DESIGN CULTURE A Collaboration between NTU and FIT







DESIGN CULTURE Contents

4	INTRODUCTION
6	COUNTERCULTURE
10	PERSONAL IDENTITY
14	SUSTAINABLE IDENTITY
18	THE BUSINESS OF FASHION
22	REFLECTIONS
29	EVALUATION
30	CREDITS

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Design Culture and Identity, Collaborative Learning. Global Networking: Transformative Teaching through socially distanced classrooms:

INTRODUCTION

Nottingham Trent University, UK Juliana Sissons: Senior Lecturer, Fashion Knitwear Design and Knitted Textiles and Global Education Champion at NTU.

Fashion Institute of Technology, New York Professor Robin Baxter: Fashion Business Management, and International Coordinator at FIT Active, Global networking

These pages explore the student learning through a collaborative project with two Universities and reflect on the discussions around Design and Identity.

TO INSPIRE AND STIMULATE COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION

The past few years of online teaching have forced educators to reconfigure their pedagogical practice and look at academia in practical ways. As a result, this inspirational global project has emerged, and is now in its third year, providing an ongoing opportunity to enhance teaching experience and student learning. This project delivers a series of six online workshops, with lectures around themes of counterculture, personal identity, fashion branding identity and sustainable identity. Thus, offering students a chance to network globally with their peers, share like-minded ideas and stimulate collaborative discussion between students from both Universities.

This culminating Zine outcome shares mixed group ideas on each theme. Students had an opportunity to meet outside of the lecture sessions in their groups to discuss themes further and find commonalities. Students taking part from different universities and different courses, offered additional learning opportunities for NTU students in Fashion Knitwear Design, NTU students in Costume Design, and FIT students in Fashion Business Management. (This merge has inspired further ideas for future collaboration).

March 19-102 Control of Control Control of C

Thirteen Level 4 students from NTU Fashion Knitwear Design and three L6 students from NTU Costume Design signed up for this optional project, which feeds into their course module and can provide additional credits towards their end of year assessments. One L5 student from NTU also joined us as a mentor, having completed the project in the previous year. The project was written into the Fashion business Management course module at FIT and twenty-eight mixed level students took part in the project, which was assessed as part of their course work. Students were divided into seven mixed groups for collaborative discussions to continue outside of the sessions on WhatsApp. The lecture sessions were held weekly and were an hour and half long.











COUNTERCULTURE

Student groups were asked to present two images of counterculture, one from the UK and one from NYC and then discuss and critically compare descriptions of counterculture.

QUESTIONS:

What is Counterculture?

What are the reasons behind the creations of new identities?

Do life experiences frame our perspectives?

What types of people are attracted to sub-groups?

What common threads can you find in people who are drawn to alternative cultures?

How do the alternative cultures of the 1980s compare with current subcultures?

How do the subcultures in London compare with those in New York?

JESUS LOOKS LIKE M

"Dennis Rodman was never shy about expressing his feelings and thoughts directly to others, while also making them aware of the current situation. During the 1995 NBA playoffs Dennis Rodman, who fashioned a new hairstyle every few weeks, took a big step towards creating awareness for a deadly epidemic. Because of the fact that he was an NBA player and millions of people were watching him, this gesture caused a lot of controversy. It's encouraging to see how he represented himself, developed a personal style that stood out and used his position to help others." Mia Hernandez



"I think of a classic American history example in counterculture where in the early 60s was heavily influenced by sophistication and long-held values began to diminish with new ideas formed by the young. Due to this rebellious behaviour, people started expressing their new values through fashion wearing bohemian-style clothing to exemplify their new less sophisticated values toward life." Lillian Svoboda











For my counterculture focus I picked young designer Alena Nevedrova and her collection in the recent Central Saint Martins graduate exhibition. She uses her experience as a resident of Russia to create her collections. She comments on her experiences with protests and escaping prosecution for her beliefs. Ilektra Charalam Poulou



Student groups were asked to provide an image of something that is very personal to them and discuss the meanings behind the images.

QUESTIONS:

Do past life experiences frame our perspectives?

What is important to you? (Political or otherwise)

What types of people are you attracted to? (What common threads can you find in the people who you are drawn to)

Describe yourself as you are now, in five words (where do these lead?)

Describe yourself in the future / ten years' time. What do you want to achieve?

PERSONAL IDENTITY





I am a student at Nottingham Trent University, studying Costume Design and Construction. As I am soon to be a graduate, I aim to specialise as a costume maker in the film/TV industry, as it has always been a dream of mine to work in a professional environment like this to collaborate with others and bring characterisation to life through the work I produce. Louise Roughley

Hi my name is Sofia I am currently finishing my sophomore year at FIT in the fashion business management program. I spend most of my time working my retail job, shopping and spending time with my friends when I have time, LoL! Sofia Mazzacane

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My personal identity is something that is both hidden and public. Not many people know that I grew up completely somewhere else besides New York City. I was born and raised in Almaty, in a country called Kazakhstan, till the age of 12. It was a completely different mentality back there compared to this big apple. I was able to become who I have always wanted to be growing up. I can proudly say that I developed my own identity since moving here. Both places honestly made me who I am today. Without both cities, I can't imagine being someone else.

I picked this photo because since a young age I have been creative and knew career wise it had to involve creativity in some aspect. Lillian Svoboda

> Garment designed by Christina Max-Koroma. Made entirely from recycled fabric, making it zero waste.

SUSTAINABLE IDENTITY

Student groups were asked to research the UN Sustainable Goals and take inspiration from Vivienne Westwood's Diaries to provide an activist logo / poster, with a group statement.

Can we learn from the mistakes of the past? How can clothing be designed to have a lower impact on waste? What is your message? How will you communicate this? What can you do to make your work more sustainable? how can customers care for their clothing and patterns of consumption?

Environmental- how does the textile and fashion industry impact on the environment and contribute to global warming? Social- the fibres/materials we use and their environmental impact? Economic- what is the potential growth and profitability of a sustainable fashion industry?

ENTER

How do these affect one another?



This is a crochet Airpod pouch my sister made for me. I make garments and Textiles for Bodies and Spaces. I have seen a lot of people on and off university campus wearing anything crocheted. It is long lasting and very durable.

14





Out There Knitwear is my design brand. I make garments and Textiles for Bodies and Spaces, using hand knit and crochet techniques. Dan Fairhurst







This garment exhibits the idea of pollution of the sea because of the nets and the layering of materials which look like the stacks of rubbish and discarded items you see in polluted areas. The two-piece was inspired by designer Marina Deris who converts trash found in the ocean into garments.



During FIT's sustainability week, they had a flea market on the breezeway. Students could sign up to set up a booth on the breezeway and sell their clothing. There were a ton of booths and it was super busy. It was amazing to see students get involved in sustainable practices while also supporting their fellow classmates. Lillian Svoboda





4 ANIMAL ABUSE

Our group agreed that Animal Exploitation

angers us the most. We believe that animals should not be taken advantage of just for our selfish benefits. We believe that the hunting of animals for entertainment is wrong as well. We wonder how humans would feel if they got killed for a fun activity.

Additionally, hunting animals for their skin and meat is not right. We are overly killing and consuming some of our wildlife that are becoming extinct. The species that we grew up to love, tigers, are endangered, and are soon to be just a memory due to our greedy desires. The use of real leather simply for human luxury is corrupt. Moreover, killing animals for their meat is wrong, especially the conditions they are put in to get this meat. Livestock animals are put in unlivable conditions

and are abused greatly by humans. Abusing animals in any way is morally wrong. Animals give so much to us and provide us with so much, why hurt them, or worse kill and eat them, in return. Animals are one of us, we should not be vicious towards them. We need to learn how to appreciate and love our animals more.

Our logo focuses on portraying four seasons of the year, depicting how no matter the season, one needs to care about our planet. Making sure the planet is clean, cared for and saved from the negative factors is what our main message is.

Sustainability has become the most talked topic today in the fashion industry, as people have been realizing how much of a negative impact the industry has. There's a lot of greenwashing occurring in the industry that needs to be addressed and put attention to. Malika

Sustainability in the fashion industry is critical, and it's becoming a trend. "Recycling, green, sustainability" is the most popular topic nowadays. We need to adapt to this theme to meet the needs of consumers. The fashion industry needs to give priority to long-term value rather than short-term profits. Jiahao

Sustainability has been a very talked about topic and though there have been breakouts in organic fabrics and ways to minimize the overconsumption of products yet there will always be an overconsumption of these fast fashion brands and the selling of synthetic fabric will continue to occur unless actual legal action is taken to prevent from this overconsumption to keep occurring. Lian

Pollution has been a problem for many years, there's been a rise in consumerism which results in more trash/discarded clothes being dumped into the oceans. As we saw during the pandemic there was less disposal of clothing into the world's water bodies since people couldn't do in person shopping. The willow project is a project where the US wants to sell Alaska to a corporation so they can drill for oil. which would lead to an increase in CO2 levels, Which then result in ocean acidification and could also lead to acid rain. This could lead to a decrease in sea life, which would disrupt the aquatic food chain for both humans and other aquatic creatures. The fashion industry is the second biggest consumer of oil as it is used to create the products. Fast fashion is the biggest contributor to oceanic pollution as they promote and sell clothing that go in and out of style very quickly (fads). Which results in consumers buying a lot of these fad trending clothes only to discard them a short while later to replace them with new fad clothing. We as a society should focus on denormalizing fast fashion clothes and clothing brands, and instead being more conscious of where we are buying our clothes. Whilst also focusing on a circular system for clothing where you, reduce, reuse, recycle clothing. Which means to reduce the amount of resources used to make the clothing, reuse the clothing for as long as possible then when the life cycle is over to break them down to be recycled and used for something else.

For me climate change and sustainability can only be achieved as goals in modern society throughout systematic change. The scale of industrial production and the impact it has on the planet is so big in comparison to what households contribute that individual actions can only act as a temporary stopper. Personal responsibility is important but movements that only involve small groups cannot outpace the destruction big companies create. For there to be significant change, the whole system of production and trade needs to be transformed. Society needs to become geared towards respecting Nature and the consumer, rather than generating profit for a Capitalistic society. Practices like slow fashion, mending and reusable materials and items must become commonplace and expected, not treated as a luxury or a novelty. Energy sources and manufacturing practices that harm the environment should be outright banned and equal rights for workers should be upheld in every country.

This is one of my favorite thrift stores from my home state. This thrift store is my favorite due to the selection they carry and the quality of the items they sell there. Thrifting is a wonderful way to buy great quality garments for an affordable price and practicing sustainability at the same time.

The only possible issue that thrift stores may run into in the near future would be the amount of good quality/ vintage garments that the thrift stores would be able to sell. Majority of clothes nowadays are very low quality due to fast fashion accelerating and taking over. From personal experience I've been encountering more and more fast fashion brands popping up in thrift stores like "Shein" and "H&M".

Quality clothing is now primarily produced by high end brands and non affordable or accessible to the majority of the population clothing companies. Going forward into the future with this is mind it is unpredictable to forecast what the quality of these second hand garments will be with the way fast fashion is advancing.

17

THE BUSINESS OF FASHION

Student groups were asked to research the UN Sustainable Goals and take inspiration from Vivienne Westwood's Diaries to provide an activist logo / poster, with a group statement.

What is a brand?

What are your communication methods?

How do you communicate your work, consider styling methods?

What are the main elements that make up your own design signature?

What types of storytelling do you use, do you have a political stance?

What is the focus of your work?

Do you have continuing themes running through your work?





Jewels By Aisha



santos







This is me and my classmates at one of the biggest trade shows in NYC, Coterie and Magic. In these trade shows, many sellers come and set up their clothing or accessory products to showcase to buyers. This is a big part of the Business of Fashion because this is when different brands create new connections in the fashion industry.





I recreated one of Zandra Rhodes Cactus Everywhere Kaftans, made from silk Chiffon, that I printed myself, it also has beading detail. Louise Roughley





At the FIT museum, I viewed "Dior & Balenciaga: The kinds of Couture and Their Legacies". The exhibition demonstrated two

known fashion designers who contributed to the rise of luxurious fashion. These designers continue to inherit handmade garments using remarkable designs and following through their production of manufacturing quality goods. Their high-end stores have sustained the business of fashion developing new concepts as the demand for more elegant pieces rises. Melissa



Interview with Ana Valero Módolo of Honey Blossom Knitwear <u>@honeyblossom.knitwear</u>

How long have you been crafting/knitting/crocheting/making? What made you want to start?

I started on embroidery back in the first lockdown with an Amazon kit, which was quickly followed by crochet around October 2020. Knit followed a year later, starting in winter 2021. I started as my A levels were mostly on hold due to lockdown and I was on a reading slump, so I wanted some other hobby to keep me entertained. I just never expected it to take over my life as much as it did.

What inspires your designs?

I come from a family of artist women; and in my home country, Brazil, crafts are something quite valued, we call it 'artesanato'. I remember on holidays always buying crochet rugs, embroidered kitchen cloths and ceramic decorations. My mum has saved many childhood garments my great-grandma crocheted during my childhood. I'd say my family's art and their (and mine) interest in nature and specially spring bloom has definitely influenced my design. I specialise in womenswear, which sometimes me and my mother design together.

Does sustainability play a role in your process? If so, how?

Sustainability does not play a role in my process as much as I'd like. It definitely took me a while to realize that contributing to slow fashion wasn't enough, and that I should look at more sustainable materials when creating my clothes. I do work mostly with 100% cotton, which is less damaging then acrylic, however I do intend on focusing more on sustainability as my business grows. LoupyLoupy Studio has inspired me to look into second hand yarn, which is something I have started doing. I mostly shop yarns on ebay and use on more distressed knit looks.

What is your favourite piece that you have made and why?

I love a lot of pieces I make. My favourite would probably be the one I made as my final piece for my first year at NTU on my Fashion Knitwear and Knitted Textiles course. I cherish it as it was a very personal project, inspired by my Mum's art. It was a year-long project, and it's one of my latest projects so I am very attached to it now.

What have you learned about starting your own business online? Did you face any challenges? Has this changed the way you design?

Honestly, up to now I have almost automatically followed trends, and what people want to buy in order to make money out of it. It has affected the way I create art and it is something I consciously need to fight against, in order to create what I like and not just what I think the public will buy. Another challenge in the 21st Century is that you usually can't be just an artist if you want to make a living out of it - you have to spend a lot of the time creating regular content, and consistently. This is something I struggle with a little - having to record your processes and post often.

What advice would you give to other makers who want to start selling their products?

Just start. Things will never be perfect or exactly how you want them to be, but sharing your designs will lead to a customer base of people who like your designs.

Also, just create what you want to.

Slow fashion is a lot less about trend forecasting

and a lot more about the joy of creating something you are proud of.





I come from a family of Artist Women, and in my home country, Brazil, crafts are something quite valued, we call it 'Artesanato'. Ana Valero Modolo





















EXPRESSING PERSONAL IDENTITY







THROUGH GARMENT DESIGNS





REFLECTIONS

What are your key points to take away? What does the content make you think of? How did the content make you feel? What is your overall response to the presentation content?

LILLIAN SVOBODA

I enjoyed meeting students from a different culture and lifestyle than mine. It was also interesting to work with people in a different aspect of the industry seeing how our brains are wired differently and how the affects working in a team.

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NOOR ASLAM

Working with the NTU students was culturally shocking for me. It was interesting to hear their perspectives on the way they see different parts of the industry as they are in the creative field.

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DANIEL FAIRHURST

I really enjoyed working with the FIT students. It was inspiring to gain a broader, more global perspective of all the themes we explored, such as identity, counter-culture, etc. It was also exciting to have discussions with students whose field of learning and expertise is based more in the marketing and the branding side of fashion. I learned a lot on how I could develop the branding strategy for my own knitwear side-business!

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MALIKA LEPESBAYEVA

Working alongside the NTU students was an eye opening experience. Not only due to the difference in studies but also the cultural differences and the way we see things.

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MELISSA GUAMAN

The COIL experience was a great opportunity hearing from the NTU peers who were part of the fashion design field. Being able to network amongst us in the meeting was motivating seeing the kinds of perspective we all had when discussing the sections of the magazine.

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MOLLY NIKIRK

I really enjoyed being able to hear lectures from Professor Sissons and learn about her history in the fashion industry and gain knowledge from her. Creating a digital magazine was such an interesting project and pushed me to be more creative. I really enjoyed being able to participate in this collaboration project.

REFLECTIONS

JORDAN HULL

I enjoyed seeing the similarities and the differences from a different part of the world. Being able to have a chat about it, share opinions without judgement. I'm glad I was a part of this experience.

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JILIAN MIHALIO

Overall working with the NTU students was a great experience. It was interesting to meet students from a different country who are also studying in the same industry but a different part of it. It also was interesting to collaborate with them and see their thinking processes and see what inspires them. It was fun to see the culture difference between American vs English fashion students in terms of what they call certain garments or what each culture view as controversial or ideas of sustainability example. I wish we had more opportunities to work with them, and do more projects with them. It was nice to collaborate with them and meet other fashion students from overseas.

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MIA HERNDANEZ

Collaborating with NTU students was an interesting and memorable experience because not everyone has this opportunity to do so. I enjoyed how we got to learn from each other. I feel as though it would have been a better experience in person rather than virtually.

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DIANA VERASTEGUI

The experience of working with the NTU students for this assignment is something that not many say they could have done. Working with someone overseas during the already hectic school year is an amazing accomplishment. It was overall, a worthwhile experience. Personally, I simply wished we had more time to actually discuss the lectures.

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MADISON HOUDE

I enjoyed working with the NTU students and thought it was a great idea. I thought it was really interesting to not only learn how their minds work as design students, but also how they work living in a completely different culture. My favorite part was when we were comparing how we say a certain product here in the States versus how the NTU students would call it. While I feel that there was more connection that could have been built, I still enjoyed the time that we were able to interact with the NTU students.

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OLIVIA DUMAS

This collaboration with students from NTU allowed me to see a different perspective of the fashion design students, as well as cultural differences. I'm glad that this collaboration happened because these students will be a part of the fashion industry as I am, so we will for sure bump into each other one day and can reminisce about our college years. I do wish we could have had more time to spend together and get to know each other better. Overall, this was a great experience I will not forget.

REFLECTIONS, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS:

This project continues to provide an online cross-cultural experience, especially benefiting those students who are unable to undertake traditional study abroad opportunities. Students fully engaged in the process, each considering their own identity through the project themes of sustainability, counterculture, and individual styling. Professor Robin Baxter from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York provided a wonderful lecture on the business of fashion, which was particularly interesting and informative for the NTU Knitwear Design students whose course doesn't cover business studies.

"I really enjoyed working with the FIT students. It was inspiring to gain a broader, more global perspective of all the themes we explored, such as identity, counterculture, etc. It was also exciting to have discussions with students whose field of learning and expertise is based more in the marketing and the branding side of fashion. I learned a lot on how I could develop the branding strategy for my own knitwear side-business!"

All students were brave enough to put their cameras on during discussions, displaying a growing confidence in sharing ideas and speaking freely to their peers. Their reflections highlight the unique opportunity to network with students working globally; some found ways to communicate outside of the workshops, through Instagram and blog accounts, to compare views on each of the project topics Overall, students reported that it was good to experience the day to day lives of their peers through social media. WhatsApp groups were arranged for students to drop ideas into, prior to the project start, but students didn't take up this opportunity. We had a successful introduction session at the start of the project, which gave students the opportunity to meet each other in their groups and test out the online break-out rooms. We also had time to introduce the magazine to the students and answer initial questions.

The breakout rooms worked well for most students, no language barrier was reported, however, some students struggled to communicate within the collaborative stages. This could be to do with some students not accessing the correct group break-out rooms. NTU had less students participating, making the group dynamics uneven, this was particularly noticeable, if someone from NTU could not attend a session. It would be improved if we could recruit the same number of students from each University and take registers. The workshop sessions were mostly taken up with lecture Presentations and general discussion, making the time spent in the breakout rooms with individual groups limited. Timings for the project delivery are currently limited, due to it being an optional project for NTU students and delivered on a Wednesday at 17.00 UK time. It would be easier to introduce the project to the L4 NTU modules. We could then add more time for the group discussions.

EVALUATION

EVALUATION CONTINUED:

We provided a list of focused questions for students to answer and then feedback to peers, in their groups. We added an additional session at the end of the project, just for students to collaborate on the submissions for the magazine, this worked well, and the handouts worked well to prompt discussion. Students designed and agreed the content submitted for the different themes in the magazine. A student mentor (who took part in the previous 2022 project) from NTU also took part this year and was useful for students to ask questions to, when in group break-out rooms.

We had good student feedback on the lecture presentations, The lectures are on current topics and give opportunity for students to discuss similarities and differences in culture. We had lectures from both Universities, which worked very well. The magazine was the driving force of this project with each lecture giving format and inspiration for content. The format for the magazine was agreed on and each group developed their own way of responding to the lecture themes. Students found that the different themes often merged providing one larger theme of identity. Counterculture made them think about past and current perspectives and how they do or don't fit that definition. The Business of Fashion gave students an opportunity to think about the branding identity of a fashion label; what goes into making a design brand through looking at their own work and the building of its signature; this of course can merge with Sustainable identity which also can be part of their personal identity etc. Students have appreciated the opportunity to work together on this project, with participants from FIT noting the cultural differences between the two groups of students. They would have liked more time to connect.

"This collaboration with students from NTU allowed me to see a different perspective of the fashion design students, as well as cultural differences. I'm glad that this collaboration happened because these students will be a part of the fashion industry as I am, so we will for sure bump into each other one day and can reminisce about our college years. I do wish we could have had more time to spend together and get to know each other better. Overall, this was a great experience I will not forget."

Olivia Dumas FIT

For this magazine, we invited a small group of NTU Costume Design & Construction students to join the NTU Knitwear Design and FIT Fashion Business Management students, thus widening the collaboration between three diverse courses. Going forward, we could build on this collaborative input, making more of the unique knowledge offered from each course. Participants commented on a newfound confidence after connecting with students globally, building on communication skills to adapt to group dynamics. The student mentor (who took part in the previous 2022 project) from NTU was useful for students to ask questions too, when in group breakout rooms. This is something we should build on for future projects. The project encouraged students to look at aspects of fashion in different ways, stepping outside of social circles and interacting with people from different backgrounds. We asked participants to try to find contrasting ideas between students from different backgrounds and find like-for-like images. Students found that there was less difference than they had first expected.

ULIANA SISSONS

CREDITS

Thank you

to the students who took part in the collaborative discussions and magazine content for this project:

Fashion Business Management Students FIT Fashion, Knitwear and Knitted Textiles students NTU Costume Design students NTU

Group 1

Daniel Fairhurst, Louise Roughley, Jack Spiers, Noor Aslam, Fat Fisiru, Sofia Mazzacane, Lillian Svoboda.

Group 2

Jordan Hull, Betsy Ballisch, Elise Bell, Melissa Guaman, Anton Merisier, Ivelisse Vargas.

Group 3

Tasha 'O' Sullivan, Ernesta Palionyte, Antonella Beron, Mia Hernandez, Jillian Mihalio, Sandra Verastegui.

Group 4

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Group 5

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28

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Fashion Editorial: The Autonomous Gaze

In today's world of fast fashion, micro trends, overnight influencers and limitless references to bygone eras, our exploration of personal style and what clothing means to us might be getting swept up in the increasing rate of change.

This editorial captures an introspective reimagining of how we might present our sense of self unrestricted by the insignia of our time. A still, glowing specter against the stark collegiate backdrop pauses for a quiet moment of self-reflection, temporarily removed from reality and an outward sense of identity.

Credits for Cover Images: Photographer: Yiu Kwok 'YK' Styling: Christina Max-Koroma & Dan Fairhurst Story: Dan Fairhurst Fashion: Gold 3-piece outfit (balaclava, vest, shorts) Bobble balaclava - @outthereknitwear Orange 3-piece outfit (blaclava, vest, net skirt) - @outthereknitwear Boots & Leggings: Model's own Earrings: Vintage

