

playback

Your guide to the raw, real,
and revolutionary talent redefining
Melbourne's culture.

Arkie Ryan
Charles Hoppe
Lucy Smethurst
Tom Bowman
& more



august 2025

VOLUME 1





lucy



charles



tom



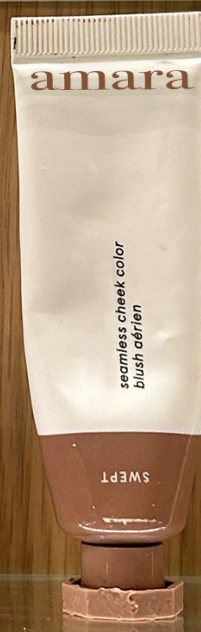
arkie

About Us

Playback magazine is intended to celebrate and represent Melbourne's creative scenes, with a particular focus on music, fashion, and design. It aims to reflect the interests and voices of individuals engaged in these fields, while also showcasing both emerging and established talent across the city. This magazine aims to be a space where creatives from all backgrounds and experience levels can share their stories, creative processes, and inspire others. By doing so, the magazine functions not only as a celebration of creativity but also as a platform for discovery—where readers and industry professionals can connect with Melbourne-based talent. Playback explores how various media forms—written, visual, and digital—can work together to build communities and foster a sense of shared identity. Playback is more than just a collection of content; it serves as a curated space where creativity is both appreciated and amplified. A strong emphasis is placed on local stories, with each feature showcasing how Melbourne's creatives shape the city's unique cultural identity. These stories highlight originality, skill, and personal expression, all of which are central to the city's creative landscape.

AMARA

all she wants all she needs



content

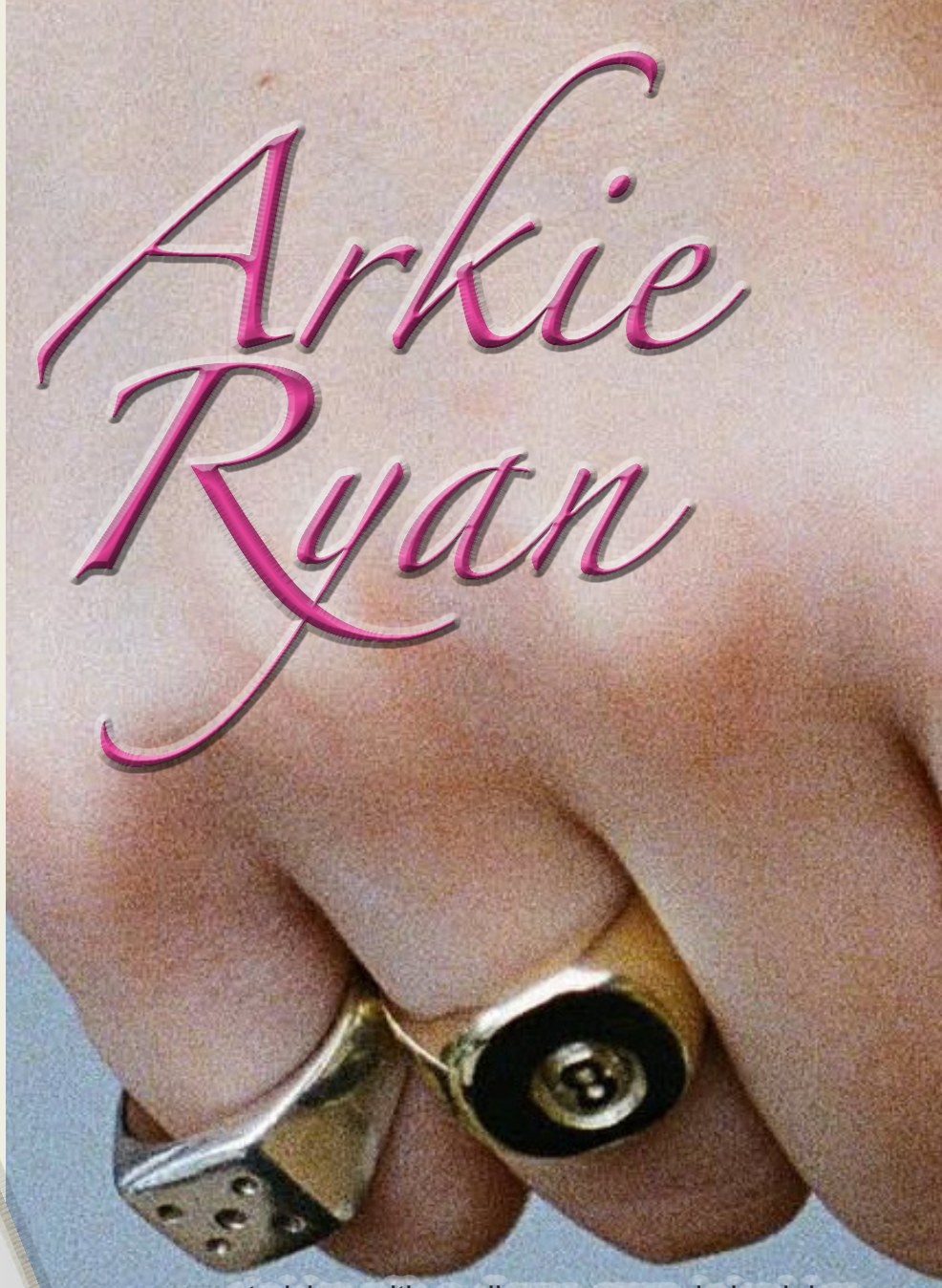
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arkie ryan's creative process when creating her jewellery starts with a shape, a stone, or just an idea. from there, it's all about experimentation. "you have to try things," she says, "even if you're scared." her work is tactile, intuitive—more about feeling than formula. inspiration can be tricky. arkie admits it's easy to get stuck making what everyone else is making. "you see what's online, and it's hard not to copy," she says. changing styles feels risky, especially when you're surrounded by other artists. but she's learned to push past that fear. "if you don't like something, try something else," she says simply.

Arkie Ryan



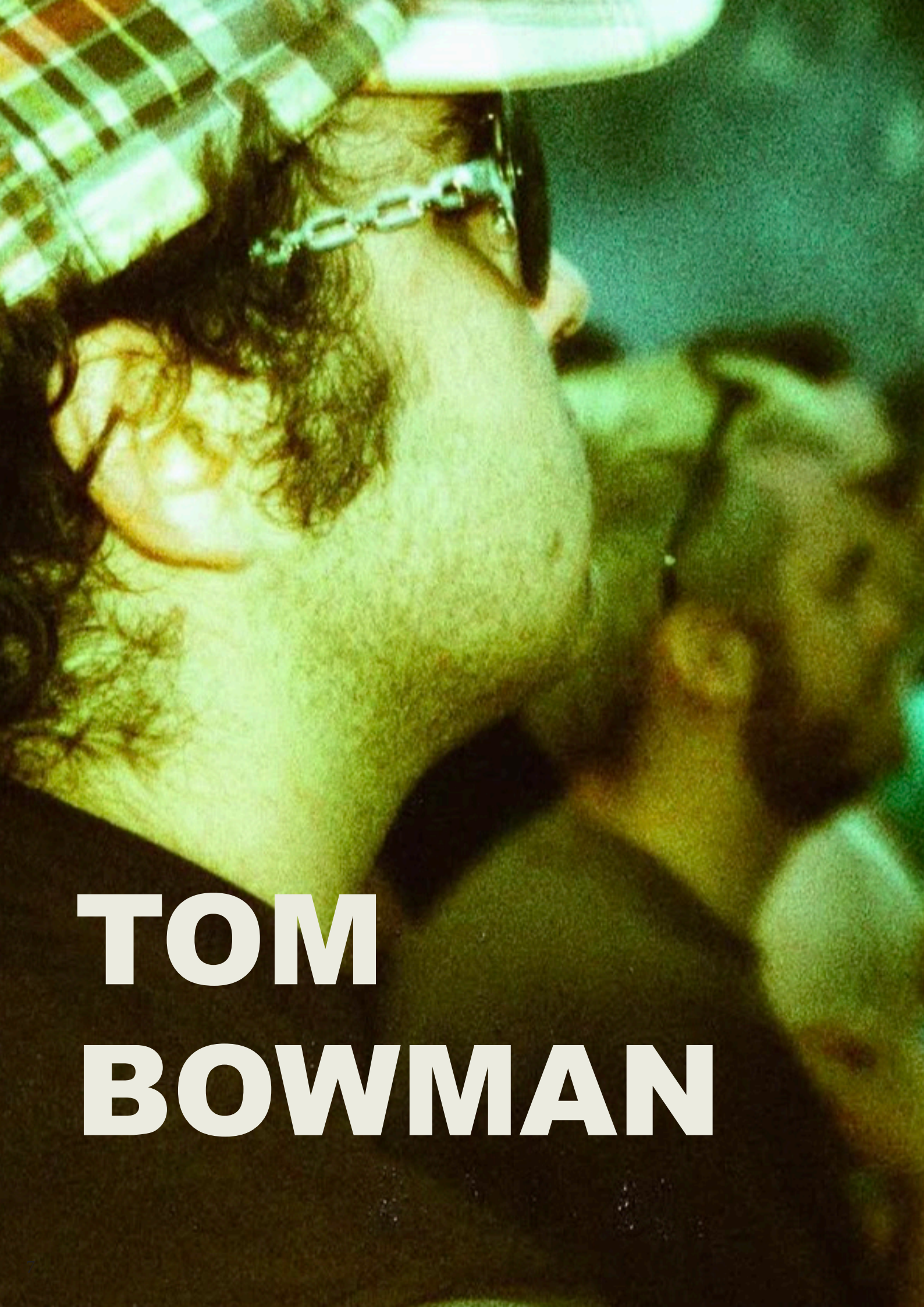
studying with a diverse group helped her grow. she learned how different people approach their craft—where they begin, and how they return to it. that openness to learning has shaped her journey, especially as she's stepped into the business side of jewellery. exhibitions, collaborations, even travelling shows—each experience taught her something new. "there's so much you don't know," she says, "until you do." one of her proudest moments? making a ring for skinonskin, a musician she admired. "i wanted to say thanks for the music," she says. she made her way into the VIP section, showed the piece, and made it happen. "i was so scared," she laughs, "but it was worth it."



the ring ended up in stores, and the experience helped her understand how explosive creativity can be when paired with courage.

arkie's style is ever-evolving. she knows she won't be "on" all the time, and that's okay. "you're so young," she says, "it's easy to feel like you have to have it all figured out." but she's learning to take breaks, trust her instincts, and keep shaping things—one stone, one idea, one risk at a time.





**TOM
BOWMAN**

tom bowman, a melbourne-based musician, speaks on the emotional side of songwriting. for him, writing is the heart of music—his favourite part of the process. it's not planned or polished at first; it's based on impulse, on moments that hit. "you write something in hopes of it being better," he says, describing the way inspiration flows from intake to output. melbourne's creative scene plays a big role in that intake. tom talks about how being surrounded by people doing new things gives him drive. "interactions, talking to others, seeing what they're doing—it gives you another push," he says. being immersed in the scene makes it easier to stay inspired. when it comes to originality, tom doesn't believe in it. he references classical music, saying "nothing that they haven't done." instead, he believes in adaptation and refinement. "everything is stolen," he says, "and the best artists know how to steal it the right way." fear of failure is something he's had to work through. he admits that making something bad used to feel like proof he wasn't good enough. now, he sees it differently.



one of his favourite songs came from a single chord he played on the piano two years ago. "it caught my attention," he says, "and the whole song came from that." outside of music, tom talks about the importance of putting yourself out there. he reflects on how talking to people at shows, supporting each other, and sharing work—even when it feels vulnerable—is part of the process. "there's embarrassment in being sincere," he says, "but you have to keep on keeping."

writing, for tom, is personal. it's expression. and while no one can hear what's in your head, the act of creating is still worth it. he believes in practice, in process, and in the idea that effort builds skill. "ten thousand hours," he says, "that's the goal."





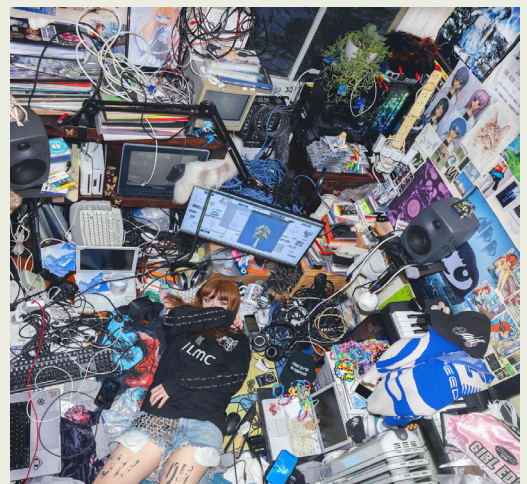
On her third album, singer-songwriter and producer Gordi - aka Sophie Payten - reflects on the last few transformative years of her life. From coming out and having to adjust the vision of her future, to working as a doctor on the frontline during the pandemic, Gordi explores the beauty, heartbreak and finite nature of human experience across 12 new songs.

Who's the Clown? marks a thrilling debut from one of pop's sharpest up-and-coming stars, Audrey Hobart, filled with synth-heavy bangers, heartbreaking glossy hooks, and introspective, revealing acoustic gems about desire and moving on.



The Beths singer-songwriter Liz Stokes is known for pairing deeply personal, anxiety-fuelled lyrics with punchy, upbeat, indie rock melodies. It's earned her the attention of former US president Barack Obama and propelled her to everything from NPR's Tiny Desk to Coachella's noticeably larger stage.

Like Charli XCX's culture-choking album, Australian DJ and producer Nina Wilson's long-gestating debut album is an instant classic that rewires nostalgia into a deliriously fun, addictive, innovative rush of rave-ready electro-pop. But it's also secretly a tender tribute to her teenage inspirations and aspirations.





THE SOUND TRACK OF AUGUST

Lucy

Smethurst

lucy smethurst, a rising stylist and producer, speaks on the technical side of her work. studying fashion merchandising and sustainability at uni, one of her main focuses is sustainability in fashion, inspired by one of her lecturers, who came from a strategic background, with an interest in environmental fashion.



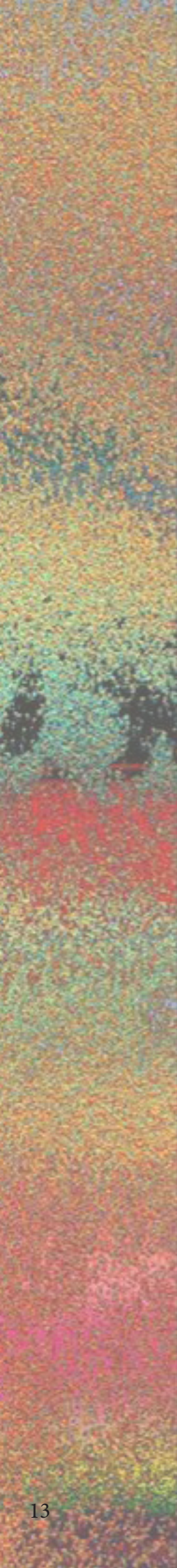
within her own routine. although lucy is now fully immersed into the collaborative space, this wasn't always the case; speaking on troubles with confidence shaped a perspective on how other creatives are more likely to be hired "people are more likely to get jobs based on their personality, will, and pride in their abilities".

throughout our conversation, lucy's priority of collaboration became clear, noting how this helped open up "multispecies perspectives", and how collaborators focus, whether holistic, community, environmental, or people based; turns into "habit"

when talking about lucy's creative process, she describes it in seven major steps; first she dissects the brief given to her by said company she is working for, (one of the most notable which was working at the head of suprè), and then uses this to create mood boards, once the board is approved she styles a rack of clothing, creates timelines, and produces photoshoots; an integral part of this process includes the making of spreadsheets, a "not



when asked if she holds any advice for putting yourself out there, she talks about the importance of overcoming shame in showcasing your work, and how our generation of "cringe" and "embarrassment in trying your hardest" makes it difficult to gain the mental ability to immerse yourself; however, lucy also notes the value in creating for yourself-to not "create for the sole purpose of showing the world" in this "digital age". ending the interview with the notable advice aimed at young people of "studying sociology", she says to "read books, and go to galleries".



NOW HIRING

GOLDEN HOUR COFFEE

Location: Melbourne, VIC (Hybrid or Remote)

Employment Type: Contract/Freelance

Pay: Negotiable – Paid in both cash and unlimited coffee.

About Us

We're Golden Hour Coffee – a soon-to-open boutique coffee shop that's all about good beans, warm vibes, and the perfect balance between minimalist style and neighbourhood charm. Our goal? To be the place you think of first when you want caffeine, comfort, and conversation.

The Role

We're looking for a creative, detail-oriented Graphic Designer to help us develop our visual identity from scratch. You'll be the brain (and pen) behind our logo, colour palette, typography, and brand aesthetic across everything from our coffee cups to Instagram feed.

How to Apply

Send your portfolio and a quick blurb about why you'd be the perfect designer for our brand to: hello@golden-hourcoffee.com.au.

THE VELVET ROOM

Now Hiring: Musician for Live Gigs

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Type: Casual/Per-Gig Basis

Pay: Cash per set + free drinks + eternal gratitude

About Us

We're The Velvet Room, a new live music space bringing the best local talent to the stage every weekend. We've got the lights, the crowd, and the cocktails — now we just need the soundtrack.

The Role

A regular spot if you nail it.

Free drinks and maybe a cheeky meal.

How to Apply

Send us a short bio, links to your music (Spotify, SoundCloud, YouTube, etc.), and a live performance clip to gigs@thevelvetroom.com.au.

We'll be booking fast — the stage is waiting.

MIDNIGHT ARCADE

Position: Stylist – Fashion & Brand Campaigns

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Type: Contract/Freelance

Pay: payroll

About Us

Midnight Arcade is a contemporary fashion and lifestyle brand, recognised for its fusion of streetwear influences and timeless, tailored details. We partner with artists, musicians, and cultural collaborators to produce campaigns and collections that resonate with a diverse, style-conscious audience.

The Role

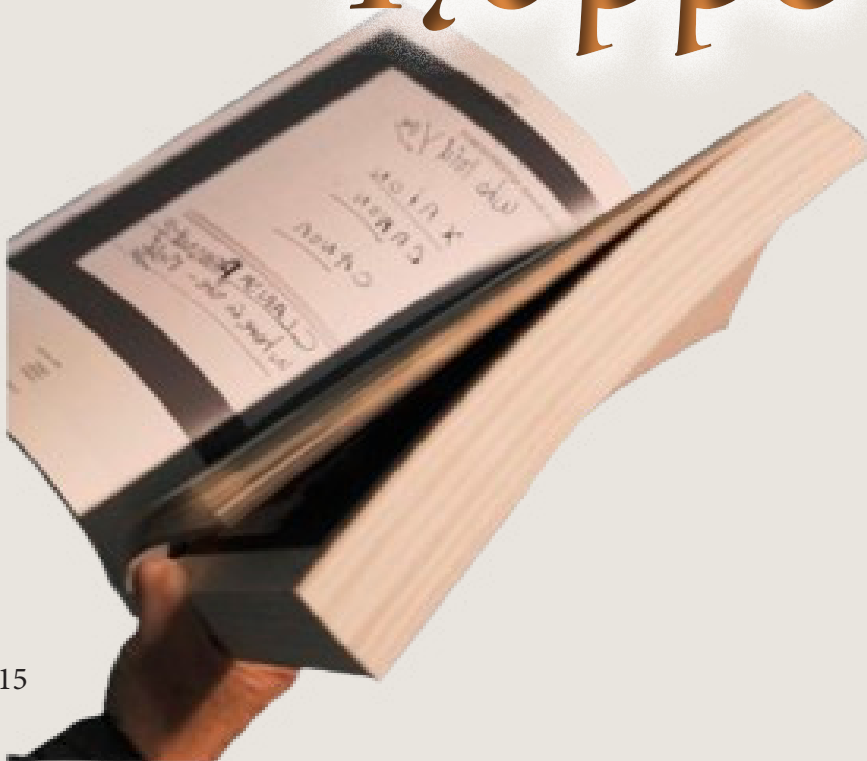
We are seeking an experienced and innovative Stylist to support our upcoming seasonal campaigns, brand activations, and collaborative projects. The ideal candidate will demonstrate a keen understanding of brand positioning, visual storytelling, and current fashion trends, while maintaining a refined, cohesive aesthetic aligned with our identity.

Application Process

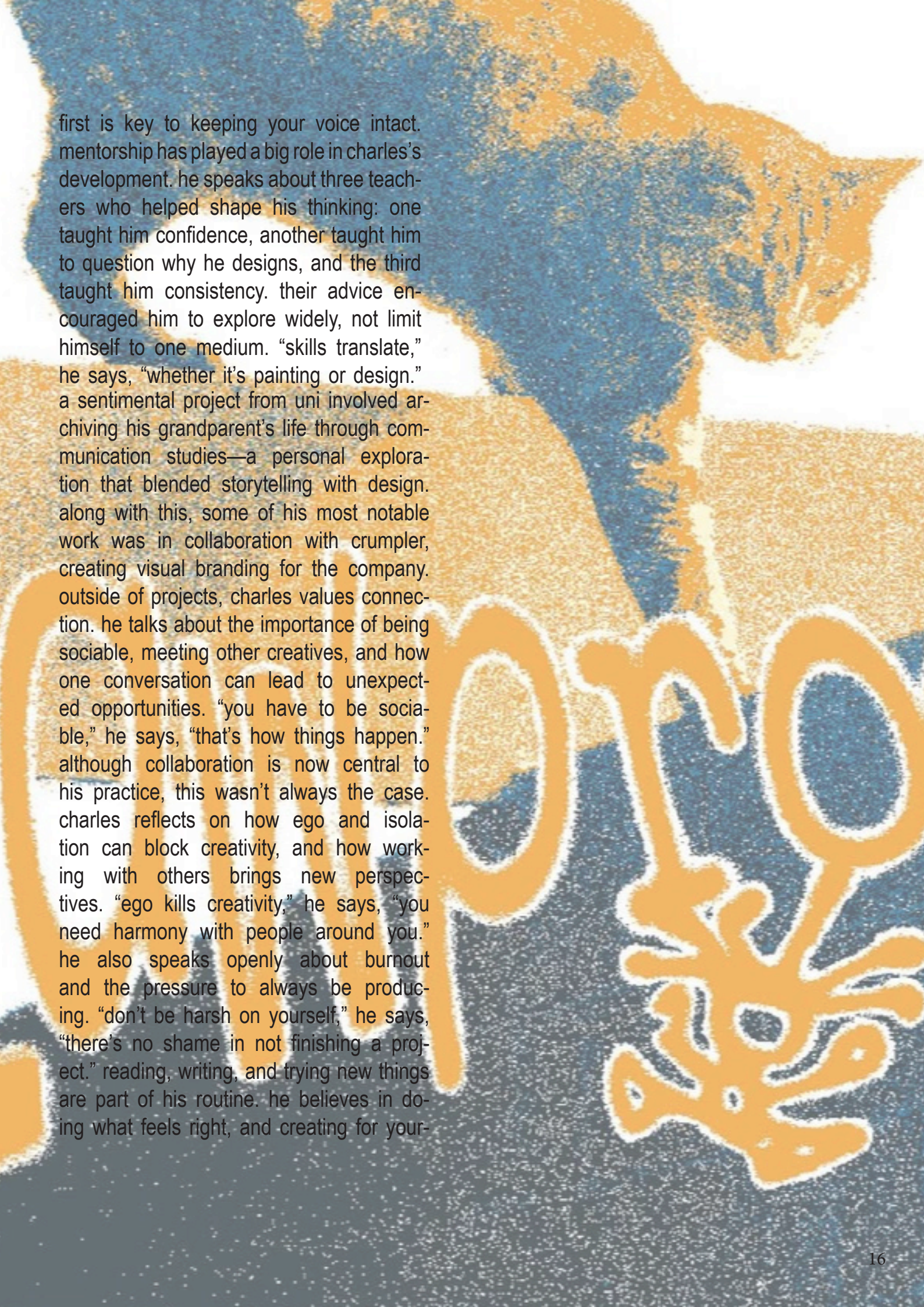
Interested candidates are invited to submit their portfolio, CV, and a brief cover letter outlining their approach to brand styling to: careers@midnightarcade.com.



Charles Hoppe



charles hoppe, a young designer, speaks on the non-linear nature of his creative process. studying design at uni, he describes his workflow as “sporadic”—sometimes starting with research, other times with visuals, depending on the project. one of his main priorities is building a strong foundation, often through real-world observation rather than online inspiration. “i try not to look at the internet too much,” he says, “it creates tunnel vision.” instead, he finds ideas in buildings, iconography, and street corners. when talking about trends, charles is cautious. he avoids designing for what’s popular, aiming instead for timelessness. this mindset also shapes how he approaches client work—believing that designing for yourself



first is key to keeping your voice intact. mentorship has played a big role in charles's development. he speaks about three teachers who helped shape his thinking: one taught him confidence, another taught him to question why he designs, and the third taught him consistency. their advice encouraged him to explore widely, not limit himself to one medium. "skills translate," he says, "whether it's painting or design." a sentimental project from uni involved archiving his grandparent's life through communication studies—a personal exploration that blended storytelling with design. along with this, some of his most notable work was in collaboration with crumpler, creating visual branding for the company. outside of projects, charles values connection. he talks about the importance of being sociable, meeting other creatives, and how one conversation can lead to unexpected opportunities. "you have to be sociable," he says, "that's how things happen." although collaboration is now central to his practice, this wasn't always the case. charles reflects on how ego and isolation can block creativity, and how working with others brings new perspectives. "ego kills creativity," he says, "you need harmony with people around you." he also speaks openly about burnout and the pressure to always be producing. "don't be harsh on yourself," he says, "there's no shame in not finishing a project." reading, writing, and trying new things are part of his routine. he believes in doing what feels right, and creating for your-

FIVE IN THE BOURNE.

The Forum Theatre. Saturday, 12th October 2025. Doors Open 7:00 PM / Show Starts 8:00 PM

08/09/2025
cherry vinyl



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