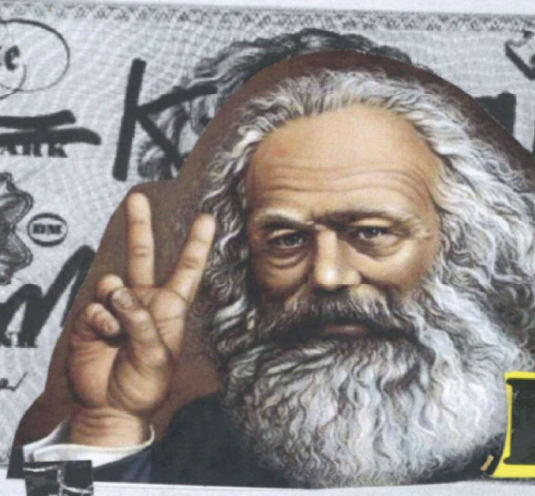




SCRIPT



Commodity
fetishism



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Dear lovely readers,

For this issue of Scriptus we wanted to do something a little bit different. After the success of our color version at the end of last year, we wanted to focus more on visuality while also giving our writers a guiding concept to base their work on. After much consideration, we decided on Commodity Fetishism.

So, you may be wondering, what exactly is Commodity Fetishism? Commodity Fetishism is a Marxist term which describes the relation people have with commodities. Marx defines commodities as, "an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind". Through the disillusion of commodities from their use value, they gain a sort of mystical quality which makes us want them so bad. We disconnect objects from the laborers who created them and connect them instead to the system of currency. Because of this, those of us living in a capitalist society begin to consider the merit of the commodity as inherent to the object and not stemming from its use value. In our homeboy Karl's own words, "The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the products of labor themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things". This leads us to believe that what is actually a social bond amongst citizens is "the fantastic form of a relation between things".

Although somewhat complicated, this phenomenon is incredibly applicable to our consumer-based lifestyles, so, we thought it would be perfect for this issue. Because the term is so loaded with theory and strictly interpreted in academia, we wanted to offer a bit of creativity to our writers. We gave authors the opportunity to write about commodity fetishism in a traditional sense or commodification (and all the intricacies which come along with it) or fetishism—however you'd like to interpret it ;)

We hope you enjoy this issue of Scriptus and the new approach we're trying to take. Delve into the pages to find stories on examples of Commodity Fetishism in China, glorification of the western lifestyle, how we grant objects personal value, incorporating intimate wear into your wardrobe, shopping for intoxicants on the dark web and much, much more.

xoxoxox

Your co-chairs,

Neda and Adri

(and everyone else in the team that has made this issue a reality)

Scriptus
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CHINA

by Ana Luiza Loio

For most Westerners, the Chinese contribution to consumerism on a global level may be easy to recognise (yet hard to escape). China's currency management policies are clear efforts to keep costs of production low, thus ensuring its exports are competitive in the global market. Low prices do, of course, mean there is more demand for the country's often useless consumer goods which are incessantly produced on the back of latent inequality and poor labour rights. In other words, the Chinese economy is supported by commodity fetishism, the idea that products have an intrinsic monetary value around which socio-economic relationships should revolve.

So, how is the Communist Party of China (CPC) able to sustain the myth that the regime currently in place is inspired by Marxist theory? Firstly, the highly educated elite is awarded privileges and positions in the Chinese bureaucracy, and thus, does not have any interest in opposing the party's claims. Yet, the elite obviously doesn't account for the majority of the country's population. Apart from media control and the fear of repression, the discourse adopted by the CPC in speeches, propaganda, and in educational settings, defends the concept of "socialism with Chinese characteristics". In other words, it is maintained that the government modernises and modifies Marxist ideas in order to match China's reality today. Moreover, the Three Represents Theory, contained in the party's constitution, affirms that the Chinese government represents "productive forces", "China's advanced culture", and "the interests of the majority."

Still, the country's huge socio-economic gaps indicates that the "interests of the majority" are not really represented. The lower classes may be prompted to believe a socialist market economy is the most desirable economic system as it ensures government protection while still allowing them to have access to consumer goods and services provided by the global market. Although the desire for luxury goods is a key factor in guaranteeing support to the CPC, a considerable amount of the population cannot in fact afford them — for these people, the consumerist culture only increases the risk of becoming indebted. And, while it is true that poverty has been diminishing in China, having a "socialist" state driven by commodity fetishism and materialist relationships is still highly contradictory. In that sense, president Xi Jinping's "Chinese dream" seems like the long lost sister of the American dream, as both are myths constructed by the political class with the sole objective of boosting economic growth.

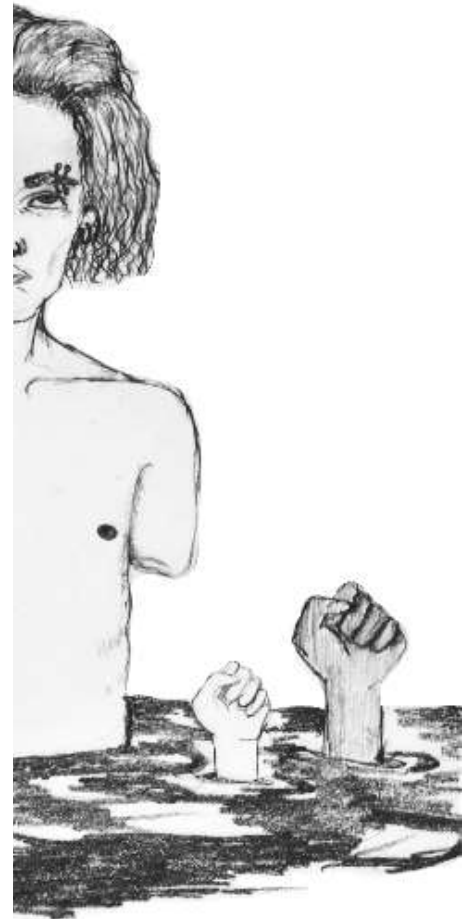
State - Led Capitalism

You may still be asking yourself: if it is true that the Chinese government is as controlling and hypocritical as we hear, why don't the masses revolt? After all, among such a huge population there must at least be a few people who recognise the problems with their current regime. The reason is, in fact, the very same as why most of us in Western countries are hesitant to criticise capitalism more radically: we don't know any better. This is very well illustrated by Mark Fisher's concept of Capitalist Realism, which describes our inability to imagine a world without capitalism. Similarly, Chinese people may think that Western capitalism is the only alternative to the CPC's socio-economic system. Although this dichotomy may seem inevitable, it is interesting to note how China is subjected to the same thinking as we are in our capitalist realist oriented minds - if we were to revolt, what other system would we demand? Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek argues we should go for utopia; not as a pursuit of the ideal society but as a means of enacting what seems impossible. However, be it in China or anywhere else, most people still tend to conformism, which is not exactly a surprise considering the extremely rationalised, almost effortless lifestyle of the modern individual.

It is true, of course, that the West benefits from constitutional democracies that guarantee our rights to speak freely and to have our thoughts communicated. Yet, whether we are talking about traditional or state-led capitalism (the Chinese version of it) matters very little. In practice, none of them are able to escape the status-quo imposed by neoliberalism and the global economy. The presence of commodity fetishism in both realities reflects precisely that; it seems hard, almost impossible, to acknowledge the use-value of material goods and not to constantly consume or to want to consume more and more.

Written by Diana Coman
Illustrated by Adèle Julia

COUNTER CULTURE PROTEST



Considering the increasing commodification of culture and the growing control over its production by the 'cultural industries', engaging with counterculture is becoming the most effective way of defying the hegemonic social hierarchies of Western capitalism.

The elusive material relations of the capitalist market have allowed for the replacement of a product's use value by its assigned economic value, meaning that the masses will believe that the illusion of its resulting intrinsic value represents its quality. By understanding this concept of commodification, one begins to unravel the mystery of why the same music artists or those replicating their styles tend to gain the most recognition. Artists such as Katy Perry, who is the highest grossing female artist of 2018 at \$83 million (Greenburg 2018), owe their success to the workings of the capitalist system and the cultural industries disseminating its business ideology. Perry's music consists of a danceable beat and the repetition of a few melodic chords, making it easily marketable where its simplicity gives it the efficiency to be distributed to listeners worldwide and thus sell at a profit for the demand of entertainment for the masses. Consumers are thus lured into subjecting themselves to the dominant social assumptions responsible for 'the perpetuation of a social set-up which concentrates wealth and power in the hands of the few' (Barry 168).

The development of a counterculture strikes at the very core of the culture industries' supremacy in standardisation and mass production of cultural material. Critique of the system finally becomes possible again due to the resistance to commodification and discourse of the dominant culture. Protest surfaces through the emerging DIY initiative, for



'in a society built around the principle that we should consume what others have produced for us,' 'the very activity of producing culture has political meaning' (Duncombe 7), leading one closer to the Marxist objective of emancipation. In addition, the cultural work created by countercultures often challenges the expectations of entertainment where their consumption cannot be marketed within the capitalist order without it contradicting itself. Punk music serves precisely this purpose by employing harsh vocals and a lack of musicality, which draws attention to the message of the lyrics charged with political meaning of revolt against the bourgeois oppressors, destroying the factor of distraction that captures the individual mind into the mechanisms of repression of what Marx called 'the false consciousness'.

A place where counterculture thrives is Manchester in Northern England; a deindustrialised urban landscape greatly affected by poverty and unemployment. Indeed, it is



*Slowly, patches, safety
pins, and written slogans
appeared and fashion
became more individualised,
thus dismembering the
uniformisation of society
generated by mass consumerism.*



this city's greatest calamity that has given birth to an explosion of creativity and a fierce local identity in opposition to the cultural industries in London that represent the capitalist hegemony. Manchester's resistance to adhering to the constructs of production (especially in music) stems out of its dissident reaction due its disadvantaged position in terms of the principles enforced by the state's governments,

thus suffering extensively at the hands of its neoliberal doctrine of market competitiveness. It was the followers of this doctrine, starting with Margaret Thatcher, who had closed down its factories, removing the main source of income for Manchester, and cutting funds to its most financially vulnerable population. The cultural resistance that has emerged here is one of survival where it is 'a way to put up with the daily grind and injustices of life while holding on to a semblance of dignity' (Duncombe 7). Moreover, protest occurs not only as a response to the hurt that the inequalities of capitalism have caused, but also due to the state's weak ideological grasp upon Manchester in a failure of its own control mechanisms, hence the cultural rebellion is rife. Mancunians have been left with virtually nothing but a burning sentiment that it cannot go on like this.

When boredom and lack of opportunity reigned in the 1970s as well as today, 'the DIY spirit of punk was easily grasped in a city well used



to making do, struggling to improvise a culture out of 'whatever's to hand' (Haslam 117). The worker's rags became the ripped suits and denim worn with pride rather than the shame imposed upon them by the upper class. Slowly, patches, safety pins, and written slogans appeared and fashion became more individualised, thus dismembering the uniformisation of society generated by mass consumerism. Paramountly, it is the platforms for the performative element of counterculture that Manchester possesses so that protest can be manifested. This includes Afflecks in the Northern Quarter, an alternative commercial space where independent retailers can sell their produce and collections, limiting the alienation of labour. Similar marketplaces offer people the opportunity to buy items that are not mass produced by transnational corporations, facilitating the expression of the ideas of counterculture which the sellers also belong to, and also supporting the local economy. Taking into account that Afflecks is located in close proximity to the major shopping mall, The Arndale, its success proves how unyielding Mancunians are in their grasp on their cultural resistance.

Manchester has likewise been blessed with numerous venues perfect for performing live music, consisting of Band on the Wall which has been there since 1977 when the Buzzcocks held a gig there. Satan's Hollow and Rebellion also host a multitude of underground bands with an entrance fee of around £5, making it accessible for all regardless of economic background, emphasising the importance of inclusiveness in public space to keep the spirit of punk alive. These venues have offered the possibility for music outside the dominant culture to be heard giving rise to the existence of independent music labels, which are considered 'punk's greatest legacy to British music' (Haslam 114). They

have constructed 'an infrastructure to support the creativity unleashed by punk' (Haslam 115) to continue into the present day where the music filled with dissent for the establishment and politically undermining it can be heard. The resistance through counterculture triggered the hope for change and this triggered enthusiasm. 'Enthusiasm triggered involvement; punk rock was empowering, its fans inspired to form bands, to create their own culture. The momentum behind music in Manchester today remains this punk ethic: do it yourself.' (Haslam 113)

In conclusion, counterculture is not rebellion for the sake of rebellion itself. The fear of counterculture becoming the dominant culture is irrelevant since its aim is to do exactly that and establish a new social order through a revolution of the arts. Perhaps this concept can be further explained by analysing the components of Mancunian society which consists of an approximately equal mix of art students and members of the working-class. The collision of the two brings about an intriguing unity where counterculture begins to develop in a response to hardship as inspiration for revolution, flourishing in the politicisation of art.

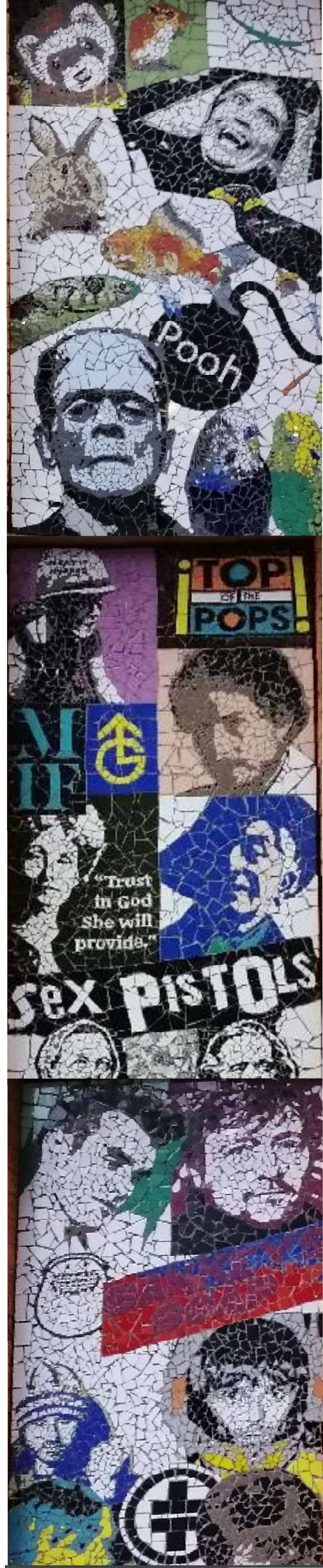
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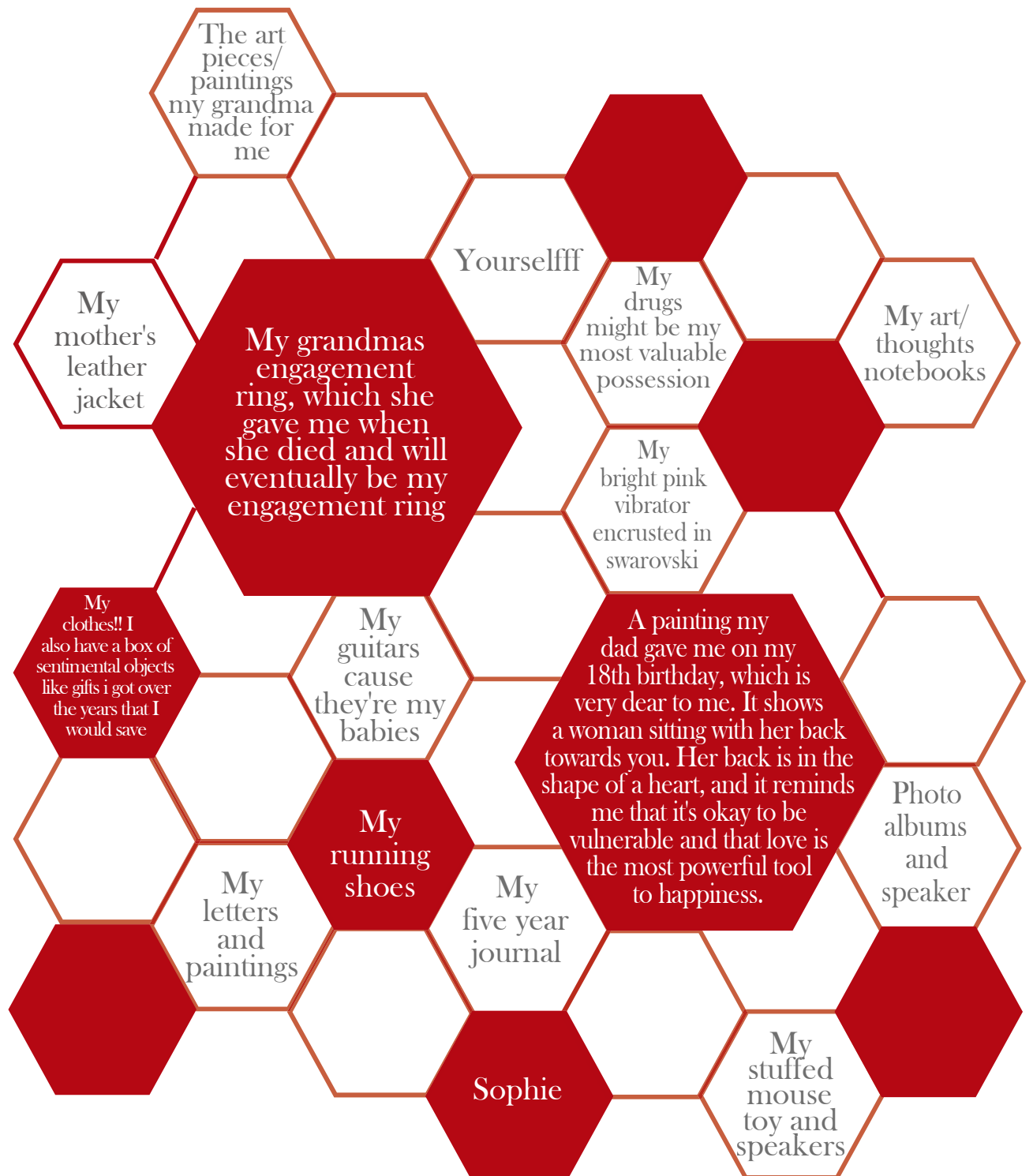
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WHAT WOULD YOU SAVE IN A FIRE?



Memories OR Medicine?

the harsh reality of an autoimmune disease

Written by Sophie Sutherland

This famous question has been asked during cringy first dates, the PG versions of truth or dare, and those first few days of class where your teachers awkwardly try to get to know everyone. Although the circumstances under which the question is asked aren't always optimal, it can lead to some fascinating discussions and reflections. Before sharing the responses, I need to comment on the fact that in the anonymous survey to get your responses, we had to specify that your electronics would be safe. Our world has undergone such drastic changes where technology have become our most valuable asset. We store photos on our phones, write our stories and important university assignments on our laptops, watch tv shows on them, possibly do our banking (or at least make a dent in our savings through online shopping), plan our time with calendar apps, contact the people in our lives, etc. Therefore, it seems natural that everyone would save one of their electronics, and that doesn't really make for an interesting article. So, with the exclusion of electronics, here were some of your answers (check page to the left).

Now, my answer to this question is easy, and perhaps strange for a nineteen year old girl. I would save my stuffed animal; a polar bear called Polly. In case you're wondering, yes Polly still sleeps in my bed with me, but come on, who wouldn't want to cuddle a soft stuffed animal while trying to fall asleep? I would save Polly in a heartbeat, because aside from being adorable, she's holds a very special meaning to me. Polly was a gift from my mother when I was having a hard time in middle school and started developing an inexplicable panic attack/tick thing — I'll spare you the details. Coming back from a particularly bad day at school I found Polly sitting on my bed. I can still remembering crying from happiness. This was an unexpected and heartwarming gift that my mom gave right when I needed it the most. And, likely not so coincidentally, my problems nearly immediately went away after I got Polly. My point here is that some objects have such a strong

emotional connection, that you can't fathom ever losing them. So, if I'm ever in the unfortunate, and rather unlikely, situation of being able to save only one item, it would be Polly. But there's something else I need to take into account: I'm a type 1 diabetic.

For those of you who don't what type 1 diabetes is, it's an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks the insulin-producing cells, meaning I regularly need to check my blood sugar, manually inject insulin and a whole list of other vital things. Maintaining a stable blood sugar is critical in remaining alive, because if it goes to high then I damage my organs, and even worse, when I go too low I could fall into a coma (and eventually...). So, this means I constantly need to check my blood sugar, which I do with something called my 'tester'. And here is the problem, if in reality I could only save one thing, would it be my cherished stuffed animal or the device that basically helps me stay alive? I honestly don't have an answer to this. On one hand, I can't get a blood sugar tester just



If you could only save one thing if your house caught fire, what would you save?



anywhere and I'd probably need a prescription for it. And, I check my blood sugar at least 8-10 times a day, so it's not like I can wait to get it (which applies to insulin as well, but it's more important for me to know my blood sugar in case it goes too low and I need sugar). But on the other hand, I would lose something priceless, something that can never be replaced. Which brings me to the point, what's more important? Can we survive in a world without having certain objects or people that bring us joy and make us feel loved? I think the answer is no. But, we can't live in a world without certain medical devices or medicine either (if we didn't have any, you'd likely already be dead). So, what would you save in a fire, what is more important to you; emotional or life-saving objects?



From the Sheets To the Streets

Photographer:
Cullen Ogden

Models:
Judi Kleine-Brockhoff
Zeynep Koban Pinhas
Carla Kay
Manar Charafeddine
Adriana Leila Rocks
Neda Summers







Sleepwear, lingerie and fetish gear are no longer just for the bedroom, see how Scriptus spices up everyday life with these provocative looks!





Western Fetishism

Written by Nada Elbohi

The elitism of the Western World and our obsession that feeds into it is an ever-present dictator deciding who is where and what is being heard, said and taught. This "Western Fetishism" ranges from the global divide between the "first world" and the "third world" that changed into "developed countries/states" and "developing world". Now the divide is labelled as the "Global North" and the "Global South" and seen in other aspects such as the worldwide definition of classical literature (that only includes Western literature). A Western us vs them, and who is this "them"? Those poor former European colonies that are "weak, impoverished, undemocratic, and helpless", in dire need of Western guidance to combat their backward cultural, political, and social systems? We, the excellent, diverse, enlightened, free-thinking, progressive students of AUC tend to think we do not fall prey to this kind of thinking that places Western Europe and the United States of America at the top of the hierarchy, but we do. We can see this in both the courses provided at AUC and the issues raised and given priority at AUC.

First, we can discern the Western Fetishism in AUC through its default assumptions that when referring to the “world” or “influential and important thinkers/concepts”. They actually mean the Western world and Western academics. AUC’s “Big Books” class and the title of the course incline one to assume Big Books refer to the books, as the course manual states, “of paramount importance”. However, this is a course only on Western Literature and the manual continues by stating “in Western culture and history”. There is an entirely separate literature course at AUC for the rest of the world. This may seem insignificant, but it’s not. It perpetuates the automatic assumption that the world—and its significance—is comprised primarily of the Western hemisphere and then secondarily of the rest of the world. This is also seen in other courses such as “Cities and Cultures” in which the course’s content presupposes that the cities of importance are those in Western Europe and America (with the exception of discussing Istanbul). The course description of “Law, Society, and Justice” claims that law is a Western notion and that other societies use primitive means of order, the primary theorists and theories in “Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory” are from Western Europe (with one chapter on Post-Colonial theories from writers such as Said and Spivak). “Inequality and Poverty” also focus almost exclusively on the “Global North”. This is only to name a few courses that carry out this trend.

Furthermore, the issues primarily addressed by the AUC student population, while of equal importance, do not take into consideration the pressing issues of racism, xenophobia, combatting Eurocentrism, inequality, widespread poverty and many more issues that are of paramount significance in countries of the “Global South”. Neglecting such persistent issues that are present at the homes of many AUC students feeds into the common obsession with the “Global North” in the “Global South”. For instance, if we take a look at countries in the Middle East such as Egypt, there is conspicuous admiration of the West and where white-Western individuals are paid double the salary of that of an Egyptian. This is because there is a common belief held by

many that Westerners must “know more and do better” than the rest. This notion leads to the appointment of white-Westerns to improve the public image of the organization, school, company, etc. Additionally, Egypt is frequently criticized for its suppression of freedom of speech, which is very true, but to the majority of the population in Egypt this is not a pressing concern. This is because approximately 30% of the Egyptian population lives in poverty, while only 10% of the population has a secure enough income to access quality education, ensure that their medical bills covered, and have a home with stable electricity and running water. Thus, more than half of Egyptians don’t have the luxury of caring about freedom of speech because they’re too busy figuring out a way to put food on the table for their kids. It’s here where we can see the true implications of Western Fetishism. It creates a higher value of worth for individuals from the West in comparison to everyone else. The ideas and values held by countries in the “Global South” are perceived as inherently flawed, where the issues are persistent, and, thus, neglected (think about the media coverage and empathy shared in regards to terrorist attacks in Paris in comparison to the Baghdad bombings that same year), and that their society in general is dysfunctional. This is further perpetuated with “foreign aid” and the white savior providing money, education, etc. when what is truly needed is equal respect and to learn from one another rather than building a dependence of the “Global South” on the “Global North”. The issues facing nations in the “Global South” are quite different from those of the “Global North” and while there is overlap, many of the more demanding issues are a vital concern in the “Global South”. Focusing only on a limited range of issues implies that these are the only issues of significance in the world. This article does not in any way suggest that these issues should be disregarded, but rather it urges for collective change: for us to be what we claim to be at AUC. This is not only in the way that we perceive the “Global South”, but also in the way that we talk about it. As ‘globalized’ students, we must give equal weight and consideration to issues of both the “Global South” and the “Global North”.

AUC GIRLS

Written by Lanie Preston

Illustrated by Anne-Marie Dimanche

This is a conversation I've often found myself in over the past year: someone compliments me on my clothes, and I respond by enthusiastically yelling about how cheap they were. With a few exceptions (I draw the line at used underwear), approximately 70 percent of my wardrobe was purchased secondhand, and I haven't stepped foot into a mainstream clothing store in almost 18 months. I often shop at flea markets and secondhand stores, but mostly, I buy my clothes through AUC Girls, the Facebook group directed at AUC's female-identifying students. Buying secondhand clothes is often cheaper, and that means more money to fritter away on food and fun. There's also no chance that me and five other girls in the AB will wear the same dress. However, the number one reason I wear secondhand clothing is sustainability.

On top of numerous human rights concerns associated with fast fashion vendors like H&M or Zara, it's been well-documented how horrendous the fashion industry is from an environmental standpoint. The apparel industry accounts for 8 percent of annual global emissions, emitting four gigatons (that's a four followed by 9 zeros) of CO₂ in 2018 (Quantis 2018). Worldwide consumption of clothing has skyrocketed in the last few decades. Western Europeans, in particular, currently purchase an average of 27 kilograms worth of new clothing annually, a 60 percent increase from 15 years ago (Greenpeace 2017). Between the widespread availability of cheap clothing and the convenience offered by online shopping, we've created a machine fueled by mindless consumerism at the environment's expense.

Living in a Capitalist society, the idea that we always need to follow ever-changing trends and wear brand-name clothing is ubiquitous. My Instagram explore page is flooded with "influencers" promoting sponsored content and garments emblazoned with logos. Advertisements lining the Kalverstraat scream out the newest fads and must-have items. And while thrift stores like Episode or Zipper are obviously miles ahead of fast fashion outlets in terms of sustainability, their high prices and exclusivity still contribute to the culture of consumerism that's currently destroying our planet.

While I also shop regularly at flea markets like Ijhalen, the AUC Girls Facebook page shines like a beacon in a sea of mass-produced polyester garments. A quick scan reveals dozens of posts with shirts, jeans, and dresses, all with plenty of life still in them, all conveniently located a few flights of stairs away. While initially it might feel a bit strange to wear other people's clothing, the benefits for our planet (and for your wallet) are undeniable. Ultimately, I have a fun, unique, and affordable wardrobe full of pieces saved from a landfill. And in a world where it feels like everyone and everything is starting to look the same, isn't that something we should all strive for?

The Bubble's Sustainable Answer to Fast



IF IT'S
NOT 2ND
HAND.....

I DON'T
WANT
IT

A
look

SUSTAINABILITY?

THAT'S SO
HOT

SUSTAINABLE
FASHION

PERFECTE

MATCH

Fashion

TRENDS
ARE TEMPORARY
FASHION IS EVER

DARK

Have you ever encountered somebody with a peculiar and overwhelming fascination for what seems to be a niche topic? Maybe it was somebody super into cheese, and you're really not that into cheese, so you didn't quite get it? That's about 99% of the conversations I have about my fascination with intoxicants, harm reduction practices, or anything at all drug related. Let's start with a little history lesson before we get into my preferred method of procuring my favorite substances.



Although I'd love to get into the nitty gritty of the War on Drugs and what an absolute farce it's been, I'd much rather focus on the vacuum it inevitably caused. By cracking down hard on supply, the early 2000's saw some of the strangest times for drug usage. Nobody wanted to sell drugs because it was too dangerous (perfect – make immigrants and poor people become drug dealers) and nobody wanted to buy them for the exact same reason. Were drugs normal goods of consumption, maybe people would have just stopped doing them.



No. People don't just stop doing drugs. If there are drugs, people will do them. Did we stop doing Opium because the government cracked down on it? No, we stopped doing Opium because innovation happened, and a bunch of better Opium derivatives were discovered.

So, here we are now in a place where the government inevitably placed us. This weird, falsely identified as drugless time of 2011. The Internet has been around for a while, and those who were clever enough would have used it in the early 2000's, before people even realized it was possible, to send drugs over the internet in exchange for a bank transfer. But then quite suddenly, people began to understand the internet. There was a literal boom of new technical knowledge spreading, new company's springing up on the daily to facilitate online businesses and suddenly, the regulations followed suit.

It's hard to govern in the digital age, there's no doubt about that, but the age where websites engaged in illicit activities could hide in plain sight, are long gone. What has come to light is a gaining shift from surface-level-web activities (Google, Facebook, YouTube etc.) to darker and more obfuscated layers of the internet. These layers require secondary software in order to gain entry, but if you're able to use Google, finding your way onto the deep web (as it is commonly referred to), is insanely easy.



WEB

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DARK WEB?

Written by Sven Siegrundson

Illustrated by Alexa Loedin



I made my first series of orders on the deep web in 2016, an almost golden age for dark web marketplaces, and now in 2019, I continue to order from them. In those three years I have made approximately 40+ orders of a variety of products and have lost only one package. Maybe it was two.

Now, a list of reasons why I feel so comfortable using this method of purchasing and why I am attracted to this unholy version of Amazon:

- 1.) It is objectively safer for me to make a drug deal from behind the safety of my screen. I'm not in danger of being physically harmed which is a massive plus if you're a spindly kid who looks like they could be 14 or 42.
- 2.) The feedback system. If I buy a gram of cocaine from that guy I met on the street, and it's under dosed or god forbid laced with fentanyl, there's nothing I can do about it. If you're exceptionally moral you may report it to the police, but chances are you'll do nothing, and the dealer can continue scamming and endangering people. Enter the feedback system. Like on Amazon, all products and vendors are reviewed on a dark web market. There are moderators who handle disputes and there are other like-minded users like you who are looking for the same safe and preferable method of buying drugs. Hard to explain without much detail, but without the feedback system the whole thing wouldn't work. If you see that the last three people who ordered from a certain vendor haven't received their product, you'd probably be smart and not order from them.
- 3.) Lastly there is also no doubt that the quality of the products I receive from the deep web are higher in terms of purity than anything I have ever bought from the street. Often vendors will pay to have a sample from a batch tested and posted publicly online to vouch for their products.



The future of dark web marketplaces looks shaky right now. Marketplaces are centralized, meaning one person or group maintains the entire network. Centralization famously leaves one central point of failure, and if the person or persons in charge are compromised, the whole network could be destroyed. Alphabay and Hansa Market were examples of this sort of failure in 2017. The Dutch Police is still arresting people two years later in regard to their investigation and take down of the two mentioned markets.

The future holds decentralized markets, where transactions frequently occur without trust between parties directly. In fact, the technology is already developed, but the userbase needs to embrace the change. The last remaining dark web market 'giant', Dream, where I still shop to this day, is the last line of defense for this shift. Do I expect all centralized markets to fail? Eventually, yes. Will the drug community continue to innovate and find new ways to beat legislations? Absolutely.

It's only a matter of time...



Bernard

What's one thing you recently did that scared you? How did you feel afterwards?

Snowboarding. It was my first time snowboarding and everyone else already knew how to do it, so most of the time I was alone. I was by myself, trying to figure it out, going down the hill – it was a lot of fun. It wasn't a fear, but it was something I thought I couldn't really do, and I did it. Another experience was bungee jumping. I was super afraid of heights and I saw this bungee jumping place when I was with my brother. They were gonna close in 20 minutes. And I told myself 'It's now or never'. So I was like 'Fuck it!' and then I did it. I read this quote by Will Smith that said 'Behind fear, there's ultimate bliss' – when I bungee jumped there were massive amounts of fear and then it felt like ultimate bliss.

What did the experience teach you?

In my opinion, it turned out positively. It felt like I had this barrier, this insecurity and being in that state with other people felt awkward. But afterwards it was just like a hurdle in the mind for me, in the sense that it wasn't that big of a deal, to be honest. It was this story I made up in my head, and afterwards it was like 'Oh ok, I did it'.

What were you the most nervous about during the shoot?

There was a lot going on (laughing). It was awkward and not-awkward at the same time. 'Cause everyone had to undress and you don't wanna be the first one undressing, you know? So we all decided to do it at the same time. And after that when Lola took our picture, she told us how to position ourselves – that was awkward, but it was more like 'Um, I'm kinda close to this person, and I'm literally, like, 90% naked here' (laughing).

How did you decide to participate in the naked calendar?

Some of my friends did it last year, and I really wanted to participate in it, but I didn't. So this year I tried to implement Junket in it – I told them that we should do this as a fun bonding experience, and they were down for it. That's the main reason why I did it, but I also wanted to overcome my fears. I'm not afraid of my body, but I'm insecure about it, and I feel like nobody should be insecure about their body – I mean, it's you. So I saw this as an opportunity to get out of my comfort zone.

Emily

Changing my major (from Sciences to Social Sciences). I was scared most of the time, and also my values were compromised – lifelong values that I had, that I thought were dependent on status and the role that you have in academia. I realize now that I'm not really a school person, or a book person, in the sense that I'm not really as book smart as I am street smart. So I think that altering your life values is a very confronting process.

I think that (the photo shoot) was a different vibe than the photo on the actual calendar itself. It being on paper is so much different than it being digital on Instagram, for example. So sometimes I post bikini pictures on Instagram, and I still feel like 'Ok, this might be a little shady, someone can take it or, you know, use it in a way'. But having it on a calendar for students – it kinda felt a little safer. And it also felt safer that it was in an environment where the body wasn't objectified as much.

Honestly, I was nervous about not being able to have synchronicity with the group on how we wanted to execute the vision – so how it'd look aesthetically. But not about how our bodies looked or anything, just how we would convey our message of self love and being okay with your body.

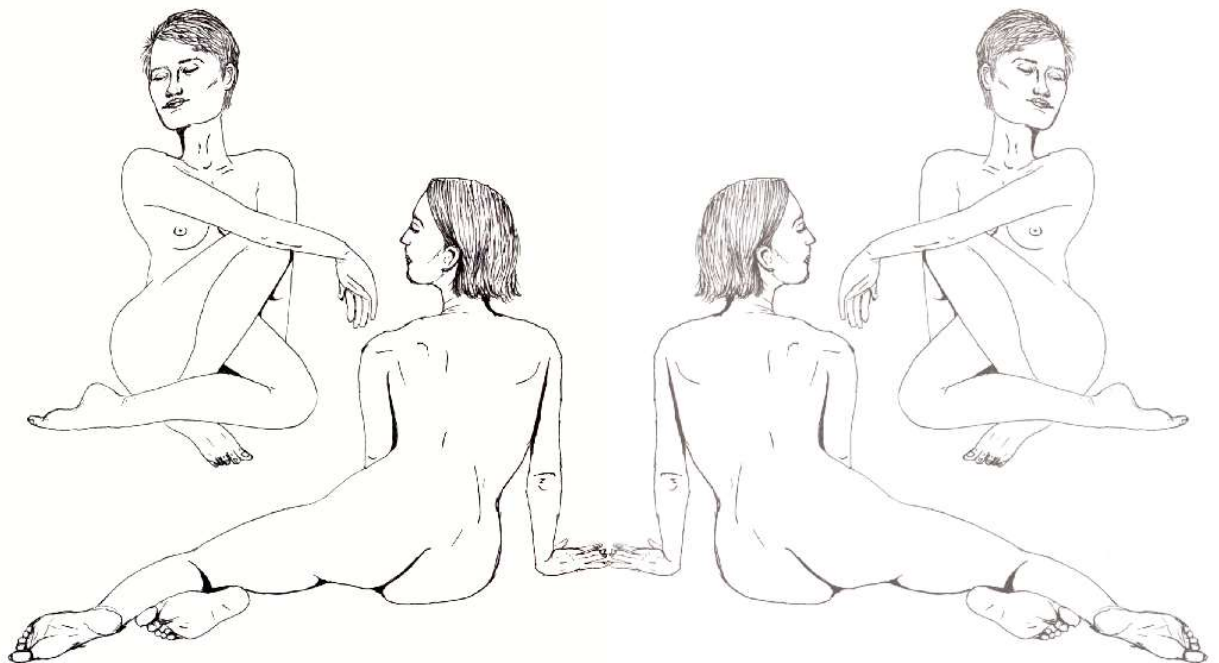
I actually used to have a lot of body image problems and I kind of grew out of that, so when they asked the Zen committee I was like 'Yeah, it's a good idea'. And because it was a group effort, it was less confronting, I'd say. So yeah – I thought it'd be a nice experience, and I don't think there's anything to be ashamed of.

Dare To Bare Dare To Bare

**Bold, daring, and unapologetically sexy – the stars of AUC's
naked calendar talk all things confidence and courage.**

Interview by Ralitzza Petrova

Illustrated by Maria Myers



Do you have any confidence tips?

Yeah! The biggest life hack, I'd say, is that awkwardness is in your head – awkwardness doesn't exist. If I feel like I'm in an awkward situation and that lowers my self esteem – what I do is just make it into a joke. I just make it into something funny, because at the end of the day it's really just about what you tell yourself. If you tell yourself 'Oh, I'm not gonna make this' – you're telling this story about yourself, and thus becoming that story. And if you tell a story where you're like 'I'm confident, I got this!' you're just gonna be making that story, and then you'll become it. So it's a life hack of perception, and it has helped me out a lot.

The way I did it was (as bad as it sounds now, it actually works) a 'fake it 'til you make it' process. Scientifically, if you say something to yourself over and over again while looking at the mirror – like 'I'm beautiful' or just 'This is real, I'm me, and I like it.' – you teach yourself to create and fabricate these confident-like thoughts. And eventually they just come naturally and genuinely, and then that's a shift that you make.

Anza

So I feel like every day I wake up, and I take off my clothes and I look at myself in the mirror, and I see this Greek god just standing in front of me and I'm like 'I'm the most selfish man on the planet, because there are just a handful of people that I get to share this godly beauty with. I'm a horrible, horrible person'. It ate away at me, and every day I thought about how morally corrupt and self-centered I had become. I saw the AUC naked calendar, and was like 'Finally, a chance for me to share with the world something that they've all desperately needed'. And then I just went for it, you know? I just gave the people what they wanted and, honestly, I think the world has been a better place since – at least AUC has been a better place.

One of the elements that were particularly nerve-wrecking was that it was really cold. Especially because my photo was in the courtyard, it was very much like 'I'm here, there are maybe sixty windows here, sixty windows there, and it's freezing cold, and Anza, just... you know, you do you'. And I'm like 'Uh, ok...' and I take my pants off. And of course going into it I had some of the more quintessential fears like 'Am I a little fat on the tummy? I mean, I haven't been going to the gym as much'. But I feel like I was very quick to humanize these feelings and feel like, of course, it's ok to feel this way. It's ok to feel like your Greek god-hood is perhaps not at its peak. But, you know, you can't think of it as something that needs to peak before you can celebrate it – I think the point is to celebrate your expression of your bodily self just as it is at any given moment.

How did you decide to participate in the naked calendar?

Paula

I think the same way that most people go into it – their friends ask them. One of the people asked me, and at first I was a bit hesitant, but then lots of the people that I knew were doing it, and I did think that the idea behind it was really nice. I think that there's this whole part of body positivity and showing who you are. I mean, your naked body doesn't say that much about you, but it's also a statement that you feel comfortable sharing it, I guess? And it's also just a bit cheeky – like, a wild thing to do.

What were you the most nervous about during the shoot?

What were you the most nervous about during the shoot?

I was nervous... Because, I mean, I don't have the "perfect" body – I don't have a problem with my body, but when you're there, and you're naked, and there's another person filming you... It's not something you're used to, it's a very different situation, and you're like 'Uh...How do I look? How does my body look?'. And I was really afraid of showing my belly – my belly is just too big, and my hips. That's the stuff I wanted to hide in the picture.

DARE TO BARE

ton of acid. That was
ary because – and I have
ychedelics before – I think
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which I was particularly
tational with myself. And I
at it could, perhaps, be very
r me. On acid I feel like I
y aware of my patterns –

I think that people shouldn't be afraid of expressing themselves. 'Cause I feel like expressing yourself is often like you have something to add, or you wanna direct the conversation somewhere – I feel like you are the only voice that could represent your experience. That's what you're here to do. Speak if you want to, and don't if you don't. Don't think about it as a grand confidence thing, it's a very human thing to represent your experience.

What's one thing you recently did that scared you? How did you feel afterwards?

The naked calendar, I guess. The thing I was the most scared about (in addition to what I said before) was this whole thing of ‘Ok, what about in twenty years? What if somebody finds it? When I’m a teacher and my students find it – what am I gonna say?’. But I think that part of the thing is that I’m strong enough to say ‘No, I did this for a good reason and you need to chill’ (laughing).

I think everyone has that thing when you say something stupid, or something that's a bit dumb, or isn't received the way you want it to be received. And then you're feeling like 'Oh shit, I said something really bad! Everyone's looking at me.' And you think about it for the rest of the day. I think it's very useful to remember that everyone is very self-centered and nobody really, really pays attention and really cares about your particular details, or something you said once. Unless it's, like, super horrible (laughing). That's something that I tell myself when I'm in these situations.

RECIPE



Guaranteed to get you laid GNOCCHI



Written by Adriana Rocks

Illustrated by Taimu Fujita

INGREDIENTS

- ☐ 1 pack of gnocchi
- ☐ A few handfuls of walnuts
- ☐ 2 cloves of garlic, minced
(increase for ultimate sexiness)
- ☐ A few handfuls of kale
- ☐ Gorgonzola cheese
- ☐ 1 Tablespoon crème fraîche
- ☐ Olive oil, salt and pepper
- ☐ Truffle oil and parsley to garnish

PREPARATION

- 1** Start by cooking your gnocchi in heavily salted, boiling water (you want it to taste like the sea). Drain a minute before the package indicates and reserve a cup of starchy pasta water.
- 2** While the pasta is cooking, place your walnuts in a dry pan and let them toast until fragrant. Keep an eye on them and move them around frequently to keep from burning. Once they're nice and toasty, remove from the pan and roughly chop.

RECIPE

3 Add enough olive oil to the same pan to coat the bottom and add your cooked pasta. Make sure to leave it untouched for a minute or so to establish a nice crisp. Then stir and let sit again (trust me, there's nothing better than crunchy gnocchi surrounded by luxurious sauce).

4 Once the gnocchi have taken on some color, remove from the pan and add your 2 cloves of minced garlic to the remaining oil. Let that hang out until you can smell the garlic and your tummy starts to grumble.

5 Then add your kale to the pan and season with salt and pepper. Let all those flavors get to know each other a lil bit until the kale has become a nice vibrant green.

6 Next, add a spoon of crème fraîche and a little bit of starchy pasta water to create a smooth sauce. At this point crumble in a bit of gorgonzola as well (if you don't like blue cheese feel free to substitute for parmesan, pecorino or grana padano).

7 Add your gnocchi and chopped, toasted walnuts back to the pan and stir to coat.

8 Finish with some chopped parsley and a drizzle of truffle oil (for extra luxury). Share the dish with that special someone and climb straight into bed after. Make sure to follow @seshnacks on Instagram for more awesome recipes.





A blurred background image showing four models in a studio setting. Two models are in the foreground, one on the left wearing a white top and dark pants, and one on the right wearing a dark top and dark pants. Two other models are in the background, one on the left wearing a light blue top and one on the right wearing a patterned top. They are all posing in a studio with a light-colored wall and a dark floor.

Are you interested in creating more photo spreads like these?

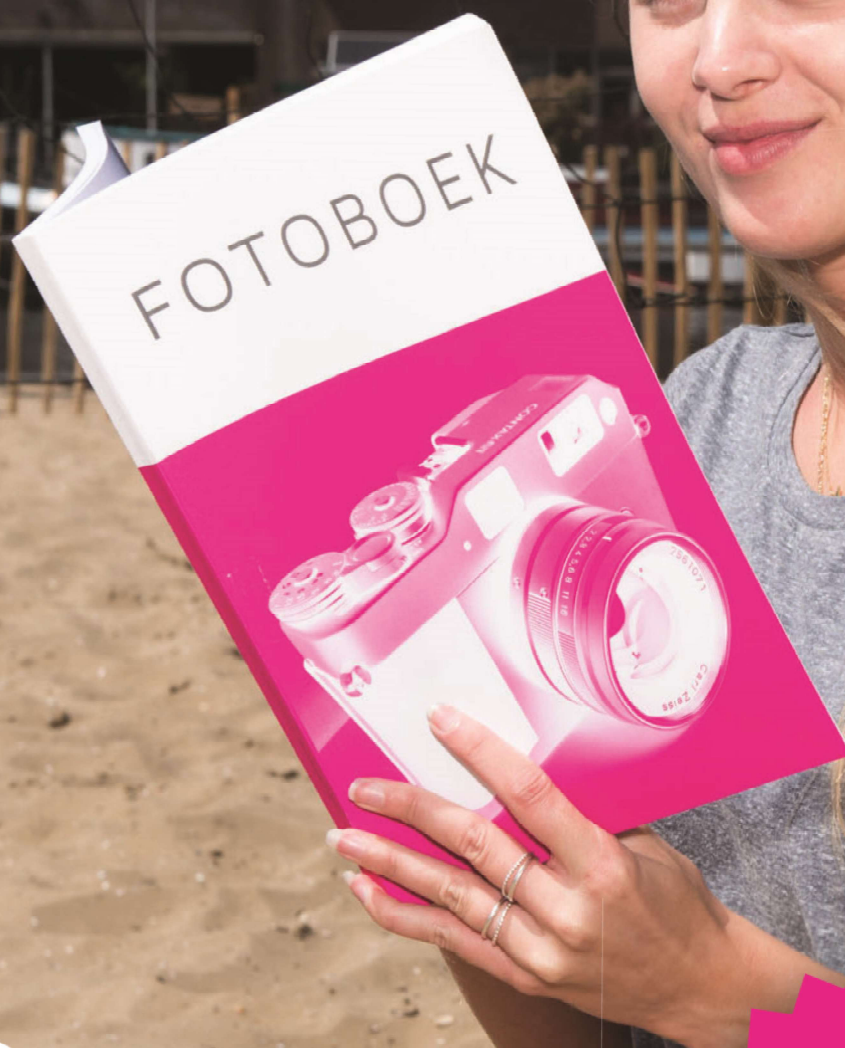
Do you have an eye for art directing? Are you able to locate and manage models, sets and props?

Scriptus is looking for an art director to help us create a more visually appealing product. With this position you'd be in charge of pitching shoot ideas, finding locations and models, organizing the photo sessions and assisting with the layout.

Please send a short motivation (300 words), any relevant experience (not required but always helpful) and a representation of your creative side (collage, photography, graphic design etc.) to scriptus@aucsa.nl

Are you interested in writing or illustrating for Scriptus? Shoot us an email at any point to pitch an idea

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