

HIGH ENERGY

A MAGAZINE BY HIGHSNOBEITY

STARRING

THE

ACTOR,

SINGER,

SONGWRITER,

AND

THE

BATMAN

ROBERT

PATTINSON





HighsNobeity

PAGE 6 The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm **PAGE 6** The Metamorphosis of Robert Pattinson **PAGE 10** Harry Fucking Styles **PAGE 16** Lil Nas X: Taking the World by Storm



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THE EYE OF ROBERT PATTINSON

By Blake Abbie
Photographed by The Lizard Queen
Styled by Jamie-Maree Shipton

He is exceptionally handsome. Wide, wild eyes. Large facial features arranged where a sculptor might have put them in 16th-century Italy. He is, unlike some actors, taller than people suppose. ("A lot of Batman fans are like, He's tiny, he's tiny! I'm not fucking tiny!" he says. "I'm, like, a large person. About half the time, I'm trying to get skinnier.") He has that ability to look convincingly different, by meaningful degrees, in many different things. It's not just hair and weight. It's the way he can lower or raise an internal dimmer switch to dial the eyes and mouth along a spectrum from, like, American scuzzbucket to French aristocrat. It permits him to work effectively as both a leading bat and a 12-minute scene-stealer. "He's a chameleon," Matt Reeves, director of *The Batman*, says. "Recently, Rob was telling me that he never plays a character with exactly his voice. The voice is one of his ways in."

In London today, his natural accent is crisp and his words are prudent. But his laughter is freewheeling and he can't help but start things off by saying precisely what he feels: "I'm so fucking jet-lagged!" He is underdressed: "It's cold! Fuck!" And he is feeling his age (35): "I can't do anything anymore!" The effect is something like: English art dealer

after a weeklong fair in Hong Kong. He looks like he was maybe at his shiniest six days ago.

We're walking through Holland Park, at the base of Notting Hill. Not 18 hours earlier, the plan had been for us to visit the London Zoo, but he'd suddenly thought better of it. "I was talking to my girlfriend"—the model and actress Suki Waterhouse—"last night and she was, like, 'You know, people don't really like zoos....' I'd been thinking about a metaphorical thing. But then I was thinking that's very wrong, a sad bear walking in circles." He'd talked himself out of it.

"I just can't help it," he says. "I'll do it for every single element, every decision, in my life. What is the worst-case scenario for this decision?"

His career to this point has been shaped by a combination of talent, desire, luck, attendant fame, and bold choices. The fame came quickly, with *Twilight*, the teen-vampire saga that grossed billions of dollars and set Pattinson up for a particular kind of path. The choices—smaller movies with singular filmmakers—came as part of his masterfully planned, decade-long prison break out of that one particular career. "I'm constantly doing risk assessments, which drives everybody crazy, trying to predict every single element that







IT'S KIND OF ABOUT HIM TRYING TO FIND SOME ELEMENT OF HOPE, IN HIMSELF, AND NOT JUST THE CITY. NORMALLY, BRUCE NEVER QUESTIONS HIS OWN ABILITY; HE QUESTIONS THE CITY'S ABILITY TO CHANGE. BUT I MEAN, IT'S KIND OF SUCH AN INSANE THING TO DO: THE ONLY WAY I CAN LIVE IS TO DRESS UP AS A BAT.

could possibly happen. And then, at the end of it, just being like: Ah, fuck it! I'll just play a lighthouse keeper who fucks a mermaid! I think this is the right move!"

His reputational swerve away from blockbuster moviemaking had taken such a firm hold in recent years that Reeves, who had been thinking of Pattinson while writing *The Batman*, wasn't sure Pattinson would be interested in ever returning from his art-house walkabout. But a little mainstream exposure, by way of *The Batman*, was just as deliberate a choice as turning away in the first place. Get into the bat cave, bank some gains, then charter a new voyage out into riskier film waters again. It was a plan.

Things got off to an auspicious enough start when shooting began at the end of 2019. "Then I broke my wrist at the beginning of it all, doing a stunt, even before COVID. So the whole first section was trying to keep working out—looking like a penguin. I remember when that seemed like the worst thing that could go wrong." Soon, of course, there were far greater obstacles brought on by the unprecedented global pandemic, which triggered production shutdowns, including the one precipitated by his own "very embarrassing" positive in September 2020, right as everyone was due back from the first interminable break. The delays ultimately stretched the shoot to 18 months—approximately the total time on set of every other Robert Pattinson movie of late combined.

And yet, when the enormous production was full steam amid the raging pandemic, he felt grateful—and even guilty at times—for having a

distraction that demanded every bit of his attention. Whereas I was so incredibly busy the whole time, doing something that was also super high pressure, by far the hardest thing I've ever done.... I was still playing Batman at the end of the day, even though the world might end. But just on the off chance that it doesn't end..." He puts it another way later: "Even if the world burns down, I've just got to get this fucking thing out!"

The set, on the outskirts of London, manifested as a "bubble within a bubble," he says. "And the nature of the shoot was so kind of insular, always shooting at night, just really dark all the time, and I felt very much alone. Even just being in the suit all the time. You're not really allowed out of the studio with the suit on, so I barely knew what was going on at all outside." They built him a little tent off to the side of the set where he could go to decompress. And mostly he would pass the time getting weird in the bat suit. "I'd be in the tent just making ambient electronic music in the suit, looking over the cowl. There's something about the construction of the cowl that makes it very difficult to read books, so you have to kind of almost lean forward to see out of the cowl."

Though they finished shooting *The Batman* in April, Pattinson seems to have still only just mentally emerged from the cave. He laughs maniacally when he recalls those solitary hours in the dark: "I mean, I was really, really, really dead afterward. I just looked at a photo of myself from April and I looked green."



HARRY FUCKING STYLES

In the final leg of his sold-out Love On Tour series of shows, his six-person band took to New York's Madison Square Garden on the weekend of Halloween. On the bird-call from their faithful leader, his legions of fans turned up to the concert

in fancy dress. Crowds outside gathered in traditional All Hallows' Eve getups of ghouls and goblins, and many paid homage to Styles' signature style (think feather boas, kick-out flares and heavy-set platforms).

Not one to miss out on the chance for a display of style, Styles appeared on stage as Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, complete with a sparkly blue pinafore with matching bow, and of course, ruby-red slippers (his band make up the Tin Man, Glinda the Good Witch et al). All outfits are courtesy of Alessandro Michele, Styles' friend and creative director of Gucci, of which Styles has long been a brand face.

Enveloped in the rapture, the crowd hangs on to ev--ery minute of his husky growl and swivel of the hip as he breaks out into a spooky rendition of Britney Spears' "Toxic". But put aside Styles' Mick Jagger swagger, and the crowd, made up of all ages, races, genders and sexualities, feel bound to something a little deeper than just the look and charm of the 27-year-old performer. Affirmations of beauty are swapped, expression is celebrated and friendships are formed under the umbrella of the pop phenom. Case in point: '#hslotoutfit' (Styles' Love On Tour outfit, in case you were wondering) hit 37 million views on TikTok in the US alone.

"It's funny because I don't think of myself that way (as a style icon)... but bringing people together is the thing I'm most proud of. (At the shows) I get kind of a front-row seat to see a bunch of people getting in a room together and just being themselves. Not coming to the front of the stage, because they're hanging out at the back, dancing like nobody's watching. Having the most basic version of a good time. Humans interacting and accepting each other," says Styles, expressing wonder at the zeal of his committed fandom, the Stylers. "A room full of people just loving each

A look inside the world of Harry Styles By ANA KARINAZATARAIN

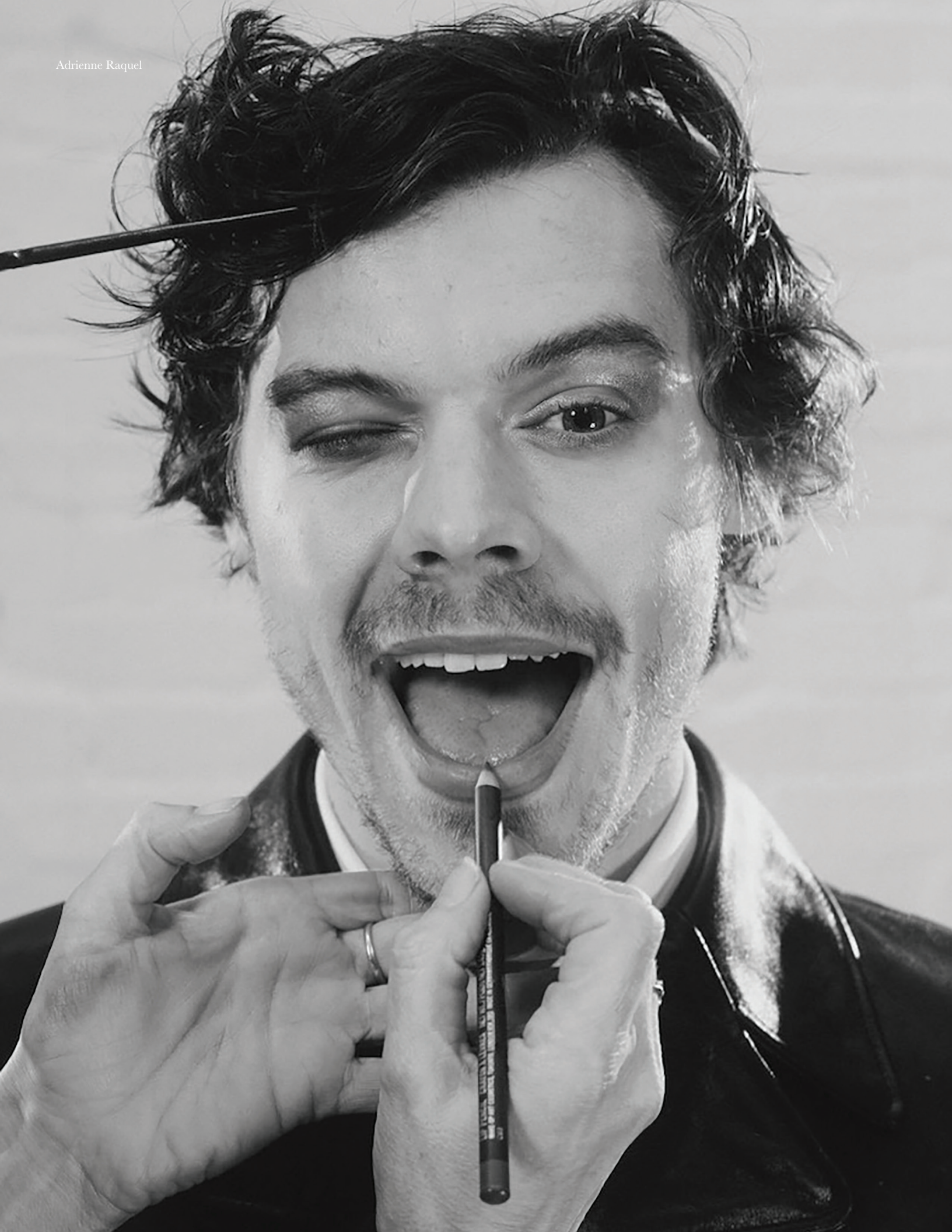
other is so powerful."

A few weeks ahead of our conversation, Styles quietly emerges at an airy photo studio in Los Angeles for his *Dazed* cover shoot. Despite the furiously quick turnaround from inception to execution

of the shoot (things in HS's world happen quickly and meticulously), the star is in wonderful spirits. Perfectly on time, and flanked by a burly and ever-present security guard, he's quiet and reserved but polite, greeting everyone with a northern accent that's been slightly tweaked by his years in L.A. Immediately, you're struck by his presence. A certain sort of wanton sex appeal that even the most hardened of critics couldn't resist radiates when he looks you in the eye, something he's careful to do when you are in conversation. (A recent study suggested Styles' sea foam-green eye colour was the most beautiful in human existence.)

He's dressed in a fitted baby tee and low-slung jeans, kept just so by an umber-brown belt, and finished with a crochet skull beanie that reads 'attainable', though I am not quite sure it would look as uncontrived on anyone else. He wears clothes unbelievably well. But that we already knew: the aforementioned face of Gucci is often feted as our generation's Bowie in his fearless, genderless and boundary-less approach to fashion. He's donned a frilly gown on a *Vogue* cover and gets your grandma's cardigan (OK, it was actually JW Anderson) a permanent spot in the V&A.

Our shoot is no exception in bringing on the glam. As photographer Rafael Pavarotti readies his camera, *Dazed*'s editor-in-chief Ibrahim Kamara takes Styles through the proposed looks for the shoot. He immediately grabs an angelic cream look of a Rick Owens webbed sweater, a Galliano corset, and a *Comme des Garçons* kitten heel from the splatter of Polaroids affixed to the wall. A psychedelic Prada jumpsuit complete with Swarovski choker is another favourite, and a Balenciaga look with top-hat aplomb is quickly greenlit. At ease in front of the camera, he slips from one look to another, each more fantastically concocted than the last. He's the right side





of confident and seems, through observation, content.

It's a far cry from the vision of the fairly sheepish Harry Styles from *One Direction*: 16 years old, with a mop of curls. Despite the group's mega-success of over 70m albums sold worldwide, we perhaps never knew the potential of what lay beneath until the release of *Harry Styles* (2017), his breakaway solo album after the group's hiatus and a revealing look at someone whose enigma had been overshadowed by headlines and hysteria.

"I was 16 (when *One Direction* started), I just kind of finished school and didn't really know what it was that was happening," he explains. "Everything was really new and exciting and I didn't know how long everything was gonna last. It kind of became like, 'Woah, how long can we keep this going?' because I really didn't expect any of this to happen."

"There was a time when I was younger, and I was in the band, when I would have been afraid for everything to have stopped. I didn't necessarily know who I was if I wasn't in the band. Now, the idea of people going, 'We don't like your music any more, go away' doesn't scare me. I think there was a time when it did. It gives me the freedom to kind of go, 'Great!' I'm not working from a place of fear. I'm working from a place of wanting to work stuff out, and try different things."

It's a sum of parts that has worked well for Styles. His sophomore album, *Fine Line* (2019), went double platinum in the US and won him Grammy, Brit, and Ivor Novello awards, with *Rolling Stone* ranking it among its 500 Greatest Albums of All Time, a feat that he has finally had time to reflect on. "I think things are hitting me for the first time," he says. "It really is the first opportunity where I felt like I had time to take it in since leaving home, to be honest. So, going forward, I'm just going to take things in as they're happening – how nice some of those things are, how not nice some of those things are – and observe them. When we get back to some semblance of normality, I will check in with parts of myself and make sure I don't lose myself again and get pulled back in."

While conquering music, he dipped his toes into the silver screen with a role in Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* (2017). He used a world tour that was paused due to Covid to take on a trio of new movie roles. He has a much-anticipated role in *Don't Worry Darling*, a psychological thriller set in a utopian California starring *Midsommar*'s Florence Pugh. Directed by Olivia Wilde, whom Styles began dating during filming, the film isn't due for release until September 2022. An 11-second clip has been ripped on to fan accounts and cumulatively got over a million views on YouTube. His relationship with Wilde has been a daily feature of celebrity gossip rags, though the privacy around it is closely guarded by Styles and images of them together are scarce.

"I've always tried to compartmentalise my personal life and my working life," he explains. Paparazzi snaps suggest the two are very much in love, though any assumptions on his love life are curtailed for his *Dazed* cover story.

My Policeman, an adaptation of Bethan Roberts's 2012 novel, centres on husband Tom Burgess, played by Styles, and wife Marion Taylor, played by Emma Corrin. Set in Brighton in the 1950s, the film follows David Dawson's character Patrick as he falls in love with policeman Tom and a tug of war of emotions between the three begins. The story explores homosexuality at a time when it was expressly forbidden. Both films offered Styles room to grow as an actor.

"I like to challenge myself and do something different and movies are definitely where I feel most out of my comfort zone," he reflects. "I'm coming from music where I don't think anyone really knows how it works, but I am somewhat in my comfort zone! But in movies, when I show up, I'm the new guy. I haven't been (an actor) for a long time and that's really cool, I feel like I've learned so much and

life is about learning."

And as much as acting is an education, it's also incredibly personal for Styles. "(With acting), you're trying to remove a lot of yourself and key into someone else," he explains. "On the most basic level, it's like being a kid and you're playing pretend. I am not a very confrontational person, I think I'm pretty chill, so then when you have a character who is like that, it's fun to explore." Styles has never had formal acting lessons, and instead reads scripts with a partner and immerses himself in the "humanity of the character".

"I think music and acting really aid each other in a lot of ways. In my experience, a lot of the time when I've gone to do a film I've felt like, 'Oh, I'm probably not gonna do any music for a while because I'll be so focused on that'. And then I actually find that, by the time I get home at the end of the day, I just write so much. Any time you are looking at the world through someone else's lens and exploring different emotions, it feels like a benefit in so many ways."

In October, the Twitterverse erupted after *Variety*'s Matt Donnelly spotted Styles' blink-and-you'll-miss-it role as Eros in *Eternals*, the newest mega-movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, directed by Oscar winner Chloé Zhao. Styles cautiously checks the publication date of this *Dazed* story before confirming his inclusion as the brother of villain Thanos. "I'm only in right at the very end," he says humbly. "But who didn't grow up wanting to be a superhero, you know? It was a great experience and I'm so grateful to have gotten to work with Chloé."

With his career expanding from global to almost stratospheric proportions, Styles has made room for other projects instead of taking any iota of spare time for himself. Namely, *Pleasing*, his shape-shifting umbrella company that will see him take the leap from musician to mogul. The first drop from the *Pleasing* universe? A curated line of products that speak to the celebratory beauty sensibility that Styles is known for. He talks me through the genesis of *Pleasing* from his hotel room in Boston, while massaging his undereye with *The Pleasing Pen*, a dual-ended eye and lip serum infused with okra, marshmallow and lingonberry, a delicious-sounding concoction that I'm told helps with tired eyes. "It was an idea I'd kind of had for a while," he describes. "I'd been talking with a couple of people close to me, like Molly (Hawkins, Styles' creative director). Firstly, I just thought it would be fun but, in actuality, *Pleasing* is about a couple of things."



“I also think that what this can become is so much more than just products you can buy. I think it’s about giving, and giving back. I am blessed to have fans who are so supportive of me, who believe in freedom and who have created this safe space for each other. Pleasing is really for them. That feeling of community is kind of what we would like Pleasing to (reflect).”

The collection cleverly eschews the usual cosmetic tropes of concealment and masking, and instead celebrates illumination: highlighting what’s already there, in a way that democratizes who can see themselves as part of the Pleasing cosmos. The product line starts small, though I have been promised there is more to come, in a sporadic drop-style format: a ‘Pearlescent Illuminating’ serum, ‘Pleasing Pen Matte’ lip oil, and ‘Perfect Pearl’ nail polish, all of which have been mindfully and sustainably made. “I don’t think that putting someone’s face on something sells a bad product,” says Styles firmly. “The product has to be good, and I think our product is good.”

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

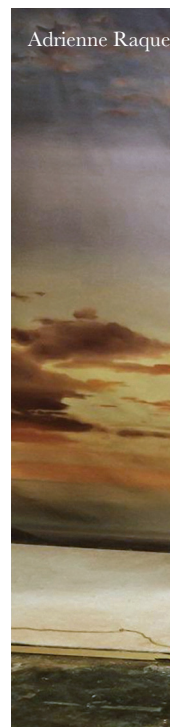
Styles is transparent about his approach to Pleasing. Business and money-making aside, he wants to build a platform that can put ideas, creativity, and empathy front and centre. “I think we have an opportunity to make something really cool, a company that operates in a completely different way,” he says. “I think the true DNA of Pleasing is about working with talented people who might not necessarily have the light shone on them, and collaborating.” A humanistic approach to a beauty company is a novel idea, though a complicated one. Can a modern beauty brand really ask you to come-as-you-are and buy into the added extras? Styles doesn’t seem put off by the challenge. “As humans, we are always changing we’re always learning new stuff and I don’t know why a company can’t operate from that same kind of standpoint.”

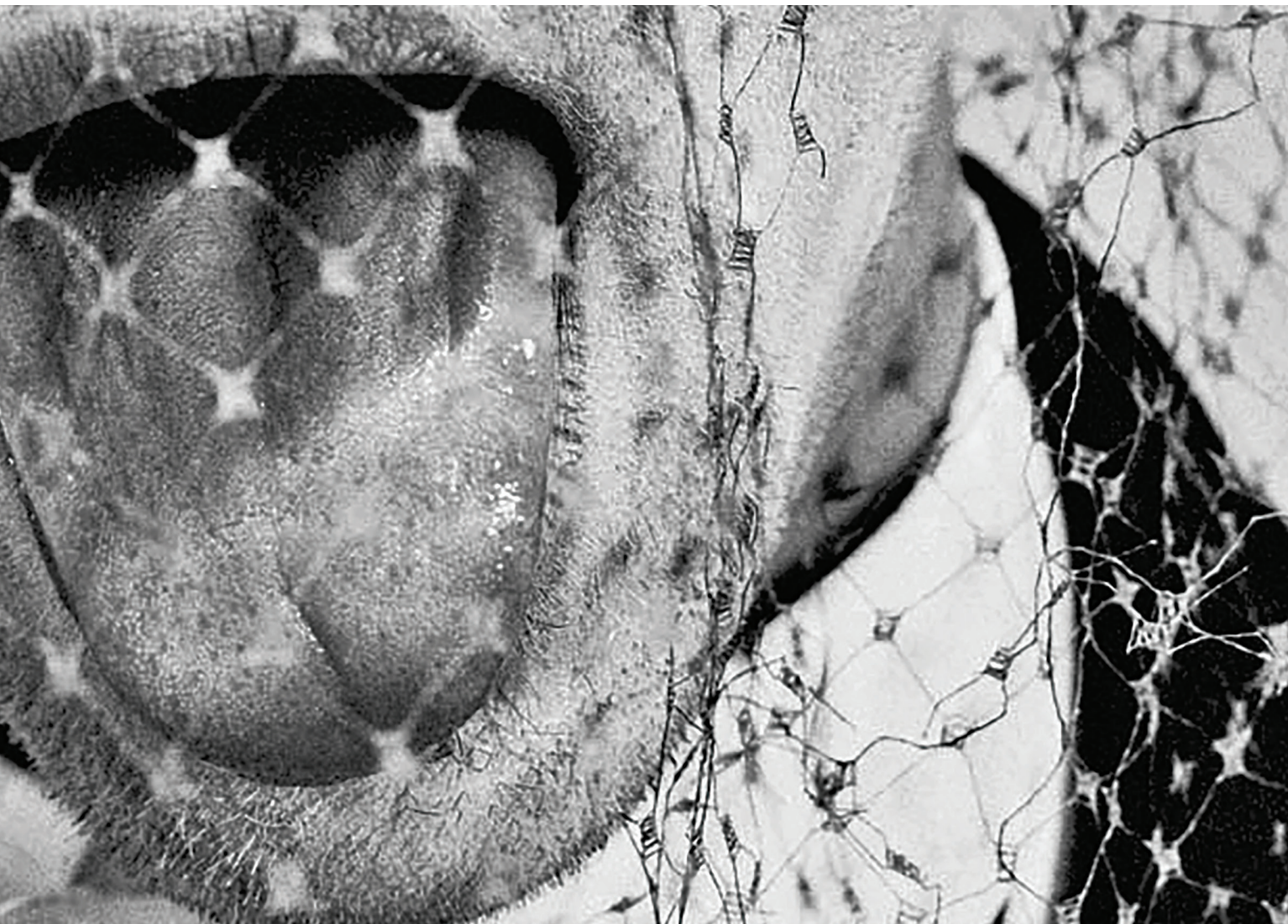
HOME

I comment, more than once, on how at peace Styles, whose every move is writ large on the internet, seems. What he takes from his glam-rock icons (Prince, Freddie Mercury, Elvis Presley), he grounds in his everyday-ness. He’s never let his stardom eclipse his need for normalcy. “I read *The Architecture of Happiness* by Alain de Botton, and there’s a chapter where he talks about the idea of emptiness being more important than fullness,” he says. “How a lot of things can be really distracting, especially in the home. I think about the space that I want around me; I need it to be calm.”

“You know, I read another book by Jon Ronson called *So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed*,” continues Styles. “It got me thinking, for a long time, about how scared I was of saying or doing the wrong thing, and how much trouble that would get me in. I was still growing up, making mistakes. I’m not ashamed of those things any more. I’ve seen subconscious changes in a lot of places in my life.”

Just as he’s trying to imagine what a beauty brand can mean for a younger generation, he’s also looking at the future possibilities of pop music, albeit starting from a clean slate. On the precipice of his *Saturn’s Return* (Styles turns 28 in February), he seems ready to enter a new, risk-taking and career-defining chapter. “I have unlocked an ability to be myself completely, unapologetically,” he says with conviction. “I started only listening to classical music because it felt like it gave me a blank canvas to work from. So I wasn’t hearing things.”







Lil Nas X TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM

By: Sydney Gore

Montero Lamar Hill came into the world on April 9, 1999, the last child of six siblings. Based on what he was told about his birth, he's been making people laugh from the moment he arrived to make his formal debut to society — his mother was feeling painfully nauseated and when she was finished puking, she didn't even realize he was there on the bed crying. "I just came out," he chuckles. "And then my dad was like, 'Do you hear that?' [My mom] was like, 'I don't hear anything, I feel great.'"

Even as a child, Lil Nas X had a feeling that he would go on to do something great. But he didn't just sit around and wait for an opportunity to emerge out of thin air. Lil Nas X turned to the Internet to not only break away from his chaotic surroundings in Atlanta, Georgia but to find the whole pieces of his higher self. As he embarked on this transformative journey through the lens of social media, he started making music that translated as well as the memes he casually fired off without overthinking them. In the early stages, Lil Nas X didn't take music seriously, he was simply doing it for fun while studying computer science in college.

Lil Nas X insists that he's mostly been winging it, but all the evidence proves that he's clearly a natural-born social media savant with his finger on the pulse of pop culture. He

knew exactly what he was doing when he dropped "Old Town Road" in 2018. While he couldn't have predicted the nationwide controversy that would ensue after it went No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, he did anticipate the single's viral success. Lil Nas X could sense that it was special the entire month he spent in the studio working on the melodies and flows. Once he started to promote the country-trap song in its final form, TikTok took care of the rest and sealed his fate.

Not long after, it seemed like the rest of the world was finally ready to follow Lil Nas X's lead as 2019 was dominated by the "yee-haw agenda." (Of course, most of us are aware that there's more to the culture than cowboy costumes, especially within the Black community.) In 1966, Nancy Sinatra said that boots are made for walking; this year, Stuart Weitzman made \$695 boots for voting in the upcoming election. If Lil Nas X weighed in, boots would probably be for wading through troubled waters without losing your balance, mind, or sense of self. His approach is slow and steady; he's in no rush to win the race.

"Old Town Road" made a strong case against the music industry's history of gatekeeping and discrimination through rigorous genre boundaries. At the time, Billy Ray Cyrus unexpectedly came to his defense, comparing Lil Nas X to the



country icon Waylon Jennings, a man who is remembered as “one of the greatest outlaws in the history of country music.” When Lil Nas X officially came out as gay, it caused an uproar of commotion within the country and hip-hop scenes. Despite haters pulling up in strong opposition, Lil Nas X always gets the last laugh in the heat of the moment. Last year, he debuted at No. 18 on Country’s Top Earners list in Forbes with a whopping \$14 million pre-tax. Come 2021, his children’s book *C Is for Country* will be out on Random House to educate the youth (with some extra help from Panini the pony).

Whether or not he identifies as an outlaw or a rebel without a cause, Lil Nas X is certainly a trailblazer. He’s a self-made breakout success story from the digital world, sent to explore the mysterious in-between while challenging America’s outdated norms. Within his six-foot-two-inch frame, Lil Nas X embodies a future paradigm shifting the landscape as he sees fit. So far, it’s a better reality than anyone in our lifetime could have ever conceived. Make no mistake — Lil Nas X is no one-hit wonder. Though his process looks effortless, he pours his whole self into it.

On a Zoom call, you’ll find him constantly in motion, like a revolving door, passing through each room of his spacious Los Angeles apartment with ease, in the comfort of a bright pink Versace robe. While we wait for the next phase of Lil Nas X to load, he’s provided some guidelines for navigating all the twists and turns up ahead.

ON NOT-SO-HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Growing up, I honestly always felt I was going to be someone huge in some way. I just didn’t know how. And it didn’t even seem like it would be possible. I grew up in Atlanta in these apartments called Bankhead Courts. It was very fun a lot of times — it was like a community — but it was also super violent and toxic. My family was always changing. I lived with my mom and my dad at first, and then they broke up. Then I lived with my mom and grandma, and then my dad got custody of me and my brother. I was there until I became famous. When you’re growing up anywhere without outside forces, you feel like it’s the only place besides TV. Social media opened up so much of the world and showed me there’s so much I can be in this life. And whenever I find that thing that sparks me, I’m going to take it all the way there.

ON THE UNIVERSE

I was Christian. Then I was atheist for a while. And now I believe in the universe and that I’m being guided by my angels and other forces that are protecting me.

ON COMING OUT

I always feel like I can never truly say, “Be brave and come out.” I was already in a great place where my family wasn’t wanting to kick me out of the house. But if I had come



**I have those moments where I’m like,
“Fuck all of this. I don’t want to be here.”**

out two years ago, things may not have been the same. No matter what happens, if people are to disown you, just go forward. Because I feel like the universe is always going to put better things and replace old things in your life.

ON YOUTH

With this young generation being able to receive so much information from the Internet, it’s going to be a recipe for something incredible. I feel like people are seeing so much more so early on, reading about so many different types of people and learning more about what’s going on in the world. It’s bound to make something shake like crazy.

ON STAN CULTURE

Growing up, when I was on it, I would use it as some kind of escape, or just a way to get away from everything and be more of myself, being more comfortable with like-minded individuals who were super into pop culture and whatnot. But it was also very toxic and pretty shitty. I did shitty things, but you know, it was a great learning moment and a crazy pivot in my life that helped me grow.

ON DIGITAL INFLUENCE

Having a big platform and digital influence is a superpower. It’s always great to have people who are looking forward to what you’re going to say or do next, and to feel that you have some kind of voice, but it’s also very finite. You have to really watch what you say, even if you’re just joking. You have to think more before you post, to remember to actually get what you want across. Because sometimes I’ll get distracted from trying to make people laugh or something on Twitter instead of finishing up a song and working on something. It’s you who has to make sure your priorities are in order.

ON MEME MAGIC

Making memes comes naturally to me, but it’s a hit or miss thing. It’s emotion and trauma — because I feel like a lot of memes come from a morbid place. There’s this meme that I like right now where people found a fake jet that influencers post pictures in. I found it super hilarious how much we do to prove to people we’re doing well. I think digital influence is a superpower. It’s always great to feel like you have some kind of voice. But it’s also very finite. You need to give people something more than a little post that they’ll forget about.

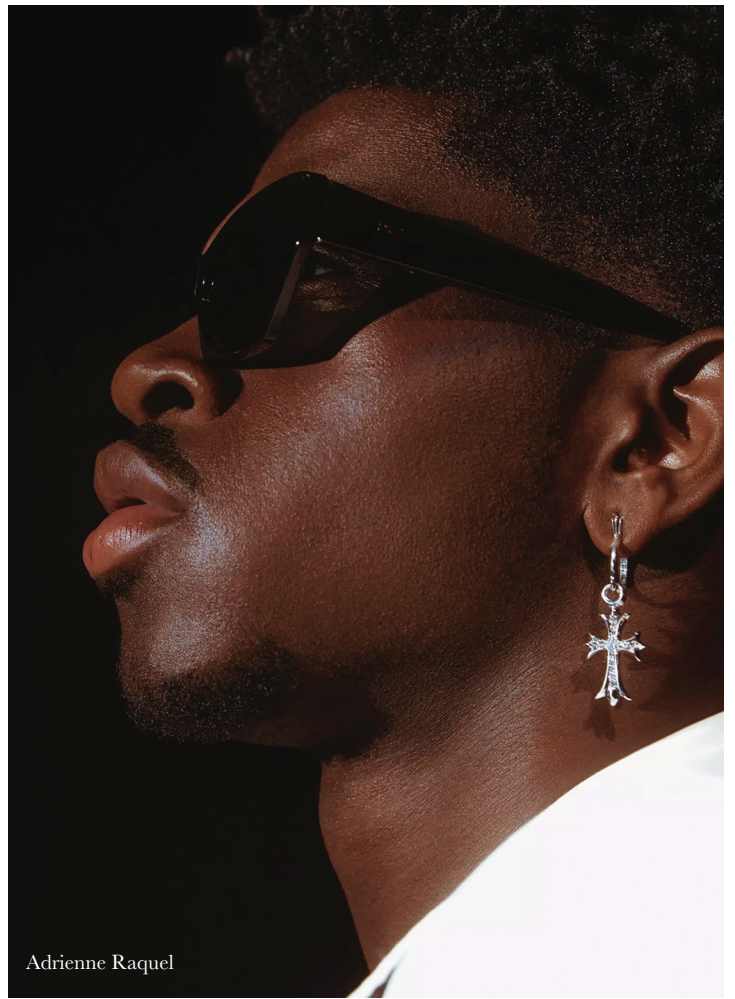
ON ANGER MANAGEMENT

I don’t get angry a lot, but if I see some shit and have a moment of rage, I just tell myself to calm down. Because I know that at the end of each angry moment, there’s always a moment of, “Was that necessary?” It’s always hard when you’re actually in the moment, but you’re supposed to push past it and not reply to people in the moment. If it’s not helping me, it’s not helping me.

Adrienne Raquel



Adrienne Raquel



Adrienne Raquel



OAKLEY

