

Issue n° 8

# thread



# disconnect



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## **editor's note**

Reconnecting with something after taking time away can be a difficult task. The overwhelming feeling towards starting a new issue was daunting. There is a lot going on out there, have we lost touch, what's now relevant. There were many false starts as we tried to separate from the clamour of a hyper-connected fashion world.

It was only when we stopped looking that we began to piece the issue together. The challenge of discovering something that's not at your fingertips can drive you forward. Making the decision to plug out created freedom and space to do something new.

Disconnect became a natural theme for this issue. Through interviews, imagery, ideas and contemporary issues we realise how important our need is to disconnect. From the noise of cities, the pressure of social media, from old legislation and irrelevant show systems, to look with fresh eyes on what and how we create.

On the flip side however, THREAD connects people across a crowded room. Our contributors are ever more positive to be involved and generous with their time, bringing together the stories that reflect a contemporary creative industry.

**AISLING FARINELLA**

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Model — JULIA at MUSE NYC  
Image by RICH GILLIGAN

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## who

## love and robots



Image: LOVE AND ROBOTS

There is a brand in Dublin that is breaking the barrier between the designer and customer, allowing the buyer to tweak and customise jewellery, accessories and gifts: Love and Robots. All this is made possible through the wonders of 3D printing, a technology that takes a digital model and layers materials until the object is created. The process gives customers control over variables like colour and material, allows re-design and mix-matching to create something totally bespoke.

One of its most interesting collections is 'Windswept', a unique and personal project between Love and Robots and its customers. It's a simple idea — a cloth blowing in the wind is transformed when

you type in a date and location, changing shape according to the wind speed. Pause it to create your unique windswept pendant. The fashion-tech company has also collaborated with the likes of Twitter, the Abbey Theatre and illustrator Chris Judge on a range of creative projects; simply put Love and Robots isn't afraid of dabbling in a bit of everything.

You can catch Love and Robots online and in a pop-up space in Arnotts department store for three months from October.

— Conaill O'Dwyer is a menswear designer recently graduated from NCAD.

who

**lorna  
foran**



image: CATWALKING.COM

When asked to define the Irish look, people will naturally describe Lorna Foran. She is an archetype, embodying the very ideal of Celtic beauty and might well be the figure to spearhead our modelling revolution. Hailing from Co. Kildare, Lorna is no stranger to editorial, recently appearing in Marni's campaign styled by Lucinda Chambers and shoots for Dansk, Pop and Another magazine. "With editorials you are pretending to be someone else in a sense. So you have more time to get into your stride through the day."

The runway is another matter and what better way to launch than by wearing thigh-high wellies in John Galiano's Maison Margiela Artisanal semi possessed AW16 haute couture lineup. This was not lost on Vogue who included her in their standout faces from Couture Week. "It was only after I had done the shows that I came to terms with the gravity of doing that," says Lorna. Of Galiano ("a delight") she said he took

the time to speak to each girl, telling them they were "amazing" and "beautiful" while checking everything was perfect.

In a precarious profession, Lorna is taking it in her stride. "You just have to prepare for the rejection, that's the worst part in the beginning. All the waiting and running around is not easy when it has the potential to amount to nothing, so you've got to enjoy the fact that not many people will get to experience it." Modelling for all of its excitement and opportunity belies a fragmented existence not everyone is cut out for.

— Gemma A. Williams is a fashion curator and brand consultant currently living in London.

## who

**anna  
cosgrave**

**repeal**



image: ELLIUS GRACE

Repeal Project, set up by Anna Cosgrave, is “an outerwear initiative to give voice to a hidden problem”. The project aims to raise awareness and create a funding mechanism for the Abortion Rights Campaign, a movement campaigning for a referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment.

The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution acknowledges the right to life of the unborn, equating it with the mother’s right to life. Abortion is a criminal offence in Ireland under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Currently, at least ten women a day travel to England to obtain abortions. With Repeal Project, Anna wishes to influence a change in the “archaic and barbaric reproductive laws in Ireland” with the hopes of seeing free, safe and legal abortions introduced for women.

As an attempt to spark conversation on the streets, Anna created a plain black sweatshirt with the word ‘REPEAL’ in white block letters across the chest. The jumpers send out a simple, strong message. With proceeds from every sale going to the Abortion Rights Campaign, Repeal Project’s contribution has been massive and the first

run of jumpers sold out almost immediately.

Anna says that while the initial reaction to Repeal Project was unexpected “the overwhelming response is testament to and telling of how important this human rights issue is, and how necessary it is to repeal the Eighth.” In the coming months, Anna will be working on a number of gender-related social projects which she will operate under a new creative agency and production house, Labyrinth, which launches in September.



## where

## arran street east



Image: AL HIGGINS

There is some contention as to how the phrase was coined but 'the grapevine' is alive and well in Dublin. On this side of the Atlantic we have Grogans pub on a Friday night and it was here that I first learned of Arran Street East. Was it true? Nice branding, good story, beautiful products and handmade in Dublin city.

Arran Street East continues to be a passion project for Laura Magahy who wanted to learn the craft of throwing for herself. A founder and managing director of MCO Projects, Laura was also chair of the Year of Irish Design 2015. It was in that role she met Jonathan Legge of Makers & Brothers who had spotted Laura's would-be pot samples. This meeting helped the collection into several stockists across the country and online.

Smithfield was always going to be home for the brand. Nestled amongst the market traders and close to the MCO offices, the building sticks out like a beautiful sore thumb. It is here on the corner of Arran Street across from the Smithfield market that Laura and her staff bring the brand to life. You get a clear sense of a career spent

with architects through both the building and the homewares inside.

The brand embodies much of the character surrounding it. This is where grapes and every other fruit and vegetable are studied for colour inspiration. It is this juxtaposition of traditional process and contemporary aesthetic that makes this particular brand and indeed street, a symbol of modern Dublin.

— The shop is open Fridays 11am–5pm, Pottery Classes — the 1st Saturday of Every Month.

where

## marlow goods



Image: RICH GILLIGAN

As a student at Columbia University, Kate Huling met Barbara Shaum, a revered leather sandal maker in New York's East Village and was inspired to set up a business making leather goods.

Life soon took a new turn however with the arrival of her first child and the expansion of her husband's restaurant business, necessitating Kate to put her company on hold for almost a decade. During this time Kate and her husband Andrew built many beloved Brooklyn restaurants and businesses including Marlow & Sons, Wythe Hotel, Roman's Diner, Marlow & Daughters butcher shop, and She Wolf Bakery.

Then after opening Marlow & Daughters butcher shop in 2008, Kate's own leather goods label Marlow Goods was born out a desire to ensure that no part of the animal goes to waste. The brand uses the pelts and hides from Kinderhook Farm in Upstate New York to craft classic leather goods and knits. Kate explains, "Instead of these hides being turned into chemical solvents, or sent to tanneries in China, they are being preserved in the US so that we can all enjoy local leather." Starting the label by selling signature items, like sheepskin rugs and leather bags, her grass-fed line has grown and with its expansion comes a new

venture just as her story comes full circle — a retail space in the East Village in what once was Barbara Shaum's leather workshop.

Kate now purchases all available hides from Kinderhook Farm and alongside her leather goods sells a carefully curated selection of clothing from Caron Callahan and Petria Lenehan, apothecary products from upstate New York and Astier de Villatte in Paris, wool blankets and handmade ceramics. Kate loves working in the shop, engaging with a global community of travellers, locals, friends and customers old and new. And so the new story of this long time East Village leather enclave unravels — as a space for Marlow Goods to grow creatively and connect directly with its customers in an ever more meaningful endeavour.

— Petria Lenehen is an Irish designer working on timeless collections with heritage textiles, currently living in Fort Greene, Brooklyn.

what



Image: LINDA BROWNLEE

'I Zii'

For the most part friendships do not thrive in isolation. As we bond we come to know the circle of people who surround, form, and reflect our friends. With our closest friendships these connections naturally extend to family. Linda Brownlee and Aisling Farinella are friends. As photographer and stylist they have collaborated professionally, but first and foremost they are friends.

Acknowledging Linda's appetite for rough-hewn landscape and the minutia of family networks, Aisling invited her friend to visit relatives in the Sicilian village of Gangi. This was to be the first of numerous trips and three years later the resulting photo book is about to be released.

I Zii opens with a wonderfully disobedient picture. An unremarkable sky fills more than two thirds of the frame and we spy only a hint of the village, biting into the mountain and entering the photograph at a slant. The whole picture feels enjoyably tipsy. Linda has consciously loosened the reins of alignment and proportion in her landscapes, taking lead from the particulars of the architecture that is forced to cling crookedly to the mountainside.

We accompany Linda as she descends and

encircles the village. She treads the surrounding landscape via ruptured roads, foggy elevations and paths carpeted with over-ripe fruit. The family members are presented to us in relaxed portraits and candid shots that criss-cross households and generations. Daily and seasonal rituals are shared as birthday candles are blown out, graves are tended and local asparagus is charred.

Interestingly Aisling herself, being half Irish and half Sicilian, will always be an outsider of sorts in Gangi, despite her familiarity, connectedness and understanding of the place. Linda has the advantage of observing from the periphery of course, but it is undoubtedly her tender curiosity that brings us around the mountain, down the winding village streets and through the front door.

— Karen McQuaid is curator at the Photographers' Gallery London.

what



Image: ALICE MAHER 'THE GREAT FALLS' 2016  
watercolour on paper, courtesy of the artist

## alice maher

Few artists have made as profound an impact on Irish contemporary art as Alice Maher. Continuously inspired by ideas of transformation, metamorphosis and identity, as well as the role of women in the formation of culture, Alice has become something of an icon with works that explore the female body not just as a source of beauty or pleasure, but as a visceral source of change. In some of her best-known work, women wear dresses made from berries of bees, necklaces of lambs' tongues or cover their faces with snail shells. Human, animal and vegetal forms dance and merge to become polymorphous, often grotesque hybrid forms.

In an exhibition at South Kensington's Purdy Hicks Gallery, Alice will show a new collection of watercolours, fantastically titled The Glorious Maids of the Charnel House, that further probes the mythical and shapeshifting potential of the body. The starting point and titular work depicts a defiant-looking adolescent girl with intestines spewing from her head: long, flowing, Rapunzel-like

locks of coiling, multicoloured guts.

As well as her usual dense seabed of cultural references, drawing upon literature, art history, folklore and mythology, Alice also studied old medical textbooks and Victorian-era illustrations for this body of work. It was these medical illustrations that prompted her to use watercolour as her medium — though given the artist's will to reclaim the female as image-maker, her choice is not incidental. "(Watercolour) is historically seen as such a 'sweet' feminine medium, usually associated with flower painting," she tells THREAD. "To make such violent and surprising imagery reclaims that medium, shakes it up and puts it to use for a totally different purpose."

— The Glorious Maids of the Charnel House, Purdy Hicks Gallery, 25 Thurloe Street, London. 21 Sept–15 Oct '16.



## wear

because  
i am  
a girl



Image: BRIAN TEELING

Irish designer Natalie B Coleman has teamed up with the Because I Am A Girl campaign in the sale of her latest Support Your Local Girl Gang collection. The Because I Am A Girl campaign is organised by the girls' rights organisation, Plan International Ireland.

Natalie's eponymous label has created a bespoke range of printed T-shirts and sweaters to raise necessary funds for the global movement. For each item from the collection sold, €5 will go directly to the campaign. Speaking about the project, Natalie says: "By teaming up with Plan International Ireland, I want to send out a loud, clear and unequivocal statement that girls need our support. They need to know we care about their futures, and they need to know we will invest in them."

The title of the collection, Support Your Local Girl Gang, promotes affinity among women, something that is extremely important given that gender inequality is still so prevalent worldwide. "This is the 21st century, it is about time that there was equality in pay, education and human rights. Girls should be encouraged and supported to realise their true potential; it will result in a better world for everyone," says Natalie.

The Support Your Local Girl Gang collection will feature a number of hand drawn slogans as well as popular prints from past seasons which have been reworked into a trans-seasonal casual collection. The collection can be purchased online and in Made, Dublin.

— Síomha Connolly is a fashion and lifestyle writer and blogs about style and trends at [talknthreads.com](http://talknthreads.com).

## watch

# Só Collective



image: COLIN HARRIS VASE

Recently launched at Kildare Village is Só Collective, a new space showcasing a curated collection of Irish fashion, lifestyle and craft from more than seventy established and emerging designers and craftspeople. Jennifer Chan and Jonathan Legge helped create the considered interior concept for this new space where raw and refined coexist. Robust materials, like limestone and marble, create the backdrop for more refined and sophisticated elements like copper and lace.

This is a space to discover emerging talent and rediscover long-established designers. Irish storytelling and clean Japanese lines inform sisters Geraldine and Helen Kane of Isle Jewellery. Each piece is handmade in Ireland and inspired by the land, from the angles of the Giant's Causeway to the patterns of the natural hedgerows. TISSUE is the exciting collaboration of printmaker Gráinne Finn and designer Hannah Mullan. Their collections combine original prints with modern, minimalist silhouettes. Look out too for Colin Harris; the furniture designer and maker is influenced by nature and uses only locally sourced Irish hardwoods, like ash, oak and elm. His interest

is in the making process and how people interact with furniture, resulting in pieces of exceptional quality and beautiful simplicity.

Emma Carroll's Weaverella was discovered for Só Collective's 'From the Maker', a monthly series of talks and demonstrations focusing on a diverse range of individual makers. A self-taught weaver, her pieces are handcrafted from natural materials and suspended from foraged driftwood. Dubliner Ros Duke launched her own knitwear brand in 2015, after ten years with John Rocha. Working with quality cashmere in an eclectic palette, her primary focus is on stitch technique and craftsmanship.

Só Collective is a unique retail concept, indeed concept for Ireland, a space where fashion sits alongside furniture, connected by the designers' respect for traditional skills, a place not only peddling wares but a space to learn and discover.

— Valerie Jordan is a writer and editor between Dublin and London.

listen

## simon cullen



Image: ELLIUS GRACE

Simon Cullen was once one half of electro(nica) outfit Le Bien and has worked on a number of projects, including solo act Lasertom and Ships, with Sorca McGrath. His latest project 'Music for 18 Machines' is a reimagining of Steve Reich's 'Music for 18 Musicians' performed by a sequencer on 18 synthesisers. He is also a great if somewhat elusive DJ.

**CHEWY:**

Tell us about some of your collaborations and how you decide when to retire one and start a new one?

**SIMON:**

The magic in (collaborations) comes from the joint effort and influences. Carrying a project on without original members must be hard, but maybe not as hard as letting it go. When Le Bien finished, I made no plan to make music again and just kind of found myself doing it one day. I wrote some tunes, didn't have a plan or a name for the project — this ended up becoming Lasertom. Ships is totally different: it's a songwriting collaboration, and we end up working on and finishing the songs that are much more in the vein of pop music.

It sounds obvious, but I'm turned on by all kinds of music, so I'm interested in making all kinds of music; a few ideas have been backburnered or scuppered for various reasons, some that were just for fun that will stay that way, but some are still half alive in the back of my head.

**CHEWY:**

Do you face many challenges as a full-time producer in Ireland?

**SIMON:**

The challenges are some of the best parts, the situations that test your metal and force you to grow and learn. If you're lucky you'll get challenged at least once a day. There is a lot of trial and error involved with any creative process so staying focused and at the same time open is something to be mastered.

— Chewy is a DJ and founder of The Gentlemen's Academy. He currently lives in Hackney but is never too far from Dublin and the sea.

# listen

## automatic tasty



Image: ELLIUS GRACE

Automatic Tasty asks, what are we doing? What are we trying to avoid? What do we take for granted? What do we assume to be good? What is actually the case? What is actually going on?

An orchestra of machines is built off the bus at Kilcoole, brought to life, house lights off bar one, no dinner, jacket still on, they are played. Creating a landscape of feeling with instrumental sounds, conveying melancholy or elation, Automatic Tasty has peeked over his machines at Berghain to see the result.

As we are being swept away by modernisation and the selfie, Automatic Tasty asks himself and us to engage with tradition as a dynamic force.

Expressions that are artistic or otherwise, that are anonymous, are communitarian, have symbolic forms, spiritual reasoning, not just the clanking material of our consumerist world — a possible antidote to the forgotten fruits of modernity.

Outside of music, his work in folk tradition, his interest in philosophy and politics provide emotional context for other projects; plans are afoot for audiences to experience folklore. These familiar traditions are ones we don't necessarily come into contact with yet the emotional content expresses very fundamental things for us to appraise.

These environments seem a distance from the machine-filled rooms that Automatic Tasty's music inhabits yet the lines of communication are changing, allowing an intersection. The artist's joy is finding new meaning to his music. So, where to now?

— Chris Chapman is director of Open Ear festival which launched on Sherkin Island this summer.



Photography – Sean Jackson  
Model – Dylan Moran  
Styling – Andy Collins



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**Neil Gavin has been working for twenty-plus years spending most of his time away from his home here in Dublin. He's spent that time working with legends in the industry, shooting well-known faces from the worlds of sport and music and working with a plethora of internationally renowned titles. In this interview, Neil talks about pestering Perry Ogden, which city has his favourite light and the benefits of being a college dropout.**

**neil**







**BRIAN:**

The theme of this issue of THREAD is 'disconnect'. Considering that you're based in New York and London, do you feel 'disconnected' from Dublin? Does it still feel like a home to you, or is it still relevant/influential in your work?

**NEIL:**

I really don't know where feels like home right now. When people in London ask me if I'm looking forward to 'going home' to New York that seems weird. I haven't lived in Ireland for over 16 or 17 years but I do seem to be finding myself there more and more often. I've shot a few fashion editorials in the West of Ireland and I'd love to find some projects to work on there.

I started shooting a project on Irish music a few years ago but it came to a standstill. I did get to shoot some legends such as Shane MacGowan, Damien Dempsey, Pecker Dunne and more. It's something I will come back to soon.

**BRIAN:**

Do you feel like New York is your home now? I've recently been reading about 'place attachment', a concept in environmental psychology where a bond is formed between an individual and a location informed by their personal experiences. With that in mind, would you say there is a variance in your work depending on where you are shooting at the time? Is there a noticeable difference between London, New York and Ireland?

**NEIL:**

I've been coming to New York regularly for 20 years. First time was when I started assisting Perry Ogden in 1996 and I loved it so much. It was like being on a movie set! London sort of still feels more like home. I still work there a lot — every

month or so — and hopefully always will, so I still have a connection to London. I hated London when I first moved there but obviously grew to like it. I just like being on the move. It's good to regularly get out of, and return to, New York too.

As for 'place attachment', I had always been thinking back to those first times in New York and even though everything was great in London, three years ago I thought 'fuck it!' and decided to move to New York. There is a difference between working in New York, London and Dublin.

For personal work, people in New York seem so much more open to collaborating. It must be an American thing or at least a New York thing. The British are so reserved, and the Irish, I think like to keep to themselves.

The light in New York is so great. I'm always going on about how sunny it is in New York. Even in the depths of winter there's usually blue skies. It's so easy to take good photos in New York. It's like a ready-made set. I've always associated New York with work (and a little bit of fun of course) since I started coming here. There's so much going on to inspire and motivate.

I would like to spend just a little more time in LA though. Of the three places I've actually worked the least in Ireland but would like to shoot there more too. I love the light there but the rain, not so much.

**BRIAN:**

It must have been amazing working with Perry. What was it like? Were you just out of college when you started?

**NEIL:**

It was an amazing experience. I had





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seen some of his Irish shoots in a few big fashion mags and somebody had told me he lived in Dublin. I got his phone number and kept calling his studio until he gave me a job. I worked on a few shoots as a third assistant and when his first assistant left a couple of months later, he gave me the job. A few weeks later I went on my first trip to New York, Miami, LA and The Bahamas, I think. It was such a big responsibility at the time for a very young me.

I learned a lot from him. He has such a strong work ethic which I really admire. I had just dropped out of DIT Kevin Street after two years of learning nothing. My parents still don't know that — I told them I was taking a year off to get some work experience.

**BRIAN:**

Considering your split across New York and London, do you feel there is a difference in the work you do in each city? Is there more fashion work in London, or more of your personal work in New York?

**NEIL:**

Typically, when I moved to New York I got busier in London. I probably shoot similar amounts of editorial and commercial work in both places but definitely a lot more personal work in New York. I'm shooting nearly every day and almost every weekend in New York. Every personal portrait I shoot in New York leads onto something else. I never really did that in London.

A lot of editing and a lot of hard drives. I'm trying to get back into shooting more film. I've always loved working with Polaroid which I'm doing more with again.

And I've been shooting a lot of moving image lately.

**BRIAN:**

I've been noticing a lot more of a partiality to film in fashion photography recently. With the likes of Jamie Hawkesworth and our own Josh Gordon and Leonn Ward really making a name for themselves in the medium. Do you see a benefit to using film over digital? And, in your experience do any of the publications you work with have a preference over either?

**NEIL:**

There are a lot of new people shooting film in fashion photography for sure. A lot of photographers never stopped shooting film. I put off shooting digital as long as I could but I really enjoy it now, especially for personal work. It doesn't cost anything to shoot as much as you like now. Until you get to retouching stage anyway. We are all retouching our digital images just to make them look like they were shot on film in the first place. Digital is great for movement. I've been shooting a lot of personal work with a lot of movement, which would cost a fortune to shoot on film. I am publishing a book on Street Workout, a project I've been shooting the last couple years which is shot on digital.

I did start shooting a lot of portraits on 5X4 film a few years ago which is so enjoyable. I would only shoot four to six sheets of film on a subject so it was a great discipline, as you need to think about what you're doing. I've been coming back to that too recently. All the publications I work for expect a digital file now I suppose. It just depends on how you get there. If you shoot on film you'll have to scan and retouch the neg' or more likely a print.

**BRIAN:**

A lot of your latest work has had a menswear focus. Do you have a preference shooting men or women, or does it depend on what the job is for?



**NEIL:**

When I started out I used to shoot womenswear mostly. Then I got into shooting music portraits for a few years which took over and I stopped doing fashion photos. Then the music industry got fucked by the internet and it became really difficult to make a living from that.

I started to shoot more portraits of interesting looking guys in London and showed them to some menswear fashion editors, like Allan Kennedy. I really like shooting 'styled portraits' of guys or girls. It's easy to find interesting looking people and throw a designer coat on them and make cool pictures.

**BRIAN:**

What publications are you working with at the moment? Is there any in particular that you would love to be featured in?

**NEIL:**

I've been working for Vanity Fair, various GQ and GQ Style mags, Man Of The World, The Telegraph. I've always liked Vogue Hommes International, L'UOMO Vogue and Interview. Again, more styled portraits. Vogue Paris too. There's way too much snobbery in editorial (fashion) photography. If it's an interesting subject to shoot I don't really care who I'm shooting for. Well, within reason.

There are so many new mags out there but I honestly don't even look at most of them. I love the magazine format and it's great to see work in print but there are so many other ways to get work seen now.

**BRIAN:**

When you look back at your career so far is there anything you wish you had done sooner or someone you had worked with?

Have you had any setbacks?

**NEIL:**

Nope! Everything has been just perfect. Just kidding! I probably should have kept doing fashion photos years ago and not got into music portraits but I'm catching up now. And got to shoot some music legends too.

**BRIAN:**

What advice would you give to any aspiring photographers?

**NEIL:**

I wouldn't give the same advice a quite well known Irish photographer at the time gave me when I showed him my book when I was just finished school. He tried to warn me not to become a photographer at all and find another job. It isn't an easy career and I don't think it ever will be. You are constantly having to prove yourself and magazine editors only remember bad shoots not all the good ones. I had some difficult situations with musicians and bands years ago where everything is out of your control and the shoot may not go as planned. These are the shoots they remember.

But if you're doing something you love every day it must be so much better than spending your life doing some shitty nine-to-five job you hate.





Image by NEIL GAVIN

**no**

Styling by ALLAN KENNEDY

Model — NOEL MURPHY, PROFESSIONAL BOXER



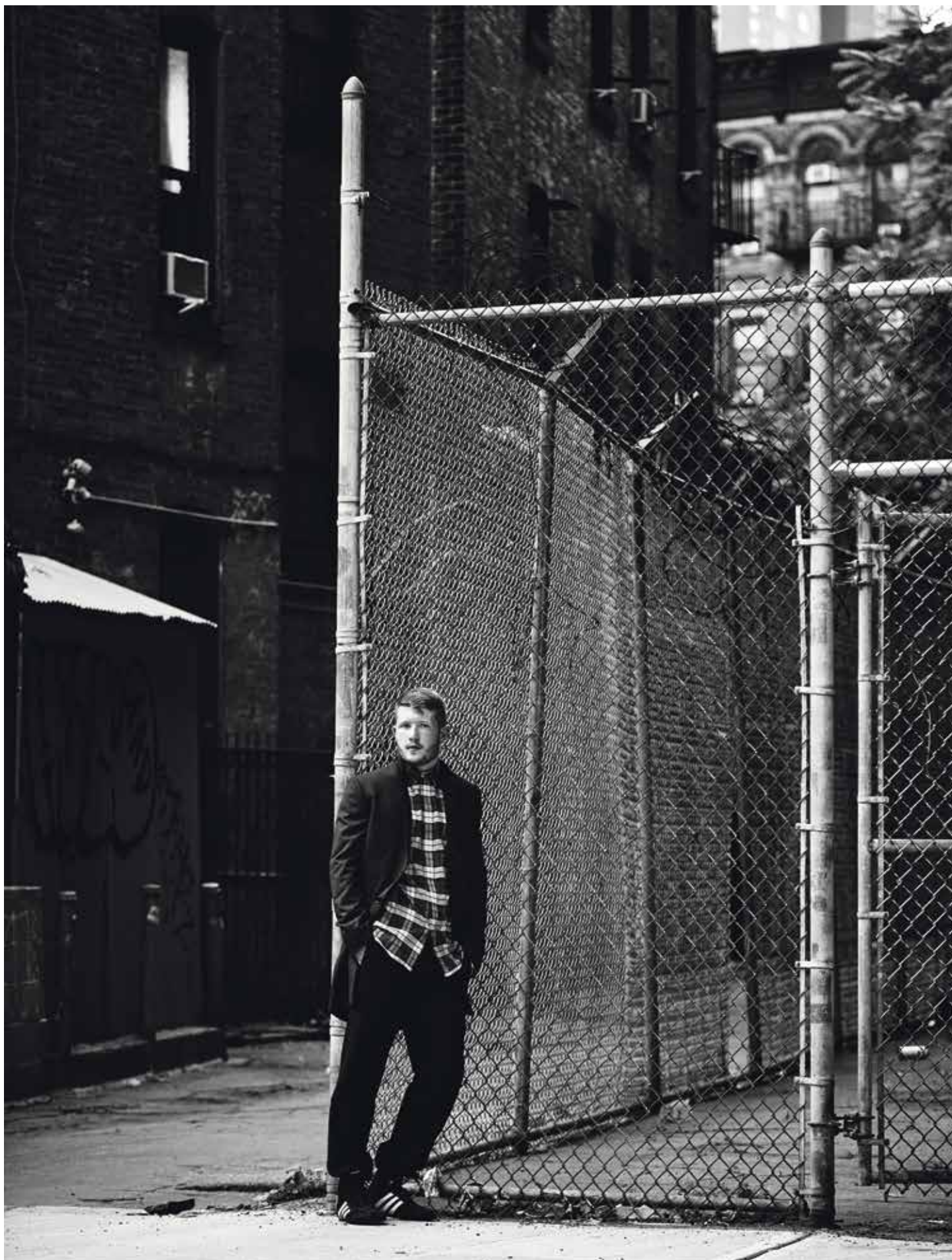
er



noel



Black coat: POLO RALPH LAUREN  
— black trousers: BOTTEGA  
VENETA — boxing boots: ADIDAS



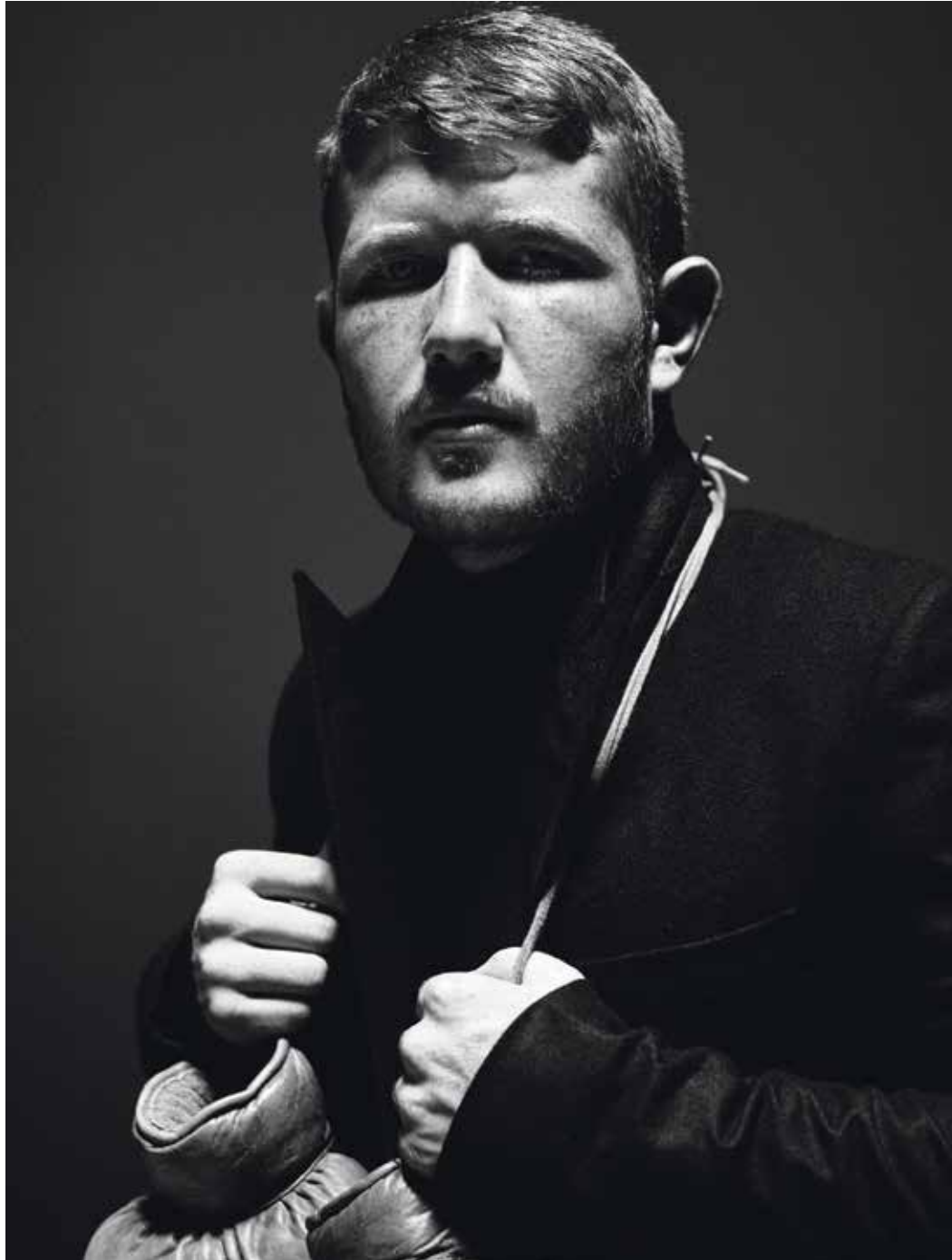
Black coat and plaid shirt:  
DIOR HOMME — black trousers:  
BOTTEGA VENETA  
— boxing boots: ADIDAS





Navy roll-neck sweater, black track pants and wool overcoat: **VERSACE** — boxing boots: **ADIDAS**





Roll-neck sweater, double  
breasted wool coat:  
BOTTEGA VENETA



Black coat: POLO RALPH LAUREN  
— black trousers: BOTTEGA VENETA  
— boxing boots: ADIDAS



Image by RICH GILLIGAN

ju



Styling by AISLING FARINELLA  
Model – JULIA at MUSE NYC





●  
**i d**

Varsity jacket: MARC JACOBS;  
ribbed polo tee: STELLA MCCARTNEY;  
ring: MARNI, all BROWN THOMAS  
— Ribbed skirt: CEDRIC CHARLIER  
at COSTUME







Leather jacket: SPORTMAX  
— ring: MARNI at BROWN THOMAS  
— white tee and panel skirt: CEDRIC  
CHARLIER at COSTUME



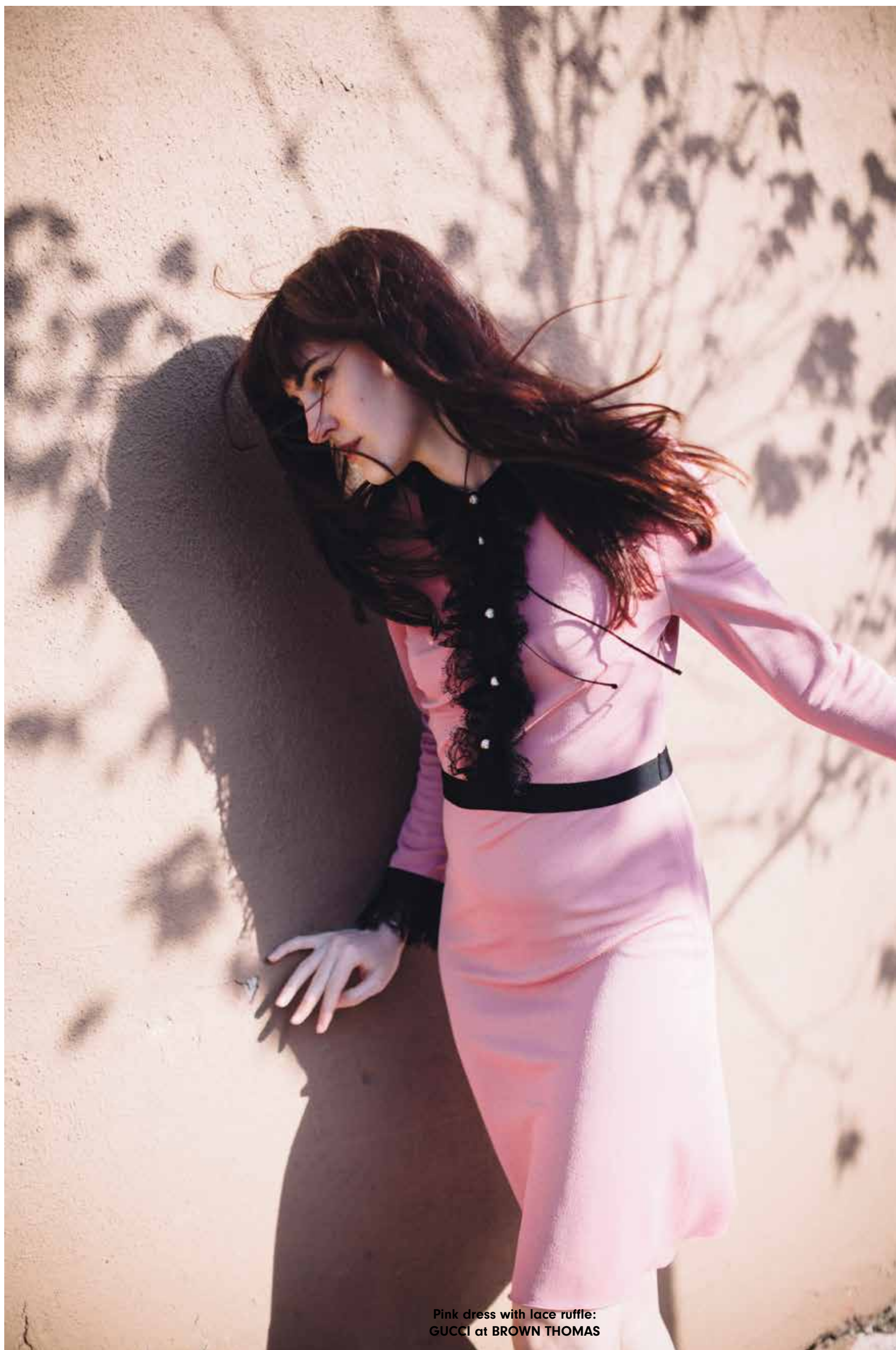
Ribbed polo tee: STELLA  
MCCARTNEY at BROWN THOMAS;  
Gold hoop earrings at MOMUSE







julia



Pink dress with lace ruffle:  
GUCCI at BROWN THOMAS



Pink wool jacket, menswear trousers,  
loafers: GUCCI at BROWN THOMAS  
— Tee: CEDRIC CHARLIER at COSTUME









Hair: NATE ROSENKRANZ at HONEY ARTISTS — Make up: ADRIANA ANDALUZ using MAKEUP FOR EVER, VISEART & URBAN DECAY — Produced in collaboration with the HOUSE OF PERONI

# simone

Since her arrival on the London fashion scene in 2010, Simone Rocha's star had been rapidly on the rise and in 2016 it looks like she's about to go supernova. With a new shop in the rarefied fashion environs of Mayfair's Mount Street, a succession of stellar collections, and a new baby, all before she turns 30 this September, Simone is capping off her twenties in style. Here, Simone talks work and home with Richard O'Mahony, senior editor of The Gentlewoman, and a fellow Central Saint Martins alumnus and Irish ex-pat in London.



Portrait: EOIN MCLOUGHLIN



**RICHARD:**  
How often do you get to go back home?

**SIMONE:**  
Well, I have a studio in Dublin as well as the one in London so I come back quite regularly, about every two or three months. But I'm always home for Christmas and for about two weeks in August.

**RICHARD:**  
I didn't know you had a studio there too.

**SIMONE:**  
Yeah, my mum she runs the Dublin studio. It's mainly production and some sampling that happens there, then the collections are designed in London. There's about fifteen of us on the team between design, sales and production.

**RICHARD:**  
How important is that distinction between the London and Dublin studios?

**SIMONE:**  
It's quite good because it means the people I work with don't get bored of seeing me every day — you can keep people motivated only for so long. So if I'm in another country for a week or so, when I get back they're primed to see me. It means I have to travel a lot, and it's taken me a while to re-adjust to that since I had a baby, but some of my team now travel with me which makes it a lot easier. Like any fashion brand there's so much logistics and movement involved: the clothes are made in Italy, we show in London and sales happen during Paris Fashion Week.

**RICHARD:**  
Are you particularly organised then?

**SIMONE:**  
I'm a big list-maker and constantly check my diary — it's the only way things are

going to happen. There's so many elements involved and so many things to consider: design, fittings, production, sales. When I walk into the office it's just this barrage of information. The only godsend is that my mobile has no reception in the studio. Initially, it annoyed everybody, but now I love it because it means I'm off-grid and can't be interrupted when I'm designing. I just close the studio door and really get into it. I like to be very focused when I'm working — when I'm there, I'm there to work.

**RICHARD:**  
How much time do you spend on email?

**SIMONE:**  
Luckily, not that much — when you have your own company it means you can pass it along to someone else! Most of the time I'm designing or in fittings, and email is something I can only really do when I'm at my desk and not doing anything else. I find it hard to do both at the same time.

**RICHARD:**  
How involved are you in the commercial side of the business?

**SIMONE:**  
Since I opened the shop on Mount Street in Mayfair I've become a lot more respectful of that side of things. Before I was just focused on the vision for the show and the collections. Now I'm far more engaged with it and I really value it as a designer.

It's not about producing cheaper pieces, but how can we make our signature pieces more accessible all year round? So, for example, we don't do Pre-Fall or Cruise, but we integrate a Simone signature into the collection.

**RICHARD:**  
What's your bestseller?



**SIMONE:**

We sell a fair amount of gúnas. And also a huge amount of shoes. Our Perspex brogue's become one of our signature items, which is funny because I never imagined myself as a shoe designer. I love seeing people wearing the clothes, it's real thrill for me, especially if it's someone I don't know. Designing and making a garment is a very personal experience for me and then for someone else to wear it and feel attached to it, that's so flattering. The clothes are expensive so I really value that people are investing in it. I want to give them something special.

**RICHARD:**

Do you do trunk shows?

**SIMONE:**

No, I'm actually terrible at sales. I'm way too attached to the pieces to have the right perspective to sell them. But I do spend a lot of time in the shop. It's quite funny because some of the time customers don't realise that I'm the designer. They're a bit shocked that I'm so young. And I'm like, 'Yeah, I look like the intern' — I dress a bit scruffier than my designs. But it's great to go undetected among a lot of the customers in the shop.

**RICHARD:**

The ultimate mystery shopping experience. I adore the books that are available in your shop.

**SIMONE:**

I want my customers to really get an experience of who I am as a designer, my influences, the people I collaborate with — I mean, there's so many established brands on Mount Street — Balenciaga, Marc Jacobs, Loewe — so it's important to distinguish myself among them and that's really how the books came about. They are a thank you to all the people

that have inspired me so far in my career. We produce and publish them ourselves each season. They're limited edition and it's very important to me that they're free. I want people, be they a fashion student or someone working in the city or anyone who's interested in the things that I am, to feel like they can come into the shop and pick one up. The first book had works by Louise Bourgeois, who I love, then work by Jacob Lillis, who I collaborate with regularly, and the latest one for AW16 I did with the photographer Colin Dodgson. We shot a lot of the images at Sally Gap in Wicklow.

**RICHARD:**

Why did you choose there?

**SIMONE:**

Colin and I started out just wanting to make a series of photographs around Ireland so he came over and the two of us got into my car and travelled around. We were on a bit of a gorse hunt so Sally Gap was the perfect place for it. The depth of the rise and fall is mind blowing. Colin grew up in California so I wanted to show him all the places in Ireland that reminded me of my childhood like Killiney Hill and Lough Dan.

The AW16 collection was about mothering and since I had my little baby I've been in a reflective mood. So these were the places I'd go for walks with my family as a child and places I still go to when I come home from London. We used to go for Sunday walks to Sally Gap and then afterwards to the Roundwood Inn and have a basket of chicken and chips.

**RICHARD:**

The thing I've appreciated the most about Ireland since moving to London, and I know it's a cliché to say so, but the landscape is phenomenal.

simone







Images: JACOB LILLIS 'SIMONE ROCHA' AW16

**SIMONE:**

And, generally, it's all only about a half hour drive away!

**RICHARD:**

And the green! I miss the green.

**SIMONE:**

Totally! Are you from Dublin?

**RICHARD:**

No, Cork.

**SIMONE:**

Oh, I'm going there soon, to Ballymaloe. I've been going there since I was a kid too. I love Cork.

**RICHARD:**

Yeah, I always say it's nice place to visit, but... I have a bit of conflicted relationship with it. How would you describe yours with Dublin?

**SIMONE:**

When I moved to London at 21 to study at Central Saint Martins I began to romanticise Dublin as soon as I left. And when I go back the nostalgic ideal lives up to it. I think it's just beautiful. I grew up in Ranelagh and didn't think it was green at all until I moved to Hackney in east London.

And Temple Bar has good memories for me. My dad's first studio was there so I was familiar with the area and used to hang around there a lot. As a teenager I was a big fan of just hanging out. My friends and I would take the 46A bus to the city centre and hang around Temple Bar all day. And I love Grogans on South William Street for a pint with friends.

**RICHARD:**

I was terribly homesick when I first moved to London. I actually even contemplated

moving to Kilburn in north London just so I could hear an Irish accent!

**SIMONE:**

Ha! I think I come home too often to feel homesick. I was so eager to move to London. When I was a kid I used to go there with my parents for London Fashion Week and we'd stay at Hazlitt's in Soho. I just loved it. I still love Soho — the noise, the hustle and bustle, it's all so energising. When I moved over I went straight into my MA under the direction of Louise Wilson and it was absolutely crazy. It didn't feel like I was living in London then because the course was so intense that all the students lived in this bubble. It was only after I graduated that I felt I could finally sink my teeth into London life. I think it took about two years before I felt comfortable there. But Ireland will always be home.

**RICHARD:**

When you were interviewed for The Gentlewoman two years ago you described London as being a place that facilitates things for you, like work and business, is that still the case since you now have your own family there?

**SIMONE:**

It is in a way, because it's where I come to work and that mindset helps to keep me focused. London helps facilitate that part of my life, whereas when I go back to Ireland I can truly relax and disconnect from work. I love working, but when I go to Ireland I don't talk about it with my friends. I try to remove myself from the fashion bubble completely. It's important to be able to step away from it and just enjoy relaxing in the company of other people. Having that remove ultimately benefits my work and allows me some perspective. London's more homely now that I have a little family though. We feel like a nice little unit. We just bought an



estate car, a family wagon, because we couldn't cycle around east London with our baby.

**RICHARD:**  
How old is your daughter?

**SIMONE:**  
Eight months so it's all still a bit of a blur. I didn't know what to expect becoming a mother to be honest. I actually kept rereading *The Snapper* by Roddy Doyle during my pregnancy thinking it would help me feel better.

Having a baby has certainly helped me to lose some of my personal anxieties. I mean, it comes with a whole new set of anxieties of its own, but it definitely helps to put things in perspective.

**RICHARD:**  
Talking of anxieties, have you driven the new car around London yet?

**SIMONE:**  
I ventured as far as Heathrow airport — very stressful. I'm looking forward to driving outside of London, taking off to Somerset — I love it there. I'm going to stay at Durslade Farm, Hauser & Wirth's art complex there, in September for my 30th birthday.

**RICHARD:**  
I've been! It's extraordinary. The Piet Oudolf gardens are phenomenal.

**SIMONE:**  
I never really celebrate my birthday so I figured this would be quite a fabulous way to do it. I love Hauser & Wirth's gallery on Savile Row in Mayfair. They represent some of my favourite artists: Louise Bourgeois, Roni Horn and Eva Hesse. They are among the few artists who are constant sources of inspiration for me. I also love

Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud and Jackie Nickerson. We have a beautiful Bacon triptych hanging in the Mount Street shop; it used to be in the kitchen at my home in Dublin.

**RICHARD:**  
Wow. We had a Sacred Heart in mine. Does it make it easier that Simone Rocha is a family business?

**SIMONE:**  
Yes and no. Obviously my mum and dad have incredible knowledge and experience of the industry so it's tremendous to have that wealth of support, especially for a young designer. But, you know, with family it can sometimes get quite emotional and tense only because we all care about it so much.

**RICHARD:**  
Is it important to maintain your independence as a brand?

**SIMONE:**  
I would never want it to become corporate — we're not that kind of company. We're very protective of wanting to do things in a way that feels sincere and right for us. It's about the control and ability to do that on our own terms, and I think in fashion today that's a real luxury. Plus, it's pretty handy when taking sick days!





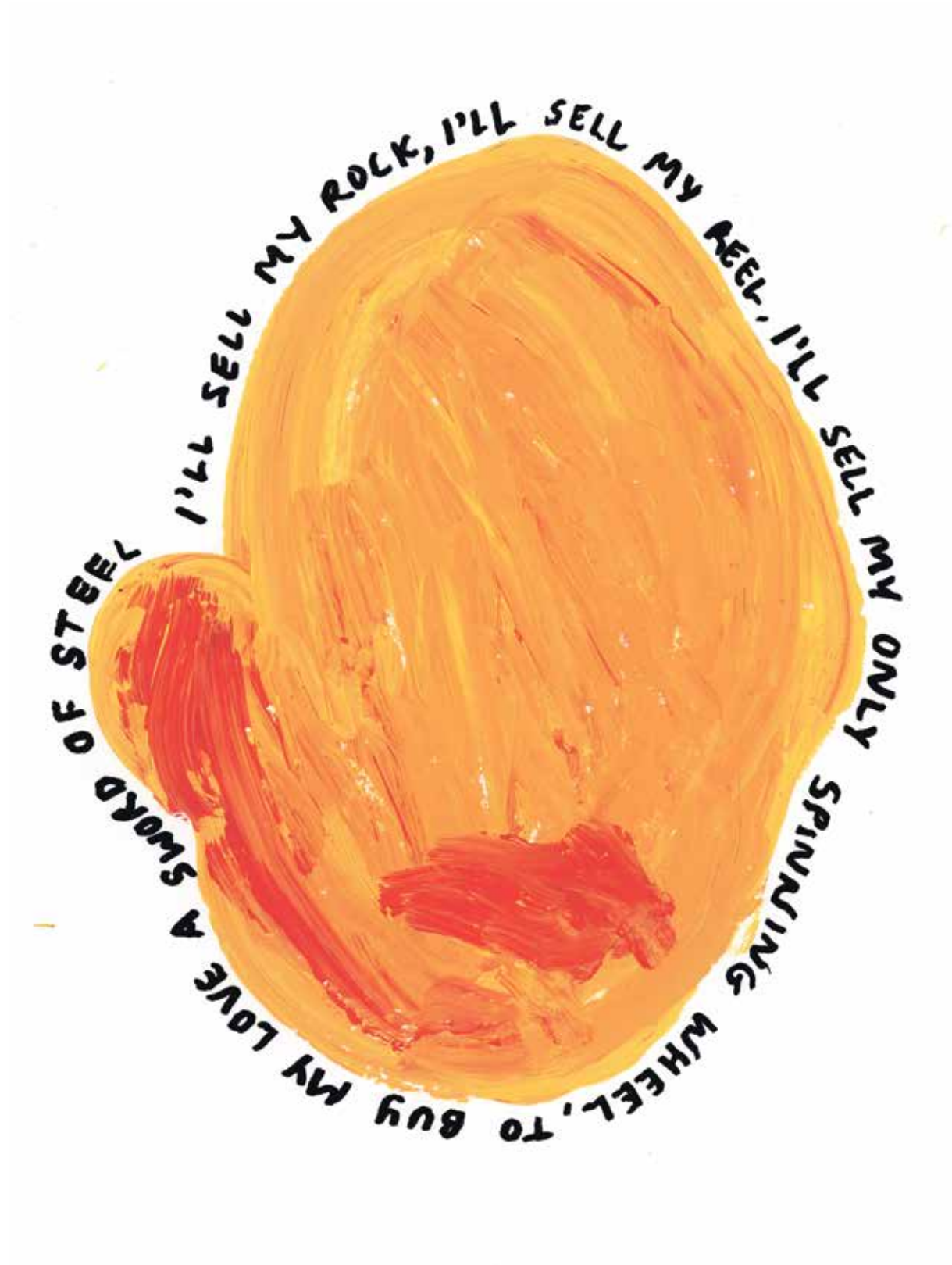


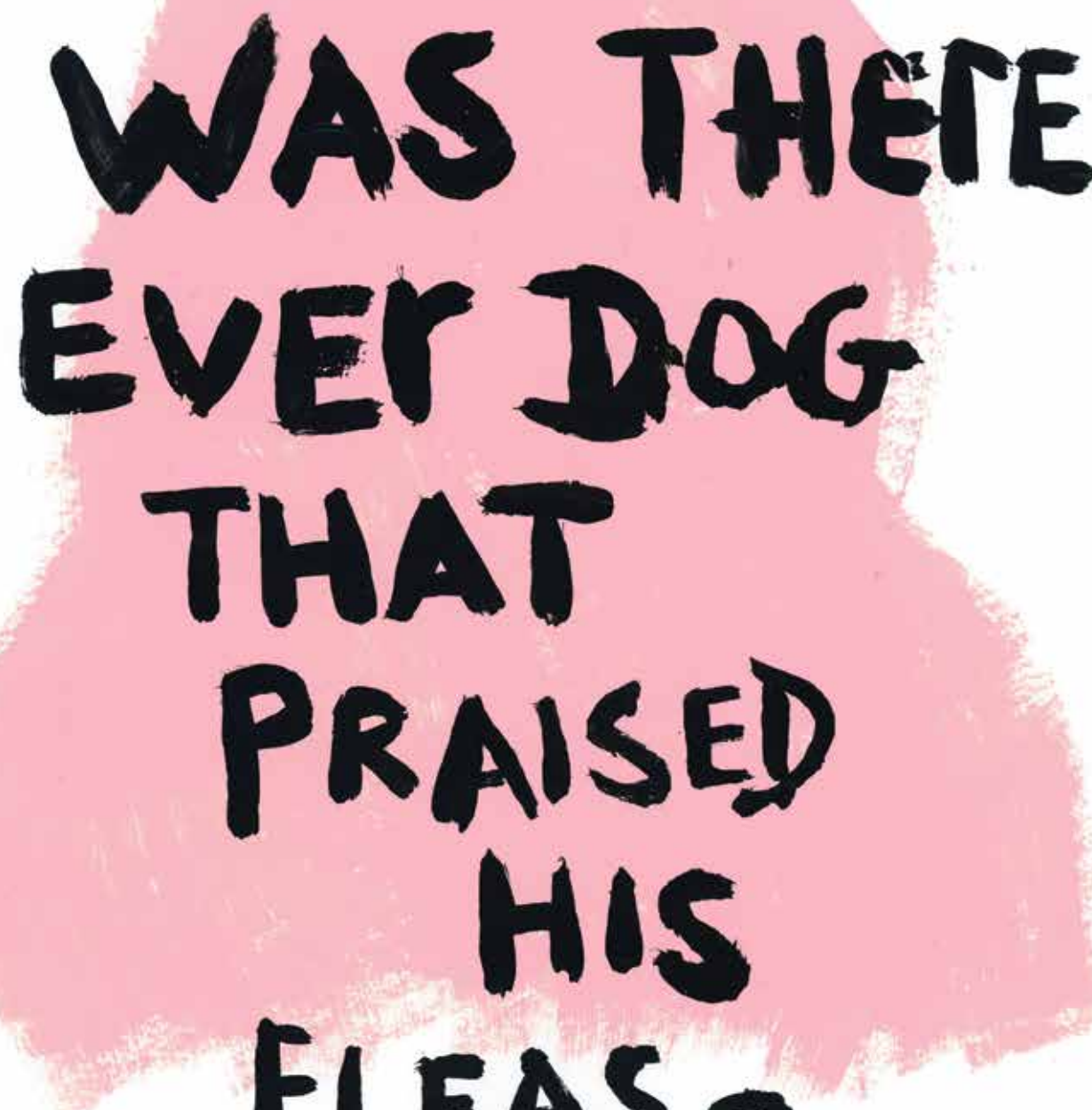
Image by LEONN WARD

**charlie**

Styling by BRIAN TEELING  
Model — CHARLIE at DISTINCT







**WAS THERE  
EVER DOG  
THAT  
PRAISED  
HIS  
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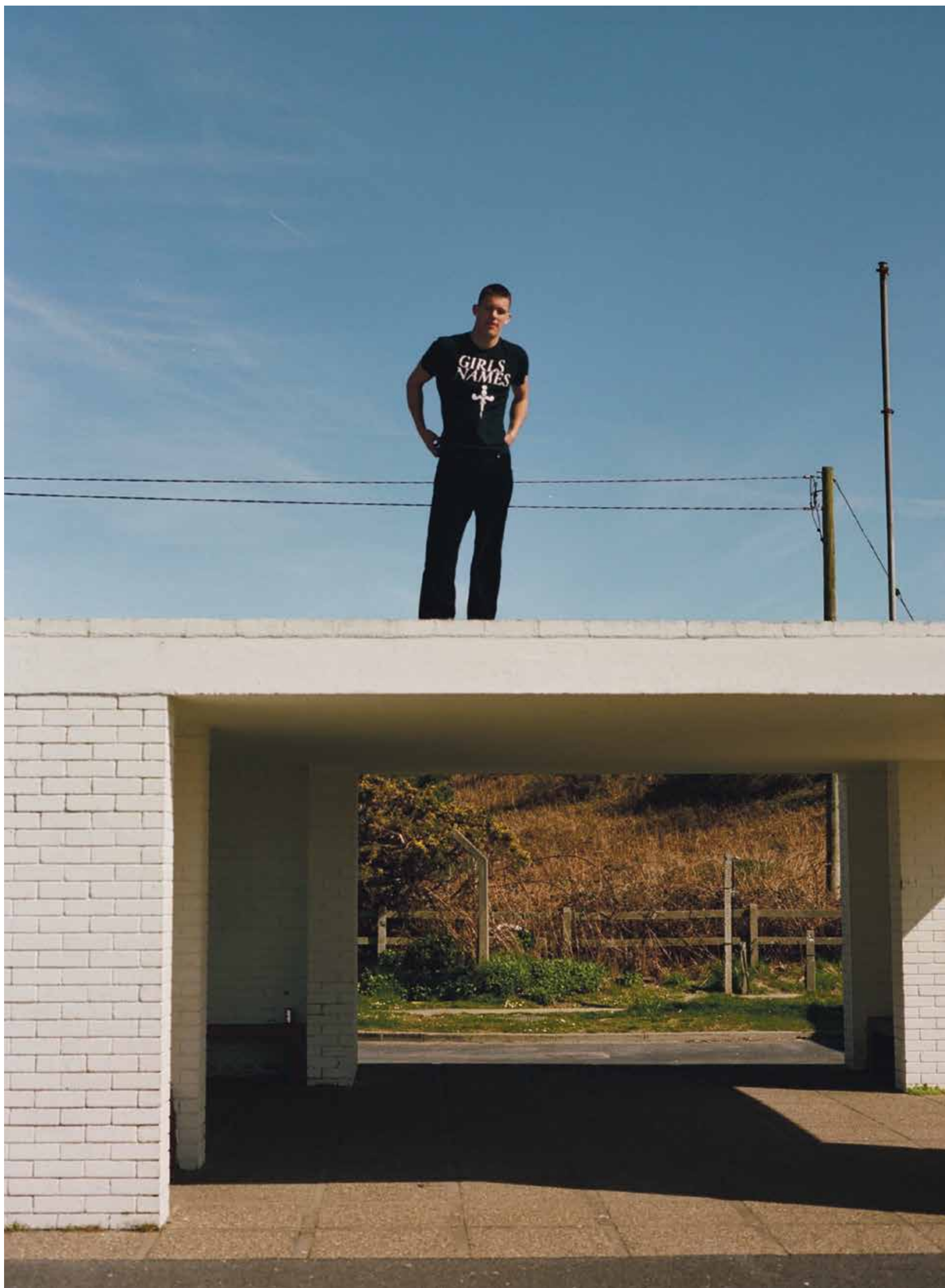




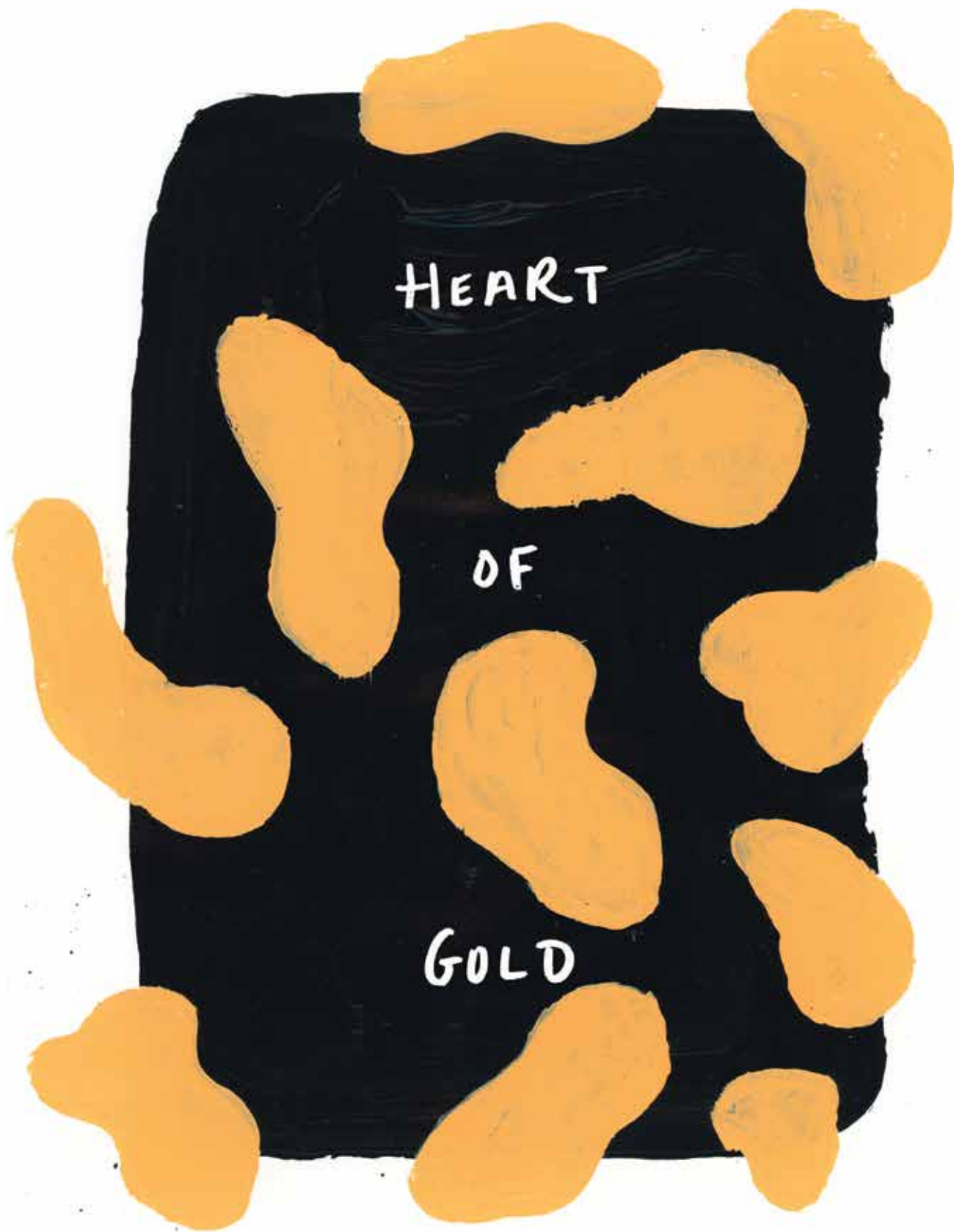
Blazer: ALAN TAYLOR  
— T-Shirt: PUBLIC IMAGE LTD







T-shirt: GIRLS NAMES  
— Trousers: STYLIST'S OWN









HAPPY OUT  
HAPPY OUT  
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HAPPY OUT





Image by ANDREW NUDING



# elle

Styling by KIERAN KILGALLON  
Model — ELLE at PRM LONDON



Floral jacket: STEVEN TAI — puffa  
hood collar: COS — sailor hat:  
THE COSTUME MILL



Corduroy long sleeve top:  
STEVEN TAI — blue leather skirt:  
DANIELLE ROMERIL — pantaloons:  
THE COSTUME MILL — glitter stripe  
boots: MICOL RAGNI





Velvet hat and argyle vest:  
THE COSTUME MILL — vintage  
pinstripe shirt — STYLIST'S OWN  
— button embellished pants:  
SORCHA O'RAGHALLAIGH



Wool jacket and matching gloves:  
ABZAL ISSABEKOV — gingham  
appliqué tee: HANNAH CHOY  
O'BYRNE — pantaloons and cow-  
boy boots: THE COSTUME MILL





Multi print top: MING MA  
— silk dress: NHORM





**michael**

It's often remarked that fashion is not just about clothing. As Mademoiselle Chanel once famously observed, it is "in the sky, in the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening".

Nowhere is this more evident than in the visually explosive world of fashion photography, from the sinister, deranged, yet impeccably glamorous world of Guy Bourdin to Tim Walker's fantastical surrealist oeuvre. These artists are some of the greatest image-makers of their times, admired not only for their sharply trained eyes, but an ability to give compelling expression to ideas, the way we live, what is happening.

Michael Hoppen's eponymous West London gallery is home not only to these fashion greats, but to a diverse list of photographers each with a unique vision reflecting their contemporary world.

One of the most recent additions to its varied and illustrious roster of artists is Dubliner Eamonn Doyle, whose first solo exhibition with the gallery, End, took place earlier this year — no small feat for the emerging documentarian, described by Martin Parr as having created "the best street photo book in a decade".

The gallery was founded in 1992 — a time when photography, not to mention fashion photography, was still confined to the margins of the art world. The landscape has shifted dramatically since then, and photography, alongside the burgeoning new media of film, video and installation, is now recognised as a vital aspect of contemporary art. It's likely that the role of fashion imagery, still overlooked by some, will only become more prevalent in this increasingly pluralised, multidisciplinary art world in which traditional hierarchies continue to be challenged.

With this in mind, Michael Hoppen kindly agreed to talk to Babette and THREAD about the history of this game-changing photography gallery, some of the breathtaking fashion and photographic talent he has worked with over the years, and what makes a really great image.

**BABETTE:**

Michael Hoppen Gallery was founded in 1992. What was the market for photography like back then?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

In 1992, there was no real market in the UK. I had been buying in America and felt that the market had to cross the pond eventually — which I am happy to say it did! Our timing was perfect as it really caught on in the 1990s.

**BABETTE:**

Why did you choose to decide to focus solely on photography?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

I felt that one needed to specialise — and I'm pleased we did. My experiences as a photographer beforehand taught me how hard it was to make a great photograph, so I was able to empathise with good artists who used photography. The definition of what it was to be a photographer or an artist who used a camera was becoming nicely blurred. It still allows me to find photography in unusual places.

**BABETTE:**

Who were some of the first photographers you worked with?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

Colin Jones was the very first show I held, and we recently held another show for him. Lartigue was also an early show, who we are currently showing now. Great photographs never go away.

**BABETTE:**

The gallery has a very diverse mix of photographers, with 19th and 20th-century works alongside contemporary pieces. Was this always the plan, or did it happen organically?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

Photography is only about 174 years old, so to deal with the whole history is not that difficult. The real problem is finding really great material that is in great condition, has a good provenance and is at the right price. I love all periods, so if we are able to work with a great 19th-century photographer and another from 2016, then how wonderful is that?

**BABETTE:**

When finding new photographers, is there any unifying thread you look for?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

We always look for consistency first. Then some idea of process is also important, as the work needs to last. The relationship is also very important, when dealing with a contemporary artist. With older work, one is after the best work in good condition with a good provenance.

**BABETTE:**

Japanese photography seems to be a particular focus for the gallery. What sparked this passion?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

I was a 'London to New York and back to London' man for many years. Then 12 years ago I was invited to Tokyo — and the love affair is still going strong. Japan is amazing. The quality of the work is also extraordinary and they actually make everything. I really admire that. Their photography publishing is also the best there is. I still find the country totally exotic and very hard to understand — but that's ex-

actly what I like. There is much more to find there than, let's say, in America at the moment.

**BABETTE:**

The gallery also works with a number of hugely influential fashion photographers. Which was the first fashion photographer you began working with?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

I think Sarah Moon was the first serious fashion photographer we worked with — and still do. However, it's not about fashion for me — it's always about great work and consistency and the vision about what can make a photograph timeless. That is very important to us.

**BABETTE:**

One of my personal favourites from your list of artists is Guy Bourdin, who died in 1991 — ironically, a year before the gallery was founded. How did you come across Bourdin's work? Had you been an admirer during his lifetime?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

I have always been a massive fan of Bourdin and wanted to be as good as him when I was a photographer. I once went to Paris to see if I could work for him. He said no, so I came back. But I was simply never as good a photographer as I wanted to be, so when he died, I had no one to really look up to, and I decided to call it a day. So actually, his death was sadly instrumental in me doing what I now do.

When I saw Bourdin had a show in New York in 2000, I flew over and bought the entire show. That's how much I loved his work! I now work with his son, Samuel, to promote and show his work to a new audience. I still love the work as much now as I did then.



**BABETTE:**

Another — more contemporary — fashion legend the gallery work's with is Tim Walker. How and when did this relationship come about?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

I met Tim through a mutual friend and we hit it off immediately. Tim is a completely different kind of story, but the one thing that runs common through the artists we work with is that they all make photographs and don't simply take photos. Tim is the essence of making photographs. We have fun and work on interesting projects with him. His creative energy is wonderful.

**BABETTE:**

What other great fashion photographers have you worked with?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

We have worked with Richard Avedon. I met him once and he is someone I really admired. I also like to work with pictures by Martin Munkácsi, who was a legend, and was the first to create lifestyle fashion pictures that really moved me.

I would really love to work with Viviane Sassen, who I think is quite clearly the most talented photographer working at the moment.

**BABETTE:**

The gallery also deals with 'anonymous' works — photographs whose authors are lost or unknown. What can you tell us about those?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

If I had to name my favourite photographers, number one would be Lartigue, and close on his heels would be Mr or Mrs Anon. Anonymous pictures carry very little baggage and free one from association with a particular artist.

I have always collected these images or snaps and get huge enjoyment from hunting for them. Whether 19th or 20th-century, these photos are an important part of my collecting, but sadly, they are becoming very scarce as so many people now look for them.

**BABETTE:**

Your current show, at the time of writing, is by the Irish photographer Eamonn Doyle, whom you recently began working with. What was it about Eamonn's work that caught the gallery's attention?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

Martin Parr introduced me to Eamonn and I immediately got on well with him and understood what he was doing.

I like the fact that 99 per cent of his work is made on one of three or four streets in Dublin. He proves the point that the best pictures are made in places you know well, of things or people you know well.

Too many photographers tackle subjects they don't know well at all — and it shows. Stick to what you know. Eamonn proves this again and again. His hit rate is amazing too and the idea is very simple.

**BABETTE:**

What shows have you got coming up later this year?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

We currently have Lartigue, co-curated with William Boyd, which is a terrific show. Then later this year, we have a show called ? The Image as Question: An Exploration of Evidential Photography. It's quite a mouthful, and the show is very varied, but very interesting. It's crime, science, examination in every sense, and a show we have been building for some ten years.

Image: END. ORANGE, 2016 © EAMONN DOYLE. Courtesy of MICHAEL HOPPEN



Image: END. TWINS, 2016 © EAMONN DOYLE. Courtesy of MICHAEL HOPPEN

**BABETTE:**

In an increasingly crowded market, how do you continue to stand out?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

No idea. Do we? We just do what we do as best as we can, every day. I think the key is making what one does interesting. I hope what we do is interesting most of the time.

**BABETTE:**

Do you pay much attention to trends?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

No. I have always done my own thing and somehow it has worked. I can only work with artists and their work if I would want it on my walls at home.

Right now, people love big colour work, which I am not against, but size has always been less impressive than the content to me.

**BABETTE:**

For any budding collectors out there, what is key to building a really great collection?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

It's the same old saying: buy what you love and work with people you like. For me, it's so important to find someone who knows their stuff and can really help navigate a fairly complex landscape. We pride ourselves in knowledge at the gallery and are very generous with it if asked.

**BABETTE:**

What pieces do you personally own?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

Too many to say. I love collecting and have too many photos, I think, but I also don't feel it's enough yet. I'm not greedy, but I am visually greedy and insatiable.

**BABETTE:**

Do you collect or archive anything else, besides photography?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

I collect 18th and 19th-century deceptive glass, photobooks, early natural history (with a learning towards octopuses and porcupines) and indigo textiles, which I buy in Japan.

**BABETTE:**

Finally, what was the first photograph you ever bought?

**MICHAEL HOPPEN:**

In 1978, I was in New York and came across a beautiful print by Harry Callahan called Water's Edge for \$44. I still have it.

— Babette is a new online project devoted to cultural criticism. Meticulous but subjective, it is particularly interested in issues of identity, gender and transformation. It sees visual art, photography, fashion and pop culture as intrinsically linked, and seeks to explore the dialogues between them.



# irish



Image: CONOR CLINCH

Richard Malone and Conor Clinch are emerging Irish talents working and living in London. Building successful careers abroad, they still hope to remain connected to the Irish industry and consider the possibility of returning home. Isabella Davey currently works at the British Fashion Council as the Showcasing Executive in London. Here, she chats to Richard and Conor about the experience of creative emigration.

For both designer and photographer, the decision to move to London was fuelled by prospects in the UK. Richard Malone is a womenswear designer who has been showing on schedule at LFW for two seasons now. Supported under Lulu Kennedy MBE's prestigious incubator initiative, Fashion East, he is one of the most distinctive voices to emerge in Irish fashion. Photographer Conor Clinch began shooting professionally at age 16. Mentored by Dazed & Confused co-founder, Rankin, his provocative yet fresh aesthetic is driven by personal projects and current obsessions, ranging from engines to muscles and six-packs.

**ISABELLA:**

So when is the right time to make the move from Ireland to London? One thing that seems to happen is that some people move before they really know what they are doing and then either they burn out, run out of money or get chewed up by the industry.

**RICHARD:**

You see it in Central Saint Martins – the cut-throat approach of it all. If you don't have that fierce mentality you aren't going to cope well. I find I can get quite aggressive when cornered, but other people aren't, and this really affects them. London is a place where you need to be at the top of your game.

**CONOR:**

I strive to set higher goals for myself, all the time – that's why I moved here. But London can really take over. When I was in Dublin, I used to think more creatively and research a lot more, whereas over here you are forced to come out with ideas all the time, compounded with the pressures of having your rent money each month – I don't understand how fashion designers create multiple collections a year.

**ISABELLA:**

The freedom to explore is precious – an advantage Ireland has with more room to breathe, against the suffocation of exhaustive output in the UK. Do you feel constant pressure to perform in London?

**RICHARD:**

I feel everything you do is monitored here.

**CONOR:**

You feel guilty for having spare time in London. I used to hugely enjoy researching in Ireland, with my bedroom looking like a creative vomit spill. I experienced anxiety when I moved over here – I still do. You can live a happier life in Ireland, if you are willing to take a step down with your career. You can have balance. The Irish also don't take things so seriously – unlike the industry in London.

**RICHARD:**

Ireland has amazing space: (both physical and mental) unlike London.

**ISABELLA:**

Within all the noise then, how hard is it to make your mark?

**CONOR:**

In Ireland, there is a small industry where you can be at the top of your game, while within a mile radius of where I live there are another 500 photographers.

**ISABELLA:**

What kind of a relationship do you currently have with Ireland? Do you feel supported at home?

**RICHARD:**

There are women in Ireland that are art collectors, with archives of fashion that are beyond your imagination. They are also private clients who are very loyal and want to invest in beautiful and considered pieces that aren't necessarily a Céline tube. They are always excited to know why you are designing things — this really makes a difference. These women are very straightforward; they have no obligation to support me, but they are passionate about fashion, about the real skill of clothes. That has been a real education in itself, that these women in Ireland buy interesting things. It's a way of keeping in touch with Ireland — there is a market there, and it is really homegrown.

**CONOR:**

I have tried to keep that relationship with Ireland, as I love Dublin, and eventually I would love to go back there, and bring what I have learnt abroad home.

**RICHARD:**

The problem with support and initiatives in Ireland is that there is often no legacy afterwards. Neither is there support for the Irish abroad — they should be celebrated in the same conversation as those still based in Ireland.

We should focus on exposing the Irish on international platforms, as much as exposing the Irish to the Irish.

**ISABELLA:**

So is there a responsibility from those abroad to return their internationally acquired skills and support at home?

**RICHARD:**

At Limerick School of Art & Design they have a fund which supports a graduate to undergo a paid internship with me for three months. Both parties involved benefit: I have someone in the studio helping me that I trust, and they receive real-life experience in return. It is a positive initiative.

**ISABELLA:**

In spite of the peace of mind and creative space Ireland has to offer, why do we still yearn to be amidst London's creative noise and scene?

**CONOR:**

I was once asked why I would want to move away if I was doing really well in Ireland, and I remember thinking that was so silly! I want to be constantly going up and up all the time. London is the largest fashion capital in the world.

Dublin is never going to hold a greater market that could withhold people from going abroad. I think what's really important is if you move away, you should bring your skill sets back home — help improve the Irish industry with what you have learnt abroad.

**RICHARD:**

The concept of fashion is a very globalised thing, so we need to travel properly to experience it.

**CONOR:**

The attitude should be to explore abroad and bring back what you've learnt.

**ISABELLA:**

The Irish combination of a strong personal outlook and determined professional ambition breeds innovation. How has Ireland influenced your creative perspective?





Image: RICHARD MALONE AW16

irish



Image: CONOR CLINCH

**RICHARD:**

(My perspective) is always based on Ireland: It's where I go to do research. The Irish perspective is different — the way people dress, on a basic level, is different. It's not for vanity, like in London.

**CONOR:**

When you step away from Ireland, and look at it from an outsider's point of view, you can be really inspired by it. When I look back on my past, it appeals with its unique character.

**ISABELLA:**

So it's a positive influence.

**RICHARD:**

(Through its) honesty, compared to the reservations of the UK, the open-mindedness. There is a work ethic in Ireland that isn't here as much: In Ireland you are brought up to get on with things. The level of hype present in London would be inconceivable to Ireland; people are a lot more insecure here (in London) than they are in Ireland.

**ISABELLA:**

Does your Irish perspective differentiate your output to others in London?

**RICHARD:**

Yes, totally. In school and now, I found there was a lot of passiveness, while Irish people are very passionate.

**CONOR:**

Coming from a working class background has shaped my perspective and has pushed me even more.

**RICHARD:**

It gives you drive to look for something that isn't there already.

**ISABELLA:**

If Ireland is influencing creative perspective, does this prove the presence of a distinctive Irish voice?

**RICHARD:**

It does: resourcefulness and originality. It's a different culture to England: there's a lot to be said of it. People have varying experiences of Ireland, and that comes through in art and design. It's a somewhat strange society to live in: there is no class system, as such, just a strange Catholic control. There is a different mentality — there is a reason that there are so many creatives who are prominent in their fields and from Ireland. There must be something in the upbringing there.





**bcn**



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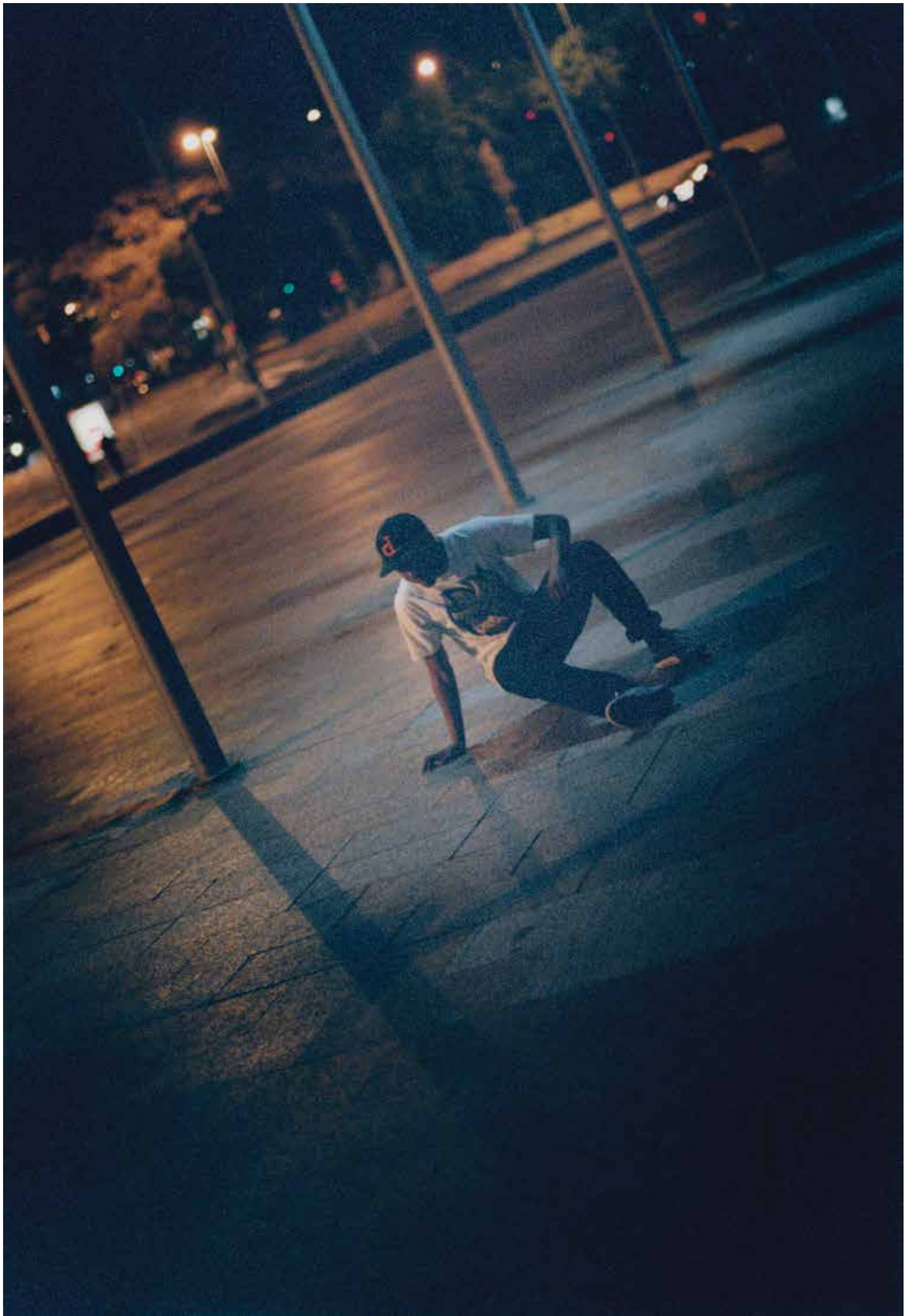






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# wudang





Enchanted by the balletic movement of martial arts, Laragh McCann visited Wudang, a small mountain range in the northwestern part of Hubei, China, home of Taoism and martial arts such as Tai Chi and Kung Fu. She returned with a new perspective and a very different vision of a romantic Chinese landscape. **THREAD** introduced Laragh to Urban Agency architect Andrew Griffin, to learn from his insights into city planning, construction and how these elements are intrinsically connected to consumerism. Andrew, amongst other places in China, worked in Ordos, a city sprung out of the desert in record time epitomising the eerie and impressive industrial and social juxtapositions in China.

**LARAGH:**

I've spent many months living and working in Singapore, Tokyo, South East Asia and also briefly China, so I was surprised by how this trip blew my mind. It made me realise how little I knew about China: it was a constant barrage of clashing identities, past and future, in the midst of an industrial boom. I learnt China has created more concrete in three years than America did in the entire 20th century, which was apparent on my 20-hour train ride from Beijing to Wudang. Looking out the window all I saw was endless construction sites, empty towns and glaring neon signs glowing for miles. It looked vaguely apocalyptic, and I wondered who would live there.

My school was deep in the mountains, beside farms and a run-down temple. I was taught the Tai Chi form by a 16-year-old boy who had been learning martial arts since he was four. It was amazing to see him and the other boys practise with swords and other weapons. During my time off, I explored the mountains and temples with my roommate Dilan; she was incredibly graceful and shared with me stories about what it was like growing up in China.

I was struck by a respect for the innately hard-working rural people, and also the state of China relative to what I expected it to be. I wondered about my part in it as a Western consumer, and what the role of my martial arts school would be in the new, emerging China. There was a general air of confusion around the place: older traditions such as tea-drinking, music and spiritual practices had much less authority or purpose in people's lives. It was unclear what would fill this void, and

how the rural way of life would fit into the modern cities appearing by the second.

I left with a sense of responsibility of my day-to-day actions — where I buy my clothes, where do the things I use come from, how are they made — having seen the effect of smog and a denial of finiteness all over China. I also left with a genuine appreciation for Ireland: the fresh air, craic and sense of ambition and passion for the arts, which I had to leave behind to realise I loved.

**ANDREW:**

Laragh's photographic series from her journey to Wudang possesses an exploratory naivety and seduction met with reality. She set out to find the surreal mountainous beauty of China, with the backdrop of gently swaying bamboo forests. What she arrived to was the real China, the one that neither China nor the West depicts, one which is deeply engrained in its industrial revolution and the societal consequences that implies.

Smog fills your lungs when you enter Beijing, as you walk off the gangway of the aeroplane it's difficult to breathe, then you forget it's there. It doesn't ever get quiet; there is always someone around, sweeping the streets, fixing a bike, a street entrepreneur making money from some type of service, collecting trash or selling bottled water. It's a William Gibson world, where the night never sleeps. The train from Beijing to almost any other city never really leaves civilisation. Endless cities blur together like some futuristic landscape. China's countryside is almost impossible to find, in a country the same size of Europe with over twice the population; one can never find the same juxtaposition of city and nature that we are so blessed with in Europe.

Inspired by the cinematic images of Ang Lee, Laragh embarked on a journey to experience the untouched beauty of the Wudang. On arrival, she met with her new martial arts Master, who was walking down the street in billowing robes, while on his oversized Chinese cell phone. This was after realising that all her accommodation details were in her Gmail account, which was now blocked by the great firewall of China.

This is the real China, full of contradictions and a wonderful beauty that is very hard to

describe. It's not the kind of beauty you find on a holiday postcard, it's much more engrained in the wonder and resilience of its people.

Laragh's photographs depict that duality of China, a country deeply concerned with its future, deeply engrained with its tradition. China is the most rapidly expanding country in the world, a world which took all of civilisation to reach 1 billion people in 1856 and grew in the last 14 years by another billion, to seven billion. Think for a moment of that exponential graph; now think that in 1910, ten per cent of people lived in cities, now over 50 per cent do, rising to 80 per cent by 2050. Cities are overcrowded and the countryside is being abandoned. Our desire for the latest iPhone or fast fashion leaves its imprint on the townscapes of India, Bangladesh and China, even somewhere as remote as Wudang.







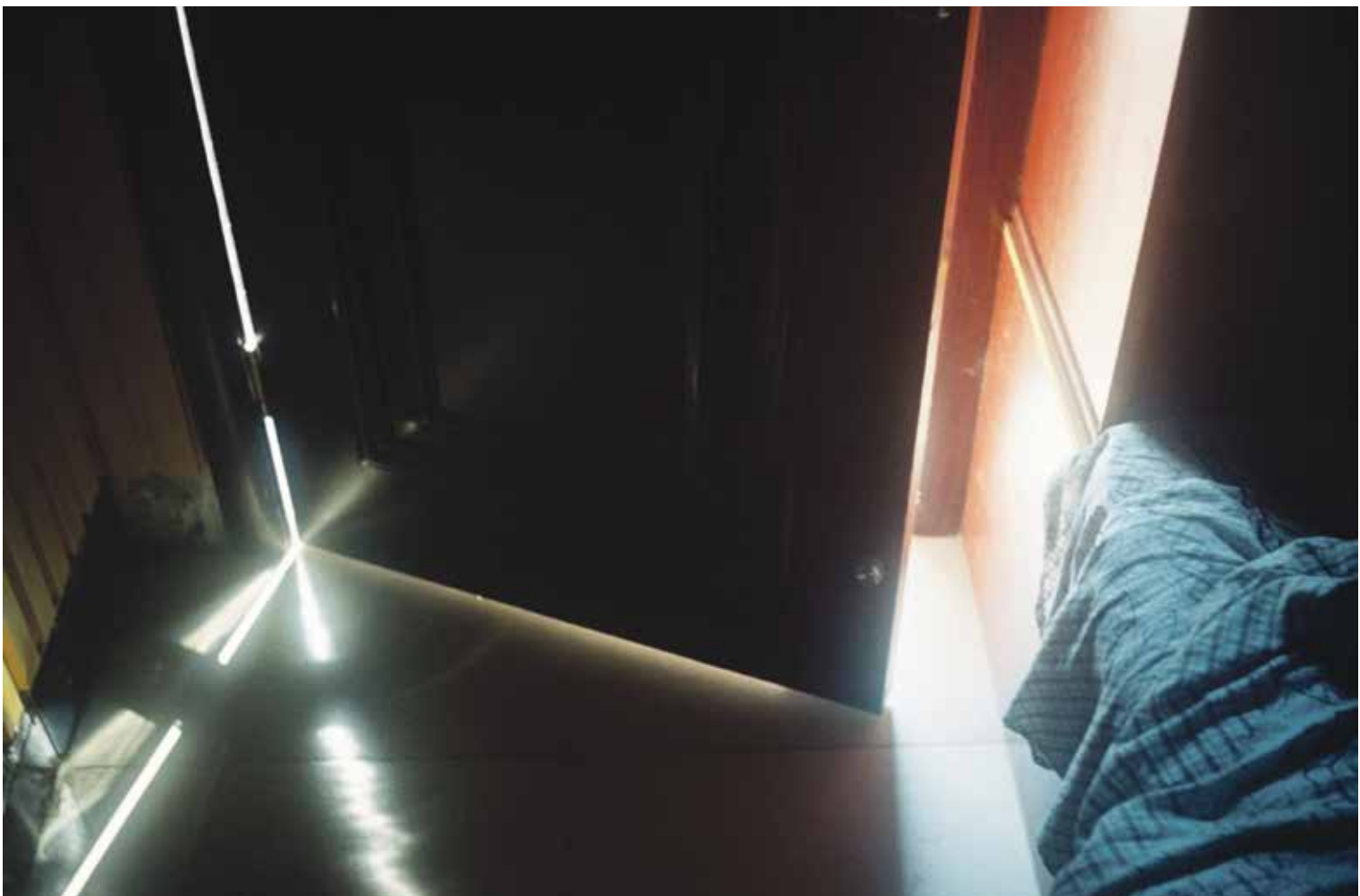






Image by TANYA HOUGHTON  
Set Design by CIARA O'DONOVAN

# portraits



ALLY CAPELLINO



ALICE MAHER





LINDA BROWNLEE



LIAM SPARKES



MARTINO GAMPER





# making faces



Image: TYRON LE BON

Deirdre McQuillan, Fashion Editor, The Irish Times, talks to international makeup artist Niamh Quinn.

In the world of fashion, designers, models and photographers tend to grab the lion's share of public recognition, but the skill of the makeup artist is also vital to the process of the finished image — whether for the catwalk, for commercial or editorial demands. The effects can be subtle or dramatic and can often set trends. One Irishwoman steadily making a successful career in the profession is thirty-three year old London-based Niamh Quinn, whose impressive portfolio of work has propelled her into the premier league, working with some of the world's top photographers and models.

"I enjoy working with skin and making a picture," she says simply.

We meet in London, where she has just returned from Rome working on a short movie for Gucci and is heading into another busy period with London fashion week looming. She explains that with many commercial jobs "it is pretty much the stylist, the photographer and the creative director who come up with a vision and you have a conversation about it and you also have your say and your tweaks — the slight alterations you would make — and it also depends on the model and sometimes that subtle difference might work. For models, good bone structure has huge importance in terms of a good picture and in terms of making people look remarkable," she says.

She has travelled all over the world on editorial shoots for Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, i-D, and Dazed magazines; on campaigns for Céline, Victoria Beckham, Loewe, Warehouse, MiH Jeans and David Koma; done makeup for Michelle Dockery for a Vogue Arts feature and occasionally for actress and former model Lily Cole, whom she admires. Generally, however, she avoids doing makeup for celebrity appearances. "Even though it pays very well, I don't really want to live someone else's life and would not want to go in that direction. I enjoy the control that I have now."

From Blackrock, Co Dublin, she is the daughter of sculptor Bob Quinn who gave up a career in advertising to become an artist. "My grandmother was also a painter, so there was always a background in art at home," she says. After



leaving school in Loreto Dalkey, she did a foundation year in NCAD but having always wanted to do a makeup course, studied at the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology and afterwards headed to London.

"I started as a makeup assistant with Kelly Cornwell and others doing fashion and commercial work and worked as hard as I could and got an insight into a number of different directions a fashion career could take. I learned how to work on the set, how to make my presence felt – and when not to – and how to connect with so many different people and so many different approaches. Every day was a new day."

Teamwork is what appeals to her. "I love art and the idea of being around people and preferred working with a team to working alone as an artist. I didn't want to be in a studio on my own." What really set her career in motion, however, was when she signed up with LGA (the Lisa Gorman Agency – Beauty). Gormley, she describes, as "an incredible woman and when you have someone behind you and directing you and you don't have to deal with trying to sell yourself and the slog of invoices – she has taken my career in a direction I could never have dreamed of".

Her first big break was working with the celebrated German artist and fashion photographer Juergen Teller on a Céline campaign and more recently with up-and-coming photographer Jamie Hawkesworth on Loewe with designer J.W. Anderson and stylist Benjamin Bruno. She has also worked with many Irish professionals like photographer Boo George and stylist Celestine Cooney and did Simone Rocha's J Brand campaign and shows for designers Danielle Romeril and Rory Parnell Mooney.

"I would be known for my work with skin and for a look that is not too glamorous – strong eyes and no mascara and no lip colour or strong lips with a very bare face. Sometimes designers want that very raw look and you have to connect with their vision and sometimes they want you to do what you want. The makeup will depend on the style of the clothes and whether or not you are creating a character. It can be really exciting." She bemoans the fact that the Kardashians have had such influence on makeup trends, their heavily contoured look so much a contrast to her personal style.

Her kit comprises oils, moisturisers, balms, cleansers, exfoliants, lip scrubs and she argues that prepping the face is the most important part of all because the results are immediate and bring a quality to the picture. "I like daylight and photographers who can create really good light because it keeps you connected during the day." Completely independent when it comes to cosmetics, she believes the most important part of the regime is skincare.

"If you have a good facial you don't need much makeup so you take the most time with it. If a model has good skin, you do them no favours by putting on makeup; you just take time with the skin itself. I use Bioderma water cleansers which work with most skin types. Some of the MAC cream colour bases are great – I can't live without them and their eyeshadows. For lips, I use Chanel because they do really beautiful tints and pigments and have nailed the colour red. I love Dior too and Tom Ford does great lipsticks, skin shimmers and illuminators." As for brushes, more often than not, she prefers to apply makeup with her fingers, and claims that models like Natalie Westling and Alek Wek have "amazing" skin.

She works with many of the same teams but sometimes a stylist will introduce her to another photographer and "so it grows and shifts, but it's nice when you know the people particularly when you travel with them". Recent trips have taken her to Los Angeles, Ghana, Kenya, Colorado, Morocco and Italy and she has just completed a short Nowness video 'Sleepwalking in the Rift' for the US label Maiyet with director Cary Fukunaga.

It all sounds like a hectic professional life which she juggles with marriage and motherhood. Her husband is Scotsman Max Bergius and the couple who live in Stepney now have a year-old baby daughter Cosima whose care makes its own demands on her time. "But I really enjoy being a working mother and try to switch off when I am at home. But I love what I do and I really can't believe how things have taken off. It is a better career than I ever thought it would be."



Image: PAUL WETHERELL





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