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Issue 1

aura collective

OUR
FIRST
ISSUE!

Featured Models

**Chasing the Spotlight:
Dreams, Dedication, and the
Pursuit of Excellence & Beyond**



Editor's Note



At Aura Collective, we believe that every journey matters. This magazine is for dreamers, doers, and everyone in between—those who are chasing purpose, creating beauty, and making bold moves in their lives and communities. We feature people from all walks of life across the Southwest, united by one thing: the courage to pursue their dreams. Thank you for being here. May these stories inspire you to shine in your own way.

Ashia Taylor

Editor

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What's in this issue?



For those who dare to chase the spotlight in these competitive fields, the journey is rarely easy. Aspiring models face constant scrutiny, navigating the pressures of body image and the need to stand out in a sea of faces. They spend countless hours perfecting their poses, honing their walks, and building a strong portfolio. They learn to embrace rejection, turning setbacks into opportunities for growth.

The world of modeling, photography, and fashion is a dazzling landscape of creativity, ambition, and aspiration. It's a realm where dreams are woven into the fabric of reality, where lenses capture fleeting moments of imagery and where individuals strive to embody style and confidence. But beneath the surface a core of hard work, resilience, and unwavering dedication.

Fashion, the ever-evolving beast of creativity, is where trends are born, styles are redefined, and self-expression is celebrated. Designers, stylists, and fashion enthusiasts work tirelessly to create innovative garments, curate compelling looks, and push the boundaries of aesthetic expression. They understand the power of clothing to empower, transform, and communicate identity

Ultimately, the pursuit of beauty, style and achievement in modeling, photography, and fashion is a testament to the human desire to create, inspire, and leave a lasting mark on the world. It's a journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

Though the spotlight in these industries may be fleeting, the lessons learned and the dreams realized can last a lifetime. This issue recognizes those who

Dream It. Pose It. Capture It. Conquer It.

Featured Models



Annie represents timeless beauty. Her radiant smile and youthful glow remind us that confidence and grace never age.

ZACHARY

...channels that old-school cool—part rebel, part heartthrob, all style.”



Photo by: Matt Mills

DAYNAH



Bold, brilliant, and dripping in glam—she doesn't just walk into a room, she arrives.

Photographer: Rori Glover
Instagram: @rorigloverstudios
@rorigglover
Hair and Makeup Artist: Rori Glover

KYLIE

Kylie brings charm with a side of sophistication—where cowboy boots meet red-carpet grace. She's all class with a country soul.



Photographer: Kolbi Watson
IG: Kolbi.watson

Rubie

Fierce in her vision and grounded in grace, she's a reminder that true power comes from believing— in yourself, and in something greater.”



Photography by : Kevin Connery
Instagram: @kevinconnery
Hair /makeup by : Karen Elder
Instagram: @iamkbates
Styling by : Kadiatu Timbo
Instagram: @kadietimbo

Entrepreneur. Artist. Powerhouse.

Rachel moves seamlessly--fusing strength, style, and vision. Whether she's sculpting her body in the gym or shaping stories on screen, she embodies ambition with artistry



Rachel



Photographer & Makeup
Artist: Ángel Briana Sanchez
Photography IG: @24shootz
Makeup IG: @angelbrimua

PARIS

Paris is the picture of grace—rooted in nature, surrounded by blooms, and glowing with effortless elegance.



Photographer: Aashia Thanimith
Photographer IG: aashia.album



Rooted in Radiance: Portraits of Culture Through Hair

Hair tells stories. In the sun-drenched Southwest—where Native, Black, Latinx, and immigrant cultures converge—hair becomes more than just fashion. It becomes a symbol of pride, tradition, struggle, and self-expression. From the desert pueblos to city barbershops, hairstyles reflect history, identity, and community.

In Navajo Nation, braiding is more than an aesthetic—it's sacred. For generations, Diné women have taught their daughters how to weave their hair in long, silky strands, often tying them with yarn or cloth as a symbol of strength and continuity. "Our hair connects us to the earth," says elder Lorraine Yazzie of Window Rock. "To cut it without reason is to break a promise with the Creator."

In Phoenix's Southside, you'll find LeShawn Carter, a master loctician who transforms natural Black hair into crowns of locs, twists, and freeform expressions. His shop, lined with Afrocentric art and soft R&B music, serves as a healing space. "When people walk in here," Carter shares, "they're not just getting styled—they're reclaiming their power."

Meanwhile, Tucson's barrios hold generations of Chicano barbers who blend art with culture. Julio Gutierrez's fades and designs—often carved with Aztec symbols or lowrider motifs—aren't just sharp, they're revolutionary. "We hold mirrors up to our culture," he says. "What's in the chair isn't just a head—it's heritage."

Even among newer immigrant communities, hair takes on a new rhythm. In West Mesa, Somali and Sudanese mothers gather on patios, twisting intricate cornrows into their daughters' hair with care and laughter. Across town, Vietnamese and Korean salons serve a new generation blending East Asian aesthetics with desert flair—bleached tips, anime bangs, desert pink highlights.

And for the youth, hair is increasingly experimental. At art schools, skate parks, and open mics, bold colors, hybrid cuts, and androgynous styles create a cultural remix—a defiant declaration that says: "I am rooted in tradition, but I'm blooming into me."

Hair in the Southwest is more than strands. It's lineage. It's liberation. It's love braided into every lock, buzzed into every fade, and wrapped around every curl. It is, and always will be, a portrait of who we are.

GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR MODELS

Annie **Email: abcshoediva@gmail.com**

Zachary **Email: zsjones1@icloud.com**

Daynah **IG: [@daynah.a](https://www.instagram.com/daynah.a)**

Kylie **IG: [Watson_kylie](https://www.instagram.com/Watson_kylie)
TikTok: [Kylierenea_](https://www.tiktok.com/@Kylierenea_)**

Rubie **IG: [@rubietimbo](https://www.instagram.com/rubietimbo)**

Rachel **rachelkentmedia.com**

Paris **Email: Delaluzparis@gmail.com**

aura collective

www.trendingschronicles.com

tcmediaaz@zohomail.com



