

The Conscious *World* of Stáine Goya

WRITING

Winnie Phebus

ILLUSTRATIONS

DESIGNER

Thandiwe Tembo





There are very few words that best describe the style and designs of Stine Goya, those words being vibrant, colorful, feminine, and eye-catching. Based on Copenhagen, Denmark this eponymous hallmark of modern Scandinavian fashion was established in 2006 by Stine Goya, and debuted at Copenhagen Fashion Week in 2007. The designer Stine Goya Hertz graduated from Central St. Martins, where she was exposed to a wide variety of national influences and her long life full of travel and cultural experiences reflect in her work and has been involved in the fashion industry for longer than two decades. The brand releases four collections a year, Autumn/Winter, Pre-Spring, Spring/Summer and Pre-Fall.

Goya is masterful in her use of color, shape, and patterns. Majority of her designs feature simple shapes and cuts, and definitely have functionality

in mind. However one notable constant throughout her collections is the usage of bright, vibrant patterns - some pieces can even have anywhere from two to five patterns and colors contained within, or the same pattern broken up into many different shades and hues of colors. Some pieces are strikingly asymmetrical, featuring contrasting patterns or ends that hang at different angles. Her clothes evoke a sense of playfulness and femininity that can be found in the muted pastel suits and the contrasting animal print casual wear alike, yet are still subtle and toned enough for a work day or fashion show alike. Accompanying boots and footwear are colored in soft pastels or alternate animal prints, yet still are designed to be practical. Loungewear, as a category, is somewhat more somber and toned down than her other pieces, yet there are still a few bright exceptions. The spring / summer 21 collection follows Goya's general

pattern - the theme being joy and celebrating joy in the everyday moments of life. This is reflected in the first drop of styles, as the colors are light, pastel and joyous, and the contrasting patterns are similarly child-like yet not childish.

As a fashion brand, Stine Goya is very transparent about their sustainability measures and practices. Stine Goya is very passionate about being as sustainable as a fashion brand can reasonably be. The website features information on how to better protect the lifecycle of a garment, and also details the alternative materials used along with how to care for the garment. Most of the clothing designed is intended to be kept and used for a long time. Stine Goya is also very candid about the materials and fabrics that go into the clothing, and why those specific choices were made. Some changes reported by Stine Goya are specifically about component replacements, like how they have replaced viscose (a plant based material made from regenerated cellulose fibres from trees like pine, bamboo, and eucalyptus. After being



spun, viscose has great colour retention, and gives garments it is in a soft, smooth and breathable feel) with Lenzing Ecovero viscose. Stine Goya uses Lenzing Ecovero viscose because it is derived from certified wood sources using an environmentally friendly production process that generates up to 50% lower emissions and water impact when compared to regular viscose and is recognized by EU Ecolabel because it has a significantly lower environmental impact throughout its life cycle.

Stine Goya also uses Tencel, which is a fiber made from the natural cellulose found in wood pulp. Tencel is fully biodegradable and produced via an advanced spinning process that has minimal impact on the environment and economical use of water and energy. Stine Goya also uses organic cotton and recycled polyester, in comparison to the less environmentally friendly alternatives (of



which, non-organic cotton accounts for 24% of the world's insecticide use and 11% of pesticides, and the use of recycled polyester reduces the amount of waste going to landfills, produces less air pollution and decreases the demand for petroleum as a raw material). By just these production changes alone, Stine Goya shows that the goal of being sustainable is not simply a market gimmick but a conscious choice.

Stine Goya is notable not only for these sustainable choices, and for its place in the fashion industry producing clothing that is feminine, eye-catching, and bright.

The *Ink* of Our Skin

WRITING

Husein Esufally

MODELING

Nathan Castro

Husein Esufaly

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jordan Alves

DESIGNER

Thandiwe Tembo



“My body is my journal and my tattoos are my story” — Johnny Depp

A blank canvas may be appealing to some, but what if it is splashed with an array of paints, punctured at certain moments, and transformed beyond its static origin? The activity, texture, and authenticity of the artwork recount the story of its journey from a void object to an engaging subject. Similarly, the tattoos we bear journal our tales of growth. Everyone has an identity that colors them in a unique way, much like a blank canvas; our individuality is the central pillar that makes us extraordinary in our ability to accomplish the things that were once thought impossible. At a time where this prospect is being pushed to the forefront, why are distinct markers of our personal identity being scrutinised? Not only are our tattoos imbued with a deep personal notion, but their decoration on our body is an eternal reminder of a timeless message — a promise to yourself.

Perhaps there are more ‘sensible’ ways to better yourself. But just as how prayer is precious to some and redundant to others, the concept of a tattoo endures various points of view — is it an art form or the signature of the devil? Regardless, the power of the tattoo lies in its ability to communicate through a series of words, emblems, and colors. There is a certain attachment between a tattoo and its holder that is unspoken, but never forgotten. Similar to how religion runs on a faith-based system, tattoos connect with the idea of spirituality. Discovering your tattoo is an exciting time as you take a pilgrimage within yourself— searching for the energy to heal the wounds that have tormented you for too long, finally uncovering a visual that reminds you to awaken your will, harness your strength, and embrace your character. The making

of a meaningful tattoo demands that you be both insightful and creative, generating artwork that reflects your journey and will stand the test of time. As such, appropriating another culture’s tattoo not only disrespects the host community, but it highlights your lackadaisical approach to this style of art (If you do not have a link to Chinese culture, you do not need a tattoo of their language — odds are you will end up with a permanent misspelling, and butcher the culture in the process). As you age, so do your tattoos. Their meanings will be as rich in 80 years as they were the day you got inked; they become checkpoints of your growth and markers of your identity.

To this end, the significance of tattoos date back to the Neolithic Period. Despite being regarded as ‘scarification’ in modern times, tattoos were originally defined as ingraining pigments onto the body. Various tribes across the globe, such as those in the Tahitian and Polynesian islands, openly practised tattooing as a rite of passage for their members. The nature of the design would indicate the hierarchy within the community, distinguishing fresh recruits and wise elders alike. Notable historical figures, such as the late Winston Churchill and his mother, were known to bear tattoos as well. All these parties imbued their bodies with a marking that bore a personal significance.



However, an antithetical ideology began to circulate. As the classic tales dictate, evil spreads faster than virtue. To this end, the beauty of tattoos were overshadowed by vicious gossip which denounced the art form. This stigma against tattoos manifested for several reasons. For instance, Japan's Edo Period details the use of tattooing as an exclusive branding mechanism for criminals and prisoners; and during World War II, the Nazis carved numbers on bodies for bureaucratic record keeping. Furthermore, the prepotent force of the Protestant Ethic, with its values of the purity of the human body, began to build a narrative that criminalized tattoos. Catalyzed by the media, the spread of these practices constructed a powerful, misguided portrayal which equated tattooing to savagery and blasphemy. Moreover, the failure of the media to highlight its cultural value, and the vision of tattoo artists, cast a nefarious shadow over the concept of tattoos.

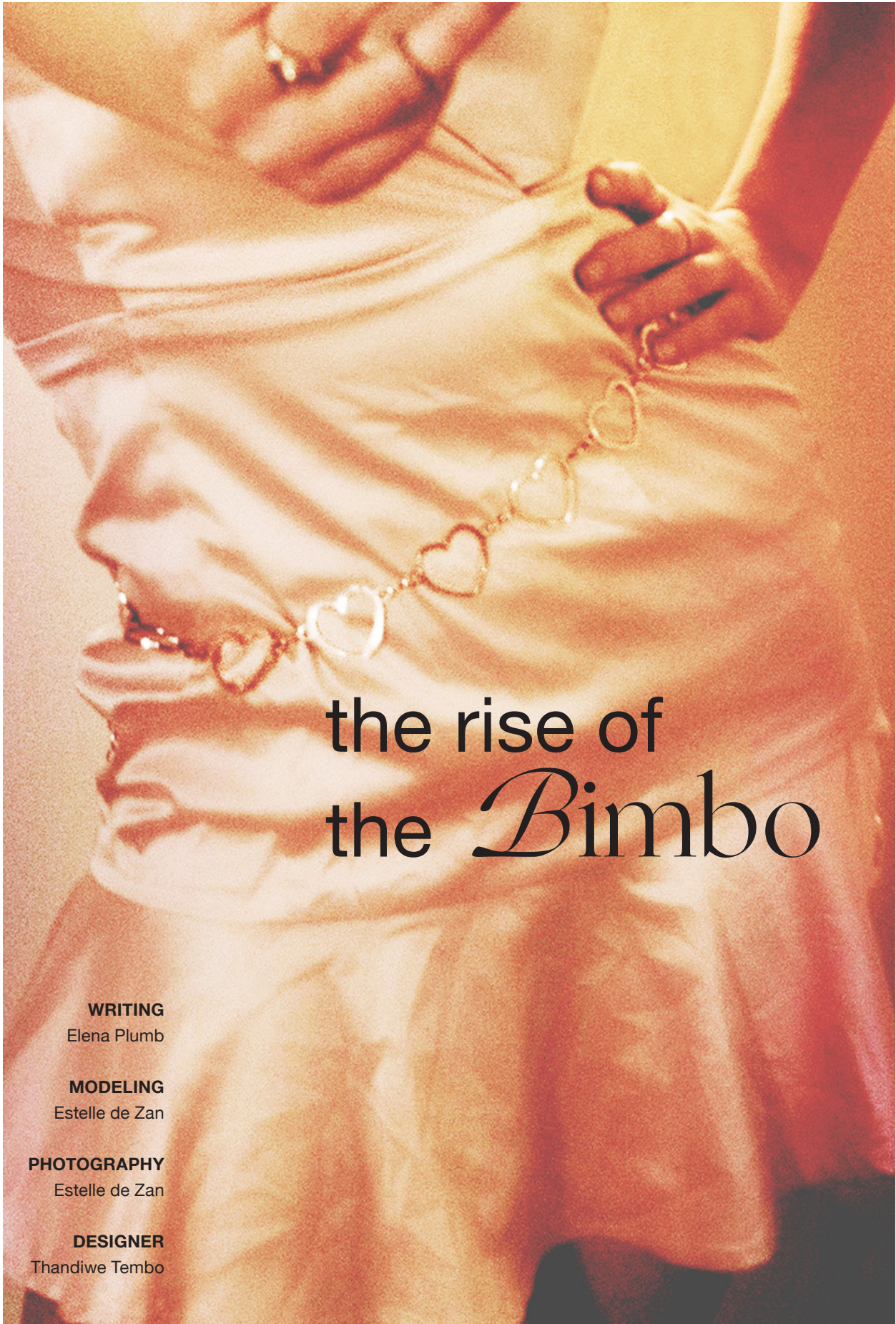
Unsurprisingly, the media respun their narrative of tattoos. Just as they rapidly condemned the tattoo, they began to celebrate it. As many popular, public figures adorn their own tattoos, paired with the rising activism and awareness of the tattoo artist community, the point of view of the media has shifted drastically. The art of tattoos is being revamped as a prominent form of self-expression, thereby gaining appreciation for its anecdotal nature. The latter heavily influenced my own tattoo journey. My philosophy for tattoos leans on two pillars: personal and minimalistic. It took me a couple of years to cultivate my insignia in order to ensure that my tattoo would resonate with me throughout my life. To this end, I now bear a tattoo which dates my coming out and is engraved on my inner, right bicep. Who could imagine those sacred three words were so difficult to say aloud! Consequently, my tattoo has become one of

the most treasured gifts I have given myself as it is a sacred oath to be brave, sensitive, and unapologetically myself. Anytime homophobia decides to creep under my skin, I glance at my arm and I am reminded of the vow I made.

If done right, tattoos can transform your body into a personalized art gallery that journals your life experiences. Originality stands at the frontier of creating art that both reflects your integrity and exhumes beauty, for the captivating nature of the tattoo is not the art alone, but its relationship to the bearer. In this regard, tattoos can become powerful tools of self-expression when considered carefully. You do not want to be simply fashionable, you want to be authentic. Tattoos are your own messages in a bottle: a love note to yourself, reminding you of your might and greatness when you need it the most. It may take time, but you owe it to yourself to engender a design that unfolds YOUR story. Only then will your body recite the tale your soul has written; only then will your ink transform from a simple decoration to a fragment of yourself; only then will you activate the beauty of your tattoos.

Tattoos can transform your body into a personalized art gallery that journals your life experiences





the rise of
the *Bimbo*

WRITING
Elena Plumb

MODELING
Estelle de Zan

PHOTOGRAPHY
Estelle de Zan

DESIGNER
Thandiwe Tembo

Everything men want *visually* whilst being everything they *hate*: self-aware, sexually empowered, politically conscious,...

TikTok creator Chrissy Chlapecka bats her false eyelashes, flips her bleached-blond hair, and stumbles over her stilettos as she twirls for the camera — a fitting introduction to “Glitter Island,” a niche corner of the popular video platform in which “the girls, gays, theys and non-binary babes,” as Chlapecka lovingly articulates, experiment with hyperfemininity.

Chlapecka guides her 2.5 million TikTok followers through a day in the life of a “bimbo” with a cutesy compilation reminiscent of Elle Woods’s Harvard video essay in *Legally Blonde*. “On Glitter Island, we learn how to count to five! One... uhhh,” she stammers, staring vacantly into space as the video cuts to the next clip. “We also learn how to read,” she continues. “‘A’ is for ‘Abolish the Police,’ and ‘B’ is for... ‘Bimbo!’”

Chlapecka is perhaps the most prominent figure fighting to reclaim the word “bimbo” on the platform. The historically misogynistic stereotype, which profiles attractive, traditionally feminine women as unintelligent, has been wielded as an insult for decades against the likes of Marilyn Monroe and Kim Kardashian. But today, the term has experienced a re-awakening — Gen-Z TikTok users now regard it as an aspiration rather than an insult. They’re leaning into everything the bimbo stereotype entails, from pink Juicy Couture sweatsuits to glittery makeup looks to an unabashed acceptance that math is, in fact, pretty hard.

Anyone who wishes to embrace their femininity and sexuality is welcome on the bimbos’ glittery island, regardless of gender expression — Chlapecka address her audience as “bimbos, thembos, himbos, bimboys, or any ‘bo’ you wanna be” in a “get ready with me” video on her profile. But who isn’t invited? The straight, cisgender man.

The bimbo performance involves a breathy voice, poor enunciation, a consistent deer-in-the-headlights expression, and an air of blissful ignorance. However, by playing into every facet of the stereotype, these TikTok creators gain the power to subvert it.

With a high-pitched voice, bouncy gait, and exaggerated smile on her face, creator @Bamlarotten teeters into the frame. As she runs her impeccably-manicured fingernails through her blonde wig, she offers an enlightening perspective on the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

“We spent the last four years pretending that these people were just ‘ignorant hicks’ who didn’t know any better — we literally hold the entire wealth of human information in our hands right now. So they do know better, and they’ve known better this entire time,” she said. “In 2021, I am begging everyone to stop infantilizing racist white people and hold them accountable like you should.”

Visually, she adheres to the bimbo aesthetic, almost inviting viewers to make assumptions about her intellectual capabilities based on her



appearance. At the same time, she challenges these assumptions with insightful commentary on our society's inclination to justify racist behavior. She thus creates a disconnect between the viewer's expectations and their actual experience, which weakens the long-accepted stereotype that feminine women are vapid, uneducated, and not to be taken seriously.

To TikTok creator @BimboKate, this is the very crux of the bimbo movement — triggering a sort of cognitive dissonance within the straight male viewer. She told Rolling Stone that the bimbo performance enables her to become “everything men want visually whilst being everything they hate: self-aware, sexually empowered, politically conscious, etc.”

While some creators might find this strategy to be empowering, critics have found reason to pause. In a recent video, Youtuber Jordan Theresa fairly points out that the heavy make-up and revealing clothing often associated with the bimbo aesthetic are ultimately “living up to straight men's sexual preferences.” Can a performance that panders to the male gaze really be considered feminist? Are these creators truly rebelling against patriarchal oppression if they are fulfilling cisgender, heterosexual male fantasies?

@Bamlarotten dismisses this critique in one of her TikTok videos. “Can we talk about how heterosexist it is to assume that feminine-presenting people, especially hyper-feminine people, are doing it for the sake of and the attention of men?” she asked. “There's nothing feminist about demanding a certain form of gender presentation in order for marginalized people to ascertain validity in your eyes.”

@FauxRich, another one of the platform's more visible bimbos, echoes this sentiment. “Just because hyperfemininity is tied to the male gaze doesn't mean that's why women are doing it,” she said in a video. “Hyperfeminine women have been made fun of and literally demonized in traditional media and in person. Being a bimbo is so empowering to some people because they feel as though they had to hide their femininity to be taken seriously.”

“Bimbo TikTok” is not the first pop culture phenomenon to examine how society regards femininity — the ever-iconic film *Legally Blonde* challenged the bimbo stereotype back in 2001. Elle Woods, a peppy sorority girl with an affinity for the color pink and a valley-girl dialect, is repeatedly underestimated by her peers at Harvard Law, despite having fairly earned her spot at the institution. On the other hand, when Vivienne Kensington dresses in pantsuits and muted colors, her peers perceive her as intelligent and serious. Both women possess the intellectual capacity to succeed in law school, but the woman who abandons her femininity will always be taken more seriously in an academic setting.

Society's mold for intelligence is sculpted to favor masculinity, so much so that 65% of women reported workplace discrimination and 40% reported a struggle to be taken seriously by company leadership in a Hired.com study. Feminine individuals, including women, LGBTQ+ men, and non-binary individuals, should not have to "prove themselves" or erase facets of their identity in order to be taken seriously. Femininity is rarely associated with intellect, therefore unlearning these implicit biases will take time — which makes the mission of "Bimbo TikTok" that much more important. We must continue to challenge such ideals and challenge the way that we as a society measure intelligence and perceive femininity.

Further, this feminist crusade must be intersectional in nature. Even with BIPOC bimbos like @FauxRich and @Bamlarotten asserting that the bimbo lifestyle is "not a white aesthetic" in their videos, it's natural for women of color to feel excluded from the trend — after all, the mainstream media's bimbo archetype has historically been white, blonde, and thin. Chlapecka, the epitome of the media's archetypal bimbo, boasts 2.5 million followers, compared to @Bamlarotten and @FauxRich's 100,000. As enjoyable as her content may be, her white privilege has undoubtedly contributed to her ascension.

We must continue to challenge such ideals and challenge the way that we as a society measure intelligence and perceive femininity.

Despite its critiques and shortcomings, the intentions behind "Bimbo TikTok" remain clear: wearing pink and engaging in an educated debate about politics should not be mutually exclusive events, and embracing femininity should never lead to one's categorization under an outdated, misogynistic stereotype. As the movement to reclaim the term "bimbo" gains traction on TikTok, hopefully creators will continue encouraging people of all shapes, sizes, colors, and backgrounds to follow Chlapecka's key advice: "finesse the capitalist society, finesse the misogynistic man, and wear cute clothes while doing it babe!"

