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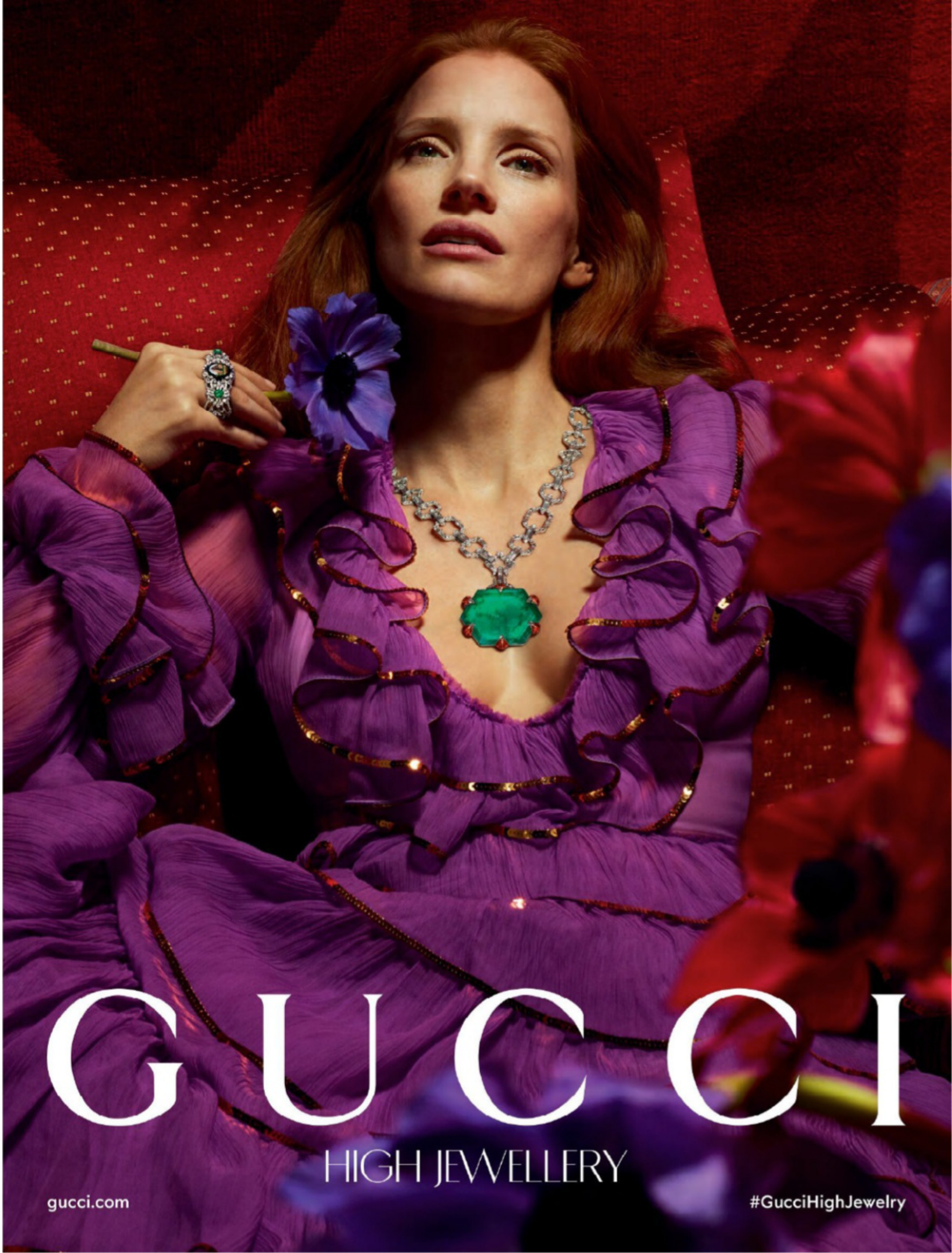
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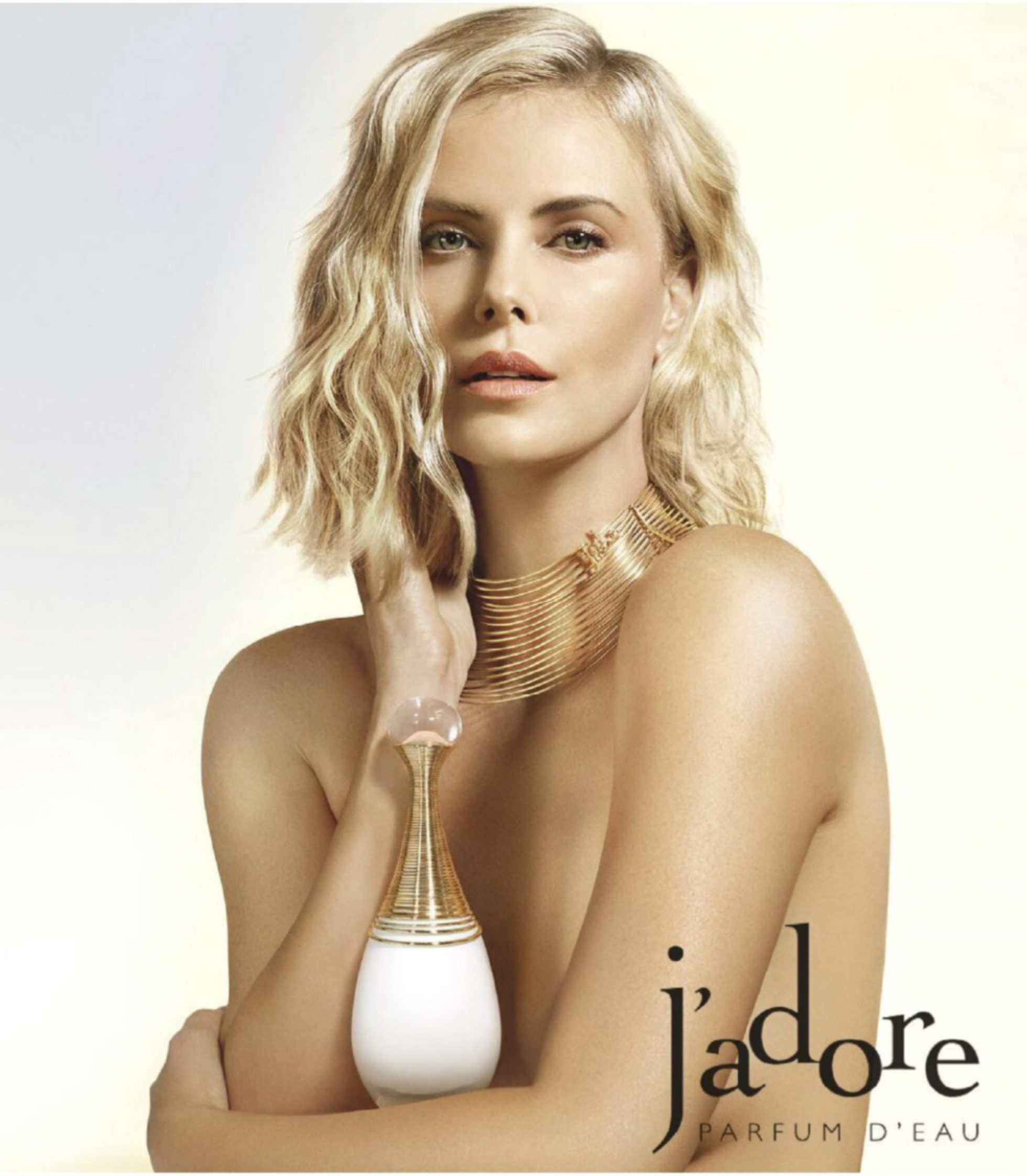

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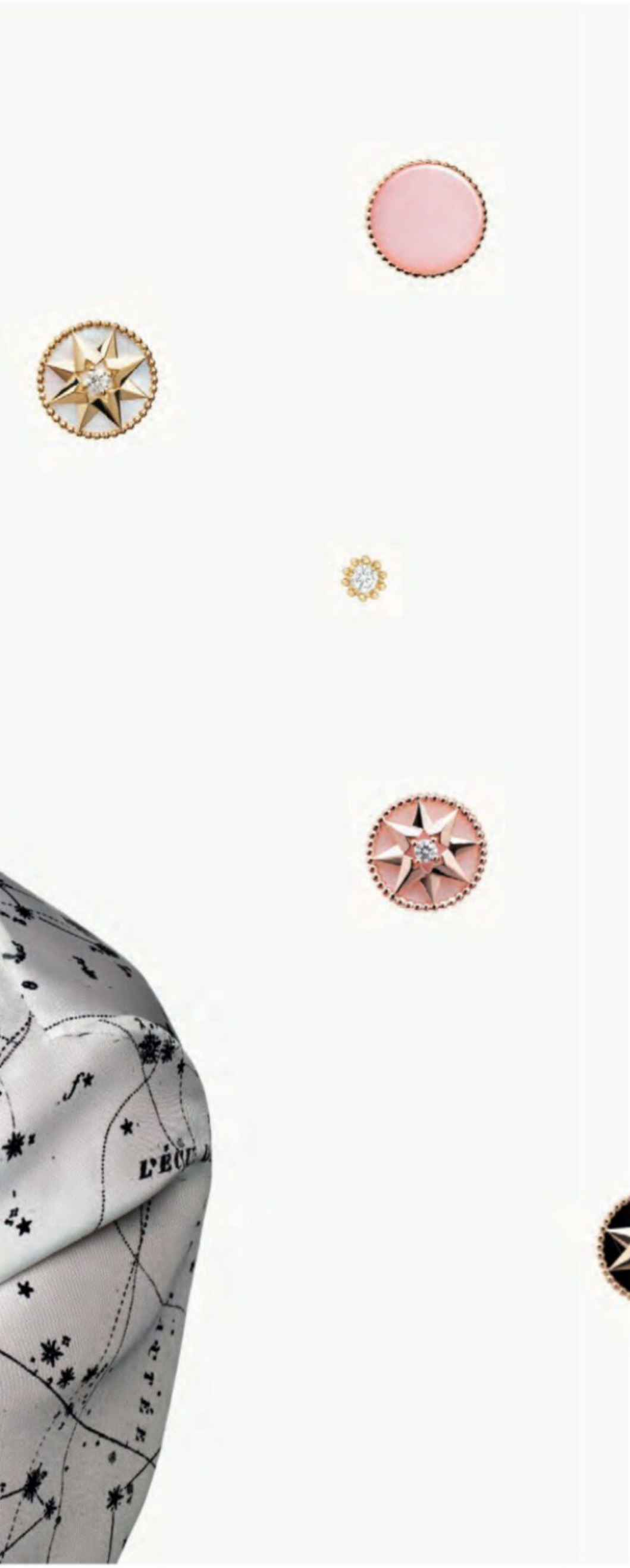

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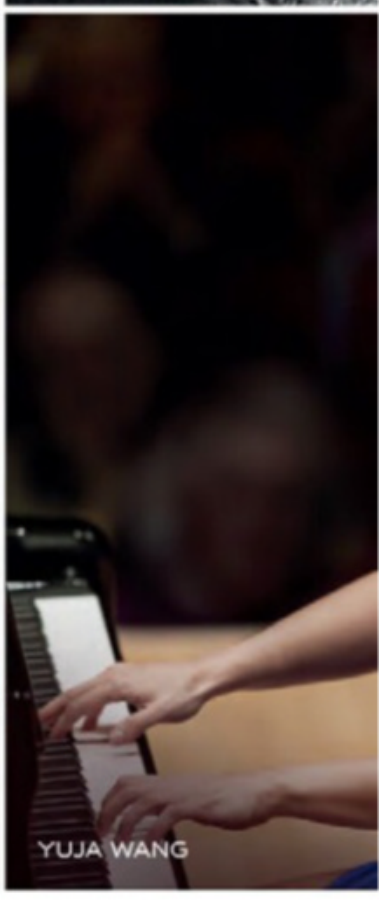
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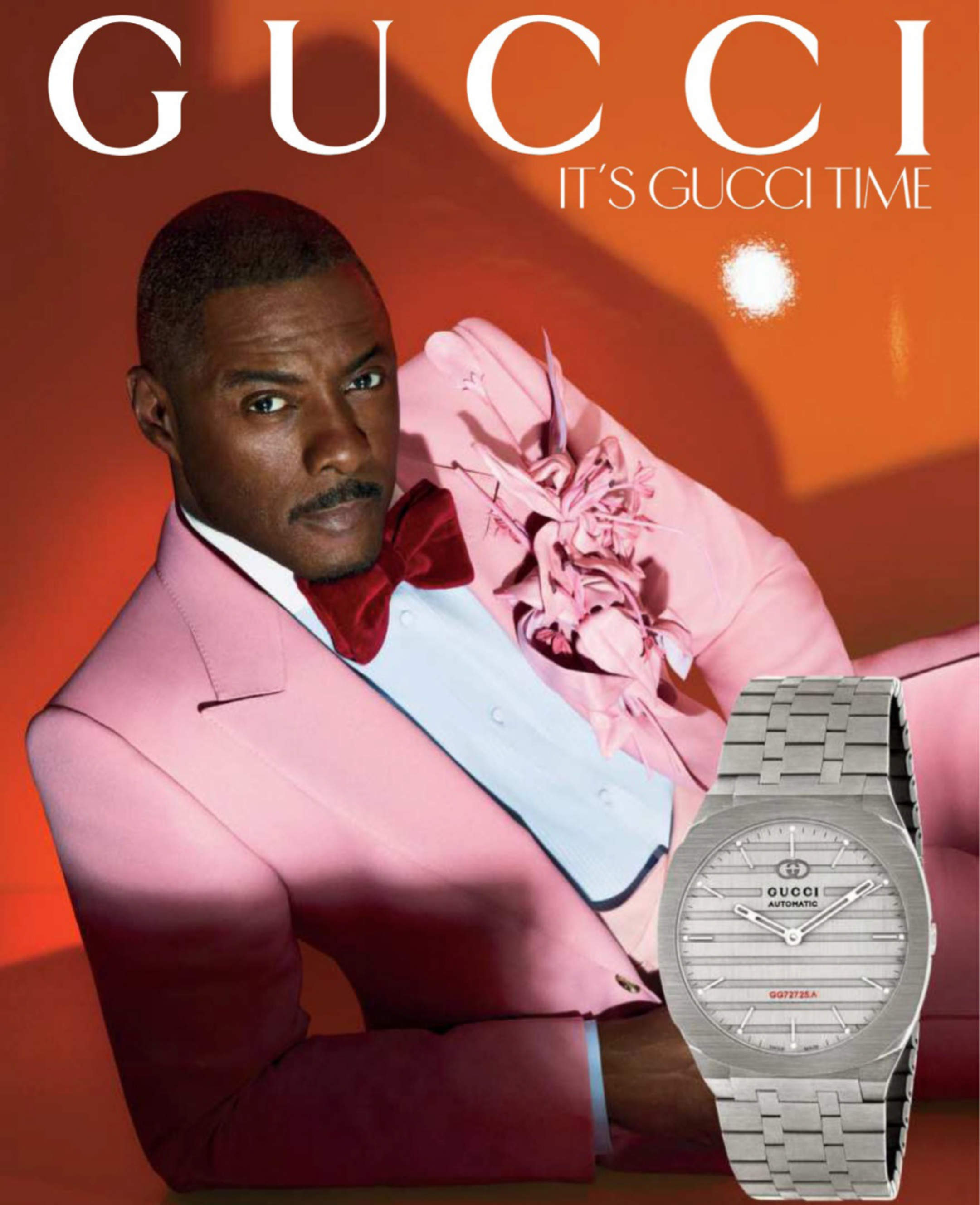

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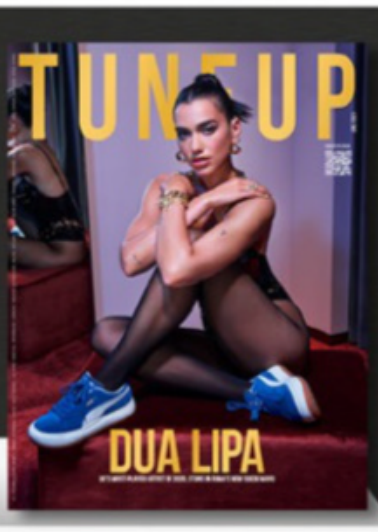
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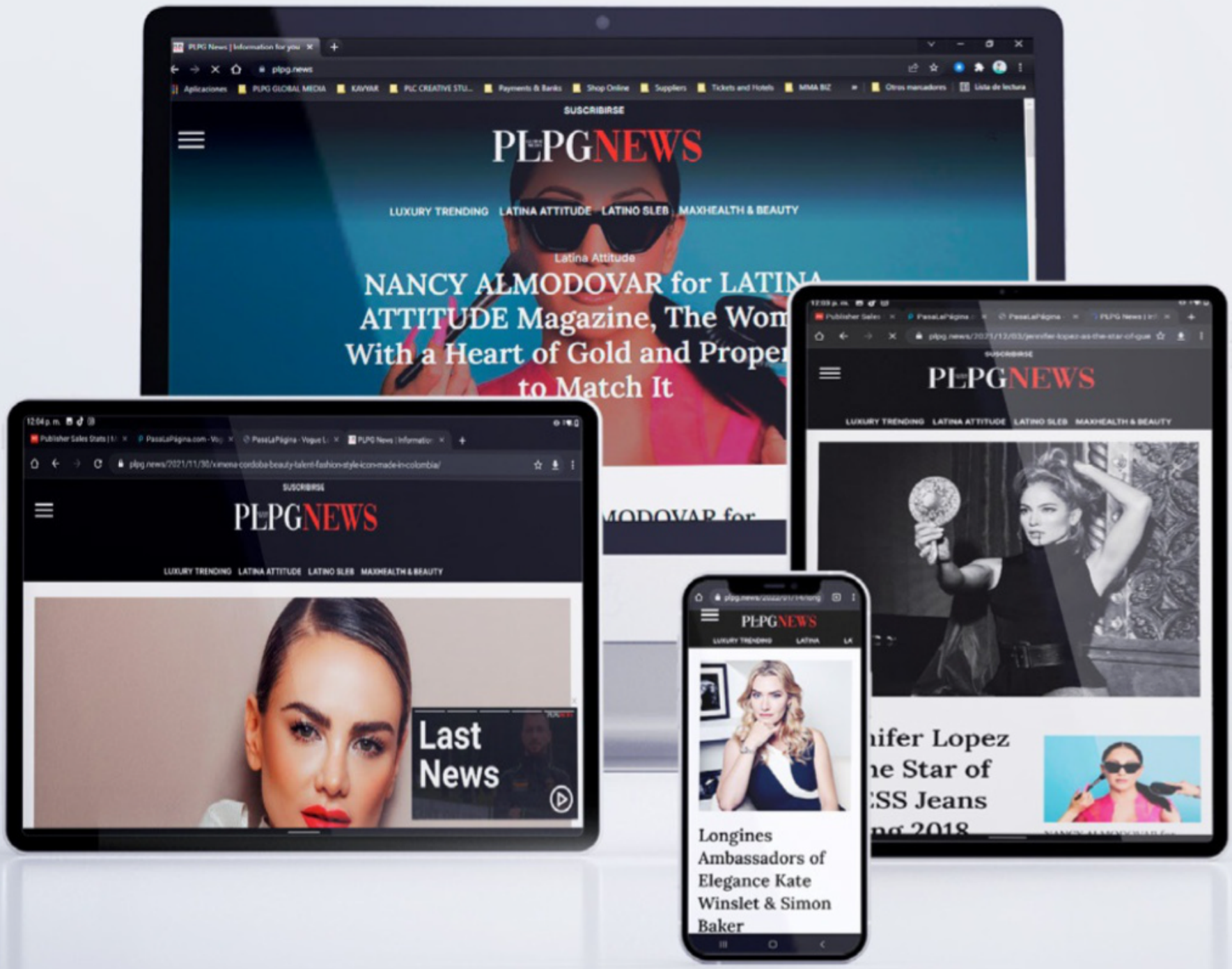

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A Taste of Hope from Garlic Noodles

Written by ***Geraldine Zialcita***

Hope comes in different shapes and forms, but if you are to ask **Hannah An**, who belongs to the An dynasty family, she will surely tell you that it all started from her mother's signature garlic noodles.

Hannah comes from a prominent generational family who loves food. Born and raised in the Imperial City of Vietnam, Hannah is the eldest child of five sisters who grew up tasting a variety of cuisines. Hannah's story goes way back to her grandmother, Diana, the wife of a dignitary and successful businessman who often traveled around the globe and entertained guests at home. Hannah's exposure to food enabled her to explore her taste buds. "My family hired private chefs that cooked Vietnamese, Chinese, French, and Italian food. We loved to eat, and my palate already determined what sumptuous food was at an early age," she shares.

During her grandmother's visit to San Francisco in the 70s, she fell in love with The Golden State and wanted to establish roots there to live the best of both worlds in Vietnam and San Francisco. For this to be possible, in 1971, Diana bought a twenty-four-seat Italian deli in the tranquil Sunset area of San Francisco. Unbeknown to the An family, this deli would foreshadow what was yet to come.

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In 1975, the fall of Saigon occurred which forced Hannah and her family to evacuate Vietnam and migrate to the US. Departing the country in haste, the An family left with nothing except the clothes they were wearing. They stayed a few weeks at an American military camp in Manila, then moved to Guam, followed by living at Refugee Camp Pendleton near San Diego, California. After the traumatic experience, Hannah and her family reunited with Diana in San Francisco. "I was only eleven years old at that time. We lost everything we had in Vietnam and had started from scratch. At a young age, I struggled to learn English and help with the family restaurant by washing dishes and making dumplings. It was like night and day from our life in Vietnam, where we had acres of land, household help, and everything catered to our needs. This was our new reality, where my parents, siblings, and grandparents lived in a cramped one-bedroom apartment above the restaurant," she discloses.

Paying tribute to her Vietnamese heritage and European influence, Hannah's mother, Helene, the matriarch of the family transformed the Italian deli into a restaurant named Thanh Long. While Thanh Long was their only source of income, the profit margins didn't sum up to be fruitful. Helene worked as an accountant during the day, and nighttime at the restaurant to help support her household. As the glue that kept the family together with a universal goal of survival, Helene did everything to achieve the American dream and make the new country her home. "My mother recalled and missed the luscious food our chefs cooked back in Vietnam. She experimented with the recipes and slowly introduced the dishes at the restaurant," Hannah informs.

Never did the An family anticipate that the quaint restaurant would serve to be an icon and one of the most sought-after destinations in San Francisco. Recognized as the first Vietnamese restaurant in San Francisco, Thanh Long became an all-time favorite mom-and-pop destination for local and foreign visitors and celebrities like Harrison Ford, Robin Williams, and Danny Glover. Thanh Long symbolizes the pillar of the An family dynasty, with Helene An acclaimed as the 'Mother of Fusion.' "We became known for our Roasted Crab, Tiger Prawns, and Garlic Noodles which my mother, Helene, takes pride in creating this dish. Since Americans savor pasta, my mother developed her own concept of noodles utilizing the benefits of garlic and herb. Our restaurant opened more than fifty years ago, and what started as a 24-seat Italian deli has evolved into a 240-seat-restaurant. We are grateful for our growth, expansion, and success. We are delighted to serve regular and new customers who have been instrumental in our journey." She smiles.

While working at the restaurant, Hannah acquired her Bachelor's degree in Biology. Since the restaurant business truly resonated with her, Hannah continued to devote her time to her family business. In 1991, Hannah and her sister persuaded her mother that it was time to deliver Vietnamese food to the mainstream. Raising the bar, the An family established the first fine dining upscale restaurant named Crustacean and opened their second branch four years later in Beverly Hills.

Crustacean received a 2-star rating from a food critic who wrote for a newspaper, indicating that it wasn't traditional Vietnamese food. Their restaurant was not well received since the diners did not understand fusion food at that time. The irony of it all is Helene intentionally didn't want to serve traditional Vietnamese dishes knowing the Americans were not prepared for this type of food. Instead, she integrated Modern Asian and a European flair into her cooking to deliver something different. "Shortly after, a food critic from another newspaper gave a favorable review. We decided to take the leap of faith and posted both reviews on an ad in the newspaper with a quote, 'Come and find out for yourself.' This worked and drew in a crowd. Crustacean is known for its seafood which contains natural ingredients and antioxidants which can help elevate your immune system. Hollywood celebrities often dine at the Beverly Hills branch," she conveys.

In 2009, the An family launched Anqi Bistro at South Coast Plaza in Orange County, Los Angeles that is popular among the locals and tourists. In 2011, they opened Tiato Market Garden in Santa Monica, Los Angeles which is a farm-to-table concept using the finest ingredients. In 2018, they commenced Dalat Rose that offers a 12-course meal for private dining and selected venues. Dalat Rose temporarily halted operations due to the pandemic. In 2020, they set up Anqi Shaken + Stirred at Bloomingdale's Steven Creek, Santa Clara, California. They plan on inaugurating their first branch outside the United States—Crustacean will be introduced in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Aside from their restaurants, the An family extended their services to An Catering which was voted as "Star Caterer to the Stars" where they can enjoy Helene's recipes in the convenience of their own home. Helene debuted her cookbook, *An: To Eat: Recipes and Stories from a Vietnamese Family Kitchen* that depicts the history, recipes, and how she presented Vietnamese cuisine to mainstream America. The An family was inaugurated in the Smithsonian Museum for being the pioneers of introducing Vietnamese food to the mainstream.

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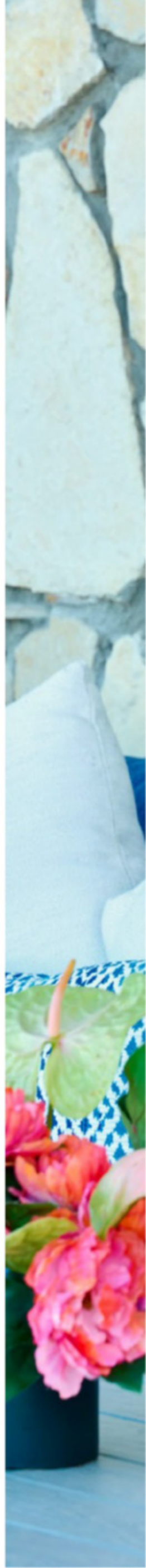
Embarking on her solo journey, Hannah spearheaded The District by Hannah An in Beverly Hills, featuring authentic Vietnamese cuisine with a modern twist. Vietnamese food is known to awaken the senses with its distinct taste. “My restaurant offers gourmet dishes from North and Central Vietnam as well as my favorite food while growing up and from my travels. Vietnam is known to be the Paris of the Far East, with French, Chinese, and Japanese influence. While each country uses different flavors and methods of cooking, Vietnamese food is known to be very balanced. We don’t only use one flavor in our dishes, and, instead, we combine sweet, salty, bitter, sour, and savory flavors in an equal balance. No specific flavor should overpower the other flavors. If we use butter, we add herbs to align the heaviness. Vietnamese food is all about balancing the art and science with simplicity and a symmetrical flavor that brings harmony to the table,” she describes.

As an Executive Chef and restaurateur, Hannah loves to express her creativity in the food she creates. “I love looking at food and perceiving how to make it taste good. My goal is to enhance all the flavors by using fresh vegetables and proteins while injecting herbs and spices. My presentations are clean, simple, and pleasing to the eye. The concept is to see what you’re eating, and you should be able to taste the richness of each flavor,” she defines.

The District by Hannah An is inducted in the Michelin guide restaurant. The restaurant closed during the pandemic but Hannah appreciates all the lessons she has learned from cooking and being an entrepreneur. “I love engaging with the customers and seeing the smile on their faces after indulging in a meal. I also enjoy planning the meals and designing the menu. However, owning and operating a restaurant is like having a newborn baby that never grows up. A restaurant can never be on its own, when it’s slow, you need to find ways to be creative. When it’s busy, you need eyes at the back of your head and extra pairs of hands. You need consistency to remain on the radar. A lot of restaurants come and go, and you need to invest time and money to stay relevant. The food is the heart of the business, but many factors like marketing, quality control, cleanliness, and stellar customer service contribute to the success of a restaurant,” she explains.



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After being involved in the restaurant business, Hannah is ready to diversify. Her next project involves health and wellness using Vietnamese dried food products and supplements. “There is a lot more to Vietnamese food that you can bring to the table. Traditional Eastern practice uses natural ways to treat the body and I’m drawn to creating a brand that can balance the Yin and Yang of our body. I hope to build my brand and continue to give back to the community,” she affirms.

As the third generation of entrepreneurs, Hannah looks back at the joys and trials she and her family have been through and acknowledges the strength, dedication, and commitment that led them to prosperity. She encourages her children who are currently employed to work hard and never stop learning something new. “I always tell my children they have to serve before they lead, and once they become successful, they can help others as well,” she expresses.

House of An, which is the mother company of the restaurant chain is a family affair headed by Helene with her daughters who share their respective roles and responsibilities. Despite their accolades, awards, and groundbreaking success, the core of the story begins with a privileged life in Vietnam which was stripped from them due to the communists that invaded their country. The An family never realized how their cozy and luxurious lifestyle could change in a split second. Their affluent status immediately transformed them into refugees. Beneath their quest for survival, lay a silver lining in the heart of San Francisco. From riches-to-rags and back to being wealthy, the An family achieved their full circle through loss, endurance, and labor of love. The restaurants and their businesses are manifestations of their hard work and perseverance. This entails a family saga of an American dream derived from despair that gave birth to hope and paved the way to victory. Hannah An concludes her story with a quote from her grandparents. “Fall with dignity and rise with humility.”

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SOME PLAY ON A COURT,
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“To be truly successful, you need to adapt to the ever-changing world as it keeps on moving.”

DAYNA LEE CORNELIUS

@daynaleec

Dayna Lee Cornelius: Navigating Retail

Words by ***Timothy Diao***

Creating a business, let alone running a successful one, is not for the faint of heart. **Dayna Lee Cornelius**, CEO and Co-owner of streetwear brand **SPORTOFKINGS**, attributes her success in the retail industry to persistence, drive, and care.

For over three decades, Dayna has seen the fashion landscape evolve from home-grown brands to a global scale. Throughout her career, she has helped brands move through the constant changes in the market and grow their business through genuine connections, her manufacturing and production prowess, and a life-long pursuit for growth and success.

“I care about their business and the individuals that run them. They’re putting their brand in my hands. I’m responsible for helping them succeed, and I’m going to do everything in my power to make sure that happens,” she shares.

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From her first job in customer service in the 90s to working her way up to Global Sales Representative at an international manufacturing company to founder and CEO of her own brands, Dayna is an example of how far grit, resilience, and an insatiable appetite for knowledge takes you. She continues to carry this indefatigable drive with her at *SPORTOFKINGS*.

Joining the California-based company in 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging. Dayna, Ziggy Williams (co-founder and owner), and the team had just suffered the loss of the brand's co-founder Casey Wheat, but her love for Casey, the brand, and what it stands for, fuels her passion.

"I was determined to do what Casey brought me here to do and help him realize his dream. Combining his capabilities, network, and vision for the brand with my experience and an understanding of what was needed, I knew we could build this into something very special."

We sat down with Dayna to talk about advancing in her career, the future of the industry, and *SPORTOFKINGS*.

How did you get your start in the industry?

I grew up in Dallas, Texas, and I wasn't in tune with the fashion industry, but I was exposed to the business when I moved to California in 1990.

I started in customer service for a clothing company many years ago. I loved learning how garments were constructed, the sketches, patterns, sewing, trims, and even how a t-shirt came to fruition. My love for that side helped fuel the business side of it for me. I grew more and more knowledgeable over the years and was lucky enough to work with people who wanted me to learn and do well.

After being with my first industry job for a couple of years, I moved on to another brand called Shore Break. They were a licensee and manufactured for *Maui and Sons, Levi's, and Bum Equipment*. I worked with them for a few years and then moved on again.

By then, I'd been in San Diego for about 11 years, and I kept getting recruited to larger companies. I started putting feelers out and making friends in the industry. I was learning higher-level things from these companies, and it helped me excel in my career. I began understanding textile manufacturing, factory operations, costing variations, net margins, and how to be profitable whether you're doing wholesale, retail, or DTC.

I took the knowledge and moved on to managerial positions focused on a scale where we would take them from 1-10 million to 50–60-million-dollar operations.

One thing led to another, and before I knew it, I've been doing it for 30 years. I can't imagine doing anything else.

And when did the idea of connecting brands to overseas manufacturers come about?

I was very entrepreneurial early on. I founded my first company in 1997, where I manufactured and produced garments for other people. I was recruited to handle overseas and international production for No Fear, a company in Carlsbad, California, and that led me to a different career path.

A vendor I contracted to manufacture clothing out of Pakistan, *VI Sigma Apparel Group* recruited me. I became their agent for international sales for brands here in the States, including *Quicksilver, DC Shoes, Urban Outfitters,* and other companies. I worked with the designers and production departments to acquire their business and manufacture their products overseas in Pakistan.

We generated a large amount of business with a number of brands. When I started working with the company, they were doing 5 million dollars in revenue, and throughout the 15 years I was with them we grew it to be over a hundred million dollars a year.

What made you decide to start your own business instead of working for other brands or other companies?

I knew that once I learned how to do what the owners and my mentors were doing, there was no reason not to do it for myself. If you're going to make money in this world, if you want to be a boss, a real boss, you have to be willing to take risks and deal with the uncertainty and discomfort that comes along with it. It's hard work but you reap the rewards of that work.

It's either you make money for somebody else, or you make money for yourself doing the same job. It just made sense to try and do it for myself.

Was starting a business scary for you?

There's no way you won't experience nervousness or feel a little bit scared of certain things throughout your life. Every person that owns a company feels a bit of fear at times.

You must keep exploring, learning, and making sure you're doing all the right things to make your business successful. You can't assume you know it all. Everything changes, from your phones, how you network with people, and the connections that you make. Even with how we manufacture our products today, machines are getting better, faster, and smarter.

You have to understand that what you're doing at the time is going to change. To be truly successful, you need to adapt to the ever-changing world as it keeps on moving. I learn something new all the time and I will never say that I know everything. I will always seek to continually improve, ask questions, and never think that there's nothing left for me to learn.

WEST COAST BOARD RIDERS
WEST COAST
SPORTOFKINGS
THE GOOD LIFE

BUSINESS
CONCEPT

“I will always seek to continually improve, ask questions, and never think that there’s nothing left for me to learn.”

Are there any key learnings you picked up through the years that helped shape your career?

I'm very fortunate and grateful for the experiences that I've had over the years. The most transformative years of my life and career happened with VI Sigma Apparel Group. I learned how to navigate international business and truly grasp operations, manufacturing, and dealing with different cultures. I've traveled all over the world working with different people and brands and it influenced me greatly.

I was regularly in very large factories that manufactured for some of the biggest brands in the world and learned to grasp some pretty complex issues. I learned from the engineers who worked the machines. I learned how to audit and ensure that these factories are up to code and doing everything ethically, and socially responsible for their employees.

I also learned how to be comfortable opening up. I was quite shy and very much an observer. I would sit back and listen, and learn. I understood manufacturing from my experience, and it made it easy for me to go out and speak with the production and design teams at Quicksilver or Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, and companies in New York because I knew how to make the best products for their designs. That made it easier for me to obtain business because I understood their side, and in fact, was an unusual sales executive in that I didn't start the meeting by listing the litany of things I could do for them but instead asked how I could help them. I also understood the factories and operational side of it too. I married those two things and made it a win-win situation for everybody.

I cared about their business and the individuals that run them. They're putting their brand in my hands. I'm responsible for helping them succeed and I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure that happens. That's just who I am at the core. I work with people that I like and care for. I don't work with every single brand that comes to me. I have to feel a connection and be inspired. I believe that every brand that I ever worked with would tell you that.

Having been in the industry for over three decades, you must have seen it grow and transition through its phases. How different is it now from how it was when you started?

The most significant change is that many of the factories we used to work with in Los Angeles have shut down because companies moved production offshore because the pricing was so cost-effective. It's so much less to manufacture overseas versus what it costs us here in the states.

Everything is also much faster and quicker now. Fashion is quicker. It used to take a long time for trends to catch up from even the West coast to the East coast. Now everything is instant. People all over the world are wearing the same things. It's just crazy how fast everything moves.

FOREVER WHEATY
595
SPORTOFKINGS

A HIGHLY CHARGED
CAREFREE LIFESTYLE
A PASSION FOR SURFING AND
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

That's an interesting observation. What do you think brought that shift from manufacturing locally in the States to overseas?

It was becoming too expensive here, especially when mass market retailers began taking over. That was the biggest shift because people started to manufacture in massive quantities at such a cheap price. It became very difficult for your average brands and retailers to compete with that. They had no choice but to move their production overseas if they wanted to stay in business. It was just more cost-effective than manufacturing here. You can either manufacture overseas and hire more employees in the US to run your actual business or you can manufacture domestically and have a smaller team that can handicap growth.

There's been a resurgence of brands growing and manufacturing locally too, right?

Even before the pandemic, people were starting to realize how much of our goods are coming from overseas. I think this prompted a lot of brands to manufacture at least a portion of their goods in Los Angeles. Trying to bring back some local businesses has become a movement.

It can be hard to navigate, especially with how expensive it is to manufacture in California, but I do think that it's something that will continue to get stronger over the next couple of years. I think this is highlighted by the importation backlogs during the pandemic. The supply chain shortage brought to light how dependent we are on other countries to bring in products for our everyday use.

SPORTOFKINGS was so fortunate because we did everything here. We keep 95% of our production local, within 50 miles of our office in Huntington Beach. Customers love that our products are homegrown and homemade, and we are proud to support local factories throughout Orange County and the Los Angeles area. That allowed us to grow through that unsettling time because we had the products that we needed while so many other brands didn't have their merchandise.

What do you think makes a great brand successful?

I believe it's how that brand makes someone feel about themselves when they wear it. Everyone has something to say and a statement to make when they put on a piece of clothing.

If your brand helps that person identify with who they are and makes them feel good about themselves then you'll succeed. Whether it's an active brand that's about a health movement or you're a brand that's about making someone feel beautiful, all those things come into play.

You have to grab onto that emotional pull and what makes them want to wear your products. People buy things because of how it makes them feel.

And what statement is *SPORTOFKINGS* making as a brand?

I think we allow people to get in touch with that rebel inside themselves. We're a little rough around the edges but also premium, so the clothing is nice and comfortable. We are an athleisure brand that focuses on quality over quantity.

It's about the people that say, "I do what I want." We all have this personality inside us that wants to color outside the lines a bit. That's what *SPORTOFKINGS* does. We allow people to wear clothes that make them feel cool and break from the social norm.

What was it like joining *SPORTOFKINGS* leadership during the pandemic?

It was very difficult for many reasons. We lost one of the founders and main face of the company when Casey Wheat passed away. Everyone was kind of lost for a bit and there was a lot of uncertainty during the pandemic.

The thing is, I woke up every day thinking about *SPORTOFKINGS*. The work they were doing, the vibe that it had, and why people were gravitating towards the brand. It's a very cool brand with a California lifestyle in mind.

Regardless of the pandemic or losing Casey, I knew that we could take the brand far if we held on to the foundation that was already built and the authenticity that it had.

I had known Casey for years before I worked with him because he was a family friend of my wife's. He was such a dynamic personality and a beautiful human that I already loved him and the brand; that's what drew me in initially.

I took ownership of the brand and put my heart and soul into it to ensure that it would succeed. It can be difficult to navigate a company when it's not your initial idea because you're trying to tread lightly and figure out how best to do it without stepping on toes. I was determined to do what Casey wanted me to do though. Combining his design capabilities, network, and vision, with my experience I knew that we could build this to be very special.

Dayna and her wife **Tiffany Brugna**

Where do you see the brand going? Are there future projects that you're excited about?

We do plan on opening more flagship stores. The plan is that we open a flagship in prime areas. We'll have one in New York, Texas, and another one somewhere in Los Angeles. We also have our flagship store in Huntington Beach. The idea is to have these stores be an experience and we can create somewhat of a "bespoke" space where people can customize their own version of *SPORTOFKINGS* pieces.

And where do you see the whole retail and manufacturing landscape heading? Is there something that the industry should be addressing?

The biggest thing that we all want to do is be more eco-friendly. It's very clear that our planet is suffering, and fashion is part of the issue. We have to make sure that we're responsibly sourcing yarns that are going into the products by removing plastics that we're using. We need to be utilizing alternative fabrics instead of constantly pumping out polyester into the world. These are things that our planet needs.

BUSINESS
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ROSALINA TRAN LYDSTER

@rosalinalydster

Spread Some Sparkle

Written by ***Geraldine Zialcita***

Since every piece of jewelry has a story to tell, eminent, celebrity jewelry designer **Rosalina Tran Lydster** works behind the scenes to craft striking, vivid, and intricate jewelry that captivates one's attention, evokes strong emotion, and leaves an everlasting impression.

As a child, Rosalina who was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam had her first taste of glamour through her mother who expressed her signature style from head to toe. "I loved watching my mom dress up in perfect symmetry, never skimping on the fine details with a matching bag, shoes, and jewelry to complement her outfit," she shares.

Rosalina's parents owned top beauty salons and a prestigious couturier company where they would import fabric from France. To add more flavor to their businesses, Rosalina's mother designed jewelry to exhibit the finishing touches in declaring a fashion statement. "My mother's keen eye and exquisite taste for fashion garnered prominent clients like the first lady of Vietnam and top socialites in Saigon. Elegance, glamour, and sophistication are deeply rooted in my veins." She smiles.

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At a young age, Rosalina was trotting around the globe with her parents, and each time they would embark on a vacation, Rosalina would get all giddy on the plane admiring how the flight attendants were elegantly dressed. “Back then, people dressed up to travel, and seeing how glamorous these flight attendants looked made me want to be like them,” she relays.

Rosalina’s family migrated to San Francisco when she was twelve years old. Since traveling around the world had exposed Rosalina to different cultures, languages, and food, she adapted naturally to the American lifestyle. As they say, ‘the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree’, Rosalina started sketching jewelry designs at fourteen years old. Rosalina completed her Bachelor’s degree in Business Marketing at the San Francisco State University while taking classes at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising.

Shortly after graduating from college, Rosalina worked at a distinguished investment banking firm in San Francisco. While having a knack for numbers, Rosalina’s creative side haunted her, and this compelled Rosalina to explore her ultimate dream of becoming a jewelry designer. “I designed wedding bands, rings, and statement pieces for friends while still working in my day job. In 2002, I launched *Jewelry by Rosalina*,” she informs.

The attributes of Rosalina’s jewelry depict fashion from various eras with a touch of a European flair. She combines semi-precious and precious stones to create a unique piece of jewelry. “Since every closet displays a different style and design of clothing, why should jewelry be any different? I love integrating old and new—avant-garde, and art deco with a modern twist. The role of the jewelry designer is to make you shine,” she states.

Providing patronage to her Vietnamese heritage, Rosalina demonstrates her fondness for flowers and color. “My jewelry is simple but elegant, and I never replicate my pieces. I’m not fond of mass-produced jewelry. Every piece of jewelry I design is carefully crafted with love and truly resonates with me, since, I believe every woman deserves the right jewelry to complement her look,” she conveys.

As a creative artist, Rosalina draws inspiration from random moments and encounters. As the concept forms, she sketches the designs before choosing the right stones. Rosalina uses jewelry as a tool to express her creativity and passion. Each piece of jewelry represents a work of art, carefully molded to unleash beauty, charm, and vigor. “I believe jewelry should be big, bold, and colorful. I want to see a client step inside a room wearing a piece of jewelry that turns heads in their direction. Jewelry should stand out and bring out the best in you,” she declares.

As a husband and wife team, Rosalina manages the creative side of the business, while her husband is the CFO who oversees the operations. “I am so blessed to have an amazing and supportive husband who enables me to fulfill my vision and purpose. We work well together and share a universal goal of growth and success for the company while having fun. We work hard and play hard. I’m very fortunate to be doing something I love which never feels like a job and the rewards are endless.” She smiles.

Jewelry by Rosalina is sold at specialty boutiques and Neiman Marcus stores nationwide where she has been honored as the top jewelry vendor for two years in a row. Rosalina custom designs jewelry for special events and individuals around the world. Her unique statement pieces and sought-after cocktail rings have hailed her to be a notable jewelry designer for celebrities Paris Hilton, Tori Spelling, Tom Hanks, Pamela Anderson, Gisele Bundchen, Jessica Simpson, Paula Abdul, Demi Lovato, Danielle Steel, and many more. She was designated as the official jeweler of the 2006 Grammy Awards. The 2008 Miss Universe crown was co-designed by Rosalina and marks history as the first colored stone crown.

To add another feather to her cap, Rosalina stumbled upon the entertainment industry with her new role as an Executive Producer of *Lionsgate* for the acclaimed Reality TV show, *House of Ho.* “Lionsgate initially approached me to help cast an ideal family for their reality TV show which would depict a *Crazy Rich Asians* concept. I was so excited because this would be the first Vietnamese reality docuseries and we made sure to exhibit the Vietnamese traditions in a fun and respectful manner. This happened during the midst of the pandemic when everybody was indoors and glued to the TV. My jewelry business was facing challenging times and this opportunity fell right into my lap. *House of Ho’s* first season debuted last 2020 on HBO Max and the second season should launch on August 25, 2022, with ten episodes. I cast, consulted with the contracts, and executively produced the show with Wallin Chambers Entertainment for Lionsgate. Lionsgate then sold the pilot to HBO Max. ” She beams with pride.

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Rosalina spearheaded *Rosalina Entertainment LLC* and is also the president of *IDES Entertainment* where they produce and distribute film/TV series. They will be establishing a talent agency soon. She is currently producing a reality TV show and game show. Rosalina also owns a consulting company that helps new businesses achieve their goals and success. “Hard-working people truly inspire me. I always advise them, that if they really want something, they have to work hard for it and do their part. It’s important to always do something you love and not get a job for the sake of making money. When you are involved in something you love, the money will unfold naturally. I believe I was sent into this world to be a connector of entrepreneurs, to shape their dreams and help them become a reality. One important factor is you have to believe in yourself, so people will believe in you,” she affirms.

Rosalina is as enchanting as the jewelry she designs, as animated as the reality docuseries she produces, and professional in her consulting business. Rosalina has been consistently supporting the San Francisco Ballet, The Raphael House of San Francisco, the Banyan Society, The American Cancer Society, and the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southern Nevada. “I realize how blessed my life has been, having a wonderful husband, amazing kids, and an incredible career, and in return, I wish to bless and take care of people,” she imparts.

When she’s not working, this dynamic woman spends time with her husband and two children traveling the globe, hanging out with friends, raising money for charities, and entertaining guests at home. “I love to cook and decorate my home with colorful flowers. I believe in living life to the fullest and spending time with the people you love,” she expresses.

Rosalina introduced her travel jewelry line called, *Diamanté Collection* before the pandemic and sold at various Four Seasons Resorts and Hotels. The jewelry line uses lab-created environmental stones to produce fine jewelry sustainably. Last December 2021, Rosalina recommenced *Diamanté Collection* with Chieu Anh Nguyen and Jasmine Nguyen, her business partners from Houston. “*Diamanté Collection* has been very well received. We partnered up with different foundations like Friendly Faces and Stopping Trafficking as a way of giving back to the community,” she defines.

BUSINESS
CONCEPT

Making headway, Rosalina hopes to collaborate with events, businesses, and beauty pageants to create memorable jewelry pieces for every occasion. “Jewelry empowers us to spell some magic,” she describes.

As Rosalina continues to push the envelope in her career, she expresses gratitude for everything she has achieved and for the people who have been instrumental in forging her path. “When I look back at how my life has evolved to where I am now, every bit and pieces fit the puzzle. Each encounter, experience, and moment has been meant to be. The foundation had been constructed from the very start taking me on this amazing journey and leading me to where I’m supposed to be. There’s still so much to learn and I’m committed to sharing my wisdom and giving back to the community,” she concludes.

Whether she’s designing her upcoming collection, producing her next Reality TV series, or providing consultation for her clients, Rosalina Tran Lydster practices what she does best which is to spread some sparkle to everyone she meets and in everything she does.

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MAMA MAI

@themamamai

The Essence of Life

Written by ***Geraldine Zialcita***

Olivia TuTram Mai otherwise known as **Mama Mai** is a woman who celebrates life with zest. She amuses you with her wit, enchants you with her charm, and is pure at heart.

Mama Mai was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam where she spent her childhood dolling up and visualizing her flamboyant outfits as part of an upscale fashion brand. “I dreamed of becoming a fashion designer and had hopes of migrating to America, but during that time, my family didn’t have the means to provide for a fashion degree,” she shares.

Little did Mama Mai know that her childhood dream would serve as foreshadowing for what was yet to come. In 1977, together with her family, sixteen-year-old Mama Mai escaped Vietnam by boat and made it to the land of the free, leaving everything behind to start a new life in the hopes of achieving their American dream. “With the assistance of the IRCC organization, we arrived in Dallas, Texas from the Hong Kong Camp. I was only there for a year when I was swept off my feet, got married, and eventually moved to the San Francisco Bay Area.” She smiles.

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BUSINESS
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Without a word of English, Mama Mai struggled to find a job, but she worked hard and enrolled in ESL classes at community colleges. Inch by inch, Mama Mai learned the ropes and navigated her way to adapt to the American lifestyle and culture while raising her kids. “As an American citizen, I always find it interesting how much I try to assimilate into American culture while hanging onto my native Vietnamese roots. When my children were growing up, I spoke English to them because I was trying to learn English. Now that they’re grown up, I consider my English very good but their Vietnamese is almost laughable. Luckily, my first granddaughter, Monaco will not share the same burden because I continue to speak Vietnamese to her as much as possible.” She winks.

Mama Mai is best known as the mother of American TV host, Jeannie Mai Jenkins who appeared on Jeannie’s YouTube channel, *Hello Hunnay*. The show features fashion, fitness, finance, and ways to increase one’s confidence. What initially started as Mama Mai being a guest on *Hello Hunnay*, transformed into an overnight sensation for Mama Mai. She managed to keep her viewers glued to the set and laughing out loud—she stole the limelight and made a name for herself. “Never in a million years did I foresee the impact *Hello Hunnay* would have. When my daughter Jeannie was conducting her first episode, I happened to be observing and casually throwing ideas or critiques like I always do. The director, Paul chimed in and said, ‘Why don’t you join us and see how it works.’ Since I’m not gonna stop at the chance of being in front of the camera, I definitely agreed, and the rest is history. Our chemistry was amazing and I had no idea how much this show would bring us closer together,” she narrates.

Hello Hunnay has continued to strike a chord with its viewers showcasing the candid, whimsical, and loving relationship between a daughter and her mother. “I think people enjoy the mother and daughter duo and they may not notice that Jeannie is already crazy and her perspective is often different and challenging. Yet, as soon as they meet me, they realize I’m even crazier which makes Jeannie the normal relatable person. That makes for a wild, yet fun, and natural partnership. Sometimes you need someone to calm you down, sometimes you need someone to build you up, and sometimes you need someone to allow you to be crazy insane. That uneven balance is what makes our show truly different,” she laughs.

Mama Mai’s presence on the show unfolded naturally, and her passion and love for the craft are evident in each episode. “The one thing I pride myself most on is being true to myself. I love showing my fans how I truly act daily. I think people nowadays are too afraid to express how they feel or how they think. When they see me act silly, serious, or crazy, they know it’s from the heart. Despite putting on a show, deep down, they know I do feel that way. This could encourage them to be brave and not afraid, knowing if I can do it, so can they,” she informs.

After many years of being in the spotlight, Mama Mai has always practiced authenticity and professionalism. “I remember my first appearance on my daughter’s show, *The Real* where I was so excited, but right when they started to film, I got so nervous. Luckily, Jeannie’s hairdresser, Noogie told me in the dressing room, ‘Don’t worry. Be yourself. Say whatever you want, and if the producer doesn’t like it, they’ll cut it out.’ I realized right there and then that I’m not trying to please anyone and I’ve been given a chance to show the world what some people already enjoy about me. To me, that’s the best kind of freedom. When you can be yourself, make people laugh, and let them decide for themselves how they want to see you,” she states.

Creative by nature, Mama Mai finds inspiration from peculiar or out-of-the-ordinary things or situations. “Oddly enough, I am drawn to things that stand out or go against the grain. I always like to capture the smallest details that make the biggest difference. Presentation to me is the most important thing you can place value in. If I’m eating at a restaurant, the decor, lighting, and ambiance can set the tone for the entire meal. At times, it might even change the way the food tastes. Fashion goes the same way, I’m often accused of dressing a little too crazy,” she quips.

After decades of setting her childhood dream aside, Mama Mai established the ideal time to develop her creative expression by launching her fashion and accessories line. “I’ve always considered myself fashionable and love when people compliment my outfits. However, I’m very frugal when it comes to shopping. My family didn’t grow up wealthy and even though I try to make every outfit stand out and look unique, everything I buy doesn’t cost much. I applied the same principle with my brand which will allow you to look good without breaking your pocket,” she briefs.

Mama Mai believes that fashion should define a story that echoes from within. She sells kimonos, dresses, jumpsuits, earrings, necklaces, scarves, and sunglasses. She shares a deep fondness for headpieces and glamorous sunglasses that frame her face which exudes her signature look. “My favorite part about designing is using materials from old curtains and clothing. I love vintage shopping and finding things to repurpose everywhere I can,” she expresses.

18+

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BUSINESS
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BUSINESS
CONCEPT

BUSINESS
CONCEPT

Mama Mai considers her three kids to be her greatest achievements. Yet, not many people know that Mama Mai used to be a professional singer back in the day, but juggling a career with three small children proved to be challenging. “I’m fortunate to have amazing kids, grandkids, a terrific show, and my fashion and accessories brand. I don’t think I’m done achieving everything I want in this world, but I’m so happy and blessed with everything I have so far. The best thing about my work is that I get to spend it with family. If I’m not working on the show with my daughter Jeannie, I’m taking care of my granddaughter, or cooking for my family. We love to laugh, tease each other, share advice, or converse about whatever is happening in each other’s lives. Although sometimes I drive them crazy if I or Jeannie have to pull out our phones and record whatever we are doing at the moment,” she relays.

Never forgetting her humble beginnings and coming full circle to where her life has taken her, has provided Mama Mai with substantial wisdom that can be practiced and applied by all. “Always be honest and be true to yourself—believe in yourself as well. I learned a long time ago, that no matter what type of lives we live, we are all the same people inside. There’s no time to waste thinking we have to live by the approval of others. Has I spent my life afraid of what the next person thought about me, I would never have achieved anything. I encourage all of you to work hard, be happy, and do the best you can without worrying too much about what other people think,” she advises.

As she continues to blaze the trail, Mama Mai emphasizes the importance of staying healthy for herself, her children, and grandchildren. “My goal is to stick around long enough to watch my grandchildren grow and become the stars in their own lives. When I was young, I could barely imagine traveling to America. Now I’m blessed to have a career in the United States, be famous for speaking English as a second language, and be fortunate enough to travel around the world. I hope to travel more and spread love, joy, and laughter to everyone I meet,” she imparts.

Whether she’s in front of the camera or up close and personal, Mama Mai values the interactions she engages in daily and how she treats everyone in the present. Her goal is for people to always remember her for the happiness she has brought to their lives. “I want my loved ones to always smile when they think of me. As for my children, I hope they share my wisdom and live a meaningful and joyful life,” she concludes.

Olivia TuTram Mai—Mama Mai truly defines the essence of life with love, laughter, and joy.

La vie est belle

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An English Tea Soiree

By **Rosalina Tran Lydster**

Photography by **Vincent Gotti**

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Inheriting the gene of my late mother, who had a huge talent in creating dishes and entertaining parties, I am a person who loves delicious dishes and fond of re-creating my mom's recipes for my friends to enjoy when I have a chance. One of my favorites is hosting an English afternoon tea party in a quiet garden on a Spring or Summer Day that I am not too busy with work. It would be the most peaceful time for me and my girlfriends to review our memories and share our joys over a few cups of tea. The preparation for the tea party is very meticulous. I'm a perfectionist and I like to do everything myself from going to the market for finger food ingredients, choosing flowers, ordering cakes, ironing tablecloths, and hand-picking cups and plates for guests. Although it would require a lot of work and attention to details, I really enjoy it. I ordered petit fours and scones from the local bakery Draeger's. I asked **Sharon Bui**, a popular baker, to help me with a cake specially designed for my tea party. I made my own finger food, prepared tea, and arranged everything else. By the magic touch of master floral designer **Alan Do** from Noovo Bloom, also a good friend of mine who has exquisite taste in flowers, my small garden had become a lovely secret fairytale garden. I love entertaining and spending quality time with friends and family, and always go out of my way to make things happen for the one I love.

BUSINESS
CONCEPT

Rosalina Tran Lydster

Carolyn Chandler

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Teresa Rodriguez

Pernella Sommerville

Iryna Voskerician

Pernella Sommerville, Navid Armstrong, and **Teresa Rodriguez**

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Jacqueline Vo

Navid Armstrong

CHRONOMAT

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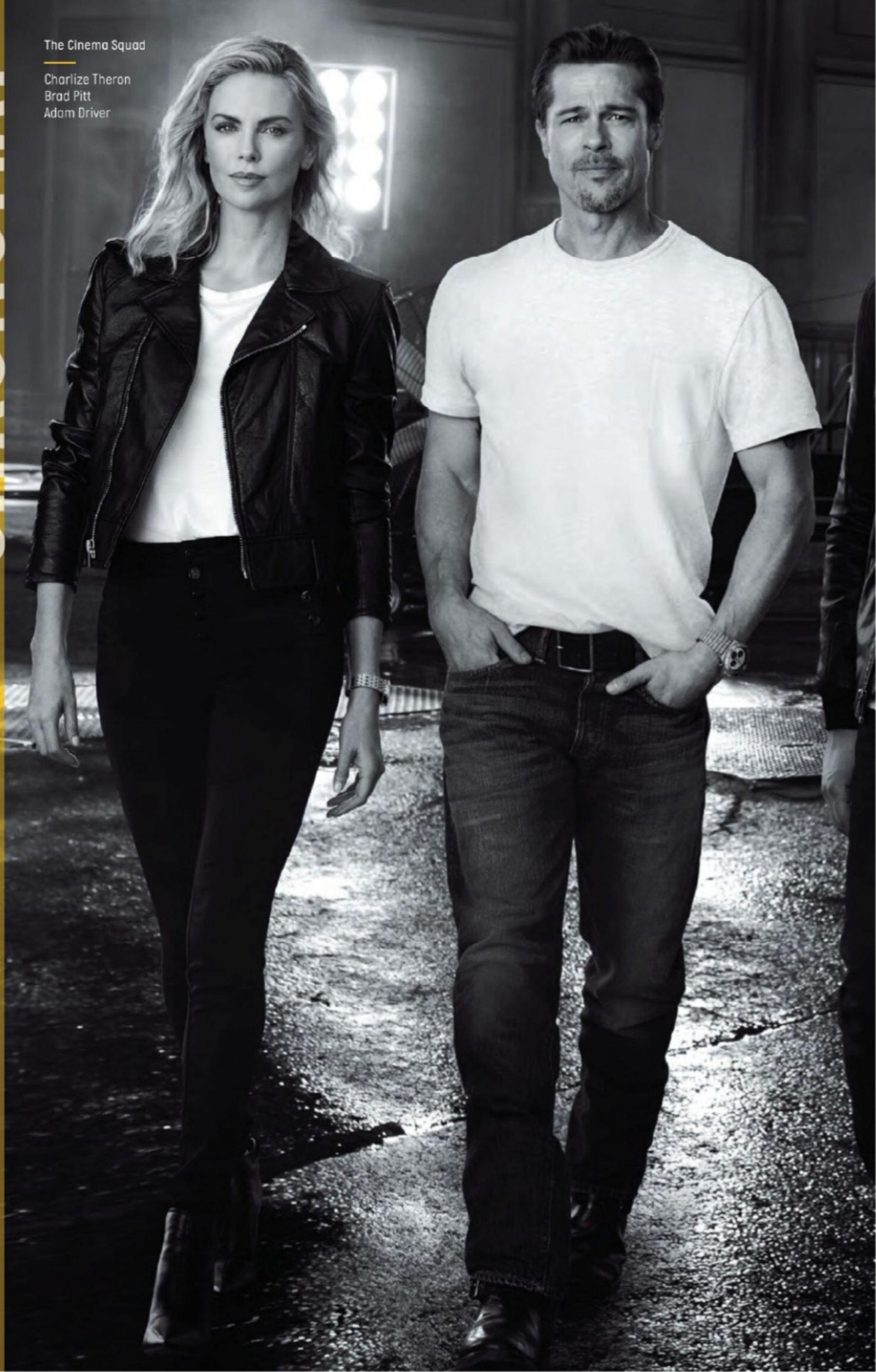
Adam Driver



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THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

CENTENNIAL SEASON

OPENING NIGHT CONCERT AND WEEKEND FOR THE AGES

By Heide VanDoren Betz

The 2022 opening weekend kicks off the centennial celebrations with a blockbuster line-up of events. On September 9, ***Opera Ball*** inaugurates the centennial with a gala at San Francisco's City Hall and a festive concert at the Opera House featuring San Francisco Opera favorites soprano **Nadine Sierra**, tenors **Michael Fabiano** and **Pene Pati** and baritone **Lucas Meachem**. Music Director **Eun Sun Kim** conducts the quartet of soloists and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in this opening night celebration that has been 100 years in the making.

2018 | Opera In The Park
Photo by Drew Altizer

Opera Ball: The Centennial Celebration, co-chaired by **Jack Calhoun** and **Maryam Muduroglu**, includes pre-performance cocktails and dinner at San Francisco's City Hall followed by an after-party at City Hall . This year, Opera Ball promises to be even more spectacular, with an array of dining options and an after-party for the ages that will be the talk of the town. Guests can dance the night away with live music, or chill out in the lounge with libations and bites. The proceeds from San Francisco's biggest night of the year support the future of opera and opera education in the Bay Area—ensuring the next 100 years of musical excellence.

Opera Ball: The Centennial Celebration is made possible, in part, by Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey with additional concert support provided by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

The weekend continues on Saturday, September 10, with the world premiere of **John Adams' Antony and Cleopatra** featuring Egyptian soprano **Amina Edris** and Canadian bass-baritone and **Gerald Finley**. The work is directed by **Elkhanah Pulitzer** and conducted by Music Director **Eun Sun Kim**. The highly anticipated new opera is based on Shakespeare's tragedy and commissioned to inaugurate San Francisco Opera's Centennial Season.

Jack Calhoun and Maryam Muduroglu
Photo by Drew Altizer

John Adams' Antony and Cleopatra *set design for Cleopatra's Palace by Mimi Lien, production by* **Elkhanah Pulitzer**

Opera Ball Final Horz

The weekend concludes on Sunday, September 11 with the free **Opera in the Park** concert, a beloved tradition held in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and featuring **Eun Sun Kim** and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

San Francisco Opera's Centennial Season features eight mainstage productions, multiple concerts, and an array of opportunities for deep engagement with the Company's 100-year history. The milestone season will be marked by activities designed to commemorate the past and welcome the community into the exciting new era just beginning under the baton of Caroline H. Hume Music Director **Eun Sun Kim**. In partnership with the Dolby Family, $10 tickets will be available to Bay Area residents for each performance during the 2022-23 Season, welcoming everyone into this once historic celebration.

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REDCARPET EVENTS

MARTY AND ROSALINA LYDSTER

30th Wedding Anniversary

Photography by **Binh Hoa Nguyen**

Thirty years of marriage. 360 months of hugs. 1565 weeks of happiness. 10,958 days of together. 262,993 hours of love. 1 blessed family and countless happy memories. A never-ending love story. We renewed our vows on August 1st, 2022. Mayor Willie Brown performed the ceremony at the Palace of Fine Arts in front of 68 of our close friends and family. Followed by a reception at Via Veneto. Owned by our long time friend Massimo Lavino. We couldn't go to Italy so we brought Italy to us. The theme for the anniversary party was come as your favorite movie character. Everyone was great… We had the Hulk, Green Lantern, Mia Wallace, Vincent Vega, Miranda Priestly, Vivian Ward, Maverick, Goose, Pink Ladies, Tbirds, and the list goes on and on. Who were the bride and groom? The coolest 007 and agent XXX/Major Anya Amasova. We are looking forward to another 30 years!

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REDCARPET EVENTS

KATRINA CUENCA ART EXHIBIT

Piercing Through the Membrane of this World

Katrina Cuenca

For much of her artistic career, Katrina Cuenca has been interested not in describing the world, but in creating an alternate magical realm to it, in which the color combinations beguile the eye, the resplendent forms provide access to quiet and contemplation, and the simplicity of her painterly gestures unlock the deepest corners of the imagination. She extends further her commitment to this transportive place in her solo exhibition, *Through the Looking Glass*, organized by Pinto Art Museum for Artist Space.

While referencing Lewis Carroll's literary masterpiece, the exhibit provides a subtler introduction to phantasmagoria in which the viewer, just like Alice, may frolic and take everything in: sculptural biomorphic forms appearing to waver and undulate, paintings responding to light in a multiplicity of ways, flashes of projection swimming onto the gallery walls, and a scent in the air evoking a memory of a garden full of flowers as soft music plays in the background.

"Advice from a Caterpillar"

Dr. Joven Cuanang, Richie Lerma, Katrina and Manyy Cuenca, Tim Yap

Emy and Charlie McNaught, Jo Uygongco and Carol Roa

"Down the Rabbit Hole"

Katrina Cuenca, Vice Mayor Yul Servo, Dr Joven Cuanang

Atty. Joy Rojas, Dr. Joven Cuanang

Jim Orencio, Cris Villanueva, Jr., Carlo Daoana

Tim Yap, Katrina Cuenca, Johnny Litton

Nuri Quimson, Rvee David, Abby Cuenca and Luis Castro

Jorge Fanlo, Mica Fanlo, Lala Miranda and Michelle Miranda

Vanessa Ledesma, Manny Cuenca

"The Hatter"

"Do You Suppose She's A Wildflower I (Looking Glass Series)"

"Down the Rabbit Hole"

Katrina Cuenca, Yodi and Andie Martija

Cacay Moras, Pepper Teehankee, Tim Yap, Joey Server

Richie Lerma

"The March Hare"

"Do You Suppose She's A Wildflower II (Looking Glass Series)"

Paolo Pangilinan

Richard Francisco, Manny Cuenca, Jaime Fanlo

Dr Joven Cuanang, Kenneth Esguerra

If You Only Walk Long Enough (Looking Glass Series)

With the Philippines having one of the world's longest lockdowns, Cuenca all wanted was to "Make a show that's a completely new experience to those who will see it." By tapping all the senses of the viewer, the artist envisions a portal that is both as a respite and an escape through which anyone may enter. Such a multi-sensorial experience entails careful and detailed planning; experimentation with different techniques and materials; and an unbridled intuition and play.

Those familiar with the paintings of the artist will be happy to see her forms which are recognizable for their multi-petalled, striated patterns that resemble different objects in the world: the swish of a fishtail, the creasing of fabric in the wind, and the dance of underwater plants. The sculptures realize the images in the paintings as three-dimensional objects in the real world whose metallic sheen and glow inflect them with an otherworldly quality.

Light, it must be said, has been an external medium in Cuenca's works. Much of her consideration of materials, such as the gold leaf and other metallic elements, is how they intervene and play with light: reflecting it, refracting it, allowing it to shimmer and pool like something liquid. Even the artist's choice of black pigment, one of the most opaque available now, is meant to highlight the endless properties of light.

Cuenca further experiments with light through an acrylic box affixed to her paintings and laden with strips of holographic film. Depending on lighting conditions and on where the viewer stands, the film gives off a mirrored effect and "Projects a holographic color on the painting itself." In some cases, the viewer may even see a reflection of themselves on the works, as if they are finally united with the world of the painting that they gaze at.

For the artist, much of what she explores in her art-making concerns not so much the specificity of the materials of the art object but viewer's perception of it. Through this interface, the work becomes a communal vessel through which the vision of the artist and the observation of the viewer meet. "If there's anything I want to add, if there's anything I want to give people," Cuenca states, "it's a semblance of tranquility."

- Carlomar Arcangel Daoana

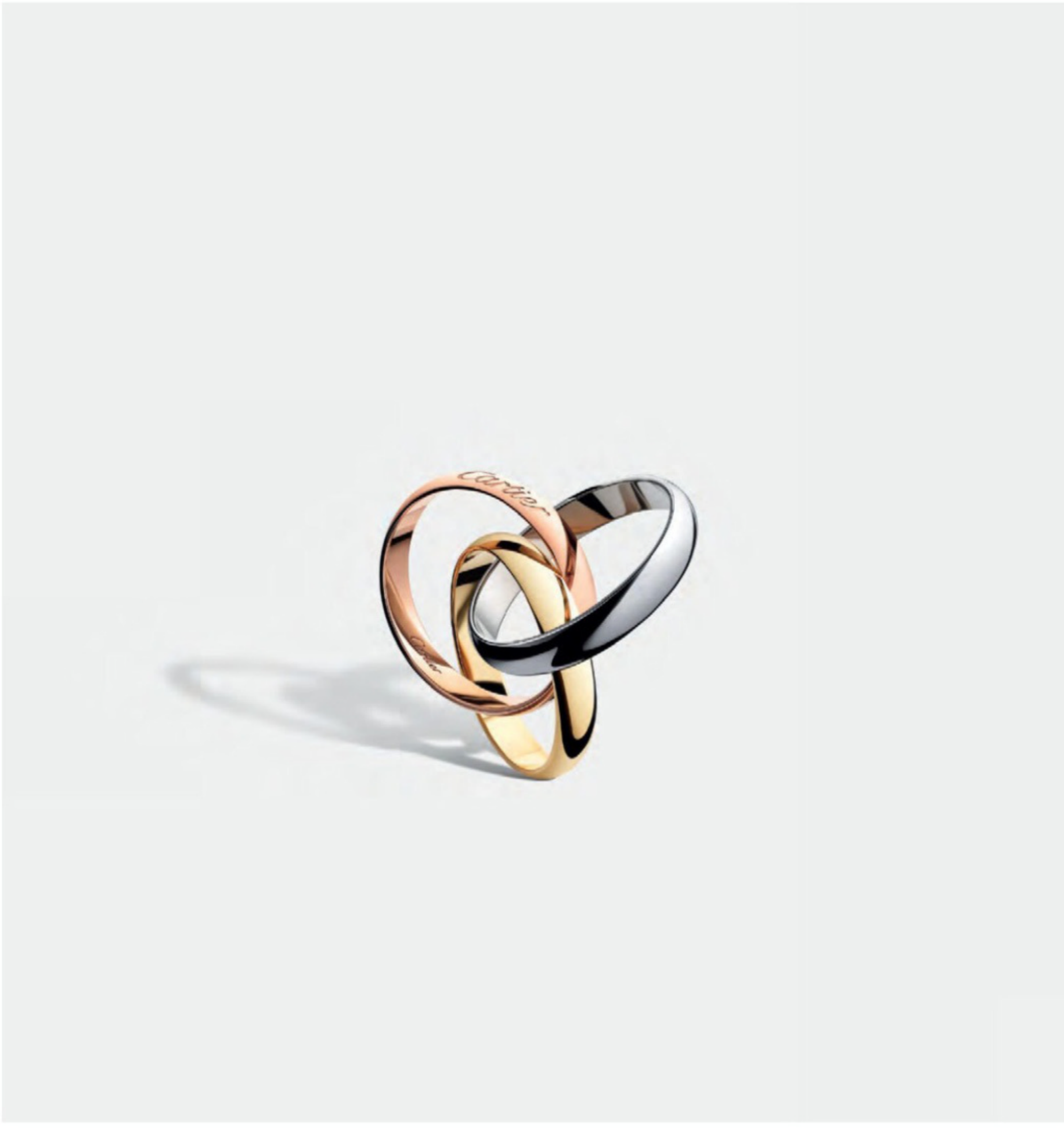
Honey Machuca and Kristine Esguerra

Rhoy Ramos, John Roa, Fernando Roa

Milcah Tan, Jepoy Almario, Astrid Almario

Katrina Cuenca

Manny and Katrina Cuenca



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