

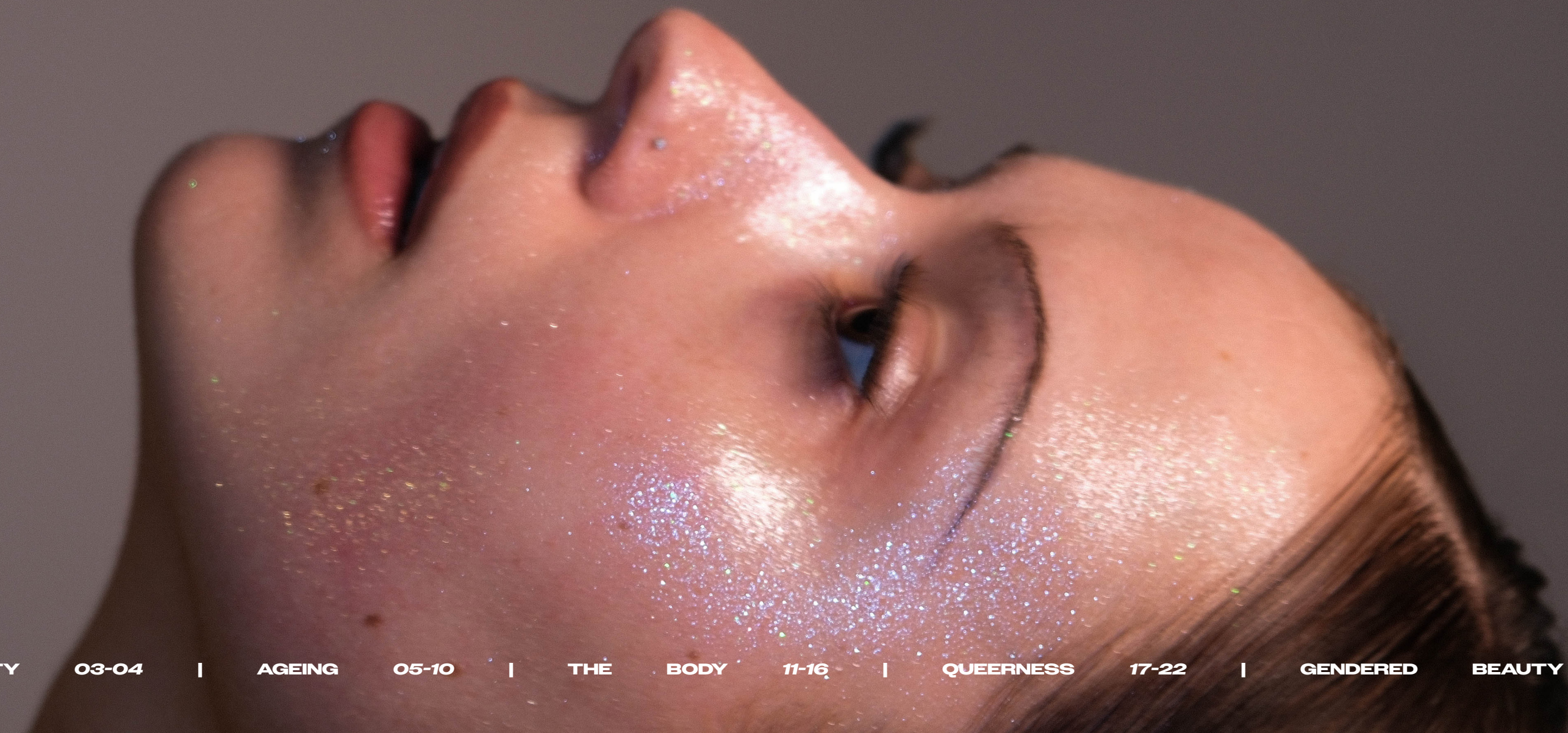
UNBOUND BEAUTY

PERSPECTIVES ON BEAUTY
REPRESENTATIONS:

THE GENDER ISSUE

m e s s a g e :
UNBOUND BEAUTY WAS
CREATED IN RESPONSE TO THE
RIGID BEAUTY STANDARDS
PERPETUATED BY MAINSTREAM
MEDIA AND CONVENTIONAL
BEAUTY MAGAZINES. IT'S ABOUT
AMPLIFYING REAL PEOPLE'S
STORIES AND THEIR DIVERSE
VIEWS ON BEAUTY. ABOUT
EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES
AND BOUNDARIES OF WHAT
IS CONSIDERED BEAUTIFUL.
THE IMPACT OF SOCIETAL
BEAUTY STANDARDS ON
THOSE WHO ENDURE THEM.
THIS IS A MAGAZINE SEEKING
TO RECLAIM BEAUTY FOR
WHAT IT TRULY CAN AND
SHOULD BE

- UNBOUND



WHAT DOES BEAUTY MEAN TO YOU?

IT'S A DOUBLE-SIDED COIN. IT CAN CAUSE EXTREME ANXIETY BUT ALSO MAKE YOU FEEL POWERFUL.

HAVING THE CONFIDENCE TO BE MYSELF, NO MATTER WHAT OTHERS THINK.

KNOWING AND GROWING INTO MYSELF OVER TIME.

MY INTEREST WITH LIFE.

UNIQUENESS.

SELF-EXPRESSION. AND SHOWCASING MY IDENTITY.

ACHIEVING YOUR ULTIMATE STATE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

IT'S EMOTIONAL. LIKE WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE, THAT PERSON BECOMES THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING.

AGEING

IN WESTERN SOCIETY, BEAUTY STANDARDS HAVE LONG BEEN A BATTLEGROUNDS OF UNATTAINABLE IDEALS. FEMALE-PRESENTING AND FEMALE-IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS, IN PARTICULAR, OFTEN FIND THEIR WORTH MEASURED AGAINST A RELENTLESS AESTHETIC IDEAL OF ETERNAL YOUTH. UNDERLINED BY THE INFLUENCE OF CAPITALIST BEAUTY PRACTICES, EVERY WRINKLE, EVERY LINE —EACH NATURAL MARK OF TIME— SEEMS TO DIMINISH THEIR PERCEIVED VALUE. THEY ARE CONSIDERED LESS BEAUTIFUL. LESS WORTHY. LESS POWERFUL.

THIS SERIES OF IMAGES EXPLORES THESE THEMES THROUGH THE LENS OF PERSONAL STORIES AND SHARED EXPERIENCES IN THE FORM OF QUOTES FROM THOSE WHO FACE THESE SOCIETAL PRESSURES OF BEAUTY. BY AMPLIFYING AUDIENCE VOICES, IT SEEKS TO CRITIQUE THE SYSTEMS THAT PERPETUATE THIS PURSUIT OF YOUTH, INVITING READERS TO RECONSIDER THE VERY DEFINITION OF BEAUTY.





“THESE IDEALS SHOWN IN THE MEDIA HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY FEMALE ATTRIBUTED. IT’S A VERY PATRIARCHIAL OLD THING. YOU KNOW, A MAN AGES LIKE FINE WINE. BUT I’VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE SAY THAT TO A WOMAN BEFORE.”

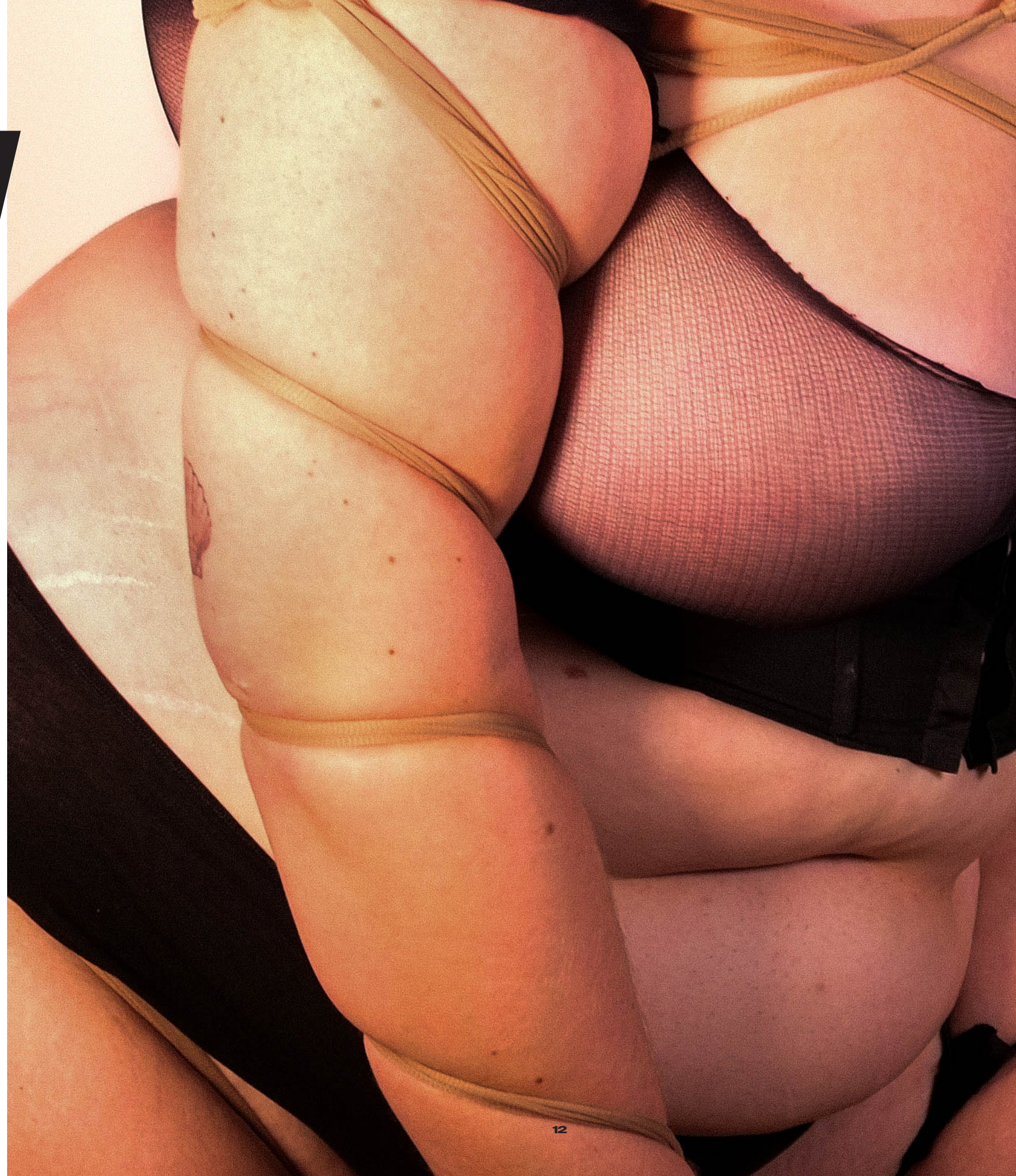
**“I KNOW WE SHOULDN’T
BE THINKING LIKE
THAT BUT IT’S REALLY
INTERNALIZED. YOU’RE
CONSTANTLY AROUND
THOSE THINGS
SOCIETY TELLS YOU
ABOUT BEING A WOMAN
AND AGING ONLINE OR
IN MAGAZINES AND IT
DEFINITELY AFFECTS
US ALL.”**



THE BODY

THE BODY IS A SCRUTINIZED SITE, ENDLESSLY DISCUSSED AND DISSEMINATED BY SOCIETY, THE MEDIA AND OURSELVES. GENDERED WESTERN BEAUTY IDEALS, OFTEN PERPETUATED BY MEDIA (MIS)REPRESENTATIONS, DICTATE WHAT THE BODY MUST LOOK LIKE, WHAT SIZE IT SHOULD HAVE, AND HOW IT MUST BE CONCEALED WHEN IT FAILS TO CONFORM. BODY SIZE TRANSFORMS INTO A TREND, DEMANDING ADHERENCE - REGARDLESS OF THE COST THIS TAKES.

ACCOMPANIED BY QUOTES ROOTED IN REAL PEOPLE'S STORIES AND STRUGGLES, THESE IMAGES AIM TO HONOUR THE DIVERSE WAYS THAT BODIES CAN AND DO LOOK. HIGHLIGHTING THE BEAUTY IN THE BODY'S SOFTNESS, THE UNIQUENESS OF EVERY SPOT AND SCAR, IT PUSHES THE READER TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN PERCEPTIONS OF BODY IMAGE.



“THERE’S BEEN A RESURGENCE OF ‘HEROIN CHIC’ AND THE IDEA THAT SKINNINESS IS THE IDEAL BODY TYPE, AND PERSONALLY, I DON’T FEEL REPRESENTED BY THE MEDIA TODAY. WITH THESE TRENDS, IT CAUSES ME TO FEEL A LOT OF GUILT - ESPECIALLY BEING SOMEBODY WHO’S PLUS SIZE.”



“I FEEL LIKE HAVING ONLY A CERTAIN FORM OF FEMININITY REPRESENTED ONLINE OR IN MAGAZINES - THAT USUALLY CONSISTS OF BEING SKINNY WITH PERFECT SKIN, NOT HAVING EXTRA HAIR OR EXTRA FAT OR WHATEVER - IT CREATES THIS BARRIER OF NOT FEELING ADEQUATE IF YOU DON'T FIT INTO THAT”



QUEERNESS

IN A SOCIETY WHERE QUEER REPRESENTATION REMAINS CONSTRAINED BY RIGID STEREOTYPES, SHAPED BY DEEP-ROOTED HETERONORMATIVE EXPECTATIONS, THE LINES BETWEEN MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY, SUBMISSION AND DOMINANCE, ARE OFTEN STRICTLY DEFINED. MAINSTREAM PORTRAYALS OF QUEERNESS TEND TO FOCUS ON A LIMITED, IDEALIZED IDEA.

THESE IMAGES AIM TO CHALLENGE AND EXPAND THESE NARROW TROPES TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF QUEER REPRESENTATION. THROUGH THIS VISUAL EXPLORATION, IN COMBINATION WITH QUOTES OF PERSONAL STORIES, THEY ENGAGE WITH QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION, CELEBRATING THE DIVERSE FACETS OF QUEERNESS. READERS ARE INVITED TO CRITICALLY REFLECT ON THESE CONSTRUCTS AND RETHINK THE WAY QUEERNESS IS PORTRAYED IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA.



“DISCOVERING TOM OF FINLAND AND THAT STYLE OF GAYNESS WAS REALLY INFLUENTIAL FOR ME AS A QUEER MAN. THIS HYBRID OF SUPER MASCULINE, BUT ALSO VERY SUBMISSIVE AT THE SAME TIME. LIKE TAKING POWER IN YOUR SUBMISSION. I THINK THIS UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALITY AND BEAUTY REALLY INFLUENCES ME, AS OPPOSED TO TODAY’S REPRESENTATION OF MAINLY SKINNY WHITE CIS GAYS IN THE MEDIA.”





**“A LOT OF TIMES IT’S STILL
A STRAIGHT-PASSING
REPRESENTATION OF
QUEERNESS. I FEEL LIKE
SUPER BUTCH QUEER
WOMEN OR FEMME GAY MEN
ARE RARELY HIGHLIGHTED.”**

GENDERED BEAUTY

ROOTED IN WESTERN IDEALS, MAINSTREAM MEDIA PROMOTES A RIGID VIEW OF GENDERED BEAUTY EXPECTATIONS. MEN ARE PORTRAYED AS HYPERMASCULINE AND RIPPED, WHILE WOMEN ARE CAST AS DAINY AND ULTRAFEMININE - UPHOLDING BINARY PRESSURES OF BEAUTY AND GENDER. THESE LIMITED REPRESENTATIONS NOT ONLY ERASE THE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WHO EXIST BETWEEN OR BEYOND THESE BINARIES BUT ALSO PUT IMMENSE PRESSURES ON INDIVIDUALS TO VISUALLY CONFORM TO THESE RESTRICTIVE EXPECTATIONS OF BINARY BEAUTY.

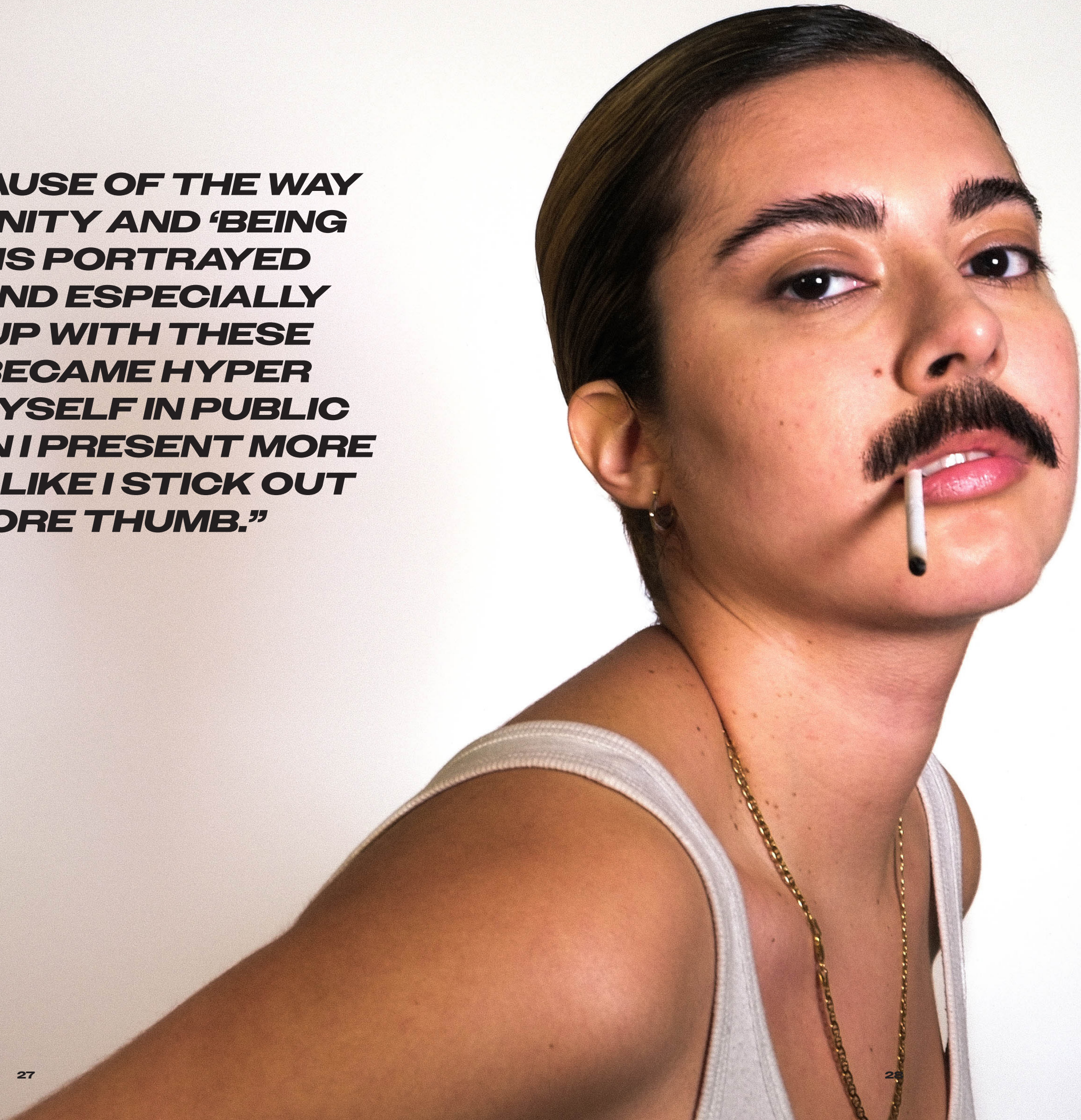
THESE IMAGES SEEK TO CELEBRATE THE FLUIDITY OF IDENTITY, EMBRACING THE SPECTRUM OF GENDER PERFORMANCES, INVITING READERS TO UNPACK THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF SUCH STRICT BINARY CONSTRUCTS OF GENDER EXPRESSIONS.





**“THE WAY IN WHICH
BEAUTY MAGAZINES
PORTRAY WOMEN
IS ALWAYS ULTRA
FEMININE, WHEREAS
I FEEL KIND OF IN THE
MIDDLE. YOU DON’T
REALLY SEE THEM
PLAY WITH IDENTITY
- WITH FEMININITY,
MASCULINITY,
ANDROGYNY - I
WISH THAT WAS
REPRESENTED MORE.”**

“I THINK BECAUSE OF THE WAY THAT FEMININITY AND ‘BEING A WOMAN’ IS PORTRAYED IN MEDIA - AND ESPECIALLY GROWING UP WITH THESE IDEALS - I BECAME HYPER AWARE OF MYSELF IN PUBLIC SPACES WHEN I PRESENT MORE MASC. I FEEL LIKE I STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB.”



UNBOUND BEAUTY