



Flasses - the new cool

What do you immediately envision when you hear the word hipster?

Well, for many Torontonians, it plays along the lines of fashion-conscious 20 to 30 year-olds who hang around the hipster circuit streets of Queen Street West, Dundas West and Ossington. They drink Pabst Blue Ribbon, smoke Parliament cigarettes and sport various numbers of cliché stylistic trademarks: unflattering printed wool sweaters from dad's closet; thick, dark beards from the Paleolithic period; greasy side combover like John Travolta in Grease; and of course they love rocking big bold "flasses"- or should I say, fake glasses?

I mean, what's the deal with hipsters and glasses anyway? What's the point in sporting them with 20-20 vision?

Jeffery Fernandes is a 36-year-old optician and operations manager at Spectacle on Queen Street West. He works with hipster-esque clients and said they buy glasses but order fake "anti-reflective, UV-coating lenses so they look more like real glasses." While replacing a client's broken left temple from their Italian made DITA frame, Fernandes also added with a chuckle that he sees "many hipsters swing by the store with no lenses in their frames at all and they act all nonchalant about it."

Bizarre indeed, but in all fairness, hipsters are known to extensively aim to stand out in a crowd with their left-wing persona.

The reality of a hipster is that their "I don't care" attitude is extremely, carefully constructed. Ignoring the ordinary craze of consumerism, hipsters refuse to associate

themselves with generic consumption and prefer to show their independence and rebellious side by making choices that deliberately reflect their desire to openly make statements.

"Part of the hipster fashion style is looking like you don't care what you look like," said 22-year-old, Nuelie America who considers herself a downtown hipster.

"So throwing on a fake pair of oversized geeky glasses is kind of like, 'I don't care what I look like and that's cool.' Being cool is not caring to be cool."

Tanja Souza, a frame stylist at Spectacle said wearing glasses is ideal in the hipster lifestyle because they feel glasses set them apart from the crowd. "Those who want to set the trends will find a way to stand out and glasses were a way of them to do that," she said.

Darren Pelcz is a slim, 6'4" curly haired, energetic, semi-hipster optician who sports a dark chunky Cutler and Gross frame and also a resident of the Queen Street West area. He is familiar with the hipster lifestyle. He describes his best friend as "One of Toronto's biggest hipsters you'll ever come across and he goes by the name of Cheeseman".

Whether they are real or fake glasses, Pelcz says it's one way to "express yourself and be cool in a really individualized way."

Christina Cheng wears a unique pair of frames everyday and wakes up with natural lioness hair, which can be a hassle when checking blindspots. For more on flasses, visit ejectmagazine.com.

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Crafting an identity

"No, No, No!" my mother used to say as she took the fabric paint away from my hand.

Banned from her arts and crafts bin as an unruly seven year old, I continued to rummage and grab as many fabric paints as I could. I used to embellish colourful hearts and flowers all over my wardrobe - getting more paint on the floor and walls than anywhere else.

She would storm my room with boxes of Arm and Hammer, and swear under her breath as she scrubbed the myriad of paint stains off the floor.

Years later, she blames me for her current back problems. Yet, as a mother, she understood my creativity was more important than the pristine nature of my clothing.

Even though I was grounded every weekend, she knew art carved my identity - made me stand out.

Crafts and identity go back thousands of years to the history of aboriginal art in Canada. Handmade practical products, such as pottery, blankets, and tools were an integral part of who they were.

Fast forward to today, practicality is set aside to make way for creativity.

Pantry Press owners Christian Morrison and Julie Gibb take pride in identifying themselves with their paper press creations. They've been making letterpress stationary for nearly 20 years.

"We put in all our heart and soul, which is evident in our products," Morrison said, as we sat in the middle of their workplace - a quaint, yet comfortable shed that resides in the backyard of their Toronto home.

In the cozy space - letterpress machines, paints and tools are the first objects you see. Turn to the right and a small office where they organize their business is neatly put together with past stationary and posters plastered over their walls.

"[Julie and I] had a busy practice designing books for museums and art galleries called Greenstreet Design," Morrison mentioned, reminiscing their humble beginnings.

Pantry Press branded themselves after purchasing and installing their first letterpress in their pantry, a Vandercook SP-15. They bought this machine in 1993 for \$300.

In 1995, their daughter Annie, who recently got married, presented them with two books. She knew these books were letterpress and thought her parents would really like them.

"It was really sweet and we went through the books together," Morrison said.

Morrison noticed something in one book "Dick Ennis The Village Schoolboy." It was printed by Morrison and Gibb - strangely, publishers with the same name in Edinburgh. A sign, Morrison admits that him and Gibb were destined to letterpress.

"We design everything...the making of things is the greater part, there's a lot of labour and handwork in every piece of paper," Gibb admits. "If we counted how many times we've touched the piece of paper before it's in the clients' hands, sometimes it's 20 times before they've touched it."

Jessica Moy can ride a unicycle. For more on crafting an identity, visit ejectmagazine.com.

Graffiti of expansion

In an interview with CanadaOne.com's Julie King, Angel Carrillo, also known as "Cruz1," is a popular graffiti artist in Toronto. He once said:

"[Graffiti] was a way for me to just get away from the traditional gang scene... I just didn't want to do anymore gang activities or be related to it or have anything in common with that lifestyle, and [graffiti] is a very creative outlet and it's just something that I like.

"I ain't no preacher but do what you need to do... If visually, graffiti stimulates you, then explore it but don't be lazy. Go out and educate yourself," Cruz1 added.

"Going to OCAD and George Brown was just something I needed to do for myself; just to say I could do it," Cruz1 said.

Graffiti vandalism versus graffiti art has been an ongoing battle in addressing a comprehensive plan to determine the two, but progression has been made.

According to the City of Toronto's Graffiti By-law, which was adopted in February of 2006, it prohibits graffiti, which is defined as: "one or more letters, symbols, figures, etchings, scratches, inscriptions, stains or other markings that disfigure or deface a structure or thing, howsoever made or otherwise affixed on the structure of a thing, but, for greater certainty, does not include an art mural."

Christina Cheng can perform the running-man. For more on graffiti, visit ejectmagazine.com.

