



ART

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST: **DANIEL SACHON'S ROSE-TINTED REALITY**

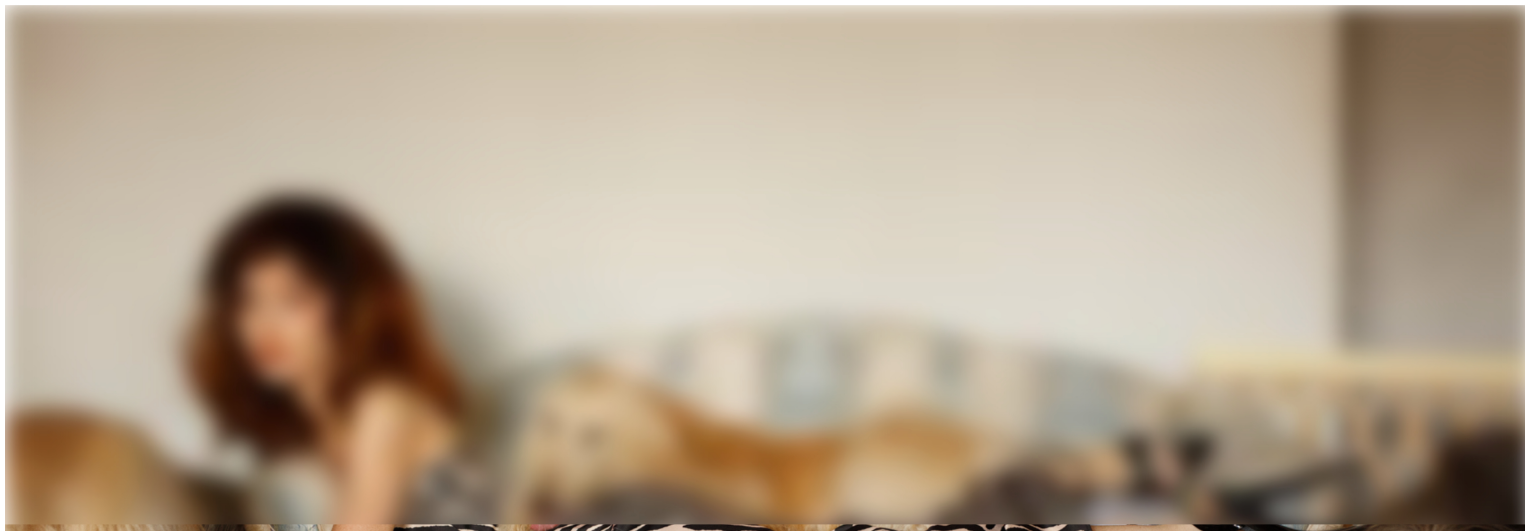
by [Alex Brzezicka](#)

Daniel Sachon is taking *Bitches* back with some four-legged helpers and a fair dose of humour in his new photo series.

It's pretty rare to see such a stunning assembly of women in one place, especially when we recognise their faces from our Instagram feeds and billboards. From fashion powerhouse Georgia May Jagger, Vivienne Westwood's granddaughter, Cora Corre, the renowned heiress Ivy Getty, photographer Nadia Lee Cohen, iconic transgender model Ivana Vladislava to British supermodel Jourdan Dunn, you'd think it couldn't be any more fabulous. Wrong! Daniel Sachon paired each of them with the most stunning canine: setters, pugs, dalmatians, and a Great Dane to name a few. Here's the only chance to see the most powerful set of interspecies bitches ever.

Daniel Sachon has been a visual artist sensation for a while now. Working as a professional photographer since the age of 14, now 26, he's made a brand of his glamour meets vintage adverts fantasy artworks. His hyperrealism musings married with Old Hollywood nostalgia, always set in beyond beautiful settings, break out from the 2022 digital-everything obsession. In his most exciting project up-to-date and recently exhibited in London, *Bitches*, Daniel pays homage to his muses, painting them as empowered heroines who are here to entertain their fate only, with the adorable bunch of dog sidekicks.

Intrigued by the process of creation and meaning behind the wordplay, we chat with Daniel Sachon about the humour of subversion in *Bitches* and the contemporary role of a photographer while celebrating the independent female force...





Can you tell me how the concept of *Bitches* was born?

I've always loved working with dogs. I've always had a stupid sense of humour. I wanted to do *Bitches* as, on one hand, it doesn't take itself very seriously, and I don't take myself very seriously either. On a more conceptual note, it was this idea that the word bitch is used to insult strong women. Within my work, I like to explore the synergy between art and commerce and the shared visual language. If you look at the history of both worlds, you can find both women and dogs throughout. I used this visual motif as almost a thread to explore this symbiotic relationship within the images.

You're quoting Jo Freeman's 'Bitch Manifesto' in the show notes. How important for you was to channel the subversive message of that declaration in the series?

The use of quotes is from one of the models in the project and the writer behind the exhibition text, Georgie Hobday. I am so delighted with what she wrote and felt about the show, and it was really important for me to invite her to share her perspective as both a participant and a woman. Her reading on the project was so insightful.





Despite the models being depicted in settings that would often make them subjects of the male gaze, here they're the ones in control. They do regain pleasure and luxury for their own good while allowing themselves to daydream. Was that a conscious effort? Did the term male gaze come into play when you were working on the series?

Yes. I never want any woman in my images to look like they're subjects, but more so they're in control, and they're powerful. I think the male gaze will always come into play just because that's nature. I think what's interesting here is that the male gaze is subverted, or indeed the power held within is destabilised. The women are so intimidating and powerful, they reject objectification from the viewer. Within the process, this idea wasn't central to what I was doing, but throughout it was important to me to show these women as they wanted to be seen. It was more about them rather than me or my point of view.

Most of the models look like 90s models and old Hollywood movie stars. What was the motivation behind the choice of the traditionally feminine models in the series?

Maybe it's a bit subconscious. Maybe the time I grew up and the women that were in the media. I also think the supermodel era, which you mentioned, is one of the first times we saw women pushed into the media, and they had their demands. They were empowered. They were probably what you would refer to back then / had the reputation of being a bitch because they knew what they wanted from life. There's strength in traditional tropes of beauty. I'm always drawn to the classic references from advertising and perhaps this lends itself to my casting.



While shooting the series you got to work with some incredible female models. What did you learn in the process?

I'm always learning because I think if you're not learning, you're not growing and evolving, especially when it's something like a craft. I don't think anything in particular, but I'm sure that without that I wouldn't be where I'm going at the moment. You have to learn from everything you do.

Despite the discourse around subverting the meaning of the word bitch, the title is pretty humorous. What's the relationship with humour in your work?

Humour allows for the exploration of something possibly emotive or political without the same weightedness. I can look at these important ideas, but also have a laugh. I feel very fortunate that what I do for a living is very frivolous. I'm not a doctor. I'm not a surgeon. It's important to remind ourselves that it's okay to just enjoy things that are beautiful and fun and a bit stupid. My sense of humour comes down to contrast that yes, this is a message of women being these powerful and inspiring entities, but as a whole art and photography and fashion don't need to be taken so seriously. That's where the title kind of plays into it and where the titles of the work play into. You can look deeper if you want (i.e how it celebrates strong women) but when it comes to pleasures like art I think it's better to just take things at face value.

"I'M ALWAYS LEARNING BECAUSE I THINK IF YOU'RE NOT LEARNING, YOU'RE NOT GROWING AND EVOLVING, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S SOMETHING LIKE A CRAFT."

It's good escapism as well.

I think that particularly 10 years ago, advertising and fashion, although it was damaging to people's mindset, it did offer a sense of escapism with a heightened sense of reality, which now we don't see as much. Everything now is a little bit more natural, a little bit more real world and tries to be relatable. I like to have something that feels like a hyper version of something we recognise from films/tv/media not so much from our everyday experience. It feels tangible, and relatable in one sense, but it's still very much escapism and a heightened version of reality.

That's a feeling that the old day advertising has. We don't see it as often.

I'm really lucky that I work with amazing creatives like hair, makeup and set designers that are able to bring it to life because I think without those kinds of people on board it wouldn't have that feeling. A great creative collaborator can push you to see something different and evolve the idea past your original plan which can ultimately enrich your process.





The stage/set designs for each photo are gorgeous. It's like an international time-travelling. How do you approach world-building when planning each shot?

I believe that you want to work with people because you like what they do and what they can offer. It was just sort of a melting point of them taking my ideas and seeing what they could do with them / how they could realise them. In some cases, they took me to a place that I wouldn't have gotten otherwise. It's cool working with great people that can take your idea, even if it's really strict and formulated, and still push it to another direction or another dimension. Turn into something that you wouldn't think about.

That's always the best way to work. The choice of models and dogs is remarkable. All of them complement each other so well. What did the casting look like?

I've always loved dogs. I've been shooting with dogs since one of my very first photo shoots where a dog bit my dog. It was a whole drama. The casting was a real back-and-forth, and there was no set formula. Sometimes I had a girl and I knew exactly what breed they would be visually striking paired with. Other times it was more that the model or the dog that gave me a specific vibe, or I was casting dogs and women for a very specific concept. It wasn't the same for each picture.





It's so thoughtful. I can imagine that coordinating dogs and models was not the easiest task. Which of the photos was the most challenging to shoot?

I'm lucky that I've had a lot of experience with animals. I always say that you never want to ask them to do something. You just work with what they give you.

You can't be even annoyed at that because they're so cute.

Exactly. They're so cute. You want to get the best out of them and not let them feel like performers. You just let them do their thing.

That's a dream set to be on.

Cheaper by the Dozen was the dream set. It was 12 or 14 puppies. Just all wanting hugs.





What's the message you want to send through the series to anyone that's viewing it?

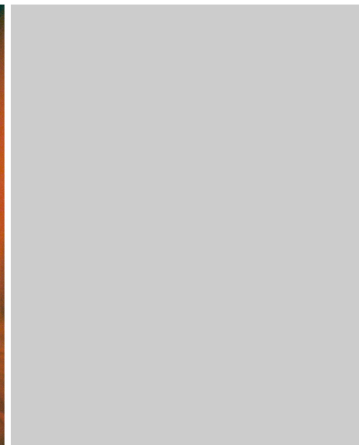
People these days often under-assume the role of the photographer on a given shoot or when they see a final image. Photographs are very much a part of our vernacular language. With Instagram, everyone who owns an iPhone is a photographer. People forget just how much a photographer has to do in terms of concept and creative and production and that taking the photo is sometimes the last piece of the puzzle. Creating a narrative through visuals for something that someone will only interact with for two minutes. There's a lot of work behind it. You create almost a framework for moments of spontaneity to happen. Then, whatever happens, happens.

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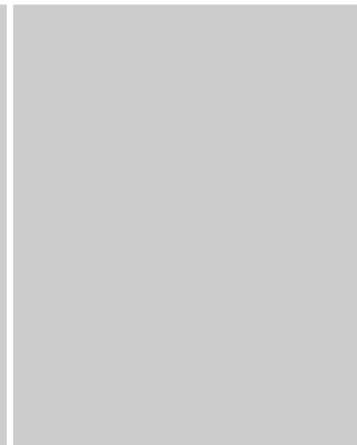
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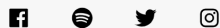
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