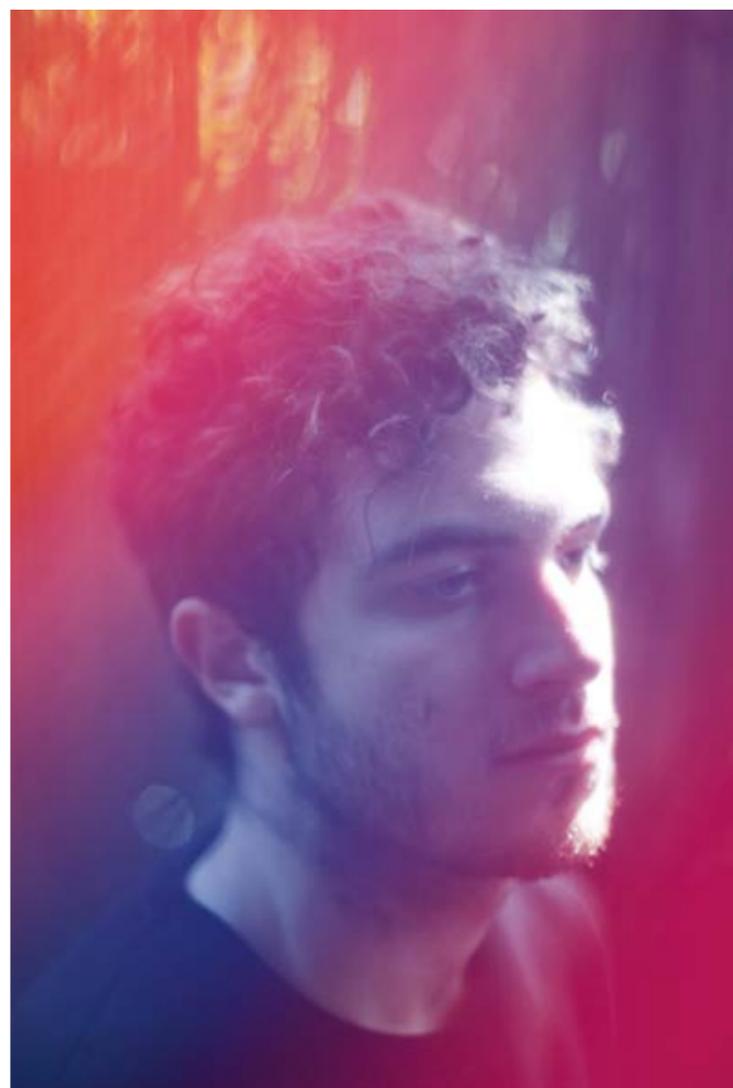


NICOLAS JAAR

The electronica pin-up



WORDS **Giovanna Maselli** PHOTOGRAPHY **Samantha Casolari**



Nicolas Jaar is a music visionary, if ever there was one. Equally comfortable with R&B beats and South American rhythms – valiantly rearranged, overturned and combined with synth sounds – the 22-year-old has managed to redefine electronica in only a few years. Nicolas was raised between Chile and New York, and started jamming his first tunes in his early teens (he released his first tracks when he was 17). His music subverts all ideas of what a dance track should be. He isn't afraid to quote music from the Renaissance, or to slow down the pace, even to the point of undanceability – somehow without ever reaching the point of pretentiousness.

Sold-out shows, screaming crowds and groupies (at a gig in Paris earlier this year, one member of the audience swung her panties over her head) testify to the opposite of pretence. In a world well provided with old, rehashed material, his music is far from trite, but never too conceptual. There is only one label Nicolas is comfortable with, and that is Clown & Sunset, the artistic collective he founded in 2011 with Noah Kraft. It allows him to release his records independently while working on several artistic endeavours, including collaborations with like-minded artists – such as the MoMA PSI performance that took place early this year with Sasha Spielberg and Will Epstein – and is emblematic of how the mind of this ingenious creator works.

You famously avoid labelling your music. Why?

I think a lot of people try hard to put labels on things, and to me that's part of a bigger problem where you simplify things to make it easier to sell them. Something like the tech-house chart – that's how you sell music. I think it's more interesting to have it be music first, and then people can think of it any way they want. It frees both you and the audience from expectations.

Have you trained yourself to think outside of those given labels?

I made music before I knew what was considered cool or not. So I developed my musical expression not from holding on to something external, but just from holding on to myself, because

I was so young. I made my first song when I was 14 years old, and it sounds a lot like the music I make now. I think it helped that I had a girlfriend from age 14 to 19, for five years, a long time. It made me feel loved, I had everything that I wanted and didn't need to try to fit in with something bigger. I have always accepted that I'm different. If I have suffered from something, it wasn't that.

What was it, then?

When you are different or when you're doing things your own way, in a way that isn't considered normal, and you aren't good at it, people hate you and tell you that you suck. If you do things differently and you're good at them, everyone praises you. If I suffered, it was because for a very long time I did things differently and badly. And that's the worst way to do things.

So when do you think you started doing things differently and well?

I don't think it will ever happen. The important thing is to keep getting better all the time. I've reached a level where I'm happy with what I do on a technical level, but now it's about doing it honestly and giving it real feeling. And that's harder than you'd think, because it's got to do with your whole life and everything you do.

Today, you're loved both by critics and the audience. Are you afraid that money will interfere with your work?

You get lazy if you get a lot of money. You might start to spend your time thinking about what to do with that money, instead of thinking about creating new work. It's not necessarily a negative thing, but it can be a problem, and it's important to be aware of the possibility that money could change your music. If you live in a mansion, and you try to make music in that mansion, how will that affect your music?

Then what is your ideal environment to work in?

Just a quiet room that I can have complete control of.

Nicolas Jaar is currently on tour. His next release will be out early next year.

Design

Set in stone

A luxury Sicilian villa in an old quarry
guardian.co.uk/travel/sicily



Art of the possible



A flavour of the new Favara ... (clockwise from left) murals in the town's maze of little streets and squares; a piece by street artist collective Dott Porka; a bright spot in a side alley; the Farm's concept store; and portraits by Australian fashion photographer Brian Walker

An ambitious project has transformed the rundown and semi-abandoned heart of a historic Sicilian town into a modern art exhibition

It is impossible not to be inspired by Andrea Bartoli. In less than two years, the self-confessed "notary by profession and cultural agitator by passion" has achieved the near impossible: turning an impoverished town in the south of Sicily into the island's capital of cool.

With one of Italy's highest rates of unemployment and an unparalleled reputation for urban eyesores, Favara, which is just 8km from Agrigento's monumental Valley of the Temples, has never featured on any tourist map. Nor was it ever likely to. But since Farm Cultural Park (farm-culturalpark.com, free entry, closed Mondays) opened in 2010, the town has attracted artists and visitors from all over the world.

The project is a contemporary art complex that occupies the entire historic centre of Favara. The idea is to draw visitors in to a handful of structures entwined together like an art gallery - there's a design corner, a tea garden and a bookshop, a sandwich shop, a champagne bar, and a concept store.



Exteriors of buildings are used as canvases for huge paintings and sculptures by artists such as Fabio Melosu; courtyards feature installations, including Fabio Novembre's giant pot-chairs; and one building houses the world's biggest permanent collection of work by US

'We were tired of having to go to places like New York to see interesting art'

fashion photographer Terry Richardson.

The idea came about when Bartoli bought several empty dwellings in Favara's semi-abandoned centre. Inspired by places such as Djemaa el-Fna in Marrakech, he thought that the maze of stone houses, with its alleys, central square and small castle were a perfect setting for an art marketplace, rather like a Sicilian kasbah.

"We were tired of always having to go to places like New York or London to see anything interesting," he says. "We wanted to find a way to transform and improve the area we were living in, for ourselves but also for our kids."

Bartoli's brainchild deliberately presents art in a manner and style that relates and speaks to anyone,

regardless of whether you're a worldly traveller, an art expert or someone who has never even left the town.

"In Italy nobody does anything before securing public funds," says Bartoli. "But if you're always waiting, what's the difference between you and those you are criticising?"

Giovanna Maselli

● Belmonte Hotel in Favara (+39 0922 437146, belmontehotel.com) has doubles from €80. Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies from Stansted to Palermo from £90 return

PHOTOGRAPHS: GIUSEPPE PORTUESI

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INTERVIEW



THE FIRST THING THAT STRIKES YOU ABOUT SOO JOO IS NOT HER STUNNING PEROXIDE MANE, NOR HER IMPECCABLE FLAWLESS SKIN AND SINEWY FIGURE. IT IS HOW CHEERFUL AND UNPRETENTIOUS SHE IS. THIS PAST SEASON SHE WALKED EXCLUSIVELY FOR CHANEL'S COUTURE SHOW, GRACED THE PAGES OF VOGUE ITALIA AND DAZED AND CONFUSED, AND MODELED FOR JUST CAVALLI, TOM FORD AND FENDI TO NAME A FEW. AT 26 YEARS OF AGE, SHE IS OLDER THAN THE AVERAGE MODEL, BUT ALSO SAVVIER: SHE KNOWS THAT IT TAKES MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE TO STAY RELEVANT IN THIS BUSINESS, BUT WITH A STRONG PERSONALITY THAT MATCHES HER GOOD LOOKS, THE KOREAN BORN GIRL LOOKS LIKE SHE HAS ALL THE CARDS TO BE A FASHION ICON IN THE MAKING.

When did you move to the States?

I was born in Seoul and only came to California when I was 10 years old. I spent a lot of my childhood going to Disneyland as well as other suburban 'hot spots' like the mall. I grew up in a conservative neighborhood, mostly Asian American and Caucasian, so I lived in a really middle-sized world until I went to college up in northern California.

What did you study there?

I studied architecture. I wanted to study design and art but my parents are very conservative and they kind of pushed me to be in something more rigorous and traditionally reputable, so I figured architecture would be a good balance between something that's more reputable, as my parents would say, and creative.

How did you become a model?

Around the time I was graduating college, an agent scouted me while I was shopping in a thrift store. She asked me if I

was interested in modeling and I said, sure! Why not? I was 21 and I've been doing it for a while now.

Had you ever thought about modeling before?

I had been approached before but I wasn't in the proper situation to do that, because my parents are really strict and they wanted me to focus on my studies. And as I grew up - it was the late 90s or early 2000s - I would look through fashion magazines and everyone was 14 years old and Russian, so I didn't think that I would be able to model then either because I obviously would stand out.

How do you feel about this now?

Now that I am older and I have a sense of identity, I like representing myself as a character of my own self. Part of the reason why I bleached my hair was because I wanted to solidify that to other people: that I am someone different. There are a lot of Asian models

now and they are all beautiful, so I just wanted to stand out and to be different.

The industry today is more open, yet Asian models are still a minority. Do you feel this creates competition between models or has it encouraged bonding?

I can't say that there is absolutely no competition because the truth is, given a job, unless it is full Asian casts - and that is like a sensation of its own -, most of the time there is only a spot for one or two girls in each show. And you know, the super-super models of right now are already established, and it's hard to break yourself in as a new thing and keep your hold. But I think the aesthetic of what a beautiful Asian woman is becoming more diversified and I appreciate that. There are a lot of different faces out there, and it's exciting to be working in a time when there are more of us. It kind of built camaraderie and the more you get to see

of each other the better you get at understanding each other.

Why did you decide to use your Korean name, Soo Joo, as opposed to your American name Cindy?

Well I was born with Soo Joo; it's just that when I moved to America it was being butchered like your name, you know? I just couldn't handle it, because I was 10, I was growing into my pre-teens, I was very self-conscious and I just wanted to fit in: once I learned the language I really wanted not to stick out and my way to do that was to adapt an American name for myself. But even before I started modeling all my friends were calling me Soo Joo, just because it's a unique cute name. It's actually a really rare name for a Korean girl as well: there's a lot of Soo Jins, Soo Jee and Soo Jung, but not Soo Joo. When I started modeling it was obvious that I didn't want to use my American name: I wanted to use my actual name that represented me.

What does Soo Joo mean?

Soo Joo in Chinese characters means a precious gem. Koreans have this thing they call conception dream, where a pregnant woman's dreams tell what kind of child she's going to have. It's just a superstitious thing, but my mom had a dream where she was swimming in an ocean and

TEXT by GIOVANNA MASELLI

at the bottom she found a treasure chest surrounded by corals reefs, inside there were rubies and garnets, so she called me Soo Joo. I love that she had that dream and she was able to give me this really awesome name.

What does your career in fashion mean for you?

Coming from a very protective family I was pretty sheltered, so modeling has been a way to grow up into being more independent. It's kind of a dreamy situation where you get to live a life that not a lot of people can, even though sometimes really shitty things happen in this industry and that's inexplicable as well.

What bothers you? Just the fact that sometimes you're almost objectified, you're not valued like a human being: you're just a look. They judge you from only outward and kind of fail to see what's inside. They just kind of treat you like shit sometimes.

How do you deal with that?

As a model you're working with different artists to create a look and project a certain image and I love that, I think it's really fun. The fact that I like it that much has helped me overcome it. I just kind of take what I can and - this is always hard and impossible because I am really sincere or I take things really to heart - but I learned that it's

not anything against you personally, so you can't take it personally.

What's your favorite moment so far in your career?

There's been a lot now, I've been very fortunate in the last year, but some of the highlights were meeting a person like Carine Roitfeld. She's everyone's icon, yet she's so sweet and considerate. I was really scared when I was meeting her for the very first time, because fashion people can be very over the top or they don't really show their emotions so much, but she was very kind. She's helped me so much by recommending me to other designers, helping me build my book and everything else.

How did you feel walking down the Chanel Couture catwalk?

Amazing! It's a hundred year old brand, an embodiment of what a woman loves, and it has all the desirable elements for a luxury brand, for me anyway. It was a dreamy situation when I walked in there in January and it was completely unplanned. I had a last minute request to see them, so I went in and they gave me an exclusive tour of couture, which was amazing. I wrote a blog entry about it, because I was so buzzed and emotionally high afterwards, I had to write so I can remember how I felt in that once in a lifetime opportunity. ■

T H E R I O T S Q U A D

The rules are there ain't no rules: introducing New York City's newest, snarkiest wave of power chord chiming punk rockers. Leave your gob at the door

Photography SAMANTHA CASOLARI
Fashion RIKI WATANABE
Words GIOVANNA MASELLI

G H X S T

Shelley X and her bleached, brooded-out gang are better known on the New York dive bar circuit as GHXST. Here, they discuss all things "doom grunge."

Formed in 2010 by mysteriously-named vocalist Shelley X, guitarist Chris Wild and drummer Nathan La Guerra, GHXST describe their sound as "doom grunge".

"Doom as a genre — for us at least — refers to the hidden violence and magic of the collective unconscious," says Shelley. "The best nineties alternative culture had a transgressive, wild energy that we're always attracted to: rock 'n' roll isn't good unless it's a little destructive." The darkly-dressed trio label the likes of Rob Zombie (they've covered his 1998 single "Dragula"), Sonic Youth and the Jesus and Mary Chain as benchmark influences. "Chris and I write everything together: the process kind of feels like making movies, or mutual dreaming."

And in *Evilwickeddesire*, their 2011-released amalgam of EPs *No Rest for the Wicked* and the self-produced *Evil's Wasted on You*, dreamy (or, perhaps, nightmarish) qualities abound.

Certainly, Shelley's goth-punk chord progressions and desperate mic murmurs in newest single "Black Camero" are like a doped-on-diazepam Shirley Manson.

Shelley wears jacket by JUNYA WATANABE
Necklace MIRACLE ICONS
Shirt Shelley's own
Jeans by NOBODY

Chris, right, wears jacket by STUSSY
Hoodie by RICK OWENS
Glasses by RICK OWENS
Shoes VINTAGE
Jeans by KSUBI

Nathan, left, wears t-shirt by AMERICAN APPAREL
Jacket by BLK DENIM
Sweatpants by RICK OWENS



D R O W N E R S

Trust Brooklyn brethren Drowners to keep their PMA intact: the band's melody driven summer-punk anthems are bound for the big stage.

Singer-songwriter Matthew Hills fled Wales for New York City in 2011 to build a band. Drowners, his four-strong, pogo-ing pop punk outfit, formed a year later.

"My music projects were kind of phasing out, I needed a fresh start," he says. "Moving across the planet to start something new sounded like a good idea at the time." Now

only 12 months old, Drowners — a title pilfered from Suede's 1994 debut single —

have already secured support slots with The Vaccines, a band who share their sense of wave-cresting enthusiasm doused in serotonin. "I try to mix aggression and

melody, in a way that I think The Buzzcocks and The Replacements did: kind of punk attitude merged with beautiful songs and lyrics". The band — whose debut EP *Between Us Girls* was released in March on ex-Kaiser Chiefs drummer Nick Hodgson's label,

Birthday Records — have secured a label-home, New York's French Kiss, for an LP release later this year. Hill claims that hard

work and positivity has been key to their early success. "I know from being in bands in the past; if you're lazy, nothing happens. I try to be really proactive in terms of writing; putting stuff out there, not wasting time."

But will the full length follow in the EP's blissed-out, melodic footsteps? Hill suggests the band have been upping the ante.

"Post-punk has a lot of influence on our music of late; a mixture of aggression and speed." Hold tight, then.



UNSTOPPABLE DEATH MACHINES

OI! OI! OI! Queens-born brothers Unstoppable Death Machines explain how “twinergy” drives their righteous garage punk sound.

“A good friend of ours is a bipolar schizophrenic. Before he was committed to a mental health clinic, he kept on repeating to us, ‘You’re unstoppable death machines, god-damnit,’ like a broken record,” say brothers Mike and Billy Tucci of the moment they coined their newest band name.

“Our friend and NYC artist Ian Hellwig calls it twinergy,” Billy continues. “Our brains are somehow wired together. We want our music to reflect the times we live in, but also our lifespan: experiences, ordeals, triumphs, set backs, and milestones.”

Starting out as an improvisational noise rock band in Brooklyn’s underground gig scene, Unstoppable Death Machines is now a far more streamlined, scuzzpunk affair.

Single “Once In a Lifetime,” from debut album *We Come In Peace*, is a speedy, attitudinal sugar rush recalling early nineties Cali acts Rancid and NOFX – minus, perhaps surprisingly, their penchant for onstage meltdowns and destruction.

“We don’t break anything on purpose. The only thing that we try to destroy is people’s egos and inhibitions.

“If you feel like dancing, dance. If you want to crowd surf, jump on stage and take a dive. A show is not just about the performer. It’s about everyone in the room.”



C E R E B R A L B A L L Z Y



85

Be afraid... Cerebral Ballzy is one of New York's most hedonistic, unpredictable bands. With hard hats and gum shields firmly fastened in, *Rollacoaster* learns why.

Cerebral Ballzy – a hell-raising quintet from Brooklyn – didn't start life as a band. "We were just a crew of kids who partied and skated together," explains bassist Melvin Honore. "The band formed as a result of us wanting to throw our own parties. Cerebral, just like punk rock itself, has always thrived on individuality." Certainly, the 2008-born troupe's lyrical content (topics include pizza eating, non-stop skateboarding, underage drinking and cutting school) echoes this sense of unruly twenteen abandon. So does their sound – a

thrashy, pedal to the metal speed punk, grounded by vocalist Honor Titus' bracing growl.

With a string of live dates planned (including two in the UK), a debut album to record and a single release (titled "City's Girl") pegged for this summer on Dave Sitek's Federal Prism label, the band are set for one hell of a spring break. Just don't get in their way.

From left:

Jason wears trousers by LEVI'S
Shoes by VANS
Shirt by HUGO BOSS
Ring by UGO CACCIATORI

Tom wears trousers by CARHARTT
Hat by SKULLS BROOKLYN
Shoes by VANS
Watch by SWATCH
Jumper Tom's own

Honor wears jeans by VOLCOM
Shoes by VISION STREET WEAR
Bracelet by UGO CACCIATORI
Shirt, hoodie and jacket Honor's own

Melvin wears trousers by LEVI'S
Belt by YVES SAINT LAURENT (Melvin's own)
T-shirt by CALVIN KLEIN
Shoes by VANS
Jacket by BLK DNM

Mason wears jeans VINTAGE
Shirt by JOHN VARVATOS
Shoes by CONVERSE
Jumper by PRADA
Watch by BELL & ROSS

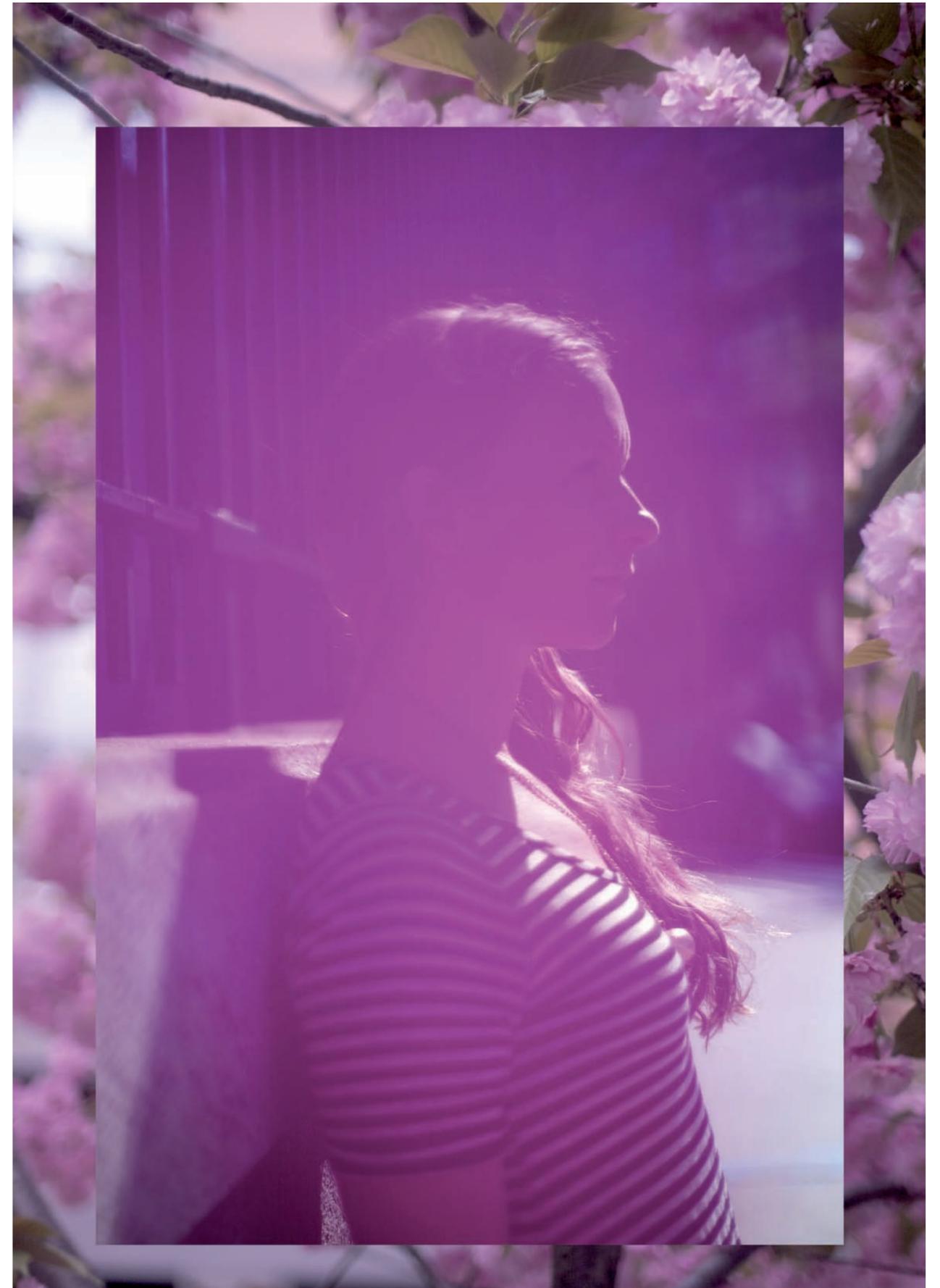
K IN K Y

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Christina Voros

in conversation with
Giovanna Maselli

portrait by
Samantha Casolari



It was the 1980s and the subject of pornography was at the forefront of the feminist debate. The women's movement split their views between viewing sexually explicit material as an immoral violation of women's dignity, and embracing any kind of smut as a positive means for freedom of expression. Thirty years later, the debate has come full circle, and in these days of high-speed information, it is still difficult to dissect the matter without being seduced by the logic of binary thinking.

When Christina Voros was approached by long-term collaborator James Franco – whom she met while in film school at NYU – with the idea to shoot a documentary on the biggest online producer of bdsm porn in the world, *Kink.com*, it was her own preconceived ideas she first was challenged with. "Everything that I had come to believe or assume about that industry was actually stuff that I had been exposed to through the portrayal of pornography in fiction films like *Boogie Nights*," she recalls. "I fell prey to what I believe is a very common hypocrisy about that world, and I think I walked in there even maybe with a bit of a superiority complex as a documentary filmmaker, assuming that people did this because it was not their first choice."

There is a general cultural presumption that, in order to work in the porn business, someone must have done something wrong in their life, as no one in their right mind, if given the option, would ever choose to take one of the most intimate elements of their persona and lay it out not only for voyeurism but for sale. "I don't



Still from 'Kinky', Courtesy of Christina Voros

think I put a lot of thought into the fact that there is a real craft to what they are doing," she says. "But I came to realize that even though I have not been someone who has in the past been interested in exploring sexuality in such a graphic way in my work as an artist, there are people for whom that is a medium they are really drawn towards, creating with and being inspired by." She suddenly grasped how directors were creating a different fantasy than she was when shooting a narrative movie, but following a similar impulse: "they're creating a method of escapism, a world where the rules of our universe are somehow suspended in a very extreme way, but the shape of the thing was not foreign to me."

It was this genesis of the project that shaped how the documentary was made. Walking in with an absolute beginner's mind, the Brooklyn-based director made a point not to do any research on films that had been made on the subject in the past. "James and I come from a very *vérité* school of documentary, and if we were to do a film here it would be observational and it would not be instigating anything, and I would not be doing anything other than observing." Shorn of a biased ideological view, she decided not to simply act as a guide pointing out things along the way but to take the viewer onto a journey with her through her process of learning about bdsm and the porn industry, while guided by the people who work there. The experience of making the film was very positive, yet "the characters were not meant to be likable, I just think they are," she takes care to underline.

The controversial film, which launched at Sundance and screened at Tribeca this year, is not meant to be an encyclopedic statement about the industry at large, but rather a multifaceted portrait of a specific place and of a very specific kind of people. Centrally located in the heart of San Francisco, Kink occupies an official historical city landmark in the Mission district, an old Armory built in 1914 in resemblance to a Moorish castle. It was once the home to the National Guard, then in 2007 Ceo Peter Acworth, a former PhD Student at Columbia Business school, attracted by the fortress's brick battlements and medieval motif, purchased the abandoned building for 14.5 million dollars and salvaged it from its derelict state. Since then it has been home to five floors of incredible sets and metal shops, where the company produces and films original content for over thirty channels, each one catering to a slightly different fetish, from device bondage to gay gangbangs to live femdom, sustaining its mission to celebrate and demystify alternative forms of sexuality, while providing a product for entertainment. "They are allowing people to live out fantasies vicariously that they may not have the opportunity to live out in their own lives, but also creating an environment in which it is ok for people to accept and acknowledge

desires that might not be considered permissible in mainstream culture," explains Voros. "By creating a community in which people can be ok with themselves and realize that they are not alone in desiring these things, is actually sort of a service to humanity."

Ethical porn might sound like something of an oxymoron, especially when used in a context defined by what many consider to be degrading fantasies and human sexual objectification, yet Kink is held up as a standard in the business, looked up to for its concern for moral practices, and care for communication, consent and respect both on and off set. "One thing that surprised me was that it was a lot less difficult for me than I imagined. When I first started and I was talking to directors about the content that they showed on their sites, the most aggressive stuff, like the gang bangs, I didn't know if I was going to be able to shoot them. I have a very difficult time watching violence against women in film, rape scenes in films; it's a visceral reaction to me." "Some things were shocking to watch, but most of what was difficult about it came from my own sort of psychological evaluations of what in that moment was difficult: what is difficult about watching a scene that implies that something is non consensual, when you know that in that world it is?"

Truth is, that if most of us cannot relate to the same impulses and desires described in Kink, we can certainly relate to understanding the way power dynamics play a role in every minute of our lives. "Making the film gave me a completely different lens to kind of look at my own relationships and the relationships of people around me and to start seeing those lines of connectivity." "Culturally there is a lot of judgment about the industry and I think it comes partially from people being afraid of their own unconscious desires about things: it raises fears about power, lack of control. Some of the fantasies that are created are scary, and what is complicated about bdsm is what that power relationship really is: that ultimately the submissive is actually the person in control."



DINNER WITH

It's a warm evening in New York. We meet with filmmaker Chiara Clemente at Lovely Day, a cozy Thai restaurant on Elizabeth Street whose menu, both affordable and tasty, has made it a favorite of the downtown creative crowd. Since Chiara moved to NoLita February last year, this quaint venue has become one of her regular hangouts in the neighborhood. We sit downstairs, in a dimly lit basement decorated with floral '50s wallpaper and diner-style leather booths, undecidedly staring at the menu: everything sounds delicious.

Conversation with Giovanna Maselli

Menù

Chiara:

Hobo Noodle
Red chili, bell peppers (Chiara asked for no red peppers so as to make it less spicy: "it makes it a little lighter, which is perfect" she says), onions, fresh thai basil and tofu.

Michelada (Negra Modelo beer with ice tomato juice, Tabasco, Worcester sauce, lime juice, salt, and chilies)

Giovanna:

Brown fried rice with vegetables and scallions
Negra Modelo beer

Samantha:

Julienne Vegetable Salad with sweet chili, peanut and lime
Summer roll with fresh herbs, shrimp and tamarind dip.
Michelada

To share:

Warm Homemade Flourless Chocolate Cake with freshly whipped cream

DINNER WITH



Photography Samantha Casolari

CC: I think I'm going to have a Lovely Day Classic.

GM: Me too. I'm going to have the fried rice.

SC: Since I first started coming here, my favorites have always been Julienne salad and pad Thai. Always.

CC: Yeah, the pad Thai is really good too...

SC: I also love the salmon... (Pointing at the surroundings) When I started coming here, this part wasn't open.

CC: No, downstairs has only opened recently... well, after they re-opened.



DINNER WITH

They were closed for some years.

GM: Really?

CC: Yes, there was a huge fire. They shut down for many years: it was a huge drama.

SC: The menu has always been the same though.

CC: Yes, they've been adding a couple of things here and there, but it doesn't change.

GM: Last time we saw you it was actually here. Do you come here often?

CC: Lovely Day is kind of a staple in my life: it has been for a long time, but now I live around the corner, it's like a home away from home. In New York, as much as one would love to cook, you always eat out, so this is kind of like the go to place to come and... You can just come and have a beer at the end of the day: a Michelada especially, which I love. And I know a lot of the people here... It's just a friendly lovely place.

GM: You have a few places you are particularly fond of. The first time I interviewed you, we met at The Smile.

CC: Yes, it's another place that I love, it's true. I like to have... Well, The Smile is a place that is run by friends, so here I made friends with the owner... it's that thing of creating families away from your family. It always feels better to go to a place like that. In Europe you generally have so much more: at the local restaurant even if you don't

know them, if you go there often they know your name... in New York especially, it's always like you're passing by, no one knows you, no one kind of looks you in the face, so it's nice to have places where you go in, you say hi, you probably run into someone. Even without making social plans, you can have a social evening.

GM: But here you said you became friends with the owner afterwards. So you picked the place before, as opposed to The Smile, right?

CC: Yeah, it came after. I just started coming here, and it felt nice. Of course it becomes nicer once you start getting to know the people. I know some of the bartenders now, and the server, and the owner... so it makes me want to come more. You know what to expect. Also, New York can be so chaotic, you can come out and eat and it can become such a mad-house and you might not be treated so well... but if you know people it feels so much warmer.

GM: Samantha is kind of obsessed with this place!

SC: Well, I love the kitchen. When you come in upstairs and you see this huge flame that just comes out of the kitchen... I love that. How long has it been open do you know?

CC: Hmm, ten years maybe... I don't know. Don't ask me facts. I like this place, but I don't know all the facts!

GM: Well, I'm sorry Chiara, but

you should have done your homework!

(We all laugh)

So you said you like to cook but you don't have the time?

CC: A combination. I don't have enough time. I love my apartment but obviously the kitchen is not the most elaborate kitchen... it's a New York kitchen, you know. I'm already lucky that I actually have a kitchen, as I know many people who don't even have one (laughs). But yeah, I do find it harder here than any other place that I've lived.

GM: What is it that you like to cook?

CC: Well, a mix. Obviously Italian. I grew up having dinner with my parents and my mom cooks, so there was that foundation. But now I make Thai curry, Indian lentils, eggs, fish...

GM: And your sister is a chef, right?

CC: Yes. She is a very good chef.

GM: Cooking is an art itself, so you are all very creative in the Clemente family.

CC: When I first started shooting the *Beginnings*, the short film series I do, I picked Dan Barber because I liked the idea of having a chef, but I also wanted to pay homage to my sister. Everyone used to say that I was the arty one, and she would always respond: "I am in the arts too: being a chef is being an artist." And it's very true, you can see it in the passion that Dan Barber

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has in talking about his things for example: sometimes he is even more expressive than the other artists.

GM: You are still shooting *Beginnings*, right?

CC: Yes, I'm continuing to do *Beginnings*, so we're figuring what the next city is.

SC: I actually loved the piece with the woman... the cartoonist, what is her name again?

CC: Marjane Satrapi.

SC: Yes, her! I love her!

CC: She's such a character. I loved doing that piece.

SC: And in the interview...

CC: Oh it was so hard. Because we had so much stuff, and we had to edit her. And it's so dynamic, and she's really funny. And there are all these funny bits and we're like "what are we going to put in"?

GM: How do you pick the people you feature?

CC: Well, with *Beginnings*, each series it's really about curating a show in a way, because I want to make sure that it represents all different types of arts and backgrounds, all different ages and different types of people. So it's tricky, because you are picking people and asking them, but then you can't ask the next person who might be similar until you get this answer from this one person... Amazingly the Paris season kind of felt like it was almost meant to be the way it was because we chose dates

where I could be in Paris to shoot and we had our list of people and we called, and most of the people worked out, so it came together...

SC: So you haven't picked the next city yet?

CC: No, not yet. I would like it to be Tokyo, or somewhere in Japan. It's an amazing place. It's so funny. It's a place where, at least when I landed, obviously it's very different culturally, but it felt like going to Paris or somewhere in Europe.

GM: You didn't have any culture shock.

CC: I don't know, the Japanese, it's a lifestyle. The way that Tokyo works, it's so smooth and easy, and everything functions and everyone smiles... I felt that it's a city that if it were closer I could see myself going there every ten days...

SC: Well, I lived in Uganda for almost a year. And although I had never been there before, in a way the culture had always fascinated me, I read about it, the music... well, I love African music! So when I got there, for me, it was incredible and I felt the connection straight away. There was a culture shock but...

CC: You were connected to certain cultural things.

SC: Yes, I had some instinctive connection with that culture.

GM: I don't know if I've ever had an instinctual connection with a different culture. It's

a very interesting concept... Actually, no, I don't think I have. For me when a culture is different it's more about curiosity, like exploring and understanding how you are similar and how you are different. Maybe I'm just not an instinctive person.

(The chocolate cake arrives. We all share)

SC: This is soooo good!

GM: I am not particularly fond of chocolate, but this is really good.

CC: You have to ask for extra cream: that is the secret too. See, when you feel down you just come here... and this is all you need.

GM: Are you planning on going back to the Amalfi Coast?

CC: Yes, at the end of August – I cannot do Ferragosto there. It's too crowded.

GM: I know what you're talking about... all the places are already tiny.

SC: Do you think you would ever live in Italy?

CC: I lived in Rome for four years. It was a great experience and I love going back: it is one of the most beautiful and inspiring places in the world. But it's just hard to make things happen there.

GM: The first movie you shot was in Italy, right?

CC: The first long movie I did was called *The Voice* and I shot it during the last year of high

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school. It was shot between Amalfi and New York, making a comparison between the two places. And of course I was coming from Amalfi. I wasn't really objective when I started. I was feeling more Italian. And it's tough growing up in NYC when you are a kid, it's not as if you have that much freedom... especially in the '80s. NYC is a bit rough, and Amalfi was a fairy tale.

GM: Why did you decide to move to Rome?

CC: I think it's that thing of being bicultural. Always living between here and Italy and you are always trying to fit in somewhere. Like I always thought: "Oh, I am Italian, I am Italian, I am Italian", and then I go back to Italy and well the truth is that I grew up in New York, I just spent the summers there. So I remember it was like the first year and I was always trying to understand: "What's wrong with me, what's wrong with me? Why don't I fit more?". The humor was so different. Even though I spoke Italian, there was a different way of speaking. And then I was like: "What's wrong with them? What's wrong with them?" (laughs). You know, it was that kind of feeling. And then by the third year I was ok, I am not totally that, I am not totally this. So I figured that much out.

GM: We were born and raised in Italy, but we are familiar with that feeling.

SC: Yes.

GM: To me, it's so funny

because since I moved to New York I feel more attached to Italy, but then on the other hand I'm not at all.

CC: You are nostalgic but without needing to venture it.

GM: Pretty much. I was there recently for three months. And it was funny, because being there after being away for so many years in a different continent I felt I had a different perspective on my country. That allowed me to get a better understanding of my roots, of who I am and where I am coming from, but then at the same time, after ninety days I wanted desperately to come back here. I love Italy so much but I just feel that now I need to be in New York for some reason.

CC: You were there for three months straight?

GM: Yes, I took some time off work to do a personal project and I wanted to be in isolation.

CC: And you went to Italy to be isolated? (laughs)

GM: Well, I went to Sicily where I didn't know anyone. Strategic planning.

CC: Now I am going to start interviewing you.

GM: Well, the purpose of *Alla Carta* is having a conversation rather than a standard interview anyway. So we are lucky, because who is better than you at doing conversations? (Chiara is well known for her conversational interview style)

CC: Yes, when I am working sometimes I get so deep into the conversation that I even forget that there is a camera and that I am actually doing an interview. But then I think that if I dive into it then also the viewers can get lost and absorb these stories.

GM: I think so too. What I like about your films is that they are always very spontaneous.

CC: Thank you. Well, *Beginnings* talks about childhood, how people started, the first steps in the life of creative people. And how that happened: the moment that we all connected, the moment that we all can relate to, our childhood, the beginning when everything started. So what better way to get people who were extremely established and also, talk about something that wasn't rehearsed, something they hadn't been talking about over and over again for the past 30 years? It's more getting back to a time when it wasn't rehearsed.



Still from 'Kink', Courtesy of Christina Voros