

ZIPPED





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Almost every Wednesday, my grandma would take my twin and me to the magazine stand near her house. "Só uma, hein." Only one. For a kid with ADHD, that felt like an impossible task. The covers were loud, colorful, intense. And while people love to say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, I absolutely did. I chose whatever looked unhinged, vibrant, unpredictable.

Fluir and Cemporcento Skate shaped my visual world long before I understood what design or photography even meant. I wanted my images on pages like those one day.

That dream was forgotten in my teenage years, but in college, during a TRM class where we made zines, everything snapped back into place. It reminded me of the physicality of print and the thrill of building something that speaks louder than you. And somehow, all of that led me here, creating my first issue as editor-in-chief of Zipped.

For this debut issue, I wanted to approach something that feels universal to our generation: the sensation that everything is happening everywhere, all at once. That's where Creation Through Chaos comes from. Because we are living through constant chaos: war, political corruption, environmental issues, dating apps, bets, social media, AI, TikTok, Labubu etc.... It's overwhelming, overstimulating, and honestly, exhausting. This issue asks a question I think matters right now: How do we hold onto originality and honesty when our entire reality feels like a rapid-fire through of influences?

What I'm exploring in this issue is how we, the gen z, can stay grounded, intentional, and real while everything around us is a mess. How to create meaning in a world that keeps trying to distract us from it. Creation Through Chaos is our attempt to create a order in the disorder. I hope you feel inspired.

With love, Maria Fernanda Boscoli Tellian

Editor-in-Chief, Zipped

Mariafernandaboscolitellian



Altamiro Boscoli: A messy guy with a genious brain & one of the inspirations for this issue

FINDING *Rhythm* IN THE CHAOS.

Text by Ceci Brown

Music is all around us, shaping the rhythm of our everyday lives. Whether it's passed down through family, discovered in a dorm room, or found in the chaos of growing up, music has always been the common denominator.

Some discover their sound young, others much later.

Konrad Birgisson, known musically as Kid Krono, is a 20-year-old artist and student at the University of Southern California (USC). The Brooklyn native grew up beside his dad, a music producer that Birgisson credits his creativity to. These beats became the soundtrack of his childhood, where chaos turned into creation.

As Birgisson grew older, he began posting beats online, building an email list of industry connections and sending out music weekly. During the 2020 pandemic, his songs began to surface online. With studios being shut down, the artist took this time to build connections online, leading to his first big break being with producer TM88, the producer behind "XO Tour Lif3." After hearing Birgisson's loops, the producer tweeted, "Where can I find this kid?" which led to internet attention and ultimately to Kanye West.

It all started when producer JW Lucas shared his email on a livestream. Birgisson added him to his contact list, not knowing it would lead to one of the biggest moments of his career: A loop he'd made years earlier was featured on a Kanye West album.

"I watched the livestream with my family, and then all of a sudden the song comes on and Jack Harlow walks out," he recalls. "It was a crazy full-circle moment."

Now studying business at USC while simultaneously working in the A&R department at Warner Records, Birgisson balances all sides of the industry: Talent scouting, development, and deal research.

"Production is amazing, but it doesn't feel like my end goal," he says. "I want to build something lasting—a company that helps producers and songwriters. Reputation is everything in music, and being able to relate to both artists and execs puts you ahead."

Balancing everything hasn't been easy for Birgisson. Between working 25 hours a week at Warner and managing business classes, finding time for music can be tough. In high school, he'd finish homework and produce all night. For Birgisson, that constant motion has become part of his personal rhythm. "The best parts are often accidents. I don't want to confine myself to a rigid process, music evolves as you make it."

While Birgisson represents the intersection of business and music, DJ Marina Diniz stays inspired by musical exploration and constant reinvention. From what also began at a very young age, DJ Marina Diniz has almost two decades under her belt, navigating through many musical landscapes — exploring house, disco, and always looking for inspiration. The Brazilian DJ remembers scenic long drives through Brazil, listening to her parents' tapes on the radio and ultimately sparking her passion for music.

Back in São Paulo, Diniz started performing in clubs across Mykonos, Paris, London, Milan, Sicily, Ibiza, and Barcelona. The Brazilian-born DJ has built a global career, performing at iconic venues like Pacha in Ibiza and The Surf Lodge in Montauk.

"It's easy to get lost in this industry," she said. "There is music, parties, alcohol, and drugs everywhere. But I've always treated this as my profession, not a hobby."

She often reminds herself where she started when she fell in love with music before the partying and fast-paced lifestyle. She encourages young musicians struggling to find focus on the chaos of the music world.

"Don't let all your inspiration come from Instagram or TikTok," she said. "Go out. Travel. Observe people, art, and fashion. Real-life experiences, that's where creativity lives."

Diniz stays inspired by adding textures to her music, collaborating with a pianist, an engineer, and experimenting with endless samples from across the world.

"Sometimes I start from scratch. Other times I take a song from the '70s or '80s and make it new again," she said. "That mix of old and new keeps it exciting. Stay true to your style, your ideas. That's what sets you apart."

Finding the Beat in Rowan Maida's Chaos

Like Diniz, student musician Rowan Maida also finds a beat within the chaos. Growing up surrounded by music — with both parents being professional musicians — Maida was immersed in creativity from birth. His mother, Chantel, is a world-renowned pianist who wrote songs for notable artists such as Drake, Kelly Clarkson, Gwen Stefani, and Avril Lavigne.

"They actually didn't want me to pursue music professionally," he said, "but it was always around me. Learning music was almost by osmosis."

One of Maida's biggest accomplishments was working with his mother on the song "Paris," which was used as a theme song for the 2024 Olympics. While some young musicians may see artificial intelligence as a disadvantage, Maida treats these changing times as an opportunity. He explains AI as "a cheat code that speeds up creativity," explaining that AI is giving young people the opportunity to access tools that don't just come with studio access.

"When I write my best music, I'm outside myself, looking through a different lens — it doesn't even feel like I'm writing it," he said.

The instruments kick off his process, where he often begins with a few piano or guitar chords before letting the rest take over. "Once it's in my hands, it's mine."

For him, balance remains key in the chaotic world of music: "Being a musician means going through highs and lows. You'll meet powerful people who aren't always positive influences, so you have to know who you are."

For Diniz and Maida, creativity grows from change and experimentation, not from control. Chaos is part of the process.

For Maida, this comes with authenticity, which he finds by spending time with his inspirations. As Maida puts it, "Being on Bon Jovi's tour bus showed me that inspiration doesn't come from silence — it comes from living through the noise."



The instinct of Camden Wappman

While Maida has found his love for music through legacy, Syracuse University student Camden Wappman discovers his through instinct.

Wappman's music journey began in fourth grade when he played in his school band, and has now grown to work with artists like Quavo and Lil Durk. It all started when Wappman began learning how to make beats from YouTube.

"Honestly, I just make what sounds good to me," he says. "I don't try to copy anything I have heard. When I sit down, I start playing around with the keyboard, hitting buttons [and] bouncing ideas. It's very experimental."

"On my first day of sophomore year in high school, I was in the cafeteria and someone I worked with posted a snippet of a song with Quavo," he recalls. "I was like, 'Why does this melody sound familiar?' Then I realized it was a melody I had sent the night before. That changed everything so many connections and friends came from that moment. It was my first big song with a major artist."

Wappman is now in the Bandier program at Syracuse, where he studies music. When asked about his long term goals, he describes them as he'll always keep creating — writing songs, producing beats, and working with the same group of friends he started with as a teenager. Still, his goals reach beyond just production; hoping to become a respected A&R, helping young, struggling artists get signed.

Wappman's beats are best recognized as dark, scary, and an eerie sound, which makes his work stand out in the industry.

From dorms to world-renowned venues to studios with some of the biggest names in music, it's often the students, producers, interns, and young creatives that form the backbone of it all. Beyond every top charting artist is a younger version of themselves who found their identity through music.

Illustration by Orissa Pandya



Photo by Khloe Scalise



CREATING A WAY *Forward*

Text by Anna Boling
Photo by Maria Tellian



Coming of age was once defined by first kisses, that pimple on your forehead the morning of prom, homecoming football games, late nights with friends and sneaking out. And while these are all still markers of adolescence today, Gen Z's coming of age has meant something far more complicated.

It's hard to remember a time when the world wasn't constantly unraveling. Gen Z has been defined by pandemics, protests, climate anxiety, and political chaos, to say the least, all while learning to build entire identities in the glare of social media. If one thing is true, it is that Gen Z has had to learn that everything is always changing.

The saying "change is constant," is an inarguable truism of life. And while many fear change, Gen Z has had no chance but to get used to it. But we aren't a generation waiting for stability; we've never even known what that feels like. Instead, Gen Z has learned to treat chaos as creative fuel and raw material. From launching businesses in bedrooms during lockdown to turning burnout into art, we're using chaos as a catalyst for creation — succeeding at it too.

Out of Isolation Came Creativity

March 11, 2020. We all thought we'd be out of school for two weeks, a quick break from exams and a tiny reprieve from the usual long days and pop-quizzes. If you're like me, you probably celebrated those two weeks of promised freedom. But then two weeks turned into two months, and two months into two years and then suddenly the break started to feel more like a blur.

We were the first cohort to fully grow up in a digital world. We had constant means of entertainment. Scrolling on TikTok for hours, stalking Instagram, re-watching Gossip Girl for the 10th time — but with so much time locked inside of our houses, what used to be an antidote for boredom started becoming, well, boring. So we searched for something more to do.

It was the era of Chloe Ting workouts and sourdough starters, of sleeping through virtual classes and desperately trying to find a new hobby to fill the endless days. Mine was painting — which I quickly discovered I was truly, horrifically bad at. But in hindsight, that was the point. We were all just trying to make something, anything, out of the stillness.

So we let this global panic give rise to great ideas. We started creating — music, art, dances, food, whole businesses — anything to occupy us. Gen Z started viewing stagnation as the new disease.

Jack Bernstein, a Syracuse University senior, found himself lonesome and anxious when the pandemic hit, and he thought that it would be a good time to start looking for ways to get his career started. He knew he was passionate about media, and started brainstorming ideas for how to take his first step into the industry. He landed on "Bernie's Bagels," a review channel where he went to different bagel shops and reviewed each.

"I didn't really know where I was going from that and I had no experience in media — but I kind of just one day started talking about the premise of the entire thing," said Bernstein. "I posted it and it kind of took off from there."

As Bernstein's review channel began to grow, he teamed up with a friend to design a logo and start monetizing his brand. After connecting with a printing company, he had the logo printed on beanies, turning his passion project into something tangible.

Tired of turning on the news and doomscrolling through headlines about political chaos, global disease, and climate catastrophes, Bernstein realized that amid all the chaos, he had the power to create something positive. He decided to donate all of his profits to Haitian earthquake relief efforts.

"Covid was good for my creative juices and it resulted in something that I'm extremely proud of," said Bernstein. "It's these little experiences and projects that you don't really realize will transform your life."





In the Crowd or On the Couch

For Gen Z, social media isn't only a space for connection. It can also be a space for political advocacy, the beginning of reform movements, and a call for bigger change. Growing up in a divided political landscape with a constant stream of breaking news, Gen Z has learned to navigate this chaotic landscape online.

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, X, and even YikYak have become digital megaphones for a generation who feel they deserve to be heard.

In today's day and age, it isn't uncommon for Gen Z-ers to feel lost in the chaos. But we have become intent on ensuring our politics are decentralized, movement-driven, and deeply emotional.

These issues have become addressed in group chats, social platforms, and memes, not just through traditional parties. Gen Z turns frustration into impact, creating conversation around the issues that plague our generation and calling for real change.

This sort of advocacy through social media can be traced back to 2020, where many Gen Z-ers began posting black squares on their Instagrams in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, in addition to the first major Gen-Z led movement in 2018 with March for Our Lives following the Parkland, Florida school shooting.

Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future mobilized students worldwide for climate strikes. Young activists drove Get Out the Vote campaigns and pushed the #MeToo movement forward, all through digital platforms.

Before social media, building a movement took months to years. Organizers had to rely on flyers, phone trees, or word-of-mouth, and momentum could easily stall. Now, a cause can spread online and spark action within hours. Gen Z has taken advantage of the new, powerful tool that is social media as a place for us all to speak up, and more importantly to speak up for what we believe in.

"I think it is really important, whichever position you take, that you say what you mean and you say it boldly," said Mila Oliva, a Southern Methodist University student government senior majoring in political communications. "Social media is a place for real change — if you feel a calling to post, you should."

You don't have to work on the Hill or be in cahoots with the president to make change now-a-days. It is imperative that Gen Z-ers get on social media and use their voice for change.

"I think it's really important that we have people our age that stand as a voice for the rest of us," said Oliva. "We don't want to go on TikTok and watch a 50-year-old woman with three kids speak for us. That has no relatability. We want to see college students in the same position as us who are scared to get employed, or nervous about the world and its political climate."

Oliva has advocated on TikTok herself, calling people to stand up against the assault on truth in the US and asking viewers to use their voices to speak up for what they believe in. She recognizes that social media is one of the most accessible

and powerful ways to call for action and start a conversation about the political decisions that will directly affect Gen Z-ers' futures.

Our feeds have been transformed into platforms for activism and empowerment, and thankfully, Gen Z is viewing activism as something that doesn't require a podium or a political title. There now happens to be influence in hashtags, comment sections, viral videos, and simply just using your voice on social platforms.

We now have the agency to reshape narratives and act as the watchdogs for those in power. And we are just one click away from making our voices heard.

"Social media unifies all of us and is a soundboard for how we're all feeling," said Oliva. "It is important that Gen Z feels safe to express our opinions because they do matter."



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They Don't Escape, They Engage

For Gen Z, the world is loud with uncertainty. It's an endless loop of doomscrolling, tuning into headlines about wars, wildfires, or school shootings and wondering, What can I possibly do about all of this? We want to understand where we fit into it all, or how we can fix it.

Creation has become Gen Z's quiet rebellion. Chaos feels constant, with the isolation of the pandemic to the unrest that followed to the hostile political climate of today, many Gen Z-ers have turned inward, finding that there can be peace in what they can make, build or change. For some, that escape comes through art and expression; for others, it is through channeling outrage into action.

When University of Michigan senior Anna Reins was in middle school, a speaker came to visit and talked about being on death row for 28 years. The whole time he was innocent. Reins was angry, but she was also inspired.

During the pandemic, she went down a rabbit hole researching the justice system, how it can fail us, and especially how it can fail those who are locked behind bars. During college, Reins began visiting prisons weekly and leading workshops.

"I want to be a lawyer because I want to have the resources to represent these prisoners and change their conditions," said Reins. "During the pandemic, our accessibility to information on what was happening in prisons was really secretive and there were a lot of horrible things that came from that — it made me want to do more; I need to do something about it."



Reins knew that generations before hadn't succeeded in real change. When she began to understand how important it was to advocate for prison reform, she let it shape the path to her future career. Reins is set on engaging with chaos in order to create real change in the middle of it.

Reins is channeling chaos into activism. Others, like 20-year-old Miles Griggs, are turning towards music to make sense of it all. During the pandemic lockdown, Griggs missed the way music took away from his stress. He had always been drawn to music and how it offered both an artistic outlet and an opportunity for connection.

"I reached out to a couple [of] friends and once the restrictions got lighter, we started playing music again," said Griggs. "That was how I ended up in my first true band."

Griggs has now been a part of three bands, and is playing gigs all over central Florida in his most recent one, a small pop-punk band called Valley in the Sky, where he is a drummer and a songwriter contributor.

He finds that music is not a way to escape the stress of today's world, but simply just a way to make it feel a little lighter for his listeners. "It's a way to de-stress, and I like seeing people have fun," said Griggs. "If people can have fun while listening or seeing music that I created be performed, then that in my mind, is bringing joy when the world feels super heavy."



Creating a Way Forward.

For Gen Z, there is an impulse to create and make a mark, even when everything feels unstable. In many ways, the pandemic was less of a pause in life and more of a proving ground, and the cardinal foundation for teaching Gen Z to create.

It forced a generation to confront uncertainty and figure out how to survive it, but more-so, it taught Gen Z that they can shape something out of it. The projects they've created, whether a band, business, or political initiative, are as much about finding personal stability as they are about creating as a way of coping.

As a generation, we have come to terms with the fact that we have grown up in an age where everything in the world feels unpredictable. So Gen Z has learned that chaos can be productive. We have turned anxiety into action and frustration into artistry. We have discovered how to be resilient by acknowledging that the world feels heavy.

For Bernie, creation means providing resources to those who need them most. For Oliva and Reins, it's using their voices to drive real change. For Griggs, it's making music that sparks joy in a world where joy often feels scarce. For millions of other Gen Z-ers, it's whatever allows them to feel connected, capable, and most importantly, to turn the chaos around them into something worth creating from.

“We have turned anxiety into action and frustration into artistry. We have discovered how to be resilient by acknowledging that the world feels heavy.”





Photo by Lev Kerlow



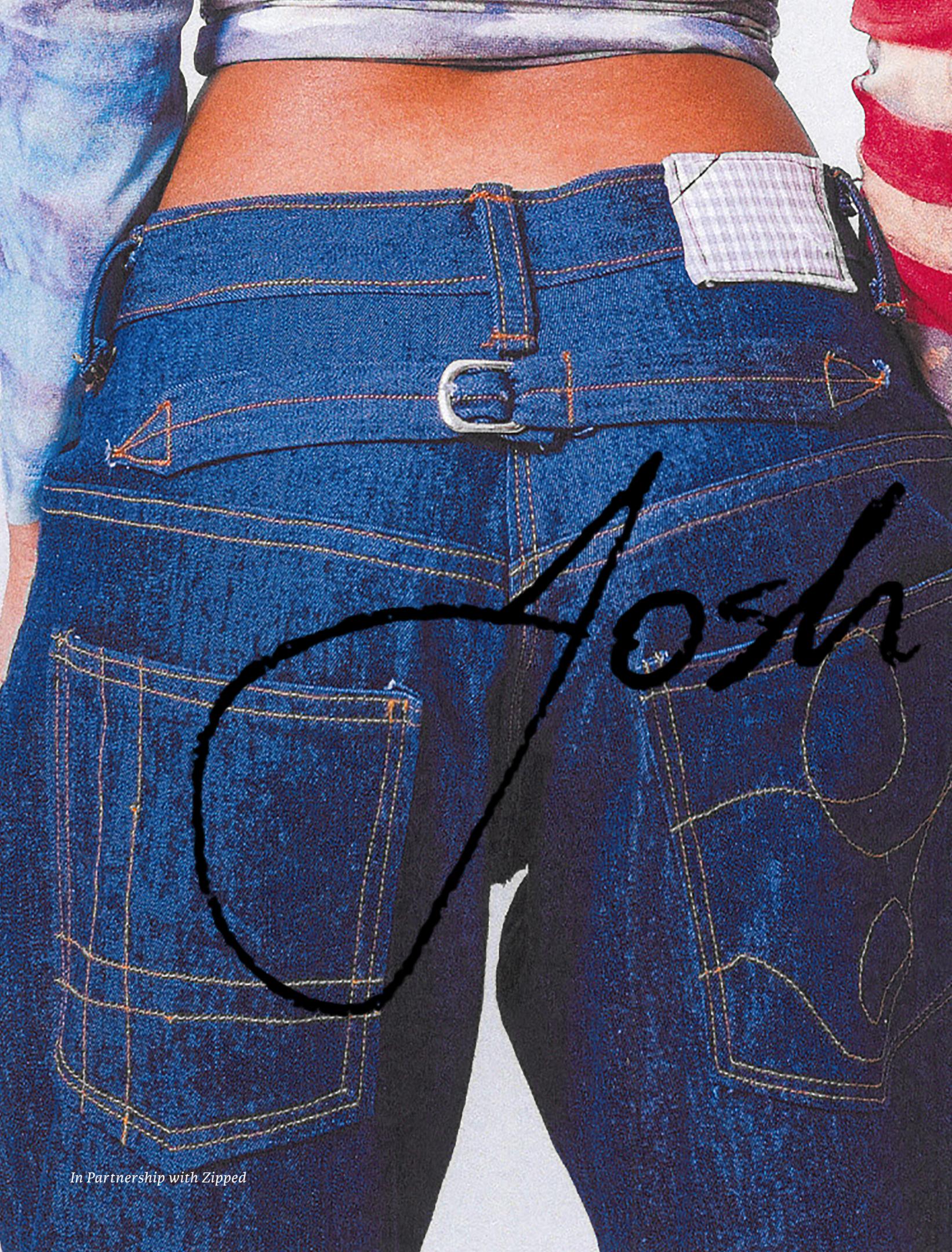
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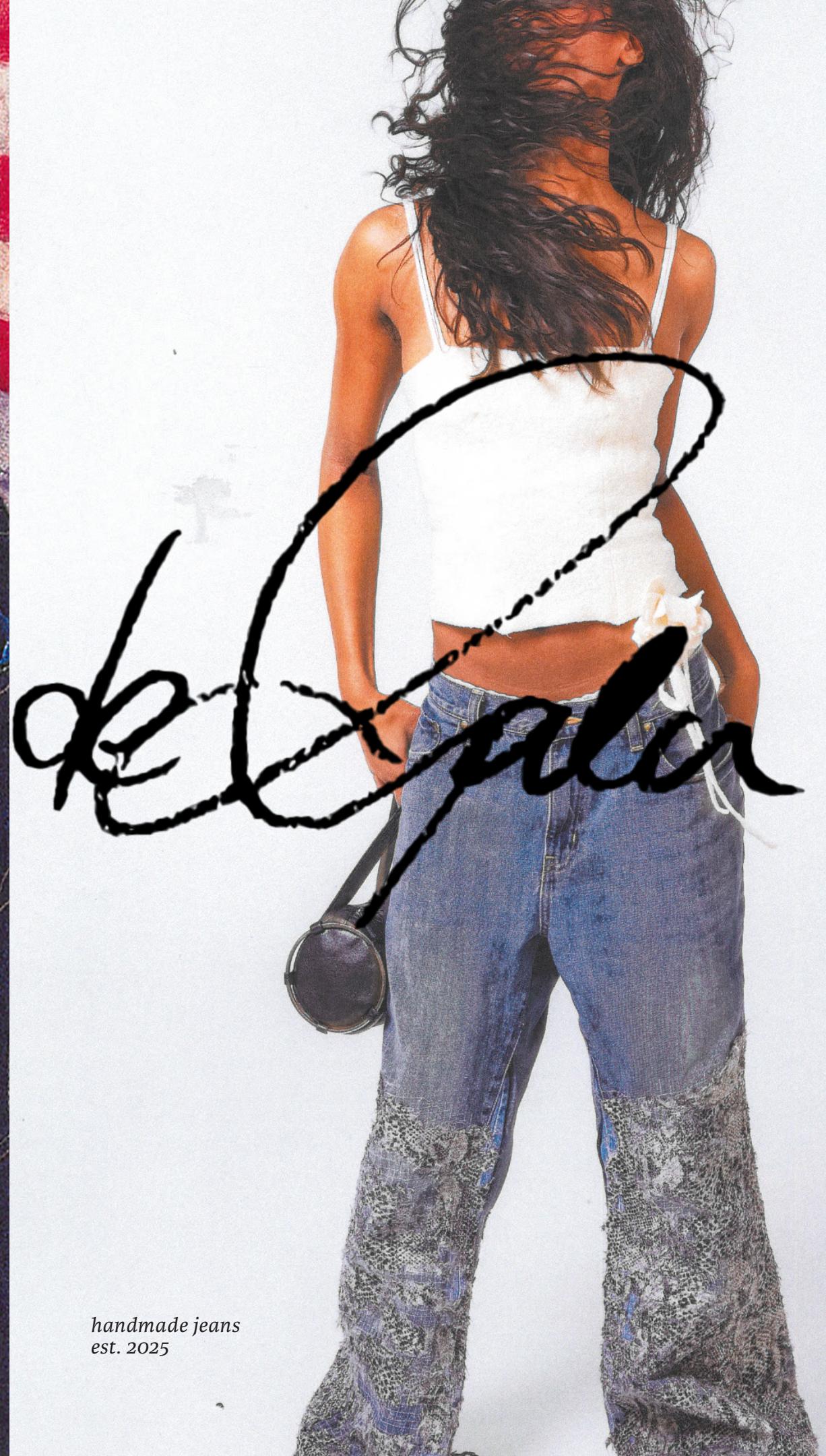








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Photo by Luena Tavares

Fearless or *Fooling* Ourselves?

Text by Mia Tiano
& Ava Swidler

Addiction comes in all different forms. There's drug and alcohol addictions that we've been warned about by news channels since we were kids. More recently, we've heard conversations shift toward modern dependencies: Caffeine, social media, and phone addictions — the kinds we don't always take as seriously.

But under that umbrella of social media, where do dating apps fall? Just like Instagram and TikTok, dating apps are just as much of a harsh environment where we are fueled by critique and fleeting validation, or maybe even a combination of both.

They're not for the weak — or maybe, they reveal how weak we all can be.

I've been trying to figure out for years what makes my sister even want to continue down the rabbit hole of Hinge. She's constantly let down by guys who seem promising in a five-minute text conversation, only to disappear or disappoint. Watching it all, it's exhausting and a little heartbreaking, but also strangely fascinating: How could you know if he's Mr. Right based off of four photos and the most over-done fun fact?

My brother is addicted to Hinge. Like, actually addicted. Every time we talk, he's either on his way to a date, coming back from a date, or roping me into revamping his profile like it's a serious group project. Not that he needs help — he brags about his 50+ likes like it's his personal trophy case. But unlike many of the other Hinge boys, my brother isn't looking for "just someone." He's a hopeless romantic, just like myself. He wants the kind of love that feels cinematic. John Cusack with a boombox outside your window, Judd Nelson with a fist in the air, Noah and Allie running together in the rain, and Jake Ryan waiting outside the church. The kind of love that never expires.

And here's where I get stuck: Does that kind of love even exist on Hinge?

Dating apps have stripped love down to preferences and filters. Fill out your height, job, and star sign, and maybe your soulmate will appear on your right shoulder wearing angel wings. Swipe left if he's 5'9 (because we all know that realistically means he's 5'7"). Swipe right if he's with his family in St. Barths for the holidays (because you know he has enough money to travel there). Send a rose if you're wine drunk enough while you're alone watching movies on a Sunday night. And if you're really feeling like putting yourself out there, maybe you'll even send a "hi" to his direct message inbox.

My parents met on a blind date where my mum showed up an hour late, but my dad still waited. My grandparents met on a double date, except they were with each other's friends. Imperfect, unplanned, unpredictable. That's romance to me.

When I ask my friends' parents or grandparents, the stories that stick are always the unexpected ones. They weren't "each other's type." They weren't even looking. They just collided. That's what makes it magical.

Compare that to today's love story being reduced to just 4 words: "We met on Hinge." Sorry, but that's not romantic. That's transactional. Imagine telling your child you found their dad because he fit neatly into your app settings. It's like shopping on Amazon, except instead of a lamp, you ordered a boyfriend. Kind of creepy. No one ever swooned over a story that started with, "he had a great prompt in his profile." The best love stories don't come pre-packaged.

And yes, I get it. Hinge feels safe. If you're shy or scared of rejection, it's easier to swipe than to walk up to someone and say hi. But here's the thing: 20 years ago, people didn't have that shortcut. They had to take the risk. And aren't we told the best things in life don't come easily? That the most rewarding moments are the ones you actually had to work for? Love is supposed to be scary and vulnerable; that's what makes it powerful. If finding it feels harder for you, then the reward is even greater when it finally happens. Don't hide behind a screen. Step into the world. The risk is part of the romance.

But maybe that's the real reason dating apps exist. Because taking the risk in real life feels impossible now. Every interaction is pre-analyzed before it happens. No one just says "hi" anymore; they craft the perfect opener, the perfectly casual response (usually written by a friend, anyway), and the perfectly timed double text to pretend our days are busy. Dating apps let us hide behind the illusion of confidence. They give us time to edit, to filter, to delete and retype. They make rejection feel less personal.

When a man matches with you and then unmatches three hours later, you'd be lying to yourself if you said that didn't sting. It's almost as if we're all participating in a collective performance of not caring, when in reality, we care more than ever. The dopamine fades fast, and suddenly you're swiping again, looking for another rush. We're chasing validation the same way we chase connection.

And though I say I couldn't care less about dating apps, I'm still fascinated by the whole phenomenon of it. There's something strangely human about how desperate we all are to be seen, even through a screen. We're all scared of rejection, but we still keep trying. We still redownload Hinge after deleting it for the fifth time. We still tell ourselves that maybe the next match will be the one.

And that goes for any social media platform. I would never download a dating app myself, but do I secretly check how many likes I get on an Instagram post even though I turned the public count off? Maybe.

Do I occasionally check how many sends I have on a story of myself in a bikini? Perhaps. So maybe a part of me feels empathy for my sister's struggle with dating apps. At the end of the day, validation can really just be the quiet relief of knowing someone's noticed you.

In the end, are these dating apps really just for the weak? The ones who are too scared to face rejection in real life? At the end of the day, who am I to say? Maybe I'm the weak one for being too scared to try.

“But maybe that’s the real reason dating apps exist. Because taking the risk in real life feels impossible now. Every interaction is pre-analyzed before it happens.”



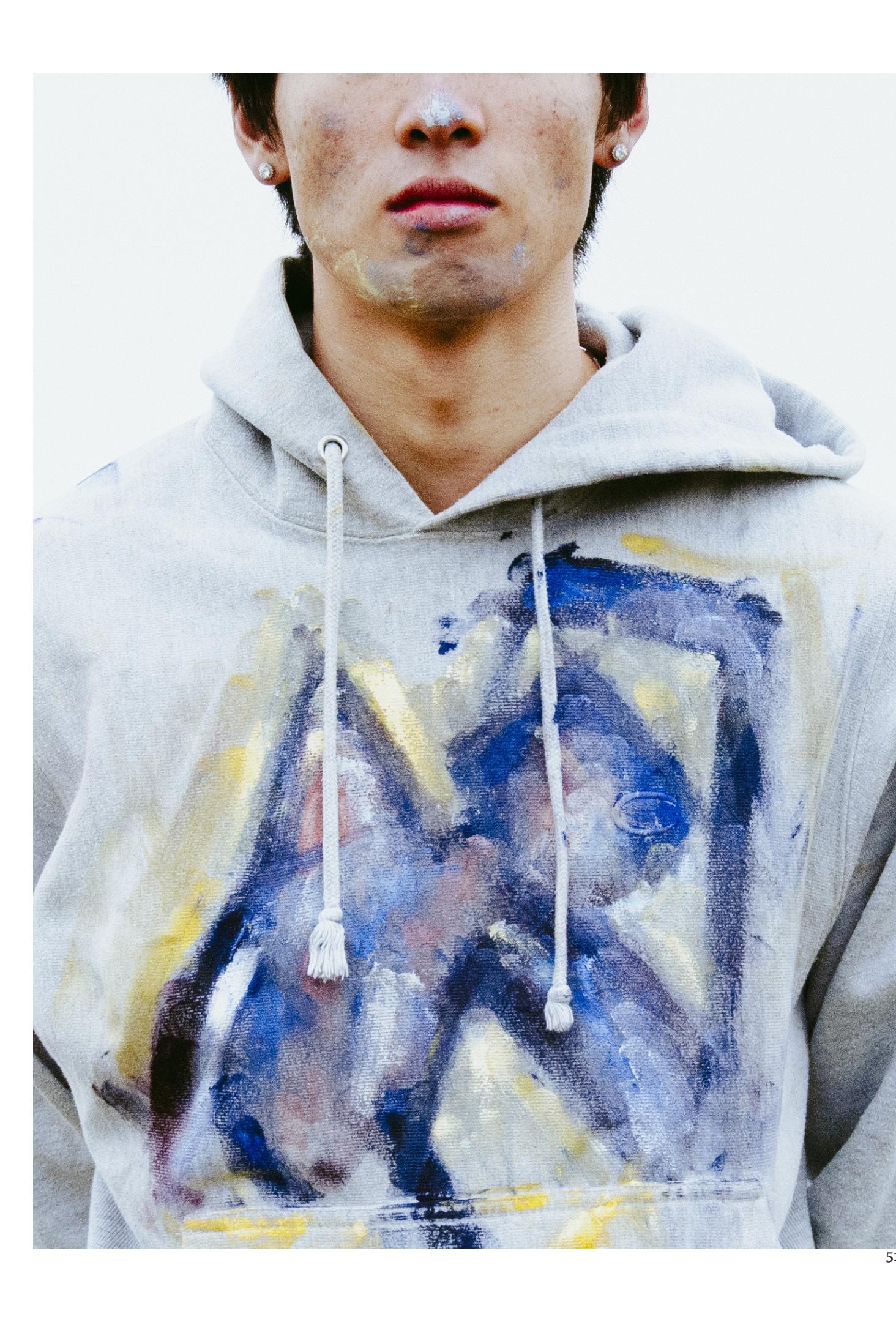






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