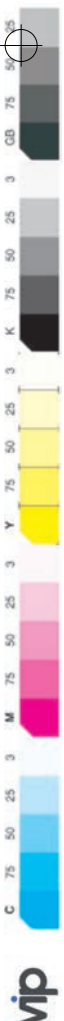


THIS PAGE: ASOS DESIGN FLORAL COAT IN VINYL £65; ASOS DESIGN DENIM JACKET IN YELLOW LARGE CHECK PRINT [coming soon]; ASOS DESIGN SILVER PLATED OVAL HOOP EARRINGS £18
 OPPOSITE: ASOS DESIGN VELVET RELAXED BLAZER [coming soon]; ASOS DESIGN VELVET RELAXED WIDE LEG TROUSERS [coming soon]; ASOS DESIGN REVERSIBLE CHECKERBOARD BUCKET HAT £12; HAIR BEADS [Ari's own]; EARRINGS [Ari's own]



MY STYLE: ARI FITZ

THE MODEL, STORYTELLER AND ASOS INSIDER BLURS GENDER LINES CREATIVELY, TALKS SELF-EXPRESSION AND BODY POSITIVITY

How do you get dressed? 'I go into my closet, play music and dance. The outfit I'm wearing screams how I'm feeling. I make sure I have menswear and womenswear elements on at all times, and always keep it a little undone, a little grungy, a little street.'

Describe your style 'Sex and androgyny are always present. I dress so everyone will want me regardless of their gender.'

Who do you look to for style inspiration? 'All the gender-bending icons: Prince, Grace Jones, Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie, George Michael, Coco Chanel, A\$AP Rocky and Harry Styles.'

What's your fave piece from this shoot? 'The sequin puffer jacket [p.48]. If you're trying to flex on your ex, this is the piece to do it in. I used to tone things down and was nervous about standing out, but lately I want to be the person you see first.'

Would you ever wear a dress? 'Yes, something boxy that doesn't cling, to maintain my androgyny. People ask if heels make me feel more feminine, but I feel most masculine when I'm wearing heels.'

Are you into jewellery and tattoos? 'I like chains right now. I want to wear a ton of silver chains in my belt loops and around my body. I [also] have tiny tattoos hidden everywhere: geometric shapes and lines.'

How do you approach makeup? 'I want one element that confuses people for a second. I like having foundation on and good brows. Then I'll add one colourful element like a weird lip or a bit of glitter.'

What do you think of the terms 'tomboy' and 'androgynous'? "'Androgynous' fits me more [but] I use "tomboy" for my zine *Tomboyish* because I like how straight girls consider themselves tomboys. It's about the fashion and identity of being masculine of centre, not who you want to go home with.'

Has your online channel Tomboyish evolved since you started? 'It was my personal [Instagram] account and then I made it @tomboyishmag officially this year, to give masculine of centre folks a place to talk, be and see themselves.'

How do you decide which stories to tell where? 'It's faster and easier to test out new stories and ideas on Instagram. Folks get on YouTube to laugh and escape. I'm developing a series that speaks to that.'

Does The Dear Body Project reflect your own body image? 'It's regular ass bodies with "I look fine AF today, right?" captions. That's my narrative. I have a long alien-like torso - I'm going to show you it so much you'll love it too. I felt more folks needed a space for that.'

Are you comfortable showing a lot of skin? 'I hated my muscle for a long time, now I embrace it. I wanted to be thin like other models, but fuck that. There's no workout regime, I'm naturally swole and I'm into it.'

What about skincare and your hair? 'My skin hates Los Angeles because it's so dry. I had the worst acne when I moved here. It's better now because I use Perricone MD cleanser, Simple moisturiser during the day with a NARS tinted moisturiser. At night, I'll use Neutrogena Overnight Gel or Rapid Tone Repair Moisturiser. I keep my hair simple: goddess locs on 1000.'

How does your new web comic Wedge encourage diversity and representation? 'It's about a young girl with extraordinary powers who wants her first kiss, and stars two black queer female characters. I'm tired of seeing folks like me boiled down to the way we look and love - I have depth and sides, [so] characters like me should too. We have two more books to go.'

What's the best compliment you've received? 'I don't know if you're a girl or a boy, but you're beautiful.'

How do you deal with negative comments? 'I'm becoming really great at tuning out bullshit. I listen though, because criticism is fundamental to growth as a creative person. I just don't have time for folks trying to break me down.'

When you're not modelling or making content, you... 'Dance like crazy alone in my apartment. I'll check the time and realise I've been dancing for hours. I film myself to study my movements and sometimes post the cute clips. My playlist is almost all Afrobeats and Nigerian music: Tekno, Wizkid, Runtown and Davido.'

Do you still consider yourself a 'work in progress'? 'I am the living example! I'm just trying a ton of shit and seeing what actually works. There's this Ira Glass video where he basically says that a creative's work will never reach their taste unless they do a large volume. I work every single day and I'm fighting to close the gap between the artist I can be and the artist I am currently. [But] I don't think I ever really want to close the gap. I always want to be a work in progress.'
 @asos_ari @itsarifitz @tomboyishmag @dearbodyproject





THIS PAGE: RECLAIMED VINTAGE FESTIVAL MESH VEST IN WHITE £18; ASOS DESIGN OVERSIZED SEQUIN PUFFER JACKET IN SILVER £80; ASOS DESIGN JOGGERS IN MIXED PRINT WITH PU PANELS £32; HAIR BEADS [Ari's own] OPPOSITE: ASOS DESIGN HEAVYWEIGHT CHENILLE JUMPER IN YELLOW £35; ASOS DESIGN DENIM JACKET IN YELLOW LARGE CHECK PRINT [coming soon]; ASOS DESIGN FLORAL COAT IN VINYL £65; ASOS DESIGN FARLEIGH HIGH-WAIST SLIM MOM JEANS IN YELLOW LARGE CHECK PRINT [coming soon]

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