



## Women in Film

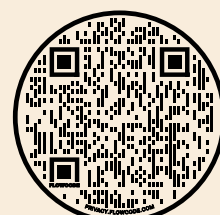
Movies are a viewfinder to all the dark, joyful, profound and mundane aspects of our lives—and who gets to make them matters. In this issue, we zoom in on the Canadian women making the most exciting films of 2024

COLLAGE BY FRANZISKA BARCZYK

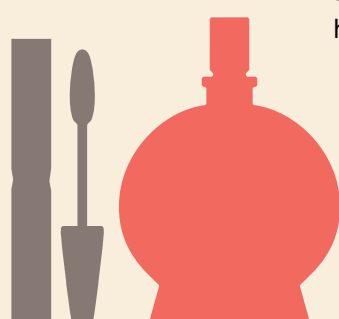
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# The nepo baby shopping list

They're young, rich, genetically blessed and have access to their ultra-cool parents' ultra-cool hand-me-downs. Why not take style cues from them?

By Jillian Vieira

Like many silver-spooned spawn before them, the newest crop of nepo babies have been handed lightning passes to the top producers, agents and stages in the biz. But for all the flack that's flung their way, the latest crop of Hollywood offspring is the most stylish we've ever witnessed. That's no coincidence: consider the sartorially inclined circles they grew up in, the deep pockets destined for designer finery, the unparalleled access to once-papped archival hand-me-downs.

Choose your fighter from our favourite preferentially treated fashion prodigies. Whichever way your style compass points, these are the cool kids worth watching.

## Iris Law

**THE PARENTS: JUDE LAW AND SADIE FROST**

The term "It girl" gets thrown around a lot, but in Iris Law's case, consider it status secured. A booked-and-busy model (she's been the face of mega brands Burberry, Versace and David Yurman in 2024 alone), Law has taken an off-duty style page from generations of runway greats, mixing fashion messages from the flashy '80s and boho-heavy aughts in a single look. It shouldn't work, but when you possess the sartorial deftness and upper crust pluck Law does, it's all kinds of style alchemy.



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## Blue Ivy Carter

**THE PARENTS: BEYONCÉ AND JAY-Z**

This 12-year-old sensation is already on track to eclipse her overachieving parents. Whether she's garnering her first Grammy-nominated writing credit or delivering scene-stealing dance performances on the Renaissance stage, Blue Ivy Carter always shows up with sparky determination. Her wardrobe is a Venn diagram of her hit-making kin: a predilection for slick streetwear from Jay-Z and a self-assured showiness via Beyoncé. Never thought we'd be taking style direction from a pre-teen, but of course Carter would be the one.



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BRACELET, \$566,  
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## Apple Martin

**THE PARENTS: GWYNETH PALTROW AND CHRIS MARTIN**

With her headline-making moniker and famously *Consciously Uncoupled*™ folks, it's no surprise 20-year-old Apple Martin has caught the eye of the culture. From what we've spotted in sparse Instagram snaps, Martin has lifted most of her style cues from her mogul mom, Gwyneth Paltrow (sorry, Chris—no oversized beanies here). The Montecito-appropriate recipe: Cool, classic and femme in a steady diet of black, white, navy and ecru. Are we looking at the next pantsuit-wearing, pseudoscience-schilling business-woman of our generation? Only time will tell.



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## A FOREVER LOVE

From Old Hollywood to today's red carpets and runways, red lipstick reigns as the ultimate scene stealer

By Caitlin Kenny

Back before colour lit our screens, Hollywood relied on red lipstick to define the mouths of black-and-white film stars like Clara Bow and Jean Harlow. Many decades later, a bold slick of scarlet still delivers main character energy, whether it's worn on a red carpet or on any given day, by any of us.

Part of its magic is that, for a look that's so singularly iconic, the red lip has wide margins for variation. Take this fall's runways: models at Khaite wore matte fiery red that was precisely painted on using a thin brush, while at Molly Goddard, brick tones were dabbed on and diffused for a post-makeout wink. From glossy or glittery (at Mugler and Altuzarra, respectively) to vibrant and vampy (Richard Quinn and L'Agence), there are so many takes on red that you can cast to suit your own story.



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# Lens



In 2024, is the film industry any more inclusive or welcoming for women than it used to be? Leanne Delap spoke to some of Canada's most dynamic directors, actors and writers to find out who holds the movie-making cards now

## shift

If a film passes the Bechdel test, it features at least one scene in which two named women characters discuss any subject that is not a man. In 2023, a meagre total of 138 films passed this low bar; Academy Award Best Picture winner *Oppenheimer* did not. The test, while not a perfect measure of equality, has been a useful way to shine a light on the lack of meaningful women characters and storylines in Hollywood.

"In terms of complicated heroines, there has been a huge movement forward," says Alison Pill, the Toronto-born, upstate-New York-based actor starring in *Young Werther*, which premieres at TIFF this year, and previously *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, *The Newsroom* and *American Horror Story*.

But it's the power to green-light a wider range of artistic projects that still lags behind. The flow of money and the ability to control whose stories are told through whose lens, with whose shot list, remains the ultimate arbiter of equality. "We don't value women's stories the same. We don't value women's labour as much," says Pill. When will we arrive at a more level playing field? "When an action movie with a big budget just happens to be directed by a woman, starring a woman."

We're still a ways off from that. "At most, the one female in Canadian film who people can name is Sarah Polley, who is fantastic," says Toronto-based filmmaker Vanessa Magic. "But how can we skew things toward what we want to see in terms of representation?"

Magic, who started out in costume design, has had a great year. Her short film, *The Future Above Us*, described as an Afrosurrealist look at a woman's quest for connection in a dystopian landscape, has been hitting markets and festivals worldwide. "Stories still get told, but there is no equality yet," she says. "I will say that I'm always hopeful."

Hope is contagious, and so is confidence. "The industry has a way of looking at women," says Canadian filmmaker Anubha Momin, director of *Aftercare*, which premiered at last year's TIFF Short Cuts program. "The industry has changed, especially in the way it looks at women of colour. There was an expectation of humility or humbleness or quietness or smallness about women of colour, especially dark-skinned women of colour, which I am, who came from a very poor part of the world," says Momin, who was born in Bangladesh and is currently based in France. "Women who came before me beat the s-t out of that." Because of that, "we are more

Women are particularly good at recommending other women for projects, at "speaking someone's name when they are not in the room."

aware of how powerful we can be, which extends to work we do and the people we work with."

"Women, people of colour, queer folk, now enter the industry with your head high," says Momin. "This is quite possibly an antidote to the scarcity mentality in any job market."

Of course, scarcity and tokenism in the film industry is very real. Ottawa-based actor turned filmmaker Kaniehtiio Horn, known for roles in *Letterkenny*, *Reservation Dogs* and *Alice, Darling*, says that for a long time, she would know every other Indigenous actor she was up against for a project. "It produced pressure and unnecessary competition."

Horn makes her directorial and screenwriting debut with *Seeds*, in which she also stars; the "genre-bending home-invasion comedy" is part of the Discovery program at TIFF 2024. When casting the film, Horn encountered a different reality. "The women I wanted were initially people who were too busy. So it opened the door for me to finding incredible new talent."

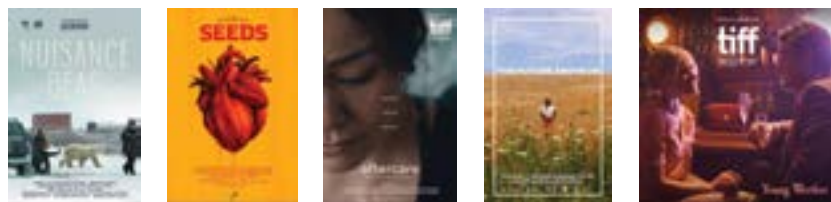
The path to opening up opportunities for more talent will be marked with generosity. Women are particularly good at recommending other women for projects, at "speaking someone's name when they are not in the room," as Momin puts it. "I am always happy to open up my network," she adds.

"I longed for people to mentor me. I looked for that and encountered closed doors," says Magic. "That is not how I will operate, moving forward."

Magic referred me to Gabriela Osio Vanden, a Venezuelan-Canadian cinematographer who is currently expanding her short documentary *Nuisance Bear*, which debuted at TIFF in 2021, into a feature. "I'm so lucky to be coming up in this time [after] women who have broken through some barriers and are established," she says. The challenge "is entering a bigger arena where there are bigger budgets. It's harder to break into for women than for men who are our counterparts." Osio Vanden doesn't want to be a "Latinx hire," chosen to check a box. "You want to be hired because you are right for the job."

That brings us back to who makes the decisions about which big-budget projects get the go-ahead. "The pipelines are shifting," says Pill. "What's exciting to me is the greater availability of women to exist in both the writing and the making of things, in whatever role and capacity." But it will take time to catch up. "The actual commitment to showcasing those voices and giving people a shot who haven't gotten a shot before—it is not instantaneous. You can't gain 20 years of experience in a year. We don't have this stable of [women] directors who have helmed a \$20-million film ready and waiting around."

Still, there is a strong reason it will happen, hopeful and cynical at once: It's good business. "In late-stage capitalism," says Momin, "the success of women's stories makes people money."



Gabriela Osio Vanden is expanding her short *Nuisance Bear* (2021) into a feature.

Kaniehtiio Horn wrote and directed *Seeds*, in the TIFF 2024 Discovery program.

Anubha Momin directed *Aftercare*, which premiered at TIFF Short Cuts in 2023.

Vanessa Magic's *The Future Above Us* is hitting festivals worldwide.

Actor Alison Pill stars in *Young Werther*, which premieres at TIFF this year.



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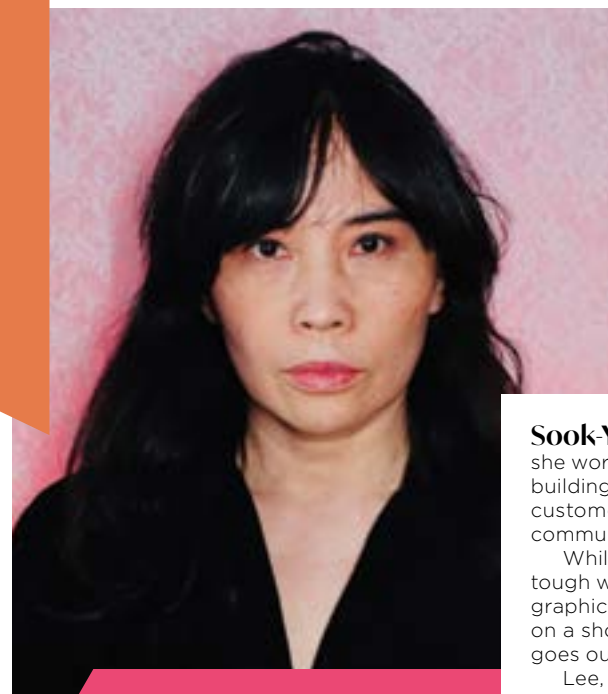
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# BRIGHT LIGHTS



As the Toronto International Film Festival takes over Hollywood North once more, we're back with our annual celebration of Canadian women making waves in the film industry. While each of these formidable talents brings a unique POV to their work, they have a few things in common: A fierce love of their craft, a commitment to persevering in an industry that's never been more challenging and a belief in the power of stories to change the world for the better

By Sarah Laing

**Sook-Yin Lee's** latest film, *Paying For It*, will premiere at TIFF 2024. And what she's most proud of is the people who she worked with to make it, many of them emerging talents helming a feature for the first time. "It's a miracle of pyramid-building of a community of people who don't usually get access to these spaces," she says. "A lot of the time, it's the usual customers who get sought out for production design, for cinematography. And yet, there's such a vibrant and brilliant community of workers who are untapped."

While she takes great pride in the work and satisfaction in collaborating with a team, very often filmmaking is "really tough work," says Lee. She's speaking from her Toronto home, which is where she filmed *Paying For It*, an adaptation of a graphic novel about sex work by Chester Brown, her former partner. "Yes, it's fun because I do love problem-solving, but on a shoestring there are a lot of pressures—even the anxiety of shooting in my 19th-century row house and the power goes out, there are the neighbours..."

Lee, who is familiar to so many from her run as a MuchMusic VJ from 1995 to 2001, has amassed a thoughtful body of work that spans filmmaking, acting, music, art and broadcasting. She played a couples' therapist who can't climax in the pioneering LGBTQ+ dramedy *Shortbus*, won a Canadian Screen Award for her role as now-Toronto-mayor Olivia Chow in the Jack Layton biopic *Jack*, and has written and directed the ghost story *Octavio Is Dead!* starring Sarah Gadon, and the lockdown tale *Death and Sickness*. And that's before we get to her work as a solo artist and composer.

"I'm a person who puts a great deal of care and love in the process of making things. To me, making art is always a process of long, durational puzzle solving," says Lee. "I'd delight in bringing people together. It's really an extension of play for me." When asked what it feels like to be a woman working in film right now, she demurs. "It's a complicated thing," she says, throwing it back to being asked how it felt to be a woman in rock. "To me, it always bristled. It's a convenient label to commodify people, and although the intention by some is to lift women up, it can put them in a box."

Lee worries that the focus on identity—like the expectation she felt early in her career that as a Chinese-Canadian, all of her work should be about that facet of herself—can become restrictive and exclusionary. "We're living in a strange time where there's a lot of 'box ticking,'" Lee says. "The boxes are created by the people who have been there forever, but they're realizing there's a demand for inclusion, and inclusion becomes slippery."

At the same time, she acknowledges that representation can be meaningful and important, and sexism is alive and well in the industry. In fact, she experienced it while making *Paying For It*. "Talking in a group, [there was] deference to a guy, or assuming that a guy did more," Lee says. "Despite our seeming progression, there is also a regression that may be happening simultaneously. Which makes sense, because when there are many steps forward, there are many steps backward. We are not free of patriarchy yet."

What Lee would like is to make projects where race and gender are not the first points of conversation. "This idea of 'women in film,' I don't want it to be a box," she says. "I want to be able to run with everyone, and to have the work stand out on its own."

I'm a person who puts a great deal of care and love in the process of making things.



**Jennifer Podemski** When Jennifer Podemski is considering a project, the first thing she thinks about is whether it aligns with her values. The second is the team she'll be working with.

"There are people I will do anything for," says Podemski, "no matter the size of the role, whether it's in front of or behind the camera."

It's why the actor and director who runs her own production company, Redcloud Studios, said yes to a supporting role in *Don't Even*, a new Zoe Hopkins-directed series streaming on Crave. It follows two Indigenous girls coming of age in 1990s Winnipeg, armed with the kind of youthful optimism that says all you need to do to change your life is have your best friend cut bangs for you with kitchen scissors.

"The scripts were funny—and I needed funny," says Podemski. "And it fit into my schedule perfectly. It was just all around the perfect opportunity!"

Podemski's previous project was *Little Bird*, the moving series about the Sixties Scoop that she co-created and executive produced. Of the many accolades it garnered—including 13 awards at this year's Canadian Screen Awards—Podemski says the Barbara Spears Award for Best Visual Research means the most to her.

"The group I won that with included my mom, our two Sixties Scoop advisors, Raven Sinclair and Nakuset, my aunt Sharon and our costume designer, Charity Martin. The show was led by research and on the visual side it was really an echo of all of the photos and visual references we compiled," Podemski says. "There are parts of all of our families and life stories on-screen because of the role that visual research played. I will always and forever hold that acknowledgment so close to my heart."

While *Little Bird's* subject matter was historical, the systemic racism it spoke to is still very much a problem. "It's there, it's thriving and it must be dismantled," says Podemski.

But she is excited to witness "the incredible wave of Indigenous talent taking their rightful place." And she's buoyed by the power of teamwork, "especially when it works. That's a real high for me, working together toward a common goal. Especially when that goal is a vision for something that doesn't exist."

There are parts of all of our families and life stories on-screen.

I still see room for my voice. I still have so many stories to tell.



PHOTOGRAPHY: DYLAN GAMBIE (LEE); ED ARQUEL (FLEMING)

**Ann Marie Fleming** How does one come up with the idea for a sci-fi thriller about a world in the throes of ecological collapse where no one over 50 is allowed to live?

For *Can I Get A Witness?* creator Ann Marie Fleming, it was sparked in 2006, when a windstorm tore through Vancouver, felling more than 10,000 trees.

"Mother nature was definitely telling us something, but not a lot of us were listening. Climate was not on everybody's mind," says Fleming. "Around the same time, there was talk of raising the age to collect CPP, as governments struggled to deal with a population that was not just aging but living longer."

Add a dash of *A Modest Proposal*—Jonathan's Swift's infamous satirical essay that suggested Ireland might alleviate famine by selling its toddlers as meat for the elite—and Fleming brought her provocative tale to life in her signature blend of animation and live action. The result is a film buzzy enough to draw Sandra Oh to star and a TIFF premiere at this year's festival.

The concept has evolved considerably since the award-winning filmmaker whose graduating short, 1989's *You Take Care Now*, ranked in the Canada's 150th Essential Cinema list, had her initial idea. "So much has changed in the world that makes this utopian-slash-dystopian world imaginable," she says. "Regardless of your take on it, climate change is affecting everyone all over the world on a daily basis. COVID showed us how instantly and universally vulnerable we all are and what the universal collective could achieve. What we would do for the greater good became a global kitchen table conversation. M.A.I.D. didn't exist back then. All these changes make the world I imagined very relatable. The ideas are still difficult. But so is our reality. The film changed from a satire to a love letter to our precious world."

The long lead time means that it's coming out at a time of acute climate consciousness and extreme weather events. "It turns out there just couldn't be a time where this film could be more relevant," Fleming says. "This is a time when people can listen."

It's also emerging in a changed film industry with "so much uncertainty" but also "so many opportunities, so many voices," says Fleming. "I still see room for my voice. I still have so many stories to tell."

While she's seen gender parity improve over her career, "there is still imbalance when it comes to larger budgets, bigger projects," Fleming says. "And there is ageism. What do we do with that, when there are so many talented young people coming up?" Considering that, she adds: "I think I have another metaphor for my film."

**Andria Wilson Mirza** has spent the past year bringing the coming-of-age film *The Queen of My Dreams* to the world: to Austin for South by Southwest, to Toronto for its Canadian premiere at TIFF, to Cape Cod for the Provincetown International Film Festival, to Los Angeles' iconic Egyptian Theatre for a screening hosted by internet-famous astrologer Chani Nicholas.

"Everything about this project has been absolutely joyful," says Wilson Mirza, who co-produced the film alongside her wife, Fawzia Mirza, who wrote and directed it. "It's so common and so normalized in our industry that we have to go through this trauma of making the film and then get on stage and represent it as something different. With this project, there really was joy throughout."

That's not to say that making the movie, which was filmed in both Canada and Pakistan, didn't come with its stresses and challenges. "Every film is a miracle to get completed. The first hurdle is taking what's on the page and the brilliant vision of your writer and director and actually executing that with countless people," says Wilson Mirza. "One thing I don't think gets talked about enough is the invisible labour with independent films that happens in getting it into festivals, sales, distribution."

*The Queen of My Dreams* was nominated for five Canadian Screen Awards, ran in Canadian theatres earlier this year and will stream on Crave this fall. As an indie filmmaker, you bring your work to the market yourself—and you're at the whim of a business model that has never been less certain. Wilson Mirza reels off a laundry list of issues—studios contracting and merging, the end of an antitrust ruling that broke up studio monopolies in 1940s Hollywood—that have created a "perfect storm" for indie films trying to find an audience.

Not that she's letting it stand in the way of her production company, Baby Daal, which she runs with her wife. "We think there's the potential to connect with audiences globally in a completely different way than before," says Wilson Mirza. "The challenge is the one that exists for us at every turn, which is that the system wasn't built for us."

This is something Wilson Mirza addresses in her advocacy work with GLAAD and WIF; she leads the non-profit's international initiatives in partnership with the Gates Foundation to promote gender equality in the film industry. "It wasn't even built for women to have jobs, so we can't expect it to reflect the socialist utopia that we dream of," she says. "It's going to be challenging, and our values are going to be at odds with what the powers that be are telling us is possible."

As executive director of the Inside Out 2SLGBTQ+ Film Festival, she was able to extend support to queer filmmakers. "It's collaborating with artists to really see them step into their power," she says. "It's giving them the knowledge that the audience is there, and they will meet them."

She felt that firsthand while promoting *The Queen of My Dreams*, a life-affirming tale about a mother and daughter who find unexpected common ground in their love for Bollywood. "I've seen people in tears, talking about how they never thought they'd see this specific kind of representation," she says.

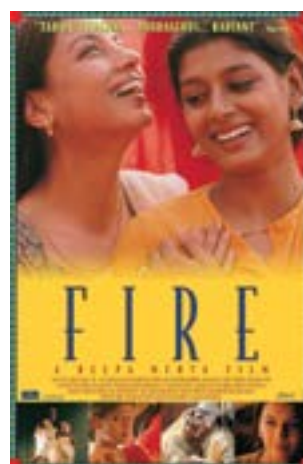
While that speaks to how much work there still is to do, Wilson Mirza aims for a balance of living within our current realities and trying to create a better world. "Naive as it sounds, I got into this because I truly believe in the transformative power of cinema and storytelling, and I believe that this power is at its greatest height when people who have traditionally been excluded from that opportunity have that opportunity," she says. "I believe in the impact, because I've felt the impact."



I truly believe in the transformative power of cinema and storytelling.

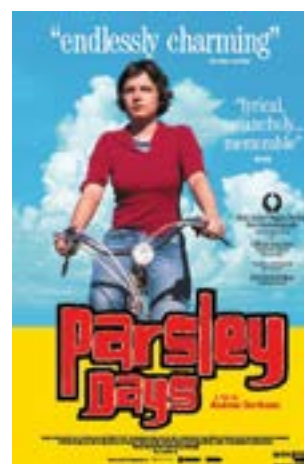
## Hot tickets

We asked our five honourees to choose their favourite film made by a Canadian woman. Behold, your new what-to-watch-next list



**FIRE, 1996**

"I'd have to say Deepa Mehta's *Fire*, which is one of my all-time favourite and most formative films. It has stayed with me so clearly—years after a viewing, images from it still pop into my head."  
—Andria Wilson Mirza



**PARSLEY DAYS, 2000**

"This indie film written, directed and shot by Andrea Dorfman takes place in Halifax. It's the story of seemingly perfect lovers, Kate and Ollie. But Kate has a secret: She's pregnant and doesn't want to have a baby. Dorfman's sensitivity, humanity, heart and humour guide this idiosyncratic and exceptional movie." —Sook-Yin Lee



**I LIKE MOVIES, 2023**

"I really enjoyed *I Like Movies* by Chandler Leveck. It's a hilarious little gem. It follows this unlikely/completely lovable teenage-boy film snob following his passion through his last year of high school. I had no idea it was directed by a woman. But now I get it." —Ann Marie Fleming



**SAVAGE, 2009**

"If I had to choose one, I'd say *Savage* by Lisa Jackson. It's a short, but man, it packs a punch and is brilliant. I mean, a musical about residential school. WTF." —Jennifer Podemski



**THE WEEKEND, 2018**

It's a tie between Stella Meghie's *The Weekend* and Kelly Fyffe-Marshall's *When Morning Comes*. I am biased because I produced it, but it really is such a beautiful film. —Sasha Leigh Henry



## One to watch

Meet our inaugural New Gen Award recipient, Sasha Leigh Henry

When we reach Sasha Leigh Henry, she's taking a mini-break in New York before shooting a "micro-micro-budget feature." Such is the life of a writer, producer and director on what promises to be a stratospheric rise. In 2022, *Variety* named her "one to watch," and this May she won best comedy series at the Canadian Screen Awards for the show she created, *Bria Mack Gets a Life*, which sadly ended after its first season.

We caught up with Henry to chat creative vision, her dream movie and how to bounce back from rejection.

**Congrats on your Canadian Screen Award! What did it mean to see *Bria Mack* get recognized?** "It's exactly the kind of 'high five, keep going' that is always appreciated when you also know that the show isn't going to continue. It really commemorated this thing that we created and the hard work of all the people that really believed in the show. That award made it clear that it wasn't cancelled for quality. It's no small thing to be up against *Workin' Moms* and other Canadian legacy shows that have really big audiences. For our little six-episode show to eke that out was super cool."

**The movie and TV industry is notoriously full of setbacks and rejection. How do you cope with that?** "It's easier for me to go after something that we can all articulate is difficult or unfair than if I'm pretending that's not the case. I try to brace for the reality that I might not get the thing. I find it really interesting to understand how these decisions are being made, because it makes it easier to not take it personally. If we'd gotten season 2 but nobody who worked on the show wanted to come back, that wouldn't have been a success to me. But if we only made one season and the majority of the people who worked on it were like, 'Whatever idea you have next, I'm down to help out,' that to me is a really great success."

**Do you have a strong sense of what a Sasha Leigh Henry project is?** "I've only made so much work, but if I had to articulate it, it's character-driven narratives, it's looking at the underdog and ambition. For people of colour, especially women, I'm always trying to broaden the scope of what's possible for them on-screen. Sometimes that looks like *Sinking Ship*, a story about an older couple where the man wants to break up because he feels she's changed too much, she feels old to him, and they're unpacking that. We mostly see those kinds of conversations through the lens of Julia Roberts, *Eat Pray Love* type of cinema, but we don't see Black contemporary adults having those conversations. I try to be progressive in subtle but significant ways. It's important we provide a wealth of representation because when we don't, you get stigmas and stereotypes."

**If you get a blank cheque to create a film right now, what are you making?** "I've got the script written already. It's a YA thriller. Me and my creative partner, Tanya Thompson, spend a lot of time ideating, and one project is called *Girls Like Us*. It's two teenage athletes who grow up in a desert town on the west coast, and one of them is a military brat. They sell weed, and in their senior year they decide they want to cut back, but their drug dealer is like, LOL, that's not how that works. One of them gets taken and the other has to rescue them. The superhero engine has been such a big thing, and we wanted to ask, 'What does that look like in real life?' The real heroes of my life are my friends and my parents, so let's take all the esteem we give Thor and give it to a 16-year-old girl who's going to try to rescue her friend."



THE KIT X LONGINES

# KEEPING TIME WITH JENNIFER LAWRENCE AND KATE WINSLET

LONGINES' MINI DOLCEVITA OFFERS MAXIMUM STYLE



Watching what actors choose to wear on the red carpet and in their everyday lives has become a guilty pleasure for those of us who love fashion but will likely not find ourselves attending the Academy Awards or The Golden Globes anytime soon. For Oscar winners Jennifer Lawrence and Kate Winslet, classic elegance is what we have come to expect. As leaders of the quiet luxury movement, their style always exudes an inner confidence. The outfits never wear them. It makes perfect sense that Longines, the Swiss watch brand whose tagline is Elegance Is An Attitude, would choose these powerful women as the faces of the Mini DolceVita collection.

The first Longines DolceVita watch, which launched in 1997, was inspired by the brand's 1927 rectangular watch whose Art Deco styling evoked the glamour of old Hollywood. The original version is available in a number of dimensions, the largest being 23.30mm x 37.00mm. In 2023, Longines introduced the adorable Mini DolceVita collection in a campaign featuring Lawrence. Thoughtfully designed with elegance in the smallest detail, the Mini DolceVita clocks in at 21.50mm x 29.00mm (.84in x 1.14in), with an iconic rectangular-shaped case. This new version includes a distinctive five-link brick-style bracelet, Cosmo circular dial inside the case, and painted Roman numerals with blue steel hands. Always concerned about practicality, the Mini DolceVita features a scratch-resistant sapphire crystal, high-precision L178 quartz movement, and water resistance up to 30 meters. Available in silver flinqué Roman (rectangular) dial with painted Roman numerals and Sunray Silver and White Cosmo (circular) dial with painted Roman numerals and indexes. The cases are adorned with 38 Top Wesselton IF-VVS diamonds, for a total of 0.456 carats. Black leather and red crocodile straps are also available for models without diamonds.

"What I love about this watch is its versatility" says fashion stylist Kim Appelt, author of the book *Style for Everybody*. "It transitions

effortlessly from a classic crisp white shirt and denim look to this season's power suiting with a feminine twist. For an evening out, the Mini DolceVita is as classic as a little black dress."

Less than a year after launching the Mini DolceVita watch to much fanfare, Longines is already expanding the collection. With a nod to its equine heritage, the latest models are highlighted in a campaign featuring Winslet wearing the unique double strap. Crafted in soft Nappa leather which encircles the wrist, the watch strap holes are numbered in hot-press printing from one to six in the same way stirrup leathers connect the saddle to a horse's stirrups. Similar to the original Mini DolceVita collection, each of the new additions to the Mini family is housed in a rectangular stainless case measuring 21.50mm x 29.00 mm, (.84in x 1.14in). The double strap is available in black, red, green and orange. Diamond versions with 38 Top Wesselton IF-VVS diamonds, totaling 0.456 carats are available in hot pink or tan with white top stitching.

While we may all be addicted to our smart watches, Appelt has noticed a shift playing out on the wrists of fashion savvy consumers. "Watches continue to gain momentum as subtle statement accessories," says Appelt. "The Mini DolceVita double strap feels edgy-cool but still classic which is a tribute to Longines's design sensibility. This is a forever watch."

Explore Longines' timepieces, including the Mini DolceVita, online at [Longines.ca](https://www.longines.ca).



LONGINES MINI DOLCEVITA  
L5.200.4.71.0 - 21.50 X 29.00 mm



LONGINES MINI DOLCEVITA  
L5.200.0.71.6 - 21.50 X 29.00 mm



LONGINES MINI DOLCEVITA  
L5.200.0.71.0 - 21.50 X 29.00 mm

## Cat

In Mike Nichols's 1967 masterpiece *The Graduate*, Anne Bancroft's Mrs. Robinson undresses for Dustin Hoffman's Benjamin Braddock to reveal a leopard-print strapless brassiere and matching half-slip.

Braddock is rendered fumbling and sweaty-palmed. "Haven't you ever seen anyone in a slip before?" Mrs. Robinson asks him in her nicotine-sanded voice, her delivery as silken as her underthings. There is a stillness and a feline confidence to her seduction—an animal with too-easy prey.

In nearly every scene, Bancroft is swathed in leopard spots, her costuming a signal of her sexual prowess and her role as nocturnal predator. A gingham bralette or pointelle camisole would not have conveyed the same magnetism. Leopard print—like Mrs. Robinson herself—skirts the line between ladylike and libidinous.

Leopard has long been code for a worldly, self-possessed femininity—a woman in full command of her wiles. In Greek and Roman mythology, the cat was a symbol of feminine power; the Greek goddess Artemis and Diana, Roman goddess of fertility and the moon, took the shape of a cat.

Leopard pelts have historically been a symbol of wealth and status, serving as ceremonial dress for Egyptian high priests and pharaohs, swathing African kings and 17th-century French and Italian nobility. In the 1920s, actor Marion Nixon promenaded the streets of Hollywood with her pet leopard whilst perversely wearing a matching coat.

Christian Dior, mercifully turning away from the violence of the fur trade, divined the first leopard print fabric for his 1947 collection, debuting an evening gown and a day dress, dubbing



woman

This fall, leopard print has prowled out of the shadows to enjoy a moment in the sun—as all cats do. Olivia Stren reflects on the feline power and presence of this oft-maligned classic

them "Jungle" and "Afrique." In Dior's *The Little Dictionary of Fashion*, the designer advised: "To wear leopard you must have a kind of femininity which is a little bit sophisticated. If you are fair and sweet, don't wear it."

Like the wild cat itself, the print has had a way of pouncing into fashion, then retreating into the shadows. This season, it's on the prowl anew, walking the runways at Marni, Alexander McQueen and Balenciaga. For Dior's Fall 2024 ready-to-wear show, Maria Grazia Chiuri sent out leopard print coats and hats in an ode to collections past. Meanwhile, Isabel Marant unleashed a jungle of leopard-print coats, jeans and boots. "We don't do quiet luxury," Marant declared while describing her collection. "We do unquiet luxury." The print is a claws-out swipe at the retiring ennui of stealth wealth and modest minimalism.

It's this loudness that has made leopard print wildly divisive. With the wrong silhouette, unrefined fabric or too-tawny undertones it can be more than a whisker vulgar, lunging cheaply into sleaze and camp. My mother is French, and I'm forever imprinted with the general Gallic sense that vulgarity—along with charmlessness and tastelessness—is among the worst of offences. But I was also raised with a certain *vive la résistance* spirit. And as a lifelong cat lady, it strikes me as almost disloyal to reject the beauty of this feline pattern.

Recently, I splurged on a cotton-poplin leopard print dress by California brand This Is the Great. But once the dress was in my paws, I hesitated to wear it, worrying that I looked a hair more like Andrea Martin's Edith Prickley from SCTV than Mrs. Robinson.

There is something—provocative? empowering? maybe just clichéd?—about going full leopard in middle-age.

Comedian Ali Wong wore a tight leopard print maternity dress to stalk the stage, heavily pregnant, in her 2018 Netflix special, *Hard Knock Wife*. While reflecting on parenthood and fashion, she said, "When you're a mom, you need sparkle to compensate for the light inside of you that has died." Leopard print, like sequins, is a sort of anti-venom against the weariness of motherhood.

If ever there was a woman who seems to have spent her infancy in leopard onesies, it's comedian Deborah Vance—the protagonist of the HBO series *Hacks*, played by 72-year-old Jean Smart. Vance is vibrant and uncompromising, a savage survivor. A leopard who won't change her spots, Vance is often bedecked in animal prints. Of her wardrobe, *Hacks* costume designer Kathleen Felix-Hager has said: "There's an air of embracing your femininity and just being like, 'This is what I love to wear and I'm going to wear it at 9 in the morning.'"

The print is a show of bravado and pride, a refusal to go without a fight. In the most recent season, Vance—in a rare display of quiet vulnerability—confides in her Gen Z protégé about aging, and the grief of having much of life's runway behind you. "The best part of being young is you don't have to savour everything," she tells Hannah Einbinder's Ava. "You don't have to consider it. Eat that candy bar. Sleep in on Saturday morning. Or have a breakup. It's not the end of the world. It's just the beginning. That's the ultimate luxury. Not having to suck the marrow out of every day. Just toss the bones. Not even make a soup."

Aging has often been associated with softness—perspective and wisdom supposedly mellowing the sharp edges of ambition or regret. But there is a hardness and intensity to getting older, too, a need to vigilantly suck the marrow of life before it's too late. Leopard print, it seems to me, is a visual representation of this rapacious hunger to live richly and loudly, to not sink into the shadows. You don't wear leopard to discreetly exit stage left.

The other day, I decided to summon some Vance-ian vitality and wear my leopard-print dress to dinner with friends. But when I came downstairs, one of my cats, Bambi—a tiny, fierce feline who rules my living room—stared at my ensemble looking both stunned and perplexed, as if to say, "What are you doing? Only one of us can pull off this look!" I nearly retreated—exited the stage, as it were—to change into something quieter. But I decided against it: It wouldn't be catlike.



Leopard has long been code for a worldly, self-possessed femininity—a woman in full command of her wiles.

Clockwise from top: Marilyn Monroe accessorized with leopard in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*; Christian Dior Fall 2024; Jean Smart as the savage survivor Deborah Vance in *Hacks*; Alexander McQueen Fall 2024; Isabel Marant Fall 2024; Anne Bancroft in her leopard underthings with Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate*.



PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES (RUNWAY EXCEPT ALEXANDERMCQUEEN); INDIER (THE GRADUATE); GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES; HBO (HACKS)

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# CHANEL

NEW FRAGRANCE



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