















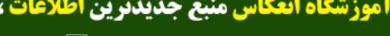






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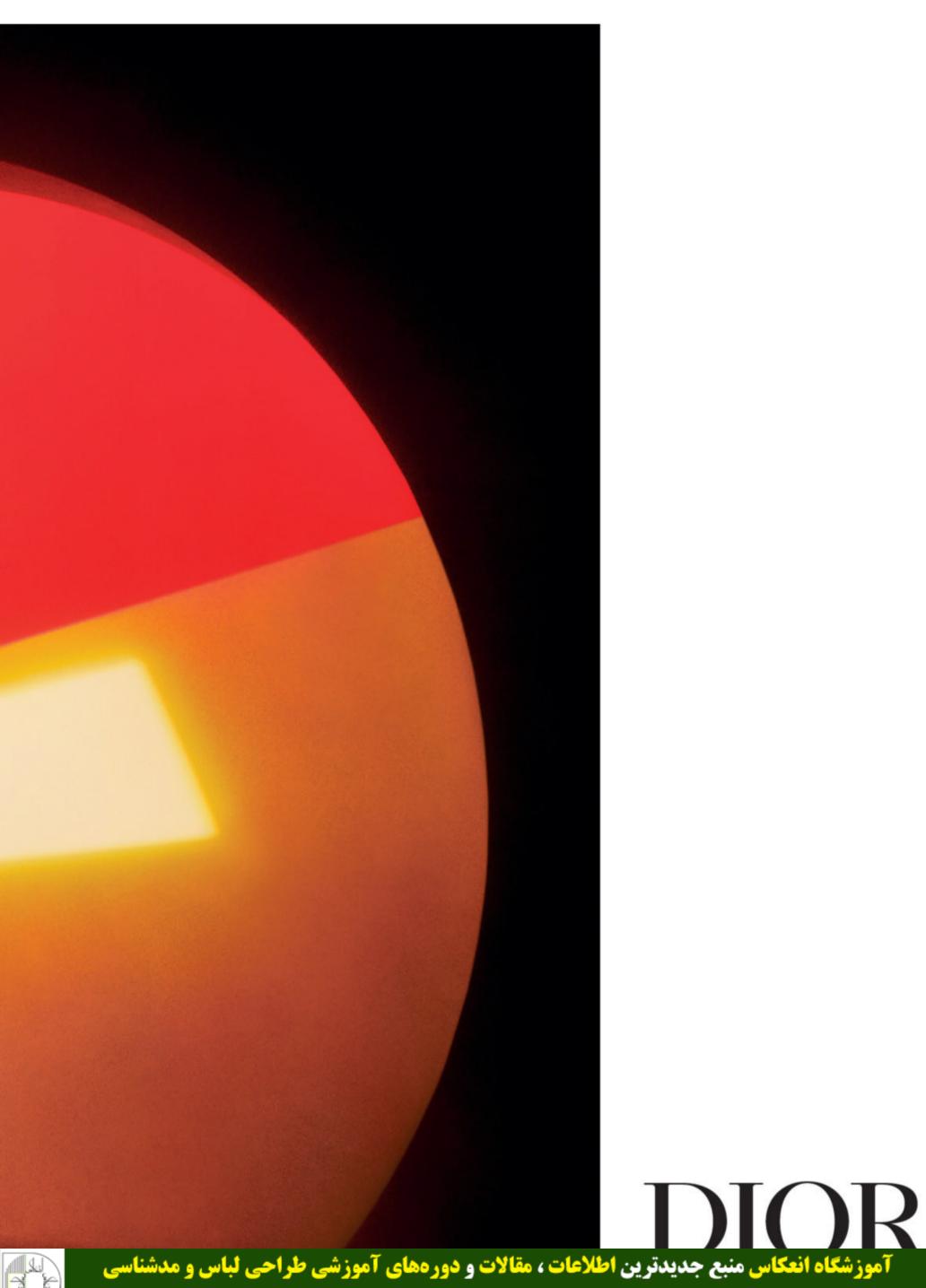




























































































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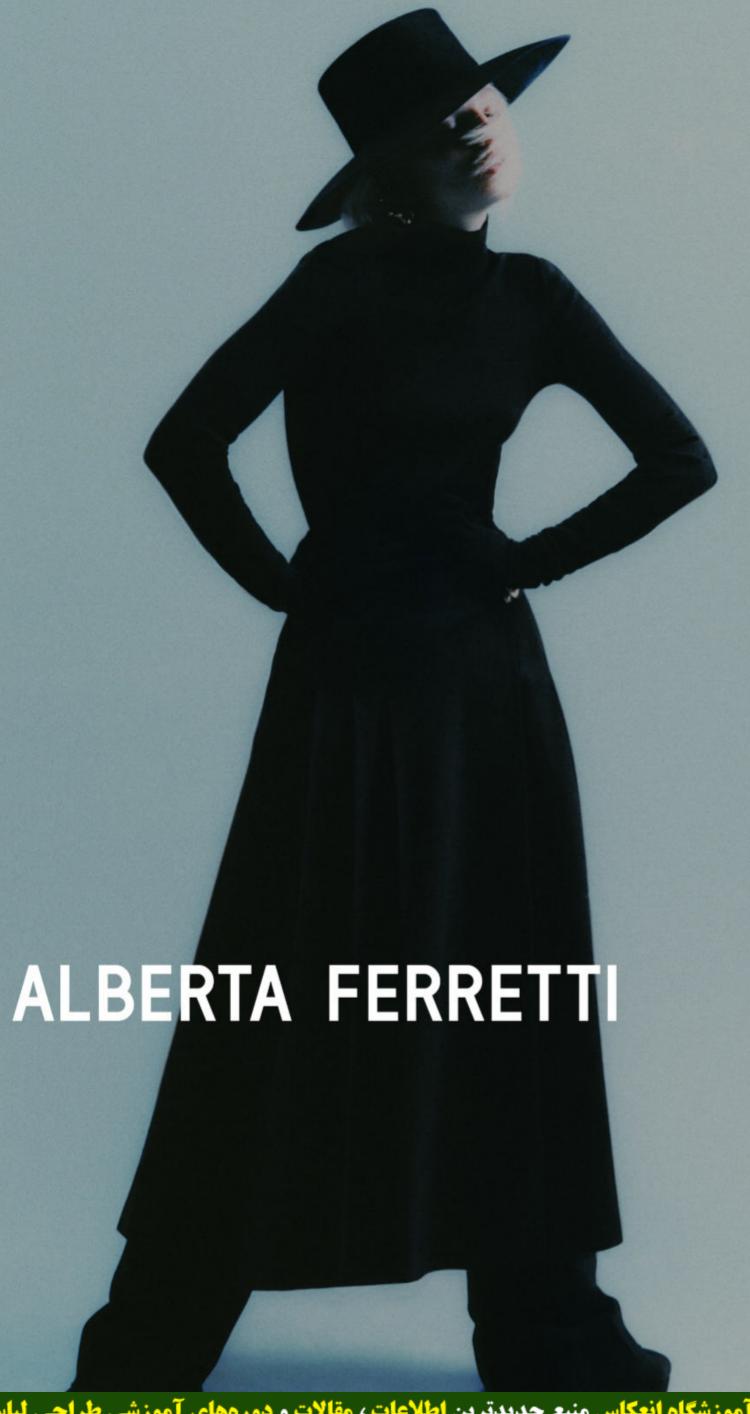
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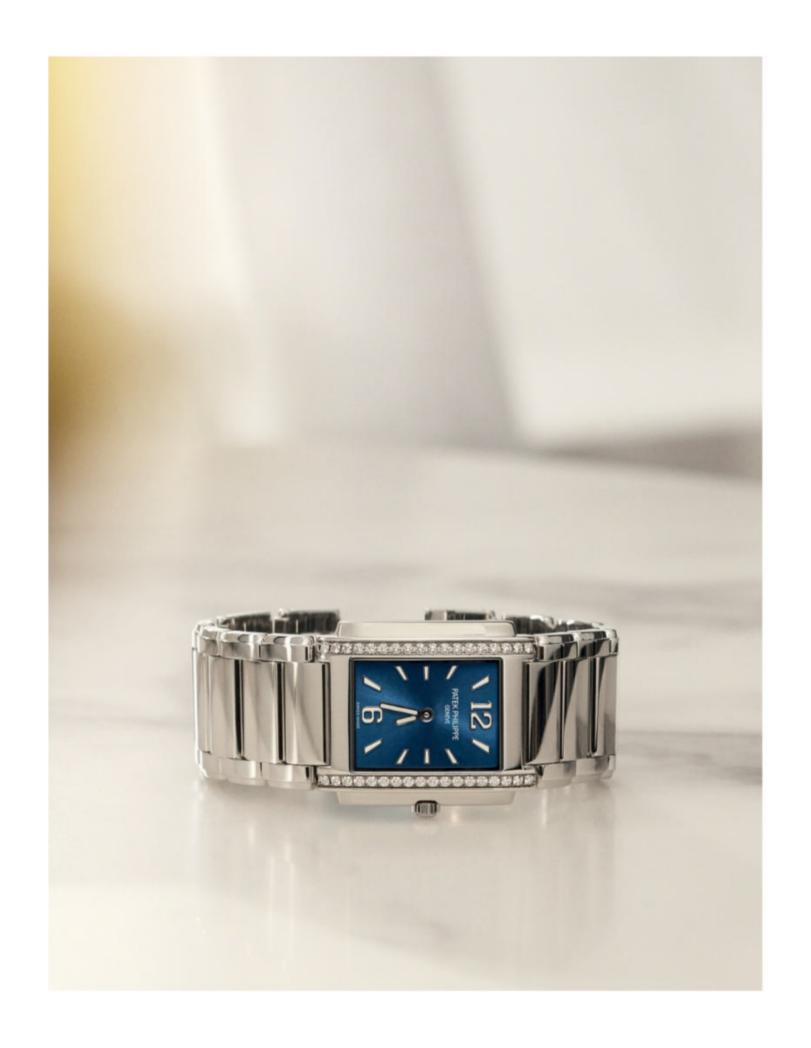




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COVER LOOKS Above left: Natalia Vodianova wears embellished cotton dress, £4,300, Louis Vuitton. Yellow and white gold and diamond earrings (just seen), £7,200, Louis Vuitton Fine Jewellery. Above right (subscribers' cover): suede shirt, £2,250; suede trousers, £2,400, both Loewe. See Stockists for details. Styled by Tania Rat-Patron. Beauty by Violette, Guerlain's Director of Makeup Creation. Hair by Paolo Ferreira at Calliste. Manicure by Olya Ivanova. Natalia Vodianova is a Guerlain ambassador. Photographs by Cédric Bihr





PHOTOGRAPH: LYNETTE GARLAND

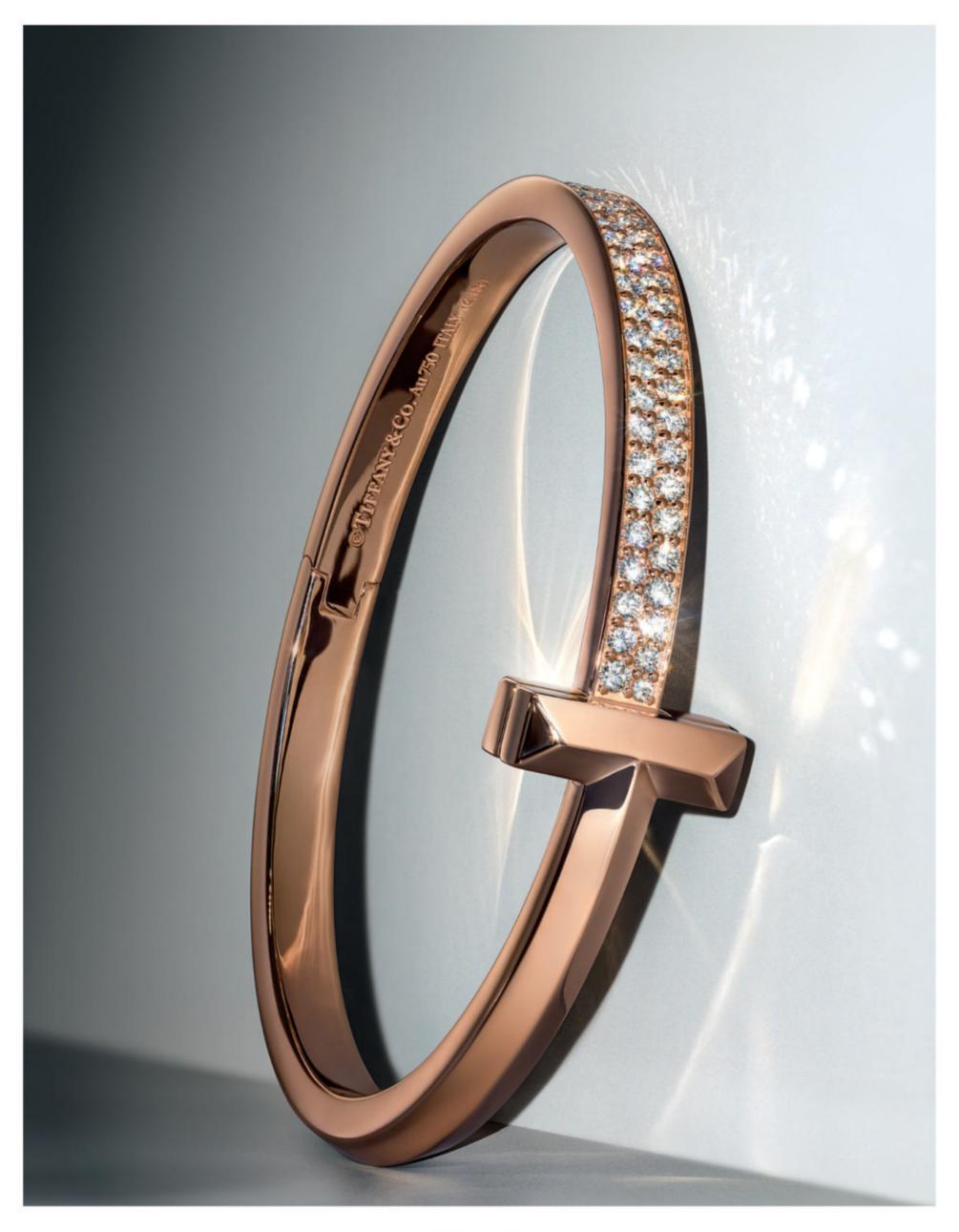












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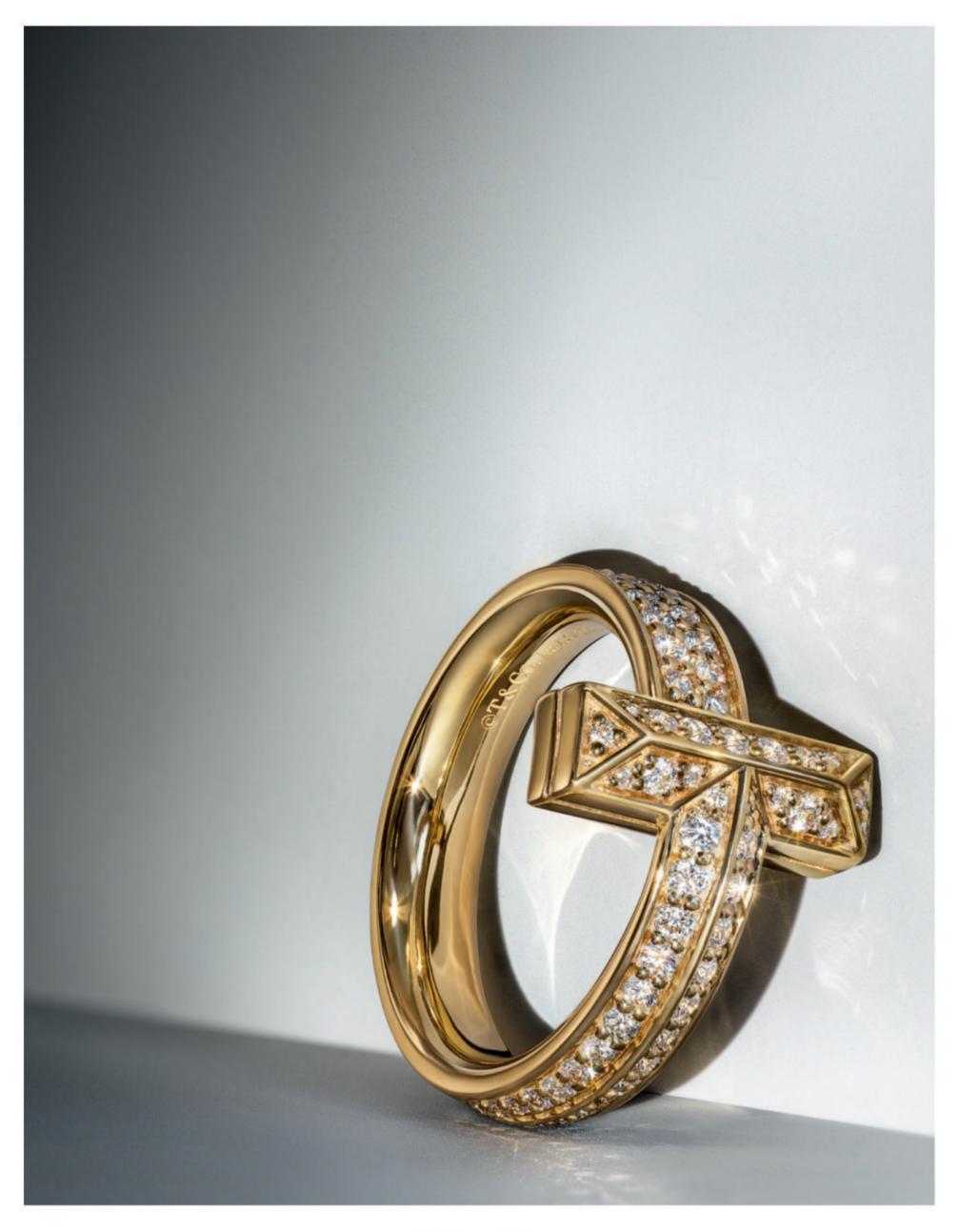












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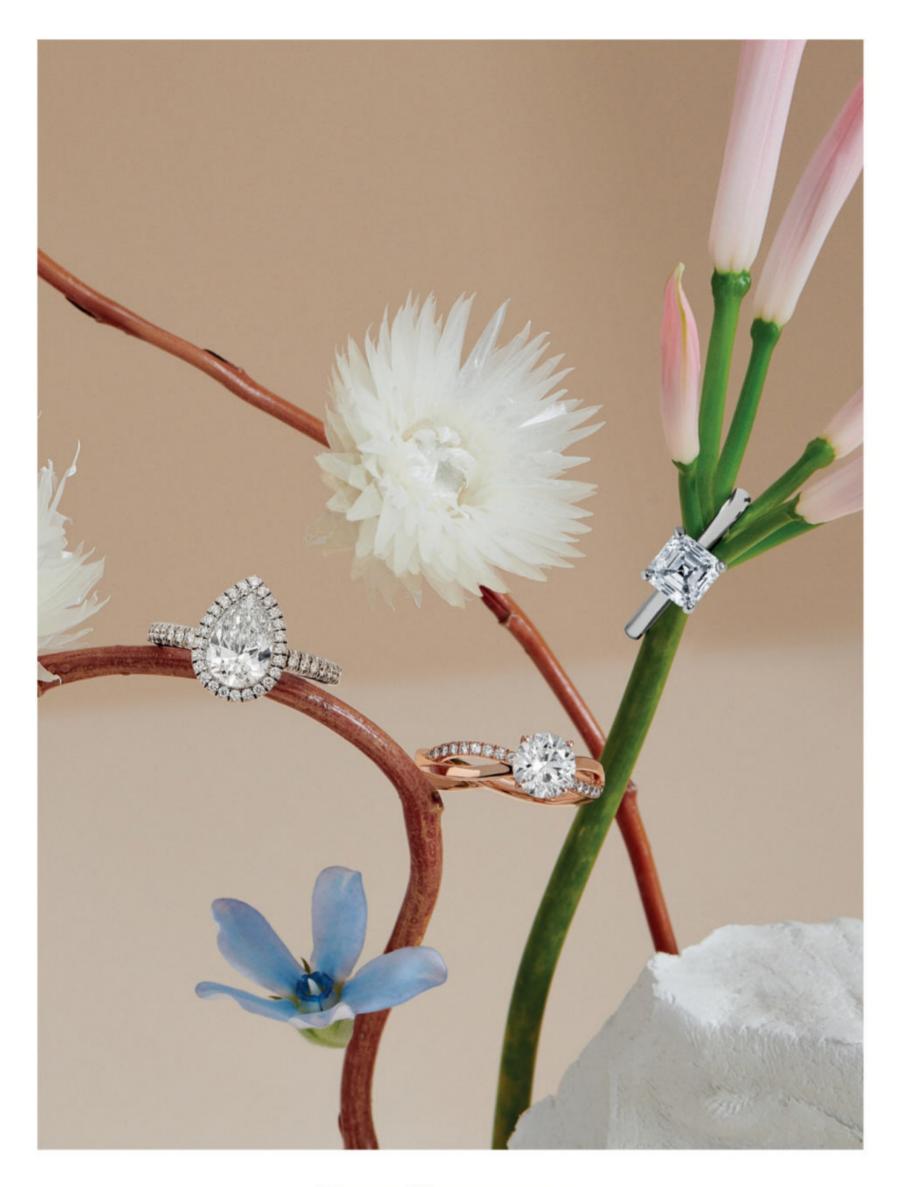
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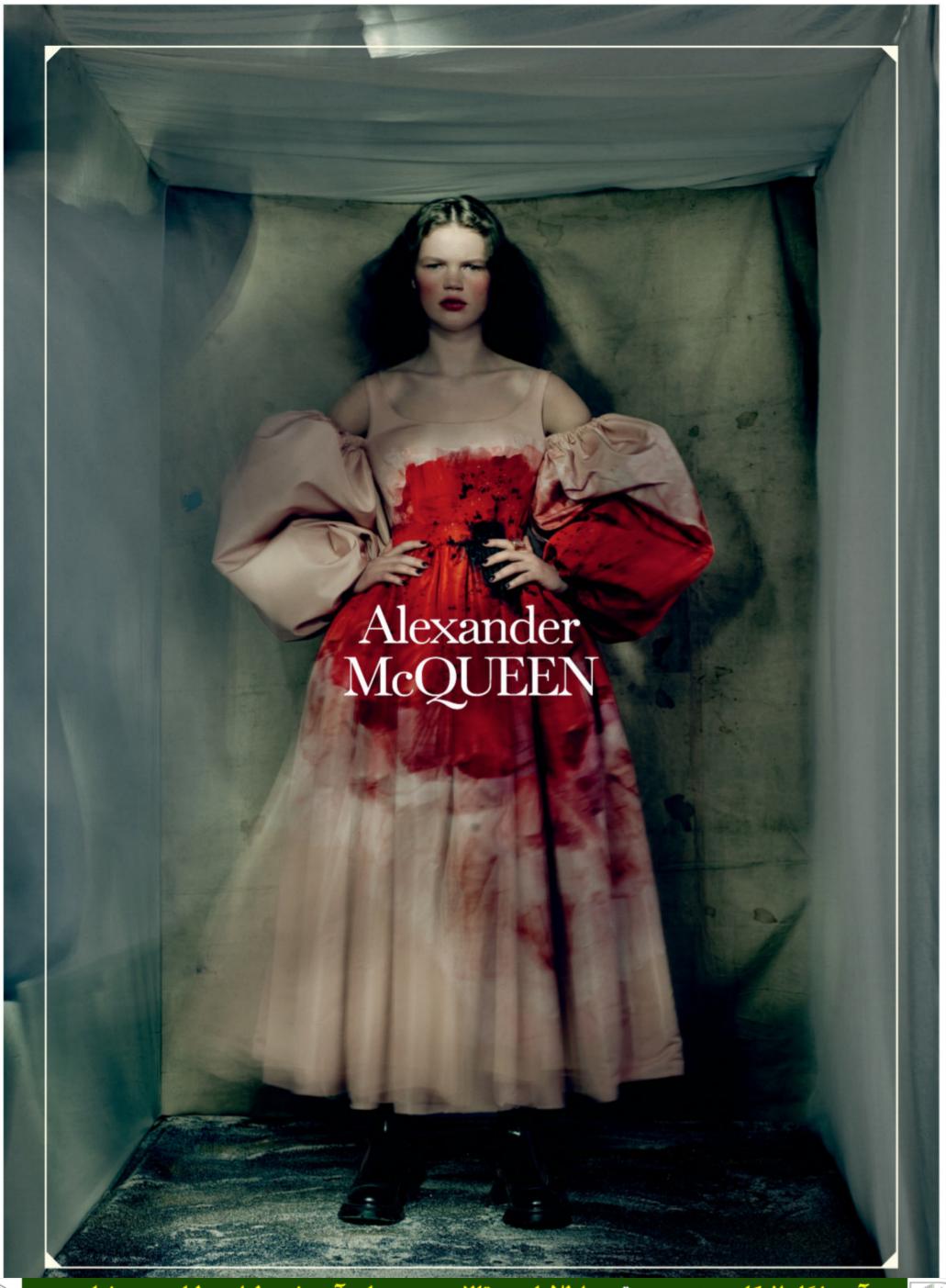
















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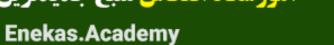
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FENDI

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FRESH START

Above: the shoot for 'The collections' (page 156). Right: Elif Shafak photographed in the feature 'Words of wisdom' (page 198)



January is traditionally posited as the time of renewal and rebirth, but I suspect that for most of us, it's really September when the blood begins to stir, and the world seems alive with possibilities after the soporific joys of summer. Who can forget the visceral thrill of the first day of the school year: setting off into the future, with a case of freshly sharpened pencils, stiff new shoes and (literally) an un-blotted copybook? That sense of excitement remains with me, as the days begin to draw in, and an exhilarating nip in the air heralds the start of fashion's new term. Once again, I can begin to think about wrapping myself in soft coats, and investing in smart boots and swingy bags... Our comprehensive guide to the new season starts on page 156, as a very stylish girl gang takes over the glorious environs of St Giles' House and its surrounding Dorset meadowland, in a 42-page daydream shot for us by the art photographer Erik Madigan Heck.

Gucci's creative director Alessandro Michele is far too cool for school, and his anarchic vision is resolutely uniform-free, with men bedecked in boas, women striding in helmets and



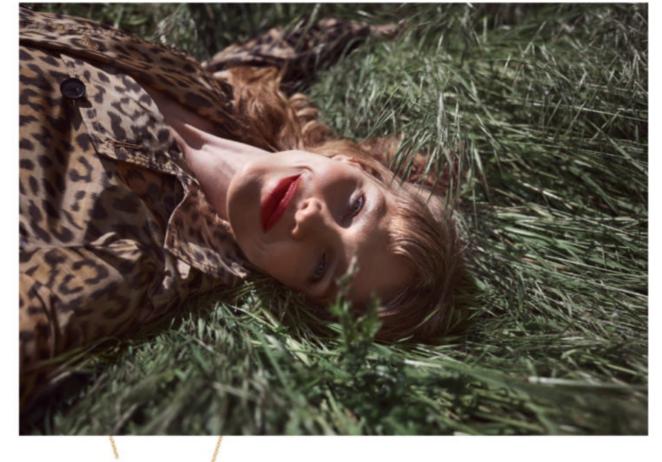




From a

selection

Harry Winston



From a selection Harry Winston

dramatic gems adorning all. 'We look more wild with jewels on, more like an animal,' Michele explains in our exclusive interview on page 204, celebrating the centenary of the luxury fashion house. It's accompanied by a shoot with the actress and singer Lou Doillon - a self-styled 'Gucci child', as well as the daughter of Jane Birkin - who models Michele's most extravagant high-jewellery creations for us.

> This month's cover star Natalia Vodianova is certainly one of fashion's most recognisable faces, which is why she seemed the perfect choice for our September issue. But the truth is that her drive and dynamism have catapulted her far beyond the catwalk: she's a global philanthropist running her own charitable foundation, a tech-impact investor and a mother of five. She talked me through her extraordinary life story (not to mention her unique anti-ageing routine) and left me feeling inspired anew by the degree to

which a single person, if they are sufficiently determined, can change the world.

Jacket, £1,550;

shirt, £490; trousers,

£1,690, all

Michael Kors

Collection

Searching for an easy yet assertive new-season update? The answer's black and white. Play with volume, and team slouchy trousers and boots with a crisp shirt and structured handbag. An ivory jacket adds a fresh twist to an eternal classic.

EDITOR'S

CHOICES

 \star

£4,100 **Louis Vuitton**

Expres Ring, from a selection Harry Winston

Lydia Slater

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Page 198

ELIF SHAFAK

A prolific and beloved novelist, essayist and political thinker, Shafak is a forthright advocate for women's rights, writing frequently on issues ranging from feminism to freedom of expression. Having grown up in Turkey, she now resides in London with her family, and, in 'Words of wisdom', she talks about her magical new novel, The Island of Missing Trees. Your style icon 'I just listen to my own heart, how I feel when I put on a dress or a suit.' What era of fashion do you wish you had lived through?

'I cannot wear corsets, bonnets, bustles and petticoats... but I am very fond of Victorian long cloaks with hoods.
They even look good on Darth Vader or Dracula.'
Your most treasured piece of jewellery is... 'my turquoise

and huge silver rings, all from

the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul.'



Page 138

N A T A L I A V O D I A N O V A

Our cover star has been a celebrated supermodel for nearly 25 years, though her catwalk fame is almost eclipsed by her prodigious philanthropy. The founder of the Naked Heart Foundation and a UN goodwill ambassador, Vodianova lives in Paris with her husband Antoine Arnault and her five children. She talks to Lydia Slater in 'Mother nurture'.

Your style icon 'Audrey Hepburn for her classic, eternal look.'

Your most treasured piece of jewellery is... 'my grandfather's wedding ring.'

Something that never goes out of style 'Kindness and empathy.'

CÉDRIC BIHR

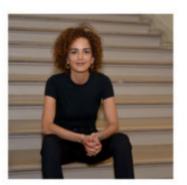
Bihr initially trained as a neuroscientist and had a career as a science journalist before shifting to fashion photography. Born and raised in the Pyrenees, he is now based in New York, Paris and Los Angeles, shooting campaigns for Hermès and Swarovski and, for this issue, the supermodel and businesswoman Natalia Vodianova.

Your style icon 'Georgia O'Keeffe: an amazingly talented artist, a beautiful woman and a strong character.' What era of fashion do you wish you had lived through? 'The late Sixties. I love the looks of Jimi Hendrix and Pink Floyd then. Guys seemed easier with their feminine side, and more creative.'

Something that never goes out of style 'A good pair of black leather YSL ankle-boots.'







Page 132

LEÏLA SLIMANI

The acclaimed novelist and journalist is the first woman of Moroccan heritage to receive the Prix Goncourt, one of France's highest literary honours. The author of *Lullaby* and Adèle also serves as President Macron's personal representative for the preservation of French language and culture. In 'Talking Points' she discusses her latest work of fiction – and her most personal book to date - The Country of Others. What era of fashion do you wish you had lived through?

wish you had lived through? 'Prehistory! There's nothing like a mammoth skin.'

Your most treasured piece of jewellery is... 'a beautiful golden hand that belonged to my great-great-grandmother.'







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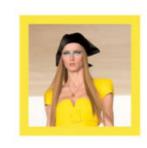






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STYLE



2



BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Although she's our sartorial icon whatever the season, the Queen ruled A/W runways with her signature style. A silk headscarf, tied neatly under the chin, is the accessory you need now.







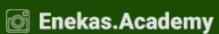




















FENDI



SAY HELLO

Two catwalk debuts to note this season: Dior Homme's Kim Jones staged a brilliant takeover at Fendi, finally filling the shoes of Karl Lagerfeld, while Gabriela Hearst became a Chloé girl, in the most perfect marriage of eco and boho.

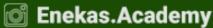


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Our annual expert guide to this year's must-have make-up, tried-and-tested skincare solutions and the most effective products for hair and body



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INT LIFE, STYLE

The simple elegance of Sophie Bille Brahe's home reflects her Scandi-chic jewellery designs

By LUCY HALFHEAD
Photographs by RASMUS WENG KARLSEN

urneighbourhood is like something from Harry Potter,' says Sophie Bille Brahe at her home in Hellerup, a peaceful suburb just 20 minutes by bike from the centre of Copenhagen. 'All the streets have flower names and I love that we are close to the water.' The

Danish jewellery designer, whose eponymous brand celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, has made a name for herself with modern pearl creations and a knack for combining Scandi cool with dazzling diamonds.

Bille Brahe also believes in making truly wearable jewellery and you'll even find her sporting some favourite pieces during her daily dip in the North Sea. 'For me to be able to do new designs, I need to somehow clear out my

head, and if I go swimming in really cold water, I always feel like it's a fresh start.'

Bille Brahe had what she describes as a 'classic Danish upbringing' with her younger brother Frederik. 'We lived in a house with







STYLE

a lot of beautiful, fragile things,' she says. 'But instead of being told, "Don't touch!" or "Be careful!" we learnt to treat objects with respect and use them in our everyday life.' Her fascination with jewellery began as a child: 'I remember one Midsummer we'd all been at the beach and when we got home,

my mum started panicking because she'd lost the Cartier watch that my dad had given her. He spent three hours walking up and down the sand with a flashlight and eventually found it. That was the first time I noticed how much a piece of jewellery can mean to a person.'

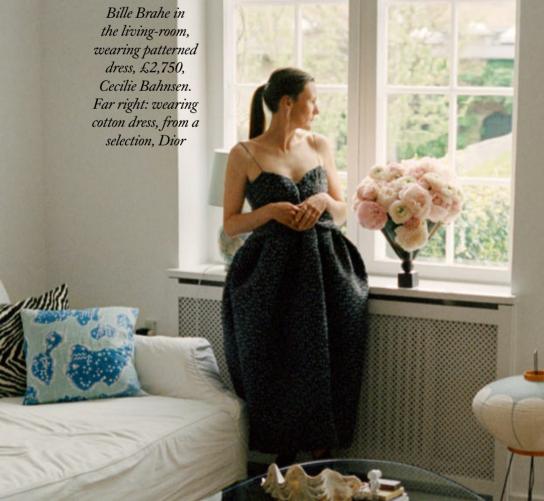
From the age of 10, Bille Brahe started making trinkets with pearls and sold them to her mother's friends. 'But at this point I didn't have faith in myself to become a designer,' she says. Instead, she decided to learn the craft first and took up a gold-smith apprenticeship in Copenhagen, before going on to complete a masters



in jewellery-making at London's Royal College of Art. She established her company in 2011, and a decade later, is firmly at the top of her game, with devotees including Zoe Kravitz, Uma Thurman and Madonna and collaborations with designers such as Sacai and another Danish fashion

favourite, Cecilie Bahnsen. 'Cecilie and I are good friends,' she says. 'We've shared ideas ever since we met at the Royal College of Art, so we work very well together, and the collection was done in record time!'

As well as having an innate love of astronomy (her ancestor Tycho Brahe discovered the constellation Cassiopeia) and being inspired by Renaissance artists such as Botticelli, one of her strongest influences is the late author Karen Blixen, who wrote *Out of Africa* and whose home in Denmark is now a museum. 'I think she was such a brave woman and really true to her own style,' Bille Brahe says. 'She did things differently, like using cabbages in the





Top: in the garden wearing corduroy dress, £725, the Vampire's Wife

flower displays at her dinner parties to give people something to talk about, and that always inspires me when I'm afraid of doing something.'

When it comes to her wardrobe, Bille Brahe likes to mix it up. 'I love wearing diamonds with a T-shirt and a pair of New Balance trainers,' she says. Her designers of choice are Molly Goddard, Balenciaga, Chanel and Prada. Today, she is dressed in a black velvet Cecilie Bahnsen smock – 'It's my favourite outfit in the whole world and I have many different versions depending on my mood!' – Bottega Veneta rubber

slider sandals and her own Peggy necklace, a double string of petite and larger pearls secured with a 14-carat gold push clasp. The always looked the same, she says. As a teenager, I only wanted to wear earrings in one ear and I still like to do that. I have this need to organise things around me—whether it's how I dress or

how I decorate my home – in a way that creates a calm feeling. So, if I wear a ring on my left hand then I can wear an earring in my right ear.'

This sense of balance and order can be seen in the five-bedroom home that Bille Brahe shares with her boyfriend, their son and baby daughter, and Snoopy, the Border Collie cross. 'It's originally from the 1920s and it reminds me of a townhouse in London,' she says. 'I immediately fell in love with the living-room because the daylight has such a beautiful flow in there and if I open the window to the garden, I can hear

Above: in the garden with her son and Snoopy. Below: dress, from a selection, Simone Rocha









STYLE



Below: wearing corduroy dress, £725, the Vampire's Wife

the birds singing.' Every piece of furniture tells a story: 'I have this great table that I got from my uncle, and a pair of Gucci lamps that I

picked up in Japan, but for me, it's important that things have meaning – and to own as little as possible really.' While most of her jewellery is stored in boxes, some are also

> displayed across two beautiful Hermès ashtrays with palm-trees on them in her bathroom. The only artwork is by a Swedish artist called Gun Gordillo whose large prints break up the clean, white walls. 'Gun and her husband were great friends of my parents and she's played an important part in my life,' Bille Brahe says. 'She was the one I talked to when I had doubts about being a designer and she had this phrase that has stuck with me ever since - "You have to remember Sophie, life is 10 per cent talent - the rest is hard work."







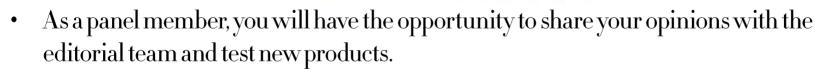




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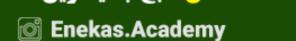
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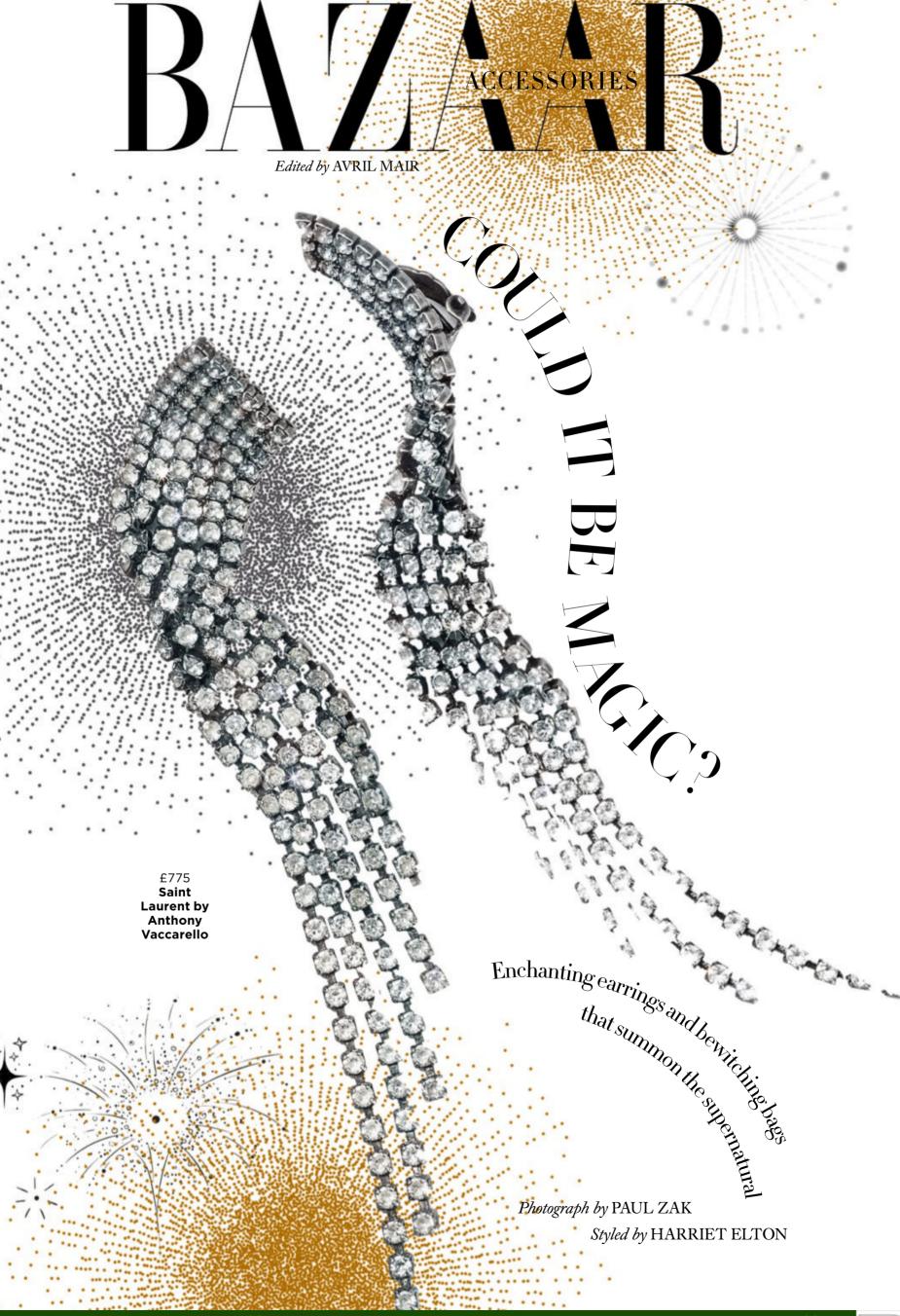


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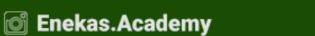


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PIXELATE. SEE STOCKISTS FOR DETAILS









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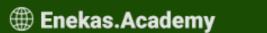
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From far left: Elsa Peretti's Bean pendants. Her Open Heart pendant. Mesh Scarf necklaces for Tiffany & Co. Centre: the Bone cuff. Below: Elsa Peretti Jewelry, New York, in 1970

most recognisable jewels on the planet. Indeed, it's been reported that one of her pieces is sold every minute by Tiffany & Co, the company for whom Peretti designed for almost half a century, and 30 of them have been inducted into the British Museum's permanent collection to date.

'Her designs are so iconic, they feel like they've existed for ever,' says Frank Everett, the senior vice-president of Sotheby's Jewellery, who worked for Tiffany & Co in the early 2000s. 'She never needed to sign her name on them; one look was all you needed to know that it was hers.'

Born in Florence in 1940 to a wealthy family, Peretti left home at 21, and in 1966 began modelling in Barcelona. Two years later, she moved to New York and fell in with club-hopping creatives including Helmut Newton, Liza Minnelli and Andy Warhol. 'When I came here,' she recalled in a 1975 interview, 'what they liked was the blonde girl... I was very tall, very dark... everything too "very". But her striking looks did attract designers like Issey Miyake, Giorgio Sant' Angelo and Halston, who cast her in catwalk shows. It was while working with Sant'Angelo that Peretti produced her first jewel, a small bud vase on a necklace, to accompany the looks at his 'flower child'-themed show in 1969. To Halston, she became more than a muse; she was a trusted collaborator, accessorising his fluid dresses with embellishments, including her Bone cuff, an undulating bracelet inspired by remains she once found inside a 17th-century Capuchin church.

> In 1974, Halston accompanied Peretti to the offices of Tiffany & Co, where they brokered an

the most successful jewellers in history (it has been reported that her designs account for between seven and 10 per cent of Tiffany's worldwide net sales). 'After that, things went boom,' she

by the Yard necklaces introduced the concept of diamonds for daytime wear. At a time when sterling silver was deemed 'undesirable' in fine jewellery, Peretti's Bean and Open Heart pendants popularised the material among a growing female workforce who could increasingly treat themselves. 'The genius of Peretti is that she

Below left: Peretti wearing her Bottle pendant (also shown below) in the 1960s. The TV series 'Halston', with Rebecca Dayan as Perretti (far right)

truly understood the emotional essence of jewellery,' explains Everett. 'There are untold numbers of women wearing her pieces right now and every one will have a connection to her particular talisman.'

Little wonder then, that even with Peretti's sad passing at the age of 80 in March this year, her influence on the worlds of art and design, and on the

exclusive contract that made her, arguably, one of house of Tiffany & Co, remains as strong as ever. The Bone cuff recently celebrated its 50th anniversary and is firmly planted in our cultural consciousness thanks to appearances in films like Sex and the City and Wonder Woman 1984, and on the Instagram accounts of celebrities such as Margot Robbie and Tracee Ellis Ross. This year, it has been reimagined with cabochons of tiger's eye and jade, in a nod to the designer's love of unusual stones. Similarly, her Open Heart pendants have been updated with sapphires, rubies or emeralds, making the gems more wearable for every day. 'The idea,' Peretti once stated, 'is to make beautiful things that people will really care about.' Countless women would undoubtedly agree. KIM PARKER

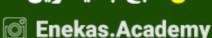
Grace Jones

(left) and Liza

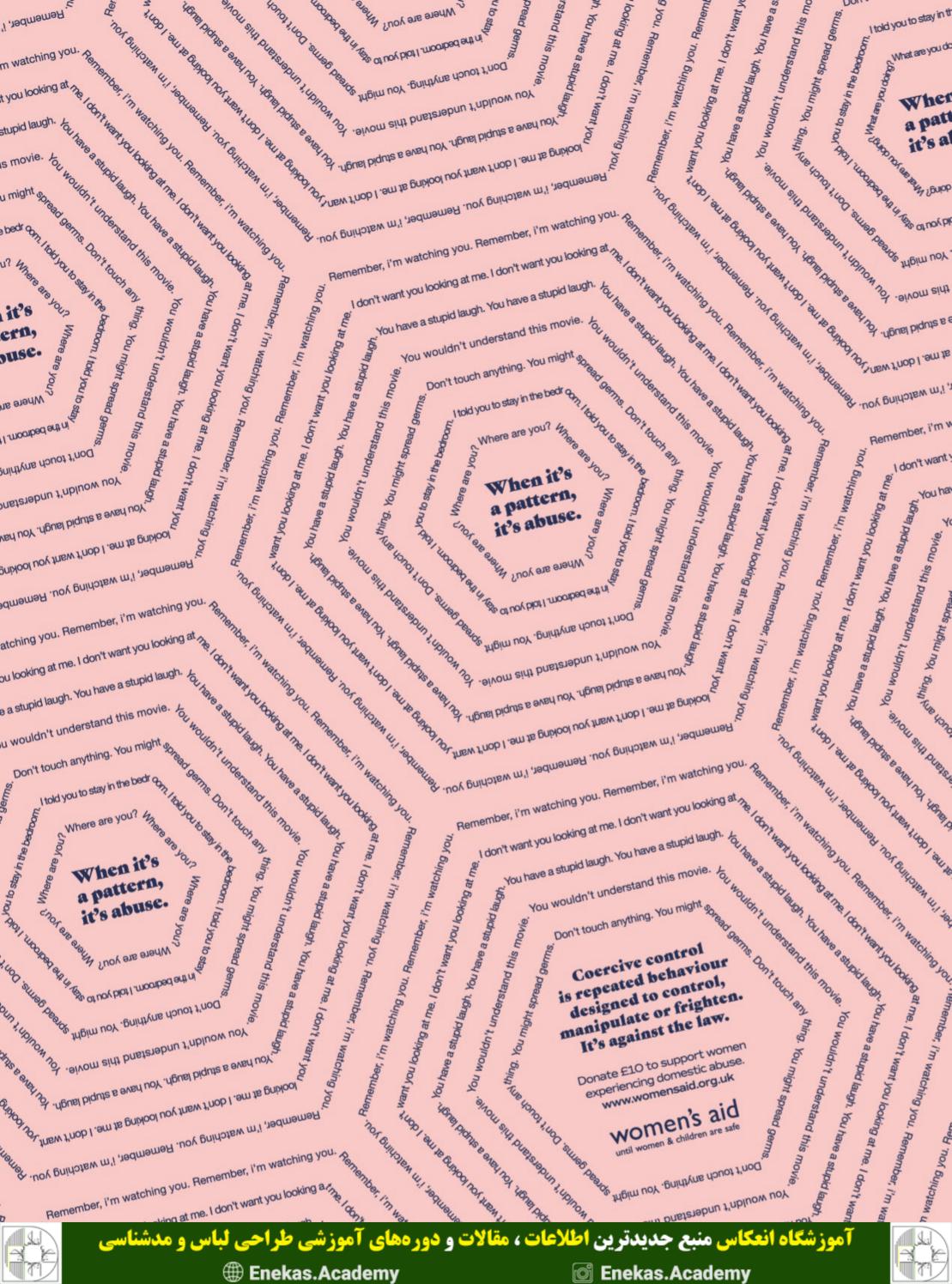
Minnelli (above

left) wearing Bone cuffs

told an interviewer in 2014. Her innovative Diamonds



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF TIFFANY & CO/HILDA MORAY, GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY/NETFLIX/COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION









SEE STOCKISTS FOR DETAILS





• The equality lawyer
Georgina Calvert-Lee reveals how
calling out sex discrimination can
elicit meaningful change

By LYDIA SLATER

he past 18 months have been a gruelling experience for all of us. Yet there is increasing evidence that the brunt of the pandemic has been disproportionately borne by working women. During this period, they have been almost twice as likely as men to have lost their jobs, while over 130,000 more women than men were placed on the furlough scheme between March and August last year. Meanwhile, those who did keep their jobs may at times have wished that they hadn't, as they found themselves taking on far more of the burden of homeschooling, caring for children and the elderly – equating, according to research by UN Women, to about 31 hours a week, almost as much as a second full-time job. This, unsurprisingly, has led to many opting to step back in their careers or even to leave the labour market permanently.

Against this bleak economic backdrop, the idea that postpandemic flexible working will lead to greater equality for working





mothers seems unlikely. On the contrary: Covid-19 is being blamed for a 'she-cession', with progress for women in work dropping back to 2017 levels.

'The pandemic hasn't happened against the backdrop of a perfect system,' explains Georgina Calvert-Lee, who leads the UK employment and equality team at the transatlantic law firm McAllister Olivarius. 'There were existing disparities and Covid-19 has exacerbated them.' Now, she anticipates a flurry of cases as firms look to restructure to offset pandemic-related losses, with women first in the firing line. 'If you close schools and childcare facilities, then someone still has to provide this service, and women feel the societal pressure to do it, especially because for years they have earned less than their male partner and so the family's income is less impacted if they take this on too. With so much extra demand on their time, it's not surprising that some have jumped at taking furlough; but as

a result, they're perceived as less committed and less essential to their employed work. This, along with the fact they have also missed out on opportunities and promotions over the past months, which have gone to the men, feeds into the already present gender pay gap.'

Calvert-Lee, who is elegant and lively with a head of appropriately fiery hair, has made her reputation as a champion of the underdog with several high-profile cases, including representing the YouTube star Chrissy Chambers in the first publicised civil claim for the publication of intimate images without consent; and the settlement of a discrimination claim against Warwick University brought by female students

targeted in a Facebook chat.

Her acute sense of fairness was developed early – 'as the youngest in a busy household with two older brothers. There are all those little injustices around the kitchen table that your parents don't necessarily notice – I realised you have to have a voice to be heard.' Her father John was an actor, but he lost his voice to rapid-onset multiple sclerosis when his daughter was a teenager. 'That was a fairly traumatic thing and so ironic,

since he was very vocal and dramatic, always the life and soul of any gathering.

'Seeing someone literally lose their power of speech really emphasised that innate feeling I had that having a voice is so important – it made me recognise the horror of having your voice stifled, and being buried within your own body – or, in society, buried by the culture you live in. That was what led me into being a lawyer in the first place.'

However, it was her experience working for a big American law firm early in her career that honed her understanding of discrimination. 'Initially, the firm was very keen to get young women associates onboard, and I had a lot of support. But as soon as I started trying to

> have children, the scales fell from my eyes,' she says. 'I was going through fertility treatment and had to have regular injections in the office. Naively, I didn't make a secret of it.' One powerful senior partner had early on appointed himself her champion. 'He'd always been very keen to find time alone with me in the evenings, and I considered him a friend. So I confided in him about the treatment and the stress of it.' Shortly afterwards, she received her annual performance reviews; the one from this senior partner stood out as 'atrocious', although the only work she had done for him that year had been carried out in partnership with a male colleague, their contributions were indistinguishable and the partner had given him a stellar review. 'As a discrimination lawyer, I can see now what a fabulously easy case it

would have been to bring,' she says. 'It brought it home to me that discrimination is real, and particularly rampant when a woman has children.' The systemic biases run throughout the system up to board level, she says, assisted partly by the assumption that women will accept unfair treatment. 'We're

so modest in our demands! I meet feisty feminist senior executives who are clearly extremely robust and intelligent, but are also so quick to blame themselves. It's deeply ingrained that we won't make a fuss, and so we will think first about all the legitimate reasons why someone else might have got the promotion instead.'

Her advice to women who believe they have been unfairly treated? 'Put in a grievance, and call it out for what it is – discrimination – that gives you more protection. Keep a log of what's hap-

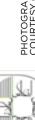
pened, so you know the dates and can refer to them. If enough women do that, then I think companies would clean up their workplace and behave better. If you have the strength to call it out, the law is there to help you.' Advice that may be well worth considering in the months to come.

Systemic biases run throughout the system, assisted partly by the assumption that women will accept unfair treatment

Georgina Calvert-Lee with her

father and brothers in Italy in

1971. Below right: Calvert-Lee







TALKING POINTS Edited by CHARLOTTE BROOK



'Untitled (Right Angle Curve)' (1966) by Bridget Riley

LIFE LINES

Exploring Bridget Riley's illusory artworks. Plus: Leïla Slimani on family and cultural belonging; and Phyllida Lloyd discusses her intimate new film



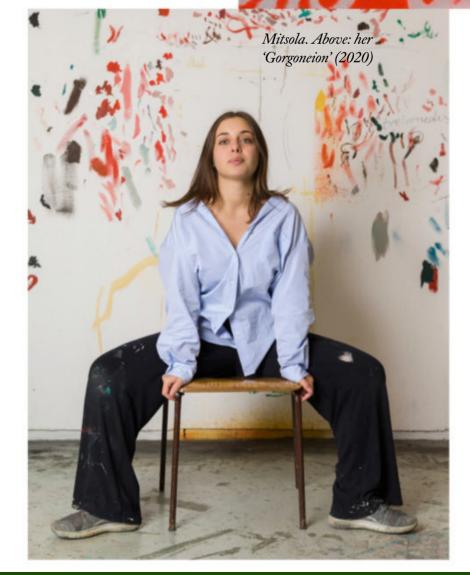




n a room full of Sofia Mitsola's portraits of voluptuous, nude women looking directly at their viewer, people tend to react in one of two ways. 'Some say that they can relate to them, while others have felt uncomfortable,' says the artist, adding with a chuckle, 'Usually that's the men.' Her characters are alive with references to audacious female figures, from the serpentine hair of Medusa in a piece titled *Gorgoneion* to the warrior in *Hot Pink Gladiator*.

Growing up in the Greek city of Thessaloniki, Mitsola would conjure her own mythological stories inspired by the rich history that surrounded her; and since moving to London to attend the Slade School of Fine Art in 2016, she has fuelled her imagination with visits to the British Museum and the V&A. 'I like the confrontational way divinities and mythical presences are portrayed,' she explains. 'They're austere and larger than life.' Mitsola accentuates this with the colossal size of her painted characters, blowing them up to stand at over two metres tall. She also favours an intensely vivid, 'predatory' colour palette to draw in her viewers. 'Sometimes I come into my studio after I've been painting and see that lots of little flies have stuck to the canvas,' she says. 'They are attracted to it because it's very bright – I feel quite flattered, it means it works!'

'Sofia Mitsola' is at Pilar Corrias (www.pilarcorrias.com) from 2 September to 2 October.











TALKING POINTS



Left: Clare Dunne in 'Herself''. Below: Phyllida Lloyd on set



CINEMA

SHINING LIGHT

Phyllida Lloyd's latest film focuses on female resilience

'I think that the only job worth doing is the one that makes your stomach lurch with fear,' says Phyllida Lloyd of the innumerable challenges she has faced during her four decades in the arts. The acclaimed director has steered productions on stage and screen, ranging from opera to musicals and tackling source material as

diverse as Shakespeare and Abba, and her latest work covers more uncharted territory as a small, low-budget film. *Herself* is the story of an abused single mother in Ireland who sets out to build her own house; it is a project on a very different scale to her preceding films, *Mamma Mia!* and *The Iron Lady*, which broke box-office records.

'I didn't want to do another blockbuster, I prefer the feeling of doing a play,' Lloyd explains. 'I've done performances in my kitchen with friends, just got the neighbours in. That's how I like to work.'

There is an element of such homespun collaboration to *Herself*. The script was co-written by its star, Clare Dunne, and features Harriet Walter, both of whom worked with Lloyd on her seminal all-female Shakespeare trilogy at the Donmar Warehouse between 2012 and 2017, and are firm friends. 'They probably wanted me to cast Meryl Streep as the builder,' Lloyd jokes as she describes how she championed not just the film, but its relatively unknown leading lady. 'There was a feeling of: "We're going to help this girl build this house and build this movie."

The film is another example of the director's talent for shining a spotlight on female narratives. It is therefore fitting that she credits her successes to other women. 'I have surrounded myself with a growing sisterhood who have taught me so much. Yet we still have to push to tell these stories,' she says laughing, adding, 'You know, I only ever made one opera where the women's problem was not her love interest. And that was because it was about nuns.' MARIE-CLAIRE CHAPPET

'Herself' will be released in cinemas nationwide from 10 September.



To celebrate her new book exploring the life of Catherine, the beloved sister of Christian Dior, a remarkable Resistance fighter and grower of roses, the former *Bazaar* editor Justine Picardie will be in conversation with the curator Oriole Cullen at the V&A (*www.vam.ac.uk*) on 2 September.





BOOKS

BOLD FORIS

Michèle Roberts' atmospheric new novel imagines the story of Matisse's assistants

By BROOKE THEIS

hen Matisse's vibrant cut-outs went on display at Tate Modern in 2014, Michèle Roberts was so entranced she visited the exhibition five times. 'They hover in between categories,' the half-French, London-based novelist and poet says. 'They're abstract and figurative; very simple and yet complicated...' But it was a flickering videoclip showing the master himself instructing a young woman where to pin the works in his hotel-room that most intrigued her – and compelled her to write her latest novel *Cut Out*.

An expressive tale of well-kept secrets and self-discovery, it is as colourful and bold as Matisse's abstract shapes. Chapters switch from being set in Nice and London, exploring both the past and present; and the story is told from the perspectives of Clémence, a former assistant to Matisse, and her godson

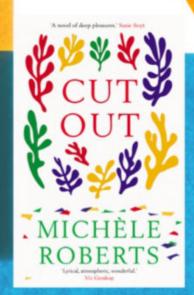
Denis, who is searching for the truth about his family's past. These are interspersed with descriptions of black and white photographs of the artist. 'I wanted his character to be absent from the narrative,' says Roberts, 'but he is present in these photos.'

Roberts is the author of 14 acclaimed novels, including the Booker-shortlisted *Daughters of the House* and her memoir of last year, *Negative Capability*, in which she candidly relays the experience of having a book rejected by her publisher. Like her previous works, *Cut Out* is laced with sharp observations about life, creativity and self-hood—this time reflecting on Roberts' fascination with France. The language of the opening pages

immediately wraps around their reader like warm sunshine and transports

you to the South of France: passages detailing picnicking on olives, saucisson, tomatoes, fresh bread and beer; evenings spent barefoot outside with a backdrop of yellow lanterns strung across the square that light up the balmy nights. All of these moments are invigorated by the passionate friendships between the characters. 'Friends are the people with whom you go to explore the world,' says Roberts, 'people you break the rules with and have pleasure with.' In its evocative prose, joie de vivre and undercurrent of rebellion, the same could be said for her book.

'Cut Out' by Michèle Roberts (£14.99, Sandstone Press) is published on 12 August.



Below: Henri Matisse working on his cut-outs at his studio in Nice, France, in 1952





Above: Michèle

Roberts





ART

FUN OF THE FAIR

Enjoy Eye of the Collector's hybrid show

Old guard meets avant-garde at a new art fair, Eye of the Collector, which will be held at Two Temple Place, and accessible online, in partnership with Christie's. Rather than opting for a conventional white tent, this next-generation event repurposes the spectacular neo-Gothic villa on the banks of the Thames to enrich visitors' visual experience of the exhibits. Founded by the dynamic art advisor Nazy Vassegh, the selling show, which will run both in-person and digitally, features a variety of works breathtaking in their scope – from ancient to contemporary. ISABEL TARAFA

Eye of the Collector (www.eyeofthecollector.com) runs from 8 to 11 September.



1956). Top: 'Le Esteriora'

by Piero Dorazio (1970)

BOOKS

The evocative illustrations of Henn Kim form a new graphic poem

It was a sardine tin that drew the world's attention to the South Korean artist Henn Kim. Peeled open to reveal an embracing couple ensconced within, the image was used as the cover art for Sally Rooney's literary phenomenon Normal People. 'I had actually drawn it long before, but Sally saw it and contacted me,' Kim reveals. 'Then I read the book and realised how perfect that image is for the story – that love can be packaged in a way that we hope will not expire.'

OREAM WAR

Kim's deceptively simple black-ink drawings have landed her high-profile collaborations with Unicef, Bottega Veneta and Nike. Yet they are intractably personal. As a teenager, she suffered from a deep depression to the extent that, for two years, she often found it easier not to speak. Instead, Kim communicated through art, doodling in pen in her schoolbooks, a style she retains today. Her latest collection, an evocative graphic poem titled Starry Nights, Blurry Dreams, riffs offher teenage desire to connect to other, possibly lost souls, through words and images. 'I want this to be for people who feel that way too,' she says. 'I hope they read it and realise they are not alone.' MCC

'Starry Nights, Blurry Dreams' by Henn Kimm (£12.99, Bloomsbury) is published on 19 August.

NEWSLETTERS

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A visual delight by Kimberley Drew, the author of This is What I Know about Art, who sends fun facts about an artwork to you every few days. www.something isaw.substack.com

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The brainchild of Olive Wakefield, this monthly collection of inspiration features interviews with designers including Lulu Guinness and Coco Fennell. www.pieces-london.co.uk

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Cat Sarsfield muses on gastronomy and her Korean heritage, while deconstructing the joy of each and every bite. www.sincenooneasked.

FOR MOVIES

Film of the Week

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FOR CONTEMPLATION The Aram

An uplifting missive that celebrates Muslim women and women of colour from the writer and editor Tahmina Begum. HELENA LEE www.tahminaxbegum. wixsite.com/portfolio





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MEMOIR

THE EDGE **OF AUTUMN**

Nina Mingya Powles reflects on the turning of the seasons

At the end of summer in London, the dried petals of yellow irises curl up and float on the surface of the pond. Swimmers linger in the faint sunlight, which is beginning to feel illusory like most things, these days.

When I'm feeling lost, I swim. I let myself drift, held by the current. In the water, my present worries no longer have any bearing - work, pandemic anxiety, growing distances. Even the smallest bodies of water have waves. I can feel them.

A few years ago, I became an autumn swimmer. As the evenings darkened and the water gradually chilled, I started to feel stronger. I always used to be a heated-pool type of person – now, I get hungry for the bite of cold on my skin. That rush of feeling followed by a cool, soft euphoria.

But as the shape of summer shifts each year, it's hard to trace the end of one season into the beginning of the next. It's hard to make out a clear picture of the future.

I sometimes feel like I'm living in two seasons at once: the northern hemisphere one, where I am in London with the opposite cycle of the southern hemisphere running underneath, played out in parallel in my friends' Instagram posts. How quickly deep winter can turn into late summer. In December, homesick and newly unemployed, I began the complex work of planning a three-month trip home to New Zealand during a pandemic. I spent 14 days in a quarantine hotel in central Auckland and watched heat intensify in the liquid blue sky reflected in the windows opposite. I watched the last deep red pohutukawa blooms collect in the gutters. I watched sudden downpours, unable to open my hotel room window to touch the rain. After a fortnight I emerged into the honey-coloured light of a late-summer afternoon.

I was born in autumn, which I like to think means I'm used to this state of in-betweenness. I can swim through it. During my three months back home earlier this year, in Aotearoa's autumn, shifts in weather were marked by the changes in temperature of the sea: from glistening, refreshing at first to spiky and crystalline on the edge of autumn.

needed one last swim, despite the wind. A quick dip was all my body could take. In those brief gasping seconds, a single monarch butterfly flew close to the surface, waves rising almost high enough to touch it. On the beach I sat in the last of the sun and unwrapped a slice of apple and ginger cake. I tried not to focus on the fact that I didn't know when I'd be back. Instead, I searched for the monarch, and saw it: a dark red speck darting further and further out to sea.

'Small Bodies of Water' by Nina Mingya Powles (£14.99, Canongate) is out now.





Bridget Riley's fans can see behind the scenes of the artist's studio via a new book revealing the sketches. colour tests and mathematical workings that go into creating her inimitably bold works. CHARLOTTE BROOK 'Working Drawings' (£45, Thames & Hudson) is published on 9 September.







TALKING POINTS

Bridget Riley works, from top left: 'Ground Study for 28th August '98' (1998). 'Blue Interior' (about 1955). Rough Study, July 4th' (1991). Opposite, from top: 'Louise' (1956). Colour Study (Painting of a Seated Nude)' (1949 to 1952)



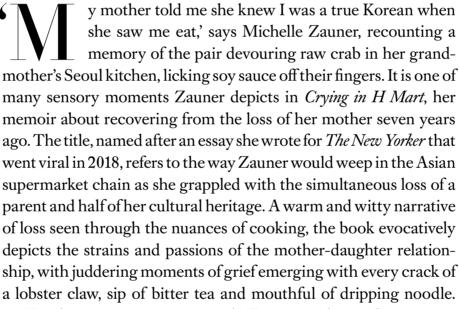
BOOKS

Left, far left and bottom left: Michelle Zauner celebrating her early birthdays with her mother

COMFORT **FOOD**

How cooking Korean dishes helped

Michelle Zauner find solace during grief



'Food was our connecting rod,' Zauner explains. 'Growing up half-American, I was always torn in my identity. But when I enjoyed Korean cuisine, there was an affirmation of belonging. My mum would say: "That's my kid." After her mother's death from cancer, Zauner found a meditative solace in teaching herself to make kimchi and perfecting the dishes of her heritage. I tried therapy but ended up thinking more joy would enter my life if I just had a really nice lunch,' she deadpans. One day, she hopes to pass these recipes on as

> a way of honouring her mother's legacy. 'My mum would have been so weirded out about this book, because she was very private,' she says, laughing. 'But I just know, if this was by someone else, and she read it, she would goad me and say: "You better write something as nice as this about me when Idie."' мсс

'Crying in H Mart' by Michelle Zauner (£16.99, Picador) is out now.



After a five-hour flight home from college, my mother would usher me to the living-room to relax on the couch, then cook rich, savoury and sweet Korean short rib out back, serving this as a side dish.

INGREDIENTS

1 jar Korean radish (dongchimi) in brine 1 tsp Korean red pepper flakes (gochugaru) 1 tsp sesame oil ½ tsp sesame seeds (All available from specialist supermarkets including H Mart and Planet Organic.)

METHOD

Open a jar of dongchimi. Scoop the radish pieces into a bowl, or if they're whole, cut them into bite-size match sticks. Pour the brine over the top. Add the gochugaru, sesame seeds and sesame oil. Serve as a side or add ice cubes and a scoop of rice for a refreshing Korean gazpacho.





IGHTS RESERVED. PHOTOGRAPHS: © BRIDGET RILEY 2021, ALL F COURTESY OF MICHELLE ZAUNER, GETTY IM,



'My grandmother was an exquisite storyteller,' Leïla Slimani tells me, her voice warm. 'We were all fascinated by her. She was mostly telling us about her childhood, about how she met my grandfather and everything – but she was a liar!' Slimani laughs. 'I knew that she was a liar and she was telling us a lot of lies.'

What a perfect beginning for a novelist – and for a novel. Slimani's grandmother, Anne Reutsch, grew up in Alsace; then in 1944 she met and married Lakhdar Dhobb, an officer in the French colonial army, and the pair moved back to a farm in his native Morocco. This was worlds away from Reutsch's French upbringing and a dramatic cultural shift that would have brought them

both up against not only their very different personal histories but also against the impact of France's colonisation of Morocco. It is this dramatic family story which informs Slimani's new fiction, *The Country of Others* – the first volume of a proposed trilogy. The next book will consider Slimani's mother's life, and the final one, her own.

Set in the years just after World War II, *The Country of Others* is an engrossing family saga of

struggle and personal growth as Mathilde – the character based on Reutsch – attempts to make a life for herself in rural Morocco. She had imagined the glamorous life of an expat: instead she is in the middle of nowhere, as she sees it, toiling on a farm, trying to bridge the distance between herself and her husband, between his culture and her own. Slimani calls her own relationship with Morocco,

Above, from left: Mamma Andersson's 'The Lost Paradise II' (2020). Her WoodCut' (2019)

where she was born, 'complicated', because she is a bourgeois French-speaker, now living in France. 'Morocco is like a man that wouldn't love me and I'm crazy in love with him,' she says. Part of what she wants to do in this novel is reveal the country to those who have disregarded it. 'I know your culture,' she says to me. T've

BOOKS

ANEW WORLD

Leïla Slimani's latest novel is inspired by the culture clashes her French grandmother faced living in her husband's native Morocco

By ERICA WAGNER



been in London and I know about English culture; when I arrived in France, I was able to speak French and I knew about that culture too. But I've never felt that about Morocco. I've never met an English person or a French person who knew as much about my country as I knew about theirs.'

Slimani grew up in Rabat but moved to France to attend university; she now lives in

Paris with her husband and two children. She shot to international fame in 2016 with her second novel *Lullaby*, about the murder of two children by their nanny; it won the Prix Goncourt, France's top literary prize, and has been translated into dozens of languages. She has always, however, been realistic about the nature of the fame that followed her success. 'I knew it was also because I was young, because I was an immigrant; I understood after a few months that they were going to try to

objectify me: I would just become "the Arab woman" – and I don't want to be put in a box.'

But her fame has had its advantages. In 2017, the French President Emmanuel Macron appointed Slimani as his personal representative to promote the French language and culture. She visits schools and universities, and makes a special effort to encourage girls and young women to feel able to express themselves. Her immigrant background is of great significance to her in this regard. 'The French language and culture don't belong to France,' she says. 'It's universal and it belongs to me, too. What I wanted to express to Moroccan people and to French people is that a woman like me, with the face of an Arab, can be the representative of the French language and French culture.'

The Country of Others – and no doubt the two books that will follow it – is a virtuoso demonstration of her ability to claim and to celebrate not only different cultures, but her own multifaceted being. 'The Country of Others' (Faber & Faber, £14.99) is out now.

ART SELF-REFLECTION

Femininity and fantasy are key themes in the Swedish painter Mamma Andersson's work. Although her latest canvases depict anonymous women, all contain a whisper of Andersson herself. She says, 'When I paint a young girl on a horse or a figure walking towards the end of the world, I feel both of those could be me.' MCC

Mamma Andersson: The Lost Paradise' (£32, David Zwirner Books) is published on 2 September.





PHOTOGRAPHS: © MAMMA ANDERSSON/AR' COURTESY THE ARTIST AND DAVID ZWIRNEI JAIME BERIESTAIN. SEE STOCKISTS FOR DET

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HOROSCOPES

The future revealed: your essential guide to SEPTEMBER By PETER WATSON

VIRGO

24 August - 23 September

Rather than panic when expected to produce something ingenious, tap into a vein of creativity you often overlook. You've been typecast in a role that does not allow you to put your talents to the best use. You're about to be given a chance to show who you really are and what you can do.

LUCKY DAY 25th – expert advice helps you avoid trouble and find success.

24 September - 23 October

Be careful not to over-promise when negotiating financial matters with someone you wouldn't want to disappoint. Uranus opposing Venus could distort your thinking when determining the best way to move forward. It's more vital than ever to make accurate assessments of money coming in and going out.

LUCKY DAY 4th – once you obey your heart, a crisis is averted.

24 October - 22 November

At first, when people want to invade your space, you'll wonder whether you should tolerate the intrusion. But you'll quickly realise that, in the end, nobody would be happy with the outcome were you to show your resentment. Be upfront and put boundaries in place.

LUCKY DAY 29th – with things in perspective, peace of mind is yours.

SAGITTARIUS

23 November - 21 December

Although there's nothing wrong with taking it easy for a while, you might become restless if you feel you're no longer part of the action. A small group of individuals would like nothing more than to collaborate with you on a social, professional or artistic venture. Hear what they have to say before committing yourself – or not. LUCKY DAY 30th – as you think freely and act confidently, answers appear.

CAPRICORN

22 December - 20 January

Unexpected developments will present you with a moral maze that shouldn't undermine your confidence. You've managed restrictions placed on you extremely well. But a Mercury-Saturn link will encourage you to bend one or two rules. Don't be too proud to ask those you trust for help in making some crucial decisions. LUCKY DAY 17th – amazingly, change and upheaval have a positive outcome.

AQUARIUS

21 January - 19 February

Acknowledge the fact that you have itchy feet, having felt constricted in your movements for far too long. With some careful planning you can arrange a journey that's guaranteed to boost your spirits. And remember, some people close by might like to be included, but they're too polite to suggest it.

LUCKY DAY 20th – an offer or invitation is too good to resist.

PISCES

20 February - 20 March

The sudden urge to enter into a shared enterprise in mid-September could lead you into fascinating territory. But promise yourself that before very long you'll have tied up any loose ends and made sure everything is safe and secure. The thrill of what you're doing mustn't distract you from putting checks and balances in place. LUCKY DAY 15th – others stick to what feels right, much to your delight.

21 March - 20 April

No one could accuse you of being lazy. However, there's one specific area that has suffered from neglect recently. And you would do well to acknowledge the needs of one particular individual who is almost certainly being left to struggle alone. Is it your fault? Not especially. Can you make a huge difference? Definitely. LUCKY DAY 14th – rivals back off at the first sign of conflict.

TAURUS

21 April - 21 May

However well-meaning your intentions may be, try not to overreact to what feels like rejection from someone close. Initially, your support will be appreciated. But towards the end of the month, when Mercury appears to move backwards, you'll sense a chill in the air. Put it down to misinterpretation and give it time. LUCKY DAY 6th – a straight line from A to B leads to where you belong.

22 May - 21 June

Refuse point-blank to adopt strategies suggested by somebody else when it comes to a family, household or professional dilemma. Initially, it will all seem to make sense. But you'll soon start to see holes appearing in the logic of what's involved. That's the point at which you have to call a halt and start again.

LUCKY DAY 2nd – enlightenment is yours concerning a complex issue.

CANCER

22 June - 23 July

Others may not be as scrupulous as you are regarding partnership, joint financial or property wheelings and dealings. And if a petty political matter crops up, try to clarify it immediately. Any criticism of your tactics must be ignored, and you should keep convincing yourself that you know best – which you do. LUCKY DAY 22nd – at last, you forgive peers for a common, minor error.

LEO

24 July - 23 August

Unusual, perhaps even wacky, ideas will spring to mind. And although a Sun-Uranus connection will make you feel invincible, companions may doubt your judgement. Since the focus is on your long-term future, you should consider the points raised. Yes, you're ready for change. But not without conducting a full risk assessment. LUCKY DAY 10th – fans or allies support you in just the way you need.

For weekly updates, visit www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/culture/horoscopes









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Our September issue is always a joyous celebration of fashion, and this year's edition is no exception. We begin in the company of the supermodel Natalia Vodianova, who reveals her love of the great outdoors. Then, in a country-house party like no other, we showcase the very best looks from all the leading new-season collections; and we get a rare insight into the world of the poet king of Gucci, Alessandro Michele. We have sustenance for the mind, as we meet the writer Elif Shafak; and savour an exclusive excerpt from the brilliant new book by Susie Boyt; and finally, a gilded host of our favourite contributors explain what the burnished moments of late summer mean to them. Golden days indeed...



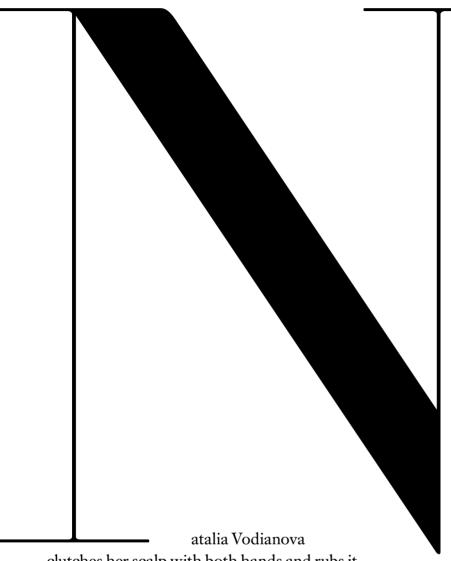


Enekas.Academy









clutches her scalp with both hands and rubs it

energetically back and forth, leaning into her Zoom screen to show me exactly what she's up to. 'Can you see how hard I'm doing it?' she asks, scrubbing away. 'It's really good for the hair too – it sends a lot of blood to the roots... I also do massages to get rid of wrinkles.' She switches to manipulating her forehead with her fingertips. 'All you need is to do this for one minute every couple of hours; you have to do it very hard and it's painful,' she says. 'But if you do it for one week, you'll see. I've never had any Botox, nothing.' Vodianova sits back in her chair and smiles at me, her pale skin now flushed and finger-marked, her blonde hair wildly tousled.

This routine is frankly not what I was expecting when I asked the supermodel, who turns 40 next year, for her favourite beauty tips. But for all her Snow Queen aura, and the polished luxury of her lifestyle as a globe-trotting superstar, designer muse, tech entrepreneur and the wife of Antoine Arnault, one of the heirs to the LVMH empire, there remains something undeniably earthy and unpretentious about Vodianova – as our cover shoot shows. Dancing around barefoot in the Jardins de Bougainville, she resembles a wood nymph, albeit clad in Dior and Louis Vuitton finery. The concept of the shoot was inspired by her grandmother Larissa, a great nature-lover; Vodianova rapturously recalls her childhood mushroom-picking excursions, and long summers spent swimming in lakes and roaming the

forests near their home in Gorky (now Nizhny Novgorod) in central Russia.

'She celebrated nature everywhere she went; for instance, she could never step on an insect,' she explains. 'And whenever she saw a beautiful tree, she always said, let's hug it. She said that when you hug a tree, you receive this very special energy from Earth, from nature, that is life-giving. You can feel better, you can leave your worries and issues here with this tree... Ilove nature, it's really where I get my energy from. I like to hike, and this is how I rest my body and most importantly, my spirit and my mind.'

Vodianova is talking to me today from her Paris apartment, swaddled in a cosy Loro Piana knit, her extraordinary, angular face innocent of any trace of make-up. Surrounded by green leafy wallpaper, she still looks dryad-like, sipping matcha tea and stroking her imperious tawny cat Galileo, who is lounging on her desk.

At periodic intervals, the two youngest of her five children, Maxim, who is seven, and five-year-old Roman, burst in, demanding her attention, but she remains unfailingly calm, patient and funny in response. 'It's something I practise a lot,' she says, of this serenity. 'It comes from an accumulation of life lessons.'

She cites her yoga practice, and her friendship with the designer Diane von Furstenberg: 'She has always been a great support and a great role model in this. She always, always has this Zen feeling about everything, and it's really helpful because you can go through life thinking that everything is important, but in the end, there is very little that is truly important.'

But it's hard to believe that the main influence was not Vodianova's own tough upbringing, and the lessons it taught her in resilience. Her father left the family when she was a toddler; her stepfather also abandoned her mother after the birth of Oksana, her half-sister, who has cerebral palsy and severe autism. At the time, it was usual in Russia for disabled children to be put into institutions, but her

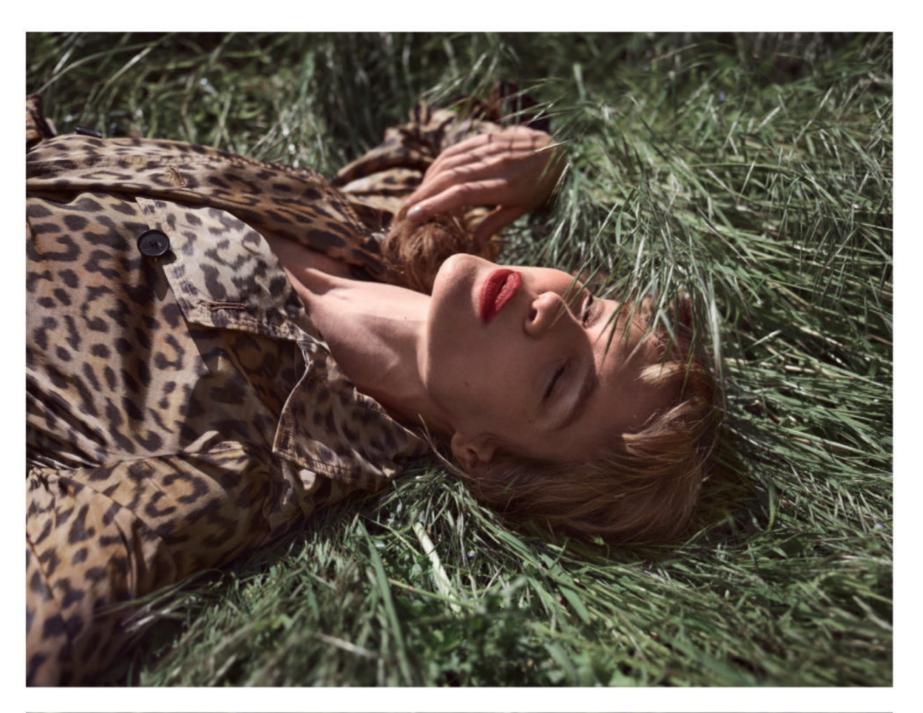
























mother refused; instead, to keep the family together, she took cleaning jobs and ran a fruit stall, leaving Vodianova to run the house and look after Oksana; at school, she was stigmatised for having a disabled sister, and bullied by her classmates.

By the time she was 11, she was manning the fruit stall herself. 'That was my reality and we felt very isolated,' she says. Far from being resentful, however, she is deeply admiring of her mother, and devoted to Oksana and to her youngest sister Kristina. 'My mother showed me a very different side of life. She taught me great resilience. She was really an exception, keeping a severely disabled child, because every parent was encouraged to abandon them at birth. My mum was a fighter, and she never gave up on Oksana. Although it was very difficult for all of us, she persevered, and she loved us equally.'

Fashion provided a Cinderella-style escape: Vodianova attended a model-scouting event, was spotted, and taken to Paris, where her elfin, otherworldly beauty made her sought-after for campaigns by brands such as Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Calvin Klein and Prada, earning herself the admiring sobriquet of 'Supernova'. A multimillionaire in her own right, she was soon able to support her mother and Oksana in comfort. By the time she was 19, she had

married Justin Portman, the aristocrat and property scion, with whom she had three children – Lucas, Neva and Victor, who are now all teenagers – before the couple divorced in 2011. That same year, she began dating Antoine Arnault, the chairman of Loro Piana and CEO of Berluti; he is the father of her two boisterous youngest offspring.

But although Vodianova presumably no longer has a financial imperative to work, the drive and grit instilled in her by her childhood has never left her. Attempting to keep up with her numerous projects, whether personal, professional, philanthropic or entrepreneurial, is almost impossible – even, sometimes, for Vodianova herself.

Alongside her modelling schedule, the demands of her numerous family and her

dedication to fitness (she's a keen long-distance runner), there is her work at the Naked Heart Foundation, which she set up after the Beslan school siege in 2004, when she was just 22, and which has built more than 190 play parks in Russia, as well as campaigning on behalf of children with disabilities. Her close relationship with Guerlain, whose ambassador she has been for over a decade, was cemented for her by a contretemps that took place a couple of years ago, when she was booked to shoot an advertisement for its Shalimar fragrance in India. 'I realised that I had double-booked myself, and there were 10 kids with autism coming from Russia to Disneyland for the first time, for the trip of their lives. It was a complete disaster. So I asked Guerlain to cut their production short by two days and that I'd work 14 hours a day, but I couldn't let these children down. They said it was no problem. Things like that make me very loyal and grateful…'

She is also a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Population Fund, sits on the board of the Special Olympics and is an investor in numerous tech start-ups, from E-gree, an app designed to democratise legal agreements such as pre-nups, to the period-tracker Flo and Loóna, an app designed to help users sleep. 'We always look to create impact and we always work with founders whose end goal is to use the amazing tech tools that are now available and to change the lives of people for the better.'

How, I wonder, does she attempt to instil this laudable sense of purpose into her own children? I definitely believe that the only way to educate your children is to be an example yourself,' she says. 'I have five children, it's a great responsibility. And it's probably the most important role in my life, to empower my children and to make sure that I can pass on some of the incredible lessons that I've received from my life in a way that will not be invasive.' Yet the sense of purpose she derived from a hand-to-mouth upbringing will not be so easy to find for her offspring, brought up as they have been with no material wants, I suggest.

'It's a good point – I didn't have a choice,' she muses. 'To be honest, I sometimes feel very compassionate towards my own children, because I think that in some way, they got the other extreme... It's not about having all, or having nothing, it's more the pressure they put on themselves, seeing who I am and how I live, and their step-

father as well, who is himself a great role model. You know: who am I, what am I going to do with my life, how am I going to find myself? For me, it's really more about teaching them to be happy. I always explain to them that they have their own gifts... and that's what they need to look for. I think that's the role of a parent, to be there always, and to try to help them find themselves.'

The pandemic has assisted this endeavour, by curtailing her constant travelling over the past year and a half. 'I realised, at the end of March last year, that I was waking up naturally and not feeling sleep-deprived for the first time since I was six years old,' she says, laughing. 'You prioritise in a very different way when you're not exhausted.' Vodianova found herself revelling in

domesticity for the first time. 'I knew how to cook, because I had cooked since I was very little. But I really loved it, actually. Having this routine of waking up and making lunch, and then having a little break and starting to cook dinner. This feeling of feeding my family was very beautiful. And everyone knew where to find me.' She set the seal on this domestic bliss by tying the knot with Arnault last September in a small civil ceremony, wearing a dress by her friend, the designer Ulyana Sergeenko.

Not, of course, that Vodianova has any plans to take things easier in the long term. Right now, she's working on two major projects: a collaboration between UNFPA and a big fashion brand, and producing a biodegradable and eco-friendly alternative to medical disposable masks. 'I'm very concerned after watching *Seaspiracy*,' she tells me. 'Our household is slowly but surely consuming much, much less meat and fish. But I don't lie awake at night worrying about anything, because I'm not that kind of person,' she says. 'I'm a doer, rather than the worrying type.' A Supernova indeed.

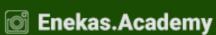
'My mother was really an exception, keeping a severely disabled child, because every parent was encouraged to abandon them'











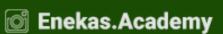








































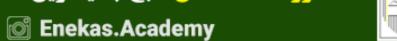












































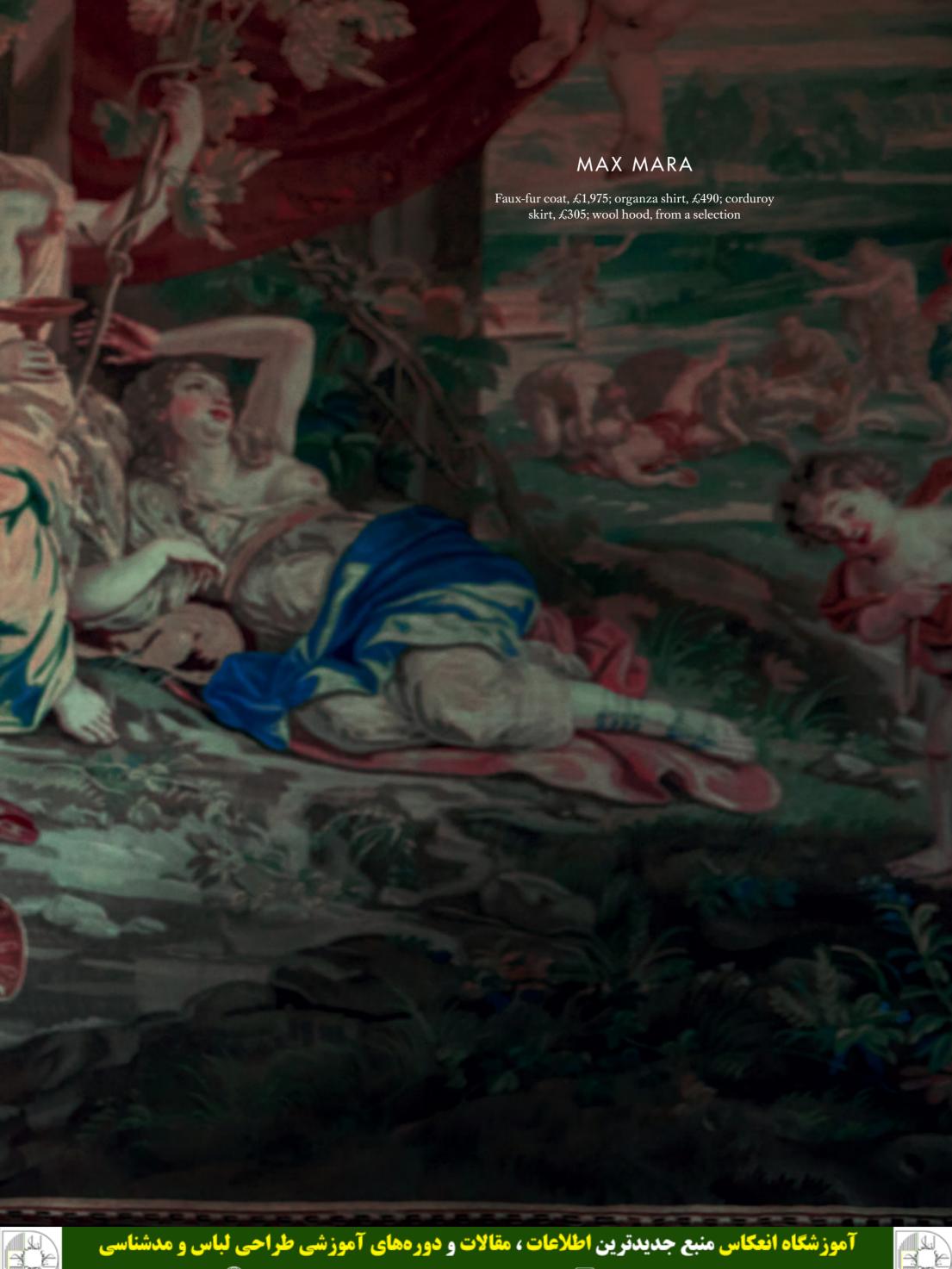




























































































WORDS OF WISDOM

As her latest novel is published, Elif Shafak discusses female strength, what home means to her, and the power of storytelling to change minds and hearts

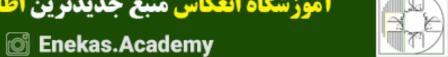
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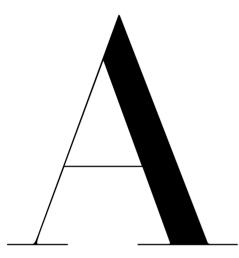












s Elif Shafak and I wander through Holland Park's gates early on a hot summer

morning, the author compliments my cotton tiered dress that is billowing in the breeze. It's lovely and airy, I say – it feels rather like wearing a yurt. In Shafak's 2017 TED talk, she pointed out that the word 'yurt' in Turkish means 'motherland', as well as a tent used by nomadic tribes. 'I like that combination,' the elegant, ethereal writer says now. Those sea-green eyes hold a steady gaze; she is simply dressed, dark hair loosely tied back, with weighty silver rings clinking together on her fingers and thumbs. Her melodic voice is still softly accented after more than 10 years of living in London. 'Your homeland doesn't need to be a geographical place – it can travel with you.'

This moment is something of a microcosm of Shafak's way of thinking and communicating. Within a few minutes, she has highlighted what words can teach us, expressed a profound sociopolitical point and, with a charming lightness of touch and vivid metaphor, made me think differently about an everyday object.

Her work has been translated into 55 languages; her 12th novel, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World, published in 2019, was Booker-shortlisted; the aforementioned TED talk has been watched more than six million times and she is currently a fellow at St Anne's College, Oxford, and a vice-president of the Royal Society of Literature. Her luminous fiction, eloquent public speaking and fearless criticism of Turkey's politics have won her a large, and growing, following. Because she often, sensitively, explores issues – child abuse, sexual harassment, war crimes – that Turkey would prefer to bury, the author has been forced to exile herself from her homeland, for fear of arrest after

several of her books were investigated by the authorities for 'crimes of obscenity', and she was prosecuted on charges of 'insulting Turkishness'.

However, all is momentarily serene when we meet in this corner of Shafak's neighbourhood in west London. We walk together past tidal waves of blue and white bearded irises in the Kyoto Gardens, and greet an imperious peacock before sitting down to chat under an old silver birch. This feels apt, since her new novel, *The Island of Missing Trees*, about a Christian Greek boy and a Muslim Turkish girl who fall in forbidden love in 1974's war-torn Cyprus, is co-narrated by a fig-tree. The chapters flash forward and back between the couple's early days as star-crossed lovers, the early 2000s when they meet again, and to their daughter Ada's troubled adolescence in contemporary London, as she struggles to work out her identity between cultures, amid the residual repercussions of the civil war. Throughout the book, the wise, wry arboreal figure bears witness and provides perspective on what is unravelling on both a political and personal level.

'I wasn't confident on how to approach this novel, until I found the fig-tree,' Shafak says. 'It gave me a voice to tell a story that hasn't, in reality, ended: Cyprus' wounds still haven't scabbed over.' As well as communicating with a knowledgeable hawthorn, this venerable shrub receives a variety of kind, occasionally annoying, visitors: a mothering mosquito, a gossipy bee, a painted-lady butterfly, a mouse who has just discovered Ovid and a newlywed queen ant with her 'entourage of loyal courtiers'. All feed the tree poignant slivers of information about what on Earth the humans are up to.

Shafak's novels are often laced with magical realism, and it's well known that alongside her muscular understanding of the world at large (she has a PhD in political science) runs an appreciation of mysticism. Soon after she was born in France, Shafak's parents split up; her mother brought her back to Ankara, to a conservative society where divorced women in her situation were expected to marry again, quickly. But Shafak's grandmother intervened, insisting her daughter finish her studies, so Shafak's girlhood was spent in her grandmother's home, an island of female strength in a patriarchal city, and a sanctuary of spiritualism amid civil clashes outside. 'My grandmother would be reading coffee cups, melting lead to ward off the evil eye, teaching me oral history and folk tales,' she says, her voice full of affection. 'I would never belittle that wisdom. There are people who have degrees and are extremely ignorant, and there are people like my grandmother who have no qualifications but are very sage. I remember sitting at the window, in this house full of magic, domestic joy and sharing, looking out at the political violence and bombs exploding in the street... I think somewhere in my work I am always trying to bridge the two.'

Her grandmother also wasn't afraid of making fun of the orthodoxy from time to time, and showed Shafak the importance of laughter from an early age. 'I love and respect humour,' she says now. 'It's not a coincidence that in all the countries where democracy has been bruised, humour has disappeared from the public space. In life, and literature, it gives a serious issue oxygen.'





Once Shafak's mother had graduated, she became a diplomat and they moved from country to country for the next several years. Shafak's imagination was the only meaningful suitcase she could take with her, and it was her constant companion: she wrote stories, played with made-up friends, would apologise to the furniture for bumping into it. 'In my head, in what I call "storyland", I could breathe, I could be myself, she remembers. 'I could be multiple. It still feels the same today.' It's this collision of opposites that she loves in heavy-metal music – she is a big fan, listening to the same track 70 or 80 times on loop when writing. If this seems at odds with her gentle demeanour, it shouldn't – typecast Shafak at your peril. 'So many emotions are packed inside the music. It's why, particularly with gothic bands, there's darkness, and so much light: it contains the yin and the yang,' she says with a smile that implies she's been making this argument for years to varying degrees of success.

Shafak is a persuasive and passionate advocate for plurality and rejecting cut-and-dried labels, because they define a person as part of a group, so they become part of an 'us', leading inevi-

tably to a sense of 'us' and 'them'. 'In a world of echo chambers, in which people are at their most comfortable, we are increasingly reluctant to actively tune in to an opposing perspective,' she says. 'This is why novels are so precious, because they are one of our last remaining spaces where we feel free, and are inclined, to step into the shoes of a completely different person for a couple of hours.'

We hear a lot about 'the power of storytelling' today, and it is increasingly co-opted for marketing, but Shafak's fiction actually does change minds: she receives letters from very conservative readers saying the character they most identified with was bisexual, or gender fluid. She herself reads prolifically and widely to

broaden her knowledge continually: 'I have no time for differentiating between so-called "highbrow" and "lowbrow". I read Rumi, crime thrillers, Virginia Woolf, cookbooks, neuroscience... they are all valuable.'

She laments the influence that identity politics has in some areas of publishing, and how if you happen to be, say, a non-Western female writer as she is, you're expected to stay in that lane, creating insightful, poignant stories relating to your experience. 'Writing is transcendental, I like to step out of myself and become someone else, tell stories we might not otherwise hear,' she says. Where is the line when it comes to cultural appropriation, I wonder. 'This is nuanced: I don't see it in binary terms. In my view, minority voices haven't been heard enough, so we have to support people from disempowered backgrounds; at the same time, never close the door on the possibility that a white

writer can write stories that take place in Black communities, and vice versa,' she says. 'If you feel it in your heart, and you take it seriously, you can write about anything and everything. I can write about a Norwegian professor – you could write about a Latin American revolutionary.'

By believing in ambiguity, in embracing what she calls 'the dance between faith and doubt', Shafak stands for the right to

change one's mind. When she came out as bisexual in 2017, she acknowledged that in spite of her life's work speaking up for the LGBTQ+ communities, she had hitherto feared the stigma and ridicule she might receive by making it personal. 'I wish I had had the courage to do it before – but I don't put any pressure on people who are not ready to come out,' she reflects. Indeed, in the event, she received an immediate and brutal backlash online, originating mostly from Turkey, that lasted months but it was a storm she was ready to weather. After all, the Turkish government has repeatedly tried to effectively 'cancel' her through various ways and means. She and her fictional characters (who had ref-

erred to the Armenian massacre as genocide, and so were put on trial too) were eventually acquitted, but nonetheless Shafak upped sticks to London with her husband, the journalist Eyup Can and two children, to be both safe and creatively free. 'There is a sense of loss and longing that comes from exile. You think you've left it behind, then suddenly you hear a song from Istanbul and feel tearful,' she says philosophically. 'At the same time, I do see myself as a citizen of the world. So London is my home, as a writer and as a woman.'

As we leave the park, a young woman runs over, smiles and, almost nervously, tells Shafak that her best friend loves her work and has read every book; would Shafak possibly jot down a note of encouragement for her on this creased postcard she had just scrabbled for in her rucksack? The author stops, accepts, and they talk for a few minutes. When we head off, she is visibly moved. 'I can't quite put into words what conversations like that mean to me,' she says quietly, looking up. 'I suppose something in that exchange is the essence of why I write, and will always.' 'The Island of Missing Trees' by Elif Shafak (£14.99, Viking) is out now.

Novels are so precious because they are one of our last remaining spaces where we feel free to step into the shoes of a different person'











Alessandro Michele has invigorated the 100-year-old House of Gucci with his bold extravagance and playful flair, which has attracted an entourage of stars, including the dynamic Lou Doillon, who models the brand's spectacular creations in our shoot. Here, the designer invites *Sasha Slater* into his world of wonder...

It's pouring with relentless rain in London, but in Alessandro Michele's office on a Roman palazzo, the sun is streaming through large casement windows. It dapples the leaves of some luxurious houseplants and lights on a mahogany table where great red leather books, ceramic bowls, glass domes and what looks like a mediaeval wooden Madonna are grouped in an alluring composition. The creative director of Gucci is sitting with his back to all this splendour, wearing a green T-shirt and Seventies-inflected spectacles talking via Microsoft Teams about birth, death, pandemics, art and adornment.

Michele is 48 and has been working for the Italian fashion and accessories label since 2002 but, with his flowing mane of black hair, full beard and endless curiosity, he appears much younger. Perhaps that is also in part due to his almost supernatural ability to predict and define the next big thing. His hand-picked family of brand ambassadors is an enviable array of the talented, beautiful and quirky, ranging from Gen Z's favourite musician, Billie Eilish, to Harry Styles, who has transformed his early boy-band fame into something much more intriguing. This Styles has done with the help of a gender-fluid wardrobe of Gucci pieces, not least a glossy bamboo top-handle handbag that Grace Kelly wouldn't have scorned, and which he carried to this year's Brit Awards.

Lou Doillon, the actress and singer who models in this story, is another. She calls herself one of the 'Gucci children' who get to play dressing-up games with Michele's creations. 'His clothes always leave room for your personality,' she says. 'In high fashion you risk getting swallowed up by what you're wearing and becoming a brand on legs. For him, everyone's personality shines out.





Enekas.Academy







I think that's because he has such tremendous respect for everyone.'

Michele has been adorning men and women, or as he himself says simply, 'everybody', in his exuberant designs since he was appointed to the role in 2015, unveiling his debut collection to rapturous applause. At the time, his vision of young men in pussy-bow blouses and floral trouser suits, and women in lace and bobble hats, was revolutionary. In his most recent show, for autumn/winter 2021, women wore riding hats and harnesses, men diaphanous off-the-shoulder black and sequins. And models of both sexes or none, wore high jewellery on the runway which – while not unheard of – is certainly not run of the mill. Blaming post-World War II austerity for turning men away from an enjoyment of precious stones and adornment, Michele aims to bedeck us all in rubies, sapphires, opals, tsavorites and beryls. 'We look more wild with jewels on,' he says in his charmingly Italian-accented, though very fluent, English. 'More like an animal. We are the least colourful animals in existence, so placing jewels on our bodies, we connect with the Earth, and can look like exotic birds.'

The show, titled Aria, was also a birthday celebration, for the house of Gucci is now 100 years old. Founded in 1921 by a former

Savoy bell-boy, Guccio Gucci, as a Florentine leather-goods shop, the brand grew and expanded. John F Kennedy called Guccio's son Aldo 'the first Italian ambassador of

fashion', and the house flourished in the glory years of Cinecittà and La Dolce Vita. After weathering murderous internecine family dramas in the 1980s, it was acquired by Pinault Printemps Redoute (later Kering) and Tom Ford was installed as the creative director in 1994. This appointment re-branded the house as a purveyor of high glamour to Hollywood. According to Michele, it was a Tom Ford claret-coloured velvet suit that 'made Gwyneth Paltrow famous'. And he reprised his predecessor's creation – for both men and women – in the Aria show. Another stand-out piece was a small crystal-encrusted minaudière in the shape of an anatomical heart that, says Michele, signifies 'the heart of the brand.

It's like a Grail. It's the heart of fashion that's alive'. There were other elegant acknowledgements of the house's history in the collection in the riding crops, snaffle loafers and lavish use of the GG logo. The show, which aired on the Gucci website, was partly shot at the Savoy Club.

The soundtrack was a blend of songs that namecheck the brand and, says Michele, was a challenge to create. 'I really tried to go very deep into what it means for a brand to be in the middle of this crazy anniversary at this time,' he says. 'I tried to get there through the songs that reference Gucci, and started to count them.' This proved an impossible task, with researchers continually coming up with new performances by Jay-Z, A\$AP Rocky and Dita Von Teese. 'Maybe it's crazy to go through fashion history with songs,' Michele says ruefully. 'Every week they came back saying, actually, there aren't just 2,000 songs, we've found another one.' But it was a challenge that revealed something about the brand and about its creative director too. 'It meant that we aren't 100 years old, we are one year old, completely new. The label is like a baby. And I think that Gucci is a kind of exception. When you think about brands with a past, you feel their history. But with Gucci you think

of something contemporary.' This is, for the designer a unique alchemy. 'If I think about Tom [Ford],' Michele explains, 'he was trying to tell the story of the hedonistic period of New York, with Halston. And that was such a long time ago. But when he started to talk in that language, the result was unbelievable.' Indeed Tom Ford's Gucci, with its long lines and jewel colours, encapsulated the 1990s. In the same way, the Aria show, lavishly quoting (with the Georgian designer's permission) from Demna Gvasalia's Balenciaga in its silhouettes and branding, felt breathlessly modern. In fashion, it's vanishingly rare to share in this way, a fact that the chairman and CEO of Kering, Gucci and Balenciaga's parent company, emphasised at the time of the show. François-Henri Pinault said, 'I've seen how [Alessandro and Demna's] innovative, inclusive and iconoclastic visions are aligned with the expectations and desires of people today.'

Once Italian travel restrictions were partially lifted, Michele left Rome with his partner of over a decade, Giovanni Attili. Attili, who is a specialist in environmental engineering and a professor at Rome's elite Sapienza University, is equally as hirsute as the designer – indeed they bear a striking physical similarity. They decamped

to their country house on the Umbria-Lazio border with their Boston terriers Orso (Bear) and Bosco (Wood), whose images have, of course, featured in a Gucci capsule collection. 'I went there in June and stayed all summer, working at home, having fun with my family and my partner and my dogs,' he recalls. 'And some friends who came back and forth, and people

from work.' One of the great revelations of lockdown, for Michele as for so many others, was the chance to see the seasons evolve. 'I saw the clouds coming, I saw the yellow light of the sun change, and the leaves change. I have the sound of the wild wind that came in the winter in my ears now.' He also saw autumn for the first time, calling it 'the season in between that I never saw because I was always in Milan and Rome and London and New York and wherever. I remember noticing the seasons because the shop windows changed, but now I saw the end of the summer in the middle of an amazing landscape.'

Michele talks and thinks like a poet. His post-show press conferences are famous among the fashion pack for

being philosophical, gnomic and apparently nothing to do with the catwalk pyrotechnics he's just shown. This is because the designer is a polymath whose influences vary from mediaeval religion to old-master painting to, of course, rap and pop culture. The title of the high-jewellery collection he showed is Hortus Deliciarum, a Garden of Delights, which he sees as a way to describe Eden, or a paradise in classical mythology: 'It's a place of beauty but not very defined... a beautiful way to describe something that is just beyond [our perceptions]'. Because Michele takes inspiration from everywhere, almost anything goes in the collection, which includes Dionysus-themed pieces, waterfalls of diamonds, tiger heads and dainty bow motifs.

High jewellery, in which the most exquisite and enormous stones are fashioned by supreme craftsmen, is a specialism that usually takes generations to get right. And Gucci was not necessarily a natural



Below, from left: Gwyneth Paltrow

wearing Gucci in

1996. Alessandro

Michele and Harry

















choice to produce such pieces. 'Gucci is not really connected with jewellery,' agrees Michele. 'But why not? It's such a powerful and beautiful label. And if I'm putting my soul and my creativity in, a piece of my creativity and my soul is that I love to decorate guys and girls and people with these kinds of things. So I thought it's a good reason to do something more. It's a good reason to play, to play as a kid.'

As for how the Gucci client would respond to the new venture, Marco Bizzarri, Gucci's CEO, is wise enough not to distract Michele with talk about sales – no matter how stratospherically they soar. As he has said in the past: 'I wanted to have a company culture where emotion and creativity were at the front and business followed. A place where creativity is fostered by joy, by happiness.' Meaning Michele is free to dream, and to spin gold (or to crochet it – at which he is remarkably skilled).

Among all Michele's passions and interests, it seems to be his love of jewellery that glows hottest. 'I'm a collector,' he explains. 'I am obsessed with jewels.' He dates this passion back to his maternal grandmother. 'She was an amazing woman, so tough and very elegant and stylish. She was really, really, really crazy about jewels,' he recalls. 'With her I learnt how beautiful it is to buy a jewel. I would spend a lot of time in so many shops with her when she was choosing things. I remember I was mesmerised in front of these amazing pieces.'

He was brought up in Rome, with a father who worked for the Italian airline, Alitalia, and a mother who, before his birth, worked for the Rank organisation and still kept the glamorous gowns she had worn to premieres and events during her career. 'She loved the divas who went to sleep in their make-up with their hair perfect. She was very connected to that era. I feel I'm more punk. It was a moment when people were playing with personality, with changing themselves. Because how you look has power and the punk crew started to question the politics of power and the way they looked,' he says now.

It is, perhaps, this familial clash of punk and *per bene* – the Italian term for a haut bourgeois mindset – that caused friction, however loving, between Michele and his grandmother. 'We were always fighting. I remember my mum saying to her mum, "How can you start a fight with a little kid of eight?" And granny would say, "But he's terrible! You have to listen to what he's saying." On her death, his grandmother left her jewellery to

Michele's sister who, he says, prefers to wear costume jewellery. 'She says "I don't like to wear those precious pieces, I feel uncomfortable." But I feel very comfortable wearing them.' So Michele took a huge and beautiful 1930s bracelet with a ruby clasp from his grandmother's collection to wear. 'And my sister said, "Oh my gosh, if Granny was looking at you wearing this bracelet she'd kill you." And the bracelet got stolen. And I was thinking maybe it was my granny, she didn't want to give me this bracelet. I'm sure she took it back.'

Whether or not the supernatural played a role in the theft of the bracelet, it's certainly true that the occult looms large in Michele's life and work. His old-master painting collection has just been delivered to his and Attili's new house – an ancient building that he says still feels cold in the heat of a Roman summer - and he's puzzling out where to hang each picture. An Instagram image taken by Attili ('who's really good with a camera') shows Michele wearing a huge Mongolian-lamb gilet, kneeling among his Renaissance pictures, which are all laid out on the marble floor. 'They're a big inspiration,' Michele confirms. 'I'm obsessed with English painting. I love the idea of Tudor paintings. There is something mysterious and kind of creepy. The way they look at me is very cinematic.' His favourite subject is one Mary Tichborne, Countess of Warwick, painted in 1541. 'She looks like a contemporary diva,' he says. 'She has this beautiful red hair and these amazing rings on these delicate hands and she's all in black.' She'd look completely at home on the eclectic catwalk of Michele, whose casting has been acclaimed for celebrating a wide spectrum of quirky, etiolated beauty.

Today Michele himself is wearing some dozen rings – at least one on every finger – and looking relaxed and tanned. It feels as if the past year, however challenging, has been good for him. But then, he has always appeared at home with himself and carries his astonishing success at Gucci, and the pressures that must surely come with it, lightly. 'I am very proud of myself,' he confirms. 'I am brave

enough to change without obsessing about criticism. But I want to be sincere with myself and with the people that are watching what I'm doing. In the end I was trying to find life and creativity inside the madness of the pandemic. That meant thinking in a very poetic way, understanding there is light after darkness.'

Surely in the end, it is Michele's very personal blend of punk, pop and poetry that will see us all through to a brighter future.

I'm more punk.
It was a moment
when people were
playing with
personality,
with changing





















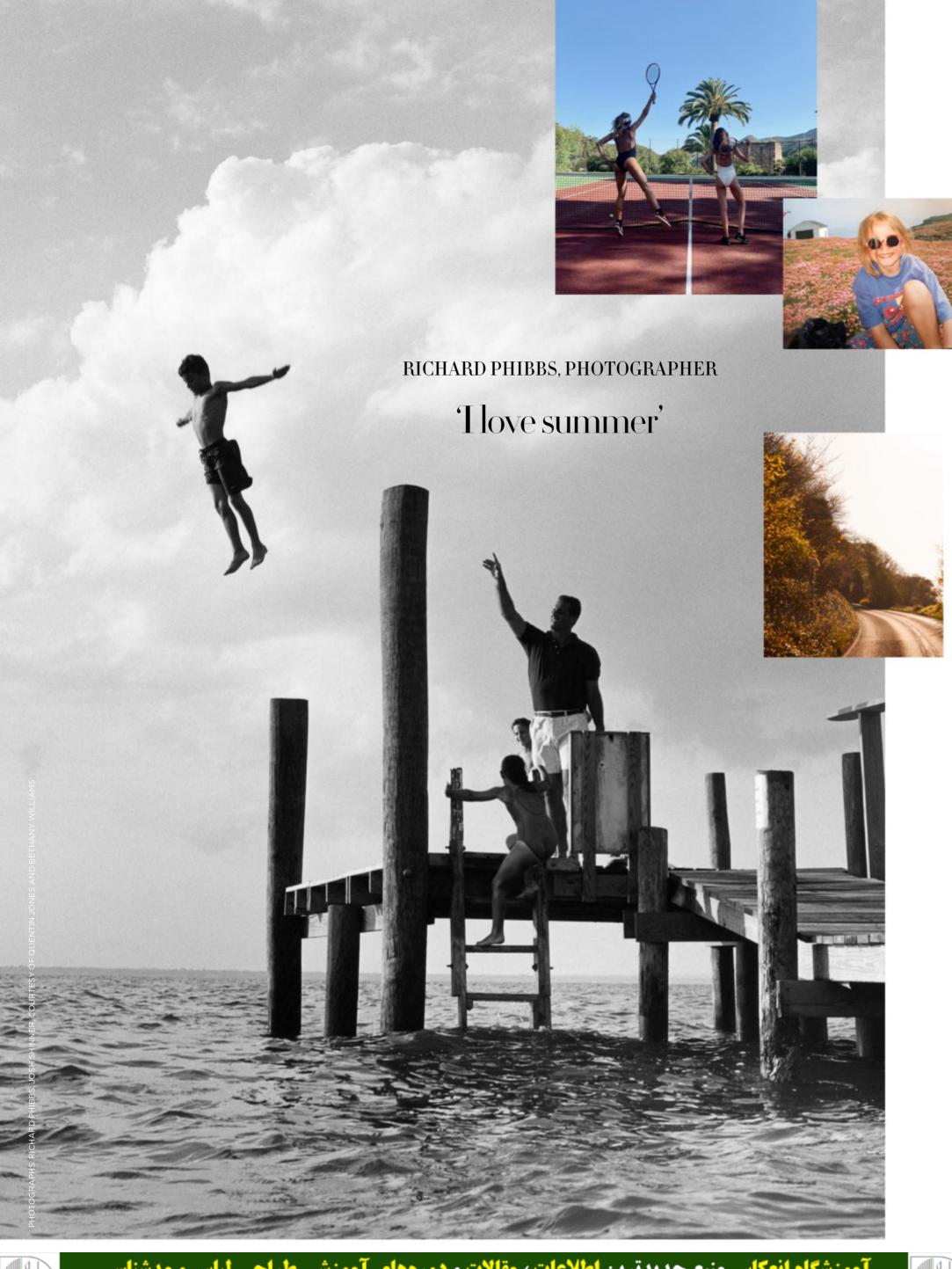
















EMILIA WICKSTEAD SHARES HER SUMMER STYLE STAPLES

'Clothing is such a powerful tool, and the garments you wear on holiday can hold memories that transport you into another time and another place. The best thing about summer is the sun: warm weather every single morning that you wake up. For me, it's a time to be a bit more playful with fashion, but equally because of the light fabrics of the clothes I take away with me, it's just very easy, relaxed dressing as well.

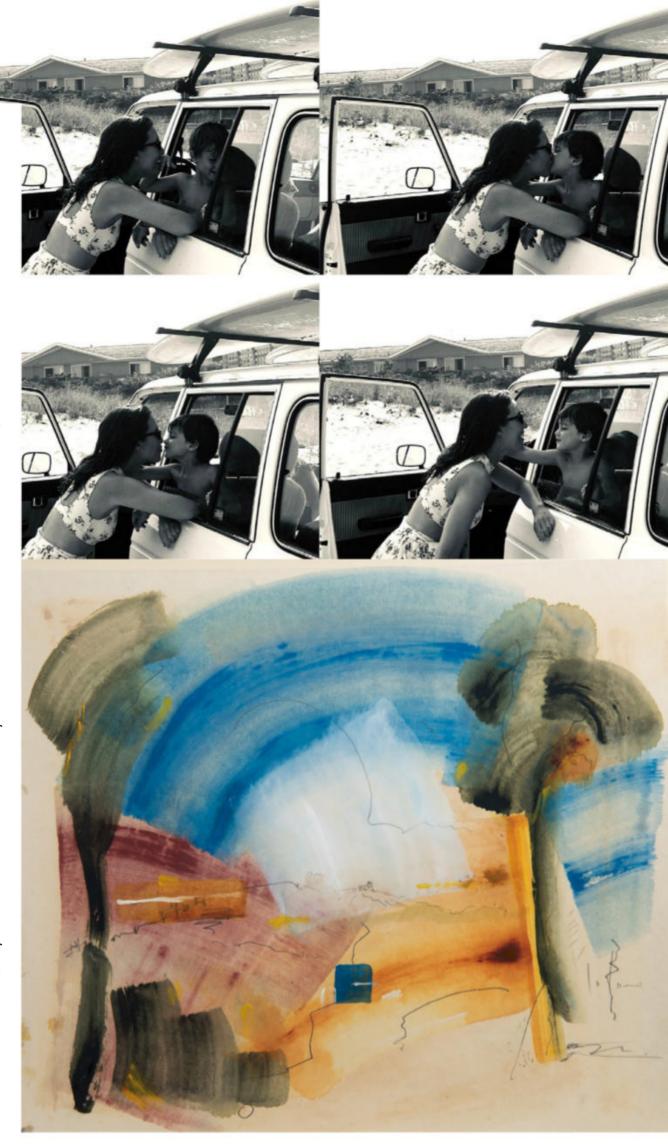
I'm all about packing lots of printed swimwear, and I like to match the print of what I'm wearing with my swimsuit; I think it's very fun and cinematic. Stripes are evocative for me of my childhood summers growing up in New Zealand. I'm filled with nostalgia thinking about those carefree days, breathing in the clean air, walking in the sand and evenings spent on the beach.

On holiday, I like to mix pieces from my previous collections with new ones, but the most recent outfits I've loved wearing have been the kaftans and swimsuits from my new designs with Le Sirenuse in Positano. My grandmother is Italian, and my husband's family originates from southern Italy, so we go there often and Positano is a place that's very close to our hearts. It feels as though it's part of us, our culture and our heritage.

I get excited about antique markets, so the first thing I do when I'm away is find out where they all are and when they're on. When I was in the South of France, I went to a roadside market and found different sets of Baccarat crystal glasses. I still use them today – I've got champagne flutes and wine glasses, and these incredible water tumblers. They're all the more charming because they have that memory attached to them.

Normally I pack the night before my flight, but I do spend about five hours doing it. In my designs, I use a lot of spongy materials like cotton cloqué, which you can crumple into your suitcase and after a few hours on a hanger, it's ready to go. I build my wardrobe out of those key pieces. When it comes to shoes, I only bring sandals: two pairs for going out and two that are more relaxed and casual. I love putting on a dress for the evening and just black satin flat-as-a-pancake flip-flops.

I'll choose something comfortable to wear on the plane, like a nice pair of crepe trousers, and I always take a warm piece of knitwear. If I'm going somewhere, it's exciting and I like to dress for the occasion.'



HARRY CORY WRIGHT, PHOTOGRAPHER

'For the last 10 years I have been painting the landscapes that open up and reveal themselves in summer. The current series is about imagining a friary that was being built 1,000 years ago on the banks of the estuary where I live in north Norfolk. The friary and the estuary no longer exist, so it's a place purely in my imagination. I think how it might have been arriving by boat from a long trip at sea; up through the creeks, round the corner to see fields on either side of you and this magnificent structure right on the banks of the river... in sunshine.'







QUENTIN JONES, ARTIST AND **PHOTOGRAPHER**

'Summer is the one time of the year where everything else can melt away for a few weeks. I lock the door to my studio in New York, and usually don't see it for most of August. Having that time with family to be silly, play games, eat too much, have wine at lunch and snooze in the afternoon is part of what makes me work so hard when I get back.'



HARRIS REED, **FASHION DESIGNER**

'Late summer is always my favourite time, when the last of the heat is bouncing off the stones by the brook. One of my favourite memories was shooting the campaign for the fragrance Gucci Mémoire in Tuscany – hot summer nights, tents full of laughter, and bowls and bowls of pasta.'





ERIK MADIGAN HECK, PHOTOGRAPHER

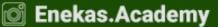
'Summer is supposed to be a vacation, but is actually when your true self begins to shine.'



















ERDEM MORALIOGLU ON HOW TO CREATE THE PERFECT HOLIDAY WARDROBE

'I'm quite a uniform dresser when I'm on vacation. I keep things simple, sticking to trunks, vintage tees and Birkenstocks, which I wear with socks on the plane. Simplicity is – I believe – the key to summer style. People always overpack for a holiday. It's not even that you won't wear half the things you take (you won't), it's that you should be smart about what you do.

A great holiday wardrobe should have versatility; basic staples that can be styled in different ways. Mix in elements of masculine and feminine: a slip dress for gorgeous dinners that doubles up as a skirt under an oversize cotton shirt for a day of sightseeing. A white T-shirt that you can tuck into capri pants on the flight or into shorts for the beach, a classic shirt-dress you can unbutton and throw over a bikini. Everything should be multifunctional and comfortable, with relaxed shapes. This also creates more room in your suitcase for the inevitable pieces – crafts and trinkets – you will buy when you are abroad.

Of course, experimentation is fun on holiday, but you don't want to lose your personal style. Think of wearing what you normally would, but a lighter version of it. This is all about the fabrics; opt for linens and cotton toiles in clothes, and raffia and canvases for bags and shoes. Make everything just a softer take on your usual look.

Sunny breaks are a great opportunity to play with colour and pattern, but even if you would normally shy away from that, remember that traditional whites and pale blues take on a new life in the brighter light of Santorini or Mallorca. Delicate florals or stripes in these shades work wonderfully, or you can toy with an irreverent contrast – like a bold tangerine parrot print. Why not? You're on holiday!

If in doubt, I would always defer to the iconic looks of Elizabeth Taylor in the 1959 film *Suddenly, Last Summer*. It's all perfection. That gorgeous white swimsuit, those elegant sundresses and that oversize hat... I do feel very strongly about hats. Always pack a big, big hat. I promise you will wear it with everything.'





AGATA POSPIESZYNSKA, PHOTOGRAPHER

'This is from my 300-kilometre Icelandic trip on horseback.'

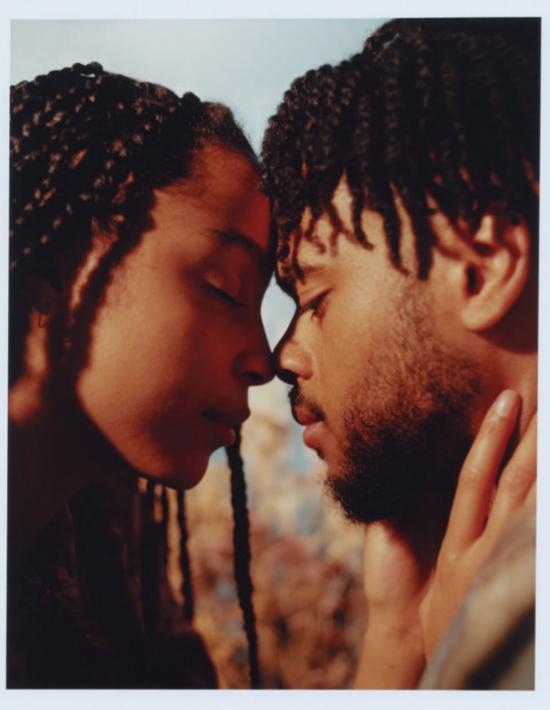


POPPY DELEVINGNE ON SUMMER WITH HER SISTERS

'Cara will always say, "Let's go sky-diving", and I will have to remind her that will never, ever happen. When we travel, she is always trying to get us to do the craziest things. Chloe, meanwhile, is the planner, she will scrupulously research wherever we visit so we know the best restaurants and places of interest. And me? You know, sometimes I think I am just there so that they can steal my bikinis. But there will always be a childlike energy between us. We will never feel like three fully grown adults on holiday. Instead, we are just our true selves - silly, playful, winding each other up. Evenings will typically descend into Disney singalongs where we can knock out the whole Aladdin soundtrack. Are we any good? Probably not. Do we think we nail it at the time? Absolutely.' Della Vite Prosecco (www.dellavite.com) will be served at the Della Vite pop-up garden at the Goring hotel until the end of summer.

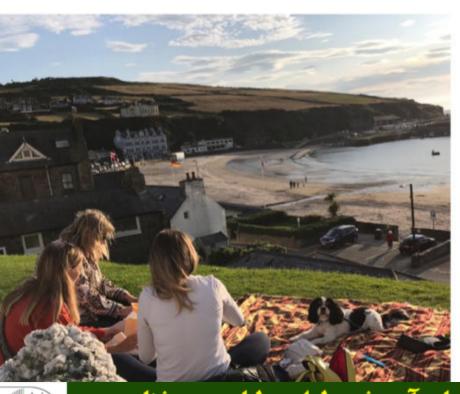


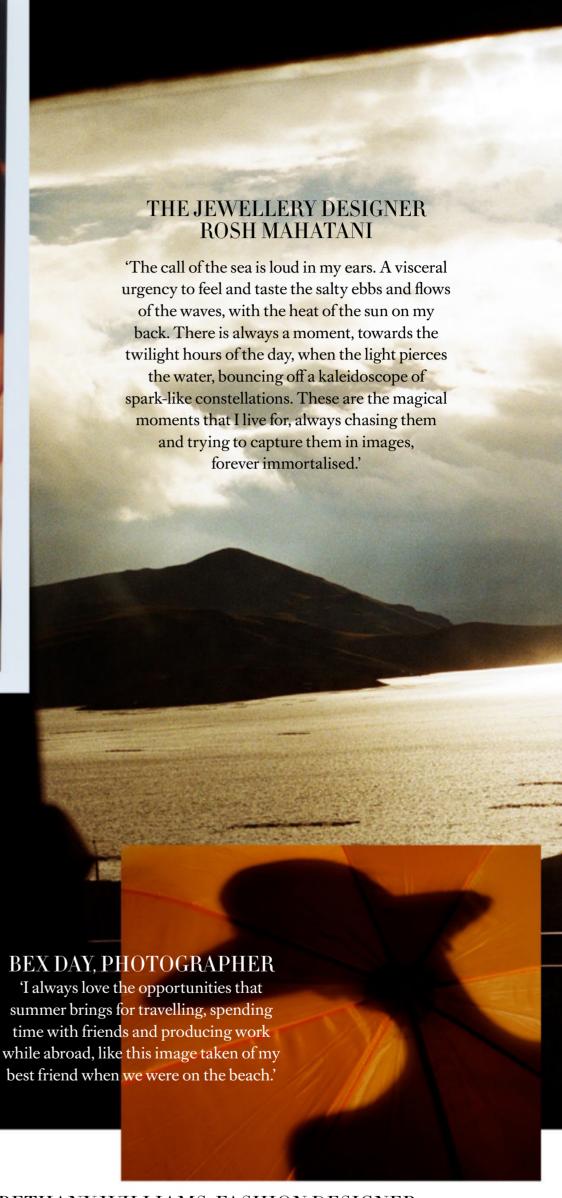




OLIVIA LIFUNGULA, **PHOTOGRAPHER**

'To me, summer has always been a time for romance; exciting, carefree and consuming romance that often ended in heartbreak. Last summer was nothing short of traumatic and the only way I felt like I could react to it was by creating work that showcases a different reality, a reality where we could hug, kiss and experience love with no fear or regrets.'





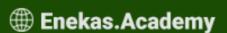
BETHANY WILLIAMS, FASHION DESIGNER

'I am from the Isle of Man, and it is gorgeous at this time of year. I'll walk with my mum and brother and our dog Brydie by the sea, head to Port Erin to watch the sunset and camp with friends around a fire when it starts to get dark. Our favourite beach is called Niarbyl and has the most beautiful heather.

We also picnic on the tiny island of Calf of Man, where only one person lives. We once spotted a basking shark there, which was such a rare moment.'

آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات ، مقالات و دورههای











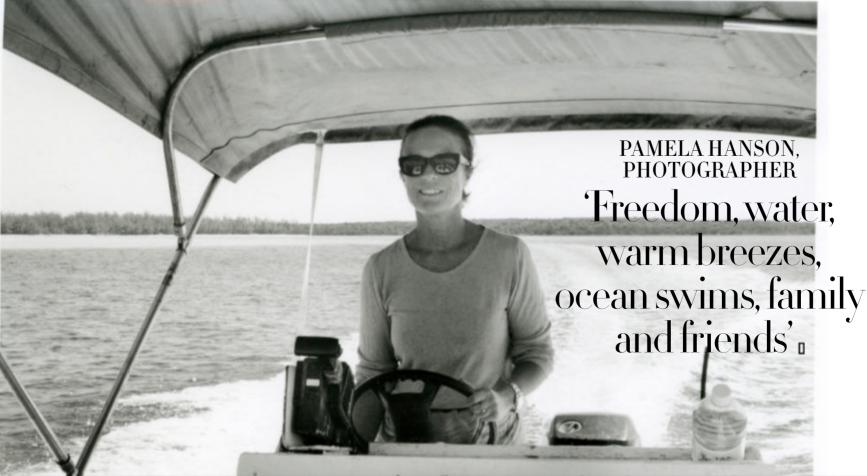
CLOVER STROUD, WRITER

'Two summers ago, I went to Norfolk with my sister Nell and all seven of our children. Nell had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015, and was in the middle of another bout of gruelling treatment, but for the space of that holiday, her illness was just a tiny speck on an otherwise huge and sunny horizon. We went out onto the marshes with our elder sister Emma, carrying baskets packed with towels and a picnic, as our

> mud-sliding in the creeks, and the strange thrill of finding tiny dried-up crabs in the marram grass. We spread blankets out on the sea lavender, and while the children played, we sat in the sunshine. Emma had brought tiny silver tumblers and we drank little shots of cold white wine, eating crab sandwiches and celebrating being sisters. It was exactly the same place, under that

> > huge Norfolk sky, where our mother, grandmother and great grandmother had picnicked together too, and the memory of that day is frozen like an insect in amber. Four months later Nell died, very suddenly, but that afternoon in the sun is something that will always be close enough for me to touch in my mind.'

> > Clover Stroud's latest book 'My Wild and Sleepless Nights' (Penguin, £8.99) is out now.





PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ROSH MAHTA







آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات ، مقالات و دورههای آموزشی طراحی لباس و مدشناسی







I sat roughly, bashing my elbow on the side of the chair and they brought us small coffees, one black, one white. There was grease on the saucers, the smell of burnt toast, and a large waitress in her pink overall was preparing for lunchtime, slicing beefsteak tomatoes with a serrated knife, undoing a yellow lettuce leaf by leaf.

'It's not a great picture,' he said. 'A sketch.'

The ancient-looking painting of a sparrow-like figure on stage in white organdie, flanked by red curtains, one arm raised in the direction of the gallery, was the best thing I had.

'Oh?' I heard a certain sharp thinness in my voice. I gulped down some coffee. I was so exhausted, I very nearly didn't care. The way it had been given to me had been a bit terrible – one of those things you have to try to forget even as it is happening.

'It is what it is,' the man answered.

What happened next was that he took a small padded envelope from a black holdall at his feet and I carried it to the café toilets, unzipped it and counted the money into the little hand basin. Four hundred brand-new ten-pound notes in four bundles, strongsmelling, crisp-edged: the Queen on one side, Florence Nightingale on the other, doing their thing. I thought of the three of us sitting on a park bench together, Her Majesty clasping a glossy sceptre and a little yapping corgi, Florence benign and powerful, a black ribbon at her throat, me lulling the baby in her christening robe. Or her little footed babygro or whatever they wore for christenings now, those with no religious faith to speak of who were undergoing hard times and could not or would not cope. I stuffed the notes back into the envelope, shoved it inside my jumper, buttoned my coat, rinsed the smell of money from my hands. My face in the mirror looked weary, suspicious. My imagination had had so much to do lately, apart from anything else.

I emerged from the ladies', barked, 'All right then' at the man's unappetising smile and walked briskly away from everything. It was early November on Oxford Street, the air mildish with a light wind, the shops threatening Christmas. My state of mind was pretty good.

The bus was crowded and I had to stand until Euston, the money lodged next to my skin, warming my ribs. I had looked up the church in a book of London churches in the school library. I did two and a half days a week now, twenty hours. 'You only want to teach the clever girls,' Mrs Hadley said. 'Well I'm afraid one can't insist on roast beef every day.' Such an odd thing to say.

The triple-arched entrance contains mosaic decoration in the arches, and opens onto a broad passage through the body of the building that emerges under a deep west gallery into the aisleless nave.

Outside the church there wasn't anyone about, and when I poked my head round the carved wooden doors there were only three or four straggling worshippers. A schoolgirl on her knees in green-andwhite-checked uniform, twin French plaits snaking down her back, that was poignant.

And then I heard them, a little throng of merry revellers, led by Eleanor and Ben, wandering up the other side of the street. They had been wetting the baby's head evidently and had a rogue processional Pied Piper air. Ben was carrying Lily, who was smiling. He wore suit trousers, but they were ancient, miles too big, and he billowed round

his edges, mad and comic, Chaplinesque. Eleanor wheeled the pram behind them. She had on a straggly black skirt and an enormous holey charcoal V-neck, long sleeves breaking into thick crinkled strands. Her fair hair was scraped back severely like a dancer, thin hoop earrings, her wide and generous mouth from a distance like a mirage. One or two of their party were clutching bottles of beer. One had a guitar. There were three cans in the navy pram with the silver trim I had bought them.

Eleanor saw me and waved hazily as though she was much further away than she was. She took Lily from Ben, crossed the road and came up to me.

'Here you go.' She plonked her in my arms, turning away. 'Hello precious,' I mouthed to the child, kissing the kink in her silky hair. Lily was her usual irreproachable self. She wasn't dressed up in the slightest, but you could tell she sensed it was a special day and she was wide awake and in adventurous mood, eyes smiling at me curiously. Maybe white terry towelling for a christening was chic? Seaside-ish. Freshly baked. A dressed-up baby, a formal tot bound in dusty lace like a child bride was an appalling idea, possibly. She was clean.

I couldn't look at Eleanor closely, not when we were celebrating. I sometimes thought what I minded most was that all the kindness had gone from her face. The way she had profaned her body.

My eyes safely hovering a few inches above her head, I congratulated her with the biggest smile I had on me. I hoped I wouldn't offend her with approximated cheer. I squinted at Ben chatting to the men with the beer bottles. He carried it well, his brand of cavern-faced mania, in part because he was tall and serious and he already had the atmosphere of distractedness clever people often have. Either that or his warm-hearted confusion was oddly endearing. He brought more of himself to this life, I felt, than she did. I didn't expect very much from him, perhaps that was all it was. And of course it wasn't nothing that they were all more or less on time and Lily looked all right and he'd put on a white shirt with a collar and Eleanor's smile had a certain high wattage, although she looked half crazed, scratching at her neck repeatedly, hollow-cheeked, hard red-rimmed eyes. They were doing their best.

Jean Reynolds from school had offered to be my date. We'd been working side by side for almost two decades and were quite friendly these days, after several years of polite fascination. On both sides, I liked to think.

'I'd do you proud,' she said. 'I have hats, I have brooches.'

I laughed. 'I'm sure you do, but . . . '

'You'd rather keep things simple?'

'If you don't mind.'

I made myself give Eleanor a hug, feeding my free arm round her, imprecisely. 'Congratulations. You're a genius!' I nodded towards the babe, which was a masterpiece. Lily launched herself into the cuddle like the filling in a sandwich.

The priest appeared, calling out bright hullo hullos. He wore his good looks with a certain luxurious amusement. He was tall,





strong-set, dark-eyed, effusive. Perhaps he had been told to make a fuss of me. He said it was a *pleasure* to meet me and that Ben and Eleanor had told him what a *wonderful* support I was and how they couldn't have done it without me.

'It's my absolute *pleasure*.' I was drunk on him suddenly. Usually I could only endure sympathy that was lightly done – it was such a hard thing to convey – but his tone was just right. His church was an inclusive church and that didn't just mean welcoming all-comers, he said, because that was, that was a given, but providing support in the community and hot dinners and baby clothes and a soup-and-sonatas drop-in for the elderly parishioners on Mondays. He wanted to get a community fridge project off the ground – they were everywhere in New Zealand – that was his next initiative.

'That sounds really *interesting*,' I heard myself say. His dark curly hair sprang forward suddenly, releasing itself over his ears and forehead, and sheepishly he batted it away. He was so animated. I appreciated the fact that there was nothing gaunt about him. He made me think of Oscar Wilde.

'Music and movement for the under fives on Tuesday afternoons,' he continued with a flourish. 'Single-dad Thursdays.' He laughed and coloured slightly. For half a second I thought he was going to confide something lavish to me – 'You know I've one or two myself, off the record' – but no such luck.

Hethanked me for coming. 'You've got your hands full, I imagine. Can't be easy.'

'Well...' Luckily Lily beamed at that exact moment in my arms and she was very contagious and I said to the priest, 'Of course *she* makes it easy.'

He nodded. 'She looks to have a very good nature.'

Outside the church some ragged clumps of marigolds grew in grey

slatted wooden tubs dotted with cigarette butts and scraps of confetti. A street sweeper was rounding up piles of withered leaves. 'Shall we?' The priest took my arm, supporting the point of my elbow with his fingertips. Was he this courtly with all his people? I quite liked being treated like the mother of the bride. We all went into the church, took our seats at the front, first three rows of stark brown pews were fullish, perhaps thirty of us altogether. There was a strong odour of incense mixed with wax polish and disinfectant; a wave of artificial vanilla from my neighbour's violent scent. Someone put a tape on – 'God only knows what I'd be without you'. I sat down with Lily propped up on my lap, my arm firm across her warm middle, jiggling my knee up and down rhythmically. An older woman passed us a fine white shawl edged in satin. She was something to do with the church possibly. I thanked her, sniffed it discreetly; it smelled only of wool and soap flakes and although it wasn't new, it was lightly matted, it looked clean, so I gathered it into a little dress shape over

Lily's babygro – it was cool in the church – and she began cuddling it so that was good. I patted the envelope of money – paper armour against my heart – and felt the swell of anxious calculations. You need to get your courage up, I mouthed the words. Concentrate.

Lily was light in my arms, too light possibly, for seven months; the heaviest thing about her was her nappy. I nipped up the back of the church and used a pew as a changing table, laid out a folding mat on some kneelers with basic tapestry of London landmarks: the Post Office Tower, Big Ben, Marble Arch. When I finished I splashed a few drops of holy water on her belly button for a sort of joke. I wasn't religious any more. I didn't suppose Lily was. Eleanor certainly wasn't. Lily chuckled as I sprinkled her. She wore a good,

strong, past-caring look as I did up the silver poppers on her suit. Her facial expressions sometimes reminded me of an elderly Jewish comedian. I winked at her. She very nearly returned the gesture.

I had to be quite stoic when I was with Eleanor – if I looked in any way aggrieved, she would not speak – but I forgot in my panic that seeing me spritz myself all over with false brightness disgusted her a little bit also. I was not in love with it myself. She hated anything resembling dishonesty or performance, but if I faced her truthfully she would probably never see me again. What did she think courage was? She could be so exacting; but it was a day for generosity, or if not generosity then painstaking kindness, and if I couldn't

run to that then a hazy sort of last-ditch myopic indulgence. I despised these sorts of downwards adjustments which made me feel miserly. An uncouth relation in a Jane Austen. Something like that, anyway.

It was five to twelve. The tentative rain was gathering strength, chipping against the high windows, thickening the congregation. A man about my age, mid fifties, settled himself in front of me, propping up a young red-haired woman whose eyes kept closing. Every now and then he prodded her affectionately in the ribs with his elbow or his rolled-up *Standard* and she'd come to and smile and switch herself on for a minute brightly and giggle and seem to be winning at things, and then she would soften herself, her shoulders and her features would sag and dim and she'd slump forward again, as though a fascinating scene was playing out in her lap. It wasn't dramatic, all very light and soft and casual, these small flashes of animation, but her red hair was wild against the man's sharp navy blazer, some of her corkscrew curls like telephone cable coming out of her head at right angles. Her freckles had a life of their own.

Suddenly she turned her head and stared at me hard.

'Hello, miss,' she said. 'It's me, miss. Sheila O'Neil,' and then I

I had to be quite stoic when I was with Eleanor – if I looked in any way aggrieved, she would not speak





realised. Taught her English in the fourth and fifth years, she was in Eleanor's form, she'd been an amazing gymnast, famous for doing strings of cartwheels all round the playground, more of a firework than a girl I remembered thinking: blazing colour-bursts and fizzing bright light and long freckled legs where her head should be, mad bouncing curls, livelier than life. She'd left at sixteen. I tried to talk her out of it. 'I've got to get on with my future, miss.'

'Sheila.' I crisped myself. 'How lovely to see you!'

'Thanks, miss. You too. You think it's no smoking?'

'Oh I do, yes. You know what churches are like.'

'Yeah, boring.'

The priest sidled back over to us. I stood up. 'Your daughter wonders if you would consider being Lily's godmother, whether that might be something you'd . . . ?' He brought the palms of his hands together apologetically.

Whoever heard of a grandmother being godmother? But it didn't matter, and I had heard of aunts and uncles being godparents; big sisters and cousins and so on, so I said, 'Thanks. I'd love to.' The priest nodded in Eleanor's direction. He looked relieved.

'And if there's a reading you'd like to do, or a poem, or even if you've a mind to, a song perhaps . . . 'He was embarrassed now; he

let it show with a small mock wince as if the blame was all his and he really ought to know better. I was grateful it didn't seem to occur to him to humiliate me. 'Short notice, I know,' he cringed. He was so polite he almost made you feel you were the priest. Bless you my son!

The other godparent hadn't materialised – Ben nipped out to telephone him from the phone box by the big Sainsbury's. There didn't seem to be anyone from Ben's family either. He had at least a mother and a brother to his name, a sister in Edinburgh who was doing *tough love*, but not today.

Father Pat was pacing up and down looking at his watch for answers. That was the thing, you started off hell-bent on a rescue mission and before you knew it you got mashed up.

I whispered to Eleanor, 'Who's the most sensible person here?' 'What's that supposed to mean?'

'Sorry, the kindest then, that was what I was thinking, what I meant to say. Sorry.'

She pointed to Sheila.

'Well . . . ' I said. Sheila was not currently conscious. 'Well . . . I'm not entirely—'

Eleanor's grey-blue eyes sent out flares of contempt. The scorn of an angry saint almost. Now and then when I have received that look of hers I have wondered if I could still keep going. I took a rapid step back and bowed my head a little, as if to show that any insolence she detected in me was just a case of mistaken identity. We had to find a way to carry on, that was all I wanted to convey.

The priest's arms were beginning to flail about. The handsome goodwill he was obviously so proud of – we all were – was growing threadbare. I caught his eye and mouthed the words 'so sorry', but if he saw me he did not respond. The whole occasion was about to fall to bits. What did he expect?

'OK, well, that's great, I mean you've known her for fifteen years, more than half your lifetime, so let's go with Sheila then. I know, why don't you ask and I'll nip out and get her a coffee, if you like, to . . . to help her, you know, everyone likes a coffee, don't they, before a big . . . ? Shall I get you one too? I'll do that.'

'OK,' Eleanor said in her ice voice.

I deposited Lily into Father Pat's startled arms and walked to the café next to the Sainsbury's, where there was a queue in front of the long glass cabinet behind which two waitresses were buttering

fawn-coloured bread. A small basket of dimpled plastic oranges was balanced on the counter, a charity tin – Save the Children. What about the mothers? One of the waitresses tilted her head at me, and although it wasn't my turn I asked if they did coffees to take away and she said no. I told her it was a bit of an emergency and I wouldn't normally ask but we needed to revive someone fast who was under the weather, in order to be godmother at a christening over the road that was already promising to be, threatening to be, fraying at its edges, quite likely to disintegrate altogether, or implode - did I really say all that? – and the extremely nice priest was running out of patience with everyone, not his fault, but ... and a tear jumped out of my eye because there was

only so much you could take sometimes, and as luck would have it something in my voice made a deep appeal with the woman behind the counter and I was no longer a demanding customer, I was a situation, and that meant different rules came into play. I could have sunk down on my knees to thank her. She made me milky coffees for Eleanor and Sheila in pristine polystyrene cups and I brought them back to the church, hot mauve liquid bubbling through the tiny holes in the lids, scalding drips on the inside of my thumbs. Good for them to get a few calories down them as well, little stick insects, stick people, sick people.

Sheila's boyfriend saw me come back into the church and began to rouse her gently and I handed him the coffee and he removed the lid, held the cup up to her mouth, blew on it for her and fed it to her in thin little sips, his other arm coiled round her back. He was careful with her, fielding her slumps and stumbling. I was glad she was with someone nurturing, even if he was more than twice her age.

'So,' I gave her my best invigorating smile – my voice had file paper in it, ring binders, hole punches, sticks of chalk. 'Shall I explain how it's all going to go? When he calls us up, the priest, you and me,'

I gave her my best invigorating smile – my voice had file paper in it, ring binders, hole punches, sticks of chalk





I pointed at her and then at myself, 'we'll just go over to the font together, over there,' I gestured again, 'and we'll say the things the priest tells us. We just repeat the words after him. That sound all right?'

'Yes, miss,' she said.

'Call me Ruth. Go on. Please. We're not at school anymore.' She looked doubtful.

I half wondered if we could ask Father Pat to be godfather. We got through it somehow. The best moment was when me, Ben, Sheila and Eleanor all rejected the glamour of evil. Lily looked at me aghast. Not on my account, she seemed to say. I caught Father Pat's eye and he caught mine and his pupils were pitched between humour and despair. 'You know we'd better laugh or we might cry because *I* don't know what to do,' his eyes whispered – or even what the *hell* to do or possibly what the *fuck* – and it was so intimate suddenly it was almost for a moment as though none of us was wearing any clothes – maybe I have underestimated religion – in any case I had to look away. Did Lily actually roll her eyes then? Could a baby do that? She was so comical. It was a brilliant idea to be a baby and laugh a great deal more than you cried.

It was time for me to do the reading. I unhooked Sheila's arm from mine, helped her back into her seat so she could rest. I always got the girls at school to learn a poem on Friday afternoons. It will be a lovely wallpaper for your life, I told them, especially at inbetween moments when you can't get off to sleep, when you're waiting for the bus or nervous about an important meeting at work, when you're feeding your babies you can just run through beautiful things in your mind to lift yourself, when you're about to take your curtain call at Stratford-upon-Avon. Often I would learn one with them too. I had 'Piping down the Valleys Wild', Blake's poem of innocence, up my sleeve. That was childish, joyous, baptismal. Good. I stood, confidently, about to begin, and then suddenly I was unsure that its glee and cheer were really what was called for, even though it contained a few tears. I needed something more stringent, a manifesto.

I remembered a song from my mother's funeral. It was one of the final things. I almost didn't make it to the end. Eleanor was a couple of months old then and she and I were living in two rooms that smelled strongly of laundry that the woman downstairs boiled in a huge saucepan on her stove, bleach and scorch round the clock, so that the walls and the staircase were permanently sweating. I was a liquid mass of grief myself: milk, tears, exhaustion. I used to sit feeding Eleanor remembering my mother's sleeping sounds, her steady breathing and her lovely face – femininity that was its own reward – birdsong welling up from the street and bright chips of children's playing noises.

I was thirty but I didn't know anything. Eleanor's father put in an appearance perhaps an hour a week, keeping his coat on, eyes trained on the door. Sometimes he wouldn't sit down.

It was a hymn I chose then, a hymn about kindness. My mother hadn't had an easy life and I wanted to acknowledge it; correct it, offer compensation. I stood at the lectern again now, for Lily, glad of its support and the way it shielded me and I began to sing. The sound

was thin at first, like a shy choirboy, but then I came into my own a little bit. The priest stood to my right, mouthing the words alongside me like a holy stage mother. Lily wriggled in her mother's arms. I felt my mother with me too, at my side, on my side. It was to the tune of 'The Londonderry Air' or 'Danny Boy'. I didn't know who the 'I' character in the song was, whether it was me, or my mother, or God or Eleanor or Lily or ... or ... Was I singing an apology to the human race? Some days the way you parodied yourself could be quite breathtaking. I smiled.

I would be true, for there are those who trust me; I would be pure, for there are those who care; I would be strong, for there is much to suffer; I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

I would be friend of all – the foe, the friendless; I would be giving, and forget the gift; I would be humble, for I know my weakness; I would look up, and laugh, and love, and live.

I took my seat again. 'Miss,' Sheila was saying, 'miss,' and she squeezed my arm. I hoped Ben and Eleanor didn't mind I had introduced notes of sadness. They had introduced them to me.

'Very nice,' the priest said. Jean Reynolds from school would have been impressed. She would have nudged me sharply in the ribs and stage-whispered, 'Good job!' Even Eleanor smiled. Why was Ben's mother not here? Wasn't this whole thing her idea? Had there been some last-minute clash or boycott? Eleanor once said Ben's mum didn't think Lily was his. Something about her colouring being off, apparently.

Afterwards Lily giggled and made free with her cuddles. It was so generous of her to think everything was funny. It might just be me, but I sometimes found babies a bit cynical round the edges. Their been-here-before auras often registered as smug. No other species considered itself so distinguished while being so glaringly generic, surely? But Lily was civilised and high-spirited. She met the world with wonder and awe. She was aware of her strengths but she didn't think she knew everything like some babies. She understood that in the grand scheme of things she had been born yesterday. I was in love with her, I suppose. I was making myself smile again. Lily's outlook was healthy, she was very taken with life, squeezing delight out of a mushroom or a cotton reel, pretty amazing when you consider she was half poisoned before she was even born.

I felt arrows of rage rising in me, fraught images spreading like bloodstains. There's no point, I told myself. I reached for the ordinary decoys. It won't get you anywhere. Think of the outcome you want and make sure you are moving towards it. Got to be practical. That was what I always told the girls at school. There is so much in life that doesn't matter, so many things that hold you back, hem you in and throw you off the scent of what's important. Don't get too bogged down in things that don't count or things you cannot influence, and specifically don't worry too much about making sure others know you're in the right, because it so easily gets in the way of what you want and need. Become an expert at shrugging most of





life off and free yourself for what really interests you. Hone your focus. Don't bother with cleaning or tidiness beyond basic hygiene. Don't make your appearance your primary concern. It will zap all your creativity. Be as self-sufficient as you dare. Sometimes you hold more strength when people don't know what you think or feel, so be very careful whom you confide in. People can run with your difficulties when you least expect it, distort them, relish them even, and before you know it they're not yours any more. Respect your privacy. And earn your own money or you'll lack power. Take good care of your friendships, nurture them and they'll strengthen you. Don't turn frowning at the defects of other people into a hobby, delicious though it may be; it poisons you. Read every day – it is a practice that dignifies humans. Become a great reader of books and it will help you with reality, you'll more easily grasp the truth of things and that will set you up for life. And don't expose your brain to low-quality art forms because there will be a certain measure of pollution.

We all had our sermons to give.

The light was lacy in the church. Ben and Eleanor seemed to have lost interest in the proceedings and kept wandering off into the street. I minded the way they were so unapologetic, although

it had a certain high style, you could say. There was a dark passage at the back of the building, partially covered by corrugated iron - they were probably making themselves at home there. We had reached a standstill. Father Pat had lost his nerve, that was clear. 'Where are they?' he mouthed to me, bright smile collapsing; he had been left holding the baby for the second time. He was standing by the altar and although the light around him was delicate, his face ennobled by narrow slits of dappled sun, he could not quite shake off the fact that he looked like a camp oil painting entitled The Reluctant Father.

'Yes, they do seem vague,' I said, lifting Lily from his arms, with some tutting and clucking in my general atmosphere. 'They're so unpredictable,

the young people.' I didn't know what to say to him. When I was a child, I was mad for God. I prayed to the Virgin every evening to improve my character. I prayed to the Holy Spirit to make my mother happy. I went on a retreat one year with some other children to a centre near Borehamwood. There were red-brick huts and hundreds of conifer trees. We stayed up late sucking cherry-flavoured sweets at the back of the coach in our pyjamas, chatting with the driver, who handed round a bottle of gin. My friends Suzy and Marion said that Jesus loved us so much and even before we were born he thought of us all the time with immense tenderness and we were silent at the vastness of it. The driver was visibly moved. 'Give us a cuddle, girls?' he said, and Marion had compassion and gave him some kisses on the lips, and afterwards, giddy from the gin, we wobbled our way down the bus's steep steps, tiptoeing across the gravel courtyard in our slippers, feeling our way back to the dormitory in the dark. We

sat on our beds wrapped up in paisley eiderdowns, measuring all the steps involved in perfecting ourselves.

Day's done. Gone the sun.

My friend Christine in gleaming conker-coloured moccasins – couldn't have been more than thirteen at the time – said, 'Of course, God will always be more important to those with absent fathers.'

We had the last part of the service without the parents in attendance. Lily didn't seem to mind. Sheila's boyfriend came to the font to support her and the sunlight flashed appreciatively against his gold cufflinks. It was going through the motions really at that point; me and Sheila linked arms again carefully. Her bones felt light and brittle, twice as old as mine. Afterwards Ben and Eleanor wandered

back in. Someone had a camera and took a roll of film and I asked if I could get it developed myself, promised I'd send off for lots of sets of prints, but they said it was all right. There didn't seem to be a plan for a meal or anything, a cup of tea, a cake, bunches of flowers. Ben settled Lily in the pram at this point and I thought her on the verge of sleep after her triumph.

I couldn't put it off any longer. Eleanor came towards me, but there were filaments of shame in her eyes that alarmed me. She was sensitive and when she saw her expression strike me as a sort of injury she said, 'Oh no, Mum, please,' and I said, 'It's OK, love,' and she said, 'I am sorry, Mum, it was kind of all over the place, wasn't it?' and I said, 'Not at all. Was lovely. Well done. Come

here,' and she gave me a big hug and let me reassure her. I don't know if I'm good and I don't know if I'm evil but I knew what I wanted so I loosened myself from her and went and fetched Lily. She was sleeping flat out in her pram now, a subtle sort of smile on her, so I wheeled her over and I beckoned to Ben to come over too, and I said, 'Ben, Eleanor, I know it's been slightly chaotic, but what a lovely occasion. Don't you think? Can't have been easy to organise, I know. Congratulations to you both, to all three of you really.' Ben looked at me and opened his mouth as if to challenge, but I held my own. 'Now, what I was thinking. Would you like me to take Lily home for the night, for the weekend even, a few days or so, and you could have a break, a bit of time to yourselves, catch up on your sleep. A week?'

'No, Mum,' Eleanor said, but Ben was looking more alert suddenly.

'Oh, and I've got her present as well to give you. I didn't know what to get. What do you give the person who has nothing! So I thought you could choose something she'd really like, for when she's older, or if you need anything now, or save it up for later on,' I said, and I handed them the envelope of Sickert money, four thousand pounds, warm and me-smelling, and kissed them both as if to

Sometimes
you hold
more strength
when people
don't know
what you
think or feel





bless the gift. They smiled, although Eleanor was beginning to look a little bored, but when they opened the envelope and saw what was inside, in under a second there was almost steam coursing out of their mouths and their nostrils, and their eyes bulged, not quite like common frogs, or I don't know, cartoon conmen, but almost. They both nodded again and Ben said carefully, 'You are right, it has been exhausting this whole thing. You are so kind and thoughtful.'

'We'll buy her something lovely, Mum,' Eleanor said, 'and open a bank account for her and everything.'

'So can I have her then? Few days? A week . . . ?'

Ben was nodding. Eleanor shrugged, which was often how she agreed with me anyway.

I took a deep breath, but it wasn't over yet, because when I looked up, I saw that Father Pat had witnessed the whole thing. He looked at me a bit savagely, his eyebrows raised, his forehead knitted with a measure of disdain, and it was possible he may have shaken his head at me severely, without any fellow feeling, or even irony, and there was a flash of stern intent in his lips, which seemed to have thinned, and he raised his hand as though to ask a question or object or even smite me for what I had done, but I stared him down and his disgust - I wasn't a bad person and he was brand new to all this and was in no position to judge anyone. He didn't know them as I did; he had not witnessed their mad omissions and neglect, the way their contempt could bear down on you with full force when the truth was it was they who were red-handed. He hadn't done those long flickering nights in the hospital with Lily for the first weeks of her life when she cried for something no one would give her.

All perspective, the passing of time and the scale of things, had broken down then. That huge half-Victorian building was swallowing me whole into its strange city with its own gravity, its own overheated laws and cruel light. The sky-blue and royal-blue and navy and lilac nurses, brisk footsteps against the bright lino, weary, brave, chattering, sugar, cigarettes. I existed on plastic coffee from the machine and stale newspapers, leaping out of my seat whenever anyone walked by, sleeping rarely, scarcely changing my damp clothes or going for a pee I was so terrified of something bad happening if I took my eye off things. I could feel the undercurrent of my nerves pulsating; love and anxiety plaited with fright. The stiffness of the air, light, dimmed light, half-darkness, space, light again. Eleanor and Ben came. Not as often as they should. Terrible of me to think that. Obviously it was worse for them, but was it, though? Lily lay in her see-through box behind a glass wall. 'Somebody needs to be cuddling her,' I told anyone who would listen, shaking my head, shaking my heart. I asked the nurse to give her a pale-blue knitted square I had made her and then get Eleanor to hold it next to her skin, so that they would learn each other's smell, swap it back and forth every few hours, but the nurse said they had to be more careful with hygiene at this stage. Eleanor's eyelids were white and hard and swollen. With me she was tough and remote. I tried to be kindly to her shame, but who would do the same for me? Ben seemed to shrink whenever he saw me, retreating deep into

himself, his face blazing pale, his skin flaking all over his clothes.

Outside, the sun died every night and I sometimes stood for a second and watched it slink from the picture windows on the landing by the lifts, counting the lights threading across London. The sky whitened at the start of each day but I wasn't sure you could rely on it. All our luck was in Lily's hands. After a time the doctors informed me there was to be a change of plan. Lily would have tiny amounts of morphine because she was having trouble sleeping and feeding and she was weak and in distress. I watched the morphine going into her system; the near-instant relief it brought. That was dark theatre; my hand splayed across my mouth. I grabbed a nurse: 'What if that's all she wants now?' I tried to keep my voice down. If they thought you were any kind of troublemaker, they could send you away.

I rubbed hibiscus soap into my hands, counting to a hundred. I did it again. An unliveable moment stretched out before me. I forbade myself from speaking after that. I knew the facts were incoherent, as the detailed accounts of battles always were. I couldn't be trusted. Some of the babies through the glass were peaceful in the fluorescent air. Some only a little bigger than my hand, raw-looking, chickenlegged, bandaged and wired, so delicate. Strange curled sea creatures, huge black grape eyes. One smiled in its sleep, but it wasn't my one. My one was crying without movement or sound. I wished I could climb in there beside her. The doctors were severe and wise with me. The nurse reappeared at my side with a small pleated paper cup of white pills. 'You'll be all right,' she said, which was kind. She held my hand for a few seconds. Let it go. On to the next.

I turned and walked briskly to the foot of the church, tucked the christening blanket around Lily's body as she didn't seem to come with a coat or anything, and steered the grubby handle of the pram onto the street. At the weekend I could take her to the zoo, I thought. To Brighton to watch the wind whip the waves. Maybe there would be a white Christmas – a hushed early morning with that strange feathery light. I saw Lily waving her arms in delight as thick snow-flakes landed on her nose and chin, her lips pursed intently, her fingers clawing the frozen jigsaw pieces. I was mapping things carefully. Eleanor was reading before she went to school and she could write and sew and knit and crochet and draw from life, after a fashion, and make basic paper dolls and paper clothes to dress them. I still had some of her beautiful pictures somewhere, in a yellow folder, dense with details.

I made my way up the high street, manoeuvring the pram in and out of bustling lunch-hour pedestrians. Lily woke for a moment and her steady blue ironical eyes seemed to take in her surroundings and then they took the measure of me. There was so much gaiety in her expression and I tried to harvest a bit of it. Courage could be hard sometimes, manual labour almost, but not this. I suddenly felt like one of those daredevil stunt motorcyclists, soaring over sixteen double-decker buses, through ragged hoops of fire.

Wheeeeeee!

Extracted from 'Love and Missed' by Susie Boyt (£16.99, Virago), published on 26 August.





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doesn't remember what you He where Or you went doesn't He remember the day (Or sometimes the month) even But he remembers the perfume on his pillow That lingered long after your early-morning i \mathbf{x} t e When you thought you'd never see him again But did you And do you











B_{V} EVIE LEATHAM

t the beginning of 2021, analysts predicted we'd be ending the year with a period of exuberance, glamour and frivolity akin to the last century's Roaring Twenties.

Those post-war years were defined by hedonism, pleasure and a keenness to celebrate life. Youth culture demanded new experiences, and the combination of women's right to vote, the flourishing Jazz Age and technological advances certainly provided them. It marked the arrival of the independent, liberated flapper girls and the modern cosmetic industry as a new means of self-expression.

Whether we're on the verge of such a moment continues to be debated, but there is certainly optimism to be found in beauty's current mood. Having pared back our make-up routines for the past year, this season's collections are bright and bold, inspiring a painterly approach. Driven by the desire for creativity and glamour that has been absent for so long, we want to revel anew in make-up and all its glory of tone and texture.

'The role of make-up has been recast: it's not about the viewer, it's all about the wearer,' says Clare Varga, the head of beauty at the trend-forecasting company WGSN. 'We are juggling multiple emotional states every day and make-up is a powerful way to express that. Colour speaks to our emotions and whether it's the tranquillity of blues or the empowerment of bright cherry lips, people are latching onto shades that make them feel something.' The magic of make-up goes well beyond visual transformations, impacting our confidence and even our general wellbeing: a red lipstick can lift the mood like nothing else.

Our sensitivity to colour has also become heightened. 'We have a more acute awareness of colour and light after the sensorial monotony of the past year,' says the European cultural history expert Dr Sean Williams. The author of *The Secret Lives of Colour*, Kassia St Clair, agrees, pointing out that screen life has left many of us seeking out the bright, but more nuanced, palettes of the natural world. 'It's perhaps surprising with the breadth of colour available via our digital environment, but nature's shades sing in a different way to the saturated tones of Instagram.'

'Colour has always been used to communicate,' says St Clair. 'In renaissance and mediaeval culture, bright hues were associated with joyfulness, but also wealth and power, with sartorial laws dictating what colours people could wear.' The boldest shades, such as blue and purple, were reserved for the most powerful members of society.

While both hues are noticeably present this season, these days we shouldn't restrict ourselves. 'There are few seasonal trends; instead people are looking for cultural reset,' says the make-up artist Terry Barber. 'Make-up with humour, style and irony.'









BEAUTY BAZAAR







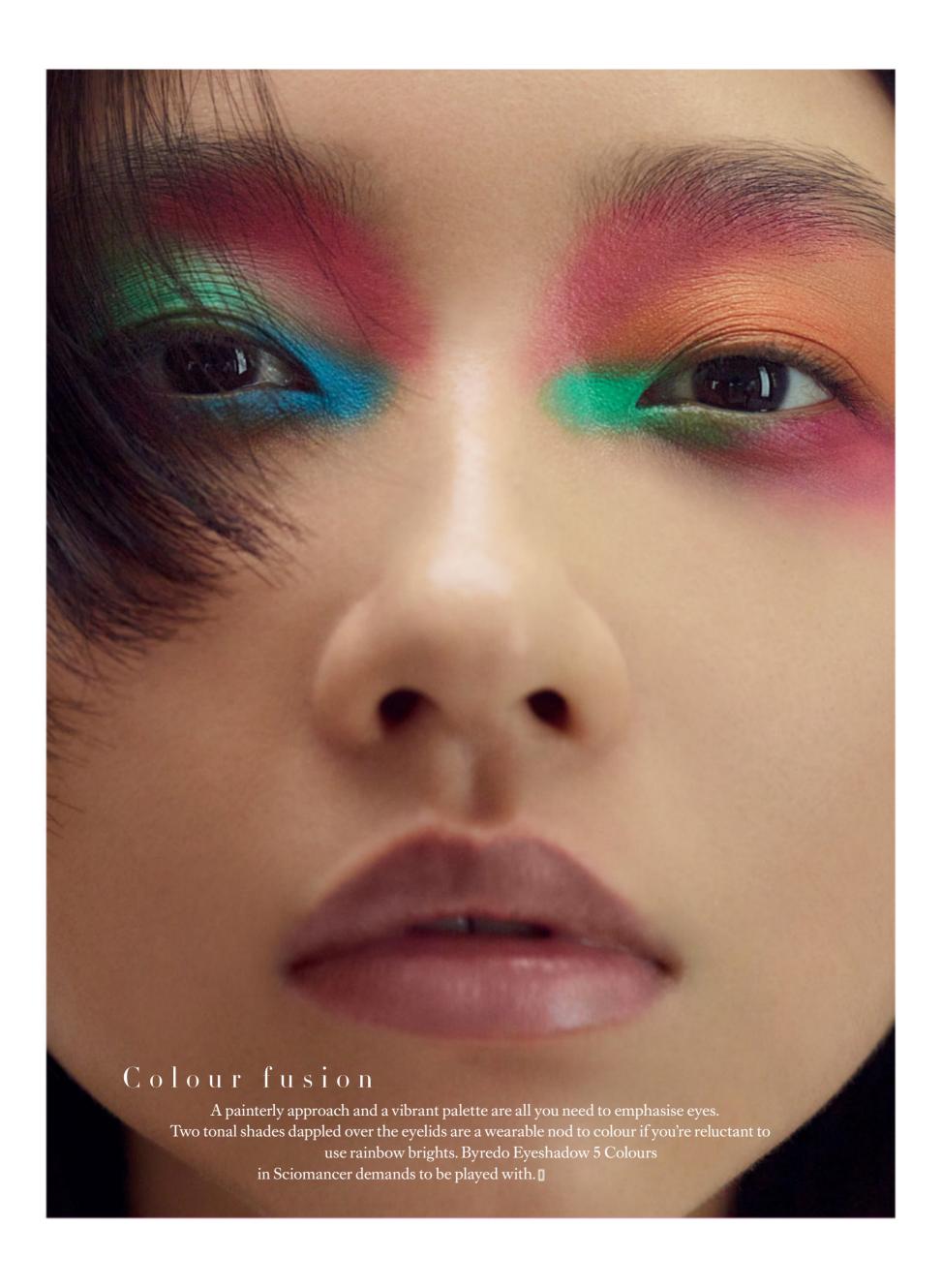








BEAUTY BAZAAR













Minimalist Whipped

Powder Blush in Chiyoko and

Sayoko (left), £35 **Shiseido** Bold hues don't require changing your whole look though. Keep your base the same as it has always been and, if eyes aren't the focus for you, Greenwell suggests accentuating them with

taupes or subtle contour shades.

EVIE LEATHAM []

t is often a seemingly small, insignificant moment – catching yourself in unforgiving light or one late night too many, perhaps – that prompts you to supercharge your skincare routine.

If you favour simplicity and a no-needles approach, retinol should be your first step. And it is finally shaking off its rather daunting reputation for irritating the skin.

Unanimously ranked by skincare experts as the most effective ingredient, retinol smooths fine lines, firms the skin and can also tackle breakouts. Derived from Vitamin A, retinoids – of which retinol is the best-known – are converted into an active ingredient called retinoic acid within the skin, where it works to increase cell turnover and collagen production. 'Retinoic acid connects to skincell receptors and tells them to behave like healthier, younger skin cells,' says the dermatologist Dr Dendy Engelman.

These undisputed benefits previously came with side effects, such as dryness, redness and peeling that could last for a few weeks – a process called 'retinisation'.

'Retinol increases skin turnover, temporarily disrupting the skin's barrier function,' explains the medical director Dr Ifeoma Ejikeme. In Black skin this could increase the risk of hyperpigmentation, while it is common to experience 'purging': breakouts caused by sebum moving to the skin's surface.

But now, innovation means that this anti-ageing powerhouse can target signs of ageing with minimal drawbacks, due to new skin-calming formulas and the latest plant-based alternatives.

'Instead of using a high-percentage retinol – which can cause lots of irritation – you can achieve better results with new breakthroughs that combine retinoids with soothing ingredients,' says the US dermatologist Dr Dennis Gross. Examples include the popular skin-fortifier ferulic acid, found in his Advanced Retinol + Ferulic range, and the calming peptide and bisabolol blend in No7 Laboratories' Pure Retinol Eye Cream.

For beginners, it's hard to go wrong with Elizabeth Arden's Retinol Ceramide Capsules, where single-dose measures of retinol are bolstered with ceramides to counteract dryness. Or, for a more immediate skin-brightening effect, SkinBetter Science's AlphaRet

(dermatologist recommended for rosacea-prone skin) and Shani Darden's Retinol Reform combine retinoids with glow-boosting exfoliating acids (AHAs).

More experienced users can benefit from formulas that 'drip-feed' the skin. Kiehl's patent-pending Retinol Skin-Renewing Daily Micro-Dose Serum and Medik8's r-Retinoate Day & Night Serum, now with antioxidant-rich vitamin C, deliver encapsulated retinol over time, for boosted benefits without peeling.

There are still instances when retinol should be avoided: when skin is too sensitive, or when pregnant or breastfeeding. In such cases, plant-based alternatives, known as alt-retinols or bio-retinols, come highly recommended.

The best known of these is bakuchiol. 'It is a botanical ingredient, an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and, like retinol, stimulates the production of new collagen,' says Dr Ejikeme.

You'll find it in Aurelia London's Resurfacing Serum or Philosophy's Bakuchiol Nature In A Jar Skin Reset Serum. Significantly, there is no irritation, although it takes longer to see results. The ingredient can also be layered with traditional retinols to enhance the benefits, and Paula's Choice Clinical 0.3% Retinol + 2% Bakuchiol combines them both in a single serum.

Other promising plant-based actives can be derived from daisy-like botanicals, such as Bidens pilosa, also known as the picao preto plant, used in Liz Earle's new Alt-Retinol and BareMinerals' Ageless 10% Phyto-Retinol. Both smooth the appearance of lines without leaving skin feeling tight.

'We're also seeing the use of retinol expand beyond the face to treat different areas of the body,' says the dermatologist Dr Meghan O'Brien. That includes Chantecaille's skin-smoothing Retinol Body Treatment and Monpure's Follicle Boost Hair Density Serum that works to improve scalp health.

Whatever you choose, always start slow. Even 0.01 per cent retinol, used twice a week, will yield results. Then, once your skin has adjusted, you can progress to daily use and then higher percentages. Thankfully, the new generation of retinols make this see-the-difference skincare altogether easier to use.



Boost your skincare regime with these new-and-improved complexion-smoothing retinols

By BECKI MURRAY













From left: Resurfacing Serum, £64, Aurelia London. Retinol Reform, £80, Shani Darden. Superskin Alt-Retinol Skin Paste, £38, Liz Earle. Retinol Ceramide Capsules Line Erasing Night Serum, £75 for 60, Elizabeth Arden. R-Retinoate Day & Night, £135, Medik8. Advanced Retinol + Ferulic Overnight Wrinkle Treatment, £89, Dr Dennis Gross. Follicle Boost Hair Density Serum, £96, Monpure. Retinol Body Treatment, £85, Chantecaille

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BEAUTY BAZAAR



collection of 11 exclusive fragrances combining two pillars of perfumery – art and raw materials. Now, the collection has been reissued with the original scents augmented by four iconic classics that have been renamed for the occasion, and two new additions: Rose Chérie and Santal Pao Rosa.

Each of the perfumes have a connection to the arts. Cruel Gardenia conjures Charles Baudelaire's poetry collection *The Flowers of Evil*; Néroli Outrenoir the monochromatic painting of Pierre Soulages. 'The arts have always intertwined with fragrance design for the Guerlain family,' says Thierry Wasser, the brand's master perfumer and the curator of the collection. Jean-Paul Guerlain was a great collector of 19th- and 20th-century paintings, and his grandfather Jacques Guerlain was friends with artists including Jean Cocteau.

Under Wasser's leadership, this tradition has been sustained. 'Art or music drives you somewhere and you want to express that, which is how a fragrance is born,' says Wasser, who likes to use moods and artistic forms to describe his creations. ('Top notes or heart notes – no one can understand a scent through those alone.')

The two new fragrances are both odes to the rose, created by the perfumer Delphine Jelk. Embodying Edith Piaf's 'La Vie En Rose', Rose Chérie is bursting with Bulgarian rosewater, which Jelk likens to 'a walk in Montmartre and a visit to the pastel macaroon counters of Ladurée'. In contrast, Santal Pao Rosa is rich with heady sandalwood and a touch of spicy cardamom. 'A mood of strength and grace,' says Jelk. 'It helps you to stay grounded.' MEG HONIGMANN

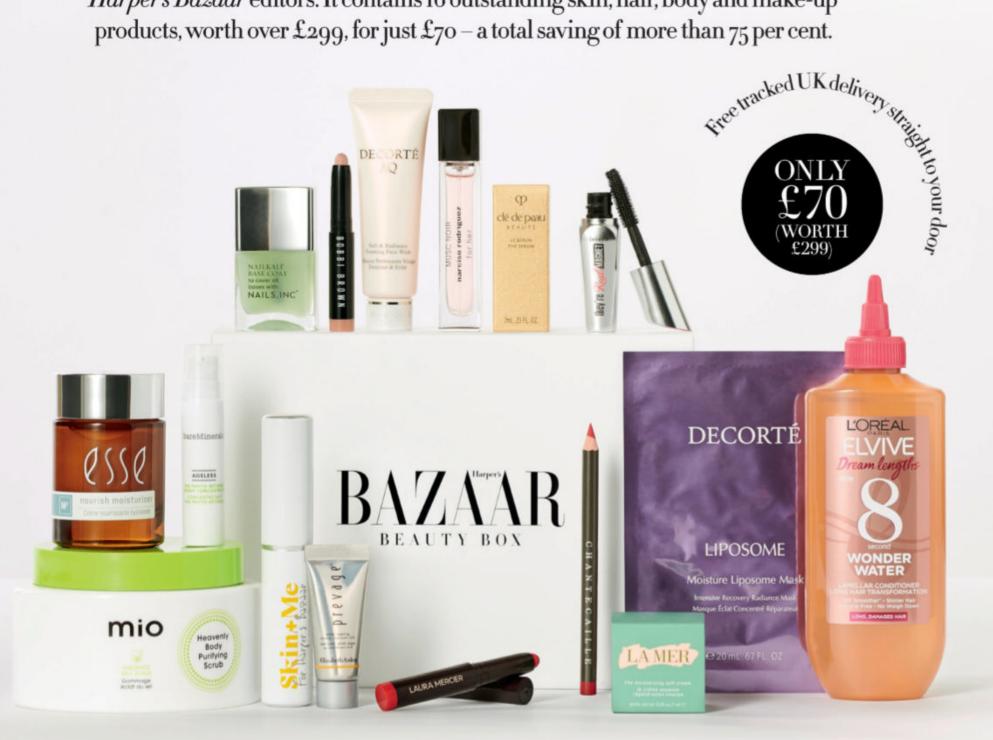
L'Art & La Matière collection, from £295, Guerlain.

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Francesc Suite, whose floral-painted ceiling and French balcony above the square only added to the romance. That night we dined at the hotel's Quadrat restaurant. The inventive menu offered burrata and spicy sobrasada, a flavourful seafood paella and to finish, a warm

Mahon cheesecake with red fruits ice-cream.

Waking early the next day, we prepared for a morning of sightseeing with a hearty breakfast of perfectly cooked eggs on toast, a plate of banana pancakes and the Mallorcan speciality ensaimada, an incredibly light and flaky pastry. Our first port of call was the Cathedral of Santa Maria of Palma, more commonly known as La Seu – a splendid gothic structure that's one of the tallest in Europe. We took our time to explore, marvelling at the 61 stained-glass windows that flood the building with beams of coloured light, and modern additions including Gaudi's enormous illuminated canopy that hangs over the altar, and a chapel redesigned by the Mallorcan artist Miquel Barcelo. It's also worth paying extra to ascend

the 215-step spiral staircase to the top terraces, where the magnificent architecture can be seen up close, and you're rewarded with panoramic views of the city.

That afternoon, we left the bustle of Palma behind us and set the sat-nav for the rural village of Santanyi in the south-east, about 45 minutes away. Launching a new hotel in the middle of a global pandemic is no mean feat, but the Soldevila-Ferrer family, who also own Sant Francesc, have undoubtedly found success with their second Mallorcan property, Can Ferrereta. This 32-room hideaway is set in a meticulously restored 17th-century mansion, surrounded by fragrant gardens filled with jasmine and bougainvillea blossoms. It's glorious from the start – after pulling up outside, we traded our car (which was swiftly valet-parked) for two flutes of chilled cava from the drinks trolley at reception. The interiors are designed in a neutral colour palette with accents of untreated wood and local stone, and headboards woven from hemp rope by local artisans; they're cool in every sense of the word. Many of the suites have private terraces, including ours, which overlooked the 25-metre saltwater pool, shaded by olive- and cypress-trees, and the all-day dining spot and bar, La Fresca, our go-to for colourful salads and chilled rosé at lunchtime.

But it's the details that elevate Can Ferrereta from a good hotel

to a great one. Throughout history, Santanyi has attracted artists and creative types (you'll find many workshops and galleries as you



Left: a view from Sant Francesc Hotel Singular. Far left: Palma

wander the narrow streets) and today art plays a central role at the hotel, with contemporary works from Guillem Nadal, Jordi Alcaraz and the Barcelona-born artist Jaume Plensa, whose two-metre-tall bronze sculpture sits pride of place by the pool. There's also a well-stocked library, curated by the expert team at Maison Assouline, with a fireplace to curl up in front of with a cocktail in the winter months.

Can Ferrereta's arrival has also opened a door to a lesser-known part of the island for the first time. The area is home to the second-largest nature park in the Balearics, Mondrago Natural Park, great for those who, like us, love a holiday hike. Meanwhile, Santanyi itself has a lively market on Wednesdays and Saturdays, home to stalls selling local handicrafts including woven baskets and linen dresses, delicious delicatessen products and fresh fruit and vegetables, with the biggest lemons and tomatoes I've ever seen. The hotel is also within striking distance of some of Mallorca's most unspoilt beaches such as Cala Llombards and S'Amarador, which we decamped to one lazy afternoon for a picnic of crunchy baguettes stuffed with jamón ibérico and huge olives. This is where to go if you like super-soft sands that lead out to turquoise, bathtemperature waters.

We returned to the hotel with warm skin and salty hair, just in time to visit its spa, Sa Calma. The spacious treatment-rooms set the stage for fabulous massages and facials that use locally grown lavender and citrus fruits, alongside products by Anne Semonin, the French skincare brand beloved by Grace Kelly and Catherine Deneuve. Guests can also unwind in the indoor heated pool, gym, hammam and sauna, or book in for yoga and meditation classes.

While Santanyi already has some good restaurants, by night, Can Ferrereta's main dining spot Ocre offers an even higher standard.

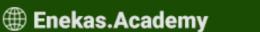
> It serves simple Mediterranean fare made from seasonal produce, much of which comes from the town's aforementioned food market, such as honey roasted aubergine with a creamy pistachio sauce, and candied cherry sorbet. You can opt for a table inside, under the

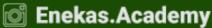
original wooden beams of the house's former wine cellar, but we preferred dining alfresco on the patio, late into the night, after the sunset had turned the sky countless shades of pink and orange - a golden glow that stayed with us long after we returned home...

Sant Francesc Hotel Singular (www.hotelsantfrancesc. com), from about £280 a room a night. Can Ferrereta (www.hotelcanferrereta.com), from about £270 a room a night. Qured (www.qured.com) offers Covid-19 testing, from £39.

















et in an archipelago of three main islands marooned in the Mediterranean Sea off the coasts of Italy, Tunisia and Libya, Malta's strategic position has defined much of its turbulent past and given it a distinct cultural identity. The language, which is of Semitic origin, is flecked with English, Italian and French, while the architecture is a combination of styles that forms a robust mediaeval cityscape with ornate baroque embellishments, neoclassical domes, gothic belfries and colourful wooden balconies.

I had always wanted to come to Malta and see the country for myself, and the opening of Iniala Harbour House, a bijou hotel with a prime location on Valletta's St Barbara Bastion, was just the excuse

I needed. The property is spread over three 19th-century buildings that have been stitched together, with 23 guestrooms adorned with in elaborate wallpaper, velvet rugs and leather armchairs. It's a delightful base from which to explore Malta's com-

pact capital – a Unesco World Heritage site – and beyond that, the astounding temples, fortress-like hilltop towns, soaring limestone cliffs and coves that shelter impossibly blue waters.

Our first evening on the island began overlooking the yacht-speckled Grand Harbour, a natural port

shaped by flaxen-hued fortifications. As the sun dipped below the horizon and the brilliant pastel wash faded from the sky, we sat down for cocktails on the terrace of the hotel's restaurant Ion, while pretty

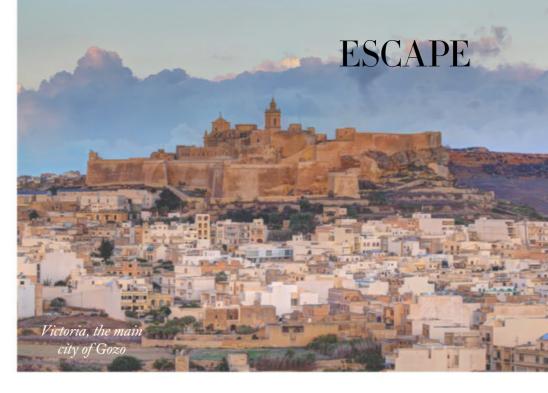
plates of caviar served with pink shrimp and ginger, crowned with a dollop of crème fraîche and a sprinkling of flowers, emerged from the kitchen. These came courtesy of the chef Alex Dilling, who was previously the executive chef at the Greenhouse, a two-Michelin-star restaurant in Mayfair. His arrival for a 100-day residency at Ion is testament to

Iniala's mission to lead Malta's hospitality scene.

Despite the past year of enforced hibernation, Valletta has emerged exhilaratingly vibrant. By day, the squares, coffee shops and attractions – like the ornately decorated St John's Co-Cathedral – were buzzing with locals (if not yet tourists) and by night, the warm air was filled with the happy sounds of chatter and live music as the bars and restaurants that line the steep, stepped streets flung open their doors.

We started with a visit to Hagar Qim, one of several prehistoric temples in the country, which are among the most ancient religious sites on Earth. The building is made

up of huge stone slabs including a megalith that's estimated to weigh close to 20 tonnes. Later, we stopped by Birgu, the oldest of the Three Cities – a trio of fortified settlements just across the Grand



Harbour from Valletta – where we spent the rest of the afternoon meandering along breezy cobblestone streets as the friendly inhabitants waved at us from their wrought-iron balconies. That evening, as dusk fell in the ancient walled city of Mdina – Malta's original

capital – we rode in horse-drawn carriages to a 17th-century palazzo, home to the Xara Palace hotel. Its excellent Michelinstarred restaurant, the de Mondion, sends out exquisite dishes such as snail ragu and pork crackling topped with an egg yolk and tender suckling pig served with celeriac, sweet potato and a mustard jus.

One sunny morning, we took a boat to Gozo, the second-largest island in the archipelago and tootled past bucolic farmland and quiet villages on electric tuk-tuks to the spectacular 120-metre-high Ta Cenc limestone cliffs. Later, after a casual portside lunch, we sailed over to the island of Comino, a tiny 3.5-square-kilometre patch (with a population of two) sandwiched between Gozo and the main island

of Malta. Here, anchored in a bay appropriately called the Blue Lagoon, we swam in the crystal-clear sea and basked under the afternoon sun, as the rhythmic rocking of the boat gently lulled us to sleep.

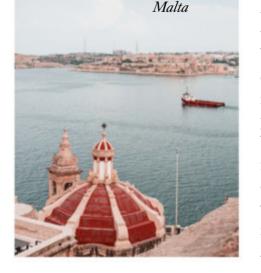
Our time in Malta ended with a dose of extravagance

onboard the *Lady in Blue*, a sleek five-cabin 135-foot yacht – part of the local charter company Carblu's growing fleet – where we sipped champagne en route to the newly opened Beefbar, a chichi beach club, pool and restaurant perched on St Paul's Bay. Gazing over the panoramic seascape we lunched on truffle pizzas, fresh kale salads and mini beef burger sliders, and raised our glasses of rosé to Malta, which, with its wealth of history, magnificent scenery and welcoming denizens, has never seemed more appealing.

Iniala Harbour House (www.inialamalta.com), from about £300 a room a night.

Air Malta (www.airmalta.com) flies from London Heathrow to Malta six times a week. For more information about Malta and the surrounding islands, visit www.visitmalta.com.

As dusk fell, we rode in horse-drawn carriages to a 17th-century palazzo



Valletta harbour. Left: Beefbar







THE HOXTON ROME

Earlier in the year, the Hoxton hospitality group opened its 10th hotel – this time in Rome's bustling Parioli neighbourhood. Inside, you'll find 192 bedrooms in four sizes - Shoebox, Cosy, Roomy and Biggy - and playful interiors that see parquet floors and Murano-glass chandeliers juxtaposed with brass lighting and colourful statement headboards. The food at Cugino, an all-day café run in collaboration with the local bakery Marigold, is equally photogenic. On a sunny day, snap up one of the

coveted terrace tables and feast on crispy pizzette, homemade pastas and fluffy brioche rolls filled with ricotta and strawberries. LUKE ABRAHAMS The Hoxton Rome (www.thehoxton.com), from about £145 a room a night.



Enjoy architectural marvels, top-notch spas and peerless cuisine at these European city-break destinations



CHEVAL BLANC PARIS

The much-anticipated Parisian addition to LVMH's ultra-luxe Cheval Blanc portfolio opens for business next month, joining hotels in Courchevel, the Maldives, St Barths and the South of France. The building was once the La Samaritaine department store – an art deco landmark on the banks of the Seine – and has undergone an incredible transformation thanks

to the American architect Peter Marino and a team of expert artisans. The hotel has an excellent location in the 1st arrondissement, but you may prefer to enjoy the Dior Spa, a mosaic-lined swimming pool, the landscaped roof terrace and polished farm-to-table cuisine from the chef Arnaud Donckele, who runs the three-Michelin-starred restaurant at Cheval Blanc Saint-Tropez. LUCY HALFHEAD Cheval Blanc Paris (www.chevalblanc.com), from about £985 a room a night.







ESCAPE

THE NED LONDON

If lockdown has dented your fitness levels, why not try the new 'Wellness Wednesdays' experience at the handsome London hotel the Ned? In addition to an overnight stay in one of the fabulous Large bedrooms (four-poster bed and free-standing tub included), guests are offered a body consultation with a trainer in Ned's Club Gym and the

> chance to attend unlimited classes, including yoga, Pilates and HIIT; we loved the mobility workshop in the House Bend studio for improving body alignment after months hunched over a laptop at the kitchen table. Follow all this hard work with a blissful 60-minute Cowshed massage in the spa, and then, if you fancy a tipple, head down for jazz and cabaret at the hotel's newest bar, the Parlour. LH The Ned (www.thened.com), from £500 a room a night.







NOBU HOTEL WARSAW

The latest addition to Poland's burgeoning hotel scene comes courtesy of the luxury lifestyle brand Nobu. Housed inside an early-20th-century heritage building with a dazzling modern wing made of glass, the residence stays true to Nobu's industrial-chic aesthetic with polished wooden floors, smooth concrete walls and glossy bathrooms that boast dramatic light fittings. The food is superb of course; opt for the wagyu sliders and beef tartare, and

if you're feeling indulgent, order the Omakase set menu, featuring lobster tacos and Chilean-style sea-bass (you can burn off the calories at the state-of-the-art Technogym). At night, the hotel's underground club is the spot for blues music and sake-based cocktails. LA Nobu Hotel Warsaw (www. warsaw.nobuhotels.com), from about £140 a room a night $B \subseteq B$.



FOUR SEASONS MADRID

Spain's first Four Seasons does not disappoint. The hotel group brings its famously slick service to this 200-room property that has been a decade in the making. Housed in seven historic buildings, it encompasses elements from the past, like the ravishing stained-glass ceiling in the lobby, with 21st-century additions such as the huge urban spa. Rooms come with elegant marble bathrooms, spacious dressing areas and of course, the signature beds with temperature-regulation technology. Don't miss a visit

> to the Dani brasserie, where the chef Dani García serves up sea urchin tortillas and an exquisite lobster carpaccio. MARY LUSSIANA Four Seasons Madrid (www.fourseasons .com), from £450 a room a night.



PHOTOGRAPHS: SERGEI WING/UNSPLASH, GABRIELLA CLARE MARINO/UNSPLASH, MATHIAS P R REDING/UNSPLASH, ALEXANDRE TABASTE, SIMON BROWN, ÖMER KARAKUS/UNSPLASH, GETTY IMAGES



JEN RUBIO

Tofino's coastline Below: Jen Rubio. Far right: 1909 Kitchen

The co-founder of the luggage company Away shares her favourite spots in Tofino, Canada



Ultra Light

Daily UV Defense

Kiehl's

Kayaking in

Clayoquot Sound

SPF50, £40

£135; bottoms, £120, both

Three words that describe Tofino

'Remote, stunning, grounding.'

Best place to stay

'The beloved Wickaninnish Inn (www.wickinn.com), with its incredible farm-to-table restaurant. I start every day in Tofino by walking out through the Inn's back doors and onto Chesterman Beach.'

Favourite restaurant

'Sobo (www.sobo.ca) is a must. It focuses on Madhappy

local, organic and foraged food.'

Ideal travelling companion

'My husband Stewart and our two dogs, Busy and Lenny.'

A treasured memory

'When Stewart proposed to me. We were walking the Rainforest Loop, a boardwalk that winds through ancient cedar-trees, and when I turned around, he was on one knee.'

Top insider secret

'Give surfing a try in the morning and, once you've worked up an appetite, head over for fish tacos at Tacofino, the famed food truck.'

Best tip for relaxation

'Book in for a massage at the Ancient Cedars Spa. Request the cabin on the rocks and you'll hear the waves crashing against them during your treatment.'



An unforgettable view

'The easiest way to get to Tofino is by seaplane, and the views as you fly in are spectacular. I love having lunch at 1909 Kitchen (www.tofinoresortandmarina.com), where you can sit on the deck and watch the planes landing in the harbour.'

Where to go for an adventure

'Kayak in the Clayoquot Sound it's one of the best ways to experience nature.' Rejuvenating

What do you pack?

'I use Away's Bigger Carry-On in navy. For a long weekend, I'll take a pair of La Sportiva Makalu hiking

boots, Girlfriend

Collective leggings and at least one Madhappy tracksuit. I also throw in a Patagonia rain jacket and Blundstone rubber boots.'

Beauty essentials

'Tata Harper's Rejuvenating Serum, Tatcha's the Water Cream, Vintner's Daughter serum and Kiehl's Ultra Ultra Light Sunscreen.'

Favourite holiday soundtrack

'Leon Bridges'



Serum, £104

Tata Harper

£235









La Sportiva

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Bulgari and Bulgari High Jewellery (020 7872 9969; www.bulgari.com)

Burberry (020 7980 8425; www.burberry.com)

С

Caran d'Ache + Klein Blue (www.carandache.com) Cartier and Cartier High Jewellery (020 7408 9192; www.cartier.co.uk)

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Chanel (020 7493 5040; www.chanel.com) Chanel Fine Jewellery and Chanel High Jewellery (020 7499 0005; www.chanel.com)

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D-F

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G-I

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M-N

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O-R

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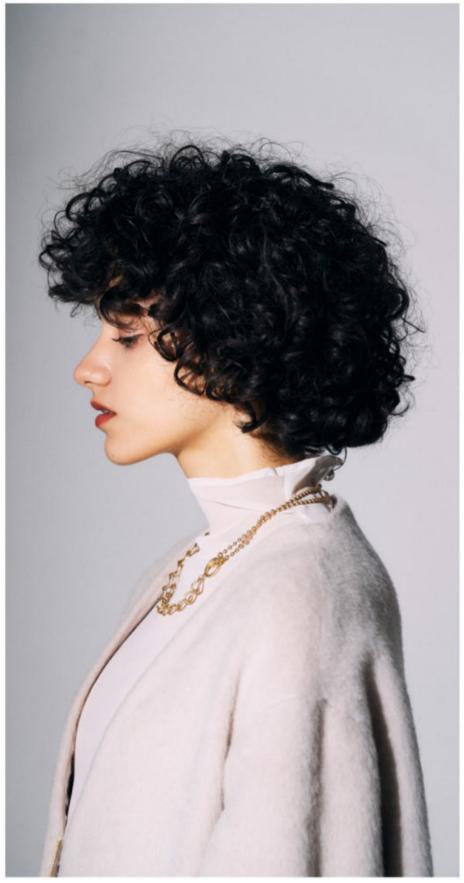
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V-W

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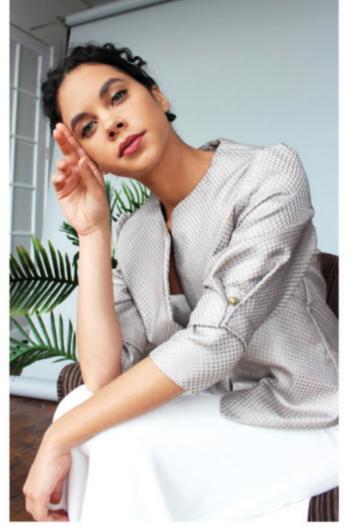


RE SYU RYU

Japanese designer brand RE SYU RYU stands for "Restyling Tastes and Trends". It is founded by two sisters living in Tokyo, who aspired to embody the beauty that lies within the modern woman. Yurie, the younger sister, draws on her experience in performance art and stage production to create designs based on her extensive knowledge of body movements. Her sister, Marie, has a professional business background and is in charge of the company behind the scenes. Made in Japan with skilled craftsmanship, their fall/winter collection is inspired by the secret of the beautiful flower, the lotus, and its language of "pure heart." Visit www.resyuryu.com and follow @resyuryu official on Instagram



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I.M. PEOPLES COAT COMPANY

IM Peoples is a Norwegian-American premium coat brand, established in 2013. Traditional craftsmanship and innovative designs are the pedestals of their heritage, as incorporated into their flagship – the Original Vinter Coat – made with premium wool blends and authentic Norwegian shearling. Shop a section of ready designed Vinter coats, customise yours with seven easy steps, or book an appointment with their Chief Designer and Director, Mareah Peoples to create a personalised order. Their design studio and showroom is based in Oslo. Visit www.impeoples.com and follow on Instagram: @impeoplescoatcompany. No forgetting. Stay warm. Keep cool.





BOTANICAL BEACH BABES

South Beach Florida would not be the same without a summer of sustainability exclusively presented by Botanical Beach Babes Miami Swim Week. Top Model Jelena Markovic is seen in Miami Beach wearing their all new luxury sustainable Liquorice one piece designed by Laura of No Bra Club from the Australia collective. The Liquorice one piece is a dynamic swimwear design made for comfort and durability that is chic & eco-friendly. Shop Botanical Beach Babes limited-edition top model runway styles from an innovative collective of female creative directors featured all across the globe who are passionate about fashion and promoting sustainability.







DELAYNE DIXON.

A designer based out of Vancouver, Canada, her ecoconscious brand mixes romanticism with cutting-edge tones. She often uses bold fabrics such as metallics, patent leather and faux fur. Every look is handmade to order right in her studio! Follow Delayne's growing fashion empire at delaynedixon.com or via Instagram @delaynedixon.

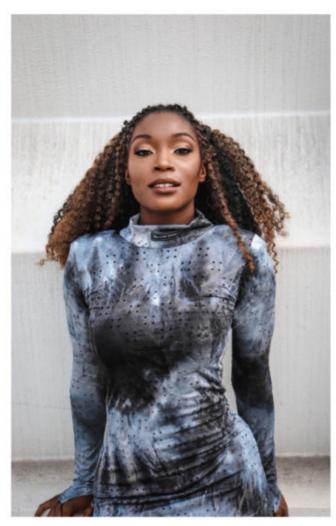


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TRANSATLANTIC CHIC

La Femme Apéro is the perfect mix of French chic and New York cool. **Founders** Léa Enderlin and Sarah Lequimener offer a curated wardrobe of elevated and easy-to-wear pieces, made in recycled fabrics and produced in small quantities. Designed in NYC by a Parisian duo, the line is feminine, cheeky and sustainable.



Visit www.lafemmeapero.com and follow on Instagram @lafemmeapero. Credits: Photographer: Stefano Ortega.



MICHAEL AZU

Michael Azu is a visionary brand with a passion for colour and elegance offering beautiful footwear using the finest leathers and materials. Leathers are folded and manipulated into forms drawn from origami to achieve elegant patterns and structures which are intricate, original and fresh. Designs are hand created to the highest standard by experienced craftsmen in Italy. Michael Azu makes luxury shoes for women who love great design and want to express their own identity and style. Shop online at www.michaelazu.com and follow on Instagram @michaelazu_footwear





BEHIND NS BY NOOF

NS by Noof is known for its bejewelled bags that combine architectural motifs in gold-plated brass with semi-precious stones. But how much do you know about the founder?

This brand was created ten years ago with the idea of luxury and exclusivity. Behind this brand is a strong woman that believes in individuality for each woman. Noof Al Shekar the Creative Director and founder of the luxury brand NS by Noof, is a Bahraini designer and a mother of four boys, who is now nominated for the Business Excellence Awards 2021. We are looking at a quite powerful female founder.

Fascinated by fine art, architecture, jewellery and fashion, Noof was pursuing an education in architecture when she decided to combine all her passions and create NS by Noof to venture into the unique jewelled bags designs that are internationally recognised and now sold around the world, especially in Europe, Asia and America. The designer recently started a new line of practice leather bags for the everyday working woman and mother.







BACK TO BAGS

There are bags and there is NS by Noof – a brand that gives you much more than just a bag.

Here's to the woman that is brave, bold and daring to take on the world. A gift from the Bahraini, luxury handbag designer Noof Al Shekar. Combining sacred geometry with the finest materials of exotic skins and semi-precious stones, she creates distinct, eye-catching pieces. And she goes even further: each meticulously hand-crafted piece is encased in 18k gold and platinum-plated solid brass frames, hand-crafted by skilled goldsmiths. Offering wearable pieces of art, her internationally selling bags are more a piece of art than just a bag. www.nsbynoof.com





ESSENTIALS EDIT



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BIJOUX EDIT



SOPHIE HARLEY LONDON

Acclaimed west London jewellery designer, Sophie Harley, creates beautiful bespoke jewels for her clients, often transforming their existing pieces of jewellery into unique and treasured heirlooms for the future.

This stunning triple band Eye ring is an example of one of Sophie's exquisite bespoke pieces.

Made in a combination of 18ct yellow gold and silver, it has a sparkling .69ct old cut diamond set centrally with a further 30 glittering white diamonds surrounding it.

For further information about Sophie's bespoke design service or to shop her collections, visit: **sophieharley.com** or contact the studio to arrange a private appointment (either virtual or in person).

T: +44 (0) 20 7430 2070

E: info@sophieharley.com



ANNE MARIE DESIGNS

This year's fashion staple includes one of a kind handcrafted jewellery and accessories by designer Katherine Blauwiekel. Inspired by vintage feminine beauty and floral elements, each piece is crafted by hand using a variety of polymer clay, Swarovski crystals, freshwater pearls, and gold accents. Pictured is "Ananya" hand rolled clay beads, adorned with sculpted wildflowers, and freshwater pearls.

Visit **annemarieshop.com** and follow @annemariedesignskc on Instagram

Photography: Hallie Fry | Model: Ananya Louviere | Floral: Solstice Floral Studio



MAKIKO WAKITA

Fine jewellery mini-series, made-to-order, providing fine jewellery that will remind you of a feeling you never want to forget. Simple yet unique, delicate yet bold, classic yet modern. Each piece is designed with a classy twist that will last for generations. Crafted with only the finest materials, designed and made in Los Angeles, California. The newest series OCEAN features a wave band using 18k solid gold and VS clarity melee diamonds. The pictured GRAND OCEAN uses various sized stones – the white diamonds sparkle like a wave breaking point. Check out more pieces on www.makikowakita.com & Instagram: @makikowakitala.





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BAZAAR BEAUTY

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BERRI-CLEAR SKIN

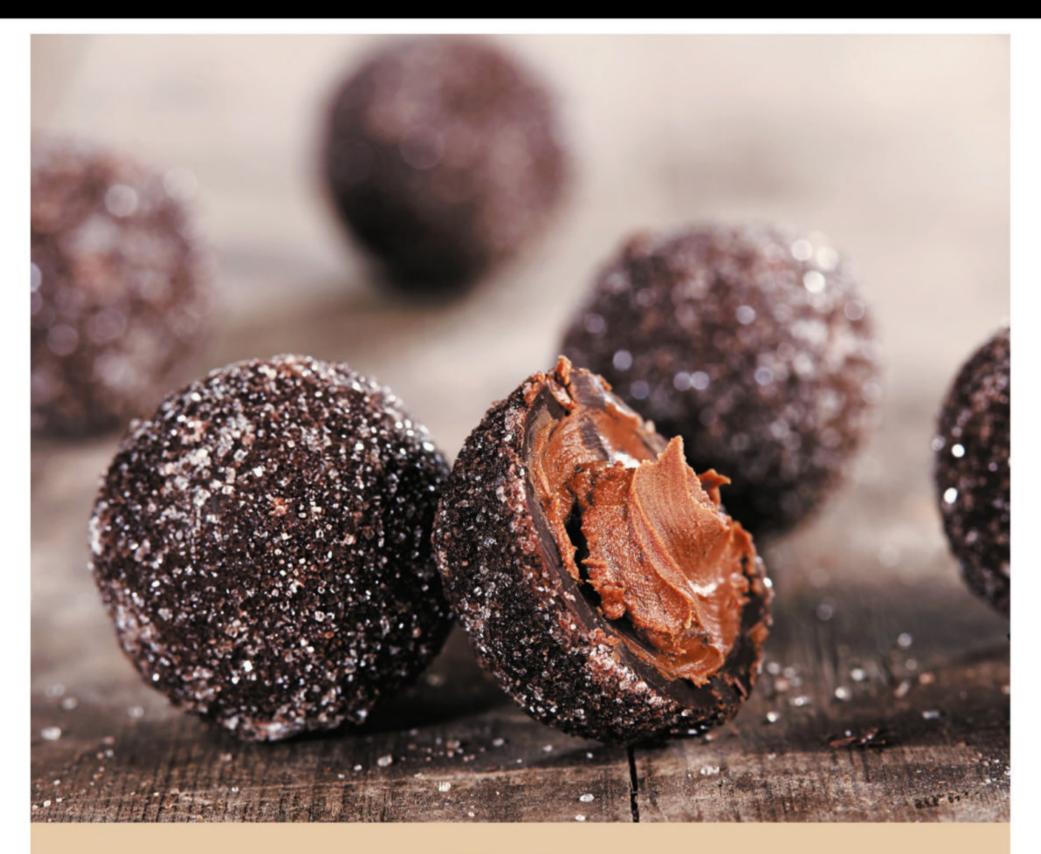
Berri-Clear Skin is a woman-owned plantbased beauty brand inspired by old school Trinidadian culture where ingredients for home made remedies are used to provide women with youthful, radiant, healthylooking skin. Berri-Clear+ is the Original 5 Berry Superfruit serum that aims to tackle uneven skin tone and stubborn dark spots. Shop today at berriclearskin.com





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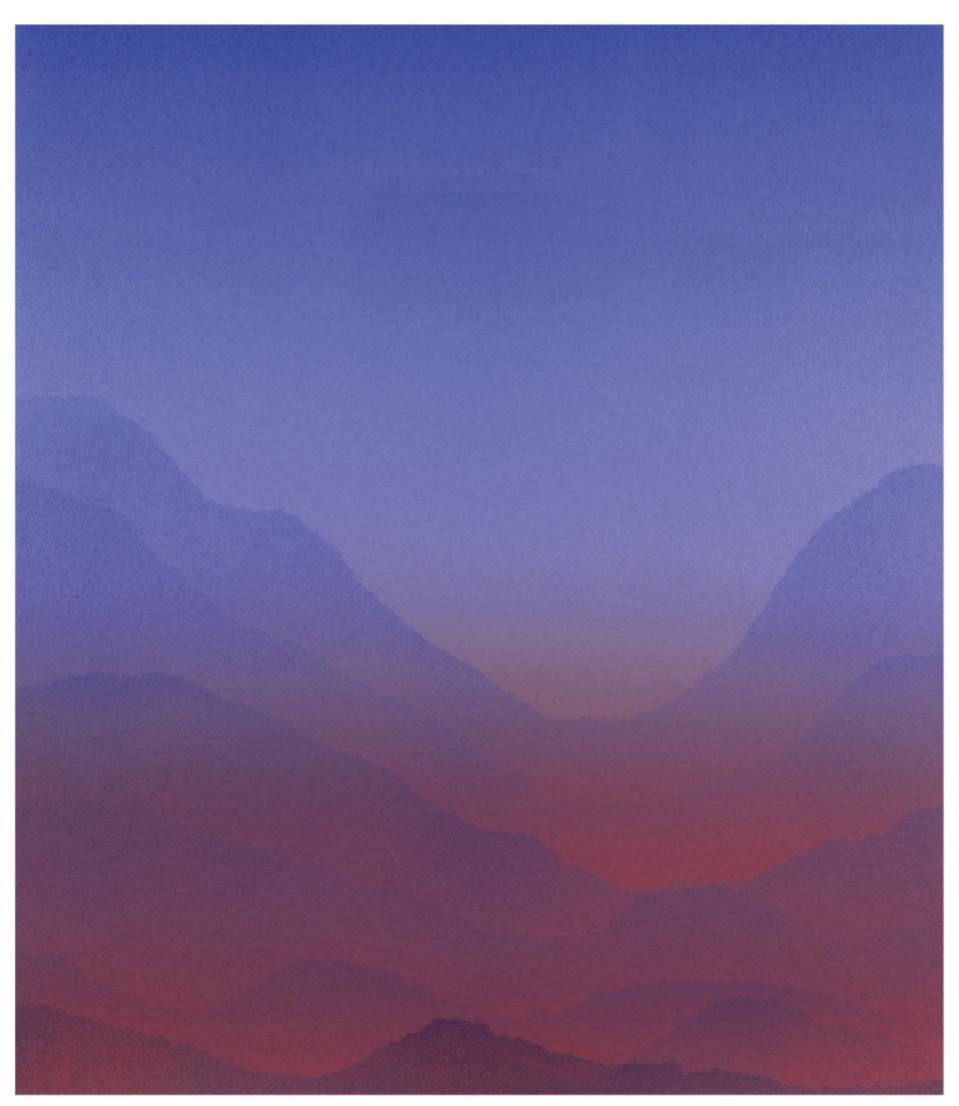
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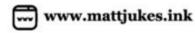


Misremembered landscapes

Matt Jukes' large-scale, one-of-a-kind monotypes on paper are misremembered landscapes and nearly forgotten memories. Each work explores colour and texture as the layers build over and over again, producing a discussion within the piece. Slowly, a memory of an emotion and a place will emerge, creating a space for dialogue with the viewer to explore their own emotions and places.

His work can be found in rooms of the British institution, Claridge's Hotel and across private collections – from Sri Lanka to Australia.















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