

# G A Z E





## Rocky Walder

Sophomore  
Communication/Acting

## Vanessa Garcia

Sophomore  
Human Bio/Pre Med



# Jules Nash

Sophomore  
PR/MAP/Photography and Social Change



# Dani Hazime

Sophomore  
Public Policy/Health Administration

# Olivia Singer

Junior  
Theater/Screenwriting



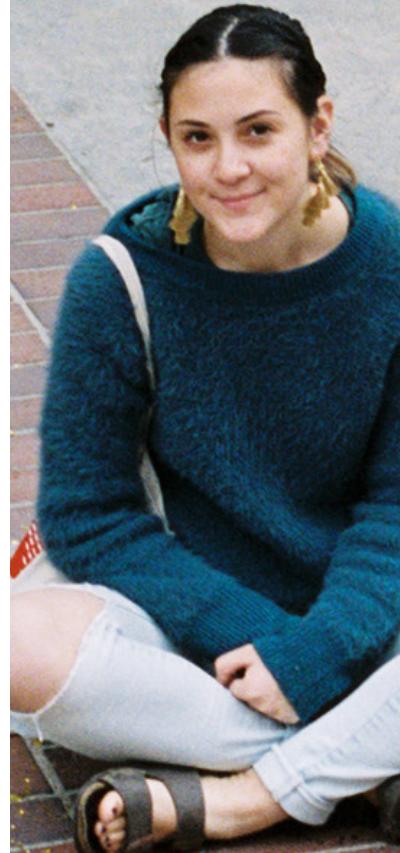
# What is This?

We frequently, often subconsciously, are exposed to the male gaze in our media. From fashion magazines, to movies, to even some music, we are constantly faced with the reality that most of our media is controlled by men, and subsequently is from the male perspective. This magazine is just one slice of the increasing amount of media that is counteracting that. By having these five women at USC take or select photos that relate to their past, present, and future, I hope to show an alternative to the cursory, surface level treatment women often receive.

In my discussions with these women, I learned not just about them, but about what the future of feminism looks like both on campus and among our generation. I learned about their struggles, their joys, and their goals. They were all incredibly open, and I got a much better understanding of gender and the direction our country is headed in terms of gender roles.

My hope is that through their photos, you can learn about them, through the photos of them you can see their essence, and through my writing about their views, we can all learn more about what a feminist looks like, and what we can do to make the world a more equal place.

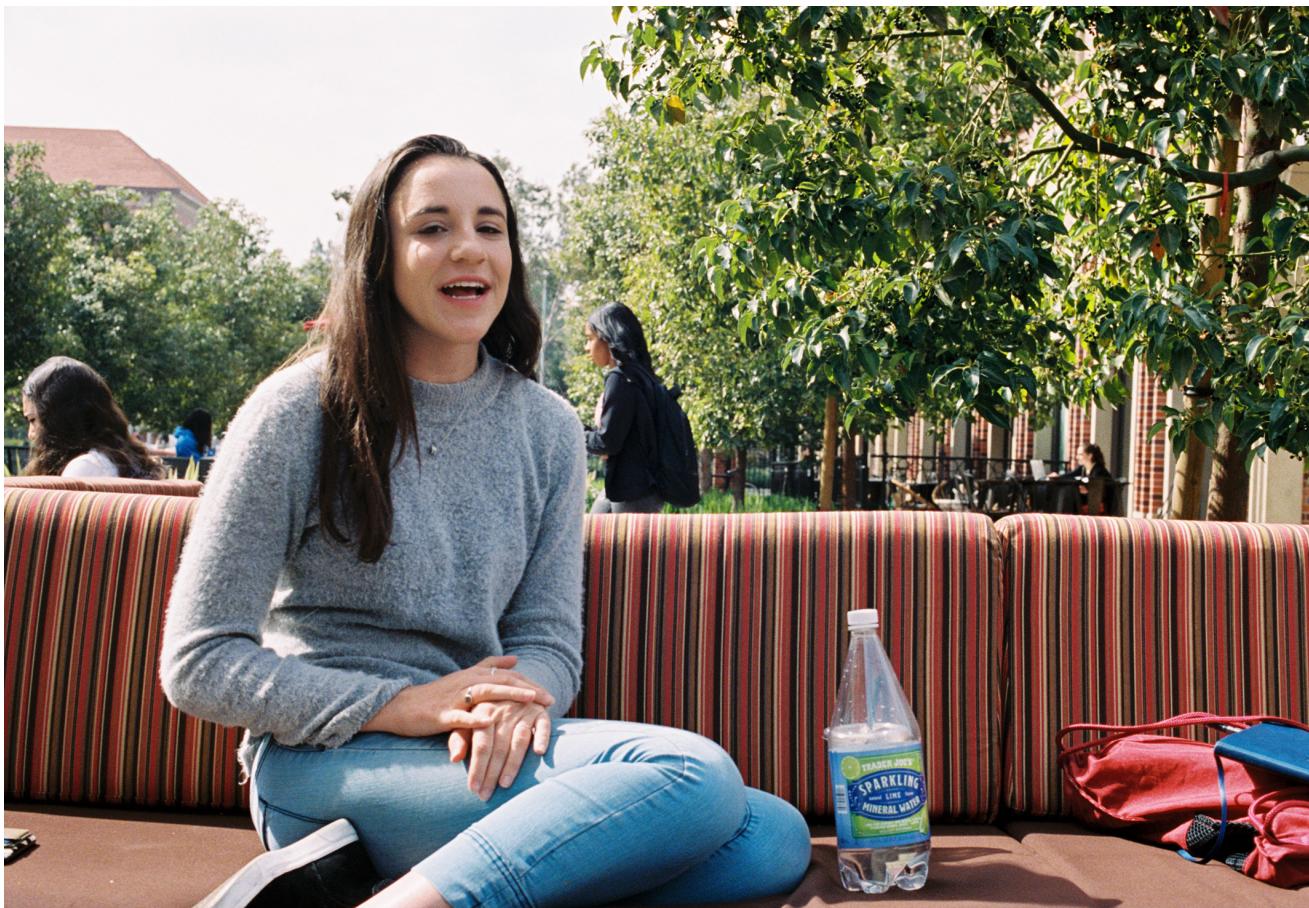
Matt Parker





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Jules Nash sitting in sparkles of her favorite color.



# ROCKY WALDER

“We’re in a space now where people can identify with whatever they want”

**M**y first shooting day incidentally landed on International Women's day, something I didn't know until later in the day and that was not brought up during the interviews that day but after learning that it felt fitting. I noticed it because Rocky had posted a collage on her Instagram story of all the women she admired in her life, a veritable army of her friends and family who had made an impact on her life.

Rocky is from a Colorado town that was mostly conservative. Where she is from, "there aren't many examples of women who aren't stay at home moms." While she doesn't think being a stay at home mom is a bad thing, it was not what she wanted, so she moved to LA to pursue a career in media. While she wants to be on the screen, she also expressed her interest in marketing and branding, referencing "girlboss" Gwyneth Paltrow as an inspiration.

She is not unaware of the challenges she faces both in terms of making herself into a brand and breaking into the film industry. She pointed out that when creating a brand, sex sells, and worried about the struggle between doing something for an audience that may not be beneficial for women vs. advancing your own career. She also brought up Me Too, and mentioned that fact that many women in media feel pressure to sleep with men to get ahead.

As another example of the bubble she feels she came from, she mentioned how her friend's Dad from Colorado didn't know about Me

Too in December, months after the allegations against Harvey Weinstein had been plastered all over the news and spurred the movement.

Rocky also wants to challenge the views of women we see in popular culture. Referencing the main act of USC's Conquest concert, the only depiction of women in his songs was "my bitch love do cocaine." She cited Refinery 29 as a magazine that is successfully countering these views. She hopes one day she'll be in charge of a similar company, and that she can be a role model for others.



# VANESSA GARCIA

**A**lthough it may look like she put on her coolest outfit for her photos, Vanessa is just naturally that cool. I met her on International women's day outside of Lyon Center, where she works and spends a good portion of her time. She loves exercise, and eventually wants to be a primary care physician. Health is clearly an important part of her life, but not just physically. She said she is most afraid of not being successful or happy, saying "I want to feel like I did everything." I wouldn't bet against it.

Vanessa is from Rhode Island, where she was one of the few women of color at a mostly white, affluent private school. Her parents didn't graduate college, and she is hoping to graduate and go on to graduate school as well. Family came up a lot during our discussion, from her clear admiration of all that her mom has done for her to her very specific vision of her future family (she wants 4 kids.)

Her mom specifically emphasized education when Vanessa was growing up, going to extreme lengths to make sure she got the best possible education. This has led Vanessa to have an incredible thirst for knowledge, something she explored in her photos. Her mom also taught her to be confident and to not take any shit, something Vanessa also had to learn through trial and error. She claims she is sometimes too real with people, to the point of hurting them. When I asked why I hadn't seen that side of her, she said simply, "you've never crossed me." Being at USC and going through the rituals of freshman year taught her how to be sure of her actions, and to avoid negative people. "I came here like a lost puppy," she said, but she's now found her stride.

One thing she worries is that people won't see all the depth she has. While on the outside she seems like the fun, cool, sporty girl, she is far more dynamic. She has spent serious time planning out her life and her goals, and even for this project she first went to a whiteboard to brainstorm rather than blindly taking photos.

Her inspirations were mostly musicians, and all feminists, from Rihanna to Jhene Aiko to Kehlani. One thing she noticed about all of them when I asked about gender roles is that they manage to merge traditional masculine and feminine qualities, something she does as well. She sees this as something that will become even more prevalent in the future. Despite our current president, she thinks we've made massive strides in the past ten years in redefining what it means to be masculine or feminine. This means women have more expanded roles in society, but men are also beginning to question what it means to be a man. For her, this all fits into the cause of feminism, and she thinks if we all can stay true to ourselves, while "making a conscious effort to grow," combined with the work of feminists, we are on track for a revolution to tip the scales towards equality.







# OLIVIA SINGER

**O**livia Singer does not give a shit. However, this definitely does not mean that she doesn't care. When she met me for our interview, she brought along her dog, Banjo. He is six months old, and she rescued him from a dumpster. Her friend saw someone throw out a sealed bag with two puppies, since he didn't have the resources to take care of them, and Olivia immediately decided to adopt one. She has worked on a barn, her neighbours had a petting zoo, and her mom helps save dogs from kill shelters, so caring for animals was second nature for her. "I never thought I would have a dog in college," she told me, but sometimes fate intervenes.

While she doesn't bring him to class, it is certainly clear how much time she spends with Banjo, and the amount of love and attention she gives him. She wants him to have a high quality of life, to be able to run around, chase squirrels, and be loved. It's unclear if Banjo counts as one of her closest friends, of which she has 7. "My mom always said you only need the palm of your hand," she explained to me. "You really only need 5 good friends. I'm incredibly lucky, I have seven." This was just one of the many pieces of wisdom she had for me, and she was never afraid to state her opinion absolutely.

One thing she established early on is that she doesn't like USC, a departure from everyone else I interviewed. She thinks college life is too predictable, from the standard trials of freshman year to "the way guys approach girls at every party." This was her first mention of feminism, and while she said she hadn't felt much sexism growing up in New York, it was clear it is something on her mind. She compared how women are treated when going out, to bars and

parties, to being like an animal in a zoo or a piece of meat, being looked out and picked out by guys.

She is in the drama school, but is interested in pursuing more professional opportunities, and will be working at Fox this summer to get experience in broadcasting. She has noticed a marked change in how women are treated in the media industry in the past year, especially after the Me Too movement. "Women are seen in a better light," after the common experiences of the harassment women have to face were revealed. However, she believes women still need to prove themselves. In any room, men are given the benefit of the doubt, but a woman has to work to get to that same level of respect automatically given to men. She sees this especially in the genre she wants to go into: comedy.

Her comedy inspiration is Elaine on Seinfeld, as she was able to participate in the male humor without judgement, something Olivia wants to pursue. She has noticed that in comedy, women are constantly made fun of or berated, while men generally only get minimal insults, mostly about small dicks. This disparity in comedy is something she thinks is slowly getting fixed, referencing Claire Dunphy of Modern Family taking over the company in the show, but Olivia wants everyone to feel there is someone on screen who can both represent them and make them laugh.

The other role she feels is lacking for women is the one of the crazy villain, a Joker like character. She believes that it can't all be rosy depictions of women, and would love to see more of the likes of Harley Quinn on screen. She seems hopeful this will happen. Citing her mom again, she says "rigidity always breaks. Now is when people need to start being flexible."

# DANI HAZIME

You may have heard of Dani Hazime before: she is co-creator of the USC Frats as vines meme. What you may not know about her is that in addition to her sense of humor and knowledge of vine and frat culture, she is also on track to graduate early and go to med school, following in her parents footsteps. While taking these photos, she planned out her entire left, having a miniature identity crisis in determining what was important to her and where she wants to go with her life, but she is certainly capable in whatever realm she enters, comedic or otherwise.

I've known Dani for over a year, so our interview was much more conversational, and we hadn't even left her apartment before she dove right into the difficulties she's faced at USC. She was very confident before coming to USC, but after feeling slightly ostracized freshman year, she lost some of that confidence. She felt she was seen as "weird" and that people didn't necessarily see that she was "smart, capable, from a diverse background, and has struggled."

She understands this is largely because people can't see you in every environment. Some of her friends know her as the smart girl in their class that is always studying, while another group knows her as the girl always down to party. The reality is somewhere in the middle: she loves to have fun, but is dedicated to her work.

She has also seen first-hand the toxicity around hookup culture at USC. She especially hates "entitled boys," which she finds a lot of at USC, especially in Greek life and among athletes. She has personally experienced this, and believes part of this is masculine culture that allows guys to be aggressive, confident, and rude, while

women can't be. She also buys into this culture, often dressing for what guys want to see, despite knowing she should be dressing for herself. While she still sees these differences in gender, some of which she thinks will never change (such as us being more inclined to see happiness in women for evolutionary reasons) our generation, especially in Los Angeles is challenging traditional gender roles.

Another way she sees these disparities playing out on campus is in classes. She has noticed it is mostly guys speaking in class, and although she was an active participant in high school, men have dominated her college classes and she often finds herself silent in class discussions.

She also discussed Me Too, stressing that it isn't anything new. "Every woman I know has been abused in some way," she told me, directly contradicting the often touted statistic that it is 1 in 4 women who will face abuse in their life. This alone leads to lack of confidence and fear in women. She presented the scenario of going on a date. For a guy, the worst that could happen is a girl says no or says she isn't into him. A girl could end up raped, murdered, or assaulted. While this is not how the majority of dates end up, it shows how much work we still have to do before we can truly claim gender equality.

Overall, she thinks patience is most important if we want to achieve the aims of feminism. "The Dalai Lama says patience is power," she told me, her third time bringing up power during our conversation. She has learned patience from her parents, her significant other, and also from herself, and she thinks if we could all relax a little, and have more patience with one another, the world would be much better off.





# JULES NASH

Jules Nash loves yellow. When she was having a rough time last year, she surrounded herself with yellow: walls, clothing, decorations, flowers, and immediately found her mood improved. Keeping the color in her life is one way she takes control, and her ability to lead is certainly clear. She is not your stereotypical leader who will delegate or orate. Instead, she simply exists, and her warmth, infectious brightness, and magnetism make those around her want to be better. This was my sense of her in our short time together, and is something she has tried to work on since coming to USC.

In high school, people knew Jules Nash as a leader on campus, but here it's almost impossible to be known. "We have student government, but there aren't well known leaders on campus," she explains. Instead, she has inserted herself into organizations and causes she is passionate about, such as Spark SC, working with feminist organizations, and working in the photography lab. She wants to go into advertising, as she sees it as a space to be creative, but also wants to fight against the ingrained patriarchy in that industry. "All the impactful ads have come from men," she told me. This has led to over sexualization and a proliferation of the male gaze in the media we often absorb subconsciously.

Jules also doesn't think we can ever be satisfied with the work we've done. Gloria Steinem helped design the curriculum for one of her classes, and when she came in, Jules found herself disappointed in Steinem's lack of awareness of the issues facing women of color.

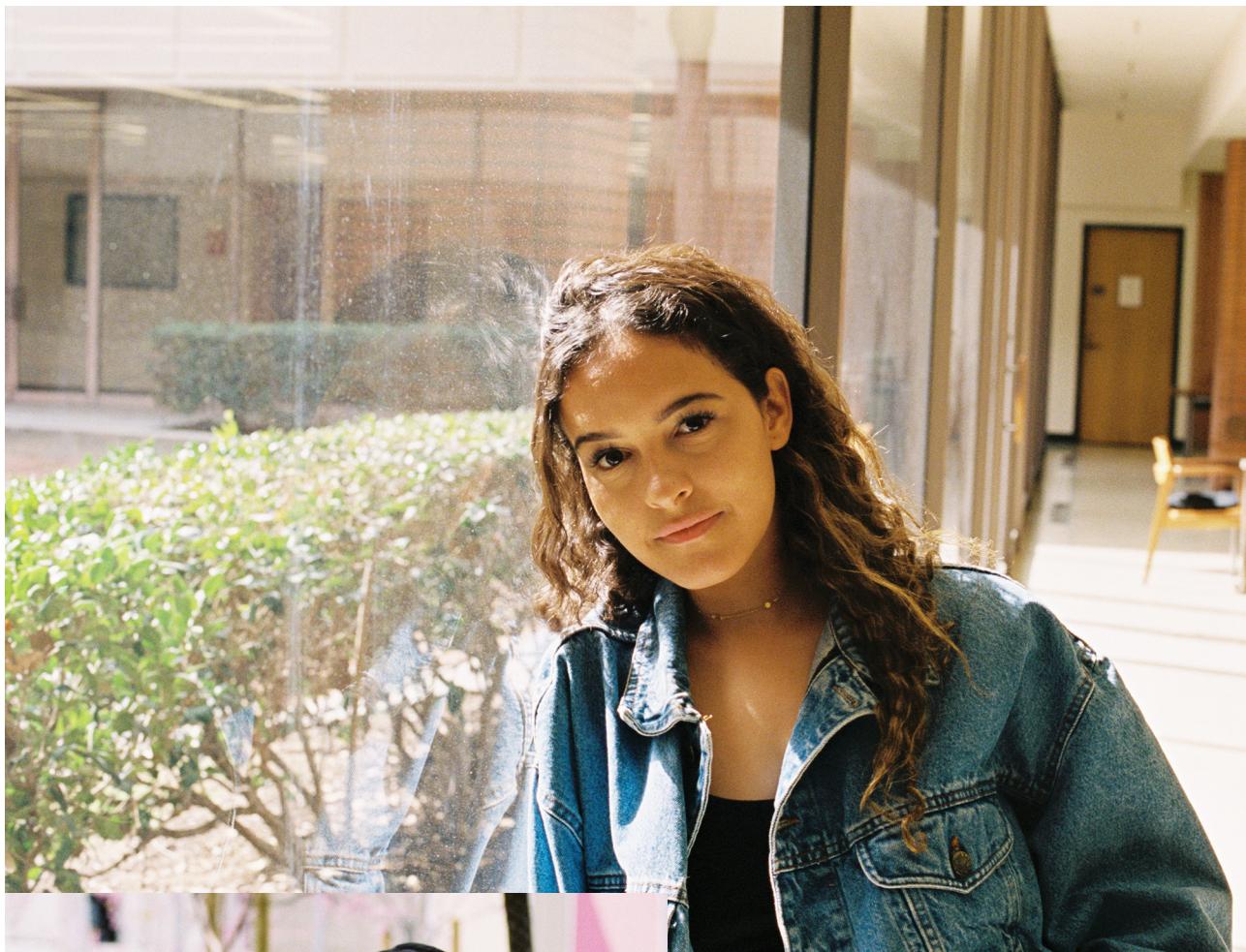
Jules and I also talked about feminine and

masculine qualities. She is very interested in redefining what strength means. As of now, she sees it as a word associated with men and power, but strength can come in many forms. This is just one area where she thinks a swap in how we perceive gender is imminent. This is not to say she doesn't embrace feminine qualities, and she is especially happy to see increasing celebration of women in the media, especially in the wake of Me Too. However, she worries that we are defining masculinity too rigidly, and she made it clear that everyone needs to come together to break stereotypes and eliminate gender roles.

Unlike some of the other women I interviewed, Jules loves social media. She sees it as a place of expression, and while we obviously all put our best face forward online, we can learn what people value by seeing what they post, similarly to how we can hopefully learn about people based on the photos they choose to take. While she admits apps like Instagram are mostly filled with women posting, because they have been taught to focus more on appearance, she still thinks it is a valuable venue for self expression.

Despite the progress we've made for feminism recently, Jules still sees examples where we can improve. Over break, when she and her boyfriend were making inappropriate jokes, her mother told her it "wasn't ladylike," which she found disappointing, especially coming from her own family. Jules points to Vice, Vox, and Refinery29 as examples of media to look to for good representations of women with accurate information. However, I think it is people like her, who push boundaries by being themselves, that will make our world better.

GAZE





# CHILDHOOD

**S**urprisingly family members were not as photographed for reminders of childhood among these five women. Instead, their family ended up in the categories of things that they admired or made them happy, perhaps less surprising once you hear them talk so glowingly about their parents. Although family wasn't as represented in photos, they were still incredibly important in forming the values of all of these women. Rocky in particular noted that "our ideas come from our family structure," and that this is a worldwide and ancient trend. Instead, there were lots of objects and places, from the road Dani drove to get to high school to Vanessa's recollection of milk, cereal, and cartoons on the weekends. There is a sense of nostalgia in many of the photos, of a desire to go back to simpler times.

From how all of them described their early life, it was relatively happy. Perhaps because we didn't dive into deeper personal issues, but almost everyone mentioned their mom as a role model, and things that made them happy and things that reminded them of childhood often were one in the same. None of the childhood objects reflected any stereotypes about gender, because at that age we are not yet fully aware of the roles we are supposed to fulfil. Jules even admitted to embracing a tomboy phase solely because she wanted to be allowed to play wall-ball. From sports to music to Star Wars, there was no clear thread towards femininity.

During our discussions, the one thing that did get brought up that many of them felt should be introduced in childhood is sex education. Dani and Jules brought this up, along with the fact that a younger generation is seeing Me

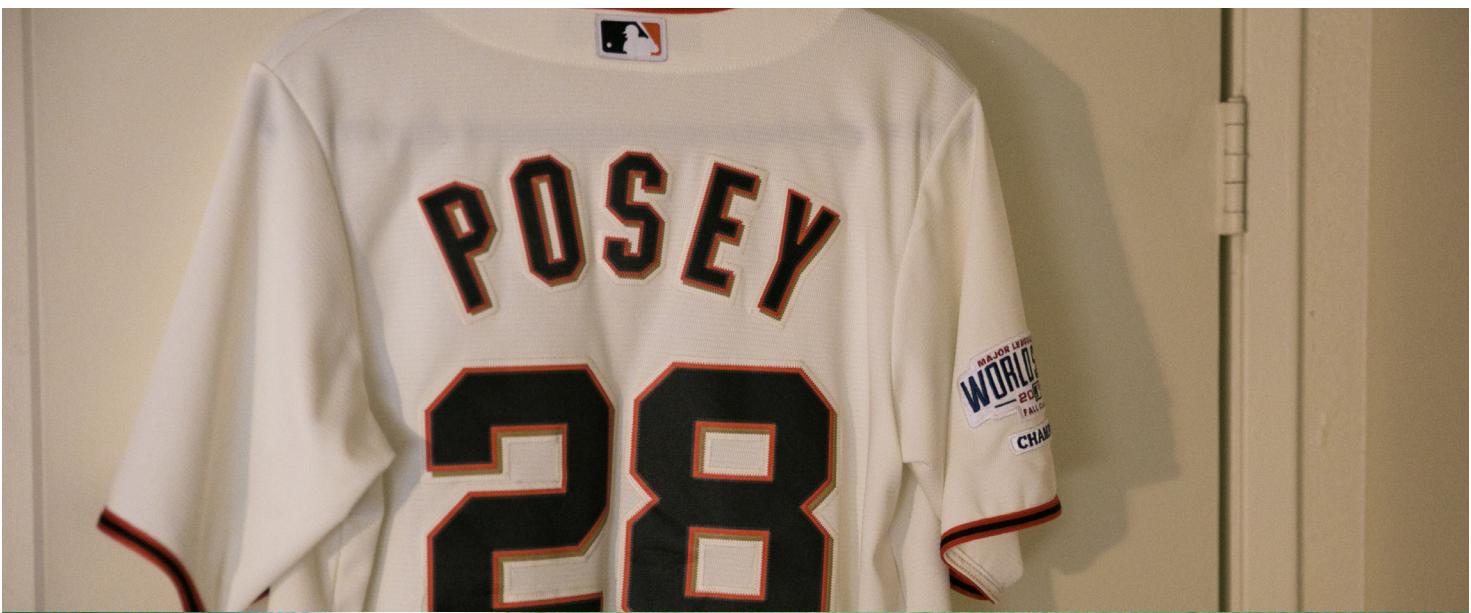
Too as it happens, and understanding the way gender and sex interact. Jules also thinks parents should allow their kids to date or sleep over at other's houses. "Obviously they shouldn't be encouraging their kids to have sex," she clarified, merely that being aware that kids will date and will have sex, it is important to educate them on how to do this properly so that when they are on their own they are capable of dealing with situations and emotions that may arise.



Fidget Cube and Light Saber wand (Jules)

Right Page from Top: Piano (Dani) Chocolate Milk and Cartoons (Vanessa)





Buster Posey Jersey from Dad (Jules), Playing outside (Vanessa),  
Children's books (Rocky)



From Left Clockwise: Cereal (Vanessa), Restaurant at home and Arizona (Dani), 60s/70s Vans (Rocky)



From Top Left Clockwise: Brunch with Family, PiPhi Dinner  
(Rocky), Fridge at school and bed with wine (Vanessa)  
Right Page: Yellow Happiness (Jules)

# HAPPINESS

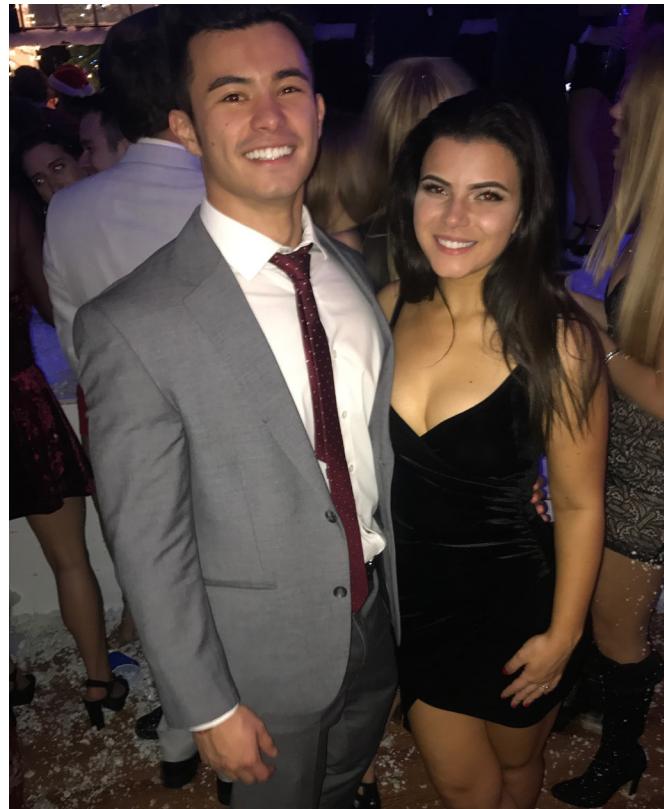
**H**appiness seemed to elicit the most photos, and also the most consistent. Frequently pictures were friends, food, and family, with some mention of the wonderful city we live in. This isn't surprising, and is not necessarily indicative of femininity, but is perhaps something women are more likely to express. As Dani said, we see happiness much more often in women than men, and women are also more likely to show affection to their similarly gendered friends. While friends are certainly a source of happiness for almost everyone, it was clear that all of these women had incredibly valuable friendships.

When thinking about happiness, we also often think of entertainment. I asked about media that represents women well, and there were not particularly many answers. While left-leaning publications like Refinery29 came up, TV shows and movies were not mentioned often. I heard maybe one or two mentions of something that

accurately and positively reflected women in the media, which translated to a lack of their appearance in the photos. This was one of the most surprising things to me, as music, movies, and TV are often where I go when searching for happiness. Seeing that half the population can be left out of the incredible joy these mediums can bring was disheartening, but almost everyone agreed that the future was looking brighter for women in entertainment (but with only 12% of speaking roles currently given to women, it's hard to get much worse). Olivia was perhaps the exception, finding happiness in comedy, but she still thinks it can improve.

My conversations, unlike the photos, did not reveal an abundance of happiness. This is likely because talking about these issues isn't always happy, as it brings up bad memories, struggles, and a reminder that not everyone is treated equally. Despite this, everyone was upbeat, optimistic, and confident about the future of feminism.

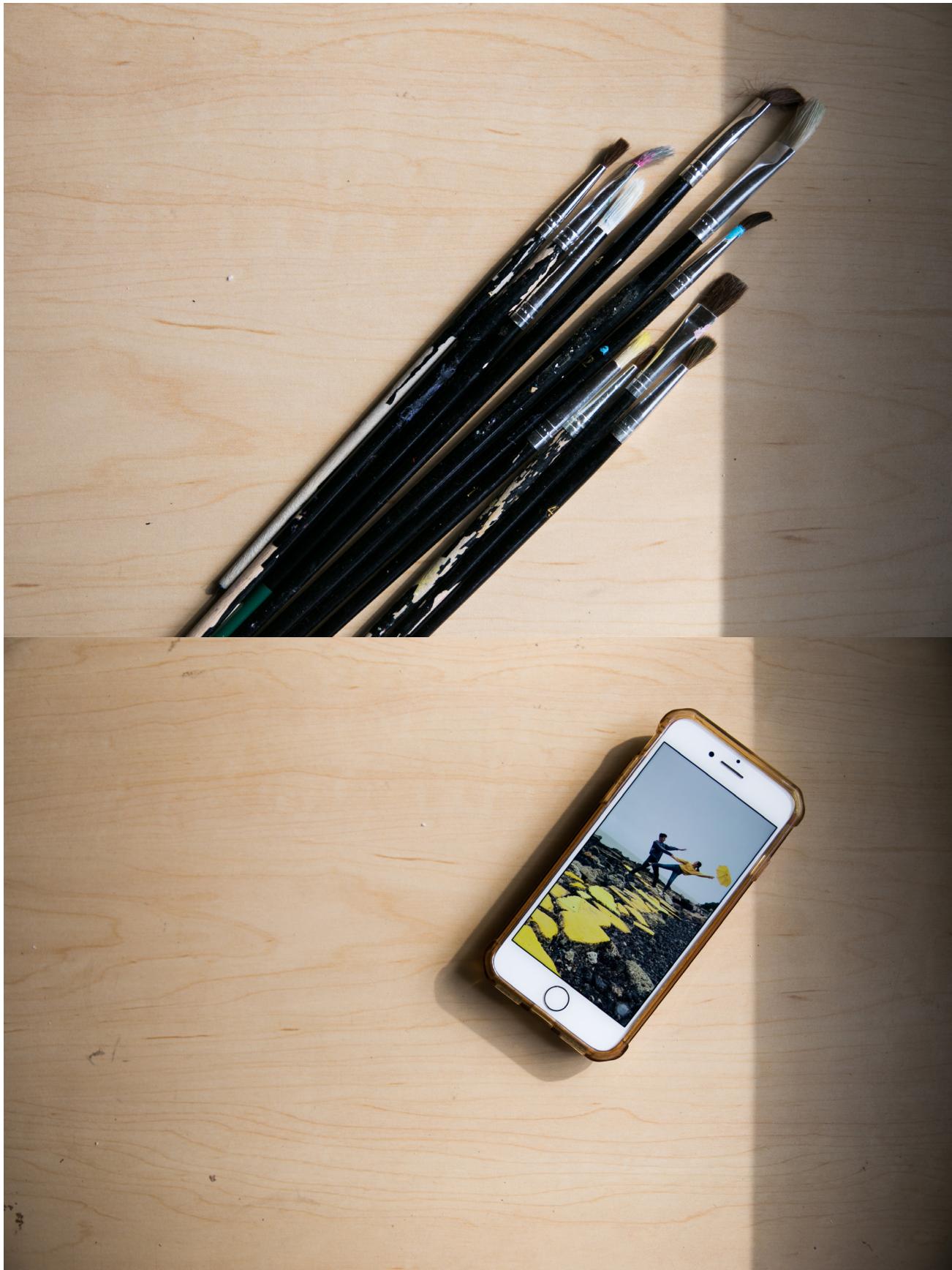


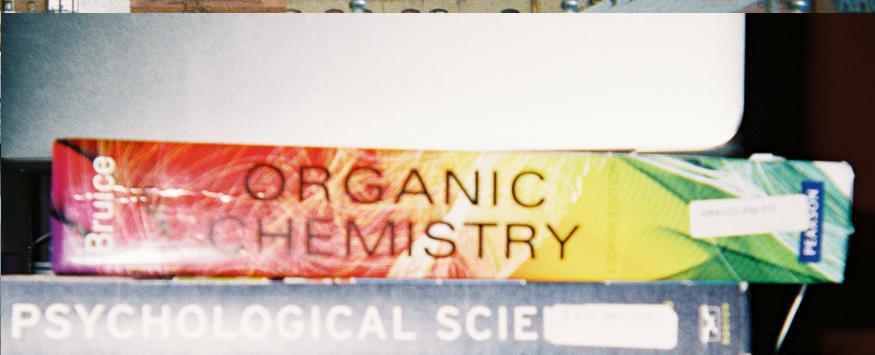


From Top Left Clockwise: Dani and Jake, Brittany (Rocky), Vanessa and Hannah



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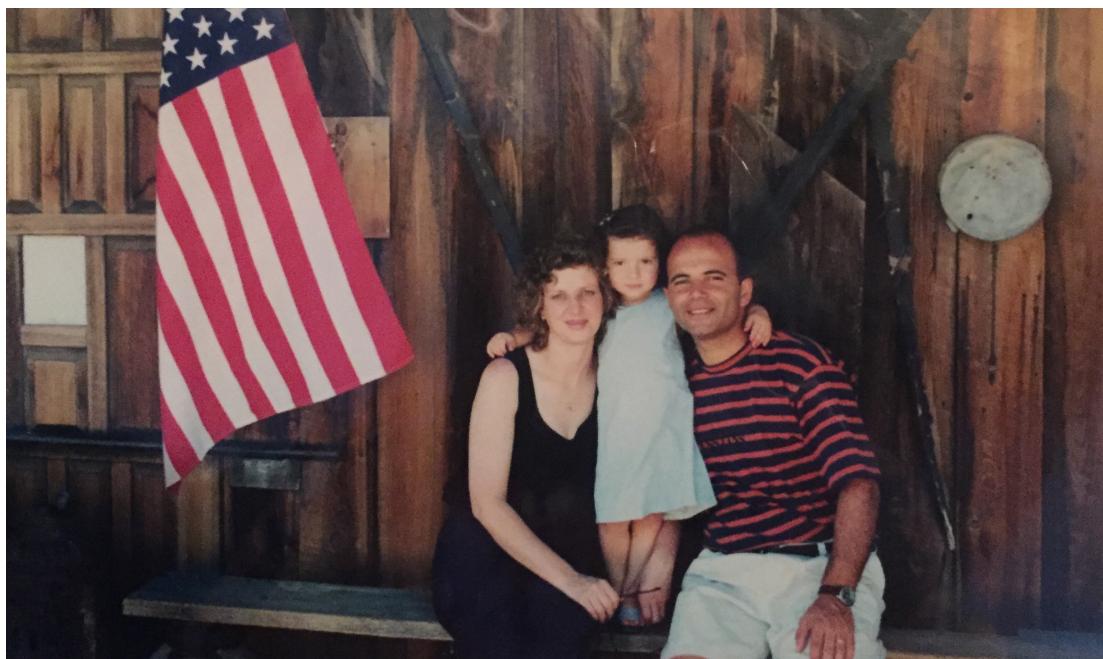


# ADMIRATION

**A**dmiration is a tough quality to think about, because it makes us think of our future. While you would imagine admiration is of something that has happened, an action done, a task completed, it's really a reflection of who we want to be. We admire the things we aspire to be, people we want to emulate, goals we hope to achieve. This makes it exciting but sometimes terrifying, since we can't predict what lies ahead. For all five of these women however, what lies ahead is greatness. Through my conversations with them, hearing about their lives, and seeing what is important to them, I've learned that they are all grounded, intelligent, passionate, and on a path to accomplish their goals and live up to their aspirations. This made looking through these photos especially interesting, as I believe it is likely a reflection of where they will end up. This could mean becoming supportive parents, like Dani's mom and dad holding her up when she was a little girl. It could be becoming an influencer and traveling the world, like Rocky aspires to. It could mean

making the next ground-breaking TV show that Olivia already has planned and is probably halfway done with writing. It may mean Vanessa being admired by her daughter as much as she admires her mom, especially after she works tirelessly to make sure her daughter has just as much of a thirst for knowledge as she does. And it could mean that Jules will be in countless other people's photos of "nasty women" they look up to.

Basically all of my conversations drifted towards the future, which is inevitable when talking to people who are ambitious and have big plans for how they want to shape their lives and the world. We talked about our changing gender roles, and the hope that one day people will be able to act however they want and wear whatever they want, although all five disagreed on how long it would take for us to accomplish that. There was some disagreement over how to best address these issues. Some argued that even having terms like masculine and feminine were detrimental, while others thought that right now it's helpful to embrace certain parts of an identity, and that



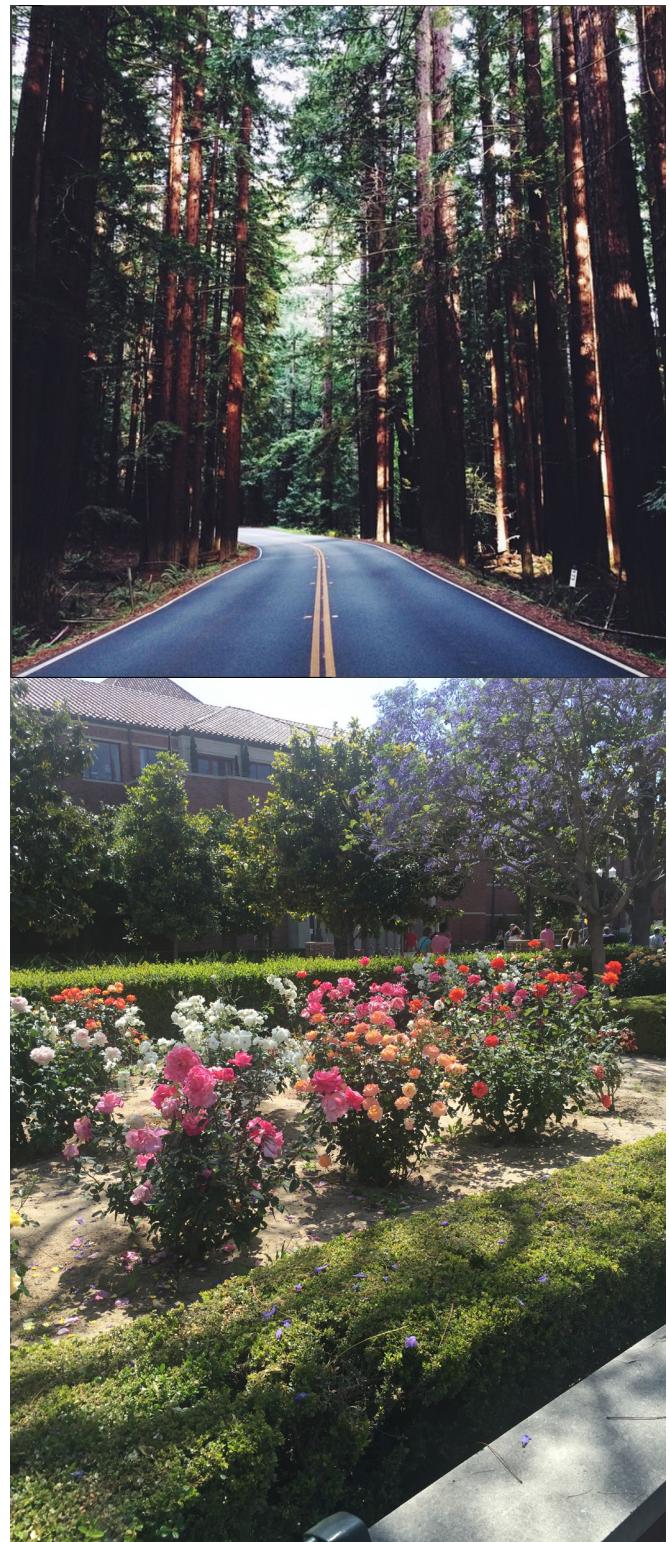
having categorization can make it easier to fit in. We talked about the future of the media industry, as some of them have their own specific ideas to change it to be more inclusive and representative of more diverse voices. We also talked about what needs to disappear. Dani was adamant that both porn and Instagram are incredibly harmful, and she has cut back on using Instagram recently. While porn didn't come up in any of my other conversations, Instagram frequently did, with mixed opinions. However, it is something that is here to stay, so it is up to us on how we choose to present ourselves on it and who we follow.

We also talked about Me Too a lot. It seems we are at a pivotal point for women in our society. The barriers to entry in some of the most strictly guarded industries are falling, and people are becoming more aware of the constant, historic abuse women have faced in the workplace. This represents an incredibly positive change, and all five feel it is a sign that the needle is moving on women's rights.

This isn't to say that we are a year away from complete equality. Rocky pointed out that there will always be differences, and she is unsure if we can ever reach an equal society, as almost all modern societies are founded on the patriarchy. However everyone agreed that in Los Angeles and among younger generations, there is a different mind-set than there used to be. Kids are growing up not caring about gender, or at least noticing the differences and seeing why it is unfair. Everyone our age and younger has now been exposed to a movement that is completely altering how we see women, and that is going to have a profound impact in years to come. In 20 years, it's possible that women won't feel like zoo animals, that assumptions won't be made about them when they act a certain way, and that when they enter a business meeting, they will be assumed to be just as capable as the men in the room. These are all things we can fight for, and each of these five, in their own ways, are helping push us in that direction .

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Left Page: Dani and her parents Below: The Bay Area (Jules), Flowers (Dani)







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Left Page Clockwise from Top Left: Dani and her Grandma, Vanessa's mom, Nasty Women (Rocky), Women's Hands (Rocky)  
Top: Vanessa's friends, Connor (Jules)



GAZE



