NOVEMBER 2023

WSJ.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

THE INNOVATORS ISSUE

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2023

WHAT'S NEWS.

THIS PAGE Photographed by Markn and styled by Alexandra Carl. Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda jacket, Schiaparelli Haute Couture headband, Wolford underwear, Darner socks and shoes courtesy of Trust Judy Blame Archive. For details see Sources, page 162.


MONT BLANC
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1858 Iced Sea
SWISS MADE

"AS I GROW OLDER,
I PROTECT A LOT MORE."
—KYLIE JENNER

MARKET REPORT.

Above left: Danish gem dealer Ittai Gradel, photographed by Felix Odell. Above right: Brand Innovator Kylie Jenner, photographed by Cass Bird and styled by Katelyn Gray. Celine by Hedi Slimane tank top, Mugler pants, Khy gloves and her own bracelet. For details see Sources, page 162.

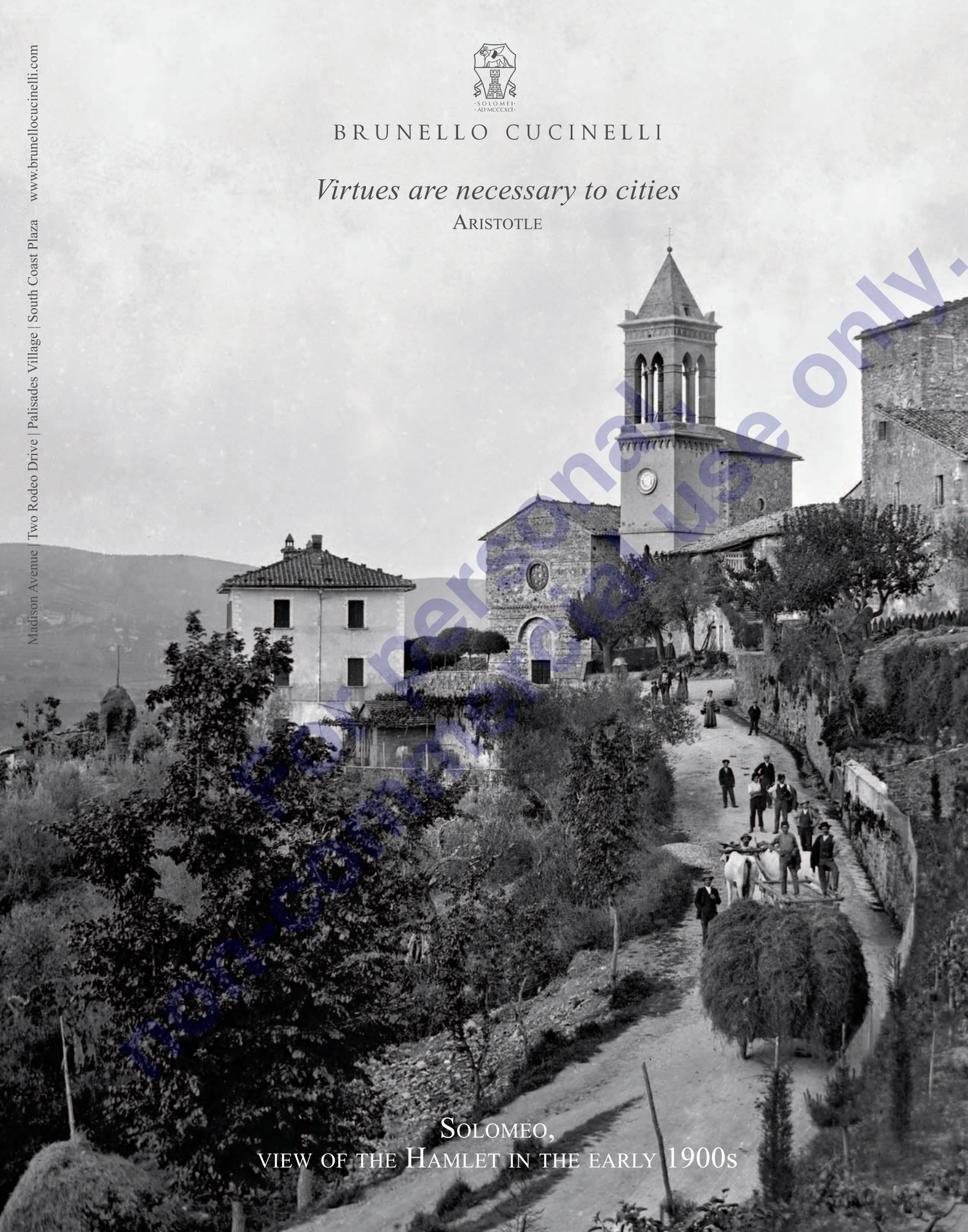
THE EXCHANGE.

THE INNOVATORS ISSUE.

BRUNELLO CUCINELLI

Virtues are necessary to cities

ARISTOTLE



SOLOMEO,
VIEW OF THE HAMLET IN THE EARLY 1900S

Left: Emerald Fennell drew inspiration for her film *Saltburn* from her days at Oxford University. “I wanted to go not just for the education, but because it just felt magical.” Photographed by Ben Quinton. Below: Design Innovator Walter Hood’s conceptual gardens for the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. Photographed by Zora J Murff.

THE INNOVATORS ISSUE.

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RIMOWA

NO ONE BUILDS A LEGACY BY STANDING STILL

THICK AS THIEVES

MEAN SHEETS Martin Scorsese, this year's Film Innovator, co-wrote and directed *Killers of the Flower Moon*, out now.

IF THERE'S ANYTHING FUNNY about innovation, it's the misapplication of the word to the mundane. Today's 21st-century, app-based "innovations," like grocery delivery and beauty-parlor blow-dries, are actually totems of the *Leave It to Beaver* era. Still, in the annals of misapplied innovation, a thief at the British Museum may be one of the greats.

In a scandal that has captivated the art world, over 2,000 pieces of Greco-Roman and other ancient museum treasures were put up for sale on eBay (under the username Sultan1966) by someone who appears to have been a curator. *If I simply choose pieces not listed in the online catalog,* the innovative thief may have reasoned, *no one will catch me.*

It was a 15th-century innovation—the commercial printing press—that foiled him in the end. Cross-referencing catalogs from the 1920s, Ittai Gradel, a Danish antiquities dealer and scholar, suspected wrongdoing after recognizing the eBay items on those yellowing pages. The story of how he unraveled the crime is charted in full by Max Colchester in London.

Truly innovative humor finds no better expression than in the work of Julia Louis-Dreyfus, one of the most Emmy-nominated actors alive. For her subversive, laugh-out-loud work on *Seinfeld, Veep* and many other film and TV projects, and the surprising and eye-misting way she's now using her stature, we've named her this year's Entertainment Innovator. Legendary director Martin Scorsese, decorated landscape architect Walter Hood, acclaimed Fear of God founder Jerry Lorenzo, beauty and now-fashion mogul Kylie Jenner, genre-crossing pop star SZA and iconic American artist Ed Ruscha complete the dream-dinner-party roster of our 2023 Innovators issue.

Welcome to the table. We hope you enjoy their inspiring and often moving stories of success.

Sarah Ball
s.ball@wsj.com

"BEAUTY LIES IN THE DETAILS OF
THE GRANDEST STRUCTURES,
AND THE FINEST."

ORA ÏTO,
CREATOR OF SHAPES, WEARS THE
VACHERON CONSTANTIN TRADITIONNELLE.

VACHERON CONSTANTIN
GENÈVE

ONE OF
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

I WISH

GRAFF

CONTRIBUTORS

The writers, photographers and stylists behind each of this year's seven Innovator profiles.

BY NATALIA BARR

JACOB GALLAGHER, TYLER MITCHELL & YASHUA SIMMONS

FEAR OF GOD P. 144

Writer Jacob Gallagher has followed Fashion Innovator Jerry Lorenzo's career for around six years. "He came up in this pack of American designers that were nontraditionally trained. People wanted to lump them in with streetwear," he says. "When someone is described so simply, I'm like, there has to be more about Jerry that we can bring to the surface." At Lorenzo's photo shoot in New York City with photographer Tyler Mitchell, stylist Yashua Simmons remembers listening to a playlist of Drake, Luther Vandross and an eclectic soul remix of Minnie Riperton. "Good vibes all day," Simmons recalls.

IAN VOLNER & ZORA J MURFF

WALTER HOOD P. 114

Design Innovator Walter Hood and writer Ian Volner briefly met a few years ago. "Ever since then, I've felt like this was someone I wanted to talk about, and do it for as broad an audience as I could," says Volner. During their interview, Hood's candor stood out. "You don't often see that in a designer of his stature. It's part of the ethos I try to convey in the piece: This guy has worked too hard and done too much to not say what he wants to say, and be who he is," says Volner. "The result is very little filter." Hood was photographed by Zora J Murff in Charleston, South Carolina.

RORY SATRAN, CASS BIRD & KATELYN GRAY

KYLIE JENNER P. 120

At her interview and on set with photographer Cass Bird in Paris, writer Rory Satran was impressed by Brand Innovator Kylie Jenner's instincts. "She definitely knows what she wants and how she would like to be portrayed," Satran says. Stylist Katelyn Gray conveyed that poise at the cover shoot. "We wanted to keep her cool—James Dean cool—but still feminine and with a twist," she says. "She's a confident woman who can obviously handle an outfit, but the goal was to maintain a little restraint." For the final shot—the cover photo—the team went out to get fresh air and eat McDonald's.

On cover: Mugler catsuit with gloves, Falke socks and Church's shoes. For details see Sources, page 162.

JOHN LOBB

ARRIVING TO 700 MADISON AVENUE
OCTOBER 2023

CONTRIBUTORS

ELLEN GAMERMAN, MAX FARAGO & REBECCA RAMSEY

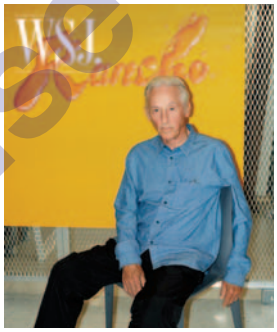
JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS P. 138

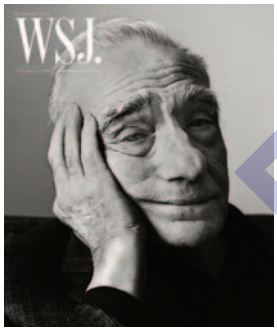
Entertainment Innovator Julia Louis-Dreyfus could not discuss her acting roles due to the SAG-Aftra strike, but writer Ellen Gamerman says, "That restriction ultimately freed us up to get into other aspects of her life." Gamerman found that the actor loves to work and—unsurprisingly—has perfect comedic timing. The writer also learned that Louis-Dreyfus and Carol Burnett text each other their Wordle results. "That text thread should go to the Smithsonian," says Gamerman. The shoot took place in Los Angeles with photography by Max Farago and styling by Rebecca Ramsey.

KELLY CROW & MARIO SORRENTI

ED RUSCHA P. 130

Like Art Innovator Ed Ruscha, writer Kelly Crow grew up in Oklahoma. "I've always felt a kinship toward him and his art," she says. After spending time with the artist at his Culver City studio, she notes, "He has a wry sense of humor and perspective on life that reminds me of Mark Twain. That wit turns to wisdom when he turns his gaze to the often-overlooked experience of the American West. I think he understands us better than most artists as a result." This personality came through at the New York City shoot, where photographer Mario Sorrenti says Ruscha was "at ease and confident."





JOHN JURGENSEN & CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON

MARTIN SCORSESE P. 100

Although writer John Jurgensen interviewed Martin Scorsese once before, this was his first chance to discuss a full-length movie with the Film Innovator. "Scorsese knows everything about cinema history—it seems like he literally has a photographic memory for it," says Jurgensen. "But the way he talks about movies, including his own, makes them feel relevant and fresh, even the ones made by pioneers long before his time." At the New York City shoot with Christopher Anderson, Jurgensen enjoyed hearing the conversation between director and photographer about light and focus.

HUNTER HARRIS, ETHAN JAMES GREEN & EMILIE KAREH

SZA P. 108

Writer Hunter Harris first interviewed Music Innovator SZA around the release of her debut album. Six years later, Harris says, "her music has only gotten more audacious." The interview and photo shoot (with photography by Ethan James Green and styling by Emilie Kareh) were in New York City, where Harris talked about how SZA's relationship with the public has evolved since she released her second record. "*SOS* is a major album from an artist who has never reached superstar status before," says Harris. "I heard a kid in the grocery store singing along to [*SOS* track] 'Kill Bill' this summer."

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WHAT'S NEWS.

SATURDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

As Formula 1 arrives in Las Vegas, has it already peaked in the U.S.?

BY JOSHUA ROBINSON ILLUSTRATION BY MARK HARRIS

WHEN FORMULA 1 came to Las Vegas two years ago with the outrageous idea of sending drivers down the Strip at 150 miles per hour, Las Vegas didn't take long to say yes. When F1 then said that the city would effectively need to shut down the biggest gambling night of the week to make it happen, Vegas said yes again. And when organizers pointed out that Las Vegas Boulevard also required resurfacing, the city didn't blink.

Whatever F1 wanted for the most anticipated Grand Prix in decades, F1 got. As the sport's chief executive Stefano Domenicali promised, the event would be "the biggest postcard that we can present to the world."

This is the moment that Formula 1's American owner, Liberty Media, has been building toward ever since it spent $8 billion in 2017 to acquire a motor-racing series with an unfortunate reputation for being boring. On the weekend of November 18, F1 will ride a recent wave of global popularity into Sin City for an over-the-top Saturday-night Grand Prix unlike any race before. Hollywood requests have been pouring in for a year. Ticket packages are being advertised for $50,000.

But beyond all the hype, the Vegas Grand Prix will help answer one of the sport's existential questions: Has F1 peaked in the U.S.—or is it just getting started?

"We were a European sport that dabbled in America," says Zak Brown, the California-born CEO of the McLaren team. "What channel it was on and what city it was in changed every two, three years.... It's hard to build a sport when you're not really consistently visible."

That's not a problem F1 has anymore. Teams such as Red Bull and McLaren, based in the English countryside, have come to New York to launch their latest cars and sign deals with blue-chip American partners. (Some 40 percent of sponsors entering F1 this season are U.S. companies, according to an analysis by Spomotion.) Every season of the hit Netflix show *Drive to Survive*, which takes viewers behind the scenes of F1, goes straight to the top of the streaming charts as soon as it's released. And Vegas will be the third U.S. race of 2023, after events in Miami and Austin. Together they will have drawn more than a million fans—a remarkable feat when you consider that as recently as 2011, the F1 calendar didn't have a single U.S. Grand Prix.

The challenge now is figuring out where else F1 can go in America without diluting the product. Even the sport's defending world champion, Dutch driver Max Verstappen, is concerned about what awaits him in the Nevada desert.

"I think it will be quite chaotic, the whole weekend," he told me in Suzuka, Japan, as he inched toward his third consecutive driver's title. "Of course, I understand why we go there. Personally, I'm a fan of the more traditional tracks."

CIRCUIT CITIES This month's Las Vegas event follows F1's arrival in the U.S. with the Miami Grand Prix (below), attended this year by Tom Cruise (left), among other celebrities.

"IT'S HARD TO BUILD A SPORT WHEN YOU'RE NOT REALLY CONSISTENTLY VISIBLE."
—ZAK BROWN

For a sport expanding as quickly as F1, striking a balance between the sport's legacy circuits in places like Japan or Monaco and visiting the U.S. three times a season can be tricky. Trying to capture and hold the attention of a truly global audience is a challenge that perhaps only the English Premier League and the NBA have lived up to.

No one inside the sport is sure what its American future might look like—adding a fourth U.S. race is currently off the table. But Formula 1 can't be accused of failing to take big swings. Last year it partnered with Brad Pitt and producer Jerry Bruckheimer on a Formula 1 summer blockbuster due out in 2024 or 2025. The sport also envisions a form of simulated competition that transforms the races themselves into virtual-reality videogames where users can go wheel-to-wheel with Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton in real time from their own couches.

One problem in the meantime: The actual reality on track is a little less thrilling. Verstappen is having one of the most dominant seasons of all time, but the truth is that it can make for predictable viewing. And still missing for the home fans is a credible American driver. The rookie Logan Sargeant, of the Williams team, is the latest candidate for that role. But he's succeeded only in leading the sport in wrecks this season.

Still, for a team executive like Brown who remembers the dark days of F1's obscurity in America, the journey from that not-too-distant past to the Vegas Strip has been nothing short of stunning.

"In America, Formula 1 is everything we hoped it would be—and I'm pleasantly surprised that it's as big as it is, and how quickly it got there," he told me. "Vegas is going to be the hottest ticket globally in the world of sport this year."

CREATIVE BRIEF

IN THE BAG

Métier, the London leather-goods company, was doing "quiet luxury" long before the term consumed fashion, with understated, logo-free bags worn by Katie Holmes and the Princess of Wales. Now it's releasing a collection with jewelry designer Fernando Jorge, whose own elegant pieces have adorned the earlobes of Beyoncé and Charlize Theron. "Fernando and I took our time to allow our ideas to grow organically," says Métier founder Melissa Morris. The result includes yellow-gold hardware, rubies and mother-of-pearl. "We both value timeless, classic design, craftsmanship and highest-quality materials," Jorge says. *For details see Sources, page 162.* *—Ashley Wong*

TIME MACHINES

Montblanc has released a new mono-pusher chronograph in collaboration with Minerva, inspired by historical sporting watches. With yellow subdials and blue scales, the design is limited to just 30 pieces.

For details see Sources, page 162.

FOOD FOR SOUL

MASSIMO BOTTURA LAUNCHES A SOUP KITCHEN IN HARLEM AND A NEW BOOK WITH PHAIDON.

"I GET EMOTIONAL," says Italian chef Massimo Bottura in September, witnessing dinner preparations for the first time at his new soup kitchen, Refettorio Harlem, in the historic Emanuel AME Church. In the professional kitchen, volunteers transform surplus food into square meals for the neighborhood's at-risk residents. As at every Refettorio—Bottura and his wife, Lara Gilmore, have opened a dozen worldwide through their charitable organization, Food for Soul—the cooking and setting are restaurant caliber. "It's fighting food waste, involving chefs, creating an amazing space that renews the whole community through beauty," says Bottura. In Harlem, Gucci donated wallpaper and furniture fabric. Artist JR added a huge work of art. Bottura's publisher, Phaidon, contributed books. *Slow Food, Fast Cars,* his new tome, written with Gilmore—on their country hotel in Emilia-Romagna—comes out next month. The visually lavish book with its 85 recipes, says Gilmore, is "about sharing how much Massimo and I love Emilia-Romagna and want people to come visit." *—Jay Cheshes*

CULT OF

Ethereus, the new eau de parfum from hair- and skin-care brand Josh Rosebrook, is a follow-up to Ethereal, its debut scent released in 2016. A warm, enveloping amber-and-sandalwood blend, the fragrance dries down to a clean musk designed for broad appeal. *—Fiorella Valdesolo*

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PADDLES UP

The star of New York's art-auction season may be Pablo Picasso's *Woman With a Watch* (shown), with Sotheby's asking $120 million, but the roughly two weeks of sales are brimming with trophy pieces. At Christie's, the big debut is Claude Monet's *Water-Lily Pond* from 1917–19, tucked away in a family collection for a half-century and estimated to sell for $65 million. Phillips rounds out the group with an estimated $15 million Fernand Léger from 1912–13, *July 14*. Will collectors stay home or raise those paddles? We'll soon find out. —*Kelly Crow*

HER SEASON

MEG RYAN DIRECTS AND STARS IN A NEW ROM-COM, JUST IN TIME FOR FALL.

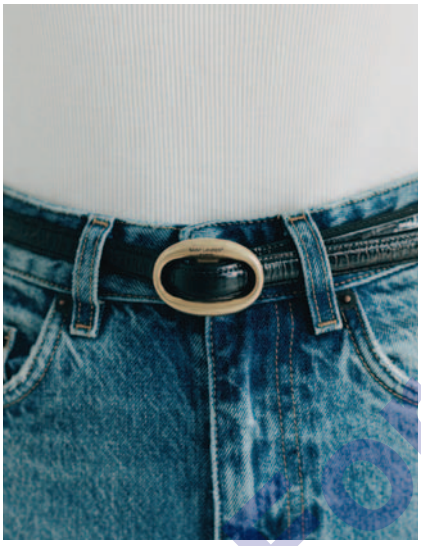
NO ACTOR is more synonymous with the golden age of the romantic comedy than Meg Ryan. In the late 1980s and '90s, she won over moviegoers by playing charmingly relatable heroines in films such as *When Harry Met Sally, Sleepless in Seattle* and *You've Got Mail*, all considered canon within the genre.

Ryan's characters, many drawn by the late, great Nora Ephron, have come to represent romance before smartphones and social media—when strangers exchanging lengthy, anonymous emails raised no red flags, and two people could arrange a rendezvous on top of the Empire State Building without coordinating their ETAs by text. And the turtleneck sweaters, wool blazers and bowler hats Ryan wears in these films now signal the turning of leaves. Now, for the first time in years, her fans are getting a true "Meg Ryan fall," as the season has come to be known. Ryan stars opposite David Duchovny in *What Happens Later*, a movie she also directed, in which two exes find themselves stranded in an airport overnight together long after their split. —*Lane Florsheim*

TREND REPORT

THE SKINNY

Simple black belts with chic metal buckles make perfectly easy style a cinch.



FULL CIRCLE
Top, from left: Chloé belt, Celine by Hedi Slimane tank top and BLK DNM jeans (both worn throughout); Polo Ralph Lauren belt. From far left: Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello belt; Hermès belt.

IN THE LOOP
Left: Celine by Hedi Slimane belt. Right: Banana Republic belt. For details see Sources, page 162.

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A perfect storm

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CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' A bathtub at Vitorrja, a new hotel in Venice, California, by the Gjelina Group.

STUDY IN DESIGN

BE OUR GUEST

The group behind a beloved restaurant in California creates a new place to stay.

IN 2008 Fran Camaj transformed an old furniture store in Venice, California, into an industrial-chic, farm-to-table restaurant with wood-oven pizzas, fresh seasonal pastas and other California-meets-Mediterranean creations by chef Travis Lett.

Camaj named the restaurant Gjelina, after his mom, a transplant from Montenegro, who helped finance the place. "I vastly underestimated what it was going to become," he says of its rapid success.

In 2014 he opened Gjusta, a cafe and bakery named for one of his mother's sisters. His new project, Vitorrja, pays homage to another Gjelina sibling, his mother's second oldest, while realizing a long-held dream to launch his own hotel. "I must have looked at 25 properties over the years," he says.

With his operating partner and CEO, Shelley Armistead, former operations director at Soho House West Hollywood, he's transformed a once down-at-the-heels rooming house just off the Venice Boardwalk into a live-in extension of his restaurants.

Armistead, who joined the Gjelina Group in 2014, leading its expansion into housewares and packaged foods, has helped bring a domestic quality to Vitorrja's 26 rooms and suites, each one unique. The décor, a mix of flea-market finds and custom furniture, includes many shoppable pieces—the upcycled linens, handblown glassware and local ceramics are all sold at Gjusta Goods, the retail shop they opened nearby in 2016.

"Vitorrja," says Armistead, "is actually the living articulation of Gjusta Goods." Even the proprietary paint hues, developed with Portola Paints, are available for purchase.

Instead of a restaurant on-site, a hotel stay comes with priority access to its sister establishments. "If you want to come to Gjelina on a Saturday night, we'll of course make that happen," says Camaj of his popular flagship restaurant.

Its new East Coast offshoot, Gjelina New York, which succumbed to a fire last winter, is on track to reopen early next year. —*Jay Cheshes*

PIN POINT

Statement brooches in sophisticated shapes give men's evening attire a new flair.

For details see Sources, page 162.

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BUY THE BOOK

ALL ABOUT BABS

Barbra Streisand's memoir is coming to bookstores this fall—and it's nearly 1,000 pages.

IF BARBRA STREISAND'S memoir, *My Name Is Barbra*, does what it's supposed to do, it will be 992 pages steeped in the author's voice, 60 chapters brimming with her memories and 48 pages of photographs full of her image. It will be like taking a bath in Babs.

Streisand, 81, started the book nine years ago. She worked with her own editor and handed her first draft to Viking last year. The chronological tale includes the twists and turns of her work, loves and life, beginning with her babyhood in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and ending with her time now in Malibu, California.

"It is as comprehensive a memoir as I've read from anyone," says Viking president and publisher Brian Tart. "She really wanted to cover it all."

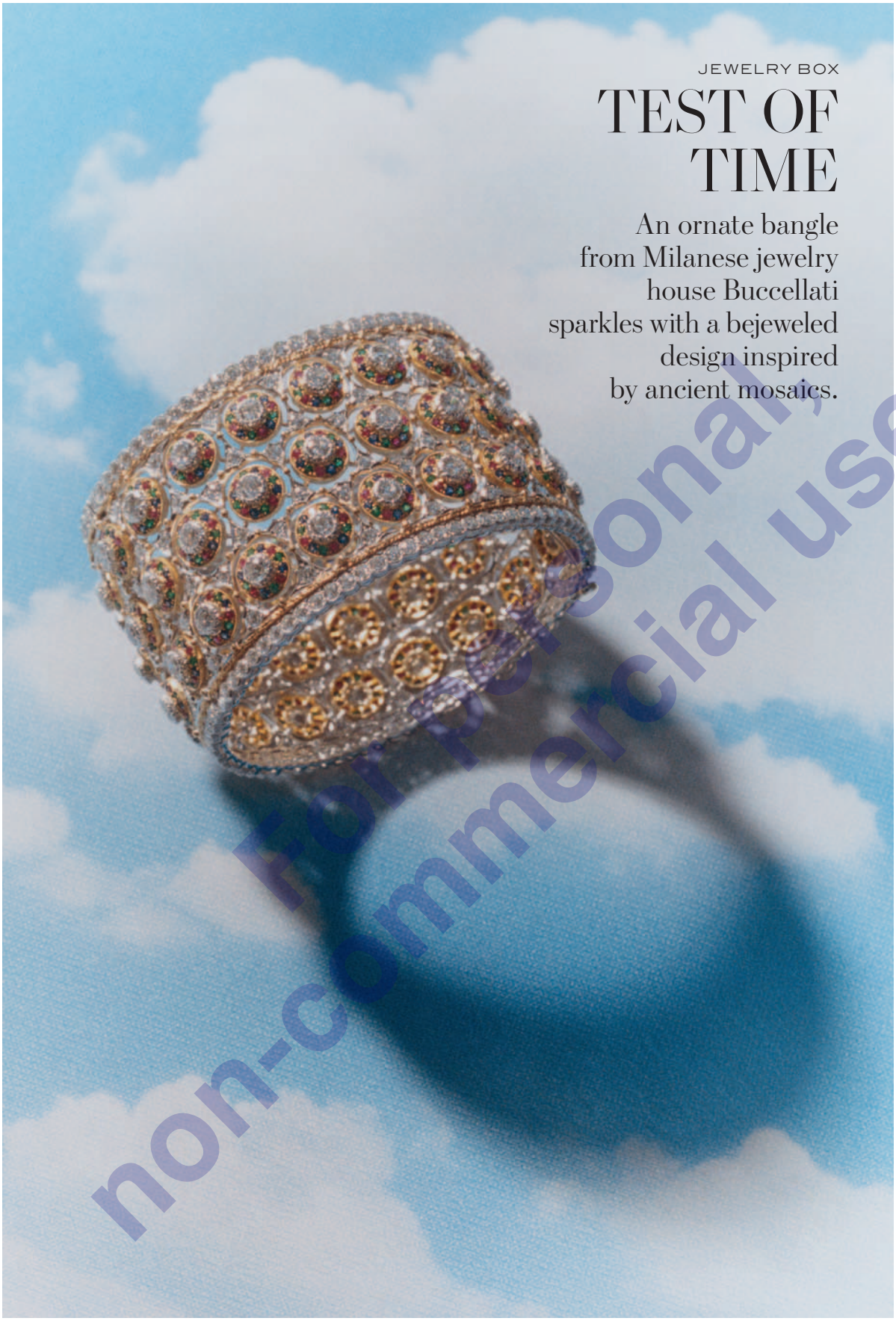
As for the audiobook, the performer with one of the music world's most recognizable voices spent weeks recording from her home studio. The end product is about 48 hours long—she even throws in some extra anecdotes that aren't in the hardcover. But don't count on hearing original singing. This is a book, and she's betting the prose will do that for her.

—Ellen Gamerman

GO WITH THE FLOW

Party dressing calls for daring drapes and pretty pleats.

CURTAIN CALL Clockwise from top: Louis Vuitton jacket; Alaïa bag; Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello dress; Silvia Furmanovich earrings; Proenza Schouler dress; Balenciaga heel. For details see Sources, page 162.



JEWELRY BOX

TEST OF TIME

An ornate bangle from Milanese jewelry house Buccellati sparkles with a bejeweled design inspired by ancient mosaics.

Simplicity has never been a part of the vocabulary at Buccellati; its newest high jewelry collection, Mosaico, is no exception. The pieces are inspired by Byzantine mosaics made between the fourth and 15th centuries, which were decorated with intricate patterns using materials such as glass, mother-of-pearl, and gold and silver leaf. One bangle, shown here, features circles of emeralds, rubies and sapphires around white-gold bezel-set diamonds. ***For details see Sources, page 162.*** ***—Jenny Hartman***

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN-MARIE BINET
FASHION STYLING BY LUNE KUIPERS
SET DESIGN BY CÉSAR SEBASTIEN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MARKET REPORT.

WILD AT HEART

Unleash singular style with bold animal-print coats.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAMUEL BRADLEY

STYLING BY ELIZABETH FRASER-BELL

SOFT SPOT
Leopard print adds flair to wardrobe classics. From left: Duran Lantink coat and Celine by Hedi Slimane bag; Erdem coat, Gucci tank top and skirt, Celine by Hedi Slimane sunglasses, Falke socks and Loro Piana shoes.

NOOK CLUB
Balance eye-catching prints with relaxed jeans. Celine Homme by Hedi Slimane coat, Celine by Hedi Slimane jeans and belt, Miu Miu cardigan, jacket and bag, Alexis Bittar earrings and Loro Piana shoes.

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SIGN OFF
Stand out in a head-to-toe print. Balenciaga coat, Victoria Beckham turtleneck and Loro Piana shoes.

PUB NIGHT
Menswear-inspired separates and cuts add contrast to ladylike pieces. From left: Michael Kors Collection coat, Tory Burch double-layered turtleneck, belt and pants, Falke socks and Loro Piana shoes; Prada coat and belt, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello tights, Calzedonia socks and Loro Piana shoes.

Morgan Freeman

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WESTERN PROMISES
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It takes time to become an icon

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HIGH BAR
Mixing unexpected lengths adds playful variety. Givenchy coat and Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello jacket, belt, tights and shoes. Models, Lizzy Kolawole at Select Model Management and Binta Diop at Elite Model Management; hair, Lauraine Bailey; makeup, Becca Wordingham; manicure, Stacey Bushay; set design, Staci Lee; production, Block Productions. For details see Sources, page 162.

Medford (Red), 2021, 38 x 22 inches, oil on canvas. © 2023 Mitchell Johnson.

Mitchell Johnson

"Like all of Johnson's works, a latent conflict is built into the scene, in the form of often abrupt contrasts of space and form. Strange as it may seem to say so, they are implicitly psychodramas disguised as physical drama. I am arguing that they have an emotional cutting edge, making them more than matter-of-factly descriptive and ingeniously abstract." —Donald Kuspit

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THE MAJORS
Alex Rodriguez says that when he's hiring, he looks for the same qualities George Steinbrenner sought for the New York Yankees.

MY MONDAY MORNING

ALEX RODRIGUEZ

The former shortstop and third baseman on his four daily hours of self-care, what makes for a good hire and advice from his mentor Warren Buffett.

BY LANE FLORSHEIM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEXANDER SALADRIGAS

ALEX RODRIGUEZ, the 14-time Major League Baseball all-star, has established himself as a businessman since he left the dugout in 2016. He manages a variety of real-estate holdings and companies under his investment firm, A-Rod Corp, including the Minnesota Timberwolves NBA team, which he co-owns. On the side, he says he's journaling toward a book about the lessons he's learned in business and baseball.

"I just love to write," says Rodriguez, 48. "I always say the great teachers are even better students. And I would say I'm probably a 90 percent student, 10 percent mentor. I have a lot to learn. I feel like I'm just getting started in my journey." He says he has no set plans for the manuscript.

Rodriguez lives in New York City, Miami and Minneapolis with his girlfriend, fitness and lifestyle coach Jaclyn Cordeiro. He has two daughters, Natasha, 18, and Ella, 15, with his ex-wife, Cynthia Scurtis. Here, he talks about dropping off his oldest daughter at college, what he thinks of the MLB's new rules and the pop superstars he's happy his daughters have as role models. >

What time do you get up on Mondays, and what's the first thing you do after waking up?

When I have the girls, usually my morning starts around 6:30. I have breakfast with them, then drive them to school and head right to the gym.

What does that part of your routine look like?

A combination of cardiovascular, some type of lifting. When I come home, it's usually some meditation, stretching. I mix in a little cold plunge, sometimes a little sauna and just kind of get out in the sun a little bit and think, meditate, pray. I try to focus on 8 a.m. to noon as my time. I'm in the office every day from 12 to 6 p.m.

And when the workday is over?

I'm very routine-oriented, because I played professional baseball for 25 years. I always wore my uniform. There's a little bit of military inside me. My stepbrother spent years in the U.S. Air Force. Jac, my girlfriend, we started [taking] long walks after dinner, then working to prepare for the next day.

You dropped Natasha off at college last month. How is the transition going?

She's never done better. I'm an emotional roller coaster. I've been talking to Cynthia, my greatest friend in the world and my co-parent to my two girls. She's given me therapy. She's a psychologist. It's been working, but I've been really depressed, down and out. On the way to the airport when I dropped her off, I was a big box of mess.

Do you interview everyone who gets a job at A-Rod Corp?

I used to. I can't anymore. We have probably 200 team members today. I have about five direct reports. Obviously I hired all of them. What we're looking for is a team player. A long-term thinker. Someone that's coachable. The qualities I want working at A-Rod Corp are the same qualities that I think George Steinbrenner looked to bring into our club of the New York Yankees.

What's it been like to get involved in a new pro sport?

It's such a new space for me. I look at my good friend Magic Johnson, who was a legendary basketball player and now is a legendary businessperson and owns a baseball team. About 25 years ago when he started mentoring me, he basically handed me his blueprint book.

Tell me about your friendship with Timberwolves shooting guard Anthony Edwards.

Everything about Anthony Edwards is fascinating. He's wildly talented, but he's also very, very likable. Because I played baseball, not basketball, there's not this embedded competition about who's better. I played for 25 years in professional sports. I was lucky enough to be part of a world-championship team. I've made tons of mistakes, and I can take those mistakes and lead with them and hopefully [the players I work with] can avoid some of the mistakes that I've made.

What do you think of the new baseball rules?

I think Rob Manfred and Tony Clark have done an incredible job with really making the game better. Attendance is up 9.6 percent. The games are about 30 minutes shorter, which is great for the young demos. The game has become a little bit more athletic, so hopefully bringing the glory days back of baseball, the game that we all fell in love with.

Are you a Swiftie or in the Beyhive?

Oh, I'm both. What they're doing is incredible. For young women out there, equality, all the good things that we want our young daughters to have. I mean, Beyoncé and Taylor, they couldn't have two better.

What's the most important thing you've learned from your mentor Warren Buffett?

It's just the long term. No shortcuts. Always be a gentleman and pick your lane. Go narrow and deep and master that. But really think about nothing short term.

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

"ALWAYS BE A GENTLEMAN AND PICK YOUR LANE."
–ALEX RODRIGUEZ

FAN GUY
Alex Rodriguez says he feels lucky that his daughters have Taylor Swift and Beyoncé as role models: "They couldn't have two better."

For more of our conversation with Alex Rodriguez, go to WSJ.com/magazine.

5 Monday Must-Haves

8 HOURS OF SLEEP
"That's No. 1."

COFFEE
"A really nice hot black coffee."

OATMEAL
"My warm oatmeal with eggs in it."

STAIRMASTER
"I need to have a good workout where I'm breaking a good sweat and I'm getting a good lift."

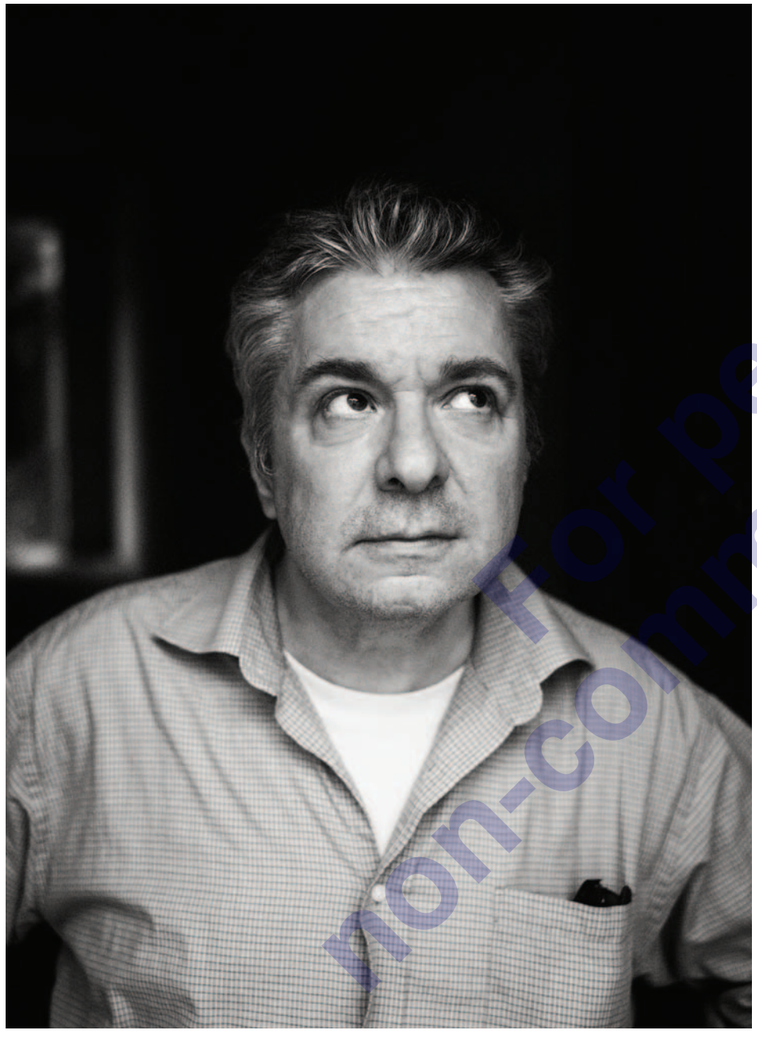
FLOSS
"My oral health is very important." [Rodriguez is a paid spokesman for oral-health company OraPharma.]

ART TALK

HOW TO CATCH A THIEF

When a Danish rare-gem dealer named Ittai Gradel blew the whistle on stolen British Museum antiquities showing up online, it was the culmination of a yearslong whodunit.

BY MAX COLCHESTER PHOTOGRAPHY BY FELIX ODELL



THE BIG STEAL Once Ittai Gradel began to suspect a thief in the British Museum, he couldn't let it go.

ITTAI GRADEL, an academic-turned-gem dealer in Denmark, was trawling eBay a decade ago when he thought he had stumbled across a gold mine.

On his screen, Gradel saw a seller called Sultan1966 advertising a glass gem from the 19th century. Gradel immediately recognized it as something much more valuable: an agate Roman Medusa cameo from the second century, featuring the mythical Gorgon with snakes as hair. He snapped it up for £15 plus postage, then turned around and sold it to a collector for a couple of thousand pounds.

In the following years, Sultan1966 kept unearthing incredible finds at rock-bottom prices. Gradel bought a ring for £150, which he assumed was a copy of one from the Ptolemaic kingdom, an ancient Greco-Egyptian empire. But when he received the item and verified it was an original from over 2,000 years ago, Gradel told Sultan1966 he had mispriced his ring and sent him an extra £500. "It was ridiculous," he remembers thinking.

Gradel inquired as to how the seller, an Englishman whose name was listed as Paul Higgins, had come across these items. Sultan1966 said he had acquired them from his grandfather, who owned a junk shop in York, in northern England, and died in 1953. Gradel checked the death records and found that such a man with the matching name did indeed die, but in 1952. The ludicrously low prices and oddly credible backstory left Gradel comfortable that he had encountered every dealer's dream seller. "He was clueless," recalls Gradel.

Then, in 2016, Sultan1966 posted a piece on eBay by mistake. It showed a fragment of a sardonyx cameo dating from Roman times engraved with the head and shoulder of a girl stooping to her right. Intrigued, Gradel screenshotted the item. Sultan1966 quickly removed it from the website and said that it actually belonged to his sister, who didn't want to sell it.

Gradel thought not much more about it. But in 2020, he came across an image on the British Museum's website that showed the exact same item in its collection. Furthermore, the color photograph was recent. It suddenly dawned on Gradel: There was a thief in the British Museum. "And he was likely still within the walls," he says.

So began an antiques whodunit—whose cast of characters include an Oxford-based priest-cum-archaeologist, a handful of rare-gem dealers and some of the British Museum's most august researchers—that has shaken the premise behind the museum's most important reason for existing: that it is the best place to safely house some of the world's greatest treasures.

This summer the British Museum said that around 2,000 items had gone missing from its collection. The museum's director resigned. The police are on the case. So far, no one has been charged with a crime. But nations from Nigeria to China have used the scandal to further long-running requests to have items stored in the museum returned. The damage to the museum's reputation is potentially incalculable, and many of the allegedly stolen items may never be found.

The art world is full of tales of audacious heists involving high-profile pieces, from the former Louvre worker in 1911 who simply snatched the *Mona Lisa* on his way home to the two men who swiped Edvard Munch's *The Scream* from an Oslo museum in 1994, leaving behind a note to its directors thanking them for the poor security.

In this case, Gradel suspects, what happened was far more humdrum—and, therefore, more disturbing. The British Museum had failed to properly catalog thousands of its pieces. Meanwhile its curators had free rein over one of the biggest treasure troves in the world. And one had possibly gone rogue.

The 58-year-old Gradel makes for an unlikely Hercule Poirot. Sipping a tomato juice in a central London bar on a September afternoon, the academic rattles through the precise details of his interactions with the museum and gives an impassioned description of the engraved stones he has seen and collected over the years.

As a young man, the Israeli-born Gradel worked as a railwayman on the London Underground to pay for his studies. After studying archaeology, and a stint in British academia, which he greatly disliked, he decided in 2008 to trade antiques.

He started with books but discovered that it was already a widely mined market. He switched to a more niche specialty: gems from the Greco-Roman period. Only a handful of experts possess enough knowledge to sort ancient glass or semi-precious engraved stone gems from latter-day copies. Gradel, who has no office and works from a modest house on an island in Denmark, spends his days scouring the wares of auctions and dealers, trying to find mispriced cameos and intaglios that he can buy and sell at a profit.

Gradel has one major advantage over fellow dealers: a photographic memory. Peter Szuhay, a London-based dealer who has known Gradel for over a decade, says Gradel has memorized which hairstyles ancient Romans wore in different years, a skill that helps him to accurately date portraits carved into gems. "No other dealer would have caught the thief," Szuhay says.

Around the time that Gradel saw the sardonyx piece in 2020, which he suspected came from the British Museum, he made another worrying discovery. Back in 2015, Sultan1966 had put up for sale a fragment of a green stone showing the profile of a Roman man with a likeness to Emperor Augustus. The profile on the stone had a distinct lock of hair sticking out of the front, a feature Gradel noted was unusual for Roman coiffure at the time. Gradel lost the bid to a fellow dealer, who bought it for £69.

A few years later, another dealer, Malcolm Hay, who now owned the piece, tried to sell it. An intermediary sent it to Gradel to see if he was interested in the fragment, which measures roughly the width of a finger.

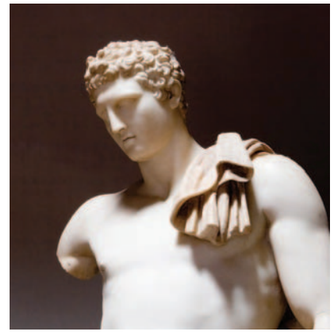
A while after, Gradel read a book by a Polish gem specialist that featured an image of a stone from a 1926 British Museum catalog blown up on a large scale. "I thought that looked familiar," he recalled thinking. There, in the book, was the gem with the same Roman profile and the same distinctive hairstyle. That, along with a couple of tiny scratches on the man's nasal ridge, matched exactly the piece Gradel received a year earlier. Clearly, Gradel concluded, they were the same piece.

Sitting in his study in Denmark, he then went through his payments to Sultan1966, or Paul Higgins, checking out his PayPal account. Though the seller listed his name as Paul Higgins on eBay, he had a different name on his PayPal account: Peter Higgs. At first Gradel didn't think much of this—he hadn't heard of anyone of that name. Then he called a dealer friend of his, Rolf von Kiaer, who had also bought items from Sultan1966, to explain the weird situation. "Ittai," a shocked Kiaer told him. "You do realize this is the name of a curator in the British Museum, don't you?"

Gradel felt the hairs on his neck begin to stand up. But the evidence accumulated. Paul Higgins's email was Bodrum1966@gmail.com, an oblique reference to an ancient Greek city in Turkey. Higgs, a curator in the museum's department of Greece and Rome, had once published a book called *After the Mausoleum: Hellenistic Sculptures From Bodrum in the British Museum*. Higgs's Twitter handle was @sultan1966.

Gradel was floored. Still, he had to be sure that the pieces he had seen on eBay were indeed from the British Museum's collection and weren't just replicas knocking around the antiques market. It would be no small feat: Only around 4.5 million of the 8 million estimated pieces in the British Museum have been cataloged online.

DISAPPEARING ACT The British Museum (center) said this summer that around 2,000 items had gone missing from its collection. Right: A Roman sard intaglio thought to be similar to missing items.



SET IN STONE Above: Gradel tracked the thefts in part by using his photographic memory of ancient Roman hairstyles like this one. Left: In 2002, an undercover journalist stole a foot fragment (similar to pictured), exposing security gaps. Far left: Amid the thefts, the proper homes for treasures like the Elgin Marbles are in dispute.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NOLI NOVAK; ARCHIPIX/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; GETTY IMAGES; THE BRITISH MUSEUM; GETTY IMAGES

Gradel emailed Martin Henig, an 81-year-old archaeologist and priest who is one of the world's foremost gem experts at Oxford University. Henig quickly dusted off the 1926 *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems and Cameos, Greek, Etruscan and Roman in the British Museum*, which he happened to have in his home library. Grainy images indicated the pieces Gradel had flagged were indeed original and had resided in the museum.

Gradel also raised the alarm with Hay. In 2020 Hay, a wiry Englishman from west London, went to the museum, which was half empty because of the pandemic, to meet with its deputy director, Jonathan Williams, and another curator from the gem collection. The meeting was slightly surreal, Hay says. The British Museum officials talked vaguely about how the museum had been bombed during World War II, which disturbed some of the collections, Hay recalls. After being thanked, he asked if he could see some more gems, but was instead bustled away and told they were all in boxes. Hay gave them the stone but left bemused. "At no point during the meeting did they say, 'This is our gem,'" he said.

Then—nothing happened. Gradel became obsessed with the idea that he had inadvertently traded stolen goods. "If I had given up on this, then I would have become complicit," he says. He flitted between despair at the prospect of the British Museum being dragged through the mud and feeling like a coward for not immediately naming the suspected thief outright. Higgs meanwhile was promoted to acting keeper of Greek collections.

In early 2021, Gradel decided to email Williams, laying out, in a somewhat manic way, his conclusions. "I write to you because of a disturbing discovery I have made, involving theft from the British Museum, apparently by one of your curators," he wrote. For months, he received no reply. Then Williams emailed back to inform him that his fears were misplaced, an investigation had concluded and that the gems he had inquired about were still in the collection.

Gradel then made a mistake. He shared his finding with Dorothy Lobel King, an archaeologist-turned-author, as he weighed the idea of leaking the news via social media. It later transpired that King went straight to Higgs to ask him about the allegation. King declined to comment.

Suspicious that a cover-up was underway, Gradel asked his dealer friend who had initially bought the green Augustus gem from Sultan1966 whether the British Museum had bothered to ask him about his purchase. It hadn't. Clearly the internal probe was a joke, he concluded.

In October 2022, Gradel got the contact details of a trustee of the British Museum and emailed him to warn him a thief was on the loose and the museum management wasn't doing anything about it. The trustee forwarded the email to the chair of the British Museum, George Osborne, who ordered a fresh probe. This summer the British Museum announced it had fired a member of its staff after items from its collection had vanished, including some dating back to the 15th century B.C. It said it would launch an independent inquiry into security and kickstart a program to recover the lost items. Days later, it emerged that the staff member fired was not a janitor or clerk, but Higgs. Williams also stepped back from day-to-day duties.

Higgs's son told the U.K. media he believes his father is innocent. Efforts to contact Higgs were unsuccessful.

The curator was a stalwart of the British Museum, where he worked for the past three decades. Higgs briefly gained notoriety as one of the museum's "Monuments Men" who helped identify looted pieces. In interviews at the time, he spoke passionately about his field and how he fell in love with ancient artifacts as a young boy. The 56-year-old did not appear to be living in great luxury. He was recently photographed outside his terraced house in Hastings, where he drives a Nissan Micra. Top-level keepers at the British Museum typically earn around £65,000 a year, according to recent job postings; middle-ranking curators make less.

In the aftermath, Gradel has been in contact with police and the museum's independent investigation. He says that upon opening a drawer, the British Museum staff found almost an entire collection of 935 individually uncataloged gems missing. Perhaps another 150 pieces with gold fixtures or mountings may have been melted down and sold off.

The British Museum declined to comment on the ongoing probe, or Higgs's alleged involvement, but said it was accelerating the cataloging process under new management. The museum says the vast majority of the missing items are from the department of Greece and Rome. It added they mainly consist of gems and gold jewelry. "Someone with knowledge of what's not registered has a big advantage in removing some of those items," Osborne, the British Museum's chair, later told the BBC. The museum has so far recovered 60 items and has identified another 300 to be returned. A representative for London's Metropolitan Police Service declined to comment on the specifics of the case but said the police force had interviewed a man in August.

Gradel, Henig and others involved still can't understand why anyone would take the risk to sell valuable items at such a discount, let alone a curator who had devoted his life to protecting and understanding these ancient artifacts. They speculate that it must be a volume play that went on for years in hopes that a drip-drip of small underpriced items wouldn't attract attention. "It only made sense if only the tiniest tip of a much larger iceberg," Gradel says.

ON THE HUNT
Gradel at work in his home office in Denmark.

Particularly shocking was the idea that some of these ancient gold pieces may have been melted down. The Roman cameo owned by Hay was chipped, indicating it may have cracked while being prized out of a ring mount. The 2,000-year-old ring Gradel had bought from Sultan1966 had nicks around the edge, which he suspects were caused by pliers to test whether it was made from gold (it wasn't). Melting down antique jewelry reduces its value, but once sold or made into new jewelry, it becomes untraceable.

Recently Gradel went back through his other purchases—in particular a cluster of several hundred gems he bought for £20,000 between 2010 and 2013. The seller, says Gradel, claimed in an email to be an elderly English gentleman who said they were heirlooms from an estate sale in northern England. Gradel recalls how, in 2011, a fellow dealer offered to meet the vendor on Gradel's behalf. But shortly before they were due to meet, the vendor's purported son emailed to say that the elderly man had passed away. The old fellow was called Paul Higgins.

Gradel says he is preparing to hand that collection of around 290 gems back to the British Museum, as he assumes they were pilfered. After that he won't devote time to hunting down the remaining gems on the open market. "My work," he says, "is done." ●

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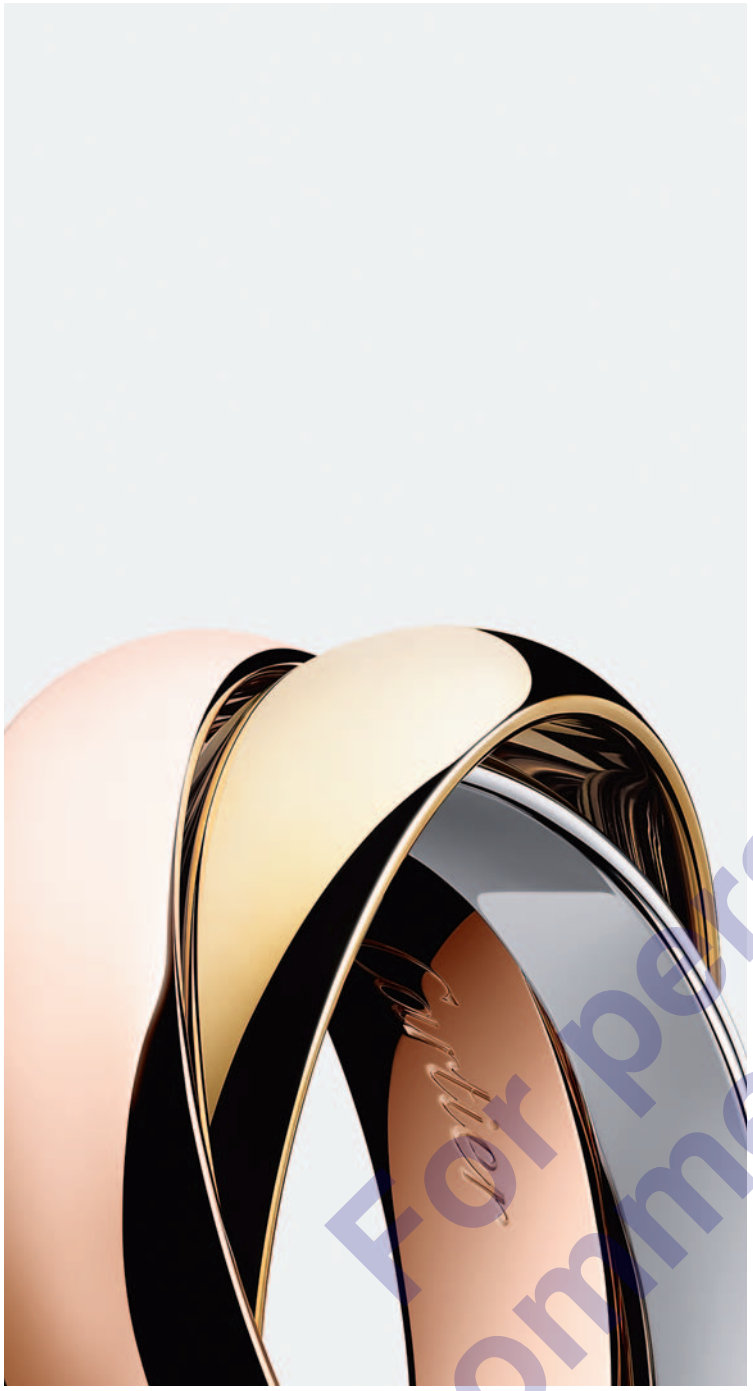

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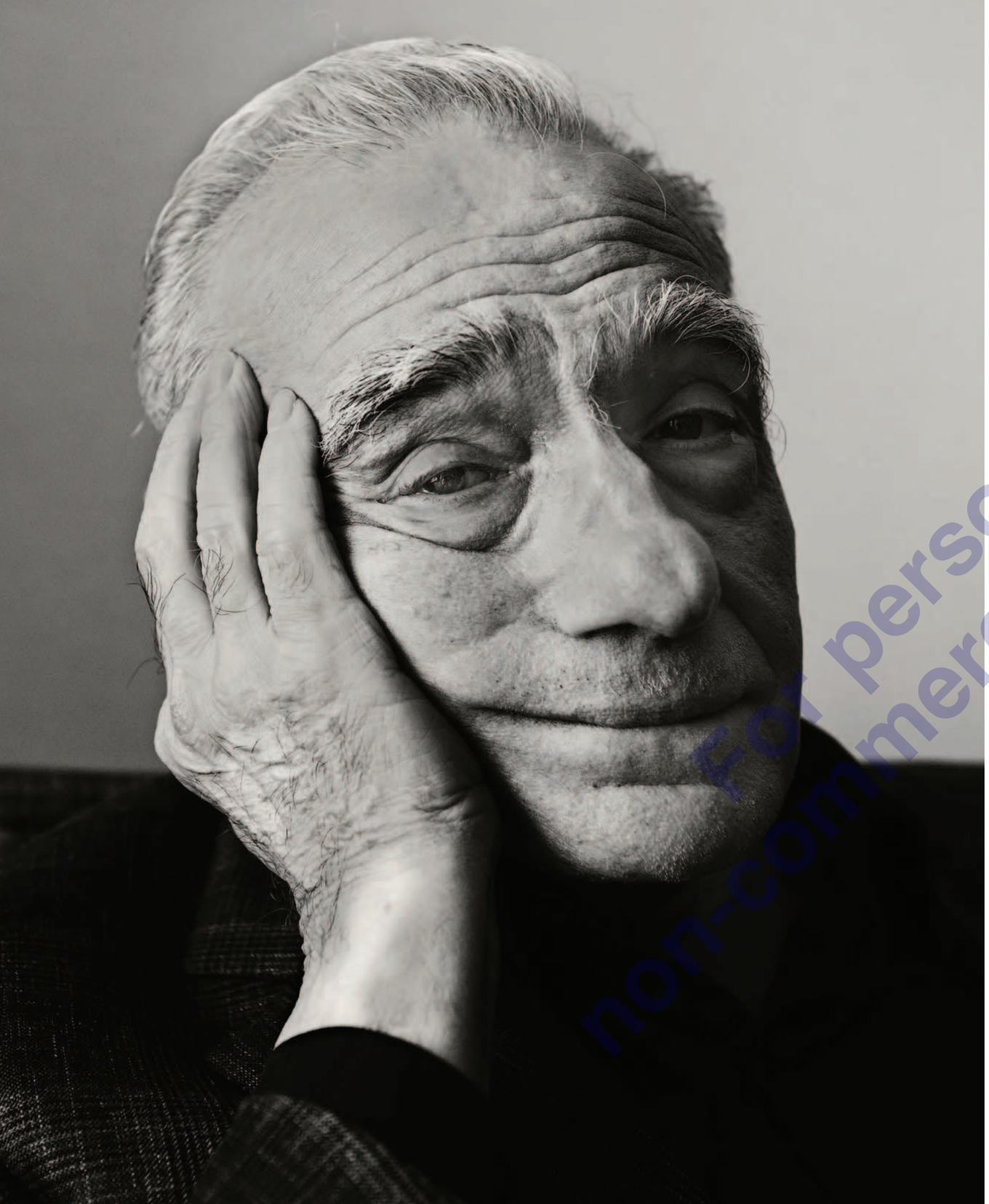
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

FLIP THE SCRIPT

After 60 years as a filmmaker, Martin Scorsese is still growing: "How far can we push? What can I learn? Not how to make a movie—just about life. Know what I mean?" Photographed by Christopher Anderson.



FILM INNOVATOR

MARTIN SCORSESE

The Oscar winner is widely regarded as one of the greatest living filmmakers. He still sees himself as a student.

BY JOHN JURGENSEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON

MARTIN SCORSESE has been making the movies he calls *pictures* for practically his whole adult life. But 27 feature films and 16 documentaries later, he says each time is like starting over.

"If I feel I'm just shooting the script—and it may be the greatest script ever made—I don't know what I'm doing. Why am I there?" he says, as the light in a 20th-floor room in Manhattan gradually shifts on a recent afternoon. "Can I go deeper? How far can we push? What can I learn? Not how to make a movie—just about life. Know what I mean?"

During the six years the director spent on his latest film, *Killers of the Flower Moon*, Scorsese and his collaborators scrapped a completed script to turn the plot inside out. He let his leading man, Leonardo DiCaprio, one of the world's most marketable movie stars, go from hero to villain.

When this and other radical revisions scared off the Hollywood studio that had backed the film, Scorsese leapt into a familiar but anxiety-inducing ritual: finding someone new to pay for his movie and put it out.

"You're asking them to trust you to get it there," he says. "But in reality, in life, nobody knows what could happen."

Scorsese also courted peril by putting himself in charge of a story that demanded deep understanding of Native American history, culture and pain. Set in 1920s Oklahoma, *Killers of the Flower Moon* is based on David Grann's bestselling book about a series of real events known as the Reign of Terror, when dozens of Osage tribe members were killed by outsiders coveting their valuable mineral rights.

In 60 years as a filmmaker, Scorsese has elevated the crime genre with humanity, granular detail and novel camera moves. He's explored the edges of spiritual faith in *The Last Temptation of Christ* and moral corruption in *The Wolf of Wall*

Street. He's parsed the greatness of other artists in documentaries about Bob Dylan, George Harrison and more. But for all his proven mastery, Scorsese, turning 81 in November, is still a student, searching for truths inside a story and how to frame them.

In 2019, when Scorsese traveled to Oklahoma for the first time to meet with Osage leaders and scout potential filming locations, he was stunned by the terrain. He recalls wild horses on the run and long drives with views dominated by prairie and sky.

With that landscape wide open to him, he says, "The problem was where to put the camera."

WHEN SCORSESE TALKS about films, his hands travel in movements as precise and contained as the *M.S.* monogram below the chest pocket of his shirt.

The hands hinge open. Fold closed. Cup the air. Point with palms pressed together, as he flips through the comprehensive film archive stored in his head. He mentions pioneering directors—John Ford and Allan Dwan, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Marco Bellocchio—as if they were mutual acquaintances of yours.

Scorsese's own visual language was shaped by the more claustrophobic scenery of his upbringing on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

"My idea of space was long, narrow hallways. Old, broken-tile floors. Staircases. Naked lightbulbs," he recalls. "Compartmentalized and closed off with angles and hidden nooks and crannies. That's how I see the world."

When he was a kid frequenting cinemas around the city, movies helped him make sense of himself and the swirl of identities in his environment. Italian and American. Catholic and criminal.

Oft-described scenes from Scorsese's childhood shape his origin story as filmmaker and future hero to cineastes: the local TV broadcasts of Italian movies like *The Bicycle Thief* and *Paisan* that he absorbed with his Sicilian family. The isolation caused by his asthma and the leeway his parents gave him to see lots of movies. The trips to the cinema led by his mentor, a Catholic priest named Father Francis Principe, and the discussions that followed.

The impossible trick that Scorsese later pulled off was to convert all this cinematic input to fiercely original output.

"I knew I had it together in *Mean Streets*," he says.

That third feature film, which Scorsese cowrote, burst from the 30-year-old director's lifelong observations of street-level drama in Little Italy. Hustlers, mafia hoods and loan sharks are the everyday people surrounding two friends at odds, played by Harvey Keitel and Robert De Niro in the 1973 movie.

A crescendo of critical acclaim, peaking with 1976's *Taxi Driver*, gave way to one of the lowest periods of Scorsese's career. He had a vision for a musical romance that his actors would improvise as they shot. His experiment got scrambled in the execution, accentuated by the director's drug use, ego and instability. *New York, New York* flopped in 1977, and Scorsese spun into more excess, along with depression and illness.

"I was lucky to survive it all," he says. "And then I threw everything into *Raging Bull*."

De Niro steered Scorsese back to work by pushing the story of boxer Jake LaMotta on him. The director orchestrated a study of male violence in black and white with dreamlike compositions of De Niro set loose in the ring. Released in 1980, *Raging Bull* yielded an Oscar for De Niro as best actor, and one for Thelma Schoonmaker, who has edited every Scorsese feature since. (It earned Scorsese the first of his nine nominations for directing; he didn't win until 2007, for *The Departed*.)

IT WAS DE NIRO, the muse of Scorsese's formative career, who put the next one, DiCaprio, on the director's radar. In 1993, De Niro had been impressed by the actor's performance, at age 18, in the lead of *This Boy's Life*, featuring De Niro as an abusive stepfather.

Scorsese has now made six features starring DiCaprio (starting with 2002's *Gangs of New York*) and 10 with De Niro. *Killers of the Flower Moon* is the first full-length Scorsese picture the actors have starred in together.

During the production, the director balanced their differing approaches to their roles: De Niro terse, DiCaprio expansive. "Oh, endless, endless, endless!" Scorsese says with a laugh, recalling DiCaprio's discussions on set and improvisations in his scenes with De Niro. "Then Bob didn't want to talk. Every now and then, Bob and I would look at each other and roll our eyes a little bit. And we'd tell him, 'You don't need that dialogue.'"

In the past, Scorsese has immersed himself in the worlds of Tibetan Buddhists (*Kundun*) and 17th-century Japanese Christians (*Silence*). But the open wound of Indigenous relations with whites in the U.S.—plus a loud cultural debate about who should tell the stories of historically oppressed peoples—made *Killers* especially fraught. Many rounds of conversation among DiCaprio, Scorsese and screenwriter Eric Roth led to the overhaul of the *Killers* script. To understand the movie they ended up making, it helps to consider the one they didn't.

The original *Killers* screenplay centered on the criminal investigation of the Osage murders by a fledgling federal agency now known as the FBI. DiCaprio initially signed on to play the bureau's straight-arrow lead investigator, Tom White.

But despite Scorsese's love of westerns, using the lawman's perspective just didn't work, he says. And by the way, having a hero named White would be an unfortunate irony for filmmakers trying to avoid Hollywood's white-savior trope.

DiCaprio suggested a heel turn. He would instead play Ernest Burkhart, a weak-willed man who marries an Osage woman and falls into schemes to kill her people. De Niro is Ernest's uncle, an Oklahoma cattle baron and apparent ally to the Osage who even speaks their language.

White, the federal investigator, does arrive (in the form of actor Jesse Plemons), but not until late in the story. Instead, Scorsese frames the film around the real-life contradictions in the relationship of Ernest and his Osage wife, Mollie Kyle, played by Lily Gladstone. He loves her but enables his uncle's plan to slowly poison her. Meanwhile, Mollie seems unwilling to see the evil in Ernest.

Along with those Oklahoma landscapes, Scorsese captured the manipulations unfolding inside Osage homes. "It put us on ground level.... The whole place is guilty. The whole place is complicit. We're complicit as people coming into this country," he says.

Casting director Ellen Lewis, who has helped Scorsese find the faces for each movie of his since *Goodfellas*, says excitement defines his approach to new work. "Every single time, it's as though we've never done it before," she says.

What leads Scorsese into unfamiliar terrain in his 80s? "Endless curiosity and openness," Lewis says. "His empathy, the tough view from where he came from and his spirituality, which is a huge part of his life."

Like any auteur who's been around the block in Hollywood, Scorsese has had his share of scrapes with major studios.

Paramount Pictures didn't like his solution to the *Killers* story, or the project's growing price tag. "The studio said, 'We backed the other version, we can't back this one,'" Scorsese recalls. And that was before the completion of the new script that would see DiCaprio playing a queasy character with bad teeth.

For the second time in a row for Scorsese, a tech company stepped in with more cash to burn and designs on one of the most respected directors in the game.

Paramount had also balked at *The Irishman*, Scorsese's ambitious return to the gangster genre. Netflix took on the project and the expensive visual-effects process of de-aging De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci for the decades-spanning story.

Apple helped save *Killers*. At the time it stepped in, the company was still trying to prove it could be a studio. Its streaming TV platform was new, and had yet to release the

FILM SCHOOL
Martin Scorsese, photographed at the Park Hyatt Hotel in New York City, shot *Killers of the Flower Moon* amid Oklahoma's open landscapes. "The problem was where to put the camera," he says.

HIS LENS
Growing up on the Lower East Side shaped Scorsese's visual language. "My idea of space was long, narrow hallways. Old, broken-tile floors. Staircases. Naked lightbulbs," he says. "Compartmentalized and closed off with angles and hidden nooks and crannies. That's how I see the world."

"THE WHOLE PLACE IS GUILTY.
THE WHOLE PLACE IS COMPLICIT. WE'RE COMPLICIT
AS PEOPLE COMING INTO THIS COUNTRY."

—MARTIN SCORSESE

Emmy-winning *Ted Lasso* or the Oscar-winning *CODA*. Apple partnered with Paramount to release *Killers* in theaters before its streaming debut on Apple TV+.

When *Killers* was in business limbo, however, Scorsese worried, in part because of thoughts about his family's future. His wife of 24 years, Helen Morris, has been dealing with Parkinson's disease for over 30 years. They have a daughter in her 20s, and Scorsese (who was married four times before) has two older daughters and two granddaughters. The precautions of estate planning can weigh on visionary filmmakers, too.

"During these dry spells, it's pretty scary," more so than before, Scorsese says. "We're at the end, in a sense."

SCORSESE HAS A SPECIAL section in his cinematic memory for mistakes in his own movies, including an entire hue in one of his masterpieces, says his friend Fran Lebowitz.

"He has said this to me numerous times: 'You know what's wrong with *Taxi Driver*, Fran? The color red. The studio wouldn't give me the money to correct the color. That's why it's unwatchable.'"

When starting one of the two documentaries he made about Lebowitz, a humorist and fellow New York City icon, Scorsese had a condition. "He said, 'All right, here's the deal—we're not gonna leave Manhattan.' And we shook hands," she recalls.

Though set in his ways as a person, Scorsese stays adventurous as an artist, she says. "Most people his age, artists or not, are not doing anything like what they used to do. To me, Marty's future work is of as much interest as his past work. There are very few artists that's true of."

He was in his mid-70s when people started asking him questions about his own mortality. For a director who has committed so many elegantly choreographed killings to film, death isn't a touchy subject. "I think about it all the time," he says.

His pace has been as busy as it's ever been in the past decade, starting with *The Wolf of Wall Street*, a tour de force of 1980s hedonism. He conveyed the corrosive effects of money in wild scenes of stockbrokers, drugs and sex. Then he explored the spiritual struggles of Jesuit priests and Japanese Christians in *Silence*. He helmed documentaries about New York Dolls rocker David Johansen and the *Rolling Thunder Revue*, a star-studded Bob Dylan tour in the mid-'70s. Beyond the films Scorsese directed himself, he helped produce projects such as Bradley Cooper's upcoming Leonard Bernstein biopic, *Maestro*.

Amid all this productivity, mortality barges in. "Every time the phone rings. Every time a text comes up," Scorsese says, he dreads bad news about a friend.

In August, Robbie Robertson died at age 80. The former leader of the Band and pioneer of the Americana movement had been a confidante and running buddy of Scorsese's since the mid-1970s. Together they shaped *The Last Waltz*, a landmark concert film from 1978 that was the Band's swan song. Both men were searching.

"The Band had broken up. My film *New York, New York* wasn't successful. What we went through was trying to find if we had any creativity left. We were helping each other that way, without saying it. He'd play music for me, I'd show him film, and we'd go from party to party around the world," Scorsese recalls, adding, "It's all the same party, I discovered that."

Leaning back on the couch where he's sitting with his legs crossed at the knee, Scorsese slips into an impression of Robertson during that time: eyes half-lidded, pretending to drag on a cigarette and watch his filmmaker friend rant.

"He was always so cool, and I was always so heated," Scorsese says with a chuckle. Then a long pause. "Oh, God."

The director dedicated *Killers* to Robertson, who composed the film's score and had shaped music for various Scorsese projects since *Raging Bull*. Robertson, who was enrolled as a member of the tribal nation where his mother was raised in Canada, created an ominous sound for *Killers* with ghostly electric guitars and Native drums.

In an initially cautious meeting between Osage leaders and Scorsese and his small team of producers, the director set the tone for the collaboration to come with lots of listening and storytelling, recalls Geoffrey Standing Bear, the principal chief of the Osage Nation. (Scorsese later sent them a DVD of *Silence* to show he was more than the *Goodfellas* guy.) From production planning to weighing in on edited scenes, Osage people were immersed in the making of the film, the chief says.

"It was our story. We told it. We just had the best people in the world at this time helping us do it."

Scorsese decided to open *Killers* with an Osage pipe ceremony and included such other rites as a wedding and baby namings. But moments of casual Native life in the film create a surprisingly powerful impact, Standing Bear says. In one scene, Mollie and her sisters huddle together at a party, laughing, teasing and chatting with each other—all in the Osage language—about the white men around them. Scorsese set up the scene but left the dialogue up to the actresses, encouraging them to improvise.

"They're talking Osage back and forth. That is something we just don't hear anymore, and we want it to be like that again," Standing Bear says. "That scene brought our language truly alive."

A brief exchange at the Cannes Film Festival, where *Killers* had its world premiere, indicated how fragile such partnerships can be. During a press conference (held in May, before the actors' strike), DiCaprio described the film team's efforts to do research and seek out Osage stories with "almost an anthropological perspective."

When asked for her opinion, Lily Gladstone, seated next to DiCaprio, chuckled a bit, then politely took issue with her co-star's word choice. "Native peoples are used to having anthropologists come in curious about everything we do," said the actress, who is of Blackfeet and Nez Perce heritage. By contrast, she said, Scorsese and company's artful take on complicated characters from history "pierces the veil."

In the Osage and the people who both lived among them and preyed on them, Scorsese saw a duality that he has been examining from different angles in almost all his films. In the Catholic obsessions of a *Mean Streets* criminal. In the righteous rage of a delusional vigilante in *Taxi Driver*. In gangsters shrugging off explosions of violence in the name of family and loyalty in *Goodfellas*, *Casino* and *The Irishman*.

Making *Killers*, Scorsese tried to grasp how his characters slid between trust and betrayal, love and murder, honesty and corruption.

"Next thing you know," the director says, "the undertaker is taking jewels off the bodies." •

GOOD FELLA
Casting director Ellen Lewis says Scorsese's empathy drives him. Production, Day International.

MUSIC INNOVATOR

SZA

With her genre-blending sound, the singer has dominated the Billboard charts, won a Grammy, sold out arenas and earned a reputation for brash honesty.

BY HUNTER HARRIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ETHAN JAMES GREEN
STYLING BY EMILIE KAREH

WHEN I MAKE a good song, literally it's better than sex," SZA says as she peels off her fake eyelashes. The Grammy-winning musician lives in Los Angeles, but tonight she's in New York, curled up in her hotel room at the Soho Grand between dates on her arena tour.

A manicurist soaks off her nail extensions with acetone. SZA apologizes as she pulls her other hand away, reaching for the lighter next to her. "I'm scared I'm going to light my nails on fire because of the acetone," she says. "If it happens, just everybody act normal."

The 34-year-old, born Solána Rowe, has become one of the most successful artists of her generation with her brash, anxious overshares. Since she signed to the rap label Top Dawg Entertainment in 2013, SZA has been churning out intimate, thorny, genre-blending hits about self-love and self-loathing.

Her debut album, *Ctrl*, hasn't left the Billboard 200 chart since July 2017. Her follow-up, *SOS*, dropped in December 2022; its 10 weeks on the chart made it the longest-running No. 1 album by a female artist of the decade. It also broke a record for most weeks atop the R&B chart, besting Whitney Houston's second album more than three decades prior. Between *Ctrl* and *SOS*, SZA won a Grammy for "Kiss Me More," her piquant collaboration with Doja Cat. Now *SOS* is expected to be a leading contender for album of the year at the next Grammys.

Songwriting for SZA is a way to resolve problems and also document them. "When I leave the studio, I feel better and empty," she says. "There's no better sleep than empty-brain sleep, and that can only come after I've been in the studio for 10

LET IT GO "When I leave the studio, I feel better," SZA says. Dolce & Gabbana feather collar and Live the Process briefs; right hand: her own rings; left hand, from left: Cartier ring, her own ring and bracelet, and Van Cleef & Arpels ring.

BRIGHT SPOTS
"I go through so many other moments in life that are amazing, things I could never describe," SZA says. Alaïa coat, Dolce & Gabbana bra, Prada shoes, her own necklace and ring and stylist's own socks.

"I DON'T WANT TO PUSH THE R&B AUDIENCE AWAY. I ALSO DON'T WANT TO NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE WHO I AM IN A FULL SPECTRUM."
—SZA

hours and done something good in there."

While SZA was working on *SOS*, she started thinking about the ultimate post-breakup fantasy. The worst thing that could happen to an ex felt like the only thing he deserved. "Like, 'Hehehehe,'" she says, mimicking a mischievous shoulder-devil, "'I might kill my ex!'" It was a joke, but her producer told her to go with it. The line became "Kill Bill," her first solo song to go No. 1 around the world. Her revenge plot has lived on the Billboard Hot 100 for 40-plus weeks: *I might kill my ex, I still love him though/ Rather be in jail than alone.* As for the ex? Presumably experiencing something close to being buried alive by SZA's success.

Yet she resents the hit. "The songs that I care so much about, that I tried so hard on, people be like, 'That's nice,'" she says. "But the shit that took no thought and came out of my mouth in five seconds? 'Girl, that's the one.'"

The five years between *Ctrl* and *SOS* elevated SZA to superstar status. She became more famous by being less present, a specter on music's periphery. Her fans are ravenous, rushing to stream her music and selling out dates on her first headline arena tour.

Meanwhile, she's obsessive about the music, and she takes every song personally. "I'll die about that shit every time," she says. Everyone wants more songs, faster, now. SZA insists on taking her time.

IT'S A SUNDAY NIGHT in September, and SZA is tired of being perceived. She spent the day co-hosting a Tommy Hilfiger fashion-week party at Maxwell, a members-only club in Tribeca where rappers, actors, influencers and models toasted with glasses of spiked green juice. SZA, who stars in a recent campaign for the brand, typically talks to fans on the sidewalk outside events like this, but she was feeling uneasy in the car, not up to all the meet and greets. After beelining for the door, she made a brief appearance at the party, then holed up in the private room downstairs.

"Sometimes when I'm in those situations, it makes me more anxious, because I'm like, Damn, they're about to judge me for being a bitch, or quiet, or looking rude," she says. "It's everything, it's not you, it's me, and I'm freaking out, and I don't know how to be any different right now." Wearing a tie-dye T-shirt and short-shorts, she rubs off her lipstick and puts on her glasses. The manicurist keeps working on her nails.

She grew up in New Jersey and wanted to be a businesswoman, she says, like "Angelica's mom from *Rugrats*." Her earliest music was passed to Terrence "Punch" Henderson, the president of TDE, which represented Kendrick Lamar until 2022. "[Music] really fell into her lap, as opposed to other artists where this has always been their dream," Henderson says.

When she sneakily plays demos for friends and collaborators, she's not sure what feedback she wants to hear. "If you accept my first draft," she says, "I won't trust you."

She says it happened with "Slime You Out," the Drake single she's featured on. "I just handed in the first draft to Drake, and he's putting it on his album," she says. "I'm scared because I handed in second vocals and he didn't use that. And now I'm like, 'Are you trying to sabotage me?' I know that's not true. I literally know that's not true, but that's how bad I feel about my first draft. When things come from an effortless space, I almost can't enjoy it." In late September, the single debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

A good SZA song feels a little bad; she will belt out the dark secrets. All the insecurities of her 20s made a home for themselves on *Ctrl*. *SOS* goes even further. The poet laureate of ghosting and getting ghosted, she reports live from the scene of her worst impulses. "The music is boring compared to the diary," she says.

SZA's emotions live close to the surface, and they can be hard to manage. She says she's tried hypnotherapy and talk therapy; she's seen a psychiatrist and also an acupuncturist. One practitioner taught her how to box breathe, inhaling, exhaling and holding on four-counts. "After I had box breathed myself for three months and didn't get better, I called her in a f—ing frenzy like, 'I'm about to commit myself to an institution today, I need help!' I said, 'What form of therapy do you do? DBT?'" (That's dialectical behavior therapy.) "She was like, 'I don't have a clinical form of therapy because I'm not a licensed therapist, honey. I thought you knew that.' It turns out she was not a board-certified therapist. She was a f—ing life coach."

Though her circuitous problems—love, heartbreak, ghosting, getting ghosted—have become signature subjects, she says she wants to write about the good stuff, too.

"I go through so many other moments in life that are amazing, things that I could never describe," she says. "I haven't even tried to find words for those things."

IN SZA'S EARLY EPS, you can hear the suggestion of the music she'd eventually make her way to: surprising vocal deliveries and diversions, the playful intimacy, a sound that defies genre. But blogs called her R&B, the de facto genre for anyone making music who happens to be Black and a woman. It confused her. She liked Blink-182 and Radiohead, and some of *Ctrl*'s songs clearly had alternative-rock influences. "I don't want to push the R&B audience away," she says. "I also don't want to not be allowed to be who I am in a full spectrum."

"From what I saw, no matter what happened, they're going to place her in this category," Henderson says. "So we can't even focus on it. If you look at the first song we dropped off of *Ctrl*, it was 'Drew Barrymore,' which was more alternative than R&B."

Henderson has supported SZA's career for more than a decade, but their creative disagreements spill onto social media. Two years before *SOS* came out, SZA told her fans to "ask Punch" when her next album would arrive. They sometimes think he's holding her music hostage, or that TDE is holding her back. Sparring online ahead of an album's release almost seems like a part of their process.

"The back-and-forth that you see publicly is because we are just different as f—. We've been with each other a long time, and he has a very different way of doing pretty much everything," SZA says. When she was younger, greener, she didn't know any better, or she didn't have the budget, or she didn't have a preference. Now, she says, "I'm grown and I be saying no. And he's not used to that."

Their exchanges can feel overwhelming to her. While making *SOS*, he drafted a tracklist that she didn't like. "He's my manager and I

“TO OTHER PEOPLE IT’S LIKE, THIS IS JUST MUSIC. IT’S LIKE, NO, THESE ARE MY PERSONAL THINGS.”
–SZA

CHART TOPPER
From top: SZA’s debut album, *Ctrl*, came out in mid-2017 and hasn’t left the Billboard 200 chart since. She released her follow-up, *SOS*, last December. This September, she surprised fans when she dropped an acoustic version of the *SOS* song “Snooze,” featuring Justin Bieber.

respect him, but I have emotional ties to these songs. I may not be Punch-level at arranging a sequence, but I still know what I like,” she says. It was worse on *Ctrl*, she says, when he stopped coming to the studio and oversaw the mix without her. “It made me really angry, because it’s like you’re digging through my underwear drawer when I’m not home, and I don’t like that. And to other people it’s like, this is just music. It’s like, no, these are my personal things. These are my period panties, basically.”

Henderson says it’s just part of their process. “You’ll hear about it publicly based on tweets, because it might be something that’s emotional in the moment, but then as soon as that moment passes, it’s like nothing has happened,” he says.

SZA admits that he’s often right—not just about her work but her personal life, too. “There’s been boys that I dated, and he told me from the time it started, ‘He’s going to break your heart. This person’s a snake,’” she says. “And I’d be like, ‘You’re crazy.’ And lo and behold, that person has broken my heart and turned out to do the snake shit.”

He was right about “Kill Bill” and “Snooze,” another *SOS* track that came easily enough for SZA to resent. It became the album’s second-highest-charting song after the music video, featuring Justin Bieber, dropped and Bieber guested on the song’s acoustic version.

“Justin wasn’t even in the video until the video was already being shot,” SZA says. “Him and Hailey [Bieber] were randomly the first people to hit me on FaceTime after *SOS* dropped.” At the video’s shoot, “[Bieber] showed up and he was down as f— for the whole day, and didn’t trip about nothing.” The video is dreamy, with shots of SZA in love with various men, then dancing on a robot at the end. They improvised the entire thing, she says, “except for the robot. That was pre-made and pre-planned.”

Those robots became a source of consternation. “The robot had cornrows, but that was my fault,” she says. “Apparently in a stream-of-consciousness talk, I said they should. I probably did say that shit! But when I rolled up and that robot had cornrows, baby, I was fit to be f—ing tied.”

Phoebe Bridgers witnessed SZA’s meticulousness in the studio while recording her verse on the *SOS* song “Ghost in the Machine.”

“She has a straightforward creative vision, and everyone just listens to her,” Bridgers says. “It seems like she’s the head of everything”—from song collaborators to music video creative.

Like so many of today’s pop stars, SZA has stans—obsessive admirers who pick apart her work and life. On YouTube, there’s more than one fan-made supercut of her sound bites, with questions raised throughout: Does she really hate cake? Were those freckles painted on?

“That shit is low-key offensive. Not low-key, it’s high-key offensive,” she says. “But what am I supposed to do? Post a debunking thread? That’s crazy.”

It’s reasonable to think that addressing their chatter would only magnify it. She suggests it’s part of her fans’ overfamiliarity. She is the lo-fi blockbuster performer, with fans who zoom in on her every movement. Her music is so urgent and personal, but SZA isn’t theirs to dissect.

“You would rather believe the TikTok thread. You would rather believe whatever Twitter thread; you could just google yourself and figure out. There’s clear instances when I talked about my freckles,” she says. She decided to sing about getting a Brazilian butt lift on *SOS*’s title track because she wanted to—not to confirm someone’s conspiracy theory.

“I hear crazy shit about myself,” she says. “I heard I had a facelift, I heard I had a nose job, I heard my teeth were fake. Now do I need to go out and get a nose job because you all made me feel like I need one?”

But she worries about her fans, too. “If they relate too much [to the music],” she says, “then they must be having a very hard time.”

On tour with *SOS*, the songs feel more honest when an arena is singing them together. She wants it to feel cathartic for everyone.

“When I’m onstage I’m actually so stressed about doing a good job, I can only lock in on one fan at a time per section. But on that note, that’s good though, because I’ve been knowing people by face and name,” she says. “Like, ‘Oh, I’ve seen you for four years, you’re coming backstage with me.’” •

TAKING HER TIME
“If you accept my first draft, I won’t trust you,” SZA says. Dolce & Gabbana feather collar; jewelry, from left: Cartier ring, her own ring and bracelet, and Van Cleef & Arpels ring. Hair, Devante Turnbull; makeup, Deanna Paley; manicure, Melissa Samuel; set design, Dylan Bailey; production, Tann Services. For details see Sources, page 162.

SPEAK, MEMORY
Hood, seated in one of the conceptual gardens his firm designed for the International African American Museum, believes landscape has the power to tell "stories people don't want to tell about places."

DESIGN INNOVATOR

WALTER HOOD

The landscape architect, who staked his career on the idea that public spaces should confront uncomfortable truths, has unveiled his most ambitious project yet.

BY IAN VOLNER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZORA J MURFF

CURRICULUM VITAE
This page, clockwise from far left: Rendezvous Park in Jackson, Wyoming (2011); Macon Yards, Macon, Georgia (2004); Los Angeles's Broad Museum (2015); John Robinson Jr. Town Square in Arlington, Virginia (2022); *Double Sights*, Princeton, New Jersey (2018).

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: MADISON WEBB PHOTOGRAPHY; HOOD DESIGN STUDIO; DAVID MOSS; EGAN JIMENEZ; MADISON WEBB PHOTOGRAPHY

OUTDOOR LIVING
Opposite, clockwise from far left: Hood's landscape design at San Francisco's de Young Museum (2005); the museum's east garden; the Nvidia campus in Santa Clara, California (2022).

ARMS FOLDED across his chest, Walter J. Hood is standing in the middle of San Pablo Avenue in Oakland, California, wearing the weary grin of a homeowner proud of his fixer-upper but with a long to-do list ahead of him. "The neighborhood has changed a lot since I got here—not always the way I wanted, and not always fast enough. They gotta fix that median," he says, pointing to a weedy strip in the middle of the roadway. "But being here, it just gives me this energy."

Next year, as his studio settles into a new office space on the block, Hood, 65, will mark nearly four decades since he moved to the area, arriving in California just in time to watch the state go up in flames. "The East Bay fires in '91, the whole O.J. thing, Rodney King," he says.

At the time, a fellow landscape architect surveyed L.A.'s unrest and declared, "Gardens will save us!" Hood recalls, with a laugh. "I knew that wouldn't help, that stuff." And yet, he was convinced that landscape architecture could do something. Since then, Hood has made it his mission to confront difficult truths in a profession more often associated with planting box hedges than with provoking social change.

In his acclaimed commissions, ranging from postage-stamp green spaces to sprawling corporate campuses, Hood creates environments that surprise and occasionally disquiet. At Princeton University, for example, his monumental sculpture *Double Sights* (2019) was erected in front of the former Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, emblazoned with quotes that simultaneously condemn the racial politics and celebrate the accomplishments of that institution's namesake.

Doubling down on this approach, Hood went on this year to unveil his most ambitious project to date for the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, a series of conceptual gardens that seem both haunted by and a tribute to the lost souls of the African diaspora.

"There are stories people don't want to tell about places," Hood says. After a long road, he's finally at the right place in his career to tell them.

HOOD WAS 8 YEARS OLD and living in his native Charlotte, North Carolina, when his mother died. "I was in my head a lot," he recalls. "I stayed in my room and made up stuff." At one point, his career-military father managed to draw his son out of doors long enough to build a doghouse. After that, the stuff in Hood's head increasingly looked like buildings.

Today, African-Americans comprise about 2 percent of landscape architects. When Hood first settled on the idea of becoming an architect, his newly desegregated high school offered a course in drafting, and although every other student was white, the teacher was Black. It gave him an opening. "I got ridiculed by all my friends," Hood says. But he stuck with it and excelled. At his instructor's urging, he went on to study architecture at North Carolina A&T State University.

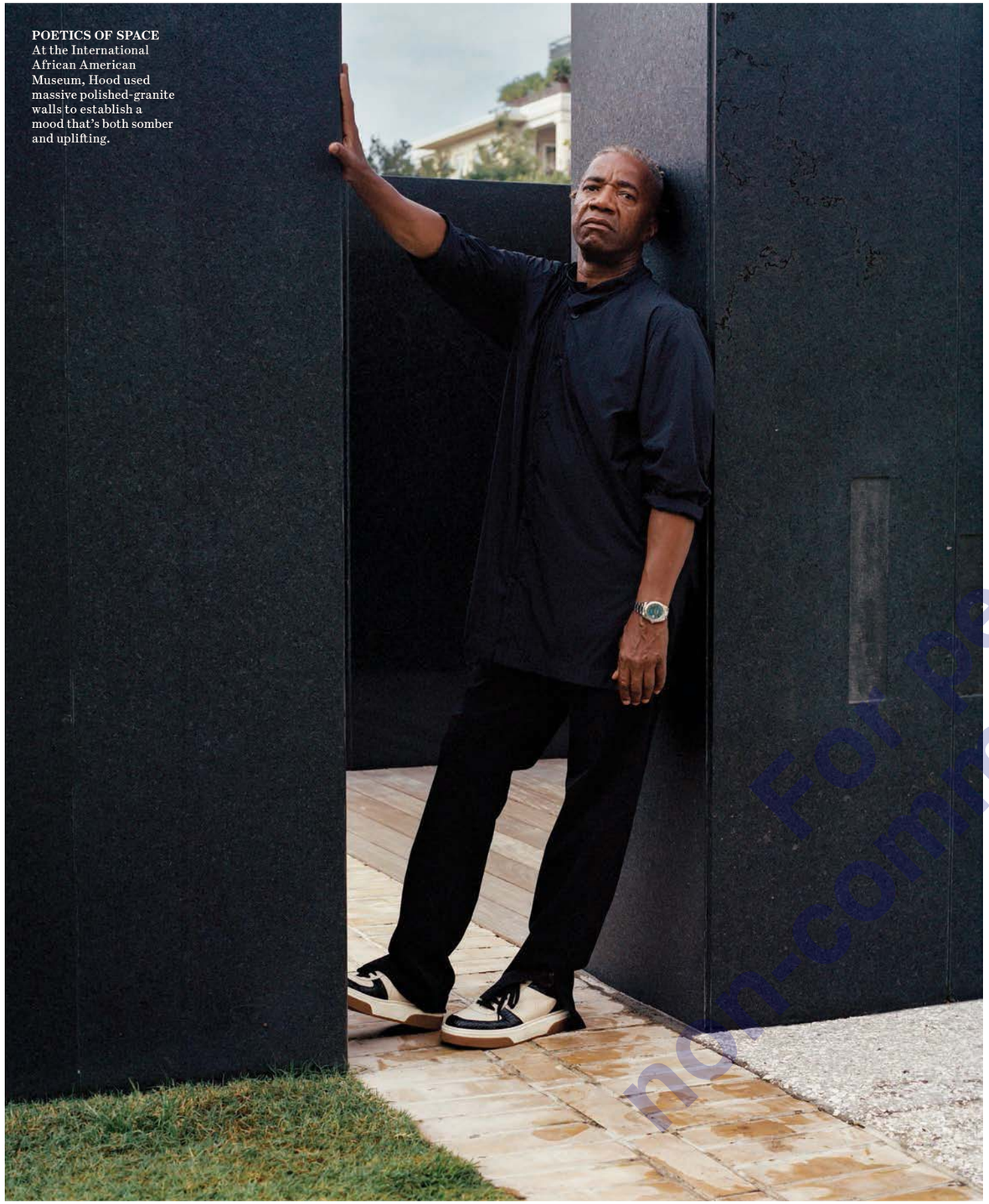
The technically oriented curriculum there didn't afford much room for his creative impulses, much less his entrepreneurial spirit. Neither did his first job, with the National Park Service. "My dad was happy," he says. "I was bored shitless." Through the '80s, Hood trudged from Philadelphia to New York and from practice to practice; at one point he spent most afternoons wearily marching through parks in Harlem, taking note of every splintered bench and dented lamppost so his employers could order replacements. Finding the career pickings slim, Hood decided to leave the private sector and head west.

As a grad student in the architecture school at the University of California, Berkeley, he started to find his bearings, though not exactly a home. "I felt isolated there, being Black," he says. "And every time I went over to Oakland"—a diverse, hardworking, occasionally rough-and-tumble city not far from campus—"I thought, Wow, this is a real community." It felt a world apart. Few of his fellow students visited the tiny loft he'd moved into there; fewer still came back a second time. But Hood discovered he was in touch with something vital. "I got the chance to experience double consciousness," he says. "I was seeing situations and spaces and circumstances that no one was talking about at school."

After securing an appointment to the Berkeley faculty in 1990 and launching his practice three years later, the landscape architect decided to stay put. In time, the city repaid his devotion with his first commissions, including the restoration of historic Lafayette Square Park and the playful, kid-friendly Splash Pad Park. No more than an acre or so in size, the firm's early projects in Oakland were a preview of things to come, each an attempt to make landscape a medium of communication that would allow the urban psyche to express itself.

How a landscape should speak, and what exactly it should say, came into focus for Hood courtesy of two interludes that put the finishing touches on "the liberal arts education I never had," as he put it. In the late '90s, during a stint at the American Academy in Rome, he sat in on twice-weekly excavations at dig sites, watching as archaeologists unearthed the city's ancient past. A few years later, at the invitation of curator Mary Jane Jacob, Hood participated in an art project in South Carolina; he went on to earn an M.F.A. at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In subsequent years, Hood's work reflected these influences as he came to favor sculptural forms freighted with historic meaning.

When Jacob first met Hood, she recalls, he was surprised at how much intellectual latitude contemporary artists enjoyed: "He was like, 'Oh, my God,'" Jacob says. "'This is what artists do? They have this freedom I don't have.'" This realization came into play for a breakthrough 2004 project Hood's studio undertook, Macon Yards park in Macon,



POETICS OF SPACE At the International African American Museum, Hood used massive polished-granite walls to establish a mood that's both somber and uplifting.

"THE POINT WAS TRYING TO FIND A HAPPY MEDIUM BETWEEN GETTING
THE SORROW OF THE PAST BUT ALSO HAVING IT BE A CELEBRATION
—WALTER HOOD

Georgia: a strip of roadway in front of one of the city's Confederate monuments, paired with stone banquettes made to resemble cotton bales—archaeology and art, in service of civic life and civic remembrance. Hood had always known he wanted to be an architect. Now he knew what for.

The following year, the studio unveiled a verdant, circular-pathed landscape for San Francisco's new de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park; a striking counterpoint to the building's eerie steel latticework designed by Herzog & de Meuron, the project brought Hood's studio to the attention of the international art world.

This led to more commissions, including another marquee cultural project, Los Angeles's Broad Museum, where Hood's lean hardscape feels like a seamless extension of the brash monolith behind it, an impression echoed by its designers, Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

In the summer of 2020, as the legacy of slavery and inequality took center stage in the national public reckoning following George Floyd's murder, Hood's practice was called upon to help with interpretive work for a new generation of architects and activists. "I was almost inundated by people reaching out, asking for help," he says.

Since then, he has been leading a global conversation about design in an age of social conflict: Before 2020 was over, Hood had edited a collection of essays, *Black Landscapes Matter*; the following year, he was in New York City, exhibiting a set of radical imaginary towers for Oakland as part of MoMA's *Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America*; this past spring, he was in Venice, installing a fragment of Carolina coastline in the Architecture Biennale's Central Pavilion. In the midst of it all, he found time to complete complex multiphase projects—including a sprawling campus for tech company Nvidia in Santa Clara, California—and push forward with others on the horizon, notably the wayfinding for the grounds of the Barack Obama Presidential Library in Chicago.

This summer, he returned to the Carolinas to pull back the curtain on a landscape he's spent much of the past decade trying to complete.

IN THE CURRENT Hood Design Studio—Hood's former apartment—a group of associates is seated around a table eating lunch as colleagues deliver a progress report on a campus redevelopment scheme for Los Angeles's Charles R. Drew University. Set in the middle of the Watts-Willowbrook neighborhood, the project involves a host of logistical challenges, from parking to planting to the future growth of the school's burgeoning medical program.

The presenters are scarcely underway when Hood pipes up with a question that stymies them: "Who was Charles R. Drew?"

After an awkward silence, which Hood appears to savor, one of the associates at last explains that Drew was an African-American surgeon who'd helped establish the country's blood bank system during World War II. Today his namesake teaching hospital is a vital lifeline to a long-underserved community nearby. Seen in this light, the elegant archways and walkways in the office's renderings are about more than just data points and sight lines—they also demonstrate, in visual form, the institution's ideals, its commitment to access and equity. "We're supposed to be all, 'Plants are pretty!'" says studio director Alma Du Solier. "But what we want to do is highlight the truth."

The International African American Museum, which officially opened in June, represents the apogee of that approach. It almost didn't happen. Years of logistical wrangling, including a struggle with the state legislature over public financing, kept the project on hold; only the personal effort of Joe Riley, Charleston's mayor from 1975 to 2016, ensured that Hood's vision for the site remained a part of it. "The landscape architecture is an essential element of the museum," says Riley, who privately raised more than $75 million for the project. "It elicits joy, sadness, contemplation, awe."

Long before the Hood team (along with the building's architects, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners and Moody Nolan) appeared on the scene, the grounds on which the facility now sits were soaked in historical significance. Centuries ago, the wharf where Hood's landscape took shape served as an entrepôt for tens of thousands of enslaved people arriving to the New World.

At every turn, IAAM's president a
Tonya Matthews, notes, Hood's des
plaza and memorial garden helps t
"tell the full story in its context,"
visitors not with explicit represe
past events but with provocative a
aimed at firing their curiosity.

Entering from the landward si
can move around or between the foc
elevated building, encountering a
installations whose meanings are
that still manage to land a powerfu
punch. Along the north end, guests
toward the waterfront by a waving b
suggestive of sub-Saharan traditio
of Charleston's own architectural
the edge of the harbor, they encou
low pool whose half-drowned figur
the images of human cargo in the
18th-century slave ships; along th
perimeter, a pair of granite wall
mysterious, hunched forms in white
either to emerge or hide.

Inside, the artifacts on display ru
from sub-Saharan statuary to 1960s
agitprop posters, spelling out som
umphs and challenges of the Africa
experience. But outside, everything
interpretation—including the hunc
who Matthews sees as ancestral
watching benevolently over her w
doing good here, right?" she asks ev
walks past them into the new buildi

Returning from his most recent
project, Hood seems to feel it hits th
he was looking for.

"The point was trying to fin
medium between getting to the so
past but also having it be a celebrati
He's intent on proving, to a sometim
audience, that landscape architectu
not only trees and benches, but als
and feelings, the things that ground

And he's determined to do it in
place with a scruffy vitality that's a
a source of strength. If he were lo
change, "all I'd have to do is mov
hills," he says. "Live a comfortabl
Walter Hood is already where he bel

BRAND INNOVATOR

KYLIE JENNER

The youngest of the Kardashian-Jenner clan is expanding her empire with the launch of a new clothing line.

BY RORY SATRAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CASS BIRD
STYLING BY KATELYN GRAY

BAREFOOT AND WRAPPED in a robe in a hushed Paris hotel suite, 26-year-old entrepreneur and reality star Kylie Jenner is seated at her altar: a vanity. Her longtime hair and makeup artists—who are also her confidantes—hover around her like discreet, black-garbed hummingbirds, making imperceptible tweaks to her long dark hair and flawless skin. They chime in occasionally, telling me where they ate dinner the night before (pan-Asian restaurant Diep), and where Jenner would like to travel next (Iceland). It's several hours before she has to be at the Acne fashion show, but for Jenner, getting ready is half, if not the whole, point. While we talk, she peers at her own reflection in the mirror.

Observing a member of the Kardashian-Jenner clan "do glam" is like watching Lindsey Vonn ski or Yo-Yo Ma play the cello. As it did for *momager* and *snatched*, the stratospherically famous family popularized *glam* as both a verb and a noun on its reality shows, first on E!, now Hulu, over 24 total seasons. For matriarch Kris Jenner, her three daughters with the late Robert Kardashian, Kourtney, Kim and Khloé, and her two daughters with ex Caitlin Jenner, Kendall and Kylie (there's also Robert's son, Rob), glam means getting your hair and makeup done. But it's bigger than that: Do glam, *be* glam, and you're ready to conquer the world. No one has profited more from the concept of glam than Kylie Jenner, the youngest of the siblings and the creator of a cosmetics empire that has been valued at over $1 billion.

For a makeup mogul, Jenner looks surprisingly bewitching without makeup. And she tells me that look is not as rare as one would think. "I love bare skin and no makeup," she says. "People think the opposite of me sometimes."

That misconception might be due to both Jenner's public persona—vampy, fashion-forward, all lips and hair and curves—as well as her business portfolio. She launched Kylie Lip Kits, later renamed Kylie Cosmetics, in 2015, based around the idea of matching liquid lipstick-and-pencil duos that she couldn't find on the market. Lip pencil and, she later admitted, lip filler, were ways she augmented her naturally thin lips. She sold a 51 percent stake for $600 million to

KING KYLIE
Part of a dynasty that has built an enormous fortune based on influence, Kylie Jenner might be the most influential of them all. Dolce & Gabbana dress and Coperni earrings.

BACK IN BLACK
Fashion and self-expression have always been Jenner's comfort zone. "Creatively I have such a strong vision of what I want to look like and what I want to do and what I want to wear," she says. Khy dress, Givenchy coat, Celine by Hedi Slimane shirt, vintage tie, Falke socks and Church's shoes (both worn throughout).

AGE OF INFLUENCE
Jenner's interest in luxury brands isn't just a passion. It's also burnishing her reputation as a discerning fashion plate with an ability to stoke publicity—and sales—for brands. Gucci dress, Skims bra and briefs, and her own bracelet (worn throughout).

"WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, OH, MY GOD, I USED TO POST EVERYTHING. THAT'S WHERE I GAINED THESE HARD-CORE FANS."
—KYLIE JENNER

beauty conglomerate Coty in 2019.

Jenner's business bona fides and net worth were called into question after she appeared on a *Forbes* cover in 2018 that said she was "set to be the youngest-ever self-made billionaire." Critics balked: self-made? The following year, the magazine published an article saying she had reached that milestone, then revoked the title the year after.

Jenner, for her part, says that she has not "inherited a dime" but understands why people responded so strongly. "I had such leverage to start with, coming from this famous family and having such a head start," she says.

Within a dynasty that has built an enormous fortune based on influence, its youngest member might be the most influential of them all. Jenner is digitally native and naturally experimental—her roughly 400 million Instagram followers outnumber the population of the United States. But TikTok, where she has over 54 million followers, is where she really sizzles, sharing videos of her children, Stormi, 5, and Aire, 1, her morning routine in her palatial bathroom, marches on the treadmill in Alo sets, hangouts in her Lamborghini.

Jenner's rapt audience has shown that it will buy her $35 lip kits, her $27 concealer, her $34 Kylie Baby hair-care set and her $125 Kylie Skin skin-care set. "The earned media value on the audience she's built and the media coverage that she receives is actually priceless," says Mae Karwowski, the founder and CEO of New York influencer marketing firm Obviously.

"The Kardashians are touching every industry," says Karwowski.

Indeed, the family businesses sprawl from Kendall's tequila brand, 818; to Kim's shapewear brand, Skims, skin-care line, Skkn by Kim and investment firm, Skky Partners; to Kris's household-products line, Safely; to Khloé's inclusive clothing line, Good American. Jenner has a mass-market clothing line with her sister, Kendall & Kylie, that is produced under a license and is sold everywhere from Walmart to PacSun. "Their audience comes and follows and spends money and mints them another really successful business," Karwowski adds.

So for Jenner, why stop there? In October, she launched Khy, a fashion line in partnership with co-founders Kris Jenner and Popular Culture's Emma and Jens Grede, a married couple who are also involved in the multibillion-dollar juggernauts Skims and Good American. Khy—a play on a nickname of Jenner's—will feature different guest designers and concepts throughout the year. The brand aims to produce investment pieces at an affordable price point. "The whole line is really inspired by my personal wardrobe, and the different moods that I'm in," Jenner says.

The first drop offers black faux-leather pieces and nylon-and-elastane "base layers," created in collaboration with the design duo Nan Li and Emilia Pfohl of Namilia, an edgy Berlin brand with a borderline-pornographic sense of humor. Namilia's offerings include a "micro dick spike bag" and a "porn star" bra top.

Nothing in Khy's first release costs over $200. The faux-leather pieces, including a voluminous trench and skintight dresses, feel very *Mad Max* meets 1980s Thierry Mugler. It's the wardrobe of a biker babe during the apocalypse—who happens to have internet access and a Pilates-toned body.

Emma Grede, an East London native who has appeared as a guest judge on *Shark Tank*, has been involved in the details leading up to the launch, even pricing items herself. She and her husband could be seen as the Kardashian-Jenners' strategic secret weapons; they see the work as collaborative. She lives five minutes away from Jenner, and the two meet in person constantly about the line.

The Khy office is on a "campus" in Los Angeles with other Popular Culture brands, including Good American, Skims and Frame, the denim line Jens co-founded. Khy has about 25 employees, including an in-house design team that works alongside the brand's guest designers. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Kardashian-Jenners and the Gredes are trying to build an accessible, social media–fueled fashion conglomerate—a Los Angeles LVMH.

AT THE CENTER of Khy is Jenner herself, who is a study in contradictions. She's a preternaturally poised mother of two who loves lip-syncing and doing girlish dances on TikTok. She's a global force in business who is also the ultimate mommy's girl; she once told James Corden that in addition to being in the delivery room with Stormi, Kris "fully took my baby out of the vagina." She has an outsize, sexy and sometimes brazen social media presence but is soft-spoken and reserved in person.

In an episode from the current season of *The Kardashians*, Kim and Kylie, two ultrasuccessful businesswomen, are filmed playing a patty-cake game like little girls. Cut to Kim's testimonial about her sister: "She's definitely obviously matured so much, having babies and growing up, but I haven't seen the silly Kylie in a while. She's back to Tumblr Kylie."

When Jenner was in her teens, she was a devotee of the image-sharing site Tumblr. Like any young woman, she was figuring out who she was, posting photos of cute pets, close-ups of shapely buttocks and lots of Rihanna looks. Her fans came to know her as King Kylie in her Tumblr days, a moniker she still uses. She describes the first Khy drop as very "King Kylie—who I am at my core."

Fashion and self-expression have always been Jenner's comfort zone. "Creatively I have such a strong vision of what I want to look like and what I want to do and what I want to wear. There's really no one telling me what to do," she says. Jenner works with sister-stylists Alexandra and Mackenzie Grandquist, but she is highly involved, noting that she mood-boards and scours vintage sites for her looks.

Her mother says Jenner "has actually been the creative director of her life and her wardrobe since she was able to walk." The momager explains how Kylie's room when she was little would look like a tornado had blown through in the mornings, with "boa feathers and somebody else's high heels, one of her sister's this or that." On weekends she would entertain her older siblings and parents by perching on the edge of the pool table, singing Shakira songs in wild getups.

"We love fashion as a family, and we love all the different brands," says Kris, remembering that she liked putting her children in matching Burberry outfits or Adidas tracksuits when they were young. One Christmas, little Kylie and Kendall received tiny Prada bags. Kylie, just a toddler, carried hers everywhere.

Today, that interest in luxury brands isn't just a passion for Jenner. It's also burnishing her reputation as a discerning fashion plate with an ability to stoke publicity—and sales—for brands that is rivaled perhaps only by her sister Kim's.

GO FOR GLAM
With her new brand, Khy, Jenner aims to produce fashionable investment pieces at an affordable price point. Khy coat and Skims bodysuit.

The European shows are also an opportunity for the family to observe the inner workings of extremely established fashion houses. Kris, who attended the Balenciaga, Victoria Beckham, Valentino and Loewe shows this fall, says that during fashion week she had a chance to pick the brains of creatives and executives like Jonathan Anderson of Loewe as well as Sidney Toledano, the chairman and CEO of LVMH Fashion Group.

Jenner's couture era ramped up in January of this year, when she attended the Schiaparelli couture show wearing one of the fresh-off-the-runway gigantesque lion's-head pieces from Daniel Roseberry's collection for the brand. The relatively niche, surrealist house went viral (spurred on further by the allegation that the animal heads glorified big-game hunting).

Jenner became an even more visible fashion-week presence this fall, appearing at shows in Milan and Paris from Prada to Schiaparelli. In 2023, she's appeared in ads for Acne Studios, Jean Paul Gaultier and Dolce & Gabbana Eyewear—as well as, of course, Kylie Cosmetics.

She took her first Prada show this September very seriously, "deep-diving" into the brand's runway history. She became fascinated by Miuccia Prada's 1992 show, with its Brigitte Bardot–goes-minimalist vibe. Jenner made a whole board of "just the glam.... They had these smoky eyes and all these updos." Inspired, she found a nude-colored minidress studded with uncanny fake flowers from the collection on a vintage site and wore it in Milan.

For this year's Met Gala, Jenner asked Haider Ackermann, a somewhat under-the-radar, true fashion-person's designer, to create her look. She had attended the French-Colombian designer's couture show for Jean Paul Gaultier in January in Paris, developing an interest in his work. "Kylie's obviously very aware of what she likes," says Ackermann. "She's very aware of her body and how she sees things, which is very intriguing.

"Our aesthetics are quite different," admits Ackermann. "But to find something in between, it was just a way to honor our friendship to do this together. She is determined. She knows what she wants. She's very confident in the choices. But so am I."

The resulting look was a striking off-the-shoulder blue and red gown that landed her on many "best of the night" lists. Ackermann remembers catching her eye in the mirror and feeling touched by the moment.

Ackermann connects Jenner's fishbowl existence to her obsession with beauty and fashion. "She grew up in the attention of the public eye from the age of 9," he says. "And she's always been very attracted to clothes, makeup, to everything that would make her world and imagination grow and be blown away. She's always been seduced by it."

Of course, there's another young Haider Ackermann acolyte in the public eye: the 27-year-old actor Timothée Chalamet, who wore a red Ackermann halter top last year that changed the course of red-carpet menswear to something looser and more feminine. While Jenner is not ready to comment on their relationship, the pair has been photographed recently at a New York dinner for Ackermann's collaboration with skin-care brand Augustinus Bader, making out at a Beyoncé concert as well as enjoying Honey Deuces and chicken fingers at the U.S. Open.

Jenner is a big fan of sci-fi and fantasy. In their teens, she and Kendall worked with ghostwriters on a young-adult sci-fi series about twin sisters. While she cringes slightly at the memory, she still loves genre narratives like *Game of Thrones*. She's seen *House of the Dragon* a mind-boggling five times already. And *Dune*, the Denis Villeneuve sci-fi saga starring Zendaya and Chalamet? Jenner smiles. "I do love that movie."

JENNER KNOWS her good angles (left side to camera), her perfect lighting (bright, head-on) and which fabrics and silhouettes look best on her. But while she's savvy about how she's portrayed, in her personal life, sometimes she falters. When her son was born in 2022, he was named Wolf Jacques. She changed it to Aire the following year.

"That was the hardest thing that I've ever done in my life," she says. "I'm still like, 'Did I make the right decision?' " She remembers, "The postpartum hit, and the hormones, and I couldn't even make a decision or think straight. And it just destroyed me. I could not name him. And I was like, 'I feel like a failure. I don't have a name for my son.' So it took me a while. And then the longer I waited, the harder it was to name him."

When asked how co-parenting with her ex, the rapper Travis Scott, is going, she responds, "It's going.... I think we're doing the best job that we can do."

Being a mother, especially to a daughter, has transformed Jenner's ideas around beauty standards. "My daughter has totally taught me a lot more about myself, and seeing myself in her has changed everything. I've had so much growth and am just embracing natural beauty," she says. "I'm teaching her about mistakes that I made and making sure she knows she's just perfect exactly how she is."

Those mistakes, she says, include "surgery when I was younger. I've never touched my face, but just even getting my breasts done when I was 19 and getting pregnant soon after, not obviously planning to be pregnant at 19. And I was never insecure about myself. I actually was always super confident and loved my body. I was just having fun. I was influenced by amazing boobs and was like, that's what I wanted to do, and had fun with it."

Now, she realizes, "I probably just should have waited until I maybe had kids or let my body just develop." She says that, for her, motherhood is about "teaching our kids to do better than us, be better versions of who we were."

WHEN JENNER IS IN MILAN and Paris for fashion week, she ricochets between her cosseted glam bubble, cozy dinners out with her sister Kendall and extremely public moments when she attends events and fashion shows. Her fans can be intense, screaming her name and capturing her every move with camera phones. Bodyguards are nonnegotiable.

Kris says she's reminded of the risk to her daughters when they try to do something simple like take a walk and are mobbed by fans. "I worry about the girls safety-wise," she says. "It can be very overwhelming."

Jenner does get scared sometimes by all the attention, but ultimately, she says, "I never get too stressed about these things because... fashion is supposed to be fun." She reserves her anxiety for her kids' health, she says, not the trappings of her glamorous job. After all, it's not so serious: "We're playing dress-up."

She says she's able to step away from the social media presence that propels her personal brand. She's gone through periods, especially during her pregnancies, where she's posted less. She'll go away for the weekend and delete all her apps for a while.

"As I grow older, I protect a lot more," she says. "I think when I was younger, oh, my God, I used to post everything. That's where I gained these hard-core fans, too, that are like family now and have grown with me. And I think just over time I guess the internet just got a little scarier maybe. And then I had children really young, which changed everything really."

After the whirl of Milan and Paris fashion weeks, with the multihour glam sessions and the screaming fans rushing toward her on the street, Jenner will retreat to the home she shares with Stormi and Aire. Her seven Italian greyhounds, who have their own "nanny," live out back in a miniature version of her house that she built just for them.

As she prepares for the launch of Khy, Jenner is also working on another, smaller-scale project. When October began, she texted Kris that she was excited to decorate her house for Halloween. Her mother beamed widely as she read the text.

"That's the secret sauce," says mother of daughter. "Just always knowing when it's time to go home." •

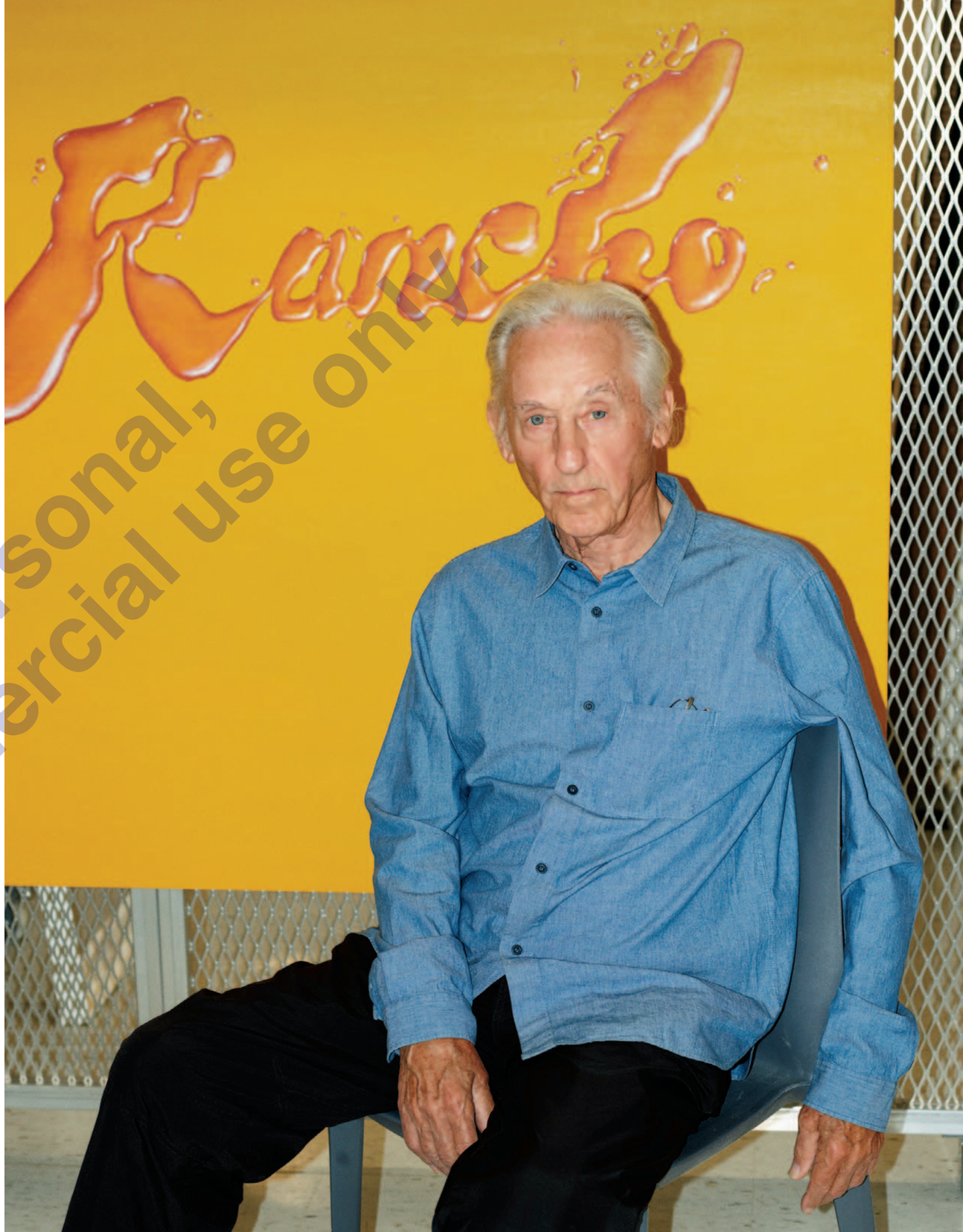
OF A FEATHER
"I never get too stressed about these things," says Jenner of navigating crowds of fans during fashion week. "Fashion is supposed to be fun." Bottega Veneta coat and stylist's own briefs. Hair, Jesus Guerrero; makeup, Ariel Tejada; set design, Lizzy Gilbert; production, Louis2. For details see Sources page 162.

ART INNOVATOR

ED RUSCHA

The artist paints words like “oof” and uses unconventional materials like gunpowder and chocolate to capture an ever-changing world.

BY KELLY CROW
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIO SORRENTI



COURTESY OF RUSCHA STUDIO

WORD PLAY
Ruscha, shown at right drawing cartoons in 1951, pioneered the notion of elevating American slang to fine art. Previous spread: The artist sitting in front of his liquid-looking painting from 1968, *Rancho*.

ED RUSCHA collects antique bricks. In a corner of the 85-year-old artist's airy, sprawling Los Angeles studio, Ruscha has arrayed his floor with red-clay blocks stamped with words and phrases that offer clues to their origins or intentions.

A few marked PAWHUSKA and MUSKOGEE hail from towns in Oklahoma, the state where Ruscha spent his childhood. DON'T SPIT ON SIDEWALK dates from a Kansas public health campaign during the 1918 pandemic that warned people against spitting on public walkways for fear of spreading Spanish flu. Ruscha's blue eyes crinkle as he grins and points to a brick stamped PRAY.

"It just happens to be the name of the man who made the bricks," he says, savoring the multiple layers of meaning in the word.

For over six decades, Ruscha (pronounced "rew-SHAY") has been making art that delights in the ambiguity and cultural anthropology of everyday language, particularly the kind spoken west of the Mississippi River. He's painted "I Can't Find My Keys Nowhere" on a vellum drumhead. He's painted "Figure It On Out" atop a Bob Ross–worthy mountainscape, its grandeur intended to serve as a backdrop befitting the slang.

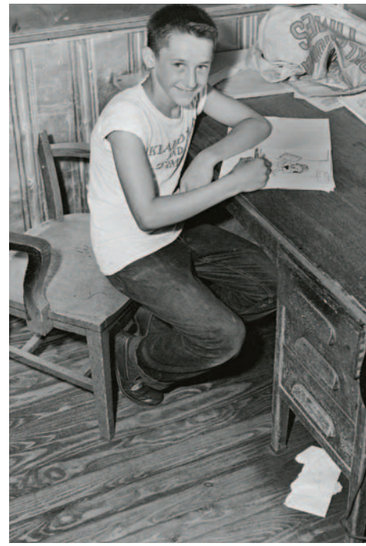
Dada artists before him may have clipped and pasted letters from magazines and posters onto art that evoked ransom notes, but Ruscha pioneered the notion of elevating American colloquialisms to the realm of fine art. Until him, few painters treated words themselves as worthy subject matter, a choice that curators say influenced generations of artists, including Jean-Michel Basquiat. In the early 1960s, he broke onto the art stage painting monochrome canvases festooned with simple, onomatopoeic words he admired from childhood comics like "honk" and "oof." Collectors still pay a premium for these wordy, early experiments, including 1964's *Hurting the Word Radio #2*, in which he painted clamps that appear to be actually squeezing a couple of letters. In 2019, it sold at auction for $52.5 million.

"You can't even see words in art now without thinking of Ed," says artist Senon Williams, a longtime friend.

Ruscha's oeuvre encompasses far more than mere wordplay, however. After World War II, a generation of young artists pivoted away from the bohemian garrets of Paris and looked to the bustling skyscrapers of New York for artistic inspiration. Ruscha, who left Oklahoma in 1956 for far-off Los Angeles, sought out an entirely different America—a vast, spare landscape that was equally modern yet largely overlooked by the New York School.

The scenery Ruscha captured over the next six decades tended to stretch outward like the horizon, not up like those big-city skyscrapers. He painted industrial buildings standing starkly against cloudless skies; he painted fixtures of the highway, from gas stations to guardrails. While peers like Andy Warhol enshrined Hollywood starlets in Technicolor silkscreens, Ruscha painted the back of the Hollywood sign—a hint that he understood the American dream, but also its dystopian veneer, better than anyone.

This fall, a life-spanning body of his work is on display at a major retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art, which finally anointed Ruscha as one of the country's most significant postwar artists. *Ed Ruscha/Now Then*, stretches across the museum's entire top floor and includes more



than 200 works that arc from his earliest wordplay paintings to re-creations of two Venice Biennale appearances to his more recent silhouette works, mountainscapes and portraits of wind-whipped U.S. flags.

"It's taken us decades to understand his originality and singularity," says Christophe Cherix, MoMA's chief curator of drawings and prints. "For too long he wasn't seen as central, but he is."

Ruscha may have once made a work titled *I Dont Want No Retro Spective*, but he showed up to MoMA's opening reception in September ready for this one. Dressed in a white golf shirt, gray blazer and black bolo tie, Ruscha chomped on a piece of bubble gum, sipped a vodka soda and greeted everyone from Pamela Anderson to John Krasinski. He hugged artists he knew well, including Jeff Koons, Louise Lawler, Neil Jenney and Jonas Wood, who called Ruscha his hero.

"It's an avalanche of ideas," Ruscha says of the show, "a big pileup."

Many of the works hailed from major collectors, including Christie's owner François Pinault, hedge-fund managers Henry Kravis and Steven Cohen, industrialist Mitchell Rales and the foundation for real-estate titan Eli Broad.

Larry Gagosian, who has managed Ruscha's career since 1993, says he sees similarities between Ruscha's work and that of modern master Edward Hopper. He prices Ruscha's works to suit his art-historical significance. Former Hollywood agent Michael Ovitz says Ruscha's works are so hard to get, he once shipped an

American flag—and vodka—to Ruscha's studio in hopes of snagging the chance to buy one of the artist's rare paintings of the U.S. flag. "I was relentless," Ovitz says, but he succeeded. The flag painting he owns features two words: "Odd Ad."

RUSCHA SAYS HIS work hinges mostly on his abiding curiosity about the passage of time—how the language and landscapes that matter to him alter or stay the same, and why. As far-ranging and coolly detached as his pieces may appear, much of his art is subtly biographical.

"I like the idea that things are changing," he says. "That's not always negative."

Born in 1937 in Omaha, Nebraska, Ruscha moved with his family to Oklahoma City when he was 4 years old. He delivered newspapers and attended Catholic Mass—his father was devout—and he says his biggest artistic influence early on was Bob Bonaparte, a neighbor two doors down who liked to make his own cartoon drawings in his spare time.

"His enthusiasm was good to see," he says. "I also began to fall in love with ink, just as a material. I liked the way you could spill it and it would dry up and crack. It was super black so it also had a visual ring to it."

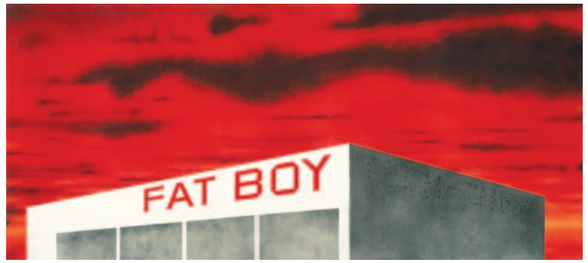
By high school, Ruscha was leafing through library books on artists and practicing the show-card lettering fonts used among commercial-sign painters. After graduating in 1956, he and his musician friend Mason Williams drove out to Los Angeles, and he enrolled at Chouinard Art Institute, now CalArts.

He was tickled to encounter a city brimming with beatniks wearing berets and playing bongo drums. He earned money working for a local printing press and took on odd jobs such as opening cans of tuna and making coffee at a popular local lunch spot, Al Cassell's Patio. Artists Joe Goode, a fellow Oklahoman, and Larry Bell also worked there, he says.

"All I needed to do was make $50 a week," Ruscha says, "and I could cruise to glory."

Ferus Gallery, a small gallery founded in 1957 that showed Andy Warhol's breakout *32 Campbell's Soup Cans* for the first time in 1962, quickly became the other locus of his attention. "Getting a show there was paramount for me," he says. Like Warhol, he was interested in leveraging popular culture for finer-art purposes, but his job setting type steered him to examine the terrain of letters or logos rather than focus on the grocery aisle. He also wanted to nod to the "folly and amusement" of comics, he says. Exclamatory words like "oof" and "honk" started to look like subject matter.

Even as he started painting, he was regularly driving or hitchhiking back home to visit



EVERYDAY SCENES
This row, from far left: *Annie, Poured From Maple Syrup* (1966); *Standard Station, Ten-Cent Western Being Torn in Half* (1964); *Honk* (1962).

BUILD UP
Top row, from far left: *The Old Tech-Chem Building* (2003); *The Old Tool & Die Building* (2004); *Blue Collar Trade School* (1992).

"HE'S THE KING OF L.A. FOR MANY REASONS, BUT HE'S MORE THAN THAT. HE'S AMERICA."
—KENNY SCHARF

DEADPAN
This row, from far left: *I Dont Want No Retro Spective* (1979); *Our Flag* (2017); *Pay Nothing Until April* (2003).

ART TALK
This row, from left: *Chocolate Room* (1970) at the 35th Venice Biennale; *Oof* (1962, reworked 1963); *The Back of Hollywood* (1977).

family in Oklahoma. As it did for Jack Kerouac, being on the road sharpened the contrast between his old world and new. He winced when he read that sociologists were predicting that the popularization of television would cause Americans to give up their regional accents in favor of one homogenized dialect. "That would just be too bad," he says.

Perhaps, he began to think, he should keep a log of sayings and slang from back home he would miss. Enamored with Marcel Duchamp's readymade approach to treating found objects as art, Ruscha also started photographing and self-publishing books, the first of which depicted the gas stations he saw on these cross-country trips—his way of time-stamping Route 66's meandering, modern landscape.

When the famed Ferus Gallery gave Ruscha his first solo show in 1963, it included *Smash* but could hardly be described as such. Friends applauded it, but nothing sold, he says. The same year, Ruscha painted *Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas*, a gleaming pit stop with cherry-red gas tanks and yellow spotlight shafts shooting up from behind the station into pitch-blackness. Ruscha was floored when actor Dennis Hopper bought it for $1,000—the artist's first major sale, he says.

"Dennis had enormous enthusiasm for what was going on in the art world, but then to also have enough money to buy art, well, that was a shock," Ruscha says.

Painting profitable gas stations could have become his singular path forward; instead, he self-published more books cataloging local swimming pools and apartment buildings. He painted the new Los Angeles County Museum of Art so that it appeared ablaze. Dealer Irving Blum marketed a show of the work by saying the city's fire marshal would attend.

And he pushed his word paintings into wackier forms, painting C-clamps on words so some letters appeared twisted, painting others so that they appeared liquefied, such as *Annie, Poured From Maple Syrup*. It was an easy leap to experiment with actual syrup.

"Musicians never tire of their tools, but sometimes I do—and I feel like I've got to do something else instead of approaching the same thing with oil paint," he says. "Why not have something else that makes marks?"

Gunpowder, caviar, blood, chewing tobacco, Vaseline, urine, radishes, whiskey—basically anything he thought might stain paper formed his palette for the next few years.

WHILE INSTALLING the MoMA retrospective, Ruscha and Cherix watched as art handlers suspended a 12-foot-long paper sheet onto which the artist had inscribed the word "spread" in tobacco in 1972. Cherix told the artist he was happy to see its chalky brown hue intact. Ruscha told Cherix he remembered the tobacco flaking off as he'd scrubbed it in more than 50 years ago.

Time wasn't so kind to another work nearby, *Satin*, whose white Gothic letters stand against a rose-petal stain. Ruscha says it was once bright pink; it has since faded to something closer to a slushy peach. "I didn't think about the materials when I was making them," he told Cherix. "I was just having fun."

Later, Cherix says he's come to learn that Ruscha regularly approaches his artistic practice with the experimental curiosity of a scientist. When researching Ruscha's travels over the years, Cherix noticed that the artist almost always photographs buildings from the outside in, an observer rather than a participant peering out.

"He's the strangest traveler because he's not sightseeing," Cherix says. "He's picking out empty shop windows."

There's also a meticulousness to the way he catalogs his surroundings: Between 1965 and 2001, Ruscha mounted a camera atop the bed of his pickup truck and took hundreds of thousands of photos of Sunset Boulevard—his ode to a changing streetscape, presaging Google Earth, that's now hailed by urban planners and still being digitized by the Getty Research Institute. He said the boulevard's nickname, the Sunset Strip, reminded him of an unfurling roll of film and merited a longer—years longer—look.

Artist Kenny Scharf, who grew up in Los Angeles, says Ruscha's approach helps Los Angelenos see their own city more clearly, without the tempting varnish of palm-tree romanticism. "He defines a lot of this city for me, and he's influenced my thinking about landscape and iconographic architecture," Scharf says. "He's the king of L.A. for many reasons, but he's more than that. He's America."

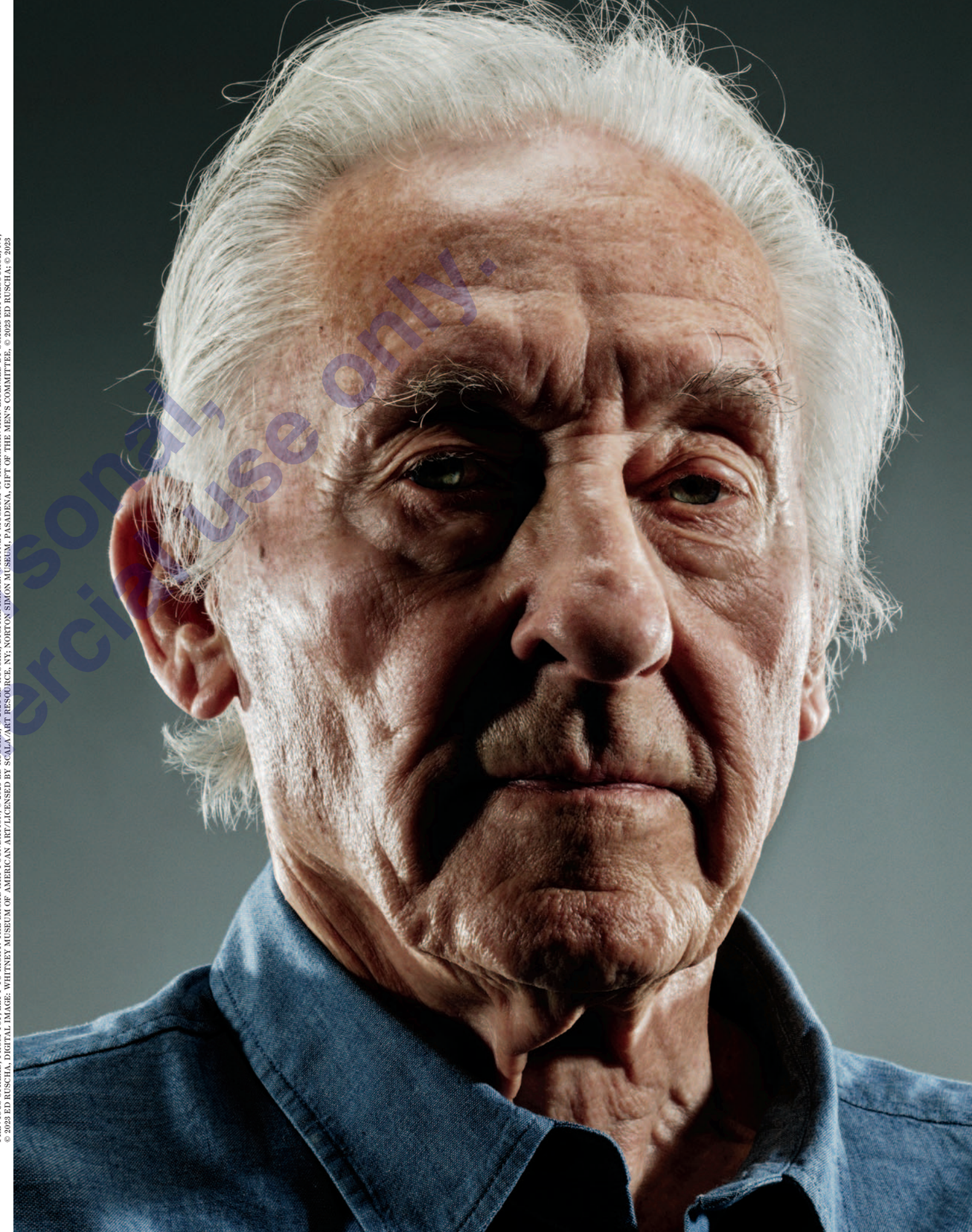
Ruscha still goes to his studio just about every day, aided occasionally by his brother, Paul, and son, Eddie, and another artist, Michael Lombardo, who also waters the small orchard of fruit trees Ruscha grows out back. Nestled nearby under a carport, there's a 1939 Ford he bought for $40 in 1959. It still runs, he says.

He never felt the urge to scale up his studio to factory proportions with dozens of assistants. "My production doesn't call for that," he says. He prefers to work, and live, simply. His wife, Danna, was an animator for Hanna-Barbera when they met in 1965. They married, divorced and then remarried in 1987. They used the same Las Vegas chapel both times.

Ruscha says he still struggles to unpack why certain words or vistas appeal to him. He's long since given up worrying about the loss of American regional dialects, and he doesn't try to keep track of teenagers' changing slang. He doesn't purposefully seek to elevate obscure spaces, though he does shy away from painting the most identifiable thing, he says. He prefers the slightly absurd, the mysterious.

"The world of science is a good way to chart the progress of man, in that disbelievable things can be shaken up and come together differently, like molecules," he says.

"Logic," he adds, "is not always part of the equation." •



A NEW OUTLOOK
Julia Louis-Dreyfus has long made people laugh. Now she brings newfound wisdom to fresh projects. Prada coat and dress.

ENTERTAINMENT INNOVATOR

JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS

The comedian, famous for *Seinfeld* and *Veep*, knows that laughter really is the best medicine.

BY ELLEN GAMERMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX FARAGO STYLING BY REBECCA RAMSEY

JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS is laughing about the time she had to eat Death.

Sitting in a Manhattan restaurant, waiting for her poached-eggs-no-home-fries, she's talking about her role as a fiercely protective mother in her new movie, *Tuesday,* a visual effects–filled drama in which Death takes the form of a mystical parrot. At one point in the mother's quest to protect her terminally ill daughter from the bird, she stuffs its entire body into her mouth. Louis-Dreyfus actually chewed black cotton candy to create the moment.

And you know what? "It was delicious."

Most funny people will say that where there's laughter, there's usually pain. Louis-Dreyfus knows the reverse is also true. Even while she explores new emotional depths in her work, with no less than mortality as her co-star, she can't help but find the funny. It turns out, you can take the girl out of the comedy, but you can't take the comedy out of the girl.

The actor with an epic Emmy haul has been instrumental in creating a new era of screen humor, the kind built on horrible people not realizing how horrible they are—Elaine Benes kidnapping a dog, Selina Meyer sabotaging her daughter's wedding, that kind of thing. As she exposes the truths inside human foibles, she creates characters so indelible it's hard to believe they're not out there at this very moment making somebody miserable.

Now the comedy icon is bringing her singular point of view to more serious projects involving questions of marital strife, family tragedy and the wisdom of older women. The turn reflects, in part, where she is in her life right now.

"I have a lot of experience and I can bring it to bear," she says. "And I'm really interested in trying new things."

It's been five years since Louis-Dreyfus finished treatment for stage-two breast cancer. She used to feel immortal, she says, but not anymore. With the relief of remission comes a determination to make her next years count. "I find myself living more mindfully," she says. "It's not like it's yakking at me all the time, but there's more laser focus."

Her performance in *Tuesday,* the first feature film from Croatian director Daina Oniunas-Pusić, received warm reviews at the 2023 Telluride Film Festival. This year's comedy drama *You Hurt My Feelings*, in which she plays a writer wounded by her husband's blunt assessment of her midcareer work, was a critical darling. She's pushing herself into new types of roles, too, appearing as the scheming Valentina Allegra de Fontaine in three recent Marvel projects and set to return in the studio's forthcoming *Thunderbolts*.

Louis-Dreyfus's latest project is *Wiser Than Me,* her first podcast and her most personally revealing work yet. She wants to know how to think about old age before she gets there. So every episode, she gets schooled on life by self-actualized women in their 70s, 80s and 90s.

With Mick Jagger rooster-strutting into his 80s, Martha Stewart splashed on the *Sports*

Illustrated swimsuit cover and a "Golden Bachelor" making his journey on TV, her interest is well timed. *Wiser Than Me* was No. 1 on Apple's overall U.S. podcast chart for nearly a month after launching in April, according to the show's producer, Lemonada Media.

At 62, Louis-Dreyfus is still in her second act but eager to learn about the third, bringing on guests such as designer Diane von Furstenberg, 76, singer Darlene Love, 82, and comedy icon Carol Burnett, 90.

The old ladies are talking, she's listening, and the show's a hit.

JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS is 5 feet 3 inches, which wouldn't be worth mentioning except that she seems far too petite to contain the powerful women she's played. Elaine with her "Get Out!" shoves in *Seinfeld*, Christine Campbell fending off smug class moms in *The New Adventures of Old Christine* and Vice President Selina Meyer inventing new forms of profanity in *Veep*. These are people intent on bending the world to their will. They are not dainty women.

But Louis-Dreyfus, in person, is. On an overcast morning in September, she's wearing a polka-dot silk blouse with a ruffle collar. A Clare V. fanny pack with a woven zigzag pattern crosses her body—she says she's "cuckoo bananas" for it—and she wears Nili Lotan jeans under a trim coat from A.P.C. Around her neck hangs an enamel pansy locket that holds the tiny faces of her two now-adult sons. Like its strong clasp that can't be easily pried open, she too has a lockdown feature, and she has spent years protecting parts of herself and her family from public consumption.

She arrives at the restaurant just after a woman with two enormous dogs gets up from breakfast and leads them out on leashes. I would have loved to ask, What would Elaine say about dogs in a white-tablecloth dining room? But this is not an interview where she even utters the word *Seinfeld*. It's by necessity, given the strike rules the actors' union has laid out regarding promotion of much of its members' screen work. Some projects can be publicized via interim agreements with the union.

So we start talking about one of those titles, *Tuesday*, her upcoming art-house drama revolving around the fear of death. It must be said, to kick off breakfast by discussing a movie about death gets into tricky territory for all concerned. And by all concerned, I mean me. Of all the things Louis-Dreyfus gets thrown in interviews, a reporter choking up before the coffee's cold probably isn't one of them.

I apologize. "No, no, listen," she says, accepting the rupture of journalism's fourth wall. "Listen. From one woman to another, don't worry about it. I totally get it." We talk about workplace emotions. "Aren't we lucky?" she says. "We have them."

One of her idols, Carol Burnett, says comedians have to understand the human condition as profoundly as any grief-ready thespian. "I think it's a misperception about comic actors, whether it's female or male, that that's all they can do, which is obviously not the case," Burnett tells me. "Comedic actors actually do better at doing drama than a dramatic actor does comedy."

When taking on a role, Louis-Dreyfus doesn't see much distinction between projects like *Veep* and *Tuesday* beyond the subject matter. "The approach to it is actually, believe it or not, quite similar," she says. "You're trying to find your own truthful way into the story."

Louis-Dreyfus has been on the East Coast visiting family including her 89-year-old mother, Judith Bowles, who still lives in Washington, D.C., where the actor grew up. Her parents divorced when she was a baby, and by the time she was in elementary school, she regularly split her time, flying up to see her dad in New York City. Her multimillionaire father, Gérard Louis-Dreyfus, who later went by the first name William, helmed the global commodities trading firm Louis Dreyfus Group. Louis-Dreyfus has beaten back internet-fueled rumors that her dad was a billionaire, arguing that the firm's wealth was not the same as her father's.

And though she says Ted Turner once handed her $100 when she noted that she was not an owner of *Seinfeld* and therefore her finances were not quite as towering as he might assume, she can, of course, write her own ticket. She lives in Santa Barbara, California, with writer-producer-director Brad Hall, her husband of 36 years. The two met when they were at Northwestern University. She joined the project he co-founded, the Practical Theatre Company.

She left college early after getting scouted with Hall for *Saturday Night Live*. In 1982, she became what was then the youngest-ever cast member at 21. Eddie Murphy was a marquee player, but the last of the show's original stars were a couple years gone, and *SNL* creator Lorne Michaels had taken a break from the job. Louis-Dreyfus wasn't thriving—there was an atmosphere of casual drug use she never got into, she has said, and too few of her skits made it on air—but it was there that she met writer Larry David, future co-creator of *Seinfeld*.

She stayed on *SNL* for three years, then launched a film career that included parts in mid-1980s titles including Woody Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters* and the controversial comedy *Soul Man*, starring a white male actor in blackface.

In 1989, she was cast on *Seinfeld*. Her first line in what would be roughly 170 episodes: "Cocoon Two: The Return," she says, looking at a VHS box in a video store. She and Jerry make fun of the movie about old people leaving a planet with eternal life. "I guess they didn't like it up there," Elaine says. Jerry imagines they missed the Chinese food: "I gotta have a lo mein!" The two promptly move on to mock the cover of a porno a few stands down. She has described the delightful rebellion of a TV format that was more conversation than setup, joke, setup, joke, and it's easy to feel the subversive energy in that video aisle. In 1998, the *Seinfeld* finale was watched by an audience of at least 76 million—more than one out of every four people in America at the time.

Louis-Dreyfus won her first Emmy with the show. After a brief flop with *Watching Ellie*, a sitcom created by Hall about a nightclub singer, she nabbed her second Emmy win with *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, the chronicles of a single mom who has amicably split from her husband. In 2012, two years after that sitcom ended, she started a record-breaking run with HBO's political satire *Veep*, winning six Emmys for her performance, the most ever awarded for a single role in the same series. Louis-Dreyfus has won 11 Emmys total, making her one of the most decorated stars in TV history.

She would take another comic role if a good one came along. The problem is supply. "They're hard to come by," she says. On her podcast, she has talked about the joys of "'laughing at a funeral' kind of laughing," where the fact that laughing is not allowed only makes it funnier.

She describes the sensation of getting a laugh as a performer as something almost physical: "It feels like scratching a very—a really deep itch," she says. "Like you've got an itch in

LISTEN UP
Louis-Dreyfus gets intimate in her new podcast, but until recently she largely avoided getting too personal in public. "I've guarded my privacy pretty ferociously in a lot of ways." Miu Miu cardigan, top and skirt, Cartier watch and ring and Wolford tights.

FINDING THE FUNNY When Louis-Dreyfus first heard she had breast cancer, she laughed. "It felt like it was a horrible black comedy," she says. "And then it sort of morphed into crying hysterically." Prada dress and Harry Winston bracelet. Hair, John D; makeup, Fiona Stiles; manicure, Alex Jachno; set design, Jeremy Reimnitz; production, Rhianna Rule. For details see Sources, page 162.

the center of your back and you can't quite get it, and then you get it, and it's like, 'Ahhh.'"

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS we learn about Louis-Dreyfus on *Wiser Than Me*: Before interviewing food critic and author Ruth Reichl, she describes the comforting smell of the chili and cornbread her mother made her when, at around age 28, she returned from the hospital after suffering a late miscarriage and infection. In her introduction for the author Amy Tan, who has said her grandmother fatally poisoned herself, Louis-Dreyfus describes her own grandfather's death by suicide.

When talking with Jane Fonda about their fathers, Louis-Dreyfus calls her dad a wonderful man but also a narcissist. When a milestone rolled around after his death, her mother wrote her a note saying she wished there were a way to talk about the divorce and what happened to their family. "I wrote her back and I said, 'What's keeping us from it?'" Louis-Dreyfus says in the podcast. "And so when I was like 60, she and I went into therapy together."

Fonda asks what happened next. "It was a release, as a lot of things fell into place," Louis-Dreyfus says. "She came from a fraught family situation, and she understood what I was living through in my childhood with her and my father and my stepfather and my stepmother and so on. And it was just, it was like something opened up."

At the end of every episode, she FaceTimes her mother, whom she sometimes calls "Mommy," "Mummy" or "Mama," and tells her how the conversation went. In these unrehearsed segments, her mom seems ready for anything, like immediately identifying the late Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Louis-Dreyfus didn't know who he was when her guest mentioned him. "I kind of lied and it was obvious," she tells her mom.

Louis-Dreyfus hasn't written a memoir or exposed much of her personal life on social media. She's low-key enough about her own story that she didn't even tell off a therapist who once fell asleep while she was talking. But podcasting demands a level of intimacy that many other mediums don't. Plus, she's asking her guests to open up to her, and the best way to build that trust is to do the same.

"I'm a little hesitant about it, I will admit," she says in our interview. "I've guarded my privacy pretty ferociously in a lot of ways."

Her guests get comfortable pretty fast. In one episode, the novelist Isabel Allende reveals that she enhances her sexual experiences by consuming a marijuana chocolate blueberry for the event.

"I was completely delighted by her response," Louis-Dreyfus tells me. "And I think the marijuana-blueberry market was as well."

Wiser Than Me guests sound so convinced about their approach to old age that it's hard not to want what they're having. Louis-Dreyfus even went out and got her own blueberry.

She decided to make the podcast last year after watching the 2018 documentary *Jane Fonda in Five Acts*. It got her thinking about how much women from that later stage of life have to say and how little they are heard. She teamed up with Hall and buried herself in research before each interview. It became a full-time job.

Listening to the show is like pounding shots of optimism. It's so much about women carving out the lives they want that when actor Rhea Perlman admits to bouts of occasional loneliness, its poignance stands out. "When everybody leaves after a great night, I go, 'Ooh, where is everyone?'" she says. Louis-Dreyfus asks how she deals with endings, a question she poses often. Perlman's meditative answer about death—describing the belief that all people are pieces of the universe—makes Louis-Dreyfus tear up.

A number of her guests talk about the importance of risk-taking later in life. It's a tip from the front lines that Louis-Dreyfus already has internalized. "I think that's her phase right now," Hall says of his wife. "She's done an awful lot of funny TV, and other things are interesting her right now." It's not what her fans are used to. "There's an expectation going into anything that she does that hilarity will ensue," says Hall, adding that "it doesn't have to be funny with Julia."

The conversations don't always yield instant chemistry. When Louis-Dreyfus tells von Furstenberg a joke about shopping for culottes on vacation, the designer doesn't laugh. The punchline was that after wondering if she was too old for the style, Louis-Dreyfus went to lunch and her tooth fell out, and there was her answer. Von Furstenberg told her she could wear culottes until she was 90, and the most important thing was to be true to herself. She didn't mention the tooth.

"I gotta say, she did not find it as funny as I do," Louis-Dreyfus tells her mom afterward. "Excuse me, but I'm very worried about that—why did your tooth fall out?" her mother replies. She wasn't getting it either. Plus it turns out it wasn't even a culotte. It was a skort. "Oh, no, honey," her mom says, "you don't need that."

THERE ARE MOMENTS when tragedy and comedy get put in a blender, and Monday, September 18, 2017, was one of them. Louis-Dreyfus and *Veep* had triumphed at the Emmys the night before. By morning, her doctor was on the phone telling her she had cancer. The first thing she did after hanging up was double over with laughter.

"I mean, it felt like it was written. It felt like it was a horrible black comedy," she says. "And then it sort of morphed into crying hysterically."

She was terrified. "You just simply don't consider it for yourself, you know, that's sort of the arrogance of human beings," she says. "But of course, at some point, we're all going to bite it."

It had been exactly a year since she'd won her fifth Emmy for her performance in *Veep*, which itself came two days after her dad died in 2016. "I'd like to dedicate this to my father," she said through tears at the time. "I'm so glad that he liked *Veep*, because his opinion was the one that really mattered."

Now here she was that much older, facing surgery and chemo. In the months that followed, she made a list of complaints, basically the unhelpful things people said to her, or the gifts they gave. All the appalling stuff that might be ripe for mockery.

"I liked to put things on that list that I wasn't supposed to say out loud," she says. "A complaint list, you know, the specifics about things that were happening to my body that I wanted to write down, things that were happening, you know, when I was in chemo and what was happening to my body as a result of that. It's just, like, horrible. It's medieval. And then people do say it comes from a positive place, but sometimes people say incredibly remarkable things that are inappropriate."

She can't find the list, but she'd like to.

"I think you might find it funny," she says. "That's all I'm saying." ●

FASHION INNOVATOR

FEAR OF GOD

With his Los Angeles–based label, Jerry Lorenzo has bucked business wisdom to build a homegrown brand that's staring down the European behemoths.

BY JACOB GALLAGHER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TYLER MITCHELL
STYLING BY YASHUA SIMMONS

A FEW YEARS into the existence of his Los Angeles fashion brand, Fear of God, designer Jerry Lorenzo screenprinted the nascent label's name on vintage rock tees from a raucous roster of headbanging bands—Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Mötley Crüe.

But when he's working at his spartan office in downtown Los Angeles, Lorenzo throws on "easy listening, soft-rock vibes," like soulful singer Anita Baker and even the elevator-music godfather Kenny G.

If that means Lorenzo speaks loudly but lives quietly, it's evinced in the 10-year-old Fear of God. The label doesn't have any brick-and-mortar stores and does very little advertising. He chooses not to stage fashion shows on the industry's traditional calendar, instead releasing collections when he feels they are ready. "I would rather only speak when I have something to say," he notes.

Lorenzo, 46, also owns his label, making it a California-based David staring down the European Goliaths run by the LVMH and Kering luxury conglomerates. A father of three, Lorenzo spends more time at his kids' baseball games than at fashion parties.

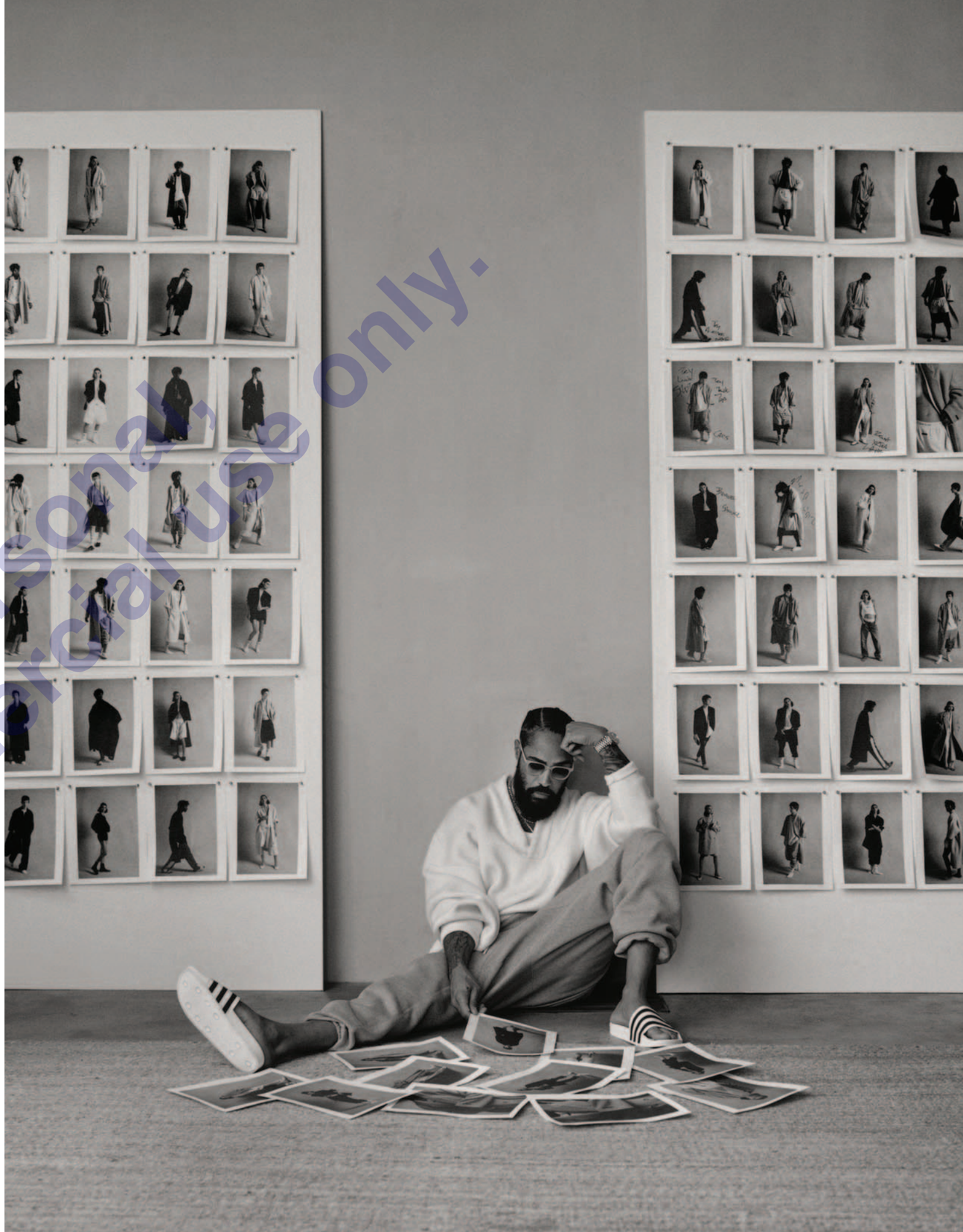
"He didn't do it fast, he did it differently," says fashion consultant Julie Gilhart, the chief development officer of Tomorrow, who has worked with Fear of God. "He had the nerve to be out of the system."

Lorenzo has pulled this off by building not one collection, but three. There is his high-end main line, which is available at retailers like Mr Porter and includes $2,850 Italian-made melton wool overcoats and $750 jeans with whiskery distress marks at the knees. Then there's Essentials, the economical label built on $100 hoodies and $95 sweats in colors like sand and slate gray that are sold at Nordstrom and PacSun. Lorenzo's third and latest brand, Athletics, is a sportswear-focused line produced in partnership with Adidas. The sizable range will include swishy parkas, duffel bags and thick-soled sneakers and is set to hit stores later this year.

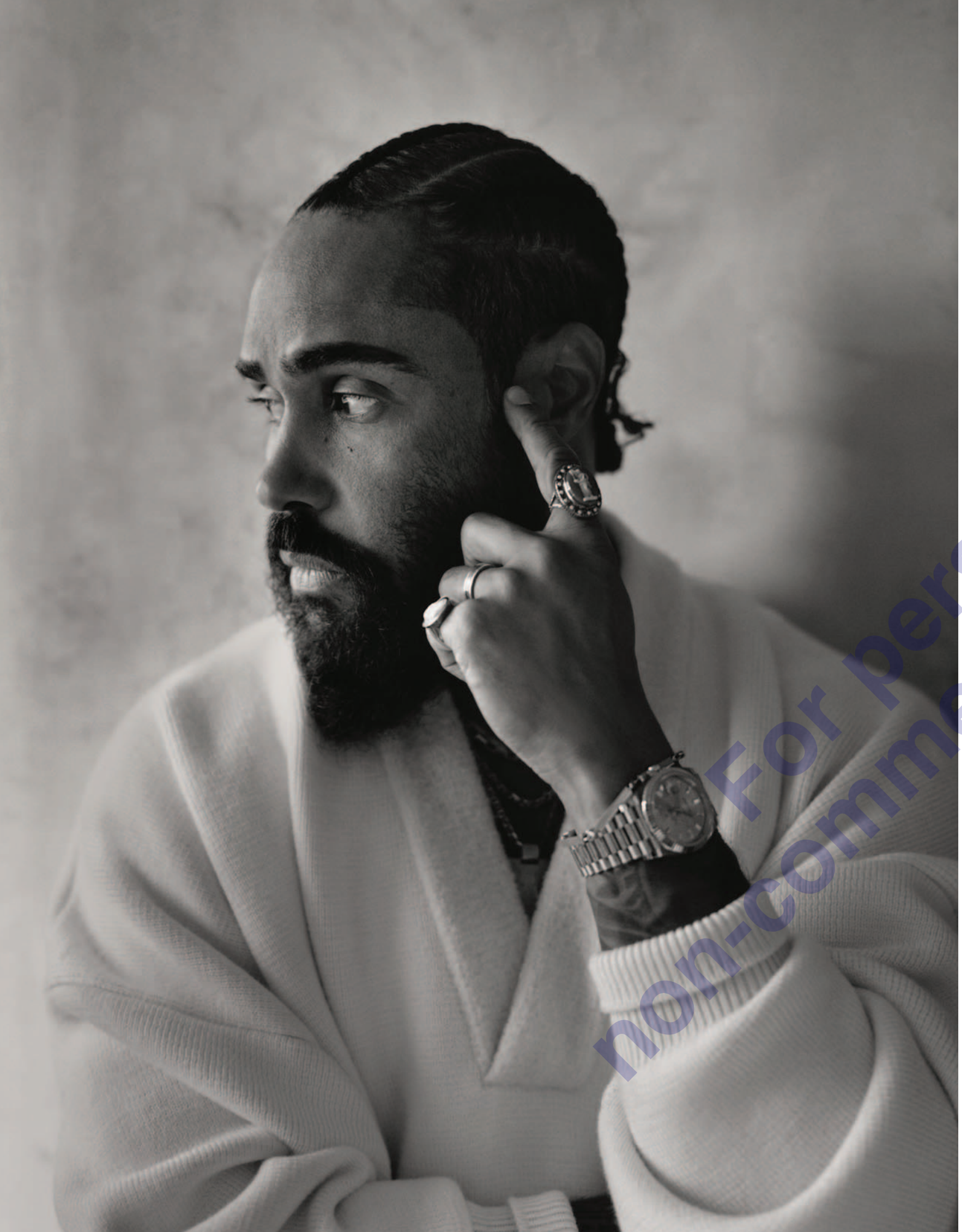
"All my relatives shop at the mall still. I actually have an opinion of what should be in the mall," says Lorenzo. Essentials is his answer to this. Despite its broad availability, the brand is widely coveted. In 2022, Fear of God unseated the streetwear pioneers at Supreme as resale site StockX's most popular apparel brand—thanks mostly to sales of Essentials pieces, according to the marketplace.

The financial success of Essentials propels the broader Fear of God empire. It's difficult to drive down Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles or amble along Spring Street in New York's SoHo neighborhood and not see several matcha-clutching, Nike-Air-Jordan-wearing 20-somethings in slouchy Essentials logo sweatshirts or jogger pants.

Selling all those sweats has allowed him to remain



AMERICAN DREAMER Jerry Lorenzo did not have formal fashion training when he launched Fear of God a decade ago. Now his brand has bumped Supreme off some bestseller lists. "American luxury to me is the freedom to be the best version of yourself," says Lorenzo. Fear of God clothing worn throughout.



independent, Lorenzo says. “I don’t have to answer to anyone.”

Fear of God employs around 60 people, with revenue in the low hundreds of millions annually, says CEO Alfred Chang, who was appointed in March after 17 years at PacSun, where he rose to be the mall retailer’s co-CEO. Two years ago, the brand opened a sprawling concrete and blond-wood-filled office in Los Angeles’s Arts District, and it plans to open its own stores in the future, Chang says. He declined to be more specific on Fear of God’s financial scale. Canadian fashion retailer Ssense, which has carried Fear of God since 2016, has experienced double-digit growth with the brand each year, says Federico Barassi, the vice president of menswear.

“I definitely don’t want to stay in a place that’s like a mom-and-pop, like a startup,” says Lorenzo.

Across each of his three labels, Lorenzo uses a palate of soothing, earthy tones. He rarely employs a pattern punchier than a murky plaid, a reflection of his own reticent personal style. “I don’t like to walk into a room and draw attention,” Lorenzo says. During our interview in California in April, he wore an oversize vintage T-shirt and loose-fitting Essentials pants in washed, dark tones, blending in with the room’s granite countertops. When we spoke again a few months later over Zoom, he was wearing nearly the exact same outfit.

As a designer who learned how to make clothes not in a classroom but through visiting factories and sampling (and resampling and resampling) his ideas, Lorenzo treats the humble hoodie or denim with as much care as ultra-luxe Italian labels like Canali treat their suits. His cashmere overcoats, jersey hoodies and Tesla Cybertruck–looking slides sit easily on the body—the sartorial equivalent of settling into a low-slung Eero Saarinen Womb Chair. He envisions customers wearing $95 Essentials sweatpants underneath, say, a tidy $1,695 lapelless blazer from Fear of God’s high-end main line.

“American luxury to me is the freedom to be the best version of yourself,” says Lorenzo. Style, he adds, “is not just clam chowder from Boston. It’s a gumbo pot of all these different cultures and experiences and points of view that represent visually what America is today.”

When celebrity stylist Karla Welch first encountered Lorenzo’s designs, she says, “you did feel like it was luxury, which was interesting. The weight of the sweatshirts, the way the jeans were torn.” She recalled buying out the entire stock of the brand’s early collections at L.A.-area stores like Maxfield.

Welch sees Lorenzo, a striking, athletically built man consistently draped in his own label’s slender tattered jeans and slouching sweatshirts, as key to the brand’s appeal.

“He’s so cool. So all these kids are just like, Yes, you lead, I’ll follow,” she says, likening Lorenzo to titans of fashion aspiration like Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger and Giorgio Armani. “We’re guided by what Jerry is showing us.” Ten years in, Lorenzo himself still appears alongside professional models in his own designs on the Fear of God website.

BOARD MEETING
Lorenzo’s father was a professional baseball player and a coach. After earning an M.B.A., Lorenzo began working for the Los Angeles Dodgers. His first designs were for Dodgers outfielder Matt Kemp.

LORENZO’S early life revolved around strikeouts, not sweatshirts. His father, Jerry Manuel Sr., was a professional baseball player who became a coach and manager for teams including the Chicago White Sox, New York Mets and Florida Marlins (with which he won a World Series) beginning in the mid-1980s. That meant that young Lorenzo, who was born in Evansville, Indiana, in 1977, moved with his family as his father got hired by teams in places like West Palm Beach, Florida, and Chicago. “My entire [childhood], we were like a check-to-check minor league baseball family,” says Lorenzo, who was named after his father, but goes by his middle name in place of Manuel.

His enterprising interior-designer mother made each unfamiliar house feel like a home—sprucing up the kitchen, cooking comforting meals. Witnessing her creativity was influential for Lorenzo, he says. “My mom would have found these antiques at all these different places,” says Lorenzo. “She was so good at taking what she had and creating something beautiful.”

Nevertheless, it was his father who inspired Lorenzo’s early interest in fashion. “My dad wore the same blue blazer to every single game and was always considered one of the coolest guys in the locker room,” he says. Watching his dad, he says, “I knew cool wasn’t so much about what he had on or his latest ’fit. It came from a different place.”

Still, fashion was not the pathway Lorenzo initially pursued. He studied public relations at the historically Black college Florida A&M University, graduating in 2000. He then received an M.B.A. from Los Angeles’s Loyola Marymount University and landed a job in 2003 in the Los Angeles Dodgers front office, specializing in corporate partnerships. He worked a retail job on weekends to pad his income. He also became a party promoter, launching JL Nights, a recurring club night in Los Angeles, with a friend.

After leaving the Dodgers, he worked as a director of marketing at a sports agency and eventually managed the Dodgers All-Star outfielder Matt Kemp. He designed his first clothes for Kemp—custom pieces for the slugger to wear based on Lorenzo’s own tastes. As someone who has strong ideas on how he and others should dress, Lorenzo says styling came naturally to him.

While much of what he designed were well-fitting basics like shirts, there were also, he admits, “some pretty bad pieces,” like a short-sleeved leather hoodie with side zippers. Still, Lorenzo says, he realized he had six to 10 designs that started to feel cohesive—something not unlike the rough outline of a clothing collection. Bringing these ideas to life gave Lorenzo the confidence to break away from managing and start Fear of God. By then he was 35—not quite as old as Giorgio Armani when he launched his namesake brand at 41.

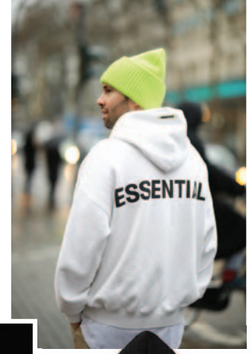
Lorenzo pulls inspiration from his twin 10-year-old daughters, his son and his wife, former stylist Desiree Manuel, who now works for Fear of God. He says he pays close attention to the way his son, who turns 13 this month, throws on a piece of clothing, or what he thinks of a new pair of sneakers. “I listen to my kids a lot; they probably don’t think that I do, but I do,” he says.

He is also a spiritual man who attends a local nondenominational Christian church when he can find the time. Lorenzo picked the brand’s name from the Oswald Chambers devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*. “Most companies run on cash; we run on faith,” says Lorenzo. “I’m more peaceful when I’m closer to Him than [whether] we’re financially doing well.”

His compact debut collection—just a dozen pieces with highlights including a short-sleeved sweatshirt and a scooped-hem, extra-long T-shirt—was more than enough to quickly make a name for himself. The designs caught the attention of Ye, then known as Kanye West, who had an eye for recruiting young talent. He asked Lorenzo to work on his freshly inked collaboration with French label A.P.C., in addition to merchandise for his Yeezus tour. West continued to support Lorenzo’s label, wearing grungy $895 Fear of God jeans with blown-out knees to the 2016 Met Gala under a crystal-studded Balmain jean jacket.

Lorenzo has fond memories of the early ’10s—Kanye had already tapped Virgil Abloh as his right hand, and the three of them jetted around the world together. Yet the fashion establishment seemed to write off Kanye’s Yeezy and, later, Lorenzo’s and Abloh’s designs, as mere streetwear—inferior to what European, largely white designers were creating.

Still, the trio persevered. Lorenzo remained close with Abloh, who went on to



STAR POWER
Clockwise from top left: Fear of God's show at the Hollywood Bowl; an Essentials sweatshirt on the street; Dwyane Wade and Zendaya wearing Fear of God; Kanye West in Fear of God jeans at the 2016 Met Gala; a sweatshirt from the Fear of God collaboration with Zegna; Justin Bieber wearing designs by Lorenzo as part of his 2016–2017 *Purpose* tour; the Nike Fear of God 1 sneaker.

start the successful label Off-White and was named men's artistic director at Louis Vuitton in 2018, the first Black American appointed as creative director at a European luxury house. His time at the brand was cut short when he died of cancer just three years later. Lorenzo attended Abloh's posthumous Louis Vuitton show in Miami just days after Abloh died.

The Ye story is thornier. "Anyone that knows Kanye will tell you it's a tough relationship to hold on to," Lorenzo says. Recently, Ye has been ensnared in a string of public controversies, and Lorenzo noted that until Ye accepted his invitation to attend his fashion show in April, the pair hadn't seen each other for more than a year.

Lorenzo had broken from working with Ye in 2016. Around this time, Justin Bieber messaged Lorenzo, and his longtime stylist Karla Welch commissioned Lorenzo to design pieces and merchandise for Bieber's upcoming *Purpose* tour.

Just a few years prior, Lorenzo says, he might have passed on the Bieber offer, dubious about the idea of working for a teen idol. But he saw an opportunity to make Bieber look, as he described to VFiles in 2016, like a hybrid of "Kurt Cobain and Allen Iverson." And frankly, he says now, he and his young kids just liked Bieber's music. "When I'm in my car by myself, I bang this *Purpose* album."

Bieber wore Lorenzo's reworked band T-shirts, plaid skirts and skinny jeans on tour night after night, city after city. *Purpose* tour hoodies continue to sell on resale site Grailed for as much as $240 to this day. Lorenzo credits the collaboration for lifting Fear of God to new heights. "What maybe, in my old thinking, could have killed the brand really just helped to expand us."

More collaborations followed. With Nike, Lorenzo made space-boot-like basketball sneakers with ropy laces. In 2020, he teamed with the Italian luxury brand Zegna for a crossover collection that melded Lorenzo's sporty perspective with classical tailoring.

Later that year, Adidas announced that he would be spearheading Adidas Basketball strategy. Yet after two years and no major releases, Fear of God announced that Lorenzo was shifting focus to a new label, Athletics, "an uncompromised and unparalleled performance vision that is set to transcend both sport and fashion," per a statement from Fear of God at the time.

Lorenzo says that Athletics is progressing slowly and that the first products from the line are set to be released later this year. Anticipation for the line's performance sneakers and minimalist parkas is high, as it's being regarded by footwear analysts as a potential answer to Adidas's bygone Yeezy brand, which generated as much as 8 percent of Adidas's total sales, per a UBS report.

This past April, Fear of God marked a significant milestone, staging its first fashion show, at Los Angeles's Hollywood Bowl, not far from where Lorenzo and his family live. "I was ready to share with the world," he says. "I'm getting better every year."

Fifty-eight models, men and women alike, marched out in fringed track pants, camel-colored suits and laser-cut leather coats. Fuzzy wool jackets swaddled the models, while kicky pants stretched down to three-stripe Fear of God Athletics sneakers. It was a master class in Lorenzo's dramatically oversize take on casual elegance.

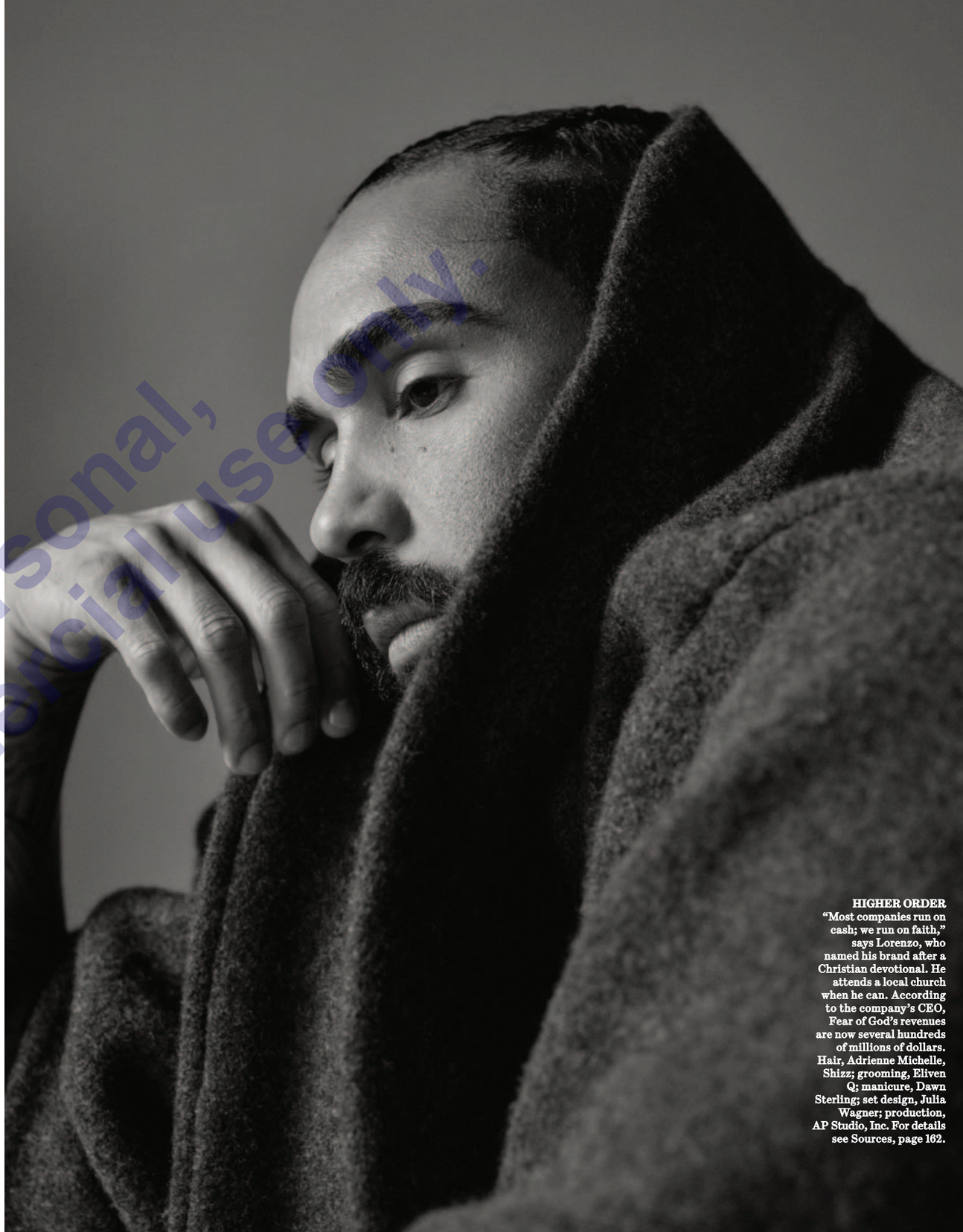
Celebrities including Tessa Thompson, Bill Burr, Tracee Ellis Ross and Lena Waithe filed into the amphitheater's wood-frame box seats. Among the audience were some 400 fans, plucked from the label's newsletter subscriber base—most of whom were wearing at least one Fear of God item. After the models walked out, the rapper Pusha T sauntered down the runway, spitting a verse brimming with Fear of God references.

In a stirring moment toward the end of the show, the soundtrack swerved into a snippet from the 1989 film *Glory,* in which a group of Black Union soldiers pray before battle. For Lorenzo, one of the rare Black Americans to break into high fashion, the clip was a reminder—to him and the audience—of where he came from. "I grew up with my dad telling me stories of his grandma picking cotton," he says.

Today, so many years later, he says he thinks of those stories as he pores over cotton swatch books for his sweaters and jackets. "That's one of the things that I was just trying to communicate," says Lorenzo. "The pain and angst, and the sacrifice and the cost of all those things."

As he took his bow, a flurry of fireworks erupted over the half-shell stage, as Ray Charles's rendition of "America the Beautiful" thundered out of the speakers.

"No matter how beautiful or ugly or, you know, cheesy L.A. may be to the rest of the world," Lorenzo says, reflecting on the show, "it's where we're from...it's who we are. As soon as I go to Europe, it's the beginning of the end." ●



HIGHER ORDER
"Most companies run on cash; we run on faith," says Lorenzo, who named his brand after a Christian devotional. He attends a local church when he can. According to the company's CEO, Fear of God's revenues are now several hundreds of millions of dollars. Hair, Adrienne Michelle, Shizz; grooming, Eliven Q; manicure, Dawn Sterling; set design, Julia Wagner; production, AP Studio, Inc. For details see Sources, page 162.

TRUE TO FORM
Sleek lines and silk ruffles make a statement. Dior Haute Couture coat, Elissa Poppy gloves and Schiaparelli Haute Couture headband (worn throughout). Opposite: Giambattista Valli Haute Couture dress and model's own shoes.

THE NEW FORMAL

This season's couture collections look to the future with out-of-this-world shapes and space-age shine.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARKN STYLING BY ALEXANDRA CARL

FACE FORWARD
Style speaks volumes with swooping curves. Thom Browne Couture suit coat, shirt and shoes. Opposite: Jean Paul Gaultier Couture by Julien Dossena dress.

STEP & REPEAT
Walk with confidence in daring silhouettes. Balenciaga 52nd Couture dress, and jumpsuit with boots and gloves. Opposite: Valentino Haute Couture cape, top, pants and shoes.

MERCURY RISING
Latex adds an edge to any ensemble. Chanel Haute Couture dress and Elissa Poppy gloves. Opposite: Fendi Couture dress, Duren bag, Agnelle gloves and vintage shoes.

BED OF ROSES
Play the romantic with delicate folds and florals. Schiaparelli Haute Couture dress, jacket and shoes. Opposite: Armani Privé top, necklace and pants and Miscreants bodysuit.

GILDED AGE
Touches of gold bring a regal air to classic eveningwear. Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda jacket and Wolford underwear. Opposite: Charles de Vilmorin Couture dress and shoes courtesy of Trust Judy Blame Archive. Model, Lineisy Montero at Next New York; hair, Mari Ohashi; make-up, Mathias van Hooff; manicure, Brenda Abrial; set design, Samuel Pidgen; production, Noir Productions. For details see Sources, page 162.

COVERS

Kylie Jenner
Mugler catsuit with gloves, price upon request, Mugler.com, Falke socks, $27, Falke.com, Church's shoes, $1,120, Church-Footwear.com

Jerry Lorenzo
Fear of God sweater, $1,595, FearOfGod.com

Julia Louis-Dreyfus
Miu Miu cardigan, $1,790, top, $1,420, and skirt, $1,120, MiuMiu.com, Cartier watch, $6,900, and ring, price upon request, available at Cartier boutiques, Wolford tights, $55, WolfordShop.com

SZA
Dolce & Gabbana feather collar, $925, DolceGabbana.com, Live the Process briefs, $128, LiveTheProcess.com, Cartier ring, $59,000, available at Cartier boutiques, Van Cleef & Arpels ring, $22,900, VanCleefArpels.com

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SZA

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UBS

STILL LIFE

EMERALD FENNELL

The writer, director and actor on the movie props and keepsakes she cherishes.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BEN QUINTON

"FOR ME, making films is all about details. Everything is made and everything takes time and is specific. With *Promising Young Woman* we were looking for something macabre and devastating and blackly funny—an embroidered yee-haw picture—to hang above the bed where a horrible murder happens. This music box of dancing puppets from *Saltburn* kind of encapsulated the film. It's a little miniature of the house, and so much of the film is about us peeping in, feeling like people looking in on a little diorama. Then, these Discos crisps you can only get at the gas station. They're so vinegary and salty, it kind of hurts. An object that my husband will not have in the house and I absolutely love is a Victorian witch. She's a doll with, I think, real human hair, pointing at a wheel you spin. It tells you that you're cursed or you're going to have a great year or whatever it is. The bath salts below have been made by monks in Italy for hundreds of years. They're unbelievably expensive, but for some reason they just transform your life. A picture of my parents from when they just got engaged. They're just the coolest. Here's a lion ring that my father made. It's empowering, over-the-top and baroque, and also fierce. There's something about it where I think, 'Well, I can always punch my way out in an emergency.' A makeup bag with Steve Buscemi from the film *Billy Madison* putting lipstick on. It's one of those movies that me and my sister watched a thousand times. It's where both of our crushes on Steve Buscemi started. I picked out a book of W.B. Yeats's collected poems that I had when I was at university. My very unprofound thoughts and doodles are all in there. Whenever I'm not feeling very inspired, I go back to him. This Loewe jacket is the nicest jacket in the world. When I look like shit and feel like shit, the jacket just makes me seem together." *—As told to Ellen Gamerman*

This interview has been edited for clarity and length. To read a Q&A with Fennell, visit WSJ.com/magazine.

jura

'Freshly ground, not capsuled.'

Roger Federer
Swiss tennis icon and
JURA brand ambassador
since 2006

The GIGA 10 is a premium automatic specialty coffee machine that sets a new standard in performance and pleasure. With two professional grinders for two different types of beans, 35 hot and cold brew specialties, and the innovative Panorama Coffee Panel for optimal clarity, the GIGA 10 offers more choices than ever before.

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