



**MIXTAPE**  
**FOR THE LOST & FOUND**



**MIXTAPE**

**FOR THE LOST & FOUND**

## **To the ones finding their way—this is for you.**

Welcome to this special issue—I'm so hyped to have you here.

At the center of everything you're about to read is *Mixtape For The Lost & Found*, a magazine that means a lot to me. It's raw, it's real, and it's full of the kind of wisdom you only get from growing up in a city like New York. Think of it as a love letter to the moments that shape us—the late nights, the heartbreaks, the subway rides that turn into soul-searching sessions, and all the ways we try to figure out who we are.

This isn't your typical magazine. It's a mixtape. Each poem, each story, each piece of advice is like a track—something you can come back to whenever you need a reminder that you're not alone. Whether you're dealing with love that feels too big to hold, questioning your identity, experimenting with your style, or just trying to survive another day at school—this mixtape gets it.

I wanted to create something that feels like sitting on a stoop with your best friend, talking about life at IAM. Something that reminds you it's okay to not have it all figured out. Something that meets you exactly where you are—and walks with you from there.

So take your time with these pages. Let the words sit with you. Reread the lines that hit hard. Skip ahead, go back, write in the margins. This is yours. Let it be your late-night soundtrack, your go-to when you need a vibe check, your reminder that there's power in being lost—and even more in finding yourself again.

I hope this issue inspires you to lean into your story, to keep creating, to love yourself harder, and to move with the rhythm of your own becoming.

From one New Yorker to another—this one's for you.

**With love and realness,  
— Caleb Kelly  
Editor-in-Chief**



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# IDENTITY: THE BELONG DOCUMENTARY (ACT I)



For NYC teens, Identity isn't just a concept—it's a living, breathing documentary, filmed in real-time with every train ride, street corner, and late-night rooftop conversation. It's the sound of your name called out in different accents, the way you switch between languages at home and school, the outfits that shift with each borough's unwritten dress code. Every moment adds another frame to the reel, another voice to the narration, shaping who you are in a city that never stops changing.

# BALANCING EXPECTATIONS AND FREEDOM

Growing up in here means constantly negotiating between cultures, expectations, and personal truths. It's the pressure of being first-generation, the weight of family sacrifice, and the quiet rebellion of carving out your own path. One day, you might feel like you fully belong; the next, you're questioning where you fit in a city that feels both infinite and isolating. Identity is a mixtape of influences—your neighborhood, the music blasting from car windows, the slang that marks you as a native.





# REINVENTION AS A SURVIVAL SKILL

NYC forces you to redefine yourself daily. One year you're a sneaker-head, the next you're into thrifted vintage. Maybe you grew up on hip-hop but started getting into punk because a friend put you on. Reinvention isn't just an option here; it's a survival skill. The city hands you a script, but you get to rewrite it, remix it, flip it into something entirely your own. In a place where everyone is someone, standing out and staying true is the real challenge.



But if identity is a lifelong documentary, then NYC gives you the best set pieces: the stoop where you had your first real talk about life, the bodega where you learned to order like a pro, the subway where you first saw yourself reflected in someone else's story. This city captures every version of you—who you were, who you are, and who you are still becoming. And the best part? You're the one directing the film.

# DIRECTING YOUR OWN STORY

# AFFECT

## The Love Con

# AFFECTION:

## Connection

"Affection: The Love Connection" captures the intense, fleeting, and transformative nature of teenage relationships in NYC. Like an eclipse, love in the city shifts between moments of brightness and shadow—romantic sparks quickly dimmed by materialism, digital detachment, and the rush for intimacy.



**Status:**

*Isabella Daley* 

**Pronouns:** She/Her

**Age:** 17

**Bio:** Certified Lover Girl









Dating in New York sucks.  
Every night out costs more than enough,  
and if they text back, well— I guess that's just luck.

Everyone's caught up in materialistic things,  
dreaming of diamond designer bling.  
Chasing the status that money brings,  
forgetting the joy in the simple things.

What happened to flowers and long evening walks?  
Picnics in parks,  
and heart-felt talks?  
Soft whispers and love that sparks,  
not just through screens but in moments that lock.

Daydreaming of us as a power duo,  
dodging that one third wheel who wants to be a trio.





## **How do you think hookup culture and the pressure to move fast impact young relationships today?**

I've found that hookup culture can make it harder for people to build emotional intimacy within a relationship, as there's often an expectation to keep things casual or to rush into physical connections before deeper emotional bonds form. I feel like in many scenarios, hooking up or being friends with benefits with a person has replaced the traditional ideas of love. When you have a purely intimate, you're not developing romantic attraction to them. For the most part, you are associating them and their body with a way to release your lustful desires. The pressure to move quickly, whether physically or emotionally, can also make people feel like they have to conform to certain dating norms rather than moving at their own pace. This can create anxiety, confusion, or a sense of detachment in relationships.

## **Have you ever felt like love in the city moves too fast? How does that affect your relationships?**

Yeah, it can definitely feel that way. In a city, everything is constantly moving whether it's people, opportunities, or relationships. It's like everyone's on a timeline, rushing from one thing to the next. Sometimes, love feels like a fleeting moment rather than something that lingers and grows.

## **The poem asks, "*What happened to flowers and long evening walks?*"—do you think romance is dead in teenage relationships, or does it just look different now?**

Based on my personal experience, I don't believe romance is dead within teenage relationships. I've only been with a handful of partners up to this point, but I can definitely say if both parties are truly committed to one another romance isn't off the table at all. Though the opposite is true, many teen relationships prioritize the intimacy aspects of it all throwing romantic feelings mostly out the window. This kind of mindset has plagued a lot teens in the generation and has scued our understanding of love as a whole.







And why's everyone rushing to get in bed?  
Yeah, hormones hit hard, I've read what they've said,  
but can we just chill, let love rest its head?

Group chats are chaotic, plans shift and change.  
Love at this age just feels so strange,  
cupid's arrows shot from long range.

Ghosted texts, a scrolling toll,  
wiping left—who's in control?  
Chasing a spark with no set goals.

So here's to the ride, the highs and the lows,  
hoping this love could bloom like a rose.  
In the heart of the city, where romance flows,  
maybe—true love still grows.









**Do you prefer face-to-face interactions over digital communication when it comes to love? Why or why not?**

I 100% prefer face to face interactions over digital communications when it comes to love. While online relationships can be convenient, especially if you're busy or in a place where it's hard to meet new people, you're miss out on a lot of the traditional and fundamental relationship experiences. Going on dates becomes harder, seeing one another can be risky, overall I feel like when you're able to love your partner face to face your relationship is bound to get stronger.

**The poem mentions a "third wheel" and chaotic group chats—do you think friendships help or hurt relationships among teens?**

Yeah, it can definitely feel that way. In a city, everything is constantly moving whether it's people, opportunities, or relationships. It's like everyone's on a timeline, rushing from one thing to the next. Sometimes, love feels like a fleeting moment rather than something that lingers and grows.

**What advice would you give to teens trying to navigate love and relationships in a fast-paced city like NYC?**

From my experiences with love i've learned it's extremely important to take your time. Focus on building real connections, not just chasing the excitement of the moment. Keep a strong sense of self, maintain your friendships, and don't let the rush of city life pressure you into something that doesn't feel right. And finally communicate openly and set boundaries with partners, NYC is full of possibilities but the right relationship should feel like a safe space, not just another hustle.











# CREATING

## Embracing The

# WITTY!

## e Artistry

"Creativity: Embracing The Artistry" captures the intersection of personal struggle and artistic expression in a city that thrives on creativity. It illustrates how art—whether through music, painting, writing, or fashion—is more than just talent; it's a form of resilience, passion, and fearless self-expression.



**Status:**

*Dancer & Singer*

**Pronouns:** He/Him

**Age:** 17

**Bio:** Future Grammy Winner









Born with rhythm in my veins,  
my gifts entwined like braided chains.  
A melody that soothes my pains,  
a canvas where my heart remains.

Each verse a bridge, each rhyme a road,  
unbreakable, creativity unfolds.  
My name in stories is fierce and bold,  
a legacy in letters flowed.

My brushstroke sings deep.  
Each hue and line, a story to keep,  
Emotions swirl, no need to speak.

But music, oh, it pulls my soul where no brush can tread,  
a symphony of thoughts dancing freely in my head.  
A path where memories are softly spread,  
carrying whispers of the past and dreams left unsaid.





## **What challenges do young artists face when trying to make their mark in a city that “roars”?**

Living in New York City I feel is very beneficial as an artist because you have so many opportunities for so many things artistically, which sometimes can become chaotic when figuring out what to do and how to execute certain things from an artistic standpoint. As a music artist I can definitely identify many challenges I've faced that relate to how I want to make my mark/brand myself. One of those being how I plan to relate to the people of my city through my music. I'm someone who loves to push the bar and break the stereotypes of what a young upcoming music artist is supposed to sound like. In the early days of my career I was always so conflicted on what my target audience is for my music. After many talks with mentors and musically inclined people I keep in my circle, I realized that I shouldn't worry about having a target audience.

## **The poem mentions different forms of artistic expression—music, painting, writing, and fashion. Which one speaks to you the most, and why?**

The artistic form of expression that speaks to me the most is music. Growing up in a family full of musicians exposed me to the power of music. For me personally music is healing, there's a strong emotional connection I have with music specifically with writing and producing music. The process of making music is very therapeutic for me, it helps me deal with my emotions when I just can't take it anymore.

## **The poem describes creativity as “a refuge” and “a means of leaving a lasting impact.” Can you share a moment when your art transformed either yourself or someone else?**

I immediately think of how my art transformed the relationship between me and my mother. Today I'm who my mother was when she was 17, a young aspiring music artist gifted with an abundance of talent. From a young age my mother was well aware that I love music just like her, I vividly remember her hyping me up when I would dance to Micheal Jackson around the house. When I revealed to her that I was writing and recording music in my closet while nobody was home I felt in that moment a light spark between us.







One restless heart that beats to shifting time.  
A painter, designer, melody-maker—all different rhyme,  
as I chase dreams up endless heights I climb.

The city roars,  
echoing life behind closed doors.  
Footsteps dance on concrete floors,  
making art and settling scores.

Not everyone will see the spark within my chest,  
not everyone will hear my song or call my art the best.  
But I still move with passion, never settling for less,  
creating from the soul, putting doubts to rest.

So let me design.  
Let my music soar and shine,  
for all my art is all my truth, and all my truth is mine.









## **How do you balance staying true to your artistry while navigating external pressures and expectations?**

“You have to have someone next to you that can remind you of who you are” - Doechii. Living in the era of social media, trends, and agendas, I feel has subconsciously put me and other upcoming artists under so much external pressures and expectations. This has caused me to doubt the potential my artistry has, and from this I’ve learned that doubt breeds chaos. As an artist, I don’t always have the answers to everything in my head. So when things get hectic up there I am sure to turn to the people who are gonna remind me of my worth and value of my artistry. The more I listen to these people the more I find myself being able to combat the pressures and expectations the world puts on me as an artist.

## **The poem mentions “a legacy in letters flowed.” What kind of legacy do you hope to leave through your art?**

A legacy that I hope to leave through my art is a legacy of empowerment. I hope that my art empowers artists and enables them to go full force towards any obstacles or doubts they may encounter. I hope that my art is known as living proof anything is possible no matter what you look like, sound like, or where you come from. I want my art to have a long lasting impact on how people perceive music. I feel that we live in a world where music is becoming an asset to the artist and I blame social media. I hope that people learn to appreciate music from the artist themselves, and not value things about the artist that have no relation to the music and how impactful it is on others.

## **What advice would you give to teens who are afraid to embrace their creativity fully?**

Advice I would give to teens who are afraid to embrace their creativity fully is to learn to let go. Let go of your ego, let go of how you desire people to perceive you, and let go of your insecurities. Easier said than done but with the right practices and dedication, adopting this new mindset will allow you to embrace your creativity fully. Starting your creative journey may be challenging, some days you might see more clouds than sun. Remember that the light is within you, and it’s your job to plant those seeds in order to grow.









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# AESTH

## The Fashion C

# AESTHETIC: Cosmetic

"Aesthetic: The Fashion Cosmetic" captures the essence of fashion as a form of self-expression that goes deeper than trends or surface appeal. It portrays aesthetic as the outer reflection of inner identity—a way to amplify confidence, emotion, and individuality through every fabric choice and color clash.



**Status:**

**Pronouns:** She/Her

**Age:** 18

**Bio:** Next Top Model

*Terrance*









When I step into a room, I want to leave them  
speechless,  
dripping in style, I make it look seamless.  
GOAT of couture, I stay undefeated,  
fashion equations, I move like a genius.

With every detail, from jewels to lace,  
they stop, they stare—"Woah, they got taste."  
Oozing with confidence and some grace,  
style so sharp I can't be replaced.

Baggy clothes isn't always fly,  
it's more than trends—it's how you amplify.  
Confidence and comfort, that's the reason why,  
real ones shine bright; no need to justify.

Some of my pieces turn heads in the hood,  
they never got it—never understood.  
Been this way my whole childhood,  
now they watch me shine in Hollywood.



**Canal  
St**

**The poem talks about turning sidewalks into runways. Do you see fashion as a form of art? Why or why not?**

Fashion is undeniably a captivating form of art that embodies self-expression and creativity. Much like visual arts, it weaves together vibrant colors and textures to create unforgettable pieces, but it does so using various fabrics instead of paint. Designers and artists alike draw inspiration from their innermost emotions and experiences, infusing their creations with personal meaning. This genuine connection to their work is what makes these pieces exceptionally valuable and distinctive in the eyes of buyers. The authenticity that shines through each garment transforms simple fabric into stories and identities, making fashion a truly unique artistic endeavor.

**Have you ever felt judged for your fashion choices? How did you handle it?**

I've always felt judged by the way I dress, I sometimes still feel this way as of now. As someone who goes to a school where not everyone expresses themselves in their fashion, I feel as if the way I dress is too much, or too weird for the dress codes/standard. The way I handle these feelings is by reminding myself that there will always be people that will judge you whether its positive or negative, but you have to continue to stay true to yourself, because the people who judge you won't always be there, it is only you who creates the final outcome.

**The poem mentions, "Real ones shine bright; no need to justify." Do you think fashion should always be explained, or should it speak for itself?**

Fashion possesses an extraordinary capacity for self-expression, offering individuals a canvas upon which to articulate their identities and emotions in myriad ways, much like a captivating piece of art. As a dynamic art form, fashion doesn't merely adorn the body—it stirs feelings and narrates tales, with vibrant hues and intricate patterns serving as the brushstrokes that vividly draw the observer's gaze. Each ensemble has the potential to evoke personal reflections, much like abstract art, inviting a rich tapestry of interpretations and reactions from its audience. The manner in which a person carries themselves significantly influences the perception of their fashion choices.



New York  
Mood

LOVE



**AUTHORIZED  
POLICE  
PERSONNEL  
ONLY**



City blocks to photoshoots, I set the tone,  
turn sidewalks to runways; the world is my own.  
Labels chase trends, but I carve my own throne,  
timeless in my essence, my style stands alone.

Every thread tells a story, every stitch a vow.  
breaking the mold and never following the crowd,  
Fashion's my language, and I say it loud.

They doubted me then; now they copy my vibe.  
whispers turn to cheers when I step inside,  
No blueprint is needed, just passion and drive.

The way fabric falls and how colors collide,  
it's more than just clothes; it's power and pride.  
And with every single step I stride,  
I'm unapologetically me; I won't let the world decide.









## **Do you think fashion is more about following trends or setting your own? Why?**

Fashion is a vibrant canvas for self-expression, where the true essence lies in forging your own unique trends. While looking to established styles can provide a spark of inspiration or serve as a source of motivation, it is the act of cultivating your own trends that truly demonstrates creativity and individuality. When you merely mimic what's popular, you risk becoming just another face in the crowd—an existence devoid of excitement and originality. Trends are often fleeting, their popularity waning with time; however, when you take the bold step of creating your own, you position yourself as a trailblazer.

## **“Every thread tells a story, every stitch a vow.” What’s one item in your wardrobe that has a special story behind it?**

I often find that my wardrobe lacks pieces with stories to tell, but when it comes to my jewelry, each item holds profound significance. I have an immense passion for jewelry; it has the power to transform any outfit, adding a captivating touch that enhances my style. What makes my collection even more special is that nearly all of my jewelry has been lovingly gifted to me by my grandmother. Her thoughtful presents carry a sense of history and connection, instilling in me an incredible boost of confidence as I embrace my personal style. Recently, she bestowed upon me a set of beautiful bangles that originally belonged to her late sister, adding an even deeper layer of meaning to these cherished heirlooms. Each piece serves as a reminder of the strong bonds of family and the stories that weave through our lives.

## **What advice would you give to teens struggling to find their own style?**

Some advice I would give to teens who are having troubles with finding their style is to take their time. From personal experience, I feel like I didn't spend enough time on what I genuinely liked. I also didn't have time to properly plan or map out the outfits and accessories the way that pleased me. I'd also encourage them that they should not feel pressured to change anything about how they dress, and to allow themselves to be comfortable in whatever.



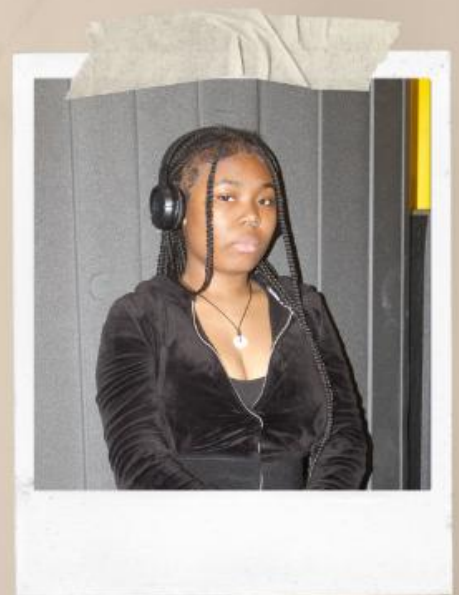


**IDENTITY: THE BELONG DOCUMENTARY (ACT 2)**






At some point, you pause and realize how much has been recorded—how every version of you has left its mark on the city, just as the city has shaped you. The train routes you memorized, the bodegas where you debated life with friends, the music that scored your late-night walks—all of it lives in your personal archive. Every choice, every shift in style, every moment of doubt and discovery becomes part of the documentary, proof that identity isn't a fixed thing but a story still unfolding.



# THE UNSCRIPTED SCENES

The thing about this city is that it doesn't just let you be—it challenges you to decide who you want to become. There are moments when you wish you could rewind, edit out the awkward phases, the missteps, the times you tried too hard to fit in. But even those scenes matter. They show growth, proof that figuring yourself out is messy, non-linear, and deeply real. NYC doesn't ask for perfection—it asks for authenticity, for a willingness to own every version of yourself, even the ones that no longer fit.





If act 1 was about absorbing the city's influence, act 2 is about claiming your role in shaping your own narrative. The city gives you endless inspiration, but the voiceover? That's yours. You get to decide what parts of the past stay with you, what lessons you carry forward, and what gets left behind in the cutting room. Reinvention is still part of the process, but now, you understand it's not about erasing who you were—it's about layering, evolving, and owning your story.

# **OWNING THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR**

# DOCUMENTARY CONTINUES

This documentary doesn't end when you turn 18, graduate, or move to a new borough. It keeps rolling with every step you take, every dream you chase, every community you build. Maybe one day, you'll look back at this chapter and see how far you've come. Maybe you'll watch it and smile at the kid who was still figuring it all out. Either way, the camera keeps running, and the city keeps watching. The question is—how will you tell your story next?





That  
is

It's a  
wrap



