
Not
VOGUE
MAY
ONE WAY
THE DANGER OF
THE SINGLE STORY
EVERYDAY
PEOPLE
A HOME
FROM HOME
FOUND IN ART
Till
Death
Us Do Part
TILDA TALKS DEATH AND HOPE

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We will always have London
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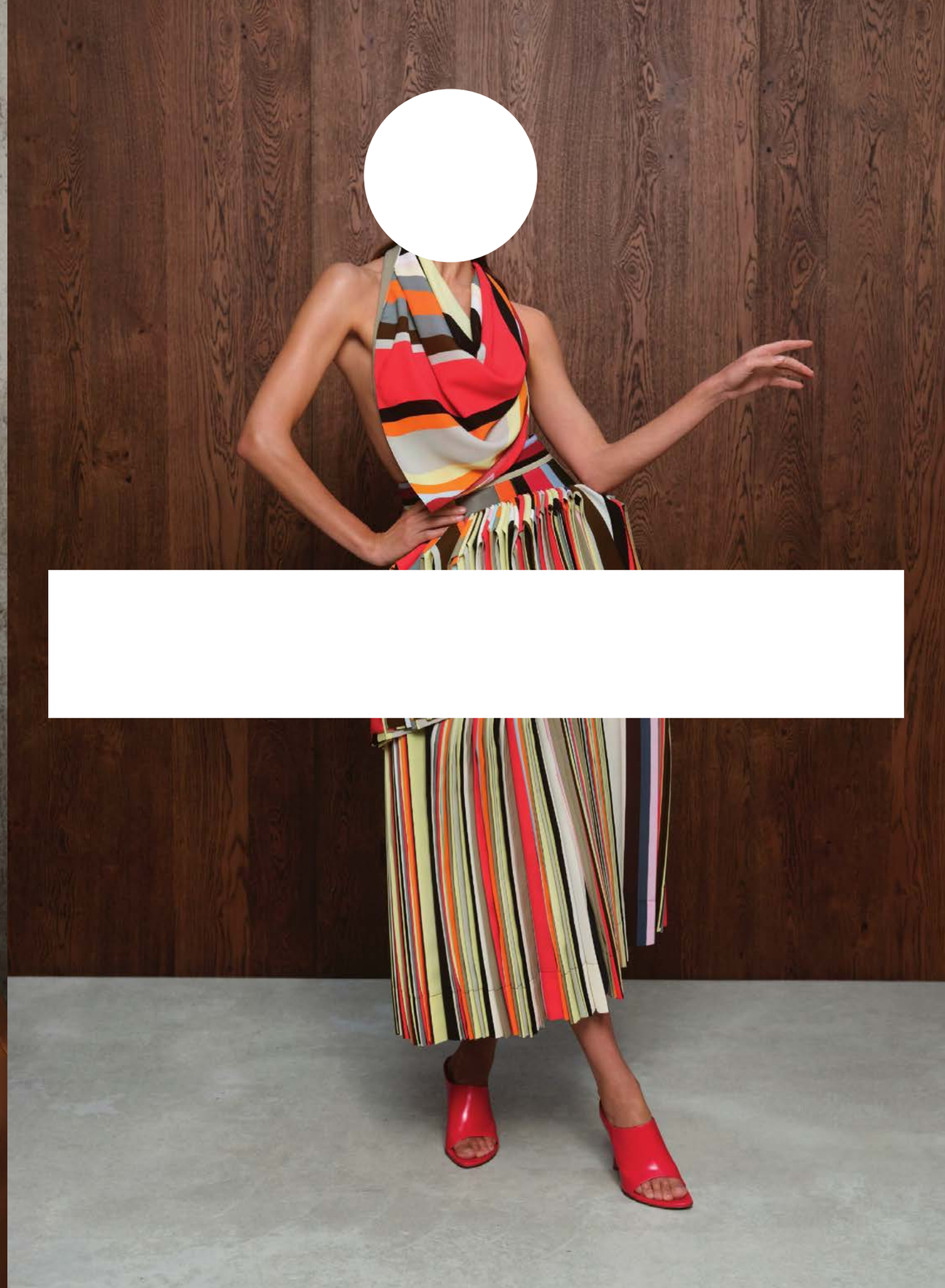

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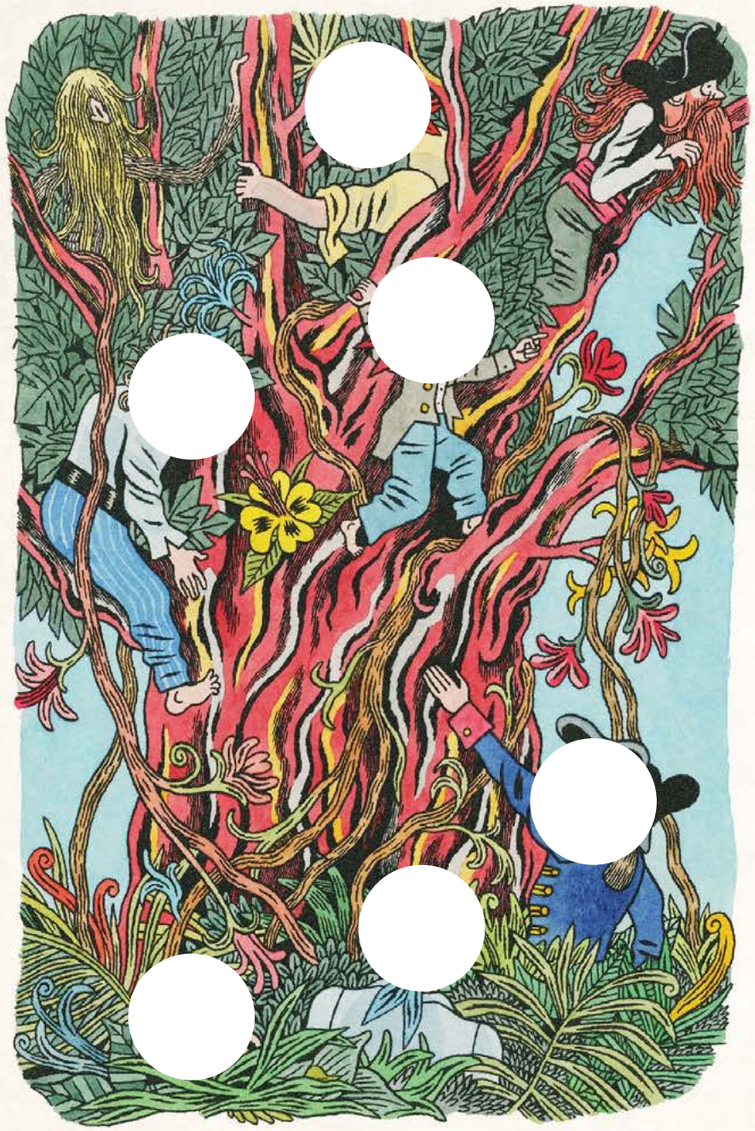

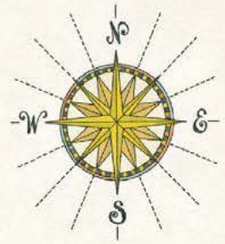

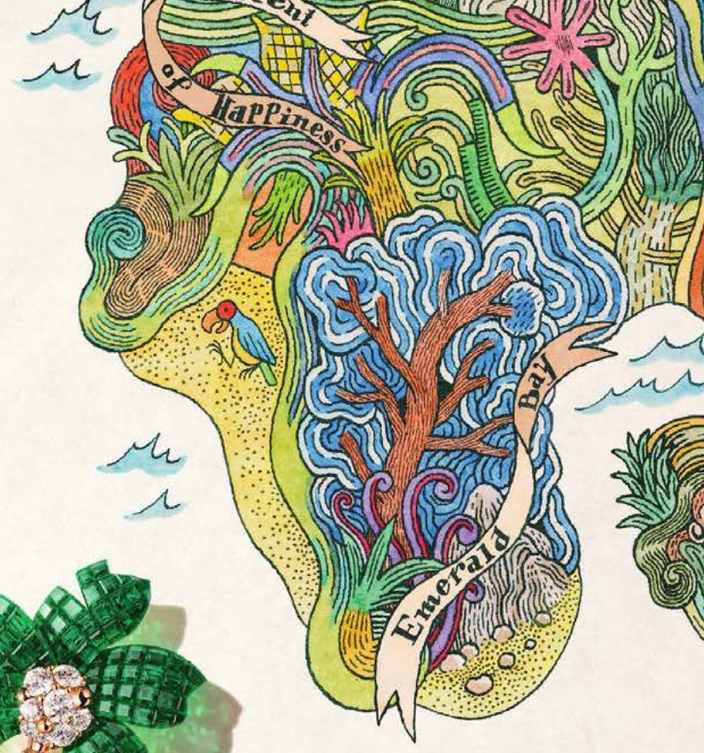

Palmier Mystérieux
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Treasure Island by

"Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder,
bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E. Skeleton Island E.S.E.
and be E. Ten feet. A tall tree was thus the principal mark."

Robert Louis Stevenson. *Treasure Island,* 1883

Discover
our collection

VOGUE

MAY 2025

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE
TELLS THE STORY OF, THE DANGER OF THE SINGLE STORY, ON PAGE 58.

COVER

Tilda Swinton: Discusses assisted death and living life on page 72

* The lights of Paris

Les lumières de Paris*
Francis Kurkdjian

Letter From the Editor

CONVERSATIONS
LEFT: PACHA, 1989, WHEN RAVING WAS ABOUT GETTING SWEATY AND LOSING YOURSELF TO THE MUSIC. PAGE 94.
ABOVE: HOW WE CONSTRUCT MEANING THROUGH PEOPLE, WORDS AND CONTEXT. PAGE 48.

In Conversation

I WAS HAVING A CONVERSATION about my contrary feelings towards feminism, when I realised I'd been having that conversation with myself for some time. I was also in conversation with magazines and popular culture. I love popular culture and I love magazines. I love the light, entertaining, flippancy of magazines, a smorgasbord of bits to nibble and digest. Indulgent imagery. Sturctured and ordered content. A feast for the eyes and a gentle stroke of my brain. Accessible and not demanding. But lately I feel shortchanged by magazines. I find, maybe one article, I want to read, the rest appears to be the same. The same people, saying the same surface level things, about the same other people. What's happened? Am I alone?

Turns out I'm not. When having a conversation with my friends they felt similar. Magazines are such wonderful constructions and have such dedicated teams that make them (I know as I use to be one of them). Great journalists, great subjects, great photographers. But... guarded celebrities regurgitate the same guarded stories for fear of misrepresentation. Editorial sells products and consumerism as much as the adverts do. The women don't smile. They look down upon us. Yet editorial teams work tirelessly for 'the audience'. Where did the connection get disconnected?

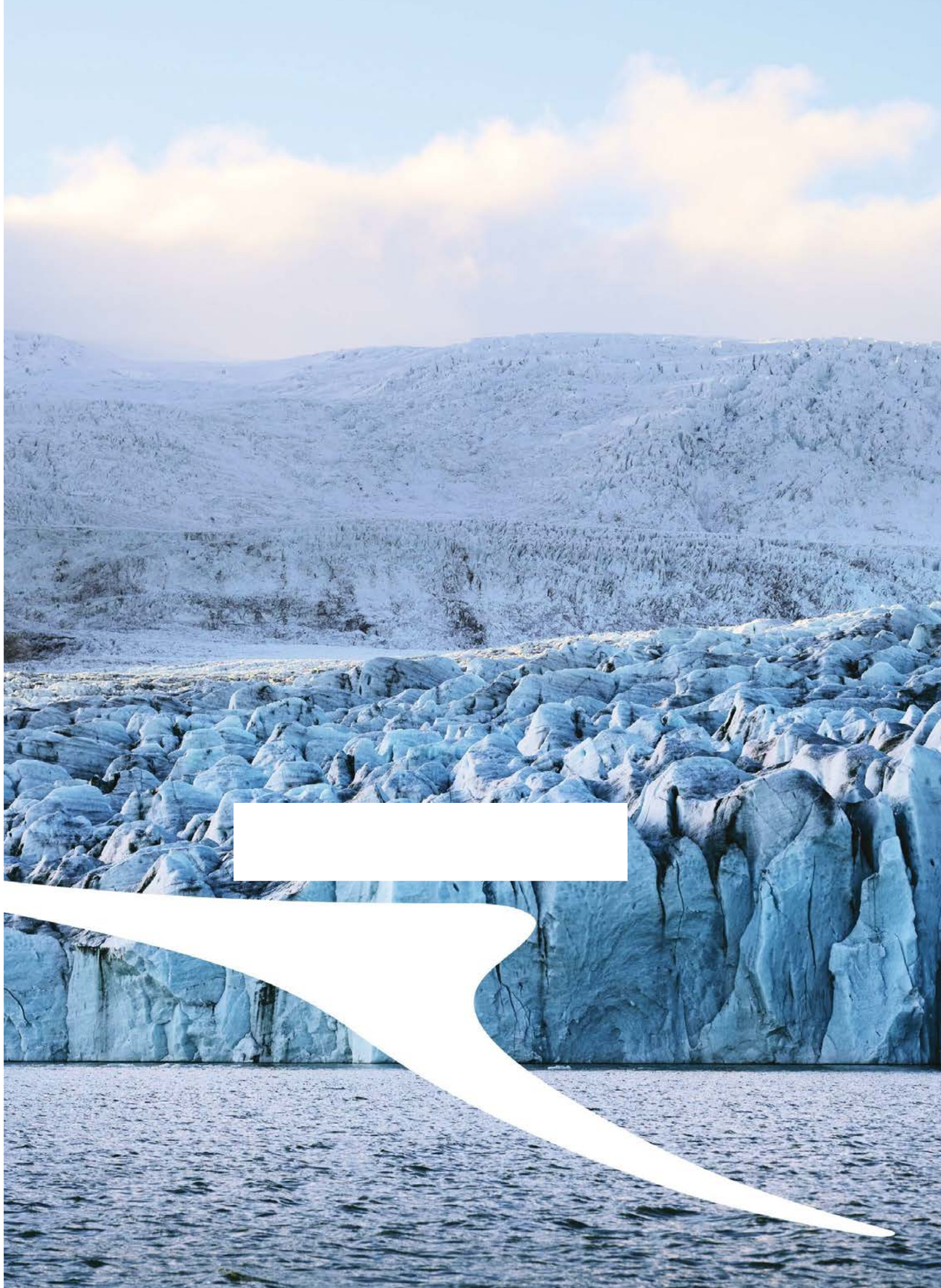
Feminism isn't *en vogue*, but it is *In Vogue*. By looking beyond the surface of what I was presented with, (which was a surface level single story of women, consistently contextualised in multiple layers of celebrity, wealth, class, femininity and exclusivity, creating a discursive reality) I found hidden deep in the text an *other* story. Moments of meaningful content that I clung to, that offered a widening of interests–covering feminism, partriarchy, capitalism, politics–rather than the analogue algorithm Vogue has become. Consumed by consuming, controlled by money and men. Whose voice is really being heard in Vogue?

Maybe it's my age. I'm exhausted with being sold to, sold off and sold out. I don't need sensational headlines to make me read something, I don't need nearly naked images to entice me to read on. I just want something to connect with, that makes me think, that challenges my view, that gives me another view, an insight, a light and accessible package, but a different way to see.

I'm not against celebrities or fashion. I like celebrities and fashion. But not when it's the only story that becomes *the* story of women. I think celebrities have really interesting things to say, but interviews and editorial content is one way traffic. The editorial voice overwhelms the actual voice; there is no feedback from the reader. Where can we find other voices, other stories, other people that have as interesting things to say? Creating a place of equality, not exclusivity. Where no one is right and no one is wrong; where we can have a conversation. Conversation is inherently contrary.

Here is a place that on the surface looks like Vogue, but isn't Vogue. It is a smorgasbord of diverse voices, from the past, present and future. In conversation with one another, in conversation with time, in conversation with Vogue and in conversation with you. I implore you to read and reflect. And when you think you're done, I ask you sit a little longer. Add your comments, thoughts, ideas and opinions to this issue, join the conversation and make it bigger.

A N. Other



Contributors

Brain Game

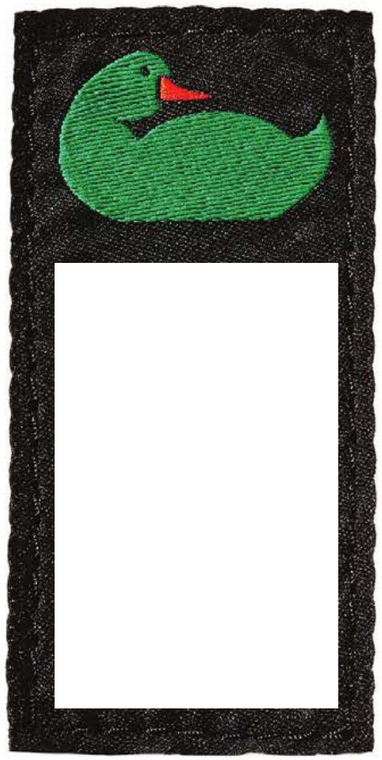
Jill Bolte Taylor, a neuroanatomist, spent her life studying the brain. As she realises she is having a stroke, she tells the enlightening story of trying to analyse her own brain in the process. Insightful, articulate and amusing, this transcription of the Ted Talk, My Stroke Of Insight, visually shows Jill's narrative of the spoken word with most sentences starting with "So, ..." and the audiences responses (Laughter). The text version of the oral gives an alternative story of editorial writing. It's jarring and a bit uncomfortable, we're not use to magazines speaking like this. What I love about this is Jill's voice dominating the narrative rather than the magazines voice. Something that can go unseen and unheard.

The Witches

The Witch by Erica Jong is a regurgitated article from Vogue 1982. Literally a reprint. Poking fun at the homogenous content of magazines, but also enlightening. Of what was and what could of been. I was overjoyed to find this content in the Vogue Archive that felt as relevant today as it would have been then. This past as present asks so many questions. How have perceptions of women changed since 1982? What would women look like if the witch hadn't be condemned, but celebrated, as we celebrate the men of medicine? What would disease look like if the witches natural remedies and tinctures were the dominant ideology? Would doctor's waiting rooms be over run? Would hospitals be under staffed and over used? Would patriarchy and capitalsim be leading the narrative? What would the *other* story of been?

Rave On

I first met Tim when I commissioned him to write a piece on acid house for the academic publication Unknown Quantities 12, an annual publication produced by Central Saint Martins in London. I may have been being contrary, but it opened up a wonderful conversation, that is still continuing, between Tim and myself about said CSM, house music, 'the old days', and connections we make as humans through music. Tim is currently undertaking a PhD on acid house and when I asked him to write this piece he asked if I would like it 'academic'. I said how do *you* want to write it? He was as affable as ever, and we agreed he should write from the heart. Lost In Music takes you back to the 80s, when dripping is sweat was in fashion, when mobile phones didn't exist, when going to a club was about the music, the people, the connection for that moment in time, of being part of something larger than yourself, of being present, with like minded people, dreaming dreams–that came true.



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ON THE LIST OF ELIGIBLES AGAIN

Mrs. Hawkins :—How much better Mr. T[illegible]mbly dresses than he used to.
Mrs. Goeasy :—Yes. His wife died last sp[illegible]ng. When a man becomes a widower he always begins to dress well.

Past

A selection of features from past issues of Vogue that have resonance today. Questioning what's changed? What hasn't changed? How does present become past? How does past become present?

THE MASKS WE WEAR
What do we hide behind a mask? What does a mask hide? And what does it tell us about the wearer?

Masks of the Mountain People

A still life of Switzerland – how masks aren't the only cover up for the people of Ferden. By Herbert Kubly.

Suddenly, one Sunday in early July, word came from the north that the sun was shining, so my guide and I set out for the valley of the masks. My strange pursuit had begun in winter in Zurich's Reitberg Museum where I saw some wooden masks collected by Baron Edward von der Heydt. Fantastically painted and finished with goat's and horse's hair the Swiss masks were more haunting than some of the primitive African ones in the same rooms.

In the spring, quite by coincidence, I rented a house, on the shores of Lago Maggiore, which was owned by that same Baron who collected the Zurich masks. He told me the wooden faces were carved in the cantons of Girsons and Valais by peasants who wore them during the carnival season. The ones I found particularly awesome had been from the Lötschental, one of the highest and most archaic valleys in Switzerland. When I told the Baron I planned to go there he advised, "Try to find the laughing mask. They are rare and most valued."

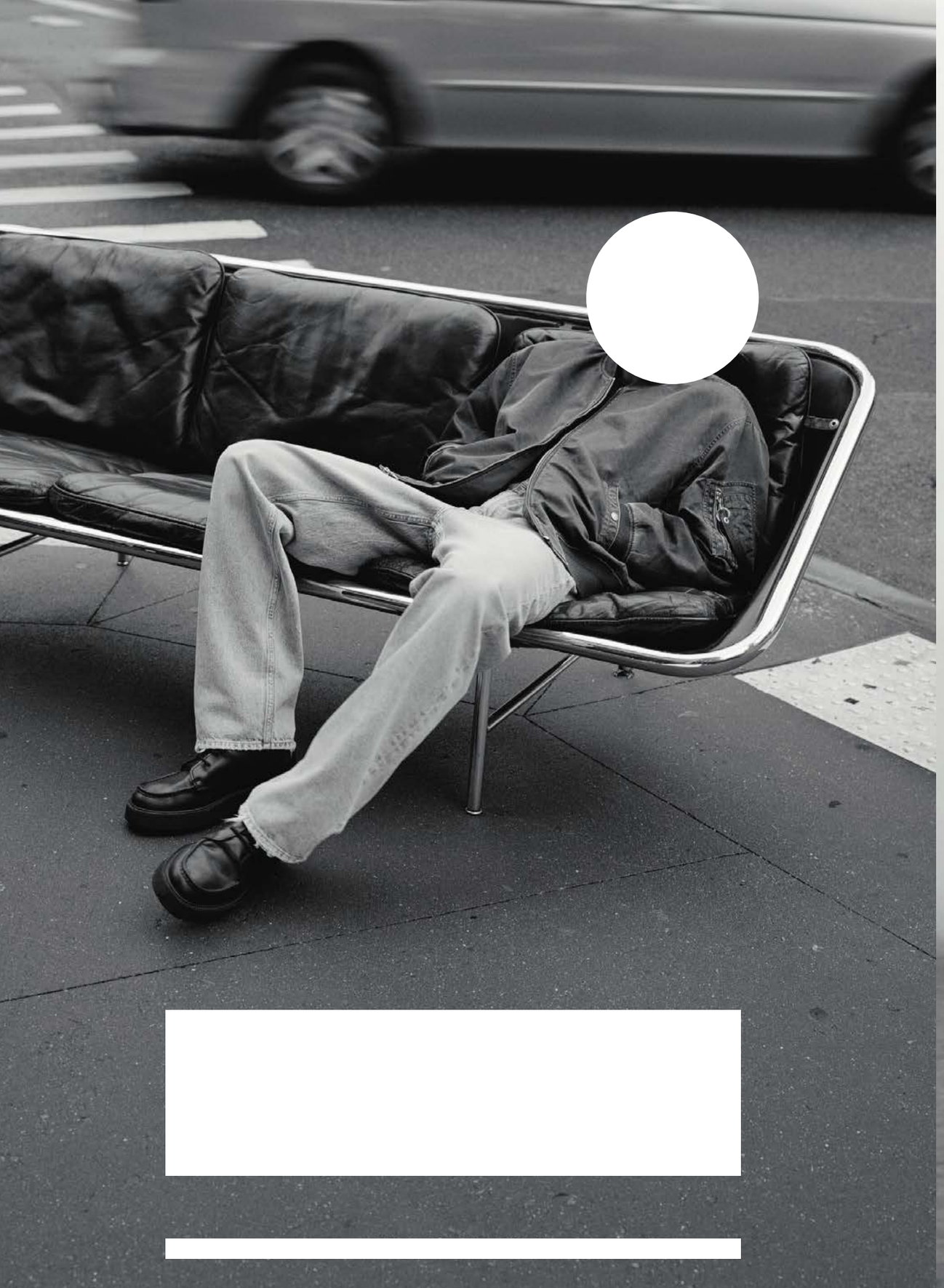
It was storming in the North and we had to wait a fortnight on Maggiore's steaming shores for the rains to cease behind the Alps. My guide, Willy Hofstetter, a nineteen-year-old student from Zug, was jolly and bright, with a round puckish face. He had come to me by way of his aunt, Lisi Hofstetter, who was my neighbour and who now packed two rucksacks with emergency food rations–chocolate, powered milk, cheeses, and also first-aid equipment–and harnessed us to the sacks like donkeys. Lötschental bread, she warned us, would be stone hard.

We started from Locarno on the Centovalli train, a hairbreadth Tooneville Trolley which wound perilously along the precipices and squeezed through canyons so narrow we picked bluebells from the mountain sides in passing. It required three railroad transfers and two boarder crossings to get us to the foot of the Lötschental. We had climbed three hours by train and now we began climbing by foot.

An icy gust blew out of the short tunnel which was the gateway to the valley. In a niche inside, in a bower of fresh flowers, was a Madonna and above her, carved on stone, we read, *"Wandered grüss Uns, Ich segne Dich"* (Wanderer greet us, I bless you).

On the other side we were blinded by mirrors of glaciers and snow peaks and deafened by the thundering of the Lonza River below. We met festive young men, and golden-braided girls, glowing pink from the briskness, carrying their Sunday trophies of Alpine roses. *"Grüss Gott,"* they said to us, *"Greet God."* A hilariously drunken little man had sense enough to cling with his hands to the right side of the road; if he had wandered to the left he could have been plunged into the foaming white river gorge. "The wine must be good in the valley," said Willy. "Let's hurry."

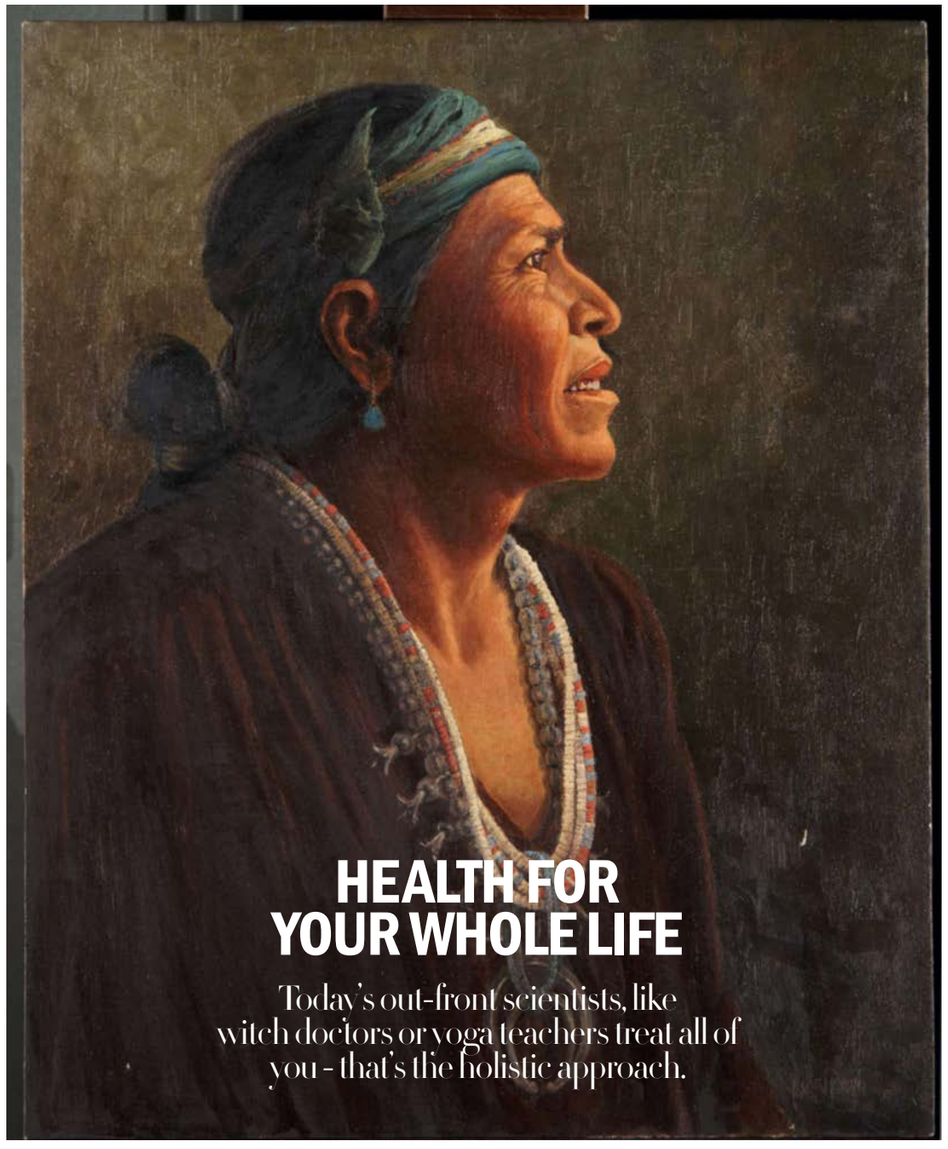
Since it was the end of the day we were alone going up. We passed through the first town, Ferden, a tight cluster of log huts built of larch, the only trees growing at that altitude, burned brown by the sun. The town had a ripe CONTINUED ON PAGE 106



ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: JOSH RYAN

THE NEW FRAGRANCE FOR HER

ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: ALINA TROYAN



HEALTH FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE

Today's out-front scientists, like witch doctors or yoga teachers treat all of you - that's the holistic approach.

The word "health" shares its root meaning with "hale," "hearty," "holy," "heal," and "whole": but modern medicine has moved a long way from these concepts. Today's physician tends to deal with the treatment of the disease rather than with the maintenance of health. What's more, medical specialists have divided our bodies into separate areas of concern: the liver, the bones, the lower gastrointestinal tract, the lungs, the heart. Although we know that what's going on in our minds affects what's happening to our bodies, an entirely different and separate group of professionals deals with the problems our emotions cause. As a result, very few physicians today make an appointment with the whole person.

This is the opinion of a group of physicians, psychologists, public-health specialists, and other scientists who have come to look at today's Western medical practice as a valuable but incomplete approach to health. They emphasize a concept that is as old as a cave man's painting and as new as tomorrow's medical journal: a holistic approach to medicine.

What do these people mean by "holistic"? The word has been adopted with enthusiasm by various cultist: food faddist's, psychic healers, gurus, swamis, astrologers, etc., and by some with pseudoscientific theories that ignore such basic physiological facts as the circulation of blood. The term "holistic" in some circles has achieved an unfortunate aura of quackery, but that's definitely not what reputable scientists who use "holistic" have in mind. The advocate of a holistic approach to health care would like to get back to some of those root concepts: to consider the whole man or woman before he or she becomes a patient, as well as after, and to be sensitive to social and emotional factors as well as to the strictly physical ones.

NAVAHO MEDICINE MAN
Ta-Otza-Begay, also called Meguelito, used ancient and traditional methods of healing (painted by Carl Moon, 1878-1948).

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Many of these scientists are convinced that Western medicine is becoming too impersonal, too dependent on complicated technology; and they want to get back to a more patient-oriented approach. Also, these scientists have seen the handwriting on the wall. Americans, who have repeatedly been assured that they receive the best health care in the world, are becoming restive. As the cost of medical care increases (last year it reached almost 10 percent of our gross national product), consumers are more critical than ever of the medical establishment. Their dissatisfaction expresses itself in a variety of ways that seem, naturally enough, threatening to physicians: the growing number of medial malpractice suits, the following acquired by various kinds of faith healers (President Carter's sister, Ruth Stapleton, is just one example), the popularity of such devastatingly critical books as Ivan Illich's *Medical Nemesis*, and the proliferation of nonprofessional health collectives, especially those directed at young people. Doctors who are watching their patients become angry, confused and hostile want to know what's happening.

> "Many of these scientists are convinced that Western medicine is becoming too impersonal, too dependent on complicated technology."

Jerome Frank, M.D., emeritus professor of psychiatry at John Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, provides one answer: "People don't visit fringe practitioners because they are gullible, stupid, or superstitious," he said. "They go because they think and hope that they can get something from him (or her) that the doctor no longer gives. They are right: often the doctor does not even pretend to give it."

Dr. Frank was one of the participants in a symposium on health and healing, cosponsored by the New York University Post Graduate Medical School and the Institute for Human Knowledge last spring in New York City. More than 750 physicians, nurses, and other health professionals attended the meetings and heard a series of lectures on the work of the "barefoot" indigenous doctors of China, the Navaho medicine men of the American Southwest, and the Ayurvedic System and Hatha Yoga practitioners of India. The American doctors wanted to know whether some of these ancient and traditional systems of healing might have something to offer that could complement (not replace) our current medical practice. Were these healers able to give their patients that "something" for which, according to Dr. Frank, some of their own patients were turning to "fringe practitioners"? Or, as one Arizona surgeon explained: "I've never heard of an Indian suing a medicine man."

Actually, it turned out that all of these healing systems, regardless of where they originated and where they are practiced, have a great deal in common. They inspire faith in their patients. They assure the patient that not only the healer, the family, and the tribe but even the gods and/or spirits care about his or her recovery. They involve the patients in their own health care. If things in the patients' environments are hindering their recovery, the healers attempt to change those factors. All in all, the kind of healing practiced in a more primitive societies meets the definition of a holistic approach to medicine very well.

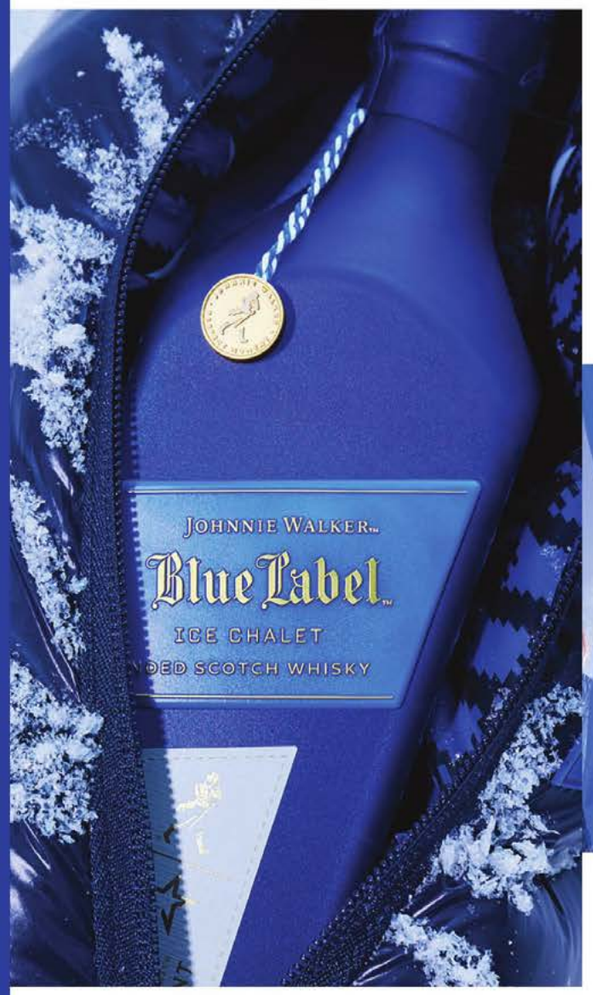
"All practitioner of nonmedical healing, who, incidentally, minister to many more suffers throughout the world than do physicians, see illness as a disorder of the total person, involving not only the patient's body but his image of himself and his relation to the group," said Dr. Frank. "Instead of emphasizing the conquest of disease, they focus on stimulating and strengthening the patient's natural healing powers. This is done by establishing a strong emotional relationship between the patient and the healer. It's really what the old family doctor meant when he talked about doctor-patient relationship. Because of our complicated technology, or increased specialization of care, we have come more and more to ignore this important factor in health care. The nonmedical healer never ignores it... he banks on it almost totally."

Let's look at the Navaho medicine man who still practices his traditional healing ceremonies, called "chants" and "sings." He views the patient in the context of his family and tribe. To get a patient well, the medicine man involves as many relatives, friends, and tribal members as possible. Donal F. Sander, M.D., a psychiatrist and training analysist at the C. G. Jung Institute in San Francisco, over the past ten years has done extensive field studies with Navaho medicine men. He points out that hundreds, sometimes thousands, of tribesmen sing and dance for several days and nights to heal just *one* of their members. Certain skills are available to just the medicine man, such as deciding which particular god must be called upon to heal a certain illness; but everyone in the tribe has a responsibility to help. And the patient cannot be passive and uninvolved; for instance, he or she must provide the feast that precedes the healing ceremony. If that's physically not possible, the relatives must take over.

If the ceremonies do nothing else but remind the patients that they are important, that their welfare is the concern of the whole tribe, they have already accomplished a great deal. Dr. Sander is well aware of the fact that the patient of today's modern American physician often feels isolated, disregarded, CONTINUED ON PAGE 107

SKI SIP STYLE

WHEN IT COMES TO APRÈS-SKI, IT'S ALL ABOUT INDULGING IN LIFE'S BEST LUXURIES.



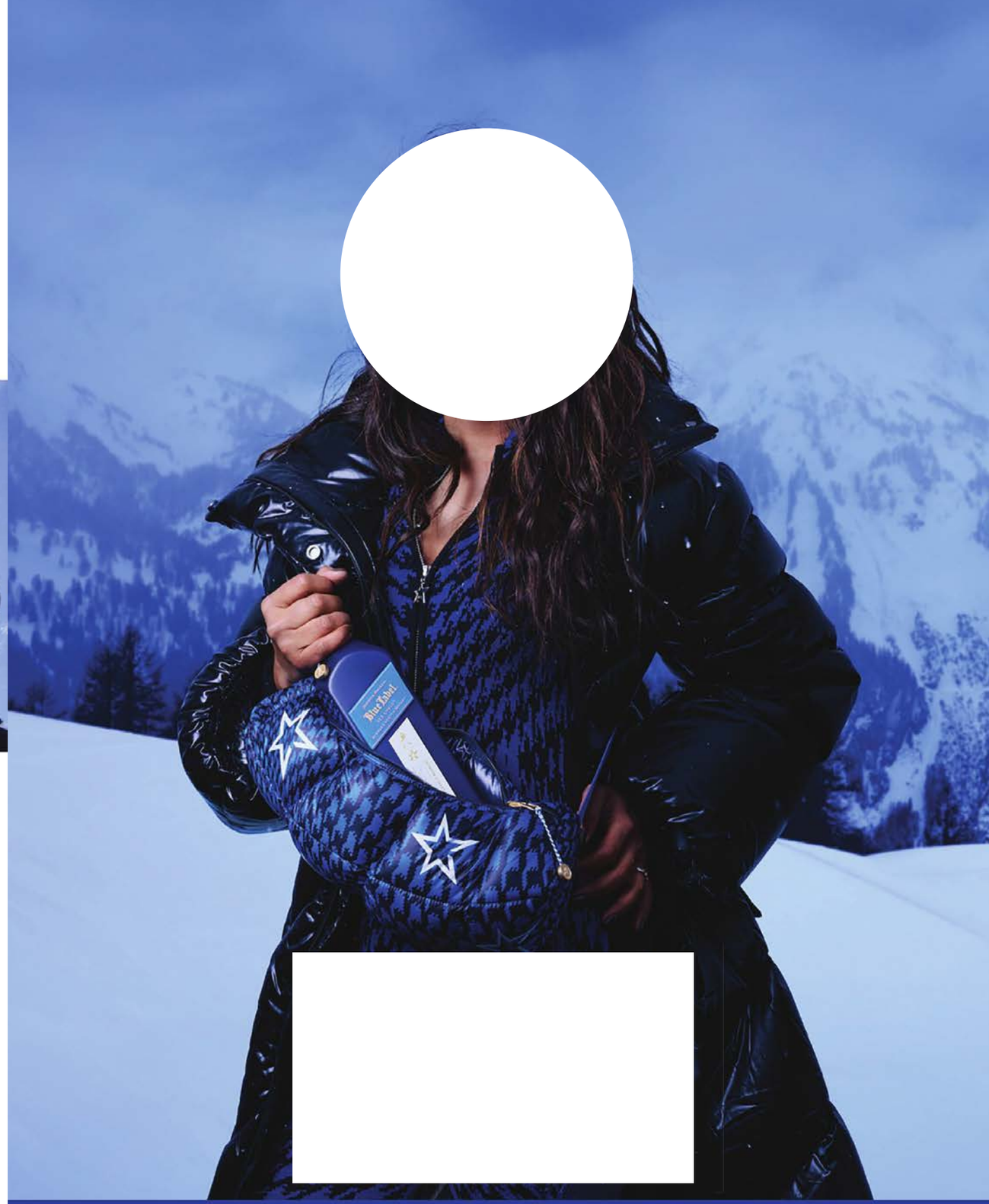
There's nothing like the energy of a day on the slopes—transitioning seamlessly from the thrill of skiing to the stylish warmth of après-ski. This winter, elevate your mountain retreat with the ultimate essentials, featuring a collaboration between Johnnie Walker and luxury skiwear brand Perfect Moment. From what to wear to what to sip, here's your guide to reimagined alpine indulgence.

SET THE SCENE
Après-ski is more than just unwinding; it's about dialing up the energy as the mountains glow during the blue hour. The Johnnie Walker Blue Label Ice Chalet bottle, wrapped in a reversible puffer-inspired bag by Perfect Moment, combines flair with functionality. Whether you're toasting at The Vintage Room at St. Regis Deer Valley in Park City, Utah, or enjoying the lively scene at Lincoln Bar's sundeck in Mammoth, California, or soaking in the dynamic atmosphere at Snow Lodge in Aspen, Colorado, the Blue Label Ice Chalet sets the tone for a night filled with style and celebration.

DRESS TO IMPRESS
Two icons collide in the Johnnie Walker x Perfect Moment capsule collection, where the timeless Blue Label square bottle meets Perfect Moment's bold star logo and houndstooth pattern. Curated by Perfect Moment ambassador Priyanka Chopra Jonas, this collection merges high-performance fabrics with vibrant blue hour-inspired hues, creating alpine fashion that blends effortless sophistication with wearability.

SIP ON SOMETHING SPECIAL
Every luxury moment deserves a luxury beverage. The Johnnie Walker Blue Label Ice Chalet, crafted by master blender Emma Walker, is a rare blend with notes of apple, clove, and smoky warmth. Enjoyed in a Blue Label Ice Chalet Manhattan or served simply over an ice rock, this scotch transforms any mountain get-together into an extraordinary occasion.

MAKE LASTING MEMORIES
The time after a day on the slopes is about exceptional flavors and lively experiences. The Johnnie Walker Blue Label Ice Chalet bottle pairs perfectly with standout dishes like the St. Regis Deer Valley's exclusive Blue Burger, turning every gathering into a vibrant culinary and social experience. From chic rooftop venues to cozy fireside dinners, these elevated moments make every high-altitude retreat truly remarkable. Cheers to style, connection, and the ultimate après-ski season.



APRÈS-SKI REDEFINED WITH
JOHNNIE WALKER X PERFECT MOMENT

RAISING THE BAR
Redressing the balance. I wonder how Brian would feel if he saw this image? How far we have come as women, or not?

WOMEN WITH THE PRIVILEGES OF MAN!

To boil down the too much that has been said, to the too little that has been thought, and present to that just jury, the public, a clear case for decision, is the first step towards a fair verdict.
By Brian Hooker.

Feminism, considered broadly and generally as a movement, is a movement of the amelioration of women in general, the eternal cause of womanhood against the world. But so considered it is no controversy at all, for you can not have a controversy where noting is controverted. Nobody denies that we all should be. Moreover, it is quite obvious that the woes and limitations of women have existed from the beginning of history, whereas the feminist movement arises now for the first time. And for this there can be only two reasons: either women are somehow worse off that ever, or they now demand more than ever before. Of these alternatives, Feminism believes the latter: women are now demanding something new. And the nature of that demand is perfectly suggested in the schoolgirl's words which we all have heard, "I wish I were a man." For the schoolgirl does not really want to be a man; she does not literally mean that. What she wants is to be a woman with the powers and privileges of a man; she want to be like a man in all matters wherein she conceives men to have an advantage over her. This is the essence of Feminism. And with this the movement becomes in a certain direction, and the controversy begins.

"What she wants is to be a woman with the powers and privileges of a man"

People are not divided upon the question that women should be wiser and better and happier. There is no such question. They are divided sharply as to what sort of education will make a woman wise, what morality will make her good, and in what sort of life she will be most happy.

Now all the troubles of women divide into three classes: political troubles, which can be relieved at once by legislation; troubles depending upon the present limits of civilization, which can be relieved only by the slow evolution of society and science; and those sheer facts of human life which can not be relieved at all. The existence and pathos of all three are undeniable. To insist upon them is not Feminism, and is not argument; they are admitted by all. And this classification is definitely and absolutely prerequisite to any intelligent thinking upon the subject; for a remedy rational in one class becomes obvious nonsense in another. The classes must be kept clear and distinct precisely because certain evils CONTINUED ON PAGE 109

THE WITCH

Everything men fear about women-and women fear about themselves.

By Erica Jong.

WITCH*
A woman who is believed to have magical powers and who uses them to harm or help other people.

*CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY; URBAN WEDDING COMPANY

N

"Nature has given women so much power that the law wisely gives her little," said Samuel Johnson, unconsciously summing up the male fear of women that has led the female sex to be denounced, despised, and legally disabled throughout the centuries. The witch is an emblem of this disabling of women, the visible symbol of men's fear of what women know, their fear of women's reproductive power, psychic gifts, and their connection with the dark side of the unconscious.

If one views the human race with the detachment of a Martian or Venutian, one wonders whether it was inevitable that the sex that bears the race's young be viewed in this manner. Probably not. If we are guided by logic, there is every reason to believe that women should have been honoured for their reproductive powers rather than denounced. In fact, we find much evidence to prove that a much more positive vire of the female prevailed in earlier historical periods. But as men began to seek hegemony over women's reproduction, and to require that the babies born to them belong to them, and be given their names, women's power came to be viewed as dangerous, and women's sexuality as the snare that led the human race into sin.

The witch is our main symbol of the denigration of women that pervades our culture. And the witch is a powerful symbol because she enshrines so many archetypes at once. She expresses the fear of women's youth and ripe sexuality as well as the fear of women's old age. She represents female freedom, female power, female sexuality; but her torture and burning also represent the fierce retribution that women fear will follow immediately upon their exercise of freedom, power, and sexuality. She represents male fantasies of unbridled female passion, but she also represents the ferocious punishment women have generally endured for that passion. In a world where both sexes are taught to fear and despise women's autonomy and assertion, the witch becomes a perfect symbol of female crime and punishment–a symbol that is equally potent for women and men.

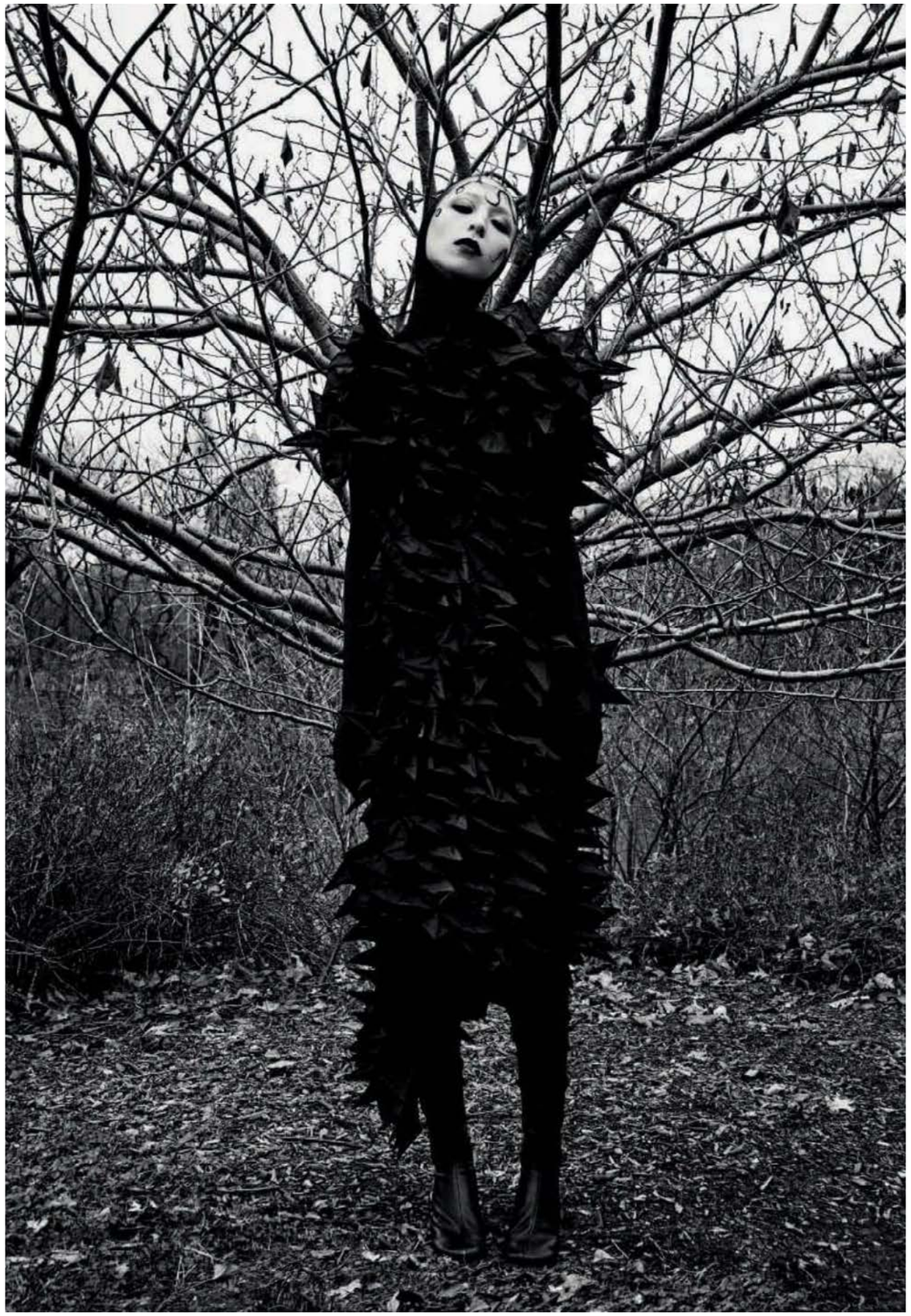
When we think of the witch, we usually think of the old crone in "Hansel and Gretel:" woman as ancient harridan, her sexual magic having festered into spells and hexes, her beauty having corroded into wens, warts, and wrinkles. Children love this old witch–who, according to psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, represents the Bad Mother who threatens to devour her children. It seems comforting to the young child to have her inmost fears and fantasies embodied in a specific figure. Like all primal symbols, the witch partakes of a terrifying duality–in some fairy tales she is young and alluring (the queen in "Sleeping Beauty") and in others hag-like and old (the witch in "Hansel and Gretel". These are the two faces of Mother as all children see her.

The history of witchcraft is similarly ambivalent where witches are concerned. "Women have been burnt as witches simply because they were beautiful," Simone de Beauvoir has written in *The Second Sex*; and indeed, the era of the witch hunts (the so-called witch-craze of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) shows us many examples of women burned for no other reason that that they were young and sexually attractive, therefore "bewitching" to men. Other women were burned for being old and horrible-looking. Others for having the insufferable presumption to be healers. Others simply because they were midwives and dared to take such politically important processes as birth (and abortion) into their own hands.

There has always been a faint suspicion clinging to the midwife, perhaps because she was privy to the mysteries of birth and death. In a world of polarised sex roles, a world where all things female and feminine came under jaundiced scrutiny, birth and the

WITCH HUNT*
An attempt to find and punish people whose opinions are unpopular and who are said to be a danger to society.

*OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY; PENN ALMANZAR/X



GERMAN VOGUE; LUIGI & IANGO

processes associated with it were seen as suspect. This is, in fact, a total reversal of the view of the female deity–from whom the witch is clearly descended–that prevailed in the pre-Christian era. There, women's life-giving powers, psychic and healing gifts, were seen as magical in a positive rather than a negative way. For, if we trace the ancestry of the witch back to its roots, it is clear that the witch is a debased and deformed descendent of the Mother Goddess in the Near East–Isis-Astarte-Ishtar-Inanna-Aphrodite–who was originally more than just "Goddess of Love," the very Queen of Heaven, *the* major deity in the polytheistic pantheon.

We do not know exactly when this powerful matriarchal figure succumbed to the domination of a male god. But we do know that there was an intermediary stage when the Queen of Heaven was accompanied by a male consort, a sort of Adonis-figure, and that he gradually came to upsurp her powers while she was demoted to "merely" Goddess of Love. Since religion always reflects social structures, we may assume that this transformation mirrored the transformation of society from matriarchal to patriarchal. Yet even under patriarchy, people felt great nostalgia for the myth of the Mother-Goddess–an inevitable nostalgia, since we are all born of woman. Whether we choose to denigrate the powerful Mother or revere her, we cannot be free of the notion of female power even if society dictates that men are economically and politically in control. The powerful Mother is enshrined in the human unconscious. We may choose to see her as good witch in one historical epoch and bad witch in another, but the underlying assumption of woman's power cannot be changed (until perhaps Huxley's Brave New World dawns and we are all hatched at the Central Hatchery, sans mother, sans uterus, sans umbilicus, sans blood).

Even during the most patriarchal of historical epochs, poets and artists have paid homage to the myth of the Mother Goddess. We find her throughout the history of poetry we find her anatomized in Robert Graves' description of the White Goddess:

The test of a poet's vision, one might say, is accuracy of his portrayal of the White Goddess and of the island over which she rules. The reason why the hair stands on end, the eyes water, the throat is constricted, the skin crawls and a shiver runs down the spine when one writes or reads a true poem is that a true poem is necessarily an invocation of the White Goddess, or Muse, the Mother of All Living, the ancient power of fright, and lust–the female spider or queen-bee whose embrace is death.

She is the fairy child–woman in Keat's, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and she is also the modern housewife as witch in Anne Sexton's haunting poem, "Her Kind."

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE
"Like all primal symbols, the witch partakes of a terryfying duality-in some fairy tales she is young and alluring; in others, hag-like and old. These are the two faces of Mother as children see her."

Her Kind
I have gone out, a possessed witch,
haunting the black air, braver
at night;
dreaming evil, I have done my hitch
over the plain houses, light by light;
lovely thing, twelve-fingered, out
of mind.
A woman like that is not a woman,
quite.
I have been kind to her.

I have found the warm caves in
the woods,
filled them with skillets,
carvings, shelves,
closets, silks,
innumerable goods;
fixed with the suppers for
the worms and the elves;
whining, rearranging
the disaligned.
A woman like that is
misunderstood.
I have been kind to her.

I have ridden in your
cart, driver,
waved my nude arms at
villages going by,
learning the last bright
routes, survivor
where your flames shall
bite my thigh
and my ribs crack where
your wheels wind.
A woman like that is not
ashamed to die.
I have been kind to her.

We find her transformed into a Christian goddess in the Virgin Mary, where she becomes woman of cleansed of genital sexuality, giving birth parthenogenically, and therefore pure (as sexual woman is, implicit, impure).

The amount of damage that has been done to women by the assumption that their sexuality constitutes "impurity" is incalculable. Even today, we all labor (both literally and figuratively) under the legacy of this assumption. The current battle over whether women should control their own reproduction–the so-called, but misnamed, Right-to-Life Movement–partakes of this assumption of female

sexual sinfulness. In a more just world, there could be no doubt that those who bear and raise children should decide when and whether to have them. In fact the oppression of women (of which the history of witch-persecutions is only an aspect) owes largely to the need of men, by nature's own idiosyncrasies uncertain of their paternity, to keep women in thrall so as to legally possess their offspring.

For centuries the fear of being thought a witch was a powerful means of social control, a means of keeping assertive women in their places through sheer terror. When the witch-craze died out (in the late seventeenth, early eighteenth century), a new form of male patriarchal social control replaced it: the ideal of romantic love. For truly there is nothing to compel a woman to grant a man paternity of her child except the love, the identification, and the submission she voluntarily cedes to him. Without romantic love, without the lush romantic feelings implied in the simple phrase, "father of my child," there would be no way for men to surely know their offspring as their own–and no way, therefore, for them to hold women hostage through their children.

When patriarchy was at its most virulent, the threat of the accusation of sorcery–which could mean immediate torture and burning–kept women healers and herbalists in their places (well below the male medical establishment), and it also kept powerful women from asserting their power too overtly. Women who transgressed these rules often met sorry fates. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake for her unparalleled service to her country. Dame Alice Kyteler, the fourteenth-century Irish heiress accused of witchcraft, fled to England, leaving her lands and wealth behind. It seems clear that the very threat of the accusation of witchcraft was used for centuries to keep women "properly" submissive and fearful. Though most of the punished "witches" were neither propertied nor powerful, the constant reminder of what patriarchal power could do to uppity, solitary, or rebellious women must have gone a long way toward keeping the mass of women in their place. Obviously the idea of the witch exercised a form of social constraint. The apparent randomness of the accusation, together with the ferocity with which punishment could strike, doubtless helped to intimidate many women.

> "Witchcraft, served many purposes... a way of intimating women, a way of keeping health care in the hands of upper-class males, and a way of preserving ecclesiastical power in times of social unrest."

Witchcraft, then, served many purposes. It was a way of projecting the evils of society outward and seeming to expunge them, a way of intimating women, a way of keeping health care in the hands of upper-class males, and a way of preserving ecclesiastical power in times of social unrest. Whether it had originally represented an ancient fertility cult or not, it came in time to have so many other secondary uses that society could hardly get by without it.

What do we have to take its place?

This is an important question because we would be wrong to assume that the attitudes that created the witch-hunts of the past are now safely behind us. Women's sexuality is still seen as a legitimate political battleground (while men's sexuality, obviously, is not). If legislators see no wrong in decreeing that poor women cannot control their own reproduction (I refer, of course, to the federal government's refusal to allow Medicaid abortions) we still have a society in which women's bodies are not beyond the reach of the state's awesome powers. While we no longer apply thumbscrews, we are still torturing women in very physical ways. Now, we torture them more selectively. Should the Right-to-Lifers prevail, poor women will once again suffer kitchen-table abortions, while the rich will pay fancy doctors (or fly to countries where abortions are legal). But the basic *principle*–that a woman's body belongs to the state–will go unchallenged.

The witch is important in understanding this current problem because the witch embodies all the female archetypes our culture is heir to. She is at once Mother-Goddess, and Moon-Goddess, Muse, Goddess of Earth and soil and fecundity, as well as woman as controller of her own reproductive destiny and as healer. As long as we see woman's unparalleled life-giving powers as sinful, evil, and needful of legislative intervention, we will be in danger of renewed witch-hunts–witch-hunts in the illegal abortionist's office, witch-hunts that will doom generations of women and children to grinding poverty and hopelessness.

What a falling off there has been from the witch's great, great, great ancestress, the Mother Goddess, embodied in Isis, Astarte, Ishtar, Inanna, and Aphrodite! In these ancient goddesses all the positive side of womanliness was expressed: her connection with the psychic world, with healing, with birthing, with bringing forth the fruits of the earth, with the life-giving energies healthy sexuality releases. That we have demoted this great goddess to a warty old crone only bespeaks our society's terror of women. It also bespeaks our terror of aging–more terrifying, as usual, in women than in men.

As an antidote to nine Christian centuries of brainwashing about woman's sexual sinfulness, we should go back and look at the great Mother Goddess as the ancients saw her. She was the life-giver, CONTINUED ON PAGE 110

GERMAN VOFUE: LUIGI & IANGO

Present

Online audio features transcribed into text, giving meaningful and diverse stories a space to be heard in their own voice.

The Danger of the Single Story

So, that is how to create a single story,
show a people as one thing, as only one thing,
over and over again, and that is what they become.

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

OPEN COUNTRY MAG / X

I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story."

I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was. And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story.

What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify.

Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books. But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for Fide's family.

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia that his brother had made. I was startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them.

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen

NKALI
A noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

to what she called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey. She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.

What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.

I must say that before I went to the U.S., I didn't consciously identify as African. But in the U.S., whenever Africa came up, people turned to me. Never mind that I knew nothing about places like Namibia.

But I did come to embrace this new identity, and in many ways I think of myself now as African. Although I still get quite irritable when Africa is referred to as a country, the most recent example being my otherwise wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."

So, after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family.

This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Lok, who sailed to West Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."

Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Lok. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West: A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."

And so, I began to realize that my American roommate must have, throughout her life, seen and heard different versions of this single story, as had a professor, who once told me that my novel was not "authentically African." Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places, but I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact, I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time was tense, and there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleecing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then, I was overwhelmed with shame. I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself.

So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

I recently spoke at a university where a student told me that it was such a shame that Nigerian men were physical abusers like the father character in my novel. I told him that I had just read a novel called "American Psycho" and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers.

Now, obviously, I said this in a fit of mild irritation. But it would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans. This is not because I am a better person than that student, but because of America's cultural and economic power. I had many stories of America. I had read Tyler and Updike and Steinbeck and Gaitskill. I did not have a single story of America.

When I learned, some years ago, that writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful, I began to think about how I could invent horrible things my parents had done to me. But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.

But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polle died because he could not get adequate healthcare. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our fire trucks did not have water. I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my par-

STORIES AS POWER
Because of America's cultural and economic power. I had many stories of America.

NO CREDIT AVAILABLE

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ / VOGUE MARCH 2025

DANGER OF THE SINGLE STORY
I told him I had just read a novel called "American Psycho" and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers.

ents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then marg rine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.

All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes: There are immense ones, such as the horrific rapes in Congo and depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

So what if before my Mexican trip, I had followed the immigration debate from both sides, the U.S. and the Mexican? What if my mother had told us that Fide's family was poor and hardworking? What if we had an African television network that broadcast diverse African stories all over the world? What the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe calls "a balance of stories."

What if my roommate knew about my Nigerian publisher, Muhtar Bakare, a remarkable man who left his job in a bank to follow his dream and start a publishing house? Now, the conventional wisdom was that Nigerians don't read literature. He disagreed. He felt that people who could read, would read, if you made literature affordable and available to them.

Shortly after he published my first novel, I went to a TV station in Lagos to do an interview, and a woman who worked there as a messenger came up to me and said, "I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now, you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen..."

And she went on to tell me what to write in the sequel. I was not only charmed, I was very moved. Here was a woman, part of the ordinary masses of Nigerians, who were not supposed to be readers. She had not only read the book, but she had taken ownership of it and felt justified in telling me what to write in the sequel.

Now, what if my roommate knew about my friend Funmi Iyanda, a fearless woman who hosts a TV show in Lagos, and is determined to tell the stories that we prefer to forget? What if my roommate knew about the heart procedure that was performed in the Lagos hospital last week? What if my roommate knew about contemporary Nigerian music, talented people singing in English and Pidgin, and Igbo and Yoruba and Ijo, mixing influences from Jay-Z to Fela to Bob Marley to their grandfathers.

> "When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."

What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports? What if my roommate knew about Nollywood, full of innovative people making films despite great technical odds, films so popular that they really are the best example of Nigerians consuming what they produce? What if my roommate knew about my wonderfully ambitious hair braider, who has just started her own business selling hair extensions? Or about the millions of other Nigerians who start businesses and sometimes fail, but continue to nurse ambition?

Every time I am home I am confronted with the usual sources of irritation for most Nigerians: our failed infrastructure, our failed government, but also by the incredible resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it. I teach writing workshops in Lagos every summer, and it is amazing to me how many people apply, how many people are eager to write, to tell stories.

My Nigerian publisher and I have just started a non-profit called Farafina Trust, and we have big dreams of building libraries and refurbishing libraries that already exist and providing books for state schools that don't have anything in their libraries, and also of organizing lots and lots of workshops, in reading and writing, for all the people who are eager to tell our many stories.

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her Southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the Southern life that they had left behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained."

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

Thank you.

UNSPLASH

MY STROKE OF INSIGHT

AS NEUROANATOMIST JILL BOLTE TAYLOR REALISED SHE WAS HAVING A STORKE SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE SHE GOT TO EXAMINE HER BRAIN FROM THE INSIDE OUT. BY JILL BOLTE TAYLOR.

I grew up to study the brain because I have a brother who has been diagnosed with a brain disorder, schizophrenia. And as a sister and later, as a scientist, I wanted to understand, why is it that I can take my dreams, I can connect them to my reality, and I can make my dreams come true? What is it about my brother's brain and his schizophrenia that he cannot connect his dreams to a common and shared reality, so they instead become delusion?

So, I dedicated my career to research into the severe mental illnesses.

BLURRED LINES
In the course of four hours, I watched my brain completely deterrioate in its ability to process information.

And I moved from my home state of Indiana to Boston, where I was working in the lab of Dr. Francine Benes, in the Harvard Department of Psychiatry. And in the lab, we were asking the question, "What are the biological differences between the brains of individuals who would be diagnosed as normal control, as compared with the brains of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, schizoaffective or bipolar disorder?"

So, we were essentially mapping the microcircuitry of the brain: which cells are communicating with which cells, with which chemicals, and then in what quantities of those chemicals.

So, there was a lot of meaning in my life because I was performing this type of research during the day, but

then in the evenings and on the weekends, I travelled as an advocate for NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. But on the morning of December 10, 1996, I woke up to discover that I had a brain disorder of my own. A blood vessel exploded in the left half of my brain. And in the course of four hours, I watched my brain completely deteriorate in its ability to process all information. On the morning of the haemorrhage, I could not walk, talk, read, write or recall any of my life. I essentially became an infant in a woman's body. If you've ever seen a human brain, it's obvious that the two hemispheres are completely separate from one another. And I have brought for you a real human brain.

(Groaning, laughter)

So, this is a real human brain. This is the front of the brain, the back of brain with the spinal cord hanging down, and this is how it would be positioned inside of my head. And when you look at the brain, it's obvious that the two cerebral cortices are completely separate from one another. For those of you who understand computers, our right hemisphere functions like a parallel processor, while our left hemisphere functions like a serial processor. The two hemispheres do communicate with one another through the corpus callosum, which is made up of some 300 million axonal fibres. But other than that, the two hemispheres are completely separate. Because they process information differently, each of our hemispheres think about different things, they care about different things, and, dare I say, they have very different personalities. *Excuse me. Thank you. It's been a joy. Assistant: It has been.* (Laughter)

Our right human hemisphere is all about this present moment. It's all about "right here, right now." Our right hemisphere, it thinks in pictures and it learns kinaesthetically through the movement of our bodies. Information, in the form of energy, streams in simultaneously through all of our sensory systems and then it explodes into this enormous collage of what this present moment looks like, what this present moment smells like and tastes like, what it feels like and what it sounds like. I am an energy-being connected to the energy all around me through the consciousness of my right hemisphere. We are energy-beings connected to one another through the consciousness of our right hemispheres as one human family. And right here, right now, we are brothers and sisters on this planet, here to make the world a better place. And in this moment we are perfect, we are whole and we are beautiful.

My left hemisphere, our left hemisphere, is a very different place. Our left hemisphere thinks linearly and methodically. Our left hemisphere is all about the past and it's all about the future. Our left hemisphere is designed to take that enormous collage of the present moment and start picking out details, and more details about those details. It then categorizes and organizes all that information, associates it with everything in the past we've ever learned, and projects into the future all of our possibilities. And our left hemisphere thinks in language. It's that ongoing brain chatter that connects me and my internal world to my external world. It's that little voice that says to me, "Hey, you've got to remember to pick up bananas on your way home. I need them in the morning." It's that calculating intelligence that reminds me when I have to do my laundry. But perhaps most important, it's that little voice that says to me, "I am. I am."

And as soon as my left hemisphere says to me "I am," I become separate. I become a single solid individual, separate from the energy flow around me and separate from you.

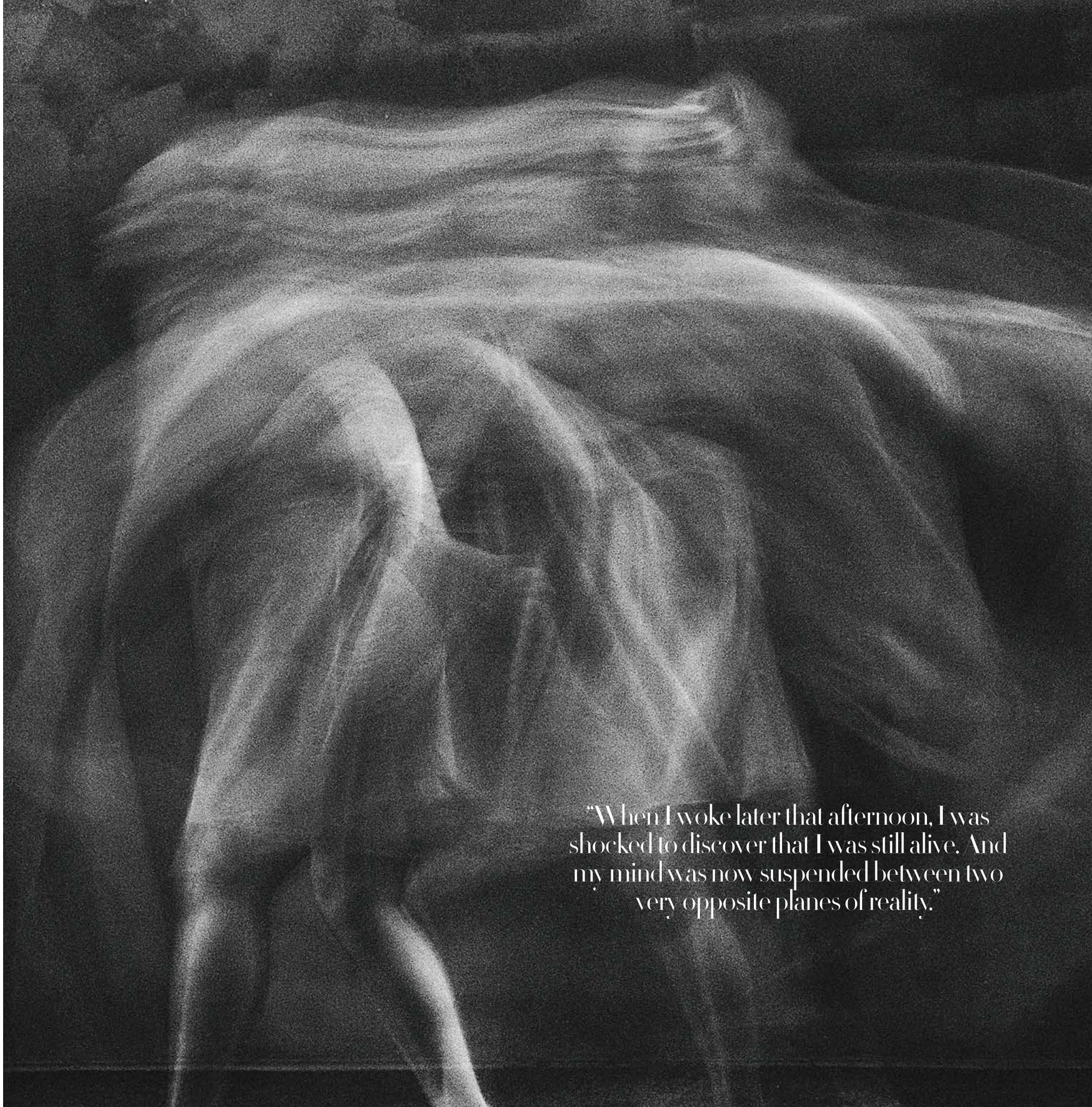
And this was the portion of my brain that I lost on the morning of my stroke.

On the morning of the stroke, I woke up to a pounding pain behind my left eye. And it was the kind of caustic pain that you get when you bite into ice cream.

And it just gripped me --
and then it released me.
And then it just gripped me --
and then it released me.

And it was very unusual for me to ever experience any kind of pain, so I

HEMISPHERE
Our right human hemisphere is all about this present moment. It's all about "right here, right now."



"When I woke later that afternoon, I was shocked to discover that I was still alive. And my mind was now suspended between two very opposite planes of reality."

"Or, I can choose to step into the consciousness of my left hemisphere, where I become a single individual, a solid."

thought, "OK, I'll just start my normal routine."

So, I got up and I jumped onto my cardio glider, which is a full-body, full-exercise machine. And I'm jamming away on this thing, and I'm realizing that my hands look like primitive claws grasping onto the bar. And I thought, "That's very peculiar." And I looked down at my body and I thought, "Whoa, I'm a weird-looking thing." And it was as though my consciousness had shifted away from my normal perception of reality, where I'm the person on the machine having the experience, to some esoteric space where I'm witnessing myself having this experience. And it was all very peculiar, and my headache was just getting worse.

So, I get off the machine, and I'm walking across my living room floor, and I realize that everything inside of my body has slowed way down. And every step is very rigid and very deliberate. There's no fluidity to my pace, and there's this constriction in my area of perception, so I'm just focused on internal systems. And I'm standing in my bathroom getting ready to step into the shower, and I could actually hear the dialogue inside of my body. I heard a little voice saying, "OK. You muscles, you've got to contract. You muscles, you relax." And then I lost my balance, and I'm propped up against the wall. And I look down at my arm and I realize that I can no longer define the boundaries of my body. I can't define where I begin and where I end, because the atoms and the molecules of my arm blended with the atoms and molecules of the wall. And all I could detect was this energy —energy. And I'm asking myself, "What is wrong with me? What is going on?" And in that moment, my left hemisphere brain chatter went totally silent. Just like someone took a remote control and pushed the mute button.

Total silence. And at first I was shocked to find myself inside of a silent mind. But then I was immediately captivated by the magnificence of the energy around me.

HEMISPHERE
Our left hemisphere thinks linearly and methodically. Our left hemisphere is all about the past and it's all about the future.

And because I could no longer identify the boundaries of my body, I felt enormous and expansive. I felt at one with all the energy that was, and it was beautiful there. Then all of a sudden my left hemisphere comes back online and it says to me, "Hey! We've got a problem! We've got to get some help." And I'm going, "Ahh! I've got a problem!" (Laughter)

So, it's like, "OK, I've got a problem." But then I immediately drifted right back out into the consciousness – and I affectionately refer to this space as La La Land.

But it was beautiful there. Imagine what it would be like to be totally disconnected from your brain chatter that connects you to the external world.

So here I am in this space, and my job, and any stress related to my job – it was gone. And I felt lighter in my body. And imagine all of the relationships in the external world and any stressors related to any of those – they were gone. And I felt this sense of peacefulness. And imagine what it would feel like to lose 37 years of emotional baggage! (Laughter) Oh! I felt euphoria – euphoria. It was beautiful. And again, my left hemisphere comes online and it says, "Hey! You've got to pay attention. We've got to get help." And I'm thinking, "I've got to get help. I've got to focus."

So I get out of the shower and I mechanically dress and I'm walking around my apartment, and I'm thinking, "I've got to get to work. Can I drive?" And in that moment, my right arm went totally paralyzed by my side. Then I realized, "Oh my gosh! I'm having a stroke!" And the next thing my brain says to me is, Wow! This is so cool! (Laughter) This is so cool! How many brain scientists have the opportunity to study their own brain from the inside out?" (Laughter) And then it crosses my mind, "But I'm a very busy woman!"(Laughter) "I don't have time for a stroke!"

So, I'm like, "OK, I can't stop the stroke from happening, so I'll do this for a week or two, and then I'll get back to my routine. OK. So, I've got to call help. I've got to call work." I couldn't CONTINUED ON PAGE 110

Innate Goodness?

"So I ... got popcorn, got Diet Coke, got M&Ms. I get to my seat. I'm feeling good, and within a few minutes it dawns on me that your movie is about assisted suicide."

By David Marchese.

NEW YORK TIMES / DEVIN OKTAR YALKIN

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Unexpected, even uncanny, connections sometimes arise in this job. An interviewee might, for example, raise an idea that chimes with something I've long been thinking about. Or I'll find while doing research that someone's work illuminates a problem I'd been dealing with. Two such surprises occurred with this week's subject, the Academy Award-winning actress Tilda Swinton. Both shaped my feeling about the ensuing conversation, though in very different ways.

The first: In a book of sketches and musings by the British writer John Berger called "Bento's Sketchbook," one drawing has always mesmerized me. It's of an androgynous face with almond-shaped, almost alien eyes, and it exudes a deeply human compassion. That sketch is labeled, simply, "Tilda," and I hadn't much thought about upon whom it was based. Until, that is, when in preparation for my interview with Swinton, I watched a documentary she co-directed about Berger. In it, she mentions "Bento's Sketchbook" — and a lightbulb went on. I'd long admired that sketch and Swinton's daring, shape-shifting acting — in her avant-garde films with her mentor and friend Derek Jarman, her indie collaborations with directors like Bong Joon Ho and Wes Anderson and her Hollywood triumphs like "Michael Clayton" and the "Chronicles of Narnia" trilogy — but I'd never put together that I'd been entranced by the same person, the same presence, the whole time. I couldn't help taking that as a good omen for the interview.

The second connection was harder to interpret. Readers of this column may remember that my last Q&A was with a doctor about medical aid in dying — a subject with which I've had recent personal experience. Swinton's upcoming film, "The Room Next Door," directed by the great Pedro Almodóvar and opening in select theaters on Dec. 20, is about — and I swear I didn't know this ahead of time — a distressingly similar topic. In the movie, Swinton plays a woman named Martha, who asks her friend Ingrid, played by Julianne Moore, to support her decision to die by suicide after becoming terminally ill. I would have felt disingenuous not to be open about this coincidence with Swinton, but I also wasn't exactly eager to explore it. She, as it turns out, felt otherwise.

"The Room Next Door" is based on a novel by Sigrid Nunez, "What Are You Going Through," which takes its title from a quote by the French philosopher Simone Weil: "The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say to him, what are you going through?" So what are you going through? I'm enjoying right now the attention to that question, and the fact that our film puts that question into the air. The idea of bearing witness, and the question of what is friendship, but even more than friendship, what is it to coexist? What is it to not look away? I think of it actually as a political film.

I have questions about that, but I want to preface them by sharing what I hope is a morbidly humorous anecdote. Sounds good!

The last interview I did was with a doctor in Canada who helps people die. The occasion of doing that interview was my mother's having gone through that process earlier this year. So it was heavy for me. Then the opportunity arose to interview you, and I thought: I love Tilda Swinton's movies; I love the exuberance of Almodóvar's work. This will be great. It'll be a laugh.

So I went to the screening. Got popcorn, got Diet Coke, got M&Ms. I get to my seat. I'm feeling good, and within a few minutes it dawns on me that your movie is about assisted suicide. Thanks. Welcome! I have to ask you, how did you feel at the end when you stood up and there were

TILDA SWINTON
"I think the superpower that art has is this distance it affords us, this capacity to be still and to allow resonances to arise from inside."

VOGUE.CO.UK / NIKOLAI VON BISMARCK 2021

IN CONTROL
Film still from *Limits of Control*. A 2009 film where Tilda played Blonde, a woman passing through the life of the Lone Man whom she engages in philosophical discussions about film and life.

M&Ms all around your feet and you had a sugar-rush headache? Because what you've described is quite a banquet of experience: your experience with your mother, your experience with this doctor and then to see a piece of art that's swimming in the same material.

I was not jazzed to revisit my emotions. But I felt glad that the subject was being treated in an emotionally truthful way, and I did feel some catharsis. How does that ring for you? I'm pleased to hear that. The reason I ask the question is that I'm thinking of what you just said: To come to a piece of art having been through the real lived experience with your mother is particularly piquant. Which we can unpack if we want to.

I'm sure readers have had enough of me being upset about my mother. I'll move on. Here's the thing, David: Moving on is, in many ways, grossly overrated.

***You've* gone through experiences similar to the one depicted in the film: being with people near the end. Can you tell me about that?** Yes, it's an enormous part of what I want to talk to you about. I have spent much of the last 15 years in the Ingrid position, the person that Julianne Moore plays: to both of my parents, to the father of my children and many other friends. But it's something that has been in my lived experience since I was quite a young person. Derek Jarman was the first person I knew very closely and lived alongside tightly who got very ill. First with H.I.V. in 1988, 1989, and then died in '94. He was the first person that I met who was looking down the barrel and did not look away. I always feel that mortality and immortality are basically the same thing, but what Derek modeled for me was something that has influenced my perspective on the whole charade. There was a sort of exhilaration for him to have the limit of his life made clear. He drove into the curve and he became sort of enlivened. What I witnessed was someone who made his dying *alive*.

Mortality and immortality, for you, are the same thing? None of us are getting out of here alive. It's so banal to have to say this, but one does have to say it, because there's so much denial around it. I've heard so many people who are living with a cancer that is going to take them away say that there is a vernacular around battle terminology: You're a winner or you're a loser. It's all about fighting. It's such a red herring, that attitude, because it brings with it the concept that we might win.

It's also as if somebody who "loses" didn't fight hard enough. Which is an insult. But more than an insult — I agree with you it's an insult — it's a waste. Because that's not the point of being alive. The point of being alive is that we know it's limited, and there's no magic, no rabbit up your sleeve that you can pull. I remember when I was beside my mother when she was dying. I found that borderline traumatic. The fact that there was nothing that could be done. I remember sitting there thinking, Is there no mortality police we can call?

To stop it from happening? Just, like, this is barbaric, this death thing. Surely this is not right. I remember feeling that with childbirth as well: This is medieval — pre-medieval — torture. Can't we have fixed it by now, this brutality?

I've read you refer to feeling like a "foundling" as a child. I know you grew up in an aristocratic Scottish military family that could trace its ancestry back a thousand years. Why did you feel displaced? It's so wonderful that you recount that back to me, David, because in the last few years, I have realized that was a complete ruse. I was systematically misled.

Misled about what? About being an artist among such beings. I've realized since my parents died that there are artists scattered through my family. My great-grandmother was a singer who had a salon with Gabriel Fauré in London. She was a great singer of lieder in drawing rooms around Europe. She was a muse of John Singer Sargent. Her artistic eminence was underplayed by my parents, who were not artists, and I don't think they quite understood it. They were, I think they'd forgive me for saying, rather frightened of artists.

Initially you wanted to be a writer. From a young age you were writing poetry, and people were reading you. Then you got to Cambridge, intending to be a writer, and you stopped writing. What happened? It wasn't that I wanted to be a writer; I was a writer. To a certain extent, David, and I have the nerve to say this to you, I still am. I find it difficult to describe myself as anything else. I certainly find it difficult to describe myself as an actor. For what it's worth, and it's worth a lot when you're young, I won poetry competitions, and that's why I wanted to go to university. I got my place, I'm embarrassed to say, at Cambridge, as a writer.

What was your poetry about? It was about nature, mainly. There was one, which was about a swan that I found on the river at home. That won, again it's embarrassing to say, a poetry prize. I was quite a solitary child, and my writing was my company. It's important that I stress that, because when I stopped writing — you ask why, we could have a whole master class on that.

> "Long live the opportunity to assemble freely and to protest, especially as a young person and especially as a young artist."

But why? Well, I could blame somebody. I could blame the program for inundating me with too much. I'm not going to blame somebody! That's silly. I clearly didn't have the confidence to hold my flame in that headwind of other voices. When I got to Cambridge, there was a lot of teaching, and there was a barrage of amazing noise, but I was like a tortoise: I just put my head in. And then I met friends. They just happened to be writers, but they were writing plays, and they said, "Come and be a part of this society." So I started being in the plays to hang out with them. I was a performer by default, and very much led by the company, and that's, frankly, all she wrote.

You know, when "The Room Next Door" was shown at the New York Film Festival, there was a post-screening talk interrupted by pro-Palestinian protesters. You, gracefully in the moment, said in response that the protests were — I'm paraphrasing — uncomfortable but necessary and also relevant to the film, because Syria, Beirut and Gaza represent "the room next door," and the film is asking people to be in that room and not look away. Is it your hope that people would have political connections spurred by seeing the film? I would like to make clear that I did include in that list of places Moscow and Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. When it was reported afterward the names of those places were not mentioned. We have to be careful about that, because if I was making a point at all, the point I was making is that we are absolutely in the room next door to everyone all the time. And it was a very interesting moment, because those people who came to make a statement in that room, I believe, dignified that room. And it was of interest to me that Pedro [Almodóvar] and I, as Europeans, immediately offered them our microphones. That was apparently remarkable. It's something to do with the fact that we're brought up in unarmed societies. I talked to my American friends afterward, and it never occurred to me that somebody coming in with a banner might be armed. But that's my privilege. Also, the idea of being frightened of free speech is something we have to take on. It's also true, by the way, we didn't hear what they wanted to say very well because they were masked. I would say to them, next time don't mask yourselves. Say it clearly and own that presence, that statement, that gesture.

This is a question I don't know that I would have asked before Nov. 5 and Donald Trump's election: You cut your teeth as an artist in the mid-80s, late '80s, working with Derek Jarman making avant-garde queer cinema in Margaret Thatcher's England — an extremely conservative time in that country. Is there anything you learned about being an artist in that cultural and political atmosphere that feels useful to you in this moment, when right-wing politics are again dominant? Yes. I left London in 1997 when my children were born and went to live in the north of Scotland. I never went back to London for years. But I happened to be there last autumn for a few weeks, and it was interesting, because both of my children at the time were living in London, and they were both 26, which was an age I was in London. So I was awash with nostalgia, and I was constantly making plans to meet up with my children, and I realized that every Saturday they were marching. And it struck me so deeply that that's what I was doing when I was 26. Every Saturday we were marching for one thing or another, whether it was against the Iraq war, whether it was against Section 28, which was the repressive bill.

Basically a homophobic bill. We campaigned long and hard against that. We were constantly in Trafalgar Square, and my children were, too. There was something in me that was grateful that they have this experience. Long live the opportunity to assemble freely and to protest, especially as a young person and especially as a young artist.

Taylor Russell
Photographed by David Sims

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But my question is more about the potential efficacy of art when it comes to protest and moving people's politics. How much effect do you think art can have in that regard? Well, that brings me back to a question I asked you at the beginning of our conversation when you explained that you'd had these three experiences with the concept of death with dignity: the experience with your mother, the conversation with the doctor and then seeing a piece of art. I asked you a question, and we went up another alley. I'm asking it again: In terms of those three experiences, what did the art manage to do for you?

There are feelings I have, and to see them reflected in the art or even tested against the art sort of tempers them with a flame. I walk away with the feelings more deeply held. But I've become skeptical that film or music or literature can do more than galvanize — that they can actually *change* feelings or precipitate a political idea that was not held in a person before. What's your response to that? I suggest that art offers us an opportunity to be quiet and still and to allow, in that stillness, for a connection to form. So for example, sorry to use the example of your triptych of experiences around this material.

Please. Your experience with your mother, not to be reductive, was lived. I don't want to take any liberties here, but it's such a car crash, that experience. One's so in it, and one doesn't know what one's doing, but it's happening and you're just staying alive and surviving it. I'm sorry if that doesn't sound representative.

> "...it's a great palette cleanser... to go through a traumatic experience, to see it played out in the safe environment of a movie theatre in the dark with strangers."

I would say a slow-motion car crash. Slow-motion car crash. It's so true. But point being, there's nothing you can do. The actual lived experience is an encounter with helplessness and trying to survive it. How can I bear this helplessness? Then you do. And then your conversation with the doctor, I imagine, was intellectually stimulating. You were talking about ideas. And when you're sitting in the dark and watching a film, here is an opportunity for you to look on something being played out in front of you. There's levels of distance which are soothing to the nervous system. You're able to observe, rather like in a meditation state. I think the superpower that art has is this distance it affords us, this capacity to be still and to allow resonances to arise from inside. And in the instance of your triptych experience, it's a great palate cleanser: to go through a traumatic experience, to see it played out in the safe environment of a movie theater in the dark with strangers.

I don't mean to belabor this — I'm probably just a grouch — but I used to really feel as if consuming art was sufficient when it came to forming a political identity and political engagement. Now I think I should have spent more time and energy out in the street and less time and energy in the theater or with headphones on. I'm rambling, but these are things I've been thinking about. I'm liking everything you're saying, and I'm surfing the wave of it. It's not a ramble at all. The real question is: Who are we and how must we live? I don't necessarily want to designate one thing as political activism and another as artistic practice and another as living your life. For me, there ain't no walls between any of them. Does that explain the attitude?

The life came first. The life always comes first, and the work comes out of the life. Here's another thing that I wanted to say: I was thinking about what we were talking about a beat before, about this resonance in the theater, that place of witness. This is a huge thing, this is a bombshell I'm going to lay down.

Go for it. The thing I want to talk about is people's innate goodness. I wonder whether art isn't a call to our innate goodness — an opportunity to connect with the empathy machine that cinema is. That M&M, Diet Coke place in the dark is an invitation to step into other people's shoes. It's such a massive gesture of agape, isn't it? I wonder — I'm seeing you and raising you — about people's innate goodness. Since you mentioned Nov. 5, and we've talked about the rise of the meanness of right-wing politics — let's use a word that is appropriate here: meanness. What oil might get through that grease? How might one be able to reconnect with the innate goodness? I don't want to assume that anybody else believes in innate goodness, but I'm declaring that I do. I do believe we were all little children, scared little animals once, including all of those people that we're thinking about. I don't know what happened to them to make them this mean, but we have to contact them somehow.

You raised the idea that art might be a call to our innate goodness. I have a hard time buying that. But I would like to be disabused of my skepticism. I just think there is so much art, even great art, that speaks to the worst of humanity. Look at Leni Riefenstahl's films or the writing of Céline or a million other examples. I don't see these as having anything to do with innate goodness. Maybe you could say that art allows us to tell the truth about humanity and show it in all its dimensions, but that's not the same thing as goodness. Tell me I'm wrong. Can I just ask a question?

Of course. Why do you have a gag reflex about the idea of innate goodness?

Oh, I don't. I think love is innately good. Life is innately good. But I find myself increasingly skeptical about the idea of art as being inherently positive. If we accept that art can be positive, I don't understand how we could not accept that it can be negative. I think there's something a little naïvely optimistic about the idea of art as innately good. I want to move the goal posts a bit. Maybe I'm conflating truth-telling and innate goodness. Let's talk about Leni Riefenstahl. The fact that watching Leni Riefenstahl's work and finding oneself stirred by it on any level, that is an opportunity for us to notice in ourselves the stirrings and the dangers of those stirrings and to, as you say, truthfully learn about ourselves that we are susceptible. That capacity to be honest about our own susceptibility is, I'm stretching it now, a good thing. We might be enriched by that perspective — we might become stronger and more socially responsible if we're aware of our own vulnerabilities. Does that make any sense?

IN LOVE
Film still from *I Am Love*. A 2009 film where Tilda plays a Emma, a Russian who embarks on an affair causing tragedy in her family.

FIRST SUN/MIKADO FILM/RAI CINEMA/ ALBUM / UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP / / BRITANNICA IMAGEQUEST

It does make sense. You pointed to a meanness in the world, and suggested that the purveyors of that meanness were once vulnerable little children. Still are, whether they tell us or not.

So having awareness of the meanness in the world and that the people who are mean are vulnerable little children — that could elicit what productive response? I suppose it's about trying to not give up on the possibility of connection between people. There's this tendency in the far right to encourage us to give up on human connection and entirely be self-serving. How do we go into some kind of negotiation with that? Do we just give up? They would love us to give up on trying to reach some kind of agreement. We just have to find agreements now. I can tell you, and he may even read this, if I ever met your incoming president, there is something I would love to talk to him about, which is having a Scottish mother. That's something I can go toward him on.

What would you want to talk to him about? I want to hear about her. I'm very curious about her. Aren't you?

I'm extremely curious. I have to say, I think the odds of President Trump clicking on the Tilda Swinton interview are low. You do yourself down, David. I'm sure he's a fan of you.

Who knows? It struck me that the way you talk about your development as an artist, and even your life, makes it sound contingent. You fell in with people, you met these writers. But there has to have been real intention in your life. At the risk of sounding as if I'm pumping you for self-help, what advice might you have for how to increase the possibility that someone could get the life they want? I'll tell you a little something, and then we'll figure out why I want to tell you it: In the church where my family would go on Sundays, our family has a separate loft which sits above everybody else and looks down. I remember sitting up there one Sunday and seeing the people that I had been playing with the day before and asking my mother why were we sitting upstairs and weren't sitting downstairs. She could not come up with an answer. I noticed two things. First of all, my brothers didn't ask this question. I love them, they're sentient beings, but they did not ask that question. I was the only one. The other thing that I noticed since is that no one has ever come up with a good answer. The reason I tell you that story is that the quest for connection was always there in me. Connection is what I'm driven by, and I was lucky enough to notice it when I was sub-6. I can hold one idea, and that's my idea. So here's my answer to your question: Figuring out what your idea is, your factory setting, is probably a good place to start. Then, when you do find your original setting, honor it and enjoy the quest.

This interview has been edited and condensed from two conversations.

Future

Features from everyday people with stories and meaningful voices, equally worthy of time and space. The future of the past, and of the present.

Tears *of* Gold

Tears of Gold was an exhibition of photographer Hazel Thompson, documenting women affected by war and gender based violence around the world. Here a selection of her moving images of extraordinary women impacted by conflict.

By Hazel Thompson

PICTURE CREDIT

PICTURE CREDIT

SORELLA
Bangui, Central Africa Republic
Sorella is married with six children, growing up she never went to school as her parents were farmers. After Sorella's village in the Central African Republic was attacked by armed groups in 2014. She fled with her family to a refugee camp in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. They returned home two years later to find their house completely ransacked. It was at this time that Sorella met the Tearfund partner ACATBA who were running an adult learning programme and she started her journey of learning to read, write and count.

VICTORIA
Vilo, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Victoria is a member of a special choir brought together by the Tearfund partner Action Entraide. The choir writes and perform songs to communicate difficult and challenging issues effecting the community. They tour villages, singing songs to educate the local community about peace-building, gender violence and rape. Ituri province has been a conflict zone for over 21 years.

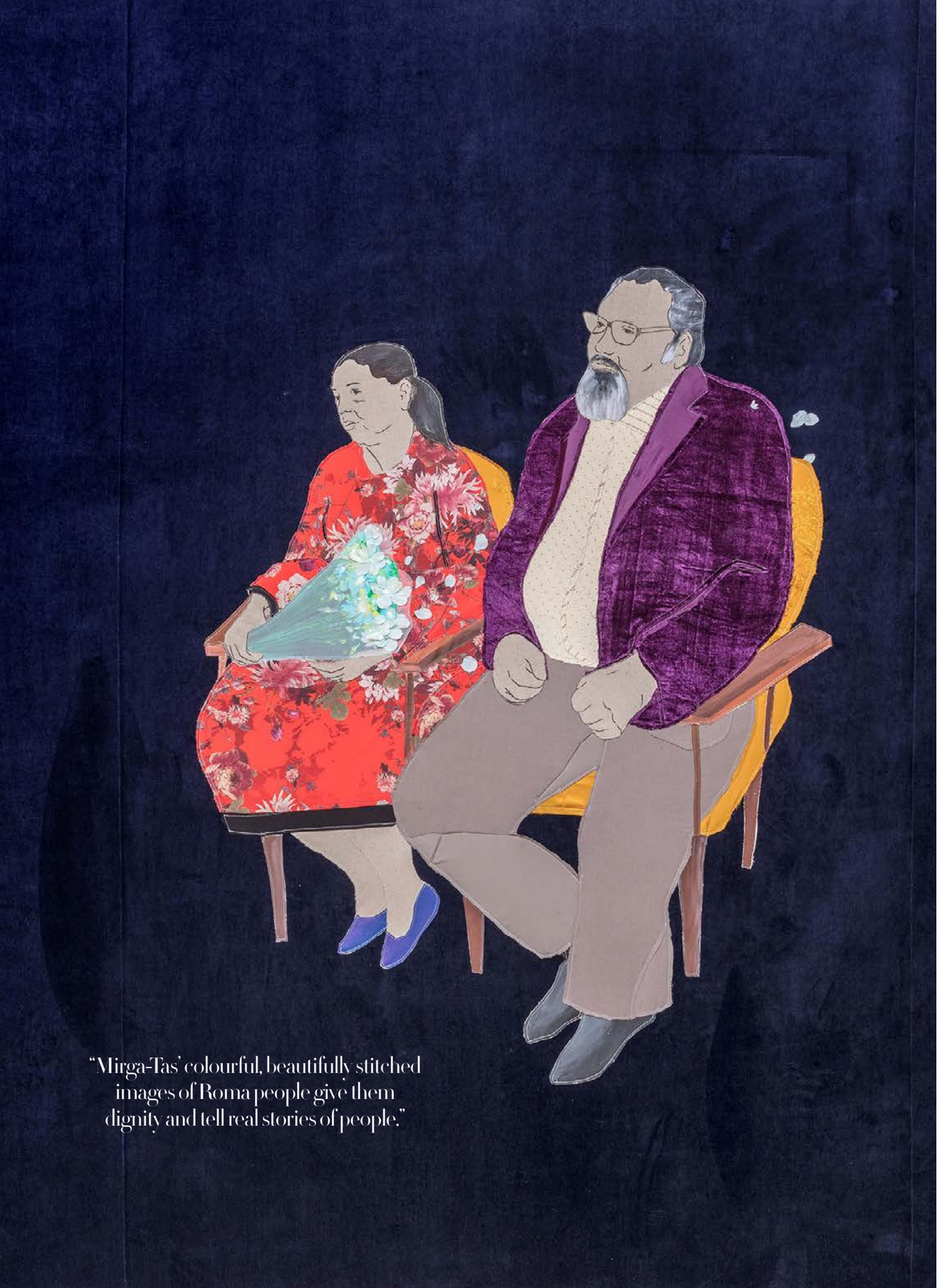
BRITA & AMELA
Dboji, Bosnia
"We all want to mean something to someone. That we are important to friends and family" Amela.

In 2009, Brita Fernandez Schmidt signed up to sponsor her first sister through the Women for Women International programme. They exchanged letters, including one where Amela Nurkanovic told Brita that she had bought tulip seeds and she planted them in her garden so she would always remember her.

REKHA
Kathmandu, Nepal
Rekha is from a small village in the valleys of western Nepal. At the tender age of 14, her adopted brother sold her to a brothel in Mumbai. After 5 years of being caged, Rekha was slowly allowed to start going on the street, as the Madam knew that now she was 'broken', she would not run away as she had no where to go. Rekha then became known to the local NGO workers who helped her escape sex slavery and rehabilitate her in their rescue home.

MONIC
Kigali, Rwanda
Monic once thought that there were other no options for women to better her life and family. At WfWI, she has learned about birth control, healthy eating, and hygiene, and was given the opportunity to thrive as a teacher of basket weaving. She has passed on this knowledge in her own children. Monic now feels capable, proud, and independent as a woman and member of her community.

In the aftermath of the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, over one million people lost their lives in a period of 100 days. An estimated 100,000-250,000 women were raped during the three months of genocide in Rwanda. Women accounted for around 70% of the population following the genocide, which led to a massive shift in the country's workforce. Today, Rwandan women hold 64% of governing roles.



"Mirga-Tas' colourful, beautifully stitched images of Roma people give them dignity and tell real stories of people."

MAŁGORZATA MIRGA-TAS

ZODIAC
This large scale composition dominated the room at Tate St Ives. One of twelve works the artist created to represent each zodiac sign. The guide described the people depicted here who played an important role in the artist's life and shaped her career including her mother and her professors (centre sitting on chairs). I like how she is showing the Romani woman as a Madonna with child giving her grandeur.

Art & Me

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas' art exhibition was an experience of connection and home, in an unexpected place. By Dominika Kubala.

Having spent more than half of my life in the UK after moving here from Poland I always find it very exciting to find Polish connections in British culture and history.

When I came across the art exhibition by Małgorzata Mirga-Tas in Tate St Ives, it made such a big impression on me and I felt I had to share my experience of it by bringing my family to see it and tell others about it.

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas is a Polish Roma artist from Czarna Góra in the south of Poland. She is a sculptor by training, but has predominantly been using fabric as her medium. Her art could be described as fabric collage which takes the form of a painting. She uses textiles belonging to people in her life and creates images of Roma people based on old photographs.

I connected with this exhibition on so many levels. First of all, I was proud to see an artist from Poland exhibit at Tate St. Ives. It was important for me to learn more about the Roma culture in Poland. It definitely brought my attention to the fact that this eth-

nic minority has been experiencing many challenges and has had to fight with the misrepresentation of their true identity. The art images from the past were often negative and stereotypical. Mirga-Tas' colourful, beautifully stitched images of Roma people give them dignity and tell real stories of people, often her family members, their vibrant culture and their lives through WWII and communism.

I remember the guide explaining how the artist compared the process of stitching the fabrics to the process of healing–stitching the wounds caused by their difficult experiences of racism and persecution.

Z CYKLU WYJŚCIE Z EGIPTU
OUT OF EGYPT
Some pictures were inspired by family photos but this one was based on a 17th century etching. I like how she gave this simple monochrome etching colour and energy.

The art and the stories behind it kept bringing me back to the Polish village my grandmother lived it, not far from where the artist lives. I used to spend summer holidays there. My grandmother lived in a wooden cottage built in the style typical to this area. She ran a small farm and was a seamstress. I spent many lazy summers there, pretty much disconnected from the world as she never owned a TV. She would cook traditional polish food including my favourite polish dumplings–'pierogi' with wild blueberries we collected in the woods. I also remember helping her bake traditional polish rye bread in a coal heated stove. We used to make butter,

"(The exhibition) brought back the memories of my childhood, the people and traditions which shaped me and the places I'm now rooted to."

MAŁGORZATA MIRGA-TAS

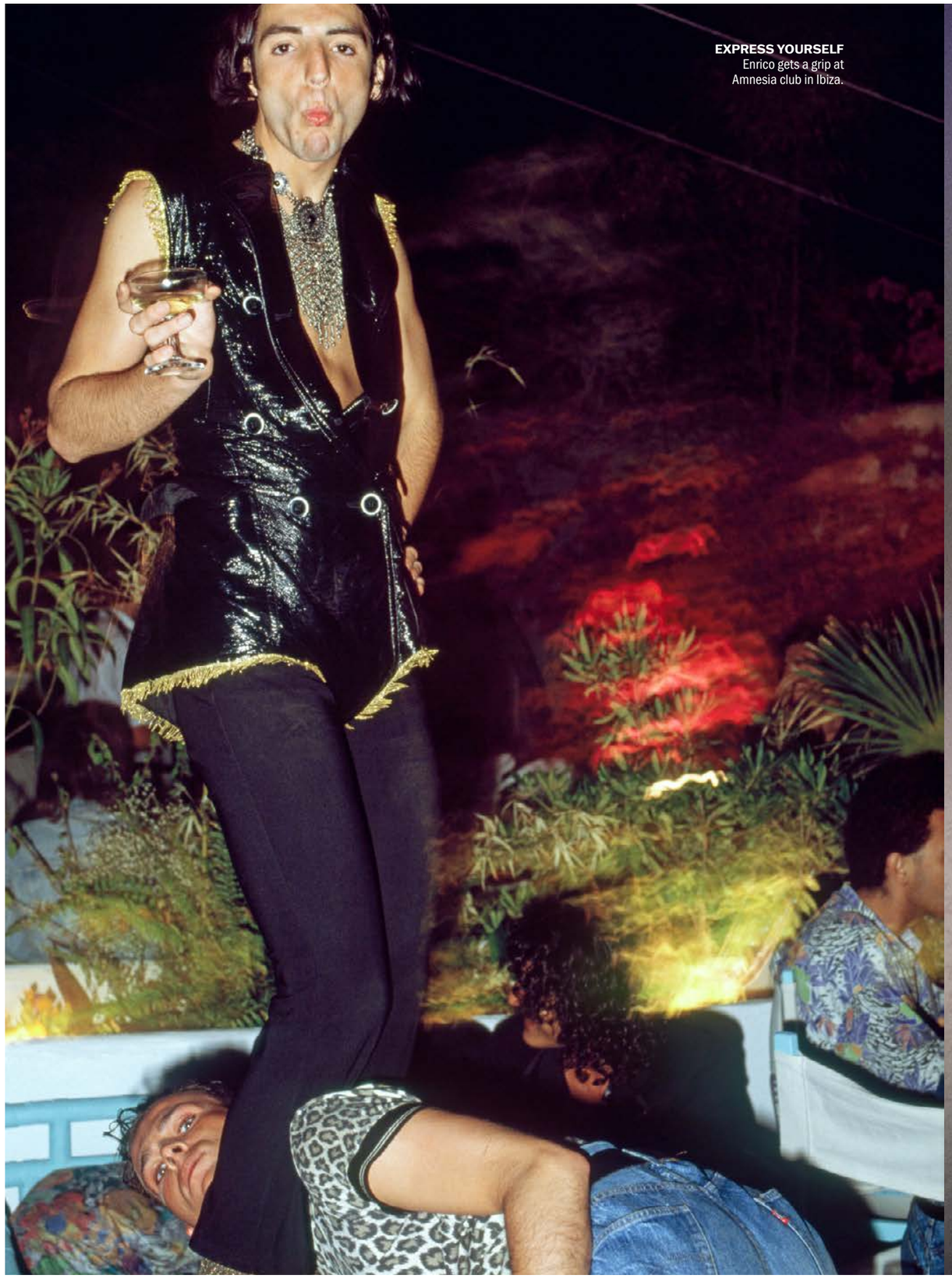
MAŁGORZATA MIRGA-TAS

WANDA
Above: Wanda spent her life looking for her daughter following their separation during WWII.

cheese and pickle fruit and vegetables. Her house was full of colourful fabrics and I found the sound her sewing machine very exciting as I knew she was creating something special. I would watch her cut the fabrics and get the old Singer sewing machine ready. I vividly remember the colourful *Burda* magazines she used to buy. You could get clothes design ideas from the magazine including sewing templates of dresses or tops. I would pick my favourite design and my grandmother would then recreate it in fabric for me. It was very exciting as we didn't have access to colourful modern fashion back then (being closed off from the West). That magazine sparked ideas, represented something aspirational and creative. Choosing designs and watching my grandmother sew created a lasting connection. I have kept one of the dresses and pillow cases she made for me to this day. It also gave me a interest in sewing. As a teenager I would sew my own clothes as l loved the creative process of doing it, and it gave me a way to express my individuality. Seeing the women sew together with the backdrop of a wooden house and a simple life connected to nature on Mirga-Tas' compositions, reminded me of my time with my grandmother and how her work brought us together. Noticing these details during the exhibition meant I was able to share my personal stories with the guide and other visitors.

THREE GRACES
Left: Showing three women including a transgender woman looking after a baby. It made me think of the Romani as an accepting and open community.

The guide asked me my feelings about the history of Roma people in the Polish culture and I was also able to help her to pronounce the Polish names of people and places in the artwork. The artist's name 'Małgorzata [mawgɔˈʐata]' is a polish version of Margaret. The names of towns and villages connected to the art: Zakopane [zah-koh-PAH-neh]—a town where the artist was born in the Tara mountains; Czarna Góra ['t͡ʂarna 'gura]—the village where she lives in the south of Poland, and Szaflary [ʂa'flarɨ]—the CONTINUED ON PAGE 111



EXPRESS YOURSELF
Enrico gets a grip at
Amnesia club in Ibiza.

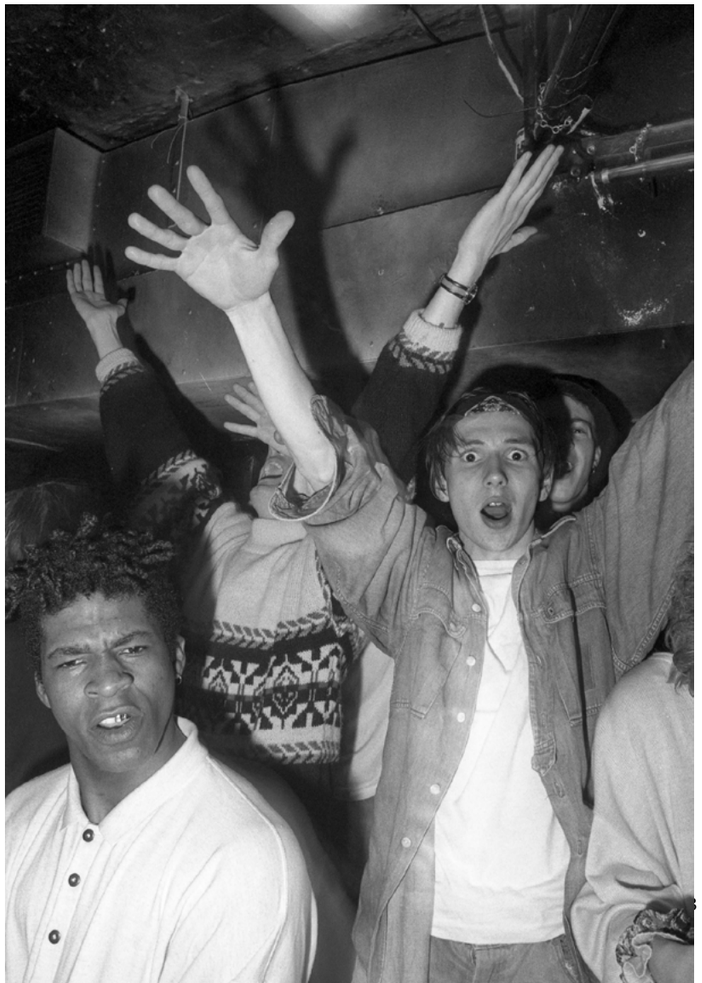
Lost in Music

Even when the lights are on and the party's over (almost), the music still plays on for the acid house generation.

By Tim Gibney.

LOVE IS THE ANSWER
What was the question?

RAVE ON
Clockwise from top left: Oh Boy, it's George on the dance floor at *Amnesia*. A moment of reflection at the pyramid mirror in *Amnesia*. Catching The Sun at *Café del Mar*, Ibiza. Hands up for Balearic beat at *Future* in London. On the floor at *Es Paradis* club, Ibiza.



DAVE SWINDELLS / IDEA

You never forget your first time.

Heartbeat pounding, anticipation off the scale and asking yourself 'how long will it last?'. At least that's how I remember my first rave. Not that we called it that at first back then. It was just a club, a shabby little one at that in south London but like no other we had ever set foot in.

A curious and intoxicating musical brew of house, quirky electronica and overlooked synth-pop, sounding more colourful, powerful, and meaningful than anything we had ever heard.

Heat intense, condensation dripping continuously from the ceiling and sweat soaking through your clothes as if you had just stepped out the shower. Taking turns to pray to the strobe light like it were the most natural thing in the world, as the DJ's sidekick happily pumped each of us with an icy blast from the smoke machine. Somebody shouted 'can you feel it?'. We could.

Everybody dancing, everybody: joyously, frenziedly, ECSTATICALLY. Happy, happy, happy. What's your name, where you from, what you on? No preening, no posing, no prejudice.

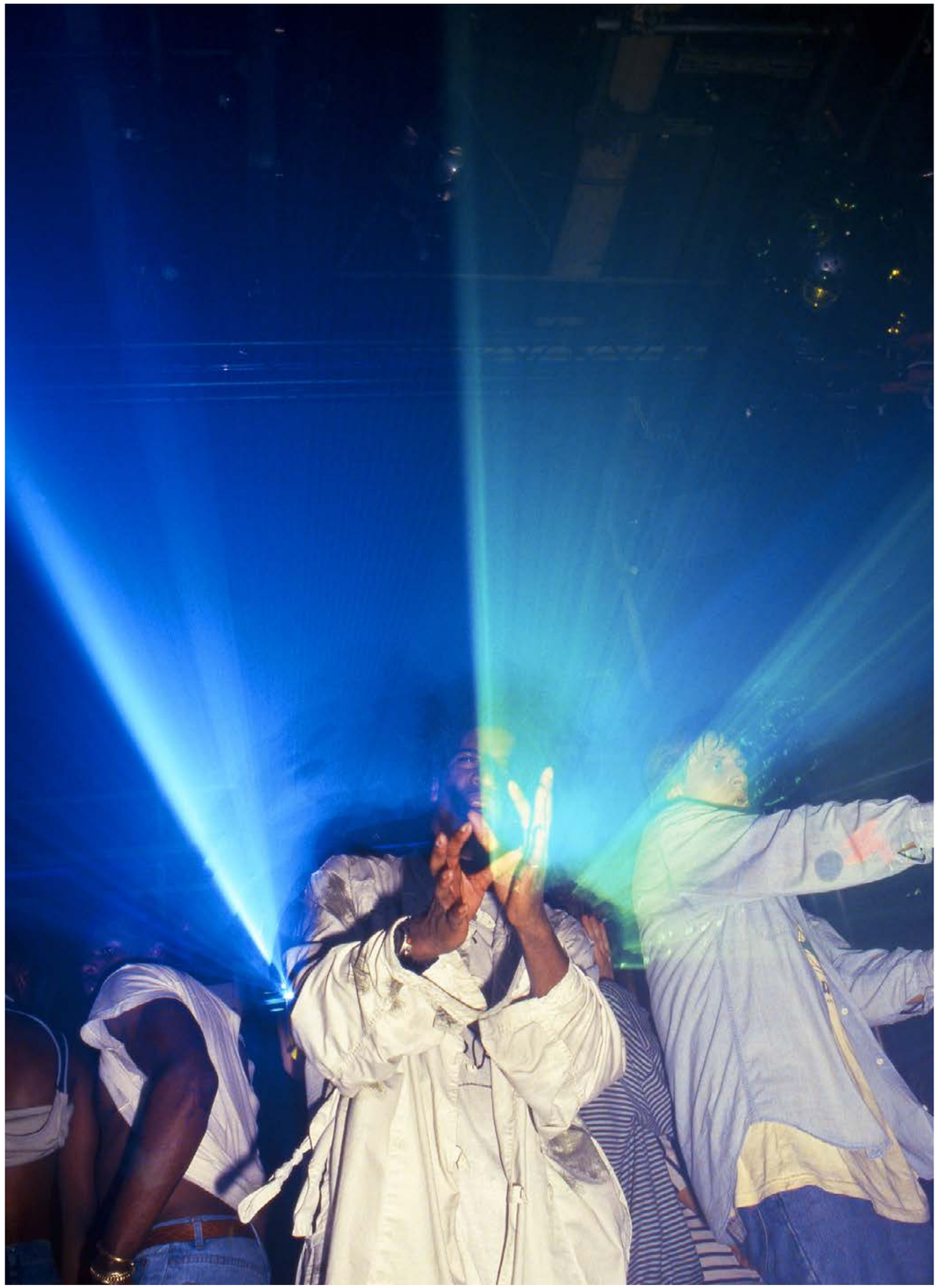
This really wasn't how things were in the turbulent Britain of the 1980s. Where Margaret Thatcher declared: "Society? There is no such thing!" If only she could have seen this. Better still dropped one and feel it. Right there, on the dance floor, a generation begging to differ. Lost in music, we found our society.

It became a way of life, at least for a while. We grew our hair, dressed down (think baggy, bold and bright) and lived for raving in clubs, pubs and bars, in disused warehouses, squats and shut-down shops, on the common, on pleasure boats, and a right carry on at Butlin's. The city was our playground. No CCTV, no internet, no mobiles and no idea where the fuck Cambridge Heath was.

We raved to Italo-house in abandoned factories east of the city. We fell in love with Chicago house at *Cooz*, a snooker hall-cum-nightclub above a parade of shops in Wood Green. We 'got it' when Danny Rampling dropped Barry White's 'It's Ecstasy When You Lay Next To Me' in the vaults of Borough Market. We heard 808 State's 'Pacific State' for the first time at *The Raid* and needed to have it. Nights dancing and days hanging around *Trax* and *Grooves* on Greek Street chasing the latest 12-inch imports.

It wasn't just us. Kids in Bedford, Blackpool and Bournemouth, Glasgow and Great Harwood, Manchester and Milton Keynes, Stoke, Swansea and Swindon, Coventry Liverpool, Nottingham, Worthing and all points in between were doing the same, feeling the same.

There was a summer in Ibiza pay-



RECHARGE AND GO AGAIN
Above: Daytime chilling at Café del Mar.
Right: Laser focused on the dance floor at Spectrum in London.

DAVE SWINDELLS / IDEA

ing homage to DJ Alfredo at Amnesia. Dancing under the stars alongside every kind of people. We're all the same really. Then on to Angels–Belgian New Beat ruled there–and down that slide. Conversations in broken English, conversations in broken Spanish. House music is a universal language. Melody, rhythm and a 4/4 beat speak to anyone.

Back again to the White Isle in '91 with my lot. Older, not wiser.

Sunsets again at the *Café del Mar*... sunrises on the road from San An... loved up... come down... arms aloft to Johnny Walker's set at Pacha... Emerson playing 'Blue Monday' at *Es Paradis*... hardcore rave girls from Essex and Richard from Pleasure... the hippy... pony-tails... tall tales... the 'secret' ingredient in the punch at Space... scraping together enough pesetas for chips... new friends... old faces... rinsing Mooney's mix tape back at the apartment... whatever happened to Dawsy?... hugs and kisses... wide-eyes... wider grins... slack jaws... sorted.

Then I met a girl. On a dance floor. We got married and had children. We're still together. Though I never really left this community that I had found, and the music never left me. It's the same for many of us. Still going strong. Sort of. Liberties and lives have been taken by greed and addiction along the way it is true. RIP Liam & Joe. But more has been found than has been lost.

Return to east London. Tucked among those spaces and places where a younger me had raved many years before, maybe even the very same space now gentrified and transformed, out in force for the genius that is Larry Heard, aka Mr Fingers. I met Jamie from Brighton. We drank warm beer, reminisced over old house tunes and agreed to stay in touch. Then Larry played 'Can You Feel It'. We could.

Music was my sanctuary again in the dark days of pandemic. First time I'd been out since losing my dad to the virus a few months earlier. I'd lost interest, and government rules had been prohibitive. Now we could go out again, but there were restrictions still; the event had to be held outside, you must remain seated and there was to be NO dancing.

You could still use the toilet though. And it was in the queue that sly ravers, desperate to be out, to be amongst people, to be normal again, stimulated by alcohol and house music, threw caution to the wind and dared to dance. Including the stranger next to me. Realising I was watching, and perhaps fearing I might report her to the dance police, she stopped.

I smiled reassuringly, and told her that I loved this tune too.

"I couldn't help it," she said smiling back at me. "The music made me do it."

MASKS OF THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

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grainy odour which came from piles of fermenting manure crowded between houses. Manure is wealth which a Lötschentaler hoards like gold. His status is measured by the height of the heap outside his door.

Willy explained that the stone crypts dug into the side of the road were shelters from the dangerous avalanches of winter and spring. There are summer hazards too. I saw a smallish snake in the road and, to my regret, called it to Willy's attention. He identified it as a poisonous viper and carefully put it into one of Aunt Lisi's plastic cheese containers and into his rucksack to take home to Zug.

Another mile and we were in Kippel, the central town of the valley. The low profile of dark buildings was broken by a gracefully spired church and the large barn-like Hotel Lötschenberg. On the streets, we met more men than women. Willy said that young women were up ion the Alpine pastures where they cared for the cattle from June 30 to September 15. In horseless Lötschental women, rather than me, do the heavy labor. There were no fat people and few tall ones. Everyone walked with long fast steps, head down, shoulders forward, buttocks following, the body bent from burdens, the shuffling shoes never far from the earth. Even children had this characteristic lope. They were not children at all, but smileless miniature adults, beasts of burden from their first steps. Childhood does not exist in Lötschental.

I asked two grave hand-holding little girls to take us to the house of their Prior to whom I had a letter. They led us through several tight alleys, pointed to a door and ran off. I rand the bell and it was answered by the Prior himself. He was a tall, think old man with white flowing hair and a lean sculptured face that was itself like a mask, benign and beautiful. In his furled black frock he appeared to be levitating from the floor like an old saint in an El Greco "Assumption."

The Prior, whose name was John Siegen, served us tea. We had bread, butter, thick honey, a bottle of white wine, and a plate of apples. The tea was excellent and the bread, indeed, was tooth-breaking, so we followed the Prior's example of pouring wine into the tea and dunking the honeyed bread. The old man told us he had risen that morning for a five-thirty Mass in Kippel, then had climbed to an altitude of 2,050 metres to hold a Mass for the pastured maiden, returned to Kippel for another Mass at twelve-thirty, after which he'd taken his first nourishment of the day and conducted Vespers in the afternoon. He was an eager mountaineer who had once climbed the Matterhorn to read the first Mass on its summit.

His low-ceilinged small rooms of unpainted vertical boards were like brown caves and no doubt warm in winter, They were filled with paintings and books on painting, mountain climbing, and history. The Prior, born in the valley, was not only its religious leader but its cultural leader, historian, and chamber of commerce as well. He was author of a book about his valley and had lectured all over Europe. His people, he said, make their living exclusively by raising dairy cattle to sell, there not being enough forage in the valley for dairying.

In summer they raise vegetables and potatoes but the winter diet is cheese, milk, bread (from imported wheat), and Bündnerfleisch, air-dried beef. Despite their restricted diet and centuries of isolated in-breeding, Lötschentalers, enigmatically, probably are the healthiest people in Switzerland. A majority are unattended by doctors from birth to death. Cancer, a leading Swiss killer, is rare in the valley. Almost everyone lives more than eighty years and then more than seventy-five per cent of the people die from "water"–dropsy–a disease of a spent body, the circulation failure of hearts weakened by hard work.

Still, the Prior sadly admitted to a grave parish problem–alcoholism. In a country noted for alcoholic consumption, the men of Lötschental are champions and their drinking doubtlessly contributes to the dropsy death rate. I didn't wonder in a valley where snow falls from September to May and where in heavy winter a one-man path is the only avenue to the world outside. There were no movies, the Prior said, and dancing was permitted only during the fourteen days of carnival–an explosive affair for which the famous masks were carved. Then people move from house to house, only their masked heads visible like grotesque bugs above the tunnelled snow.

He told us of an unfortunate parishioner who had three sons and no daughters. Consequently the youngest son, an innocent lad just past twenty, had to be sent into the summer pastures to care for the cows with the maidens. Willy rolled his eyes and sighed. "That poor, unlucky young fellow," he said. "Just think of it. He doesn't have any sisters."

The hotel was deserted. Wandering in empty halls we heard from the basement a silvery spiral of song. In a moment a pretty red-haired girl came running up the stairs, yodelling merrily. When she saw us she stopped dead and blushed. A room? Yes, she has one, five francs per night per bed. She took us to it. It was large and pleasant.

After a wash–no running water of course–we went down to supper and a bottle of marvellously delicate Rhone Valley Fendant, the popular white wine in the valley. We asked the waitress–her name was Katie–if it were true there was no dancing except at carnival. She lifted her brows wisely and said, "There are things the Prior does not know." For instance that very evening down in Ferden there would be a Kirchenbau, literally a "church-building" but actually a fete to raise money to pay for the building. She herself was going, after her evening's chores.

A moment later Katie ran to our table, trembling and pale. Did we know, she asked, there was a viper in our room? We did. Well, the chambermaid had run screaming into the kitchen and after a restorative cognac had refused absolutely to have anything more to do with the room.

Down in Ferden people were crowding in and around the Town Hall, which doubled also as schoolhouse. Women in black skirts, embroidered vests, and shawls, offered us chances on a lottery. Men, not women, were the preeners. They wore large rakish yellow hats with black bands and elaborately cross-stitched girdles inherited, father to son, and dated 1907, 1911, et cetera. They were banging on bowls and rat-a-tatting on a Blumenscheissen, rifle sharpshooting in which the targets were flowers.

Inside there was music. A few young couples thumped awkwardly in a dance. Young bucks, covered with flower-shooting glory, whirled with a spark of spirit but the girls didn't seem to enjoy it at all. No doubt their knitted woollen stockings and heavy mountain shoes, like boots worn by skiers, took the joy from it. I tried dancing with one girl but she was so cumbersome and graceless I gave up.

The room was like a Brueghel wedding with men and women crowded around long tables drinking beakers of Fendant or beer. We had been drinking Fendant ourselves and suddenly in the warm building I was aware of faces. Gaunt faces. Hollowed worn faces, even on the young. Distorted faces with large, sometimes broken noses, scarred cheeks, protruding ears. They were familiar faces I'd seen somewhere before. But where?

Then I remembered the masks in Zurich. These stern, smileless people, having humour after all, carved the masks in their own image. Those grotesque wooden bogies in the museum, often of old people distorted by paralysis or simply age and suffering, had been brutishly, almost malevolently ironic as if suffering and adversity were themselves comic phenomena.

Suddenly every face in the room had become a mask–old women's faces with black kerchiefs hiding hair so that hollowed cheeks and gleaming eyes shone as if from a tube; men's faces scarred, crushed, weathered, time-limned like tree bark.

I remember the Baron's tip that smiling masks were almost non-existent. The Prior had told us the art of mask-carving was dying out but he had given us the names of several carvers up and down the valley. In the morning we followed the churning white Lonza up the misty gorge, through villages named Wiler and Ried, Blatten and Eisten, where sleighs hung on hoses as in Lapland. We walked over heavenly meadows of wild pansies, bluebells, roses, lavenderpuffs called Rapunzel, endless daisies, lupines, and finally on the high slopes near the glacier, edelweiss. It was a sunny windy day and everyone in the valley was haying. Youths and girls swung scythes on goat-challenging slopes, Men were pushing loaded carts and women carried hay up ravines on their backs. We saw the old Prior, his black robes flapping, swinging a scythe like an avenging dark angel of death.

The masks I found seemed dull and casually turned for tourists. It was Willy who located some exciting ones in the window of a house back down in Ferden. A sombre girl of ten answered the door. Her parents, she said, were busy with the haying but she knew the prices of the masks. One had a grimacing apoplectic leer–it was closest I found to a smile. For 160 francs I bought it and three others; a shawled old witch, a tongue-protruding demon with feverish cheeks, and an angered old man with white horsehairs emerging from his ears.

As we carried them to the hotel, the sweet scent of drying hay filled the air, covering the manure like a deodorant. A tiny little girl on the road embraced a long new loaf of bread lovingly as she might a doll, and boys swooping about us on bicycles flapped their jackets like bats' wings in the twilight. The setting sun glowed pink on the glaciers. In the hotel Katie was yodelling. She was the only woman we had seen smiling and the only one wearing nylon stockings.

That night it stormed, Black clouds rolled over the snowfields and thunder rumbled louder than the Lonza. Lightning knocked out the electricity. Willy was singing or whistling like a snake charmer to the viper–it appeared to be a great love between them.

In a flare of lightning the masks propped on a chest came to vivid and terrifying life and I had to turn them face down. As I passed a window I saw in a flash the form of a young woman climbing the mountain, carrying two lumber planks which met at right angles exactly at her neck, forming a perfect cross. She was bent low, almost to the ground, by the weight. I was so startled I could not move and I watched with each flare from the heavens whole she carried her burden as to Calvary. Walking behind her, following, was a man holding the hand of a child.

Editor's Note: Herbert Kubly grew up in the Swiss country of Wisconsin where yodelling, hop waltzes, wursts, and Schweizer Deutsch flourish exuberantly. A restless charmer with a talent for travel, he is the author of two books on Italy and a collection of short stories; his first novel, The Whistling Stage, is now in the works.

HEALTH FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

and, perhaps, guilty. "We have a way of making a sick person feel responsible for the inconvenience he or she is causing the rest of us," he said. "Obviously, this approach only adds to the pain and disability of sickness." The Navaho rituals take the opposite tack. The gods are responsible for illness and the whole tribe will attempt to persuade them to lift their curse from the innocent patient.

Incidentally, the efforts of the Navaho medicine man are by no means free. They charge their patients a fee, just as regular physician would. And the most revered medicine men get the highest fees. Also, the medicine man is only too aware of the fact that he cannot substitute his kind of healing for the art of the surgeon or the internist. "Medicine men cheerfully refer patients with gallbladder problems, appendicitis, etc., to the nearest reservation hospital," Dr. Sandner said. "They tell the patient: 'The doctors there will take the first steps to help you get better. After the operation, come back to see me and I will then heal you completely.' And, of course, they do. Their songs, dances, and painting help to relieve the pa-

tient of the feelings of depression and dependence that so many of us have after a serious illness."

In China, a whole spectrum of healing and curing methods and personnel are available to the patient, according to Arthur M. Kleinman, M.D., head of the division of social and cross cultural psychiatry at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle and coeditor of the book Medicine in Chinese Cultures. Patients tend to select the type of problem that seems to be bothering the, For a child who seems to cry a great deal with no other discernible symptoms, for instance, they visit a Shaman who uses various herbs and incarnations to cure the youngster of "fright"... the Chinese definition of the kind of generalize restlessness and crankiness that seems to make young babies and their parents miserable. Perhaps it's the fact that, after the child is treated, the parent feels more secure; but, according to Dr. Kleinman, the practitioners seem to be amazingly effective. Another kind of practitioner is the shaman who has his office on a street corner. He too deals in spells, reassurance and depends on the faith that the patient has in his ability to help. But Chinese shamans, like Navaho medicine men, have a way of referring the seriously physically ill to other, more specialized resources. "I know the kind of person whom I can't help," one shaman told Dr. Kleinman, "I don't try to treat him. I send him to someone else."

Besides the semireligious, magical healers, there are specialists in both Western and Chinese medicine available. Bpth provide their own kind of specialized care, but the Western-trained physician is most highly respected. A medical school in Taiwan once attempted to give both kinds of training to would-be physicians, but gave up the effort when it was found that many of the doctors using the ancient Chinese methods wanted to take just a few courses to qualify as "Western-trained" physicians.

Dr. Kleinman in discussing Chinese medical practice, differentiates between "curing" and "healing," "disease" and "illness." There are many chronic pathological conditions that cannot be cured, but the patient can still be healed if the symbolic and psychosocial aspects of his problems are taken seriously. If they are, the patient can often be made to feel a great deal better, even if there is no visible improvement in his or her physical condition," Dr. Kleinman says. "So, the Chinese patient may avail himself of all the technological methods used by the Western-trained doctor and still visit a traditional practitioner who provides the reassurance, concern, and personal attention that the Western-trained doctor may not have the time or inclination to give."

In India, too, many people decide to visit a variety of healers, depending on the type of illness from which they are suffering. For acute conditions requiring surgery or other kinds of drastic physical intervention, a middle- or upper-class Indian would almost certainly choose a Western-trained physician. But for chronic, debilitating ills he might turn to an Ayurvedic System or Yoga practitioner. And, according to Peter Brent, a British author who has studied the medical practices and beliefs of Indian healers, some of the traditional methods turn out to be amazingly effective.

East Indian healers are concerned with the inner balance of the patient and the promotion of health, rather than the removal of specific diseases. According to Brent, they yse some herb medicines, but their principal efforts are directed at changing the patient's lifestyle, diet, and other environmental factors that seem to interfere with health. They involve not only the patient but the family, and sometimes neighbors and friends, in the healing process. Where a Western physician might recommend drugs, they advise changes in the patients eating habits, relaxation, meditation, and various forms off Yoga exercises. Brent told f one government-sponsored research project that is checking on claims that Ayurvedic healers have been able to help their diabetic patients to lower blood sugar by exercise alone.

Actually, many of the East Indian methods and herbal medicines have made their way into the standard, scientific practice of Western health care: Reserpine, an indigenous Indian herbal remedy, was the first Western tranquilizer. Western scientists noted how effective this medicine was in lowering blood pressure and calming anxious or excited patients. Reserpine is rarely used in its original form in most Western countries now, but many of the chemically synthesized medications we use for hypertension and/or anxiety are based on its natural composition.

Meditation techniques first used by religious sects also are becoming an important part of Western medicine. At the New York conference, Herbert Bensen, M.D., associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and program director of the clinical research center at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, explained that he had become interested in relaxation exercises to lower blood pressure after some of his students told him of the effect of transcendental meditation seemed to have on their own physiological processes. He tried the systematic relaxation techniques on himself and later on some of his hypersensitive patients. They worked. Then he developed a much simpler system, not dependent on gurus or mantras. In his best-selling book, The Relaxation Response, Dr. Bensen describes his method in one page, It's worked, under controlled conditions, for thousands of patients, He also has a rather simple explanation for the apparent effectiveness of the Ayurvedic System treatment of diabetes which apparently is fairly effective.

A combination of relaxation, exercise, and weight loss is recognized as an important step in the treatment of diabetes in Western, as well as in Eastern, medicine. It's apparent, then, that primitive and ancient healing systems, particularly those of the Far East, can contribute important benefits to Western medical practice. But what does all this mean to us, the medically sophisticated patients of American technologically orientated physicians? Do we have to wait until our doctors adopt some of these practices? Not really, all the medical experts at the New York conference agreed.

One of the most important contributions made by these systems, which have survived almost unchanged through centuries, is the emphasis they place on the patient for self-care and self-healing. Rene Dubos, Ph.D., professor emeritus of environmental biomedicine at The Rockerfeller University in New York City and the author of many books including The Mirage of Health, pointed out that human beings, like other living systems, possess great powers of spontaneous recovery from illness and other traumatic experiences. "Recovery may simply involve a return to the original state through the natural development homeostatic processes," he said. "More commonly, however, it involves lasting changes resulting from the adaptive responses of the forces that disturbed the equilibrium. Self-healing can thus be a creative force in development.

Scientists, looking ahead at medical care in the year 2000, emphasize that the greatest advances in health care will probably not come "from the test tube or the clinic but from individual self-care in the form of wiser living," to quote John H. Knowles, M.D., president of the research-oriented Rockerfeller Foundation. Increasingly, the responsibility for our own physical and psychological well-being will be returned to us. The physician will become the educator as well as the healer. That is, of course, what the shaman, the guru, the medicine man, and other nonmedical healers in other societies have been all along. In their own way, they always have practiced the principles of holistic health care to which today's highly specialized physicians look with admiration and hope.

Image credit: Ta-otza-begay, also called Meguelito, Navajo Medicine Man (oil on canvas mounted on panel), Moon, Carl (1878-1948) / Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA, USA / © Huntington Art Collections / © Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens / Bridgeman Images

WOMEN WITH THE PRIVILEGES OF MEN!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

overlap from class to class. This the so-called double standard of morality belongs partly to the first class and partly to the second, for it depends both upon law and upon convention. Thus the physical disabilities of women belong in a degree to the second class, in essence to the third; for science may alleviate but never eliminate them. Of course, opinions may and do disagree as to the position in these classes of any given wrong. That is just why definition is imperative if we are to avoid absurdity. When a house projects beyond the street line, it is necessary to know exactly where that line is to be drawn. Feminism solves the difficulty by proposing for all the woes of women a single and simple remedy: the removal of sex-differences. Where women are unfortunate as women they are less fortunate than men; make them as nearly as possible like men; make them as nearly as possible like men, and the misfortune will as far as possible disappear. The ingenuity of this idea is that it applies consistently to all cases. A woman is unjustly treated by the law; let her vote and hold office. A woman is hampered in living her own life and earning her own living; educate her like a man, and educate convention to regard both alike, throwing open to her all industry. A woman suffers and is bound by motherhood; very well, why need she be a mother? Make her as free as a man to elect marriage and children and what kind of home she will. It is an answer to everything, because it is really radical and really ideal. And the feminists are quite ready to carry their cause to its logical effects. Emphatically they do not wish to be men; but they have no sentimental reverence for existing traditions of what is masculine and what is feminine. They believe in Progress, and mean to produce, if necessary, new laws, new conventions, and a new kind of men and women. If human nature at present stands in the way of Feminism, so much the worse for human nature.

Thus plainly stated, the principle may sound extreme; but the extremity is not the author's. And to limit its application within narrower bounds than those of possibility is to. Do less than justice to feminist logic. Applied to political troubles, it means Suffrage, which is, rationally considered, a mere episode in general Feminism; applied to social troubles, it means education and propaganda; and applied to limitations of the third class, it means voluntary evolution, which is the logical limit of the scheme. You will find partial feminists compromising all along the line, but you will not find them repudiating the fundamental idea of the removal of sex-difference; and you will not find the leaders of the movement shirking the conclusion of their own logic. Here, then, is the diameter of the controversy, the first and general line of opposition. Feminism believes that the differences between men and women should be minimized: its opponents believe that they should not. That is the main issue.

ASSISTING THE INEVITABLE

So far we have been upon clear ground; but where argument begins is also the beginning of bosh and the confusion of tongues. Feminism is cumbered with a crowd of vaguely discontented women who identify it with anything that is change–just as many people who do not believe one article of the Christian faith indignantly insist that they are Christians, identifying Christianity with all goodness. And upon the other side are ranged a mass of vaguely irritated, for whom Feminism means that their young women shall break hearts and their old women shall break windows. That is the penalty of the modern dread of dogma and definition: that people avoid knowing (in the literal sense of the words) what they are talking about. Before examining these embattled vaguenesses, we may as well expunge two highly popular arguments which merely cut both ways: the argument from prophecy and the argument from progress. For the first, it is equally futile to proclaim that Feminism will

inevitably triumph or that it must practically fail. Why trouble to assist the inevitable? Of course, the degree of its practicability can be determined only by experiment; and the present question is whether the experiment ought to be tried. For the second, sex-differences among the higher humanity of the millennium may be less than among ourselves; they are unquestionably less among savages and animals. And the present trend in that direction (if such a trend exists) no more proves that we are evolving toward the superman than that we are degenerating toward barbarism and the beast. That is precisely the question. And there is no use begging it.

"PRODUCE YOUR HOME"

We come now to the current phrases upon the subject, the verbal ammunition of the partisans; of which perhaps the most familiar is the complacent saying that "A Woman's Place is in the Home." This is that particularly irritating form of falsehood which consists in applying a truth where it does not apply. The immediate retort is, of course, "Produce your own home." But this, while it smashes fallacy, does not explain it, for Feminism is not merely the protest of the actually homeless. The first difficulty is the meaning of the word Home, about which you and I are perfectly agreed although neither of us can readily define it. Home (as the popular singer observes) is not merely four square walls. It is not always the bosom of the family: some families have no bosoms, and some people resist embosoming. Perhaps the shortest statement of the truth is that home is not Home unless you feel at home there.

This is an extract from a longer piece available in full at proquest.com/vogue

THE WITCH

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the force that pushed plants to sunlight and babies into the world. She was also the force that drove men and women to desire new life. Surely she was fearsome–because whoever controls life also controls death–so her embrace could kill as well as cure. But in her we have had for many centuries since, and she remains an inspiration.

Standing over my daughter's bed at night, I confess I pray to the Great Mother. I ask Her to bless my daughter and make her strong and self-reliant–even independent of me, when the time comes. I suspect that many mothers of daughters secretly do the same. Covert goddess-worshippers, we all must feel a little silly for praying to this ancient deity, so forgotten and neglected, in our nuclear-armed, patriarchal world. Yet she still lurks in our midst, or hovers over all–like Gerard Manley Hopkins' image of the Holy Ghost ("with–ah–bright wings"). She is waiting for us to recognize Her again, to choose life for our planet rather than death. Let us hope She prevails.

To the Goddess
Goddess, I come to you
my neck wreathed with rosebuds,
my head filled with visions of infants,
my palms open to your silver nails.
my eyes open to your rays
of illumination,
my vagina & my womb gaping
to be filled by your radiance....
O goddess, I would be a worthy vessel.

Impermanence–all is impermanence.
The cock rises to fall again;
the woman fills only to empty
in a convulsion that shkes the world;
the poet grows to become a voice
only to lose that voice when death takes her.
A stroke cancels her upon the page–
& yet I open her book & a chill wind blows from eternity.

Goddess, I come to you
wreathed in tears, in losses, in whistling winds.
I wrap the witch's herbs around my neck
to ward off the impermanence that is our common fate.

The herbs dry & crumble,
as my face grows the map of my anxieties,
& my daughter leaps up like a vine
twining around the trellis
of impermanence.
O goddess, teach me to praise loss,
death & the passing of all things–
for from this flux
I know your blessings flow.

Erica Jong is author of "Witches," to be published in paperback this month by New American Library/Plume.
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MY STROKE OF INSIGHT

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remember the number at work, so I remembered, in my office I had a business card with my number.

So I go into my business room, I pull out a three-inch stack of business cards. And I'm looking at the card on top and even though I could see clearly in my mind's eye

what my business card looked like, I couldn't tell if this was my card or not, because all I could see were pixels. And the pixels of the words blended with the pixels of the background and the pixels of the symbols, and I just couldn't tell. And then I would wait for what I call a wave of clarity. And in that moment, I would be able to reattach to normal reality and I could tell that's not the card... that's not the card. It took me 45 minutes to get one inch down inside of that stack of cards. In the meantime, for 45 minutes, the haemorrhage is getting bigger in my left hemisphere. I do not understand numbers, I do not understand the telephone, but it's the only plan I have.

So I take the phone pad and I put it right here. I take the business card, I put it right here, and I'm matching the shape of the squiggles on the card to the shape of the squiggles on the phone pad. But then I would drift back out into La La Land, and not remember when I came back if I'd already dialled those numbers.

So I had to wield my paralyzed arm like a stump and cover the numbers as I went along and pushed them, so that as I would come back to normal reality, I'd be able to tell, "Yes, I've already dialed that number." Eventually, the whole number gets dialed and I'm listening to the phone, and my colleague picks up the phone and he says to me, "Woo woo woo woo." (Laughter) (Laughter) And I think to myself, "Oh my gosh, he sounds like a Golden Retriever!" (Laughter) And so I say to him -- clear in my mind, I say to him:

"This is Jill! I need help!" And what comes out of my voice is, "Woo woo woo woo woo."

I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, I sound like a Golden Retriever."

So I couldn't know -- I didn't know that I couldn't speak or understand language until I tried.

So he recognizes that I need help and he gets me help. And a little while later, I am riding in an ambulance from one hospital across Boston to [Massachusetts] General Hospital. And I curl up into a little foetal ball. And just like a balloon with the last bit of air, just right out of the balloon, I just felt my energy lift and, just, I felt my spirit surrender. And in that moment, I knew that I was no longer the choreographer of my life.

And either the doctors rescue my body and give me a second chance at life, or this was perhaps my moment of transition.

When I woke later that afternoon, I was shocked to discover that I was still alive. When I felt my spirit surrender, I said goodbye to my life. And my mind was now suspended between two very opposite planes of reality. Stimulation coming in through my sensory systems felt like pure pain. Light burned my brain like wildfire, and sounds were so loud and chaotic that I could not pick a voice out from the background noise, and I just wanted to escape. Because I could not identify the position of my body in space, I felt enormous and expansive, like a genie just liberated from her bottle. And my spirit soared free, like a great whale gliding through the sea of silent euphoria.

Nirvana. I found Nirvana. And I remember thinking, there's no way I would ever be able to squeeze the enormousness of myself back inside this tiny little body. But then I realized, "But I'm still alive! I'm still alive, and I have found Nirvana. And if I have found Nirvana and I'm still alive, then everyone who is alive can find Nirvana."

And I pictured a world filled with beautiful, peaceful, compassionate, loving people who knew that they could come to this space at any time. And that they could purposely choose to step to the right of their left hemispheres -- and find this peace. And then I realized what a tremendous gift this experience could be, what a stroke of insight this could be to how we live our lives. And it motivated me to recover.Two and a half weeks after the haemorrhage, the surgeons went in, and they removed a blood clot the size of a golf ball that was pushing on my language centers. Here I am with my mama, who is a true angel in my life. It took me eight years to completely recover.

So who are we? We are the life-force power of the universe, with manual dexterity and two cognitive minds. And we have the power to choose, moment by moment, who and how we want to be in the world. Right here, right now, I can step into the consciousness of my right hemisphere, where we are. I am the life-force power of the universe. I am the life-force power of the 50 trillion beautiful molecular geniuses that make up my form, at one with all that is.

Or, I can choose to step into the consciousness of my left hemisphere, where I become a single individual, a solid. Separate from the flow, separate from you. I am Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor: intellectual, neuroanatomist. These are the "we" inside of me. Which would you choose? Which do you choose? And when? I believe that the more time we spend choosing to run the deep inner-peace circuitry of our right hemispheres, the more peace we will project into the world, and the more peaceful our planet will be. And I thought that was an idea worth spreading.

Thank you. (Applause)

ART AND ME

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place where her studio is located. It was a special experience to connect with an exhibition in a more personal way.

The stories of individuals in the 'Wonderful People' part of the exhibition really resonated with me. Some of them experienced the holocaust. The introduction to this part of the exhibition highlighted that 500,000 Romani people were killed in the holocaust during WWII. I grew up a few miles from Auschwitz. The topic of holocaust and the concentration camp built by the Germans near my home town of Bielsko-Biala was always part of my childhood in Poland. My family was lucky and no-one was sent to a concentration camp, as far as I'm aware. My great-grandmother was however in a forced labour camp during WWII and as a result lost her eye sight after working as a cleaner and being exposed to harmful chemicals.

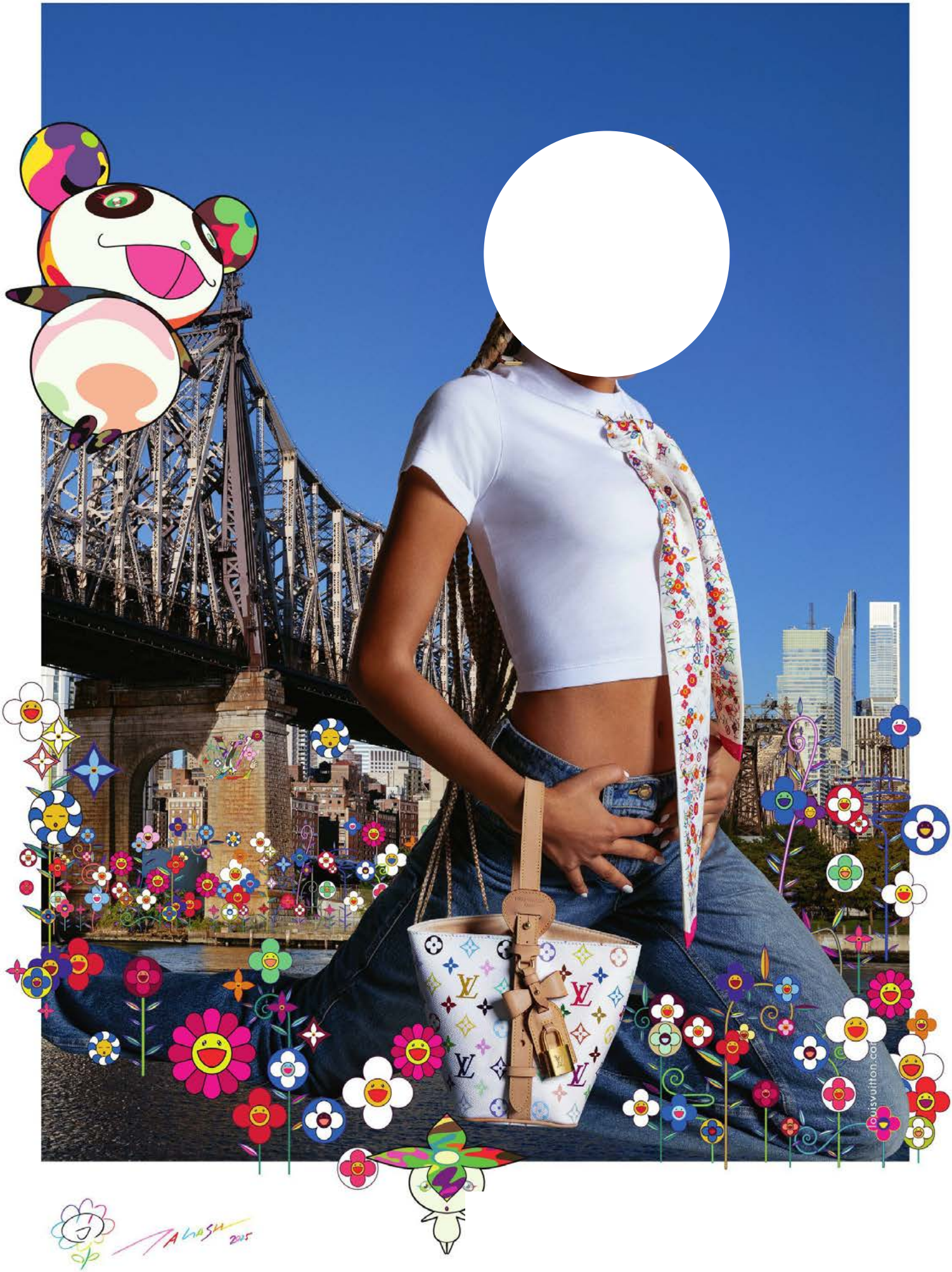
The exhibition provided stories of Romani people linked to the artist's life and their experiences of WWII which I found very moving. One that struck me the most was the picture Wanda Siwak (Wanda Siwak, from the series *Siukar Manusia*, 2022). Wanda was sent to a concentration camp and separated from her daughter who was hiding from the Germans in Ukraine. Wanda spent her whole life after she'd survived the camp searching for her daughter. After Wanda's death the search was continued by her nephew Edward Dunka (depicted in Edward Dunka, from the series *Siukar Manusia*, 2022) who in later life succeed in finding the family of Siwak's daughter in Germany.

The exhibition reminded me that I'm part of a rich culture and history I'm very proud of. It brought back the memories of my childhood, the people and traditions which shaped me and the places I'm now rooted to. It made me reflect how art can be used to highlight difficult topics and elevate the value of misrepresented culture.

An alternative perspective

I stood behind the photographer on a photoshoot I was producing, for a fashion brand, with one of the most beautiful backdrops in the world. Fashion brands being notoriously environmentally un-friendly, but at the same time using natures beauty to sell their product.

DAVE GRAHAM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