

ink

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flip for fashion

IN THIS ISSUE

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT:

Allison Bills

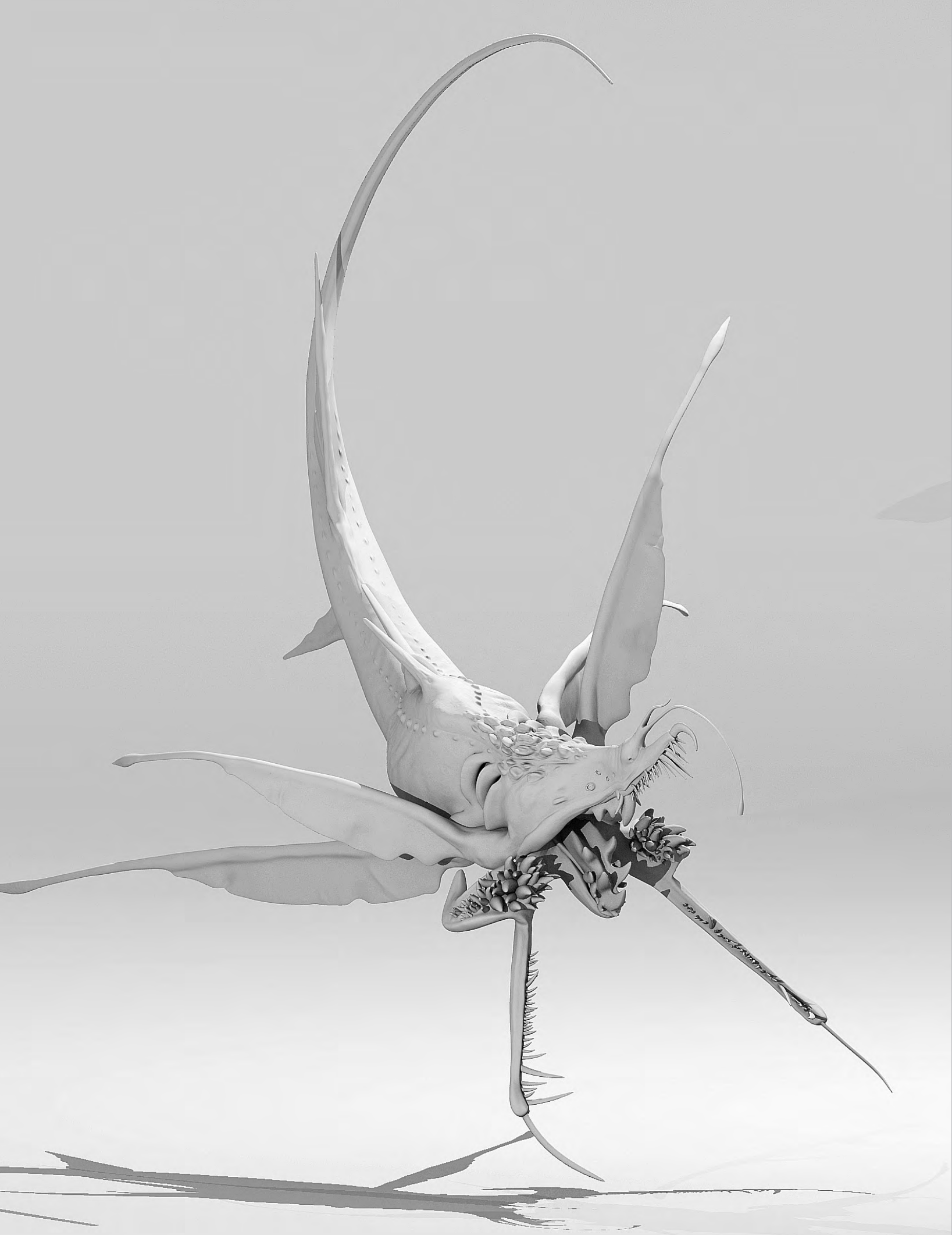
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KNOW THYSELF: GULL

CREATIVES OF COLOR

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Fall/Winter 2015

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Editor’s Note



This issue is dedicated to Courtney Shackelford, our Editor in Chief, who crafted the foundation for this issue while looking at the dichotomy of nostalgia and progress. Unfortunately, as the issue took shape, Courtney had to take a leave of absence. Following this, our senior editing staff came together to build an issue true to Courtney’s vision and INK.

Sometimes experiences are temporal. When they happened defined what they meant, and what will happen is being defined now. Our stories, in this issue, are woven through the fabric of the past and future. Whether it is in the artistic documentation of NASA, the rise of invasive technologies, or in the sound of Funk music making it’s way back to Richmond. INK remains dedicated to progress and engaging with our readers. Whether it requires us to focus on where our community is going, or where we have been.

We hope you enjoy the issue - whether it sits on your shelf for a second read or is cut up and collaged to decorate your walls. Keep up to date with our online content at inkmagazinevcu.com, and keep us in mind.



BRANDON GEIB & KELLY REYES
CO-INTERIM EDITORS IN CHIEF

Word on the Street

PHOTOS BY NADINE LAMPTON
WRITTEN BY BRANDON GEIB



Chris, Senior

If you could time travel would you go to the past or the future?

"The past."

Is there a specific time period?

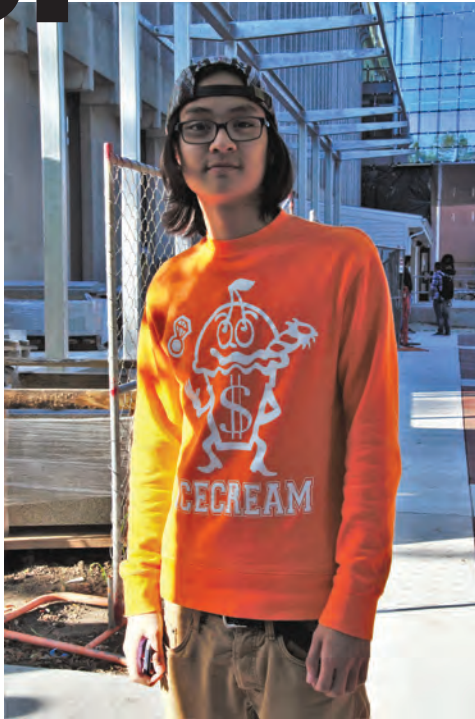
"Probably like right at the beginning of the colonization of North America by any nationality I don't really know, I haven't put that much thought into it."

What is your favorite underrated restaurant in RVA?

"Mojo's cause it's the Monk's of my life if anybody watches Seinfeld. It's great."

What do you wake up for in the morning?

"Pursuit of knowledge and happiness which are kind of intertwined for me, I guess."



Bryan, Sophomore

Have you ever had a near death experience?

"Yeah I almost got hit by a train once, when I was in high school. Me and my friends were at the train tracks and the train was coming and we were under the bridge and I peeked my head up and the train almost took my head off. I was like this close from the train, it was pretty crazy, but I lived to tell the tale so."

What do you wake up for in the morning?

"Take everything one step at a time, work for my future I guess. Go to school for my future, everything is done for my future."



Bailey, Sophomore

What was your favorite childhood toy?

"I don't think I really had many. I like going on the swings a lot I don't know if that counts."



Sean, Sophomore

Have you ever had a near death experience?

"Oh yeah, well I almost slid my truck off a bridge once. I didn't know the bridge was there and I was kinda trying to slide around a gravel turn, I was going camping, and I got out and kissed the ground after it fishtailed back and forth four or five times and I saw the edge of the embankment and it finally stopped, and I've never been more happy to come to a stop."



Bryant, Senior

What was your favorite childhood toy?

"I don't know I was a big sports head so if it wasn't a ball in my hand it was definitely some kind of action figure. I was big into Pokemon, so Pikachu, I had a lot of those. I was also a big beanie baby collector back in the day. So me and my Grandma use to collect a lot of the beanie babies. Yeah, so if it wasn't an action figure, beanie babies, or a basketball and football, that was about it."

If you could travel anywhere right now where would it be?

"Not big into flying but probably to LA to go see a Lakers game, If I could travel anywhere that's where it would be."



Ray, Junior

If you could travel anywhere right now where would it be?

"Probably be Eastern Europe or Italy... or Syria. it's where the fun is."

Who was your hero growing up?

"Probably T.E. Lawrence, Theodore Roosevelt."



One Small Step for NASA, One Giant Leap for Allison Bills

WRITTEN BY ALAN RODRIGUEZ
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ALLISON BILLS + NASA





VCU Senior and freelance photojournalist Allison Bills took her photography where most photography majors could only wish of going: the offices of NASA in Houston, TX. For three months, Bills had the opportunity to do an internship as a staff photographer, and she carried out all sorts of tasks, from taking astronaut portraits, to documenting equipment, and even helping with high school space camps.

Bills landed her first internship, and the only so far, thanks to the daily email updates sent by the photography department. "I responded to one. That's all you have to do. I was the only one in the department that responded."

At NASA, Bills had the chance to experience parabolic flights in a zero gravity chamber. "When you're floating in a zero gravity environment there is no up and down," said Bills. "So when you're upside down, you genuinely perceive that everyone else is upside down. You feel like you're right side up."

Not only did she take flight, but she also took photographs in zero gravity. One of her last photo shoots, and her personal favorite because she had "100% artistic freedom," was when she assisted chemical engineer and photographer Don Pettit in capturing images of a space cup he 3D printed. The images that resulted from this shoot do an incredible job at demonstrating the beauty that can be formed when science and art come together.

Bills got to photograph astronaut Reid Wiseman in a non-traditional lighting of her choice, and she took the official crew portraits for Crew 44 as well as full body shots that were turned into cut outs. Not only will these photographs be used by NASA, but if a big-name publication such as Time magazine chose to use her images, she would get credit for them.

In addition, she photographed retired NASA engineer Norman Chaffee, who has worked for NASA since 1962 and has been present for many legendary events







including the moon landing.

"He's really old," said Bills when talking about the retired engineer with two different colored eyes. "He's brilliant though, and he's so sweet. He knew everything about the Apollo missions."

This summer was quite eventful for NASA. New Horizons sent back photos of Pluto that were the clearest photographs taken of the dwarf planet to date. Bills was lucky enough to witness this magnificent event as the pictures first reached NASA, as well as other live updates from the International Space Station.

On her website, one can view a selection of pictures from her NASA internship, as well as plenty of her other projects. Bills emphasized that all of her projects have significance behind them, explaining that "art is just there to be beautiful unless you give it meaning."

One of her previous shoots, named Everybody Bleeds Red, is a political science piece that explores the notion that everybody is the same on the inside, despite differences in physical appearance. "I worked with the Life Sciences department and took photos through a microscope of different blood samples of different girls," said Bills. "I felt that it was really relevant to the turmoil that has been boiling in today's society."

Another project, Sweet Spots, which is more of an on-going series, focuses on the power and beauty of the everyday.

Allison explains that "photography is a really productive way to capture what's really in front of you while simultaneously bending reality. It stops the movement of time."

"I live a double life, one through the lens, and one of what I

actually see. I have to balance that because I'll notice myself taking too many photos and not actually experiencing what's happening in front of me, and that's kind of frustrating." Regardless, Bills believes that capturing a moment in time is "a brilliant thing." She explains that in a sense, photography generates memory. "You can remember something completely differently from what a photograph can show you. It bends perception and what the photographer sees versus what the world sees."

In the future, Bills aspires to become a photojournalist for the Peace Corps or National Geographic. For her next project, she hopes to come up with a collection of photographs that will answer her philosophical questions, some of which originated from what she learned during her stay at NASA.

Looking back on her experience, Bills recalls "the coolest part about

NASA was that it was a really good demonstration of countries coming together for a greater good – space exploration." She says there is no judgment and that factors such as race, ethnicity, or gender are non-existent. "You get a first hand view at how much effort they put just to send one person into space."

For being her first internship, Bills truly set the bar high. She learned a great deal about engineering, space exploration, what it means to be a photo journalist and most importantly, she learned "Jupiter is where they send the boys to get stupider."

Jered Fykes Saves the Day

WRITTEN BY DANIEL POTES
ILLUSTRATION BY JERED FYKES



Jered Fykes sees the beauty in a cruel world. On a day where my dog had pissed in the house, the weather sucked, and my girlfriend's anxiety was stifling, Jered's art brought a moment of calm. It seems simple; they are title-less notes, however the meaning is much deeper. On one side he handwrites an uplifting quote to inspire inner-peace, on the other, an intricate ink drawing.

The first note he gave me said, "Don't rush into reactions, be calm and feel the good vibes all around you. Keep love alive. — Peace within." The drawing on the flip side was of palm leaves, a symbol of peace.

His art inspired within me a fresh mind-set. Meeting Jered that day was like a sign. Fate intervened at a low point, and gave me some much-needed motivation to push through the hardship and realize the splendor in the world around me. Jered turned my shitty day around with his art, and that is something that needs to be shared.

He isn't an artist who thrusts his work in your face. It doesn't shock or offend, it is meant to subtly bring Zen to those who need it. As someone who carries three of Jered's notes in my wallet, specifically because they cheer me up, I am certain his notes could do the same for many other people in the VCU community.

On the next page, there is a template for writing your own peace inducing notes. These are for those who need a pick-me-up. They can be cut out of the magazine and kept for personal inspiration, or shared with someone who might need some inner-peace. On the back of his art, write something that speaks to you. Keep it with you and save it for a rainy day. You never know when you, or someone else, might need it.

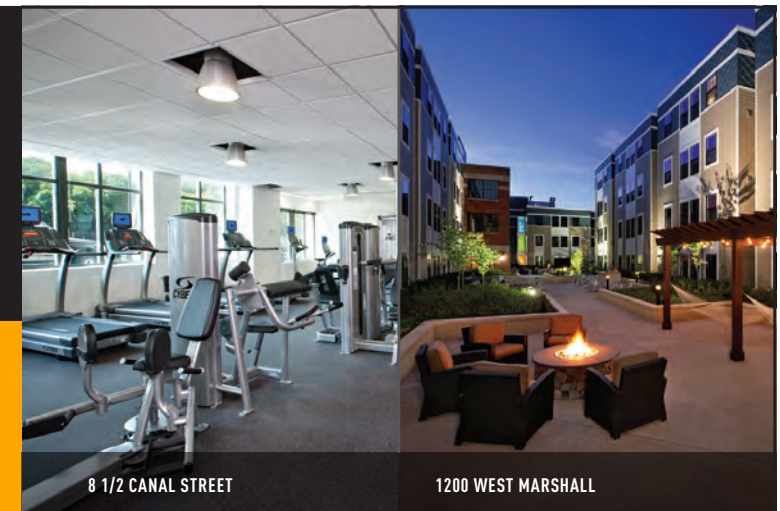


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Monsters of the Third Dimension

Cynthia Raggo

PHOTOS + STORY BY BRANDON GEIB
RENDERINGS PROVIDED BY CYNTHIA RAGGO







"It was always monster side" Cynthia Raggo says while talking about the concept and inspiration for her body of work.

Cynthia is a recent Communication Arts graduate with a focus on 3D modeling and a love of fantasy, paleontology and martial arts. She does Brazilian Ju Jitsu, has been an amateur MMA fighter, and will excitedly describe to you the "differences of the lacrimals of different tyrannosaurids." While her knowledge of dinosaurs is expansive, it doesn't stop her fictional monsters from having a little more leeway. "I was also a big fan of Digimon as a kid, so if I can stick shoulder mounted rocket launchers on them, I will do it," says Raggo. All of which plays into the detail and skill with which Cynthia creates her models, extinct or imaginary.

Unlike many of us who wander through undergrad just seeking a major, never mind the specifications of what we want to do as far as a job is concerned, Cynthia picked out her field in fifth grade. Cynthia became entranced with video game concept art after stumbling upon a book about movie concept art. Her mom, a software engineer, asked her peers who worked with video games for advice. Their insight

directed Cynthia to 3D modeling. "It's kinda like I figured out what I wanted to do in 5th grade, that's crazy" she explains, adding "I still question it" but comes back to the conclusion "what else is there, but this."

3D modeling remains foreign and mysterious to a lot of us, but Cynthia has been tracking that learning curve for nearly ten years now. She expertly walks through the process explaining that in any highly detailed 3D model you see there are millions of polygonal faces that exist, and are being defined. Raggo then adds "That's why video game models will always be at a lower poly than movies... It needs to respond in real time." The work is highly detailed and very time consuming. "A lot of times you can't take shortcuts with 3D modeling cause it messes everything up." One example Cynthia points to is retopologizing - the process of taking a highly detailed model and making a low poly from it. While there is automation that will do retopologizing for you, Cynthia explains "it is creating a topiary with a flame flower... eventually some human touch is going to be needed."

For Cynthia that human touch is part of the whole process, preferring to be in full control, in

order to make her models as true to the originals as possible.

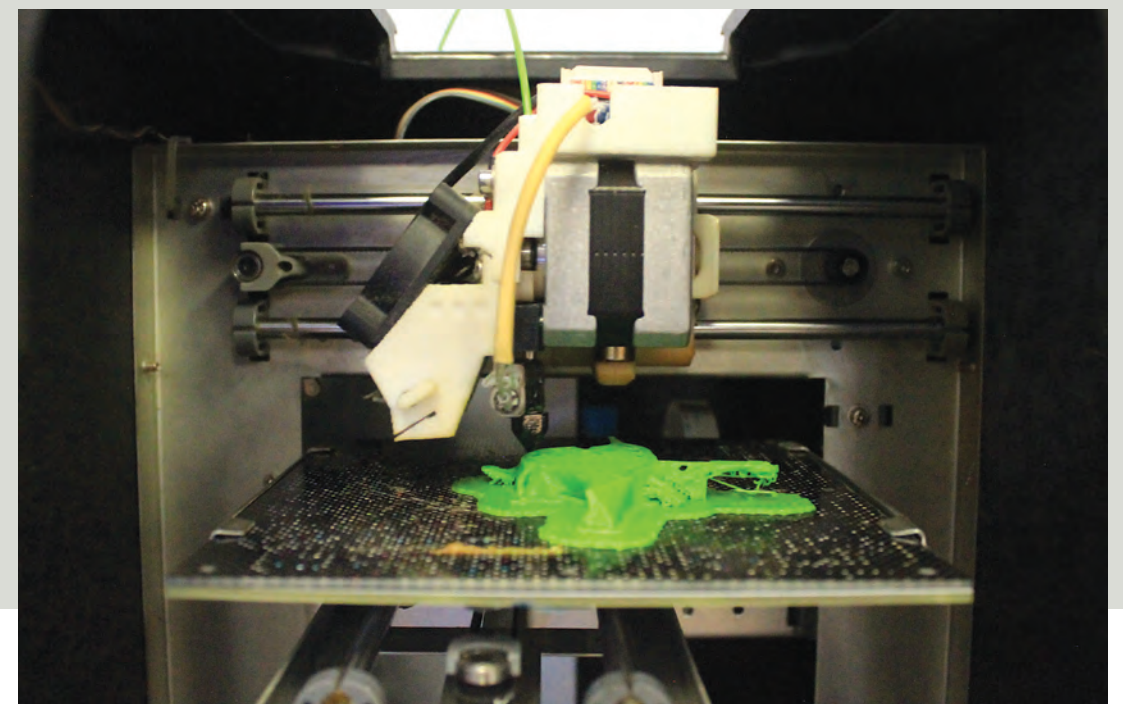
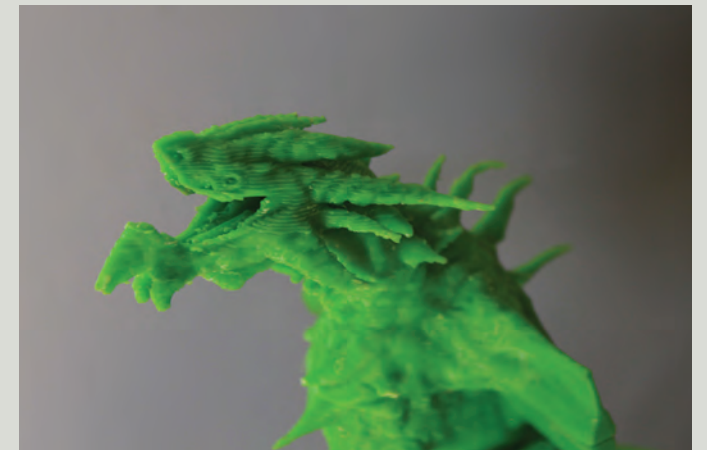
Cynthia does a variety of work both freelance and personal. One of her current projects has involved the recreation of dinosaurs. Getting it right becomes overtly important in this work, as she pays attention to shape, locomotion, and an array of scientific information in order to ensure her creations not only look like dinosaurs, they move like them too. Her research has in turn informed her other projects, as well as her personal work. While her personal monsters may "have large spikes that would prevent them from eating properly" it still comes from an understanding of how anatomy and locomotion work. What bones and muscles could fit together here or there tells her how to make her creations look more real, no matter the anatomically imposed starvation.

Cynthia explains that she is really looking to share her passion with others. "Anatomy excites me, animals excite me, dinosaurs excite me ... I want other people to be excited by it." She wants to bring her creations to life, refine the details, and get people to go "this is awesome, oh my god! Look at the teeth, this is so cool, this is really cool!"

Building up the Beast

3D Printing

While not part of her regular work, Cynthia has also recently been in the process of getting one of her models 3D printed. The conversion can be a trial for work like hers with it's millions of faces, when many 3D places generally work with printing in the hundreds. 3D Central on Main Street has been working with her to reconstruct a final printed model. A glimpse at one of their rough drafts shows how spectacular the interplay between digital and physical spaces has become.

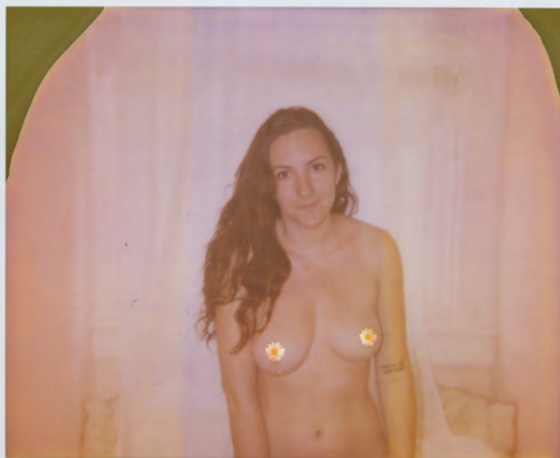


Anna Pleskow

WRITTEN BY ANNA PLESKOW
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ANNA PLESKOW

The same way photographers and fashion designers use Polaroid's to organize their shows, I use them to organize my life. As people surround me, I find myself overwhelmed by their features, personalities and energies. I see all of the variables that make up a person floating around in my head, and find myself craving a sense of understanding and control over them. By having people strip down to just themselves, they become vulnerable enough for me to see them as they are, at their simplest form: features. This 30-second ritual of having someone pose and me taking their picture turns these floating variables into a beautiful flow of features unique to the soul that owns them, and finally, there is an imprint of understanding in my head. I get the feeling that those who are photographed feel the same connection I feel, and understand who they are a little better as well.

*You can find more work at
annapleskow.com*



Know Thyself



Gull Performing at BIG SECRET - February 2015

Gull: Richmond's favorite one-man band



WRITTEN BY DANIEL RHOADS
ILLUSTRATION BY JAMIE DOUGLAS
PHOTOS BY PERRY CONNER

I saw Gull play a set on a cold First Friday when I was 16, before pepper spray and cops on horseback sterilized the Richmond event, seemingly for good. Set up in the darkness amongst galleries, he was spontaneous mystery in flesh. Seated on his stool, he wore a mask that I remember as deep red, like thick blood, and in the shadows he let loose his craft, playing a small drum kit with one hand and dancing fingers percussively off the fretboard of a guitar with the other. It was an overwhelming visual experience, and understanding it required more attention than the insistent, intense music allowed. Hence, the scene was reduced to confusion. Beautiful confusion.

I met Nate Rappole, the figure behind Gull, in the dining area of the VMFA at the end of September. He was cheerful, fresh-faced and, by all accounts, a pretty ordinary guy.

"I think of it as a way to break down certain boundaries I guess where... you go to work here, you go to see movies here, you eat here... and using the street as a place to kind of express yourself breaks that up a little bit," Rappole said of the experience playing music in public spaces.

One fundamental element of Gull is surprise and interruption. Finding yourself confronted by the audiovisual maelstrom that is Gull while traveling a path you know well could certainly be a shock. Once this initial feeling has worn off, more questions arise. What does it all mean? Is there a symbolism behind the mask? Some mystical element to the heavily rhythmic music played by an anonymous figure? As is the nature of street performance, people come and go during a Gull set, asking questions to themselves which will likely remain unanswered.





"A lot of times, at first, people think of it as just being like a gimmick of some sort, because of the mask," Rappole said. "It's like... 'who's this joker?'" The mask, in fact, is a functional piece, used to hold a microphone close to his face so he can avoid craning his neck towards a stationary mic and mic stand during a set.

This utilitarian answer to the puzzle of the mask ends up not being such a surprise. In reality, Gull is not so much of an act at all. Less mythos, pretension and points being made — more expression, pure and simple.

"I don't really consider myself an artist at all," Rappole said. "It's more like - it's just something I do. It's like fulfilling some daily need."

Far from a purveyor of gimmicks, Nate Rappole is Gull and Gull is Nate Rappole, a self-aware, articulate 35-year-old man who has deduced from life that his best personal path to self-discovery involves playing drums and guitar in unison while wearing a skull mask. Anyway, "know thyself," said Socrates, I guess.

You can find recorded Gull on bandcamp (gullface.bandcamp.com) and like the project's Facebook for info on upcoming shows, as well as any forthcoming information about Street Muse - Kenya, a documentary, filmed in 2012 but yet to be released to the general public. The documentary features Nate and his travels over a six week period, playing music with and engaging in dialogues with street musicians in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya.

Find the trailer, and more info, at streetmusekenya.com.





Spirit Animals of Funk

Add an extra bit of funk to Black Girls and sprinkle some harder riffs onto the Trongone Band, and you get Caterpillar Trap: a Richmond-based psychedelic funk band that will make you dance until you spill beer all over the person next to you. Having a short conversation with these slightly awkward, but very quirky and funny guys, will make you realize that their funky sound and undying enthusiasm is a product of their commitment to music and friendship.

I had asked them to introduce themselves by their spirit animal, and as soon as Mark said, “Pika,” Kirk immediately followed with, “I knew it, I knew it! That’s how well we know each other because I almost said that too.”

Mark and Kirk are in the Outdoor Adventure Program at VCU together, and recently got back from taking the semester off to hike the Appalachian Trail.

The band members, Tyler Donnelly (saxophone, back-up vocals), Mark Land (guitar), Kirk McIntosh (drums, vocals), and Chris Rubis (bass, vocals), started off as

just another group of friends jamming together. “We started in middle school, that was our first ‘band,’ me, [Mark], and another kid,” said Chris, adding that a “whole group of friends just came and went through the band.”

As they grew older and their musical passions became a little more serious, Chris and Mark started recruiting some of their friends for what would become Caterpillar Trap.

“We tricked Kirk into being the drummer. We invited him over to Chris’s house and was just like, ‘yeah dude, bring your drum set.’ And then he got there and we’re just like, ‘yeah we should play some songs.’ And then we got done and we said, ‘oh by the way there’s a band and you’re in the band now Kirk,’” said Mark.

The band talks about creating music with such simultaneous agreement that it’s no surprise



that they can create such smooth flowing sound. “Sometimes I’ll just hear something in my head and it’ll just be stuck there and it won’t go away until [we] try to make something happen [with it],” Mark said. Tyler quickly added that “we all know about that... like when we’re practicing music we’ll be in between songs and someone will scat out a rhythm and like, oh that’s cool, let’s try and build on them. It’s more impromptu than anything.”

Kirk recalled a specific instance: “Before our last show, Tyler started singing some line and we were all packing up, and then I started singing too. It was just some kind of rhythmic scatting and we just had a vocal jam to warm ourselves up.” This openness to improvisation isn’t specific to the practice space either, the band is also fond of improvising live.

This kind of musical syncing seems to be what keeps the band going, as well. They all agree that there is something that can’t exactly be described when they are feeling the best with their music.

“Our thoughts, and everything we are doing musically, kinda align to one counterpoint almost above the band and that’s, to me, the best feeling in the world, that’s church to me. It doesn’t get any better,” Tyler said, adding that this feeling, combined with “people that wanna get out and dance,” is the essence of what they are looking for in their band experience. As Mark put it, the core of the band can be described as “tension and release.”

As a relatively new band (their first show was back in February), Caterpillar Trap has high hopes for making music and “chopping firewood” in the winter. “We intend to spend the winter isolated in a snow covered cabin with nothing but our instruments,” said Kirk. They are expecting new music for release sometime in the winter, and are always looking for house shows.

Check out Caterpillar Trap on Bandcamp at <http://caterpillarttrap.bandcamp.com/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/caterpillarttrap>

FloydFest 2015

PHOTOS + STORY BY WILL E. NELSON

Driving on the Blue Ridge Parkway I encountered curves and slopes found only in the mountains. I arrived at FloydFest a few minutes shy of midnight on Saturday. Mere minutes before he deadline to pick up my wristband. Too late, the box office had already closed. I called out towards the remaining parking attendants. A bearded man with a frantic look on his face approached me. He said, "Sorry man they have already headed out for the night." I hesitated for a second and then explained to him why I was there. After every-

thing was verified I received my wristband, "Fire on The Mountain – En Fuego," and that is when I knew I was in for a good experience.

My preparation for this trip was only minimal. I entered the festival grounds via a pathway illuminated with colored lights and ornaments. I saw people my age, there seemed to be high-schoolers, and folks old enough to be my parents. I grabbed some shots and immediately headed over to buy one of FloydFest's steel cups. I grabbed a craft brew and headed towards the closest stage.

The platform was glowing along with the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains surrounding it. The band concluded their set and, I continued along the main path to discover what I would get myself into next. I found a separate area that caught my eyes. I saw people with costumes as well as almost every young person that had not already returned



to camp. Flames were spewing from a barrel, fire blasted from torches mounted to the stage, and performers prepped the stage. I had walked into a burlesque show being put on by, "The Party Liberation Front", based out of Richmond. A variety of acts performed including; dancers, actresses, singers, and even fire spinners off stage. The grand finale was with Deanna Danger, a well-known burlesque artist based in Richmond. She crossed the stage with elegance, talent, and class.

The next day I had an experience that would forever change my life and view of photography. I made my way to the photo pit for Emma Lou Harris and Rodney Crowell who were performing on the main stage. This alone was great, but when one of the security guys approached me, he mentioned that I would be on stage for one song. I chose the left side, and with each step towards it my head turned in each and every direction. I found myself on the side of the stage looking out towards thousands of festival attendees who were waiting for one of the most well-known headliners. I turned to my left to see an American singer-songwriter who has won 13 Grammys, including best Americana album for her 2014 release, Old Yellow Moon.

The five minute song seemed like an hour long escape from reality. To this day, I still think about that Sunday evening and all of the inspiration it has given me to continue to pursue this kind of adventure. I may have missed the first half of FloydFest, but what I experienced in its last hours was enough to keep me returning for years.



A Scary Side to Progress

The ever-changing technology

WRITTEN BY GLORIA WYSZYNSKI
ILLUSTRATION BY ALISSA PIVARAL

I believe we can all think back to a time where life was a lot more, how should I put it, simpler? Free of the constant harassment of text messages attacking our cell phones, free of the surveillance from the ominous cameras perched atop a growing number of buildings, free of the constant reminder that we are now forever plugged in. Gone are the days where we go a day without touching a screen or hearing the click of a keyboard. Of course, I do have a cell phone, I do have a Facebook, and yes, I am embarrassingly dependent on all the technology we have come to use on a daily basis. It was strange then, for me to realize that certain changes were happening in our society that I was not okay with. You can now unlock your iPhone with the touch of your finger, tag your friends in pictures on Facebook by use of facial recognition, and swipe into Shafer by use of your...eyes? Yes, Shafer, a cafeteria on Monroe campus at Virginia Commonwealth University, has recently installed two iris cameras as an alternative method of "swiping" in order to get a meal. Before it was really quite easy, hand your

school ID to someone who swipes you into the computer and go. It appeared to someone, however, that swiping your card was all too difficult and "unsanitary." Students go in to have photographs of their irises taken and the camera produces a number that correlates to your school ID.

I'll tell you what, the whole thing rattles my poor nerves. It helps though that apparently other students feel the same way, even if from a different view point. When asked for their opinion about the recent placement of these undoubtedly creepy iris cameras, many VCU students agreed that the entire project was downright unnecessary. They wondered how expensive they were and why that money wasn't used towards the ever rising price of tuition. Clearly, many students have a calmer point of view when it comes to it, I don't see anyone running through the streets screaming about how the government's trying to collect all our identities so they can control us. One student, who asked to remain anonymous for privacy reasons, said that the iris cameras exist to solve a problem that was never really a problem in the first place yet requires the collection of unique biological information. He couldn't be more right. A password consisting of numbers or letters, something we are all familiar with, can be changed.

Can it be hacked? Sure, happens all the time. A fingerprint though, can never be changed. Want to know what happens if the wrong person comes across your valuable information in your precious fingertips? It's not pretty.

Call me a fanatic but as I'm walking along the street and notice surveillance cameras perched on top of parking garages, I can't help but feel uneasy versus safe. I can't help but ask the workers at the gym to let me in using my ID instead of placing my hand on a hand scanner. I can't help but wonder why in the world you would be asked to have pictures of your irises taken in order to get a meal. The interesting response I get from those who I talk to about my uncertainties is "what do you have to hide?" maybe it is this thought process that prevents people from voicing their concerns about certain invasive technologies. It's possible they feel as though refusing to give up their fingerprint when randomly asked or having a picture of their eyes taken makes them look like they have something to hide or that they're against the progress and development of the technological world.

This view is wrong in so many ways. I have absolutely nothing to hide yet I will constantly question why we're asked for such personal information for simple everyday activities such as going to work out. The iris cameras at Shafer are currently not mandatory meaning you can still use your I.D but who knows how long that'll last. For the current moment we can always take a stand and demand to maintain your privacy. The truth is we may not be able to go very long behaving this way simply because of how our culture is becoming one in which we feel we simply can't function without this technology making things "safer" and "quicker." It's a real damn shame too. I find myself thinking back to the good ol' days where I spent hours playing with friends on the playground without the knowledge that the world was rapidly changing. I try to keep myself from imagining the kids of the future alone in their rooms playing on their iPads for hours. I try to imagine that instead of unlocking their future houses with the use of their eyes they use a normal key. No one knows exactly what the future holds but it's become clear that as we progress, I always take a look back.





Roller Derby

Fresh Meat

WRITTEN BY SARAH THAW
PHOTOS BY PORCELYN HEADEN

Forget the flashy socks and fish-nets. For the Mother State Roller Derby ladies, their focus is the game, not the aesthetic.

Roller Derby is a lot more than just skating around in circles. It is a fast paced, physically demanding sport and requires intense focus. There are two positions: the blockers and jammers. Blockers make up the bulk of the players on the track, with four people from each team. They are the offense and the defense that help the jammer who scores the points. The goal of the blockers is to keep the opposing team's jammer back as they try to get through the pack as many times as possible within each two-minute jam. Each game consists of two thirty-minute halves made up of these two-minute period jams.

By taking part in one of their "fresh meat" practices, I got a firsthand feel of what it's like to be a part of the Mother State Roller Derby team.

Upon arriving at the Richmond Roller Dome, I was greeted by the co-founder of the league, Casey Bianco, who has been doing derby for nine years. Although a majority of the team-members had years of experience under their belt, none was necessary to lace up and get on the rink.

"Put skates on and you're on the team," team member Kate, told me. No time was wasted as I was quickly geared up from head to toe in protective padding and skates.

Going out on the rink was intimidating; I had not roller-skated in years. But instead of trying not to fall, that is exactly what they had me do. "Dive into the rink," Casey told me. Learning how to fall properly is the foundation of all other skills taught in derby. "Fall small" is a mantra that helps the ladies not only prevent injuries, but also get back up quickly during a match.

Even though the group was welcoming, I could not help but feel inadequate. They zoomed around at lightning speed while I busted my ass going half as fast. My brain was working hard, but getting my body into the same sync was a challenge. As I struggled to learn the most basic of techniques, I quickly realized just how much determination and patience is necessary for coming fresh into derby. It is no easy ride.

Kate's past 6 months of derby were spent learning the skills and getting her body to cooperate. Stephanie or "Steve" as her team members call her, has been doing derby for four years and described the sport as a roller-coaster with extreme highs and lows. She said that her biggest obstacles were her clumsiness and maintaining balance. Even Casey, who has been a part of the derby for nearly a decade, admitted how chaotic the sport can be. She said her biggest obstacle was not letting her brain get the best of her when she had difficulties at practice. I took solace in the fact that my beginner struggles were once faced by even the most skilled of the bunch.

My initial discouragement was quickly replaced with a sense of accomplishment when I finally got a hang of some techniques. I started to understand what got the players hooked on the sport. Finally mastering a skill seemed to be what most viewed as a great triumph, as the little personal victories added up to team progress.

"Put skates on and you're on the team"



Roller Derby got its start as a show, with a lot of expression in stunts and costumes, but has since progressed into being more athletically focused. Mother State broke through these lingering stereotypes surrounding derby culture, including doing away with derby names. Casey, The Psycho Seamstress, as she used to be called, decided to ditch the nicknames to take a traditional approach. There was also no specific "look" necessary to be a part of the team. The ladies were diverse, from all walks of life, with different body types and skill levels. Although the opportunity to be social was there, it was not the main focus. However, the encouragement from teammates was what the ladies attributed to their motivation. Their mentality was athletically oriented, balancing personal dedication with achieving common team goals.

"It's hard to not beat yourself up. There needs to be a balance of having confidence in self and knowing where to grow," Casey said, reflecting on what lessons she has learned from being a part of the derby community. "We are constantly growing together and everyone has different strengths and weaknesses"

Some team members offered these words of advice for anyone interested in the sport: "Come and do it, you will fall."

I woke up the next morning with sore muscles and tired feet, but a new sense of appreciation for the badass Mother State Roller Derby ladies.

Creatives of Color

Power in Numbers

ZINE BY ZAIRA QURESHI + TOMIKO TOMASHIRO PARDO
WRITTEN BY KELLY REYES
PHOTOS BY BRANDON GEIB



Scrolling down POCollective's facebook wall, posts range from calls for models needed in an art project to discussions concerning the oppression faced by people of color – especially in creative spaces.

Their Facebook wall is updated on a daily basis with new inquiries, discussions, comments or maybe even a casual salutation to peers.

POCollective (People of Color Collective) is a group created "to serve as a database of creatives for upcoming shows," according to their Facebook description. The Richmond based collective was founded by Zaira Qureshi, a graphic design senior at VCU, this past January. Since then, the group has grown in size, now operating with 188 members and continually growing.

When asked about the collective's purpose, Qureshi stated the collective was created focusing on the representation of people of color in creative spaces – simultaneously providing networking opportunities for said creatives. This is very clearly seen on their wall, members post daily on the group asking to collaborate or asking for thoughts on certain issues that can be addressed through their practice. Artists gain more opportunities to create

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work for a purpose, and are given access to an exuberant database of other artists of color that are open to work with one another.

I took to POCollective's wall to see what some members had to say about the collective as a whole. Qureshi then encouraged members to respond so that their thoughts could be taken into consideration for the betterment of the collective – while Qureshi might be the founder of the collective, it runs as a collaborative effort. Responses flooded in from members eager to discuss and willing to listen to each other.

Members collectively agreed that the white washing of creative spaces is a major reason a collective of this nature is necessary. One member, Ishan Bose, when asked about the necessity of POCollective, stated "Living in a white supremacist state, white people inherently dominate most if not all spaces within it – including creative ones." Most members agreed that a collective of this nature is needed to provide people of color with creative space because these spaces are almost always predominantly white. It is easy for artists of color to feel uncomfortable in such spaces, the lack of representation can be overwhelming.

"Because the world is white-washed, so can be the language we are taught – We have to make our language. Make our art. One of the most radical things we can do is love ourselves/create a community. Without that, where will we get the energy to navigate the bullshit we live every day," member, Taylor Manigault, added to the discussion.

The collective prides itself in being a safe space for people of color. This begs the question, what exactly makes something a safe space?

Being heard.

Every response I received was someone thankful for the chance to be heard by people willing to listen. Members find solace in the fact that their peers know the struggles they face and are likeminded individuals. One can post on the group without hesitation – knowing everyone in the collective is accepting and supportive of each other. Many members admitted to feeling unsafe in a space when not given the opportunity to be heard or when faced with close-mindedness.

"There's a lot of openness about everything. Just being able to talk about safety, for example, makes me feel safer. Because I know if there's anything that seems threatening, people are willing to listen," stated Bayan Atari, a member of the collective. "It's nice to feel a sense of community, as opposed to alienation."

Whether someone needs help with a project or a peer wants to vent to an understanding audience, the collective promises to stand as a safe space for them. Creative responses are born. Support is abundant. A community is built.

The commonalities these individuals share draw them together, initially. But, most importantly, provide them with a foundation to build upon their talents and common struggles for more creative opportunity and social change.

Dear Fellow Folks of Color,

I am writing to tell you that I'm in love with you. I would have said it to your faces, but I don't have that kind of travel money.

what I love about you, POC, is... well, there's a lot.

First of all, I love that, despite what you may have heard, your ancestors pretty much built or invented everything that was ever built or invented in the world. They built the pyramids. They built the United States (this includes buildings, roads, bridges, and the entire economic system that came from the cotton of the South and which made this country a world power). They invented chess, jewelry, sculpture, dance. Air conditioning, the fire extinguisher. Guitars, horseshoes, rock and roll, mailboxes, motors, refrigerators, traffic lights. They invented chopsticks, spoons, and forks. To eat the food whose domestication they originated: rice, chocolate, potatoes, carrots, coffee, wheat, ice cream. I could go on. The first game of soccer was played by them. The first songs sung with the human voice were sung by them. By you. I mean, how could I not love you? (Also, I'm pretty sure you invented love.)

But that's really not even the half of it. POC, I love you because you are fierce. Because you are strong. Because you are hella resilient. Because despite living in a country that finds some new way every single day to tell you that you are less, you somehow continue to be more and more and more. Despite racism and xenophobia and poverty and white women's tears and Mitt Romney, you still manage, somehow, to hold it together. Even though every Arab movie terrorist is played by an Arab dude (or a Mexican dude) but the hero "Prince of Persia" is played by Jake Gyllenhaal; even though some people think "reverse racism" is a real thing; even though API folks are like .003% of the characters on US TV shows right now and most of them are on Glee, you haven't just given up and started speaking gibberish and throwing your feces. which, under the circumstances, would be really understandable. No, instead you find more and more ways to survive, and not only to survive, but to thrive. Despite your children being gunned down by cops like every single day, despite your mothers being sent to prison for "stealing" public education, despite your sisters dying in the heat of the desert while "sneaking" into a land that belongs to your own ancestors, not to mention being deported from that same land in record numbers, despite the CONSTANT beatings inflicted on your souls, you somehow still have souls. That's fucking amazing. I mean, I'm not surprised. Your ancestors couldn't have survived slavery and internment and genocide without some damn serious sturdy genes. But still. It's impressive.

I love you for all of these things.

I love you, too, for the way, despite all of this, you continue to love each other. I love you for knowing what community really is. I love you for understanding what family means. I love you for the way you lean into each other when you laugh, the way you rock when you hug, the way you cook and fight and die for each other. The way you forgive. The way you remember.

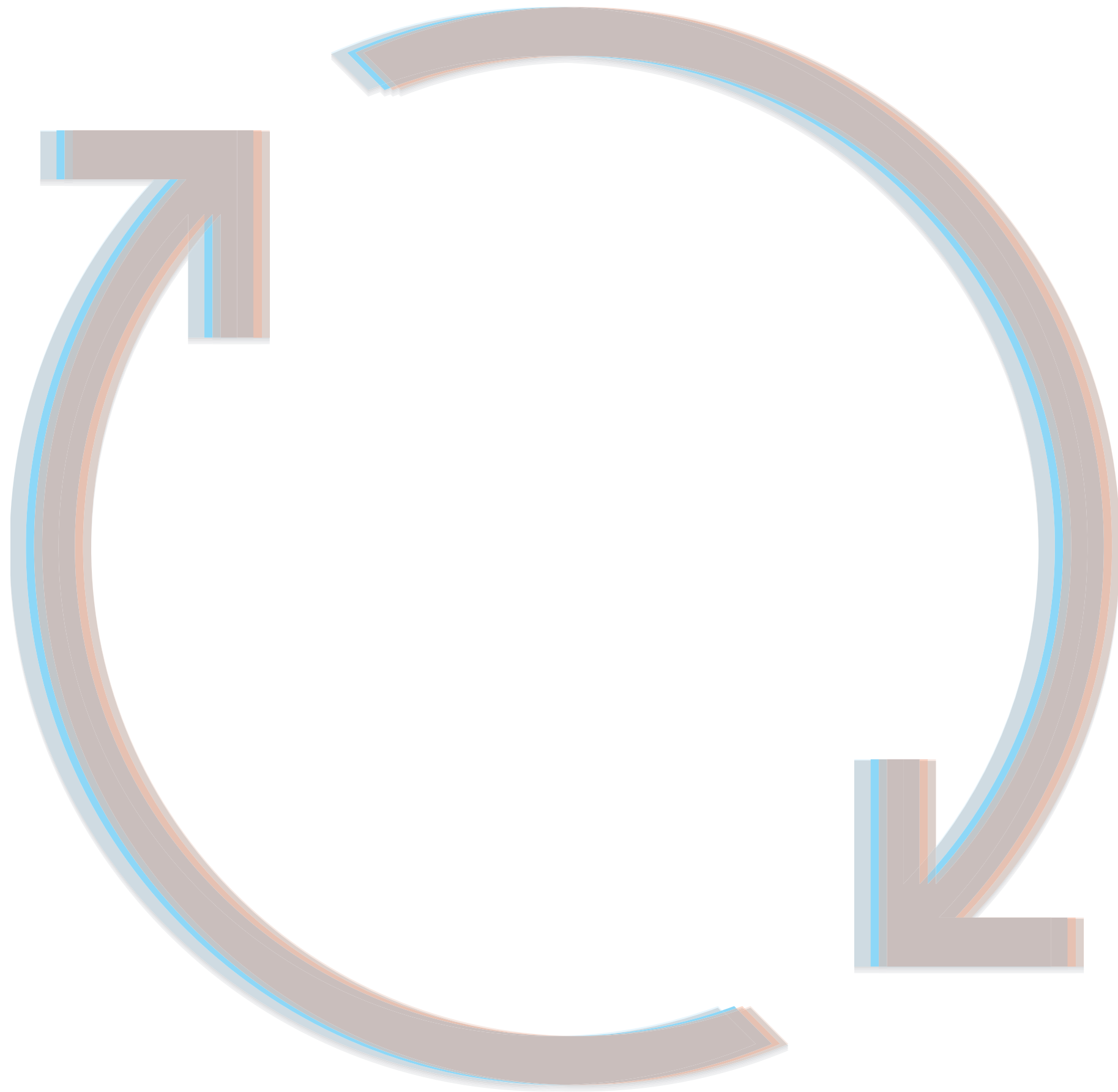
I love your thick lips and your thick/curly/kinky/bone-straight hair. I love your slanted eyes, and your round and not-round asses, and your high cheekbones and your big/tiny feet. I love your brown eyes. I LOVE your brown skin.

I love the way you do math (which you also invented), the way you dance, the way you talk. I love your fire. I love your anger.

Folks of color, I am so fucking in love with you. So in love with us.

Sigh.

Love, Mia of BLACKGIRLDANGEROUS.ORG (not affiliated with POCollective)



ink

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 1
flip for culture

IN THIS ISSUE

DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT:

Rene Velasquez

GIRLS WILL BE BOYS...

SHARED OR STOLEN?

+ much more!





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Erica
Farrow Dress *Need Supply Co.*
Adidas Sneakers *Circle Thrift*

Brett
Denim Shirt *American Apparel*
Jeans *Rumor’s Boutique*
Allen Edmonds Brogues *(Model’s Own)*
Surface Handmade Necklace *Rosewood Clothing Co.*



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INK FASHION EDITORS

Editor's Choice

AARON NI'JAI, SENIOR FASHION EDITOR



BRITNIE DATES, JUNIOR FASHION EDITOR



THE TURTLE-NECK

The cold-weather essential: The turtleneck. They are sleek, warm, and amazing for layering. With the right fit and fabric, this could go beyond looking like your father's old turtle neck. They can be sexy paired with a blazer or have a kind of a James Bond, ultimate cool guy appeal
Get it: Macys.com, HM.com, Urbanoutfitters.com



THE WHITE BUTTON UP

The most aesthetically versatile piece: the white button up. It can be dressed up, down, can look clean, relaxed, and even sporty. There are many different options; From various hemlines, oversized or fitted and collar types. This should be in every man closet.

Get it: Asos.com, HM.com, Zara.com



ACCESSORIES

Don't play it safe, try something new. Take your wardrobe to the next level by adding in a standout accessory. It's a simple way to show your personal style can instantly update old favorites. Whether you choose a hat, bowtie, bag or scarf there are endless possibilities on the market right now.

Get It: Express.com, Asos.com, HM.com, NeedSupply.com



The fall season is generally regarded as a time to make new changes, but when it comes to my wardrobe, I'm more interested in sticking to what works. This season, I'm taking inspiration from decade specific fashion and classic style. Most of these picks are made fresh with modern updates, but I promise they're still just as easy to style.



SOCK IT TO ME

While the idea of wearing anything with the term "sock" in its description may sound unappealing at first, trust me when I say it's anything but. Made popular by the latex beauties Raf Simons debuted on Dior's Fall 2015 runway, the sock boot is the new way to wear stacked ankle boots.

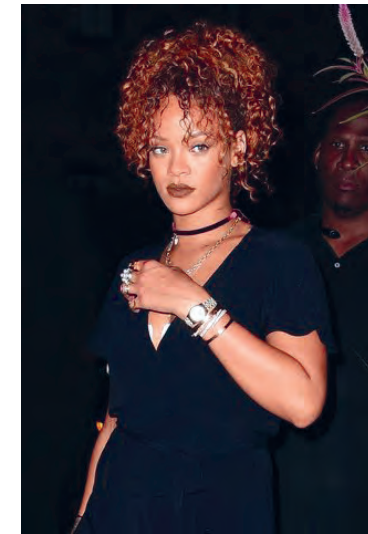
Get it: Zara.com, Topshop.com, Nastygal.com



SLIP DREAMS

A cult classic in the 90s, the slip dress has been lingering on the trend horizon for some time now. My personal pick is one that favors the original idea of innerwear as outerwear. Because really, there's nothing chicer (or more efficient) than wearing your pajamas during the day. Make this look class appropriate by pairing it with a cool coat and your favorite sneakers.

Get it: Bygonesvintage.com, NeedSupply.com, Topshop.com



CHOCOLATE KISSES

Nude lipstick will forever be in our makeup rotation, but a darker hue presents a fresh take on the classic. A chocolate pout is the perfect way to top off the 70s trend currently invading stores. While popular brands like M.A.C offer great options for brown lipstick, drugstore labels including L'Oreal and Black Radiance will more than suffice.

Get it: Sephora.com, Drugstore.com, Amazon.com

MONO-TONES

Head to toe black is a classic uniform, but this season add a fun twist to monochromatic looks by experimenting with new shades on the color spectrum. Wearing an all grey outfit is a bit cooler than black, but offers the same ease. Go one step further by sporting pieces in coordinating red or blue hues.

Get it: AmericanApparel.net, Zara.com, Asos.com



THE TIMELESS CLASSIC: DENIM

From bootcut to slimfit jeans, to button ups and jackets, this trend is back once again. Since Levi Strauss invention in 1873, denim has been an integral part of any wardrobe. Whether for work or for play, denim gets you through your day effortlessly. With so many different washes, cuts and styles there's definitely something for every man.

Get it: Urbanoutfitters.com, JCPenny.com, Luckybrand.com



Shared or Stolen

An Examination of Cultural Appropriation



WRITTEN BY KENDALL BAZEMORE
ILLUSTRATION BY SHANNON WRIGHT

The term cultural appropriation has been used a great deal in social and mainstream media; however, the term is rarely fully explored in meaning or in its practice in our lives and is beginning to lose much of its significance. Cultural Appropriation, as defined by Professor Richard A Rogers at the University of Amsterdam, is “the use of a culture’s symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture.” It is widely believed that we are living in a time that is post-racial, meaning that racism no longer exists. This combined with the fact that people are more connected than ever before, through social media and other vehicles, many believe they can “try on” other cultures and think it’s acceptable. The misuse of cultural items or practices can be seen in all aspects of pop culture, in performance art, fashion, music etc. It is most often personified as a white person wearing an object that belongs or is most attributed to

a people of color (POC) culture; however, cultural appropriation is not limited to objects and ceremonies. There are ramifications to appropriating that people from outside a particular culture are unaware of or in some cases blatantly disregarded. This appropriation often reduces people of color down to racist generalizations and stereotypes. It is important to understand that appropriation is directly linked to cultural politics. People’s position society and privilege must be acknowledged when discussing appropriation.

Many people of color take issue when they see certain aspects of their culture being used by others mainly because there are double standards that exist when an object is appropriated. Take for example black hairstyles: afros, twists, dreadlocks, cornrows, and other black hairstyles have been a part of black culture for centuries. These hairstyles

have history in their culture, even before African colonization began and throughout diaspora. Dreadlocks in particular, are associated with Rastafarianism, a religion that at its core sees black people as the chosen people of God and rejects all Eurocentric ideas. Reggae music and dreadlocks were derived from Rastafarianism as a vehicle to express their faith. When locs are present on black bodies they are subjected to stereotypes, assumptions, and discrimination. Black hair is seen as unprofessional by the labor force and they are expected and often times forced by threat of losing their jobs to conform to more Eurocentric hairstyles. There was controversy surrounding the 2015 Oscars, when actor Zendaya Coleman wore faux-locs to the ceremony. Fashion Police host, Giuliana Rancic mocked Zendaya stating that like she smelled of “patchouli oil and weed.” This comment created a huge outcry from the black community because it’s an incredibly ignorant stereotype that has plagued black people with locs for years, but also because white people with dreadlocks are never subjected to the same kind of scrutiny. When white people get locs they are often seen as cool, edgy, earthy, or trying to find themselves. Other hairstyles that have been

historically popular in the black community have been appropriated in a similar way. Fashion lines like Alexander McQueen have used white models to wear cornrows in their shows and given the hairstyle the label of high fashion, but when black people have cornrows they are given the label “ghetto”. Another example of this was shown in Marie Claire, who featured Kendall Jenner in adorning braids as “bold and epic braids.” Kendall’s braids were simple and uninspiring yet the praise that Marie Claire gave Jenner for her hair is not met with criticism when black women wear that style. What’s more Marie Claire has seldom featured black women wearing black hairstyles in their magazine. White people are given the freedom to express themselves when they appropriate these hairstyles whether it’s dreadlocks, afros, twists, or even just dyed hair, but when present on black bodies they are often seen as negative.

Cultural appropriations also reduce significance of objects that are often tied to religious roots. Consider the bindi: many South Asian cultures, particularly Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, and Southeast Asian women who practice Hinduism place bindis upon their forehead during wedding ceremonies. The bindi



is also said to symbolize the third eye in Hinduism as well as to ward off bad luck. It’s loaded with religious significance and has meaning in Hindu culture, so you could imagine the irritation that many Hindus may feel when they see people wearing bindis for superficial reasons. During music festival season our timelines, dashboards, and news feeds were inundated with images of people wearing bindis. Singers like Katy Perry and Selena Gomez both wore bindis to fit “Indian” themed performances. However, when Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A wore a bindi she received criticism because it was shaped as a Swastika. People associate the Swastika with the infamous Nazi party and see it as a symbol of hate and genocide, but the truth is the Swastika was appropriated by the Nazis from Hinduism. The Swastika’s original meaning was “well-being” and “good luck” but that meaning was corrupted and bastardized by the Nazi party using it. It’s incredibly ironic that M.I.A receives criticism for wearing an object of her own culture for its original meaning while white people can wear it freely.

Another example of this reduction of significance would be with the Native American headdress or war bonnet. Though not all indigenous cultures use headdresses, for some such as the Lakota, Sioux, and Navajo— the headdress is a symbol of status and accomplishment. It is a symbol bestowed

upon the elders of a tribe whose leadership and selflessness earned them a position as the head of the group. Thus seeing models at the annual Victoria’s Secret fashion show wearing headdresses with bikinis completely degrades and disrespects the meaning. Going a bit deeper, the motivation behind wearing an object of significance must be examined as well. When you see a fashion show and models are wearing a headdress, have you ever stopped to ask yourself; why is she wearing that? Or to use a more mundane example: people wearing headdresses at music festivals; why do they wear it? The truth is, in both cases, they probably have no reason to wear it, but for purely for a pretentious need to impress others. If you were to challenge the wearer, the answer is usually a defensive excuse along the lines of “respect of the culture”. The claim of wanting to celebrate a culture is a front to deflect or silence any claims of appropriation they might be faced with.

Another more stinging reason people of color get frustrated when their culture is being appropriated is the lack of concern white people demonstrate regarding other aspects of the cultures and experiences of people of color that also happen to be negative. There have been multiple stories in the media about attacks and killings of POC by white people (both law enforcement officials and vigilantes). When POC speak up about



our oppression the white people that appropriate or enjoy our cultures disappear; this is another example of the enduring privilege they hold. They want to wear headdresses at music festivals or on runways when they want to look cool . However, when indigenous people talk about the missing aboriginal women in Canada or the fact Native Americans are being killed at higher rates than any other race, those people that “love” their culture, vanish. White people can wear their hair in traditionally black hair styles, but are silent when new stories of police brutality appear in the media. Recently, actor Amandla Stenberg proved this point with Kylie Jenner’s Instagram post displaying her hair in cornrows. Stenberg’s point was that Kylie being from a wealthy family and having a lot of privilege could use that privilege to bring attention to the problems black people are facing today but instead she draws attention to herself. This shows that white people value the aesthetic aspect POC culture more than people

of color themselves. What makes this issue more ironic is when POC call out white people for failing often to acknowledge the ways in which they are discriminated against, marginalized, oppressed, but wanting to partake in aspects of their culture when it’s trendy and cool, they claim that people of color magnify the issues or conflate the two problems. As expressed earlier, people are engaging with people from different cultures now more than ever, thus people are bound to be interested in aspects of other cultures. The phrase cultural exchange is often brought up in discussions about cultural appropriation. Cultural exchange as defined by Richard A Rogers, is “the reciprocal exchange of symbols, artifacts, rituals, genres and/or technologies between cultures with roughly equal levels of power.” I would add to this definition and say that cultural exchange occurs on the terms of the originators. For example, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi asks guests to follow their dress code which includes

women covering. Covering and dressing modestly holds religious significance for Muslims, so for outsiders acknowledging those customs and abiding by them shows their respect for the culture. Actor Angelina Jolie wore a hijab when she travelled to the Pakistan out of respect for the tradition. It is important to note that appropriation is possible between different people of color. The customs and values of the different POC must be respected across the board by anyone outside of that culture. An example of this would be orientalism in hip hop music. There is a trend for hip hop artists using Asian objects and concepts in their videos such as Nicki Minaj for her video “Your Love.” In the video Minaj dons a kimono and makeup and uses katanas and samurai gear as well. This belittles the history and fetishizes these Japanese objects at the same time. Minaj used these objects for superficial reasons. The line between appropriation and exchange is becoming more and more blurred as the world gets more globalized, an example of this would be when Willow Smith was photographed portraying the Hindu goddess Kali. This would technically fit the definition of cultural exchange since Willow being a member of a marginalized group is portraying a goddess from another marginalized group. However, this definitely counts as appropriation, portraying a religious figure in any context as someone who doesn’t follow that religion, reduces its meaning. This is the difficulty in labelling what’s appropriation and exchange when it comes to people of color, there are situations that apply as both. Being interested or wanting to celebrate another culture isn’t negative, but people should examine why they want to celebrate that culture. It’s essential that if you truly respect that culture you shouldn’t tokenize the culture. Understand that only those whose culture you wish

to celebrate can dictate the correct way. If you are white, you don’t get to say that you are celebrating, for example, West African culture when you wear dashikis or Indigenous culture when you put on a headdress, if those who belong to that culture say otherwise. Understand that regardless of your good intentions you must recognize the privilege that you have and the historical/religious significance of what you don. If you are criticized by someone of that group for wearing something of significance you must be open to that criticism. People of color also need to understand that other POC cultures need to be respected and though we are on relatively equal political standing, we can appropriate each other’s culture. If by the end of this, you still wish to wear objects of other cultures, there are some questions to keep in mind. First, do you know what you are wearing? Do you know the significance? If you are sincere in your respect and appreciation for a culture, you wouldn’t knowingly wear a significant object of that culture if you were conscious of that culture’s historic and current oppression. How do you you wear that object? Are you presenting that object as something unique to yourself? Don’t “Columbus” the items you wear- meaning don’t present the object as something existing only to express yourself, if it already has meaning. Culture is not something that can be put on or taken off, it is something you are born into. While it can be shared, it should never be stolen.

Back to the Classics

Fall-Winter 2015 Beauty Trends

WRITTEN BY MORIAH BRISCOE

Marilyn Monroe, Betty Boop and Jessica Rabbit. Each of these classic figures in American entertainment are united by one trademark beauty item: red lipstick. Despite our obsession with nude lips last fall, we are returning to this classic. Thanks to the likes of Carolina Herrera and Phillip Lim, this season, it was only a matter of time before red lips would pop onto our radar. Though its revival is hardly controversial, it’s about reintroducing a classic beauty staple. Following its close counterpart, blush is making a comeback. Just like red lips, it’s a subtle return, but it’s one nonetheless. Once seen as excessive, we’ve accepted blush back into our bags. The Prodigal Compact has returned and we are letting everyone know. Though it’s only natural for one to achieve

blushed cheeks, the beauty of it is that it elongates the effect of blushing itself; thus making blush one of the easier beauty trends this year. Contrary to blush’s effortless-ness, it’s techniques like contouring, a process that we have apprehensively tried to master, that prove blush’s own ease. Just like rosy cheeks aren’t going anywhere this fall, neither are metallic eyeshadows. Sure to brighten any dreary fall day, take note from Marchesa and Mara Hoffman’s fall show by illuminating your eyes. Or go the dramatic route as seen on Tom Ford’s fall runway. Yet again, metallic eyes are nothing new. It has played an integral part of fall beauty in recent years, so long as it continues to add interest and spark to our looks, then so be it.



While rosy cheeks/lips and metallic eyeshadow each hold a place deep in our bags, the staples may pose to be too much for some. Luckily, messy mascara and eyeliner, seen this year at Fendi and Roberto Cavalli, are one in the same as effortless eyewear makes its break this fall. So busy, you don’t have time to let your mascara dry? No problem. Dare to not draw in the lines as you apply eyeliner, brush on a few coats of mascara and call it a day. Makeup clearly holds no bounds as we attempt to define what effortless really looks like. Unlike seasons past, this one comes without restriction with rules falling under the guise of minimalism, or the idea that “less is more”. Now it’s about doing what you want, however you please.

Makeup is having fun again and we’re not going to continue to act cool about how much makeup we’re not putting on for once. Hell, we’re putting on mascara that’s supposed to look clumpy! The common denominator of these beauty trends is that it’s what we know and understand, which to say the least, is quite endearing. As unwaveringly classic as they are unique, these trends collectively shift from the trend of the “it” feature like eyebrows, lips, etc. But instead, we are given a variety to choose from. There’s something for those that want to be more sophisticated, and some lax. These latest trends, offer the choice to go all or nothing: Clumpy mascara to bring out the eyes, or do we go for a more flushed and natural look? You decide.



Models **Brett McAnney, Sarah Thaw, Erica Dreybus**
Photographer **Jennifer Van SteenBurgh**
Stylist **Ink Fashion Editors**
Makeup **K.Will**
Creative Direction **Aaron Ni'jai + Cierra Artis**
Assistant **Jessica Morgan**

Child's Play

Supersede the innocence of childhood
for the (sometimes) crushing reality of adulthood.
Children aren't the only ones
who get lost in play.

Sarah
Sweater *J. Crew*
Skirt *ASOS*
Socks *Target*

Brett
Sport Jacket *Vintage Christian Dior Monsieur*
Jeans *Cotton On*
Shoes *Custom made Allen Edmonds*
Shirt *Banana Republic*



Fanmail Raglan Tee *Need Supply Co.*
Free People Scarf *Need Supply Co.*



Top Stylist's Own



Jacket GAP
T-shirt American Apparel
Converse Sneakers DTLR



Clutch Dimepiece LA



Sweater *H&M*
Socks *Target*



Leather Brogues *Aldo*





Free People Sweater *Need Supply Co.*
Farrow Romper *Need Supply Co.*



Quartz Ring Drift/*Riot Rosewood Clothing Co.*
2nd and 4th rings Brittany Chanel Jewelry *Rosewood Clothing Co.*
All other rings *Rosewood Clothing Co.*

Ms. Thrifty

The Thrifted Spices

FEATURING LIZZ BRUCE
PHOTOGRAPHER TOBI O.

Second hand clothing shopping is an excellent alternative to finding an original style at an affordable cost. Thrifting for clothes is not only a great way to save money but it is also a way to give back. Shopping for used clothes is a sustainable way to give clothes a second life instead of sending them off to our

already over flowing waste-land-fills. Instead of buying disposable fast fashion for a low cost, you could easily up cycle good quality clothes at the same low price. Buying from vintage or second hand stores is also a great way to support small local businesses and artists.



Chic Spice

Top *Buffalo Exchange* \$10
Bottom *Fantastic Thrift* \$6
Shoes *Ashby's* \$12
Hat *(Stylist's Own)*
Necklace *Clementine* \$12



Country Spice

Calvin Klien Cropped Jacket *second hand Ashby's* \$24
Vintage Guess Jeans *second hand Ashby's* \$12
Bolo tie *Blue Bones Vintage* \$22
Vintage Leather Booties *Blue Bones-Vintage* \$27
Reebok Shoes *Urban Outfitters* \$35



Urban Spice

Asos Top *Ashby's* \$10
80's Vintage biker Shorts *etsy: BlackPaganVintage* \$27
Shoes *Nature Breeze Ashby's* \$10
Necklace *Ashby's* \$12
Bracelet *Blue Bones Vintage* \$3

Rave Spice

American Apparel Top *yard sale* \$2
Vintage Nike Shorts *second hand Ashby's* \$6
Troll Earrings *Blue Bones Vintage*
Sunglasses *Cierra's from Nasty Gal*



Peppy or Varsity Spice

Jacket *Liz Sport by Liz Claiborne, Thrift Mart* \$6
Top *Rumors* \$10
Reeboks Pleated Skirt *Ashby's* \$10
Checker Cup Hat \$20



Patches are a fun way to make something that is used new again by adding your own unique touch. Oyster patch: *RVA local designer @wearenobrow* sold at *@blueblonesvintage*. Rainbow and kiss patch: *Buffalo Exchange*



Girls Will Be Boys and Boys Will Be Girls

Gender Streamlining Styles



WRITTEN BY ANDREA PHILBIN
ILLUSTRATION BY ALISSA PIVARAL

Gender identity has quickly become a trending issue for this past summer on social media and IRL. However, gender identity isn't just two categories the entire human population can fit into. With the announcement of former Bruce Jenner to now Caitlyn, the trans process has been explained in mainstream media. Especially in fashion, gender fluidity has emerged into the mainstream culture and the idea of a gender

spectrum has been planted in many minds. Newest cast member of the cult favorite, *Orange Is the New Black*, Ruby Rose, has recently become the poster face for gender fluidity. In an interview with Elle she explains her place on the gender spectrum, "For the most part, I definitely don't identify as any gender. I'm not a guy; I don't really feel like a woman, but obviously I was born one. So, I'm somewhere in the middle, which -- in my perfect imagination

-- is like having the best of both sexes. I have a lot of characteristics that would normally be present in a guy and then less that would be present in a woman. But then sometimes I'll put on a skirt." Rose touches on one important factor when individuals define a gender in their mind-- clothing. Much of these gender fluidity issues is focused on fashion and clothing because our culture puts so much emphasis on the differences between women and men's clothing. Much so,

that even down to the little details, there is a difference: men's oxford shirts button on the right, while women's button on the left. Referred to in fashion as androgyny, gender-bending has been a trend for some years with women. Labels such as Rick Owens or fashion icons such as Tilda Swinton show the androgynous look. By dressing women in masculine silhouettes and colors, designers play up their sexuality in a different way on the gender spectrum. However because

this style for women has been around for some time, it is far less taboo to see a woman in a masculine cut suit than say, Marc Jacobs wearing a skirt. This slant towards womenswear androgyny is thought of as normal. We've all heard of the term "tomboy." However, this leaves men with a lot of conservative prejudices in our culture, keeping them from experimenting with feminine cuts and shades.

It may be the up and coming popularity of the gender identity spectrum, but now it's finally the boy's turn.

Styles such as Anti-Fit/Over-sized wear has reached popularity by hip-hop culture icons such as Kanye West and A\$AP Rocky. Tap onto Instagram and you'll see a slew of accounts like, @jacobjkeller, surrounding this men's fashion trend with a large following.

This trend encompasses oversized, longline separates in neutral hues. You'll see the guys getting creative with exaggerated layering, paired with a slim fit pant and an understated sneaker or boot. And yes, kilts have been seen too.

Now you may think these long-line styles resemble dresses or skirts sported by the ladies, which is where praise and criticism come in. Rocky and West took heat a few years back after wearing the style on televised events. Hate it or love it, this unconventional menswear trend is breaking down the gender barriers in fashion. Because why should the girls have all the fun?

Another trend seen popular in pop-music culture is a western androgynous look. One Direction member, Harry Styles, has been seen sporting tight fitting pants, wide brimmed hats, and pointed boots. This look is easily transferred to womenswear seen on Cara Delevigne. The basic principles of the outfit are unisex, which is what makes it so flexible for both genders and the trend takes less heat for being too "girly" for guys.

These styles are popular, but don't expect to see your man out in drag. These trends are about streamlining fashion for XX and XY. Meaning you could see a woman wearing the trend one day and a man rocking it the next-- regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identification.

Designers are picking up on this gender fluidity cue and bringing the style to the public. As we've seen with Instagram royalty, street style trends are moving forward with this unisex look and it is being spotted daily. Unisex fashion and style is directly projecting the ideals of the gender spectrum, now the rest of the world has to catch up.





In my closet

KIERA BROWN AND ERIC NINH
PHOTOS BY JOSH MACLIN

KIERA BROWN

- INK Explain the accessories' or articles of clothing that mean a lot to you. Why are they important? What's the history?
- KB My Doc Martens are pretty important to me. I remember when my older sister introduced them to me and I wore them to school the first day. I got made fun of because they weren't "in style", no one even knew what they were. However, I continued to wear them and years later everyone had them. At that time, they made me pay less attention of what's trendy and reinforced me dressing for myself and allowed me to use clothes as an expression.
- INK What would you call your style?
- KB I wouldn't necessarily put a title to my style. I believe I experiment with different articles of clothing and different known styles. I like to keep what I wear diverse.
- INK What inspires you to create your personal style?
- KB I enjoy the ability to create different perceptions of yourself to others. People will always judge you on your appearance, it's fun to see people's different reactions, how they approach you, or their perceived perception of who you are based on what you wear.

INK What do people say to you about your style?

KB Some people like it, others don't. Most people say I dress weird but I honestly don't see how haha. I just wear what I like.

INK What would you say to a student or anyone that wants to dress uniquely like yourself but that is afraid too?

KB Time flies when you're young. Wear what you want, do what you want. Live for yourself and let that determine how you move through the world. Don't hold back for the convenience and fear of others.

INK Which celebrity style do you like the most?

KB I honestly don't intensely look at celebrities styles. I like looking at fashion bloggers, designers, etc. They're the ones who seem to be the early adopters of all things new.

ERIC NINH

INK Explain the accessories' or articles of clothing that mean a lot to you. Why are they important? What's the history?

EN Freedminds Secret Society Heather Grey Crewneck Sweatshirt: I began to develop my style and the way I dress when I began to listen to rap and hip-hop music more. Towards the end of high school I started listening to a lot of Mac Miller and Odd Future when they were on their respective

come-ups. Following them on social media, I could find the brands they wore. I remember seeing this sweater on Hodgy Beats on Tumblr and I immediately fell in love with it. I don't really listen to Mac Miller or Odd Future anymore but I definitely wouldn't dress the way I do without them. Anglican Cross Necklace: I got this at Westminster Abbey in London. Accessories can really take your style game to the next level. This necklace reminds me of my grandmother on my father's side. I was never really religious and my parents never



forced religion on me, but my father's side is Catholic. My grandmother was the only person to ever encourage or even remotely talk about religion to me when I was a young boy. This is one of the few pieces of clothing that actually has sentimental value to me.

INK What would you call your style?

EN I would say my style is more urban. Over the past year or two, I've been trying to keep my style more minimalist and focus on staple pieces, which makes it a lot easier to mix and match what I have and put things together. I tend to be very brand-oriented because with certain brands, I always know what I'm getting and I can rely on the quality. I take a lot of direction from GQ and sort of pick and choose the things that I like. Those things could be concepts, rules, articles of clothing, ideas, and sometimes even entire outfits.

INK What inspires you to create your personal style?

EN I believe appearances mean a lot in life. As an adult, appearing well and put together can do a lot for your image and the impressions you make. Even when I'm dressing casually or wearing comfortable clothes, I can't walk out my front door if I feel like I'm not adequately put together. I think that being able to appear well in any situation shows that you care about yourself and that you're at least responsible enough to take care of yourself.

INK What would you say to a student or anyone that wants to dress uniquely like yourself but that is afraid too?

EN The best place to start is with buying clothes that fit. The second thing would be attention to detail. For example, wearing dress socks or no show socks with dress shoes as opposed to athletic socks is the difference between appearing like an aspiring professional rather than a kid at a middle school dance. I would also recommend starting with simple staple pieces because they will be the basis of one's style. Making progress with your personal style should be steady and consistent. Not being too trendy is a central aspect of being trendy. Like most things in life, you can't just dress yourself and put on clothes willy nilly, just because you think it looks cool. I'm not saying you should meticulously plan each outfit, but there has to be a certain level of structure, consideration, and direction in the process.

INK Which celebrity style do you like the most?

EN My favorites are probably Kanye West and A\$AP Rocky. They appear in GQ all the time. To me, they are trendsetters and icons for both streetwear and formal wear. I have replicated and adopted (more or less) entire outfits from these two individuals. I don't have remotely as much jewelry or designer clothes as a rapper but there are definitely affordable ways to dress like them and be trendy.



**Perfect,
paralyzing,
and perverse:
Get Punk.**

Punk[tuated]

Model **Allison M.** Of Next Models NYC
Photography **Aaron Ni'Jai**
Stylist **P. Franco**
Makeup **K. Wil**
Hair **Joshua Eugene**
Creative Direction **Cierra Artis**
Assistant **Allison O.**

Top Gap
Skirt + Shoes Zara



Jacket *Zara*
Top + Bottoms *Charlotte Russe*
Shoes *Stuart Weitzman*



Dress *Forever 21*
Shoes *Forever 21*
Fur *H&M*
Socks *Target*



Top *sheinside.com*
Bottoms *Charlotte Russe*
Shoes *Alexander Wang*

Shorts *Zara*
Vest *Zara*
Coat *Zara*



Jacket *Zara*
Shoes *Mango*
Skirt *Charlotte Russe*





Coat *Zara*
Knit *Love Culture*
Pants *White House Black Market*
Shoes *Zara*



Coat *HRH Collection*
Jumpsuit *Charlotte Russe*
Shoes *Schutz*



Body Suit *Charlotte Russe*
Pants *H&M*

Growth of Broad St.

BY JESSICA MORGAN
PHOTOS BY PORCELYN HEADEN

When you think of Richmond what do you think of? Most people think of its role in historical wars, the high crime rate it used to have before VCU took over the downtown area or simply this city being the capitol of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Though Richmond has many aspects it's known for, one I'm sure nobody noted was Richmond's fashion industry. However, with the help of growing boutiques, up and coming apparel shops and amazingly high quality vintage shops, that could be changed.

When entering here my freshman year, I remember all the rage was about the one place students had to shop at. It was within walking distance of campus, it was affordable and it was ran by VCU alumni, I'm sure you know what it is but if you don't I'm speaking of Rumors Boutique. Known mostly for its thrifty/ vintage vibe, Rumors is where students and Richmonders flocked to for cool

t-shirts, great shoes and the best vintage jeans. Rumors is still a huge part of Richmond's fashion scene but with the influx of students and the money we're willing to spend to look good, other businesses have taken notice of the opportunity and planted their own seed here in Richmond and more specifically on Broad Street.

Now as a senior at VCU walking down Broad Street for the first Friday of the year I was in shock with all the new life Richmond is seeing in retail. Soul.eil a women's boutique with a soulful edge, Rosewood a vintage contemporary women's retailer, and designer boutique Verdalina are providing women in the heart of Richmond with more options than ever. We know malls in America are dying and as consumers we miss the intimacy of a good brick and mortar and not to mention the convenience, finally these owners are giving us just what we need.

Other booming companies like skate shop, Utmost Co., and upscale second hand shop, Round Two are catering mainly to the men, but we all know there is no gender in fashion. Utmost Co. made their way to Richmond to represent the skate subculture and provide more than clothes but also a lifestyle. Round Two has seen much success selling previously owned fashionable street wear clothing as well as a ridiculous collection of sneakers. And speaking of sneakers, sneaker boutique, Monument is providing students

and Richmonders with only the most desirable and on trend sneakers with an aesthetic of a high end New York sneaker store.

Finally, Richmond is getting options at accessible locations. No longer do we have to be confined to a car ride or bus ride to Carytown and Short Pump but we can walk right around where we live and see what new things Broad St. has to offer. Richmond's fashion scene is beginning to develop it's own flavor and style, and I think I can speak for all of us when I say we are loving it!



Monument



Verdalina



The Gallery by Round Two

Rene Velasquez

BY MADDY MURROW
PHOTOS BY VIRGINIA STROH

VCUarts graduate Rene Velasquez shows that with the right attitude, anyone can conquer the fashion industry. From the domestic to the international stage, he has experienced it all. Taking into consideration the needs of his customer, Velasquez adds thoughtful details to his designs that go beyond aesthetics and become a useful part of the garment. This collection displays Velasquez's minimalistic designs combined with architectural lines. His inspiration comes from his numerous travels worldwide. From the graphic style of the buildings he saw in Amsterdam, to keeping with his heritage and the artisanal work from his country of El Salvador—Velasquez puts his heart and soul into each piece. For instance, Velasquez used inspiration from his home country to develop a conceptual form of a flower to

embroider and embellish some of his garments. With the drive of a mad scientist Velasquez has achieved a great deal in his time at VCU. He was awarded a 2nd Place Cotton Inc. Scholarship for his men's wear design, interned for Bespoke Apparel NYC in New York, participated in the Florence study abroad program and attended the Pitti Uomo and Pitti Filati trade shows. He was also chosen out of a pool of students to showcase his senior collection at the VCUQ Fashion Show in Doha, Qatar. Currently he is working in New York for private licensing company, Bespoke NY Inc. Velasquez is also the senior designer and production assistant for the Andrew Yu brand, which sells on the QVC UK network. All of the pieces used in this feature are from the personal collection of his former professor, Kimberly Guthrie.



INK Is there an essential part of your design process?

RV An essential part of my design in thinking about my customer. Thinking about my customer is just as important as choosing the proper fabrics. I develop my collection and design details thinking about how effective or how useful it will be to my customer. I laughed when my professor, Kimberly Guthrie, called me a mad scientist, when I was trying to execute a double coin pocket on a silk wool pant. It's details like that, that I feel my customer would appreciate because it was a very thoughtful detail.

INK Who is your ideal muse and what type of woman do you see wearing your clothes?

RV I don't really per say have a physical muse. I can name a model or an actress, but my muse goes beyond just the physical esthetic. If I were to describe my model she would be tall, fair skinned with long brown/black hair. She has a very delicate look in regards to her face and has really thick and dark eyebrows. She has a very boyish look to her face with very sharp cheekbones and jaw structure. My muse is a combination of features that I feel are appealing to my design. She is a woman who is career driven, enjoys traveling and although she may live in a cosmopolitan environment she cherishes simplicity and effortless elegance. She is a amalgam citizen of the world who strives to balance minimalist style with her complex persona.

INK Have you ever considered branching out into other areas of fashion design, like menswear or accessories?

RV I have considered branching out into other designs. During my junior year at VCU I was awarded second place for the construction of a menswear jacket. During my senior year as part of an assignment for my portfolio class I decided to work on developing a men's wear collection. I connect the idea of "Normcore" with a fusion of Northern European Street Fashion. During the summer of my junior year I was able to travel to Amsterdam and Antwerp and became really inspired by this idea of "Normcore," which is designing average looking clothes. I was inspired by the simplicity and silent elegance of these designs that I decided to use it as part of my idea to develop a men's wear collection. I hope that in the future I will be able to design a small capsule collection, but for right now I am focused on developing my women's wear brand.





INK What inspired you to become a designer?

RV I don't have the cliché story of making dresses for my dolls or sewing at a very young age. I didn't realize until middle school that it was something that I wanted to do. I would catch myself drawing clothes and trying to make them different. I would catch myself at moments criticizing things that people would wear. I wanted to understand how clothes were made. It was not until high school that I started to fully immerse myself in trying to pursue fashion as a career.



INK What's your earliest memory with fashion?

RV My earliest memory of fashion is from when I used to still live in El Salvador. I remember my grandmother sewing clothes and hemming pants for my aunts and uncles. Most women in El Salvador learned to make their own clothes because poverty was so high. I remember the stories my mom would tell me from when she was a child and how she could recall her mother making her a dress.

INK Have you ever doubted pursuing a career in this industry?

RV There have been plenty of times that I doubted pursuing a career in the fashion industry. There were days when I wanted to just throw in the towel and give up. I think what scared me the most about pursuing this career was whether I could find a job and be able to sustain myself when I got out of college. I knew that I was talented and that I could do anything that I set out to do, but was I going to be good enough to compete with students from Parson's or FIT? Today, I don't doubt that I chose well. I am happy with my senior position at a private design licensing company and it feels great to be a Semi-Finalist for the CFDA+ Award.

INK In terms of design, who would you hope to be compared to?

RV Hmm... this is a hard question because I would be honored to be compared to some of the most successful designers out there right now, but I want to stand out on my own. I want my inspiration, design and execution to be completely different from everyone else. I will say that I want to develop a brand that contributes to minimalist designs that if I were to be compared to someone that it be Jil Sander, Stella McCartney, or new comers like Altuzarra or Victoria Beckham.



INK How difficult was it to execute your ideas into tangible garments and did you have to adapt any once you started making them?

RV It was not hard for me to execute my ideas into tangible garments. I think the hardest part of developing a collection is perfecting the fit and style that you want. Technically, I knew how to develop my patterns and construct my garments. The hardest part about developing was also developing my embellishment. It took me about a month to embellish the front of one jacket. I didn't really have to adapt any styles. It was more about developing a few more styles that would assist as layering pieces. I remember having to make a basic top as an under piece for my jacket because it would be to revealing to show at the fashion show in Doha, Qatar. I had to make sure that although it was going to be a simple piece that it would work with my collection.

INK What helped you grow as an artist?

RV I think what helped grow me as an artist was traveling. I traveled to El Salvador a few times when I was young and each time I got to see a different part of my heritage. I felt that I grew the most when I got to travel in Europe and go to Amsterdam, Antwerp and travel around Italy. It opened my eyes and gave me a new perspective of how people dress and appreciate art.

INK What type of impact has being a fashion design student at VCU had on your career?

RV The most impact VCU has had on my career is being able to send me to Doha, Qatar to debut my senior collection. It was one of best experiences, especially having Stefan Rolland say to Diedra Arrington that the Richmond Collections were very modern and contemporary. I think what also validated me as a fashion student is the connection that one of our professors had with the owner from Baggio's Consignment. They were able to organize a trunk show in order to sell the VCU Senior Collection's. I was glad to be selected to sell some of my garments at Baggio.

INK Where do you see your design aesthetic in the future?

RV I have taken a great interest in developing a sustainable luxury brand. I have been volunteering some of my free time to help sustainable designer, Tara St. James and the luxury brand Kaufman-franco. I want to be able to develop an understanding about both markets so that by the time I decide to launch my brand that I am able to be successful.

INK For this collection, what was your inspiration and do you have a favorite piece?

RV My inspiration was connecting minimalist fashion with architectural lines. I was very drawn by how graphic some of the buildings in Amsterdam were. I also wanted to connect a bit of my heritage and the artisanal work that exist in my country. Therefore I developed a conceptual form of a flower with embroidery and embellishments. I don't per say have a favorite piece. They are all my favorite pieces. I put my heart into every single one of the pieces that I developed. At the end I knew that I put my all into every single piece.

Additional work by Rene Velasquez and contact information can be viewed at renevelasquez.virb.com.



Get This Look!

BY GIOVANNI V, EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Kate Bosworth and Alison Brie are each sporting one of this fall's fashion trends. Kate Bosworth is wearing a jean dress over a plaid turtleneck paired with tote bag and patterned shoes. Her look is simple and clean allowing you to mix it up to make it your own. To get the look layers are key and base colors such as white and black are

alternatives. Alison Brie's ensemble is a sleeveless dark floral print dress with bright red suede heels, timeless and effortless. To achieve this look go with suede, wool, and leather. Also keep away from pastel florals and only wear dark prints and tones; this will keep the florals from looking too spring-y.



Pink Penguin Boutique, New York City
Navy floral romper
\$54.99



French Connection
Lunar rose wool coat
\$298.00



Capulet boutique, San Francisco
Carved heel ankle boot
\$120



French Connection
Botanical tropical trip maxi dress
\$328.00



Urban Outfitters
Kimchi Blue
Denim Midi Dress
\$79



Zara
Flat leather ankle boots
with metal plaque
\$69.99



Dor l'dor boutique, New York City
Reversible tote
\$36.99

White House Black Market
Long sleeve turtleneck
\$78



ink *fashion*

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