

CULTURE

GENERATION TOMORROW: **JAZZELLE**

by [Alex Brzezicka](#)

Jump into our new series featuring fresh faces who are on the way to define the sounds and aesthetics of the not so distant future. The cultural revolution is happening now. We don't want you to miss any of it. Let's push boundaries together.

When they entered the modelling game, tipped off by Nick Knight, they wouldn't believe they'd survive warm-ups, not to mention scoring big. There was a slight chance for anyone alternative to make it in the mainstream. Especially if you had a shaved head, quirky style and a lot to say. Yet against the odds and powered by stale determination, shoot after shoot, show after show, they've broken the boring glass ceiling and become the most interesting player in New York or even, worldwide. Getting all high-profile jobs for Fenty, Gypsy Sport or Gareth Pugh and featuring on i-D and British Vogue's covers, they've changed the rules of the fashion contest. It's freaks to the front from now on.

Meet Jazzelle Zanaughtti aka Uglyworldwide, a creative shapeshifter from Detroit, Chicago's former teenage club kid and currently, New York City-based icon. One swipe through their Instagram account is enough to get mindblown. On and off set, Jazzelle brings it every time. Unapologetic outfits, attitude and honesty. They're like a character from your favourite childhood cartoon. Which one? Depends on the day. Jazzelle's ultimate mission is creating for themselves and anyone who can relate. When over 697K people found their work relatable, uglyworldwide has grown into a movement. A symbol of a new generation that rebels against set beauty standards and following in the footsteps of their role model, won't wait for anyone to put them into the spotlight. They'll force its shine on them.

14-year-old Jazzelle used to draw this alien-looking, slim silhouette titled uglyworldwide. Today, they'd be over the rainbow, seeing her beloved character transformed into, well, their current self. Detroit feels like a lifetime and an obstacle tour ago. Like a true comic hero, they have built themselves from zero, saving their sanity and inspiring thousands of people on the way. Jazzelle makes sure their voice is heard loud and clear. We want to amplify it.

How did you find your place in the fashion world?

I'm from Detroit originally but I lived in Chicago for a few years. I worked in clubs there. I was like a club kid and did some drag, performance art or whatever you want to call it. I spend all my time getting dressed up and being at the club. I ended up shaving my head and then Nick Knight randomly found me on Instagram the next day. He had phoned me on to London to do a shoot for AnOther magazine. I was already on my way to New York. I didn't really think that I had a place in the fashion industry. I thought that I was too weird. I didn't really think that I would fit into it so I didn't think to start modelling. Then I got there and was like let me ask him if he can help me find some agencies. He referred me to a woman named Kat Davey and she helped me set up some interviews with agencies. I ended up getting signed and I just fell into it. I don't really ever feel, even to this day, I'm still not sure that I know my place in the fashion industry. I'm just doing me. I don't think I really feel at home in the fashion in-

Freaks to the front,
Jazzelle's in the lead.
Get ready, it might get
ugly.

dusty. It's what I do. I feel a little bit settled but also at the same time it's always important to grow and not get too comfortable with anything. I'm in the fashion industry now. I don't see that being like my forever thing but it's a cool industry. I love fashion.

You're often recognized by your Instagram handle @uglyworldwide. What made you choose it?

Everybody always thinks that there's some deep meaning behind uglyworldwide but actually that name has been a part of my life since I was like 14 or 15. In high school, before I really started getting into makeup a lot, I used to draw basically the same silhouette of this person with busted shoulders and always pretty much the same shape. It would transition through a bunch of different looks but the silhouette would always stay the same. One of my friends I really looked up to as an artist. They drew and painted. I got enough fucking courage and asked them what they thought of my work and I showed them something. They just said it was super ugly. That was a hard hit but after that I just started tagging all of my drawings with uglyworldwide. After I've shaved my head and moved to New York, I've realised that I had personified this person or being that I was drawing all these years. I just thought it was right to change my name to the uglyworldwide. I think it's cool though because a lot of people take different perspectives on what they see from uglyworldwide which is cool especially being such a person who likes to stay outside of the box and try new things and not be afraid of the ugly.

The fashion industry seems to be in need of revolution. If you were to lead it, how would it look?

Fashion should always push forward on being more diverse in every type of way. Not just from what you look like or where you come from but also personality wise and people who are more alternative. Just opening up the door for the freaks in the world. Freaks and the creatives. From my take, I'm a model but also, I have a lot of other creative things I do as well. Opening up that door for the subject in the photo or the film to be more involved creatively. Diversifying the type of people that are being worked with. Giving people more voice and more space to have a voice in the industry.





What are you working on right now?

I've just directed my first short film. I'm really excited about that. Hopefully, it will come out soon. I don't like to say too much until you know things come out especially if it takes a while. That's the most exciting thing and then just continuing on my journey as a creative in the fashion industry.

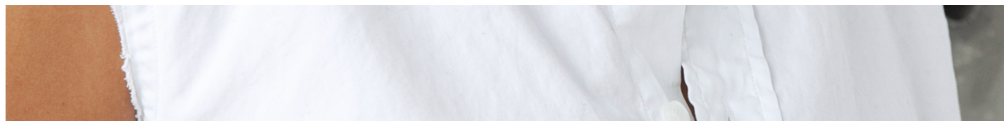
Your personal style is absolutely stunning and unique. How would you describe your aesthetics?

It's ever-changing. I get this question a lot. I never really know what to say because you look at my Instagram, you look at my work and it's very vast. It's a long spectrum. Even when people are asking what my inspiration is, it's so different depending on what the look is or what I'm feeling that day. I never really know what to say to that. It's ever-changing. One big metamorphosis. Just doing whatever I want. Whatever feels right. It's very characters. I definitely always have a story behind each look that I do like. Just disassociating and putting on whoever I feel like that day. I like keeping people on their toes. They never know what's coming next.

Every artist has their muse. Who is a source of inspiration for you?

I have my initial inspirations from when I was a kid and they don't really change much. There's one comic book that I really like called 'Tank Girl' and there is this movie that came out in the 90s. Lori Petty played Tank Girl. That's a big inspiration for me, the style and then also just the attitude. She's the fucking bad-ass so I love that. David Bowie. Spice Girls. I just like people who always do different things, have fun with them and break the rules. Very that.





What should be the role of the new-gen creators in modern society?

I think that the role is just to not conform, to just be themselves and keep pushing the boundaries as far as possible.

The creative industry is built on odd part-time jobs, free internships, all-nighters and tons of energy-boosters to get through all the turmoil of making or breaking it. Was it a struggle to get to this point in your career?

It was a real struggle for a long time. You could say it still is, especially when I first moved to New York. I don't come from a lot of money or any money at all really. When you move to New York and when you're starting off in the modelling industry or the creative industry, you don't really get paid for anything. I don't think I had my first paid job or actually saw any money until two years after I started modelling. I was just fucking poor but when you are dead set on making something happen and you want to be whatever successful means... I grew up poor so I just was like 'well at least I have a goal in mind and now I'm working towards something instead of being aimless'. It was a struggle but it's paid off.

A lot of people in the creative industry are pushing for that notion of success. It can be very superficial or confusing sometimes. Do you feel that as well?

When I say success, I don't mean outward success. I'm looking to be a success within myself. I'm making shit happen and making my voice heard no matter what. It's always been a success to me that I've been able to create my own path and my own lane in this industry which I didn't think was really possible at all. I haven't seen that from anybody that I know. I'm sure it happened before with many other people but from my perspective. Before I started modelling, I wasn't super into fashion. I liked fashion but I didn't really know anything about it other than like Alexander McQueen who is also one of my really big inspirations.





What's the message that you want to send to the industry?

I don't really know what I have to say to the industry. I'm just creating my art. I don't think that there's a message to the industry that I need to send. It's really a message to myself. I'm glad that I'm able to be a part of it and to work with great creatives as well but I don't really think that there's some big thing I have to say to the industry. I'm not really doing it for the industry. I'm just making my art for myself. I'm happy that I get to work with people and be a part of it. I'd rather let my art and my work speak for itself than put a quote on it.

Where do you want to see yourself in five years?

I don't live in the future. I like to live in the present. I think that it's very limiting to set five-year goals or any of that. I'm just living in the present really. If anything, I'd like to buy a house in like 5 years. When it comes to my career, I just feel like I'm sailing down the river and taking it wherever it takes me then whatever is fate. Just going with the flow and continuing on my own journey and my own path. You never know what's gonna happen the next year, the next five years.

Generation Tomorrow features new faces who are on the way to define, not so distant, creative future and shake society up a little. Who would be your choice?

I did this weird, not weird, thing but I used to follow a lot of really great crazy creatives but I've been going through a moment right now that I felt like I needed to focus on myself so I unfollowed everybody. I don't feel like there's one person.

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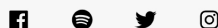
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