

"BACK LATER, GONE FISHING..."

UNAVAILABLE

CLAUDIA CLARK

ISSUE NO. 18



THE STAFF

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SONGS TO PLAY WHILE READING

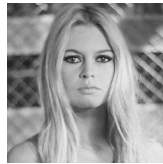
MUSIC TRACK LISTING / The Look of Love by Isaac Hayes / Triste by Toquinho & Paulinho Nogueira/ Move Over Darling (Single Version) by Doris Day
*BONUS SONG/Sweetest Thing (The Single Mix) by U2

CONTRIBUTORS



BRIDGET FONDA

MODEL, IT-GIRL
I THOUGHT I WOULD HELP OUT CLAUDIA SINCE SHE REALLY WANTS TO BE A BLOGGER. I HELPED GUIDE HER THROUGH MANY PHOTOS, TO MAKE SURE EACH ARE PLEASING TO THE EYE AND ENJOYABLE.



BRIGITTE BARDOT

INTERNATIONAL ICON
PARDON MY ENGLISH, TRUTHFULLY I DO NOT HAVE A TASTE FOR IT. THOUGH I THOUGHT I WOULD SAY HELLO, AND LET EVERYONE KNOW HOW PROUD I AM OF CLAUDIA AND HER EFFORTS TO MAKE THIS ALL COME TOGETHER, BONSOIR!



BRIDGET JONES

AMERICAN SWEETHEART
MAKE SURE YOU ALL COME HERE AND DOWNLOAD A NEW LOOK-BOOK EVERY MONTH! OR WHENEVER CLAUDIA PUTS A NEW ONE UP ON THE WEB! I SPENT A LOT OF TIME CONSULTING HER ON ETHICS AND THIS DESIGN, EMOTIONALLY MORE THAN ARTISTICALLY.

FROM THE EDITOR



With this attempt, I hope you all get a closer look at who I am. This Look Book is a diary of sorts, creating a little world month after month to gently remind me of life's beauty and how important it is to take a breath and jot it all down. Throughout every page, you'll digest my two cents on just about everything. I've learned it is important to romanticize all the occasions in life, from work to pleasure, I seek only joy.

We wonder what's the price for joy, simple joy. Is it bought for one and sold for two? How much of a deal am I getting? With Blahniks on my feet, it's safe to say I've been around so I know joy couldn't come cheap though I'd love to know the real cost.

Until next time.

BEST REGARD

Claudia Clark

UNAVAILABLE

CLAUDIA CLARK

“WHEN SOMEONE LOVES YOU, THE WAY THEY TALK ABOUT YOU IS DIFFERENT. YOU FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE....”

I was outside a theater waiting for a friend, admiring the townies. During those days, I sat 60 miles or so from the border of Quebec, wishing I spoke french, and dared to make a change. I was the type of person that needed it all to fall on my lap, love, aspirations, ideas, and money. Misery was my muse—love was a national treasure. I felt like a giant nobody, though I had no care for effort. I was as glamorous as my environment was, mainly cloudy, and my life consisted of bills, credit cards, insurance,

rent, subscriptions of all kinds, immoral ones that led me down a rabbit hole of despondency.

Though there was something in the air that night—it was as if I was thriving. I had an eye for everything; I smiled at everyone I came across. I smiled at families, drug addicts, the unhoused, the forgotten ones muttering amongst themselves, never blending in with the wasps that hopped out of their Infiniti and Range Rovers; I smiled at the little

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college girls that skipped by with backpacks that weighed half their size, showing off winsome smiles, some precocious some naive. I was among the most optimistic on the block in front of The Flynn; I was unsure why my friend was running late, but the weather was favorable enough to enjoy the scenery.

Before my friend would arrive, two questionable men spotted me, seeming high and deprived. When the two of them approached me, so did the angst; the two

looked me right in the eyes, and I balled up my fists, wishing I had rotten tomatoes to throw at them. They were not intrigued; they were not active—only alive. Before the first one said hello, the brunette, I could smell the desperation on his breath, the absence in his eyes nearly brought me to tears, he let out his hand jittery and anxiously—he wasn't afraid of rejection, he was fearful of digging further into obligation, down to the depths where one can no longer see, his identity had faded along with his emotions—leaving only

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“THE MEETING OF TWO PERSONALITIES IS LIKE THE CONTACT OF TWO CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES: IF THERE IS ANY REACTION, BOTH ARE TRANSFORMED....”

ABOVE
Heading out to the MOMA..

BELOW
What I saw at the MOMA...



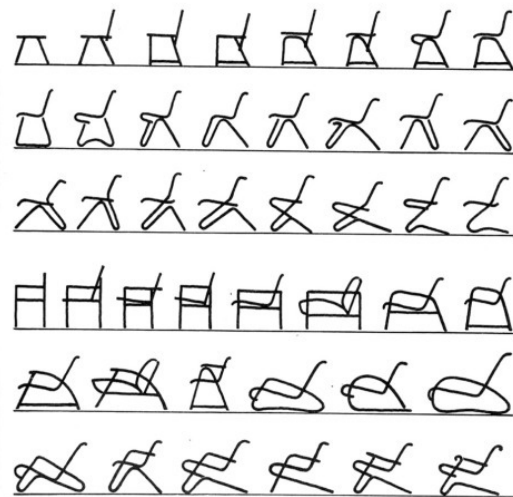
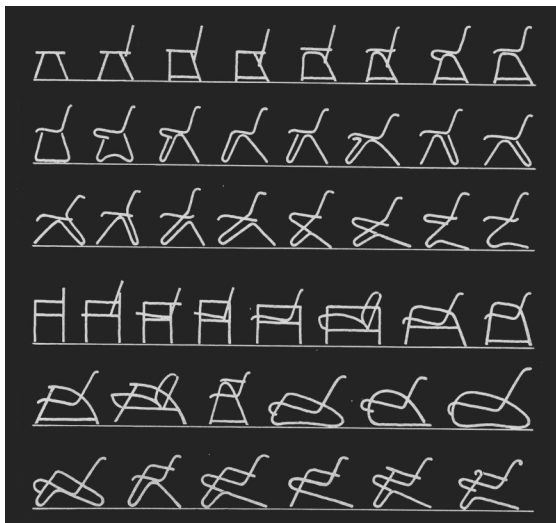
memories and wet dreams. The other one seemed to carry more of the burden. He looked like he had more to say, but the words wouldn't escape him; his hair was hardly brushed, he was also pudgy and tired though he smiled once he saw me. Was I easy to look at or just another distraction to keep the festering thoughts at bay? Either way, they stood there, too afraid to talk, making it all so awkward.

Once they opened their mouths, the wackiness began. The blonde hung his head and took a step closer to me, nearly like a fawn, wet behind the ears, freshly out of the womb and learning to take its first steps. I wasn't sure what was more insulting, his approach or the audacity. Finally, his friend, the brunette, pushed him aside, walking

softly over, rather smooth, raw, uncut, free of second thoughts. He cleared his throat, prepared to "sing" his call.

"You see, I have already been coached by my friend here, so my apologies for approaching a place of business with insufficient funds and unrelated topics. If you'd be so kind and humor the two of us, I'd like to start with politely stating what may be obvious to us but unclear to you..." I laughed. "DUDE, what? Just say what you have to say, man." He seemed relieved. "Oh, okay, do you like him?" He asked, pulling the blonde one front and center.

The brunette continued to talk. "He's a gay man that exclusively dates women; he isn't ready to try guys, but I'm patient. He's in pursuit of someone new, but the problem is,



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taschen



CALL ME WHAT YOU WANT

BUT...

DON'T CALL ME WHEN THE FEELINGS AREN'T THERE...

“

EVERY MAN I MEET WANTS TO PROTECT ME. I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT FROM.

"-He never leaves his garage and is usually always high on something. But the poor bugger has finally left his shell, and two heads are better than one—so here we are.

"Hat in hand," I responded, laughing.

Their banter and charisma were nowhere to be found. But the brunette gave me a wink as if he aced it. Perhaps his assurance is what led me to entertain them, especially since I had nothing better to do.

The blonde began to talk. "Yeah, my last relationship led to opioids and isolation, but life is on the up and up."

The brunette began to speak. "And as for me, I have no life outside of work, sometimes I'm involved with women I'm not supposed to date, the kind of women society would be displeased seeing the two of us happily together; I was sure the world would crucify me—so now I'm single trying to find the right one."

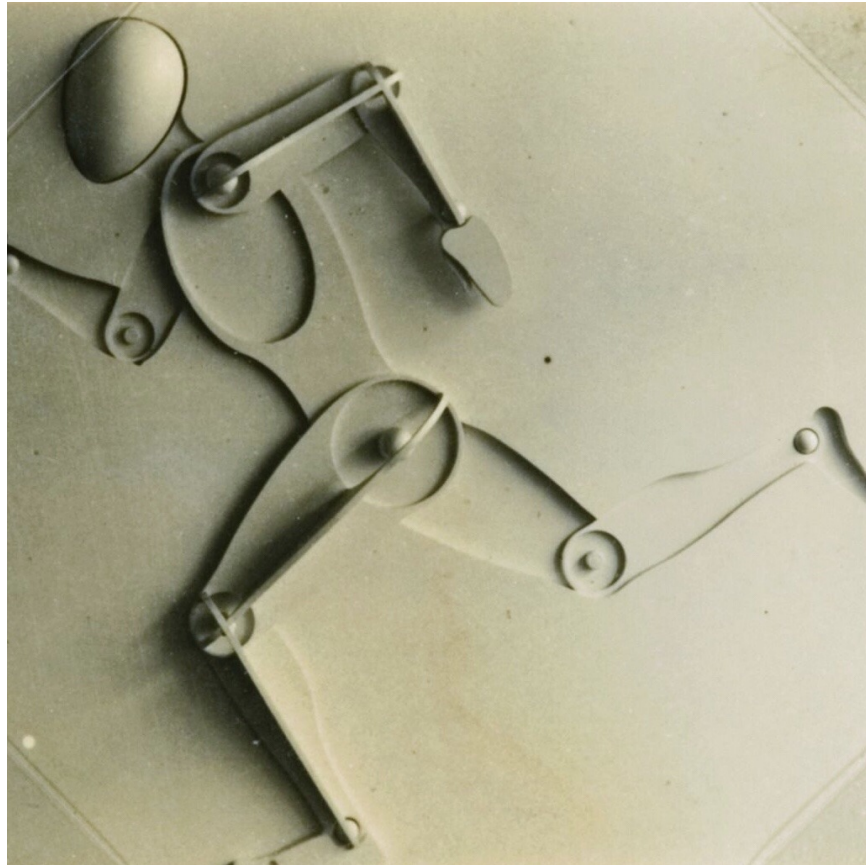
"And here I am; that's what you're getting at?"

The two nodded their heads happily.

The blonde shrugged his shoulders. "I figured we get a drink."

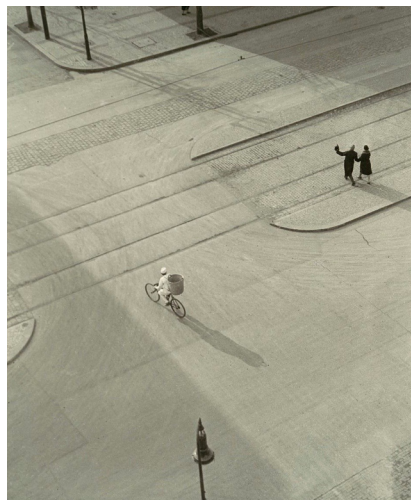
The brunette nearly punched him. "Come again?" He asked him, confused.

"I dunno, maybe we should just get out of here; we can't keep looking at her—what do ya think this is?"



ABOVE
Running from my problems.

BELOW
And then I found no man's land...



The brunette folded his arms and put his foot down. "You will tell the lady how you feel; it's not harassment."

The blonde grabbed his hands, and I imagined the same way Gandhi would. "But, you have to understand that it is harassment; she and the entire business is only looking for customers and frequently asked questions that are related to the mission of the business, so for me to randomly tell her that I feel some sort of

emotion that very well could be fleeting, it's unnecessary and unwarranted. So we have to think about how it makes her feel."

I was in a good mood... "No, I don't mind; do tell if you have a crush." The blonde's eyebrows raised. "You want me to tell you how I feel, right here, right now?"

I nodded, encouraging him.

He got close enough for me to smell him. He was a sappy guy who looked like a chain-smoker. He stood in place for a while, stuck inside his head, lost in variables,

outweighing the pros and cons. Finally, he was near implosion, but I had to let nature run its course—who was I to intervene.

"Well, listen, you will not believe me, but I believe you could make everything right for me; I can feel it—I promise you... I can feel the change that's about to take place. This is serious! This is fierce!" His eyes were nearly watery. He took a breath and continued. I'm often convinced I'm on some sort of precipice of complete change. Even tonight, I was going to dye my hair, but I decided not to, and I feel

"MAN, WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR LAUGH YOU LOSE YOUR FOOTING."

confident enough to let it all out, you know...." He took a hit of his cigarette, oddly enough, and carried on.

"—I can feel this one, you know? Most times, I'm faking it all, I mean most times, you know? But this one I can feel, I can feel it all over. I mean, I'm trying not to get emotional here, but this is new, right? Most times, there's nothing but bullshit, guy meets girl, I like your hair, nice shirt, nice MacBook, nothing but poppycock, but this is true." He finished in whispers.

The brunette padded him on the shoulders, seeming proud of him, and I only wished I was carrying Ritalin.

"So...You...think...it was worth it saying hello?" The blonde asked me sincerely, rubbing his temples with both index fingers. "I think it's a good start." I turned away from the two of them, walking near the curb, looking down both sides of the street but never spotting my friend, no texts, no response. I took a deep breath and questioned my own life. My world was also bitter; I never

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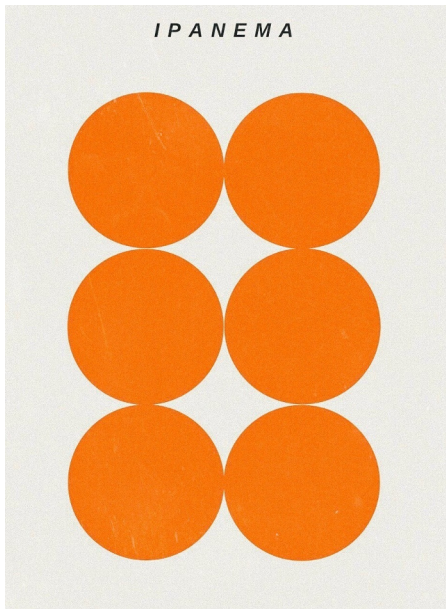
LEFT
I stay in

RIGHT
To keep the madness



BELOW
Far away as possible





knew how to love, I couldn't find the right hands and mouth to kiss the right person. It was all wrong before I would say hello; I felt I was no different than either of them, but there were conflicts of interest.

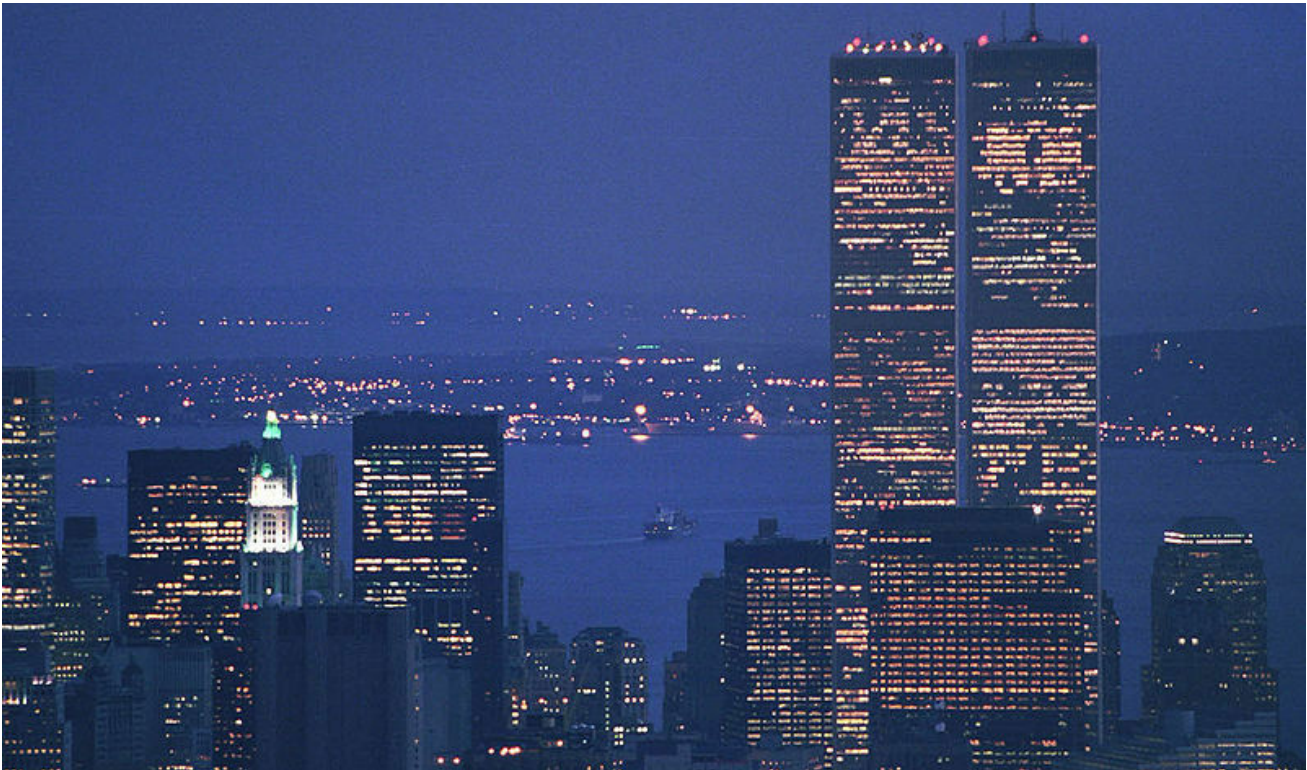
As suspected, the two met me by the curb, dragging their feet as if they were stuck to the concrete—at least knee-deep mentally. Before the brunette opened his mouth, he did his best to swallow down his testosterone. But instead, he opened his mouth like a toad, slow and wide, desperate and hungry, seeking validation like it was daily bread.

"So I know you had more air time with my friend here, but you should know that this guy, my friend, is a misogynist? He has a song that says he only likes girls that wear dresses? Don't you think that's wrong???" He said to me as if he was holding a microphone.

The blonde turned around, fumbling over my words and feet. "Well, it's not misogyny—it's art." He smiled, hoping his response simmered down the tension. I didn't care; I had already peeled back their skulls and figured out what worked and what didn't.

I was perfectly fine with never sharing another word, but there was an effort—I knew I had to let them down softly. I mentioned I was attending a show, a boring poetry event at the theater. Didn't work. They apparently "loved" poetry and were "poets." I mentioned the performance would

"unavailable..."



be painfully long; even better for them.

They seemed interested to see what my friend would look like as if destiny had fallen at their feet; the world was ready to be spun by their fingertips for once. I was prepared to be the villain

as soon as my friend would eventually find a parking spot.

Once my friend arrived, I mentioned that I was "unavailable," we were "unavailable."





CONT'D

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The blonde and the brunette shook their heads, displeased, but there was nothing else I could do for them but walk away.

The theater lights were dim enough to sleep soundly; every row was filled with either a college kid or someone much older wishing they could go back. I was there, lost in the middle, next to my friend, hung up on the fact I turned them down, especially the blonde one.

I figured he'd be a useless creature, sitting around twiddling his thumbs, using me for validation. I was perfectly happy without them. Although, it was sad to see them reach out for something that wouldn't want them in return. They wanted love, the meaning of it more than the notion, and they had the tolerance to withstand what would come with the research, name-calling, accusations, and rejection...I sat my head back and allowed myself to become dazzled by the university students, all



DÉBUT

of them bright in the eyes, wordsmiths sashaying centerstage while the rest of us wished we were as adequate. Every once in a while, I peeked over to my friend, imagining what it would be like if I offered the extra company. Would I regret it? Would it be worth mentioning? I wasn't sure; I was confident I would have been distracted from the performance art, while the blonde or the brunette would do their very best to make my cheeks flush, cause the butterflies

CLAUDIA CLARK

PAUL KLEE

LAND
SCHAFSTEN

to swarm my belly from all the flirtatious remarks. I was convinced I wouldn't give in to the many attempts; they were selling snake oil, and I had no use for it.

I questioned when I would find someone or when I didn't have to feel bad enough to turn someone down or accept someone decent enough to settle with. Was I destined for a lothario, a bumblebee, a grasshopper, a gnat, a termite? I was amongst the finite; perhaps I was

»Eine kleine Reise
ins Land der
besseren Erkenntnis«

low and insignificant, mad and dangerous and like attracted like. It wasn't fair to see other girls with everything they needed—it didn't matter that I was afraid to succeed; I couldn't see clearly enough to have the option.

My only option was the door if I was meant to thrive, but I couldn't leave my friend—she was my best friend, and she was convinced someone would come her way, and she wouldn't have to move a muscle. But I needed to be brave and make mistakes; if I refused, I was sure the world would break me, limb by limb, and I would end up old, rocking back and forth, popping two pills every two hours,

staring out the window fixated on squirrels...I wanted to cry, but I wasn't silly enough; my tears were trapped, and wallowing in self-pity wouldn't do the trick, so I slid low, hunched in my chair, letting the poetry convince me that the moment meant something; that I was on the cusp of something great, a life of reformation, a life of ease.

Convincing myself, I would have everything fall into my hands without any effort was exhausting. The blonde and the brunette inspired me; I was to give effort even if the results weren't satisfying—it was the attempt to try that made it all worth mentioning.



less is more

CLAUDIA CLARK

KIND OF BLUE

MILES DAVIS



TO BE FULLY SEEN BY SOMEBODY, THEN,
AND BE LOVED ANYHOW - THIS IS A HUMAN
OFFERING THAT CAN BORDER ON
MIRACULOUS."

ABOVE

Jazz will set you free...

MARCH 2022

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