girls — on boredom, rebellion, and being in-between

HANNIBAL

MOMU — FASHION MUSEUM ANTWERP

contents

Jim Britt
Sisters, 1976

SELF SERVICE

PRINTEMPS 1996 N°2 20F

foreword

Kaat Debo

Director
MoMu – Fashion Museum Antwerp

A few times a year I meet up with girlfriends whom I've known since kindergarten. We all take turns hosting our get-togethers. On one occasion, the teenage son of one of my friends happened to walk in on us, teasingly greeting us as 'the 40-year-old girls'. My girlfriends and I found this hilarious, albeit a bit confrontational. Did he say this because he always hears us giggling and acting silly, or was he mocking us because these days he also hears us gripe about all the things that make us visibly older? I am now on the verge of celebrating my 50th birthday and my friend's teenage son is a grown man. I sometimes wonder if he would still call us girls today. Because when do you stop being a girl? And do you decide this yourself or do others make this decision for you? Is it age-related, a phase, or rather an attitude, a feeling or an aura you radiate? And which expectations, prejudices or fantasies does this imply?

In the autumn of 2025, MoMu – Fashion Museum Antwerp is hosting *GIRLS*, an exhibition on what it means to be a girl. As the mother of two teenage daughters, this exhibition is probably closest to my own personal reality. Watching a teenage daughter grow up, search, struggle… can be an incredibly beautiful experience, but also a frustrating, challenging and vulnerable time, both for the teenager and the parent. Research on teenagers in Flanders shows that girls experience more pressure on several levels: more parental control despite being less deviant, more academic pressure despite the fact that they perform better at school, more time pressure and more pressure from social media. On top of that, they are more likely to feel victimised, which means that, in studies, they have lower mental well-being scores than their male peers (Prof. Dr. Lieve Bradt, JOP-Youth Research Platform).

GIRLS is about the complexity, beauty and struggle of growing up and finding your place in the world and how artists, fashion designers, photographers, costume designers and filmmakers think about girlhood. In her essay for this book, Morna Laing describes girlhood and the figure of the girl 'as culturally mediated categories, subject to ongoing definition… [a] multi-layered code who holds spectacular currency in the fashion media'. Throughout history, notions such as the child, the teenager and the girl have been redefined time and again, in ever-changing social contexts: as objects of feminist discourse and even as desirable subjects in a capitalist consumer culture.

Chloë Sevigny photographed by Mark Borthwick, *Self Service*, issue No. 2, Spring 1996

D'heygere for *I'm Sorry* by Petra Collins, Cookie Earring, Diary Necklace,
Black Heart Nail Earrings, Heart Bandage Earrings, Flower Hair Clip Earrings, 2025
D'heygere Autumn-Winter 2023–2024, Canister Bear Earrings
D'heygere for Vaquera Autumn-Winter 2025–2026, XL Heart Locket Necklace
D'heygere Spring-Summer 2024, Sugar Ring
D'heygere Autumn-Winter 2025–2026, Stud Tiara
D'heygere in collaboration with Nails by Mei Autumn-Winter 2025–2026, Kawaii Stiletto Nail Earrings

Ashley Williams
Spring-Summer 2025
‘Clutter Bag’

Elisa De Wyngaert

in-between: the lingering years of girlhood

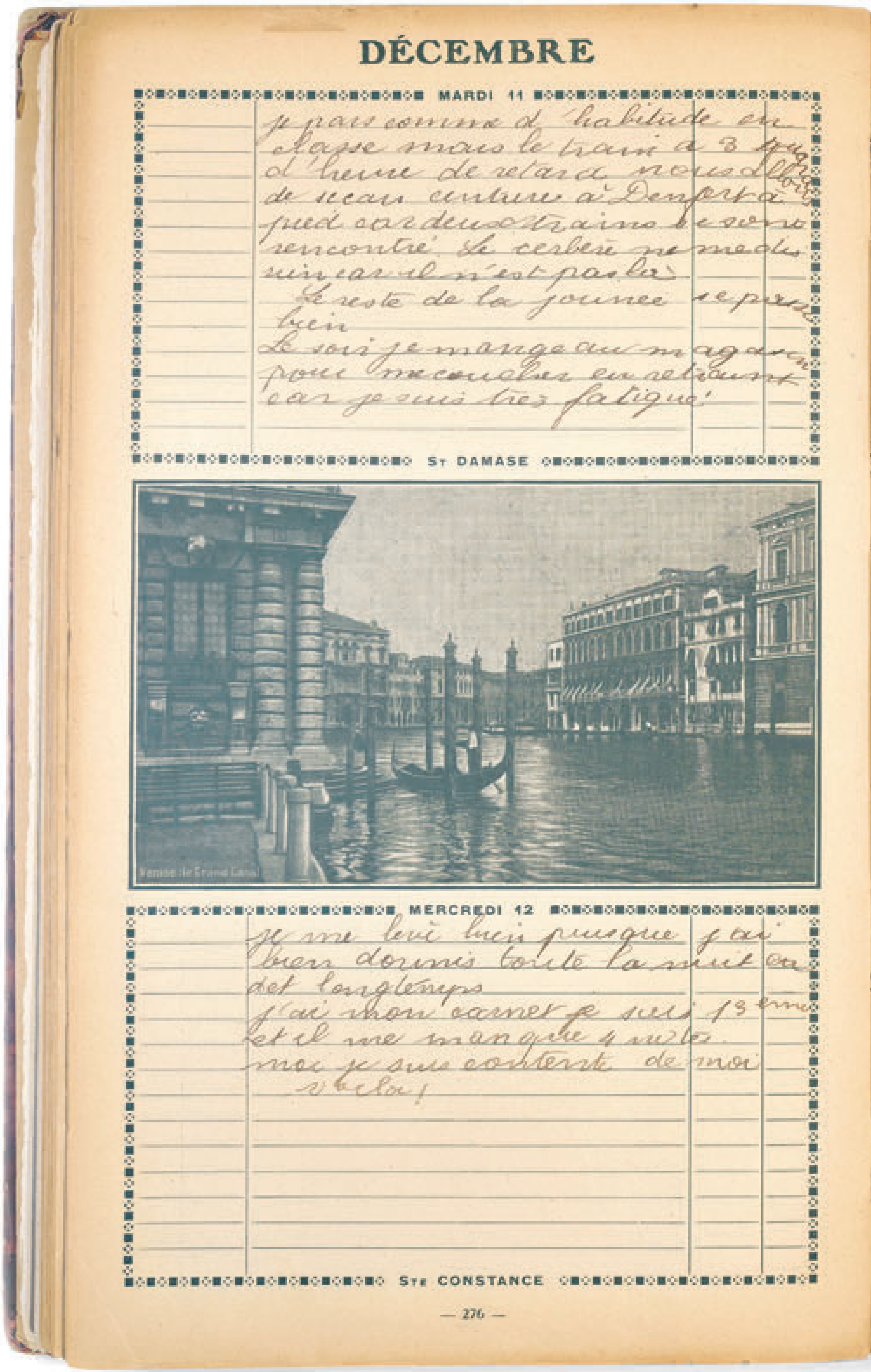
Growing up, my neighbour kept pigeons. Each year, their cooing became the first whisper of spring, the arrival of bare-legs season and the joy of escaping the smelly high-school toilets. Pigeon calls still stir anxious teenage flutters in me. There's something about the intensity with which you experience life at that age, and although we couldn't capture life in the 1990s as teens do today, I still remember those years like a film — scene by scene.

'I'm not alone: psychologists say our sharpest memories are formed at fifteen.'

In Western art's canonised history, the *girlhood years* have been framed as a fleeting phase: tender, naive, in transition. A phase marked by sweetness and passivity. As an eternal muse, the 'young girl' in art history was an anonymous girl, a daughter *of*, a silent subject playing the piano, holding a kitten, covered in symbols and paraphernalia hinting at her virtue and innocence. She's not bothering anyone, she's just there. Art that truly centred girlhood, biographical history and femininity as serious subjects had long been dismissed as sentimental or lacking intellectual rigour — a trivialisation that, as this essay will explore, overlooks the emotional, psychological and political depth of these artists and their enduring resonance. Through the eyes of the artists, designers, photographers and filmmakers in this exhibition, girlhood is not a theme, not captured through a voyeuristic gaze, but a way of seeing — of remembering and imagining. As Siri Hustvedt wrote so eloquently, 'Femininity and childhood have been continually linked in Western culture as conditions of shrunken intellect and dependence. And yet, the dependent child lives on in the adult, in every adult, in memory that is more feeling than autobiographical image.'[1]

'You don't just leave girlhood — you drag it with you.'

Fumiko Imano
Laundrette/LA/USA, 2019



DÉCEMBRE

MARDI 11

je pars comme d'habitude en
classe mais le train a 3 quarts
d'heure de retard nous allons
de sceau ceinture à Denfert à
pied car deux trains se sont
rencontré. Le cerbère ne me dit
rien car il n'est pas là
Le reste de la journée se passe
bien
Le soir je mange au magasin
pour me coucher en rentrant
car je suis très fatigué

St DAMASE

MERCREDI 12

je me levé bien puisque j'ai
bien dormis toute la nuit ou
dét longtemps
j'ai mon carnet je suis 13ème
et il me manque 4 notes.
moi je suis contente de moi
voila!

Ste CONSTANCE

— 276 —

DÉCEMBRE

JEUDI 13

Il paraît que l'on va arranger
ma chambre, hier on a paillé
de rideaux de la chambre de
Lison.
Alors on installe les fameux
rideaux, ils sont rouges à rayures
blanches une fois placés je
les trouve pas trop beaux. Ce dont
je suis sûre je pense. Dans le
milieu de l'après midi je
me sens extrêmement fatiguée
je me couche le soir j'ai pris
ma température j'ai 39

STE LUCIE

Bellaggio (lac de Côme)

VENDREDI 14

je me désespère mais je n'ai pas
le courage de réfléchir aujourd'hui
dans j'en ait des choses à penser
Les personnes qui lisent ce
journal penseront certainement
cette enfant est morte de la tête
elle n'a rien à faire que d'aller
Dormir jouer, manger, mais
pas du tout j'ai des choses à penser
je réfléchis des mystères à approfondir
tous ces soucis ne sont
pas grands pour vous
mais pour moi ce n'est pas
facile

ST NICAISE

— 277 —

Louise Bourgeois
Diary entries, 11–14 December 1923

and 'I HAD TO MAKE MYSELF FORGIVEN FOR BEING A GIRL', each conveying personal psychological weight.

Born in 1911, as the second daughter in her family, she grew up with the intense belief that she needed to *make herself forgiven for being a girl*:

> **'A daughter is a disappointment. If you bring a daughter into this world, you have to be forgiven, the way my mother was forgiven because I was the spitting image of my father. That was my first piece of luck. It may be why he treated me like the son he always wanted. I was gifted enough to satisfy my father. That was my second piece of luck.'**[6]

This experience of gender disappointment was embroidered on a white cotton apron: a garment symbolic of both domestic labour and protection. Bourgeois grew up in the early 20th century, a time when designer fashion not only gained prominence but also when children's fashion became distinctly gendered. Around the ages of 4 to 6, boys transitioned from dresses to short trousers before moving to long trousers in adolescence. Girls' clothing, however, remained decorative and restrictive, mirroring an education system that primarily prepared them for their roles as wives and mothers. As Simone de Beauvoir asserted in *The Second Sex* (1949), those societal expectations — reflected, among other things, in clothing — only serve to constrain girls' autonomy:

> **'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.'**[7]

Thirteen months after Louise Bourgeois was born, her mother gave birth to a son, but by then she had already become the focal point of her father's attention. As Juliet Mitchell wrote, 'her personal story of the relationship with her mother and father, for whom she felt she had to be both the family's prettiest girl and cleverest boy, was extreme'.[8] Moving to New York in 1938 with her husband, Robert Goldwater, Bourgeois felt like a runaway girl.

In the 1970s, important voices emerged that advocated for art that reflected women's lived experiences and challenged dominant power structures. Notably, art critic and curator Lucy Lippard (b. 1937, USA) was a crucial advocate for this shift, calling for non-elitist art that broke down barriers between artists and audiences. This shift in the art world resonated across disciplines. In the 1990s, in film, directors such as Sofia Coppola (b. 1971, USA) pioneered work driven by a desire to capture the intensity, vulnerability and sexuality of this formative time. A similar shift took place in fashion, albeit more slowly.

Fashion, like all creative industries, has long been male-dominated, but women and certainly teenage girls have always inspired it. The 'teenager' only emerged as a distinct social and sartorial category in the mid-1950s. It was then that retailers and clothing manufacturers began to recognise teenage girls as an influential consumer group, introducing dedicated shopping spaces and teen-appropriate sizing. The relationship between teenagers and ready-to-wear adult fashion intensified in the 1990s as teenage models were increasingly hired to represent adult women in campaigns and on the runway.

Miu Miu
Spring-Summer 2025
Backstage photography by Michella Bredahl, styling by Lotta Volkova

Fumiko Imano
Perdonnet/Vevey/Switzerland, 2018

Fumiko Imano
Yellow bath/Hitachi/Japan, 2007

before it slips away

Photographing the unselfconscious magic of teenage girls is most resonant when the subjects have agency in the creation of the work. In 1976, photographer **Jim Britt** captured the candid, awkward charm of his daughters Melendy (Mimi) and Jody, just a year apart and almost twin-like. Over a decade later, one of their photos was used as the Autumn-Winter 1988–89 campaign for Comme des Garçons.

That same sense of comfort and trust is captured in *This is Me, This is You* (1997–2000) by **Roni Horn** (b. 1955, USA). Created over the space of two years, the work offers a dynamic portrait of her niece Georgia, who invited the artist to photograph her. Horn was just following her lead:

> **'Maybe she was eating, or maybe she was just waking up, or she was taking a bath, or she was out swimming in the ocean, or whatever she was doing. And if I was there and I took some snapshots, wanted to get eye contact, and that it was an automatic camera so you would hear two shots. That's all I needed.'**[16]

The 48 portraits were taken with a point-and-shoot camera, paired with another 48, shot just seconds apart — almost identical, yet revealing a play between self-awareness and the moment immediately after. Georgia enjoyed dressing up, and Horn noticed that she would sometimes change her clothes three to four times a day — not because she was being photographed, but because she liked to explore her options. The work shows just how transformative two years can be: how one evolves in adolescence, and how, if you blink, you might miss the glory of it all.

In *Isabetta* (1934–35) and *Memories* (1981), a young girl meets our gaze with piercing blue eyes. The girl is **Alice Neel**'s (1900–1984, USA) daughter, Isabetta, her second child and only surviving daughter with the Cuban artist Carlos Enríquez. Their first child, Santillana, died of diphtheria around her first birthday in 1927. As her due date with Isabetta approached, Neel was plagued by depression and anxiety. When Isabetta was born, Neel struggled to reconcile the societal expectations of motherhood with her own urgent desire to pursue a life as an artist. She later said, 'I always had this awful dichotomy. I loved Isabetta, of course I did. But I wanted to paint.'[17] Carlos, hoping to give Alice a break, took Isabetta to Havana. The plan was for Neel to join them there before moving to Paris as a family. Instead, Carlos left for Paris alone, leaving Isabetta with his sisters in Cuba. Neel suffered a breakdown and was institutionalised in Philadelphia. Upon her release, she seemed to accept what the therapists had been telling her: that being a mother and an artist are irreconcilable.[18]

Mother and daughter would not see each other again for four years. When they did meet again, Neel painted her in the summer of 1934. Isabetta had barely been walking when Alice had last seen her, now she was five years old. Isabetta, raised in Cuba, only saw her mother a handful of times throughout her life. Painted as a memory of this reunion, *Memories* (1981) is a late recalling of how her baby had become a girl. In *Baby on the Fire Escape: Creativity, Motherhood, and the Mind-Baby Problem* Julie Phillips wrote: 'Children in her paintings often look fragile, astonished, curious, restless, but this is a portrait of an independent, almost invulnerable child — a daughter who doesn't need her mother.'[19]

Nathanaëlle Herbelin
Charlotte, 2023
Oil on canvas

Isabetta died of suicide in 1982 at the age of fifty-four; Neel, who hadn't seen her daughter for over thirty years, died in 1984. A socially engaged artist, Neel's legacy lies in her special ability to reveal the psychological depth of those that had been overlooked by traditional portraiture — women, people of colour, children, artists and the marginalised.

The memories of those fleeting girlhood years linger in objects and outgrown garments. In **Robert Gober**'s (b. 1954, USA) *Untitled* (1992), a child's shoe sprouts human hair from its insole.

> **'I saw this shoe in the middle of East 10th Street early one morning. It had a poignancy as if a little girl had lost it and was still walking around the city with one shoe. I'm sure the reality is that it was in the garbage and the garbage was ransacked or sloppily loaded into the garbage truck and that the shoe was abandoned because it was unwanted or outgrown.'**[20]

There's something quietly unsettling about seeing just one child's shoe — something is missing, something's not right. Beginning in 1986, Robert Gober expanded his practice to include wax sculptures of human body parts, using them to explore themes of gender, sexuality and vulnerability. The Mary Jane is a shoe historically tied to white, middle-class girlhood: neat, obedient, polite. Here, it becomes intimate and abject: childhood innocence disrupted.

The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer (1880–81) by **Edgar Degas** (1834–1917, France) carries a similar disquiet. The sculpture, two-thirds life-size, portrays Marie van Goethem, a young ballet student born in Brussels and raised in poverty. The original sculpture was made of wax and dressed in a real tutu, with a silk ribbon braided through human hair. Shown in a glass case, its stark realism unsettled contemporary viewers — some called it uncanny, like a specimen on display in a natural history museum.[21] Degas's work disrupted the idealised image of girlhood. His dancer is not mythic — she's real. Degas depicted the reality of the *petits rats* at the Paris Opéra as working-class girls. Marie posed for Degas to supplement her income. Over time, she faded from history.[22]

There is an alluring connection between girlhood and the ancient process of wax modelling. In 1999, **Iris Häussler** (b. 1962, Germany) also turned to the material, sourcing her own family's laundry to create sealed sculptures with shirts, undergarments, childhood dresses. The works relate to our most intimate sensory associations — sense and touch. In *She 06* (2006), a pristine white sailor's dress floats in wax. Häussler never wore it but it was always in her wardrobe.[23] The dress is a vision of girlhood as something imagined: a thing a parent buys when the child is still an abstract concept. Waxing recalls mummification — a preservation of memory — but it can melt and crack. It demands constant care. We may try to hold the past, but memory is unstable.

Edgar Degas
***The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*, 1880–1881**
(cast c. 1922)

Chloë Sevigny wearing the 'Elvis jacket' from the movie *Out of the Blue* (1980), photographed by William Strobeck in 2012

Claire Marie Healy

girlhood & clothing & film

I can't stop thinking about putting on Linda Manz's denim jacket. Worn by the actress in Dennis Hopper's 1980 film *Out of the Blue*, it is embroidered on the back with a guitar, musical notes and the name 'Elvis' in cursive script; close-up, you notice pink and silver sequins that swirl and glint at the seams. Such details catch me like a ladder in tights.

The embroidery gets plenty of airtime in the film, in part because the teen-girl character who wears it is always storming away from us like a hurricane (one time, she cleanly knocks over a cheerleader as she goes). 15-year-old Cebe, played by the 17-year-old Manz, is a self-proclaimed punk-rock acolyte ('Subvert normality!') with an incarcerated father and heroin-addicted mother. She's harsh, foul-mouthed, a square (peg) in an inescapable round hole. Why do I find her well-worn jacket so tender? The jacket moves us, as she moves in it, because this particular teenage girl is defined by her obvious anger, but also her secret plea to be protected.

With its naive, childlike design worn in the service of rebellion, Cebe's denim jacket retains traces of both childhood and adulthood: the inherent in-betweenness of girls who experience too much of life, too soon. ('I'll always be that character', Linda Manz would say in her womanhood. 'I'm just a tough little rebel, I guess. A survivor'.) It is also charged in a manner unique to garments that were always intended for the screen. This is a jacket that only ever really existed in a movie, as worn by an actress who, for most audiences, only lives on in their minds as a teenage girl. Manz pretty much stopped acting after *Out of the Blue*, but when she performed one last time in her adulthood (in Harmony Korine's *Gummo*, 1997), she sold the jacket to a fellow forever-girl: Chloë Sevigny. One of her most-prized possessions, the actress wears it, striking her own punk-rock pose, in a much-Tumblrd photo taken by William Strobeck in 2012.

I love this passing of the torch between Manz and Sevigny, two actresses so strongly associated with girlhood. That's the funny thing about certain items of fashion in film: their potential for an afterlife. The critic Maya Cade, of Black Film Archive, has spoken about 'screencap culture' as a way of reframing how we engage with film as a connection point; the teen-girl fashion we might remember from coming-of-age movies often provides that connection.[1] Such is the power of certain on-screen looks – you don't always have to have seen the film.

In the best examples of girls' fashion on film, they are little acts of disruption in cinema's patriarchal gaze. Anna Backman Rogers, picking up the thread from Teresa de Lauretis's theory of cinema's operation as a technology of gender, says that

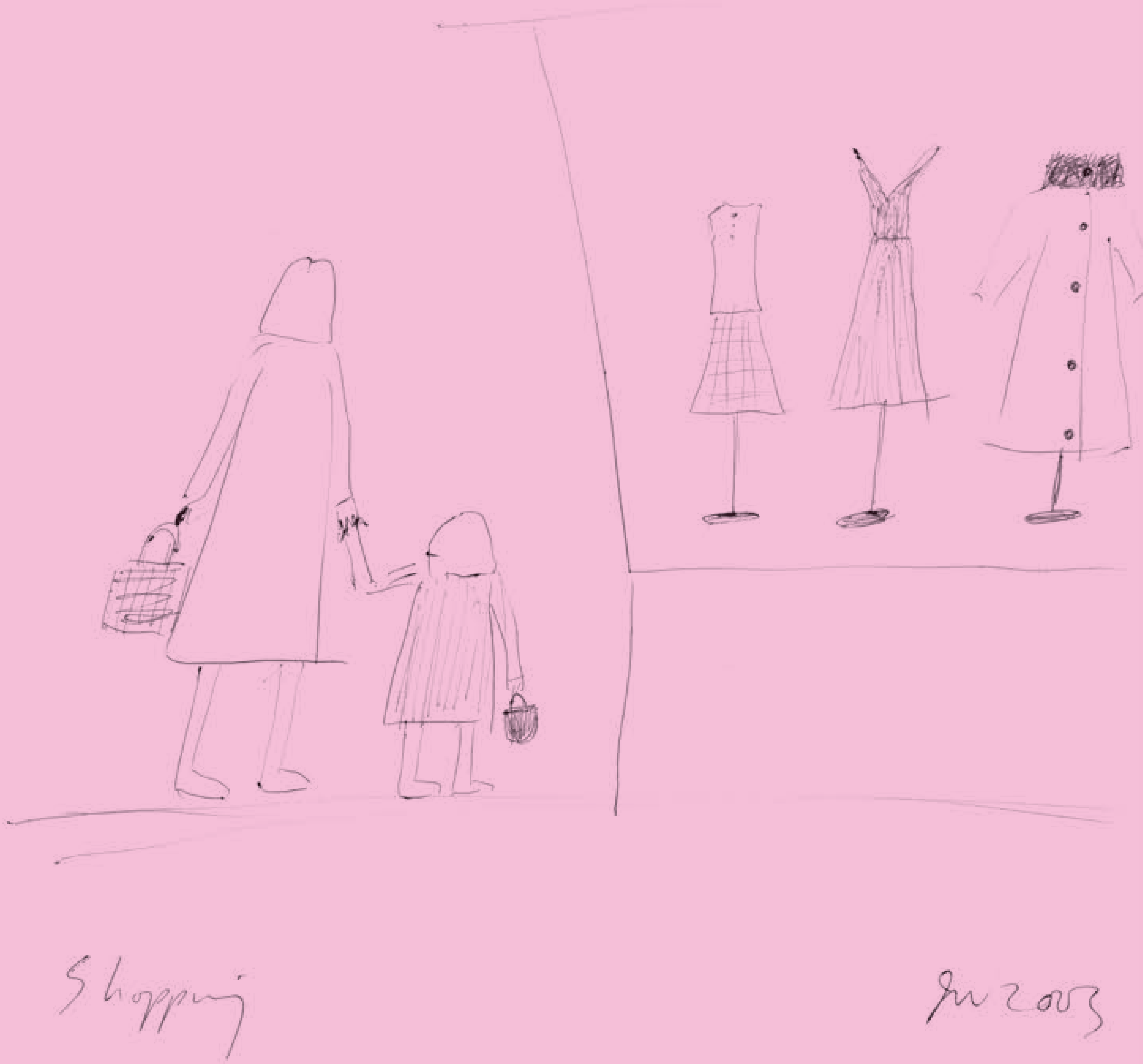
From a girl undressing to girls getting dressed, the 1980s was a decade in which subculture entered the stylings of the on-screen teenage girl like never before. If *Out of The Blue* is an undeniable outlier (the film was, in the end, barely seen), its central character type — the outcast girl rebel — is multiplied across this decade: in *Times Square* (1980), *Fame* (1980) and *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains* (1982), to name but a few. This is the decade of the teen-girl moral panic: Mary Ellen Mark's *LIFE* magazine report of Seattle's homeless teenage population (which eventually grew into the *Streetwise* documentary), or the smash 1978 addiction memoir of Christiane F. in Germany (*Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo*) [Christiane F. – We Children from Zoo Station], became cultural phenomena that brought the image of disenfranchised, runaway girls into the mainstream conversation, as well as into cinema. Uli Edel's adaptation of Christiane F.'s story of heroin addiction, and the potent image of the waif-like, red-haired 13-year-old David Bowie fan it produced, was immediately folded into fashion parlance: Raf Simons even emblazoned stills from the movie on T-shirts and sweaters for his Autumn-Winter 2018–2019 collection. While many of *Christiane F.*'s scenes still shock, the most indelible image, for me, takes place in the first beats. As the girl's voiceover announces Christiane is going to 'Europe's coolest discotheque', we see her striped rainbow socks in silver kitten heels in close-up; we also see that she's carried the sandals to the club in a plastic bag, so she can change out of her Adidas Sambas on the pavement outside.

Elsewhere, in the multiplexes, such subcultural undercurrents went widescreen. Director John Hughes near single-handedly established the mode of the classic high school drama made for a vast audience. I see such films as co-creations, however, with his ingénue misfit, Molly Ringwald. In 1986's *Pretty in Pink* (written by Hughes as a tribute to Ringwald's own style, and directed by Howard Deutch), another potential gesture towards freedom for the girl is given delicious airtime: customisation. Andie is poorer than the other girls in school: she wears antique jewellery, granny knits and chalky makeup. In the film's opening sequence, we watch the protagonist putting together her outfit for school as the Psychedelic Furs' title track plays: we even hear her tell her father (Harry Dean Stanton) how much it cost ('$15 for the shoes, second-hand, and I made the rest'). Although the character's final Frankenstein prom dress has been much derided in popular culture, it too is reflective of a more authentic approach to teen-girl costume design: as costume designer Marilyn Vance has defended, the whole point is that Andie designed it herself. In the brainstorming montage, the character touches her hand thoughtfully to the cold-shoulder neckline of the black jersey she is already wearing, demonstrating to the viewer how the idea is forming in her mind. It doesn't matter if we like this dress or not. It matters that we bear witness to Andie taking out the scissors and creating this version of herself.

Such earnest marketing to teens soon creates its own pushback. In 1988's *Heathers* (director Michael Lehmann, costume design Rudy Dillon) the sardonic heroines are like the John Hughes' Brat Pack reflected in a funereal funhouse — the shoulder pads are bigger, the scrunchies more voluptuous, and the dialogue as cutting, comparatively, as a chainsaw. And in the memorable 'Get ready with me' opening sequence of *Clueless* (1995), Cher's voiceover in combination with the extravagant display of technology and wealth ('I actually have a *way* normal life for a teenage girl') is one example of that film's success at striking an overtly self-conscious and knowing tone that is still much imitated though rarely

Stacey Dash and Alicia Silverstone in *Clueless*,
directed by Amy Heckerling, 1995


Hair
2003


Shopping
2003

sofia coppola
the virgin suicides, 1999

‘It felt like Jeffrey Eugenides — author of *The Virgin Suicides* — really understood the experience of being a teenager. I loved how the boys were so confused by the girls, and I really connected with all that lazing around in your bedroom. I tried to make it feel real to me. I felt that in a lot of movies, the teens didn’t feel relatable. Because I was still in my 20s when I directed the film, the idea of school wasn’t far away. I wanted their world to look accurate.’

‘The story is told as a memory. Costume designer Nancy Steiner and I talked about the prom dresses reflecting the way Eugenides wrote about them as a “four-headed-creature”. We wanted them to look accurate for the 1970s, and for them to feel like real kids, while the Lisbon girls were dreamy and mythic in the memory of the boys’ minds.’

The Lisbon sisters at school, photographed by Sofia Coppola

‘The vintage flannel nightgowns are by Lanz of Salzburg. When I was a little girl, every Christmas my sister and I would get a nightgown from this brand too. I got the Lisbon sisters those nightgowns because they were appropriate for the period, and very cosy.’

Lux’s nightgown, worn by actress Kirsten Dunst

Lux's summer dress, worn by actress Kirsten Dunst

Foreigner in Your Own Body, 2025

'*Foreigner in Your Own Body* is about your changing body during adolescence. The two identical figures symbolise the duality between the inner, authentic self and the external, performative self. Their tender, mirrored forms reflect the struggle to reconcile who we are with who we are expected to be.'

Sofia Lai, drawing of *Foreigner in Your Own Body*, 2025

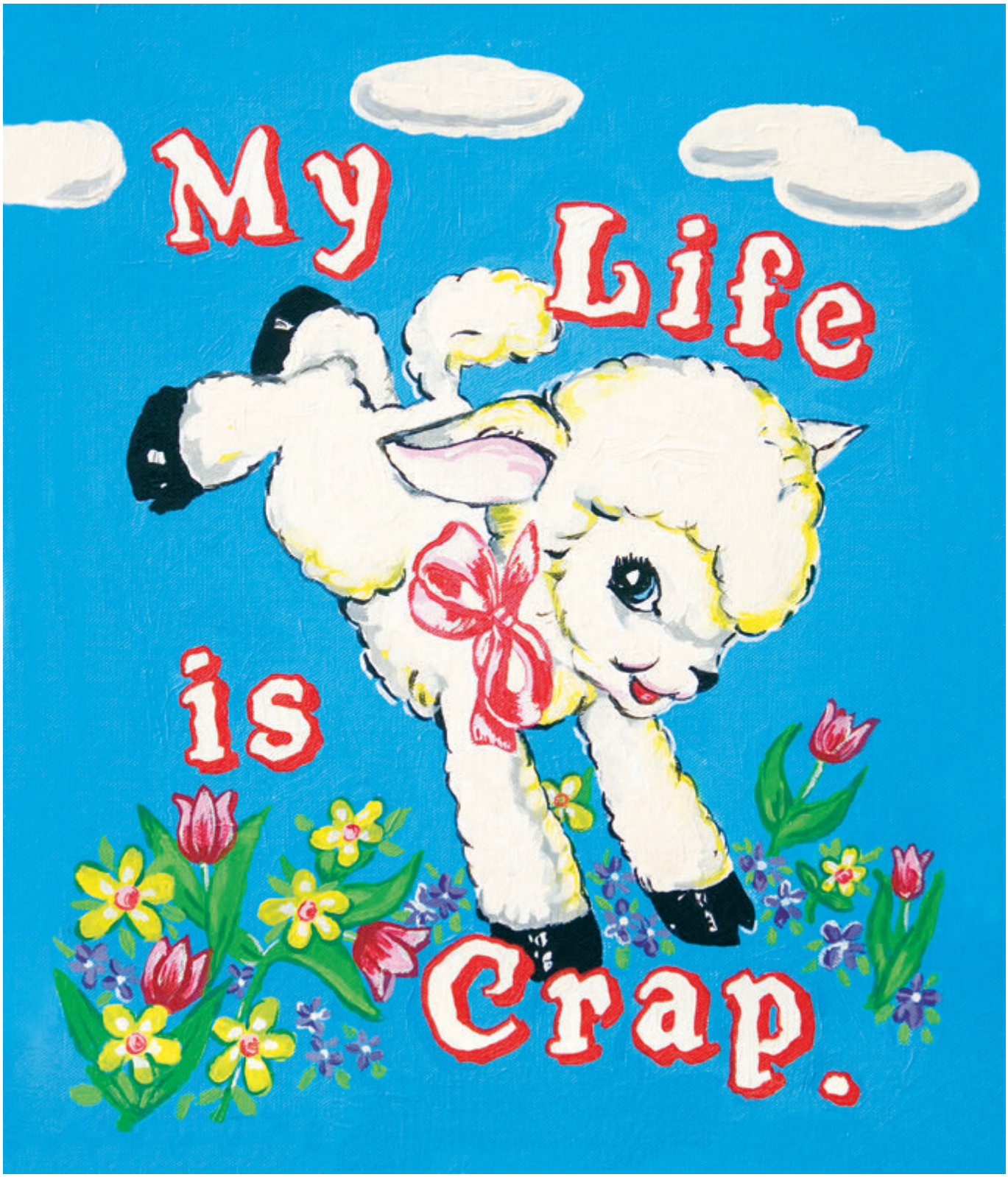
hoodie

It's hard to tell who the first girl to wear a hoodie was. Perhaps it was Little Red Riding Hood who, coming up against the loss of innocence at the mercy of the Big Bad Wolf, might be one of the first bedtime story protagonists who feels teen-girl coded. Today, some of the greatest pressures enacted on teenage girls — and the quiet ways they resist those pressures — seem to crumple and coalesce around this item of clothing: usually jersey-cotton, soft, oversized. The story of the hoodie in the 2000s is a story of the everyday life of the girl, and contains certain rights in its folds: a girl's right to cover up, a girl's right to comfort, and (especially with the hood up) a girl's right to anonymity. To *not* be visible.

Like many garments symbolic of girlhood that are 'borrowed from the boys' — the androgyny of the leather jacket since the 1960s, or baggy jeans in the 1990s — the hoodie has been broadly associated with a moral panic around juvenile girl delinquency in our modern era. From 'chavs' in the UK, to B-girls in New York, such coverage says much about how the media disenfranchises girls through misrepresentation. But what really seems to threaten the patriarchy about this garment is the way it covers up the girl: offering ownership over her own body, it allows the girl to not partake in the usual expectations placed upon her. One need only consider the criticism provoked by Billie Eilish's propensity to wear baggy hoodies in her early career, swiftly followed by outrage when she took part in her first skin-revealing shoot, to understand that for teenage girls — who are always surveilled, famous or not — it is impossible to win. Another link to pop stardom is the rise of the hoodie as merch: the item is the perfect blank canvas to display all kinds of strongly felt associations.

Maybe the influence of the hoodie shows us that comfort, not rebellion, is the hidden desire that more profoundly shapes these contemporary girlhoods — in such a reading, its bagginess and softness become invested with a kind of potent longing. In a world hostile to girlhood(s) in ever-shifting ways, the desire to be comfortable outweighs the desire to display.

COMME des GARÇONS
Autumn-Winter 2008–2009 campaign by Mondongo



Magda Archer, *My Life is Crap*, as used in the
COMME des GARÇONS SHIRT Spring-Summer 2012 campaign

Peter Adriaenssens

the teen brain

boredom – the calm before the storm

When puberty hits, boredom increases. Parents often worry that their teenager is caught up in a whirlwind of activities and that some calm and boredom would be more than welcome, or the teen feels that there is too much of the latter and continually complains: I'm bored.

'I'M BORED'

But this feeling can be very misleading. It gives the impression that life has ground to a standstill, while brain scans have revealed that the teen brain is firing on all cylinders. Lots of new connections are made, while networks that are not used are being eliminated or pruned. Below the waterline, a story of maturation and development is unfolding. In a sense, you could say it is like the calm before the storm — and for good reason. The adolescent is unravelling the threads of childhood. What remains, however, are loose threads that are still trying to find ways of weaving themselves into a fabric that connects to adulthood. Instead of the fun kid who used to love going to school and showed up punctually to football practice, parents are suddenly faced with a human who is seeking purpose and behaving erratically. The 'I'm bored' human dislikes anyone who says they know how to cure the boredom blues and rejects anyone who can't come up with a fun activity. What are your options, as a parent or as a friend? Bearing in mind all the signs of mental health concerns in teens, how can you be sure whether this behaviour is entirely normal or one on a long list of red flags? What do you call that? An annoying list, that's what.

FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS

LOOSE THREADS

Isn't it wonderful how a *desire for something* is inherent to boredom? That is also why it is so difficult to define the line between the bliss of doing nothing and dangerous silence. Slipping into daydreams, into games, into social media. Or into criminal behaviour 'out of boredom'. This is all very complex, but is society doing any better? Young people disparage adults who no longer know how to stop wars, enforce conventions, or resolve anything with dialogue despite their stellar school careers. Were they insufficiently bored perhaps? Did they spend too much time cherishing the wiring of their childhood, with lots of 'yes sir, no ma'am' copycat behaviour? Young people peer into the crack of time, so many layers, one rips the others to shreds, what is truth and what is fabrication, does it still have an identity, what is important? Is there any guidance?

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Those who are bored are waiting for themselves. Educators are not there to provide continuous entertainment. Take your time, we tell them. We did.

BEHAVING ERRATICALLY

A DESIRE FOR SOMETHING

PEERING INTO THE CRACK OF TIME

B.B. Wallace by Meryll Rogge Autumn-Winter 2025–2026, knitted underwear

Jenny Fax Spring-Summer 2024, crying heart socks

Ashley Williams (right)
Spring-Summer 2025


ASHLEY WILLIAMS
ASHLEY WILLIAMS

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PP. 67–69 © Sofia Coppola
P. 70 from left to right: Lady (Assa Sylla),
Adiatou (Lindsay Karamoh), Marieme/Vic
(Karidja Touré) and Fily (Mariétou Touré)
sing and dance to Rihanna's 'Diamonds' in
Céline Sciamma's *Girlhood* (2014)
P. 73 Top © Estelle Hanania,
bottom © Thaïs Despont
PP. 74–75 Part of a series of 48 drawings.
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PP. 114–115 Lauren Greenfield/Institute
PP. 116–117 Lauren Greenfield/Institute
PP. 118–123 © Leticia Valverdes
P. 124 © Sofia Lai
P. 125 Photo © Luca Trevisani. The sculpture
is wearing: a Comme des Garçons mesh
corsage cupro collar, Comme des Garçons
see-through mesh leggings, vintage pink
silk and leather ballerina shoes, and vintage
stockings worn underneath.
P. 126 Photo © Luca Trevisani. The sculpture
is wearing: Junya Watanabe Comme des
Garçons rib-knit arm covers, Emilio Pucci
feather sandals, vintage silk underwear,
and a vintage bra.
PP. 127–128 © Sofia Lai
P. 129 Photo © Luca Trevisani. The sculpture
on the left is wearing: a dressing gown
by Comme des Garçons, a striped
scalloped T-shirt, a Comme des Garçons
poly cut-off design padded collar, vintage
stockings, and Comme des Garçons leather
switching-strap sandals. The sculpture on
the right is wearing: a dressing gown by
Comme des Garçons, a tulle-embellished
sleeveless vest, and vintage stockings.
PP. 130–131 © Sofia Lai
P. 132 © Nails by Mei
P. 134 © Petra Collins
P. 135 Petra Collins, *Red Selfie (Piper)*, 2014,
Green Selfie (Jackie), 2014, in: *Babe*, 2015
P. 136 Courtesy of Princess Gallery, New York
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