

ALLEYES ONALVA SIREN. SUPERMODEL. SHOWSTOPPER

PRIVATE VIEW GILBERT & GEORGE'S BRAND NEW GALLERY

31 MARCH 2023

TOP TABLE KIM JONES' DREAM DINNER PARTY

HAUTE MESS GOOD NEWS FOR BAD HAIR DAYS

> LEWIS Goodall's My London



EDITOR'S LETTER



I first met model Alva Claire through Marco Capaldo, the creative director of super-glam brand 16Arlington. The three of us were standing outside at the Serpentine summer party, it had just stopped raining and an obnoxious, very drunk man sidled up and made a joke about threesomes — I can't remember the details as it was unfunny, but Alva shot him a look and off he squirmed on his merry way. I was impressed by her: smart, beautiful and with a shut-it-down strength, what a killer combo! It's that self-assurance that saw the south-east Londoner kick down industry doors and will her global modelling career into being. This season there has been no missing Alva. She walked 14 shows in New York, London, Milan and Paris. She is the girl of the moment and this week's cover star. Shot by Gwen Trannoy and styled by Jeanie Annan-Lewin, Alva appears in her true smouldering form. When the images first arrived at ES HQ, the team stood around the screen and phrases like 'hot stuff' and 'goddess' were bounced about by, I must stress, the women. And then I heard Laura, our acting associate editor and writer of the cover story, say, 'She's an absolute smokeshow!' I have to confess I'd never heard the word 'smokeshow' before. How had I never heard the word 'smokeshow' before? A quick Google revealed that 'smokeshow' officially entered the Urban Dictionary on 6 October 2003: it's been around 20 years! I asked around the office and it turns out none of the men in the team knew the phrase either. Is it just used by women about women? I'm intrigued.

Moving on... Elsewhere, Gilbert & George fling open the doors to their new arts centre for a sneak preview; Kim Jones takes over our Set Menu section; and there's a My London with one-third of *The News Agents* podcast. Plus, we investigate what's going on in the world of banking: short answer — to use a phrase I know very well — 'it's an absolute shitshow'.

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NEED TO KNOW

EDITED BY JOANNA TAYLOR



THE WARHOL WEAVES

We're guessing you could spot an Andy Warhol a mile away. Such was the pop artist's Midas touch, he could turn even the most banal items — Brillo boxes, Campbell's cans, Coca-Cola bottles — into instantly recognisable (and highly collectable) works of art. Less familiar, however, are his textile designs, which are now getting their due at the Fashion and Textile Museum in **Andy Warhol: The Textiles**. Expect prints of pretzels, clowns, toffee apples — and a prompt desire to upgrade your spring florals. *31 Mar to 10 Sep. Tickets £12.65 (fashiontextilemuseum.org)*



THE PLAY THAT GETS YOU THINKING

As the title of Ryan Calais Cameron's play suggests, For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When the Hue Gets Too Heavy is not necessarily a show that'll have you skipping out of the Apollo Theatre. It does, however, contain some laughs, as well as more than two hours of often touching, sometimes tense emotional dialogue between six men at their most vulnerable: in therapy. Until 7 May. Tickets from £15 (theapollotheatre.co.uk)

THE ATTENBOROUGH SHOWSTOPPER



Venture to new habitats, get up close and personal with creepy crawlies and dive into new depths as the world's wildest wonders come to The Daikin Centre in Earl's Court. The **BBC Earth Experience**, narrated by national tresh' Sir David Attenborough, is packed with visuals from the TV series — showing off our planet as you've never seen it before. *Tickets* from £22 (bbcearthexperience.com)



BY @THEASTROLOGYVIXEN **ARIES** If the Oscars can break away from 62 years of red carpet tradition, then so can you. It's time for a switch-up to revitalise your relationship sphere and

THE STARS

kiss goodbye to stale patterns.



TAURUS You can rarely go wrong with the tried and tested, so be grateful for the manky old slippers that haven't given up on you. Stick to familiar territory to up the ante on your practical mastery.



GEMINI It looks like there's a climax coming for whatever is getting your pulse racing. If you've been fanatically working on a creative project day and night, don't worry, you're very near the finish line.



CANCER Release your emotional valve because you could implode, contaminating your surroundings with the frustration of your unmet needs. Address where you feel less than satisfied to taste decadent salvation.



LEO When it comes to your one-to-one relationships, speak now or forever hold your peace. Don't beat around the bush, it'll only keep you awake at night and starved of a true, authentic connection.



VIRGO How can you separate your personal worth from your financial algorithm? Inject a shot of passion into your workplace mindset rather than seeing it as a means to an end. Your light bulb moment is waiting in the wings.



LIBRA Psst! You don't need to orchestrate a full transformation to be hyper-visible, but there's no harm in playing up to the cameras. When the lights are on you, how will you wield your power?



SCORPIO This week, exorcise anything that's haunting you and banish such annoyances to another dimension. When you reach the end of this saga, you'll have uncovered shiny new gems of truth.



SAGITTARIUS Gather the members of your coven, but choose who gets to see what goes on backstage carefully. Don't leave yourself too exposed or you might end up as a causality of hearsay sorcery.



CAPRICORN Tighten those lips and resist the urge to overshare at work. Appearances aren't everything, but it sure can paint a picture. Keep any private monologues to yourself for the utmost safety.



AQUARIUS Your very own mentor is waiting just around the corner to help you expand beyond your limited goals. But first, you're given the task to uproot the belief that you must walk the path alone.



PISCES Swim far out to the deep end to cross into unique possibilities. If life has felt a touch on the dry side, you'll soon be splashing about in unrealised potential. Grab your bikini and leap away from the shore.

THE LAST HURRAH

No Glasto ticket? That sucks. But if you want a sneak preview of **Elton**'s grand finale tour, you can head to the O2 for his London stop. And the only 'bucket of mud' you'll have to deal with is the lyrics of 'Hercules', which he surely won't play anyway. *Ten dates between 2 Apr and 30 May. Tickets from £99 (theo2.co.uk)*

BUBBLE RAP

London renters are up against it already. After becoming an accidental landlord, **Susie Lau** thinks the last thing they need is the rise of the 'landlord influencer'



ever in my lifetime did I think I would ever, EVER, be a landlord (when I type 'landlady' I can only think of Julia Deakin's Marsha from *Spaced* and I'm not quite sure I see myself in that vein yet), but thanks to Kwasi Kwarteng and

Liz Truss' botched mini Budget last year, it left my house loitering like magnolia-shaded tumbleweed on the market, with no other option but to rent it out.

Even under the short-term landlord duress, the process has made me cower with self-loathing. There's of course a severe rental shortage in London at the moment, which has pushed up rents amid frenzied bidding wars. You basically need to befriend an estate agent in their shiny tie and questionable choice of cufflinks to get in on listings before they go live, and put your best silly rent bid forward. Friends are being pushed out to nether parts of the city they have never even heard of in the name of putting a roof over their head. 'What's Hendon like?' they ask. 'It's near Brent "According to Cross Shopping Centre. And a very giant #PropertyTok I should Wing Yip,' I say, hoping they are potential turn my three-bedroom selling points (I mean what's not to like about being near the brilliantly downhouse into five minuscule and-out Hong Kong caff, Reindeer, bedsits, squeezing in as nestled inside the Chinese supermarket).

And so in a small voice, I have to saymany tenants as possible"And so in a small voice, I have to saymany tenants as possible"that I've gone over to the dark side. Myreluctant landlord style is basically to acquiesce toeverything and pay more than makes financial senselaughable thirto get things fixed, so that the person can live therethese propertyhappily and my property doesn't end up in Joel Golby'sthey're providbad books (he's recently retired his hate-read Londonthat they're acRental Opportunity of the Week Vice column).way' in the wo

According to a new rise of 'landlord influencers' on Instagram and Tik Tok though, I'm doing it all wrong.



What I should be doing, according to the #PropertyTok videos that are notching up views, is cannily turning my three-bedroom house into five minuscule, dumpling-sized bedsits, squeezing as many tenants as possible into an HMO set-up and openly boasting about racking up rental income with kerching sound effects. Landlording on social media has taken on the guise of a get rich quick scheme. With algorithms feeding gems like '23k a Month at 23'

> and mock-rich displays of wealth rented Ferraris, jet-skis and cascading banknotes seem to pop up in these content streams — no wonder disaffected youths are gravitating towards them. *ule* Who wants to be part of Generation Rent when you can be cruising in a Maserati one minute, and haphazardly tiling a claustrophobic ensuite the next?

As a temporary accidental landlord, I'm busy hate-watching this content gold. The most laughable thing of course is the pretentious delusions of these property TikTokers. Namely that it's a noble cause, they're providing a much-needed service and, best of all, that they're actually helping hapless tenants 'find their way' in the world because they're quite clearly lost causes.

Of course, as with many corners of social media and online commentary, vitriol and hate will only fuel this particular sector. And they are only an extreme symptom of a broken housing system that most of us are enslaved to in one way or another, whether you're a tenant or indeed, a landlord like me, who just wants to be divested of this onerous responsibility. What seems to be lost in the land of landlord influencing beyond rent yields and pyramid scheme subletting, is the boring fact that you have real duty of care to a tenant. Funny that.



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BY MICHAEL HENNEGAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES PELTEKIAN



A bumper week here at Party Towers, starting with a dinner hosted by Schiaparelli creative director Daniel Roseberry with Naomi Campbell, Dame Joan Collins (looking in-cred-i-ble) and David Furnish. 'It's lovely to see you Ms Collins,' was our opening gambit. 'Dame Joan,' an aid politely but firmly reminded us – fallen at the first hurdle. Next, we ricocheted to a do celebrating the original Rocket Man and the opening of Elton John's Corner Chop at Selfridges, featuring a collection of merchandise to mark his farewell tour. We ended the week at a dinner thrown by Omega and hosted by Eddie Redmayne and Zoë Kravitz, where talk turned to time. 'Are you punctual?' we asked Redmayne (we're consistently 10 minutes late for life). 'I'm depressingly early,' he told us, 'I like getting to places early, in order to sit and relax. I love having time to indulge in nothingness.' Can't relate... Highlight of the week – despite the roster of megastars in town - for one of the *ES* team? (Not mentioning names but glossy, good hair, mean taste, 1970s suits.) Meeting Christopher Biggins. 'Was he everything you'd ever imagined?' we asked the next morning back at HQ. 'Everything, and more.' 🐙





Which London icon politely spat out their farfalle pasta at the Schiaparelli dinner?

GUESS WHO, DON'T SUE



DAVE BENE

EDITED BY HANNAH TINDLE

THE MID-NOUGHTIES 'IT' BAGS COMEBACK

Fashion hoarders, you were right all along: it really is worth holding on to those 'It' bags they told you you'd never wear again. The recent resurgence of the Dior Saddle, the Balenciaga City and the Fendi Baguette goes to show that no tote is too passé to come back. That 2000s Miu Miu crossbody I found in a charity shop in 2014? I could kick myself for getting rid of it - Mrs Prada is now sending similar versions down the runway. If you have any of the following bags already lurking in your wardrobe, now is the time to dust them off. The Marc Jacobs Stam - first introduced in the label's AW05 collection - has been reissued in the past month. A few weeks ago, Michael Kors announced it would be selling the Astor again. Predictions for what's up next? Set up an eBay alert for the Chloé Paddington and Givenchy Nightingale. I've also got my eye on a 2006 Chanel Cambon shoulder bag (well, a girl can dream).





GANT SHOWS OFF ITS ARCHIVE

Gant's travelling exhibition is stopping off in London. Curated by trend consultant Samuel Trotman, the show features never before seen sweatshirts, graphic tees, varsity jackets and college campus memorabilia. '[Samuel's] deep understanding of streetwear and this dive into the cultural impact American sportswear has had on it really makes London something different from the exhibition we did in NYC,' says Gant's creative director Christopher Bastin. Until 2 Apr at DIJONSS, 6 Dray Walk, E1 Flying off the shelves again: Michael Kors' Astor bag reboot

ADD TO BASKET: WHAT TO BUY NOW

FENDI Soft Trunk Baguette bag, £1,520 (fendi.com)

12

LOUIS VUITTON LV Archlight trainers, £905 (louisvuitton.com)

MAX MARA UNVEILS ART PRIZE WINNER

Max Mara has announced British sculpture and installation artist Dominique White as the recipient of its latest Art Prize for Women. Nominated alongside Rebecca Bellantoni, Bhajan Hunjan, Onyeka Igwe and Zinzi Minott, White was announced as the winner earlier this week. The artist, who lives between Marseille and Essex and creates work around the subjects of 'Afro-futurism and Afro-pessimism', will now embark on a six-month residency in Italy supported by the brand, culminating in an exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in 2024. *(whitechapelgallery.org)*



STYLE

ARE YOU A Haute Mess?

Good news for those of you who brush up a little, er, sloppily: your look is having its moment. For **Laura Antonia Jordan**, this hasn't come a minute too soon

f all the skills one might have expected to possess a competent grasp of by adulthood, 'brushing your hair' seems like a pretty low bar to clear, hovering somewhere between wiping your own botty and tying your shoelaces.

And yet, some of us functioning (honest!) grown-ups have made it this far without the presence of a hairbrush as a faithful steed. We refuse to tame our tresses. We don't own straightening irons and use hairdryers only to speed up our DIY manis. We are the Great Unbrushed.

Perhaps you are someone who has never had to cut a knot out of your hair. You — and I am guessing here, because I am definitely not you — also have a competent understanding of the difference between cleanser and toner, can wear white and keep it white, and don't spend your life brushing crumbs off your jumper. Well, good for you. But you might want to consider unravelling a little, because the current moment belongs to us bed-head girls. Getting dragged through a hedge backwards is fashion forwards.

You can thank, or blame, Miuccia Prada for that. Closing out the recently wrapped fashion month in Paris at her Miu Miu show, a gaggle of naughty nerds in oval specs, prim little cardigans and pointed-toe slingbacks sauntered down the catwalk. But that dorkiness was shot through with some detention-ready attitude. Skirts were sheer, trousers bunking off, tights pulled high above the waistbands. But best of all, there was the all-muss, no-fuss hair. Tousled and messy, it felt relatable and looked mildly transgressive (excuse me Miss, but what exactly were you up to in the library? Wink wink).

And she wasn't the only one. At Coperni, untidy plaits were a perfectly imperfect, tactile counterpart to the robotics unfold-

GETTY



ing on the runway. At Proenza Schouler, lightly tousled hair appeared air-dried. Not got time even for that? No problem! In the spring/summer collections, Marni, Ester Manas, Dries Van Noten and Ludovic de Saint Sernin were among the designers making the case for wet-look hair. You can see hints of it on the red carpet too. Look, there's Nicole Kidman foregoing her usual ironed hair for something inching towards untamed. Here's Rihanna with a topknot, ends poking out just like the bun you might do to wash your face (except, not, because Rihanna). And, seriously, can't we all iden-

"The current moment belongs to us bed-head girls. Getting dragged through a hedge backwards is fashion forwards"

> tify with Florence Pugh, heading home from the Baftas the morning after with superior not-gone-to-bed hair.

> Should you wish to express your hautemess credentials anywhere but your barnet, you're in luck. You might want to dabble with the one-night stand make-up trend doing the rounds on TikTok, encouraging you to sleep in your mascara and lipstick for

Right hair, right now: bed-hair on the Miu Miu runway

an I've-got-stories-to-tell look. Or maybe you could try a bit of the haphazard, thrown-together, anti-trend trend we saw on the AW23 catwalks; superlong Dr Who scarves with cocktail dresses at Louis Vuitton for instance, or Gucci's moon boots and mini dresses. or the mum-onthe-run leggings, hoodies and jangling keys at Miu Miu (again!). The attitude was a bit 'well, everything else was in the laundry' but - big but - the end result was far more elevated. Which is just as well; you're going for haute mess not hot mess remember.

Perhaps the patronage of luxury maisons does little to convince you that this is not just slovenly slobbery. Okay, okay. Let me reassure you that to pull it off successfully does require a little

bit of sorcery, of (shhh...) effort. It's not about letting go entirely, more loosening the reigns a little. Think French, not mid-breakdown. So, unbrushed hair should still be cut-and-coloured hair. I learnt this after being literally marched to the hairdressers by a firm-but-fair friend in my 20s. Shout out to Alexe and Neale at Hershesons for their accommodation of my whims, mainly making it look like they don't exist at all. On another note, well, I am sorry, but you cannot have it all. So you can have birds-nest hair, but not smudged make-up and a chaotic outfit as well. Choose your fighter.

But why though? What is the appeal of looking like you actually just woke up like this? Rejection of the heavily filtered, perfection-at-all-costs narrative that has dominated for so long, for sure. It's choosing BeReal in an Instagram world. But I suspect, there is a shallower reason too. It looks cool, cooler certainly than the coiffed-and-puffed 'done' look. Who wants to look like an *Apprentice* candidate when they could look like the girl who has been up late, too late, doing something she shouldn't? The hautemess adoptee has swagger to spare. She's got big IDGAF energy. Nobody needs to know that you actually got eight hours sleep.

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SILCON SLUMP?

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank has raised the spectre of another financial crisis. As the contagion appears to be spreading, **Samuel Fishwick** investigates how spooked we should be feeling

They say that when the US sneezes, the world catches a cold. So, how is everybody feeling? In a matter of weeks, three American bank failures (Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank and Silvergate Bank) and the government-brokered acquisition of Europe's floundering behemoth Credit Suisse have caused heart palpitations in the City. If West Coast panic spreads to the streets of London, what might that mean for you? What about your mortgage, your savings, your job, your life? What, exactly, is going on?

Not very long ago, this all felt very far away. On 10 Mar, Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), a lender deeply enmeshed with the lives of tech's biggest names, became the largest bank to fail since the 2008 financial crisis. After credit rating agency Moody's warned that the bank's bonds were in danger of being downgraded to junk due to a worsening economic climate, clients pulled out \$40bn (£33bn) of their money during a single Thursday. 'If you're going to panic, panic first,' quipped a venture capitalist, as customers queued round the block outside SVB HQ in sunny Santa Clara, California. A tearful Sharon Stone claimed that she'd lost 'half my money' in the collapse.



"You often don't know where the bodies are buried until you see the stress" Ex-SVB CEO Greg Becker, turfed out after a swift Federal Reserve bailout that saved depositors fortunes, jetted off to his £2.5 million Hawaii bolthole in shorts and flip-flops.

Closer to home, the Government's rescue bid, Project Yeti, swung into action. Rishi Sunak's whirlwind overnight operation tapped advisers including former British chancellor George Osborne, hooking up SVB's ailing British arm, which has 3,300 UK clients, with HSBC as a buyer. It cost a symbolic £1. 'Deposits will be protected, with no taxpayer support,' Chancellor Jeremy Hunt wrote on Twitter. For a hot second, SVB was seen as simply an eccentric, under-regulated outlier operating in a particularly volatile space — a victim of Silicon Valley's close-knit, 'move fast, break things' investor culture, hoisted by indulging the whims of fickle California dreamers.

Then, at ferociously high speed, events deteriorated. Signature and Silvergate, two banks with exposure to crypto and other tech-focused lending, failed — perhaps not a huge shock to those who have followed the crypto crash and the downfall of Sam Bankman Fried's crypto exchange and hedge fund FTX. Then Credit Suisse, a 166-year-old institution that was once an emblem of Swiss pride, was bought by its larger rival UBS in a rescue deal for a humiliating £2.6bn — less than the value of Greggs, the British bakers. A rout in banking stocks, spurred by the collapse of SVB, had brought Credit Suisse's long-standing vulnerabilities into sharp relief and hurried its collapse, highlighting just how spooked investors are.

Last weekend, the head of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, warned that the global economy faces 'exceptionally high' risks to its financial stability because of the turbulence in the banking sector. And Deutsche Bank, Germany's biggest bank and one of the largest in the eurozone, caused jitters when its shares tanked a week ago.

Are we on the verge of a 2008-style financial meltdown? Two schools of thought prevail: one rattled; the other becalmed by the speed and certainty with which regulators have acted by pumping liquidity into jittery systems. Tests can be overcome. Financial crises on the scale of 2008 are exceedingly rare. False alarms have fizzled out before and regulation is much improved.

So how does all this affect you and me? 'What we've seen from the reaction of central banks and authorities that guarantee our funds is that they move very, very fast,' says





economist Vicky Pryce, co-author of *How to be a Successful Economist*. The real problem is that lots of investors have lost out. If you were investing in the banking sector — or if your pension was invested in the banking sector — the drop in value that we have seen recently is a concern.'

'I think we should be worried,' says Kenneth Rogoff, Harvard professor of economics, who has long warned that the world is sleepwalking towards 'financial contagion', when doubt about one bank's assets spreads to another's. 'Financial crises go in waves. You remember the European debt crisis. First it was Greece. "But it's only Greece," they said. Then a couple of months later it's Portugal. "But it's only Greece and Portugal." So, you shouldn't just look a week later and say nothing else happened, all clear. It's much easier to call a financial crisis in hindsight than to call it in the moment— you often don't know where the bodies are buried until you see the stress.'

What about the domestic picture? The International Monetary Fund has said the UK will be the only G7 economy to shrink this year, which will likely kill struggling companies and hit jobs hard. The cost of further bank bailouts must eventually be passed on to the taxpayer: whatever the Chancellor might tweet, SVB UK is the exception, not a new rule. The era of dirt cheap credit is kaput for now. Moreover, the failure of a bank like SVB, one which was the go-to bank for a technology start-up company, could have a stifling impact on Britain's innovation economy unless other challengers can step in. Tech businesses may withhold new hires, and staff who remain may respond in kind, cutting local spending or delaying home purchases or renovation work.

Let's behonest. We have been here before. Bank bailouts. Centuries-old institutions - poof! - gone in a puff of smoke. 'For all the analysis you can do, the power of panic is bigger than any number that you can put on it,' says Rogoff. But this time, experts say, it's different. 'There's always a fear that idiosyncratic events are indicative of a picture that we can't see yet,' says John Cronin, UK lead at financial analyst Goodbody. Yes, the next big danger can come out of nowhere, he says. Who's next? What else is lurking out there? Could we see problems elsewhere? What are the unknown unknowns? 'But I'm confident that the banks in my bit of the universe are in good shape,' he concludes. 'There's no particular reason to worry.'

So don't panic. Yet... 🕅





"London felt like the centre of the universe"

More than half a century in to their partnership and the capital's most famously anti-elitist art duo are showing little sign of slowing down. Next up? The Gilbert & George Centre. **Joanna Taylor** meets them

t's one of those early spring mornings where the sun is peeking through the clouds and nobody besides the weatherman can tell whether you'll be absolutely freezing or perspiring beneath your coat. It transpires that today is most certainly the latter, but either way, standing outside a pair of great, vibrant green gates on Heneage Street in east London, Gilbert Prousch, 79, and George Passmore, 81, are in their trademark get-up: a pair of dashing, three-piece tweed suits. Across the road, a blonde woman is asking a man at the door of an Afro hairdresser why she can't get her hair cut; there are builders buzzing around us nodding 'alright, mate?' at either Gilbert or George; and a van parked a few doors up is being filled with a household's worldly possessions. 'It looks like someone is moving,' observes Gilbert.

The reason we're here? Behind the elaborate green gates, hallmarked with two winding Gs and topped with King Charles' royal crest, is The Gilbert & George Centre, a permanent celebration of the two artists' 56-year career and the distinctive, daring work that made it. Complete with three galleries, a screening room, and a beloved Himalayan magnolia tree dedicated to their late friend and curator Ron Brownson,

the centre is set to open to the public on 1 April, and feature an array of changing exhibitions intended to carry on their legacy and immortalise the pair long after they've checked out.

Our interview is due to take place a few streets away at their home and

studio on Fournier Street, and as we amble there, the pair reminisce about how much the street has changed since they moved here in 1968. 'We were the only artists and everybody was amazed that we would live here. It is quite romantic and at the same time they felt it was quite dangerous,' says Gilbert. 'Cab drivers would say, "When's

"WE USED TO GO OUT CLUBBING AT BLITZ. WE USED TO BE THERE EVERY NIGHT"

this lot coming down then?" adds George. 'Not "will it come down?", just "when?"

Today the residential Georgian street is one of the most desirable in town, a far cry from the area which inspired the artwork that shot the two to global fame, when back

> in 1969 the pair came across a copy of the song 'Underneath the Arches' by Flanagan and Allen in a second-hand shop. 'We didn't know what [the title] meant except that we were living in the East End where there were thousands of people living

underneath the arches and in hostels,' says George. 'The vast majority were ex-servicemen and there were quite a big percentage damaged by the sex laws before decriminalisation — at least a third were damaged from being put in prison for [homosexual] sex. It contained all of the thoughts and feelings that were relevant.' The song became the basis of their piece, *The Singing Sculpture*, which they'd end up singing ('It's not a performance; performance art is art that alienates most people,' quips George) with their hands and heads painted silver all over the world. 'It's still relevant. All of these people have gone, they've all died. They have been replaced by a smaller group, a younger group of drug addicts, of course. Equally dispossessed and equally enchanting in their own way.'

Needless to say, with around 120 collective years roaming this city under their belts, that's not the only change they've seen. 'London was a very different place then from what it is now. And the world is a very different place from 1967 [when the pair met at what is now Central St Martins],' says Gilbert. 'It's difficult to imagine how privileged we were at that time.'

George continues. 'London was extraordinarily famous in a different way from now. Not more or less, just different. The Beatles were out and The Rolling Stones. Covent Garden was completely deserted but very trendy. It was extraordinary. There were people from countries of the world that I'd



Resident advisors: the pair have lived on Fournier Street in the East End since 1968

Photographer's assistant: Stefan Ebelewicz. Grooming by Jolanda Coetzer

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by Sainsbury's whole leg of lamb £6.50/kg never heard of, filming in Saint Martin's School of Art. We felt we were living in the centre of the universe. The Charing Cross Road was world famous, even more so than now.' And a stone's throw away is where you'd find them, says Gilbert. 'We used to go out clubbing, not in the East End, but at the Blitz. We used to be there every night. You know, misbehaving, coming back in a cab.'

"WE WANT TO WIN WITH OUR ART, WITH OUR VISION. THAT IS DRIVING US DAY AND NIGHT. WE NEVER STOPPED THAT"

In the vast studio at the back of their home the pair show me the archive of invitations to all of their shows. One, an early set of multicoloured flyers, handwritten in swirly letters, catches my eye. This was for different groups playing, and at that time we didn't know if we wanted to become musicians or artists,' says Gilbert. 'We printed these out in a photocopy shop, handed them out ourselves at Liverpool Street Station. Nobody came, of course,' adds George. Though that didn't stop them. Driven by belief in their work, they took their act to the public.

'In the late 1960s we did a Rolling Stones concert. Not for the concert, we didn't actually see the concert. We went because we knew that we would have an amazing public,' George continues. 'And as we went through the park as living sculptures, all of the young people came up to us asking extraordinary, intense personal questions as though we would know the answers to life itself. It was such a free time. I remember a lot of people were wearing kaftans. They were sitting in the park with their knees up underneath the kaftan, masturbating, clearly ... because it was free love. Anything goes was the term. Nobody batted an eyelid. Now it would be more difficult ... 'Now you would have to do it in prison,' chimes Gilbert.

These days, you won't find them hanging out in the park, though they are still creatures of habit in other ways, especially when it comes to food. With no kitchen, they dine out every night. 'We went to Mangal 2 every night for 25 years and then one night we saw somebody putting a cable around the room. We said, "What's that for?" They said they're putting in a music system. So now we go to Mangal 1,' says Gilbert. 'We're heading for Mangal 0,' he jokes. 'The staff are so friendly and so nice. They're a real family. We have our table that's reserved for us every night, against the wall, near the column.' George adds: 'We have a view of the boys in the kitchen to keep an eye on things.'

At more than half a century together and still going strong, it seems perhaps the key to a happy partnership might be to nix the kitchen. But, seriously, what is the secret? I ask. To which Gilbert replies: 'We want to win with our art, with our vision. That is driving us day and night. We never stopped that.' And despite the fact their most recent works, unveiled at the White Cube earlier this week, are titled *The Corpsing Pictures*, it seems these two have no intention of slowing down just yet.

The Paradisical Pictures', the inaugural exhibition at The Gilbert & George Centre, opens 1 Apr (gilbertandgeorgecentre.org). 'The Corpsing Pictures', until 20 May at White Cube Mason's Yard (whitecube.com)



ALL ABOUT ALVA

When Alva Claire steps on to the runway, there's only *one* place to look. Laura Antonia Jordan meets the woman behind the smokeshow

outh closed. Chin down. And think of something smouldery.' In a Stoke Newington photo studio, model of the moment Alva Claire is giving me a one-to-one 'smoulder session'. If you know who she is, you'll understand that is a bit like getting Sergei Rachmaninov to listen to your best 'Chopsticks'. And if you don't know, just look at the photographs here. She's undeniably hot stuff, hot property, a pure smokeshow. 'That's it. You've got it!' she says sweetly as I squint awkwardly. Hardly, but bless her.

Twenty-four hours earlier and Alva is in a less smouldery mode, though still low-key dazzling in a Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra cap, flouncy skirt fashioned from boxer shorts and knee-high DMs (a gift from the designer Matty Bovan). It's a blustery, almost-spring day and we are sitting in the café in the middle of Brockwell Park — her suggestion — drinking builder's tea from paper cups. South London born and raised, this is familiar stomping ground for, to use her full name, Alva Claire McKenzie. 'You're my first interaction in a while, sorry I'm a bit...' she says, miming being frazzled. Actually, she's excellent company: funny, smart, engaging, warm. 'It's not difficult to be a kind person. Why would I be any different?'

She's just returned from a solo trip to the Azores where she celebrated her 31st birthday 'nattering away to myself, journaling, hiking. As I've got older I've realised the importance of being someone who can enjoy their own company. It's f***ing magic,' she says flashing a gem-encrusted grin.

It was a moment of required reset after a busy show season for a woman whose star is on the up. She walked, by my count, 14 shows across New York, London, Milan and Paris fashion weeks, including Altuzarra, 16Arlington, Ester Manas and Nina Ricci. She slips into character with the immersive precision of an actor. I loved her fierce and formidable turn at Dilara Findikoglu, I tell her, where she locked eyes with the audience. 'I'm so happy you've seen me in action,' she beams. 'I don't know where it comes from. It's like I'm able to connect with who I'm portraying or what I'm doing. I come out of myself for a minute'.

Growing up, Alva's 'hippy' parents — her Jamaican-born graphic designer father, and her mother from Syracuse, New York, who taught at Camberwell College of Art — encouraged her and her older brother 'to have an opinion on everything. Well, what do you think? Appearance was never the focal point of who we were, it was always about what we had to say. I never thought I was particularly attractive, but I also had such a strong sense of self because of that not being the focus.'

Despite her impressive self-assurance, she didn't see people who reflected how she looked in the media. So when scouts started noticing her, they were 'intrigued' but didn't know where to place her. 'I obviously didn't fit any of the requirements at that time. The magazines I was saving up my coins to buy were exclusively white skinny models cover to cover at that point. And it wasn't that long ago.' Nevertheless, she harboured a deep interest in fashion. On the bus across Waterloo Bridge, she'd see Somerset House — then HQ of London Fashion Week — and dream about being in the thick of it. One day she read an article in the now defunct *Look* magazine about a curve-model agency and decided to give it a shot. Alongside studies at London College of Fashion, she'd book the occasional Asos job, which would help her supplement her work assisting stylists and interning. 'I'm not from a background where I can work for free forever,' she says matter-of-factly. 'It was cool, but not a thing.'

Now it definitely is a thing. The shift came in her early 20s when, deeply unhappy in her retail job, she got out of the 'warm bath' of home comforts and moved to New York, making the most of her dual citizenship. 'When I quit my job I did it with such intention. I didn't fall into this,' she says. 'Going into the unknown was really scary. That really transformed me as a person and as a model.'

Career-defining moments came when she was one of the first 'curve' models to be cast in a Versace show (SS21) and, then, in Rihanna's acclaimed Savage Fenty extravaganza at the Barclays Center, which seemed to kill off the homogenous Victoria's Secret look in one fell swoop. 'It was a feeling of pure adrenaline that I'd never felt before. I grew from that in such a big way'.

Breaking the mould means Alva has talked about her body a lot. But, understandably, she's bored of discussing it. Why? a) because her work speaks for itself and b) because really, what woman does? 'If you can get women talking and thinking about their body all the time, then we're not thinking about other stuff.'

Besides, she's more than just a face, or a body, she's a collaborator. 'I'm interested. When I'm on set I want to talk to the stylist, I want to talk to the photographer, I want to get to know people. I've immersed myself in it.' What really motivates her is that love of fashion, the transportive nature of clothes. 'You can move people, make people cry, make people angry, fashion has so much power. People don't want to think it does. They want to dismiss it, or they think it's silly. But you can make people feel with art.'

As for what's next? The wonderful thing, she says, is that she doesn't feel like any doors are closed — and even if they are, she has a proven track record of smashing them wide open. 'I still get such a kick out of the fact that there were so many things that hadn't been done before and a lot of people said I couldn't do. And I was like, well that's not going to stop me from trying to do it. And each time you do it, it's like you've got a little Mario kart and zhooop!' she says, miming lift-off. 'People can say you can't do it, but that doesn't mean you can't.'

RICK OWENS jacket, £5,300; tank top, £290; boots, £3,290 (all at rickowens. eu). CARTIER necklace, £16,000; earrings, £4,800; earring, £4,250 (all at cartier.com)





ALAĨA coat, £22,080 (maison-alaia.com). WOLFORD bodysuit, £180 (wolfordshop. co.uk), BLUEBELLA stockings, £12 (bluebella.com). CASADEI heels, £695 (casadei. com). CARTIER earrings, £6,950 (cartier.com)

"Appearance was never the focal point of who I was, it was always about what I had to say"

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Thispage: 16ARLINGTON top, POA;skir, POA (16arlington.co.uk). BLUEBELLA stockings,£12 (bluebella.com). JIMMY CHOO heels,£550 (jimmychoo.com). SWAROVSKI earrings,£175; bracelet,£280 (swarovski.com)

Opposite page: DILARA FINDIKOGLU dress, £1,000 (dilarafindikoglu. com). SWAROVSKI necklace, £500 (swarovski.com)

Make-up: Terry Barber at David Artists using MAC. Hair: Issac Poleon at CLM using Keracare and Keracare and Ruka Hair. Manicure: Robbie Tomkins at LMC Worldwide using Dior Manicure Collection and Miss Dior Hand Cream. Photographer's assistants: Jack Symes and Symes and Pietro Lazzaris. Stylist's assistant: Julia Veitch

"People said I couldn't do things. I was like, that's not going to stop me trying"





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BEAUTY & HEALTH -



BOND AMBITION

Recent years have seen an influx of at-home treatments to restore damaged hair by enhancing its strength and shine. And while each formula showcases its own patents, this breed shares the aim to repair broken bonds deep in the hair cortex, re-establishing structural integrity — oh, and their hefty price tags too. Cue L'Oreal Paris's Bond Repair range which starts at a wallet-tickling £11.99 and uses a citric acid complex to rebuild broken bonds at a molecular level with remarkable results that saw 98 per cent less breakage and 90 per cent more shine. My ow some times frizzy always wayward strands were immediately soft

VOREAL ELVIVE

broken bonds at a molecular level with remarkable results that saw 98 per cent less breakage and 90 per cent more shine. My own curly, sometimes frizzy, always wayward strands were immediately softer, smoother and notably easier to tame. L'OREAL PARIS Bond Repair Rescue Pre-Shampoo, Shampoo, Conditioner and Serum, available at Boots

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VIEVE Soul Shadows in Lure, £29 (vieve.co.uk)



Pillow Talk Matte Beauty Blush Wand in Pink Pop, £30 (charlottetilbury.com)

PIN DROP

Over his two decades in the industry, hairdresser George Northwood has grown a famously loyal clientele, including Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Alexa Chung, The Duchess of Sussex and Julianne Moore, his signature 'undone' style delivering effortlessly glamorous and modern hair. His second salon opened in Shoreditch this week and we say get thee there now. *George Northwood Shoreditch*, 13 *Boundary Street*, *E2* (georgenorthwood.com)



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

BY KATIE PUCKRIK

How do you catch a cloud and pin it down? Such is the puzzle of describing a smell. Not everyone possesses the same palette of flora, fauna and funk, and even if we did, individual odour associations make universal experience tricky to map. Do you share my pleasure at a quick niff of fresh garbage? You would if you'd lived in the US Embassy in Moscow as I did as a kid, happily playing with the feral kittens who proliferated in the compound's rubbish dump. I find an aberrant approach to language helps build rickety bridges connecting personal kinks, which is part of the fun in writing about perfume. Another part of the fun is parsing the witch's brew of materials contained within. Especially when the stuff seems prosaic, like geranium, the central character in Sisley's shimmering new eau de toilette, L'Eau Rêvée D'Hubert.

Like the mousy secretary in a 1960s Rat Pack movie who is invisible to Dean Martin until removing her glasses renders her a bombshell, L'Eau Rêvée D'Hubert's humble geranium is revealed to be a dazzler. It was Sisley co-founder Countess Isabelle d'Ornano who noticed her family drawn to the climbing pelargonium in the garden of her French country home, rubbing the velvety leaves and savouring their minty-rosy aroma. Perfumer Alexis Dadier followed her lead and added the dry bite of shiso leaf and the arid aromatics of papyrus to create this symphony in green. Verdant, mossy, clear and sheer, L'Eau Rêvée D'Hubert is a wow of a cloud. *From £81 for 50ml (sisley-paris.co.uk)*



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MY RESERVATIONS

l'm a bit of a hermit, but if I go out I head to The Wolseley, Scott's or Dinings. And my friend Jackson Boxer, who has a few good restaurants around London, cooks quite a bit for me.



DREAM DINNER PARTY

Andy Warhol — he'd probably just sit and watch but I like the idea of him being there. I'd get Francis Bacon to cause a bit of trouble and some composer who's died, like Handel. And if you're going really far back, someone from Ancient Rome. I'd like a really big mix, just to see how it goes. I have some amazing friends, and I get to have them around me a lot and we have great fun. The conversations you can have with someone like Grace Jones are incredible — we just sit in my living room chatting away.



TABLEWARE TALK

I buy all of my napkins from the Charleston gift shop because I have a house near there. They sell out but they have beautiful fabrics. My house in Sussex is quite traditional, and my place in London is a big modern concrete block, so I have to soften it with some Bloomsbury-inspired things.

EVERYDAY



EATS I'm quite a precise eater because I'm doing a sort of fasting diet at the moment where I have two specific meals a day. So, I have the Wrise ale de

the Wolseley chopped salad delivered to my office or wherever I'm working for lunch and then something light for dinner — just chicken and vegetables really. Although I like a bit of the green EI Yucateco hot sauce, I'm not going to lie.

GUEST EDITED BY **KIM JONES**



A MAN OF GREAT TASTE

On a break from fashion, **Kim Jones** explains why his Hennessey side hustle has fuelled his creative fire

This collaboration first came about when someone who I used to work with at LVMH asked whether I would be interested in working with Hennessy, so I went to visit Cognac. I found the process fascinating, and the archive very interesting, which fit the criteria of what I like doing, because for me everything has to have relevance. For me to consider doing a project, it has to be authentic. I like the fact that when you see all the barrels, you see how the craftsmanship hasn't changed or what was actually in the bottle. It was the innovation around that which was interesting for me.

I was looking at the paper on the early bottles from 1890 and 1900, and I thought it was interesting to approach that in the form of draping. The paper almost turned into a piece of pattern paper for me, actually dressing the bottles, so it's like making a couture dress. For the shoe, the HNY Low, when I looked at it and thought about Hennessy and about the colour of cognac, I knew it's all really about the cognac. So the wax lace is shiny like the liquid, the colours are all tones of cognac. I just wanted it to feel like the liquid in the bottle rather than anything else.

My hero bottle has to be the Masterpiece carafe, which is impressive because of the amount of work and technology that goes into it. It's very different. The sculptural titanium casing is 3D-printed, so it's very technical and it's a kind of new way of working for me. Product design is very different to fashion design, and I like learning new things, so when I'm working with people this really appeals to me. I want to know: what am I going to learn from this? The limited edition collection is available at Flannels



IN THE KITCHEN

In lockdown when my team were working with me, I'd cook quite a lot, and one of the main things I'd make is chilli con carne — a veggie one and a meat one. It's something that you can leave and keep coming back to, so you can keep on working. I like it not to be too runny, so the secret is to keep an eye on it when it's cooking. It's something my dad taught me how to cook. I like cooking the fad iffrom things.

cooking lots of different things. I'm good at a roast, I'm good at a Christmas dinner. It's all about timing. I'm very Virgo, so I write down my list of what I'm going to do before and follow it to the dot — that's what gets me through. I always partially boil the potatoes before I roast them, I do it quite thoroughly so they're really fluffy inside and crispy, and I'm constantly checking them when I'm cooking them.

Lise my friend David Herbert's cookbook, which is mainly about cakes and desserts, when I'm making things like that. I don't eat them but I love making them, I find it relaxing. I like making a Victoria sponge because you can knock it out in about 20 minutes, and it's fun to do. When everyone is sitting around and you present them with a cake, they're always quite shocked. It always has to be with fresh cream and strawberries chopped up, not jam. I put a tiny bit of cognac into the cream sometimes, almost like a brandy butter.

IN DEFENCE OF... MARMITE



Working in different countries, we get quite consistent conversations about Marmite going on. Myself and Amanda Harlech really, really love it, so it comes up in conversation a lot. Other people just don't get it at all. You need to have it on a good bit of thick toast with lots of butter; a white crusty loaf is best. When I do eat bread that's what I'll do.

31 -

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INTERIOR MOTIVE EDITED BY ADAM BRAY



THE MORNING SHOW

Whether you kick off your day with a hastily gulped espresso or a maximal blow-out, a few details can make the breakfast ritual a joy, says **Adam Bray**



ow I approach breakfast tells meall I need to know about how the day is going to play out. Until the caffeine kicks in, I am in a relatively

dreamlike state. Although in the working week, that can feel a bit more like a nightmare: the grim morning news on the radio, the beckoning to-do list, the inbox and phone calls are all an unwelcome distraction while I gather myself together.

Probably the most personal of all meals, it can be a solitary affair or scoffed in a crowd. It can be eaten in bed with a partner or over a crisp white tablecloth with a work colleague. It can be a sumptuous banquet or a Lucozade and Wotsits (the entirely orange breakfast that was a go-to of a bloke I would regularly spot on the school run). It can be tea or coffee, or salmon or bacon, or berries or booze, or pancakes or eggs. It can be all of the above.

A successful breakfast needs just a bit of time and a little planning. Don't set yourself up to fail. If you have 10 minutes between opening your eyes and catching the bus, then attempting eggs Arlington is asking for trouble. If, however, you are working from home and find yourself with a spare moment between Zooms and staring out of the window wondering why?!?!, then a dollop of hollandaise will work wonders for your will to live.

No matter whether you can cook or not, the preciousness about breakfast is in the ritual. There is an old decorators' adage about using circular or oval tables for break-

Dawn symphony: a feast for all the senses fast and rectangular ones for dinner, maybe because you don't feel like looking right across at someone — as you might later in the day — first thing in the morning. In the space-strapped capital, that two-table lifestyle might be asking a bit much, but you can lend even the most Monday-ish of mornings a hint of luxury with, say, an antique toast rack or a hand-painted egg cup. Something you don't need to use, but want to.

A chipped Japanese pottery cup that I've had for many years, a napkin that a friend kindly embroidered with my initials and a leaky old pen to make notes with, these are my morning companions. Later on in the day, this ritual would all seem a bit silly. But first thing in the morning it is essential. As, of course, is coffee.

MY LONDON

Home is...

Norbury. Most people probably know it as 'near Streatham on the way to Gatwick'. I like the feeling that nobody really knows it.

What's your earliest memory of the city?

Coming down on the coach when I was 10 to see the Millennium Dome for a school trip. The second time, I went for work experience in Parliament when I was 14. I was as politics-obsessed then as I am now. I was walking around going, 'Oh my god it's David Blunkett! It's Jack Straw!'

Most memorable meal?

Pique-Nique in Bermondsey. The most fantastic French cooking. It's just divine.

Any spots you have introduced your *News Agents* co-hosts to?

A couple of weeks ago I took Jon [Sopel] to Zima in Soho. The pelmeni [Russian dumplings] are superb. The best thing I like to do with Emily Maitlis is take her to a pub. She's so resplendent and elegant, there's just something really funny to me about Emily Maitlis in a boozer.

So, what's your favourite boozer?

The Angel in Bermondsey. It's like going in to a slightly different world. You almost feel like you're in this old wharfside of London.

What's your London secret?

The Thames Path beyond London Bridge. The South Bank is great but packed. Something weird happens beyond London Bridge, there's almost no one apart from the occasional runner. If you keep going eventually you get to RSPB Rainham Marshes.

Best thing a cabbie has ever said to you?

'I love *The News Agents*'. That was the moment I thought, 'We're actually making a bit of a cultural impression.'

Which shops do you rely on?

This sounds so bourgeois but there's a really lovely delicatessen a few minutes from me, David's Deli in Streatham Common. The shop I use most is Lidl. Lidl is great! And there's a bookshop just opened in Balham called Backstory, which I've been to a lot.

Best place for a first date?

Go to the National Theatre for a matinee,



"She's so resplendent, there's just something really funny to me about Emily Maitlis in a boozer"

The News Agents podcast presenter **Lewis Goodall** dines on Gallic fare at Pique-Nique, lets loose at John the Unicorn and would take his co-host for a riverside pint at the Angel

walk to the Angel inn, then get the Thameslink to a nice restaurant in south London, like Llewelyn's in Herne Hill.

What would you do if you were Mayor for the day?

I would ban cars. I'm a big, big walker and feel like I spend half my life breathing in fumes while I wait for traffic lights to change. Where do you go to let your hair down?

I seem to always end up at John the Unicorn in Peckham. But to relax, a few years ago I took up boxing, so I go to a guy called Clinton McKenzie in East Dulwich.

What do you collect?

Ilove gardening. It's the opposite of modern life, it's not instant gratification. So at the moment I'm collecting lots of seeds.

Most iconic Londoner?

Thomas à Becket: he took on the establishment. Virginia Woolf: she's such a London writer. And someone I interviewed the other day, Diane Abbott. To me, she is an iconic Londoner, the first Black woman MP, she really screams London in a good way.

And finally... What's your favourite London newsagent?

Haha! I tried to explain to some Americans recently what 'newsagents' were... somewhere you can buy cigarettes, newspapers and Twixes. There's a great newsstand just by Carnaby Street. And the one in Brixton Tube. Considering it's tiny, it has an amazing array of magazines. One hell of a delivery they get in there!

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