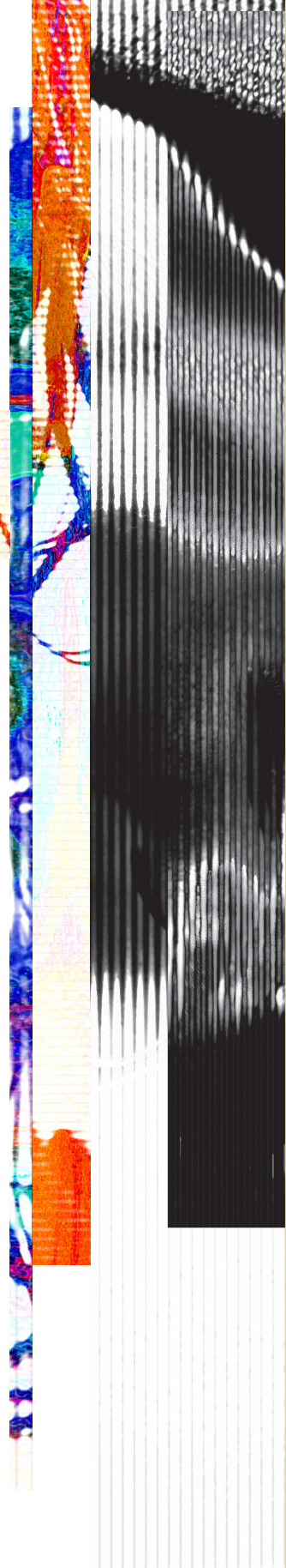
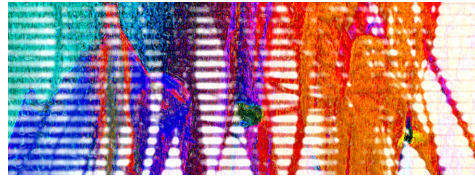
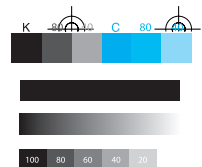


PRINT IS DEAD

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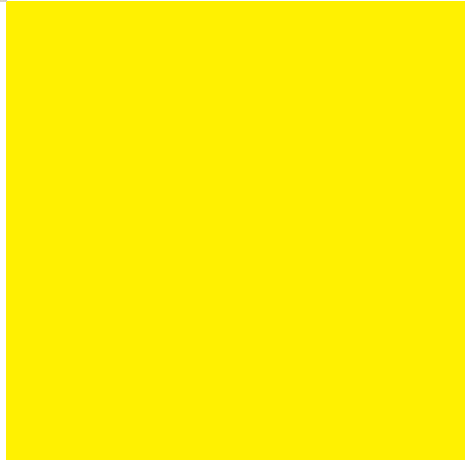
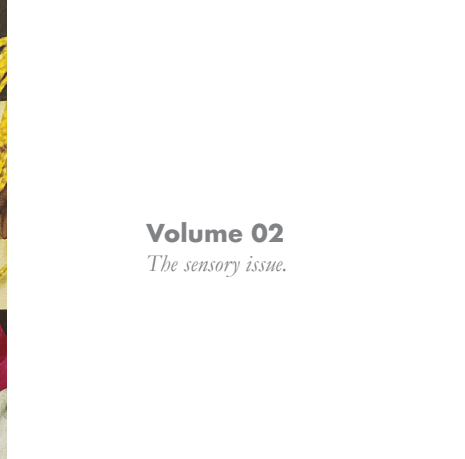
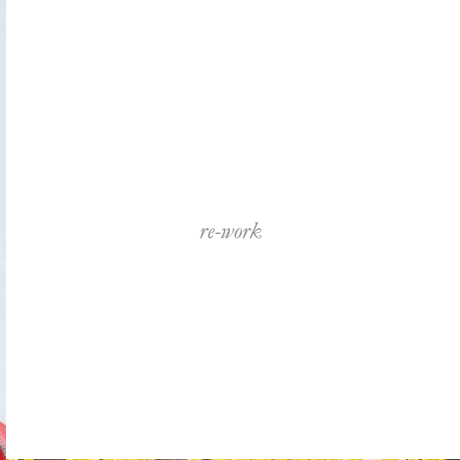
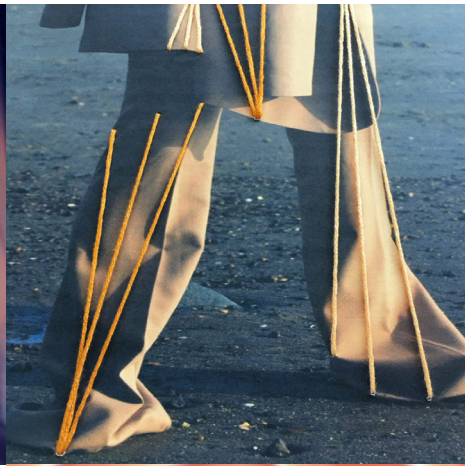
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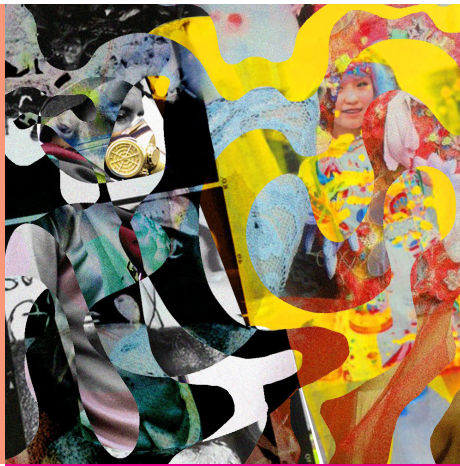
The printed magazine as we know it has changed. Magazines have become brands, much bigger than their traditional paper origins. Content is now consumed through many forms, from online to the experiential. And even though we are living in a digital age, the permanence of print remains true, and arguably even more important than ever.

Back in January, we dipped back into the UN_FOLD archive for some inspiration - the ideal place to kick start our imagination. Restricted by the rules of Lockdown, we decided it was about time we digitalised our printed form. So, later this year, we will be launching UN_FOLD.mag as a celebration of the past, present and future work. It will be a space where we can share stuff from behind the scenes, work-in-progress and just some of the things we really like, including the things that just never made the cut for print, but are still pretty outstanding □

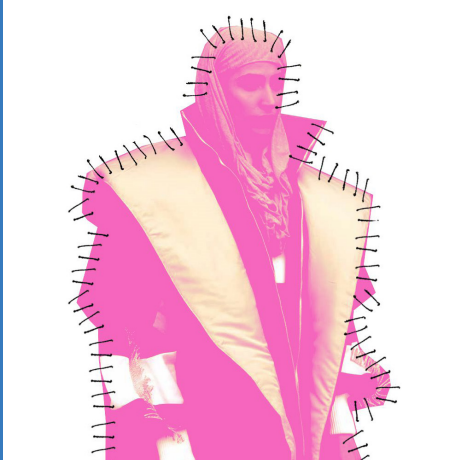
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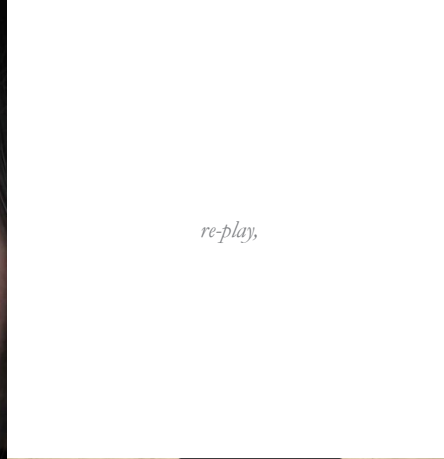




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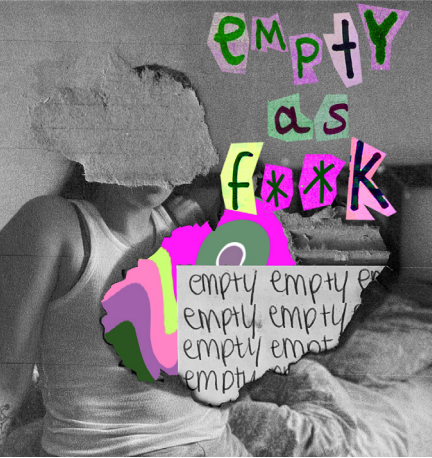
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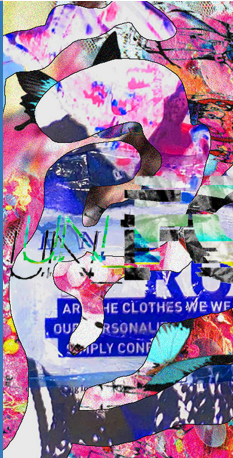
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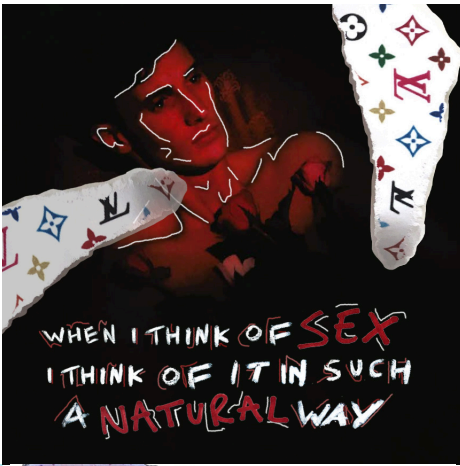


Volume 04
Sex. Politics. Art. Money.



Volume 05
Conform / Rebel.

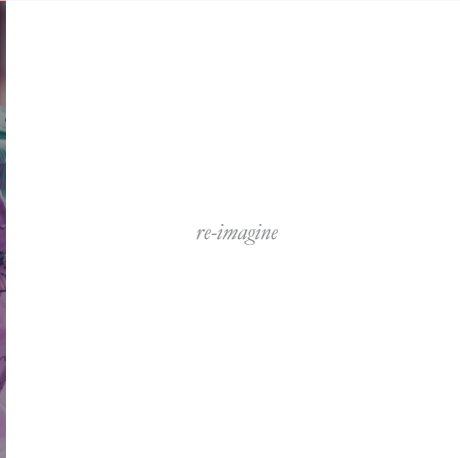
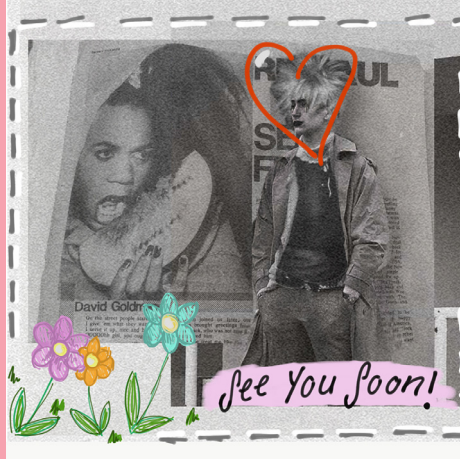




BUILDING
A BETTER
FUTURE



A RESPONSE
FROM GEN-Z



Forced to adjust to a new reality, the magazine in the digital age has had to become more. The traditional studio which had always been our communal social space and a driver to our creative practice came under threat. But we found new and other ways to make work.



Our Culture of Quarantine issue ends with the *UN_***edited** chapter, bringing together a collection of conversations, meetings and questions with our friends from industry.

In this series we've been talking to Art Directors, Designers, Photographers and Illustrators - dipping into their inner workings and secret life of studio culture during Lockdown □

*UN_***edited**



In conversation with Jermaine Francis

by Lydia George.

Jermaine Francis is a London based Photographer.

Jermaine's practice is immersed in Documentary and Portraiture, in the format of personally driven photographic projects and editorials that explore issues that arise from the interaction in everyday environments. His work can be found in publications such as I-D, Beauty Papers, 10 Magazine, More or Less Magazine, as well as for brands Gucci and Stella McCartney.

PHOTO TRUTH ISSUE

KEVIN ABSTRACT PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARIO SORRENTI

London, England



FACE

Legacy

Utopia is, by nature, full of contradictions. Whether or not you see it for its positive potential or its dangerous ideology, one thing is for certain, utopia appears to be finding a place within the fashion industry as it grapples with the impact of the pandemic. But why the sudden resurgence of utopia's relevance in the fashion world? Despite the fact that fashion has long been ignored as a relevant utopian pursuit, fashion and utopia are inextricably linked. With their flexibility, cultural significance, and transformative powers, both fashion and utopia are perfectly suited for responding to the crisis of the COVID pandemic.

Utopia is a problematic topic and open to varied perspectives. To understand how one such perspective is being expressed in the fashion industry, we interviewed photographer Jermaine about his work in the 'Utopia in Dystopia' issue of i-D Magazine early this year. We discuss the contradictions between Jermaine's and our concepts of utopia. Together, our views represent the oppositional nature of utopia and show the two extremes – reality vs fantasy – so we invite you to find your place along the spectrum and discover what utopia means to you and to fashion.

JF "I don't believe in utopias...you cannot have a perfect ideological position...it can't exist, because it always fails and it leads to problems."

Jermaine's beliefs represent the anti-utopian strain within the field of Utopianism. At the foundation of such views is an unwavering acceptance of the traditional definition of 'utopia' – an imagined perfect society. The key aspect of this definition which problematises utopia is 'perfection' – ever desired, ethereal and, ultimately, impossible. Jermaine's more realistic approach to utopia has its roots in historical examples of **utopia-gone-wrong**. In our interview, Jermaine referenced failed, and dangerous utopias, such as the Third Reich. That the concept of utopia has the potential to inspire such terrible results should not be ignored or forgotten. And, perhaps it is wise to

remain realistic when it comes to utopia, even after the devastation of the COVID pandemic, so that we can remain vigilant against dangerous utopian visions in our society today.

But, utopia has not always resulted in dangerous political movements; without utopia we would not have Feminism, for example, or any other movement that calls for equality. So, we are proposing a way to move beyond utopia's dark history. The definition of utopia limits it to a promise of impossible perfection, and is always doomed to fail. So, why not move beyond the rigidity of this definition? Why not embrace the sense of dreaming inherent to utopia? By removing the notion of intention from utopia, it is not destroyed, instead it is liberated – utopia becomes unbridled imagination, which can be a powerful tool. During a time of crisis, when the future is uncertain, intentional utopias seem destined to fail. After this long spell in the dystopia of a pandemic, utopia's hopefulness (without the burden of intention), combined with the transformative **power of fashion**, could be needed to help us emerge into the post-pandemic world.

JF "utopias put things in a very neat box...utopia can't be messy."

Jermaine's photographic style is documentary in nature. His work published in February's issue of i-D magazine featured portraits of Londoners during Lockdown. This was a shoot for a fashion magazine, but one with a focus on people and identity during quarantine, with no aim of selling clothes. Jermaine's photographs show the 'problematics of utopia', highlighting the utopianism within English nationalism. He wanted to show 'what is being diluted' and 'what is being destroyed' by the utopian ideals attached to symbols that uphold the construct of the UK as a 'great nation'. So, he 'juxtaposes [the] symbolism' of the Union Jack, St George's flag, and monuments to Queen Victoria against his portraits and street scenes, showing a diverse range of people who are excluded from the 'neat box' of English nationalism's utopian vision.

Whilst Jermaine's work comments on the application of utopia on a societal scale, we can suggest that we need to adjust our utopian thinking towards the individual. Doing so would allow us to move away from the one-size-fits-all approach of past utopian schemes. Fashion acts as the sartorial embodiment of identity, and so could be the key to creating a utopian self. However, our identities have been difficult to connect with during the pandemic, particularly in terms of fashion. Social restrictions have forced an emphasis on 'loungewear' and 'sportswear' because of the activities we are limited to; which, in turn, will have **limited** the possibility of self expression through fashion. One way in which we can reconnect with our fashion identities is by channelling the fantastical nature of utopia (as opposed to the realistic). The circus, as just one example, is a fantastical theme used throughout fashion history, such as: Elsa Schiaparelli's Circus Collection 1938, Alexander McQueen Autumn/Winter 2001, and Dior Spring Haute Couture 2019. Embracing such fantastical themes allow identities to be experimented with and transformed into characters – in this way, utopia can be messy.

JF "it's not about [whether] fantasy or reality is better because that's not true, it's about story telling, it's about how well that story is told... it's whatever strategy works best for that person."

Jermaine's raw, social documentation for the 'Utopia in Dystopia' issue shows the undeniable reality of utopia's problematic past (and present). And with the onset of the pandemic, an urgent shift in focus is required, from societal to personal, from collective to **individual**, both in terms of utopia and fashion. That being said, at the end of the day there is no right or wrong approach to utopia through the lens of fashion. The beauty of both fashion and utopia is their flexibility □

**In conversation with
Paul (Copyright) Davis**

by Katie Taylor.

Paul Davis is an artist and illustrator based in South London, UK.

Last month, we had the pleasure to sit down, chat and share a virtual coffee with the celebrated artist and illustrator Paul Davis. We started by asking how he would describe his art style: *“Still working on it. So far, it’s been sketchy, painty, scratchy, pretentious, very occasionally profound, frustrating, joyous, small, big, all of it. I always think it’ll all come together around the next corner. Drawing the way I do is, I guess, the most honest way I work. And drawing with an idea (essential!) is the best foundation to work and to build upon. There’s always more to experiment with which can lead to confusion. Humour is important to me as is human behaviour.”*

Known for his humour and journalist commentary he has lots of wisdom to share with the world, and having worked with the likes of Dazed & Confused, Creative Review, Time Out, Marc Jacobs and Agnes B we were interested to learn what the **new normal** is for Paul and how he managed his time during the pandemic. Paul explained that he was affected both positively and negatively during Lockdown. It encouraged him to get involved in the **Artist Support Pledge**, a network of established and

emerging artists pledging to support one another by buying each other’s work through Instagram. The Artist Support Pledge actively promotes the idea that when an artist earns £1000 from selling, they are then encouraged to spend up to £200 on another artist’s work. We are all aware that the creative industries have suffered during these times, exhibitions and sales have been closed, teaching and technical support has become more difficult to access, so in a bid to help artists carry on as normal, just as the rest of the world closed down, the Artist Support Pledge and online community was born. This positively encouraged Paul and others to keep making new work. He went on to say how interesting it was to see artists becoming more thoughtful with the art and what they wanted to say to the world right now. Unfortunately, one of his shows due to open at Jealous Gallery was coincidentally the same night Lockdown began. Spending so much time and money arranging an exhibition for it to be cancelled is devastating for anybody, but Paul said he found some comfort in knowing that everybody was in the same boat.

As ever, no topic is off limits when speaking to Paul. The art of observation,

LOCKDOWN SMUGGERY:

'AUTHORS'

"IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM MY NORMAL"



everyday life and people are always on the agenda. But the global pandemic did reveal that he had started asking even more questions *"thinking about things like God or lack thereof, war, meditation and the sheer amount of people deciding that making sour bread dough would be the best way to cope with this new-found confinement"*.

Like many people, he took the time in Lockdown to reflect on past work and learn from it. He spoke how pieces that he once loved no longer make him feel the same way... One of his newest series was on volcanoes. We asked him if there was any particular reason for this because it seemed out of context to the current happenings of the world. He explained excitedly that it was because volcanoes created and shaped the world over millions of years, the steam from volcanoes ended up making the oceans and everything that came out of the volcanoes made the layers of the earth. On Saturday the 22nd of May 2021 Paul was finally able to have his show at **Jealous Gallery** with his 'BOOM!' exhibition showcasing his volcano inspired art pieces.

While many people found it impossible to get back into work, Paul found

himself very lucky to be able to get into the studio early on to continue working. He completed a series on cars and people still driving/walking around during the height of the pandemic when everybody really should have been at home where possible. He also explained his grievances towards joggers as they would be running around the city heavy breathing on everything and everyone while not wearing a mask. At the same time, Paul got involved with cooking for the homeless *"you find your generosity in times like this."* It surprised him how many people didn't have a lot to eat which opened his eyes to the UK's hunger crisis. *"With not many people out and about and almost nobody carrying cash, it must have been extremely difficult to be homeless during the pandemic - the majority of homeless people rely on spare change and the kindness of strangers for their next meal"*.

We went on to discuss what some of his contemporaries had been doing during the crisis, and he told us that he had seen a lot of people using government and politics as inspiration. *"Satire monetized the Lockdown for artists."*

Meaning a lot of artists used their art to discuss their **true feelings** about how the UK government responded. He also discussed how some artists such as Jeremy Deller used profits from their sales to donate to charities. Paul jokingly said that he kept his profit for rent. Our last question for Paul was *"Where did the 'Copyright' come from in your name?"*

"In 1998 (I think), some friends at a design company got some lovely German interns to make my first website and as there were so many people with my name, they had to think of something, so I had nothing really to do with it. I accepted their idea for the website name and email addresses thereafter. I just ran with it and that was that."

Paul was a pleasure to talk to, he spoke freely, honestly and passionately about life, and **life in Lockdown**, divulging *'It's no different from my normal'*. To see more of his observations about people and the real-world visit his Instagram page @paulcopyrightdavis □

Talking tech, 3D art and digital illustration

In conversation with Safwaan Motara
by Shannon Evans

Safwaan is a Motion Designer and Digital Artist based in London, working with brands such as Kenzo and Alexander Wang.

We are currently living through unprecedented times, Coronavirus has created unfamiliar alterations to the way we live our lives day-to-day, and globally we crave togetherness, stability and communication. Connecting solely online over the past year has left us all thinking what's next? Especially in terms of creativity, employability and prospects within the fashion industry. Digital Fashion, communication, virtual reality presentations, collections rendered solely through 3D design software, and interactive and immersive online sales is starting to revolutionise and breathe a new life into the industry. We wanted to talk to Safwaan Motara, as someone who really is fully immersed in digital fashion world right now to find out more.

SE:

Hi Saf, can you tell **UN_FOLD** a bit about yourself and your role in the creative industries.

SM:

I'm a freelance motion designer and digital artist, creating 3D visuals, simulations and illustrations for fashion brands such as Kenzo. I particularly enjoy the 3D nature of my work when creating digital video.

SE:

As a Motion Designer and Digital Artist do you work a lot online already, and how do you feel the global pandemic has effected your working processes?

SM:

Obviously coronavirus is a terrible thing to have happened, having to isolate means missing out on communicating not just within a studio space at work but socially as well. I think it's been wonderful however that I've been able to connect with others digitally throughout this time and our online connections have become stronger because of it.

SE:

Do you find inspiration in the digital world?

SM:

I find a lot of my inspiration for my work within photography, film, real life, just socialising, and observation. I watch the way people move and react in real life, it informs my process. I find architecture inspiring in terms of design too, especially within 3D and coming up with concepts.

SE:

What do you love about your work?

SM:

I love that I'm essentially left to create my own vision for the projects I've worked on, being able to create some amazing illustrations and video makes my work a lot of fun and rewarding... but that's always with the caveat of the project brief - I always need to execute the brands vision, values and aesthetic.

SE:

As a digital designer you must spend a lot of your time online, and over the past year with the pandemic there hasn't been much in real life (IRL) interaction,

do you believe that our online persona's are what really present us?

SE:

For me, I don't make my online presence personal. I use social media as a platform for my work, because my social life is personal I don't need to share that online, I feel it can be damaging when you're putting your life online. It's a good way to set yourself up as a brand but can be destructive to just alter and show your whole life online, it's not really you.

SE:

Do you believe there should be a balance then between your online self and your IRL?

SM:

Definitely, my online life is not my real life, it's something I use to share work and make work connections.

SE:

Did your creative process change over the last year within the pandemic?

SM:

For sure, I normally get a lot of inspiration from social interaction and just being around others outside. But as a digital artist I have been able to work and be creative more intensely through experimenting digitally with new media.

SE:

Do you think the future of the fashion industry will be heavily influenced by Digital environments such as AI and Virtual Reality?

SM:

Yeah, there are more graphic designers, 3D artists now getting into fashion, and the industry (this last year) has limited a lot of designers and brands, therefore I see it as an opportunity to bring a newness to the industry. Check out Safwaan's work his Instagram page@safwaanm ☐



In conversation with Joshua Marriott and David Vassou.

By Annabel Spencer.

Joshua and David are both fashion designers based in Liverpool. They work with brands such as Bellfield, Very, 11 degrees, Matalan, Molby and Missguided.

Recently we had the pleasure of interviewing two of our very own, the talented fashion designers Joshua Marriott and David Vassou. Having both studied BA Fashion Design at Liverpool John Moores University and graduating back in 2015, their final undergraduate collections featured in the debut issue of *UN_FOLD* magazine, and since then their creative flair has continued to flourish.

"Hello UN_FOLD! The fashion publication of dreams!", David gave us a warm welcome straight away. We asked them both what they have learnt from the industry so far and what else they have experienced since graduating. Joshua explained to us how he started his journey in high-end fashion, taking an internship with Peter Pilotto *'before graduating'* in 2014 and worked *'70+hours per week for free!'* During the internship Joshua realised that he was interested in more commercial fashion, but, he looks back at the internship with positivity as he learnt a lot from the experience which confirmed his decision to work in the fast-fashion industry. This is pretty similar to David's early experience. David had a 'taste of high-end design' during [his] studies, and whilst it was creative, [he] quickly learnt that *"the end consumer in this marketplace was fairly small"*. For David, his *"biggest feeling of fulfilment was knowing [his] clothes are being worn by many"*. From this, he

knew he wanted to pursue a career as a designer for high street brands.

Since their original collections were published in *UN_FOLD*, other publications took interest in them and also asked to shoot their garments. We asked both designers about their experience of working with us on that debut issue, and Joshua quickly added that '[he] loved being a part of this' that it gave him *"real exposure into the creative industries"*. The shoot images *"look really striking in contrast to the rest of my work"*, and that these images are still in his fashion portfolio, adding he was *"so thankful"* that his collection made the cut for *UN_FOLD*. David echoed this. He labelled his experience being a part of the first GFW award-winning issue as *"sensational!"* Publications such as *Pause*, *Disorder*, *69 Mag* and *The Skinny* all contacted him to request some of the looks from the shoot to feature in their editorials. As well as Joshua, he states that his collaborative project within *UN_FOLD* are *"the only images [he] kept in [his] portfolio, and they secured [his] first job offers... and the biggest thing I've learnt in the industry is that collaborative work is key to any success"*.

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, some creatives lost confidence and the motivation to keep on creating. This was something that Joshua picked up on during the interview. Joshua mentioned that even though the Lockdown throughout 2020 and 2021 has caused

a lot of suffering to large retail stores and similar business, *"Some creatives have thrived... so many independent start-ups have flourished during the pandemic. It's nice to see people explore their creative flare. I think creatives have definitely benefited from the gift of time that the pandemic has given to us all. I think it has also helped spread a message of optimism seeing all new talent emerging."* Similarly, David expressed that *"there is no better time to be looking for design work than right now"*. As fashion businesses change and adapt to the new way of life, post-pandemic, he believes that *"this year in particular will be a great year of employment for fashion graduates... and now is the time to learn a new skill, explore a new passion, work on you, and turn this unusual time into a positive"*.

We wanted to know how this duo managed to stay creative over this last year. Joshua said that he used the mass of free time to *"learn new creative skills, explore new interests"*, build his professional profile and use the pandemic as an opportunity to work on himself, on his own terms. He wasn't afraid to admit that he had his down-days when he did not feel as productive, *"but you have to look at the small stuff you do in life that you might not acknowledge [which contribute] to the bigger picture"*.

Since graduating he and David have bought their own house. They explained to us, like many, they used their 'extra time' to renovate and decorate their new home, deciding to document their interior design journey on social media under the name @justoffroselane on Instagram. David describes this as *"absolutely [their] equivalent of a Lockdown baby"*. By documenting their renovation journey, Joshua believes that it has been *"quite a good tool to use for reflection and progression"*, and David admits that it is something that has really kept them going in Lockdown. *"Working on something like your home that is completely for your own benefit and happiness feels so selfishly amazing!"* David describes. Being creative for your work life is great, however, allowing time to be creative for yourself really does bring you happiness!

As the interview came to an end, we asked if either of the pair had any last words of wisdom for younger creatives. Joshua made an important point on the fact that there is no timescale for gaining employment after graduating from your creative studies, these things take time, and you should not 'beat yourself up' if you don't get into the industry straight away. *"Keep working on yourself and don't give up"*. David on the other hand reeled off some words of wisdom.

"I want all fashion graduates to know:

- You are the new fresh talent and the future of fashion.
- Go into your first role with confidence.
- If you have suggestions speak up.
- Nothing at all is ever a silly question.
- Everybody wings it (sometimes).
- Don't undersell yourself.
- Designers - try and be nice to your buyers. Buyers - not everything needs to be grey marl." □



Model Behaviour

In conversation with Josue Dimbele

By Shauna McKeown

Photography Viktorija Grigorjevaite

S: Can you introduce yourself, tell us about yourself and your modelling profession?

J: I'm Josue Dimbele, I'm 22 and I've been modelling for just over five years now. Right now I'm signed to multiple agencies in the UK and internationally. Yeah that's it really, travelling working with different clients all over the world.

S: So you grew up in Liverpool, how do you think that shaped you?

J: Growing up in Liverpool is kinda funny, cos like I always tried to dress different from everyone else. I noticed growing up that everyone just dressed the same, I always tried to stand out and even as a kid I was always into clothing and fashion. That's how I ended up at the John Moores Summer Fashion Program.

S: Ahhh ok so it that how everything came about, I've been told is you were spotted in the sewing room at the Art School, which confuses me... why were you in the sewing room?

J: Basically I was in Sixth Form at the time and some guest speakers from John Moores came and gave a presentation about a six week fashion program they were running that Summer. I was doing that for about four weeks when Paul came in seen me and asked me if I was interested in shooting, that's literally how the first interaction happened, if I hadn't of been there that day we'd probably never have met.

S: Ok this makes more sense, I thought maybe one of you're friends was one the fashion course or modelling a graduates collection?

J: Actually I was with a few of my mates, I'd convinced some of them to join the program aswell.

S: So for you to join the program, fashion or an interest in it is something that always been with you?

J: Yeah, it's something I've always loved.

S: So, you graced the cover of *UN_FOLD* first addition, that's awesome. Tell us about how that happened?

J: It was kind of crazy, I'd honestly never thought of modelling before. I'd never been approached and when I thought of fashion it was always design or production or something like that, not modelling.

S: I feel like with such a strong look how had you not been approached?

J: (laughing) Yeah, at that time I had like a moustache and a goatee, like I don't know what I was doing there.

S: Yeah you were much younger, when I first saw the shots I was like it's definitely Josh but you've matured in your look.

J: When I look back at the pictures I do think what the f*** was I doing (laughing)

S: We all think that when we look back. You've definitely matured and progressed into your look, some of my favourite images ever are from that last shoot we did. The one of you eating the peach, you were so uncomfortable and we were all laughing but did it and the shots were just so amazing. J'adore (Josh's UK Mother agency) liked them for sure, I saw.

J: Yeah it's like my whole portfolio (laughs)

S: So you were approached, you got the gig. Paul has mentioned that he had some convincing with to do with your Dad, is that right?

J: Funny story! During that time I was in sh*t with my Dad for doing something

I shouldn't have. Even going out at the time was a like, a no. When Paul approached me, I really wanted to do it, it was something I'd never thought of but it seemed exciting. But it took some convincing of my Dad to let me pursue the offer.

S: Were your Father's reservations because it was modelling?

J: No, I was purely because literally that week I was in really bad trouble with him and he didn't want me to go. Modelling wasn't an issue at all, just I was in sh*t with him.

S: And how are your parents now your career has gone heavily down the modelling route, are they supportive?

J: Oh my Mum loves it! She sends my pictures back to all her friends in Africa. Her cover on WhatsApp is one of my modelling pictures (laughing)

S: That is the cutest!

J: Every month she'll ask me to send her some pictures and she'll send them out to all her friends and family.

S: Awww she's reppin' you, she's like your Momager! Have you done any work in Africa?

J: I haven't been to Africa since I was 10 years old, but I'm planning to go really soon. What's funny is when I was a kid I wore glasses, had a skin head and big ears and all her friends still have that image of me. Mum's like sending these pictures like, look at my Son he's all grown up!

S: That really is the cutest! So, *UN_FOLD* was your first step into the modelling industry. How has the rest of your journey played out, when we're you first signed?



J: Just after I finished shooting for *UN_FOLD*, Vik and Paul were both telling me to pursue modelling, they were like you just need to go for it. Even though I'd done that shoot with them signing for an agency still didn't really occur to me. So afterwards I did some research online... then J'adore (Josh's current agency) got in contact via social media. I went into their offices, met Keisha who was a Junior Booker at the time, she signed me at the first interview. She's literally been with me throughout my whole time with the agency. That same week I did a test shoot in Warrington, I felt more comfortable having shot with the *UN_FOLD*. I was using direction I'd been given from Paul and Vik, my experience with them really helped me at the time. After the test shoot, I worked on my portfolio and started working with JD (Sports). After that I was signed in London with Established Models.

S: So with everything that's happened in the last 12 months do you work more up north or still in London?

J: This last year, for obvious reasons practically all my work has been with J'adore. But the year before whilst I was in London. I was shooting Jack Wills every week. But with the pandemic work started to die down and it's been a while since I've had a job down there.

S: Is your agency are cool with you working on personal projects?

J: Yeah, test shooting is fine with them. J'adore are super flexible which is why I like working with them.

S: Well things have changed haven't they, newer agencies I suppose have to apply a more hybrid approach than traditional agencies allowing for how content production has evolved.

J: Yeah definitely!

S: So, you mentioned you are signed internationally?

J: Yeah, so after Established I was signed with an agency in Milan, through them I got to experience at Milan Fashion Week which was absolutely amazing!

S: So do you enjoy doing catwalk, or do you prefer e-commerce or campaign shoots?

J: Catwalk, well for me is one of the best things about this job I think.

S: What is it for you about modelling, do you love what you do?

J: I love the fact I can travel to a different country that I don't know anyone, to work and live there. I can go to Milan, my agency sorts out an apartment and I can just live there



for a bit. I love that freedom, where I can always go somewhere and make a living. Modelling is everywhere, there's always the opportunity to earn, I love that. The fact that I get to meet so many people, from all around the world. I've got friends all around the world and I love that. We still have contact with each other, like yesterday I was talking with a Korean model friend who I lived with in Milan, about the meals we would cook together and the time we spent living together. There are not many other careers where you get that experience that.

S: Do you have a favourite project / shoot you're most proud of and why?

J: My favourite project was my first time doing fashion week, backstage I was nervous but excited. On the screen you can see everyone walking as it was my turn approaching and I first stepped out there was so much light, I was nervous as f*ck! But all those nerves went, and it was blank, I couldn't hear anything or see anything but I just knew where to go. I can't explain the experience and that for me was a real moment. I wanted to do it again, that's why I went back the next season. If we're talking about proudest jobs though, I'll say Jack Wills store front campaign. That was something I'd always wanted since I started modelling, I'd see a model mate be on a massive billboard and be like that's what I want.

S: What store front was it?

J: It was Manchester Arndale. But people were sending me photos from all over the UK, it was amazing. Even friends from Malaysia were sending me images. That was something since I started modelling that I'd wanted to see my picture on a billboard.

S: How far into your career was that?

J: It was three years ago, I'd been modelling for a bit and had been wanting a campaign like that for a while. After Jack Will's I shot a Foot Asylum store campaign and some smaller stuff for SIZE. It changes, you get work with one client for a while, then it switches to another, then back again. The Hut Group has been my man clients since the pandemic begun, they've been booking me weekly for ecomm across all their brands.

S: How have you found modelling work during in the pandemic? How did Lockdown affect the industry?

J: Well Lockdown basically ruined my whole year, during the time before the pandemic I'd gotten signed to an agency in South Africa. I'd sorted Visa, booked flights and months accommodation, everything was ready and then we went into Lockdown 4 days before my flight. So that's how I started the pandemic which was quite hard, I'd spent a lot of money on the trip, I had castings arranged and clients interested in

is something we all haven't been able to do for a while. During the pandemic a lot of clients have been sticking with the models they've worked with before, no one was booking outside of that. Now I'm back full time I want to get myself back down there in front of the clients.

S: And what about international travel?

J: I really want to try to do Fashion Week again, if that goes ahead. I've missed the last three seasons so I really want to do that again. I've got a new agent in Milan so it's good timing.

That's the change I see and that's the change I love.

booking so I knew I had work when I got there. I was investing into myself by doing that and the pandemic stopped all that. Visa and accommodation I never received the money back.

S: That's difficult

J: Yeah at the start it was hard, I had one home shoot for Zavvi at The Hut Group. It was surreal doing a shoot from home as well. We were just sent the clothes, no equipment, Chloe was just using her phone taking pictures which were used on their social media. It was weird like, that's how it was. Have you seen the facetime shoots, where the photographer is behind the camera taking picture of the model on location, directing them like normal and that? It's weird. I'm kind of happy I wasn't booked to do one, I'd have said no I think.

S: What are you looking forward to now the country is starting to open back up?

J: I'm looking forward to getting back to London. It's been a while now since I've worked there. The week after next, I've a week of castings planned which

S: Yeah it'll interesting to see how the brands adapt moving forward, whether we'll go back to Fashion Week how it used to be or more digital focus in the future.

J: Yeah it will be interesting.

S: How different is attending a casting now?

J: I haven't attended a casting for almost two years now. All the jobs I've got come from past bookings. You can't enter set with a negative test beforehand and some clients' temperature check too.

S: Ahhh yes, the new normal. Have you witnessed change in the industry since you started out? What are the biggest issues facing the modelling industry at the moment?

J: I've noticed that there's more diversity in the industry, I'm seeing more people of colour and different races and even size as well. When I first started, plus size and curve models wasn't really a thing. Seeing the progression is really cool, seeing more normal people looking good in these clothes and I love seeing

that. Just seeing more people that look like me as well, in the industry, it's amazing.

S: At the beginning of your career did you feel you feel people of colour were under-represented, was that ever a deterrent from working in fashion?

J: For me it was never an issue for me to get booked, it was more just not seeing many people that looked like me. I realised when I went to my London agency for the first time and there was a wall of all the models and I could only see two black models, in over 100 faces. It just made me think, you know, it could be a bit more? If you walk into any agency now it's different, you see much more diversity. That's the change I see and that's the change I love. It's been amazing being part of the change and experiencing the industry in the last five years as it's happened.

S: Best piece of modelling advice you've ever been given or heard?

J: I've never really been given advice, but I can give advice if that's alright, maybe? One thing I always say to people who are starting out and when ask me about modelling, I always say for every ten No's, there's always that one Yes. And that one yes is what you should strive for. My first time I went to London I got rejected so many times but when I got that one yes that's what got me in. That's what you should always strive for, that one yes. That's all's I can say on that.

S: That's awesome! Is modelling your end goal?

J: I don't think it's my end goal, but I'd like to model for another couple of years until my looks deteriorate (laughs).

S: Those looks aren't fading babe, trust me (laughing).

J: Well, my dad is like 60 and he's got only a few wrinkles so I do look at him and think maybe there's another decade or two in modelling for me.

S: Well, we discussed change in the industry. I see a lot of change towards age also, editorial features with more mature models, brand campaigns featuring people over 35... which isn't actually old by the way (laughing).

J: I loved that campaign you showed me for New Balance, with the older models with shopping bags, so cool.

S: Ahhh yeah the Aimé Leon Dore collab, the Runners Aren't Normal campaign is one of my favourites ever! So you want to model for a while longer, and you mentioned Art Direction before?

J: Yeah art direction, fashion shows or maybe even art direction in theatre. I've recently bought some land in Congo too so setting something up there, it's an investment, I'm building my own house there so see how that's goes for the future too. My family are setting up there, so I'm not too sure where I'll end up in the future, but there's options.

S: So it's fair to say modelling has given you a platform to earn an income to give you better options for your future.

J: Yeah, it's given me flexibility, where I can go through different routes. After graduation I can still model and support myself whilst I think about where I want to go next. That's why I like modelling, it's flexible.

S: What do you want from 2021?

J: Get new clients, meet new people. I really want to try something new or something I've not done for a while.

S: Quick fire round?? Describe yourself in three words.

J: Creative, caring and entrepreneurial.

S: Dream brand / creative team that you would like to work with?

J: I cast for Gucci in Milan and I got to go to the Gucci mansion and everything was amazing. I got there they gave me an ID card and it was Gucci, the furniture was Gucci, the carpet was Gucci, I was walking round like, wow. I really wanted it and didn't get it. It was the final stages and since then I've been wanting to walk for Gucci. That's my goal.

S: When international travel opens up fully, where you headed first?

J: Obviously Milan as I've said and I still very much want to try to go to South Africa again. I built up a lot of excitement for that trip, I was really ready for it and I'd loved to try and do it still.

S: What is the last image you took on your phone?

J: It's a tag, I was working in The Hut Group last week and there was a jacket I was wearing that looked amazing so I decided to take a picture of the tag so when it comes on sale I can buy. It's Ralph Lauren, so yeah I took a picture of the tag. That's how I do my shopping.

S: Words to live by?

J: Ermmmmm, let me think about this. Ok, just do you. That's what I always say.

S: That's lovely Josh.

J: There's no point in trying to impress people or be something you're not. Just do you, be who you are that's all I can say. If people don't agree with you, there's nothing you can do. When I first started modelling not everyone agreed, some people said it was a mistake, it's not going anywhere, I just though fuck it I'll still do it. And then months later the same people asking me to help get them signed with my agency. If you've got an aim or something you want to do, you shouldn't let people put you off, there's nothing else to say just do what you want to do.

S: Just do you, it's so important. Really good advice, thanks Josh ☺



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UN_FOLD

Liverpool School of Art & Design
John Lennon Art and Design Building
2 Duckinfield Street
Liverpool, L3 5YD

@un-fold.mag
www.wearefashion.co.uk
www.ljmu.ac.uk