

A Black man is sitting on a light-colored wooden chair. He is wearing a matching plaid suit jacket and trousers in shades of brown, red, and grey. Underneath, he has a red and white plaid shirt. He is also wearing leopard print loafers. He has short, dark hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression, resting his chin on his right hand. The background is a wall with a grid pattern of small black dots. The floor is light-colored with dark lines.

OUT

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Kim Petras photographed by **Martin Schoeller**.

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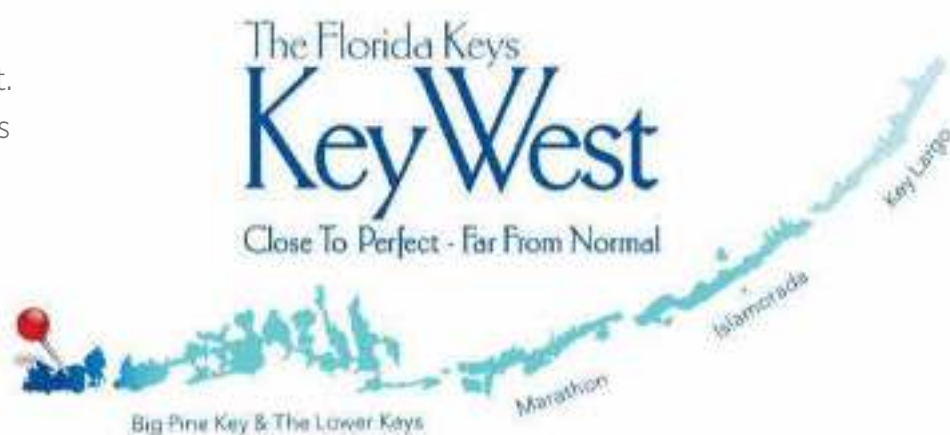
Dress by **Adam Selman**.
Earrings by **Alessandra Rich**.
Necklace by **Rory Rockmore**

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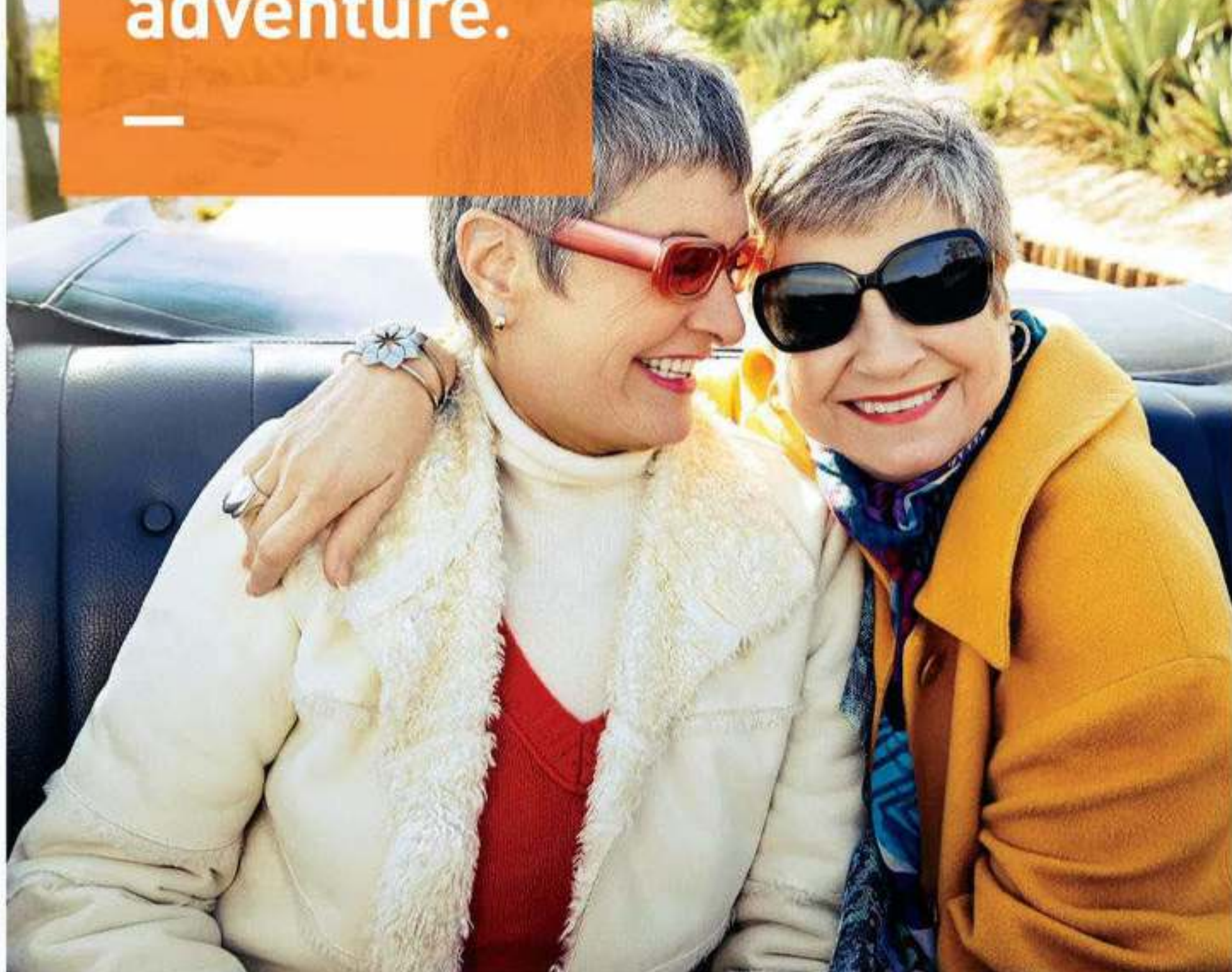
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ROYTEL MONTERO

Roytel Montero bonded with Rickey Thompson over their coming-out stories while working on our cover story (pg. 68). "Unlike him, I made a pact with myself that I'd never come out formally," he said. "Now, I've written an article in *Out*, and my adolescent heart is soaring with pride." Montero has previously written about LGBTQ entrepreneurs and is currently developing an interview series. He also writes for *Paper* and *Forbes*.



JOHN RUSSELL



"I was taking stock of everything I knew about Queen, and a lot of that came from an episode of *Behind the Music* I could have sworn I watched," says John Russell, who in this issue serves a crash course on the classic rock staple (pg. 85). "Turns out there never was an episode on Queen!" The writer's work has also been featured in *Time Out New York* and *New York Press*.

MISS TIGER

"The gay subtext within the pages of *Undergear* and *International Male* helped me navigate my queer identity, sexual desire, coming-out, and self-acceptance," says Miss Tiger, who breaks down what your undies say about you in her side-splitting sex column (pg. 35). The advice-giver has been featured in *Vanity Teen* and *Da Man*, and she had her own monthly segment on SiriusXM Radio. She is currently developing a podcast.



DUSTY ST. AMAND



Photographer Dusty St. Amand loved snapping intimate photos of model Macho for our story on the rise of social sites like Only Fans (pg. 54). "When photographing an emerging porn star in public, it's easy to feel like the pervert people think you are," he said. "But Macho and I just had fun." St. Amand's work can also be seen in *Brooklyn*, *Wolfy*, and *Cultured*.

FEEDBACK

Robyn's Return

Eight years is a long time for any musician to go without releasing new music. But when a global superstar like Robyn is the one coming back from an almost decade-long hiatus, the impatience of the music industry—and her throng of fans from around the world—can be overwhelming. For *Out*'s October cover story, the Swedish pop sensation opened up about the loss of a friend and how the fear of disappointing fans kept her away for so long. But it was those very fans who welcomed her back with open arms.

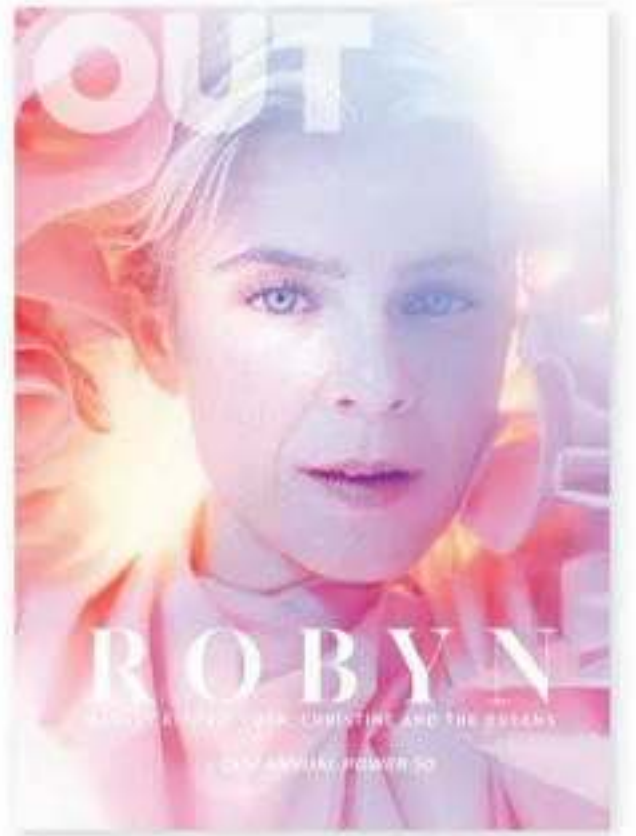
While *Billboard* noted how Robyn "shines bright" in the pastel palette of our cover shoot, her Twitter fans were much more descriptive. "You look like a (pardon my words or don't) lovely battle-ready bitch. Beautiful but ready to tear some shit up," wrote @ryazu.

Among the repeated cries of "Beautiful" (@CharlotteDamone) and "Stunning!" (@Jasey6), one fan interjected with a ranking of Robyn among the other greats of the genre. "Robyn > Every Pop Star," writes @kallgorr. All hail the dance-floor queen.

With Great Power...

Being a queer person with power is a multifaceted role. A balance of visibility, cultural impact, financial clout, political influence, and activism is necessary, and the honorees of this year's Power 50 list each covered those bases in their own way. Among perennial giants like Ryan Murphy, Anderson Cooper, and Rachel Maddow (our top three this year) were fresh faces like Lena Waithe and Adam Rippon.

"Honored to be a part of the Power 50," wrote Rippon in an Instagram post, sharing his illustration (by artist Fernando



Monroy) from the portfolio. Rippon became America's outspoken sweetheart during the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang and has remained a relevant, undaunted voice ever since.

"Thanks @outmagazine for listing me on this year's Power 50 alongside so many faves," tweeted Janet Mock, nodding to other honorees Laverne Cox, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Justin Simien, Waithe, and Murphy. The multitasking Mock served as a producer, writer, and director on Murphy's smash FX hit *Pose* this year, and like the rest of our Power 50 stars, she not only knows how to wield her power right now, she also knows how to inspire younger generations to do the same.

Correction

In the Power 50 portfolio in *Out*'s October issue, honoree Lena Waithe was listed as a co-creator of the series *Master of None*. She in fact has worked as a co-writer on the show, for which she won an Emmy. *Out* regrets the error.

WRITE TO OUT

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When writing to *Out* please include your name, address, height, eye color, a detailed chart of your sexual history, and a daytime telephone number for confirmation. Please note that all letters and email become the property of *Out* and may be edited for space and clarity. Because of the heavy volume of reader mail, we are unable to acknowledge letters that we do not publish.

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A close-up portrait of actress Claire Foy. She has short, dark, wavy hair and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing a dark red lipstick and a dark, thin-strapped top. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

FOREGROUND

Incoming

THE NEXT REAL DEAL

IN *THE GIRL IN THE SPIDER'S WEB*, CLAIRE FOY GOES FROM PLAYING ELIZABETH II TO LISBETH SALANDER III.

BY R. KURT OSENLUND. PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIMON EMMETT

CLAIRE FOY IS SMACK in the middle of one of the most common movie climaxes: the mad dash to the airport. But instead of chasing the soulmate she nearly let slip away, the British-born actress is simply getting out of Tinseltown. It's the day after the 70th Primetime Emmy Awards, where Foy won Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series for her work on Season 2 of Netflix's *The Crown*. She's calling from a car, and she's deeply apologetic—for the turn-signal sounds, the chatter of her team, and even her acceptance speech. "It was a disaster!" says Foy, who hours before seemed like the lone soul in the Microsoft Theater shocked by her win for brilliantly portraying Queen Elizabeth II. (And, unless you define *disaster* as only name-dropping one of your fellow nominees—Sandra Oh—Foy's speech was hardly that.)

"It was such a singular experience," she goes on to say of the role itself, which saw her embody young Elizabeth and nabbed her a Golden Globe and two SAG awards. "It's difficult to replicate." Perhaps, but as Foy departs *The Crown*, relinquishing her throne to actress Olivia Colman (who'll play the queen in middle age as the series continues), she isn't short on new options to attain glory. If Margot Robbie is the new Charlize Theron (an underestimated blonde bombshell with stealth Oscar clout), then Foy just might be the new Jessica Chastain—an actress who seems to have achieved ubiquity in a snap, and, most important, has the range and chops to validate it. Foy isn't just the next big thing; she's the next real deal.

"Every day is absolutely different," says the 34-year-old, who honed her craft early on at Liverpool John Moores University and the Oxford School of Drama before making her Royal National Theatre debut in 2008. Foy's 2018 may not be as prolific as Chastain's 2011 (in which the Oscar nominee starred in a whopping seven films), but Foy's personal daily variety matches her current professional output. And moreover, without any prior endorsement from ticket buyers, she's that rare female newcomer whom Hollywood has suddenly decreed a

marquee name.

In March, Foy ditched her English accent and peered into Steven Soderbergh's fish-eye lens, playing the lead in the auteur's mental-asylum mindfuck *Unsane*. Last month, she played Janet Shearon, the hard-nosed wife of Neil Armstrong in Damien Chazelle's fact-based *First Man*, a film that saw her share top billing with Ryan Gosling. And this month, she rocks a roughhewn mohawk and piercings in *The Girl in the Spider's Web*, the next adventure of bisexual vigilante Lisbeth Salander, and a spin-off, of sorts, of David Fincher's remake of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011).

"The story has moved beyond the first three books," says Foy, noting that *Spider's Web* is based on the 2015 novel by David Lagercrantz, who continued Salander's saga after Stieg Larsson, author of the original *Millennium* trilogy, died in 2004. "She's such a complex character, and there's so much more of her to discover." That includes her pivotal rivalry with her estranged and unhinged sister, but one thing fans already know about Salander is her proclivity to sleep with both men and women, a detail Foy describes as an inherent part of the rule-defying heroine. "She doesn't associate herself with hardly anything but work," says the actress, whose own work involved fight choreography and motorcycle chases. "She doesn't want to be defined or even respected. Her sexuality is not the topic of this movie, but that's who she is, so that's the role I play."

"I was adamant that nothing could be in there that was titillating, or could be seen as being for the male gaze. It had to be entirely from her."

From *Femme Fatale* to *Atomic Blonde*, sexual fluidity among female ass-kickers like Salander has become common, but her unique agenda as a feminist avenger helps clear up skepticism over whom that detail is actually serving. "I made sure that I constantly had that conversation," Foy says. "I was adamant that nothing could be in there that was titillating, or could be seen as being for the male gaze. It had to be entirely from her."

Lisbeth Salander has now been played by Noomi Rapace, Rooney Mara, and Foy, and it's safe to assume a fourth actress may sport her dragon tattoo in the future. Like Catwoman, she's become a theatrical icon of female rebellion, too wild to be owned by a single performer, even one with Foy's talent. "The work is there to be reinvented and reinterpreted by anyone who wants to have a go at it," Foy says. "The lovely thing about being an actress is that you don't own the part—especially this one. Nobody does." ■



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THE AGENDA

14 things you should be talking about right now

1. Boy George's New Life

The Culture Club frontman is back, but not looking back.

In 1984, Boy George was a true sensation: With a face slashed with mascara, neon eyeshadow, and somehow even brighter lipstick, he brought gender fluidity to MTV and the *Billboard* charts a decade before the term even existed. As the leader of Culture Club, he essayed universal yearning and pop perfection with “Karma Chameleon” and “Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?” Nearly 20 years after they disbanded, the group is back with their new album, *Life*, which brings messages of love and a warning about resting bitch face.

MICHAEL MARTIN

What did you want to accomplish with this album?

New music! That was the bottom line. I didn't want to be out there doing nostalgia. I mean, nostalgia is a beautiful thing; it's given us all so much. But as a band, if you're not creating, you just kind of feel redundant. I feel like I have very much to say. Artistically, I get my pleasure from writing and reporting.

Who do you like in pop acts now?

I am deeply shallow when it comes to my pop music. I like my artists to be interesting, quirky. You look at someone and you think, “Do I believe you were born to do this, or are you just a complete poseur?”

With the new album, you're advocating talking about the things you love instead of the things you hate. What are the three things that you love most right now?

I love that I'm able to get up every day and pursue a creative existence. I love the fact that there's an audience out there that gives a shit. And I love the fact that the Internet is a wonderful way that you can just communicate with everybody, everywhere.



What was the inspiration for the song “Resting Bitch Face”?

Well, you can have resting bitch face, and you could also have resting butch face. There are two options. [Laughs.] It's really just about how we want to control other people in relationships. In my life, I've been one of those people who's tried to change other people. The things that attract us to other people, we try to kind of destroy once we get to that person. Sometimes it's about accepting people as they are, letting people express themselves.

The song “Let Somebody Love You”—have you had difficulty doing that, or is it about people you loved who couldn't do that?

I still have difficulty doing that, because it's hard to define what love is. To me, that's the thing about love and God—the power of those things is the unknowingness. Somebody can tell you they love you, but you don't really know that they do. You have to have a lot of faith. A lot of my love songs are about the fact that to love is to risk getting hurt. But you still have to do it, because you never know what somebody might bring to your life.

So, are you in love right now, or are you looking?

I'm always in love! ■

2. Allie X's Tour of La-La Land

The pop artist's new album explores the sprawling city's promises.

Blending the baroque blonde looks of Gaga with the deadpan dourness of Morrissey, the L.A.-based electropop chanteuse Allie X returns with her third album, *Super Sunset* (available October 29), and it helps compensate for a 2018 without a song-of-the-summer. She's released three videos to support the album, and they're art-directed to look like they were ripped from early-'80s videodiscs. But her sound is crisply modern. “Not So Bad in L.A.” unspools a laundry list of La-La Land's amenities (“My yard has two lemon trees / 10 grams from the dispensary”), delivered with ironic torpor, as if Joan Didion had merged with Joan As Police Woman. Doing a 180, “Focus” is a shimmery, straightforward testament to the clarifying power of infatuation, and “Can't Stop Now” is an earnest ode to persistence. Both would sound at home at a matcha bar on Venice Beach. Allie is trying to send up and milk inspiration from a bipolar town, and on this compulsively listenable album, she doesn't miss a beat.

MM



THE AGENDA

3. Cynthia Erivo's Cinematic Leap

Cynthia Erivo wants it all. The actress, renowned for her work onstage (particularly as Celie in the Broadway revival of *The Color Purple*, which won her a Tony in 2016), is making the jump to film this fall with starring roles in the action thrillers *Widows* and *Bad Times at the El Royale*.

In *Widows*, opening November 16, Erivo plays Belle, a single mom who's hustling to make ends meet for her and her 6-year-old daughter. She joins three women—led by the indomitable Viola Davis—to carry out the unfinished heists of their late, bank-robbing husbands. “She pulls no punches,” Erivo says of Belle. “She isn’t a woman of many words, but she’ll tell you what she’s thinking, and she’s prepared to do what she needs to do to take care of her kid—good, bad, or indifferent.”

Erivo is set to play another unwavering woman, and an iconic one at that, in *Harriet*, an Oscar-baity biopic of Harriet Tubman, with Erivo in the title role. (Filming began in October.) “The journey to getting on set was scary,” says the 31-year-old, “but it’s a challenge I am really ready for and probably something I’ve been waiting for all my life. I’m honored to be a part of telling this story, because it’s a story that needs to be told.”

Other idols who have inspired Erivo include Aretha Franklin and Barbra Streisand, a woman whose widespread talents fuel Erivo’s career hopes. “Streisand is a true Renaissance woman,” she says. “She runs the whole gamut yet still maintains a wonderful air about herself. That’s what I want: to be able to do a number of things really beautifully.” **ALEXANDER KACALA**



Lorenzo Ferro

4. *El Angel's Tainted Love*

The best queer film of the season unveils the achy breaky heart of a sociopath.

In *El Angel*, teenage Carlitos (Lorenzo Ferro) takes a pause from his compulsive scamming to admire the naked crotch of his sleeping cohort, Ramon (Chino Darin), before covering it with stolen jewels. It's the moment when Argentine director Luis Ortega—a disciple of Pedro Almodóvar, who also produced—shows that Carlitos can rob every person in Buenos Aires, but that doesn't mean he'll ever grasp what he truly desires. Ortega—whose film screened in Un Certain Regard at Cannes, has been chosen as Argentina's entry for the Foreign Language Oscar, and opens November 9—uses outrageous humor to offset the heft of his tale of star-crossed bandits, and he poses the question of whether or not a remorseless crook can love at all.

Carlitos—whom Ferro plays as a sort of genderfucked Adonis—is based on real-life criminal Carlos Robledo Puch, who, like Carlitos, seemed beyond suspicion thanks to his curly gold locks, lollipop

lips, and cherubic complexion. But even the cutest among us can still bust a cap in their loved ones, and one of *El Angel's* eeriest scenes sees a stone-cold Carlitos half-jokingly point a pistol at his concerned mom (the legendary Cecilia Roth).

When it's not referencing Eva Perón (or, through its saturated color palette, bleeding the influence of Almodóvar and even Xavier Dolan), *El Angel* is drawing us back to the New Queer heyday of movies like *Swoon*, which showed no fear in painting its gay characters as potential monsters. It also propels a teasing dance of flirtation in Carlitos and Ramon's relationship, which Ortega is smart enough to know is far sexier without consummation. The movie is no *Bonnie and Clyde*, but it certainly takes that film's framework and queers it, as if to satisfy a void in thief-drama history. **R. KURT OSENLUND**

9. The Gay Gospel of *Boy Erased*

This Oscar bait doubles as a megaphone for conversion-camp awareness.

Based on Garrard Conley's celebrated memoir, *Boy Erased* (in theaters November 2) depicts a family at a crossroads, dealing with the reality that Jared (Lucas Hedges), the only son of a pastor (Russell Crowe) and his wife (Nicole Kidman), might be gay. After a night of solemn prayer, the parents decide to ship Jared off to exorcise his "demons" at a 12-day, pray-the-gay-away program. For queer audiences, this material might not register as groundbreaking (*But I'm a Cheerleader* brought us to a similar camp in 1999), but *Boy Erased*, with its marquee names and award-season timing, could be the shiny vehicle that mainstream viewers need to take conversion therapy seriously. (A title card eventually states that 700,000 people have been affected by it.) Actor-turned-director Joel Edgerton excels at bringing into focus Jared's past sexual trauma, in part making this the gay movie of the #MeToo age. He winds up with a moral any woke viewer can appreciate: that lost boys like Jared were never lost to begin with. **ALEXANDER KACALA**



Nicole Kidman and Lucas Hedges

5-8. Our Favourite Queer Love Triangles

From madcap royals to sandwiching Matt Dillon

The Favourite (2018)

In Yorgos Lanthimos's wild send-up of the reign of Queen Anne (Olivia Colman), Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone play corseted cousins fighting for the legendary sovereign's affections. (In theaters November 23)



Heartbeats (2010)

Xavier Dolan directs and stars in this catty swoon fest about two best friends (played by Dolan and Monia Chokri) who find themselves vying for the same virile blond hottie (Niels Schneider).



The Dreamers (2003)

Bertolucci's cult hit invoked everything from the French New Wave to the crimson wave as it dropped a doe-eyed American (Michael Pitt) into the boho bed of two rebel siblings (Eva Green and Louis Garrell).



Wild Things (1998)

This campy swamp noir is perhaps best known for the con-artist threesome of Denise Richards, Neve Campbell, and Matt Dillon, who swap spit while plotting their next backstab.



THE AGENDA

10. Chance Perdomo: Alakazaddy

The British actor plays pansexual in Netflix's *Sabrina* reboot.

Casting away animatronic cats, lighthearted drama, and, yes, Melissa Joan Hart, Sabrina the teenage witch is back—and dark as hell. In the new Netflix series *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, the action is just over the river from *Riverdale*'s impossibly hot townfolk, and takes a page—and the title—from a popular Sabrina comic. It's a new witchy world for its title character (*Mad Men*'s Kiernan Shipka) and her super-woke friends at Baxter High, but it's her pansexual cousin Ambrose (Chance Perdomo) who steals the show with his devilish smirk and alluring English accent. Doomed to house arrest by the Witches Council, Ambrose wanders the halls of a funeral parlor in a silken robe, ready to cause mischief whenever necessary. We caught up with Perdomo as he filmed *Sabrina*'s second season in Vancouver to talk about his group naps and bringing diversity to the screen. **CHRIST THOMAS**

This is your first project in America. What drew you to the character?

I realized Ambrose is unlike [any character] I've ever auditioned for. He truly lives by his own compass and sense of identity. To explore that depth has been a creatively delicious opportunity.

What has been your favorite moment on set so far?

I have one memory where we're all in between scenes and I'm taking a



Chance Perdomo

nap. I get a knock on the trailer and, shortly after, nearly the whole cast is in this trailer taking a nap, with one guy upright in the closet and three of us crammed on a sofa. It was cute.

Your first role was in *Longfield Drive*, a short film about racial profiling, and now you play a pansexual person of color. How does that feel?

It's both a blessing and a responsibility to be part of driving forth new narratives [and] straying away from the archaic colonial thinking that what sells and represents are straight white dudes running around telling the same stories.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

Hmm... I'll let you decide. [Winks] ■

11. Julia Roberts, *Homecoming Queen*

Amazon's binge-worthy thriller shows a new side of America's sweetheart.

Been hunting for something to fill that void since you finished binging *Sharp Objects*? Call off the search with *Homecoming*, Amazon Prime's new original mystery series, starring Julia Roberts in a role that pulls her back to her paranoid *Pelican Brief* roots. Based on the podcast of the same name, and directed by Sam Esmail (*Mr. Robot*), *Homecoming* (premiering Nov. 2) casts Roberts as Heidi, a caseworker at a secret government facility where soldiers like Walter (Stephan James) seek to rejoin civilian life. Esmail leans into Hitchcockian noir as he juggles stories of PTSD and plays with chronology as he depicts Heidi's view of her past. Roberts steps into acting territory she rarely has before, nailing the part of a woman whose stance of hero or villain is tantalizingly uncertain. **ALEXANDER KACALA**

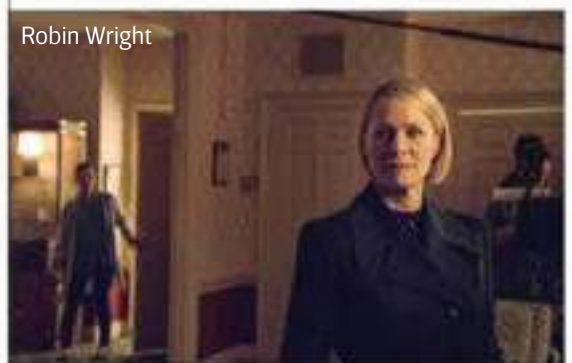


REVIEW

12. The Wright Reason to Return to *House of Cards*

The final season of Netflix's *House of Cards* has one big question lingering over it, and it's not about the ultimate fate of corrupt former President Francis Underwood (played by disgraced actor Kevin Spacey in the show's first five seasons). As season 6 opens, it's plainly revealed that Frank has died, leaving his equally ruthless wife and former veep, Claire (Robin Wright), as commander in chief. The question we're faced with is how to digest President Claire Underwood in a post-"I'm With Her" world.

Given that real-life corruption dominates coverage of a flagrantly sexist administration, is there an



Robin Wright

appetite right now for a character like Claire? After all, *House of Cards* has always been a fever dream of Washington's power-hungry political class, and Claire's hands are dirtier than most. There also may be too much meta-textual baggage here—the 2016 election, Spacey's alleged sexual misconduct—for the show's last eight episodes to really soar.

And yet, it's hard to imagine Claire not getting her turn. Wright's performance has always been a bright spot, even as the show careened off the rails, and she remains icily captivating in this final stretch. She relishes scenes in which Claire contends with new rivals as well as old. In a sense, *HOC* now unfolds like a car crash, and Wright is the glistening burst of glass shards that makes it so hard to look away. **JOHN RUSSELL**

THE AGENDA



13. SPKTRM's Unretouched Realness

A fresh-faced makeup brand cuts Photoshop from its regimen.

SPKTRM, a new, eco-friendly cosmetics startup, seeks to represent beauty as it exists in the world—without Photoshop alterations. The first makeup brand fully committed to cutting out the retouching of models' skin in its marketing imagery, SPKTRM Beauty is chipping away at restrictive and often unattainable industry conventions. Its mission is to empower folks with a broader understanding of what's pretty, both for others and for themselves. According to Jasmine Glass, editor in chief of the culture mag *Glassbook* and one of SPKTRM's three co-founders, the commitment to ban retouching spawned from two things: a desire to offer transparency in the efficacy of its products and, most important, an awareness of how constant exposure to doctored commercial portraits can affect customer self-esteem.

"My inspiration to create SPKTRM Beauty was born out of a desire to see broader representation in the beauty industry," says Glass, noting that the brand's recent campaign photos feature models of varying genders, ethnicities, and skin types. The brand's devotion to honesty and diversity is well reflected in its products, which are now available to peruse online. When SPKTRM launched its Web shop in October, it debuted a highlighter and a foundation that comes in a whopping 50-plus shades, beating out Fenty's 40-color range. "We see the beauty industry's potential for shaping societal views and standards," Glass says. "We want to contribute positively to that."

COCO ROMACK

14. The New Personal Branding

Louis Vuitton is letting you have it your way.

While designer duds are nice, they're always more special if they're made specifically for you. This fall, in select locations like its New York store on Fifth Avenue and the Beverly Hills site on Rodeo Drive, Louis Vuitton takes its long-standing customization service—previously reserved for travel finery—and applies it to men's sneakers and ready-to-wear.



The new project, Now Yours, offers an elevated statement of ownership to the customer. Everything from jeans to sporty

bomber jackets can be punched up with details and emblems that truly reflect *you*. Even cardigans can be treated with personalized patches (à la letterman jackets), while outerwear might have your initials embroidered into the sleeve.

Capping off the customization initiative is the brand's Run Away sneakers, which are available in full leather, half-exotic leather, and full-exotic leather. A mix-and-match approach allows you to dictate your own sneaker design, with nine colors of calf leather and four colors of alligator leather to choose from and combine. And, of course, if you want to opt for that authentic LV look, you can go with the Parisian label's iconic monogram and Damier prints.



We're living in a time when fashion collaboration is ubiquitous. But how often do you get to be a collaborator? And how much more limited-edition can you get than with a one-of-a-kind, customized piece of Louis Vuitton? With this new offering, couture is...now yours. MIKELLE STREET



FOREGROUND: TRENDING



Purse First

History has had alternating feelings when it comes to men and their bags. Guys have carried some form of them since the dawn of civilization (even cavemen had purses), but once pockets came into vogue during the Industrial Revolution, small satchels to hold belongings became girls-only accessories. This perception stretched into modern times, but now, designers are rewriting the rules—again. There are days when a messenger bag or briefcase is simply too much,

and others when our devices (not to mention chargers) outgrow the size of what we can fit in our pants. Brands like Gucci and Louis Vuitton are here to help with fresh new offerings, and they aren't the knapsacks of five years ago or the repurposed totes you've been using for convenience. These are decisive, fashionable options, and whatever you call them (*murses*, if you must), never apologize. Your ancestors didn't.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COAT, SWEATER, AND PANTS, PRICES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST; AND BAG, \$1,970, BY **LOUIS VUITTON**. SWEATER, \$4,980; SHIRT, \$700; SHORTS, \$1,200; HAT, \$530; AND BAG, \$1,980, BY **GUCCI**. JACKET, \$1,150; PANTS, \$570; SHIRT, \$295; AND BAG, \$920, BY **DRIES VAN NOTEN**. SWEATER, \$690, BY **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO**; PANTS, PRICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST, BY **PERRY ELLIS**; BAG, \$515, BY **MISBHV**



Weather Worn

Harsh weather is no excuse for dismal dressing—it's an opportunity to get wrapped up in a wealth of fashionable options. Face the season's elements with pieces that'll keep you covered without compromising your style. It's not every day you get to wear an umbrella as a chic hat, but Fendi has dreamed it to life, making your go-to handheld irrelevant in the next torrential downpour. Need to protect your fur? Coach has hot new overcoats for

that, as does Z Zegna, a brand whose down-filled ski suit comes complete with hood, gloves, and insulated boots to combat the ice. As for those inevitable, gusting winds? Fend them off while casting a billowing silhouette with an oversized windbreaker poncho from Versace. Don't let the forecast scare you away from facing the world...let it inspire you to show off the functional gems you just added to your wardrobe.

STYLING BY MICHAEL COOK. GROOMER: SCOTT MCMAHAN. MODELS: PACE CHEN AT ONE MODEL MANAGEMENT, ANDREW TROY AT HEROES MODEL MANAGEMENT, MOUSSA KEITA AT NEW YORK MODEL MANAGEMENT. CASTING: ERIC CANO



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: UMBRELLA HAT, \$390, AND COAT, \$5,400, BY **FENDI**.

PONCHO, \$1,975, BY **VERSACE**; PONCHO (LAYERED), \$1,575, BY **ISSEY MIYAKE MEN**; PANTS BY **PERRY ELLIS**, PRICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST; SHOES BY **PRADA**, PRICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. PARKA, \$1,495; PANTS, PRICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST; GLOVES, \$650; AND BOOTS, \$595, BY **Z ZEGNA**.

COAT (TOP) BY **COACH**, PRICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST; COAT (LAYERED), \$3,998, AND PANTS, \$398, BY **JOHN VARVATOS**; SWEATER, \$4,950, BY **ERMEGILDO ZEGNA COUTURE**

What is BIKTARVY®?

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about BIKTARVY?

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects:

- ▶ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV and stop taking BIKTARVY, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

Who should not take BIKTARVY?

Do not take BIKTARVY if you take:

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

What are the other possible side effects of BIKTARVY?

Serious side effects of BIKTARVY may also include:

- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death.

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.

- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

The most common side effects of BIKTARVY in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%). Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don’t go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking BIKTARVY?

- ▶ **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- ▶ **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements. BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all of your other medicines.
- ▶ **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.



Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the following page.

Get HIV support by
downloading a free app
at **MyDailyCharge.com**



KEEP LOVING.

Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

BIKTARVY is a **1-pill, once-a-day complete HIV-1 treatment** for adults who are either new to treatment or whose healthcare provider determines they can replace their current HIV-1 medicines with BIKTARVY.

BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

BIKTARVY.COM



BIKTARVY®
bictegravir 50mg/emtricitabine 200mg/
tenofovir alafenamide 25mg tablets

LOVE
WHAT'S
INSIDE®



(bik-TAR-vee)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:

- dofetilide
- rifampin
- any other medicines to treat HIV-1

BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

Tell your healthcare provider all your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY.

IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY® and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.

HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit BIKTARVY.com for program information.



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Rhythm of the Night

Five professionally recommended skin products to make you gleam while you dream

DERMALOGICA PURE NIGHT

Ingredients like vitamin C and zinc glycinate help brighten and even out skin tone, while white bird-of-paradise seed extract helps turn up the luminosity. (\$80; dermalogica.com)



SKINCEUTICALS RENEW OVERNIGHT OILY

Dr. Roth praises this product's "blend of hydroxy acids and retinol, which increases cell turnover and thickens the dermis, improving fine lines, wrinkles, and acne." (\$61; skinceuticals.com)



LAMER THE EYE CONCENTRATE

The area around the eyes is particularly important, and this velvety emollient helps diminish the appearance of fine lines and dark circles while promoting a luminous look. (\$215; cremedelamer.com)



PERRICONE MD MULTI-ACTION OVERNIGHT INTENSIVE FIRMING MASK

By using a mixture of coconut oil and alpha lipoic acid, this rich and nourishing mask helps support the dermis's natural hydration process throughout the night. (\$99; perriconemd.com)



KIEHL'S MIDNIGHT RECOVERY CONCENTRATE

You need only two or three drops to allow this alchemical serum to work wonders, harnessing evening primrose and lavender oils as well as squalane to yield smoother, glowing skin. (\$26 for .5 fl. oz.; kiehls.com)



Rest. Easy.

One of the most important skin-care regimens—the one at night, while you sleep—is also the simplest.

MOST PEOPLE WAKE UP and spend a good chunk of time washing and moisturizing their skin—starting their day by readying their mugs for public scrutiny. But skipping a pre-bedtime regimen is a major missed opportunity. While you're catching Zs, evidence shows that your dermis may go into recovery mode, optimizing it for overnight healing. "At night, our skin repairs the free-radical damage, or sun damage, sustained during the day," says Dr. Forrest S. Roth of West Ave. Plastic Surgery in Houston. "This is why we call it beauty sleep!"

Dr. Annie Chiu, of the Derm Institute in North Redondo Beach, Calif., concurs: "Nighttime is regeneration time for your skin," she says. The increased blood flow while you sleep can encourage topical products to penetrate more deeply. To get the most from this restorative period, Dr. Chiu suggests getting seven to nine hours.

"Less sleep will affect your skin negatively," she says, "meaning more fine lines and wrinkles. Lack of sleep may also cause drier skin. When you sleep, skin makes new collagen and blood flow is increased, which means plumper skin with more glow."

Dr. Chiu recommends a thorough face washing in the P.M. to prevent "not just dirt but impurities and pollution from sitting on the skin overnight." Dr. Roth suggests seeking out products that contain resveratrol as a key ingredient. "Known as the longevity molecule, it's an antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals, supports our natural antioxidant defenses, and decreases the visible signs of aging," he says.

Meanwhile, Dr. David Lortscher, co-founder of customized-skin-care brand Curology, says that although there is "no scientific evidence of skin going into repair mode while you sleep," he agrees that "a good night's sleep is an essential step in a good skin-care routine." A recent study, he says, found that "poor-quality sleepers showed increased signs of intrinsic skin aging," including fine lines, uneven pigmentation, and reduced skin elasticity.

The general consensus is that if you're skipping a nighttime routine, you're missing out on half the potential benefits. And the best part is that all the magic happens...while you're asleep. Consider it the laziest beauty treatment available. **MAX BERLINGER**



Tamal de Frijol from Calavera

Culinary Revolution in the Bay Area's Brooklyn

In spruced-up Oakland, the restaurant scene reflects a diverse community with a rich history.

IT'S ALMOST TOO PERFECT a coincidence that a large swath of Oakland was once known as Brooklyn—after a ship that brought Mormon settlers to California in 1846—before it was renamed East Oakland. Like that famously eclectic New York borough, this scrappy Bay city, with its vibrant arts scene and refurbished waterfront, has become a byword for the kind of ineffable cool that few other cities can equal.

Much of that has to do with Oakland's cultural and ethnic diversity, which provides the impetus for today's dynamic food scene. Whether it's pungent berbere spiked sauces in the city's many Ethiopian restaurants, or traditional Oaxacan dishes (where the tortillas are made from heirloom corn), the secret ingredient to Oakland's rise as a foodie hub is the community the restaurants serve. Since the city has only just emerged as a tourist destination, the food is good without being pretentious, made by—and for—those who live there. To hang with the locals, head to the **White Horse Inn**, which claims to be the oldest queer bar in America, with a history that dates back to Prohibition,

when it was rumored to operate as a gay speakeasy. Located in Bushrod Park, a historically black, working class neighborhood, the bar is now on the frontline of Oakland's rapid gentrification, as home prices rise and longtime residents struggle to keep up.

Uptown Oakland used to be where people went to shop at Sears, but with retail in rapid retreat—the store closed in 2014—restaurants and cafés have taken up residence. “You can’t change progress,” says hometown hero James Copes, who coined the nickname “Oaktown” decades ago and sells a popular line of T-shirts and baseball caps celebrating his native city. On Sundays you can sometimes find him at the farmers’ market in **Jack London Square**, where he’ll happily walk you through his collection of news clippings and photos in which he poses with luminaries like Black Panthers co-founder Huey P. Newton and tennis legend Arthur Ashe. “Oakland has been America’s best kept secret,” he says. “I want people to come here and get to know who we are, but I don’t want them to take over and pretend nothing happened before they arrived.” **AARON HICKLIN**

Oakland's Best Eateries

Calavera

This spacious, high-ceilinged Mexican restaurant has been packed since opening in 2015, and for good reason. The food is inventive but true to executive chef Gustavo Romano's Oaxacan roots. For Umami Mole, beer-battered hen of the woods mushrooms are served with puréed plantains and a 22-ingredient mole poblano, using a recipe passed down to Romano by his grandmother. (2337 Broadway, calaveraoakland.com)

Café Van Kleeef

People come to this tiny Telegraph Avenue mainstay for one thing—the signature Greyhound, made with freshly squeezed grapefruit. Marvel at the décor—think Parisian flea market—while soaking in the friendly vibe. (1621 Telegraph Ave., cafevankleeef.com)

Ramen Shop

There are just three ramen dishes on the menu of this noodle bar, but each is a work of art. Sit at the 18-seat wooden counter, grab a spoon from the wooden box, and dig into the Veggie Meyer Lemon Shoyu Ramen, a silky bowl of pleasure. (5812 College Ave., ramenshop.com)



Vodka's New Shelf Life

Recently outshone by bourbons and tequilas, everyone's favorite liquor is having a makeover—thanks in part to a little blush.

VODKA IS THE most widely consumed spirit in the United States. It accounts for nearly a third of annual booze sales by volume. Yet today, backbars are dominated by mahogany hued bottles of bourbon and aged tequilas. For all its enduring popularity, vodka is denied a spot at the cool kids' table, partly because it's misunderstood. The classical definition—colorless, flavorless, odorless—doesn't tell the whole story, and a new era of craft offerings is spinning a new tale.

"The American definition of vodka renders its identity useless," says Jordan Felix, an Australian born barman who works for **House Spirits Distillery** in Portland, Ore. "Vodka can have complexity. It could be considered the pinnacle of an experienced spirits palate."

Felix views a quality vodka as one that selectively reduces the flavors of its raw materials, and there are plenty of ways to enhance those subtleties without drowning them in additives. A luscious example is Ketel One Botanical. It's distilled and infused with the essence of natural fruits and flowers, and the result

is a delicate, aromatic vodka with obvious appeal to health conscious drinkers. On the rocks with a splash of soda, it's an effervescent alternative to white wine—with 40 percent fewer calories.

But for those who can't seem to shake the grape, there's the subcategory of rosé vodkas. Hangar 1 out of Northern California debuted its pink colored entrant earlier this year. It's a blend of vodka and West Coast wine with a reduced alcohol level of 60 proof.

Three Olives upped the ante this spring with its own rosé, emulating the summer sipper without adding a drop of wine. "Rosé is booming, and it's extending into new products," says bartender Niccole Trzaska, a fan of Three Olives Rosé Vodka. She prefers hers in a frosé assembly.

However or *wherever* you take yours, you're likely to discover a side of the spirit you never knew existed. Whether at **Gym**—New York's preeminent gay sports bar—or in the dimly lit cocktail lounge **Elixir** in Chicago, this new face of vodka is finding its place, proudly displayed on a bar shelf near you. **BRAD JAPHE**

Drink These Now

Frosé Vosé

1½ oz. Three Olives Rosé Vodka
¾ oz. lemon juice
¾ oz. grapefruit juice
¾ oz. raspberry or simple syrup
¾ oz. dry vermouth
Fresh fruit (for serving)
Ice

Combine all ingredients and one cup of ice in a blender. Blend and garnish with fresh fruit.

Red, White, & Rosé

1 oz. Three Olives Rosé Vodka
Soda water
2 dashes Peychaud's bitters
Grapefruit twist (for serving)

Pour vodka into a glass with ice. Top with soda water and a dash of bitters. Garnish with grapefruit twist.

Spritz & Giggles

1 oz. Three Olives Rosé Vodka
1 oz. bitter orange liqueur
3 oz. sparkling wine
1 oz. soda water
Orange wedge and raspberries (for serving)

Build in a glass over ice. Garnish with an orange wedge and raspberries.

A Divine Road to Nowhere

Are you too dependent on spiritual practices like yoga to namaste the pain away?

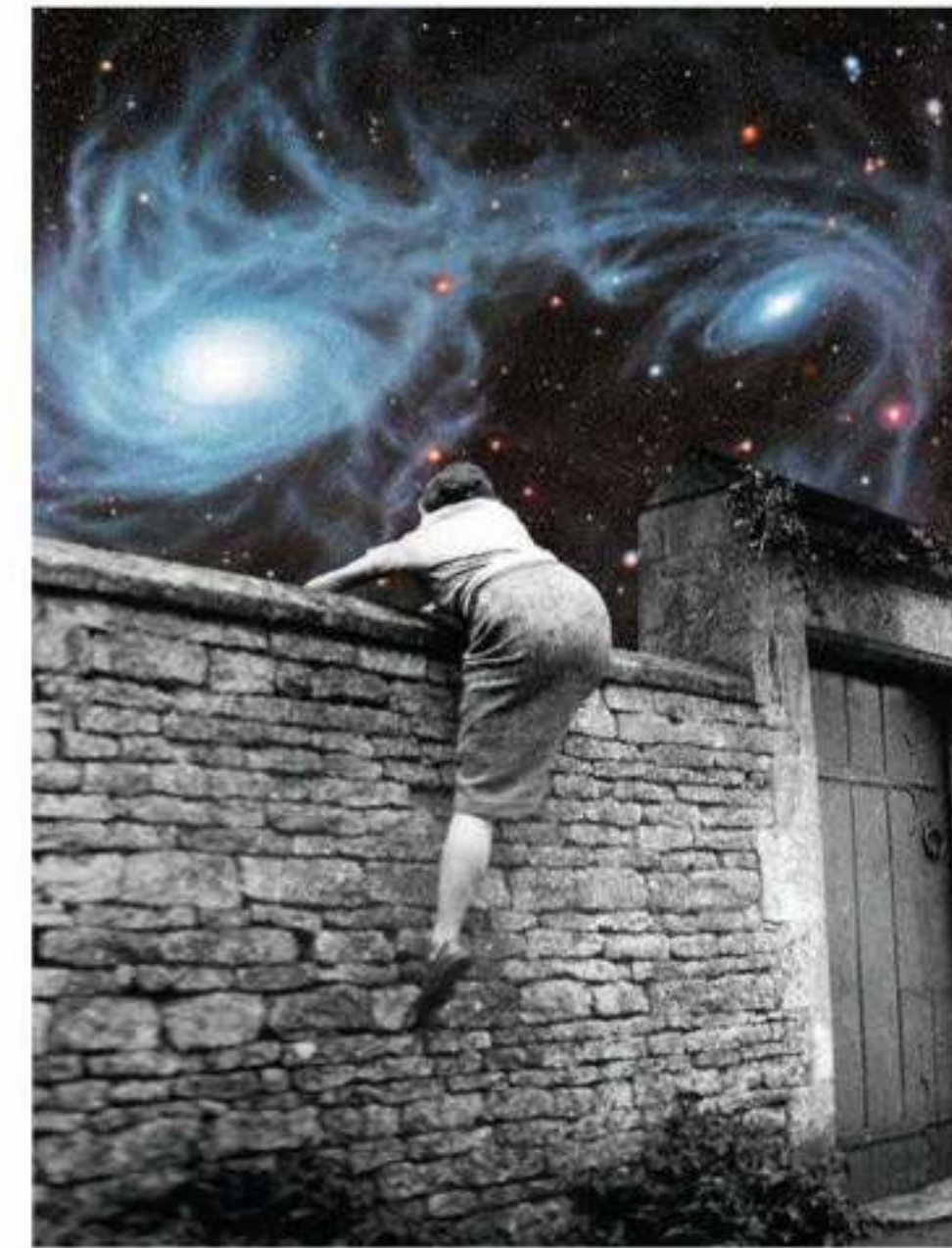
AMERICA'S SELF-IMPROVEMENT culture is bursting with promises that *this road* or *that path* will be the ultimate way to find spiritual fulfillment. Virtually every bookstore and media platform devote copious real estate to post-religion bibles of betterment. As queer people, we can be especially vulnerable to the allure of these programs—potential distractions from curing deeper emotional issues that sit unresolved. Some of us take these routes as quick fixes to save face, while ignoring wounds we might harbor under layers of identity that are already complex enough.

Known in psychological circles as “spiritual bypassing,” yoga is one practice often used to sidestep bona fide housecleaning. It surely isn’t all bad: For many, yoga is about focusing on a spiritual upswing that serves them well in the long run. But for those whose inner demons can’t be hushed by downward dogs, a redirection toward truly observing emotions and trauma can be key.

“Spiritual bypassing is basically defined as the overindulgence in spiritual tools,” says Matthew J. Dempsey, a licensed clinical counselor based in Los Angeles. “These tools, like yoga, are typically used to help gain greater peace, but they’re often viewed with an expectation of guaranteeing peace forever, which is of course unrealistic. It’s not unlike a person who overanalyzes life choices instead of actually taking risks and living.”

How can you tell if you’re doing this yourself? Dempsey says, “One of the best indications that you’re using something like yoga for spiritual bypassing is gauging your ability to sit with uncomfortable thoughts and feelings—and open up about them.” In Dempsey’s experience, gay men are particularly susceptible to this. “We typically have a hypersensitivity to criticism because of experiences with homophobia, and at times they’ll grasp for anything, any strategy, to avoid what society deems a negative emotion.”

He continues, “Yoga, meditation, or any mindfulness practice is appealing because they’re active and measurable. But they can be misinterpreted. If we’re doing anything that simply masks pain, sadness, or loneliness, odds are we’re deflecting and missing out on



“If we’re doing anything that simply masks pain, sadness, or loneliness, odds are we’re deflecting, and missing out on opportunities to actually heal.”

opportunities to actually heal. And while it can be challenging for a group of people with a history of social rejection, there are better avenues that involve vulnerable connections and practices [like, say, group therapy].”

Although it’s rarely easy, sometimes the answer simply involves shifting your focus—and your outlook. In her book *Recovering Spirituality: Achieving Emotional Sobriety in Your Spiritual Practice*, Dr. Ingrid Clayton serves up encouraging insights into how changing her thinking changed her daily grind. “I’ve redefined my own finish line from ‘becoming someone’ to accepting who I am and where I am in my life,” she writes. “I can still have a sense of purpose and intention. The difference [now] is that I try not to use a spiritual path...some golden road free of frailty...as an escape hatch for the present.”

In discussing her clients, Dr. Clayton goes on to write that there’s always a balance between avoiding spiritual bypass *and* working on yourself in other ways, through outdoor activities and, yes, yoga. So go ahead and roll out your mats and align your chakras—just make sure that’s not the only task involved with your inside job.

ALEXANDER KACALA

For the Sausage Party Sophisticate

Up close and personal at the Late Birds, Portugal's gay, all-male, boutique hotel

AT SOME TIME near noon on any given day, in an unassuming town house on a steep and stony road in downtown Lisbon, the boys come to life. Soon, sneakers (and the muscled calves slipped into them) start scampering down creaky wooden stairs toward a large, sun-soaked breakfast room, where homemade Portuguese shortbread *biscoitos* and *pasteis de nata* (egg tarts) are served amid a heaping pile of crumbling cakes, jams, and fruit from the owners' orchard. After two weeks of hitting fancy international hotels in and out of the city, this was the scene I stumbled into at the Late Birds, Lisbon's gay, male-only, unavoidably intimate hotel.

"Our breakfast has no end time," says Carlos Sanches Ruivo, co-founder of the resort—with a name that hints at the guests who find themselves fluttering home to their rooms in the wee hours. Lisbon discos rage well past 6 A.M., and, indeed, a few members of the flock who join me at breakfast are still soaked in the smells of last night. But the Late Birds is not merely a place to keep the party going, nor is it a halfway house between day and night.

In a renovated 18th-century building, the luxe B&B is more home than hotel. "We wanted to keep it as close to a house as possible," says Ruivo, who lives on-site. The architecture features natural materials like lioz limestone, stucco, and wood, and they're paired with Portuguese elements like large shutters and hardwood floors—a nod to the traditions of the region. Custom pieces by local designer Marco Sousa Santos are thrown in for a splash of chic modernity, and heirlooms from the original facade and the owners' private past—such as an antique African totem brought back from Paris—are scattered throughout to make things more personal.

Speaking of which, group interaction is encouraged at the Late Birds, and during my stay, a whole lot of guests cozied up to me in



Views at the Late Birds hotel



"While there's always a vodka cocktail or another male within reach, this isn't your typical, overtly sexualized queer getaway."

the hotel's lush courtyard. Adding to that view? A mix of lime and orange trees, jasmine, and palms framing a garden pool, which is quiet when men aren't splashing in it. It's a rare sanctuary in the center of bustling Lisbon. And while there's always a vodka cocktail or another male within reach, this isn't your typical, overtly sexualized queer getaway. Shared moments seem genuine, and the location itself seems to foster a unique sense of candidness and friendship for all who've checked in. (Of course, it's not a fully platonic affair, and upstairs, there's ample action when the sun goes down.)

"It's really important that people feel comfortable here," says Ruivo, who tells me that nearly a third of the hotel's guests are American, and that each week, five to 10 patrons return to Late Birds after a previous stay. And why wouldn't they? Tucked into the Bairro Alto neighborhood (the city's East Village equivalent), the hotel seems to have it all. Well, everything except a sauna. "For that, you'll have to go next door," says Ruivo, referring to Trombeta Bath, just down the street. All that leaves is the challenge of ever wanting to exit the grounds.

JOSHUA GLASS

Mexico City's Pervert

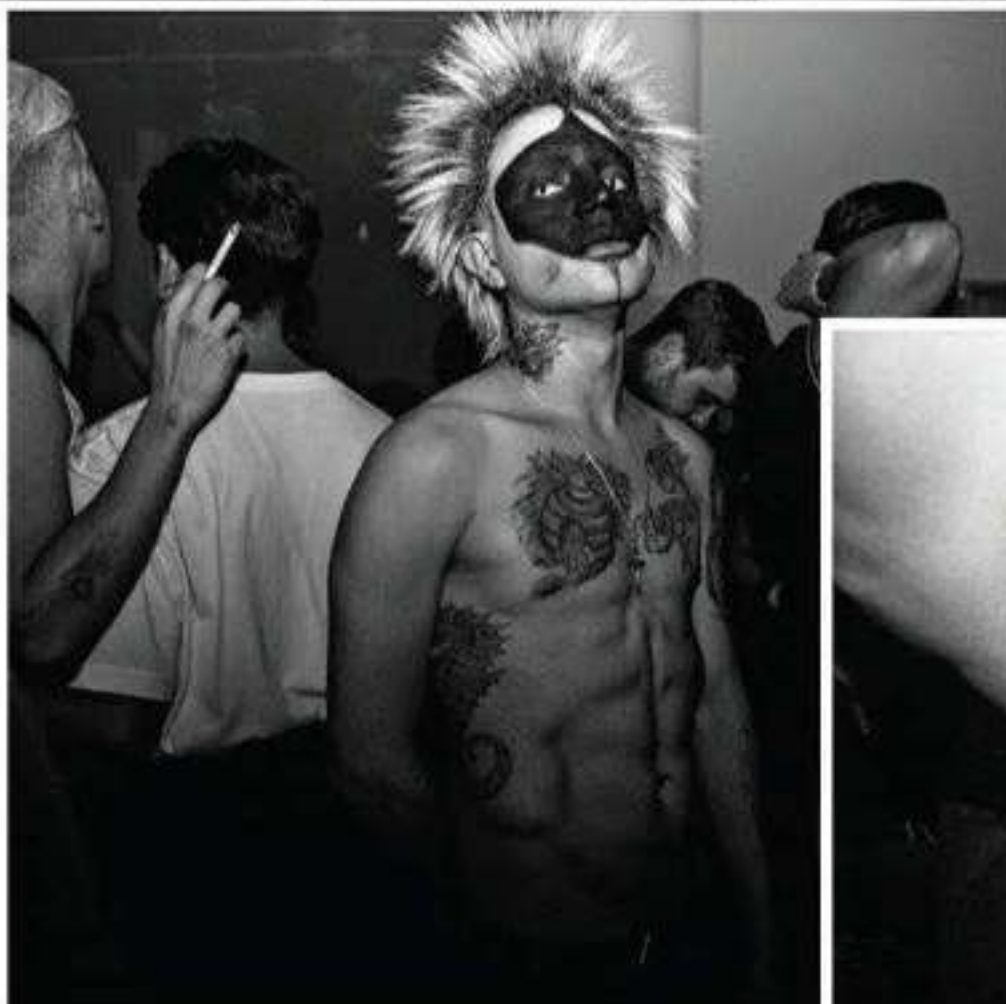
No matter your gender, class, or orientation, this traveling bacchanal has a spot for you on the sweat-slicked dance floor.

"WE ARE A QUEER collective that fuses disco, house, and techno music with sexuality, performances, nudity, and art," says Robin García, creative director and proprietor of Pervert, a gritty yet joyous traveling bash in Mexico City, and one where the only thing that seems forbidden is a closed mind. "We go beyond the music by integrating erotic installations, paintings by Juanjo Sainz, and illustrations by Simón Malvaez," García says. "We also enable spaces for sexual encounters and provide condoms, lubricants, and information on sexual education. We believe that pleasure is a right for all."

While past Pervert gatherings have been held at Plaza Mesones and the Crisanta Cervecería Garage (each enhanced by the collective's neon signage, which travels with it), no one ever knows where the party will pop up next, which makes it all the more enticing for guests thirsty for diversity. "For nearly two years, we've met once a month in underground locations," García says. "We've done the party in cellars, billiard halls, movie theaters, and abandoned mansions."

The Pervert crowd is a gorgeous blend of unshaven men, unabashed regulars, drag queens, performance artists, fleeting lovers, and gender-defying danceaholics, some of whom feel no necessity to wear clothes. García likens Mexico City's underground scene to that of Berlin and says Pervert's dance floor is attracting DJs both locally and abroad.

"We have Villaseñor and Portugal," he says, "two DJs who are famous in the local LGBTQ community. We've also had guest DJs from other cities, such as Eris Drew and Harry Cross from Chicago, Sarah Wild from Berlin, David Banjela from Los Angeles, Jeremy Castillo from San Francisco, and Wildfiction from





Slovakia.” And there’s no room for gender discrimination behind the Pervert turntables. “It’s very important for us to make visible the female talent in the electronic music of Mexico,” García says. “When we discover an experienced or even up-and-coming DJ girl, we integrate her into our lineup.”

García says that Pervert will soon be welcoming DJs from New York and Paris, and on November 3, he and his team will present “Pervert XIX: Halloqueer,” to be held at Plaza de la Constitución (Zócalo). If you want to attend, chances are you’ll be able to.

“The party has become very popular in CDMX because all people, regardless of gender, identity, orientation, or economic position, are welcome,” he says. “In a country like Mexico, where more than half of its people live in poverty, we offer an experience that is accessible to all. This is a country where there’s still classism and prejudice, but our community feels comfortable expressing its sexuality—and freely.”

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DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTLINES OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE



Without You I'm Nothing, 2018

The Many Fibers of Being

WITH MASSIVE GARMENTS AND TECHNICOLOR PAINTINGS, ARTIST **JEFFREY GIBSON** REJOICES IN MERGING HIS QUEER AND NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITIES.

By Coco Romack

WHAT WE WEAR has always served as a means to wield power. With wigs and makeup, drag queens summon larger-than-life alter egos; with a colored handkerchief tucked in the back pocket of his Levi's, a gay man can broadcast his sexual appetites; and with studs, nose rings, and leather jackets, punks can call out to members of their subculture while also fending off anyone they may want out of their path. Through the ritual of getting dressed, we are transformed, by visual language, into someone entirely new—identified and differentiated by our chosen armor.

This notion was the launching point for Jeffrey Gibson's exhibition "This Is the Day" at the Wellin Museum in Clinton, N.Y., one of four solo shows now on view from the 46-year-old artist. In addition to more than 50 works of sculpture, painting, and video, there are five

helmets decadently adorned with found objects, and seven glorious large-scale tunics hung from tepee poles. A gay man and a Native American of Choctaw and Cherokee heritage, Gibson has woven his own multifaceted identity within the fibrous layers of these tunics, which reference traditional shirts associated with the Ghost Dance movement, originating with the Paiute in the late 19th century.

"You would make these shirts, and then you would dance in them," says Gibson, who spent much of his youth moving around with his family. (His father, a civil engineer with the United States government, brought him from Germany to New Jersey to Korea and finally to Maryland.) Gibson notes that while he attended powwows, he wasn't raised in a traditional Native American environment. He did, however, absorb the philosophies behind the fashions. "The idea was that [the dance] would bring unity and prosperity

"The dance would bring prosperity to the tribe, but at the same time, the shirt would protect you from what was called the white man's bullet."



and strength back to the tribe, but at the same time, the shirt would protect you from what was called the white man's bullet."

For the makers of these ceremonial shirts, and for the artisans who keep these traditions alive, there is spirituality in both the process and the performance—a spirituality Gibson adopts in his own art-making. "There's a tremendous amount of faith in the practice of these artisanal techniques," he says, "which are really about strengthening and continuing cultures that might otherwise not survive. I began to understand that it was a real form of resistance for people to continue to create and to pass down their dance regalia within their communities."

The garments and helmets Gibson has created are an amalgam of far-flung references mined from aspects of his own history as well as pop culture and contemporary political issues. Incorporating a variety of materials (from beads and vintage quilts to chiffon and silk that are digitally printed with Gibson's writing and photos from the Dakota Access Pipeline protests), they are at once a comment on race and religion and an indulgent ode to the richness of identity—dripping with fringe ribbons. Exaggerated in size and incredibly heavy, the garments are more sculpture than practical garb. They also serve as a nod to the subversive, over-the-top humor that has occasionally left viewers dismissing Gibson's work, even if that type of humor has long been a source of parody in the queer community. "Kitsch and camp, when they occurred initially, were really survival tools," the artist says. "I wanted to embrace that because for a long time, I kind of rejected it...like, 'No, I'm not that kind of gay.' I finally

This page, clockwise from top left: Detail from *Peace*, 2018; Jeffrey Gibson; *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*, 2018; *Because Once You Enter My House It Becomes Our House*, 2018. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: *Oceana*, 2018; *Watchtower*, 2018; *Peace*, 2018; *Death*, 2018



gave in to the glittery, shiny excess."

Gibson, who attended the Art Institute of Chicago in the early '90s, began his career as a painter. His signature style is identified by exuberant, technicolor geometric abstractions, a technique he's also applied to his garments. "I

think about everything from a painting perspective," he says. By which he means, in two dimensions. "Even when I make a three-dimensional object or garment, I think about multiple two-dimensional surfaces coming together. So you really end up with a front and a back, and when the garments are on somebody, you're getting an image."

Another just-opened exhibition, "I Am a Rainbow Too" at Sikkema Jenkins & Co. in New York City, shines a light on Gibson's painting since 2010, showcasing a series of compositions in which, for the central imagery, he has lifted lyrics from '80s and '90s club hits, along with melancholy words from Nina Simone, one of his longtime inspirations.

"I remember going to nightclubs in the late '80s and early '90s and just feeling like, within the club, there was a kind of tribal feel of unity, and feeling like there was family," says Gibson, who relates the celebratory themes in his work to the microcosms of the powwow and the gay club. "I know there was a lot of pain. There were a lot of people dying at that time. There were a lot of people mourning. But somehow, at a club, you were united in celebration." ■





Emergency Contact

IN HER NEW BOOK, *HOW TO BE ALONE*, QUEER COMEDIAN **LANE MOORE** GETS BRUTALLY HONEST ABOUT KEEPING PEOPLE AT ARM'S LENGTH.

I RECENTLY WENT to the gynecologist for my annual vagina exam. I would truly rather do anything than go to the doctor for so many reasons, not the least of which is the “oh shit, here comes a nervous breakdown in the basement of an office building” forms you have to fill out. These forms lay bare everything I carry with me about myself, all of the information that tells a story no one wants to read. And this process always starts off with two words followed by a blank space you’re supposed to know what to do with: Emergency contact:

Until recently, this simple question has made me cry in the waiting room of every doctor’s office I’ve been in. Because it makes me feel as I have always felt: that I belong to no one. It’s not that I don’t have people in my life. I have my agents (ha-haha, I listed them first, which is just the loneliest thing), but they aren’t obligated to give a shit about me really, beyond business. I truly assume on some level that with anyone I regularly interact with on any level, it’s personal. I would just assume that if you talk to me almost daily, you should care if I died. If you deal with suicidal ideation or depression, that’s often part of how you define someone’s ability to be close to you. I have some waiting-room friends, my term for people I’m in the process of evaluating to see if they’re trustworthy, as well as people who’ve already been through that process but have proven unsafe at various points. (God, even reading that exhausts me.)

People who know me might be tempted to be like, “This bitch talks about being alone, but there are, like, 30 people in her phone,” but here’s why my brain feels like that’s nothing: Every single one of those people falls into one of the following categories, except for my therapist, who is so great that I recently described her to someone as “my only friend,” and this was the saddest fucking thing ever. Still, I have spent most of my life not having a therapist, so I’m so grateful I have one now. Anyway, back to the categories:

- I don’t know them well enough to tell them when things are really bad.
- They’ve told me to reach out when things are really bad, and then I’ve told them when things are

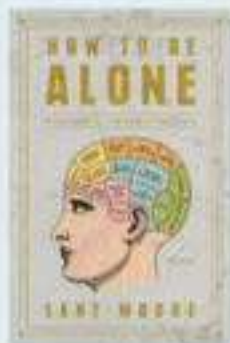


Lane Moore

really bad, and they didn’t write back.

- They’ve told me to reach out, reply when I do, but don’t seem to have the empathy or bandwidth to respond in a way

“It’s not that I don’t have people in my life. I have my agents (ha-haha, I listed them first, which is just the loneliest thing), but they aren’t obligated to give a shit about me really.”



that feels comforting to me, so I don’t do it anymore.

- They’re selectively helpful, so every time I reach out, I never know if I’ll be helped or disappointed, and it feels easier to just stop trying.
- They’re super helpful, but I feel like there’s an unspoken time limit in terms of how much I can talk about how hard things are.
- They’ve been really, really wonderful and helpful before, but I don’t want to “bother them” again by reaching out another time.
- Work contacts.
- People who are fighting their own gigantic battles and are therefore either too triggering or send me into a spiral where I focus all the energy I should be using on myself to help them survive.

But back to the gyno. The fluorescent lights in the waiting room put pressure on me to hurry up so I can get the fuck out of there, so I refocus and hold my pen in a way that means business. Usually I just leave the emergency contact field blank... maybe they won’t notice. But they always do. “You didn’t fill out the emergency contact,” the woman at the front desk says while pointing her pen directly at the violation. “I don’t have one,” I say, my face turning red. “You can just put down a family member,” she says, a little more slowly this time. With a quickening pulse and flushed face I say, “I don’t have any family” for the second time that day. And she says, “Well, we’re happy to be your support system.” I scoffed like I didn’t care, but I cared. ■

This is an edited extract from How to Be Alone: If You Want to, and Even If You Don't by Lane Moore, available November 6 from Simon and Schuster.

Express Male Order

OUR GUEST COLUMNIST REMEMBERS *UNDERGEAR* AND UNPACKS WHAT YOUR UNDIES SAY ABOUT YOU.

By Miss Tiger

ONCE UPON A TIME, in an enchanted world known as the '90s, gay boys managed their hormonal lust without the assistance of social media and hookup apps. We didn't break the Internet, but we sure as hell broke a sweat running to the mailbox to retrieve our monthly issue of *Undergear*. You're probably wondering, "WTF is *Undergear*, Miss Tiger?" Keep in mind this was long before Grindr dick pics, Pornhub clicks, and the eggplant emoji. So let's just say it was a "sacred text" (predecessor to sexting) belonging to future queens everywhere.

At the time, *Undergear* was a mail-order catalog showcasing sexy guys in various states of underwear—cotton, leather, silk, and fishnet, to name a few. If you weren't quite 18 or fell somewhere below the legal drinking age, *Undergear* was an essential coming-of-age experience for gay youth. We couldn't exactly bounce into a gay bar or sashay into an adult bookstore, with saved lunch money in hand, and buy the latest *Blueboy*. Left to our own devices, we improvised when Dad's *Muscle & Fitness* no longer did the job. And we found bliss within the lotion-smudged pages of *Undergear*.

Growing up in the Midwest, I assumed that if a guy wore sheer nylon undies, then he probably lived in a metropolis like Manhattan. I soon found out that hotties in Ohio were mailing in money orders (predecessor to PayPal), too! Looking back, I'm thankful that *Undergear* was my Encyclopedia Britannica (predecessor to Wikipedia).

In the spirit of sharing what I learned from it, here are a few tips on what some men's styles of underwear say about them. Refer to this list often via smartphones and reposts—without having to run to the mailbox.

CLASSIC WHITE BRIEF (a.k.a. Tightly Whitey)

Pros: If he's from somewhere like Kansas, chances are he's a keeper. Do like Dorothy: Click your slippers, pull down his briefs, and chant, "There's no place like home!"

Cons: If his profile says, "str8 acting," or something racist, then buyer beware! His Fruit of the Looms may indicate he's bananas over oranges like Donald Trump.

JOCK STRAP (a.k.a. Cupcake)

Pros: It can't get any better for Ass Aficionados. In the misattributed words of Marie Antoinette, "Let them eat cake!"

Cons: You thought he was serving Quarterback Realness, but he's serving Flag Football Realness instead. Butch Trade is a bottom!

G-STRING (a.k.a. The Dookie)

Pros: Those into scat will love the lingering smell, but unlike M&M's, it won't melt in your mouth or on your hands!

Cons: He's either a douchebag, a stripper, or trying too hard...especially when sporting them in neon colors.

PACKAGE ENHANCING (a.k.a. False Advertisement)

Pros: You pulled a marshmallow Peep out of his hat instead of a bunny rabbit. Give your *culito* a rest and top for a change!

Cons: Size queens lookin' for Oscar Mayer risk finding a corn dog with more batter than beef.

SHEER (a.k.a. Window Shopping)

Pros: It's always best to sample the butter before you spread.

Cons: The bush needs a Weed Eater? That won't be ladybugs you keep pullin' outta your mouth!

ONE-HIP ASYMMETRICAL (à la Grace Jones starring as Strangé in *Boomerang*)

Pros: His wardrobe may be tacky...but you'll go back for more.

Cons: Don't be offended if he refers to you as Captain Kirk while you're inside his deep space!

LACE (à la '80s Madonna)

Pros: He's thrifty and finds fresh and affordable pairs at the Victoria's Secret Semi-Annual Sale. His sexual fluidity makes for mysterious evenings.

Cons: Your neighbor finds his panties in the dryer and gives you a permanent side-eye!

Get to know Miss Tiger at MissTiger.com.



"We didn't break the Internet, but we sure as hell broke a sweat running to the mailbox to retrieve our monthly issue of *Undergear*."



Personal Is Political

PHOTOGRAPHER **SLOBODAN RANDJELOVIĆ**'S NEW BOOK LAYS BARE THE REALITY OF QUEER PEOPLE LIVING IN SERBIA, WHERE A LONG-STANDING WAR FOR EQUAL RIGHTS RAGES ON.

By Coco Romack

FOLLOWING THE TUMULT of the Balkan wars in the 1990s, the inland nation of Serbia found itself in political limbo. In 2000, the government under president Slobodan Milošević was ousted, its head given up to The Hague and tried for crimes against humanity in relation to the Bosnian genocide. Serbian LGBTQ organizations, which had been vocally anti-war and anti-nationalist in the later part of the '90s, were excited to capitalize on the nation's fresh commitment to democratic ideals. But in 2001, their optimism proved premature: Belgrade's first attempt at a pride parade, scheduled just two days after Milošević's arrest, was met with brutal violence from right-wing extremists, nationalists, and neo-Nazis with lingering commitments to the old regime. Images of bloodied marchers were broadcast around the world.

In the late 2000s, when Serbia was vying for a spot within the European Union, LGBTQ rights became a hot-button topic. In the year of Serbia's application



Clockwise from top left: activists gather at Helena's apartment; Sonja Sajzor; Aleksandar Selmić and Saša Masal; Sonja Sajzor; Dalibor Vujović and Srdjan Dimitrijević; Stefan Radojković

for EU membership, the United States and Europe pressured the nation to guarantee a pride parade without brutality, but in 2009, it was still too soon. Threats of violence spurred the government to cancel, and the parade's main organizer, Majda Puaca, was forced to seek asylum in the United States. It wasn't until September 2014 that a pride parade would take place uninterrupted, although with heavy police protection. Today, Serbia remains staunchly conservative, with deep influence from the Serbian Orthodox Church, and although the sociopolitical landscape for LGBTQ citizens is warming (in fact, Serbia's first openly lesbian prime minister, Ana Brnabić, was elected in 2017), the thaw isn't felt in the daily lives of many queer Serbians.

These are the folks captured in *Lives in Transition: LGBTQ Serbia*, the product of an 18-month endeavor by Serbian-born and New York-based photographer and architect Slobodan Randjelović. The artist, who returned to his homeland to document LGBTQ people living in

Belgrade, introduces us to Helena, a trans woman who sits upright in her hospital bed moments after her gender-confirmation surgery. We also meet Dalibor and Srdjan, a handsome gay couple of more than six years who muse about their fears of violence on the streets. Another subject, Štefica, an up-and-coming drag queen, tells the familiar, yet triumphant tale of finding family in her community after being rejected by the family into which she was born.

"I hope to show a glimpse into their lives," Randjelović writes, "so that anyone who reads this can find empathy and understand that we are all human, that we all hurt, and that we all love." His photos show the ability of the camera to do so much more than document: It can explore the rich complexities of human relationships, pointing to the universalities that connect us across cultures and beyond borders. ■

Lives in Transition: LGBTQ Serbia, by Slobodan Randjelović, now available from the New Press



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WHAT IS DESCOVY®?

DESCOVY is a prescription medicine that is used together with other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 in people who weigh at least 77 lbs (35kg). DESCOVY is not for use to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. DESCOVY combines 2 medicines into 1 pill taken once a day. Because DESCOVY by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1, it must be used together with other HIV-1 medicines.

DESCOVY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS.

To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses, you must keep taking DESCOVY. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about DESCOVY?

DESCOVY may cause serious side effects:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** DESCOVY is not approved to treat HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV and stop taking DESCOVY, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking DESCOVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

What are the other possible side effects of DESCOVY?

Serious side effects of DESCOVY may also include:

- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking DESCOVY.
- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking DESCOVY if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that

can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.

- **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

The most common side effect of DESCOVY is nausea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

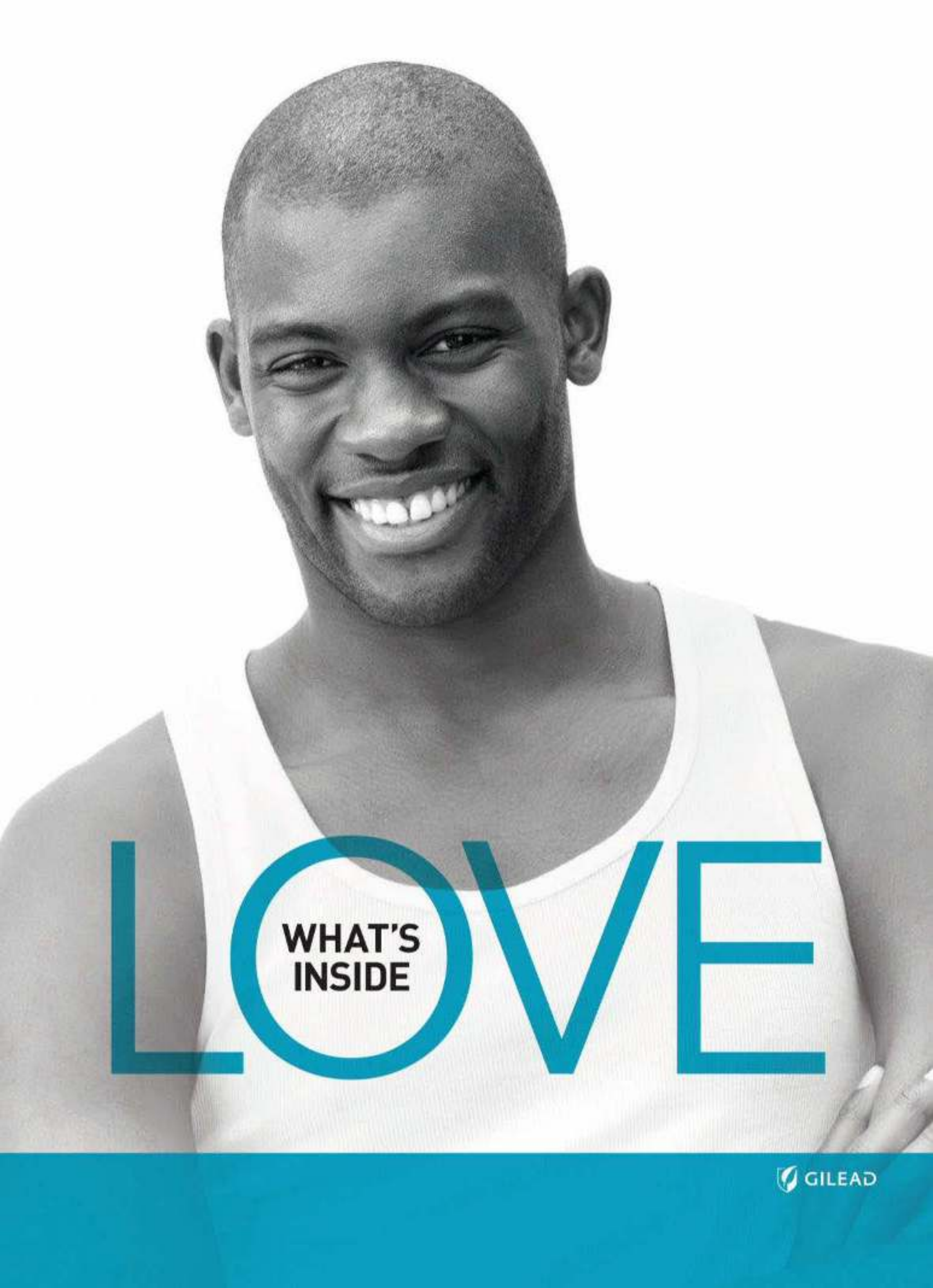
What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking DESCOVY?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Other medicines may affect how DESCOVY works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Ask your healthcare provider if it is safe to take DESCOVY with all of your other medicines.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if DESCOVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking DESCOVY.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Facts about DESCOVY, including important warnings, on the following page.

Ask your healthcare provider if an HIV-1 treatment that contains DESCOVY® is right for you.



LOVE

**WHAT'S
INSIDE**



(des-KOH-vee)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT DESCOVY

DESCOVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** DESCOVY is not approved to treat HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking DESCOVY. Do not stop taking DESCOVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT DESCOVY

- DESCOVY is a prescription medicine that is used together with other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 in people who weigh at least 77 lbs (35kg). DESCOVY is **not** for use to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- **DESCOVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.

BEFORE TAKING DESCOVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other medical condition.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with DESCOVY.

HOW TO TAKE DESCOVY

- DESCOVY is a one pill, once a day HIV-1 medicine that is taken with other HIV-1 medicines.
- Take DESCOVY with or without food.

IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about DESCOVY® and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF DESCOVY

DESCOVY can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About DESCOVY” section.
- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

The most common side effect of DESCOVY is nausea.

These are not all the possible side effects of DESCOVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking DESCOVY.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with DESCOVY.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about DESCOVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to DESCOVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit DESCOVY.com for program information.



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Black, Brown, and Gay

STATE DELEGATE MARY WASHINGTON FLIPPED THE SCRIPT ON RACIAL STEREOTYPES IN MARYLAND'S 2011 BATTLE FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM tells us there's heightened pressure when a person is both black and gay. In the United States, black legislators who have strong connections to historically black churches or Latino legislators rooted in Catholic communities are generally expected to be less inclined to support gay rights. However, the current reality is different. The support for same-sex marriage among black and Latino legislators between 2005 and 2013 was much higher than among their white, Asian, and Pacific Islander colleagues. A full 78 percent of all black legislators voted for marriage equality, and 82 percent of Latinos. Only 56 percent of whites did. It is true that blacks and Latinos are much more likely to be Democrats, but Democrats voting against gay marriage are no more likely to be black or Latino.

Nowhere was this more clearly manifest than in the 2011 battle over gay marriage in Maryland. As a state, Maryland is one-third black, but Baltimore, its major urban center, is two-thirds black. State Delegate Mary Washington's entire life has centered on building coalitions. She's a black woman from a middle-class suburb of Philadelphia, educated in a Catholic school. She came out at 13 years old. She is a professor of sociology, an elder of her Presbyterian church, and a radical feminist. Growing up, Mary had a sense of relative privilege rather than oppression. "I was raised in the house my father was raised in," she says. "He was raised in a middle-class Jewish neighborhood—there were just a couple of African-Americans." That meant Washington saw decline and inequality from her porch. She says she grew up thinking that "if I am in a position to use my relative privilege, I should." In college, she threw herself into organizations and felt competing tugs: "I had to be a woman, I had to be gay, and be black." Washington calls herself a coalition-builder by nature: "I was always the head of the thing that could bring people together."

Elected to the Maryland House of Delegates from Baltimore in 2006, she went about making friends and allies. When marriage equality finally passed in the state of Maryland in February 2012, it passed by three votes in the Senate and nine in the House of Delegates. "I am the only out African-American legislator in the entire state of Maryland," she says,



Mary Washington

adding, "I personally secured three Senate votes, just because of my relationships. That was the margin." Washington had a legitimacy unlike any other. She could speak to black folks and the black church. During the campaign, she was on Fox TV arguing with a homophobic pastor. "The audience was going with him," she recalls, "but I said the great legacy for black people is that our movement inspires people around the world. I could say that, but a white legislator couldn't say that. On the floor of the House I was the antidote to the religious pastors that spoke."

Even once the legislative vote was won, there were still two hurdles to surmount. First, Governor O'Malley had to sign the bill. Washington notes that O'Malley, despite being known as a progressive Democrat, is, at his core, a conservative Catholic, and many of his major donors were "very uncomfortable" with gay rights. Then the law had to be adopted by the voters of Maryland as a whole. Washington recalls that "the polling told us that our only chance was to win black women ages 35 to 53, comprising 7 percent of the vote. If we could get them, we would win the referendum." That 7 percent, thanks to her, was the swing vote. "African-Americans and working-class whites are used to espousing a certain view and then doing something else in the privacy of the booth. At the end of the day, we were able to remind them about their brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews." ■

This is an edited extract from The Children of Harvey Milk: How LGBTQ Politicians Changed the World, by Andrew Reynolds, available this month from Oxford University Press.

"I am the only out African-American legislator in the entire state of Maryland. I personally secured three Senate votes, just because of my relationships. That was the margin."

A Storm of Discourse

AS IT NEARS ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY, MARKED BY A SPECIAL HD RELEASE, WE LOOK BACK ON **PHILADELPHIA**, A FILM BOTH PRAISED AND BASHED FOR ITS DEPICTION OF HIV/AIDS AND GAY LIFE IN THE '90S.

By Alexander Kacala

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO this December, director Jonathan Demme's *Philadelphia* debuted in theaters. Hailed as a landmark film, it would go on to win two Oscars—Best Actor for Tom Hanks and Best Original Song for Bruce Springsteen's "Streets of Philadelphia"—and earn more than \$200 million in worldwide box office sales. Through profit and prestige, the film accomplished what no other major motion picture had before: It evolved the national mainstream conversation about HIV and AIDS. But those are mainly the trade-publication stats for an ultimately polarizing sensation.

"Like any controversial movie, there were people on all sides of it," says Kelsey Louie, CEO of the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC). "There were people who believed it broke down barriers, and people who thought it misrepresented the gay experience and the realities of HIV/AIDS." The film's main benefit, Louie explains, lies in the varied reactions themselves. "It prompted a wider dialogue about HIV/AIDS and the issues surrounding it. In 1993, more than a decade into the AIDS crisis, many people wanted and needed a cultural touchstone to help them have these kinds of discussions, even if this film wasn't exactly what the LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS community may have hoped for. It was considered 'too Hollywood' by many, but at least it got more people to pay attention."

Indeed, *Philadelphia* was a totem that came to be both blessing and burden for the queer community. It was the first major Hollywood film—released three years after the indie *Longtime Companion* and seven years after the now-hallowed *Parting Glances*—to deal with the impact of HIV and AIDS on gay people. And it was also one of the first modern blockbusters to feature a major straight Hollywood star, Hanks, playing gay.

The film's most vocal detractor was perhaps



Larry Kramer, who bashed it in the *Los Angeles Times*, writing, "I'm tired of hearing the old chestnut that the reason Hollywood doesn't finance movies about gays and AIDS is that they won't make money. *Philadelphia* will not make money. I scream back: If you make an honest movie, people will come to it, and there's never been an honest movie financed by a major studio with gay or lesbian leading characters in which we're dealt with dramatically just as heterosexuals are!"

Given *Philadelphia*'s industry reception and its box-office haul, which amounted to roughly eight times its production budget, Kramer was, of course, off the mark. But his moans and whines had a point: What do you forfeit when you go mainstream?

"Jonathan Demme and I worked very hard to develop a story that we felt would bring in the largest possible audience," says writer Ron Nyswaner, whose screenplay for the film was also nominated for an Oscar. "AIDS was a social issue that made people uncomfortable. It made them angry and upset, and it brought out a lot of biases. What we didn't need to do was put out another lower budget, independent film about AIDS, because that had already been done. Those films were seen by an art-house audience already comfortable talking about these things."



"What we didn't need to do was put out another lower budget, independent film about AIDS, because that had already been done."



Antonio Banderas and Tom Hanks in a scene from *Philadelphia*

and hugged me.”

More than two decades after *Philadelphia* first propelled a storm of HIV/AIDS conversations, Nyswaner and the rest of us now live in a world in which PrEP is available to some and AIDS is no longer a death sentence

But why, in a movie about a gay man dying of AIDS, was that man not seen sharing a kiss or lying in bed with his partner? In regard to a deleted scene that showed Hanks and his boyfriend (played by Antonio Banderas) being affectionate in bed, Nyswaner explains that Demme told him the scene “stopped the story.”

He continues, “There may have been hesitation on our part to push the mainstream too far, but that’s only because we can’t tell fortunes. But we did know that we didn’t want to make something only people in New York City and Los Angeles would go see. We wanted to make a successful, mainstream movie, and we did.”

As for *Philadelphia*’s critics (like Kramer), Nyswaner seems resolved to tip his hat and keep on walking. “Larry Kramer is an icon who changed the world and God bless him,” he says, “but what he thinks about my movie is of no interest to me.” And Kramer, however revered and experienced, is only one person with an opinion.

“A few years after the film came out,” Nyswaner says, “a 19-year-old straight girl came up to me and said, ‘I am HIV positive, and I was tortured about how to tell my family. And one night they happened to rent your movie. We sat and watched it together, and at the end, I just stood up and told them, I have what he has. And they all gathered

for many. It’s a new era—with a new narrative and a new cast of characters. “The demographics of the AIDS epidemic are different today than they were in 1993,” Louie acknowledges. “Today, AIDS is everywhere and is owned by everyone. Back then, it was largely still a disease among white gay men in urban areas. Or at least that’s how it was perceived. Now, for example, across the country, black and Latino men who have sex with other men are disproportionately impacted by HIV.”

In the age of PrEP, what would a contemporary take on *Philadelphia* look like? Perhaps one that recognizes prejudice as a lingering shadow. “If I could produce a film about HIV/AIDS for today’s audiences, I would produce one that spoke to the fact that homophobia, stigma, and discrimination are still alive and well in the United States,” Louie says. “I’d also show that a lack of access to prevention and treatment is still crippling for many populations affected, particularly gay black males in the South and people in the trans community. And I would show that there is hope, and there is help to be had, but that hope and help take resources, understanding, and grace. That’s a movie I’d like to see.” ■

The 25th anniversary release of Philadelphia on 4K Ultra HD is available November 27.

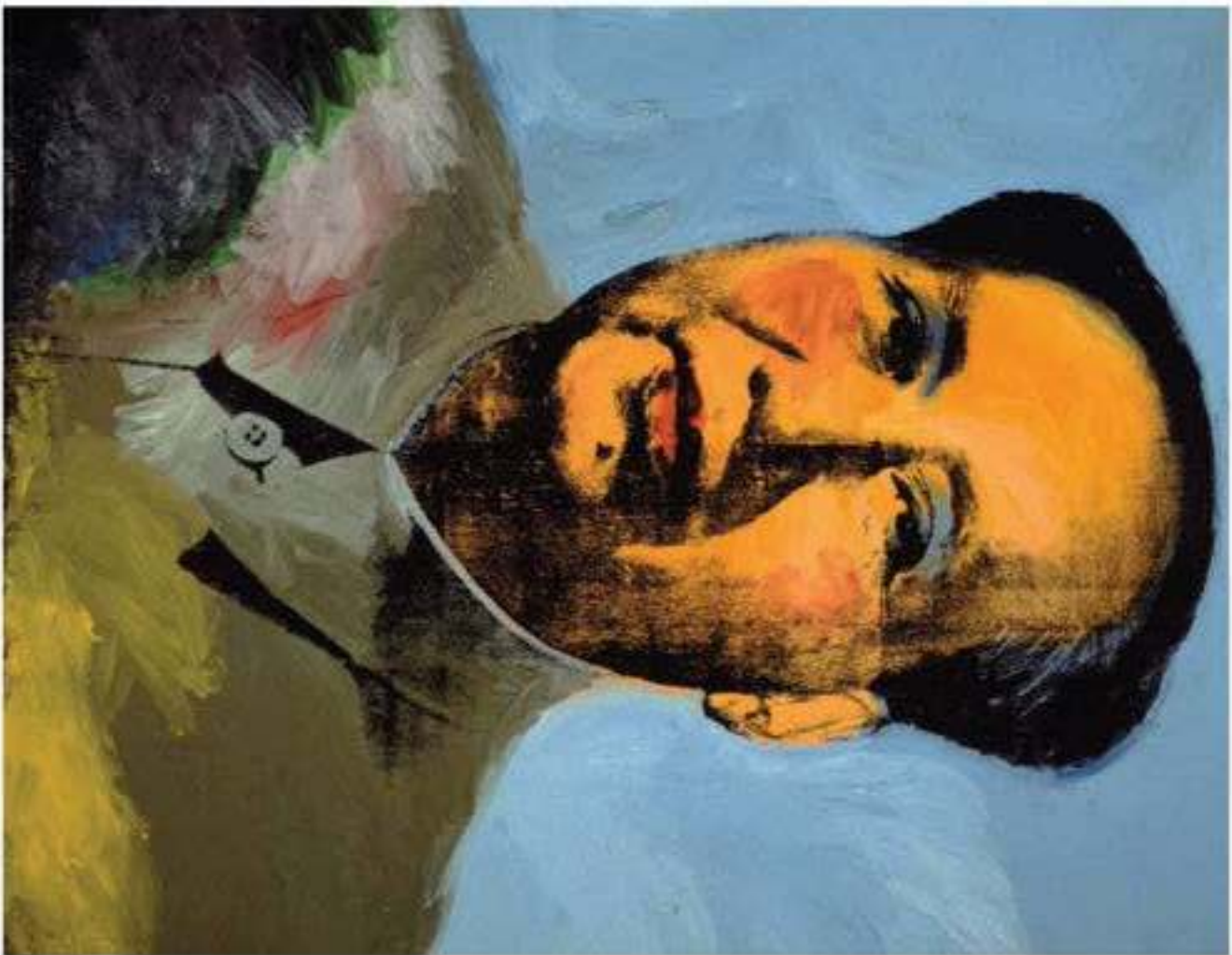


Re-Gaying Andy Warhol

A MASSIVE NEW RETROSPECTIVE AT NEW YORK'S WHITNEY MUSEUM SEEKS TO RIGHT THE WRONGS OF A SCHOLARLY TRADITION TO STRAIGHT-WASH AN ICON.

By Alexander Kacala

WHAT'S LEFT TO SAY about Andy Warhol? That was the question first posed to one of the curators behind "From A to B and Back Again," the Whitney's sprawling retrospective on the patron saint of pop art, opening November 12. The first Warhol retrospective organized in the United States since the '80s, the show illuminates the breadth, depth, and diversity of Warhol's oeuvre, looking at the full trajectory of the artist's work, from his 1949 arrival in New York to his death in 1987. It presents his art as a rich continuum,



"Many art historians who wanted to valorize Warhol reduced his queerness to a footnote—an odd move for the recounting of a man whose gayness was both freely flaunted and decidedly femme."



Clockwise from far left:
Self-Portrait, 1964;
Marilyn Diptych, 1962;
ST309 Edie Sedgwick,
1965; My Hustler, 1965;
Mao, 1972



offering a complex portrait that goes far beyond pedestrian notions of soup cans.

"There are a million things left to say," says Claire K. Henry, assistant curator of the museum's extensive Andy Warhol Film Project. "And we're continually uncovering more information. Warhol was a collector of all kinds of things: cookie jars, Fiestaware—objects that had to be auctioned off after he passed away. I also view him as a collector of people and an amasser of information."

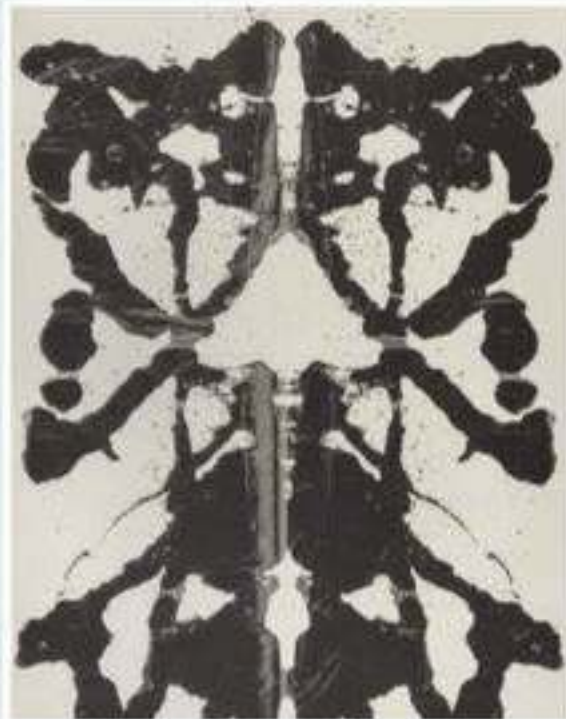
Warhol's hoarded bounty is on full display in this show, which, with more than 350 pieces, is also the largest monographic exhibition to date at the Whitney's current location. His infamous self-portrait from 1964, his colorful 1972 rendering of Mao, and his personal take on the Rorschach from 1984 are all accounted for, many assembled together for the first time. They're joined by Warhol's litany of Polaroids from the '70s, his films, and the thousands of audiotapes he recorded.

Henry notes another bit of audio that recently surfaced and piqued scholars' interest. It was

pulled from an *ARTnews* interview Warhol gave in 1963 to then-young art critic Gene R. Swenson, as part of a series titled "What Is Pop Art? Answers From 8 Painters." Unearthed by historian Jennifer Sichel, the recording revealed that Warhol and Swenson's conversation started off by covering homosexuality and Warhol's thoughts on queerness, which never made it into print. "I practically fell off my chair when I read the whole transcript," Henry says. "The Swenson interview that was published is a truncated and a de-gay-ed version of the conversation. It was straight-washed."

The legacy of Warhol has long been subjected to straight-washing. Take, for example, Heiner Bastian's traveling exhibition from the 2000s, which began at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, then went to the Tate Modern in London, and landed at Los Angeles's MOCA. "It lionized Warhol as this sort of über-Catholic and moralistic arbiter of '60s counterculture," Henry says. "Catholicism does play deeply into his

"Homosexuality was still illegal in the '60s, and the Factory provided a refuge for queer people seeking sanctuary from heteronormative culture."



Clockwise from far left: Ari and Mario, 1966; Green Coca-Cola Bottles, 1962; Sleep, 1963; Superman, 1961; Rorschach, 1984; Christine Jorgenson, 1956; Empire, 1964

work, but the exhibition had no mention—or very little—of queerness.”

“From A to B and Back Again” explores the complex facets of Warhol’s gay and religious identities, as well as the intersections of the disparate media in which he worked. There’s also a three-film series called “Queer Performativity,” which nods to the wildness of Warhol’s Factory. “A huge thing to underscore is the Factory as a space where people could perform gayness,” Henry says. “Homosexuality was still illegal in the ’60s, and the Factory provided a refuge for queer people seeking sanctuary from heteronormative culture.” In *Vinyl*, amphetamine queens play out S&M fantasies—man-on-man action, dripping candle wax, whipping, backhand slapping—in an adaptation of Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange*. In *Camp*, a troupe of outlandish Factory performers host their own queer variety program, including a drag performance by Mario Montez, a pantomime by Jack Smith, and a dance extravaganza from cult legend Paul Swan. And, finally, in *My Hustler*, an

aging John battles his straight female neighbor on the shores of Fire Island for the affections of a young stud hired for the weekend.

All of this wide-ranging material pushes back on the fact that many art historians who wanted to valorize Warhol reduced his queerness to a footnote—an odd move for the recounting of a man whose gayness was both freely flaunted and decidedly femme. The last time a Warhol exhibition of this magnitude was mounted in the United States was at MoMA in 1989, when the AIDS crisis cast a shadow over his queer identity. In today’s warmer social climate, a vast Warhol show can allow for a perception of him that’s unprecedentedly authentic.

“We’re going to try to rectify a lot of scholars,” Henry says. “For the last 20 years, we have been working in this regard: to re-gay Warhol, who never was in the closet to begin with.” ■

“From A to B and Back Again” opens November 12 and runs through March 31 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

TEN PLACES TO GO IN 2019

FROM EMERGING ARTS
SCENES AND UNLIKELY
BEACHES TO MUST-TRY
FOODIE SPOTS, THESE
ARE THE DESTINATIONS
INSPIRING US TO BOOK
OUR NEXT PLANE TICKET.

BY BRANDON PRESSER

PHOTOGRAPH BY BERNARD BOSCH



← 10. French Guiana

A spate of new flight connections has opened up unlikely weekend destinations such as Cartagena and Panama City. Is French Guiana next? Norwegian Air has added flights from the U.S. to Cayenne, the capital.

9. Beirut, Lebanon

Whether it is in staunch defiance of Trump's Islamophobia, or simply the continuation of global progressiveness, the Arab world continues to garner our travel interest. Last year's advent of the Jordan Trail—a 40-day hiking path—brought adventure seekers to Petra and beyond. Now, Beirut is poised to capture urbanites as the fresh alternative to Tel Aviv, with lively queer nightlife and beach scenes. According to American Express Travel, Lebanon's capital has seen a 150 percent spike in bookings.

8. Georgia

First things first: We're talking about the country, not the home of the Braves. Georgia is a nation with surprisingly diverse geography considering its diminutive stature huddled up against the towering peaks of the Caucasus. It is believed that wine was first produced here, and a proud tradition of vintners remains to this day. Food is hallowed, too, with generational recipes that accentuate the bounty of the land. No "farm to table" jargon here, just honest eats.

7. The Big Island, Hawaii

Imagine all the beauty and splendor of the Aloha State but without the bumper-to-bumper tourist traffic. Right now—following the much-publicized eruption of its resident volcano—Hawaii's Big Island has climbed into a time machine and transported itself back 30 years to a moment when only the savviest of surfers could be found roaming the land. Surely, visitor numbers will swell again soon, especially once everyone realizes that most of the lunar landscapes have remained delightfully unscathed. Until then, take your pick from any of the empty black sand beaches.

6. Michigan

We're keen on checking out America's *other* coast, a land with miles of uninterrupted lakeside beaches and remote recesses of national park, like Isle Royale, a collection of hard-to-reach islands fronting the pine-studded shoreline of the Canadian border. Detroit is having a second coming of creativity following the auto industry's collapse, with the creation of new hangout spaces. Luxury brand Shinola just launched its first hotel in the metropolis, and furniture and home décor behemoth West Elm is almost ready to swing open of its own accommodation offering.

5. Dakar, Senegal

Often fetishized by travelers for its safari opps, the African continent is poised to deliver so much more, and with the long-anticipated completion of Dakar's new international airport—10 years in the making—a new cultural beacon can finally show off its megawatt output to a bevy of expected travelers. The French-speaking capital has resonated in the world music scene—think Amadou and Mariam—but it's Dakar's fashion and photography that are currently turning heads. Flight times are surprisingly short from both Europe and North America, making Senegal a manageable choice for tourists with a time cap wanting a mix of heady city magic and compelling nature, like the Pepto-colored waters of Lac Rose.

4. British Virgin Islands

Maybe it's unfair that we're keen on the BVIs, since almost all of the Caribbean could use a heartfelt endorsement after the widespread devastation of last year's hurricanes. The rebuilding efforts throughout the region have been monumental, and many destinations are ready to welcome eager sunbathers. We have our sights set on Tortola, Virgin Gorda, and their smaller, scrubrier neighbors because they're the ideal destinations for DIY holidaymakers. But forget about Airbnb-ing a private condo or villa; go one better and rent your own sailboat. Ship charters like The Moorings offer a variety of build-your-own-boat options: You can lease a vessel outright for a week of autonomous cruising, or hire a captain and chef and just sit back and let the wind take you.



Hawaii Volcanoes National Park



Tbilisi, Georgia



Bond Falls, Michigan



Dakar, Senegal



Buffalo Bayou Park, Houston

2. Texas

Capital city Austin is the Lone Star's poster child for "blue dot/red state," earning the lion's share of hipster traffic in the entirety of the American South. This is anchored by the "Keep Austin Weird" slogan, the pronounced live music scene, the college-town vibe, and the SXSW arts-festival-cum-conference. And, yes, the city makes good on its alt, small-batch coolness, with not just one token neighborhood but a checkerboard of decidedly uncorporate streets and blocks. Texas's other major hubs, however, have long been more than longhorns. Even lesbian hotelier Liz Lambert is branching out from her Austin roots, opening accommodations in San Antonio, Marfa, and beyond.

Houston—which is poised to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the moon landing—has the largest creative community in the entire state. There's the Washington Avenue Arts District, and the Montrose area, which is a great entry point for newcomers with its protracted indie history (during the '80s, it was a hub of LGBTQ activity). Dallas's dining scene is unexpectedly diverse and multiplying by the minute, and San Antonio (fresh off the 300th anniversary of its founding) recently registered the region's sharpest population growth among college-educated Millennials seeking a more affordable lifestyle in the home of the Alamo.

3. Germany

We love a good excuse to throw a party, and Germany has two—the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the centenary of the Bauhaus—both synonymous with a strong, progressive spirit. The Bauhaus opened after the First World War as an interdisciplinary art school, and although it lasted for just a little over a decade, its radical vision of design and architecture had a ripple effect around the globe. An array of exhibitions have been created in honor of the anniversary. Check out Bauhaus100.de for inspirational tourist trails of the movement's living monuments, which cross the entire country from Hamburg to Stuttgart. Of course, there are plenty of stark, modernist structures in Berlin as well—it's a city so celebrated for fostering a good time that even nightclubs can get tax rebates for worthy cultural output.



Spreebogenpark, Berlin



The Grand Factory, Beirut



British Virgin Islands

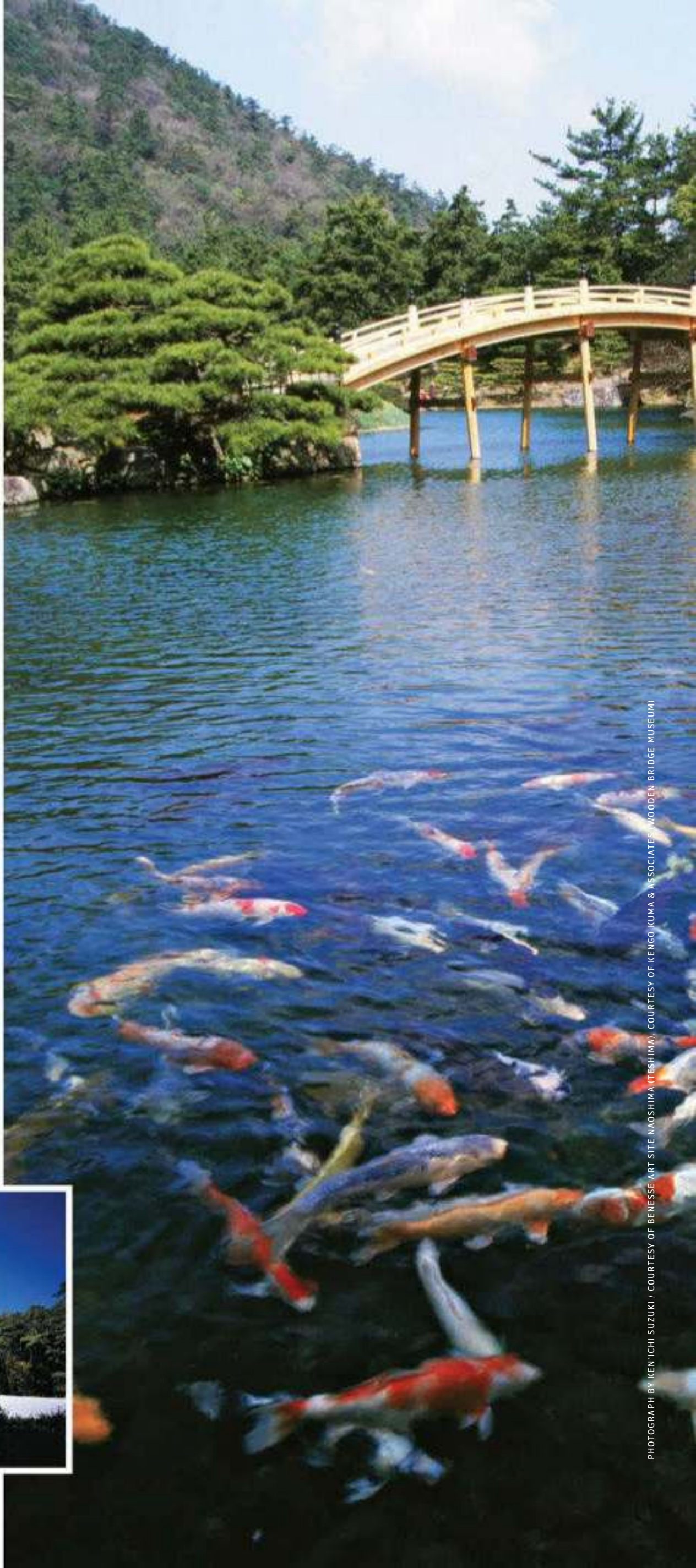
I. Shikoku, Japan

The 2020 Olympics in Tokyo is already a fixture of the international news cycle, but we're keen to visit the Land of the Rising Sun in 2019 instead, for an exhibition so large—think the Olympics of Art—that it spans more than a dozen islands scattered throughout Japan's Inland Sea. Born from a fervent desire to reimagine a region that was once a repository for biohazardous waste (don't worry, it's all been safely removed following a class action suit filed against the government), the Setouchi Triennale has now become an international byword for immersive, large-scale oeuvres spanning a variety of media and platforms.

Objects showcased from past exhibitions—like Yayoi Kusama's polka-dotted pumpkin on Naoshima—have become enduring monuments, making the region a must-see for art enthusiasts year-round. Our pick is the quieter Teshima, where there's a fraction of the crowds and a handful of permanent pieces, including Storm House, a wooden abode through which a rapturous cyclone blows, and the Teshima Art Museum, a strange, singular experience inside what appears to be the collapsed concrete hull of an alien spacecraft.

Lodging is limited among the constellation of art-infused islets, but tiny Ogijima has an immersive offering at Dorima no Ue (or Dreamer no Ue), where Myoko, the owner, provides her homestay guests with dishes made from her backyard's bounty. She'll teach you how to prepare a meal—even daintily fry tempura—and will take you up the mountain to pick wild blueberries or down to the pier to snorkel for fresh uni. For something more upmarket, InsideJapan Tours charts private yachts and seaplanes to link exhibitions.

The islands of the Inland Sea collectively



PHOTOGRAPH BY KEN'ICHI SUZUKI / COURTESY OF BENESE ART SITE NAOSHIMA (TESHIMA), COURTESY OF KENGO KUMA & ASSOCIATES (WOODEN BRIDGE MUSEUM)





Clockwise from bottom left: Teshima Art Museum; Kuribayashi Park, Takamatsu; Yushuhara Wooden Bridge Museum; *20th Century Recall* by Funjo Hagetaka, Setouchi Triennale

belong to Kagawa prefecture on Shikoku, Japan's fourth-largest island, and are easily accessed from its largest city, Takamatsu. Known mostly for its endless farming pastures and rice paddies, the island has long garnered

a faithful influx of domestic tourists who journey to visit the 88 elaborate temples that ring its shores in what has become the longest formalized pilgrimage in the country. Some tackle a few shrines at a time; others take weeks—if not months—to solemnly perform the circuit.

The town of Yusuvara, in Kōchi prefecture, on Shikoku's south-facing coast, is a new art and architectural hotspot, following the meteoric ascendance of Kengo Kuma in the global collective consciousness. The celebrated architect opened his firm in the 1990s and has recently become a household name since winning the bid to create much of the infrastructure for the Olympics. Yusuvara is home to a handful of public and private structures, all embodying Kuma's calling card: building with natural materials. The newest of the lot—a mixed-use structure with a strong socialist bent—features a retirement center and a public library behind a wooden-slatted facade. ■



By Mikelle Street.
Photography by Dusty St. Amand*

INCHING TO STARDOM

Inside the phenomenon of OnlyFans, Just For Fans, and other subscription social media services that are cashing in on the thirst for immediate, amateur gay porn.

As late as the summer of 2017, Macho was working a customer-service job at the Philadelphia branch of PECO, an electric and natural gas utility company in Pennsylvania. The 9-to-5 was Macho's shot at the American dream, but waking up every day to stare at a computer screen and field phone calls wasn't for him. Since then, the 23-year-old's online popularity—which he grew on Instagram, expanded on Twitter (as @jesus_really_), and finally monetized via the website OnlyFans—has shifted his life to one of self-employment, in which he uploads content, mostly explicit in nature, to paying subscribers.

“Basically with Instagram, I was reinventing myself,” Macho says over pizza in his hometown of Philly. “At first, it was just videos of me talking shit and being stupid. But then I started to show off my body, sort of like the vixens that you see on TV, or the girls in music videos with fake butts or fake boobs, who are confident and don't care what anybody says. It made me happy to be the gay version of that.”

Macho's early postings built up a following and a fandom. (His first Instagram account racked up 14,000 followers before it was suspended, and it drew 40,000 when it resurfaced before a final deletion.) But when he began to post photos of his ass, followers started to DM him asking for nudes and wanting to trade videos. This went further when he joined the less-filtered Twitter, where he was able to really understand the size of his audience. “I never started this intending to show my penis or my bulge or anything like that,” he says, “but as I started to become more comfortable with my body and my ass, and realized nothing [bad happened when I showed them], I stopped worrying about it.”

In September 2017, the budding entrepreneur uploaded a photo of himself “inching,” as he calls it. In the image, Macho (who stands at 5-foot-2 and is of Puerto Rican descent) shows the base and first few inches of his penis above the waistband of



a pair of dark gray sweatpants. Since it was posted, the tweet has accumulated well over 3.5 million impressions and 17,000 likes. “That’s when I realized this was something I really could do, because people are obviously looking,” he says.

That “something” sees the popular-boy-about-social-media posting a series of nude photos and explicit videos—both solo and with other Grindr-connected guys who can host—to his OnlyFans account, where he currently charges more than 100 subscribers \$25 a month for access. The follower count can fluctuate (when he started, Macho’s OnlyFans viewer fee of \$7.99 brought in more than 500 followers, but the \$25 price tag garners up to 300), and he’s had to outmaneuver others who pirate and sell his videos. But since February, OnlyFans has provided him with enough financial support to serve as a legitimate full-time job. And along with it have come other opportunities and offers, such as flying to Orlando to film for Raging Stallion and releasing merchandise.

Macho’s story is one of many that have emerged from a cottage industry of sites that have essentially brought the influencer-culture phenomenon to adult entertainment. Former studio performers, amateur adult models, and social media influencers are now using sites like OnlyFans, many making thousands of dollars a month for content. This genre of fan sites is not only an example of a shift in consumer tastes, it also represents a new model when it comes to porn.

“There’s definitely been a trend over the last eight years of consumers liking more amateur movies,” says Dominic Ford, both the owner of his eponymous film studio for gay pornography (which even he describes as “pretty vanilla”) and the founder of OnlyFans competitor site Just For Fans. He adds, “I’ve seen the steady decline of studio porn, just having been in it for a decade. Things seem to have stagnated while amateur porn really has taken off.”

ONLYFANS LAUNCHED in 2016 as another site for multiple influencers to monetize their followings. It mimicked celebrities who had tried similar ventures (like the Jenner-Kardashian clan, who’ve launched their own apps and sites), but this new platform allowed for anyone with a phone to

charge for content. It became an ideal tool for people like fitness experts and independent musicians with avid supporters of all kinds. Some began calling it “Twitter that you pay for.” And, much like Twitter, a subset of these users was pushing an increasing amount of amateur gay porn and other erotic material.

“There are really two main ways I’ve seen it used well,” says Ty Mitchell, a studio porn performer who has worked with the likes of Lucas Entertainment and Treasure Island Media but now has both OnlyFans and Just For Fans accounts. “It’s either

porn performers who are using it as a way of maintaining their careers and making an additional income, or thirst-trap guys who don’t have experience doing porn but see a high demand for their nude image and have figured out how to satisfy that in a way that makes them extra coin.”

Macho falls into the latter category. “I started getting thirsty DMs,” he says. “I still get them, even though I have OnlyFans—people in my DMs [on other platforms] asking for something personal. It’s annoying, but I decided, *Oh, if you want to see this, you can pay.*” Others, like Jamari, a dancer who has worked with Sam Smith and Keke Palmer, have started accounts, but instead of creating porn, they’ve kept things PG. Jamari’s account includes suggestive photos as well as content depicting his work as a go-go dancer.

But big business is also being made by porn performers, both amateur and studio, who have begun to use these websites much the way that escorting work was used in the past—to supplement infrequent and low-paying jobs. After launching his own OnlyFans account in October 2017, Ford started Just For Fans on Valentine’s Day. This new site aimed to address performers’ mounting concerns with OnlyFans, like overusage, which frequently causes server problems and slow load times; the lack of a public company face held accountable for issues like delayed payments; and a gray area about when to cut explicit material. It also provided new, additional features, some of which had only been previously accessible by signing up with multiple services.

“OnlyFans was Twitter that you paid for. ManyVids and Clips4Sale were pay-per-view content services, and a website called SextPanther allowed models to text for money,” Ford says. “Plus, there’s eBay, where people could sell actual



Clockwise from top left: Rocco Steele, Ty Mitchell, Griffin Barrows, Diggory, Jamari

"I never started this intending to show my penis or my bulge or anything like that, but as I started to become more comfortable with my body, I stopped worrying about it."

“It’s unbelievably more than I used to make doing studio work. It’s the type of thing that feels like it’s all going to come crashing down because it’s too good to be true.”

product and autographs. As opposed to having models and performers subscribe to all of these different sites, I wanted to create a house where all the rooms could live under the same roof.” And that house—that home base—is Just For Fans, which in six months has amassed more than 130,000 subscribers, brought in more than 2,000 models, and paid

some of its top performers upwards of \$70,000.

“It’s unbelievably more than I used to make doing studio work,” says Rocco Steele, a heavily awarded porn performer who has operated *RoccoSteeleStudio.com* and *My10Inches.com* since his 2014 industry debut. “It’s the type of thing that feels like it’s all going to come crashing down because it’s too good to be true.”

According to Ford, of the roughly 2,000 performers on Just For Fans, more than 1,500 are cisgender men making content for other men. On average, they boast 100 to 300 followers and charge each of them approximately \$9.99 a month, with Ford taking 30 percent of their earnings. This means that the average performer is banking anywhere from \$700 to \$2,100 a month for uploading content, which can span anywhere from under a minute to more than an hour in length. And the lion’s share of the work can be done via smartphone, which means it’s an international business.

Popular go-go boy and ginger-haired pinup model Seth Fornea made his X-rated debut on OnlyFans in January, and says that the autonomy it provided, in part, allowed him to relocate from New York to Brazil. Diggory, a performer in London who was doing amateur porn-cam work prior to joining both OnlyFans and Just For Fans this year, says that his city has a community, of sorts, where performers network with one another to find scene partners. And while their average profit is certainly more than pocket money (there is little to no overhead), the perfect viral moment can shoot the right creator into much higher earnings.

“It’s really a viable way to figure out your own niche and play to your own strengths,” says Griffin Barrows, who has been a studio performer, on and off, since 2014, starting with ChaosMen before moving on to *Men.com* and Next Door Studios. He’s now one of the top three performers on Just For Fans, thanks in part to a November 2017 upload that went viral. The footage, originally available in full exclusively on OnlyFans and in clips on Twitter and Tumblr, showed him giving a faceless partner a hand job for 40 minutes. Barrows describes his scene mate as a “young, closeted college student,” and says the clip became famous because of

the student’s...substantial orgasm. “There’s this really high volume. My surprise there is genuine,” Barrows says. “You don’t really get genuine surprise in studio porn, and once I posted that clip, it just went crazy.” The footage attracted more than 500,000 notes on Tumblr before it got removed, and to date, it has more than 3.9 million views on Twitter.

That video has become emblematic of the most successful accounts on these fan sites, which essentially bring better lighting to content that viewers feel is organic, authentic, and even somewhat personal, since they follow the performers. This genre has institutionalized homemade amateur porn in a way that ties it directly to the cult of personality. The effect democratizes the porn industry, meaning that any and all genres can be explored. RopeTrainKeep, an account that focuses on bondage, is one of the top performers on Just For Fans. And, according to Ford, other fetishes that were thought to be niche, like fisting and masked performers, also do well. Additionally, this new model provides performers with consistent compensation in an industry suffering from exploitative practices and falling rates.

But with this new autonomy—in which each actor is allowed to choose when, how, and with whom he will perform—comes an ongoing demand for content. “When I started, I was immediately hit with a lot of anxiety about posting good videos that would make my profile competitive with other people,” says Mitchell, who posts about four times a month, with an emphasis on duo scenes. “That’s kind of a con about participating in this,” he says. “On one hand, I’m in competition with porn performers who are really established in the industry and have a lot more access to other performers. And on the other hand, I’m in competition with guys who can just post a nude, and because their naked body isn’t as available online, that’s enough satisfaction for their fans.”

Many of the performers interviewed for this story try to upload anywhere from two to four times a week, and most include at least one penetrative clip. Some, like Diggory, use their local network of fan-site performers, while others, like Steele, travel frequently to meet up with studio performers in other places. Almost all also perform with non-studio performers. And while too much editing can be a turnoff to fans (many of the more successful streams are low on editing to maintain a homemade feeling), the need to create content, edit it, and constantly promote it has many people feeling that this new genre won’t replace studio porn.

“[Self-promotion] is a big part of it,” Barrows says. “Someone who is willing to hustle a bit more. A lot of guys don’t want to do all this work. They want to show up, film, and get paid.” But for those who are willing to put in the time, the payoff can be as limitless as the number of people who click “Subscribe.” ■



POP GOES KIM PETRAS

BY ROSE DOMMU.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN SCHOELLER.

STYLING BY MATTHEW MAZUR

DEVoured BY THE
QUEER COMMUNITY,
THE BUDDING DIVA'S
ESCAPIST POP SELLS
AN IRRESISTIBLE
FANTASY, BUT WHAT'S
THE REALITY BEHIND
THE BOPS?

KIM PETRAS is hoping to own the fall the same way she owned the summer—with captivating singles delivered one on top of the other. When I speak with her the morning after the first show of Troye Sivan's *Bloom* tour, which she's supporting as an opener until it wraps on November 8, she is days away from the surprise drop of her new Halloween mixtape, *Turn Off the Light, Volume 1*. For an artist who has largely written cheekily heartfelt bops about the agony and ecstasy of heartbreak, it's something of a musical departure—dark and sexy, filled with techno beats straight out of the seediest Berlin dungeon (appropriate for a girl who grew up less than 400 miles away in Cologne). The addictive mixtape sounds like the soundtrack from some long-forgotten, campy '80s horror movie, with Petras in the Final Girl role (that is, when she's not playing the slasher). It's another side of Petras, another fantasy from a budding pop star for whom fantasy is the ideal.

When Petras wrote her first single, "I Don't Want It at All," a bratty, bubbly anthem about the rabid pursuit of excess—think Veruca Salt if she'd ditched the golden geese for Gucci—she was sleeping on a futon in a "shitty ass apartment" in Los Angeles. She was far away from the sugar-baby lifestyle

Dress by **Adam Selman**.
Earrings by **Alessandra Rich**.
Necklace by **Rory Rockmore**



Dress by **LaQuan Smith**.
Earrings by **Alessandra Rich**.
Necklace by **Rory Rockmore**



"I WATCHED POP
VIDEOS ALL DAY AND
WAS LIKE, OK, I'M
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GREAT SONGWRITER,
AND DIDN'T CARE
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POPULAR, BECAUSE I
NEVER WAS."

imagined in the lyrics, but imagination was the key. "I'm definitely pop music's greatest scammer," she says with a laugh.

"I'm really into the fantasy," adds the 26-year-old, who grew up idolizing pop stars with outrageous stage personas, from Boy George to Gwen Stefani. Petras's first single landed at a time when pop was still having its stripped-back moment (in the middle of Gaga's *Joanne* era), and she was eager to bring back a little Top 40 irreverence. "Everybody is so cool right now," she says. "Nobody's singing high songs, everybody's whispering—it's just a lot of really mellow pop. There's a minimalist thing that's happening right now." Petras, however, is a maximalist. "What I want to do is just the fantasy—it's so cool to have fun and be flamboyant and dance and sing really loud at the top of your lungs. I just think that's the shit."

The fantasy struck a chord, and the song went viral. After years of trying to break into an industry still attempting to navigate in the age of streaming, Petras used the momentum of her first hit and kept them coming. She partnered with Spotify and released single after single, all without the support of a major label.

But a hot single making the club rounds was one thing; a career was another. "With a hundred songs coming out every New Music Friday, how do you break out?" Petras wonders aloud. "It's been a thing of figuring it out and trying new things the best way possible to get as much exposure as possible. And at the same time, put out as much music as possible. That's always my goal."

Petras wanted her prolific output to help fans get to know her. Those fans are largely queer, which makes sense: Petras's songs are like gay catnip, irresistibly catchy bops about heartbreak and getting wasted. They do what pop songs do best: take something as universal as a crush or a wild night out and turn it into the most perfectly transcendent dance-floor moment, with the help of a few synths, a relentless beat, and a guitar riff. In a year like 2018, when every week our phones buzz with some new political horror, Petras's escapist pop is a blessing for queer people, and it doesn't hurt that she is *one of the girls*.

Petras gained national attention as a teenager when, at 16, she became the youngest person to ever receive gender-confirmation surgery. She spent her adolescence as an advocate, making documentaries in Europe that aimed to help other transgender kids. Though she had access to the medical necessities of transition, it wasn't easy growing up as

one of the world's most visible trans figures—but being an outsider only made Petras more driven. "In school, I was very antisocial and very unpopular," she says. "People didn't understand me and thought I was freaky. I always felt a little like a freak. And so I just went

home and focused on becoming really good at something. I watched pop music videos all day and was like, *OK, I'm going to become a great songwriter*, and didn't care so much about going to parties or being popular, because I never was."

But now her music and the queer fans who know what it's like to be an outsider have turned *her* into a pop star. Gay approval can make or break a new diva—as Samantha Jones said on *Sex and the City*: "First come the gays, then the girls, then...the industry." Petras not only has the bops, she's actually part of the community best positioned to make her a hit. That doesn't mean, however, that she's interested in being a *trans* pop star, or even a *queer* one. "As a human, it's annoying that you have to have a label," says Petras. "You know, you're a 'gay actor' or you're a 'trans artist.' I want people to talk about my music and not my gender identity because, to me, that's what I'm proud of. I'm transgender, but it's just a strong footnote, you know? Yes, that's who I am, but at the same time, what I'm proud of and what I want to be seen for is my music and my art and what I've worked really hard on achieving."

In September, during the press tour for her film *Assassination Nation*, actress and model Hari Nef challenged journalists to stop qualifying her by her transness. "Would you introduce Viola Davis as a black actress?" she asked. "Would you introduce Kristen Stewart as a gay actress? Would you introduce Millicent Simmonds as a deaf actress? No? OK, cool—so please stop introducing me as a trans actress." In a world reckoning with transgender visibility, artists like Nef and Petras are demanding to be acknowledged for their work rather than their identity, but that's not so easy in the era of identity politics, when the personal and the political are more entwined than ever.

Kim Petras doesn't seem all that interested in being political, something non-binary, trans writer KC Clements

Dress by **Adam Selman**.
Earrings by **Alessandra Rich**.
Necklace by **Rory Rockmore**

examined in their *Pitchfork* article, “What Does It Mean to Be an Apolitical Trans Pop Star?” Clements believes that Petras has “actively eschewed getting involved in politics, particularly around trans issues.” It’s a position that’s somewhat jarring as more underground trans artists (many with less privilege than Petras) are leaning into political activism, using their platforms to promote social causes. “We have this person who could potentially be at least somewhat of a political figure, and instead she’s distanced herself from that,” Clements said in an interview. But the critique of Petras is balanced with a heartfelt love for her music. “I’m rooting for her,” Clements says.

“She makes infectious music in a pop landscape that’s disappointing us at every turn,” said another fan—we’ll call him Steve. “The pop stars we like who are political aren’t really impressing us very much with the actual product.”

Part of Petras’s reluctance to make her transness the center of her public persona is the fact that she transitioned so long ago, before the advent of trans visibility. “It’s a very important part of my life, but at the same time, it’s so normal to me,” she says. “My whole life, I’ve just been me, and sometimes I get annoyed when people know me as only that. It’s frustrating sometimes.” Several labels interested in signing her early in her career wanted to lead with her transness. “I never wanted to do that,” says Petras. “I always wanted to lead with the music.”

“I would be exhausted too if I had spent my whole life being visible as a trans person,” says Clements, “and feeling like you constantly have to be an advocate—that the sole focus is on your identity. As trans folks, it’s so rare that we get to just be joyful and fun and sexy and fall in love and do drugs. There’s something I really love about that in her music and her persona.”

There’s another part of Petras’s story she’d rather not have overshadow her music, and that’s her working relationship with Dr. Luke, the prolific pop producer who was accused of sexual abuse by Kesha in 2014. The messy legal battle continues to this day, and Petras has been adamant that the conflict has nothing to do with her. When Petras’s spot on Troye Sivan’s *Bloom* tour was announced, the singer responded to criticism from Sivan’s fans, saying her positive experience with Dr. Luke “does not negate or dismiss the experience of others or suggest that multiple perspectives cannot exist at once.” But Petras’s fans don’t want a canned PR statement, they want the real, honest *tea*.

“The tea is I respect both of them a lot,” Petras says of Luke and Kesha, after a bit of nudging. “I think they’re very, very talented. It’s an ongoing legal case, and I just literally don’t have anything to do with it. It really doesn’t involve me. I want it to be between the two of them. That’s kind of





it. It's a pending litigation, so I can't speak about it. I respect them both and...whatever will happen will happen."

But Petras doesn't seem to grasp that her socially conscious queer audience, who are watching women come forward and speak openly about sexual assault in the wake of #MeToo, want more transparency from the public figures they look up to, even the ones selling fantasy in their music. Kesha accused Dr. Luke of abuse years before Petras started working with him, raising the question, Why did she start working with him in the first place? By her admission, he's only marginally involved in producing her songs. "He kind of comes in and polishes it up," she says. "He changes the melody slightly—just helps polish it, texture it." But is a bit of industry polish worth being inextricably linked to the man implicated in one of pop culture's nastiest sexual assault cases?

The singer's fans seem willing to cut her some slack, even in a community that rigorously polices its own. "I've come to this awakening about how much harder queer and trans people are on other queer and trans people," says Clements. "We've got all these problematic faves that are cisgender and heterosexual who are constantly getting away with shit, and then somebody like PWR BTTM gets canceled." Clements is referring to the queer punk duo whose career collapsed after multiple sexual assault allegations emerged days before their debut album was scheduled for release. Justice is swift among social justice warriors, but even social justice warriors stan Kim Petras.

"This is one of the first pop stars we've been able to look to and say, 'That person is trans; that person's like me,'" says Clements, who hopes that Petras will eventually move on to other collaborations and take an active role in trans politics. "It doesn't need to be central to her career or identity, but, to some extent, those of us with more privilege and with access to a wide audience have some responsibility to engage with those issues."

Steve thinks that in Petras's case, visibility is powerful in and of itself. "She's somebody who could be downplaying her trans identity a lot more, because she passes and is white and pretty," he says. "So it's cool that she's open about it. It lends a bit of credibility we wouldn't give somebody who wasn't part of our community."

Whether or not Petras is interested in being a queer pop star, her rise is a powerful symbol in an industry that is finally embracing trans artists and letting them tell their own stories. Petras may not be a perfect pop star, but pop stars aren't really meant to be perfect. We want them to be messy, to make mistakes, to break hearts, and to have their hearts broken—after all, that makes for the best bops. "To have at least one trans pop star who is making total bangers that I want to dance to...it feels important," says Clements.

In January, Brooklyn DJ Paul Tomasiello got in touch with Petras's team and floated the possibility of doing a short set at a party, and days later they booked a pop-up show. Petras gushed on Instagram how obsessed she was with the Williamsburg crowd, who knew every word of the bridge to her song "Hillside Boys."

Afterward, she joined Tomasiello and a few drag queens upstairs, singing a cappella and playing the then-unreleased "Heart to Break," arguably her best single—a throbbing,



synth-heavy, '80s-style banger with a relentless beat about all the boys you *know* are bad for you. After a ki with the girls, Petras rejoined the party downstairs, dancing behind the DJ booth for the rest of the night. "She blended in with everybody so easily, and everyone loved her," said the DJ. "She had this great energy. She's really sweet, and she loves to party. She's just...one of us."

But it seems that if Petras is one of us, that relationship can't stop at making great pop music. Art doesn't exist in a vacuum, and the fantasy world Petras is building needs to share space with the reality in which she and the rest of us



Dress by
Eric Schlösberg.
Earrings by
Alessandra Rich.
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Rory Rockmore

"WE HAVE THIS PERSON
WHO COULD POTENTIALLY
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live. We need her to be transparent and accountable, because the truth is, we *need* Kim Petras. We need her irresistible escapist pop to help us forget that the world is falling to shit around our ears. We need her as proof that queer people have value in the music industry. We need her to show young trans women that they can be joyful and powerful and sexy *and* secure the bag. But Kim Petras needs us too, *because* she's one of the girls, and what are sisters if not the people who hold you up, who read you when you need to be read, and who'll join you on the floor when *that song* is so good you can't possibly not dance to it. ■

YOUNG, LOUD, AND FREE

TREKKING FROM THE QUIET OF NORTH CAROLINA TO THE BUSTLE OF LOS ANGELES, SOCIAL MEDIA SENSATION **RICKEY THOMPSON** HAS BECOME A STYLISH AND JOYOUS FACE OF A MOVEMENT OF OUTSPOKEN QUEER BLACK MEN—UNWILLING TO STOP AND READY TO STUNT.





All clothing by **Tom Ford**

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Styling by Grant Woolhead

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RICKEY THOMPSON is probably sliding into your DMs. If you happen to know any of the viral celeb's 1.5 million Instagram followers, chances are they've hit up your inbox with one of his hilarious videos, which see the bendy 22-year-old doing everything from twerking at a McDonald's bag to practicing pickup lines with a house plant. His bio says he's "just here to make you laugh," and Thompson has done that and then some, yielding him faithful fans across multiple platforms, like the dearly departed Vine, where his antics first took off in 2013.

But Thompson wasn't always flaunting his flamboyant voice. In fact, it took him a while to find it. "When I was younger, I was the shyest kid ever," he says. His past is probably part of the reason he was shocked when the Vines he posted in high school sparked such a swift audience response. "All of a sudden, I started getting *a lot* of attention for my videos," he says, noting that as a Christian from North Carolina, with seemingly impossible dreams of breaking into showbiz, he enjoyed a plot twist fit for a teen movie. "I was an underdog kid, and then, in my senior year of high school, I was the most popular thing," he says.

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Alexander McQueen







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All clothing
by **Gucci**

➤ Galvanized by this popularity, Thompson focused on making his dreams possible, setting his sights on Los Angeles. Just a day before enrolling in an undergrad program, a trajectory his parents lined up for him, Thompson had an abrupt, adverse reaction and broke the news to his family. “I was like, ‘This is not me; this is not what I want to do,’” he says. Instead, Thompson continued boosting his presence on another platform, YouTube, and headed west—which, as he expected, gave him a jolt of energy. “L.A. is this whole different scene where you can be yourself and dress how you wanna dress,” he says. “And everybody’s out here trying to succeed, chase goals, and be the next big thing.”

But, for Thompson, after a year of asserting his independence, the City of Angels showed its demons—in his case, fake friends. “When you start to feel out L.A. a little bit more, you see people’s intentions,” he says. “People will mess around and backstab you—do you dirty just to get to the top. It’s ugly. I was not raised that way.” But Thompson has a best friend in fellow YouTuber Denzel Dion, who helps him ➤

All clothing by
Louis Vuitton



■ stay grounded—and on brand. At one point, Thompson veered from his trademark comedy and tried his hand at style videos, but Denzel steered him back. “He told me, ‘Rickey, this is not for you,’” Thompson says. “I’m gonna be real. I’m so sorry, but look at the views.”

We all need to know our strengths, and while Thompson may not be your source for wardrobe tutorials, since moving to the West Coast, he has seen his theatricality pay off. A bit of his dream to act was fulfilled when he nabbed the role of Dakota on the cheekily named YouTube series *Foursome*, about a group of friends who help to get lead character Andie laid. As for Thompson’s own sexual awakening, when it came to sharing it with the world, he was true to form. “I came out on Twitter,” he says. “In 2016. But I didn’t plan it well. I would never have thought my family would find out, but my dad’s a barber, and one of his customers came in and was, like, ‘Congrats on your son.’ And he was, like, ‘What do you mean?’ ”

Thompson’s family didn’t love the style of his revelation, but they’re still part of his support network, which helps to fuel Thompson’s ambitions. “I’m not gonna give up, because I have so many people who are watching me today, and these are people who are going through something as well,” he says. “I can never give up on that. A lot of people aren’t supportive of gays, and a lot of people don’t have what this black boy from North Carolina has. So I’m never gonna hold my tongue.” ■

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By Mikelle Street.
Photography by Matthew Leifheit

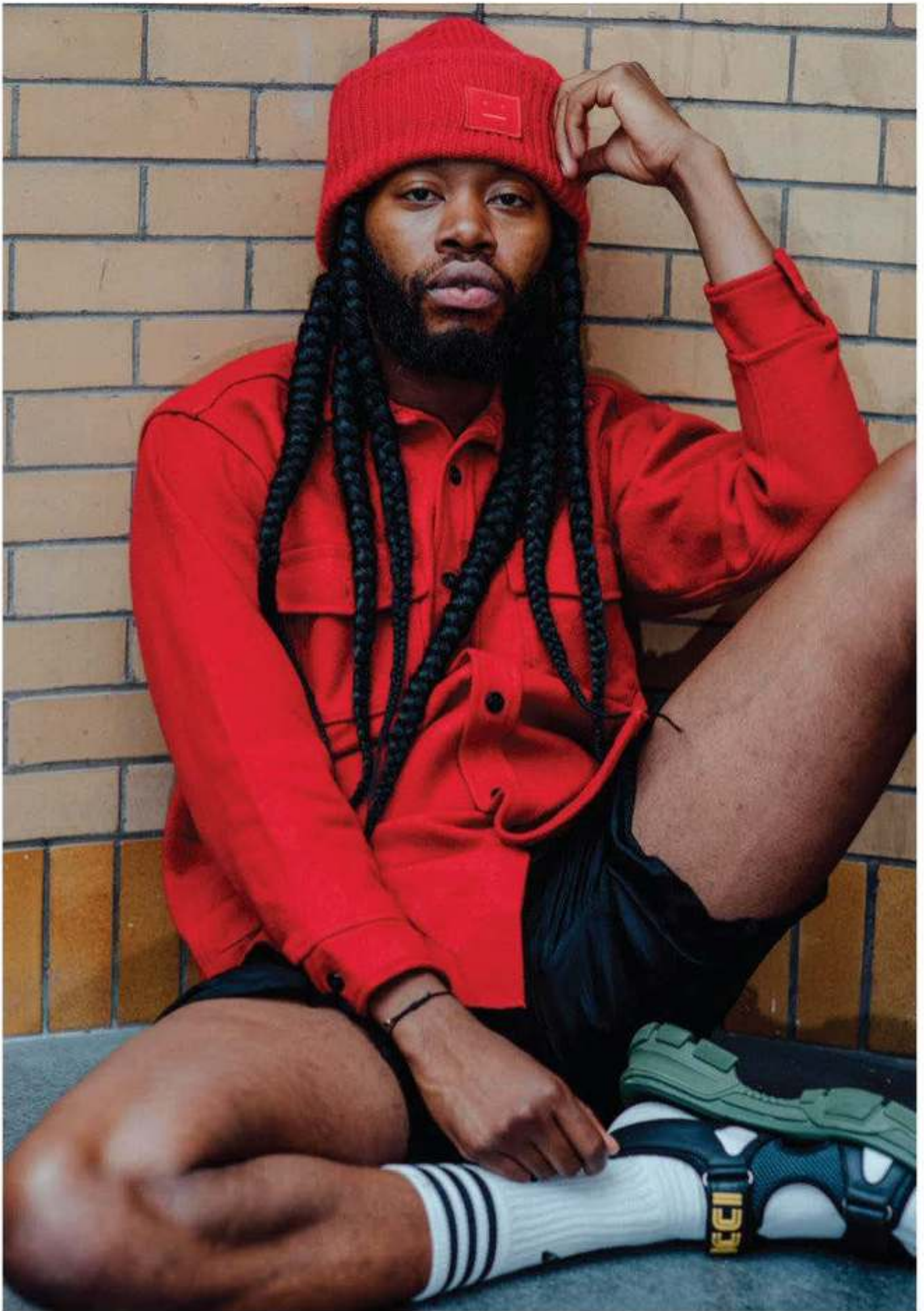
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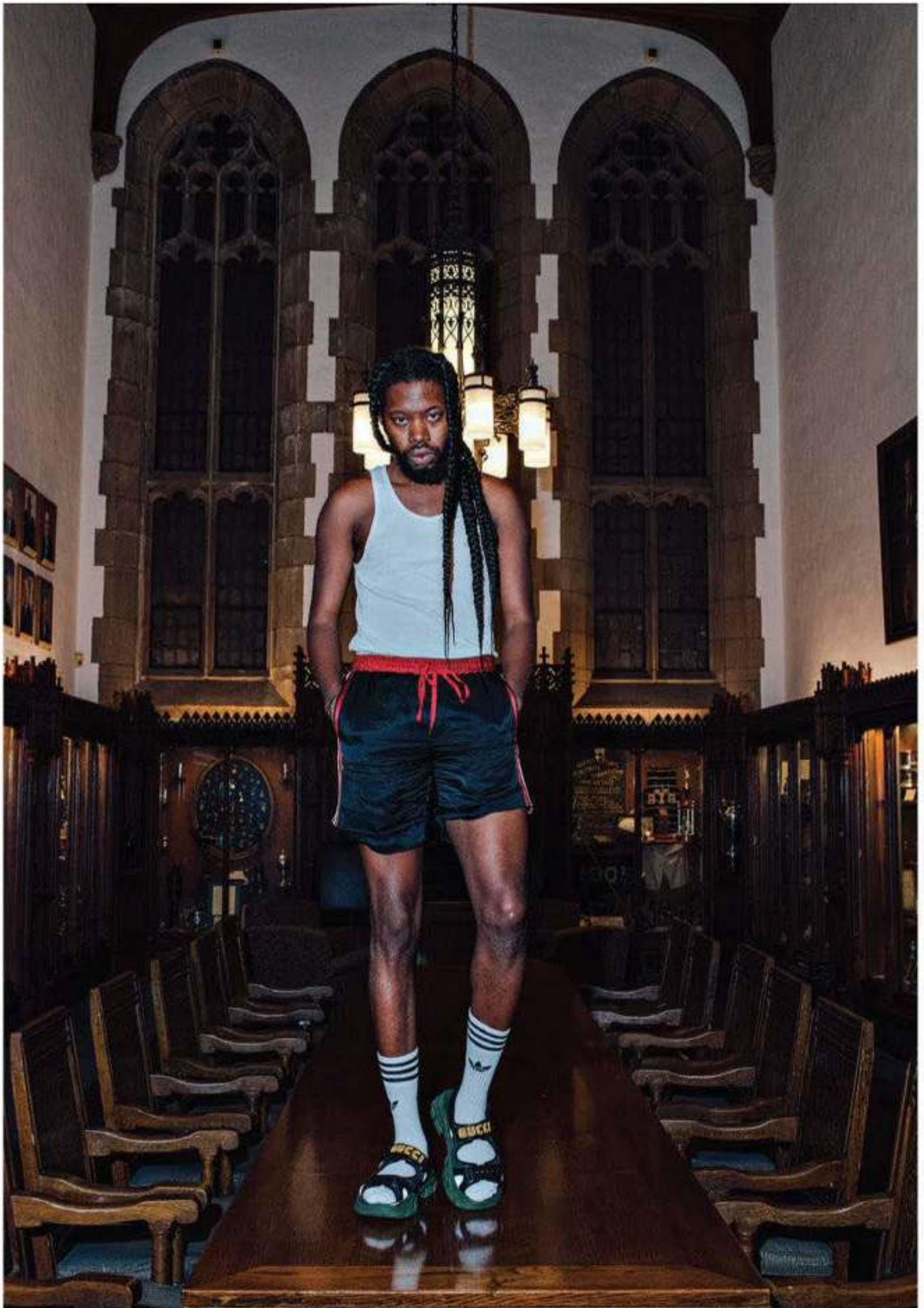
WITH THIS MONTH'S OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTION *SLAVE PLAY*, AND WITH A GROWING CATALOG FUELED BY A GLAZED-OVER ARTISTIC HISTORY, **JEREMY O. HARRIS** MIGHT BE THE TIRELESS QUEER BLACK SAVIOR THE THEATER WORLD NEEDS.

IN August 2014, Jeremy O. Harris had a turning point. “It was sort of my Scarlett O’Hara moment,” says the playwright and actor, recalling the night when he received a standing ovation for a play he wrote as a finalist in the Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Short Play Festival. The 30-minute production, which included music Harris composed with his friend Isabella Summers (from *Florence and the Machine*), did not win the top prize, but it did get people on their feet like no other work of the evening. “I had that ‘As God is my witness... I’ll never go hungry again,’ moment,” Harris says, “where I was, like, ‘I refuse! This is bullshit! None of these other plays got a standing ovation tonight, and I did. I did it!’” That fiercely determined attitude—along with encouragement from his mentor, playwright and Pulitzer Prize finalist Christopher Shinn—set Harris on a four-year path toward his next projects: two Off-Broadway productions, beginning this month with *Slave Play*.

“I’m from Martinsville, Virginia,” Harris says, “and what I’ve always wanted for myself is to be able to write a play that will end up in the same Barnes & Noble as the first play I encountered [back home].” (Over lunch at Yale, where he’s in his final year at the School of Drama, Harris says that first play was *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which he stumbled upon in fifth grade, when he was 11.) “I want that because when I think about the playwrights who have written plays that have reached that kid—playwrights who identify as black and gay—they are limited. I know offhand the four who got to me: Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Robert O’Hara, Tarell Alvin McCraney, and Marcus Gardley.”

Harris, who in 2009 dropped out of the Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago, is set on both standing out and adding his name to the ranks, not only of those writers who have inspired him but also of a lineage of black playwrights. He was named a 2016 MacDowell Colony fellow and was the





recipient of the 2018–2019 Vineyard Theatre Paula Vogel Playwriting Award. *Slave Play*, which covers race and sexuality and is billed as an “antebellum fever dream,” has earned the 2018 Kennedy Center Rosa Parks Playwriting Award and the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award. And all of this recognition is for art that sees Harris putting his identity and heritage at the forefront.

“My identity markers, which would have made this work less palatable 20 years ago—or even 10 years ago—might now be part of the reason why my work is more impactful,” Harris says. Indeed, *Slave Play*, which will be directed by Robert O’Hara and debut Nov. 19 at New York Theatre Workshop, and *Daddy*, which opens next February and stars Alan Cumming, include a queer sexuality that wasn’t always accepted in the work of his theatrical heroes. “In this landscape of white, cis, straightness, there’s a curiosity about this black queer boy working in this paradigm,” Harris says, “which is both interesting and scary because it feels like a trend. Like, what happens when they get bored?” If and when they do, Harris intends to have already done as much as he can to ask questions and poke and prod at topics surrounding race, gender, sexuality, and the interactions therein.

“*Slave Play*,” he says, somewhat cryptically, “moves best if no one knows what will happen.” He likens this tactic to the enticing effect that “18 or over” screens had on him when he perused adult websites in his youth. “The way I describe *Slave Play* to people is, ‘It’s a slave play; there’s a history of them; go see mine.’” And while the play drops a few recognizable contemporary names—such as Rihanna, whose inclusion reflects how music is another hallmark of Harris’s work—its creator isn’t exactly keen on making things that pander to the mainstream.

“I don’t think about palatability as much as other people seem to,” he says. “For me, it’s akin to respectability politics, and I think there’s very little necessity for respectability politics, especially in a time that’s so deeply unrespectable. When I think about race and sexuality in America, palatability is the furthest thing from my concerns. I made a play that’s palatable to me but might not be palatable to my audience. I’ll see how they reckon with that.”

Harris’s work is built on the back of a history that’s often left out of the traditional theater narrative. He cites the chitlin circuit and storied productions by black artists as additional influences. For *Slave Play*, in particular, he points to the work of Alice Childress and Thomas

“When I think about race and sexuality in America, palatability is the furthest thing from my concerns.

I made a play that’s palatable to me but might not be palatable to my audience. I’ll see how they reckon with that.”

Bradshaw as much as he does to that of Annie Baker and Rainer Werner Fassbinder. And while imbuing his art with this heritage, he poses even more questions.

“I’m continuously asking people, Why is it that Alice Childress is not getting a remounting on Broadway?” he says. “Why is it that we’ve only had, like, one Adrienne Kennedy remount in the past five years, but in New York, we’ve had three by Edward Albee? Why is it that the works of so many experimental and genre-bending black artists don’t get taught in our schools? For me, part of being a young writer is talking about your references—consistently.”

He hopes to bring that conversation to the stage, from *Slave Play* to *Daddy* and beyond. His next production is one he’ll work on through his new award from Vineyard Theatre, and he describes it as The Colored Museum on crack—a reference to black gay playwright George C. Wolfe’s 1986 satire that examined African-American culture. In addition, last year Harris finished his first screenplay, which is based on the viral Twitter story about a character named Zola, and involves strippers, pimps, forced prostitution, and human trafficking. It was co-written, and will be directed, by Janicza Bravo, who has helmed episodes of shows like *Atlanta* and *Dear White People*. He’s also working on an original screenplay with producer Bruce Cohen (*Milk*, *Silver Linings Playbook*) and Makeready.

“The fact that I took so many wrong turns and have ended up here means that everything was sort of right,” Harris says. “If I can utilize the wrong turns I made, and bring along all the people I met along the way into my journey of being a playwright, and introduce them and their friends to people that I think are making the best theater right now, then theater might actually become a medium that people care about again.” ■

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THE PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS PULLING US IN

Queen 101

As *Bohemian Rhapsody* struts into theaters, we serve up a beginner's guide to the extravagant band that's penetrated our culture for decades.

Confessions of a Queen Virgin

Writer **John Russell** never thought much about this British rock quartet...until he couldn't think about much else.

I had to admit to someone recently that I'm not a fan of Queen. I didn't mean I'm "not a fan" in the tongue-in-cheek way, which most people use today as an ironic understatement of profound distaste. I just don't have any Queen songs in my iTunes library or on any of my Spotify playlists. And I've never taken much time to digest the band or their legacy.

But as the new Freddie Mercury biopic *Bohemian Rhapsody* hits theaters, and posters of actor Rami Malek in character dominate every street corner, thinking about Queen and contemplating their music is unavoidable.

For many, Queen has *always* been unavoidable. Considering the enduring omnipresence of songs like "Bohemian Rhapsody," "We Will Rock You," and "We Are the Champions," it's fairly safe to assume that almost every adult in the developed world has heard them. Chances are you've absorbed the lyrics to their hits without even realizing it. (Say it with me: "Scaramouche, scaramouche, will you do the fandango?") And these three anthems mark a good place to start when thinking



about the band's queer influence.

"Bohemian Rhapsody" has all the queerness of a punk queen crashing a night at the opera. At six minutes long, and with several sections evoking those of a classical suite, it subversively fucks with the form of a rock song, not to mention a commercial pop single. The lyrics have the primal scream of a pariah raging against the world. And yet, the unaccepting masses embraced this strange, inherently queer single, driving the track to become the band's biggest hit and, arguably, Mercury's *magnus opus*. (Hell, even the Muppets covered it a

few years back.)

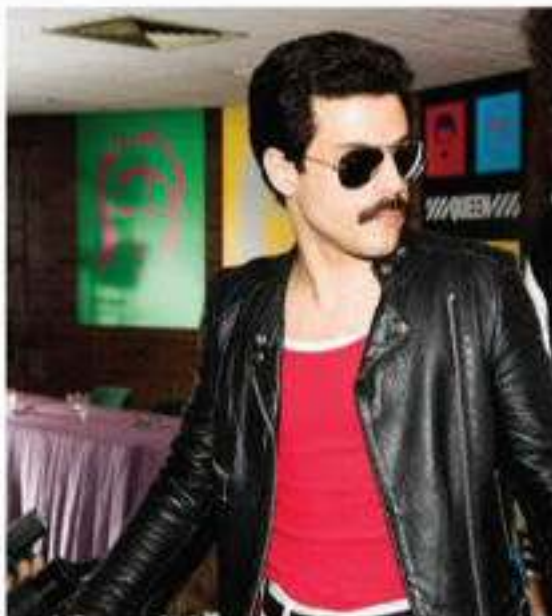
In "We Will Rock You" and "We Are the Champions," it doesn't take a rock scholar to see how deeply ironic it is that these two songs have become sports anthems. Think of the stadiums packed with fans singing along in their slavish devotion to the American arena, where contemporary gladiators sacrifice their bodies on the alter of capitalism, aggression, and masculinity. But do they realize that the words they're chanting were written by an East African queer who was among the generation of men devastated by the AIDS crisis? Probably not.

Perhaps my apathy toward Queen is linked to the fact that they have always seemed to belong to straight culture. Maybe it's because their music falls into a straight-white-male-dominated category; maybe it's because a band so massively successful could never be regarded as anything other than mainstream.

With the exception being Freddie Mercury. A dynamo both wedded to his four-man outfit and gleaming beyond them, Mercury has felt like gay pop culture property, not unlike how Rock Hudson, Elton John, Liberace, and Anderson Cooper have. They're all mainstream, but they're still...ours. And Freddie's look—an evolution from '70s glam to '80s clone—serves as a

Rami Malek on playing Freddie Mercury

"It's important that we didn't shy away from darker aspects of his life, but for him, I don't think he'd necessarily want us to linger on things too much. He was a human being who loved to celebrate—loved joy, loved fun. In the film, we get into very sensitive parts of his personal journey, and we get to know what goes on behind closed doors. But we also get to celebrate him in the way I think he deserves."



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The Ultimate Queen Playlist

Inspired by *Bohemian Rhapsody*,
our 10 favorite Queen tracks

Bohemian Rhapsody (in theaters November 2) profiles Queen's rise, Freddie Mercury's (Rami Malek) attempted solo career, and the band's reinvigoration in the 1980s. It also recounts Mercury's struggle with his orientation and his diagnosis with AIDS, which led to his death in 1991. The film could go deeper in exploring Mercury's confused sex life and egocentricity, but the indelible mark his band left on rock music is grandly amplified. Studio sessions that yielded some of the most important rock anthems of a generation are reimagined before our eyes, and the movie's finest moments come as Malek electrically embodies Mercury onstage. It's enough to leave viewers digging through their devices for Queen classics, and here, we list 10 favorites, each still repeat-worthy 48 years after the band was formed.



1. **Bohemian Rhapsody** (1975)
2. **Under Pressure ft. David Bowie** (1981)
3. **Somebody to Love** (1976)
4. **We Are the Champions** (1977)
5. **We Will Rock You** (1977)
6. **Another One Bites the Dust** (1980)
7. **Radio Ga Ga** (1984)
8. **Who Wants to Live Forever** (1986)
9. **Don't Stop Me Now** (1979)
10. **You're My Best Friend** (1976)

"If Queen belongs somehow to straight culture, Freddie Mercury is unquestionably gay pop-cultural property."

template for a certain type of gay man. In our 20s, we put on eyeliner and nail polish, hope to be recognized as fabulous creatures, and fly our freak flags. Then, in our mid-30s and 40s, we scrub the glitter off, flagging hankies instead. We hit the gym, grow facial hair, and, like Freddie in the '80s, adopt a more self-consciously butch presentation.

I thought about this while watching Queen's 1985 Live Aid performance on YouTube. Freddie's mustache is epic, the studded leather strap around his bicep just provocative enough. It's widely regarded as one of the greatest rock performances ever. It's only 25 minutes long, and it's by no means a comprehensive setlist (no "Fat Bottom Girls," "I Want to Break Free," or "You're My Best Friend"), but it encapsulated the band's range, and Freddie inarguably owned the stage. For the largely uninitiated like me, it's especially unforgettable.

The recordings of that performance will be released for the first time ever on the *Bohemian Rhapsody* soundtrack, but you can find the footage on YouTube, too. It's a good place to start if, like me, you're reconsidering Queen for the very first time. And reconsidering your playlists. ■



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