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Assignment 2
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00216925

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The History of Female Statements Made at the Oscars

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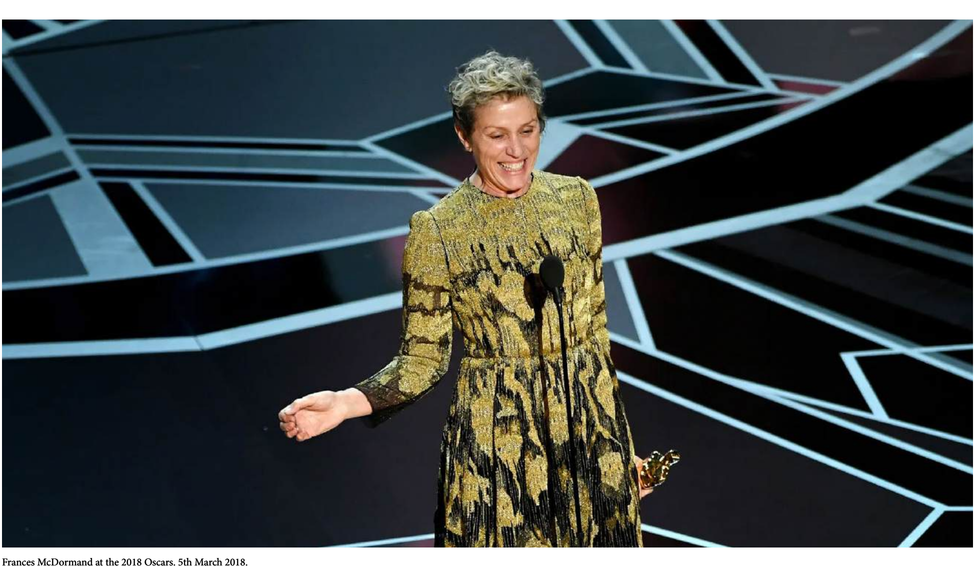

Frances McDormand at the 2018 Oscars. 5th March 2018.
(Credit: Getty Images)

BY BETHAN GWYNNE PUBLISHED 10 MARCH 2025 IN FEATURES

The Oscars guarantee glitz, gold, and gown-envy every year. Yet between beaded gowns and tearful acceptance speeches, Hollywood's biggest night has also served as a platform for feminism. From subtle jabs to impassioned statements, feminist speeches at the Academy Awards have traced the trajectory of the movement itself and sometimes shocked the industry into periods of introspection.

Let's roll the tape again and highlight the voices who used their moment in the gold not only for thank-yous, but to demand equality, justice, and representation.

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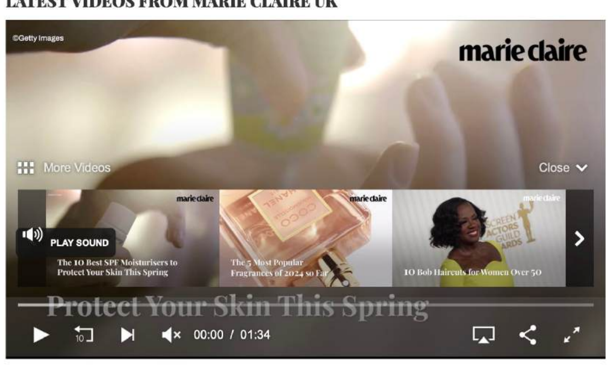

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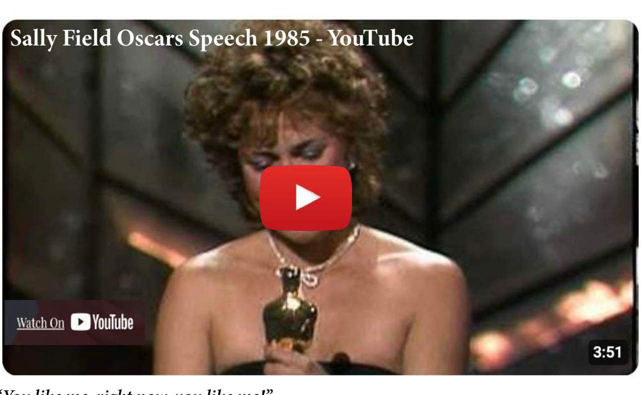
The greatest speeches at the oscars made by women

1973: Marlon Brando and Sacheen Littlefeather

Sacheen Littlefeather refuses the 1973 Academy Award for Best Actor on behalf of Marlon Brando.
(Credit: Bettman)

Before viral videos and hashtags, Oscars activismassumed quieter if no less potent forms. When Marlon Brando declined his Best Actor award for The Godfather, he sent Native American rights activist Sacheen Littlefeather in his place. In traditional Apache dress, she discussed the industry's misrepresentation of Native Americans. Not a feminist moment in the strictest sense, it nonetheless opened the door for the use of the Oscars as a vehicle for political activism, work that would be built on by later feminist speeches.

1985: Sally Field and the 'You Like Me!' Misunderstanding



"You like me, right now, you like me!"

When Sally Field accepted the Best Actress Oscar for Places in the Heart, her expression, tearfully exclaimed as " I can't deny the fact that you like me, right now, you like me." Although widely misquoted as "You like me, right now, you like me!" – it became iconic. It became a moment that was much quoted and parodied, the occasion had a deep-seated source: Field had been typecast and on the Hollywood margins for decades. Her tearful speech was less an ego exercise than a feminist declaration of validation in a male-controlled industry.

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1993: Whoopi Goldberg and Unapologetic Representation

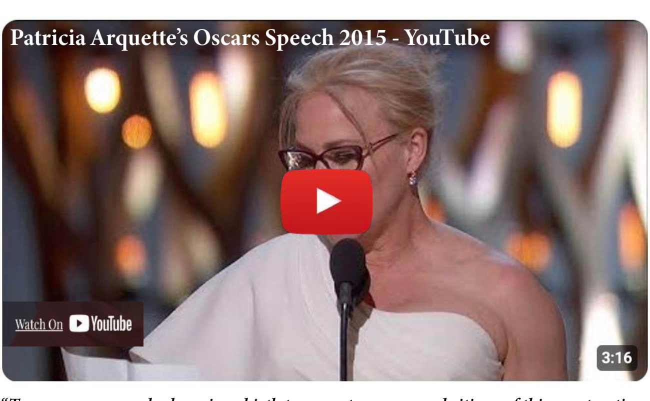
Winning Best Supporting Actress for Ghost in 1991, Whoopi Goldberg became only the second Black woman to win an acting Oscar. But it was her hosting stint in 1993 that turned heads: Goldberg appeared in multiple costumes celebrating cinematic history, including Queen Elizabeth I and Cleopatra. A bold, visual ode to inclusion and defiance, it was a wink and a challenge to the white, male lens of Hollywood.

2002: Halle Berry's Groundbreaking Tears

"This moment is so much bigger than me"

When Halle Berry took Best Actress for Monster's Ball, she broke a 74-year-old ceiling. "This moment is so much bigger than me," she cried, hardly able to contain it. Berry dedicated her victory to all the women of colour who'd ever been turned away at the doors of opportunity that were closed tight. Her victory is still historic and heartbreakingly, still singular. No Black woman has ever won Best Actress since.

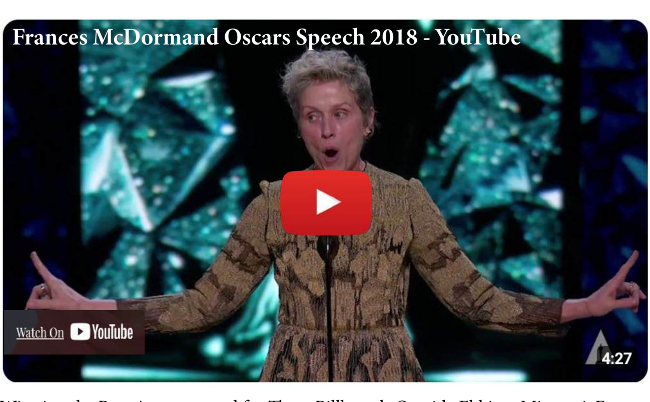
2015: Patricia Arquette's Equal Pay Mic Drop



"To every woman who has given birth to every taxpayer and citizen of this great nation, we have fought for everybody else's equal rights. It's our time to have wage equality once and for all."

What occasion would see Meryl Streep fist-pumping the air surrounded by a thunderous round of applause? It would be Patricia Arquette and her speech at the 2015 Oscars. She won her Best Supporting Actress Oscar for Boyhood, and she didn't just thank her agent. She took on the gender pay gap:
"To every woman who has given birth to every taxpayer and citizen of this great nation, we have fought for everybody else's equal rights. It's our time to have wage equality once and for all."
It was a call to action that echoed on social media, sparking discussions about Hollywood pay and beyond. Arquette's moment rendered feminism urgent, immediate, and unapologetically mainstream.

2018: Frances McDormand and the 'Inclusion Rider'



Winning the Best Actress award for Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri, Frances McDormand concluded her acceptance speech with two words that set Google searches ablaze: "Inclusion Rider." It's a contractual rider that actors can utilise to mandate diversity in hiring on set. With two words, McDormand shone a light on a concrete solution to Hollywood's diversity issue.
Her commanding presence and no-nonsense delivery left one thing clear: feminism wasn't a mood. It was policy.

2020: Natalie Portman's Red-Carpet Rebellion

Natalie Portman at the Oscars 2020.
(Credit: Getty Images)

Not every feminist Oscar moment occurs onstage. Natalie Portman walked the 2020 red carpet in a bespoke Dior cape with the names of overlooked female directors embroidered along it. Subtle? Yes. Effective? Absolutely. Though Portman has herself been criticised for not hiring enough female directors in her own work, the move was a style highlight of the industry's systemic failure to hire women behind the camera. Despite the criticism, it shows Portman using her platform in the correct way – albeit a bit of a privileged one.

2021: Regina King and Centring Black Motherhood

"I know that the fear that so many live with will not be ended with today's verdict."

Regina King opened the 2021 ceremony not just with elegance, but with empathy and fire. She addressed police brutality and the trial of Derek Chauvin before the awards even kicked off, saying,

"I know that the fear that so many live with will not be ended with today's verdict."

While not overtly labelled as a "feminist" speech, King's framing of justice through the lens of a Black mother put intersectional feminism front and centre.

For all of these watershed moments, the Oscars remain overwhelmingly male and white. Only three women have ever won Best Director, and only one of them is Black: Kathryn Bigelow (2010), Chloé Zhao (2021), and Jane Campion (2022) remain the exceptions. As feminism comes to include broader conversations about race, identity, and representation, the Oscars can often appear behind the zeitgeist curve. Yet, every feminist speech deconstructs the past, making room for new voices and new visions.

So, what's the future of feminist Oscar acceptance speeches? Louder, intersectional, and hopefully less historic. When a woman steps onto the Dolby Theatre stage today to speak up, she is standing on the shoulders of those who first dared to speak up before her, from Sacheen Little feather to Frances McDormand. Feminist Oscar moments don't transform an industry suffused with implicit bias overnight, but they do matter. They are a mirror held to Hollywood's conscience, a reminder that behind each award lies a battlefield.

And if there is one thing that we can be certain about feminists at the Oscars: they don't attend simply to dazzle. They attend to shake things up.

Bethan Gwynne

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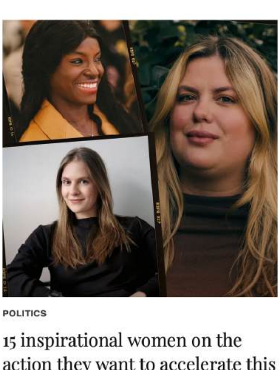

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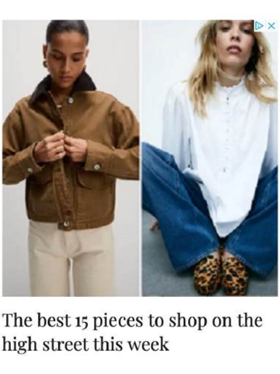

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How to Nail the 'Quiet Luxury' Trend for Work: Where Do You Go?

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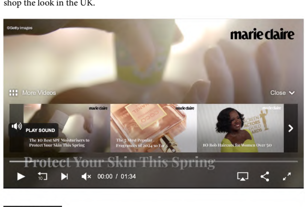
(Credit: Edward Berthelot/Getty Images)

BY BETHAN GWYNNE PUBLISHED 11 MARCH 2025 IN BUYING GUIDES

Call it stealth wealth, low-key luxe, or simply "looking expensive," the quiet luxury trend is here to stay, and the office is the perfect runway. Inspired by the likes of Succession's Shiv Roy and old-money minimalists, this movement champions refined tailoring, natural fabrics, and unfussy silhouettes over flashy logos and trend-chasing chaos.

If you're wondering how to bring the vibe to your 9-5 without blowing your 9-5 budget, here's your cheat sheet to nailing quiet luxury at work; plus, where to actually shop the look in the UK.



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Tailoring That Works as Hard as You Do

First stop: the blazer. Think structure, weight, and razor-sharp cuts. Saint Laurent's Virgin Wool Blazer (£2,190) is a serious splurge, but the cost-per-wear is worth its weight in gold. For a pared-down hero piece, try the Niwaki Kojima Work Trousers (£239), which have a utilitarian edge while still reading as polished.

(Credit: @modedamour)

One-and-Done Dresses with Quiet Power

The holy grail of workwear? A dress that does all the heavy lifting. Jasper Conran London's Celia Wrap Dress (£420) in black offers understated glamour, while the Reiss Micah Drape Midi (£158) feels fresh and modern in the office or at a client lunch.

(Credit: Jacqui Broberg by Julia Le)

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Elevate Your Essentials

Quiet luxury isn't about having more; it's about having better. Case in point: The Row's Cashmere Turtleneck (£1,200). It's the kind of piece you wear for a decade and still get compliments on. Neutral knitwear in high-quality wool or cashmere instantly elevates a look and keeps you warm in icy meeting rooms.

(Credit: @RosieHW)

Accessories That Whisper, Not Shout

Your work bag says a lot. Ideally, not "this was an impulse buy at 1am". The Celine Cabas Anais tote (£2,300) is refined, discreet, and big enough to swallow your laptop and meal deal. Footwear-wise, try the Bottega Veneta Lug Chelsea Boots (£990) which are sturdy enough for your commute and sleek enough for the C-suite.

Stick to a Rich, Neutral Palette

Cream, camel, charcoal: the quiet luxury colour wheel is all about tones that look rich without trying. Loro Piana's Cashmere Coat (£7,080) is the outerwear gold standard. Or for a subtler nod, the Ralph Lauren Kennidi Linen Dress (£1,870) brings in pattern and artistry without feeling showy.

(Credit: Acielle / Style du Monde)

Basics, Reimagined

Finally, don't underestimate the humble shirt. The Boyfriend Shirt from With Nothing Underneath (£95) is crisp, cut to perfection, and endlessly wearable. Layer under a blazer, tuck into wide-leg trousers, or wear loose on casual Fridays.

(Credit: Getty Images)

Quiet luxury isn't just a look, it's a mindset. It's about dressing with intention, choosing quality over quantity, and letting your clothes reflect your confidence, not your credit card limit. Whether you're navigating a pitch meeting or powering through spreadsheets, these pieces bring the kind of polish that whispers, "I've got this."

Shop the Looks

Saint Laurent
Virgin Wool Blazer
£2,190 at Net-A-Porter

Niwaki Kojima
Work Trousers
£239 at Niwaki Kojima

Jasper Conran
Celia Wrap Dress (Black)
£420 at Jasper Conran

Reiss
Micah Drape Midi
£158 at Reiss

The Row
Cashmere Turtleneck
£1,200 at Net-A-Porter

Celine
Cabas Anais tote
£2,300 at Celine

Bottega Veneta
Lug Chelsea Boots
£990 at Net-A-Porter

Loro Piana
Cashmere Coat
£7,080 at Loro Piana

Ralph Lauren
Kennidi Linen Dress
£1,870 at Ralph Lauren

With Nothing Underneath
The Boyfriend Shirt
£95 at With Nothing Underneath

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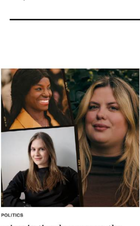

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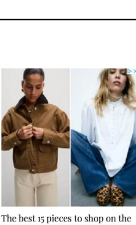

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The Blazers that Scream Power and Confidence and Where to Get Them

We look at the best places to get the go-to blazers.

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Jacket & Trousers, Zara; Blazer, Topshop; Shoes, Dune; Bag, Mango; Necklace, Topshop

BY MARIAN CAPTAIN PUBLISHED 11 MAY 2017 IN FASHION

Few items of the wardrobe are as close to demanding a room as the blazer. Walking into a boardroom in one, it's the ultimate power move, and it's one that never ever yacts the boss of the week, the ideal blazer doesn't speak quietly, it shouts. Power dressing returns this season, and blazers are leading the way: sculpted shoulders, belted in waists, and bold colour schemes are your arsenal. Go for loose silhouettes in rich camel, pinstripe power suits, and double breasted styles that are reminiscent of the power women without shoulder pads, thank goodness.

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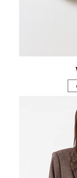
The Frankie Shop
The Bean Blazer
£290 at The Frankie Shop

Mango
Wool Blazer
£199.99 at Mango

& Other Stories
Herringbone Blazer
£175 at & Other Stories



Boden
Asymmetrical Blazer
£67% at Boden

Alexander McQueen
Angular Shoulder Blazer
£3,690 at Net-A-Porter

Mango
Suit Jacket (Green)
£149 at Mango

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HAIR & BEAUTY

Feminist Beauty: What Does It Mean in 2025?

We look at what feminist beauty means to us in 2025

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(Credit: Tiffany Christie Freeman: Pexels)

BY BETHAN GWYNNE PUBLISHED 8 MARCH 2025 IN HAIR AND BEAUTY

In 2025, "feminist beauty" is no longer an oxymoron. It's a potent, growing movement redefining the terms on which we think about, sell, and live in beauty. Ditch airbrushed perfection or universal norms. Feminist beauty is messy, politicised, intersectional, and most importantly: self-defined.

Formerly laughed at as trivial, beauty is now a frontier for gender politics and power. In this post-#MeToo, post-lockdown, AI-fixated era, the feminist interrogation of beauty is more incisive and more inclusive than ever before. Far from reinforcing narrow ideals, it challenges them at their roots, insisting on nuance, diversity, and responsibility.

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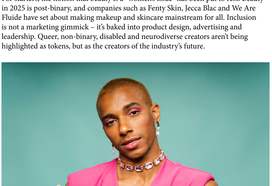
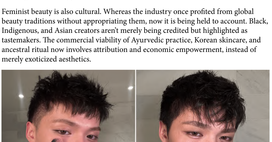
For starters, the notion that beauty is a "women's issue" has been put to rest. Beauty in 2025 is post-binary, and companies such as Fenty Skin, Jecca Blac and We Are Fluide have set about making makeup and skincare mainstream for all. Inclusion is not a marketing gimmick – it's baked into product design, advertising and leadership. Queer, non-binary, disabled and neurodiverse creators aren't being highlighted as tokens, but as the creators of the industry's future.



(Credit: Stocksy)

In the meantime, the emergence of "de-influencing" has shone a light on overconsumption and the poisonous love affair between beauty marketing and social media. Feminist beauty today is all about skin minimalism, eco-friendly packaging, and authentic transparency, as opposed to the maximalist routines of yesteryear. TikTok is full of users rebelling against paid content that capitalizes on insecurity. But as real-life standards change, virtual ones become increasingly dystopian. Face-changing filters and AI influencers have distorted our expectations of what beauty even looks like. Taking back authenticity online, feminist voices are fighting back. Influencers such as @Shanaevers and @Zive share unfiltered photos, revealing algorithmic bias and resisting the tech that mediates what we see. Even the platforms themselves are being pushed toward more ethical design; Instagram now has filter warnings, and new apps such as BeReal enable unfiltered self-expression.

Feminist beauty is also cultural. Whereas the industry once profited from global beauty traditions without appropriating them, now it is being held to account. Black, Indigenous, and Asian creators aren't merely being credited but highlighted as tastemakers. The commercial viability of Ayurvedic practice, Korean skincare, and ancestral ritual now involves attribution and economic empowerment, instead of merely exoticized aesthetics.



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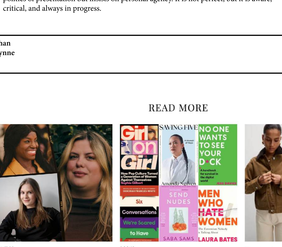
And yet the most profound shift in 2025 is that the consistent conversation regarding who gets to be beautiful in the first place is still very much alive. 'Pretty privilege' is at last getting examined in the mainstream as people understand more and more how race, age, size, ability, and gender identity dictate who is seen and affirmed. Activists such as Chidera Eggerue remind us,

"I don't owe anybody 'pretty'. Whatever state I show up in will always be enough."

A mantra that has become a rallying cry for a generation who won't confuse worth with looks.

The trend is not without its contradiction, naturally. Feminist beauty remains capitalist; the business makes money on empowerment rhetoric but does not always implement structural change. Critics cite the discrepancy between front-of-house and back-of house reality: diversity campaigns that mask unequal pay, boardrooms that remain very male, and "diverse" ranges that are still narrowly defined.



Chidera Eggerue for Elle UK in 2018.
(Credit: Vicky Grout)

Finally, 2025 feminist beauty is not about eschewing beauty, but taking it back. It is less about whether or not you wear lipstick or shave your body hair, but whether you are free to do either without judgment, coercion, or humiliation. It has a sense of the politics of presentation but insists on personal agency. It is not perfect, but it is aware, critical, and always in progress.

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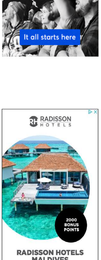

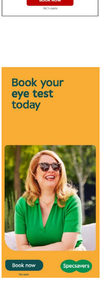

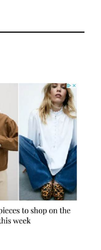

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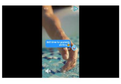

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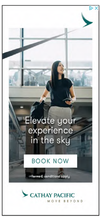
(Credit: Glery Media, Mackenzie Patterson)

BY BETHAN GWYNNE PUBLISHED 14 MARCH 2025 IN CULTURE

Whether you're powerwalking to Pret, sinking into your Sunday bath, or commuting with caffeine in hand, the right podcast can elevate your mood and your mind. And right now, women-led podcasts are the ones setting the tone. From razor-sharp cultural commentary to soul-baring conversations and laugh-out-loud life musings, these shows are more than background noise; they're therapy, mentorship, and group chat rolled into one.



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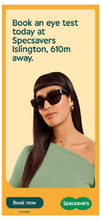

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Firstly: The High Low's spiritual successor, The Shift with Sam Baker. This blindingly candid podcast talks life, work, and makeover-by-force-of-circumstance-after-40 with guests like Marian Keyes and Andi Oliver. It's clever, funny, and sweetly free of sugar.

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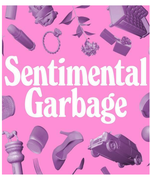

Sentimental Garbage with Caroline O'Donoghue

Starving for a culture reboot? Sentimental Garbage, hosted by journalist Caroline O'Donoghue, dives headfirst into all the so-called "guilty pleasures" that really make us chick-lit, noughties rom-coms, and pop culture politics. It's funny, therapeutic, and flat-out binge-worthy.

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For entrepreneurial spirits and big dreams, The Diary of a CEO might be the number one, but The BossBabe Podcast (with Natalie Ellis and Danielle Canty) speaks to ambitious women building their kingdoms - with real conversation, not hustle fluff.

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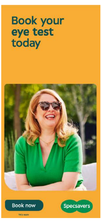

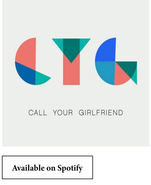

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Whether you're here for deep dives or light relief, these women-led podcasts are the audio equivalent of a sharp red lip: bold, unapologetic, and impossible to ignore. Press play: you won't regret it.

Bethan Gwynne

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MANGO
CRAFT YOUR DESCRIPTION

I Monitored My Cycle for a Week and Here's How It Changed My Perspective

I kept a diary of my hormone cycle for a week, and the results changed my perspective on how my hormones affect my daily life

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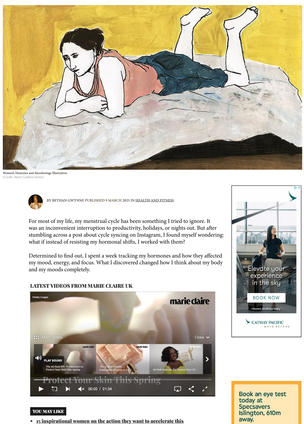

Natural Hormones and Menstrual Cycle Illustration
(Credit: Marie Claire Digital)

BY BETHAN GWYNNE PUBLISHED 9 MARCH 2021 IN HEALTH AND FITNESS

For most of my life, my menstrual cycle has been something I tried to ignore. It was an inconvenient interruption to productivity, holidays, or nights out. But after stumbling across a post about cycle syncing on Instagram, I found myself wondering: what if instead of resisting my hormonal cycle, I worked with them?

Determined to find out, I spent a week tracking my hormones and how they affected my mood, energy, and focus. What I discovered changed how I think about my body and my moods completely.

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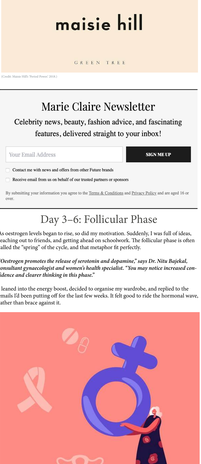
Day 1–2: Menstrual Phase

My cycle started on a Wednesday, and with it came the usual suspects: cramps, fatigue, and a craving for comfort. But instead of fighting through with caffeine and a walk, I gave myself permission to slow down. I worked from bed and told my dog she'd have to skip her walk today.

Maisie Hill, menstrual health expert and author of Period Power, encourages exactly this approach:

"When you become aware of your cycle, you can start working with it rather than against it. The menstrual phase is a time for rest and renewal; it's like your body's natural monthly reset."

Giving myself that grace felt radical and oddly productive. By Saturday, I felt refreshed, not resentful.



(Credit: Maisie Hill's 'Period Power' 2018.)

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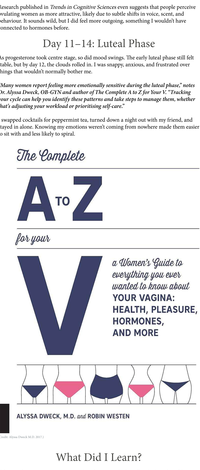
Day 3–6: Follicular Phase

As oestrogen levels begin to rise, so did my motivation. Suddenly, I was full of ideas, reaching out to friends, and getting ahead on schoolwork. The follicular phase is often called the "spring" of the cycle, and that metaphor fit perfectly.

"Oestrogen promotes the release of serotonin and dopamine," says Dr. Nita Bajekal, consultant gynaecologist and women's health specialist. "You may notice increased confidence and clearer thinking in this phase."

I leaned into the energy boost, decided to organise my wardrobe, and replied to the emails I'd been putting off for the last few weeks. It felt good to ride the hormonal wave, rather than brace against it.



(Credit: Shutterstock)

Day 7–10: Ovulatory Phase

By the beginning of the next week, I was feeling sociable and magnetic. That's no coincidence: ovulation is often when oestrogen peaks, and our communication skills, libido, and confidence can all surge.

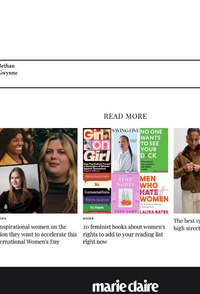
Research published in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* even suggests that people perceive ovulating women as more attractive, likely due to subtle shifts in voice, scent, and behaviour. It sounds wild, but I did feel more outgoing, something I wouldn't have connected to hormones before.

Day 11–14: Luteal Phase

As progesterone took centre stage, so did mood swings. The early luteal phase still felt stable, but by day 12, the clouds rolled in. I was snappy, anxious, and frustrated over things that wouldn't normally bother me.

"Many women report feeling more emotionally sensitive during the luteal phase," notes Dr. Alyssa Dweck, OB-GYN and author of The Complete A to Z for Your V. "Tracking your cycle can help you identify these patterns and take steps to manage them, whether that's adjusting your workload or prioritising self-care."

I swapped cocktails for peppermint tea, turned down a night out with my friend, and stayed in alone. Knowing my emotions weren't coming from nowhere made them easier to sit with and less likely to spiral.



(Credit: Alyssa Dweck, M.D. 2021.)

What Did I Learn?

This experiment gave me more than data; it gave me insight. For the first time, I felt connected to my cycle in a way that was empowering rather than annoying. I realised that my body isn't unpredictable, it's actually cyclical. And with a bit of planning, I could use that rhythm to my advantage. Don't get me wrong, it's still rather irritating but understanding it as opposed to ignoring it felt somewhat powerful.

Women's health has long been underserved and misunderstood but understanding our hormonal patterns doesn't just improve our periods, it can improve our entire month. With more understanding surrounding women's health, conditions like Endometriosis and PCOS would perhaps stop going undiagnosed for so long.

As Maisie Hill puts it, "Cycle awareness is the greatest untapped resource for improving the mental and physical wellbeing of menstruating people."

I'll be honest: I used to be meticulously tracking every hormone surge forever. But after this week, I'll never ignore my cycle again.

Bethan Gwynne

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The Cover

marie claire

My Cover

MARIECLAIRE.CO.UK
marie claire
Nico Parker
On Fame, Nepotism, and Bridget Jones

The Moodboard

This is my chosen cover. I took inspiration from Marie Claire UK's very minimal and monochrome cover shoots, particularly Gugu Mbatha-Raw's cover shoot (link available) from 2024. As per my plans from the first assignment, my cover star for my chosen period of time would be Nico Parker, and I chose, styled, and directed my images with her and the shoot I would have planned in mind. In her place is my model, Imogen.

Imogen perfectly encapsultated the facial expression I wanted to achieve in the cover. Marie Claire UK cover stars have a serious, more empowering expression on their faces. This is to do with the aims and ethos of the publication: empowering women. Not smiling, and having a more forceful look is a direct rejection of what the patriarchy deems as feminine and attractive. This was certainly noted during my shoot.

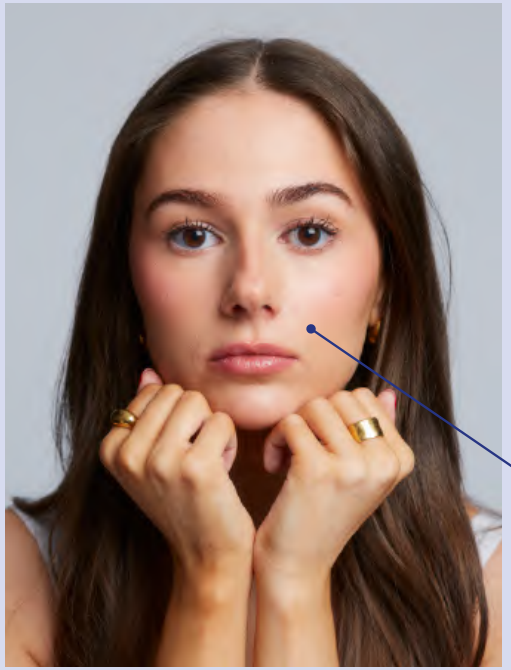
The monochromatic white palette is inspired by a number of Marie Claire UK cover shoots, from Lashana Lynch, Shakira, and Zoe Saldana. Marie Claire tends to stick to simple and plain backgrounds, usually white, or a plainer colour like pink, purple, or blue.

The flowers and floral motifs were taken directly from Gugu's shoot, and I loved the uniform colour of the white peonies along with the white clothing and the background. Simple jewelerry was also heavily inspired by Lashana Lynch's shoot from 2023, as Marie Claire UK collaborates with simpler jewellery brands like Missoma frequently.

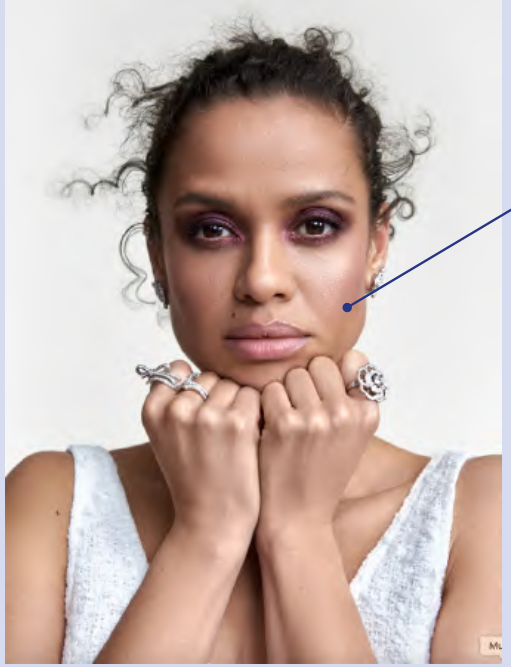
The hair and makeup did differ from a few of the other shoots I studied. Imogen's long, smooth hair was more reminiscent of Shakira's shoot from 2024. I wanted her hair to be more a feature for the cover, due to the more neutral nature of the colour scheme.

The makeup was also slightly more natural compared to some of the other covers. I asked Imogen for a lighter, more natural look. This is because Nico Parker tends to appear more natural in her other photoshoot work, which would suggest that is what she prefers and asks for when consulting with makeup artists. She's also young, so a more natural look is more suitable than a bold lip or heavy shadow.

Styling for the shoot was taken from this cover. The neckline of the dress being extremely similiar. The fake flowers differ from the applique flower on Gugu's dress, but the realness of the flowers for my cover felt more right for how I envisioned Nico's cover due to the time of year (March) and her youthful nature.

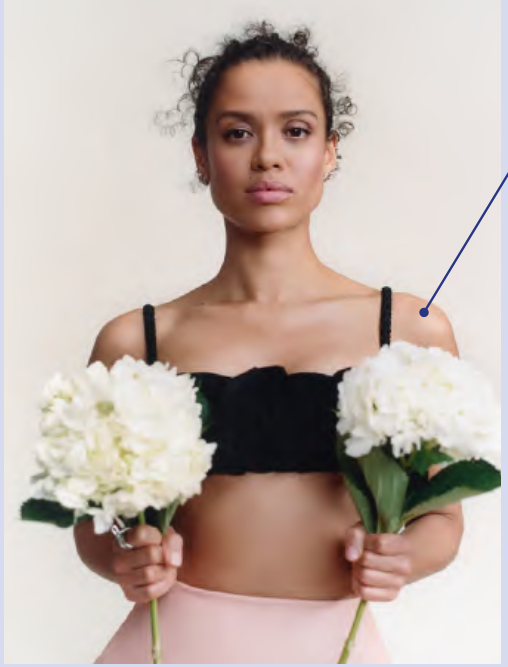


I loved the powerthat these photos brought with them. The close-up nature of the pose pulls together a certain vulnerability and strength all in one. Though I asked for a more natural makeup look, you can similiarities in the pose and the expressions.



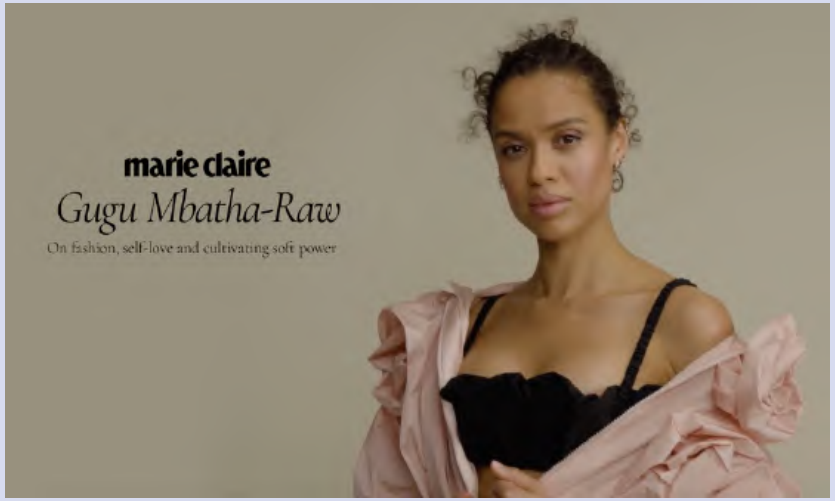
This photo shows a clear inspiration from Gugu's shoot. Though I kept a more white colour theme, ditching the pink and the black to keep the photo series more uniform.

I was lucky enough to have access to near enough the exact same flowers from the images that inspired the shoot. I loved this pose, holding two flowers in each hand. I intially wanted this photo for the cover, but felt the image of her holding the whole bunch with both hands felt more natural, and just more pleasing to the eye.



This image was not on my initial moodboard. I didn't realise I would be able to create such an up-close image with the flowers as well, and it was only with the help with photographer, Ed Miles, that it came to life. The original image of Imogen was taken in a portrait style, and I used Photoshop to generatively expand the background so I could make it more of a hero image within the planned article - which you can see in my mock-up of the interview article. I loved this more pinkier, natural look on Gugu and on reflection, wish I had brought in or found a pinkier lipstick and eyeshadow look for Imogen as I feel it would have added a more ethereal vibe to the images with the flowers.

I knew I wanted a hero image for the top of the Marie Claire website, as it seemed somewhat formulaic that each cover shoot interview article had a wider-shot, hero image at the top with some text on the side introducing the subject and a small byline (with some instruction that editorial bylines usually follow a 'rule of three'). This image came out exactly how I wanted, with the styling used to add some flair to the image with the puff-sleeved top, as opposed to the simple neckline of the dress and vest top I'd also used. Keeping the white palette consistent, this banner image reflected a youthfulness, yet powerful sincerity - something I envisioned Nico embodying in this shoot.



A Mock Up of the Visuals

marie claire

Nico Parker

On Nepotism, Young Fame, and Bridget Jones

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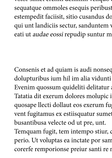
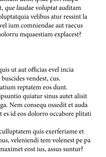


FASHION: DRESS, ARRIET VIAN, ENTERPRISE JEWELLERY; CARTIER AND VERSACE, RINGS; MISSONI AND MONICA VINADER



FASHION: TOP, STEFANO RINGS; MONICA VINADER

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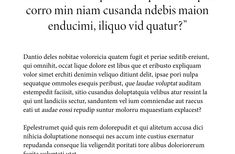

BEAUTY: CHARLOTTE TILBURY, CHANEL, SUZE CAVENDLIN, BRUNELLEN

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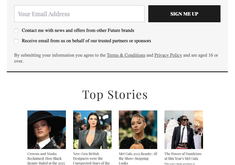

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