



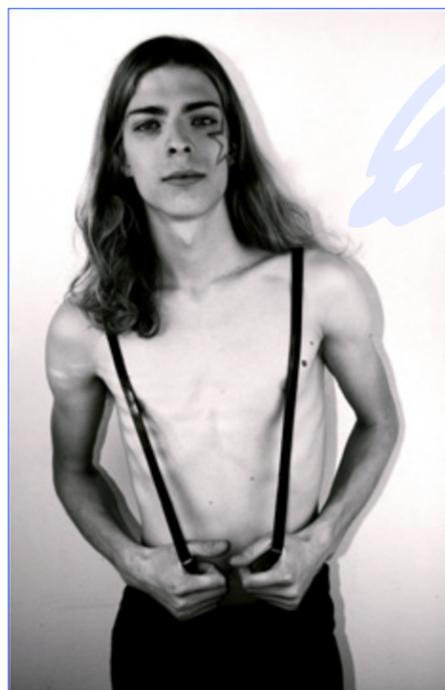
off the map

EYES WIDE OPEN
winter 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

2	We are OTM
3	Editors Letter
4	Rebels In Their Own Right
7	The Deerhunters
11	Juggling Lives

14	Why Don't You Talk To Me?
21	A Love Letter From...
22	Pencil Cases from Popsicle Sticks
25	A Model Male
27	Transforming Toronto's Art Scene
28	Little Miss Sunshine
29	Blogger Chic
30	Hair Today...
36	Young & Making Their Mark
39	Waiting for the Morning to Come
42	Top Drawer
43	Downstream Movement
49	Self Reflections
50	You & Eye
51	Fresh Princess of Toronto
52	Through The Lens
56	Attack in Black



on our cover
JOHN CHERKAS (nam)
photographer CHRIS PANGAN
art director TARA BARTOLINI
stylist AIMEE LEGAULT
make-up JULIA STEINER
clothing provided by
JACFLASH
www.jacflash.net



AIMEE LEGAULT
Editor
Fashion Director



GALEN DRINNAN
Film Crew



MOSES ENIOJUKAN
Web Design
Director



TARA BARTOLINI
Editor
Art Director



CHRIS DI STAULO
Film Crew



ADAM SCHOALES
Communications
Director



ALICIA RUSSANO
Layout
Designer



CHRIS PANGAN
Photography
Director

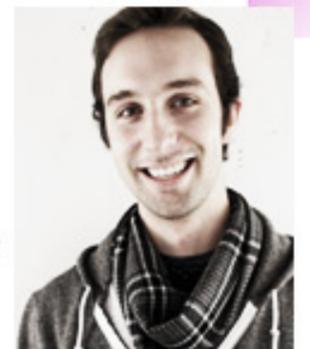
NATALIE KAINE
Fashion
Assistant



ROOP GILL
Writer



ANDREW WEIR
Writer



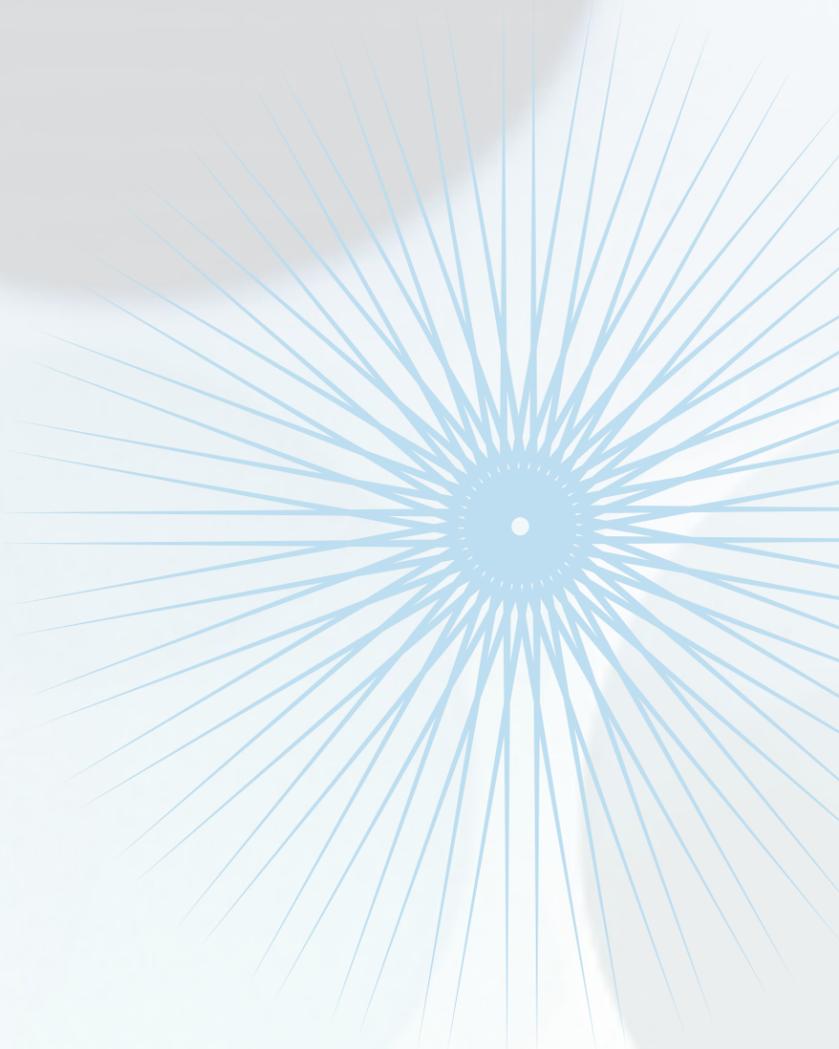
LINDSAY DESCHAMPS
Fashion
Assistant



SARA HAROWITZ
Writer



DYLAN FRANKS
Writer



In brainstorming ideas for the theme of our second issue, we decided to base it on our experience after the launch of *The First Time*. Everyday we discover new and talented artists around the city be it walking down the street, relaxing at a coffee shop or riding the subway. These people have opened our eyes to the raw talent that we knew was here in Toronto and they are the reason why we started *Off The Map* in the first place. We are so excited that we have had such support from our family and friends as well as the art, fashion, film and music communities in Toronto.

Sometimes it takes an eye opening experience to bring us back to reality. In this issue, we share our experiences with you.

 TARA + AIMEE



photograph www.runningdive.ca

Rebels In Their Own Right

Up close and personal with
Toronto's hottest new band
- **Rebel Emergency**.

writer SARA HAROWITZ



Photographs HeeBoo Photographics

Picture this: four guys and one dirty Brooklyn apartment. It's the middle of summer, and their place has no air conditioning. There's no TV, no internet. All that sits on the floor is a soccer ball, some chairs, and a deck of cards. With only one bed to share between the four of them, they separate the mattress from the wooden box spring and two of them sleep on each.

This was the creative space of Rebel Emergency.

The rock-reggae-ska band from Toronto spent a year living in New York, writing songs and recording their first album. And while the living situation was far from glamorous, the four guys had the time of their lives.

"We loved it," said the band's frontman, Roddy. "We had the best time ever and wrote some of our best songs there."

Those songs turned into a vibrant self-titled EP that has recently been released on *iTunes*. The band has also recently released a full-length album, titled *Love Ain't Free*.

"We kind of just dropped everything and moved to New York," said Roddy. "At first we thought we were going there for three days to do one song; I had like, three pairs of underwear that I packed. We ended up staying there for a year, and I only used those three pairs of underwear..."

The room erupted into laughter.

"It was kind of an eye-opener to the idea that happiness doesn't have anything to do with money or space," added guitarist, Neil.

Rebel Emergency first formed about six years ago. Originally under the name Panic and the Rebel Emergency, they released one album, *Captured by a Vision*. When their producer, Panic, left the group, they revamped and came back strong as Rebel Emergency.

"We have a weird journey because we've had a few different formations of the band," said Roddy. "It takes a while to actually become a band. There's so much business behind it, so much you have to go through."

But now they have their groove, and the fans love it. "It was just me and Neil (guitarist) at first, with one other guy who's no longer in the band," said lead singer Roddy. "I saw Geoff play bass once and he made me cry!" he continued, and the "talented" Jeremy plays the drums.

With a rock-reggae sound that inhabits melodies that are laid-back yet lively, Rebel Emergency is quickly gaining momentum – and not just in Toronto.

Their first show was at the Horseshoe Tavern

and was sold out. They've since then sold out the MOD Club and played at the Sound Academy; they have also received recognition overseas.

They toured the States, and even lived in Jamaica for a month, where they played at its biggest reggae festival, *Sumfest*.

Still, Rebel Emergency loves Toronto.

"Toronto's an amazing city," said Geoff; "We have amazing fans here and great support."

Rebel Emergency started in 2002 in a friend's basement, and that's what they've stayed: friends. Refreshingly, Roddy, Neil, Geoff, and Jeremy all genuinely like each other.

"You can be in a band that's amazing but if you don't really want to hang out with the guys and spend time with them the music suffers, the energy suffers," said Neil. "We love going out with each other we usually have a pretty good time. And we can really mess up a club!"

They all laughed.

Their interview plays like life – just four guys hanging out. Their dynamic is revitalizing and upbeat, each member adding tidbits to the retelling of a hilarious story – and they've had quite a few.

There was the trip that Geoff described as "so typical Rebel Emergency" when they made the fifty hour drive to California in a blizzard to participate in a battle of the bands. Upon arrival, they found out that they were actually scheduled to play at the after party and not as part of the competition.

That same jaunt, they had a gig scheduled with another musician. However, the guy they were sharing the stage with wanted to play for three hours, so Rebel Emergency's spot got cancelled.

"It was a bad trip but it was a great trip," said Roddy.

There was also the story of when they heard their song on the radio for the first time. It was at a Jamaican clothing warehouse in Miami.

"We all made a promise to each other we'd take off our pants the first time we heard our song on the radio no matter what," said Geoff.

"There were all these huge black guys hanging around and we heard our song come on," he continued. "So we all kind of huddled behind the van on the side and took off our pants and gave a little high five all around. It wasn't as glamorous as you might think, but it was a good time."

And then there was the story of Roddy crowd surfing in Kitchener – and falling. Roddy's idea of crowd surfing isn't typical – he actually uses a surfboard. It was an idea, he said, that came randomly one day when he saw his surfboard sitting at his house.

"It's funny because I was playing, and I turned to Jeremy for a second, and I looked back and I just saw the surfboard and said 'Roddy,'" Neil recalled of the Kitchener incident. "And then he popped up under the barrier with blood on his lip."

Their first full-length album as Rebel Emergency, *Love Ain't Free*, was released in September. It was an album that Roddy joked took "a lot of rum and cokes" to make. The band now works with producer Commissioner Gordon, whose past credentials include Lauryn Hill, Carlos Santana, Damian Marley, and Will Smith ("Big Willy style!" Neil piped up).

Commissioner Gordon heard their songs in the studio and immediately wanted in on the action.

"We just fell in love, all of us, and started making amazing music," said Neil.

And Gordon wasn't the only one who wanted to work with Rebel Emergency after hearing their music. Their unique sound has found them a unique fan: Snoop Dogg.

"Snoop wants to do a song with us," said Roddy. "We have a mutual friend, she sent him two of our songs and a video and he was like, 'I want to meet these guys.'"

It's no surprise that their music is reaching a broad spectrum of fans – Rebel Emergency's music is relatable and positive.

"I'd rather be happy than sad," said Roddy on the fact that a lot of their songs on *Love Ain't Free* are optimistic. "It's just our outlook. There are enough bands putting negative messages out there."

"There's some dark material on the album as well as some heart wrenching sad stuff," Geoff pointed out. "We smother it all with happy stuff in between so we don't keep our listeners down too long."

"We are emotional!" he joked.

"We're not all sunshiney!" added Neil, as the others laughed.

"As a whole piece of art, the album's interesting," said Roddy. "There are ups and downs, so I think it's cool if you listen to it front to back, it definitely takes you on a ride."

"The good thing about our music is I feel that you can pop us anywhere on the map and people will like it just because it's really accessible and melodic," he continued.

The hard-working foursome currently don't have a manager or a record label, but that allows them to stay the friendly and personable guys that they are.



photograph HeeBoo Photographics

"HAPPINESS
DOES NOT
HAVE A
THING TO DO
WITH MONEY
OR SPACE"

"We're fans of music too," added Geoff. "If you go to shows in town we're going to be there, hanging out and having fun, just like everybody else."

Next, Rebel Emergency has an all-ages show at the Sound Academy on December 23, 2009. And as their hype continues to mount, the guys are dreaming big.

"We want to be bigger than the Beatles!" Roddy said.

"I think every band wants to be bigger than the Beatles," retorted Neil.

"Yeah, actually we want to be bigger than Jesus!"

Hear more from Rebel Emergency at www.myspace.com/rebelemercencymusic



photograph
T. Bartolini



The Deerhunters

a photo story by TESS ROBY



“IN THE CENTRE OF THE CITY, WE FIND THE WILD”





See more from Tess at www.flickr.com/photos/tessroby



Juggling Lives

Having just finished shooting the ninth season of *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, **Charlotte Arnold** and **Paula Brancati** give some insight into working on the show, the Canadian acting scene, and what might be next for them.

writer ANDREW WEIR
photographer TARA BARTOLINI

“What’s special about Toronto? For me, it’s that we all know each other,” Charlotte says while sitting on a couch at a vintage store in Toronto. “It’s a really supportive community,” Paula adds, “there’s a small group of actors that have all worked on each other’s shows before. You know, you’ll get congratulations all the time from actors you’ve worked with on different shows. It’s really supportive.”

“Where do I see Degrassi taking me?” Charlotte laughs, “...I’d like to rap like my boy Drizzy.”

OTM got an exciting chance to chat with actors Charlotte Arnold and Paula Brancati about their experiences on Degrassi: The Next Generation. Paula and Charlotte, both 20, just finished filming their third season with Degrassi. When we sat down with them, they were just a day away from flying out to New York to finish working on the second Degrassi movie. Paula plays Jane Vaughn, a senior at Degrassi High who has thus far dealt with being bullied on the football team, helping her boyfriend battle cancer, and being caught up in an affair with an exchange student. Now, in season nine, she and Charlotte’s character, Holly J, are becoming unlikely friends. Though when Charlotte joined the show, Holly J was the “mean girl” at school. The past few seasons have shown that her character is not so simply understood.

Both actors share the experience of coming onto a show with a massive existing audience. Charlotte remembers how different it was, starting on a show already with so many eyes on her. “The first time we took the tour of the set” Charlotte said, “I got the feeling there really aren’t that many places in Toronto with this kind of history.”

Charlotte has been working in TV since she was just four, and arrived on the Degrassi set after 59 episodes of playing Sadie on the Disney Channel’s Naturally, Sadie. The transition was from a bubbly

show aimed at younger audiences, to one that is much darker and much more “raw.” In fact, Charlotte’s transition was a complete flip. From the get go, Holly J has been complex, sarcastic, and at times, rather mean. Currently, Charlotte is working on a journalism degree at Ryerson University, a passion that is just as strong as that for acting.

Paula joined Degrassi after a few years of playing the lead on Emmy-award winning show Dark Oracle. “It was a little darker,” she remembers, “but still funny – and it had a supernatural element.”

Almost immediately after starting on Degrassi, Paula emerged into one of the more intense plot lines of the show. “I was coming on as Spinner’s girlfriend almost right away, so it was interesting being thrust into a storyline with a character that had such a huge following... it was a little intimidating. The storyline also involved cancer right off the bat, so it was pretty dark – but that’s something special about this business... it’s about constantly challenging yourself and pushing your boundaries.” This season, Paula juggled her work on Degrassi with a role on the television show Being Erica. She plays Jenny Zalen, a bubbly 30-year old who enjoys drinking. Though alternating between playing a high school senior one day and a 30-year-old the next sounds surreal, Paula says it is a great experience: “Going back and forth between characters is so cool because every day is completely different.”

There’s no doubt that Degrassi is a uniquely Canadian experience, for actors and viewers. Paula is adamant that the show is a national treasure. It has been a part of the Canadian scene since 1987 and also remained an educational tool (I’m sure I’m not alone in remembering having to watch early Degrassi episodes in middle school health class). Specifically, Paula recently did a Public Service Announcement for the Rape, Abuse and In-



Special thanks to **69 Vintage** for the interview and photo space. 1100 Queen St. W. Toronto, Canada. M6J 1H9. 416-516-0669 www.69vintage.com



cest National Network (RAINN). “The number of calls that came in after I did that PSA was amazing. It’s crazy how much Degrassi speaks to kids.”

Though the plot lines can be heavy, both Charlotte and Paula smirk when we ask what their favorite parts about shooting are. Paula assures me that their grins are real: “These are genuine grins because it’s just so much fun; we just... love each other! I had days that were just like, such a good day. And it was just like... this is my job? I love these people! I love the stories I’m telling, I love the crew— and then I drive home and feel all sad and nostalgic at the idea of it potentially ending some day. And I know it’s not like that on other shows. We really appreciate where we work.”

“My standard advice to young actors” Charlotte says, “is to go on to actratoronto.com. It gives you an FAQ section – things that you need to know to get started and there are a lot of people that get fooled when they’re coming in”

“YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT BUSINESS WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE YOURSELF DOING ANYTHING ELSE”

“Everyone’s path is unique,” Paula wisely advises, “you know you’re in the right business when you can’t see yourself doing anything else. You need that eye of the tiger to persevere – that fire really comes out in the audition, and if you have it, you just need to get working as hard as you can.”

Rapid Fire

In an effort to find out more about each other, the girls sat down to uncover a few random facts for *OTM* readers.

Charlotte: On a Saturday in Toronto, you’ll find me...

Paula: Jamming to music with my brother Anthony.

Paula: I’ve always been obsessed with...

Charlotte: The author Roald Dahl.

Charlotte: I used to want to be...

Paula: A detective. But then I found out you needed to go through police officer-ing first and then I said no way.

Paula: One thing most people don’t know about me...

Charlotte: I’ve done a lot of travelling.

Charlotte: Being on TV is...

Paula: Surreal.

Paula: If I were a cartoon, I would be...

Charlotte: *The Little Mermaid*.

Charlotte: If there was a fire, the first thing I’d grab would be...

Paula: My necklace, which has a ring on it that my grandfather gave me before he passed away.

Paula: I’m happiest when...

Charlotte: I’m with my siblings watching *Survivor* and *Lost* every Thursday night.

Charlotte: My inner geek is really into...

Paula: *Pokémon* cards, *Power Rangers*, choral music, and *Glee*.

Paula: I will know I have made it when ...

Charlotte: I’ve met Leonard Cohen. If I shake that man’s hand...

Charlotte: I will know I have made it when ...

Paula: I see my face on a billboard.

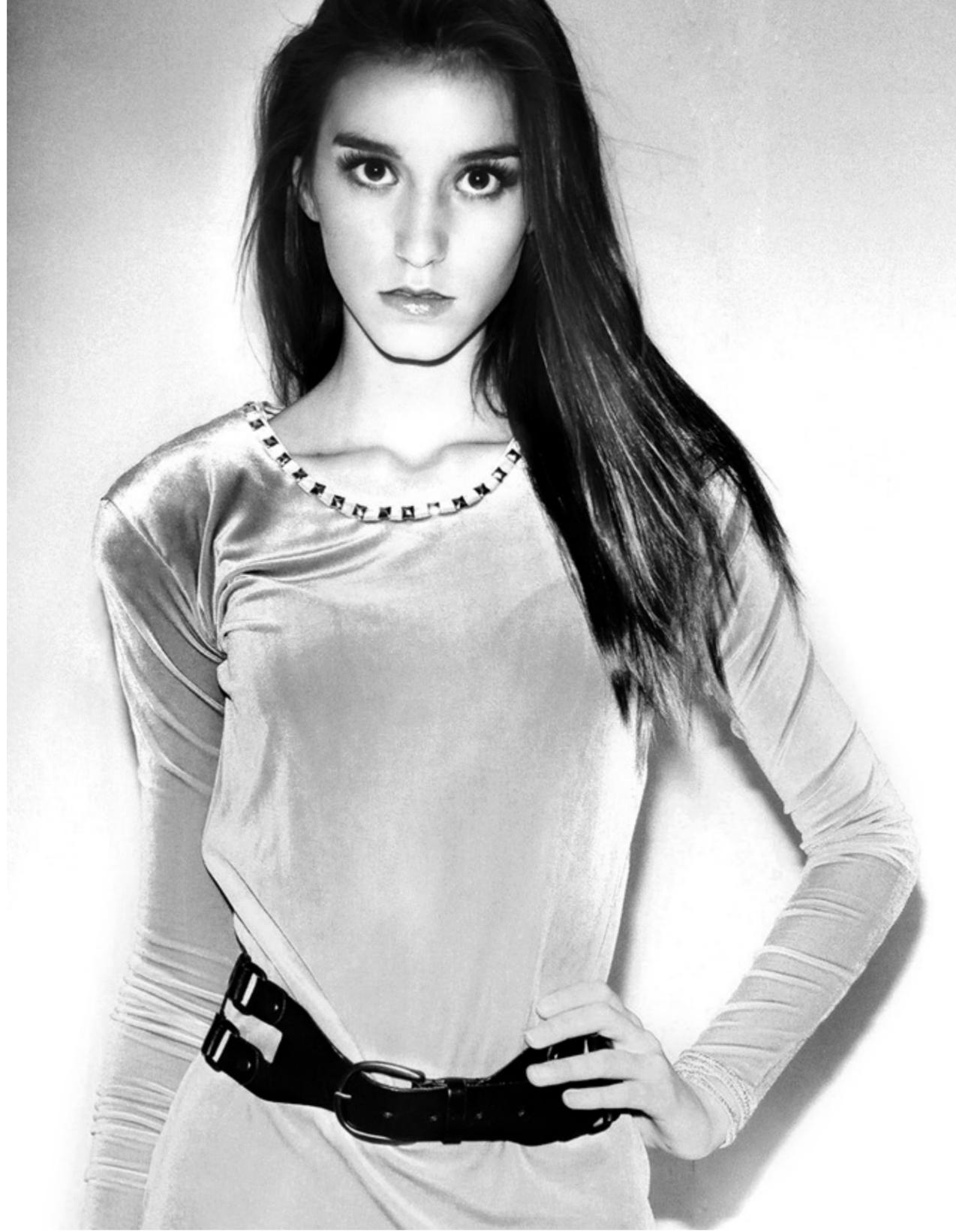
Why Don't You Talk To Me?

photographer ALEXANDRA WAESPI
art director TARA BARTOLINI
stylist AIMEE LEGAULT
style assistant NATALIE KAINE
make-up JULIA STEINER
models LAUREN WOOD (ford)
LAURA V (ford) JULIET C (elite)



romper, Courtney de Vries. fur coat, Kimchi Blue. boots, Aldo.

left: dress, Courtney de Vries. belt, vintage. nylons, Allude, boots, Forever 21.
right: romper & jacket, Sui Generis. bracelets, stylist's own. shoes, Aldo.





on Lauren, sequin top & ring, vintage; on Laura, dress, Sui Generis, www.suigenerisclothing.net; on Juliet, top, Courtney de Vries.





*on Laura, dress, Sui Generis; on
Juliet, top & dress, Courtney de
Vries. bracelet, Jimmy Choo
for H&M.*



on Juliet, mesh shirt, American Apparel. skirt & necklace, Forever 21. on Lauren, lace dress, Talula @ Aritzia. skirt, Wilfred @ Aritzia.



dress, Wilfred @ Aritzia. bracelet, necklace & tights, stylist's own. shoes, model's own.

A LOVE LETTER FROM...

writer ANDREW WEIR
illustration KELLY HUTCHESON

Dear Andrew,

Hmm... where to begin? First of all, I think I'm impressed. What made you think you could write a letter to a city and have it respond? Sure, you could have written the mayor, your representative, a party leader, or even the city council in general, and would have had a decent chance at hearing back; yet you chose to address it to an abstract collection of streets, buildings, creeks, people, pigeons, and squirrels, somehow figuring you'd get a letter back. Not only that, but you wrote that abstract collection to tell it that you'd been cheating on it.

Well... it worked out, so well done.

But I suppose it isn't that surprising, after all, corporations have the same rights as people, so why should cities not have a bit of prose?

To be clear, I am a little bit freaked out – but, nevertheless excited about this opportunity to express myself.

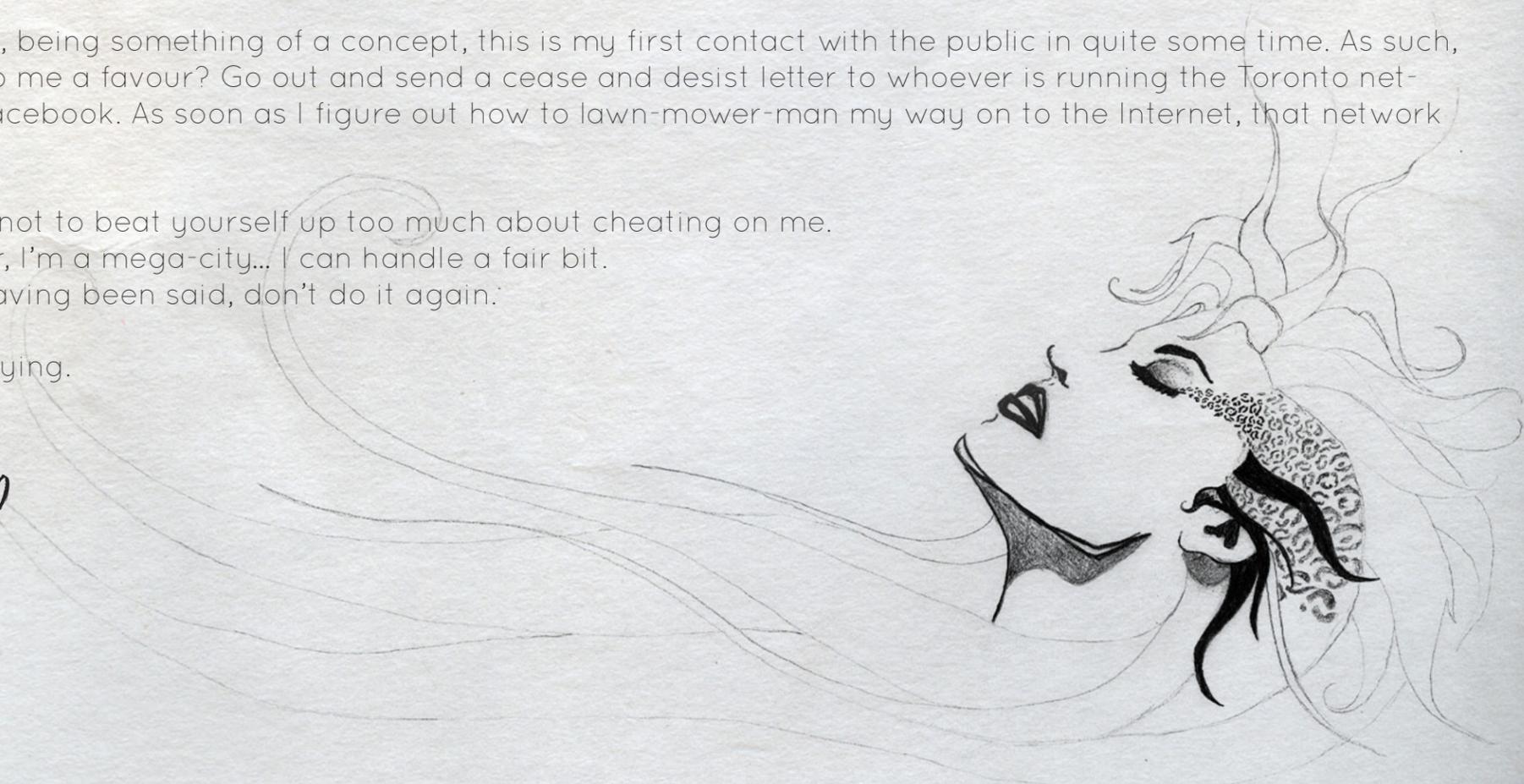
But first, I feel I need to ask you something. With the paws of so many woodland creatures running down my streets, and the first steps of so many babies pattering about... why did you feel I would miss your feet's sweet caress? I mean don't get me wrong, you sound like an awesome fellow – but your feet are no paws.

Admittedly, being something of a concept, this is my first contact with the public in quite some time. As such, can you do me a favour? Go out and send a cease and desist letter to whoever is running the Toronto network on Facebook. As soon as I figure out how to lawn-mower-man my way on to the Internet, that network is mine.

Really, try not to beat yourself up too much about cheating on me. Remember, I'm a mega-city... I can handle a fair bit. But that having been said, don't do it again.

I'm not playing.

Sincerely,
TORONTO



See more from Kelly at k-hutcheson.deviantart.com/



Pencil Cases from Popsicle Sticks

Illustrator **Oliver Banyard** sheds light on
the world of New Media.

writer SARA HAROWITZ

In a culture obsessed with the abstract and the post-modern, Oliver Banyard is taking it back to basics.

While the 22-year-old Ryerson New Media student creates contemporary art daily, he recognizes the importance of bringing art back to its fundamentals.

"I think it's important to have some art that is primarily for the sake of beauty," said the Ontario native: "I want to create art that makes people think or that they can just enjoy."

An avid and talented illustrator, Banyard uses New Media, which he defines as "art through technology with emphasis on interaction and participation," to remind people of the basic human qualities that define us.

"The further along we get with cell phones, and internet, and digital everything, it's important that we participate with art works to draw us back to some very important child-like qualities that come with being human," he explained. "We need to be curious, we need to interact, and we need to create. It's kind of hard to do that when our eyes are glued to the screens of our Blackberry's, screening calls with caller-ID so we don't have to talk to anyone we don't want to."

"We've created a very controlled environment for ourselves as humans because it makes us feel safe," Banyard continued. "New Media seeks to shake up that false sense of security but at the same time say, 'Look, it's okay to rub shoulders, it's okay to make eye contact.'"

Even outside of his work, Banyard loves the simple things in life; he's quick to admit that he adores pizza, snow, exploring, playing guitar, skating, learning, and coffee.

Still, one of the main reasons Banyard loves New Media is because it lets him go beyond what is basic and what is standard.

"I love the scope it gives to me as an artist," he said. "It doesn't really require me to adhere to any particular kind of convention."

And the way he goes about his illustrations is definitely unconventional. Banyard prefers drawing ideas as opposed to subjects, and often isn't even sure what he's drawing until halfway through his work.

"A lot of the time I'm drawing straight out of a feeling rather than having a clear image of what I want to draw," he said. "About halfway through I usually get a pretty clear idea for where I'm going with it and I take it from there."

And he can get inspiration from just about anything.

"I get inspiration from everything around me: classrooms, friends, nightclubs, movie sets," Banyard said. "A lot of the time, I'll draw something that directly links with something I'm feeling. I did a series of wall-sized illustrations last year that I just kind of started without knowing what I was doing. I finished the second one and took a step back and I realized I'd just represented exactly what I was feeling and I hadn't even meant to. It freaked me out a bit."

Along with illustrations, Banyard also loves to write and direct short films. He currently has one, *The Thief*, featured on his profile on the Ryerson New Media website. *The Thief* was written as a series of three videos; he has only filmed one, but plans on finishing the other two in the near future. It is also currently featured on OTM's website.

"Conceptually, the video is all based around a passage in the Bible that talks about death coming like a thief in the night," he explained. "I wrote the story with that in mind and thinking about the various dimensions one would have to cross through in dying. I wondered if a dying person would even realize what was happening."

Banyard has been interested in film from a young age, often describing his visions to his mom.

"I'd say stuff like 'Okay, imagine if this was a movie. There'd be a camera up there and it would pan





over there,” he said. “I was only thinking in pictures and key phrases.”

Ever since that young age, Banyard has been in love with his art. However, he said his biggest eye-opening experiences have been the nights he has lost track of time and become engulfed in his work.

“Every time I start working on a project at 9 p.m. at night and then I glance at the clock and it’s suddenly 4 a.m., those are eye openers for me,” he said. “I realize that this is something I’m willing to stay up all night for; I don’t even notice the time passing. That’s the kind of stuff I want to do for the rest of my life.”

Banyard hopes to one day direct films and open his own illustration and design company; and with a passion like his, success is on the horizon.

“For me, success is creating art that speaks to people and changes their perspective, and having the resources to continue to create art for a living,” he said. “When you create an artwork or a film or an illustration that affects someone the way you planned, that’s success.”

So what is his main goal in this expanding world of New Media?

“I want to do what I love my whole life and do it excellently,” he said.

Still, the profession has a ways to go. While New Media continues to grow, there are still those who do not quite understand it.

“Sometimes folks get the impression that what I’m doing with a BFA [Bachelor of Fine Arts] is sitting around making pencil cases out of popsicle sticks,” he said. “But for the most part, people are pretty supportive, even if they don’t really understand.”

See more from Oliver at
www.imagearts.ryerson.ca/obanyard/



A MODEL MALE

With lively blonde hair tousled to his shoulders and captivating features, **John Cherkas** of NAM Personal Management “stomps” his way through the industry, Toronto, and beyond.

writer NATALIE KAINE
photographer TARA BARTOLINI



A picture of John can be deceiving. Photos of him capture a searing blue gaze and stern expression with striking intensity. As I talk to him now, however, his geniality and child-like enthusiasm convey the opposite feeling. While the makeup artist plucks hairs from his eyebrows, he continues to speak through a thoughtful smile about his hopes to “work in the forest chasing bears.”

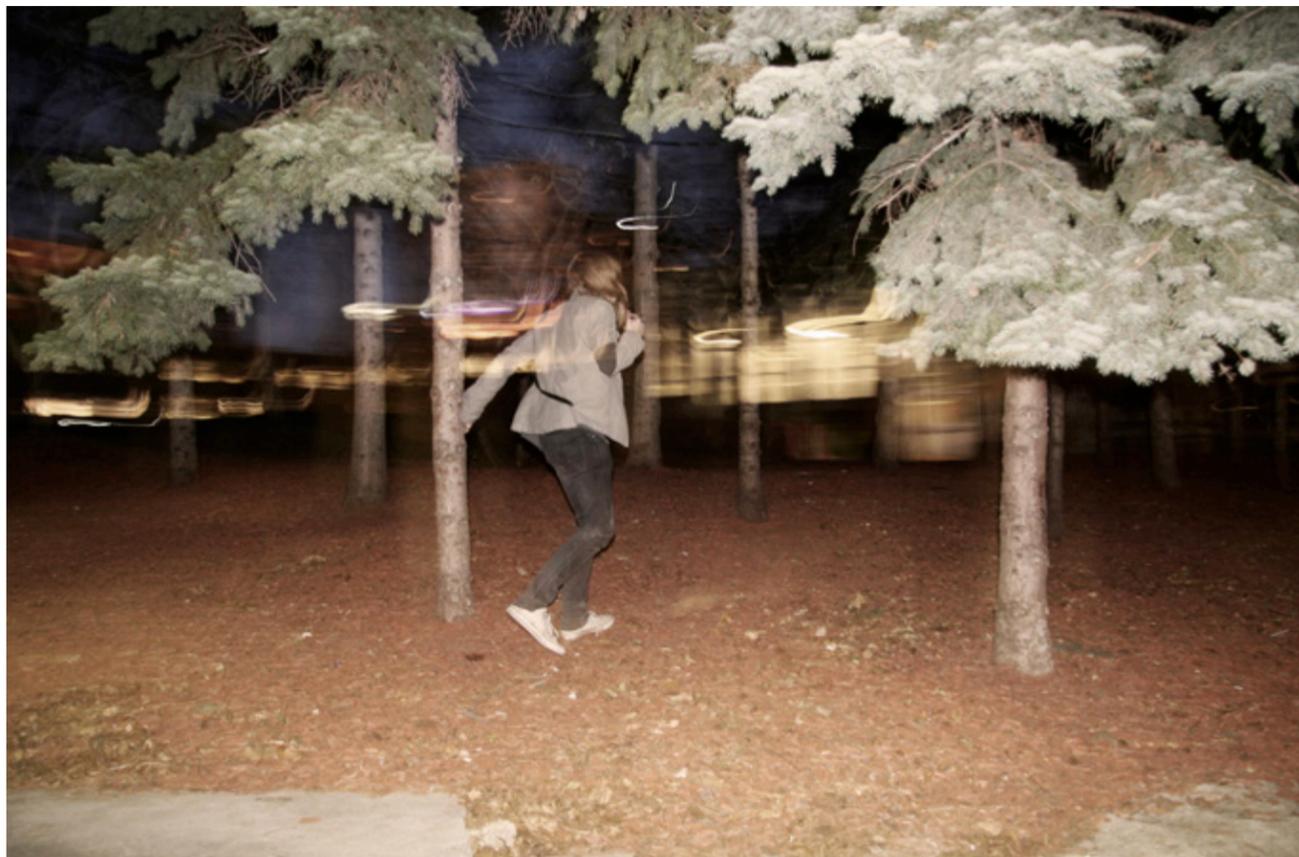
The eighteen year old was first spotted by a fellow NAM Model in an American Apparel store, just over a year ago. He has since walked for Bustle Clothing, Greta Constantine as well as Costume National in Milan. When I ask about his preference for fashion shows or print work he shares that runway is “a thrill” and that he “likes to feel a part of something” rather than simply playing a live mannequin in a studio. But generally he feels that has an “innate ability for modeling” and it’s something he wants to fully pursue internationally.

Nicknamed “Zoolander” during his year at the University of Guelph, John certainly possesses much more intellect than his namesake. He studied Wildlife Biology at Guelph but then decided to return to Toronto to pursue modeling opportunities and attend the University of Toronto’s Zoology program. With slow and deliberate words he explains his affinity for animals and nature, “I just adore animals, but I’m allergic to cats and dogs. I sort of want to become more communal with the wilderness of Canada. I want to save the animals, I guess,” he says with a laugh.

I ask him about ten years in the future and he replies that he has “no grand plan,” and is thinking of moving somewhere “not too far, maybe Iceland.” He tells me he may not even stick with zoology. The vagueness of his answer highlights his now obvious, optimistic, go-with-the-flow outlook, a feeling that is also manifested by his personal style.

“Sporadic, random... and some would say hipster” is how he describes it. He doesn’t think about what others are wearing and doesn’t take inspiration from anything specific, he simply “takes what he likes and does what he wants with it.” A twelve year old hat he wears to the shoot gains the attention of both editors who insist that he wears it in some photos.

When I ask about his long hair he sighs and says, “A long story comes with the long hair.” Essentially his interest in death metal and his older brother’s influence caused him to decide that he would never get it cut again, “aside from occasional trims... and it gets knotted” he says, “sorry- that’s sounds so boring.” Tangled or not, it seems to me that the potential of this quirky young man extends much further than his hair.



clothing provided by jacflash
1036 queen st. w. toronto, canada. m6j 1h7.
416-516-8766 www.jacflash.net

TRANSFORMING TORONTO'S ART SCENE



Luke Correia-Damude talks about his experience setting up one of Toronto's coolest not-for-profit art galleries, giving young artists and affordable place to show and develop their work.

writer ANDREW WEIR
photographer TARA BARTOLINI

The Whippersnapper Gallery on College Street has become one of the most influential hubs for young artists and culture fiends in downtown Toronto. *OTM* got a chance to talk with one of the not-for-profit collective's founders, Luke Correia-Damude. He enlightened us on the gallery's roots, elaborated on some eye-opening exhibits and hinted at some exciting changes in the near future.

How did you guys get started?

My friend Patrick Struys, and I, were in university at

the time. We found that a lot of artist friends were getting discouraged with their work because it was just really hard to exhibit. There were no spaces, and if artists approached galleries, the galleries needed them to have a body of exhibitions to show. They weren't getting taken seriously.

At first, we thought it would be cool to do just a one-off group show. We approached a property manager that had a vacant property on Front Street that had been empty for five years. We proposed that we would fix it up and do an art show in exchange for not paying rent. We didn't think they'd go for it, but they said, "sure, go for it!"

It was huge... about a 7,000 square foot space. For the first show, it took us months and a bunch of fundraisers to set the place up. We had 40 artists, and over 700 people showed up. We realized there was a definite need for this kind of space, so we continued. In the first 8 or 9-month period, we had enough events that we were able to lease this new spot. It was a bit of an experiment and we never thought it would last, but now we're five years in. One year at the old place, and four years here.

Any eye opening moments since you opened?

I'm always shocked when people recognize me as "the guy from Whippersnapper." I'm always like "wow... you know that place?" I guess one real eye-opening moment would be when we were asked to host the Governor General for an event. That was kind of shocking—we had the secret service here and everything.

Also, just the fact that we didn't go bankrupt after the first few months.

Do you feel like you've inspired other students?

I hope so! We started when we were in second-year University. None of it could ever have been possible without the thousands of hours of volunteer time. I guess I realized when things got started that if you want to do something, most of the time you really can. It just takes a lot of patience and dedication. It's really stressful, and there's a lot of bullshit involved; a lot of bullshit. We have to sweep the floors, paint the walls at least twice a month, patch, fix heating problems and put out garbage that you hate. It's a lesson though. I learned more here than during university. Well... different principles at least.

Favorite exhibition?

One of my favorites is Joshua Barndt, a painter

and installation artist that did [Scotiabank's] Nuit Blanche a few years ago, who has helped us out a lot in our current space. He completely transformed the space with organic grass, a sculpture of a dead elephant, wall to wall projections and a giant raft that looked like it was crashing out of the wall; really cool transformation.

Coollest things to come out of "Sleep is for Dead People"?

We've done four of these events. It's as much an exercise about staying awake and being around people as it is about art. My friend Adrian painted the whole back wall with things he saw throughout the night; one girl— and this was really crazy— drew a portrait every ten minutes for the entire 24 hours. She filled an entire wall... it really worked. Oh also, there was a frightened lost possum outside the door one year. That was cool too.

Overtly political exhibits?

Oh, a lot. One of the most successful was an exhibit by a printing press company called Punch Clock. All of the proceeds for the show went towards legal services for Shaun Brant— a Native activist who had been imprisoned unfairly.

If Whippersnapper was a Nicholas Cage role, what would it be?

I'd have to say *Leaving Las Vegas*. It keeps chugging and chugging and hasn't died yet. You know they made an entire movie about a guy drinking himself to death... We haven't stopped drinking yet.

Where you do guys see Whippersnapper going? Plans for the future?

We have a lot of plans... but I can't divulge *too* much into them. There are definite plans for growth. We're in a transition phase for sure... it might mean a different space; maybe different spaces? We've definitely filled a void in the art world, but we're at a point now after five years that we're trying to figure out what we are doing to move forward.

Whippersnapper Gallery is located at 587A College Street in Toronto. Their current exhibition series is entitled *Emergence, Series One* is on until December 22, 2009 and *Series Two* will be displayed from January 7 to 22, 2010. Be sure to check out their website www.whippersnapper.ca for details.





Little Miss Sunshine

Guitar in hand, smile on face and music in heart.
 writer ROOP GILL photographer TARA BARTOLINI

Self-dyed and self-cut beach blonde hair; self sewn shirt; self taught artist; self made girl. Introducing seventeen year old **Anne-Lise Dugas**, an upcoming musician from Thornhill; she is ready to take over with her music, writing and beyond-her-years thinking.

Forced into piano lessons by her grandmother as a kid, Dugas opened her mind to music when she started picking up, and falling in love with, instruments. She taught herself the guitar, learned classical music, started listening to rock and old-school punk; then, she got into the 70s scene and realized there was a whole world of music out there.

Some of the musical influences that have inspired her include Radio-

head, My Brightest Diamond and Porcupine Head. Learning from the Indie scene, Some of the musical influences that have inspired her include Radiohead, My Brightest Diamond and Porcupine Head. Learning from the Indie scene, Dugas is always looking for something experimental and original.

She started writing her own music and last February held her first show at the Opera House. She experienced her first taste of a potential career when she had to sell tickets at her high school, get people to come, work out the finances and then finally get up on stage to perform. It gave her a sense of what she wanted to do for the rest of her life and she discovered it was going to be tough.

But that hasn't stopped her. She is doing another big show around Valentine's Day 2010 and meanwhile, has regular gigs at Centro Lounge at Bloor and Bathurst and Chimera Bar and Lounge at Warden and Steeles.

Dugas is also a part of a band with a bassist and a drummer who are looking to record their first album soon.

She sat down with the OTM team over coffee, rests her guitar case next to her chair and maintains a charming smile while she answers a few questions.

Where do you draw inspiration from for your music?

Pretty much just life experiences and interesting thoughts I come up with.

We are always trying to answer the same question: what is life? There are so many songs about that and people are always reaching for a new answer. In response to those questions, I write my music.

And does Toronto influence you in any way?

Toronto has a lot of people and therefore a lot of inspiration. All the artsy people can be found here. People that are looking for the grunge and new stuff can be found here, and that's where all my ideas come from. It is a just a melange of so many different energies.

What other places have a vibe that parallels your music?

London! I have never been but I feel like I should go there, I don't know why. Also Australia has produced some really good reggae. There was a phase when I started writing happy acoustic music and I met these people from Australia, they listened to my song and in the Aussie accent said, "I want to sit on a beach next to a fire and hear you-play this." I thought to myself, this is exactly what I wrote this for!

If you could join a pre-existing band, which one would it be?

I'd like to go back time to join the Clash and add some female vocals.

Piano or guitar?

Ahh... piano! It was my first love.

"WE ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO ANSWER THE SAME QUESTION: WHAT IS LIFE?"

Which one of your own songs describes you the best?

Strong Shoulder because it's simple and was fun to write. It's where I found my writing style.

If you could bring back and artist from the dead, who would it be?

Patty Smith, because she needs another chance. She wrote really good poetry. Obviously the Beatles - well they are still here. And Bob Dylan. I just want to have coffee with him because after the film *I'm Not There*, it amazes me that one person can be so many different people.

Hear more from Anne-Lise at www.myspace.com/annelisedugas

BLOGGER CHIC

writer DYLAN FRANKS
photographer CHRIS PANGAN
make-up VINCENT TANG



Elizabeth Clark is the voice behind *Chic Heroin*. Her fashion blog chronicles her everyday style, inspirations and itineraries: fashion shows and impromptu photo shoots by the side of the road. Her blogging has begun to pay off as her audience continues to grow. I sat her down for some Q+A.

Describe your personal style.

Pretty with an edge. I like to make things a bit ugly. I'm really influenced by the 90s. I really like the style of Kate Lanphear (the style director for Elle magazine)

Why blog?

It's totally personal. I started it for myself, but I feel like I've become a part of a blogging community, and that's cool.



Has that community been accepting of what you're doing?

Yes. Thankfully I've never had negative posts on my blog or anything.

How much did the 'heroin chic' movement of the 90s influence the name of your blog?

When I started my blog I was writing a thesis about the movement which was fronted by Kate Moss and James King. I'm really only inspired by the fashions that were developed during this time, especially the lingerie and menswear inspired looks. My blog reflects that.

Any style icons?

Jen Brill. She's a fashion journalist who really knows how to dress.

How often do you update the blog?

I try at least biweekly if not every week. I also reply to the comments left on the blog.

Where do you see your blog going in the future?

I'm not sure. I'm going to keep it up; I think blogs are really becoming influential now and I'd like to stick in the game and see where that goes. There are a lot of opportunities that come out of blogging, I think.

Now for the good stuff. Finish these sentences okay?

Sure.

I've always been obsessed with...

Shoes.

If I had to live in the same article of clothing forever it would be...

This old jays playoff t-shirt I stole from an ex-boyfriend like five years ago and am never giving back.

See Elizabeth's blog at www.chicheroin.blogspot.com















Young & Making Their Mark

Two sisters are about to take
the fashion world by storm.

writer SARA HAROWITZ

photographers CHRIS PANGAN &

HAYLEY BLACKMORE

models ASHA (ford) & KASIA (elmer olsen)



Chloé and Parris Gordon practically grew up in Holt Renfrew. From the time they were babies in a stroller, their mother was taking them on outings to the high-end department store.

“When we cried she’d feed us raisins,” said the nineteen year old Parris with a laugh. “We grew up in fashion, there was no escaping.”

When they were little, Chloé and Parris’ mother would make their clothes. And their house was stuffed to the brim with fashion magazines.

“Our mom has pretty much kept every single Vogue magazine she’s had since she was sixteen,” said Chloé, who just turned twenty two last month. “So our house is littered. There’s no room for any other books because there’s just so much fashion.”

Their mother, they said, is their biggest inspiration.

“Our house in Toronto – she’s painted every crevice,” said Parris, a smile creeping into her voice. “She really has just kind of taken over our house with her creativity.”

With such a creative upbringing it’s no surprise that the two young sisters are breaking into the fashion world themselves. With one barely legal in Canada and the other barely legal in the States, Chloé and Parris have accomplished an incredible amount. For starters, they have achieved every fashionista’s dream – their own fashion and jewellery line, called *Chloé Comme Parris*.

Though everyone is creating a fashion line these days, (Whitney Port, anyone?), the Toronto-born Gordon sisters are the real deal. Aside from being successful right off the bat and already offering their product in boutiques in both Canada and



the USA, the girls are just plain talented; and these days, that says a lot.

“When we put up the website, people were like, ‘Wow, I never even knew you were capable of this, this is so crazy!’” Chloé said. “Throughout high school I was very lost. I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I’ve always been creative but I didn’t know how to channel it. So proving a lot of people wrong who felt maybe I wasn’t going anywhere ... it’s just a great feeling.”

While the girls were born and raised in Toronto, they both currently live in Halifax, where they attend the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Their majors directly reflect the work they do for Chloé Comme Parris: Chloé is in her fourth year, majoring in textiles and doing a minor in fashion, taking care of all the designing, cutting, sewing, and fine-tuning of the clothing in their line. Parris is in her second year, majoring in jewellery and metalsmithing, leaving her in charge of creating all of the jewellery for their collection, designing the pieces and then creating them out of metal.

While it has been in the works for over a year and a half, Chloé Comme Parris didn’t officially launch until this past summer.

Chloé, who had sold her home-made feather earrings two years prior to the launch of Chloé Comme Parris, was able to fund a lot of their start-up costs with the income from her earrings; their sales earned her nearly \$6,000. “We pretty much cover all of the costs through our sales and it’s a great feeling to be so independent this early.”

The Gordon sisters don’t design together, preferring to work separately on their projects and then come together to share and explore their products. Somehow, they always fit together like puzzle pieces.

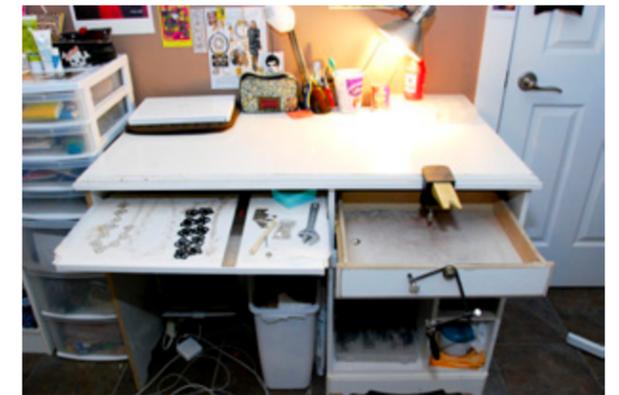
“Half the time I’m like, ‘Parris, try this on,’” said Chloé. “We both push each other. I also feel like Parris’ opinion means a lot to me because I think she has a great perspective on fashion and style, and I think the same thing goes for me with Parris as well.”

“We’ll just show each other when we’re finished and be like, ‘Oh my gosh, that necklace goes with your dress!’” added Parris. “It ends up working out, which is nice.”



Chloé and Parris say they owe their unspoken connection to their family ties. Best friends as well as sisters, they share a mental understanding of each other that is not common in siblings.

“We’ve always been really close,” Chloé said. “We’ve always both kind of looked up to each other. Even though Parris is younger than me, there are things about her that I really look up to, and I think vice versa.”



And while they finish each other’s sentences as if they were twins, the Gordon sisters are each unique in many ways, starting off with their personal fashion styles.

“I’m very laid back, bohemian,” said Chloé, thoughtful. “I always like wearing something natural, something second-hand, and something very high fashion. I like mixing a bit of everything.”

“I go for comfortable and chic at the same time, casual and simple,” Parris said. “But I always like the kind of rock star elements in clothing, like studs, or leather, or fur, and stuff like that. But day-to-day I like being casual.”

Both speak with a wisdom and knowledge of fashion beyond their years. Always appearing well put together but always pushing the envelope, Chloé and Parris dress like they design – with flair, sensitivity, maturity, and passion.

“I really would like to create clothing that speaks to high fashion,” Chloé said, “things that are easily paired with other pieces in your existing wardrobe, and just finding new ways to tweak and alter patterns.”

“With jewellery I just want to make the things that you feel are a luxury to have, that you’ll have forever,” Parris said. “I think jewellery is really special because it doesn’t



matter what size you are and it doesn't matter what you're going through. You can always buy it and feel special."

Juggling school and Chloé Comme Parris is tough because Chloé and Parris do all of the work for their products (they do not yet have a manufacturer). They have little time to relax but they wouldn't have it any other way: "I'm the type of person that I can't get bored," said Chloé. "It doesn't work for me." Still, somehow they manage to make everything work with the help of an incredible support system. When they were first getting their line and website off the ground, their parents lent them all the money they needed, which they have been able to pay back with their early success.

"Our mother's absolutely blown away," she added. "It's her dream come true. She cries a lot when she sees our stuff." Still, Chloé and Parris can find inspiration in just about anything. And a lot of the time, they use that to their advantage, creating beauti-

ful pieces of clothing and jewellery based on simple objects.

"I just think that there is so much beauty in natural things," said Chloé with wonder.

"A perfect example: my first three pieces of jewellery were based off simple machines," said Parris. "I made a brooch that was stylized off a screw, and I found myself looking at the screws in my jewellery desk to know how to form it... there's just things that are lying there that no one notices that you can make beautiful, and wearable, and recognized, and almost iconic."

And with inspiration coming at them from every which way, the Gordon sisters are finding themselves with more ideas than they know what to do with.

"I feel like the problem with me is in most cases I have too many ideas, and I'm like, 'How am I going to get this all done?'" said Chloé. "It's a great feeling having so many ideas but it's just annoying that I don't have any manufacturers yet and I have to produce

it all on my own."

However, when Chloé moves back to Toronto in April upon graduation, she has lined up meetings with various manufacturers. Parris will move back after she graduates.

While the sisters will be separated for a while, they hope to reunite soon in Toronto for LG Fashion Week. They are going to apply to be a part of next year's event, in which case Parris would fly back for the show.

The girls' goals don't stop there. One day they hope to be working in New York or Paris, selling their line at high-end stores like Holt Renfrew and Bergdorf Goodman.

Still, their early success has not got the better of them. The two sisters are humble, soft-spoken, and sincere. And their accomplishments haven't even fully hit them yet.

"[October's Atlantic Fashion Week in Halifax] was the first time we'd introduced fine jewellery on the runway," said Parris. "Sitting in the front row and really feeling a sense of pride for what we had put down. Hearing someone introduce us, and afterwards having people write about us was really eye-opening. We realized that we're doing something that people are talking about."

The novelty of selling their products to complete strangers has not yet worn off.

"It's been really fun and exciting going to shops, seeing what people think and what people want to buy," added Chloé. "And just the overwhelming e-mails too, not even for sale purposes, but just like, 'I had to e-mail you to tell you how much I love your work,' sort of thing. It just feels great."

And all their success just pushes Chloé and Parris to work harder and to aim higher.

One day Chloé hopes to have a spread in Vogue Magazine, and Parris is determined to get a spot in New York's Mercedes Benz Fashion Week. Still, they know that half the fun is the journey, and they're just happy to be on it.

"We're just going to keep working hard," said Chloé. "I think in the future something like that would be possible, and we're both prepared to work as hard as we can to get there. But we're just excited for what's to come."

"IN MOST CASES I HAVE TOO MANY IDEAS"

See more from Chloé & Parris at www.chloecommepparris.ca



waiting for the morning to come

a photo story by TARA BARTOLINI & AIMEE LEGAULT









top drawer

The intimates of making intimates.

photographer CHRIS PANGAN
art director TARA BARTOLINI
stylist AIMEE LEGAULT
make-up VINCENT TANG
writer DYLAN FRANKS
model LEIGH M (elite)

Natasha Gatto, fashion student at George Brown College, is making a name for herself in Toronto's fashion scene. She is the creator of the *Top Drawer Intimate* wear line, which is focused on giving all women exciting intimates for their personal wardrobe. With a quirky name and original, flirty designs, Gatto is changing the world of intimates.

I've seen your sweaters and your lingerie. Those are at opposite ends of the apparel spectrum, what came first?

I actually did the lingerie first. I had taken a bra making class in Hamilton and really ended up liking it so I went with that.

Bra making sounds daunting, you can't really fake the fit with lingerie can you? How did you get into that world first?

I had made some swimsuits for friends for a high school trip to Cuba, My mom noticed and asked me if I wanted to take this course in Hamilton with a woman named Bev Johnson. So I said yes and it's just gone from there.

So where have you been able to show off your work so far?

I've been at the Toronto Clothing Show and right now I'm getting ready for the Christmas Portobello Market.

That's great exposure for someone still studying. Where do you see your lingerie work going from here?

As of now, I am going to continue creating my lingerie and try to get my name out there as much as possible. I'll be finished school soon and I am looking forward to promoting my brand. Eventually, I would love to open my own store to sell my line of intimate wear. There's just something about working for myself that intrigues me which is rooted in growing up immersed in a family business. It helped me learn the ropes of what it takes to run your own store. For now,



I'm trying to attend as many clothing shows in the city as I can, where I can sell my stuff and network to get to know other designers and Toronto's fashion indulged people.

That makes sense. What does the name, Top Drawer Intimate, mean to you personally?

Well I think a top drawer is where a girl keeps her most important things, her most intimate things like her lingerie, jewelry, cigarettes... you know?

See more from Natasha at www.top-drawer-intimate.com

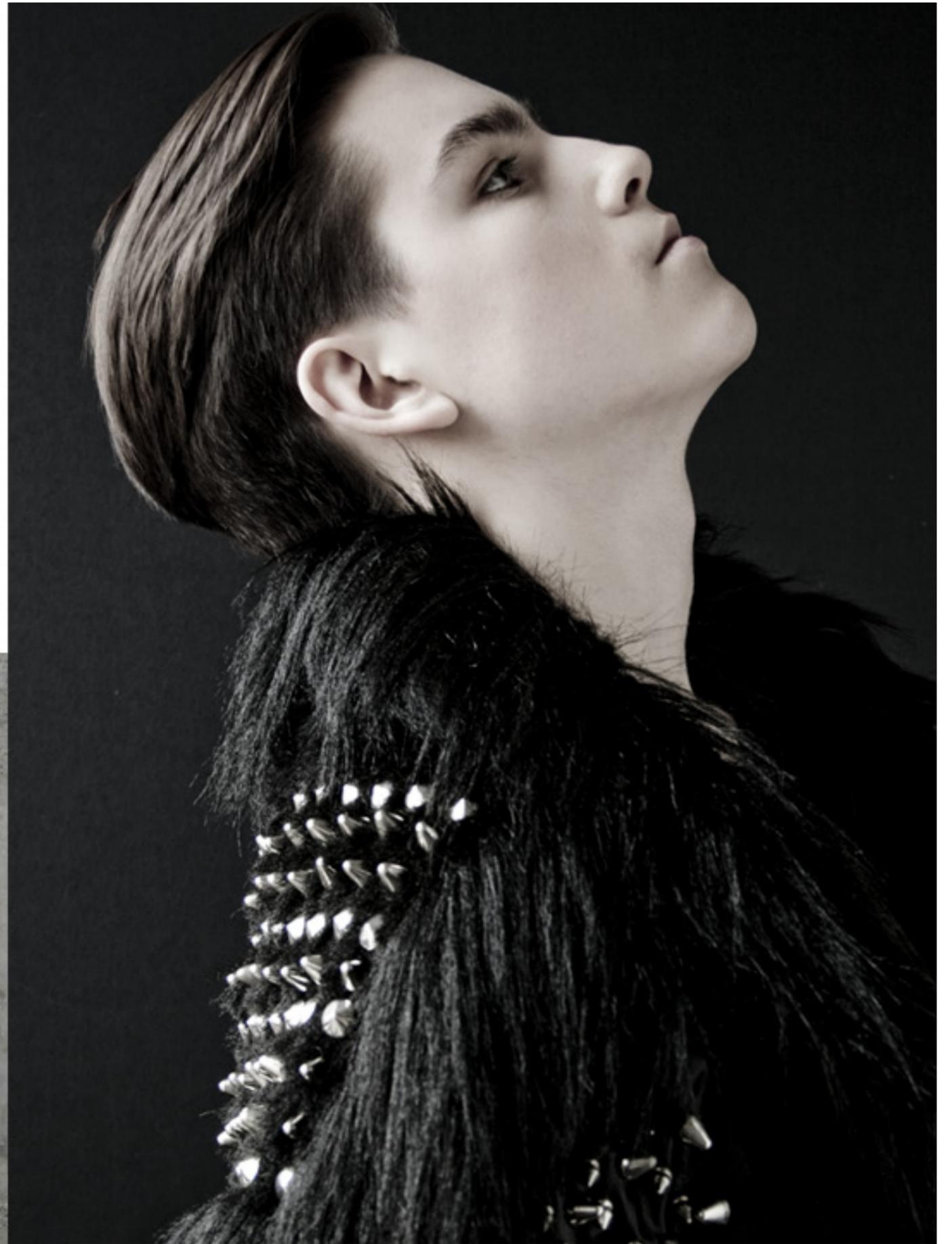


DOWNSTREAM

photographer CHRIS PANGAN
stylist MATTHEW CHIU
make-up ERAM SHARIF
models EMILY JANE (ford)
FRASER WRIGHT (nam)



MOVEMENT







all clothing, stylist's own.



Self Reflections

An indie artist gets personal.



In a pass along style interview, *OTM's* first music feature band *Donlands and Mortimer* members Steven Foster, Edwin Sheard and Johnny Spence sat down with THOMAS front-man **Thom Gill** to talk everything, well, Thom.

writer AMANDA CUDA
photographer TARA BARTOLINI

Japa Dogs, rat-drifting and beautiful people. These are just some of the things that Thom Gill loves, as witnessed through his humorous perspective, which is just as creative as his writing style. And the music that he makes with his band THOMAS is just as diverse and compelling as his list of interests. As the band's rich music swells out of your speakers, there's no denying that Gill will have to keep his Japa Dog stand dreams on hold for a little while longer.

Why did you call the album *Self Help*?

Well, it's my first record. The band is named after me. And the album artwork is all pictures of me. And a lot of the songs are just about me dealing with me in conjunction with others, but mainly just me.

So *Self Help* was a personal motivational thing?

If you listen to that song in particular it's kind of like, I don't think the album is as well tied together as the next one will be. I mean, that's always what you do when you make your first record is you realize how not to do the next one. So I think for my next one it won't be a concept record, but it'll at least have a much more obvious thematic string running through it where this one is a little bit more hard to find, I think.

In keeping with the theme of eye opening experiences, what's typically the first thing you see when you wake up in the morning?

The first thing I see when I wake up in the morning . . . is my phone, probably. I usually just hang out on my phone in bed for a while. I don't have the internet at my house so I use my mobile browser. And uh . . . what else do I see? I see that my CD player that I had playing the night before is still on. And I think "Oh yeah. What did I fall asleep to?" I sleep in the basement so it's very dark. And cool.

We're really interested in the production of your music because you've used a mix of different styles. You've used some stuff that's really polished and other stuff that's really rough and almost lo-fi. So, what aspects of those production styles do you like and why? How do you use them to express your music?

Sort of going back to what I was saying about recording your first record. It's like, I've always liked studios and felt comfortable in them, but I've never really known quite how to use them to their full potential. Like, I always feel like I have a producer kind of mind set, but

never with my own music, really. Because I like what is born out of home recording, like doing demos. And that's sort of how I worked on the record. It was just like, recording at home through my Firebox or whatever.

If you weren't a musician, what do you think you'd be doing with your life?

Probably owning a Japa Dog stand.

A what?!

A Japa Dog stand. We don't have them here! Japa Dogs are a normal hot dog stand but with bonito flakes, pickled radishes, seaweed . . . there's other things too. It's brilliant and it's so good and it's the same price and if we had that here . . . I'd probably be the owner of 666 Spadina and own a Japa Dog stand out front. And I'd probably just be just like a lot of other white kids in Southern Ontario. I'd probably go to school for as long as my parents would support me.

When you're writing your songs, to what extent do you think about your audience and how it's going to affect them?

I don't really that much. I used to write songs that kinda had a lot of shock value, I think. And that worked. Well, not shock value, but a lot of interest. Like, I'd write a song centred around a certain word or something. I wrote songs that were overtly sexy, like, sex based music. And I thought that was kinda fun, to just sort of take it over the top. And that's writing for an audience because you know exactly what reaction you're going to get. But then I just started writing songs that lyrically don't give you anything. Just, like, fragments of sentences. I think musically I do though, in terms of the harmonic phrases and stuff. I like to write things that feel like there's a flow to it. And I love groove. I love songs that groove. Not that anyone's ever danced at my show.

What are your thoughts on the Toronto indie music scene?

My thoughts are that it is so special. Such a special scene here and I love it. Toronto is such a great group of young people. We have such special little pockets, you know. It's diverse. There's the rat-drifting scene which I love to death. Then there's "so cute sun shine" music. It's just rich. There's so much courage because there's a great audience here. Not that I would say that people buy lots of records and go and see lots of shows, but for some reason the musicians love everything else that's happening. And everyone listens to a lot of stuff. I feel like it's easy to ignore the bad bands in Toronto and have so much great stuff to listen to.

Lastly, we know you're pretty. What are your thoughts on that?

A beautiful life with beautiful friends and beautiful things. I don't ever come across ugly people, so . . . that's what I have to say about the Toronto music scene! Nobody ugly. No one that you wouldn't want to be seen with.

Hear more from THOMAS at www.myspace.com/isthisthomas or www.thomgill.com



photograph www.mattvardy.com

You & Eye

writer ROOP GILL

Soft footsteps and other bad attempts at a feeble surprise,
Your intentions exposed with the heavy breathing and temperature rise.
You lift your hands to grasp my shoulders and get ready to place it with a thump.
Eye turn around and move away quickly. You jump.
Eye know what you're up to even before you do,
Eye can read you inside out and then work my voodoo.
You don't understand this magic and keep wondering why,
Eye see you better than your very own eye.

Dark brown, ocean blue, smoky grey or mysterious green,
Whichever colour eye may be, you have seen
Again and again how eye can shock you, amaze you, tease you,
Bother you, hurt you, torment you, please you.
Eye can read your mind even before the neurons understand the signal;
The nerves can keep working on making that synapse split and sparkle
It'll be too late, you'll be helpless and won't know why
Eye know you better than your very own eye.

Goosebumps cover your skin yet neither finger nor lash has brushed you.
Just the look that eye gave you has sent those shivers and rushed you
To run to me and tell me things eye have heard before.
Nothing original yet... Yes, eye know you love me, care and adore.
Eye wait and wait for something new that may just be real;
Eye wait patiently just to see how you will heal
My wounds, the pain, the wait and eye never knew why
Eye love you more than your very own eye.



Fresh Princess of Toronto

Her music may not have a genre but her purpose is well-defined.

writer ROOP GILL
photographer TARA BARTOLINI

This is **Kay Pettigrew's** take on changing the face of contemporary Canadian music.

A very short nine year old girl stands to play drums at a rock camp in Montreal and she just kills it. Twenty three year old Kay Pettigrew also stands and just watches this group of young women challenging the machismo culture of contemporary Canadian music. That was an unforgettable eye-opening moment for her in which she learned that you don't need a formula to enjoy something.

Pettigrew grew up in a farming community of 500 people in Southern Ontario called Queensville. With both a father and a grandfather who were musicians, she was introduced to the world of music from a very early age. At thirteen, Pettigrew started creating her own music.

Pettigrew's influences are all over the map. They began at home with her grandfather's country music and progressed to Johnny Cash, who became her first famous inspiration. In high school, she was into jazz and blues, declaring Billie Holiday and Nina Simone as two of her favourites. Currently, she's fascinated by Cat Power and admires raunchier female musicians such as Rhonda Jackson. Taking notes from each these performers has allowed Pettigrew to develop into a musical chameleon.

Pettigrew's method of song writing is to write the music first and then the lyrics. In a similar fashion she wrote her claim to fame, the 'Fresh Prince of Bel Air' cover. She played it at a show and her producer was like,

"oh we should do a video of this" to generate interest around the upcoming album.

THE VIDEO HAS OVER 73,000 HITS ON YOUTUBE.

Pettigrew has gotten gigs from this video, met people, made contacts, and received fan e-mail from as far as Germany. It's still weird for her, someone who writes their own music, to be associated with a cover, but it has also been a doorway for people to get to her music.

The last time she recorded, she used songs from when she was sixteen or seventeen. A few years of song-writing later, she thinks her sound has evolved and is waiting to see if that'll be evident in her next recording due out Spring 2010.

Describe your music.

The other day, my bass player's dad described us as the modern rockabilly which is the coolest compliment I have ever received, but not entirely true. I think the closest I can describe my music is to call it a folk band with indie sensibility.

When did you realize that music is what you want to do?

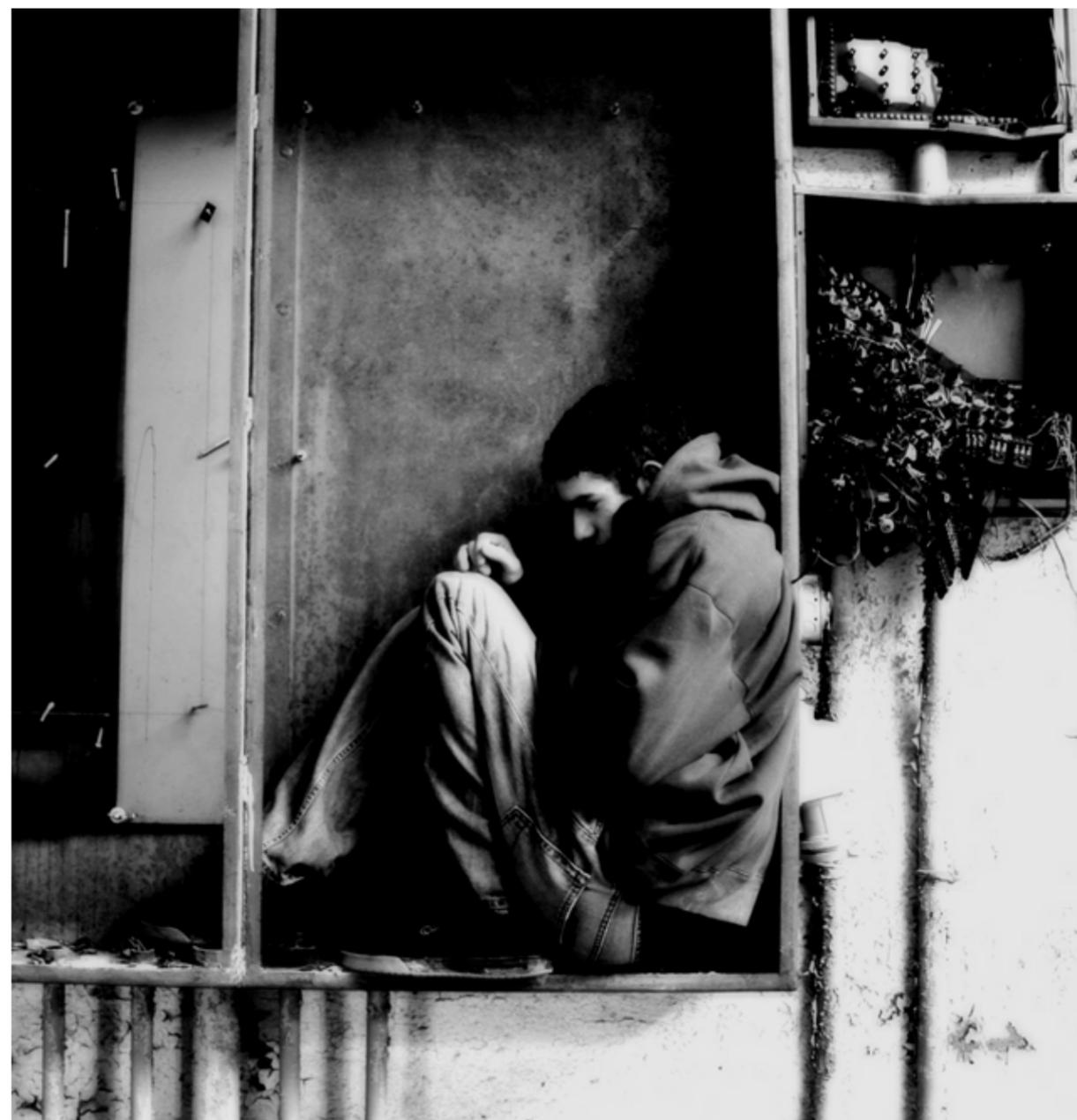
Actually I wonder regularly if music is what I don't want to do. It's hard being broke all the time. But because music was a family thing for me, it's never been in question. Even if I am not performing, it'll be a part of me.



What's the best musical advice anyone has ever given you?

I get advice everyday and it's hard to pick a best. For example just today before this interview I ran into a friend and told her where I was going. She said, "okay, have fun" and I was like "yeah - I should have fun!" When you are looking at your life as a musician, it's fucking weird. I stand up and show my most vulnerable places to groups of people I don't know and they may or may not like it - it's a risky thing.

Check out her famous Fresh Prince Video on YouTube and hear more from Kay at www.myspace.com/kaypettigrew



Through the Lens

A zoomed in look at **Matt Vardy** - one of Toronto's hottest young photographers.

writer SARA HAROWITZ

"It comes from my surroundings, I think," he said, a thoughtful expression on his face. "That's where I get my inspiration. It depends on the weather, my mood, and the setting, you know?" He took a sip of his water.

"A lot of the time, actually, you have to make things up on the fly," he continued. "You don't have a lot of preparation so you just take inspiration from whatever's around you."

His skinny figure was relaxed; he leaned back in his chair as his bright blue eyes darted around the room.

"Like right now, this brick and these windows and stuff, would be really cool to take a photo with if I had to," he said to me, motioning to the walls of the Yonge Street cafe that surround us.

"I would probably do a silhouette shot of you with the light, like, your hair by the window, maybe sipping a coffee or something," he said with a crooked grin, as I giggled at the thought of being the subject of a professional photographer. "It would be cool."

Matt Vardy is brimming with creative force. The professional photographer may only be twenty two, but he has experience and dedication beyond his years.

Born in Grimsby, Ontario, and now living in Toronto, Vardy started his own photography company when he was just sixteen years old. After taking his first photography class in Grade 10, he fell head over heels in love with the craft.

"It just came to me so naturally," he said. "And my teacher said, 'Wow, Matt, you're

really good at this.' I started taking the cameras home and fooling around, going for walks in the woods, you know, just taking pictures all the time."

So what is it that Vardy loves about photography?

"Ahhh," he said, smiling. "There's so much. I like the challenge that each photo brings. I view it as a challenge to get everything right and get everything perfect the way I want it. And I like being able to wow people with a picture. Pictures speak a thousand words, and pictures also seem to capture a moment in time that's frozen, and that will never go away."

It's easy to cast off Vardy as just another kid with a camera, ("Everyone's a photographer these days," he said.) But taking just one look at his work will convert any non-believer.

Vardy photographs everything from nature to weddings to fashion. Right now, though, his favourite subjects are bands.

"It's cool to be able to associate with them, get close to them, even if it's just for a couple hours, and be that guy who gets a little glimpse of their life," Vardy told me. "And I get to be really creative because bands usually don't care what you do, they like to have fun and be crazy so you have total creative freedom."

Vardy has photographed a long list of musicians, including The Midway State, Stereos, MSTRKRFT, Inward Eye, This Is An Empire, Poison the Well, and many others.

Still, Vardy says it can often be difficult to establish trust with his subjects, and sometimes even his subjects' entourage.

"I TREAT PHOTOSHOP LIKE MY DARKROOM"

"Sometimes people look at me, or their manager will look at me and be like, 'Who's this punk kid who thinks he is gonna take a good photo?'" he said. "And then I love blowing them away. That's my favourite thing, is to be underestimated and then respected when it's all said and done."

When I told Vardy that this issue of *Off The Map* is all about eye-opening experiences, he instantly wanted to share one of his own experiences by sharing the story - and the photos - with us.

When Vardy was just eighteen, he said, he and fellow photographer and friend Joey Lawrence went exploring in an abandoned psychiatric hospital in Whitby, ON. "Apparently they shipped people there; the government sort of shunned them and sent them there," he said, the images clearly still vivid in his mind. "So me and Joey, being the crazy adventurers that we are, went there at night time, broke in through the fences and got in."

And what they saw sure was eye-opening.

"The pictures I took [in there] are still some of the best I've ever taken, I think, because words can't describe the stuff I saw," he said, lightly shaking his head with bewilderment. "There were chains hanging from the ceilings, little 3x3 rooms with a chair and clubs in the corner. What the government did to people in there is beyond me. It was really eye-opening to get to see that, [to] take pictures in there. And a couple months later it was all torn down."

The result of this experience is featured in this issue.

However, Vardy owes a big thanks to the computer program Photoshop for making his photos look so chilling. He is an avid user

of the program, and is not afraid to admit it.

"I treat Photoshop like my dark room," Vardy told me. "It's the place where I get to experiment with things, try new techniques, just have fun with my art."

But no matter how advanced Vardy gets with his craft, he'll never forget the first time he borrowed a camera.

"[I] went kayaking with it, just had a good time exploring things and taking photos of absolutely anything," said Vardy. "That's how you get good at something, is practicing. Take hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of photos, and eventually you learn what is good, what isn't, what works, what doesn't, what people like and what people don't like. That time in my life was really instrumental in putting me where I am today. Practice makes perfect, right? Not that it's perfect yet, but I'm getting there hopefully." He let out a laugh.

And while he knows he isn't perfect yet, Vardy is not afraid to aim high.

"I want to be well-known and respected as good at what I do," he said when I asked him about his goals as a photographer. "I would like someone to sit down in an interview one day and say, 'I look up to Matt Vardy.'"

And while that day may be a little ways off, Vardy's unique artistic presence in the photography world is sure to keep people interested. He loves to push the boundaries, loves to break the rules, and loves to take risks with his photos.

"You can't really draw the line," he said, when I asked him about his limits. "You find a way to do it, you know?...I think that's what great photographers are all about, is being resourceful and coming up with solutions to make it happen."

Vardy's risk-taking is a true testament to the kind of photographer that he is, and will continue to be.

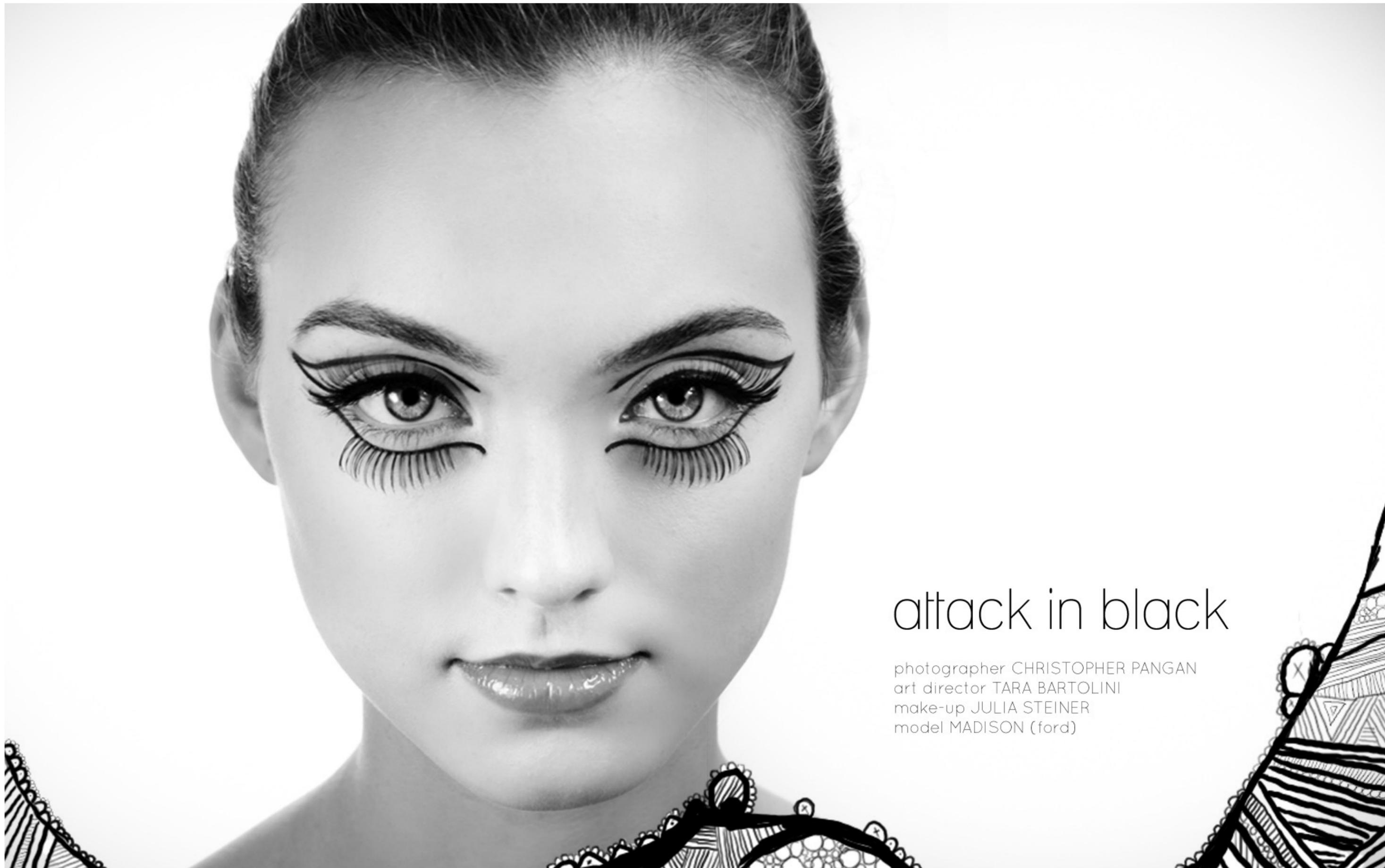
"As long as it's physically possible I would do it," he told me, his mouth cracking into a crooked smile once more. "Like, I'm not willing to jump off a bridge or anything, but I am willing to hang off the edge."

See more from Matt at www.mattvardy.com









attack in black

photographer CHRISTOPHER PANGAN
art director TARA BARTOLINI
make-up JULIA STEINER
model MADISON (ford)





photographer TARA BARTOLINI models LEIGH M (elite) & ALEXANDRA (elmer olsen)



next issue:

SPRING 2010