

VOGUE

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**GIGI IN
WONDERLAND**
ON MOTHERHOOD,
SELF-DISCOVERY,
AND LIFE BEYOND
MODELING

**SCIENCE
WITHOUT
POLITICS**
THE NEW COVID-19
LEADERSHIP

**POWER TRIPS
PSYCHEDELICS
AND THE
NEXT FRONTIER OF
MENTAL HEALTH**

CREATIVITY

**A GLOBAL CELEBRATION
SPRING FASHION FOR A CHANGING WORLD**

VOGUE

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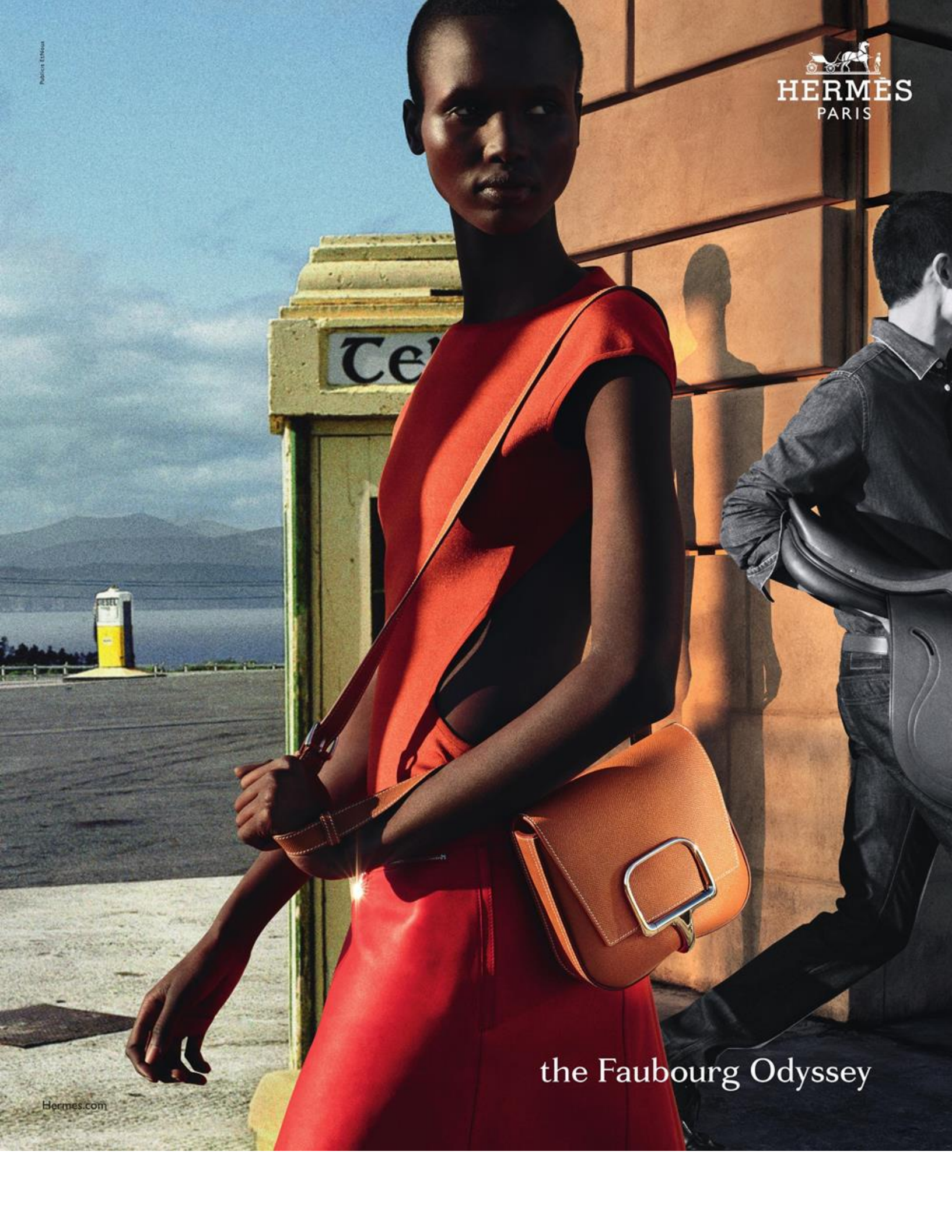
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AND SNEAKERS.
PHOTOGRAPHED
BY FENG LI.

FASHION EDITOR: ALEX HARRINGTON, HAIR: XIAO TIAN, MAKEUP: TAI LING YI,
PRODUCED BY BLOC PRODUCTIONS, PHOTOGRAPHED AT LONGFU.



the Faubourg Odyssey

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FASHION EDITOR: ALEX HARRINGTON. HAIR: TAMAS TUZES; MAKEUP: DICK PAGE. PRODUCED BY MARTY TANNENBAUM; PHOTOGRAPHED AT FACE GALLERY.

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Letter From the Editor



A NEW LIGHT
CLOCKWISE FROM NEAR
LEFT: MODEL ATHIEC
GENG, IN DRIES VAN
NOTEN, PHOTOGRAPHED
BY MOUS LAMRABAT;
MODEL SHAUNA
BRENNAN, IN POLO
RALPH LAUREN,
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
JACKIE NICKERSON;
GIGI HADID, IN
ALBERTA FERRETTI,
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
TESS AYANO.



Special Deliveries

THERE'S NO WAY TO OVERSTATE what an astonishing moment in history we're living through. The country, severely tested as I write this in January, is set to remake itself under a new administration. The losses wrought by this pandemic have been profound. Our lives have been upended and transformed. Everywhere you look, old ways of doing things are being discarded and new ways are taking hold.

This is true at *Vogue*, of course: Change is everywhere. And to be honest, I welcome much of how we've had to adapt and evolve. A love of change, in fact, led me to fashion journalism in the first place. And I feel strongly that so much of what is happening now, especially in fashion, is long overdue.

In this issue, which pays tribute to creativity all around the world—and all 27 global editions of *Vogue* are joining us in celebrating the joy of creativity—we conceived of a globe-hopping fashion portfolio that rejoices in movement but does so with barely any behind-the-scenes travel. We used local photographers and models working on their own turf. We shipped clothes near and far, and *Vogue's* sittings editors advised remotely via Zoom. To see the magical result, turn to "Creativity in Motion" (page 148). I find these images glorious and gorgeous and inclusive and joyful—an exciting look at the exceptional world of fashion today.

Change has defined the year of our cover star, Gigi Hadid, too, but in the most human terms: She has become a mother. Of course, nothing is quite life-size with Hadid, who has perfected the art of being a Supermodel 2.0, as Chloe Malle expresses it in her wonderful profile. Hadid and her partner, Zayn Malik, opted for a home birth at the Hadid family farm in Pennsylvania—they had a local midwife (and Zoom doula)—and the experience seems to have affected Hadid profoundly. She's thinking beyond modeling and absolutely loves life on the farm, complete with pet goats, and is determined, post-COVID, to lead a less peripatetic life. She has made a decision that I applaud her for—to keep her daughter out of the public eye and away from social media until she is old enough to make her own decisions about how much she wants to be seen. A decision to share less from such a gifted sharer seems like one of the most natural changes of all.

Amalita.

HADID: SITTINGS EDITOR, GABRIELLA KAREFA-JOHNSON;
HAIR: JIMMY PAUL; MAKEUP: DICK PAGE. SET DESIGN: JULIA WAGNER.
BRENNAN: PHOTOGRAPHER, MARRINGTON MAKEUP; KARIMA MARIJAN.
GENG: PHOTOGRAPHER, JACKIE NICKERSON.



Here &
Now



One & Only

RESORTS & PRIVATE HOMES

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Stella Tennant, My Friend

Hamish Bowles remembers the inimitable model.

Stella came off the train from Scotland smelling of goats,” Isabella Blow remembered back in 2001. Stella Tennant had been scouted for British *Vogue*’s “London Girls” story, to be shot by Steven Meisel in the summer of 1993. The portfolio was being orchestrated by Blow and stylist Joe McKenna, and they were searching for striking bluebloods. The young writer Plum Sykes had also been enlisted in the hunt and remembers the “tiny little passport photo” of Stella with her septum ring. “She was remarkable-looking—just this really cool, beautiful country turnip,” Sykes said to me when we spoke just after Stella’s death. “Her beauty was in her eyes,” Blow told me. “She was absolutely wild.” Meisel was so smitten with Stella’s achingly cool style that he asked her if she would come to Paris to shoot the Versace campaign the following week.

Stella was the bluest of bluebloods. Her mother, botanical artist Lady Emma Cavendish, is the daughter of the 11th Duke of Devonshire and his wife, Deborah “Debo” Devonshire, the youngest of the fabled Mitford sisters. Stella’s father, Tobias William Tennant, meanwhile, is a son of the second Baron Glenconner. Both of Stella’s parents, however, had retreated from the worlds into which they were born to raise sheep on a 1,500-acre farm on the Scottish Borders, where Stella and her two siblings, Eddie and Isabel, were born. It was, Stella insisted in 2003, “a *proper* hill farm, not a hobby farm.”

Initially, Stella—a 23-year-old art student when the “London Girls” shoot took place—was wary of fashion. “I thought it was a big, shallow world, and I wasn’t really sure if I liked the look of it,” she said in 2016. Nevertheless, she duly turned up in Paris, where, as she wrote in 2018, “Steven photographed me just standing there while Linda [Evangelista] and Kristen [McMenamy] danced around me.” One of the images landed on the cover of Italian *Vogue*: a consecration that established Stella as a star. A season later she walked in 75 shows. Stella would jokingly confide that every step she took represented another acre of the Scottish estate she wanted to buy one day.

But her ability to embody so many different fashion idioms—from Helmut Lang’s edgy minimalism to John Galliano’s madcap fantasy, from Versace’s high-octane glamour to Karl Lagerfeld’s haute couture hauteur—with equal insouciance placed her in the very small class of true fashion chameleons, in the pantheon with Linda, Naomi, Kate, Veruschka, and Twiggy. By the time she entered the fashion fray, Stella was no teenage neophyte; she was a remarkably grounded young woman, with her own agency and

perspective on the industry. “She wasn’t trying to be fabulous,” said milliner Philip Treacy in *Vogue* in 2001. “She didn’t care—of course, that was part of the appeal.” The truth is, Stella didn’t have to try: She not only possessed but she defined the indefinable It.

Stella met David Lasnet, then a photographer’s assistant, on a Mario Testino shoot. She was so smitten that when they sat opposite each other at lunch the rice kept falling off her fork, she later recalled. Tennant and Lasnet were wed in 1999 in the small village church of Oxnam in Roxburghshire, with Stella in Helmut Lang’s first wedding dress—a creation so ethereal and wispy that it was later confused with a layer of tissue paper when her mother’s own substantial wedding dress was unpacked for an exhibition. The couple had four exquisite children: Marcel, now 22; Cecily, 20; Jasmine, 17; and Iris, 15.

“To some degree, doing up properties has replaced my desire for making things,” noted Stella in 2003. She was then working on a wonderful West Village apartment in an 1834 brownstone,

but following the birth of Jasmine, the family decamped to an 18th-century house in the Scottish Lowlands. “I like the idea of being settled,” she said at the time. “In these years of modeling I’ve been in transit.” She brought her wonderful taste to bear on the home’s transformation and was rarely happier than when she was surveying the landscape in the company of Bert the gardener. Stella and Lasnet separated a year or so ago. When her family confirmed that she had taken her own life, they noted that she had been suffering for some time. Her loss is eviscerating to her family and friends, and the fashion industry will never know her like again. □



Tennant, photographed by David Sims in 2010.



A Place for Everything

The pandemic preempted the filming of *The Pursuit of Love*. But, wondered Georgia Beaufort, could much of the series be filmed, carefully, at a single house? She offered up Badminton to give it a try.

In January 2020, on a drizzly morning so familiar to those of us who endure the gray winters of the West of England, I received an excited message from my friend Emily Mortimer. Her television adaptation of *The Pursuit of Love*, Nancy Mitford's novel about an aristocratic British family in the 1920s and '30s, had been greenlighted. Filming was scheduled to start in the spring. Emily would be directing and starring in the series, and she asked if we would consider our home, Badminton House, as a suitable location for some of the production.

Then, of course, the pandemic happened, and all plans melted away. March and April drifted into May without any of the usual events that animate the house and the estate. I began to wonder if the whole place would ever come alive again. Like Nancy Mitford's bored young protagonist, Linda Radlett, we were "enveloped in the present," a "detached and futureless life."

But by early May, the production team had worked out a way of shooting under COVID-safe rules. Emily would be flying over from New York as soon as restrictions allowed. Within weeks, the

estate was beginning to thrum with activity. Emily and her family needed somewhere to live (no hotels were open), so we moved them into Swangrove House, a beautiful, early-18th-century castellated folly built by the second Duke of Beaufort as a *maison de plaisance* for his mistress. Its magic was not lost on Emily's Russian assistant, who, upon arrival, announced that she could sense the "sex energy."

In between location-scouting sessions and preproduction Zoom meetings, Emily joined me on dog walks and trips to our walled garden, where we would pick sweet peas and discuss the script. (Though she cowrote, coproduced, and starred in the wonderful series *Doll & Em*, this would be her first time directing.) *The Pursuit of Love* is a (mostly) comic account of the romantic life of Linda

ANIMAL HOUSE

Gathered in Badminton's North Hall, Georgia Beaufort, the Duchess of Beaufort, and Matt Ramsden, Master of the Duke of Beaufort's Hunt, with horse and hounds, photographed by Simon Upton for *Vogue's* December 2019 issue.

Radlett (played by Lily James), seen through the eyes of her cousin Fanny Logan (Emily Beecham). It was first published in 1945 and was an instant best seller; Harold Acton, Nancy Mitford's biographer, described it as a "gloom-dispersing rocket" for a war-weary world.

But would our pandemic-ravaged world be able to relate to Mitford's sparkling but unsentimental lightness of touch? Would the man-obsessed and willful Linda, the insouciant Bolter (Fanny's mother, played by Emily)—who abandons her child and several husbands—and the xenophobic Uncle Matthew (Dominic West) seem antediluvian or even offensive? Not, we agreed, if the script was suffused with Nancy herself, who is sometimes lazily labeled as a frivolous upper-class snob but was, in reality, wickedly witty, brave, irreverent, and not entirely free from darkness. Following several miscarriages, Mitford had a hysterectomy in her late 30s. Unhappily married to a serial adulterer, she sought solace and validation in her writing and in the time she spent with Spanish refugees fleeing Franco's army and later with Jewish refugees in London. As the oldest of the six colorful Mitford sisters, two of whom, Diana and Unity, were closely associated with Fascism and Hitler, Mitford was always keen to distance herself publicly from their politics. Ten years before the publication of *The Pursuit of Love*, she published *Wigs on the Green*, a satirical novel that ridiculed both sisters and Diana's husband, Sir Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists. The characters described in *The Pursuit of Love* may have been drawn from her own background, but they are depicted through the lens of a brilliant satirist who chose in her own life not to engage with many of the conventions of her class. In such a way, Linda Radlett's determined restlessness in both life and love could be seen as a disavowal of the expectations of women of her background.

The production team, however, faced more pressing anxieties than how the finished product would be received. When the trucks began to roll into Badminton village in mid-July, they marked the initial steps in the filming of one of the first new television drama series to be made since the pandemic began. Everyone on set was to be tested every three days, and the cast and crew formed safety bubbles to limit any possible spread of the virus. Soon Badminton, released from its lockdown languor, was teeming with masked members of the crew. Marquees were erected in the park, and the Palladian north front of the house was crowded with buses, cranes, and hand-sanitizer stations.

And the house itself became a substitute for as many locations as possible. The little church attached to the house became the 12th-century St. Margaret's, next to Westminster Abbey. The rose beds were covered in fake blooms to create Linda's loathed first husband's Surrey garden ("a riot of sterility"). In the North Hall, Lord Merlin (Andrew Scott) held court in his "cinema room," complete with a (live) white horse, while the Orangery became his gallery. The Chinese Dressing Room was turned into a

Parisian love nest for Linda and her French lover, Fabrice (Assaad Bouab). The pool area became the gardens of a palazzo where Emily, as the Bolter, lay, rather bored, being attended to by a European count. In the old kitchen, a parliamentary speech was given in the House of Commons, while gauzy pink curtains transformed the ballroom into both the Paris and the London Ritz.

The actor Dolly Wells (Aunt Sadie) moved into a cottage on the estate with Annabel Mullion (Aunt Emily), while other members of the cast stayed in the house with us. Now, on my morning dog walks, I would see Emily in costume directing a scene or Annabel, in a beautiful white dress and matching gloves, standing beside a ridiculous miniature pony and trap, or Andrew Scott and John Hefernan (Uncle Davey) heading for the ballroom looking impossibly elegant in beautifully cut 1930s suits.

Throughout August the weather remained almost continually hot and sunny. We had drinks in the setting sun on the steps of Swangrove, and at a dinner for the cast, Emily auditioned my husband to play both a French and an English waiter at the Ritz. Fortunately, even someone of her generous and inclusive nature could not quite accommodate his acting talent.

In September, the production moved on, and the following month Emily and her family left Swangrove and returned to New York. The filming process

had remained COVID-free and had just managed to miss the second wave (and second lockdown). I felt a genuine pang as the last truck turned out of the drive and Badminton seemed to shrink back into itself, drained of color and life. I was comforted, however, by the thought that *The Pursuit of Love* will undoubtedly be infused with the joy and energy that went into the making of it, despite the extraordinary times in which it was made. It will also be steeped in the spirit of Nancy Mitford. As Harold Acton wrote of her: "Perhaps deep down below the surface her life was sad, but she had the courage to banish melancholy." □



PORTRAIT OF THE LADIES

FROM TOP: Nancy Mitford (FAR RIGHT) photographed by Cecil Beaton for *Vogue* in 1931. A scene from *The Pursuit of Love*, with Lily James (LEFT) and Emily Beecham (RIGHT), to be released later this year on Amazon Prime in the US, New Zealand and Australia, and on BBC One in the UK.

Take the Read

Set across Shenzhen, sun-drenched Baja California, and mysterious corners of Morocco, spring's best books transport.



My Year Abroad, by Chang-rae Lee (Riverhead) *My Year Abroad* is an extraordinary novel, acrobatic on the level of the sentence, symphonic across its many movements—and this narrative *moves*: from the manicured town of Dunbar (hard not to read as a Princeton stand-in) to buzzing Shenzhen, to a Chinese bazillionaire's compound, back to a landlocked American exurban town. For all the self-proclaimed ordinariness of its rudderless protagonist, *My Year Abroad* is a wild ride—a caper, a romance, a bildungsroman, and something of a satire of how to get filthy rich in rising Asia. This isn't a book that skates through its many disparate-seeming scenes, but rather unites them in the heartfelt adventure of its protagonist, who begins his year "abroad" as a foreign land to himself and arrives at something like belonging by the end of his story. —CHLOE SCHAMA

Klara and the Sun, by Kazuo Ishiguro (Knopf) While the announcement of a new novel by Kazuo Ishiguro would be greeted with feverish anticipation under normal circumstances, his latest comes with added expectation, as it is his first since he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2017. *Klara and the Sun*, set in the near future, dovetails with Ishiguro's 2005 dystopian masterpiece *Never Let Me Go*, exploring similar questions of love and sacrifice. The titular Klara is a solar-powered Artificial Friend, purchased by a lonely teenager. To explain too much of the plot would be to deny the strange pleasure of watching it unfold, but Ishiguro's story transmits a world both richly imagined and meticulously constructed. *Klara and the Sun* once again marks Ishiguro as a master of the ache of missed opportunities and lost connections. —LIAM HESS

Fierce Poise: Helen Frankenthaler and 1950s New York, by Alexander Nemerov (Penguin Press) Neither conventional biography nor arm's-length critical appraisal, Alexander Nemerov's *Fierce Poise* shines a light on Helen Frankenthaler's early artistic breakthrough by blending both forms. Eleven crucial days—from May 19, 1950, to January 26, 1960—are given an almost novelistic treatment to imbue revealing moments in the painter's life and work with color, shading, feeling, mood, and historical and social setting. If the book occasionally wanders into a kind of assumed verisimilitude, rendering scenes with a level of detail that seemingly belies available historical and biographical facts—well, think of it as the price of admission to a thrillingly alive account of a woman unapologetically pursuing her own vision in a milieu largely defined by men. —COREY SEYMOUR

The Final Revival of Opal & Nev, by Dawnie Walton (37 Ink) If there were a genre for popular postmodern literature, *The Final Revival of Opal & Nev* would fall squarely within it. Easy to read, yet layered in both its structure and its impact, Dawnie Walton's novel is an "oral history" that tells the story of '70s musicians Opal and Nev and their politically inflected rise. The journalist assembling this rock-and-roll chronicle just so happens to be the daughter of an erstwhile bandmate, intent on putting together a patchwork picture of the iconoclastic duo. Provocative, rich, and assured, *The Final Revival of Opal & Nev* is a singular debut. —CHLOE SCHAMA

The Hard Crowd: Essays 2000–2020, by Rachel Kushner (Scribner) Rachel Kushner, the author of three acclaimed novels, including 2018's dazzling prison-set *The Mars Room*, turns her fierce intellect to nonfiction in this essay collection. Her interests—vintage cars and motorcycles, the art world, the late Denis Johnson (whose work is clearly an influence here), tough underground scenes of all kinds—won't surprise readers of her fiction, but there's a rigorous specificity to the essays that draws you in. Unmissable lead essay "Girl on a Motorcycle" is a thrilling road-racing adventure set in Baja California, and "Not With the Band" (originally published in *Vogue*) offers insight into Kushner's misspent youth, bartending at San Francisco rock venues. *The Hard Crowd* is wild, wide-ranging, and unsparingly intelligent throughout. —TAYLOR ANTRIM

Who Is Maud Dixon?, by Alexandra Andrews (Little, Brown) Twenty-something Florence is floundering, making decisions that result in unequivocal emails from the HR department at the New York publishing company where she works. But when our hapless protagonist takes an assistant job with a renowned author who publishes under the pseudonym Maud Dixon, she finds herself tantalizingly proximate to the life she desires. This literary thriller takes on exotic dimension when Florence travels with her patron to Morocco and, following the disappearance of her employer, assumes her identity. *Who Is Maud Dixon?* combines a rapid-fire plot with larger questions of authenticity and authorship, creating an edgy and distinct work that is as compelling as the mysterious figure at its center. —CHLOE SCHAMA

Pencil Pusher

Needle-moving cultural moments have long been defined by black eyeliner, from Godard to glam rock, goth to grunge. The COVID era is no exception, writes Cazzie David.



One would think, based on the hundreds of hours I've logged consuming photos and videos of attractive strangers on the internet, that I would know more about beauty. I have mastered the art of observing attainable, desirable aesthetic choices on others—and taking absolutely zero action to apply them to myself. All of my makeup expired two years ago. My brushes are in desperate need of a wash, and instead of washing them I just refuse to use them. My foundation doesn't match my skin, because I bought it two summers ago, when I was tan, and I don't want to waste money ordering a new one, because I know I will somehow mess up and it too will be the wrong color for

my unmatched, sometimes red—sometimes green skin tone. And no, I wouldn't be able to “just return it,” because I seem to have been born with an inability to return things.

I exist in that sweet spot of desperately *wanting* to look good and not making any kind of real effort lest someone think I am *trying* to look good. Yet even I have picked up on the current fascination with Y2K—that era of low-rise jeans, bedazzled tank tops, >106

WING WOMAN

Worn high and tight or low and smudged, eyeliner can convey our collective emotional state. ABOVE: Model Kate Moss gives black kohl a graphic spin.

and lip gloss that is still haunting and humiliating to those of us who were actually cognizant in the early aughts—and what is seemingly the makeup of the moment: It's black eyeliner. There's literally been no other option. But despite the lower half of our faces being covered for the last 12 months, there are other reasons I'd like to suggest for why eyeliner remains the only thing we want to wear in the New Year. Yes, this is an entire essay about eyeliner. Don't blame me; blame society.

The last time I was obsessed with eyeliner, it was a universal form of expression for us sad girls who didn't know who we were yet, or why we were so sad. My raccoon eyes, which I erratically traced with Urban Decay's 24/7 Glide-On Pencil in high school, had the ability to immediately inform strangers that I was annoyed and that I didn't like attention, even though I was simultaneously bringing attention to myself. Fast-forward to the hell that was 2020, and even a non-beauty expert could have predicted that this punk-rock favorite would start to show up all over social media—and the spring runways. I've never seen a fashion show in my life, but I do scour the internet (see above), which is rich with references to makeup artist Peter Philips's strong and graphic black eyeliner at Christian Dior, and Pat McGrath's dramatic and sculptural wings at Chloe, not to mention her electroclash moment at Valentino. Because after getting through this last year, we're all punk rockers? (I'm not confident enough about this last sentence to not put a question mark at the end of it, but I stand by it.)

"Ancient cultures used black kajal and kohl for protection and as a statement of power," celebrity makeup artist Pati Dubroff says, explaining dark eyeliner's unique ability to convey our collective emotional state. "Wearing it now makes us feel as though we have power over the last year." It effectively translates our mood, she continues—"and it can create a character within a mood," confirms Daniel Parker. He would know; as the lead hair and makeup designer for Netflix's popular miniseries *The Queen's Gambit*, Parker used a variety of black eyeliners—MAC's cult-favorite Blacktrack Gel and Pencil in Smoulder, as well as liquid pens from brands such as Christian Dior, YSL Beauty, and Tom Ford—to subliminally affect Anya Taylor-Joy's onscreen evolution so you never once find yourself thinking, Hey, isn't it kind of weird that Beth Harmon puts on a winged eyeliner, every morning and night, to practice chess, alone? "When she was a very young girl, the liner was small and timid and delicate," explains Parker. "As she moves on, it becomes longer and broader and definitely bolder, so you end up getting something very sophisticated."



"I feel like the wing has taken over," Ffrench elaborates, highlighting the elongated liner shape that is essential to creating "a sort of illusion of youth" and what she calls "Instagrammable sexy-face makeup"

Isamaya Ffrench deals in this kind of shape-shifting. The trail-blazing makeup artist behind Byredo's debut color collection—which includes the Technical Black Eyeliner, a liquid pen that applies like ice skates on a fresh rink—explains that we are moving away from smudged '90s grunge liner. Sadly, my generation doesn't have iconic bands like Nirvana influencing our messy, tear-stained makeup; instead, we have Lil Huddy, the Hype House cofounder and self-described "21st-century vampire" who dabbles in curated black eyeliner (and black nail polish). Eyeliner used to be a sign of being a bad girl—or a pirate; now it's really just a sign that you're on TikTok. If you were ever looking for a statement that sums up our culture today, there it is.

"I feel like the wing has taken over," Ffrench elaborates, highlighting the elongated liner shape that is essential to creating "a sort of illusion of youth" and what she calls "Instagrammable sexy-face makeup"—or what I call "plastic baby-cat face," which relies on freakish symmetry. "Eyeliner can balance the distance between your eyes," reveals Mario Dedivanovic, a.k.a. Kim Kardashian West's longtime makeup artist, a.k.a. Makeup by Mario. "If your eyes are close together, start your liner at the center of the eye and draw to the outer corner," he tells me. "And if you're looking to bring your eyes closer together, line them from the inner corner to the outer corner to minimize separation." And if one eyelid is, say, larger than the other? "Go a bit thicker with your line on that lid," says Dedivanovic. This is all really good to hear, obviously, because I need another thing to obsess over.

Regardless of whatever Dedivanovic secretly knows to be wrong with my eyes, the Master Pigment Pro Pencil from his recently launched brand is the best eyeliner I've ever used in that it's not too creamy but still super blendable to hide how bad I am at actually putting on eyeliner. Trying to apply it while working out whether I have deep-set eyes, protruding eyes, or round eyes ultimately led me down

a Makeup by Mario YouTube tutorial spiral—a good thing as prolonged mandatory-mask mandates mean that we really have to worry only about our eyeliner technique for the foreseeable future (apologies to those of you who have spent thousands of dollars on lip injections that no one will see). Even a cat eye seems almost doable to me now, a skill I will spend the rest of quarantine improving until my number comes up years from now in the vaccine queue; after that, maybe I'll learn how to return things. □

LINE, PLEASE

Black eyeliner riffs subliminally affect Anya Taylor-Joy's onscreen evolution from timid young girl to empowered young woman in *The Queen's Gambit*.



Fresh Paint

Sarah Cain's joyful, exuberant canvases, currently supplanting a handful of 20th-century masters at the National Gallery of Art, are the right tonic for a time of transition. Dodie Kazanjian reports.

Sarah Cain, a 41-year-old Los Angeles-based artist whose wildly colorful paintings dominate huge spaces, is about to take over the National Gallery of Art's soaring East Building Atrium. One of the most heavily visited spaces in the nation's capital, the building has been closed for several months due to the pandemic but also to allow for a major renovation. The great hanging Calder was removed; the sculptures by Richard Serra, Isamu Noguchi, and Max Ernst stayed put but were enclosed in protective boxes the size of mobile homes. "It's going to be so deadly in there," Molly Donovan, the NGA's contemporary-art curator, remembers thinking when the process began. "No art, just gray construction walls. What can we do?" Her solution: Get artists to transform the atrium while the work goes on. "I was looking for color, and Sarah provides that like nobody else—joyful, exuberant, remarkable paintings."

From the start of her 15-plus-year career, Cain tells me on Skype, "people always give me the weird spots that they don't know what to do with." I'm on the East Coast, and she's in her Los Angeles studio, surrounded by eight-by-seven-foot canvases that will

come together as one painting on a very large, temporary construction wall. "I was really excited about the project. I thought, Okay, I'll go there and make a massive work on-site." Part of the fun would be supplanting the "old dudes," the male 20th-century masters who have always occupied the atrium, and this thought contributed to the show's title: "My favorite season is the fall of the patriarchy."

But then the pandemic hit. The NGA had planned to remain open during the renovation, but it was forced to shut in March of last year. As of this writing, it intends to reopen sometime this spring. Meanwhile, the actual creation of the installation faced new hurdles: Unable to travel, Cain had to figure out how to work from a distance and still keep the spontaneity of her intuitive improvisation. "One of my biggest goals is to make active, exciting, breathable work," she says. "I've made more than 50 works on-site, and I love the ephemerality >112

BRIGHT LINE

RIGHT: Cain, photographed at her color-and-light-soaked studio in Garvanza, Los Angeles.

ABOVE: A detail of the working composite for Cain's National Gallery installation.



ABOVE LEFT: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; STUDIO: PHILIP CHU JUNG



and the present tense and the energy this can capture." The imagery (a giant purple-violet "X," hot-pink and multicolored geometric abstractions, etc.) was eventually applied to the protective boxes by National Gallery design staff, who worked from Cain's detailed drawings and were overseen by FaceTime guidance. "I'm actually excited to be doing it this way," she says. "It's been a big learning curve, but I've come to realize that I don't have to be there. I can do this until I'm 90."

Cain lives in the Garvanza neighborhood of L.A., near Pasadena, and her studio is on the property, with a view of orange, lemon, and apricot trees. In this worst of all possible times, she is busier than ever. She gets up early to feed her rescue cats and works nonstop until it's time to feed the cats again and go to bed. "I started doing cat rescue so I'd stop dating assholes," she says with a big laugh. "I have a really sweet boyfriend"—a marine biologist, whom she refers to as "my cutie"—"and a lot of cats. I trap them, have them fixed at the vet, and then release them if they have a food source. I've flown quite a few cats to the art world in New York." Cain, who keeps in shape with strenuous hill hiking and online Pilates, is planting an ambitious garden in her backyard and has organized her pandemic social life around FaceTime teas with friends.

As of this writing, her exhibition "In Nature" is set to open in February at the Momentary, the new contemporary art satellite of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, and her "Enter the Center" show is scheduled for July at the Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College. She recently joined Broadway, a new gallery in downtown Manhattan, where she'll have a solo show in September. "I'm insanely overscheduled," she tells me. Confident and full of kick-ass feminism, she manages somehow to combine femininity with her own brand of swagger. "There's always been tough ladies around me," she says. "My mom and my grandmother—and my dad's a feminist, too. They instilled this 'You can do it' attitude."

"She's tough and she's bold and she's not shy," says Donovan. "But her work embraces the feminine. That's why I love it. It's fierce."

Cain left home in Kinderhook, New York, when she was 15, to go to Paris. She remembers hearing an announcement over the loudspeaker at her "horrible" public

high school asking for foreign-exchange participants. She immediately volunteered. "I can't believe my parents let me go, but I don't know if they had a choice," she says. "I was pretty hard to tame." Her mother was a public school teacher; her father worked for the state health industry. Cain had just dropped her French classes in order to take more art classes, and when she got to France, she was "mute for months." That year, she



COLOR THEORY

"They have the energy of the person," the artist says of her work. Here, Cain's *Self Portrait*, 2020.

says, was "really brutal, before cell phones and the internet." But a couple of years later, she was back in France on a full scholarship to the Parsons School of Design's Paris campus. Next stop was the San Francisco Art Institute, for her B.F.A.

Cain began showing work when she was getting her M.F.A. at Berkeley. The poet Bill Berkson, one of her teachers, saw her wall drawings in a San Francisco artists' space, and she remembers him telling her, "No one's going to pay attention to your work if you just do these little quiet lines in a fuck-it manner." It took her a decade "to get loud enough," she says, but by 2007 when she moved to L.A., she had found her no-holds-barred approach. "I think of my work as painting moving into sculpture," she tells me. "I'm very adamant that my paintings are not murals. They're site-specific paintings." Her work is abstract but neither quiet nor formal. Paint slides off the canvas and onto

the wall and the floor. Geometric shapes collide with loopy undulations of riotous color. The canvas can get peeled back to reveal the stretchers and the underside of the canvas, which she also paints. Beads, hula hoops, and other found objects enliven the playful, often humorous, surfaces. Not surprisingly, the artists she admires include Agnes Martin, Hilma af Klint, Isa Genzken, Mary Heilmann, Judy Pfaff, Amy Sillman,

Rachel Harrison—and one guy, Richard Tuttle. "The way I paint is totally intuitive," she says. "I don't plan; I don't make sketches. I sort of see it right before it's going to happen, and I have to stay in a state where I'm open to seeing it."

The Hammer Museum curator Ali Subotnick, who put Cain in her 2019 Frieze Los Angeles show, tells me, "Sarah's compositions may be abstract, but they cross over into some other genre because they seem animated and constantly in motion. She makes a space for viewers to move around and inside her work." For Frieze Los Angeles, which was held on the back lot of Paramount Studios, Cain transformed a classic brownstone film set into a Cain wonderland, painting on every available surface. Later that year, her first

permanent public work was unveiled—a 150-foot-long series of 37 stained-glass windows (using more than 270 colors) at the new AirTrain station at San Francisco International Airport.

Cain's unique brand of abstraction has always been highly personal, and it makes room for portraits. "They have the energy of the person," she explains. In her depiction of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the justice's white lace collar becomes a string of pearls above a fan of vibrant colors; her Kamala Harris is the veep's first name spelled out in cadmium red with hearts standing in for the three A's. It's hard to think of an abstract artist whose work feels so intimate. "I look at a person and see colors," she tells me. "That's how the portraits work. There's a translation that is intuitive and fast."

"I really believe in living fully and entering into something even though it's a risk," Cain says. Her parents "still don't understand what I do, but I think they've accepted that there's not going to be grandkids. I'm one of those painters who needs to paint every day. Life would be miserable if I wasn't. I know my reason on Earth is to make paintings." □

String Theory

In Judy Turner, designer Conley Averett has established a knitwear brand with one foot in old-world traditions—and another in a very contemporary sense of cool.

Conley Averett—the independent, New York-based designer behind the label Judy Turner—leaned way, way into the concept of working from home during months of isolation. What started with dyeing his yarns in his bathtub led him, in short order, to renting an additional unit in his building as a studio to create the pieces for his spring 2021 season, which he's showing off via video chat. There are classic pullovers, sure, but also a cushy balaclava, cashmere-silk-wool-blended sweatpants, crocheted trousers, and a slinky knit tank with deep-cut armholes for both men and women. There's also a custom green-and-charcoal knit zip-up made from leftover yarns that he found in his apartment during lockdown. "Our target is to use everything we have," says Averett, 30. In perfect Judy Turner form, the piece composed of surplus yarn is the ideal marriage between homespun (colorful and nubby) and classic (insightful, sharp silhouettes), two qualities that are turning his small but dedicated group of fans into something much bigger as more and more people are craving the comfort, ease, and craft of knits.

Averett certainly knows his way around the genre: The Alabama-born, Parsons-schooled designer has worked at the likes of Brock Collection, Creatures of the Wind, and Khaite by Catherine Holstein, whom he considers to be one of his biggest mentors. "A lot of the ideas for Judy Turner"—the label is named after Hollywood bombshells Lana Turner and Judy Garland—"were so all over the place," says Averett, "and she [Holstein] really showed me the blueprint of how to organize all my thoughts."

While growing up in a small town outside Birmingham, Averett never imagined he'd end up as a fashion designer. His "wild

childhood" eventually saw him being sent to a correctional wilderness camp and, later, a "second chance" boarding school in Sewanee, Tennessee. It was in this small town, also home to a liberal-arts college, that he got his first taste of knitting from a local instructor, an older woman whom he would assist. "This was what really shaped a lot of my aesthetic and my interest in craft and community," says Averett.

"She planted that seed." His instructor, who has since passed away, sent Averett a knitted swatch, a talismanic piece that he carries with him to photo shoots to this day.

That homespun effect is part of the charm in Averett's clothes. While his designs are polished and elevated, there is a craft appeal to his pieces—think wrap-you-up comfort, but with a chic, Zoom-worthy punch. He chalks the latter up to his talent for working his mistakes into something, well, beautiful. "Knitwear isn't laser-cut or so specific as making something with leather, or even a shirt," he says. "If something comes in wrong, it's often good to work with the mistakes and then watch what possibilities unfold from that."

Averett produces many of his pieces in Brooklyn—not boho, L-train Brooklyn but, rather, a Russian-centric pocket of far-flung

Bay Ridge. When he first graduated from Parsons, Averett was trained by Vlad, a former Bolshoi Ballet dancer who had learned how to knit and who introduced Averett to a clan of female-led Soviet-born knitters. "They bring a European sensibility from the '80s that is very wanted right now," says Averett. He shows off a black crocheted merino-wool dress made by one of them, whose bobble-stitch technique is reminiscent of pearls. During lockdown, Averett had been getting his team together under unusual circumstances—masked while in the open air, and very much in public. "We'd meet at Bryant Park or Madison Square Garden," he says. "I wish there was footage, because we were pulling all these pieces out and I was trying them on. If I was a bigger brand, that would be a no-go!" he says. "Instead, it's kind of cool."—LIANA SATENSTEIN



CLOSE TIES

Designer Conley Averett with model Marcs Goldberg, wearing a Judy Turner shrug (\$895), tank top (\$395), and shorts (\$215); judy-turner.com. Stylist: Dara Allen. Photographed by Ethan James Green.



Silk Corset Print
Pant Set Top:

\$845

Silk Corset
Print Pant Set
Pants: \$825

Gold Peggy Platform
Sneakers: \$645

Second Life

As the popularity of resale sites like The RealReal and Rebag grows and grows, Lynn Yaeger finds that what's thrilling and "new" isn't always so new at all.

I was killing time outside a fashion show a few years ago when I noticed a woman in the distance wearing a beautiful deep-blue coat decorated with a flourish of fuchsia sequins. *I know that coat*, I suddenly realized—Dries Van Noten! I had tried it on at Bergdorf's a couple of seasons back, and part of me loved it, but the other part of me thought it was maybe too flashy, the tiniest bit *Honeymoon in Vegas*—and it was \$2,000. Still, as so often happens, now that I saw it on someone else, it seemed like the most desirable garment in the world.

Until recently, it would have been near impossible to turn up this elusive item—if only I had bought it when I had the chance! Not anymore. Some months after that fateful glimpse, this exact coat—in my size! New with tags!—showed up on The RealReal at a fraction of its original price. Now it is happily ensconced next to the other resale treasures I have gleaned from various sites: the rare circa-1996 padded velvet *Comme des Garçons* jacket; the extraordinary black Marni collar with velvety petals; the campy Balenciaga bag printed like a souvenir tote from Paris. (Someday we will go to France again.) A few of these items came to me brand-new, but others were gently worn—and if I didn't care that another person with great taste wore them a few times before consigning, well, the rest of the world doesn't seem to, either.

It's not just me. Practically everyone I know is addicted to vintage and resale sites, spending untold hours both looking for things to love and consigning things that, despite their exquisite provenances, they just don't want anymore.

"The rise of the resale market has been incredible—everyone wants to get into this space," says Tatiana Wolter-Ferguson, the CEO and a director of HEWI (Hardly Ever Worn It), a business started by her mother in 2012 in Monaco—where, Wolter-Ferguson explains, an excess of wealth created a situation ripe for resale. "At first it was hard to get people to understand that they could off-load clothes and spend the money they earned in the primary market," she says, "but now the taboo has blown up."

"Blown up" is putting it mildly. You can't argue with the numbers: In 2019, resale grew 25 times faster than retail—and what is now a \$28 billion secondhand-apparel market will more than double to an astonishing \$64 billion by 2024.

"People like nice things!" says Julie Wainwright, The RealReal's founder and CEO, explaining in the simplest terms this explosion. "And if these things are in nice condition, people don't care if they are previously owned." If anyone understands this phenomenon, it is Wainwright, who founded her site in 2011—the name, cooked up over drinks with her friends, was meant to convey that everything

sold would be authentic high-end designer goods, no dodgy fakes allowed—and now boasts 20 million members. "The world is coming around to the fact that there is too much product—you need to get people recirculating goods."

This new movement to recirculate arrives at the apex of a perfect storm encompassing an increasing focus on sustainability, a growing antipathy for fast fashion, brilliant new e-commerce technological innovations—and the realization that you can make money off-loading your old clothes. Add to this mix the inordinate amount of time we've been spending recently in our homes, surrounded by all the stuff we've bought over the years, thinking hard about the value—both literal and metaphorical—of our wardrobes. What do our clothes really mean to us? How attached are we to the things we own? This revolution in the way we relate to consumption has transformed nearly every aspect of our lives: Why have a car when you can call an Uber? Why own a bike when many cities allow you to grab one from a street stand? Who needs a country house when you can just Airbnb?

And even as we sat sequestered in our living rooms, roaming the virtual universe, searching Vestiaire Collective for Phoebe Philo's Céline and Byronesque for Ghesquière-era Balenciaga, we began to realize that the maxim so many of us once lived by—that too much is never enough—was not only false but downright dangerous. Too much was indeed just that—too much stuffed in our closets, polluting our fragile environment; too much for one person to ever wear and enjoy. "Forty-eight percent of millennials or Gen Z-ers," Wainwright says, "tell us that sustainability is the main reason they consign." But that doesn't just mean being aware of what overconsumption is doing to our planet: It also means holding fast (literally) to what sustains us—the precious material things we cling to season after season; the clothing that has real worth for us.

Giorgio Belloli, the chief commercial and sustainability officer at Farfetch, says that his company is also tiptoeing into this burgeoning market. Farfetch's main business is linking shoppers to thousands of stores all over the world selling current merchandise, but they have recently launched Farfetch Second Life in the U.S., which lets you trade in your designer handbags for credit to be used toward—guess what?—future Farfetch purchases. It's part of a larger story, with luxury behemoths waking up and realizing the power, both commercial and aesthetic, of owning their histories, burnishing their legacies, and controlling the narrative. Dolce & Gabbana's Domenico Dolce explains it this way: "In doing research we realized, with great satisfaction, that some of our vintage pieces are highly priced and often requested. This made us reflect. We have a large and well-kept archive, and some items are duplicated, as we tend to have a second collection to try to cover all the editorial and celebrity requests we have." So, he says, the pair is now considering offering some of these coveted originals for sale.

Other luxury companies took notice when younger people began snapping up iconic products, spurring

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BY THE NUMBERS

If you bought these pieces from Gucci in 2016 and are thinking about selling them to The RealReal today, you'll be happy to know they held a fair amount of value: The sneakers are now selling for \$645; the pants, \$825; and the top, \$845. Model Fei Fei Sun, photographed by Josh Olins for *Vogue*, 2016.



Crystal Clear

Recently installed as Swarovski's first-ever creative director, Giovanna Engelbert has designed a collection of jewels as vibrant and playful as she is. By Emma Elwick-Bates.

Italians like to wear jewelry," trills Giovanna Engelbert, the stylist and sultana of street style (remember that?). "It's in our DNA—we're not afraid of mixing bizarre things together and putting a lot on—but craftsmanship speaks more to me than carats." The Milan-born former model and *L'Uomo Vogue*, *Vogue Japan*, and *W* alumna is now the creative director of Swarovski—the first appointment of its kind in the house's legendary 125 years in business—and it's a deft hire: Engelbert's vibrantly colorful self-curation aligns nicely with our current moment, and her positivity sparkles at a time when we all need a little illumination. "With crystal, you can play," she says. "You can just have more fun, more...everything!"

When she was appointed, in May, she felt she had "won this Willy Wonka ticket," she says, "but instead of a chocolate factory, it was a crystal factory." Little did she know that her first visit to the Zurich headquarters would be her last, and that the next collection would materialize via samples bouncing back and forth to her house in Stockholm, where she built a small work-from-home team. "We have the best long-distance relationship," Engelbert, 41, jokes.

Her debut collection is souped-up Swarovski, realized in gargantuan gems. "Bigger is better, yes!" she exclaims on our video call, pirouetting a manicured hand dressed with two gobstopper cocktail rings and a simple wedding band. "But it's always a balancing act." She test-drove all the glistening samples on their family's island—a short boat ride away from Stockholm—adding "a sense of dress-up" to fire-cooking, saunas, and icy swims, with the clear Swedish skies inspiring the final colors, which Engelbert says are "like Magritte paintings."

Her free-flowing, candy-colored rivières come in princess, opera, and an ultra-theatrical rope length that could boomerang past your miniskirt—if you dare to reveal your legs after months of Zoom-only wardrobes. There is a chromatic rainbow-stone parure, and chokers

cut like eternity bands—though her very first sketch was of a cyber-punk earring. ("I wanted one big, chunky shard through your lobe," she says.) Even estate-feel drop earrings come blown up with double-sided crystals for guaranteed 360 glamour, while a made-to-order engineered body piece is constellated with white crystals. ("I wear it over a cashmere turtleneck.")

And while the collection is shiny, it is not superficial. Engelbert knows her jewelry and is buoyantly nerdy about it. She is a private collector of Georgian and enamel pieces—"It's my obsession"—with the latter inspiring an otherworldly ring of high-tech lacquering composed of cushion-cut "floating crystals" suspended in a black lacquer setting.

While it's been a spell since statement jewelry stood front and center, after a year filled with Zoom calls, the timing feels right for Engelbert. Her own style has certainly evolved, not least because of daughter Talitha Italia, now two, roaming around the house—no more pumps, for starters. "My husband asked me recently where that Giovanna was—I said, 'She's off to a party on Madison Avenue wearing Alaïa, but I am here in Stockholm!' I am now always wearing an elevated T-shirt, elevated sweatshirt." Emphasis on the elevated, for sure—but she captures the current synthesis of sweats and sparkle.

Where will she be wearing the new Swarovski, though, when we finally reemerge? "A great party in New York, like the good old days, or in Capri with all my friends," she says. Then again, "we've been playing DJ sets from Burning Man throughout lockdown here on the island—maybe I'll have my own music festival!" □

RISE AND SHINE

Giovanna Engelbert, ringed by a clutch of her new pieces for Swarovski; at swarovski.com. Details, see In This Issue.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GIANLUIGI BATTAGLIA; STYLING: GIOVANNA ENGELBERT; ALL OTHERS: COURTESY OF SWAROVSKI.



Contour de Force

After months away from the gym, is the best workout no workout at all?
Naomi Fry signs up for next-gen, noninvasive body sculpting.

A few months ago, I sprawled out on my living-room couch, my laptop burning my thighs, and opened my Zoom app as I had done every morning since last March. But the face, or should I say, the body, looking back at me through the screen was notably different from my usual digital workday encounters. Wearing a dramatically nipped-in evening top, the influencer/model/entrepreneur Olivia Culpo (4.7 million Instagram followers) had signed on from her home in Los Angeles to greet a grid of smiling editors and writers. While nuzzling her caramel toy goldendoodle, Oliver Sprinkles—her hair in a glossy, distinctly pre-pandemic-quality blowout—Culpo was talking about what everyone wants to talk about at 10 a.m. on a cold Thursday in December, following almost a year of stress-eating in isolation: toned abs. “It’s been really hard during COVID, not

being able to go to the gym and trying to be accountable at home,” Culpo lamented as the other well-groomed participants nodded along in agreement.

But the 28-year-old, whose midsection didn’t seem to be struggling with accountability in the same way as, say, mine, had discovered a solution: “After one treatment, I already felt a difference,” Culpo said, endorsing the Emsculpt Neo, a buzzy new cosmetic device that purports to burn fat and tone muscles in four 30-minute treatments. It’s the perfect workout for the COVID era, Manhattan plastic surgeon Jennifer Levine, M.D., offered from an adjacent square, cheerfully describing a new crop of sculpting devices that use radio frequency to melt fat while electric currents and electromagnetic waves tone muscles for you—no squats or bird-dogs required. Added Levine, “You can get a treatment in a room alone, and wear a

mask!” In America, the pursuit to become our so-called best selves never stops, not even during a pandemic.

This is not news to me, of course, thanks to the relentless #fitspo that has flooded my Instagram Explore page as I’ve refreshed the app again (and again) in the New Year. I try not to dwell on this kind of content, finding some measure of relief in the idea that as long as “normal life” has all but ceased to exist, at least I can let myself go. Not completely: I still do Yoga with Adriene on YouTube every once in a while, and I’ve been surprising myself by jumping on a livestream of >126

HOME BODY

Increasingly stationary lifestyles have caused a demand for professional treatments that melt fat while manually toning muscle. Model Natalia Vodianova, photographed by Steven Meisel for *Vogue*, May 2009.

Taryn Toomey's cultish *The Class*—a fairly intense hour-long combination of cardio, strength training, and breath work—a few times a month. But I'm a writer, not an influencer/model/entrepreneur: Who even cares about my abs? Still. Even I am not immune to the appeal of something like Emsculpt, especially as we try to erase the physical signs of the sad, anxious, dumpy year we just endured, a kind of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless...body*.

"It's completely understandable that we're not at our regular fitness levels," Anne Chapas, M.D., assures me. "It's been an incredibly stressful time for all of us." A Manhattan dermatologist and the founder and medical director of Union Derm, Chapas relays that she and her colleagues have seen a rise in the number of patients seeking quick, noninvasive, no-downtime fixes. "I had a patient who joked to me the other day, 'You know why they call it COVID-19?' Because of the 19 pounds we've all gained." Similar memes and tweets have been met with a backlash from the body-positivity community: Why are we worrying about a few extra pounds when so many of us have been sequestered at home, awash in worry, trying to keep ourselves and the people around us healthy and solvent?

But the numbers don't lie. "The uptick in the desire for body contouring has increased in my office by almost 400 percent," confirms Harold Lancer, M.D., a cosmetic dermatologist based in Beverly Hills. Traditionally, these treatments have been focused on fat reduction through devices like CoolSculpting, which freezes fat cells to break them down, or truSculpt iD, which employs heat to the same end, explains Lancer. But newer devices—such as Emsculpt's Neo, Cutera's rebooted suite of truSculpt machines, and InMode's new Evolve—add electrical-stimulation technology or high-intensity electromagnetic technology to tighten and tone muscles as well. Delivered through applicators attached to targeted areas, most commonly the abs, the flanks (a.k.a. the "love handles"), and the arms, these contractions work the muscles to provide definition.

While this may sound like an episode of *Black Mirror*, in which a simple beauty treatment somehow ends with machine-animated clones attempting to murder each other, there is nothing especially new (or scary) about electrical muscle stimulation, which has been used in physical therapy and rehabilitation protocols

since the 1960s to reduce pain and swelling or to keep muscles from atrophying after an injury. "By stimulating the tissue, these machines help increase blood flow into the area and facilitate voluntary muscle contraction," explains Michael Fredericson, M.D., a sports-medicine physiatrist at Stanford University. Fredericson is less optimistic about electrical muscle stimulation's cosmetic benefits. "There's no free lunch," he deadpans. "Using a device like this might be a good starting point for a more defined silhouette, but ultimately, you will have to exercise to get the results you want." Dennis Cardone, D.O., a sports-medicine specialist at NYU Langone, agrees. "If someone isn't able-bodied, I can see the benefits of using one of these machines," he says. "But otherwise, I'd say, save your money and start with a good home-workout program."

The electric currents kneading and manipulating my midsection made the muscles pop up on my stomach, *Alien*-style. Strangely, I came to experience the sensation as almost relaxing

To my surprise, Chapas doesn't completely disagree with this logic. "These new treatments are for people who already have a baseline of fitness," she says during a Zoom consultation. "They're meant to be an additional tool for people who want some extra help in toning and optimizing, and in getting back into their fitness routine." Unlike the machines that are employed in the sports-medicine field, she explains, the new, cosmetically oriented devices mimic the course of a real, varied workout as much as possible and can alternate between the upper, lower, and oblique abs. I tell Chapas about my noncommittal commitment to Toomey's training program to convince her that I am at least making an attempt to get back into shape, and she asks me to pull up my shirt. For a brief moment, I feel like the world's least erotic cam girl. Since I am carrying some "excess fat" in my midsection, the plan is to start with the truSculpt iD, which, over two separate 15-minute sessions, will use radio-frequency technology to slim my abdominal area, then

proceed to my flanks; I'll follow this with the new truSculpt Flex, which employs a separate round of electrical muscle stimulation to tighten those same areas, over four 45-minute-long sessions. "You need to wait at least two weeks to see even a hint of results," Chapas says, explaining that the real payoff should reveal itself in about two months and will require maintenance every three months. (The effects of the Flex, which runs between \$750 and \$1,250 dollars per session, fade over time.)

I lowered my expectations accordingly, which was both a disappointment and a relief. On the downside, I wasn't going to end up with six-pack abs; on the upside, I wasn't going to end up with six-pack abs. I would still be me—only, perhaps, slightly slimmer and more toned. While the fat-reducing truSculpt iD sessions were described as feeling not unlike a "hot stone massage," I found the tingling sensation more akin to a sizzling teapot wrapped in a cozy. As for the truSculpt Flex, the electric currents kneading and manipulating my midsection made the muscles pop up on my stomach, *Alien*-style. Strangely, I came to experience the sensation as almost relaxing. During the sessions, I wore a mask and texted with friends. "OMG, you're Kim Richards!," my friend Brett responded, naming a high-maintenance former *Real Housewife of Beverly Hills*. The slight roiling soreness that came after was oddly reminiscent of that familiar, not-unpleasant post-workout feeling, though I hadn't done a single crunch.

After completing my four separate pilgrimages to Chapas's Central Park office, I was notably tighter, but also somehow at loose ends. I kept patting my stomach, wondering if it was, in fact, flatter, but the results were so subtle I can't honestly say. And perhaps a quick physical fix belies the point of more analog forms of fitness anyway. Toomey's *The Class* bills itself as "a practice of self-study through physical conditioning," she tells me. "Movement is more about realizing the power of your own presence, bringing your mind into your body," she continues, "and this is something that you miss out on when you have it done for you." Maybe so. But over Christmas, I felt newly empowered to post my own low-key version of #fitspo—a rare snap of me in a leopard-print minidress that I wasn't comfortable wearing when I bought it online in the fall, and that I was now excited not just to put on but to share on social media. These days, I'll take the endorphins however I can get them. □





MOSCHINO



Gigi in Wonderland

As a model, she's perfected the art of living in the spotlight.

But motherhood has opened Gigi Hadid up to a new world—and a new set of priorities. By Chloe Malle.

Photographed by Ethan James Green.



FLORAL HISTORY

"It feels like now I'm in a different place in my life."

Gigi wears a flower-strewn hat by Harlem's Heaven Hats, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello feather-trimmed bodysuit, and Tiffany & Co. earring.

Fashion Editor: Gabriella Karefa-Johnson.

I think they all knew that I have that animal in me," says Gigi Hadid, relaxed and bright from the December cold. The 25-year-old model is astride a cinnamon-colored quarter horse named Dallas and telling me about the birth of her baby in September, here at her home in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, following a 14½-hour labor. At her side were her partner, Zayn Malik; her mother, Yolanda; her sister, Bella; and a local midwife and her assistant. "When you see someone do that, you look at them a bit differently. I probably looked crazy, actually," she says, a giggle tinged with pride. "I was an animal woman."

Malik caught the baby. "It didn't even click that she was out," says Gigi, gazing forward through Dallas's alert ears as we plod through the upper fields of Harmony Hollow, the farm owned by Yolanda's boyfriend, Joseph Jingoli, a construction-firm CEO. "I was so exhausted, and I looked up and he's holding her. It was so cute."

She's in a cropped North Face puffer, stretch Zara jeans, and worn black riding boots, and looks like neither a harried mother of a 10-week-old nor a paparazzi-ducking supermodel. With her hair roped into a smooth bun, bare face, and tiny gold hoop earrings, she resembles mostly her teenage self, an equestrienne who show-jumped competitively while growing up in her hometown of Santa Barbara, California.

"What I really wanted from my experience was to feel like, Okay, this is a natural thing that women are meant to do." She'd planned to deliver at a New York City hospital, but then the realities of COVID hit—particularly sequestering here, 90 minutes from Manhattan, and the limits on numbers in the delivery room, which would have precluded Yolanda and Bella from being present. Then she and Malik watched the 2008 documentary *The Business of Being Born*, which is critical of medical interventions and depicts a successful home birth. "We both looked at each other and were like, I think that's the call," Gigi says.

They placed a blow-up bath in their bedroom and sent their three cats and border collie away when the midwife expressed concern that the sphynx and Maine coon felines might puncture the tub with their claws. Malik asked Gigi what music she wanted to hear, and she surprised him by requesting the audio of a favorite children's novel, *The Indian in the Cupboard*. He downloaded the film because it was one of his favorites too, and they spent the early hours of labor watching it together.

"That's something we'd never talked about but in that moment we discovered we both loved," Gigi says bashfully. She then tells me that Malik, the former One Direction star turned solo artist, who is famously press-shy and declined to be interviewed for this article, likened his own experience of her birth to a lion documentary he'd seen in which a male lion paces nervously outside the cave while the lioness delivers her cubs. "Z was like, 'That's how I felt! You feel so helpless to see the person you love in pain.'"

Gigi's Zoom doula, Malibu High classmate Carson Meyer, had prepared her for the moment where the mother feels she can't go any longer without drugs. "I had to dig deep," Gigi says. "I knew it was going to be the craziest pain in my life, but you have to surrender to it and be like, 'This is what it is.' I loved that." Yolanda and the midwife coached Gigi through the pain. "There definitely was a point where I was like, I wonder what it would be like with an epidural, how it would be different," Gigi says frankly. "My midwife looked at me and was like, 'You're doing it. No one can help you. You're past the point of the epidural anyway, so you'd be pushing exactly the same way in a hospital bed.'" So she kept pushing.

"I know my mom and Zayn and Bella were proud of me, but at certain points I saw each of them in terror," says Gigi, ducking under a leafless branch, Dallas's hooves sucking in the muddy terrain. "Afterward, Z and I looked at each other and were like, We can have some time before we do that again."

The baby girl—named Khai, Gigi revealed on Instagram in January, from the Arabic for "the chosen one"—was a week late. "She was so bright right away," Gigi says, adding that the baby's heart rate stayed consistent throughout the labor. "That's what I wanted for her, a peaceful bringing to the world."

Khai's world has, so far, remained small. Her mother rarely leaves the bucolic corner of horse country where the Hadids put down roots in 2017 (Malik bought a nearby farm). The shoot for this story, in early December at a studio in Manhattan, was the first time Gigi had left her daughter since the birth. Yolanda took over caregiving duties, even bringing her granddaughter along to feed the miniature ponies Mamma and Muku. Gigi has no nanny, no baby nurse, none of the traditional celebrity crutches of new motherhood. (During our interview the baby stayed with her father and Zayn's mother, Trisha, who is visiting from England for a month to help.)





FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Gigi and her partner, Zayn Malik, chose a home birth. "What I really wanted was to feel like, Okay, this is a natural thing that women are meant to do." Alexander McQueen jacket and dress (in an image colorized by the photographer).



“I knew it was going
to be the craziest
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MAMA BIRD

Gigi in a Chanel feathered cape, top, pants, and pearl belts. Chained platform sandals by Versace.
OPPOSITE: A Proenza Schouler crop top, a painterly Marni skirt, and JW Anderson strappy sandals.

"She decided to completely take care of the baby alone," says Yolanda, awed, "and I think that bond is so important." The Dutch former model turned *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* alum was my welcoming party when I arrived at the farm, booming "Hello!", her arms wide on the threshold, in a camo-print puffer and Ugg boots. "I'm proud of her face on a magazine, but seeing her give birth was a whole other level of proud," Yolanda says. "You go from looking at her as a daughter to looking at her as a fellow mother."

The natural transitions and generational shifts of new motherhood are at play in the Hadid household. It is a family happily in flux: On the sprawling 32-acre property, the handful of cottages are designated for different siblings, but this summer, when Gigi moved out of her cottage into Zayn's house, Bella and brother Anwar graduated to larger cottages, leaving the smallest as a guesthouse. "We're still close by," says Gigi, "but we have our space to be our own little family." She hosted Thanksgiving dinner for the first time this year, with Zayn's mother, cooking the turkey. Gigi (a prolific home cook herself) made Banoffee pie and baked Yolanda's favorite tarte tatin. Bella and Yolanda carted over stuffing and spiked apple cider in the Kubota RTV. Gigi got her Christmas tree early for the occasion, dressing it with personal ornaments that she and Malik have exchanged over the years, the most recent being a glass Nintendo console, a reference to a favorite quarantine activity. "I decorated fully without my mom's help, and I think I did her proud," Gigi says.

They are a tribe publicly known for their closeness: Yolanda the doting den mother, Gigi the fresh-faced, protective older sister, Bella the edgier Veronica to Gigi's Betty, and aloof baby brother Anwar. Joining Gigi and Yolanda in the kitchen for lattes and cinnamon rolls before our horseback ride, I witness these roles confirmed. Yolanda hovers by the sink drinking a smoothie and finishing Gigi's sentences when she grasps for a word. Gigi threatens to "have a conniption" if Anwar eats her cinnamon roll when he ambles out of his cottage.

But motherhood is a new phase, and it will be up to Gigi to decide whether it belongs on the silhouette screen of social media. "I

think she wants to be real online," says Bella, 24, by phone from New York City, "but until her child wants to be in the spotlight and can make the decision herself, she doesn't want to put her in that position." Bella, who splits her time between her SoHo loft and "The Farm" (and FaceTimes with her niece and sister every morning), says she already enjoys reading books aloud that Gigi used to read to her, including *The Rainbow Fish* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. "It's pretty nostalgic," Bella says.

It could be argued that we're all hungry caterpillars this year, cocooning and comfort-eating with a hope of emerging bright-winged and vaccinated. Gigi once split her time between her condo in NoHo and the first-class cabins of airplanes. When lockdowns began, she had just returned from walking fashion shows in four countries and discovering that she was pregnant. On the other end of COVID, she will emerge as a mother, happily headquartered in rural Pennsylvania—still a supermodel but one determined to lead a more secluded, less peripatetic life. "I always want to be here full-time," she tells me. "I love the city, but this is where I'm happiest."

Furious speculation and countless think pieces have attended the question of what this time will mean: Will we slow down? Flee cities for a less frenzied, more mindful life? In many ways, Gigi is the *echt* embodiment of such ideas: the chicest, most glamorous version, yes, but also a person drawn

"I'm proud of her face on a magazine, but seeing her give birth was a whole other level of proud," Yolanda says. "You go from looking at her as a daughter to looking at her as a fellow mother"

to reassessment. "It feels like now I'm in a different place in my life," she says. And she does seem genuinely at home: At the wheel of her Chevy Silverado, after our horseback ride, she names the local farmers markets and antiques stores she likes to frequent, and ticks off the various dishes she perfected during quarantine cooking. Malik is comfortably ensconced as well, with a recording studio on his property where he's been working on his next album.

In Yolanda's classic Bucks County stone Colonial, soupçons of Jenner abound. On each corner of a white marble mantel sits a framed glamour shot of Gigi and Bella,

and at the far end of the kitchen an entire wall is hung with Gigi and Bella magazine covers in matching silver frames. "We're going to end up in the laundry room!" says Yolanda proudly. ("My *Vogue* cover is not gonna go in the laundry room!" says Gigi.) Apart from Gigi's childhood stints modeling for Guess, Gigi and Bella were shielded by their mother from the industry until they were 18. "I never wanted them to be in that life until they had some sense of who they were as human beings, as women," Yolanda explains, "and I think that worked very well."

Gigi is unfailingly polite. When she arrived 10 minutes late for our interview, she apologized profusely and seemed out of breath, as if she'd actually run here. As we settle into Yolanda's ponyskin-pillowed breakfast nook, Gigi moves an enormous split quartz crystal so we have a direct view of each other. She scrolls through her iPhone looking for photos of the baby's nursery to show me, apologizing once again and assuring me she is paying attention. She credits her mother for teaching her how to be: "She always used to say, 'There are a lot of pretty girls, and if you're not the nicest and most hardworking, there's going to be someone prettier, nicer, and more hardworking.'"

By most accounts, since Gigi began her career in 2014, she's been just that. "She is the personification of beast mode," says stylist Gabriella Karefa-Johnson, a friend since she and Gigi met on a *Vogue* shoot (at the time Karefa-Johnson was fashion assistant to *Vogue's* Tonne Goodman). "She has to master everything. Once I went into one of those escape rooms with her, and it just became *CSI: Miami*. She handled it; we escaped in record time." Karefa-Johnson, who styled *Vogue's* cover this month and these accompanying images, says that drive was on display on set. "She was dedicated to doing the job she would have done before she was spending the whole night up for feedings."

Most mothers 10 weeks postpartum are not called upon for a *Vogue* cover, but Gigi was unfazed. "I know that I'm not as small as I was before, but I also am a very realistic thinker. I straight up was like, 'Yeah, I'll shoot a *Vogue* cover, but I'm obviously not going to be a size 0,' nor do I, at this point, feel like I need to be back to that," she says. "I also think it's a blessing of this time in fashion that anyone who says that I have to be that can suck it."

Gigi doesn't feel pressure to rush back to her frenzied work schedule. She's open

to acting roles and relished her recent turn voicing herself on *Scooby-Doo*. “I’m veering toward things that feel more stable than being in a different country every week,” she says. In a way she’s achieved that stability already, producing and directing her own media content from the comfort of the farm, both for Instagram and for publications hamstrung by COVID. Long ago, Gigi became one of a handful of Supermodels 2.0, capable of delivering a multifaceted and intimate (if highly controlled) world directly to her some 62 million Instagram followers: runway shots of her closing the Chanel show; snaps of her 25th-birthday celebration seven weeks later, with the family crowded around an everything-bagel birthday cake. If quarantine threatened to throw the paparazzi-tabloid industrial complex into peril—what to report on if everyone stayed safe behind their security hedges?—it has only served to cement the power of millennial image makers like Gigi.

“I feel like we all just love cameras in general—like, I always have a Polaroid and my film camera around,” she says sweetly, zipping us across the property in the RTV, pointing out various outbuildings and pulling up in front of the neatly appointed vegetable garden, currently threaded with tufts of winter cabbage and curls of purple kale. The garden is uncannily familiar; I have glimpsed it in the background of Hadid-family Instagrams. Bella has chronicled planting baby lavender for Yolanda’s essential oils, Gigi nuzzling with Cool, her German warmblood, at the garden gate.

The farm is not so different from the secluded bougainvillea-clad Tuscan-style villa where Gigi grew up, a Montecito estate abutting John Cleese’s horse farm, where Gigi enjoyed horseback rides down to the Pacific Ocean as a girl at the local elementary. When Gigi was in high school, Yolanda moved her family to Malibu, and in 2011 she married music maven David Foster. (She and the children’s father, Mohamed Hadid, a real estate developer and businessman, had divorced some 10 years prior, though he remained active in his kids’ lives.)

The farm is, in fact, the family’s first joint financial venture, Gigi explains before leading me into a soaring timbered barn, once a boarding ground for circus animals. Elephants were housed in this high-ceilinged space, with built-in ladders under the eaves

for washing the pachyderms’ backs; tigers were kept down below in what are now the horse stalls. In a neighboring stall we pass Funky and BamBam, a pair of pygmy goats who typically have the run of the place but are in a time-out because they have been caught eating the holly and evergreen Yolanda has festively swagged on the barn doors and in the stone troughs turned planters. The goats were a gift for Anwar from his girlfriend, Dua Lipa (part of the summer quarantine crew), but it quickly became apparent they were not suited to

Gigi doesn’t feel pressure to rush back to her frenzied schedule. “I’m veering toward things that feel more stable than being in a different country every week”

New York City apartment life and they found their home at the farm. Gigi leads me above the horse barn to a guest suite that, in recent months, has also functioned as a Zoom studio. It is here that Hadid confirmed pregnancy rumors on Jimmy Fallon at the end of April. She first found out she was pregnant in February, the day before the Tom Ford show, and hid a copy of *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* behind a textbook sleeve, reading it clandestinely on planes and before shows. She felt liberated by the timing of the lockdowns, she says, noting that she would have otherwise had to work for a few more months before she started showing.

Protecting their child’s privacy is something both she and Malik have been aligned on from the beginning, she tells me. “I have friends who are public figures and that’s how they’ve gone about it, and I see their kids really blossom in a different way,” she says, citing Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds. Lively, who met her through mutual friend Swift, says she and Gigi had conversations about this early in her pregnancy. “I told her you have to do what works for you,” says the actor on the phone from her closet, where she was hiding from her three daughters. “Gigi has a really special relationship with her fans, and I love how open she is on social media. I love seeing into her world,” Lively adds, and pauses. “I’m grateful for what she shares but also understand whatever boundaries she chooses to set.”

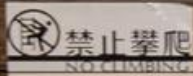
“I think she’ll definitely be raised here,” says Hadid of her daughter, looking out over the sloping fields stitched with split-rail fences. “The greenery and the farm-y lifestyle are

similar to what made me feel really centered as a kid, and I think that’s really important to Zayn and me.” She goes on, “I think that just giving your child the opportunity to explore different interests is such a beautiful thing.” This applies to the baby’s spiritual upbringing as well. “My dad’s Muslim, and my mom grew up celebrating Christmas. I felt like I was allowed to learn about every religion when I was a kid. I think it’s good to take different pieces of different religions that you connect with, and I think that’s how we’ll do that,” she says. Zayn’s father is British-Pakistani, and his mother, who is English and of Irish descent, converted to Islam. The preferred nicknames from the four grandparents reflect the baby’s rich background. Mohamed, who is Palestinian, will be Jido, *grandpa* in Arabic; Yolanda is Oma, Dutch for *grandmother*; Malik’s father will be Abu, from the Urdu; and his mother is Nini, a derivative of the British *Nana*.

“My brother, when he was in elementary school, someone said to him, ‘Your dad’s a terrorist,’ because that was after 9/11.” Gigi is earnest and thoughtful, telling me this, both hands on the wheel of her truck. “I think that [Zayn and I] both want our daughter to understand fully all of her background—and also we want to prepare her. If someone does say something to her at school, we want to give her the tools to understand why other kids would do that and where that comes from.”

Malik bought his daughter a retro pink VHS player and has purchased all the Disney cartoons as well as his favorite Bollywood films on cassette tape. Hadid says that if they’d had a boy, the nursery, thanks to Zayn, would have surely been superhero-themed (the baby dressed as the Hulk for Halloween). Instead she’s decorated it with a macramé cloud mobile, a rattan changing basket, and embroidered pillows from Anthropologie. She painted a frame for a poem Malik wrote for his daughter. “I’ve been popping off on Etsy,” she says. “I really wanted to be working toward something, and the nursery really helped me feel like we were ready.”

Gigi has written thank-you notes for every gift she has received, and there have been legions, from Simon Porte Jacquemus’s micro handbag—in this case, actually size appropriate—to a Versace-logo sweatshirt from “Auntie Donatella.” Swift, a close friend of the couple’s since she and Gigi met at an Oscar party in 2014, sent a teddy bear sewn by the CONTINUED ON PAGE 220



CREATIVITY IN MOTION

Enough with the armchair travel: We sent the best and boldest spring fashion around the world—from Beijing to Brazil and Los Angeles to Lagos—to celebrate the joy and freedom of walking, running, jumping, swimming, and dancing. Let's move.

GO FISH

Model Liu Wen charts a playful course forward in a Loewe top, skirt, and sneakers; loewe.com. Hair, Xiao Tian; Makeup, Tai Ling Yi. Fashion Editor: Alex Harrington.



PRODUCED BY BLOC PRODUCTIONS;
PHOTOGRAPHED AT LONGFU.

BEIJING
Photographed by Feng Li



SETTING SAIL

Model Shauna Brennan lets her whirlwind fashion flag fly in a Polo Ralph Lauren eyelet dress (\$598) and sneakers; ralphlauren.com. Fashion Editor: Camilla Nickerson.



COUNTY LOUTH, IRELAND
Photographed by Jackie Nickerson



HOLDING PATTERN

FROM NEAR RIGHT: Model Temidayo Sanusi wears a **Lisa Folawiyo** robe; lisafolawiyo.com. **Tom Ford** skirt; tomford.com. Model Adesuwa Aighewi wears a **Kenneth Ize** trench coat (\$1,154) and pants (\$421); kennethize.net. Model Rebecca Fabunmi wears a **Maki Oh** dress; makioh.com. **Tom Ford** skirt; tomford.com. All wear **Giuseppe Zanotti** sandals. Hair, **Olarotimi Hallimat Olamide**; makeup, **Pinheiro John Omololu**. Fashion Editor: **Gabriella Karefa-Johnson**.

She cries as she gets the vaccine. “It’s amazing, it’s amazing,” Rochelle Walensky, M.D., murmurs as a nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital pierces her deltoid with a needle. “Usually it takes 10 to 15 years. The fact that we have it in one...” Walensky shakes her head in wonder.

“Yay for science,” the nurse says.

“Yay for science,” Walensky agrees.

After vaccination, patients are monitored for an allergic reaction for 15 minutes, so Walensky—who had been chief of infectious diseases at Mass General until a few weeks ago—takes a seat in a makeshift clinic set up in the now-shuttered museum of medicine at the hospital. “It has been *so hard*,” she says, dabbing her eyes over her mask. “So much of what we do as doctors has to do with touch. With COVID all you can see are the eyes, and these patients have been so alone, without their families.” It is not the first time she’s become emotional over the toll of this pandemic. When she spoke recently at the announcement of her new job as the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she also teared up. “My kids were like, ‘*You quivered.*’” She laughs at herself. “I did! I can’t help it. I want to be strong, but when you look at all the people affected and the collateral damage, it’s *heavy.*”

There’s no doubt that Walensky, 51, has the scientific and intellectual chops for her new job. Besides her now-former position at Mass General, the teaching hospital of Harvard, she is a prolific author of papers on the epidemiology of HIV and, at 43, was among the youngest women ever promoted to full professor at Harvard Medical School. As Julie Gerberding, M.D.—who led the CDC from 2002 to 2009—says, “Her credentials and reputation are impeccable. It’s clear that the Biden administration played an ace in this decision.” It’s also clear Walensky will bring much-needed compassion to a nation reeling from the trauma of the last year. “She’s an interesting choice,” says Ingrid Bassett, M.D., an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, who counts Walensky as one of her mentors. “It shows that they understand the messenger is just as important as the message. She’s warm, she’s kind, you feel she wants to make the world a better place. People are ready to feel that sense of trust in the messenger.”

The CDC was founded in 1946 to combat malaria in the South, which is why the main campus is located in Atlanta. In the years since, it has evolved into a revered institution entrusted

CONTINUED ON PAGE 220



The Face of Hope

Rochelle Walensky, M.D., is the brilliant and compassionate new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Rebecca Johnson meets the scientist America needs now. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.



THE DOCTOR IS IN

"The enormity of this job is not lost on me," says Walensky, photographed at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she served as chief of infectious diseases before leading the CDC. Hair and makeup, Liz Washer.

Trip Adviser

As certain psychedelic drugs receive “breakthrough” status from the FDA for the treatment of serious mental-health conditions, the wellness industry is looking to commodify the science—with a polarizing response from the medical community.

Maya Singer turns on, tunes in, and drops some knowledge.

At seven o’clock on a recent evening, I dim the bedroom lights, call out a reminder to my boyfriend to rouse me in an hour with a gentle tap, and close the door. “Have a great trip,” I hear him say from the living room as the two ketamine tablets I’ve pressed into the pockets of my cheeks dissolve, leaving a bitter residue. Minutes later, I’m flying over water that reflects a sourceless golden light. Am I the light? The thought triggers a sensation of being stretched like taffy in all directions. It’s not my body being stretched—I don’t have a body anymore—but the immaterial me moving in tune with the ambient music in my headphones. I stretch and spread until at last I’ve dissolved—pixelated—at which point a small voice in my head calls out, “Do you really think this will help you quit smoking?”

The last time I was on ketamine, I was hooked up to an IV following surgery. This time, the drug—in general medical use as an anesthetic since 1970—arrived on my doorstep courtesy of Mindbloom, a new telemedicine company specializing in ketamine-based psychedelic therapy. This was no shady dark-web deal: Prescribed by a psychiatric nurse practitioner following an extensive intake evaluation, and compounded by a licensed pharmacy, the ketamine came bundled with an eye mask, a hardbound journal, and a blood-pressure cuff that I was instructed to use before and after dosing, to test my vitals. The tablets themselves were housed in a mirrored pouchette with the tagline *ACHIEVE YOUR BREAKTHROUGH* spelled out in sleek, sans serif font. I was tempted to post a shot to Instagram, but I had a Zoom call with my psychedelic-integration coach in half an hour, and I wanted to meditate first.

Welcome to the brave new world of psychedelic wellness. After decades underground, hallucinogens such as ketamine, LSD, psilocybin, and MDMA are getting a fresh look from the medical establishment, thanks to myriad studies suggesting silver bullet-like efficacy in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and addiction, among other ailments. MDMA, renowned for its bliss-inducing effect—hence the street name “ecstasy”—is on course to be approved for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) within the next year or two. Synthetic forms of psilocybin, the active compound in magic mushrooms, were given “breakthrough” designation by the FDA in 2018, allowing for fast-tracking of drug trials. Meanwhile, this past November, Oregon became the first state in the nation to legalize psilocybin for medical use, an advance not lost on the investors flocking to start-ups like MindMed and Compass Pathways, both of which are developing psilocybin treatments in anticipation of a cannabis-style psychedelics boom. A mental-health revolution is at hand—and

it’s long overdue, according to experts such as Frederick Streeter Barrett, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and a faculty member at the university’s recently opened Center for Psychedelic & Consciousness Research.

“The current model for treating problems like anxiety and depression just isn’t very good,” Barrett says. “Patients take pills every day, for years, and these medications not only have nasty side effects, they often don’t even work. But with psychedelics-assisted therapy, there’s the potential to truly alter someone’s life with just one or two sessions, because you’re getting at suffering at the source.”

I’m not suffering, exactly, but for lack of more technical language, I’ve kind of been freaking out. Straining to maintain a productive work schedule under lockdown, I fell back into the habit of smoking as I write—and soon thereafter, the habit of trying to quit. The addiction struck me as fundamentally psychological: If I was so hooked on nicotine, why did I reach for my American Spirits only when I was stuck at my desk, staring down a deadline? But reach for them I did, and the harder I worked not to—with the aid of gum, apps, hypnosis, you-name-it—the more fixated I became on the fear that I simply could not write without cigarettes. I was starting to feel truly hopeless when I stumbled across a news item about studies showing that with the aid of psilocybin, longtime smokers were quitting cold turkey and sticking with it at rates that put all other remedies to shame; two-thirds of participants in one recent study were confirmed cigarette-free after one year!

Intrigued, I did a little more digging and discovered that ketamine—a dissociative hallucinogen that is already legal for supervised medical use, including in the treatment of depression—seemed to draw out the mind in a way similar to psilocybin by putting the brain in a “neuroplastic” state, explains Julie Holland, M.D., a New York-based psychiatrist and the author of the 2020 book *Good Chemistry*. “They have different chemical properties, but both ketamine and psilocybin have an ego-dissolving effect, where you’re breaking the mental loop that’s symptomatic of conditions like depression and anxiety and addiction, and allowing the brain to form new connections.”

Maybe a little ego-dissolution was the answer, I mused as I stamped out another butt in the ashtray next to my laptop and googled “ketamine therapy—New York.” **CONTINUED ON PAGE 222**

THINKING CAPS

Psilocybin—the active compound in magic mushrooms—is one of a handful of psychedelic drugs that have shown real clinical promise in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and addiction.





Through a Screen, Brightly

For a handful of ambitious, digitally minded, and homebound new creators, the pandemic has been not a curse but a passage forward. Nathan Heller meets the most vibrant lights to emerge from a dark year.

The year 2020 began badly for Sarah Cooper—in fact, it threatened to end her career. “I was just feeling like it wasn’t really *happening*,” Cooper confesses one winter afternoon over Zoom from her WeWork office in Brooklyn. After studying economics and design, she’d spent much of her 30s working in user experience at Google. In 2014, a humorous blog post she wrote, “10 Tricks to Appear Smart in Meetings,” had gone viral, and Cooper quit her job to write and perform comedy full-time. A contract for a book followed six months later. Over six years she did stand-up in New York, released two more humor books, and wrote a pilot that was not produced. Her work had a respectable audience—she had assembled some 50,000 Twitter followers—but not a huge one, and now, at 42, she wondered whether her risky leap had left her in the roadside dust. “It was kind of a make-or-break year for me,” she says. “I told myself that if I couldn’t get a late-night set I would think about going back to Google.”

At just the moment when Cooper was working up the steam to give her dream one final push, though, the pandemic lockdowns began. The clubs where she’d performed closed, and she felt her train shiver to a halt. Worried about losing momentum, she turned to social media and started brainstorming new approaches. “I was looking for a funny series that I could do,” she says.

It was around this time that Cooper noticed President Trump was saying the most extraordinary things live on TV: UV light baths, disinfectant injections, and similar inanities. “You couldn’t *write* something better than that,” she says. She decided to lip-synch the statements for TikTok, the algorithmic social network for short user-generated videos. To distinguish her effort, she used multiple camera setups, playing not just the president but baffled figures in his audience. And instead of doing a full-on impersonation, with a tie and a wig, she dressed as herself. Her third book had been called *How to Be Successful Without Hurting Men’s Feelings*, and she saw the president as one of many swaggering, flimflaming male executives. By adopting this swagger herself, she thought that she could bring the words’ absurdity into relief. She worked at it, hard. “Usually if I can’t get something exactly the way I want it, I’ll give up on it pretty quickly—I call myself a lazy perfectionist,” Cooper says. “But with the lip-synchs I was willing to put in the effort.”

TIK TOK DON’T STOP

A cooped-up, screen-dazed audience was particularly captive for a new generation of social-media star, including Tabitha Brown (top left corner), Sarah Cooper (top row, in green), Addison Rae (top left, with pink nails), and Hiram Yarbrow (second row, with flower).

In late April, “How to Medical” appeared on TikTok, with cross-posting on Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. As of this writing, it has been watched more than 30 million times. As other videos followed, Cooper made it not just to the late-night shows but to morning TV, afternoon TV, and the virtual red carpet. In September, she released a Netflix sketch special, *Sarah Cooper: Everything’s Fine*, with a cast of stars who’d admired her work—a group ranging from Maya Rudolph to Jon Hamm to Helen Mirren. She spent much of the autumn writing a new TV show for CBS based on her last book. “It’s amazing to go from creating a 60-second TikTok to being able to create a series,” she says. “And it’s weird, because without the pandemic I wouldn’t have had these opportunities.”

For most of us, the arrival of COVID-19 meant a narrowing aperture in life, in hope, and in the opportunity to shape new and inventive projects in the world. The American death toll from coronavirus is close to that of World War II. As the pandemic’s ravages increased, whole fields of creative work went dark—from the stage to the screen, the shop window to the restaurant around the corner. “When the crisis started, we all hoped a few months of a shutdown would be followed by a rapid economic turnaround,” President Biden said shortly before being elected. “No one thought they’d lose the job for good or see small businesses shut down en masse.”

For a smaller group of people, though—those like Cooper—the razed landscape left by the coronavirus brought a cleared path. Where other people’s experience was reduction, theirs was construction. They transformed the pandemic’s sour notes into an unguent; some grew well known, and turned that fame toward providing what the country lacked, be it information, delight, creativity, or trust. At the height of the pandemic, they were working at jobs that they’d essentially invented. By the time the first vaccines arrived, they had built careers along new lines. Meet the COVID entrepreneurs—the canaries who found an escape from the noxious coal shaft of last year. Their success shaped new paths of enterprise, not only for the pandemic but for the era that approaches as it ends.

COVID entrepreneurship in the creative realm was powerful in part because it permeated many fields. We saw flights of imagination in the arts, starting in pop music: In April, Charli XCX announced plans to make an album in lockdown, using ideas and input from fans, and the result, *How I’m Feeling Now*, released the next month, won praise for its fresh intimacy—a change in tone born of its new remote-collaborative model. Maggie Rogers turned inward in a different way, releasing an album of songs from the years before her success. The artistic director of London’s

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GLOWING TERMS

Geng pairs Balmain's edgy, shoulder-sculpting pantsuit (balmain.com) with a scarf and crown from Azrar Marrakech—accessories chosen by Lamrabat to celebrate his native Morocco. Makeup, Karima Maruan. Photographed by Mous Lamrabat. Fashion Editor: Alex Harrington.





PROP STYLIST: LISA LAPAQUE, DIGITAL OPERATOR: ANAS GUAAJIDY

ALL IN

Geng is layered in texture in a ruffled Dries Van Noten dress (\$2,085; driesvannoten.com) and a traditional Moroccan wedding blanket. On her feet, Dries Van Noten sandals (\$960; driesvannoten.com); on top, a headpiece from Azrar Marrakech. Makeup, Karima Maruan. Photographed by Mous Lamrabat. Fashion Editor: Alex Harrington.

SECOND LIFE

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houses to delve into their own back catalogs and reissue versions of their greatest hits: Witness the renaissance of the Dior Saddle Bag, the Gucci Jackie 1961—the name says it all—and the Fendi Baguette. Prada even launched a line called Re-Nylon, which turns plastic and fishing nets salvaged from the ocean into their trademark satchels. “This is not just a trend,” Belloli predicts. “Technology will make people look at their wardrobes in a different way.”

Some luxury labels have already been forging partnerships with resale sites, with Stella McCartney again a forerunner: In 2017 the designer, who was thinking deeply about sustainability and overconsumption long before they were on everyone else’s radar, entered into a partnership with The RealReal, encouraging her customers to recycle and resell their Stellas. This revolutionary stance was echoed by Burberry, and last fall Gucci went a step further, not only inviting fans to part with their old pieces but putting some of their own mint stock—direct from their warehouses—up on The RealReal.

“We want sustainability to be built into the way we operate, and we want to encourage our community to really think about the idea of circularity,” says Robert Triefus, Gucci’s executive vice president for brand and customer engagement. As this year marks Gucci’s 100th anniversary, the house is also assessing how its instantly recognizable icons and symbols—all those magical Gs!—enhance the value of its vintage items. Triefus even reveals that Gucci has not ruled out selling older merchandise on its own website. “We are constantly thinking about how to enhance the life cycle of our product—and we are the best equipped to do it, since we can repair, renew, and ensure authenticity. The more that we can do to facilitate circularity, the better.”

Maybe it’s because they are so literally durable, or maybe it’s because we aren’t dressing up all that much at the moment (I mean, it’s a pandemic—where are we going?), but fine jewelry and handbags are, unsurprisingly, the hottest resale categories right now. In times of crisis, jewelry, particularly signed pieces, is almost as good as money. (In some cases, better—have you checked the price of gold lately?) Erin Hazelton, an extremely avid RealReal-er, tells me she is hell-bent on finding a large gold Tiffany Peretti bottle pendant (she already has a

pre-owned medium-size one), and I confess: I would not be averse to a vintage Cartier Tank Française at a really good price.

Charles Gorra, the founder and CEO of the handbag-resale site Rebag, says that what everyone wants these days are smaller handbags—including scaled-down Birkins and Kellys. And regardless of size, Dior and Bottega Veneta—especially Dior’s insanely popular book bag—are selling second-hand for almost as much as they garner brand-new. (On the day I Zoom with Gorra, he is in his warehouse, and in the background I can see miles of packages stacked to the rafters, ready to fly out the door.) On The RealReal, the most sought-after label is Louis Vuitton, with demand for their petite Pochette skyrocketing.

“You’re at home, focused on dollars, thinking, How can I monetize?” Gorra muses. But as eager as you are to sell? That’s likely also exactly how anxious you are to feed the beast and buy, okay, just one more bag to replace the seven you’ve already said goodbye to—after all, it’s an investment! As a sweetener, Rebag will credit you with up to 80 percent of the purchase price should you choose to part ways with any of the purses you buy from them—guaranteeing you will get some of that investment back. “It’s the idea that your risk is capped,” Gorra says. “It keeps our relationship going with the customer.” In yet another example of the felicitous marriage between resale and tech, Rebag has just launched Clair AI—image-recognition technology that promises to identify luxury handbags within seconds. Snap a photo on your phone, and Clair AI will instantly generate the price Rebag is willing to pay for it. (Do we sense a whole new party game?)

If the resale CEOs are bullish on this new way of getting and spending, customers are equally enthusiastic. No one thinks we will go back to the old days, locked in a moribund system of one-sided consumption—not when we can indulge in the pure joy of buying and selling (and then buying again!) at a time when joy may seem to be in short supply. Take the case of the downtown New York artist DeSe Escobar, who’s been able to indulge a passion for vintage Prada, circa 2008 to 2016, “especially the banana collection! I was on The RealReal every day at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., when they refresh the inventory.” (She has since moved on to a Rick Owens obsession.) Escobar prides herself on being a poster child of

circularity—she lives in a one-bedroom apartment in Chinatown, where storage space is severely limited, which means she is constantly editing, selling things, and then hitting the resale sites to replenish her wardrobe. “I get bored easily and excited for fresh things,” she says with a shrug.

And really, who among us is not excited by fresh things? We may be thinking seriously about the environment; we may finally be realizing that less is indeed more—but we still want to cheer ourselves up and enliven our days with things that are beautiful and that charm and delight us, especially in tough times. The world may be upside-down, but the thrill of wearing something new endures—even if it’s only new to you. □

GIGI IN WONDERLAND

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singer out of one of her own dresses. “It’s misshapen, and she called it Ugly Bear,” gushes Gigi. “She had one when she was little.” And Gigi keeps a journal, a simple leather unlined notebook, where she chronicled her pregnancy anxieties. “I would just write every day about what I was feeling, if I was anxious or nervous. A lot of it was ‘I hope I’m good enough to be a mom.’”

Until recently the baby had been sleeping in bed with the couple, secure in a padded DockATot. “I was a little sad to start sleep training because we loved having her,” says Gigi wistfully. “Like when I wake up and I look over and she’s already awake, laughing at the ceiling fan, I love that. It’s going to be so sad when she’s out of our room...” She trails off, her voice catching with emotion.

“You have a kid and you’re lying in bed together and you look over and you’re like, ‘Okay, what now?’ And you ask all of your friends the same questions, and everyone has a different answer. And that’s when you kind of realize that everyone figures it out for themselves,” says Gigi, serene and sincere. “And you do it in your own way, and you can take bits and pieces from people, but you’re always going to end up doing it a little bit differently. This is our way.” □

THE FACE OF HOPE

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with protecting the country’s health. “I know it doesn’t roll off the public’s tongue,” Walensky says, “but I rely on it for everything I do. If you type c in my Google search bar, the first thing that comes up is the CDC website.” For all those reasons, its missteps

in this pandemic year have been acutely painful for the scientific community. First the CDC stumbled by producing a flawed COVID-19 test early on. More recently, whistleblowers have revealed the extent to which politics have interfered with the agency's delivery of medical advice. Health memos from the CDC were being edited by the likes of Kellyanne Conway and Ivanka Trump. Lifesaving practical advice was simply ignored—when the agency sought to issue a nationwide requirement that masks be worn on all public transportation last September, the White House blocked it without discussion.

Among the agency's 13,000 or so employees, these have been dark days. Former chief Gerberding has received phone calls from employees she once worked with wondering if they could maintain their sense of integrity in such an environment. "I am not concerned about what's going on underneath the politicization," she says. "These are the same heroic scientists who did such a fantastic job on SARS and containing Ebola. They are still there." Walensky concurs. "I am not going to say there weren't missteps, but for the most part [the scientists] have been incredible." Nevertheless, getting politics out of science will be her first goal. "Political people cannot influence science," she says simply. "If they do, I won't be there."

Walensky grew up in Potomac, Maryland, the daughter of a father with a Ph.D. in mathematics and a schoolteacher mother. As a child, she excelled at math. "It's in my genes," she says. Her great-grandparents emigrated from Russia in the early part of the century, entering the United States through Ellis Island. Her parents divorced when she was 14, an experience she calls painful but one that left her with an indelible message—whatever happened in her life, she would need to be independent. She remains close to both parents, who are impatiently awaiting the pandemic's end so they can start traveling and see their grandchildren (Walensky and her husband, Loren, have three sons, ages 16, 19, and 21). To keep her mother's spirits up, she tries to talk to her daily.

Being good at math and wanting to work with people made doctoring an obvious choice. With a guaranteed acceptance at Washington University in St. Louis, she applied to only two medical schools—Harvard and Johns Hopkins. Harvard, she readily admits, rejected her. In fact, she

readily admits to a lot of failure in her life. "My CV makes it look easy, but it hasn't always been. For every paper or grant I have submitted, 80 to 90 percent of them have been rejected, which is why I tell my students they have to love the pursuit of the question." At Hopkins, she met her husband, a pediatric oncologist at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. She calls him "an amazing husband in every way" (except, perhaps, for that *Star Wars* obsession). A close-knit family, they and their boys spend their evenings at home in Newton, Massachusetts, watching the news (Tivo'ed), followed by Stephen Colbert. If the family tries to make her sit through another episode of *The Mandalorian*, the answer is no. The Walenskys seem to take special pleasure in egging one another on in friendly competition. There was the FitBit challenge Walensky set with her kids to see who could take more steps in a day. She knew that as a doctor doing rounds at a hospital, she would have an edge: "I'm winning!" she texted them.

Taking the CDC job will mean moving to Atlanta, where she will rent an apartment while leaving the family up north. Two of her boys, Seth and Matthew, will be in college, and one will be finishing his junior year of high school. She is a woman who has always put family first; is she bothered by the separation? "My entire life has been turned upside down in the last four weeks," she agrees, "but this isn't about me. This is about public service and getting us out of this hot mess." In any case, she adds, "My children know I am always there for them."

Walensky's worldview was shaped by her residency in Baltimore during the 1990s, when HIV/AIDS was ravaging the population. It could have been an irredeemably depressing experience, but her tenure coincided with the discovery of a new class of antiretroviral drugs. The resulting combination therapies would prove to be a medical miracle along the lines of the COVID vaccine. "You were going to die in September," she recalls, "but by February we could say, 'Maybe you won't.'" A generation of doctors was inspired by this era—some 30 percent of Walensky's class at Johns Hopkins would go into infectious diseases, she estimates, even though it is one of the medical specialties with the lowest salary. "It's a cerebral field," she explains. "We don't do procedures. When someone has been in the hospital for two months and then they spike a fever, that's

when they will call in infectious diseases. We will pore through every culture that was done, and it may take two hours, but you can't bill for that work as well as you could if you had done a colonoscopy." Not that she's complaining. "It makes for a happy, fulfilled group of doctors." Indeed, a new generation of physicians may be similarly inspired by the miracle of COVID vaccination—applications to med school are up an unprecedented 18 percent this year. (If so, they will likely be Democrats—Walensky likes to cite a Yale study that found infectious-disease doctors are the most blue of any specialty. Surgeons were the least.)

Walensky's work with drug addicts in the '90s taught her some fundamental truths about long-standing inequities in our culture and the limits of medicine. She could write a prescription, but getting a patient to change his or her life was something else. "When you ask someone to stop doing drugs, you are essentially saying, 'You know all those contacts in your phone? Throw them out. In fact, throw out your whole phone because all those people know your number, and they are going to be calling you.' It's hard."

To make individual choices easier, she began to view her science through the lens of advocacy. As an example, she tells me about her first bylined paper in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. By the early 2000s, the treatment for HIV was changing lives, but the disease was still spreading, due to a lack of routine screening in the medical community. The people spreading it were unaware of being infected. "The CDC actually had routine screening as policy, but it was one of its most ignored," Walensky points out. "So I used my tool kit of epidemiology, math modeling, and cost effectiveness to make the case for it. There were other papers, but ours was among those that show the science to make such screening possible. It was a thrilling moment because I knew things were going to be better."

One of the challenges she will face at the CDC is persuading vaccine-reluctant people to get the shot. Does this hesitancy frustrate you? I ask. "I don't think it matters if it frustrates me," she answers. "We need to understand the 'why' behind the hesitancy. In medical school we were taught to stay quiet after giving someone a new HIV diagnosis. It's a painful, awful pause, but you need it so you can learn what they're thinking. That diagnosis means different things to different people. Maybe they're

wondering, 'Am I going to die?' or 'Is my kid infected?' 'Will I lose my job?' Until you know what the diagnosis means for that person, you can't address the next question. I think it's similar with vaccine hesitancy. Are you worried about the side effects? Is it because you have no place to leave your kid while you get vaccinated? Are you worried about the science? We can't address the noes until we understand them."

Of course, even the people who give an enthusiastic yes to the vaccine have faced difficulty getting it, something she attributes to an initial misallocation of resources. "The budget for Operation Warp Speed was in the billions; the budget for the rollout was in the millions," she says. "This isn't something you just drop off at the front door." From the moment she accepted the job, she has been meeting with President Biden and a multidisciplinary group including FEMA officials and supply-chain, data, and community experts to figure out the optimal way of distributing the dose. "We are," she said, "treating this like the emergency it is." She admits the way forward is going to be difficult, but at least it will be transparent. "The states haven't been able to plan, because they haven't known how much vaccine they're going to get. How do you open a stadium if you don't know what you have? We have a vision for making it better."

I went looking for someone who might be skeptical of Walensky in her new position. She is, after all, going from overseeing a staff of 100 to a staff of more than 10,000. No small jump. But I couldn't find a single naysayer. By contrast, her predecessor, Robert Redfield, M.D., was strenuously opposed by the consumer-advocacy group Center for Science in the Public Interest. Even Twitter swooned over the appointment. As one doctor wrote, "This has sent me into a sort of public health euphoria!" The only person expressing trepidation might be Walensky herself. "A female mentor once said to me, 'Any job you're not a little afraid of isn't big enough.' The enormity of this job is not lost on me. It's a big job, but I don't think the fundamentals of leadership change with the number of people working under you. You've got to credit those people and understand that they are trying to do the right thing. The personal touch matters. Feeling valued is so important."

At Mass General, the stories of that personal touch are commonplace. "Everybody remembers their first impression of

Rochelle," says Jacqueline Chu, M.D., another doctor Walensky has mentored. "She fills the room. Her investment in me has made me think that if she believes in me, then maybe I can step into this role. And she doesn't just do it for me; she does it for everyone she meets with. I often wonder where she gets the time or energy, but I think caring about people is what fills her tank. At least, that's how she makes you feel." She was so adept at being both friend and mentor—"I'm wearing my friend hat now" is one of her signature phrases—that a colleague once gifted her a baseball hat emblazoned with the word FRIEND. It hung prominently on a hook in her office. And now the nation is going to get a chance to be her friend. Says Chu, "Her light and energy are going to be great for this country." □

TRIP ADVISER

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"The truth is, we don't really know how this stuff works," Michael Pollan, author of the best-selling psychedelics primer *How to Change Your Mind*, tells me. "A leading theory is that psychedelics quiet the brain's 'default-mode network,' and that opens up new pathways for thought." As Pollan goes on to explain, the default-mode network is where "the ego has its address"—it's the part of our brains where we construct the narrative of who we are and, thus, the place we get stuck in destructive thought patterns about ourselves. "That could be 'I'm a worthless person who doesn't deserve love,' or it could mean telling yourself that you can't get through the day without smoking," Pollan continues. "Either way, the idea is that, by muffling those thoughts, psychedelics help you out of the rut."

Pollan's précis on the science of psychedelics is reassuringly down-to-earth. For years, I'd been put off by the drugs' woo-woo connotations, and to judge by the refined, minimalist aesthetics of new ketamine-therapy chains such as Field Trip Health, which has serene locations in New York City, Toronto, Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles, I'm not the only person with zero interest in a tie-dye mental makeover. It's all a far cry from Timothy Leary and *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. But Leary—who famously conducted psychedelics experiments at Harvard in the early 1960s, before he ran afoul of the law and, in turn, helped prompt the criminalization of psilocybin and LSD—does continue to exert

an influence: His "set and setting" theory is a cornerstone of all contemporary psychedelics-aided therapy. "*Set* basically refers to mindset, going into your journey, and *setting* is your environment," explains Ronan Levy, who cofounded Field Trip in 2019 after establishing—then selling—Canada's largest network of cannabis clinics. "They matter as much as the drug you're taking," he continues. "You need to be in a place—mentally and physically—where you feel inspired and at ease."

Because I'd chosen to work with Mindbloom, thanks to their COVID-friendly process, the setting for my four, hour-long treatments, was my bedroom. To be perfectly clear, I wasn't microdosing. Nor was I popping a pill just to see what colors spilled out of my head. Prior to receiving my Mindbloom package, I spent over an hour on Zoom with a board-certified psychiatric nurse practitioner who quizzed me on everything from my family medical history to my typical responses to stress. (According to Mindbloom founder and CEO, Dylan Beynon, about 35 percent of potential patients are screened out at this point, for reasons such as past experience of psychosis or, at the other end of the spectrum, not meeting the threshold for a diagnosis of anxiety and/or depression.) "Set" was established in conversation with Laura Teodori, my psychedelic-integration-support coach, who—after obtaining confirmation from my boyfriend that he'd check on me every 20 minutes—helped me formulate an "intention" for the trip immediately after our call. My goal, we ascertained, was to recall moments in my life when I could create without smoking. With that in mind, I tucked the tablets inside my mouth, pressed play on the Mindbloom-curated soundtrack that would be piping through my headphones, lowered my eye mask, and waited for my default-mode network to go off-line.

Hallucinogens come in many forms, from the low-dose ketamine I was taking to wallop-packing plant medicines, like ayahuasca and ibogaine and peyote, that have been used in sacred rituals for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years (and that are illegal in the United States). But a feature common to all is the sense of coming into contact with the cosmic. "It's like there's no boundary between you and others, or you and the universe," notes Johns Hopkins' Barrett, saying that virtually all subjects in psilocybin

studies have reported such a feeling of oneness. “Some people call this an experience of God, or nirvana.” I went into my first ketamine journey matter-of-factly, with a problem to solve, and even so, that first trip commenced with a vision of the world rewinding, a kind of reverse big bang that exposed the heretofore invisible filaments connecting everyone and everything. The vision moved me—tears puddled behind my eye mask—and then it yielded to more personal impressions, such as a recurring image of myself, age six or seven, playing with my dollhouse.

“What do you think was important about the dollhouse?” Teodori asked me in our post-trip call. I was still pretty woozy as we Zoomed—the effect wore off by the next day—but suddenly, it was like a light bulb went on in my head. “I think... I think I was remembering what it felt like to create without smoking,” I told her. “When there wasn’t any pressure, and I could just play.”

This download is part of integration, another cornerstone of modern psychedelic medicine. “The goal is to take advantage of the neuroplastic state, which lasts for about a week after dosing,” explains Beynon. “You want the changes in your brain to stick, so the question becomes, How do you turn these new thoughts into new behaviors?” For me, this entailed finding ways to get back in touch with that dollhouse sense of play.

Easier said than done. My ketamine experiences were clarifying and often even profound, but they didn’t change certain nerve-racking facts of life, such as that I write for a living and thus have deadlines to meet if I wish to pay my bills. Or that it’s hard—like, really hard—to stay motivated in the midst of a global pandemic, when each day brings fresh spurs to panic and depression. “There’s a huge mental-health crisis happening parallel to, and in response to, this pandemic,” notes Benjamin Brody, M.D., assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York, and chief of the Division of Inpatient Psychiatry at the university hospital, where ketamine infusions are typically administered. “People who are grieving, people who have lost jobs, people who are feeling disconnected, whose lives have been upended....” With demand for care rising “across the board,” as Brody notes, it’s no surprise that psychiatrists such as Amanda Itzkoff, M.D., are seeing a huge uptick in inquiries about ketamine therapy. But it

may or may not be the right tool for every job, Itzkoff points out.

“The thing is, if you got laid off and you don’t know how you’re going to pay rent, ketamine won’t change that,” says Itzkoff, an early adopter who has been providing ketamine infusions at her Manhattan practice since 2014. “It doesn’t remove the external pressures. But when you’ve got someone with severe depression, who has kind of given up, then there’s real promise in this treatment.” Itzkoff cites the example of a former patient, a high-powered attorney and mother of two, who was on disability and “almost catatonic” when they began working together. “She had to be retrieved from this state,” recalls Itzkoff. “By breaking the negative thought loop—even temporarily—you show someone it’s possible to feel another way. And that,” she adds, “can be channeled toward getting people back on their feet.”

Chad Kuske didn’t just get back on his feet following his first psilocybin treatment a year and a half ago; he experienced what he calls an immediate and profound “sense of meaning and a desire to live.” A former Navy SEAL, Kuske, 40, had tried psychoanalysis and various pharmaceuticals before being medically retired from the service in 2017. Reentering civilian life, he found himself using drugs and alcohol as a way of coping with the anxiety, depression, and alienation that he now comprehends as the symptoms of PTSD. “Nothing else had worked. And I knew that sooner or later, if I kept doing things the same way, my life would be over—either literally or metaphorically, like I’d wind up in jail,” Kuske explains. “The mushrooms helped me see my situation clearly: I was in hell, but it was a hell of my own creation, and I could make the choice whether to stay there and suffer or leave and start the work of changing.”

One of the key insights Kuske has taken away from his trips—and from his integration process, which is ongoing—is that he’s not alone in struggling to meet the challenges of daily life. Likewise, Itzkoff suggests that the feeling of interconnectedness induced by psychedelic therapy—and near-psychedelics, such as ketamine and MDMA—may help alleviate the isolation brought on by COVID. It may also play a role in helping the people hardest hit by the pandemic recuperate: Nautilus Sanctuary, a nonprofit psychedelics-research and training center in New York, is already planning a study exploring the use of MDMA to treat frontline workers with severe

PTSD—one of the many inquiries to expand on the drug’s groundbreaking FDA trials sponsored by the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), which entered phase three in 2017. Other studies sponsored by the organization have focused on veterans in Israel and the United States, and the Department of Veterans Affairs has exhibited a willingness to approve such studies, so long as they are safe, beneficial, and scientifically sound. This kind of conservative approach is merited, notes Weill Cornell’s Brody. “I’m very concerned about this atmosphere, that the floodgates are opening. I work with ketamine, a drug that’s been in use for decades, and even there, we don’t know all that much about its long-term effects,” says Brody, who provides ketamine-infusion therapy only to patients in whom he’s observed severe, treatment-resistant depression—and who was positively aghast when I relayed rumors that self-dosing with inhalers of esketamine, a synthetic form of the drug given FDA approval for supervised use in 2019, was all the rage in L.A. “Ketamine is a serious drug!” he reiterates. “This isn’t a spa service. It’s not like getting Botox. And what worries me about all these clinics popping up is that people are going to start thinking about it that way.”

Brody is hardly alone in fearing the commercialization of psychedelics—a trend that, if canny investors like Peter Thiel, a backer of Compass Pathways, are correct, is on pace to increase rapidly. “It’s a unique space because so much of the technology has been developed by Indigenous healers,” notes Pip Deely, cofounder of the venture-capital firm Delphi, which is eyeing investments in psychedelics start-ups and supporting a new psilocybin-legalization campaign in Hawaii. “We see a lot of dread that if this all goes the way of cannabis, the people who have been doing this work the longest will be cut out of the conversation, and those Indigenous roots will be erased.” Unprompted, I hear a version of this concern from one Berkshires-area healer who, for legal reasons, prefers to remain unnamed; she tells me that, although she supports expanding access to psychedelics, she worries about the experience becoming pro forma and “clinical.”

Though they come at their misgivings from opposite angles, both traditional healers and Brody are wary of psychedelics’ getting marketed as a quick fix—and in all honesty, I’m the target demographic for that pitch. When I sat down at my computer to fill

out Mindbloom's candidate questionnaire, what I wanted was to detangle a few mental wires. By the time I'd completed my final ketamine treatment, I'd come to realize that those wires were crossed very deep down: My writing-while-smoking problem was really a problem with the little voice in my head telling me that I'm not good enough, I haven't achieved enough, I'm falling behind. As I wrote in my integration journal after my second session, "Every little deal is a big deal." I added a frowny face to underline the point.

I can't blame Mindbloom for my failure of mindset. All my conversations with Teodori were oriented around getting me to probe the heart of my fears, and she was diligent in supporting me as I attempted to integrate the lessons of my journeys into daily life, checking in with me every few days via text and reminding me that she was always available to talk. Alas, I didn't take her up on that offer as often as I should have—I had a ton of writing to do!—and in the end, I felt changed but not transformed. Which could be a me thing, or it could be a drug thing. Barrett of Johns Hopkins pointed me to studies from the university's Center for Psychedelic & Consciousness Research indicating that, where smoking cessation is concerned, the more "mystical" the trip, the more effective the treatment. "There's a big difference between a low dose of ketamine and taking what we call a 'breakthrough' dose of psilocybin," he notes. "That's where you're really going to break down your sense of self."

Is that what I want? Is that what we all want, in some subconscious way? "There's a spiritual hunger these medicines satisfy," Pollan points out, and I can attest that once you've visited the astral plane, you want to go back. Most hallucinogens are not physically addictive, but the psychedelic experience is itself addicting. I spoke to numerous people for this story who described their encounters with psychedelics as "life changing" in ways large and small; one woman even credited peyote with restoring movement to her paralyzed arm. But Ann Watson's account is the most relatable. A former VP and fashion director at Henri Bendel in New York City, and now a cochair of The Vaquera Group, a global marketing firm, Watson, 52, is also a self-described "explorer" who, like me, kept a pretty tight lid on her deepest, darkest feelings—until she began working with psychedelics 12 years ago. "My childhood was chaotic; there was a lot of abandonment, but I didn't associate with the word *trauma*,

because I thought it was reserved for people who have experienced things like rape or war. But I was seeking something," explains Watson, who tried a variety of treatments to relieve an "ever-present vibration of anxiety," including counseling and prescribed antidepressants, before experimenting with a long list of psychedelics. Eventually she arrived at a treatment plan with a doctor in Los Angeles she sees four times a year for guided psilocybin trips; she also microdoses psilocybin on a more regular basis, mixing magic mushrooms with Lion's Mane. "It's an ongoing process," she tells me. "The thing is, once you start looking inward, you realize there's always more to see."

Perhaps that is the main takeaway from my own journey: that I'm just at the start of it. I have work to do on myself. But in the meantime, I also have work to do, period—as in, I'm on deadline for this piece. And I regret to inform you that as I write these words, I am indeed smoking. □

THROUGH A SCREEN, BRIGHTLY

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Old Vic theater, Matthew Warchus, maintained a season of sorts by presenting plays in livestream, with an admissions fee (as the Vic cheekily put it, all tickets "offer the same view"), not only helping to keep actors in feed but democratizing and internationalizing the stage. In New York, the Public Theater offered up the latest of playwright Richard Nelson's Apple-family saga; but this time, the characters, whom audiences had met in traditional theater settings in the past, reunited on Zoom, with "theatergoers" eavesdropping on their live antics.

One hundred and ten thousand restaurants—17 percent of all those in the United States—shuttered permanently in 2020, and most of those that didn't merely got by. But some culinary visionaries without big staffs and spaces saw opportunities to do the whole food business differently. DeVonn Francis, a young food-and-events creator in New York, moved the work of his company, Yardy, onto Instagram Live, hosting salon-type dinners with writers and artists. The event planner Samantha Rees, a former *Vogue* staffer, created a food-box service in New York, delivering curated meals (picnic boxes in the summer, holiday-food boxes in the winter) that sold out by mid-December.

Other fields became increasingly global under the gaze of a homebound, screen-dazed population. Elsa Majimbo, a teenage

comedian from Nairobi, soared to Instagram popularity—and a seven-figure following—with funny dispatches on pandemic living. ("I literally lost an hour of my life just going through all your Instagram feed," Anderson Cooper, a fan, confessed while interviewing her on-air.) What all these entrepreneurs shared was a willingness to move away from the old structures of validation and legitimacy and to build an audience directly—even if that meant a captive audience desperate to forget the chaos and disorder of the moment and embrace new hope. For a new generation of creators and consumers alike, the pandemic was a chance to break away and begin again.

No surprise, then, that the platform most synonymous with COVID entrepreneurship—its great acceleration tube, really—has been TikTok. Many locked-down people, it seems, felt impatient with the sardonic newsmongering of Twitter; detached from the polished, proud world of Instagram; and distrustful of crazed Facebook. TikTok, known for its youngish demographic and upbeat, often goofy tone, felt more uplifting, and friendlier to feelings of community at a distance. The platform's base of monthly active users in the United States nearly tripled from fall 2019 to late summer in 2020, an expansion that helped many entrepreneurs find their audiences, even those more comfortable on other platforms. (Sarah Cooper still considers herself a Twitter person.) And for those who had strong voices already, TikTok brought an added boost.

"When I got on TikTok, I was in a whirlwind," Tabitha Brown, a charismatic breakout star of vegan-cooking videos, says. Brown had spent her youth trying to make it as an actor but never broke through. In 2017, she happened to make a social-media recording from her car as she volubly enjoyed a Whole Foods tempeh-bacon, tomato, lettuce, and avocado sandwich. ("Honey, Whole Foods," she proclaimed, "my soul cries out, *Hallelujah!*") When her exuberance went viral, Whole Foods hired her as a brand ambassador. She assembled a following on Facebook and Instagram, and a lineup of sponsorships. Then the pandemic hit, and her teenage daughter suggested she branch out onto TikTok.

"When she mentioned it to me, I was like, 'Girl, I don't need to get on no TikTok—that's a lot of kids on there!'" Brown says. But her daughter persisted ("She was like, 'You'd be the TikTok mom'"), so Brown

toed in. “The first video was me trying to do a dance with my daughter, and I was like, Okay, that ain’t it for me,” Brown says, in an airy Los Angeles home she has just moved into. “So I thought, Let me see if I can do, like, a recipe. That video went viral in the first day or two. And when I started reading the comments, the things that they were saying were ‘Oh, my gosh, it’s like the mom I never had,’ ‘I wish she was my aunt,’ or ‘Her smile feels like a hug.’ That was when I realized, They need me on here.”

As of this writing, Brown has a following of nearly five million on TikTok, where, several times a week, smiling and gentle-voiced, she releases videos—often minute-long vegan recipes, but sometimes soothing affirmations, pepped up by her vivid clothes. (“I think color makes people happy,” she says.) She employs a small repertoire of signature phrases: “That’s your business,” Brown exclaims with relatable leniency, as in “Add two slices because that’s your business!” And she often involves members of her family in videos, working to stay warm and upbeat on camera. It isn’t always easy; these days Brown leads a team on a tight schedule. “A lot of days start on a Zoom call, and then I head on into my kitchen. If I’m making some breakfast, I’m usually recording that for TikTok or Instagram or whatever,” she says. “I have a son who is eight, and he’s homeschooling, of course.” Afternoons are spent in meetings—especially because, since her following exploded, recording videos is just one thing Brown does.

In April, Brown began hosting a show, *All Love*, on the Ellen Digital Network. She hosts another, *Fridays With Tab & Chance*—her husband—on IGTV. She spends many afternoons making voice recordings for the writing of two books that she is bringing out; she has, for a while, had a merchandise line and, in January, brought out a hair-care line, too. (“It’s called Donna’s Recipe, because I call my hair Donna.”) For years, Brown tried to make it as an actor playing other people. The big turn in her life was realizing people simply wanted her the way she was.

“I hold the phone very close to my face when I’m doing videos, because I want it to feel like a FaceTime,” she explains. “I want it to be so far away from acting, just me and my free self.” Brown’s career path, like Cooper’s, is notable because until last year it didn’t exist: There were influencers who made a living from sponsorships, but the idea of a 41-year-old mom and amateur

vegan chef going from TikTok presence to multifaceted business maven in mere months is new, although the destinations are familiar. “I see myself on a sitcom of some sort and even, maybe later, a drama,” Brown says. “But ultimately, in the years to come, I would love a talk show.”

For truly new ways through the world, all eyes—and hearts—are on Generation Z, for whom COVID entrepreneurship is entrepreneurship *tout court*. Nobody has gained more of a career from the pandemic than a 20-year-old TikTok-er named Addison Rae Easterling, who online goes by Addison Rae. As recently as the summer of 2019, Addison Rae was not just unknown; she had no prospects for being knowable. Growing up in Louisiana and Texas, she had studied dancing and hoped, as many kids do, to make it one day in entertainment. Yet the furthest she had moved in that direction was deciding to study sports broadcasting at Louisiana State University. During the summer before college, on a whim, she downloaded TikTok. “I was just posting lip-synching videos with my friends, and then my videos started randomly getting likes. I thought it was so crazy,” she recalls. At one point she and her mother danced to a Mariah Carey song, and Mariah Carey, to their surprise, liked it. By the time Addison Rae started college, in the fall of 2019, she had 300,000 followers; by late October, she had a million. “I was like, Okay, I know if I can get a million followers on a platform, I can take this and make my dreams come true.”

Addison Rae’s parents gave her the go-ahead to move to Los Angeles, and more: The entire family followed her out. That was the start of 2020, and by then she had signed with a talent agency to make a living from sponsorships. Today, Addison Rae is the second-most-followed person on TikTok (the first, Charli D’Amelio, is a dancer in her mid-teens) and the platform’s highest earner, reportedly pulling in \$5 million in the 12 months preceding June 2020. As of this writing, she commands more than 73 million TikTok followers—a group larger than the entire nation of France.

“The time I began to gain followers really fast was right around when lockdown started up,” she says. “So many people weren’t able to go places, and they were on their phones.” (On TikTok, she became known for her lip-synch dance videos, though she

also sometimes does short conversations and around-the-house snapshots.) Last year, Addison Rae launched a merchandise line through the e-commerce site Fanjoy and cofounded her Item Beauty line. With her mother, she launched a podcast, *Mama Knows Best*, that has been downloaded in 80 countries, and by late 2020 she was in the midst of filming her first movie, *He’s All That*, a gender-flipped remake of the 1999 original. Along the way, she took on celebrity friends, including Karlie Kloss and Jason Derulo, and began a much paparazied romance with another TikTok-er, the tousle-haired Bryce Hall. Rome may not have been built in a day, but Addison Rae’s empire very nearly was: Everything—the path from random LSU freshman to international star with a film career, global retail and media concerns, and hundreds of thousands of new TikTok followers daily—happened in less than a year.

Asked to account for her success, she notes her “authenticity”: She does a few takes of her videos, but she doesn’t overthink them, and she includes other people in her life, from Hall to her parents (whose own accounts, on which they also, perhaps surprisingly, dance, now have millions of followers, too).

If there’s a theme to the most successful COVID entrepreneurship, in fact, it is authentic self-differentiation, not just in style but in message. Hiram Yarbrow, a 24-year-old with a short whoosh of hair and a bubbly manner, grew up on a cattle ranch in Arizona, baling hay and branding livestock. At some point he realized that he was more interested in matters of the face, so he moved to Honolulu, where he still lives, and worked as a makeup artist at Saks Fifth Avenue. “I saw people spending thousands of dollars on skin-care products, and I was wanting to know why—what were the ingredients that justified that price point?” He started poring over labels closely, researching each ingredient and trying products himself. (Yarbrow says he has exceptionally fast-aging skin, which drove his interest.) “There were amazing resources out there—dermatologists, aestheticians, chemists—but I was having a hard time finding people who just broke down the information as simply as possible,” he says. After a while, Yarbrow began posting YouTube reviews, under the handle Skin Care by Hiram. “I thought I’d get 10,000 followers at most,” he says. “In my dreams, 100,000.”

At the beginning of March, not long after expanding onto TikTok (he liked its split-screen editing capacity, which he uses to critique young celebrities' skin-care regimens), Yarbro had indeed made it to 100,000 TikTok followers as a "skinfluencer." Then the pandemic came, and within six months, his following had ballooned beyond six million. "In this time where mental health is just so bad, we're all stressed, and that translates to the skin," he says. "I think with the extra amount of time that people had at home, they were realizing, Oh, I don't need to have a full face of makeup every day. I can invest in my skin."

In September, *The New York Times* pronounced Yarbro the most influential arbiter of the global skin-care market for young demographics. But grown-ups recognized the appeal of what he does, too. His videos

might explain specifically why one \$200 luxury-brand skin cream is worse than a \$20 tube from the drugstore, or which little-known product is worth seeking out. (He's a big fan of South Korean sunscreens.) He keeps a running list of verboten ingredients, such as methylchloroisothiazolinone and polyvinyl alcohol, and can distill the vast skin-care aisle into a handful of specific endorsements. At first, much of his research came from deep rabbit holes on the Web and dermatologists on social media, and he continues to monitor skin-care developments closely. He sees himself as a translator and synthesizer of expertise, rather than as an expert himself.

Most appealingly, he's honest. "I remember a really pivotal moment, when I started to see a little bit of pickup and I realized, Okay, Hiram, if you're really wanting to utilize your YouTube presence as a business

opportunity, it would be smart for you to not be so *principled*, I guess you could say, when it comes to ingredients and formulations and price points," he recalls. "It wasn't a difficult decision. I was like, You know what? I'm just going to be brutally honest."

As it turned out, brutal honesty was good business. These days, Yarbro's operation makes its money from highly competitive sponsorships (he accepts four out of nearly 1,000 offers a month), but he's known for slamming his sponsors' products alongside everybody else's. "I've had so many moments where I tell sponsors, 'I could talk about this—I'm probably going to rip it to shreds because I don't like it.'" Some sponsors back away on hearing that. But many don't. They want Yarbro because he's the authority, and that's because he has his viewers' trust. "When you shop with your

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148–149: Cropped top (price upon request), skirt (price upon request), and sneakers (\$750); loewe.com. Manicure, Wendy Wen. **150:** Leather coat (\$10,800) and skirt jumpsuit (price upon request). Manicure, Lucy Falck. **151:** Skirt, \$4,950. Tailor, Susie's Custom Designs. **152:** Dress (\$3,800) and sneakers (\$750). Manicure, Wendy Wen. **153:** Dress, \$2,611. **154–155:** Sneakers, \$98. **156:** On Esparza: Coat, price upon request. On Rea: Dress, price upon request. **157:** Dress and sneakers, priced upon request. **158:** On Qaasim: Coat (\$3,700) and shoes (\$920). On Amrit: Prada shoes (\$920); prada.com. **159:** Jumpsuit (price upon request) and mules

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On Sheikh: Pants, \$1,205; saksfifthavenue.com. Sandals, \$725; bloomingdales.com. On Thapa: Dress, \$3,295. Boots, \$745; jw Anderson.com. **173:** Jacket, \$4,190. Boots, \$920; celine.com. **174–175:** On Sanusi: Tailor, Cha Cha Zutic. Amato New York gloves, \$127; amatonewyork.com. Wolford tights, \$49; wolfordshop.com. Sandals, \$895; giuseppezanotti.com. On Aighewi: Legacy necklace, cross, and shoulder chain. Sandals, \$1,095; giuseppezanotti.com. On Fabunmi: Skirt, \$2,650. Amato New York gloves, \$231; amatonewyork.com. Sandals, \$895; giuseppezanotti.com. Legacy necklace and bracelet. **176:** Blazer, \$2,700. **177:** Feather-trimmed dress (\$7,490) and black dress, underneath (price upon request). Hat, \$650; ericjavits.com. Falke socks, \$27; bloomingdales.com. Boots, \$990; alexandermcqueen.com. **178–179:** Belt, \$690.

best friend at the cosmetics store, they're not saying everything's good," he says. "Your friends are going to tell you, 'Oh, that product is terrible—don't get that.' 'Oh, get that one—that one's amazing.'" For Generation Z, candor and trust, more than polish and dynamism, are near the heart of power. "I saw a lot of people on so many different platforms saying, 'We just can't trust anyone. I wish there were someone I could trust.'"

At the moment, Yarbro's time is divided among his TikTok and YouTube videos; an online "community network," where his fans talk with him and one another; recommendation channels at retailers such as Amazon; and a slew of mainstream talk shows. But the skinfluencer thing, he says, is just the cornerstone of something bigger. "What I've always wanted to do most in my life is focus on philanthropy—helping people get

access to basic human rights, and talking about global social issues," he says. "I've been able to see how my videos have an impact on the skin-care industry, and my goal is to replicate that within the human rights and philanthropy space as well."

Many COVID entrepreneurs share that outward orientation, almost as if a more authentic path allows their human interests to shine through. Through all the years when Sarah Cooper was styling herself as an office-humor comic, she notes, she felt she had to suppress a part of her voice that was political, opinionated, and engaged. "Politics and the office don't usually mix, and so I was trying to create this space where politics didn't exist," she says. "I got to a point where I was like, I can't. I'm kind of hiding part of myself by doing this."

That anxiety faded with her newfound success. "I got to be very authentic this year, and that's what I always wanted to be—that's part of the reason I left Google, because I felt like I couldn't really be myself and represent Google," she says. "I feel like I am getting to say everything that I want to say."

For Cooper, that means diving into the work and carrying the career she built this year into the world beyond it. Whether specific new forms of enterprise, such as hers, will survive the return of more conventional paths is anyone's guess. What's likely to remain, though, is a realization that the channels forward are much broader than creative people had supposed. "I'm hoping to just focus on writing shows and maybe another special and maybe movies eventually," she says. "Hopefully, by the time the pandemic is over, my 15 minutes won't be up." □

180: Jumpsuit, \$10,500. Pumps, \$1,480; louisvuitton.com.

181: Dress (price upon request) and boots (\$1,140). **183:** Loewe sneakers, \$750; loewe.com. **184:** Dress, price upon request. Sneakers, \$620; marni.com. **185:** Dress (price upon request) and boots (\$690). **186:** Dress (\$5,630) and hat (\$450; similar styles at etro.com). **187:** Tailor, Holly Harris. **188:** Dress, \$4,550. Dannijo earrings, \$220; dannijo.com. Falke tights, \$35; matchesfashion.com. Shoes, \$565; ghazalparis.com. Tailor, Hailey Desjardins.

189: Dress, price upon request. Kenneth Jay Lane earrings, \$190; kennethjaylor.com. Shoes, \$750; marinamoscone.com. Tailor, Hailey Desjardins.

190: Dress, \$3,460. Tailor, Cha Cha Zutic. **191:** Jacket, \$5,530. Earrings, \$795.

192–193: On Chaoyu: Dress (\$5,500), sunglasses (\$505), and necklaces (\$2,800–\$2,950). On He: Dress (\$3,800) and sunglasses (\$505). **194:** Top, price upon request. Boots, \$170; drmartens.com.

195: Coat, \$6,745. Tailor, Lucy Falck.

FORCES OF NATURE

202: Dress, \$3,065; simonerocha.com. Mask, price upon request; contact @arielbrickman.artist for information. Mateo pearl dangling earring, \$750 for pair; mateonewyork.com. Cathy Waterman earring, \$8,530 for pair; cathywaterman.com.

203: Mask, price upon request; contact @arielbrickman.artist for information. Earrings, \$1,400; lisaisnerjewelry.com. **204–205:** On Chloe: Dress, \$17,900. Earring, \$6,700 for pair; lenchanteur.co. On Halle: Dress, \$17,000. Earring, \$5,500; lenchanteur.co. **206–207:** On Halle: Top (\$16,600)

and skirt (\$18,000). On Chloe: Dress, \$29,500. **209:** On Halle: Dress, \$3,590. Earrings, \$6,050; loren-nicole.com. On Chloe: Dress, price upon request; (800) 929-DIOR. Earrings, \$7,500; loren-nicole.com. In this story: Manicurist, Naoko Saita. Tailor, Susie's Custom Designs.

BRIGHT DAYS

210: Sneakers, \$750; loewe.com. Headpiece, \$800; soufiane-zarib.com. **214:** Jacket (\$2,815) and pants (\$1,015).

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218–219: 7. Roller skates, \$4,700. 13. Necklace, \$12,000.

LAST LOOK PAGE 234

PHOTOGRAPHED AT
THE FOUR SEASONS
RESORT LANAI.

FIRST LOOK

230: Top (price upon request) and pants (\$2,700); prada.com. Manicurist, Jolene Brodeur. Tailor, Susie's Custom Designs.

LAST LOOK

234: Skateboard, \$2,350; louisvuitton.com.

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GIVENCHY



First Look



ROLE PLAY

LEFT: THE SINGER AND ACTOR ANDRA DAY IN A PRADA TOP AND PANTS, CARTIER RING. FASHION EDITOR: MAX ORTEGA. FAR LEFT AND BELOW: TO PLAY BILLIE HOLIDAY, DAY WENT METHOD, ADOPTING HOLIDAY'S ERA-SPECIFIC BUMPER BANGS AND WEARING HER SIGNATURE SCENT ON SET.

All That Jazz

WHEN DIRECTOR LEE DANIELS set out to make *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*, a new Hulu biopic that will premiere on February 26 about the legendary Lady Day, adapted from *Chasing the Dream*, Johann Hari's 2015 book about the war on drugs, he certainly wasn't trying to cast an unknown with no previous acting experience. "Many people told me to meet with Andra because she is a singer and her last name is Day. But I hate doing what other people say," Daniels jokes of his initial talent search for Holiday, whom he portrays as an unsung civil rights activist speaking truth to power with her chill-inducing vocals. But he was smitten by Day, the 36-year-old, Los Angeles-based R & B singer whose impressive performance is fueled by raw talent—and some very good hair and makeup. "It was a pretty significant transformation," Day reveals of the process of getting into character, which included

cutting off her hip-length hair, wearing brown contact lenses, and losing almost 40 pounds to effectively convey Holiday's struggle with addiction as she is pursued by the FBI. The "Strange Fruit" singer's signature deep-red lipstick was reimagined as a "true red" by makeup artist Laini Thompson, and Day's updos and ponytails were re-created with era-specific care—shoe polish added an extra dark sheen—by the late, great hairstylist Charles Gregory Ross. "I tried to live in that space," Day says of an all-in approach that saw her pick up a smoking habit, a taste for vintage lingerie, and Lenthéric's woody-musk Tweed, a discontinued fragrance beloved by Holiday that helped inform the name of the film's theme song, "Tigress & Tweed," written by Day and Raphael Saadiq. Day keeps the scent in a vintage flacon as a tribute to Holiday. "She told stories with her voice, which has helped me to own my own."—AKILI KING

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILIP-DANIEL DUCASSE

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