

A woman with short, vibrant red hair and teal-colored eye makeup is the central figure. She is wearing a highly reflective, metallic silver jacket with a high collar and visible buttons. Her expression is serious as she looks slightly off-camera. The background is dark and out of focus, with some teal light reflecting off surfaces.

# ink

VOLUME 11

*Jennifer Vanilla*

# THE CAMP ISSUE







**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Kristina Dickey

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Grace Hoffman

**ART DIRECTOR**

Hannah Van Buskirk

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Franny DeAtley

**CONTENT DIRECTOR**

Katherine Manson

**OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

Kylie Newcomb

**SENIOR FASHION EDITOR**

Lordina Nyarko

**JUNIOR FASHION EDITOR**

Nico Gavino

**MULTIMEDIA EDITOR**

Fiona Penn

**MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Sam Mullany

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Amber Carpenter

Monica Escamilla

Raelyn Fines

Darby Lindsay

Mary Macleod

Rebecca Renton

Brenda Santillan

Tyler Shebelski

Katie Williams

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Grace Hoffman

Jeffrey Pohanka

**COVER**

Tyler Shebelski

**BACK COVER**

Raelyn Fines

**INSIDE COVER**

(Front) Raelyn Fines

(Back) Amber Carpenter

**STUDENT MEDIA DIRECTOR**

Allison Bennett Dyche

**CREATIVE MEDIA MANAGER**

Mark Jeffries

**BUSINESS MANAGER**

Jacob McFaden

INK magazine is produced at the  
VCU Student Media Center.

817 W. Broad St.  
P.O. Box 842010  
Richmond, VA, 23284  
Phone: (804) 828-1058

INK magazine is a student publication, published  
annually with the support of the Student Media  
Center.

To advertise with INK, please contact our Advertising  
representatives at [advertising@vcustudentmedia.com](mailto:advertising@vcustudentmedia.com)

Material in this publication may not be reproduced in  
any form without written permission from the VCU  
Student Media Center.

All content copyright © 2018 by VCU Student  
Media Center, All rights reserved.

Printed Locally

**Website:**  
[www.inkmagazinevcu.com](http://www.inkmagazinevcu.com)

**Email:**  
[inkmagazine.vcu@gmail.com](mailto:inkmagazine.vcu@gmail.com)

**Instagram:**  
[@ink\\_magazine](https://www.instagram.com/ink_magazine)

**Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/vcu.ink](https://www.facebook.com/vcu.ink)

**Youtube:**  
INK Magazine VCU

**Twitter:**  
[@inkmagazine](https://twitter.com/inkmagazine)



# Contents:

## SENIOR STAFF *page 01*

---



*page 05*

## HYPER-FANTASY: AN INTERVIEW WITH SWAN MEAT

---

## KITSCH STITCH



*page 11*

---



## ARTIST FEATURE: *page 21* BRAXTON CONGROVE

---



## HOT TAKE *page 27*

---



# NOTES ON “NOTES ON ‘CAMP’”

---

*page 43*



## INFINITE JEST

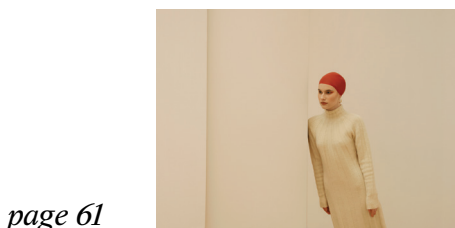
---

*page 49*

## IN MY CLOSET: HARPER LEE DOBEY

---

*page 57*



*page 61*

## LUCKY STRIKE

---

## TOUCHING DOWN ON PLANET JENNIFER

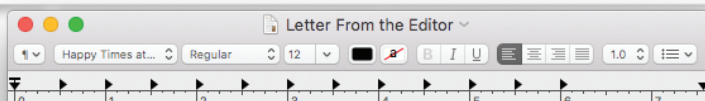
---

*page 71*





# SENIOR STAFF!!



"It's good because it's awful," wrote Susan Sontag in her 1964 essay, "Notes on 'Camp.'" With this treatise, Sontag defined a sensibility that before had only been stirring in the undercurrents of pop culture.

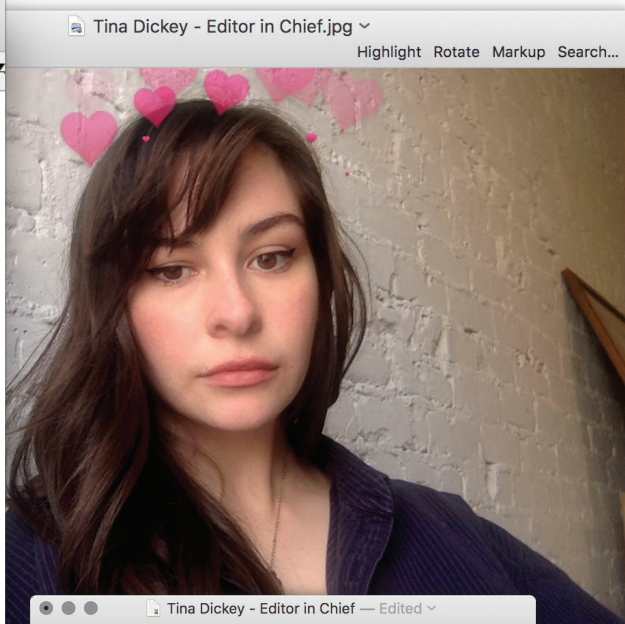
While the term is difficult to define, a "camp" object must be excessively soaked in bad taste and irony. There has always been and will always be an audience for camp, but certain eras saw surges of the aesthetic-- from the art nouveau Paris Metro entrances that imitate orchid stalks to 70's b-movies like John Waters' *Pink Flamingos*.

A love of camp is a love of the unnatural, of artifice and exaggeration, Sontag explains. This love is manifested today in the fashion collections of Moschino and Comme des Garçons, the popularization of drag in mainstream culture, and surreal comedies like *Tim and Eric Awesome Show, Great Job!*

Because of its relevance to the current cultural conversation, the INK staff thought it a compelling challenge for print. In this issue you will find interviews with dynamic artists like Braxton Congrove, Swan Meat, and our cover star Becca Kauffman (aka Jennifer Vanilla). Contributing writer Mary Macleod explores Sontag's seminal work and camp's origins within the LGBTQIA+ community. For "In My Closet," Harper Dobey peruses her wardrobe and discusses her personal style with INK managing editor, Franny DeAtley.

Also contained within these pages is a diverse selection of fashion editorials in which themes of kitsch, imitation, and nostalgia are explored.

After four years at INK, this is my second and final publication as editor-in-chief. I am so grateful to our staff for their enthusiasm and creativity this year, and their hard work should not be glossed over. I cannot wait for you, our readers, to explore the result.



Name: Kristina Dickey

Instagram: @tinafishes

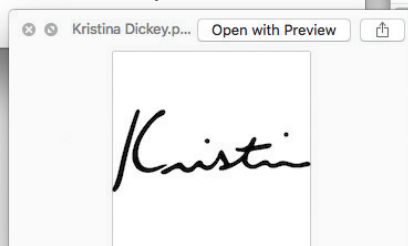
Sun sign: aries

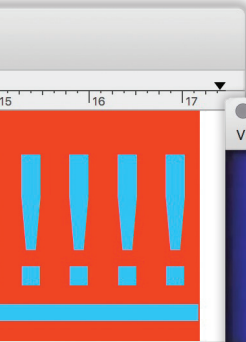
Favorite color combo: green and lilac

Favorite breakfast food: poppy seed bagel and lox

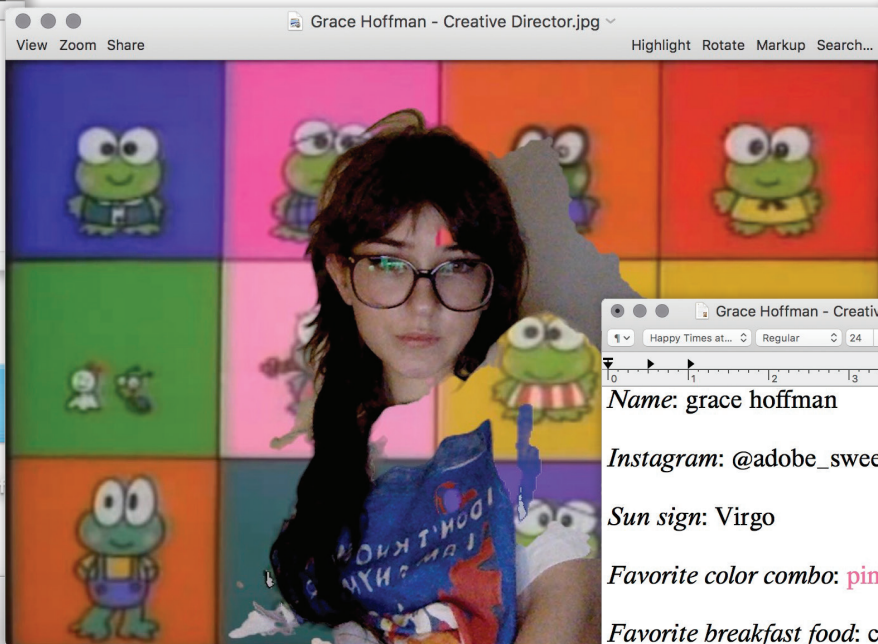
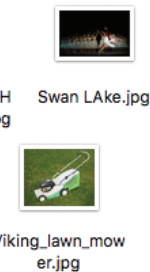
Favorite emojis: 🍷 🌤️ 🍷 🍷

First celebrity crush: Steve from Blue's Clues





otes on Camp



Grace Hoffman - Creative Director — Edited

Name: grace hoffman

Instagram: @adobe\_sweet

Sun sign: Virgo

Favorite color combo: pink and green

Favorite breakfast food: cinnamon raisin toast w/ cream cheese

Favorite emojis: 🦋🐞🐼🐼🐼🐼

First celebrity crush: lily's brother in | princess diaries

Lordina Nyarko - Senior Fashion Editor

Name: Lordina Nyarko

Instagram: @iamlordina

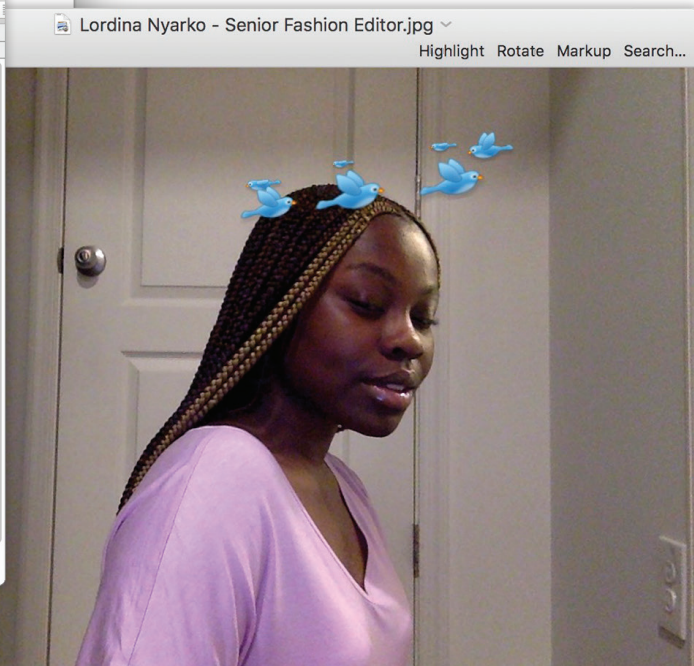
Sun sign: Aries

Favorite color combo: Black, White, and green

Favorite breakfast food: Special K protein cereal (Original Multi-grain with a touch of cinnamon)

Favorite emojis: 🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰

First celebrity crush: Jesse McCartney





Fiona Penn - Multimedia Editor — Edited

Happy Times at... Regular 24

Name: Fiona Penn

Instagram: @fi\_pen\_cil

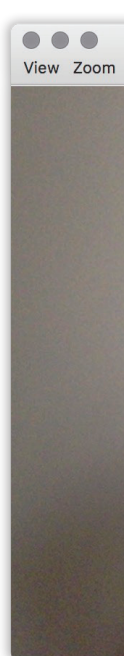
Sun sign: virgo

Favorite color combo: chili red, navy, and mint

Favorite breakfast food: belgian waffles with sugar and fruit

Favorite emojis: 🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌

First celebrity crush: liv tyler as arwen in lord of the rings



Franny DeAtley - Managing Editor

Happy Times at... Regular 24

Name: franny deatley

Instagram: @sidechick4g

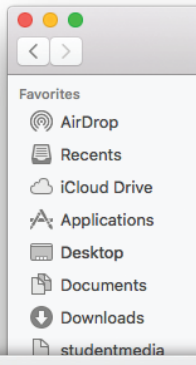
Sun sign: sagittarius

Favorite color combo: red and black

Favorite breakfast food: rice krispies and almond milk

Favorite emojis: 🍷💖🍷🍷🍷

First celebrity crush: danny phantom



Sam Mullany - Senior Music Editor — Edited

Happy Times at... Regular 24

Name: Sam Mullany

Instagram: @sammullany

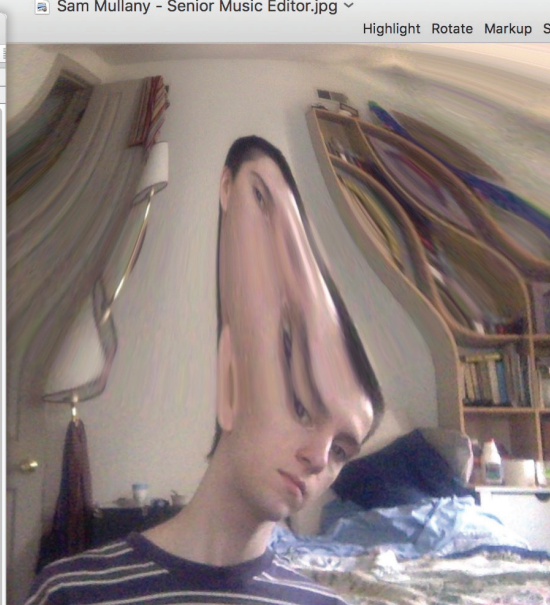
Sun sign: Aries

Favorite color combo: warm grey and cool grey

Favorite breakfast food: oatmeal with whisked-in egg, cinnamon and honey

Favorite emojis: 🙄🐼🐼🐼🐼🐼🐼🐼🐼🐼

First celebrity crush: Solange







**Name:** Kylie Newcomb

**Instagram:** @kyliehoneycomb

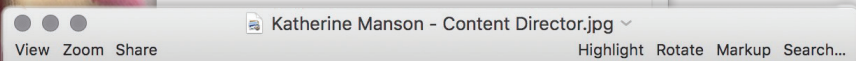
**Sun sign:** Sagittarius

**Favorite color combo:** lavender and sage

**Favorite breakfast food:** oatmeal with blueberries and brown sugar or egg over easy on toast

**Favorite emojis:** 🍎 ✨ 🌻 😊 🐛 🌿 🍀

**First celebrity crush:** Lance from \*NSYNC



**Name:** Katherine Manson

**Instagram:** @katherinemanson |

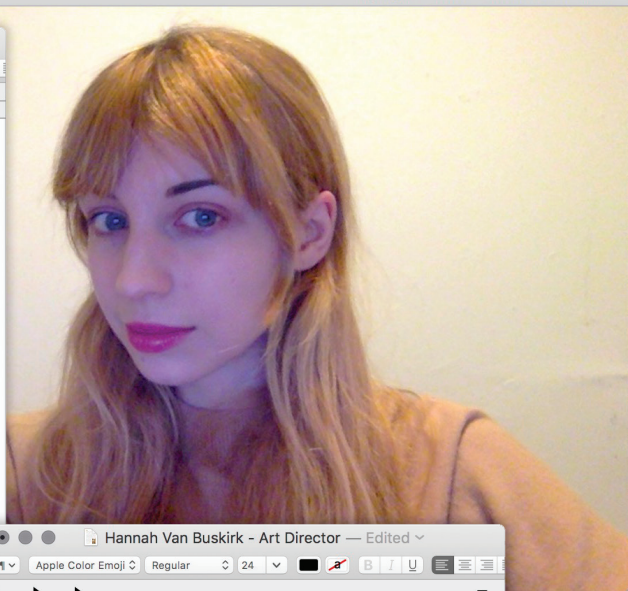
**Sun sign:** libra

**Favorite color combo:** chartreuse and mint

**Favorite breakfast food:** peach crêpes

**Favorite emojis:** 🌻 🦋 ✨ 🍓 🕸 🍇 🍷 🥰

**First celebrity crush:** kim possible



**Name:** Hannah Van Buskirk

**Instagram:** @\_cilantrhoe\_

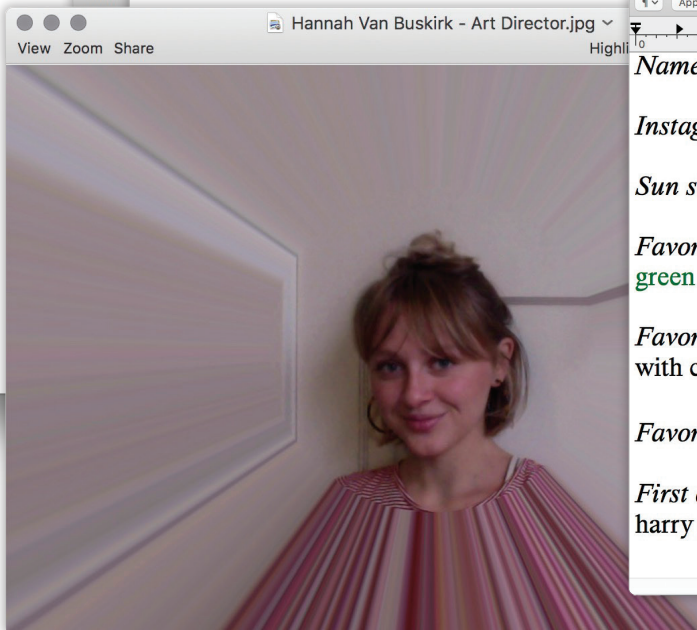
**Sun sign:** aries

**Favorite color combo:** orange and hunter green

**Favorite breakfast food:** everything bagel with cream cheese, lox, and capers

**Favorite emojis:** 😎 🤖 🍷 🍷 💜 💕 😊

**First celebrity crush:** daniel radcliffe in harry potter





# HYPER- FANTASY



AN INTERVIEW WITH  
SWAN MEAT



**SWAN MEAT** IS THE ALIAS OF THE VIRGINIA-BORN, NOW GERMANY-BASED PRODUCER REBA FAY. SINCE HER ACCLAIMED BREAK-OUT EP, *BOUNTY*, SHE'S PRODUCED A LARGE MUSICAL OEUVRE CONSISTING OF SINGLES, MIXES, REMIXES, AND COLLABORATIVE EPS FOR A NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS AND MUSIC LABELS.

*written by Sam Mullany  
images © Phillip Muller &  
Frederike Wetzel*

The unique visual language that surrounds her music is an amalgamation of fantasy, dystopian sci-fi, hyper-real 3D rendering, and tongue-in-cheek references to goth and Deviantart aesthetics. Her latest EP, *TAME*, came out last November on Bala Club, and shows a slight departure from the noise-laden sonic collage and discordant anti-melodies that are characteristic of her previous work. Though the sense of surprise, disruption and catharsis is still present on *TAME*, the EP is also lush with evolving orchestral melodies and calculated moments of rhythmic impact. It feels as much like a crowning artistic summation of stylistic explorations years in the making as it does a fresh start for Swan Meat.

*INK: Where are you right now?*

SM: I am currently in my apartment in Cologne, Germany, where I've lived since October. It's freezing outside but it also gets incredibly dusty in my room, so I have my windows open, and someone outside is honking their car horn incessantly.

*INK: Where are your musical roots?*

SM: My musical roots are so "everywhere" that I feel as though they're nowhere, or have always been there. Becoming aware of them, of my having learned music, is strange, hyper-personal. I would say those roots converge at a weird nexus where musical theater preening and D.C. punk meet and shake hands, albeit hesitantly. When I was a kid my mom and I would bond by acting (and of course singing, playing music, etc) in these nowheresville community theater productions. From there on out I was always in music lessons, always somewhere somehow playing music - but it wasn't until I found myself enmeshed in the sort of 'DIY punk' scene surrounding D.C. that I began to explore the roots of guitar music, then instrumental music, then sort of stumbled into electronic music. For the most part Ableton is my sole medium now.

*INK: Performance and visual language seem to have been an integral part of your output from the beginning. What role do visual aesthetics play in your practice now, and where did you begin to form the sensibilities you have today?*

SM: I always have a visual in mind when I produce—or at least everything comes from a visual place or perspective. Much of this, I think, has to do with so many visual "universes" have served as touchstones in my becoming human, really. I grew up writing *Legend of Zelda* fan-fiction and obsessively browsing these fan-art communities on Deviantart—directly inserting myself into these hyper-colorful fantasy worlds. Now, I keep finding myself recalling old SNES games and their soundtracks; it's magical how these first VGM composers were able to make



these digital images real & evoke so much on a 16 bit DSP. I'd never claim to be even tangential to their league, and I understand that the software I work with, Ableton, has massive computing capabilities, but even so the tools at my disposal remain limited. Having a visual in mind—a game world, a narrative—helps

music has definitely changed accordingly; I don't want to make this aggressive noise-drenched music anymore. Lately I've focused on writing melodies, experimenting with different time signatures and arrangements, having fun. Never before have I been able to pin down a workflow like this. Though it must be

working is dedicated to learning German. One of the ways I've been learning is through reading manga in German translation, specifically Tokyo Ghoul and the Battle Royale series, which is incredibly fun. I still write—when I find it impossible to work on music I try to write poetry to purge word salads that

**“HAVING A VISUAL IN MIND—A GAME WORLD, A NARRATIVE—HELPS ME IMAGINE MY MUSIC EXISTING OUTSIDE OF ABLETON (IT'S SO EASY FOR THE TRACK TO LITERALLY BECOME THE PROJECT FILE), WHICH ALWAYS MAKES COMPOSING FEEL MORE—I DON'T KNOW, PURPOSEFUL, MEANINGFUL.”**

me imagine my music existing outside of Ableton (it's so easy for the track to literally become the project file), which always makes composing feel more—I don't know, purposeful, meaningful. Not that it wouldn't be on its own.

*INK: So you grew up in DC, and lived in Virginia for some time. What brought you to Cologne, Germany? And what effect did that change of environment have on your practice?*

SM: Yeah, I grew up kind of everywhere but mostly around D.C. in Virginia and Maryland. To be honest I didn't move abroad to pursue music, though having been able to exist as a musician here has been a nice side effect of this transition. I actually came to Cologne to be with my boyfriend and though I miss home a lot I am so, so glad I did. I think the biggest “change” has come from being able to live affordably, which means I can give music the time it deserves. Also, I'm just happier than I've ever been—at least I think I am? And my

said that ever since I released my last EP, finishing tracks has been hard af.

*INK: Actually one of my questions was about creative block—if you have any go-to tricks for getting over it. But maybe a better question would be: What do you do in your free time other than music? Where do you draw inspiration from these days?*

SM: Yeah, the latter question is much better, because the only way to push through a creative block is to just sit down and work, period. Make weird effects racks, randomize them, re-sample some sort of weird sound ad-infinitum until you have a noise sausage on your hands—chop that into drums, keep going. Even if it sounds like crap you've at least done something. Which is better than sitting around and playing, like, Hearthstone, which is what I do when I'm feeling braindead (I've sampled this game's sfx many a time). Since I live in Cologne, the majority of my time not spent

might serve as future guideposts for producing a track, i.e. I want to make percussion that sounds like ‘this word’, etc. I read a lot of speculative sci-fi. I'm getting into Alastair Reynolds right now and naturally, imagining music that might exist or be heard in these alternate universes is an inspiration wellspring.

Ultimately it's hard to articulate where inspiration comes from. I know the books and music I continually revisit, even this language learning process, are feeding into the music I make. But this happens imperceptibly, fluidly, organically. I have noticed that when I'm not setting aside time to write I find it harder to produce, even if that writing isn't explicitly in tandem with the music I'm working on. I've often discussed how I tend to draw inspiration first and foremost from game OSTs. And this is very true, but my worst creative blocks always seem to emerge when I've immersed myself in some new game. Whoops.







*INK: You've incorporated poetry and spoken word into a lot of your work, from DJ mixes to your EPs. It is often warped and woven into the songs so much that your poetry starts to behave in tandem with other samples and instruments. How does writing fit into your process? Who/what are your influences there?*

SM: To build on what I mentioned previously, poetry has frequently served as the “backbone” of my tracks. When I first started out producing I would straight up bring a dry recording of a poem into Ableton and build audio around it. The germ, the nucleus of every track was a poem. This is why so much on my first EP seemed to intentionally shirk conventional rhythm and meter. The poem itself was the time signature. But this happened because I was still, admittedly, very much in the learning process and needed those spoken word recordings at the heart of everything. They were crutches. I don't incorporate poetry into the tracks I write now, mostly because I find it—I don't know—too easy? I don't want my voice to be a distraction from (in my opinion) the more important aspects of my work: the things I'm doing now with drum arrangement, with melody, with modulation and alternate time signatures. For example, I wrote a waltz for my EP TAME. I haven't read a proper book of poetry in months, which is painful to admit. The name ‘Swan Meat’ comes from the hyper-gory, hyper-visceral work of the poet Natalie Eilbert.

*INK: Between past releases and your new EP, TAME, one can definitely hear that shift toward a more traditional (if you can call it that) style of songwriting. There seems to even be some clas-*

*sical influence. The closing track “Puppy Breath” may be the most gentle (tame?) Swan Meat song I've heard. Is this at all indicative of the direction you might be headed in the future?*

SM: I'd say so. Then again this change of direction didn't really start with TAME, which I think brings it to its logical conclusion more than anything. Last March I released a mini-EP called Lathe of Heaven, for which I wrote this track called “The Crucible” after listening to a lot of Jeremy Soule (hello Skyrim OST). I remember thinking Ok, I want to play on these so-called cinematic, D-minor bombastic niceties. I want this emotional weight & bravado, but don't want it to be corny, don't want to write blockbuster trailer music. I was interested in turning these tropes on their heads. After working on

this release I just kept going and TAME was the brainchild of all that. Though, when it comes to TAME, I wanted to score a hypothetical great escape from a haunted out-of-time joint arcade. On a more technical level, this “more traditional” approach to composing came about simply because I was no longer using poetry as a centerpiece in the tracks. I hadn't been for a while, and that was never totally my *modus operandi*, anyway. But I was quite frankly sick of hearing my voice. Hence the vocaloid on tracks like “Lullabye” or “Lisp.”

*INK: What's a song that everyone should listen to right now?*

SM: “Underground Sewer” from Chrono Trigger. And “Gotham Lullaby” by Meredith Monk for incredible piano and vocal work. ●







# KITSCH STITCH



CREATIVE DIRECTORS — KATHERINE MANSON & HANNAH VAN BUSKIRK PHOTOGRAPHER —  
MONICA ESCAMILLA STYLISTS — KATHERINE MANSON & HANNAH VAN BUSKIRK MAKEUP  
ARTIST — CLAUDIA VINCENT MODELS — JESSLYN MCCARTNEY, ASHLEY YALAJU, ELLIE  
THORNTON PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS — CALI CARTER & PIPER LYNCH



*Vintage Prairie Dress (Stylist's Own)*



*Vintage Dress (Stylist's Own), Sarah  
Hudson Handmade Coat & Jumpsuit,  
Farrow Sheer Top C/O Need Supply*





*White Vintage Handmade Dress, Pink  
Candi Jones Dress (Stylist's Own)*











*Baisheva Blouse, Vintage Earrings  
C/O Blue Bones Vintage*



*Vintage Dress & Slip (Stylist's Own), Vintage  
Earrings C/O Blue Bones Vintage*











*Farrow Dress C/O Need Supply, Vintage  
Angora Sweater (Stylist's Own)*



*Vintage Floral Dress C/O Blue Bones Vintage.*  
*White Evening Gloves C/O Halcyon Vintage.*









# ARTIST INTERVIEW: BRAXTON CONGROVE





Braxton Congrove is a Richmond-based artist whose work centers around sculpture, installation, and craft. A 2015 James Madison University Studio Art graduate, Braxton has showed her work at VALET, Syracuse University, and the Richmond International Airport. The two-time VMFA fellowship recipient invited Ink to her studio and talked with us about her materials, inspiration, and process.

*written by Katherine Manson  
photography by Kylie Newcomb*

**INK:** When did you first know you wanted to be an artist?

**BC:** I don't think there was ever a defining moment, but even as a kid I was always making things. I spent a lot of time with my grandmother who is a painter. She likes to talk about how I would transform any materials laying around into something I was excited about. For a while it was purses.

Going into college I started in ceramics, and then slowly started moving toward sculpture. After graduating I attended the VCU Summer Studio Program in sculpture and that's where I really learned how to have a studio practice.

**INK:** Who are artists that influence you?

**BC:** I really love Franz West, specifically the works that are outdoor sculptures you can interact with. The forms are really playful, kinda sexual, but also candy-like.

One of my biggest early influences was Lygia Clark and how the viewer often

becomes a participant with her works. The question of the line between the body and space is still important in my practice.

I saw Nicola L's retrospective at Sculpture Center a year or so ago— it was all these sculptures that were kind of surreal furniture while referencing the female body. The work was all so strange but enticing and I really wanted to interact with it.

**INK:** Do you have a favorite piece of art you've made?

**BC:** One of the ones from my show at the Richmond airport called "Over and

Under" is sort of my favorite right now, because it was the last one that I made for the show and I think it goes back to a more playful studio process.

The imagery included larger abstract shapes, still in a room, but it's as if large sculptures are situated in a space. I was working on it late one night and was really interested in trying some different things. I started mixing the flocking fibers more to give the surface a gradient, rather than the flatness of monochrome. I'm excited about the roughness of this piece and how it translates into what's next.





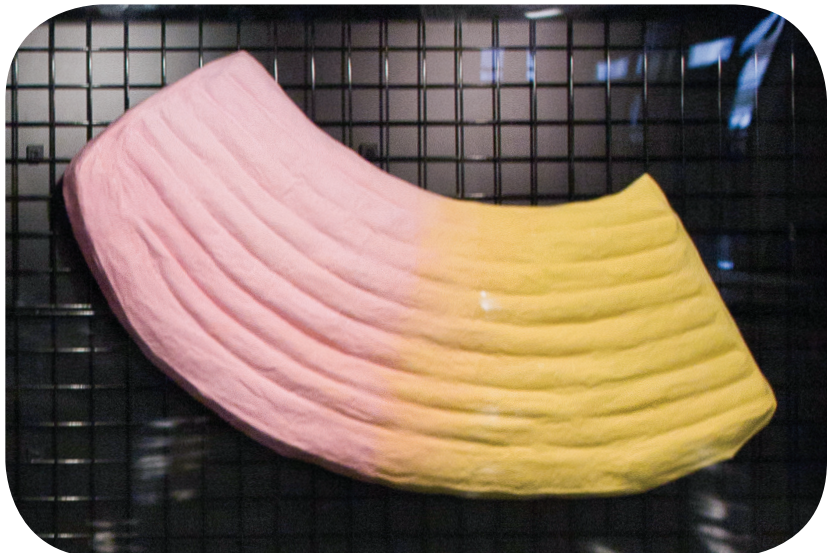
*INK: Could you tell me more about your process?*

BC: I've been working primarily in paper mache for the past few years now, mostly large scale sculptures coated with flocking fibers. Often my work starts with Sculpey or cardboard models then grows in scale. Imagery is sort of a new element in my work and a lot of that is based on models that I've made, photographs I've taken, or objects I've collected. Some of the objects I've made then become characters in my other works.

*INK: How do you select your materials?*

BC: My background is more fiber-based and I have always collected materials I'm excited about even if they don't seem relevant yet. For a while I was really into pool noodles and fuzzy carpet tiles. Sometime I sift through my collection and decide what fits, I re-organize and arrange often.

I was interested in a more sustainable way of making after college, and I started doing a lot of paper mache work because I could find free or cheap cardboard. I think the best cardboard I've ever used is still a box that was laying in the middle of the road near my old studio on Mayo Island. On top of the paper mache I apply flocking fibers, so all the works are fuzzy, they have this quality that feels like soft sculpture.







*INK: How has your work evolved?*

BC: My older work was primarily large scale sculptural installation. I was interested in creating a world for the viewer to physically enter.

About a year ago I read this essay by David Getsy that talks about a very small body of work that Picasso made— these sand relief sculptures— and I thought it was a really interesting way to think about exploring three

expanding the colors really took form, just as a way to try new things. My palette had previously been more subdued fleshy colors.

INK: Could you tell us more about your experience with the VMFA fellowship?

BC: The VMFA fellowship has allowed me to focus on my practice a lot more. It's also been great to be able to move into my own studio. It's really nice to have your own space and make a mess,

INK: If you had an unlimited amount of space and an unlimited budget what would your dream project be?

BC: I would make an immersive installation that people can physically interact with— sit on, play on etc. Something like a sculpture park or playland of sorts— I'm not entirely sure what it would look like yet. I'm really interested in outdoor sculptures and how I could translate my work into that environment. I also feel really excited about a room or space where everything is covered in flocking: the floor, the walls, all the sculptures or objects inside. It would be completely immersive. You'd have to put on those weird booties to go in.

INK: Could you speak to the themes in your work a little bit more?

BC: Some parts of my work are little portals into another piece— sometimes I translate objects into other materials

## “I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN THE PLAYFULNESS OF CHILDHOOD NARRATIVES AND THE CONFUSION OF THINGS THAT ARE BODY-LIKE.”

dimensional space in a two dimensional plane.

That's when I realized I was ready to take a break from these huge immersive installation projects, because that's not really sustainable either. I needed to work on a smaller scale and try some things out. That was when working in monochrome and

like being in your own room as a kid. I've been able to work on ambitious projects, giving them the time and resources they need. One of these big projects was the work included in “TTYL,” currently on view at the Richmond Airport as part of the VMFA Fellowship Exhibition Program.

and change their scale, I've done that with disco balls for example.

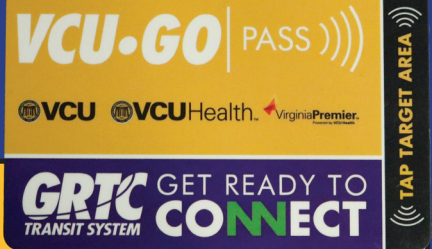
I'm really interested in the playfulness of childhood narratives and the confusion of things that are body-like. I'm thinking about a time when you saw things for the first time rather than through the lens of social media or







Effective February 24, students & employees must utilize their VCU/GRTC GO Pass in addition to their VCU ID card to ride GRTC.



## How to Use Your VCU/GRTC GO Pass

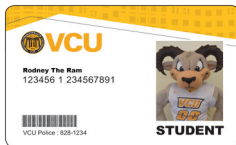
On regular local and express routes:

1



Tap your pass on the blue lighted smart card area as you are boarding the bus.

2



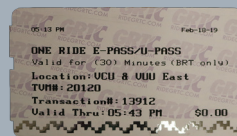
Present your VCU, VCU Health System, or Virginia Premier issued ID card to the driver. Ensure the photo on your ID is visible.

### On the Pulse:

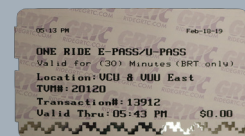
1 Tap your pass on the smart reader at the ticket vending machine located at the Pulse stop.



2 Take the receipt from the tray.



3 Present your receipt and VCU, VCU Health System, or Virginia Premier issued ID card to the enforcement officer upon boarding.





# HOT

# TAKE

Creative Director — Grace Hoffman   Photographer — Raelyn Fines   Stylist — Grace Hoffman  
Makeup Artist — Elina Oehlert   Models — Nanah Bai-kamara, Jasia, Neo Zhang, Kylie Newcomb  
Production Assistants — Daniela Osuna, Nico Gavino, Jess Som









*Vintage Racecar Shirt C/O Blue Bones Vintage,  
VICTIMI5 x HORA Clear Hooded Jacket & Gray  
Leisure Pants, Adidas Sneakers (Model's Own)*





*Vintage Two-Piece Set & Vintage Heels  
(Stylist's Own), Grace Hoffman for VICTIM15  
Crystal Logo Bralette, Playboy Trackpants & Floral  
Vintage Mini Purse C/O Lordina Nyarko*









*Slashed By Tia Ruffle Top (Stylist's Own), Vintage  
Beaded Purse C/O Lordina Nyarko*





*Vintage Lace Leotard, Vintage Pleather Trench &  
Urban Outfitters Velvet Mini Skirt (Stylist's Own),  
Vintage Velvet Hat C/O Blue Bones Vintage*









*Vintage Versace Blouse C/O Blue Bones Vintage*





*Grace Hoffman for VICTIM15 Crystal Logo Bralette*









*Palette Studios Rug Sweater, Monki Corduroy  
Pants (Model's Own), Vintage Tortoiseshell  
Sunglasses (Stylist's Own)*













*Acne Studios Button-Up C/O Peter Skudlarek,  
Vintage Satin Pants C/O Blue Bones Vintage*

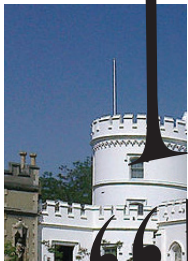
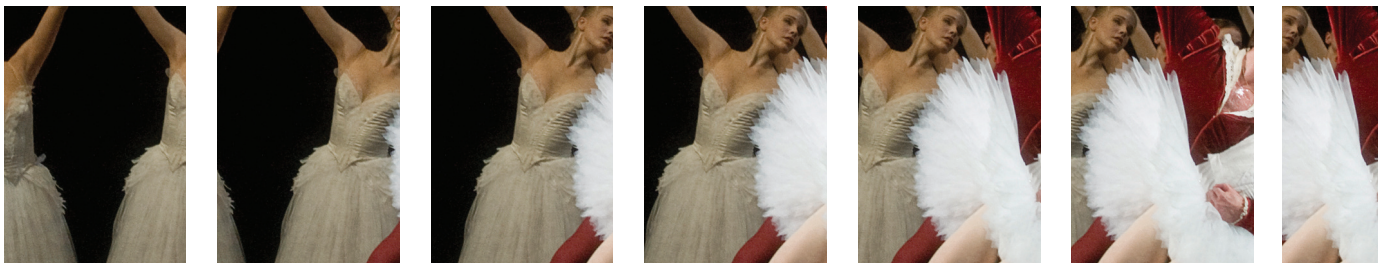




Grace Hoffman for VICTIM15 Crystal Logo Set &  
Clear Pocket Chaps, ASHISH Crystal Embellished  
Hoodie C/O Peter Skudlarek



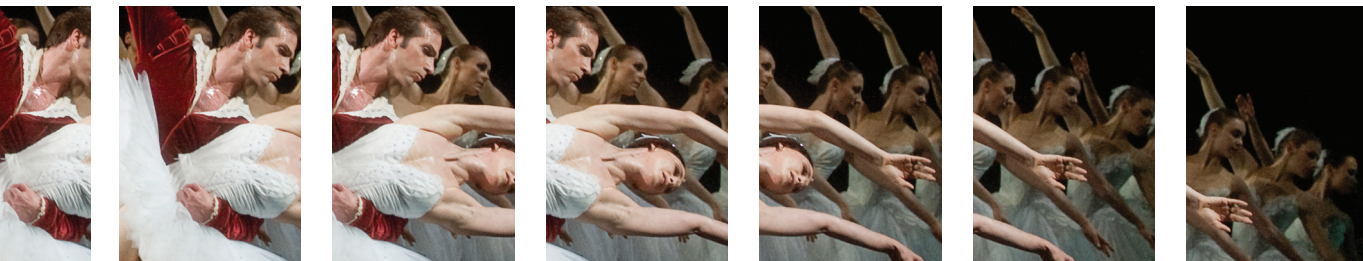




# Notes on “Notes on ” “Camp







*Written by  
Mary MacLeod*

Susan Sontag's 1964 essay, "Notes on Camp" is widely credited with bringing the concept of "camp sensibility" to the mainstream. Although it's been over fifty years since her seminal essay was published, her assertion that "the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration" has been reiterated through modern music, film, media, and fashion.

It is one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. (It is) not in terms of beauty, but in terms of the degree of artifice, of stylization." Part of the definition of camp sensibility is that it has no formal concrete definition, or as Sontag states, "any sensibility which can be crammed into the mold of a system, or handled with the rough tools of proof, is no longer a sensibility at all. It has hardened into an idea." This is why Sontag's essay is broken into 58 "jottings" on the topic rather than a more typical article formatting. In

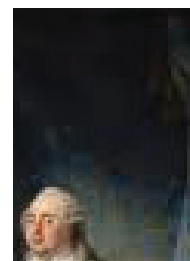
## "DOES CAMP STILL SUBVERT THE NORM, IF THE NORM HAS CHANGED SO DRASTICALLY WITHIN THE PAST FEW DECADES?"

ion. Camp is an intrinsic part of pop culture— even if we don't always realize it. With the theme of the 2019 Met Gala being "Camp: Notes on Fashion," it's important to consider both the history and the future of camp sensibility.

The answer to the question of "what is camp?" is ever changing. In the simplest of terms, according to Sontag, camp is "a certain mode of aes-

theticism. It is one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. (It is) not in terms of beauty, but in terms of the degree of artifice, of stylization." Part of the definition of camp sensibility is that it has no formal concrete definition, or as Sontag states, "any sensibility which can be crammed into the mold of a system, or handled with the rough tools of proof, is no longer a sensibility at all. It has hardened into an idea." This is why Sontag's essay is broken into 58 "jottings" on the topic rather than a more typical article formatting. In

order to gain a sense of what camp sensibility means according to Sontag, you have to look at how camp has manifested throughout time. Many scholars claim that beginnings of the sensibility can be traced to the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and can be seen riddled throughout the over-the-top style of art, literature, fashion, and even architectural design of the time. Think rhyming couplets







"CAMP IS AN INTRINSIC PART OF POP CULTURE"







in painfully dramatic love poems or of the time periods obsession with capturing nature in art. Sontag states, "In the 18th century, people of taste either patronized nature (Strawberry Hill) or attempted to remake it into something artificial (Versailles)." King Louis XIV of France is perhaps one of the first poster boys for camp sensibility, with a heightened obsession with lavish living, celebration, and keeping up appearance. As Hamish Bowles writes in an article for Vogue: "The Sun King [Louis XIV] himself consolidated his power by compelling the French nobility to abandon their country strongholds

most famous pieces of artwork and performance, like Bellini's operas or Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake. But as time passed, camp started to bleed into the everyday life of the average individual. The flapper style of women's fashion in the 1920's comes to mind (after all, Sontag did describe camp as "a woman walking around in a dress made of three million feathers")—but camp has persisted in sects of life that one may not expect. For example, in an article for the Paris Review, writer Megan Mayhew Bergman outlines how the American obsession with lawn care is, in fact, camp. She states, "Nothing in nature can be campy, Sontag claims,



## – EVEN IF WE DON'T ALWAYS REALIZE IT."



and to gather at Versailles, the glittering showplace that he had built a suitable distance from Paris, where the elaborate protocol and demands of dress forced them to squander vast sums literally to keep up appearances... At Versailles, everything was pose and performance." King Louis is perhaps one of the best examples of an essential trait of camp—"snob taste," as Sontag puts it.

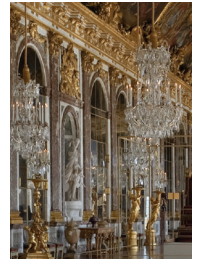
so camp can only exist in a place of striking exaggeration. When a plot of land is decorated, pruned, and enhanced with color and ornamentation, it moves from nature toward artifice. Cue the hedges of Versailles, and cue the American lawn, unnaturally green, weedless, and adorned with foreign species, mirror balls, gnomes, and shaped boxwoods."

Of course, camp sensibility persisted beyond the era of monarchy, but still thrived predominantly within high society. It can be seen in some of the

When examining the history of camp, it is also crucial to



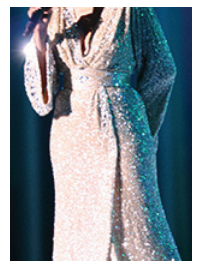




discuss its inextricable links and associations with the queer community. The Oxford Dictionary defines camp as “Ostentatious, exaggerated, affected, theatrical; effeminate or homosexual; pertaining to or characteristic of homosexuals.” Camp, according to Sontag’s essay, acted as a private code in certain sects of society, a badge of identity for some small urban cliques. In other words, the sensibility was an unspoken form of aesthetic connection, especially for the gay community. Scholar Judith Halberstam proposes that camp is often attributed to gay men because some subvert the default conventions of masculinity by presenting in a more traditionally feminine way. Judith Butler points to drag’s camp aesthetic as a critique of gender norms as well. Another scholar, Joanna King Slutzsky, asserts that “Camp is about playfulness, innocence and enjoyment, not condemnation. According to Sontag, it dissolves the moral outrage of many detractors of gay culture.”

That being said, “camp” and “gay” are not interchangeable synonyms. But it is important to consider how the queer community has curated camp as a form of identity, and uses this identity as a defense against the social rigidity of those who would try to persecute them. For better or worse (and despite Sontag’s assertions that camp is “apolitical”), the use of camp is often wielded as a political statement. It is no coincidence that in the heated sociopolitical climate of today, the Met Gala organizers chose a theme as historically controversial as “camp.”

This only fuels the discussion of whether or not pure camp can even exist anymore. There have been rumors of “the death of camp.” Camp was once considered a sixth sense of sorts, something that was to be subtly noticed, but never concretely explained or cheaply replicated. Does camp still subvert the norm, if





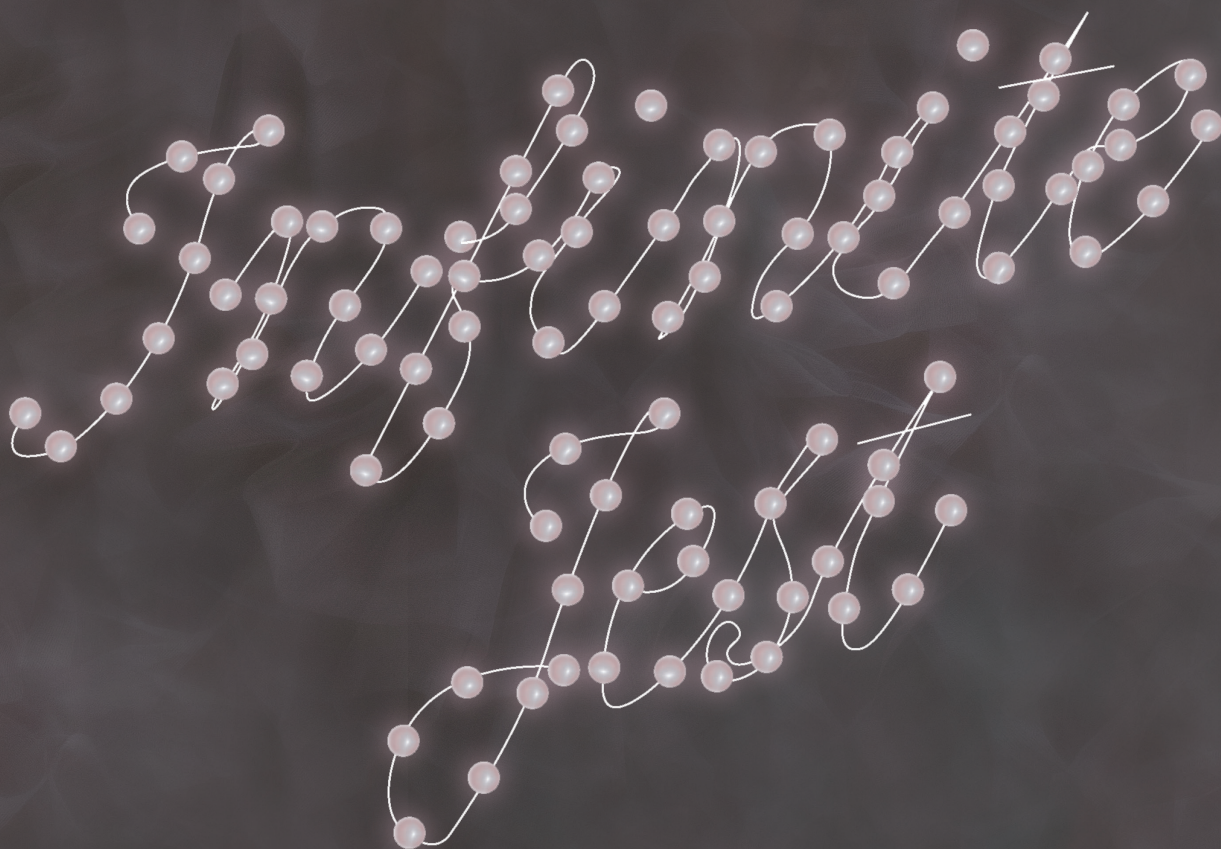


the norm has changed so drastically within the past few decades? As Sontag states, “to talk about camp is to therefore betray it.” In that case, both this essay and “Notes on Camp” are the ultimate betrayal, however well intentioned.

I’ll end this essay in exactly the same way Sontag ends hers-- “The ultimate Camp statement: it’s good because it’s awful . . . Of course, one can’t always say that. Only under certain conditions, those which I’ve tried to sketch in these notes.” ●







CREATIVE DIRECTOR — KRISTINA DICKEY PHOTOGRAPHER — REBECCA RENTON  
MAKEUP ARTIST — KATIE WILLIAMS MODELS — CHYNA MATHENY, DANIEL BRICKHOUSE,  
DARBY LINDSAY PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS — JESS SOM































IN MY CLOSET:

HARPER LEE DO-

HABBER LEE DOBEY

HARPER LEE DOBEY



HARPER LEE DOBEY



*written by Franny DeAtley  
photography by Amber Carpenter*

HLD: I like to think that I don't, but I do. I think it's fine to

something—a basic that I'll have forever.

*INK: How would you describe your personal style?*

HLD: I feel like I really just want to be a front woman, even though I don't play any instruments or have any musical talent. Basically as if I was in a rock band... or if I was Freddie Mercury.

*INK: Who do you look to or style inspiration?*

HLD: Both of my parents have amazing style, and I base a lot of my own style off of them. I have a lot of my mom's old stuff and going thrifting with her really influenced me. Honestly, just thrifting in general. I've done that since before I can remember. Also, front women like Debbie Harry and Madonna. Although, I feel like I've been more into the seventies lately, so Freddie Mercury, Dolly Parton, seventies rock. It changes all the time, but right now that's where I am.

*INK: If you were to trade closets with anyone who would it be?*

HLD: Devon Lee Carlson. I love her. She's dating that guy from the Neighbourhood, but she is the queen of my world. If not her, then Poison Ivy from the Cramps.

*INK: Do you follow any trends?*

## "I FEEL LIKE I REALLY JUST WANT TO BE A FRONT WOMAN"

follow trends as long as you put your own spin on it. I

*INK: Are there any trends you regret partaking in looking back?*

HLD: I guess when I was scene, but that shaped me. Besides that, I'm fine, which I'm very lucky for.

*INK: What's your favorite piece in your wardrobe? Does it have a story?*

HLD: These boots. They look huge, but I just have a really small foot. I got them specially made by a guy that lives in Mexico and makes crazy boots like this. They were super expensive but I got them as a birthday gift to myself.

*INK: What's your favorite place you've worn them?*

HLD: I don't wear them a lot because I'm scared to fall down in them, but I did wear them to a friend's going-away party once. I was wearing an ICP [Insane Clown Posse] jersey that also had flames on it. It was a good look. I'm hoping to make stories with them, but they fit weird so I'm scared to wear them places. They're more of a display item.

I also have my Fluevogs. Lady Miss Kier from Deee-Lite made them super popular. She always had on this bright orange pair. I have a crazy old



really like Reformation's stuff, but that shit is expensive. I feel like you can usually thrift things that look similar.

*INK: Considering your love of thrifting, what's your take on fast fashion?*

HLD: I still definitely partake in fast fashion. Which sucks, I know it does. But when I do buy fast fashion pieces it's like a tank top or



picture of my mom in them and she totally looks like a goth version of Lady Miss Kier. It's so good. My mom and I split the cost of my own pair but I also still have hers from the nineties.



## "I LIKE GETTING ATTENTION WHEN I WEAR STUFF, THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF FASHION."

Levi's in the men's section. After jeans, I go to shoes. I feel like everyone always rushes that section especially when I'm with friends. We're always super competitive to get to the shoes.

trying to fit in and it sucked. Looking back, I have no idea what I was thinking. So I guess, yeah, don't care about what anyone else thinks. I like getting attention when I wear stuff—that's the whole point of fashion. ●

*INK: Any tips to someone trying to develop their own personal style?*

HLD: It sounds super cheesy, but just don't care what anyone else thinks. I remember I had this weird two-year phase where I tried really hard to fit in with friends who went to private school and who dressed super basic. Actually, going back, that's definitely my biggest regret. I don't know why I did that. Before then, I dressed really different, and then in those two years, I was just really



*INK: When you're shopping what's your process like?*

HLD: I always go to the jeans section just because it's easy to go through. You just need to look at the size and the wash to see if they're vintage or not. I usually go thrifting with my dad and we look at the men's stuff together. That's where I find most of my stuff. I feel like thrift store employees put all the vintage









# LUCKY





# STRIKE

Creative Director — Lordina Nyarko   Photographer — Brenda Santillan   Stylist — Lordina Nyarko  
Makeup Artist — Elina Oehlert   Models — Bridget Hamel   Production Assistants — Jerrell Funtila,  
Jess Som





*Nordstrom Knit Maxi Dress,  
ZARA Woven Slingback Heels*











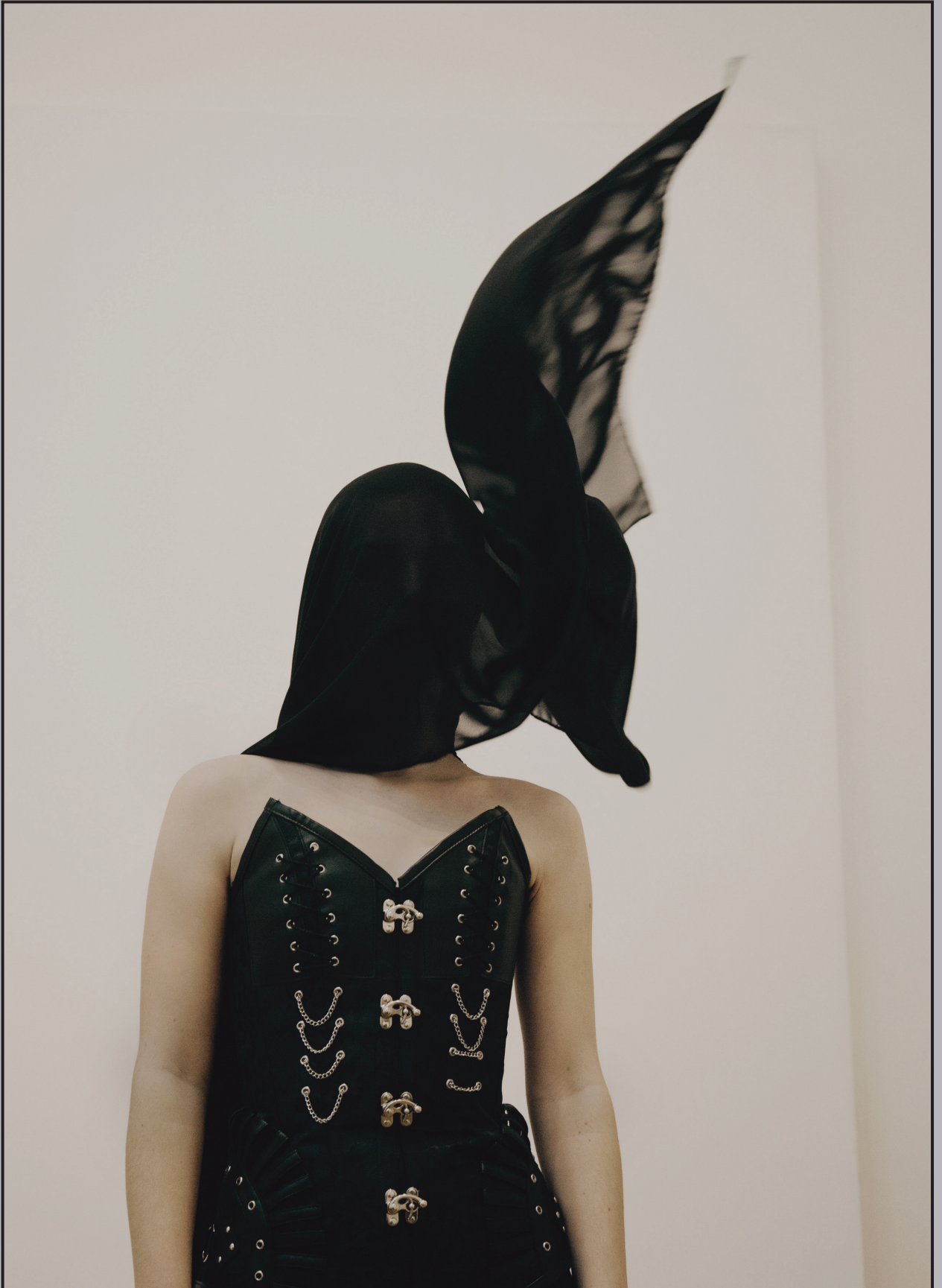






*Black Hardware Corset Top & Stirrup Leggings  
(Stylist's Own), ZARA Cuffed Pants*

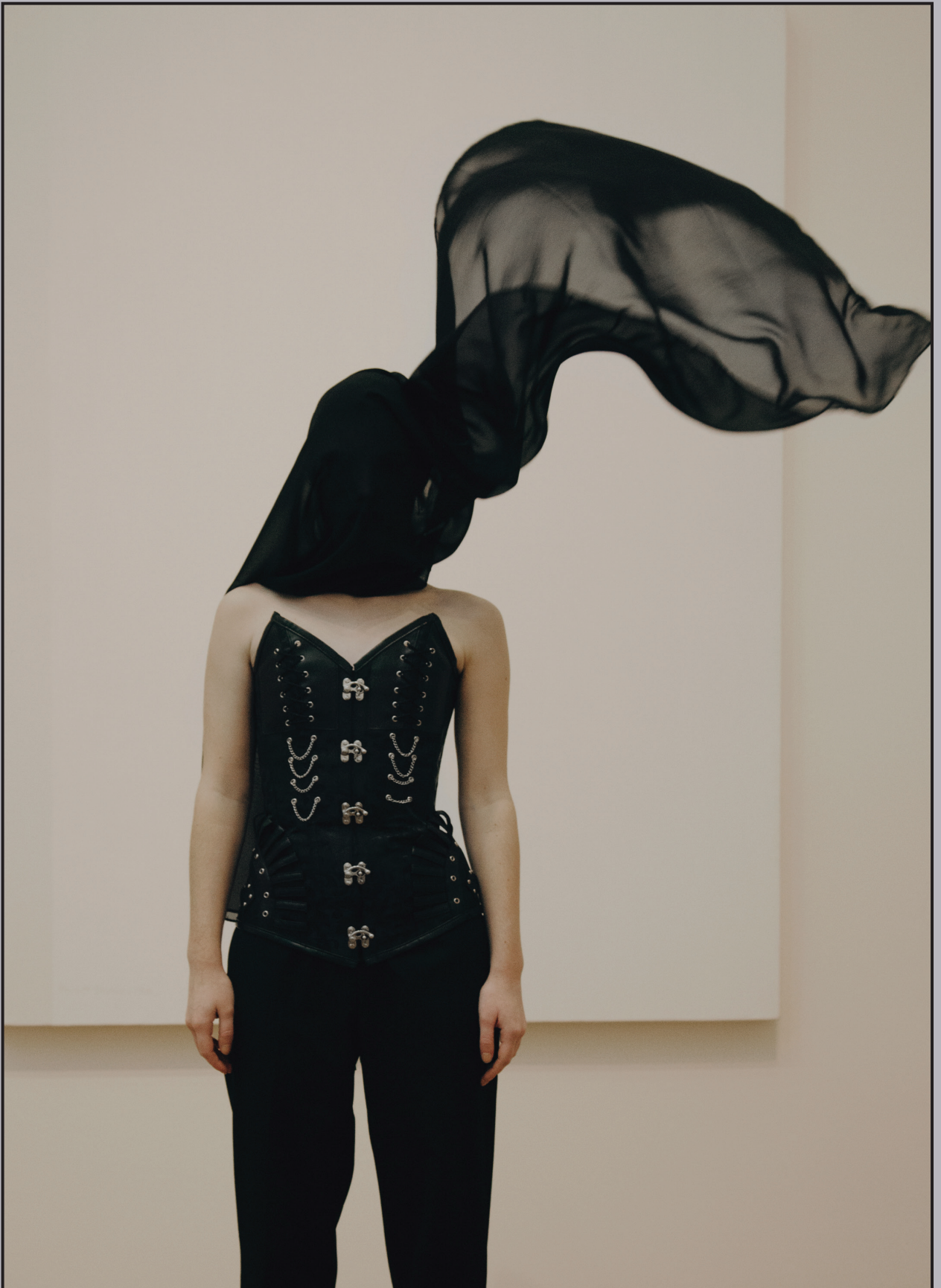














# TOUCHING DOWN ON

*written by Kristina Dickey*

*photography by Tyler Shebelski*





# PLANET JENNIFER

*All the world's a stage for Becca Kauffman — and lucky for us, she's brought Jennifer Vanilla with her. The Cambridge, Massachusetts native and member of the band Ava Luna has created a character that encompasses her own world — and you'll want to be there too.*

Who is Jennifer Vanilla?

Kauffman describes the power suit-clad pop star as her fantasy life manifested. She is prismatic and complex, a discotheque connoisseur for the new age whose identity is based on public perception and the public experience.

"Jennifer rounds me out and completes me," Kauffman explains. "She answers my questions. She does the work I can't do alone."

Kauffman describes her hometown as a liberal, vibrant and multicultural city where she and her friends were always inclined to be the weirdest ones in the room.

"I had a lot of permission from my parents to spread out, be big, make noise, perform for them in the living room... the result is that I take the stage with me wherever I go, like a portable state of mind."

Attending the Jennifer Vanilla show at Gallery 5 this past February was



an immersive experience unlike Richmond's usual house show and karaoke offerings. Kauffman ran a soundcheck as attendees refilled drinks and emptied bladders between sets. But as Jennifer Vanilla opened the curtains and the first track played, the crowd fused into a pulsing unit of bouncing shoulders and swinging arms—heads swaying. It felt like a post-Soviet youth nightclub with an extraterrestrial twist, the most carefree participants inches from the speakers and Jennifer at the helm of it all.

Talking to Kauffman on the set of our photoshoot the next day, the Gallery 5 show's energy felt like the trajectory she was aiming for.

"With my solo act, there was very much a vaudeville bend to the whole thing. Pretty bare bones—no one playing any live music with me," Kauffman explains. "I want to infiltrate the club scene and kind of 'jenniferize' the dance floor because that was sort of the inspiration all along."

Her track "Jenniferland (Audio Brochure)" holds true to its title. It works as both a call to action and a vocal mission statement about the all-encompassing world of Jennifer:

*You won't be the only one  
here in Jenniferland  
Should you come here  
we will  
hold a conversation  
talk about the latest poetry  
balloon  
self-brand  
create unique colloquialisms  
pin the Jennifer  
personal interviews  
t-shirt shopping  
or just  
move to the rhythm*



At the show, Kauffman recites these lines with arms spread open, gliding back and forth across the stage like a theatrical shepherd. The crowd responds accordingly, bobbing to the smooth chiptune-esque beat, shouting 'whoos' encouragement and praise.

But Kauffman doesn't take responsibility for that energy. She says that Richmond was by far the most participatory and enthusiastic crowd she's seen on tour yet.

"Every show is different. It depends on what kind of culture exists there

—if there's an arts scene. The level of reservation of participation kind of varies ... I felt like everyone was putting out just as much energy as I was and usually as a performer it's pretty one-sided."

Kauffman lists all of the factors that contribute to a show's success: geography, local culture, curation of the bill, the venue, what weeknight it falls on, the personalities in the room, the mood and size of the crowd. Performance, Kauffman explains, is an immaterial artform, one that relies on attendance and participation. Her work's intangible nature is, at times, a source of frustration, as there's no real way to package it and document it accurately.

"You're constantly chasing perfection because it's not something where you can be like 'I'm done now!' and it can be framed and shipped off to the gallery," she says.

As someone who is rarely satisfied, it can be hard for her to accept certain artistic choices she made in the moment. But the attitude of Jennifer, she clarifies —the whole Jennifer ethos is all about self-acceptance and being unapologetic to oneself.

Lessons like this are ones that Jennifer wants you, the audience, to absorb. She is both your friend and your sage.

## "JENNIFER VANILLA IS AN ENERGY SOURCE FOR ME AND WHOEVER IS AROUND WHEN SHE TOUCHES DOWN."

"Jennifer Vanilla is an energy source for me and whoever is around when she touches down."

The more you experience Jennifer, the more you want to become her. Find your Jennifer, croons Kauffman in "Jenniferland." So how does one become a Jennifer?

"You just have to be on board," explains Kauffman simply. "Jennifer is a LARP (Live Action Role Play) of confidence."

"What it is, is a dissolution of ego masked in what appears to in fact be a hearty and substantial ego.

The mask is so overblown that it can't possibly be contained in one individual; it spills up and over and out like a fountain, and Jennifer as a noun is transmuted into jennifer as a verb: To jennifer."

To jennifer is essentially what you make of it. "I would love for the

definition of Jennifer to be 'crowdsourced'," explains Kauffman, saying she wants to set up a website where anyone can submit their own take. "What people tell me they see in Jennifer is always fully accurate. There's almost no wrong answer... a sort of fill-in-the-blank."

Jennifer invites you to join her world, her planet. There are Jennifer Vanilla T-shirts available on her Bandcamp, custom made by Kauffman herself with block-letter slogans like "What Would Jennifer Do?" "Dance like

Jennifer's Watching" and "Powered by Jennifer." You can also purchase the "This is Jennifer" cassette, or a personalized autographed headshot advertised with the following message: "Power through your day with the moral support of this veritable elf on a shelf, and see what happens when Jennifer is watching!"

Just when you think you know Jennifer Vanilla, a nagging feeling tells you that you've just scratched the surface. After reading in a past interview that Kauffman wanted Jennifer to exist in a world where her identity did not exist in relation to men, I asked how she navigates a world where this seems utterly impossible. "I don't think the male gaze is erasable," explains Kauffman, "so no, I don't purport to fully erase that."

"But I did want to actively desexualize her, which is why I wrote in her origin story that she has no genitalia. I wanted to sort of take her off the market in a way."

Kauffman goes further to explain the symbolic convenience of this charac-



















*Creative Director — Kristina Dickey   Photographer — Tyler Shebelski   Stylist — Grace Hoffman  
Makeup Artist — Elina Oehlert   Production Assistants — Jerrell Funtila, Lordina Nyarko*



teristic. “If she has no genitalia, then she’s impenetrable—which is also an accurate way to explain her as an entity. There’s an implied familiarity, but you also have no idea what she is.” With that sustained mystery, “... she’s the unanswerable question.”

Kauffman admits that in her experience, desexualizing her character and herself on stage isn’t entirely successful—but it’s an important component of the work for her personally. “Of course throughout my life, in different times and scenarios I’ve hungered for male approval. I wanted to step out of that for my own project.”

When I asked about this year’s print theme “camp” and what camp art Kauffman is drawn to, she cites the movie *Mommie Dearest* and her all-time favorite musical, *Gypsy*. She talks about her love for old Hollywood starlets—their hyper-(but very powerful) femininity. “That’s why I identify as a handsome woman.

3-minute pop songs that she’d write lyrics and melodies over.

A lot of it was generous sampling from copyrighted material, following in the tradition of club and house music. Now,



## “I’M REALLY ATTRACTED TO BEING A CARICATURE VERSION OF A HUMAN BEING. I KIND OF IDENTIFY AS A CARTOON.”

That sort of vet-era, Sunset Boulevard, Broadway diva like Ethel Merman” who starred in *Annie Get Your Gun*. “Camp calls attention to the artifice of identity,” says Kauffman, “And it calls attention to how malleable and in your control it actually is. I’m really attracted to being a caricature version of a human being. I kind of identify as a cartoon.”

Up until recently, Kauffman wasn’t making fully original music. She started making soundtracks to performances by restructuring old house music, manipulating 8-minute club tracks into

Kauffman says, she’ll be putting out original music with a producer she’s collaborated with for the past couple years. Two club singles, “Erase the Time” and “Space Time Motion,” will be coming out on 12” this summer. Kauffman describes the former as a “traditional Jenniferian folk song” that explains the customs of Jenniferland: “warping linearity, basically,” she says. The latter, according to her, is about the randomness of identity.

As to where Kauffman sees Jennifer Vanilla going, she’s developing the idea of what she calls “performative

DJing,” a hybrid of live DJing and theatrical showmanship. After I describe how the Gallery 5 show felt like an inclusive discotheque, she nods her head replying, “I’ve always conceived of JV as a vibes operator, an attitudinal DJ. Now I’m working toward incorporating actual DJing into that role to, exactly as you said, create an inclusive discotheque.”

Get to the gig, Jennifers—or rather, get to the club. ●











