

blush

The Indulgence Issue



Blush Magazine

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Spring 2025



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Spring/Summer 2025

The Indulgence Issue

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Executive team



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Coral Day



Photo Assistant
Kiefer Shortell



Vice President
Nishtha Jhawar



Podcast Director
Rebecca Messner Medina



Social Media Manager
Jayne Kim



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Kristin McCormack

Spring
Summer
2025



Talent Phoenix Simpson
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Stylist Danny Colon
Stylist Assistant Michelle Liao
Hair Artist Gillian Tokar
MUA Brooke Harry
Nail Artist Gillian Tokar
Graphics Erin Black
Photo Assistant Coral Day, Kiefer Shortell
Dress Electrix Vintage
Shoes Chinese Laundry



Leotard Speerise
Shoes Steve Madden



Editor's Letter

What does indulgence look like?

When Audrey and I initially conceptualized *The Indulgence Issue* back in August of 2024, we dreamed up an issue bursting at the seams with excess. We aimed to transport the *Blush Magazine* reader into a lavish fantasy that served as an escape from reality.

Reality hit us hard as the club was put on financial probation in the first week of the academic year. This unexpected turn of events left us playing catch-up as we were trying to create an issue with a club rife with foundational issues that had been plaguing it for years. Eventually, the decision was made for *Blush* to postpone the issue to the spring semester and spend the fall addressing the club's areas of growth.

This was not the end of our difficulties as the team dealt with the unexpected loss of team members, photo shoots rescheduled, and many more issues, but we took it in stride. Once we started production in the spring, we found a new meaning in indulgence. Embodied by the cover, *The Indulgence Issue* represents finding the glamour even in the face of adversity. It is holding your head up high and persevering when times are tough. Even though there are so many issues plaguing the world and impacting FIT's student body, it's important to find moments to foster creativity despite it all. Despite working with limited resources compared to previous issues, our team has been able to craft an extravagant issue that continues to propel the club forward.

I have always been drawn to life's most fabulous offerings. Even when my circumstances were far from glamorous throughout my life, I could always flip through the pages of my mom's issues of *Vogue* for the cutting-edge fashions I couldn't otherwise access or her many gossip magazines to obsess over how the stars lived. This issue is filled with fantasies that would've never been possible to realize without the countless hours put in by me and the team over this year, as well as the platform that *Blush* has provided me.

Blush has shaped my college experience, and I am thrilled to see the issue come to fruition as I come close to the end of it. I started with *Blush* in 2023, writing my first article ever for *The Anniversary Issue*. From this, my involvement rapidly expanded as I became the Senior Beauty Editor, and graced the cover of *The Rebirth Issue*. I am honored to have had the opportunity to reshape the club this past year and carry on its legacy with this issue.

I want to extend my gratitude to the team this year who showed resilience through the ever-changing circumstances and stayed dedicated to the art we were creating. I couldn't have done it without those who gave this issue their all as well, and I am so excited to finally share this issue with everyone.

XOXO,
Phoenix Simpson



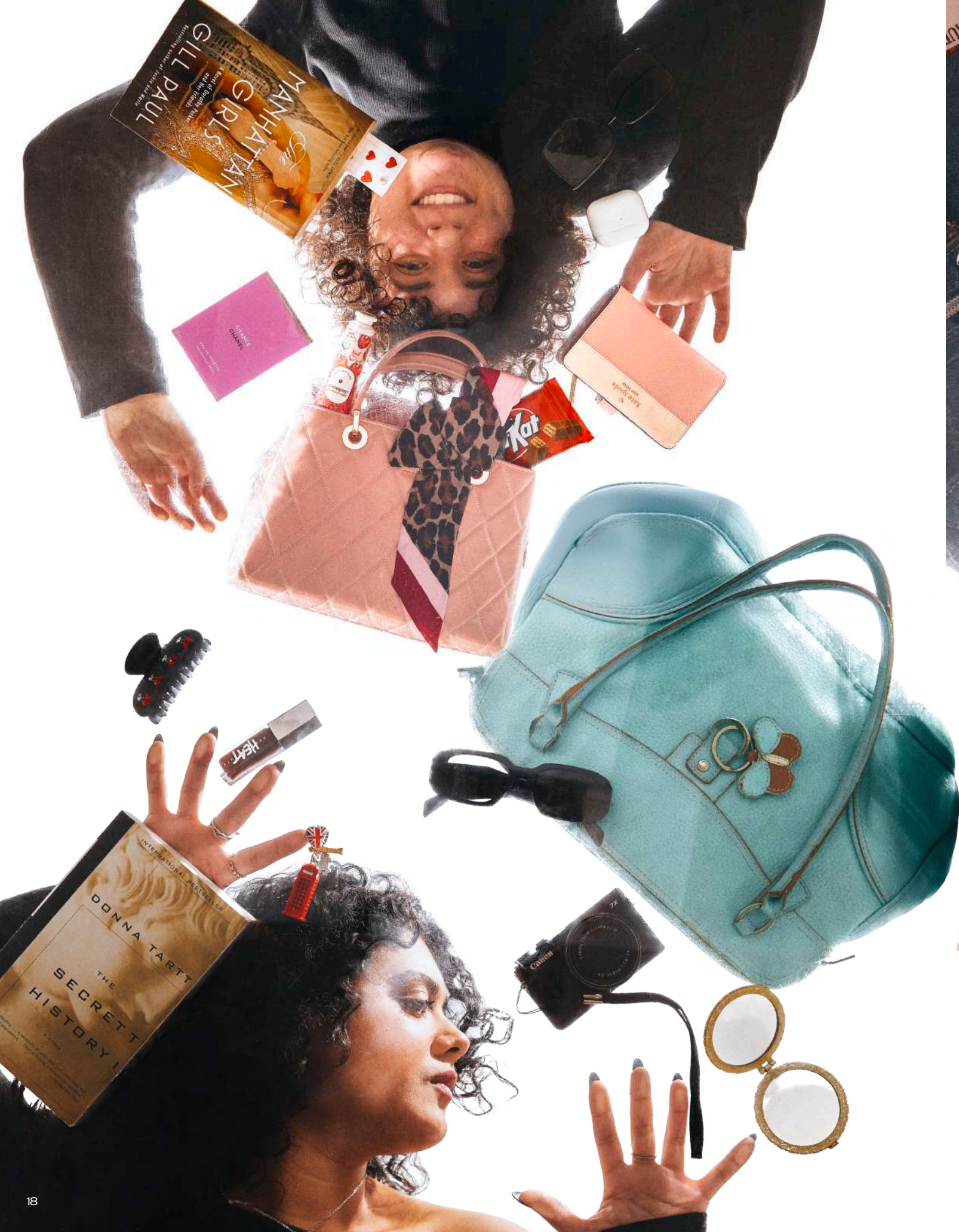
Phoenix

EXECUTIVE PICKS



Photographer Eva Demming
Graphics Hailey Weber





TREND SPOTTING 2025



WHAT ARE FIT



STUDENTS WEARING?

Photographer Kiefer Shortell
Graphic Designer Hailey Weber



AN ODE TO THE CITY MADE UP OF MORE THAN JUST MIDTOWN.

A NEW YORK

MINUTE

BY NAA ANKRAH

For every Fashion Institute of Technology student, the concept of the glamorous life in New York City gets shoved down their throats since day one. Over time, their career interests developed through the consumption of copious amounts of media selling the same dream- a fast-paced, fashionable lifestyle, leading them to one of the best fashion schools in the world, reading one of the best student-led fashion magazines.

Each year, eager FIT freshmen drive across state lines or fly overseas to pursue their NYC dreams. However, for FIT’s in-state students, their dreams were a Metrocard swipe away. The inspiration for their art, style, and fashion comes from more than the Chelsea but lived cultural experiences in the notable boroughs- Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.

A 35-minute ride on a Uptown train takes you to Harlem, known for its

dynamic history with fashion, art, and music that inspires all visitors. From Fifth Avenue to East 96th Street lies East Harlem, known as Spanish Harlem—or El Barrio, for real New Yorkers. Lesley Valdovinos, a fourth-year Advertising Marketing Communications and graphic design intern, was born and raised there.

For Valdovinos, diversity and creativity were at the forefront of her childhood- recalling music-filled community gatherings on scorching hot summers. She wanted her college experience to match those memories. “I just knew that I wanted to be surrounded by effervescent people who were good at being passionate and, of course, surrounded by creativity, which FIT does exceptionally well,” she says.

For 40 minutes on several Downtown trains, you arrive in Brooklyn. Referred to as the new Manhattan, this borough is home to diverse artistic communities and upcoming creatives. Jamisha Rosado, an AMC senior and the founder of JAMDED Magazine, discovered her inspiration there.

Growing up surrounded by creativity, Jamisha knew she was destined for a place in the industry. However, as a first-generation college student, she didn’t know where to start. During her senior year at the High School of Fashion Industries, she fell in love with the balance marketing provided, eventually deciding to pursue it as a major. “However, I figured if I did pursue marketing, I would want it to be in fashion, and what better place to expand my network in the fashion industry than THE Fashion Institute of Technology,” she explains.

After taking the N or 7 train, you enter Queens, known for its beautiful parks with eye-catching views and diverse communities, serving delicious flavors of food and art. Jennifer Sze, a fourth-year knitwear fashion design student and president of the Fashion and Art Design club, gained her artistic passion there.

Like Jamisha, Sze’s road to FIT started inside the walls of a classroom. During her freshman year at the famous LaGuardia High for studio art, Sze joined the fashion club, inspiring her to take FIT’s “Designing a Collection” pre-college class and drop her dreams of attending Rhode Island School of Design.

“After finishing that pre-college class, I had solidified in my head that I am going to only apply to FIT, and I only wanted to go to FIT,” recalls Sze. “New York is the best city to grow up in, attend schools, and work after college, so there wasn’t any point for me to go to RISD anymore.”

Multiple stops on the 2 train leads you to the Bronx. The birthplace of Hip Hop, the Bronx transformed fashion as we know it. This is the borough Carlos Villa, a Technical Design senior and freelancer, calls home.

Although Villa had a natural eye for fashion, it was not his first choice. “Actually, I wanted to be an artist, so I was studying fine arts at Hunter College,” he explains. “A lot of the fashion jobs started hitting during my time there, so I just decided to continue my degree in fashion because I’m already in the industry.”

These are the type of people that make up our FIT community and give a taste of their borough to 27th Street. However, the energy of New York City stays the same in any borough you enter—an addicting one that every citizen has no choice but to match.

“You walk around every day in a city, like, what are you wearing?” Villa expresses. “Why did they choose that?” These signs of unconventional thinking lead people to the center of fashion inspiration and creation.

Elizabeth Ovalle, a stylist and AMC student in her final year, was one of them. After graduating high school, she decided to move to New York City with the support of her dad. “After researching FIT’s programs and its accomplished alumni, I recognized that the dynamic environment would challenge me to grow and further develop my creative abilities,” she explains.

WHEN YOU WALK
DOWN THE STREET,
WALK LIKE
YOU HAVE SOMEWHERE
TO BE.

WHEN ASKED TO SPEAK—
ANSWER LIKE
YOU HAVE
SOMETHING
VALUABLE
TO SAY.

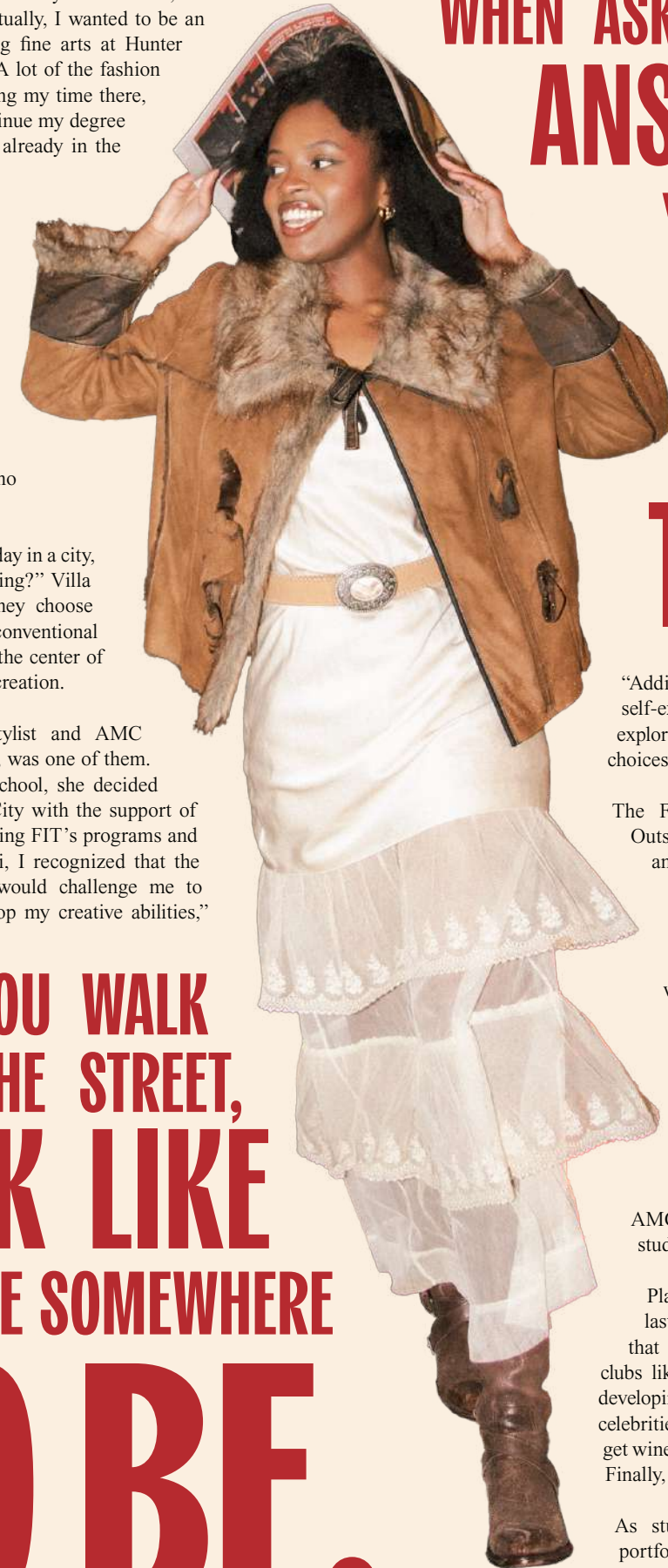
“Additionally, I was drawn to the freedom of self-expression the city offers, allowing me to explore outrageous and unconventional fashion choices confidently.”

The FIT experience is one like no other. Outside in the Breezeway, students, native and transplant alike, display their curated outfits—expressions of their culture, attitude, and art. Inside FIT’s walls hold not only competition and cliquy attitudes but faculty and student staff with friendly faces.

In the Design Tutoring Studio, Jen would kindly provide flat guides. In the Career Services Center, meet Adrian Jones, who critiques the cover letter that will secure an internship. On the fourth floor of the B-building is Lorretta Volpe, Chairwoman of the AMC department, assisting your London study abroad trip.

Play the FIT game right, and gain long-lasting relationships and experiences that challenge comfort zones. You will join clubs like *Blush* magazine, curating shoots and developing articles. On the weekends, party with celebrities at The Box in the Lower East Side or get wine drunk at Lunático jazz club in Brooklyn. Finally, on weekdays, work diligently.

As students leave FIT with their degrees, portfolios, and tech packs, their love story with the City is just beginning. A love story that leads them back to the city every time.



Dress Cestibout
Fur coat Vintage
Hat Vintage
Shoes Jeffery Campbell

Lace skirt Vintage
Slip dress Thrifted
Fur jacket Marvin Richards
Shoes Vintage

Talent Laila Abdul - Aziz, Jada Davis
Photographer Mia Baric
Stylist Ellie McCullough
Graphic Designer Elise Harcsar

FEMININE

An exploration of the cultural impact of TikTok “girl trends” and their evolution from empowering to toxic.

By Kate DiBartolomeo

OVERLOAD



“Girl math,” “girl dinner,” “I’m just a girl,” “hot girl walk,” “it girl,” “rat girl,” “feral girl.” For a moment, it felt like the “girlification” of anything and everything was inescapable. These gendered trends peaked in 2023 when the term “Barbie Summer” took over. Greta Gerwig’s multi-billion dollar film delightfully functioned like a modern Feminine Mystique, giving voice to women’s issues and sparking conversation and discourse.

Feeling empowered, women swarmed to social media. Some filmed serious multi-minute videos tackling the problems they perceived as most pressing for women. Others chose a more lighthearted approach, using satire as a coping mechanism. The latter approach gave way to the rise of “girl” trends.

Talent Sydney Dyball, Samantha Le Brecht, Brianna Herbet
Photographer Allison Simms
Photo Assistant Kiefer Shortell
Stylist Fiona Verderosa
Stylist Assistant Elisa Panelo
Hair Artist Brooke Harry
MUA Zoie Kremer, Iris Santiago, Izzy Catu
Nail Artist Mio Okagaki
Graphic Designer Erin Black

However, *Barbie* was not the lone star of the summer, numerous female icons swept the entertainment industry. Taylor Swift’s *The Era’s Tour* ravaged charts in the United States alongside Beyoncé’s *Renaissance Tour*. Swift released her chart-topping re-recording of *Speak Now* in July, while Olivia Rodrigo snuck in to close the summer with her Grammy Award-winning *Guts* album in early September. These accomplishments contributed to the unique sense of femininity, strength, power, and celebration of the zeitgeist of summer 2023.

Jewelry Vintage
Dress Adrianna by Adrianna Papell
Shoes Vintage

While the
jokes started
as a means to
commiserate,
they quickly

SOURCED.





“I think, unfortunately, sometimes on social media, a lot of the girl trends like “girl dinner” can go from being cute or funny or something relatable into something that could be toxic,” says the head of the gender studies department at the Fashion Institute of Technology, Melissa Tombro. When “girl math” and “girl dinner” started as self-deprecating jokes that seemed innocent. The videos drew smiles on faces and provided a sense of unity in shared faults.

Furthermore, some of the trends defied stereotypical gender roles. “Girl dinner,” for instance, subverts the expectation that women should cook for the family. Young women prepared food solely for themselves, the “meals” not at all suitable for a traditional family dinner but rather women seeking provision for herself and herself only; a concept many cannot fathom—a woman doing something for herself and herself only.

Despite solid beginnings, “girl dinner” illustrates one of the clearest descents into darkness. “A lot of it is silly or fun and snacky,” Tombro says, “I also identify with girl dinners. I’m eating cheese, nuts, a piece of fruit, a cookie, whatever it is. Then it descends into things like “girl dinner,” “I’m eating ice.”

What began as a feminist subversion of gender roles quickly plunged into women publicizing disordered eating habits on social media. Other trends like “girl math” and “I’m just a girl” progressed down similar paths. They perpetuated stereotypes like women being

poor at math or somehow less capable than men. Overwhelmingly, TikTok users who pointed out this harmful rhetoric met the sentiment that the videos are jokes and, therefore, not that serious. However, those expressing concern identified a real problem.

Social media sites like TikTok are complicated arenas brimming with a variety of contentious content. Not every user opens TikTok looking for the same type of content; some seek news or information, while others search for entertainment, and what the user looks for often changes multiple times a day.

Professor of English and Communication studies at FIT Marcus Brock explains that TikTok is “not necessarily a comedic, satirical space.” Brock says, “When I log on, I’m not paying for tickets to a comedy show or watching something on Netflix. So it gets misconstrued in a very different way.”

The constant shifting tone from video to video makes it hard for users to differentiate between serious and satirical content. A perfect example of this phenomenon is rage baiting, a content strategy where creators intentionally post agitating videos to increase engagement. The technique is profoundly effective because the average user fails to engage the content they consume critically and subsequently fails to recognize a fabricated video when they see one. Therefore, many TikTok users take messages to heart, regardless of whether they are framed as jokes. That gets particu-

larly dangerous if the messaging is negative or consumed in large amounts.

The TikTok algorithm tailors the in-app experience by collecting comprehensive data to push the most engaging content for the individual user. For that same reason, the algorithm is so effective and intensely dangerous. If a user interacts with toxic or harmful content, the algorithm will push more of the same into their feed.



In her experience doing social media for her children’s apparel store, owner of Phia Boutique Michelle Gardiner explains, “The algorithm will keep focusing on the negative images instead of bringing in positive ones. You can go down rabbit holes of negativity because it just keeps showing up on your For You page.”

On a platform like TikTok, governed by a pervasive algorithm and rampant with poor media literacy, jokes can quickly become harmful. Gardiner warns, “If you’re constantly getting the same message, satire or not, then you’re going to buy into that message.” Her sentiment applies to all app users but is increasingly concerning for young children.

It is estimated that 32.5% of TikTok users are under the age of 20. While TikTok has a 13+ age requirement, it is incredibly easy to lie about one’s age. Therefore, children are present on and consume content through the platform.

“When I was growing up, we had magazines, which you would look at. These kids now, every 15 seconds, they’re seeing a new image,” Gardner says. “We were seeing it once a month; they’re constantly being bombarded by negative messages.”

Children are hugely impressionable as they are developing their view of the world and self-image. When children use a platform like TikTok, they start to internalize these poor sentiments as universal truths. For young girls making sense of their place in the world, it is profoundly damaging to see adult women, who they might consider role models, make self-deprecating jokes about their gender.



Necklace Vintage
Earrings Vintage
Dress B Darlin
Ring Chelsea Flea
Earrings Vintage

Dress Milly
Ring Chelsea Flea
Shoes Michael Kors

“Tony Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* follows similar themes,” says Professor Brock.” What happens when you soak children in shame and despair? They end up going insane, essentially. It messes them up psychologically.”

One of the best qualities of TikTok is that people from all walks of life can use the platform. It democratizes media, giving voices to marginalized groups who historically haven’t had them in traditional media and publishing. This also means anyone can see a video posted to TikTok. It is important to consider that while a piece of content might have an intended audience, there is no way to guarantee that’s who consumes the video. “It’s interesting because social media is a place where young women have a lot of power,” says Professor Tombro.

With an increased sphere of influence comes a certain level of responsibility and a real opportunity to make impactful change. To achieve equality, it is dire that female creators recognize their power and start acting accordingly.

Professor Brock recalls, “I grew up with that phrase: You have to teach people how to treat you.” Practicing positive self-talk when posting to public platforms is one way female creators can use their power for good. Speaking positively about oneself and other women creates an expectation that everyone does the same. This behavior sets a good example for young girls, who can learn to speak kindly to themselves and refuse to accept negativity from others.

Dress B Darlin
Necklace Vintage
Earrings Vintage

That’s not to say that all women have to post serious videos to TikTok, there is of course a place for humor. The distinction lies in the jokes we choose to popularize.

Azalea Flores, President of Her Campus at FIT, loves videos of “women bashing stereotypes and insane beauty standards.” While there is an abundance of problematic “girl” trends, there are absolutely healthy iterations that have appeared across the app. One such trend that immediately comes to mind utilized TikTok’s photo mode. Female creators would compile personal childhood photos, or images that reminded them of growing up, to highlight the beauty of girlhood. Trends like this, that show appreciation for the female experience, are a wholesome way for the girl trends to continue.

With small tweaks to the way we create and consume TikTok content, there is hope for the girl trends to be reborn into something beneficial. After all, this began as a celebration of the increased role of women in popular media. By refocusing the girl trends into something positive again, they can act as a powerful vehicle for furthering the conversation around women’s equality. Gardiner has faith that this is possible,” I feel like your age group will change things in the next five years.”

Dress French Connection
Ring Chelsea Flea
Earrings Vintage