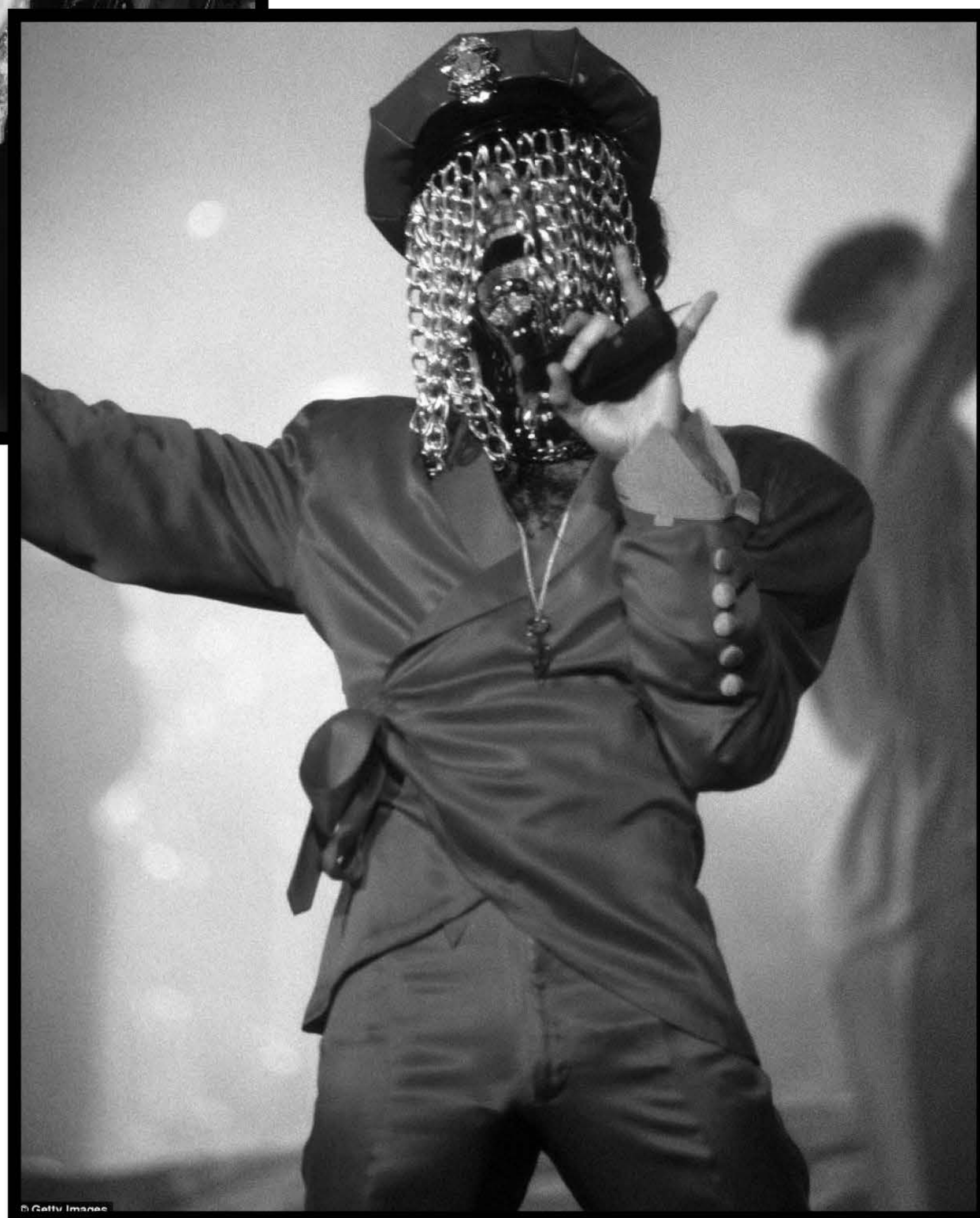

SEAM RIPPERS

Dedicated to the people who have never
been ashamed to express themselves.

Your ambition breaks boundaries for us all.

SEAM RIPPERS

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INTRODUCTION

One thing I have always been told since a young age was to always be myself, and I'm sure everyone has heard this throughout their lives too. This is why it's so interesting to me that oftentimes, we find ourselves trying to fit in with the crowd rather than stand out and be ourselves. We spend so much time worrying about what others think, and in the end, we don't really get to express ourselves. When I was in my sophomore year of high school, I started to become very infatuated with clothing, shoes, and the way I dress. For my entire life up to then, I had never really cared about what I looked like or wore out of the house. I have always loved art and had the desire to create, so at some point, I think it clicked in my mind that fashion was another way I could create, but at an even more personal level. Once I started to get into the fashion world, I quickly noticed that it seems like everyone is just trying to follow the latest trends. People will line up outside in hundreds, waiting for hours to purchase the latest shoe from Jordan. They will spend thousands of dollars trying to buy the hottest hoodie from Supreme or Off-White. We see celebrities wearing these flashy shoes and clothes, and we want to be like them. We want to live the lifestyle we see them living, and just like that - being yourself is out the window. I think it's for this reason that I've started to really appreciate people who intentionally try to stand out from others in the ways that they dress and view fashion. Why dress like someone else when you can dress in a way that really lets you express yourself? In men's fashion, it seems like there are so many boundaries and social rules that tell us what we can and cannot wear. Certain styles have been associated with either males or females, and when someone tries to cross that boundary and dress a little outside the box, we tend to look at them differently. However, over time this line has started to become a little blurred. It seems like men today are beginning to dress more freely and express themselves more than ever. I think this is in part due to people starting to see the fluidity in gender and removing old expectations for what is acceptable to be worn by a man or a woman. By pushing the boundaries of what we are expected to wear, we break these old-fashioned gender norms and become free to express who we really are. This is where

the concept of Seam Rippers is born. I have searched throughout the history of fashion over the last 50 years, and I want to celebrate the people who were never afraid to be who they are, no matter how much of the public eye was on them. From people like Elton John to Dennis Rodman, fashion and self-expression can tie all types of people together, all over the world and throughout all of time. By using their massive public stage and never being afraid to be themselves, these leaders in style have opened the door for men everywhere to dress how they want, without fearing what others might think. Just like art or music, fashion is a form of self-expression, and it allows us to show what makes us unique. By developing your own taste for what you want to wear in fashion, you are building your own sense of identity and not just trying to fit in. While I may not wear the eccentric gender-defying outfits of Harry Styles or dress in the extravagant masked, futuristic streetwear looks of Kanye West, I have learned to wear any clothes that I like. In doing this, I feel like I am able to express myself more than ever.



DAVID BOWIE

David Robert Jones, also known as David Bowie, was born on January 8th, 1947, in Brixton, London. Throughout his life, Bowie would earn the admiration of people all around the world for his one-of-a-kind personality, music, and fashion. He went through many different stages and styles during his career, but if there's one thing that remained the same, it was that he was always unapologetically himself. Even at a young age, Bowie always set trends and influenced fashion. While in school, he reportedly started a massive movement of wearing tapered pants and would often be seen coming to school with different hair colors that he would achieve with food coloring. This trend-setting attitude in fashion didn't stop there; throughout his entire career, we would see Bowie change up his look and style more than any other artist we had seen before. From Ziggy Stardust to The Thin White Duke, Bowie was constantly changing his style and experimenting with clothes in the form of self-expression - even going as far as to create new personalities and identities for these changes in style. He was always pushing the envelope and, in turn, created tons of noise in the fashion world by starting a multitude

of trends throughout his lifetime. One thing that Bowie always did well in his styling was creating looks that were very sexually ambiguous. For him, there were no clothes that were simply made for men or for women. Instead, he looked at clothing with a mindset of just wearing whatever he wanted to wear. Because of this, he was able to influence not just men's fashion but also women's fashion for generations to come. Many of his looks were often seen as weird or crazy, but this was just because people were not used to seeing a man with this kind of platform dressing in the ways that he did. After a long and prosperous career, Bowie passed away at the age of 69 years old on January 10th, 2016, but his legacy will certainly never die in both music and fashion. Today we see pop stars, rappers, athletes, and all sorts of celebrities dressing in outfits we may have never thought about ten or twenty years ago. People are starting to become more expressive than ever in the ways that we dress, and we can thank David Bowie for leading the way nearly fifty years ago.

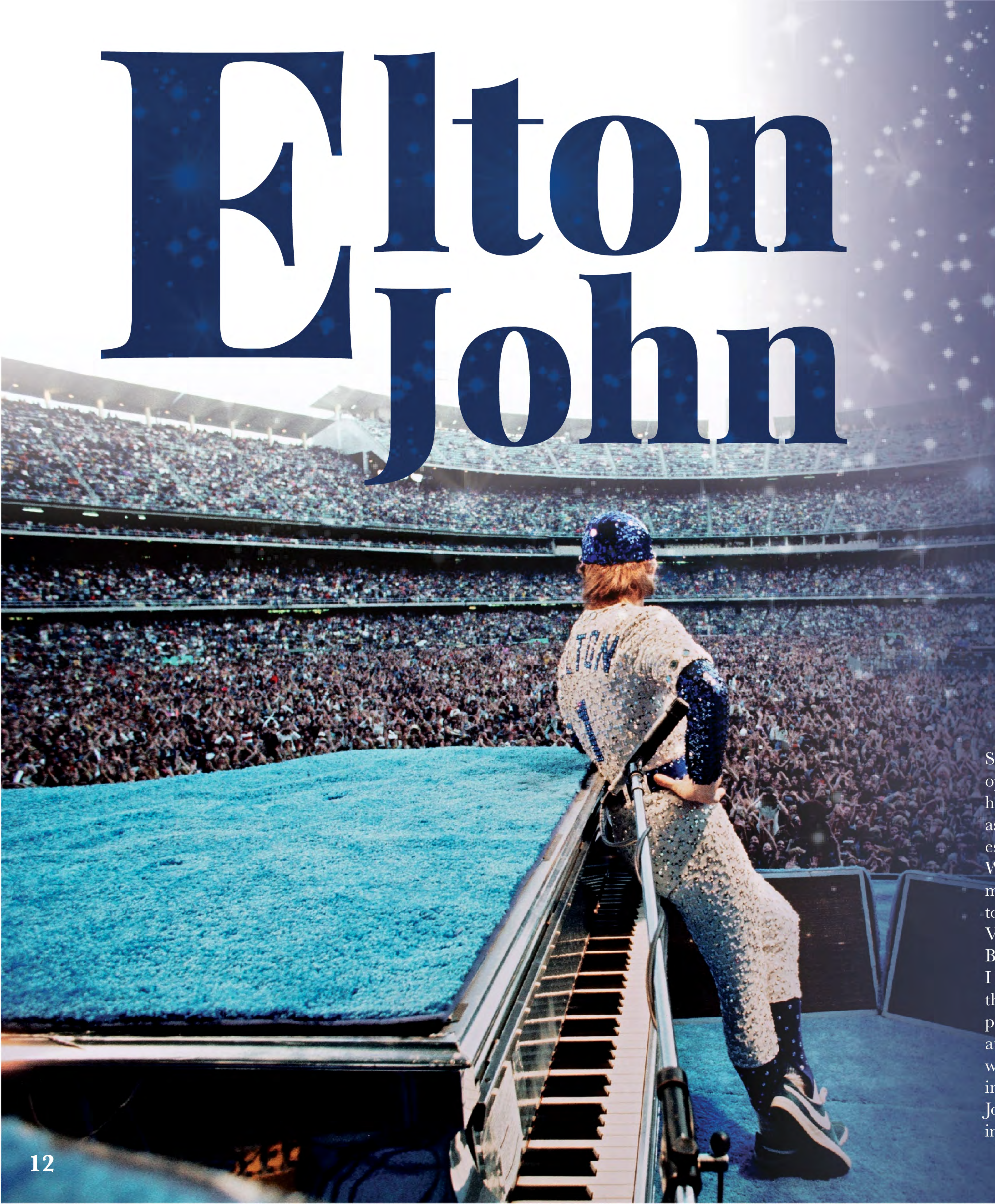


THE ICONIC FASHION RANGE OF DAVID BOWIE



When it came to David Bowie, you could never predict what the man was going to be seen wearing next. One day it would be a simple bright-colored suit, then the next, it would be some sort of eccentric costume that you expect to see on the set of a sci-fi movie. He will always be remembered for his courage and ambition to break the boundaries that society has set for us.

Elton John



Since the beginning of his career, Elton John has developed a fashion sense that is undoubtedly himself. John has seemingly never worried about what his outfits meant as far as gender norms went. Instead, he was more interested in dressing in things that reflected his personality. Whether he meant to or not, this paved the way for many artists to come and helped redefine what it means to express yourself through fashion. In an interview with *Vogue*, he stated, “I wasn’t glam rock. I wasn’t David Bowie; I was me being a blokey guy wearing these clothes. I had to have humor in my costume.” This is evident from the many various costumes we’ve seen him wear, even performing dressed as Donald Duck and Minnie Mouse at points in his career. To John, fashion was just another way to let his sparkling personality shine through, and in turn, he was able to inspire others to do the same. John’s luxurious taste for glamorous, over-the-top clothing has made him the ideal celebrity to collaborate with

for fashion brands, as it allowed them to create the wildest of outfits with no limits to how creative they could be. He has represented both Gucci and Versace, two of the world’s largest and most iconic fashion brands. He became close friends with the brands, and in 2017, Gucci even released a collection titled “Levon,” named after one of John’s hit singles from the 70s. Perhaps one of his most iconic and equally flashy outfits was his crystal-covered Los Angeles Dodgers uniform, which he wore in front of over 55,000 people in an epic performance at a sold-out Dodgers stadium. John’s outfits started to gain such recognition, that they actually helped him sell tickets as people would come in masses not only to hear his numerous hit songs, but also to see what new extravagant outfit he would be rocking this time. He even stated that wearing such wild outfits helped to bring out his larger-than-life personality on stage, creating moments to be remembered forever by those in attendance of his shows.

ROCKET MAN



What started with simple suits and sweaters quickly evolved into wild feathers and flare as Elton John realized that fashion could actually help to enhance his abilities as a performer. Perhaps the only thing that could be crazier to witness than John performing all of his hits in person would be seeing these same songs performed with him dressed in a crazy colorful and sparkly costume.



While we have seen him go through many phases of fashion, one part of Elton John's identity that has always remained consistent is his love of wearing sunglasses. According to John, he began wearing sunglasses all the time when he was 13 years old after being inspired by Buddy Holly. Since then, we have seen his glasses get more extravagant, just like his outfits.



FUNK AND FASHION

In 1958, Prince was born. In 1993, Prince changed his name to a symbol. However, even before this, Prince was already a symbol for so many people. He was a symbol of love, peace, androgyny, and creativity. Prince was a man who never really cared what other people thought about him. He would wear what he wanted and do whatever he wanted to do, despite the backlash he would receive at times. This was the mentality he had to have, as people in the 80s were not very open-minded towards expressing yourself in the way that Prince did. David Bowie and Elton John had come before him and dealt with similar criticisms, but Prince faced the additional challenge of being a black man on top of all of that. Despite all of this, he was always unequivocally himself – sporting boundary-breaking outfits that featured traditionally feminine qualities such as sequins, tassels, and feathers. This dedication to self-expression led Prince to lots of success, becoming one of the most iconic pop stars of all time. When asked about Prince, Grammy award-winning singer and rapper Frank Ocean once stated, “He made me feel comfortable with how I identify sexually, simply by his display of freedom from and irreverence for the archaic idea of gender conformity.” Prince had a similar effect on many people, showing that no matter how many eyes are on you, you should always feel free to be yourself. Prince embraced gender fluidity and continued what those before him had laid the groundwork for. He wore his outfits with a confidence that would inspire so many worldwide to follow in his footsteps. He never strayed from who he was, and as a result, he made it to what seemed like unreachable heights. Even his iconic voice blurred the lines of what was considered feminine or masculine. People would often ask him about his race, gender, sexuality, or spirituality, but at the end of the day, none of that mattered, as he was just sticking to himself and being Prince. On April 26th, 2016, Prince passed away in his home state of Minnesota. He will always be remembered for his legendary impact on music, fashion, and gender identity.





JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT

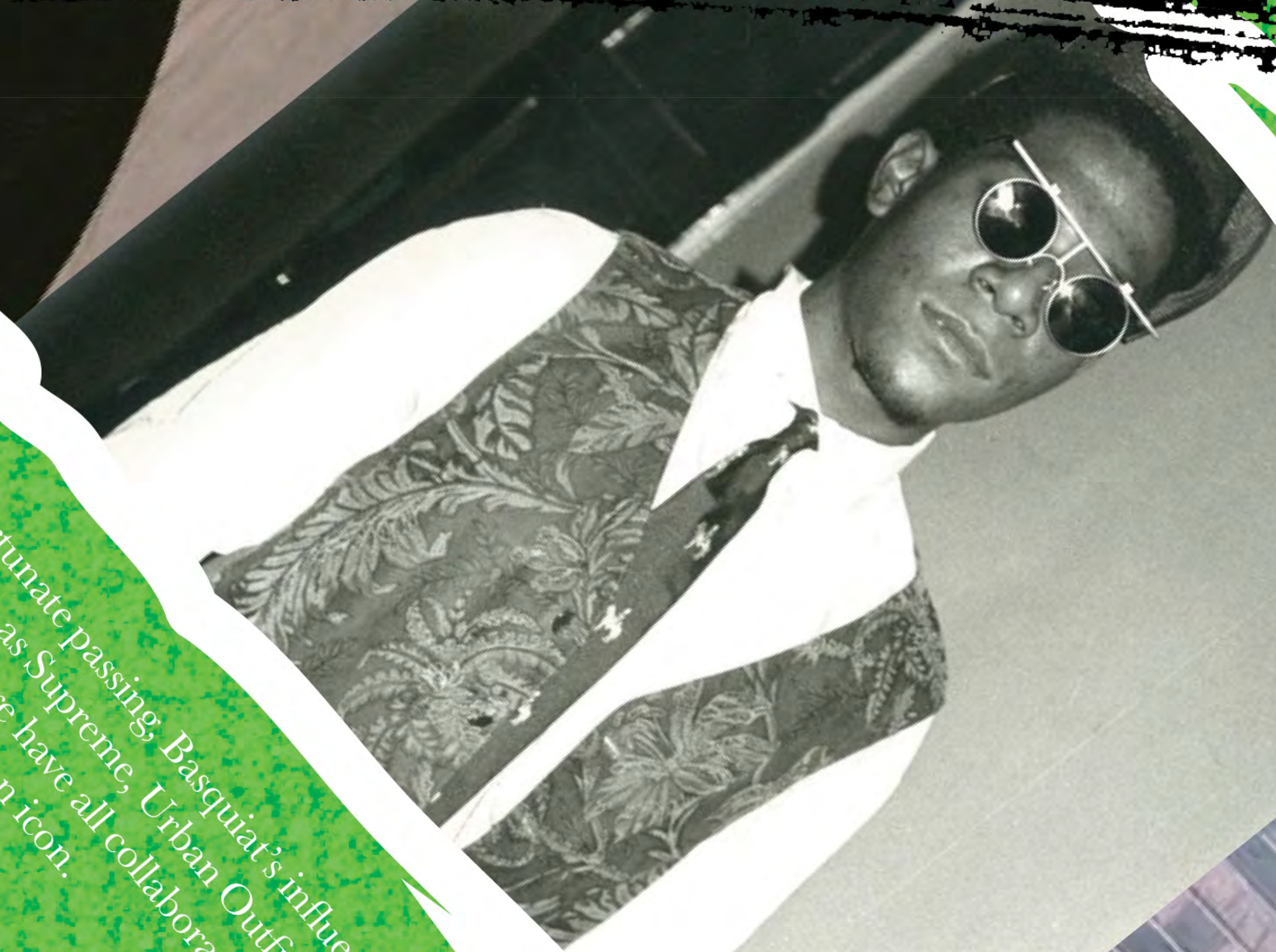
THE INFLUENCE OF BASQUIAT

When you think of painters who created art both on the canvas and also in fashion, the first person that comes to mind is Jean-Michel Basquiat. While his beautiful artwork was very energetic and chaotic, his fashion sense seems almost the opposite. Basquiat always seemed to have a sort of simple elegance to his clothing. When you look at pictures of his outfits, it seems like he barely had to even try, yet he always looks composed, put together, and well dressed. He could be wearing a full suit yet still manage to make it look cool and relaxed. Basquiat became known for this look, as he would often break traditional boundaries of what is considered casual or formal wear, combining the two to create a unique style that reflects who he is as an artist and as a person. You could often see him wearing a blazer over a casual athletic tee or dressed in a full suit but with no shoes or socks on. To Basquiat, anything could be worn at any time as long as you knew how to wear it right. He was a huge fan of Armani suits, owning multiple of them and wearing them whenever or wherever he wanted. Even while painting, he would wear these suits, letting the paint splash onto him and all over his suit, only further adding to the casual yet formal look he became so well known for. Basquiat was also a huge fan of COMME des GARÇONS and Issey Miyake, both of whom he ended up modeling and walking in runway shows for. He had an excellent feeling for the clothes he loved and felt comfortable in, so he wore them unapologetically and unintentionally became a style icon because of it. Basquiat is regarded as such a visionary in fashion because while he didn't wear the grandiose, flashy outfits of David Bowie or Elton John, he stuck to what he loved and expressed himself no matter what other people thought of him. On August 12th, 1988, Jean-Michel Basquiat sadly passed away at the young age of 27. Even though this was over 30 years ago, his influence in both fashion and art is still felt today. He has impacted fashion even beyond what he wore, as his art style and direct references to his paintings appear all over clothes and accessories to this day, ensuring that his legacy will last on for many years to come.



CHAOS IN FASHION AND DESIGN

Even after his unfortunate passing, Basquiat's influence on fashion has lived on for over 30 years now. Brands such as Supreme, Urban Outfitters, Uniqlo, Saint Laurent, Coach, Dr. Martens, Reebok, and more have all collaborated with Basquiat's estate to commemorate the late, great artist and fashion icon.



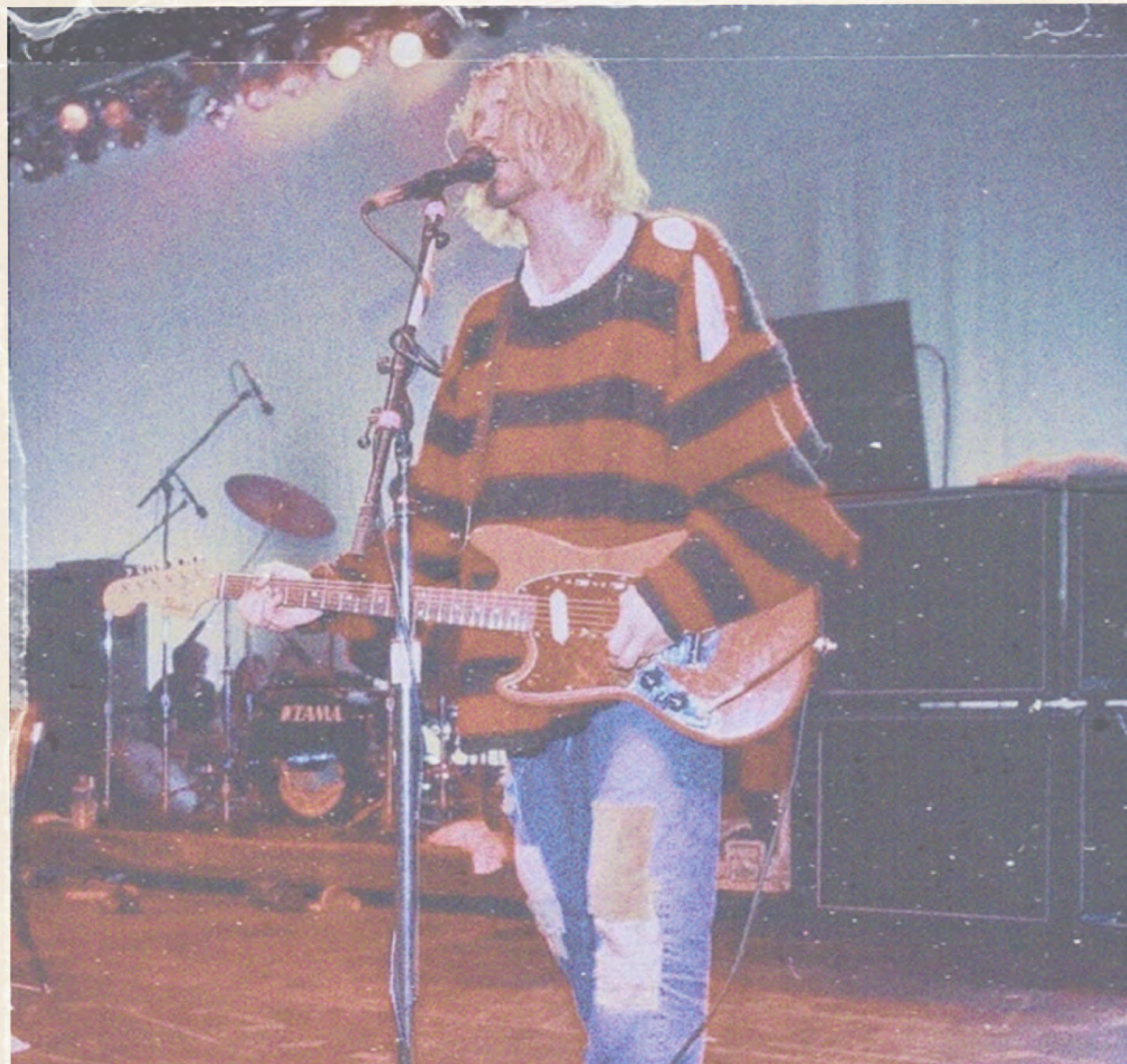
CASUAL YET FORMAL



Basquiat's ability to put together an outfit that appears to be chosen almost randomly but still pull it off like he's about to walk the runway is a testament to his outstanding artistic vision. Even off the canvas, his eye for design is still boundary breaking.

kurt cobain

counterculture in fashion
and the rise of grunge

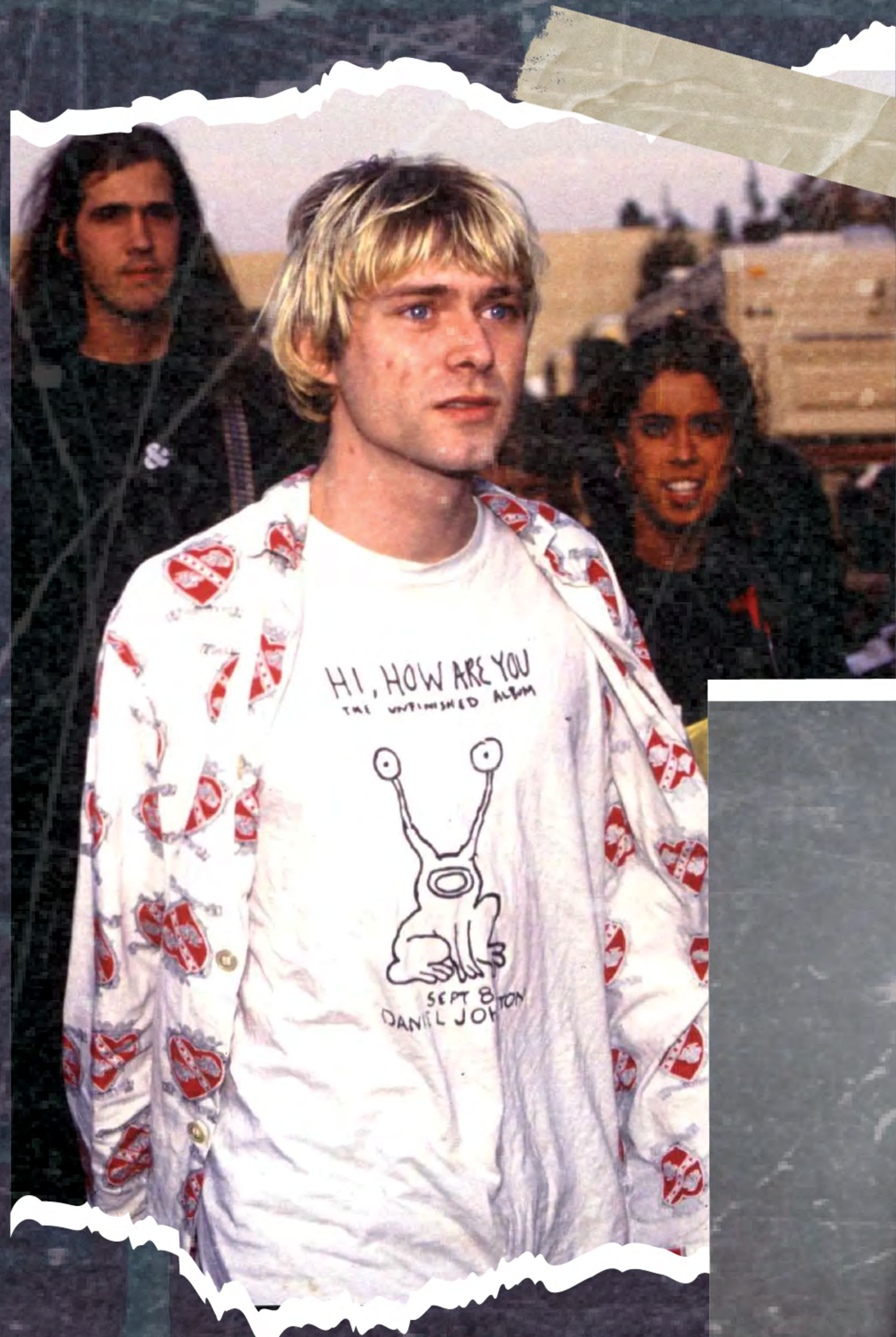


Kurt Cobain
“wanting to be someone else
is a waste of the person you are.”
Smelly

Kurt Cobain may be one of the most extraordinary individuals to walk this earth, so it comes with no surprise that his influence on fashion was so impactful, even without him trying. He never really seemed to care about fashion, and never wanted endorsements from any brands. Yet, he unintentionally became the poster boy for the grunge fashion movement, which was one of the biggest trends of the 90s and is still relevant even today. Cobain's music with Nirvana was a breath of fresh air in the music industry that fit perfectly within the counterculture movements of the time. Hence, as a result of his popularity among young people, they started

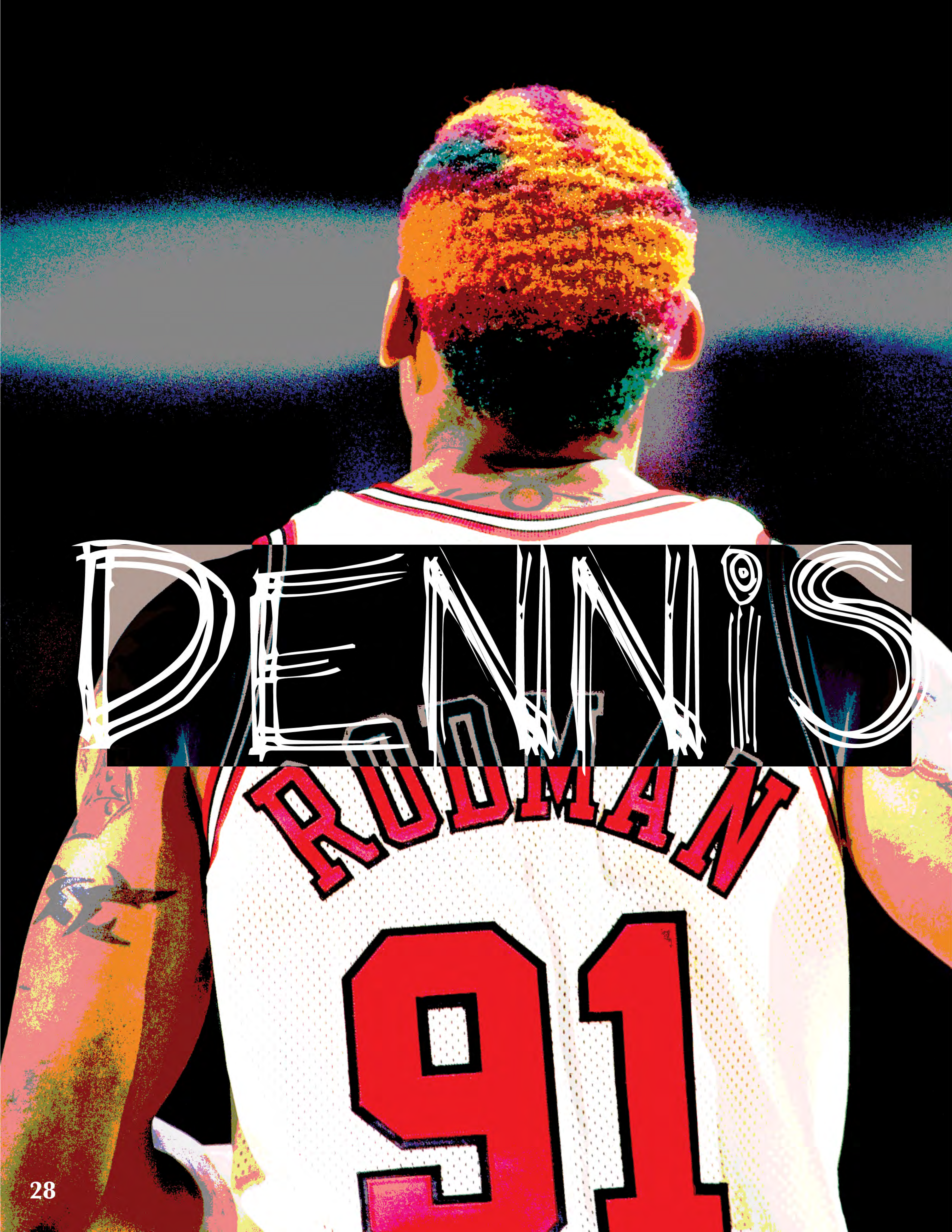
wanting to dress like him too. He got the majority of his clothing from thrift stores and would dress in multiple layers to combine pieces in unique ways. This would include flannels and many different garments with clashing patterns that you wouldn't expect to go together. He would essentially wear whatever he could find, but his artistic vision and swagger allowed him to create unique looks out of these pieces. Even in photoshoots or music videos, Cobain would wear these thrifted clothes out of his own closet, yet he would still look better dressed than most musicians at the time. Cobain tragically passed away at the age of 27, but in his limited time here, he impacted so many people and enabled us all to express ourselves through fashion and music.

counter culture icon



"There's nothing more comfortable than that cozy flower pattern.. It just feels comfortable, sexy and free wearing a dress. It's fun."

- kurt cobain



DENNIS RODMAN

out of his mind, or ahead of his time?



In the NBA today, fashion has become a staple of the culture surrounding the league. We often see pregame footage showcasing what players showed up to the arena wearing, with people on social media constantly reacting to these outfits and debating which players are the best dressed. However, it has not always been this way, and we have one man to thank for the popularization of fashion in sports – his name is Dennis Rodman. In the 90s, he was an icon for many reasons, including his wild personality, ability to grab a rebound, eccentric outfits and clothing choices, colorful dyed hair, and most importantly, his dedication to being himself. Rodman may just be the definition of staying true to yourself. The man loved himself so much that in 1996 he wore a wedding

dress out in public and claimed he was marrying himself. Antics aside, Rodman’s attitude towards fashion in the NBA was revolutionary. He showed that NBA players were more than just athletes; they could be fashion and pop culture icons too. This was not usual for basketball players at the time, so Rodman was constantly receiving criticism for his fashion choices and off-the-court antics. Thankfully, he was also a legend on the court too, being named NBA Defensive Player of the Year two times in his career, and winning three championships alongside Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. By proving he could hold his own on the court while also expressing himself off the court, Rodman changed the way people perceived NBA players as personalities in mainstream media.

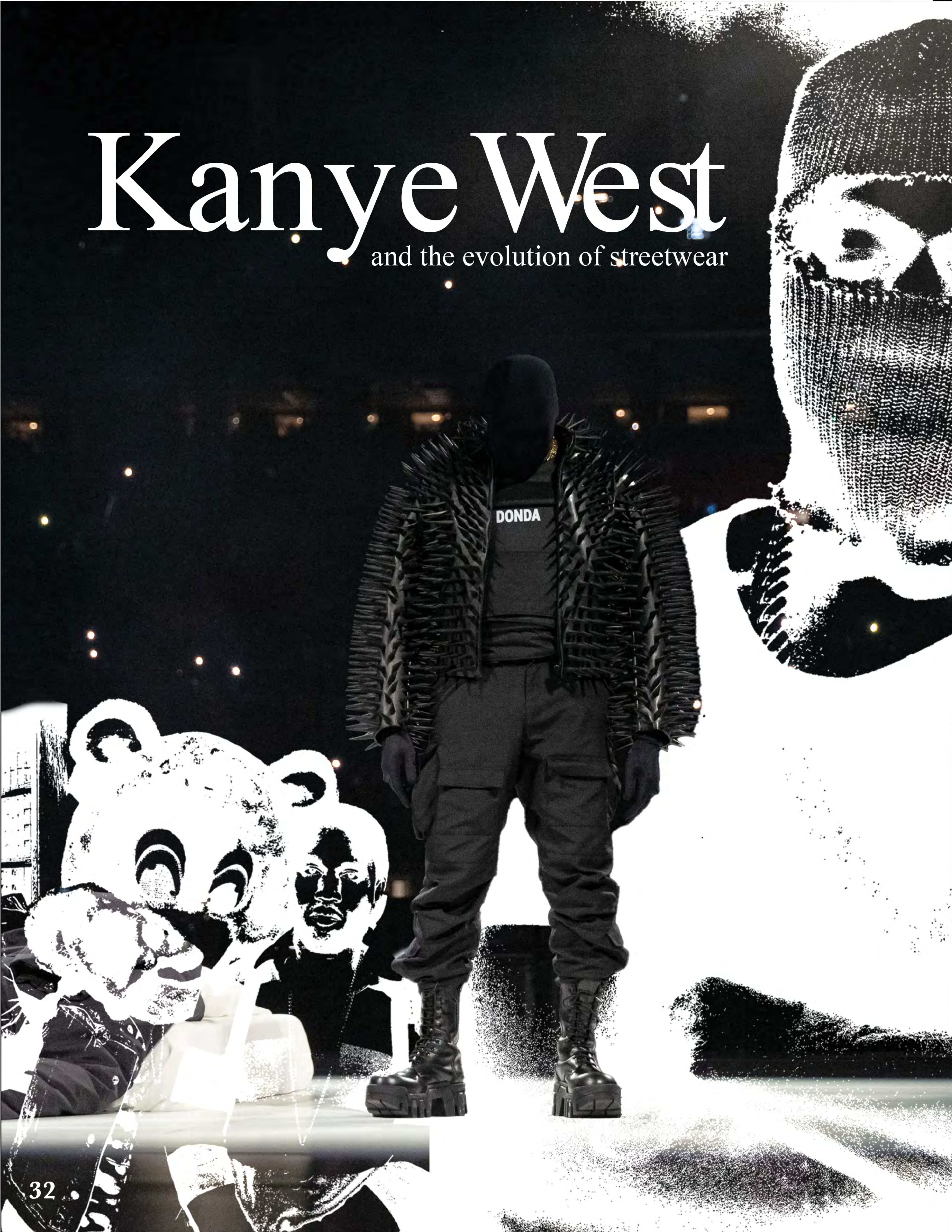


Dennis Rodman was known for his wild, one-of-a-kind outfits that he would be seen in off the court. But nowadays, many of these outfits don't seem nearly as crazy as they appeared back when Rodman was playing in the league. A lot of his styles are actually reflected in popular looks we see today. On top of all this, he was also known for expressing himself on the court with his wild dyed hairstyles. When everyone is forced to wear the same uniform, what better way to express yourself than with your hair? From smiley faces to cheetah print, Rodman expressed his creativity in all sorts of ways with his hair.



Kanye West

and the evolution of streetwear



You can't talk about fashion in the 2000s without mentioning one of the most popular yet controversial names – Kanye West. Kanye was born on June 8th, 1997. His mother was a teacher, and one thing she often taught Kanye was to always be himself. From the moment Kanye stepped into the limelight when he dropped his historic debut album, *The College Dropout*, he has always been himself with no worries about what other people think of him other than his own mother. Of course, being himself included expressing his creative energy through fashion as well as his music. Similar to David Bowie, as Kanye progressed in his musical stylings, he also went through many different eras of fashion. What started with simple, preppy-looking outfits at the time of the release of *The College Dropout*, has since evolved into the futuristic streetwear looks we saw him wear throughout the development of his most recent album, *Donda*. With each new album we receive from Kanye, we are

also seeing him reinvent himself through fashion. He has been heavily involved with the development of the streetwear style from 2010 onwards, even starting his own brand, "Yeezy," which has released multiple lines of very popular sneakers and clothing. Kanye initially brought his sneaker visions to life with the most popular athletic brand in the world, Nike, before leaving and bringing his product to their rival Adidas as he felt that he was being limited creatively. Kanye has reached such success in the fashion world that it almost rivals his greatness in the music industry. According to Forbes, his Yeezy brand brought in around 1.7 billion dollars in annual revenue in 2020. Kanye may be outspoken at times, saying things that many people will disagree with, but it's hard to say that he isn't one of the greatest creative minds of our generation. Thanks to his ambition and drive to always be himself, he has changed the world of fashion forever.

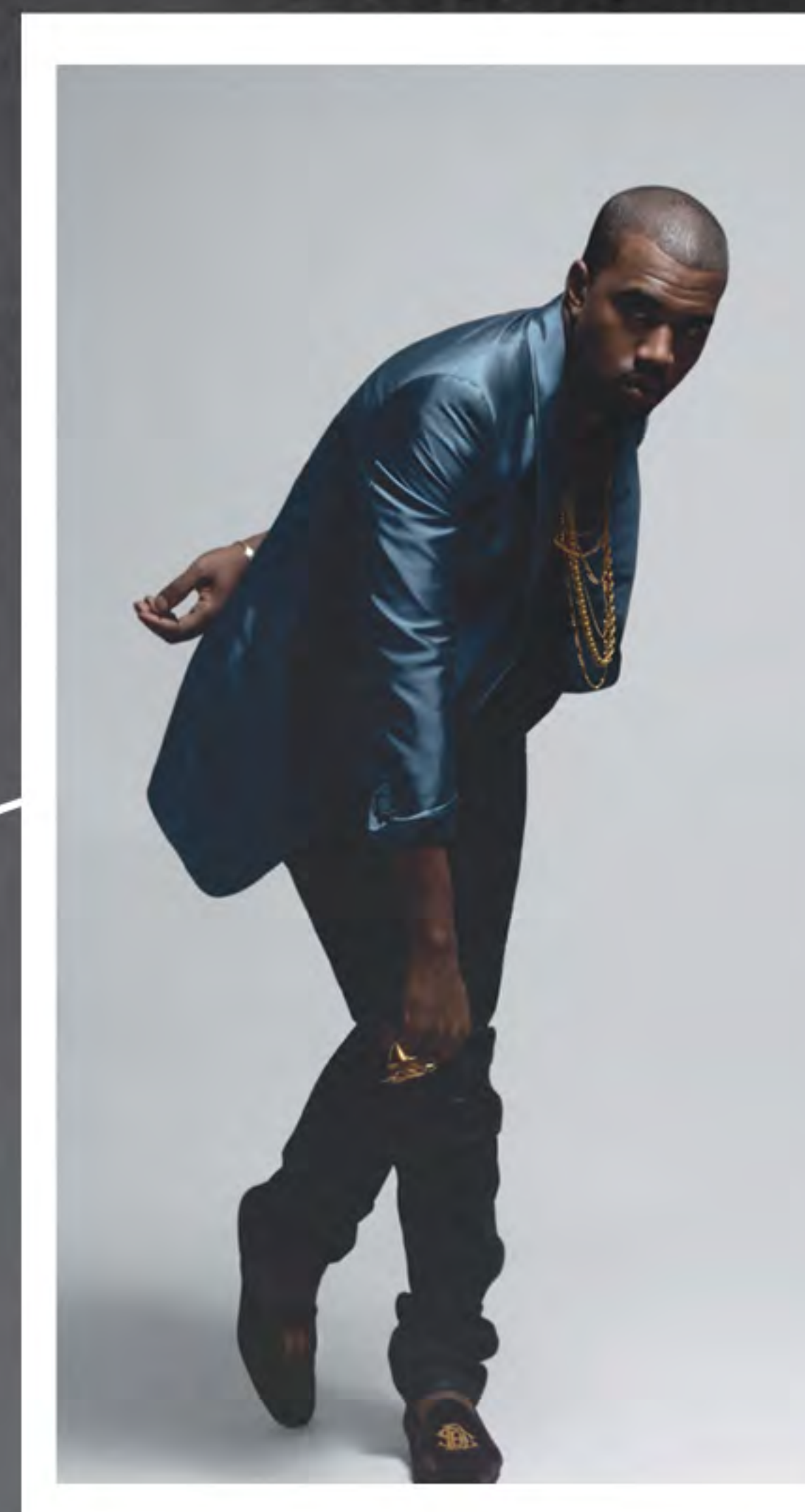
Kanye West

20 years of fashion history

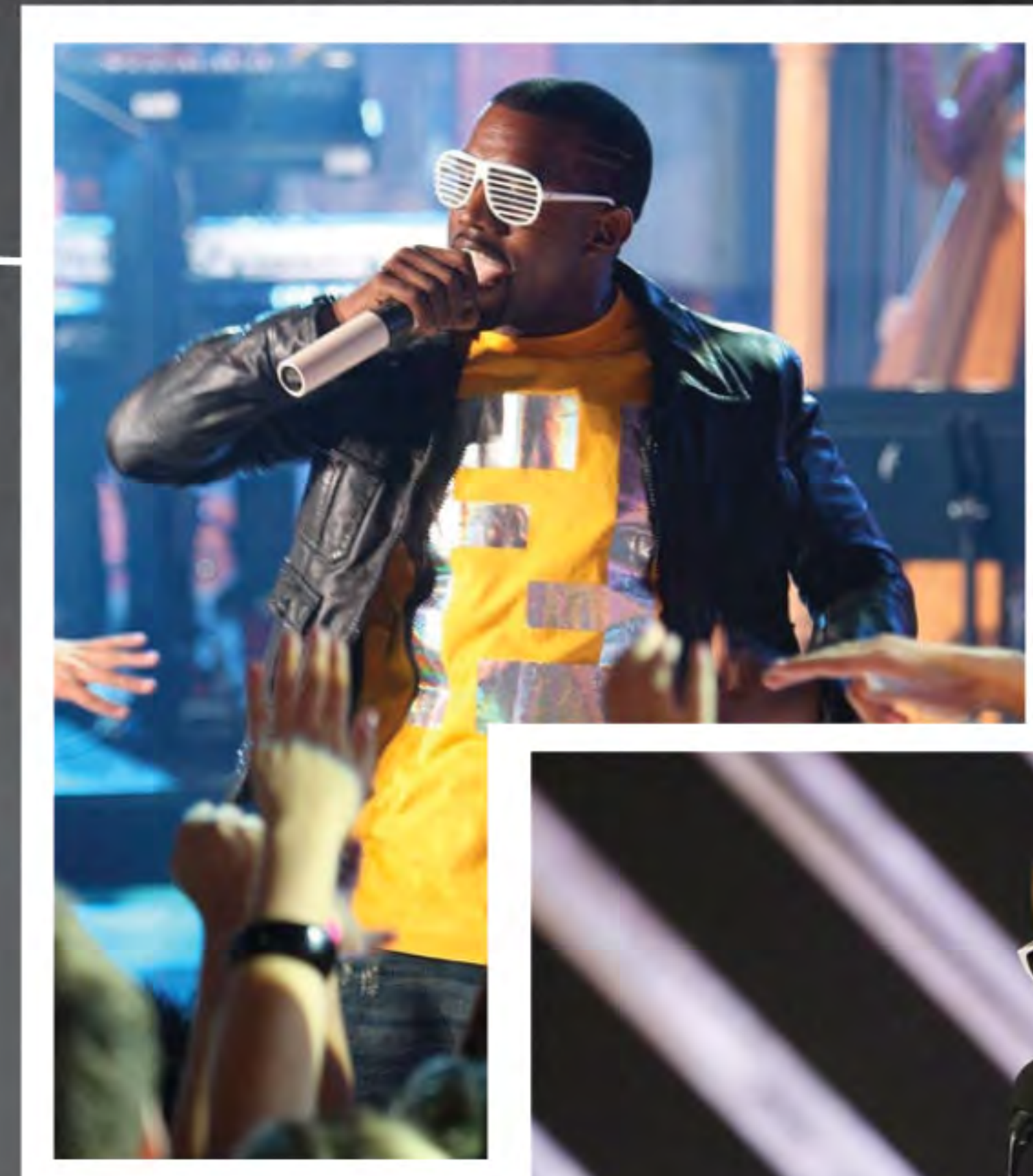
Like all creative minds, Kanye is constantly changing the ways in which he expresses himself, in music and in fashion. In 2010 we often saw him in leather or bright red suits. Then merely three years later, he could be seen wearing oversized coats and a metallic mask when performing on stage. Kanye's fashion is a part of his identity, and it helps him to visually represent how he is always changing.



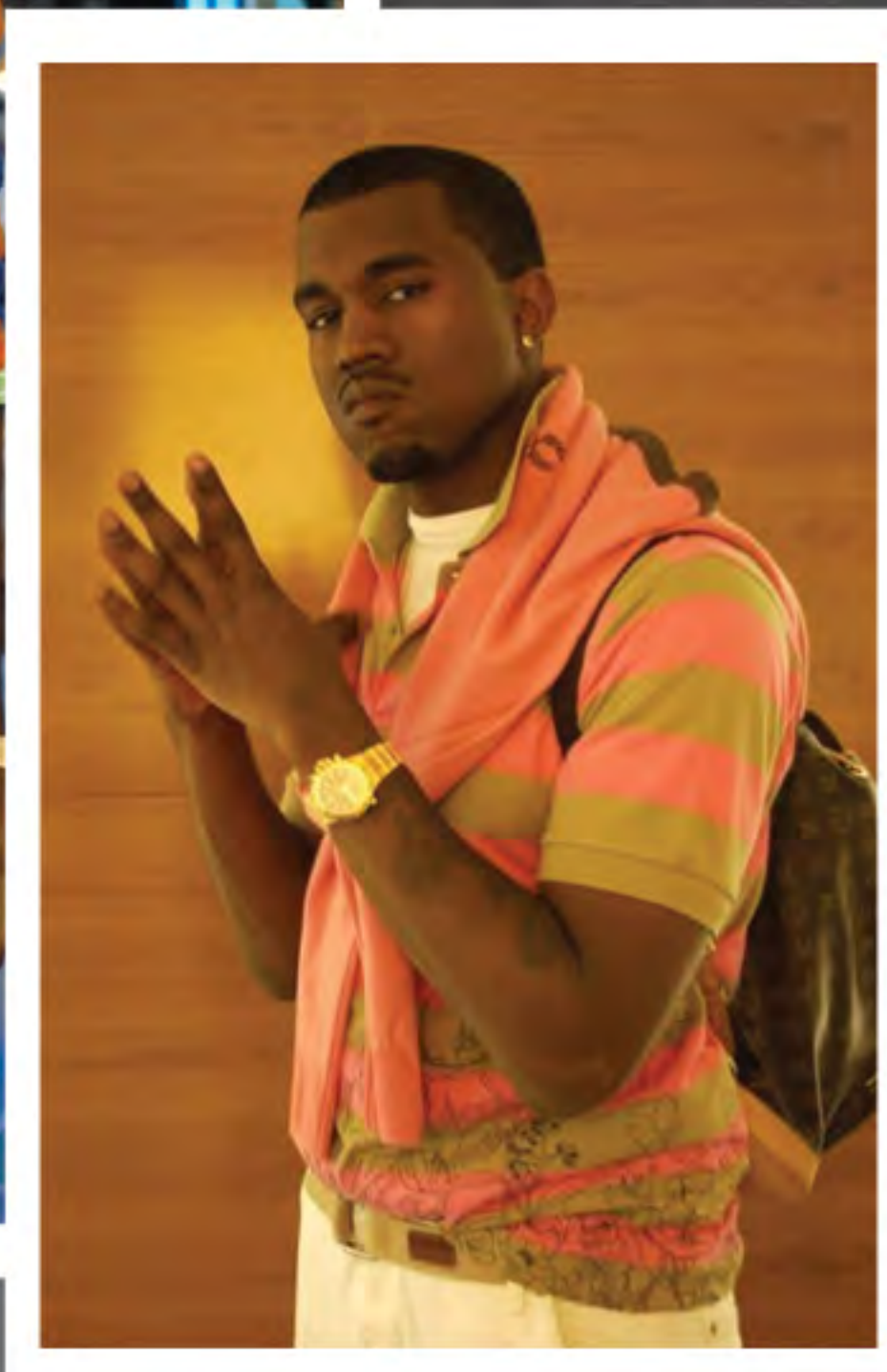
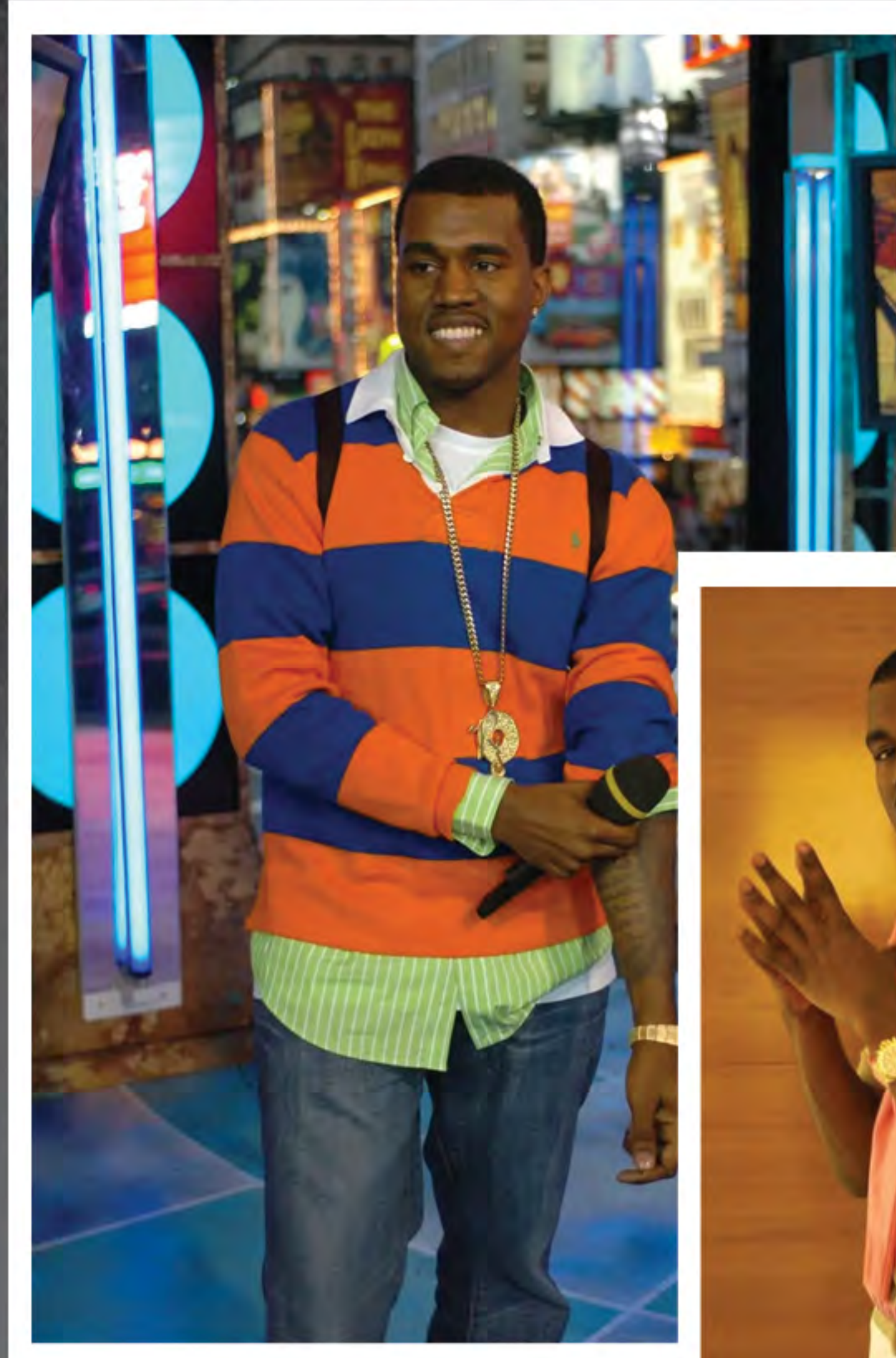
2010



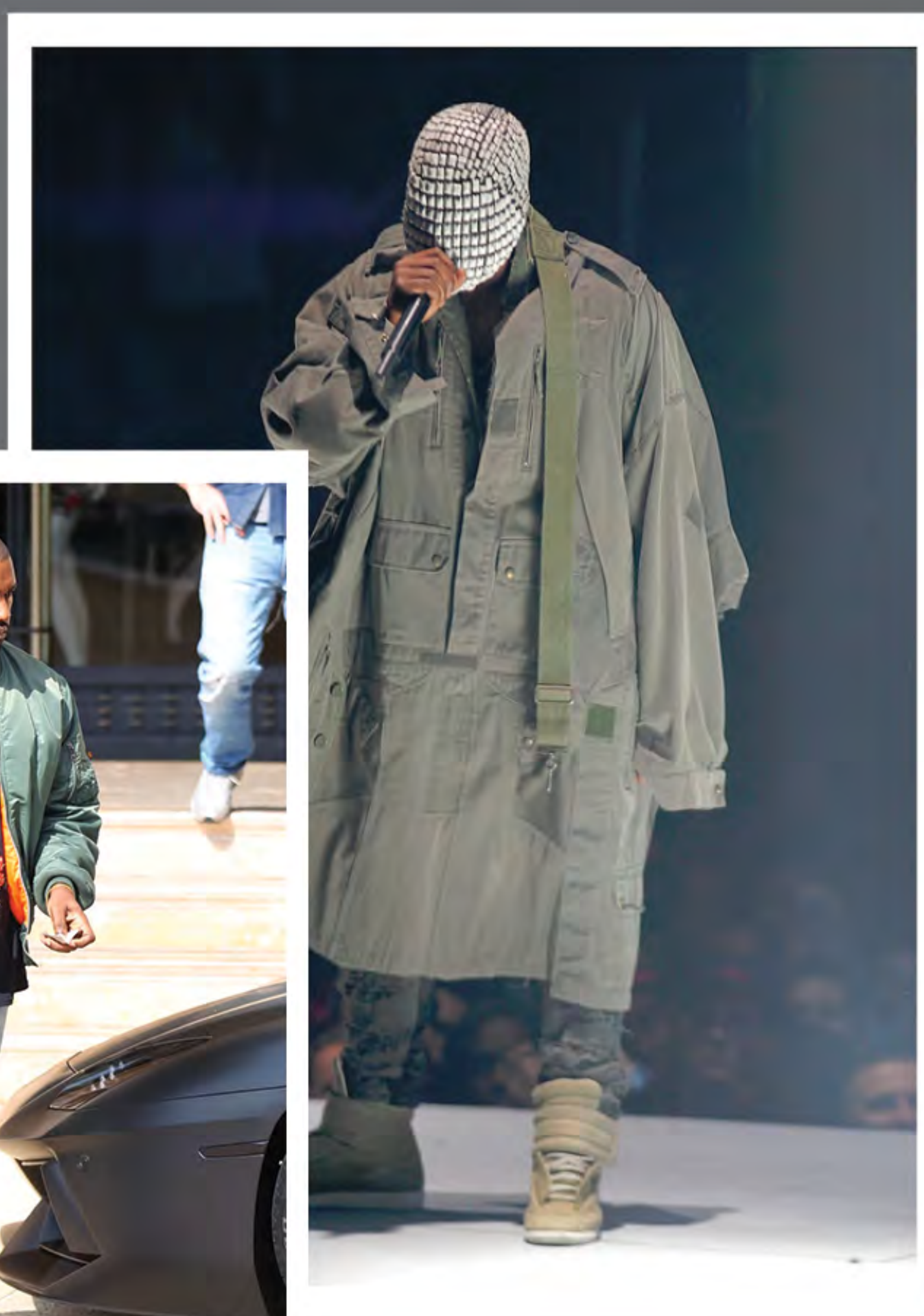
2007



2002



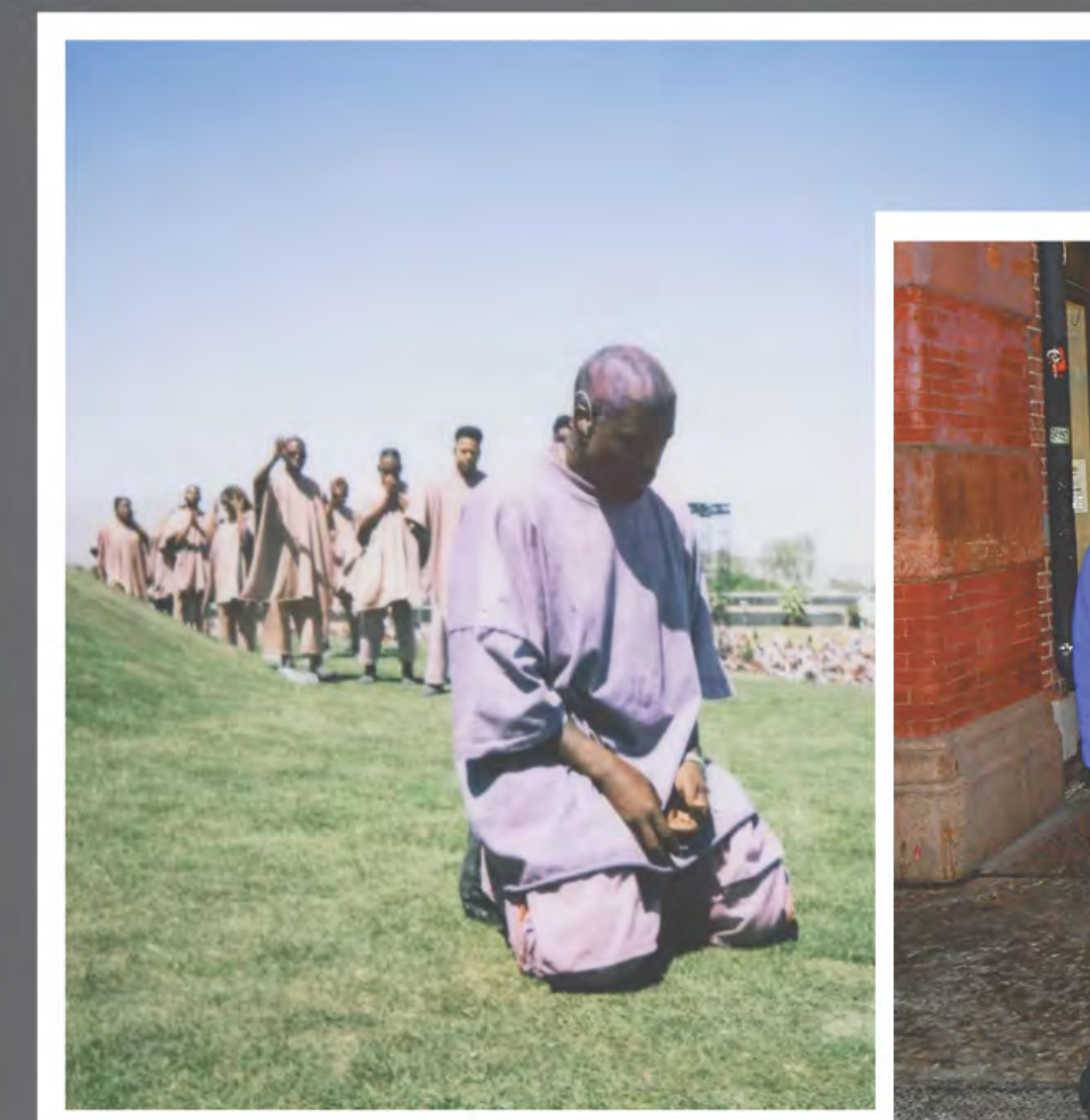
2013



2016



2019



2022



HARRY STYLES



Harry



On February 1st, 1994, Harry Styles was born in Redditch, Worcestershire, England. Throughout his early life, he expressed his passion for music. As a teen, he became part of one of the most popular boy bands of all time, One Direction. Styles' popularity skyrocketed while in the band, and this success continued well after the band's split in 2015. Styles' influence has veered into spaces separate from music, including acting and fashion. Following his departure from the band, Harry's taste in fashion has seen a significant transformation. While he used to stick to more masculine appearing clothing, he's recently defied gender norms as he takes

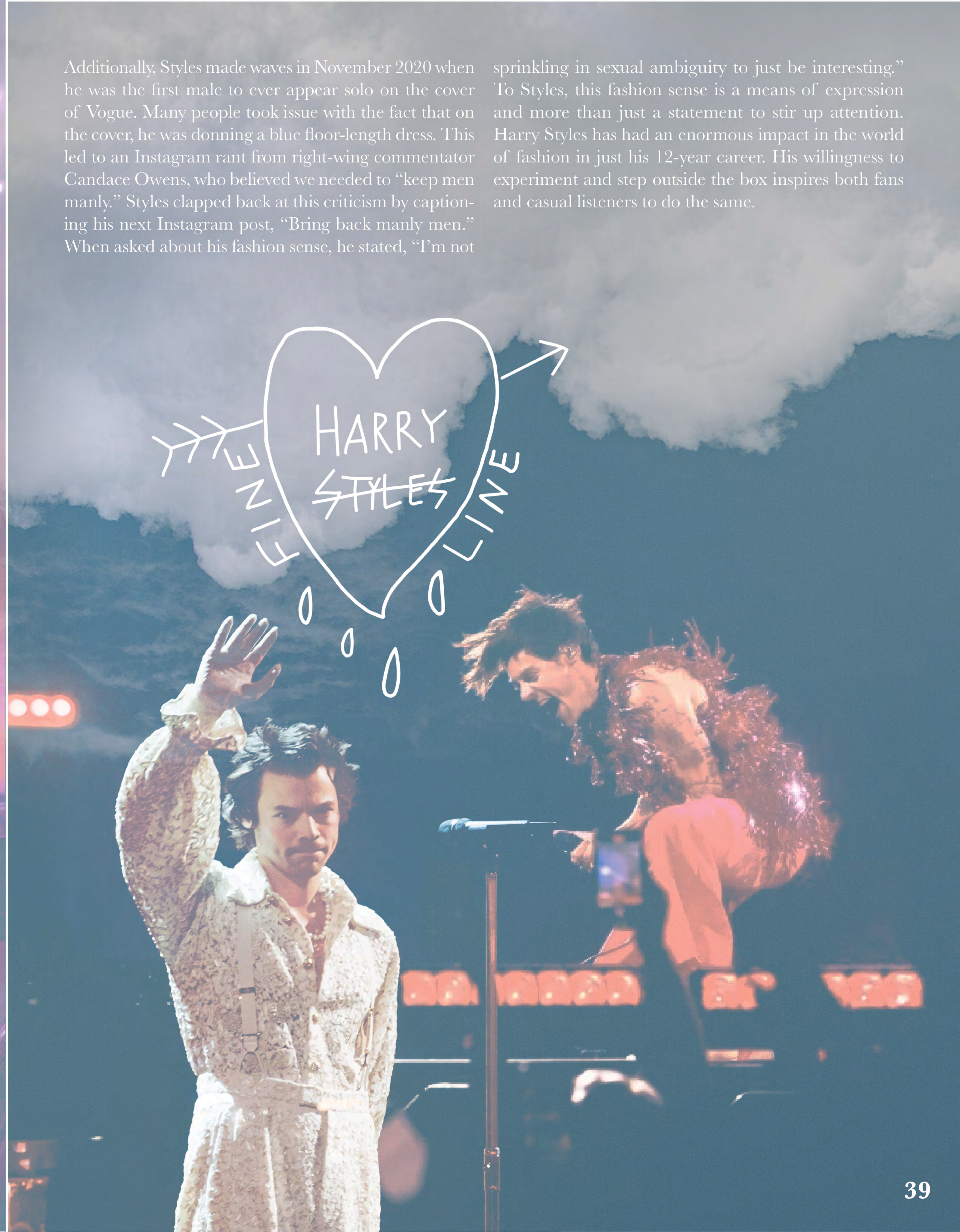
on a more ambiguous style. In December 2019, Styles' second album, "Fine Line," was released. On the cover of this album, he's seen wearing a hot pink button-up blouse along with white high-waisted flare pants. This traditionally feminine look became a wardrobe staple for him, as he wore a different colored version of it for most of his stops in his 2021 tour entitled "Love on Tour." In an article for Vogue, writer Christian Allaire stated, "Ever since Styles kicked off his second solo tour, Love on Tour, back in September, the singer has been bringing epic fashions to the stage (his printed suits or sequined vests all designed by Gucci, of course)."



"IT'S LIKE ANYTHING — ANYTIME YOU'RE PUTTING BARRIERS UP IN YOUR OWN LIFE, YOU'RE JUST LIMITING YOURSELF. THERE'S SO MUCH JOY TO BE HAD IN PLAYING WITH CLOTHES."

Additionally, Styles made waves in November 2020 when he was the first male to ever appear solo on the cover of *Vogue*. Many people took issue with the fact that on the cover, he was donning a blue floor-length dress. This led to an Instagram rant from right-wing commentator Candace Owens, who believed we needed to “keep men manly.” Styles clapped back at this criticism by captioning his next Instagram post, “Bring back manly men.” When asked about his fashion sense, he stated, “I’m not

sprinkling in sexual ambiguity to just be interesting.” To Styles, this fashion sense is a means of expression and more than just a statement to stir up attention. Harry Styles has had an enormous impact in the world of fashion in just his 12-year career. His willingness to experiment and step outside the box inspires both fans and casual listeners to do the same.



STEAM RIPPERS



IN CONCLUSION

From the age of David Bowie and Elton John wearing gender-defying outfits and rocking in the 70s, to the current day, where just about everyone has their own personal style, I believe we have come a long way in progressing fashion to be accessible for all people to truly express themselves. Growing up, lots of men will learn that dressing up and fashion is something that is traditionally feminine, when in reality, clothes are just another method of self-expression for everyone to explore, regardless of their gender identity. While researching the careers of the men who first started to use their large platforms to push gender fluidity in fashion, it was clear that it wasn't as easy as just throwing on some ambiguous-looking clothes and hopping on stage. This was a matter of exploring their self-identity in a way that many had not done before, all while being under the constant scrutiny of the public eye. Nowadays, men still face some of the same criticisms that they did back in the 70s for wearing nontraditional male clothing, but it does seem like everyone is starting to become a little more open, and I see a lot more men starting to care about how they look and express themselves through the broad creative

outlet that is the world of fashion. Just like art or music, fashion is a great way to let off your creativity and create a sense of self-identity for yourself. From rock stars to basketball players and painters to rappers, it seems like recently, everyone is starting to open up to the world of men's fashion and dive a little deeper than the clothes we have all grown up wearing. Does this mean that everyone should wear a full sequin suit like Elton John or a long blue dress like Harry Styles? No, that's never what I set out to say. For me, I believe that everyone should be able to have the freedom to truly express themselves and wear clothes that make them feel happy, safe, and comfortable at the end of the day.

“People mistake fashion for style.”



“What's wrong with expressing yourself just trying to be yourself?”



“I am not a woman, I am not a man,
I am something that you'll never understand.”



“I am not a black artist, I am an artist.”



“I'd rather be hated for who I am, than loved for who I am not”



“There's one thing everyone should understand: I like my character.”



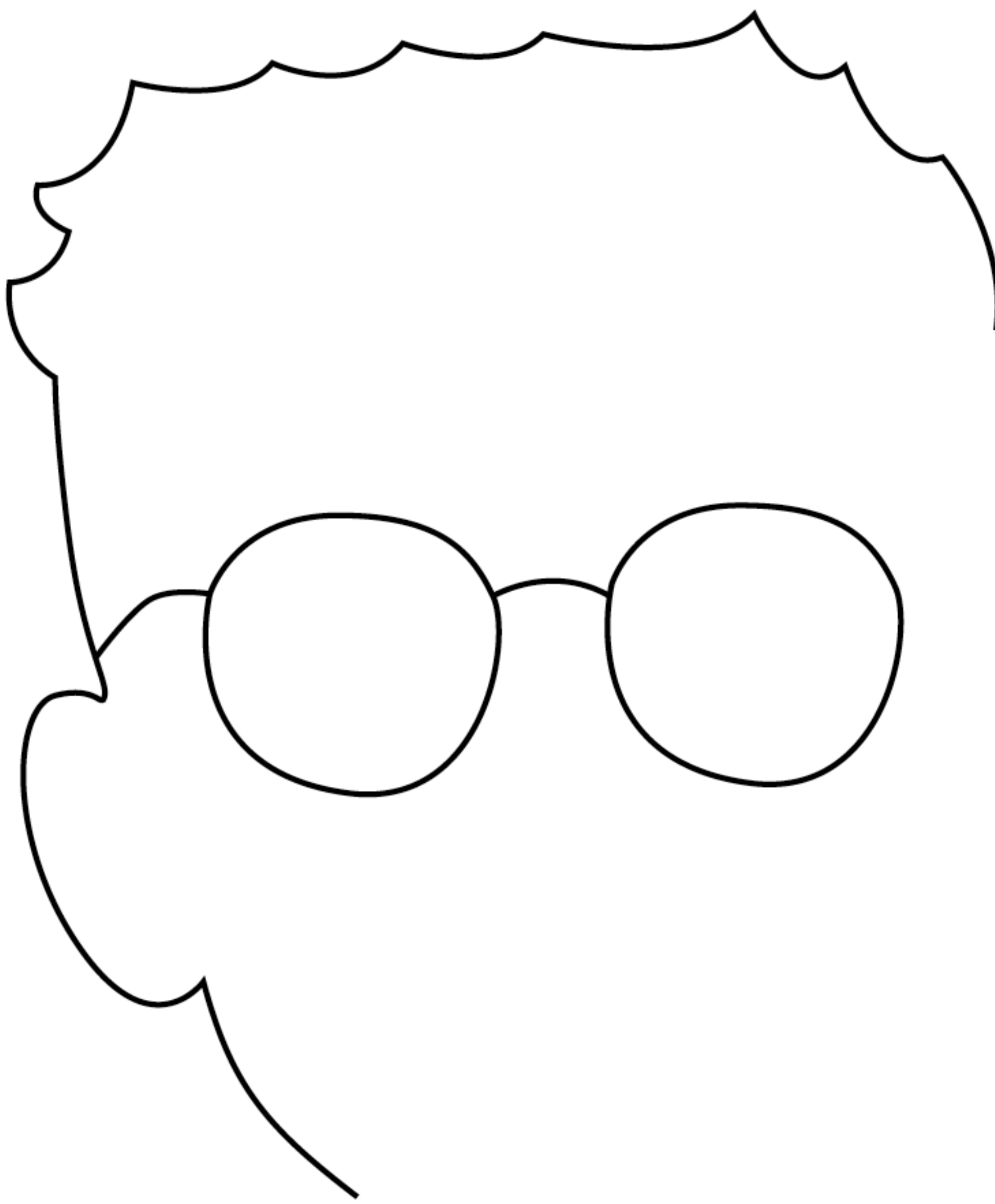
“People say, 'What do you mean you want to help the world, but you're so concerned about fashion?' It's illegal to be naked. It is something that is extremely important.”



“I think you have to take me for who I am”







Mitch McGee

SEAM RIPPERS

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