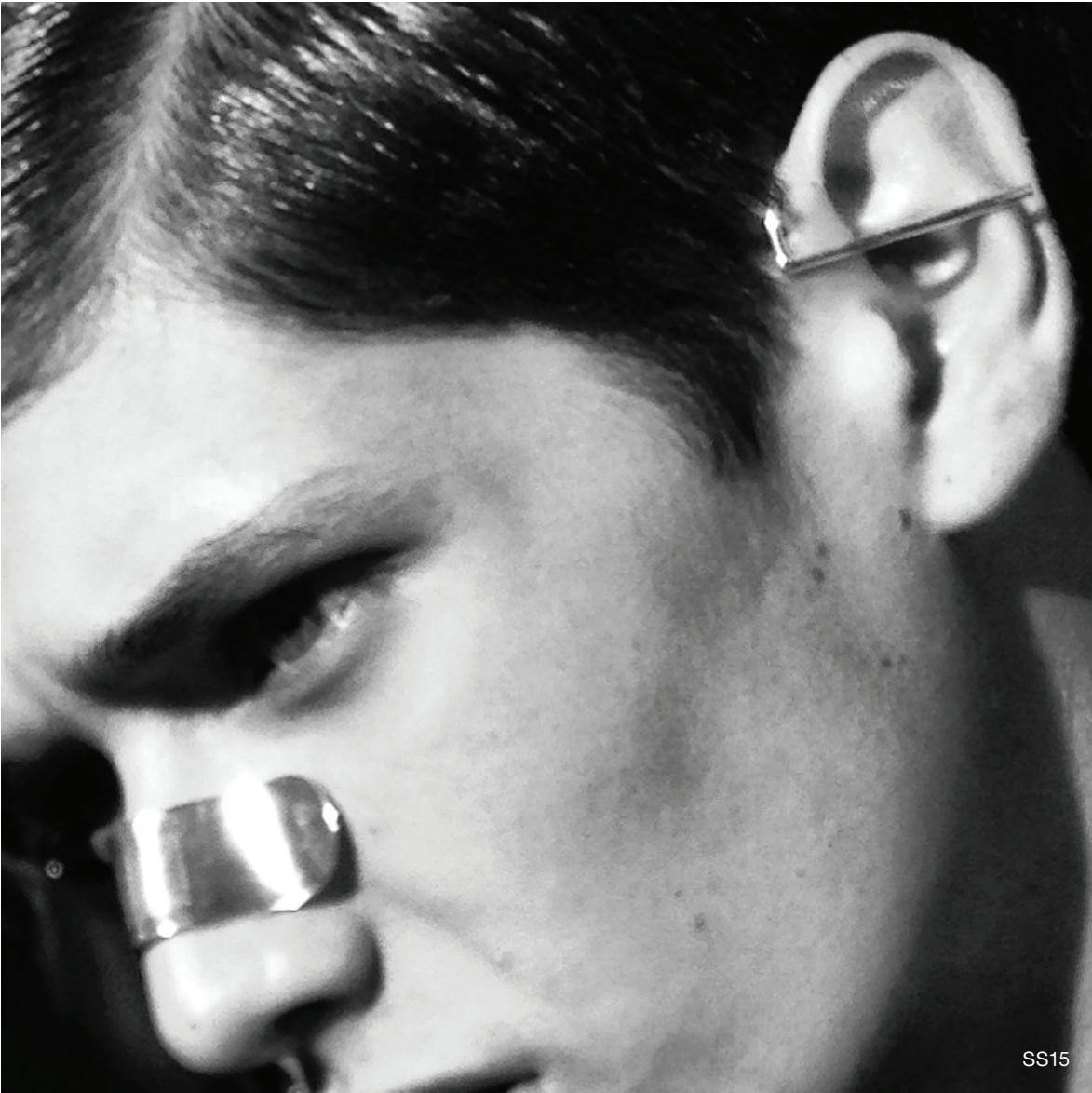


JEWELLERY THAT COMES IN MEN’S SIZES

As dashing and glitzy as it may be, we haven’t been treated to any significant display of jewelry during men’s fashion week for a long time now — we had almost learnt to hope for no more than tiepins or the occasional cufflink. However, since a couple of seasons back, a much more thrilling appointment has found its way onto our schedules. As bright and brave as Lulu Kennedy’s Fashion East pupils tend to be, Alan Crocetti has made charms into his signature world. For SS15, his reference was David Fincher’s generational hit *Fight Club*, a film that fifteen years later carries the dirty, slightly shiny patina of underexposed Kodak film stock, and all the visceral appeal of the ‘90s. He’s the guy of those wicked AW14 mouthpieces, of the bullet rings, knuckledusters, and silver plaster casts, with a soft spot for rubies and pearls. His aim is to defy the stereotypes of masculinity as we know it, and capture the whole spectrum of a modern man’s wills. We’re complex creatures, as Tyler Durden would say, “sticking feathers up your butt does not make you a chicken.” There’s so much yet to explore.

By Silvia Bombardini



SS15

Silvia Bombardini: You were once, and not that long ago, a womenswear student at the prestigious Central Saint Martins. What kind of clothes did you wish for back then, who were your idols and muses? Do you remember the moment when you decided that you would actually go into jewelry, instead?
Alan Crocetti: I used to wish for clothes I could not buy and have idols who were far out of reach. Desire back then was more like a fantasy. I still love Helmut Lang. It’s my friends now who inspire me a lot; their admiration is vital. I didn’t really decide I was going into jewelry. I’ve always enjoyed design as a whole. Jewelry happened to me when I was developing my final collection at CSM. I just fell in love with the whole process.

SB: Looking even further back, you’ve said before that, “jewelry always turned [you] on.” Can you recall the first gem to ever do so, to catch your eye like a magpie’s treasure? Perhaps as a child, something your dad wore, or that you saw on an infomercial on TV, in a shop window, or a catalogue?
AC: In the past, professionals used to have these designated stones according to their occupation, and my grandfather was a lawyer so he had this amazing ruby ring that he used to wear all the time. That’s my first memory of menswear jewelry and I’m glad my first time was with a ruby.

SB: As a practice, jewelry making finds itself curiously nestled in that limbo between the seasonal whims and swings of fashion and a much more rigorous, almost fetishized concern with timelessness and antiquity. How do you see it yourself, and how do you wear your own?
AC: Only time can dictate timelessness, but I like to think I create pieces that will always be appreciated. They don’t just belong to a time and place, they have a whole story surrounding them.

SB: To add to this traditional ambivalence, newer tendencies are known to take part in braver challenges, teasing along thinner lines between formalwear and street style, or bygone notions of gender. Take your fascination with pearls, the ones we’ve seen on the runway with Bobby Abley’s “Prince Charming” collection: what do you love the most about them?
AC: Pearls are an old love affair of mine. My mom has always worn them and I’ve always been fascinated by them. Something so pure, beautiful, and strong shouldn’t be classified or categorized in gender. We all live off references, and I like the idea of pushing them forward. I do want menswear to get out of the “men’s wear” hole that it has been stuck in, jewelry-wise. Men are not as strong or as simple as they’ve been portrayed and there’s a distinctive lack of sensitivity about it. I design jewelry, and it comes in men’s sizes.

SB: You’ve teamed up with Bobby Abley again for AW14, probably his most iconic season to date. What can you tell me about the conflicts and pleasures of working

alongside someone else’s talent, and how did you first meet Bobby? Is there anyone else in particular whom you would love to work with in the future?
AC: Working with Bobby was amazing, he basically showed me what he was going for with the collection and I showed him what I had in mind. It was simple and natural. There are a few more designers and artists I would like to collaborate with, but I’d rather keep those names to myself for now.

SB: I read that those famed mouthpieces that held the models’ lips into perfectly shaped Os were actually inspired by Munch’s *Scream*, and not intended in a sexual way — you’ll have to forgive the sinful mind of the fashion crowd. May I ask though if the pieces themselves were for the show or to be sold, if they did, and in what context or by whom would you like to see them worn?
AC: They were showpieces, but I got a few requests and interest in purchasing them. I don’t think people will actually wear them but it’s a beautiful piece to collect.

SB: You define your work as “body conscious,” and a steely preoccupation with anatomy, on a more invasive level than might be usual, does indeed recur through the seasons — from those silver braces to the bandages and bruises of SS15. Almost as if your jewelry has shifted from the ornamental to the structural, but kept the pearls. Would you tell me something about your creative process, where do your ideas come from, and what’s a typical day at your studio like?
AC: I usually have an idea that sets a tone, then I turn to books, films, documentaries... art, architecture, science, design, they all intertwine. Experimenting with shapes, materials and even drawing all over my hands. There’s no typical day when you’re developing an idea. Everything is unpredictable.

SB: Showcasing jewelry is never easy, especially on fashion week days, when we’re all jumpy and late, and prone to notice only what’s big enough to stand in our way. Although, admittedly, we’ll always be sensitive to the call of sparkles, and have learnt to grant any Fashion East presentation its special spot on our timetables. It was in this setting that you unveiled your “Fixation” collection in London last June: how did you prepare yourself for it, and what has such exposure meant for your brand since then?
AC: I had a great team working with me. Fashion East made everything that could have seemed to be unfeasible, possible. It took two intense months to put the jewelry, set, garments, models, hairdos, and make-up together but it was an amazing experience and the response has been unbelievable.

SB: “To care only for well-being seems to me positively ill-bred. Whether it’s good or bad, it is sometimes very pleasant, too, to smash things,” Dostoevsky wrote in *Notes from Underground*. And that’s the core of it, perhaps, of “Fixation,” as was fighting for our guys in *Fight Club*. What’s your personal one

then, and how much do you tend to identify with these characters you design for?
AC: My fixations are many. I’m way too sedentary now for my taste, and all my fixation and focus are going to my brand, but I love swimming for example and I could go for a swim several times in one day . . . My obsessions do come and go though, I’m not a really steady person and I carry this into my brand too. It varies, and it’s not bound to one single path. I like to explore diversity and divergence; of course like everything else in life it’s got to flow. That’s how I identify with those guys and the characters I design for: it’s all about desiring, possessing, and letting go — not letting go of the jewelry but letting go of a state of being – yet staying true to who you are and how you feel.

SB: Thanks to the Red Bull Catwalk Studio initiative, young Irish rapper Rejjie Snow performed live at the event. Regardless of their gender, rappers are known to be the most adamant, audacious lovers of blingy jewelry on the planet after Liberace. But what kind of music do you listen to while you work, and who would you like to bring your designs on stage?
AC: I listen to all sorts of music. Lots of great and not so great music too... I like the balance. It would be great to see Abel Tesfaye a.k.a. The Weeknd wearing one of my pieces.

SB: Finally, what happens next? Are you already working on something new, or what are your plans, projects and dreams for the season to come?
AC: AW15’s title is already set. Now I’m working on the plot. Let’s say that’s my current project and dream.

www.alancrocetti.com



SS15