

MICHELA DE ROSSI



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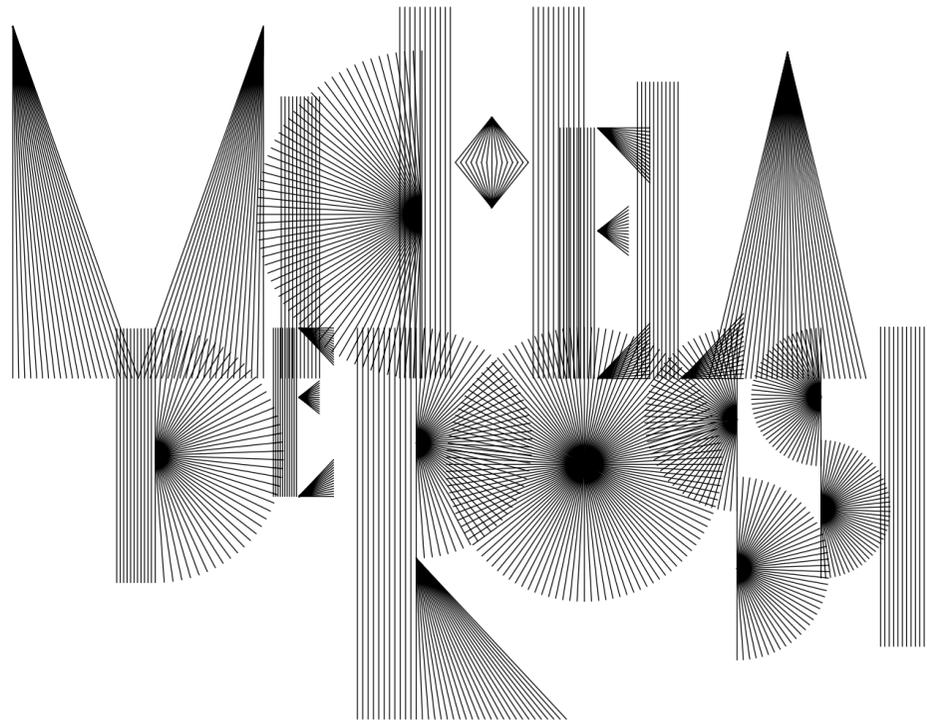
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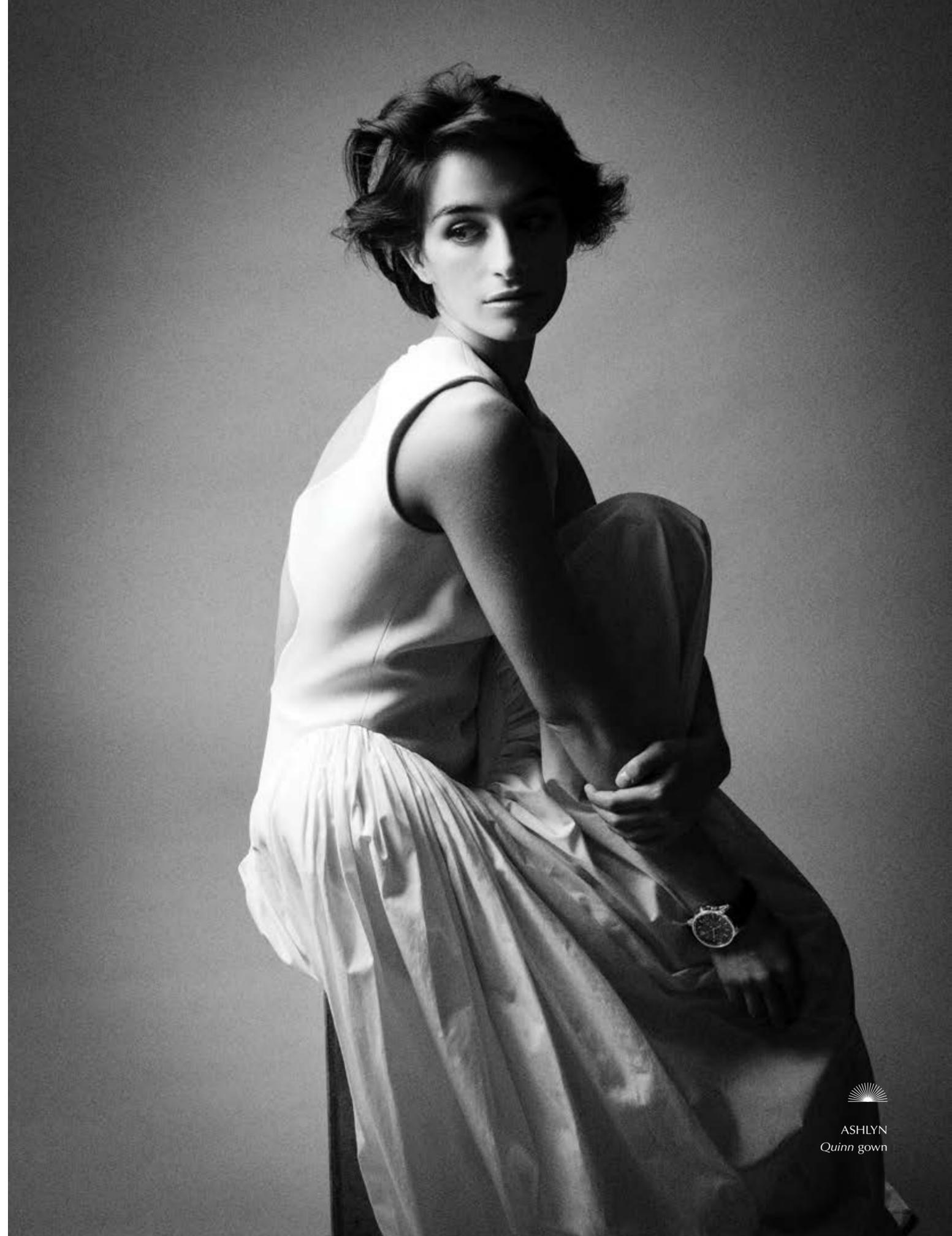
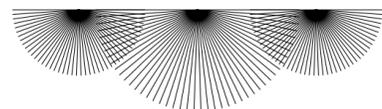


JASON WU  
scarf tie crepe blazer

KRISTIN HANSON  
*Ice Vine* ring, white and  
pink diamonds, 18k  
white and rose gold



is about to become one of Italy's hottest exports. The much-anticipated Sopranos' prequel, *The Many Saints of Newark*, from the original creator, David Chase hits theatres this fall, and the femme fatal character played by de Rossi will leave audiences breathless. This dark haired, dark eyed, beauty hailing from Rome personifies mystery and sensuality, attributes American audiences have long attributed to Italian screen goddesses—think Sophia Loren and Monica Bellucci. I had the opportunity to photograph and sit down with the actress to talk about her experiences on the film and what it was like working in America, the biggest cultural differences between the American and Italian way of life, as well as a lesson on how to boil pasta the Roman way.





DOLCE & GABBANA  
jacquard brocade dress,  
silk bustier, and patent  
leather handbag



GUCCI  
blue-mustard multicolor  
playboard printed,  
velvet single breasted,  
long sleeve jacket with  
embroidered label with  
masculine fitted vest and  
straight pants, Isabella  
light drill wool silk long  
sleeve shirt, and shoes



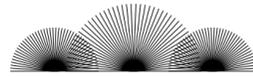
JONATHAN SIMKHAJ  
*Kali* vegan leather  
midi dress



SALVATORE  
FERRAGAMO  
*Boy Scout* green recycled plastic jersey asymmetrical halter dress, and *London Sparrow* Nappa leather clog

CHRISTIAN WIJNANTS  
*Arya* bag

AUDEMARS PIGUET  
*Code 11.59* self-winding chronograph 18k white gold case, black ceramic



“IN ITALY, WE HAVE NO RUSH, YOU KNOW? WE JUST TAKE A COFFEE AND TAKE TIME TO TALK. AMERICANS ARE WAY MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN WE ARE, BUT ITALIANS HELP EACH OTHER WAY MORE.”

**AS IF: Michela, you landed the final lead role in the Sopranos film, *The Many Saints of Newark*, which was coveted by many actresses. Now, you're an Italian actress living and working in Rome and American audiences don't know who you are so tell me how you got the role?**

MDR: The producers were searching for an Italian actress and I self-taped myself using a website. They tried to find an American-Italian actress but decided to go with an Italian. So, when the producers saw my self-tape, they called me in Rome for a callback. I did the callback and then they disappeared for two months. Then, one night while I was in the theater watching a play my agent called me and I was afraid that something bad happened because it was around 11pm. But he said, *you are never going to believe what has happened, you are going to New York tomorrow morning!* And that was my first time out of Europe, my first time on a flight alone, my first time to the USA!

**AS IF: Is that when you learned you got the part?**

MDR: No, this was for the screentest. They saw me on tape, but now they needed me to do a chemistry test. You know, they need to see the actors together, how our heights are together, our chemistry. When I had the first callback in Rome, I auditioned with all the other Italian actresses with dark hair and dark eyes in my age group. I was convinced they would never choose me, so when they called me for a chemistry test with Alessandro Nivola, I couldn't believe it! At the audition in New York was writer David Chase, Alan Taylor the director, along with someone from Warner Brothers and the casting directors. Alessandro and I worked for like two hours and did most of the scenes. When it was done I was on my way back to the hotel and my phone rang, it was Alan Taylor who said, *before you get on your flight back to Rome we want you to be Giuseppina Bruno!* I was so happy!

**AS IF: Your character, Giuseppina, comes to America for the first time, and you mentioned you came to America for the first time for this audition. I'm sure that experience helped connect you to your character.**

MDR: Yes, it did, and David kept asking me how I felt, how Michela feels in a scene, what I was thinking in a scene to find the similarities between me and my character because we were obviously sharing similar feelings of excitement and nerves. It was a very hard challenge to switch back and forth from total happiness to fear and to happiness again.

**AS IF: What can you tell us about your character and the movie without giving anything away?**

MDR: I think my character is revolutionary compared to other women during that time period from that part of Italy. Giuseppina wants to do her own things, she wants to be independent, she knows she is hot and knows what she can do with that. It's her weapon—*weapon*, is that the word? She's smart and ambitious compared with other Italian women from that period who would stay at home with their children. There was strong *patriarcato* in Italy then; I think the word in English is *patriarchy*—you know, when the man makes the rules. And my character tries in a way to fight with that.

**AS IF: What was it like acting in English and what were the challenges acting in another language?**

MDR: Oh my god, it was so hard because I thought in Italian but had to communicate my thoughts in English. I remember the panic that I had because I needed time to translate in my head, but the scene must keep going and I had no time to think, translate and then react (laughs)! But at the same time, my character was Italian and experiencing the same dilemma. The hardest challenge was interpreting explanations given to

me by my colleagues and trying to talk back to them in English. My English is much better now, but it wasn't so good when I started filming. They didn't want me to have an English coach, so when I didn't understand something, they didn't care. They liked my confused reactions because it was real emotion.

**AS IF: Acting is about the authentic experience.**

MDR: Right. I want to say an important thing, which is they chose me as an Italian but my character is Neapolitan. They thought that an Italian actress can also do a Neapolitan accent, but they didn't know that Neapolitan is another language. If I go to Naples, I don't understand a word. Once they chose me, they told me that my character is Neapolitan from Naples. So, while we were shooting, I was constantly on the phone with my friend who would translate my Italian lines into Neapolitan for me.

**AS IF: So, essentially you were working in three languages.**

MDR: Yes. I had the English language problem and I had the Neapolitan language problem. I wanted to have a real Neapolitan accent because there will be Neapolitans watching this film.

**AS IF: I also thought Neapolitan was a dialect not a separate language. When the Italian language was formalized back in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, I assumed they merged all the languages.**

MDR: No, it's still its own language.

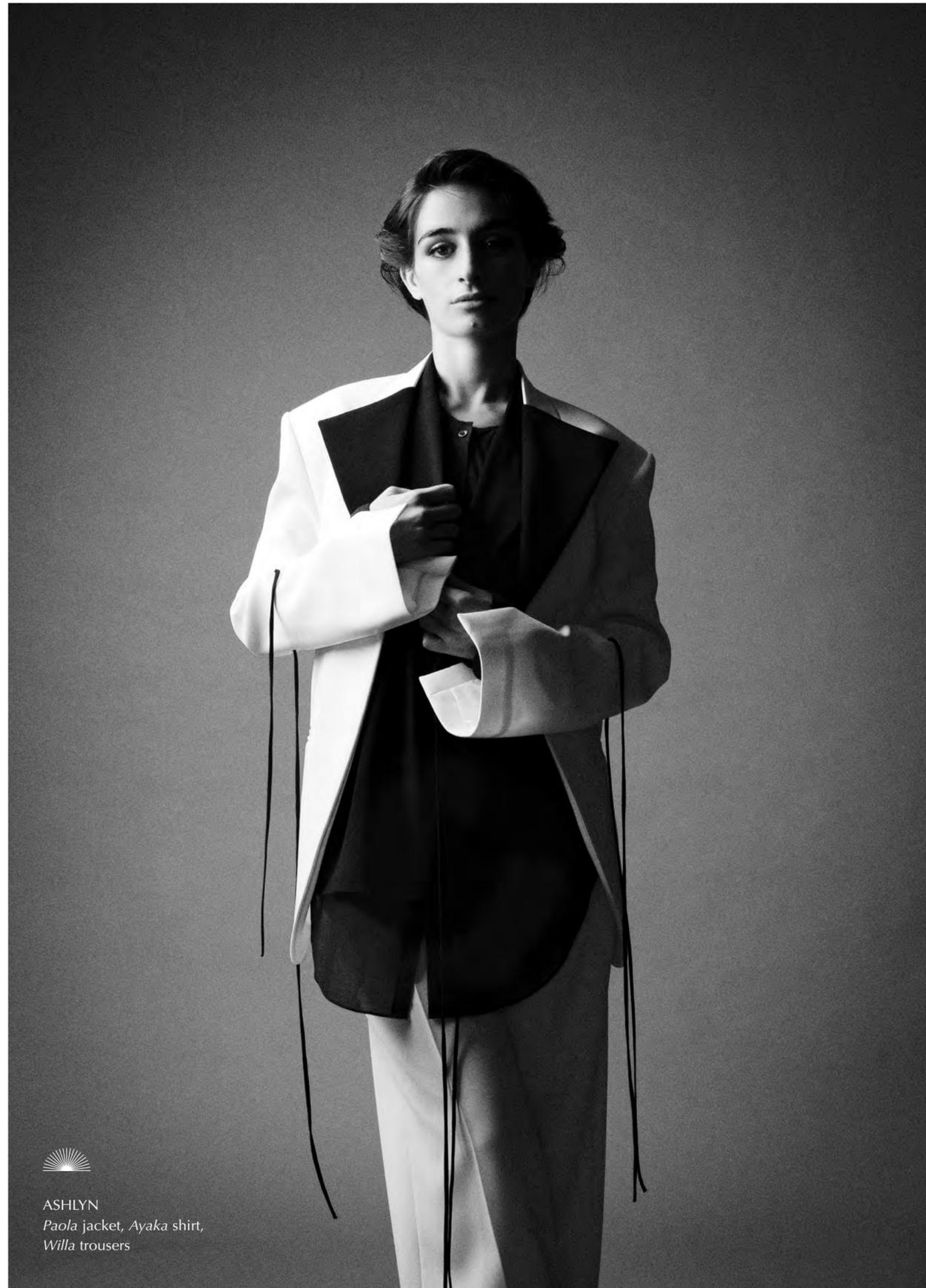
**AS IF: Now, when you and I were shooting this editorial, you were telling me how pasta should be cooked and that Americans have it all wrong.**

MDR: (Laughs) Yes! I made my carbonara for all the cast and they thought it was amazing! Ok, so the trick is to fill the pot with more water than the pasta, the water level needs to be higher than the



JASON WU  
scarf tie crepe blazer

KRISTIN HANSON  
18k white and rose gold  
*Bow* bracelet with white  
and pink diamonds, *Ice  
Vine* ring, white and  
pink diamonds, 18k  
white and rose gold



ASHLYN  
*Paola jacket, Ayaka shirt,  
Willa trousers*



STELLA MCCARTNEY  
*Magnolia dress in  
grape with Hobo bag in  
cameo blue*

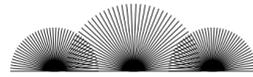


GUCCI  
 blue-mustard multicolor  
 playboard printed,  
 velvet single breasted,  
 long sleeve jacket with  
 embroidered label with  
 masculine fitted vest and  
 straight pants, Isabella  
 light drill wool silk long  
 sleeve shirt



AKRIS  
 black trapezoid grid  
 St. Gallen embroidery  
 mock neck gown  
 with tulle mirrored  
 trapezoid St. Gallen  
 embroidery skirt

JONATHAN SIMKHAI  
 boots



“ I AM DEFINITELY A PERFECTIONIST. I’M VERY SENSITIVE AND I CAN ALSO GET REALLY, REALLY ANGRY. I DON’T KNOW WHICH IS THE WORD... BUT I’M VERY FIRE. I’M *FIRE*.”

pasta and it must be salty, no oil. When the pasta is still too hard—read the directions on the box to see how long to cook it—strain the pasta and reserve some of the water. Do not drain all the water from the pasta, this is where most people make the mistake! Then return your pasta to your pot, add the water you reserved and now you can include the sauce.

**AS IF: How much water are you reserving?**

MDR: Each serving should get a finger width of water if you measure it in a cup. And, when you add the pasta, the water and your sauce back to the pot the pasta continues to cook, so it’s important that you strain the pasta while it is still al dente because it’s going to continue cooking for another minute. In Italy we say the pasta must to sing.

**AS IF: Sing?**

MDR: Yes! Once you return the pasta with water to the pot—and the stove needs to still be on—you can hear the noise the pasta makes on the stove, like bubbles and snapping. In Italy, this is the pasta singing!

**AS IF: Now let’s talk fashion. From our shoot, you loved Max Mara, Gucci, Dolce and Gabbana, Ferragamo, four iconic Italian brands. What attracts you to fashion?**

MDR: I love fashion, I love Italian fashion, I love vintage too. The thing I find fun to do, is to wear something and give my interpretation of it and put my personality on it. While a model has to give space for the clothes to talk, my job is the opposite. I’m an actress, I can give life to clothes and this is what I love. Actress Tilda Swinton has her own style and I love to have my way of being recognized and I think fashion helps actors do that. I don’t like it when actors don’t have a particular sense of fashion. Fashion can help you to have personality and as an actor I use that in my work.

**AS IF: *The Many Saints of Newark* takes place in the 60s and 70s. Did you have any input on how your character needed to dress?**

MDR: Our costume designer was great and she created all my costumes. We would talk about references like Claudia Cardinale and the Italian actresses who worked in the cinema during that period. My costumes had fake boobs! We tried to build costumes that could help me achieve a certain posture to make me feel like I was from that period. I asked for a corset because I wanted to walk a certain way because I’m nothing like my character, I’m more like a tomboy.

I also wore a wig. I had like four hours of makeup and hair every day. My pick-up time was like 2:30am while the other actors call times were more like 6am.

**AS IF: That time was needed to create you; build you from the ground up!**

MDR: (Laughs) Yeah, yeah!

**AS IF: So now that you had a taste of American life, can you see yourself living here?**

MDR: Yeah, definitely. We have the American Dream, you know, we have it. Sometimes you go to a place and fall in love with it, and I totally fell in love with New York City.

**AS IF: Well, especially after your experience—your dream came true in New York, it doesn’t get better than that.**

MDR: It did. And I lived in New York City for almost five months. I’m working on my English now. I definitely didn’t talk like this two years ago when I shot the movie. I worked so hard for what you are hearing (laughs)!

**AS IF: What was the most shocking thing you experienced about American culture while you were filming?**

MDR: Oh, the *rush*!

**AS IF: Rush?**

MDR: The rush, oh my god, yes. I remember this one episode when I was walking on the street in Manhattan and I received a text message. I just stopped walking for two seconds to look at my screen and all the people walked into me. I fell on the floor and the people said, get out of the way, watch where you are going! You can’t just stop on the streets of New York City. At that point I thought, *oh my god, this is definitely a different culture.* w In New York I felt alone, everything was huge and I felt that if something happened to me no one would help me. In Italy, I know someone is going help me. And, another thing is, if you don’t like to smoke you go to another place, and in America it’s the opposite—if you smoke, then you need to go to another place.

**AS IF: So, what can Americans, specifically New Yorkers, learn from the Italian way of life?**

MDR: Enjoy the time. Enjoy the pauses.

**AS IF: Enjoy the pauses.**

MDR: Because the pauses are more important than the thing you are doing. Italians enjoy life more because we have less things to do, less opportunities, we are less vicious. You and I were talking about simple green salad on our shoot. The Americans like to even complicate a green salad by adding so many things to it. Just enjoy a green salad, you don’t need all that stuff in it. I think it’s important to start from the beginning, accept that, and then maybe you can add things in your life.

**AS IF: Give me three adjectives to describe yourself.**

MDR: Ok, I am definitely a perfectionist. I’m very sensitive and I can also get really, really angry. I don’t know which is the word... but I’m very fire. I’m *fire*.

**AS IF: You’re Italian, baby!**



CLAUDIA LI  
prom dress in corduroy



ICEBERG  
blazer and pants

KRISTIN HANSON  
*Storm* 18k white and  
rose gold ring with white  
and pink diamonds



MAX MARA  
silk skirt, silk top, wool  
bag, and leather shoe