

# Please!

A JOURNAL FOR STRONG WOMEN  
WHO LOVE PHENOMENAL FASHION  
AND FANTASTIC JEWELRY

## THE L.A. ISSUE



PAMELA ANDERSON

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# L.A. PEOPLE

From Los Feliz to Melrose, from Beverly Hills to Echo Park, we trailed Los Angeles to meet the incredible people who are making the Californian city great again. Designers, actors, artists, stylists, store-owners, socialites... Meet the best of the West Coast, as selected by *Please*.

## Miranda July

ARTIST, AUTHOR,  
SCREENWRITER AND DIRECTOR

*"I like the privacy aspect of Los Angeles. I often take walks to rehearse by myself, and I can count on not seeing anyone I know, and pretty much not see anyone at all. The space and the quietness are probably two of the biggest reasons I've stayed on the West Coast my whole life."*

"It involves me ordering curtains." That's all artist, author and filmmaker Miranda July can say about her upcoming project with an European art museum, due to come out after the magazine goes to press. Intriguing, to say the least. We meet the Berkeley-born artist in her office in Silverlake, a whole house converted into her own very private creative space, filled with books from floor

to ceiling. "I spend so much time working alone," says Miranda, who is currently writing her next movie script, "and it's great that I have this space and quietness here." She mentions the walks she goes on to rehearse or take a break, and how refreshing it is not to run into anyone she knows, or even anyone at all. "I like the privacy aspect of L.A. That's probably why I've stayed on the West Coast my whole life." After living in Portland in the 1990's just before the Riot Grrl scene came to an end—Joanie4Jackie, the "undergrad movie distribution network for women making movies" she launched there at the time, will get its own online archive in September—Miranda returned to Los Angeles, where she now lives with her husband and son. We first heard of Miranda's work via Somebody, the phone app she launched with Miu Miu in 2014: "No media is inherently interesting to me, but the idea of creating an app came to me one night with a couple of friends," she remembers. The concept? You write a message to a friend, post it on the app, and a stranger located closest to your friend delivers it orally to them, acting as a surrogate. "It was inspired by high school, when you could pay the glee club to go sing to your secret crush and give them a rose," laughs Miranda. As a result, 10 000 people used the app every day until its clos-

| Photography: OLIVIA DA COSTA || Words: FLEUR BURLET |

ing in October 2015. "I loved the populist quality of it," explains its creator. "The rarefied forms of art have never been interesting to me. Coming from a punk, do-it-yourself thing, that was always the enemy—you want to make things accessible, and cheap, and available to young people from small towns. It exists not in a museum, but in an app store. That was what was cool." Since then, after a collection of short stories in 2007, Miranda published the incredibly powerful *The First Bad Man*, written right here in her L.A. office. It took her a full two years to complete the novel, writing the first draft in the 9 months of her pregnancy and then reworking it after her son was born. "The hardest part of the book is the first draft, making it exist. But the whole thing is made in the rewriting, not so much the structure, but the beautifulness of it. Looking back, I'm not totally sure how I did it, seeing as I had an infant child!" she marvels. "I guess I just needed it."

*Joanie4Jackie.com, coming soon.*





## Rebecca Dayan

ACTRESS AND ARTIST

*“It has become impossible to live in New York, it’s so expensive. And when you travel a lot, Los Angeles is a nice place to come home to.”*

What better place to meet fellow Frenchie Rebecca Dayan than Café Stella, a heavily-referenced Parisian-style bistro in the hip area of Silverlake? “I’m warning you, I speak Frenghish!” laughs the raven-haired actress and artist, who left Paris for New York nearly seven years ago. She orders a lemonade in a perfect US-drawl—no trace of frenchness spotted—and proceeds to tell us about the new film she’s starred in, staged in the unlikely setting of a convent. “It was fascinating—I have no religious education, and learned so much about Catholicism while preparing for the film. Did you know that nuns were actually married to Jesus? They wear rings and take part in a religious marriage ceremony. I had no idea!” Rebecca plays a nun, alongside leading character and good friend Margaret Qualley, who needs to adjust to the 1964 Catholic reform law that changes the whole functioning of convents. “That year, 80 000 nuns left the convents,” marvels the actress. “They couldn’t deal with the fact that their lives were completely turned over. It must have been pretty hardcore for them.” The preparation for *Novitiate*, the first feature film by director Maggie Betts, led Rebecca to immerse herself in religious studies, in which she found the theme of her first ever exhibition staged at the end of 2015 in New York. After a three-year pause, Rebecca came back to watercolour painting, presenting a series of portraits after a month of residency at the Katherine Ahnell gallery. “It was super intensive, a bit like a boot camp,” explains the artist. “One month is not long! I learned a lot about my way of working, when you don’t have a lot of time you have to force yourself to go straight to the essentials, to not ask yourself too many questions.” Rebecca now splits her time between New York, her first great love, and Los Angeles, where she’s just found a studio Downtown. Was it hard adjusting to life on the West Coast? “The first time I came to L.A., I hated it!” laughs Rebecca. “I hated the city, and I hated driving. But there is a real quality of life in Los Angeles, and another kind of energy. A lot of my friends are moving here, and so have many art galleries. I don’t think I could live here full time—it’s removed, you’re in a bit of a bubble, sometimes I feel as though people here don’t know what’s going on in the world. It has become impossible to live in New York, it’s so expensive. And when you travel a lot, Los Angeles is a nice place to come home to.”

*Novitiate*, by Maggie Betts  
(release date TBC)



## Greg Chait

FOUNDER OF LUXURY  
CASHMERE BRAND  
THE ELDER STATESMAN

*“The fact that pretty much anyone in any industry can reach his/her full potential, professionally or artistically, and surf on the same day makes L.A. pretty tough to beat.”*

Welcome to Culver City, the area located West of L.A. where all the major art galleries have opened their Californian branches. It’s also where Greg Chait chose to open the HQ of his company, luxury cashmere brand The Elder Statesman, in a building comprising of the brand’s factory, filled with vintage machinery sourced on Ebay, and Greg’s personal office, where we meet him one crisp Tuesday morning. Light wood furniture, shelves loaded with books, paintings lying on the floor... Greg’s office is a perfect reflection of the luxuriously pared-down way of life that his brand advocates. Founded in 2008, The Elder Statesman specializes in out-of-this-world cashmere knits, a story that started completely out of the blue when Greg was gifted a cashmere blanket, which he describes as “epic”, back in 2001. “Cashmere has literally been my obsession ever since,” says the Arizona native, who now lives in Malibu with his 6 ¾ years old daughter (“The ¾ is very important,” he adds with a smile). The brand, named in homage to Greg’s late brother, creates sweaters, knits, blankets and homewear almost exclusively made in its Culver City factory, spinning cashmere wool from Afghanistan or Mongolia to make the most exquisite garments you have ever touched. The Elder Statesman even scooped up the prestigious CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund Prize in 2012, putting its designs in the fashion spotlight. In an era where ultimate luxury is often linked to simplicity, with high-end brands such as Celine and Hermès offering distinctively pared-down silhouettes, The Elder Statesman’s classic cashmere sweaters effortlessly slide right into the “simple luxury” trend. “We chose to let the quality of the raw material and the soul of our product do the talking”, explains Greg about the brand’s aesthetic. “I hope that trend never goes away. If it does, we all have bigger problems to face.” Describing Los Angeles sartorial style as “optimistic, at least the L.A. I know”, Greg’s creations seem to be a perfect fit for the Cali scene, where the winters are

never cold enough for seasonal coats and the stifling summers are spent dashing in and out of freezing air conditioning—cashmere, as we know, is highly valued for its exceptional insulation qualities. On a personal level, Los Angeles also seems to fulfil most of Greg’s expectations. The one thing that made him choose L.A. as his home? “The fact that pretty much anyone in any industry can reach his/her full potential, professionally or artistically, and surf on the same day makes L.A. pretty tough to beat.” We’re sensing a theme here...

elder-statesman.com



Chatting to designer Jesse Kamm is truly an inspiring moment. She reaches out to us from her home in Panama—every year, she, her husband Luke and son Julien leave L.A. to spend their summers there—a haven of peace that they built with their own hands, where Jesse and her family connect with nature, go surfing and enjoy time off from the city. “The contrast is wonderful,” sighs Jesse, who was raised in Illinois. “The quiet of our jungle life helps to balance out living and working in the city. We made a decision very early on in our careers that we were going to commit a part of our life to doing what we love. We built our work calendar around this idea, and have made it a priority ever since.” Shutting down in the summer doesn’t mean the family reject all city life, far from it: “I truly love L.A.,” confesses Jesse, who has lived in the city for the last 17 years. “The energy has always been excellent, in my opinion. The sea and the desert all in one sprawling glorious expanse—what is not to love? Except for the traffic!” This balance of energy and mindfulness is perceptible in Jesse’s creations, a line of simple and classically elegant pieces that effortlessly become wardrobe staples (nearly everyone we meet in the making of this issue possessed a pair of her famous Sailor pants, a bestseller). To create her pieces, Jesse simply looks all around her: “I am constantly photographing my surroundings for reference,” explains the designer. “I find my ideas in the most unlikely places.” She tells the story of her son watching her with great curiosity as she trails the ground trying to take photos of wadded up fabric and sticks on the side of the road. Far from the fast-fashion crowd, Jesse picks her retailers with extreme care, keeping her business small so she has maximum flexibility. “I choose to make less money so that I can have my nights and weekends. I covet my time, and I do not give it away freely. I say no 35 times before I say yes... to press, to blogs, to new retailers.” A mindset she describes as a “1970’s state of mind”: “I think that in the modern era everyone is way too focused on ‘growth and expansion’. I think it is excessive, unsustainable, and unnecessary. Less is more in my book.”

Jessekamm.com



## Jesse Kamm

FASHION DESIGNER

*“The energy in L.A. has always been excellent, in my opinion. The sea and the desert all in one sprawling glorious expanse—what is not to love? Except for the traffic!”*

© Gabby Alexander

## Heather Taylor

FOUNDER OF HOME GOODS  
AND TEXTILE BRAND  
HEATHER TAYLOR HOME

*“L.A. has always been a magnet for dreamers, and was built on its receptiveness to new ideas. This feeling of openness and innovation is the lifeblood of this city.”*

It is a gloriously sunny day, and we are late for our meeting with Heather Taylor. She beckons us to the colorful garden of her beautiful West Hollywood home, flooded with late afternoon sunlight. “Living in such a glorious climate does a lot for the spirit,” says the California native. “There’s a little buzz that happens on a beautiful day, which so many days here are.” Born in L.A., she returned to her home city after a stint in New York, drawn to the very specific energy of the city of angels. “L.A. has always been a magnet for dreamers and was built on its receptiveness to new ideas. This feeling of openness and innovation is the lifeblood of this city.” Innovation came to Heather out of frustration: after working in the arts scene, the idea of launching her own home-line came to Heather while she was planning her wedding. Finding the correct linen for the dressing of the dinner tables proved to be more difficult than expected: “I came across some beautiful options, but nothing that worked with the elegant, yet relaxed look I wanted for my wedding.” Heather remembers. “The flowers, plates and menus all hit the right note, but I kept coming up short on the napkin and runner search.” The week before her big day, Heather was down at a fabric store having runners made according to her wishes, completely last minute. She founded Heather Taylor Home, her line of beautiful hand-knit and woven fabrics, in 2013, and a friend’s wedding last year made the light bulb go off—“Let’s offer Heather Taylor Home linens for rent!” A lover of entertaining and beautiful table settings, Heather despaired in never been able to find linens that suited her without travelling abroad. Her beautiful designs, all hand-woven in Mexico, are an invitation to wanderlust, celebrating international cultures. “The first inkling of inspiration for the line came while eating breakfast in Greece in 2006,” recalls the designer. “The table was covered in a white crocheted lace tablecloth, which felt like the perfect mix of elegance and ease.” Her creations seem

perfectly suited to the L.A.-state of mind, focused on low-key entertaining and allowing yourself that “time off” to then be able to bounce back full of creative new ideas. For Heather, relaxing enables productivity. “Going to the beach on the weekend and truly getting mellow allows me to come up with new ideas at a faster pace than if I didn’t allow myself that time off. L.A. celebrates the weekend.” A city after our own hearts.

[Heathertaylorhome.com](http://Heathertaylorhome.com)



## Brad Elterman

PHOTOGRAPHER

*“L.A. has changed so much in the past couple of years. There is a real resurgence in music, but it’s even larger than that: L.A. has finally become a world-class city, on the same level as New York or Paris.”*

It all started with a picture of David Bowie, snapped at 6am as the singer was leaving a Californian recording studio. Brad Elterman, 18 years old at the time, instantly shot to music photography stardom. That day, the San Fernando native skipped school: “Both my teachers and my parents were pissed!”, he recalls with a laugh on the terrace of the Villa Le Réve, his charming residence in the Hollywood hills. And the rest, as they say, is history: Brad went on to attend some of Hollywood’s most exclusive events—photographing Bryan Ferry, Cher, Paul McCartney, Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan in one evening, during the Faces’s party for which he borrowed his brother’s camera—and snap backstage and candid shots of some of the world’s biggest artists. How does the photographer explain such a success at a young age? “I think people thought it was kinda cute that I was so young,” muses Brad. “I just have this gusto for taking pictures, I have fun—and I think it showed, people like to work with people who have enthusiasm. I still have it now, 100%—I love young bands and cool kids.” The coolest kid of them all is without a doubt Joan Jett. “Joany” as the photographer calls her, Brad’s biggest muse and longtime friend. Joan ordering fries, Joan on the Santa Monica pier, Joan on the phone, Joan striking a pose on the Hollywood Boulevard... Brad’s collection of candid snaps give a compelling insight into the rock’n’roll life of the key member of successful girl band The Runaways. “We had a real chemistry,” recalls the photographer. After a whirlwind of star-studded events and touring, things start to change in the 1980’s: photographers have less access to behind the scenes, and music photography becomes more formatted. Brad puts down his camera to create his own photo agency in 1980, then Online USA, the first digital agency in 1992. After a 20-year break from photography, he’s now returning to his first love: after scanning and posting his iconic pictures on social media, the overwhelming response he got from fans led him to pick

up his camera again. “The kids would say to me, why don’t you shoot this band? And I would think, what—take photos again? It really was a big leap for me.” Brad is now intent on capturing the booming Cali creative scene: “L.A. has changed so much in the past couple of years. There is a real resurgence in music—Burger Records has a lot to do with it—but it’s even larger than that: L.A. has finally become a world-class city, on the same level as New York or Paris.”

[Bradelterman.tumblr.com](http://Bradelterman.tumblr.com)



## Julia Gogosha

FOUNDER OF EYEWEAR RETAILER GOGOSHA OPTIQUE

*“What I’ve learned about living in L.A. is that there’s a place and a pace for everyone and everything. Just being who you are in this city is very much celebrated.”*



As we cross the threshold of the Gogosha Optique 3<sup>rd</sup> Street boutique, we spot the brand’s logo—an illuminated “GO” that, if you look closely, comes to form a pair of spectacles. The logo is very much representative of founder Julia Gogosha’s spirit of merging things together—literally, as the shop specialises in bringing together frames from some of the world’s leading designers and lenses tailored to your vision to form the perfect pair of glasses. “I instantly loved the combination of working with people, being able to play a little with maths—making sure that part of my brain still works—and mix in a bit of fashion and culture,” recounts Julia, a Michigan native who moved to Los Angeles 13 years ago. “Glasses flow through all those things.” Her namesake store, Gogosha Optique, brings to Los Angeles some of most creative eyewear designers from around the world, from Frenchies Anne et Valentin and Thierry Lasry to L.A.-based brand Ahlem. A good trade to be in when you consider that the city of angels counts over 300 days of sun a year—not that it’s what motivated Julia in the first place. “I started wearing prescription glasses when I was around 5, and when I was 14 I bought a pair that was the definitive pair, the one that went from utility to me actually enjoying wearing glasses and it being part of my identity. They looked like me.” From drop-ins to client appointments, Gogosha Optique has been striving for the last five years to help you find THE perfect pair, even if, according to Julia, there really is no such thing: “It’s a lot of pressure to put on one object!” she laughs. “It’s like if I said, This is your outfit for the rest of the year, every day, every occasion, every mood, every season—that’s a little limiting. So when people come in, we try to look at what they are right now, and we learn about their aesthetic through them. It’s a mix of math and art, angles and proportions. If the composition fits you, then you decide if it suits you or not.” After we ourselves fall for a pair (the store’s selection is to die for), Julia explains how it was hard for her at first to fit in to the L.A. optical scene. “All the opticians and the buyers were like, This isn’t what L.A. wants. The customer wants labels, brands, designers they know.” But she didn’t give in, and now counts a second store in trendy Silverlake. “What I’ve learned about living in L.A. is that there’s a place and a pace for everyone and everything. Just being who you are in this city is very much celebrated.”

Gogosha Optique, 8238 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
and 3208 Sunset Boulevard  
Gogosha.com



## Cameron Silver

FOUNDER OF LUXURY VINTAGE STORE DECADES

*“Fashion in L.A. is not just sweatpants and jeans. Decades helped show that, and was an important part of the rebirth of Hollywood glamour.”*

How do you get into opening and running one of the most celebrated vintage stores in the US? The answer may be surprising: by touring the country and singing German cabaret classics. At least, that’s how Cameron Silver, owner and founder of established L.A. boutique Decades, first caught the vintage bug: “As I toured the country, I started to thrift men’s clothing for the stage,” recalls Cameron from the living room of his 1930’s Art Deco house in Los Feliz, “and I quickly realised that I was finding a lot more of women’s things.” Orlando, Seattle, Minneapolis... Cameron travels all round the States, and finds that shopping is a good way to get a feeling of all the cities he briefly stops in. He slowly amasses a breathtaking selection of vintage pieces from all around the country, and opens his store on Melrose Avenue in 1997. “This was before vintage was popular, or even socially acceptable,” explains Cameron. The opening of Decades coincides with the Hollywood Renaissance: a global realisation that Los Angeles is “not all about sweatpants and jeans”. Celebrity stylists, such as Rachel Zoe, become popular, and California is transformed into an established destination for the research trips of fashion designers, stopping at the Rose Bowl flea market and Decades to find inspiration for their future collections. “Vintage dictates modern trends,” assures Cameron. “Decades was never about finding vintage that looked vintage. It was about finding the perfect Courrèges dress, that looked like something we could wear today.” Twenty years on, the store owner—and author of the book *Decades: A Century of Fashion*—notices a shift in what clients look for in a vintage shop: “The period in which something becomes collectible or vintage has really condensed. Today, in this out-of-control fashion industry, it’s all about the neo-vintage: a piece by the now-defunct duo behind Valentino, Pierpaolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri, has now become collectible. Similarly, clients come to me looking for Stella McCartney or Chloé pieces from a few seasons ago.” Wearing past season clothes, the new chic? “That’s how real people dress,” says Cameron. “Vintage liberates people from trends. Wearing things that are a couple of seasons old is a little punk rock, a bit countercultural. And if you think about Jacqueline de Ribes, or Betsey Bloomingdale—these iconic women of the past didn’t just wear one evening dress once. Chic people repeat.”

Cameron is the creative director of H by Halston, available on QVC. Decades, 8214 Melrose Avenue  
Decadesinc.com



## Arvida Byström

PHOTOGRAPHER

*“Fashion-wise, everything is very commercial in L.A. Most of the models have big boobs and long hair, which is fine but not very me. I think things are changing, but it’s quite slow.”*

We meet Arvida at her studio, a pink-hued haven in a neighborhood round the corner from MacArthur Park. A gymnastics ball lies on the turquoise backdrop, and in the back office, a neon sign borrowed from Sunday gallery gives the whole room a pleasantly girly feel. The perfect setting for someone whose personal style—and Instagram feed, followed by 143,000 fans—is largely made up of a tension of ultra-girliness (as the pink 12-inch stilettos in the corner demonstrate) and a radically modern perception of femininity: Swedish-born Arvida has recently decided not to give in to pressure around body hair. “I got scouted as a model in Sweden when I was super young, but I wasn’t really interested in it,” recounts the photographer. “But since I’ve started to do art-related things I do talent modelling, and people want me because I’m me.” After a couple of years in London, Arvida moved to Los Angeles in 2015, choosing to follow her American girlfriend and establish herself on the other side of the Atlantic. She’s had a bit of trouble fitting in to the Angeleno scene: “It’s kind of hard if you’re not exactly in one little box, like a model, or a blogger, or a singer. People don’t really get what you’re doing, they’re like—ok you’re cool, but what are you? My situation is to not be in any box.” As an established photographer—Arvida shot rising star Maxine Ashley for this issue of *Please!*—she’s also been struggling with the L.A. fashion scene: “London fashion is super fun, there’s a lot of creativity. Los Angeles doesn’t have a very strong fashion scene, there aren’t as many cool new brands as New York. Everything is very commercial here, most of the models have big boobs and long hair, which is fine but not very me.” A beach babe look that the photographer, who used to have bleached-pink hair, doesn’t find fitting to her aesthetic. “So I don’t really work with L.A.-based clients. I think things are changing, but it’s quite slow.” In the meantime, Arvida is putting together a book with cyber-friend Molly Soda, regrouping all the

pictures that have been banned from Instagram. Arvida, who has had a couple of pictures taken down herself, is appalled at the censorship of the app—not only in its choices (most of the submissions she receives feature nipples and body hair, sadly and unsurprisingly) but also in its methods: “It’s not automated, it’s actually manual,” says the photographer about Instagram’s censorship. “Aside from body stuff, there are a lot of strong, violent pictures that get posted. And these badly-paid people have to sit and scroll and manually take them down, seeing these pretty heavy things on a daily basis.”

The most surprising pictures she’s received? “Weirdly, a lot of barely suggestive pictures get taken down, things that could be read as completely non-sexual,” sighs Arvida. “And butts. Half-covered is fine, but if you see it fully it gets taken down.”

*Arvida Byström and Molly Soda’s Instabanned book is out February 2017. [Instagram.com/arvidabystrom](http://Instagram.com/arvidabystrom)*



## James Goldstein

ENTREPRENEUR

*“I enjoyed Los Angeles right from the start. I’m not sure I would have done it again if I had the choice, I’ve become very fond of Miami over the years. But L.A. has become part of my life. And there are two basketball teams here!”*

After driving to the top of Beverly Hills, snaking through the mountains and enjoying the most incredible view of the city down below, we arrive at the Goldstein Residence. Designed by architect John Lautner in the sixties, and updated by its owner in 1972, James Goldstein’s home is truly breathtaking, and a regular backdrop in glossy fashion shoots—including *Please* photographer Olivia Malone’s cover shoot with Pamela Anderson. Perched on the edge of a cliff, it features an inside koi pond, a pool with a breathtaking panoramic view and its very own night club. “I enjoyed California right from the start,” recalls James, who was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. “I visited L.A. a number of times while I was at university—I went to Stanford, near San Francisco—and decided to give it a try. I then went to UCLA, and never moved back.” However appreciative he is of California, James, a businessman, has often wondered about building a life elsewhere. “I’m not sure I would have done it again if I had the choice,” he muses. His second option? Miami. “The climate is more to my liking, I love the beaches there, and it is more international, which is something I think to be. It is closer to Europe, where I spend a lot of time.” A big follower of fashion, James travels to Europe for all the major fashion weeks. Starting with Paris, where he was invited by L.A. store Maxfields to attend some of the most prestigious shows, James extends his love of European fashion to lesser-known events, such as Russian and Danish fashion weeks. But L.A. will stay his home, at least for the time being. “I’m not in a position to switch, I’ve been living in this house for the last 40 years and L.A. has become part of my life. And there are two basketball teams here that I support!” Aside from basketball, James is a avid lover of socializing, hosting numerous exclusive events right here in his home, which is filled with

party snaps with some of the industry’s biggest stars. Is there one night that stands out in particular? “Rihanna’s birthday party last year, which kicked off at Club James, the private club I built right next door to my house,” James is quick to answer. “It was an amazing party, not just because it was at my house, but it was one of the top parties I’ve ever experienced. There was an interesting mix of people there—supermodels, celebrities, and Mick Jagger.” Just a regular night at the Goldstein Residence.

[jamesgoldstein.com](http://jamesgoldstein.com)



© Kobi Gulianni

## Sissy Sainte-Marie

STYLIST

*“I’m not a fan of the fun-in-the-sun casualness or glitzy glamour that most people might think of when they think of L.A. There is a side of Los Angeles that I love, represented by designers who offer smart elegant design and quality that feels complete and important to me. What they do will leave a lasting mark.”*

It’s a scorching hot day in Los Angeles, and everyone on set is slowly melting away. Except for Sissy, coolly dressed in a linen wrap top and cream Jesse Kamm Sailor pants, whose handheld parasol is the only indication that she, like us all, is suffering from having to work in such heat. All preconceived ideas of “Californian fashion” are brushed away upon meeting the stylist, who has been living in L.A. for the last 20 years and is intent on showing another side of her city via both her work, all pared-down chic and simple silhouettes, and her personal style, which she and her husband, photographer Eddie Chacon, call “mama” : “If something is “so me” or “so Mama”, chances are it is white or beige and fairly oversized,” explains Sissy. “I also have an aversion to man-made fabrics. 90% of what I wear is a natural fiber like linen, cotton, silk or wool.” If her style is relatively pared-down, Sissy is one of those people who has lived many colorful lives: an art graduate, she first went on to teach 10 years in elementary school. After realizing teaching wasn’t her calling; she briefly dabbled in music with her husband (amongst other things, Eddie was half of Charlie & Eddie, the duo that released cult 90’s song *Would I Lie To You?*), and joined a band. “I enjoyed the visual side of it mostly,” she remembers. “Making stage costumes, making videos, doing photoshoots.” But that also got old: she turned to vintage selling “for a minute”, and eventually came to work with her husband, now an established fashion photographer, as a stylist on

fashion shoots. A quick look at the two stories she styled for *Please*, *West Hollywood* and *Mulholland Drive*, and you can tell she’s found her thing. A loyal supporter of the L.A. creative scene, Sissy quotes Shaina Mote, Pari Desai and jewelry queen Sophie Buhai as some of the designers helping reshape the way the world perceives Angeleno fashion. “I’m not a fan of the fun-in-the-sun casualness or glitzy glamour that most people might think of when they think of L.A.,” says Sissy. “There is a side of Los Angeles I love, represented by designers who offer smart elegant design and quality that feels complete and important to me. What they do will leave a lasting mark.” Does she, like

so many people we’ve met, think that L.A. is finally “taking off”? Sissy shrugs. “I am hopeful about L.A., but it remains to be seen whether it will establish itself as a new fashion destination.” The prime fashion capital of the U.S. being L.A.’s great rival, New York. “I sure hope that happens so I continue to have more opportunities to do what I love here,” says Sissy, who is nowhere near planning to “uproot” and move to the Big Apple. “Time will tell”.

[sissysaintemarie.com](http://sissysaintemarie.com)



Thought only Stella McCartney was a fan of fashion with a conscience? Think again: meet BreeLayne Carter, the Los Angeles born and bred founder of namesake fashion label BreeLayne. Though only two years old, the brand has taken the L.A. design scene by storm from their Downtown-based studio. A Pratt graduate, BreeLayne worked for a bunch of different companies before realizing her true call: “There was something missing, there was no luxury brand with a sustainable focus,” explains the designer. “Yes, Stella McCartney has that concern, but I wanted to do something intentional. As a small company, trying to be fully sustainable is really difficult, but everything we put out is thoroughly thought through.” As a result, the label only uses deadstock fabric—making their own would be a huge contributor to pollution—and for every purchase, a tree is planted through the National Forest Foundation. But don’t think the sustainable focus stands in the way of a savvy silhouette: we’re big fans of BreeLayne’s designs, heavily influenced by vintage and international cultures, for which the designer immerses herself fully during the conception of each collection: “Every season, I really want to understand the chosen concept, so I do a lot of reading, researching, often travelling,” says BreeLayne. “My launch collection was inspired by Indian culture, and this season I turned to Paris for ideas.” But always adding that L.A. twist: “Everything is really effortless. My whole concept is to be able to throw on one of my pieces with jeans or tennis shoes, and still look put together. I feel like luxury should be about ease and comfort.” A design mindset that particularly fits it to the L.A. scene: after graduating from Pratt, BreeLayne fled New York because of the difference in pace of life. “There was too much stimulus in New York. I was always like, ARG!” laughs the designer. “I’m very low key and laid-back, so I fit in better in L.A.” She feels the design community, despite being smaller, is better suited to her way of life: “New York is definitely more cutthroat. The fashion scene here is more community-oriented. I think it’s because there are fewer designers, people want to help each other. I firmly believe that you attract what you put out.”

[Brelayne.com](http://Brelayne.com)



## BreeLayne Carter

FASHION DESIGNER

*“The fashion scene in L.A. is more community-oriented. I think it’s because there are fewer designers, people want to help each other. I firmly believe that you attract what you put out.”*

