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STIXX IN THE CITY

ON FORMING HIS OWN VOICE

SPRING / SUMMER

FORMING HIS OWN VOICE

How the Influencer Found His Voice
Through Fashion and Beauty

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photo from Instagram via @_StixxInTheCity_

Fashion influencer and beauty professional Stixx Mathews has always been a presence in the fashion community. After graduating with a degree in Sociology, he worked as a stylist in Atlanta on everything from infomercials to the *Real Housewives of Atlanta* franchise. When he was just 23, a friend introduced him to someone from BET's *106th and Park*. The show was looking for someone to style their on-air personality Rocsi Diaz. On a whim, he took the chance and began working with Rocsi until the show's end in late 2014.

Later, Stixx landed a role styling on the *Love and Hip-Hop New York* franchise. But he did not stop there, he went on to style Amy Roebach for her daily appearances on ABC's *Good Morning America*. As he continued to climb the ladder of success, he learned that even with a plethora of job experience, it is not easy navigating the corporate fashion industry. "I made a lot of mistakes. There were so many different things that I really had to adapt fast to if I wanted to keep a job and stay in New York," he admits.

Nevertheless, he pushed through, taking freelance journalism jobs on the side. He continued styling and another of his friends introduced him to a new idea: the beauty industry. Following his friend's advice, Stixx began a corporate role handling Diversity and Inclusion work for L'Oréal's acquired brands that did not have a market for people of color. Some of the brands he handled were Lancôme, Maybelline & IT Cosmetics. After some time, Stixx grew frustrated with the red tape of corporate beauty. He went searching for something new.



STIXX MATHIEWS



Through networking, he landed his current role for beauty newcomer Glossier. This move proved instrumental in finding his stride. At Glossier, Stixx wears multiple hats, doing Research and Development for their products as well as writing for their blog Into the Gloss. As a writer, Stixx pitches four stories per week, usually centered around the voice of people of color. Part of this role entails spreading brand awareness to people of color, as Glossier is skin first, makeup second. “There is a place for every hue [at Glossier],” Stixx proclaims.

As a researcher and developer, he is responsible for coordinating the raw materials for products & getting analytics on the usage by people of color from each vendor. A lower usage rate means a lower chance of that vendor being used. This is especially important as Glossier’s Head of Product Development is Kym Davis. Davis is known industry-wide for her time at NARS Cosmetics. She is more publicly known for her influential role as Vice President of Product Development for Rihanna’s Fenty Beauty. “She was Rihanna’s right-hand man, creating all the shades at Fenty,” Stixx says.

It is here at Glossier that Stixx learned of the myriad of roles within the beauty industry. When asked what those roles are, he expounds effortlessly.

“Oh my gosh there are so many different jobs. There’s make-up artists, research and development, social media, and the packaging industry that creates the components the actual product will go into. You have the online and beauty editors, and now, beauty and tech go [together], so you have people that do data analytics and performance reviews for the different campaign ads. You have people from the creative side in

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beauty that optimize the beauty images for campaigns, packaging, and anything that is going out representing the brand. You even have real estate [agents] for pop-ups and community events that will negotiate [space] for you. You also have people that do brand community who create spaces for people to partner with you. There are so many different avenues.”

Equally as effortless is Stixx’s impeccable sense of style. Inspired by his mother’s clean bourgeois style and the Brooklyn Pentecostal Church fashion culture, he set out to re-create both signatures but in his own way. He would go from over-the-top & flamboyant, to the smart suiting that can currently be seen on his Instagram feed, [@_StixxInTheCity_](#). “The pomp and circumstance [of the church fashion culture] is very influential and I love it,” he admits.

Even when fashion fades, Stixx rests on the laurels of the beauty industry. It always stands the test of time and lasts during times of economic recession. It will also last through the COVID-19 public health pandemic. “You’re going to invest \$30 in skincare and make-up because those things make you feel good.” At a time when COVID-19 is changing what fashion brands can and cannot do, Glossier is winning. At the end of April, the company launched an \$18 hand cream and donated the first 10,000 bottles to ease the dry hands of New York City’s healthcare workers.

Another source of inspiration comes from former Vogue Editor-at-Large Andre Leon Talley, as Stixx and Talley have similar



upbringings. Both are from the south and paved their own way into the fashion industry after college. Talley, whose internship with Diana Vreeland at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art led him to become the Paris correspondent for the fashion newspaper Women's Wear Daily. Talley's time with Vreeland, her advice, and his upbringing in church prepared him for the road ahead. Similarly, Stixx's time styling the famous attorney and TV host, Star Jones, would prepare him for his own road. "She gave it to me straight," Stixx fondly remembers. It was Jones' straight-forward demeanor that opened his eyes to who he wanted to be, where he wanted to continue to go & what he wanted his legacy to be.

Looking back, Stixx was always in the right place at the right time. When times became hard, he looked to his faith and kept going. When the opportunity rang, he answered the call and pressed forward. "I've always been very optimistic. I always know where I am today, I may not be next week; where I am next week, I am not going to be there next month. I always look forward to the pot of gold on the other side of the rainbow."

STIXX'S TIPS FOR TEENS

1. It is okay to not know everything, but it is not okay to not seek the information to know what you do not know.
2. It is okay to make mistakes. Failure comes from mistakes. Success comes from failure.
3. There is a stepping-stone somewhere. You do not just come out of the gate on top.
4. Follow your own mind, your own spirit.
5. Do not stop. Greater is coming later.
6. If you believe in yourself, you can do whatever it is you need to do to get yourself to wherever it is you want to be.

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STIXX MATHEWS



Q: Who is your favorite designer?

A: Christopher John Rogers

Q: What was your first luxury purchase?

A: Vintage Celine jumpsuit

Q: What is your go-to power outfit?

A: A black suit

Q: Who in pop culture influences fashion the most?

A: Rihanna

Q: Who do you consider has a timeless sense of style?

A: Zendaya

Q: Who in pop culture influences beauty the most?

A: Tracee Ellis Ross

Q: What is the most iconic brand ever?

A: Givenchy & Yves Saint Laurent

Q: Which brand can withstand the next 100 years?

A: Not seeing it

Q: What was the biggest adjustment to life in New York City?

A: There was no adjustment – aside from adjusting to people's mannerisms.

Q: What is your favorite Glossier product?

A: Boy Brow!

Q: What is your favorite non-Glossier product?

A: HypnoLash from Lancôme

Q: Describe your style in one word.

A: Classic

Q: What is your favorite department store?

A: Barney's

Q: What is your all-time favorite gift a company sent you?

A: Silver Hermes Bracelet