

# VOGUE

MAY

COSTUME  
ART  
INSIDE THE  
MET'S NEW  
BLOCKBUSTER

## SEEING DOUBLE

WHEN MIRANDA MET ANNA





Dior



A woman with long dark hair is seated at a wooden table, looking out a window. She is wearing a light blue, sleeveless, draped dress. A black leather bag with a gold-tone circular detail is slung over her shoulder. She is also wearing a gold watch on her left wrist. The scene is brightly lit by natural light from the window, which shows a view of a landscape with trees and a building. The word "Dior" is overlaid in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

Dior





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Haute Joaillerie, place Vendôme since 1906





**Perlée**  
Bracelets and ring



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**Perlée**  
Rings



SCARLETT JOHANSSON / GALLERIA BAG  
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PRADA.COM



**PRADA**

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THE CHANEL 25 HANDBAG



# CHANEL

THE CHANEL 25 HANDBAG





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GARAVANI





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OMEGA

# VOGUE

May 2026



## VOLUME UP

"I LOVE THE THEME. IT'S A PERFECT FIT FOR ME," SAYS VENUS WILLIAMS OF THE UPCOMING MET EXHIBITION "COSTUME ART." BALenciAGA TOP AND SKIRT. ROGER VIVIER SHOES. PHOTOGRAPHED BY JACKIE NICKERSON.

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Animated by a dauntless band of artists, models, performers, and activists, spring's most beguiling

## Cover Look Bilateral Talks

Anna Wintour and Meryl Streep in Prada. Wintour wears Manolo Blahnik shoes, S.J. Phillips necklaces, and Chanel sunglasses. Streep wears Prada sunglasses. For Wintour: hair, Bobby Michael; makeup, Melissa Silver. For Streep: hair and makeup, Donald S McInnes. Details, see In This Issue.

**Photographer: Annie Leibovitz.**  
**Fashion Editor: Grace Coddington.**

silhouettes do all the talking

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EYEWEAR

stones and mist  
Hermès, crossing horizons





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PARIS



/ Have A Puffy\*  
Summer /



\*Light, Layered and Unmistakably Moncler



# Letter From the Editor



## WHAT A PAIR

LEFT: ANNA WINTOUR AND MERYL STREEP IN PRADA. WINTOUR WEARS MANOLO BLAHNIK SHOES, S.J. PHILLIPS NECKLACES, AND CHANEL SUNGLASSES. STREEP WEARS PRADA SUNGLASSES. PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ. ABOVE: *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA* IS VOGUE'S LATEST BOOK CLUB PICK.

## The Devils

I REMEMBER ATTENDING the premiere of *The Devil Wears Prada* with my mother (I wore my prom dress) and we sat behind Anna (in...Prada) and her daughter, Bee. Bee and I were both in college and discussed summer plans. When I started working at *Vogue* some years later, friends' parents, suburban businessmen, my mom's doormen would all ask, "Is it like that?" "What's the most *Devil Wears Prada* thing that's happened?" "What's it like working for *Miranda Priestly*?" They knew her name!

These were people outside of fashion—men especially. As it happens, Meryl Streep, who shares our cover this month with Anna Wintour (a portrait captured by Annie Leibovitz and styled by Grace Coddington), mentioned that Miranda is a role that men most ask her about and see themselves in.

This was just one of the unexpected tidbits from the Meryl-Anna interview accompanying Annie's shoot—a three-way conversation conducted by Greta Gerwig

(Meryl's very good idea!). Topic A was *The Devil Wears Prada 2*. What made Meryl want to do the sequel? What did Anna do when she heard it was happening? (Answer: She called Meryl.) Meryl revealed she would never actually want Anna's job ("I would dread the shoes"). Nor could Anna imagine doing Meryl's ("There's no way").

I was there to keep things on track but really I just enjoyed myself. They talked about longevity among designers, dressing for work,

how clothes express who we are (who can forget Miranda's cerulean sweater monologue?). This made me think about "Costume Art," the upcoming Costume Institute exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum. This month, Ethan James Green has photographed fashion and fine art for us inside The Met's new Condé M. Nast Galleries. Annie assembled members of the Gala host committee for portraits. Five visual artists considered the range of body types in the exhibition, and we staged a pajama party at The Mark Hotel to honor the tradition of seeing the sun rise after a very late night in ball gowns.

Amid it all, I had the thought: Why not make our second Vogue Book Club pick *The Devil Wears Prada*? I'd never actually read Lauren Weisberger's novel, and it is a wild ride: five-inch stilettos every day, bottomless Big Apple Car accounts, and New York coffee that, apparently, cost \$1 a cup in 2003! That's all.

Adèle Exarchopoulos

LACOSTE





BE

LOVE



**PANDORA**  
LAB-GROWN DIAMONDS

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THE  
DEVIL  
WEARS  
PRADA

IN THEATERS MAY 1

YOU'RE  
WORTH IT

*That's  
all*



[ RUNWAY  
APPROVED  
MAKEUP ]



WATCH VIDEO

A full-page photograph of Zendaya sitting on a grey table. She is wearing a dark blue ribbed crop top with white trim around the neck and armholes, black wide-leg pants, white socks, and purple sneakers with red laces. She has short, curly dark hair and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a light-colored wood-paneled wall. The text "Dream On." is overlaid in large white font across the middle of the image.

Dream On.

Zendaya  
Together with On



no

on.com

A photograph of Zendaya with short, curly brown hair, wearing a dark blue tank top with white trim and black shorts. She is leaning on a grey table with her right arm raised and looking towards the camera. The background is a light-colored wood-grain wall.

Dream On.

Zendaya  
Together with On



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# Contributors



## Costume Party

This issue features several references and homages to “Costume Art,” the spring exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute. But “Making Space” (page 114)—a portfolio shot by Ethan James Green (pictured ABOVE, with a Duran Lantink-clad Angelina Kendall), styled by Amanda Harlech, and set in the museum’s new Condé M. Nast Galleries, opening in May—most clearly echoes the show’s organizing principle, underscoring the harmonies between daring fashion and striking works of art.



## Star Player

When *Vogue* first met Venus Williams, in 1998, she was 17 years old (Serena, ABOVE LEFT, was 16) and already well on her way to changing women’s tennis for good. But she had big ambitions outside the sport too. Williams wanted to be a designer, especially of “gowns,” she told Julia Reed at the time—but “right now,” she added, sweetly, “I don’t have anywhere to go.” Nearly 30 years later, Williams is still happily in the game—“I get a lot of joy out of being different or unexpected or bucking the system,” she tells Jen Wang in “Going Strong” (page 148)—and still loves fashion. But now she has all kinds of reasons to dress up—not least among them, serving as a co-chair for this year’s Met Gala, alongside Beyoncé and Nicole Kidman.

## Self Portrait

Tschabalala Self has long focused on the Black female body in her paintings and sculptures, so a chief concern of “Costume Art”—how art has interpreted the dressed human form across centuries—felt perfectly in tune with her practice. “Within the greater cultural context, the body can come to symbolize so many things,” she says. “But at its core, the body is a vehicle for personal expression.” This is why she was all too happy to join the Met Gala’s hosting committee—and to appear in “Free Form” (page 152), a story shot by Annie Leibovitz and styled by Law Roach. “Being surrounded by art and the greatest creative forces in contemporary fashion was a dream!”

KENDALL: COURTESY OF GREGORY BIRKHOFFER; WILLIAMS: © ANNIE LEIBOVITZ/TRUNK ARCHIVE. SELF: CHRISTIAN DEFONTE. DETAILS: SEE IN THIS ISSUE.



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# THE ART OF FASHION



COLLAGE: THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, DELPHOS GOWN, FORTUNY, 1920s; GIFT OF FRANCES J. KIERNAN, 2005; TERRACOTTA STATUETTE OF NIKE, THE PERSONIFICATION OF VICTORY, LATE 5TH CENTURY BCE, ROGERS FUND, 1907; ARTWORK BY JULIE WOLFE.

With each passing season, the once-separate worlds of fashion and art seem to collide, embrace, intermingle, or dance à deux. From the pieces themselves to the elevated photography and choreography taking place on the page, their partnership is a kind of alchemy that elevates and expands both realms—as celebrated by a few of our friends over the next pages.

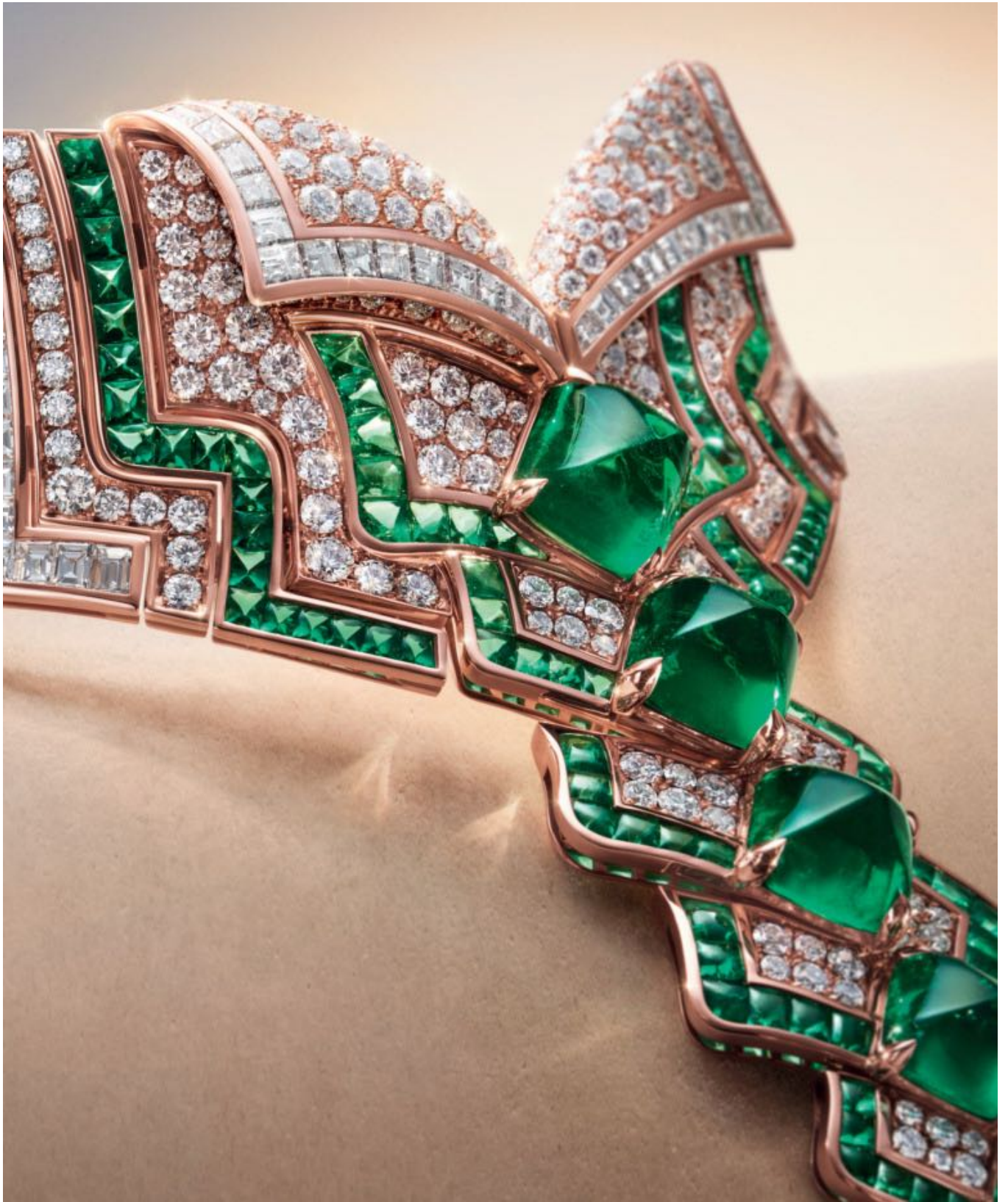




**BVLGARI**

ROMA 1884





BVLGARI

ROMA 1884



A woman with long dark hair is lying on her back on a stack of cardboard boxes. She is wearing a black, shiny, leather-like outfit consisting of a long-sleeved top and pants. She is smiling and looking upwards. In her right hand, she holds a large, black, textured leather bag with multiple straps and buckles. The background is a plain, light gray wall. The word "BALENCIAGA" is printed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

**BALENCIAGA**





**MICHAEL KORS**  
COLLECTION





*Cartier*

A photograph of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore under a cloudy sky. The waves are a vibrant greenish-blue, and the foam is white. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds. The foreground shows the sandy beach with some small pieces of driftwood or debris.

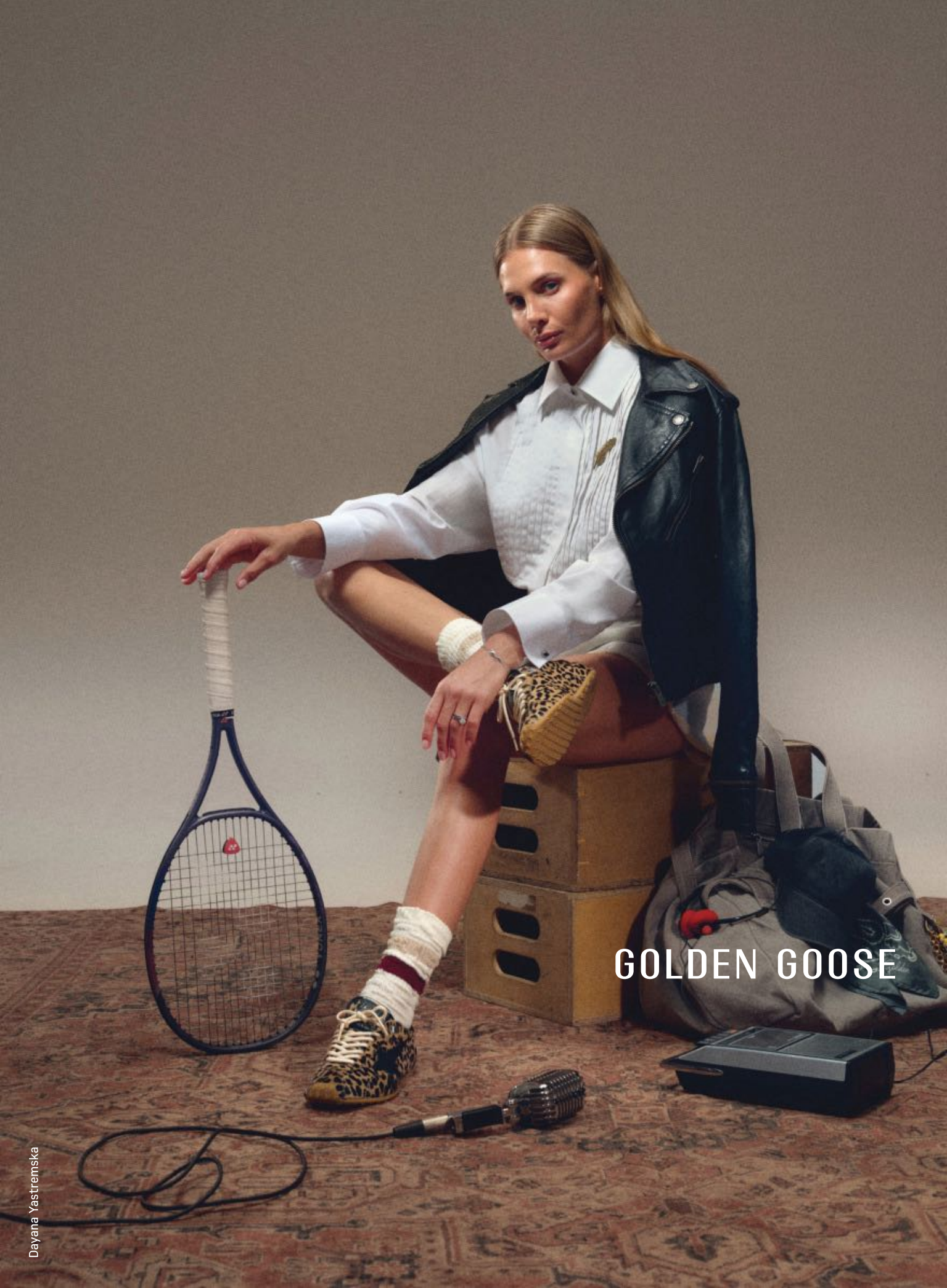
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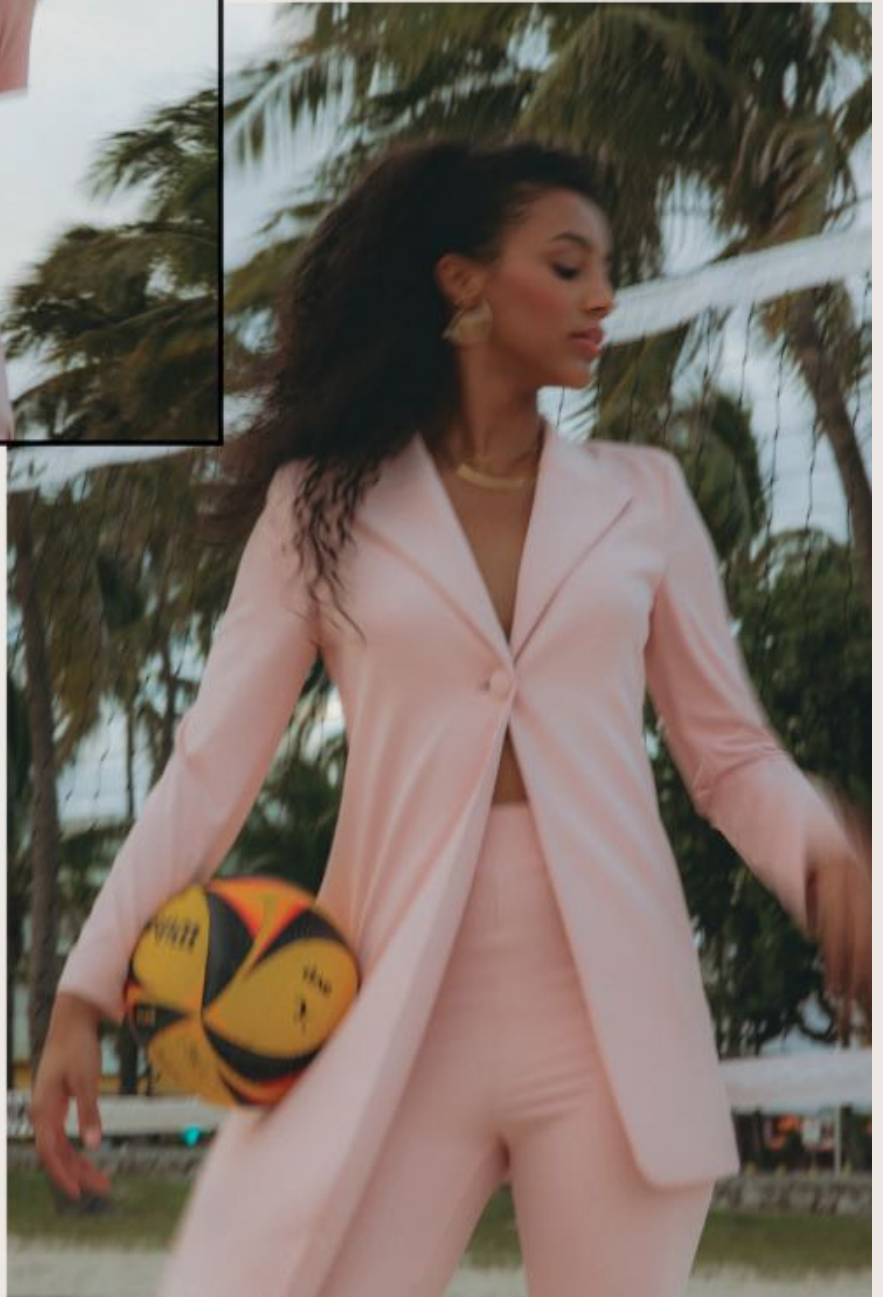
A woman in a beige suit and sunglasses walks in a field. The background is blurred, showing other people and a horse. The text "DESIGNED TO MOVE" is overlaid in the center.

# DESIGNED TO MOVE

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A photograph of three women standing outdoors in a tropical setting with palm trees and a modern building in the background. The woman on the left is wearing a purple suit, the woman in the middle is wearing a pink suit, and the woman on the right is wearing a blue jumpsuit. They are all looking towards the right of the frame.

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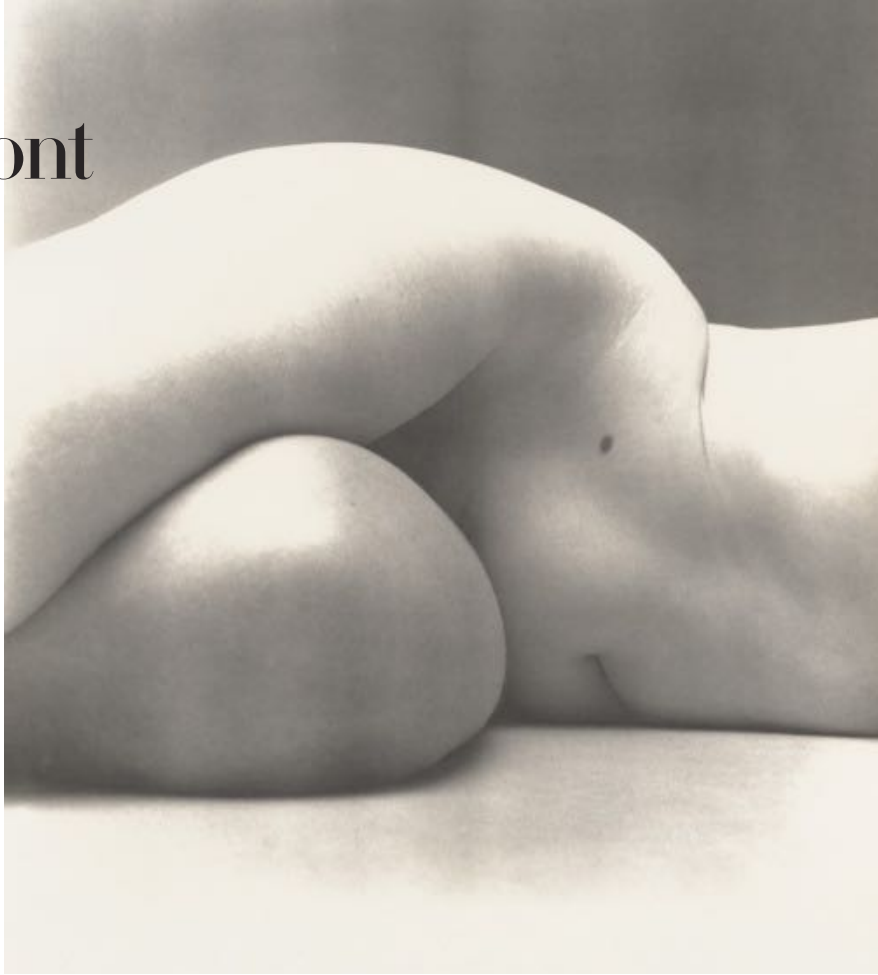
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# GUESS ICONIC SUBLIME

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## Naked Truths

Our thinking about our bodies is often veiled, cloaked in convention and cultural expectations. Here, three writers reflect on the universal, and also infinitely distinct, human form.

### CONTROLLING THE BODY

By Leila Mottley

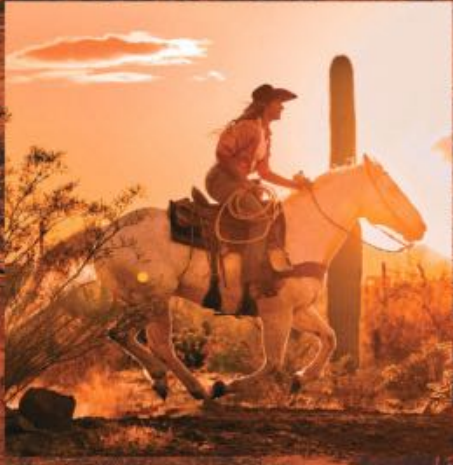
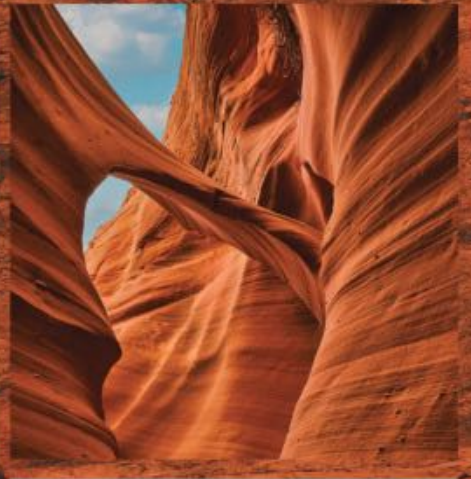
I was six the first time I was told to lose weight, eight when I learned to suck in my stomach, and 15 when I began to starve myself. Growing up, I believed success was found in the art of controlling and manipulating the body, and my particular one was seen as a problem. A grandparent would comment on what I was eating. A friend's mom would tell me how pretty I would be if I lost a little weight. When my mom searched the women's department for clothes that would fit my nine-year-old frame, I shrank from the disapproving looks of watchful strangers. I strove for perfection, upset if I received anything less than an A on a test, constantly on a mission to be perceived

not only as good, but immaculate. The only thing I could not seem to control was my body.

The feeling simmered for years, until, deep in the awkward trenches of high school, I decided I was finally prepared to wage the ultimate fight. It was 2017, Instagram was at its peak, and beauty was the overlined lips and BBLs of white women masquerading as Black. At my arts high school in Oakland, the aesthetic was weirder, more eclectic, and yet the girls who received the admiration of our peers were thin but curvy, often ethnically ambiguous—reminding us that, even in one of the most progressive and rebellious cities in the country, ideals of beauty remained as narrow as what was depicted on our phone screens.

Most of us, myself included, did not naturally possess this "ideal" body. As a mixed Black girl, I received >84

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# ARIZONA

countless compliments for my green eyes, while attributes that were unmistakably Black, particularly the size and shape of my body, were judged harshly. My body was not the trend. It was the object that the trend had cinched, commodified, and whitewashed.

I wanted to be seamless, perfect, invincible, and in order to achieve this I believed I needed to be skinny. I went on a diet and ran miles after school. At home I carefully measured the declining circumference of my waist. I ate two meals a day, and then only one, and then limited my diet to just eggs one week, apples another. My hair began to thin and fall out until my hairstylist refused to cut or color it, fearing it would disintegrate in her hands.

My body, however, had become an object of desire—I was catcalled, harassed, or groped on the way home from the movies or school. I now fit the flat-stomached, wide-hipped ideal of the 2010s: small enough to clutch around the waist but with sufficient curve to grasp. I was not overtly alarming to look at, like the images I had seen of white anorexic women. As with many Black women with eating disorders, my muscles clung to my bones, my thighs stood their ground, regardless of the weight dropping from my stomach and breasts. My body, genetically adept at survival, fought to keep me alive.

Later, when I was diagnosed with anorexia, there was always an addendum: atypical. Essentially, I was not underweight, I was simply starving. I lost half my weight between the ages of 15 and 17. Sometimes I picture severing myself down the middle and holding one half of my body next to the other: This is how much I diminished myself in the pursuit of a body that I believed would allow me to belong.

In those years, I desperately wanted someone to show real concern. Instead, I found people were warmer toward me. I graduated high school and went to college, where I made friends easily and began dating my now wife, who never knew what my body had been before I battled it into place. I felt as though my body was no longer in the way of my life. At the same time, I was miserable and alone. No one seemed to see a problem in the body that tormented me.

My eating disorder left me with a body that could no longer maintain its own temperature, blood pressure so low I saw white every time I stood, and organs that were slowly shutting down. One day, after two weeks of eating nothing but Granny Smith apples from the dining hall, I found I could not see. My vision had gone blurry behind my glasses, and I could hear my heart pulsing in my chest, the sound distorted and wrong. Terrified, I went to urgent care alone. The doctor called my therapist, who called my parents, as I had now surpassed the bounds of confidentiality: I was a danger to myself.

My parents allowed me to remain enrolled in college on the condition that I went to an intensive outpatient

program. For months, I took an hour-long bus ride at six in the morning to eat breakfast with strangers and attend group therapy before I rode back for a full day of classes. In that program, I met women who had fought their bodies for so long that they, too, had forgotten what they were fighting for. It certainly couldn't be this: hearts palpating in our ears, vision blurring, fingers slender and cold to the touch.

I spent my late teens teaching myself how to release control. There were tearful meals, where I mumbled behavioral therapy phrases that felt ridiculous, like “food is not my enemy,” between bites. Alarms set for

mealtimes. Confrontations with my “fear foods.” On the day I ate pasta for the first time in three years, I laid in bed afterward, convincing myself I did not have to make up for it with exercise. Months later I looked up from a bowl of spaghetti, surprised I had not spent the previous hour panicking.

I am lucky to have lived in enough versions of my body to know that power and beauty are not found in strict control over it. By the time I turned 20 and my first novel was published, I had gained back the weight I'd been celebrated for shedding. I did nothing special to fit into my wedding dress two years later. My heart beats softly behind my ribs, and I take comfort in the knowledge that I am not perfect, but I am loved and successful and, finally, at peace. □

I wanted to be seamless,  
perfect, invincible,  
and in order to achieve  
this I believed  
I needed to be skinny

## CAPTURING THE BODY

By Emma Cline

**W**e were all freshmen, mostly, in the life-drawing class. First-year art majors. How curious, thinking about it now—that the art department hired other college students as models. It's impossible that they still do this. But it was true back then. Sometimes, yes, the model was the gray-haired man from the small Vermont town who brought in a walking stick as his prop, a man who was maybe a little too happy to strip down for us. But sometimes the model was another student, someone you might recognize from around the small campus, now shrugging off their winter coat, disappearing behind the folding screen to change into a robe, a space heater making a feeble attempt against the chill.

There was a wooden platform only a few inches off the ground. That was enough to divide us into the ones looking, the one being looked at. There was a lack >86

MERYL  
STREEP

ANNE  
HATHAWAY

EMILY  
BLUNT

STANLEY  
TUCCI

THE  
DEVIL  
WEARS  
PRADA



20TH CENTURY STUDIOS PRESENTS A WENDY FINERMAN PRODUCTION A DAVID FRANKEL FILM "THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2" MERYL STREEP ANNE HATHAWAY EMILY BLUNT JUSTIN THEROUX WITH KENNETH BRANAGH AND STANLEY TUCCI

CASTING BY ELLEN LEWIS SHAYNA MARKOWITZ COSTUME DESIGNER MOLLY ROGERS MUSIC BY JULIA MICHELS MUSIC BY THEODORE SHAPIRO EDITOR ANDREW MARCUS PRODUCED BY JESS GONCHOR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FLORIAN BALLHAUS, ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHAEL BEDERMAN ALINE BROSH MCKENNA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KAREN ROSENFELT

PG-13  
STRONG LANGUAGE  
AND SOME DRUG USE  
OR ALCOHOL ABUSE  
PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

PRODUCED BY WENDY FINERMAN  
BASED UPON CHARACTERS  
CREATED BY LAUREN WEISBERGER

IN THEATERS MAY 1

WRITTEN BY ALINE BROSH MCKENNA  
DIRECTED BY DAVID FRANKEL

20th Century Studios  
i  
PG-13  
20th Century Studios

of ceremony when the model stepped onto the platform, the room tightening around the sudden nudity. Everyone knew to be polite—even a little blasé.

First, a series of 30-second poses. Before you had a chance to really think about the nakedness, your empty page needed to be filled. The teacher called time, the model moved. Too brief to get anything down but a scribble, the roughest mass of a body in space. Then came the longer poses. This is when you started to take in the person—the real person, the real body. Like nudity in hot springs or communal baths, it wasn't sexual, really, though that wasn't entirely absent. The nakedness was blunt, endlessly interesting, unless it started to get boring, and then there was the curious realization that a naked person could be boring. I'd feel the switch sometimes—the moment that lines and forms would drop back into the fact of nakedness, the nude classmate zoning out on a folding chair draped in a towel, their muscles shivering a little in the effort to hold the pose.

When the timer went off, they stood up, the spell instantly broken, the skin of their back red and imprinted with the texture of terrycloth.

Three hours, a few breaks. Sometimes, during the break, the model wandered around the studio in the robe, glancing at the work on our drawing boards, one of us again.

There was a drawing book that was a popular source of studio exercises, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. Whatever neuroscience it invoked was flimsy, thoroughly debunked I'm sure, but the exercises were genuinely helpful. Draw the model's face without looking down at your paper. Draw the shape of the negative space between their torso and their crooked elbow. The exercises jolted us out of the received ideas about the subject we were trying to draw—our preexisting mental image of an apple, or what a human face should look like—and allowed us to engage with raw visual information. Certain things you had to learn—where features sit in relation to each other, how the line of the neck slopes where it meets the shoulders, the difference between the body in your imagination and the body in actuality.

At the same time I was taking an art history survey. The classroom would go dark, the slide projector would whirl, and there, before our eyes, the painting or

photograph would appear. I loved how the images flickered on the screen, made of light. How we all looked together, with real reverence, at the work. There I learned how to talk about art—what a piece looks like, its material elements, but its historic context too, the biographical details of the artist. It was about gathering a kind of outside authority.

It was different, what we learned in the life-drawing class. The aim was almost reversed—how might we lose all our inherited ideas or misconceptions about the way a body might be rendered and really see the truth of how this particular body existed, there in that room with its stale air and big paned windows, the bare winter trees outside. It didn't really need more explanation or context or authority—the body was the thing, and it resisted too much thinking.

Were the drawings any good? It wasn't really about that. We tried hard, and if we got better, it was only

because we got better at looking. We learned how to spend time paying attention. The plain gift of another human being, standing in front of us, made us want to meet the moment with our own effort. What was more deserving of our attention than the body? What else had stayed so eternally itself?

Those hours had such a particular quality. How time dilated, intensified

in the act of looking.

The classical music played on a CD player, the songs repeating. Sometimes the class would be over and I'd sit up in surprise. Other times I felt my ability to sustain close attention drain away, the minutes starting to loom, and I'd flip my sketchbook to a new page and start over, try and fail to get back my focus.

I would often think of those life-drawing sessions later: at an art school in San Francisco, in green Oregon—any time I'd drop in on an evening figure-drawing group with my tin pencil box and pad of brown paper. I'm still cheered by the persistence—of this practice, its humanness, of the assertion of something primary and essential about the body. So much is unrecognizable to me, even in my lifetime. It's good to think about what remains.

Life class—how I wrote it in my little calendar. It's a beautiful phrase, a beautiful idea. And wasn't that pretty much what it was? □



#### FEEL FREE

RYAN MCGINLEY, *RUNNING FIELD*, 2007.



# The future looks vintage.

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# ACCEPTING THE BODY

By Mary Gaitskill

When I was in my early 20s, I had a brief period of total confidence in my body. In my teens, I had been thin to the point of scrawny and almost completely flat-chested. I was also short (five four) and therefore painfully non-leggy; my hips were, in my opinion, too wide, as were my shoulders. Then, at age 18, a miracle of late development occurred; I grew breasts, put on weight, and, at 22, found myself sporting a bodily measurement of 35-22-35. For the first time in my life, I felt like I was as I should be, and it felt great!

But by 25 things changed. The reasons for this were more psychological than physical: I suffered a traumatic breakup and moved to New York City, where I struggled to get a decent job, let alone get published. And I was suddenly surrounded by stylish beauties wearing clothes I couldn't afford. In these circumstances, it was easy to focus my dissatisfaction on my appearance. After all, I *had* gotten a little bigger in the hips, and I was still painfully non-leggy.

My bodily dissatisfaction wasn't just about appearances. Although I was fit (I practiced a martial art three times a week) and very strong, I didn't think I was sufficiently robust. I wore glasses and was pale, or, as I once "jokingly" described myself, "pasty-faced and four-eyed." If I was sick too often (too often being more than twice a year), I was not merely dissatisfied by this supposed failure of vitality but impatient and even angry. I would actually lie in bed feeling rageful toward my body, which any sensible person would see was doing its level best to recover. (Possibly this had something to do with my age; in my late 20s and early 30s I was already worried about getting older and didn't want to waste one youthful moment lying in bed.) I would try to counter with accepting thoughts, but the impatience lurked within.

All of this, I assumed, would only get worse as I aged. But, starting in my early 40s, the self-criticism began to quietly dial itself back. This surely had something to do with newfound stability: I was recently married, I was developing a sense of community, my work was growing stronger and more confident. How I looked became a more minor concern.

And to the extent that it was a concern, my standards had become more realistic. Shortly after I hit 50, I looked at my body and thought, *That's better than I expected.* I don't know if I actually *was* healthier or stronger, but I felt my vitality in a way that I had not before. Perhaps I benefited from the inculcation of age-dread; in comparison to what I had been taught to anticipate, what I got was pretty great. Part of this was luck. During the

hormonal topsy-turvy of perimenopause, I lost weight instead of gaining it, my breasts actually got a little bigger. The more important thing was attitude change; I was no longer demanding anything like perfection of myself.

I expected this all to collapse in the next decade or so, and sure enough my appearance became, well, even less perfect into my 60s. However, there was another development that almost compensated, just in the sheer irony of it. At the age of 64, I went to the doctor because of roving pain in my right hip and leg. Eventually I got an MRI that revealed something apparently unrelated: severe spinal stenosis, which, the doctor helpfully explained, happens to a lot of older people, the ones you might see in the grocery store leaning on their carts or walkers. Mild stenosis is not a big deal, moderate is manageable, but a severe case—well, the doctor was surprised that I was walking without pain, let alone taking a dance class that required a high degree of spinal mobility. Watching in mild amazement as I executed a body wave, he recommended a "wait and see" approach.

A few months later I decided to get a second opinion from a spine surgeon. Looking at my MRI, this guy, a grim older man with a rigid countenance, informed me that my spine was a "time bomb," and that I was going

to need surgery sooner rather than later. I asked if there were any options other than surgery. "Oh," he replied, "you're going to be begging for it." I asked when he thought this begging might commence. His "educated guess": within four years, five at the most.

Five years later, still asymptomatic, I decided to get another MRI, just to see if there was some miraculous improvement. And maybe there was; the diagnosis at that time was "moderate stenosis" as opposed to severe. Nonetheless, said my GP, it was surprising that I was still completely pain-free. But the body was "mysterious," he added, and found ways to compensate. Perhaps I wouldn't need surgery until I was 80. For the first time in my life I had the thought, *My body is awesome!* It is resourceful and clever, and it cannot be stopped!

During the next three years, comparable blips occurred twice more: My hip suddenly hurt when I walked up or down stairs, causing embarrassing hobbling; my Achilles tendon exploded in pain after a particularly fast-paced workout. In both cases I thought, *Okay, this is it; I've had a good run and now decrepitude is about to come down hard.* And in both cases I was able to resolve the issues in a matter of weeks.

Of course, I know that my body is not unstoppable, and that, eventually, decrepitude *will* set in. In fact, in some ways it already has. I have an arthritic shoulder. I wake up some mornings feeling joint pain. And when I look at myself I see things that make me sad. Even so, at age 71, I appreciate my body in a way I didn't when it was stronger and more attractive. It is doing its best with the hand it was dealt, and that is far more than I ever before thought possible. □

Shortly after I hit 50,  
I looked at my body  
and thought, *That's  
better than I expected*

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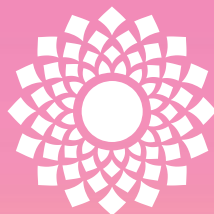


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**Kal Baffi | 15<sup>th</sup> century**  
An ancient tapestry of pattern and precision, once hand-knotted for emperors on fumed looms.  
Kashmir

**Walnut Wood Carving | 15<sup>th</sup> century**  
A dynastic craft passed down through families, once favoured by royals for its sculptural richness.  
Kashmir

**Chikankari | 16<sup>th</sup> century**  
Introduced by Persian nobles and embraced by Awadhi royalty, this delicate needlework transformed fabric into poetry.  
Uttar Pradesh

**Bone Inlay | 16<sup>th</sup> century**  
A Persian technique where bone and resin blend with desert craftsmanship in intricate harmony.  
Rajasthan

**Pichwai | 17<sup>th</sup> century**  
Rooted in Nathdwara's temple walls, these sacred paintings have narrated devotional legends for centuries.  
Rajasthan

**Pacchikari | 17<sup>th</sup> century**  
Floral mosaics that echo Persian roots, elevating the art of inlay to its imperial heights.  
Uttar Pradesh

**Thangka | 11<sup>th</sup> century**  
Sacred scrolls layered with devotion, depicting Buddhist iconography in pigment, silk and gold.  
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**Bamboo Craft | Ancient origins**  
An age-old tradition of utility and artistry shaping life from nature's most enduring grass.  
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**Rogan | 17<sup>th</sup> century**  
A legacy of creating freehand designs using a wooden stylus and a blend of castor oil & natural pigments—a tradition kept alive by a handful of families in Kutch.  
Gujarat

**Meenakari | 15<sup>th</sup> century**  
The ancient Persian art of enameling metals transformed royal jewelry and heirlooms with hand-painted brilliance and a precise firing process.  
Rajasthan

**Banarasi | 14<sup>th</sup> century**  
Woven under royal patronage in Varanasi, the craft is a loom-spun legend of zari and devotion.  
Uttar Pradesh

**Jamdani | 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC**  
A textile of poetic finesse that originated in Dhaka and was patronised by Indian royalty for centuries.  
West Bengal

**Longpi Pottery | 1000 BC**  
Black serpentine stone and brown clay come together to echo ancient tribal traditions from the Longpi village.  
Manipur

**Gond Art | 600 AD**  
A tribal storytelling tradition, where nature, myth, and memory are rendered in rhythmic, sacred line-work.  
Madhya Pradesh

**Dhokra | 3000 BC**  
One among India's oldest metal crafts that use the lost-wax method to cast tribal lore into timeless bronze forms.  
Chhattisgarh

**Stone Carving | 7<sup>th</sup> century BC**  
A sacred sculptural tradition rooted in temple architecture, where myth and devotion are chiselled into enduring stone.  
Orissa

**Pattachitra | 12<sup>th</sup> century**  
Temple walls and palm leaves once carried these scrolls, narrating mythologies in vivid line and colour.  
Orissa

**Cane and Rattan | 7<sup>th</sup> century**  
A tribal tradition where natural fibres are handwoven into objects of everyday grace and ancestral design.  
Nagaland

**Bandhani | 6<sup>th</sup> century**  
An ancient resist-dyeing practice once used for bridal rituals and auspicious beginnings.  
Gujarat

**Sandalwood Carving | 10<sup>th</sup> century**  
Wood sculpted into art—fine filigree carved from the sacred heart of sandalwood.  
Karnataka

**Bidri | 16<sup>th</sup> century**  
A regal metal craft born in royal courts, where silver inlay shimmered against darkened alloy to mirror Deccan opulence.  
Karnataka

**Kundalavelai | 17<sup>th</sup> century**  
An ode to ancient jewelry inspired by the architecture of South Indian temples.  
Karnataka

**Wood Carving | 3<sup>rd</sup> century**  
A sacred art once carved into royal courts and temples, preserving stories in timber with timeless precision.  
Andhra Pradesh

**Bronze Casting | 10<sup>th</sup> century**  
An age-old casting method preserved by the Shapathis and perfected under the Cholas to create timeless devotional sculptures.  
Tamil Nadu

**Tanjore Painting | 16<sup>th</sup> century**  
Patronised by kings, the age-old craft layers gesso work, gold foil and stone inlays to create sacred canvases of devotion.  
Tamil Nadu

**Vilakku | 10<sup>th</sup> century**  
Ritual lamps cast in gleaming bronze that have lit temple thresholds and homes for centuries.  
Kerala

**Aranmula Kannadi | 17<sup>th</sup> century**  
A sacred mirror of polished metal, handmade with a guarded technique known only to a few families for generations.  
Kerala

# A BONE TO PICK

Skeletal strength is all the rage. But is there anything you can really do to improve your internal scaffolding? By Alice Gregory.



**F**or as long as I can remember, my mother—whom I resemble closely enough that strangers sometimes treat us like before-and-after photos—has narrated certain facts about herself in the first-person plural, joining us together in a small, unlucky demographic damned by extremely minor curses. *We* don't look good in red. *We* should never wear silver jewelry. One pronouncement surfaced more frequently than the others: *We* will get osteoporosis. Her mother had it, she would say, and so did her grandmother. Our bones were small, she'd explain. And you never really drank a lot of milk as a child.

Not long ago, an unpleasant but minor stomach condition forced me onto a low dose of a steroid, whose side effects included the remote, theoretical possibility of decreased bone density. In an act of due diligence, my doctor ordered a DEXA

scan, an imaging test used to measure bone mineral density and from it extrapolate one's future fracture risk. I remember little about the actual X-ray, but I'll never forget the alarm on the face of the specialist charged with interpreting the results a few weeks later.

"You're 37?" he asked, sounding stricken.

All but two of my vertebrae were within the range of what is considered osteopenia, the clinical term for low bone density, often considered a precursor to osteoporosis. The other two were solidly osteoporotic.

Did I have any children, he wanted to know.

Yes, I told him. One.

He asked if I planned on having any more.

"I'm not sure," I said. "Probably?"

In that case, he sighed, there was nothing to be done. Until I had birthed and weaned my hypothetical

second (and definitely last, I assured him) child, I was not a candidate for any available medications currently on the market, which, like most drugs, have not been tested on pregnant women. He encouraged me to continue taking a calcium supplement and to incorporate strength training into my exercise routine. "Try not to fall," he added.

In the months that followed, it began to seem like a concern I had long associated with AARP inserts was now a green-juice-adjacent wellness frontier. I walked past multiple boutique fitness studios advertising bone-building workouts and clicked past numerous alarming headlines posted by mainstream >96

## THE NEW FRAMEWORK

Long associated with AARP inserts, bone strength now seems like the new wellness frontier. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Pelvis with the Distance*, 1943.



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publications. At the gym, people were standing on a vibrating platform that looked a bit like a giant hockey puck, ostensibly to strengthen their skeletons while they did their leg lifts. Glossy-haired perimenopause influencers kept popping up on my feed, talking about bone density and the midlife hormonal changes that cause it to plummet.

Endocrinologist Caroline Messer, MD, attributes the surge in awareness to the prevalence of GLP-1s. “With any kind of weight loss, you have an increased risk of bone loss, so I think that’s the main reason we’re hearing so much more about it now,” she says. “The typical screening recommendation is for women 65 and older, and that is just terrible, in my opinion.” More and more doctors, Messer says, are, like her, beginning to screen their patients earlier, at the first signs of an irregular period.

Indeed, by the time osteoporosis is diagnosed—commonly after a broken hip or spine—many years of bone loss have already taken place. Peak bone mass is typically achieved by the age of 30; the higher one’s peak bone density, the more remains later in life to serve as a buffer. For most people, building a kind of skeletal savings account does not require heroic interventions but rather regular, unglamorous habits: adequate calcium and vitamin D, enough protein, and a regular weight-bearing exercise routine. The available drugs, broadly speaking, fall into two classes: ones that slow the rate of bone loss and ones that stimulate new bone formation. These drugs are typically reserved for patients who have crossed the diagnostic threshold of osteoporosis.

But we may be on the brink of a new era in preventative treatment. There is promising new research that looks at a “biological switch,” normally triggered by exercise, that helps keep bones strong—offering a potential path for drugs that might mimic physical activity. New screening technologies (based on bone flexibility rather than mineral density) may be able to catch issues earlier than before. And in 2024, the FDA cleared the Osteoboost, a new wearable device for osteopenia. Fitted like a belt, it delivers vibration to the hips and lower spine. Bone is constantly renewing itself, spurred on by specialized cells that break down old bone while other cells build new mineral in its place. Those cells are highly responsive to mechanical stress—the reason weight-bearing exercise strengthens the skeleton—and the device is designed to imitate that signal through subtle vibration.

“More women die of hip fractures than breast cancer,” says Laura Yecies, a grandmother of six and Osteoboost’s CEO. Yecies thinks that low-bone-density awareness has suffered from what she calls “double discrimination.” It is a condition that disproportionately affects women, yes—but she also believes women themselves tend to minimize it. “It’s common that older women get osteoporosis,” she says. “In fact, almost all women will. But it also used to be inevitable that people would get high blood pressure.”

“Fear is a wonderful motivator,” says Steven R. Goldstein, MD, a New York-based gynecologist and professor

at NYU who has treated menopausal women for decades. “My patients are all really good about their breasts,” he said. “They get their mammograms and ultrasounds every year. I wish everyone were as focused on their bone health.” The statistics are indeed terrifying: 21 percent of older women who fracture a hip die within a year, and 25 percent don’t ever live independently again. Goldstein conceded that these numbers tend to refer to people much older than me, but still I was right to feel dread.

Dread is what finally forced me to start a weight-bearing exercise routine. Dread and the fact that a new outpost of Good Day Pilates opened a half block from my Brooklyn apartment. Founded by Clara Gilmour, a physical therapist, the studio offers classes that incorporate heavy resistance bands and the occasional kettlebell to provide what Gilmour calls, appealingly, a “strengthening dose.” For someone like me, she says, a classical balletic Pilates class with a lot of stretching might not be sufficient. “You want to work the muscles in a way that actually pulls on the bone and stimulates new growth. You need to work to the point of fatigue, where the muscle—and the bone—actually respond.”

So now I go three, sometimes four, days a week. Besides its extreme proximity, I like that the studio has no mirrors and I am able to convince myself that taking a class is a nonnegotiable sort of medicine.

Is it working? I might not know for decades, but wanting a second opinion—or perhaps just reassur-

ance that I wasn’t already halfway to collapsing into a pile of dust—I call David Karpf, MD, an endocrinologist at Stanford who specializes in metabolic bone disease.

“I really wish every woman had a baseline DEXA scan taken before menopause,” he tells me. The test itself, he explains, is an imperfect instrument, especially for people whose bones, like mine, are smaller than average.

“Let’s calculate your fracture risk right now,” he suggests, rattling off a list of rapid-fire questions. What was my height, my weight, my age? When did I start menstruating? Had my mother or father ever fractured a hip? Had I ever broken a bone? I could hear him typing figures into a calculator on the other end of the line.

He reads the results aloud. “You have a 99.2 percent likelihood of not having a hip fracture in the next 10 years.”

What my earlier scan had probably captured, Karpf explains, was simply the natural consequence of having small bones. “In all likelihood, this is a good representation of your peak bone mass,” he said.

It was just one opinion, but I hung up the phone and was tempted, if I’m being honest, to cancel my upcoming Pilates class. But that was not the point. Even if the story my mother told was maybe not quite as inevitable as it sounded, I should do everything in my power to offset this folkloric family hex. So I continue to drag myself to Pilates and swallow a calcium supplement with my coffee. And one day soon I will probably purchase an Osteoboost belt, which will rumble at the base of my spine as I make my way to pick up my daughter at day care, to which I have begun to bring a sippy cup of milk. □

“My patients are all really good about their breasts,” said Steven R. Goldstein, MD. “I wish everyone were as focused on their bone health.”



150 YEARS OF

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## LEARNING CURVE

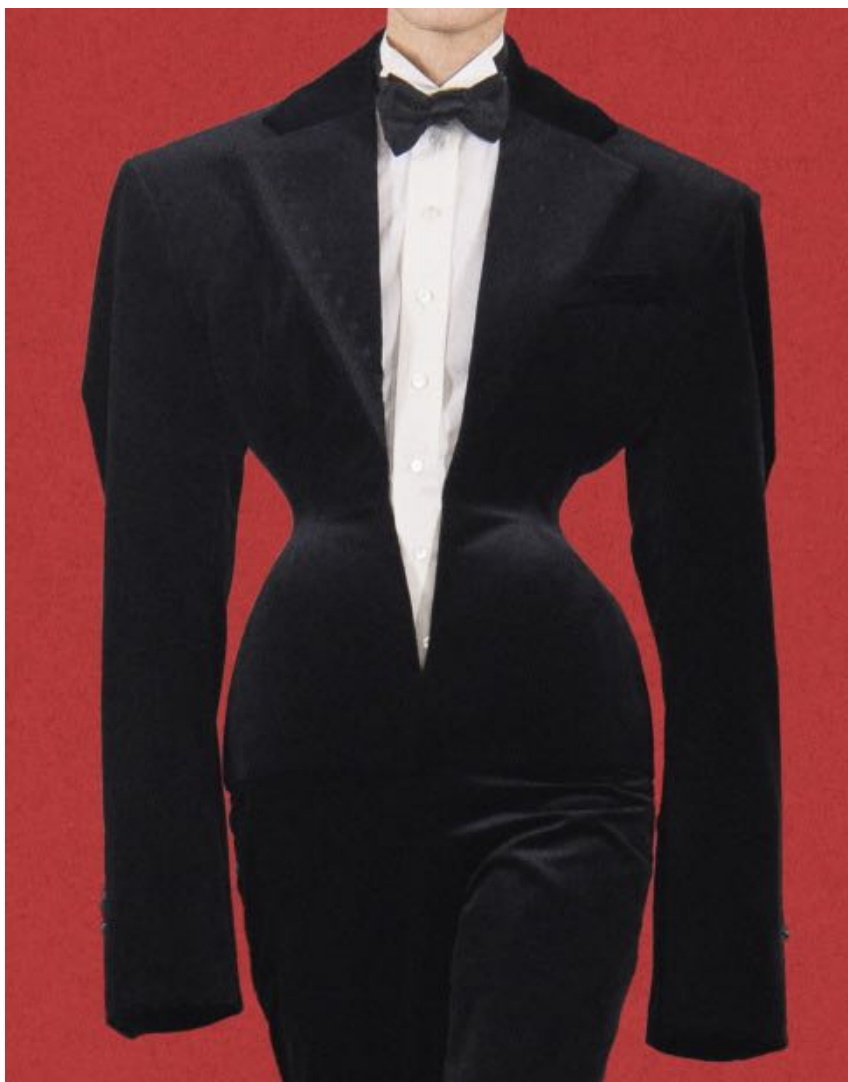
In the age of plastic surgery and GLP-1s, why are corsets more popular than ever? Margaux Anboubia goes in for the squeeze.

I'm well into a meze spread at Ayat, a favorite Palestinian restaurant in Manhattan's East Village, when I get a stitch in my side. The pressure building and building, I look at my friend and sigh: "I'll be right back," I say, before racing to the bathroom for an emergency adjustment to the corset I'm wearing.

A few weeks before, I had been talking to Kylie Jenner's stylists, sisters Alexandra and Mackenzie Grandquist, about fashion's rediscovered obsession with the waist when they clued me in on a little secret. Corsets are under more outfits than you would believe, Mackenzie said, adding they are no longer just used to shape figures for high-stakes events. "You can just throw one on with a T-shirt to go out to lunch."

Jenner's own collection, they tell me, includes a bespoke creation by couture-corset legend Mr. Pearl (which took a year and multiple fittings in his London atelier to perfect) and a handful of Jean Paul Gaultier waspies (waist-only versions of the garment). She's in shapely company: Hailey Bieber wore her own take on the corset for a recent girls night out, Sabrina Carpenter wore a variety of bedazzled full-body versions throughout her *Short n' Sweet* tour, Jessie Buckley turned to a torso-size waspie while promoting *The Bride!*, and Bad Bunny made history at the Grammys in an hourglass-fitted custom Schiaparelli corseted tuxedo.

Valerie Steele, chief curator of The Museum at Manhattan's Fashion Institute of Technology, called the corset—long derided as anti-feminist and imprisoning—"probably the most controversial garment in the history of fashion" in her 2001 book *The Corset: A Cultural History*. A quarter century later, she notes that, while we may be light-years away from the rigid conformity of the corset's Victorian heyday, many of us simply constrict ourselves in different ways.



"Women didn't stop wearing corsets," she says. "They just internalized them in the form of diet, exercise, liposuction, tummy tucks, and, recently, Ozempic." Freed of their repressive practicality, corsets themselves are now an option for all kinds of body types and make an entirely different statement. (And sometimes, of course, corsets can solve pain rather than inflict it, as with the bespoke braces made at Manhattan's Hospital for Special Surgery, which help a range of spinal issues including scoliosis.)

"Corsetry today," Steele continues, "is very *I'm powerful, I'm sexy*." Steele cites Matières Fécales founders Hannah Rose Dalton and Steven Raj Bhaskaran's Paris Fashion Week show—which featured more than 15 hourglass silhouettes on an array of different bodies—as a pivotal moment in reclaiming both the waist and the corset.

Illisa, the mononymous owner of Illisa's Vintage Lingerie, whose clients at her Sutton Place boutique over the years have included Gaultier and Azzedine Alaïa (and—full disclosure—me), tells me that any time a new historically rooted drama (*Wuthering Heights*, >102

### LESS IS MORE

The corseted tuxedo that Bad Bunny wore at the 2026 Grammys was based on this look from Schiaparelli's 2023 couture runway.

# LANCÔME

PARIS



La vie  
est belle

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

ORIGINAL

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*Bridgerton*) develops a fan base, business skyrockets. But while her shop has lately seen a run on classic corsets with hook and eye closures, contemporary iterations come with both easy updates—a front closure, say, for those of us who live alone, along with construction-grade steel boning (midcentury corsets generally use celluloid-plastic boning)—and even more intense options.

On a drizzling, early-spring afternoon, I make my way to Lower Manhattan—to the family-owned Orchard Corset in the Lower East Side and Agent Provocateur in SoHo—in search of the new state of the corset.

Behind their theatrical windows on Orchard Street, owners Peggy and Ralph Bergstein are quietly working in front of stacks upon stacks of boxes bearing handwritten labels—*Christian Lacroix Couture Panties, Half Slips XL*. Once I tell Peggy what I'm looking for—a manufactured hourglass figure—she takes me to the back room, chooses a few options, and gives my seminude body a glance before lacing me into one of their custom-made satin underbust corsets. Later, across town at Agent Provocateur, I find myself bracing my arms against the walls of the dressing room while a shop assistant yanks on laces like she's ripping the pull cord on a lawn mower, squeezing almost three inches from my midsection.

I come home with a black mesh waspie from Agent Provocateur and the satin underbust corset from Orchard, with plans to wear them under clothing for the next few weeks (though Erdem's spring 2026 runway proved that corsetry over clothing can be provocative too). Both pieces make my 1950s merry widow corsets seem like oversized T-shirts. "Looks good, but seems like it would be unpleasant to touch," my fiancé replies when I send him a dressing room selfie I snuck at Orchard. "How much can you actually do in it?"

It's easier, perhaps, to list everything I *can't* do—pick up my keys when they fall on the floor, say; walk down subway steps without feeling like the Tin Man from *The Wizard of Oz*—and don't get me started on going to the bathroom. But I'm also magically imbued with the greatest posture of my life—and I'm living proof of what Steele told me earlier: *I feel powerful*.

Hari Nef agrees. The model and actor was first introduced to waist cinchers by *Barbie* costume director

Jacqueline Durran, though when it came to the film's press tour, Nef wanted to pay homage to the doll in a more subversive way. "I had a custom corset made that gave me the proportions of a Barbie with all of the antiquated body modification—the dark, insidious context of a corset," Nef says. Mr. Pearl made it happen. And while she never pulls the piece out for day-to-day wear (she's quick to note how she almost fainted in it on the steps of the 2024 Met Gala), Nef says the piece remains in her fashion arsenal for the moments when it might feel right—for her, choice is everything. "You can wear a corset one day and a drop waist the next," she says. (In fact, the corset renaissance comes just as some designers, including Matthieu Blazy at Chanel and Miuccia Prada at Miu Miu, are showing

drop-waist looks utterly flowing and free.)

When I realize a trip to London isn't in the cards—Mr. Pearl only takes on select clients for in-person fittings—I turn to Jackson Wiederhoeft, whose brand bears his last name and who makes bespoke corsets by hand in Manhattan's Garment District. Inside his pink-and-emerald-green showroom, Wiederhoeft and a colleague begin by taking 19 measurements, including what they call my "smallest waist"—the tightest they can wrap a tape measure around the part of my waist where the corset will constrict me the most. After the measuring, I'm assigned a numerical size between 00 and 30 and then a subtype—curvy, athletic, petite, or flare. Soon I'm trying on a sample, and it's the most comfortable



corset I've ever worn. Unfortunately, it's also three months' rent, and so for now it will have to remain a dream.

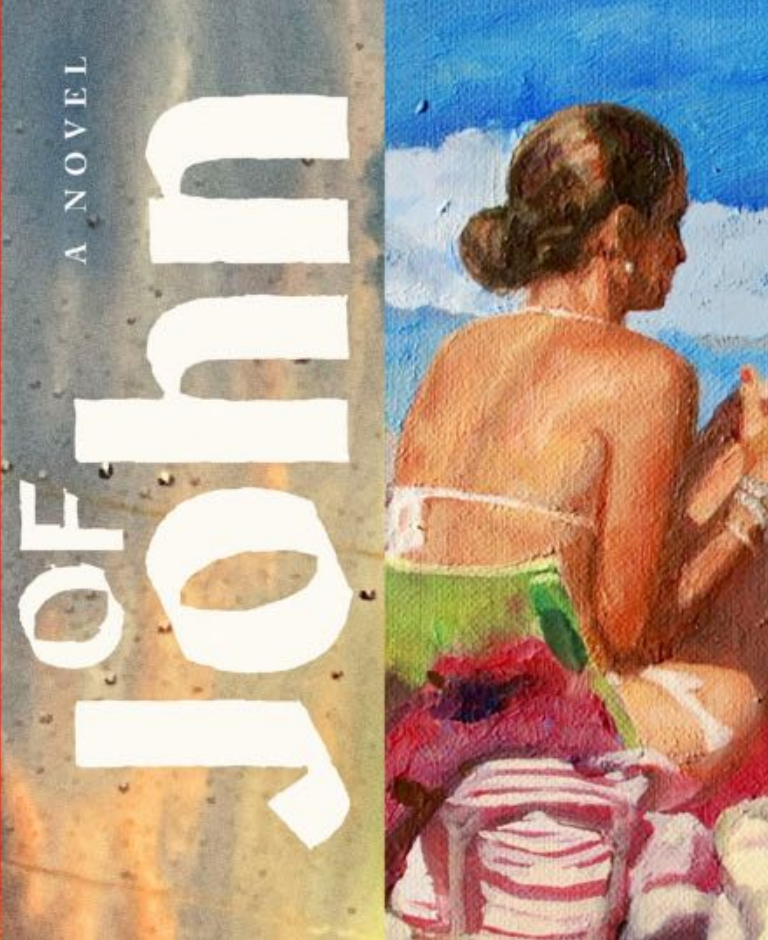
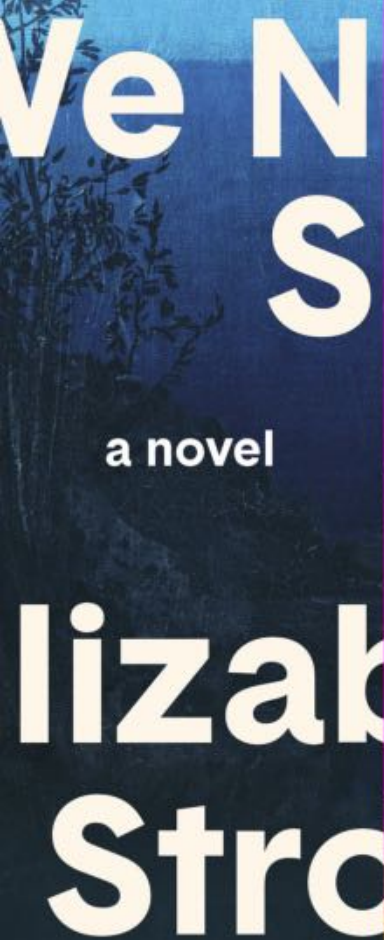
As much as I've been loving squeezing my body into new corsets (or, at least, loving the results), there are times when the pain and inconvenience proves to be a bit much. Back in the bathroom at Ayat, I'm faced with a choice of my own, though it's an easy one: I simply loosen my laces, open the buttons one by one, and drop my corset into my tote. Almost immediately, my body begins to feel a bit like crescent roll dough that's popped out of its container. When I return to our table, I confess to just what I'd been up to. "So you're finished with corsets?" my friend asks, with a sly smile.

Today? Definitely. Tomorrow? I'll probably lace back up again. □

#### IN A BIND

Erdem's spring 2026 runway featured an array of 19th-century-inspired caged, corseted, cinched, and belted pieces.





**T**here's a beguiling simplicity to Elizabeth Strout's fiction—slim novels set in New England, populated with characters who bury feelings under Yankee reticence. You don't quite notice, amid the placid small-town interactions, how devastatingly sad the situation has become. At the center of **The Things We Never Say** (Random House) is a beloved middle-aged history teacher, a genuinely good man named Artie Dam, who just so happens to want to kill himself. But then when Artie nearly dies, and when his adult son reveals a life-changing secret, he rediscovers a will to live. Strout's shardlike book is about endurance and about moving steadily forward even when you lose your bearings.—TAYLOR ANTRIM

In the rapidly gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood of Fort Greene circa 2007, 20-something resident Alicia Canales Forten is caught between the pressures applied by her dutiful, class-conscious mother and a life of liberty embodied by young artists who make chain-saw ice sculptures in abandoned Dumbo lofts. Alicia is a Boricua Nick Carraway—proximal to wealth

## BOOK IT

A guide to new spring fiction.

but not of it, Ivy League-educated but raised in Gravesend, the far reaches of the outer borough. Pulitzer Prize finalist Xochitl Gonzalez's novel, **Last Night in Brooklyn** (Flatiron), captures a bygone era with wry humor and sharply written characters; it's perfect for anyone who wants to remember the free-wheeling spirit of pre-smartphone nightlife, when anything was possible.—P. CLAIRE DODSON

Douglas Stuart's **John of John** (Grove) follows John-Calum "Cal" Macleod, a recent art-school graduate who returns to the remote Scottish Isle of Harris to help his strict Presbyterian father, John, care for his grandmother. Cal reluctantly reintegrates, and long-buried tensions threaten the delicate balance between the Macleods and their community. As with Stuart's prior novels, *Young Mungo* and *Shuggie Bain*, the focus

here is sexuality, masculinity, and generational trauma, set against harsh realities of rural life. With his gripping latest, Stuart has further established himself as a master of human emotion.—JILLIAN SELZER

You could be forgiven for thinking that Jenny Jackson, who offered a delicious dissection of Brooklyn's upper crust in 2023's *Pineapple Street*, would stick to New York City society. But in **The Shampoo Effect** (Pamela Dorman Books) she describes a fictional Massachusetts seaside town, where a handful of lifelong friends are living in a state of arrested development, even as their joints get stiffer and their hangovers more deadly. Into this scene steps a younger writer named Caroline Lash, who falls in love with one of the uncoupled men. True to the title, *The Shampoo Effect* is a frothy, exuberant book in which the stakes are rarely higher than shifting relationships, and yet that feels like plenty.—CHLOE SCHAMA

### BY THE COVER

Cover details of, FROM LEFT, *The Things We Never Say*, *Last Night in Brooklyn*, *John of John*, and *The Shampoo Effect*.

THE THINGS WE NEVER SAY: COURTESY OF RANDOM HOUSE. LAST NIGHT IN BROOKLYN: COURTESY OF FLATIRON BOOKS. JOHN OF JOHN: COURTESY OF GROVE PRESS. THE SHAMPOO EFFECT: COURTESY OF VIKING BOOKS.

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### FRESH FIELDS

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Crowder in the gardens of the Roman and Williams founders, Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch; the Field Studies Flora studio; a pair of Crowder's favorite Japanese shears.

## BLOOM TIME

Floral artist Alex Crowder puts together a line of gardening tools for novice and expert alike.

**W**hen Alex Crowder was a kid growing up in the Ozarks, she would entertain herself by lying in the hayfields. “The grass would crowd my field of vision,” she recalls. “It’s a vivid memory of studying the natural world.” A few decades later, not much has changed. As the founder of Field Studies Flora, a Brooklyn studio with an emphasis on hyperseasonal blooms, the 38-year-old florist spends her days sorting through foliage and stems that her team collects each week from within a 200-mile radius of New York City, which she then uses to create elaborate arrangements for clients like MoMA, Kallmeyer, and Roman and Williams—though Crowder calls them interventions: “I want people to stop in their tracks.”



This spring, Crowder is breaking new ground (pun intended) by offering a hand-picked line of tools. There are elegant woven foraging baskets made in collaboration with Underwater Weaving Studio, leather holsters, and aprons by Samuel Snider. All of this will be custom-made, with the exception of Crowder’s favorite Japanese shears. These are the things you need, says Crowder. “There’s this idea that you have to take classes or do a workshop to become a florist, and it’s not true.”

Indeed, what sets Crowder apart is not just the beauty of her work, with its focus on quirks and nuances—“the way a stem bends, or how a leaf is a bit bespeckled,” in her words—but also her responsible practice. She’s turned down clients whose values don’t align with her steadfast belief in sourcing seasonally and locally and uses the farm-to-table food and circular fashion movements as parallels to her approach. “That comparison switches things in people’s minds, and consumers drive change,” Crowder notes. “They are the ones who will help us reroute the industry.” With the tools (available online) she hopes to spread that message. But she also simply wants to help others feel that same connection with nature she had as a child—and that she still experiences every day as she wrangles branches and blooms. “It’s a lovely way to work,” Crowder adds. “To let nature dictate.”—LIAM HESS

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**GODDESS  
DRESSING**

FROM LEFT: Models Ashley Graham, Bhavitha Mandava, and Devyn Garcia play three graces in The Met's new Condé M. Nast Galleries. Graham's **Di Petsa** gown evokes the Hellenistic period, while Mandava and Garcia channel ancient charioteers in chiton-esque **Tory Burch** and **Michael Kors Collection** dresses. Fashion Editor: Amanda Harlech.



# Making Space

As The Metropolitan Museum of Art gives the Costume Institute pride of place with new galleries, Dodie Kazanjian considers “Costume Art,” an exhibition that sets art and fashion side by side—and erases any distinctions between the two. Photographed by Ethan James Green.



“Fashion is more art than art is,” according to Andy Warhol, who, 39 years after his death, may have the last word. Is fashion art? Is art fashion? The answer to those perennial, pesky questions should be resolved this May when The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute, after years in the basement, expands upstairs into prime real estate, just adjacent to The Met’s Great Hall. “In a way fashion is beyond art,” says the Costume Institute’s curator in charge, Andrew Bolton. “It embodies our lived experience. It’s the only art form that does that.”

Fashion will now be at the center of the museum in what has been The Met’s sprawling gift store, between the Egyptian galleries to the north and the Greek and Roman galleries to the south. There, in a home of their own, the Costume Institute’s Condé M. Nast Galleries—named for the publisher and bon vivant who made *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and other magazines into cultural touchstones—will present “Costume Art,” an exhibition which examines and celebrates the dressed body, featuring clothing and artworks from a majority of the museum’s 19 collecting areas.

Max Hollein, the CEO and director of The Metropolitan Museum, calls the new galleries “a powerful continuation” of what the institution has long done. “The Costume Institute is part of our identity. The new galleries don’t represent revolution.”

But they were a long time coming, and all the while the audience for fashion has grown dramatically. “The relationship between fashion and art has become less defensive,” says the artist Maurizio Cattelan, one of several artists and curators I spoke to about The Met’s new galleries in the course of writing this story. “Fashion no longer asks for permission from art, and art no longer pretends to ignore fashion. They’ve understood they share the same obsession: the body, power, desire, status.” He goes on, “At The Met, fashion has moved from being displayed as craft to being framed as narrative. The exhibitions feel less like wardrobes and more like arguments. That shift, from object to idea, is where fashion becomes interesting.”

“The impact of the Costume Institute and its exhibitions has grown enormously over the last 30 years,” says the designer Michael Kors, who reels off name after name (from Mark Rothko to John Singer Sargent to Georgia O’Keeffe) when I ask him how art and artists have influenced his work. “It’s opened people’s eyes to the interconnection between fashion and everything—from pop



#### AHEAD OF THE CURVE

“Costume Art” is an exploration of contrasts. ABOVE: The contours of Jean Arp’s undulating *Configuration in Serpentine Movements I* (1950)—a work from The Met’s holdings—find an echo in model Angelina Kendall’s surging **Duran Lantink** dress (OPPOSITE).

**NESTING STAGE**

A gourd-shaped artifact—part of The Met's collection of Japanese 19th-century Meiji period art—evokes fertility. OPPOSITE: Model Adut Akech Bior, pregnant with her second child, in Loewe.







**SHAKE THE FOUNDATION**

BELOW, FROM LEFT: A **Charles James** muslin dress from 1947 employs a bustle as a kind of scaffolding, while Nicolas Ghesquière's 2006 work for **Balenciaga** creates the illusion of a pannier atop a buoyant skirt. OPPOSITE: Model Elisabetta Dessy wears a quilted **Erdem x Barbour** coat inspired by Deborah Cavendish, the late Duchess of Devonshire.



culture to politics to art. It has shown the public that fashion is about more than just the clothes you put on every day.”

And these new galleries, says the designer Tory Burch, “will recognize fashion as an essential part of our shared history. The Met has always understood that fashion is a vital form of creative expression, one that shapes and reflects our culture.”

Even so, the Costume Institute’s spring show remained stateless for years. The new home came about after a long campaign (much of it led by the global editorial director at this magazine) and resulted in a daunting assignment for an architecture firm. The commission went to the Brooklyn-based firm Peterson Rich Office, whose principals, Nathan Rich and Miriam Peterson—a husband-and-wife team who had their first date at The Met—immersed themselves in the history of the museum and its 21 separate buildings. “It’s more of a city than a building,” says Peterson. The two studied the Great Hall and thought about how it might lead to the galleries and considered the way light filters in. They knew their job would be to create a new urban pathway and they worked closely with Bolton. “It was wonderful having conversations with him,” says Peterson. “We felt a deep resonance between architecture as a field and costume as an art form.” Bolton needed a flexible space, where lighting could be adjusted and power provided, but he wanted it to reflect something of the stature of the Greek and Roman galleries. “It had to be a rotating exhibition space,” says Rich. “It needed to constantly change. At the same time, it had to feel as if it had always been there.” The new almost-12,000-square-foot galleries are divided into five interconnected spaces, and they incorporate limestone thresholds, echoing the limestone arches in the Great Hall. The luminescent gray-and-white stone floors, beamed ceilings, and Venetian plaster walls flood the new space with an aura of permanence.

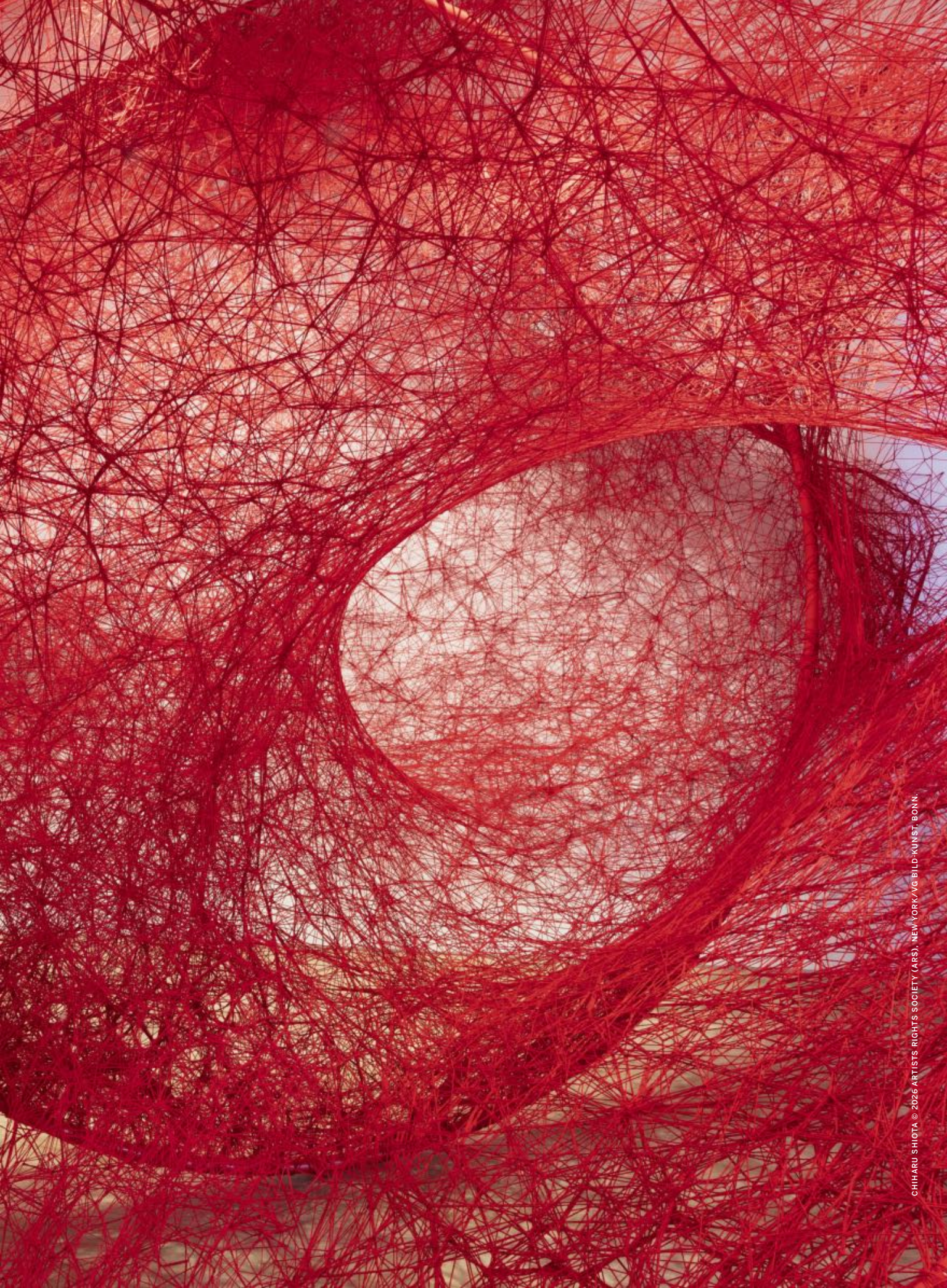
“Fashion at The Met has grown from celebrating beauty and craftsmanship to exploring culture, politics, and history,” says Dasha Zhukova, an art collector, businesswoman, and trustee at the museum. “It’s not just about what we wear, but what clothing tells us about who we are. So I wouldn’t call it controversial that the Costume Institute has taken center stage at The Met. The new galleries are about perspective, not hierarchy.”



#### WRAP PARTY

The exuberant colors, full figure, and winding snake in Niki de Saint-Phalle’s *Nana and Serpent* from 1992 (ABOVE) find common ground with Michaela Stark’s body-binding corsetry (OPPOSITE). For Stark, the female body—in this case, model Jill Kortleve—completes the work. “When there is an element of flesh—of real identity—you can really appreciate Jill and the intimacy that she’s giving us,” Stark says.





**EVERYTHING'S  
CONNECTED**

A rendering of red veins bleeds into model Libby Taverner's black wool-mohair **Olivier Theyskens** gown. OPPOSITE: A close-up of Chiharu Shiota's 2024 work *In Circles* resembles an arterial network.





#### PAST LIVES

Model Abény Nhial turns back time in a warrior-esque **Givenchy** minidress by Alexander McQueen, its leather trompe l'oeil breastplate standing in for a suit of armor. OPPOSITE: Models Chen Yang and Yura Romaniuk go skin-deep in **Tamae Hirokawa for Somarta** bodysuits, their intricate beadwork mimicking patterns seen in Japanese dogū figurines from the final Jōmon period (circa 1000–300 BCE).

#### BEAUTY NOTE

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**PURPOSE BUILT**

After losing mobility in her legs, designer Louise Linderoth devoted herself to thinking about dressing wheelchair users in everything from jeans to high fashion. Here, model and musician Aariana Rose Philip, who has quadriplegic cerebral palsy, wears Linderoth's **Lou Dehrot** strapless jumpsuit. "It was so fabulous and magical—I felt like a piece of high art," Philip says of the shoot. OPPOSITE: Model Emeline Hoareau's **Undercover** jacket incorporates a memento mori.







Zhukova also points out that the Costume Institute has been responsible for engaging a younger and more diverse audience. This audience is especially uninterested in drawing boundaries. The painter Anna Weyant, herself just 31, tells me firmly that costume should be regarded as art and indeed as one of art's most "political forms."

Tschabalala Self (whose brilliant work *Evening* can be seen on page 146) says, "To me, the separation between fashion and art is a false dichotomy. They're both means of expression, and they're both vehicles—modalities, really—that allow artists to express the concerns and desires of our time.... I'm really excited to see the new exhibition.... I'm a figurative painter, so the body is central in my practice. It's something we all share, and when we dress we all make a statement."

"The term *art* is a legacy of a much older term from the ancient Greeks: *arete*, which translates as 'excellence,'" says the artist Paul Chan. "So it seems to me that there can be excellence in costumes as much as in any painting or sculpture."

Any dissent to The Met's grand move? "I regard fashion as an art but not as Art," comments Massimiliano Gioni, the artistic director of the New Museum in Lower Manhattan. And yet Gioni is quick to point out that museums and curators ("myself included," he says) have expanded their field of vision. "It doesn't even matter whether fashion is art or not: certainly it is a discipline, a practice that can tell us a lot about what we desire and value—as such, it is a language worth listening to and engaging with if we want to learn more about ourselves."

"The difference between art and fashion is time," says the artist Rachel Feinstein. "Fashion is about the present, about now. Next year, what you're presently seeing on the runway is going to look dated, where a painting or sculpture made today will not. Art has a longevity aspect—it's meant to last."

Boundaries vanish in the new exhibition Bolton has mounted. In conception, "Costume Art" is inclusive and collaborative, and the unifying theme is the human body and how it has been depicted—dressed, undressed, decorated, honored, injured, and mourned. In a series of revelatory, often surprising, sometimes purposefully jarring, juxtapositions, the exhibition pairs objects and images with clothing: a 460 BCE Greek vessel with a 1920s gown by Fortuny; Albrecht Dürer's *Man of Sorrows with Arms*



#### SHEER POWER

Translucence has always been in fashion, from the 2024 **Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello** hosiery dress—worn by model Mona Tougaard (OPPOSITE)—to Pharaoh Akhenaten's reign. In an Egyptian relief from this period held by The Met, *Dancers with Instruments* (ABOVE, circa 1353–1336 BCE), musicians are pictured in sheer linen garments called kalasiris.



### UNDER YOUR SKIN

What lies beneath the flesh is a centuries-old fascination. In 1746, the French anatomist and artist Jacques Fabien Gautier Dagoty painted a flayed female subject in *Myologie Complète en Couleur et Grandeur Naturelle*, while more recently designers **Robert Wun Couture** and **Thom Browne Couture** have offered their own interpretations— as seen on models Yasmin Warsame and Betsy Gaghan (OPPOSITE). In this story: hair, Jimmy Paul; makeup, Kabuki. Details, see In This Issue.





*Outstretched* with Vivienne Westwood's Martyr to Love jacket; an 1883 walking dress that appears to have strolled out of Seurat's study for *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*; Jean Arp's and Henry Moore's curvilinear sculptures with ensembles by Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons. The exhibition reveals the long and symbiotic relationship between art and fashion—making the case that they are separate but equal art forms.

"I wanted to present fashion as a lens with which to look at art," Bolton explains. "I wanted the pairings to be sometimes formal, sometimes conceptual, sometimes political, sometimes humorous, sometimes deeply profound, and sometimes lighthearted. When you juxtapose a garment with an artwork, another meaning comes about. Something else happens. I want to focus on that. It's as if one plus one equals three.... Hopefully, the show will empower people to make those connections beyond the four walls of the museum."

"I've been struck by how The Met's presentation of fashion has shifted from something archival to something more immersive, almost cinematic," says the artist Laurie Simmons. "The exhibitions have taken on narrative, mood, psychology—more of a sense of performance.... The museum is acknowledging that the body—dressed, styled, staged—is as rich and loaded as any ancient relic. It's also an ongoing story that's constantly being rewritten in real time. Its placement near the Egyptians and across from the Greeks and Romans feels less like a disruption and more like a correction. It acknowledges that what we wear is also civilization's artifact."

"I like the idea that some of the glamour of fashion is rubbing off on painting and artists," the artist John Currin tells me. "I care about painting even more than sculpture or architecture or photography; still, I think these things coexist wonderfully, especially fashion, because it's been so beneficial for the museum." Institutions like The Met need change, he argues; nothing should be regarded as sacred. "They should have a celebrity zoo at The Met," he says. "People naked in cages. They can work out in front of everybody.... I'll give up the bookstore if that's what it takes. (The Met has not given up its store—only relocated it.)"

Finally, I asked my husband, Calvin Tomkins, who wrote the history of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (*Merchants and Masterpieces*) the question I'd been asking everyone. "Can costume be art and art be fashion?" He answered with a resounding "Yes!" and added, "In fact, the two are so close that they can't help being each other." □

"It had to be a rotating exhibition space," says architect Nathan Rich.

"It needed to constantly change. At the same time, it had to feel as if it had always been there"

#### MAJOR SCALE

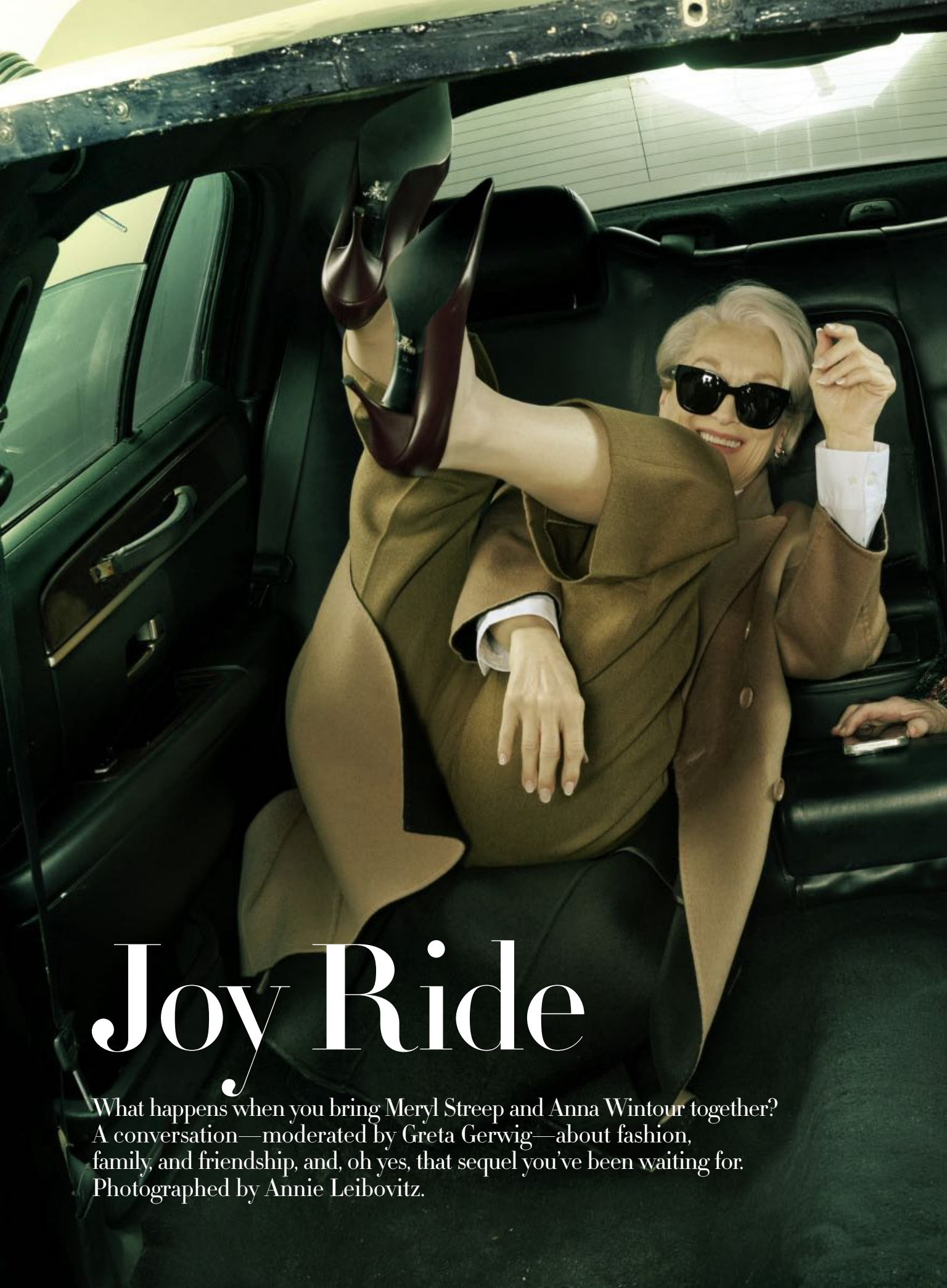
OPPOSITE: Nathan Rich (in a **Boglioli Milano** suit) and Miriam Peterson (in a **Proenza Schouler** dress) of Peterson Rich Office are the husband-and-wife architects who designed the Condé M. Nast Galleries.  
Sittings Editor: Michael Philouze.



**GROWTH  
AND FORM**

Andrew Bolton,  
curator in charge  
of the Costume  
Institute. OPPOSITE:  
Max Hollein,  
The Met's director  
and CEO.





# Joy Ride

What happens when you bring Meryl Streep and Anna Wintour together? A conversation—moderated by Greta Gerwig—about fashion, family, and friendship, and, oh yes, that sequel you've been waiting for. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.



#### **BUCKLE UP**

Streep in a Dolce & Gabbana coat, Loro Piana pants, and Prada shoes and sunglasses. Wintour in a Chanel coat, brooch, sunglasses, and dress, and Manolo Blahnik boots. For Wintour: hair, Bobby Michael; makeup, Melissa Silver. For Streep: hair and makeup, Donald S Mcinnes. Details, see In This Issue.

Fashion Editor:  
Grace Coddington.

# B

Both Meryl and Anna arrive in yellow scarves, like a pair of generals in matching epaulets. We're in a sprawling suite at the Crosby Street Hotel, and the occasion is a conversation with a timely premise: What happens when you put two Mirandas in a room? The filmmaker Greta Gerwig, who directed Meryl in 2019's *Little Women*, is here too. As an avowed fan of the *Devil Wears Prada* films—*DWP2* (as it's known at *Vogue*) opens in theaters on May 1—she has kindly offered to act as moderator. My role is something akin to court stenographer.

The suite's jaunty decor matches Meryl's gauzy, sunny pashmina. Anna's is more egg yolk in color and of a thicker, fringed cashmere. They catch up like old friends, discussing theater outings, politics, parenting, and grandparenting. Greta describes the emotional whiplash of returning home to young children after months away on set filming her forthcoming *Narnia* film ("They punished me on Face-Time," she says, and Meryl nods knowingly). The winter temperatures outside are record-breaking; inside it feels almost cozy.

But time is of the essence. This encounter is the result of months of planning and not a small bit of arm-twisting, and it was combined with a remarkable shoot: Annie Leibovitz photographing Anna and Meryl with Grace Coddington acting as stylist (a power quartet if I've ever heard of one).

Below is a lightly edited version of the conversation that followed. Meryl and Anna began, naturally enough, by talking about coats, which are something of a motif in the first film. (Who can forget the parade of them flung on the assistant's desk? Though for the record, I have only seen Anna politely hand hers off.) "I like coats," Meryl said. "They cover all the sins of whatever else is underneath."

"And they're easy to try on," Anna said.

It proceeded swiftly from there.—CHLOE MALLE

**GRETA GERWIG:** The question of how you present yourself is so much what *The Devil Wears Prada* is about. For men, there's a clear code: You dress for the job you want. But for women, dressing has always been more nebulous. Anna, how much do you think about that? Do you think about how women are meant to dress to communicate power?

**ANNA WINTOUR:** I don't think wearing a power suit to the office is in any way necessary. Think about the women that one admires: Mrs. Obama comes to mind. Whether she's wearing J.Crew or Duro Olowu or Matthieu Blazy's Chanel, she always looks like herself. I'm full of admiration for New York City's new first lady because she looks so cool and wears a lot of vintage—young and modern and also entirely herself. To be fair, Melania Trump also always looks like herself when she dresses.

**MERYL STREEP:** I have so many thoughts about this. I think the most...powerful message that our current first lady sent was in the coat that said "I Really Don't Care, Do U?" when she was going to see migrant children who were incarcerated. All dress is about expressing yourself, but we're also subject to larger historical and political sweeps of expectation. I'm stunned at how women in power have to have bare arms on television while men are covered in shirts and ties or a suit. There's an apology built into women. They have to show their smallness. It's compensatory: The advancements of women in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of this one have been destabilizing. It's as if women have to say, "I'm little. I can't walk in these shoes. I can't run. I'm bare, not threatening."

**GERWIG:** Meryl, you and I were talking about women in films, and the great parts women have had—like Bette Davis or Rosalind Russell. Even at a moment in America when there weren't many women with full careers, the roles for women were terrific. And you said, "Yes, well that's because there was no actual threat of Rosalind Russell taking Cary Grant's job."

**STREEP:** Or Spencer Tracy's. So it was fun. It was like cross-dressing.

**GERWIG:** Women didn't actually present a threat, so we could be big and outrageous in films—

**STREEP:** We could be brassy and smoke and be tough.

**GERWIG:** What I think is interesting here is that the character of Miranda Priestly is the sort of outsize role that Bette Davis would be allowed to have.

**STREEP:** Absolutely. Unapologetic.

**GERWIG:** I wondered if that was why you decided, 20 years later, to go back. Was it watching the world turn and thinking, What do we need from Miranda now?

**STREEP:** I was interested in the business part of it, that thing of carrying the weight of many, many people's jobs, running a big organization, keeping it going somehow. With this one, I thought, Well, where are they going to go? Now that everything's disintegrating, now that these institutions are being undermined or exploded in a way that who knows what is happening in the world right now—I wondered what they were going to do. And I do think they've located something true about the business now.

**WINTOUR:** What I liked about the first film is that it showed the world what a huge business fashion is. It's a true economic force globally, and the first film acknowledged that. So much has changed. But I like to think we're evolving rather than disintegrating. We are still here. We're all doing our jobs—in different ways and across multiple platforms instead of just one, but how wonderful is that? We're reaching far more people.

**STREEP:** Oh, I didn't mean disintegrating!

**WINTOUR:** When I heard rumors that this new film might be happening, I called Meryl to ask if it was true. I knew she would tell me if it was going to be all right. She hadn't yet read the script, so she said she'd call me back. And that's what she did. She read the script. She called me back and said, "Anna, I think it's going to be all right." She told me very little about what happens in the film, but I trusted her implicitly.

**GERWIG:** Here's another thing that's changed: Fashion used to be thought of as elitist. Why was it seen that way?

**WINTOUR:** Maybe because many, many decades ago we were living in the world of haute couture and very expensive fashion only being available to a small group of society women. Today fashion is so much more democratic, and its influence is enormous. It's central to the culture. Look at how interested people are in what the characters are wearing in *Wuthering Heights* or *Euphoria*. Look at the big companies hiring great designers—like Zara signing John Galliano as a creative partner. Or Gap bringing on Zac Posen. Coach hiring Stuart Vevers. Uniqlo working with Jonathan Anderson and Clare Waight Keller. It's happening everywhere. This is a very changed landscape.

**GERWIG:** I would love for you both to just speak about being 76. I'm in my early 40s and I look at both of you and I think, That is worth going for.

**WINTOUR:** And we're being photographed by a 76-year-old woman!

**STREEP:** My life...I can't even speak about that. That question is too huge. In terms of Miranda, and coming back to that character 20 years later, I did think honestly about Anna and tried to imagine what it was like to carry her responsibility and to be as interested in the world and curious as she must have to be. That's the key, I think, to being alive: Always breaking new water. Always breaking

the waves. And we're not done yet. But the thing that's fun about this character is that I was using my role models, different people that I know, and most of them are men. So that gave me some freedom too.

**WINTOUR:** First of all, I'd like to say it's such an honor to be played by Meryl, however distant Miranda is from myself. Who wouldn't think that that wasn't the most extraordinary gift? I like my age. I feel as alive, excited, and aware as ever, and I like to learn from my children and from all my teams around the world. It's always exciting. And I think with experience, you have a sense of balance and proportion, and you know that life is not perfect and that things will go wrong and you're just going to give it your best shot. But if it doesn't work, you have to move on. I feel age is actually an advantage.

**STREEP:** Yes.

**WINTOUR:** I think with a life well lived, you can lead more easily.

**GERWIG:** I can definitely say that from being on set with Meryl, everybody sits up a little straighter when you're there.

**STREEP:** That's ridiculous.

**GERWIG:** No, it's true. I watched it happen when we did *Little Women* together, and you were in costume and you sat in for your own lighting, and that was the fastest they've ever lit anything. It was just: *Meryl is sitting in for her lighting*. I don't know if fashion and publishing feels this way, but I deeply feel that filmmaking is passed from person to person. Meryl, you've experienced that—and

some of the people you've walked this path with are not here. Mike [Nichols] is not here, and Robert [Redford].

**STREEP:** Mike's here. [*Touches her chest.*] Mike is so here. That's the great consolation of getting older. It's unbearable when every week somebody's dying that I love, but you realize, Okay, you've got to swallow her. You've got to swallow him. You've got to have all of them. They are in here, you're going to use them, and they're going to live. The indelible people don't go. We don't lose people. We keep them and they keep working.

**GERWIG:** Anna, do you feel that same thing of something being passed on, or a connection to different designers or people who are gone?

**WINTOUR:** Well, of course, *Vogue* is CONTINUED ON PAGE 174

# LIFE DRAWING

The human figure is the heart of “Costume Art,” the new show at The Met—the way it has been dressed, undressed, manipulated, ornamented, and honored over centuries of art-making. Here, *Vogue* adds a small chapter to that history, with five works by contemporary female artists, each considering the body in all its marvelous, multitudinous glory.

Photograph by Charlotte Wales

## IN FLUX

*Frank and Grace and Me*, 2026, a self-portrait by Charlotte Wales, who was well into her second pregnancy at the time—accompanied by her toddler son. “I couldn’t wait for my daughter to be born,” she says, “so I could be more physical with my son again.”





#### STUDY IN CONTRASTS

"Costume Art" is built on historical juxtapositions. Here, Harley Weir offers a body adorned with a leather British army apron and a 19th-century crinoline. OPPOSITE: The "Abstract Body" is one of the exhibition's themes. A self-portrait by Isabelle Wenzel (who trained as an acrobat) plays with its meaning.

Photograph by Harley Weir



Photograph by Isabelle Wenzel

**ADD A LAYER**

*Evening*, 2019, by  
Tschabalala Self—  
who is on the advisory  
committee for  
"Costume Art" and is  
herself photographed  
on page 156—  
addresses bodily  
scale and shape  
to expressive effect.





**BARE IT ALL**

The nude body is  
Coco Capitán's subject  
in this work—and a  
preoccupation in the  
exhibition as well.

Artwork by Tschabalala Self  
Photograph by Coco Capitán

# Going Strong

Venus Williams has long defied expectations—which is why stepping off-court now is very much not on the menu. The Met Gala cohost (and newlywed!) talks to Jen Wang about building her legacy, match by match. Photographed by Jackie Nickerson.

It's the last place on earth you'd expect to find Venus Williams—a palm-shaded tiki bar on a Florida waterway in Palm Beach North: plastic armchairs, baskets of seafood on the menu, Jimmy Buffett over the speakers. But Venus likes the food at this honky-tonk, she tells me matter-of-factly, and we take a table on the sand with a lighthouse view. We're in Jupiter, Florida, near Venus's beachfront home, where she wed Danish Italian model-actor-restaurateur Andrea Preti in December in a multiday affair that the bride didn't want to end. (There was also an intimate ceremony in Ischia, Italy, held months before.) "There's no more wedding to plan," she says with a sigh. "That part's really sad."

She proceeds to order a veggie burger, fries, and, to my surprise, a Bloody Mary. She's joking, it turns out, though that's almost impossible to discern, as her poker face—once described as "lapidary" for its exquisite composure—has been finely honed across a 32-year career.

Improbably, that career is still going strong. Unlike her younger sister, Serena, who announced in 2022 that she was "evolving away" from tennis, Venus, at 45, has never even hinted at retirement. "I get a lot of joy out of being different or unexpected or bucking the system," she says. "I find that thrilling." Venus is currently the oldest competitor on the women's tour, and though she did step away two years ago to treat a debilitating, and long undiagnosed, uterine fibroid condition called adenomyosis, the seven-time Grand Slam champion came charging back last year, getting as far as the US Open doubles quarterfinals with 23-year-old Canadian Leylah Fernandez. "It was a lot of fun," Fernandez says of their run. "Walking onto the court with Venus and seeing how much joy tennis has brought to her, it was one of those moments where I thought, Wow. It's not just a job."

Except for the bejeweled black Simone Rocha Cross on her feet, Venus is dressed entirely in winter white this evening, a nod to her recently bygone bridal era. While she's long had the fantasy of living abroad—Preti's family is based in Rome—Venus and her husband have settled near here, enjoying the proximity to Serena and her family, and to their parents, who also live in the area. "They're older now," Venus says of her parents, "and I want every minute with them." Family is paramount to Venus, and while she froze her eggs in her 30s to have "options," she isn't in any hurry to start her own. "I'm playing," she reminds me. "So it would be very inconvenient."

Sacrifice has been a recurring theme in Venus's career, though she wouldn't frame her story that way. Venus and Serena were famously molded into prodigies on the public tennis courts in Compton, California, by their father, Richard Williams, who worked as a security guard, and their mother, Oracene Price, then a registered nurse. "We were just laser-focused," she says. "We missed out on things that we didn't even know we were missing out on." Skipping the juniors circuit to stay in school was about the only thing she had in common with her teenage peers. "I remember one kid, I was kind of friends with him. He was like, 'You think you're better than us.' Because I didn't have time to hang out after school," Venus says. "We immediately went to train for five hours."

## WINGING IT

"I get a lot of joy out of...bucking the system," says Williams, who, at 45, is the oldest competitor on the women's tour. Gucci dress. Hair, Felicia Burrows; makeup, Frankie Boyd. Details, see In This Issue.

Sittings Editor: Eric McNeal.





That dedication yielded milestones. At 17, Venus became the first unseeded female player to reach a US Open final. Five years later, she claimed the number one ranking, the first African American woman to do so in the Open era—this after winning Wimbledon and the US Open with her exceptional combination of power and speed and her tireless court coverage. Her ground strokes were unmatched; her missile-like first serve later set the women's record at 129 miles per hour (and went unbroken for seven years).

Fernandez believes Venus elevated the game to an art form. “It’s so beautiful how she moves, how she kind of glides on grass, which is one of the hardest things to do. She’s not forcing it, it looks so easy. Everything flows.”

There would be accomplishments off-court as well. In 2006 she successfully negotiated with Wimbledon and French Open officials to award female players equal prize money to men, writing a thoughtful op-ed for *The Times* that informed the powers that be that they were on “the wrong side of history.” Venus capped off this campaign by winning Wimbledon the following year and collecting the same pay as her male co-champion.

Then Serena came along. In the 2021 film *King Richard*, their father, in an Oscar-winning turn by Will Smith, presages the dynamic, telling a young Serena, “Your sister is gonna be number one in the whole world, no doubt about it. But you gonna be the best there ever was.” Serena would indeed wrest the number one spot from her older sister and beat her in four consecutive Grand Slam finals, from 2002 to 2003. Venus’s story—extraordinary though it was—was steadily subsumed by Serena’s.

The sisters played each other 31 times, nine of those matches Grand Slam finals (Serena won seven). “I didn’t want to play her,” Venus says. “I was hoping someone else would take her out, to do the hard work for me. Then I could play them, which would’ve been much easier.” She shakes her head and laughs, a breezy demeanor suggesting she wears these memories lightly. “But it was what it was. We got to play a lot of times. I wanted to win. I won as much as I could.”

Serena is more direct. “It was a nightmare,” she says, speaking from her Palm Beach home after a morning spent making slime with her two-year-old daughter, Adira. Playing Venus “was the most difficult thing in my career,” she says. “It’s something you don’t prepare for mentally, because it’s impossible.”

The complexity and strain of their on-court rivalry drew commentary—and not much of it was kind. Some even ascribed nefarious motives to the wins and losses. America’s favorite tennis crank, John McEnroe, insinuated that Richard Williams was predetermining outcomes. And when Venus withdrew from a 2001 semifinal against Serena at Indian Wells due to a knee injury, the crowd turned on the sisters. Serena was booed at her final, as were her father and Venus, who came to cheer on Serena. Richard reported hearing racial epithets. The Williamses boycotted the tournament for 14 years.

Doubles, of course, was a less complicated story. The sisters simply dominated, winning 14 Grand Slam doubles titles and three Olympic gold medals. “Now I realize how magical that was,” Venus says of their doubles record. “I feel like I can find a word better than *magical*,” counters Serena, ever the competitive sibling. “It was magical, but it was also once in a lifetime.”

Serena goes on: “We grew up as singles players. And then my dad said one day, ‘You guys are going to play doubles. Serena, you stand on this side. Venus, you stand on that side.’ And we kept those sides our whole career. We never grew up thinking, Oh, I’m going to win doubles Grand Slams or any of that stuff. But we did. We won them all.”

Though there have been rumors of a Serena comeback—Novak Djokovic recently predicted that she and Venus would be playing doubles together at Wimbledon—the mother of two says she’s firmly in her “mom era.” The professional partnership Serena and Venus do have at the moment is their podcast *Stockton Street*, which launched last September and has featured guests ranging from Olympic sprinter Gabby Thomas to billionaire businessman Mark Cuban. The height of Serena’s ambition beyond that, she tells me, is to replicate those perfect bento box lunches she sees all over social media for her daughters.

Venus, meanwhile, is immersed in workouts, led by her coach Diego Ayala, who previously trained Jelena Janković and Robby Ginepri. “Three hours on the court every day,” she reports. “I work like a dog.” Her work ethic is fueled partly by the experience of playing without pain. For years her undiagnosed adenomyosis caused excessive bleeding, anemia, painful fibroids, and nausea, symptoms that were only successfully treated when Venus underwent a myomectomy, or surgical fibroid removal, in 2024. Venus has also had to contend with the autoimmune disease Sjögren’s syndrome for the last two decades, which causes fatigue and shortness of breath and led to more layoffs from tennis. “I feel great,” Venus says now simply, though she doesn’t know how long this will last. “Hopefully the fibroids don’t grow back. It can happen. They don’t know why.”

Time off from tennis paid other dividends. It was in 2024 that Venus met her husband—at a Gucci runway show in Milan. Preti introduced himself and the two

struck up a conversation. “She speaks Italian very, very well,” Preti says. And when a text relationship ensued, “she asked for restaurant suggestions in Milan, and I said I want to see you,” he remembers. They connected in London, where Venus was cohosting the Serpentine Summer Party. Venus, who’d been single for six years, quickly identified Preti, an old-school romantic, as the One.

“In the past a guy would call you; he would tell you you looked beautiful, that he loved your outfit. In this day and age, that doesn’t really happen,” she laments. “But Andrea did all those things. The first time he called, I thought, ‘Is something wrong?’”

The tight-knit Williams family swept Preti into the fold. “He is her biggest cheerleader,” Serena says. “It’s rare to find someone who loves you wholeheartedly for who you are, not what you represent.” Preti felt their welcome right away. “We were very close,” Preti says. “We could talk about everything, fashion, movies, lots of things. They didn’t make me feel like I was outside.”

In lieu of a honeymoon, Venus and Preti have been together on the road, Venus securing wild card bids to the Australian Open, the ATX Open in Austin, Indian Wells, and the Miami Open. Preti has cheered her on from her player’s box, Venus’s 18-year-old Havanese pup, Harry, perched on his lap. On the rare off-day, the newlyweds like to stay close—as in, locked-in-a-room close. “We love escape rooms,” Venus admits. “We work well together, but he definitely likes to ask for hints, and I’m like, ‘Let’s just hold on. I wanna figure this out first.’”

In May the couple will make their debut in grander confines, at the Met Gala.

Venus is serving as co-chair, alongside Beyoncé and Nicole Kidman. This year’s exhibition, “Costume Art,” sets fashion alongside the dressed form in fine art through centuries—and through a spectrum of body types. “I love the theme. It’s a perfect fit for me,” Venus says. “It’s even more important today because people feel so much pressure to look a certain way. Though there’s so much beauty in difference.”

Venus herself reached the height of five eleven at 13. “I definitely had an awkward period, but I didn’t know I was in it,” she says and laughs (she’d eventually grow to six one). “I didn’t go through a period like, ‘Oh my God, I’m so tall. Guys are this tall.’ I was trying to figure out how to beat these people who were coming for me,” she says. “I was focused on being the best player in the world. I didn’t have time to think about whether I was winning some imaginary beauty contest.”

Venus famously loves fashion—last year at the US Open she wore a parade of New York designers, including Khaite, Luar, and Who Decides War, onto court. Gabriela Hearst, who dressed her for the 2022 Met Gala in

a black Chloé suit and sunglasses, adores working with her. “Venus looked so elegant,” Hearst recalls of the Met look, a play on the film *Men in Black*. “As a superathlete, she is very aware of her body and knows exactly what she wants.” Of late Venus has been simplifying her wardrobe. The cream-colored wool jacket she wears to our interview is Max Mara, which she’s had for a long time, and the matching quarter-zip sweater underneath was a purchase from “Bezos Atelier,” she jokes. “I had to recover from a shopping addiction,” she goes on. “It was horrible. Too much excess.” The remedy has been to donate much of the fashion she owns—handbags especially. (“My dog is my best accessory,” she says with pride.) A look she’s kept is the first one she spent prize money on, a Dolce & Gabbana corset she bought at 19.

When she needs a fashion fix, Venus will turn on *Sex and the City*. “I was 17 when it came out, and didn’t watch risqué stuff,” she says. But she’s made up for lost time: “I’m a Miranda. I love her because she’s cut-and-dried and logical. When she’s angry, she’s angry. And when she’s a jerk, she’s a jerk.” The subject of fashion brings us closest

to retirement talk during our conversation; Venus muses that she’d like to spend more time sewing her own clothes when she stops playing—which is something of a full-circle moment, given that her mother sewed her tennis skirt for her tour debut at 14.

But as long as she’s playing, “there’s no time to sew,” Venus says. A few weeks later, when she arrives at the ATX Open, flashes of top-form Venus are on display. Center Court is packed for her match against Croatian Australian Ajla Tomljanović,

who has the distinction of being the last player to beat Serena on the tour. Preti is here, ensconced in his wife’s player’s box with Harry, cheering her on in French (“*allez!*”) and Italian (“*va bene!*”). The crowd is unabashedly pro-Venus, roaring loudly after every winning shot. Her first serve is still a weapon, and when she nails a backhand down the line, the stadium erupts in “Let’s go, Venus” chants.

Tomljanović bests Venus in the end, but it doesn’t matter: Venus is met with a standing ovation as she makes her way off Center Court, and she acknowledges the crowd with a smile and an appreciative wave. This reminds me of something she said in Florida, something that touched on legacy and what it means to her: “I’ve had a great life getting to do what I love and being able to do it well,” she told me. “It’s an honor. Selfishly, I wanted to be a champ, I wanted to win. But in doing positive things for myself, it trickled down. Like, all of a sudden all of these people are playing”—she means players like Coco Gauff, Madison Keys, Naomi Osaka, and Hailey Baptiste, who have all cited Venus as their inspiration. “It’s all beyond what I could have imagined.” □

“I’ve had a great life getting to do what I love and being able to do it well. It’s an honor.... It’s all beyond what I could have imagined”

## SECOND SKIN

Actor Gwendoline Christie—one of several members of the Met Gala's 2026 host committee featured in this portfolio—wears a gilded, sculptural Carolina Herrera dress; [carolinaherrera.com](http://carolinaherrera.com).  
OPPOSITE: Like the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, ballet dancer Misty Copeland is an awesome vision in a deftly layered top and skirt from Fforme; [fforme.com](http://fforme.com).

Fashion Editor:  
Law Roach.



A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is captured in a dynamic, almost sculptural pose. She is wearing a white, form-fitting, ribbed dress that appears to be made of a fine, textured material like silk or a similar fabric. The dress has a lace-like detail at the bust and a high slit on the side. Her right arm is raised high, and her left arm is extended outwards. Her head is tilted back, and her eyes are closed. The background is a dark, textured wall, possibly a studio backdrop. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of her body and the texture of the dress. The overall mood is artistic and elegant.

# Free Form

Animated by a dauntless band of artists, models, performers, and activists, spring's most beguiling silhouettes—from the sleekly columnar to the sublimely voluminous—do all the talking. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.



**GIRL WONDER**

Actor Chase Sui Wonders lies low and languid in her **Valentino** dress, a dream of shimmery, glimmery embellishments; Valentino boutiques for similar styles.



## BLUE PERIOD

Artist Tschabalala Self, known for her densely patterned paeans to Black womanhood, enjoys the jaunty juxtaposition of a severe black turtleneck, brilliant statement necklace, and ballooning ball skirt, all from **Chanel**.



**LOOK AT IT THIS WAY...**

Model and activist  
Lauren Wasser tries a  
different angle in a  
coruscating, sheer  
Carolina Herrera dress  
([carolinaherrera.com](http://carolinaherrera.com))—with Roberto  
Cavalli slingbacks  
([robertocavalli.com](http://robertocavalli.com)) to  
match her signature  
golden prosthetics.





### TRAIN DREAMS

Model Alex Consani goes long in a figure-skimming persimmon orange **Balenciaga** dress ([balenciaga.com](https://www.balenciaga.com)) that calls to mind Lord Frederic Leighton's aesthetic-movement masterpiece *Flaming June*.



**THE SHAPE OF  
THINGS TO COME**

Actor Wunmi Mosaku sets a striking tone in a Tom Ford top and skirt: fwr.com. Tiffany & Co. cuff; select Tiffany & Co. boutiques. In this story: hair, Sondrea "Dre" Demry-Sanders; makeup, Jamal Scott. Details, see In This Issue.

# THE AFTER -



It's the morning following the Met Gala at The Mark Hotel in Manhattan, and—gloriously—you and your friends have nowhere you need to be. So drink some coffee, order up room service, and start rehashing the night: It's time for a good old-fashioned pajama party. Photographed by Sebastián Faena.

# AFTER-PARTY



## THE SUN ALSO RISES

Model Amelia Gray, still in her cotton candy **Stella McCartney** coat ([stellamccartney.com](http://stellamccartney.com)) and **Victoria Beckham** slip dress ([victoriabeckham.com](http://victoriabeckham.com)), finds a blessed moment of peace and quiet with her trusty Jellycat stuffed bunny.

Fashion Editor: Tabitha Simmons.



**DREAM TEAM**

ABOVE: Model Bhavitha Mandava—in a **Tory Burch** dress ([toryburch.com](http://toryburch.com))—and Gray trade stories. LEFT: Makeover, anyone? Model Abby Champion beckons us inside the powder room. **Chloé** playsuit; [chloe.com](http://chloe.com). OPPOSITE: Sometimes after a big night, you don't choose to sleep—sleep chooses you. Model Sora Choi wears a **Simone Rocha** dress and pillow; [simonerocha.com](http://simonerocha.com). **Tiffany & Co.** jewelry. **Bode** shoes; [bode.com](http://bode.com).







**READY PLAYER ONE**

With nothing but fast food and gaming ahead, model Bibi Breslin and Champion swap their party dresses for ditsy floral Prada pj's; [prada.com](http://prada.com). (Their furry friend, meanwhile, is clearly angling for fries.)



### SHINING UP

ABOVE: Breslin gallivants through the hotel, a voluminous **McQueen** jacket ([alexander mcqueen.com](http://alexandermcqueen.com)) over her **Max Mara** top and skirt. OPPOSITE: It's room service, s'il vous plaît, for model Paloma Elsesser, who accessorizes her **Gucci** robe ([gucci.com](http://gucci.com)) with strands upon strands of **Chopard Haute Joaillerie** diamonds.





## WAKE-UP CALLS

As Gray steps onto the balcony for caffeine and a bit of enlivening spring air, she throws a cropped trench over her gauzy strapless dress—both

**Maison Margiela;** [maisonmargiela.com](http://maisonmargiela.com).

**Jimmy Choo** bag.

OPPOSITE: Champion, in a fantastical

**Erdem** look ([erdem.com](http://erdem.com)), enjoys her cuppa from the windowsill.









**SHOULD I STAY OR  
SHOULD I GO**

ABOVE: Mandava works her charm in hopes of a late checkout in a look by **Erdem**. (While she's traded her heels for **Bode** slippers, the **Van Cleef & Arpels** necklace stays put.) OPPOSITE: Breslin, Champion, and Choi fire up a midday movie in coordinating **Dolce & Gabbana** pajamas; Dolce & Gabbana boutiques.

**BEAUTY NOTE**

For slept-in eyeliner at any hour, Diorshow On Stage Crayon in 099 Black smudges easily before it sets with a waterproof finish.



**DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN**

Model Devyn Garcia is rested and ready to hit the town once more in her slinky Dior slip dress and shoes (but a shot of espresso certainly couldn't hurt); Dior boutiques. OPPOSITE: Breslin, cozied up in her Louis Vuitton dress (select Louis Vuitton boutiques), needs a little more convincing. In this story: hair, Roddi Walters; makeup, Lisa Houghton. Details, see In This Issue.



## JOY RIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 141

built on the values and the traditions of its history. I had the great good fortune to work for both Alexander Liberman and Si Newhouse, and they were extraordinary men with fantastic instincts. I do think you should stay grounded in your past. When you understand your history, that's when you can move forward.

**STREEP:** Do you see that anyone will have a career like Karl Lagerfeld's—

**WINTOUR:** Yes!

**STREEP:** That same longevity and influence?

**WINTOUR:** I do, I really do. I feel Matthieu has found the job of his dreams. The owners of Chanel—Alain and Gérard Wertheimer—are very patient. And they've always found that balance between tradition and an openness to change. That was the magic of Karl, who knew history so completely but also had curiosity and restlessness and was an extraordinary multitasker. I think Matthieu has the same vitality and cultural awareness and could be—who knows?—there as long as Karl.

**GERWIG:** There's always the question, especially with women, of children and work and how that goes together. And I got very excited thinking of interviewing you because nobody asks about being a grandmother. So, I mean, Meryl, I know you are incredibly involved—

**STREEP:** Some say over-involved.

**GERWIG:** How does being a grandmother balance with work?

**STREEP:** It's just grabbing seconds, just grabbing everything you can of them, with the knowledge of how completely fleeting it all is and how rapidly time goes. This is what my mother said to me, and I said, "Yeah, yeah." It's the longest, shortest time. And you can't get anything back. So take as much as you can.... I find it divine. I have six grandchildren, six under six. They're six, five, four, three, two, and one. I hope we're not done, but we'll see. I can't even talk about how much it means to me that my kids give me as much time as they do with their kids. The only thing is that they're on two coasts, so I'm in the airplane a lot.

**GERWIG:** And you, Anna, also have grandchildren.

**WINTOUR:** I don't have as many as Meryl. I only have four, and I have four step-grandchildren that grew up all around us. Being a mother when you have the jobs that we have—you have to make the time. I was relentless about going to the games and turning up at the parent-teacher meetings, being there when it was important. I felt like *Vogue* could always wait and that it's okay to be a busy mother. You make it work. We have a family compound on Long Island, and I try to make it a center for all of us, who are spread all over the world. We love to celebrate birthdays and weddings; traditions are important—we're English, so we constantly play games and stage countless tennis tournaments—and we try to take care of each other through thick and thin. I try to instill in my children and my grandchildren that it's family that counts and family who will give you love and support. If you have that, everything else will be fine.

**GERWIG:** Meryl, you said something to me that has rattled around in my head. You said, "Life begins when you make a commitment," and I thought that that was such a wise thing to say. Obviously when you have a family that's the biggest commitment, but I think for both of you in your work, you've made a commitment to your respective fields.

**STREEP:** Tom Stoppard said, "You've got to shift your weight." You're always, always on unstable ground. It's so uncertain being an actor. You're chronically unemployed. And then there's no sort of climb, because fame is something you have in a second. But to make a body of work and have faith in yourself? That takes time, and you can't do it at home by yourself—it's not like writing or composing. I don't think: I love this job. I'm going to have this job for a long time. I think: This is the world. The unstable world. Everything changes and it's about learning to sort of be prepared for that.

**WINTOUR:** But I also think challenges are really what makes what one does interesting. During COVID we had to totally change how we worked, how we communicated—everything. I thought all the time of my son, Charlie, who was a resident at Cornell. He was working in the COVID wards and because his field is mental health, a part of what he had to do was to break tragic news to families when they had lost someone. We were all holed up out in the country, and he would come home

every weekend and had to describe and then he would reach for his children and just hold onto them. That for me was context—an important reminder of what was happening in the world even as I was trying to lead these global teams through uncharted waters. What do you do? You find a way.

**GERWIG:** If you had her job, and you had her job, what is the thing that would be most exciting and what would be the thing that you would think, I can't do that.

**WINTOUR:** There's no way. I have no gifts. I have absolutely no gifts at all. I can't sing, I can't dance, I can't act, I'm useless with my hands, I can't cook, I certainly can't sew.

**STREEP:** You run a multinational corporation, that's all.... I would dread the shoes. Every day, wow, to pull it together. But working with a lot of young people would be thrilling, and to keep all the ideas flowing—I love that kind of engagement—and also just to be creating something that makes people happy. To find beauty. Look for it, nurture it. Support it. That's a good thing.

**GERWIG:** And now I'll just ask one sort of fandom Miranda question. Has her style changed?

**STREEP:** Well, everybody was afraid of Anna on the first one, so we couldn't find any clothes. Nobody would give us any clothes. This time we pared her down. We made her simpler and just more essentially her. And we do have less hair with me—so that was not as floppy and floppy. She loves an accessory, but there's a fearless thing with her. Less worried about what anybody thinks.

**GERWIG:** Did you want to say which is your favorite costume?

**WINTOUR:** Oh, the red dress, the *Jezebel* dress. Pierpaolo!

**STREEP:** Pierpaolo. That he would make that.

**WINTOUR:** It's a great dress. You look amazing in it. What's the film in which your costumes have been your favorite? I know mine is *Out of Africa*.

**STREEP:** I don't know. There were so many great people I've worked with. I liked Florence Foster Jenkins because

I love a big bosom and they knew how to dress a big bosom at a certain time. Costume is character. When I was at Vassar, that was my degree, in costume design, because I'm a good sewer and I really love drawing. For my thesis I designed 60 costumes for *Camino Real*—you know, the Tennessee Williams play. And all those characters are so vivid. They're so idiosyncratic and weird. All my life I've thought I've been such a pain in the ass for whomever is the costume designer. Because I have such little nitpicky ideas.

**GERWIG:** Meryl, you said this thing about the first movie and how you loved being with everyone on set—with Anne and Emily and Stanley—but that you felt as if you couldn't quite hang out with them the way that they could hang out with each other.

**STREEP:** Oh, they all had a fabulous time. And I felt like I had to have some

distance. I do like a hang, I mean, that's almost how you pick the things, like, How good is the hang going to be? But I really consciously pulled back, and I was sitting in my trailer just miserable the whole time.

**WINTOUR:** What did you read when you were in the trailer?

**STREEP:** I didn't read. I knitted. I'm still knitting. But I can't read anything when I'm working because it splits my focus. Especially with this character who has a sort of relentless energy.

**GERWIG:** When we had a wrap party for *Narnia*, I realized nobody wanted me there. I was like, Nobody can have any fun as long as I'm there.

**WINTOUR:** I know that feeling.

**GERWIG:** So when I embraced the last crying child, who was sad that the

movie was over, I was like, "I'm going to take myself home." And I almost felt like, as I walked out the door, everyone was like, "Yay."

**WINTOUR:** The art of the drop-by is also good. You go for five minutes and head for the hills.

**GERWIG:** You want to tell us the plot of the movie?

**STREEP:** That's, like, the last thing I ever remember about a movie. I am the best audience for my own movies because I never remember what happened.

**WINTOUR:** Let's hope it's a happy ending.

**STREEP:** Yes, it's a happy ending. Or not happy, exactly. But it's real and it's triumphant.

**WINTOUR:** Can't wait. □

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# Last Look



## Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello shoe

In Paris, on the northern end of the Place de la Concorde, the Fontaine des Fleuves pays monumental tribute to France's waterways, commerce, and agriculture. Here, it props up yet another moving marvel: one heavily bejeweled Saint Laurent slingback, its colorful toe cap variously calling to mind a Byzantine mosaic and rounded-off pieces of sea glass. With such fanciful footwear, rest assured that wherever you roam, the chic will run river deep.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOM BLESCH

# Sixteen Stone by Tiffany

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