



*Danielle Levitt*

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"THE FIRST TIME I WORKED WITH DANIELLE WAS WHEN I ASKED HER TO DOCUMENT MY SPRING/SUMMER 2014 PARIS RUNWAY SHOW, TITLED 'VICIOUS'. I HAD ASKED FOUR STEP GROUPS FROM THE NEW YORK/WASHINGTON AREA OF THE U.S. TO CREATE A ROUTINE WHERE THEY WOULD PERFORM AS SEPARATE TEAMS AND FINALLY MERGE ALL WHILE WEARING THE COLLECTION. IT WAS A SHOW THAT TOUCHED ON BLACK CULTURE AND THE QUESTION OF MY APPROPRIATION OF IT, WOMEN'S STEREOTYPED BODY IMAGE IN THE FASHION WORLD, AND THE BEAUTY OF GRACE UNDER PRESSURE. STEP ROUTINES EVOLVED FROM RACIAL TENSIONS DURING COLLEGE INTEGRATION IN THE SIXTIES, BUT THE IDEA OF UNITING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY IS SOMETHING THAT CAN RESONATE WITH EVERYONE.

I HAD SEEN THIS SAME IDEA IN DANIELLE'S WORK. I HAD SEEN HER INTEREST IN SUBCULTURES AND ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES — FROM TEENAGE WOLF PACKS AND THRASHCORE TRIBES TO SENIOR BURLEQUE PERFORMERS AND RADICAL FAIRIES, ALL GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO HAD FOUND ONE OTHER AND COMMITTED TO A COMMON IDEAL. I SAW HER USE AN EMPATHETIC AND LOVING EYE. THIS NEED TO BOND AND CONNECT IS ONE OF LIFE'S FUNDAMENTAL URGES, AND SATISFYING IT WITH A BOLD GESTURE ALWAYS MEETS WITH MY ENTHUSIASM. DANIELLE'S TOO.

HER CRISP, CLEAR, SATURATED COLORS ARE THE OPPOSITE OF THE MURKINESS I SUSPECT PEOPLE WOULD EXPECT FROM ME, AND THERE IS A WARM BUT SHREWD REGISTRATION OF AN INTIMATE MICRO-MOMENT IN A PERSON'S FACE THAT ONLY SOMEONE WITH PERCEPTION BASED ON KINDNESS CAN CLOCK.

DANIELLE'S IMAGERY HAS A CLEAR-EYED HONESTY AND TENDERNESS THAT I WANT TO ALIGN MYSELF WITH AND ENDORSE. THE WAY SHE HAS CAPTURED WHAT I DO IS EXACTLY HOW I WANT IT TO BE REMEMBERED."

WHEN I WROTE THAT INTRODUCTION 5 YEARS AGO, I HAD KNOWN AND WORKED WITH DANIELLE FOR 5 YEARS, BRINGING US TO A TOTAL OF 10 YEARS OF WORK SUMMARIZED IN 2 BOOKS. 10 OUT OF 25 YEARS OF MY LABEL'S EXISTENCE.

INCLUDED IN THIS BOOK IS OUR COVID QUARTET — THE SHOWS WE HELD FOR NO AUDIENCES ON VENICE'S LIDO ISLAND. I LIVE THERE ALL SUMMER AND SINCE OUR FACTORY IS A 2-HOUR DRIVE AWAY, WE WERE ABLE TO PULL TOGETHER THOSE SHOWS WITH OUR FACTORY TEAM INSTEAD OF THE ARMIES OF DRESSERS AND HAIR AND MAKEUP AND PRESS FORCES THAT USUALLY CONVENE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD DURING OUR PARIS SHOWS.

OUR SKELETON FACTORY CREW WAS THERE TO SEE THE COLLECTIONS FROM THEIR STUDIO INCEPTIONS TO THE FINAL PRESENTATIONS IN A COMPLETELY NEW WAY — OUR HEAD OF THE DESIGN STUDIO TOOK TURNS WITH ME DOING HAIR, OUR HEAD OF COLLECTIONS ORGANIZED THE RUNNING ORDER, OUR PATTERNMAKING TEAM HELPED THE MODELS WITH THEIR CHANGES, AND THERE WAS DANIELLE IN HER IMPROVISED SHOOTING CORNER TWERKING AND ENERGIZING THE MODELS BEING FANNED WITH A TRASH CAN LID IN LIEU OF A WIND MACHINE.

WE ALL FELT THAT WE WERE FACING AN UNCOMFORTABLE, UNCERTAIN MOMENT WITH OUR VERY BEST EFFORTS ALL TOGETHER AND THESE WILL REMAIN SOME OF THE MOST MOVING EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE.

THESE 2 BOOKS ALSO OWE A LOT TO THE LOVINGLY ATTENTIVE WORK OF ANGUS MUNRO, WHO HAS BEEN THE CASTING DIRECTOR AND SO MUCH MORE FOR ALL OF THESE SHOWS — HE WAS THE ONE OPERATING THE TRASH CAN LID WIND MACHINE. HIS EYE AND DEVOTED CARE IN GETTING THE CASTING JUST RIGHT IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THIS RECORD OF A BRIEF FOOTNOTE IN THE HISTORY OF FASHION THAT WE WILL BE LEAVING BEHIND.

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