A.R.T.S.YMAG

N°10



CURATED BY WOMYN

Womyn
noun | pl. wo·myn \'wim in\
First Known Use: 1980
Example: She is an inspiration to all womyn.

Womon
noun | sing. wo·mon \'wΩmΩn\
First Known Use: 1996
Example: She is a womon.




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NOTES FROM **THE CREATORS**

WOMYN'S INFLUENCE



Seanella Abraham

I dedicate this issue to every hard working womon in my life, especially the womyn that may be criticized or not appreciated for doing a "man's" job.



Nicole Callender

Very special thanks to Astrid S. and Anjelica B. for critiquing my work and being my second and third pair of eyes. This issue is for Valry, Joyann, Lisa, Simone, Lurlene, Paula, A.K, Apple, Sonia, Cutie, Jo, Dominique P., Carine, Keyri, Angely, Britt, Chrys, Katie, Caroline, Paloma, Fatou, Aurelia, DC, Tyra, Shay, Monyette, Ms. Henri, Senk, Gianna, Mikailla, Alanna, Danielle, Kady who told me I could be the next Steve Jobs, myself, and all womyn featured in the issue — you have helped me put together the pieces.



Gerardo Mendez

I dedicate this issue to all the womyn I have come across, who've inspired me and continue to support me and my endeavours. Especially my mother who has always believed in me and pushed me to do and be better.



Alicia A. Graham

I dedicate it to all of the womyn in my life, and to all of the womyn I don't know. I want them to see how young ladies and womyn overall are involved and hold more power and are more than talented enough to run their own businesses, to be in charge, to be fearless and to do it with sass, sex appeal and of course sophistication. We are more than a mother, a wife, and a "working womon." We are everything and we can do everything.



Jordan Elvie

I dedicate this issue to my Mother. The time that we have here is limited and a majority of our youth is spent figuring out who we want to be and not appreciating the ones who are responsible for our presence. Thank you Mom for allowing me to bloom after so many rainy days. My sunshine.



Astrid Sarmiento

I look up to womyn who've made a difference or continue to strive for greatness. This issue is for you — for the ones I have encountered, for the ones I have yet to meet, and for the ones who have passed away. Thank you for inspiring me to believe in myself.



Tommy Thomas

I dedicate this issue to my older sister, Candice. I know she'll appreciate the value of this issue and the amazing work that it features.



Raymond Eugenio

I dedicate this issue to my mother, Nida dela Cruz-Eugenio. Without her love, care, and support, I would of never taken the leap of faith to move 3000 miles away from home without knowing anyone to follow my creative vision. I owe everything to this strong woman. Thank you Mother Dearest.

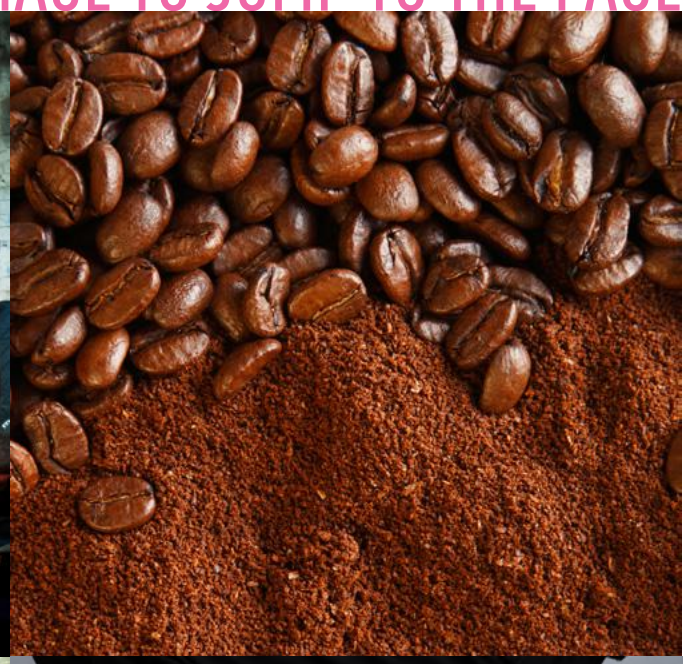


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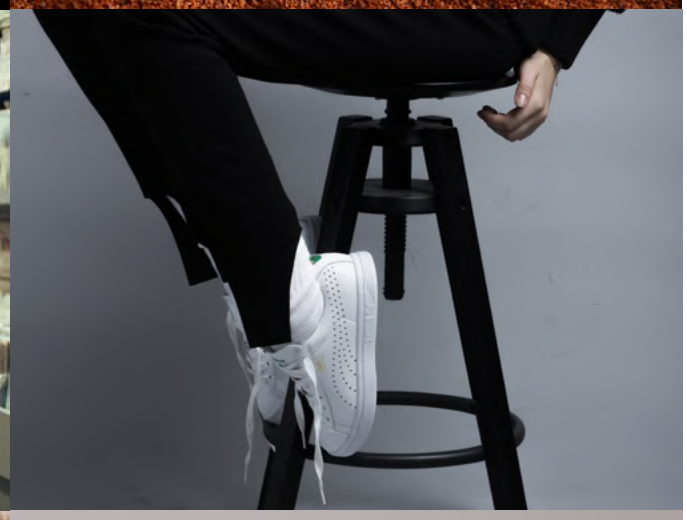
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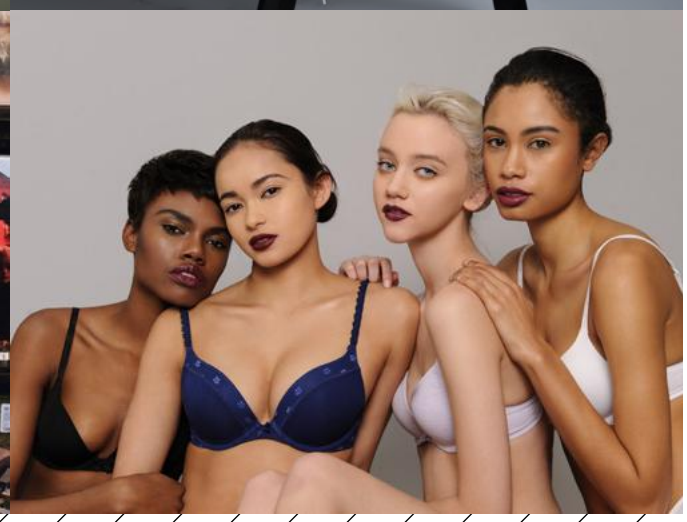

































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KARIKATURA

BY ASTRID SARMIENTO, NICOLE CALLENDER AND RAQUEL RODRIGUEZ | PHOTOS DANIEL KOVACS

KARIKATURA

WITH A NATURAL FLAIR FOR CREATING FEEL GOOD MUSIC IS A NY-BASED BAND BY THE NAME OF KARIKATURA. THE SIX-MAN BAND WHO FORMED ON THE ROAD, HAVE A UNIQUE SOUND THAT DANCES ACROSS THE GLOBE. KARIKATURA PROVE THEMSELVES ADEPT AT MASTERING A DIVERSE RANGE OF STYLES AND BLENDING THEM SKILLFULLY. IT WOULD BE A DISHONOR TO CATEGORIZE KARIKATURA TO A SPECIFIC GENRE. THEIR SOUND TRANSCENDS FROM A FUSION OF STYLES INCLUDING: CUMBIA, SALSA, HIP-HOP, REGGAE, INDIE-ROCK AND MORE— IT IS CLEAR TO SEE THAT THEY ARE CONSUMED BY WANDERLUST.

WE EXPLORE THEIR INCLINATIONS BEHIND THEIR TRAVELS, MUSIC, MOVIES AND EVEN THEIR SWEET TOOTH. KARIKATURA KNOWS NO BORDERS, THEY ONLY KNOW ADVENTURE. IF YOU WANT TO LISTEN TO A BAND THAT CAN INTRIGUE YOUR SENSES AND TRANSPORT YOU TO A DIFFERENT PLACE IN THE WORLD, OTHER THAN THE DANCE FLOOR, LOOK NO FURTHER.

TAP TO READ MORE

LET'S TUMBLE TOGETHER



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Womyn - what the world needs to revolve,
what each species needs to evolve.
this poem isn't written to bash the man;
we understand your role, and we're often your biggest fan.
for the womyn whose voice is often ignored -
the paper is my victim, this pen is my sword.
to the womyn who cries every night for her son who was lost to the system -
foster care, mental institutions, even the system of prison;
I write for you.
to the womyn who chose the lover that her heart told her was right,
and lost her family's love because they couldn't see the light;
I write for you.
to the womyn who work unequal wage,
and are more qualified than the man their age;
I write for you.
to the womyn who choose to wear baggy clothes,
and do not care about being chose;
I write for you.
to the womyn who rejected the media's image of "the ideal girl",
and decided to be herself with not a care in the world;
I write for you.
to the womyn who decided to find the GOD in THEM,
and forget about all of these religions run by men;
I write for you.
to the womyn who found the badass WOMYN inside of them;
you write for you.

- Aurelia ♡



GIMMIE COFFEE

BY JAIMI COOKS PHOTOS BY GERARDO MENDEZ

IN ORDER TO KEEP UP WITH THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS, YOU OCCASIONALLY NEED AN EXTRA BOOST TO KEEP IT GOING. FOR MOST PEOPLE, THEIR SECRET IS CAFFEINE. NATURALLY, WE MADE A LIST OF SPOTS TO CHECK OUT THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE FEELING BOGGED DOWN AND NEED TO GET THE CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING.

CHALAIT

224 WEST 4TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY

The new alternative to your coffee regime is Chalait's Matcha Latte. This hot green tea packs a punch by matching your bean fix with a sweeter taste. Straight off of the 1 train, it's the best place to sit, sip and stare out of the shop's ceiling to floor windows.



HAPPY BONES

394 BROOME ST, NEW YORK, NY

Here the Flat White is the best balance of the traditional espresso and milk drink, just as long as you don't add anything. Situated off of Lafayette Street, the nook style of the shop offers limited seating, but the smooth drink is perfect for a quick pick-up on the go.



SWEATSHOP

232 METROPOLITAN AVE, BROOKLYN, NY

Nestled in Williamsburg, this freshly minted shop not only serves a mean cup of joe but also serves as a creative's paradise. Their Aussie Cappuccino has flavorful taste with a hint of chocolate to complement your buds. The coffee finishes off savory rather than the typical bitter coffee bean.

Photo by Gerardo Mendez

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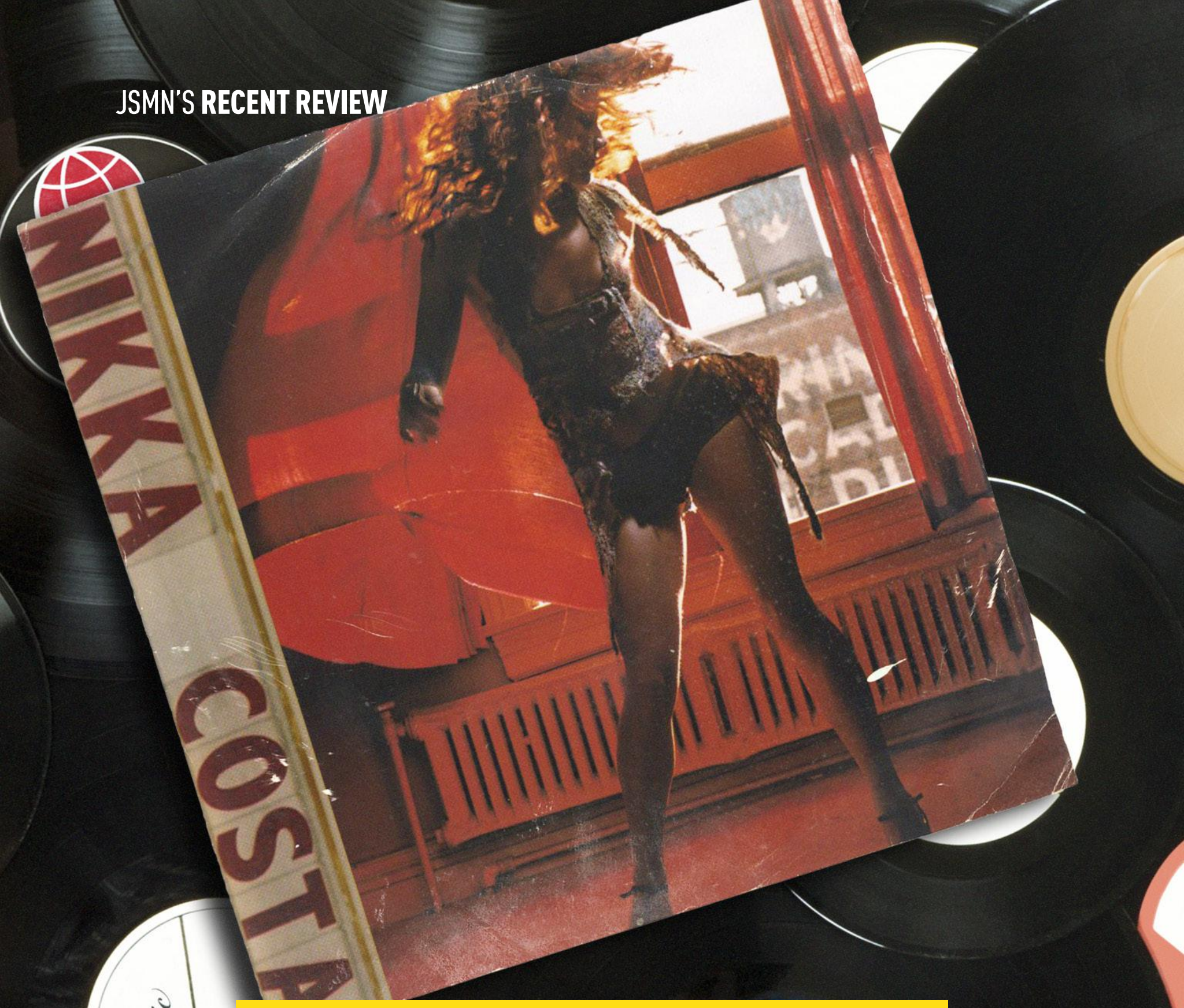
RECENT REVIEW WITH

JSMN

Betty Davis' self-titled album, signed under the label of **Just Sunshine Records** and produced by Greg Errico, is a funk/soul record. Some of my favorites from this album are "If I'm In Luck I Might Get Picked Up," "Walking up The Road," and "Game is my Middle Name." "If I'm In Luck I Might Get Picked Up," is a song that I used to cover at open mics back in high school. It's so tough, and so raw with its lyrics: "So all you lady haters don't be cruel to me. Don't you crush my velvet don't you ruffle my feathers neither." "Walking up The Road," is the epitome of funk: "I'm gonna walk up the road, I'm gonna uplift your soul," there is so much attitude here that I can listen to it all day. On "Game is My Middle Name," Betty is just so free while in pursuit of this man on this song: "Rap on heavy one, tell me the world is round. Do me in, do me in. I could dig it man. Go on open up your bag of tricks. Anything you've got to give, I'll take it," she sings. Womyn are often timid in the chase, yet here Betty is unashamed to express what she wants. Betty in this album was fearless to the point where she offended most people during that decade. She was raw, sexual, and wild and it was revolutionary at that time, for her to break a mold that womyn were not known for.



Mama's Gun is the second studio album by recording artist Erykah Badu, when she was signed to **Motown Records.** Many individuals were involved in the production of this Neo-Soul record including Badu, Questlove, J Dilla, James Poyser and more. Badu is my life idol. She knows how to be sarcastic, hilarious, inspirational and sassy all in one breath. Her song "Cleva" is a great example of this: "I got a little pot in my belly so now a days my figure ain't so fly. My dress ain't cost nothin' but seven dollars, but I made it fly and I'll tell you why." Another great song is "In Love With You," here Badu and Stephen Marley sing a love song together, and it doesn't get more romantic than with these lyrics: "And you said you were more than a friend... that's all I've ever been." With "Time's A Wastin," Badu provides such a substantial message not just for men but for everyone: "Don't you take your time young man. Keep on driftin and ain't no tellin where you'll land." She's basically saying it's so easy to do nothing but it's so important to do something. This album is the most influential album of my life. Badu over the past three decades has remained an artist that spreads love and wisdom, all the while never losing an ounce of cool.



Everybody Got Their Something, an R&B/soul/funk record, was Nikka Costa's first album on **Virgin Records**, produced and co-written by Justin Stanley, Mark Ronson and Nikka Costa. Nikka is able to be fierce, smart, sexy and sensitive all at the same time with songs like "Hope It Felt Good," "So Have I For You," and "Corners Of My Mind." With "Hope It Felt Good," anyone who has ever been cheated on needs to lock themselves in their bedroom, turn this song all the way up and scream the lyrics: "What if I just wipe the floor with your love without even thinking. What if the thread you were hanging on had you strung out on wishful thinking. Hope it felt good for you baby." I love when musicians turn heartbreak into bad ass revenge. Watching her perform this live was unlike anything I've ever seen. The mix of vulnerability and strength in "So Have I For You," makes it one of my favorites. She sings, "This bird is going to fly so high, watch my sky come undone. Mama you can choose the rain but I choose the sun." "Corners Of My Mind" also projects beautiful lyrics: "Meet me in the stillness away from all this madness. I'll give you a piece of me if you'll give me a moment." Nikka has a way of explaining life so simply yet profoundly. Her music has changed my life.

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RECENT REVIEW WITH

CHUNKY

CHIINKY'S **RECENT REVIEW**

CrazySexyCool, the second studio album by TLC, released November 1994 by **LaFace Records,** peaked at number three on the **Billboard 200** and spent over two years on the **Billboard** album charts. While showing diversity and sticking to their roots, TLC became the first girl group in history to be awarded diamond status. T-Boz, Left Eye, and Chilli entered the studio in late 1993 to work on this album with songwriters and producers such as Dallas Austin, Babyface, Sean "Diddy" Combs and Jermaine Dupri. All four singles from *CrazySexyCool* reached top five on the **Billboard Hot 100** list. "Waterfalls" became their most successful single, written by band member Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes with Marqueze Etheridge. The socially conscious lyrics of the song tackled issues of violence associated with illegal drug trade, promiscuity and HIV/AIDS which were growing issues in the early 1990s. This album showed contrast from TLC's first project, by revealing more of a grown, soul and sexy temperament. To date, *CrazySexyCool* has sold over 23 million copies worldwide becoming the best-selling album by an American girl group.

CHIINKY'S **RECENT REVIEW**



The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill, the debut solo album by singer, songwriter, and rapper Lauryn Hill released August 1998, by **Ruffhouse Records** and **Columbia Records**. The neo-soul album incorporates R&B, Hip-Hop, soul, and reggae. While telling stories of turmoil, joy, love and life, Hill poured her heart out for all womyn on this album. It debuted at number one on the **Billboard 200** chart, selling 422,624 copies in its first week and eventually became eight-times-platinum in the U.S. She was then nominated for ten Grammys, making her the first womon to ever be nominated ten times in one year. Setting a new record in the industry, she also became the first womon to win five Grammys in one night including **Best New Artist, Album of The Year** and many more. This album is truly timeless, record breaking, and beyond inspirational from her singing for the love of her unborn son in "Zion" to the hit single "Doo Wop (That Thing)," warning young men and womyn to be cautious and reminding them to stay true to themselves.

CHIINKY'S **RECENT REVIEW**



Kala, M.I.A's second album, a Dance/World/Hip-Hop record, released August 2007 by **XL Recordings** (a British independent record label) and is mainly written and produced by herself and Switch (a British DJ, songwriter, sound engineer and record producer). The album, which is named after her mother, also features contributions from some of my favorite producers: Timbaland, Diplo, Blaqstarr and more. This project is essential to music culture because M.I.A defies the limitations of rhythmic perceptions and meticulously curates the album while traveling and exploring the world's sounds in places including India, Jamaica, Australia, Liberia and Trinidad. She sonically embraces and explores these cultures which is super valuable to her unparalleled multi-vocal style and social consciousness. This album is not very lyrical; it's more of a feel good dance vibe. "XR2," "Bamboo Banga," and "Boyz" will get any party started along with "Paper Planes." Though *Kala* did not highly favor in the commercial realm, its critical reception soars high. M.I.A's inspirational carefree swag definitely bleeds throughout this album.

REFLECTINGSKIN

BY PATRIK JANSON GUGGENBERGER

STYLIST: JANSONNIKLASON
MODEL: EMILY PARSONS













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WHO'S THAT WOMON?

BY CHIKA & CHEVE CHAN

PHOTOS BY TOMMY THOMAS

PRESENTED BY MAKE-UP PRO

Stylist: Alicia Graham

Models:

Mary Herman

London Knight

Nina Wisner

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WE ARE ALL WOMYN

By Anjelica Blige
Illustration By Roberto Joseph

We live in a world under the thumb of men. It's a constant structure that continues to shape the way we, as womyn, live our lives. From what we do at home to what we do at work, men have always bared the upper hand. It's a shame that we celebrate Christopher Columbus for being a thief and slave trader but can't get a day off from work to celebrate the womyn who discovered the myth of the orgasm.

Instead we have doctors, teachers, lawyers, CEO's of Fortune 500 companies who are leveled down by the term "lady." Lady doctors or lady lawyers aren't given the same respect as their male counterparts because they're womyn. How backwards is that? Even when womyn are at the top of their fields we are identified by our gender and not by our title, which may very well be the same title as the male sitting one cubicle away.

Think about conversations you or someone you know have had. There has probably been a time or two when you assumed someone in the highest position of power was a man. Remember when you thought the person in IT solutions would be a male or that your College Dean would most likely have a penis. It's so natural for us to attach gender to positions of authoritative power and it's simply due to the lack of womyn who are visibly in powerful positions, like a CEO or a Wolf of Wall Street.

One of the main industries where womyn are in the deficit is finance. According to a 2013 **ThinkProgress** article, men represent 60% or more of the workers than womyn in some of the key sectors of finance. When men outnumber women to such a degree it then gives those males a form of encouragement to refer to their female counterparts as "ladies."

Nora, a dear friend of mine, who currently works in finance here in New York City told me some of the same things that go on behind closed doors.

"Everyone else just got a raise except for me, apparently mine will be on March 31. The guy who sits behind me got an extra three grand more than me the last time the office got a raise. It's all honestly bullshit and it all is obviously a thing against me because they either don't like me, or it's because I'm a woman." To the haters who gave backlash to Patricia Arquette after her Oscars acceptance speech, please know that this is real — this is a womon's day to day experience living in the world. We just want more. We want not to be leveled down by the term "lady."



In support of balancing out gender levels, there is now too a rising in universities dropping the term "lady" from their womyn's teams. The University of Delaware is at the helm of this switch after an alum wrote a letter to the school's newspaper stating in short that "the term 'Lady Hens' is inherently sexist." Rather than being the "Lady Hens," both the men's and womyn's teams would now be the "Hens," showing that they are both playing at an equal level and embodiment of athleticism. Since the letter, the newspaper has dropped the term "lady" when writing about the Hens in hopes that it will start to turn the page on the issue.

The change at UD has sparked the conversation among one of the nation's most recognizable and legendary womyn's sports teams: The University of Tennessee's Lady Vols. For decades now, the Lady Vols have made every NCAA Women's Division I Basketball Championship tournament consistently cementing a positive reputation. In honor of their athleticism and the flooding of third-wave feminism, it seems that no one wants to refer to them as the "Lady Vols" but rather equalize the field by just calling them the "Vols" or "Volunteers."

It seems that the majority of the problem lies in what the definition of a "lady" is, whether this be the textbook definition or what pop culture has told us. "Lady" can refer not only to gender, but also to the difference between a womon and a girl, or how much she rates on the "proper" scale. It goes along with the classic saying that "a lady doesn't work, she lunches" or even in less recent years that infamous line from Ludacris where he proclaims "we a want a lady in the sheets and a freak in the bed."

In season one, episode two of the acclaimed HBO series *Girls*, Shoshana self identifies herself and her group of female friends as "the ladies" without qualm. Jessa, on the other hand, rejects the notion that she belongs to any group of "ladies." "I'm not the ladies. You're being unfair, you can't force be to be a lady." So even in the realms of pop culture, the term "lady" is purely conditional.

All womyn are technically ladies by definition of the gender term and it seems as though everyone is at fault for using the label in one way or another. There may not be one straight forward answer as to why we designate womyn by gender and not by name, being or title, but hopefully there is now enough push on the subject to make the change.

PHAE

BY NICOLE CALLENDER | PHOTOS BY CHERRY | HAIR AND MAKEUP BY MAKE-UP PRO NEW YORK | STYLING BY KIDSUPER

In a culture that naturally tells womyn who to be and what to do, Danii Phae is — without any exceptions — being herself. In her teenage years, Mama Phae was less than open arms toward Danii's outspoken style and life choices. Today, she's still sticking to her temperament and not taking any tips or opinions about who she should be. As a model, designer, and spokesperson of "doing you," Phae is rebelling against rehearsed societal titles in a bold and unstoppable way. She's collaborating, assassinating personal roadblocks, and manifesting her own happiness.

What's the best piece of advice you've gotten from a womon?

"Wake up" was a good one. At a time in my life that was traumatizing, a friend of mine, Gita, was the first person I contacted. She helped my vision became clearer by pushing me to turn a negative situation into a positive platform for womyn to use their voice.

As a womon, what would you say is the biggest obstacle you've had to face?

Well, my mom is fucking with me right now. My mom wasn't a part of my life for a good chunk of my teenage years. So it's different — we're talking and I'm around her. It's a start and a new beginning.

How did you cope as a teenage girl without your mom being there?

I started missing school, I was smoking and drinking like almost everyday. I was really an alcoholic at like the age of 17 and 18. I also suffered from depression. I know that shouldn't be good for you but I mean I'm good now, I'm in control. My mom was there, but in a sense she wasn't there emotionally or verbally. She was just there physically. We didn't speak and I had to hustle early to get bread on my own.

Looking back, what advice would you give to your 17-year old self?

I would tell that girl to basically stick to your gut. If you love something don't let someone pull you away from that, everyone is their own person. A lot of the time, people around you inflict things that you'll think is cool because they think it's cool.

Is there anything you've done so far that inspires you?

I mean the whole thing of me just being myself and doing me, and loving myself is inspirational. Yeah, pursue doing things yourself and appreciate doing what you like to do and not being afraid to just push limits. It helps other people feel the same way I feel at the end of the day, like "oh, if she could do that then let me just try it." I'm not afraid to fail, that shit is poppin'— failing is poppin'. It makes you ahead of the game, because if you felt that and it didn't bother you and you got to do it again it's like you can't be stopped, you're unstoppable.

What makes you powerful and unstoppable?

I find that I don't allow negative criticism to alter or affect me ever. I've gone through things in my life that have set me up to be the being I am today. And I believe that anything you set your mind to can come into existence if you are just steady with the goals you have in life.

Why is it important for you to push the boundaries of convention?

I just appreciate quality and value. I don't like repetitive things. Why would you want to do the same thing that someone else is doing? That's just whack to me. How about you go get a pair of something that no one has, something that you like and not because everyone else fucks with it.



"WE ARE THE CREATORS AND THE START OF MANKIND, SO WHY DON'T WE GET PRAISED FOR THESE GIFTS?"

Are there any projects you're working on right now?

I'm all over the place. Right now, I'm working on a collaboration with a designer from Chicago. She's really great at line work.

I just shot with RSVP Gallery in Chicago, that was cool. I've never been to Chicago before. Everyone showed me around, and I met some really cool people. The architecture is great, it feels like New York but cleaner and more antique, but a more modern-antique-esque feel. We shot at the museum Art Institute and that was so poppin'. I wish I could've stayed the whole day to enjoy it but we had to keep it moving.

Are there any other artists, who are womyn, that you want to collaborate with?

Missy is life, that's it. Missy is mommy (laughs). She is someone that I would love to work with one day on a general creative process. That would be honorable.

How do you feel about womyn shaming other womyn?

I feel like it's stupid, we already have enough issues as it is and that's just another add on. It's all about communication and if it's not to help one another then there shouldn't even be a word said. Or if words are being said, it should be positive and also about how we can fix it.

What kind of womon do you hope to be in the next five years?

I'm trying to be paid (laughs). And also, a womon that isn't pushed down because of the fact of being a womon. I'm not trying to be a role model but I want to be someone's hope and someone's invisible ladder to reach their dreams. I want to travel the world and learn new things everyday. I don't want a huge house, I don't want multiple cars, I just want to be in a happy place.

What's your favorite part of being a womon everyday?

Men have this idea that they rule the world, when in reality womyn are the most powerful beings. They are the strongest forms of life and the things that they have to deal with on a day to day basis is no comparison to the opposite sex. We are the creators and the start of mankind, so why don't we get praised for these gifts? To be a part of that is just a blessing.

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WOMYN OF THE SKINS

BY NICOLE CALLENDER | PHOTOS BY LAURA CIRIACO | HAIR AND MAKEUP BY MAKE-UP PRO NEW YORK



Guess what the womyn of the Skins would be doing if they weren't mastering new and inventive ways to be the illest musicians alive? Well, one would be spreading knowledge among the youth, one would be the finest real estate broker in the city and the other would be protecting marine organisms. Thanks to the School of Rock and skillful procreation, these three womyn are being ballsy, beautiful, and sonically badass together — they are truly a triple threat.

While Kaya (bass) and Bayli (vocals) do share the same parents, Daisy (guitar) might as well be on the Mckeithan's family tree too. Bayli and Daisy met when they were 13 at the School of Rock and Kaya, at the time, was in the dance studio right up until she decided to pick up the bass. She later joined School of Rock, and they've been creatively linked ever since. It was just last year, that the five-piece band, which includes Reef and Russell, signed to American Recordings.

What's the age range for School of Rock?

Daisy: It's any age until you go to college, pretty much. You can be any age.

Bayli: Once you're 18, you got to go. But then there's some people who stay.

Do you think training at School of Rock prepared you to perform in front of Rick Rubin?

Kaya: Yes SOR definitely helped, that's where I sang and played bass for the first time publicly. I'd also include my middle school and high school for preparing me to become a performer. Ever since a young age, I went to all performing art schools and that's where I really picked up overall performance skills.

Bayli: Also auditioning for Paul, the guy who's the head of the all-star program. You had to be nice, because you would go international, like to Germany and other places.

Daisy: I went to Germany and Sweden with him.

Bayli: Yeah, we would do tours when we were 15 and 16.

So if you weren't musicians, what would be your current career path?

Daisy: Marine Biologist. I say that very quickly because if this doesn't work out with the band, I'm pretty sure that's what I would go and continue doing. In high school, I studied in the Bahamas. I always had a fascination for fish and I would really love, at some point in my life, to go back and do that again. I really like scuba diving and being hands on.

Kaya: I would probably be doing real estate for the first few early years of my life and most likely would have made my way to starting a record label, which I still want to do.

Bayli: If I weren't in this band, I would definitely still want to do music probably as a hobby or on the side. But I would love to be a teacher; an art teacher. I love little kids and I know a lot of people who don't, especially people our age. I just love the youth, their intelligent. It's so cool how their brains work.

What are some stereotypes you get because of being womyn?

Daisy: You don't know how many times I've been kicked out of a womyn's bathroom. And I have boobs now. When I was a kid I got bullied so much, my school was terrible. I was getting called a dyke all the time. And I was like, so what if I am?

Bayli: Also, those are terrible people that have their own insecurities.

Kaya: Some stereotypes people attach to me are, quote on quote "being able to play bass this well for a girl" and also guys assuming I can't drive well because I'm female.

Bayli: Yeah, so it's like we're impressing people by not doing anything because they

"I DON'T THINK SEXUALITY IS IMPORTANT BUT SHOWING SKIN WILL ALWAYS BE DONE BY US."

don't expect to see us. It's kind of like a cheat for us, because people are like "oh my god, you're so good" but I wonder if it's because they don't expect us to be because they don't see a lot of girls doing it.

Do you find sexuality to be important as a part of your branding?

Kaya: I don't think sexuality is important but showing SKIN will always be done by us.

Bayli: I'm like a huge fan of being unafraid of having sexuality. I don't really give a fuck at all, I love that people find me sexy. And it also makes me feel good when I find myself sexy.

Daisy: When we went on tour with Jake Bugg this time last year, I think it was so pivotal for me because I never put myself in the spotlight. I don't care, I'm just trying to play guitar and that's it. But when we got put on these massive stages with all these sixteen year old fans of Jake Bugg, they became really big fans of us. I know that the ones I got to talk to clearly came and sought me because I'm a womon whose very clearly comfortable with their own sexuality and that's a recent thing. I used to not be comfortable with it. I'm very recently open and it was great to have little girls coming up to me asking questions about this stuff. I was so engaged. A lot of them said some really cool shit and that got me thinking how important it is to be open and be yourself. I just want to give off that vibe to everyone because when I was growing up I didn't get that support.

It was so upsetting when I would go into bathrooms just to piss and I would get kicked out. That broke me as a kid. I want every little girl to know how okay everything is, trying everything, doing everything. I just want people to be comfortable with themselves. You see Miley Cyrus has a message to give, don't spread your ass cheeks out. Give a positive message.

Bayli: You could still spread your ass cheeks as long as you have a message.

What would you say is the biggest obstacle you've had to face as a womon?

Kaya: Accepting my monthly menstrual cycle.

Bayli: One thing I really do not like is that the second I leave my house, no matter what I look like, guys will catcall me. I don't even want to have to think about that, but I have to think about that. It feels like you're on display.

Daisy: Well, I came out as gay. I feel like that's one of the hardest things to do, man or womon. I also came out seven or eight



months ago. It's not a new thing but it's funny because all of my life, in my head, I was like "yes, I am." I remember my pretend boyfriend, at the time, I was totally head over heels for their sister. But I didn't know what it meant. It didn't click, it was one of those things where now that I say it out loud it, it's like "yeah."

Right now, in this moment, what's your favorite thing about being a womon?

Kaya: I like being a womon because we can produce other human beings and that's the coolest thing.

Bayli: I feel like there's a billion things. Maybe because I'm a womon, I look up to other womyn but I just see womyn as being very beautiful and attractive generally, very intelligent, vivacious, and when I see a powerful womon for some reason it's more powerful than seeing a powerful male. I love everything about it, the reasons are infinite.

Daisy: For me personally, I love being a womon because especially when you got short hair and different lifestyle approaches life for womyn in general and for womyn who tend to embody a more tomboy look have a little more difficult time. And just like Bayli said, I really look up to womyn who like to break the social norms, break the rules, and they don't really stick to a stereotypical style for what's coming out of their mouth. I feel like girls are bad ass and the girls who may not be as fearless in the process, I still think there's something admirable about them because life is just a little bit harder for us.

Bayli: Yeah, that's a great point too. I don't mean to cut you off but I think that internationally and "herstorically" we've been through a lot. For womyn, it has been tougher for us it seems, especially womyn of color, but womyn in general. And you know around the world, womyn are suffering simply because of being a womon. I think us going through those struggles and us knowing that people see womyn sometimes and dilute the idea of what a womon is — or maybe they don't think we can be as strong or powerful as maybe a man — empowers us because that makes us show off who we are.


JUMP
FROM
PAPER

RESET @GENEVALW

BY NICOLE CALLENDER | PHOTOS BY TORY VAN THOMPSON

After hitting the reset button this year, not only is Geneva White reckoning what her next step is but she's also leaving behind deep seeded patriarchal notions of not being good enough. Instead, Geneva is being more open and celebratory of her work than she's ever been. She's an artist and photographer who prefers to hide her visage, so it's a really big win that she let us show you how stunning she is. Here you can reap the benefits on how this Pittsburgh native, is molding and recreating a Utopian space for her mobile photography and her counter-culture Instagram feed.

"I think there are recurring themes that I've been grabbed by my whole life which are basically looking up and looking down; so the clouds, the sky, architecture and then just like things on the street, or a wall. You know the idiosyncrasies of our day that we don't always tap into."

Who or what inspired your interest in photography?

Social media has been something that I've dabbled with over time. I quit social media years before it became the cool thing to do. It just felt very contrived and just not my space, so I bowed out of Twitter and Facebook and all of those things probably back in 2009 or 2010. And then someone introduced me to Instagram and it really had been the thing I was missing. You know I didn't really care who had a baby or what anyone was talking about, it was just uninteresting to me until Instagram where I found this community of people that were really challenging what is art and what is photography.

My feed is full of just weird things.There's someone whose Instagram name is "sidewalkeats" and it's all the things he sees on the ground in New York City. And it's just really pushing the envelope as to this is my visual journal, this is what I'm seeing in the world, and all these perspectives to people's daily lives. That just plugged right into my cerebral cortex. This is what I want to be playing with, this is so fun.

So it just started out as a mobile thing, it was something that was with me all the time. I was just starting to document my view on how I see New York City, how I see DC, and how I see New Orleans or wherever I am. And I think that mobile photography has actually pushed me into physical photography. Although I've dabbled a bunch in college and out of college, I've played with photography and had a camera my whole life. But it's really pushed me to challenge myself, and figure out what does that look like and what does Geneva, as a photographer, look like.

Do you prefer using your phone versus a camera?

I would say I prefer it because it's so fast and so I don't carry my camera around with me as much as I carry my phone around with me. But I do think that it also acts almost like a sketch pad in that I can take a photo of something and then remember that's something I really loved and come back to it. Or developing a series, really enjoying disheveled subway ads and then saying I need to come back and grab this and think about this and edit this. I think that they work hand in hand but because of how accessible my phone is and how attached it is to me, it's definitely my number one.

Did you self assess yourself with "Impostor Syndrome" at one point?

Yeah, it's kind of this state of being a woman in a patriarchal society that you sort of always feel like you're not qualified to be at the table; so not qualified to call myself a photographer, not qualified to ask for that raise or qualified to write a bunch of things

on your resume to sell yourself. Whereas men never have that problem, they're always like "oh, I could do it" and they never worry about that impostor syndrome. I definitely think that's ingrained in most womyn but especially in me, who is a little self deprecating — which can be a good thing. I've always dabbled in everything, so it's almost like I've been a jack of all trades but a master of none until recently with Instagram which has kind of pushed me to choose a medium. So I would say now in 2015, I'm definitely calling myself a photographer. But it's been hard, self doubt is so real especially when you spent your whole life dabbling in every art there is.

Do you believe that's why so many artists, who are womyn, are insecure about their work?

We aren't selling ourselves in the that way men are ingrained to. They are in a world where the world is theirs, you know what I mean. And so they'll claim it. They can take two photos and say "I'm a photographer" and nobody questions it, whereas we're really hard on ourselves.

I think most of it is society, I think that it's ingrained in that. So of course, it's also like we have access to all the best photographers in the world so we know what we're gauging our work against. But I think really deep down, it's a deep seeded patriarchal thing that womyn feel less than or feel less capable and especially womyn of color. I also think in that same vein that the pendulum is swinging in a really positive way right now. For example, you guys are doing a womyn's issue and Essence is blacking out their cover writing "Black Lives Matter."

It shows that there are these spaces where we are talking about and celebrating womyn. Also, womyn are literally doing the most progressive shit right now. It's exciting, we can see this because of the internet — the access to information we have right now —and so it's truthful and a little depressing and then it's also really motivating.

So thinking back to your 17-year old self, what advice would you give to that girl?

I would tell her that "there's more to life than what you think. The things that you think are important will change drastically" and then I would tell her that she was built for this. Like I had a really tough time growing up, we were literally the poorest kids in the school. We were evicted five times and so what I would say is "you're ready for what's to come. The worst case scenario to everyone else, you're prepared for that. Just keep going."

My seventeen year old self was a bit confused about what was important. I had a lot of hurdles, we as family had a lot of hurdles. But I continued to fight. I'm a fighter.

Did you even expect to be the womon you are today?

Absolutely not. Which is why I think that my first thought is like "there's more." I, at the time, was focused on the picture long term which was a husband and 2.5 children and a job that is going to help pay my bills and do it better than my mom did it; trying to be a two parent home, trying to not have my kids shop at salvation army, trying not be evicted. It was little wins that I was imagining for myself and now I'm in New York City having a conversation about photography. I think it's so important.

A couple of months ago, I was really in the thick of everything changing for me. Literally like the rug being ripped out from underneath me and a friend of mine said, "you have to take a step back and look at the big picture until you see something positive" and sometimes it takes two or three steps back until you're literally up in the sky looking down on earth saying like "well look where you came from."



You might have all this stuff happening but there are spaces where you're winning. That was huge for me, to say "don't get lost in the 'I need to find a new apartment.' Like really look at this shit, you have an apartment. Like the most beautiful apartment. And you did that for yourself and you've never been evicted as an adult. You figured it out and you'll continue to grow and grow."

Is it still important for you to have a family?

I would love to build a family. I would love to raise a child. But I also would love to have that not be my only source of happiness. My family history has been kind of circled around just being a mom and being like a really good mom or just being a provider. And then once that's over, there's not really much left. When I look back on my mother and my grandparents, it was really kind of basic. It was I'm gonna do this one thing well — I'm going to be at the house and I'm going to love my children. My mother's whole goal in life was just to love us as hard as humanly possible and she did it. But I do feel like there has to be something else. There has to be a lot of things that are making you happy. And so, if I do have the opportunity to have a family it will be a piece of what makes me happy and not the entirety.

I recently went through a breakup last year and I'm in a space where it's like I want to choose someone everyday in a really honest way. I want you today. I want you to be by my side today. And then tomorrow, I will choose you again and I'll still want you until I don't choose you anymore. Or until we're in a space where this doesn't make sense or this isn't inspiring me anymore. Whatever the case may be.

How do you feel about doing what you want?

I definitely think that's where my comfort has come from in 2015. 2014 was really a difficult year for me, almost everything in my life was set on fire. It was this big reset button, so in 2015 I'm definitely feeling more open and more confident. Not only that I got through that and I'm ready to fight, but also this opportunity with **A.R.T.S.Y** was presented because you see me. Or even the friend of mine I'm working with now in a photography studio and building a book of portraiture with, which is not something last year I would've imagined working on. So it's like people are seeing me and pushing me to the point where I know this is happening for a reason and I have to celebrate myself as much as other people are celebrating me.

SEND US YOUR SNAPS

ARTSYMAGAZINE

QPLUSA

BY NICOLE CALLENDER | PHOTOS BY GERARDO MENDEZ | HAIR AND MAKEUP BY MAKE-UP PRO NEW YORK

When they both met on the set of a photo shoot, Quinn thought Asha was a hottie with a body and for Asha, it was love at first sight — one of the most notable first impressions in the history of collaboration and girlhood. Quinn, an art director, and Asha, a photographer, are a collaborative production team who meticulously document their creative process via their online platform QPLUSA. Q+A are viciously executing the aesthetic needs of their clients one vision board at a time.

In addition to producing press photos for musicians and look book material for designers, Asha is a tour manager and Quinn is a makeup artist for the Minneapolis based rapper Lizzo.

Recall the best moment you've had on tour with Lizzo.

Asha: Oh man. Easy. Last summer at the Wireless Festival in London was probably one of the best weekends of my life. It was so surreal just hanging with some of my favorite rappers and seeing Kanye perform so close up. But really it was when we watched Outkast; Lizzo and I lost our minds. I cried when Andre sang "Prototype." It was a dream to finally see them.

Quinn: There have been a lot of fun ones but this one stands out in particular: We were all in London at the Glastonbury Festival dancing until sunrise to a Jagwar Ma DJ set. The night ended with all of us thinking that we saw a flying spaceship and Lizzo twerking in slow motion to the Jurassic Park theme song. It was a very cinematic moment.

Where did you both meet each other?

Q: Asha and I met on a photo shoot. I had seen her work via Instagram and thought that she was a hottie with a body that could produce some great work. So when I was asked to be the makeup artist on a shoot with her I was all in. Turns out we got along.

What initially attracted you to each other's energy?

A: I don't remember exactly but I definitely knew I loved it as soon as she walked in the room. Probably as close to love at first sight as I'll ever get. It definitely helped that we were both wearing Palladiums. Instant bond. At the shoot we were cracking jokes and it was very obvious we were on the same page creatively. Our friendship was not forced and I just knew instantly we were going to get along really well.

Q: Yeah, before we became business partners we were friends. She became one of my best friends at a rapid pace. She's fun and energetic, and an all around bad ass business womon, so of course I was attracted to her.

Did you ever imagine yourselves being in the creative space you're in now?

A: I would have never thought I'd be working with another person ever. I've always liked being very in charge of my shoots but I love working with Quinn. She gives an element to my art that I could never do alone. Working with musicians is a beautiful thing as well. I prefer it because you're working with another creative. And it's really awesome to put your brains together to develop a visual.

Q: I really think I did. The idea of what my creative world would be like was so much more vague when I was younger but I've always known I wanted to work on a team to produce artwork and visuals, ever since I was little girl.

What were you both doing before QPLUSA?

A: I've been doing photography for about 6 years now. Before QPLUSA I was focused on being a wedding photographer. I did really well for a long time but I knew I wasn't creatively fulfilled. I was instantly passion-



ate about QPLUSA and the work we were putting out.

Q: I was and still am a student at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, in the entrepreneurial studies program, minoring in graphic design. I'm also currently a makeup artist and the Junior Art Director for Greenroom Magazine which was all before Q+A.

The story behind the name "QPLUSA?"

A: Honestly, it's just Quinn + Asha (laughs). It was the first thing we thought of and we liked the sound and look of it. And when we started, we initially planned on it being an interview blog in addition to our process. We liked that it was like Q&A. We don't do that very often anymore but the name is still perfect. When we're together in real life people will call us Q+A. It's cute (laughs).

What's your favorite Q+A project thus far?

Q: Every project we've worked on has been amazing, but my favorite one would have to be our project for Vegas street wear brand KNYEW. We shot it in Vegas and drove around for hours sweating our lil asses off while looking for locations. It was painful and beautiful at the same time. I loved that shoot.

A: We recently worked with rapper and producer Oddisee. The photos aren't out yet but they are so good and I can't wait to share them.

How do you map out your design process when you're collaborating with clients?

A: I leave that to Quinn. We usually have a brainstorm session. She gives me her base ideas and I just add little ideas here and there. Coming up with our concepts is amazing, honestly. We do it so smoothly and I don't think we have ever disagreed on that part of the process.

Q: Our process is pretty systematic. We develop our concept based off of the person or brand that we're shooting from research on our clients established representation of themselves, and from there we throw in our own ideas of how we see them. We present a visual board to the client for them to get a gist of the aesthetic that we plan to go with for the shoot, and shoot from there.

Why do you believe collaboration is important?

A: I think it helps you grow hugely as an artist. Working with people is a skill and bouncing ideas off of each other is an amazing thing. It's the best way to keep learning and progressing. Opportunities are endless with a team.

Q: Q+A wouldn't exist if it weren't for the idea of collaboration. Sure Asha can do an amazing job at taking photos on her own which she does do, and I can execute creative ideas through outlets other than photography which I do often as well. But when you take two talents and two different perspectives and put them together, something so beautiful that neither one of us would be able to achieve without the other happens, and that's really fucking cool. It's like having a baby. You need a mama and daddy to collaborate. The baby has both features of the parents; Q+A is our cute ass baby.

Speaking of the importance of collaboration, how important is it for you both to work with womyn in this industry?

Q: So important. I feel much more passionate about a project when I'm working on an all womyn team.

A: I am huge on working with other womyn. I think it is so important to empower one another. I don't like the idea of not working with womyn because you're catty or jealous. My favorite is all womyn teams. We just understand each other in a special way.

What creatives, who are womyn, inspire you?

Q: The womyn I surround myself with are all creative, either photographers, designers or musicians. I've found myself in a small group of womyn who feed my soul when it comes to inspiration. I truly look to them to push myself forward.


ONE WAY
ONE WAY



A: I've been on tour for a month with the band Sleater Kinney and I am hugely inspired by them right now. To see these three womyn perform every night to sold out crowds is awe-inspiring. I am inspired by womyn who are out there getting it, accomplishing their goals and dreams. My group of friends in Minneapolis consistently push me as well: Lizzo, Quinn, Sophia Eris, Caroline Smith and Claire (manchita). I love watching strong womyn who aren't afraid to be themselves. Check out Sleater Kinney and Grrrl Prty.

As a womon, what's the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome?

Q: Self doubt hands down, whether about my physical appearance or about being a creative professional. It's easy to overthink things especially as a creative person. I do it all the time. When I let myself get in that overly critical, perfectionist mind state I try to shake it off as much as possible because it doesn't make for enjoyable productive work.

A: The biggest I've run into over the years come as men using my career simply as a launch pad to a personal relationship. I've been tricked into dates a few too many times by men pretending to have a business opportunity. I like to be taken seriously and professionally, so that's a very frustrating aspect of it for me.

Looking back, what advice would you give to your 17-year old self?

A: Oh man, 17-year old me was so annoying. I'd start with smacking her, then grab her by the face and say, "Be yourself! Stop worrying about what other people think. There is no substance in the superficial bullshit you're into. Just be a good, honest person, work really hard and you'll be alright."

Q: I would just be like, "Hey girl, do you. You are brown and beautiful and you've got great hair. You're sexy and funny and smart and creative, don't let anyone tell you otherwise." Because sometimes it's really hard to remember those things about yourself.

What do you find most beautiful about yourself?

A: Honestly I really love that I'm true to myself and who I am. I am not afraid to make a fool or embarrass myself. I know exactly who I am and I think that's a great quality. I'm pretty happy with the way I've turned out. I'm also very ambitious, which makes me a boss. I like that. Not to toot, you asked.

Q: Physically... my belly button. I seriously look at my belly button sometimes and I thank my parents for giving me such a nice one. It's not too deep, not to shallow, and perfect oval.



MAKE-UP PRO™
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

CHERRY & LAURA

BY NICOLE CALLENDER | PHOTOS BY CAMILA RESTREPO

When they met at the end of 2011 in a high school gym class, their first conversation consisted of a love for history, Seinfeld, and their theories on *Banksy's Exit Through The Gift Shop.* From that day forward, Stephanie (also known as Cherry) and Laura spent each day going on adventures and exploring hidden jewels in the crooks of their own world. Together they shoot other womyn using the concepts that they brainstorm, fantasize and dream about. The final product is documented on their feminist Tumblr blog "moremulher." They both have work in this issue that exhibits their vision for capturing the essence of womyn.

Comparing now to when you met, how is the other person different?

Laura: Steph was among a group of people who were just not who she was at all. They were lowkey bullying her and she didn't realize it at the time. Now she can see people's intentions from the start. She can say, "okay, this is not someone that I want to be with." I feel like she thought she didn't have a choice on who she was hanging out with but now she realizes that she does.

Cherry: When I met Laura, she was very skeptical about a lot of things. Now she's more open. I get to see her as she blossoms. I literally saw my best friend go from this person who was very scared about all these things and now she has this powerful confidence. I saw that change in her.

Laura: I spent a lot of time with her when we met, and she helped me through a lot of anxiety attacks. That brought us closer. Because it's weird when you have anxiety and you think when it happens outside in public that someone who doesn't normally see it is going to assume "that girl is so weird, why is she going through this? She's so scared of everything." But Steph was acceptive of me. She even tried to learn about it and figure out ways she could help me with it.

How did your blog come about?

Laura: It was during my last year of high school when I didn't really know what I wanted to do in life. I knew I wanted to help a certain group of people, I just didn't know how to narrow that down. I kept having these dreams, it was kind of during my drug era. I was trying out a bunch of stuff and my imagination was really vivid. I had this one dream where I saw this beautiful picture, the colors were magenta. I don't know, it was just such a beautiful dream and I woke up and was like "I'm going to make this happen." Then I texted Steph and this girl Sunny, who's an artist. I went to an art store and bought a bunch of stuff. I didn't know how I was going to do it, I just went and bought stuff that looked like what was in the dream. And then we went to Sunny's house and started shooting. It's the first images on our blog, and that was exactly how I saw it in my dream. Then I had a bunch of dreams and a bunch of concepts came about. I realized I didn't want to do it by myself and I loved the way Steph portrayed womyn as well. So then we started working together, it grew as we grew. We didn't have any plan for it at all. The more we shot, the more we realized what it was becoming. I named it a feminist blog, but I wanted it to be a "feminine" blog not "feminist." But people saw it as a feminist blog. When we shot girls they would be like "oh, my boyfriend is not going to let me post this," or "my boyfriend is not going to like this."

Cherry: They would say, "I've been with him for two months."

Laura: What does he do for you that's so amazing that you can't love yourself?

Cherry: Also, when you're looking at the images you get to see each womon and you get to see right through us. You could see our friendship, what inspires her, and what inspires me. There's so much in it that you're not just seeing photos of womyn, you're seeing us. It's telling a complex story. You could see that Laura and I are the same and different at the same time. A lot of people shoot womyn, I like that we do it together. If she did it alone, I don't think it would be as powerful as us doing it together. It's us building something. When I'm shooting a girl and she's there, one of us is taking the lead. It's cool



and it's never one of us on top of the other. There's an equal power between us.

Why did you name it "moremulher?"

Laura: I was in an anthropology class reading about transvestite prostitution in Brazil and "mulher" means "womon" in Portuguese. Everyone deserves to have more womyn in their life, and not even just the physical form just more of the feminine aspect added on to their life. I feel like men need to appreciate womyn, get to know womyn, and get to know what it is to be a womon. There are feminine aspects that men ignore in themselves that they should have in their life.

Cherry: I feel like everyone is made out of a feminine and masculine way. Many times, men only think about their masculine ways and never think about their feminine ways. It discourages them from really getting to know a girl just because they ignore themselves. Imagine a whole bunch of guys that actually knew themselves. There would be less pressure on a lot of things.

Were you both doing photography before you met?

Laura: When we met it was an individual thing. We were both learning. My sister was doing photography and I was her muse. I learned from her and kind of then self taught. I never took a photography class until last semester.

Cherry: I feel like her and I are the kind of people who don't limit our vision. We were on the train and we were just talking about still life and she said things that I wouldn't have thought of. We're trying to keep being ourselves because sometimes in the imagery scene you could see the imagery, but not the photographer.

Laura: Yeah, it's so made, like every little detail is thought of. I know photographers who will do something and just be like "it's whatever, I don't really care. They're going to like this anyway." But do you like it? Most of the time they're not satisfied with their own work, it's just the bare minimum of whatever is going to satisfy their audience and I don't like that. If I don't give it my all, I'm not going to do it. That's how it's always going to be.

Where do you expect your blog to be in two years?

Laura: I want us to show people different types of people. Not everyone gets the opportunity to travel to a different place where people live differently. They don't know how you live and you don't know how they live. I want there to be some sort of thread that connects everyone.

Cherry: In a way I expect the blog to keep us together. If we have any miscommunication it really does break me. What she has done for me and the way she has opened up my world, I'm so appreciative of it, it means a lot to me. If I never found her, I don't who or where I would be. I love that she always wants to help other people and the way she has helped me. I didn't say this before but she made me feel special and no one has ever done that for me as a friend. It's my expectation for the blog to stay here, for each other.


AURA
ROBERT WUN F/W 15

















QUEEN OF THE WASSEBLY

THIS IS NOT AN "IT GIRL" STORY.

BY NICOLE CALLENDER | PHOTOS BY RENELL MEDRANO | HAIR AND MAKEUP BY MAKE-UP PRO NEW YORK



IT'S an early and brisk Thursday morning on Bleecker Street and we're preparing for the most likable and bite sized person's arrival. The smell of coffee and bagels settle over in the photo studio. *If You're Reading This Its Too Late* doubles over in the background as it stays on repeat. My iPhone rings. It's Stephanie. "Hey, I'm here, but I'm not sure what floor it's on." When I open the studio door for the 5 foot Queen of the Assembly, she's smiling and it's quite magnetic, which is ironic since most people assume from social media, that she's much taller and probably not as nice in person. She's definitely not as tall, but still just as charming.

Stephanie Arenas, 26, — a terrorist to anti-feminist groups — is merging a centerfold for womyn between the ages of 20 and 30 to recognize both their responsibilities as human beings and their inherent need for sisterhood. As the founder of **The Queen Assembly (TQA)**, a Womyn's Empowerment Network, Stephanie and her partner Ricardo Rodriguez are throwing a wrench in self doubt and self loathing among 350 of their registered members. Not only is that progressive and seriously intelligent, but it's also filled with persuasive feminist rhetoric.

Feminism is a form of terrorism to those who fear womyn — The type of womyn who are first planting their own seeds, watering them, and then cultivating their lives garden-style. Anti-feminist groups classify solidarity among womyn as separatism and a form of male oppression which is, sidebar, extremely ancient and non-progressive but let's not name call or anything. It's just such rhetoric rejects fundamental human rights, the same human rights that First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR-1948) stamped as the "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." 67 years later, smart and witty womyn like author Roxane Gay are curating books such as *Bad Feminist* that recognize a far more complex and modern day need to explore the frequencies of collaboration and sisterhood.

Born in Miami, FL and bred in Queens, NY, Stephanie is recognizing the inherent dignity and inalienable rights not only of all TQA members, but also of all womyn in the human family — not such a distant way of when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt signed the UDHR. "I used to have a lifestyle beauty blog that catered toward womyn. And I grew a huge audience because of it, so I wanted to give back to my audience. I hosted a dinner and I said on my blog 'if you'd like to, please come to my dinner.' I only expected a good ten people, and 30 to 35 womyn came," Stephanie says. "I never met any of them, they never met each other, but when they were at the dinner it was such an amazing positive female energy. So, I wanted to do it on a larger scale and to do it all the time. I just didn't know how."

A year later when she met her partner, Ricardo Rodriguez, who specializes in marketing, Stephanie's creative range meshed with his business tactics and **The Queen Assembly** was born. Together Stephanie and Ricardo created a system where womyn from various industries with a multitude of skills unite at TQA workshops and events. "They can meet, network and support one another and we're basically trying to strengthen the unity between womyn because a lot of womyn my age are just instantly negative toward each other or are maybe catty or competitive and there's really no reason to be," Stephanie says. "Competition is great. Cattiness is unnecessary. These barriers are unnecessary.







You can be competitive by working together, we get ahead way farther working together than against each other. The Queen Assembly accesses the nucleus and is the reason for these womyn to get together and support each other through unity."

To help their members hone in on solidarity TQA requires womyn to come to events without their friends. Since it's a members-only organization where you send in an application, Stephanie and Ricardo gather girls with special aspirations, skills and craft. "So when they come to these events alone I know it can be a little shaky for them, but honestly at the end of every event these girls are best friends. They're learning more about each other. They have each other's contact info. There are so many times where one girl connects with another girl and ends up getting a job out of it," Stephanie shares.

Like any functioning assembly with a social purpose there's always more to do than meets the eye, "whether it be emails, social media, event planning or coming up with programs for the future or different initiatives. There's definitely lots of brainstorming between Ricardo and I, and at times, it has gotten frustrating. We literally do it all, the web design, the social media, the emails, the event planning, and speaking with the sponsors and companies. It's all us," Stephanie says. "We don't make a single dime off it but it's very rewarding. It is a tremendous learning experience, I've learned so much and Ric's learned so much. We keep learning."

Before TQA's manifestation Stephanie not only blogged, but she also dabbled in modeling. She worked with **Make Up For Ever, Sephora, Play Clothes** and **Coogi.** While it was fun and yes, the pay was good, Stephanie needed to fill a void that requires her to help and inspire others. So to stick true to her soul purpose, she walked away from both endeavors and never looked back. "I feel like if you don't give something 100% of yourself then it won't flourish 100%. If you have three things and you give them all a part of you, none of it is going to receive 100%. Therefore none of it is going to flourish so, it was a sacrifice, but it was completely worth it."

Since her modeling and blogging days Stephanie is definitely not the womon she was five years ago or even a year ago. She says, "I've seen myself become more of a womon. When you hear the word 'womon' I mean it like very strong, very impactful and very respected. That's what I aspire to be and that's what I'm getting closer to." By indulging in the things she loves to do TQA's mother has become more confident and accepting of herself. "Picture you have a little plant, this seed and this seed is what you like to do. If you like to sew, yours is the seed of sewing. When you keep watering it and you keep taking care of it and giving it sunshine, the seed is going to grow and it's going to turn into a gorgeous plant and with that plant comes berries or who knows what else. Feed what you love to do. Confidence, self love and success will follow."

She's also assertively clear in stating that almost every single girl she's met in TQA inspires her. "I'm inspired by the courage that she took to say 'I want to join this network and I want to meet other womyn' because honestly it does take a lot of courage, and aspiration, and drive to be like 'I'm going to go to an all womyn's event where I don't know anyone but I'm going to come out with success.' That's inspirational right there." Aside from being stunningly humble and entrepreneurial, Stephanie is diligently ten steps ahead. Not only does she want to take the network and present it to different companies, she also wants to expose TQA's members to different experiences.



Right now they're collaborating on a focus group where they gather some of the network's members who have fashion interests and bring them into Converse focus groups. The girls are able to get a behind the scenes feel of the company and brand, creating a dialogue for those companies to give their feedback while getting feedback from TQA's womyn. She says, "We want to do that for companies. We'll bring our network of womyn and we'll all work together."

Now at less than two years old, **The Queen Assembly** is at the foundation of sisterhood, collaboration and feminist theory. Stephanie Arenas may be a threat to anti-feminist groups, but at least she's a damn good threat. "I feel anyone who would critique feminism and however a womon feels like expressing feminism is confined. If you're a womon and you want to express your feminism in your own way, then do it because that's your way. There is no book on how to express your view on feminism. So why should there be anyone telling you, 'no you're a little too much, take it down a notch.'"


JUMP FROM PAPER

CONSUMER VS. ENTREPRENEUR

BY ELLE SANTIAGO | PHOTOS BY GERARDO MENDEZ

"WHEN I THINK BACK TO MY 20-YEAR OLD SELF, I WISH I WOULD HAVE SAVED ALL THAT CASH I SPENT ON CLOTHES I NOW WISH I HAD NEVER EVEN WORN."

"There's a sick jacket on sale I need to have," said every womon I have ever met. Womyn cannot control their urge to shop. It is without any doubt, a legitimate drug. And I too, am a victim. Each and every pay week is accompanied by a sad surrender to consumerism. The uncontrollable want for something new seeps into my blood like a pure shot of heroin. And thanks to the wonderful Internet age, a fix for that Instagram-worthy appearance is only a retail dealer away.

Being a product of today's society, shopping addictions are all too common. I can't tell you how many times I have to remind myself of something I don't need. And working in retail is no help. According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, in 2011, 14.8 million people were employed in the retail industry and according to the **Department of Labor** just over 8 million were womyn; womyn who often spend their checks right back into the companies they work for. I began to wonder, why would womyn rather shop now than someday sign their own checks? Why are our mentalities driven by consumerism more than entrepreneurship? It seems our culture has womyn so superficially blinded and so product-occupied, that they can't see their true business potential.

Since the very beginning of society, womyn have been unaccepted in financial industries. Corporations, media, and television have continuously supported the repression of the intellectual womon. Looking at 1950's commercial ads and 2015's commercial ads we see little to no progression for the value of womyn. The sexual innuendos and the complete advantage taken of our insecurities are consistent. There are billboards everywhere telling us that our looks should be a priority, but never mention our thoughts, never mention our dreams.

The display of female figures, from models to news anchors is still drenched with underlying stereotypes and demeaning messages. Impressionable young girls are being taught their lipstick color is more important than the words that actually come from their lips. When we think of the celebrity role models for the youth they prominently promote the necessity for clothes and beauty secrets. There is a message telling us that we can only be as cool as Rihanna if only we spend the coins to look as great as Rihanna. But none of us will ever be as cool as Rihanna, no matter how many trips to **V-Files** we make. Reason number one: we don't make her kind of money.
Think of the way social media currently works. There is a strong agenda for product placement and endorsements. We want to wear what our favorite personalities and musicians are wearing and we want to buy what they're selling because we love them. But the average consumer makes nowhere near what these stars make in income. There is a huge financial and lifestyle gap that the media never acknowledges. And it is crucial to the future development of womyn that young girls spend wisely and save their money for their goals, and I don't mean style goals.

In recent years, the number of womyn starting their own companies has leaped tremendously. This shows great economic contributions from females in business, who are not shopping in Soho. But with all these strides, womyn leaders are still very far behind their male counterparts. A big issue is that male entrepreneurs receive more than double the funding womyn do. According to a recent womon's study, 73% of the top womyn owned businesses were independently funded, mainly from their own savings; meaning womyn need to overcome their lack of investment support and ignore the internet's selling tactics in order to gain control over their finances and their future. It has been proven that womyn who succeed in business have done so by grouping with like-minded womyn. Womyn who understand the struggle of Consumer vs. Entrepreneur can greatly impact each other's success.

It's important that girls graduating school open savings account and not have shopping sprees. Even if they have no clue what they want to do into their womon-hood, they must prepare for the discovery. When I think back to my 20-year old self, I wish I would have saved all that cash I spent on clothes I now wish I had never even worn. And now as an adult I am still struggling with those problems. But when I decided to start my own business I knew there was no other way. I had to choose to be an entrepreneur rather than just be another lady consumer. So to control my urges I called for reinforcement. I asked my female friends to help remind me of the bigger plans worth paying for. Because what womyn really need is to support each other, to stop cosigning shoes and start cosigning checks. If the world won't take us seriously, we'll just have to do it ourselves.



INDIGO

BY LEIYING LO
PHOTOS BY GRETAR GUNNLAUGSSON

Leiying Lo (2014) is comprised of Angela and Maame, a Styling and Creative Directing duo. They met nine years ago and have been best friends ever since. After deciding to creatively join forces in August 2014, Angela and Maame have curated a number of high-flown editorials. These two womyn are aesthetic products of both Belgium and sharply defined menswear. They refer to their personal style as a mixture between street wear and high-end. When they paid a short visit during New York Fashion Week to network and hit some after-parties, both womyn managed to set up a meeting with Ryan Leslie. The musical genius wants to link forces with the duo to work on costume pieces for his tour as well some street wear looks. Here, you'll be satisfied to experience **Leiying Lo's** editorial "Indigo." "We were inspired by the knitwear that we saw on the runway when the fashion housed presented their winter collections. We love to layer with different fabrics so we went for it. At the end we added a red background to create more contrast and to play around with the visual."


PUMA
PUMA

















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