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# MUSIC.



Merlin Kafka

The wizard of smartphone photography talks about the magic of Instagram

# MUSE.

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Does religion still have an impact on contemporary art?

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## Image Credits

Cover: Merlin Kafka

Top left to right: Nagarjun, Fiction Records, Merlin Kafka

Bottom left: elle.be

## Editor's note

Deputy Muse Editor  
Kate Barlow



**A**s exams slowly approach us I will do anything to avoid the horrors of trying to find a seat in JB Morrell. When still

in bed at 9am, one must abandon all hope of braving the trek to the library, as attempting to spot a seat among a sea of far more studious individuals than myself who all sensibly arrived at some ridiculous hour of the morning is pretty demoralising.

I am then met with the far too easy decision to either attempt to work from home (which inevitably results in a day of snacking, Buzzfeed and chatting to my housemates, until eventually giving up and going to the library after dinner) or to sit in between the bookshelves in the History section of the JB, interrupted by people trying to get past, and finally realising that there are far too many

books on hysteria in the 17th century and I might as well go home anyway as there is nothing new that my dissertation is going to bring to this field.

One of the best distractions from all things degree-wise was Roses. As someone who prides themselves on being so un-sporty - I managed to make up enough excuses to get off PE in school for almost a term (most of which, making the most of having a male gym-teacher, were period-based), I was surprised by how much I enjoyed it.

Despite understanding few of the rules to a number of sports, which is perhaps my fault for choosing to attend Kendo, handball,

lacrosse and American football, all of which were sadly excluded from my fairly limited school sports education, this didn't deter me from the enthusiastic shouting and cheering. Even if it was a few seconds delayed.

The return to seminars, revision and group project meetings on Monday felt a lot like the return to York after the summer. Perhaps the best distraction of all, however, is student media.

Become an editor for one of the campus newspapers and you get to spend an entire week in an office, faffing around with InDesign to your heart's content, blissfully oblivious to the impending deadlines.

# We could be heroes

As fans line up for the return of the Avengers, Liz Tresidder takes a look at the best and the worst that the superhero genre has to offer

## THE GOOD

### The Dark Knight Rises & The Avengers:

I couldn't pick just one for the number five. They might not be everyone's cup of tea, but I enjoyed these films massively for very different reasons. Whilst Christopher Nolan's final Batman film was an excellent finale of the franchise, *The Avengers* was impressive in its scope and more playful in its outlook.

### The Incredibles:

Pixar can do little wrong, and this movie about a superhero family trying to juggle ordinary life with their abilities is no exception. Inordinately charming, this one is up there with the greats for its funny, innovative take on the superhero genre pre-*Iron Man*, where superhero movies were still stuck in a flat, uninspired rut.

### Iron Man:

*Iron Man* was the first superhero film I saw in the cinema and it changed my perspective on the genre entirely. *Iron Man* was charming, thanks in part to Robert Downey Junior's solid charisma, and managed to kick-start Marvel Studios' now monolithic success, setting a lighter tone for superhero films for years to come.

### The Dark Knight:

Although some have criticised Nolan's Batman movies for being too dark, each and every one of them has a well-acted villain coming from an unexpected source. Heath Ledger took the role of the Joker to new heights in a performance that made the movie what it is, winning him an Oscar after his tragic death.

### Captain America: The Winter Soldier:

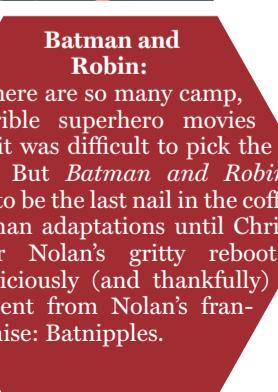
This movie has everything: Cold War tensions, touches of a summer blockbuster and even hints of *Brokeback Mountain*. The supporting cast help lift a sometimes-flat Chris Evans, but a few particularly impressive moments from Sebastian Stan and Robert Redford make the movie.



## THE BAD

### The Amazing Spider-Man 2:

When a movie has potential, it is all the more irritating when it totally misses the mark. Marc Webb's reboot of our friendly neighbourhood Spider-man started strong, with a quirky, indie style – but *TASM 2* fell entirely flat with an incomprehensible plot line and an underdeveloped villain.



## Review

### Avengers: Age of Ultron

Niall Whitehead



Well, here it is – arguably one of the three biggest films of the year, alongside *Star Wars: Episode VII* and *Jurassic World*. But is it any good? The answer, represented by those five star-shaped things resting underneath the title there, is yes. Yes, it really is.

The movie opens with the Avengers working as an established team, swatting down HYDRA bases left and right. But with the threat of another alien invasion hanging over their heads, Tony Stark decides to reactivate a long-dormant peacekeeping program, 'Ultron'. When that goes south in about six seconds and Ultron decides to end the world, it's up to the Avengers – Iron Man, Thor, Hulk, Captain America, Black Widow and Hawkeye – to stop him.

First up, if you're looking for exciting action scenes, this is the movie for you, since it's dripping with them. The film opens with the Avengers storming a HYDRA base and just escalates from there. Then there's the Avengers fighting Ultron and Quicksilver with some nightmare-fuelled dream sequences from the Scarlet Witch thrown in for flavour. Then we get a brilliant fight between the Hulk and Iron Man's Hulkbuster armour. And there's pretty much everything about the final battle.

It's a Joss Whedon production, so the quips fly thick and fast (though there aren't quite as many laugh-out-loud moments as the first one) and you can expect at least one saddening character death. The ensemble cast is handled well – all the core Avengers get something to do, though Thor's personal subplot's a little extraneous. As for the newbies, Ultron is the second great villain Marvel's unleashed after Loki, and James Spader nails his performance. The Vision, too, is an enigmatic and interesting hero who I'm already excited to see more of.

So, though *Age of Ultron* is working to higher expectations than *The Avengers* was, and though its plot's a little choppier (due to all the subplots it has to juggle) it is still the film of the year thus far. Next up? *Ant-Man*! Well, they can't all be mega-blockbusters, can they?

# Change where change is needed

**Tara Rowe**, Project Manager of Change100 speaks to Laura Tait about the accessibility of the work place for disabled students



IMAGES: LEONARD CHESHIRE DISABILITY

Naturally, as a university with such a diverse community, York is home to an abundance of students with disabilities that vary in both scope and severity. In such a thriving and prestigious institution, it only makes sense that those with disabilities are given the same platform of opportunities as those without. After all, does a wheelchair mean you cannot sit at a desk like anybody else? Does a physical disability reduce brain power in any way? Does a developmental disability such as autism make you less open minded and incapable of thinking up new ideas?

Of course, the answer to all of these questions is quite clearly, no. Bearing this in mind then, although skills and interests vary, there are a multitude of talented students with disabilities who would be prime candidates for many roles in business and industry.

Change100 provides this chance.

Leonard Cheshire, the company behind Change100, is currently the UK's leading charity in support of those with disabilities, working tirelessly to ensure that people with both physical and learning disabilities are able to fulfil their potential. Change100 functions as an internship programme, which offers paid placements to successful applicants, lasting three months. T

hey have access to some of the top UK employers, offering a plethora of unprecedented opportunities to gain guidance and experience, and to network in order to facilitate future employment.

During their placement, participants receive mentoring to ensure that they make the most of their time there. Some employers who took on students under the Change100

scheme last year include Barclays Bank and SABMiller, the multinational brewing and beverage company. Evidently, these are neither small nor insignificant companies; a successful placement in and good references from institutions such as these can understandably have a profound impact on students' future career options.

Unfortunately, it appears that a large proportion of the public fail to recognise the

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**Change100  
seeks to  
enlighten society  
as a whole as to  
what a disability  
really is**

broad range of disabilities that exist, and simply seem to be immune to the fact that having one disability does not necessarily hamper your ability to do everything.

There are more than 11 million people in the UK who have a disability, but these people are much less likely to be in employment than non-disabled people; 75 per cent of non-disabled people are currently employed, compared to less than 50 per cent of those

who suffer from a disability. Change100 came about through a campaign to change the employment landscape for people with disabilities, and according to the programme's website: "If the employment rate for disabled people matched that of the rest of the UK, an extra two million people would be working".

With UK unemployment levels remaining an ever prominent issue, despite minor improvements, it seems largely nonsensical to not fully embrace this initiative.

*Nouse* had the unprecedented opportunity to speak with Tara Rowe, who is the project manager for this initiative, in order to find out more about it. We asked Tara how Change100 works, why it is so important and how beneficial it can prove to be to those who partake.

Tara answered: "At Change100 we work hard to make employment opportunities accessible to people with a variety of disabilities and long-term health conditions. We do this in a number of ways.

"Firstly, we run an inclusive and accessible recruitment process that's tailored to get the most out of every

individual. Then, if you are successfully and are made an offer, we work alongside you and your host organisation to ensure they understand what adjustments may need to be put in place in order for you to reach your potential. Finally, we offer you mentoring, coaching and guidance for a full year to support you both in your internship role and in securing longer term em-



IMAGE: TARA ROWE



ployment when you finish."

However, the advantages of this scheme do not stop there. Going into the second year of the programme, there are a further 15 companies taking on board students from a variety of sectors and business areas, alongside the pilot employees from last year (SABMiller, Barclays, Prospects, Experia and Leonard Cheshire Disability). As noted explicitly by Tara herself, the benefits for these businesses truly are extensive:

"I'm often saddened to hear disabled students say to me 'What's in it for the employers, why would they hire me over someone who isn't disabled?'

"The fact of the matter is that one in six people in the UK have a disability so if businesses fail to understand or make the most of disabled jobseekers and employees, how can they be sure they are accessing the best talent?

"People with disabilities often demonstrate significant skills and behaviours, such

as resilience, problem solving abilities and self-awareness that are far beyond their peers who may not have experienced the same challenges in their lives. Furthermore, if the estimated spending power of disabled people in the UK is £80 billion, can businesses afford not to have access to the insight that comes with having disabled people embedded in their workforce? As such, the employers that we work with appreciate the value that talented disabled students can bring to their organisations and see Change100 as a great way to access a large pool of currently untapped potential."

Change100 seeks to enlighten society as a whole as to what a disability really is, and draws attention to how a minor disability in the present day can make finding employment so much more difficult. Frankly, it is shameful that many employers do not recognise the potential of bright, talented, and disabled young people. A change really is needed.

This scheme was piloted for the first time last year, proving to be a roaring success. So much so that the programme has expanded its reach for 2015, offering far more places than the mere 17 last year. Thomas Ron, the Disabled Students Officer and newly elected Academic Officer here at York was one of the lucky few who was able to experience the programme last year. We asked him what he thought about Change100 and for advice for any students wishing to get involved.

He said: "I loved the Change100 scheme, it was a fantastic experience and every moment of it was golden. I think that anyone who gets involved should really take the opportunity to know their workplace and think about going to work in the place [that Change100] have matched up [to you] as they tend to be absolutely spot on."

The website offers a further look into the positive impact that Change100 can have on the lives of the people who take part. It gives an insight into the inspirational 'success stories' of two more participants from 2014: Anna McCarthy and Sophie Stowell.

Anna served her internship at SABMiller, working in a subsection of their HR department conducting psychometric assessment in

Africa and also assessing demand and supply of talent for future employment at SABMiller. Anna describes the confidence that this opportunity has given her, and hugely praises the warm attitude shown by her employers. She says it was nice that they knew you had a disability and, for once, weren't made to feel like "the awkward one".

Sophie echoes this sentiment when giving an insight into her Change100 experience. She spent nine brilliant weeks working with Barclays Bank in Canary Wharf, London and describes the experience she gained there to have been "vital".

Currently, the University of York does in fact offer a good support programme to those students who do have disabilities, aiming to make university life as accessible to them as they possibly can. However it does appear to be that although the student life of those with disabilities is fulfilling thanks to this support, there is a distinct lack of assistance in the students' lives post-University.

There exists a huge gap in the University's disability assistance programme where increased awareness of the Change100 scheme would fit perfectly. The vitality of experience in the workplace is unprecedented to all students, but will prove particularly invaluable to those who may struggle to find employment due to a disability.

In the UK, 1 in every 6 people will be affected by a disability at some point during their lives, so this issue should be pertinent across society. If we are empathetic and place ourselves in the shoes of those 11 million, bearing in mind that we could end up in that tally, we just cannot underestimate how influential this initiative could one day prove to be. This scheme truly is a hidden gem, with unfortunately what appears to be very little publicity.

It is absolutely vital that the University pushes this initiative to aim to make it more well-known, and subsequently allow the employment prospects for those with disabilities to be just as plentiful as for those without. M

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To find out more about Change100, visit <http://www.leonardcheshire.org/what-we-do/change100>.



# Does Art really hate Religion?

Stefan Kielbasiewicz questions whether the art world really has walked away from its spiritual past

One may safely assume from general experience that the majority of works exhibited in a modern art gallery would not have overtly religious themes. Of the few that could, it would seem highly unexpected for them to treat religion in a positive light. Those, unlike me, who are well-versed in art might recall famous examples that helped institutionalise a certain negative attitude towards religion: Chris Ofili's painting *The Holy Virgin Mary*, exhibited in 1999, was famously criticised by the then-New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani as "sick". As the effect of these so-called "shock doctrines" towards religion have started to wear off, it seems that nowadays attitudes are changing. Articles from the BBC and the Huffington Post by art critics and academics alike point out how "religion is alive and well in contemporary art", citing examples of commercially successful religious artists and artworks such as Mark Wallinger's *Ecce Homo*. So what could account for this seemingly sudden change in today's artistic climate?

Some defend religious art positively, such as the cultural critic and 'feminist provocateur' Camille Paglia, who labels herself as a "libertarian-minded atheist". She says that to sneer at religion is a "cynical posture that has become de rigueur in the art world" and is also a contributing factor to contemporary art's lack of "big ideas". However, it seems there is more behind this liberal change of attitude than first thought. For Smith, and others in the art world, 'religion' essentially acts as a synonym for 'Christianity'. No doubt the art world is sufficiently multi-cultural to warrant a discussion beyond Christianity as religion (Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism), but Christianity still remains the primary example.

What is art's relationship to some of these other religions? Following some research, it became clear that, after heavy restriction, depictions of the Divine in human form proliferated side by side in both Christianity and Buddhism. Since depictions of Allah or Muhammad in Islam are forbidden there are abstract expressions of the divine

in Arabesque textile patterns or Arabic calligraphy which acts as both literature and visual art.

However, information from popular Western media on how modern art specifically engages with these religions is minimal. Though it's precisely the absence of this discussion that is changing Western art's relationship to Christianity. From my perspective, the growing positive influence of religion on art can be explained by a growing multi-religious tolerance. For example, liberal atheists, like myself, are often more than willing to accommodate and take for granted non-Christian religions but are, at the same time, sour towards Christianity itself. I think, to some extent, this is what is happening in the art world now: we can't be hypocrites and despise Christianity in art without also despising other religions as well - we can't be selectively tolerant. Of course, it could also simply be that artists have run out of original ways to shockingly criticise religion in order to arouse the public's interest. Nowadays, contemporary artwork which explores spiritual themes more broadly are more popular amongst audiences who tend to represent a variety of beliefs, backgrounds and lifestyles.

Since Cathedrals were once the main places where the public could go to see visual works of art, it is often said that museums and galleries have become the new cathedrals, where people come to "replenish their spirit in the secular age." We have to still bear in mind that it's quite a recent concept to go to museums to appreciate art that is not created for specifically social or religious purposes. Unlike religiously themed art, modern art has been particularly suited to museums and galleries. However, cathedrals and religious spaces today, such as St. Paul's in London, are also starting to put on their own art exhibitions. Although art doesn't need to be religious, as it was centuries ago, neither does it need to be aggressive towards religions, as it had been particularly towards Christianity. While there may still be some kicking and punching, it seems from now on the two are more intent on shaking hands.



IMAGES: MICHAEL FOLEY, MARK WALLINGER, THERESTEVE, NAGARJUN, AFRICANAHQ, WALTER ARTS MUSEUM

## Editors' Picks: The International Shakespeare Festival

Two Shakespeare Heroines  
Lily Papworth  
Arts Editor

H (2) O  
Joel Down  
Deputy Arts Editor

The Taming of the Shrew  
Lara Swan  
Deputy Arts Editor

What could sound better to an English Literature student than a Shakespeare Festival? An International one, of course!

York's first International Shakespeare Festival is particularly exciting for me, as it is incredibly diverse and there is just so much to see. Despite Shakespeare being quintessentially English, this Festival is proving how accessible the Bard is on a global level. With performances in Polish, German, Spanish and English, the Shakespearean tales we all know and love are being reinvented before our eyes and presented to us in ways we could have never imagined.

I am particularly looking forward to the opening production, Two Shakespeare Heroines. Performed by the renowned Japanese actress, Aki Isoda, both Lady Macbeth and Ophelia will come to life through a combination of Western and Japanese styles. The performance will also be delivered in Japanese with English subtitles - even better!

Isoda is highly acclaimed for her craft with numerous awards to her name, including an award from the Shakespeare Globe Trust in London. I think her performance will certainly be a highlight of the Festival and, as the opener for the event, Isoda will most likely set the tone for the ensuing two weeks in celebration of the world's favourite Bard.

York's Shakespeare festival looks set on exceeding expectations. Therefore, while there is an unsurprising emphasis on *Hamlet*, with three or four different performances popping up over the duration of the festival, the play is unlikely to appear in a form you'd expect it to. That's true even if you were to go to the same performance twice in one day. You could do this if especially eager to test whether or not Teatr Strefa Otwarta's improvisation is as sharp as they advertise in their highly condensed development of *Hamlet*: reworded, reorganised and replayed over the course of three days during the festival. A two person cast, H(2)O promises to illustrate and magnify the contradictions within Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship and engage the viewer in dialogue.

Sound intimidating or intense? Well don't worry, it should be fairly relaxed given the array of unconventional venues the company has chosen; including a cocktail bar and a pub. It's there that the name 'H(2)O' might reach its full meaning. After all, if you're going to drown your sorrows, why not do it creatively?

There's everything to suggest that the performance will be worth a look-in: to see how well this interesting experiment comes off; what the cast does when its audience refuses to fill in the blanks and lastly, the bewilderment of a few locals when they find their pub overrun by eager-to-please thespians.

Being born and bred in Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of the Bard, I've had no choice but to have been under the spell of Shakespeare since my earliest days.

Growing up, I never really understood the throngs of tourists blocking my way to Woolworth's pick n mix, drawn from all over the world to celebrate Shakespeare through performances and the odd novelty keyring with one of his quotes on it.

But now I realize that Shakespeare's works are written in a way that everyone can understand, and we are lucky enough to have an opportunity to see many iconic plays during the upcoming International Shakespeare festival.

My choice for this year's festival is the Two Gents Production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. This production company is attempting to perform Shakespeare's plays in the chronological order in which they were written, and pride themselves upon 'unusually thoughtful' interpretations.

My hope is that this production company are able to strip away the layers of comedy to reveal the complexities of this play. Whether you think Katherine's plight is a result of misogyny and patriarchy, or is a strange form of Elizabethan foreplay, *The Taming of the Shrew* is most definitely one not to be missed.

# A spoonful of sugar

**Stephanie Faye Bartlett** of Two Spoons Theatre Company talks to Lily Luty about funny and thought provoking theatre that makes the medicine go down

In 2014 they wowed in Drama Barn, this year they are on a mission to bring their high quality comedy to the rest of the nation with their two touring productions, *Clandestine Sketch Show* and *The Room: the Musical*, at various UK Fringe festivals. Two Spoons Theatre Company is a collection of four driven York alumnus who became firm friends through comedy events at York. I met with Stephanie Faye Bartlett, one of the talented quartet, on the morning of the show's premiere in York to talk shows, societies and Tommy Wiseau.

In interviews, it is easy to see why Stephanie is such a successful producer. She is enthusiastic, committed yet ultimately practical and level-headed, despite the intimidating to-do list she shows me. When asked about the difficulties of running a graduate theatre company, she dismisses the limitations that such stressors can impose. "We have to understand that this is about us learning a craft. We're growing together and it will give us a strong foundation if we want to do anything in the future. Out of every adverse situation there's always good to be gained in the long run and that's a philosophy that you have to live by, otherwise you will go insane."

Such a positive and forgiving vision is wonderful to see, and what is even more encouraging is the company's ability to plan for the future: "one of the reasons we're doing the show tonight is as a bit of a lap. Hopefully we're going to film tonight, then review where the laughs are, and understand how this plays to an audience that come with no expectations. We need to be prepared for times in the tour for when people have never heard of us before, and are waiting to see if it was money well spent." Not only is this invaluable in helping the company to prepare for Fringe performances, but also allows for a strong focus on how to invest any current profits in potential future endeavours.

As an act that relies on a good relationship with its audience, it is incredibly important for Two Spoons to create a welcoming environment from the outset. As producer, this creates a lot of responsibility for Stephanie when choosing performance venues. "I constantly strive to create a venue that is locked off from the rest of the world, where every single molecule is completely saturated with people being in the moment watching the show and enjoying it for what it is... it's this all inclusive party that everyone's involved in." This relationship is not simply Stephanie's responsibility, but is maintained throughout the entire company, with Ed Greenwood and Charles Deane dynamically playing to and involving the audience beautifully throughout *The Clandestine Sketch Show*.

Stephanie is eager to promote the benefits of becoming involved with societies at York, considering such involvement as 'vital' in the formation and success of the 'Two Spoons' company. Our university is privileged to have weekly performance opportunities through DramaSoc, providing a constant stream of opportunities and allowing those with no former experience to become involved with running a show. "York University definitely has this culture of producing these fantastic performance societies as kind of a springboard to becoming professional." Performance societies in York are keenly aware of the individual value of their members, and eager to support each member and help them to realise their creative potential.

Stephanie herself benefitted greatly from York's culture scene and was keen to emphasise this: "I learned how to produce from directing, how to act from teching and, personally, I think it's that universal approach to theatre and performance that has given me the opportunity to learn. You need to understand the roles and responsibilities of everybody else to make the best show possible. [Two Spoons' members have] done an awful lot of work together, but I think it's the fact that we all went to the University of York. We're very privileged to have a diverse community that are all willing to give a hand. I can't speak for any other universities, but our basis in York is certainly vital."

The fact that anyone can become involved with any aspect of theatre creates a rich base of multi-skilled students for com-

panies such as Two Spoons to draw from. Coming from this background of York societies, Stephanie is more than willing to provide opportunities to those missing experience. In doing this, Two Spoons becomes more than a theatre company, but an inclusive and evolving learning environment in which individuals can fulfil their creative potential and gain further professional skills.

Protected by the Parody Law of October 2014, which loosened the laws on the use of artistic material without owning copyright, Two Spoons' *The Room: The Musical* is safe from the well-known wrath of Tommy Wiseau. However, the intimidating force of Mr. Wiseau did weigh heavy on producer Stephanie's mind. Mindful of letting him see that *The Room: The Musical* comes from a spirit of camaraderie, she sent an email to the official website of *The Room*. The response at 6am 3 weeks later was what started her journey 'down the rabbit hole,' exploring the mysterious Wiseau.

Signed off by 'John Caffrey,' the response made use of

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I would love to meet Tommy Wiseau, but I would not like to get on the wrong side of him, which I feel is very easily done

the same idiosyncratic English that only Mr. Wiseau seems to speak. Online forums are filled with people claiming that Wiseau messaged them under this pseudonym. This is not unusual in the film business, with smaller companies using avatars to make themselves seem more established.

Things get stranger further down this Tommy Wiseau-shaped rabbit tunnel, however. In research, there are only two records of John Caffrey's existence: his working for Wiseau films, and a YouTube account which comments on random videos promoting *The Room* in baffling formats. The name 'Drew Caffrey' peppers the Wiseau-saturated credits of *The Room*, naming him executive producer and casting director for San Francisco, despite his death several years before the film was made.

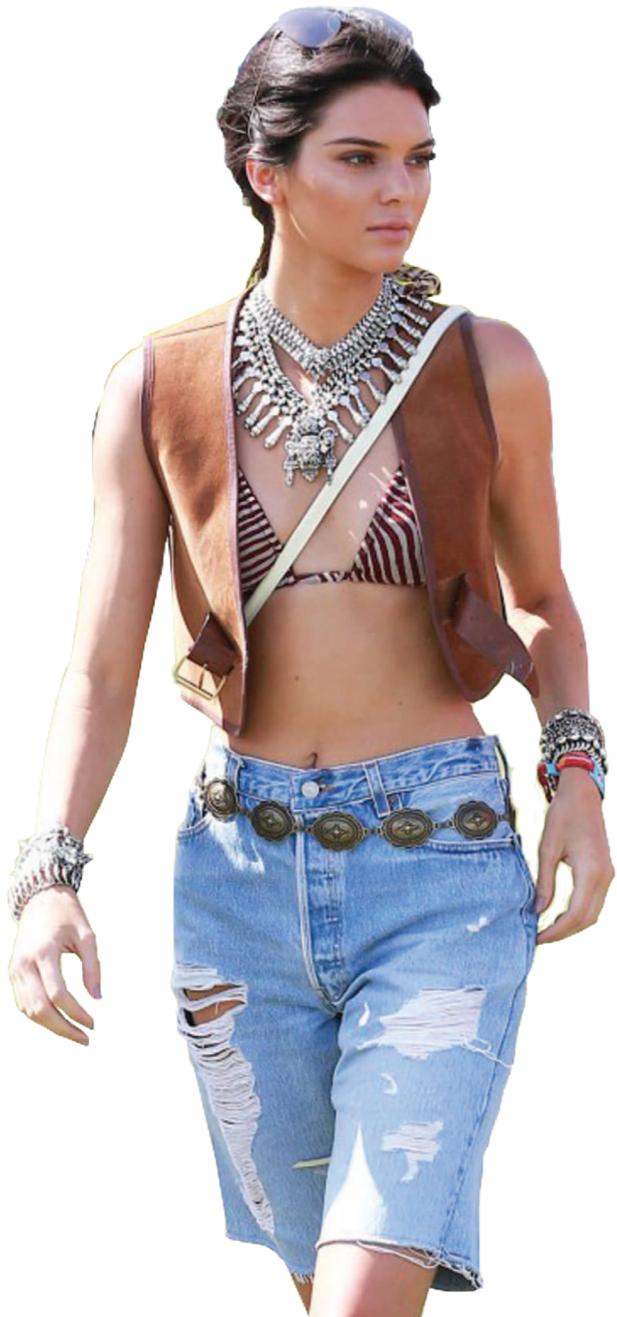
Did Wiseau combine the name of this mentor with his character in *The Room* to create the inscrutable avatar, 'John Caffrey'? Stephanie is almost convinced, however is still yet to meet him: "I would love to meet him and talk to him, but I would not like to get on the wrong side of him, which I feel is very easily done. I would not like to meet him in a dark alley for a game of football!"

With Wiseau's self-claimed love of travelling and 'turning up' in unexpected places, are 'Two Spoons' likely to encounter the man himself during their tour? Stephanie would not be surprised: "Apparently he has this habit of just turning up to places, so I wouldn't be surprised if in Edinburgh one night we look out into the audience and he's just sat there, 1:00 AM, sunglasses still on, inside." M



IMAGES: TIMOTHY KELLY





## Coachella chic

Rachel Paix tells us how to achieve Kendall Jenner's festival look for less

**T**here was much to see at the fashion parade staged at Coachella this year. Models Alessandra Ambrosio and Jasmine Tookes opted for delicacy and successfully introduced feminine dresses to the festival scene. Here, warm colours excelled by teasing summer vibes and complimenting those sporting a golden tan. Accessorising a simple dress with a belt, necklace or hat also was a popular look. But the star of the show was the Queen of Coachella herself, Kendall Jenner.

The heart of the fashion world and certainly the envy of many, Jenner did not disappoint with her collection of festival attire at Coachella this year. Bravely boasting her slim physique, she craftily complemented a bikini top with a statement necklace and sleeveless leather jacket, whilst also proving that vintage denim need not be left in the past with her ripped boyfriend shorts.

Though we may sigh in despair that we're not Kendall, the high street is here to help imitate her look. The faux leather jacket can be found for only £45 from ASOS. Check out New Look's swimwear range for a cheap alternative to her Aztec bikini top at just £5. Accessorise are also offering some great pieces to rival Kendall's, such as this Kiya Statement Necklace for just £25.99. To complete her more laid back look, throw on these boyfriend denim shorts, only £29.50 from Marks and Spencers. For a more feminine look, accessorising a simple dress with a belt, necklace or hat can work a treat.

Overall, the Coachella 2015 A-List have not failed to impress this year and are sure to skew seasonal trends this summer. Engaging with a variety of styles, the high-street promises to save us some money and cater for the diverse tastes of festival goers. Finally, although we might not have been at Coachella we can at least dress like we were. Anyway, there's always next year?



## Blast from the past

Forget Glastonbury, Grace Howarth talks about the vintage festival craze that took York by storm

**T**he fifth annual Festival of Vintage was held at York Racecourse over the weekend. The sunny weather drew in crowds for the loud, flashy and up-beat event. The festival, which was a celebration of popular cultures from the 20th century, was situated in two main grandstands. Spread across three floors were stalls of vintage clothing, furniture and living displays, where visitors could trawl down memory lane. Exhibitions of radios, cassette players, juke boxes and record players were not to be missed, while outside classic vehicles such as cars, caravans, scooters and bikes were lined up for the crowd to admire.

The festival also boasted fashion parades, exhibiting looks from the 1930s as well as a chance for collectors to find hidden treasures in the 'collectors corner'. Alongside this there were many attractions and novelties for the public to try, such as a barber's shop and beauty parlour for those who wished to achieve a truly authentic vintage look. Also available were free dance lessons, where visitors were encouraged to partner up and learn popular moves from the 1930s such as the Charleston, Foxtrot and Swing dance.

The dance hall was situated in one of the main stands which housed a stage and atrium so that visitors could look on and enjoy talented music acts covering songs from the likes of Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, Benny Goodman, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and T-Rex.

Many of the visitors got into the spirit of the event and came dressed in vintage clothing from various eras. Some women wore traditional 50s floating prom dresses in brightly coloured florals and check prints with matching head ac-



IMAGE: EVAN WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

## Model citizens

Shahreen Vacha and Chloe Kent discuss how rising unconventional models have revolutionised our perceptions of beauty

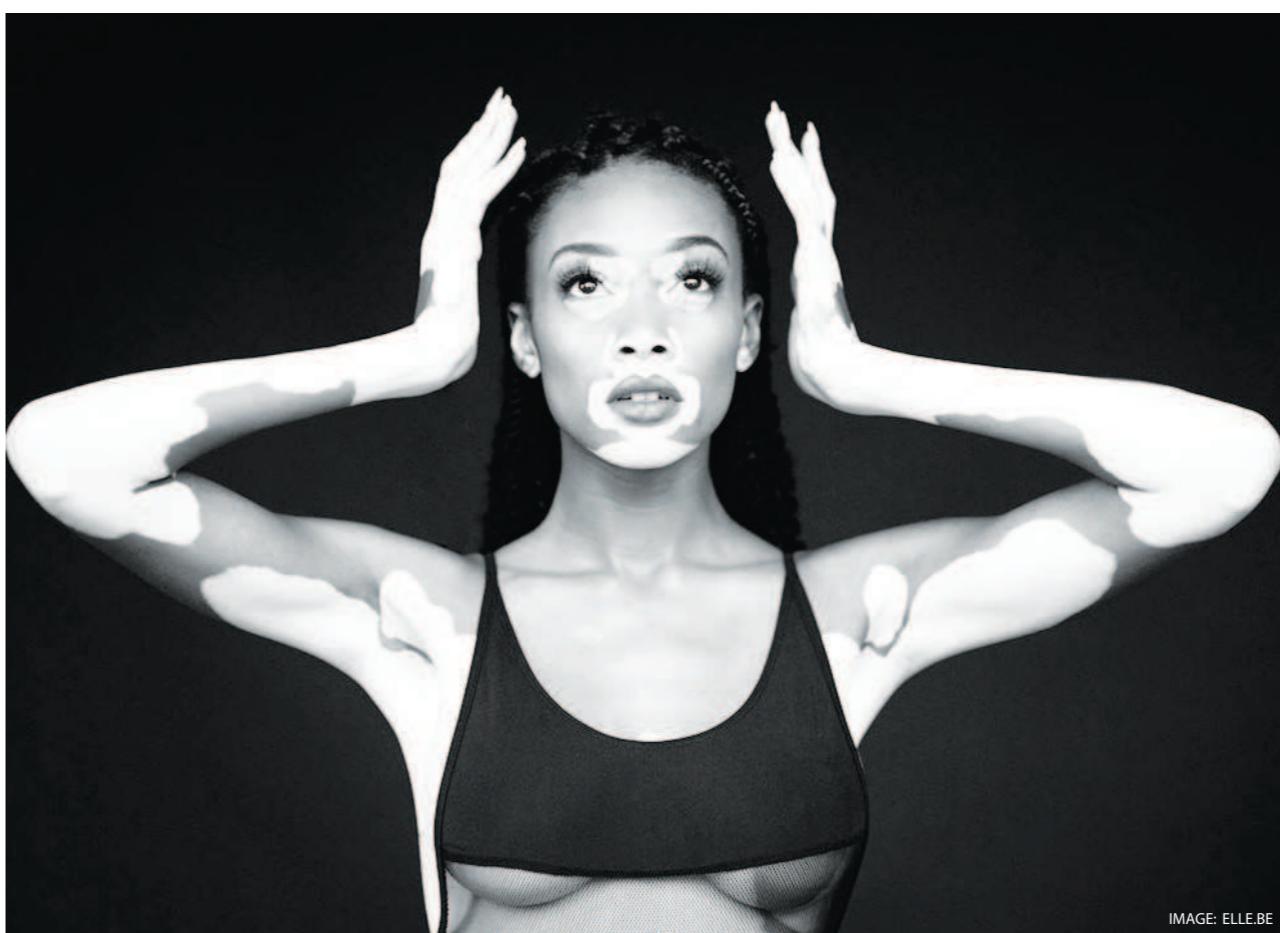


IMAGE: ELLE.BE

**A**s any reliable dictionary would tell you, beauty is defined as "a combination of qualities, such as shape, colour, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight." This line of thought is so simple yet so essential, for nowhere does this definition utilise the terms blonde, skinny, curvy, hourglass, fair or any of the other labels that we have been associating with beauty.

An average girl's perception of herself is reliant on an ever-changing fashion industry that dictates to her time and again what's beautiful and what's not. From the voluptuous blonde bombshell in the 1960s to the size zero fad that took over runways not too long ago, beauty has always been evolving and yet it has remained conventional through its ability to deem a certain look as beautiful and demean anyone who does not adhere to it.

However, recent years have seen an increase in demand for 'unconventionally' attractive models. A prominent example of this is Tess Munster, who, standing at 5ft 5in, wears a UK size 26. Signed onto Milk, a large mainstream modelling agency, Munster has been named by Vogue Italia as one of the top six plus size models in the world. Another emerging icon is Winnie Harlow. The model, who has the skin pigment condition vitiligo, was recently awarded the Beauty Idol gong at German magazine Gala's Spa Awards 2015, having walked the runway for brands such as Desigual and Diesel. Munster and Harlow both are considered unusual beauties, not conforming to our cultural norm of what is considered, by and large, to be "classically" beautiful, yet are clearly very successful in their own right, redefining how we perceive the fashion world.

However, there is something perverse about the way in which these women are considered oddities, the fact that individuals who are not thin or may not have flawless skin, stand out so glaringly. It is almost as though they are celebrated as being beautiful in spite of their quirks, and not including them, or indeed as a result of them.

Another driving force to promote unconventional beauty is Dove's 'Real Beauty' campaign. Launched in September 2004, this campaign came as a breath of fresh air, strongly committed towards widening the definition of beauty. With adverts and short films such as *Evolution*,

Dove has targeted the unrealistic expectations set across the world in order to be considered beautiful. This movement is about much more than physical appearances and ideals of perfection. It is a call to women and young girls across the globe to embrace themselves the way they are, without conforming to society and its perception of beauty. It is about rebuilding their self esteem and their broken confidence in order for them to believe that they are indeed, beautiful and that no industry or society has the right to tell them otherwise.

The beauty industry is an entity which constantly shifts and changes, but whilst it is easy to accept red being in one day, blue the next, it is more difficult to come to terms with physical characteristics themselves waxing and waning in popularity. Beauty shouldn't be defined, because it can't be defined.

If beauty has no price, then why must we give it a label?



## Beat the heat

Sarah Martin shares her tips on keeping your summer makeup looking fresh from dawn to dusk

### 1. Prep

As we all produce more oil in the warmer months, it may be time to switch to an oil free moisturiser if you have oilier skin or a lighter cream formula to satisfy drier complexions. The French pharmacy skincare brands always do great moisturisers (and at a reasonable price) so try La Roche Posay Effaclar Mat for oily skins, or Avene Hydrance Optimale Light Protective UV, both £14.50.



### 2. Prime

Primers are one of the main steps that can ensure longevity of your face. Laura Mercier does great ones, and doesn't just cater for oily skin, but also sell Illuminating Primer for dull, dry skin. When packing on the shadow, definitely pop some eye primer on the lids. It's personally something I do every day and prevents creasing. The best primers are Nars and Urban Decay.



### 3. Thin layers

Try to apply makeup in thin layers, building up when needed. For example, a thin layer of primer, a small amount of foundation buffed well into the skin, finished with targeted spot and blemish correction with concealer. Using fewer, well-blended products means it's less likely to move around and will mesh effectively with your skin. Also, moving away from creamy products to water or gel-based products will help keep the shine at bay.



### 4. Shine Control

A light dusting of powder across the T-zone will immediately tone down shine when applying makeup in the morning and preserve your makeup to make it last throughout the day. The Bourjois Healthy Balance Powder (£3.99) is a really finely milled powder and is pretty much undetectable on the skin.

### 5. Refresh

If natural oils begin to build up, it's probably best not to powder over the top. To absorb excess oil, try blotting paper, which soaks it up, while maintaining the makeup underneath. DHC are a steal at £3. Powder can gather and make your complexion look cakey so to rejuvenate your makeup use a moisturising spritz. Try Caudalie Grape Water at just £6.



# “Everyone should stop taking themselves so seriously”

**Fred Macpherson**, lead singer of indie rock band Spector, tells Ricky Jones why he thinks the music industry needs to lighten up

“I’ve been in bands since I was 17. I’m used to it going well and not so well. The joy of making music is the important thing”.

Fred Macpherson, lead singer of Spector, admits it is hard for anyone, regardless of genre, to make it in the music business. However, after a string of semi-successes with bands Les Incompétents and Ox.Eagle.Lion. Man, it seems Fred has found his true calling with Spector, whose last album entered the charts at number 11, with an eagerly anticipated second one on the way.

He expresses his admiration for fellow band, The 1975, in the way they made it “against all odds” through excessive touring and building up a fan base from the grassroots. For Fred this is the “noble and honest” way to make it, but above all you have to be “willing to get ignored” for a long while before anything starts to happen.

Spector are first and foremost a London band. Fred talks wistfully about his hometown and the state of its music scene. “It’s so sad walking around Soho now. The Astoria, Mean Fiddler, Metro – there are a good ten music venues in that area that have closed down in the last few years. There are only about two left – The 100 Club and Borderline.”

Conversation moves onto recently released track ‘All The Sad Young Men’, a melancholy epic complete with swirling synths and his passionate vocals. “The tracks we have put out from the second album are bombastic in style but there are moments of calm on there too. They’re really just hints at the overall sound. The album as a whole is very colourful and expansive”.

I wonder whether the song’s downbeat tone indicated a change of direction from their party-ready indie tunes of yore. “Well ‘Chevy Thunder’ from the first album had a downbeat tone to it but I think the songs on the new album are more honest, and more self-indulgent in a way”.

He dismisses the idea of there being any overt influences, but says


IMAGE: FICTION RECORDS

that he was listening to The Walkman, Drake and Pusha T around the recording of the album, and admires the lyrics of Tom Waits as well as the vocal delivery of The Blue Nile singer Paul Buchanan: “He has a certain fragility to his delivery”.

Nominated for NME ‘Villain of the Year’ and ‘Best Twitter Account’ in 2013, I cautiously question Fred on whether he felt he was perhaps a little too conspicuous in his relationship with the media around the release of the first album.

“The year we came out there weren’t many good bands about, so the press courted us. We would just say something funny or stupid. It was just PR. Everyone should stop taking themselves so seriously. You shouldn’t be reading music magazines if you take life too seriously.”

We move onto the topic of vinyl records, Record Store Day having just taken place the weekend before. “I understand why people find [Record Store Day] a bit corporate,” Fred says. “It is a bit novel. I was away for it so I didn’t go, but hopefully the band will put out a record for it next year, get something on vinyl”. He expresses his appreciation for independent vinyl record label, Death Waltz, but laments the fact that he got into vinyl so late in life.

“Every album I buy now is on vinyl. I have a depressing number of CDs that I’d bought from HMV when I was younger. CDs will be gone in ten years. Its natural that we will end up with digital downloads and vinyl. You get the clinical sound of downloads and then on the other end of the spectrum the warmth of

“”

**The year we came out there weren’t many good bands about, so the press courted us. We would just say something funny or stupid. It was just PR**

vinyl. And I love the artwork”.

Fred goes onto to laud Australian musician Nick Cave, especially his last album *Push The Sky Away*, which he describes as “his best album yet...its great to see older artists staying fresh”. Along with describing Katy Perry as “amazing” he also reveals his love of hip-hop,

especially Kanye West and Drake.

It may be odd to hear the lead singer of an indie rock band profess his love of hip-hop, however Fred’s lyrical style is jam-packed with the acerbic wit and fast-paced narratives usually associated with the best in the rap game; a particular lyrical highlight from the first album was the unbearably pretentious line “A quarter-life crisis, teen Dionysus”. In a musical landscape where lyrics are underappreciated in lieu of big beats or effects-laden guitars, Spector are refreshingly experimental in their approach to composition.

As May arrives, Fred eagerly awaits the festival season. “If you stick around it’s like a holiday. If you’re playing later in the evening then you have to stay sober unfortunately, but we’re usually on in the late afternoon...it’s a good platform for our music and the people who go to festivals usually have an open attitude.”

Their first album was released amid a tornado of NME-induced hype, however the tracks recently released for the all-important sophomore album have been attracting a lot of respect, and a sense that Spector are growing into their sizeable reputation.

A standing as one of the best live bands on the UK circuit and a stream of quality indie rock songwriting should see them outlive the ‘NME curse’ of recent years that has seen the demise of far too many promising but overhyped bands (Tribes, Viva Brother, The Twang etc.).

We should be seeing Fred and co. tearing up festival stages for many years to come. M


IMAGE: FICTION RECORDS

## MUSINGS.

**PM David Cameron on his love of The Jam’s ‘The Eton Rifles’**

“I don’t see why the Left should be the only ones allowed to listen to protest songs.”

# Spotlight On: Luxo Jr

York students **Laurence, Tom, Michael and Nick** talk to Chris Owen about live shows, their musical influences and making it on to BBC radio

**L**easantly unassuming, exceptionally talented and armed with a sharply original array of sounds, Laurence Morgan, Tom Ford, Nick Upton and Michael Sumner are Luxo Jr, a band that takes its name from a Pixar short and its inspiration from just about anywhere you can imagine. Their music is as innovative as it is charming, and it's about time you heard it. Nouse finds out how four students are making songs that have caught the attention of some serious tastemakers.

#### Just how far does the Luxo Jr fanbase now extend?

LM: We've had a really weird selection of airplay. We've had our songs played on Polish radio. But more importantly, we discovered that if you upload your stuff to BBC Introducing, not only have you got a chance to be on local radio, but you can then also enter your stuff in a tastemaker's blog called 'Fresh on the Net'.

A team of 20 or so people whittle all submissions down to their favourite 25 from a week, and then put them up on the blog and people vote for their favourites. 'Nightclubbing' [the band's first single] did pretty well – it made it into the final 25 – and then the guy who compiles the tracks and started the blog, Tom Robinson, seemed to really like it. He has his own BBC Radio 6 show, so if he likes your music, you can find your way onto national radio.

'Another Working Day' didn't even make it into the top 25, but Tom seemed to really like it, so he played it anyway.

#### Maybe that has something to do with the fact that your music is very versatile – it could easily be played in some late night mix, or on daytime commercial radio.

LM: Well we all come from very different musical backgrounds and have very different tastes, so I think that plays a part.

TF: I'm very into heavy stuff. I use a seven

string guitar, which I suppose is something most pop/indie bands don't really do. It gives you a really great range, actually. You can play with some slam effects and weird sorts of riffs with the extra depth.

LM: In terms of other genres, we wanted to draw on something fairly indie, I suppose, but with elements of electronic stuff, and pop as well. There's a lot going on, which is sort of the appeal, we hope.

#### There are classical influences in there too, of course.

LM: Absolutely. A lot of that is film music influence. Me and Tom do a lot of classical composition, and as Music and Music Tech students who all have experience in production, we find everything mixes together well – tastes, ideas, influences. And we all love film as well, so we constantly come back to that.

NU: Especially on our new song 'Milpool', we're drawing influences from film and TV, and that's something that's increasingly permeating into the music as well as the lyrics.

LM: And obviously the name of the band is from Pixar. If we ever achieved any kind of serious fame we'd get sued so badly.

#### And how far into a live career are you?

LM: We've played mostly university based gigs so far, and a number of charity events. We've played on a big stage to a small crowd at something like Woodstock, and then vice versa we played at Dusk recently, and that was possibly my favourite gig so far. Even though in Dusk it's not the best sound system, the energy was incredible.

NU: The main issue with the live shows is trying to break away from being seen as solely a university band, and trying to get known as just an act that puts on a good show, and has some good music to offer.

TF: I think another issue is that there aren't really any other bands around with a sound much like ours, so there isn't really an estab-

lished scene we can get on to. We're going to have to go out there and forge our own kind of niche, in terms of the gigs.

#### What writing and recording ambitions do you have going forward?

NU: The EP recording is going to get underway as soon as Tom finishes his dissertation.

LM: We've got quite a lot of short term recording plans materialising, because we've done about three demos of new songs. We've got in total about five songs ready to go now, with a couple more in the works.

One of my inspirations for even being in a band is that I'm a massive fan of alt-J, and the way that they craft their albums; the way that they have not entirely random but very distinctive interludes, and little minute long features that don't necessarily cling to what the rest of the album is. They're just nice little moments of music.

TF: I think that's something else that we also all appreciate – when you listen to an album or EP and there's obviously been a lot of work going into it. It's not just a collection of songs but a listening experience from A to B.

#### As a band, which artist's trajectory appeals to you most in terms of someone you'd like to emulate?

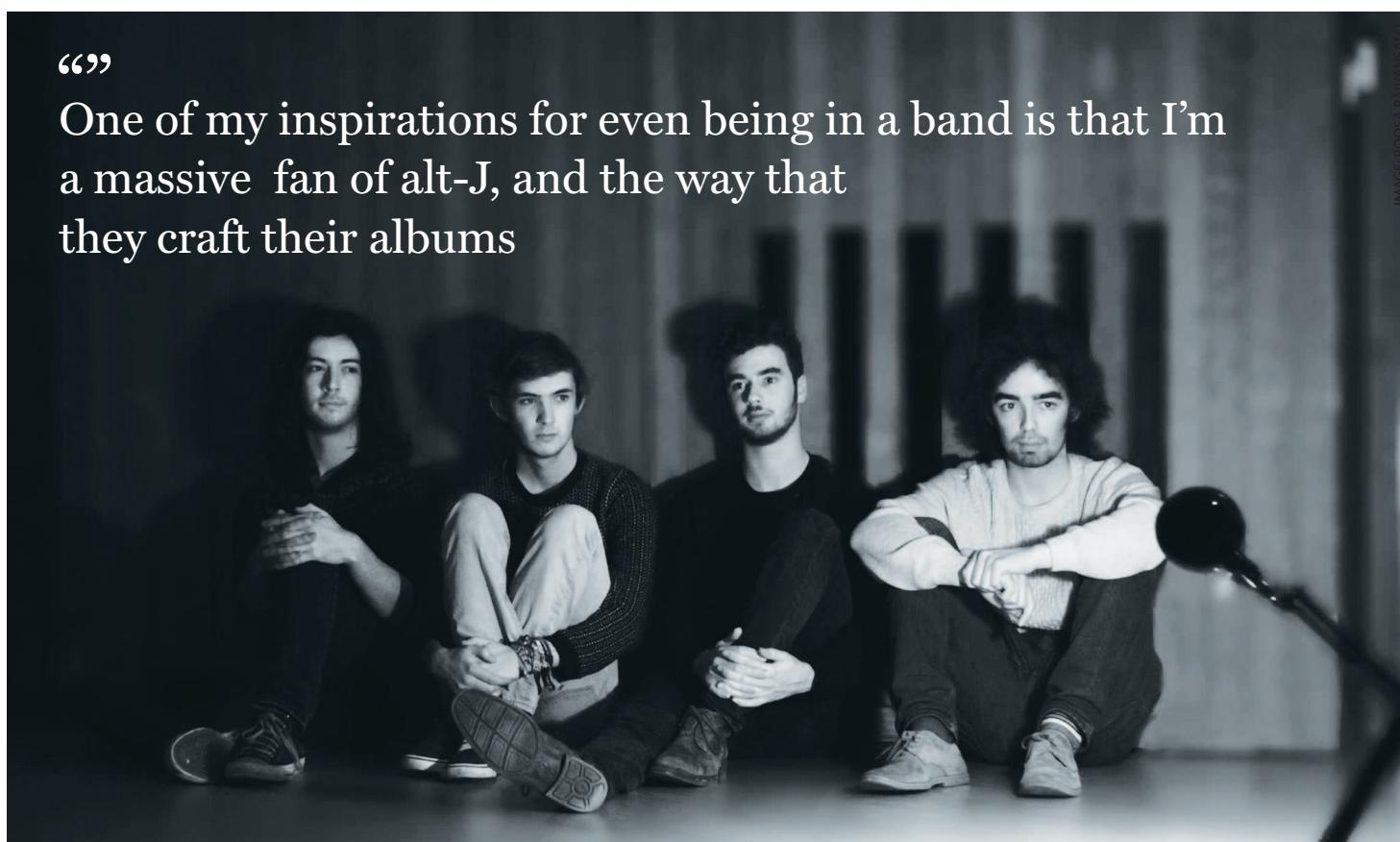
LM: alt-J is a big one, and they've obviously become absolutely huge. I think we'd love to have that kind of success, but they're a band who have been working at it for years. They were going to Glastonbury and plugging their CDs to anyone and everyone as attendees, not even as performers. And I think we all have a lot of respect and admiration for Everything Everything too. Another really fantastic, intricate rock band. Rock? Pop?

NU: Indie? Alternative.

LM: Alternative. Alternative pop. Yeah. We just really like what they do. You can listen to any of their songs three times and hear something new every time. That's something we admire. M

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One of my inspirations for even being in a band is that I'm a massive fan of alt-J, and the way that they craft their albums



## Other campus bands to watch



Troubadours of garage-rock, **Hypnotic Eye** is made up of Frederick James French-Pounce and Josef Boronski. Well recognised both on and off campus for their compact, gnarly guitar lines and bass riffs, the duo last week dropped the addictive 'Give It All To Me', the first single from their forthcoming album.



**Nudists** have amassed a significant fanbase by playing venues in town and around campus over the course of the last few years. They released their excellent self-titled EP earlier this year; think The Smiths meets Palma Violets. With some effortlessly listenable tracks and a certain charismatic knack for songwriting, Nudists are definitely one to look out for.



The project of Dave Crews, Matt Kitchen, Max Goodliffe and Tom Oliver, **Juvenile Summer** are renowned for their electric live gigs, where their bold, grisly rock stylings are given free reign. Their Pass The Time EP, released in 2014, is a promising debut. Catch them performing at this year's Summer Ball.

IMAGES (TOP TO BOTTOM) HYPNOTIC EYE, NUDISTS, JUVENILE SUMMER

# Playing politics: *Democracy 3*

Adam Koper and George Nanidis run the country from their computers



With the 2015 UK general election almost at hand, we looked to the popular political game *Democracy 3* to simulate each of the possible governments and see what would happen if each of the five main parties got into power.

In the game, players act as the leader of the country, giving them the freedom to alter and introduce policy in areas such as the economy, welfare and transport.

The main aims of the game are to tackle various social issues like homelessness, to save the often failing economy and to ultimately get elected for another term.

For different playthroughs we researched the manifestos of each party and then attempted to implement these into the game as accurately as possible. When the parties hadn't outlined the needed policy clearly, we were as faithful to the party ethos as we could be.



## Labour

Labour have promised to cut the deficit every year, while also spending another £2.5bn on the NHS. They hope to raise the minimum wage, employ an additional 1,000 border staff, and bring in rent controls. Labour hope to use the money gained from cutting down on tax avoidance and new policies such as the mansion tax.

Things got off to a dodgy start, as the deficit and crime increased. Luckily, these problems were eventually brought under control, and by the end of our first term we were running a narrow surplus. Labour were lucky to survive to the end of the term, as multiple groups, such as the patriots and capitalists, were plotting to topple the government. Having survived a whole five years, Labour won the next election by the skin of their teeth.

**Result: 51.3% at next election**



## Conservatives

We began with the Conservatives, who promise to eliminate the deficit by the end of the next term, while also investing £8bn in the NHS. We also had to lower inheritance tax, invest in roads and the rail network, and build more houses. Apart from cuts to welfare spending, the Tories seem vague about where savings will be made, and so we quickly found ourselves stuck with a stubborn deficit that refused to go down. Despite giving greater powers to the police and intelligence services, our Prime Minister ended up being assassinated less than a year before the next election. Admittedly, the polls were looking bad, so we doubt that he was missing out on much.

**Result: Assassinated 9 months before next election**



## UKIP

Not exactly the most successful government featured. Having quit the EU (we had to specially download an EU mod), we found that the savings promised by UKIP failed to materialise. It became difficult to fund increased military spending, despite cutting foreign aid. Then, from out of the blue, separatist rebels took control over part of the country, and we decided to send in the troops. Things went from bad to worse as the polls slumped, and a dissatisfied populace took to the streets in vigilante mobs and street gangs. As the country descended into chaos, our PM was assassinated for the third time.

**Result: PM assassinated 1 year 9 months before next election**

## VERDICT:

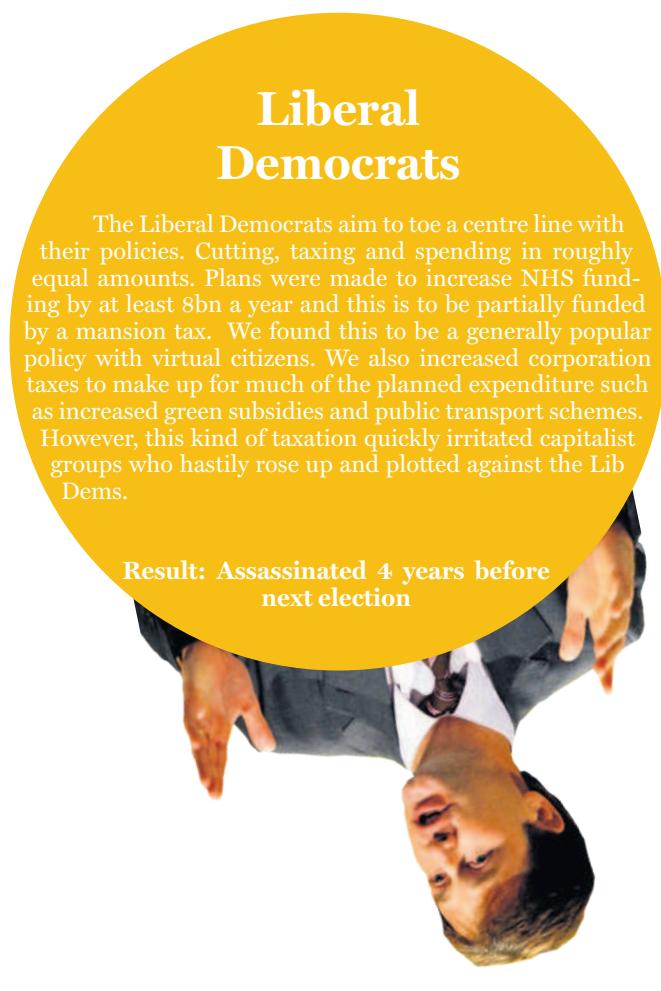
- While UKIP, the Lib Dems and the Tories fail to be re-elected due to their leaders' untimely deaths, both Labour and the Green party are successfully re-elected by a slim margin.



## Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats aim to toe a centre line with their policies. Cutting, taxing and spending in roughly equal amounts. Plans were made to increase NHS funding by at least 8bn a year and this is to be partially funded by a mansion tax. We found this to be a generally popular policy with virtual citizens. We also increased corporation taxes to make up for much of the planned expenditure such as increased green subsidies and public transport schemes. However, this kind of taxation quickly irritated capitalist groups who hastily rose up and plotted against the Lib Dems.

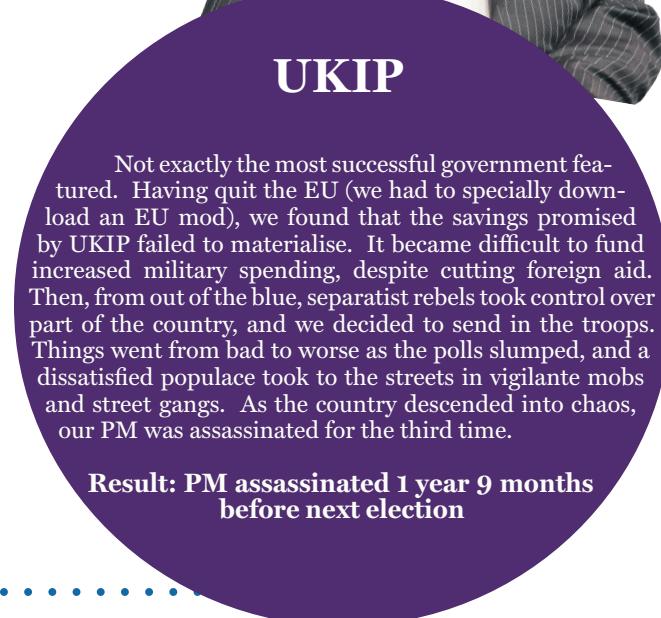
**Result: Assassinated 4 years before next election**



## The Green Party

The Greens aim to put in place some strong taxes on corporations, in order to fund green subsidies and welfare policies. Originally we managed to bring in a lot of tax revenue, but this quickly led to a brain drain in the financial sector and the capitalists got plotting. We also managed to decrease the number of motorists on the roads with fuel efficiency measures. We struggled to meet their goal of an increase in state employees as cuts to the military left many people unemployed. The Greens did manage to avoid being assassinated, and the wealth generated by the carbon taxes allowed for more welfare policies to be enacted.

**Result: 53% at the next election**



# Spice up your life

Amy Norton considers the health benefits that five cupboard worthy herbs and spices can bring to your cooking

**S**pices can change everything in a dish. They are the dynamics to your music, the accessories to your outfit, the decor to your room. A meal without seasoning is like a blank canvas without paint: but simply add to it a few additional strokes, and you've got a whole collage of flavours.

Not only do herbs and spices transform food, but they also have a place as the natural world's medicines. Cinnamon is great for digestion and balancing blood sugar levels; rosemary boosts memory and concentration; and cayenne pepper can make colds go dis-

appear. Yet with so many different spices out there, it can be difficult sometimes to know which to use.

And there's nothing more frustrating for a mildly adventurous cook than to stumble across a fantastic recipe, and find that the ingredients include a bunch of herbs and spices you can't even pronounce, let alone track down in the shops.

Thankfully, there are ways to cut corners: if you don't have time to track down strange seasonings, or want a lower-budget version of an expensive spice, then there are other sub-

stances with which you can fool the palette.

Instead of asafoedita in curries, use onion or garlic powder. A mix of cayenne pepper and ground paprika can be substituted for chipotle powder. Use lemon juice and salt if you can't source sumac for your kebab meats or salads; and replace harissa with chilli flakes ground with caraway seeds in a few drops of olive oil – or just a hot chilli sauce.

Remember that a little always goes a long way: you don't want the flavour to be overpowering. This short assemblage of the top five flavours will really improve your meals.



Dried Oregano

It's a given: fresh herbs don't keep well. Basil, coriander, or parsley garnishes are only worth buying if you're certain that they won't wilt at the back of the fridge. Dried oregano is popular in middle eastern and Italian cuisine to flavour meats. With its aromatic, slightly bitter flavour, oregano is perfect if you want a herby flavour in soups, on pizzas, or in pasta dishes.



Chilli Flakes

Made from crushed red chilli peppers, chilli flakes add a kick to just about anything, and remove the need to buy real chillies and painstakingly (and often painfully) chop them. With added benefits including aiding weight loss and pain relief, chilli flakes are a store cupboard essential. Use sparingly, as a little goes a long way. That way you can work your spice tolerance up.



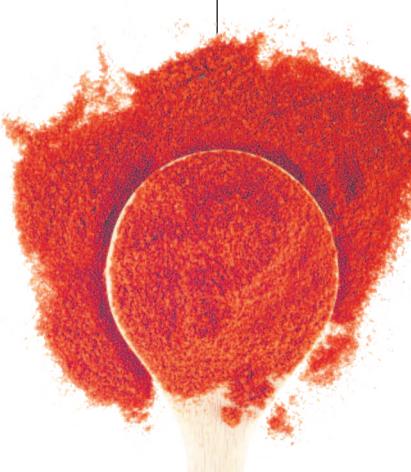
Ground cumin



Lemon

Yes, ok, lemons are neither a herb nor a spice, but fantastic for giving food a citrusy zing. Great with fish, in salads, and in some curries and Mexican dishes. Rather than buying lemons whole which can often go off, bottled lemon juice is readily available in supermarkets and will keep in the fridge for longer.

Smoked Paprika



## Revision provisions

Sophie Crump offers some healthy study grub for long nights in the library

### Granola Bars

For the bakers out there, homemade granola bars are far better than any you can buy. One recipe we found whittled them down to four ingredients: oats, almonds, honey, and peanut or almond butter. Mix and leave to set in the fridge or freezer, ready to be cut into squares. These bars are full of energy for long slogs in the JB Morrell.



IMAGE: MIRIAM

### Biltong

High in protein and with a long shelf life, biltong is an increasingly popular smoked meat snack from South Africa. Don't be put off by its manly packaging: biltong is not just for the muscle heads. Just perhaps pack some gum for afterwards, as it's got a pretty strong aftertaste.

### Apples and Peanut Butter

A delicious dip to spice up the monotonous 'apple a day.' Apple and peanut butter is a delicious combo, but celery or banana also work as great complements. Invest in some handy Tupperware to transport your preferred peanut butter, whether you like it crunchy or smooth.



IMAGE: SARAH GILBERT

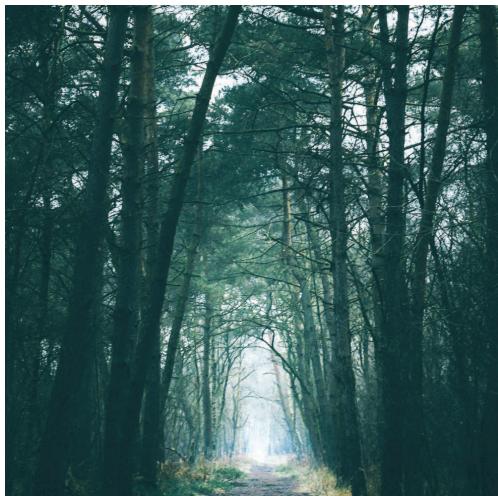
### Trail Mix

Far better for you than a packet of crisps, trail mix is a versatile and easy snack to throw in your backpack. Don't be put off by the high fat contents of nuts, as they're heart-healthy unsaturated fats and full of vitamin E and fibre. Do one better and make your own mix at home with your favourite nuts, dried fruit and, if you fancy some sweetness, add a few chocolate chips.

### Cheese and Grapes

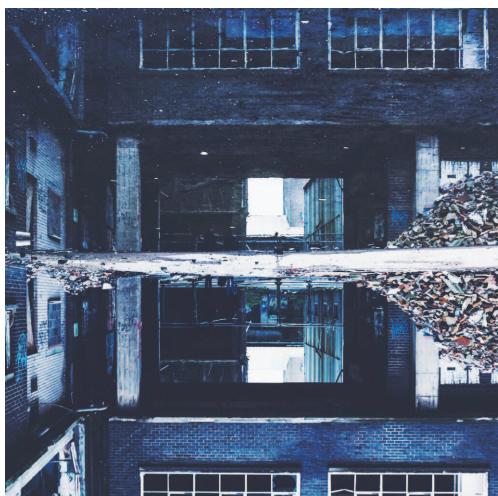
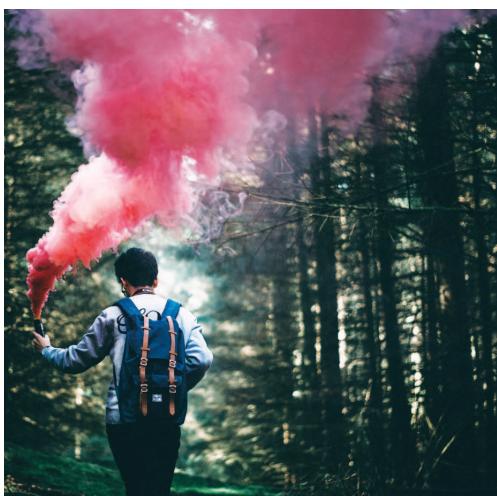
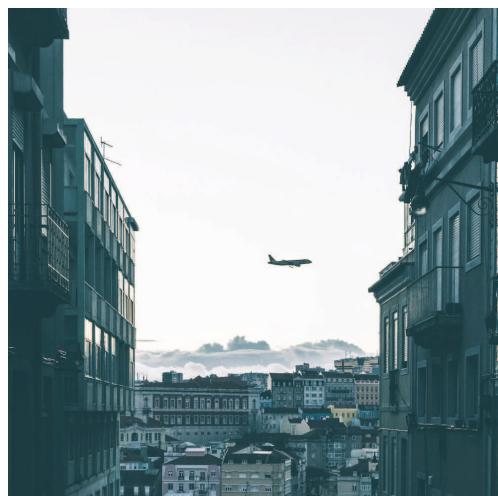
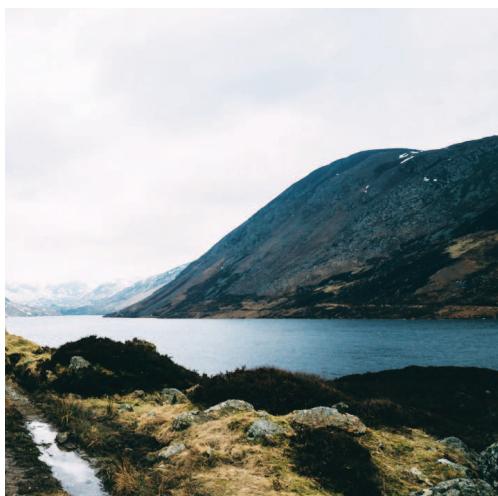
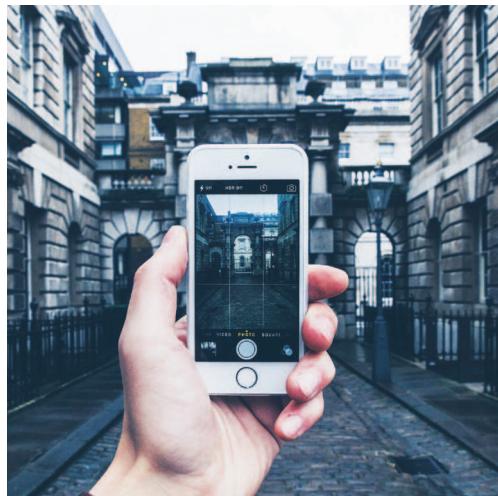
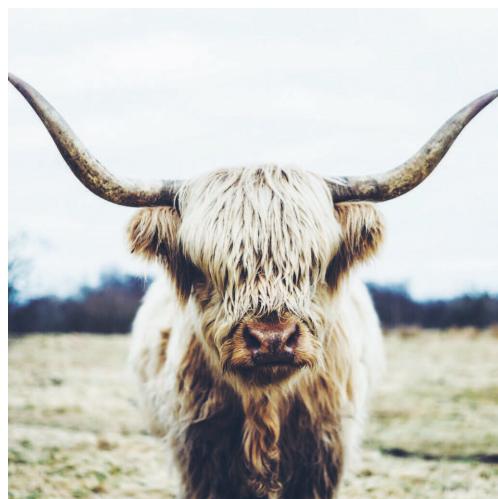
You don't need to be at a fancy dinner party to enjoy this delicate flavour combination. Babybel and Dairylea bites are a perfect size to accompany a small cluster of grapes in a container to the library with you. The red wine can wait until after exams.





# Thinking inside the box

Instagrammer **Merlin Kafka** talks to Jack Richardson about fame, friends and photography



““ It was like a door to a different world of photography had opened for me



““ My aim is to capture moments in a cinematic, atmospheric way

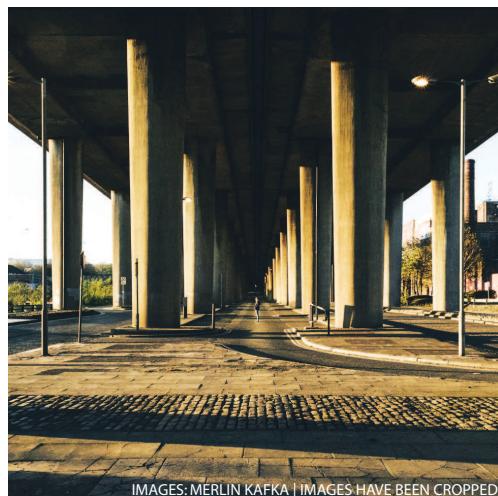
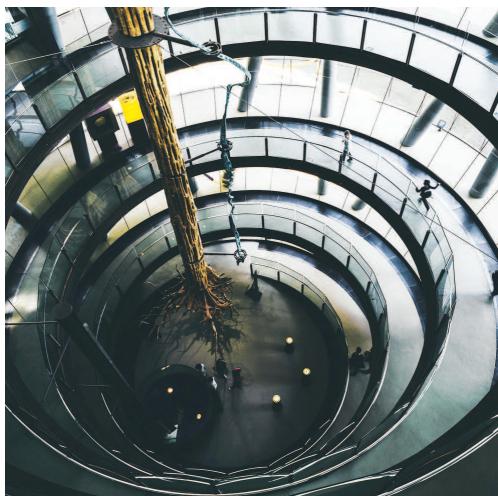




IMAGE: NEDIM SULEJMANOVIC

**W**ith over 52,000 followers, Merlin Kafka is one of the heavyweights of Instagram. Having only been using Instagram since 2013, he has more than 300 photos and has entranced viewers with his geometric and minimalist style. A clear and sensitive distinction between the clean lines of his urban shots and ethereal views of the Scottish countryside demonstrate Kafka's immense talent in a wide range of photographic subjects.

#### **What's your day job and where do you live currently?**

Currently I'm studying Product Design in Glasgow. These days my life is not too exciting - I spend most of my time in the library as the end of the year is approaching. However, in a few months I will leave Glasgow for a while to move to Singapore.

#### **How did you get started in photography? Was it through Instagram or earlier?**

Picking up my dad's DSLR was what got me started in photography. I began to play around with the settings and different techniques. Back then I was interested in documenting my travels through photography. After that I took a large number of photos mainly with my iPhone, simply because it was easy to use, I always had it with me, and I could reach it quickly to get that snap on-the-go.

#### **How and when did you discover Instagram and did you adopt it straight away?**

I joined Instagram around two and a half years ago. I can't remember exactly who or what got me into it, and I also didn't adopt it straight away. It was merely a platform for me to share moments of my life and memories from my travels back then. If you scroll way back on my feed you can still see a few photos from China almost two years ago, but I have tidied up the photos a little since then. Last year I started treating it a bit more seriously. I discovered Instagrammers such as Trashhand, 13thwitness and Alexstrohl. It was like a door to a different world of photography had opened for me. I had never seen anything like it and it inspired me to go out and be more aware of what I saw in my daily life. Instagram was sort of a catalyst for me - the platform motivated me to improve my photography.

#### **How did your popularity increase? Was there a turning point or did momentum simply build?**

Once I started taking it more seriously, I noticed an increased engagement within my own little community of people who I followed and who followed me. I also got in touch with other Instagrammers, some of whom I am proud to call good friends today - you could say I developed a sense for how the whole community thing works on Instagram. A few months ago I

received a message from Instagram that they had put me on their list of Suggested Users, which was a huge honour for me. From there the numbers skyrocketed.

#### **You've done some sponsored work on Instagram. How did that come about and was it an easy decision to take up the offers?**

I have only done one or two sponsored projects to date - there have been a number of opportunities but I decided not to do all of them. For me personally, it's not the right way to 'capitalise' on Instagram, if one is interested in doing that. Once I got the chance to collaborate with one company however, I made the decision to take up the offer. I simply enjoyed their minimalist, classic design and already had a number of ideas in my head of how I could present their product in a creative way. Going commercial is always a big point of discussion - in the end I try not to take Instagram too seriously though.

#### **Do sponsored shots restrict you creatively? Is the money justified by following a brief or is it simply a bonus for a shot you might have taken anyway?**

Restrictions can enhance one's creativity I believe. Constraints help you to focus and can give you some sort of guideline with your photos. I can only hypothetically speak about monetary aspects, as I haven't taken up any offer that involves that. If the money is justified, it leads back to the question of selling yourself, if one intends to make profit from Instagram - that's ok for me. There are a number of examples where it works perfectly. If you prefer to stay non-commercial then any amount of money would not be justified - it's really up to the person in my opinion. All that matters in the end is the work.

#### **How would you describe your style of photography and subject matter?**

You tell me! This is one of the hardest things for me; I feel that my style has constantly changed over time. I'm always trying to keep a balance between having a visually cohesive gallery of images and just posting the photos that I personally like the most, which would result in a less cohesive style. Overall my aim is to capture moments in a cinematic, atmospheric way: photographs that tell a story and that are aesthetically pleasing.

#### **What brings you inspiration and has your style/inspiration changed over time?**

Great minds. People who have an idea of something and pursue it inspire me as well. I also see music as a great source of inspiration. When I'm shooting I always listen to something. Different music inspires me to take different kinds of photos.

Sometimes silence is bliss as well, especially in the environment of nature.

#### **How have you approached the editing aspect of Instagram? Do you use the app for editing?**

I don't use the Instagram app for editing at all, actually. I use Lightroom to edit my DSLR shots and apps such as VSCOcam, Google Snapseed and TouchRetouch to perform minor adjustments or to edit iPhone shots.

#### **More generally, what gear do you use for your photos?**

I use my iPhone to take shots on the go when I don't have my camera. I like the simplicity, speed and flexibility of it, and the fact that I have it with me at all times. Most of my photographs are taken with my SLR camera though.

#### **What do you think of being 'Instagram famous'? Is it a title that you're proud of? How do you think it stacks up to other forms of social media fame?**

I don't like to call myself 'Instagram famous' - I want to add that I see the whole 'numbers' thing (followers, likes etc.) very critically. Of course I am proud of my success, but in the end it's just a number in a mobile application. It's seen as too prestigious in my opinion, and I don't want to get too attached to it. Being 'Instagram famous' as you call it also makes things a lot easier, and it opens doors, sadly. The number of followers should not have an influence on such things in my opinion. The Suggested Users list on Instagram has created an extremely powerful tool to lift people up to a certain status and exposure that is almost scary in my opinion. With the click of a button they could potentially make anyone 'famous' over night. It's an interesting concept in my opinion, and a very powerful mechanism.

#### **Do you have any advice to budding photographers in general and Instagrammers in particular?**

Don't take Instagram too seriously and get stuck in a creative loop. Reinvent your style on a daily basis, try new things, meet the community, utilise every opportunity to take a photograph. Also experiment with different conditions in case you're shooting outside - rain can create great atmospheres, for example. Get inspired by other people, try to emulate their styles and learn from it; from that you will inevitably develop your own style. M

# My shit week so far

Tom Fennelly

It was nice to take a step back from my usual full on involvement in running the coverage for *Nouse* as it allowed me to take in the aura of Europe's biggest varsity event as a whole, and to spot some of the more obscure and rather humorous antics that also occur.

My 'coverage' of the opening ceremony was far from serious journalism. I shouted a few things that I could never get published in this column and would even be scorned upon in a court of law. I even managed to get a series of Russell Group chants echoing around Central Hall at the expense of our opposition. Paupers.

Although, as my long-term *Nouse* colleague Jamie Summers pointed out, giving the Lancaster contingent the wanker sign throughout the bouts probably looked a tad more vindictive towards the university officials and big wigs sat in front of them. Although we were beyond caring after the fourth pint.

Amid the large amount of football I watched during the tournament, I can't say I saw a single card brandished (despite the final minute brawl that ensued after the Uni seconds match) until I watched both universities' second-best college sides battle it out very far away from the Roses spotlight.

It was during this game that a rugby league player was somehow booked. The player was only at the game to watch his housemate play and, when the referee asked, reluctantly took up the role of linesman. I politely had to remind him of the rules after he flagged for a player's foot touching the line, but after that it shouldn't have been too difficult for the lad to understand.

Apparently not. After failing to flag which way the throw-in should have been given, he

got lip from someone. Not seeing who, he gave some strongly-worded lip back. The person who had given him that initial lip was the referee, who gave him a proper standing down. Safe to say, he won't be touching a flag any time soon.

Nevertheless, the rest of Roses was a huge success. We stuffed the Red Rose like never before, my housemate won his boxing match and the fireworks were shiny.

The only spate of bad news, strangely, came from the Roses promotion video. The video, which is a fantastic feat, received bad press from a one-sided article in The Tab where some of the cheerleaders complained that a shot that focused on the word 'York' written on their kit was actually focusing on their breasts.

Both The Tab and the complainants seemingly forgot that putting writing on clothing naturally draws people in to read them, so be careful where you position it, and that cheerleading itself is the most objectifying thing to happen to women since the corset. Or that Lancaster bloke who was in a vest with a megaphone at the water polo (if you do find him, please return him safely back to the 1980s).

The other papers aren't saying anything else more interesting really. In a slow news week, Vision have created a scandal out of the University spending money. Shock horror – the University invests in stuff. Not that I should ridicule; no doubt a similar story will be splashed across the front page of this paper when it's published.

It's also been in the news this week that Mark Warters, the councillor for Osbaldwick, still hates students. I used to live in Osbald-

LANCASSTER  
LOVES ME  
NOT

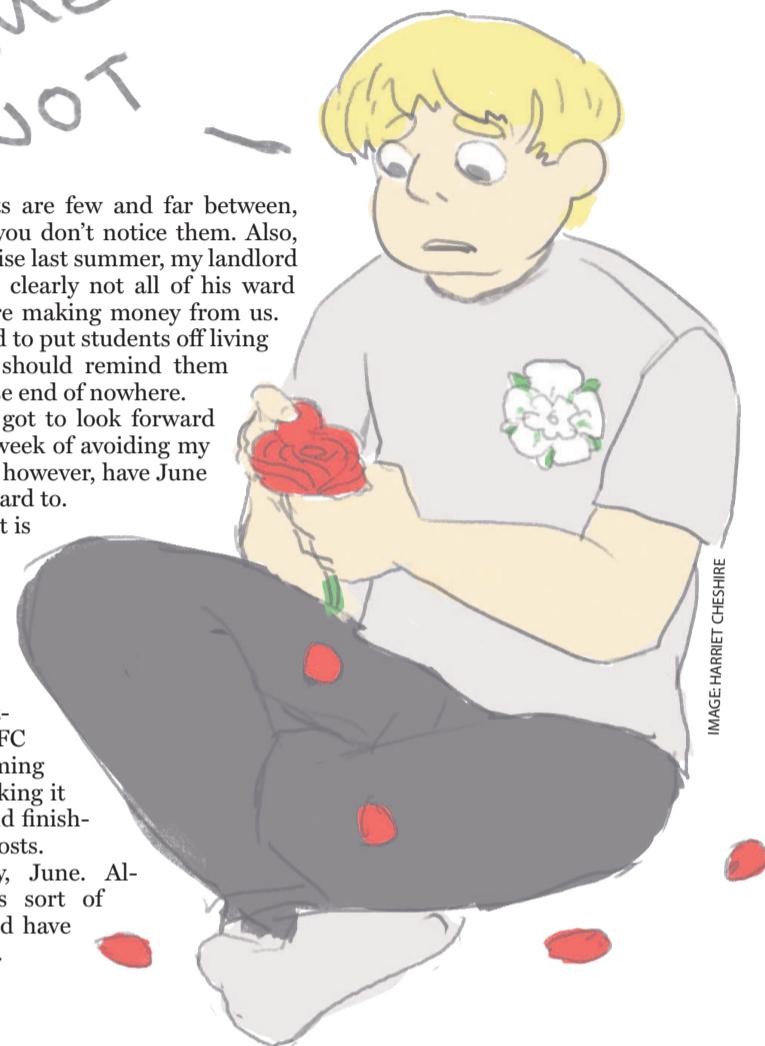
wick and students are few and far between, so much so that you don't notice them. Also, much to my surprise last summer, my landlord lived opposite, so clearly not all of his ward agree when they're making money from us. If he really wanted to put students off living there, maybe he should remind them that it is in the arse end of nowhere.

What have I got to look forward to? Another shit week of avoiding my dissertation. I do, however, have June Allen to look forward to.

To clarify, that is my mate's mum.

To clarify further, it's also the name of my six-a-side team, which you can follow live on Twitter @JuneAllenFC to see June coming from behind, working it up the passage and finishing between the posts.

I'm so sorry, June. Although with this sort of misogyny, I should have gone to Lancaster.



## Callum McCulloch: 10 things I've learnt this week



**1** My friends don't think very highly of me. Following a painfully successful frappe, which eased past a half century of 'likes' with consummate ease, too many of my friends believed that I had nominated myself for BNOC of the year and was imploring people to vote for me. I may be tragic but that is another level.

**2** If I was training for my marathon as much as I'm talking about it, I would be able to run it tomorrow. Instead, I am trying to guilt trip people into sponsoring me. It's for charity, you know.

**3** If I get any more than 40 per cent in my exams, I will be annoyed that I didn't use my time wisely enough. I'm sorry to all of those who need to actually do well but it would be reckless not to make the most of this first-year benefit.

**4** If you don't wear your Uni sport stash, you may as well not play Uni sport. The sports tent may have been hotter than a steam room on 2 for 1 night, but at no point was I removing my UYHC track-

suit jacket. What if people mistook me for just a supporter?

**5** If your profile picture and cover photo don't show you playing in Roses, you may as well not have played in Roses. And did your team really win if you didn't post a team photo immediately to Facebook announcing the score followed by #rosesarewhite?

**6** Floyd Mayweather's 'The Money Team' is just an over exaggerated version of Boats 'N Hoes from Step Brothers. "Anchors away and shiver me timbers/we like to fuck ladies with our 8-inch members." Is that Floyd or Dale Doback? Genuinely can't tell.

**7** Vanilla coke and regular coke need to be in different coloured cans. I can't be the only one who has enthusiastically gulped a vanilla coke thinking it was far superior flavour only to be met with an assault on the taste buds. First world problems don't get much more severe.

**8** Retrospective to-do lists are perfect for faking productivity. This way you can trick yourself into thinking you're getting shit done. Self-deceptive procrastination at its best.

**9** Ducks are evil. Not only are they intimidating everyone around campus, but I found out this week that they rape and eat each other. Watch your backs kids, the revolution is nigh.

**10** I haven't had a match on Tinder in weeks. Somehow, I think it might be broken...

## Villanella

*Sam Hickford*

You were a hoax to me. I stretched the stars for you  
To raise forth your name, and from a shadow's  
pulse beside you  
I painted the night-sky, and from this cracked canvas  
I yearn.  
Just what a hoax you were. Mellifluous murmurs,

Thundered down from angels, screamed in infernal, perfect words;  
And raised a sea of ashes. What a hoax you were.  
You don't deserve these burning songs of sunless  
praise –  
And do not, with your cold incantations, swoop  
down to say;

"It was a drunken pull." Sometimes I see your face,  
You flutter a glare of half-recognition, and soft  
grace  
Gushes from your Blank. It was only last term  
You tongued me the Robert Burns! Oh what a hoax  
you were!  
(Can't you smile before you fade without a trace?)

The lonely night alights its trembling dreams –  
and, were,  
I conscious, breathing, I'd see just what a hoax I'd  
served  
As every Earth throngs in silence, leave-strewn –  
the hazy shade  
Redresses the eternal rushes of strangling Rage.