

LOVE

PRETTY
LITTLE
UPSTARTS

MAYA HAWKE
LUCAS HEDGECOCK
RICHIE MERRILL
LOLA LEWIS
RODARTE
ELLE FANNING

MAYA HAWKE BY WILLY VANDERPERRE
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*The queer club icon, DJ, artist
and gallery producer has
prevailed after a bizarre legal
battle with Italian butchers*

WRITER / REBA MAYBURY

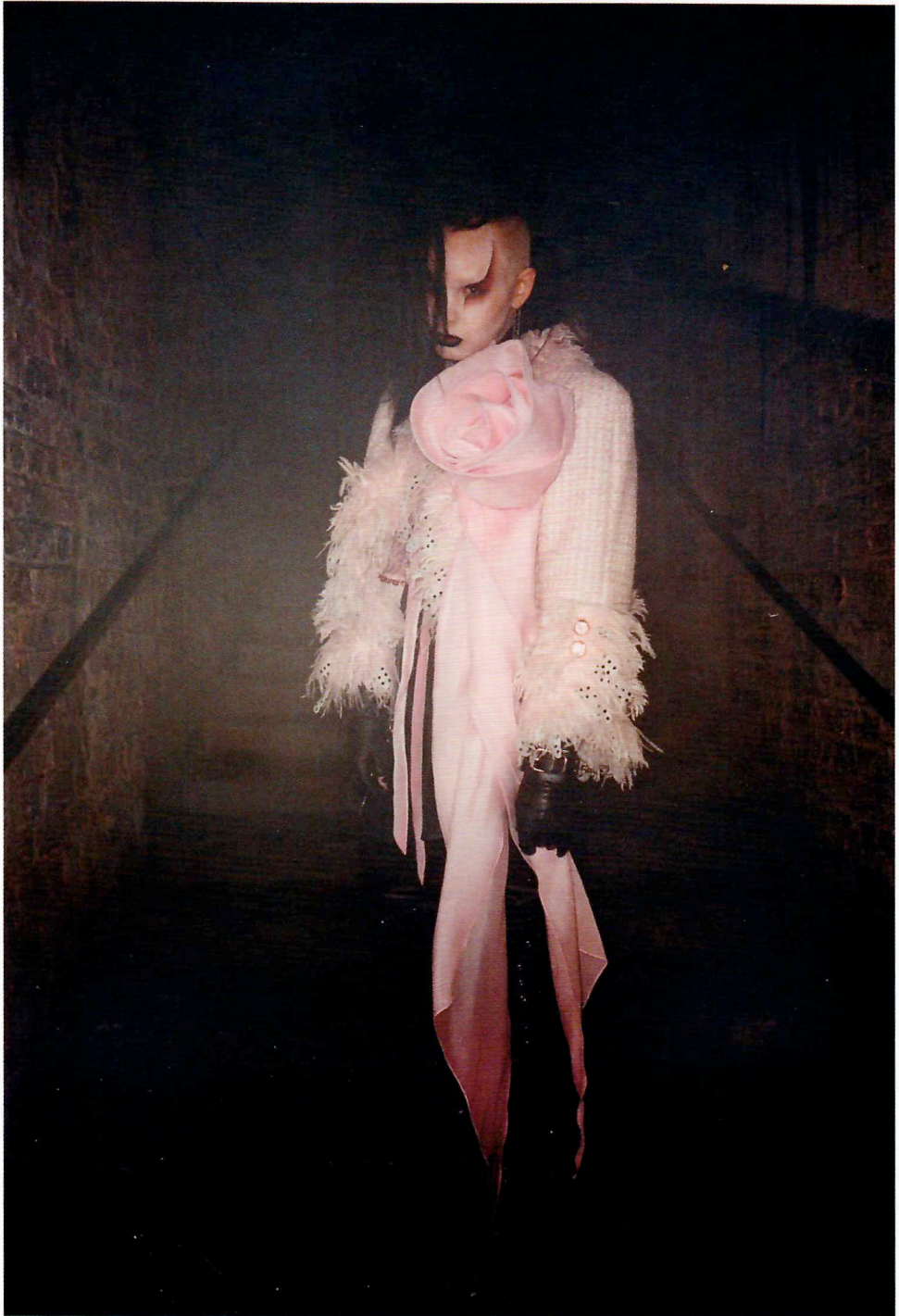
Parma Ham does not want you to question them about how they do their hair. ‘Some things are better kept within the subculture,’ they tell me as we catch up over the phone. We soon decide that other things are also better left unsaid: their age and their home town are no more or less interesting than being summarised as being ‘young’ and taking place in a banal home county – a place of endless inspiration for Parma and one they will never return to because of the profound levels of boredom. Parma Ham has never actually eaten Parma ham: in fact they are vegan, which spurred them on to choose a meat-related name because they enjoy its element of disgust. After changing their online name to this Italian dry-cured pig-related entity, they decided to change their name by deed poll in real life too, so Facebook wouldn’t try to challenge them over the legitimacy of their expression.

Parma ham is like champagne – the term is registered under the European Union’s Protected Food Names scheme and its use is restricted, so the producers of Parma ham tried to sue Parma Ham earlier this year for infringement of the rules. They received a strongly worded three-page letter which reflected on the brilliance of the foodstuff and demanded that Parma Ham hand over all of their social media. Parma Ham received legal advice and has since overcome the producers’ demands. There is a political aspect to such legal battles: in a world where trans identity is under attack, being able to change your name is an important right. We can and should be able to be whoever we want.

The night is critical to Parma Ham, they say: they work best then. They are currently working on curating an art show at Lethal Amounts gallery in Los Angeles on the subject of how to protest about the censorship of art online and, more specifically, in social media. Parma is working mainly with self-taught artists and the majority of them are trans or gender non-conforming. The inspiration for the show is how mainstream gender is coerced online, and how many of Parma’s allies and friends are being censored and even erased from social media because of their refusal to conform to ‘pleasant’ ideas of the human body. The show will eventually travel to New York and London, too, and will showcase the work of such non-conforming personalities as Latex Lucifer, Fecal Matter and Salvia. In short, Parma Ham represents the qualities that London has always stood for: progressive and humorous self-expression – qualities that are needed now more than ever in a city being engulfed by sterile gentrification and a politics based on aimless greed.

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PARMA HAM



Parma Ham wears cropped fringe jacket, tie-neck blouse, dressy trousers and large sash rosette all by MARC JACOBS; boater hat with veil by STEPHEN JONES FOR MARC JACOBS; black leather gloves, black leather boots and jewellery all Parma Ham's own