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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2025

THE & INNOVATORS & ISSUE

HAILEY BIEBER • PRISCILLA CHAN • BILLIE EILISH • MELLODY HOBSON & GEORGE LUCAS • SPIKE LEE • BEN STILLER • NADEGE VANHEE

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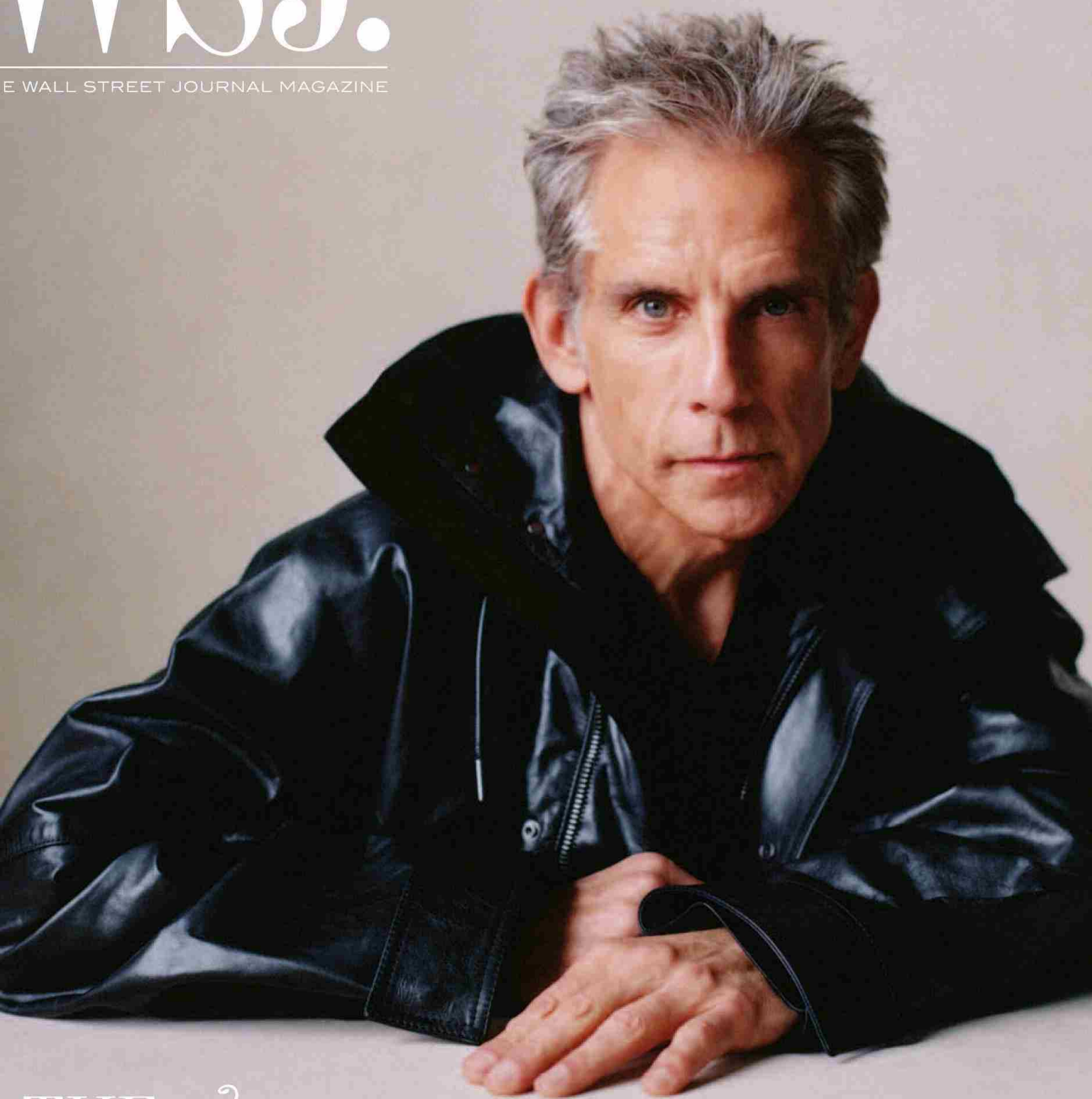
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A.-L. Breguet redefined the art of horology with his inventions. His pursuit of perfection continues to inspire those shaping the future. To celebrate this legacy, Breguet introduces the new Reine de Naples 9935, paying tribute to the first wristwatch.

BREGUET

250 YEARS

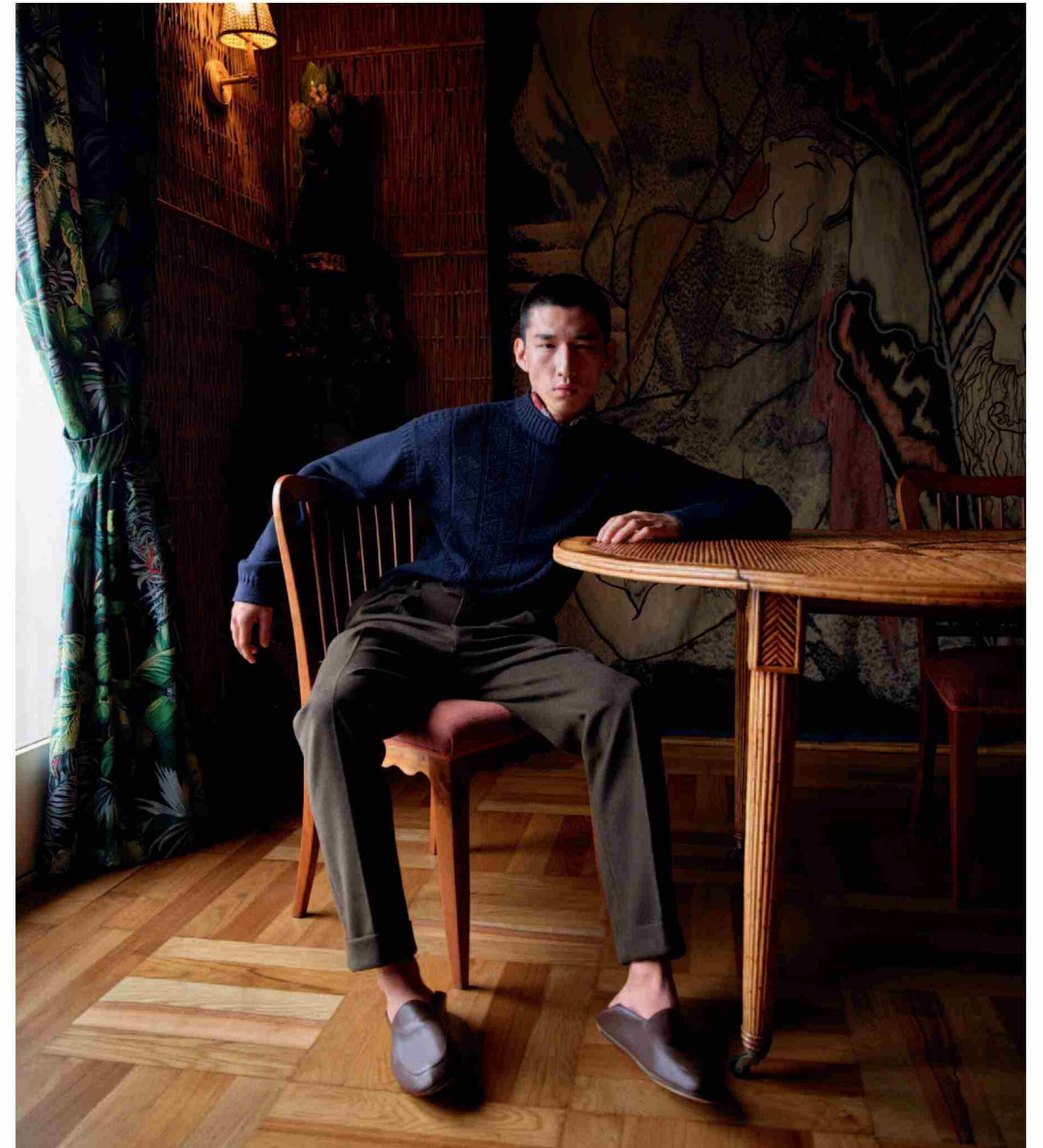




For Pedro Almodóvar, as for Roche Bobois, color is a language, a signature, an emotion – one that has inspired a collaboration and several exclusive designs. The iconic Bubble sofa designed by Sacha Lakic is reimagined in exclusive new colors created by Pedro Almodóvar. The cushions, furniture, and fabrics further extend the tribute to his cinematic universe.

Bubble Pedro Almodóvar. Curved 3-4 seat sofa, designed by Sacha Lakic.
Exclusive color designed by Pedro Almodóvar.

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Clearing after Rain on Mount Inwang
Jeong Seon (1676–1759)

From Seoul to the Smithsonian:

KOREA'S CULTURAL MOMENT ARRIVES

As Korean culture captures the world's imagination, the Smithsonian's new exhibition connects its origins to one man's remarkable vision.

Step into the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art (NMAA) this November and you'll instantly feel transported.

By the entrance, a 19th-century folding screen bursts with color. Soon, a serene Buddhist sculpture comes into view, followed by a vast modern canvas pulsing with abstract forms. This is *Korean Treasures: Collected, Cherished, Shared*, an exhibition as dynamic and layered as the country it represents.

Over 200 works are on view, from ancient Buddhist sculptures cast more than a thousand years ago to jade ceramics, delicate screens from the Joseon dynasty and striking paintings that reflect Korea's

rapid modernization. Drawn from diverse settings—scholars' studies, Buddhist temples and more—these works tell a story of creativity, innovation and resilience that has shaped Korean culture for centuries.

The show marks the first time the Lee Kun-hee Collection, one of the most remarkable collections of Korean art, is being shared with international audiences. Best known for transforming Samsung into a technology powerhouse, Lee was also a passionate collector. *Korean Treasures* showcases works amassed over generations by Lee and his family, including pieces originally collected by his father, Samsung founder Byung-chull Lee.

At its core, the exhibition is a celebration of Korea's story, spanning more than 1,500 years, and its impact on global culture. Lee believed preserving heritage was a duty—a way of safeguarding a nation's soul for future generations. Inspired by his father, Lee's dedication led to his family's donation of more than 23,000 works to the Republic of Korea in 2021, a profound act of cultural generosity. This philosophy mirrors how Lee reshaped Samsung, using innovation not just to address challenges, but to inspire a better future—a legacy the company continues today.

“The family's donation stems from a deep sense of mission to share Korea's cultural heritage more widely.”

YOONIE JOUNG

The exhibition is arranged to feel both intimate and grand. One gallery recreates the quiet beauty of a *sarangbang*, a scholar's study, complete with hand-carved writing desks and brushes once used by Korea's Confucian elite. Another features *Clearing after Rain on Mount Inwang*, an 18th-century piece by Jeong Seon, capturing Seoul's mist-covered mountains in a way that feels both timeless and modern. In the final galleries, 20th-century canvases by Kim Whanki and Paik Namsoon electrify the space, blending tradition and modernity to create something entirely new.

As Yoonie Joung, president and CEO of Samsung Electronics North America, explains: “The family's donation stems from a deep sense of mission to share Korea's cultural heritage more widely.”

Chaekgado: Scholar's Accoutrements in a Bookcase
Joseon dynasty (19th century)



Echo 19-II-73#307
Kim Whanki (1913–1974)

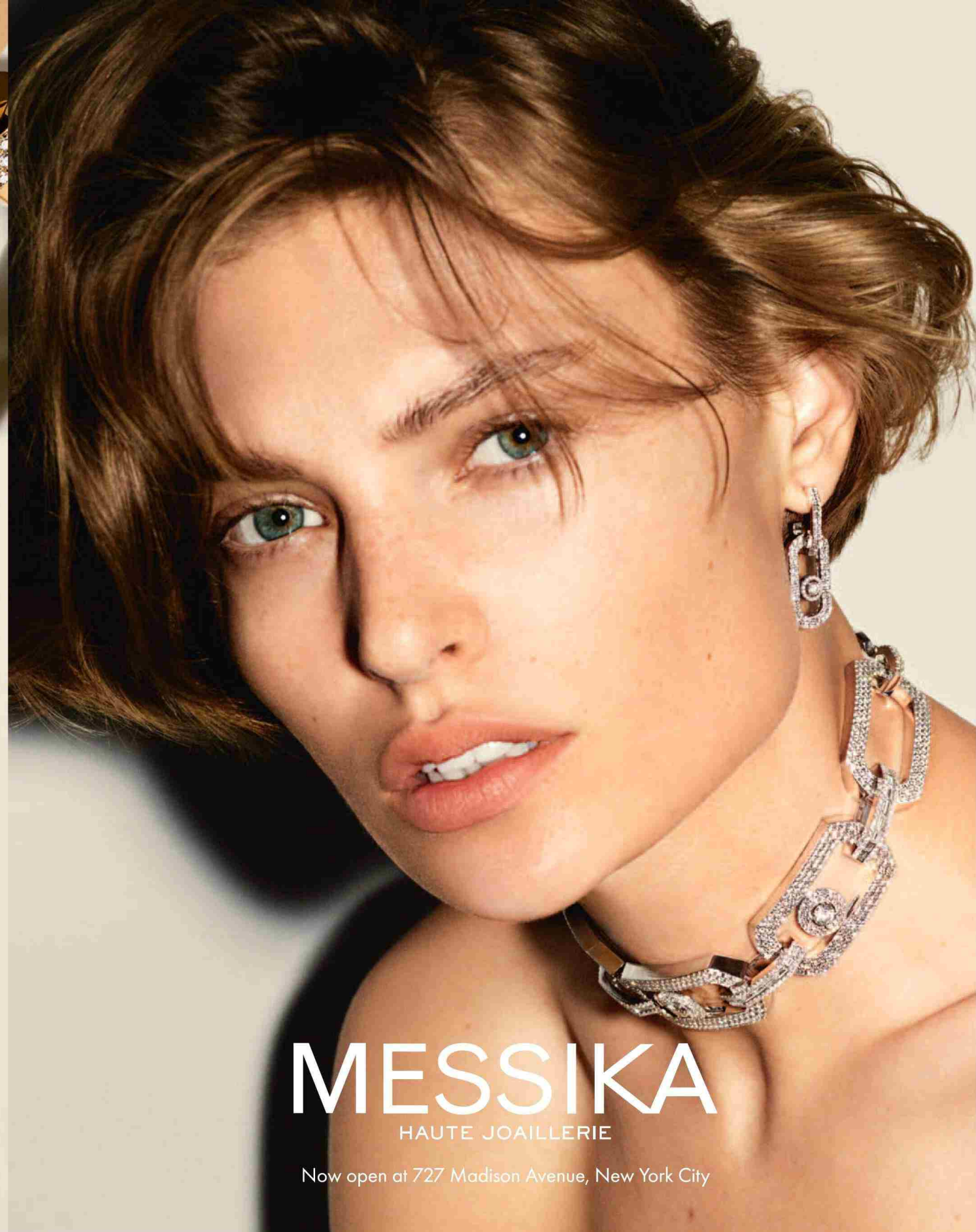
“*Korean Treasures* is a rare opportunity to share the richness and depth of Korean art with U.S. audiences,” said Chase F. Robinson, director of the NMAA. “Kun-hee Lee was a visionary collector, and his family's gift stands as one of the most significant in Korea's history. As a museum founded through a similar transformative act of generosity, we are honored to share this remarkable story on the international stage.”

Across ten galleries, the exhibition offers more than art. It's a glimpse into Korea's cultural heartbeat, a legacy Kun-hee Lee spent his life protecting—and that his family is now offering to all.

Korean Treasures: Collected, Cherished, Shared will be on view at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art (NMAA) in Washington, D.C. from November 8, 2025, through February 1, 2026.

From March 7 through July 5, 2026, the collection will be on view at the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Wall Street Journal news organization was not involved in the creation of this content. This article is sponsored by Samsung.



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Cooking *as an* Art Form

What One Luxury Brand Brings to the Table

For Michael Tusk, executive chef and owner of the three Michelin-starred restaurant Quince in San Francisco, the right kitchen is vital for inspiring him and his team—and in bringing joy and freedom to their cooking.

Far more than just a place to cook, the kitchen is a stage for performance and self-expression. With audiences increasingly captivated by the creativity and narrative that shape their dining experiences, cooking has emerged as a defining cultural touchpoint that champions both form and function. Under this spotlight, gastronomy and design are converging in ever more sophisticated ways, with a chef's chosen tools serving to enhance and elevate their craft.

"The kitchen is where I spend most of my time, so my environment matters," says Michael Tusk, the award-winning executive chef and owner of the three Michelin-starred Quince in San Francisco. "If the space feels beautiful, ordered and intentional, it inspires me and my team. Aesthetics are not just decoration. They create a mood that informs how we work together and how much joy we bring to the process."



A Chef's Perspective

Tusk, who worked in some of the world's most heralded kitchens before opening Quince in the Bay Area in 2003, says, "Cooking has always been a way for me to tell a story. It is about memory, ingredients and the connection between people, ingredients and place," he says of his culinary approach, which pairs classic technique with contemporary refinement. "The tools and appliances I use are an extension of that expression. If they respond to me intuitively, they allow me to focus on flavor and detail without distraction."

All of which explains Tusk's long-lasting relationship with Gaggenau, the luxury brand for professional-grade home appliances whose craftsmanship and attention to detail make it a firm favorite among discerning chefs. Starting out as a steel and enamel specialist almost 350 years ago, today its clean-lined, Bauhaus-inspired collection of professional-standard appliances range from cooktops to coffee machines and fridges to combi-steam ovens, each characterized by timeless design and precision engineering.

"Cooking has always been a way for me to tell a story. It is about memory, ingredients and the connection between people, ingredients and place. The tools and appliances I use are an extension of that expression."

Michael Tusk
Executive chef and owner of Quince

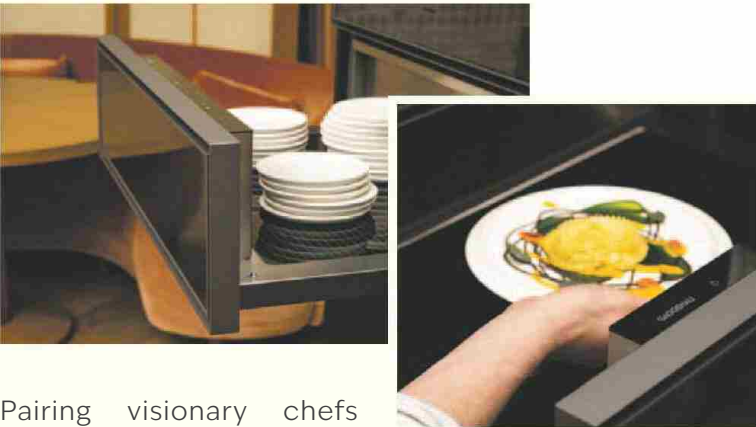
"The best tools disappear into the background," says Tusk. "With Gaggenau, the function is so clear that I can stay focused on the task at hand. This gives me confidence and allows me to cook with more freedom." At Quince, he integrated the Vario 400 full-surface induction cooktop into the central dining room island, turning cooking into not just preparation, but a theatrical part of the guest experience.

Tools of the Trade

Even with its storied heritage, Gaggenau is continually evolving. Its most iconic products embody an avant-garde design ethos that have set industry benchmarks. This year marked the launch of the new Expressive series,

whose appliances embody those Bauhaus principles of bold geometry—using simple shapes, elegantly, for a clear purpose—an aesthetic matched by better performance and control. As part of the range, the renowned Gaggenau oven has been taken to the next level with a special heated-air catalyzer and near-silent convection-plus heating system.

"What struck me first about Gaggenau is its respect for craftsmanship," Tusk says. "The appliances in the Expressive range are designed with the same level of detail that I'd expect from a handmade tool. They carry a sense of refinement and reliability. The materials feel solid and the design is timeless."



Pairing visionary chefs with elite tools opens the possibility of breaking culinary boundaries and creating unforgettable dining experiences. And it's here that Gaggenau excels—producing exquisite kitchen equipment that doesn't just elevate the chef's work but touches the lives of all those gathered around the table.

And it's not just for Michelin-starred chefs; the right appliances are crucial to anyone who wants to make an impact in the kitchen, whether in a professional setting or at home. "Tools, such as those in Gaggenau's Expressive range give a chef consistency and reliability," Tusk says. "Those qualities build trust in the process and allow them to focus on learning the craft. Good appliances teach discipline. They show what is possible when the equipment rises to the same level as the cook's ambition."



For more information about Gaggenau's Expressive range visit [gaggenau.com](https://www.gaggenau.com)

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WSJ.insider

A LOOK INSIDE THE WORLD OF WSJ.

INSIDE WSJ. MAGAZINE’S U.S. OPEN COCKTAIL PARTY SEPTEMBER 2, 2025 | ARTHUR ASHE STADIUM | NYC

To celebrate the launch of its fall women’s fashion issue, *WSJ. Magazine* co-hosted an intimate cocktail party at the U.S. Open quarterfinals. On the court, Novak Djokovic defeated Taylor Fritz in a match that lasted several hours. In the suite, guests enjoyed boxes of Coqodaq’s caviar chicken nuggets. Model Awar Odhiang, stylist Gabriella Karefa-Johnson and fashion editor Tonne Goodman—all of whom contributed to the September women’s fashion issue—attended the event, produced in partnership with Cadillac.

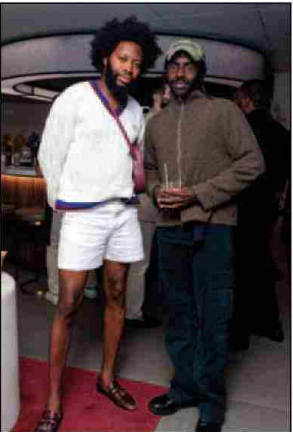
Image credit: Yvonne Tnt/BFA.com



Gabriella Karefa-Johnson and Awar Odhiang



Sarah Ball and Odhiang



Jeremy O. Harris and Dev Hynes



Chris John Millington, Karefa-Johnson and Ball



Edward Bowleg III and Tonne Goodman



Ball, Aurora James and Willow Lindley



Tyler Mitchell



Savanah Leaf, Harris, Arvand Khosravi, Ball and Lindley



Marili Andre and Hynes



Harris



“THERE IS A BEAUTY THAT REMAINS
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LOOKING.” CORY RICHARDS,
PHOTOGRAPHER AND EXPLORER, WEARS THE
VACHERON CONSTANTIN OVERSEAS.


VACHERON CONSTANTIN | ONE OF
GENÈVE NOT MANY.



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Photography by Ryan James Caruthers

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Candy collection

Ben Stiller in a Dolce & Gabbana shirt, Hermès pants,
Ferragamo shoes, Charvet belt, Tom Ford tie and stylist's
own socks. Photographed by William Waterworth
and styled by Thistle Brown. Hair, Alicia Zavarella using
R+CO; grooming, Rebecca Hickey; set design, Dylan
Bailey; production, Day International. For details see
Sources, page 172.



The Bird on a Rock Collection
An homage to the House's most celebrated brooch, first introduced in 1965

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BRUNELLO CUCINELLI

Books showed me the way of life
Emperor Hadrian



MARKET REPORT.

87 THE NEW BLUES

Denim, once a workhorse, takes the spotlight with bold trims, appliqués and cuts.

Photography by Olu Michael Odukoya
Styling by Ola Ebiti

Hailey Bieber in a Miu Miu top and skirt and her own ring. Photographed by Marili Andre and styled by Gabriella Karefa-Johnson. Hair, James Pecis using Blu & Green; makeup, Emi Kaneko using Rhode; manicure, Dawn Sterling; set design, Patience Harding; production, Casa Projects. For details see Sources, page 172.

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Judd Apatow

The director and producer used his hoarding tendencies to compile his visual memoir, out this fall.

By Lane Florsheim
Photography by Adali Schell

100 JAMIE DIMON'S \$3 BILLION BET

The CEO of JPMorgan Chase spent six years building a shiny new headquarters, a skyscraper that is reshaping Manhattan's skyline—and, he hopes, the future of his industry.

By Alexander Saeedy
Photography by Chris Maggio

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At just 23, the pop superstar has already accumulated 44 Hot 100 hits, nine Grammys and a pair of Oscars.

By Elias Leight
Photography by Alex Prager
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116 MELLODY HOBSON & GEORGE LUCAS

Inside the audacious effort to bring the power couple's dream to life.

By John Jurgensen
Photography by Deanna and Ed Templeton
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Her confidence arrived before she did.



FERRAGAMO
FIRENZE



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He helped define the Gen X sensibility. With *Severance*, and a revealing documentary about his parents, he's taking a more serious turn.

By Sam Schube

Photography by William Waterworth
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As the initiative she co-founded celebrates its 10th anniversary, Chan is pursuing an ambitious goal.

By Ellen Gamerman

Photography by Sinna Nasseri
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The Rhode co-founder joined a growing class of beauty supermoguls this year when her brand, Rhode, sold to Elf Cosmetics for \$1 billion.

By Chavie Lieber

Photography by Marili Andre
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The women's ready-to-wear designer is preparing to relaunch haute couture at Hermès.

By Ben Cohen

Photography by Nigel Shafran
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Thirty-six years after *Do the Right Thing*, the Brooklyn-born filmmaker is as provocative as ever.

By Erich Schwartzel

Photography by Bolade Banjo
Sittings Editor Eric McNeal

158 CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

Couture brings out the best the fashion and jewelry industries have to offer, from embroidery and lace to metalwork and diamonds.

Photography by Pablo Di Prima
Styling by Giulia Revolo

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Spike Lee in a Studio Kibun shirt and his own hat, glasses, bracelets, rings and watch. Photographed by Bolade Banjo; sittings editor, Eric McNeal; production, We Are Counsel. For details see Sources, page 172.



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HUMAN RESOURCES



Mellody Hobson and George Lucas outside the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles.



IF IT'S SOCIAL-EVENT SEASON, that means it's small-talk season. And the ripest gourd on fall's meandering small-talk vine is—you'll already know—AI. What do you think of it? What change will it bring to your personal work? How often are you speaking to Claude? If I were small-talking with you at a dinner right now, I would tell you over knife-scrapes that one of our reporters recently tried the AI-powered Friend, which you wear on a lanyard around your neck for guidance and companionship. It records your daily interactions and, aside from support and reassurance, supposedly tells you when you have a social interaction with a would-be foe. (Austin Powers-adjacent technology to then spray that person with Silly String: surely contingent upon the next round of funding.)

Still, I do wonder if the more we swarm to use these tools in ever more mundane ways, the more weight it gives to what isn't AI. If the machine-smoothed contours of a ChatGPT rendering of a den, or a perfectly personality-less rehearsal-dinner speech,

are now a kind of valueless norm, what becomes valuable?

Shaggily human innovation—the kind where new ground isn't just broken but broken imperfectly, with emotional stakes and nonlinear progress—will always be what inspires other people the most. It's basic storytelling, for one. And it's a unifying factor of our seven Innovators. Their triumphs are real, but so were their setbacks. Their wins were sweeter because of their losses. The criticism they faced or the challenges they overcame weren't hidden in the “Analyzing your answer...” wheel of lightning-fast processing; they were lived through, slowly or painfully, in public fashion. Hard-won may not always be best-won. But to look upon a person who struggled before they succeeded is to be left with one glittering thought that LLMs truly never give you:

Maybe I could do that too.

Sarah Ball

Sarah Ball
s.ball@wsj.com



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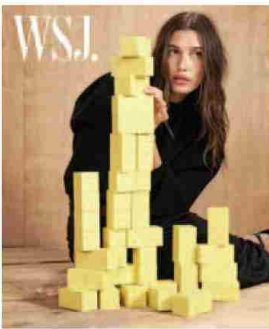
A woman with dark skin and short hair is leaning against a light-colored stone ledge. She is wearing a long-sleeved, form-fitting dress with a vibrant pattern of stylized, fan-like shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and green on a light blue background. She is also wearing large, ornate earrings and a wide, light-colored bandage around her right thigh. The background features a white paneled wall and a window with sheer curtains. The overall mood is elegant and artistic.

ULLA JOHNSON

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The writers, photographers and stylists behind each of this year's seven Innovator profiles.

BY AVA MANSON



CHAVIE LIEBER, MARILI ANDRE & GABRIELLA KAREFA-JOHNSON

HAILEY BIEBER P. 136

When writer Chavie Lieber interviewed Beauty Innovator Hailey Bieber at a restaurant in New York, she could relate to the model and Rhode founder more than she expected. "Hailey and I have very different lives, but we had both been up the night before with our crying babies," Lieber says. "Motherhood is the great equalizer, I guess!" Bieber's cover was styled by Gabriella Karefa-Johnson and photographed by Marili Andre, who wanted the shoot to have a playful, curious energy. "The starting point for me was a red toy car," Andre says—a subtle nod to Bieber as a mom. Tom Ford top and skirt, Kalda heel and her own ring.

ELLEN GAMERMAN, SINNA NASSERI & KARLA WELCH

PRISCILLA CHAN P. 130

For her cover shoot in a Chicago lab, Philanthropy in Science Innovator Priscilla Chan was styled by Karla Welch and photographed by Sinna Nasser, who felt right at home on set. "My parents were research scientists," Nasser says. "My inspiration [for the shoot] was my own fleeting memories of growing up in science labs." Writer Ellen Gamerman hopes that from this story people are able to see Chan separately from her husband, Mark Zuckerberg. "She has a rule for herself and her husband," says Gamerman: At the end of the day, no work talk in bed.



ELIAS LEIGHT, ALEX PRAGER & MAX ORTEGA

BILLIE EILISH P. 108

Photographer Alex Prager and stylist Max Ortega had a simple vision for Music Innovator Billie Eilish. "I wanted to strip away anything that might create a barrier between Billie and her audience," Prager says. "I chose to focus on who she is as a person and a woman without any extra layers." To writer Elias Leight, that authenticity reflects on the state of today's music industry: "how rigid traditional ideas about pop stars having to look and sound a certain way no longer apply," he says. Vintage shirt and her own necklace.

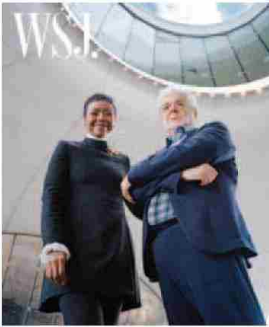


PIAGET POLO 79 WATCH

PIAGET

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CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN JURGENSEN, DEANNA & ED TEMPLETON
& KATE FOLEY

MELLODY HOBSON & GEORGE LUCAS P. 116

Deanna and Ed Templeton photographed Design Innovators Mellody Hobson and George Lucas at the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles. “Even while under construction, the museum is a sight to behold,” says Ed. “Our goal was to [balance] a classic double portrait with a hint of the ‘work in progress’ going on behind them.” Impressed by the co-founders as much as the building, sittings editor Kate Foley admired the pair’s demeanor on set. “[They] were attentive, respectful and exceedingly generous with their time,” Foley says. Written by John Jurgensen, this story represents one of Hobson and Lucas’s first in-depth interviews together.

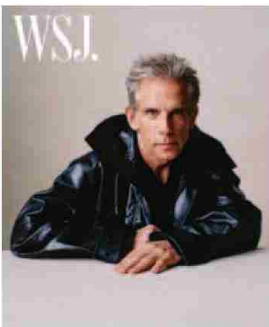
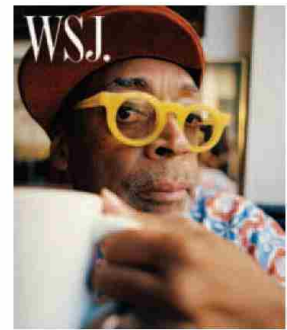
ERICH SCHWARTZEL, BOLADE BANJO & ERIC MCNEAL

SPIKE LEE P. 150

Photographer Bolade Banjo and stylist Eric McNeal quickly realized they were working with local royalty when they photographed Film Innovator Spike Lee—whose cover story was written by Erich Schwartzel—in the director’s hometown of Brooklyn. “Everywhere we walked he was embracing people,” says Banjo. That energy, McNeal adds, helped him to better understand Lee as a filmmaker.

“He loves people,” McNeal says. “I think you see that in his work.”

Studio Kiban shirt and his own glasses, hat and ring.

SAM SCHUBE, WILLIAM WATERWORTH
& THISTLE BROWN

BEN STILLER P. 122

Marlon Brando and Jean Cocteau were on stylist Thistle Brown’s moodboard for Entertainment Innovator Ben Stiller’s cover story, which was shot by William Waterworth and written by Sam Schube. “We studied how they confidently presented themselves in portraits,” says Brown, who was inspired by the men’s layered suits. The challenge was to ensure that Stiller’s all-black looks wouldn’t blend together on camera. “It’s really about subtle textures and mixing fabrics like leather and wool to make a simple look feel dynamic,” Brown says.

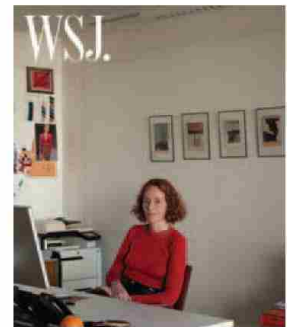
Burberry coat and stylist’s own sweater.

BEN COHEN, NIGEL SHAFRAN & RAE BOXER

NADÈGE VANHÉE FOR HERMÈS P. 144

When writer Ben Cohen asked Fashion Innovator Nadège Vanhée her thoughts on innovation, he was intrigued by her answer. “She thinks of it as constant reinvention—the act of challenging what has been created before,” he says. But one of his favorite moments in her office in Paris was spent admiring her decoration: red-marker drawings by her 6-year-old daughter. “[She] was also responsible for the chihuahua sticker on the back of Nadège’s phone.” (Cohen could relate—his daughter does the same.) Vanhée was photographed by Nigel Shafran and styled by Rae Boxer.

For details see Sources, page 172.



QUATRE COLLECTION

BOUCHERON

PARIS SINCE 1858

The schoolgirl's tale.

In her new memoir, *Book of Lives*, Margaret Atwood recalls the mean girls, “magic person” and high school boyfriend who helped inspire her novels and short stories.



ANYONE WHO thinks that females are perfect, that girls are nicer, that every sadistic thing girls and women do is the fault of “the patriarchy,” has either forgotten a lot or never been a 9-year-old girl at school. The desire for power is a human constant.

If we’d been playing boys’ rules, I would have known what to do. If someone called you a name, you called them a worse one. If someone hit you, you hit them back. If you didn’t do that, you were a sissy. Grown men can be as Machiavellian as 9-year-old girls, but boys haven’t quite learned how. Our mother had a rule against physical fighting. When my brother went off to school for the first time, he obeyed it and came home covered in blood. Our mother then told him he was allowed to defend himself. He went back to school the next day and beat the crap out of his attackers.

Boys’ rules of those times: Conflicts were out in the open. They were usually settled physically. There was a stable hierarchy established. Your friends were your friends, and your enemies were your enemies.

This was not the form Sandra’s bid for power took. Instead, it came in the guise of a desire to help me. She and the other two were my friends. In order to improve me—for I needed much improving, it seemed—they would have to punish me in various ways. I must be left in the snow, I must be buried in a hole, I must be reprimanded and ordered not to smirk. This was for my own good.

How could I object to this kindly meant program that was for my benefit? Look at all the trouble they were taking to correct my deficiencies! I walked funny, I talked funny. My hair was funny; I looked funny. All that would have to change! But none of the efforts I made to comply were good enough. I would have to try harder.

I became more and more nervous and depressed. I took to peeling the skin off my feet, chewing the ends of my hair, pushing out my uneven tooth, pulling off the cuticles on my fingers. My mother noticed that something was wrong and guessed who was at the bottom of it, especially when my torturers would appear at the door and ask sweetly if I could come out to play and I wouldn’t seem eager. But if I didn’t go, other and worse punishments would be in store for me later.

“You don’t need to play with them,” my mother told me. Nowadays she would probably have phoned the other mothers, but in those times it was believed that children should fight their own battles. They needed to develop their backbones. They needed to stand up for themselves.

I DID HAVE some temporary escapes: places where there were no spies, where there were different friends, or where there were other things to occupy my mind.

I joined the Deer Park branch of the Toronto Public Library and was borrowing everything I could get my hands on. I read my way through all the Andrew Lang folk-tale collections, and was shortly to progress to the collected works of Edgar Allan Poe—not suitable for children, though allowed then because there wasn’t any sex in Poe, except possibly some necrophilia. I read Hans

Christian Andersen’s sad and frightening tales; I read the E. Nesbit books, and the usual children’s classics of the time, such as *Treasure Island* and *Peter Pan*. I read *Mary Poppins* too, but no magic person came down out of the clouds to help me out.

I joined a Brownie pack led by a woman I knew as Brown Owl. (She exists in all her glory in *Lady Oracle*.) Brownies at that time was a strange organization in which the girls were divided into groups named after different kinds of fairies—pixies, elves and gnomes were the groups in our outfit. We began each session by dancing around a cardboard mushroom with a papier-mâché owl on top of it. We had slogans and passwords, and made the Brownie promise: “I promise to do my best, to do my duty to God and the King, to help other people every day, especially those at home.”

When Brown Owl and I were much older, I met her again: Her name was Katie Firstbrook, she was the aunt of a friend of mine and by that time she was in her 90s. We all had tea. “I think you should have these,” she said to me, and returned the booklets I’d made as a 9-year-old. My first reader, then, apart from my parents. So, a magic person after all.

ONE MORNING I got up to find our mother gone and a pile of blood-soaked sheets in the hallway. Something horrible had happened, but what? Explanations from our father were evasive. She had become ill (with what?), was at the hospital (that much was believable) and would be back soon (dubious). Our father struggled on as best he could. Breakfasts and short-order (Continued on page 68)



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(Continued from page 66) cooking were within his skill set, but when it came to doing my ringlets with what our mother called “his stubby little fingers”—as opposed to her long, elegant and ringlet-adapted ones—I’m afraid he got an F.

Our mother did reappear, looking wan and smiling bravely, and we had to pretend that she was fine. It took me a while to figure out that she had “lost a baby.” I found one eloquent knitted baby sock—pale green in colour—when looking for wool. How did one lose a baby? Not like losing the house keys: much more dangerous and blood-soaked. Where had such a baby gone? Much later, she told me that there had been another lost baby between my brother and me. Background sadness.

If you trace in this event the origins of a similar scene in *Alias Grace* and also one in *The Blind Assassin*, you would be right.

WHEN I RETURNED to school in September, I found myself in the Grade 10 “brain class.” At least one other person in it was as young as me, and being smart was no longer a health hazard.

In the brain class, you were awarded an extra subject. If I’d known I was going to turn into a writer, I would have taken Secretarial Sciences instead of Home Economics. Though maybe not: Many of those girls smoked in the washroom and had very thin plucked eyebrows and Fire and Ice lipstick, and I found them scary. No writing by me so far, except the essays we had to crank out on uninspiring topics such as My Favourite Pet. My creative energies were going into sewing.

This was partly because I didn’t have a lot of money for clothes. There were my babysitting fees and an allowance for doing household chores—what I don’t know about toilet-cleaning is not worth knowing—which included the wringer-washer laundry that was to feature in *Cat’s Eye*.

Still, these income sources didn’t add up to a lot, so I couldn’t waltz out and buy garments off the rack. I pored through pattern books in fabric stores and haunted remnants counters, and was eager to snap up bargains. Some of the lush scraps—velvets, taffetas, silks, lace—I turned into sumptuous ballgowns for my sister’s

“GROWN MEN CAN BE AS MACHIAVELLIAN AS 9-YEAR-OLD GIRLS, BUT BOYS HAVEN’T QUITE LEARNED HOW.”

proto-Barbie doll. I made my own formal dance dresses. One was pink chiffon. The next was an elegant Audrey Hepburn spaghetti-strap white brocade.

I made a pleated plaid skirt—this must have been a school project, as I recall no love for it—and my father said, “You shouldn’t wear plaid. It makes you look broad in the beam.” How withering. Ever since, I have gone through the world, as many women do, trying to see what I look like from behind.

IN THE SPRING of 1954, I acquired a boyfriend. He was 18, had already left high school and was working in his father’s auto-body shop, which he later inherited. Naturally he had a car.

Why did my parents permit a 14-year-old to tootle around with a de facto grown man who was old enough to serve in the army? Nowadays, my perfectly nice and well-behaved and always freshly washed boyfriend would be tagged a child molester, but mores were different then, and anyway I was batting above my league: I didn’t look two years older than I was, but I talked two years older. As for my parents, they probably weren’t thinking much about me and my dating habits, being almost entirely taken up with my toddler sister, who still didn’t sleep nights, was strong-willed and could not be made to do anything she didn’t want to do.

That summer, while I was away with my mother and sister, my 18-year-old boyfriend wrote me awkward, affectionate, misspelled letters, in blobby blue ballpoint ink, with SWAK on the envelope. He even came to see me in his second-hand car, which was lacking a muffler, and we drove noisily over to Bass Lake and went swimming. No seatbelts in those days, and no air conditioning: You kept the windows open so the breeze could get in and the cigarette smoke could get out. Needless to say, my boyfriend smoked. Most boyfriends did, most girlfriends didn’t.

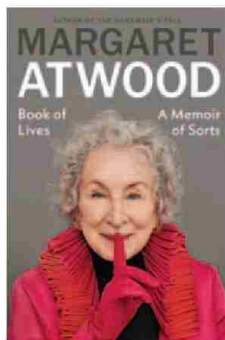
Let’s call this boyfriend “Buddy,” which is how he appears in a story of mine called “Hurricane Hazel.” We broke up on the night of this famous hurricane, which flooded the Don Valley and killed 81 people in Toronto. Buddy wanted to go out that night, but my father, snapping out of his inattention, said it was out of the question. Didn’t Buddy know what a hurricane was?

The real reason for the breakup was probably that Buddy, having turned 19, was ready for a more sexually fulfilling relationship than was possible with underaged, cautious me. So, having briefly lived some version of the 1950s teen dream—drive-in movies, car hops—I reverted to being an immature 14-year-old in the brain class. I went to the Grade 11 Junior Prom with a shy, geeky boy who played the cello.

I did have moments of nostalgia for Buddy’s aftershave and clean white short-sleeved cotton T-shirts with the cigarette packs tucked into the sleeves. But time moves on, whether you want it to or not. ●



Atwood in the 1960s, when she was a Ph.D. student at Radcliffe College.



Excerpted from *Book of Lives: A Memoir of Sorts*, by Margaret Atwood, published by Doubleday, Penguin Random House, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2025 by O. W. Toad Limited.

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NOVEMBER 2025

WHAT'S NEWS.

GOD'S GIFT

Fear of God launches
its first official womenswear
collection.

BY SAM SCHUBE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
RYAN JAMES CARUTHERS

LIKE MANY married couples, fashion designer Jerry Lorenzo and his wife, Desiree Manuel, discuss each other's outfits. "I quite enjoy it," Manuel says, though "sometimes it's frustrating because I also am just trying to get ready."

Unlike most couples' closet-side chats, their conversations have a way of turning into actual clothing. That's the case with Lorenzo's latest collection for his brand Fear of God—including, for the first time, a dedicated line of womenswear. Launching early next year, it runs the gamut from croc-embossed pool slides to wool-cashmere coats, pieces that Lorenzo says he and his wife "both wish that she had."

Fear of God has long dressed women, both in its lookbooks and on red carpets, and produces womenswear under its Essentials label. "Since our early collections, we've always featured women in men's clothing," Lorenzo says. "There's only so far you can go with that perspective. I've yet to really make her pieces that are just for her."

Since launching Fear of God in 2013, Lorenzo has made clothes designed for his own closet. In the early days, that meant flannels, T-shirts and denim, mostly in a long-and-skinny silhouette that quickly conquered menswear. Over time, though, Lorenzo's vision expanded. The clothes became more capacious in silhouette, and more ambitious in execution. In recent years he's identified the smooth-jazz icon Kenny G as emblematic of his brand's refined sense of ease:

"You can tune it in, you can tune it out, but you don't have to kick him out of the room."

Business à la Kenny G has been good. After early associations with Ye and Justin Bieber, Fear of God now resides in a world—heavy on the taupe, with plush carpeting underfoot—all its own. It brings in hundreds of millions of dollars a year, thanks in part to its accessibly priced Essentials line, and is seen on red carpets and in pre-game NBA tunnels the world over. This fall, the Council of Fashion Designers of America gave Lorenzo its Innovation Award. And the relaxed luxury that has distinguished Lorenzo as a menswear designer lends itself naturally to womenswear, officially or not.

"I always tease him and call him the Black Brunello Cucinelli, because the things he does rival these Italian houses," says Law Roach, the celebrity stylist and a friend of Lorenzo's who has dressed his client Zendaya in custom Fear of God. "I think his clothes should be mentioned in the same conversations as those clothes."

Actress Yara Shahidi, who has worn Fear of God for almost a decade, including a custom look to the Met Gala earlier this year, says she is a fan of "Jerry's way of creating a really genderless perspective on clothes," pointing to his particular facility with draping and texture.

If other designers build collections around a carefully drawn ideal customer, Lorenzo goes the other way. "I don't want you to know where this woman is going," he says. The Fear of God woman, he explains, can't be pinned down quite that easily. "If someone looks as if they're going to a meeting or to work or she's dressed up for an occasion, you're able to put a box around your perception of who she is and what she's doing."

Everything in the new collection has the classic Fear of God drape, but includes garments that hug the body in ways his menswear doesn't. Heavyweight fleece is styled alongside washed silk and lightweight wool. (Prices range from \$195 for T-shirts to \$4,990 for a chocolate-brown belted leather trench.) His conversations with Manuel led him to think particularly hard about the line's outerwear.



"I DON'T WANT YOU
TO KNOW WHERE THIS
WOMAN IS GOING."

—JERRY LORENZO



Jerry Lorenzo's wife, Desiree Manuel (above right), inspired the new collection, which includes "easy blazers" and kitten heels (above).

"A lot of her jackets said either real-estate agent or red carpet," he says with a chuckle. So he designed "easy blazers" that "allow her to do both," or just take the kids to school.

Lorenzo surprises me by describing one leather bag in the range as "perfectly opinionless"—not exactly what you expect to hear from a fashion designer discussing his wares. The idea is to let the clothes get out of the way.

"It's not screaming at you. It's not calling for attention," he says. The bag is "perfectly as good as it was intended to be. Nothing more, nothing less."

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STYLE GUIDE

THE LEGGINGS

A pair from The Row is a jack-of-all-trades, going from the couch to the office with ease.



1 Work from home.

The Row leggings (worn throughout), sweater and shirt, Loro Piana belt and Max Mara shoes.

2 Completely relax.

Adam Lippes coat, Everybody.World shirt, Live the Process bra, Comme Si socks and Birkenstock shoe.

3 Get to the office.

Heirlome shirt, Dries Van Noten skirt and Khaite boots.

4 Stay out late.

Maria McManus jacket, Tod's skirt and Tibi heels.

5 Be ready for

anything. Soft Goat dress, Fusalp hat and Morjas shoes.

Model, Li Linzi at Ford Models; hair and makeup, Kimi Duncan; production, Bodeyco. For details see Sources, page 172.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JANE DYLAN CODY
STYLING BY
CAITIE KELLY



BÉZIER DESIGN MARCIO KOGAN / STUDIO MK27

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CELINE'S NEW LUGGAGE

When Michael Rider's debut spring 2026 collection for Celine hit the runway, onlookers immediately noticed a familiar accessory. With its distinctive trapezoidal shape and wavy accent lines, the Phantom Luggage handbag was a defining style during Phoebe Philo's tenure at the helm of the French line. Has Rider revived the It Bag? Yes, but under the name New Luggage. The east-west shape lends itself to multiple sizes, from the small, pictured here in oxide blue, to a large iteration that can be carried by hand or worn over the shoulder. For details see Sources, page 172.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELIZABETH ARVELOS COETZEE



TIMELINE

1969

Celine founder Céline Vipiana creates the Mistral bag, featuring recognizable curved lines.

2010

Phoebe Philo launches the Phantom Luggage bag, inspired by Vipiana's Mistral bag.

2010s

Celebrities including Kim Kardashian, Rihanna and Gwyneth Paltrow are photographed with Phantom bags.

2025

Michael Rider revives Phantom Luggage as New Luggage in his debut runway show.

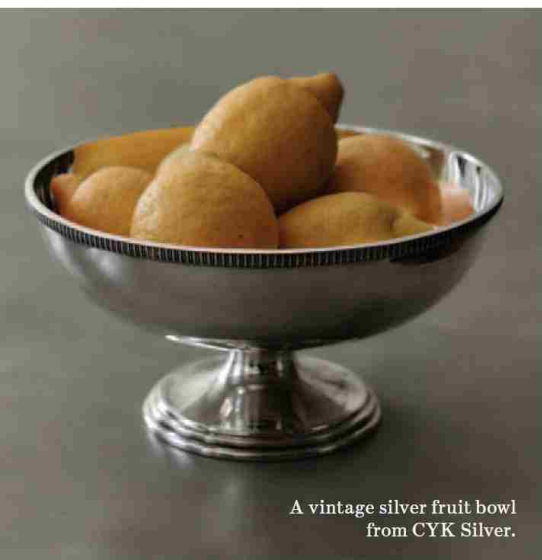


G R A F F

Three ways to upgrade your days at home.

BY SARAH MEDFORD

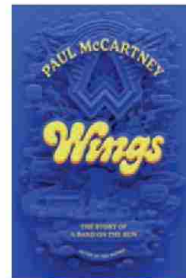
New York culinary agency CY Kitchen specializes in the kind of deftly planned, impeccably sourced parties that get people talking—and founder Celine Yousefzadeh has made sparkling vintage silver tableware something of a brand signature. With the launch of CYK Silver, she's offering these collectible pieces to a wider audience. \$65–\$2,250, CYKitchen.com



A vintage silver fruit bowl from CYK Silver.



MY MIND IS always flooded with images of form, texture and gesture,” the artist Adam Pendleton says. Often these visions translate into multilayered abstract paintings and drawings; lately they’ve taken the shape of tables, chairs and stools. This month, Pendleton’s first works of design go on view and on sale at Friedman Benda gallery in Manhattan, through December 19. Poetic and precise, the wood, onyx and granite pieces share the stage this fall with *Adam Pendleton: Love, Queen*, the artist’s ongoing exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. FriedmanBenda.com



Three rock icons who shaped the '70s—its sound, its vibe, its style and its irrepressible cultural influence—are celebrated in new books this month.

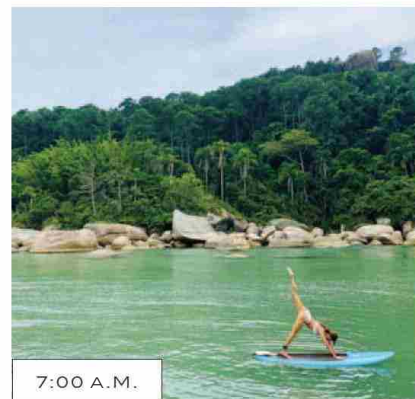
From left: *Collaboration: Frank Ockenfels 3 X David Bowie* (Abrams), \$65; *Wings: The Story of a Band on the Run* (W.W. Norton), \$45; *Patti Smith: Horses, Paris 1976* (Abrams), \$50.



24 HOURS IN FLORIANÓPOLIS

WITH ALESSANDRA AMBROSIO

After the COP30 conference in Belém, Brazil, stop over at Florianópolis to visit the Brazilian supermodel's homegrown favorites.



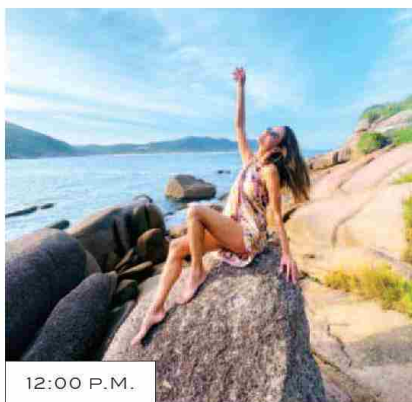
7:00 A.M.

Stay at Awasi Santa Catarina hotel. "An amazing spot that you can reach by boat or car. It has a private beach and feels really special."



9:00 A.M.

Have breakfast at Ovo Café in Jurerê. "They have delicious smoothies, fresh açai bowls and classic Brazilian breakfast favorites."



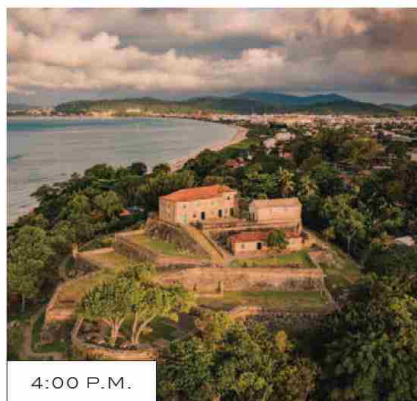
12:00 P.M.

Explore the city's beautiful trails. "Some take you to untouched beaches where you can swim right off the rocks."



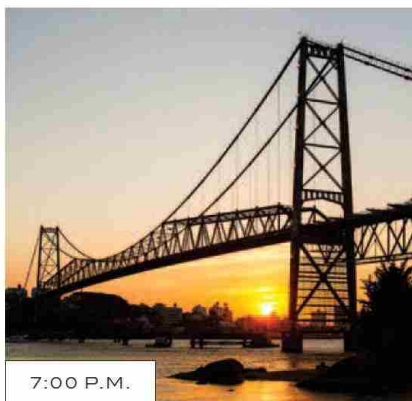
2:00 P.M.

Shop in Lagoa da Conceição. "You can find women making incredible hand-crocheted pieces—dresses, bags, tablecloths, everything."



4:00 P.M.

Visit the São José da Ponta Grossa fortress. "The historic landmark is perfect for a walk and great photos."



7:00 P.M.

Take in views of the Hercílio Luz Bridge. "The bridge is the symbol of arriving in Florianópolis—definitely a must-see."

GET THERE

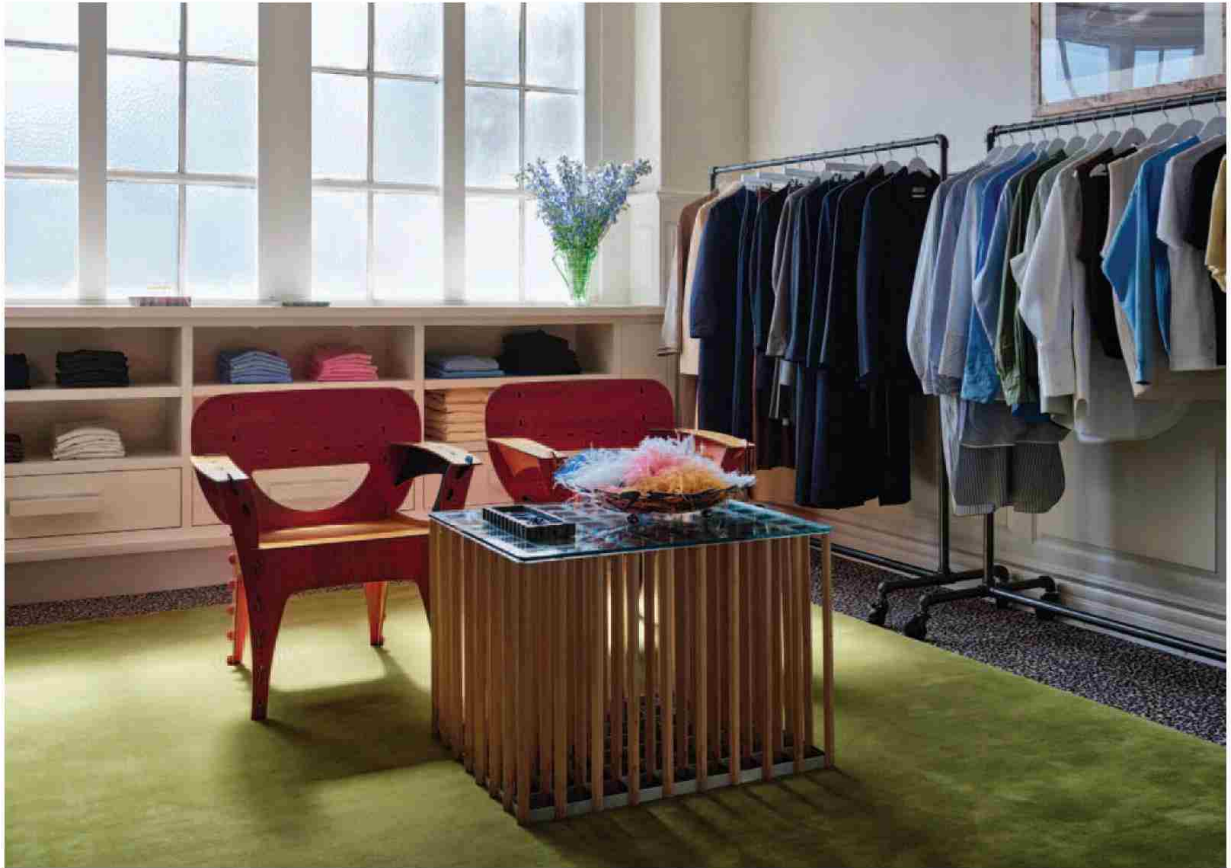
What
COP30 UN Climate
Change Conference

When
November 10–21

Worth Knowing
The annual event
brings together
world leaders and
scientists to tackle
climate change.

A fashion newsletter comes to life in L.A.

BY LANE FLORSHEIM



When designing her Beverly Hills boutique Earl IRL, stylist Laurel Pantin wanted to make a “girl palace.”

FORFOUR YEARS, Laurel Pantin has used her Earl Earl newsletter to teach women, primarily those 40 and over, how to get dressed. Now the stylist is opening her own store, Earl IRL. Located in Beverly Hills, the 450-square-foot space features wall-to-wall leopard carpeting, a glittering disco-ball mirror and a set of funky David Kaweck puzzle chairs. “I was obsessed with the idea of having a space that felt like a girl palace,” Pantin says. Touches like a bowl filled with Indress ostrich-feather brooches are designed to surprise and delight. “I have a really strong sense of humor in my style. I like things that are a little silly and a little stupid,” says Pantin.

Brands on offer include sequin-forward British label Ashish; Kallmeyer, known for its tailoring; and the colorful, L.A.-based line Brooke Callahan. Earl IRL will be appointment-only with three different tiers of service. At the highest level, customers can spend two hours trying on pieces from the store and learning how to style them with clothing they’ve brought from their own closets. “In L.A., there’s so much happening socially but it’s all really casual, and you don’t want to feel like you’re constantly showing up in sweatpants and leggings,” says Pantin. “I think it’s hard to experiment with what they have without someone showing them the way.” She also plans to open up the space to visiting brands’ trunk shows and will offer a book curation by Des Pair Books. “It’s so close to what my fantasy store was like when I was, like, 6,” says Pantin. *Appointments available at EarlIRL.com.*

PANTIN'S STYLING TIPS

Sweater Vests

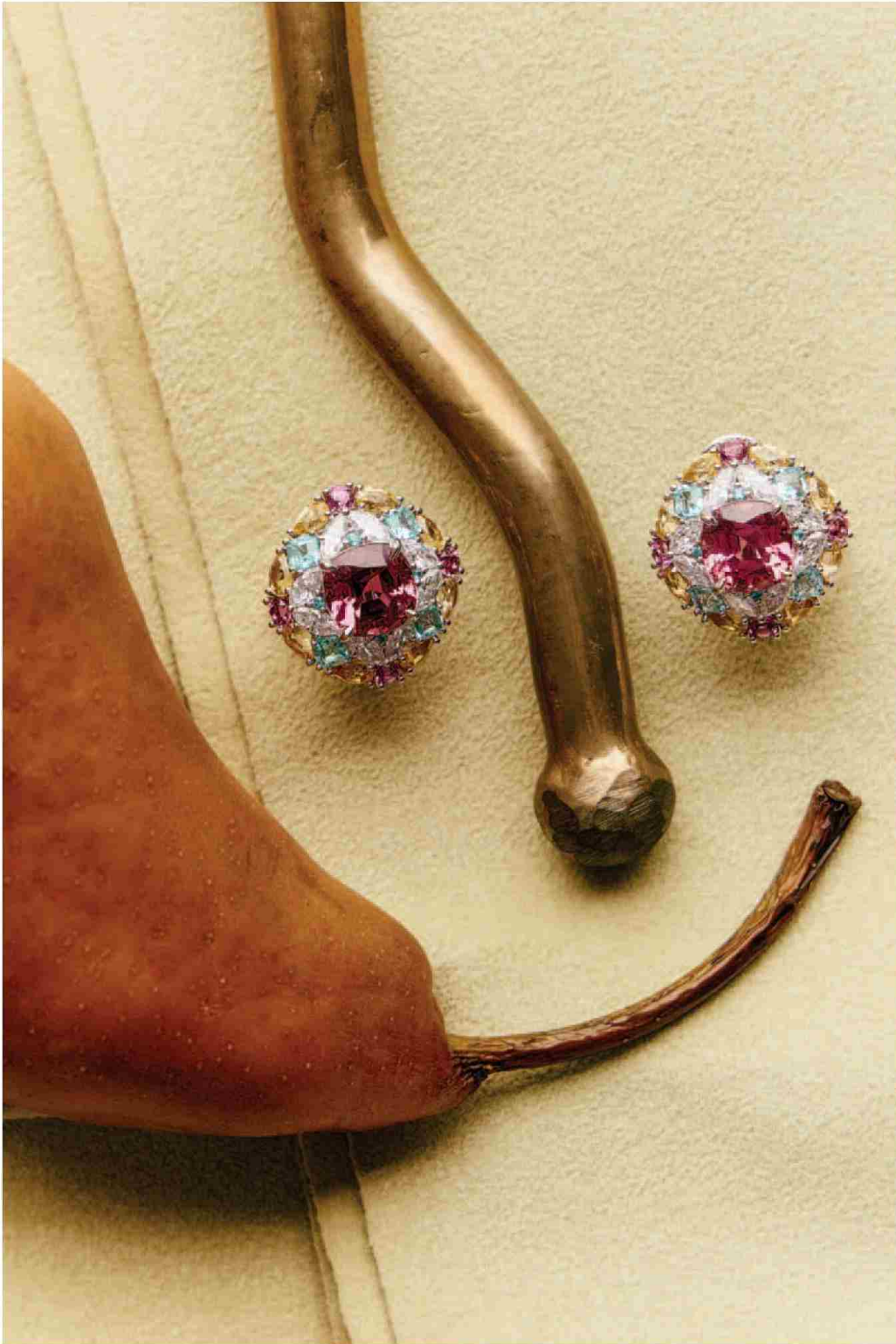
“[They] get a bad reputation for being dorky or old-fashioned but are very handy if you’re wanting to create a layered look without adding bulk to your arms.”

Silk Scarves

“Think outside the box when it comes to tying yours; keep it loose and asymmetrical to feel more current.”



1. Sleeper pajama shirt. 2. Van Cleef & Arpels watch. 3. Dolce & Gabbana bag and scarves. 4. Louis Vuitton Sun Song perfume. 5. Pucci sunglasses. 6. Rimowa luggage. 7. Max Mara scarf. 8. Loro Piana glasses. 9. Oscar de la Renta top. 10. Manolo Blahnik heels. 11. Ginori 1735 plate. 12. Acerin ice bucket. 13. Vacation sunscreen. 14. Dior Maison carafe. 15. Hermès slippers. 16. Chanel bag. 17. Lavorati a Mano toothbrush. 18. Dries Van Noten comb. 19. High Sport pants. 20. The Green Vase paper citrus tree. 21. Guerlain lipstick case. 22. Dom Pérignon x Takashi Murakami rosé 2010. 23. Buccellati candlesticks and Trudon candles. 24. Gucci dress. 25. Larkspur & Hawk shorts and belt. 26. Van Cleef & Arpels watch. 27. Dom Pérignon x Takashi Murakami rosé 2010. 28. Buccellati candlesticks and Trudon candles. 29. Gucci dress. 30. Larkspur & Hawk shorts and belt.



Gumdrop-size tourmalines shine in these earrings from Harry Winston's Winston Candy collection, inspired by sketches of cocktail rings from the 1950s and '60s. Those pink stones are surrounded by bright blue Paraiba tourmalines, yellow sapphires and diamonds, weighing a total of 11.6 carats. A confection sure to satisfy any sweet tooth. For details see Sources, page 172. —*Sarah Spellings*

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NOVEMBER 2025

MARKET REPORT.

05



Dolce & Gabbana denim jacket,
Sportmax fringe belt, Tory Burch
heels and stylist's own tights.

THE NEW BLUES

Denim, once a
workhorse, takes
the spotlight
with bold
trims, appliqués
and cuts.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
OLU MICHAEL ODUKOYA
STYLING BY
OLA EBITI

Hermès sweater,
Duran Lantink
denim apron
jeans and Phoebe
Philo heels.





Chloé shirt,
David Koma
flower embroi-
dered jeans,
Jimmy Choo heels
and stylist's
own socks.

Louis Vuitton
dress, JW
Anderson jeans,
Khaite gloves and
Sportmax boots.



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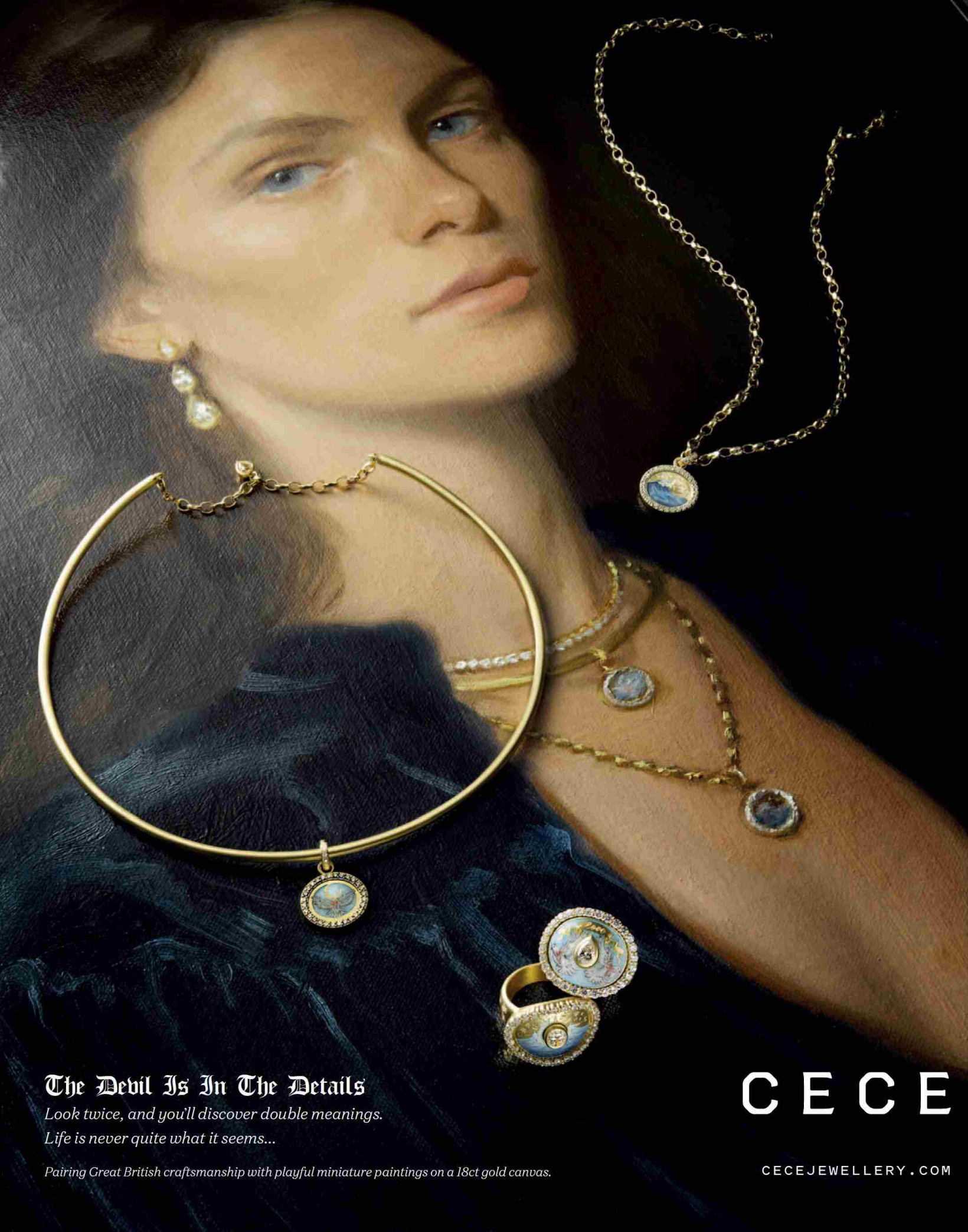
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Givenchy by Sarah Burton dress and cuffs, Tory Burch earrings, Marko Baković heels, vintage denim bra and stylist's own tights.



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From left:
 Ferragamo sweat-
 er and scarf,
 Dolce & Gabbana
 denim skirt,
 Sportmax hat,
 Tory Burch
 earring, Khaite
 gloves, Phoebe
 Philo heels and
 stylist's own
 tights; Prada
 coat, stockings
 and heels, Simone
 Rocha denim
 jacket and
 stylist's own shirt.



Models, Lila Byass
 at Nevs Models,
 Kinvara Whitson
 and Aliet at Storm
 Management, Laysa
 Cruz at The Hive
 Management; hair,
 Kei Terada; makeup,
 Claire Urquhart;
 production, North
 Six. For details see
 Sources, page 172.

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NOVEMBER 2025

THE EXCHANGE.

Judd Apatow walks to *Forrest Gump* screenwriter Eric Roth's house in the morning to "harass him for about half an hour."



MY MONDAY MORNING

JUDD APATOW

The director and producer used his hoarding tendencies to compile his visual memoir, out this fall.

BY LANE FLORSHEIM PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADALI SCHELL

JUDD APATOW never throws anything away. He has multiple copies of every magazine that ran an article about one of his movies stashed in one of his many, many storage units. He says the idea of saving just one and throwing the rest away hurts his soul. "I started hoarding when I was really little," says the director and producer, 57.

The memorabilia of Apatow's life makes up his new 574-page visual memoir, *Comedy Nerd: A Lifelong Obsession in Stories and*

Pictures. Among the mementos are the email Apatow sent himself describing his initial musings for *Knocked Up* (subject line: "Pregnancy"); a series of diary entries from the months he spent producing *Freaks and Geeks*; and sweet pictures of Apatow's daughters, Maude and Iris, on the sets of his films.

Apatow lives in Beverly Hills with his wife, the actress Leslie Mann. Here, he discusses his somewhat traumatic 40th birthday, his writing process and his prized possessions. >

What time do you get up on Mondays, and what's the first thing you do?

I wake up around 6:30 a.m. I very quickly eat a caffeine chew to get my eyes open, because I don't love coffee. I drive to Santa Monica, I take a 90-minute walk. At the end, I stop at Eric Roth's house, the great screenwriter who wrote *A Star Is Born* and *Forrest Gump*, and I harass him for about half an hour. Then I go to my office and take a shower and try to write before the problems of the day put me in such a bad mood that I can't be funny any longer.

There's a part in the book where you describe yourself as "so bad" at dressing. What's your uniform like these days?

A long time ago, I realized I had no sense of fashion whatsoever. Am I Eurotrash? Am I a sexy-Italian-clothes-and-leather guy? Then one day I put on a black James Perse polo, and no matter how overweight I am, I look OK. So probably 80 percent of the time I'm wearing that shirt. I always had a dream of losing 15 more pounds and suddenly looking good in all kinds of shirts, but it rarely happens.

What does your writing process look like?

I usually try to have some sort of target. So if I'm writing a script, I might say, "No matter what, I have to write five pages a day," so that in six weeks I could have a draft. Then when I'm done with

the draft, I'll say, "I'm going to rewrite 20 pages a day," so then I could basically revise a script in two weeks. But then I will do that 20 more times, so hopefully at some point it feels like it's something that's worth shooting.

The book describes your fairly intense work processes. Over the years, have you learned how to take time off and relax?

I've gotten much better. When you're younger, you have this insane energy to work and prove yourself, and it really does feel like life or death. I had to consciously say, "I'm allowed to have fun and do things that have nothing to do with work." So in recent years I've made it a point to really shut off. This year, we went to Glastonbury and saw Olivia Rodrigo with Neil Young.

You have two movies that revolve around the characters' 40th year of life. What was 40 like for you?

I remember the day I turned 40, I visited Leslie on the set of the movie *17 Again*, and I had to watch her repeatedly kiss Zac Efron. That's how I started my 40th birthday.

You first cast your daughters in *Knocked Up*. What has it been like to watch their acting careers take off?

I feel bad that I never talked about anything but creativity and movies and TV in the house. I probably

didn't create an environment where they would think that they could do anything else. We always have had such great fun working together on these projects. It's been especially fulfilling to see all the work they're doing outside of that.

What's your most prized possession?

[Evacuating during a fire] forced me to decide what my most prized possessions were. Obviously the most important thing is that you have all of the photos of your life. My autograph collection from when I was in sixth grade, the signed book from Steve Martin, the little mementos.

It's funny because I went to one of my daughter's rooms and I said, "What do you want to pack since we have to evacuate?" And she said, "I don't need anything. It's all in the cloud." And I said, "There must be something you need." And she said, "A charger?"

Do you have anything you consider the secret or key to a happy marriage?

To realize the whole purpose of relationships is to bring up all your stuff and then, if you can, to both want to deal with it—in a positive way. Then everybody grows and gets to the next place.

What's one piece of advice that's guided you?

The best advice I ever got was, "All pain comes from wanting something."

"IN RECENT YEARS I'VE MADE IT A POINT TO REALLY SHUT OFF."



Apatow typically tries to write a certain number of pages a day. He also tries to write early, "before the problems of the day put me in such a bad mood that I can't be funny any longer."

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

5 Monday Must-Haves



MY IPAD

"I watch YouTube videos about how AI will one day kill all of us to put myself in the proper mood for the day."



IRISH SPRING SOAP

"I can't live without it. Maybe the green color makes me feel exotic."



VITAMINS

"I don't know what any of them do, but experts tell me without them I will die. At least sooner."



EGG MCMUFFIN

"Apparently [Warren Buffett] has one every day, so I convinced myself that's a very healthy thing to do."



MERCEDES-BENZ

"No, it isn't electric. I don't feel guilty, because I put so little mileage on it, which basically makes it equivalent to a Tesla."

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OFFICE SPACE

JAMIE DIMON'S \$3 BILLION BET

The CEO of JPMorgan Chase spent six years building a shiny new headquarters, a skyscraper that is reshaping Manhattan's skyline—and one he hopes will revive the glory of the office.

BY ALEXANDER SAEEDY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS MAGGIO



JAMIE DIMON was sitting on the 13th floor of his new headquarters on a Monday morning, sipping a Guinness and looking out at the Manhattan skyline. It was the first day that JPMorgan Chase's massive skyscraper at 270 Park Avenue was opening to employees; the CEO had arrived with his architect to toast the building, a \$3 billion monument to work.

Since the 1980s, Dimon has helped reshape American finance, forging the megabanks of Citigroup and now JPMorgan. The industry and his home city are now at a crossroads. Fears that Zohran Mamdani, a democratic socialist, will win the mayoral race have some financiers fretting about the future of New York City again. Banks are fighting new competitors from Silicon Valley, and many workers remain reluctant to come to any office five days a week, making it harder to keep them around.

Dimon's stance is clear. He has delivered expletive-laden broadsides against remote meetings, declaring that the only way to work is together, in person, the old-fashioned way. And so he has built one of the most expensive towers in America, extending a quarter-mile into the sky, and filled it with 19 Danny Meyer-approved eateries, coffee shops, a company store, a gym and Morgan's, the English pub where he hopes bankers will commune after-hours.

So long, late-night Seamless deliveries to the lobby while slogging through deals; hello, civilized meals from company-owned food kiosks.

For the past six years, Dimon and his top executives have tried to design an office building that will captivate and entice their staff. Dimon himself helped pick the artist and lighting design for the building's peak and pushed for the pub he sat in that morning.

Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JPMorgan Chase, in the lobby of the bank's new headquarters at 270 Park Avenue in Manhattan.

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The leading statesman of his industry, counselor to presidents and executives, Dimon, 69, may not occupy his new perch for long. He’s signaled that he wants to retire in the next few years, though he refuses to say exactly when. But the billionaire CEO wants to leave behind a temple dedicated to the workplace, a love letter to the hard-charging Wall Street culture he helped define.

DIMON HAS BEEN SEARCHING for a new JPMorgan headquarters for nearly as long as he’s been CEO. For most of those roughly 20 years, the bank was headquartered in the middle of Midtown at the Union Carbide Building, which was built in 1960 for a workforce of about 3,500. JPMorgan Chase had over 6,000 employees there by around 2010.

The company had a few options. It could move back to the Financial District, near where J. Pierpont Morgan set up shop at 23 Wall Street in 1873, or decamp to the flashy new Hudson Yards, where big firms like KKR have moved in recent years.

David Arena, the bank’s head of real estate, proposed something more extreme: Tear down the headquarters on Park Avenue and build a new skyscraper. It would be expensive and time-consuming, and the company would have to move out for at least five years.

“No company had ever demolished a building like that before,” Dimon said. “But it was the best location in the city, and we could build exactly what we wanted.”

In 2019, the deconstruction began. Construction workers started from the top down, removing the floors one by one. They needed to protect the structural integrity of the skyscraper, which sits on top of the city’s rail lines, so it wouldn’t collapse in the middle of America’s densest office district.

Most of the staff and Dimon’s top executive team moved across 47th Street into 383 Madison Avenue, the old Bear

After years of watching construction from a satellite office across the street, JPMorgan Chase employees are filing into the new building.



Stearns headquarters that it nabbed as part of the rescue deal for that bank in 2008.

Just when the demolition was finishing in early 2020, the pandemic hit.

Construction workers were called off the site for two weeks. Most JPMorgan staff were sent home, as were workers across the city. Commercial real-estate values plunged. The office, the longtime center of American work life, seemed like it might be dead.

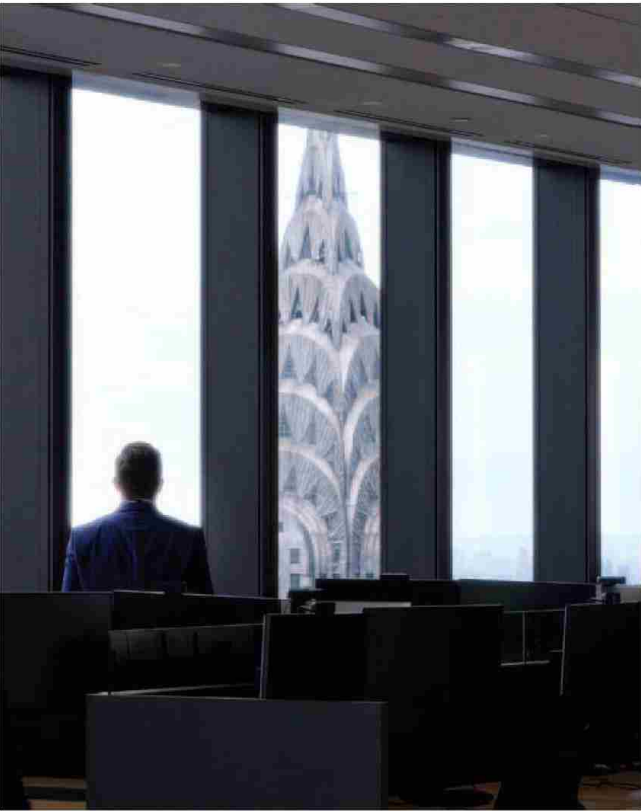
Dimon and his team ran economic analyses to see if it made sense to stop construction or keep going. He told the bank’s top executives and its board of directors that the bank invests through cycles and that it shouldn’t stop moving on with its plan to open the headquarters by 2025.

“And to their credit, they all agreed,” Arena said.

In 2021, workers started drilling underground through two major railway systems—the Metro North Railroad and the Long Island Rail Road—and installing caissons 100 feet into the bedrock. They had to demolish one of the Long Island Rail Road’s concourses in the process, but JPMorgan agreed to build a new one for the commuter rail system.

As JPMorgan’s workers trickled back to work, they saw the new colossus rising about one floor every week as they looked out of their cafeteria windows and cubicles.

NO ONE IS more emphatic about Dimon’s vision for the new building than Norman Foster, the



famed architect tasked with bringing it to life. The man who designed Apple Park, Hearst Tower and Hong Kong’s HSBC Building described 270 Park as one of the crown jewels of his portfolio.

“In terms of leisure, entertainment, lifestyle, I would say that every level of this tower pushes those boundaries further than anything we’ve done before,” he said.

We entered the lobby, which has 50-foot ceilings and spans a city block. Dimon and other executives gave Foster keywords like “fortress” and “ascendant” to inform the design. The building stretches far above our heads, its 400 million pounds suspended by 14 fan-shaped steel columns that pierce the lobby’s marble floor and burrow into Manhattan’s bedrock.

It is still a work in progress and won’t be finished until next year. A yet-to-be-opened trading floor was a barren expanse with rows of wooden desks still covered in blue masking tape and empty computer stands awaiting monitors to be screwed onto them. Dimon and other executives don’t expect their upper-floor offices to be ready until Christmas.

JPMorgan executives were intimately involved in the design process, Dimon said. Executives divided each part of the building among



themselves for planning. Doug Petno, now co-head of its commercial and investment bank, took the ground floor and lobby. Mary Erdoes, head of asset and wealth management, and Marianne Lake, the consumer head, planned the office floors and client spaces. Erdoes and former president Daniel Pinto were in charge of the executive floor. Dimon was effectively the building’s “master architect,” JPMorgan’s Arena said.

At one point, Foster’s team built a model of the lobby in a warehouse in the South Bronx. Dimon and executives including Erdoes and Petno donned masks and walked through the space, debating where to put its escalators.

As the sky-lobby filled with glossy retail and eateries, some executives worried it was beginning to look more like a mall than an office building. Dimon tapped Rick Caruso, the billionaire Los Angeles developer known for his shopping centers, for his advice on how to cultivate a more professional look.



“NO COMPANY HAD EVER DEMOLISHED A BUILDING LIKE THAT BEFORE.”

—JAMIE DIMON

DIMON AND OTHER EXECUTIVES hope the new space will help get people excited about working from the office every day. That would give them another edge in the fight to keep talent from fleeing to more flexible industries—or other banks that have looser in-person requirements.

At a town hall in Ohio earlier this year, when employees asked Dimon about why they had to be full time in the office, he exploded into a profane rant about Zoom and texting during meetings. The message was clear: If you don’t want to be in the office, you are welcome to quit.

“You don’t have to work at JPMorgan,” he said. “This company is going to set our own standards and do it our own way.”

In August, 270 Park welcomed its first workers to the office. In September, employees from JPMorgan’s private bank moved in, and the week after Labor Day, Erdoes led a Monday-morning meeting for her staff from a common area in the 13th-floor sky-lobby. When everyone is moved in, there will be about 10,000 staff working from

the building every day. (Some 7,500 other New York City-based corporate employees will be scattered across other buildings.)

There have been some bumps along the way as staff have started to return to work.

Some investment bankers are finding that the building’s tall floors and large common areas mean their actual working spaces are more cramped than those at the old digs across the street at 383 Madison Avenue, people who work at the bank said.

To celebrate the new headquarters, Dimon threw a block party on Park Avenue for over 1,000 construction workers. Sandwiched between laborers, he noshed on a cheeseburger as caterers circled the area with platters of hot dogs and steamed lobster. Bruce Springsteen’s greatest hits blared over speakers.

“This building is a labor of love,” Dimon said, gesturing at the steel structure’s dark-bronze facade. “It is an embodiment that represents our company and where our people are going to work.”

He knows he’s not going to be around the building forever. But the fortress, visible from Brooklyn, Queens and even Lower Manhattan, if you look just right, will remain long after he retires.

“We move paper, that’s what we do,” Dimon said. “We move paper around. This is a permanent thing.” ●



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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE



BILLIE CALLING

With a massive global hit and a documentary directed by James Cameron in the works, the pop superstar continues to push the boundaries of modern fame. Photographed by Alex Prager and styled by Max Ortega. Vintage shirt, Comme Si boxers and John Hardy ring. For details see Sources, page 172.



Vintage shirt and her own necklace (worn throughout).

Billie Eilish

MUSIC
INNOVATOR

At just 23, the pop superstar has already accumulated 44 Hot 100 hits,
nine Grammys and a pair of Oscars.

BY ELIAS LEIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEX PRAGER STYLING BY MAX ORTEGA

IN FEBRUARY 2023, Billie Eilish started work on a new song with Finneas, her brother and primary collaborator, at his home studio. One of the paradoxes of songwriting is that it can be fiendishly difficult to craft something that sounds effortlessly simple. For 11 months, the two grappled with the track, retooling the chorus and struggling to find a way to deploy the line “I’ll love you till the day that I die” in a way that didn’t feel trite.

When they finally finished the song, titled “Birds of a Feather,” Eilish wasn’t sure she wanted to put it out. She’s known for somber songs, yet this one was almost peppy, with plush synthesizers and promises of eternal devotion. “Multiple times I was like, ‘We should cut this,’” Eilish says. She’s in a seventh-floor hotel suite overlooking Broadway on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, sitting cross-legged on the couch, leaning forward and clutching a green pillow in her lap. “Even when I played the whole album for the label, I was like, ‘Guys, this one is kind of stupid.’”

More than 16 months later, “Birds of a Feather” is still ranked in the top 10 on Spotify’s Global chart, flying above more recent releases from Sabrina Carpenter and Justin Bieber. The song passed 3 billion streams on Spotify in 481 days, faster than any other in the platform’s history, according to the analytics company Chartmetric. The runner-up, Harry Styles’s “As It Was,” took nearly 200 days longer to reach the same threshold.

At just 23, Eilish has already accumulated 44 Hot 100 hits, nine Grammys and a pair of Oscars. Her most recent record, *Hit Me Hard and Soft*, was the fifth-most popular release in the U.S. last year, earning over 2.2 billion streams, per the data company Luminate. She followed the album with a tour that has sold more than 383,000 tickets and grossed more than \$55 million in the past nine months, according to Pollstar.

Eilish has racked up these triumphs despite the fact that she is allergic to writing carefree pop hits, and many in the music industry did not believe her downbeat approach would be palatable to a wide audience. “It’s so funny to think back on all of the criticisms that were like, ‘The songs are too sad,’” she says. “So many people and companies wanted us to make happier songs.” Even when writing “Birds of a Feather,” she made sure to add “something dark” so the song wasn’t just “rainbows and smiles,” she says. “We wrote about the idea that you’re going to die soon, and let’s make it last.”

In conversation, the singer is easygoing and bright-eyed, fond of punctuating sentences with “Hell, yeah!” when she’s fired up. In black Converse sneakers, green camo pants and a T-shirt honoring the 1980s synth-pop group



Chanel shirt and vintage blanket.
Opposite: Dolce & Gabbana pajamas, John Hardy ring, vintage robe and her own earrings (worn throughout).

“IT’S SO FUNNY TO
THINK BACK ON ALL OF
THE CRITICISMS THAT
WERE LIKE, ‘THE SONGS
ARE TOO SAD.’”

Billie Eilish



New Order, Eilish is especially animated when advocating for environmental causes. She talks rapid-fire for eight straight minutes without interruption about sustainability as a personal project, ticking off all the ways she tries to be more eco-friendly in everything that she does. She’s equally “Hell, yeah!” about a new collaboration with director James Cameron—a 3-D concert film.

And as an artist, she’s glad that, even as a 16-year-old just beginning her career, she never gave in to the pressure to cheer up her tracks. “It just wouldn’t have been genuine if we had,” Eilish says. “I feel really proud of my younger self for standing up in that way.”

“I CAN’T SOUND GOOD, ’cause I’m not good!”

Eilish is recording with her brother in her childhood home in *Billie Eilish: The World’s a Little Blurry*, the 2021 documentary directed by R.J. Cutler, when she erupts in frustration. She’s slouched on the couch, singing into a microphone; her brother is huddled over his laptop on the nearby desk.

“Some people would agree with me that you’re very good,” Finneas replies patiently. His sister stares at him, stony-faced. In another session captured a few minutes later, Finneas tries a different tack. “I just am trying to write the best song we’ve ever written,” he says.

“That’s stupid,” Eilish retorts.

Insecurity is not uncommon among artists—or the rest of us—but few stars broadcast their anxieties to the world like Eilish: She is wildly open, the emotional equivalent of a fire hydrant spraying a summer sidewalk. At the same time, she is also uninterested in spouting the uplifting banalities that can make some celebrities seem calculated, as if every setback is just a marketing opportunity in disguise. Writing “self-help bangers is not what I do,” Eilish says.

She has spoken in the past about her Tourette’s syndrome, her struggles with depression and self-harm, and feeling brutally lonely on the road. At one point in *The World’s a Little Blurry*, disappointed by her own Coachella performance, Eilish bawls on her idol Justin Bieber’s shoulder—she was once “desperately” in love with the singer, her mother says in the film. Try to imagine another star at the top of pop’s pecking order comfortable with anyone, but especially their mother, describing them as desperate.

Eilish has been “somewhat of an open book” as long as she can remember. “With friends and family and people that I meet, I want to hear everything about someone’s life and every dark secret,” she says. “That’s who I am. That’s what I crave.”

This emotional warts-and-all approach is on display across her catalog. Some songs are dispatches from one-sided romantic arguments:



Vintage top and skirt
and The Row shoes.

“Tore my shirt to stop you bleedin’ / But nothin’ ever stops you leavin’.” She provides regular updates on the cruelties of fame—“People say I look happy / Just because I got skinny”—but also refuses to let herself off the hook: “Last week, I realized I crave pity / When I retell a story, I make everything sound worse.”

“Her music feels like it’s written in a bedroom just for you—dark, honest and vulnerable,” says Nandha Krishna, a fan who created the Eilish subreddit more than eight years ago. “She doesn’t try to fit in.”

When Eilish broke out with the single “Ocean Eyes” in 2015, she was also a unique musical proposition: Raised on classics like the Beatles, she once posited Frank Sinatra as her dream collaborator, and she loves singing for singing’s sake, stacking her voice in dreamy, acrobatic formations. But as a teenager in the mid-2010s, she was also enamored with the rambunctious hip-hop subgenre known as SoundCloud rap, which made stars out of XXXTentacion and Lil Uzi Vert. This style prized tracks that hit like a brick through a window, with tossed-off, degraded production that would give older Sinatra-lovers a heart attack.

Few artists can draw from both worlds, but they collided in her debut, *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*—pillow-soft vocals and blown-out drums, singer-songwriter lullabies and sonic battering rams. “Bad Guy,” with its haunted-house synthesizers and hard-charging bassline, hit No. 1 on the Hot 100.

Eilish has continued to explore new styles on her subsequent releases—pulling off swooning retro ballads on *Happier Than Ever* and gesturing toward dance music on *Hit Me Hard and Soft*. Is the synthesizer in “Chihiro” pushing toward the hypnotic style of electronic music known as trance? “Hell, yeah!”

“OH, MY GOD!”

Eilish is reliving the moment when she learned that many fashion brands were not paying much attention to their environmental impact, raising her voice in outrage as if she just discovered this for the first time: “It’s one of the most wasteful things in the world.”

When she talks about promoting

sustainability, she speeds up and repeats herself for emphasis. “The amount of water and energy that eating one plant-based meal a day can [save] is really pretty amazing,” Eilish says with wonder. She circles back later to drive this point home. “One plant-based meal a day!” she exclaims. “Just one!”

She scrutinizes every element of her tour looking for ways to be more environmentally conscious. A catering consultant provides plant-based food at each stop on tour. Eilish also uses biodegradable confetti at her concerts, encourages fans to bring in their own water bottles and makes merchandise from recycled cotton. At some shows, entire venues have honored her request to serve only plant-based food.

“You can literally make all the same s— with sustainable materials, and people just aren’t doing it,” Eilish says. “The main thing that I’ve learned in working with so many companies and making my own merch and my perfume is that everyone can actually do it. It’s just that mostly they don’t.”

Her interest in environmental causes brings her places pop stars don’t often appear. While in New York, Eilish attended the inaugural gala for the NAT, a nonprofit founded by longtime activist Gail Gallie, to raise money for reforestation, climate education and more. The singer introduced Sylvia Earle, a 90-year-old marine biologist, to an audience that included Harrison Ford, Jane Fonda and Stella McCartney. “It was just extraordinary to get that cross section of people who care together,” says Earle, who applauded Eilish’s “passion for nature and the ocean.”

When asked if she had listened to the singer’s music, Earle responded: “Hasn’t everyone?”

DESPITE EILISH’S KNACK for layered harmonies and classic songcraft, at times her performances still feel more indebted to the frenetic rapper Playboi Carti—she can be a spitfire onstage, bounding and thrashing and swaggering. She’s been touring in support of *Hit Me Hard and Soft* since September 2024. Eilish was

“really freaked out” by the thought of performing without Finneas, who had accompanied her on every previous tour. But she says this run of shows has become her favorite to date.

Rianna McCaulsky went to all four of Eilish’s shows in Manchester, England, in July. There is “a huge 360 stage with a jumbotron, giving everyone a chance to see Billie wherever they are in the arena, which is great as she literally runs and jumps up and down,” McCaulsky says. “I honestly had the best time.”

Of course, Eilish does not get to watch the show, as she is too busy hurling herself from one side of the stage to the other. That’s where James Cameron comes in. Other artists have made 3-D concert films before—U2, Katy Perry, Bieber—but not with help from Cameron, whose work on *Avatar* and its follow-ups is widely credited with pushing the technology forward.

Eilish connected with the director through her mother, Maggie Baird, who, like Cameron, shares Eilish’s passion for the environment. Cameron was talking about making movies in 3-D; Baird was talking about flaws in the concert films she had seen. An idea started to percolate.

For Eilish, filming her performance gives her a chance to experience it like so many of her fans—and on a big screen, rather than through the pint-size phone videos that fly around TikTok after each show. While the Cutler documentary included snippets of her shows, it was not a concert film, instead focusing primarily on behind-the-scenes dynamics.

“If you do something amazing, like a f—ing backflip, and nobody’s filmed it, I can’t ever really have proof that I did it,” Eilish reasons. “So it’ll be nice to have that.”

She has always been transparent about the challenges of life on the road. At a time when most teenagers are learning to socialize and building friend groups, she was already touring. Speaking to a crowd of students at Chapman University in 2024, she described spending “the last seven years alone” in hotel rooms on tour.

“I barely had friends for years and years,” she said.

But this time around, she likens her current tour to attending summer camp with her pals. She brought two childhood friends, sisters Ava and Jane Horner, on tour to sing with her. And her three new band members have also become “some of my favorite people.”

It also helps that Eilish completely reworked her tour schedule, instituting a new set of rules. Don’t go out for more than three weeks at a time; go home in between stints on the road, even if it’s just for a week; don’t do too many shows consecutively.

“It takes longer, and you make less money that way,” she says cheerfully. “But for me, it’s magical.” ●

“I WANT TO HEAR EVERYTHING ABOUT SOMEONE’S LIFE AND EVERY DARK SECRET.”

Billie Eilish



Chanel shirt and pants
and Eyevan 7285
sunglasses. Hair, Lucas
Wilson using Oribe;
makeup, Emily Cheng;
manicure, Erin Leigh
Moffett using Chanel
Beauty; production
design, Florencia
Martin; production,
Connect the Dots.
For details see Sources,
page 172.





LETTERING BY ANNA MILLS

Melody Johnson & George Lucas

DESIGN
INNOVATORS

Inside the audacious effort to bring the power couple's dream to life.

BY JOHN JURGENSEN PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEANNA AND ED TEMPLETON SITTINGS EDITOR KATE FOLEY

IF IT WEREN'T FOR AN ILLUSTRATOR—a narrative artist—would George Lucas's most beloved creation even exist?

Back in the mid-1970s, Lucas's pitch for a space opera exploring archetypes of good and evil was inching along in Hollywood, following his breakout hit, *American Graffiti*. The former film-school whiz kid wrote reams of explanation about galactic samurai, laser swords and something called the Force. But to studio executives, his script seemed all over the place and too expensive.

Lucas turned to Ralph McQuarrie. An illustrator 15 years his senior who once made technical drawings for Boeing, McQuarrie gave shape to Lucas's wordy proposals. His renderings of C-3PO and R2-D2 on Tatooine and more helped convince 20th Century Fox to fund *Star Wars*.

With that, Lucas established a pattern that would repeat throughout his career and give rise to the Lucasfilm empire: Find the artistic allies who could translate his grand ideas into vivid specifics, and never stop until those ideas were hammered into being.

"People can't understand what I'm talking about because they've never seen it before," Lucas says, describing a familiar cycle. "That's why I had so many illustrators working for me. I relied on them to help people get the picture."

In tribute to visual storytellers like these, Lucas, 81, built what he calls a temple. The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, due to open next year in South Los Angeles, will showcase a sprawling lineage of artists that the filmmaker feels deep kinship with, from stone-age cave painters to masters of futuristic fantasy. At the core of the museum's holdings is a collection Lucas started 60 years ago with the comic art he could afford in college. Among the 40,000-plus pieces are 160 works by Norman Rockwell, whose vignettes of American life are the epitome of narrative art for Lucas. He's organizing galleries around themes like family, love, work and play, with artworks that explore the myths and stories that bind society, he says.

Bringing the museum to life has been a 15-year crusade beset by all kinds of challenges, from cities rejecting his proposal, to upheavals over who would curate the museum, to criticism that he was making a shrine to himself.

Lucas scoffs at that. "I'm making a museum for what I call the orphaned arts," he says, citing the snobbery that has excluded the illustrators, cartoonists and other commercial artists he's championing from institutions of fine art. His museum is about "the art people respond to in the real world."

To turn one of the most challenging projects of his lifetime into a reality, Lucas depended on a new collaborator: his wife, Mellody Hobson.

ON A RECENT summer day, Hobson, the museum's co-founder, walks through the construction site nearing completion with her husband. With the brooches on her slim black tunic she wears a symbol of her commitment to Lucas's artistic causes—a small silver pin bearing a Rebel Alliance insignia like the one that adorned Luke Skywalker's helmet.

"When you step into the building, you're stepping into George's brain," she says.

In 2013, she was 44 and a star from a different world of money and investing when she married the filmmaker, making him a newlywed at 69. His second wife was on the boards of DreamWorks Animation, Estée Lauder and Starbucks, and was on the way to becoming co-CEO of Chicago's Ariel Investments, the first Black-owned mutual fund firm in the country, where she'd risen from summer intern to president by age 31.

Less than a year into their marriage, Lucas's initial museum plan blew up. He intended to build it in San Francisco, near his longtime headquarters at Skywalker Ranch. But opponents in the city dickered for several years over his design for a neoclassical building on the Presidio, and then rejected it.

Hobson leapt in. Why not bring her husband's passion project to her hometown?

She had grown up in Chicago, with five older siblings and a single mother who dealt with utility shutoffs and evictions. Now Hobson ran with the city's power players, many of whom had partied at her wedding reception where Prince performed.

"Suddenly it was in my city, and I was out there trying to promote it and defend it with the people that I knew much better than George did," Hobson recalls.

Soon, news headlines announced that Lucas's museum would land on Chicago's lakefront near Soldier Field. A design was selected, debated and revised. But then came

The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art is set to open next year in Los Angeles.

a preservationist group called Friends of the Parks with a lawsuit that blew up the museum plan for a second time.

Rather than fight the preservationists indefinitely in court, Lucas and Hobson retreated. She asked him if it was time to shelve the museum plan. "Strident," "forceful" and "emotional" are the words she uses now to describe Lucas's response. In other words, it was his turn to blow up. "I am building this museum in my lifetime!" he declared.

Hobson smoothed the way in L.A. by recruiting an ally in Mayor Eric Garcetti and doing diplomacy with local bureaucrats. They were starstruck by Lucas in their first meeting, Garcetti says, but it was Hobson who stole the show, pitching the museum as a gift to a community with 18 low-income schools within walking distance.

"It wasn't just nuts and bolts," the former mayor recalls. "She had a very gentle touch with a very strong message."

In 2018, the co-founders broke ground on a former parking lot in Exposition Park. It was Hobson's idea to put down some roots by purchasing a house in the city—no small matter, given Lucas's history of keeping his distance from Hollywood. Now, when they're in L.A., Hobson leads Sunday tours of the construction site for community leaders and prominent friends to get them invested.

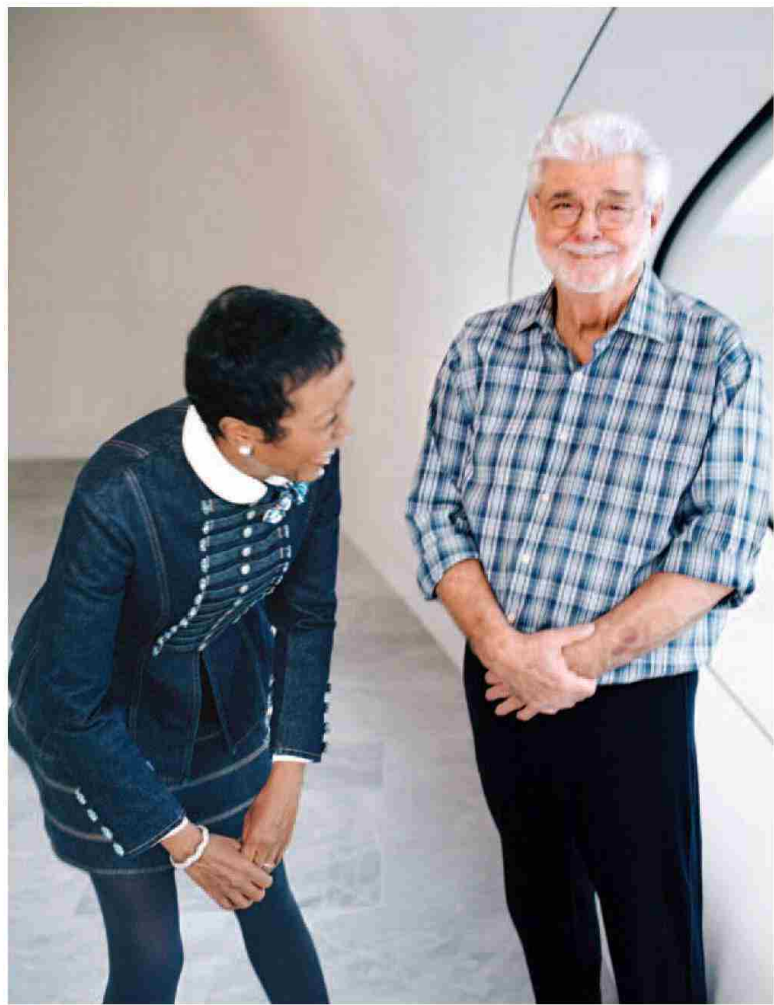
"George is not used to people seeing his work while it's in progress," she says. "And I'm like, that's exactly right. They can say, 'I was there when.'"

**"WHEN YOU STEP
INTO THE BUILDING,
YOU'RE
STEPPING INTO
GEORGE'S BRAIN."**

Mellody Hobson







Hair, Christol Williams; makeup, Mark Payne; production, Hinoki Productions.

LUCAS’S TOTAL CONTROL over tiny creative details led to everything from the *Millennium Falcon* to Indiana Jones. The key to these creations, which now include an 11-acre museum campus, is his method of relentless revision.

One of Lucas’s first moves when making his *Star Wars* prequels was to break from the “used universe” he had introduced in the first three films, in which banged-up ships and malfunctioning droids helped the audience believe they were joining a gritty galacti saga in progress.

Lucas’s new design mandate scared Doug Chiang, one of the first concept artists hired in 1995. To the young designer, the look of the original trilogy was sacrosanct. “Are we going to break it?” Chiang recalls thinking.

“George said, ‘We’re going to get to the foundation of it.’ He wanted to establish a very clear evolution of design,” by reaching back to elegant art deco influences from the 1920s and ’30s.

When Lucas repeated the words “sleek” and “chrome” in his instructions for a spacecraft on the planet Naboo, Chiang took inspiration from the hood ornaments of antique cars. After months of design iterations, his boss approved a needle-nose vessel braced by two bullet-shaped engines, then ordered up a bright yellow paint job to evoke the Formula 1 racing cars Lucas loved. The *N-1 Starfighter* debuted in *The Phantom Menace* in 1999 and soon will hang as a 33-foot-long model in the Lucas museum’s south wing.

Sometimes Lucas’s cinematic needs required whole companies—which delivered huge entrepreneurial payoffs and would help lead Hollywood through the digital cinema revolution. Industrial Light & Magic and Skywalker Sound, the workshops Lucas formed to invent the visual and audio effects he needed for *Star Wars*, grew into powerhouse contractors and were part of the \$4 billion Lucasfilm package the founder sold to Disney in 2012. To prevent the cutting-edge sound in *Return of the Jedi* from playing through the crummy speakers in movie theaters, he formed THX, a technology and certification program that brought theaters up to his audiovisual standards.

“George not only was able to see into the future,” says Martin Scorsese, part of the ’70s cinema vanguard with Lucas, Francis Ford Coppola and others, “but he executed it, he made it. He’s one of the key people responsible for the world we live in now in terms of our art, our

technology. His influence is just incalculable.”

The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art seems to hover over the undulating gardens, paths and meadows at its base. Architect Ma Yansong says he had tree canopies and mysterious clouds in mind for the building’s shape to beckon people inside. Many observers will see something else: a spaceship.

The flared hull of the building is clad in 1,300 fiberglass panels, each with unique proportions. Its north and south wings are connected by a swooping canopy that has a circular opening to the sky. Inside the cavernous entrance, cathedral-like arches converge overhead. A trio of clear glass elevator tubes lead to the main gallery floors above with a library, a restaurant and a hive of educational spaces—all with the curving surfaces that define the museum.

Though Yansong had to redraw the building multiple times as the proposal bounced among cities, he says Lucas himself had a light touch. “From the beginning, some people warned me, ‘He’s a designer, he will modify your work.’ But he never does that,” the architect says. “He’s an artist, so maybe he doesn’t like other people doing that to his work.”

When it comes down to the details inside, Lucas is an approval committee of one. Earlier this year, the experienced museum director who’d been hired to oversee curation stepped down after Lucas opted to do the job himself. Lately he’s been picking films for the two cozy but cutting-edge theaters on the museum’s ground floor. One inaugural exhibit will feature the designs of *Star Wars* vehicles. “It’s one gallery out of 33. And I did it grudgingly,” Lucas says with a chuckle. “I didn’t want people to come to the museum and say, ‘Where’s the *Star Wars*?’”

Fifteen years after he sold that universe, has Lucas let go of his instinct to manage it? “Disney took it over and they gave it their vision. That’s what happens,” he says. “Of course I’ve moved past it. I mean, I’ve got a life. I’m building a museum. A museum is harder than making movies.”

WHEN LUCAS WAS COURTING HOBSON in the late 2000s, he gifted her a prehistoric turtle. The hulking fossil was a nod to the slow-and-steady mascot of the investment firm Hobson had devoted her professional life to.

Later, after they married, came a Banksy—a girl’s silhouette with a heart-shaped balloon, plus the hunk of concrete wall where the elusive street artist had painted it. The couple reinforced the floor of their Chicago apartment to support the tonnage of the two pieces. Lucas had them arranged to face each other across a room so they would tell a story across time.

“He said, ‘Old fossil, new fossil,’ because he saw the Banksy as a fossil of today. Which is very George,” Hobson recalls. She’s sitting next to

her husband on a deep couch in their Spanish-style L.A. home, which is hidden behind a high hedge. The walls are decorated with art they’ve acquired together, including paintings by Diego Rivera, Chuck Close and Fernando Botero.

When asked where their tastes differed, Hobson answers: toilets. Lucas had done up his Victorian home near San Francisco with period-authentic detail, down to the 19th-century commodes fitted with high tanks and pull chains.

“They’re gone, they’re gone!” Hobson says, cracking up. When the couple got serious, “I said, ‘You’re going to have a bunch of toilets delivered to the house. They’ll be a gift from me.’”

“I managed to keep a few,” Lucas says with a smile.

He wears white gym socks, black sweatpants and a faded T-shirt with an iconic F1 Ferrari from the ’60s on it. Hobson’s outfit of white and gold is cozy chic, with fuzzy green Chanel sandals.

They’re a power couple from seemingly opposite poles in style and bearing. He’s the introvert who answers a question about how he feels in his museum with digressions into art history and the patronage of church and state. She’s the savant with people who is also tuned to the verbal acuties of investment presentations.

On the topic of the museum’s cost, which the co-founders are covering completely, Hobson has a precise way of demurring.

“We’ve always said that we’re holding society’s money that we fully intend to give back, and this is how we’re doing it,” she says. “We’re not spending willy-nilly. We’re not being frivolous. We’re doing what it takes to create an environment where people want to come.”

Lucas circles back to snubs, saying, “The art inside has always been thrown in the garbage, literally, and so we’re trying to say, this art is important, let’s put it in an important building.”

As for the billion-dollar price tag often mentioned in reports about the project, Lucas says, “It is close, but we haven’t gotten there yet.”

“George told me years ago there’s nothing harder than a blank page,” Hobson says. “We’re doing a blank-page version of a museum. And it’s reminiscent of all the hard things we both have ever done. That part feels uncomfortably familiar.”

Does Lucas relish the opportunity to prove his naysayers wrong about the museum?

“Yes,” his wife responds with a grin.

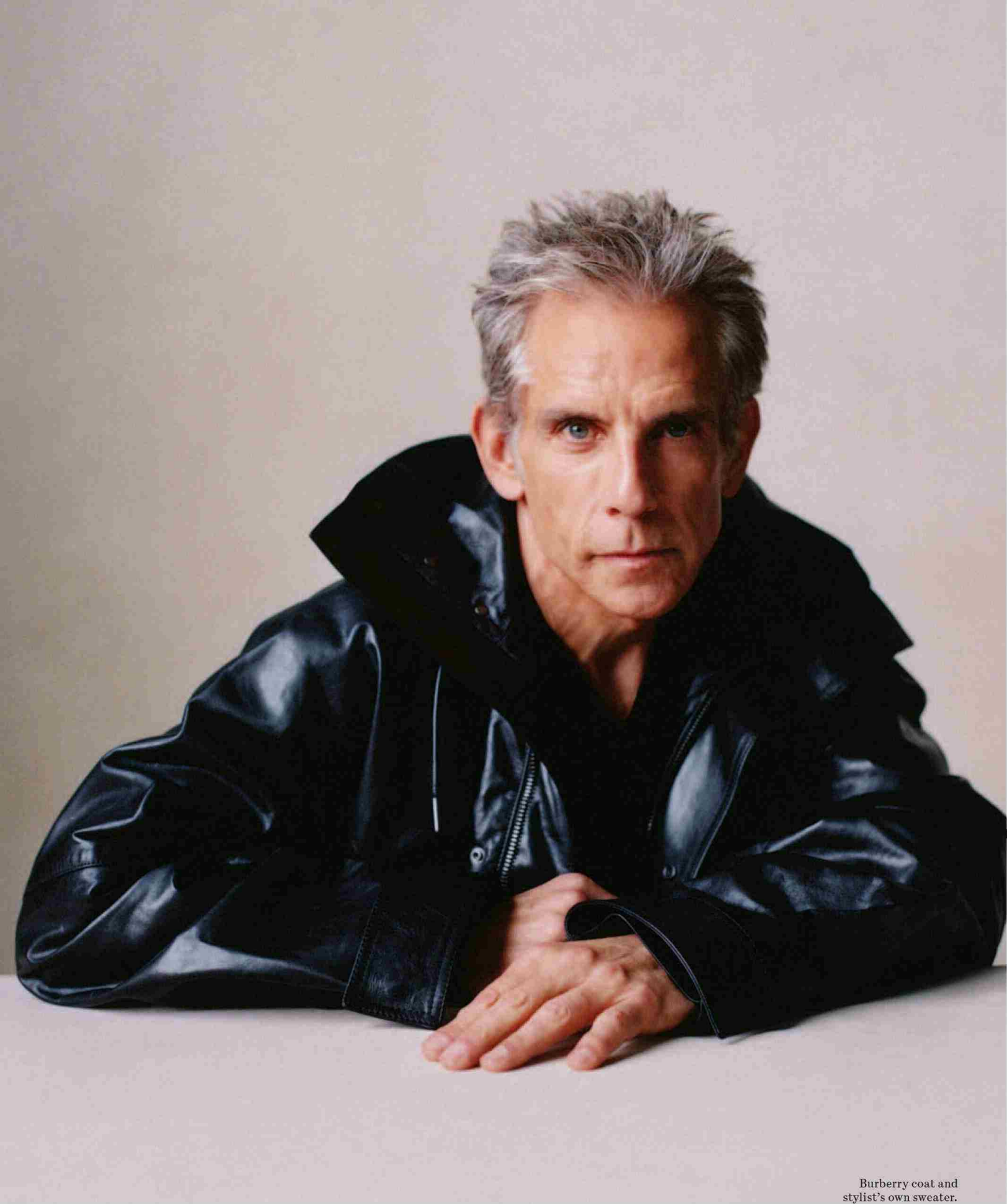
“No,” Lucas says.

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Resistance becomes fuel for you,” Hobson says.

“Well, I’d rather not have that fuel, but it tells me one thing,” he says. “You have to have the kind of personality that says, I’ve got an idea—and I want to see it be real.” ●



Burberry coat and
stylist's own sweater.

LETTERING BY ANNA MILLS

Ben Stiller

ENTERTAINMENT
INNOVATOR

He helped define the Gen X sensibility. With *Severance*, and a revealing documentary about his parents, he's taking a more serious turn.

BY SAM SCHUBE PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM WATERWORTH STYLING BY THISTLE BROWN

THIS SUMMER, Ben Stiller started acting again. That he'd stopped might come as a surprise: For more than two decades, he was a reliable presence in very big and very successful comedies, the sort that Hollywood seems to have forgotten how to make. He specialized in a few distinct character types—usually the straight man subjected to cascading humiliations, or the buffoon ignorant of how he's coming off.

To millions, and sometimes to his frustration, Stiller is still inseparable from characters like Derek Zoolander, Chas Tenenbaum and Greg Focker. “The negative way of saying it would be, like, ‘pigeonholed,’” Stiller tells me one morning this fall. “But I don’t look at it negatively.” He long ago came to terms with the fact that many people associate him with the movies he made in the ’90s and 2000s.

What those fans might not realize is that Stiller hasn’t acted in a theatrical release since 2017. It’s not that he disappeared. He pops up here and there, with recent cameos in both *Happy Gilmore 2* and a SZA music video. He’s a courtside staple at New York Knicks games, and just released his own line of low-sugar sodas.

But when it comes to his work in Hollywood, he’s spent the better part of the past decade directing—the job he always wanted, and one that fell by the wayside as he became a superstar in front of the camera.

Stiller is still a master at wringing comedy from anxiety, but his recent projects, primarily in television, are shot through with a new layer of dramatic intensity. He’s evolved from generational comedy force to serious (and sometimes twisted) director not by learning any fancy new tricks, but by doubling down on his creative instincts—in the process reminding us that the distance between a laugh and a jump-scare is shorter than it seems.

Stiller enjoys the work as much as anything else he’s done, and it’s receiving critical acclaim. He serves as the executive producer and has directed over half the episodes of Apple TV’s *Severance*, which brought home eight wins (from 27 nominations) at the Emmys this fall. More than that, the zeitgeist-y sci-fi series has embedded itself into popular culture like Stiller’s biggest starring roles did.

Directing is a sort of virtuous cycle, where doing one project “makes me want to just keep doing it—and try to get more in touch with what kinds of movies I want to make, what I want to be as a filmmaker,” Stiller says. That includes *Stiller & Meara: Nothing Is Lost*, his new documentary about his parents, the legendary comedy duo Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara. Still, he concedes, he’s taken a longer break from acting than he ever expected to.

But like a cat that can flush the toilet or a

free dab of hair gel, sometimes life throws you a surprise. A few years back, John Hamburg, the writer of *Meet the Parents* and its two sequels, started working on a script for a potential fourth film in the series. The 2023 Hollywood strikes happened not long after, and Stiller sort of forgot about it. Then the best thing happened, Stiller says: “It came out good.”

As a result, he returned to a job he hadn’t had for a while: movie star. Now he is about halfway through production of *Focker In-Law*, which means he spends his days shuttling between a soundstage and locations around New York. The new film puts Stiller’s Greg Focker in the old Robert De Niro role, as a parent meeting his son’s spouse-to-be—this time played by Ariana Grande. (“She’s a great improviser,” he says.)

“I’ve been acclimating to it,” he says, sounding a bit like an athlete returning gingerly from injury—guarded but optimistic. “I finally am sort of feeling like I’m in the groove.”

One early reviewer says he hasn’t lost a step. “He has such specificity but also such openness,” Grande says. “He invites those around him to play in a way that I really appreciate, as well as digging into the script on a microscopic level and making sure each beat tracks through the comedy.”

Another reason Stiller signed on was an amusing coincidence: At 59, he is now about the same age that Robert De Niro was when he first played Stiller’s gruff father-in-law-to-be.

“It’s weird,” Stiller says. “Like, Oh, man—I guess that’s where I am.”

EXCEPT FOR HIS HAIR—these days a little more salt than pepper—Stiller looks much like the guy who starred in *Meet the Parents*. He’s visibly fit, his black T-shirt snug on his compact frame and a chunky black Panerai watch on his wrist. His blue eyes are still piercing. He’s an intense guy. “I met him in 2020, and I’m still getting a sense of who this man is,” says Tramell Tillman, who won an Emmy this fall for his work as the enigmatic Mr. Milchick on *Severance*.

Stiller grew up in a showbiz family: His parents were one of the signature comedy acts of the ’60s and ’70s, performing their Stiller and Meara act several times to tens of millions on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

Stiller *films* saw himself as a filmmaker, breaking into Hollywood with a short film he co-directed that parodied Martin Scorsese’s *The Color of Money*. That led to a writing gig on *Saturday Night Live* (he quit after four episodes), and eventually to *The Ben Stiller Show*, a sketch series that ran a season each on MTV and Fox, then disruptive upstarts in the TV landscape. The first feature film he directed was 1994’s *Reality Bites*, a warm, biting portrait of young Gen X that has become the Rosetta

Stone of that generation.

For Adam Scott, watching Stiller’s early work was thrilling. “All of a sudden there was someone speaking to me,” he says. He watched *The Ben Stiller Show* when it debuted on MTV and was in acting school by the time it landed on Fox. “We would smoke a joint every Sunday night and watch. It was the best comedy around. There was nothing like it.” He and his pals pretended they didn’t like *Reality Bites* (that’s what you were supposed to do, as a Gen Xer), but they couldn’t ignore the fact that “we were wearing those exact same clothes and talking about the exact same things, making the same jokes.”

Then came *There’s Something About Mary*, the raunchy 1998 comedy he starred in alongside Cameron Diaz. All of a sudden Stiller was a superstar, top-lining a run of studio comedies that permanently tattooed themselves onto the brains of teenage boys everywhere. He directed a few more movies—*Zoolander*, *Tropic Thunder*, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*—in which he also acted. But it was his starring in them that made them far more likely to be greenlit by studio executives.

Fans like Scott got a special thrill out of watching Stiller rise. “It’s happening to one of the good ones, one of the cool ones,” Scott recalls feeling. And the way Stiller carried himself on the biggest stage possible spoke volumes. “He was this television and movie star, but he didn’t seem entirely comfortable with being a television and movie star,” Scott says. “We could all put ourselves in his shoes when we were watching his work, but out in the public eye, he seemed a little bit sheepish about being this giant star—and that was also deeply relatable.”

STILLER’S FIRST television foray as a director and producer was *Escape at Dannemora*, a 2018 limited series about a real-life jailbreak. “It wasn’t like I was dying to tell a prison-escape story,” he says. There was just something about the subject that spoke to him—it felt like a story that could yield a show he’d want to watch himself.

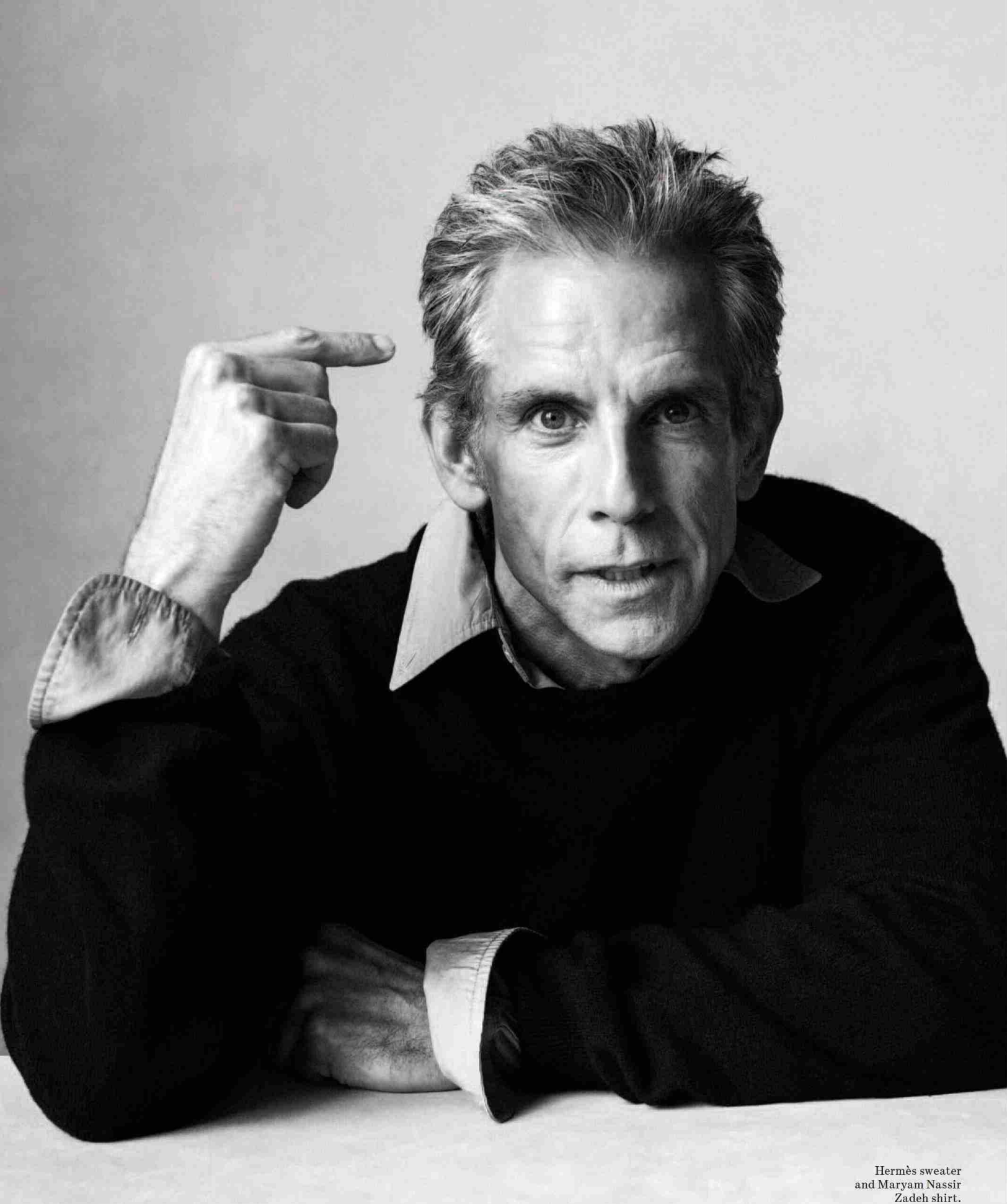
He was coming off of *Zoolander 2*, a critical and commercial disappointment, and working through issues in his personal life. “I was at sea a little bit,” he says. *Dannemora* was a raft. The project was full of appealingly tactile problems that required solving: What is prison like? How does it work? How might you escape?

“I know nothing about this world,” he remembers thinking. “The only way I’m going to feel confident as a filmmaker is if I learn as much as I can about this world.”

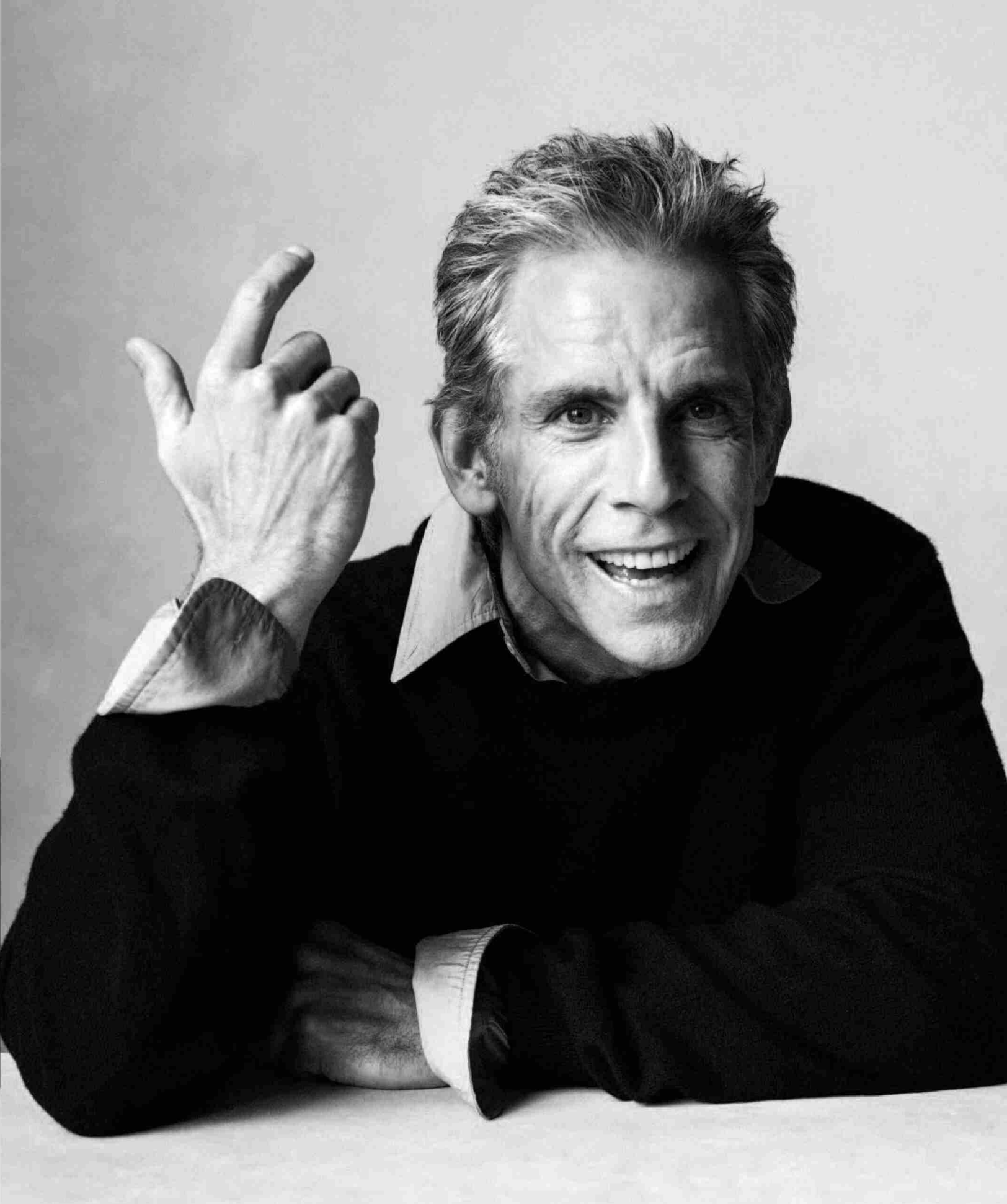
If critics noted with curiosity that Stiller was in the director’s chair, Stiller himself didn’t think it odd. “In my mind, I was like, Well, I

Calvin Klein Collection coat, Sunspel T-shirt, Hermès pants, Carmina shoes and stylist’s own socks.





Hermès sweater
and Maryam Nassir
Zadeh shirt.



“IN MY MIND, I WAS LIKE, WELL, I ALWAYS THINK OF MYSELF AS A DIRECTOR FIRST.”

Ben Stiller



Emporio Armani coat, Prada jacket, Dolce & Gabbana shirt, Hermès pants, Ferragamo shoes, Charvet belt and Tom Ford tie. Hair, Alicia Zavarella using R+CO; grooming, Rebecca Hickey; set design, Dylan Bailey; production, Day International. For details see Sources, page 172.

always think of myself as a director first.” And the whole thing felt good. “It just clarified for me that I love doing this,” he says. “Not acting was so enjoyable to me. I just felt so much freer.”

He began developing *Severance* with series creator Dan Erickson some five years before its 2022 premiere. Stiller likes to say that he was drawn to *Severance* for its resemblance to workplace comedies like *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*. But where most workplace sitcoms are sweet and fuzzy, *Severance* is weird and chilly, its central conceit the eerie “severance” procedure that splits subjects’ consciousness between work and life. It’s funny, but only sometimes. (I don’t recall—and here’s a spoiler for season 2—Michael Scott sacrificing any goats at Dunder Mifflin HQ.)

Season 1 became an immediate sensation, and Stiller was thrilled about the attachment fans felt to its central characters. But television is a serial business in a way that even sequel-hungry Hollywood isn’t. “If you’re lucky enough to have success with a season,” Stiller says, chuckling, “you’re rewarded by having to do it again and do it again, and make it better and better.”

Stiller is deeply involved in both conception and execution, laboring over story beats and also directing more than half of the show’s episodes. He’s not afraid to keep trying different versions of a line or scene, says Britt Lower, who also brought home an Emmy for her acting on season 2. “It’s like an oil painter who can spend a lot of time on detailing a portion of the painting—not like watercolor where it dries, and you don’t really come back to it.” Season 2 was disrupted first by the actors’ and writers’ strikes, and then by an impasse with Apple that Stiller describes as budget-related. But the two sides patched things up—both sides “really rallied around the show,” he says—and found the money necessary to pull off, among other things, a blockbuster finale involving a marching band.

But Stiller won’t be directing when cameras roll on season 3, instead prepping a Jeremy Allen

White-led World War II movie he’ll direct, along with another series for Apple that he’s producing and starring in alongside Jessica Chastain.

“Part of me would love to direct all the episodes of next season,” he says. “But it’s also getting to a point in my life where I’m looking at my lifespan, and I want to do different things.”

Stiller remains surprised that *Severance* has been his full-time job for half a decade. And, from the outside, it’s easy to wonder how this guy, of all people, wound up making this show.

“I’d seen all his movies, all the comedies, and when I found out that he was directing it, I said, ‘Oh, this is going to be just a breeze on set. We’re just going to have a lot of fun,’” Tillman says. Making the show is fun, he goes on, but it’s also intense.

That tonal dexterity comes naturally to Stiller, Adam Scott explains. “That displacement and unease, in the midst of a very staid, regular environment, it befits Ben’s sensibility,” he says. “These boxes that we’re all kind of put into, and the things that we should aspire to, never feel comfortable once you’re there.”

Taking a workplace comedy and making it weird? That’s exactly what’s Ben Stiller about it.

TWO MONTHS into the pandemic, Stiller’s father died at the age of 92. (His mother died in 2015.) That spring, when Stiller and his sister, Amy, were clearing out their Upper West Side apartment, Stiller brought a camera with him, to make a permanent record of the place where he grew up.

He was struck by just how much his father had documented and saved: home movies and audio recordings of Anne and Jerry workshopping their groundbreaking act, along with files, receipts and at least one snorkeling mask. Initially he thought he’d make a documentary about his parents’ lives and work together—their rise and relationship, Jerry’s scene-stealing role as the indelible Frank Costanza (“SERENITY NOW!”) on *Seinfeld*, Meara’s embrace of theater.

That’s not quite the movie he made. *Stiller and Meara: Nothing Is Lost* does lovingly sketch his parents’ lives. But it also explores what it felt like for Ben and Amy to grow up in the wake of their creativity—the heady brew of their ambitions, disagreements and love for each other. More vulnerably, it delves into what it’s been like for Stiller’s own family to navigate their version of that dynamic. This required a degree of transparency: Stiller is a character in his movie, as are his wife, children and sister.

The present-tense segments between Ben and his family members, in particular—his children’s observations about his shortcomings as a parent; a conversation with his wife, the actress Christine Taylor, about their relationship—are striking for their vulnerability. “As I was watching cuts, I was like, Oh, wow, I’ve never really talked about any personal stuff like this,” he says.

The documentary, the return to acting, the directorial projects—it all gives the impression that Stiller is entering a new phase of his career. He is OK with that interpretation, though it perhaps oversells the complexity of what he’s trying to do at this point, which is simply chase things that excite him—an idea he repeats several times.

“More of my career is behind me than in front of me,” he says, laughing. Figuring out what’s going to feel rewarding has gotten easier, he explains, sounding like someone who very much wants it to be true:

“I think I’m more in touch now,” he says, “with what makes me happy.” ●





"There's never been
a better time to
be a present and
consistent aspirational
science funder,"
Chan says of her lead-
ership of the Chan
Zuckerberg Initiative.

Priscilla Chan

PHILANTHROPY IN SCIENCE
INNOVATOR

As the initiative she co-founded celebrates its 10-year anniversary, Chan is pursuing a wildly ambitious goal: unlocking the hidden causes of disease.

BY ELLEN GAMERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY SINNA NASSERI STYLING BY KARLA WELCH

LETTERING BY ANNA MILL

PRISCILLA CHAN is explaining how the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative hopes to help “cure, prevent and manage all disease” by the end of the century when she drops an unexpected detail into the conversation. One day, she wants to apply to be on *The Amazing Race*. Seriously.

“I’ve thought through this,” she says of her desire to find a partner for the around-the-world competition that asks contestants to climb mountains and dive into frigid waters. Chan, 40, is perched on a soft-as-cashmere couch in the lodge-chic sitting room of her home in Palo Alto, California. “I know who I would choose.”

Though she admits to having ruled out Mark Zuckerberg, the billionaire founder of Facebook and Meta chief executive to whom she happens to be married, when pressed about her prospective teammate for the reality TV show, she demurs: “I want my application to be novel.”

The traits Chan thinks might impress the show’s producers—Problem-solver! Detail oriented! Team player!—are the same ones she’s been trying to put to work at CZI, the philanthropic mission she and Zuckerberg launched a decade ago. The couple unveiled the undertaking with the birth of their first child, framing its purpose as a responsibility to improve life for the next generation by thinking big and investing for the long term. Over time, as CZI’s mission has evolved and science has edged out other priorities, Chan, a former practicing pediatrician who treated gravely ill children during her residency, has become the organization’s de facto leader. Zuckerberg has always been certain about her ability to steer the enterprise. “She is running this on a day-to-day basis,” he says, “in a way that I’m not sure many other living philanthropists are.”

These days, CZI is applying its considerable resources to a moonshot: creating virtual cell models, including a virtual immune system, that can explore the body’s responses to threats. Using huge data sets, large language models and artificial intelligence—and making the models and findings free and publicly available—CZI is creating tools and technologies that scientists can use to spot diseases lurking in cells and then, by engineering individualized treatments, outsmart them.

The couple pledged to the cause 99% of their Meta shares (then Facebook, valued at \$45 billion at the time). But even with such a massive war chest, is it possible to neutralize the threat of all disease by the year 2100?

“It’s wonderful to set really bold goals,” says Jennifer Doudna, a biochemist at University of California, Berkeley, and founder of the Innovative Genomics Institute, who shared the 2020 Nobel Prize in chemistry for her work on CRISPR, a technology that edits DNA to correct

genetic disorders. “On the other hand, biology is complicated and it’s hard, and so I think we just have to also be realistic. But look, I would love their effort to be wildly successful.”

The work is personal for Chan, who recalls craving more precise treatments for serious pediatric illnesses rather than the educated guesswork she often encountered as a physician. She attributes CZI’s boldness in part to Zuckerberg. “One of his great fears probably is not being sufficiently ambitious,” she says. But she’s not ruling out failure. “If we miss, we’ve done something totally awesome, rather than underselling what is possible.”

The dream she’s chasing is mind-bogglingly complex—the science nearly unimaginable even a decade ago—but for Chan, it’s not that far removed from the spirit of *The Amazing Race*: a chance to live out a *let’s-effin-go* optimism that friends and colleagues say grounds much of what she does. “I love feel-good shows,” she says. “I want to feel good about the world.”

JUST OVER A CENTURY AGO, roughly 20% of children were dead before the age of 5. There was no routine heart surgery, no insulin therapy, no vitamin supplements, no widespread use of clinical X-rays, no commercial antibiotics. Those who lived to see their 65th birthdays were lucky. CZI is betting that over the next hundred years, the transformation will be just as radical.

Earlier this year, at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, an infant referred to as “Baby KJ” became the first child diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder to be successfully treated with customized gene-editing therapy, a procedure that involved intravenous infusions to correct a life-threatening mutation in his liver cells. Doudna’s institute played a role in developing and ensuring the safety of the therapy.

This breakthrough has the potential to mark a before-and-after moment in the approach to disease. CZI was not involved in Baby KJ’s case (or in the project that won Doudna the Nobel),

but it is one of a number of research organizations motivated by such triumphs. Recently, CZI donated \$20 million to Doudna’s research to expand work into personalized gene-editing treatments. CZI is not out to address every disease on the planet, but aims to foster opportunities for the global experts who can. Its goal is to shorten the time between lab experimentation and real-world impact.

While working as a pediatrician at the University of California, San Francisco medical center in the early 2010s, Chan spent a lot of time with the families of children suffering from rare diseases. These parents would cling to laminated PDFs that detailed every intricacy of their child’s case. Information gave them something to hold onto. “That experience of taking care of really sick kids of all different types really taught me how research is actually hope,” Chan says.

But those years also haunt her. “These are people that we took care of for weeks and

weeks and sometimes months, and you either saw them get to leave and live a happy, healthy life, or you saw kids pass, which is terrible and devastating,” she says.

Biotech research exists in its own byzantine world where scientific rigor marries startup energy. The government’s role in supporting this research outpaces philanthropic institutions like CZI, with nearly \$48 billion granted to the National Institutes of Health alone in last year’s federal budget. As the Trump administration has tried to stanch the flow of these funds, top scientists have condemned the move, saying the damage to the research community could be irreversible.

Chan herself doesn’t want to get drawn into politics. But does she think her field is currently under attack? “Frankly, I’d be doing this in any political climate,” she replies. “There’s never been a better time to be a present and consistent and aspirational science funder in this current ecosystem.”

Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates, who met with Chan and Zuckerberg when they were just starting CZI, praises Chan for leveraging her skills and background as a pediatrician to take on system-wide problems in biomedical research.

“Across all her work, Priscilla pushes for equity and access, reimagining philanthropy to drive large-scale, inclusive change,” he said in an email. “CZI is already showing how philanthropy can accelerate scientific progress and making the case that private philanthropy can take risks and move with a speed that governments and traditional funders often cannot.”

CHAN’S COTTAGE-STYLE HOME is shaded by the kind of towering redwoods you see in national parks. The room where we meet has several places to sit, but Chan pats a spot on her couch right next to her. As the conversation gets rolling, she digs into her roots, explaining that her maternal grandmother was an illiterate indentured servant. One version of family lore holds that she was once sold for two bags of rice.

Chan’s parents were ethnic Chinese immigrants who fled Vietnam in 1978 after the fall of Saigon. Her then-17-year-old mother, who still doesn’t know how to swim, remembers crossing the South China Sea without her parents on a leaky boat crowded with nearly a dozen strangers. While fleeing the country, Priscilla’s grandparents and their friends sorted the children into different boats. That way, if any sank, each family would have survivors.

“I was terrified,” Yvonne Chan, Priscilla’s mother, says of the journey. “We got to Thailand, and Thailand said, ‘No, we don’t want you.’”

Ultimately landing in a Malaysian refugee camp, Yvonne didn’t know how to prepare food, much less how to build a fire. “Mostly, we ate a lot

of raw rice,” she recalls. She lived in a hut with a hole in the roof. It rained a lot.

“I always think about how nothing I do will be as hard as what my grandparents and my parents had to do,” Chan says. “So, they did it. I can do it too.”

When Priscilla was little, one of her anxieties was missing the first day of school. As Cantonese speakers, her parents, who settled the family in Quincy, Massachusetts, weren’t plugged into the parent-school network. So every September, Priscilla diligently checked the school calendar in the local newspaper, making sure her two younger sisters knew the date, too.

Chan’s parents worked multiple jobs, including running a Boston restaurant called Taste of Asia, while the paternal grandparents looked after the kids. “I got home, they went to bed, I only saw them, like, 15 minutes in the morning,” Yvonne recalls of Priscilla’s childhood. “All I did was provide a house, food on the table, and send her to school. The rest she figured out on her own.”

When she was a child, her grandfather was diagnosed with cancer. Priscilla accompanied him to doctors’ appointments to translate—but only to a point. The family decided not to inform him that he had cancer. The fear was that hearing the news might make him sicker.

One morning when she was in sixth grade, her grandfather felt well enough to drop Priscilla at school. By the time she got home, he had died. “I was like, What is going on?” Chan says. “I need to understand. Science is going to explain this to me.” Chan found a cancer biology textbook on Amazon and devoured its contents, teaching herself the basics of oncology.

She went on to become valedictorian of her public high school and the first member of her family to go to college. At Harvard, the other students seemed to know what sweaters to wear, what jeans to buy, what bag to sling over their shoulder. Priscilla, who made her own clothes in high school (up until the day she split the seam of a pair of pants), felt like an outsider.

In her freshman year, Chan went to a frat party with a friend who was worried that a boy she’d developed a crush on might be sketchy. While Priscilla waited in line for the bathroom, a different guy, a curly-haired student from an upscale New York suburb, told her he’d probably be kicked out of school in a matter of days. He was in trouble with the administration for a website he’d developed ranking the looks of his female classmates. Did she want to go out with him before he got the boot?

Zuckerberg and Chan admired each other from the early days of their relationship. For him, it was that she’d decided to become a pediatrician and was always looking out for other people; for her, it was his ability to think big and turn life into an adventure.



Chan (seen here and throughout) at the Biohub in Chicago, one of three such CZI research facilities.

The two were on their way to a winter week-end in Montreal when they stopped at Chan’s family home in the Boston suburbs so she could introduce Zuckerberg. Yvonne Chan liked him but thought: Why is he wearing sandals? Would he like some socks?

Everyone knows what followed. Facebook took off. The two got married, settled in the Bay Area and had kids. The family now also owns a home and working farm and ranch in Hawaii, where they throw CZI retreats with team building and karaoke, and a home in Lake Tahoe.

Does it matter to their relationship that they met before all the wealth?

“Yes,” Chan says. “We grew up together, and we sort of understand how each other works and ticks, and we’ve built a very long life together already.” They have inside jokes that are two decades old. “We understand the bright spots, the funny parts, the not-so-good parts, in a way that we are each other’s historians.”

Not long ago, Chan converted to Judaism, the faith practiced by her husband and three daughters, who are 9, 8 and 2. Every Friday night, she tries to slow down and cook for them instead of turning the job over to staff.

On the day I meet Chan, her mother, who goes by Popo, is visiting from Boston and comes down from her guest room to chat. The family chef knows not to throw out leftovers when she’s around; having gone hungry as a child, she can’t bear to waste food.

Yvonne continues to work, she says, now in the finance department at a university. Her boss knows she travels a lot, often as the granny on call. Although she has a sunny disposition, the past can come roaring back. On a recent trip to Mexico, she spotted a hut in a small fishing village. It reminded her of the one from the refugee camp. She grows emotional talking about it. “It brings me back,” she says. “Those times.”

She also knows not to give her grandkids too many gifts in front of Priscilla, who is more strict about not spoiling them. Priscilla wants the children to study, to do homework and chores, Yvonne says. Nobody gets their free-choice activity until that’s all done.

“She had it so easy with me,” Yvonne says lightly.

CHAN IS GIVING ME A TOUR of CZI’s Institute for Advanced Biological Imaging in Redwood City, California, one of four outposts she and Zuckerberg founded nationwide. CZI divides its mission into three parts: basic science research, tech innovation (including AI) and grant giving. The labs, which CZI calls Biohubs—in San Francisco, Chicago and New York—investigate inflammation, immune systems and other aspects of human biology.

She’s standing near a hyperpowerful microscope with a lens so complex only one

“CZI IS SHOWING HOW PHILANTHROPY CAN ACCELERATE SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.”

Bill Gates



expert in the world creates it. It’s just one part of a football field’s worth of technology where cells are explored at the atomic level.

In another room, a researcher with a headset shows off a program that allows scientists to walk inside a cell image. The viewer stands amid the molecules, like Raquel Welch (minus the white catsuit) miniaturized to explore the inside of a man’s body in the sci-fi classic *Fantastic Voyage*. Later, Chan looks at a 3-D screen representation showing differing pH levels inside a cell, a picture created with advanced imaging tools. “Imaging is like art,” she says. “Biology is beautiful.”

As CZI has ventured deeper into this highly specialized work, some of the decisions facilitating the shift have put Chan in the crosshairs. In February, the organization announced it was no longer offering grants for certain causes, including immigration reform and racial equity. It reassigned its internal diversity, equity and inclusion staff. (A CZI spokesperson says a number of its recent changes around social advocacy had been in the works for years.) And in the spring, the Primary School, a school co-founded by Chan that had offered free tuition to underprivileged communities at two Bay Area campuses, announced it would close at the end of the 2025–2026 academic year.

Chan said the initiative now favors scientific research because that’s where its resources were paying off the most, adding that it’s been a top priority for CZI from the outset. She described the Primary School, which she started in 2016 with Meredith Liu, a friend and educator who died in 2023, as an effort with “broad and ambitious” scope that didn’t take off.

“The outcomes just weren’t where [the board] would have wanted them to be or, frankly, anyone would have wanted them to be,” says Chan. CZI says the organization is offering \$50 million to help Primary School families with the transition and continues to invest in efforts to improve teaching and learning in schools.

Zuckerberg, with Chan beside him, was also among the tech leaders who attended Trump’s

second inauguration—the optics of which, along with Meta’s recent decision to replace third-party fact-checkers with user-driven notes, prompted negative press.

“We’ve both been in the public eye for a while and understand that if you’re trying to do meaningful work, it comes with some scrutiny,” says Zuckerberg. “Some of the scrutiny I think is good faith, and there are really interesting critiques that can improve the work if you take them into account, and then there are people who I think sometimes just try to find data points that fit a narrative that they’re trying to tell, even if they aren’t really an accurate picture of things.”

He praises Chan’s expertise, orientation and values. And he notes her dedication to the unglamorous task of working hard, a quality that is “often the core of actually getting big things done in the world.”

As the work continues, Chan’s fingerprints are on pretty much everything CZI-related—from making major funding decisions to fielding complaints about the choice of music in the bathrooms.

Observing her hands-on management, it’s not much of a leap to imagine her sprinting around foreign cities in quick-dry leggings, battling jet lag as she competes in a televised competition—even as she admits that, because she doesn’t run very fast, she’d need a light backpack. “I’m just going to wash my clothes in the bathtub every night,” she says.

So is she actually going to try to join *The Amazing Race*?

“There’s a part of me that wants to jump off big cliffs and do scary things,” she says, referring to her love of skiing and surfing, though now she usually has time only to watch her kids do sports. She can’t really imagine being away from them for a month to take part in the race.

Beyond that, there’s the work: CZI’s experiments are moving at a clip. Other adventures will have to wait, she says, trying to move on from talking about a reality show. “We have spent way too much time on this!” she says. And then we talk about it some more. ●

“All I did was provide a house, food on the table, and send her to school,” Chan’s mother, Yvonne, says of Priscilla’s childhood. “The rest she figured out on her own.” Hair, Ashley Streicher; makeup, Jenn Streicher; production, Christy Schmid Productions.



Calvin Klein Collection dress.

LETTERING BY ANNA MILLS

Hailey Bieber

BEAUTY
INNOVATOR

Bieber joined a growing class of beauty supermoguls this year when her brand, Rhode, sold to Elf Cosmetics for \$1 billion. She's just getting started.

BY CHAVIE LIEBER PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARILI ANDRE STYLING BY GABRIELLA KAREFA-JOHNSON

ON AN EARLY September morning in New York City, Hailey Bieber's beauty brand, Rhode, was a few hours away from launching at Sephora. A staffer flipped open a camcorder and began filming Midtown cityscapes—food carts and street traffic—for B-roll on Instagram. Next to her, an employee with a digital camera took a shot of the giant photo of Bieber overlooking the Times Square storefront.

Suddenly, Bieber stepped onto Seventh Avenue in a plunging silver top and miniskirt, her hair slicked back in a bun and her moisturized face glowing behind sunglasses. The crowd broke into a cheer as she pulled a curtain off the store. Inside, Bieber huddled for photos with Sephora associates and filmed TikToks. All of this content would soon generate millions of likes, shares and comments. It would also sell tons of products.

When I went back to that same Sephora a few days later, the store was practically wiped clean of Rhode's moisturizers, serums and blushes. I watched a little girl with a British accent nearly break into tears. "There's no more blush from Haaayley Biebaaa!" she wailed to her mother.

In the three years since Bieber debuted her brand, Rhode has become one of beauty's more influential labels. Shoppers buy its milky facial tonics and sticky lip glosses for the chance to smear Bieber's vibes into their skin. It's the same allure that has shoppers dropping \$20 on a Hailey Bieber Erewhon smoothie, or buying any piece of hot-girl clothing she's photographed wearing.

"She looks so good, I just want to look the same," says Marie Shim, a 25-year-old engineer in New York City. Shim dropped everything to run to Times Square for Rhode's Sephora launch. She waited about an hour to use the Rhode photo booth and buy one of the brand's lip tints, which she says women her age are obsessed with.

Rhode entered a crowded market of celebrity cosmetics in 2022 and rose above the tide.

By March of this year, the brand said it had hit \$212 million in annual net sales. In May, Elf Cosmetics announced it was acquiring the brand for \$1 billion, adding Bieber to a growing class of beauty supermoguls.

"Most celebrity brands fail because it's just a celebrity lending their name," says Elf CEO Tarang Amin. "This is a real brand. She's all in."

IF HAILEY BIEBER IS BEING HONEST, she wasn't always sure she'd be embraced as a beauty entrepreneur. "I felt like a lot of people didn't like me. I



still feel that way," Bieber, 28, says.

It's the day after the Sephora launch, and we're having lunch at a Tribeca restaurant near her New York City apartment. She's wearing a vintage leather Gucci jacket and \$890 flip-flops from The Row, her hair pulled back into a pink claw clip. A massive oval diamond glistens on her ring finger, which is dotted with dainty tattoos. We're sipping iced coffees and trading photos of our babies.

Bieber had woken up early that morning to ring the bell at the New York Stock Exchange

with the Elf Cosmetics team. Earlier that day, her husband, Justin, had dropped a new album, *Swag II*.

Mental health, finances, marriage rumors—all of the Biebers' personal matters have been widely scrutinized. Had the Rhode acquisition and album launch detracted from negative attention on the couple? "No," Bieber says dryly. "But we're both really finding our voices of who we are and, I believe, both really walking authentically in what it is we actually want to be doing."

By the time Bieber was drumming up her idea for a skin-care brand in 2020, she'd already built a huge audience as one of fashion and beauty's most sought-after faces. Sitting alongside her friends and fellow Insta-famous models, the Jenners and Hadids, she has inspired millions of beauty tutorials with her glowing "glazed donut" skin. TikTok even came up with a name for her fresh, minimal makeup look: "clean girl."

In building her business, Bieber says she didn't want a licensing deal or collaboration with an existing brand. "I had lent my name enough times to see how it benefited that company," she says, cutting into her chicken paillard. "I knew for a fact that if I'm doing this, I have to be the majority owner."

Bieber approached Michael D. Ratner, a friend and founder of the entertainment studio OBB Media, who'd worked with the Biebers on documentaries, to be a partner in the business. Ratner joined as Rhode's co-founder and executive chairman, and co-founder Lauren Rothberg, now Ratner's wife, worked on branding and marketing. Rhode hired veteran beauty chemist Ron Robinson and the New York dermatologist Dhaval Bhanusali.

Rhode launched in September 2022 with a serum, a moisturizer and a lip treatment, all sheathed in monochromatic gray packaging. Bieber says all of these offerings were her idea.

"I test them on my husband, I test them on my friends," she says. "I'm product-obsessed."

The company stuck to a small number of beauty products, which often sold out. Rhode



Ferragamo dress and her own ring (worn throughout). Opposite: Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello jacket, sweater and shorts.

“I KNEW FOR A FACT
THAT IF I’M DOING THIS,
I HAVE TO BE THE
MAJORITY OWNER.”

Hailey Bieber



Tom Ford top and skirt
and Kalda heels.

also dropped limited-edition items to fuel brand hype. After a lip gloss collaboration with Krispy Kreme, Ratner recalled receiving a note from the doughnut CMO saying “he’d never seen anything like it.”

I ask if Bieber feels competitive, now that her products have to stand up against other Sephora brands. “I think there is space for everybody,” she says. She is most competitive with herself, she adds. “I don’t feel competitive with people that I’m not inspired by.”

Is she nervous that Sephora shoppers might compare Rhode to Rare Beauty, the brand from Selena Gomez that’s also sold at Sephora? Fans have suggested there’s a rivalry between the two; Gomez used to date Justin when they were younger. Before she can respond, a publicist sitting nearby tells her to skip the question.

“It’s always annoying being pitted against other people. I didn’t ask for that,” Bieber says later. “When people want to see you a certain way and they’ve made up a story about you in their minds, it’s not up to you to change that.”

BEFORE SHE WAS A BIEBER, Hailey was a Baldwin. The second-born daughter of actor Stephen Baldwin and graphic designer Kennya Deodato, she was raised in the suburb of Nyack, New York, where she took ballet lessons and was homeschooled for most of her youth.

She spent 12 years training in dance, but it was a career in modeling that found her at age 16. She signed with Ford Models in 2014 and began working with brands like Topshop and Tommy Hilfiger.

Bieber says she paid close attention to the products that makeup artists and facialists used to prep her skin before shoots and shows. “I was able to hone in that skin care is actually quite simple, and less is way more,” she says.

She met Justin when they were kids, and they later dated on and off for a few years. Then suddenly, in 2018, they were publicly back on again, and by the end of the year they’d tied the knot.

Her high-profile associations have led some to label Bieber a “nepo baby,” a phrase she has embraced; in 2023, she was photographed wearing a white T-shirt with the words emblazoned across her chest. When it comes to her business, Bieber contends that her success is hard-earned. She says she invested her own money in Rhode and took money from investors. She declines to say who her investors were or how much of the company she owns.

What’s inarguable is that Bieber has changed the way many young women think about makeup and skin care. “It used to all be about heavier makeup and full-coverage foundation, which she pivoted away from,” says Brianna Renee Price, a 27-year-old content creator in Toronto.

“What sucked me in was getting that dewy look,” says Haley Vintson, 30, a labor and

delivery nurse in Chelsea, Alabama. “Everyone wants to look hydrated.”

The brand did only direct sales for its first three years, but at Rhode pop-ups in select cities, Ratner says his team saw the craze firsthand—women and girls waiting for hours to take photos inside the brand activations. An expansion into blush and lip pencils carrying cute names like Sleepy Girl and Freckle helped Rhode’s revenue climb. In 2023, Rhode’s net sales tripled, the company said. Fans went wild for Rhode’s cream blush, and the sales demonstrated “just how big this company could get,” Ratner says.

The arrival of Rhode’s biggest innovation—a \$38 iPhone case with a slot for lip gloss—prompted much of the internet to lose their minds.

“im literally upgrading my phone so i can get this case lol,” one TikTokker commented when the case launched in February last year. Rhode has sold over 700,000 phone cases, the company said.

“We put something in people’s hands that they didn’t know that they needed or wanted,” Bieber says proudly.

Not all Rhode products were hits. The company had to reformulate its peptide lip treatment after customers complained the texture turned grainy. “It’s something that still haunts me,” Bieber says. Rhode resolved the issue, she says, and she looks back on the experience as a lesson. “Even when you’ve done all the testing and checked all the boxes that you need to, there are still things that can happen unexpectedly with formulas and production.”

Hannah Campbell, an 18-year-old content creator in South Jersey who buys Rhode and has also been given products by the brand, says she didn’t find any Rhode products to be particularly revolutionary but says the vibes pulled her in. “You’ve got to give credit to their marketing, because it’s so aesthetically pleasing. You almost want to eat Rhode.”

Some celebrities launch multiple business ventures to hedge their bets—the requisite alcohol brand, an activewear label. Bieber says she “put every egg into this basket.”

“If I’m going to do it, I’m going to do it the best that I can possibly do it, and focus on one thing,” she says. “I don’t want to build a million brands just to build them.”

AS THE RHODE TEAM spent some seven months working on the Elf acquisition, Bieber was simultaneously shifting into her new role as a mother. Her son, Jack Blues, was born in August 2024.

Bieber admits she probably pushed herself to get back into the swing of things a little too soon. She did a Rhode shoot only three months after giving birth.

Becoming a mother has made her more of a homebody, Bieber says. She recalls scheduling a

dinner with girlfriends and insisting on 6 p.m. so she’d be back for bedtime. “I feel like time has just become so precious,” she says. “Having kids makes you realize that.”

Bieber still models and remains highly sought-after by brands. “It doesn’t matter if the client is in automotive, hospitality, CPG—she’s always on the list,” says Ashlee Margolis, whose company, The A List, brokers brand and celebrity deals. “And she’s on the tippy top.”

She spends her downtime swimming with her son and creating fashion moodboards on Pinterest under a secret name. It’s usually late at night that she has “brain dumps” about Rhode. “I’ll be laying in bed at 1 o’clock in the morning and write something down. You can ask my team; they’ll get a text at 2 o’clock in the morning and I’m like, ‘Ignore this till the morning!’”

Given the world’s attention on the family, Bieber says her son’s privacy is a priority. The couple doesn’t post photos of him and are careful about where they bring him. “Until your child can understand it and it’s possible to have conversation around it, I have no interest in putting him out there in any way,” she says.

I ask her how the money from the Rhode sale will affect her life, and the conversation comes back to Jack.

“I want to preserve that for my son’s future,” she says. “It’s an amount of money that I have not dealt with before, so I just want to be smart with it. I would like to invest it wisely.” Bieber says she’s been working with the same business manager since she was 19.

Bieber feels she’s developed newfound “ferocity” in motherhood. “I like who I am so much more now than I did before I had my son,” she says. “You gain this silent strength and confidence. You can’t tell me the same s— that you could tell me before. You’re not f—ing with me after I pushed a human out of my body.”

While some entrepreneurs prefer to walk away after cashing in on acquisitions, Bieber says she is staying on at Rhode as founder and chief creative and innovation officer. She says the team looked for a buyer that wanted to keep her and the team on board.

“I never wanted to sell my company and wipe my hands clean and walk away from it,” she says. “I’m still the one that’s testing all the products, I’m still the one that’s sitting in the product-development meetings.” She has also joined Elf as a strategic adviser and will be lending ideas to the makeup giant.

I joke that maybe Rhode needs to do a line of baby products, and Bieber admits it’s something she’s thought about. In addition to coating herself with creams every night, she’s now moisturizing her son with French pharmacy lotions.

“My baby every single night goes to bed like a baby glazed doughnut,” she says. “I slather him.” ●

Givenchy by Sarah Burton coat and pants and A. Emery shoes. Hair, James Pecis using Blu & Green; makeup, Emi Kaneko using Rhode; manicure, Dawn Sterling; set design, Patience Harding; production, Casa Projects. For details see Sources, page 172.





Vadogo for Vanhõe Hermès

FASHION
INNOVATOR

The women's ready-to-wear designer is preparing to relaunch haute couture at Hermès—by embracing an ethos that made it the most valuable luxury brand in the world.

BY BEN COHEN PHOTOGRAPHY BY NIGEL SHAFRAN STYLING BY RAE BOXER

INSIDE THE MOST exclusive house of luxury, a fashion designer is comparing her work to one of the most stressful jobs on the planet.

We're sitting in the Hermès offices on the outskirts of Paris in the month before Fashion Week, and Nadège Vanhée, artistic director of the company's women's ready-to-wear métier, is explaining her approach to the glamorous job she's held for more than a decade. I figure she might identify as an artist, or perhaps some word so outrageously French that it comes with an espresso and cigarette. But that's not how Vanhée describes her role. She thinks of herself as an air-traffic controller.

In her serene office looking down on a courtyard garden, as she sips tea from an Hermès cup and saucer, she interrupts herself to acknowledge that putting clothes on the runway is not exactly the same as navigating chaos in the sky.

"It's fashion," Vanhée says. "It's not making sure that planes are safe."

But to do the job well requires focus, calm under pressure, attention to detail amid a crush of distractions and making decisions about what's in front of her while looking over the horizon for what's ahead. In that sense, her office might as well be a control tower.

I mention this comparison to Pierre-Alexis Dumas, artistic director of the whole company and a sixth-generation member of its ruling family. He's in charge of the creative process across a house known for its craftsmanship, exquisite technique and savoir faire, the specialized knowledge that has been preserved for centuries—first applied to saddles and harnesses, now to women's and men's clothing, ties, scarves, belts, shoes, jewelry, furniture, perfume, makeup, watches, headphones, chess sets, stuffed animals and handbags so coveted they have become an economy unto themselves. At Hermès, there are 16 métiers, from leather goods and equestrian to home and beauty, and their leaders all report to Dumas.

His eyes light up when he learns that one of the company's stars relates to clearing

air traffic.

"My father used to say that if you want to pronounce Hermès correctly, think of a traffic jam in the air," he says. "*Air mess.*"

These days, Hermès has soared to a rarefied place in the luxury stratosphere. The business founded in 1837 is a global empire built on leather, silk and cashmere that has become one of the most valuable companies in the world.

Hermès achieved this success by operating unlike the rest of the industry. As conglomerates LVMH and Kering swallow up European brands, Hermès is the rare family-run company that has remained independent. Its signature product is a handbag methodically saddle-stitched by a single person from start to finish.



On the roof of Hermès's Paris flagship, hairstylist Christian Eberhard joins the fashion shoot.

In the age of artificial intelligence, the Dumas family is still betting on artisanship. This strategy of growing through scarcity, not scale, is nothing less than rebellious.

Back in her office, Vanhée reveals that she has been working on something radical herself.

In addition to the ruthless pressure of putting collections on the runway season after season, she is now preparing to relaunch a line of haute couture, which Hermès hasn't produced since the 1960s. The exalted segment of made-to-order fashion is famously difficult to crack. It comes with specific rules, like mandating at least 20 full-time technical employees. And by getting back into extravagantly customized gowns, which might cost as much as a car, Hermès will be competing with houses like

Chanel and Dior in the couture market.

Vanhée says she's up for the challenge. She points out that some ready-to-wear garments in her recent collections have already introduced couture-like embellishments. While her first collection isn't coming anytime soon, she gives me a sneak preview of her thought process. She already knows that her couture will reflect the identity of the house, which means there will be plenty of leather and she intends for it to be worn. "It's not going to be museum pieces," she promises.

By constantly reinventing itself, Hermès has proven remarkably durable. Over the years, the company has survived wars, recessions, pandemics, cars replacing horses and even a battle

with a man known as the wolf in cashmere. When LVMH's billionaire chairman Bernard Arnault disclosed owning a huge stake in Hermès in 2010, which Hermès viewed as a hostile takeover attempt, his company dwarfed its rival. It still did even after their war ended with a truce in 2014. But this year, Hermès's market capitalization surpassed LVMH's for the first time, and it was the most valuable company in luxury—a single brand suddenly worth more than a fortress portfolio of 75 brands.

"It was like an eclipse," Dumas says. "I could not believe it with my eyes."

Just like an actual eclipse, it didn't last very long. But the metric Dumas says he cares about most is not strictly financial. The questions that keep him up at night are the philosophical ones.

"Is what we're producing desirable?" he says. "Is it meaningful?"

Of course, the more desirable a luxury brand is, the more product it sells. But as it sells more products, any luxury brand risks becoming less desirable. To explain how a 188-year-old company has navigated this paradox—how Hermès has remained so defiantly Hermès—Dumas cites another one. "You have to change all the time," he says, "to remain the same."

WHEN NADÈGE VANHÉE got the offer to design for Hermès in 2014, she immediately thought of

The Godfather and knew she could not refuse.

Vanhée, 47, who grew up in northern France, had studied fashion design in Belgium and kept a low profile as she worked for Maison Martin Margiela, for Céline under Phoebe Philo and then at Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen's label, The Row. She wasn't looking for another job and wasn't expecting to be courted by a house of luxury, much less *the* house of luxury: "I never said: One day, Hermès."

Then, one day, Hermès called. *Hermès!* She had always revered the brand, even if she was not the most obvious candidate for the job. Yes, she had an Hermès scarf that she'd inherited from her mother and a bracelet her father had given her when she turned 18. But she hadn't actually bought anything from Hermès before she was hired to work there.

Until that moment, she had felt like an outsider for most of her life. As a child, she was ostracized because of her striking red hair and told she couldn't wear red clothing. (Today she collects red dresses.) But when she met with Axel Dumas, the chief executive of Hermès and Pierre-Alexis's cousin, she realized she would be right at home. "He likes the outsider," she says.

When she started as the creative force behind women's ready-to-wear, she felt it was vital to understand the psychology of Hermès. She dug through equestrian catalogs in the archives. She soaked up the wisdom of highly trained artisans in the company's ateliers. In a leather workshop where they work their magic on her garments, there's a wall of handwritten thank-you notes from Vanhée that accompany the bouquets she sends them after every show. Her investigation into all things Hermès led her to a crucial insight. "Leather is the consciousness of the house," she says, "and silk is the subconsciousness."

One thing that surprised her during this education was the house's very serious commitment to not taking itself too seriously. From skiing penguins on men's silk ties to the meticulously curated vibe of its retail stores, the brand is less pretentious than playful—even whimsical. (A few years ago, for example, the window display at the company's flagship store in Paris featured a tasteful pile of horse poop.) That whimsy suited Vanhée, who carries an E.T. charm on her key chain and flaunts a chihuahua sticker from her 6-year-old daughter on the back of her phone.

The more she learned about Hermès, the more she understood that the house's priorities were the same in every métier, including hers. The nature of fashion might seem antithetical to a brand that stands for timelessness. But her clothing isn't meant to go out of style by next season. It's designed to last forever. A collection must be ready to wear now—and decades from now. It needs to honor the company's heritage

"YOU HAVE TO CHANGE ALL THE TIME TO REMAIN THE SAME."

Pierre-Alexis Dumas



without being nostalgic for its history.

"Nostalgia is connected with this idea that it was better before—a certain kind of sadness, a feeling of inadequacy with today," Vanhée says. "Heritage is about embracing the present."

To embrace the present, she toys with the company's past, taking its equestrian roots and twisting them as she recasts silhouettes, repurposes leather and silk and reimagines jackets, vests and Hermès archetypes for women today.

On the day we meet at the company's design studios in the Parisian suburb of Pantin, where even the trash bins are mottled with horse iconography, Vanhée is dressed in all black. The only Hermès she's wearing happens to be the first Hermès she bought, a pair of boots designed by Pierre Hardy, creative director for jewelry, shoes and beauty objects, who has been with the company since 1990. Along the way, he learned that creative autonomy inside Hermès comes from the sturdy foundation of a house secure in its identity. "We're dancing on a platform that is in stone," he says.

The pirouette into couture will be Vanhée's latest chance to revive the company's past—a concept as quintessentially Hermès as its orange box. That morning, she breezes into her studio, past her moodboards and bookshelf with neatly organized binders of fabric, on her way to a meeting with Priscila Alexandre Spring. As the creative director of leather goods, Alexandre Spring is responsible for tweaking iconic handbags like the Birkin and Kelly while coming up with ideas that one day might join them in the canon.

Before the two women get to work, they compare notes on balancing old and new.

"We are very classic with the novelties," Alexandre Spring says. "We try to be less classic with the classics."

PIERRE-ALEXIS DUMAS works out of an unmarked building on a quiet street in Paris just around the corner from the Hermès flagship

store. On a tour of his impeccably decorated office filled with company artifacts, he shows me a baseball signed by Jony Ive, Apple's former design guru, who worked closely with Hermès on straps for the Apple Watch. Then he opens a cabinet, grabs a hidden box of leather treasures and pulls out a wallet, the first object he made for himself while learning the company's vaunted saddle-stitch as a child. These days, he signs off on every product that Hermès sells, personally inspecting thousands of designs each year to make sure they meet the company's exacting standards. "I have to," he says. "This is the family name."

That family name has never been more valuable. The peculiar economics of scarcity has created a wildly profitable business. There is so much demand for handmade bags like the Birkin and they are in such limited supply that Hermès clients sometimes wait years before they are invited by a sales associate for the privilege of buying one.

Even so, during our conversation, Dumas reaches for an oddly shaped leather object—the Hermès equivalent of a stress ball. "I'll tell you what is stressful, but it's good stress," he says. "It's thinking about Hermès."

Nobody has thought more about Hermès than Dumas, 59, who traces the history of women's clothing at the company back to its founder. When Thierry Hermès opened his first workshop, his harnesses were known for two things. "They were extremely discreet," Dumas says, "and they revealed the natural beauty of the horse." In the early days, Hermès dressed clients with four legs. But those principles apply to Vanhée's clothing, which is meant to be understated, flattering and emboldening.

The famous origin story of women's ready-to-wear at the company involves a female customer declaring that her horse was better-dressed than she was. *Et voilà*—Hermès began dressing humans, too. Dumas tells me another version that stars his great-grandfather, Émile Hermès, whose four children (all daughters)

inspired a women’s line in the 1920s. Either way, the first official women’s ready-to-wear collection wasn’t presented until the 1960s. In the 1970s, Pierre-Alexis’s father took over from his grandfather and set about diversifying the family business. And in the 1990s and 2000s, the fashion division got a makeover when a series of subversive creative directors, like Martin Margiela and Jean Paul Gaultier, rebranded Hermès “from horsey to hip,” as one fashion critic put it.

But as the line evolved, the company went looking for someone who could make horsey hip—that is, an Hermès designer, rather than a designer for Hermès.

At other houses, creative directors transcend their brands. But at Hermès, the house is bigger than any of its inhabitants. “It’s through our work that we elevate ourselves,” Dumas says. “Joining Hermès is deciding to serve something greater than yourself, accepting that, and then very joyfully sharing that success.”

Vanhée’s métier is successful in more ways than one. It opens a door for shoppers to enter the universe of Hermès, which makes it essential strategically. It’s also important financially. The ready-to-wear and accessories division accounted for 22% of the company’s sales when she started and accounts for 29% today, making it one of the fastest-growing parts of the business. But to Dumas, what really matters is that Vanhée’s work resonates creatively. “She absorbed what Hermès is about,” he says. “She picked up the dream of Émile Hermès and brought it much further.”

At this point, she has done the job longer than any of the men who came before her. “It’s really something that I hope I can do for a long time without boring anyone,” Vanhée says. She also has the confidence to do it in her own way. As fashion designers overshare on Instagram to cultivate their personal brands, she looks at social media but never posts. “It’s not my job,” Vanhée says. As it turns out, a tastemaker does not have to be an influencer. She has the luxury of expressing herself through her work for Hermès.

“I profit from the great sympathy of Hermès,” she says. “You say Hermès, and some people will say, Can I get 20% off? And all the others say, Oh, my God—*Hermès*.”

THIS HAS NOT BEEN a particularly luxurious year for the luxury industry, which has been dealing with the uncertainty of tariffs, softening global demand and the constant threat of forgeries and cheap knockoffs—which for Hermès includes the Wirkin, a Birkin dupe from Walmart. Meanwhile, a dizzying game of musical chairs left more than a dozen houses scrambling to hire new creative directors this season.

The classic orange Hermès box, playfully repurposed, near the company’s flagship store in Paris. All featured fashion by Hermès. Models, Anouk Smits at Platform Agency and Nataly Vieira at IMG Models; makeup, Tatsu Yamanaka; hair, Christian Eberhard; manicure, Beatrice Eni; set design, Stuart McCaffer; production, DoBeDo Represents and Mercenary Paris.

The turbulence hasn’t shaken Hermès. This palace of opulence continues to seduce new generations of shoppers while Very Important Clients keep splurging on crocodile Birkins. Last year, Hermès reported a record \$15.8 billion in sales, and the company’s market cap typically floats between \$250 billion and \$300 billion. That means Hermès brings in less annual revenue than Mercedes-Benz, Target, Adidas, Ford, Delta Airlines or Michelin individually, but it’s worth more than all of those companies put together.

As we discuss the company’s resilience, Dumas brings the conversation back to his touchstones.

“What does it mean to be desirable today?” he says. “The true meaning of desire is not instant gratification. The true meaning of desire is to find something that gives meaning to your life.”

Dumas believes the quest for meaning will be the guiding force of the modern age. When consumers buy something, he says, they want to know where it’s made, how it’s made, who made it—the human craft behind the product. “That’s what Nadège does. That’s what all the people who work at Hermès have understood,” he says. “They’re working on helping us be in touch with ourselves.”

All of which explains why he looks offended when I ask if he’s using AI. I might as well have asked if he spent August at the office.

“No,” he says. “*Why?*”

Does he think a machine could saddle-stitch a handbag like the ones made by Hermès artisans?

“Never.”

Why?

“It’s all about the human touch. Yes, you can program a machine. But what the machine doesn’t have is feelings. It doesn’t have consciousness. It’s not aware of what it’s doing. It’s just doing what it’s supposed to do.”

But if a machine could do everything humans can, would he use it?

He doesn’t need an Hermès stress ball to think about this question. For all the changes in his family’s business, the answer has always been the same.

“You’re talking to someone working for a company with over 7,000 craftsmen,” Dumas says.

“No. I would not do it. Over my dead body.” ●





Studio Kibun shirt, Nike pants and his own hat, glasses, necklace, earring (worn throughout) and bracelets.

LETTERING BY ANNA MILLS

Spike Lee

FILM
INNOVATOR

Thirty-six years after *Do the Right Thing*, the unofficial poet laureate of Brooklyn is as provocative as ever.

BY ERICH SCHWARTZEL PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOLADE BANJO SITTINGS EDITOR ERIC MCNEAL

SPIKE LEE processes the world through movie titles, and on a Monday morning in Brooklyn’s Fort Greene neighborhood, there’s one that keeps coursing through his mind.

The Year of Living Dangerously.

Dangerous—because Lee, a commentator on life in America since his first feature in 1986, doesn’t quite know what to say about this moment of political violence and censorship. Or whether he should say it.

Dangerous—because Lee, whose first feature cost \$175,000 strung together through the handouts of friends and family, has released a new movie co-produced by one of the world’s richest tech companies.

Dangerous—because that movie, like the industry that surrounds him, questions the encroachment of artificial intelligence into the creative process.

Dangerous—because Lee can’t walk three steps out the door without being recognized.

“This man!” an admirer yells on the neighborhood block that houses Lee’s company, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks. “Since *School Daze*.”

Lee has been famous for much of his adult life and, since a supporting role in his first movie, *She’s Gotta Have It*, has cultivated a personal aesthetic that, in today’s parlance, would be called a brand. On-screen, he has made movies—he calls them “joints,” another Lee signature—that have proven so provocative and influential that Lee is getting asked to explain them and himself decades after their premieres.

At 68 years old, Lee occupies a peculiar place in Hollywood. He is simultaneously early and late to trends, a proto-influencer before the smartphone made producers of us all, and also among the last of the celebrity directors to come from the film-school brigade of Scorsese, Coppola and Lucas.

On this Monday morning, Lee is dressed in chunky white Ray-Ban glasses, a baseball cap advertising the 1619 Project and a track jacket emblazoned with Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the Olympic medalists who protested racial injustice from the podium of the 1968 Summer Games in Mexico City. The facade of his office highlights the old with the new: Next to a mural of deceased cast members from his 1989 breakout, *Do the Right Thing*, is a poster for his latest release, *Highest 2 Lowest*. Not even his building can blend.

IN 1963, Spike Lee was one member of the “first Black family in Cobble Hill.” His father, a jazz bassist who played with Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan and members of the 1960s folk movement, had to go where the music took him, and it took the Lees to New York. Lee and his

“I JUST WANT MY
STUDENTS TO
UNDERSTAND.
THIS S— IS
SERIOUS.”

Spike Lee



Studio Kibun shirt and his own hat, glasses and watch. Opposite: Prada overshirt, Louis Vuitton Men’s shirt, Gucci pants and his own hat and glasses.

“You know what it’s called?” Lee says. “Gentrification.”

Lee has been the unofficial poet laureate of Brooklyn for nearly four decades, since *Do the Right Thing* introduced the world to a block of Bedford-Stuyvesant on a scorching summer day. Lee played Mookie, a pizza delivery worker who watches his community reach a boiling point with the Italian owners of a pizzeria. The movie was released 36 years ago and has themes, references and jokes that make it feel like it came out last week, including nods to the polar caps melting and Donald Trump, then a mere real estate mogul from across the bridge. The climactic confrontation reaches its peak intensity after a Black man dies in a police officer’s choke hold and Mookie heaves a garbage can through the pizzeria’s window. When the movie premiered, some theaters refused to show it, worried its on-screen riots

would inspire off-screen criminality. Since then Lee has been called on to explain his characters’ actions. “No Black person’s ever asked me why Mookie threw the garbage can through the window,” he notes.

When *Do the Right Thing* failed to receive a nomination for best picture at the Academy Awards, presenter Kim Basinger went off script to criticize the omission. “We’ve got five great films here,” Basinger said, referring to that year’s nominees for the top Oscar. “And they’re great for one reason: They tell the truth. But there is one film missing from this list that deserves to be on it because, ironically, it might tell the biggest truth of all. And that’s *Do the Right Thing*.” The eventual winner of best picture, *Driving Miss Daisy*, about a Jewish Southerner and her Black driver, offered Lee an unwelcome sense of déjà vu in 2019, when *Green Book*, about a Black

talking about the arts,” says Lee. “You know, do machines have a heart? Do they have a soul? They don’t live and breathe.”

In his character’s admonition, Lee is staking his position as new AI-powered tools threaten to undo a system of moviemaking built on flesh-and-blood cast and crew. Lee is quick to distinguish himself from the “fuddy-duddy” types who resist progress—as a kid, he snuck Beatles albums into the house against his dad’s wishes. But the idea of machine-produced paintings or movies conceived by code gives him pause. “Gimme human beings—heart, soul,” he says. “Can you blame me? My father wouldn’t play electric bass!”

Highest 2 Lowest is Lee’s fifth film with Washington, a collaboration that began with *Mo’ Better Blues* and has included *Malcolm X* and *Inside Man*. The actor brought Lee the script, a

reimagined take on a novel that once inspired a 1963 Akira Kurosawa film about a class divide involving a kidnapping, a businessman and a chauffeur. Lee’s take on the subject matter places the story in the contemporary music industry, where Washington is “King David,” a music executive whose son is targeted for kidnapping, but it turns out that the criminals mistakenly take the son of his driver, an ex-con played by Jeffrey Wright. Like many of Lee’s movies, it feels entirely of-the-moment, even down to a public celebration of criminality that calls to mind the embrace of Luigi Mangione, who’s been charged with killing UnitedHealthcare chief executive Brian Thompson.

The companies behind it reflect the moment too, and not in ways Lee necessarily appreciates.

A24, the cooler-than-cool outfit behind *Lady Bird* and *Civil War*, released the movie with a

limited theatrical run. Then its co-producer, Apple, premiered it on the company’s streaming service. Lee says he was caught off guard. “I was not happy,” he says. Friends texted to say they’d have to drive 50 miles to find a theater showing the film, a far cry from the 1980s when he got his start, and the multiplex drove culture.

“It’s never going back,” he says. By mid-September, only a small number of theaters were still showing *Highest 2 Lowest*, including an Alamo Drafthouse in Brooklyn that last year was christened the Spike Lee Cinema.

HIGHEST 2 LOWEST takes place not far from that theater, in the Olympia Dumbo, a sail-shaped condo building where Washington’s character lives in a penthouse worth nearly \$20 million. It is three miles and a world away from the Brooklyn of Lee’s earlier films.

pianist who must be accompanied on a tour with a white driver, beat his own *BlacKkKlansman*.

“Every time someone’s driving someone else,” he said at the time, “I lose.”

Yet few directors have built the repertoire Lee has, with or without a best picture win: *Jungle Fever*, *Malcolm X*, *Summer of Sam*, *25th Hour*, *Da 5 Bloods*. He says his 1997 documentary, *4 Little Girls*, on the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four young Black churchgoers, is his greatest accomplishment, because it encouraged the FBI to continue investigating the decades-old case.

He recently screened *4 Little Girls* for his class at New York University, where he teaches every Thursday. He attended film school there in the early 1980s and started drawing acclaim since his thesis—*Joe’s Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*—made at 25 years old for \$12,000. His first feature, *She’s Gotta Have It*, almost didn’t survive being held hostage by a film-processing laboratory that Lee owed \$2,000.

The movie was financed with help from friends like Earl Smith, who handed over a \$5,000 life-insurance check he’d received when his mother died. The funding allowed Lee to finish the movie and make it to the Cannes Film Festival in 1986, where it premiered. Lee’s look at a woman juggling three boyfriends earned him the festival moniker “the Black Woody Allen.” “We’re both from Brooklyn and we’re both funny,” Lee allowed at first, before the description wore on him.

It was a critical hit—and, with a box-office gross of \$7 million, enormously profitable. Smith’s \$5,000 donation proved a savvy investment: He owns two brownstones in Brooklyn today, Lee notes, with a peal of laughter.

Now that he’s back on campus in the professor role, class typically consists of a screening of an old movie that Lee has on his mind—*A Face in the Crowd*, about a TV barker who assumes dangerous political power, was one recent selection. Then he holds office hours to go over works in progress. He described himself as a tough teacher. “Half-stepping? You know, lollygagging? They get an earful,” he says.

The word “try” is banned—if a student says it, Lee lets out a squeal so loud that the teaching assistant on the other side of the wall can hear it. His inspiration comes from Yoda, whose adage “Do or do not. There is no try” serves as a constant signpost. He recently had a student say “try” five times, earning five loud squeals. “I just want my students to understand,” says Lee. “This s— is serious.”

HE’S SERIOUS, YES, but no one cracks themselves up quite like Spike Lee. A joke about fake watches—“is that a Rolex or a Nolex?”—practically has him on the floor. When he really likes

the joke, he stomps his feet up and down.

A director even off set, he walks into a room and immediately adjusts the lighting before he sits down. Over the course of a three-hour conversation, totems appeared on the table before us as he referenced them: a collection of Jamel Shabazz photography called *A Time Before Crack*, the new biography of James Baldwin, an inscribed early copy of Kamala Harris’s new memoir. When a song popped into his head, the conversation stopped until he could find it on his iPhone, and play it in its entirety.

Lee’s movies might reflect the world, but he has perfected world-building of his own. The office in Fort Greene might be called SpikeWorld, a theme park with attractions that include:

- tributes to its creator’s obsessions (framed New York Knicks jerseys, gargantuan foreign-release posters of *On the Waterfront*)
- a repository of the filmmaker’s own oeuvre (gold records from *He Got Game*, early posters of *Do the Right Thing*)
- a multifloor exhibit of American Black excellence (a painting of Toni Morrison near the entrance, a voided passport of Muhammad Ali’s in the bathroom).

The other SpikeWorld remains the blocks of Bed-Stuy forever associated with Lee: in murals of the cast, or in the street signs that have announced the block as Do the Right Thing Way since 2015.

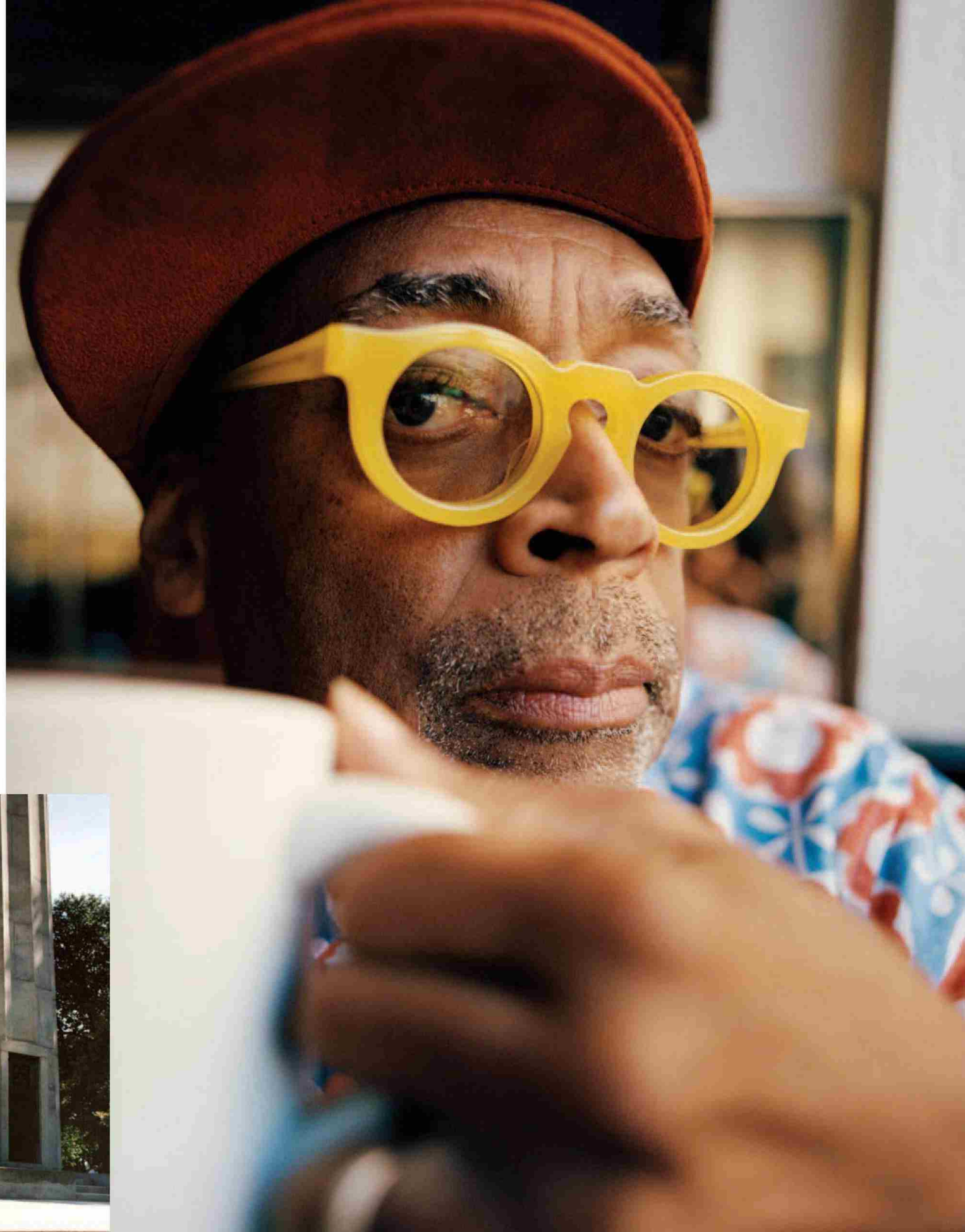
Jernysse Jackson, a grandmother of six walking back to work on Do the Right Thing Way on a Sunday in September, has lived in the area long enough to remember its pre- and post-Spike days. She remembered her friends in middle school interrupting an afternoon to let her know about a massive gathering in the streets—hordes of people yelling “Fight the power!” as they marched through the heart of Bed-Stuy, filming a music video for the Public Enemy anthem that *Do the Right Thing* helped make famous. “I knew it meant strong—us sticking together, helping one another,” she says.

On one corner today, Jeison Arias operates the Good Times Deli, where an oversize mural of Lee (glasses, hat, slightly stupefied expression) draws in customers and tourists. The building’s facade can be seen in *Do the Right Thing* around minute 27. Arias has the frame saved on his phone.

In Fort Greene, Brooklyn, where his office is located, Spike Lee can’t walk three steps out the door without being recognized. Prada overshirt, Gucci pants and his own hat and glasses. Opposite: Studio Kibun shirt and his own hat, glasses and ring. Production, We Are Counsel. For details see Sources, page 172.

Since Arias bought the deli in 2021, he has had to stock a bodega for the dual clientele that Lee clocked nearly four decades ago. When he tried to replace a Bunn coffeepot with a fancier machine, the “old ladies” who come in each morning protested—“I want to see my coffee,” they said. But the younger renters moving in keep the cash register humming with sales of IPAs and White Claws.

Residents are quick to point out that the pizza shop that serves as the tinderbox of the film never existed—the set was built so it could be destroyed in the filming. But on a recent Sunday afternoon, the two blocks of Bed-Stuy that Lee immortalized paid an unlikely tribute, when a young woman opened the door to her brownstone, peered down the street and stepped out in bare feet. She was waiting for her dinner to arrive—four pizzas, delivered not by Mookie, but by an anonymous helmeted driver on a scooter who had sped away before she stepped back inside. ●





BALENCIAGA



Dior Haute
Couture dress
and vintage hat.
Opposite, from
left: Graff High
Jewelry earrings;
Balenciaga
Couture jacket,
belt and skirt.

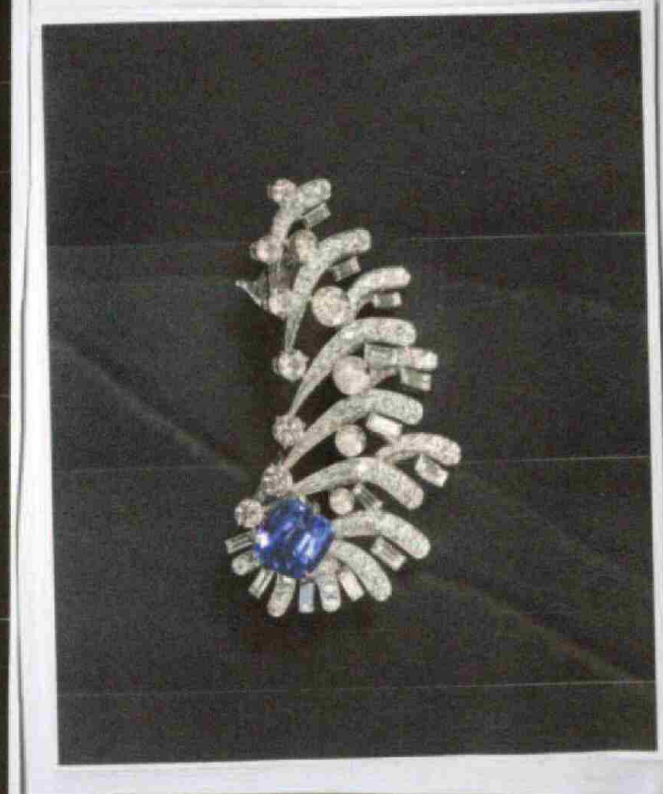
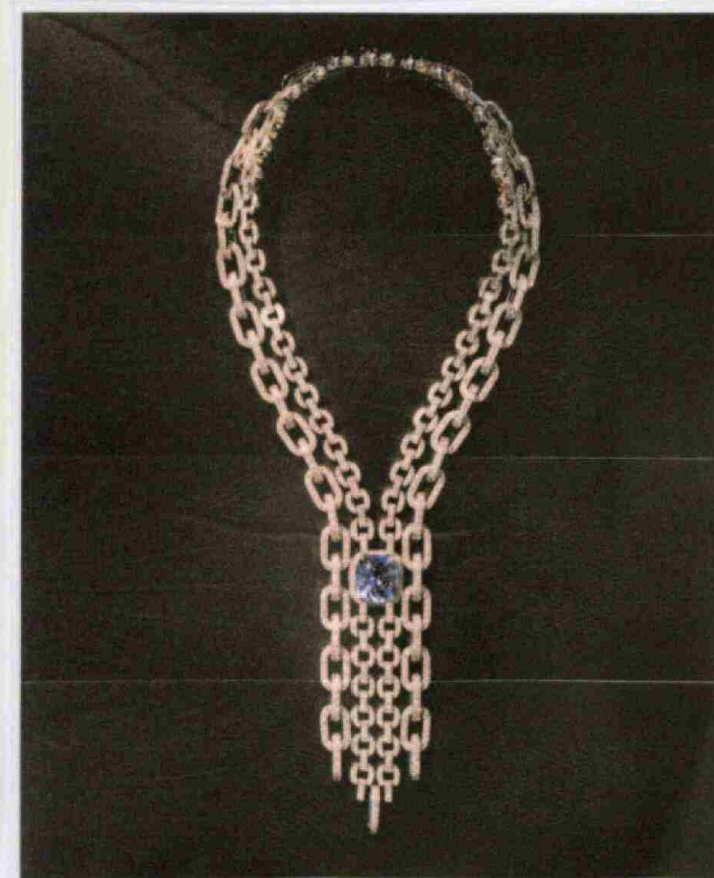
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PABLO DI PRIMA
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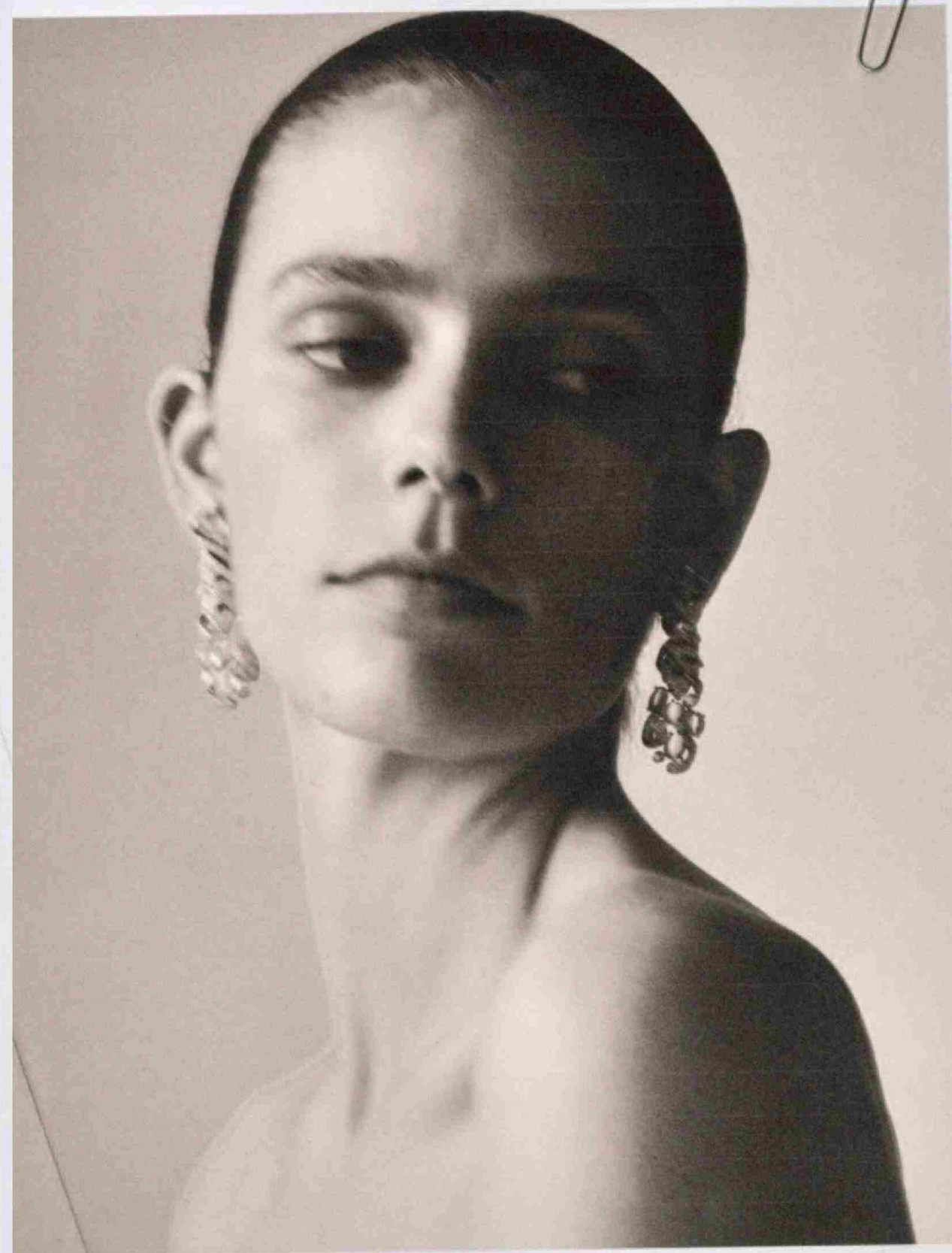
N° 3-16



Maison Margiela
Artisanal coat,
dress, mask and
boots. Opposite,
clockwise from top
left: Gucci High
Jewelry necklace;
Graff High Jewelry
earrings; Fendi High
Jewelry ear cuff;
Pomellato High
Jewelry necklace.



MOMENTS + BETSY



Dior Haute Couture bralette, Tiffany & Co. High Jewelry earrings and model's own stud earrings (worn throughout).

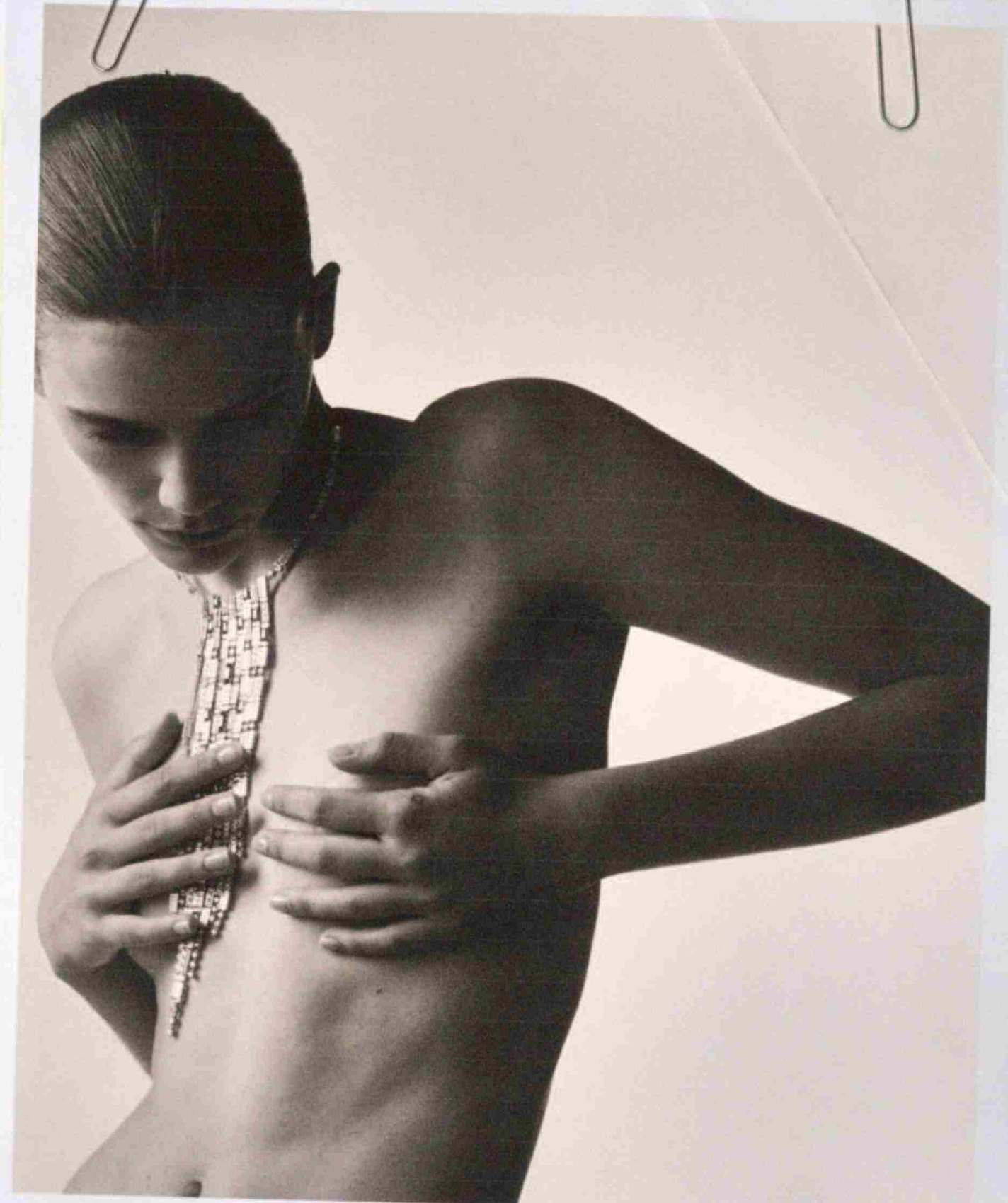


Chanel Haute
Couture embroidered
sweater and vintage
earrings. Opposite:
Elie Saab Haute
Couture jacket
with train and pants,
vintage hat and
stylist's own tights
(worn throughout).

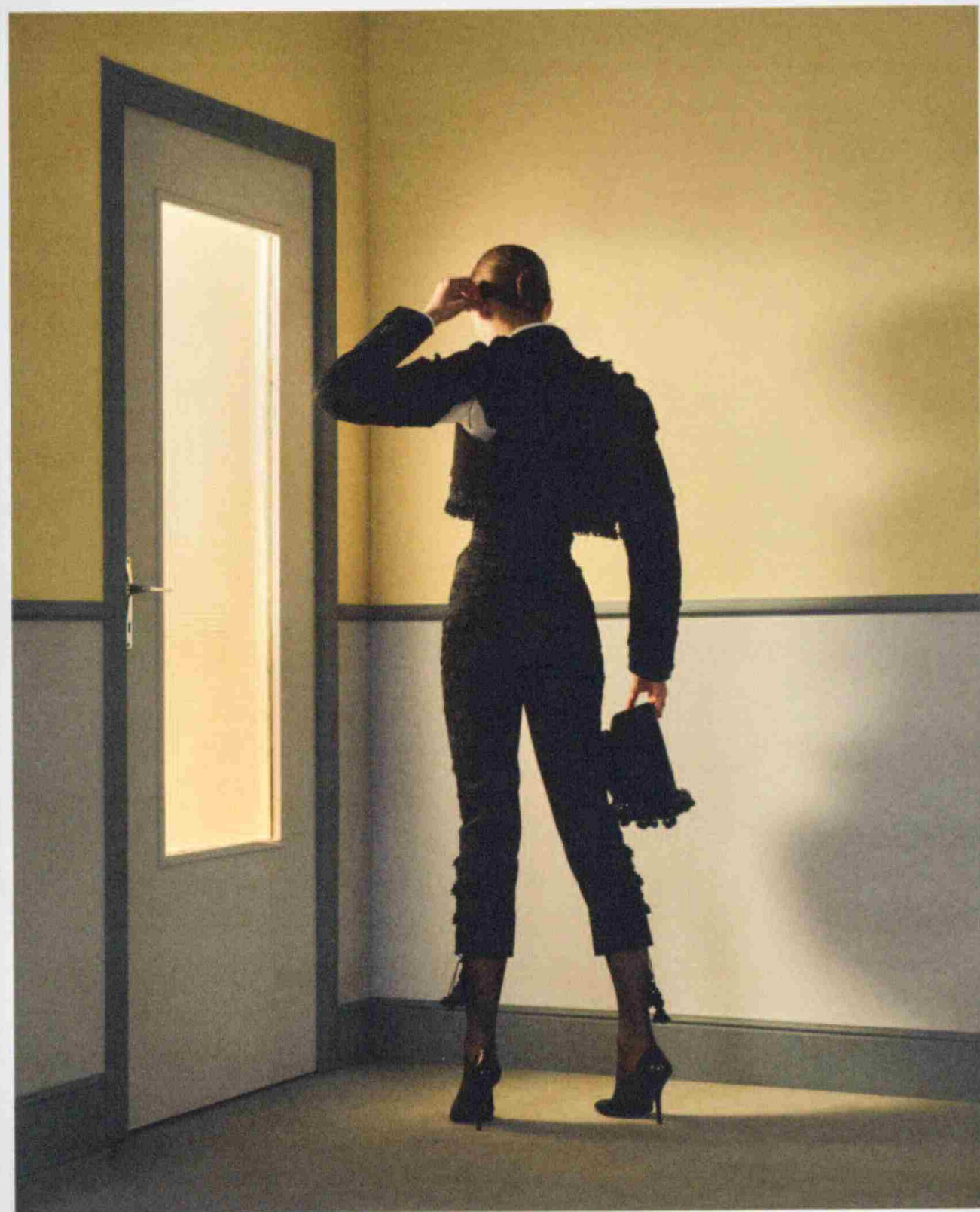
B E T S Y



From top: Cartier
High Jewelry ear-
rings; Louis Vuitton
High Jewelry neck-
lace. Opposite, from
left: Boucheron
High Jewelry brooch;
De Beers High
Jewelry earrings.



Dolce & Gabbana
Alta Moda jacket
and pants. Opposite:
Messika High
Jewelry necklace.



Giorgio Armani Privé jacket, pants and hat and Manolo Blahnik heels. Opposite: Schiaparelli Haute Couture tuxedo, shirt and hat and vintage heels. Model, Betsy Gaghan at Next Management Paris; hair, Pawel Solis; makeup, Lisa Michalik; manicure, Ama Cauvas; set design, Félix Gesnouin; production, Mercenary Paris. For details see Sources, page 172.



Hailey Bieber in a McQueen jacket. For details see page 174.

COVERS

Hailey Bieber

Tom Ford top, \$2,190, and skirt, \$3,990, TomFordFashion.com, Kalda heels, \$470, Kalda.com

Billie Eilish

Vintage shirt courtesy of Western Costume, WesternCostume.com

Spike Lee

Studio Kibun shirt, \$90, StudioKibun.com

Ben Stiller

Burberry coat, \$10,490, US.Burberry.com

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Tom Ford tie, \$1,350, TomFordFashion.com

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Miu Miu top, \$1,990, and skirt, \$2,200, MiuMiu.com

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Studio Kibun shirt, \$90, StudioKibun.com

WHAT'S NEWS

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The Row leggings, \$790, sweater, \$2,700, and shirt, \$1,290, TheRow.com, Loro

Piana belt, \$915, US.LoroPiana.com, Max Mara shoes, \$1,060, MaxMara.com; Adam Lippes coat, \$8,990, AdamLippes.com, Everybody World shirt, \$44, Everybody.World, Live the Process bra, \$50, LiveTheProcess.com, Comme Si socks, \$40, CommeSi.com, Birkenstock shoes, \$175, Birkenstock.com; Heirlome shirt, \$690,

Heirlome.com, Dries Van Noten skirt, \$515, DriesVanNoten.com, Khaite boots, \$2,400, Khaite.com; Maria McManus jacket, \$690, MariaMcManus.com, Tod's skirt, \$445, Tods.com, Tibi heels, \$525, Tibi.com; Soft Goat dress, \$645, SoftGoat.com, Fusalp hat, \$130, Fusalp.com, Morjas shoes, \$380, Morjas.com

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Celine bag, \$3,600, Celine.com

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Sleeper pajama shirt, \$490 for pajama set, The-Sleeper.com; Van Cleef & Arpels watch, price upon request, VanCleeArpels.com; Dolce & Gabbana bag, \$1,445, and scarves, \$225 each, available at select Dolce & Gabbana boutiques; Louis Vuitton Sun Song perfume, \$345 for 100ml, available at select Louis Vuitton boutiques; Pucci sunglasses, \$735, Pucci.com; Rimowa luggage, \$950, Rimowa.com; Max Mara shorts, \$795, and belt, price upon request, MaxMara.com; Guerlain lipstick case, \$43, Guerlain.com; Dom Pérignon x Takashi Murakami rosé 2010, \$475, DomPerignon.com; Buccellati candlesticks, \$2,050 each, Buccellati.com, Trudon candles, \$39 for a box of six, Trudon.com; Gucci dress, \$4,500, Gucci.com; Larkspur & Hawk necklace, \$4,500, LarkspurAndHawk.com; Ancient Greek Sandals slippers, \$370, Ancient-Greek-Sandals.com; Chanel bag, \$2,775, available at select Chanel boutiques; Lavorati a Mano toothbrush, price upon request, NickeyKehoe.com; Dries Van Noten comb, \$185, DriesVanNoten.com; High Sport pants, \$980, High-Sport.com; The Green Vase paper citrus tree, \$2,200, TheGreenVase.com; Loro Piana glasses, starting at \$345, US.LoroPiana.com; Oscar de la Renta top, \$2,190, OscarDeLaRenta.com; Manolo Blahnik heels, \$1,145, ManoloBlahnik.com; Ginori 1735 plate, \$210, Ginori1735.com; Aerin ice bucket with tongs, \$485, Aerin.com; Vacation Orange Gelée sunscreen, \$23, Vacation.inc; Dior Maison carafe, price upon request, similar styles available at Dior boutiques; Hermès scarf, \$620, available at Hermès boutiques; Silvia Furmanovich jewelry box, \$5,325, BrokenEnglishJewelry.com, Irene Neuwirth rings, prices upon request, IreneNeuwirth.com; Mark Davis bangles, prices upon request, MarkDavis.com; Eres Paris swimsuit, \$785, EresParis.com; Ulla Johnson makeup bag, \$60, UllaJohnson.com

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Harry Winston earrings, price upon request, HarryWinston.com

THE NEW BLUES

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Dolce & Gabbana denim jacket, \$6,195, available at select Dolce & Gabbana boutiques, Sportmax fringe belt, \$935, Sportmax.com, Tory Burch heels, \$475, ToryBurch.com

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Hermès sweater, \$1,900, available at Hermès boutiques, Duran Lantink denim apron jeans, \$1,155, Dover Street Market

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Paris, 35-37 rue des Francs Bourgeois, Phoebe Philo heels, \$1,300, PhoebePhilo.com

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Chloé shirt, \$2,990, Chloe.com, David Koma flower embroidered jeans, \$2,630, DavidKoma.com, Jimmy Choo heels, \$875, JimmyChoo.com

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Louis Vuitton dress, \$4,700, LouisVuitton.com, JW Anderson jeans, \$790, JWAnderson.com, Sportmax boots, \$1,300, Sportmax.com, Khaite gloves, \$1,100, Khaite.com

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Givenchy by Sarah Burton dress, \$10,000, and cuffs, \$2,030 each, Givenchy.com, Tory Burch earrings, \$300, ToryBurch.com, Marko Baković heels, \$650, MarkoBakovic.com, vintage denim bra, price and availability upon request, for more information visit Instagram.com/MishiArchiveXo

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Ferragamo sweater, \$1,590, and scarf, \$990, Ferragamo.com, Dolce & Gabbana denim skirt, \$675, available at select Dolce & Gabbana boutiques, Sportmax hat, \$325, Sportmax.com, Tory Burch earrings, \$300, ToryBurch.com, Khaite gloves, \$680, Khaite.com, Phoebe Philo heels, \$1,300, PhoebePhilo.com; Prada coat and stockings, prices upon request, and heels, \$1,200, Prada.com, Simone Rocha

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BILLIE CALLING

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Vintage shirt, courtesy of Palace Costume, PalaceCostume.com, Comme Si boxers, \$95, CommeSi.com, John Hardy ring, price upon request, JohnHardy.com

BILLIE EILISH

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Vintage shirt courtesy of Western Costume, WesternCostume.com

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Chanel shirt, \$3,200, available at select Chanel boutiques

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BEN STILLER

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Burberry coat, \$10,490, US.Burberry.com

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Calvin Klein Collection coat, price and availability upon request, CalvinKlein.us, Sunspel T-shirt, \$98, Sunspel.com, Hermès pants,

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HAILEY BIEBER

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Calvin Klein Collection dress, \$2,200, Ssense.com

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Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello jacket, \$3,200, sweater, \$1,900, and shorts, \$4,300, YSL.com

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Ferragamo dress, price upon request, Ferragamo.com

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Tom Ford top, \$2,190, and skirt, \$3,990, TomFordFashion.com, Kalda heels, \$470, Kalda.com

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Givenchy by Sarah Burton coat, price upon request, and pants, \$1,350, Givenchy.com, A. Emery shoes, \$170, AEmery.com

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McQueen jacket, \$6,300,

AlexanderMcQueen.com

SPIKE LEE

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Studio Kibun shirt, \$90, StudioKibun.com, Nike pants, price upon request, Nike.com

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Prada overshirt, \$1,990, Prada.com, Louis Vuitton Men's shirt, \$930, LouisVuitton.com, Gucci pants, \$1,550, Gucci.com

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Studio Kibun shirt, \$90, StudioKibun.com

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Prada overshirt, \$1,990, Prada.com, Gucci pants, \$1,550, Gucci.com

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Studio Kibun shirt, \$90, StudioKibun.com

CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

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Graff High Jewelry earrings, price upon request, Graff.com; Balenciaga Couture jacket, belt and skirt, prices and availability upon request, Couture.Balenciaga.com

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Dior Haute Couture dress, price upon request, available by special order, 1-800-929-Dior, vintage hat, price and availability upon request, for more information contact Costume@Compagnie-du-Costume.com

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Maison Margiela Artisanal coat, dress, mask and boots, prices and availability upon request, Maison Margiela, 33 Avenue Montaigne, Paris

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Gucci High Jewelry necklace, price upon request, Gucci, 60

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Dior Haute Couture bralette, price and availability upon request, available by special order, 1-800-929-Dior, Tiffany & Co. High Jewelry earrings, price upon request, available at select Tiffany & Co. locations

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Chanel Haute Couture embroidered sweater, price upon request, for more information call 1-800-550-0005, vintage earrings courtesy of Pryn Archives, PrynArchives.com

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Elie Saab Haute Couture jacket with train and pants, prices and availability upon request, ElieSaab.com, vintage hat, price and availability upon request, for more information contact Costume@Compagnie-du-Costume.com

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Boucheron High

Jewelry brooch, price upon request, Boucheron.com; De Beers High Jewelry earrings, price upon request, DeBeers.com

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Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda jacket and pants, prices and availability upon request, DolceGabbana.com

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Messika High Jewelry necklace, price upon request, Messika.com

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Schiaparelli Haute Couture tuxedo, shirt and hat, prices and availability upon request, Maison Schiaparelli, 21 Place Vendôme, Paris, vintage heels courtesy of Pryn Archives, PrynArchives.com

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Giorgio Armani Privé jacket, pants and hat, prices upon request, Giorgio Armani New York, 760 Madison Avenue, Manolo Blahnik heels, \$1,235, ManoloBlahnik.com



Read
and take
notes.

RUTH PORAT

The president and chief investment officer of Alphabet and Google on how tech is like playing with fire, the upside of smart risk and why she believes in the “quark test.”

BY HOLLY PETERSON

ILLUSTRATION BY LORENZO D’ALESSANDRO



Are you a rule breaker?

Am I rule breaking by having been one of the few women in finance and pushing through all the stereotypes? No, that's setting new norms.

Is innovation breaking rules?

Yes, in a sense. The art of the possible does need to be redefined constantly.

What's something an employee does that drives you nuts?

I don't want people who process. I want people who think. Step back and put yourself in my shoes.

What makes a star employee?

A star is someone who is in my face, because I want them to challenge me in different ways.

You've worked in three environments: finance, government and tech. How does Google stand out?

It's very different. "Why not?" is very much the ethos. How do we create an experience to be more profound?

**"YOU INCREASE THE
PROBABILITY THAT YOU WILL
HAVE GOOD LUCK BY
TAKING CALCULATED RISK."**

Do you own a hoodie?

Yeah, a lot of them.

A savvy leader has a good BS detector. Do you?

My father, who was a physicist, said if someone can't define a quark in less than 30 seconds, they don't know what they're talking about. Throughout my career, I have used the quark test. If you think something adds value, and you can't tell me why in a compelling way in less than 30 seconds, you don't know what you're talking about.

How has luck affected you?

I think if bad luck comes out of the blue, good luck must as well. You increase the probability you will have good luck by taking calculated risk, smart risk. It's not just telling people to jump into a lagoon.

Does anything scare you about AI?

With technology this profound, you have to be focused on mitigating downside risk. Sundar Pichai pointed out that with all technologies, there's upside and downside, even going back to the earliest days with fire: It can heat your home, but left unmanaged, it can also burn down your home. You have to be bold and responsible. ●

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.



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