

SOUPBONE
#9:

ZINE
CRAFT



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Something You Can Feel

Tiffany Xie

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I bejeweled this couch myself.
Encrusted it in rhinestones.
If you run your hands along the arms,
you'll feel each plastic stud.
The upholstery—a family heirloom
or a craft store bargain bin.
I'm a hobbyist
I'm an illegitimate child
I'm a diamond painting
I'm a museum acquisition
I sparkle, I sparkle, I sparkle
in every light
I decide what I can afford.

After Hung Tung

Tiffany Xie

Drawing makes me forget
the first fifty years, more hardship
than happiness. I'm not mad,
nor possessed, nor useless.

I picked up a rock and
scribbled out my old life.
I'm a fairy tale or folk hero or
whatever you wish to make of me.

My wife, I asked her permission
to paint. I asked again and again.
My wife, I must paint. I must.
I need to make my life.

From my hands, faces bloomed
on fields of red. Blue babies and
fantastic hairstyles. Small people
dancing in stripes, in polka dots.

I strung my paintings outside
the temple, flags in the wind.
I let the magazine interview me.
I'm becoming holy.

I won't sell I won't
sell I won't sell I
won't.

Summer Woodland Fairy Arch (2024)

Cindy Liu

*Digital painting drawn by hand using ProCreate for iPad.
Shoutout to James Julier for the tutorial!*

When I think of the word “craft,” it feels synonymous with freedom and discovery. I wanted to evoke the sense of peeling back one world—so familiar one might sleepwalk straight through it—to enter another that delights, enchants, and asks for curiosity and openness. A place that is simultaneously of our world, yet not quite. The magical realism of García Márquez, the sun-drenched hilltops of *Attack on Titan*, auroras skating across the night sky—these are images that flitted across my mind, and which I sought to emulate, while creating this painting. They kindle an inner peace and contentment that is impossible to put into words, but one I find myself always striving to find.

To paint this piece, I followed an excellent tutorial by James Julier. The painting primarily relies on the Rainforest brush, an easy way to hack a quasi-Seurat dapple effect. You can see examples of

this on the forest floor and tree leaves enveloping the archway. I also tried to engender a feeling of arrival by experimenting with light and texture through Airbrushing brushes. As one’s eyes travel up to the archway, the textures take on greater clarity, and the light becomes more direct. I played around with opacity and smudging to create this optical illusion.

One of my favorite aspects to explore while working on this piece was the infinite possibilities of color. The lower half of the painting, for example, includes 12 different colors across the pathway, stones, and greenery snaking its way up the tree branches. Once mixed and layered, the colors assume a mirage effect, similar to that of stained glass, or a photo of water taken on an old film camera. They harmonize and blend, twist and turn, push and pull, until they become strange yet familiar versions of themselves. I realized that color itself is a form of craftsmanship, a way to elasticize the boundaries of my imagination.

To me, the ultimate realization of craft is the capacity to create a better, more hopeful world. I hope this piece, in some small way, allows us to dream towards one.



New Vintage

Margaret Schnabel

...it's hard to sleep knowing so little
about everything, so I enroll in a night class

where I learn the universe is an arrow
without end and it asks only one question:

How dare you?

—PAIGE LEWIS, "BECAUSE THE COLOR IS HALF THE TASTE,"

SPACE STRUCK

This story begins with a sacrifice. In June of this year, I forwent Boston's pride celebrations and bid goodbye to my circle of deliciously queer, deliciously mutually-involved friends to visit my family, whom I am fairly certain invented heterosexuality and will cup it in their hands like a rare glittering emerald until they die. (Not their fault, obviously; love is love.)

My parents live in Ireland. Besides general childly goodwill, I had been seduced by promises of a weekend wine tour in Spain ("we'll hop over!" my mom kept saying, brightly), a thing that probably nobody should be allowed to do ever, so ridiculously indulgent it felt—but like other ridiculously indulgent things

that scant people are afforded in life, the moment continues despite your well-meaning but ultimately selfish and useless guilt about it. And so boom: there we were, looping through the mountains of Spain's Priorat region in the car of an excessively nervous Irish man (no relation) who spent the hourlong drives between vineyards expounding upon his climate conspiracies. The central character of said conspiracies were commercial airlines in cahoots with the Spanish government, whom he insisted were dumping dirt or toxic chemicals or some combination thereof into the air, thereby purposefully dimming the sun with no clear profit nor ethical motive. This he knew because his brother worked for Boeing. "It's not climate *change*," he kept saying. "It's climate *control*."

No one, I repeat, should be afforded this experience, least of all someone who barely drinks because an oblique shroud of doom drapes itself around their shoulders whenever they experience a tinge of bodily dissociation. I sipped and sometimes discreetly spat out tiny mouthfuls of very expensive wine, and watched the heat boil the air that cloaked the vertiginous dusty-green hills, and imagined that I was dying.

*

The second morning of the wine tour began at Scala Dei, a Carthusian-monastery-cum-winery established in 1194. Let history remember that there have been cool monks. The building had that combination of ancient stone and meticulous lighting that begets the

feeling that one is in a museum. Sitting with us at the high-top “tasting counter” were a sickly thin Slovakian woman and her potbellied husband; a coiffed American couple eager to appear gregarious yet polite, who, though apparently born and raised in the Midwest, had thick Southern accents; and a gaggle of ruddy-cheeked Scandinavians in sensible shorts. We had our attention turned to Scala Dei’s butchy, ebullient tour guide, whom I kind of had a crush on. She uncorked a bottle. “This is our last vintage from before the drought,” she announced, and poured elegant swirls into our glasses.

So dystopian was that sentence that I got halfway through my first micro-sip before fully processing it. “Last vintage before the drought” is the stuff of apocalypse fiction, the sort of thing a gross billionaire might say to his luxury-bunker visitor before forcing him into a blood pact with the literal devil to marry off his cryogenically-preserved daughter.¹ But there it was, in my glass: a living memento of the world before we fucked it up beyond repair. *Glug.*

Scala dei, by the way, is Latin for “God’s ladder.” I imagined it stretching between the vineyard parking lot and heaven, each rung glowing with righteousness. How many visions of the afterlife are founded on escape from the mess we’re leaving behind—a kind of forgiveness-via-departure?

¹ Provisional title: *The Emperor’s New Cryptocurrency.*

If you were wondering: that vintage was 2018.

*

In moderation, drought can be a good thing for wine. Vines struggling to find water will produce sweeter fruit, in order to attract animals who might eat it and deposit its seeds elsewhere.

That metaphor’s a little too easy, of course. Why should suffering make life more meaningful? Why should death?

*

As a child, I held a firm and unworried conviction that I was going to die young. Adults would mention college or marriage, and I’d think to myself: oh, I don’t have to worry about that. I won’t make it that far. Death felt around every corner; no day, month, year could be taken for granted.

Perhaps because of that morbid certainty, I became preemptively nostalgic. I’d set up Polly Pockets in immobile vignettes, not allowing my siblings to disrupt them; I’d squirrel away wrappers from the nightly singular pieces of chocolate we were each allowed and collect them in a bag, where I could smell them privately and remember pleasure.²

² Or take pleasure in remembering, take pleasure in having something to remember.

Each passing year brought with it an acute awareness that I was, in fact, getting older. In middle school, I started journaling. One entry from that time period is exclusively dedicated to my future self, begging them³ to remember exactly what it felt like to be crouched breathlessly beside my bed, scribbling madly.⁴ I drew a diagram, the exact placement of my pillows. I scrawled the question again and again: Do you remember? I feared the judgment of my older self, as I had judged younger versions of myself: how naïve I had been before I learned XYZ! How embarrassing. But no, my middle school self insisted, I was still one continuous person—no better or worse or more noble in my preoccupations.

How much ties us to previous versions of ourselves? What metonymy fits the bill? “Mind” (defined how?) as “me” (defined how?)? Or is my younger self extricable from that environment—was I in some important way continuous with the warm lake I swam in, the balcony I leaned out over, the ugly off-white chaise longue from which I first texted a boy?⁵

We tell some stories about growing up. One of them

³ (*her*, I imagined at the time)

⁴ I insisted on doing anything that could be considered emotional in absolute secret at that age—no letting them know you have an interior life!

⁵ After weeks of heated banter, he informed me that I was in his “top three” choices of girls in our grade to date. Neither of them would have given him a second glance.

is that “coming of age” sets us on an invisible, inevitable path hurtling towards a life partner. Desire as a kind of cannily predictive magnetism. Desire pulling us neatly into ourselves like a psychic corset, then sewing us into the family quilt. Repeat generation after generation ad infinitum. What you want is what you are, or so goes the story.

But the summer after my freshman year of college, my desires abandoned me, splayed me out on the dinner table in front of my parents. If you have the stomach to imagine it, here’s an approximation:

ROSE [*Margaret’s sister; buoyant; maintaining a blind faith in their parents’ acceptance*]: I have an announcement.

General confusion and ribbing from parents. If they understand what’s about to happen, they don’t let on.

MARGARET [*psychically*]: no no no no no shh-hh abort mission abort mission

ROSE: I—

MARGARET [*psychically*]: PLEASE. GOD OH PLEASE NO DON’T

ROSE: I am *pansexual*.

Silence.

MOTHER [*tight smile*]: What do you mean?

ROSE [*smile fading*]: I'm pansexual. That means I'm into people of all genders.

Wrinkled noses at phrase "all genders."

PARENTS ask ROSE to elaborate. ROSE does, is met with thick discomfort.

MARGARET [*internally*]: Bury me under a mountain of expired soup cans. Liquify my organs and ship them to a Yankee Candle factory in the dead of night.

FATHER: Well I mean, this affects, uh, your future. Whether you'll have kids, you know. But you'll have to be aware, you know, that some men find that attractive.

MARGARET [*internally*]: Staple my body to a dying palm tree.

MOTHER [*turning to MARGARET*]: and what about you?

The world explodes.

*

And then the world picks itself up and keeps spinning.

Around my parents, I have preserved myself in a thick glob of ice, which makes me suitably blurry to them. Everyone's happy. It's pretty cold in here.

Over the past few months, I've started chipping away at it with a pair of chopsticks I found in the backseat. I should be fully out in 150 years or so.

My mom sees my queerness—when she can't ignore it—as an incomprehensible religion that I have invented and whose strictures I blindly abide by. There's hope yet that the right man will shake me back into my senses. To her, queerness is a contrivance; a strange and pointless craft explicitly aimed at giving her, and by extension Well-Meaning Reasonable America, a headache.

Midway through my visit, my sister—always more optimistic re: my parents' progressiveness than I—proposed a family screening of *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*. It was my fourth or fifth time watching the movie, and for the first time I felt strongly compelled by the Orpheus-Eurydice thread. The two lovers and protagonists, Marianne and Heloise, debate Orpheus' decision to turn around, damning his wife Eurydice to the underworld just as she is on the brink of escaping with him. Marianne declares that the "lover's choice" would have been to refrain from looking back, bringing Eurydice into the world of the living. Instead, she posits, Orpheus made the "poet's choice": privileging the memory of her over her reality.

My mom didn't like it—but she didn't like it for the same reasons that I didn't quite love it when I first watched it. She wasn't convinced of Marianne and Heloise's chemistry; there weren't, she argued, enough scenes of them building rapport, actually getting to know one another; sometimes Sciamma's sparseness felt like oversight. I didn't tell my mother that the moment I became convinced of the leads' chemistry was when I first watched the movie with a girl, our limbs entwined in a freezing British cinema. I did tell her that I thought Sciamma made the poet's choice, rather than the lover's: she would rather the perfection of the subterranean—emotional and character depths unplumbed—than the risks and potential disappointments of dredging them up.

Opacity can protect the physical and emotional safety of queer people, yes. But illegibility is not, here, a contrivance, I don't think; queerness feels impoverished when ordered in language, made to be slotted into folks' existing conceptions of the world. Nature, too, shares this untranslatability. And what an absurd, beautiful irony; that proverbial Place From Whence We Came, the very stuff we're made of, rendered alien through our language or lack thereof. Queerness, likewise, sheds light on an oft-obscured truth: of course we exist before, beyond, between language. How could we ever have deluded ourselves into thinking otherwise?

*

And yet language is the core of our spiritual and emotional safety. Metaphor assures us that nothing is truly incomparable, truly unprecedented.⁶ As we stumbled into the humid shade of the processing building, another, better metaphor hit me in the face. Red wines, the guide explained, derive much of their flavor from the grapes' skins, stems, and seeds. Their “first ferment,” therefore, takes place in a large vat with all of the above. As the active yeast produces carbon dioxide, the skins et al rise and create a “cap”: a thick, hard-to-penetrate layer at the top of the vat. Leaving the cap undisturbed means missing out on the potential flavor of skin contact,⁷ so winemakers use a variety of different methods to break the cap up. They might punch the cap down manually or with a hydraulic arm; or they might draw liquid (“must”) from the bottom of the vat and pump it over the cap, slowly filtering the liquid back through the skins. This last method offered my favorite metaphor: a kind of cyclical concentration, infinite restarts that might seem pointless but for the slow increase of richness. Growing up to me has frequently felt recursive in that way: I'm channeled through the same conditions or situations, growing more myself each time I pass through.

Cyclicity is theoretically trendy right now—and is

⁶ It's funny to me how critics typically cast metaphors as essentially creative, representative of individual genius or perspective, when to me the point of a metaphor is to draw on a shared intuition: *You've seen this before. You always knew this.*

⁷ AKA my love language

often suggested to be more in tune with the natural rhythms of the Earth. But as human practices endanger those very rhythms, we're confronted with an undeniable linearity: a steep drop-off into extinction. The uncomfortable reality is, as I currently understand it, that we are bringing the Earth to a point of no return: a cycle from which it cannot recover, at least not while the human race continues to kick around on it.

I think of Spain's rocky soil growing more and more inhospitable, producing brighter, sweeter fruit—until it's too much, the conditions have pushed the vines too far, what has grown for decades crumples in an instant from champion to corpse. I imagine a squeezing, squeezing, squeezing of the Earth. Just a little more liquid. Just a little more.

What to do when the increasing difficulty of your craft is a symptom of the earth's sickness? Do you stop? But who would stopping help? But how can you continue?

*

Not everything gets a second chance. Before the wine tour, we spent a day in Valencia. We stopped at the Centro de Arte Hortensia Herrero, which I considered a silent gift from my family members, none of whom much like modern art. We picked our way through the comforting forest of chrome blobs and ugly hair-covered things and ended up in front of a giant screen. Before us stood a simulation of what looked like an ancient Japanese town: villagers conversed in squares,

entered and exited the temples, and carried baskets across bridges.⁸

The docent explained that the simulation followed the rhythms and weather of its surrounding environment: the simulation-sun rose and set in tandem with the real sun, and if it rained in Valencia, it would rain in the simulation. When visitors touched a villager on screen, it would wiggle and frown, clearly upset. Afterwards, the villager would pick fights with a handful of surrounding people, increasing the restlessness and volatility of the town. There was no way to tell how angry each villager was, the docent explained, or how high ambient tensions had risen; once they reached a breaking point, however, the entire village would erupt in fighting and flames, eventually burning it down and killing the entire population. The simulation could not be restarted; once the village burned down, it could not be rebuilt.

After the docent's speech, we stared at the screen dumbly, each fighting an internal battle between our curious wiring and socialized guilt. They were only pixels, ultimately. But they were *humanoid* pixels. But the simulation would certainly reach a breaking point

⁸ For those who are interested, the work is called "The World of Irreversible Change" by TeamLab, a multimedia art collective founded by Japanese artist Toshiyuki Inoko. More detail can be found on the TeamLab website:

<https://www.teamlab.art/w/world_of_irreversiblechange/>

eventually, so by not participating, were we just delaying the inevitable? How much would our paltry interactions actually change? On the other hand, our only option to engage with the artwork—to register any kind of presence—was to harm it, shorten its lifespan.

My moral code is roughly *do absolutely no harm unless you're in a hurry or in a particularly indulgent mood* (see: the biannual egg sandwich I allow myself despite my veganism), and I was neither in a hurry nor in a particularly indulgent mood, so I was dead-set on not interacting with the piece.⁹ So, apparently, were my family members. We stood stiffly, as if not trusting our bodies' urges should we relax them.

Then a girl wandered in, not having heard the docent's talk, and began touching the screen. Villagers squirmed and cried. I wanted to grab her shoulders and scream. *WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS IRREVERSIBLE! YOU DON'T KNOW IT BUT YOU ARE CONTRIBUTING TO A VAST NETWORK OF HARM FROM WHICH THIS WORLD WILL NEVER RECOVER!*

But why don't I grab myself by my own shoulders and scream when I buy my gay little iced coffee and accept the plastic cup? Where, exactly, do I think it's going?

⁹ It's an upgrade from my previous moral code, which was something approximating apologize for existing, though perhaps still a little too black-and-white.

Why did art activate a sense of justice that daily life couldn't? In this case, maybe, the answer is anthropomorphism. In "Ideas of Nature," Raymond Williams surveys changing conceptions of nature throughout history, critiquing the modern abstraction of Nature as a unified entity in opposition to Man rather than a series of repeated, variable, historical engagements and interrelated systems.¹⁰ Besides a glancing reference to nature as "divine mother," however, Williams doesn't dig into the persistent figure of "Mother Nature": a decidedly gendered abstraction that positions the human race as a single family.

One expects the gendered personification of nature to encourage a relationship of mutual care, even obedience: your mother made you; she loves you; you must love her back (and, perhaps less happily, share her with your siblings). This personification also does something interesting to time: Mother Nature becomes a continuous, transgenerational entity, an unchanging being watching over the trials and downfalls of human civilizations.

And yet, in effect, Mother produced offspring that would destroy her.

*

¹⁰ Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature," *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 67-85)

My own mother quilts, scrapbooks, cross-stitches, crochets, and sews. Her penmanship is impeccable; her sheets are always fresh, pressed, and tucked in; she's in bed by ten-thirty, where she reads the latest novel recommended by the *New York Times* and then falls asleep, easily, her mouth falling open. She likes Monet's water lilies, British dramas, anything sweet. When my parents moved to Ireland, she immediately set about imposing the order of an Indiana suburb onto the Irish wilderness: trimming the hedges, paving the driveway, putting down mulch and planting flowers in it.

Her crafts are perfect, usable, slipping easily into their environments. When I made her a collage for Christmas, she looked at it, puzzled. "I don't...*understand* it," she said politely, "but...thank you!" Seen in one light, the art-craft divide—however real or fake you find it—is the crux of our difficulties. She interprets my profundity to be mocking what she sees as her own intellectual inferiority—and I want, so desperately, for her to understand me.

Craft is what you can live with, what you do live with: the quilt you smooth over your bed each morning, the handmade pencil case you reach for in class. Art is what you can't; it's supposed to bowl you over, act fickle under your gaze. We ascribe an atemporality to art and a dailiness to craft, and I feel the latter viscerally. My mother knows I'll use her quilts for years to come, imagines them moving with me, eventually draped around a loved one (read: husband). So too do crafts

gesture towards long traditions of making, bring the past into the present. Presence, I keep trying to remind myself, is not the lack of profundity. Annie Dillard: "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives."

*

What I'm doing with my one wild and precious life is, apparently, attempting to come out to my mother through the postal service. I drop artful hints in my letters, overstating my vacillation: *I've really been struggling recently with the question of whether I'm attracted to men*. I'm drawing up a heartwarming pilot episode of *Your Kid's Queer and Nonbinary* while I live on Season 4 Episode 57.

Sometimes I feel like a huge coward. Dive in, right? The lake's not getting any warmer.¹¹ But my identity feels too fragile to be subjected to the funhouse mirrors of my mother's misunderstanding. Even if she made a good-faith effort, she'd still warp me into a shape that made sense to her. I don't want to see something that feels to me precious and true reflected back as a garish contrivance.

Babak Ganjei: "art is the thing nobody asked you to do." Being queer is the thing no one asked you to do, either.

¹¹ Counter to the vast climate panic of the rest of this essay, apparently. Metaphors! The last ecologically stable space!

Queerness wasn't in the job description of a Good Life that my parents envisioned for me. "I wouldn't give up all hope with men," my mom responded to my letter. Giving up all hope with men would mean giving up a particular brand of futurity: the wedding that will prove my success to my conservative aunts and uncles and soothe my grandparents; the house in the suburbs (maybe); the biological children (sort of).

In *No Future*, Lee Edelman argues that contemporary politics is grounded in reproductive futurity, invoking the figure of "the Child" to justify conserving the status quo. "That Child," Edelman writes, "remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention."¹² *Think of the children!* Queerness, of course, "is understood as bringing children and childhood to an end," and thus "comes to figure the bar to every realization of futurity, the resistance, internal to the social, to every social structure or form."¹³

As an actual child I held wisdom that I was encouraged to forget. I knew I wanted to kiss Natalie Wilkinson in the preschool bathroom, knew I didn't want to wear dresses or pink. I told my parents, at 7 or 8 years old, that I didn't want kids.

My mother, clearly disturbed, came to me quietly one day and said, "is it because of all the blood? Because you know, you don't have to look at the blood. The nurses can put a barrier up." I looked at her and thought, *it's because I'd have to marry a man*. And I swallowed and smiled and said yes. *The blood*.

*

The poet's choice depends on partiality. The fragment made perfect by what future viewers imagine surrounded it. The lover's choice is presence, is craft, the gift of a momentous dailiness. But the poet's choice thinks beyond and around salvation. To be queer is to live in a world not designed around your futurity—which is, perhaps, more like the natural world. Even though I'm not The Child, I am still a child, am still middle-school me waiting for my mother (and my Mother) to look at me, to see what she's made.

¹² Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 3

¹³ Edelman, 19, 4

A Photograph in Four Parts: Color, Light, Texture, Line

Thalia Taylor

“To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. . . . Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire.”

—Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (174)

The making of a photograph can be instantaneous: the click of a button, the snap of a shutter. It takes very little but a beautiful reality to make a beautiful photograph. It takes a lot more to consistently make well-crafted photographs. I think that a photograph is more than a thing photographed. I think it is a craft, in two parts.

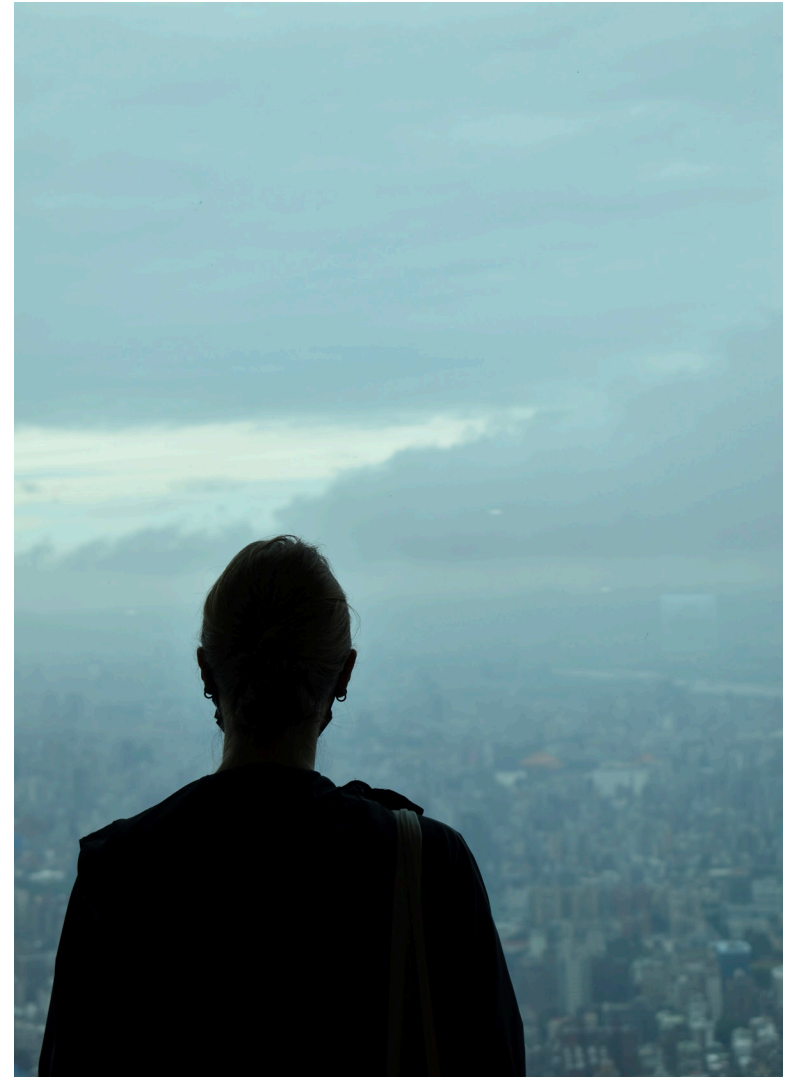
There is the taking of the photograph, and there is the printing (or the editing, if you work more with digital). For me, taking the photograph is about choosing what piece of reality you think is art, and translating it into frame. It is a split-second decision. It is often a selection of one

of four things: color, light, texture, or line. The frame as captured may not be perfect. Editing and printing serve to articulate the photographer’s focus. I have chosen and edited these photos to bring out color, light, texture, or line. I think you can see one of these four elements particularly clearly in each of these photos. I’ve also added captions explaining what I was thinking when taking the photograph— not very poetic. Some were taken very intentionally, others were happy accidents.

Of course, none of these photos are about these elements or what I was thinking when I took them. They’re about the beauty in my friends, and in these wonderful places. They’re about happiness and mystery, culture and surprise.



The mist over the mountains, the lines of tea bushes
Ali-shan Tea Fields
Ali-shan, Taiwan (December 2022)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



Stillness. Blueness.
Lauren
Taipei 101, Taipei, Taiwan (January 2023)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



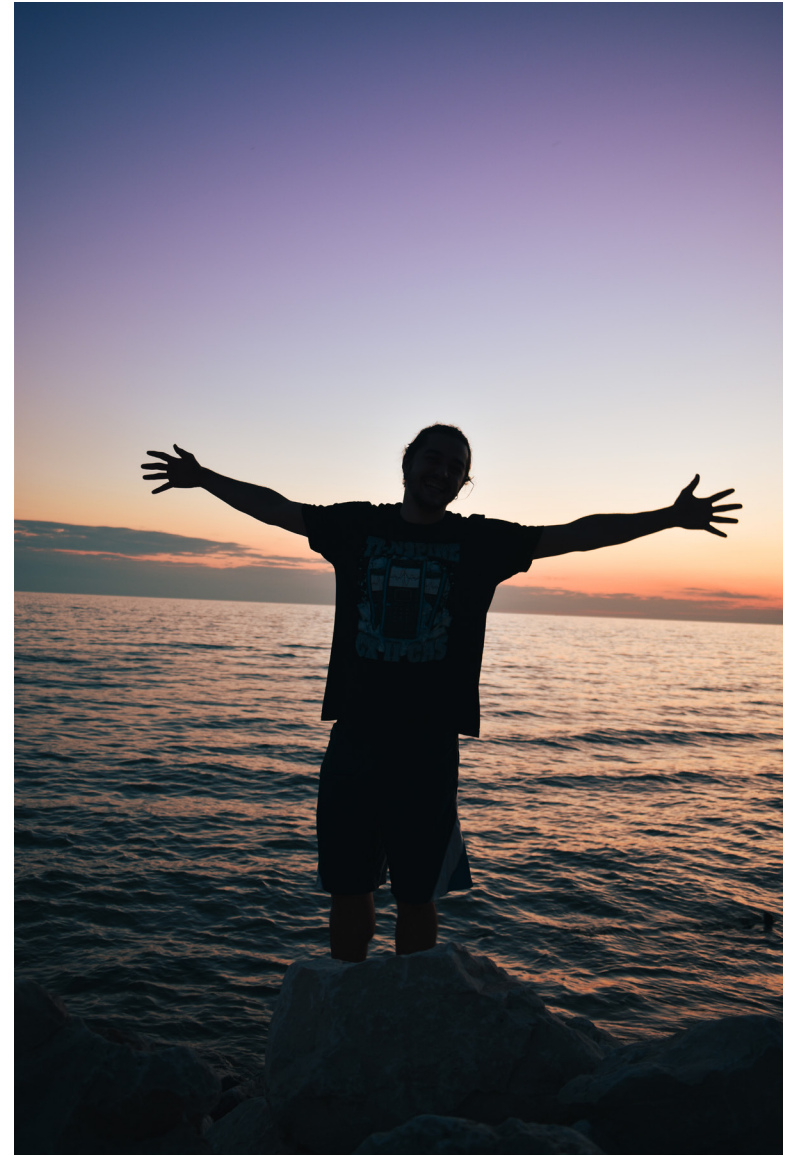
RED
Red Dancer
Bernal, Queretaro, Mexico (December 2023)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



Desaturating pink. Ooh, a bee!
Bee
Bean Blossom, IN (July 2024)
Sony Alpha 6400 18-135mm 3.5-5.6



Hurry, hurry, get the sunset colors against the white.
Hollywood
Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, CA (August 2023)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



"Hey Emilio, look at me!"
Emilio, Sunset
Epworth, Ludington, MI (August 2023)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G

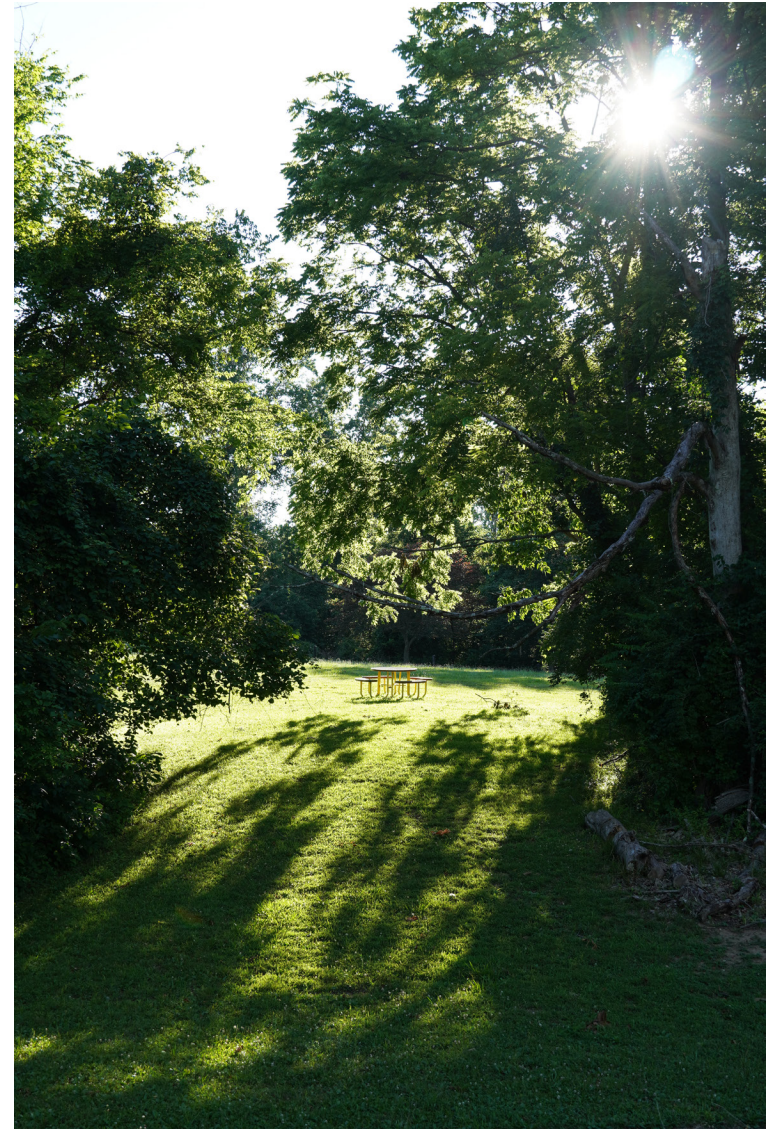


“Go over there and then come back. Farther. I want to take a picture of the sun.”

Salt Flats

Bonneville Salt Flats, Bonneville, UT (May 2024)

Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



A late morning walk, perfectly timed.

Picnic

Bloomington, IN (July 2024)

Sony Alpha 6400 18-135mm 3.5-5.6

TEXTURE



Lake Michigan doesn't do this.
Ocean
Malibu, CA (February 2023)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



Undisturbed dust
Blueberry
Ludington, MI (August 2023)
Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



“Wait, stay there. I’m using you to get the focus right.”

Jack-o

Frida Kahlo Museum, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico (January 2024)

Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



Shoot, I wanted to get his face. Oh, that turned out very cool.

Dancer

Bernal, Queretaro, Mexico (December 2023)

Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



Woah, that's a cool chair. What's it doing in the attic?

Chair

Taipei, Taiwan (January 2023)

Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



Ooh, a bianchi.

59th St. Bikes

Chicago, IL (July 2024)

Nikon D3500 50mm 1:1.8 D



Wow, what a chic bus stop.

Bus Stop / Hualien, Taiwan (January 2023)

Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G



I love baseball. How wide can I make this shot?

Dodgers Stadium / Los Angeles, CA (August 2023)

Nikon D3500 18-55mm 1:3.5-5.6 G

To All the Crafts I've Lost

Calla Norman

On a late spring morning, I was at work in the office, and as I was yapping with a colleague, my hands reached for a square Post-It that had been left abandoned on the table. My fingers folded it into tinier squares, and as I absentmindedly played with it my friend asked, “Are you trying to make a cootie catcher?”

And I was, although I always called it a fortune catcher. You know, the peaked structure which unfolds into numbers, colors, and eventually fortunes. Or, you can turn it into a beaked puppet, as I have been known to do. I had folded my Post-It into fourths, folded that into half, and then, I was stuck. You pinch it in here, right? Why isn't it doing what I want it to?

I had completely forgotten how to make this, out of the probably hundreds I'd made in childhood. Where did that knowledge go?

Gone with all the other embodied skills I picked up and put down throughout my life. Lyrics forgotten, fingerings missed on a once beloved and obligated instrument, theories on how to properly draw an eye.

Part of it obviously was a lack of proper materials. No matter what way you fold it, a Post-It is simply too small to feasibly make into a fortune catcher.

I have an easel in my closet that's been there for probably thirteen years. My grandmother got it for me when she tried to teach me how to paint. I didn't understand why I had to layer paint, what the point of priming the canvas was if my background was going to be white anyway, and pretty much gave up because I wasn't immediately good at it. The first painting I was supposed to make was of a calla lily, but the curvature was all wrong. I knew I'd never be able to make the shadow of the lip of the flower fall right, so what was the point in even trying? Now, I watch painting videos of experts breaking it all down, and it still doesn't compute.

There's this push-pull between wanting to pick up these crafts again, to make them a part of my daily practice, and in just letting them lie. One can only do so many things, and is it not better to just focus on one or two, and getting

better at them? At the same time, I can't stand the thought of purchasing more craft supplies and having all that clutter—although the ghosts of that clutter I feel will always be in the back of my mind.

Crafts I've Lost

- ◆ Acrylic Painting
- ◆ Drawing / sketching
- ◆ Chocolate making
- ◆ Crochet
- ◆ Sewing
- ◆ Scrapbooking
- ◆ Cake decorating
- ◆ Model cars
- ◆ Pottery
- ◆ Wine making
- ◆ Piano
- ◆ Oboe
- ◆ Guitar
- ◆ Singing
- ◆ Woodcarving
- ◆ Woodburning
- ◆ Fabric painting
- ◆ Stained Glass

Something that the adults in my life always told me when I'd whine that I was bored is, "Boredom is a choice." Or, a bit more biting, "Only stupid

people get bored." While I wonder if that was some method of getting me out from under their feet (I understand now, since as I type this there is a bored dog currently barking at me trying to get me to play with him), I think that this is one of the pieces of advice or admonishment that's still affecting me—the drive to always be doing *something*.

Several friends I know are into crochet and knitting. They'll whip out yarn and needles whenever given the chance: work meetings, *Lord of the Rings* extended edition marathons, lazy afternoons, baseball games, the possibilities are endless. Watching them, I think it's a good way to pass the time, and part of me is attracted by the idea of having some kind of embodied thing to do while I try to get through the hours in a day.

Lately that's been my relationship with time, trying to just get through the day, not necessarily feeling engaged, treating the day as if it were a chore I just need to get through. Would having a craft to work on help? Being able to sit with my fingers in motion and at the end of the day have something to show for my time, to insist that I was here, even if I was just sitting on the couch.

Looking at the list, even though I couldn't tell you the first step in making an acrylic painting or crochet, and the last time I thought of a piano key-

board was trying to figure out how many white keys there were for a trivia night question, every one of them has had a role in making the person I am.

MASC SUMMER FASHION UTOPIA

Phoebe Pan and Margaret Schnabel

This piece comes with a printable sheet at the end of this zine: inspired by ye olde paper dolls of yore, we've drawn our very own masc summer fashion utopia doll for you to cut out and dress up! Feel free to fill in each article of clothing with your own designs, patterns, and colors.

June 18, 2024

Dearest Phoebe,

Starting our email chain off bright and early this summer morning! We're at the beginning of a heat wave; I've already changed once this morning (and cut up a t-shirt) to cope.

Some questions I'd like your answers to, to get the sartorial ball rolling:

- * How do you pick out an outfit on a typical summer morning? How long does it take?
- * What's your best thrift find of the summer?
- * (If applicable) what's your best non-thrift find: retail purchase, gift, etc.?

- * What do you envy when you see other mascs (and/or men) in their summer clothes?
- * What staple can you not live without?
- * Do you want your style/presentation to change, in the near or far future? What would you change about your current closet, if you could?

Excited to hear back on any of the above that appeal to you!

xoxoxoxoxoxox,
Margaret

June 19, 2024

Dear M! Funny we're starting this convo during a heatwave—likewise, I've been taking cold showers and changing twice a day to try to escape the stickiness. The first thing that's become apparent is that I don't own enough shorts...

I'll go through your questions out of order, I think, because I want to start with #4—it's all about the silhouette, isn't it? I've always envied menswear for its ability to hide the body. Like, cropped shirts are in vogue right now across all the men's fashion accounts I follow, and it's all about creating the illusion of longer legs or a more "proportional" torso/legs ratio. I find that women's fashion has often been the opposite: it's more about accentuating the body, highlighting curves, showing skin, and all that. I know I'm speaking in dichotomies and style

is always changing, but that's the framework I grew up with.

That's why summer is the roughest clothing season for me! It's hard to hide under a tank top and pair of shorts. Wearing a binder in the summer is honestly horrible—so sweaty. So I guess my envy is less about clothing and more about transmasculine folks who have gotten top surgery and get to walk around shirtless in the summer. I love that for them, and I want that for myself! Summer is the time when I sort of give up on picking out a nice outfit to wear. Anything to get me through the day—a graphic tee, some shorts, and that's it. I will truly take at most two minutes to decide on an outfit in the summer, versus the five or ten minutes in the fall and winter (layers ftw).

Some questions for you:

- * Do you find that it's easier to search for masc clothing in thrift stores rather than retail spaces?
- * Have you tried any of those brands specifically marketed as "gender-neutral" (like Wildfang)?
- * Where do you look for outfit/clothing inspiration?
- * How do you go about altering/crafting your own clothing?

COOL wishes,
Phoebe

P.S. Also, we've talked about queer awakenings at some point, but I'm curious to know

if you had a specific “trans” or “genderqueer” awakening? Mine was Ashitaka from *Princess Mononoke*, way back when I first saw the film in high school, even though I didn’t realize it yet... here he is, rocking those chest scars and shirtless sleeves:



June 21, 2024

Phoebe Phoebe,

God, yes, re: silhouettes! What I envy most is the way t-shirts drape off of cis men: some magic in the shoulders and chest that makes it skim off of them instead of clinging. Even when I wear my binder, I don’t quite get the silhouette that I’m aiming for. (It’s

also tricky for me, body-image wise; the compression up top makes the skin below pop out a bit, for me, & makes me comparatively self-conscious about my stomach. No way to win!) (Side note here on the problematic associations of androgyny with thinness...)

To answer your questions:

* *Do you find that it’s easier to search for masc clothing in thrift stores rather than retail spaces?*

I thrift about 90% of my clothes at the moment, but for a whole mixed bag of reasons: it’s cheaper, it’s a sustainable/ethical option, and it makes me feel more in touch with local community than shopping at a big-box store. Re: masc fashion, though, it does have a number of advantages. Back when I dressed more femme, I loved how elaborate I could get with my outfits, how much I could decorate myself and create surprising, textured looks. Sometimes I find traditionally masc styles quite boring! Thrifting helps me find more unique pieces—a strangely-patterned shirt, a stupid tee, vintage bottoms. I also find that a lot of femme styles from yesteryear fit quite well into masc looks (and they fit my body better). It’s helped me to get out of the men’s-section/women’s-section mentality, because I walk into a thrift store and just see...heaps of fabric! Totally up to the wearer to decide what they mean or how they feel.

* *Have you tried any brands specifically marketed as “gender-neutral” (like Wildfang)?*

No, actually! I had a brief crisis over shorts last month and was swayed by Instagram ads to check out Both&, but they actually don't make pieces for people who are my height. (*Cries in 5'10" nonbinary*) Wildfang and similar *androgynous* brands don't quite fit my style; they come off as a little 2012-twee, tipping-my-fedora-at-you to me. One day I'll cave and buy a Big Bud Press piece, but for now I'm satisfied with my thrifty versions of those "vintage soft" tees.

* *Where do you look for outfit/clothing inspiration?*

A lot of people in Boston have great street style, so I keep my eyes peeled whenever I go out! Surprisingly, I like Pinterest for fashion inspo; searching "masc fashion" explicitly rockets you back to 2012-fedora-land, but my algorithm has slowly shifted into showing me ethereal-vibrantly-colored-surreal-genderless items that please me deeply. I'll attach some samples.

* *How do you go about altering/crafting your own clothing?*

Time to come clean...pretty much all of my t-shirts enter a t-shirt-to-cropped-tee-to-muscle-tank pipeline the second they land in my closet. I don't really measure anything—just spread them out tight to create tension and go at them with my sharpest pair of scissors. I like cropping big tees so they don't cling to my hips and I get the boxy look that I want. Next on my to-do list is cropping some button downs; I heard all the cool mascs

are doing it. And I'm sure my shorts panic will soon result in cropping some baggy jeans and/or Dickies. I had a big fabric-paint moment a few years ago that's coming back with a vengeance; it's just so tempting to spruce up those plain tees and make them look...Worse. This summer I want to bleach some t-shirts! And do some cyanotypes!

And re: trans/genderqueer awakening, it happened slowly...the only gravitational center, if I had to try to pinpoint it, was my gradual understanding that not only was I attracted to boyishness in other people, I wanted to embody it in myself—and I could! (As the kids say: the problem of wanting Timothee Chalamet versus wanting to *be* Timothee Chalamet.)

For you:

- * Describe your current style in 3-8 words
- * Where do you find fashion inspiration?
- * What's your current favorite outfit?

xoxoxoxoxoxox,
M





reebok INSTAPUMP FURY 95 BY HAPPY99 hartcopy

Spawned out of a purely virtual set of creations, Happy99 is a pioneering, subversive clothing line blurring the lines between the tangible and digital, founded by Dominic Lopez and Nathalie Nguyen in what they called "a passion project between two long-distance artists and designers". Since 2018, the brand has stepped up considerably, and in one of its defining moments, takes to the world of physical, collaborative footwear, reworking Reebok's Instapump Fury 95 in two colour schemes.

YEAR OF RELEASE: 2023

July 1, 2024

Dear M,

That's a great point on androgyny x thinness. I came across a book at the library the other day titled *Androgyne: Fashion and Gender*, compiled by Patrick Mauriès, and it contained mostly photos of—well, you guessed it. The book was weirdly fetishistic, compounded with the fact of the author barely being able to utter the word transgender... anyway!

Your point also made me think about the terms of "passing" in gender, which is obviously different from passing in racial terms, but still interesting to consider as an experience of blending into a "norm." There are days when I literally want to look like an indistinguishable guy walking down the street, broad-shouldered and casting that very magic you described with the t-shirt draping—and then there are days when I think, maybe I just want to look like a bean sprout? or a cave goblin? or just something utterly baffling and genre-defying in all senses of gender and the space-time continuum?

* *Describe your current style in 3-8 words.*

Dyke closet straight from Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman*.

* *Where do you find fashion inspiration?*

I think my sense of fashion often comes to me in sideways glances, in places where I'm not directly searching for cool outfits or looks.

An example: I'm a bit of a bicycle nerd, and I follow this bike shop in Japan called **Blue Lug**—they sell an incredible array of niche bicycle parts, and I bought some stuff from them a while back for my custom bike build. I only recently noticed that I've been looking to their product photos for style inspo!

Sometimes, it comes from a specific aura I get from an object or particular article of clothing. I have a small obsession with old dice and knucklebones—search "Twenty-sided die" and "glass astragal" in the Met Museum's digital collection—and that's translated into my growing collection of ceramic charm necklaces, which then led me to a phase where I really wanted to figure out what a modern dyke wizard outfit would look like.

Films and TV shows are also good sources... I didn't grow up watching *Sailor Moon*, but Yeeseon once showed me some of the outfits from the show and I loved them. Historical films are fun, too, because I like to theorize costumes as ways of becoming someone else. There are specific actors that I might follow, too, less for their actual outfits and more for the energy they bring to their outfits. Josh O'Connor's a good example of that: even in a nice shirt or jacket, he's sleeping on the set of *La Chimera* in the grimmest of conditions with his mouth slightly open or his arm tucked into his chest, and it's the perfect representation of "Funny-Looking Actor Is Hot In His Seeming Ordinairiness."

* *What's your current favorite outfit?*

Currently love a good "Mr. Darcy" billowy shirt (rolled up sleeves for bonus points) tucked into a pair of shorts.

Questions for you!

- * Would you say there's a distinction between dyke fashion and masc fashion? Or even between butch and masc fashion?
- * If you could craft your own outfit head-to-toe from scratch, what would it be?
- * What kinds of outfits do you look forward to wearing the most, whether they're your most frequent or least frequent outfits?

Wishes,
P!



July 10, 2024

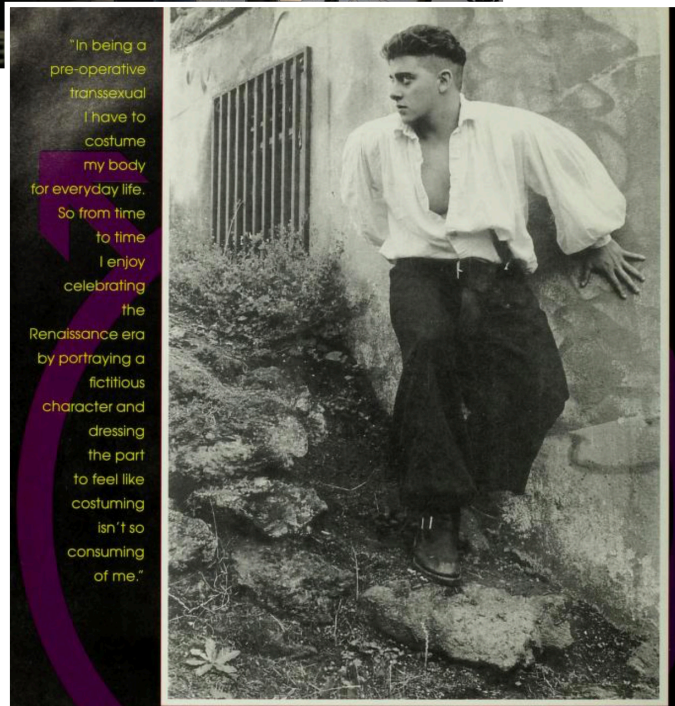
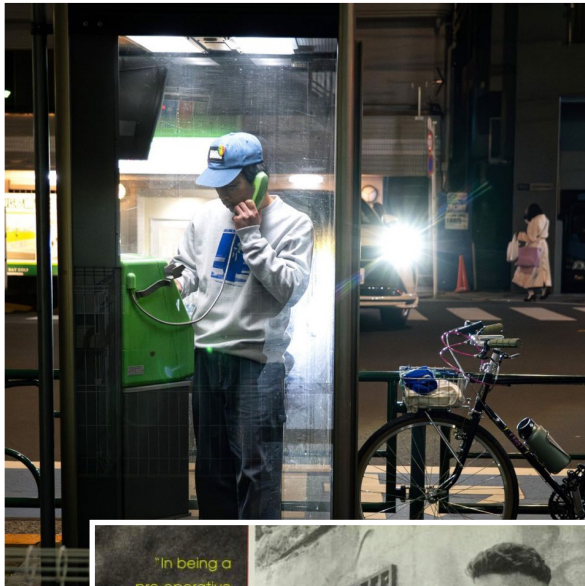
Phoebe on my mind,

WOW your mention of Josh O'Connor sent me down a profound *Challengers* rabbit hole including, importantly, that infamous churro scene.....

Did you also feel *so many things* watching that movie??? I'm starting to realize that I'm probably a lesbian, and yet seeing Patrick and Art fight and flirt and compete with and love each other *Really Did Something For Me*—whether for gender-envy reasons or attraction reasons I'm not yet sure. (I'll have to watch the movie a few dozen more times to figure it out.)

Went to my first official dyke event last night ("dyke descent") at a local dive bar, and the variety of looks was staggering. Which gives me an entry point into your first question: I definitely saw a distinction last night between dyke and masc fashion. Some folks were wearing more traditionally masc outfits (black a-shirt, jorts), but I also saw the following looks:

- * kink wear and general maximalist adornments: harnesses, so! many! chains!, spiky belts and collars
- * tiny crop tops with irreverent slogans on them (possibly modified from thrifted tees?) (I'm hoping yes so I can replicate posthaste)
- * a black skirt pulled up into a dress and secured at the top with two belts



- * bubblegum pink and highlighter-green hair w/matching outfits; talked to someone who's worn exclusively green for the past four years to match their hair
- * western everything: belt buckles, cowboy boots (so many cowboy boots) (I'm so over them), cowboy hats
- * ethereal slip dresses in light-as-air colors
- * schoolgirl looks w/a touch of punk: short plaid skirt, cropped white tee, tie, piercings and tattoos galore

In a proud moment, someone *assumed I used they/them pronouns*, which felt like a real sartorial win. (I wore: a blue lacy halter bralette underneath a brown lace-up vest left partially open; a silver pendant necklace on a black cord that my grandma got for me in a surprisingly perfect assessment of my taste this past Christmas; long acid-washed jorts; white sneakers long faded into beige.)

Butch/masc distinction feels harder to me, but maybe it's a square-rectangle situation? Like butch falls within masc fashion and masc fashion is maybe more volatile and expansive with time whereas butch is bound to a bit more tradition?

- * *If you could craft your own outfit head-to-toe from scratch, what would it be?*

I want to feel SEXY!!! It used to be so much easier to craft a look that felt sexy (i.e. that I thought other people would find sexy) when I dressed femme; I just basically showed as much skin as possible. Now it's so much

harder to balance my subterranean subconscious gender whims with whatever amount of skin feels good to show that day with whatever fits the weather and vibe of the event. So if I could craft any outfit, it'd be one that made me feel super sexy without like I'm outfitting my body For Other People. What would that look like??? Ugh—maybe like big cargo pants that fit my waist perfectly and drape in a nice baggy way down my legs with plenty of length (always a struggle to find), and a corset like the crystals corset from Lirika Matoshi, or some jazzed-up basketball shorts and a cropped binder tank that doesn't make me feel incapable of breathing and the perfect short-sleeved button down. I don't know!! Where do you find sexiness in your outfits???

- * *What kinds of outfits do you look forward to wearing the most, whether they're your most frequent or least frequent outfits?*

Any outfit with one of my beloved vests <33 I don't know what itch vests have been scratching for me for the past 1.5 years, but man are they efficient.

Maybe we call our email exchange here, unless any other thoughts come to mind? Is there anything you wish I'd asked that I haven't???

Leaving you with:

Hugs,
M



Thus Bespoke Zarathustra

Kevin Chu

I held out my arms like I was being patted down by a TSA officer. I stood facing forward while a man professionally trained to read body language stared intently at me, looking up and down my posture. But this was not the airport security line. I was in an artist's loft in a gentrifying part of town getting fitted for a bespoke garment. A sliver of measuring tape wrapped around my chest, I watched my tailor move with purpose, mapping out my figure down to the difference between my left and right wrist circumference.

PJ was a third-generation tailor. He had worked as a Savile Row cutter, but we were as far from Savile Row as we could be. Apron and tailoring shears in pocket, unlike the overly slick slim-fit suits of department store and Indochino salesmen, he walked me through how I might want to design the bespoke blazer jacket I had commissioned him to make. I had come in with an idea of what I wanted, after watching a bunch of Gentleman's Gazette videos and finding a reference design from Suitsupply. But

PJ told me plainly: "The jacket you want me to make you is not going to work."

Menswear has its own distinct visual vocabulary, he explained. Full canvas construction, lapel roll, mitered cuffs, single vs. double vents, Milanese buttonholes. For many, a suit is a suit. But why do some wear their clothes well, while others are worn by their clothes? It's the details that matter. "How do you look like you know what you're doing in the Macy's men's store? Walk up to a rack of suits and start inspecting the lapel fold or count the number of stitches per inch." That is the first promise of tailored clothing: working with somebody whose professional interest is to make you look good. Someone who cares as much as if not more than you do about the details that make that possible.

The Suitsupply design? It may have photographed well on a slim, chiseled model, but it didn't get the details right. It simply tried too hard. For instance, the jetted pockets: the most formal pocket type, reserved for tuxedo jackets, doesn't belong anywhere on a blazer or even a suit. Or the all-too-serious shade of midnight navy that would be out of place for a summer or even three-season jacket. Meanwhile, the loose and unstructured Neapolitan *spalla camicia* shoulders, an odd contrast to the more formal elements, gave off more sleaze than *sprezzatura*. At least it didn't have brass buttons, the tacky mark of the New England prep school fashion crime to war criminal pipeline.

In my back and forth with PJ, I deferred to his recommendations for the most part. He steered me away from subtle sartorial faux pas and made suggestions based on what would work with my body, and not that of a model.

We arrived at what would become a single-breasted navy jacket with a notch lapel to match, double vents in the back to account for how I liked to put my hands in my pockets, simple patch pockets to accentuate the less formal nature of a blazer, and a classic three-roll-two lineup of horn buttons dark enough to match my shoes. After flipping through the square flaps of fabric books with samples of wool that would eventually be spun and sewn into a three-dimensional drape, we agreed on a breezy hopsack weave from Vitale Barberis Canonico, the venerable Italian fabric mill that has been family owned and operated since 1663. Keeping in line with the Italian design language, PJ suggested that we look just a bit north of Naples. A self-professed fan of Brioni, he matched my upper body shape to the Roman fashion house's style of more structured shoulders. Finally, a curved *barchetta* breast pocket.

After the course of a few months and a few fittings, I ended up with a really nice garment that came out to be significantly less expensive, yet of even better workmanship, than an off the rack designer suit from Bloomingdale's or Saks Fifth Avenue. Even if nobody else noticed, I could appreciate the subtle hallmarks of skilled handiwork: the light-

ness of a hand-fastened collar, hand-stitched monogrammed initials, the birdseye Milanese buttonhole, cuff sleeve buttonholes that actually work, the *barchetta* (what a lovely word)—all time-intensive flairs that are only possible under experienced hands. Furthermore, I could speak for the provenance of the labor that went into it, from having met face-to-face with the tailor who did the design and fittings to it being sewn together by a local independent tailoring collective.

Should it be surprising that I was able to get a well-made, handsewn, and ethically sourced bespoke garment for way less than what one of comparable quality would have cost if it had a designer label on it? In the minds of the typical fashion consumer, there is only expensive aspirational luxury designer, or cheap fast fashion that lasts just barely long enough until the next Shein haul.

People can get really weird about defending their right to shop from Shein. "I know its impact on the environment. I know how they treat their workers. But honestly? I don't blame myself for shopping there when my options are so limited," said a commenter on a Reddit community for plus-sized people, lamenting their difficulty in finding clothes in their size from anywhere other than Shein. "I also don't blame myself for wanting cute clothes." They insist they have no other choice. "Selfish? Sure, but when the whole system is rigged against people like me, I think we should be allowed to be a bit selfish."

But is anybody *forced* to buy from Shein? Is it classist or even fatphobic, actually, to shade people for buying \$6 tops made artificially cheap by child labor? Of course not. Shein discourse is consumerism made woke: Spending money on nicer things is elitist, while buying hauls of shit-tier clothes at cheap prices made possible only by labor exploitation is smart and thrifty.

But how much can ethical fashion solely be a matter of personal responsibility? We might not be having the same conversation around ultra-fast fashion in the first place if consumers had more options of where they can get their clothes from. It turns out that in many parts of the world, tailored clothing is perfectly normal. This is only made possible by a robust infrastructure of garment makers and a healthy, diverse fashion ecosystem that affords people a spectrum of choices other than buying from the same mass-retail megabrands.

You can find tailors and cobblers in every neighborhood in Italy, where it is nothing more than a small errand to stop by the tailor shop every so often for small things like getting a button replaced or a sleeve tapered. Hong Kong's vibrant tailoring community, known for the 24-hour suit (the original fast fashion), owes much of its heritage to Indian Hindu immigrants who fled the Sindh region of what is now Pakistan in the aftermath of the Partition. Such places simply have a lot more people in the clothing trades. As a result, handmade and tailored clothing

is that much more accessible to regular people. Such is the fruit of an established sartorial culture that respects and normalizes tailored clothing. Meanwhile, here in North America, the lack of such infrastructure and cultural norms to make quality clothing widely affordable and accessible relegates tailored clothing to a novelty at best, snobbery at worst.

My zillennial generation remembers *iCarly* nemesis Nevel Papperman (“You will rue this day!”) and his obsession with menswear. His lifelong dream to open a haberdashery serves as an additional layer of characterization to his arrogant and pompous personality. The joke lands because formal clothing has become synonymous with out-of-touch elitism. But even if dressing up is a rare, eye-turning gesture nowadays, dismissing it as elitist is ahistorical.

Even the classic Ivy League style of menswear, nowadays better known to the TikTok generation as part of the “old money quiet luxury” aesthetic, was not the exclusive preserve of old money Ivy League polo guys. “People who reduce this look to straight, elite, male WASPs all make the same mistake: they erase what’s actually a complex, rich history and the impact of this style of dress across social classes and even the world,” said Derek Guy, the extremely online menswear commentator known as “menswear guy” on Twitter. “While many of the people who gave this style its meaning were WASP, the tailoring was done by Jewish immigrants. Black jazz musicians also gave the style a sense of cool.”



derek guy
@dieworkwear

...

People who reduce this look to straight, elite, male WASPs all make the same mistake: they erase what's actually a complex, rich history and the impact of this style of dress across social classes and even the world. Perhaps I will save that as a topic for another day. People can differ on aesthetics, but to take such a cartoony view of this style of dress is to be reductive and, if you're American, ignorant of your own history.



3:53 PM · Jul 17, 2024 · 131.5K Views

Black Ivy: A Revolt in Style chronicles the subversive role of classic Ivy fashion, adopted to signify both respectability and rebellion, in Black cultural and civil rights history. Wrote authors Jules and Marsh: “Style is about the freedom to be oneself, to authentically express oneself, and in doing so reject limitations imposed by others. A consciousness of style, in essence, emerges when one asserts one’s right to self-definition and the right to take control of one’s own Identity.” In parallel, David W. Marx’s *Ametora: How Japan Saved American Style* traces how Ivy style gripped Japan’s national consciousness and the ensuing ripple effects on fashion as we know it today.

What would it take to get more people to care about clothing again? Menswear guy has observed that “many people are not actually into clothes. They are into fame, rich lifestyles, and certain body types.” Slim fit and vanity sizing prey on purchasers’ insecurities and force people of varying body types to fit into a narrow range of predefined shapes and sizes. Luxury labels and fast fashion retailers alike tap into the drive for aspirational consumption. Lacking in meaningful community ties that would otherwise provide a sense of identity, atomized and overworked customers go into credit card debt for aspirational purchases that they hope will say something about who they are. A new handbag or sports watch, as a treat. Another Shein haul, for the gram. Perhaps the second promise of tailored clothing then, is to grant you some reprieve from all of that by making it about the clothes again.



derek guy @dieworkwear · Jun 21

...



As somebody who lives and breathes Uniqlo-core, I wasn't one to find myself in front of a tailor. The last and only time I bought a suit was in high school from Men's Wearhouse. What drew me down the tailored clothing rabbit hole was how rich and personal the experience can be. I appreciated the interpersonal aspect of being able to put a face to who made your clothes. I found the lore behind fashion history and etiquette fascinating. And of course, I developed a respect for the craftsmanship of the clothes themselves.

I liked that tailored clothing was a conversation that unfolded over months, unlike a one-and-done transaction after a few clicks or swipes. The magic of tailoring happens during the fittings, the first of which is a test of how well raw measurements and a quick croquis sketch translate into an actual half-finished garment draped over your figure. It continues as you further iterate on the fit of your garment under the discretion and judgment of a real person who is really good at their craft. Meanwhile with fast fashion, the fitting process starts and ends when you try on your \$6 top in front of your bathroom mirror only to realize it cannot possibly fit you in any flattering way and subsequently condemn it to a landfill somewhere.

Embracing clothing as deserving of your attention and respect changes not only how you dress, but also how you view yourself. The ethos of tailored clothing rejects insecurity for exploration and experimentation. It instills patience and delayed gratification in the knowledge that beautiful things take time to create and are worth waiting for. I liked how Mark Cho, one of the best-dressed men on this planet, put it. "We want people to know the joy of well-made things that age well. We want people to know how clothes are made and how to wear them. And most importantly, we want people to understand their style," said Mark in an address celebrating ten years of his men's clothier The Armoury.

 **derek guy**  @dieworkwear · Jul 8

Once again, I feel many people are not actually into clothes. They are into fame, rich lifestyles, and certain body types. This AI version of Craig shows him in a shirt that's far too tight—pulling across placket, sleeve about to burst. Compare to Felipe VI. Perfect tailoring



 **Laird of the Manor**  @LairdOfTheManor · Jul 7

 This is how to dress. This is what being a sophisticated, handsomely dressed man is. Tell me I'm wrong. (For those of you that want to tell me I'm not interested.)

306 723 16K 2.3M

Regardless if you have tailored clothing in your closet or not, it's worth giving a damn about how you dress and carry yourself.

About the binding...

For the release of our Craft Zine, I created a limited-edition binding for 20 copies. As I was designing the binding, I kept returning to the different dimensions of the word craft.

There is the craft of carefully selected materials, of care and attention to detail, of technical expertise. This is the kind of craft that I practice, if imperfectly. As an artist, I am drawn to multi-step, technical media where the process shapes the final piece as much as the artist's original concept: I am a printmaker, a darkroom photographer, a bookbinder.

Craft has another side: the craft of elementary-school projects, of primary colors and glitter glue, of found materials and experimentation. Living with a middle school art teacher, this is the craft I grew up with. My childhood home is full of art supplies donated or purchased at garage sales and the kind of craft projects done at the kitchen table or the living room floor.

For this binding, I wanted to combine the precise techniques of bookbinding with materials that evoke the spontaneity and joy of childhood craft projects. Most importantly, I wanted to leave room for the reader to engage in craft themselves. My bindings are just a starting point. They include materials that the reader can use to cut, color, stitch, glue, and stick to craft their own binding!

–Lauren Ehrmann

Soupbone Collective

Soupbone is a distributed humanities collective founded in 2019. We are a group of friends who get together once in a while and make things at the intersections of research and lived experience. Visit soupbonecollective.org to read more!

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