyliner." Two years later, Charles James, a British-born, American-based haute-couturier elevated eiderdowns and traditional bedwear to salon-worthy cocktail attire, calling it the "pneumatic jacket." Since then, despite cameo roles at street smart 1980's Moncler and a nod or two by Norma Kamali, never the twain shall meet.

Until recent winter runways, where that mother of invention herself has reappeared as fashion's anti-freeze godmother, namely by Balenciaga and Acne, and for this coming cold season, co-opted by brands from high to low and all in between. Finally, finally—form actually follows function. The designers are on our side: velvet, lace, embroidery, oil slick patent, metallics; mens, womens or gender-neutral versions; all bases and price points are covered.

Baby, it's cold out there. But cozy as hell inside. Take a look.



FALL FASHION TREND: CHECKS AND BALANCES

Go ahead and get rad with your plaid.

BY MARY FELLOWES | THE STYLE

November 29th, 2017

Fall and early winter, before the chill sets in, is my favorite time to max out style; this season offers endless opportunities for layering, playing with textures, structure and volumes. The runways are always overflowing with new ideas, but many are unachievable and unrealistic for real life. So I have curated the trends that matter for those of us that lead an active life on the move, prioritizing pragmatism, those of us needing fashion to work for us, not vice versa—otherwise why invest? Fall in love, go on, I dare you. There is plenty here to whisk you off your feet, or just keep them squarely on the ground. Follow along as I provide guidance on these trends, one by one, over the next several weeks. Previously, I've discussed athletic layering, getting political, practical bags, and spice colors. Below, the fifth trend:

Trend 5: Plaid And Tartan Go From Cozy To Kick-Ass

This fall/winter is not the first time tartan has rebelled: In the same way it was for centuries the symbol of ruling elites in Scotland until liberated and subverted by the 1970s punks, fashion has long held tartan, and its plaid cousins, captive in the 'cozy' category. But now it is back, kicking and fighting in streamlined, urbane refinement. The quieter Prince Of Wales (or Glen) check, another symbol of British heritage, has never really gone out of style; this season, it's made its presence as widely known as one of its most famous other fans—James Bond.

How to wear them: While all checked wools feel perfectly on-point for an upstate fireside weekend—and should be embraced for that—they do feel like a welcome change for city life. Look for sharp unusual modern tailoring, and break them up by juxtaposing with whatever feels its polar opposite to you: think tough inky leather, primary colors or athletic fabrics, or generally whatever feels least cozy and most empowering.



By Mary Fellowes

A pair of jeans can define a man, even more than his watch or mobile. But it's all too easy to get denim wrong. Our fashion editor Mary Fellowes gives her dos and don'ts ...

Why aren't men's jeans straightforward? They should be. They're practical, hard-wearing, comfortable--and yet they're a minefield of style accidents waiting to happen. Too short, too wide, too tight in one place, too baggy in another... look down any street and you'll see otherwise innocent men committing serious crimes against denim. A friend once went on a date with a man who turned up in baggy jeans so violently tapered that they shortened him by six inches, and with the waist hoisted so high that from behind he looked like an overweight mother at school sports day. Call her fickle, but she walked out.

From where women are standing, jeans define a man more than his watch, car mobile or any other expensive gadget the male psyche uses to express its virility. Almost everyone wears them, and yet stitched into their warp and weft are a host of hidden indicators, exact barometers--to a beady female eye--of his taste and self-image.

Some men wear jeans with an almost indecent ease. From the Ramones via the blokes in Blondie to any of Kate Moss's more recent boyfriends, punk and post-punk musicians have been adept at combining anti-bourgeois attitude, unkempt hair and skinny-fit denims. James Dean always gave good jean: dark, uncomplicated, flattering without being narcissistic, and set off by his crisp white t-shirt. And older Italians and Frenchmen choose jeans with clean lines and a slightly tight fit, worn with grown-up leather shoes and continentally well-cut jackets. But English men seldom manage this casual distinction, choosing looser jeans in an attempt to be laid-back, then counter-attacking their own strategy by adding a badly fitting jacket, or a shirt that's either too preppy, too tight or--most unfortunate of all--short-sleeved.

It doesn't have to be this way. Some tailors will make jeans to measure. (Why shouldn't a man take the cut of his denim as seriously as his suit? He'd make a lot of women happier if he did.) And if, as is likely, you carry on buying off the peg, the sheer number of brands might seem bewildering--but it does mean that somewhere there's a style that will suit you. A few of the best are listed below, along with the following golden rules to help make buying easier.

1. Swallow your pride Or at least your impatience, and do the thing that probably drives you mad when your wife or girlfriend does it: spend some time in a department store, trying lots of different styles. You wouldn't buy a television without watching it first.

2. Find your length Long, loose jeans that scuff the pavement will inevitably lose their structure at the hem, looking messy and studenty. Waistbands should sit no higher than just above the hip bones, and the lower edge of your back pockets should finish below the top of the thigh, as the sight of the male buttock, fully outlined, is perhaps not your strongest asset.

3. Find your width Sharply tapered, drainpipe legs aren't a good idea unless you are either whippet-thin or under 30. But that doesn't mean loose fit is necessarily the answer. Rappers from South Central Los Angeles look good in really baggy jeans; office managers from Reading do not.

4. Don't try to hide Jeans are not meant to be full in front--in fact, the flatter-fronted the better. So if you have a paunch, take your cue from Jack Nicholson or David Bailey and keep your jeans low-slung beneath it. In female eyes, belting jeans halfway up a paunch is as grave a sin as the comb-over.

5. Don't overdo distressing Draw a mental graph where the x-axis is your age, and the y-axis the amount of sandblasting, ripping, bleaching and so on that has been done to your prospective pair of jeans. The further along the x-axis you fall, the lower down the y-axis your purchase should be. Similarly, the further along the x-axis you go, the straighter the silhouette.



6. Go for true colours Look at Keith Richards: the older he's got, the darker his jeans. Having said that, solid-dyed indigo is perhaps best left to the under-30s; and whether you prefer black jeans or blue, a subtle white fleck will stop the colour looking too prissy.

7. Get into detail Jeans styling is a rich hunting ground of nerdy detail. Selvage denim--cloth woven on a particular kind of narrow shuttle loom--occupies a whole separate sub-category of stylishness. Plant-based indigo allows jeans to become faded--naturally, with wear--rather than having fadedness thrust upon them. Then there's the weight of the cloth, the pattern and colour of the stitching, the limited-edition waistband tags. Buying a pair of jeans is, potentially, as much fun as buying a car, though without the voice of Jeremy Clarkson ringing in your ears. Clarkson, incidentally, likes to combine leather blouson jackets with stone-washed denim in a late-1980s cut: the perfect example of how not to wear jeans.

JEAN GENIUS

Seven brands that are safe pairs of hands:

Best on the high street: Uniqlo

Despite their modest price, Uniqlo's Selvedge-label jeans are made using some of the highest-quality denim on the market. The range of sizes and cuts means this is the place to go if you struggle to find the right fit.
£24.99-39.99 (€31-50)

Best for rebels: Ksubi

A cult brand from two ruffian Australian surfers and DJs, with a very relaxed cut, and tiny, blink-and-you'll-miss-them stars embroidered on the pockets. Most are distressed, but in a way that looks like you've owned them for 30 years.
£145-300 (€182-376)

Best for the worn-in look: Edwin

This Japanese-owned, Swiss-based brand has been a pioneer of different washes and types of denim since the mid-1970s--where Edwin distresses, others follow. Its new Japan Vintage collection features convincing versions of jeans-as-much-loved-workwear.
From £80 (€100)

Best for smartening up: Dior Homme

Hedi Slimane's famous drainpipes used to be pencil-sharp, but since he left Dior the cut has become a little fuller. The silhouette is still sleek, though, with the button fly replaced by a hidden clasp. They can be worn beltless, which makes them a good formal option.
£143-366 (€180-460)

Best for straight leg: Earnest Sewn

Its hand-made "Fulton" (the waistband tags are stamped with the signature of the person who made them) provides the perfect amount of straightness--neither too narrow, nor too wide. Already a classic, and they look particularly good with a shirt or blazer.
Around £180 (€225)

Best for simplicity: APC

An exceptionally cool label, often described as the French 501, though they are in fact made in Sweden. Utterly unadorned, raw jeans made using super-tough, 13oz denim, in a slimmish cut that's barely changed in 20 years.
£99-105 (€124-131)

Best for comfort: Stronghold

All its jeans are hand-made on site at Stronghold's shop in Los Angeles, where the looms are on display. Have a perfect lived-in feel without compromising the quality of the denim: thick and strong but still supple.
\$285-1,100 (€181-700); 1,625 Abbot Kinney Blvd, Venice, CA 90291; +1 (310) 399 7221

BAD TASTE IS A GOOD THING GO ON, I DARE YOU | AUGUST 21ST 2008

By Mary Fellowes

Sometimes you need to wear a tulle puffball skirt with black bondage straps. Judith Watt explains why we can all afford to let a little bad taste into our wardrobes; Mary Fellowes Shows us how

HOW TO WEAR IT: BAD TASTE

Revel in the unexpected, don't take yourself too seriously, but always, always maintain an elegant line- the late Isabella Blow, Anna Piaggi and dry own ancestor Daisy Fellowes are all entertaining examples of how to wear the opposite of what would be considered "right". Take them as inspiration, but don't pile it all on at once- you can have too much of a good (bad) thing.

Metalheads:

You can wear sequins during the day- ideally a bolero or drop-waisted dress from the 1920s- as long as they are old and tarnished-looking, and are dressed down with plimsolls. Or layer mixed gold chains over slim, monochrome tailoring, as at Givenchy.

Second Skin

Wolford's high-gloss Satin De Luxe black tights make even very short skirts more wearable, as well as elongating the legs.

See spots

Invest a pair of leopard-print or glitter shoes, but only in the most modern, clean shapes- Gina and Miu Miu both excel at this. Wear them with pieces that are structured or tailored, Neve with anything too vampish or girls. And if you are over 20, don't buy vintage- they instantly date an outfit.

Uniform

Wear one loud colour, such as violet, top-to-toe for evening - as seen at Christian Dior and Moschino- but then balance it with bare legs and arms.



Lanvin's way

Taking inspiration form Alber Elbaz, pile layers of past and pearl necklaces and brooches on top of anything plain or sporty- even a T-shirt, tank top or jeans. More playful still are Sonia Rykiel's "jewels", concocted from diamanté coloured plastic.

Cheap Laughs

Have some fun- express your sense of humour with glittery, flower-motif hairclips, skull-print flip flops, or comical plastic rings form market stalls. But try them with precious fabrics such as silk, satin and cashmere