



URI MCMILLAN

MAVERICKS
OF

Style

THE SEVENTIES IN COLOR

MAVERICKS OF *Style*

BUY



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Sunset from the room of 31 Union Square West, New York City, circa 1980. Polaroid sx-70. Courtesy of the Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos.

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Cover art: Pat Cleveland and Stephen Burrows at the home of fashion photographer Sante Forlano, ca. 1971. Courtesy of Charles Tracy Archive.

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To those who dare to dream, create, and live outward

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Cast of Characters

PRIMARY CHARACTERS

Stephen Burrows Black American fashion designer, master of color and the “disco dress,” mambo dancer, O Boutique cofounder, connoisseur of jersey and chiffon, friend of Pat Cleveland and Bethann Hardison

Pat Cleveland Biracial, Harlem-raised model, Ebony Fashion Fair alum, bubbly runway walker, *Soul Train* dancer, Halstonette, one of “Antonio’s Girls,” Stephen Burrows’s fitting model and muse

Grace Jones Jamaica-born model and recording artist, an African mask and Cubist sculpture, bon vivant and “art groupie,” Jean-Paul Goude’s onetime paramour, Richard Bernstein’s “art mother,” one of “Antonio’s Girls”

Antonio Lopez Puerto Rico-born fashion illustrator, Kodak Instamatic artist, lover of the street, flashy dresser and

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dancer, lifelong collaborator with Juan Ramos, credited with “discovering” Grace Jones and Jerry Hall

Juan Ramos Puerto Rico–born art director, former window dresser, elegance personified, lifelong collaborator with Antonio Lopez, partner of Paul Caranicas

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

Joey Arias Performance artist, Club 57 habitué, salesperson and window dancer at Fiorucci, friend of Antonio Lopez and Klaus Nomi

Anthony Barboza Erudite Black commercial and fashion photographer, member of Kamoinge Workshop, early collaborator with Grace Jones

Richard Bernstein Bronx-born Jewish commercial illustrator, quaalude lover, friend of and collaborator with Grace Jones, Andy Warhol’s favorite local artist

Bobby Breslau Deft leathemaker, member of Stephen Burrows’s commune, Halston’s handbag designer, friend of Andy Warhol and Keith Haring

Paul Caranicas Greece-born painter, student at École des Beaux-Arts and DJ at Le Bureau, friend of Antonio Lopez, partner of Juan Ramos

Angelo Colon Model for Antonio Lopez, body double for Grace Jones

Betty Davis Lusty funk siren, self-professed “Nasty Gal,” wife of Miles Davis, frequent collaborator with Antonio Lopez

Potassa de la Fayette Leggy Dominican partygoer with Grace Jones and Pat Cleveland, informal model of Antonio Lopez

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Victor Fernandez	Piscean Latin-about-Manhattan, frequent model for Antonio Lopez, assistant designer to Stephen Burrows
Jean-Paul Goude	French graphic designer, Antonio Lopez's friend and Union Square neighbor, collaborator with and one-time paramour of Grace Jones
Jerry Hall	Texan model, Grace Jones's Paris roommate, muse of and briefly engaged to Antonio Lopez, model for Stephen Burrows
Halston	Iowa-born fashion designer, lover of Ultrasuede, friend of Stephen Burrows, Studio 54 enthusiast, friend of Pat Cleveland
Bethann Hardison	Black American model, fierce runway walker, Stephen Burrows's first showroom model, friend of Pat Cleveland, Halstonette
Elsa Peretti	Italian jewelry designer, model, friend of Halston, member of Stephen Burrows's commune
Rock Steady Crew	Legendary Bronx-based b-boy crew, collaborators of Antonio Lopez
Roz Rubenstein	Cofounder of O Boutique, member of Stephen Burrows's commune
Ming Smith	Black American model, fine-art photographer, sole female member of Kamoinge Workshop, friend of and collaborator with Grace Jones
Willi Smith	Lead designer for WilliWear, geeky brother of model Toukie Smith, friend of Stephen Burrows, friend of Bethann Hardison

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André Leon Talley	Andy Warhol's receptionist at <i>Interview</i> magazine, chic social diarist, interviewer of Grace Jones, champion of Stephen Burrows
Charles Tracy	Puerto Rico-born fashion photographer, member of Stephen Burrows's commune, collaborator with Antonio Lopez
Andy Warhol	Pittsburgh-born Pop artist, Antonio Lopez's friend and Union Square neighbor, friend of Pat Cleveland, collaborator with Grace Jones
Stephen Burrows's models	Alva Chinn, Naomi Sims, Billie Blair, Norma Jean Darden, Renauld White, Deanna Lambert, Iman
Antonio Lopez's models	Jane Thorvaldson, John Stavros, Jessica Lange, Donna Jordan, Virginia Shaddick MacGregor, Jean Eudes Canival, Tina Chow, Paloma Picasso, Amina Warsuma, Nina Gaidarova, Annabel D'Huart, Jay Jenkins, Arrow, Carol LaBrie, Toukie Smith, Divine
Settings	Paris, Palace of Versailles, Fire Island, the gritty streets of New York City, Enchanted Gardens (The Enchanted Garden, Douglaston Golf Course [now Douglaston Manor], 6320 Commonwealth Boulevard, Douglaston, NY), Studio 54 (254 West Fifty-Fourth Street), Max's Kansas City (213 Park Avenue South), Paradise Garage (84 King Street), Fiorucci (125 East Fifty-Ninth Street), Cinandre (11 East Fifty-Seventh Street), O Boutique (236 Park Avenue South), Stephen Burrows World boutique at Henri Bendel (10 West Fifty-Seventh Street), Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos's studios (876 Broadway and 31 Union Square West), Anthony Barboza's studio (10 West Eighteenth Street), department store windows, bathtubs and showers, broom closets

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I thought this was how artists moved to New York, alone, that the city was a mecca of individual points, longings, all merging into one great light-pulsing mesh, and you simply found your pulse, your place.

Rachel Kushner, *The Flamethrowers*

Introduction

Insurgent Aesthetics

Amid the enormous economic precarity and persistent political upheaval that roiled the United States in the 1970s, New York City was an urban metropolis on the verge. But what, exactly, it was on the brink of depended entirely on whom you asked.

Across the country, the decade seemed like a parade of bad news: an oil embargo and stubbornly high gas prices, Richard Nixon's resignation following the Watergate scandal, the persistent stagflation, and looming fears of a recession. But this gnawing cynicism was particularly pernicious in New York City. Despite completing the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan in 1973, a phenomenal architectural and financial achievement, the city barely escaped bankruptcy two years later. And that fiscal crisis was often blamed on populations of color, particularly impoverished Black and Puerto Rican residents, who were perceived as draining social services while not paying enough taxes.¹ The summer of 1976 was the beginning of serial killer David Berkowitz's yearlong spree of violence. And, amid this terror, the city suffered a crippling twenty-five-hour blackout in July 1977, resulting in widespread looting. Times Square, bursting with peep shows, adult bookstores, and xxx

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porn theaters by decade's end, was a sleazy vortex of prostitution and crime. Graffiti was widely perceived as an uncontrollable and inescapable public nuisance. And the South Bronx, already devastated by the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway, was a charred landscape, a national symbol of dysfunction, as landlords burned their buildings to pocket the insurance money.

However, as those with the means fled the city for more serene surroundings, more and more artists found a home. After all, "The Big Apple," specifically downtown Manhattan, was the place to go if you wanted to make a name for yourself. Cheap rents attracted the ambitious. And consequently, among all the awfulness—*because* of all the awfulness—a thriving and sprawling network of creative, eager people bloomed: hairstylists, aspiring filmmakers, performers, musicians, photographers, visual artists. From SoHo to the East Village to Tribeca, casual conversations over drinks or on the dance floor—whether at the East Village's Club 57 or Tribeca's Mudd Club—often led to artistic collaborations. And that spirit of openness and experimentation permeated the work subsequently created; friendship and art-making went hand in hand. Hand-drawn, xeroxed flyers, which would later become collector items, epitomized the DIY ethos of the time. Poetry readings, performance art, "trash" film screenings, and whimsical theme parties proliferated. Nightclubs hosted art exhibitions. Painters designed clothes. Fashion boutiques morphed into impromptu parties. Together and independently, these hopeful artists shared a dogged pursuit: creativity inseparable from hedonism. As the city seemed on the verge of falling apart, downtown seemed to bubble with artistic scenes—ever-mutating, irreverent, overlapping.

This flowering of aesthetic energy downtown also manifested in heady sonic innovation as disco culture became a distinctive paradigm. Starting in the early 1970s, racially mixed crowds (often predominately gay men) gathered at word-of-mouth parties and underground clubs. Dancing became a form of communal pleasure and spiritual rebirth.² At 647 Broadway, David Mancuso hosted the Loft, an early predecessor; he used LSD and music to deprogram people's minds and bring them together. And DJs, in tandem, became legendary inspirations who smoothly blended disparate genres and, later in the decade, debuted 12-inch singles. For instance, Paradise Garage's resident spinner Larry Levan became as talked about as the club's spectacular sound system. Writer Hilton Als likened Levan's skill to a narcotic high: "Levan's music was like the sound of cocaine: one intense burst of thinking

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and feeling joined to another by a bass line.”³ People began looking for vinyl records of songs they had heard the night before. In this expansive milieu, DJs were celebrated as an integral part of a growing tapestry of artists, recognized for their ability to mold sound into color and emotion.

Meanwhile, in contrast to the effervescent energy bubbling south of Fourteenth Street, uptown was the locus of culture with a capital C. Though a mere subway ride away, it was a universe apart. On the Upper East Side, “Museum Mile” was a twenty-three-block stretch of Fifth Avenue anchored by some of the most exclusive arts institutions in the world, including the Met and the Guggenheim. And as bastions of respectability, they catered to established artists—not quirky neophytes. The offices of *Vogue* were also nearby, across the street from Central Park, projecting and disseminating ideals of American fashion to the masses. Uptown was also home to the city’s luxury department stores, like Henri Bendel on Fifty-Seventh Street and Fifth Avenue, known for its white-and-chocolate-brown striped hat boxes and its moneyed (and adamantly slim) clientele. Pop artist Andy Warhol and fashion designer Halston, who each became wealthy household names in the 1970s, lived on the Upper East Side. Uptown’s upper-crust respectability and elite social networks coexisted with downtown’s edgier, laid-back environs and artistic efflorescence. And those two worlds started to mingle more, eroding seemingly clear-cut geographical borders and cultural limits.



Much has been written about this heavily mythologized moment. The grit of 1970s New York seems magical. And there is ongoing “nostalgia for the sequined glory days of 1970s bohemia.”⁴ But our myths, like all myths, are partial. Incomplete. Our exuberant and constant retelling of this legendary time has also been influenced by our blind spots, washing out crucial dimensions of this moment in the city. In doing so, once-prominent historical subjects and their assemblages of friends-turned-collaborators have been overlooked in our storytelling.

Artists of color—critical contributors to the riveting downtown cultural scene, yet whose prodigious and outsize talents were also, somewhat surprisingly, recognized uptown—exist only on the margins of our understandings of this now-romanticized time. And that is primarily because of their race. Too often, they are characterized as marginal figures—people who circulated

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in the same spaces as more important artists or perhaps even briefly dated a member of a collective, but are not themselves worthy of serious and sustained consideration. Repeatedly, they are assigned stock parts with a few lines in the cultural histories of the period. They typically serve as the local color, hovering in the shadows while the spotlight remains on the era's major, and nearly always white, characters. In short, they are stubbornly situated as mere footnotes to a larger story.

And yet the inverse is more accurate: Much of the innovation of this period came from these artists. These artists of color were the ones most able to see that culture was more expansive than what was exhibited in the hushed (and Eurocentric) spaces of museums. Instead, they noticed that culture was on bold display everywhere: in the blossoming locales downtown, the bustling streets of Harlem and the South Bronx, and the spray paint-drenched subways that traversed them all. And that culture multiplied in the subterranean nightclubs where disparate groups—Black and Puerto Rican breakdancers, gay men and their fashionable female friends, even choreographer Alvin Ailey alongside his students and instructors in their Capezio shoes—commingled. The result was an ongoing exchange of energy, which was not left on the musty dance floor but was absorbed into everyday life. By combining these putatively low sensibilities with allusions to high art, artists of color continually created experimental and cutting-edge forms, eventually appropriated or belatedly recognized by gatekeeper institutions and arbiters of culture. In other words, the New York City of our myths would not have fully emerged without this ill-defined but essential gathering of Black and Brown artists.



This book is an intimate journey through the lives and work of three artists of color: Antonio Lopez, Grace Jones, and Stephen Burrows. It offers a kaleidoscopic view of these figures and their eclectic orbits of friends during the creative explosion that was 1970s New York City. Each primarily expressed themselves through a specific form: fashion illustration (Lopez), modeling (Jones), and fashion design (Burrows), but also confidently crossed over into other mediums. Lopez, for instance, swapped markers and pens for a Kodak Instamatic camera during this period. And Jones made a notable pivot later in the decade, reincarnating herself as a dazzling disco diva. Each partook in

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the joys of working together—a practice that, I believe, was a defining feature of this era. They built networks with like-minded individuals who prized imagination—people who keenly understood that where you came from and who you were was much less important than who you *imagined* yourself to be. They each envisioned New York City as fertile stomping grounds for their artistic practice, where inspiration could be easily gleaned from the colorful din of the street or the crisp pages of a fashion magazine. Together, these polymaths offered a textured and profoundly original way of seeing—each providing, in other words, a slightly different version of the 1970s as they staged art, performance, and fashion that pushed the cultural needle radically forward.

These characters each charted idiosyncratic paths while merging downtown attitude with uptown glam. Lopez, by all accounts playful, sexy, and charismatic, was already well-known by the late 1960s for modernizing fashion illustration with fresh forms and psychedelic color. In the 1970s, he and his lifelong collaborator Juan Ramos devised album covers, designed clothes, and participated in a renaissance of diasporic Puerto Rican creatives. Jones, striking and supple with an angular face often likened to an African mask, was a struggling model at the decade's dawn. By the end of the 1970s, after a brief stint in Europe, she became a successful model, a wild performer, and an object of fascination for artists like Andy Warhol and Keith Haring. Burrows, a boyish wunderkind who favored muscle tees and mirrored sunglasses, had gained notice by the end of the 1960s for his handmade leather garments. In the ensuing decade, he became synonymous with tropical-hued jersey and chiffon dresses that resembled paintings on the body.

At first glance, Grace Jones, Antonio Lopez, and Stephen Burrows may seem like improbable protagonists in this story. They did not have the imprimatur of elite art schools, nor did they necessarily aspire to become serious artists. Lopez and Jones, for instance, were both college dropouts. Lopez briefly studied at Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) but left to work at *Women's Wear Daily*, the industry trade journal. He quickly ascended the ranks and landed his first cover within a few months. Likewise, Jones was enrolled at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse at one point, with the modest goal of becoming a Spanish teacher. She left to join a traveling theater troupe, briefly became a nudist, and first experimented with LSD while living in a hippie commune in rural Pennsylvania. Burrows's original aim was to become an art teacher, given his propensity for drawing and "strong color."

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He spent two years at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art before transferring to FIT and moving to New York City.

Furthermore, given their backgrounds, their rise to stardom in the 1970s seemed unlikely. Lopez and Burrows were the second- and third-generation progeny of garment trade workers—sample hands, sewists, and mannequin dressers. Their families were indeed part of the American fashion industry, but only as the invisible Black and Brown labor that ultimately sustained it. Lopez and Jones, moreover, came to the United States as children from the Caribbean. The former, born in Puerto Rico, was raised in East Harlem, while the latter, born in Jamaica, eventually migrated with her family to upstate New York. Not just by the sheer size of their talent but by their insistence on breaking the rules did they overcome steep social hierarchies designed to keep them in their place. All three bypassed the gallery system, the usual track to recognition in the polite art world, as they figured out what it meant to be bona fide artists. Instead of the typical pecking order, the collectives they each nurtured and were nurtured by operated with relentless variety: as a type of school, an incubator of big ideas, and a perpetual party.

Antonio Lopez, Stephen Burrows, and Grace Jones belonged to prismatic and interlocking social worlds that, while erroneously remembered as secondary to the glittery silver of Andy Warhol's Factory or the art-punk sensibilities of Club 57, were deeply impactful. Despite their humble and (in the cases of Lopez and Jones) immigrant backgrounds, they each became cosmopolitan and forward-thinking iconoclasts whose gifts reverberated outward—past the graffitied subway cars and the newly completed Twin Towers.

Yet, while these three artists created through community, their most compelling canvas was their personal style. In other words, these creators constantly reinvented themselves, evolving with each phase of their work. Their punchy aesthetic and performance-based disruptions found analogues in their oft-discussed and ardently original self-presentations. They lacked the hallmarks of more traditional routes to artistic eminence, be it financial capital or the patronage of an accomplished elder. However, what they each possessed in abundance was a confident and influential sense of self. As they staged themselves, over and over, they became pathbreaking mavericks who happily disobeyed boundaries between commercial and fine art. In short, they inhabited style and made art.

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Pat Cleveland, Billie Blair, Alva Chinn, Bethann Hardison, and Sean Byrne at a fashion show, New York City, circa 1975. Kodak Instamatics. Courtesy of the Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos.

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As we have seen, these creatives were not simply of the 1970s; they actively shaped it. They did so by manipulating their individualistic style, that inherently amorphous apparatus of cultural cachet, and even challenging what that term meant. Again, while Lopez, Jones, and Burrows were extremely fashionable people and repeatedly interpellated as such by their peers and the press, they each recognized that style was much more expansive than a mere vehicle of personal expression; instead, it was an artistic medium and an intentional form of communication—a nonverbal conduit for meaning. And by learning how to harness it, whether through the drape of jersey fabric, the tilt of a head, or the arrangement of mannequins in a department store window, they could each translate their audacious worldview to a broader public.

Style surfaces in these pages as both a noun and a verb. It can refer to the set of unique characteristics inherent in a work of art, such as line, shape, or color. These characteristics are often so distinct that they can be recognized in other works manufactured by the same person or group. (Burrows's lettuce hem is one of many examples.) Style is thus an artistic signature that audiences can "read" for clues about the artist's intentions or the climate a collective lived and worked in.⁵ (Think of Lopez's repeated use of a three-by-three grid for his series of Kodak Instamatic works.) Style, however, is also closer to a practice or a *doing*. (Here, we need look no further than Jones's staging of herself as an aesthetic subject.) It is also a manner of living (as in Burrows's fashion "commune"). And style is a powerful vehicle when subordinate groups, those who ostensibly lack power, wield it. Subcultures manipulate style to reveal their group identities to each other (see: gay men's clever and coded use of handkerchiefs in this period) and as a type of defiant messaging directed at the public (see: the boisterous visual language of graffiti).⁶ As we examine this decade more closely, we find again and again that the most meaningful connoisseurs of style are the overlooked individuals on the margins of society who utilize whatever is readily available to speak about their most urgent concerns.⁷

The tenacity of these artists meant that, sooner or later, the so-called tastemakers began to herald the singular work they constructed or actively participated in, but such emerging fame did not occlude experiences of racial bias or homophobia.⁸ Some critics spent more time trying to situate these creators into prefabricated narratives centered on their racial backgrounds than recognizing their aesthetic finesse. In such efforts, tortured and biased, we see a recurrence of the burden of representation that is repeatedly foisted

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onto queer artists and artists of color, where their identities are privileged more than their art. And sometimes, these artists' work was misunderstood or blatantly censored, particularly when it openly flaunted queer desire or exhibited pleasure in self-objectification.

The specific hardships these artists faced also reveal the vast complexities frequently ignored in static portrayals of race in this fraught moment. The stories of these three artists showcase, for instance, the linkages between psychedelic drugs and creativity among these Black and Brown cognoscenti. They force us to confront the manifold realities of artistic subjects who resist recuperation in the revolutionary ethos of Black Power or doctrines of racial uplift. And once again, they reveal the presence of figures who are often elided in the prototypical narratives of this historical moment, be it hippie communes, the "peacock revolution," or the rise of boutique culture in New York City.

Likewise, if their boldness was apparent in how they chose to stage themselves as racial and sexual minorities, it was also evident in their unabashed use of bright, sumptuous colors. The artists and performers I gather here repeatedly gravitate to a chromatically intense spectrum. Lopez's use of a fluorescent pink, or the blood-red favored by Burrows, transported viewers to a Shangri-la-like aesthetic dimension and temporarily estranged them from pressing economic and political realities. And that reality—New York City in the 1970s—was often bleak: diminished social services, widespread vandalism, persistent robberies, and the scorched tenement buildings of the Lower East Side.

Still, amid these entrenched structural problems, a seemingly endless array of innovations emerged. Gay men repurposed the long-abandoned Pier 48 in Greenwich Village for street cruising and casual sex; artists began living and working in expansive, sunlit SoHo lofts once used for manufacturing; and figures like Burrows, Lopez, and Jones were purveyors of an aesthetic revolution, albeit in a minor key.⁹ Living on the social edges of society, so often the wellspring of avant-garde art, they channeled their desires—for pleasure, for the new, for an intangible *more*—into raucous color and indefatigable fun. Hence, when Roland Barthes grumpily decried the artifice-laden "openly chemical" colors of Pop Art—colors that were "never shades, since nuance is banished from them"—he could have been discussing Lopez's Kodak Instamatic photo series or the airbrushed album covers Richard Bernstein made for Grace Jones.¹⁰

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If the seventies were the decade of color, the ensemble of peers discussed in these pages were virtuosos of insurgent chromatics. This rebellion was waged not through political organizing, as it was in the sixties, but through the turf war of the aesthetic. In other words, while seemingly superficial, the heated debates about aesthetic practices—such as the artistic merits of color photography, or lack thereof, as some critics argued—were often a cover for more significant concerns. The aesthetic was not as openly democratic as it might appear; debates often arose over who had the privilege to shape it and for whose advantage. Moreover, the artistic use of color was not wholly cleaved from racial identity as color. For instance, Americans typically understood “loud” colors to belong *elsewhere*: confined to urban landscapes like barrios or exported to the blistering sun of Latin America and the Caribbean. When used at all, racy colors were to be tamed within the relative safety of interior design.¹¹ But these luscious shades and highlighter hues were precisely the types of color that these artists repeatedly deployed and adorned themselves with. Colors that evoked the dreamy hallucinogenic effects of an acid trip. Colors that, in an Afro-diasporic sense, possessed palpable energy—like Burrows’s fiery red. Colors that “popped,” especially when paired with brown skin. “Hot equator colors,” as one fashion journalist aptly described Burrows’s plush dresses. Lush, saturated colors that exceeded the optical and seemed to spill over into the other senses—like the gold lamé unitard Jones wore when she performed at Studio 54. Colors that had movement. And colors that seemed to symbolize futurity. Collectively, they offered a shared sense that color was not simply decorative but a potent repository of knowledge, feelings, and memories.

Mavericks of Style, therefore, seeks to complicate, undo, and expand past the rote frameworks and casual assumptions that too often underlie our discussions of artistic practice. Fashion design, long regarded as a secondary art form, is given equal billing with visual art. Pop Art is recast as a genre generative for artists of color in the United States, not just white men. Along the way, the artist and the model are revealed as mutually transformative. And the fetish of sole authorship is scrapped for a more pluralistic perception of bodies at play in the act of creation. The care the assorted players in this book exhibited toward each other was not simply the precondition for what they made together. Their friendships were, in themselves, art forms too.

Thus, if the development of an artist’s style is a product of their social environment, then *Mavericks of Style* continually illuminates the cohort’s

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FASHION IDEAS SHAPE



Naomi and Deanna greet sunrise (left) on the beach in "worm" dresses of rayon jersey (\$130)—to wear over bikinis or nothing at all. Renauld shows O's classic tunic (\$70) and flared pants (\$40) both in wool jersey. At right, Naomi comes through the beach plume in an "Egyptian" suit—burned-leather wrap skirt, appliquéd jersey jacket and "worm" pullover (\$315, complete). The girls' jersey suits (below right) look like sports sweaters over dresses (Naomi's, \$200; Deanna's, \$130). Skullcaps are \$5. What inspires Stephen's designs? People on the streets, sports gear, rock music and sex—the anatomy clothes "are sex," he points out. As hair stylist, brother Franklyn Welsh updates coiffures of the '30's like Deanna's, and fluffs the family Afros.

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Look magazine, 1970. Left to right: Naomi Sims, Renauld White, Deanna Lambert.
Courtesy of Charles Tracy Archive.

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influence on creation. What these Black and Brown creatives constructed was inseparable from the communities they formed; these peers understood collaboration as a given, as they lived and worked together or in close proximity. Each of the principal characters in the book was enmeshed in the artistic ecosystems of others whose so-called solo projects were, in fact, spiderweb-like structures that often intersected with one another. They made work not just alongside each other but *because* of each other.¹² Lopez worked with Jones and drew Burrows; Jones wore clothes by Lopez and Burrows; Burrows and Lopez both had connections to *Vogue* and shared model Pat Cleveland; Cleveland made films with Lopez, went on *Soul Train* with Burrows, and partied at Enchanted Gardens with Lopez and Jones. Jones dated, worked, and lived with Jean-Paul Goude, whose studio was near Lopez's; Cleveland met Halston through Burrows; Lopez, like Burrows, frequented Max's Kansas City; Andy Warhol's Factory was close to both Lopez's and Goude's studios, and he watched horror movies with Cleveland.¹³ If we peel back the palimpsest-like layers of these people and their art, friendship and love frequently surface as the critical supports enabling their work to flourish—or even to exist in the first place.

Grace Jones herself acknowledges this: “Back then, it seemed that everything and everyone was connected. There was some kind of nuclear magnet that brought all of us together. I always say it was as if an octopus linked me to Andy (Warhol), Jean-Paul (Goude), Antonio (Lopez), and Richard (Bernstein). Nowadays, artists don't really work together anymore, but we all inspired and respected each other and collaborated together. We had the best, best times doing what we wanted to do and having fun with it.”¹⁴

As Jones suggests, these trailblazers lived life as an ongoing art project, filled with color and fashion, music and travel, heartbreak and laughter. They journeyed together to far-flung places like Brazil and Puerto Rico or more local haunts like Fire Island, staging impromptu photo shoots in pools or on the beach. They elevated partying to an art form in their collective pursuit of the get-down. They actively sought forms of beauty while widening the watercolor-like palette they used to conjure it into being. At the same time, Antonio Lopez, Grace Jones, and Stephen Burrows did not wait for others to identify them as “artists.” They forcibly, if belatedly, claimed that title for themselves. They were masters at creating spellbinding worlds that lasted the

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duration of a darkly alluring performance or came alive when a swath of canary-yellow chiffon undulated on its wearer. And the rhythm of their lives attests to how they traversed the streets of New York City and beyond. These pages are a tribute to their steely determination in art and life and their shared attempt to project a new vision of the 1970s in sultry, bombastic color.



Throughout *Mavericks of Style*, these New York City–based artists move between varying fields of expertise in a dual effort: they seek to explore new aesthetic forms and to melt the edges between seemingly disparate disciplines. In this cultural history, I trace a loose assembly of the artistically inclined, from models to leather-makers to graphic designers, all living and working in 1970s New York City. Rejecting the hierarchical order implicit in traditional categories, they collectively develop increasingly sophisticated artistic practices that span multiple genres. Inspired by these creatives’ wildly imaginative, cross-disciplinary approach, I employ, in Kandice Chuh’s words, a “deliberately promiscuous” reading practice that utilizes insights from multiple schools of thought without being beholden to their apparent limits.¹⁵

How can these provocateurs’ noted aversion to boundaries—between high and low cultures, fashion and art, or commercialism and creativity¹⁶—encourage a breakdown in the rigid and often-policed divisions between bodies of knowledge?¹⁷ Put differently, an open-ended interpretative method can more fully attune to the porous flows between differing sensibilities, influences, and cultures discussed here. For instance, recognizing Antonio Lopez’s immense artistry requires us to understand his “context-switching,” as he freely pivoted to whatever medium best suited his purposes at each moment.¹⁸ In doing so, the imprint of his point of view moves across various material objects—make-up-inspired vinyl record covers, tulle skirts, or steamy photography.

As such, *Mavericks of Style* draws on concepts from disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields, including cultural studies, visual culture, queer and feminist theory, art history, and ethnic studies. It is aligned with the onus of performance studies to privilege artists as “not only culture makers but also

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theory producers,” as José Esteban Muñoz has argued, while also contributing to the field’s attention to “critical experiments in sound, visibility, space, and text,” as Alexandra Vazquez elegantly puts it.¹⁹

Moreover, I understand the aesthetic as the broad range of stimuli the human sensorium discerns. *Mavericks of Style* dovetails with scholarship tracking the “ways in which aesthetic practices could alter the world and our experience of it,” such as the image and object world of mass culture, while also critiquing aesthetics as a regime often wielded against minoritarian subjects.²⁰ Thus, I follow the lead of scholars like Muñoz, Anne Cheng, Amber Musser, and Jillian Hernandez, among others, turning toward the ornamental, campy, synthetic, surface-oriented, and excessive as foundational (albeit feminized and racialized) aesthetic properties.²¹ Furthermore, this text’s attention to “distinct forms of image-making” and “performative approaches to being seen and represented” corresponds with work tracing the intermingling of gesture, desire, and affect that occurs inside and outside the representational frame; these scholars also highlight photography’s “other histories,” or its complicity in sustaining visual taxonomies of racial difference and Western superiority.²²

Similarly, art history has been criticized for its “focus on Western perspectives, dominant narratives, and canonic images” while treating racial difference as “an unwanted or uninvited guest, an intrusive presence that cheapens and distracts attention from the concerns of materiality and form.”²³ These appraisals indicate the need for fresh methodological perspectives in the field, widening our purview to include performance and aesthetic works that stage provocative encounters for the spectator and offer counter-intuitive examples of how (and where) meaning is produced. It also means redirecting our gaze to marginalized historical figures and unorthodox archives that remain underexamined. In the following discussion, I construct an alternative model, continually revealing sites and scenes of “uncommon beauty”—Paradise Garage, Fiorucci, O Boutique, breakdancing, sportswear, voguing, Blackness, and latinidad.²⁴ They take their cues (and audiences) from queer nightlife, hip-hop, or a shared sense of diasporic cultural pride, for instance, rather than the museum or gallery. *Gesture*, a keyword in performance studies, also serves as a valuable rubric for analyzing the artistic works below. “After all, the gesture is small, oftentimes barely perceptible, and as performance studies scholars, this is what we are trained to catch, in

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an artwork, in an everyday interaction, in the way a dancer moves a muscle, etc.," as Iván A. Ramos reiterates.²⁵

In addition, this book emerges from topics that transcend any field of study per se—modeling, department store window performance, and hippie communes, to name a few. In what follows, I reveal the influence of overlooked but vital historical figures and defamiliarize well-known ones. I suggest a more extensive understanding of artistic practice, which supersedes the usual lines of demarcation—hastily drawn but rigidly imposed—between visual art, performance, and fashion design.

Mavericks of Style is also, avowedly, a queer history. I foreground figures whose orientation to the world was queer, and I value elusive forms of evidence that more traditional histories may obscure. While *queer* is often used exclusively to denote nonnormative forms of sexuality and identity, I conceive of queerness differently. What if queerness is more indicative of a directional compass that suggests how a person perceives everyday life and how they move through it? In this way, queerness refers less to one's sexual proclivities and more to one's approach to navigating the world.²⁶ Lopez, Jones, and Burrows cut a dashing figure not just in terms of how they looked (or dressed or danced) but also in how they traversed New York City and contributed to various artistic enterprises and commercial industries. Again and again, they choreographed ingenious possibilities for personal and aesthetic expression and thus daringly mapped new terrains.²⁷ Their objective, as Jonathan Flatley and Anthony Grudin write about Warhol, was "making room for alternative, queer ways of feeling and being with others in the world" via artistic expression.²⁸

Queerness also indicates the "differential aesthetic valuing" of Black and Brown cultural producers, in Jillian Hernandez's words, as well as what they valued as objects of beauty, such as the poetry of the street, the sensory bliss of the disco, and the zest of the Black model.²⁹ This echoes Ann Cvetkovich's suggestion, in an essay on queer collecting practices, that "to love the wrong kind of objects is to be queer."³⁰ My attention to both ephemera and chatty, secondhand narration in this book echoes our growing scholarly insistence on these as different forms of evidence that subvert, or queer, more prototypical notions of the "fact" or proof. This methodological approach attaches value to performances, for instance, that only existed in the time of their duration but live on through documentation and the memories of those who

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were there.³¹ Despite their negative valences, it recognizes gossip and rumor as generative sources of knowledge and (art) history.³²

Amid all this, I recognize that *Mavericks of Style* is also an act of curation. My selective arrangement of visual media and textual description conjures this story into being. My sequencing of drawings, photographs, and print advertising runs on a parallel track to the written word, as this book is not just a cultural study but a visual history of style, as practiced by this artistic ensemble and their compatriots. (After all, one could argue that Lopez, Jones, and Burrows were curators in their own right.) Furthermore, this book is also a queer curatorial project, one that understands curation as not just the juxtaposition of aesthetic objects but also as an intimate care for the past and a duty to translate its importance to others.³³ That care is particularly important for objects, persons, conversations, and onetime events typically deemed unimportant, as well as for those whose names, when not elided entirely, are badly mangled: I was initially disappointed that neither Stephen Burrows's name nor his O Boutique appeared in a cultural history of Max's Kansas City until I realized that his full name and boutique were misspelled as "Steven Barrow's Au Boutique."³⁴ I "care about" and "care for" these aesthetic practices, as Gayatri Gopinath puts it, by writing about them and indulging in the generative frictions produced by considering them alongside one another.³⁵ That sense of fidelity and affection also manifests in my studious documentation of the places these figures touched and the specific friendships and extensive "life-world[s]" they built.³⁶

As a result, in each chapter, I reconstruct a spatial cartography of select sites in New York City of the late 1960s and 1970s, places instrumental in the artistic and personal development of Lopez, Jones, and Burrows. I describe venues, both noteworthy and obscure, where they partied, pranced, and performed, where others helped refine their image, and where they imparted their aesthetic signature, their style. We crisscross the city and sometimes temporarily escape it, as I transport us to little-known hair salons, nondescript artist studios, buzzy boutiques, posh department stores, funky discos, and formal runway presentations. I also apply that subway map vision to their sundry working relationships and kinship networks, often a confluence of both. I describe like-minded affiliations (Grace Jones and Ming Smith's mutual identity as Black models), track mentor and mentee dyads (Antonio

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Lopez and Joey Arias at Fiorucci), and pinpoint more asymmetrical dynamics based on aesthetic inspiration (Stephen Burrows and his muse Pat Cleveland). In doing so, I aim to showcase the glossy and glamorous but also gritty and soulful projects they created together, where style and substance coexisted in equal measure. And, in this vivid rendering of the recent past, I hope to draw a new map of where artistic experimentation and camaraderie roamed in 1970s New York City, manifested in its singular—if until now ignored—progenitors.

Mavericks of Style contributes to a small but growing body of literature, especially in recent years, on key artistic collectives on the East (and West) Coast that overlap with the historical period distilled here. In Southern California, for instance, these include the East LA-based Chicana group Asco, who pointedly rejected the “collective” label. It also indexes the loosely organized Studio Z, an assemblage of Black artists who worked out of a former dancehall in South LA. Both groups thrived, despite lacking the institutional support of museums, because of their willingness to share resources and present their works in nonart contexts, such as the Route 110 underpass and the median strip of Whittier Boulevard.³⁷ Meanwhile, the Kamoinge Workshop—a Harlem-based network of Black fine art photographers—nurtured their members’ desires to sharpen their technical aptitudes and proudly foreground Black diasporic subjects as archetypes of beauty. (One of these was Grace Jones.) First formed in the early 1960s, this working group exhibited and published together most fiercely in the early 1970s. Two other groups that originated in New York during this period—“Where We At” Black Women Artists Inc. in 1971 and the Nuyorican Poets Café in 1973—were both the result of informal gatherings of like-minded peers: the former’s initial meeting in Dindga McCannon’s Brooklyn home and, in the latter’s case, Miguel Algarín’s living room on East Sixth Street.³⁸ For each ad hoc group, the sixties’ various political and social upheavals were critical underpinnings of a shared aesthetic philosophy and institutional critique.³⁹

This study is also in dialogue with scholarship focused less on overt identifiable sets of artists and more on the nocturnal spaces they congregated in. For instance, the oddball energy circulating in Club 57 and the Mudd Club led to unique forms of artistic exchange. And both are firmly centered in any recounting of Lower Manhattan’s vibrant party scene in the late 1970s,

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spilling over into the early 1980s. However, neither appears to be a home for the primary characters of this book. One reason may be that while identity play, especially gender nonconformity, was a defining theme of Club 57, racial diversity was not.⁴⁰ Consequently, the few Black artists who frequented the venue did not make it their preferred base. The Mudd Club, which opened in Tribeca in 1978, featured punk and disco in the same space as avant-garde performances and art exhibitions.⁴¹ While not a regular presence, Pat Cleveland mentions singing at the Mudd Club in her memoirs.⁴² At least one artist recalls witnessing the runway legend's "long-forgotten performance."⁴³ But a similar ethnic homogeneity haunts the historical record. The noted exceptions—graffiti artist Fred Braithwaite (later known as Fab 5 Freddy), visual artist Jean-Paul Basquiat, and Michael Holman (who formed the experimental band Gray with Basquiat in 1979)—were habitués of both spaces. And yet, Basquiat and Braithwaite struggled to get into either club before becoming more recognizable, which is a testament to the painfully slow inclusion of people of color into the city's burgeoning art-punk club scene at the tail end of the decade.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the prominence of midtown's Studio 54 and its Queens-based predecessor, Enchanted Gardens, in the following pages may seem antithetical to the genealogies of New York City's downtown party networks.⁴⁵ This is primarily because neither was located downtown. However, that dissonance, too, is instructive. In short, we need a more expansive account of the feedback loop between club culture and artistic freedom in the 1970s, especially for the chic polymaths of color I highlight here.⁴⁶

Moreover, my focus on identifying specific networks of affiliation and shared artistic impulses suggests a *generational* aesthetic dissent. Typically, generations are thought to be united by their mutual experience of the era's defining events. For instance, Woodstock, the March on Washington, the Stonewall Riots, and the Vietnam War symbolize the political agitation and daring of the sixties generation, an era of seismic sociopolitical "shocks." In contrast, the seventies have been identified as the "Me" decade, a term coined by writer Tom Wolfe in 1976; the decade traded sixties communalism for individualistic role-play, "compulsive artifice," and "soul style."⁴⁷ In short, "the 1970s as a 'me' decade is remembered as relentlessly superficial and self-obsessed."⁴⁸ The common point of view I track in these pages—toward deeply saturated colors, for instance—indicates a different metric for understanding how their collective predispositions were initially shaped: the similarity

of their “impressions.” In other words, a generation consists of people who share identical impressions, drawn from their experiences during youth, their country of birth, age, or university education. “The early impression is the key to understanding how a shift in attitude or a new aesthetic has come about,” art historian James Meyer argues.⁴⁹

For instance, model Pat Cleveland recalls money being scarce growing up in Spanish Harlem with her painter mother, Lady Bird, and aunt Helen, both nurses’ aides at Bellevue Hospital. However, that poverty was augmented by the “will to adorn,” in Zora Neale Hurston’s words, which they freely indulged in when designing clothes for the costume balls they hoped to attend.⁵⁰ In Cleveland’s words, “As far as I’m concerned, my true education centered on the creative mess that existed in our living room. And what a glorious mess it was: There were sequins, strings of pearls, peacock feathers, large exotic fans, beads, and bent wire hangers loaded down with fabrics.”⁵¹ She describes how, soon after *Sputnik* entered space, her mother and aunt constructed a four-foot-high replica of planet Earth that Lady Bird wore to New York City’s Beaux Arts Ball in 1958. Cleveland’s anecdote, set during her formative years, illustrates how she, like others in this book, absorbed a tutelage in style as a means for extravagant self-expression that often required creative resourcefulness. It demonstrates how histories are defined just as much by our individual lives—not to mention the stories we tell about ourselves and our friends—as they are by epochal events. Thus, I meditate on the careers and kinship networks of our primary and secondary characters to understand the recent past, a time that is both near (memory) and far (history).

In my elastic understanding of the seventies, I suggest that this milieu’s propulsive energies extend beyond the decade itself, bookended by the late 1960s and the early 1980s. In this manner, I concur with other historians in suggesting that clear-cut delineations of decades are artificial; such temporal divisions ignore how history and memory both linger and persist. Moreover, in this project, a taut focus on the ten years beginning in 1970 is unrealistic, given that, for instance, Burrows and Lopez had both gained notoriety by the end of the sixties. As a result, their aesthetic interventions in the following decade are better understood when contextualized within the longer trajectory of their artistic development as they sharpened their skills and ventured into different arenas. The same is true for Jones, a fierce performer whose iconic image is so synonymous with the late seventies that it has become

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visual shorthand for it, especially the excesses of Studio 54. A broader inquiry into her fledgling attempts at modeling from the late 1960s into the early 1970s provides a more nuanced understanding of how she created her distinct persona with crucial coconspirators, becoming a canvas for others and a muse for herself. This looser frame around the seventies reveals, on the one hand, how the recent past animated what these artists designed and, on the other hand, the fascinating afterlives of acts that persisted long after their creation.

Finally, *Mavericks of Style* is a multisensorial project. It aims to hear the “groove” of Juan Ramos and Antonio Lopez’s artistic practice. It seeks to recreate the intoxicating atmosphere in which Grace Jones’s cosmopolitan glamour flourished. And it attempts to capture the kinetic motion of Stephen Burrows’s ethereal, rainbow-bright dresses. I repeatedly showcase assorted innovations in form as they individually and collectively fashioned the era. I also privilege photography as source material, attending to its illusory mysteries and mythological qualities.⁵² Such a mandate necessitates, in Tina Campt’s words, “looking beyond what we see and attuning our senses to the other affective frequencies through which photographs register.”⁵³ In addition, I integrate the recorded testimonies of those there, whether through formalized oral histories or informal chitchat gathered from commercial print media and artist memoirs. And I, in performance studies parlance, write *with* (rather than simply *about*) the luscious polyrhythmic soundtrack of the disco.⁵⁴

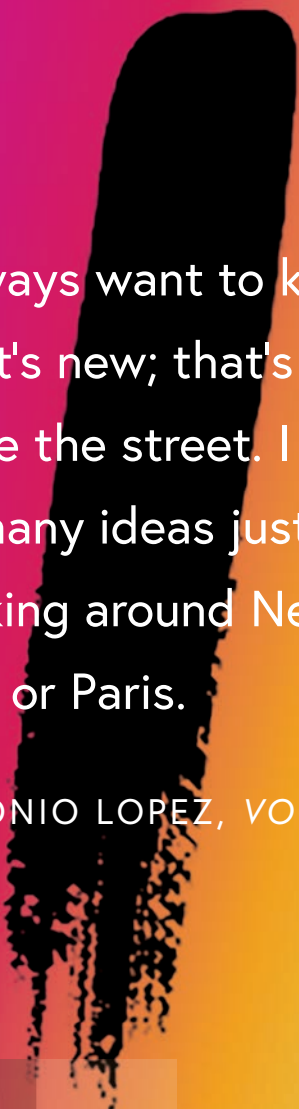
After all, as novelist Justin Torres reminds us, the (gay) disco’s imperative was the act of transformation it imparted on those who entered, allowing one to be “transfigured in the disco light. To lighten, loosen, see yourself reflected in the beauty of others.”⁵⁵ My immersion in this audio archive—including Roy Ayers, La Lupe, Earth, Wind & Fire, Gwen Guthrie, Larry Levan, Cheryl Lynn, Herbie Hancock, and, of course, Grace Jones—has acted as a temporal gateway, enabling me to enter the recent past sonically. But it has also implored me to listen very closely to the details, “those bits of history that get skipped over or left unattended” and often “effect in flashes and refuse analytical capture.”⁵⁶ Doing so has enabled me to hear the faint tempo of these main characters’ steps as they circumnavigated the street, the studio, the disco, and the world. I, in turn, have carefully crafted prose whose cadence mimics the rhythm of these protagonists’ artistic journeys while also attempting

to capture that certain *je ne sais quoi*—a fleeting feeling, a sensation, a tactile hue—that punctuated their lives and permeates these pages. Here, we enter and exit stages where Black and Brown creatives are the leading players, orchestrating a beautifully rendered portrait of the seventies where style is the tool at hand for forging a better world.

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I always want to know
what's new; that's why
I love the street. I get
so many ideas just
walking around New
York or Paris.

ANTONIO LOPEZ, *VOGUE*

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Notes

Introduction. Insurgent Aesthetics

1. As Hillary Miller discusses in the introduction to her book about theater and performance during the city's financial crisis in the 1970s, New York City's \$13.5 billion budget was the largest municipal budget in the United States at the time, and the city was also the nation's most populous with its 7.5 million residents. After President Gerald Ford infamously denied federal assistance to the city—only to reverse himself later—a state-backed corporation, the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC), was formed by city and state officials to shore up the city's finances. However, Miller reminds us, the austerity measures that were put in place were unevenly distributed and thus affected neighborhoods and industries differently. For more on how these municipal infrastructures affected performance practices, particularly small independent and community-based theaters in the outer boroughs, see Miller, *Drop Dead*.
2. Keith Haring lovingly describes Paradise Garage repeatedly in such terms, emphasizing it as a space that had a significant effect on his life and the lives of others who frequented it. "Dancing [at the Paradise Garage] was really dancing in a way to reach another state of mind, to transcend being

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- here and getting communally to another place.” See Keith Haring and Robert Farris Thompson’s filmed interview for the BBC, November 1988, quoted in Haring, *Keith Haring’s Journals*, xliii.
3. Als, “Spinning Tales,” 26.
 4. Miller, *Drop Dead*, 17.
 5. Finch, *Style in Art History*; Ackerman, “Theory of Style.” For similar works on style in art history, see Rothschild, *Style in Art*; and Ernest Hans Gombrich, “The Concept of Style in the History of Art,” lecture notes [for] Fine Arts 190, Spring term, 1959.
 6. Fischer, *Gay Seventies*; Hebdige, *Subculture*.
 7. This echoes scholar Carol Tulloch’s understanding of expressive style as an agentive process in the African diaspora. In her words, “I use the term ‘style’ as agency—in the construction of self through the assemblage of garments and accessories, hairstyles and beauty regimes that may, or may not, be ‘in fashion’ at the time of use. I see the styling practices of a layperson’s articulation of everyday life though their styled body as exercising that agency.” Tulloch, *Birth of Cool*, 276.
 8. While the 1970s were recognized as the time when white gay men came to be regarded as tastemakers due to their heavy influence on disco culture, I chose not to use that term to describe these creators of color because of the Eurocentrism and colonial trappings associated with taste. Taste, in other words, is a highly cultivated sensibility that is deemed the proper provenance of an elite few. And it is a category that, historically, has been wielded against folks of color who are often deemed lacking. For more on white gay men as tastemakers, see Lawrence, *Loves Saves the Day*. For more discussion of taste, see Pham, *Asians Wear Clothes*; and Hernandez, *Aesthetics of Excess*.
 9. Art historian David Getsy offers a useful description of street cruising’s intricate mechanics: “Cruising is a strategic inhabitation of streets and other public and semipublic spaces, and it comprises coded signs, furtive but intentional looks, proxemic negotiations, gestural prompts, sartorial cues, and a heightened awareness of the city’s geographic and social delineations.” In the context of 1970s New York City, these “public performances of looking for and finding sex, sexual reciprocation, or mutual recognition of queer desiring were part of the experience of New York’s streets, both day and night.” Getsy, *Queer Behavior*, 27.
 10. Barthes, “That Old Thing, Art...,” 204.
 11. Londoño, *Abstract Barrios*.
 12. Pérez, “Glory That Was Wrong,” 282.
 13. Luckett, “Interview with Pat Cleveland,” 41.
 14. Jones, quoted in Padilha and Padilha, *Richard Bernstein*, 5.
 15. Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*, 4.

16. Fashion designer Willi Smith's thoughts on creativity and commercialism, in 1978, ring true of how the other artists in this study, his peers, thought of the linkage between the two: "Today artists are afraid of becoming too commercial, but I don't believe my creativity is threatened by commercialism. Quite the opposite—I think that the more commercial I become, the more creative I can be, because I'm reaching more people." "Wear Willi Wear," *Fashion World*, August 28, 1978, quoted in Pastor, "WilliWear New Wave Graphics," 172.
17. As Chuh emphasizes, this "intense compartmentalization of knowledge" in the academy is salient "not only in disciplinarity, but also within disciplines." Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*, 13.
18. Heiser, *Double Lives in Art and Pop Music*.
19. Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 33; Vazquez, *Listening in Detail*, 7. Jennifer Doyle neatly summarizes the field's collective focus: "The entire field of performance studies is structured by attention to the social space around performance" while "exploring the presence of the spectator or viewer to the work of art." Doyle, *Hold It Against Me*, 152n7.
20. Flatley and Grudin, "Introduction," 421. See also Stallings, *Funk the Erotic*; and Bradley, *Anteaesthetics*.
21. Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*; Cheng, *Second Skin*; Cheng, *Ornamentality*; Musser, *Sensual Excess*; Hernandez, *Aesthetics of Excess*.
22. Thompson, *Shine*, 5, 10. See also Brown and Phu, *Feeling Photography*; Camp, *Black Gaze*; Camp, *Listening to Images*; Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle*; Smith, *American Archives*; Pinney and Peterson, *Photography's Other Histories*; Sharpe, *Ordinary Notes*.
23. I quote Jasmine Nicole Cobb and Derek Conrad Murray, respectively. See Briellemaier et al., "Institutionalizing Methods," 243, 248.
24. I borrow this phrasing from Kandice Chuh and her rumination on José Esteban Muñoz as a theorist of the aesthetic whose "theory of uncommon beauty" permeates his scholarship. See Chuh, "It's Not About Anything," 171.
25. Briellemaier et al., "Institutionalizing Methods," 253.
26. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*. In terms of a deviant spatial orientation, I am also thinking of Saidiya Hartman's description of young Black women in early twentieth-century America and the "errant path they understood as freedom" as they sought to create beautiful lives for themselves in crowded cities. See Hartman, *Wayward Lives*, 288. I also concur with Mel Chen's suggestion to reconceive of queerness as not simply a sexual identity or as contact but rather as a form of "improper affiliation" across an array of subjectivities and spaces outside the heteronormative. See Chen, *Animacies*.
27. For more on everyday choreographies and maps of "what might be," see Hartman, *Wayward Lives*, 234.

28. Flatley and Grudin, "Introduction," 421.
29. Hernandez, *Aesthetics of Excess*, 7.
30. Cvetkovich, "Photographing Objects," 275.
31. Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*. For more on the specific knowledges gained from the documentary traces of an event, see Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia."
32. Butt, introduction to *Between You and Me*.
33. Gopinath, *Unruly Visions*, 4. Moreover, in a more tangible manner, this book itself is indebted to models of queer curatorship, like the stewardship of Juan Ramos and Antonio Lopez's estate by Paul and Devon Caranicas and the attention Barry Ratoff has paid to Charles Tracy's photographic archive.
34. See Sewall-Ruskin, *High on Rebellion*.
35. Gopinath, *Unruly Visions*, 4.
36. Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 34.
37. For discussions of both groups, see Shanks and Tepper, *Side by Side*. For more on Asco, see Chavoya and Gonzales, *Asco*; Chavoya and Frantz, *Axis Mundo*; Gleisser, *Risk Work*; and Guzmán, *Dissatisfactions*. For more on Studio Z, see Jones, *South of Pico*.
38. For more on the former, see Morris and Hockley, *We Wanted a Revolution*. For more on the latter, see Jaime, *Queer Nuyorican*.
39. For more on institutional critique, see Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*.
40. Its early participants were largely a mix of white suburban kids from the New York area, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and the West Coast states, along with a smattering of artists from abroad, including Brazil, Italy, and Peru. See Magliozzi, "Art Is What You Make It," 14.
41. Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd*.
42. Cleveland, *Walking with the Muses*, 317.
43. Boch, *Mudd Club*, 101.
44. Lawrence, *Life and Death on the New York Dance Floor*, 77.
45. For more on these downtown party networks in New York City, see Lawrence, *Love Saves the Day*. For a design history of the nightclub that includes this period, see Kries et al., *Night Fever*. Finally, the Downtown Collection in the Fales Library at New York University is also a valuable resource of ephemera related to New York's City's various downtown scenes, especially Club 57, the Mudd Club, and Danceteria.
46. For instance, see Heiser, "Club Culture and Contemporary Art."
47. It has been characterized as a period of "compulsive artifice," where people adopted poses and identities that were contrived. The popularity of unisex styles, for instance, and idiosyncratic materials (such as leather and synthetics) encouraged this role-play. This idea of clothing and hair as both a form of disguise and a conduit to announce selfhood also per-

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vaded Black consciousness—from blaxploitation films to “soul style.” And *Vogue* in the seventies attempted to reframe the female body as a site of liberation rather than male pleasure, especially as more women entered the workforce and engaged in “power dressing.” This focus on sartorial aesthetics and bodily embellishment showcases how seventies fashion was often employed as a form of “impression management” to influence viewers’ interpretation of the sundry bodies they encountered in everyday life. See Françoise, “These Boots Were Made”; Powell, “Racial Imaginaries”; Ford, *Liberated Threads*; and Vogel, “State of Grace.”

48. Miller, *Drop Dead*, 5.
49. Meyer, *Art of Return*, 42.
50. Hurston, “Characteristics of Negro Expression,” 48.
51. Cleveland, *Walking with the Muses*, 30.
52. Writer Ocean Vuong’s recent thoughts on photography, discussed alongside his poetry, resonates with my thinking on photography’s power as a form. In his words, “I feel a very great kinship with photography in its ability to create a myth out of the real. You look at a photo, and anything you write about, it ends up being true, right? So the photograph because of how it’s framed is very seductive and capacious and ends up being to me a very queer form because it sets up what is seemingly fixed. As we interpret [photography], or as we contextualize it, anything could happen. That’s the closest I see to my own work in ‘auto-fiction,’ or auto-mythology, which is how I view my poems. Taking the lived experience and then mythologizing it towards other tropes...I think photography is really elusive in that way. It’s seemingly so static, and so infinite. Every pixel, every frame is there, but the mystery is in the interpretation.” Quoted in Stewart, “Ocean Vuong,” 105.
53. Camp, *Listening to Images*, 9.
54. For a reflection on friendship and writing with art, see Doyle, “Just Friends.”
55. Torres, “In Praise of Latin Night.”
56. Vazquez, *Listening in Detail*, 20, 21.

Chapter 1. Mundane Made Spectacular: Antonio Lopez

Epigraph: Antonio Lopez, quoted in Laird Borrelli-Persson, “Before There Were Influencers, There Was Antonio, Illustrator Extraordinaire and Arbiter of Style,” *Vogue*, September 5, 2018, <https://www.vogue.com/article/antonio-lopez-1970s-sex-fashion-disco-documentary-by-james-crump>.

1. *Nuyorican* and *Nuyorico*—which refer to the New York-born children of Puerto Rican parents who are familiar with the island’s language and

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culture—are, in Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes's words, “messy, irreverent neologisms that engage phonetic traits” or “insert non-English diacritics and capital letters in the middle of words,” like *DiaspoRicans* (a synonym for Nuyorican). These negative slurs acquired new meaning in the late 1960s and early 1970s as Nuyorican cultural consciousness flourished: “As a practice of resistance, [they] entailed the proud affirmation of a new cultural identity, that of Puerto Ricans in the United States, and solidified through art making, site-specific artistic practices, community organizing and institution building.” La Fountain-Stokes, *Queer Ricans*, 139, 138.

2. Banes, “Breaking,” 14.
3. I borrow this wording from Juan Flores, who importantly emphasizes “the intensely overlapping and intermingling expressive repertoires” of Black and Puerto Rican cultures in New York City that were foundational to hip-hop’s formation. See Flores, *From Bomba to Hip-Hop*, 117.
4. This historically coincided with Operation Bootstrap, an economic shift and employment shortage in Puerto Rico, which led to the migration of a million people to the mainland between 1950 and 1965.
5. “Antonio Lopez at Art Center, 1983,” short 1984 film directed by Leslie Ann Smith, posted April 7, 2016, by ArtCenter College of Design, https://youtu.be/XT6HU1_HxNU (hereafter Smith, “Antonio Lopez at Art Center, 1983”).
6. Caranicas, *Antonio’s People*, 126.
7. Malanga and Foye, “Grace to Be Born.”
8. Malanga and Foye, “Grace to Be Born.”
9. “Antonio Lopez (1986)—The Videofashion Vault,” video interview with Lopez, last posted August 31, 2012, by Videofashion, https://youtu.be/uwq_zQQ2BgU.
10. O’Neill, “Antonio and Juan Stepping Out,” 57.
11. Bourhis, “Antonio,” 10.
12. James, “Juan Ramos.”
13. Cleveland, *Walking with the Muses*, 197.
14. See Ruiz, *Ricanness*.
15. See Muñoz, *Sense of Brown*.
16. Smith, “Antonio Lopez at Art Center, 1983.”
17. Amelia Malagamba-Ansótegui and Ramón Rivera-Servera, “Critical Desires: Race and Sexuality in the Work of Antonio,” n.d., archived March 4, 2016, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20160304045402/http://latino.si.edu/virtualgallery/antonio/bodyessay.htm>.
18. Jones, *I’ll Never Write My Memoirs*, 89.