Candid

Photographer: Ashley Staib

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Photographer: Ethan Douglass   Model: Christian Schmitz

Fashion Activism: The Politics of Personal Style

MADALYN COTTRELL

There was always something peculiar about me as a child.. I was never afraid to speak my mind, and carried myself in a way most 10-year-old girls wouldn't. My strange level of self-awareness fueled the development of my own personal aesthetic. However, it was in middle school that my love for fashion and self-expression truly flourished. I remember making monthly trips to the mall with my mom. Being the only daughter often had its perks. I come from a small, conservative town. Throughout high school, I felt that every person my age conformed to a particular, conventional standard of style.

As I aged I became more aware of the effects of fast fashion and the dreadful effects of capitalism on the industry. Various platforms of social media introduced me to the issues with fast fashion. Understanding the consequences of my purchases haunted me, and it was hard to further support these large companies. I then became invested in shopping sustainably and learning to rework items in my wardrobe. My intentions in regard to what I purchased; however, were never malicious. But it wasn't ethical by any means. I was spending hundreds on harmful websites as I attempted to keep up with the ever-changing cycles of fast fashion. Trends that were deemed artsy and stylish quickly morphed to become out-of-date and ridiculed by the masses. I shopped where it was convenient. Shein, Romwe, Cider, and Forever21 were all sites I knew to be reliable for cheap and stylish clothes. I have since stopped supporting these companies as the inhumanity of the production and practices.

Shopping at the mall is not always more ethical when it comes to shopping online. You might walk through a couple of stores and see shirts with pride symbols or promoting other liberal or leftist ideologies ans stereotypes. On countless occasions, I have seen t-shirts with mottoes like "GIRL POWER!!" and "THE FUTURE IS FEMALE!" printed across white t-shirts in bold, bright lettering. For these stores, these political messages are nothing more than a means for profit. Many of the clothes created by these large corporations were made by underpaid laborers. In many cases, some of the brands who claim to be eco-friendly are also producing their clothing unsustainably. In a capitalist society, it is truly difficult to shop ethically, but it does not discredit the fact that researching where we shop and what we support isn't still important.

It was through this upheaval from the cycle of fast fashion did I learn that personal style is an entirely different sphere. It exists as a separate branch from the fashion industry. Personal style is how we respond to the fashion industry and the society around us. It truly is much unlike fashion, and, in this day in age, fashion is something that's become political.

To say that fashion is political simply means you are recognizing that it is a product of a particular political and economic context. It is a direct reflection of society, and companies and designers attempt to fit within that society through the means of dress. What strengthened my personal style was when I also realized that clothing can reinforce political ideas and power dynamics. Still, it can also challenge them.

Fashion activism is a newer term, coined in the 1990s by Céline Semaan-Vernon, the co-founder of the Slow Factory Foundation. Slow Factory is a collective that focuses on generating solutions for social and environmental change through fashion. That is precisely what fashion activism is. A common, simple example of fashion activism would be a slogan on a t-shirt that says something about environmental change. Alternatively, perhaps you see a college-aged girl in a small town wearing a tattered t-shirt with the phrase "Fuck Transphobes" sharpied across her chest. That's fashion activism. Shopping sustainably, pushing for change, protesting against fast fashion and the exploitation of human labor within the industry are all forms of fashion activism. There is no single form of fashion activism. It could be considered an abstract practice.

Despite the recent emergence of the term "fashion activism," the actual act itself has an extensive history. A notable example took place a little more than 200 years ago in 18th-century France. During the course of the French Revolution, the commoners and working-class members of the third state adopted their own form of dress as opposed to what the higher states fashioned. They were given the name "sans-clouttes," which translates to without breeches. The commoners wore trousers as opposed to the aristocratic style of breeches over stockings. They continued to develop their own civilian uniform, choosing to wear loose-fitting clothing as opposed to the form-fitting garments fashioned by the aristocracy. This was a celebration of freedom and promises of self-expression that the French Revolution was set to bring. The French Revolution inspired a new era of political and societal change. Looser silhouettes, fewer layers, and less form-fitting clothing continued to be a common trend throughout the history of fashion activism.

Revolt against the pressures of conforming to the standards of the aristocracy continued to be a recurring theme during the course of history; however, for women, fashion and feminism have always been intertwined. In the early 1900s, the United States and Great Britain saw the emergence of the Women's Suffrage movement in an attempt to gain the right for women to participate in political elections. Women protesting for the right to vote were referred to as suffragettes. They used fashion as a tool in their campaigns. In the course of their cause, they broke free from traditional expectations pressured upon them, choosing to present themselves as independent, strong, women. They pulled away from the restrictive, heavy, and layered garments that women were expected to wear during the Victorian era. The Women's Suffrage movement truly changed fashion for women. They chose to defy the social patriarchy and the pressures to conform to what men considered attractive. They began to wear trousers, cut their hair, and indulged in all of the forms of fashion that women were not encouraged to wear.

In 1920, America also saw the rise of the flapper girl. The Victorian corset had been replaced with much looser styles that allowed for more range and freedom of movement. The flapper is more than what has been created by the modern media

Model: Via Ryan W

Model: Via Ryan W

and much more than the "ideal modern woman" of the early 20th century. The flapper girl was a distinct result of the political, social, and economic changes that occurred as a result of World War I. Many women did not want to part with the freedoms they had acquired during the war due to the absence of men. Flappers pushed barriers both in society and in the conventional forms of dress in the period. One of the most influential barriers that the flapper girl pushed was the push for the sexual freedom of women. Decades later the 1950s and 1960s saw a major second wave of feminism with the debut of the mini skirt which is regarded as one of the most influential periods of fashion history. Women were continuously disappointed with how the oppression they faced from the patriarchy. This led them to shorten the hemlines as a form of revolt against the patriarchal system. The mini skirt was also a political symbol for the liberation of women, and by 1966, the hemlines of women's garments reached mid-thigh.

The changes that occurred in the fashion industry between the 19th and 20th century are the reason fashion has become what it is today. The way we are choosing to present ourselves today seems to revolve around making a statement. We have also taken a few steps back within the industry as designers are focused on bringing trends from the past back into the present. What goes out will always come back in style. The core of 21st century fashion; however, is adhering to the belief that an individual can wear whatever they desire.

There was a brief return to conservatism in the fashion industry after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001; however, the 21st century has generally seen a lot of fashion activism, especially within the past decade. It's not something that is entirely controversial anymore, which has allowed individuals to make more of a statement when it comes to what they wear. Fashion activism isn't always about shared symbols. It's become more about the individual act, especially when it comes to the actions of the designers.. At least to some extent. 2020 and

Model: Via Ryan W

the social disparities and protests that occurred then pushed brands to respond, thus fashion and activism became even more intertwined. Activism in the fashion industry has also arguably played a part in paving the way for diversity in the industry.

It is also important to note what flourished as a result of defying the norms From this, Fashion subcultures developed. Fashion subcultures are a popular way of dressing, created by cultural influences such as art, music, and epochs. One of the most notable subcultures of fashion is the punk subculture. Punk emerged in the United Kingdom in the mid 1970s through the designs of Vivienne Westwood and Malcom McLaren.

punk ideologies, were primarily concerned with rebellion, anti-authoritarianism, concepts of individualism, and free thought and discontent. Though the movement is still, at its core, an overall act rebellion through fashion and belief. Being a part of the punk subculture is much different in the 2000s than it was in 1970. We have seen the rise of the Riot Girl subculture in the 1990s and the Emo/Scene subculture in the early to mid-2000s. In 2020, social media simply began to refer to anyone who participated or portrayed elements of these subcultures within their fashion as alternative.

Despite the punk movement, there has also been an upheaval in androgyny and the shift in fashion standards for both men and women due to the fashion expression and personal style that has been created by the queer and non-binary communities. Revelations surrounding the normalization of the gender spectrum have changed fashion expectations for everyone. Makeup is now being marketed to people other than women. We are seeing male identifying people fashion what are considered to be traditionally feminine forms of style. We are even seeing women adopt more "boyish" forms of style. Our society still has a long way to go in terms of the normalization and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community; however, queer rebellion in defiance of the norms is something that is starting to be celebrated rather than condemned.

There is a spectrum of fashion subcultures in modern society. Punk just happens to be one of the more notable examples with a strong standing community. Still, there has been a common goal amongst all fashion subcultures and movements: the message being conveyed.

Despite political statements being made about clothing in the fashion industry, many people are also attempting to be more conscious about what they consume. Consumer activism is the process in which activists seek to influence the way in

Exactly where punk originated has been a matter of controversy. Punk music was mostly an American invention, but it is believed that the fashion of the punk subculture roots from the youth in the UK. Still, the emergence of punk in the United States also rose during the 1970s as a continuation and a counter cultural movement to the 1960s. Punk fashion consists of grungier, alternative styles of clothing, hair, and accessories. It is an easily identifiable form of fashion, but there is more to the movement aside from the way of dress within the punk subculture. Punk ideologies exist within the subculture, though those beliefs are varied amongst different groups within the community. In its original incarnation, the foundation of the

Model: Ashley Staib

EARTH
SUKS!!

which goods or services are delivered. It aims to develop a greener industry on top of the more diverse fashion industry that has been developing. Overall, there is a common goal: the push for a better industry.

Still, how do we demand a better industry? When talking about massive issues, the term "activist" may seem a bit daunting. These issues often feel immeasurable, and people don't always respond well to pressure. But participating in fashion activism doesn't mean that you alone are taking all of these issues onto your shoulders. It means being a part of a collective movement. Be a part of a community that strives for collective change. There's power in numbers.

There are many easy ways to get involved. Sign a petition, email a brand, or post on social media to spread awareness. Talk to a friend or a family member about these issues and the positive impacts that fashion activism hopes to accomplish. Join an advocacy group. College campuses are usually filled with an array of different advocacy groups. Host an event. Donate, or simply support these advocacy groups. Shop less at the mall or online and spend more time at the thrift. Support small businesses that produce green, sustainable fashion. Support brands that are advocating and supporting issues that activists are pushing to mend. Activism, by any means, is a long-term commitment; it is a marathon.

Decolonize Our Identities

LEXI REED
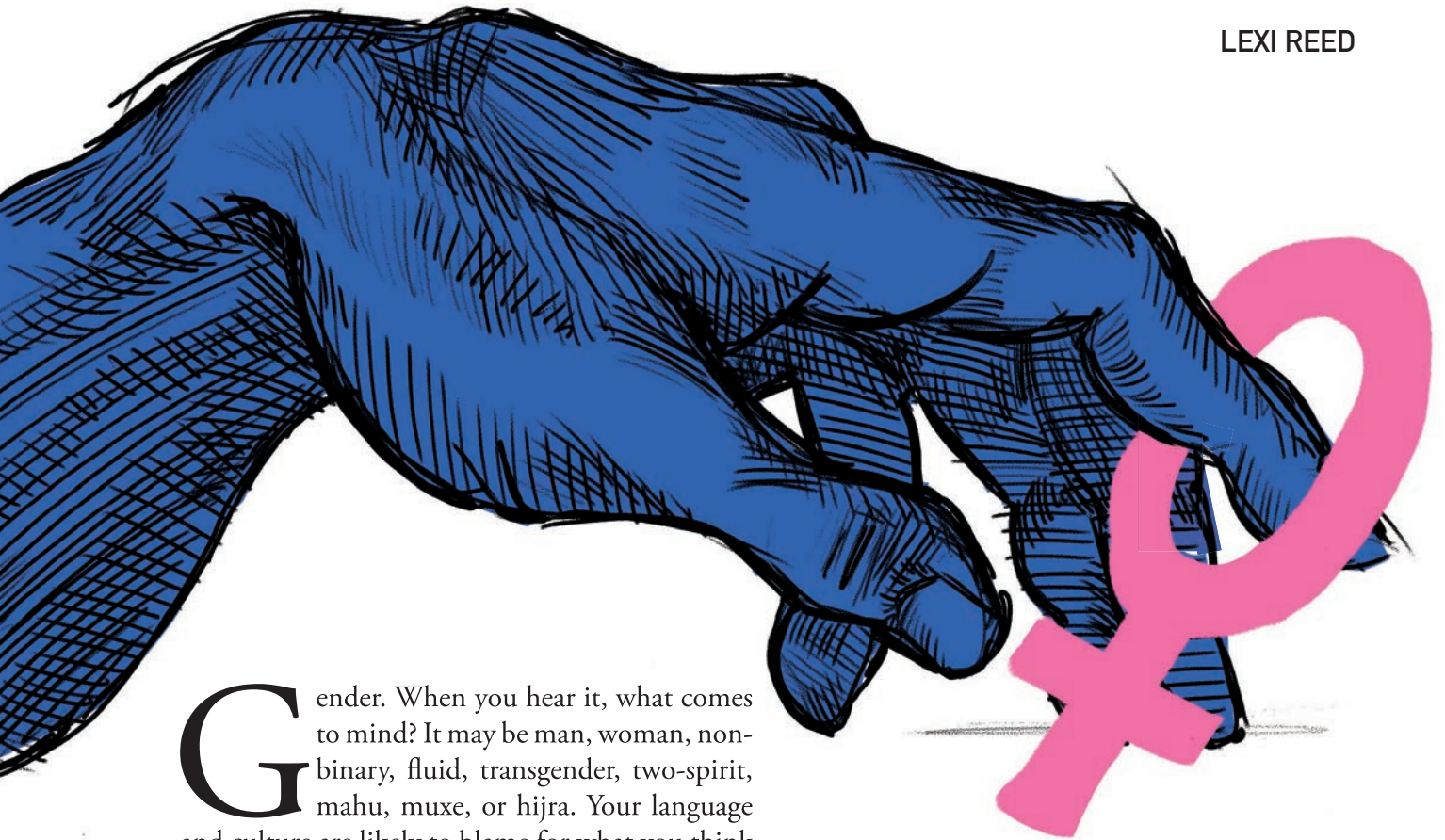
Gender. When you hear it, what comes to mind? It may be man, woman, non-binary, fluid, transgender, two-spirit, mahu, muxe, or hijra. Your language and culture are likely to blame for what you think of when you consider gender. Gender is a construct that attracts various non-binary or binary language and identification depending on where you live and the history of your culture. The gender binary we are accustomed to in the Midwest and United States a largely Euro-centric, Western concept whose spread can be associated with colonization. Shocker. When we look at gender from a broad lens as a spectrum and cultural construct,we find a vast array of non-binary identities all over the globe.

Some people may think of the binary when gender comes to mind—man or woman. However, gender is much more complex than that. Gender is defined as the characteristics socially assigned through culture that can change over time. Most simply, gender can be described as binary or non-binary. Binary gender is categorized strictly into two opposite categories: man or woman. Men have short hair, big muscles, facial hair, and don't show emotions. Women have long hair, are beautiful,

kind, and quiet. These stereotypes placed on men and women probably sound pretty familiar to you and that's because they are rooted in the binary we experience in American culture. The gender binary leaves no room for fluidity or movement of one's gender identity. Gender outside the binary's much broader and allows for movement, fluidity, and blending.

Non-binary genders encompass many identities under an umbrella that may blend the boundary between masculinity and femininity. Here, boys may have long hair and wear dresses, girls may have short hair and wear suits, a person may present more masculine one day and more feminine the next, or not feel attached to a gender at all! However, this is extremely over simplified.

Non-binary identities are often described on a spectrum or scale and used as an umbrella term to encompass identities falling outside of the exclusivity of masculine or feminine. Genderqueer, genderfluid, gender expansive, and agender and just a few examples of non-binary identities. Around the globe, cultures recognize a variety of genders outside of the binary. In Samoa, fa'afineis agender fluid identity that is recognized and accepted within their social norms. Among the Navajo Native Americans, the two-spirit gender identity allows people to embrace their masculinity and femininity simultaneously. More cultures have recognizability non-binary and androgynous identities throughout history, such as the Zuni's lhamana, Mexico's muxes, Madagascar's sekrata, and South Asia's hijras. Unfortunately, several of these identities were pushed out of the mainstream and stigmatized with the spread of European colonization.

Illustrations by Al Sheets
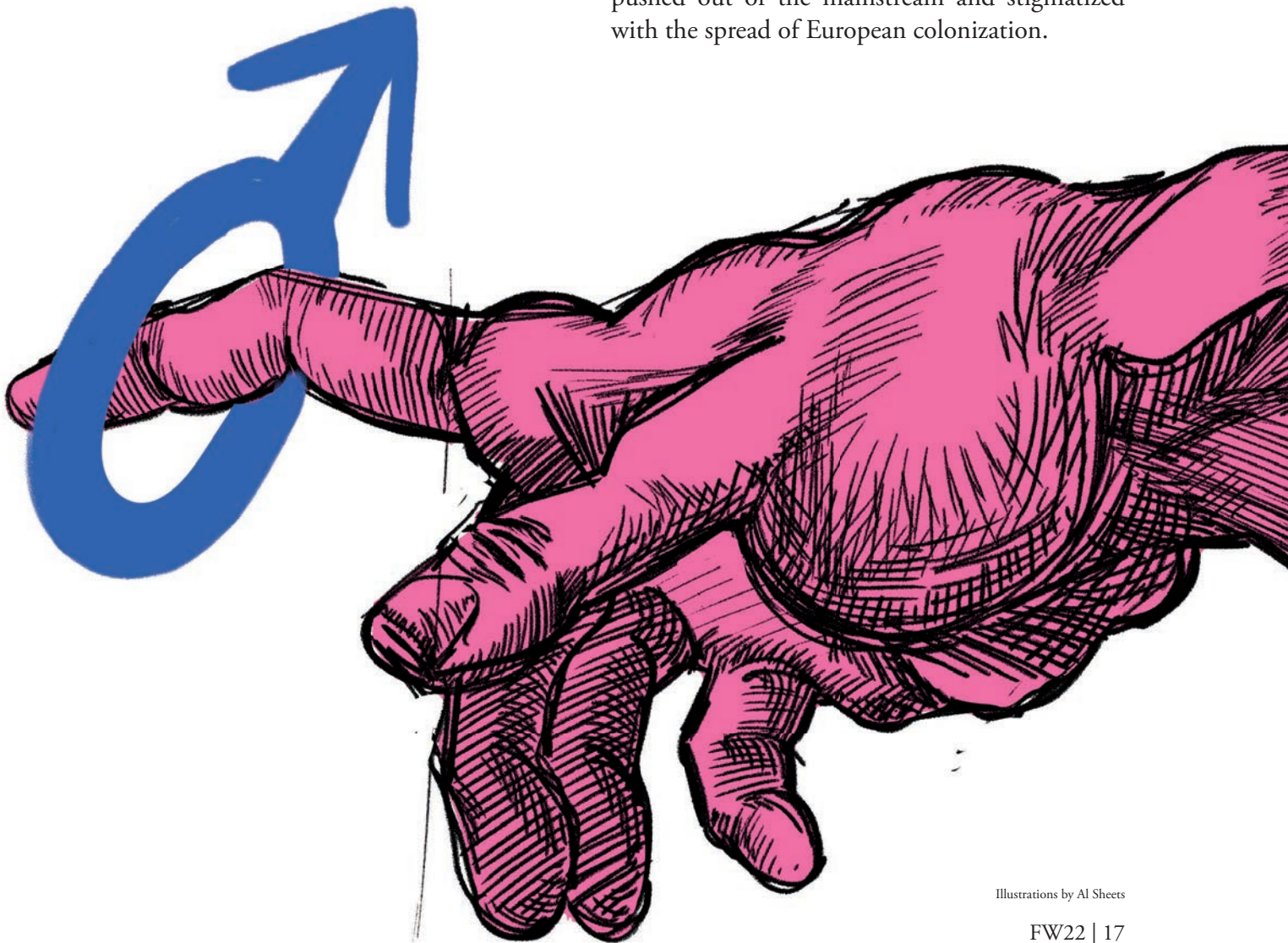
The spread of white, cisgendered, heteronormative, puritan culture was destructive. Colonizers sought to destroy anything unfamiliar, deeming it evil and impure. Ideas of all kinds were binary to the colonizers—you're Christian, or you're not. You're white, or you're not. You're a man, or you're not. For those outcasted and categorized among the "you're not," consequences could cost your life or, at best, your autonomy and sense of self. We know that the historic, Eurocentric ideas from the colonies and colonizers were oppressive, racist, sexist, and caused long-lasting damage that was nearly irreparable. These ideas promoted the power of straight, white men and aimed to oppress everyone else. American history shows the devastating truth that colonization was essentially genocide of Indigenous peoples. With this widespread destruction of communities also came the destruction of cultures, and thus, the destruction of ideas and practices that did not qualify within the cisgendered, misogynistic world of the white man.

The Navajo and roughly 100 or so other indigenous tribes and communities recognized genders and identities outside of the binary. These non-binary identities embodied and embraced the in-between. Identities such as two spirit, berdache, or nádleehí, represented individuals who were fluid with their work and community roles, physical appearance, and clothes. These people were widely accepted and respected within their communities, embodying both femininity and masculinity. Colonization not only rid the mainland of non-binary identities for years, but also impacted and influenced Hawaii as colonization demanded the removal of the non-binary mahu identity. Some sociological research suggests that prior to the spread of Eurocentric ideas and values, the gender binary was nearly nonexistent. Non-binary identities were, and continue to be, seen all over the globe in Myanmar, India, Madagascar, Samoa, Afghanistan, Egypt, Thailand, and more despite the harsh consequences of colonization.

When these binaries were forced upon various cultures, gender congruence was impacted. Gender congruence is achieved when you feel a comfortable and healthy relationship with your sense of self felt privately and the expressions you present to the world around you. Additionally, gender and sex are not the same. It is not uncommon for people to feel as if their gender identity does not align with their assigned sex at birth. Gender is a broad spectrum to which we can apply a wide variety of terms to identify

ourselves however we feel fits us best. Though our culture continues to push the patriarchy and binary, the growing vocabulary for the gender spectrum is providing more opportunity for gender congruence and a shift toward a more accepting and welcoming culture.

Respecting and normalizing a variety of identities is key to embracing genders all across the spectrum. Identities within the binary are viewed strictly as either cisgendered men who were assigned male at

birth (AMAB) and identify as a man or cisgendered women who are assigned female at birth (AFAB) and identify as a woman. Identities among the non-binary include: transgender, agender, genderfluid, gender expansive, genderqueer, and more. Transgender is an identity that may be utilized for someone to describe themselves who has a gender identity different or opposite from the sex they were assigned at birth. A person identifying as transgender can identify as either binary or non-binary. This goes back to the idea

that your gender identity reflects what feels right for you personally! People identifying as agender may feel neutral, like they do not belong to any one gender or identity. Genderfluid identifying individuals may describe feelings of dynamic movement among and between their own gender identity, and their gender identity can vary from day to day. Monday this person may feel more masculine and want to wear sleek hair, pants, and a simple shirt, but Tuesday this person may feel more feminine and want to wear flowy,

colorful clothes and makeup. Wednesday they may switch it up and incorporate both! Someone who identifies as gender expansive may feel as if their gender identity does not exactly align with vocabulary that exists in their culture. Similarly, genderqueer may be a term used for people to identify at large as someone who doesn't feel they confirm to the gender binary, but another term may be preferred to someone else. However, the above list of gender identities is not expansive.

There is a broad spectrum of gender identities and an even broader spectrum of individuals who do not feel they fit the binary. It is important to remember that what one individual may use to describe their own identity may not feel right to another person you perceive to be experiencing something similar. Be sure to respect the identity people have assigned to themselves, if they've even assigned one at all! Not every identity needs to be identified, we can simply exist as we are with no label if that's what feels right.

Culture, communication, and expression work hand in hand to create unique identities that we can use to describe ourselves and feel a sense belonging within a community. Across cultures and throughout history, gender identities have existed outside of the binary. Femininity and masculinity lived in harmony, floating outside of the restrictive cage of the Eurocentric gender binary for centuries. Two-spirit, mahu, muxe, sekrata, hijra, and ankole are some examples of these. Though colonization sought to enforce the binary and obliterate those categorized as other, we are circling back to reclaim and rediscover all of the beautiful identities existing outside the restraints of binary. The spectrum is broad, fluid, colorful, and welcoming. We all have a unique place on the gender spectrum—the most important part is that wherever you land feels like you.

DOUBLE EXPOSED

Photographer: Nathaniel Tang
Models: Rafael Varona, Dakota Smith, Piper Briscoe, and Nurlan Ismagulov

What is Really Depopping?

Writer: Ryleigh Miller
Photographer: Emma Kurtz

With all kinds of different trends on the rise, thrift and resale shop prices also happen to be on the rise. Whether it's grunge, y2k, athleisure, miniskirts, or "vintage," thrifting is a great idea as a whole. Stopping by your local Goodwill or Abyss Co. is a great way to find cool pieces for your fit or prevent old clothes from rotting in a landfill. It's also a great way to save money compared to mall prices. Shopping in thrift stores used to be an affordable way for low-income individuals to find stylish clothing. However, as resell sites and over-purchasing grows with the trends, price tags get bigger, and wallets take hits twice as hard.

Thrift prices in the 2010's were just glorious. You could walk in with ten dollars to your name and leave with a grandpa sweater, two shirts, and a purse. Now, you would leave with a pair of jeans and an employee running after you because you owe two more dollars. Obviously, prices everywhere are increasing. A bunch of bananas is worth more than 53 cents now, and don't even get me started on gas. Considering the mission of thrift stores, though, the price increases at thrift stores are a little more excessive. They are supposed to be cheap and accessible to those who cannot afford fast fashion like Forever 21 or American Eagle.

Aside from obvious inflation, resellers are to blame. Clothing hauls are a trend on social media platforms, and they consist of buying and styling large amounts of clothing that are never actually seen worn. With huge sums of clothing constantly being bought, thrift stores see their business increasing, and thus increase their prices as well. A little thrifting for a wardrobe change is one thing, but buying tons of clothing and selling them for even higher prices is another.

On top of reselling, too, mass consuming leads to less clothing for the people who need it. As stated previously, the original intention for resale stores was for old clothing to be donated to those who may need it more. When clothes are being rapidly purchased, there is not enough time to restock between customers. That leaves less available to those who come to buy what they can afford, rather than reselling on a depop website. This problem is not universally awful, but gets very straining in bigger cities.

Overall, thrift stores are magical places. They are a reliable resource to purchase cool clothes, save money, and make sure your old clothes go to good use. Not a place where clothes go to die, but to be brought back to life with the help of a creative mind. There is nothing wrong with thrifting instead of shopping at the mall, but be considerate of others who rely on them to survive. There are better, cooler side hustles that don't take away from others in need.❧
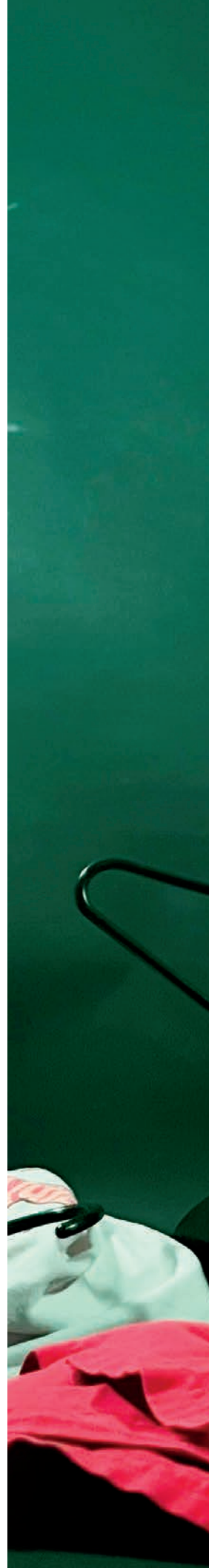
Illustrator: Lucy Blair

Bell Bottoms and Body Standards

RYLEIGH MILLER

Take a good look around you. Some, like myself, may wonder how we went from rocks and leaves to cell phones that have everything from calendars to text messages that can be sent in seconds. It took time to get to where we are now, and with technological advances come advances in culture and the people amongst it. Maybe we started out wearing clothing similar to Fred Flintstone, or maybe even skirts made of palm leaves. Whatever the origin, it is easy to compare that to what we are wearing now and think in disbelief.

Dating all the way back into B.C., the only possible

way of knowing what kind of clothing was worn is with statues, sculptures, and other art forms left behind. Within these remnants, it would seem curvy was the way to go. Big hips were shown through silky, goddess-like dresses which revealed broad shoulders and a puffy chest. At the time, bigger was better, and clothing was meant to hug the beautiful curves of women. What we consider today as flaws were once acceptable and desired. To be precise, they were the goal.

As time continuously passed, eventually the way to go was to be thin. Everyone was as thin as a sheet of paper during colonization. Curves were no longer the goal because they were appealing, having curves just meant you were rich and had the money to keep yourself healthy. Economies were not growing, and neither were women's chest sizes. Being big was bad and you would be shunned if there was so much as a morsel of meat on your bones.

Our imaginary time machine keeps chugging on as we enter our better days, the roaring 20's. Flappers strutted what their mama gave them in front of lifeless individuals whose days were so full of dread from working, that all they had to look forward to was girls giving it their all in sparkly and fitting dresses. What a lady had in this era depended and varied. Hit and miss, if you will. The trend and infatuation with being thin continued on, and so did the belief that you had to be skinny to be pretty.

After taking an unnecessary bathroom break in our time machine into the 30's-40's, fashion and women's standards changed yet again in the 50's. When I say the 50's, I think of the so-called "American dream" that was not a dream at all (actually, quite a nightmare). Women were to stay home all day, clean the house over and over as their rotten kiddos tore it up repeatedly, and then proceed to prepare a dinner to the hardworking husband's satisfaction on the neatly set table. On top of these unspoken, but perfectly set, expectations, the hour glass idealization really set in. There was to be junk in the trunk AND on top of the hood. Not the single, slightest amount of junk was supposed to be in the middle row of this hypothetical soccer-mom van, however. There were to be curves that handled the day, but not too much. It is when beauty standards really hit the fan, and fake beliefs of what girls, and even men,

were too look like in order to appeal to a *kinda* charming man that minimally kept the roof over their heads.

I was not even there and I know the 70's were a blur. The hippies were going nuts with their peace and joy and it was almost as if people had finally started to listen to them. Between then and the 80's, aerobics went crazy and everyone was toned between that and the immense amounts of coke. Am I referring to the soda or the- I guess we'll never know. Continuing on, everyone was jacked, and having a toned body was the end goal. Underneath the bell bottoms and neon clothes, it was common to find a ripped body that was worked very hard to achieve.

The 90's were great! The cartoons were spectacular on Saturday mornings and the style was immaculate. Baggy and grunge was the move, like aesthetically pleasing trash bags as attire. The patterns of 90's clothing ties a lot into styles now.
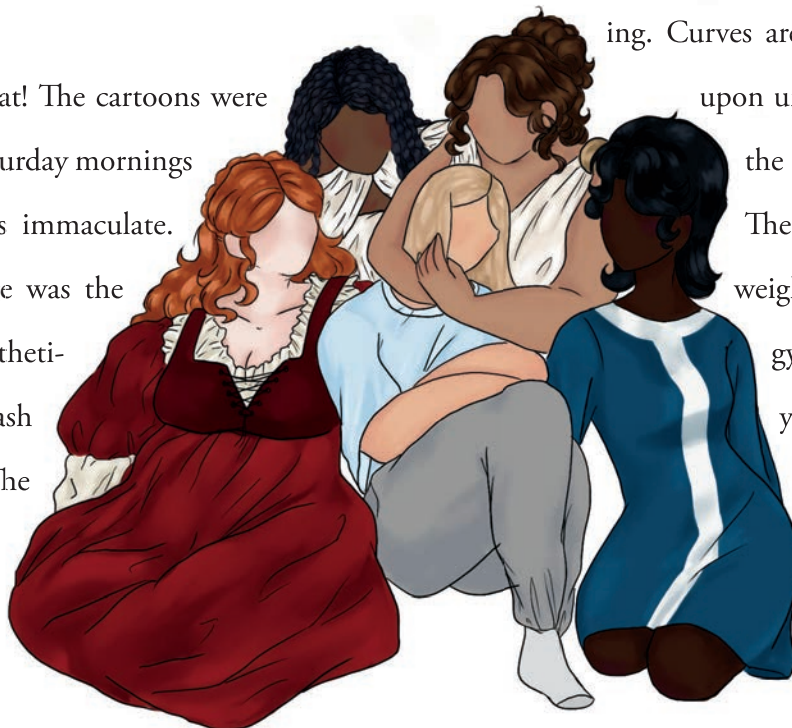
Illustrator: Lucy Blair

Now styles are very similar to both the 90's and early 2000's in an almost conflicting way. Even today while scrolling through TikTok, you may come across a "get ready with me" or something of the sort. In the hashtags, "y2k" lingers like an ugly sweater in the back of your closet. Styling your outfit today like the 90's would include lots of bagginess that does not really correlate with a certain body type in the eyes of the media. Whenever 2000's clothing gets involved, those odds get slimmer, and so do body expectations. Today low waisted jeans are heavily trending, but paired with a cute set of jeans comes with a wide waist with limited pudge that is hard to achieve. Even with baggy pants, tiny tops are usually added to the mix as well. The body goals today are conflicting. Curves are looked so highly upon unil those curves hit the lower abdomen. Then it is "lose some weight", "go to the gym", and "and do you really need to be eating that?". A DD cup is sexy and wonderful, but side-boob

is disgusting. Wearing tight/slimming athleisure to the grocery store and work is also on the rise. So today the standards are to be thin, but to also have curves, but not in the wrong places. With all the trends floating around social media, the body type that matches the fashion soon follows. That will happen, clearly, as it is a given with all the trends in the past. But clothes should not have a certain figure that comes with the drip.

Moral of the story, our time machine has not come to a complete stop, and never will. Here in less than two years the trends will change and so will the body idealization with it. Wear those low rise jeans you thrifted the other day. They were sewn together for the price tag, not to match a certain body that is hard to achieve. If that is not your thing, wear those baggy jeans and make the girl bosses of the 90's proud. If the Greek goddesses and flappers got to wear slim fitting dresses despite their crazy differences in size, so do you. Trends have body types that trend with them, but that doesn't really matter at all when you consider that your ancestors wore a leaf as undies.❧

one theme, five artists

SATIATED

an editorial

Illustrator: Ashley Staib

Illustrator: Lucy Blair

Illustrator: Holly Karges

Illustrator: Kayla Allen

#VirtueSignaling: Look, I Have Good Opinions!

LEXI REED

Photographer: Max Prentice

If you were among the many utilizing social media for knowledge and awareness throughout the last few years, this applies to you. We've all shared informative posts about causes we care about with good intentions whether it was #MeToo, #BLM, or general information about consent, racism, women's rights, or Covid. Sharing information about important topics, especially the ones we are passionate about, can be impactful and necessary as we seek to make change. But have we all taken a step or two back to make sure we're doing it in the right way for the right reasons? Let's dive in.

The internet changed nearly every aspect of our lives. Giant, clunky computers that once took up an entire room evolved into screens we can hold in one hand today. Research that took hours now only takes seconds. The internet made information accessible at the click of a button and gave rise to social media which invites us into the lives of our neighbors, our friends, and strangers across the city, state, country, and globe. Broader and more accessible insight into the lives of those different than ourselves quickened the pace and widened the spectrum of activism. This begs the question: has this change been for the better? Has social media made activism more performative,

or is any spread of quality information positive? What are the best ways to participate in activism on the internet? What is virtue signaling, and is it ok? The internet has brought an entirely new set of social rules, culture, and language to the table, especially when it comes to activism. What are the best parts, and what can we improve upon?

Grassroot activism, used to build relationships, cultivate conversation, and spread information by word of mouth, was among the first methods of activism. This mode of activism was the primary way early movements swelled. Soon after the burst in grassroot activism, social activism began and was utilized to end slavery. With this, mass action strategy was born. In mass action strategy individuals paired with larger organizations, such as churches or charities, and utilized their influence to help spread information or circulate petitions for their cause. Conventions brought activists together, abolitionist articles began to be seen in newspapers, and social justice publications were created. Years later, radio and television would create a forum for information to be spread even quicker. These were the integral tools used in the Civil Rights Movement, among others. To-

day, we have internet and social media.

Social media can be both toxic and helpful. Some say we are migrating to be more performative by sharing the right posts, the right links, and posting the right pictures of ourselves doing the right things. Others argue we're still in the "good fight." Slacktivism, virtue signaling, information warfare, and performative activism are criticized daily, but is this for good reason?

Any attempt to spread information of awareness about social issues on the internet and social media can be considered online activism. The #MeToo movement, an immensely successful form of online activism, became a global movement where victims of sexual assault from several nations shared their stories. In the US, we saw several men, previously of high power, be taken down after survivors came together and shared their stories of assault. In addition, this online movement allowed women around the world to have a voice and take action when protesting would have been difficult to carry out successfully. As the #MeToo movement spread, government changes were made in China to address the issue of sexual harassment and assault for citizens. In India,

the #MeToo movement provided a way for victims to share their stories about assault from men they did and did not know. Many women came forward about their assault by a federal minister which ultimately forced him to resign from his position. The pattern continued uniting women all over the world in Japan, Australia, France, Nigeria, Mexico, the Middle East, and more. Many assailants abusing their positions of power were brought down and survivors created a sense of community and understanding among each other through their shared experiences. Without social media, this movement may not have reached as broadly as it did or had such immense, global impact.

More recently the Black Lives Matter, or BLM, movement created a heavy online presence by utilizing online activism. The BLM movement, though active and present years before, took a strong hold near the peak of Covid-19. Racial targeting and police brutality continued as Covid began to impact the Black community at a disproportionate rate. As the pandemic progressed,

the need to quarantine, protect yourself, and protect loved ones became paramount. The desire to take action through an online presence was higher than ever. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was utilized to spread information, share experiences, and mobilize the cause. The online presence and activism of this movement allowed for more protests, created a widespread network for information sharing, and created more opportunities for accountability as experiences of and witnesses to brutality were documented and shared online. The online portion of activism proved to broaden the scope of political messages, calls to action, identifications of police brutality victims, histories, community outreaches, and inclusion of a variety of other causes that intersected with the BLM movement. The online forum made activism accessible, widespread, and may have even enhanced the message. However, criticism of performative activism and virtue signaling were at the forefront of conversations.

Reproach of both performative activism and virtue signaling was high as people posted the solid black square in a rush on #BlackoutTuesday to show solidarity with the BLM movement. When this was posted without any further action, it was deemed performative. Performative activism is "activism" done that has no real impact on the world and, usually, with the intent to enhance how you are perceived and viewed from the outside rather than because you are devoted to a cause. The criticism of this as performative was due to the lack of action taken outside of the post. Emma Watson, though mostly well-liked, faced serious backlash after her participation in #BlackoutTuesday. Watson edited the black square with white borders which many interpreted as her trying to make the cause "fit her aesthetic." Fans pointed this out and criticized the post repeatedly. The way the post was edited brought Watson's intentions into question as fans wondered if she truly cared about the cause or if she posted it because it "looked good." Another celebrity that faced backlash from fans due to insensitivity online was Ariana Grande.

Ariana Grande is a popular celebrity frequently criticized and accused of cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation occurs when customs, practices, or ideas of a particular group or culture are taken up by people of another, typically more socially powerful, group. Cultural appreciation occurs when a member of one group or culture seeks to understand, learn about, and connect

with another culture. The line between appropriation and appreciation can sometimes be thin or subjective, but most of the time it's pretty obvious. You should always aim to appreciate cultures rather than appropriate. If you're unsure or it feels a little off, take a step back—it's probably appropriation. Many have suggested that Ariana Grande should take many steps back.

Over the years, Grande has made dramatic changes in her appearance, verbiage, vernacular, and mannerisms. In her beginnings on Victorious she appeared fair skinned with bright red hair, a high-pitched voice, and innocent mannerisms. She has gone through phases of utilizing make-up, stylings, and poses to appear as if she is of Asian heritage as well as darkening her skin and hair while adopting some African American Vernacular English (AAVE) over time and in correspondence to various albums. This is called Asian fishing and Black fishing. Grande adopts styles, language, slang, makeup, or poses popular among another, often marginalized, culture or community and has repeatedly been pointed out to be extremely problematic. These same patterns arose over and over again throughout the years and it's not exclusive to celebrities. Cultural appropriation has re-

currently been in discussion with the rise of social media and social media activism. This appropriation is often profited on as it circulates and trends along social media. Cultures and communities should never be viewed as "trendy," and neither should social justice issues.

It is important to recognize and address that the spread of information on social media occurs at nearly lightning speed. It is easy for this quick and broad spread of information to be misconstrued and interpreted as trendy. Social justice issues frequently circulate social media platforms like trends with people posting education items "just to look good." This is called virtue signaling. Similar to performative activism, virtue signaling occurs when you express thoughts and opinions publicly to show that you are morally good or that you oppose immoral things. People were concerned that posting the black square on #BlackoutTuesday without any further action was simply done to show that someone was on the "right side" without making any personal sacrifice or devotion to the cause itself—a good example of virtue signaling. Alternatively, people have also asked if the spread of information can be bad at all? It depends on the intent behind the share—

are you doing it solely to look good, or are you doing it because you truly care and want to make a change?

Other concerns with social media activism have included misinformation, lack of fact checking, and omitting proper credit to original sources. Misinformation and fake news have created a web of false information that can be tricky to navigate if you don't know what you're looking for. This misinformation can be spread accidentally or intentionally by anyone, but the rise of fake news in particular can largely be associated with the presidential term from 2016-2020. Misinformation and fake news, though often joked about light-heartedly, has evolved into a serious issue that threatens journalists and media receivers alike. Taking steps to ensure that the information you are sharing and seeing on your social media, especially when it comes to social justice and activism, is a crucial part of being a responsible contributor to social media and online activism. Look for the date and relevancy of the information, confirm who the original source of information is and if they are reliable, analyze the intention of the information, and google outside resources!

One thing I like to do to protect myself from misinformation is follow reputable individuals on my social media. If I see something interesting that I want to know more about, I will google it and skim a few articles related to the topic to look for similarities and discrepancies. Doing this also helps to ensure that you understand and support the information that you are sharing! When you take part in social media activism, you will likely be contacted by people looking to agitate you or people curious for more information—it's always good to be knowledgeable and passionate about your stance! Also, be sure to give credit to people who are doing the hard work. Don't be afraid to give a shout-out or share the account of prominent people and activists who you get important information from!

Social media has provided an entirely new forum for how we portray our lives and view the lives of others. Our perception of the world around us changed because of social media and the internet, as has the way we interact with each other, the government, and the world to create change. We can reach larger audiences, share experiences, and unify people for the same cause all over the planet. Social media does not have to be the evil end of

genuine activism as long as we make sure to utilize it the right way, be genuine with our interactions and presentation of self, participate in social justice activities outside of the internet, and be careful to avoid the spread of misinformation. If we work by these general guidelines, we can not only continue making change, but we can generate an even greater impact by connecting with others on a global scale.❧

Photographer: Max Prentice
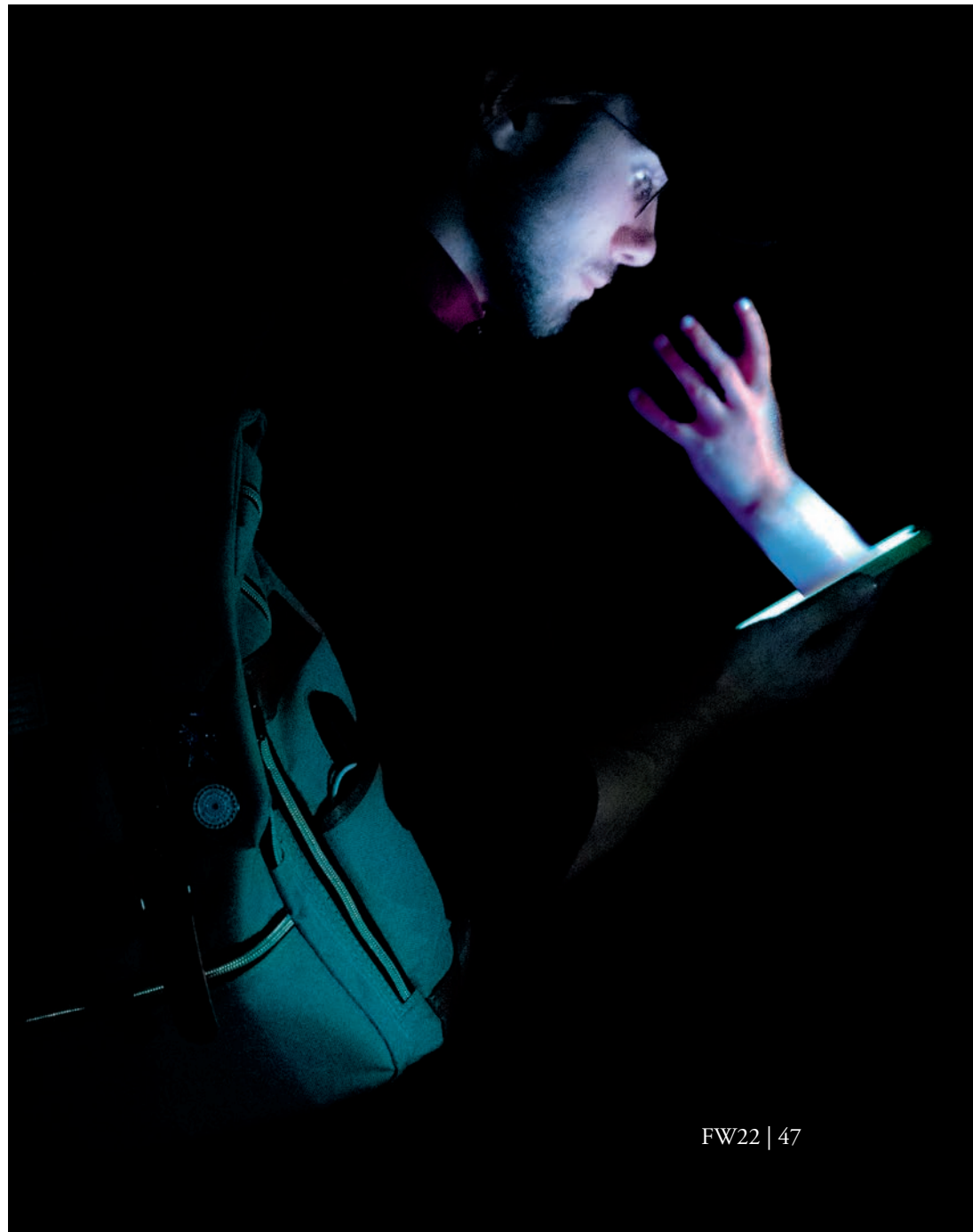
France, Frocks, and Fashion: What is Couture and Why Do We Care About it?

Zoey Scates

Illustrator: Holly Karges

It's time to learn your ABC's: Alexandre Vauthier, Balenciaga, Chanel. These are the fashion ABC's. Couture fashion that is. In 1858 the House of Worth became the first ever haute couture house, French for *high fashion*. It also marked the first instance of the term *fashion designer* being used. Ten years after Frederick Worth formed the House of Worth, le Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture (a sector of the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode) was created as a protective force for the high fashion houses—essentially the equivalent of the FDA for fashion. This governing body states that designers and fashion houses must earn the right to call themselves a couture fashion house, hence why there are currently only 16 certified haute couture houses globally—a number that at one time was over one hundred.

It's a great feat to become a certified couture house. Many designers can't even fathom going through the obstacles of becoming one. Yet, even today, couture fashion remains an everlasting piece of the fashion world. You may ask, how so?

In 1945 the Chambre Syndicale proclaimed that to be certified *haute couture* the house, or maison, must have an atelier—design studio—with at least twenty staff members, a thirty-five piece col

lection to show in Paris each year, and all designs must be made-to-order with at least one fitting per customer. These requirements solidified what it means to be a haute couture house. It is no easy task. Today, these rules remain.

Couture fashion today is virtually the same as it was when it was born. An elite sector of the fashion industry comprising thousands of hours of garment work yields the most minute of details. The flower on a Chanel dress? Each one hand-stitched. The pearls of a Dior dress? Sewn in one by one. The tulle of a Giambattisa gown? Stretched out and sewn together after hours of work. Each design goes through rigorous stages until determined to be perfect by the director of the maison. All designs are then presented during Paris Fashion Week.

It isn't just your average person walking around in these garments. These are the red carpet show stoppers that leave the photographers screaming at the celebrities to give them a twirl. Even so, the celebrities and socialites adorning these pieces have no rights to them. They are almost always on loan and when necessary, may even have a guard with them to insure no damage to the design. So why are these impractical and virtually unobtainable designs worth our time? Think of the Mona Lisa. The Louvre. We can admire the Mona Lisa from here in the U.S. While it would be an amazing opportunity to visit the Louvre and see the Mona Lisa in person, we can still appreciate the artisanship of the famous portrait from afar. The same can be said about couture. If we label it as art and value the craft rather than the object, we can dismiss questions such as why is couture worth our time.

Is art really wearable? Can clothing really be considered art? Given the amount of hours and the artistic abilities of the designers, there is no reason for fashion to not be considered art. Especially couture fashion. While it may seem outrageous and even ostentatious, couture fashion is the Frida Khalo of fashion. It's the Olympics of art. No other art media can be presented in such a way. There is movement, texture, color, rhythm, space, and sometimes even

sound. It's no wonder the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City has an entire section dedicated to fashion.

Of course the question still remains. Why is haute couture still around? Is it not the same as ready-to-wear fashion just with more people and located in Paris? Think of it as a sport. It's a game. Whoever presents the most stunning designs will be featured the most on red carpets, in films, television, magazines, social media. It is no different than a recording artist releasing an album and winning a Grammy or an actor winning an Oscar. There may not be a physical award for best haute couture house, but the visibility of a maison will tell you what you need to know about the house.

Some may say it's insolent or disrespectful to continue the legacy of haute couture in a world like ours. With such suffering and constant conflict, why should we put any focus on lavish gowns from France? Gowns no average person could ever afford. Would we ask the same question about a painting or a sculpture though? We save paintings from

floods, fires, and wars. We protect sculptures in glass boxes. Why would we not do the same for a couture piece? The idea that fashion—especially couture fashion—doesn't have the right to call itself art diminishes the work and creative minds of those in the fashion community. If anything, fashion is one of the most intricate and versatile forms of art. Collections are thoroughly curated and hand sewn to perfection. They are customized for each individual. And lastly, they are wearable. One of the only wearable art forms. So even though couture fashion may be something we admire from afar, we can still use fashion to show off our personality, our artisticness, and our passions.

Illustrator: Holly Karges

MY GOOD ⌢ SIDE

Photographer: Ethan Douglass
Models (In Order): Ethan, Eli, Christian, Zach, Sam

"You Act Just Like Sheldon Cooper!": The Problem with Autism in Media
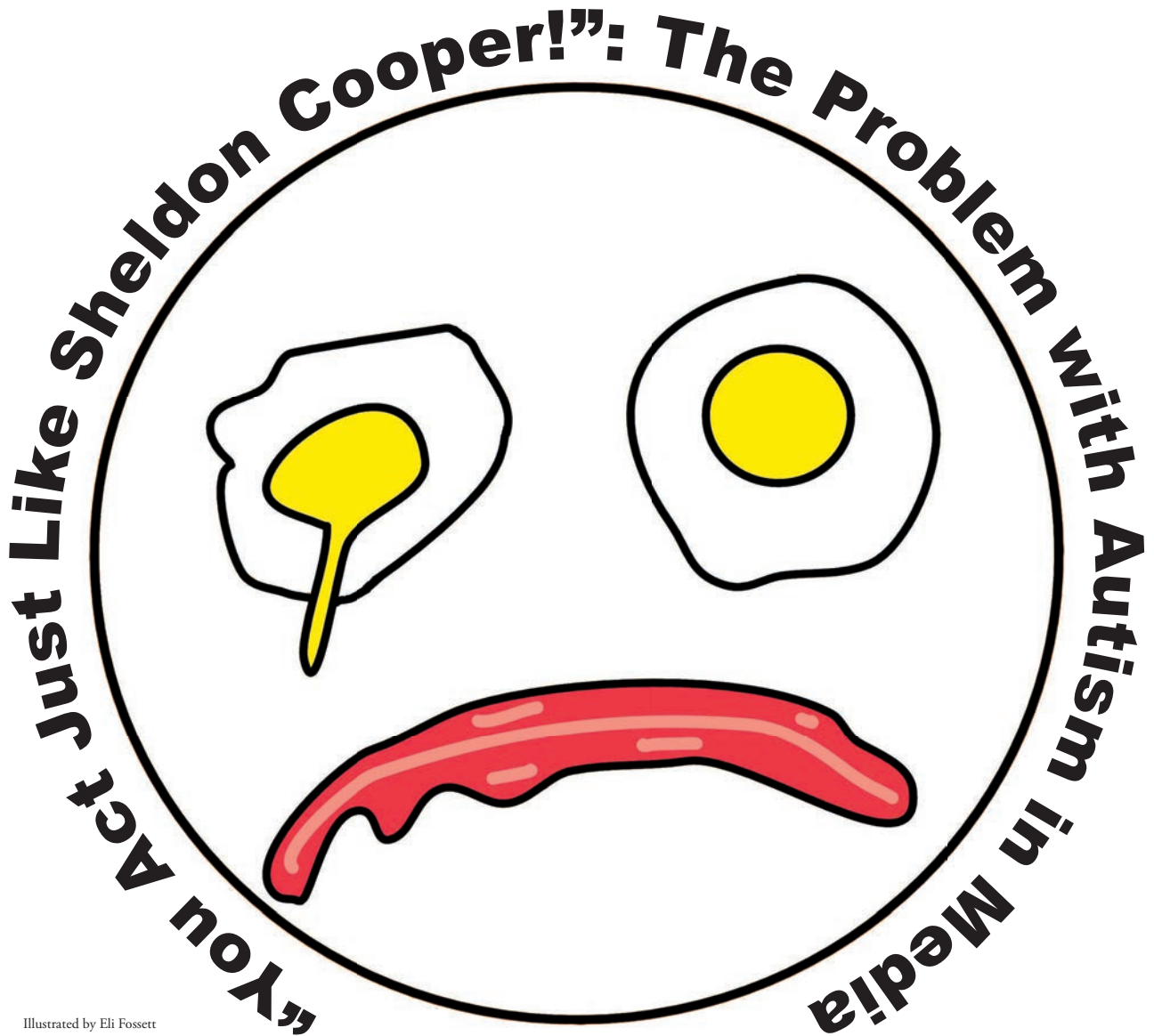
Illustrated by Eli Fossett

Eli Fossett

When I was fourteen years old, I was officially diagnosed with autism. I had very mixed feelings about this when it first happened. On the more positive end, I had finally figured out why I acted different than the other kids in my age group, and I was able to get a decent support group of other people on the spectrum within my school. On the negative side, I had started to notice that people would start treating me different-ly once they found out I was on the spectrum. It wasn't bullying exactly, but it felt like people were talking down to me, assuming I was less capable than I really was. They would talk down and al-most infantize me. And I think a lot of this can stem from who autism is portrayed in the media.

People on the spectrum are often the vic-tims of stereotyping in the media. One of these stereotypes is autistic people being either savants or super geniuses. In such TV shows as The Big

Bang Theory and The Good Doctor, the characters of Sheldon Cooper and Shawn Murphey, are portrayed as having genius level intelligence in their field of expertise and have almost inhuman like intellect. This can be harmful for people on the spectrum because it is almost impossible for people in real life on the spectrum to live up to, and if they can't, they are often cast aside for not meeting up to these almost impossible expectations. This stereotype can also make people on the spectrum look inhuman and almost alien like. Because of this, this can make neurotypical people think that people on the spectrum aren't like neurodivergent people and makes them treat them differently than others.

Characters in media who are on the autism spectrum are roughly ninety nine percent of the time presented as Skinny, nerdy white males. The Main examples of autistic characters in media are Sheldon Cooper from The Big Bang Theory,

Sam from Atypical, and Shawn from The Good Doctor are all Nerdy, well off, white males with STEM related interests. This helps further the stereotype that autism is something that only men can have. In reality, the ratio of autistic men and autistic women is 4:1. While being more common in men, women still make up a good percentage of autistic people. In addition, these autistic characters are often portrayed as the butt of the joke and are shown to be annoying to their neurotypical cast of friends. For example, Sheldon Cooper is shown throughout most of the series as being a nuisance to his friends, who are annoyed by his habits, and seemingly begrudgingly put up with him. A lot of media tends to focus on how hard it is to deal withautistic people as a neurotypical and how a person's autism only makes things worse for others, rather than a person on the spectrum and their story.
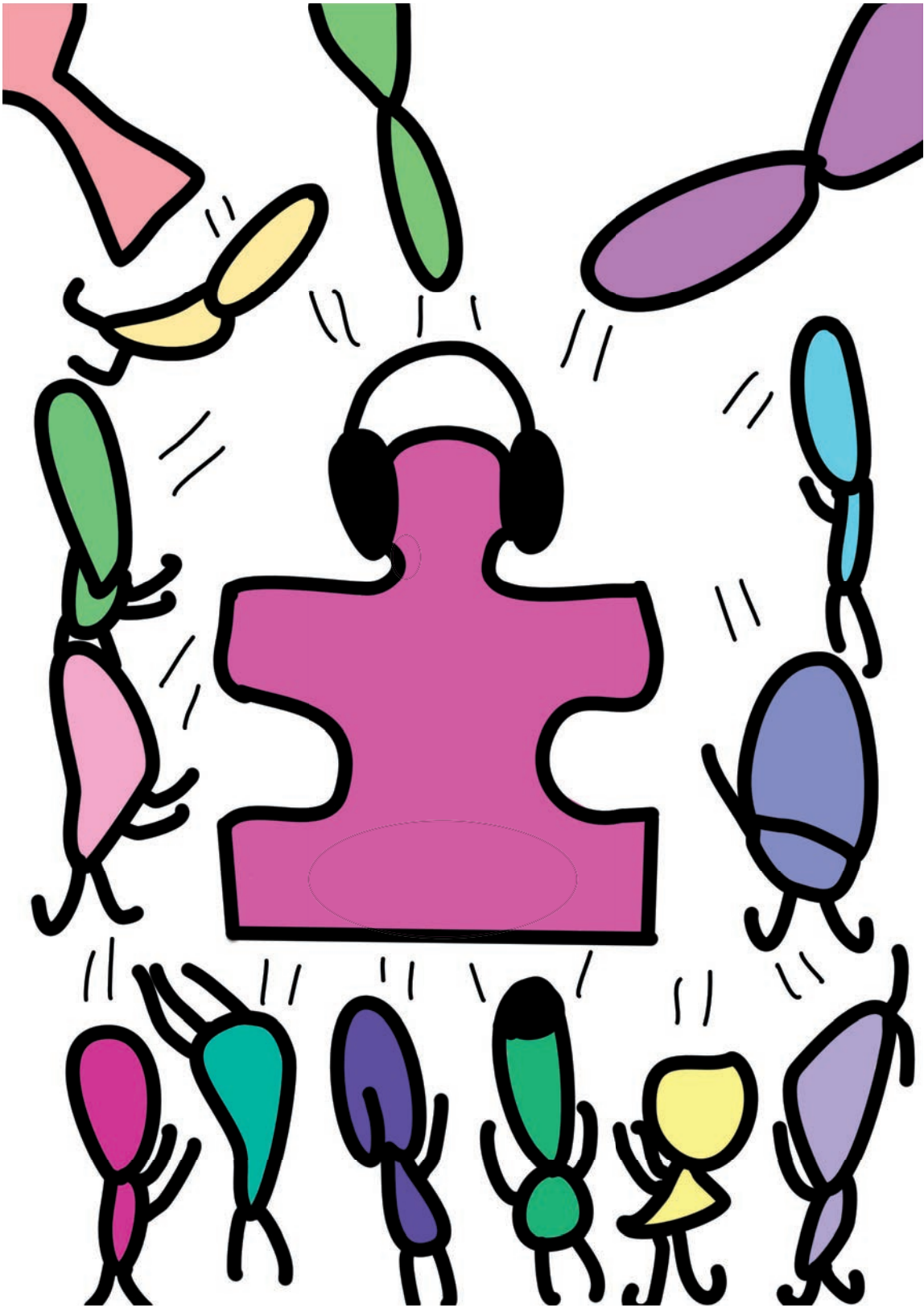
Illustrated by Eli Fossett
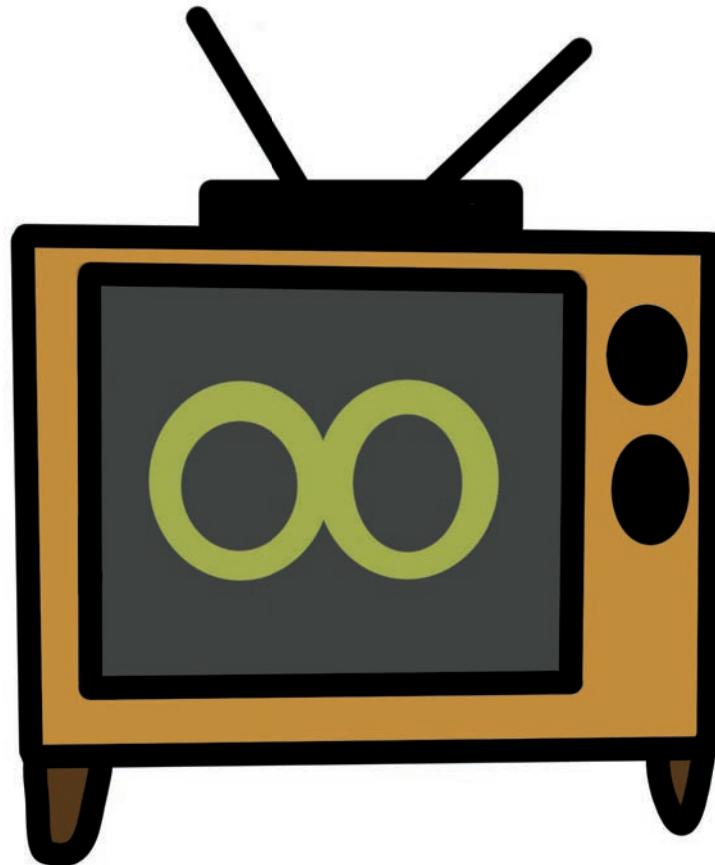
These problems tend to arise from the fact that many of these characters are not written by or performed by people on the spectrum. In the entertainment industry, while there are some autistic actors, such as Dan Aykroyd and Sir Anthony Hopkins, Actors on the spectrum are severely underrepresented. Yet, many autistic characters are played by neurotypical actors. The most damning example of this would be the Australian musician Sia's controversial 2021 movie titled Music. The movie stars a young girl, who was presented as a nonverbal autistic girl. Several Autistic and Neurotypical people alike were outraged when seeing the film due to its offensive and ablest portrayal of people on the spectrum. Several red flags had emerged in the movie, such as when Maddie's character begins overstimulating, another character begins to climb on top of her to try and restrain her, which if done in real life, can lead to attacks from being more overstimulated. The main concern voiced online was the actress in the movie, Maddie Zeigler, was a neurotypical playing an autistic character. This is offensive for many reasons. For one, having a non-autistic person play an autistic character is a very risky move because if not handled well, can become offensive chariotries of autistic people. And considering one of Sia's method of research was watching YouTube videos of children on the spectrum having episodes at airports, its safe to assume she wasn't very careful with her research. Maddie's character in the film is shown as being a young autistic woman, and the movie painfully goes out of its way to let you know how "weird" and "not normal" she is, by making her eat gum off of park benches. And the worst part, Sia actually did try to have an autistic actress initially, but replaced her because she was, in Sia's words, "Too difficult", AKA having to make accommodations for their needs.

The reason for Sia's offensive portrayal, and many others, is that most media following characters with autism are sponsored by Autism Speaks. Autism Speaks is a hateful organization that masquerades as an Autism advocacy group, but in reality, is extremely harmful to people on the spectrum, and to this day does not have a single autistic person on their board. The main reason Autism Speaks is hated by people on the spectrum is for the fact that they treat Autism as something that needs to be cured. In an ad that Autism Speaks ran in 2009, they claimed that autism is a "silent killer" and was more deadly than AIDS, cancer and diabetes combined, comparing autism to several deadly diseases. Autism Speaks in general focuses far more on Neurotypical parents' problems with their children with autism than actual autistic people. For example, in one interview, the had a parent talk about how she used to think about killing her autistic son because of the stress he caused her, and the only reason she stopped herself was because of her neurotypical child. Unfortunately, Autism Speaks is the most relevant and popular Autism advocacy board in the world, making it the first choice for many Hollywood studios to go to when making a character on the spectrum. Even shows with otherwise great representation, such as Julia from Sesame Street, are under the grasp of Autism Speaks. Sesame Street even partnered with Autism Speaks to create a kit for parents with newly diagnosed children, which uses the outdated five stages of grief method to deal with having an autistic child, which is typically used with grieving with death.

So, how do we get better representation for people on the spectrum? Simple, have autistic people write autistic stories and have autistic actors play autistic characters. It makes the most sense to have people how have actually lived those experiences tell those type of stories.

Illustrated by Eli Fossett

Illustrated by Kayla Allen

The Fashionable Future of Sustainability

Gloria Kim

Thousands of years ago, the advent of agriculture replaced the hunter-gatherer lifestyle for mankind, making civilizations possible. Then, came the industrial revolution hundreds of years ago, making otherwise handcrafted goods more accessible to the common person. Only a few decades ago, came the World Wide Web, enabling information to be shared and attained across the globe at a faster rate. It is no doubt that technology is exponentially improving. What more feats could we achieve? Most futurists agree that building a computer smarter than us may be the last invention we will ever need. This can cause some degree of dread in some, and strangely some euphoria in others. Right now, we can worry about what technology we already have and how it may feasibly impact us as they scale. The fashion industry is getting a taste of what its future could look like. Fashion futurists believe that new technologies will solve the age-old problem that is climate change. So, can technology make fashion sustainable? Can it finally be an ethical industry, or is this a flowery pipe dream?

As you may already know, out of all industries, the fashion industry is among the worst offenders when it comes to annual carbon emissions. Leather is a byproduct of the cattle production, coming from another industry accelerating the rate of climate change. The fashion industry has been trying to appease "conscious" consumers and lower the cost of self-expression. However, the solution is not an environmentally friendly one either. Polyurethane (PU), marketed as "vegan leather," is derived from fossil fuel, and takes centuries to break down. When marketed, it is typically accompanied with clothing articles that are made with other non-biodegradable textile materials like polyester and nylon. With that in mind, imagine this: someone is shopping online for a leather jacket on a budget. They are enthralled by the whole top look of an image entitled "Vegan Leather Jacket." They purchase everything it was modeled with. They receive it and find that there are some minor defects. So, they promptly ship them back to the site's warehouse. As per standard protocol, the workers of the warehouse toss the jacket into the garbage.

What you imagined is a process that repeats frequently. Clothing that's new relative to its production date and times worn, make a large portion of the landfill consisting of billions of tons of textile waste. Whether brand new or not, the truck loads of clothing that gets dumped out every second are usually non-biodegradable. Fortunately, we have the biotechnology to create materials that do biodegrade. Some biotech companies from California realized the use of fungi as leather. That's right, leather derived from mycelium can have the properties of cowhide. Such a remarkable material has already been turned into Adidas shoes and a Hermès bag. What's more is Biotech startups have also found a way to synthesize spider silk proteins. This silk thread has been used to sew said Adidas shoes and has been weaved into a North Face parka (that's waterproof). It must also be mentioned that a tie has been made with spider silk, given to the creator of Spider Man—Stan Lee. There's no secret that these biomaterials are expensive right now; however, once they are in demand, these prices will likely become affordable.

AI technologies can address the reduction of clothing that gets wasted in the first place.

Machine learning (ML)—a subset of AI—can use large amounts of data to get increasingly smarter at finding appropriate patterns. ML can use data to suggest ways to sell inventory via promotional deals and finding a good price for each piece of merchandise. Deep learning (DL)—a more sophisticated ML—can help brands forecast fashion trends. This will reduce production surplus, ensuring that warehouses are stocked with clothes people want. Clothing production can be automated, minimizing textile waste as well. 3D knitting is something that brands like Patagonia are using. This technology typically sews the whole garment, meaning that there is no excess fabric being cut away and thrown out. In addition, a garment is completed in a matter of seconds. If the concept of purchasing an item before it is produced can become a reality across most large brands, there could be a massive reduction of textile waste.

The modeling industry can be impacted by AI technologies. A small feature of this is AI-generated models using generative adversarial networks (GAN), which is ML that uses two neural networks. One—the generator—outputs an image, and the other—the discriminator—compares the generated image to real images. The repeated process of this makes for these fake images to be indistinguishable from real ones to a human. GAN used in fashion takes a large dataset of poses and clothing. It can also be incorporated with DL techniques used to make deepfakes; the AI can be trained with media of an influencer or celebrity's face to imitate their facial likeness in the GAN generated image. Companies can rent faces, and the model would never have to be present. Photoshoots require more than one source of labor to accomplish; there is a whole crew of people that a business would need to hire, making shoots expensive. Since these shoots are done all year round, samples worn by models get thrown out, widening the carbon footprint.

AI isn't sophisticated enough to make automated influencers, but people can make fake models using computer generate imagery (CGI). With a couple of visual tricks using CGI and an appealing character background story, you can make someone who doesn't physically exist relevant to the fashion industry. Shudu Gram, a virtual South African model, has been used to endorse brands like Balmain, Tiffany & Co., and Louis Vuitton. Miquela, a Brazilian-American, forever-19-year-old virtual influencer has collaborated with Prada and Calvin Klein. Her presence has extended beyond the fashion industry, into the entertainment and music industry, garnering her 3 million followers on Instagram. What brands love about Shudu Gram and Miquela is that it's difficult for them to tarnish brand image with controversial behavior, unlike real influencers. The good news for everyone else is that they don't leave as much of a negative impact on the environment as real people do.

The next big thing picking up speed in the sphere of the fashion world is the virtualization of fashion itself. Virtual fashion isn't an unfamiliar concept, at least in the gaming industry. Since the days of World of Warcraft, many people have been paying either virtual or real-life currency on cosmetics for whatever they are playing as in a video game. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of gamers and hours spent on video games skyrocketed. On the other hand, the fashion industry lost a significant amount of revenue. Big fashion brands seized the opportunity to make in-game assets in popular video games. A few examples include Balenciaga in Fortnite, Nike in Roblox, and MISBHV in Grand Theft Auto V. The enticing fact to designers is that there are many creative prospects with virtual fashion; in other words, the virtual world is exempt from the laws of nature, so clothing can (appear to) be made of matter that could flood or burn down your room. And, to sound more or less like a bro-
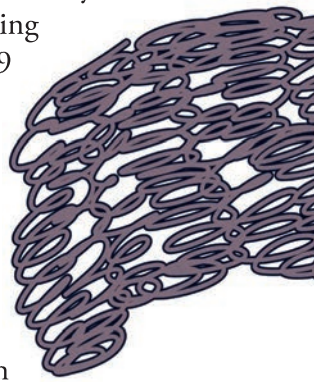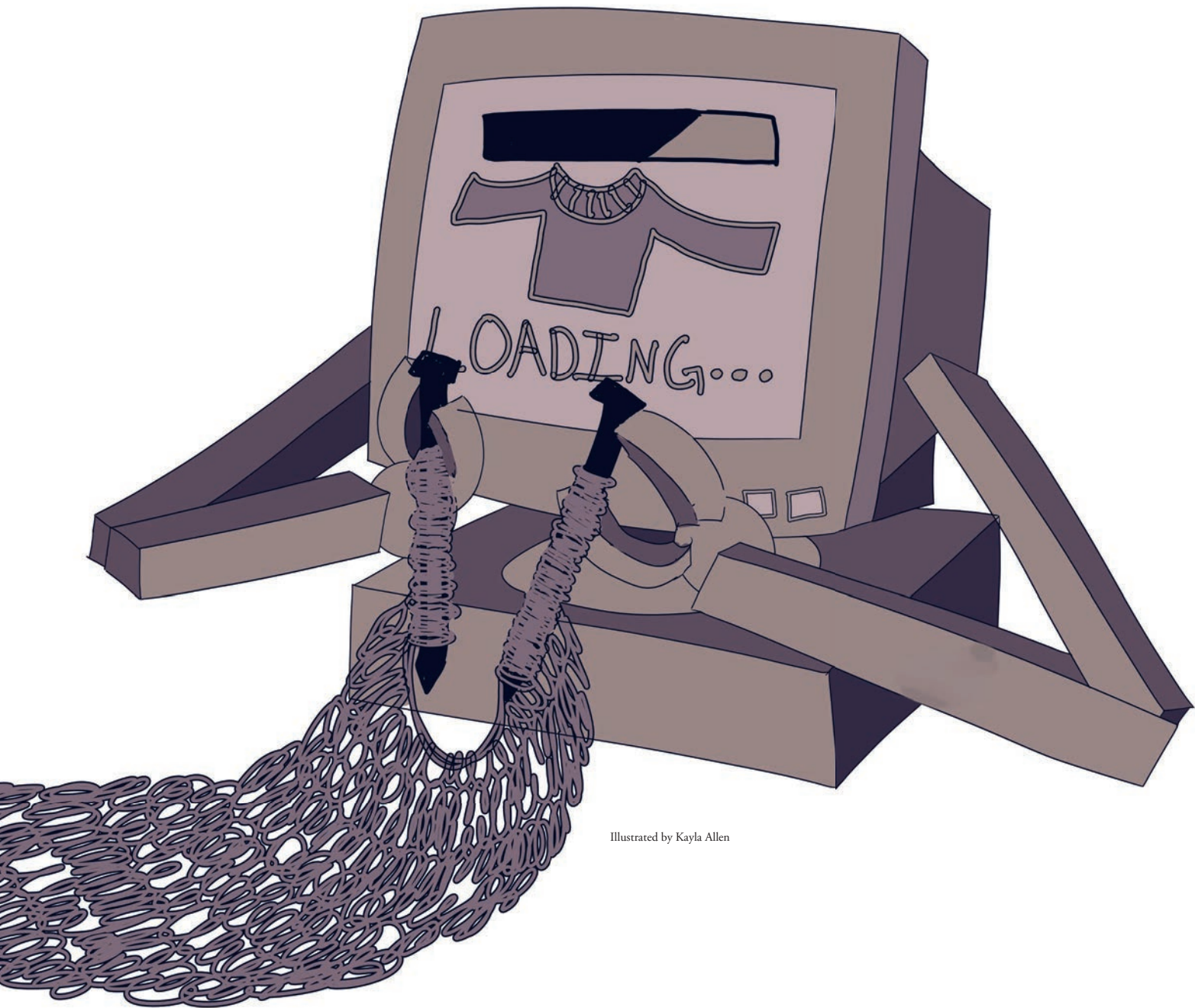
Illustrated by Kayla Allen

ken record, these virtual pieces most likely don't emit real carbon dioxide.

    The future of fashion looks promising when it comes to minimizing its carbon footprint—at first glance. This could be one of those instances where it is too good to be true. There are some bugs that need to be addressed before we can have a working utopian-like framework. We don't know if biodegradable materials will be

widely used more than cheap petroleum-derived ones. Machines are creating new clothes faster than human hands ever could and may scale relatively quick. Unless biodegradable materials can scale at the rate of clothing the industry produces, we will perpetuate fast fashion's output of carbon emissions. Furthermore, these machines introduce job displacement. Low-wage manual labor may overall seem unethical, but there are many people in the world who depend on this labor as their household's main or only source of income; additionally, fashion production may be their country's only ticket out of development. There is no compensation from these governments if its citizens are jobless due to automation.

The joblessness doesn't end there. The lack of photoshoots as a result of GAN images could devalue the jobs of photographers, makeup artists, and stylists. GAN used with deepfake technology runs the risk of initiating misuse. Brands could use a person's face to advertise products without his or her permission. If legal or social trouble is not on a brand's mind, the demand for real models could begin to decrease. Social media would consist of perfect-looking humanoids that will always have millions of adoring fans no matter how many humanly flawed virtual models one makes. We may see a statistical spike in those with body dysmorphia as a result. Another major concern with virtual models is that their creators may not relate to their character story and share the same ascribed identity as the model is presented as. It would be inappropriate for them to comment on social issues from the fictional perspective of the model. We will never know if someone with a similar story to the virtual model is truly writing these things.

Digital fashion isn't the last man standing here (there will be none spared). Virtual designs seem like a good solution to fashion, if everyone has a virtual identity online. This isn't the case now, but the industry is trying to help facilitate the development of the digital landscape for that to occur. The problem doesn't arise when brands sell digital garments in everyone's favorite video games, but when digital garments are tied to NFTs—non-fungible tokens. Behind these otherworldly digital pieces of fashion, it requires an unimaginable amount of computing power to ensure that the tokens are secure once their transactions are stored on the blockchain. In the process, energy, often from non-renewable sources, gets consumed. Dolce & Gabbana,

Gucci, and Louis Vuitton are some luxury brands embracing blockchain technology and believe virtual fashion NFTs are the future of the industry. Unless blockchain technology can become sustainable, or we develop technology that can offset NFT carbon emissions, the fashion industry will worsen its already-horrendous carbon footprint.

It can be argued that technological advancements are solving mankind's problems, but it's hard to deduce such a thing on a global scale. Fashion may never be an ethical industry, as with everything that has a grand impact on the world. We can't undo that fact. It seems that when one parameter gets fixed, many more parameters become unfixed. Perhaps, instead we are selective with our focus, and don't realize that equally nice and not-so-nice things conjointly occur, or even the former more than the latter. However, this all is an oversimplification of reality. What we know is that we are fixated on making the most out of our lives with technology. The humanity of a person will go unchanged throughout the evolution of new technologies. An extension of that is self-expression, which will always be most important to us. Our current mode of self-expression is at odds with the current state of the environment. Is it naïve to think striving for a compromise between the two through technology will get us one? For now, we can only dream.❧

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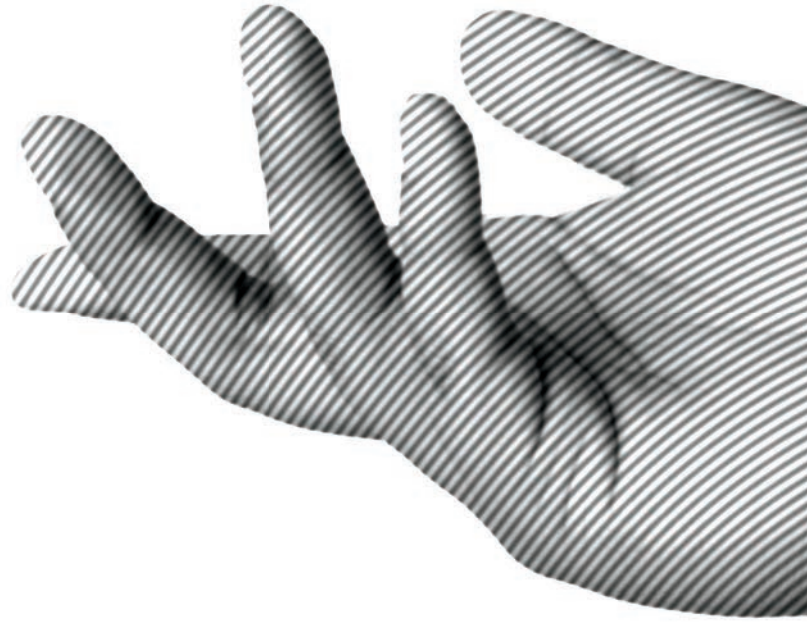
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can·did

/ˈkandəd/ · adjective

Truthful and straightforward; frank.

Candid Magazine is a student-focused art/fashion magazine made by college students for everyone.

This magazine is an outlet for students to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions in creative ways.