

Enthusiasm – Style

Content Warnings

- Discussions of: gender transition & dysphoria, COVID-19 pandemic, toxic beauty standards
- Mentions of: exercise & weight, alcohol, piercings & tattoos, food

NATHAN

...but the moment I was able to put something like long and dangly in my ear, and I'm like, "Oh! Gender!"

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yes.

(Laughter)

[Show Theme - Intro]

HELEN

Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusiasm. The show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your host, Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers; and today we're talking about style and I am bedazzled to

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be joined by Annie, Marisa, Nathan and Sasha. As always, we shall introduce ourselves alphabetically so, Annie, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

ANNIE

Hi, I'm Annie Fitch, I'm an audio editor at Rusty Quill. Sorry, I use she/her pronouns I should have... I am doing this out of order. I use she/her pronouns. I am an audio editor at Rusty Quill and the voice of Akteraks on Stella Firma and a Twitch streamer, among other things.

HELEN

(Laughter)

Don't worry about doing it in a correct order, this is loosey goosey show, we can all be as relaxed as we like.

Marisa, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

MARISA

Yeah, my name's Marisa, my pronouns are she/her. I am also an audio editor at Rusty Quill, and I also own a production company called Hemlock Creek Productions.

HELEN

Wonderful,

Nathan, what are your pronouns and what do you do.

NATHAN

Hi, hello I use he/they pronouns and I am your androgynous android game show host from the future, Nathan Blades...

(Laughter)

...tabletop RPG...

(Laughter)

...streamer, designer, voice actor and general internet ne'er-do-well, hello.

HELEN

(Laughter)

I do love your introductions like...

NATHAN

I still say them wrong occasionally even though I do them every time.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Well I have the, I am lucky enough to have written mine down beforehand, so that's why I never get mine wrong.

And, Sasha, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

SASHA

Hello, I'm Sasha, my pronouns are she/he and they and I am a performing monkey with a typewriter.

(Laughter)

So, I'm a writer, a games designer and a voice artist and just a, you know, a regular around these parts.

(Laughter)

HELEN

My mood has rocketed up, I don't know if I'm ever coming down again.

(Laughter)

Okay, so, we have some questions to prompt out conversation. We are going to start with a very broad one, which is what does style mean to you? If no one wants to go first I will say that to me style means a lot of things, but mostly is how I show who I am, how I'm feeling, and it is a way to make myself feel good.

NATHAN

Mm, yes, that's the long and the short of it really.

(Laughter)

You got to the essence of that real quick, show's over.

HELEN

Oh no. Discussion ends.

SASHA

Job done then.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

But no, no, no I definitely agree with it's the way of getting my vibe across to be understood by others, in the most efficient yet ostentatious way possible.

HELEN

Does anyone else want to talk about what style means to you as like a personal thing?

SASHA

Oh, yes I do.

HELEN

Go for it.

SASHA

Because I really loved what you were both saying about style being like how you present and express yourself to the world, and for me that is it, that is a big part of it, but there's also an element of... it's also been how I've figured out who I am.

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

It's also been how I've tried on different identities and figured out where I feel most comfortable, and I think especially like when I was working out that I was non-binary because it took me a very long time to realise. When I was working out that I was non-binary the like the key moment that really stuck for me and flipped something in me was when I tried on a different style of clothes that I had kind of... I had used to wear when I was a kid and then kind of like shoved aside in my teenage years and my early twenties and then putting those clothes on, trying on that identity again and just feeling something release.

HELEN

Yeah. I think that's very relatable.

MARISA

Yeah.

SASHA

Sorry, don't mean to go so heavy so early.

(Laughter)

HELEN

No, do not worry.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Oh we're absolutely going to talk about style and gender over the course of this, because I also have similar words to say.

MARISA

Yes.

HELEN

We are going to talk a lot about gender because I don't think any of us are cis on this call.

(Laughter)

Also, Sasha I think you were one of the first people I went to when I was trying to figure out whether I was non-binary or gender fluid or something, and I think I sent you my first attempt in which I'm wearing this little beany hat...

SASHA

Yes!

HELEN

...and like a red checked shirt and these massive baggy jeans and like...

(Laughter)

...that's so different to how I dress masc, now.

SASHA

Yeah.

HELEN

Because that it just like a teenager!

(Laughter)

I was dressed like a 90s teen.

SASHA

It was the same when I found out, I started dressing like how I did as a kid, you know...

HELEN

Yeah.

(Laughter)

SASHA

...and I looked like some 90s Nickelodeon teen.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yes, I looked like I was in Ed, Ed and Eddie.

(Laughter)

SASHA

But it was so important for me to try on that identity in that way and like reconnect to a part of myself that I thought I had kind of lost. You know like how everybody says smells are so linked to memory like when you smell something from your childhood you're taken back there immediately.

NATHAN

Sure.

SASHA

Like for me it's not smells it's clothes.

HELEN

Yeah.

MARISA

I think that's actually a really fair point Sasha, because I had a very similar experience when coming out as non-binary. When I was younger I definitely used to be very like oh fashion is like a girly thing, and I'm a tom boy so I don't care about fashion.

(Laughter)

And I found that like through exploration of different styles, because I'd say my styles are very between like a 50s housewife and like biker gang.

(Laughter)

But you know I feel like actually I dress more you know in terms of dresses, nail polish and things like that than I did back when I thought I was cis, because I just feel more comfortable in my identity – which is really interesting.

HELEN

Yeah, because you don't... you no longer feel forced to do those things.

MARISA

Yeah, when it was like oh you should wear a dress because you're a girl, I was like no I don't want to do that, but now I have like 40 dresses and I'm very picky about them.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Well you gotta, it will just be wearing a dress for no reason you got to make it...

MARISA

Yes, exactly.

NATHAN

Because the sheer range of like fem fit clothing in terms of the cuts and styles for that are so broad.

SASHA

Oh yeah.

NATHAN

It would have to be the right type of fit for anybody, especially if you're somebody like me who has a masc body, a lot of cuts and dresses don't work properly on my frame, so I have to kind of make sure that I find ones that fit correctly, and yeah, especially if you're a human noodle, 6ft 4"...

(Laughter)

...there are certain cuts of diff-

HELEN

You're 6ft 4"?!

NATHAN

Yeah, I'm 6ft 4" probably even taller with the hair, but...

(Laughter)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean this number is a sleeveless turtleneck that I am rocking today.

ANNIE

Oh fantastic!

MARISA

Very nice.

HELEN

Very good.

NATHAN

I adore it, but it is clearly, clearly for tall skinny people so I'm like okay good, yes.

(Laughter)

But there are so many others that look really pretty and then on me look like I'm doing bad drag when I just want to kind of look effortlessly cool, right there's that balance in between.

SASHA

I have the opposite problem where I go to menswear departments and I'm like oo this is nice, and this is nice, and this is nice but actually I have to look for the things that are cut for a hobbit.

(Laughter)

MARISA

Yes. Yes.

(Laughter)

SASHA

There are actually very few.

HELEN

I refuse to look in menswear for stuff that I like because I can't be bothered learning a whole new sizing system.

(Laughter)

MARISA

I ooph, I feel that. The first time I bought a suit I was like I don't know what I am doing, and I was in a store called The Modern Man, and I was like please help me I don't know what I'm doing.

(Laughter)

ANNIE

Suits on the one hand I can say, suits were one of the things that actually was interesting to come to terms with my like gender identity, because when I transitioned I started to like... I didn't... I had a really slow and odd and gradual like transition in pieces where I come out to different groups at a time; and then when I would dress femme I always felt like I had such limited opportunities to do it because I was only out to certain people, that I would try to go all the way to like a dress thing, and then when I dress masc if I had to be fancy I would be in a suit, but I've always felt up until very recently like the two couldn't cross and so like...umm

SASHA

Oh Annie, let me tell you the good news about glittery suits.

(Laughter)

ANNIE

Yeah.

NATHAN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Well I wear like now like only recently I have started getting really into wearing like suits just like in a daily way, like I wear blazers nearly every day now because I just love a good jacket, I always have, but for some reason there was that disconnect when I was first transitioning and then now it's like I used to only wear... I would only wear a nice like suit jacket or blazer if it was like a fancy occasion and I would always want to have a tailored one so I would have like one jacket that I could wear to any of these things and that was all; and now I've just got like I've got three blazers that I cycle through pretty much all week and like I've got... I've switched from wearing a lot of jeans to a lot of like slacks and stuff and like once you... it's funny how once you like, you know, again from the like the sort of trans perspective on this, once you transition and you feel like okay now that I'm over wherever this other place is there's like this specific thing that I have to do, and then once you've been there for a minute you're like mm nah, let's just like...

SASHA

Yeah.

ANNIE

...widen that back out a little bit let's push that back over here because I like this still you know.

HELEN, MARISA AND SASHA

Yeah.

HELEN

Aw, very relatable.

(Laughter)

I mean, one of the other questions I wanted to ask was how did you develop your own sense of style, but it sounds like the kind of meshing that into this section as well.

NATHAN

Yeah, yeah I... it's interesting because when I was younger my dad is, and I think he still is a reasonably trendy guy...

(Laughter)

...or he had a really well formulated sense of style and liked clothes and fashion...

HELEN

Yeah.

NATHAN

He used to shop at Diesel a lot before they kind of like changed their general like look at outlook in terms of how they style their clothes...anyway.

So, I was basically trained to dress like him a lot so I would basically wear what he was wearing in a slightly different size, we were both pretty tall but you know, it meant for a lot of the time a lot of the clothes that I had were essentially clothes that he wasn't wearing anymore and I was kind of getting them second hand from him; and that worked for a decent period of time while I was a teenager and so on, but there was a point at like well you know when you kind of hit university-ish where it's like oh, I can now wear whatever I want because I am not going clothes shopping with my dad as like a casual family activity kind of thing, it's like I can kind of wear whatever.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

NATHAN

It was all none of it was especially adventurous I don't think, it was only I think it was definitely after university that I was much more experimental in the kind of clothes that I wore, but, you know we are quite literally a different person every seven years because of the way that our cells decay and are reborn so...

HELEN

Yeah, yeah.

NATHAN

...in a heart, a full Ship of Theseus philosophical thing!

(Laughter)

But it does mean, that it does mean that you know there is no reason why you have to kind of be the same style of person permanently across one's lifespan or that you find one and settle into it permanently and that's your style forever because you just become a different person so frequently, that comes with also a change in style, because it was very urban dandy a lot when I was like at university-ish wearing the kind of like oh I'm going to wear like the kind of formal wear but I'm also wearing high top sneakers, that kind of thing.

MARISA

Yeah.

NATHAN

And I still love that look. I still love that look a lot of the...

SASHA

It's a good look.

NATHAN

A lot of that stuff is really expensive.

HELEN

That's what I, I think that's what I am trying to aim for these days as well, I like I've got this velvet blazer on right now and a shirt and then these leather look jeans and Doc Martins.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Nice! Sick.

MARISA

Very nice.

SASHA

Nice.

ANNIE

Yeah!

NATHAN

Mmhm, mmhm. And it's got to come with a... if you can manage getting a nice hat like black Americans know how to get a nice hat, I don't know where I can get a nice hat here, my head be huge.

(Laughter)

This barely fits me.

(Laughter)

HELEN

My head is too big. My head is too big, no hat will suit me unless it's a beany.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

You know, I'm sure that there are hats for our head sizes out there...

(Laughter)

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...but I would have to like go overseas, go on like an unchartered Indiana Jones looking journey across the globe to find something that fits this globe that the rest of my body is attached too.

(Laughter)

But, yeah, these days it's much more witchy because I, as a kid, didn't know that black people could be goths, because I never saw one.

(Laughter)

So, now I get to live out my teenager goth phase every day. I'm sad that we don't have a hot topic because I would be all over that as an adult!

(Laughter)

Shameful, but I would, I would find some way to incorporate it.

This is from Kill Star actually I think which is I guess a hot topic for fashion adults.

(Laughter)

So, I guess I'm still living that. So, yeah, yeah we're mostly like librarian goth these days I think. Oh no there's a term for that, dark academia.

HELEN

Dark academia!

(Laughter)

MARISA

Argh, yes!

ANNIE

Which is... I was going to get onto that because that's where I've been... that's the road I've been heading down with the like the sort of like oh yes, I had a friend when I first started wearing this like the suits daily look that I've been doing. I had a friend who I hung out with for the first time since I got into it who told me that I looked like a... the like third year professor that everyone in the class of any gender has a crush on but nobody wants to talk about it...

(Laughter)

...and like gave me this whole like description of the thing and I was like, that's the aesthetic right there, except with more tattoos that's all I want.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Marisa, Sasha any thoughts on how you developed your own sense of style other than what we've already said?

MARISA

I think mine was kind of like a very like abrupt development because I went for such a long time of just thinking that maybe other than like earrings just being like oh fashion's not for me blah blah blah, but when I went through university and started coming out both as you know pansexual and as non-binary. I kind of went through like a very dramatic like going from jeans and graphic tees to cutting off all my hair and buying like a bunch of things at second hand stores and...

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

MARISA

...I'll be honest that a lot of it was pretty bad off the top, but it was really fun to get to actually play around and develop that sense, especially as an adult where you can buy what you want.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

(Laughter)

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I am not at the cutting off all my hair stage now because I'm currently in the growing my hair very long stage with these locks, but when they are too long, and I am bored of them I will shave my head.

NATHAN

Oh, yeah.

HELEN

Absolutely. I've argh, I've always wanted to.

SASHA

Shaving my head was so fun.

(Laughter)

MARISA

Yeah, it was scary at first because you're like what if I don't look good and then afterwards you're like oh, oh, okay, alright.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

I mean Skunk Anansie is out here just with no hair at all looking gorgeous, so yeah, yeah, absolutely.

HELEN

Yes.

Any other thoughts Sasha?

SASHA

Uh, yeah I feel like what Nathan said about style not being a fixed thing you know like I feel like I am at a particular point on my style journey right now but I am under no illusions if that is going to last.

Yeah, I think for me I think my kind of style evolution was a little bit weird because when I... okay so, when I was about 11 or 12 and I was like not allowed to have gender feelings anymore but also was starting to have a lot of gender feelings.

(Laughter)

I also watched the films Legally Blonde and Miss Congeniality.

MARISA

Yes!

SASHA

And those films are fantastic! They're brilliant films I love them.

(Laughter)

And I think I kind of like watched these films and learned to admire a type of femininity that I had previously kind of just dismissed before, and so I started trying out girly things, and it was really fun and also I feel like when I tried out all these girly things when I put myself in these like stiff vintage dresses or you know big makeup or what have you. It felt like I was fooling people around me, like for me it's always been that like I look in the mirror and it feels like I am somehow failing at being a woman and I can't put my finger on why, like that's how it had felt. Or failing at being a girl because I was about 14 at this point, and so I just like I basically lived ten to 15 years like in drag all the time...

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

...and I was really into like vintage 40s to 60s looks and like very strong silhouettes with like nipped in waists and pencil skirts or big circle skirts and little blazers and all with like high heels and all that, I absolutely loved it, and I made a lot of my own clothes so I got very into like vintage repro patterns and things like that.

ANNIE

Cool.

HELEN

Nice.

SASHA

So I could go like as cartoony as I wanted with it, and I genuinely did have some outfits that were like that were basically just drag that I would wear just about the place and it was great fun...

(Laughter)

...and it wasn't me, it was a costume, but it was a way of armouring myself against what I thought people would perceive.

NATHAN

Sure.

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

You know, and but it was very playful, because it wasn't, I wasn't getting dressed to get dressed I was creating a character I was presenting a front so it was a bit like costume design, and so I think now that I've kind of realised I'm non-binary and I've come out and I've kind of realised what's going on there. Yeah, now I think that my style I'm still in a place where I'm enjoying being

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more low key, and for a while I kind of like shunned that but now I'm starting to...

Like with the dresses thing, like I now have four dresses, for a while I was like no dresses!

(Laughter)

They weren't me after all...

NATHAN

(laughs) no capes!

SASHA

...but now it's like no okay they were it's just that if I'm going to have a dress it's got to have a stretchy waist, but yeah now I'm kind of I think I've figured out I quite like to be fem in kind of a punky way with an edge you know.

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

Also, I got really into weightlifting like six months ago.

MARISA

Oo, nice.

SASHA

So, I've been really enjoying like sleeveless bro tanks.

ANNIE

Yes.

(Laughter)

SASHA

...and I've developed this whole look that is like muscle tees and my arms will not be contained and I'm ready for the gym.

(Laughter)

Which is not a look that I've ever considered me before, but I am really enjoying it, it's a lot fun.

ANNIE

I can relate a lot to the idea of using your style as like an armour against that like...

HELEN

Yes.

ANNIE

But I did it in a very opposite way of that, which was like when I started to have... because even though I was like in retrospect very clearly having a lot of like dysphoric feelings as a teenager I didn't identify them until I was in my like early to mid-20s, like I was a very, very late to the game of figuring out what this was I just kind of... even if I'd had a thing that would have made me realise it and packed it away and forgotten it for six years or whatever right; and so I spent most of my life to this point dressing as, like, as with no thought put into it whatsoever as possible, like I just wore jeans and graphic tees every day for decades, you know what I mean?

MARISA

Yeah.

ANNIE

If I didn't have to wear something nice to go somewhere I wouldn't because I didn't want to have to just like engage with that sort of thing.

HELEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And I would think about it as being like well this is like I dress for like comfort and I put like you know the shirts that I have I like well enough so that's fine that's as far as I need to go with it, I just want to be comfort- and then like you sort of try to now unpack all of that like I'm only really... I'm very early on in

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like self-discovery in what my own style is because like trying to go back and unpack all of that like, no I don't care about clothes at all this doesn't and it's like well, I very much did I just didn't want too, so I forced myself to do nothing about it.

HELEN, MARISA, SASHA AND NATHAN

Yeah.

HELEN

Yeah, I totally hear you on that.

I'm thinking how much I did not... I knew this was going to be a personal topic and now I'm like oh actually, this is deeply, deeply personal.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Ah, you didn't know how raw it was going to get today, I see, I see I understand.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Because like I have been lots and lots of different weights in my life as well, and that has always made my style fluctuate because for a long time I was having to buy basically an entire new wardrobe every couple of years either in

one direction or the other and that really affected what I thought I could wear too.

NATHAN

And what would just be available as well, I guess.

MARISA

Yeah.

HELEN

Yes, that too. Like I am finding now that it's a lot easier to wear what I want because online shopping is such a big thing, way more than it was like ten years ago.

MARISA

Yeah.

HELEN

I went through a long period of like only getting stuff from eBay, but also I started working in offices, and I had a very specific idea of what a person who works in an office would wear.

(Laughter)

So, I actually like, I was all skirts and dresses for a really long time, partly because they were really easy to put on, like I wore a dress for the first time in

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a long time on Halloween and I was like “oh! I just put one thing on and it was done!”

(Laughter)

Oh, that’s kind of... I remember this.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Layering...I don’t know her.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah, exactly.

(Laughter)

Although like, that particular outfit that was a dress and a crown and like a faux fur leopard-print stole thing.

NATHAN

Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Um, what was the point of saying this...I think the point of me saying this was that lots of things are going to affect your style in your life and often you don't realise that's what happened until you look back on it.

MARISA

Yeah.

SASHA

Yeah.

NATHAN

Inciting incidents yeah, yeah, yeah.

HELEN

Yes. Yeah, and suddenly you open your wardrobe and you're like "Oh! When did this happen?!"

(Laughter)

Do you know what I think it's time to take a little break, and when we come back I want to talk about our favourite actual items of clothing and accessories and stuff, because I want to hear what we've all got.

NATHAN

Right, okay.

HELEN

Alright, back in a second.

[BREAK]

HELEN

And welcome back.

Okay so now let's get into some of the nitty gritty. Who wants to tell me what your favourite item of clothing or accessory is? I am all ears.

NATHAN

Ooooo.

MARISA

Just one?

NATHAN

Yeah, I know right.

(Laughter)

SASHA

I didn't realise I'd have to pick one.

HELEN

Okay.

NATHAN

Actually, no we can do that.

HELEN

One to three.

MARISA

(Laughter)

Okay.

NATHAN

We can do that because I'm actually wearing some of my favourite accessories literally right now.

The earring I'm currently wearing I think is probably one of my favourite accessories because just before lockdown started, well we'll weave a very short tale.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Okay.

NATHAN

Going on one of the final gay brunches because, pandemic was swiftly approaching not that we knew; and a couple mimosas in, a friend messages me and is like “I’m going to be going into town to do some fabric shopping and also me and my friends are going to get our ears pierced, do you want in?” and I’m like YEAH! Yeah, I wanted my ears pierced for ages, but I figured it would be really painful...

(Laughter)

...and I’m a baby and didn’t want to do it...

(Laughter)

...but the idea of having a big dangly earring was like oo this is the thing that I think I would really enjoy...

HELEN

Yes.

NATHAN

...and the entire process of that took forever for it to heal despite me taking good care of it, but the moment I was able to put something like long and dangly in my ear, and I'm like, "Oh! Gender!"

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yes.

(Laughter)

There's sooo much gender in earrings.

MARISA

Yes.

NATHAN

And this particular piece from Vitaly was recommended by like a non-binary fashion You Tuber, they dress mostly masc, but were giving a wide variety of different... because I don't wear much jewellery at all, and I was like I would like to, I figure I'm now in this stage of my life where having spent two and whatever years in the panini where I have basically abandoned all my fashion sensibilities, I normally only wear dress shirts. At some point I made a New Year's resolution to just wear dress shirts more and tee shirts less, and I just committed without thinking about it too hard.

(Laughter)

...but when you are just rolling out of bed to your computer to work and then rolling from your computer back to bed again everyday for a period of time.

HELEN

Yeah.

NATHAN

The process of wearing clothes that are nice, feels pointless...

MARISA, ANNIE & HELEN

Yes.

NATHAN

So, I was just wearing tee shirts and pyjama bottoms for like a year.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

NATHAN

So, I was like I am going to buy a nice gender item for myself, maybe now is the time where I care about jewellery and got this, wasn't cheap but I was in the

position to buy a nice statement piece and went [gasps] no this feels great, I don't normally wear necklaces, this necklace is great, yeah we love this, this is now... I don't get to wear it super often because I am still in the process of hey I'm just in a work call on Zoom y'all already know what I look like you don't need to see...,

(Laughter)

Although I must say for the period of time where we were slowly going back into the office again, I am sure other people were like in the full work from home thing and then it was gradually to maybe working some days in the office and then Omicron happened and everyone was like no, no, no, no never mind...

(Laughter)

...but for that period of time, I was coming in with the biggest earrings. I was dressing pretty masc, but I was kind of like, I don't need to explain he/they to you so I'm just going to come in, in masc clothes, painted nails and a big earring and y'all can do the mental maths, you can do the sudoku and work out what's going on with my...

(Laughter)

SASHA

It's like an illustrated guide to pronouns.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Gender is an endless sudoku.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

So, yeah, yeah, yeah big dangling earring – favourite accessory.

HELEN

Excellent.

SASHA

You said in the break we were going to show some of our favourite things.

HELEN

Oh, yeah.

SASHA

So, I've put some of them in a pile on the floor and by putting some of them in a pile on the floor I went passed my laundry and picked up the ones that were in the laundry and put those on the pile on the floor...

(Laughter)

...and the rest... the clean ones are still hanging up but...

NATHAN

Transplanted.

SASHA

Yeah.

So, I... the peninsula happened, and then about nine months into the peninsula I quit my job and went full time self-employed so...

MARISA

Yay.

SASHA

I have a) no office to go to, except my own house; and b) no colleagues that I have to like look professional for, so I was spending a lot of time wearing my pyjamas and then putting a big jumper over that whenever I had to go on a call. So, I got myself these (oh, I've lost the top, hang on) it's instead of a dress, it's these like wide legged...

NATHAN

Ooo.

ANNIE

Oh, wow.

Rusty Quill - EGSM027 - Style

HELEN

Oh! I think I've seen you in those.

MARISA

Those look so comfy.

SASHA

...trousers with this like long sleeved top...

MARISA

Yeah.

SASHA

...they match. They are in the soooooftest fabric...

HELEN

Awww.

SASHA

...and they've got this wide elasticated waistband and they've got pockets...

HELEN

Yes.

SASHA

...and they actually look really stylish. So, that is... I've brought these as one of my favourite things because it makes me feel like I've got a look.

(Laughter)

Even though it is functionally, exactly the same as wearing pyjamas to work.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

You're giving that Hugh Hefner energy, yeah I'm just in pyjamas, it's fine, I;m rich...

(Laughter)

SASHA

Yeah.

HELEN

I think having a look whilst functionally wearing pyjamas, is the goal.

MARISA

Yes. Yes.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Marisa, what about you?

MARISA

So, yeah, I've kind of been in a similar situation as Sasha where I also work for myself and work from home. So, I've swung super hard into like body mod, so I have a tattoo, I have 11 piercings and I have... I tend to go pretty hard with the designs in my hair, because it's like a way to show off style without you know still being comfortable at home and also I have a picture of, my hair doesn't quite look like this anymore but...

NATHAN

It'll be in the show notes, it's fine.

(Laughter)

MARISA

Yes.

I think I'm going to send these pictures.

Ah, this was my hair when I went to a fashion show and for the audience it's a bunch of leaves, kind of carved into my hair.

SASHA

Ooo.

Rusty Quill - EGSM027 - Style

HELEN

Aw, that's pretty.

ANNIE

Oh wow.

MARISA

...to match this feature.

HELEN

Oh, you look great!

SASHA

Oh, look at that, that looks amazing!

ANNIE

Jacket is...

MARISA

So, I really like to match my hair and my jewellery to my outfits, but even then, when I am still working from home I put a lot more attention into my hair and jewellery than I do with my clothes.

HELEN

Yeah.

MARISA

...and I'm hoping that once Omicron calms down a) I can finally get a haircut because it's been to two months but b) I want more piercings and tattoos.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

So, as half of you know, my laptop currently is a little bit broken, I spilled tea on it last Saturday.

(Laughter)

SASHA

I knew it was broken but I didn't know that's why.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yep!

(Laughter)

Don't have tea and work in bed again.

(Laughter)

SASHA

I'm sorry I shouldn't laugh it's dreadful that your laptop's broken.

HELEN

And that is... the laptop is now working fine apart from the keyboard and the video call functions which is why I'm doing the Skype call from my phone.

So, I took it into London on Saturday to get it fixed and then I was like well I'm in London on a Saturday so I might as well do something. So I went to Camden Town, got a bit drunk and got a helix piercing.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Oh.

MARISA

Yes, nice.

HELEN

So, my headphones now have to sit a little bit oddly because I don't want to be putting pressure on it, but yeah, I want to also get more piercings I've wanted an eyebrow piercing for a really long time.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Ooo.

MARISA

Ooo, yeah.

SASHA

Oh, that would really suit you, you'd look so cool.

MARISA

Yeah.

HELEN

I know, I know I would, my mum would have a fit.

(Laughter)

Annie, how about you?

ANNIE

My favourite item is almost more of like a category for me, I'm actually wearing one of them right now which is, I really enjoy very loud button downs...

MARISA

Yeah.

ANNIE

...one way or another. I like button downs with ridiculous patterns or with like... because one of the things I've been having a lot of fun playing with is like being semi-formal in the way of like work stuff, right? If I'm wearing a button down and a nice pair of slacks or whatever no one can technically get mad at me but if I'm doing that in a way...

(Laughter)

...where it's also like crazy patterns and something very expressive and not necessarily "professional" that I am also still... I kind of get kind of that way where no one can actually do or say anything about it. So, like the current shirt I'm wearing has like skulls and like spell books and like all bunch of witchy stuff all over it and there's like little pieces of Halloween candy and stuff.

HELEN

(gleefully) Hee hee.

ANNIE

And I like wearing like you know I have this one I've got like I've got shirts with like I've a salmon pink shirt with T-Rexs on it.

MARISA

Ooo.

ANNIE

I have a navy blue shirt covered in bananas like Warhol style bananas.

(Laughter)

I have a white high collar button down with a trans-coloured roller skates all over it.

MARISA

Ooo.

ANNIE

Like, I just... I try and find button downs with ridiculous patterns on them and then put those in something that would otherwise be kind of formal and professional, that's one of my favourite things.

HELEN

You are all so cool.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

We are, we are cool!

HELEN

You've all just told me about the coolest things I can imagine.

SASHA

Helen, I brought fake PJs!

(Laughter)

HELEN

No, but that's still so cool.

MARISA

They look great and also very comfy.

ANNIE

They look so comfortable.

HELEN

Yes!

I am wearing most of my favourite things right now because this is the first time I'm going out in London, not on emergency laptop repair missions...

(Laughter)

...since before Christmas, and I've already mentioned almost everything that I am wearing apart from I have a little rainbow belt on, and I have this necklace that an ex got me from Brazil, and I was surprised at how me it was.

NATHAN

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

MARISA

Oh, that's pretty.

HELEN

Isn't it pretty. For the listener, it looks a bit like a blue poké ball.

(Laughter)

But it's made of wood and fabric sort of melded together, and it's a big circle thing that I like to wear.

Okay, next thing which I know some of us are very excited to talk about.

(Laughter)

I want to talk about who like... who's style you'd admire like who is like a style inspiration.

NATHAN

Ooo.

HELEN

And I want to make a kind of distinction, this can be either people who you want to dress like, or people whose style you admire but you know you like, it's not for you.

NATHAN

Mm, I feel you.

MARISA

Oh.

HELEN

Yeah, so it can be either or both categories.

NATHAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah. As a performer I kind of define, I describe my aesthetic as like a Grace Jones meets Max Headroom.

(Laughter)

ANNIE

Oh, excellent.

HELEN

Oh.

NATHAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah like a nubian queen also does not exist is a digital construct do not perceive me.

(Laughter)

But like funnily enough, that like now I would probably say that my kind of like my stud big star icon is Dorian Electra, the like hyper pop musician, who does really elaborate non-binary drag king stuff, with a very like sharp pencil moustache drawn on iconic – love that, but it was actually Lenny Kravitz that I think put me on the style journey that I currently am on now.

HELEN

(gasps)

Very good.

NATHAN

Back in what, 2012 when yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah 2012 when the first Hunger Games movie came out. Was not interested in the books but was like oh, I like going to the cinema I'll go watch this movie of a book I've not seen; and Lenny Kravitz with the really tasteful like gold eyeliner, and I was like, men can do that?! He looks so cool!

(Laughter)

And yeah, that just set me on the road to being the makeup cannon trash fire that I am today.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Anyone else want to share their fashion inspirations?

MARISA

So, I have one that became an inspiration relatively recently. I went to this fashion show that was specifically for like trans and GNC models and the designer... there were two designers, but I specifically really liked the first one who was I am Toney Leung who basically does deep dives into LGBT fashions so the show that I got to see was all about like flannel and plaid.

(gasps)

ANNIE

Ooo.

SASHA

Oh.

MARISA

So good, I have a video that I'll send in the chat but...

(Laughter)

Basically, first of all, it was just so exciting just to see like LGBT fashion being celebrated, but two, seeing models of all shapes, sizes and genders was really, really cool and that was the first time I'd seen that. So that was like in especially because I was so nit-picky about what I wanted to wear to this event, it was the first time that I really thought about clothing in like what looks good and not what gender are you, and like being able to see like masc bodies with like you know almost foot tall like platform pumps and things like that it was so great so I would say that is like a current new inspiration.

HELEN

Oh, I love that.

Annie, what about you?

ANNIE

A few different and none of them I don't think like well, okay, one celebrity one I can give, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention is Lil Nas X.

NATHAN

Mm.

MARISA

Ah, yes.

SASHA

Argh, so good.

HELEN

Super star.

ANNIE

100%, just a master class in being able to embrace getting a little weird and almost confrontational with it because it's just what you want to wear.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Like he goes... if he wants to go over the top, he goes all the way over the top and then some.

NATHAN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And it's really... I really have so much respect for that of just being like, like let me just take whatever this look that I want to go with is and just make it as extreme as I can and then more extreme, let's just see what comes out of that. I always really admire that.

Other than that, it's all like my fiancé is a style inspiration to me, she's very into... she's very like a cottagecore lesbian like really strong sense of aesthetic in that...

(Laughter)

...and it's adorable and amazing and I love her.

(Laughter)

And like Helen, there's also this like I don't know, it all comes from these very weird like, it comes in bursts rather than as like just I just admire a whole person's style usually.

HELEN

Sure.

ANNIE

So, like it's just like sometimes I will come across like a just somebody posting a selfie on Twitter and I'm just like that right there...

(Laughter)

...like whatever this is that you're doing, that's a style inspiration I'm just like save, save, you know.

HELEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

So, I think that yeah, but other than Lil Nas X, I don't know that I have like any celebrity inspirations.

HELEN

That's okay, it doesn't have to be a celebrity at all, I think it's really... that's really, really, lovely that your fiancé is inspiration, that's so nice.

(Laughter)

Sash, anyone you want to name drop?

SASHA

Like Annie, I think a lot of my style inspiration tends to come from my friends or my family or like who I'm hanging out with. Like when I came out to my brother as non-binary, he asked me something about clothes and I was like oh yeah I think that my style is like you if you were a flamboyant gay man.

(Laughter)

Which I think is true, but also like when I've dated people that I have generally... like a lot of finding like a queer style was like I dated women and then I'd be like oh wait, large khaki shirts - yes please.

(Laughter)

Yeah, I think in terms of celebrities if I could dress somewhere between Cate Blanchett in Ocean's 8.

(gasps)

(Laughter)

Rhianna in Ocean's 8...

HELEN

Yes!

SASHA

...and Taika Waititi, then I would be very happy.

MARISA

That, yeah.

NATHAN

That, oh my god Rhianna in Ocean's 8.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yes, yes, everyone in Ocean's 8 looks so amazing all the time.

SASHA

Oh, didn't they.

MARISA

Yes.

HELEN

What a... just the most fun, like I feel like there are so many films out there where like they're good but they're not fun, but Ocean's 8 was so much fun.

(Laughter)

MARISA

Yes.

SASHA

Yeah, it was not a great film, but it was fun and it looked good, well everyone looked really good.

MARISA

Yeah.

HELEN

Yeah. Yeah, Cate Blanchett's look in that was great.

I have realised now that I have to think about the question, that David Bowie has been a big influence on how I would like to dress.

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Sure, what era, or like all the eras?

MARISA

Like to dress?

HELEN

All of them.

(Laughter)

Rusty Quill - EGSM027 - Style

Like, I think because so much of his aesthetic for a while was like just being like really glam and I love the idea of looking expensive.

(Laughter)

And I love the idea of looking surprising. So, I have that on one side. On the other side, this is going to sound so weird, but I did have a while where I was like, I really like pirates.

(Laughter)

I want to have big billowy shirts and tight black pants.

SASHA

Yeah.

HELEN

That's what I would like.

(Laughter)

SASHA

I had such a pirate phase style wise, yeah.

HELEN

Yeah, where I was watching Black Sails last year I was like, yes! They all look great. They're all covered in dirt and blood and everything but also, they look great.

(Laughter)

But what I want to close on is, what advice would you give to other people who are trying to like develop their own style?

Mine would be that eBay is your friend because you can pick up so much stuff which is like 99p it's great, but I don't know if anyone else has any advice?

NATHAN

Sure, I would say that the trick to fashion and style is making cheapish look expensive.

MARISA

Yeah.

NATHAN

You don't need to buy big brand; and I say this as somebody I've promised myself that when one day when I'm earning Big Money – capital “b” capital “m” - for being an entertainer.

(Laughter)

I'm going to buy myself a pair of Louboutin's and then everything will be set.
But until then...

(Laughter)

Until then... cheap-ish, and that's within in your means because you know...

HELEN

Yes.

NATHAN

While the world of fast fashion has many ethical considerations and stuff about that, sometimes that's the only way that you can buy clothes that look nice for your own budget range, and that is okay...

HELEN

Yeah.

NATHAN

...you know, buying clothes within one's means. If you can thrift absolutely. I can't thrift because nothing is in my size.

(Laughter)

MARISA

Aw.

NATHAN

As a result, I learnt to sew, but again, not everybody is in a position to be able to do those bits of things. So, yeah you know, find cheap clothes that make you happy and then that will become a style in itself, even if it doesn't make sense within those pieces.

ANNIE

Yeah.

NATHAN

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HELEN

I do want to add an addendum on that which is if you can afford to, don't skimp on shoes.

SASHA

Or at the very least learn where do the comfy ones, like...

HELEN

Yes, yeah.

(Laughter)

Anyone else?

MARISA

I think that my advice would be like, don't be scared to try things on at a store that might not normally be your fashion style...

HELEN

Yeah.

MARISA

...because there's definitely been times I've gone to a store and I'll pull something off the rack and be like, ah this looks you know kind of ridiculous, but I kind of like that pattern...

HELEN

Yeah.

MARISA

...and then I'll try it on and be like oh this looks great like I'm gonna get this, and I think like...

(Laughter)

...without having that sense of adventure you're going to kind of like limit your sense of style before you get started.

HELEN

Yes.

MARISA

So, like don't be afraid to try things on especially you know in stores because you don't have to buy it, but maybe you'll find something that is completely out of your comfort zone but you think looks nice.

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

Yeah, I think mine would similarly be try on a bunch of stuff, just try on so much stuff.

HELEN

Yes.

ANNIE

Yeah.

SASHA

And put all the stuff that you try on with all the other bits that you try on, put everything together, but it really only works if you've got enough will power to not then buy all the stuff...

(Laughter)

MARISA

Yeah, that's the hard part.

(Laughter)

SASHA

Which has always been an issue for me, but yeah, like try on a bunch of stuff, and I think also... I mean I'll try and phrase this that it... the problem is this bit of advice sounds like really bad advice.

(Laughter)

It sounds like you know when people say like "oh, choose clothes that flatter your figure" and they always mean a really specific thing with that...

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

...and I really want to be upfront that I am not saying that! But what I am saying is work out how you like things to fit your body.

HELEN

Yeah, yeah.

SASHA

And if something doesn't fit like that, don't get it, because you're not going to wear it. Like, whether it's about how it looks or how it physically feels on you like figure out what fits you the way you like to be fit, and then get things like that.

HELEN

I think that's actually a really good point, yeah; because whenever anyone says, "get things that flatter your figure" they mean "make you look thin!"

(Laughter)

ANNIE

Yeah, right.

MARISA

And like look small.

SASHA

Yeah exactly, I mean like, just as long as you look small and in these particular proportions that we have designated correct...

ANNIE

Right.

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

...and I don't mean that at all!

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah, and I know you don't, but it also makes me laugh these days because I'm like, nothing's going to make me look thin.

(Laughter)

No one is going to turn around and be like "Oh!"

(Laughter)

So instead, I am trying to go for like striking and imposing sometimes and some days I want to look like intimidating and confusing to people.

(Laughter)

ANNIE

Yes.

HELEN

And I think that's very valid of me.

SASHA

Yes.

HELEN

Annie, what about you?

ANNIE

First, I just...yeah, I also want to echo the figure out what the way you want clothes to fit your body is and then angle for that, because and also that was one of the things that took me forever to figure out exactly how I wanted clothes to fit me because I was kind of locked into the idea of the societal norm of a flattering, flattering your figure or whatever, and once I broke out of that and found what I actually wanted my clothes to fit me like, now all of a sudden I have this guide to go off and that's really helped me find stuff a lot faster. The other thing I was going to say is my advice to anybody who wants to experiment with style is, be weird, find whatever...

HELEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

...you think other people will look at you and think you're weird or find whatever you look at and go oh I want to try that on but mm I don't know it's kind of weird. Like, don't run from that impulse, run towards it. If you see something that you're thinking I want to try that but I don't know it's weird, go straight for that and find more things like it.

(Laughter)

Do the thing that is weird because then... and like try it on, I don't necessarily mean you have to spend a bunch of money being bizarre with your fashion...

(Laughter)

...but find the things that you feel weird, or that you think other people will think look weird on you and try them on anyway. Try them out. Give them a spin...

HELEN

Yes.

ANNIE

...and like because that was sort of... like the freer you can get yourself from like expectations or like learn like routines and habits of it and the broader you can go from there, the more chance you have of actually finding a style that works for you.

HELEN

Yeah.

SASHA

The amount of time that I wasted of trying not to look tacky haunts me, honestly!

(Laughter)

ANNIE

Yeah!

SASHA

Now I love to look tacky.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yes.

I've also just realised that I have another practical tip which is... so one of the things that I do is I will comb through an online clothing site in whatever category I'm looking for and I'll bookmark anything that remotely interests me, and then a few days later I will go through and I will eliminate those bookmarks based on whether I still like them, and also basically on that Marie

Rusty Quill - EGSM027 - Style

Kondo thing of like “Does it spark joy in me?” like do I... can I imagine myself wearing this and does it make me feel good, and that helps a lot.

NATHAN

Great.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A third category to add to those two I think, and it’s helped me when I was like oh I can buy statement items and then you fall into the trap of only buying statement items, which is like...

HELEN

Yes!

(Laughter)

SASHA

Yeah.

It’s like I need a black tee shirt, where...

(Laughter)

NATHAN

Mm, but yeah so, the idea is like when it comes to something that’s like oo this is weird and maybe I’m a little intrigued the little thought process is like can I think of three outfits that I can incorporate this in with my existing wardrobe.

HELEN

Oh, that's good.

SASHA

Oh yes, that's such a great...

NATHAN

Because I can't think of three than that really narrows down the number of opportunities I'm going to wear this item and if that item is like a luxury one, why buy a luxury item you will never find an outfit you can wear it with.

(Laughter)

MARISA

Yeah.

ANNIE

True.

NATHAN

So, yeah, yeah, yeah make that little mental vision of kind of like oo this is super sexy, oo this is super stylish - what other items can I pair with that, like I'm looking at the list of clothes in Animal Crossing and throwing them together.

(Laughter)

HELEN

God, I can't believe that's the first time that we've said the word sexy on this.

ANNIE

I know.

NATHAN

I was weighing it up on whether that would like trip word sensors that you're kind of aiming for, or not, so I resisted.

(Laughter)

HELEN

Sexy is not a swear word, we can absolutely say that and yes, looking sexy is also very valid to feel is important to your own sense of style and one's definition of sexy can be whatever you want it to be.

Okay, we're now out of the time. I don't... this might be my favourite episode so far...

NATHAN

Yeah!

HELEN

(Laughter)

Rusty Quill - EGSM027 - Style

...this season, this has been so good, thank you so, so, so much for coming on and talking about this with me. I've had so much fun.

Thank you listener also, for listening. I'm going to see you in the next episode, but for now it is goodbye from me, goodbye and it is goodbye from everyone else, do you all want to say goodbye...

NATHAN

[sighs] farewell, goodbye!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

HELEN

Enthusiasm is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial share alike 4.0 international license. It is directed by Helen Gould, produced by Lowri Ann Davies, with Executive Producers Alexander J Newall and April Sumner, and edited by Marisa Ewing, Tessa Vroom, and Catherine Rinella. Thanks for listening.

[Show Theme – Outro Ends]

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