

# STRAND

IN CONVERSATION WITH **QUAY DASH** &

EQUALITY DANCE/BEST SUMMER EXHIBITIONS IN LONDON/US ABORTION LAWS/ CONFESSIONS OF A WORKING CLASS STUDENT/A NOTE ON WORTH AND PRODUCTIVITY/NBA RASICM/SEXUAL ASSAULT ON THE LONDON STAGE/BEST SUMMER EXHIBITIONS IN LONDON/ 3 AMERICAN CITIES/2019 MUSIC FESTIVAL REVIEWS/AN ACADEMIC YEAR IN OHOTOS



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# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR...



Dear readers,

I'm writing this three days after my last exam, boarded on a ten-hour flight to Colombia. I'm still a little dazed from the lack of sunlight I've gotten from being cooped up in both Maughan and Olympia for the past weeks, but I'm extremely excited for the months to come — and I hope you are too. These last couple of weeks have been an exam-stress induced chaos, but it has all led up to that shining light at the end of the tunnel: summer.

Whether you're off to explore the secret nooks and crannies of the world, visiting family, or spending these next few months in our beautiful London town, Strand is coming with you. With some probing essays, an interview with upcoming rapper Quay Dash, a conversation with Jo about gender equality in dance, multiple London summer must-sees, and more, we worked hard to kick off your summer just right. I wish you all the fun, excitement and relaxation for the brightest season of the year, and I look forward to seeing your beautiful faces again in September.

**Isabel Veninga**  
Editor-in-Chief

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# FRESH OUT OF FASHION SCHOOL - The Trio to quench Your Thirst This Summer

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We often wish for what we don't or can't have. As for me, I tend to miss winter when it's summer. I particularly miss last winter because of the London Fashion Week, where I had the opportunity to interact with emerging talents. Join my longing and become acquainted with the three new names in the global fashion arena – Amari Carter, Katya Zelentsova, and Kitty Shukman. The designers have three things in common: they are females, they went to fashion schools, and they were brought together in one LFW showroom curated by Jeanie Annan-Lewin, a London-based editor, stylist, and consultant.

## Amari Carter

• Instagram: @amaricarter

• Website: www.amaricarter.com

Amari Carter is originally from Atlanta, United States. She graduated from London College of Fashion, where she studied womenswear, and created her brand in September 2018. For Amari, the handmaking process is vital as she makes each piece by herself.

Both of her collections – Collection I Under Your Skin and

Collection II Lust For Comfort – examine one's inner nudity and vulnerability

by experimenting with lingerie-associated materials and sophisticated silhouettes.

**Your brand has a very strong aesthetic component. How long have you been working on it for?**

For the last four months. Before, I was studying at London College of Fashion from where I graduated last July. The white pieces are from my graduate collection. Then I did an extension to experiment with black, so it's a bit monochrome. I really love the black stuff because it's more hardcore as opposed to the white angelic vibes, but it still has delicacy, which is my aesthetic. My clothes are based on intimacy. I focus on vulnerability, and this is why you see the bra straps. It's about the inside being shown on the outside. You know, about what we hide the most. When we get undressed, we reveal our most private selves. My pieces are supposed to be worn as outerwear because the point of this artistic feel is to unveil your inner self.

**Why are you here?**

I got an email from Jeanie, saying: 'Hey, will you show your things?'

And I was like: 'Oh my God, she loves my brand! Great!'

I just graduated, so I thought that it would be a fantastic opportunity. 'Count me in!'

**How did it feel to go to a fashion school?**

It was really interesting since I'm from Atlanta. It's definitely a whole different vibe, which is amazing. And the London underground fashion scene is so different.

**Why didn't you study in America?**

I think that aesthetic-wise, I'm more accepted in Europe than at home. Here, you can be more creative and more conceptual. You're able to tell your story.

**How is the real fashion world going for you?**

It's overwhelming. But it's been really good so far. I've also gotten a lot of valuable feedback here during this fashion week, which is so shocking because because you don't expect it when you just graduate. It's definitely great for the learning experience.

IMAGE: AMARI CARTER

## Katya Zelentsova

• Instagram: @ekatzelentsova

Katya Zelentsova may trick you with a British accent, but behind it hides a saturated Russian soul. Originally from Volgograd, a city in Southwestern Russia known for its handicrafts, Katya moved to London to study at Central Saint Martins in 2012. She is currently finishing her master's degree there. During her journey, the designer has gotten her hands on refining crochet and knitting skills while pursuing her unique design and vision. She pays homage to national crafts of both



KATYA ZELENTSOVA

Russia and the UK while valuing self-irony when exploring the Russian identity outside of the home. Katya has taken advantage of stereotypes and misconceptions by employing them as tools that create a new fashion image of a contemporary Russian.

**Could you share a little fashion story of yours? Why do you make clothes?**

I did my foundation, BA, and I'm doing my master's now at Central Saint Martins in knitwear. I decided to make clothes because when I was seven, I wanted to be an interior designer, but when sketching, I realised that it was easier to

sketch dresses rather than sofas. This is kind of how it all began. When I was eleven, I found out about CSM, and I was like: 'Alright, that sounds like a pretty reasonable place to go to.' Fast forward seven years, there I was – knitwear. I initially came to foundation thinking that I would do womenswear, which was a bit silly, since I was extremely bad at pattern cutting, so that didn't match up. But I had this tutor, whom we all really wanted to impress. She gave us a tuto



AMARI CARTER



KITTY SHUKMAN

rial with a knitting machine, where I did so badly because I thought I would be amazing straight away. When I realised the disaster, I was like: 'Shit, she must think that I'm an idiot, so I need to make sure that I'm going to prove her wrong.' So, I stayed after-hours, practising with the machine for weeks and weeks. Until I kind of got somewhere. I ended up doing knitwear because of this. I did my BA, and I graduated last summer with a collection titled 'It's not easy being seductive in -20 degrees'. A very humorous name – obviously I don't care about the male gaze or whatever. But, honestly, it's not easy. I went back to Russia over this winter, and it was a struggle. Then, over the summer, I developed a little capsule collection of simplified pieces, derived from the graduate collection. And I've made it all of the offcuts and little bits and pieces left over from my grad collection. Just because I didn't want to waste them.

**How different were responses to your graduate collection from the international and Russian communities?**

Everyone has been quite sweet about it in Russia actually. Maybe people took it a little bit more literal. But all of my friends there were like: 'Oh, I get it. It's funny.' Yet, if people just want to see it as miniskirts, it's cool with me. However, you read the collection.

**IMAGE:  
KATYA  
ZELENTSOVA**



**Zero waste!**

Yeah, zero waste and all that. Also, it's ridiculously expensive to remake things.

**Why are you here?**

Jeanie, amazing stylist behind this space, reached out to me, literally last week, and was like: 'Would you like to be in this?' And I was like: 'Yeah, I'd love to.'

**How does specialising in knitwear rather than womenswear affect your skills?**

I think it's nice that I have a skill. If I were to look for a job, which I will probably have to do eventually, this would be good, because I know how to do things for a niche market. Most of the fashion houses have a knitwear department. I guess that there is less competition because there aren't that many fashion courses focusing on knitwear in the world, as opposed to pattern cutting or just womenswear and menswear courses. So, hopefully, it will be a great advantage, but the time will tell.

**How would you describe going to a fashion school? Where would you be if you didn't go there?**

I wouldn't be doing any of this, I suppose. I can't really imagine not having done this education.

I don't think that I could have done the things that I was able to do at Central Saint Martins anywhere else. Because while I would desperately YouTube how to crochet and knit, most of the skills that I acquired over the last five-six years were learned in CSM through the practice that I did there. I don't think everyone needs a classical education, it's more about what works for you.

But I like to think that this education has worked for me. It doesn't mean that it's the best, though.

**Kitty Shukman**

- **Instagram:** @kittyshukman
- **Website:** www.kittyshukman.org

Kitty Shukman is a London-based shoe-designer, who graduated with the first class degree in footwear design from London College of Fashion Cordwainers in July 2018. She is now a junior designer at Yeezy. Kitty incorporates the conversation about mental health into the couture environment by creating shoes that help their owners feel powerful and protected when they are anxious. Her two unisex designs – in grey and black – play by the sustainable rules and employ the technology of innovative 3D printing. The designer steps off the pedestal of a fashion creator to demonstrate the importance of comfort and empathy in the times of racing for a perfect image.

**Why did you choose to make shoes?**

Since I was little, I knew that I wanted to be a shoe designer. I feel like it's a perfect mixture of fashion and sculpture. Also, shoes seem to be a collective item. Sometimes people can buy a dress and feel like they really have to wear it. But shoes feel different. After you buy them, you can hold on to them. While my journey was full of ups and downs, it was a really important time. When I started my degree, I interned at Sophia Webster, where the product was very girly, glittery heels. But through my course, I learned that I'm very unisex and androgynous, so I wanted to make shoes for men and women, but away from those feminine heels. There's still a special place for that in my heart, though.

**Why are you here?**

Jeanie reached out and asked me to be part of this. And it's super exciting for me because I haven't heard much about what people think about my shoes. So, it's interesting for me to listen to the opinions. Also, I haven't released a full collection. These are the only two handmade pairs from my graduate collection. I actually produced these myself, which made the process very long.

**What inspired you to create these shoes? This year chunky boots have peaked, but I've been following you on Instagram for a while now, and you had used platforms and chunkiness before the boom.**

It's so saturated now! My inspiration for the collection was my desire to make something authentic to me. I struggle with OCD, which is a mental health condition, and I have a lot of anxiety from that. When you put on an item of clothing, it totally changes your energy and your state of mind. I wanted to make shoes that other people could wear when feeling anxious so that they make them feel very confident and very strong. So, I looked at different ways of how humans protect themselves. For example, sportswear padding, first aid support and armours from various cultures, like those of British medieval knights and Japanese samurai. That's why there are so much strapping and things that hold on to clothes to give you that comfort. They are like warrior shoes. I 3D printed them to make them so light that it's possible to wear them every day without your feet hurting or feeling tired. Also, I wanted to make them without leather, so they're made of recycled suede. They have reflective elements and foam inside, so they're super comfortable.

**Are you planning to mass-produce these shoes?**

I think that when the time is right, and I'm on my own, I'll definitely do it.

**How did you find a fashion school? What is it like in the fashion reality?**

I was so tired. Last year was very hectic and intense. After graduation, I started my new job, and it gave me so much energy. LCF prepared me in many ways, like teaching me technical and photoshop skills and giving me an idea of how the process works. But in other ways, there's so much stuff about the industry, which you just have to learn; how it actually works outside the classroom.



**IMAGE: KITTY SHUKMAN**

GRACE VICKERS



## EQUALITY DANCE: INTERVIEW WITH JO OWNER OF JO'S DANCE EMPORIUM

According to the 2012 World Dance Sport Federation Professional Division Competition Rules, a couple is defined as consisting of **'a male and female partner'**. The male of course taking the role as the 'lead', and the female the role of the inferior 'follower'. For many, the ballroom dance community's traditional presentation of gender hierarchies and heteronormative relationships does a disservice to a modern day understanding of gender and sexuality- it leaves little room for individual expression.

Each year, the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* brings fabulous flavour to our screens, yet despite their sexually diverse cast they neglect to portray gender diversity within their professional pairings. Instead, the BBC programme continues to push physical chemistry between just a man and a woman to its 8.1 million viewers- something the 21st century has long left behind. In 2019, the battle against heteronormativity is on the rise, with some members of the ballroom dance community actively rallying against such binary concepts through performances that promote gender equality through same sex partnerings. Such duos dissolve gender boundaries and create a space where masculinity and femininity are no longer limited by a single definition.

Jo, the owner of 'Jo's Dance Emporium', is a member of an **'equality dance'** pair with his partner Tom. These pairs are of same gendered individuals, something that the mainstream ballroom dance community fails to promote. I spoke to Jo about his experience in the ballroom dance world, from his childhood in Portugal, to his time in London.

### **'DID YOU CONSIDER TAKING PART IN 'EQUALITY DANCE' AS A CHILD?'**

*'It just wasn't an option. Growing up in Portugal, the only dance couples we could learn from were a man and woman. The idea of two men dancing together never crossed my mind!'*

### **'HOW WAS IT THAT YOU ENTERED EQUALITY DANCE? WAS IT AN EASY TRANSITION?'**

*"No. Not all. Like I said, back home it didn't exist. When I attended international competitions, it was presented to me for the first time, and it was a shock. Initially I didn't think it was something I was capable of. I was worried about what my parents would think, and I was worried about whether the fact it was two guys dancing would distract from the skill, talent and style of dance I've worked so hard to accomplish.'*

### **'IN THE 21ST CENTURY HOW DO YOU FEEL THE BALLROOM DANCE COMMUNITY DOES AT MIRRORING POLITICAL PROGRESSION REGARDING LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES?'**

*'Much like politics, it's slow, and accepted differently internationally. Some people are very openminded and want to embrace the new. Others, not so much. Much like in politics, there's a lot of work to be done, but there's also a lot of people willing to put in the time to show the importance of equality and acceptance. I'm optimistic about it.'*

### **'DO YOU THINK THIS LIMITED YOUR GROWTH AS A DANCER OR EFFECT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR SEXUALITY?'**

*'It didn't limit my growth, but due to the political climate in Portugal, it definitely affected how I handled my own coming out. Being 'gay' was and still is a sensitive topic back home- and here within certain social circles. I didn't come out until 4 years ago!'*

### **'SO, WHAT MADE YOU TAKE THE LEAP?'**

*'Tom. He encouraged self-acceptance and spoke of how it could help the same-sex dance community gain strength. You see, because of the judgement directed towards 'equality dance', the standard of dance within this group hasn't reached the same heights as heteronormative pairs. By taking part in 'equality dance' we've introduced so many more LGBTQ couples to the concept!'*

**'IN YOUR POSITION AS A TEACHER, AND A MEMBER OF AN 'EQUALITY DANCE' PAIR, DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS ANYTHING ABOUT A LEADER'S STEPS THAT MAKE THEM INHERENTLY MALE OR A FOLLOWER'S STEPS THAT MAKE THEM INHERENTLY FEMALE?'**

*Steps are steps. The figures for a man and woman are the same. Think of it like acting, when dancing you are performing a role, it's important that that role relates to you. Your style and personality identify you as a follower or a leader. It has nothing to do with your X and Y chromosomes. Nothing regarding the steps prevents a dancer from assuming either role, it's your personality and how an individual expresses their gender that matters.'*

**'HOW ARE YOU ENCOURAGING THE GROWTH OF THE 'EQUALITY DANCE' COMMUNITY?'**

*'Both Tom and I compete regularly i equality dance competitions, we have a strong social media presence and we teach same gender couples- some even for their wedding dances! Since becoming more vocal on the topic we've received lots of interest. Like I said before, it's about 'normalising it', and by actively bringing it to people, more and more individuals have gained access to a world they never knew existed! We're creating a safe place for diversity and talent!'*

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT POPULAR SHOWS, SUCH AS 'STRICTLY' ONLY PROMOTING HET-ERONORMATIVITY WITHIN THEIR PAIRINGS? DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS ROOM FOR CHANGE WITHIN THESE FORMULAS?'**

*'I don't understand why it hasn't happened yet. Maybe because it's a family show and 'equality dance' doesn't project the 'normal' family? But what is normal? If these shows presented same gendered pairs then it would familiarise their massive audience with the notion and it would no longer seem strange! The more frequently people see it the more 'normal it will become!'*

*So it seems, the couples that mainstream society is presented with promote a 'normal', or heteronormative concept of physical romance- but the public today are not represented by a heteronormative pair. This black and white concept of relationships within the dance world is no longer mirrored by the public! This idea of 'normal' is a misconception. The ballroom dance world's presentation of 'normal' is merely a justification for an outdated stereotype. Jo and Tom, along with 'equality dance' pairs internationally have proven that a fluid expression of gender is possible in a same sex pair, and together they work on bringing acceptance to their cause.*



# THE TOP 10 EXHIBITIONS OPENING IN LONDON THIS SUMMER

GODELIEVE DE BREE

## 1. HOWARDENA PINDELL AT VICTORIA MIRO MAYFAIR

Explicitly political and concerned with themes such as exploitation, racism and feminism this should be an incredibly thought-provoking exhibit. The work of Howardena Pindell, an American multimedia artist, is making its way to the Victoria Miro in Mayfair for the first solo exhibition of her work to come to the UK. It will give a fantastic idea of the artist's progression throughout her career, showing work ranging from her large-scale spray paintings produced in the 1970's to her more contemporary three-dimensional wall-mounted work.

**Info:** Open from the 5th June to the 27th July, free entry



## 2. NATALIA GONCHAROVA AT TATE MODERN

The work of Natalia Goncharova, a Russian avant-garde artist, is coming to the Tate Modern for the first retrospective to be shown in the UK. Goncharova was incredibly prolific as well as multi-talented: not only did she work as an artist she also wrote, designed costumes and sets for ballets and engaged with film. Her style is erratic as she experimented with cubism, expressionism and impressionism. If you're looking for some female inspiration the Tate is the place to visit.

**Info:** Open from the 6th June – 8th September, £16, £15 concessions and £5 Tate Collective



## 3. THE SUMMER EXHIBITION AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Since 1769 the Royal Academy of the Arts has held their famous Summer exhibition, an open submission show that encourages upcoming talent while also giving space to respected names. It is truly a core of culture in London and its artistic legacy. This traditional show is a fantastic way to become acquainted with the contemporary art world. The Summer exhibition should prove to be an incredibly educational experience in a variety of media including film, sculpture, printmaking, and even architecture.

**Info:** Open from the 10th June to the 12th August, £16 with £13 concessions



## 4. IBRAHIM EL-SALAH- HI: PAIN RELIEF AT THE SAATCHI GALLERY

Known as the 'Godfather of African Modernism' Ibrahim El-Salahi's work will be on view in the Saatchi Gallery this summer. Born in Sudan in 1930, El-Salahi was educated at the Slade School of Art in London. His six months of imprisonment, wrongly so and without trial, in Sudan has had an integral impact on his style. This collection focuses on the experience of chronic pain and the difficulties that can arise from, as was the catharsis of, creation as consequence of this restriction.

**Info:** Open from 7th to the 18th July, free entry





## 5. CINDY SHERMAN AT THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Featuring approximately 150 works of the contemporary American photographer Cindy Sherman this is sure to be an evocative exhibition. This retrospective sees the progression of her work from the 1970's all the way to her present-day photographs. Asking questions about performance and deception Sherman's work takes influence from fashion, film and advertising. Localised around the theme of identity, her photographs often features experimental self-portraits in which she captures herself playing different personas thus exploring the roles we play versus the realities we live in.

**Info: Open from the 27th June to the 15th September, £18-20 with concessions £17-19 and £5 tickets for under 25s on Fridays**

## 6. GET UP, STAND UP NOW AT SOMERSET HOUSE

Over 100 artists are contributing to this exhibition at Somerset House about Black creativity. With a timeline starting with the Windrush generation that works its way to contemporary artists this collection of work is sure to give an insight into Black history as well as its diaspora. Work in multiple genres will be presented and made specifically for this show which seeks to celebrate the abundance in talent from Black individuals all over the world. It is sure to be a genuinely exceptional experience.

**Info: Open from the 2nd June to the 15th September, £12.50 with £9.50 concessions**



## 7. HELENE SCHJERFBECK AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Delicate and touching Helen Schjerfbeck's work has been too long over-looked; the RA's exhibition, which will be the premiere collection of her work in the UK, seeks to address this. Schjerfbeck is a household name in Finland, she is particularly known for her tender portraits that depict and investigate what it means to age. Her 19th century realism becomes abstraction as the collection will explore her different styles of painting with over 60 of her works including portraits, landscapes and still lifes on show.

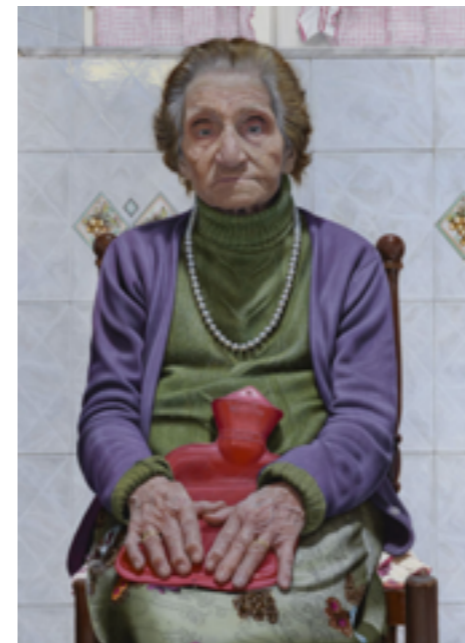
**Info: Open from the 20th July the 27th October, £14 with £10 concessions**



## 8. LEE KRASNER: LIVING COLOUR AT THE BARBICAN

Lee Krasner's vivid work will be making its way to the Barbican to grace London with some exhilarating abstract expressionism. A key figure in the movement, Krasner's art is charged with energy and life. This exhibit will see approximately 100 of her works on display spanning her 50 year career including life drawings, large-scale abstract paintings as well as collages, many of which have never been on display in the UK. Expect to be dazzled, this rare collection is unmissable.

**Info: Open from the 30th May to the 1st September, £15 (Monday-Friday, £17 Saturday & Sunday and £5 Young Barbican**



## 9. BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2019 AT THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Portraiture is an astounding reflection of, as well as an exercise in, humanity. Considered the most prestigious and competitive portrait award, selected submissions from the BP Portrait Award will show at the National Portrait Gallery for its fortieth year running. This year it received 2,538 entries from 84 countries and this exhibit will show approximately 50 of the highlights from the submission pool including those shortlisted: Emma Hopkins, Massimiliano Pironti, Carl-Martin Sandvold and Charlie Schaffer. This collection will then go on to tour from London to other venues.

**Info: Open from the 13th June to the 20th October, free entry**

## 10. FÉLIX VALLOTTON AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Having moved to Paris at a young age, Félix Vallotton became acquainted with a collection of artists called Les Nabis which involved Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. This would deeply influence the Swiss-born Vallotton's avant-garde style. Consequently, if you visited and enjoyed the Tate Modern's exhibition on Bonnard, which showed this spring, this would be a fascinating extension. It is also the first evaluative exhibition of Vallotton's career, with over 80 prints on a variety of subjects, to be showing in the UK.

**Info: Open from the 30th June to the 29th September, £16 with £12 concessions**



# IN CONVERSATION WITH

# QUAY DASH

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MOST UP AND COMING RAPPER FROM NEW YORK AS SHE MAKES WAVES THROUGH EUROPE



Listening to Quay Dash's unique brand of empowerment rap you would have no idea what a sweetheart she really is underneath. A woman who has overcome more than most of us could fathom, homophobia, transphobia and bullying. Speaking to her was both a pleasure and a privileged look into the life she has led up to her career. Discovering her key influences to find out why she is becoming such a key influencer within the rap industry and inspiring so many in this new world of SoundCloud self-made artists. I spoke to Quay Dash to uncover how she's made such a name for herself within an ever-competitive industry.

## WHAT WERE YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES GROWING UP?

**QUAY DASH:** Growing up I was always listening to female hip hop, all the big names in the 90s like Lil Kim, Missy Elliot, Foxy, but following that I was really into Nicki Minaj and Trina who really influenced the way I felt music could be.

## GROWING UP IN NYC, DID THAT AFFECT YOUR INFLUENCES?

**QUAY DASH:** It was fun and vibrant, hearing all the different types of rap girls and listening to my mom blasting that on the radio. It was like the Golden era of so many female artists. It was amazing and played a big part of how I experienced music.

## YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR MOM, WHAT STARTED YOUR LOVE OF MUSIC AND WHEN DID IT START?

**QUAY DASH:** It started in my childhood and growing up in foster homes because I was a 'troubled child', I spent a lot of time alone and in rooms by myself but there would always be cassettes lying around and it was a way to escape. I always had cassettes, even after my childhood. I didn't have much choice in what I listened to, so I listened to every genre of music there was, not just rap.

## WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED IN THE INDUSTRY

**QUAY DASH:** Honestly putting out a project, I'm booked like crazy and because I don't show myself online so much that makes things harder but I'm more of an in real life person so you can get to know me as an artist. Putting out artistic work is not as easy as it seems, there's time, money and work that need to be invested and there often just isn't enough time in my day. I'm also busy in my personal life and to create art I need to be in the right state of mind.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BEST AND WORST PARTS OF TRAVELLING AND BEING ON TOUR? I'M SURE IT'S AMAZING TO BE BOOKED ALL THE TIME,, BUT THERE MUST BE PARTS THAT BECOME STRESSFUL.**

**QUAY DASH:** Being in Europe has been amazing and I really loved Stockholm! However, it's frustrating to travel alone, and it's especially tough being a black trans woman and travelling solo. It's a lot, sometimes I'm balling crying-most of the time actually I'll cry before I leave home just because it's so overwhelming and I have no team, no DJ, no management it's just me doing everything. I'm a one woman show because I've had management in the past that have really fucked me over and I just don't trust people enough, so I do it myself.

**THAT'S AMAZING! HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE INDUSTRY CONSIDERING HOW FAR YOU'VE COME DOING JUST THIS ALONE?**

**QUAY DASH:** I started on SoundCloud making music with a friend and we recorded together usually. Eventually I made a solo track which attracted a lot of buzz in the city and then I went on to create my own EP, transphobic, which started more waves and it really went from there.

**WHAT ACTUALLY INSPIRED YOUR UNIQUE BRAND OF RAP THAT IS SO EMPOWERING? I KNOW U.C.F.W.M IN PARTICULAR HAS BECOME AN ANTHEM FOR MOST OF THE WOMEN IN MY LIFE.**

**QUAY DASH:** It was just how I wanted to hear music, it was wrapped around bullying and all the bs that just exists in the world and everything that's in my head. I think my thoughts just become my brand, like my background experience is just poured into my music. I just think and write and it becomes art.

**OKAY THAT DEFINITELY COMES THROUGH IN THE MUSIC AND IS WHY I THINK IT'S SO RELATABLE, IT'S MUSIC WE ALL NEED TO POWER THROUGH. WITH THAT IN MIND WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR YOUNGER SELF?**

**QUAY DASH:** Just that like you're gonna be....I don't know...just enjoy your life because even if it seems that things are bad, they do get better.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE THAT ARE STRUGGLING WITH THEIR GENDER IDENTITY? AS YOU ARE A PART OF A MINORITY OF TRANS-RAPPERS I'M SURE YOU HELP A LOT OF PEOPLE THROUGH YOUR MUSIC SIMPLY BY BRINGING MORE VISIBILITY INTO THE COMMUNITY.**

**QUAY DASH:** right now is crazy but you just have to take that and ride the wave. Follow what your heart says and your intuition within yourself. Don't be what any man or woman tells you, you should be, or what you think you should be, just be what you feel inside and struggle on.

# CONFESSIONS OF A WORKING - CLASS STUDENT

EDIT: ISSABELLA ORLANDO  
IMAGES: BASHIR SULTANI



**B**eing working class in London is a struggle and being a working-class student in

London, more so. Only 26.6% of King's students come from working-class backgrounds, essentially meaning that the majority of the student body come from the middle- and upper-classes, which highlights the disparity between the accessibility of higher education for privately versus state-educated students. This lack of opportunity available to the working classes grows more and more every day.

Private schools receive more funding than ever from their donors and are now able to choose IGCSEs over the infinitely more difficult reformed GCSEs. According to the Headmaster of Kings College School in Wimbledon, Andrew Halls:

**“the difference in difficulty between reformed GCSEs and IGCSEs is infinitesimal”.** The choice of easier GCSEs gives private school students a further head start than they might have already had. Meanwhile, government schools are lacking funding, teachers and training. This results in a total imbalance between the working-class and upper-class' educational advantages.

In the absence of these advantages, state-school students struggle to keep up at exam time, and often can't earn themselves places at ever more exclusive Russel Group Universities, no matter how hard they work. Without access to the resources and teachers private school tuition can afford, their grades suffer in comparison. Moreover, as private schools are achieving more A's and A\*s due to seemingly infinite resources and motivated teachers, the linear grading system pushes the mark equivalents of state-school students further and further down the alphabet.

Rather than place blame on working-class students for allegedly not working hard enough, the real issue may be that private school students simply don't have to work as hard to get to where they want to go.

If we want things to change, it begins with the government. It means being stricter with independent schools and making sure both state and private schools follow the same curriculum regardless of resources. It means providing state schools with more funding and better teaching.

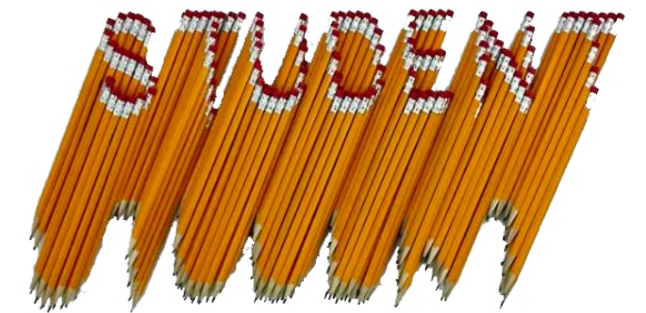
This is not to say our teachers are lacking but that they are suffering under the Tories. We have to start paying teachers better, giving them their deserved pensions, providing support and counselling, before they become burnt out by the overwhelming workload they manage alone and out of hours. Primarily, chance would entail enforcing a universal code of teaching of both private and state that involves equal opportunity for all.



The government is not the only institution accountable for the lack of equal accessibility in higher education. Universities need to consider the viable differences between a student educated privately and one educated publicly. This involves lowering grade offers for working-class students and providing more support during their studies; for instance, grants for private tuition for those who receive offers of above three As. While this may seem indulgent, most private school students expecting to go to Oxbridge receive extra-curric

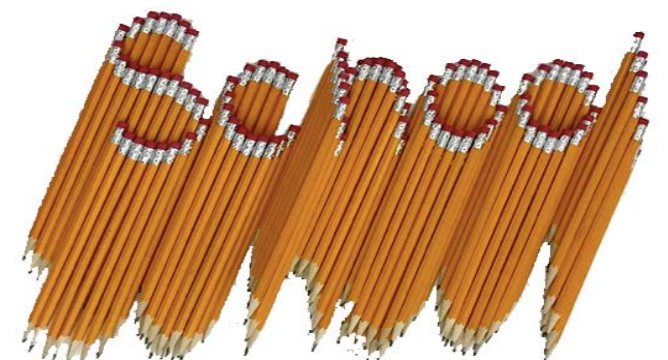
ular teaching as part of their school's myriad of support.

London in particular is a challenging place to live as a member of the working class. The snobbery that goes on in universities, especially in the capital, must be taken just as seriously as any other discriminatory slander.



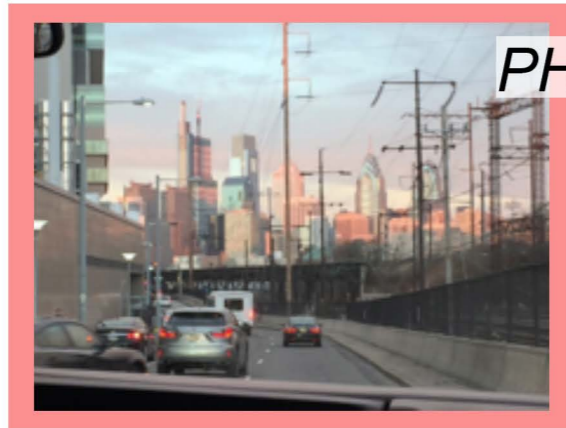
This calls for more safeguarding and more education about the unacceptability of looking down upon peers based on their financial status.

The education system in itself needs to change, and the only way this is going to happen is if the government and universities recognise that there is a disparity and work towards implementing the changes that are so desperately needed to create broader opportunity, inclusion and acceptance.

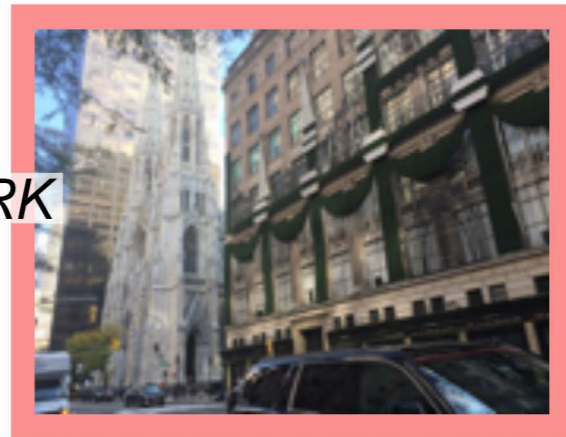


# THREE AMERICAN CITIES

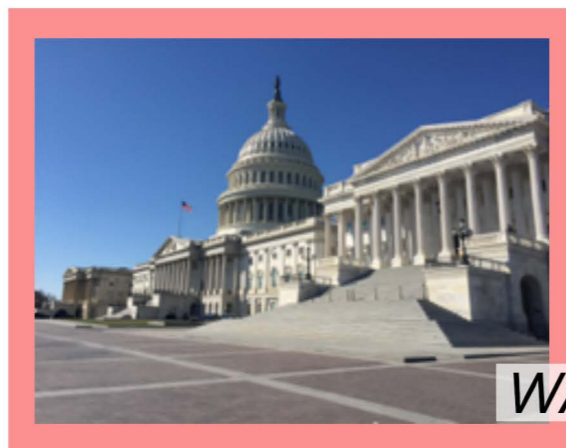
WRITTEN BY  
**KATHERINE TROJAK**



PHILADELPHIA



NEW YORK



WASHINGTON DC

America is a country as vast and diverse as the people who live in it. The East Coast is known for its bustling cities, fast-paced lifestyle, and modern histories. This guide will take you through three of those cities: Washington DC, Philadelphia, and New York, and show you just what to see, how to maximize your time, and how to travel between the cities.

## WASHINGTON DC

Starting with the southernmost of these cities, Washington DC is the seat of government in the United States and is a city filled with grand and white designed buildings giving it a very official feel wherever you go. It's a city of monuments and museums and a host of seasonal events, from ice skating in the winter to strolling through the cherry tree parks in the spring.

At the US Capitol, take a 45-minute tour led by knowledgeable guides or, if Congress is in session, stop by the House or Senate Appointment Desk in the Capitol Visitor Center to obtain an international pass to watch right from the balconies. Nearby is the Library of Congress, the US Supreme Court, and the US Botanical Gardens, which are all worth a quick visit.

Stroll along the National Mall to the Washington Monument and then along to the Lincoln Memorial, passing several of the Smithsonian museums which hold some of the US's most thorough collections, the World War II memorial, the Vietnam War Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the National Christmas Tree if it's in season. From there, look out across the water to find the Jefferson Memorial or take a trek across the water to see it up close.



The White House is a must see and visitors can take pictures in front of the barred gates, but there's still a pretty good view of one of the US's most iconic buildings. Tours are given inside and could be worth it, but you'll have to make sure to book in advance to get the day that you want.

Getting around the city is relatively easy; there's a network of underground subway trains and over-ground busses that work well. Just grab a MetroCard from any subway station to travel across any of the lines.

## PHILADELPHIA

*In the middle of these three cities, Philadelphia can work as a perfect base to see the rest of the East Coast. But there's so much to see within the city itself that it's a place you don't want to miss.*



*There's several LOVE statues scattered across the city of brotherly love, the most famous at Love Park, so make sure to snap a picture next to one. And if you're up for a bit of dessert, stop by The Famous 4th Street Cookie Company at Reading Terminal for some of the best cookies in town or by Capogiro for some wonderful gelato.*

*The city doesn't have as complete a network of underground or overground transportation, so be prepared to walk around.*



*Philadelphia is the birthplace of the United States of America, so start with the Independence National Historical Park. You can see the Liberty Bell, exhibits on the story of American independence, where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were signed, and even earn a Jr Ranger Badge.*

*There might not be as many museums as Washington DC, but there are certainly a few not to miss. Visit the Philadelphia Museum of Art and run up the famous steps where Rocky ran to the triumphant music in the movie Rocky and check out his statue at the bottom. Or visit the Barnes Foundation, a beautiful private collection of art. And the Rodin museum has the largest collection of his work outside of Paris.*

## NEW YORK CITY

*The City of Lights, the city that never sleeps, the city of everything, New York, New York. It's the city that most international visitors choose as the city to visit and a place where people all over the US go to see the museums, nightlife, and iconic sites.*

*The Statue of Liberty is a popular choice, though isn't generally one that the local's choose. The 9/11 memorial is a touching and thought-provoking exhibit and memorial dedicated to the terrorist attack on the twin towers. Ellis Island is another exciting trip, detailing the experience of millions of immigrants that came through the checkpoint during the 19th century to start a new life in America. Both Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty can be seen from The Battery, a cute little green park along the water.*

*A few other sites to travel around and visit are Brooklyn Bridge, the Empire State Building, and Grand Central Terminal. Fifth Avenue is a bright and expensive place to see high-end shopping. Rockefeller Square, which has ice skating during the winter, and St. Patrick's Cathedral are beautiful sites. Central Park is perfect for strolling on warm days and is full of ponds, fountains, playgrounds, sports fields, and flower gardens.*

*The High Line is a refurbished overground train route that winds its way through the city a few flights up giving visitors a unique view of the skyline. If you follow that route, Chelsea Market is a perfect place to stop for lunch.*

*Times Square might not be the most endearing but is one of the most exciting places in the city and is always bustling with people. Make sure to watch your bags as there are a huge number of pickpockets that watch the area. If you love theatre, visit the TKTS booth for discounted day-of Broadway tickets.*

*New York is also a city of museums. Get lost in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, because you're bound to find an interesting exhibit you've never seen before, or the Museum of Modern Art, for rotating exhibits on many topics as well as classics in the permanent collection such as Van Gogh's Starry Starry Night and Monet's Water Lilies.*

*Travelling in New York City is easy with its subway stations conveniently located nearly everywhere in the city. It'll be packed during rush hour and expect to walk places you want to go, but it's very simple to use. Just buy a metro card and put money on it, then swipe in whenever you want to go somewhere.*



## TRAVELLING IN BETWEEN

*It's easy to turn these three cities into one exciting trip filled with visits to America's history and present.*

*Travelling by train is probably one of the best ways to get from city to city. Between Philadelphia and Washington DC, you can take an Amtrak train that takes about two and a half hours. It makes a lot of stops, so you can either get on or off at the central stations in the cities, Union Station for Washington DC and 30th Street Station in Philadelphia, or leave somewhere closer to where you're staying. Amtrak is also an option between Philadelphia and New York, but the cheaper option is to take New Jersey transit. It'll save money and there isn't a huge difference in the service.*

*Bus is another option for travel, Greyhound being the most famous line. If you book at the right time, tickets can go down to under 10 USD or roughly 8 pounds. It'll take a little longer to get from place to place, for example, about three and a half hours in between Philadelphia and Washington DC, and will be a little bit more cramped than a train, but it's a great way to save money and see more of the road while travelling.*

*These three cities are American through and through and are packed with things to see. Washington DC's monuments and museums, Philadelphia's history, and New York City's energy are all endearing in their own way. A trip to the US would be incomplete without them, so make sure to check them off your list next time you visit the states.*

# A YEAR IN



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# PHOTOS

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# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT



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## **LOCATIONS:**

- 1. THE TUBE**
- 2. TAJ STORES, BRICK LANE**
- 3. PLATFORMS @ CORSICA STUDIOS**
- 4. GREENWICH PARK**
- 5. JAZZ CAFE, CAMDEN**
- 6. PICADILLY CIRCUS**

- 7. JAZZ CAFE, CAMDEN**
- 8. TAJ STORES, BRICK LANE**
- 9. UNKNOWN**
- 10. WINTER WONDERLAND, HYDE PARK**
- 11. PLATFORMS @ CORSICA STUDIOS**
- 12. BREXIT MARCH, WESTMINSTER**
- 13. BRIGHTON BEACH**

# TALKING ABOUT US ABORTION LAWS

## 1. RACHEL BROOKER

*The murder of George Tiller, ten years ago on the 31st of May 2009, was due to his title as the medical director of Women's Health Care Services that was one of only three clinics nationwide to provide late-term abortions for American women. At least 11 people have been killed in attacks on abortions in the United States since 1993. The unprecedented violence inflicted upon the right to choose, has found itself in full circle. Lawmakers have made it their mission to overturn the constitutional amendment of Roe vs. Wade in 1973, that allowed women the legal right to have an abortion. New, harmful and strict legislation that violates women's autonomy in America; has been passed in several states such as Alabama, Ohio and Georgia. The 'heart-bill bill' bans all abortions after 6 weeks, despite doctors and reproductive rights advocates arguing it is too early in a pregnancy for a woman to recognize.*

*Before abortion became legalised, the preventative measures for abortion were shunned as women opted into oral contraception in the 1960s. It was only recently revealed that a woman's 'break' in her pill pact was an attempt at gaining the Pope's approval. Emma Goldman, a renowned anarchist, a pioneer for contraception and Margaret Sanger's mentor; recognised the need for contraception. Working as a nurse, she assisted poor immigrant workers on the Lower East Side of New York in the 1890s. Goldman saw the injustice that poor women of colour were facing and the poverty they were being subjected to by being forced to have another child they were not able to financially look after. She understood the role of the government and its power in withholding the rights of women to socially and economically liberate themselves.*

*The fight for abortion is often overlooked as an empowered 'fight for all' on a level playing field, since were all fighting for the same rights. However, this legislation would affect women of colour increasingly harsher. Before abortion became constitutionally legal, wealthy white women were able to receive 'therapeutic abortions' whilst their poor, women of colour counterparts were denied. People fail to notice the*

*What empowers this campaign to over-turn the right for a woman to have an abortion, originates from the strong religious stance of the fetus' right to live since it is deemed human from the moment of conception. However, this strong religious stance has remained ubiquitous in society long before the Roe vs. Wade decision.*

*intersectionality of abortions and what this legislation will do for women who cannot afford the trip to another state. Compared with the State of Working America's statistics, 'workers earning poverty-level wages are disproportionately female, black, Hispanic, or between the ages of 18 and 25.' The legislation being passed not only limits female autonomy, but it is also classist and racist.*

*Through the same intersectional lens, we in Britain should be as critical when we look over the sea and see Northern-Irish women facing stricter laws than the women in Alabama. Despite England legalizing abortion in 1967 and Ireland successfully repealing the eighth amendment by referendum in 2018, Northern Ireland still faces strong religious influence over their legislation. Repeated attempts to relax abortion laws, have been shattered by the ability of the Democratic Unionist Party to veto any efforts to grant women the rights they deserve over the control on their own bodies.*

*On the 31st May 2019, ten years after George Tiller's murder, his anniversary is arrived with successful attempts at reversing the constitutional rights he upheld. In a world of literature that discusses possible dystopian futures, it may be right to believe that women are approaching theirs.*

## 2. MEG HAIN

America is currently facing a frightening wave of tightening anti-abortion laws in states including Arkansas, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Georgia and Ohio. Most of these states are implementing "heartbeat bills", banning abortions from around 6-8 weeks, once a foetal heartbeat can be detected. This alone will pose a significant challenge to women's ability to seek an abortion as most women are not aware they are pregnant by this point, but some states are taking further steps to make it near-impossible to get a legal abortion.



Alabama's recent bill marks the strictest of these new laws, which sees a near-total ban on abortion, with an exception only for cases of severe risk to the mother's health. Alabama's governor Kay Ivey signed into law a bill which makes performing an abortion at any stage of a pregnancy a felony, punishable by up to 99 years in prison. The bill was passed after a vote in which 25 local senators voted in favour, with only 6 against. 22 Senators also voted against the bill including an exception for cases of rape or incest, making for a majority. The complicated legal territory surrounding rape and the climate that surrounds sexual assault allegations in the US mean that under Alabama's new law, it is possible that a doctor who performs an abortion on a rape victim could potentially face more jail time than the actual rapist.

Despite supporting the bill, Governor Ivey also acknowledged that the bill is likely to face a swift challenge from the U.S. Supreme Court, calling it 'unenforceable', as it directly challenges their Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court's 1973

landmark decision in favour of women's rights to choose to have an abortion. Indeed, this resistance to the changes can already be seen occurring in other states, with a federal judge striking down Kentucky's attempts to change the law, although supporters of the bill have immediately vowed to appeal the decision. The involvement of the Supreme Court and the mass publicity these laws have been receiving only highlight the more insidious motivations behind the disconcerting co-ordination of these state's attacks on reproductive rights. "Pro-life" supporters want the opportunity to challenge Roe v. Wade on a National level, and once again bring the issue of abortion and its legality across America before the Supreme Court. It is speculated that the current 5-4 majority of Conservative politicians on the Supreme Court mean that for the first time there is a real chance that an appeal may work out in favour of those who wish to once again make abortions illegal, or at the very least much harder to obtain safely and legally.



A common argument circulating the internet is how horrifying it is that these laws mean that an underage rape victim living in any of these states would be forced to carry and give birth to her rapist's baby. While this thought is horrifying and encapsulates the lack of empathy from those behind these laws, this should not be our criteria for who deserves access to legal, safe abortions. Anyone with a uterus who does not wish to have a child should not be forced to put their body through a pregnancy and a birth, no matter what their reasons. Before Roe v. Wade in 1973, it is estimated that 1.2 million women in America each year sought illegal abortions, 5000 of whom would die from the procedure. History shows us that legal restrictions

on abortion will not stop them from happening; they will simply drive people to put their lives at risk. These laws represent a huge threat to reproductive rights and bodily autonomy in the U.S. They will help ensure that people remain trapped in cycles of poverty for generations, perpetuating harmful cycles which the rich and powerful benefit from. They will disproportionately harm minority groups and the underprivileged who do not have the means to find a way around the law.



This is why pro-life has never actually meant pro-life. The senators who voted to pass this bill do not care for the lives of those forced to carry unwanted pregnancies to term, the lives and mental health of rape victims whose ordeals will only continue with their pregnancies and births, the lives of children in the foster system. Many of the politicians who back these legal changes are also those who claim gun laws won't stop people dying from gun violence. They will not speak out on Pamela Shantay Turner, a black woman shot by the police despite her telling them she was pregnant. They will not demand that the children torn away from their families at the border are returned to their parents. Pro-life is a guise for the unethical policing and controlling of other's bodies.



For those of us in the UK watching on and feeling horrified, we must also look closer to home. Currently, those in Northern Ireland suffer under stricter anti-abortion laws than any state in the U.S. Women in NI face life in jail for aborting a pregnancy, as does anyone who helps them. They are forced to travel to England to seek the procedure, to take online abortion pills or simply carry out unwanted pregnancies. This culture of shame and silence is allowed to continue by Teresa May and the UK government because of their coalition with the DUP, who among many of their other reprehensible stances have fought hard to halt any progress with extended abortion rights in NI. If you feel strongly about what's happening in America, I urge you to e-mail your local MP and ask for their commitment to making sure everyone in the UK has the right to end an unwanted pregnancy legally and safely. It takes

less than a minute at this link: [nowforNI.uk@email](mailto:nowforNI.uk@email). In the wake of these disturbing changes, all we can do is use our voices to support those vulnerable to the harm these laws have and will caused.





# SHIFTING GEARS

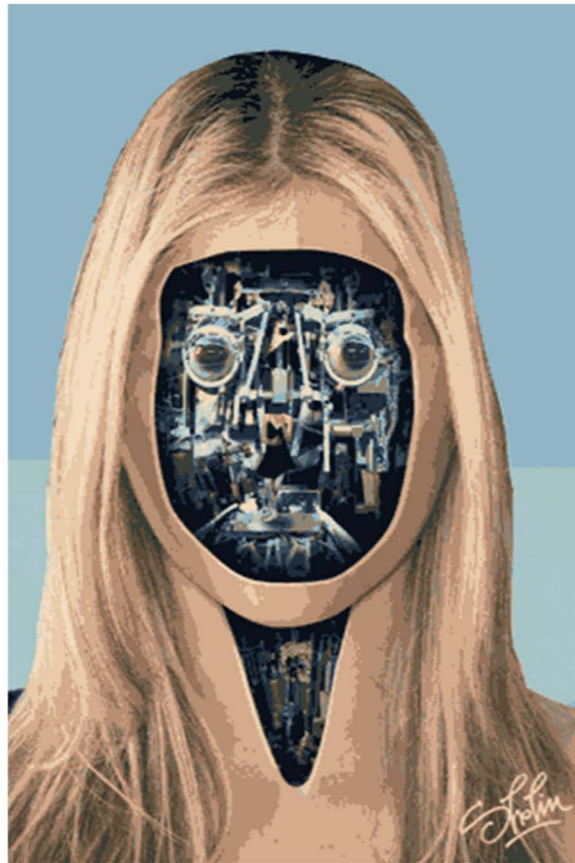
- A NOTE ON WORTH & PRODUCTIVITY -

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I have never been the kind of person who enjoys doing nothing. I have always found it hard to sit still. I wake up most mornings acutely aware of what needs to be done that day, and jolt out of bed to get started. I feel most purposeful when I am in constant motion. Like many others who share this disposition — somewhere between workaholic and the desire for constant activity, no matter what that might be — I find it difficult to wind down, to power off, to enjoy the sweet simplicity of doing absolutely nothing.

Not everyone functions this way, but those who do can easily exchange stories of the praise we have been granted for this strange quality of natural motorisation, for propelling ourselves forward, often toward a final destination we haven't even determined. For years we have been reared to take pride in our efforts by teachers who were pleased by our output, family members proud of our achievements and friends who claim to wish they were 'as productive as you'.



All unbeknownst to the increasing angst and pressure building within the producer; all unbeknownst to the reminder of inadequacy nudged toward our equally capable peers, who happened to complete tasks at less than whiplash-resulting speed.

Like an advertisement for a fuel-efficient car, we have been taught that there is a crucial relationship between productivity and self-worth. As a generation we have been bred to pride ourselves on the qualities of motivation and determination, growing up in a world where expectations are high thanks to the many avenues to success, paved by our predecessors and aided by technology. While our parents witnessed the gargantuan global technological shift, we were brought into the world at the same time as erudite computers and machinery, our metallic brothers and sisters, and it seems as though this collective upbringing has resulted in an association between us and them.

When did humans begin to view them-

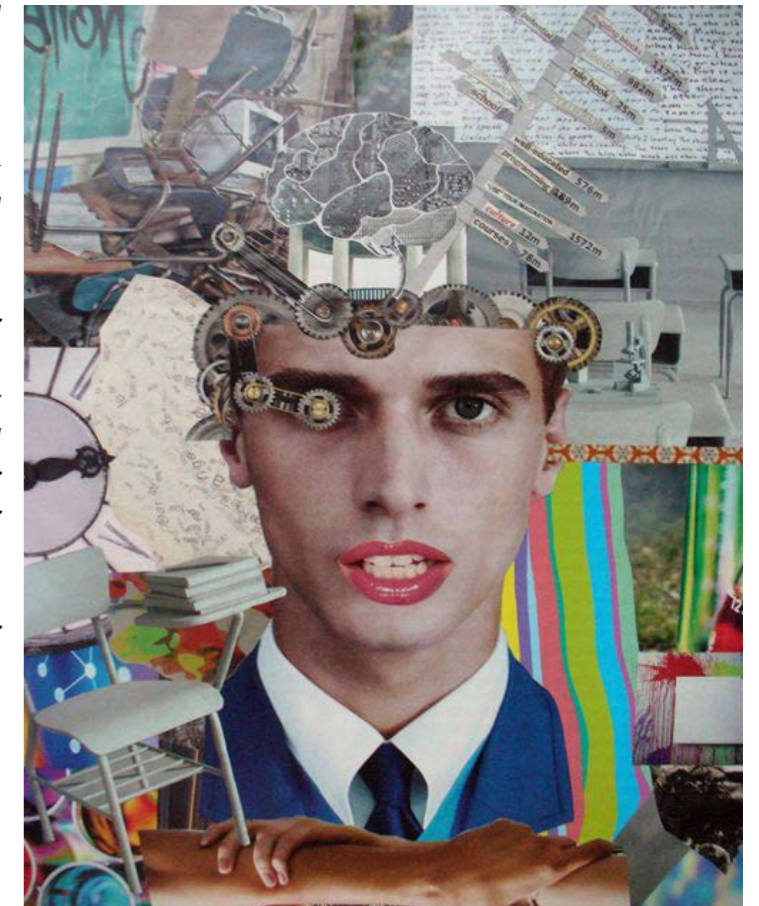
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selves in the likeness of their technological and mechanical creations? When did we decide that the most valuable thing about ourselves is, no different from the computers we have engineered, the number of tasks we can tick off a to-do list? There seem to be two general responses to the pervasive message that the yields of our mechanical labour exceed in importance the quality of our lives: we are either constantly struggling toward a moving target, or burning out in this endeavour. Feeling sorry for ourselves all the while, we slink down and hungrily climb the hierarchy inside all of our heads which ranks ourselves, our friends, our colleagues, our idols and our heroes according to their productive capacity.

But we are not robots nor machines nor gadgets with gears inside our heads, trained to churn out one product after the next. Humans, unlike computers, thrive from social connection. Humans, unlike machines, require fuel in many forms: movement, laughter, silence, solitude, food, sleep, physical touch. The sciences of biology and psychology support this, research fuelled by an increasing awareness that we cannot be expected to go without this vital nourishment, despite the aims and targets set by the institutions which preside over our assembly-line society. Without it, we will burn out. Mechanically speaking, it is the oil that greases the gears and keeps them from screeching to a painful, grinding halt.

Upon the realisation that humans require different maintenance than computers, steps are being taken to provide workers and students alike with support so they can continue the cycle of production. Companies are building sleep stations into their offices in which employees can doze off for a much-needed nap. During exam season, universities are pitching tents on campus fitted for ping-pong matches and massage sessions. While these changes are undoubtedly positive, reminding us to break up long periods of work with staccato intermissions of rest and recreation, they still overall underscore the notion that our efforts to take care of ourselves must always be concerned with continued production.

Perhaps as a society what we really need is to be reminded of the holistic fact that our value is comprised of much more than our net output. Perhaps what we need is not gearing-down so much as a collective gear shift:



teaching younger generations and rewiring our own brains to conceptualise work as a single aspect of a multifaceted life. Only then can we free ourselves of the guilt that surfaces when we are finally stagnant, the little tick in the back of our brains, the computer glitch within us sending error messages, an unblocked pop-up that reminds us that being unproductive renders us utterly uselessness.

IMAGES - MILOS RAJKOVIC

# MUSIC FESTIVAL

## REVIEWS

AMIKAMOSER

Summer is the season for music festivals, and the line-ups of 2019 have proven not to disappoint. Whether you're in London or planning on travelling to somewhere else in Europe, here are a few of the music festivals that are definitely worth booking tickets to.

If you're staying in London...

# LOVEBOX

London is always rife with incredible performances and festivals but if you're an R&B, hip-hop or even dance music fan, Lovebox's line-up is worth your time. Solange, whose new album was released earlier this year is headlining the show along with Chance the Rapper. Other artists to look out for include BROCKHAMPTON and canadian DJ Kaytranada. The festival is also showcasing many British acts including up-and-coming artists like slowthai and Loyle Carner.

# SOMERSET

# HOUSE

# SUMMER

# SERIES

If you're not too sick and tired of Strand during the summertime, you should definitely check out the Summer Series. For eleven nights, Somerset House will be hosting a series of gigs from a range of incredibly talented musicians. The Internet, one of the coolest bands out there, will be opening as well as Rosalia, whose unique take on pop is propelling her to high lengths including collaborations with James Blake and headlining Primavera so she is definitely one to keep an eye on.

If you're looking to travel...

# BRAIN CHILD

The UK is filled with festivals but Brainchild really sets itself apart. It is an independent festival to showcase creative artists across the UK and the rest of the world, from musical arts, to spoken word, film and theatre. The festival also includes talks run by Travis Alabanza, an artist who has been raising awareness for trans rights and intersectionality through their work in various UK publications and their play Burgerz, which was acclaimed by the Guardian. The festival is filled with workshops, like zine-making and voguing so you're sure to stay entertained all weekend long.

Where to stay? Brainchild has a large camping ground that also has art installations and promises an inclusive and fun experience.

# PRIMAVERA SOUND

There has been a lot of controversy in the past years surrounding the lack of female representation in music festival headliners. Thankfully, Barcelona's Primavera Sound is one of the only festivals that seems to prove that there are plenty of talented women out there. With innovative artists like Janelle Monáe, Tierra Whack and Lizzo at the forefront, it provides arguably one of the best line-ups of the summer. If you're looking for a beach holiday, there's no better experience than listening to the artists defining pop music up into the late hours of the night.

Where to stay? Whilst Primavera Sound doesn't have its own campgrounds, Unite Hostel will transform itself into Hostel Primavera with activities and music performances all day long to keep the experience going for as long as possible.

# LOWLANDS

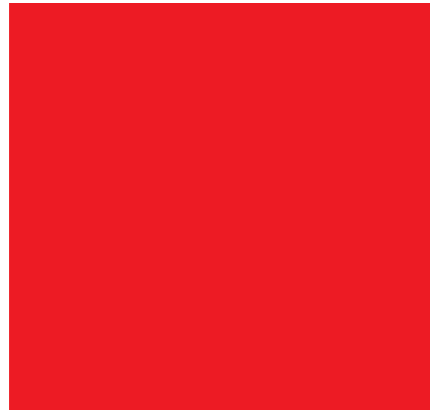
Based in the Netherlands, Lowlands is a festival that has received praise for being smoothly organised with a great atmosphere. Its varied line up includes the Vaccines, Anderson .Paak and Billie Eilish as well as showcasing visual arts and even science across its stages. It also has a wellness village that boasts a sauna and a hot tub so what's not to love.

Where to stay? Lowlands is a three day festival that includes access to camp grounds that include hot showers and real toilets. If that's not enough you can access the glamping section that allows you to stay in an even more luxurious settings

# #MeToo

## OR VOYEURISTIC SPECTACLE? THE PRESENTATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT ON THE LONDON STAGE

*When I first started reviewing for the STRAND I was excited to discover the slew of female-centric stories on stage in London. The first of these plays, 'Boots' by Sacha Voit, focused on two female characters both of whom had been assaulted. The story of two women traversing the narratives around sexual assault and overcoming their anxieties through unlikely friendship felt new and exciting and the play itself was gorgeous, rich and funny. However, having been to see more of these plays I have become unsure about the purpose behind them. Of the plays I have seen with female main characters 50% of them have focused specifically on the sexual assault of that character.*



*According the Guardian in 2018, one in five women over sixteen in the UK have faced sexual assault or attempted assault in their lifetime. A common experience of assault or the assault of someone close to them connects most women in the UK and the stream of new plays coming out make up for lost time when women were discouraged from writing about and discuss these issues. In that way I am very grateful for the writers who have chosen to break new territory speaking from a specifically female perspective.*

*However, watching these plays feels like a different story. I see the same tropes played out again and again. Self-disgust and self-blame is presented as the only reaction to sexual assa-*

*ult. Where are the women who are angry or unaltered by their experience? These plays present women's reaction to sexual assault as homogeneous. 'Boots' climax comes with the main characters admitting out loud the fact that she was "raped." Whilst naming language around rape is important to feminist politics, the impact of reclaiming this language on an individual women's life seems marginal at best. It comes across as the PC solution to a challenging problem that oversimplifies the real recovery from trauma that some women who have been assaulted face.*



*What does an audience gain from these stories? An insight into the lives of those who have been sexually assaulted? Perhaps. But do the graphic and explicit depictions of rape, for example in the Emma Dennis-Edwards' 'Funeral Flowers,' do more harm than good? Whilst I am sure it's not the intention, these descriptions occasionally come off as more of a titillating, Game-Of-Thrones-esque voyeurism than a real empathetic look into women's lives. I understand the necessity to write against a male tradition where the rape of women is often used as a plot point. A metaphor with some grander meaning. Think of Blanche's rape in 'A Streetcar Named Desire' that supposedly represents the conquering of an industrialised America over the slave ridden past but barely touches on the physiological effect of the experience for her.*

*Women's stories need to be told and specifically stories which have so often been silenced or made taboo. I respect the strength and dignity of the women represented in these plays and the female writers who tackle difficult issues. Indeed I would rather watch a hundred plays dealing with sexual assault as the main focus by female authors than one where the statutory rape of a fourteen year old is used as a convenient plot point as in Simon Stephens' 'Birdland.' However, I worry about the stories we choose to tell, over and over again. The stories we think are worth telling.*



*Sometimes in criticising the writing of other women telling women's stories I am scared of being overly harsh, pointing out things I would never bother to in a male playwrights work and as I said, I'm glad to hear these stories told by women rather than men. The story of women who get sexually assaulted is an important one that needs to be treated with nuance and empathy. I guess what I'm really saying is I would like to see the story about the young woman in 'Funeral Flowers' where she doesn't get raped, where she has something else to say, where her strength is not determined by what she can withstand.*



*I do not believe sexual assault and harassment are the most interesting story to tell about any women. Is it important to tell these stories? Of course. Are they the only stories worth telling about women? I really fucking hope not.*



**OLIVE  
FRANKLIN**

# BLACK WHITE & ORANGE: IT'S ABOUT TIME THE NBA ADDRESSED THE PROBLEM OF RACISM

Almost 15 years ago, the National Basketball Association (NBA) experienced the “worst night in its’ history”, or so the media claimed. For it was then that Ron Artest, who at that time played as a Small Forward for the Indiana Pacers, surged into the stands at the Palace stadium in Detroit and began vehemently attacking a mob of riled-up Detroit Pistons fans. Moments before, the 2-metre-tall athlete had been provoked by the overzealous crowd, who had been assaulting the Pacers team by throwing beer bottles, chairs and anything else at their disposal onto the court, enraged by the fact that Artest had fouled the Pistons’ Ben Wallace with less than a minute to go in a heated game between the two teams. This infamous night was christened ‘Malice at the Palace’, and the implications following it unveiled the racism at the heart of the NBA. And to make matters worse, recent events like the altercation that broke out between African- American Point Guard Russell Westbrook and a racist white Utah Jazz fan earlier this year show all too clearly that times haven’t changed much.

Artest, an African-American who now goes by the moniker ‘Metta World Peace’, was given the longest ban in NBA history for his actions at the Palace stadium. Yet astonishingly, there was very little real condemnation, on the part of the league’s administration, towards the abusive behaviour of the predominantly white Pistons fans that sparked the brawl in the first place. What’s more, the notorious incident spawned a tirade of media coverage, scribed in a racially coded rhetoric, blaming the “thug mentality” and “hip-hop culture” for the ‘Malice’ that shook the Palace stadium fifteen years ago. This made all too apparent the fact that the mass media was eager to assign blame to the black players who retaliated, as opposed to the white fans who initiated the ugly altercation to begin with. Essentially, the media was equating the black men involved with criminality, despite the fact that they were simply reacting to aggressive white fans.

The blatant assault on blackness propagated by the media in the wake of the Palace

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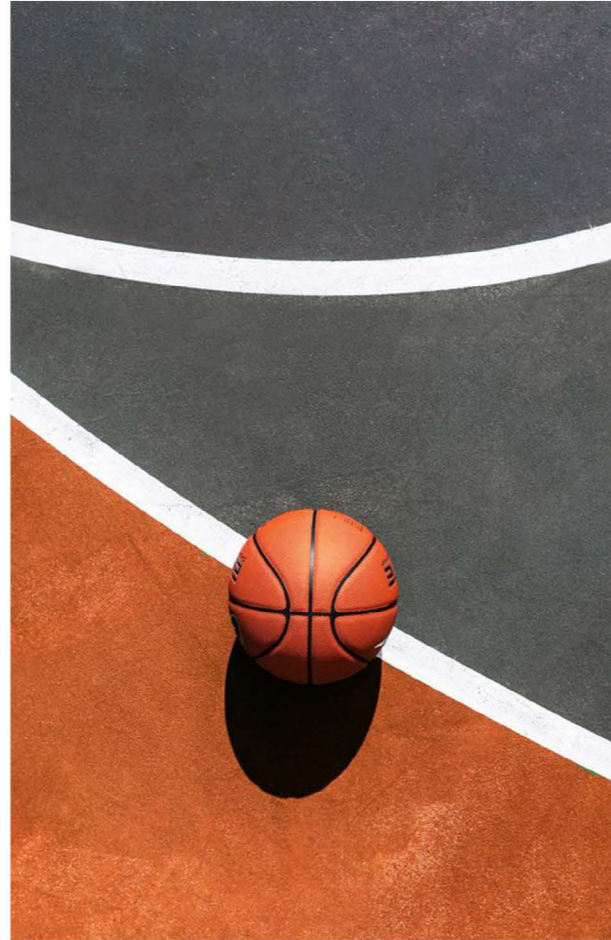


IMAGE: TOMMY BEBO

also extended to the league’s administration. For in 2005, the year after the infamous melee coloured national and international headlines, the NBA issued a dress-code that was widely dubbed racist – players were hit with hefty fines for wearing chains and baggy clothing, styles popular with the primarily black hip-hop community of the early 2000s. As such, in a bid ‘clean up’ the image of the league, and to wave good riddance to the ‘gangstas’ (read: black athletes) prowling the court, the NBA unveiled itself as a racially biased institution. Those pulling the strings made clear that there was no place for Allen Iversons and Carmelo Anthonys in XXXL slacks wearing cornrows and durags on the courts anymore. The NBA wanted men in “business casual attire”, no “thugs” please, or a fight might break out again, based on the mistaken notion that it was the black “thug” athletes who caused the fight at the Palace, not the fans.

The controversial dress code, issued under ex-commissioner David Stern after the brawl is still in effect today, and lingers as a lasting remi-

nder of the racial bias that underpins the NBA. One undeniable way that such racism can be observed is through a comparison of the severity of the black players punishment for their violent conduct in Detroit with that of white players in history. That is, fighting on the part of basketball players, both black and white, is relatively frequent – yet the NBA has chosen to discipline black athletes more harshly than their white counterparts. Take, for example, Larry Bird, previously of the Boston Celtics and arguably the most iconic white basketball player in the history of the game, who was well known as a hothead during his iconic career in the NBA. Bird got into his fair share of violent altercations on the court, most notably with Julius ‘Dr. J’ Erving back in 1984, yet although he received several fines for his outbursts, he never faced repercussions as extreme and wide-reaching as the dress-code implemented following ‘Malice at the Palace’.

One might argue that the fact that the Palace brawl involved fans, rather than just players, was the reason the league’s response was so severe. Nevertheless, it’s difficult to argue against this response being fundamentally racial in nature. For the NBA’s administration effectively played on the actions of a few black players to impose aesthetic constraints on all basketball players, which blatantly targeted the styles of dress popular with black athletes in the league, the vast majority of whom had no history whatsoever of fighting. As such, the dress code was essentially an institutionalised act of racial profiling, and it carried with it the connotations that if nobody dresses like a gangster, and if black bodies are effectively policed by white authority, no further fights will erupt.

The controversy around ‘Malice at the Palace’ and the resulting dress code took place over a decade ago. Yet recent events in the league show just how little progress has been made to address the issue of racism in basketball, not only in terms of racist administrative decisions, but also with regards to the leagues sustained tolerance of racist player-fan dynamics. That is, basketball is well known as the ‘blackest sport in America’, and at present, give-or-take 75% of basketball players are black. The sport is overwhelmingly lapped up by a white audience, a shocking visual that can be seen in almost any game broadcasted; as a result, there are recurring instances of white fans harassing players with racial slurs, yet being let off far too leniently in doing so. To make matters worse, so too are black athletes harshly penalised for responding to verbal abuse lambasted from the stands, a shocking amount of which is racial in nature.

In March 2019, footage began circulating on social media of an obviously aggravated Russell Westbrook, a recent victim of such racial taunts, lashing out at a white fan during a game, yelling that he was going to “f\*\*\* him up”. Yet in an interview with ESPN that emerged shortly after Westbrook’s ‘bravado’ graced the internet, it became clear that the Oklahoma City Thunder star was in fact reacting a spectator who told him to “get down on your knees like you used to”, a slur so blatantly racial in nature that it would not have been out of place in the Jim Crow south. The NBA tried to resolve the matter in as dignified a manner as it knew how. Westbrook was fined \$25,000 for directing violent threats at a spectator. The league also banned the perpetrator from attending Utah Jazz games for life; yet the incident with Westbrook is simply another reminder of the long history in which black players have been penalised for responding to racial abuse from fans. For countless headlines in the aftermath of the event claimed that although what the fan said was out of line, Westbrook was equally in the wrong for responding in the way that he did. After all, these athletes are paid fat cheques, critics say. So they should shut up and take it, or as Fox news journalist Laura Ingraham notoriously said in reference to 4-time- MVP LeBron James, “shut up and dribble”. Yet these attitudes carry the presupposition that the entitlement to a paycheck warrants a man to forfeit his right to be treated like a human being – that is, to not be racially derided. We would hardly demand that a black stock trader sit and ‘take’ racist insults hurled at him from a client simply because he extracts a hefty enough brokerage fee from him. So why should we expect athletes to be so robotically docile in the face of racism?

It is discouraging to consider why black athletes like Artest and Westbrook are continually pushed to kick and scream in order for racism to be given the attention it deserve. While violence is not to be encouraged in response, fans can no longer be free of reprehension for racially charged comments. In light of both recent and historical events, it’s time the NBA consider that banning one racist fan won’t do. The administration rather needs to take a long hard look at itself; for a start, stricter policing of fans to prevent attacks on players both physical and verbal, so that altercations like Westbrook’s, or the infamous ‘Malice at the Palace’, don’t ever erupt in the first place.

