

IMORE

EDITION 2023 — ISSUE 3







Born This Way

Favorite polish: Big Apple Red. Favorite brand packaging: Cartier.

Is red my style? It is certainly a part of my palette. I have enough passion for that range of color in certain contexts to want to paint this entire issue red. In the margins my preference is unabashedly tied to the feelings red can evoke: glamour, courage, timelessness.

The use of any color depends on the energy you're seeking to confirm or express. Color can be just one piece of whatever style you are drawn to or want to exude, either for a moment or a lifetime. Or it can be the entire statement.

I seek color - and style - in everything. I've always been an observer of style in others and in the world around me, letting the world influence me and the way I represent myself back, in kind.

Coming somewhere from within, I naturally seek patterns, and look to align things with one another - finding commonalities to expose or anomalies to highlight in favor of dramatic juxtaposition. I've also always sought out beauty and the beautifully obscure. Even Diane Arbus has a small influence on my style.

In this issue, I amplify the voices of four amazing individuals who, of course, have amazing style. Through words and pictures, this issue is a vessel for my collaborators' thoughts on the subject.

Lenea Grace is a Canadian poet whose published work has won her accolades in the US and Canada. Nana Adu-Kofi is an extraordinarily talented artist whose use of color is refreshingly crisp, reflective of his often pop culture subjects. Alex Harris is an impressive and multi-faceted artist, designer and entrepreneur, whose work spans bespoke interiors, wine and painting. And Eileen Pierce is a formidable lighting designer, whose work changes the human experience in a space, even when one can't grasp how or why.

The previous page is a photo I took of a kid dancing in the street in Paris, back in 2016. The energy and passion he was putting into this dance, moving along to the rhythm of a jazz band performing in the alley... it was poetry in motion. He had style. He was born this way.

Style is all around. Focus on it. Observe it. Figure out what it means to you. And perhaps be inspired by what it means to Lenea, Nana, Alex and Eileen.

I hope I've piqued your curiosity and I hope you're ready to read some MORE.

Sincerely,



Founding Principal

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Style // Classy AF

A Poem by Lenea Grace

*“I do not believe in God.
I believe in cashmere.”*

– Fran Lebowitz

Anjelica Huston in twill chino
shorts, legs on legs -
purse like the knot of Isis,
tyet in ox-blood,
dried rust - the colour
of arbutus branches reaching for the gods
like a garden, but a garden in hell.

Diana Vreeland said that -
patron saint of style,
of scarlet chintz,
rouge and rouge and rouge
and more is more for me
and less is more for you -

think Jane Birkin's blue jeans
her signature straw
basket, hair - those bangs
and teeth.

Give me a French tuck any day,
high waisted trousers and a leather belted man.
Give me Tom Selleck in 1987,
Armani wire-rims and suspenders -
the Sunday crossword,
Yankees pinstripes -
the quiet swagger

of Fran Lebowitz in 50s
and a blazer, patinaed
cowboy boots -
ask her to define *juxtapose*
and get Savile Row on the horn.

Now hang up.
Bring me the new ingénues.
Tell me, when did rouge become blush?
They don't know what they don't know.

Say YES

Style is about a lust for life.

Style isn't an outfit, a look, a room. It's everything.

Yes AND... no but, really!

Style is also about evolving, I think. You start out, eyes fresh to the world. You take in everything, every minute you're alive. You pick up bits and pieces from maybe the house you grew up in, the trips you took as a kid, the music you listen to, the fashion of any given day.

But you also start to develop a voice in your head. Something that takes all those experiences and mixes them with what's inside of you from birth.

Style is discernment. It's who you are and how you choose to represent yourself. Some of us have this knowledge inside of ourselves from the very beginning. Some of us have a realization of where we are in the world early, but need time to seek out what suits us. And some of us will always be searching for ourselves. Say YES to every experience to open all the doors...to see how what's out there might change you, mold you. Maybe you're not done.

Style is not just the way we dress. It's everything. Absolutely everything. An unconscious decision is a decision nonetheless. Frankly, a pair of sweatpants is a thing if it's YOUR thing.

I was a very self-conscious kid (hell, if I'm honest, I'm probably still finding myself). But just in reaching a certain age, and getting to know myself, I've evolved my style so that it really reflects ME. I've never felt

more confident that what I project represents what's inside of me. Maybe twenty years ago, maybe even five years ago, my style was still perhaps attached to somebody's else's version of me.

But I say yes to all the experiences I see that I want to incorporate into who I am. I am conscious of the world around me and I absorb what I like – and when I don't like something, I want to understand why. What is it about that thing that doesn't represent me? What does that dislike say about my style - is it accurate? All the things I do appreciate; what are they building to? Do I care if I'm unique? What IS unique anyway? Am I a follower? Am I a leader? I have no real clue except I think we're all a little of both.

Pulling in everything, and then discerning, is the most exciting part. Letting everything flow, and then analyzing the good and the bad is the crux of the journey. Developing my style means learning who I AM. The more my preferences repeat themselves in the things I choose, but with an understanding of the why, the more I realize I've found my style. I am who I have been trying to be.

It could take a minute or a lifetime, but keep looking. Say YES to everything you can, and see what parts of the experience float through to the surface. Why not?

To me, style is having the self-awareness to fully understand what you appreciate in this world, and then the confidence to display that authentically and consistently across every aspect of your life.



Display in the window of Duroque Custom Neon Signs, West Hollywood, California





Pop

Featuring Adukofs Art

Nana Adu-Kofi's (aka Adukofs) work is intoxicating. I say that with zero knowledge of his subject (basketball players) and zero experience in his technique (painting), proof positive that style (at least his style) transcends logic.

Born in Massachusetts, Nana moved to Ghana at age seven, moved back to New England for college where he majored in architecture and minored in art. His current project—painting 30 basketball players, one from each NBA team—is influenced by the concepts and processes he learned as an architecture student. I say that with no formal knowledge of architecture but listening to Nana describe his technique and watching videos of his work shows an “artitect” building with art and technique.

“Honestly, I don't know if I have a particular style,” says Nana, but he tries to answer the question. “Realistic, portraiture, abstract . . . I try to aesthetically change it up. One piece has more broad brushstrokes, another is made with blocks, another is very modern, whimsical. I do that because I also want to have fun.”

Nana says style is about techniques used in the process and decisions made along the way. Like the fact that he sandpapers his blank canvas to assure the surface is smooth and ready to receive his bold colors and designs. And how he videos himself painting the portraits so that others can learn from his process.

“I have a soft spot for other artists,” he explains, proving that he also has Style with a capital S. “Since I'm doing the portraits, I might as well show the process and help them with different ideas, different processes.

“I've tried to push away from most of my pieces looking the same,” he continues, noting that because galleries often look for artists who are known for a certain style, he's not gone down that route.

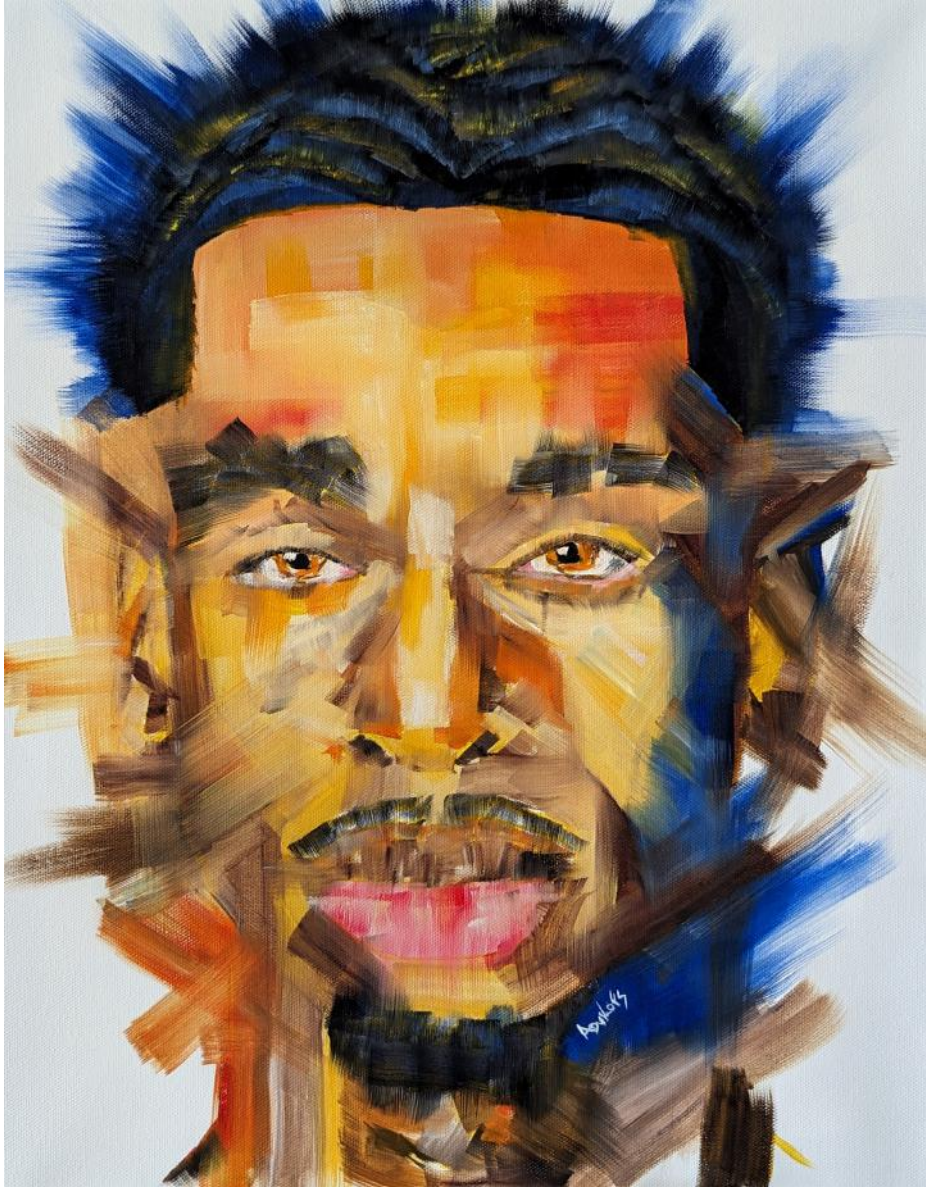
He's done a few commissions, one a hauntingly beautiful painting of African elephants with a missing tusk, another of player Derrick Rose. His NBA series is more personal...based on a love of the game and his attachment to certain players. He uses different techniques to get player personalities and team particulars right - and hopes to complete all 30 in early 2024.

He laughs when I ask what happens when players who he's painted are traded to a different team. “Maybe I'll redo them. Maybe I'll do bonus players. Maybe I'll do legendary players on a bigger canvas . . . there's a whole basketball art community online, which is really cool.”

What's next for Nana the artist? “For now, my mind is on NBA basketball,” he says, clearly thinking of the faces he has yet to finish. “Maybe in the future I'll do something with outer space because I love space, too.”









Restored original mosaic patio of the Harris Gallery, Healdsburg, CA

Calm

Featuring A3L3XZAND3R

"I don't ever think about the definition of style," says third-generation artist Alex Harris, who owns The Harris Gallery in Healdsburg, California with his father. "It's something that is probably given or shown through honest interaction. I think true style would be an intuitive reaction to how you want to do something.

"The way I paint is anything from minimalist abstract to realism," Alex, who is classically trained and studied in Italy and Russia, explains. "When I'm in the gallery, I describe a painting that looks like five lines on a canvas as minimal abstract, and a figurative portrait as realistic." His signature, A3L3XZAND3R, which sprung from his dyslexic teenage self, quickly became synonymous with the successful artist whose work, which is in private, public, and corporate collections around the world, also includes uniquely curated wine and high-end design.

"Everything is art. There's no singular base for art, or style...basketball can have a style, a sales manager has a style. I think all of it is one's personal touch on how they interact with the people and things around them. Aesthetics is probably the most common way of interacting with someone's style or recognizing it, because we usually recognize things visually more quickly than any other way. If you saw someone write something, and then you saw someone else write something, you'd see the writing styles are different. If you heard someone play Bach, and then another person play Bach, you might not be able to decipher

the different styles of music."

In addition to painting and running a successful art gallery, Alex also lends his style to curating unique wines and creating wine labels. "Art and wine have always been part of the gallery. Living where we live, we've always had winemaker friends. I've always appreciated the craft and the artistry that goes into making wine. In the gallery, part of the social dynamic for us is interacting with people by opening wine from our collection, sharing a glass, and talking about the area. People come up for wine tasting, for wine country . . . it is the backbone of our economy. Around 2015, I got the idea to show the work of respected winemakers in the gallery - the beginning of The Harris Gallery Art & Wine Collection."

Key to his business is maintaining the visual aesthetic and style of the spaces he and his dad so carefully curated. Bringing in other artists in a different field has been a unique way to express this creativity.

In presenting a collection of artwork with a collection of wine, he and his father's artwork participates with what's in the bottle. For example, their winemaker Leo Hansen makes a Chenin Blanc for the gallery. "The label is usually an abstract of my father's, which is the best fit for him, his personality, and our wine with him. It's a really good match."

That last sentiment could extend to the entire canon of Alex's work, how his paintings, his wine, and his gallery combine to create his extraordinary style.









Contrast

Featuring Eileen Pierce

Eileen is as much of an industry titan as she is an approachable, graceful, articulate human with a true devotion to her passion for artful lighting.

As the namesake of Pierce Lighting Studio in New York City, her work frequents the very best magazines and she's lit spaces from NYC's Pebble Bar and Amangiri, to Glossier pop-ups and the historic valuts of the Lincoln Galleries at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. Her lighting design is nuanced and has a profound impact on the look and feel of a space. It is absolutely an art and a science.

Architectural lighting is sometimes a barely visible or invisible element to the naked eye, but that is completely strategic: its presence is often what brings visibility to the most important aspects of a space.

Wearing a brightly colored, sculptural pendant necklace against a simple black dress, Eileen recently discussed style over virtual coffee. I found her outfit almost reminiscent of the way she lights spaces: the black dress a necessary yet subliminal background to emphasize the boldness of the necklace.

Having just returned from Paris, on a light-sourcing excursion with a client, Eileen explains to me that she has found style to be "the essence of being and being true to oneself. Even if you think you don't have style, you do. It might be anti-style, but it's a conscious choice of being. It is the ultimate form of personal expression."

"Style influences every aspect of life. It's how you move through the world. It's how people perceive you, it's how you communicate back and connect visually and or verbally." Eileen finds herself influenced by fashion, design, architecture, nature, travel. Every day world events influence her state of mind, and therefore how she express herself to the world.

However, when it comes to lighting spaces "My personal aesthetic takes a backseat... My role is to be good listener and define the core underlying problem." I asked her if she'd ever turn down a client if their styles did not align, and she said no, with almost no hesitation.

What she finds most critical is that a client is open to the idea that good lighting is essential. She works with many repeat clients, and has seen clients who perhaps did not understand the impact of good lighting, who then come back time and time again after seeing the very first results of her work. "A successful collaboration reflects the needs of the client. If we do our job well, the lighting magically elevates the project to the next level."

As she has evolved thru life's experiences, her style has evolved. Eileen's now strong sense of self reinforces her self-expression personally and professionally.

In Eileen's words, "style needs to be ever evolving. It can't be static, because the world is not static, and style must be in alignment with the world that surrounds us."









Photo courtesy of Perrotin Guillaume





Photo courtesy of Selldorf Architects





Until Next Time...

The image at left and its sister image in my opening letter are some of my favorite photographs. They are pictures I took of the famous Printemps Christmas marionettes, the last time I was in Paris, pre-COVID. The image on the next page - a street corner in St Germain de Pres - was taken on that same trip.

Paris is ... Paris ... and it has influenced me so much in my journey as a designer and as a human. Travel - to anywhere - is very much part of my ethos and the way I seek to represent myself to the world; someone who is always curious, learning and growing.

I spoke at length about style with one of my closest collaborators, Bryan Trindade, as I was building this issue. About style, he had this to say:

“Style transcends mere clothing choices and that’s what excites me. Style is a reflection of who I truly am - and it goes beyond just the clothes I put on each day, or the way I design my own home. I consider even the simplest decisions thoughtfully, because I want all aspects of my life to represent who I AM.”

I hope the words and pictures all of my collaborators shared on these pages leave a lasting impression on your mind, as they absolutely have on mine.

And I want to give a special thanks to Holly and Keith Emerson and Sarah Montgomery for introducing me to Alex Harris and Eileen Pierce. I am so grateful to know cool people who know cool people.

Can't wait to share more amazing voices with you in my next and final issue of 2023!

Much love and hugs.





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