



Spooned

By Michael Ybarra and Johnny Dao

To whom it may concern,
we renounce cages and your cruel
conformity. We pledge ourselves to betterment
and truth. We surrender to femininity,
to insecurity, to vulnerability.
They make us strong.
We refuse to suffer under oblivion.
We recentre.

We revolt
against
the
keepers
of the
status
quo.

Grace Ortiz, Johnny Dao, Jada Johnson
Photos by Grace Wartman
Graphic Design by Allison Mendoza

To whom it may concern,
we know money means nothing.
We have writhed under your
watch for decades,
And we weaponise scrutiny
like you taught us,
All to distract from
our own cracking
clay pot.

To whom it may concern,
we ride from oblivion and hover
Above the catastrophe current,
Strong enough to submerge even the
most experienced sailor.
Imagine those of us still getting
our sea legs.

We will break your slippery
cycles,
Forged for generations.
Just watch.

the
keepers
of the
status
quo.



Will Lunt, Ashlyn Schraad, Sarah Siba
Photos by Kate Vita
Graphic Design by Allison Mendoza

Oblivion, the pervasive feeling of being mentally and internally lost in society due to the relentless pressure to conform and hide our true identities, haunts us from the moment we enter this world. In a society that dictates our identities from birth, including our gender, sexuality, and numerous expectations, it's no surprise that many of us feel like trash cans, constantly spilling out the garbage that has been thrown into us. Society presents us with a menu of roles and norms that we are expected to adopt and conform to, as if our very existence is a script written by others, and we are expected to play our assigned parts with unwavering fidelity.

Johnny Dao
Photos by Kate Vita
Graphic Design by Andrea Moor

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Photos by Kate Vita
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Alison Mendoza

This transformation in fashion highlights the tyranny of sexual expectations and the pressure to conform to sexual norms (e.g. binary gender roles, heteronormativity, dress codes, etc).

Society often dictates how we should express our sexuality, who we should be attracted to and how we should engage in intimate relationships. But fashion can be a powerful means of resisting these oppressive norms allowing individuals to explore their sexuality on their own terms and in ways that make them feel comfortable and empowered.

Grace Ortiz
Photos by Grace Wartman
Graphic Design by Helen Fiske



Yet, within this complex landscape of identity, societal pressure, and fashion's role in it all, there is a glimmer of hope. Historically, generations prior have led movements such as the Hippie and Counterculture (60s-70s), Punk (70s-80s) and Grunge (90s) movements as means of questioning societal norms; however, generations-now-are leading the forefront in dismantling those norms within the fashion industry. A growing wave of individuals, largely led by Gen Z, is challenging the status quo and reshaping the fashion world to be more inclusive and diverse by incorporating a fluid gendered and sexual ideology. They are using fashion not as a tool for conformity but as a means of self-expression, a path to rediscovering their true selves in a world that often seeks to suppress individuality.

This shift delves deep into these issues and serves as a powerful reminder of the profound impact fashion can have on our identities and our quest for authenticity. It recognizes that the expectations and norms placed upon us from the moment we are born can be limiting and soul-crushing. But it also celebrates the transformative power of fashion, the way it can liberate us from these constraints and help us find our true selves.

Ashlyn Scraad
Photos by Grace Wartman
Graphic Design by Helen Fiske



Ashlyn Schraad
Photos by Kate Vita
Graphic Design by Andrea Moor

This suffocating conformity extends into the realm of fashion, where body expectations and the relentless desire to please others dictate our every choice. The fashion industry has long been a breeding ground for unrealistic standards, perpetuating a narrow, homogenous vision of beauty that leaves countless individuals feeling inadequate and pressured to conform. It's an exhausting cycle that leaves many feeling as if they are constantly falling short of societal expectations.

Yet, as much as fashion has the power to liberate, it also comes with its own set of challenges. The fear of being forgotten by the public and the pressure to conform to societal standards can lead individuals to suppress their true selves in the quest for acceptance and recognition.

By constantly masking ourselves, it not only inhibits others from viewing our unique, individualistic forms of self-expression but would also over time hinder our ability to internally recall our genuine selves. In a world dominated by social media and the constant gaze of others, it's easy to lose sight of one's authenticity in the pursuit of fleeting fame and validation.

One of the most pernicious aspects of societal expectations is the rigid definition of what it means to be a man or a woman. Gender roles have been assigned for centuries, and anyone daring to stray from these predefined roles is met with resistance, ridicule, or worse. But, fashion has the ability to transcend these limitations, offering individuals the freedom to explore and express their gender identity as they see fit.

It is through fashion that many have found the courage to

reject the

spoon-fed notions of gender and embrace

a more fluid, authentic self.

The fashion industry, despite all its flaws, is also a realm where individuals can break free from the suffocating grip of body expectations. It has long been criticized for promoting an unrealistic standard of beauty that leaves many feeling inadequate and unworthy. However, the rise of body-positive movements and inclusive fashion initiatives championed by Gen Z is slowly dismantling these damaging ideals.

Gen Z, with their unapologetic commitment to authenticity and inclusivity, is leading the charge in reshaping the fashion industry for the better. This generation, known for its dedication to social justice, is demanding greater diversity, representation, and sustainability in fashion. They are pushing for a more compassionate industry that celebrates individuality over conformity, challenging the norms, and breaking free from the mold. Gen Z is the light at the end of the tunnel in a world that often feels like a relentless storm of expectations, showing us that fashion can be a powerful tool for redemption and self-discovery.

Will Lunt
Photos by Grace Wartman
Graphic Design by Helen Fiske