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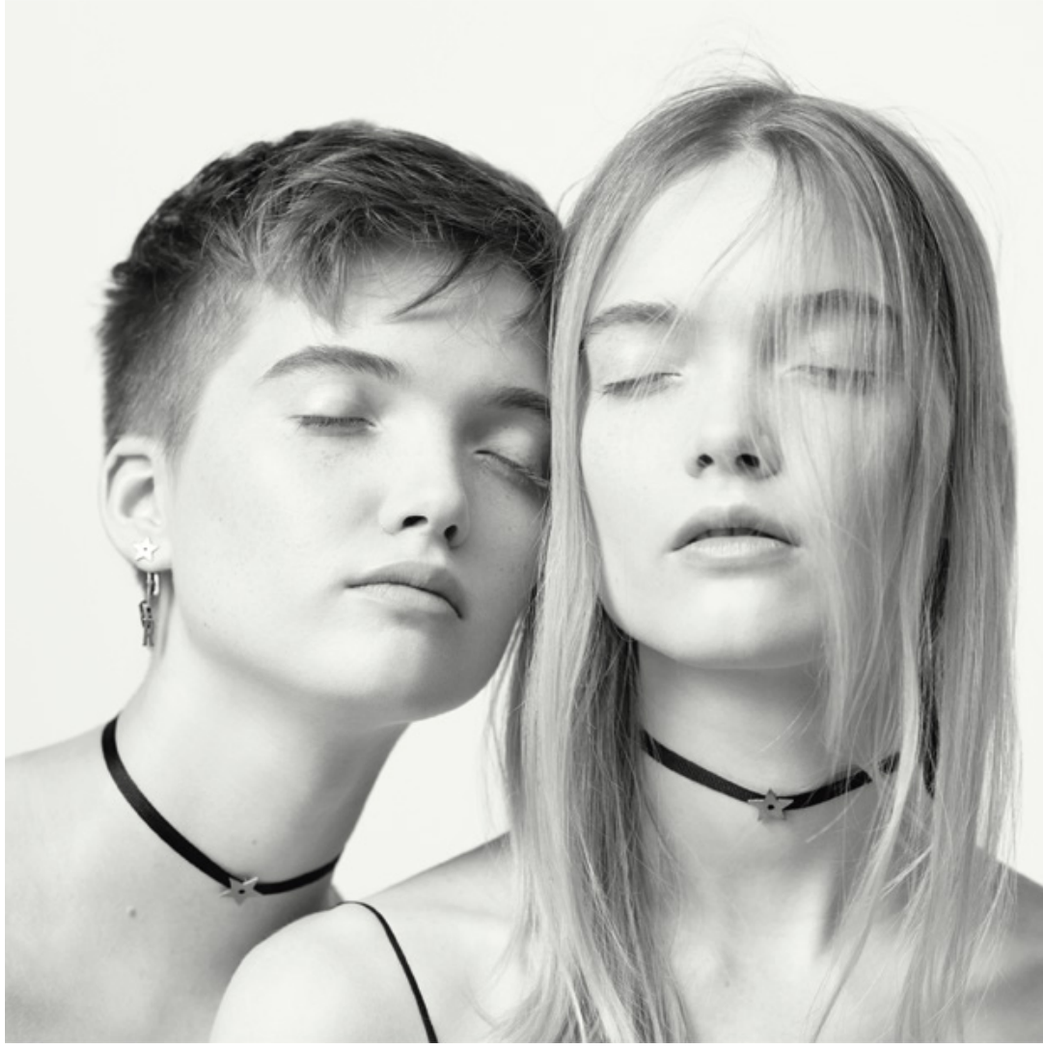

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The TUXEDO, *2016*
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NOVEMBER 24-26 2016
BY ALASDAIR McLELLAN

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Andy Warhol: Ambulance Disaster, 1963-64 © The Andy Warhol Foundation / ARS
Calvin Klein: Classic Denim Jeans (Archival Originals, 1980) and Classic Denim Jeans (Archival Originals, 1982)
Photographed at The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh


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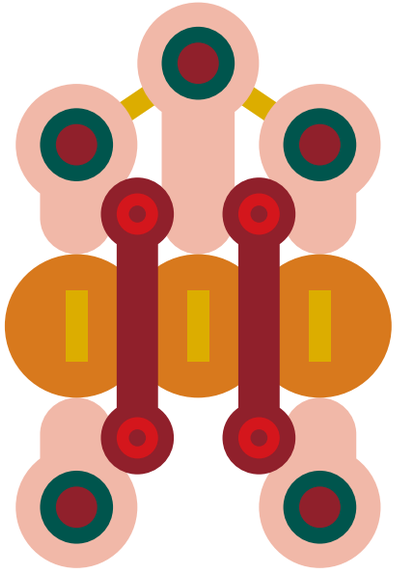

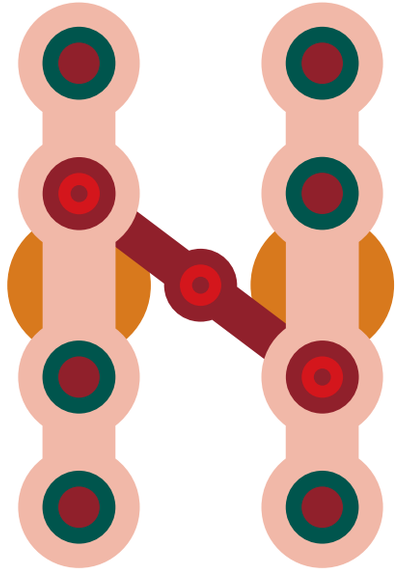

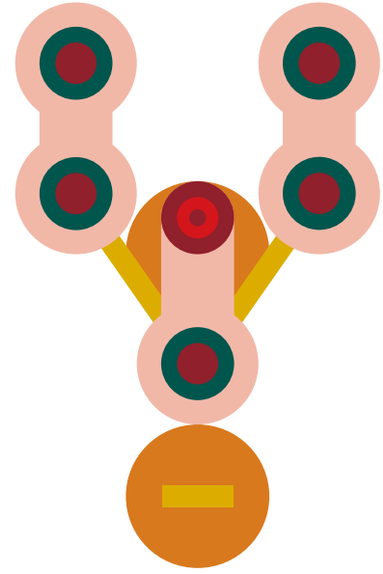

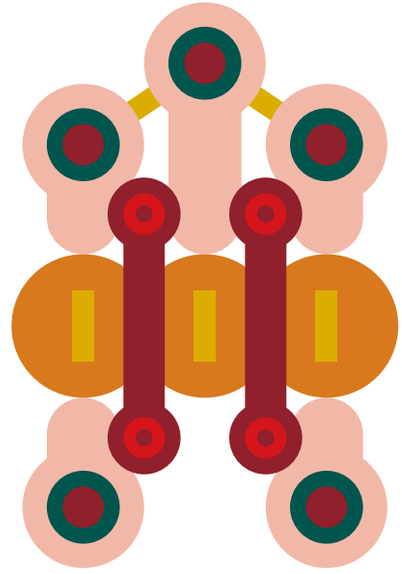

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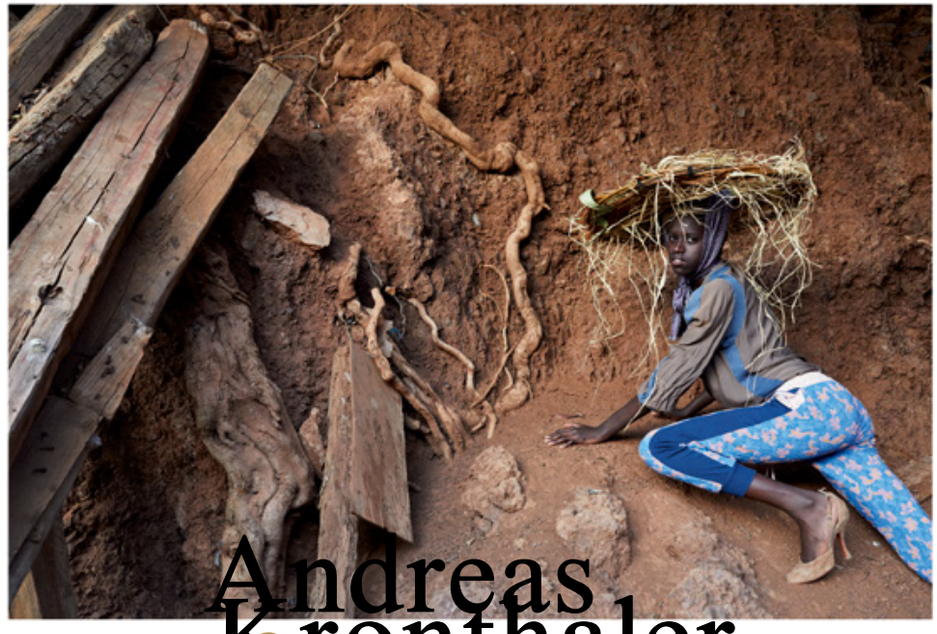

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Molly Goddard

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Ruba Abu-Nimah is a creative director and has worked for beauty brands in Paris and New York. Her favourite line in a movie is Prince Feisal in David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*: 'No Arab loves the desert. We love water and green trees, there is nothing in the desert. No man needs nothing.'

Jon Caramanica is the *New York Times*' pop-music critic and writes the 'Critical Shopper' column. His favourite movie quote is Nino Brown in *New Jack City* (1991): 'Sit your five-dollar ass down, before I make change.'

Talia Chetrit is a fine-art photographer in New York. 'In *Charade*, Peter asks Regina if they know each other. Regina replies they don't, and unless someone in her life dies, there's simply no room for anyone else.'

Jean-Philippe Delhomme is a Paris-based fashion illustrator, painter and writer. 'My favourite line comes from French film, *Rois et reine* (2004) when Mathieu Amalric says to Catherine Deneuve, "Vous, les femmes, allez de bulles en bulles".'

Dennis Freedman is a creative director in New York. Robert De Niro's 'You talking to me?' from Martin Scorsese's 1976 *Taxi Driver* is his favourite line.

Alexander Fury is chief fashion correspondent of *T, the New York Times Style Magazine*. His favourite line comes from *Unzipped* and designer Isaac Mizrahi on the cons of faux-fur trousers: 'It's about women not wanting to look like cows, I guess.'

Shane Gabier and Christopher Peters created ready-to-wear label, Creatures of The Wind in 2008. Their favourite line is from Derek Jarman's *Jubilee*: 'Our school motto was *Faites vos désirs réalité* – make your desires reality; I, myself, prefer the song "Don't Dream It, Be It".'

Michel Gaubert is a French sound director. After 'much deliberation', he chose Elizabeth Berkley as Nomi Malone in *Showgirls* (1995) as his favourite quote. Producer: 'That's a nice dress.' Malone: 'Thanks. I bought it at Ver-sayce.'

Robin Givhan is a staff writer and fashion correspondent at the *Washington Post*. 'I like Meryl Streep's speech about cerulean blue from *The Devil Wears Prada*. It sums up fashion's relationship to the average customer in one deliciously understated but pointed paragraph.'

Ethan James Green is a New York-based photographer. His favourite quote comes from *I Am Sam*: 'You've grown … your ears are bigger, and your eyes are older.'

Hung Huang works as a publisher and journalist in Beijing. Her favourite line is from classic 1965 Chinese film, *Di dao zhan* (*Tunnel Warfare*): 'Every bullet counts.'

Nina Khosla studied product design at Stanford University, before launching an accessories line. 'In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Will Turner says, "This is either madness, or brilliance." Jack Sparrow replies, "It's remarkable how often those two traits coincide".'

Brigitte Lacombe is a French photographer and documentary filmmaker, based in New York. 'My favourite line is "We'll always have Paris" from *Casablanca* (1942). It is a comfort to me – particularly now, in these Trumpian times.'

Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez are the founders of Proenza Schouler. Jack's favourite line is from Woody Allen's *Interiors*: 'You'll live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to.' Lazaro's is from *My Own Private Idaho*: 'Some people take your heart, others take your shoes, and still others take you home.'

Lily McMenamy is a model and actress. Her favourite line is Audrey Hepburn in *Love in the Afternoon*: 'It is that Parisian thing you got, that certain *quelque chose*, as they say on the Left Bank, that piquant soupçon of aperitif.'

Historian and novelist Andrew Pearmain is writing a biography of Antonio Gramsci. His favourite dialogue is paraphrased from 1972 musical *Cabaret*. 'Fuck Max,' says Brian. 'I do,' Sally responds. To which Brian retorts, 'Well, as matter of fact, so do I!'

Max Pearmain is a stylist and contributing editor to *Arena HOMME+*. 'I knew these people, these two people,' said by Harry Dean Stanton in *Paris, Texas* (1984), is his favourite film quote.

Entrepreneur, art collector and photographer Jean Pigozzi's favourite line is from *Gone with the Wind* (1939), when Rhett Butler says: 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.'

Matt Holmes is a stylist and photographer in New York. He loves Bob Harris's line in *Lost in Translation*: 'I'm trying to organize a prison break. I'm looking for, like, an accomplice. We have to first get out of this bar, then the hotel, then the city, and then the country. Are you in or you out?'

Loïc Prigent is a writer and documentary filmmaker from Paris. 'I'm saying goodbye,' says Kirsten Dunst in Sofia Coppola's 2006 *Marie Antoinette*; 'it's the best intro to a decapitation, ever,' says Loïc.

Frederic Sanchez is a sound artist and music producer based in Paris. His favourite dialogue is from Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris* (1963). Producer: 'I like the gods. I like them very much. I know exactly how they feel.' Fritz Lang: 'Jerry, don't forget: the gods have not created man. Man has created gods.'

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Photographed by Nigel Shafran
Patty, friend since 2008

Sies Marjan

Girlfriends Project 2016, part 2
October 27th, New York

What happens when nothing goes to plan? When you're sat in a hotel room in Vancouver, delirious with jet lag, and waiting for Rihanna to show up. When the rain outside is torrential and Rihanna's doctor has just ordered her to stay in bed – 2,800 miles away – and the weeks of planning are unravelling in front of your eyes?

But who says the meticulous execution of a premeditated idea is the most noble of creative endeavours? Isn't true creativity the art of embracing the unexpected; transforming scuppered plans into something of value and beauty? Because what's life if it isn't unexpected? Everything else is just painting-by-numbers.

Certainly, Juergen Teller's accompanying portfolio, *Waiting for Rihanna*, is a lively case study in how to capture the uncertainties of life. And besides, who needs the presence of celebrity when you can dream up a Brazilian supermodel, a pair of Canadian hula-hoop enthusiasts, and a 60,000-square-foot medical-cannabis facility?

Juergen Teller, room 1411, Shangri-La Hotel, Vancouver, Sunday March 12, 2017.

The women of Proenza Schouler

How the two men behind the brand owe it all to women.

By Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez
Photographs by Ethan James Green
Styling by Matt Holmes

Previous pages: left, Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA;
right, Cleo Cwiek, Fall 2017, New York, NY
Above: Grace Coddington in Spring/Summer 2017

Natalie Westling in Spring/Summer 2017

Clam River, Sandisfield, MA

As the old proverb goes, 'Behind every good man is a great woman.' The idea that Proenza Schouler is simply the two of us – two guys, now in our mid-30s – calling the shots, couldn't be further from the truth. As our company has steadily grown and evolved over its 14 years of existence, one constant remains and it's that this company has been completely built and run by women. Of the nearly 200 people who make up our teams, 95 percent are women. They are the true engine and heartbeat of Proenza Schouler.

Growing up in the 1980s, one of us in Miami, the other in Tokyo (before ending up in Montclair, New Jersey), we had radically different experiences, but we shared one common thread, and it is possibly the catalyst that brought us together in the first place. Each of us felt deeply as if we never quite fitted in. Square pegs in round holes. We both felt much more comfortable spending time with our sisters and mothers in the salon or in the kitchen making things, than hanging out with our dads and brothers out on a sports field somewhere.

The situation was put into sharp relief during our early school days – a time when the world was not as open as it is today – where being an outsider presented its unique challenges. The heat we each felt from those who didn't understand us was only dampened down by turning further towards the world we knew, the world in which we felt protected and accepted: the world of women, a world that to this day brings us the greatest joy and is the reason why we do what we do.

'We both felt more comfortable spending time with our sisters and mothers, than hanging out with our dads and brothers on a sports field somewhere.'

Lazaro Hernandez: My mother used to have a beauty salon in Miami when I was growing up. After school, when many of my friends were getting ready to practice for whatever sports team they were on, my mother would pick me up from school and take me back to her salon where she had to work until the early evening getting her ladies ready for whatever big night was ahead of them. Hair, makeup and fashion were all topics of constant conversation. I always had one eye on whatever boring book I had to read for school and the other fixed on these incredible creatures, one more beautiful and exotic than the next. I would wait patiently for one of them to call me over to help with a busted zipper or to unpack a dress they had brought with them. The intimacy of the collaboration, the inherent vulnerability present in the process, and the eventual confidence and strength when it all came together, were all things that definitely resonated with me. My mother suspected how into it all I was and I cannot thank her enough for letting me be a part of it, and for not forcing me to hang out with the other boys doing the things I'm sure she felt pressure from my dad to make me do. Her love and acceptance of me trumped all the social pressures I'm certain she endured. True love.

Jack McCollough: I grew up in a house of five kids with a dad who at the time, at least –it was the 1980s in New York – seemed to have a big and important job on Wall Street. We've all seen that movie before. He had endless events in the city every week and my mom was always invited to go along with him. She honestly had no interest in most of those people, but she did have a secret passion for the dressing-up bit. She was a stay-at-home mom during the day and dealing with the five of us was truly the harder of the two jobs. I used to love watching her get ready for her big nights out. Suspecting that I had a burgeoning interest in making things, and possibly in the craft of making clothes, she surprised me on my 12th birthday with my own sewing machine. It sounds so embarrassing to admit it now, but that was a sort of a turning point for me. I delved into learning the ins and outs of that machine and started to make things for myself at first and eventually, as a teenager, I had the confidence to start making things for friends. My mother was truly my first introduction to fashion and the catalyst to the road I'm currently on.

LH: As I got older I tried to conform to the norms around me and even got myself a girlfriend (a best friend really) as a way of fitting in. After high school, I enrolled in a big old traditional university studying medicine. I'm not sure what I was thinking. At first, and this I find telling, I wanted to be an obstetrician-gynaecologist (the thought of which makes my stomach curl today). It was, in retrospect, an attempt to be closer to the people that I felt most comfortable around: women. When the whole thing started to freak me out, I turned to plastic surgery as it somehow seemed easier, less invasive, and more in line with the things I was slowly becoming more interested in, namely, the world of aesthetics. It wasn't until I was faced with the reality of having to cut people open that I secretly applied to Parsons in New York; I'd heard it had the best fashion-design programme around. I applied without telling anyone and left my destiny up (continued p.100)

Lineisy Montero, Fall 2017, New York, NY

Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA

Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA

Julia Nobis in Spring/Summer 2017

Ashley Brokaw in Spring/Summer 2017

Holli Smith in Spring/Summer 2017

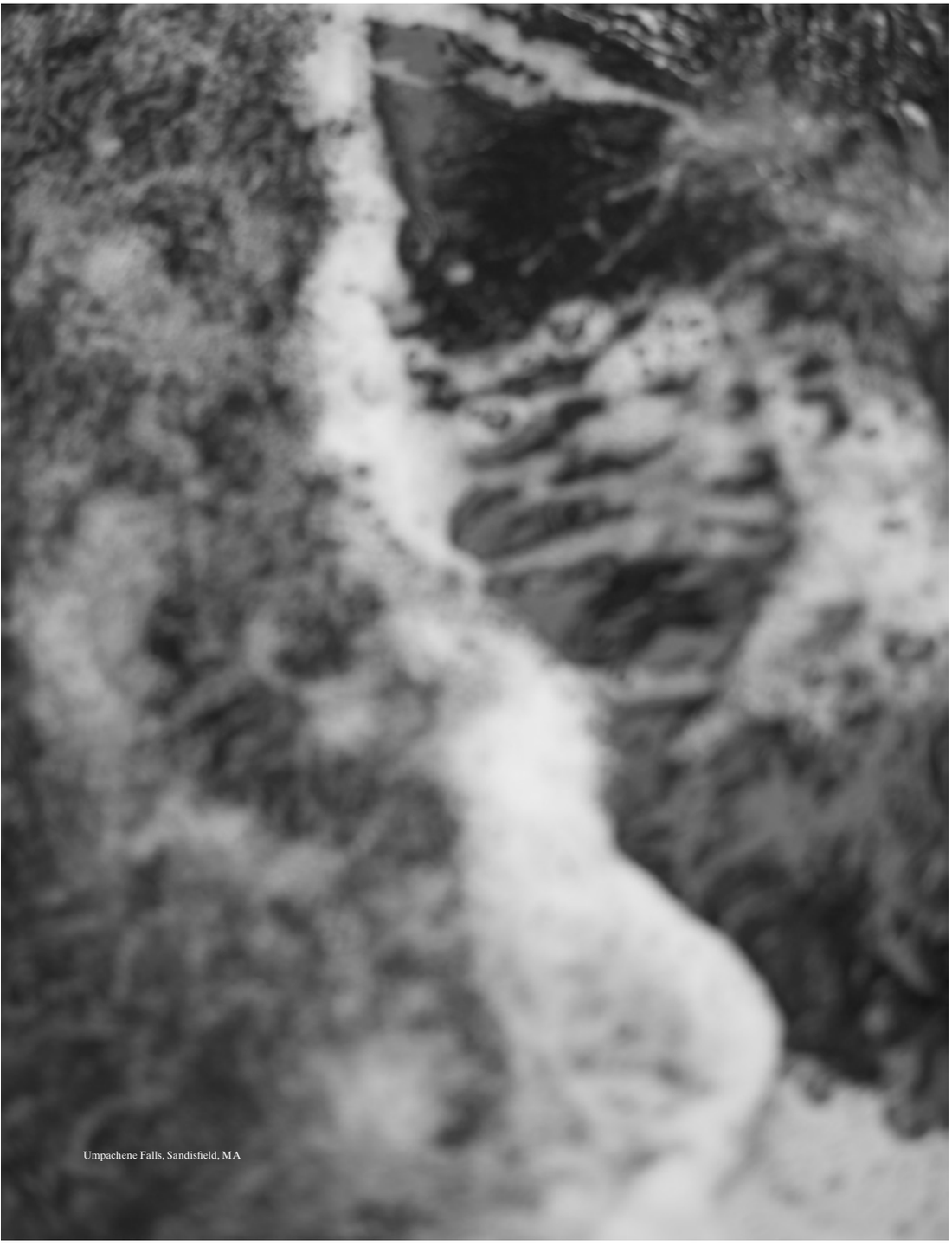
Old Reservoir, Sandisfield, MA

Fall 2017 (detail)

Work in progress, Spring/Summer 2017 collection

Camilla Nickerson in Spring/Summer 2017

Marcs Marcus in Spring/Summer 2017



Umpachene Falls, Sandisfield, MA

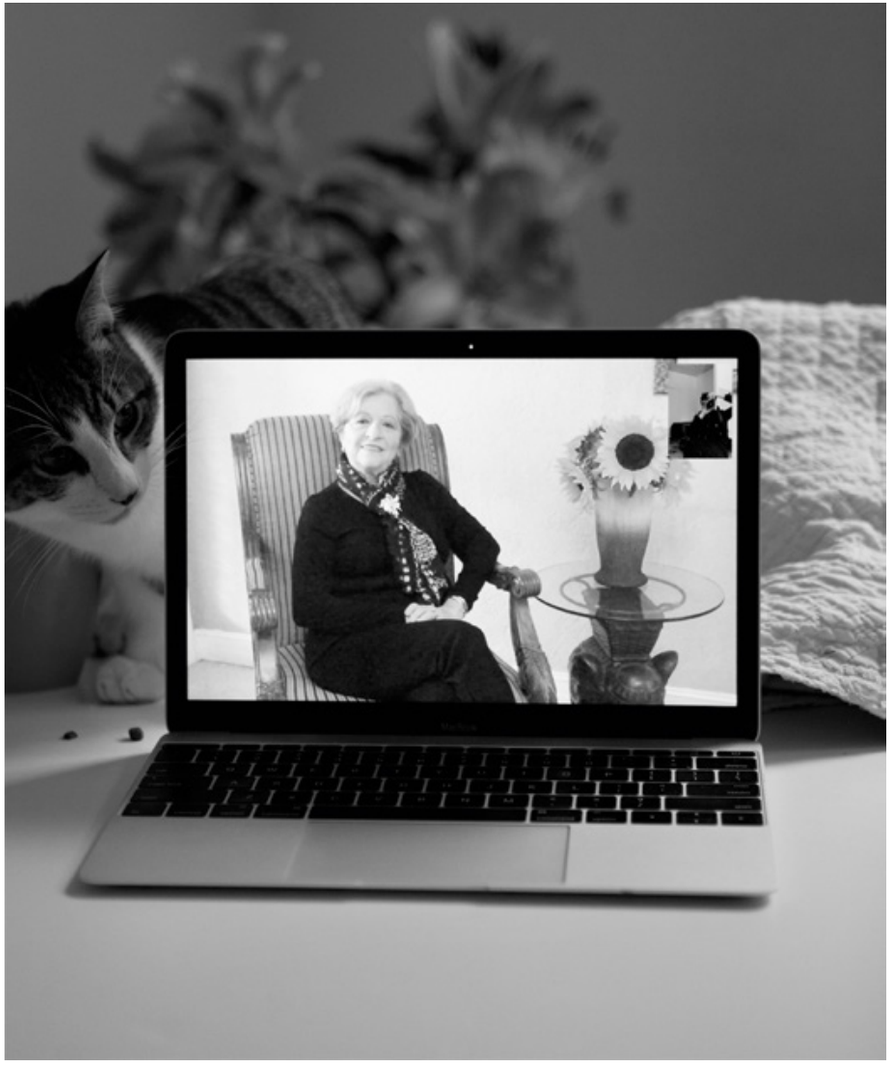
Selena Forrest in Spring/Summer 2017

Fall 2017 (detail)

Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA

Olympia Scarry in Spring/Summer 2017

Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez



Estela Hernandez-Proenza, Coral Gables, FL

Joan McCollough-Schouler, Great Wigsell, UK

Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA

Jen Brill in Spring/Summer 2017, with James Fabien

Fall 2017 runway (detail)

Selah Marley in Spring/Summer 2017

Work in progress, Spring/Summer 2017 collection

Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA

Cleo Cwiek, Fall 2017, New York

Snow Farm, Sandisfield, MA

(continued from p.71) to some higher power. If I got accepted, which was highly unlikely as I had never taken any art classes and had a laughable portfolio, I would ditch pre-med and move to New York to study fashion. If it didn't pan out, which I figured was more likely than not, I would stay in Miami and finish medical school. By some stroke of luck, I was accepted and that was that. I told my family what I was doing and moved to New York. A year later I met Jack and three years later we started Proenza Schouler.

JM: As my sisters grew up, the fashion game with my mom became their turf, which was fine by me, as I had, by that time, turned my attention to the arts. I was going to a pretty strait-laced high school in Montclair where sports were king and the classic jock stereotype was all too familiar. I started to act up and became difficult for my parents to deal with; in retrospect, I was simply rebelling against a world I just didn't belong in. Things came to a head when I was expelled from school for smoking weed with some friends. That really felt like the end of my life, but actually it ended up being the very thing that set me on the path I am still on today. My parents knew better than to force me into another one of those preppy schools and instead enrolled me at Walnut Hill, a boarding school in Massachusetts that specializes in the arts, and was away from everyone and everything I had known. It was incredible how I changed overnight. All of a sudden I was surrounded by people just like me – kids interested in the arts – in a place where being gay was sort of the norm. For the first time in a long time, I felt I was finally myself. After high school, I moved to San Francisco to study painting and glassblowing, but I missed New York and felt as though I was working in the wrong field, so I quickly transferred to Parsons and enrolled in the fashion-design department where I met Lazaro. The rest is history.

Proenza Schouler would not be what it is today without the many women along the way, many of whom are still part of our family 14 years in, women who pushed us along and helped us over every hurdle. Women like Grace, whose wisdom and guidance we have used as a beacon of light over the years. Women like Camilla, whose cool and understanding of the world fills us with inspiration every day. Women like Ashley who, acting as far more than casting director, helps us push the brand forward year after year and shape whatever abstract idea we might be tossing around. Women like Julia, Selena and Natalie who give life to the clothes we make and inspire us the end of every season. There are too many women to list here and there aren't enough pages in this magazine to spotlight all the women who have helped us get to where we are today. We have nothing but love and admiration for what they all have done and continue to do for us. The sensitive balancing act of juggling the demands of this business and motherhood is awe-inspiring. When we feel overwhelmed or run down by the demands of our own lives we look up to them – and their firm grip on their own lives fills us with strength and gives us the ability to push forward. These are our heroes, our mentors, our mothers, and our friends. The story of Proenza Schouler is one written chiefly by these beautiful, strong, brave and inspiring women.

Fall 2017 finale

Buster the Newfie, Sandisfield, MA

Snow Farm

By 2008, the city had become too much for us. Every day had become some kind of social commitment or obligation, and it had really started to wear us down. We were finding it difficult to focus on the creative side of things when day after day was being spent in meetings and later at night, at whatever party or event our friends were up to. We needed to escape New York, but we also needed to find a balance. So, unable to make a permanent break because of what we had built there, we did the next best thing: we bought Snow Farm, a dilapidated, early American colonial property in Sandisfield, Massachusetts. When we happened upon it, we made the commitment to bring it back to its original glory. We immediately built a working studio in the woods where we have since drawn every single collection over a three-week period a few months before every show. We go up there whenever possible, whenever the noise of the city becomes overwhelming, and when a bit of the outdoors is the thing we crave. It has become our sanctuary and our personal space away from it all.

Props: Julia Wagner. Hair: Shingo Shibata at the Wall Group, and Joey George at Streeters. Make-up: Kanako at Streeters.

Old Reservoir, Sandisfield, MA

Fashion, Silicon Valley style

Is the reality of tech killing the fantasy of fashion?
By Nina Khosla. Illustration by Jean-Philippe Delhomme.

My love for the Internet has been a big part of my life. I grew up in Silicon Valley, watching my dad invest in start-ups. I also grew up on the Internet. I bought my first domain name in 2000, where I hosted both my blog and various Photoshop experiments, and after attending Stanford University, where I studied product design, I founded a start-up that focused on online communities. I've spent the last few years immersing myself in bag design, getting ready to launch my own label.

Ten years ago, the question around Silicon Valley was how to create a more open world. There was a lot of talk about creating platforms that would let people speak their minds, changing the way we communicate. We did that with the inception of social media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Just last week, I was sitting at my computer, watching a YouTube vlogger recommend lipstick, saying the best one was actually available on Etsy – an online marketplace built on its sense of community. I Googled the Etsy store, finding that the only product reviews were on Internet forum Reddit. None of these platforms are vetted by PRs or business execs, and no one there needs to ask permission to share their views or sell products. There are no gatekeepers.

No one saw how these platforms would affect culture, however. Today, we see these sites and apps filled with 'influencers' and 'trolls', with the 'memeification' of cultural concepts, and the spread of fake news. It reminds me of a very basic fact: technology and culture are two sides of the same coin. Progress in one area deeply affects the other; they're two forces constantly engaging with each other, one able to pull the other off course. Tied to this interaction is fashion. Because like tech, it's an industry concerned with change. In tech, we're fascinated with innovation – what technological change is coming next? Fashion is not dissimilar in how it responds to cultural shifts.

Yet it increasingly seems that rather than leading culture, the fashion industry is simply responding to a changing landscape and developing in line with technology. "Normcore" was a trend called out and named by an online collective. Techy fabrics and "athleisure" didn't start in an *atelier*. If fashion wants to be seen as promulgating change, it needs to better understand and react to how people live now.

Looking at the fashion industry, it seems that the companies that understand this best are the ones thriving. Fast fashion, for example, seems built to succeed in a new cultural and technological landscape, reflecting a new reality in which consumers only want to wear something once, have a photo captured for Facebook, then move onto the next thing. Brands like Zara and H&M have transformed their manufacturing and supply chains in order to allow them to react swiftly to this behavioural shift.

It's not just your local Zara quickly adjusting. A new range of e-commerce companies like Everlane, Warby Parker, Cuyana and Outdoor Voices are catching up, and represent a new business model. If fast fashion is a reflection of the rise of the personal-style-blogging 'influencer', these companies reflect a back-to-basics trend that almost dares you to notice you've worn the same thing twice.

Hundreds of these small, niche brands have emerged in the last 5-10 years, serving passionate communities that believe in the message and values these brands present. These companies don't look to influencers or celebrities to be the face of their brand because they don't need them. They know their customers intimately, building online communities in which they really engage, and use knowledge of their customers to craft stories that represent not just a brand, but a cultural ideal. Without this connection to the realities of their customers' lives, the ideas these brands propose would lack depth. Big-name designers might be blazoning T-shirts with slogans declaring, 'We are all feminists', but shop owners on Etsy are creating pins and patches that reflect the attitudes of an authentic community.

Adopting a more holistic view of how people live and how clothes are a part of that is central to selling in the 21st century. Design can't just be about surface. We need to stop only thinking of models on a catwalk, and instead consider real people in real situations – how clothes are worn, and what their use means to customers. If we don't, the idea of fashion as an insider industry, relevant only to those inside it, is more and more likely to become a reality. The fashion industry may love fantasy and whimsy, but to begin changing the way people think at a deep, structural level, we have got to work harder to engage with reality, and understand how customers actually think.

Hip-hop don't fop

Why the Supreme-Louis Vuitton menswear collab is pure 1990s hip-hop. By Jon Caramanica. Illustration by Jean-Philippe Delhomme.

Being a hip-hop fan in the 1980s and early 1990s meant having a front-row seat to the most vital cultural transformation of our time. There was the music, of course, putting an end to the primacy of the guitar. And the politics, which gave antagonism and scepticism an appealing sheen. And then there was style, building an aesthetic from the ground up, long before street style was a well-curated series of poses and an object of mainstream obsession.

In an era before hip-hop mall-fashion lines, and later, hip-hop-enhanced runway collections, I just had to figure it out, cobbling together a look from pre-existing options: a boxy Carhartt jacket here, some tapered Girbaud jeans there, maybe a pair of not-too-broken-in Filas. Hip-hop honed my ear, my mind, my politics and my heart, but it also made me a sharp-eyed, detail-obsessed shopper.

When I became a music journalist and critic, I realized quickly that the job – done right – involved writing about more than just sound. Hip-hop proposed a whole worldview – cocky, oppositional, sometimes pugnacious and unerringly confident. It was impossible to detach the words and music from the presentation – an outfit choice could be just as potent a statement as a song – which meant that I was a style writer long before it was part of my actual job.

I came to the *New York Times* as a pop-music critic after years of writing for music magazines, but I'd always kept a longing eye on the paper's Critical Shopper column. I knew there was a story to tell about clothes that was parallel to the one I was telling about music, even if traditional fashion writers hadn't yet taken notice.

A couple of years later, in 2010, I got the opportunity to take over the column, and tried to make that point quickly: my first one was about Dave's, a workwear store, chosen in combination of sincere spirit and a desire to deflate the slick blue-collar fetishism that was dominating the menswear conversation at the time. Plus, by that point I'd been wearing Carhartt for two decades – the idea that menswear was anointing high-fashion workwear, while ignoring the roots seemed ludicrous and pious.

Being an outsider was helpful; I didn't hold as holy the prevailing aesthetic narratives or the market forces that buoyed them. The column – intended to be a retail survey – ended up as an ongoing conversation about the radical upheaval in men's fashion that's defined the 2010s, both in design terms, but more so in terms of who was included in the conversation. That the column takes place at store level – the place where a consumer might touch, try on, and perhaps, buy an item of clothing – removes the arguments from the philosophical realm to the tangible one.

Which brings me back to my earliest attempts at personal style. I, like so many others, found a way to invent myself through fashion, and not from the top down, but rather through borrowing, reframing, and hit-and-miss reimagining. Hip-hop said that you didn't have to be part of the dominant culture to use a piece of it, to wear it in a way that made sense to you and flipped the bird at convention.

Sure enough, as the years have gone by, that approach has itself moved closer to the centre of the fashion conversation. Unlike the celebrities who crashed the front row a couple of decades ago, succubi who caught the draught of fashion's aesthetic authority but added little to the conversation, hip-hop came with a fully formed taste profile, a commitment to disruption, and a firm belief that it should be accepted on its own terms.

And now the fashion world is beginning to reflect those values – sometimes with enthusiasm, sometimes with reluctance. The language of the online conversation about men's clothing is pure hip-hop. Contemporary logo excess draws a straight line back to hip-hop repurposing of mainstream brands 15 years ago. What is the Supreme-Louis Vuitton collaboration if not a hyper-aware reframing of the logo-jacking that Dapper Dan was doing almost 30 years ago?

Many of these hip-hop-native gestures are now fully woven into the fashion mainstream – in both menswear and womenswear – and a proper assessment of fashion's future will demand a thorough understanding of them.

Fashion's top-downness is done forever. What a relief. A favourite moment of mine from the collision of these worlds came last year, when, in the middle of a VFILES runway show, Young Thug sprung up out of his front-row seat to adjust a model's collar mid-walk. I could relate – he was simply making the fashion he wanted to see in the world, and no one blinked.

Faking it

The key to success in Chinese e-comm? Do-it-yourself, buy-it-yourself. By Hung Huang. Illustration by Jean-Philippe Delhomme.

I had a store called Brand New China, a boutique which sold mostly Chinese designer products. Finally, the rent got too high for us to bear, and as millennials, our main customers, do 40 percent of their shopping online, it was time to close the physical store and go digital.

Taobao, the Chinese equivalent of Amazon or eBay, and part of the now world-famous Alibaba, leads the online market, but now there are several other must-occupy platforms alongside it. JD.com, the second largest e-commerce platform in China, has made a huge splash in the market for luxury fashion here, hosting shows of Chinese designers at Milan Fashion Week. (How is that working out for you, JD? I've always wanted to ask.) Then, about a year ago, mobile shopping went crazy, too. Weidian and Youzan, two popular mobile apps, inspired thousands of people to start their own businesses alongside their white-collar office jobs. It has totally taken off. It's huge.

So to move our bricks and mortar online, I needed to hire someone savvy with e-commerce. This one guy seemed like a nice kid. He had unkempt hair, thick glasses, a wrinkled, checkered cotton shirt, and faded jeans – a typical Millennial 'nerd' look. I was about to hire him to manage e-commerce for my store.

'Do you have any questions about the job?' I tossed this out, expecting to hear 'no'.

'Hmmm…' He hesitated a bit and then said, 'Are you sure you're committed to e-commerce?'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean, are you aware of what you have to do to succeed on TMall, for example' – one of China's biggest business-to-consumer websites – 'I am just afraid you might change your mind when you find out...'

'Find out what? Why don't you tell me?'

'Are you familiar with the term *shua dan*?'

My puzzled look was a clear indication that I had no idea what he was talking about.

'On TMall, to get excellent free exposure on the site, you need to accumulate a certain number of orders for each item you're selling. So a lot of merchants buy their own merchandise in order to gain that advertising space. Would you ever consider doing that?'

'What?!'

'Yes, most stores on TMall do that, so TMall now asks to see shipping documents for the orders to make *shua dan* more difficult. But now you need to buy fake shipping bills to go with your fake orders.'

'Isn't this all very time consuming?'

'Not really. I can show you.'

The kid was now feeling way more confident, realizing how unwise I was about the inner-workings of the fake 'system', and how to sell on TMall.

'You can go to a company that specialises in *shua dan*, and next to its office is a company that specialises in fake documents. It's like a production line, so very easy.'

'Isn't it easier to just buy advertising on TMall?' I asked.

The kid laughed.

'You are such an outsider, and so Western. It's way cheaper to *shua dan*. If you do a lot of business, you can get other special treatments too, like flashing your site for 10 minutes during high traffic hours. It's the Chinese way; your way is the foreigner's way. All the big foreign brands buy advertising – very expensive.'

'Oh,' I said to myself.

'And if you have connections with foreign delivery companies, like FedEx, you can make a lot of money too.'

'Explain,' I said.

'You know *daigou*, right?"

Daigou is essentially surrogate shopping, particularly for luxury goods: someone outside of China does your shopping for you and sends it to you.

'There are a lot of fakes in Daigou, so now the buyer in China is asking to see the "official" documents from abroad. I have a friend who started a company that specializes in fake foreign express packages. They'll pay for used express packages from foreign delivery services.'

'Why all this fake business?'

He looked at me as if I was stupid.

'Because it makes money!'

'But it's dishonest.'

It was my turn to look at him as if he was an idiot, a total crook.

He thought about it for a minute and said to me: 'You know, I don't think I want to work for you. You are not committed enough to being an e-commerce success story.'

So that was the end of that interview. The search for the e-commerce guy had clearly just started.

The elegance of transgression

By Shane Gabier and Christopher Peters, Creatures of The Wind

This image, by Karlheinz Weinberger, suggests something both elegant and transgressive. His personal styling is earnest and beautiful, but it's also aggressive and strong.

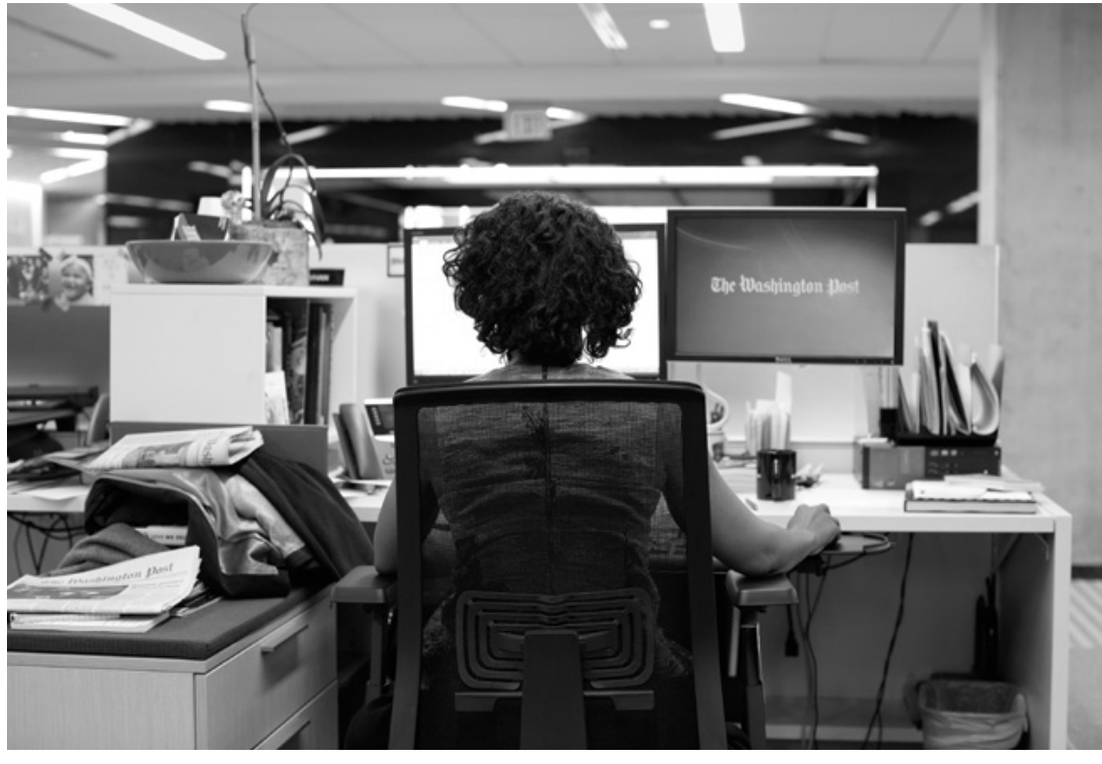
Romeo, Zurich (1962) by Karlheinz Weinberger in *Rebel Youth* (Rizzoli, 2011).

Backstage at the Autumn/Winter 2017 show by Mekko Harjo, courtesy of Creatures of The Wind.

The tension that is created when disparate elements come together is something that we always seek to explore. This photo, by Mekko Harjo, captures both the rawness and polish of the materials pictured.

‘My readers are sceptical about fashion.’

Washington Post fashion critic (and Pulitzer Prize winner) Robin Givhan on the politics of appearance and the appearance of politics.



By Jonathan Wingfield
Photographs by Brigitte Lacombe

In March this year, White House press secretary Sean Spicer attended a press conference wearing odd shoes, as if he'd fallen out of bed and panic-dressed. It wasn't the first time that his clothing had become news. President Trump was reported to be extremely displeased that the ill-fitting suit Spicer wore to his first-ever press conference looked like he'd borrowed it for the day. Because, as Robin Givhan often notes, Trump clearly understands that how you present yourself in politics matters. She has been writing about this revealing mix of clothing and politics for many years, perhaps a natural gig when you're the fashion correspondent for the *Washington Post*, the newspaper of record in the US capital.

In 2006, Givhan's writing won her a Pulitzer Prize for what the jury described as 'witty, closely observed essays that transform fashion criticism into cultural criticism' (an alchemy much rarer than it should be). She sees fashion as far more than regular bouts of hysterical exhibitionism; it is also a lens through which society reflects and reveals itself. For her, dealing with the appearance of politics is an integral part of her larger role interpreting the politics of appearance. (Which she regularly does in beautiful prose.)

System recently sat down with Givhan in New York, and later on the phone from her home in Washington D.C., to discuss how a career that began reporting on techno ended up on fashion's front row; the importance of the written word and its physical presence; and how a journalist's first priority is her readers, always and forever.

Part One
'I had no idea about fashion, nothing, *nada!* I liked clothes, but that was it.'

You were born and raised in Detroit…
…which is now suddenly Hipsterville! When I was growing up there, it was a standard Midwestern city that was a bit down on its heels, but still a pretty lovely place with extraordinary Albert Kahn[1] and Frank Lloyd Wright architecture. But by the early 2000s it had spiralled into bankruptcy, post-industrial urban decay, and sadness. As it started to come out of that, Detroit became this very fertile city for entrepreneurs, artists, and people who want to kind of recreate themselves. And because it was really affordable, it became this burgeoning mecca for hipsters.

'My first job was on the entertainment section of the *Detroit Free Press*. I had my own beat about the city's burgeoning techno and rave music scene.'

Why do you think people always romanticize the perceived grittiness of Detroit?
It's never had the glamour of Chicago, but that grittiness gives it an authenticity that can be hard to come by in the States, as so many cities have become defined by their glass-and-steel towers. Detroit has very few genuine skyscrapers; its grand office towers have that post-WW2 limestone and marble look, and I'm convinced some of the romanticism comes with that.

I've read that you were always top of the class throughout your academic years. Was there a history of high achieving in your family, or were you the golden child?
My parents are the classic Great Migration[2] couple: born in the South, met in college, moved north for better opportunities. Education was definitely the number-one responsibility for me as a kid; I knew I could always get out washing the dishes if I said, 'Oh, I have homework.' People say that your favourite subject is the one you find easy, and English came naturally to me. Probably because I loved reading.

What were you reading?
I think I read all 80 of the Nancy Drew[3] mysteries. I just loved reading fiction and I loved storytelling in general. When I was in high school, my English teacher gave me a copy of Toni Morrison's, *The Bluest Eye*[4]. It wasn't on our syllabus; she just handed it to me one day, saying, 'I think you'll love this.' If you're lucky, you'll have had a teacher like that somewhere along the way.

What about clothes, dressing up, expressing oneself through appearance? Was that something significant within your family?
My mother liked clothes, but she was very much what I'd call an 'appropriate Southern lady'. She believed that you dressed properly for the occasion; even for travelling, you got dressed correctly, never in sweatpants and a T-shirt. My father is the same: a very appropriately dressed, dignified guy. His mantra is: your shoes should be polished, your suit should fit, your shirt should be crisp, your tie should be properly tied, and you should have a pocket square. Not necessarily because it's about fashion, but about wanting to present your best face to the world.

Were newspapers important to them?

My parents were huge readers of newspapers and to this day my father must have his hard copy of the *Detroit Free Press*; fetching it each morning is his daily exercise. Growing up, I wasn't so much focused on journalism as much as compelling stories, and the newspaper was a great source for them. I probably spent more time focused on the features section of the paper than the news.

Is that still the case?
It's professional now, so I soak it all in, but I am still absolutely drawn to wonderful narrative and beautiful writing.

You've often mentioned the importance of narrative in your journalism, more than, say, the need for tenacious reporting or getting the perfect quote.
I do think there tends to be two types of reporters: the ones who love gathering the facts and the ones who love writing the story. I definitely fall into the latter of the two camps. I see journalism as a sort of fact-based line of storytelling, and when you talk about a narrative, it's also a way of making a story more personal; emphasizing the psychology of people's decision making, and the emotional depth that that entails.

You studied at Princeton followed by an MA in journalism, but tell me about your first instance of actually writing for a newspaper.
I'd already done internships on the news desk of the *St. Petersburg Times* in Florida, and the *Detroit News*. Then I got an interview at the *Detroit Free Press*, which at that time was known in Detroit as the 'writer's paper'. They offered me an internship, and I have no idea where I got the chutzpah, but I remember saying to the editor, 'I've already done two internships; what I really want is a job.' She called me back and offered me my first job, in the entertainment section.

Did this mean specializing in any particular domain?
It was general cultural writing, but I really wanted my own beat[5] – to 'own' a topic that I could constantly explore and deep dive into – so I started carving out a kind of mini-micro-beat about Detroit's up and coming techno and rave music scene.

Considering Detroit's musical history, wouldn't that have been quite an esteemed beat to own?
To be honest, it was more fun than esteemed. [Laughs] And the irony, of course, is that techno, while originating from Detroit, had its most sizeable audience in Europe. This would have been around 1989, and I have a vague recollection of going to clubs like The Majestic, or just random pop-up clubs where DJs played. The most prominent were Kevin Saunderson, Derrick May and Juan Atkins[6] and Saunderson's big hit, 'Good Life'[7], appeared around then. I'd go and meet them and think, 'You're a good story.'

How did you end up on the fashion beat?
Robin Abcarian, who was the fashion editor at the time, became a features columnist and the newspaper needed to replace her. I just thought, 'Wow, this beat is available; I know nothing about fashion but, you know, I wear clothes. I've got nothing to lose; I'll apply.'

Had you read many fashion magazines?
I had a friend who got *W*, which might as well have been written in Sanskrit. I had no idea, nothing, *nada*. I liked clothes, but that was it. So I consulted one of my high-school friends – my gay consigliere – who gave me a pep talk about who was who in fashion, and I put together a proposal and presented it. Unsurprisingly, I didn't get the job because they were like, 'Er, you know *nothing* about fashion!' But they asked me to cover menswear part-time while continuing my other assignments. So my introduction to fashion came through menswear.

Did that immediately mean going to cover the shows in Paris and Milan?
Yes. It's kind of amazing to think that at the time the *Detroit Free Press* not only had the budget for a fashion editor who went to Paris, Milan, London and New York twice a year, but it also had a secondary writer covering menswear in those same places. There were the resources available and it was deemed important. Robin Abcarian gave me a list of shows that were either 'must-see', 'up to you', or 'you can skip'. Knowing nothing, that list became my bible. And I was told not to review, just to report: 'Don't offer up your opinion, just go and tell us what you see.' Robin also gave the names of four other regional editors who were her pals on the road: someone from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Dallas Morning News*. These women were lifesavers: so

'The publicist looked me up and down and said – I can still remember her exact words – 'Not every publication is important.' I stood there speechless.'

kind and welcoming and informative; they saved me from catastrophe.

Did you feel out of your depth?
I was deeply horrified! I am still scarred. We hadn't registered properly, so I remember having to call all the Parisian fashion houses and use my sophomore French to get invites. No one knew who I was; it was a Detroit newspaper no one cared about; and we were late to the game that season. The invitations I did manage to get were either standing or in tenth row. It was basically a huge learning curve, and I cried in the privacy of my hotel room from the stress and the awfulness of it. But at the same time, I was in Paris!

Which specific shows can you remember attending in that first season?
Shamefully, it's all a blur and I don't remember any actual shows; what sticks out is the whole logistics of being there. I remember in Paris having to go to the less-than-salubrious Rue Saint-Denis[8] to supposedly pick up an invitation for a show; on arriving, I was told to wait for what seemed like ages, then finally got called into this room where the publicist looked me up and down and said – and I can still remember her exact words – 'Not every publication is important.' I just stood there speechless, thinking, 'You've had me come all the way here just so you can insult me in person!' I turned and walked out. It was horrible, hideous, but I persevered.

Part Two
'I try really hard not to drink too much of the fashion Kool-Aid.'

By your own admission, you didn't start out as a big fashion authority. Do you think that consequently set the tone for how you've gone on to write about the industry?
I saw myself as being in the room and being able to observe and talk to people about what they did, and try to understand it. But still to this day, I never feel like I am part of the fashion industry. I cover it, but I'm not part of it. I am part of the journalist community.

That's a key distinction for you?
Yes, because I don't make fashion happen. I have nothing to do with what consumers ultimately see hanging on store racks. My job is to help consumers understand how those things got there, to understand more about the people who make those clothes, what those people might be thinking and what inspires them; why this dress is $5,000, while that one is only $50; and if you're not happy with the way it is being marketed and sold to you, how you can change that.

So your commitment is to the consumer – or at least the reader – not the fashion industry.
Absolutely. As far as I'm concerned, as soon as you start to consider yourself part of the machine that makes fashion, you won't be very good at explaining how that machine works, or offering healthy criticism about that machine. I think you have to have a certain degree of scepticism; and I always say it is scepticism and not cynicism, because if you become cynical about what you're covering, you need to find a different beat.

When Obama gave his final press conference in January, he addressed the members of the press directly, saying: 'You guys have to do that hard work to get to the bottom of stories, and getting them right, and pushing those of us in power to be the best version of ourselves.' Does his statement have any relevance in fashion journalism?
I think that the fundamental job of the journalist is to be the eyes and ears of the public. You are not there to please the designers or the retailers or the publicists. You are there to please the readers: to delight them, to inform them, to advocate for them, to look at things through a sceptical lens so they have the information that they need to process what fashion is presenting them.

Can you give me an example.
How that ad campaign is manipulating them. Why the cover of that magazine influences how they define beauty and value and femininity. It will hopefully enable them to become better consumers; certainly if they are concerned about issues like sustainability or labour practices.

What are your thoughts on large parts of the fashion media – from glossy monthlies to Instagram influencers – being quite openly 'bought' or neutralized by fashion brands?
I view it with a certain amount of curiosity and bemusement. I mean, I certainly understand the role of magazines and the way that magazines see themselves within the fashion universe, and that is very different to the way that newspapers do. In any one magazine, there can

'I think the fundamental job of a journalist is to be the eyes and ears of the public. I'm not here to please the designers or the retailers or the publicists.'

be terrific stories and essays about political and social issues, while the fashion editorials operate in an almost parallel world.

But hasn't that always more or less been the case?
I think there might have been a period two generations ago when readers had a highly nuanced understanding of the media, but things have changed so much and so rapidly that I just think that people who are reading magazines or looking at blogs and Instagram feeds see it as one big blur of information. Whether it's political reporting or fashion reporting, we should be concerned when people are unable to make distinctions between what is independent journalism, what is advertorial writing, and what is just straight advertising.

influence the way you report fashion?
I think that the person I was writing for changed when I joined the *Washington Post* in 1995; in part, because it is both a local reader and an international reader. The *Post* has scope, whether it is online or in print, and so if I were to describe the average reader, it is someone well educated, very curious, opinionated and deeply engaged with their culture. And I suppose I also see that person as being sceptical about fashion. I don't see myself preaching to the choir, although there are definitely members of the choir who read. Unlike a lot of a newspapers, the *Post* has never had a specific fashion section, and I've always really liked that. I like the fact that fashion stories are in the Style section, so they jockey for position with stories about film or politics or television. It means that they're being seen by people who might accidently stumble across them.

think your writing has a responsibility to simply entertain?
I think it has to! That is the primary goal. I mean, you are never going to inform someone if what you've written reads like a computer manual. It has to be entertaining in order to capture anyone's imagination. Sometimes, there is no greater pleasure than going to see a collection that is really just a pure visual delight; I don't think any less of a collection that is just pure pleasure than I do of, say, a Comme des Garçons collection, which is an intellectual brain-twister. I applaud those designers who can give people that pure pleasure because it is no easy feat.

In any given season, you'll see well over a hundred collections. Do you find yourself wanting to write about, say, Balenciaga or Comme, because they're considered by other critics to have shown stand-out collections, or are you homing in on more socio-politically engaged themes within those collections, regardless of popular 'fashion-industry opinion'?
I am most interested in and most excited to write about collections that make me think about things far beyond the runway. Designers like Thom Browne and Rei Kawakubo sort of love you to extrapolate whatever you want to out of their collections and shows, which I find both frustrating and energizing! But above all, my antenna is attuned to those collections that allow me to talk about fashion in the same way that you would talk about an intriguing painting or a provocative film. I don't necessarily think that it has to be a complicated

'We should be concerned when people are unable to distinguish between journalism, advertorial writing, and what is just straight-up advertising.'

Is the ubiquity of social media a healthy thing for an established journalist? Or do you think it's becoming increasingly difficult to cut through the noise of the often-polarizing personal opinion that's now in the public arena?
It would be wonderful if it was civil and delighted expression of opinion, but oftentimes it is a really mean, how-obnoxiously-can-I-say-something kind of discourse. Because it is so provocative, it attracts eyes, and triggers this immediate but generally short-lived conversation. I think the longer, more in-depth, more interesting conversation is the one that exists in the grey zone, where something isn't necessarily the best or worst thing that I have ever seen.

To what extent does the publication you're writing for – and its readership –

Does that affect the subjects that you write about?
Definitely. The *Post*'s readers aren't particularly interested in who is up and who is down in the industry; they are more interested in how that person might impact their life. I remember when I pitched a Dries Van Noten profile and I said to my editor, 'We should write about him because his clothes are breathtaking, and that is enough.'

In the show notes for Marc Jacobs' final Vuitton show, he wrote, 'Connecting with something on a superficial level is as honest as connecting with it on an intellectual level.' Similarly, do you

political tango. I remember several years ago I was at a Dolce & Gabbana show; they did a little preview with this long, complicated tale about the mood in Italy, and migration. When I actually saw the show there was barely any evidence of that narrative, yet it was absolutely gorgeous. I remember writing that you don't always need a long rambling existentialist tale to justify beauty, because, as I said before, beauty is quite often enough.

Do you ever find yourself tempering your criticism, knowing that harsh reviews might impact people's lives – whether it's the designer or the lesser-known individuals involved – or because getting banned from shows might be counterproductive?
I try very hard not to, but I am also mindful that if something is critical, it shouldn't be personal. I don't presume to get into a designer's head and say, 'This is what the designer was thinking,' unless that person's actually told me that is what they're thinking. I just try to see both sides of a situation.

Have you fallen out of grace with designers or brands?
I wrote a piece about Rodarte, with the headline 'Does Rodarte Exist?' By that, I meant, is this a traditional fashion brand that is set up to actually build a profitable business through its runway productions and the clothes it is putting out there? My reaction was no, and for many reasons that I detailed. But I did try to acknowledge that what these designers are doing is very satisfying to them – and that shouldn't be discounted by any means – but it doesn't make anything like a sustainable business.

And how badly did they take the piece?
Well, I don't think I will ever see another Rodarte show in the flesh! But I think it was an important story to write for the readers. I think Rodarte is a really obvious example of the smoke and mirrors and the mythology of fashion, which sometimes obscures the fact that fashion is a business and has to function. What readers are seeing on the runway and in photos shoots isn't actually real – it's an illusion. Ultimately, I try to ask the questions that readers might have, and try to anticipate when they are going to raise their eyebrow in scepticism, and have an objective answer for that. And I try really hard not to drink too much of the fashion Kool-Aid.

One of the things that strikes me about your writing is that there is a conspicuous absence of 'fashion talk'; no 'fashionista' or 'the frow'.
I try really, really hard not to use that. I'm always reminded of why when I pick up a sports story; when I get half way through, they'll have lost me because I don't know what a 'pick and roll' is, and no matter how many times people have explained this to me, I still don't understand. I find it's better to just say what something is, rather than rely on the vernacular of fashion. And besides, I despise words like fashionista; I don't know what that's even supposed to mean. I think it's belittling at best and meaningless at worst. You know, words are just as relevant to someone who covers fashion as to someone covering politics, because at the end of the day, you try to let your reader in on the truth as well as you can report it.

Is the increased emphasis on fashion reporting as seen through the prism of business a good thing? I guess there are those who'd argue it's one more nail in the creative coffin.
It's certainly a great aspect to report on. It's always intriguing to me to see what consumers latch on to, and when things really sell. Saint Laurent under Hedi Slimane was a great case in point. Based on the numbers, he really struck a chord with consumers, whether it was the runway collection or the classic collection. As a critic though, I would go look at those collections and not necessarily have a ton of positive things to say. But the story stopped being 'Why or why not this is a good collection', and became more a question of, 'OK, the collection is what it is, so why is it connecting with the people the way that it does?' I think that the financial part of it is key to moving the story along; it forces you to ask different questions.

So the consumer experience outweighs the industry interpretation.
I don't know if it eclipses it, but it adds a whole other layer to the conversation; it keeps the industry from talking to itself. In the case of Saint Laurent, it didn't change my opinion as a critic about the collection – I still thought aesthetically that its proportions were off, and it felt derivative – but there was now this other aspect where the consumers thought it's great and were buying it. And so my question becomes, 'What is it that's making those aesthetic considerations

'I despise words like fashionista; I don't even know what it's supposed to mean. I think it's belittling at best and meaningless at worst.'

Photographer's assistants: David Coventry and Frederick Lam.

no longer viable, or less important.' Something has changed and to me that is intriguing. I want to figure out what is changing in the eye of the consumer because that has ramifications for Saint Laurent, and other brands to come, and fashion as a whole – for better or worse.

Part Three
'Trump has been very shrewd about the way he dresses himself.'

Over recent years, you've become increasingly known for writing about the appearance of politicians. Was that something that always intrigued you, or did it become a kind of default specialist subject since joining the *Washington Post*?

With the *Post*, it's impossible to be in Washington and not have that seep into your mindset. And once I'd explored it, I realized that it was particularly interesting and it became ever more apparent to me how much appearance and image and storytelling, and this notion of costuming, plays into this world of politics and the way that we view and respond to public figures.

Can you recall an instance when this first became apparent?

One of the first stories about that came at the very end of the Clinton years. Washington fixer, Vernon Jordan[9], is this tall, black man; very wealthy, friend of many presidents, and is known for his style. Turnbull & Asser shirts, ties from Charvet, beautifully tailored suits, and so on. He was going to appear before this congressional hearing and I essentially wrote about how he was inevitably going to be the best-dressed man in the room. Part of his choices about what he wore, and the way that he dressed in public, was very much rooted in the idea that he was often the only black man in the room; his clothes were part of his way of collaring control. That opened the door for me to a point of view that I found really interesting. During that same period, when Hillary Clinton had to appear before the grand jury, she did so wearing a coat that had a sort of abstract print on the back. There were all these commentators who kept on referring to this print as a stylised dragon, saying, 'Why would she wear such a coat?' I remember calling her press secretary about it, and he took a photograph of the back of the coat and e-mailed it to me. The print was completely abstract; there *was* no dragon! So I wrote this piece about how people just see what they want to see. It was fascinating, the way that fashion could be used to alter people's perceptions about what they were seeing; and how this could influence whether they saw someone in positive or negative light.

You concluded a recent *Washington Post* piece about the appearance of politicians with the line: 'Image is always secondary to substance. It may briefly distract from a narrative or add to it. But surely, it can't change it.' Tell me more about that.

Appearance underscores something that is being said – a message. It can distract, it can contradict that message, but it doesn't fundamentally change the messenger. I think that's something we wrestle with all the time; this idea that certain people are taken more seriously or deemed more legitimate because of their attire. It shapes the message, it shapes how we perceive the message, but it doesn't change whether that message is true or false. Appearance doesn't change fact, but it certainly can alter the way in which we perceive the fact; sometimes, it alters whether or not we believe in it.

Give me an example.

One Sunday, a few years ago, the United States' security colour levels went from yellow to orange. Suddenly, there were these quick recalls to news conferences that involved the mayor, the police chief and the fire chief in both New York and Washington D.C. In New York, the three players were dressed in suits. Here in D.C., the mayor was in casual clothing, the police chief was in his everyday uniform, and the fire chief looked like he'd been at the mall with his kids when the news broke; he was in a very casual shirt and shorts. The whole point of these news conferences was to reassure people, and send out a message that said, 'Everything is under control, don't worry, go about your day.' The facts in New York and the facts in D.C. were exactly the same, but because of the appearance of the trio in D.C., things looked less in control, less organized, less polished. It's a good example of how appearance won't necessarily change facts, but it can certainly affect how much faith we have in them.

How much of this is at play in the Trump administration?

There's an incredible emphasis on appearance! It's as if the appearance is going to change our understanding of, our judgement of, or our willingness to believe in the administration. And it's like, hold on, facts don't change whether they are wrapped up in a business suit or a Gucci cadet uniform.

It brings to mind the *Post* piece you recently wrote about Sean Spicer; how in his first official press conference he was wearing a huge, terrible-fitting suit and shirt, then later that same day he appeared in front of the cameras in seemingly sharper attire – as if he'd been advised to clean up his act.

After that piece was published, one reader sent me an e-mail that referenced a Renaissance painting. [Reading out e-mail:] 'Sean Spicer's ill-fitting suit reminded me of the portrait of Ranuccio Farnese by Titian[10], which is at the National Gallery here in D.C. You can find it on the nga.gov website. It states: "Adult responsibility came to Ranuccio when still a child, as Titian so brilliantly conveyed through the cloak of office, too large and heavy, sliding off the youth's small shoulders".' It was such a fascinating and obscure reference, that's why I love the *Washington Post* readers!

What about Trump himself in all this?

One of the things he has repeatedly referred to is how someone 'looks the part'; he did it a lot during his hunt for a secretary of state. I think he does believe that. I mean, he is a prodigious consumer of television, and I think he does believe that visuals really matter in selling the story line. He personally has been very shrewd about the way he dresses himself: he wears these expensive suits that don't look overtly expensive. He never looked too polished on his campaign trail, in a way that might cause a working-class guy to be suspicious of him. But then, when he arrived at the White House, suddenly he is wearing a pocket square, a little flourish of formality. I think it is all very subtle… well, actually not that subtle at all! I mean, when you consider the transformation of someone like Steve Bannon, who spent the bulk of the campaign wearing five shirts at once with the collars popped, and even he is in a business suit now. So, you know, there is a clear understanding of what power looks like.

You've often written pieces about Michelle Obama's appearance and rapport with fashion. Will you be following Melania Trump in the same way? In terms of pure appearance, I guess she's the first ex-model to become the First Lady.

Honestly, I don't have an answer for how interesting Melania is yet, because we've seen so little of her thus far. My interest in the other First Ladies has generally focused on what they've worn to the inauguration, because the gown typically ends up in the museum[11].

Beyond that, is there any significance?

Well, whether it's Jackie Kennedy's Europe via America glamour or Michelle Obama rooting for Jason Wu – young and optimistic – there's always this idea that the inauguration gown represents a kind of soft-focus advance peek at how the administration wants to be perceived, the shorthand they want to use to describe themselves.

Personal stylists have become increasingly present across many industries. To what extent are there stylists operating in the field of politics?

There are certainly people who advise and recommend, but other than at the level of First Lady – where someone is going out and getting dresses made or commissioned – it is not that extreme. But there are definitely people who are charged with making sure that politicians look polished and professional, but not too fancy.

Did that service extend to Kellyanne Conway's inauguration look[12]?

[Laughs] I don't know, I can only pray that no stylist was responsible for that! I think that was a personal decision that went a little awry.

What do you make of the fact that American designers such as Tom Ford, Marc Jacobs and Zac Posen have been vocal about not wanting to dress Melania Trump? Or the fact that Nordstrom cut Ivanka Trump's line?

I think it's significant. It was a very polarizing election and this has been an administration that has unfolded like no other. Fashion isn't exempt from the tumult that some of the other industries and the individuals in those industries feel. I think there are designers for whom fashion is the way that they communicate on the world stage, and they wanted to make their thoughts clear. I suspect there are probably as many designers who see dressing the First

'Appearance doesn't change fact, but it certainly can alter the way in which we perceive the fact; sometimes, it alters whether or not we believe in it.'

'I can only pray that no stylist was responsible for Kellyanne Conway's inauguration look. I think that was a personal decision that went a little awry.'

Lady as something unique and interesting and can separate that from the individual. They can focus on the role, the title and the historical nature of it.

A few years ago, Cathy Horyn wrote that, 'There's a danger of reading too much into the fashion choices of a person, particularly a public figure.' Would you argue that today, on the contrary, it seems more important than ever to be examining these things?
For sure, I'd say that. It is more important now because we have become a culture that is so quick to judge, and to judge based on a glimpse, a word, a phrase, a gesture, so I think that public officials who are out to sway opinion are ever more sensitive to that reality. Look at Trump's obsession with crowd size; for him, that visual is a statement of popularity and success. Of course, I do think we need to be cautious that sometimes a dress is just a dress, but we should be looking closely at the style choices of public officials.

We've already seen fashion becoming increasingly politicized over the past season. Is that a good thing? Misplaced? A fad?
I definitely think that fashion has the tools to engage politically – the reach, the stage, the audience – and I think that it has shown an intellectual capacity to do that, too. I don't know fashion has an obligation to be political with what it presents on the runway, but I think it has an obligation to be relevant. In the same way that I think fashion has an obligation to be diverse and respectful of a wide range of customers. It has an obligation to be aware of the changing nature of global relationships.

Do you think it exercises that awareness in an appropriate way?
I tend to be surprised that, given the fashion community of people, it is often as reticent as it is to step forward.

Is that ultimately because business is business and the bottom line cannot be influenced or swayed by other factors? I mean, when you started writing about fashion in the late 1980s, it was already referred to as an industry, but these days it operates on a truly industrial scale – with a lot more zeros.
Well, you could argue that all those zeros are just a measure of fashion's scale. But I do think that it's interesting that the tech community has been much more aggressive in speaking out about some of the things that are happening politically than the fashion industry has. I couldn't imagine the tech industry would be anymore adversely affected or morally controlled by things that are coming down the pipe from the Trump administration than the fashion industry would be. Republicans use iPhones and Google. So, to argue that fashion doesn't want to offend its customers doesn't add up. I think it's just a matter of how the tech industry sees itself within our culture; I think tech sees itself as a leader in terms of its consumers.

I think what's significant is how many individuals in fashion were very outspoken, yet the brands those individuals are associated with have for the most part remained tight-lipped.
I agree that as a whole the industry hasn't spoken out. Fashion hasn't had its Meryl Streep moment.

Does that disappoint you?
Well, I don't know if I have any more of a vested interest in fashion speaking out than tech speaking out. As a reporter in this industry, it makes me want to consider yet again how fashion perceives itself on the world stage. I think fashion is a deeply conflicted industry, in that it has global reach and enormous influence in how we define the individual. Yet at the same time there is often a tendency for fashion to disavow any responsibility and to disavow its impact.

Can you give me an example?
I remember Ralph Lauren showing a collection filled with grey flannel and bankers' stripes in 2009, in the middle of a global economic crisis. You sort of ask yourself, 'What is the appropriateness of this product in these times?' In Ralph Lauren's case, he is just going back to part of his company's vernacular, something he's done a million times before. But, you know, once you put it out there into the world, how does it look against that backdrop? Ultimately, fashion wants to be free to embrace any kind of inspiration and to claim that as its own, but it is not always willing to take on the responsibility that comes with that privilege.

Why do you think that is?
Because fashion is made up of human beings, and human beings are far more inclined to take advantage of things than take responsibility for them!

'Fashion wants to be free to claim any kind of inspiration as its own, but it's rarely willing to take on the responsibility that comes with that privilege.'

1. Described by *Time* magazine in 1940 as a 'small, merry architectural genius', Albert Kahn (1869-1942) set up his own practice in his hometown of Detroit in 1895. With his engineer brother Julius, he created new systems of standardized modular construction and designed a concrete beam that revolutionized industrial architecture. His innovations interested Henry Ford who commissioned two plants, one of which, the 800-metre long Ford River Rouge Complex, was the largest factory complex in the USA. This attracted the attention of the leadership of the Soviet Union and in 1929 Kahn signed a contract to design a tractor plant in Stalingrad. A year later, a further contract was signed, which made his firm responsible for all industrial construction in the Soviet Union. In 1930 alone, the plan aimed to construct, according to historian Sonia Melnikova-Raich, 'four large car, truck and motorcycle factories; nine tractor and farm-machinery plants; and over 500 other plants and factories for light and heavy industry'. By the time Kahn's teams left the Soviet Union in 1932, his firm had built 'several hundred' plants and factories in 21 cities and trained over 4,000 architects and engineers. By 1938, the importance of Kahn to Soviet industrial development was being denied by the Soviet leadership.

2. At the beginning of the 20th century, 90 percent of African-Americans lived in Southern US states. Between 1915 and 1970, 6 million moved to find work in the Northeast, Midwest and West, in what became known as the Great Migration.

3. Nancy Drew is a fictional teenage detective created by publisher Edward Stratemeyer as a female equivalent to his successful Hardy Boys characters. The books were ghostwritten and published under the pseudonym Carolyn Keene. Around 175 were published between 1930 and 2003, although this figure is not definitive.

4. Since Toni Morrison's debut novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970, its tale of racism, incest and rape has led to multiple calls for it be banned. In 1998, it inspired Mos Def and Talib Kweli – performing as Blackstar – to write the song 'Thieves in the Night'.

5. Beat is a journalistic term for a specialization.

6. Kevin Saunderson, Derrick May and Juan Atkins, also known as the Belleville Three, met at high school in Belleville, Michigan, and went on to create Detroit techno in the 1980s and early 1990s. The genre's mix of Chicago house, Kraftwerk and funk, with a sprinkling of science-fiction futurism, can be seen as an ironic reflection of the deindustrialization process that had by then depopulated Motor City.

7. The song, written and produced by Saunderson, and sung by Paris Grey, was released under the band name Inner City in late 1988.

8. Rue Saint-Denis in Paris' first and second *arrondissement* is traditionally seen as the city's centre of prostitution.

9. Vernon Jordan is a lawyer, Wall Street banker, civil-rights activist and political fixer. He was a close advisor to Bill Clinton during his presidency.

10. Tiziano Vecellio or Titian painted Ranuccio Farnese, the grandson of Pope Paul III, in 1542 when the 12-year-old had been arrived in Venice to become a prior. He became Archbishop of Naples aged 14, and was later appointed Bishop of Bologna and Archbishop of Milan and Ravenna. He died in 1565 in Parma; he was 35.

11. The 'museum' is the National Museum of American History, part of the Smithsonian, in Washington D.C. The dresses become part of *The First Ladies at the Smithsonian*, a special exhibition featuring 24 evening gowns worn by presidential spouses at their husbands' inaugruations. Melania Trump wore a dress billed as a 'collaboration' between herself and French-born, New York-based designer Hervé Pierre, a one-time creative director at Caroline Herrera.

12. At Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2017, presidential advisor Kellyanne Conway wore an off-the-peg red, white and blue Gucci coat with cat buttons. She described the outfit, which was topped off with a red cloche-style hat, as 'Trump revolutionary wear'.

‘My life has been a visual privilege.’

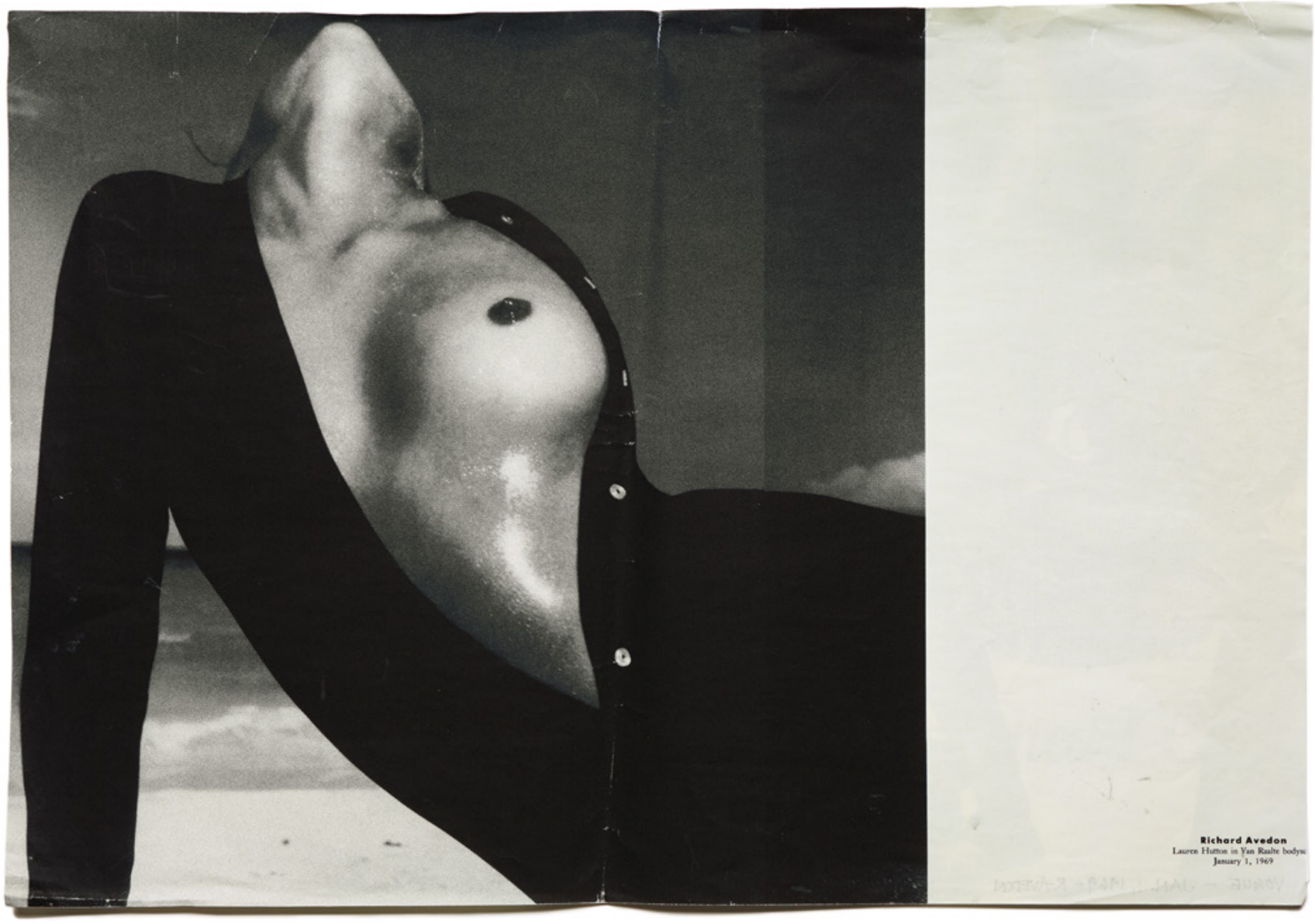
Legendary stylist, editor and so much more, Polly Mellen, on a life less ordinary.

By Jonathan Wingfield
Portrait by Steven Klein
Portfolio curated by Dennis Freedman

Lauren Hutton, Great Exuma, the Bahamas, October 1968
Photograph by Richard Avedon, ©The Richard Avedon Foundation

‘Fashion: There’s More to a Bathing Suit Than Meets the Eye’, New York, US *Vogue*, May 1975
Photograph by Deborah Turbeville

‘Beauty and Health: American Beauty Collections: Your Eyes’, US *Vogue*, October 1974
Jerry Hall photographed by Helmut Newton



Lauren Hutton, sweater by Van Raalte, Great Exuma, the Bahamas, October 1968
Photograph by Richard Avedon, ©The Richard Avedon Foundation

'A Powerful Beauty… Something Wild', Kenya, US *Vogue*, October 1988
Kim Basinger photographed by Sheila Metzner

Nadja Auermann and a Person Unknown, dress by Hussein Chalayan, Montauk, New York, August 1995
Photograph by Richard Avedon, © The Richard Avedon Foundation

‘Beauty Now: Exercise Out’, Miami, Florida, US *Vogue*, January 1975
Jerry Hall and Lisa Taylor photographed by Helmut Newton

Veruschka, poncho by John Paul Goebel, Tojimbo, Japan, February 1966
Photograph by Richard Avedon, © The Richard Avedon Foundation

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vogue

Avedon
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nued from page 90) It was night when we came to the hotel. There is a ski-run nearby and skis
od like pikes inside the huge entrance room of the inn. We took off our boots, and soon their
vere all over the floor; Verushka's over-the-knee Jill-boots looked like pods of St.-John's-bread,
nough to eat. The hotel is built on many levels, with slippery ramps and bridges over streams
ie mosaic. Wooden sledges, straw snowboots, and snowshoes made of vines were leaned on
ls like banners. If this was the castle, where was the keep? I pushed open a door and found I
the kitchen, surrounded by crouching short-legged lacquer serving trays and helmets of shining
ckets. A patient maid in kimono led me to our quarters. There was a room for Verushka, Polly,
; two rooms for the men; a room for the furs. Polly had already unpacked many of the boxes and
-room had a marauded look. Our rooms were in Japanese style—the bedding quilts tucked out
it during the day—and sitting on the floor like small children we talked, wrote, ate, growing
by the moment.

We were all hungry; food was brought in, precious little morsels, each on a wittily chosen porcelain dish, and all the sort of food the Japanese themselves don't eat but know to be expensive. Midas seeing to the food himself couldn't have turned out anything more inedible. Two perfect grasshoppers, preserved in soy sauce, rested coldly on two damp beds of pale-green seaweed. The maids smiled. They always ; they knew exactly how to dominate guests. We were tired, and it was easier for us to be chil-
ve supped on porridge of rice and tea. Dick and I played how-In-are-you monopoly, with movies,
and books never published in the United States traded to move us forward and back in each other's
ion. Verushka, like a yoga's wunderkind, rolled about on the springy matted floor, a tawny cat's
of long, exquisite arms and legs. Ara and Polly must as children never have known an idle mo-
Polly, like a silk-weaver's favourite daughter, folded fantasies of brocade; Ara wove knots of Dy-
ir, laying each golden plait over his shoulders.
ter on, after a pale-yellow sulphur bath, Verushka, Polly, and I decided we wanted massages. Two
masseuses were summoned from the village. A maid led them in. They knelt beside our quilts, in-
g we should put our kimono back on. Perhaps it seems impolite to them to touch a guest's skin.
informed fingers found each stiffness, talked soothingly to each nerve. The women themselves
y spoke, would not answer the simplest questions I put to them in Japanese. Verushka offered
bottle of body lotion, which is not used for massages in Japan; the masseuse pondered for a mo-
and then, as if humouring the generous gesture of a child, rubbed it lavishly into her own arms
turned the bottle to Verushka, thanking her most politely.
is always snowing in Yuzawa. From November to May, there is not a day when more inches of
do not fall. The cypresses look like standing white foxes. The mountains are only sometimes vis-
ke whisking wild animals' tails. Dick was delighted. We were up and out early; Dick had already
l out the slopes he liked. Helpers, on rafts of straw mats, had thickened and flattened the snow so
was safe for us to move about. We marched in narrow procession. Elongated, in boots and bonnets
irs, we looked like the cast of an Eisenstein film. The hotel staff came out to see us off—because
o this for all guests, and because they wanted to see our fabulous furs. (Continued on page 103)

HE VALLEY OF HELL: A GENTLE HEIAN GHOST

athlike lady like an apparition in a Noh play, the ghost of a Heian beauty too attached to the pas-
and enchantments of earthly life to leave it alt-gether, one of the Japanese ghosts who haunt, not
s, but wild and desolate regions like this. . . . In this photographic fantasy, Verushka wears a Noh
based on the classic Heian face—ideally, round and plump; whitened with layers of chalk-white
er; the mouth like a tiny rosebud, touched with rouge; the eyes long, expressionless slits; eyebrows
letely removed by shaving or plucking, and others painted on higher up. Instead of the traditional
ched-black wig, she wears four yards of other-worldly blond Dynel. . . . Her robe, a torrential
of silk in the manner of the Heian lady's costume, the *juni-hitoe*—voluminous, magnificent, with
endous fanlike pleated train. . . . At the Heian court, delicate sensibilities were all. Heian gentle-
—though their prowess in love was astonishing—often burst into tears at the beauty of a sunset, or
performance on the flute. Ladies composed enchanting little poems, and inscribed them in ravish-
rushwork calligraphy, at the drop of a plum blossom. Life was charming, frivolous . . . and hard to
(Modern version of the kimono in black silk brocade, by Perfect; to order at Elizabeth Arden.)

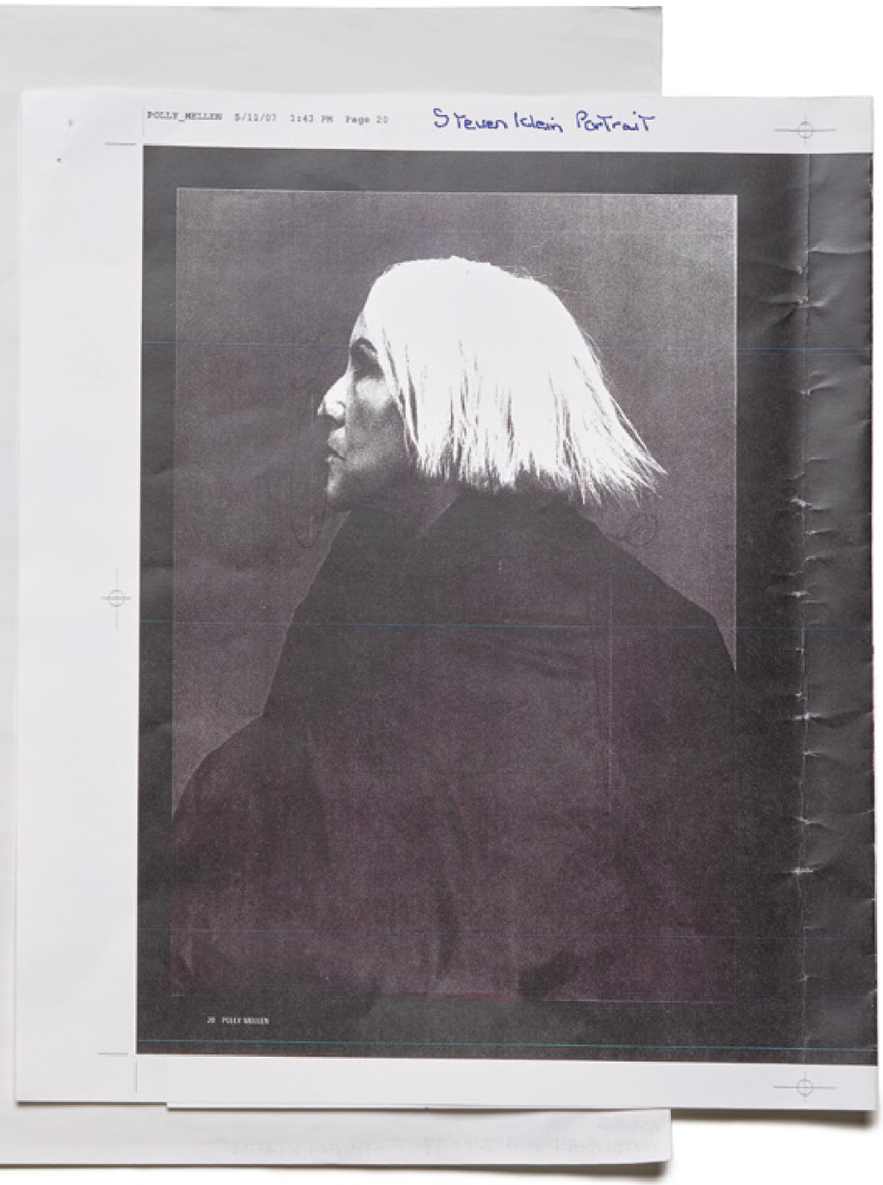
Veruschka in Noh mask, Jigokudani, Japan, February 1966
Photograph by Richard Avedon, © The Richard Avedon Foundation

'Beauty and Health: The Story of Ohhh...', Saint-Tropez, France, US *Vogue*, May 1975
Lisa Taylor and Peter Keating photographed by Helmut Newton

Twiggy, hair by Ara Gallant, Paris, January 1968
Photograph by Richard Avedon, © The Richard Avedon Foundation

Ingrid Boulting, coat by Dior, Paris, January 1970
Photograph by Richard Avedon, © The Richard Avedon Foundation

Unpublished, April 1997
Photograph by Steven Klein



Unpublished, April 1997
Photograph by Steven Klein

Polly Mellen, April 1997
Photograph by Steven Klein

Richard Avedon, Brooke Shields and Polly Mellen at an Yves Saint Laurent haute-couture show, Paris
Photographer and date unknown

Polly Mellen is a legend. For over 50 years, she worked with some of the world's greatest photographers to create images that have marked fashion history forever. There was the painterly yet scandalous bathhouse shoot with Deborah Turbeville for *Vogue*. And the daringly lusty 1975 shoot with Helmut Newton, cheekily entitled 'The Story of Ohhh…'. Not forgetting the work with Irving Penn, Guy Bourdin, David Bailey, and Saul Leiter. And later on, with Herb Ritts, Steven Meisel, Mario Testino, and Steven Klein. Through it all, from the very beginning of her career as a stylist and editor up to the shoots in the early new millennium, there was Richard Avedon. Their professional partnership helped shape the vision of *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1950s and *Vogue* in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, under the editorships of Carmel Snow, Diana Vreeland, Grace Mirabella and, briefly, Anna Wintour. Together, Avedon and Mellen redefined what women wore by changing how fashion envisaged their femininity and their new-found freedom.

Born Polly Allen in 1924 into a well-to-do family, Mellen led a cosmopolitan childhood, travelling widely. After serving as a nurse's aide in a Virginia hospital during World War II, she moved to New York. It was there that she was introduced to Diana Vreeland – and grabbed her chance with the determined, go-getter *joie de vivre* she would later bring to fashion shoots and front rows around the world.

Dennis Freedman, who suggested we feature Polly Mellen in *System*, first met her in the mid-1990s, when he was the creative director of *W*, and she was typically encouraging ('Young man, you are the one doing the best work right now,' she told him). *System* and Dennis visited Mellen at her home in Connecticut on a snowy January afternoon, and discovered that, aged 92, she's lost none of her enthusiastic, yet critical and avant-garde eye for fashion. It is a vision revealed in the portfolio of her work that Freedman curated for these pages. Selected from her personal archive of working documents, it is a treasury of what Mellen calls her life of wonderful 'visual privilege'.

I couldn't help but notice all the pictures of your parents here. They seem like they were a very glamorous couple.
My mother loved colour, loved life, and was a very expressive woman. I mean, she weighed 250 pounds, and apart from the times she was in Paris or Rome or New York City, when she'd dress in black or navy, she only ever wore wonderful printed pyjamas. She practically lived in them. My father was extremely masculine, but would dress with great flair. He was borderline foppish; he loved beautiful clothes, many of which were made by a tailor at Saks Fifth Avenue called Wetzel[1]. When they were in Cuba on the beach at the Havana Country Club[2], he'd wear a *guayabera* – a white shirt with embroidery all over – along with his terry-cloth, monogrammed white blazer, and slippers with green bows on them.

Were you dressed up as a child?
Mummy was always conscious of the way both she and her children dressed, so when, for example, we spent a summer in Paris or Cap d'Antibes or Juan les Pins[3], she'd put us in these little hats and braids, and we wore very short skirts. We were like 'the little Allen family': five children, a friend or two along for the ride, and a governess and tutor for us.

Did your sense of the avant-garde develop at an early age?
I think it started right there. I loved the sailors who sang to us at lunch; they wore their hats with the pompom on top and their middies[4], and I remember Mummy saying, 'Oh, I'd love the girls to wear middies and hats like that, where can we get them?' It was obviously a no-no because it was all official Navy uniform. Looking back, it was a wonderful upbringing; one of complete privilege.

'When I was quite young, somebody asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up and I just said, 'I would like to work on a fashion magazine."

Within your family and your circle of girlfriends from school[5], was it expected that you'd go out to work and have a career?
No. Besides my eldest sister Nancy, who was also a career girl, I was one of the few; it was just something I felt very strongly about wanting to do. When I was quite young, somebody asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up and I just said, 'I would like to work on a fashion magazine.' The fact that I ended up doing just that is down to a lot of luck, and meeting the right people who believed in me.

Prior to working in fashion, would you say that you had a rebellious spirit?
Yes. It probably comes from being the youngest of four girls. My sister, Patty, was 13 months older than me, and when

children are that close in age you always get dressed alike. So I think I wanted to be noticed, wanted to be heard. I didn't just want to be Patty's sister; I wanted to be Polly. Thinking about it now, that probably brought out both some rebelliousness and some inferiority complex in me. To be honest though, I was a very good girl and a nice, sweet-natured person… at least, until I was 21.

What happened then?
I was a virgin until I was 21, but then I met a married man in New York City; he was 13 years older than me and the most attractive and exciting man who I had ever met. He awakened me to so much of life: he taught me to be brave and to let go and to embrace abandon and understand that there is nothing wrong or shameful in living the life you choose, even though he was married with four children. I fell deeply in love with him, which was very upsetting for my family.

Nice sweet Polly had been corrupted!
Mummy was concerned that my contemporaries would never satisfy me, because this was a pretty devastating man, hard to compete with. I mean, it was not a good thing for everyone, yet it was obviously a great thing for *me*, and we continued it for 15 years. It taught me the sexual side of life. When I later did 'The Story of Ohhh…' shoot[6] in Saint-Tropez with Helmut Newton, Helmut would listen to my experiences from that time, and the pictures developed from deep emotions and feelings that I believed in, because I'd actually lived them.

The picture of the female model in that suggestive, almost masculine pose.
Yes, that was Lisa Taylor[7] with the male model Peter Keating. In the pictures, you don't know if they've made love, if they are about to make love, if they are getting dressed or undressed. Her posture also came from my experiences as a child in Antigua: there was a wonderful West Indian lady who'd sell eggplants in the market place, and she'd sit like that, which I guess could be construed as quite sexual, quite masculine, but she had an extraordinary dignity. It made me realize that my personal experiences could be transferred into picture-taking, in order to create powerful stories.

Before we move on to those other stories, I'd love you to paint a picture of post-war New York City?
I moved to the city in 1949. I was totally naive but very excited by what New York had to offer; it was so different from the protective WASP-ish environment in which I'd grown up. I'd gone to private schools in Connecticut all my childhood, but had a real appetite for experiencing other facets of life. I became heavily involved in things like the ballet and the opera, but was just as fascinated by the New York street, with things like the circus and the flea market, and the whole 42nd Street scene.

Where were you living?
I lived in a boarding house for young ladies that was at 151 East 61st Street, and was run by a Bermudian lady called Mrs. Outerbridge Horsey. I was working as a salesgirl on the fifth floor of Lord & Taylor[8], which is still there today, but it's not so interesting now.

What was your first experience working on a magazine?
Well, I progressed quickly from Lord & Taylor. I became head of the college shop – that was the closest I ever got to attending college – and then I went into window display back at Lord & Taylor, then at Saks Fifth Avenue, which was miserable. After that, I went to *Mademoiselle* magazine[9] as a fashion editor.

What did being a fashion editor entail at the time?
For me, it meant going to the big *salons* and picking out hats for the stories that the other editors were shooting.

Was this all based in New York or were you travelling?
No, I didn't go to places like Paris until I got the job at *Bazaar*.

Diana Vreeland was already at *Harper's Bazaar* at that time, right?
Yes, and she already had a reputation for being this wonderful and eccentric woman, full of freshness. Her background was European and she had a sophistication that was more leftfield than *Vogue*, which was preoccupied with elegance, and had become a little repetitious. *Bazaar* had both Mrs. Vreeland – who was driven by finding new faces, new ideas – and, of course, Alexey Brodovitch, the art director with the most extraordinary eye.

What do you think made Diana Vreeland want to hire you?
She hired me because a couple of women who she respected had suggested she meet me. I was frightened to death at the prospect of meeting her, but I went in and there she was, sitting there with her hair lacquered, the snood and the bow, and the grey turtleneck sweater and her medals. She got up and shut the door behind me; I was so incredibly nervous, but we immediately got talking and just hit it off, and it was wonderful. I soon realized what a normal and fascinating person she was. She was also smart enough to sense how nervous I was, so immediately put me at ease so I'd share what my interests and passions were. She was always so hungry for information, and I guess she saw me as a new source. After that meeting, I had to see Mrs. Snow, who was the boss.

Because Diana Vreeland was 'only' the fashion director of *Bazaar*, right? Carmel Snow[10] was the editor-in-chief.
That's right. Once I was hired, there was no guarantee that I was going to stay. I had to do this shoot called 'The Day Farers', with all these horrible-looking clothes which I ended up turning inside out, just to give them some life, something new. Mrs. Vreeland went in to see Carmel Snow who said to her, 'We can't afford this young woman, Diana. We're shooting "The Day Farers" for the fourth time. She's out!' But Mrs Vreeland said, 'No, please, let me take her under my wing, let me work with her, it's going to work out, Carmel.' And it did. And here I am! It was all or nothing with Mrs. Vreeland; when she had a conviction, she never left your side.

Can you remember Richard Avedon being around at that time?
Dick [Avedon] was just starting there, too, but the big *Bazaar* photographer at the time was Louise Dahl-Wolfe[11] – and Dick was definitely a threat to her. Believe me, you didn't want to experience the ire of Louise Dahl-Wolfe! Carmel Snow wanted Dick for the magazine, so she snuck him over to Paris to shoot half of the collections, while Louise would shoot the other half.

What was your first shoot with Avedon?
Diana called him in and said, 'I want you to shoot a portrait of a promising young actress called Audrey Hepburn, and I want you to work with Polly Allen.' Dick must have already seen me at a show or something because he immediately said, 'Diana, I can't work with her, she is too noisy. I'll get bad vibes from her.'

What did he mean by that?
Well, he had a point! I keep nothing inside; I've always released my feelings. But Diana said, 'Please, Dick, have her come and let her shoot with you.' I will never forget it: it was at his studio above Longchamps on Madison Avenue[12].

How old was Audrey Hepburn?
She was just starting out, and she was adorable. She wore this yellow and white dress and when she got on set, she had no waist – 16 inches, like Scarlett O'Hara – which I wanted to exaggerate. I remember turning to Dick and saying, 'I would like to do something, Mr. Avedon.' He said, 'OK, OK, go do something.' I crunched up all this paper and put it under the skirt, which made it look really enormous and effective, and I remember Dick saying, 'That's great, Polly!' He took the pictures and I didn't utter a single word. Just before the shoot was over, Dick said, 'Why were you so quiet, Polly? I like to have some noise on set.' And from that moment on, I never was quiet.

How would you define your contribution to those Avedon shoots?
Well, I don't know if other editors were ever like this, but I felt I really participated in the shoot, no matter who I was working with; I was always right behind the photographer – not in the way, just behind him, in the line of the camera – so I could see what he saw. And if I could see what he was seeing, then I could communicate that back to Lauren Hutton or Sophia Loren or Fred Astaire, or whoever was in front of the camera.

Did communicating with the models and portrait sitters come naturally to you?
I always considered that to be a main responsibility, to woo the model into being shot. One of the early shoots with Dick was with Nureyev. Gosh, wonderful, incredible! When he jumped, his physique was so unbelievably statuesque, like stone. But between frames, whenever I went over to discuss the next shot with him, he'd turn and have his back to me. He was rubbing himself so he would be 'full' for the next picture. And then he'd turn around to me! I loved it; I mean, I was sitting right there!

How was Mrs. Vreeland about all this? Was she goading you to get the shots?

'I was terrified of meeting Diana Vreeland; she was sitting there with lacquered hair, the snood and the bow, the grey turtleneck sweater, and her medals.'

'Diana called Avedon and said, 'I want you to shoot a portrait of a promising young actress called Audrey Hepburn, and I want you to work with Polly."

Goading me and how! She loved sexy guys, all those photographers like Patrick Lichfield[13]. Everything about Mrs. Vreeland centred on pushing you to do the best, the newest. She brought me to *Vogue* in the mid-1960s, and my first assignment was a whole new level: five weeks shooting in Japan with Dick Avedon and Veruschka[14].

Five weeks? The budget must have been eye-watering.
I'm proud to say it was the most expensive shoot Condé Nast ever did. They never did one like it again! I had 16 trunks of clothes, no assistant, and I basically became Japanese for a month.

Shoots these days barely last a day.
This was exceptional, and we knew it. Believe me, all the other editors, like Babs Simpson[15], wanted that shoot, but this new woman who'd come from *Harper's Bazaar* got it – it wasn't fair. I said to Mrs. Vreeland: 'I feel an animosity towards me from the other editors, and I don't feel like I've really made any friends.' She just said, 'Who needs friends, Polly? Go about your business and concentrate on this extraordinary trip to Japan. Oh, and by the way, as part of your research, read a book called the *Tales of Genji*.' It turns out it's the dirtiest book you'll ever read. Mrs. Vreeland hadn't actually read it herself; she just got me to fetch a copy, read it, dog-ear the pages of the best bits, and pass it on to her.

What do you remember most about the trip to Japan?
So many vivid memories. One time, it was about five in the morning in Hokkaido, the uppermost main island in Japan, and we were on a hill overlooking the sea. We were getting ready to take a picture, which was taking forever, when I heard this humming music in the distance. All of a sudden, these very sturdy, dark-skinned women appeared through the mist; they were all wrapped in white fabric, like gauze, which they undid, dropped their tops, and then greased their bodies all over, before covering themselves up again in their white gauze. And then, one by one, they all dived into the water. Turns out they were pearl divers. It was so poetic, so unbelievably beautiful.

You'd mentioned that your upbringing was one of privilege, but your adult life feels equally extraordinary…
I think of my life as one of visual privilege. It continues to affect me today when I think about all these wonderful visual moments that I experienced over the years. There was one ugly moment though, in Japan. Akira Kurosawa[16] was having his portrait taken and Dick wouldn't let me be there. I'd been so excited to be on that shoot, but he just flat-out refused. I was hurt, sad, furious – *everything*!

Talking of being hurt and furious. Your work is now celebrated as having been pretty avant-garde and challenging for its time, but were any of your shoots rejected at the time, killed by the editor?
That was something you just had to deal with. Sometimes I managed to get some of the pictures in and sometimes I didn't. But, you know, the boss is the boss. And I respected that. And she was quick to say, 'I am the boss, I am the editor-in-chief, it's my magazine, and I want you to re-do it Polly.'

What would happen then?
Dick always refused to reshoot! We'd move on to a new photographer and a whole new story.

How often did that happen?
Only a couple of times, I think. Once was when we'd been in Paris shooting the collections: Dick photographed Veruschka and the make-up artist was Serge Lutens[17]. The clothes were very beautiful and she was amazing, but they became very surreal and strange pictures. Serge made Veruschka chalky white, and you felt like you were in the fog, like in a movie. It was very interesting, but it had nothing to do with *Vogue* magazine. I just instinctively felt, 'This isn't going to fly.' True enough, they said, 'Absolutely not, we're not publishing anything like this in *Vogue*.'

Did you see beauty in it?
It's funny what I see: I can see beauty; I can see ugliness; I can see a lot of different things. At some sittings, it almost felt like a film and it was very easy to get completely wrapped up in it. I did a bathing-suit shoot with Deborah Turbeville[18] that became like this.

The incredible shoot in the bathhouse. That was done in New York, right?
Yes. It was for *Vogue*. It was great fun and when all those pictures came in, I showed them to Grace [Mirabella], who was the editor-in-chief, and Alex [Alexander Liberman[19], *Vogue* art director]. You could immediately tell that Alex was very, very interested, and that Grace was horrified. I knew from her look that it was going to get killed, and that angered me so much, because she was wrong on a lot of levels. Alex just put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'Polly, why don't you go for a walk?' When I came back, he said, 'Polly, we're going to publish this shoot, it is amazing. But we will call it a feature; it will not be in the fashion pages, and that way I can get it published the way I want to.' Grace knew that the pictures were special, but her point of view, which I obviously respected, was that they don't belong in thie magazine. It was said that the pictures resembled a prison camp, like Belsen, which made me feel sick. But all the pictures finally got published and, my god, they are still being published to this day.

Were you ever accused of vulgarity?
Once, when I was at *Harper's Bazaar*. I did a shoot with Suzy Parker[20] wearing a raincoat with black pumps and no stockings, which was very shocking for the time. She's walking with one hand in her pocket; I think I'd been influenced by Bogart and Bacall in *To Have and Have Not*[21]. The pictures came in and I got a call from my boss, Nancy White. She put the picture with the hand in the pocket on her desk and said, 'What's going on here, Polly?' I was – and still am – very naive to a degree, and I just said, 'What are you trying to say Nancy?' And she said, 'We don't publish a picture that implies that something is going on with her hand in her pocket.' I didn't know what the hell she was talking about! So I picked up the phone and called Dick and he said, 'Masturbation, Polly!' I was so shocked; I said, 'I never thought of that, I don't have a dirty mind. Did *you* think of that?' And Dick just said, 'Of course! And Nancy White clearly did, too!'

It seems that fashion photography's most iconic images are often born out of mistakes, happy accidents, the unplanned. I'm curious to know your thoughts on this.
I'd say the planning, if that's the correct term, is my responsibility, and the photographer's responsibility to woo the model. And without that there is no chemistry; there is no excitement; there is no possibility of the unplanned moments you refer to. The model is dressed – she's in Dior, she's in Saint Laurent, it doesn't matter – she feels beautiful, she feels wanted, let's go. So once you're in that moment, the mistakes and the accidents can happen. And if there's a mistake – I left a body pin in the dress – so what? Leave it in, don't take it out! So a bra strap is showing, let it show! It's exciting. I remember shooting in Saint-Tropez with Helmut and I put a black bra underneath the model's naive little gauze top, and Helmut saying, 'Brilliant! Black bra! Brilliant, Polly!' Ultimately, imperfection is a good thing if it works, but it is up to you to create the tension and the chemistry in which it *can* work. I was always very lucky. With Avedon, Penn, Newton and later on, Steven Meisel and Steven Klein, the magic was there.

Can you give me a specific example of the wooing, the creating of tension and chemistry?
The snake picture with Nastassja Kinski is the obvious example. I was in LA with Dick, taking what I thought were pretty mediocre fashion pictures with her. I'd seen Nastassja before and watched her movies, and I felt that here was a really strange, beautiful, young woman, and I wanted to express that in the pictures. I wasn't thinking about the clothes or the ambiance, I was simply thinking, 'What do I want to have going on with Nastassja Kinski in the shot?' So I asked her if she had any favourite hobbies or anything she liked that kind of turned her on. And she said, 'Oh yes, I like snakes.' I asked her if she wanted to do a picture with one, and she said, 'Yes, but I'd like it to be a really big, beautiful snake, and I would rather be naked.' Now, I don't know if you've ever held a snake… it is so erotic, you cannot imagine, it's like holding your lover's penis, it really is. And so Nastassja lay down and the handler passed her the snake. And the magic happened: it started to wind around her body and I just couldn't believe it. Oh my god! When it got to her ear, it kissed it with its tongue, and Dick caught it on camera. One single frame, and the sitting was over. I was crying, literally. It was such an emotional moment, that came from a perfectly banal shoot. Not only did I let go, but Nastassja let go, the snake let go, Dick let go. Just one of the magical things that I was lucky enough to witness.

Besides Avedon, you also worked with Irving Penn, whose approach was

'My first assignment was a whole new level: five weeks in Japan with Avedon and Veruschka. It was the most expensive shoot Condé Nast ever did!'

'I asked Nastassja Kinski if she wanted to do a picture with a snake. She said, 'Yes, but I'd like it to be a really big snake, and I'd rather be naked."

known to be totally different. Tell me about creating chemistry in his particular environment?
Penn's studio was all about calm and silence. There was no music, no smoking, no nothing allowed. But I remember one instance of breaking that with Leslie Winer[22], a young model who people said was a drug addict. She arrived one day and asked if she could bring a friend and I said, 'Yes, but on the condition that you both remain quiet and don't smoke.' Well, of course, they were both chain-smokers; her boyfriend sat at a little dressing table sketching, and they'd go off the bathroom to shoot up or whatever. She'd come out, go down to the studio, and then completely woo Penn because she was high and very expressive – it's always stuck in mind because that wasn't Penn's style at all.

You obviously witnessed many changes in the magazine and fashion industries over the years you were working. How did you experience this evolution? And how did you continue to remain clued-up, curious, enthusiastic?
When I left *Vogue* the second time, it was because Anna Wintour brought in Grace Coddington. We were both very outspoken about the fact that it wasn't working having two creative directors, so I moved on to *Allure*, which was a very difficult spot for me. I mean, in that environment, you learn mediocrity, and you hear about business being everything. But within a culture that's led by the bottom line, I always felt that I had to exercise my curiosity even more. So I'd make a point of seeking out young talent, and going to the little shows they'd have in SoHo lofts. It was out of behind a designer's work if it's something interesting.

What about in Europe?
I always went to see Martin Margiela, who was a total innovator, or those incredible Comme des Garçons shows; the ones that everyone talks about now, even though Anna Wintour never ever went along. The show that sticks in my mind was the one when Rei Kawakubo distorted the body by transforming these cute cotton gingham summer clothes with lumps of cotton[24]. It was childlike, yet grown-up, and you'd be thinking, 'It this fashion? Is this an art performance?' I felt such an affinity with those kind of collections.

Do you see that sense of daring in fashion editors today?

'I had to make Leslie Winer feel beautiful and turn her on, because I was about to send her downstairs in front of Irving Penn's camera.'

When the shoot was over, the boy Leslie had with her tossed all his sketches in the wastebasket, and they left. Turns out he was Jean-Michel Basquiat!

This was in New York, right?
No, this was in Paris in the early 1980s. Oh, he was so adorable, just such a wonderful face; they were giggling and so high and making out, and he was under her skirt. These are the sort of things that you just deal with on set, and I sort of ate it all up because I felt that there was a spirit that happens in the dressing room, and an energy that you have to ignite. As I mentioned before, you need to make the model feel beautiful and interesting; you have to turn them on, because you're about to send them downstairs in front of Irving Penn's camera.

Did it pay off? Did you get to see some significant designers early on in their career?
I remember one time that [fashion PR] Keisha Keeble called me and said, 'You have to come and see this guy's work'. His name was Stephen Sprouse[23]. I walked in and he seemed completely high, but I was so stunned by the colour. The clothes were almost manly. I mean, there were leggings and a T-shirt and a man's coat in fuchsia, but I'd always respond to something as striking as that. The point is, you've just got to go out and see it for yourself, and get curiosity, but also that little thought in my mind that's always saying, 'How do you know this isn't going to be the next thing?' It might be good or it might not, but it's the 'might' that you are there for.

Camilla Nickerson, who I admire, continues to be daring. But today there isn't much work out there for minds like that, and how they see the world. I have great respect for Anna Wintour, but she likes 'pretty'. And today she is so big that her magazine still sets the tone for so much else. I'm sorry, it doesn't turn me on. Why would it?

What about today's photographers?
Certain things interest me a lot. For example, I'd love to know who shoots today's Yves Saint Laurent advertising.

It is Collier Schorr.
I think that work is fantastic. There's a picture of two girls kissing: you are not aware of the clothes – you're not *meant* to be aware of them – but you can't help stopping and thinking about Yves Saint Laurent. It's not about any specific garment; it's about the world that woman inhabits, and that's a Saint Laurent world.

Do you miss the camaraderie, the sense of community that comes with fashion?
Goodness, no; I am a loner. I became that way over the years because I didn't feel like I was meshing with what that working environment wanted.

Like a self-prescribed isolation.
Yes. I would be very genial on shoots, but at night I'd go back to the hotel, order room service and think about the following day. That was my constant responsibility: I've had all these privileges, now I've got to use them visually. I don't mean with conceit, just with straightforward honesty. Does that make sense? Before you came here today, I wrote down some notes – as much for myself – about how I consider the way that I work, and the way I see the world, then as now. [She reads from a notebook] 'Adjusting, keeping quiet and always moving on. The push and pull of making one's voice heard, but always listening, because that's the game, especially when you're not the boss. And, finally, never being a pessimist. Optimism always prevails.'

That's wonderful. Finally, are there moments today when you think, 'I'd like to get out there and do a shoot'?
[Laughs] Well, I'm 92 now… but let's just say I get teased by the idea every once in a while.

1. 'It was after the Civil War, that Wetzel the custom tailor began measuring celebrities,' says a 1944 advertisement for the label. It wasn't until the 'Bicycle Era', however, that Wetzel had 'his great idea that men's clothes might be comfortable. Fifty years have now passed since Wetzel made his humanitarian discovery. Stiffness and passing in men's clothing have gone. But Wetzel workers are always busy devising new conveniences in tailoring'. At the time, a Wetzel suit cost $155 (about $2,150 in 2016 dollars); to get one at Saks Fifth Avenue, you simply took the 'express elevator to the Sixth Floor'.

2. The Havana Country Club was transformed into a music and arts institute after the Cuban Revolution that brought Fidel Castro's Communist regime to power; its well-regarded golf course was dug up. This may be why, when Castro and Che Guevara had a round of golf in 1961, they played the city's Colinas de Vilareal course. Guevara beat Castro by shooting a 57-over-par round of 127.

3. Juan-les-Pins is a seaside resort on the Côte d'Azur. Founded in 1882, it became particularly popular among expatriates during the Jazz Age.

4. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a middy is a 'woman's or child's loose blouse with a sailor collar'.

5. Polly Mellen attended Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut. The exclusive all-girls school was founded in 1843 by Sarah Porter, a pioneer in women's education. Polly's fellow alumnae include Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Barbara Bush, re-sortwear pioneer Lilly Pulitzer, and actress Gene Tierney.

6. Helmut Newton told the *New York Times* in 2003 that he was delighted by how many *Vogue* readers cancelled their subscriptions after 'The Story of Ohhh…', which featured 'a man, two girls and a dog', appeared in 1975.

7. Lisa Taylor began modelling in 1971 and became one of the faces of the era. She is perhaps now best known for one photograph, which featured in 'The Story of Ohhh…', in which she is sitting on a sofa, wearing a Calvin Klein dress, and staring with undisguised lust at a man.

8. Founded in 1826, New York department store Lord & Taylor boasts of being the 'first retailer with the vision to move to Fifth Avenue', and, perhaps, more importantly, 'the first to install an elevator'.

9. *Mademoiselle*, which was published between 1935 and 2001, was a magazine for young women and known for both its fashion coverage and its literary bent. It published short stories by authors including Truman Capote, Flannery O'Connor, James Baldwin and Joyce Carol Oates. In 1952, Sylvia Plath won the magazine's short-story competition; the prize of a month-long stint as a guest editor at the magazine became the basis of her novel, *The Bell Jar*.

10. Carmel Snow began her career as an assistant fashion editor at *Vogue* in 1921, before jumping ship to *Harper's Bazaar* in 1932. She is widely credited with transforming the latter by bringing in Alexey Brodovitch as art director and hiring photographers such as Martin Munkacsi and Louise Dahl-Wolfe (see footnote 11), and writers including Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Parker. (She also discovered Diana Vreeland, on the dance floor of the St. Regis Hotel in 1936.)

11. Fashion and portrait photographer Louise Dahl-Wolfe's work was featured in the Museum of Modern Art's first-ever photography exhibition in 1937. She worked for *Harper's Bazaar* from 1936 to 1958, shooting 85 covers and 600 colour pages. She died in 1989, aged 94.

12. Located at 713 Madison Ave, between East 63rd and East 64th.

13. When British society photographer Patrick Lichfield died in 2005,

the *Daily Telegraph*'s obituary read: 'underneath the absurd bouffant hairdo – which caused the humorist Craig Brown to suggest that Lichfield must be a long-lost brother of the entertainer Lionel Blair – could be found an immensely likeable, friendly and straightforward ex-Grenadier officer. If not over-endowed with intellectual gifts, he had an enthusiastic capacity for hard work and an engaging determination to make the best of his talents.'

14. Model Veruschka was born Countess Vera von Lehndorff-Steinort in 1939 and was described by Richard Avedon as 'the most beautiful woman in the world'. The results of the trip to Japan with Avedon and Polly Mellen were published in the October 1966 edition of US *Vogue* as: 'Vogue's Eye View: The Girl in the Fabulous Furs.' The story's introductory text read: 'In a fashion year of glorious furs this is the girl to watch. She's celebrated here and on the next twenty-six pages in *Vogue*'s fashion adventure, "The Great Fur Caravan," which began – as you see here – when The Girl struck North from Kyoto Station, where the famous "Bullet Express" streaks to Tokyo.'

15. Babs Simpson was a legendary fashion editor at *Harper's Bazaar* and, from 1947 to 1972, at *Vogue*.

16. Nearly 20 years after his death, Akira Kurosawa remains perhaps the most celebrated Japanese film director of all time. His features with actor Toshirô Mifune – including *Rashomon*, *Seven Samurai* and *The Hidden Fortress* – have proved particularly influential, inspiring, among others, George Lucas for the *Star Wars* films.

17. Serge Lutens is a photographer, filmmaker, make-up artist and perfumer. He first worked for *Vogue* Paris in the early 1960s, collaborated with photographers including Avedon and Guy Bourdin, and labels including Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior, and Shiseido. He created an eponymous make-up and perfume brand in 2000.

18. The fashion story entitled, 'There's More to a Bathing Suit than Meets the Eye' was published in the May 1975 issue of US *Vogue*.

19. Alexander Liberman (1912-1999), born in Kiev, educated in London and Paris, emigrated to New York in 1941, and began working for *Vogue* in 1943.

20. Model Suzy Parker is sometimes seen as the first ever supermodel, and in the 1950s, was said to be the world's highest-earning model. The one-time face of Chanel, she named one of her daughters, Georgia Florian Coco Chanel.

21. On a fishing trip, director Howard Hawks made a bet with Ernest Hemingway that he could make a good film from the writer's worst novel. The director won when *To Have and Have Not* was released in 1944. (Hemingway paid up.) The film starred Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, in her screen debut; she was cast after Hawks spotted her in a photo taken by Louise Dahl-Wolfe (see footnote 11).

22. Model and musician Leslie Winer's cult debut album *Witch* was completed in 1991, but not released until 1993, which, as Pitchfork noted when it was re-re-released in 2014, 'puts it in the odd position of being both ahead of its time (during its long pre-release circulation) and behind it (on its release in a country about to be awash in trip-hop)'.

23. Fashion designer and downtown darling Stephen Sprouse is today perhaps best remembered for the 'graffitied' bags he designed for Louis Vuitton in 2000, which came to define Marc Jacobs' reinvention of the French label. Sprouse died aged 50 of heart failure in 2004.

24. Comme des Garçons' Spring/Summer 1997 show, *Body Meets Dress*, is sometimes commonly known as the 'lumps and bumps' show.

Polly Mellen and Richard Avedon on the way to Japan and on the set of 'The Great Fur Caravan' shoot, 1966
Photographer unknown

‘Is Bruno Mars playing a Victoria’s Secret show anything to do with fashion?’

The masters of catwalk music, Michel Gaubert and Frédéric Sanchez, on why it’s more than just choosing a tune.

By Jonathan Wingfield
Illustrations by Jean-Philippe Delhomme

DJs? Sound artists? Sound designers or directors? *Illustrateurs sonores*? However they're described, Michel Gaubert and Frédéric Sanchez remain fashion's go-to music men. With almost 60 years of experience soundtracking runway shows between them, their respective client lists are a who's who of the iconic and influential. Gaubert works with the likes of Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Loewe, Céline and Raf Simons; while Sanchez collaborated for many years with Martin Margiela, and continues to do so with Prada and Comme des Garçons.

In an era where every other curator-art director-blogger-influencer is a self-proclaimed DJ, Gaubert and Sanchez bring not just experience, but the desire and talent to create more nuanced, considered and complex soundscapes – those that can subtly alter the mood of a space and the perception of a collection. Gaubert loves to rework, remix and mash up genres into new and unexpected pieces, while Sanchez is known for using complex loops, collages and delivering his own compositions.

System brought them together in Paris to compare musical notes.

Part One
'While my friends were busy dismantling car engines, I was studying record sleeves in my bedroom.'

As kids, was music something that facilitated a social life for you, or was it more of a solitary activity?

Frédéric Sanchez: For me, music was totally personal, to be consumed when I was alone, because I was probably a bit autistic as a child! It wasn't something I shared; I didn't make mixtapes for friends or anything like that.

Michel Gaubert: It was a bit of both for me. In the 1970s, music culture in France was still defined by the idea of 'tribes': you'd have the kids who'd listen to Led Zeppelin, then those who'd listen to James Brown. And they rarely crossed over. The key thing that music brought me as a teenager was the broadening of my horizons. I went to live in the States for a year in the mid-1970s, which was a great era for music. I heard so many fantastic things – the Temptations, Al Green, jazz – that I would never have had the access to in France because of that closed attitude of the tribes. It opened my ears.

Which specific elements of music culture resonated with you most?

FS: I really responded to the idea of music telling a story. The mid-1970s were the big LP era, where albums had a beginning and an end, and an entire narrative that got expressed, whereas today music is generally listened to as individual tracks.

MG: That notion of the album was still going strong in the 1980s, up to the arrival of the CD[1]. I remember going on holiday to Tunisia and falling in love with Prince's *Purple Rain*, which I had on cassette and would listen to eight times a day. That album really is a whole world unto itself, and it's hard to find that these days.

Why?

MG: Well, you couldn't put more than about 20 minutes of music on a side of vinyl without losing the sound quality. So when the CD arrived, the album length suddenly increased, and I think the dimension of the LP as a contained world got a bit lost.

When was the first time music became a conduit to images for you?

FS: Roxy Music, maybe. I loved the visual information contained in record sleeves – the graphics, the artwork, the text. I mean, while my friends were taking cars apart to see how engines worked, I was busy studying the information on record sleeves in my bedroom. I wanted to know how they were made, from start to finish: who designed the cover, where the studio was located.

MG: I used to go to London when I was about 14 to buy records. I'd go to shops on the King's Road where the bands bought their clothes; I remember going to find the Anthony Price[2] boutique simply because Roxy Music wore his stuff. And I'd track down the Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren boutique there, too. And as Frédéric mentioned, the studio location was an important element; there are so many mythical studios in London that I wanted to know about. I wanted to dive into these worlds; it was a total obsession.

FS: What's interesting about the English bands from that era, is how many of them were formed in art schools – that was a whole scene then – so they'd have a pretty sophisticated understanding of image and clothes and style, the whole visual world. People like Roxy Music knew how to play to their audience, not just through their music, but other tricks such as costume, makeup, or the *mise-en-scène* of their stage show.

MG: I totally agree. I mean, Bryan Ferry's whole look and style, mid-1970s, was fantastic – the military attire with the tie tucked in, the Ray-Bans, the cap. I remember seeing him play at the Palais du Congrès in Paris[3], and his voice was beautiful, too.

Did you have childhood ambitions of becoming a pop star or playing professionally?

MG: As a kid, I'd watch variety shows and my big dream was to be on stage with them. I couldn't sing or play an instrument, and although I tried making my own music when I was a little older, it didn't work out.

What about you, Frédéric?

FS: No, no, never! [Laughs] Initially, I didn't really know what to do with this obsession with music; it just came out of nowhere. I wasn't prepared.

Tell me about some other live concerts that really touched you; when you first understood how music could affect people's emotions, or alter the mood of a space?

FS: I remember seeing Siouxsie and the Banshees at La Mutualité in about 1982[4]; it was extraordinary, very theatrical, and the atmosphere was wild. I saw lots of gigs at Le Palace[5] around that time, too: The Virgin Prunes and the group Weekend[6]. It was incredible.

MG: The one that sticks in my mind is seeing Kraftwerk play at the Espace Cardin in 1981. It was very small and intimate, and I was sitting so close to this group of what looked like robots playing these kind of computer instruments that you couldn't really see. The next day I had to go to New York, for a wedding, and when I arrived I went to the Paradise Garage[7], without knowing anything about the place at the time. The DJ played the track 'Numbers' by Kraftwerk and all the black guys went crazy for it, dancing like mad. I thought it was just brilliant. One day I was seeing them performing like robots in Paris, and the next there was a crowd in New York who probably didn't know Kraftwerk, but just got lost in the music.

At what point did you start thinking about music in the context of fashion?

FS: I had no intention of working in fashion; I wanted to work in contemporary dance, because around that time, in 1983, there were all these great young dance companies here in Paris – people like Régine Chopinot[7] and Daniel Larrieu[8] – while in England there was Michael Clark. I was very drawn to that whole scene, but I was curious about fashion, too, because I realized very early on that there was a laboratory side to it, a bit like being in a recording studio, but with clothes.

What about you, Michel? You worked in a record shop, right?

MG: Yes, I worked in Champs Disques on the Champs-Élysées, and DJed at Le Palace at the weekend. I played in the downstairs room, which could hold about 300 people, which was good fun and hard work. I'd start at 10pm and finish at 7am, and I was DJing on my own the whole time. By 3am, I was like, 'Shit, what am I going to put on now? I've played everything.'

What were people listening to at 7am at Le Palace?

MG: That really depended on where you found yourself in the club. Upstairs was more like a dance factory, you had to play the hits, which I found pretty tiresome. And because the DJ booth was up in the mezzanine, there was no interaction with the crowd. DJing downstairs was much cooler because you could play more eclectic stuff: Public Image Ltd, Rick James, Kraftwerk…

Was that where you discovered the fashion crowd?

MG: Yes, I met a lot of friends there, some of whom were designing menswear, so when someone was showing their collection on the catwalk, I'd come along with two turntables and my records, and play for fun.

Frédéric, what was your entrée into fashion?

FS: I got a job as an assistant at Michèle Montagne's PR agency. It wasn't a big career move; it was out of the necessity to meet people and find my voice. I didn't stay there long but one of Michèle's clients was Martine Sitbon, and one day she said to Martine, 'Look, you should ask Frédéric to do your show music because he has an excellent knowledge and culture of that world.' That was the first time I started thinking about music in that way, as part of a runway show. Not long after that, I met Martin Margiela who at the time had just left Gaultier and was busy preparing his first collection. He asked me over to his house for dinner and showed me his brand dossier, which already had all the elements that

'I used to go on pilgrimages to London when I was 14 to find the Anthony Price boutique, simply because Roxy Music wore his stuff.'

'Martin Margiela loved Warhol's lo-fi films, so the soundtrack I made for his debut show was done by physically cutting and splicing magnetic tapes.'

we now associate with Margiela – it was all there in that very first collection in 1988. All of a sudden, that opened the field for me in terms of what I could do with sound. Martin worked a lot with Super 8 film, so I started working with magnetic tapes that I would physically cut and splice together.

Is that how you made the first Margiela soundtrack?

FS: Yes, that became the soundtrack for Martin's first show, and it also established my way of working, with this notion of collage – the anti-mix, if you like. We worked on that first soundtrack for two months: Martin wanted things with a very specific mood and effect. He loved the kind of lo-fi approach of Warhol's films, so I started doing that with the sound as well; initially, with obvious things like The Velvet Underground, but then more experimental music, such as Meredith Monk[9]. By the end, there were about 25 different tracks incorporated into that first soundtrack.

How closely did Martin want you to evoke the physicality of his actual collection in the music?

FS: That was definitely part of it; the mix of imagery and physical things, too. In particular, the fabrics in the collection, and things like pleats, which he loved, and wanted to somehow express within the music.

Did it come naturally for you to think like that, too?

FS: Yes, because already when I was a kid I'd made cassettes using just one track; if I loved only 10 seconds of a track, I'd record just that section, and use it again and again, to make loops. It was almost like a freeze-frame of a movie image at the most emotional moment. And that was the sort of thing I created for Martin.

So you were already exploring the idea of sound beyond just playing a track from start to finish.

FS: At the first Margiela runway show you could hear the crackling of the record, that was as important as the track itself. Then we pushed that idea: I remember a few seasons later, when Martin presented the collection in an abandoned Métro station[10], and for that one, there wasn't even any music. I think I must have taken about 50 records of live recordings – classical, jazz, pop, everything – and I just extracted the moments when you could hear the audience. I cut them all up and stuck it together to create a sort of crescendo. It was good, it felt experimental, and it worked.

Michel, when did you start producing music for a paying fashion client?

MG: I think it was October 1989. I started working with Karl Lagerfeld, who I knew through Champs Disque because his office was just along the Champs-Élysées from the store – we were at number 84, he was 144.

Would Karl come shopping for records a lot?

He came in the mornings and would buy cartloads of them, like he does with books, furniture, everything. Then one day he said, 'Michel, would you do the music for my next show? I want something similar to the Malcolm McLaren record, 'House of the Blue Danube.'[11] I listened to the track but thought, 'I'm not going to do the same thing.' I ended up mixing a whole bunch of different things: De La Soul mixed with Pavarotti, Jessye Norman, Neneh Cherry… but everything in the spirit of Karl Lagerfeld. It was quite out there.

When did you first get asked to work for Chanel?

I was still working at Champs Disque when he asked me. One night, at about one in the morning, I got a call out of the blue: 'Hi Michel, it's Karl. I've been listening to the music for the Chanel show tomorrow and it's terrible; can you come and save it?' I said, 'Yes, sure.' The problem was, I'd taken a sleeping pill earlier on and wasn't sure at all how I was going to manage. Karl just said, 'Hold on, I'm going to pass you over to Diane de Beauvau[12]; she'll explain everything you'll need to know.' So I found myself at 5am at Diane de Beauvau's place on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, still drowsy from the sleeping pill, and with the Chanel show starting a few hours later. Luckily, we found something that Karl liked and I've been working with Chanel ever since.

Frédéric, what about the start of your long-term collaboration with Prada?

I actually started working with Miu Miu just prior to starting with Prada. In October 1994, I was in New York producing the music for both Marc Jacobs and Anna Sui's runway shows, and as Miu Miu was about to do its first runway

"Hi Michel, it's Karl. The music for tomorrow's Chanel show is terrible. Can you come and save it?' 'Sure,' I said, but I'd just taken a sleeping pill.'

show, also in New York, they contacted me. A year later, Miuccia Prada asked me to work on the Prada show in Milan, which I was super excited about because I felt that the Prada world transcended fashion and moved into the realm of contemporary art. When I saw the colours and textures of the collection – which were verging on the garish and synthetic – it immediately made me think of a young group at the time called Stereolab[13]. I felt that their music resonated with what Miuccia Prada was doing with fashion.

Part Two
'Some designers are nervous about revealing their taste in music.'

Let's talk about your working methods today. When you start discussing music with a new client, is it generally a broader conversation or is it straight into the designer saying, 'I love techno, I'm not into jazz; I like this track, this one not so much?'
MG: I find it's often a conversation about everything *apart* from music. For example, the first time I met Phoebe [Philo], we talked about family, friends, the past – basically, everything unrelated to music – and when the conversation finally did turn to music, it was more about music that we shared an interest in, rather than specific ideas for the show. That came later. I can't be sure, but I guess if designers knew exactly what they wanted, then they wouldn't need people like me.

Is it important to find shared interests, tastes, common ground, in order to trigger the dialogue with a designer?
MG: Before I met and started working with Jonathan Anderson, I loved what he did; it struck me as significant, right from the very beginning. I worked for Jonathan for a year before actually meeting him, we communicated by e-mail. I couldn't get to London because of schedule clashes, so Jonathan would send me images of the collection, along with a series of amazingly specific adjectives – these great things like 'mathematical aristocrat'. I'd send things back over to him and he'd respond with, 'Love that one, that one too, don't like that, not sure about that…' When we did finally meet, he immediately put me at ease and the dialogue has always taken us to find what I think are interesting soundtracks, whether for his own brand or for Loewe.

Looking at a fashion designer's work from a distance, are you able to perceive what they like in terms of music? Is there a connection in that way? Or is there a significant discrepancy?
FS: There's often discrepancy. To be honest, there aren't that many fashion designers for whom music is so important. For every Marc Jacobs, Anna Sui or Martine Sitbon, who've all used music to communicate their values, there are many others for whom that's not the case. I've listened to tracks nonstop for hours with Marc Jacobs, whereas other designers are nervous about even revealing their taste in music. Either way, it's the dialogue you establish with the designer that's important.

For someone like Raf Simons, who has always demonstrated his passion and understanding for music and its peripheral culture, how do you approach working with him, Michel?
MG: The key thing with Raf is that he has extremely precise tastes and references – whether that's aesthetic, cultural or the actual music itself. As you say, music is very much central to his world; it's something vital to him. Raf grew up with music, and music culture fascinates him, whether that's rap culture or rock or acid house. This is a guy who'd go clubbing at Boccaccio[14] in Belgium in the early 1990s, and discovered that whole acid-house scene for himself; that's probably why he loves Mark Lecky's film *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore*[14] so much. Raf and I have talked together a lot about different clubbing eras and cultures – from northern soul to disco to gabber[16] – and what people wear, how they get ready, why they do this or that. So in selecting music for his shows, we'll exchange very precise ideas and references, then move off into completely different directions.
FS: The more I work on shows, the more I realize that beyond the music itself, I need to tell a story – it has to go through that channel, that conversation.

Does that conversation alter significantly depending on the collection a designer is presenting?
FS: Not really, because it's rare that a house will show me the clothes. The only house where I really get to see them is Comme des Garçons; Rei Kawakubo *wants* me to see the clothes.

What about at Prada? How has your collaboration and dialogue with the house grown over the past 22 years?
FS: At Prada, the dialogue is everything. I mentioned before the idea of fashion operating like a laboratory of ideas, and this really is central to Prada's activity. There are long discussions; it's fundamental to the process. We talk about everything, from the collection and the runway-show concept to things totally unrelated. We find an idea, destroy it, find another idea, develop that; it's an ongoing process.
MG: It feels the same with me at Chanel. That's why it works so well, I think. It's this feeling of being part of something; you're not just employed like a tool for music.
FS: You have to understand what people want, and the longer a working relationship develops, the more intuitive that understanding becomes.

Am I right in thinking that cinematic references are quite commonplace, considering film is the obvious convergence of storytelling, image, sound, and *mise-en-scène*.
FS: When we did the Miu Miu show four years ago, the theme was loosely based on *Belle de Jour*[19], and because it took place in a *hôtel particulier* on Avenue Foch, the idea was to only use film dialogue and no music, because it just worked so well with the mood and intimacy of the setting.
MG: That reminds me of Jonathan Anderson's Loewe show in March 2016. It took place at UNESCO in the décor of an imaginary female art-collector's apartment, with specific furniture like Noguchi tables and George Platt Lynes[20] photos on the wall. Benjamin Bruno, the stylist who works with Jonathan, had recently been hypnotized to stop smoking, and he suggested using the spoken-word hypnosis recording as part of the show music. The sound in the venue was so good that everyone became totally entranced by this hypnotic recording, the words were all about taking a journey – being by the sea, running and so on – and after a few minutes the voice suddenly announces, 'You are now a non-smoker!' The music I put to that was a kind of pastoral Michael Nyman piece, a bit like a TV ad for air freshener. The people at the show were affected because we managed to take them somewhere, yet they had no idea where they were going.

In the history of the fashion catwalk, what soundtrack or music, if any, was used for those early couture shows? Wasn't it more a spoken-word presentation of the looks?
MG: For many years, there wasn't any music. I think it was Courrèges who was one of the first to use music, because he choreographed his runway shows and put music to them. But with Chanel, there wasn't any for a long time. Even Saint Laurent, at the beginning when they were in the Rue Spontini, I don't think there was any music, I think that happened later. And the shows lasted for hours. Literally! At the time of Cristóbal Balenciaga, a show could last up to two-and-a-half hours.
FS: I think it was generally muzak or classical music early on. I've recently been looking at footage of Sonia Rykiel shows from the 1970s that took place in the boutique and you see Sonia Rykiel, perched on the stairs, talking into a microphone, in-between bits of music. She wrote all the text herself then presented it. It's great.

To what extent does the choice of venue determine what you propose?
FS: It's very important; it totally changes the perception of the story. The Miu Miu film-dialogue soundtrack could

Does it ever start with a specific track or the name of a particular artist suggested by the designer?

'I've spent hours with Marc Jacobs listening to the same track non-stop, whereas other designers are nervous about even revealing their taste in music.'

'Raf is a guy who'd go clubbing at Boccaccio in Belgium in the early 1990s; he discovered that whole acid-house scene for himself.'

never have been done in the bigger Place d'Iéna venue where Miu Miu now shows. It worked because of the setting, the intimacy, the story.

MG: In the opposite way, Chanel's ready-to-wear shows at the Grand Palais are presented to 2,500 people, so the music has to be able to connect on a big scale. It couldn't just be a string quartet in the corner; it has to fill the place. The Grand Palais has very difficult acoustics; it's taken a long time to find the right way to do the sound there, and of course, that also changes from season to season depending on the décor and concept that Karl chooses.

For those Chanel shows, is it a constant dialogue between yourself and Karl? I'm guessing you no longer get the frantic call from him the night before?

very testing when there are too many people involved. Everyone has an opinion and there comes a point when I simply cannot listen to what everyone's proposing.

Frédéric, how is your work with Prada different now to when you started?

FS: I just think we try to go a bit further each season, push ourselves into places that might have seemed uncomfortable before. For example, for the Fall/Winter 2014 show, the starting point was Fassbinder's films and Pina Bausch's choreography. But we then started developing an entire *mise-en-scène* that played with the idea of space and performance. I transcribed some of Kurt Weill's work[21], which was then interpreted by musicians and the actress Barbara Sukowa[22], while I added some

the best solution, even if they're clealy not into it?

MG: It depends. If it's a client that I love, and whose clothes I think I really understand, and for whom – in my opinion – the soundtrack plays a significant part in the show, then yes, I will always fight for something.

Are there ever instances when you'll play something you really don't like at all personally, but that you know works for the brand?

MG: Not often. There are times when it's painful because people think you're just a DJ machine, and that doesn't really interest me. Then again, I always think the music that I play is right for the event I'm playing at. It might be something I don't normally like, but it works in that context.

FS: I agree that there are times when it's not your own personal taste, but what *is* personal is the way that you do it, or the meaning you associate with it. For example, with the Lanvin show last season there was a Prince song; I don't particularly listen to Prince, but it reminded me of certain things, like a stage production of *Hamlet* by Patrice Chéreau[23], which had used a Prince song in the middle of it. The memory was interesting to me, and it felt right in the context of the Lanvin show.

MG: Talking of Prince, about five years ago, there was a Chanel show at the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, so I thought I'd watch Prince's film *Under the Cherry Moon*[24], as I knew it had been filmed there. So I'm watching it, thinking, 'Hang on, it looks like Kristin Scott Thomas' character is wearing Chanel.' At the end I saw in the credits, 'Kristin

'Rei Kawakubo shared one word with me – opera. But that didn't mean I could turn up the next day with an opera track. It was the *idea* of opera.'

MG: It starts with a general chat about music; it's very rare that he actually describes the collection to me. It happens in his office, which isn't all that big, and everyone is there – the team, the assistants – and everyone says what they want. Karl will give me a reference, which I'll go away and interpret and translate into something else.

FS: With me it's pretty closed, there aren't many people around. I don't like working with lots of people around me – more than 10 and I start to get anxious – because the rapport with the designer needs to be almost personal. Even though Prada operates at a very large scale, the ideation and research still takes place in a small room between two or three people. That's what continues to make it so interesting.

MG: I agree with Frédéric that it can be extra pre-recorded sounds. The whole thing was performed live and as a result, became a real reflection on the idea of what a performance could entail.

Is it useful to talk with the stylist, the make-up artist, the hair stylist when you start working on a runway show?

FS: I need to have *someone* in front of me to talk to, for sure. I can't go into it blindly. But yes, I often ask about the hair, the make-up, the venue…

MG: …the shoes! That is what can define a show for me, in terms of pace, rhythm, attitude. I mean, just thinking about Chanel, the difference between flats or heels or thigh-high boots can alter the way I think about the music.

Do you ever have to fight to convince a client that what you are proposing is

Scott Thomas, dressed by Chanel', and I was like, bingo! Instinct or luck? Who knows, but it worked.

Are you in the habit of sending your designer clients music all year round, irrespective of a dialogue you're having about a particular show?
FS: No, I never send actual music, even though I make a point of maintaining a constant dialogue with the designers I work with; it's more an exchange of ideas, stories, events, emotions…
MG: I send them music all the time. In 2014, I went to see that Jonathan Glazer[25] film, *Under the Skin*, at the Cinerama Dome[26] in Los Angeles; I sat in the front row and was blown away – it was totally in-your-face, and quite trippy. The soundtrack, which is by Mica Levi[27], is absolutely fantastic, so when I got back to Paris I got hold of Raf Simons and said, 'Listen, I've seen this incredible movie, it was made for you! You've got to go and see it, and the music completely goes with your approach to music and sound.' We ended up looping five tracks from the film and using them for the entirety of the next Raf Simons show – the music was playing for an hour and a half in total: from the moment people entered the venue, standing around waiting, then during the actual show, and afterwards, right up until the last person left. Raf has since told me that he's now seen *Under the Skin* about 25 times.

Part Three
'There are days when I'm super reactive to finding new music, then others when I'm just as uninspired.'

To what extent has technology changed the way that you search for music? The choice out there is exhaustive today.
FS: As there is too much of everything, it's become difficult. You have to know what you personally want to do, and what your approach to music is, and the narratives you want to explore through music. I mean, I listen to a lot of music, but somewhere along the line you have to narrow it down with your own filter.

So it's become more of a curatorial exercise.
FS: Yes.

Where do you go to find music?
FS: A lot of time spent on the Internet, finding specialized websites and blogs. Maybe it's because the means of communication are extremely well developed now compared to 25 years ago, but there seems to be an abundance of interesting things out there.

Michel, how do you find new things? Do you say to yourself, 'I need to be in constant exploratory mode'? Or is it more like: every Tuesday is new music day?
MG: What I hear on a day-to-day basis will be things that my boyfriend, Ryan, is playing, or stuff on the radio. I'll clear a day or two to spend about 10 hours in the studio, just listening to music. There are days when I'm super reactive to finding things, then others when I'm just as uninspired. There doesn't seem to be any particular stimulation to make it work; you can't force it.

Frédéric, do you make a point of listening to music every day?
FS: No, not at all. In fact, for a while now I've been composing my own music and that's what inspires me the most; I'll look for other artists' music, based on the compositions I've been making.

Do you compose every day?
FS: Yes, I'm always composing.

With the goal of it being used in a show context, or released in some capacity?
FS: No, sometimes just for the pleasure. I've always been doing lots of things on the side – personal work, sound installations – so this was a logical next step. It doesn't feel all that different from when I was younger, making music by sticking magnetic tapes together.

And it's an isolated way of working.
FS: Oh yes, totally isolated. I've just spent the past five years living out in Normandy. I installed a studio there and was able to do a lot of work. I've used programs and instruments I didn't know before; things that are so technically sophisticated that I couldn't even describe them.

Michel, you'd mentioned that you tried composing stuff when you were younger, but it didn't work out. Have there been times when you've been tempted to compose music for a show?
MG: To be honest, no. I don't feel the need to compose, and I think I'd be much too tough on myself.

Beyond the fashion shows themselves, everyone needs so much more music content now – for films, online, events, stores. To what extent does the purity of the show music get diluted or distorted once you're selecting playlists for a retail environment on the other side of the world?
FS: Well, what's interesting is the possibility of starting with the runway show and then having that narrative branch out into many different areas across a brand, to create a bigger picture. But I've done music for Prada and Miu Miu stores, and it's a completely different setting to the runway. I mean, it's 12 hours of music a day, and it changes practically every month. It's complicated because you have to be aware of the potential sensitivities associated with different regions around the world.
MG: It's the same thing with Chanel: for stores in the USA and the Gulf countries, there's a sort of censoring that takes place. Tracks go through a computer program that identifies what it construes as inappropriate material. I had to take out a track simply because it had the lyric, 'You gotta take off your red dress.' The Depeche Mode tracks 'Master and Servant'[28] and 'Just Can't Get Enough' have both been refused, too. In fact, I've sent playlists where half of the tracks don't make it. The computer's censoring system clearly has high moral standards!

Part Four
'Does Bruno Mars playing live to thousands of people at a Victoria's Secret show have anything to do with fashion?'

The future of the fashion show remains up in the air. On one hand, some brands and designers are opting out, in favour of, say, producing a film, while others such as Victoria's Secret are staging increasingly big-scale events with live music. What are your thoughts on this?
MG: In answer to your question, I'd simply ask another question: 'Is Bruno Mars playing live to thousands of people at a Victoria's Secret show[29] anything to do with fashion?'
FS: In some respects, the scale of the runway show hasn't changed that much. In the 1980s you had Mugler doing huge shows for thousands of people.
MG: Funnily enough, just yesterday I was doing some research and came across the 1984 Mugler show at Le Zénith[30], which I actually saw live. The finale is beautiful: all angels in golden dresses and bronze wings, with tons of confetti, and then Pat Cleveland as the Virgin Mary descends from the ceiling; the music is a mix of Siouxsie and an opera concerto[31]. You watch that and by comparison the Victoria's Secret show is just one big commercial – which I've nothing against – but there's nothing artistic going on, no real content.

I'm curious to know your thoughts on Kanye West launching both a fashion collection and a new album in front of industry and public alike at Madison Square Garden.
MG: I see no interest in that sort of thing. It's his trip, why not, but I don't think it has any influence on the fashion world. There are things by Kanye that I like a lot, but I don't think that show was particularly pioneering.

To what extent does the image and the attitude of an artist influence whether you'll select their music for a show?
MG: It's always important. A show is an entirety: an attitude, a venue, a type of music, lights; everything comes together to make that work. Whether it's explicit or not, you use the image of an artist because it fits with the context, or because it makes an interesting contrast.
FS: For a while, there was a whole series of Miu Miu shows where the significance of the soundtrack artist set the tone for everything else – it was Björk one season, Kate Bush another. Everything those artists represent and express gave extra meaning to the show.

These days there are more designers, more brands, more consumers, and more music to be produced and shared than ever before. Is this a good thing?
FS: Right now, things are good. But that's because I forced myself to rethink how I wanted to work. In the 2000s, the work started to become too mechanical. At one point, so much of the creative process was happening at the last minute, and the idea of actual collaboration was compromised. It was in danger of becoming a factory operation. So I made a conscious decision to return to the working methods I'd enjoyed at the beginning of my collaborations: working two or three months in advance, actually talking to people, thinking about the process, emphasizing the element of research and the laboratory – just discovering the pleasure again.
MG: What Frédéric says resonates with me. Things have indeed become too mechanical. I found that some of the bigger but less creative environments

'I make a point of maintaining a constant dialogue with the designers I work with; it's more an exchange of ideas, stories, events, emotions...'

'When people comment that the show's music is great but they cannot recall the collection, it means something isn't working. It's not a compliment.'

place little importance on time being a key ingredient. There have been instances when I've been requested to arrive two days before the show – because the stylist consultant couldn't be there until then and you can't make any decisions without them – and I'm shown the collection, and then given an hour before the client will say, 'Right, so what are we listening to?' No, that's not how it works. I mean, I *could* do something, of course, but it won't please me, and probably won't please the client.

Finally, what is the sign of a successful runway-show soundtrack?

FS: It's when the music and all the other elements – the collection, the casting, the venue, the hair and make-up – come together, and one doesn't detract from the others. When people comment that the music's great but they cannot recall the collection, it means that something isn't working. It's not a compliment.

1. Compact-disc technology was a joint venture between Sony and Philips. This Japanese-Dutch collaboration was seen in the fact that the first CD players were launched in Japan in October 1982, while the hole in the middle of every CD is the same size as an old Dutch 10-cent coin.

2. Fashion designer Anthony Price's work dressing Roxy Music and Bryan Ferry throughout the 1970s brought him fame as an 'image-maker' and subsequent work with other musicians including David Bowie and Duran Duran (he designed the suits worn by the band in the 1982 video for 'Rio'). He today works on one-off couture commissions for private clients, including the Duchess of Cornwall.

3. Part of the band's *Country Life* tour, the concert took place on November 27, 1974, and is widely available as a bootleg. It is sometimes said to be the band's first show in Paris. In fact, Roxy Music had already played Le Bataclan on November 26, 1972, and the Palais des Sports on December 10, 1973.

4. The concert was on December 16, 1982; the support act was Parisian band, Les Désaxés.

5. Le Palace, situated at 8 Rue du Faubourg Montmartre in Paris, was bought by Fabrice Emaer, a nightclub impresario who already owned fashion favourite Le Sept. It opened on March 1, 1978, with waiters dressed in Thierry Mugler and Grace Jones singing 'La Vie en rose'. An instant legend and the Parisian equivalent of Studio 54, it became the night-time haunt of *le tout Paris*. It was used by designers for shows and parties – such as Takada Kenzo's birthday party 'Men Dress as Women, Women Dress as Men' on March 11, 1978 – and also hosted concerts including Prince's Parisian debut and one by Public Image Ltd that was released as a live album (both in 1981). The heyday of Palace ended when Fabrice Emaer died in 1983, but the club remained open until 1996. It is today a theatre.

6. Performance-art-rock band The Virgin Prunes was founded by Gavin Friday in Dublin in 1977, and released four albums, often described as 'difficult'; the group split after the release of its live album *The Moon Looked Down and Laughed* in 1987. After Young Marble Giants disbanded in 1981, vocalist Alison Statton teamed up with Mark 'Spike' Williams and later Simon Emmerson to form Weekend. The band's only album, *La Varieté*, was released on Rough Trade in 1982.

7. Paradise Garage opened at 84 King Street in Manhattan in 1977. Over the next decade, it became the centre of black and Latino LGBT culture in New York and a legend on the club scene thanks in large part to its DJ, Larry Levan. Sometimes seen as a more music-driven, less celebrity-obsessed Studio 54, Paradise Garage is considered the birthplace of New York house music, or garage.

8. In the early 1980s, dancer Daniel Larrieu worked with Régine Chopinot, a choreographer who later collaborated with Jean Paul Gaultier. In 1986, Larrieu created his celebrated piece *Waterproof* in a swimming pool in Angers, France.

9. Meredith Monk is an American composer, singer, choreographer, dancer and performance artist. The 74-year-old's music is based around her soprano voice, using modal harmonies and drones to build up complex compositions and site-specific performances. 'At its best,' wrote critic Tom Service, 'Monk's music sounds like folk music for the whole world.'

10. The Spring-Summer 1992 Martin Margiela show was held at Saint-Martin, a ghost station on lines 8 and 9, which had been closed since 1939 (apart from a short time after the Liberation). The stairways down which the models walked were lit by 1,600 beeswax candles and crammed with the show's guests (there was no seating plan). Part of the station is today home to a Salvation Army centre for the homeless; it is accessible at 31 Boulevard Saint-Martin.

11. 'House of the Blue Danube' by Malcolm McLaren and the Bootzilla Orchestra was the opening track on McLaren's fourth album, *Waltz Darling*, released in 1989. The song is a reworking of Johann Strauss's 1866 waltz 'An der schönen blauen Donau' or 'The Blue Danube' and features a driving bassline by Bootsy Collins and guitar noodling by Jeff Beck.

12. Diane de Beauvau-Craon, daughter of a Bolivian mining heiress and Prince Marc de Beauvau-Craon, was introduced to Karl Lagerfeld aged 17 by their mutual friend Jacques de Bascher. She moved to New York (where she took psychedelics with Timothy Leary), designed a 1977 couture collection (which Andy Warhol described as 'terrific'), before moving to Morocco, getting married and converting to Islam. She later returned to Paris, and began working closely with Lagerfeld. 'We never had time to understand people,' she told author Alicia Drake about that period, 'we were too busy running after illusions.'

13. Stereolab, formed in 1991 by British guitarist Tim Gane and French vocalist Lætitia Sadier, released 10 albums, including 1996 hit *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*. The band's influential sound mixed Krautrock-influenced drone-pop and 1960s-inspired melodies, with Sadier's politically inspired lyrics sung in both French and English. In 2002, bassist Mary Hansen was killed, aged 36, in a traffic accident; Gane and Sadier put the group on indefinite hold in 2009.

14. Boccaccio Life International was an early super-club situated in Destelbergen, near Gand, Belgium. First opened in 1963, it became renowned around 1986 as the place where acid house was first played in continental Europe and, more importantly, as the birthplace of New Beat, an influential mix of acid house and European Body Music (EBM). The story goes that the style began when a DJ accidently played A Split Second's 1987 track 'Flesh' at 33 instead of 45, but this is widely contested. Boccaccio Life International was closed by the local authorities in 1993.

Special thanks: Hotel Normandy.

15. Contemporary artist Mark Lecky's 15-minute film *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore*, released in 1999, tells the story of British dance music through found footage and a collaged soundtrack. *The Guardian* wrote that, with the film, Lecky 'succeeded where almost everyone else fails – in accurately conveying what it feels like to be inside a nightclub, when being inside a nightclub is the most important thing in your life'.

16. Gabber is an offshoot of hardcore techno and grew out of the early 1990s music scene in Rotterdam, particularly the club, Parkzicht. The name comes from Amsterdam slang – via Yiddish – and means 'friend' or 'mate', and was first used by DJ Funkaholic around 1992. The genre also had a specific dancing style (all arms and elasticity) and fashion (Nike Air Max, fluorescent tops and tracksuits).

17. Released in 1984, Philippe Labro's film stars Gérard Depardieu, Nathalie Baye and Carole Bouquet.

18. Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) was a Glasgow born and bred artist, architect and designer. His work with his wife, Margaret McDonald, was highly influenced by the new European style of Art Nouveau and Modernism, and perhaps more appreciated on the continent than in Britain. In 1900, the couple designed a highly regarded room for the Eighth Vienna Secession, about which the *Wiener Rundschau* newspaper wrote: 'The inner truth of these works ... seems overwhelming. The severity, purity, simplicity and zeal of these designs reveal the opposition between the lively creation of atmosphere and that factitious banality, which in certain allegedly modern work has already bored us for years.'

19. Luis Buñuel's 1967 film *Belle de Jour* tells the story of a bored, bourgeoise housewife, played by Catherine Deneuve, who works as a high-class prostitute on weekday afternoons.

20. George Platt Lynes (1907-1955) was a fashion and arts photographer, who worked in France and the US. His photographic studies of male nudes – a large number of which were given to the Kinsey Institute upon his death – remained hidden for many years. They are now considered as precursors of Robert Mapplethorpe's work.

21. German-born composer Kurt Weill (1900-1955) is perhaps best-known today for his collaborations with Bertholt Brecht, particularly *The Threepenny Opera*, which includes the song 'Mack the Knife', later covered by Louis Armstrong, Bobby Darin and Frank Sinatra. In 1933, Weill fled the Nazis and emigrated to the US where he would go on to produce a series of revolutionary and highly influential musicals, including *Street Scene* (with poet Langston Hughes) and *Love Life* (with Alan Jay Lerner).

22. Barbara Sukowa worked extensively with Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

23. Patrice Chéreau's production of *Hamlet* – in a translation by Yves Bonnefoy – opened at the Palais des Papes, Avignon, on July 7, 1988.

24. *Under the Cherry Moon* was Prince's directorial debut. The film's original director, however, was Mary Lambert, who had directed videos for Madonna, including *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* homage, 'Material Girl'. Lambert was replaced shortly after filming began in the south of France. (Her departure also saw Terence Stamp replaced by Steven Berkoff.) The film was panned upon its release in 1986. In the *New York Times*, Walter Goodman began his review: 'For all those out there who can't get enough of Prince, *Under the Cherry Moon* may be just the antidote.'

25. Jonathan Glazer made commercials and worked with Blur, Radiohead and Massive Attack before releasing *Sexy Beast*, his splendidly nasty feature debut in 2000. He has since made two features, the unsettling *Birth* (2004) with Nicole Kidman, and *Under the Skin* (2013), with Scarlett Johansson.

26. The Cinerama Dome at 6360 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, opened on November 7, 1963, with the premiere of Stanley Kramer's *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, in 70mm. The cinema is a geodesic dome (built in just 16 weeks) specially designed to show Cinerama films, a format first introduced in 1952 that used three projectors and a deeply curved screen. A version of Cinerama was developed by the Soviet Union in the late 1950s and called Kinopanorama.

27. Mica Levi's music for *Under the Skin* was her first film score. The UK-born, 30-year-old musician is a member of Micachu and the Shapes, whose most recent album, *Good Sad Happy Bad*, was released in 2015. In 2016, her second film score, for Pablo Larrain's *Jackie* earned her an Academy Award nomination, and she released *Remain Calm*, an album in collaboration with cellist Oliver Coates.

28. The algorithm may have been offended by the opening verse of 'Master and Servant': 'There's a new game / We like to play, you see / A game with added reality / You treat me like a dog / Get me down on my knees.'

29. The Victoria's Secret show took place on November 30, 2016, at the Grand Palais in Paris. Bruno Mars was not the only performer; Lady Gaga performed one song and a medley, while The Weeknd sang his hit, 'Starboy'.

30. *L'Hiver des Anges*, Thierry Mugler's Fall/Winter 1984-85 show, celebrated the designer's first decade in the business. It was held at Le Zénith, a large concert venue on the edge of Paris, and was the first ever fashion show in France open to the general public. Six thousand people attended: 2,000 invited guests and 4,000 fans who paid 175 Francs (or the equivalent of nearly €50 today) to get in.

31. It also featured the 'Dies Irae' from Verdi's *Requiem*.

‘It’s a dialogue, isn’t it?’

A father and son discuss style, styling, and the looks of the season.

Interview by Andrew Pearmain
Photographs by Talia Chetrit
Styling by Max Pearmain

Previous page: Corset by Vivienne Westwood, worn with high-waisted underwear by Eres.

Styling: Max Pearmain, assisted by Laura Vartiainen. Photography: Talia Chetrit, assisted by Will Grundy. Model: Erin O'Connor at Heroes Model Management. Hair: Gary Gill at Streeters, using EIMI By Wella Professionals, assisted by Kirstine Engell. Make-up: Lauren Parsons at Art Partner.

Twice a year, stylists and editors the world over sit down, sift through images of all the collections presented in the shows six months earlier, and select the pieces they feel are going to define the upcoming season – in doing so, stamping their own sense of style on the contemporary fashion landscape. It's a process that, as ever-more shows are staged for ever-more collections in ever-more places ever-more frequently, is becoming increasingly complex. So when *System* asked Max Pearmain if he'd like to do some of that sorting for us, it was as much a pretext for him to examine and question this most commonplace and traditional of stylist assignments – shooting the 'looks of the season'.

As a contributing editor (and ex-editor-in-chief) of men's fashion title *Arena HOMME+*, in-demand stylist and co-designer, with Anthony Symonds, of art-fashion label Symonds Pearmain, Max has long had a wide-ranging vision of what modern clothing can and should be, as well as the skills to manage fashion's fine line between art and commerce, aesthetics and revenue, editorial and advertising. Which sounded like a good place to start a discussion. So we asked Max's father, Andrew Pearmain – author, academic, political commentator and one-time punk poet – to have a word with his son. The resulting conversation around Max's kitchen table takes in sartorial tribes, generational difference, and just what it is that Max does with his time. While providing the perfect weft to the weave of this season's musts, as worn by Erin O'Connor and shot by photographer Talia Chetrit.

Andrew Pearmain: I'd like to start by talking about dress sense, and where it comes from. Mine very much came from the streets of south Leeds in the 1960s, growing up and gradually coming out of absolute austerity where we had nothing, to suddenly being able to buy stuff, including clothes that said something about ourselves. For me, it was very much in a mod context, bringing together the spirit of working-class dandyism, European fashion styling, and something in there too about Jamaican rude boys[1]. It gave ordinary working-class kids a sense of style if they were able to pick it up. Where would you say your own dress sense comes from?

Max Pearmain: I'm kind of envious of yours, because I didn't have an obvious one around me. Growing up in Norwich, there weren't distinct groups of people, but one thing I did have was a very strong fashion upbringing in the shop I worked in, Philip Browne[2], and watching people interact over clothing. It got me to the core of what I'm interested in, which is the connection between fashion and reality. By that I mean giving off one signal, but meaning another. I quite like the idea of camouflage, not in the literal sense, but the codes that come with being a man, what you can and can't wear, but also what you can hint at. It's sending out clues for someone who might feel the same way as you, that's how I see dress sense. There's also an issue of practicality. I like the utilitarianism of sportswear, but also the maleness of it...

The most interesting thing is that there are 30 years between us, two people forming and developing 30 years apart. I was talking all about class, and the context for my dress sense was a definite class location in a fairly fixed society. You're talking about individual personal identity that you take on and develop. That's basically how things changed over that 30-year period. There's still stuff to play with in both contexts, so you talk about playing with masculinity, and so were we, playing with what being working class and male was all about, in a certain dandy or cissy version of that.

There is an issue of place, in that I was born in London, but we lived in Norwich. When I read *The Face* and other magazines, it was like an advert for this other place. It was always London oriented, and I used to go down to London from the age of 14. It was really exciting, without having anyone to share that with, to go and find things I'd read about. The physical journey was very important to me, actually going to London and going to find the shop where they sold these clothes I'd read about. Obviously, I couldn't afford most of what I saw, but I was lucky to have that desire. I didn't see that in other people at school, and it gives you a strong kind of motivation.

'I'm interested in the connection between fashion and reality; by that I mean, giving off one signal, but hinting at another.

It was also available to you, and I do feel a certain sense of pride in making it available to you. You were making the journey back that we'd made the other way, out of London. But by then it was more available. My generation had to create our own dress sense, whereas for you, it was almost off the peg, you could

Fisherman boots with stiletto heel
by Vetements x Manolo Blahnik.

Denim jacket by Gucci.

Dress by Céline.

go and choose. I'm not decrying that...
To be honest, I would rather have come from where you came from, because I think I would have enjoyed having those limits. The issue today is the total lack of limits.

The interesting thing historically is that we had literally nothing. I didn't have my own pair of shoes until I was five and went to school; prior to that I wore hand-me-downs. My own first personal item of clothing was a pair of Levi's that I bought with my paper-round money when I was about 13. So we had a much more limited but clearer sense of what was available, and we obviously valued it. We weren't spoiled for choice.
I definitely had an inherited sense of value from you and Mum, and I enjoyed having the desire and ambition to work towards getting that stuff. I loved working in that shop, and you could see how prized the stuff was, the Helmut Lang stuff and whatnot... We didn't have the Internet then really, no one had smartphones, so the shop was just this little fuzzy bubble you could go to. To be honest, I spent a lot of time just staring at the people who'd come into the shop, and editing stuff in my head because there wasn't a lot to do, so I was able to work out why I found something interesting. I was also incredibly impressionable; I started there when I was 14. I was in awe of certain people and how they dressed. I wore ridiculous things, for older people and in wrong sizes. It didn't look right on me, but I wanted to try it all out, like white Patrick Cox loafers with jeans with massive turn-ups that I bought in a sale because they looked like something I'd seen in a *Face* editorial.

It was as if you were playing a role, but that's what fashion and being a teenager are all about. There's also something in there about the relationship between the provincial and the capital.
Max: Yes, and I actually valued the fact that we lived outside London. I'm always bemused by people who've only ever lived in London. And Norwich did have fashion; Philip took risks with what he stocked: Helmut Lang, Alexander McQueen, Vivienne Westwood. There was a slight underdog feel to that, these exotic things in that place. But my dress sense relates to all that – what it comes down to is, I'll show you this, but it might be something else, and if it's something else, do you get it? Do you understand what this means? Or what that means? And if you do understand, does it affect you, and if so how? It's a dialogue, isn't it?

I don't want to bring you down to earth too much, but we were always aware that the clientele was a certain type – blokes with quite a lot of ready cash, footballers...
There were guys who worked on the oil rigs at Great Yarmouth[3] who'd come in to buy their clothes at Philip Browne. And I totally loved that idea, that these guys from Yarmouth were wearing Walter Van Beirendonck[4], and, you know, paying in cash. There's aggression in those undercurrents of menswear, like football casuals; you've got to be ready to fight if you're going to dress up extravagantly. Not that I ever did... but it's a Bowie-ism.

How does the fashion industry work? Where do ideas, different styles come from? What gets chosen above something else as the look for the season?
It's fairly democratic. In blunt terms, there's talent and commerce, some people who know how to present an idea that's both intriguing and commercially viable. That's why fashion is so interesting, because it's a collision between selling and seeing who can do it creatively; it's art and commerce mixing. In the context of the here and now certain designers can do that, Phoebe Philo, for example, Raf Simons, Jonathan Anderson; people who can be incredibly personal with their output, but also have heavy commercial clout. They create something seductive and interesting. Alongside that, comes a huge parallel machine for production and marketing that will say, we need this handbag to sell in this region, for example. That can also become quite dangerous because the marketing starts to dominate the creative, so that balance needs to be one that works. Partnerships really matter between the business leader and the designer, as does the amount of freedom the latter is given. For example, Pierre Bergé and Yves Saint Laurent were lovers and business partners and worked together to create space to grow both creatively and commercially. Demna Gvasalia at Vetements and his brother, Guram, who controls the business side would be another, contemporary example. The fascination is in the dance between business and creation.

'I wore ridiculous things, for older people, like white Patrick Cox loafers with massive turn-ups. It didn't look right on me, but I wanted to try it all out.'

Shorts by Undercover.

Top and skirt by Prada.

Where does the money come from and where does it go to?
Money generally comes from perfume and handbags, accessories. It's the bluntness of duty-free product essentially, but you need the seduction of the fashion catwalk collection to support the accessibility of the perfume and handbags.

Which explains the Symonds-Pearmain 'Iron Lady' perfume...
Yes, but it's what we love about it, too, the strange bluntness. Yes, it's about shipping perfume, but you're also presenting this beautiful narrative in front of it.

So the perfume is a kind of tax that enables you to do what you really want to do. Where does all the money go? I was always aware as you were working your way up as an intern, and then even as an editor of a magazine, that it certainly wasn't going to you! But there was lots of it sloshing around. The perfume sustains the creativity, but there must be an element of profit that somebody extracts…
People at a certain level of fashion earn a lot of money, whether that's the the photographers, the stylists, the art directors, and obviously the designers themselves. Just like in the majority of organizations, that money generally goes to the people who are deemed the most qualified. Well, in most cases anyway! [Laughs]

Antonio Gramsci[5] wrote, 'The display of luxury is not fashion; great fashion comes from industrial development.'

Great industrial economies create a fashion industry, like the French and the English in the 19th and early 20th centuries...
That's also because fashion is celebratory, the cherry on top of successful societies, you need something to wear to the dance, don't you? It comes with the development of taste. In relation to that idea of taste and the consumption of taste comes one of my favourite quotes. Cindy Sherman was talking about a set of self-portraits from early in her career, and when asked about them her explanation was, 'I just thought maybe I'd make some really disturbing pictures that people wouldn't want to hang on their walls.' I love that because it's so problematic. Imagine Cindy Sherman actually producing something that people wouldn't hang; it wouldn't be possible now – she's Cindy Sherman the successful and established artist, it would get displayed regardless. So the perception of your content is dependant on your status, and fashion is very status driven.

Even so, I think she was able to say that having already established herself on the top of a thriving industrial economy, such as America still was. I want to ask you about a sense of place, which I very definitively have, but you travel the world at a certain cosmopolitan level. I'm often struck when you say you've been in Paris, which is such a special place, but it feels like you could have been anywhere. Do you have a sense of where you are at any particular time, and does that in any way influence your fashion?
My sensibility is wholly English, and I really notice that in other countries, especially America. English sensibility and style are great, because it's about saying one thing and meaning another. Appropriation is a very English thing. There's a literalism in America, and they're confused by that aspect of Englishness at times

The way we take bits and pieces of other stuff...
That's why I like styling, because it's about amalgamating several messages and creating a new one. You've got a pallet of colour to work with, and with that you can mix, and play and reinterpret.

On the one hand, that requires a degree of confidence in yourself and your own culture; not to have to retreat into it but be able to mix it all up and stick other stuff on top. On the other hand, it might also indicate a certain lack of self-awareness that you're disguising and covering up through appropriation from other cultures. There is a sense about Englishness, that it's both empty and over-full.
Max: That's multiculturalism versus provincialism.

Yes, and that's what Brexit is all about, big city versus small town, whether you are closed off from the world or open to it.
For me, Englishness has always been about being open to the world, then making it English. It's humour, it's camp, playing with roles and character. Kenneth Williams and *Carry On*

'There's aggression in the undercurrents of menswear, like football casuals; you've got to be ready to fight if you're dressing up extravagantly.'

T-shirt by Paco Rabanne,
worn with high-waisted underwear by Eres.

Dress by Loewe.

Top by Junya Watanabe.

Trousers by Ralph Lauren.

films[6], nudge nudge, wink wink. America in contrast is more literal, and we're often suspicious of that...

We're now being told we shouldn't take Donald Trump literally; maybe he's best understood as a misplaced Englishman! The last question I want to consider is how do we restore 'cool', by which I mean the central guiding theme of modernism and modernity, with all its components of restraint, simplicity, sparseness? The thought that gave rise to this question is: looking at so many fashion shoots, including some of the stuff you've been involved in, you get somebody young and beautiful and you could dress them in anything and they're going to look interesting. Leafing through a fashion magazine, I'm just looking at young and beautiful people who've just had stuff thrown on them. There's no sense of restraint, of less is more...

There are several aspects of this shoot I've done for *System* that are all about that kind of restraint. We shot 'looks of the season', so we worked with specific looks that I deemed in my head a definition of catwalk fashion at this moment in time, and it's much more of a literal approach than I'm used to, taking quite specific things from the catwalks and putting them together very disparately on a model, who happened to be Erin O'Connor. She represented for me fashion as I was growing up. And Talia Chetrit, the photographer, is primarily an artist, and she was also interested in Erin's heritage of working with very big fashion photographers. When I look through a magazine, I'm looking for some kind of quality control by people I know and understand. It's a bit like reading music for a musician.

You're a professional...

Yes, I look for a way of handling the material within frames of reference. For this shoot, I tried to let go a bit; we dressed Erin in a way that was wholly about the product, literally pieces of the season, we gave her these hair extensions. She's a bit older, very beautiful. There were oddities to this shoot that made it interesting for me. I'm also beginning to feel more confident; I have the beginning of a context and a body of work that I can start playing with, at least in my mind.

Like a personal heritage, growing up and into yourself...

Yes, like a writer, in your case. It also links to the development of one's own taste, confidence in it.

Let me take you back a bit, because what you're actually talking about is postmodernism. That's another difference between you and me because I'm very definitely a modernist. Your generation feels able to pick and choose and throw things and see what sticks, but I feel profoundly uncomfortable with that. I have to pare things back and make conscious choices. But what I think you're also saying is that in a professional sense you do make conscious choices, but just from a broader range than I was used to.

Of course, you have to. I would like to think I treat good product that already exists with respect, then produce my own work, which can bounce off it, but not imitate it. Imitation is dangerous, but it's so close to adaptation. It's a very delicate dance within a space that's getting smaller and smaller.

And that's the problem with postmodernism, that it just exhausts itself and everything else.

There's just so much out there, you have to make intelligent choices, and push yourself to find them.

And at the end of the day it's all about the process of choice...

Sure. The role of the stylist is all about editing, and I did that to the extreme on this shoot, editing it down, but also weirdly just letting go and not putting barriers between the looks, letting the fashion be literally 'the fashion'. If that's successful… well, I'm not even sure, but I was happy to set myself that task, set that problem up and see what it looked like made real.

So you're just being a bit more relaxed about things. What we're also getting at is the central myth of postmodernism, in that it looked like it was random and actually it wasn't; there were choices being made. It made it look like everything was on an equal plane, an amalgamation of everything else, all of equal value and not discriminating...

I like the elitism of fashion – for me, fashion is a way of endorsing what you find important. It's a lot to do with not trying to explain something away, letting something be the language you're speaking in, even if it's a dialogue that a limited audience understands.

'My idea of cool was Miles Davis. He was utterly confident in his choices to the point of *not* choosing something – like the use of silence in his music.'

Shorts and T-shirt by Giorgio Armani.

Trouser-boots by Balenciaga

Dress by Altuzarra.

So that's what's 'cool' — being confident in your own choices. My absolute ideal of cool was Miles Davis, and that's what he was, utterly confident in his own choices, to the point of not choosing something, because he was famous for the use of silence in his music.

That's a fundamental principle of good styling, which even effects how you act on set and what people expect of you. But I've seen how David Sims photographs, and he can be walking away from an image as he takes it. For me, that's real talent, not constantly looking to impose oneself on the situation. He wants to remove himself at times. It's really important to keep the silences in.

1. The rude-boy movement emerged from the slums of post-independence Kingston, Jamaica, in the early 1960s. Brought to the UK by Jamaican immigrants, it became a significant cultural movement in late-1970s, as ska-influenced groups, such as The Selecter, The Specials and others on the Two-Tone Records label, hit the mainstream.

2. Multibrand fashion store Philip Browne Menswear opened in November 1986 in Norwich, UK, and since then, has 'become synonymous with experimenting'. It was once nominated for *FHM*'s Designer Retailer of the Year for East Anglia.

3. A town on the coast of East Anglia, 30 kilometres from Norwich, Great Yarmouth has a population of nearly 100,000. Until the second half of the 20th century, its economy was based on herring fishing, but today it relies on providing support services to offshore oil and gas platforms.

4. Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonck was one of the original 'Antwerp Six', alongside Dirk Van Saene, Dries Van Noten, Dirk Bikkembergs, Ann Demeulemeester and Marina Yee. He is also head of the fashion department at Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts. His website says that he is 'often "double bottomed",' but does not elaborate further.

5. Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was a (neo-)Marxist social theorist and one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party. He was imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's fascist regime and died shortly after his release of the effects of his ill-treatment. His interest in how working-class populations were not inherently revolutionary and, indeed, could support fascism led to his highly influential idea of hegemony, which sociologist Dominic Strinati describes as: 'Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the "spontaneous consent" of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups.'

6. Actor, comedian and raconteur Kenneth Williams' nasal twang and archly camp delivery were a fixture on BBC radio comedy programmes from the 1940s up to his death in 1988. Today, he is perhaps best remembered for his starring roles in the 24 parodic, double-entendre-filled *Carry On…* films, particularly his celebrated line in *Carry on Cleo*: 'Infamy, infamy! They've all got it in for me!'


BALENCIAGA

‘Menswear is a body fascist.’

Dressing for the XXXL man has always been a tight squeeze.

By Alexander Fury
Photographs by Jean Pigozzi

Photo: Garth Hovell/Jean Pigozzi

Jean Pigozzi wearing an XXXL bespoke printed silk Moschino lounge suit, made by Jeremy Scott for this story.
‘I am on my jet ski rushing to a meeting with the king of the monkeys in a mangrove in the north of Panama.’

Back in March 2000, Belgian designer Martin Margiela (the real one) showed a bunch of pretty ordinary clothes. What made them extraordinary was their size: each had been constructed on a dress form in Italian size 74 and 78 (a US size 40 and 44, respectively; hardly your standard model measurements). It wasn't the first time we'd seen this oversized stuff: Margiela himself had presented a collection expanded by varying percentages – 148, 150 or 200 – the previous season, with inserts of fabric sewn into some garments to distend and distort them. And in the 1980s, everything was big: big egos, big hair, big bucks, and big shoulders held up by big shoulder pads to fill the big houses those big-time arbitrageurs and corporate raiders were buying themselves. Giorgio Armani built a big business off them, and Chanel blew up around that time, too. But the 1990s were a decade of ninny clothes, skinny and lank and limp. Margiela's blow-up ran against received wisdom and the current style. It made big big again – in every sense – except the people inside.

It's never really gone away, that taste for expanding garments. Perhaps because it's the perfect fashion double bluff. Making everything so large only serves to emphasize the dichotomy between the body and the garment: a skinny girl looks even skinnier in a big girl's clothes. By the same logic, a too-tightly fitting garment will only serve to make you look heavier. It's an optical illusion that's become a useful fashion cliché.

At least, it has for women. But menswear? Menswear is a body fascist – and it has been for centuries. Ever since the introduction of the tailored suit – sometime around the time the 18th century turned into the 19th, after the French Revolution and in the midst of the Industrial one – suits have only suited a certain type. The ideal back then, and oddly enough, today, is the neoclassical, the nudes of Ancient Greece and Rome with their defined, muscled torsos, wide shoulders, slender hips, good legs. Wrap that up tightly in a great lump of wool, and you've nailed what every tailored suit is aiming for, and looks best on, even today. The perfect male, circa 500BC.

The issue is when a man's body type sits outside those narrow confines. If you're smaller, it's easy. The bulk is added for you; the fashion is fashioned. That's why tailoring was originally developed. Replacing highly decorated clothes made from soft silk – the embroidered juste-au-corps frock coat of 19th-century court dress – tailors instead crafted woollen coats with internalized structures of linings and interfacings, padding filling sunken chests and straightening sloping shoulders, jackets tightly double-breasted to hold in the stomach. Wool, naturally elastic, with qualities of compression and expansion woven into its fabric, could be treated with heat and steam to magically mould it to different dimensions, invisibly shrinking and swelling to give the impression of the idealized male body to even the skinniest of wearers. 'Heroes in wool' is the great phrase coined by fashion historian Anne Hollander, to reflect this third revolution, the cloth version. Psychologist J. C. Flügel called this moment when men abandoned overt embellishment and bright colours in favour of sober suiting, the 'Great Male Renunciation'.

But men also abandoned something more fundamental: a Renaissance template of masculine power, the idea that, when it comes to menswear, bigger is better. In the past, masculine bulk was desirable, even required. Heft was impressive. In 1520 at the Field of the Cloth of Gold[1], King Henry VIII of England had a 36.1-inch (size 52 in Italian) waist and 41.8-inch chest; he was aged just 28. And in 1537, his girth was not minimized, but accentuated, even exaggerated in his portrait by Hans Holbein[2]; the shoulders of the-then 45-year-old king are vastly inflated, padded and draped with jewels, trimmed with fur and embroidery, his feet firmly planted to bear the weight. His clothes resemble a palace on his back. Over 180 years later, Hyacinthe Rigaud's 1701 image of Louis XIV[3] emphasizes majesty again through mass: ermine runneth over, cloaking the entire painting right to the frame, the whole subsumed by his fashion – and therefore his body.

It was not specific to men; the rotund nude women of Rubens and Van Dyck were also full-bodied, but their corporeal fleshiness was either vulnerable or voluptuous. Centred on the belly and hips, emphasizing child-rearing qualities, this body shape was echoed in the too-familiar dress of the time, those wide-spread *paniers*, and all that folded satin, like quivering, gelatinous flesh. A full-figured female body wasn't powerful, however; it was passive – sensual, sexual, and to be consumed. The heft of the male form, by contrast, was about exerting power and presence, just as those monarchs dominated the frames of their images. For men, virility and fertility were, of course, also implied, but

Ever since the introduction of tailored suits – sometime after the French Revolution and during the Industrial one – they have only suited a certain type.

Jean Pigozzi wearing an XXXL bespoke navy-blue, single-breasted Ermenegildo Zegna suit and Tod's Gommino driving loafers in black suede – both made for this story – and his own shirt. 'At the *N. S. Harsha: Charming Journey* exhibition at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo.'

for them, it was active, aggressive and assertive.

Despite sounding like it went out of fashion with the feudal system, it didn't. Not really. Throughout the 20th century, bulk has crept in and out of menswear as a way to assert a degree of male dominance, particularly when threatened. The zoot suits of late 1940s African-American culture – capacious trousers and elongated 'drape' jackets hanging off shoulders, which Malcolm X (a zoot suiter himself) described as 'padded like a lunatic's cell' – are interesting because, for all the perceived flamboyance of their colouring and fabric, they have a traditional top-heavy male silhouette, an almost Renaissance swagger. While zoot suits underline a more general easing of the male silhouette in the same period, with boxier, roomier jackets and trousers, they are also important because of who wore them. They were sported by a disenfranchised group – people who needed to express power they didn't actually have. The XXXL had become about pretence, about the appearance of power.

That was the thinking later in the 1980s, when the look was once again revived. The extreme width of shoulders – for him, and for her – was as evocative of power in 1987 as it was in 1537. The body inside was once again bulked out, this time by the gym or steroids, but was always pushed further through the oversized clothes of Armani, and – for the creatively inclined – Yohji Yamamoto, Comme des Garçons, and Matsuda[4], tailors of choice to a then-oversized Karl Lagerfeld, among others. 'When I started a men's line in Paris, my message was very simple: let's be outside of this,' Yamamoto wrote, in his 2014 Rizzoli monograph *Yamamoto and Yohji*. 'Let's be far from our suits and ties. Let's be far from businessmen. Let's be vagabonds.' And yet, Yamamoto's vagabond looks weren't that far from those businessmen's, their sloping, eased silhouette conforming to the same sense of volume and proportion, the prevalent shape of the decade. The power exchange this time tended towards artists, rather than arbitrageurs; Jean-Michel Basquiat painted in his floppy Yamamoto suits (though he wore Armani, too).

In the mid-1990s, however, something shifted. Men began to look actively, consciously fragile; slender in themselves, their clothes were cut to emphasize the bodies within. The low waistband of trousers and high-rise of a cropped top (for him as well as her) framed the hipbones; knits clung to torsos. The man-boys of Hedi Slimane's tenures at Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche in the late 1990s, and Dior Homme from 2000, set the fashion pace. They also shifted the power of their message, from assertive XL width to the streamlined and slick. Suddenly, men didn't want to beef up, but to slim down, and exercise patterns shifted, to avoid building bulky muscle and focus instead on tone. Sizes got smaller. This was in line with the general moves in menswear since the Great Masculine Renunciation. It was a renunciation of volume, as well as decoration, away from the curve, towards the straight and narrow. It was also practical: it's easier to create clothes that hang on a slender figure than to dart and seam them around female – or, indeed, male – curves. The architecture of slender clothes is both simpler, and more industrial, as they're easier to mass-produce, and more economical.

American painter Barnett Newman[5] once asserted that if women's clothing is an art, men's clothing is a sculpture. What he meant, I think, is that womenswear by and large establishes its silhouette for the moment (the crinoline, the miniskirt, even the 1980s power suit) and tinkers on the surface of things to affect change. Or, rather, its impression. By contrast, changes in menswear are made in three dimensions. It's more difficult to change menswear, and the transformations tend to be sweeping exercises in volume, reducing or expanding, each with nuanced meaning.

Does Henry VIII's gargantuan suit of armour from 1540-something mean the same thing as a giant Vetements puffer jacket does today?

Today, there's another change afoot. Menswear is expanding again; a typically perverse reaction to a decade defined by slimming suiting, and a natural result of period of socio-economic uncertainty. (Using more fabric is a sure-fire way to bulk up your prices, as well as your garments – more cloth costs more, even if people are buying fewer pieces. That's why women's hemlines almost always drop during a recession.) But I keep being drawn back to those notions of power, and power exchange, and wondering if the bulked-up clothes we're showing today say the same things as those of the distant past. Is the masculine role static enough for us to say that Henry VIII's gargantuan suit armour, with its 51-inch waist and 54.5 inch chest, from 1540-something means the same thing as a giant Vetements puffer jacket does today? If a woman was to wear a crinoline or *paniers* – as she might have done under the influence of Christian Lacroix couture, and possibly other expensive and difficult-to-procure substances, in the

Photo: Cary Leitzes/Jean Pigozzi

Jean Pigozzi wearing an XXXL bespoke black wool Dior Homme suit, made by Kris Van Assche, and his own shirt.
'*Pain au chocolat* for breakfast with Cary Leitzes at The Shilla Hotel in Seoul, South Korea.'

mid-1980s – we wouldn't suggest she was anxious to emphasize her fecundity. (Even if she probably was out for a good time.) So why is a bolder-shouldered menswear silhouette still dubbed 'power-dressing'? Why is the assumption that a man is out for a fight?

Perhaps it is because the viewer is, nearly invariably, presumed to be a man. Those aforementioned images of fragile men are generally dubbed homoerotic, immediately assumed to be images of men made to be consumed by men. No such assumption, oddly, is made of female images, even when included in a fashion magazine with a predominantly female readership. So a man in wide-cut shoulders is presenting himself as powerful for other men, not for himself – and, perhaps, not even for women, whom it's assumed he's aiming to impress, if we're reducing it all down to Captain Caveman[6] logic of fighting and fucking.

But the voluminous men's clothes we're seeing emerge today, in the 21st century, have eschewed all these traditional connotations. More often than not, they more reveal the fragility of the men wearing them, rather than hiding it. We're not duped into believing the wearers have grown their girth themselves, like Henry VIII; they're not powerful figures, but rather reduced to something child-like (not childish, a different thing). There's a vulnerability to, say, Rick Owens' men wrapped in down-stuffed coats, or Balenciaga's XXXL boxy tailoring contrasting with skinny trousers, or wide pants balancing tightly wrapped torsos. We see the weakness inside. Today, the jig is up. Power today is embedded in the clothes – the bigger the coat, the bigger and more powerful the fashion statement, the image, you're projecting. Clothes no longer make the man; instead, it's the man who makes the clothes that has become all important. It's no longer about trying to convince an observer you're a big man; rather, that you're wearing a big brand.

1. Henry VIII and King Francis I of France met at the Field of Cloth of Gold in June 1520. The name derives from the rich and expansive tents made from 'cloth of gold', a fabric woven from silk and gold thread; each huge tent was then divided into spaces such as reception rooms, private areas, chapels and galleries by fabric hangings. The meeting, which aimed to reduce tensions between England and France, was ended after Henry challenged Francis to a wrestling match – and was soundly and quickly beaten.

2. Hans Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII is an iconic vision of kingship, imagining Henry as an all-powerful, thrusting monarch. The image was part of a mural in the Palace of Whitehall, and painted in 1537, during the darkest days of Henry's reign, when the 45-year-old king was in increasingly ill health. Considered an early example of state-sponsored propaganda, the original painting was lost to a fire in 1698.

3. Born in Catalan-speaking Perpignan, Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743) was baptised Jacint Rigau-Ros i Serra. The painter became the most sought-after Baroque portraitist in France and his 1701 portrait of the 'Sun King', Louis XIV, became the template for royal portraits across Europe for the next century.

4. Japanese designer Mitsuhiro Matsuda studied fashion in Tokyo alongside his friend Kenzo Takada, and the pair travelled to Paris in 1964. Matsudo returned to Tokyo six months later and in 1967 set up Nicole, his own label, which would become extremely successful in Japan and the US in the 1980s. In 1974, he helped found Tokyo's first fashion week with fellow designers Junko Koshino, Yukiko Hanai, Isao Kaneko, Takeo Kikuchi and Kansai Yamamoto. Matsuda died in 2008 aged 74.

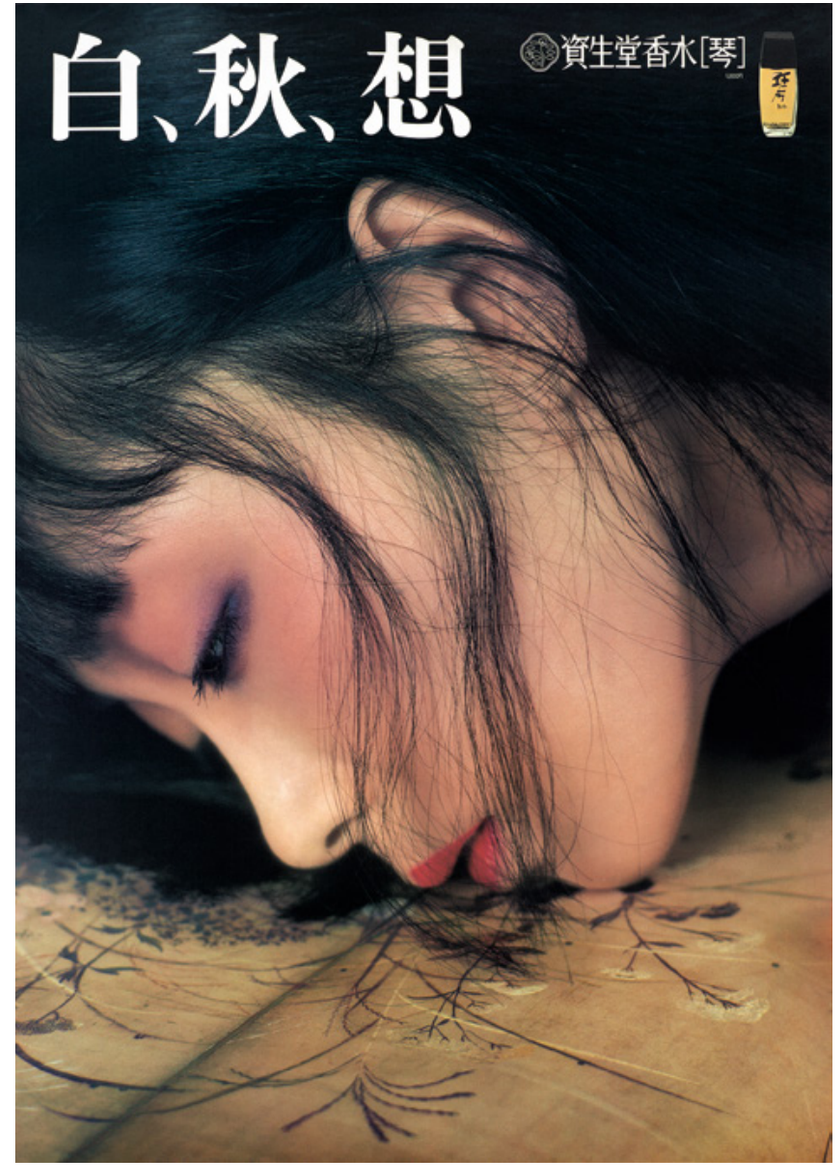
5. American painter Barnett Newman (1905-1970) was a leading painter of abstract expressionism. A late starter as an artist, his breakthrough came in 1948 with *Onement I*. The painting would define the rest of his career as it was the first to feature his trademark 'zip' – a straight line from the top to the bottom of the image. 'For him,' writes art historian Karen Kedmey, 'art was an act of self-creation and a declaration of political, intellectual, and individual freedom.'

6. *Captain Caveman and the Teen Angels* was a cartoon series produced by Hanna-Barbera between 1977 and 1981. It featured three young women, Brenda, Taffy and DeeDee, who find a caveman frozen in a block of ice. Once thawed out, he proves to have superpowers, so the quartet criss-cross the country solving crime and unravelling mysteries. (Think *Scooby-Doo* meets *Charlie's Angels*.) Captain Caveman himself was voiced by Mel Blanc, the legendary voice of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester the Cat, Tweety Bird, Road Runner, Pepé Le Pew, Speedy Gonzales, Wile E. Coyote, Foghorn Leghorn, the Tasmanian Devil, Porky Pig, and Marvin the Martian.

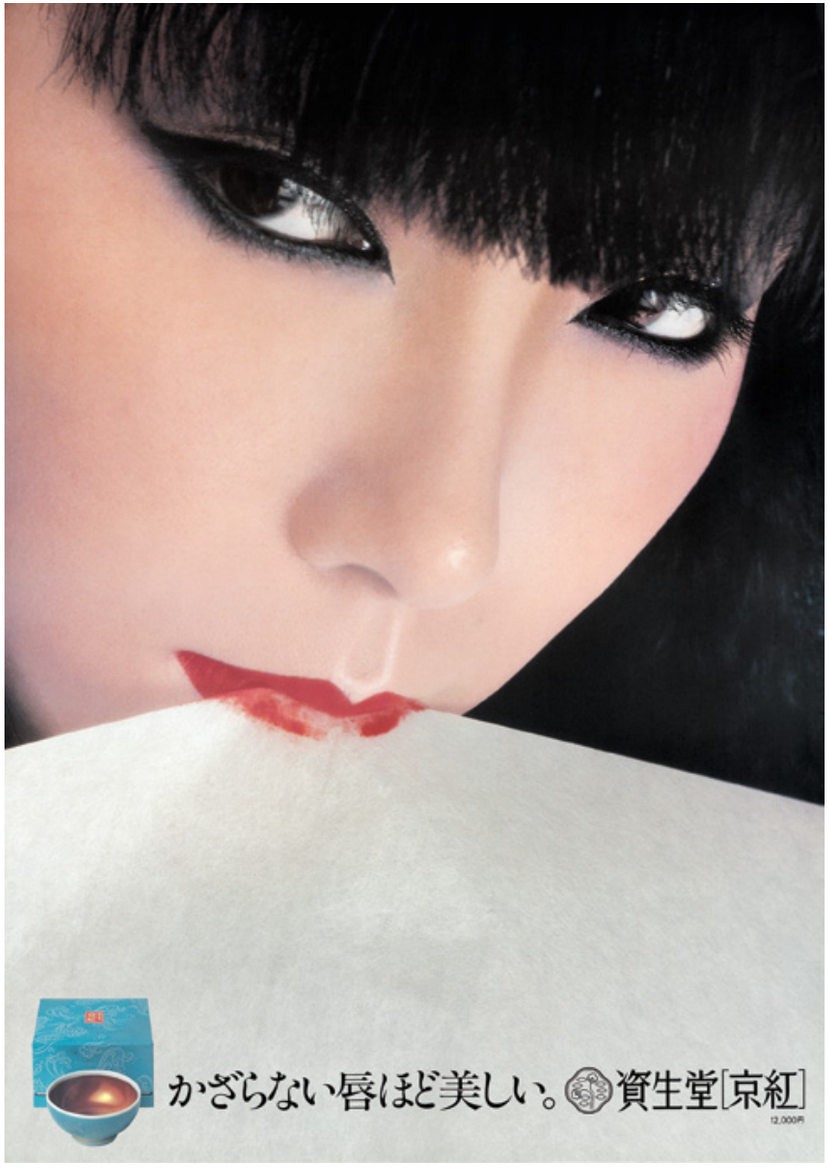
‘It was Japanese spirit aligned with Western skills.’

How Shiseido’s advertising changed the way Japan saw itself.

By Ruba Amu-Nimah



Shiseido Koto fragrance,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1982



Shiseido Kyobeni,
photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1978

Shiseido Chiffonette,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1973

Shiseido Benefique,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1974

Shiseido Light Feel enamel,
photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1978

Shiseido Mai fragrance,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1978

Shiseido Benefique,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1974

Shiseido Suzuro fragrance,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1981

Shiseido Revital lipstick,
Sayoko Yamaguchi photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1982

Ikuo Amano was appointed creative director at Shiseido in 1966, a year after graduating from Tokyo University of the Arts. By that time, the Japanese skincare and beauty company had grown from a single Western-style pharmacy in Ginza, Tokyo, opened in 1872, into a burgeoning multinational. Amano, working with photographers including Noriaki Yokosuka and Kiyosuke Kajihara, and models such as Sayoko Yamaguchi and the Lutz sisters, Adelle and Tina, opened up the company's visuals to new influences by mixing the quiet poetry of their Japanese sensibility with the striking geometry and abstraction of contemporary Western visual culture. Combined with the profound changes in Japanese society being brought about by the country's increasing economic power and a new cultural openness, Amano's images helped revolutionize advertising in his homeland and build his company's reputation abroad.

System asked Ruba Abu-Nimah, who until early 2017 was Shiseido's creative director, to talk to her illustrious predecessor, Ikuo Amano. The pair met in Tokyo where they talked about his pioneering work, how a still-relevant visual identity was born, and what gives a local brand a global outlook.

Ruba Abu-Nimah: Let's start at the beginning in the 1960s.

Ikuo Amano: I began working for Shiseido in 1966. I'm sorry, but I need to say a lot about the 1960s before I go into the 1970s, so this is going to be like a prologue, but bear with me. In the early 1960s, before this, Shiseido was doing mostly illustrations. Of course, we had cameras and we had photography, but we didn't use those in advertising. We were mostly using illustrations by Ayao Yamana[1]. But a Shiseido poster from 1966 was one of the very, very first posters that used photography for a campaign. For me, it was very shocking to see this poster when I first joined the company. No matter how many times you put them up, the posters would get stolen. That means people wanted or needed to see them. People who did not want or need any cosmetics wanted these posters. That's how intriguing they were, and I think that it shows how much these kinds of visuals had an impact.

Beyond being a cosmetics advertisement, that poster represents a point of view, a paradigm shift in design and art direction, and almost a cultural revolution coming out of Shiseido. Did you feel, when you arrived, that you were about to witness something very new?

Yes, I did feel newness in that movement. In the world of illustrated campaigns, we did try to express beauty, but those illustrations didn't show the strength or the power or the reality that photography does in these posters. For the poster in question, we worked with an art director called Eiko Ishioka[2]. She brought out these very strong eyes that are really glaring at you. In this era, Japanese people were trying not to get sunburned, but at this point, we were trying to tell them, 'Why don't you make sure that the sun really loves you?' After this poster came out in Japan, we had this kind of vacation phenomena, when everybody wanted to go into the sun to get a suntan. That was the kind of phenomenon this poster created. These very strong eyes, as if she's looking straight at you, that was unique at that point; it was not the fashion. Not only in beauty – fashion campaigns did not really show this much bare skin on posters in Japan, so that was rare as well.

It was important in the history of Japan.

Exactly. You can see that this was a trigger, which led other companies to do these kinds of big, flashy campaigns as well. Not just on posters, but also in TV commercials, print ads, and newspaper ads. I think this moment in time – the 1960s and 1970s – was really a turning point, when companies started to focus more on advertising. Particularly as, at this time, we were seeing very strong economic growth.

Where did you go after the success of that poster? What did the creative department do after this?

I think from that poster onwards, we started to establish an advertisement style of our own. Instead of using illustrations, we really focused on photography. The technology of printing had an impact on our posters as well. For this poster, Makoto Nakamura[3] was the art director. Noriaki Yokosuka[4] was the photographer, and we had a copywriter. They were all professionals. I believe that this way of working – together – was instrumental in establishing our advertising style. Each professional contributed their own style.

That's the way I've been working in New York for 20 years. A creative director has to bring the best experts together. Then, if each one does their job properly, you get something magnificent. The industry has changed and doesn't allow for that way of working anymore. Were those values Shiseido values? Or are they just Japanese?

I don't think it is unique to Shiseido. I think we were probably one of the first to do it in the industry though. It became more general in society after the 1960s, when we had this international fair. In 1960, there was this World Design Conference[5]. This word "design" was already used in Japan before 1960s, but it wasn't used generally. Up until then, in the world of design, the actors, or maybe we should say artists, were trying to pursue expressing their individuality, and that was it. But once we had the international fair come to Japan, we started to try and find ways to collaborate. This wasn't only limited to the graphic-design world. It was about a wider collaboration, with graphic designers collaborating with fashion designers, architects, industrial designers. Everyone started to think about collaboration, and I believe the trigger for that was this international fair in 1960.

Good art sells product, and when I look at this, I see art; I see marketing as secondary. What role did marketing play in your creative strategy?

This poster did sell a lot of the products. We had a lot of great sales for sun oil. We had this vacation phenomenon. This was also the first time that we had gone out to a specific location to do the photography. Before this poster, Shiseido's posters and advertisements were always shot within studios and only showed the picture of a model from her breasts and upwards, so just the top of them. I believe these posters gave the advertising industry courage to bring their point of view out forward.

Do you think the industry still has courage?

It is decreasing. It's 50 years since I joined Shiseido, and there have been many changes in those years. Cosmetic products, especially after 1980, shifted their role in society. Everyone started to focus on the quality of product, and the specifications of the products themselves. At that time, we also found that the advertisements became the same, even though they were produced by different companies. Now we see computers coming into the game and we see that photography can be retouched so many times, or entirely digitally composed. These advertisements are not lying, but they are retouched realities, and they now all look the same.

Myself, and others say the same thing today: we believe the beauty industry is now lying to the consumer. Advertising has become completely homogenous and dishonest. What's your advice on bringing it back to an honest reality?

We need to cherish our heritage, while obviously at the same time, ensuring that we have a continuous evolution or revolution going on. Rome was not built in a day, but of course, Shiseido wasn't either. We have our very rich heritage and have always cherished our history; we have always tried to keep it safe, and consider it an essential core of the brand. Yoshiharu Fukuhara[6], the head of the company, always says that there are certain important pillars to talk about when we talk about Shiseido. One is to make sure we use our history when we have a story to tell. Our research and development and our technology should also be developed throughout time, taking into account our heritage. We also need to make sure that the products have a humanity. All of this was in a book he made.

What year was this?

It was 1997, the 125th anniversary of Shiseido, and the book was distributed to all employees, with the brand's values. Shiseido now has a 145-year history, and the corporate culture developed in that time is like a precious treasure. It provides a foundation; it's like a whole museum for us. At that time, for advertisements, our team was growing as we had started to incorporate many professionals into one team. We now had an art director, a photographer, graphic designers, copywriters, producers, make-up artists, and stylists. We found ourselves working in these gigantic teams.

I'm very interested in the idea of this collective culture, and in collaboration. For example, the work that you did with photographer Noriaki Yokosuka. That seems really important; he photographed some of Shiseido's most iconic images. I would love to hear about the process of working together.

'Shiseido's 1966 campaign was the first to use photography, not illustration. No matter how many times we put them up, the posters would get stolen.'

'The 1960 World Design Conference in Tokyo introduced the Japanese to the idea of creative collaboration, as opposed to individuality.'

Firstly, I would like to talk about the history. In 1970s Japan, after experiencing very strong economic growth, we were in a different era. The population had grown, and we found ourselves – nearly the whole population – in the middle class. We also found that the consumers were starting to mature, and Japanese fashion designers were beginning to go global. They began debuting in Paris during fashion week. For the Japanese, it was a foreign world. We were even writing phonetically: the headlines on posters were 'Pink Pop', and 'Beauty Cake Lip Art'. Because of this, at that time, we used half-Japanese, half-foreign models. Then one day Yokosuka came to me and said, 'I know this model called Sayoko Yamaguchi[7], and we need to use her.' Her hair was short and she was very white. She had this talent to express herself, and you could feel that the minute you met her. Before we used her for the Benefique campaigns, though, we did an advertisement with her that said, 'Good morning, skin'. That was in 1972 and the first time we shot her for Shiseido. Nobody else knew her. This is an advertisement for night cream, and usually at this time, that kind of skin cream had advertisements showing the night, or the model right before she went to bed. This was different. This showed the morning after she applied the cream, and had slept. It showed how dewy your skin could be, matching it with the morning dew on the leaves in the image. That's why Takeo Onoda, the copywriter, added 'The skin that says "good morning".' The phrase 'good morning' was about the promise of a brand-new day.

They're quite brilliant. It's very conceptual.

We needed to have a different advertisement every month, so we were always photographing. We were not in a digital world like now; everything was analogue. We would take a picture and cut out all the text, and then place it on top of the images. We would ask the printers to work on it, but they wouldn't give it back to us until the next day, so we had to wait and wait for things to be ready. So, I would go to the movies and to museums. I had abundant time to explore and to really look at things. Today, because we are working at such speed, and sitting in front of the computer for such a long time, we're not able to really look at things, and explore. Around this time, everything started to appear in colour, so we took the opposite tack and did monochrome advertisements. We wanted consumers to use their own imagination, imagining what the colours could look like. You can also see that we photographed the models from a very wide angle because fashion had started to enter beauty advertising. In the 1960s, you would probably see a close-up of the face, but we shot the clothing, interiors and urban backgrounds.

Was this unique to Shiseido or were other beauty brands doing that at the time?

Many other cosmetic companies started to do similar kinds of layouts, but we always tried to be unique, and try not to be affected by whatever the other companies were doing. When we did the monochrome advertisements, I was the art director and did the design as well. What was interesting at this time was that Junko Koshino[8], a Japanese fashion designer, was working with us as a stylist. She would bring her own clothes, ones she had designed, and her own accessories; the props would be her own. She would always come to the meetings with many, many – maybe sometimes even 10 – variations of what she wanted to dress Sayoko in. She was really determined and had strong wishes for each campaign. Usually you'd start out with a pre-planned situation and location, and after this has been defined, you would ask the stylist to come in, and you would direct her. But it was the other way around when Junko Koshino was with us – she would bring out all these great ideas. We would be inspired by her dresses – maybe even the itchiness – and the interesting things and ideas she would bring. We would then decide on the locations and how and where we would like to place the model.

How much of an impact did the casting, with Sayoko, have on the work you did?

When we were making these kinds of advertisements, we weren't showing the model any pictures of what should be done or how she should be posing. Yokosuka, the photographer, really didn't believe in that either. He would get all the inspiration on site; he was inspired by the moment. He would start working with Sayoko, who would then respond to the atmosphere, and who would pose in response, again inspiring a change in the atmosphere. Those two would work together, and bring out

'Everything started to appear in colour, so we took the opposite tack and did monochrome advertising. We wanted consumers to use their imaginations.'

something very rare. I think you could say that having Sayoko brought out the artistry in both her and us. Having her with us was one of the big reasons we were able to continue this series for such a long time. The presence of Yokosuka was very essential as well.

It wasn't only work for me. When I work with someone I try to establish a human relationship with that person, and then the work comes after. With Yokosuka, we ate together a lot; we drank together a lot. We did a lot of work together and so this kind of great relationship was something that was really essential for our work, too.

This set-up was very diverse for a Japanese company in 1971.

Maybe, but it wasn't that intentional.

You're talking about uniformity in Japan, but that was happening at the same time as you were creating something specifically individual and non-conformist. Were you working against the grain? Or were you doing something in line with what was happening in Japan at the time?

Yes, I think I was in line. When I look back to that time, there was so much change. We had the Tokyo Olympics[9], all the new highways, the monorails running – everything. The whole environment had changed in an instant. With that, we saw a big leap in technology, and printers were able to print mass amounts. That enabled everyone to have the same thing, at the same time, and to reach different locations quickly, so advertisements became central. I had one more big project, working with Serge Lutens. I think around 1977. In America or Europe, it might have been very different, but in Japan, women had really started to go out into the society, and to work at the same level as men at that time. Cosmetic products we manufactured were uniform. Without this uniformity, I don't think we would have ever been able to reach the high-speed economic growth we saw in that era. We are now in a different era, in an era of greater diversity, in beauty and in general. Diversity is a word used often now, and it is far more important to position yourself in that context, and ask how advertisements should be now. What is the ideal advertisement today, and what is the ideal way of creating a product? I think the axis or the core of such thinking has changed.

But it's important. You're talking about authenticity and brand values. How have they changed at Shiseido since the time you were creating all of this extraordinary work?

What has changed is not the values, but the point of view and our behaviour. What has not changed is the response to the aesthetics of beauty – how your heart moves when you see something beautiful – and the feeling that you want to really make something good, or do something good in your life, and in your company. We were talking about mass production and mass consumption in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Why was Japan able to become this country with the big, gigantic economy? It was because we were trying to make everything in a uniform way, so our education was uniform and the products that before then were designed to be beautiful when displayed on the counter. The creams, the lipsticks would be big and beautiful, but at this time we started to think differently. We wanted everything to be light, slim and short – very easy to carry around. So we created a new brand, which cut out everything that was not essential. We called it Inoui and we created products that allowed women to have these cosmetics in their pockets, at their side, accessible at any time. I don't think we have the Inoui line anymore. At the time we developed it, the mission for big brands was to make sure that they catered to masses and had great sales. Inoui was a little different. We weren't asked to make a big contribution to the overall sales within the company. It was positioned so that having Inoui as a Shiseido brand would symbolize Shiseido's position as a very fashionable, progressive brand. We knew Shiseido had its own culture, its own history, but it was like Shiseido was becoming a brand that had already fully bloomed and we needed other flowers on another branch to come through. Serge Lutens was the person who was able to bring that to us. Issey Miyake and our model, Sayoko, introduced Serge Lutens to the company president at the time, Mr. Ono. Mr. Fukuhara was working as an advisor at that point. These two top management people took the decision to bring Lutens on board. I had a wonderful opportunity to attend the meeting in which they made that decision, and was therefore given the chance to work with him. So we worked together with Serge Lutens on Inoui.

'Why was Japan able to become this country with a gigantic economy? Because we were trying to make everything in a uniform way. Diversity didn't exist.'

Shiseido has always been very outward looking. It's been a very Japanese company, but at the same time, from the beginning, it has looked to the West and incorporated that into everything. How did that affect your work?
My understanding of the company was that it wasn't trying to become Westernized at all; we thought of it as a hybrid. In 1872, when it was founded, the premise was to have Eastern culture as its mother, and to have Western, well, not culture, but the West as its father. We have a word in Japanese, *wakonsosai*, meaning the Japanese spirit or the Japanese thoughts aligned with Western skills and technology. I always thought of Shiseido as trying to pursue something as a combination between the East and West. I think of ranges like Inoui and Tactics as being representative of such a hybrid. For instance, Inoui was a combination of Japan and the US, and Tactics was, I think, more of a combination between Japan and the UK. Lutens mixed his own sensitivity with Eastern sensitivities, and this is what brought Mr. Fukuhara to say that he and Serge Lutens have very similar values. They had this kind of dialogue, which they discovered while working on *Vogue*, where they spoke to each other and agreed that they had some kind of affinity with one another. Also, they shared a birthday, March 14.

Emphasizing history helps to determine how a brand can maintain its authenticity, as well as move forward. What advice would you give people working in the beauty industry today?
In one small sentence, it would be this: yes, this era is digital, but humans are analogue. We are flesh. This applies to product development and advertising. This is an extreme example, but when I retired from Shiseido in 2001, it was the same time that we opened its Shiseido Parlour. It was a big events space, and I remember there was this giant screen, and it was showing visuals of Ito Jakuchu[10]. He is a Japanese painter, and his work was shown digitally. When you look into the Edo period, the time at which Jakuchu painted, which was more than 100 years ago, they didn't have the speed we have today, but they had speed in their bodies – physical speed. As an art form, that applies to cosmetics. We cannot forget that humans are analogue. Let's keep the physicality of art in mind as we continue to work digitally.

1. Ayao Yamana (1897-1980) is best known for the illustrations he drew for Shiseido, particularly his Art Deco-influenced work of the 1920s.

2. Eiko Ishioka (1938-2012), who became one of Japan's best-known graphic designers and costume designers, joined Shiseido's advertising department in 1961, after graduating from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. In the early 1970s, she set up her own design studio and began collaborating with Parco, a chain of shopping complexes, for whom she created a celebrated 90-second TV commercial featuring a black-clad Faye Dunaway silently peeling and then eating a hard-boiled egg against a black background. Ishioka later moved into costume design, winning an Academy Award in 1992 for Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*; creating the costumes for the Swiss, Canadian, Spanish and Japanese teams at the 2002 Winter Olympics; and working on Broadway shows including *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* and David Copperfield's *Dreams and Nightmares*.

3. Makoto Nakamura (1926-2013) joined Shiseido in 1949. According to the company, his professional motto was: 'One vocation, one company, one life, one advertisement.'

4. Noriaki Yokosuka was born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1937, and in 1960, graduated from Nihon University College of Art. He had begun contributing to Shiseido's in-house magazine while studying and the collaboration continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s. He later worked with Eiko Ishioka on her Parco campaigns and with Issey Miyake. In 1982, he became the first Japanese staff photographer for Italian, French and German *Vogue*. He died in 2003.

5. The World Design Conference or WoDeCo took place from May 11-16, 1960. Eighty speakers and 300 guests from 26 countries gathered in Tokyo to discuss the theme of 'Total Image for the 20th Century'. It featured lectures from leading graphic and industrial designers and architects including Yusaku Kamekura, Herbert Bayer, Saul Bass, Walter Landor, Otl Aicher and Joseph Müller-Brockmann. It is considered a key moment in Japan's design history.

6. Born in 1931, Yoshiharu Fukuhara was the grandson of Shiseido's founder, Arinobu. He joined the family firm in 1953 and was named president of its US subsidiary in 1966. In 1987, he took over the presidency of the whole company and, over the next decade, led it through significant expansion both in Japan and abroad. In 2000, he was appointed director of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. His hobbies include photographing orchids.

7. In 1977, *Newsweek* described Sayoko Yamaguchi as one of the top six models in the world. The same year, she was featured on the cover of Steely Dan's LP *Aja*. As well as being the most famous Japanese model of the 1970s and working with Issey Miyake and Kansai Yamamoto (among others), Yamaguchi was an actress, singer, puppet and fashion designer, and DJ. She died suddenly of pneumonia in 2007 aged 57.

8. Born in Osaka in 1939, Junko Koshino opened her first boutique, in Tokyo, in 1966 and since then has launched a number of different labels. She first showed in Paris in 1978 – both ready-to-wear and couture – and continued until 2000. She has also designed costumes for the theatre and opera, and uniforms for the 1992 Japanese Olympic volleyball team and the employees of Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation.

9. The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad, held from October 10-24, was a games of firsts: the first Olympics held in Asia; the first to be telecast via satellite; and the first broadcast (partly) in colour. Among the new venues built for the event was Kenzo Tange's now-iconic National Gymnasium, which combined modern construction techniques with traditional Japanese forms. The Olympics will return to Tokyo in 2020.

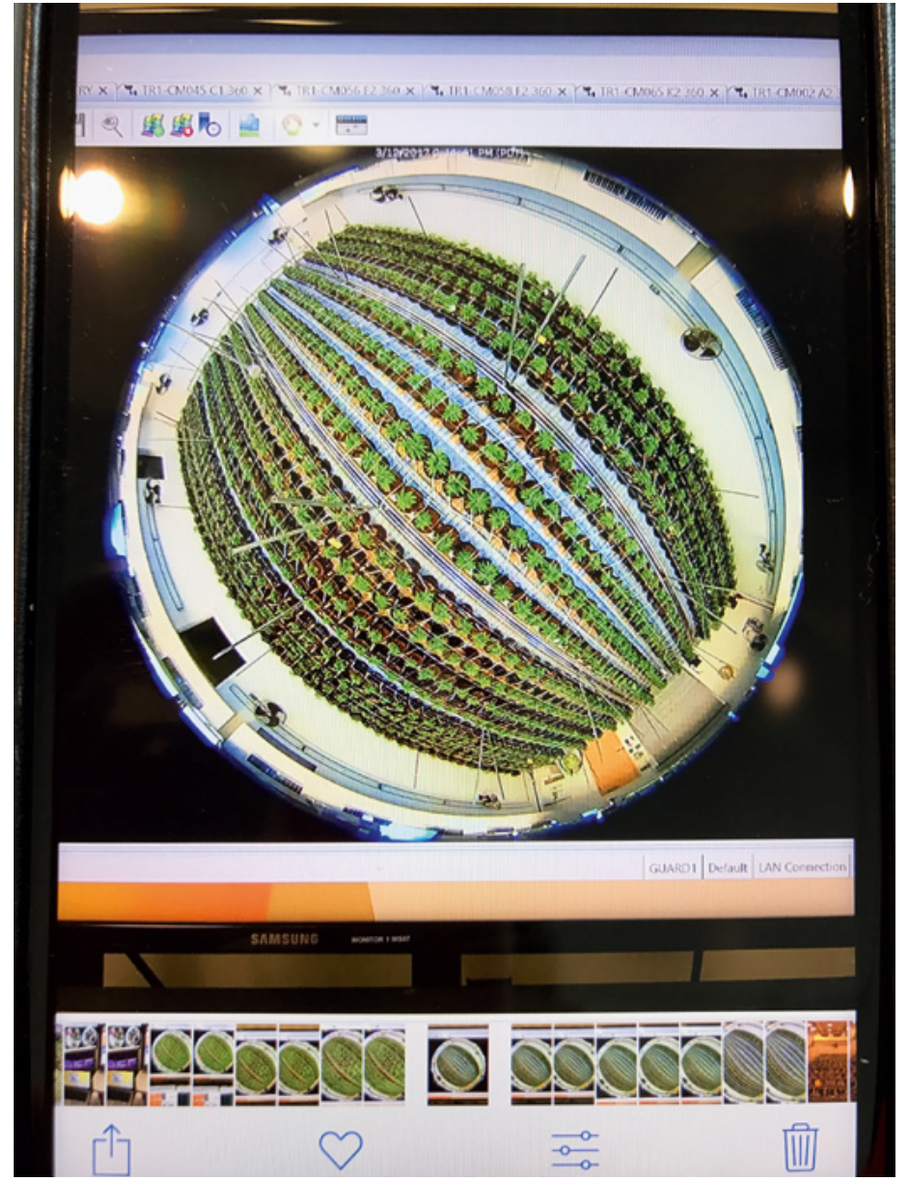
10. Ito Jakuchu (1716-1800) was a painter during the Edo Period, when Japan was closed to the outside world. In 1755, he retired from the family wholesale business to concentrate on Zen Buddhism and his paintings of the natural world. 'Flowers, birds, grasses and insects each have their own innate spirit,' he wrote. 'Only after one has actually determined the true nature of this spirit through observation should painting begin.'

Shiseido nail enamel,
photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1978

‘The office is more boring than people might imagine.’

Brendan Kennedy on why marijuana could be luxury’s new frontier.

By Xerxes Cook
Photographs by Juergen Teller



The backdrop for Juergen Teller's portfolio, *Waiting for Rihanna*, is a 60,000-square-foot indoor marijuana facility off the west coast of Canada. It is owned by Seattle-based Privateer Holdings, a private-equity firm that has been working on the production and distribution of legal medicinal marijuana since 2010. Steered by CEO Brendan Kennedy, the company's portfolio has expanded in line with shifting attitudes towards cannabis throughout Canada and the US, and now encompasses the website Leafly – which ran the industry's first full-page advert in the *New York Times*, when New York state legalized medical marijuana in 2015 – and most notably, the Marley Natural line of buds, body-care products and smoking accessories made in conjunction with the late singer's family.

Kenney sat down with *System* to talk about the power of marketing, working as a heritage brand, and the politics of being in an industry that remains illegal under US federal law.

How does one become the CEO of one of the world's largest legal-cannabis companies?
After Yale, I started at a new subsidiary of Silicon Valley Bank; we had clients who were working on interesting things in software and biotech science. One day, the owners of a medical-cannabis company walked into my office, and I thought that was interesting. It was something I knew nothing about, but I always felt that whatever my next entrepreneurial adventure was, I wanted it to be big. And then a couple of days later I happened to hear an NPR show about

What changed your mind?
I was extremely sceptical of the concept of medical cannabis and of its efficacy. It just sounded too good to be true; it sounded like a panacea. And that was how I felt until we started doing research. It wasn't just one single moment that changed my opinion; it was a series of encounters with lots of different people. We talked to cannabis growers, retailers, patients, pharmacists, physicians, activists, lawyers and political campaigners – but it was the combination of patients and physicians that changed my opinion. There was a fire chief in California, a staunch law-and-order person, who had an extremely nasty form of cancer. He used medical cannabis in the final six months of his life and he spoke about it as being the one thing that worked in helping

'Until we started doing research, I was extremely sceptical of the concept of medical cannabis and of its efficacy. It just sounded too good to be true.'

This changing legislation and the accompanying shift in mainstream perceptions of the plant has seen legal marijuana become the country's fastest-growing industry, according to one cannabis-business research firm, with US sales projected to reach $22 billion by 2020. Marley Natural, marketed as a lifestyle brand with creative input from Heckler Associates – the ad agency that gave Starbucks its name and mermaid logo – and Bob Marley's former art director, Neville Garrick, has been featured in reputable media outlets such as *Business of Fashion* and US *Vogue*, under headlines speculating that marijuana might just be the luxury industry's next big opportunity.

With his aim to take Marley Natural as mainstream as the all-conquering Seattle-based coffee company, Brendan

California's Proposition 19 [the Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010], and I sort of took it as a sign.

So you quit your job at the bank, called up your two buddies, Michael Blue and Christian Groh [Privateer CFO and partner], and convinced them to take this leap into the unknown with you?
Yeah, that's pretty much how it happened! [Laughs] The three of us had to talk ourselves into it – this was different than just leaving our jobs to start up a new Twitter. There was an element of reputational risk. We had to have those conversations with our spouses and parents, and my parents are more Frank Sinatra than the Grateful Dead.

I've read that you were initially very sceptical about medical marijuana.

him manage his pain. That is just one example. The first time you have that conversation, not all your scepticism goes away, but the tenth time you have it – whether it is with someone who is using cannabis to treat pain in the final months of their life or someone who is the mother of a child with epilepsy – you can't remain sceptical anymore.

What was the most surprising or convincing finding from your market research?
We were really data driven, so part of our pitch to investors at the time was about the eligibility of it. Interestingly, a lot of the polling at that time in the US matched that of gay marriage, almost identically, and that was fascinating to us because we saw the inevitability of the end of cannabis prohibition. There

are a lot of religious groups and political groups opposed to gay marriage, but we couldn't find any groups who opposed cannabis legalisation.

How would you characterize your investor's motivations?
I would really break it down to when they invested. In our initial round in 2012 and 2013, we raised $7 million, and most of those investors saw the business as a form of political activism – most of our investors were looking for financial return, but *all* of them were looking for a social return. It was the first time I've ever had to manage investor expectations.

There's a line in a great 2013 *New Yorker* article exploring the hurdles facing the legal marijuana economy that says you and your partner Michael Blue 'disdain iconography involving cannabis leaves or Bob Marley'. What happened?
In one of the first meetings we had at Privateer, we made a list of all the clichés around cannabis we didn't like, and one of those was that stylized imagery around Bob Marley and cannabis – it was one of the things that needed vast improvement. Then in February 2013, we were approached by the Marley family, who were intrigued by how we were talking about and approaching the industry. We spent a lot of time with them – his children, grandchildren, and his wife, Rita – learning about his beliefs and thoughts on cannabis. And I realized my initial conceptions were misconceptions. After a process of almost two years from our first conversation with them, we launched Marley Natural. The challenge is to build a global brand – and which is an expensive and time-consuming process – distanced from the ubiquitous clichés, which elevates the industry. To design products that are timeless and respectful of Bob Marley. To educate people and describe cannabis in a mainstream way – because its use is mainstream.

How are Bob Marley's values of social justice and respect for nature seen in the brand's social initiative, Rise Up?
Rise Up is an important aspect of the brand. Close to 750,000 people a year in the US are arrested for cannabis possession and distribution – disproportionately African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. The idea behind Rise Up is that it's important to the industry as a whole that those who have been most harmed by prohibition somehow reap the benefits from its end. We have worked with the Minority Cannabis Business Association to expunge the criminal records of 30 people who were convicted for cannabis possession or distribution. And we plan to do it again. We also want Rise Up to give back to Jamaica, and so we are working on small agricultural projects there. The brand itself is steeped in education and social activism – what Bob Marley would advocate as the plant's positive potential for the Earth.

People can be sceptical when brands engage with politics. Is this more than just business for you?
It is. We have 350 employees in seven US states and seven countries, and they are smart, professional people who are motivated to fuel change. We all believe success will be when people around the world aren't being arrested for possessing a plant. We also believe that there are huge opportunities to produce plant-based pharmaceuticals that don't have the devastating effects of opioids.

This leads us to Tilray. How does one get become the only American company with a licence to grow and distribute medical marijuana globally?
With Tilray, we have a federal licence from [government ministry] Health Canada in Canada. We've built a pharmaceutical-grade production company whose products are distributed to 20,000 patients registered with Tilray in Canada. Then we also produce products for export for commercial purposes, typically to pharmaceutical distributors that dispense our products to pharmacies. We also export for clinical trials around the world. At the moment, two in Australia – one for chemotherapy, one for epilepsy – and one with a children's hospital in Toronto focused on epilepsy. There is also compassionate use, for a single patient who for medical reasons is allowed to use cannabis, and we ship directly to them where they are.

Do you run clinical trials at Tilray?
Not by Tilray at Tilray. We have run a few clinical trials, and we are working on a brain tumour clinical trial, and in that project, clinical researchers did some initial tests on mice that had these types of brain tumours. We will be exporting the formulation from Canada to the EU for that clinical trial.

'The challenge is to build a global brand distanced from the ubiquitous clichés, and to design products that are timeless and respectful of Bob Marley.'

Is Marley Natural cannabis also grown at Tilray, or are Marley products produced within the state they are sold in as you can't ship across state or national lines?
Tilray is a pharmaceutical facility. In the US, Marley Natural doesn't grow cannabis – we source and support local farmers who are experts in growing this product.

I don't know your personal politics, but were the 2016 election results bittersweet for you? Trump was elected, but eight states voted to legalize recreational and/or medical marijuana use…
In October, I thought maybe four or five states would legalize marijuana in some form, but not eight. On the campaign trail, Trump said that he supported medical cannabis 100 percent; 90 percent of Americans think that marijuana should be legalized for medical reasons; 70 percent of Americans oppose federal crackdown on cannabis laws; and 60 percent support cannabis legalisation. The industry supports 125,000 jobs and going after it would just empower the black market. So I am pretty optimistic about the industry's long-term prospects.

Is this your dream job?
For me, the dream part of this job is working with so many smart people and so many investors who see the end of prohibition as inevitable. The dream is that someday the big wall of cannabis prohibition will topple over, and I will be proud to have played some part in that.

One last question: do you get high on your own supply?
Far less frequently than you could ever possibly imagine, fewer than a handful of times in the last year. The office is a lot more boring than most people might imagine. And between the travel, and the fact I have small children, my hands are kept full!


Juergen Teller
Dieter at
Martin Gropius Bau
Berlin
20. April –
3. July
2017

The kissy questionnaire: Lily McMenamy

By Loïc Prigent

Tell me everything about your first romantic kiss!
Aside from me and my forearm, it was with a male model in my father's night-club. I told him I was four years older than I actually was. My dad had spies everywhere, but I went in for it anyway. 'Close To Me' by The Cure played in the background; the heavens parted.

How long was your longest kiss?
My kiss with the sweet breath of life – ongoing.

Can you give us an alternative word for 'duck face'?
My thinking face.

Can you give us an alternative word for 'rouge'?
Energizing mouth-paint.

Who do you kiss the most?
My stuffed animal, Divine.

You know the fashion circuit. So, who is the best kisser? Parisians, the Milanese, Londoners or New Yorkers?
None of the above.

When, and where, is it OK to distribute fashion kisses?
Endless surface kisses should be distributed in fashionable scenarios. Mwah, mwah, mwah...

To gloss or not to gloss, and why?
Nein! Never! Gloss is gross.

Bright and bold lips, or *au naturel*?
Depends on what – or who – you're in the mood for.

PDA – yay or nay?
PDA FTW.

What's your French-kissing tip for boys?
Do not suck.

What's your French-kissing tip for girls?
Do not mentally plan your next meal.

What do you think of people spending a fortune to have wonderful lips like yours?
Have them.

One kiss on the cheek, two or three?
Two. Three is ghastly to a Parisian, and one is very forward.

In which place would you most want to kiss?
By an erupting volcano, perhaps.

SERIES 6 PHOTOGRAPHED BY
BRUCE WEBER

LOUIS VUITTON