

VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

**AUSTRALIAN
FASHION WEEK
ONES TO WATCH**

ZENDAYA GRACE & POWER

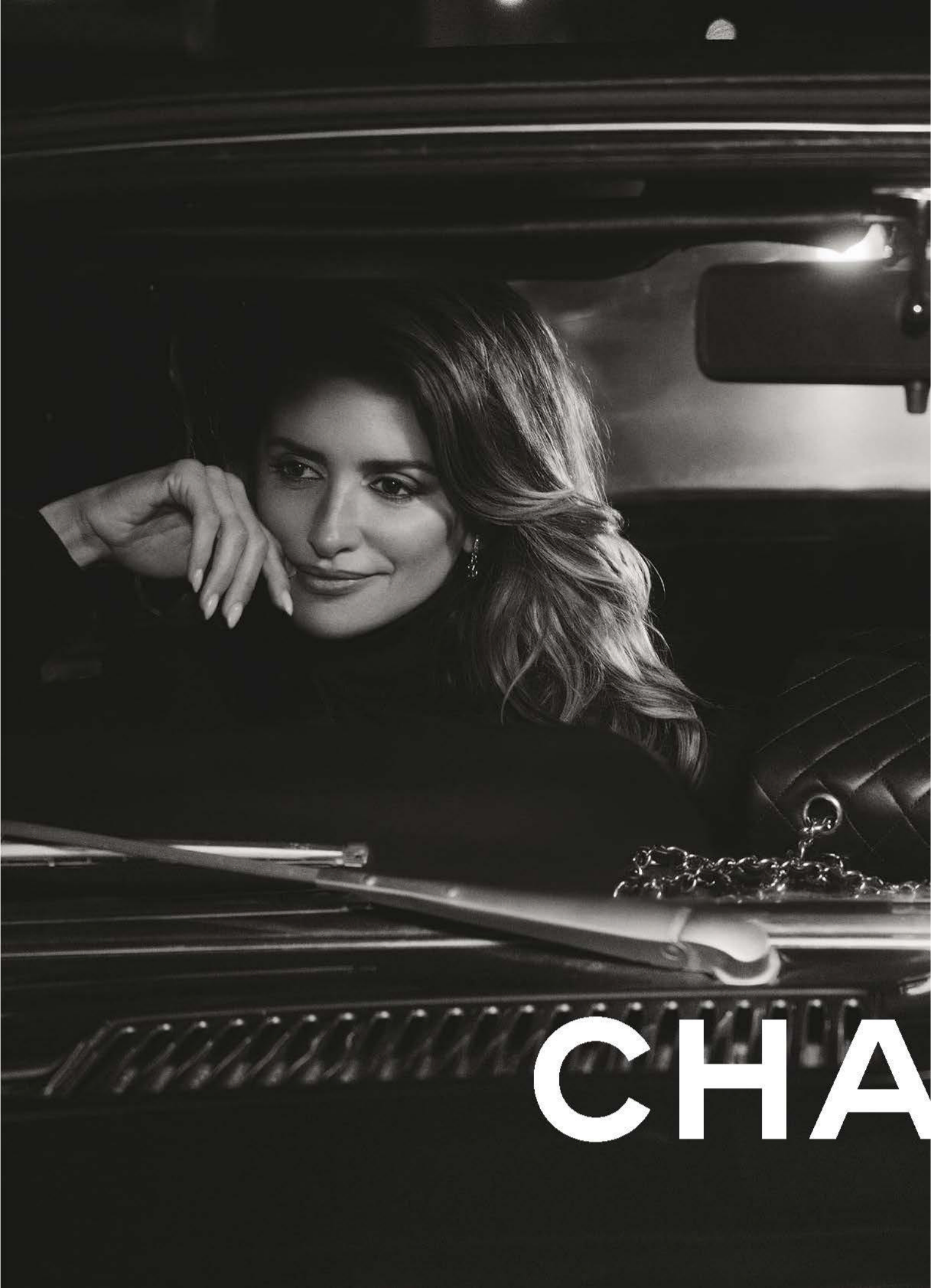
**ELIZABETH DEBICKI
LENA DUNHAM
KENDALL JENNER
HARRIET DYER
WILLOW SMITH**

**SIT DOWN WITH DEMNA:
A BALENCIAGA EXCLUSIVE**

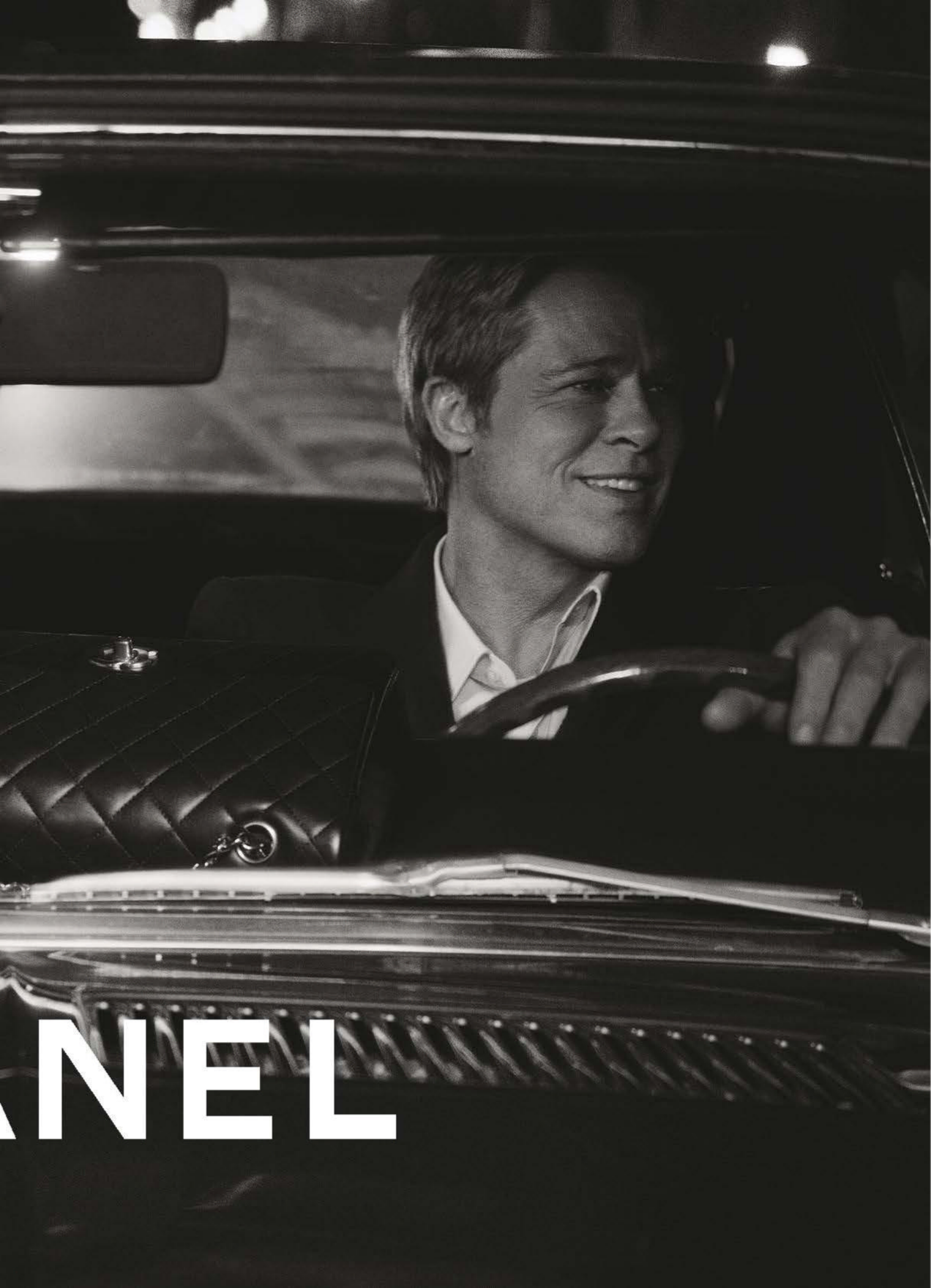




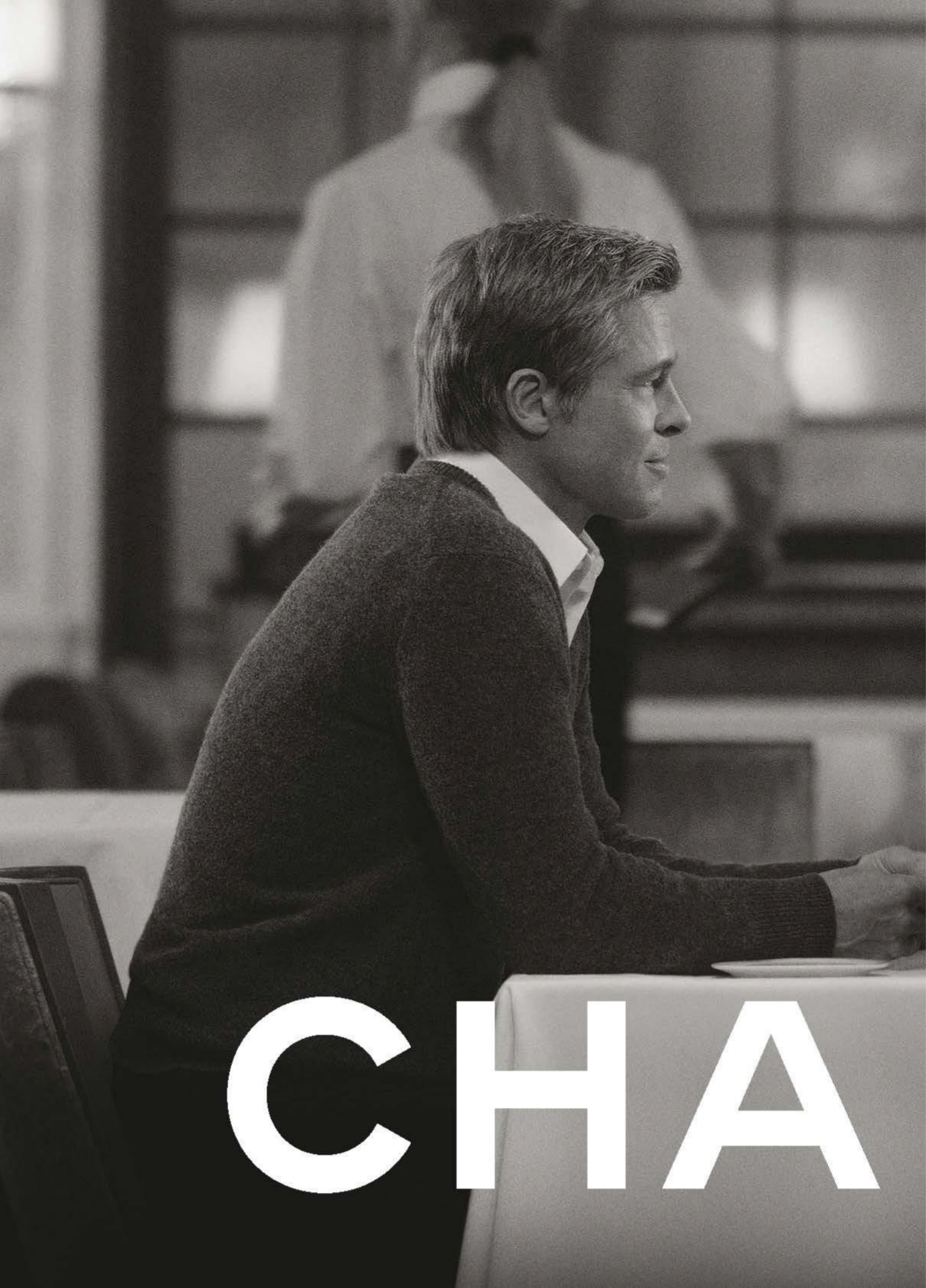
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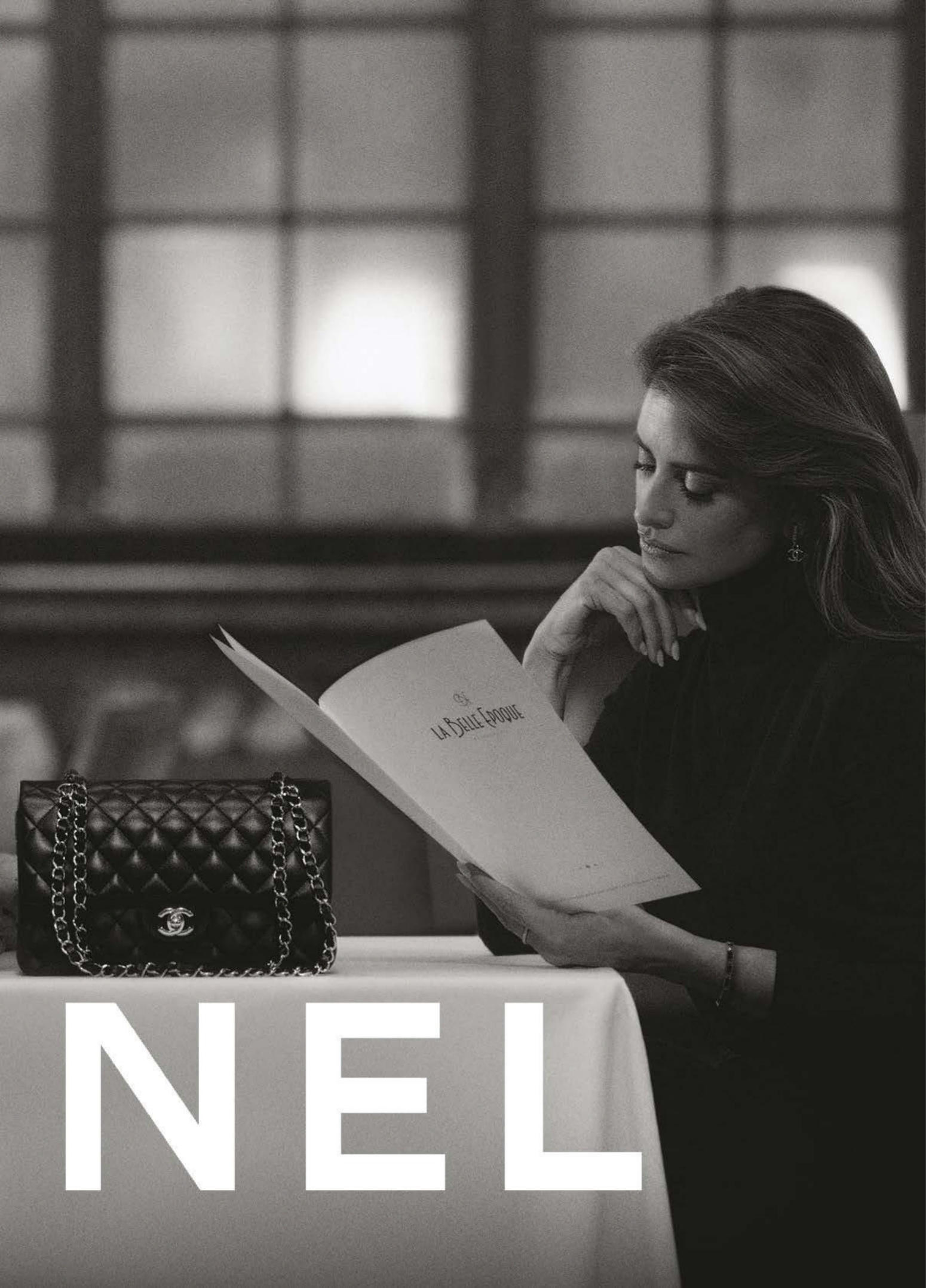
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TRINITY
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Snowflake collection
Necklace, platinum,
white gold and diamonds.



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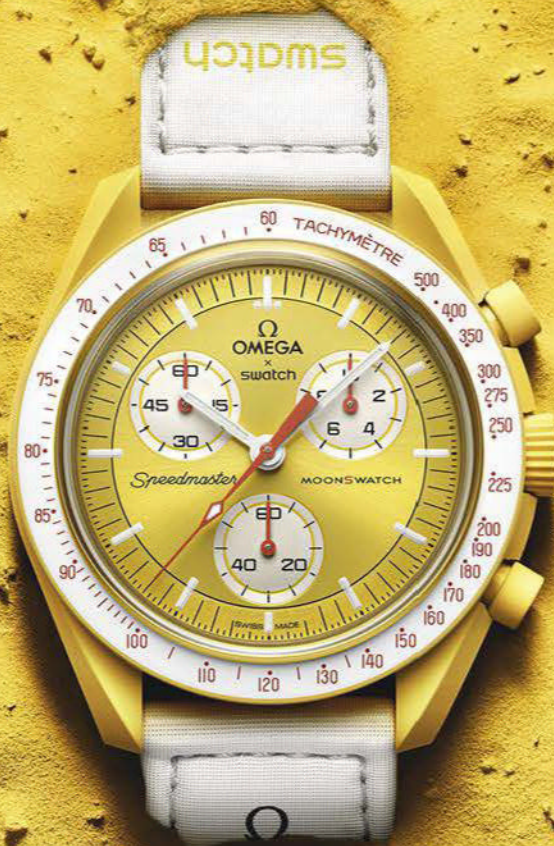


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May 2024

VOGUE

AUSTRALIA



On the cover

Zendaya wears a LOUIS VUITTON dress. BULGARI bangle and rings. Make-up from LANCÔME starting with Teint Idôle Ultra Wear Foundation in 430C; on cheeks, Belle de Teint Bronzer in Belle de Moka; on eyes, Hypnôse Eyeshadow Palette in French Nude and Idôle Tint Liquid Eye & Cheek Blush in Canyon Rose; on lips, Juicy Tubes Lip Gloss in Pure.

Stylist: Law Roach
Photographer: Josh Olins
Hair: Kim Kimble
Make-up: Raoul Alejandre
Manicure: Marisa Carmichael
Props: Heath Mattioli
Tailor: Matthew Reisman
Production: GE Projects

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this issue contains images and names of deceased persons.

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34 Staying power

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47 Night moves

Burberry's latest Knight bag takes its signature hardware to the hilt by dipping it in ice-green crystals.

48 Round are way

The city of Manchester's grit and bluster might have seemed an incongruous match for the French house of Chanel to stage its Métiers d'art show. Until the two met.

52 The centre holds

At the spring/summer '24 haute couture shows, designers asked themselves: what defines this house? The answers came alive with innovation and a forward-facing spirit.

59 Curated by: Julia Capp

Architect and CEO of Paris-based design firm RDAI, one of our most successful creative exports, Julia Capp, shares her current fascinations.

60 Piece together

For his fourth Australian fashion week show, Jordan Gogos continues his collaborations, reinvigorating the work of Australian design legends by partnering with revered designer Linda Jackson.

62 One thing

In celebration of Australian fashion, established and emerging local designers recall the one hero piece that propelled their stars to new heights.

66 New force

As Australian fashion week returns this month, *Vogue* spotlights the local fashion talent burning with a drive to do things differently.

71 String along

Meet the new generation of pearl necklace with a brand-new lustre.

72 Funny girl

Harriet Dyer turned a writing exercise into romantic comedy *Colin From Accounts* with her real-life husband, and it swept the world. What's next for Australia's favourite couple?

76 The exhibitionists

Around Australia, these three new galleries are changing the way art is experienced by fresh audiences.

78 Growing pains

On her new album, Willow articulates coming of age with a potent honesty, and at 23, proves she's only just touched the surface of her talent.

80 Leap of faith

When writer Sloane Crosley lost a friend to suicide, the grief felt insurmountable. In an attempt to escape it, she travelled to Sydney and pushed herself to the edge, as she details in this extract from her memoir.

82 Star-crossed lovers

You know the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, but prepare to see it in a whole new light via a groundbreaking gender-fluid ballet.

89 Her own way

She's a movie star, a fashion icon, a producer, and maybe a director, too. Is there anything Zendaya can't do? We meet her in Sydney as she plots her next move.



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Hermès Frères
Épiciers


HERMÈS
PARIS

Faubourg calling

Cate Blanchett



GIORGIO ARMANI



the refillable
eau de parfum intense



104 The surreal life

Balenciaga helmsman Demna is a fashion shaman, reading current culture and filtering it back to us in all its chaos, absurdity and beauty. We meet the re-energised creative director in his personal creative epicentre – Los Angeles.

110 Outward bound

An uncomplicated attitude and practicality gives Burberry its current flavour. In earthy, autumnal tones of a season on the turn and hard-wearing accessories, pre-fall is made for bracing blustery days outdoors. Let in the cold.

116 The big short

Kendall Jenner tries the season's highest hemlines on for size, layered up with knit outerwear to strike a counterpoint to the most daring silhouette of the season.

126 Hit the street

Choose an accessory equipped to level up to the pace of everyday life, like Fendi's icons including the hold-all go-everywhere Peekaboo, energised in new colours.

132 A sense of occasion

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154 Base note

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156 To the point

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161 For keeps

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162 Love on the brain

New tech is changing romance. Ahead of appearing at *Vogue Codes Summit*, neuroscientist Dr Sarah McKay discusses how modern love is altering our brains.

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Editor's letter



This issue is a celebration of the power of clothes and some of the many talents who understand and harness its potency. One of those people is actor Zendaya, who in just a short time has experienced a rapid ascent and made a seismic impact. At just 27, she is a two-time Emmy award-winner, bona fide movie star and producer.

Having acted from a young age, Zendaya is that rare case: a child star who astutely steered her career and elegantly built momentum, gaining influence and respect as she transitioned into adulthood. Zendaya has not simply navigated, but taken the controls, approaching everything she does with surety and purpose.

Her mission is not just to make great work, but to use the voice of a generation and wield its power to have a genuine and lasting impact on the worlds of entertainment and fashion.

In 'A sense of occasion', from page 132, maverick Elizabeth Debicki plays the lead role. Photographed by the legendary Steven Meisel in a portfolio of rarely seen looks that will be on display at this year's *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion* exhibition at the Costume Institute in New York, Elizabeth is otherworldly. She is one of the greatest Australian actors of our time, and I have the utmost respect for her. The Met Gala, which always kicks off the first Monday in May and this year counts Zendaya as a co-chair, will soon be followed by Australian fashion week. In this issue, established local designers reflect on past important, pivotal moments, and we showcase the new names to watch. It can be incredibly hard to cut through in this industry, but the best of them are creating memorable clothes with a fearless passion.

Balenciaga creative director, Demna, has always done this. He rarely gives interviews but following the Balenciaga pre-fall '24 show, (well positioned within sight of the Hollywood sign in LA) he spoke to us exclusively. Demna is very much a hands-on designer who thrives on and loves the art of making clothes. He has a true talent that is in many ways unmatched.

What unites all these multi-talented people within this issue is their courage and creative stamina. They are rich in ideas and we are proud to acknowledge them.

CHRISTINE CENTENERA Editor-in-chief



PASQUALE BRUNI

ACT VI.

HEART TO EARTH

J Farren-Price

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Contributors

JOSH OLINS

“I started to take terrible pictures of my friends skateboarding when I was 16,” British-born photographer Josh Olins, who captured the indomitable Zendaya for the cover of this issue, says of his foray into the industry. “I will always remember the light bulb moment when I realised I could transfer my interest in composition in drawing and painting into photography, which was in my mind filling a frame.” Because Olins is most proud of producing imagery that conjures a sense of feeling, he hopes his work is more than just aesthetically pleasing. “We are saturated with images every second of every day, but I hope to feel that mine are worth spending more than a millisecond looking at.”



SLOANE CROSBY

“I don’t have business cards, but if I did, they’d probably read President, People’s Republic of My Apartment,” New York City-based critic, journalist and author Sloane Crosby tells *Vogue*. In this issue, the writer shares an excerpt about a very special trip to Sydney from her new memoir, *Grief is for People*. Crosby recognises her latest work is inherently sad, but has a “beating joyous heart”. “When you write a book and press ‘print’, it no longer belongs to you,” the author explains. “So I want readers to see themselves and their loved ones in these pages. However someone connects with the story? That’s the right way to connect with the story.”



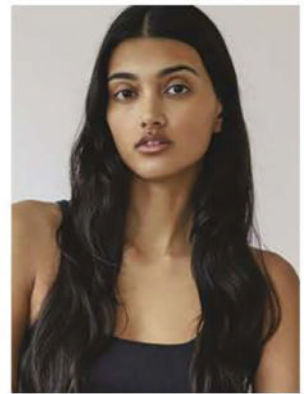
BLAKE AZUR

This isn’t the first time photographer Blake Azur has worked with *Vogue* Australia. The creative, who regularly produces emotive imagery for the pages of this publication, has once again collaborated with talent, stylists and make-up artists to produce two features for this issue. The first being ‘Staying power’ from page 34, and the second a series of portraits picturing Harriet Dyer and Patrick Brammall, from page 72. “I’m most proud of the images that evoke strong emotions, nurture the soul, and transport viewers to different places. That achievement deeply resonates with me,” says Azur. “I hope it leaves the audience with a stimulated mind.”



NEELAM GILL

British Punjabi model Neelam Gill has amassed a number of notable achievements since she was first scouted at just 14, but says that shooting with photographer Steven Meisel is a goal she still has her sights set on. “It’s been my dream for as long as I can remember,” she tells *Vogue*, after appearing in ‘Outward bound’, from page 110. While citing working in India for the first time as a career highlight and beyond magical – “I had goosebumps walking underneath the Gateway of India!” – Gill has a meaningful message to share beyond the world of modelling. “I’m also working on a documentary about domestic violence, which I hope will help people and raise awareness on such an important issue.”





MICHAEL HILL



MICHAEL



EL HILL

Staying power

As one season ends and another begins, the smartest pieces to buy work seamlessly through all. *Vogue* picks the best bridging staples, with versatility in spades, to transcend dress codes and temperature shifts.

STYLING EMMA KALFUS PHOTOGRAPHS BLAKE AZAR



Fine fold

Whether floor- or knee-length, the long pleated skirt embodies formality and fun in equal measure. Note the versatility; low-key or dressier pairings shine equally.

Above left: PARIS GEORGIA top, \$590. COURTNEY ZHENG skirt, \$540. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS necklace, \$18,600. BURBERRY ring, P.O.A. CAMILLA AND MARC bag, \$595. SPORTMAX boots, \$2,420. **Above right:** HARRIS TAPPER trench coat, \$1,055. LMND polo, \$289. TOD'S skirt, \$2,730. FENDI bag, \$3,520. FALKE socks, \$30. ADIDAS sneakers, \$180.



Scan the QR code to shop *Vogue's* edit of the trend.



MIU MIU shirt, \$1,860, top, worn underneath, P.O.A., skirt, \$1,860, and belt \$1,130. CARTIER watch, \$42,600.

WORDS: JONAH WATERHOUSE HAIR: DARREN SUMMERS MAKE-UP: ISABELLA SCHIMID MODEL: SANNE DEVRIES ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM/AU/WTB

CHRISTIAN
DIOR jacket,
\$6,000, shirt,
\$3,700, and
pants, P.O.A.
PASPALEY
earrings,
\$18,800, and
necklaces, worn
as bracelet,
\$16,800 each.
SAINT
LAURENT
shoes, \$1,620.

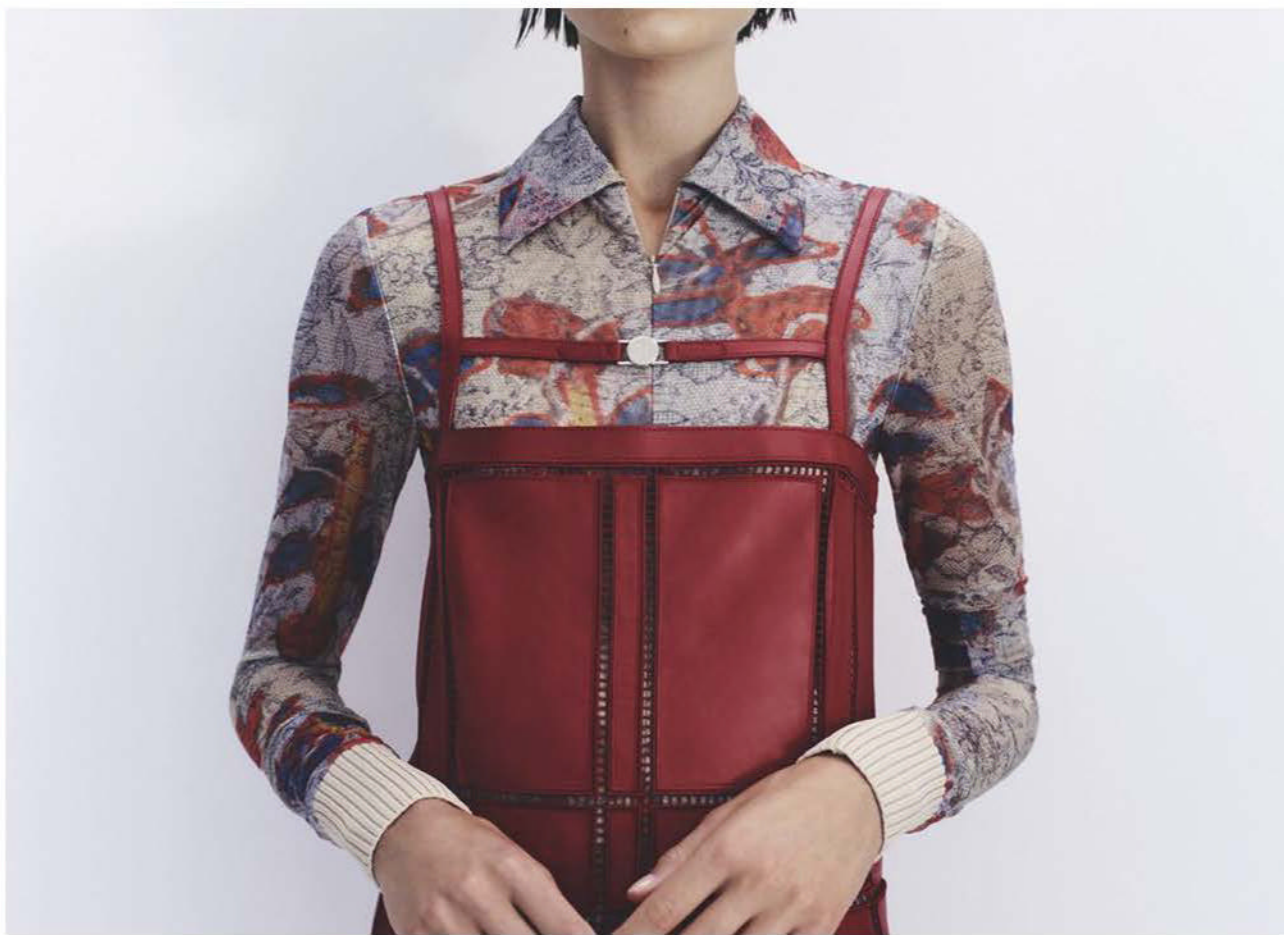


À la 90s

Minimalist tailoring was at peak power in the 90s and remains a covetable proposition for its ease and polish. Per Dior and Sportmax, pair with bold accessories for an individual twist.



Above left: FRIENDS WITH FRANK coat, \$670. UNIQLO sweater, \$50. THE ROW shirt, \$1,150, from Mytheresa.com. SAINT LAURENT pants, \$1,735. GENTLE MONSTER X MAISON MARGIELA glasses, \$485. **Above right:** SPORTMAX jacket, \$2,360, and skirt, \$1,180. PASPALEY pearl earrings, \$1,780. NOAH THE LABEL earrings, \$110. BURBERRY bag, P.O.A.



Above: HERMÈS dress, \$27,040. SIR bodysuit, \$240. **Below left:** ALICE + OLIVIA trench coat, \$795, from The Outnet. CARTIER earrings, \$3,650. NOAH THE LABEL ring, \$60. FALKE socks, \$50. SONG FOR THE MUTE X ADIDAS sneakers, \$200. **Below right:** CHRISTOPHER ESBER jacket, \$6,000, and skirt, \$3,900. HERMÈS bag, \$28,025.





Hue dares

Consider coloured leather when brokering a transition into autumnal dressing. Clear, bright hues and buttery textures are a tonic for cool-weather blues.

P. JOHNSON FEMME cardigan, \$895. ST. AGNI skirt, \$399. CARTIER watch, \$44,600. CHANEL boots, \$3,660, from the Chanel boutiques.



Let loose

Kick back in roomy jeans that fit at the waist and play with proportion.

They chime with wardrobe essentials by day, and with gossamer party tops for high-low glamour at night.

BARRIE sleeveless jacket, \$3,360. GUCCI jeans, \$1,820. BURBERRY earrings, P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. bracelet, P.O.A. SCANLAN THEODORE shoes, \$650.



Scan the QR code to shop *Vogue's* edit of the trend.



Above left: EMMA MULHOLLAND ON HOLIDAY jacket, \$450. COURTNEY ZHENG jeans, \$325. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS ring, \$16,400. **Above right:** GUCCI jacket, \$7,045, tank top, \$2,225, and shoes, \$2,155. GINN jeans, \$425. TIFFANY & CO. necklace, \$21,600. BREITLING watch, \$10,890.



SPORTMAX top, \$2,995. ERES bralette, \$340, from Net-A-Porter.com. AGOLDE jeans, \$625, from Net-A-Porter.com. TIFFANY & CO. necklace, P.O.A. OMEGA watch, \$41,425. ANNA ROSSI double ring, \$89.



Above left: MAX MARA coat, \$4,375. TIFFANY & CO. necklace, \$22,000. FENDI shoes \$1,820. **Above right:** BEARE PARK coat, \$1,490. ACLER shirt, \$350. DION LEE pants, \$690. BURBERRY bag, \$2,790. **Below:** CHRISTIAN DIOR coat, \$7,400. COURTNEY ZHENG dress, \$510. SONG FOR THE MUTE shirt, \$645, and sunglasses, \$630.

Light touch

Lightweight outerwear is perfect for the days between peak seasons. Consider a louche canvas mackintosh, or a draped blazer in fine wool, to soft launch a winter wardrobe.





BURBERRY
trench coat, P.O.A.,
earrings, \$1,150,
and shoes, \$1,890.
SCANLAN
THEODORE skirt,
\$1,800. HERMÈS
necklace, \$1,175.



ALEXANDER WANG trench coat, \$990, from The Outnet. VALENTINO GARAVANI shoes, P.O.A.



Scan the QR code to shop *Vogue's* edit of the trend.

Sling shot

Whether favouring Valentino's crimson pumps or Chanel's ballerina slippers, fashion's affinity for the day-to-night slingback is growing.

Below left: SIR trench coat, \$650. TOKEN socks, \$10, from Universal Store. CHRISTIAN DIOR shoes, \$1,390. **Below right:** BARRIE jacket, \$3,640. MAGGIE MARILYN jeans, \$295. PASPALEY necklace, worn as bracelet, \$32,800. CHANEL shoes, \$1,150, from the Chanel boutiques.



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Night moves

First impressions count when it comes to Burberry's Knight bag which, in its newest iteration, takes its signature hardware to the hilt by dipping it in ice-green crystals. Begging to be taken shimmering into the night.



BURBERRY bag, \$6,900.

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM/AU/WTB

ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE STYLING ISABELLA MAMAS

Round are way

The city of Manchester's grit, bluster and irreverent English spirit might have seemed an incongruous match for the French house of Chanel to stage its Métiers d'art show. Until the two met.
By Alice Birrell.



Below, from left: Joy Division's Ian Curtis in 1980; a poster for the band's concert in 1979 at The Factory; New Order's 1987 single 'Touched by the Hand of God', a Factory record.





Above: Chanel's Métiers d'art show in Manchester in December.



In the depths of British winter, Chanel sought out the damp, cloud-cloaked climes of the unlikelyst of places for its Métiers d'art showcase in December. Wittingly or not, creative director Virginie Viard set off a chain of chatter about the chosen Manchester, not least of all among the locals. One, however, presided over all of it with philosophical bearing. “Some of it doesn’t make sense, which of course, is actually kind of interesting,” Mancunian Peter Saville says, settled in a corner of Free Trade Hall. Now a hotel, the locale was once the site of the Sex Pistols legendary performance in 1976, and of Bob Dylan’s 1966 world-shaking choice to go electric, to which an audience member declared him Judas.

Saville, vaunted graphic designer and bellwether extraordinaire, is equipped to evaluate the convergence of Chanel and the northern city. As in-house designer of Factory Records, the 1978 independent music label that signed Happy Mondays and The Durutti Column, and the cultural powerhouse that ran the Hacienda nightclub,

he also designed the album covers for Factory artists’ Joy Division and New Order. For this show, Saville contributed a special-edition vinyl design for Chanel, with music selected by Michel Gaubert. “Everything does make sense these days when we can decode everything and we tend not to end up believing in things because you can see the strings,” he says, referring to tacit marketing in an increasingly homogenised industry. “This [show], you can’t distil or diagnose the same way. There are some historic and, you could almost say, spiritual kind of connections,” he continues. “Virginie’s desires of ‘let’s go to Manchester’ set the company on a collision course with another reality.”

And so, Chanel exploded into, as much as collided with, Manchester, entering into its past and the rich weave of its culture. The challenge was in handling the singular pioneering spirit that has authored socio-cultural shifts via music – from Northern soul, to punk, beat, acid-house and lo-fi – that has been canonised then consecrated. And recognising the →

‘As I’m caught without my jacket once again.
The raindrops on my face play a sweet refrain’
‘Manchester’ by The Beautiful South.



Show rehearsal in typical Manchester weather.

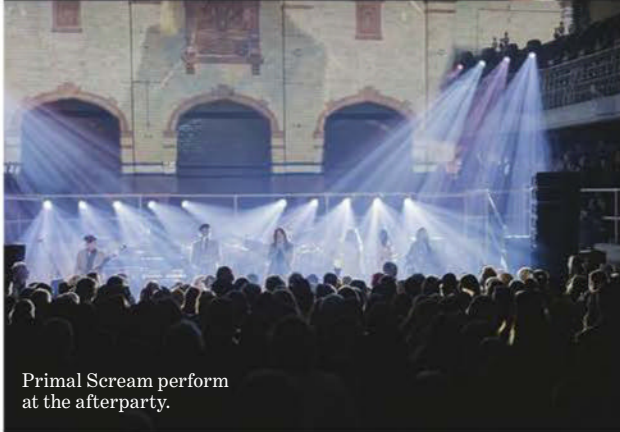


The site of Factory Records, Manchester.



Mancunian graphic designer Peter Saville CBE was part of Factory Records.

Longtime Chanel ambassador Tilda Swinton in Manchester.



Primal Scream perform at the afterparty.

‘I’m free to say whatever I like. Whatever I like if it’s wrong or right, it’s alright’
‘Whatever’ by Oasis.

anti-establishment, democratic tenor of the place, where the labour movement began and where Engels and Marx wrote their manifesto.

The evening of the show though, Viard won hearts and minds. The weather served up local flavour, drizzle slicking Thomas Street and its tattoo parlours and pubs, the street borrowed for the night for the runway. A sartorial nod to the skies, a grey tweed coat opened, but, like the title of the book *Looking for the Light Through the Pouring Rain* by photographer Kevin Cummins (chronicler of the city’s progeny of musical tastes and talents, from The Stone Roses to the Buzzcocks, Joy Division’s Ian Curtis and The Smiths’ Morrissey) – light streamed in.

It came via the red of Martin Parr’s first colour photograph, taken in Manchester of a woman in a pants-suit, here as a tweed skirt suit on Edie Campbell. Royal Mail red. Manchester United red. Then Karen Elson, who hails from Oldham, a 30-minute drive away, in pea green tweed, followed by a show of lipstick pink and lavender tweed, all in shapes taken from 1960s Chanel skirt suits. Viard was connecting to a youthquake silhouette, easy skirts and high hemlines for dancing in, steering clear of overt references.

These she layered in subtly. A floral pattern that read English wallpaper was applied to a sequin bustier, tiny cakes and tea motifs were scattered restrainedly on tops and on badges. Then came black leather, quilted like Chanel’s flap bag, and acid-wash denim in deep red, the kind worn to band practice in disused warehouses-cum-jamming spaces. Colours went from cinnamon to earl grey-tinged green on a tunic dress over a ruffled shirt with a tea tin bag, a feeling of honouring the everyday, a democratic Mancunian attitude pervading the symbols and palette. The shine on one charcoal tweed was made to reflect wet paving stones on a rainy night. It got subtler: looped tweed on a multicoloured coat mimicked the autographs of lead singers. “It’s a Métiers d’art collection that I wanted to be very close to the house codes. True to their spirit of sophistication and simplicity, to which I added touches of a pop universe,” Viard said.

“I just love the way it was a real response to the city. And the vibe of this place, which is all about no-nonsense, youth culture, going out clubbing, putting on a little dress but then putting on a coat, you know, as an afterthought, because it’s probably going to rain on the way back from the club,” Scottish actor Tilda Swinton said post-show dressed in a sweeping midnight blue coat, a shock of white-blond hair swept dramatically up.

“I grew up in the country, and I’m always envious of that kind of vibe ... I’ve always got a hankering for the experience of this kind of city, fiercely proud and owned by the people who live here. I know Glasgow quite well and Glasgow has the same feeling,” she says. “In Scottish, we would call it gallus, that feeling of pride and up-for-it-ness.”

It’s that feeling that’s propelled the Manchester’s outsized contribution to culture, one that flourishes through a prism of

‘They’re not the sights of Rome but it’s home ... it’s not the Taj Mahal, but it’s ours’ *‘It’s Nice to go Out in the Morning’* by Herman’s Hermits.

subversiveness, innovation and independence unbound by the wealthy south’s codes of propriety. Growing rapidly in burst and lurches founded with the disruptive force of industrialisation has been fertile ground for catalysts, agitators and misfits, their legacy including women’s suffrage, the first thesaurus, splitting the atom, and football culture – the Football League was born here in 1888.

Gabrielle Coco Chanel has ties directly, and indirectly, to all these what Saville might call historic, and spiritual, connections. A love affair with the Duke of Westminster, Hugh Grosvenor, brought her to Eaton Hall in nearby Chester where she encountered tweeds and masculine shapes of loose sportswear worn in the English outdoors. Saville sees something extra. “It is possible to understand this place as the original modern city, in that Manchester addresses so many of the issues that are brought about by era-changing moments. And if we look in the history of fashion for an individual who epitomises original modern, you can choose Gabrielle Chanel.”

“If we think of the time when she was making her greatest impact, that was also parallel with when Manchester was one of the most important cities,” Saville says. The town’s industriousness as a cotton mill and textile manufacturing hub is echoed in Le19M, a formidable building that now houses the Chanel-owned ateliers including Lesage for tweed and embroidery, Lemarié for flowers and feathers, and Massaro for shoes.

Aska Yamashita, artistic director of the atelier Montex, was responsible for overseeing the miniature teapots on football badges and thousands of black sequins in varying textures in arcs, embroidered to look like vinyl records. For this collection, the atelier applied metal piercings to lace guipure, tracing the elaborate lines. “It was not a traditional embroidery work. It was more between embroidery and jewellery,” she explains. “We didn’t work with needle and thread, it was with pliers.”

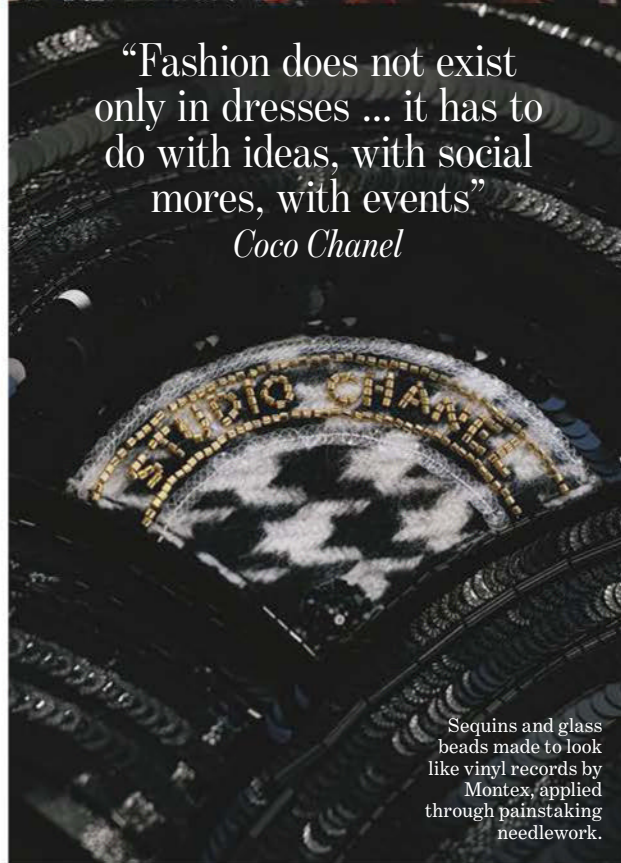
“I think it’s really important for the Métiers d’art projects, to say, ‘I see you. You are a manufacturing place that actually invests and is built on to a certain extent, the clothing industry,’” observed Swinton, a long-time house ambassador. “There’s always that sense of visibility and honouring.”

Chanel has borrowed from the city, and the city, it seems, might borrow something of Chanel. Saville, who visited Le19M, said he’d like to see a commitment to the handmade, the makers and doers – not too different to the way he as a Factory member would pour over physical books for starting points, crafting an image carefully.

“I would like there to be an entity and initiative like that in Manchester,” he reflects. A city that never set out to prove anything to anyone inadvertently just did. “Chanel choosing to do a show in Manchester is an extraordinary acknowledgment of Manchester,” says Saville. “And the bit that’s really important to me is it makes it quite clear, even to the city itself, that Manchester resonates in the world.” ■



“Fashion does not exist only in dresses ... it has to do with ideas, with social mores, with events”
Coco Chanel



Sequins and glass beads made to look like vinyl records by Montex, applied through painstaking needlework.

The centre holds

At the spring/summer '24 haute couture shows, a reverence for tradition and meditations on designers' DNA took hold, each asking themselves: what defines this house? The answers came alive with innovation and a forward-facing spirit. By Alice Birrell.



This page, all looks Fendi haute couture spring/summer '24, and below left, a coat made of layers of thread.



Fendi: material future

Kim Jones was not deterred by the weight of history at the 1925-founded Roman house of Fendi. Making light work of reinventing Italian aristocratic elegance for now, he let his ideas float: in wafer-thin one-shoulder sheaths and multi-dimensional sequins practically levitating off the surface of skirts and opera gloves. Skilfully, he fused this to the house history hewing close to Fendi's roots as a furrier but, crucially, subbing in animal-friendly, opulent, shaggy textures. Short layered fringe on a petrol blue skirt was a glossy mimicry in metallic fibres. A melange of tufted gold, brown and copper threads read as a decadently ersatz fur coat. Punctuating it all was a classic futurism – not an oxymoron but a compelling mash-up of timeless simplicity and futurism, also true to Fendi's DNA. It was what Karl Lagerfeld embraced during his 54 years at the Italian house, sometimes expressed via high-definition geometry and crisp silhouettes. Jones deployed it his way in squared-off shapes, like a rectilinear black column dress in silver bugle beads, with a spartan restraint. Set to a Max Richter soundtrack composed of electric drones, it was materiality in motion – the past heading into a spacey, glittering future.



Chanel haute couture spring/summer '24.



Feathers cut into leaf shapes complete a look.



Chanel: movement and freedom

“A beautiful dress may look beautiful on a hanger, but that means nothing. It must be seen on the shoulders, with the movement of the arms, the legs and the waist.” So said Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel whose mission it was to rescue women from the strictures of early 20th century dress. Decades on, Virginie Viard is sailing on a similar sentiment, immersing herself in the gestures of dance and elaborating on her vocabulary of light, modern femininity for spring’s couture collection. She flexed it in clouds of silk tulle and feathers, illusory overlays and Lesage-embroidered tweed liquifying at hem into trailing sheer skirts. Ballerina pink, lilac and powdery peach were hero tones, all present in one triumph of a look that summed up the Chanel ateliers’ breathtaking, nimble work: using 1,600 turkey feathers, individually shaped to look like tiny leaves, then dyed and embroidered with flowers to cover a white tunic dress. Lithe and airy or “vaporous”, as Viard dubbed her looks. *Totalement Chanel.*



Actor Margaret Qualley opens the Chanel haute couture show in Paris.



Schiaparelli: a tale of two titans

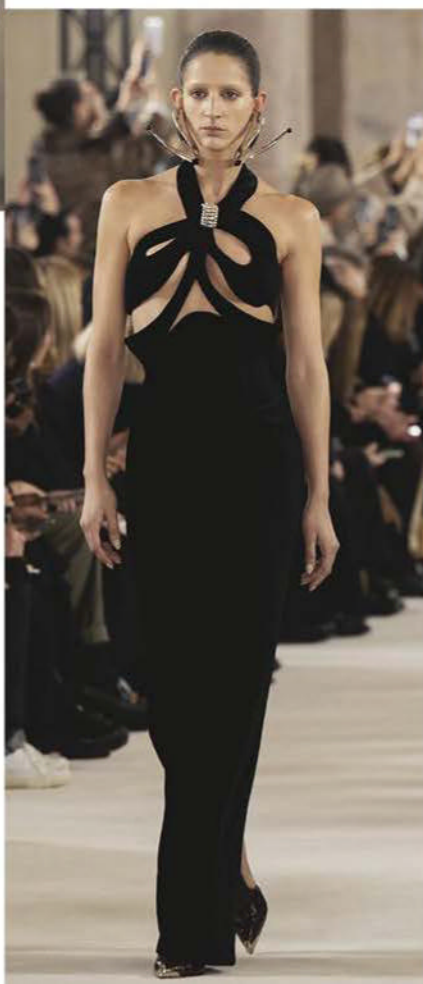
Creating harmony between Elsa Schiaparelli's taste for grandiose surreality and current Texan creative director Daniel Roseberry's love of American film might seem an impossibility, but this collection proved otherwise. Soaring architectural shapes borrowed from sci-fi – Roseberry has fostered a love of cinema since childhood – were also befitting an avant-garde Elsa, an Italian in Paris who never kowtowed to convention. It is this spirit which Roseberry syncs with, from the recontextualisation of e-waste into embellishment on a glittering shift dress laden with motherboards and microchips, to Western-inflected fringing and dressage-style knots on shield-shaped structures shrouding shoulders. Artifice and warmth, clinical precision and human emotion. Two sensibilities in synergy.



Schiaparelli haute couture spring/summer '24.



Western-inspired fringing on a Schiaparelli look.



Christian Dior: the golden age

For haute couture spring/summer '24 Maria Grazia Chiuri excavated a time period so consequential to Dior it was officially dubbed the golden age: the 1950s. Chiuri signalled intentions early, rendering her humble cotton pieces in couture drape and mid-century nipped waists. Usually unrestrained in her use of decorative elements, Chiuri held off, bending a ladylike soignée elegance to a spare, contemporary sensibility. At the heart of it was an historic dress from the Dior's archives: Cigalle. In pearl-grey moiré, Chiuri recognised its warps and waves, the kind that mimics the grain of a piece of wood, as its own form of restrained embellishment, so she applied it to a dress with opera collar in black cherry, and a strapless gown that carried the same jutting hips of Christian Dior's autumn/winter 1952 Profile Line collection, from which Cigalle came.



A look in moiré (above left) for Christian Dior haute couture, and right.



Giambattista Valli haute couture spring/summer '24, and below left.



Giambattista Valli: the romance of shape

Italian couturier Giambattista Valli is unabashed in his lavish expressions of dressmaking. His romantically extravagant dresses are fantasy in the grand tradition of haute couture and the spring/summer collection was no exception. He began riffing on the rose, creating 3D dupes that to the naked eye were hard to discern from the real thing – scattered in models' hair. In lieu of frills and furbelows, he let his magnified volume carry the feeling he has ever strove to achieve – occasion and otherworldly beauty. Valli reveres techniques held by very few in the rarefied world of couture ateliers – draping and construction – and so used them to craft the bundled, bubble-hem taffeta Watteau-style skirts, fanning trains exploding from neat bodices in blurred floral fabric and inflated sleeves.





Valentino haute couture spring/summer '24.



Valentino: everyday dreaming

With the news that Pierpaolo Piccioli is leaving his celebrated post at Valentino, attempts to distil his legacy began. What were the markers of his vision at the Italian house? His last couture collection held quintessentially Piccioli ideas: a democratic idea of escapism and fantasy, an inclusive world of dreams. In concrete terms, and physical form, this meant haute couture via the codes of ready-to-wear, breathing ease into a mulberry gown half-covered in marabou feathers by making it sheer on top, marrying the poetry of a white feathered top with the familiarity of wide-leg trousers in Bordeaux, ennobling a workaday blazer by casting it in amethyst and pairing it with opera gloves. Wardrobe essentials with the foil of couture. He has often said emotion is a universal human experience, and it is something he poured into his clothes like these. Piccioli elevated the art of clothesmaking, and took us along for the ride.

Gaurav Gupta: culture course

Get to know Gaurav Gupta, the Indian designer who took his third turn on the Paris couture schedule this season. Having dressed a constellation of celebrities for stage and red carpet (Beyoncé, Nicki Minaj, Cardi B) he is attracting attention for his singular forms. There is an elemental, primal energy beneath his collections, articulated in Gupta's now signature metal-wire dresses. In arcing waves with tight, plissé-like folds, they look as if swept by a giant hand or applied with a giant paintbrush. In forms evocative of the curlicues and tendrils of flame or smoke he has wrought his handiwork drawing on his culture – through technique and embellishment, like the metal snake forms on necklines, representative of kundalini, the energy of divine love. He called this collection Aarohanam, Sanskrit for the process of ascension.

Fitting, for a name on the rise.



Gaurav Gupta haute couture spring/summer '24, and left.

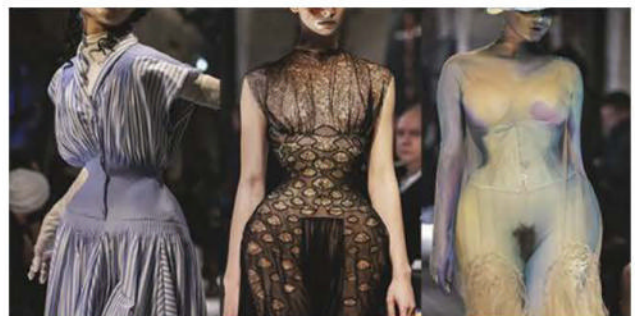


Maison Margiela haute couture spring/summer '24.



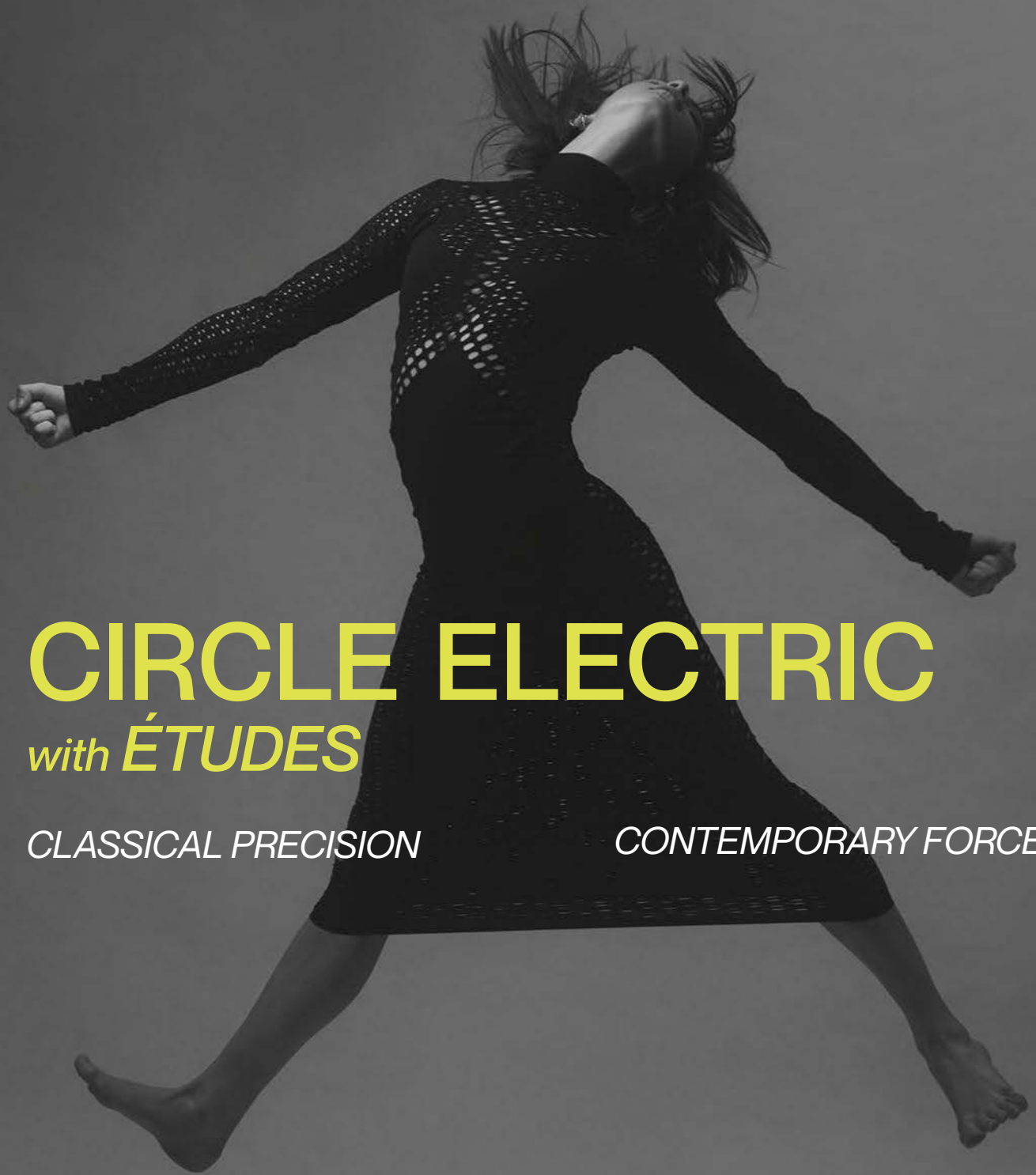
Maison Margiela: world-making returns

Under Pont Alexandre III, John Galliano subsumed showgoers into a nocturnal drama, in potent, breathtaking style. Men and women, rogues and ruffians, drawn from the Paris underworld of the 1920s and 30s – he cited Brassai’s people on the fringes. In a state of deshabelle, models pulled pinstripe overcoats tight against the cold, clutched at collars of tweed jackets made to look rain-soaked, and leant into their lasciviously curved corsetry scaffolding sheer dresses with eyes at turns searching, glaring, wistful. Some were in trouble, others were about to enter into it wending through a midnight den of broken glasses and upturned chairs. The cinematic tableau was a platform for his experimentation with complex techniques of stitching, gluing and beading, but this was the minutiae. Galliano wants us to be absorbed in the gesture, the mood he’s laid out with a willingness to confront the darker pockets of life and enter into something darkly beautiful.



Corseted and sheer looks by John Galliano for Maison Margiela.

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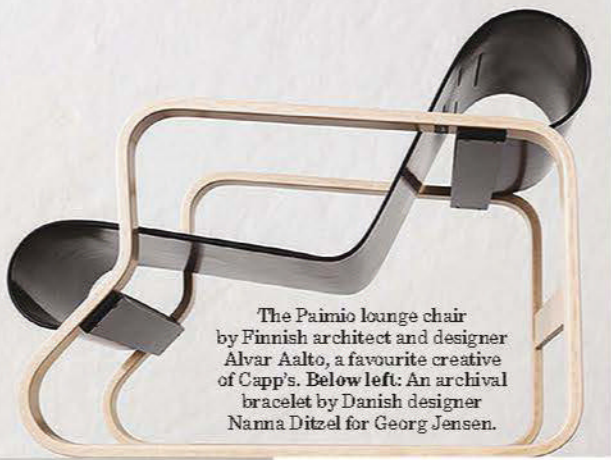
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The Paimio lounge chair by Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto, a favourite creative of Capp's. Below left: An archival bracelet by Danish designer Nanna Ditzel for Georg Jensen.

Design heroes: "Twentieth century Scandinavian design with its simplicity, functionality and beautiful relationship to nature has always been a strong influence."



CURATED BY

Above: Paris must-visit: "The Buttes Chaumont Park in the north-east of Paris, is a lush green park with winding bucolic promenades and a magical view over Paris."



"My favourite Hermès silk scarf is the Marcelena by the artist Natalie Rich Fernandez. I travel extensively, packing utilitarian clothes; my Hermès scarves add colour and poetry."

HERMÈS Choreographie Equestre scarf 70, \$640.



Julia Capp

Architect and CEO of Paris-based design firm RDAI, Julia Capp is one of our most successful creative exports. Here, her current fascinations.

Context, location, culture. These are the principles Julia Capp and her team are led by when developing a project, which these days, as the chief executive officer at renowned 1972-founded architecture firm Rena Dumas Architecture Intérieure (RDAI), could be a five-star hotel, an Hermès boutique in an art deco building, or a skyscraper in Taipei. An itinerant creative, the Queensland-trained Capp has the advantage of honing her eye during her travels that have taken her to work in firms in Hong Kong, London and now Paris. The spaces she turns her hand to are disparate, but all connected by a thread of warmth, natural materials and organic, sumptuous curves. As Capp puts it: "Light-filled and comfortable and also to be intriguing, inviting." One of the firm's most frequent clients is Hermès, with which RDAI founding architect, the late Rena Dumas, wife of former Hermès chair Jean-Louis Dumas, formulated its singular architectural style. Today Capp collaborates on Hermès stores from Tokyo to New York and Hamburg. Advising would-be creatives to be curious, here she shares the forces and treasures that make her tick.

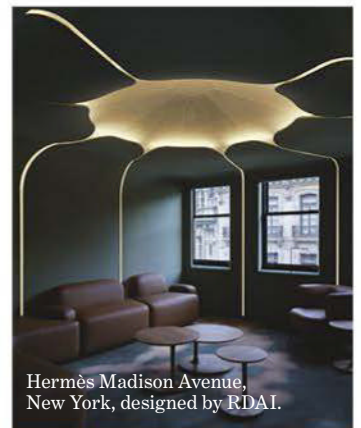


"A book I recently offered to my son who is studying design is *The Beauty of Everyday Things*. Designer Soetsu Yanagi eloquently articulates the relationship between spaces and objects that interact in our daily routines."



"My two favourite fragrances are Rose Tonnerre by Edouard Fléchier for the morning, and Angéliques Sous La Pluie by Jean-Claude Ellena for the end of the day."

EDITIONS DE PARFUMS FREDERIC MALLE Rose Tonnerre by Edouard Fléchier EDP, 50ml for \$395.



Hermès Madison Avenue, New York, designed by RDAI.



Left: "Aboriginal art with its colour, rhythm, movement and the dialogue it creates with the earth has nurtured me as I live far away from my home country ... The canvas I have is by Julie Nangala Robertson."



SO/ Paris hotel lobby, by RDAI.

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL. PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE WARLUKURLANGU ARTISTS AND YAAMA GANU GALLERY. COURTESY OF GEORG JENSEN, GETTY IMAGES, GUILLAUME GRASSET, KEVIN SCOTT, SHAO TING KUEI. ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

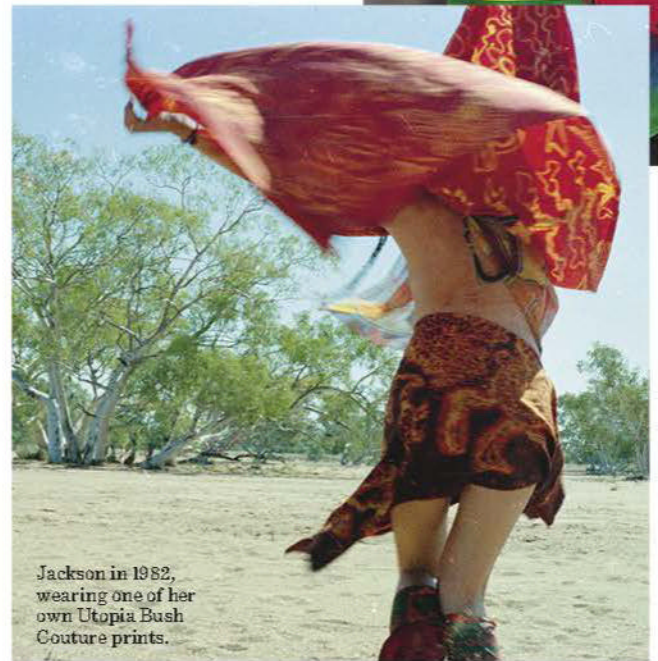


Linda Jackson photographed in the 1970s.



Piece together

For his fourth Australian fashion week show, Jordan Gogos continues his theme of collaboration, this time partnering with revered designer Linda Jackson for a spellbinding match-up. By Jonah Waterhouse.



Jackson in 1982, wearing one of her own Utopia Bush Couture prints.

Few experiences bond people like a road trip. For designer Jordan Gogos, a jaunt from Sydney to Mudgee in January with Australian creative icon Linda Jackson in the passenger seat of his blue Mini convertible formed the groundwork for an otherworldly collaboration – but first, there was a slight hiccup. “I picked Linda up, and then we get to Mudgee,” he recalls of the four-hour drive from Sydney to the rural New South Wales town. “And then [when we arrived], she says, ‘I forgot my keys!’”

Even icons make mistakes. Jackson – whose colourful prints and interpretations of Australian flora and fauna made her one of Australia’s most famous designers in the 1970s and 80s – was there to open her off-grid archive of fabrics, bespoke garments, and ephemera for Gogos only. The emerging multidisciplinary designer, known for his psychedelic handspun creations, will reinterpret Jackson’s painted fabrics in three handmade custom pieces, appearing in the runway show for his label Iordanes Spyridon Gogos this month as part of Australia fashion week.

“What I love about the collaboration is that it’s up to *him*,” Jackson emphasises over the phone from her temporary base in far north Queensland, where she’s working with artists from Yalanji Art Centre at Mossman Gorge on a bespoke fashion piece for Darwin’s Country to Couture runway this year. “To do absolutely whatever he was feeling and what he wants to do.”

The partnership follows 29-year-old Gogos’s design collaborations with Jenny Kee, Jackson’s longtime creative

partner, and Akira Isogawa, who last worked with Gogos in 2023 and will collaborate on five pieces for this year’s show. Working with Jackson extends Gogos’s probing of Australian fashion’s pioneers, recontextualising their work for a new generation.

Once Gogos arrived in Mudgee, he realised borrowing just a few fabrics from the expansive archive would be impossible. “I was meant to decide, but I got greedy,” he says with a laugh. “I said, ‘I want this one ... now I want this one ... actually no, I want them all.’”

Jackson happily obliged. “I’ve seen the fabulous things he’s done in the past,” she says. “I’ve been so aware of his extraordinary skills that he uses in the sewing, stitching, folding. You can zoom in and see the details.”

Inside Jackson’s nondescript barn, the two sat for hours as she revealed the stories behind fabrics, from her tropical art to her opal prints which appeared in *Vogue Australia*. An editorial in the December 1983 issue, titled ‘Cyclone Linda’, included images from Jackson’s Bush Couture salon show in Sydney’s Kings Cross, where supermodel Penelope Tree walked among a sea of Jackson’s rainbow fabrics. “We could do anything here. It didn’t really matter what other people saw, because we were in this incredible country, and all these amazing things could happen,” she says.

When creating the pieces, Gogos challenged himself to use as many fabrics as possible, down to a granular level. “She has metres of gorgeous fabric – I wasn’t interested in that,” he



Jordan Gogos and Jackson; Gogos wears a print from Jackson's Rainbow collection
Below: The pair comb through Jackson's archive.



Gogos's 'The Library' garment incorporating Jackson's prints, modelled by designer Mary Argyropoulos.



Jackson's Black Opal print as seen in *Vogue* Australia, 1983.



Jenny Kee, Jackson's longtime creative partner, wears her famous Black Cockatoo dress.

explains. "Rather than the length of something, I just wanted as many [colours and prints] as possible."

The first garment, which he calls *The Library*, is a walking homage to Jackson's handiwork. Briefly tempted to weave hundreds of the fabrics into a long gown ("a 'Princess Diana train'" he jokes, recalling the 7.5 metre-long appendage on the royal's wedding dress), the hand-folded composition incorporates hundreds of Jackson's prints in three-dimensional shapes, showing her artistic breadth in one concise swoop. "The fun of it is you've got a print, and then you open one piece up and inside there's another print," Gogos says gleefully.

But there was something else that caught his eye. In a large box were thousands of square fabric tags in rainbow colours, which Jackson made in the 1980s but never used. "I'd always imagined we could patch them together," Jackson says of the badges, which Gogos used to stitch together an entire dress. "Suddenly, I was in the bottom of one of these boxes with Jordan, and now he's actually done it. It's labour-intensive, and technically extraordinary."

None of this would've happened without Jackson's archiving. The designer says attending Dior and Madame Grès shows in

1970s Paris taught her the importance of keeping her work in immaculate condition. "I always had textile archives I brought with me," Jackson notes, adding that pieces of her work are even in safekeeping at her temporary base in Port Douglas. "To have a few things you can talk about from the 70s and 80s – helping others to understand different ways of putting things together and printing."

"The fun of it is you've got a print, and then you open one piece up and inside there's another print"

Gogos has four collections under his belt, and this March, the Powerhouse Museum announced it would procure his entire archive in a major acquisition. Such watershed moments make him even more grateful for Jackson's counsel. "The one thing about Linda, and anyone who's ever met her will say this to you verbatim, is that she's so generous with her time," he says.

An eye for detail defines Gogos's work, but in his time with Jackson, he quickly realised he'd met his match. "It takes a certain person to look at a textile, and 120 textiles later, still be surprised. We were sitting down, going, 'Oh my god, look at the bleed marks of that paint, look at that black overlapping the colours' ... it's really kind of finicky. And quite funny, maybe, to other people. But to us, it was normal." Consider it a daytrip well spent.

One thing

In celebration of Australian fashion, established and emerging local designers recall the one hero piece that propelled their stars to new heights.
By Jonah Waterhouse.

Dion Lee: the corset

“Internationally, what’s had the most impact on my business has been the jersey corset profiles that we introduced in 2019. We immediately saw celebrity attraction and support for those styles, from Bella Hadid to the Kardashians. The one Taylor Swift wore to the Super Bowl in 2024 was hand-crocheted, a knit version of the same silhouette. I think what really struck a chord with people was this ease and wearability of something that represents female sensuality. Since then, we’ve introduced profiles that evolved from there to become more unisex, which introduced a whole new customer.”



Lee's cotton-jersey corset from autumn/winter '19/'20.



The piece in photos from Isogawa's personal archive.

Akira Isogawa: the dress

“The textile of this hand-embellished dress from resort '99 was made by an artisan in Bali. The motif of ‘Phoenix in a Summer Garden’ was drawn with a batik technique onto cotton poplin, with glass beads and sequins on a heavy cotton canvas lining to support their weight.

“This dress was apparently the highlight of Australian fashion week ... the style in blue and dark red was chosen for the front cover of *The Australian* and dubbed ‘The dress that saved Sydney’. I received two awards in the same month: Womenswear Designer of the Year and Australian Designer of the Year at the Australian Fashion Industry Awards.

“I was told Björk bought this dress from Browns in London. In Tokyo, department store Barneys organised a trunk show, and every single embellished piece sold out. People apparently saw the beauty in the hand-embellishment and appreciated its uniqueness.”



The swimsuit, left, and this image, Nicky Zimmermann at the show's finale.

Zimmermann: the swim piece

“Our journey with swimwear started at our first Australian fashion week in the mid-90s, when Simone [Zimmermann] and I made a conscious decision to show something different and unique on the runway that felt true to our design aesthetic and vision ... [this swimsuit is] a style we could do now, and it would not look out of place.”

“A friend of mine, Valeryi Yong, styled this early show in '97 – we went to design school together in Sydney. I look at it now and still think it's a great swimsuit, even though it was designed nearly 30 years ago!”
Nicky Zimmermann

Albus Lumen: the airy resort piece

“I called the resort '18 collection ‘Lemon Pickers’. There was a sense of nostalgia, European summer sleekness and youthful happiness. This dress in particular was lightweight for summer, and the colour is uplifting.”

“When I launched the brand in 2015, we did very simple silhouettes and released a basic range, nothing too intricate. This dress, however, took 10 metres of fabric to make, and the colours and silk chiffon texture were very dreamy, elevated and different from the past. I love clothes with an ethereal feel and with some kind of movement. The dress is timeless, which I love, and looks good in any colour. It's something you could wear now, in five years' time and beyond. I'm bringing the dress back for resort '25 [this year] – it's an iconic piece.”

Marina Afonina



Afonina's light yellow dress.



The Outline Cross Bandeau dress on the runway at Christopher Esber resort 2020.

Christopher Esber: the cut-out

“Emily Ratajkowski wore this dress from the resort 2020 collection and soon after, *Vogue Australia's* editor-in-chief (then fashion director) Christine Centenera was working on a cover shoot. She liked the silhouette but was looking for something a bit more elevated and special.”

“We created a one-off piece, incorporating metal hardware and adding volume to the skirt [and included] it in the spring/summer '20 collection. Zendaya's stylist Law Roach immediately requested it for her. She went on to wear it to the People's Choice Awards.”

“The dress played a pivotal role in putting the brand on the map. It combines my background in tailoring with a nod to beach culture, merging the two ideas into something unique to the brand.”

Maara Collective: the collaboration

“The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)’s then-First Nations curator, Shonae Hobson, approached me about creating a piece for the Indigenous Fashion Commission, and I knew immediately I wanted it to involve a collaborative element. A beautiful way to do this would be to collaborate with Aboriginal weavers to make the bodice structure using traditional weaving techniques and natural materials sourced from Country. I worked with the Yolngu master weavers from Bula’bula Art Centre in Arnhem Land.

“The Maayama-li dress was a culmination of all the design elements of my artistic practice. The dress has been acquired by the NGV, where it will live in perpetuity within the permanent fashion collections.” *Julie Shaw*



Charlee Fraser
in a fitting for
the dress.



ALIX HIGGINS RESORT '23

Alix Higgins: the slogan showpiece

“The ‘God’ dress was the final look of my first show at Australian fashion week in 2022. It was presented as a floor-length peplum gown but became a commercial success in the sewn-off top version, the ‘God’ top. The first collection was a kind of religious experience, it was such a frenetic blur to create and go leaps and bounds beyond what I’d made up until that point. This was also the first instance of floral in my brand ... a bed-sheet floral scanned, inverted, reinterpreted. I think this piece changed how people saw my brand beyond the cutesy, sweet slogans I’d been doing to something more mature, with more depth and weight.”

Romance Was Born: the heirloom

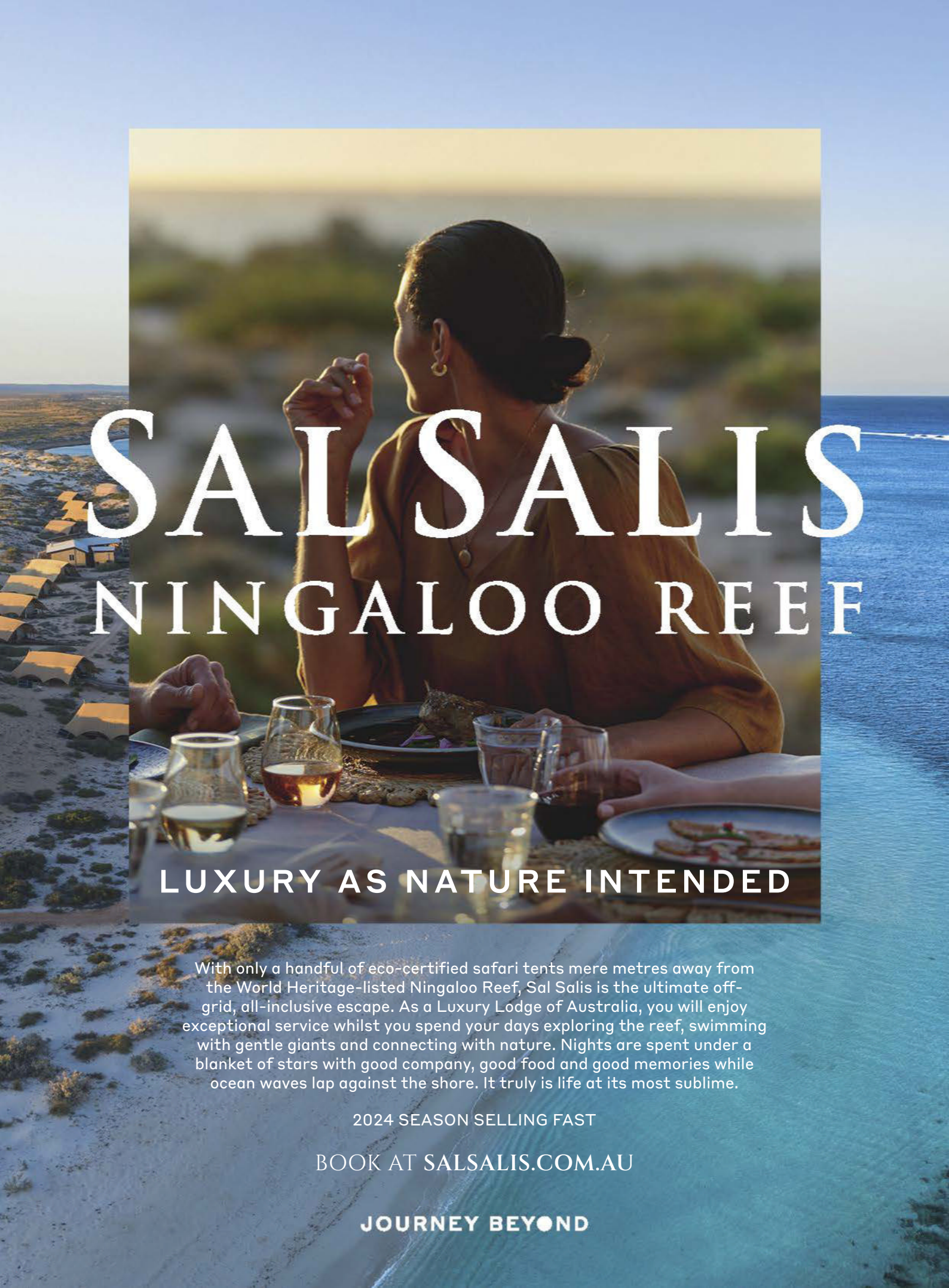
“The crocheted blanket dress from spring/summer ’09 was a blanket my mum had crocheted for us so we could photograph it and make a print. I thought we’d better use the blanket for something else and that’s how the dress came to be. Cate Blanchett wore the dress to the opening of ACMI in Melbourne and it was suddenly on the cover of all these papers around the world, with [people nicknaming her] ‘Cate Blanket’. People made fun of it, but we loved it. Cate had chosen it herself, so it’s a big compliment.

“The dress really sums up what we’re about, and the support of someone like her to wear it and understand where we’re coming from, I think really helped to send a message of what we do not being a joke – although we like to have a laugh!” *Luke Sales*



The blanket
dress
and Cate
Blanchett
wearing it
in Melbourne.

LUCAS DAWSON, GORUNWAY.COM, FIONA HAMILTON, PETRINA TINSLEY



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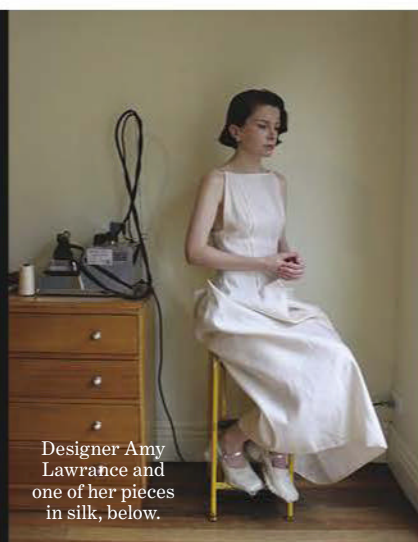
JOURNEY BEYOND

New force

As Australian fashion week returns this month, *Vogue* spotlights the fashion talent from our corner of the world who see it through fresh eyes, and are burning with a drive to do things differently. By Alice Birrell.



Silk scalloped bonnet by Amy Lawrance.



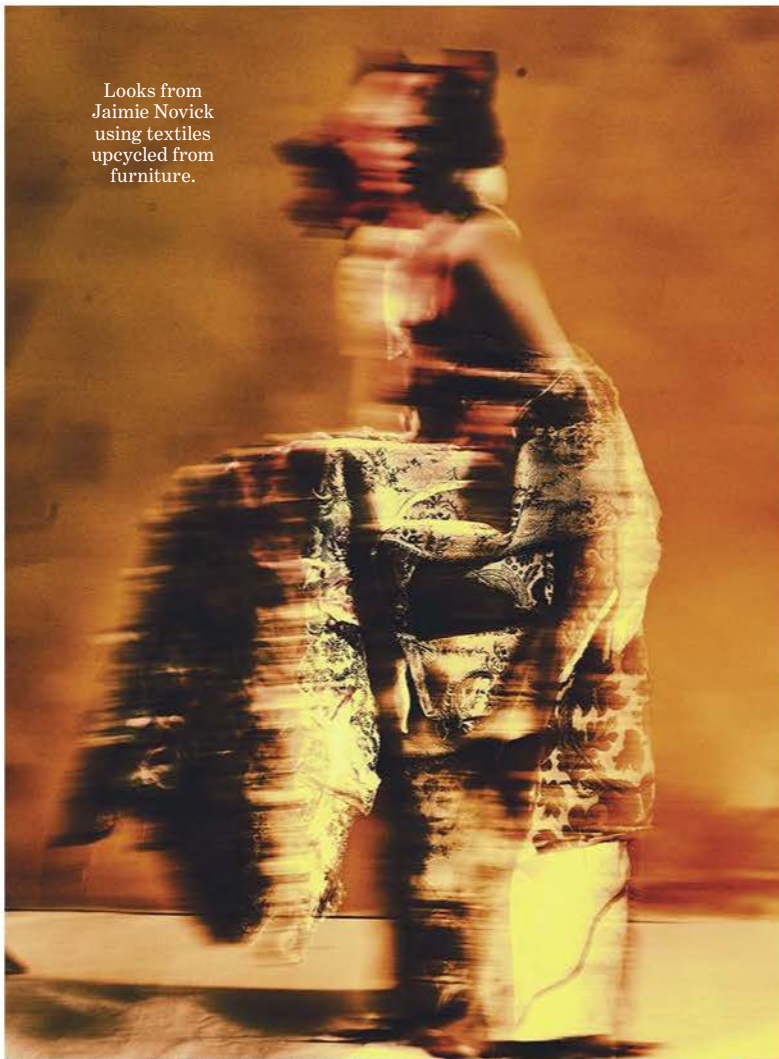
Designer Amy Lawrance and one of her pieces in silk, below.



Amy Lawrance

Looking at Amy Lawrance's work now, it's hard to imagine the bubblegum brights that rolled off her sewing machine in acid green and Barbie pink during lockdown. Today her pieces are rendered deliberately in the eggshell white of raw silk in sparse, elegantly modular geometry. Barbie though, had a part to play. Fascinated by an old suitcase filled with 1960s dolls' clothes, and a neighbour's old clothing patterns for children, she began experimenting in lockdown, practising the firsthand construction of cottage industry dressmaking.

"My appreciation for the often overlooked and undervalued technical proficiency required to produce a beautiful item of clothing really came to the fore," she says of the past few years. It's why a spirit of domesticity emanates from her work via slubbed textures on hand-loomed, unprocessed silk, from noil, ahimsa and tussah, chosen for its irregularities. Keeping it out of homely territory is her injection of historical grandeur in pannier-like shapes at the hips, drop-waist dresses and cartridge pleats. Each of her garments is sewn from disconnected pieces; suspending skirts from bodices and joining darts in two- to three-millimetre gaps hand-sewn using vintage silverleaf-coated thread. Keeping seams visible honours construction. "Craftsmanship is really the main impetus behind my work today."



Looks from Jaimie Novick using textiles upcycled from furniture.



Left: Jaimie Novick.



Jaimie Novick

Jaimie Novick's work reads like wearable art because, largely, it's closer to it than clothing. For one, Novick's grandmother – Granny Barbi – is an artist whose "craziness and passion" she emulates. For another, the 20-year-old UTS graduate's work presents as on-body sculptures made of huge, padded appendages and gravity-defying forms constructed from old furniture.

But it's fashion that propels her. "I couldn't imagine a world where I don't think about it every day," she says. Meaning the chintzy, piped upholstery of old sofas metamorphosis into wide, hoop-like skirts, enveloping gowns and jutting shapes reminiscent of Rei Kawakubo's Comme des Garçons – a key influence. "Seeing the way she always creates exciting shapes that aren't necessarily informed by the body but rather transform the body into something new," describes Novick.

The upcycling comes from a fierce desire to find new ways of consuming, and creating, citing something she shares with fellow creatives, along with community-based creation, sharing resources and knowledge, or as Novick puts it, "Moving towards an understanding that everyone in the process is equally as important."

Phoebe Cutler

"I'm a proud lover of seemingly useless objects," so declares 27-year-old jeweller Phoebe Cutler. Bowerbird-like, she aggregates a cacophony of visual touchpoints and funnels them into her work, from 19th-century symbolism to shelves of antique dinnerware. "My mum also instilled the love of old things in me from hand-me-downs from my sisters, or things she found in a car boot when she was a teenager," she explains of her inclination for the past. The results though are anything but fusty-looking, reworking miniature water fountains into pendants, antique crosses and Greek mythology into her gold and silver rings and bracelets studded with an eclectic mix of stones from opals, onyx and turquoise. Now stocked at indie boutiques here and abroad, including in South Korea and the USA, the self-taught jeweller is on a mission to make the heirlooms of the future, translating that emotion and warmth in antique treasures. "The part I love most with antique jewellery is the idea of the many hands, fingers, ears and necks it has lived on."



Jeweller
Phoebe Cutler.

Pieces from
Cutler's newest
collection.

Jewelled
creations from
Phoebe Cutler
with pieces
inspired by
antiques.

HOLLY SARAH BURGER, SCOTT HELDORF, CHLOE HILL, CORBEN MADDEN,
NATALIA PARSONSON, SEAMUS PHELAN, ANNE THU PHAM



Designer Bridget Matison, left, and her creations, right and below.



Bridget Matison

Bridget Matison's clothing, whether it be ceramic plates printed with pieces of text and cut-outs of tin cans linked together to form a dress, or T-shirts, starched and layered with scans from biology textbook labels, is about recontextualisation. It's in the wearing, however, where it is applied most powerfully. "As a trans woman, I was always super in touch with the way that clothing could make you feel, and the power it had as a way to communicate the way you felt about yourself to the world," the 21-year-old UTS class of 2023 graduate says.

Kitsch and camp, Matison says, is a part of queer culture, appropriation a powerful assertion, and insertion, of identity within a mass culture traditionally not welcoming to queer communities. "I think that this generation of Australian talent has an awareness that clothes are not a one-size-fits-all," says Matison, who plans to develop her ready-to-wear offering. "I think the ultimate goal of my work is to make trans women feel glamorous, where so often it feels like constructs of beauty are built in opposition to us."

Campbell Luke

Dr Bobby Campbell Luke is not your typical designer, not least because he holds a PhD, and a master's in visual lens-based arts and fashion. Fashion and study are connected for Dr Campbell Luke who, when starting out in fashion, found an industry that didn't reflect him. "This academic odyssey has deepened my understanding of the intersection between art, fashion and culture," he says, as an indigenous Māori New Zealand designer.

"At the core of my design process is unpacking a narrative, one that is informed by *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge), *purakau* (Māori stories), *whakatauki* (Māori proverbs) and at the same time addressing colonial influences that I set to reclaim and indigenise."

His pieces, in humble familiar cottons, dominated by natural fibres and recalling domesticity, aprons and linens, reframe ideas about home and broaden Western ideas of motherhood, instead connecting it to Mother Earth, for example.

Proof fashion and deep thinking go hand in hand. "By highlighting issues relevant to a particular culture or community, design can spark conversations," he says.



Woven pieces by Ahi Nyx of Te Āti Awa and Ngāti Raukawa.

Designer Dr Bobby Campbell Luke.

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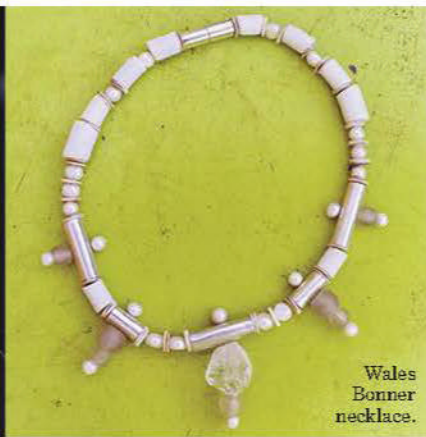
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PARLOUR



Miu Miu
spring/
summer '24.



Wales
Bonner
necklace.



Louis Vuitton
men's spring/
summer '24.

String along

The pearl strand has endured as a symbol of aristocratic poise, until now. Meet the new generation of necklace with a brand-new lustre.

Yes, yes, we all know about The Revenge Dress, but what about Princess Diana's Revenge Necklace? The seven-strand pearl choker with velvety navy sapphire brooch completed the effect of the fatale LBD – after all anyone can wear a black dress, but would it have been as special if not for the final regal flourish?

A bevy of switched-on modern jewellery lovers seems to think so, too. Susan Caplan, vintage jewellery dealer, who procured a version for *The Crown*, and who's sourced jewels worn by Beyoncé and Kate Moss, reported a 30 per cent increase in the sale of pearls on her website since the replica took a turn on screens. "And we are continuing to see growing demand," she reports.

While pearls have been enjoying a slow revival, it's specifically the pearl strand necklace that's winning favour – see Prada autumn/winter '24/'25, Grace Wales Bonner and Louis Vuitton's men's shows where dainty strings give a soignée touch to suiting.

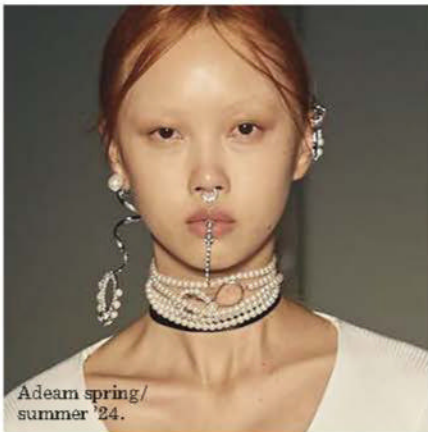
As Caplan observes, they cemented themselves as a staple accessory long ago, now though they've broken free of their old codes. "Pearls are no longer confined to traditional single-row pearls," Caplan says. Like Paspaley's Rhapsody necklace – which converts cleverly into different lengths and pieces via different clasps hidden along the strand. "It can be worn in a more relaxed way, with layered bracelets while barefoot at the beach, or worn classically in the form of a single pearl choker. Each strand can be entwined, layered, wrapped, draped, shortened and lengthened

in any way you choose," explains Paspaley creative director, Christine Salter. "This is a totally new way to wear pearls."

It is why it is appealing to a younger clientele, as Salter notes. Or as Chris Paspaley, director of merchandise, points out, male customers. "Men wearing strands has been an exciting trend, with the likes of Harry Styles, Justin Bieber, Pharrell Williams wearing them socially," he says. "Pearls have transcended age, style and now, gender."

That classic angle appeals to designers like Danish fine jeweller Sophie Bille Brahe who flips the association, playing with volume in gradations to form new-look strands, and who doesn't view them through a lens of old-world preciousness. "I love wearing my jewellery with a simple silk dress, a T-shirt," she says. "My jewellery is something that should be worn and used every day." She also wears hers in unexpected places, like around the ankle or on the back of the neck. A studied nonchalance, the kind on show at Prada, where strands pulled halfway out of collars peeked out, is something Caplan advises can be achieved, too, via a mixed approach. "Pearls can exude a modern aesthetic through layering with gold chains or a multitude of graduated strands." She also points to variations in colours, from pastels to darker tones, along with classic white, and shapes from round to baroque.

There's plenty then, for non-royal types. "Even for women who have never pictured themselves wearing pearls," says Salter, "once you put one on, their effect on skin is simply irresistible."



Adeam spring/
summer '24.



Sophie Bille
Brahe necklace.



PASPALEY
necklace, \$28,800.

Funny girl

Harriet Dyer turned a writing exercise into a romantic comedy with her real-life husband, and it swept the world. Hannah-Rose Yee pays a visit to the set of *Colin From Accounts* to find out what's next for Australia's favourite couple.

STYLING EMMA KALFUS
PHOTOGRAPHS BLAKE AZAR

U h-oh. Harriet Dyer and Patrick Brammall are fighting. It's the final day of production on season two of *Colin From Accounts* – the couple's smash-hit romantic comedy about two lonely people brought together by public nudity and a disabled dog – and the atmosphere is heated. Literally heated: it's the hottest day of the summer thus far, the kind of sweltering February afternoon that makes you want to lie down with a wet towel over your face. "Good day for filming in an old car with no air-con," jokes director Wayne Hope, as he sits in front of the camera monitor. "But they wanted retro!"

Said old car, with maroon leather upholstery and no air-con, is parked outside the Sydney University Business School, which doubles as the hospital where Ashley (Dyer), a 30-year-old trainee doctor, regularly turns up late to work with the slight hint of tequila on her breath. Her new boyfriend Gordon (Brammall), a relationship status minted at the end of season one, is dropping her off for the day.

"Your sexual health affects me pretty directly!" shouts Dyer. The uni students milling about rubbernecking are deathly silent.

"And your mental health doesn't?" Brammall shoots back. Dyer's face is a study in fury. "Stop being so selfish and just get the fucking check-up!"

"We've got it!" yells Hope, over the radio. That's a wrap. Everybody cheers and crew members begin packing up the set. The couple leap out of the car. "Was that too much?" Dyer asks the director. (It wasn't. *Colin From Accounts* exists somewhere in the middle of the *Fleabag-Ted Lasso* continuum,



which means too much is just right.) Dyer, still in her hospital scrubs costume, turns to me. "Sorry," she says. "Mum and Dad are fighting." She loves it when she gets to have a proper, blow-out argument with her husband in the guise of Ashley and Gordon, who are still in the throes of an exquisite and effervescent will-they-won't-they set up. Brammall and Dyer sorted all that out years ago and have been married since 2021. "I don't get the chance to yell at him much," Dyer explains, smiling at Brammall like a woman who knows her happiness has come.

A few weeks later, I call Dyer as she walks from the couple's Newtown Airbnb to the *Colin From Accounts* post-production offices in Moore Park. For the past five months, they have been living in Sydney with their toddler Joni as they film and edit the



Harriet Dyer wears a ST. AGNI jacket, \$829. P. JOHNSON FEMME top, \$425, and skirt, \$750. CHRISTIE NICOLAIDES necklace, \$1,100.

second season of the television series that has transformed their lives. But their home is actually in Los Angeles and Dyer misses her things: her own dog Walt, her spice rack, her teas, her wheat pillow for soothing period pain. “But then I’ll get back to LA and I’ll feel really sad that I can’t pick up the phone when I’m having my morning coffee and my friends are also having their morning coffee, or my mum is having a tea,” says Dyer. “I’ll have to wait until 2pm until anyone I love is reachable.”

The couple had freshly relocated to the US when, in 2017 and just for fun, Dyer – best known as an actor in *No Activity*, where she met Brammall – decided to try her hand at writing a screenplay. It was candid and earthy and behind the thoroughly bonkers premise was the texture of truth: how excruciating and

agonising it is to fall in love. It was also, Brammall recalls, brilliant. “I just remember when I read it being struck by how fucking funny it was,” he says. “She’s got this great sense of what’s true and what’s not. She’d never written before this and her lines never feel like a writer’s line ... I was like, this is really good! And it was the first draft!”

The script was refined. It went into development a couple of times but never took. And then suddenly, life came at the Brammall-Dyers fast, when in 2021, with a five-week-old baby, the series was commissioned by Binge, with four eps as yet unwritten. There is a lightness to *Colin From Accounts* that was borne of very real exertion; Dyer’s overwhelming memory of that time is “white-knuckle panic”. “Joni was so little and →



Harriet wears a P. JOHNSON FEMME cardigan, \$895. CAMILLA AND MARC skirt, \$500. ANNA ROSSI ring, \$69. Patrick Brammall wears a HAULIER jacket, \$1,150, and jumper, \$795. BOSS T-shirt, \$179. RALPH LAUREN pants, \$279.

actually work?” There’s ‘real life stuff’ that plays out in season two, which will be released this month, from sexual history to infertility and mental health. If the first season was a will-they-won’t-they, these new episodes ask: should they have?

The answer, of course, is yes. But the magic of *Colin From Accounts*, as it is with all romantic comedies, is watching two people figure that out for themselves, like tuning through the radio until you hit a song. “The space between two people will always be so exciting to try to mine,” reflects Dyer. That this show happens to star an actual, real-life romantic pairing is no small part of its appeal. Dyer and Brammall have electric chemistry, which is a good thing, given their marital status. And there’s something special that happens every now and then in the series, which is that Brammall can make Dyer laugh on camera – for real, not as Ashley – by tossing off some throwaway line, or doing a silly voice. I saw it happen on set: “Stop making me laugh. I’m supposed to be angry at you!” Dyer gasped, as Brammall sang a made-up song in the old car with no air-con. These moments are rare and shimmering; Dyer likens it to watching Julia Roberts snatch her hand out of the jewellery box in *Pretty Woman*, an authentic reaction to a moment of true connection. “We can also then sit in the edit and choose to keep that in,” Dyer adds, nodding to their power as producers.

Brammall says what he loves about Dyer is that she is funny in a bone-deep, elemental way. “To be funny speaks to having

“I never really wanted our own relationship to be a hook. I certainly didn’t want to *use* that. Because it’s our precious, private space”

we had no help,” she begins. “We hired some babysitter off the internet who was 18 and was drawing on her own arm with permanent marker and listening to music with AirPods while Joni was just flailing on the ground. I was like, ‘What’s happening? Who’s in my house? Like, get out?’”

The first season premiered in late 2022 breaking records as Binge’s most-watched original series of all time. But the real thrill came in 2023 when it was embraced by global viewers. At the BAFTAs last year, where Brammall and Dyer were presenting an award, they were accosted by A-list fans including Imelda Staunton, David Tennant and Richard Curtis, Mr Rom-Com himself. Phoebe Waller-Bridge told me in an interview that she was “*loving*” the series “so much”. (Dyer gasps when that is relayed to her.) “There was another one, a producer said that he was just on the phone with Lena Dunham and she was like, ‘I wanna make it like *Colin From Accounts*.’ That got passed back to me. And I was like, ‘Oh my god!’ ‘Cos she was one of my references, in terms of putting real women stuff out there [on screen].”

If the first season was produced under great, galvanising pressure, season two was a more civilised affair. Over the course of six months, Dyer and Brammall would walk their daughter to daycare, pick up a coffee on the way home, retreat to their spare room and get to work. “It was actually one of the most beautiful times of my life, writing season two,” says Dyer. And where the first season relied on a gimmick, the second season is built entirely on our fondness for these strange, fragile people. “Once you get together, that’s kind of what interests me. That feels more real,” she explains. “Like, ‘Wait, who are you? Do we

a different perspective on life,” he explains. “Of course you take things seriously and you feel the stakes of life and the darkness of life. But she’s got this great ability to just open a window and throw light on it.” He could continue, and he does. “She’s a mum now, and I love that version. She’s a scamp. Like, she’s just a full tomboy and a ragamuffin. And she’s also this gorgeous woman as well ... There are just so many faces to her and I love them all.”

Dyer says she loves nothing in the world so well as when someone discovers they are married after watching the show. “I never really wanted our own relationship to be a hook. I certainly didn’t want to *use* that,” she stresses. “Because it’s our precious, private space. So I would hate to feel like I’m monetising that.” She pauses. “But the fact is that we have great chemistry. And we live together. And we wrote it together. So it just kind of was natural.” Dyer adds that there was never a grand master plan for *Colin From Accounts*; that in fact, if there was an overarching ambition, it was to create something that might invite some more acting work for them both. “But it backfired, because now when we go back to America, there’s apparently a list of 40-odd production companies that want to meet us as writers,” Dyer says. “I’d love to go and do something and then come home and tell Paddy what I did that day, because we haven’t been able to do that for a year. It’s take your husband and your wife to work day, every day,” she jokes. “Thank god we like each other.”

Our time is up. Dyer has to get to work on editing the final episodes before they premiere later this month, and I have to call her husband for his part of this interview. “Okay,” Dyer says as we bid farewell, a smile in her voice. “Tell him I said hi.” *Colin From Accounts season two streams on Binge from May 30.*



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DAYS ON DECK
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AFTERNOON TEA
Reformation top, \$340. Maison Margiela skirt, \$2,045. Déhanche belt, \$500.



DRESS TO IMPRESS
Solace London dress, \$1,220. Jimmy Choo shoes, \$1,825. Métier bag, \$2,700.

The exhibitionists

Around Australia, these three new galleries are changing the way art is experienced by fresh audiences.



DESASTRES 27-mazatlan-mexico-had-4875-homicides-per-100000-residents.jpg variation (2024) by Marco Fusinato.

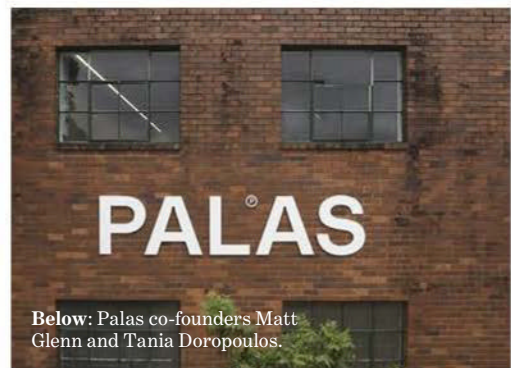


Palas

Sometimes you just have to ask the question: are you thinking what I'm thinking? That's what gallerists Tania Doropoulos and Matt Glenn posed to each other on a phone call after returning to Australia following years spent working overseas at art institutions including Frieze London and Sadie Coles HQ. Upon arriving home, both identified something was missing.

"There is a generational shift happening in Sydney, as well as more broadly in the country, in terms of galleries, museums and collectors," says Glenn. "A few artists who we now work with were also looking for something new." A year on from that phone call, the pair has joined forces to open contemporary gallery Palas in Sydney's Zetland, with a serious roster of names including Marco Fusinato's first Australian show since his run at the 2022 Venice Biennale, and this month, the first Australian exhibition of Canadian artist Tamara Hendson since she relocated to Canberra. "Tamara's exhibitions are like their own ecosystems, or worlds, that invite us in," says Glenn.

Next month, the two will travel to Art Basel before staging a group show in July and the first Australian exhibition of Irish sculptor Eva Rothschild outside of a public institution. At the core of Palas is collaboration; with artists, international galleries, collectors and museums. "Artists located outside of major art centres have to work harder to maintain their visibility," explains Doropoulos, "and their galleries must support this beyond the biennials and museums. Also, when galleries work well together, it seriously benefits artists, and the broader ecosystems of curators and collectors."



Below: Palas co-founders Matt Glenn and Tania Doropoulos.





Below, from left: Jake Elliott, Sammy Nugent and Ash Holmes, co-founders of Hake House, in front of *Different This Time* (2024) and *Active Surrender* (2024) by Hake artist Lorelee Jade. Right: An event in the space. Far right: Holmes's *Charcoal Run #1* (2023) and *Charcoal Run #2* (2023) on display.



Hake House of Art

The first thing you notice when you step inside Hake House is how bright it is. The soaring, airy space on Sydney's Northern Beaches boasts a sprawling glass shopfront; all the better to flood the space with light. This, says Ash Holmes, who opened Hake House in 2022 alongside friends and collaborators Jake Elliott and Sammy Nugent, was always intentional. "From the start, I had my eye on gallery spaces that could physically hold large-scale works with enough breathing space around them," she explains.

No wonder – Holmes is an artist herself, known for rich, textured canvases that capture your attention from every corner of a room. And Hake House seems purpose-built for them, and for the works of the 27 other artists represented by the gallery. Drawing on Holmes's own experiences, Hake's representation goes beyond that of a traditional gallery. Everything from creative consultancy to residencies, events and photography come under its banner.

Of equal importance is giving back to the local creative community. Nugent points to a lunch held in summer when their represented artists were invited to the space to celebrate the year. "It really did feel like a big family catch-up."

Laundry Gallery

When the creative director, curator and writer Nina Fitzgerald was growing up in Darwin, there was an historic working laundromat in the suburb of Parap that dated back to the 1970s. In 2022, it began a new cycle of life as Laundry Gallery, a creative hub for fostering, celebrating and exhibiting Indigenous art.

Co-founded by Fitzgerald and Laura Shellie, Laundry Gallery works closely with emerging First Nations artists. "The excitement and pride of working with and showcasing the work of a new artists, or someone who has not exhibited before, is priceless," says Fitzgerald. The Indigenous curator, whose family hails from Kakadu in the Torres Strait Islands and the Wuthathi people of Far North Queensland, also takes pride in championing modern iterations of traditional culture. She points to the gallery's 2023 exhibition *Maminjirrada (Hook Spear)* as an example, for which young artists from Groote Eylandt fused traditional weaponry techniques with contemporary references, such as Japanese manga.

This year, Laundry Gallery is continuing its mission to share Indigenous culture with new audiences. "So much of the profiled Indigenous art sits in the high-end price point and more traditional galleries and spaces," she explains. "This isn't accessible to these younger people with lower disposable incomes. We want to flip this and engage this demographic on a journey to learn and to prove it is a fun, enriching space they can interact with."



Nina Fitzgerald outside Laundry Gallery, Darwin.

WORDS: HANNAH ROSE YEE. PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST & PALAS, SYDNEY; SAGE HAMMOND, JOSH RAYMOND, SAGE HAMMOND, GRANT TYRRELL, RACHEL YABSLEY



Growing pains

On her new album, Willow articulates coming of age with a potent honesty, and at 23, proves she's only just touched the surface of her talent. By Jonah Waterhouse.

PHOTOGRAPHS SALOMÉ GOMIS-TREZISE

There's no clear path through adolescence, and even less so if you're a superstar. For Willow, the musician otherwise known as Willow Smith, music was a guiding force through a unique childhood in one of Hollywood's most famous families. It's little wonder, then, that her new album, *empathogen*, released this month, is dedicated to time spent alone, with sophisticated funk beats and mature, evolved lyrics that detail the search for solitary peace.

A natural successor to her previous record, *Coping Mechanism* – a soul-baring rock odyssey that acted as a form of catharsis – the 23-year-old says she's now found her sweet spot. "I definitely see music as not just something I do with my time, and with my life, but it actually *being* my life," she says of entering her 20s as her career continues to flourish; at the time of writing, she has more than 13 million Spotify listeners. Life as a musician means sharing moments good and bad. Here, Willow opens up about her creative journey, and the sonic experimentation that's made her one of music's most exciting names.

VOGUE AUSTRALIA: This album felt like a big ode to self-acceptance. Can you share a little about your mindset when writing it?

WILLOW SMITH: “I think after *Coping Mechanism*, I got to a place where I was like, you know what, I have some issues that need to be addressed. And I went about addressing them emotionally, mentally, spiritually. I did a few meditation retreats, ceremonial activities [to ground myself]. A lot of the songs were written from the inspiration of these dives into myself. And me just trying to be like, okay, obviously, there are some issues here that I need to address. This album really came from a place of me trying to address those issues with compassion and love.”

VA: In what ways is ‘Symptom of Life’, the lead single, tied to growing up and your world now?

WS: “‘Symptom of Life’ came from a very special place. Buddha said that life is suffering ... that is definitely true. A symptom of life is pain, suffering and loss, but another symptom of life is birth, and renewal and joy. I like that that song was kind of an exploration of [that] – I’m very, very acquainted with the fact that life is pain and that you can’t get away from pain while you’re alive. But I also know the opposite is true as well. It was an exploration of how those two interplay with each other.”

VA: Plenty of the lyrics are about silence and getting comfortable with your thoughts, like the song ‘The Fear is Not Real’. What led you to wanting to explore this topic?

WS: “In one of the [meditation ceremonies] I did, right before I started recording this album, I have a family friend I’ve known since the beginning of my life, and she’s known my parents forever. She started talking about her experience during the ceremony and everything she’s learned. And I remember her saying, ‘The fear is not real, and the battle is not mine.’ It was a really beautiful moment – someone I’ve known for so many years, who’s so close to my family and so close to me, going through this experience, and then her unpacking it in such a poetic way. I was like, oh no, this has to be a song ... we’re doing it tomorrow.”

VA: That theme spreads to the rest of the album – spending time alone, and how it can help or benefit you ...

WS: “I felt that during *Coping Mechanism* I was expressing so much anger and confusion. Because the core of my creativity comes from a place of curiosity and compassion, you’re still gonna feel those twinges in the lyrics and melodies of [that album], because that’s just a part of me, but the majority is very dark and expressive of where I was at the time. This new album is really an ode to me just trying to go in there and be like, okay, you let out your anger, you expressed all this stuff – now what? You know what I’m saying? It was like, okay, now comes the moment to really dig deep into those wounded places, [and] remember things that happened in your childhood, go deep into your body to try to clear up some of those trauma responses. Sometimes it’s fun to be like, I’m so hurt, I’m so angry, I’m just going to paint the town red! That can be nice and that can be fun, but the real work begins when you’re like, okay, I painted the town red ... so let me see how I can fix these issues inside of me.”

VA: On ‘Pain For Fun’ you collaborate with St. Vincent. How did that take shape?

WS: “I’ve been in love with St. Vincent ever since I was 12 or 13 and have always wanted to work with her. When I was 14, I ended up meeting her for the first time, and it was such a beautiful experience. I was completely and utterly fangirling ... I started playing her guitars [produced by guitar company Ernie Ball Music Man] a few years ago, it was the only guitar I played, all the festivals, all my performances. And then I played



“I definitely see music as not just something I do with my time, and with my life, but it actually *being* my life”

SNL with her guitar, and she was like, ‘Oh my goodness, I’m obsessed.’ A few months later, we organically set up a time and I went to her studio, and we just messed around. It was one of the most beautiful moments of my life, seeing her creating at such a high level, but also knowing the [guitarist’s] gear – knowing how to work a patchbay, all this technical shit, on top of being so creatively tapped in. I’ll never forget it.”

VA: You’ve become known for sonic experimentation and exploring different genres. What are some things you tried on this record that were new to you?

WS: “I feel like every album, there are certain vocal things I do, whether I’m aware of it or not ... for *Coping Mechanism*, I really was trying to work on the power [of my] range – like, how high can I really sing? How high can I really let this go? For this album, I’m really focusing on vocal dexterity, clarity and tonality, getting into the intricacies of [my voice]. Genre-wise, there are a lot of funk and jazz elements. There’s also a lot of, I don’t know how to describe it, but indigenous, ceremonial vibes – there’s a bunch of Hungarian and Gregorian chants I listened to, Native American throat singing and flute playing, Indian ragas. There’s a lot of different world music I brought into this record, [but] I’d definitely say jazz, funk and a little bit of pop in there, just because there are choruses and things to sing along to ...”

VA: What’s something on this album you’re most excited to share with the world?

WS: “I’m just excited for the whole thing, bro. I’m excited for people to hear what I can really do, and how I’m stretching and pushing myself to become a better musician. I want people to hear it, and feel loved, and feel understood. And like they’re not alone, because they’re not.”

Willow’s album empathogen is available now.



Leap of faith

In 2019, when the writer Sloane Crosley lost her beloved friend and mentor Russell to suicide, exactly one month after her New York City apartment was broken into and pieces of cherished jewellery stolen, the grief felt insurmountable. In an attempt to escape it, she travelled to Sydney, met up with a kindred spirit, and pushed herself to the edge of her limits, as she details in this exclusive extract from her new memoir.

Tucked away on Sydney's eastern shores, there's a wall of rock that juts out about 11 metres above the harbour. It's hard to wrap one's mind around what 11 vertical metres looks like from above, exactly, but if one were to drop a book into the water, it would take a moment to spot it again.

The reason I am familiar with this cliff is because, a decade ago, I tried, and failed, to jump off it. In 2009, I was invited to a literary festival in Melbourne, and since I was not about to fly to Australia for a weekend, I tacked on Sydney. During that first trip, I was sitting alone at a bar, reading a book, when I was befriended by a woman named Bec. Bec grew up in rural Queensland. One of her earliest memories is of discovering a frill-necked lizard pacing in her bathtub. She fears not the great outdoors.

One summer, after university, after she'd moved to Sydney, Bec and her friends stumbled upon the cliff and dared one another to jump. As she told me this, I put away my book and thought: I should definitely make this woman take me to a ledge and push me off it. After all, why are we on this planet if not to bring ourselves to its edges?

These are the kinds of batshit questions Australia invites you to ask. The following morning, the two of us stood stock-still, like gargoyles, the wind whipping off the grey harbour in ornery gales. During the winter, you can propel yourself into this liquid stucco only at high tide, but at high tide there's no way to gauge the topography of the rocks. Also, shooting straight into the harbour from that height is a free enema. Also, the cliff is located in a section of the harbour called, not for nothing, Shark Bay. In the end, neither of us jumped. We drove to the Park Hyatt, sat in the lobby in our dry wetsuits, and ordered martinis.

Given my shaky mental state in August 2019, friends express concern when I tell them I'm planning, yet again, to jump off a cliff. I don't mean to shock them. Nothing about this time period requires extra narrative flair. So I start lying. I should not be jumping off cliffs. Agreed. Jumping will not knock out the time I didn't jump. Nor will it bring Russell back. It's also a potentially humiliating way to die. I will go to Melbourne and come straight home. Absolutely.

I book a \$60 flight to Sydney and tell no one. Actually, I tell one person. She texts back: *your wetsuit is still hanging in my garage.*

Bec comes running out of her house, barefoot, to greet me. I tell her she looks exactly the same and she returns the compliment. In her case, it's true in a way that extends beyond hydration. Bec is a youthful person, the kind who makes fast friends of transient Americans. Two children and 10 years later, she says she is still game to jump.

Her husband is away for the evening so I take his side of the bed. As I get ready for our sleepover, digging in my bag for face wash, her four-year-old son pads into the bedroom wearing footed pyjamas. He has something to tell me and I am to listen very carefully. I pull up a chair. He informs me that I am, under no circumstances, to wet the bed. Because even if I wet only part of the bed, "they will still have to change all the sheets". He rolls his eyes, as if we both know how unreasonable adults can be. Then he runs down the hall to his mother, who is beckoning him to come brush his teeth. I watch as she ushers him into the bathroom.

"What?" she asks.

"Nothing," I say, smiling.

There is no way she's jumping.

I've been pacing for an hour, me in my wetsuit and Bec in her shore-bound jeans and cardigan. It has been decided, over a breakfast of Cheerios, that someone has to keep watch. Someone has to be able to run for help just in case. I agree, these are excellent points. But now, perhaps because she's wearing the associated gear, her motherly concern transfers to me. She decides the water is looking "a bit sharky". I reject this, pointing out that there's a Diamond Bay around here somewhere and it's not like it's lined with diamonds. She frowns. The horizon is streaked with ominous clouds that seem to emanate from the skyline like rays. The wind is force-feeding me my own hair.

I kick off my sneakers and whip my coat into a tree. I instruct Bec to count to 10. She holds up her phone to film the occasion. At first, I think I will surprise her and jump at six. Or eight. But then I shake my wrists and jog in place and make her start again from the top. I stop short of the edge each time.

I want nothing more than to spring off this cliff. I have bent over backward to make it possible. But I cannot. It's not that I am afraid, although I am most definitely that, it's that my muscles freeze when they get close to the edge. My brain has decided this looks an awful lot like death. I try to trick it. It's not so bad. Just pretend you're being chased. Pretend your feet are being scorched by lava. But my body isn't buying it. I spray the air with epithets and plop down in defeat. Bec tells me it's okay, an excuse for me to come back in the summer, when the petrification has been reduced by a factor of 10. Okay, I say, sure.

Bec needs to make a call and says she'll meet me at the car. After she disappears into the woods, I think: well, here we are, Russell, alone at last, on the other side of the world. I am embarrassed to articulate such fantastical thinking, but I'm not just here to experience a *sliver* of what you experienced, not just here to somehow get closer to you: I'm here to get closer to *finding* you.

I am still in the early stages of grieving and I find it suspicious that you are not lurking around this planet *somewhere*. So why not here? I have been making silent vows to find you: if you are in the trees, I will climb them. If you are in the bushes, I will trim them. If you are in the ocean, I will drain it.

But when I crawl to the cliff's edge and let my head hang down over the abyss, there is nothing. I focus on the folded napkin of the Sydney Opera House to keep myself from getting dizzy. There's no sign of you. There is only the wind and the inky waves, rising and falling to their own tempo. Even the seagulls have gone.

My temples are starting to tingle. I roll over, stand up and unzip my wetsuit pocket. Inside is half a gold chain. It's a chain that snapped in two when the thief rushed out of my apartment the night of the burglary. It's all that was left. I have put it in a plastic sandwich bag and brought it with me to the other side of the world. As I hold it up, I hear a magpie in a tree behind me, squawking, adjusting its white cape.

I tell it to back off. If any part of you is in the jewellery, then it feels right to throw you over the edge. To decide that this is where you are, even if you're not, even if I never visit you again. To give just one thing up voluntarily.

This is an edited extract from Grief is for People (\$24.99, Serpent's Tail) by Sloane Crosley, out now.

I have been
making silent
vows to find you:
if you are in the
trees, I will climb
them. If you are
in the ocean,
I will drain it

Star-crossed lovers

You know the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, but prepare to see it in a whole new light via a groundbreaking gender-fluid interpretation through ballet. By Ella O’Keeffe.

Two households, fair Verona, death-mark’d love and star-crossed lovers. The tale of *Romeo and Juliet* is well-known and understood. As a ballet, it has been danced thousands of times, every moment of love, lust, infatuation, pain and tragedy reinterpreted by performers. Their own experiences woven through movement, each step laden with meaning for an audience to witness. What might happen, then, if the story folded in on itself? If forbidden love was explored through subtext alongside its famous plot and brought into a contemporary context?

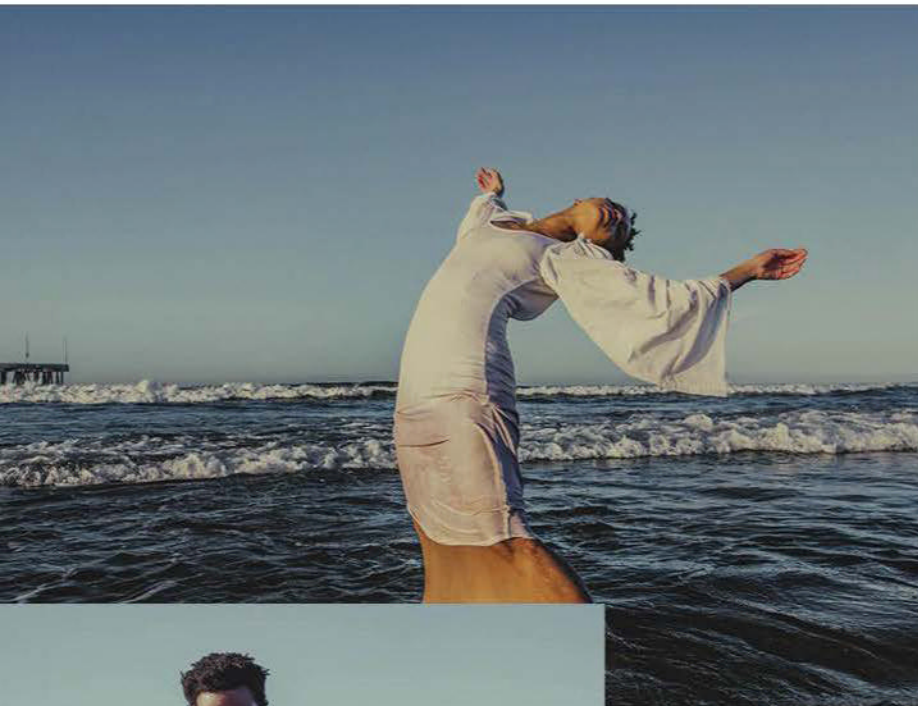
In Benjamin Millepied’s *Romeo & Juliet Suite*, this is exactly what the director of the L.A. Dance Company is hoping to explore. Performing at the Sydney Opera House in June, the acclaimed ballet involves three couples dancing the *pas-de-deux* main roles with male-male, female-female and female-male pairings across six shows. The dance is underscored by a live cinema component, telling the classic story through a modern lens with footage that takes place in present-day Los Angeles while the dancers move throughout the theatre space.

“For me, it’s really special being a gay man and actually getting to dance with another guy on stage to tell this story,” says David Adrian Freeland, who is the star of the ballet and has performed as Romeo since the interpretation originated in 2018. “It’s so beautiful, and something you dream of and for. Now here we are, where I can dance on stage with someone I’ve known for a really long time, but each day I get on stage, I have to meet them as if this is our first time, and then fall in love with them.” For Freeland, it’s so significant that he is able to be part of showing the audience an alternative way to be portrayed in ballet – a way that might reflect their own reality – when shifting gender roles still isn’t common practice in classical ballet.

Nayomi Van Brunt, who joined the ballet in 2019 and will travel to Australia to play Juliet, echoes Freeland’s devotion to representation. Being a Black woman dancing a role traditionally portrayed through the lens of whiteness is significant to her, as well as the different experience that



A dancer from the *Romeo & Juliet Suite*.



“There are times I feel like we’re super vulnerable ... and there’s something about that which is different from what I’ve experienced with male counterparts”

comes with dancing across from a female partner. “It’s really cool to see how that dynamic within the partnering changes, or even the emotion between us, which I find really interesting,” she reflects. “There are times I feel like we’re super-vulnerable and emotional, and there’s something about that which is different from what I’ve experienced with male counterparts.” It’s this level of emotion she is able to access when dancing with her partner, Daphne Fernberger, that is reflected back through the audience when the curtains come down.

“There are so many people after shows that are crying and feel seen. It’s really beautiful. We kind of forget because it’s our job, but to get that experience from the audience and hear their perspective and how they feel seen, that’s the most important and beautiful thing – that our art is making an impact on people.”

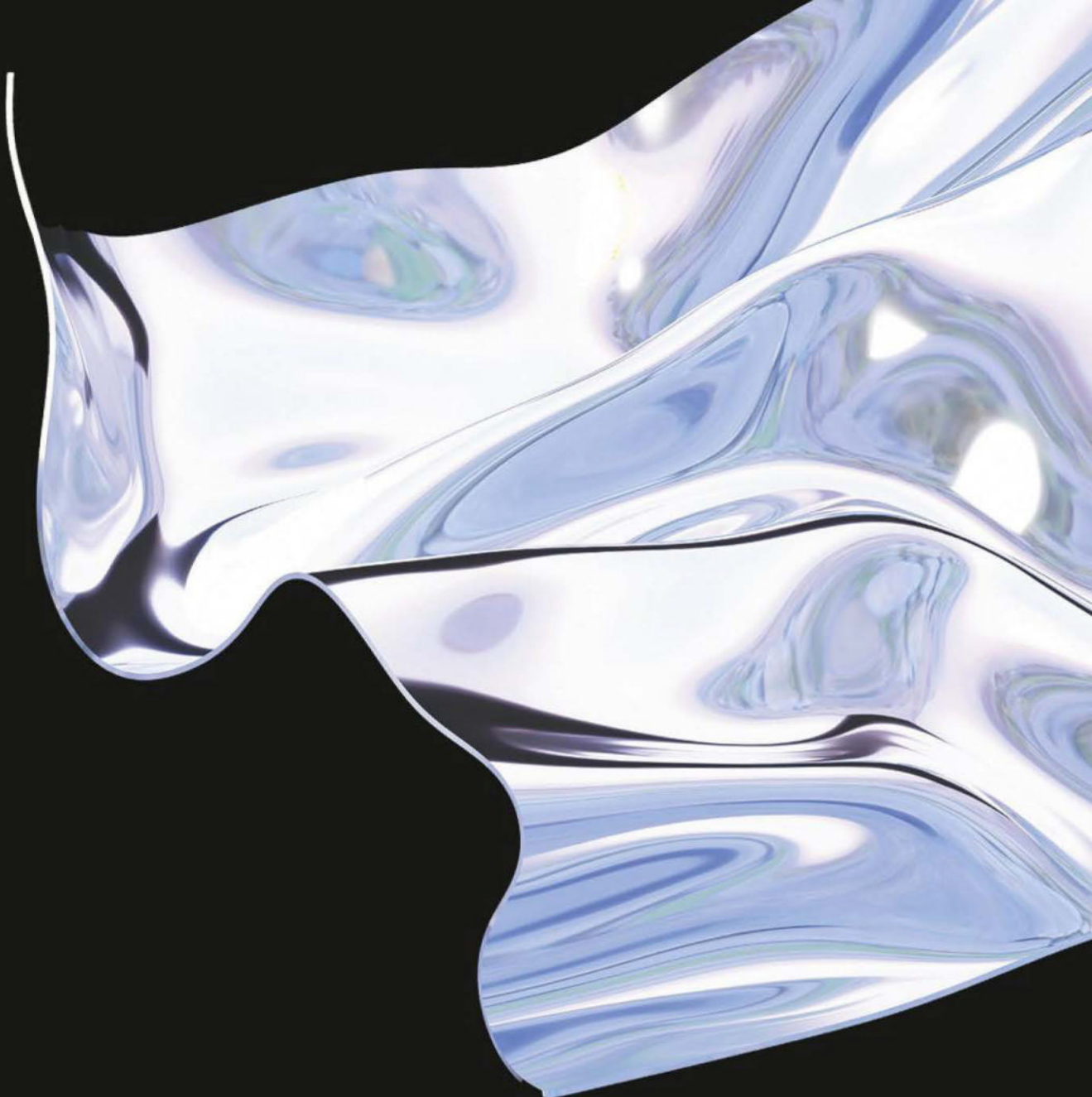
The classic tale of *Romeo and Juliet* is grounded in tragedy, as much of Shakespeare’s work is. Historically, queer stories have been told in a similar vein – centred around the concept of forbidden love and, ultimately, its devastating end. In many parts of the world today, these stories are still an upsetting reality. For Freeland, this theme is a constant throughout his life and work, but there was something about the classicism of this particular dance that made it easier to process.

“For me it’s layered. I’m queer, and I’m Black, so just death in itself and self-inflicted harm is such a strong and powerful thing, that I kind of have to pull back those layers,” he explains. “In thinking about queer narratives and how they’re depicted and displayed, you’re always hoping they get a happy ending without a disease to take them, or drugs, or suicide, or harm by somebody else. So in this regard, because it’s so tied to a story, I was able to compartmentalise this. But we did have conversations with one of our rehearsal directors at one point. He was like, ‘This is kind of hard for us as queer people, so how do we use that to also make it beautiful? That it’s not this sad thing, within the realm of this story?’ But because Shakespeare wrote it so beautifully, it’s still the same all around.”

He continues: “But you do think about it, and I can only imagine audience members thinking about it. Maybe those queer people in the audience who have lost their partner, or somebody they were dating for a long time and could never tell their families about. Those things still live here in this world. And that’s why I think it’s important we do get to share this ballet more and more, because we are moving the needle in our own silent way.”

Benjamin Millepied’s Romeo & Juliet Suite is on at the Sydney Opera House from June 5–9.

From top: Nayomi Van Brunt will travel to Australia to perform. **Left:** David Adrian Freeland as Romeo (centre). **Below:** Van Brunt dancing Juliet on stage in Paris in 2022.



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PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOSH OLINS.

STYLED BY LAW ROACH.

INTERVIEWED BY HANNAH-ROSE YEE.



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coat, \$3,070, and
bodysuit, \$8,570.
BULGARI earrings,
\$18,400, and rings,
\$5,350, and \$15,500.
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shoes, \$1,140.



There's a moment in *Challengers* in the very final act when all the nasty little game playing chickens come home to roost. If you've seen the movie, and of course you have, you know the one: Patrick (a swaggering Josh O'Connor) holds a ball to his racquet, signalling something devastating to his one-time best friend Art (Mike Faist), who is now married to Patrick's ex, Tashi, played by the one and only Zendaya. When this scene rolled during the Australian premiere of *Challengers* in late March, the crowd was rocking. "Oh *shit!*" someone yelled, sotto-no-longer-voce in the febrile rapture of the State Theatre. Sydney was the first stop on the global tour for *Challengers*, which is the kind of movie that demands to be seen with an audience, the more rosé-sodden the better. It boasts outrageous needle drops, unhinged horniness and an almost pneumatic silliness that will have you grinning from ear to ear.

Maybe the theatre was so amped because Zendaya was there, in the flesh, walking the red carpet in a bedazzled lawn green Loewe gown. Her hair was newly blonde for the occasion, though Zendaya, ever the perfectionist – every article ever written about her will tell you one thing, and that is that Zendaya is a Virgo – was worried that nobody could tell. "I didn't like the lighting on the carpet. It was so dark," she admits. "I dyed my hair blonde and it looks brown!" (She tips her immaculate pile of curls forward and yes, they are fresh as a wedge of lemon.) "This is blonde! I did all this work!" Zendaya has made an art form of the press tour and planning spans months, even years. The archival Thierry Mugler 'robot suit', worn at the London premiere of *Dune: Part Two* in February, was something Zendaya first suggested to her stylist Law Roach when she was making the film two entire years ago. "I was going through references and coming up with ideas ... 'Do you think we could do this?' And he was like, 'Don't play with me!'"

The Australian premiere of *Challengers* was the first time that Zendaya had the opportunity to see the movie with an audience. "I was really, really happy," she smiles. The film has been waiting almost two years for this moment, and though Zendaya has always been proud of the project, such a drawn-out pause allowed insecurity to fester. "You just want people to enjoy it, and have a good time," she admits. In her capacity as both star and producer, Zendaya has seen the film on countless occasions, but every viewing brings a new appreciation. "It *is* funny, which I realised, too, watching. A lot more people laughed than I expected." She was torn between wanting to stay in the dark with a crowd who was responding so viscerally to this long-gestating work, and duty to the fans who were outside, who had been waiting all day for a glimpse of their hero. If every article ever written about Zendaya tells you a second thing, it is that she takes the responsibility of her fame very seriously. So Zendaya left her big premiere after 45 minutes to take selfies with all the people in line.

The next afternoon, she sits curled up on an armchair in a suite overlooking the Sydney Opera House in a sporty green Louis Vuitton midi-dress (she's a house ambassador) and a pair of hotel slippers. An assistant hovers over her shoulder, waiting to collect the Bulgari jewellery (she's an ambassador for them, too), on loan for the day. Off come three rings, a choker, a tangle of bracelets and a couple of brilliant diamond studs the size of peanut M&M's. Even without the bling, there is no mistaking Zendaya's star power. Up close, there is a force to it that is equal parts charisma and the straightforward, polished friendliness of so many former child stars. She is genuinely lovely. But she is also a little guarded.

Can you blame her? She's always been in the public eye, ever since she was 13. But now she's *famous* famous. She can still do

normal things, but they require Herculean planning: back entrances and security guards, private dining rooms, after-hours visits to museums, sneaking into movies after the lights go down. "If I can get in quietly, it's nice," she admits, "no one can see you." This change in her life was speed-ramped on the set of *Challengers*, which began filming in the middle of 2022 after the release of *Dune*, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* and the second season of *Euphoria*, culminating in another Best Actress Emmy trophy (she is the youngest person ever to win the award ... and she's won it twice), and making public her relationship with Tom Holland. Any of these alone would have been enough; collectively, it was celebrity critical mass. "It became very apparent for her, while we were shooting this film, of her stardom changing. She was kind of realising, 'Oh, my life is different now,'" remembers her *Challengers* co-star Mike Faist. "To the point where, you know, she actually couldn't leave her apartment, is the truth."

She finished making *Challengers* in Boston and went straight to the sand dunes of Abu Dhabi for *Dune: Part Two*, and then that wrapped in December 2022 and she hasn't been on a film set since. It was accidental, this break; compounded by the actors' strike and the push back in production on the third season of *Euphoria*, the hectic HBO high-school drama that began when she was 22. Her response to the *Euphoria* delay is measured: "I'm a firm believer that the right thing will happen at the right time. Things are meant to be the way they're meant to be. I can't speed things up, slow things down." But not doing her job, and for so long, is strange for this hyper-focused person who has been working since she was 13. "I haven't been *working*, honey," she says drily, eyebrows raised. "That's been really tough for me because I'm so used to it. That's all I know how to do, and it's all I've ever done."

Extended periods of pause can make a woman think. "Sometimes when you work so much, it becomes almost a distraction," she explains. "Like you don't have to think about your life all that much because you're like, 'I'm just working, working, working.' So when you are in moments where you just have to do life ... then you're like, 'Oh I really have to deal with all these feelings I have.' You know? So I'm trying to work through feelings that I think come of any person that's growing up, and having grown up in the public sphere." The questions she is circling are simple yet fundamental: "I've only ever done this. What else am I even good at? What else can I do?"

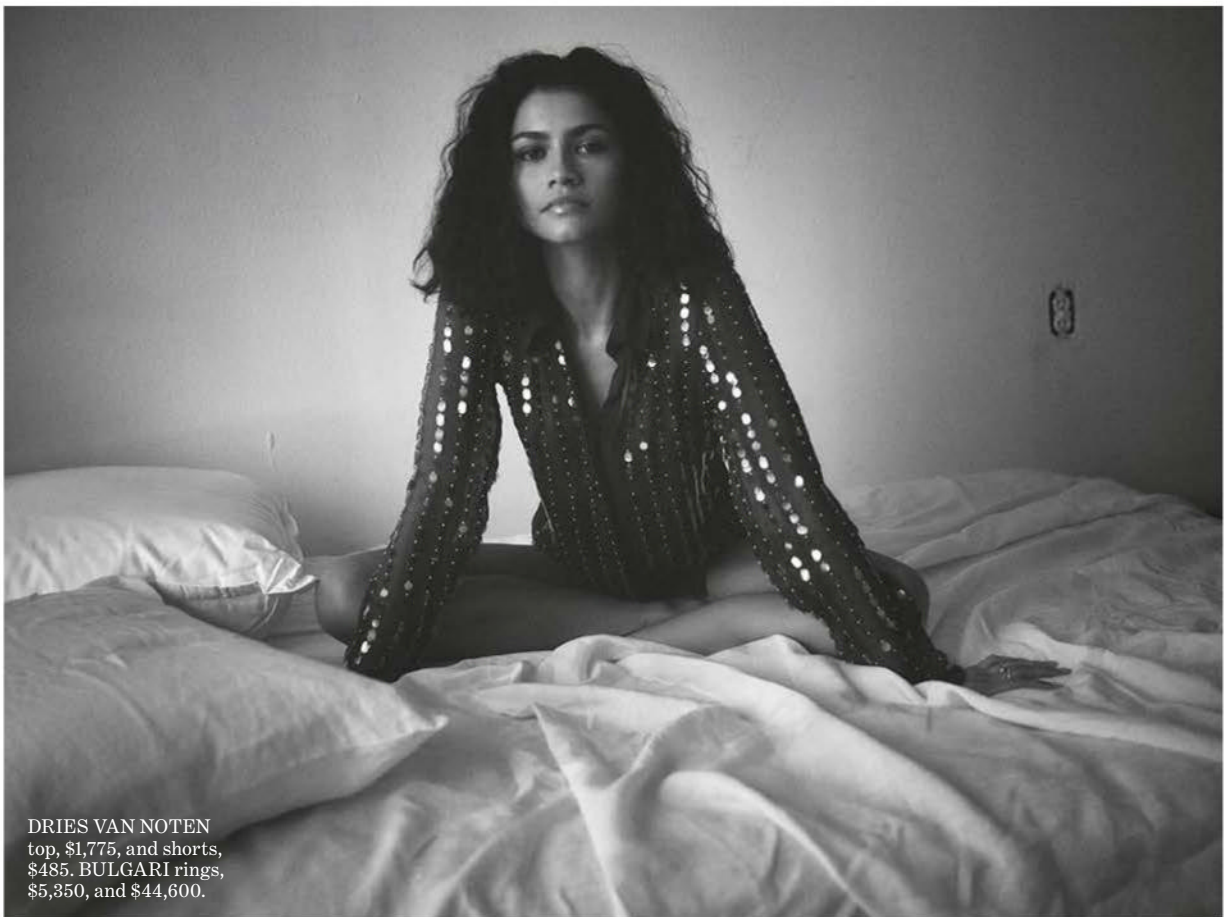
Zendaya got her first taste of being a producer when she was 18 years old. The project was *K.C. Undercover*, the breezy, long-running Disney Channel series about a family of spies. Zendaya, a mononymous megastar since making her television debut five years prior, had already learned a powerful lesson. "Have your own back, just in case anyone else doesn't," she says. "Because sometimes you're maybe not taken as seriously, or your thoughts are kind of brushed off as, 'You're just an actor.' I really like to be able to have my own back, and hopefully in the process other people's backs as well."

As a producer on *Challengers*, Zendaya is the film's architect: she suggested director Luca Guadagnino (the maestro of sunlit sultriness, as evidenced in *Call Me By Your Name*), whom she met at a fashion show, and hand-picked co-stars Josh O'Connor, having watched him on *The Crown*, and Mike Faist, after seeing him in the original Broadway production of *Dear Evan Hansen*. Jonathan Anderson, creative director of Loewe, was enlisted to design the costumes. "What is amazing about Zendaya is, she is someone who really defines her generation, which is →



SCHIAPARELLI top,
\$7,295, and briefs, P.O.A.





DRIES VAN NOTEN
top, \$1,775, and shorts,
\$485. BULGARI rings,
\$5,350, and \$44,600.





CHRISTIAN DIOR top, \$1,500,
and skirt, \$2,900. BULGARI
earrings, \$18,400, bangle,
\$9,350, and ring, \$5,350.
Beauty note: Lancôme Hypnôse
Volumising and Non-clumping
Mascara in Noir Hypnotic.







JOSH OLINS

BURBERRY dress,
\$17,900. BULGARI
bangle, \$9,350,
and rings, \$5,350,
and \$44,600.

extremely rare,” enthuses Anderson via email. “And yet there has never been someone so humble. Not to mention, she has an incredible fashion knowledge, which made our collaboration so much more compelling.” (Alongside Louis Vuitton and Bulgari, Zendaya is also an ambassador for Lancôme.)

When it came to Tashi, a prodigy sidelined by injury, Zendaya shaped her into a ferocious blend of competitive energy and messy desire. “In the original draft, she was even more harsh and more cutthroat,” she shares. “Something we all talked about and worked with was not just making her a caricature of strength ... allowing her to be gentle and soft.” *Challengers* is a film that’s at full pelt from the very first, sweat-soaked scene, but it’s the quieter, more disarming moments that reveal the height of Zendaya’s powers. Guadagnino loves the fizzy, flirtatious back-and-forth volley between Tashi and Faist’s Art as they reconnect, in which “she shows so many emotions and fragilities in an arresting way”. Then there’s the scene where Tashi first truly grieves the end of her career, not with a bang but a dejected whimper.

“She’s so raw,” reflects Josh O’Connor. “I definitely had this [understanding] as a viewer watching her work before. To witness her do that, she’s just got this access to her character’s soul so flawlessly. And seemingly effortlessly, though I know she does prep and she works, she studies the script.” O’Connor, along with Faist, joined Zendaya in Sydney for the *Challengers* premiere, where the pair spoke to *Vogue* Australia. (“Remember what I told you to say,” she jokingly directed them.) When talking about Zendaya, certain words were persistent: hardworking,

always been tennis,” Zendaya begins. “Once her husband says, ‘I don’t want to do this anymore’, that to her is as good as her life is over.” So she manipulates the only way she can, courtside, “because her life is depending on it”.

This notion of Tashi’s life or death mentality recurs often in conversation with Zendaya. There’s a sense that this is not something she wants for herself in her career. Asked her ambitions, yet to be achieved, she pauses. “I don’t know,” she says. “The biggest focus is managing and finding my joy and peace throughout my career and making sure I hold on to that.” Her 20s have been a time of immense change, both personal and professional. They began when she moved to New York, alone, to film *The Greatest Showman*. “I loved doing that movie, every day of it,” she smiles. “The first time, really, being in another city, by myself, adulting and shit.” Then along came three *Spider-Men*, *Euphoria*, *Dune*, *Challengers*, and “I feel like I blinked and then it was like, I was 27,” Zendaya laments. “Is this how it’s gonna be forever? It just goes on fast forward, but you still feel the same age and nobody tells you that you still don’t know what you’re doing, but you’re still getting older? What the fuck?” she laughs. “That is a trap.”

But there are positives to getting older. Zendaya, a self-professed “queen existential crisis” – she’ll happily muck in on other people’s problems, too, though “maybe I should just worry about myself every now and then, not take on everybody else’s stuff” – relishes the perspective of hindsight. “You can actually step back and look at it. This works, this doesn’t work. This is serving me, this is *not*. Just try to figure out what really makes

“THE BIGGEST FOCUS IS MANAGING AND FINDING MY JOY AND PEACE THROUGHOUT MY CAREER AND MAKING SURE I HOLD ON TO THAT”

kind, grounded and playful. “You would do a scene with her, she would pull out this unbelievable performance, they call cut and she’d be like, ‘Would you rather this? Or this?’ or ‘Let’s play rock, paper, scissors,’” O’Connor marvels. “She’s just a goofball,” says Faist. “She’s always down to clown.” Adds Guadagnino: “Z has a generosity and sophistication that are very inspiring to me.”

Guadagnino has described the film as “sexxxxxxy”. (Spelling his own.) There is literal sexxxxxxiness in the film – the notorious, much-memed, very-sizzling first kiss between Tashi, Patrick and Art, in which Zendaya’s character holds the balance of power like a ball in her hands – but also figurative. The way O’Connor’s Patrick eats a banana should come with a content warning. (By the way, this low-slung character was based, so O’Connor says, on Nick Kyrgios.) And yet, Zendaya is quick to point out, “Everybody thinks they watched a lot of sex scenes, and they didn’t! There’s a lot of making out, but they’re not sex scenes.” It’s semantics, but Zendaya’s point is that intimacy doesn’t need to be explicit, merely on the road to it. She shimmies in her seat, trying to find the words. “You can feel the sweat dripping down their faces and feel how *hot* they might be,” she says, hands balled into fists. And that’s enough. “More than enough!” she declares. “Because it tricked everybody into thinking they watched something they didn’t watch!”

Now might be a good time to talk about the ending. It’s certainly polarising; in Zendaya’s US *Vogue* interview, Serena Williams said that she “hated” how ambiguous it was. Basically, after Patrick places the ball on his racquet, signalling to Art that he has been sleeping with Tashi – *oh shit!* – the pair rally like they’ve never rallied before, leaping over the net and into each other’s arms (!) as Tashi cheers (!) in ecstasy from the sidelines. “How I perceive it, her one true love above all these men has

you happy.” Has she got the answer? “I think I’m still figuring that out,” she replies, quickly. “I think I’m learning as I go.”

The day of this interview, there is a video doing the rounds online of Steven Spielberg asking Denis Villeneuve which one of his *Dune* cast could he imagine as a director, and Villeneuve’s immediate answer is Zendaya. She is bashful at the mention of it. The truth is that Zendaya already talks like a director, referencing specific camera angles in *Challengers*, such as the way Guadagnino used perspective shots in the third act to make the audience feel like they were right there in the marriage bed. She is most passionate when excavating the process of filmmaking. On *Euphoria*, for example, “We do a lot of takes, ‘cos it’s all about finding it, you know what I mean?” Whereas Guadagnino, “most of the time he was just like, ‘Love! Moving on.’ I was like, ‘Really? You don’t want me to do it again?’” On *Dune: Part Two*, she shyly asked Villeneuve if he would mind if she shadowed both him and cinematographer Greig Fraser, and so she spent almost the entire production on set, even when she wasn’t required in a scene. Faist muses that film sets are where Zendaya finds community. “She probably has found her tribe ... She just immediately kind of says, all right, we’re family.”

Seeing filmmakers such as Villeneuve and Fraser, or Guadagnino, at work is both fuel and fear. “The only thing that’s getting in my way is my own self-criticism and self-doubt and my fear of not being anywhere near as close to as great as those people I get to watch,” she admits. “If I ever get over that feeling of telling myself that you don’t know what you’re doing ... If I ever get over that inside voice, then maybe I would be able to actually direct something.” After talking to her, this feels right. The only thing that can stop Zendaya is Zendaya. *Challengers* is in *cinemas now*.

ACNE STUDIOS top, P.O.A.,
and skirt, \$1,700. BULGARI
ring, \$15,500. GIUSEPPE
ZANOTTI shoes, \$1,450.

Hair: Kim Kimble
Make-up: Raoul Alejandro
Manicure: Marisa Carmichael
Props: Heath Mattioli
Tailor: Matthew Reisman
Production: GE Projects





The surreal life

Balenciaga helmsman Demna is a fashion shaman for our times, reading current culture and filtering it back to us in all its chaos, absurdity and beauty. Anders Christian Madsen meets a newly re-energised creative director in a city that has been a personal creative epicentre – Los Angeles.



Balenciaga creative director Demna.
Opposite page:
Balenciaga pre-fall '24.

Portrait by Malick Bodian.



In early December, Demna was strolling down the Venice Beach Boardwalk when a long-haired, bearded man selling dreamcatchers set eyes upon his husband Loik Gomez's torn-apart, faux-dirty, over-dimensional Balenciaga trousers. "The guy was like, 'Is this fashion now? Because if it is, I'm loving it!'" the designer recounts, feigning that thrilled yet slow-motivated Californian accent. "Loik looked at me and said, 'I love being in LA.'" As a child, growing up in 1980s Georgia – "in the vacuum of the Soviet Union" – Demna would feed on the droplets of Hollywood glitz that seeped through the Iron Curtain. "My biggest cultural influences come from here, from this city," he says the day before his Balenciaga pre-fall '24 show in the City of Angels. He's draped over a sofa in a suite in the Chateau Marmont, sporting a golden tan and wearing an intentionally undersized pink velour track top with big trousers, like the ghost of Nicole Richie's past. The situation couldn't be more LA if it tried; a teenage fantasy fulfilled.

The next day, motorcades of shiny Escalades with darkened windows ferry guests clad in Demna's shattered-chic, black Balenciaga silhouettes and superstar sunglasses to South Windsor Boulevard where the show takes place. A picture-perfect street in the plush Hancock Park neighbourhood of LA, it is lined with palm trees and villas from the city's Golden Age, the Hollywood sign hovering atop the hills on the far

clichés under a magnifying glass: Paris Hilton's Y2K velour tracksuits and sheepskin boots upscaled to new dimensions, Hailey and Justin Bieber's clinical workout wardrobes paired with titanic trainers, and gigantic puffer jackets worn in the 30-degree LA sun, Kim Kardashian-style.

"Because it's so personal for me, I feel like this show is a continuation of what I started in October: me specifically looking at my cultural references and the effect they have on my work and on fashion. That's why we're in LA – because it started here," Demna explains. He is referring to the spring/summer '24 show he presented in Paris two months prior to LA, a collection that recapitulated and refined the design signatures he has cultivated at Balenciaga since his industry breakthrough in 2014 with his former brand Vetements: subversive, autonomous, anti-establishment energies expressed in surreal tailoring, patinaed motorcycle jackets, bathrobes for coats, waxy floral outdoor tablecloth dresses, awkward tracksuits and high-octane glamour gowns. It was a cathartic exercise following the tumult of 2022 when two Balenciaga campaigns, which appeared to objectify children, caused social media uproar. The company apologised, saying it had no such intentions, and launched a partnership with the National Children's Alliance.

Needless to say, the circumstances turned Demna's life upside down. With last October's show – opened

"You need to protect yourself and have boundaries, but enjoy life and what you do. I always try to bring fashion somewhere without exactly knowing where"

horizon. Like a scene from *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, the reality show's former star Lisa Rinna arrives dressed in a couture-cut floor-length Balenciaga parka with her It-girl daughters. "Welcome to LA!" she erupts, greeting a friend. It's life imitating, well, reality TV, and with the afternoon sun ablaze and the slight vertigo of jet lag kicking in, it's all feeling rather surreal. That morning, a black Balenciaga-labelled health drink from the local cult supermarket Erewhon (the be-all-and-end-all Beverly Hills supermarket whose logos grace the collection) appeared in guests' hotel rooms, and on a token hike through Runyon Canyon I saw a topless male bodybuilder walking a white bunny on a lead.

"The first time I came to LA was in the beginning of the 2000s. When I came here, I felt like I'd been here forever," Demna says. "The visual aspect of it is what you see in the movies; the imagery I saw when I was 10 years old. Suddenly there was this world out there that looked like that; the logos, the billboards, the type of buildings, the palm trees on this blue sky. Even being on the highway in the traffic jam is a picture from a film for me, like a Hollywood crime documentary or a reality show, which most of us actually watch ..."

For the boy from the Eastern Bloc, La La Land was a dream come true. Two decades on, he's taken his Balenciaga show here in a mad meta homage to the LA magic that has inspired so much of his work for the house, which he joined in 2015. It's celebrity culture

poignantly by his mother – he explains he wanted to allow himself to be vulnerable and go back to his core design roots. "This show, I realise, is a narrative again," he says, turning to the LA collection. "Now it's more specifically about my cultural influences and how I see them. It's my version of LA style. I think a lot of instinct goes into it now. Less brain cells at work but more ... Emotion? "Yeah. Fuck, it's really complicated to do that, I have to say. I talk about it every week on Tuesdays at six. That's when everybody knows that Demna is not available. Psychoanalysis. It ends up that we talk about fashion a lot, I can tell you that. Having the desire to bring Balenciaga here is related to it, because I really feel super-good here. I have a lot of connections to LA from my past; my love life and personal stuff," he says. Like his work, Demna's demeanour walks a constant tightrope between fragility and self-protection. He shares, but he doesn't overshare. He's friendly, but he's firm.

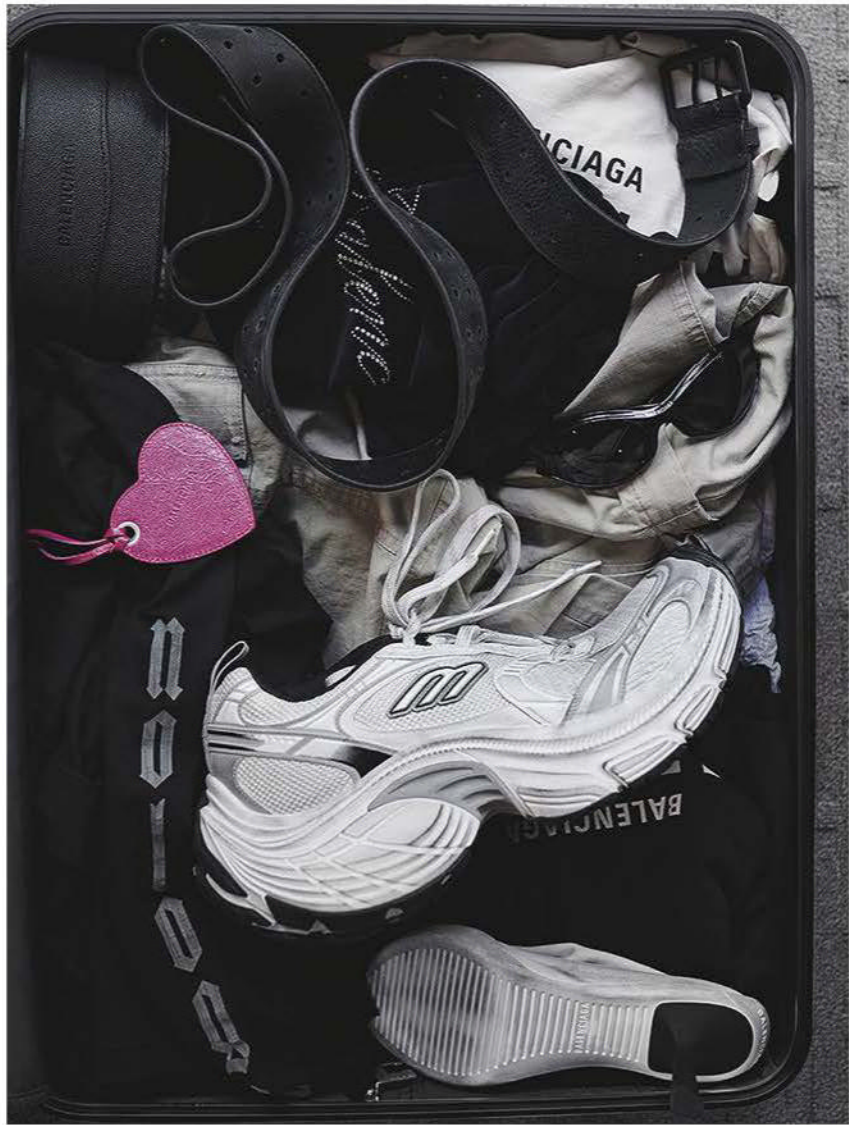
"I guess it comes from this connection to being true to yourself and vulnerable," he continues. "After what I had to go through, to be honest, the vulnerability test is two thousand per cent. And I enjoy that. It's a human thing to do. You need to protect yourself and have boundaries, but enjoy life and what you do. I always try to bring fashion somewhere without exactly knowing where." Those words could be Demna's tagline for life. He was born in the civil war-torn Georgian state of Abkhazia in 1981 and fled over the Caucasus Mountains with his →



Cardi B in a faux fur coat walks the Balenciaga runway in L.A., and surrounding, looks from Balenciaga pre-fall '24.



Above: Accessories from the pre-fall runway, and right, far right. Below: Brigitte Nielsen walks the Balenciaga runway.



family in 1993, first to the safe side of Georgia, then to Ukraine and Russia, before finally settling in Germany when he was 18. He studied finance there until, at 21, he decided to follow his heart into a fashion career that took him to the Royal Academy in Antwerp, and jobs on the design teams of Walter van Beirendonck, Maison Martin Margiela and Louis Vuitton. In 2013, now a Paris resident, he founded Vetements. Its instant cult-level hype catapulted him into the creative directorship of Balenciaga in 2015.

What happened to Demna along the way wasn't that different to the life makeovers we associate with Hollywood and its stars. Named after the Madonna album, pop culture knows this phenomenon as the *'Ray of Light'* moment: a life-changing flash of enlightenment, whether spiritual or pragmatic, focused on mental wellbeing and physical wellness. In 2017, he married the musician Loïk Gomez – who scores the Balenciaga shows under the stage name BFRND – and left Paris for Switzerland where they set up base, first in Zurich and then in Geneva. In 2019, he left Vetements in the hands of his co-founder and brother Guram Gvasalia to focus solely on Balenciaga. In 2021, Demna relaunched the maison's haute couture line to swooning reviews. The same year, he relinquished his surname in favour, simply, of Demna. Along

the way – and increasingly on the gale of that 2023 media storm – he grew more focused on his core values.

On the personal side, it was family first, as illustrated in the casting of his mother in the October show and its campaign. "She told me she was proud to be in the show. I know that my dad was slightly jealous after, like, 'Why just her?'" Demna laughs, noting that he actually credits his father with his fashion gene. "Family has always been important to me, but I think I never realised it as much as I do now, being older. My parents came with us to LA and I realised I've not been on holiday with them since pre-war in Georgia. In my case, with time, I have a better relationship with many members of my family," he says. "Not all of them." As for the professional side to Demna's re-evaluation, he's expressed it in a devotion to the defining characteristics of his aesthetic. "I want to embrace that identity and evolve it with time, but I want to experiment more with things. I want to do more conceptual things when it comes to fashion. I think this show has that element in its study of style," he explains, referring to the LA collection.

"But trying to do something completely new would be against being loyal to myself and who I am. What I do is what I do. Another oversized coat ..." he pauses and smiles, acknowledging his go-to silhouette. "Unless I find a reason not to like them,



Nicole Kidman (above) and Kim Kardashian (below) attend the Balenciaga pre-fall '24 show, left.



I will keep doing them, and every time I'll try to do it better. Since I started in 2013, you know ... very early on I spoke to you about those thoughts, and some of them stayed very much the same. I just want to do clothes I like. There are new influences today, like a lot of AI and things like that, but I don't believe in one creative person having multiple identities. Unless it's a disorder." Revisiting the interview archives, he's not wrong – 10 years ago, he was waxing lyrical about real clothes over fashion trends. "We get inspired by normal things, but at the end of the day, the things we produce are just a bit *off*. It has to have that weirdness to it that makes it Vetements," he told me back then.

Fast-forward to the sofa of the Chateau and those words echo: "I had a lot of visual influences from streets," he says of the LA show. "Mostly celebrities: lots of Justins and Kims and everyone else we know from here that represent that specific style – the way we dress today – that actually originated here. I realise how much it's part of my work, and in general, it's a big part of the fashion language today." If Demna's devotion to reality has remained the same, his real-life poster girls have become slightly larger than life. At Balenciaga, he has embraced our time's celebrity culture to the max, featuring the likes of Bieber, Kardashian, Nicole Kidman and Isabelle Huppert in his shows and campaigns. On South Windsor

Boulevard, Cardi B gets a turn on the runway, but it's the casting of Brigitte Nielsen – the Helmut Newton model, action woman and reality TV queen – that cements the outré, out-of-this-world Los Angeles attitude Demna came for, thigh-high patent platform boots in tow.

Stopping by Erewhon for a Hailey Bieber smoothie the morning after the show, you see plenty of real-life versions of that unreal LA character. "What excites me is anthropological voyeurism, even here," Demna says. "The other day, I saw a waitress dressed in a single-breasted double-button suit, navy blue, with matching pants. And I realised she was wearing leggings and her jacket was made out of leggings fabric. She wasn't actually in a suit. For her, it was meant to be practical and comfortable because she has to move at work. For me, it was an aha moment; a new silhouette I couldn't have imagined." As he approaches his 10th year at Balenciaga, the fun-house mirror Demna's work has held up to the real world over the past decade only gets sharper. "Seeing another cashmere, angora, pinstriped, medium-fit ... with a little twist ... doesn't excite me. I'm bored to death," he says, lamenting the conservatism of the fashion industry. "I need to be stimulated with outside information, and that, I have to say, there's plenty of here. Whenever I need to do research, I come to LA for three days and just watch people." ■






Outward bound

An uncomplicated attitude and practicality gives Burberry its current flavour. In earthy, autumnal tones of a season on the turn and hard-wearing accessories, pre-fall is made for bracing blustery days outdoors. Let in the cold.

Styled by Harriet Crawford. Photographed by Lorenz Schmidl.

BURBERRY jacket, \$4,390, sweater, P.O.A., skirt, \$2,750, and earrings, \$2,750.

A fashion photograph of a woman with long dark hair sitting in a field of ivy. She is wearing a long, olive-green Burberry coat over a dark blue and red plaid skirt. She is also wearing black tights and dark boots. The background is a dense thicket of ivy and bare tree branches.

BURBERRY coat,
\$5,900, shirt, \$2,190,
skirt, P.O.A., earrings,
\$2,090, ring, P.O.A.,
tights, P.O.A., and
shoes, \$3,350.



LORENZ SCHMIDL

BURBERRY coat, \$5,500, sweater, P.O.A., bag, P.O.A., tights, \$730, and shoes, \$1,890.



BURBERRY dress, \$5,500, earrings, \$2,750, bag, \$3,990, and boots, P.O.A.



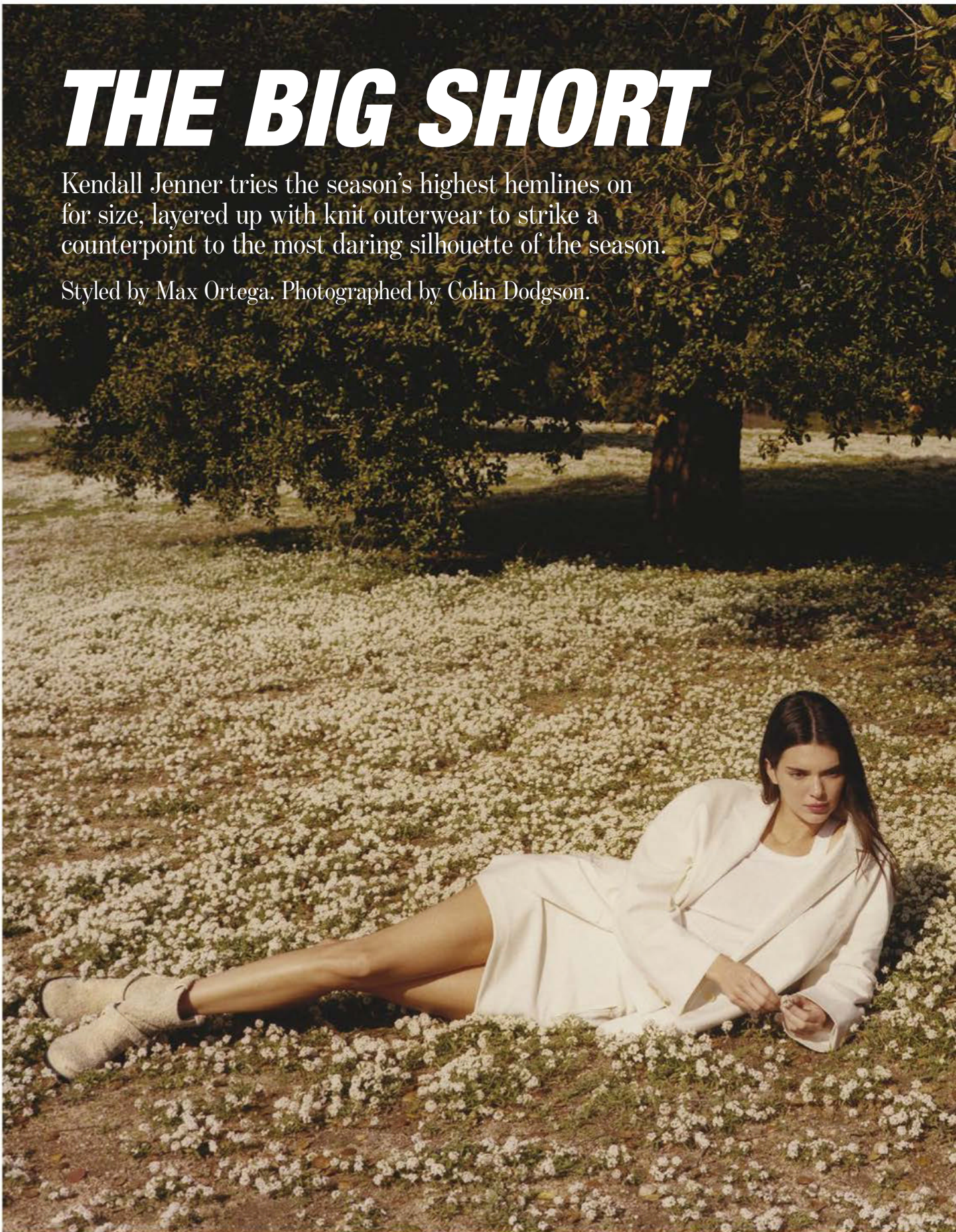
BURBERRY parka, \$4,390,
top, P.O.A., pants, P.O.A.,
and shoes, \$1,890.

Hair: Christopher Gatt
Make-up: Joel Babicci
Model: Neelam Gill
Production: Farago Projects
Photography Production:
A Creative Partner

THE BIG SHORT

Kendall Jenner tries the season's highest hemlines on for size, layered up with knit outerwear to strike a counterpoint to the most daring silhouette of the season.

Styled by Max Ortega. Photographed by Colin Dodgson.



MAX MARA jacket, \$2,660,
tank top, \$455, and skirt,
\$955. LOEWE boots, P.O.A.
All prices approximate; details
at Vogue.com.au/WTB.





MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION sweater, \$3,645. RALPH LAUREN sneakers, \$150. Socks, stylist's own.



HERMÈS shirt,
\$6,660, top, \$2,080,
and shorts, \$6,660.
FALKE socks,
\$35. VICTORIA
BECKHAM
boots, P.O.A.

KHAYE dress,
P.O.A. VICTORIA
BECKHAM
boots, P.O.A.





TOM FORD top, \$1,570, and skirt, \$21,970. FALKE socks, \$50. MIU MIU shoes, \$1,380.



MARNI dress, P.O.A.
Beauty note: L'ORÉAL Color Riche Classic Satin Nude Lipstick in Confident.

FENDI dress, P.O.A.
LOEWE boots, P.O.A.



PRADA cardigan,
\$4,450, top, \$2,550,
and briefs, P.O.A.





CHANEL jacket, \$8,680, and shorts, \$4,300, from the Chanel boutiques. VICTORIA BECKHAM boots, P.O.A.
Hair: Tamás Tüzes. Make-up: Mary Phillips. Manicure: Zola Ganzorigt.



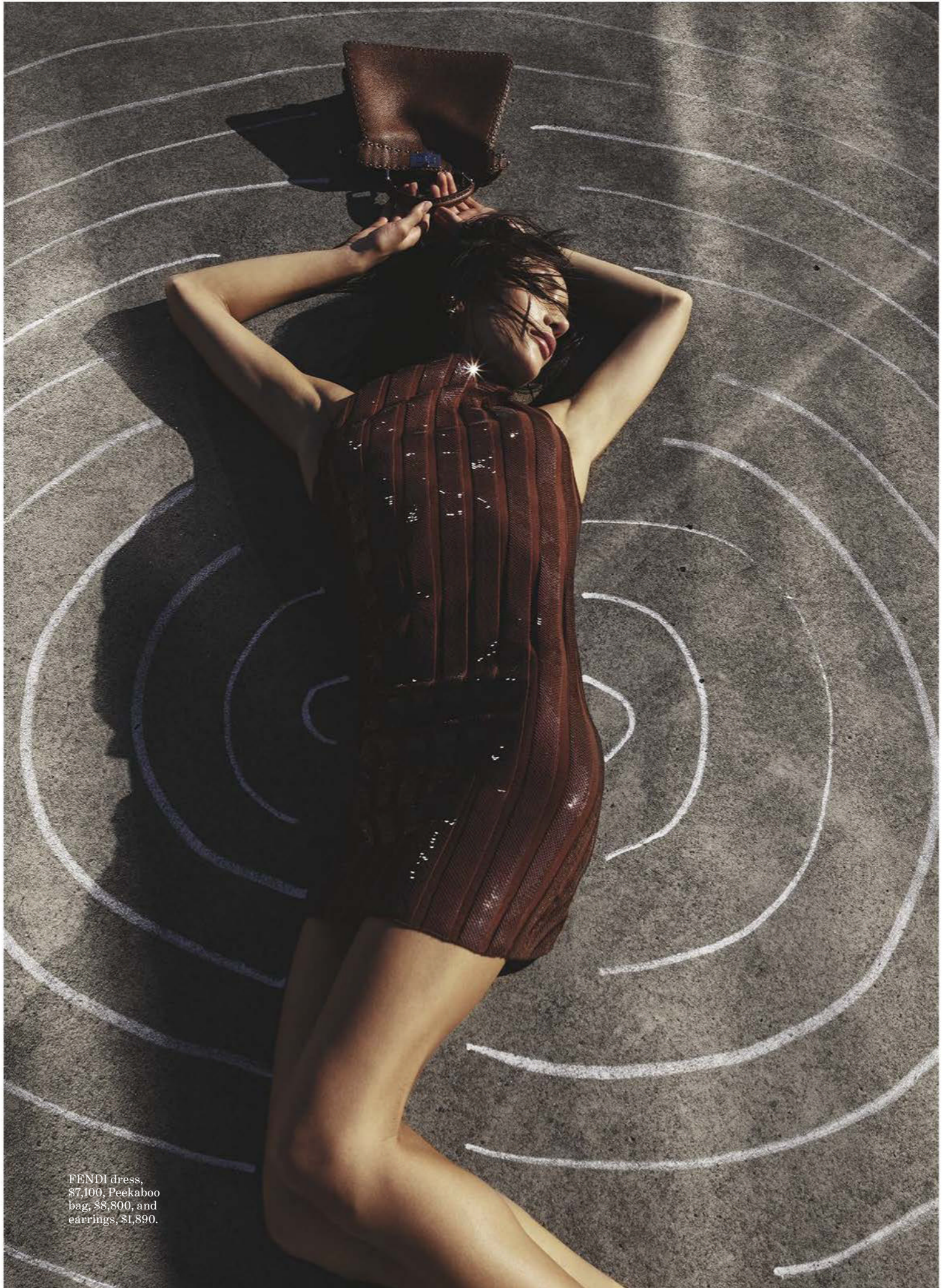
HIT THE STREET

Choose an accessory equipped to level up to the pace of everyday life, like Fendi's icons including the hold-all go-everywhere Peekaboo, energised in new colours.

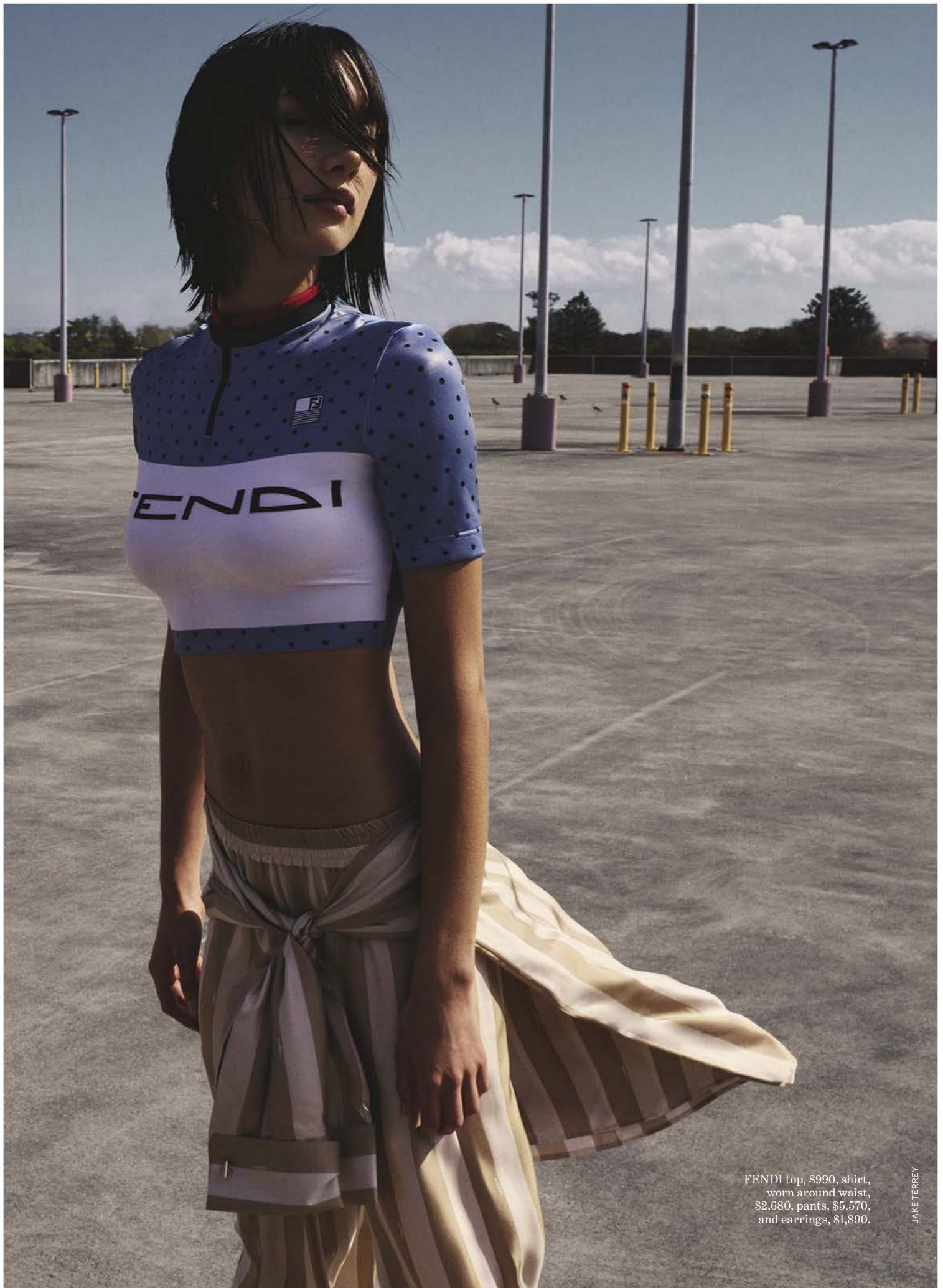
Styled by Kaila Matthews. Photographed by Jake Terrey.

FENDI jacket, \$3,970, swimsuit, \$1,150, pants, \$1,870, earrings, \$1,890, and bag, \$3,520. All prices approximate; details at [Vogue.com.au/WTB](https://www.vogue.com.au/WTB).

IN COLLABORATION WITH FENDI



FENDI dress,
\$7,100. Peekaboo
bag, \$8,800, and
earrings, \$1,890.



FENDI top, \$990, shirt,
worn around waist,
\$2,680, pants, \$5,570,
and earrings, \$1,890.

JAKE TERREY

FENDI dress, \$3,460,
earrings, \$1,890, and
Peekaboo bag, \$8,800.





FENDI jacket, \$3,970, bikini top, part of a set, \$950, skirt, \$3,250, earrings, \$1,890, Peekaboo bag, \$6,900, and shoes, \$1,520.



FENDI jacket, \$2,850,
earrings, \$1,890, and
Peekaboo bag, \$6,900.

Hair: Rory Rice
Make-up: Isabella Schmid
Models: Manahou Mackay,
Shanina Shaik

A sense of occasion

The Costume Institute in New York's revelatory new exhibition, *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion*, employs sight, touch, smell, sound and technology to bring rarely seen pieces to life. Nathan Heller gets the full picture.

Styled by Amanda Harlech.
Photographed by Steven Meisel.

NESTED INTERESTS

Elizabeth Debicki wears a dress from Marni's spring/summer '24 collection. In his invitation to the runway show, the house's creative director, Francesco Risso, described encountering a fragrance in Paris that he longed one day to smell again. *Sleeping Beauties* revels in such quests, recapturing the look, feel, sound and even the scent of garments from The Met's collection. Details throughout at [Vogue.com.au/WTB](https://www.vogue.com.au/WTB).



HEADPIECES BY MARY HOWARD AND ANNE TOMLIN







On the avenue today before The Metropolitan Museum of Art, it is frosty, with a selection of clothing that reflects the weather – pedestrians are hastening by with scarves and tweed coats drawn to their chins. But soon the rush of passing garments will change. In the New York spring, when the trees of Central Park grow fragrant and the asphalt warms, people wearing dresses in soft fabrics will pass scatterings of tourists out on the museum steps. At the start of May, a red carpet will draw up the staircase, and guests dressed for the Met Gala will catch camera flashes on their way inside. By tradition, that will be high fashion’s brightest moment, when an outfit and a personality bring each other most entirely to life. Then the attendees will enter the museum, where, most years, they would tour an exhibition of historic dresses whose wearers are long vanished, and whose fabrics are now frozen in place.

“It’s something we always struggle with – that, once a garment comes into the museum, a lot of the sensorial experiences that we take for granted with clothing are lost,” Andrew Bolton, the curator in charge at the Costume Institute, explains this morning, over tea, in a dimly lit conference room inside The Met. Photographs of more than 50 clothing items are pinned to the wall. “The positive part of it is that we’re custodians of the clothing, here to take care of it in perpetuity,” he goes on. “But that involves very specific conditions: you can’t touch it, you can’t smell it, it can’t be worn. And you can’t *hear* it.”

For centuries, each of those qualities was considered not incidental to fashion but an integral part of its experience and design. Dresses were marketed in part by their sound, known as *scroop*: the sensuous rustle of fabrics against one another as the wearer crossed the room. Cloth buttons used to be constructed around bits of cotton wool to absorb and emanate drops of perfume. “If we’re able to capture this information now,” Bolton says, “it’s a way of helping future generations appreciate how it was worn, what it looked like on the body and how it moved.”

Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion, opening on May 10 and closing on September 2, is Bolton and the Costume Institute’s bid to break beyond the limits of display and bring long-dormant garments back to life, reinventing on the way what a museum show can be. With a team of researchers and an array of technologies, the museum has extracted information about how historic pieces stimulated the senses and has devised ways to present this data. “The information is going to be there in perpetuity – not just in the exhibition but on our website forever,” Bolton says.

The show is a landmark for the museum, in part because it frees The Met to turn back to its own collection with new eyes. There was no borrowing from other institutions to flesh out the displays, and although the Costume Institute made 75 new acquisitions for the show – from an exquisite Christian Dior petal dress and a magnificent Iris van Herpen draped garment, as delicate as moth wings, to a Philip Treacy headpiece built around the upside-down form of a rose – the inspiration came about organically, in every sense, from The Met’s existing collection of more than 33,000 objects. “What struck me, when the pieces were all on my wall here” – Bolton gestures to the pinboard – “was how many pieces in the collection have been inspired by the natural world.” Themes recurred: there were patterns of flowers, birds, →

BLOW, WINDS!

All the clothes photographed on Debicki for this story – including an organza Iris van Herpen haute couture dress from spring 2020, seen here with Femme LA shoes – were later acquired by the Costume Institute for the show, except where noted.



IN BLOOM

Above: On CHRISTIAN DIOR's May dress from spring 1953, flowering grasses and wild clover are etched into organza.
Opposite page: A splendid 2017 reimagining of the Junon dress from Christian Dior's haute couture autumn 1949 collection, courtesy of Christian Dior, with Christian Dior shoes.

butterflies. And there were constant references, he noticed, to the elements of earth, air and water. All this would shape the formal organisation of the show. "One of the things that resonated with me – and why I think nature seemed particularly relevant – was the impermanence and the transitory nature of fashion," he says, "but also the cyclical nature of it, the rebirth."

The exhibition's title refers to the ultra-fragile garments that Bolton has made the centrepiece of the show. So delicate that they can barely be handled, let alone hung on a mannequin, these 'sleeping beauties' must lie flat and undisturbed in their cases. Most have what is known in the conservation trade as inherent vice: because of the materials involved or the way these elements are bound together, they have progressive, irreversible degradation and will one day come to shreds. In the sleeping beauties, Bolton's team found the emblem for both the exhibition's sensory project – reviving the lost physical attributes of a garment – and its scientific goals.

"This show makes us reflect a bit more on what we need to do to make sure that we keep and maintain the integrity of an object," Max Hollein, The Met's director, says. "It will help us understand how to not only amplify the experience, but to resurrect the total authenticity of the object – and that will have an impact on other areas of the museum."

"A piece of clothing isn't something we purchase just to hang on a hanger or put on a mannequin," says the photographer Nick Knight. "We have dreams in it and live our lives through it." Knight's digital-fashion company ShowStudio, which not long ago digitally animated a custom Gucci dress by Alessandro Michele in a Björk music video, is collaborating with Bolton to reanimate two garments in similar ways. Some crucial dresses will be →



STEVEN MEISEL







STEVEN MEISEL.
HEADBAND FROM ANGELS; HAIR CLIP FROM COSPROF; CHRISTIAN
LOUBOUTIN SHOES; SIMILAR STYLES FROM CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN.



MAGIC TOUCH

Above: A mystical-seeming House of Worth cape from 1889.

Opposite page: A fairytale-worthy Gucci cape and dress by Alessandro Michele for autumn/winter '17/'18.

brought to life again as Pepper's ghosts – a holographic illusion by which a flat-image projection appears as an object in a three-dimensional space.

More broadly, the Costume Institute has undertaken a careful study of postures, perfumes, habits and mores in the milieus where the garments first lived. "There are ball gowns – you could go to a dance in them," Knight explains. "You'd be in an environment where the way you held your fan, the way you held a glass of Champagne, how you curtsied, bowed and danced; all those things were important." The show will display the clothes, but it will also work to re-create the experience of encountering them. "The idea is, if you met somebody at one of these balls 150 years ago, what would it feel like?" he says. "Why would it be ... exciting?"

Now, deep in the Costume Institute's warren of office space, the conservator Elizabeth Shaeffer rolls out translucent sheets of Mylar trimmed to match the panels of a dress. The studio resembles a laboratory – bright, quiet and filled with technical equipment. Even by The Met's scrupulous standards, it is a place of exceptional care: metal tables are draped, for the artifacts' protection, with white cloth, and inside the doorway a foot mat is fixed to the floor with its adhesive surface facing upwards to remove stray particles from the soles of the shoes of everyone who enters. Shaeffer – attentive and soft-spoken – sorts the Mylar pieces on the table.

"This is a full-scale model from which a dress can be sewn," she explains. Each piece has been traced from a panel of a sleeping-beauty dress – a non-invasive process that helps the conservators gather information about its structure. From the Mylar, the pattern forms are transferred onto paper, →



TAKING SHAPE

Above: Beholding this coat, dress and crinoline from Olivier Theyskens's autumn/winter 2000/'01 collection, one can nearly hear the sumptuous sound of its silk moiré in motion – an auditory experience known among fashion conservators as *scroop* – also on display in the exhibition. **Opposite page:** A British waistcoat from 1615-20.

marked with a grid, while the dress is rendered digitally; the one form in which, in theory, it can live forever. “All of this information,” Bolton says, “is being used to bring it back to life – not only three-dimensionally, as it was meant to be on the body, but the *movement*.”

The specimen on the table today, a circa-1887 piece by Charles Frederick Worth, the landmark English designer whose House of Worth laid the groundwork for 20th-century couture, is the sleeping beauty that inspired the entire show. Once owned by an Astor, the garment is one of the exhibition's most fragile, beset by warp loss: a form of degradation in which the long, shiny filaments of satin abrade away, leaving feathery, rip-like streaks. As with most of the sleeping beauties, handling the dress – even delicately – hastens its decay; Bolton made the decision that the risk was worth the opportunity to gather detailed information about what

the Worth dress, in its prime, had been. “For me, it’s like, yes, of course if you kept it in a drawer and it’s never seen ever again, that does slow the deterioration,” he says. But what would be the value of that?

A separate curatorial decision he made was to bring the dress – now faded into lovely pastels – back to life in its original colours. Sitting in her office off the conservation studio with Bolton, Shaeffer studies bits of chiffon near the seams, unfaded by daylight, and matches those colours to Pantone hues, from which the colours can be digitally re-created, for a Pepper’s ghost. (The team also used spectrophotographic analysis to pick out original colour.)

“Something has gone a little wrong here,” Shaeffer notes, studying the colours on her screen. “This is an evening gown, so it would only come out at night, and gas lamps and early electric light bulbs were very warm in tone.”



She plays a draft of the animation that Knight's team has sent, studying the motion of the dress. An avatar dressed in a computer rendering of the garment swirls and dances vigorously, seeming to kick its knees in the air. Bolton frowns.

"It's a bit like *The King and I*," he says gently.

Shaeffer draws closer to the screen. "I think the chiffon is a little too bouncy and doesn't take into consideration the many layers of things that go underneath," she murmurs.

If movement studies are an unorthodox conservation task, they are not the strangest in *Sleeping Beauties*, an exhibition that is also based largely on sound. The conservation room also contains an ornate, colourfully painted dress covered in aluminium flowers that Francesco Risso designed for this year's Marni spring season. Another of The Met's new acquisitions, it is recently back from the anechoic chamber at Binghamton University in New York, where Bolton recorded the clatter of

the flowers against one another. The same process was used to capture the swoop associated with a historical dress, and both audio samples will be included in this exhibition.

Yet the real reason for including the Marni dress, Bolton explains, is not its sound but its association with scent. In his invitation for the runway show in which it featured, Risso described his experience being introduced to an enchanting perfume at a party in Paris at the age of 14, then spending his adulthood roaming the city, trying to discover its origin or its wearer.

One of the exhibition's leading collaborators is the Berlin-based olfactory artist and researcher Sissel Tolaas, a pioneer in the work of creating – and recording – the world of smell. Trained as a chemist and a linguist, Tolaas spent seven years travelling the globe from her small hometown on an island in Norway with the goal of smelling everything. "I liked →





becoming a dog,” she says. “I built up massive databases of scents; trained myself to understand the importance of smell in terms of memory, language, tolerance; and, after seven years, was ready to conquer the world.”

Tolaas spent close to a year analysing scents associated with both garments and their wearers for the Costume Institute exhibition. Her discoveries will become part of the displays, while certain scents will be smellable, reinterpreted for the exhibition halls. “*Is it perfume from a dress / That makes me so digress?*” T.S. Eliot wrote early in the 20th century. At The Met, visitors will be able to encounter fragrance elements of that time.

One room, devoted to the floral theme, will feature an array of hats with floral motifs. Another will be devoted to Millicent Rogers, the early-20th-century socialite and philanthropist. “I’m focusing on literally the molecules emitting from the various items that were used by this woman: the scents of her body, her habits, her culture, her rituals, the food she ate,” Tolaas says. The data of science and the sensory mysteries of art emerge from one another. “I’m not ‘perfuming spaces,’” she explains. “I’m highlighting or amplifying hidden information in the garments.”

Rogers’ collection, which includes Schiaparelli’s famous seed-packet dress of 1937 – an allusion to the designer’s own past putting seeds in her mouth to try to grow a garden from within to make herself more beautiful – stands as evidence of the individuality and peculiarity of fashion: one person’s taste can be just that, to an ecstatic degree. Growing beyond Rogers, there’s Christian Dior’s standard-setting Vilmorin dress, which references his childhood love of gardening, as a reader of his mother’s Vilmorin-Andrieux seed catalogues. There is a resplendent Balenciaga hat made to look exactly like a cabbage, and – one of the great triumphs of awkward-chic – an example of prewar ‘hobble skirts’: a flash-in-the-pan fashion that left women unable to walk with a normal gait. There is Sarah Burton’s astonishing butterfly dress, with an explosion of fiery wings at the collar, alongside a butterfly-themed sleeping beauty from Charles James.

One of the most improbable of the exhibition’s sleeping beauties is a coat, by Jonathan Anderson for Loewe, that is sown – in the agricultural sense – with grass seed. With time, the grass grows, creating a lush green pelt. At first, Bolton wanted to bring in a live coat, but it would have required an elaborate array of irrigation and growing lamps. So an already-grown version, now dead as the California hills in summer, will be shown, with a time-lapse video of grass sprouting nearby. Another of Anderson’s contributions to the show, an outfit centred on a large re-creation of an anthurium, will be part of the garden galleries – making it more of an object than it ever was on the runway. “I love when clothing becomes sculptural,” he explains. “You look at the form, in three dimensions, and see how it interacts with the body.” Loewe is a sponsor of the exhibition, and Anderson notes that the show’s capacity to bring out a garment’s physical qualities this way struck him as part of its appeal. “When you’re taking things out of an archive, reexamining them, and trying to find newness or storytelling within something old,” he says, “how do you engage new audiences and at the same time not *overexplain* something?”

The greatest of the show’s technological moments, meanwhile, is also the most daring. An exquisite wedding dress worn in the 1930s by Jazz Age →

ABOUT FACE

The Upside-Down Rose hat from Philip Treacy’s spring 2000 haute couture collection, like so many of the pieces in *Sleeping Beauties*, channels the natural world.



GARDEN VARIETY

Above, clockwise from top: A 1957 Balenciaga hat; Deirdre Hawken's Cauliflower headpiece from 2013; a layered silk hat from the 1940s; a 1942 Germaine Vittu hat. **Opposite page:** An anthurium-inspired bodice from Loewe's spring/summer '23 collection.



STEVEN MEISEL

New York socialite and actress Natalie Potter will be brought to life with an interactive interface specially designed for the show by OpenAI. “The Met team provided us with a lot of source documents, facts and materials about Natalie, her life and her dress,” Isa Fulford, an OpenAI technician, explains. “We gave the model custom instructions about how to interact with the attendees in the style and tone of Natalie’s voice, and then we gave the model access to all of these facts about her life, dress, wedding, and so on.” Visitors will be able to text ‘Natalie’ and get back specific answers. “I wanted to have an example of a garment that is actively responding to your engagement with it,” Bolton explains. “Something I find a little bit frustrating in any show is how passive the objects are.” Here in the exhibition halls, motion sets the mood. Shaping the physical space for so sensual an exhibition was a daunting enough task that Bolton looked to Leong Leong, an architecture firm of two brothers based in New York’s Chinatown. Rather than traditional galleries, Leong Leong envisaged a single snaking hallway widening into a series of round, domed rooms, like pearls strung on a necklace – a series of immersive spaces. “The design of the exhibition is episodic: you progress from one room to another,” Dominic Leong explains. Many rooms centre on glass cases reminiscent of bell jars, an icon of scientific objectivity. The sleeping beauties, meanwhile, will lie flat in cases throughout the exhibition, surrounded by frosted glass for a ghostly, holographic air.

On arriving at the show, visitors will first see a Brancusi bronze placed into dialogue with the Worth sleeping beauty. A contemporary garment that the Worth dress helped to inspire – an Alessandro Michele piece for Gucci →





STEVEN MEISEL
RICK OWENS COAT, DRESS, SHORTS AND BOOTS.



SLEEPING MUSE: THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ALFRED STIEGLITZ COLLECTION, 1949. © SUCCESSION BRANCUSI. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © 2024 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK.



DREAM SCENARIOS


Above: Constantin Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse* (1910).

Opposite page: A complete look from Rick Owens's spring/summer '22 Fogachine collection, courtesy of Rick Owens.

– will be displayed nearby. Visitors will progress into a space filled with botanicals on painted silk – a Chinese technique imitated by Europeans in the 18th century and updated by Mary Katrantzou, whose garment is nearby. A small room that follows will be devoted to warp printing, a technique with a beautiful out-of-focus effect on patterning and images, echoed by a lenticular hologram.

From there, Bolton says one morning in the museum, rushing around with growing excitement, the exhibition blooms into its naturalistic themes. A room devoted to touch features a Miss Dior dress created by Raf Simons in 2013, with a touchable scale model. Next comes the Van Gogh room, centred on a Saint Laurent jacket inspired by the artist's painting of irises, put into dialogue with Rodarte's dress inspired by Van Gogh's sunflowers, and the poppy room, centring on Isaac Mizrahi's bleeding poppy dress, inspired by the work of Irving Penn. The poppies lead to daisies embroidered on an intricate 18th-century French court suit; the daisies lead to Spitalfields silks, shown with a projection of the original botanical watercolours on which they were modelled; the Spitalfields lead on to tulips, roses, and what Bolton calls a "garden room".

And on it goes, through dresses of Chinese silk as yellow as the sun; a surprisingly wide selection of beetle-related fashion, including early-plastic necklaces by Schiaparelli; and a room of snake style, animated with terrifying videos. As Bolton elaborates the immersive world of cutting-edge technology he is building to recover the lost experiences of the past, he is seemingly impressed less by the ambitious scale of the exhibition than by the possibilities of future work that it has opened up. "It's a very humbling show to work on," he says. "It makes you realise how little you are." ■



BRANCHING OUT
Debicki wears a Vetements
dress by GuraM Gvasalia
for spring/summer '24
(courtesy of Vetements by
GuraM Gvasalia).

Hair: Guido
Make-up: Pat McGrath
Manicure: Jin Soon Choi
Colourist: Lena Ott
Tailor: Carol Ai
Set design: Mary Howard
Production: PRODN at
Art + Commerce

Elizabeth Debicki

The Australian actor who brought Princess Diana to life – and won a passel of awards in the process – is ready to transform anew. By Taylor Antrim.

She's poised for 30 seconds, ethereal in her Dior column dress, thanking the right people, her family, her boyfriend Kristian Rasmussen, the creatives on *The Crown*. And then Elizabeth Debicki, somewhat gloriously, goes blank. You can see it on her face as the adrenaline ebbs, as a trace of panic sets in. Here she is on the Golden Globes stage, and she can't think of anything else to say. "Goodness," she stammers. "Maybe ... that's it?"

Debicki refused, at first, to watch the footage on YouTube, but then forced herself to, once. "Maybe that's it?" she says to me, appalled. "That has to be the most Australian thing anyone's ever said."

Equally Australian: shutting down a dance party, which Debicki did later that night alongside Andrew Scott and Billie Eilish "in this random room at the Chateau – but what a lovely room", she remembers. The whole Globes experience was the biggest moment of the Paris-born, Melbourne-raised actor's career. But it cost her, too. Debicki, 33, who is in Manhattan to play muse and model to photographer Steven Meisel in the images you see across these pages, is someone who does not relish the glare of public attention and actually has to recover from it. "I find carpets quite overwhelming," she admits.

At six foot three, Debicki can't help but draw attention, but in person she's cloaked in the retiring aspect of a graduate student emerging from a library carrel. Long hair, wire glasses, jeans, vintage work shirt, turtleneck, Adidas. No one seems to recognise her on the busy SoHo streets, and miraculously we find an empty-ish cafe with a menu of adaptogenic teas. She has missed lunch and chooses an infusion with beetroot as sustenance.

The cause for all the Globes hubbub, after which she retreated to the desert of New Mexico for two weeks with Rasmussen (about whom she speaks with careful privacy-hoarding circumspection), was her two-season turn as Diana, Princess of Wales, a catalyzing performance for an actor who has had a varied résumé of supporting roles (in *Widows*, *Tenet*, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* and *Vol. 3*) but was, prior to *The Crown*, probably best known among TV sophisticates for the 2016 adaptation of John le Carré's *The Night Manager*. Debicki is fond of self-deprecating jokes about being below-radar (a lifelong reader, she's always loved fictional characters no one wants to talk about, "which is also the title of my career!").

But Debicki as Diana was an uncanny tour de force that was much seen, much written about, celebrated and still exerts an afterglow. Maybe a hangover, too: "The degree of vulnerability for me doing the role was immense ... immense," she tells me. Because she wasn't inventing a backstory but reckoning with history and facts – and with public opinion. "Here's this whole life," she says.

Even at the table read, "she had the character completely", says co-star Dominic West. "I was very much at sea with Charles. I hadn't quite got a handle on it. And she had the voice. She had everything." She also had Diana's humour. "That was the thing that struck me most," he adds. "How funny she could be." *Hugs, we all need them*, one of Diana's earliest public utterances (or close enough), became Debicki's catchphrase, a go-to bit of on-set levity.

Debicki knows that she is not cut out for the life of a royal. There's her propensity to withdraw; there's also a kind of counterbalancing wanderlust. "I have this insatiable desire to

sort of live everywhere, which is absolutely terrible," she says. London is her base, a new flat, she tells me, where she hosts dinner parties for friends: "I've been teaching myself to be a better cook." Her other anecdotes place her in Los Angeles, Brooklyn and Melbourne, where she visits annually to see her mother and father and two younger siblings. "It's really hard to live away from them. When you're 20, the distance just bounces off of you. But now I miss my family terribly all the time." Her parents were professional ballet dancers – and Debicki herself trained in dance until she was 18. "My body has a memory of once being an extremely fit person," she says. Her height marked her out to coaches, but she was hopeless: "The basketball team in high school asked me to help intimidate the other side. And then they would bench me for the whole game." She loved books instead (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, by Jean Rhys, was an early favourite) and limited her coursework to literature and humanities, which was hell when exams came round: "I'd be practice-writing 12 essays a night." Sports are still a nonstarter. She likes Pilates and "a walk in the park" for exercise – but in free time she devours novels when she doesn't have a pile of scripts to get through. Recently she picked up Shirley Jackson's 1962 classic thriller, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. "Devastating."

The Gothic sensibility of Jackson neatly brings us around to her next film. After *The Crown*, "I needed to do something very different," she says, and the role she jumped at was in *MaXXXine*, the third in a loose horror trilogy written and directed by Ti West, following *X* and *Pearl* (each starring Mia Goth as a murderous lunatic). *MaXXXine*, out August 1 in Australia, is shrouded in secrecy, but Debicki confirms it's set in 1980s Hollywood and that she plays a director, Elizabeth Bender. West had watched nearly everything she'd done (excepting *The Crown*, he tells me) and sent her the script as a kind of Hail Mary. It was a compliment not lost on Debicki. "Would you like to play an 80s film director with massive leather shoulder pads?" she says. "Yes. I've never felt so seen in my life."

"The movie sort of hinges on you taking her character seriously and being a little bit afraid of her, but also liking her," says West. "That's a really small bull's-eye to hit. I didn't know if we'd be able to get her – but she jumped at it. And she's so iconic in the role."

There is more on the horizon. She's due to film *Andorra*, an adaptation of the 1997 Peter Cameron novel, with the Italian director Giuseppe Capotondi (who cast her in his 2019 art world indie, *The Burnt Orange Heresy*), with Bobby Cannavale and Ruth Wilson – "I would watch Ruth Wilson read the phone book," Debicki says. Most exciting is a return to the New York stage. She's done theatre before, notably a production of Jean Genet's *The Maids*, with Cate Blanchett and Isabelle Huppert, first with the Sydney Theatre Company and then off-Broadway a decade ago, and, in 2016, a David Hare play, *The Red Barn*, staged in London's West End.

The new project is another play, and she won't say more except that she's producing it herself out of a feeling that she "really, really needed to do some theatre stuff again", she says. Theatre – unlike acceptance speeches – puts her inside a ring of safety. "These very strong boundaries," she says. "You spend four or five weeks in rehearsals carving out a path. It's like, here are the hedges, here and here, and in that space you can bounce around and really go deep and explore." She smiles and it's as if the Globes moment never happened. "The joy I get onstage is just *profound*." ■

Mind over matter

From scent to skincare, can the neuroscience behind the formulas in our beauty bag really alter our emotional mindset? Remy Rippon investigates.

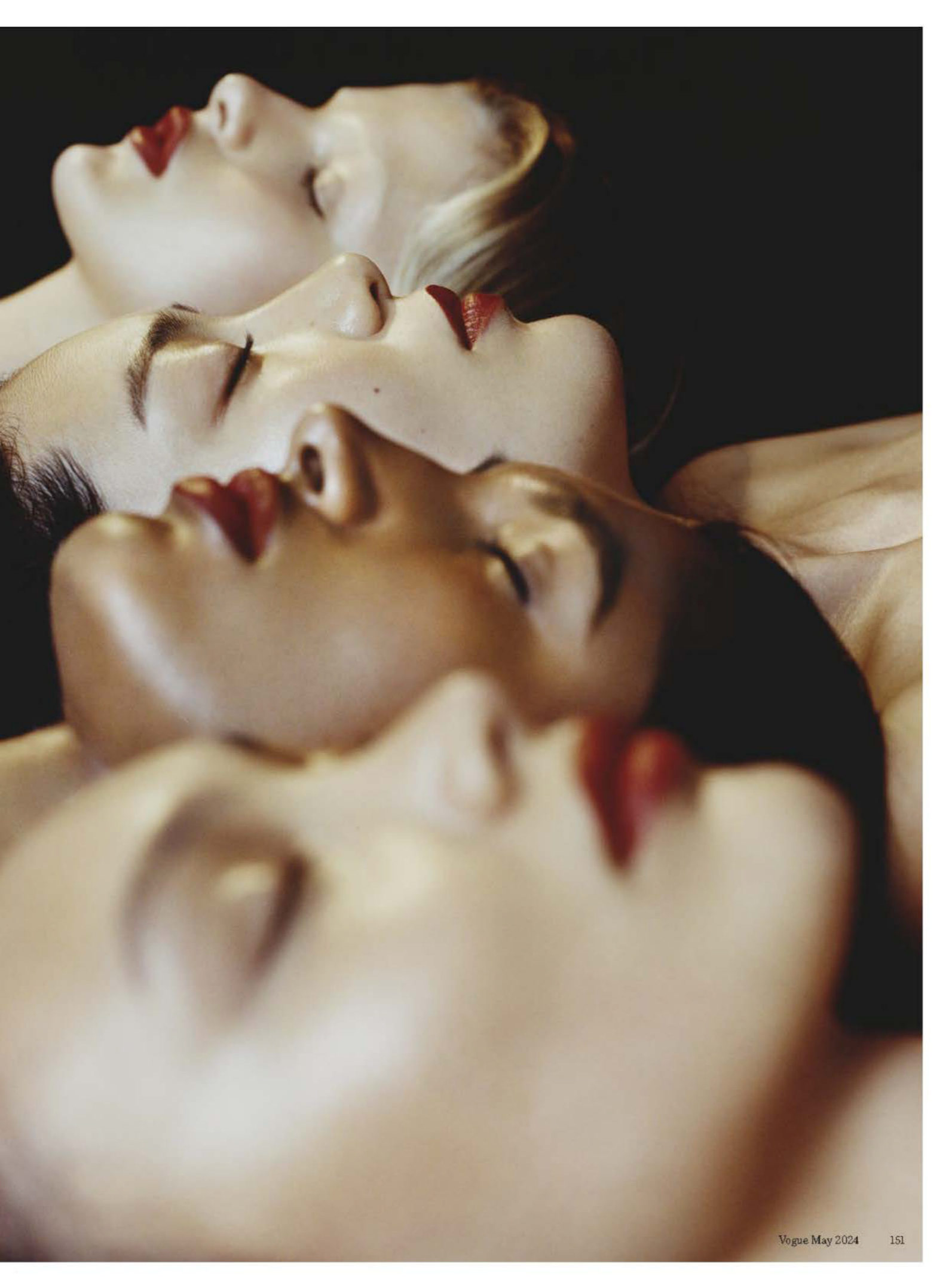
Darlings, the brain is like an emotional map,” says Charlotte Tilbury, the British make-up artist turned beauty entrepreneur. Lately, Tilbury has been fixated on the limbic system – the brain’s emotional processing centre – to better understand its link to our sense of smell. “When we feel emotions, this is reflected in different areas of the brain, creating patterns that can be read thanks to incredible advances made in neuroscience,” says the London-based founder who enlisted a team of neuroscientists and perfumers to create six ‘emotion-boosting’ fragrances launching this month. “From as young as 13, I have been fascinated by the invisible power of fragrance, captivated by its magical ability to unlock memories and emotions, and how it can mesmerise those around you,” she says.

The science stacks up. A recent study found that at a cognitive level, ‘odour memory’ is a two-step process involving both the ability to recognise a familiar smell and then transfer that smell into an associated memory. According to researchers from Brown University, smells that evoke warm memories can increase positive emotions, lower stress, decrease inflammation and boost self-confidence and motivation. The reason? Within our brain, smell, memory and emotions are uniquely linked. “We have this amazing structure called the olfactory bulb, which is involved with our sense of smell,” says Dr Lila Landowski, a neuroscientist and senior lecturer at the University of Tasmania. “And the really cool thing about it is this part of the brain is literally connecting to another part of the brain involved in processing our emotions and feelings, the amygdala.

“It’s also strongly connected to the part of the brain involved in memory, the hippocampus. And what that means is that smells are intrinsically linked to how we feel, and especially the memories that we have with those smells.”

It’s little wonder brands – from fragrance to skincare – are increasingly interested in this brain-to-beauty connection. A growing area of skincare dubbed neurocosmetics is built on the premise that the pathways between the cells in our skin and our body’s messenger system – the central nervous system – can be influenced by the ingredients in our products. Last month, the creators of French skincare powerhouse Sisley launched Neuraé, a line of skin and mood-boosting formulas, 10 years in the making. Aimed at targeting three emotional states that impact the skin’s appearance (tiredness, sadness and stress), formulators →





uncovered four key neuromediators or messengers that influence both the skin and brain. Put simply: by applying serums and creams fuelled by ingredients that can tweak these go-betweens, formulators believe we may be able to influence our emotional state through our skincare regimen.

Of course, if you've ever woken up to an angry pimple on the day of an important meeting or event, you'll know that our emotional wellbeing can have a profound impact on our skin. You can thank cortisol for that. "Our mind-body connection represents the intrinsic link between our brain (thoughts, feelings, emotions) and endocrine system – the system responsible for regulating our hormones," explains Giorgi Strachan, dermal clinician and skincare education manager at Mecca. "When we are in a state of emotional flux, such as stress or anxiety, key hormones [like] cortisol and adrenaline are often activated in our body."

As a society, it seems we're more stressed than ever; a pivotal Stress and Wellbeing in Australia survey found more than 70 per cent of Australians feel stress that impacts their physical health, while young adults namechecked finances, health and family issues among their top concerns. An occasional uptick in so-called 'stress' hormones generally won't impact our complexion, however, "when we have chronic stress, it basically puts our body in survival mode. And it takes a toll on the body, especially on the skin," says Landowski. The reason? Inflammation.

If you're prone to conditions like acne, psoriasis, eczema or rosacea, a surge in cortisol and adrenaline can trigger a flare-up. "For all the major skin issues, stress is such a big thing," says Dr Shyamalar Gunatheesan, a Melbourne-based dermatologist and founder of Ode Dermatology. "With acne, for example, we know that cortisol, which is one of your key stress response hormones, actually has receptors in your oil glands. So it makes it produce more oil and more congestion." For some, stress shows up as an increase in oil production and acne, while others may notice changes in texture and dullness, or an increased sensitivity to products that were previously well-tolerated.

"When you've been stressed for a long time, one of the first things to happen is that the top layer of skin becomes thinner, and you're more likely to lose water from your skin and have

barrier dysfunction," says Landowski. More to feel stressed about: a loss of collagen (the protein that gives our skin bounce and plumpness), as well as a downturn in hyaluronic acid, the skin's natural moisturiser. "So, you lose two of these integral things that give your skin this beautiful structure," she adds.

While the remedy to life's worries can't be found solely in the beauty aisle, stress-induced flare-ups can be managed with the right arsenal of products. Harnessing the skin barrier is key: avoid over-cleansing and rinse with tepid water which is less likely to irritate a stressed-out complexion. Antioxidants, such as a gentle vitamin C serum every morning can protect the skin through the day, says Gunatheesan. "If you've got lots of inflammation in your skin, you actually want to trap in all these active serums with a hyaluronic serum and a restorative moisturiser barrier so you're keeping your natural moisturising factor in place. Skincare is key to reduce the elemental damage."

"While skincare can assist in managing the symptoms of stressed skin, addressing the root cause of the stressor will support your overall wellbeing and skin health journey," says Strachan. The simplest stress-busting protocols remain the most effective. "I know people don't like hearing, 'Oh, just do more exercise,' but science tells us that exercise will help you deal with more stress and it will ultimately reduce the amount of cortisol in your bloodstream," says Landowski adding that the sweet spot is around 150 minutes per week. Other protocols require less heavy lifting: socialising is a natural de-stressor ("It activates our brain's reward pathway, which is why you feel good after hanging out with people that you like," says Landowski), while being outdoors can reduce the level of cortisol in your blood by around 18 per cent in just 20 minutes. Equally, daily mindfulness and meditation can prepare you for the day ahead and give you the mental tools to adapt to stressful situations when they strike. Or simply take a leaf from Tilbury's book and spritz one of her six mood-boosting scents: Love Frequency, Joyphoria, Magic Energy, Calm Bliss, Cosmic Power, or "finally, darling, More Sex. It captures total carnal attraction and temptation. Whenever I wear it, I feel instantly magnetic; I feel irresistible. More Sex truly envelops you in a hypnotic aura of captivating chemistry." Stress relief, indeed. ■

“Our mind-body connection represents the intrinsic link between our brain and endocrine system”

Press reset

De-stress your mind and body with these calming and soothing salves.



LANCÔME Rénergie H.C.F Triple Serum, \$212.



AUGUSTINUS BADER The Ultimate Soothing Cream, \$454.



KATE SOMERVILLE Delikate Recovery Cream Stressed Skin Saver, \$130.



CHARLOTTE TILBURY Joyphoria EDP, 100ml for \$265.

ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

VOGUE DIARY

Explore what's in store and worth having this month.



PRIME TIME

Lightweight, silky and luxurious, Estée Lauder's Futurist Peptide-Power Serum Primer provides a burst of hydration, instantly plumping, smoothing and creating a youthful radiance in preparation for make-up. It also strengthens the skin barrier and provides blue light protection. Go to esteelauder.com.au.



CLIP ART

Michael Hill's new signature Lock bracelet combines timeless elegance with contemporary flair. Crafted in 10-carat gold, its high quality is matched by refined aesthetics that make it suit any occasion, adding a touch of modern sophistication for daytime and understated elegance for evening. Discover more at michaelhill.com.au.

HEAVEN SCENT

A luxurious aromatic blend of black and green tea extracts, bergamot and mandarin, Armani Thé Yulong EDT takes you on a sensory journey through China's awe-inspiring Yulong Mountains. Equally opulent, the timeless glass flacon, crowned with a stone-like cap. Visit giorgioarmanibeauty.com.au.



MANE CHANCE

Promote stronger, fuller hair within six weeks with the Genesis Anti-Fall Fortifying Hair Serum designed to address hair fall from the roots to the lengths. Boosting the natural protective moisture barrier of the scalp, the serum creates an optimal environment for future hair growth. Go to kerastase.com.au.



ATTACHMENT STYLE

Beautiful, unique and versatile, Paspaley's Rhapsody strands are available in a variety of pearl shapes, sizes and lengths. The special feature? A detachable clasp that enables you to wear the necklace in one long line or transform it into bracelets and smaller necklaces. Find out more at paspaley.com.



EYE SPY

Specsavers welcomes iconic British heritage lifestyle brand Barbour into its growing portfolio. With a fresh twist on classics, the collection features colours and patterns inspired by modern countryside style. Available in-store and online from \$299 for two pairs single vision. Go to specsavers.com.au.

Base note

The latest skincare-adjacent tints provide lightweight coverage, hydration and good-skin benefits. Here, Estée Lauder’s national education manager, Gemma Rogers, delivers the base basics.

By Remy Rippon



Backstage at JW Anderson spring/summer '24.



ESTÉE LAUDER Futurist SkinTint Serum, \$89.

VOGUE AUSTRALIA: How do the new skin tints and foundations bridge the gap between skincare and make-up?

GEMMA ROGERS: “The newer foundations and skin tint formulations go beyond simply perfecting the complexion, offering a myriad of skin-loving ingredients that may help to improve the look of skin over time. These ‘wear and care’ products are rapidly becoming popular as consumers expect their products to work harder and close the gap between where their skincare ends and their make-up routine begins.”

VA: So these new compositions can actually address skin concerns?

GR: “Depending on the specific formulation, a tint such as Estée Lauder Futurist SkinTint Serum foundation will offer hydration, strengthening and smoothing, as well as improving the look of skin over time. Skin-caring ingredients in the product include meadowfoam seed, calendula and rosehip oils to help nourish and strengthen and provide a glowy finish.”

VA: Any specific skin concerns it might benefit?

GR: “Skin tints contain the latest innovations in skin finish and ingredient technology, making them a great option for all skin types. They may offer different finishes, such as glowy radiance or in some cases oil control, so depending on the consumer’s skin condition and finish preference, they will be able to find a skin tint to suit their needs. Skin tints offer plenty of versatility, another reason they’re popular.”

Mother’s Day gift guide

Vogue-approved little luxuries and self-care essentials to gift this May.



HERMÈS Rouge Hermès Matte Lipstick, engraved limited edition, in Rouge Amazone, \$125.



LA PRAIRIE Skin Caviar Eye Lift, \$825.



APPLE AirPods 3rd Gen with Lightning Charging Case, \$279, from Harvey Norman.



DYSON Supersonic Hair Dryer in Blue Blush, \$649, from Harvey Norman.

Backstage insider

THE TREND: Graphic liner

Time to sharpen up, that's the message backstage make-up artists were sending for spring/summer '24 with graphic eyeliner adding an artistic edge to runways from New York to Paris. At Khaite, make-up maestro

Diane Kendal charted horizontal darts across the centre of the eyelids – a 2024 update on the classic wing – while models at Helmet Lang sported futuristic etches in silver and ruby red from inner to outer corners.

Elsewhere, eye lines were as precise as they were impactful; you'd be forgiven for thinking make-up

artists at Jil Sander swapped their go-to eyeliner for a felt-tip marker with the dramatic shape-shifting stripes that peered out from the outer lids. Go on, walk the line.



Clockwise from top left: Chanel Ombre Essentielle Soft Touch eye shadow in Rouge Cosmos, Lilas Poudré, Brun Talpa, Quartz Fumé, and Rose Charnel, \$58 each. **Bottom left, from left:** Chanel Noir Allure mascara in Lilas Poudré, Orange Bruni and Rouge Intense, \$71 each.

Colour correct

Chanel's Cometes collective – the trio of make-up artists charged with steering the heritage house's beauty line in new and creative ways – is delivering on its promise. Ombre Essentielle, Chanel's latest make-up launch, includes 14 muted, chalky eye shadow shades designed to be dialed up or down, as well as a pick 'n' mix of limited-edition mascaras in lilac, red and amber.

Wear them with the corresponding eye shadow for intense colour pay-off or swipe the outer lashes for a hint of colour.



CLARINS Precious La Crème Yeux, \$270.

In bloom

The latest luxe arrival from French beauty brand Clarins, harnesses the power of plants.

French beauty powerhouse Clarins has always had a knack for marrying plant power and science. Launching this month, the brand's first ultra-luxe skincare line, Precious, sprouts from the rare moonlight flower, which blooms only at night (once a year, if you're lucky) and is harvested within a time-sensitive two-hour window to maintain its skincare benefits.

Each of the formulas within the six-piece collection boast the delicate floral extract as well as a high-performance peptide trio. The jewel in the Precious crown, La Crème, is a nourishing hydrator dispensing the perfect slip for applying under make-up, while Le Serum Lift delivers a clever instant tightening effect. Both can be massaged into the skin with a nifty massage tool: the next best thing to a hands-on treatment at a one of Clarins's world-renowned spas.

To the point

Lena Dunham's task at hand?
To examine what our nails –
both practically short and
epically long – really say
about all we're asked to do.

PHOTOGRAPH BY OK McCausland

My babysitter Noreen wore long acrylics in frosted pink that, to my five-year-old self, were the epitome of glam. I loved to watch her hands as she fried a grilled cheese, finger-combed watermelon-scented mousse through her fringe, or twisted the phone cord as she chatted to her boyfriend Gene. Even when one broke and she had to hold it in place with a bandaid, I swooned at the impossibly adult *je ne sais quoi* of being a woman with nails to boot, imitating her by sticking strawberries on the ends of my fingers or forming my own with red putty.

Meanwhile, my mother and her friends were clean girls before there was a name for the aesthetic. As artists in the male-dominated 1980s, they were wearing loosely fitting suiting by Comme des Garçons and cutting their nails to the quick, partially for practicality (they were wielding paintbrushes and cameras, sculpting and performing) and also to prove that their femininity didn't prevent them from playing in the big leagues – a stigma that culturally we've at least pretended to abandon. But, as always, it takes work to look effortless – my mother had her nails buffed and painted with a clear lacquer every other week, a process I watched like a hawk, often grabbing pinks and purples and begging her to give them a try. The closest she came was classic red for special occasions. Meanwhile, I collected polishes and lined them up on my windowsill like I was the proud owner of a rainbow itself.

In high school, long nails festooned with sunsets or airbrushed with the heavy tracks of monster trucks, screaming CAUTION against yellow paint, became an accessory as coveted as nameplate earrings and Timberland boots. (Like so many good things, nail art was co-opted from the hip-hop looks of Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown, styled by Misa Hylton, that began influencing us all in the early aughts and still does. Throw in the kawaii nail art of Japan, and rough it up with runway-ready piercings and gems, and you had decades of trends.) My mother found acrylics "too mature" and made a highly specific rule that I could wear any nail colour I wanted as long as it didn't read as adult – baby blues, electric greens but absolutely no red, no coral, not even a pink. Through my 20s I continued to associate bright nails with personal expression, and was an early adopter of nail art salons, where I'd watch with jealousy as the burlesque dancer in the seat beside me applied inch-long tips studded with faux rubies.

But once I reached my 30s, a combination of maturity, practicality and the fatigue that comes with increased responsibility meant that the closest I came to turning a look



Lena Dunham.

was a few coats of polish on a special occasion – the rest of the time, it was a quick clip when they started to look ragged, stained with watercolour and pen, uneven and stress-bitten.

But when the writers' strike hit last year, suddenly I had oodles of time stretching ahead of me, nowhere to be and no time to be there. The last time I'd felt that way was long before I started my career, when I'd spend high school afternoons in the chemist testing colours on my thumb or a lazy Saturday in my earliest 20s requesting the technicians at the salon replicate everything from my dog's face to oozing slime. Even when I went to Japan, a mecca of nail art, it was to shoot an episode of *Girls* and I was too rushed to decorate every finger, simply getting one of my tattoos recreated on my thumbs (although I did come home with boxes and boxes of press-ons, including a set that depicted smiling cups of pudding dancing on thumb and forefinger).

And so came my summer of nails, the longer the better, inspired by Zoë Kravitz's Catwoman, by early Lana Del Rey videos back when she called herself the "gangsta Nancy Sinatra", by Lil' Kim matching her nails to her pasties. I studied nail shapes (coffin? Who knew) and started a Pinterest, enjoying, in no particular order, 70s chevrons, a medieval harlequin pattern, ditzy florals, red glitter and black stilettos that looked like Morticia Addams was headed to a Berlin rave. It made every email I sent feel like an occasion and every book read required a hand-selfie (helpie?). No matter your level of daily dress-up,

your gender expression, or your age, there's nothing quite like a nail to make every point you make feel, well, pointed.

I loved every second of it. Yes, it required reading a surprisingly lengthy article about how to text with tips (pro move: use the sides of your thumbs, like you're playing Nintendo) and I had to carry tweezers in order to remove my credit card from the ATM. (Pop-top drink cans? Out of the question.) But what I lost in efficiency, I more than made up for in the feeling of slinky glamour that my newly extended fingers gave me. (And as a girl with hands that resemble a bouquet of hot dogs, that's always a boost, self-love be damned.)

"You're texting like you're 98," my husband noted (but even he had to admit it was worth it for the back scratches). But when our strike ended (hooray! We did it!) and it was time to head back to work, it became clear that my nails were going to be a hindrance when it came to everything from doing quick rewrites, to flipping through the pages of my binder on set, leashing up the dogs quickly in the morning, to buttoning my jeans and lacing my sneakers (summer had been all nail-proof cotton dresses and old-school Adidas slides). And so off they came, revealing the kind of cracked nails you'd see in the "before" portion of an infomercial at 3am. Paging Sally Hansen.

But when my *Vogue* editor approached me, suggesting I try a week as a clean girly (to quote the gen Z'ers in my office), I gladly accepted. After all, I was going to be manicured by none other than Michelle Class, who boasts clients such as Kate Moss (clean clean clean) and Lily Allen (no time for the short-nail trend, according to Class, who recently gave her a matt-grey coffin shape so long I would be forced to lie in bed all day). We would try an over-the-top moment of glamour, and then I would embrace the new desires of nail fetishists: spring 2024 runways went for the viral "glazed doughnut" and "ballet-core" vibes (Christian Siriano, Sandy Liang), with Proenza Schouler showing a classic short crimson that still reads squeaky clean.

After rescheduling with Michelle because my dog had an asthma attack and I needed not to have my hands in a gel machine so I could work her nebulizer (an early omen that epic nails might not work for me), we made an appointment for a Friday afternoon. As Michelle worked away, I watched the feed of footage from set on two iPads and dictated my notes to a patient coworker, my hands shaking with the desire to get back to typing. My kitten begged for treats as my (other) dog coughed up grass. I could do nothing about any of it. I felt grateful I am not yet changing nappies as I tried to unwrap a sandwich to little success, filling a not-yet-finished nail with an unintended scoop of avocado. When my husband returned home and asked why I hadn't finished putting on the duvet cover, I simply held up my new almond-shaped gel tips – nude until just above the quick, with a tortoiseshell tip and an arc of gold – as explanation.

While these nails felt the best of any "falsies" I'd ever worn, light and natural, they were still precarious. They elicited oohs and ahhs from my colleagues, but consternation when it took me about 15 minutes longer than usual to rewrite the scenes for the day. Meanwhile, after three days of telling myself I would remember how to text with them on again (and three days of asking my husband to please do everything from pulling up my Spanx to telling my parents not to worry that I hadn't responded to the family group chat), I took to leaving voice notes instead, all of which started: "Sorry, but I have fake nails at the moment."

It wasn't that I'd been good at handling the nails before and had now somehow forgotten, but rather that I'd enjoyed my period of the nail as a distraction from a strike that lasted months longer than we'd hoped, as concern for colleagues and below-the-line workers mounted and free time turned to free-floating anxiety. The nails worked for carrying picket signs, reading books I'd kept in a pile by the bed all year, even painting murals on my walls (all the hobbies I adopted in place of my beloved day job). On those lazy days, I could take my routine slow, devising cunning tricks for doling out pet food from vacuum-sealed packages, washing dishes like I was more breakable than the plates (nothing like a broken nail to remind you of our essential human fallibility). But by the end of a week with Michelle's mob-wife look, I had to admit – sadly, because I felt like a pop star and criminal mastermind all at the same time – that it was clean-girl time.

Hours before I was due to attend a film premiere, a lovely woman named Tracy (who was as impressed by Michelle's work as everyone, and felt it was almost a sacrilege taking a literal jackhammer to the nails) cut me back down to size, presenting me with so many impossible-to-distinguish nudes before applying O.P.I Ballet Slipper. I felt my shoulders slump lower and my conviction that I could rob a bank without consequence disappear.

Luckily my sister-stylist (new concept, look it up) Saam was there to talk sense back into me – my looks for the evening included a Simone Rocha tulle cocktail dress bedecked in delicate blue bows, whose matching gloves would have been immediately shredded by my talons. Next was an Issey Miyake Grecian-draped gown in sheer silver – and if there's a fashion ambassador for the modern clean girl (which, we should note, isn't just a term for girls, or people who shower a lot; anyone can be a clean girl with the right highlighter and Hailey Bieber-approved moisturiser), it

would be Issey. I was reminded of my first Met Gala, when Hamish Bowles – a man I would trust in any style emergency – encouraged me to wipe off my nail art: "Not for right here, not for right now," he smiled. Now I felt, with my child-length nails but adult sophistication, sexy in a more sly way. Plus, I was able to pull up my own underpants. Now that's a win-win.

So, was there a victor in the experiment? Who had triumphed in the face-off between sleek practicality and sensual excess? The short nail may be winning on runways at the moment, but Michelle told me that her clients who are "long-nail people will always be long-nail people". It's not a trend for them, but a way of life. It would be easy to say that the devotees must have pampered lives, not working with their hands, but how many times have we seen someone dole out cash at a register or corral their kids with a nail as long as some pinkies themselves? The nail becomes a nexus of power for them, just as the absence of a feminine nail served the same purpose for the women I knew growing up. And is it wrong to say that I may not belong to one sect or the other but am, instead, whatever the nail equivalent of bi(coastal) is? I love each expression precisely because of how different it can make me feel, taking me from a beacon of old-school femininity (with a twist) to something more practical but equally delicate. If the short nail is Audrey Hepburn, the long one is Sophia Loren. In modern terms, let's say my Natalie Portman sun is facing off against my powerful Cardi B rising. And don't we all contain multitudes?

What I lost in efficiency, I made up for in the feeling of slinky glamour that my newly extended fingers gave me



NATURAL WONDER

Singer-songwriter Kita Alexander gets her glow on with Estée Lauder's new Futurist SkinTint Serum, delivering instant radiance and long-term skincare benefits.

WORKING HARD

Most make-up performs a simple function, but Estée Lauder is a brand with its heart set on innovation. Its newest launch – Futurist SkinTint Serum with Botanical Oil Infusion SPF 20 – carries on this legacy of performance, as make-up that not only leaves skin looking fresh and flawless but improves it, too.

Estée Lauder is an authority in science-powered products that care for your skin. After all, it's the brains behind best-selling face serum Advanced Night Repair, as well as Double

Wear Stay-in-Place Makeup SPF 10, an oil-free foundation that lasts all day, battles humidity and still looks natural.

Innovative, hardworking make-up is exactly what a performer like Kita Alexander needs, whether she's on stage or about town. Alexander, who released her debut album *Young in Love* in March, is the first face of the skin tint. A disrupter herself, she has plenty in common with a groundbreaking formula. The singer-songwriter is an advocate for natural beauty, and the perfect fit for a serum dedicated to enhancing skin.



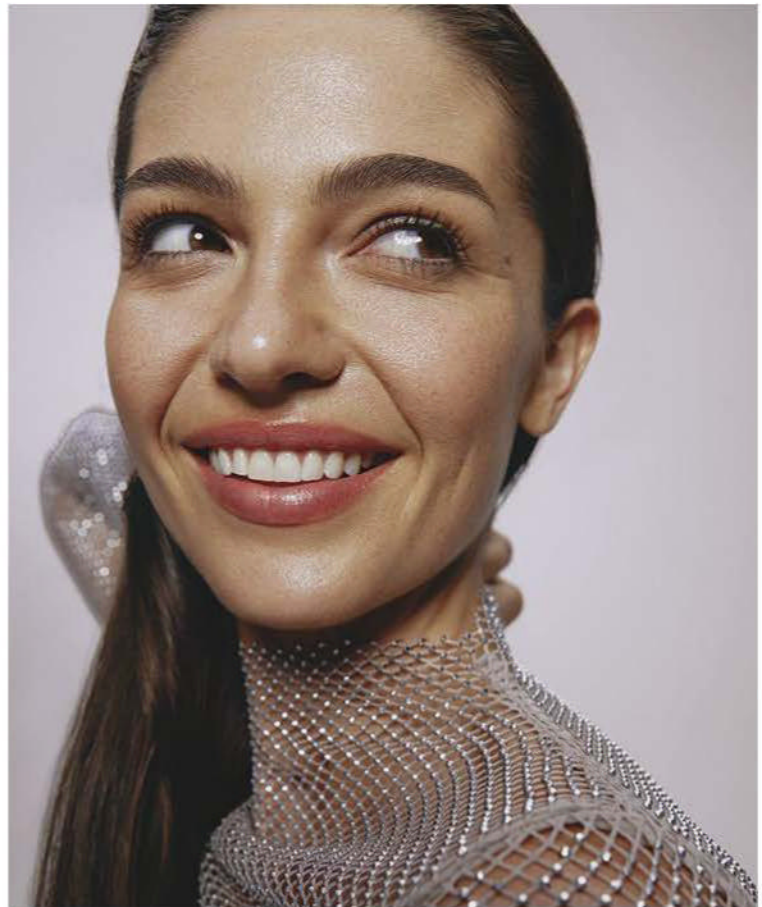
Every drop of Estée Lauder's new SkinTint is enriched with nutrients.

RESULTS THAT LAST

With an impressive range of 29 shades, the silky Futurist SkinTint Serum not only provides a radiant, natural finish but includes skincare ingredients such as meadowfoam seed, calendula and rosehip oils. Blended with soft clay cocoons that surround the oils, the result is a covetable foundation that's comfortable, lightweight, glowy and non-greasy.

Estée Lauder's Futurist SkinTint Serum works overtime, doubling as skincare to nurture the face 24/7. Like the brand's much-loved Double Wear Makeup, it's sweat and humidity resistant. With a staying power of eight hours, it's non-creasing, non-streaking and non-poring, meaning it won't sit in pores or fine lines. This is a sheer, skintone perfecter infused with SPF 20 broad spectrum protection that looks after you but doesn't compromise on results. That extends from the short-term to the long-term. After just one week of using the Futurist SkinTint Serum, as Estée Lauder promises, your skin will appear smooth, hydrated and even-toned.

A make-up product that cares for your skin even hours after application? You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who wouldn't say yes.



ESTÉE LAUDER

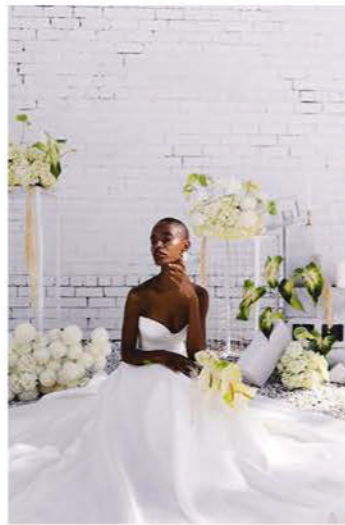
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For keeps

Designed to be cherished forevermore, a treasure-trove of new fragrances distils old-world charm and the finest ingredients into every spritz.

ART DIRECTION GEORGA HILLIARD PHOTOGRAPH LAUREN BAMFORD



Clockwise from top left: LANCÔME Idôle Now L'Eau de Parfum Florale, 50ml for \$177; DIOR New Look EDP, 125ml for \$470; COACH Love EDP, 90ml for \$178; GUERLAIN Aqua Allegoria Forte Florabloom EDP, 125ml for \$309; GUERLAIN Néroli Plein Sud EDP, 100ml for \$565; GUCCI The Alchemist's Garden A Gloaming Night EDP, 100ml for \$578; D.S. & DURGA Deep Dark Vanilla EDP, 50ml for \$360; CHANEL Comète Les Exclusifs de Chanel EDP, 200ml for \$630; CHLOÉ Atelier Des Fleurs Magnolia Alba EDP, 50ml for \$207; RABANNE Olympéa EDP, 80ml for \$210; HERMÈS Hermessence Oud Alezan EDP, 100ml for \$482; JEAN PAUL GAULTIER La Belle Paradise Garden EDP, 100ml for \$260.

WORDS: REMY RIPPON
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Love on the brain

New tech is changing romance, and it's impacting not just our hearts, but our heads. Ahead of appearing at *Vogue Codes Summit*, neuroscientist Dr Sarah McKay meets Madelyn Keith to discuss how modern love is altering our brains.



PHOTOGRAPH CHO GI-SEOK

Since the dawn of time, or at least since the golden era of the 1990s rom-com, humans have tried to predict how love will look in the future. Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail* painted the innocent early days of cyberdating; the 2013 film *Her* saw a lonely writer fall deeply for his virtual assistant; and in 2017, speculative design studio Object Solutions imagined a world in which we'll all wear brainwave monitoring headsets and find our perfect partner based on complementary neural sparks.

The first two narratives have since come to life to varying degrees, and the third isn't as outlandish as it might initially sound. Because while love has long been the domain of the heart – beating, fluttering and pulsing from the chest – our brain is its real regulator. Touted as the most complex object in the known universe, it contains 86 billion neurons and can store the equivalent of 2.5 million gigabytes of data, or 4.7 billion books. When we feel affection and infatuation, the ventral area activates and surges with dopamine; it's why the universal love lexicon is made up of phrases like 'chemistry', 'losing your head' and 'on the same wavelength'.

"When two people fall in love, we see that their biology and brainwaves start to synchronise," explains Dr Sarah McKay, neuroscientist and author, who will appear in a panel at this year's *Vogue Codes Summit* about the impact of tech and the changing dating landscape on our brains. "This could represent that spark you feel when you randomly meet someone and just click; you're in sync."

But today the brain has to process more than biology when navigating romance and relationships. With every new medium, the human mind adapts, recruiting more neurons to the task at hand. When we began to read 5000-10,000 years ago, for example, our visual cortex dedicated itself to deciphering text, but lost some of its visual acuity to read nature. Today in a torrent of rapidly evolving tech – where apps dominate the dating scene (an estimated 49 per cent of Australians aged 18-49 currently use them) and chatbots can spit out semi-coherent Hinge responses – it's a brave new world for our brains.

"Swiping on a dating app looks similar to online shopping, or even gambling, in the brain," says Dr McKay. "There's excitement to begin with, but it's far easier to become dependent or addicted to something when the number of times you get positive reinforcement is completely random. If every person you swiped right on did the same, these apps wouldn't be as addictive. But it's unpredictable, so you keep going back for more."

Endless, mindless swiping could also encourage binary thinking – a potential match is either a right or a left, a yes or a no. In nullifying the 'maybe', and eliminating any grey area, are we training our brains to view the broader world in absolutes? Then there's the fact that online dating means opening yourself up to a string of micro-rejections, coupled with decision fatigue and cognitive overload. "Once upon a time your world was limited to what you could see with your eyes out to the horizon, but suddenly the whole world is streaming 10 or 20 centimetres from your face," points out Dr McKay. "The brain and the body learned over millennia to react to something depending on how visually close it is, so now we're trying to respond to everything on our screens."

Yet the power and initial purpose of dating apps – idealistically thinking, at least – was to help us forge connections, a basic human longing. Two lonely hearts on opposite ends of the earth might bond over a shared love of K-dramas or a particular brand of hot sauce, and a shy or marginalised individual can find their tribe online.

A new field of research is exploring how people in stable, loving relationships interact online versus face-to-face based on brain synchrony (most of the studies thus far have been carried out on parents and teenage children rather than romantic partners). "Findings show that their brain connections are really strong and synchronised in-person, but when the same conversation is taken to Zoom, almost all synchrony is lost," says Dr McKay. "If you think about what's happening on any kind of FaceTime, you're either looking at someone's image on the screen or you're looking at the camera – you can't both look each other in the eye at the same time. Immediately you've removed any kind of true visual interaction with the other person. You can't touch or smell each other; it's impossible to communicate social chemosignals [pheromones] digitally. You've nearly removed all emotional mandates. The only sense you're left with is hearing, which is one source of connection that's still pretty strong."

According to Dr McKay, while digital interaction will never replace the real thing, it's most beneficial to those in established relationships. It's why virtual reality date nights for long-distance lovers are in development (the social network vTime XR already offers this tech), and intimacy-fostering online platforms such as Pillow Talk use AI chatbots to help couples have difficult and meaningful conversations. Down the track, artificial empathy could be employed to help us read and understand our partners better – by analysing their expressions, tone and physiological signals – to facilitate better communication and even predict challenges in a relationship.

In a world of hyper-distraction, is turning to tech to enhance our relationships counter-productive, though? Our brains might be malleable and evolving, but they're not neurologically wired for the high-tech realities of modern love. Maybe the true potential of technology is to bridge the divide between the actual and the virtual. Imagine if a dating app could do the groundwork and find you a pool of 100 potential matches, and then a virtual assistant swooped in and got them all in one room. You'd put down your device, enter a party buzzing with strangers and physically scan for that elusive spark – synchronised brainwaves and all.

"I met my husband at a college party over a bottle of gin," recalls Dr McKay. "We were making eye contact then looking away. We didn't fall in love immediately, but we spoke and there was instant attraction. We started drinking from the same bottle, which is a little bit dodgy, but it was like we were sharing all of our biology within an hour of meeting. If we'd been online, we wouldn't have been able to share those basic biological signals to gauge one another."

Shared biology. One day, with any luck, there'll be an app for that.

Vogue Codes Summit returns to Sydney's Carriageworks on June 22 with the theme Technotopia: Design the World of Tomorrow. For tickets, go to vogue.com.au/vogue-codes.

"Swiping on a dating app looks similar to online shopping, or even gambling, in the brain"



Above: 2024 La Prairie Art Award Marikit Santiago with her husband Shawn Pearl and their three children, from left, Sari, Santi Mateo and Maella.



Above left: La Prairie 'Art of Perfection' hand massage stations.
Above right, from left: Candice Fernandez, Rosi Fernandez and Belinda Besant, all from La Prairie Group Australia.



Above: Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran.
Left: Artist Angela Tiatia.



Jordan Gogos (left) and Akira Isogawa.



Nina Treffkorn (left) and Alix Higgins.



Beatrice Gralton, senior curator, contemporary Australian art, AGNSW.

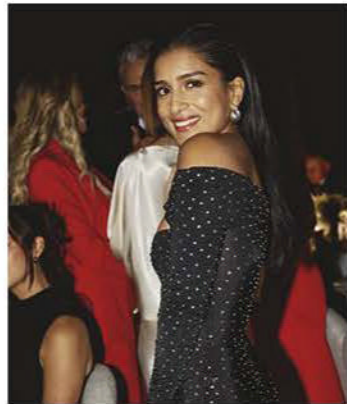
Strokes of genius

In the sunlit North Wing of the Art Gallery of New South Wales's (AGNSW) new contemporary art building, *Vogue* Australia and La Prairie hosted lunch in celebration of this year's La Prairie Art Award winner, Filipino-Australian artist Marikit Santiago. Now in its third year, the accolade has been a beacon for emerging visual artists, including past winners Atong Atem and Thea Anamara Perkins, and this year recognises Santiago, a three-time Archibald finalist. Along with industry recognition, the prize consists of an acquisition, an international residency

and the privilege of attending Art Basel International Art Fair 2024 in June as a guest of La Prairie. Those in attendance surveyed a diptych by Santiago (the acquisition which now hangs in the AGNSW) before enjoying a sumptuous lunch during which *Vogue* Australia's Edwina McCann engaged in lively dialogue with Santiago and AGNSW's senior curator Beatrice Gralton exploring the artist's influences, techniques and integration of motherhood into her process. To end the day, La Prairie offered hand massages at its 'Art of Perfection' stations.



Above left: Manahou Mackay (left) and Sarah Ellen. Above right: Shanina Shaik. Below: Lewis Hamilton (left) on stage with teammate George Russell.



Above, from left: Pallavi Sharda; Jessica Hart and James Kirkham. Below, from left: Mel Jarnson; Mercedes-Benz Australia's Jerry Stamoulis and Vogue editor-in-chief Christine Centenera.



Hannah Hollis.

Olivia DeJonge.





Speed date

What do you get when you combine an iconic race, fast cars and a fashion magazine? A well-dressed party, of course. Mercedes-Benz Australia and *Vogue* Australia joined forces in Melbourne to celebrate the Formula One (F1) race weekend in March. Hosting a soirée inside the prestigious AMG Lounge at the Albert Park circuit, Mercedes-Benz Australia and *Vogue* invited some of Australia's most stylish faces, among them Olivia DeJonge, Shanina Shaik and Thelma Plum, for an evening of glamour and track talk. Inside the lounge,

guests were treated to a conversation on racing and fashion between seven-time F1 world champion Lewis Hamilton and his Mercedes F1 teammate George Russell, hosted by Fox Sports host Hannah Hollis, as well as a chat between *Vogue* Australia's editor-in-chief Christine Centenera and editorial director Edwina McCann. Guests embraced the 'trackside glamour' dress code with high-octane enthusiasm, providing a show of designer looks, embellished gowns, splashes of metallic and, for the men, sharp suiting. Win-win.

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Taurus

21 April-21 May

A career transformation could slow down now with Pluto in reverse to give you a chance to check your progress. Your personal annual reset occurs now, too, via a New Moon in your sign, with communicator Mercury also revitalising your capacity to connect. As your ruler Venus joins lucky Jupiter, the potential to boost your earning, saving and spending prowess is high.

STYLE ICON: Adele

Leo

23 July-23 August

A relationship that was going somewhere deep and different could stop in its tracks now with Pluto in reverse. Appraise the situation and replot your course. Your career gets a cosmic boost from a New Moon and ideas planet Mercury, and your luck is in with friends and ambitions as loving Venus, joyful Jupiter and your ruler the Sun connect in an empowering group hug.

STYLE ICON: Dua Lipa

Scorpio

24 October-22 November

Deep-seated home issues may need to go on temporary hold or be revised, as your co-ruler Pluto turns retrograde. With a New Moon and Mercury in your relationship zone, discussions could kickstart a fresh take on partnerships, and as Venus and Jupiter align to influence commitments, the potential to attract major money luck or some seriously sensual bonding is strong.

STYLE ICON: Raye

Aquarius

21 January-18 February

A personal transformation is ongoing with Pluto in your sign, with a retrograde time-out now to gauge how it's going. Your career gets a New Moon push, along with Mercury adding new ideas and ways of working. The big news is Venus and Jupiter bringing extra luck and love to major plans linked to romance and creativity. Launch them now, to help them bloom and grow.

STYLE ICON: Julia Garner

Gemini

22 May-21 June

With Venus in your sign this month, you may find that what or who you're looking for is likely to be looking for you – and will find you. A New Moon and your ruler Mercury sow the seeds for innovative ideas, and you could commit to or quit a close relationship under the Full Moon's beams. Lucky Jupiter enters your sign now to bring fulfilment or freedom on your terms.

STYLE ICON: Natalie Portman

Virgo

24 August-22 September

With Pluto turning retrograde, any intensity around commitments and intimacy slows down now. Check in with yourself and reset situations to make you more comfortable. Your adventurous spirit awakes as a New Moon and Mercury open you up to new options, and your career could expand with Jupiter and Venus bringing the potential for more luck, money and adoration at work.

STYLE ICON: Zendaya

Sagittarius

23 November-21 December

While Pluto flips into retrograde now, your new and more radical approach to communication may need a rethink. A Full Moon in your sign suggests you've been overdoing things, so let others do the heavy lifting. Venus and your ruler Jupiter highlight partnerships so that extreme love, luck and joy – or to be free from the desire for any of these – could be yours now.

STYLE ICON: Gemma Chan

Pisces

19 February-20 March

Your mindset is changing, and this month Pluto turns retrograde to help you adjust to this new way of thinking. A New Moon targets the way you learn, travel and communicate, with Mercury adding sense and substance to your often dreamy approach. Home life gets gorgeous now, with Venus and Jupiter bringing charm, love, luck, adventure and big ideas linked to you.

STYLE ICON: Tuppence Middleton

Cancer

22 June-22 July

The cosmos is giving you a chance to assess and fine-tune your progress with a commitment now, while Pluto is retrograde. A New Moon brings a fresh start with your go-to crew and your hopes and dreams, so harness Mercury power to talk things through. Venus puts love on your mind and Jupiter influences ideas and emotions to help you think big and stay super optimistic.

STYLE ICON: Hyeon Jung

Libra

23 September-23 October

The fun needn't stop just because Pluto's retrograde in your romance and creativity zone, so make adjustments and move on. A New Moon urges you to take commitments more seriously and Mercury will help you make that happen. As Jupiter and your ruler Venus move into your zone of media, travel and studying, one or more of these areas could be super lucky for you now.

STYLE ICON: Halle Bailey

Capricorn

22 December-20 January

A revamp of your values or money could hit pause now as transformational planet Pluto turns retrograde, so use this time to fine-tune your progress. A New Moon says "bring it on!" to fun, romance and creativity, with Mercury offering indulgent options. As a Full Moon clears away past hurts, Venus and Jupiter add luck and joy to health and to ways you can help others.

STYLE ICON: Odessa Young

Aries

21 March-20 April

It's a big month for you. Even though ambitions and friendships could falter a tad with Pluto newly retrograde, a New Moon enhances your money mojo, with Mercury adding bright ideas for increasing your funds. Communication gets a massive boost from "romance and finance" planet Venus plus Jupiter, so that your luck and love grow with how you connect as well as who with.

STYLE ICON: Rooney Mara

Trunk show

Make a moment out of travel with Louis Vuitton's Side Trunk MM replete with souvenir stickers and structured frame, borrowed from its famed heritage luggage. At the ready to be whisked away on an adventure.



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