

# *L'Amour Fou*

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LOGAN LEVITT



# A Note From the Director

When I learned the term “L’Amour Fou” in a Surrealism art history class, I immediately felt as though a well of emotions and experiences had been bound into one term. The following moments were a visceral sensation of a visual story unwinding; I was nowhere near a filmmaker at that time, but knew that this was a film that needed to be created. Coined by Andre Breton, “L’Amour Fou” translates into “Mad Love” and describes an impassioned, all-consuming romantic obsession. I recognized it as a shared secret experience amongst young woman, but was frustrated to only see it represented as literal madness instead of the complex range of emotions that it carries. While exploring the female gaze through “L’Amour Fou”, I wanted to subvert the societal pairing of “the older man and younger woman” trope, and the paradox it holds. Young women are often “paired” with older men, but are rarely seen actively wanting it, removing all of their agency, and yet in the case she does desire this, she’s reprimanded, and her inclination is either seen as freudian or exploitative. By subverting this through the young women’s lens, and showing the complexities of romantic obsession, it creates a narrative that feels universal amongst young women, yet is taboo, and thus needs to be told.

Thank you Hannah Stowe for pouring in hours and hours into reveiwing the script with me, and for always being my go-to set of eyes. Thank you Ollie Miccio for being my right hand person on set, my voice of reason and inspiring companion. Thank you Ronnie Side for putting your entire life into this edit (we grew so much from the beginning to the end), for being my point person for so many production questions, and for always easing my anxieties/ being my rock. Thank you Grant Yaun for your infectious energy and for bringing your immense talents to this film, you brought the scenes alive. Thank you Korissa Frooman for being my Cleo! You gave me all of your time, your heart, your warmth and your extreme generosity. Thank you Thea Hurwitz, your warmth, humor and kindness, you rounded out this film. You both brought these character to life, and realized this vison for me, and I will always be indebted to you.

*Mad Love,  
Obsessive Passion*



# L'Amour Fou

A Film by Logan Levitt

STARRING KORISSA FROOMAN WITH THEA HURWITZ

PRODUCED BY OLYMPIA MICCIO PRODUCED BY RONNIE SIDE PRODUCED BY HANNAH STOWE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LOGAN LEVITT  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY GRANT YAUN EDITED BY RONNIE SIDE COSTUME DESIGNER LOGAN LEVITT MUSIC FROM GEORGE GERSHWIN

## The Story

In the throes of a deep infatuation with an older actor, 19 year old Cleo firmly believes that fate has tied them together. She searches for him in New York, going to his favorite places, reading his favorite books, only to realize she doesn't want to meet him like this. Hauntingly, he begins appearing in pieces everywhere, but she wants confirmation, a sign that they'll meet when she's older, out of this obsession. The film ends with her sitting on the subway, looking through the window at a passing train, eyes catching sight of something, or someone.



*It's so random. It must mean something, right?*



*Even though I don't actually know him, I feel like I know him better than most people.  
It's not a celebrity crush.*



*I thought I saw him everywhere. Around street corners, in the park, in store windows.*

*It felt like we were the only two people in New York, like we were playing a game of cat and mouse--and maybe, he was looking for me too.*



*In interviews, he mentioned books that changed his life.*

*I read them all, looking for him as I flipped each page.*



*He said his perfect Saturday was spent in the park with coffee and a croissant.  
He didn't specify which park, so I tried a few.*

*He wasn't wrong, it is a nice way to spend a Saturday.*



*I heard he was a smoker, so I thought I at least had to try.*

*It wasn't for me.*



*If he mentioned restaurants or cafes he liked, I would go.  
All to get a sense of his world.*



*He became an imaginary friend of sorts. I never felt alone...he was always there.*





*I began thinking that maybe a glance would be enough, that it could be confirmation for the future. Just a glance could tell me that my intuition was right.*



L'Amour Fou

# L'Amour Fou: The Major Themes

## Surrealist Roots

L'Amour Fou is a term coined by Andre Breton, describing the consuming affairs of the 1920's Parisian Surrealist scene. Many themes of Surrealism are integral to the story of L'Amour Fou, such as the romanticization of life and the "magic" of cities such as New York and Paris, that shape the core of Cleo's ideologies. Through these ideals she's able to enter the dream-like Surrealist world of romantic obsession where themes of chance-encounter, sexual awakening and fate are central, such as Breton writes about in L'Amour Fou, The Magnetic Fields and Nadja.

## The Female Gaze

After learning the term L'Amour Fou, I was struck by the feeling that the feminine experience is so linked to these intense emotions, but I couldn't think of stories that told that fully, without judgments or treating the female protagonist as "crazed". The female gaze is nuanced, in the story this protagonist is often left viewing herself through her own perceived gaze, along with actively looking for the male love interest of the story. Even though we never see him in the film, we are in the seat of the feminine sensual gaze, as the seeker not the one being sought.

## On the Age Gap

While exploring the female gaze through "L'Amour Fou", I wanted to subvert the societal pairing of "the older man and younger woman" trope, and the paradox it holds. Young women are often "paired" with older men, but are rarely seen actively wanting it, removing all of their agency, and yet in the case she does desire this, she's reprimanded, and her inclination is either seen as Freudian or exploitative. By subverting this through the young women's lens, and showing the complexities of romantic obsession, it creates a narrative that feels universal amongst young women, yet is taboo, and thus needs to be told.

# Cleo's Closet

## Colors:

White- Purity, Innocence

Red- Power, Sensuality, Power

## References:

Cableknit - Age, Masculinity

Sweatervests- Youth / Age

Striped Shirt - Creative Control

Bloomers- Childhood

Pintuck Bib / Dickie- Masculinity

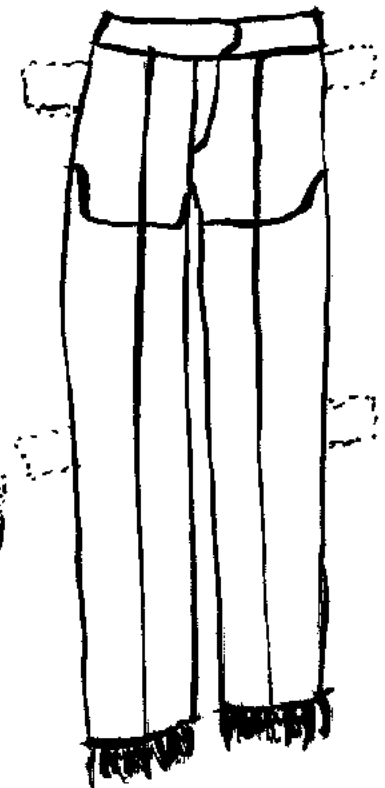
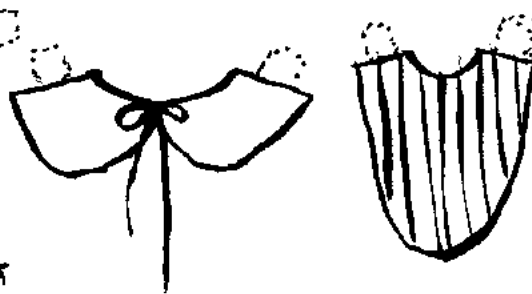
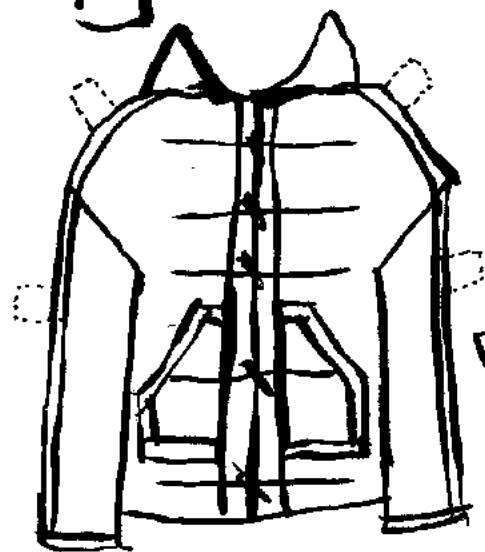
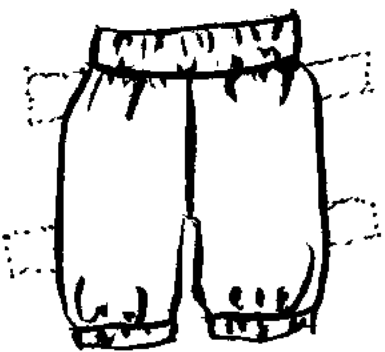
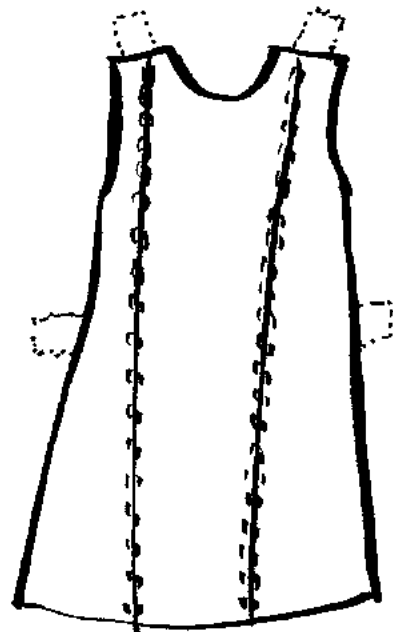
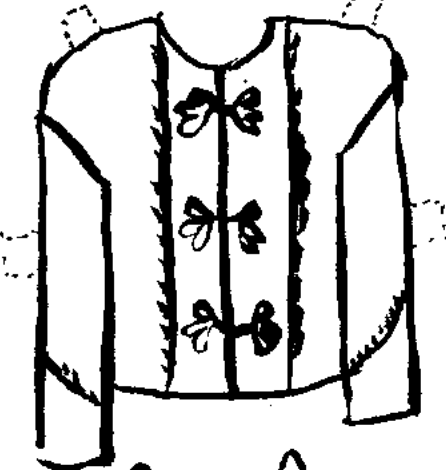
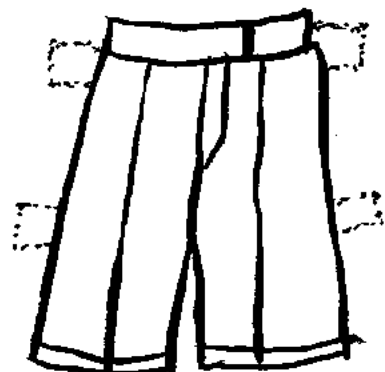
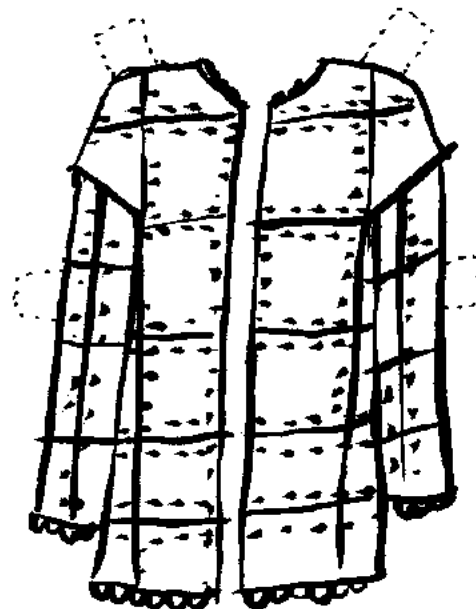
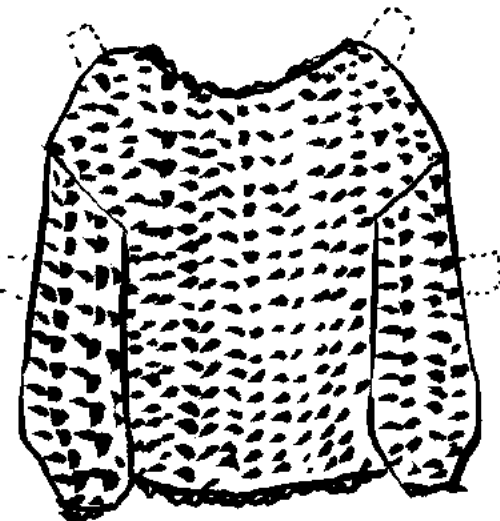
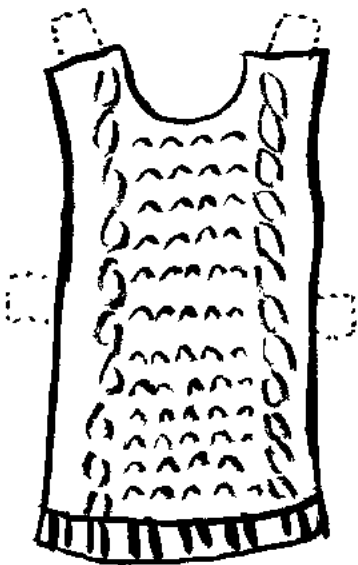
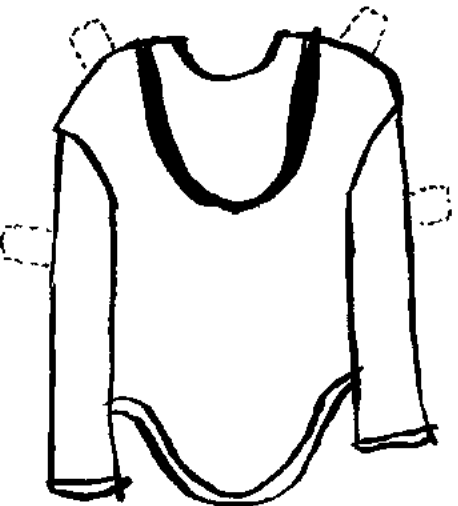
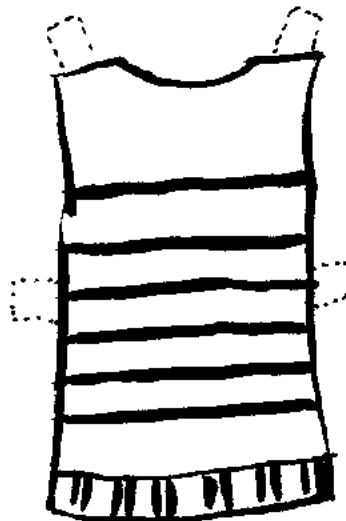
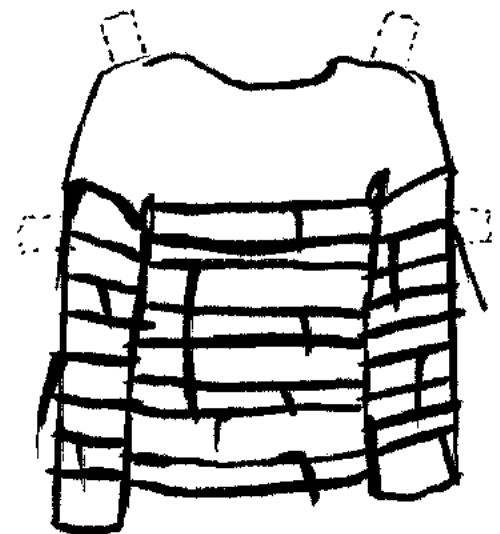
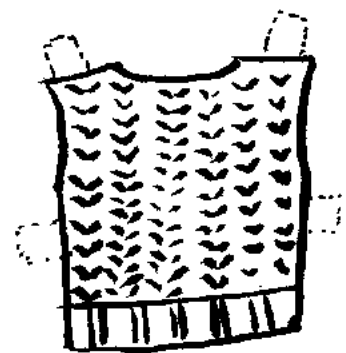
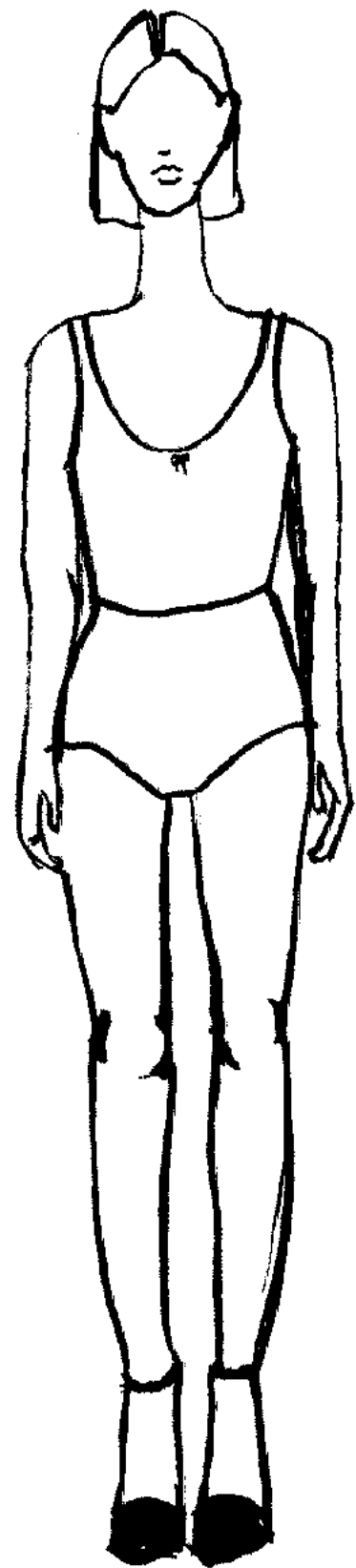
## Silhouettes:

Dropwaist Dress- Sensuality

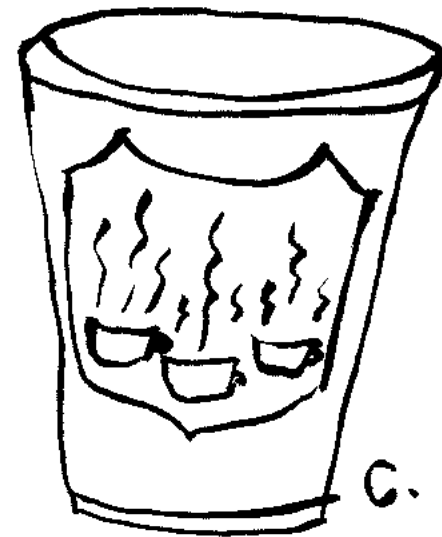
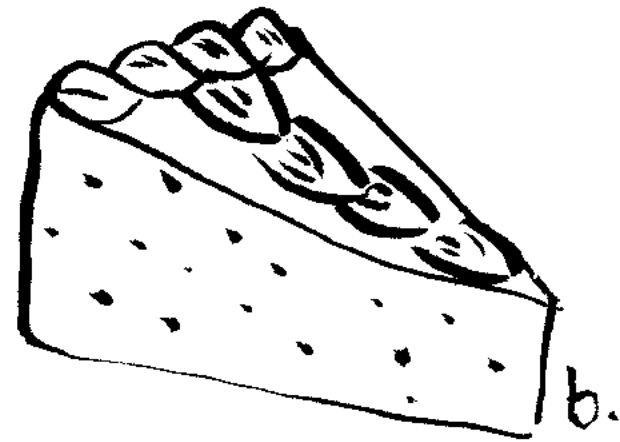
Trapeze Dress - Youth

Trouser shorts- Age & Power





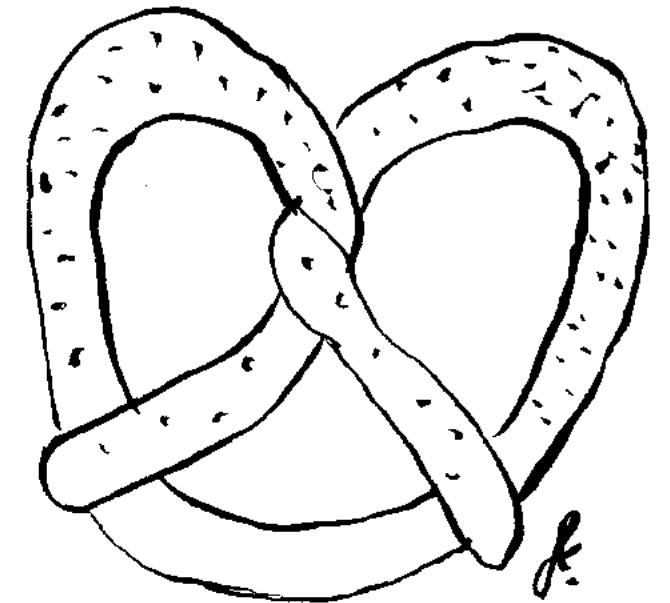
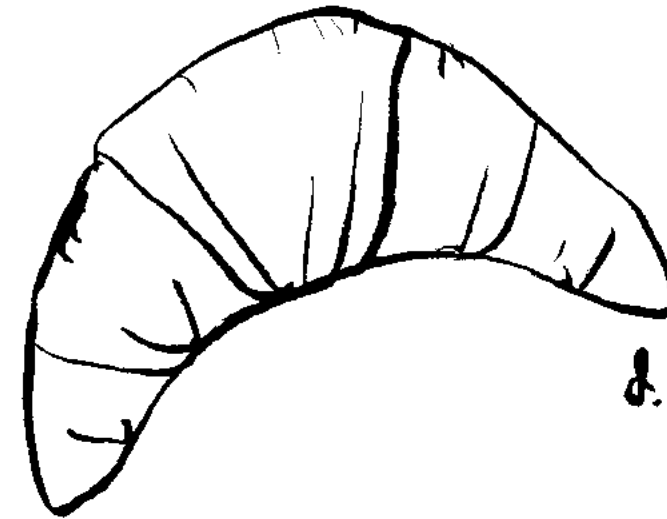
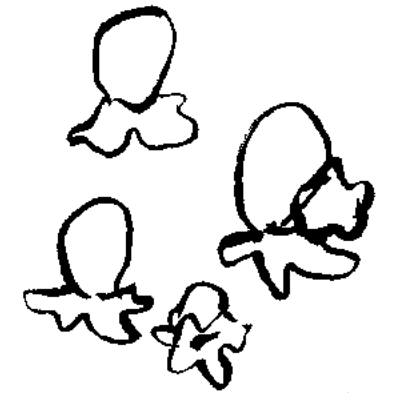
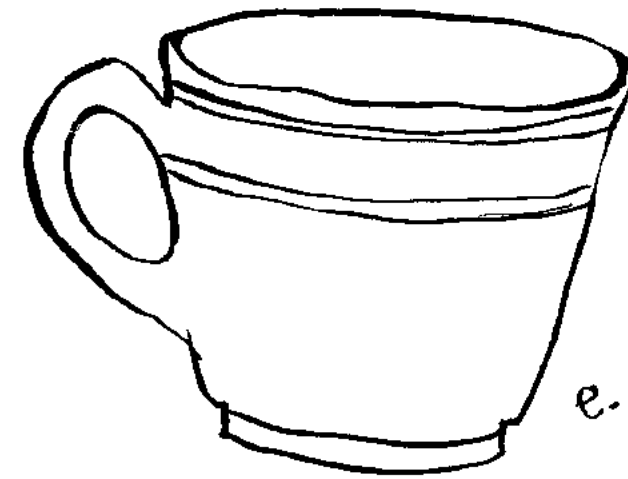
the food (+ drinks!) of L'Amour Fou



a. The Movie Scene

b. Caffe Reggio

c. Washington Square Park



d. Washington Square Park

e. Caffe Reggio

f. The Met Steps

# L'Amour Fou- Playlist

- I Only Have Eyes For You- The Flamingo's
- Night and Day-Fred Astaire
- The Man I Love- Billie Holiday
- Where or When-Frank Sinatra
- I'm Making Believe-The Ink Spots
- Dream-Roy Orbison
- Tonight You Belong to Me- Patience and Prudence
- All I Do Is Dream Of You-Gene Austen
- You Do Something To Me-Ella Fitzgerald
- That's My Desire-Louis Armstrong & Velma Middleton
- All Of Me- Billie Holiday
- I Don't Want to Set The World On Fire-The Ink Spots



Scan code with phone camera in Spotify app to access Playlist

# L'Amour Fou- Reading List

- L'Amour Fou- Andre Breton
- Suite Venitienne- Sophie Calle
- I Love Dick- Chris Kraus
- The Lost Daughter- Elena Ferante
- For Esme -with Love and Squalor- J.D. Salinger
- Conversations with Friends - Sally Rooney



*In interviews, he mentioned books that changed his life.*

*I read them all, looking for him as I flipped each page.*

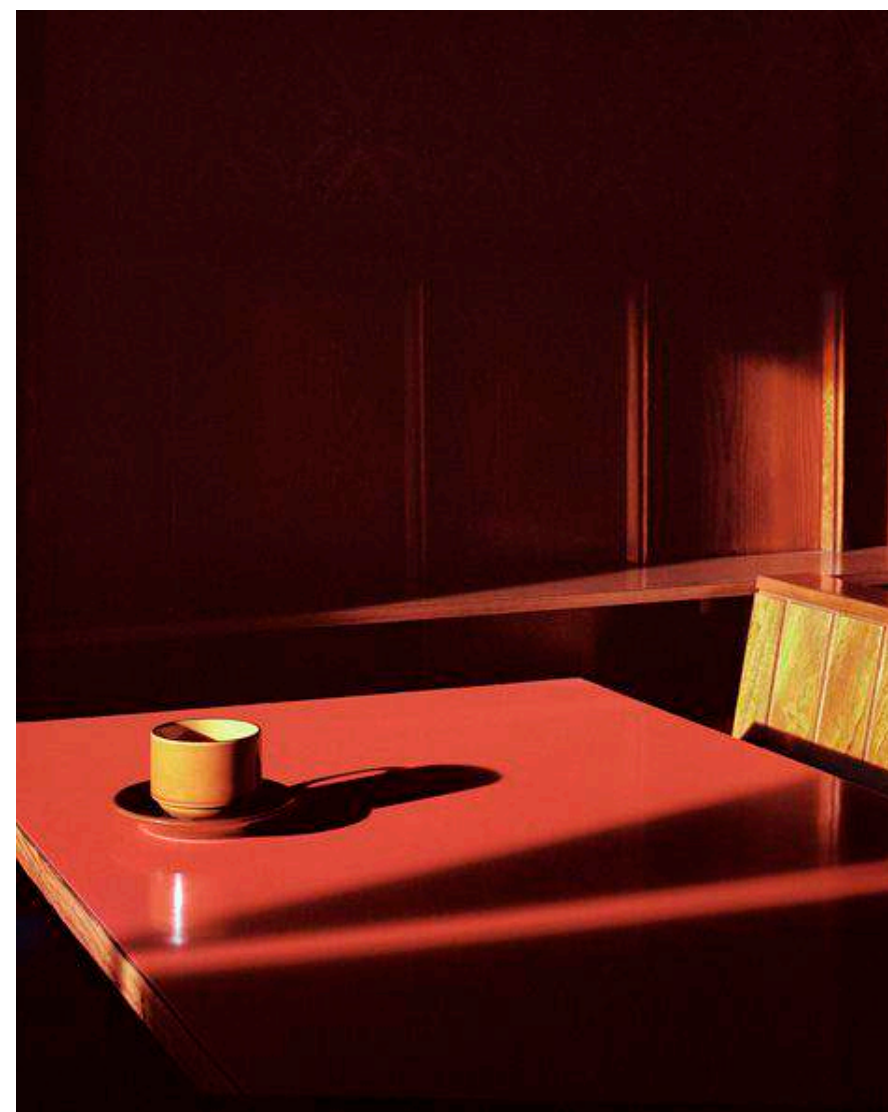
# Lookbook

This is the lookbook I created for the films atmosphere, "look" and mood, and is what I shared with my collaborators along with the script and George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, which is the music of the film.

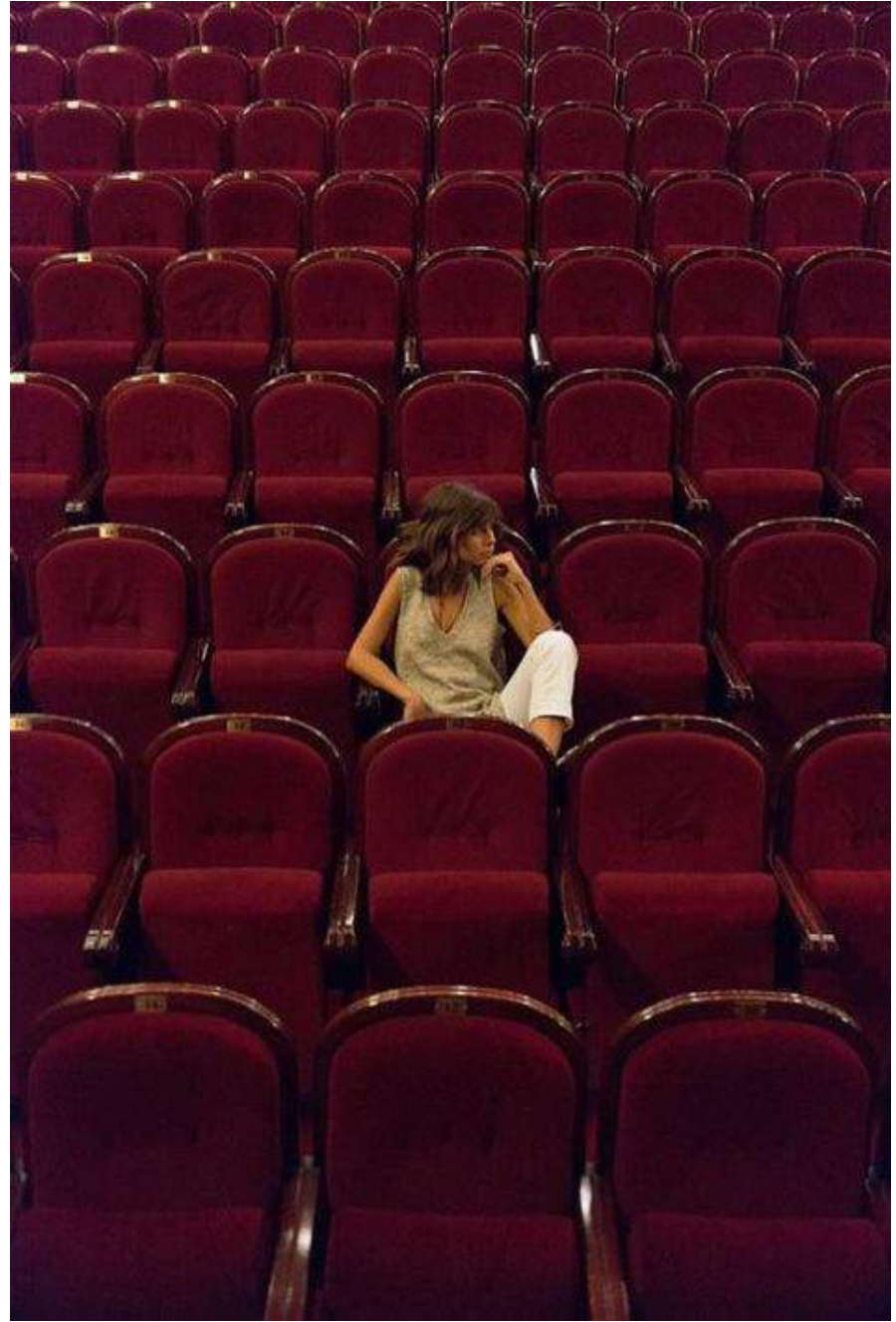


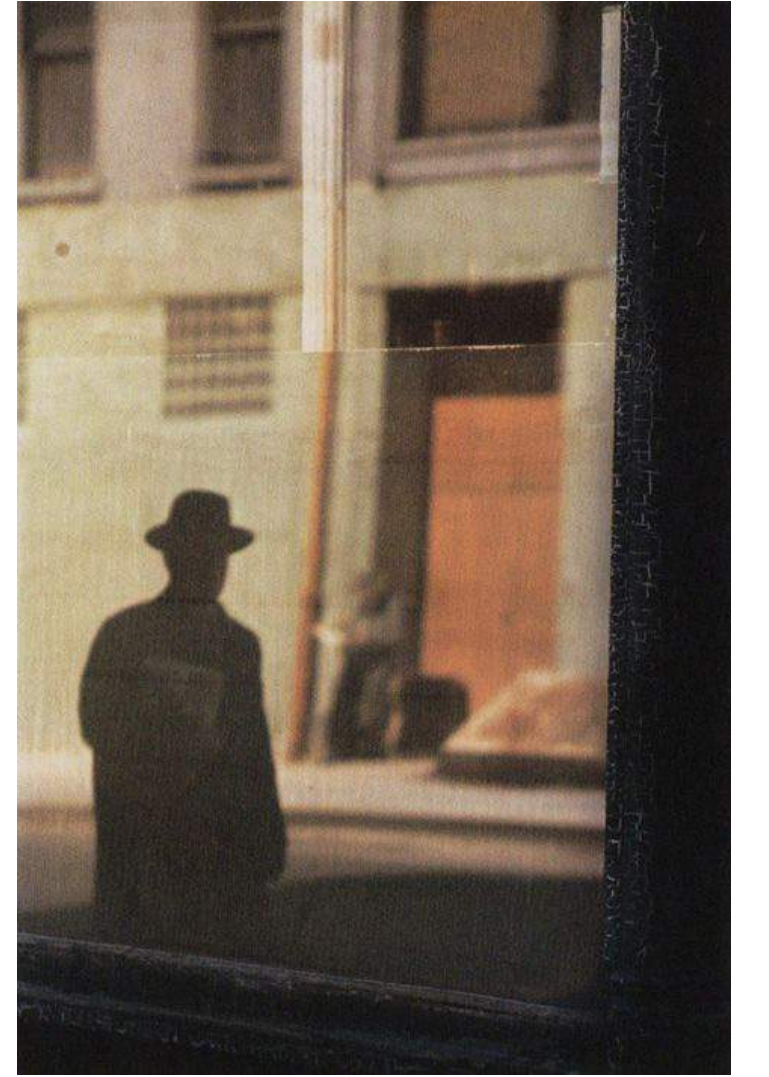


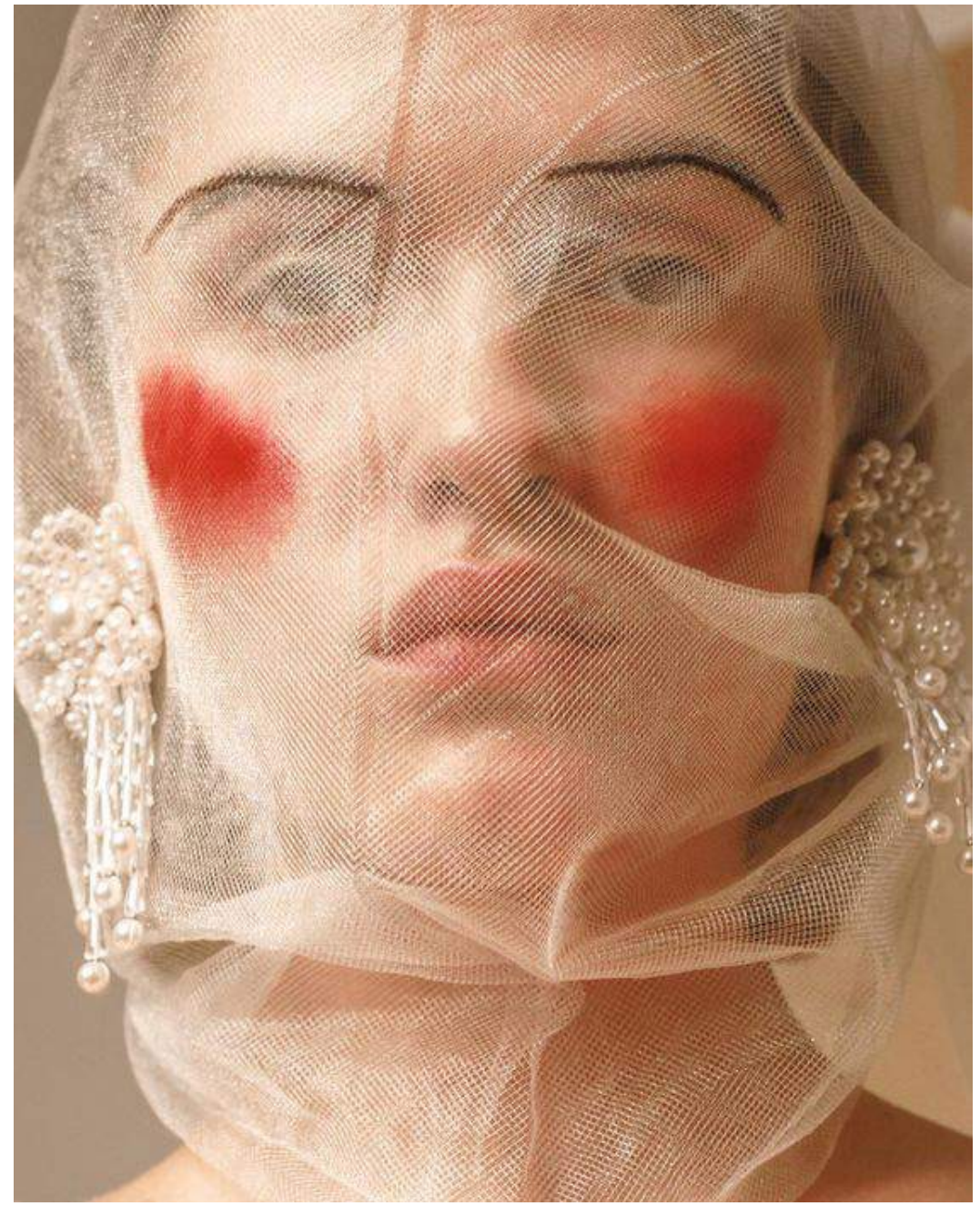


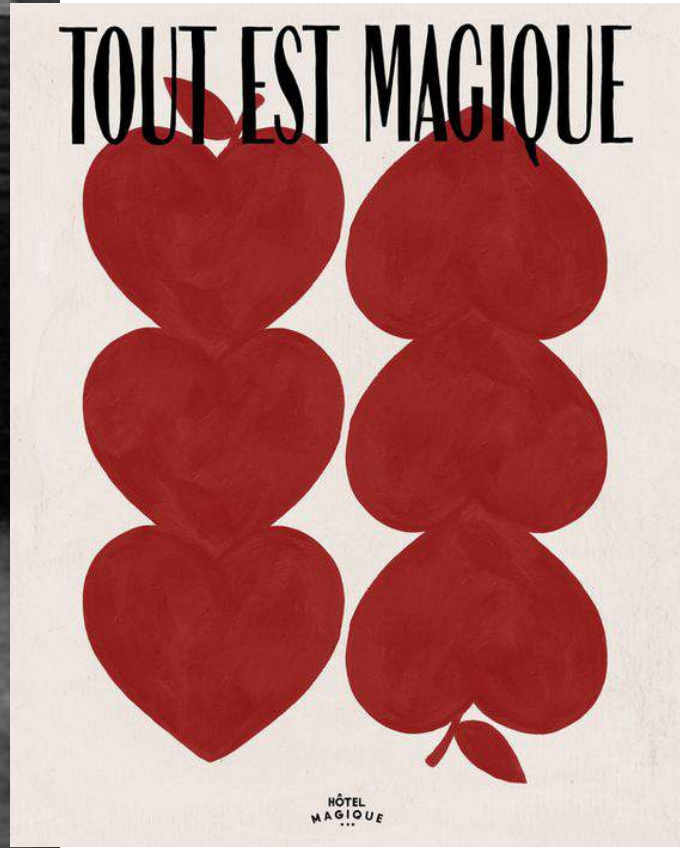




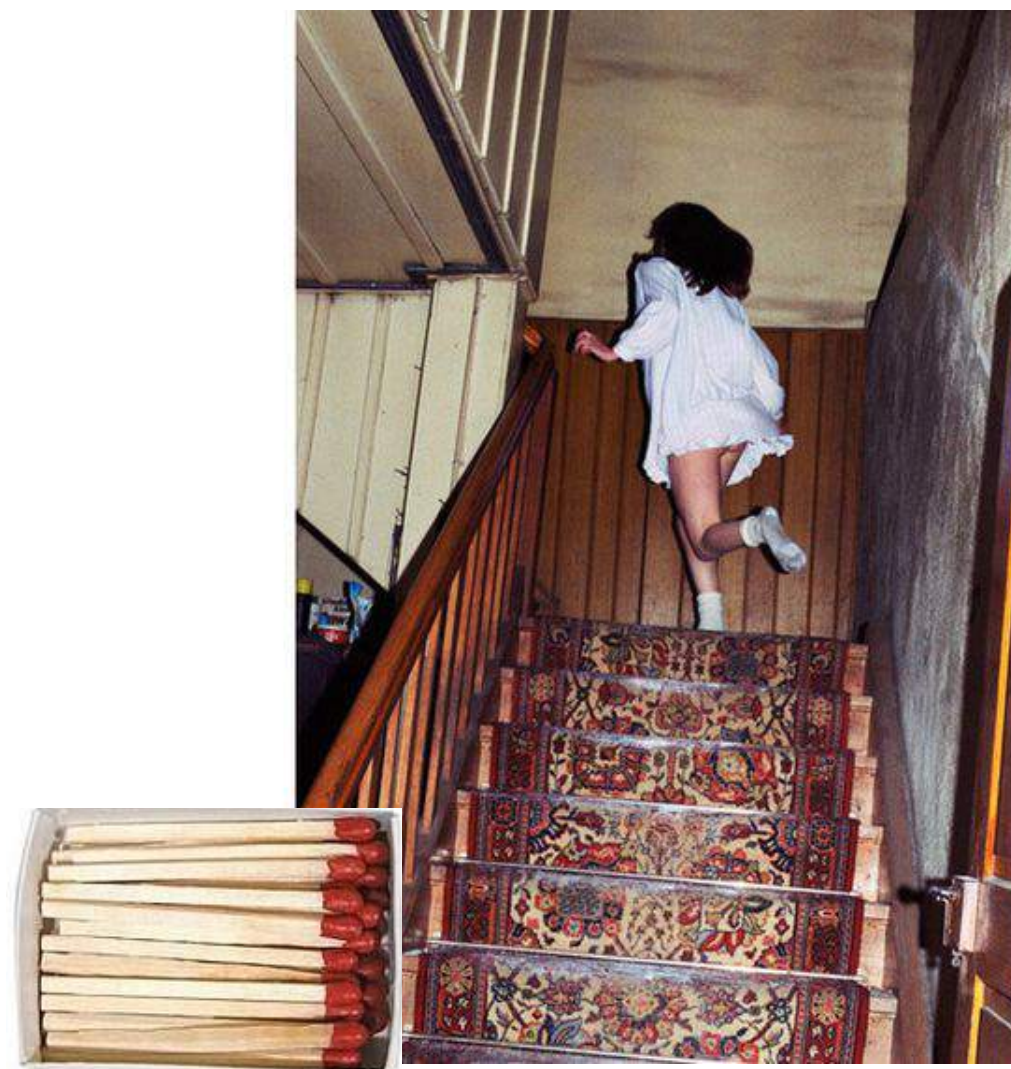


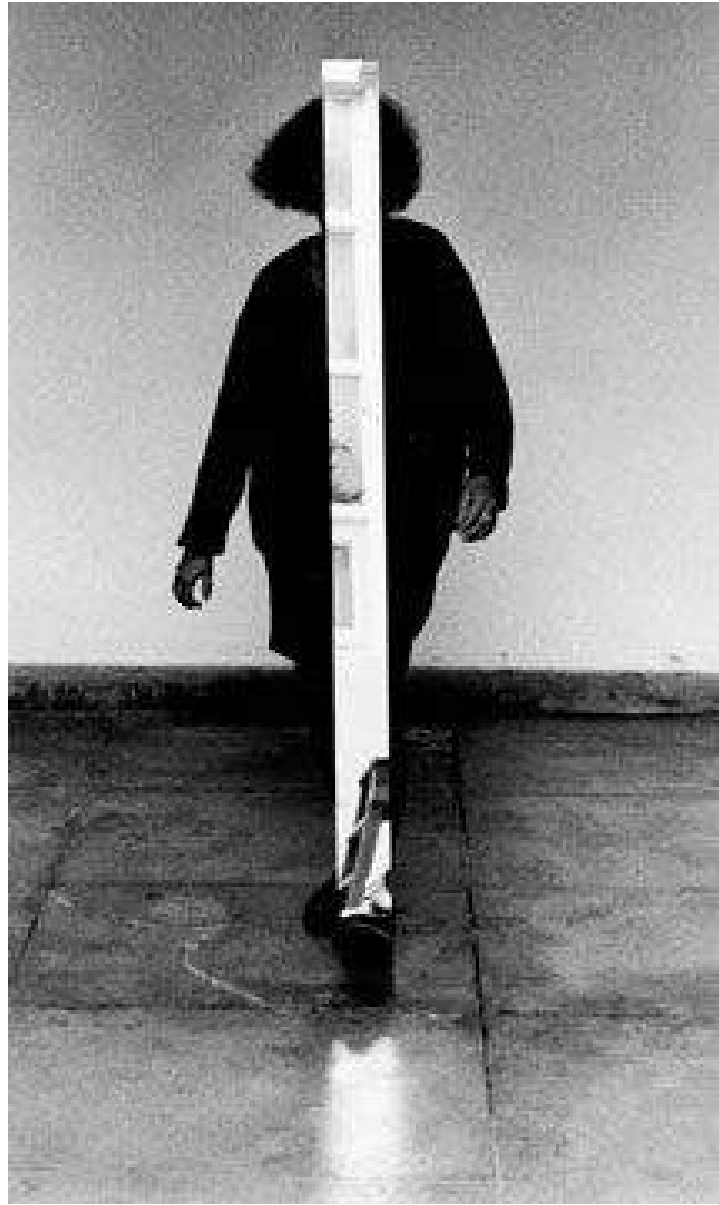








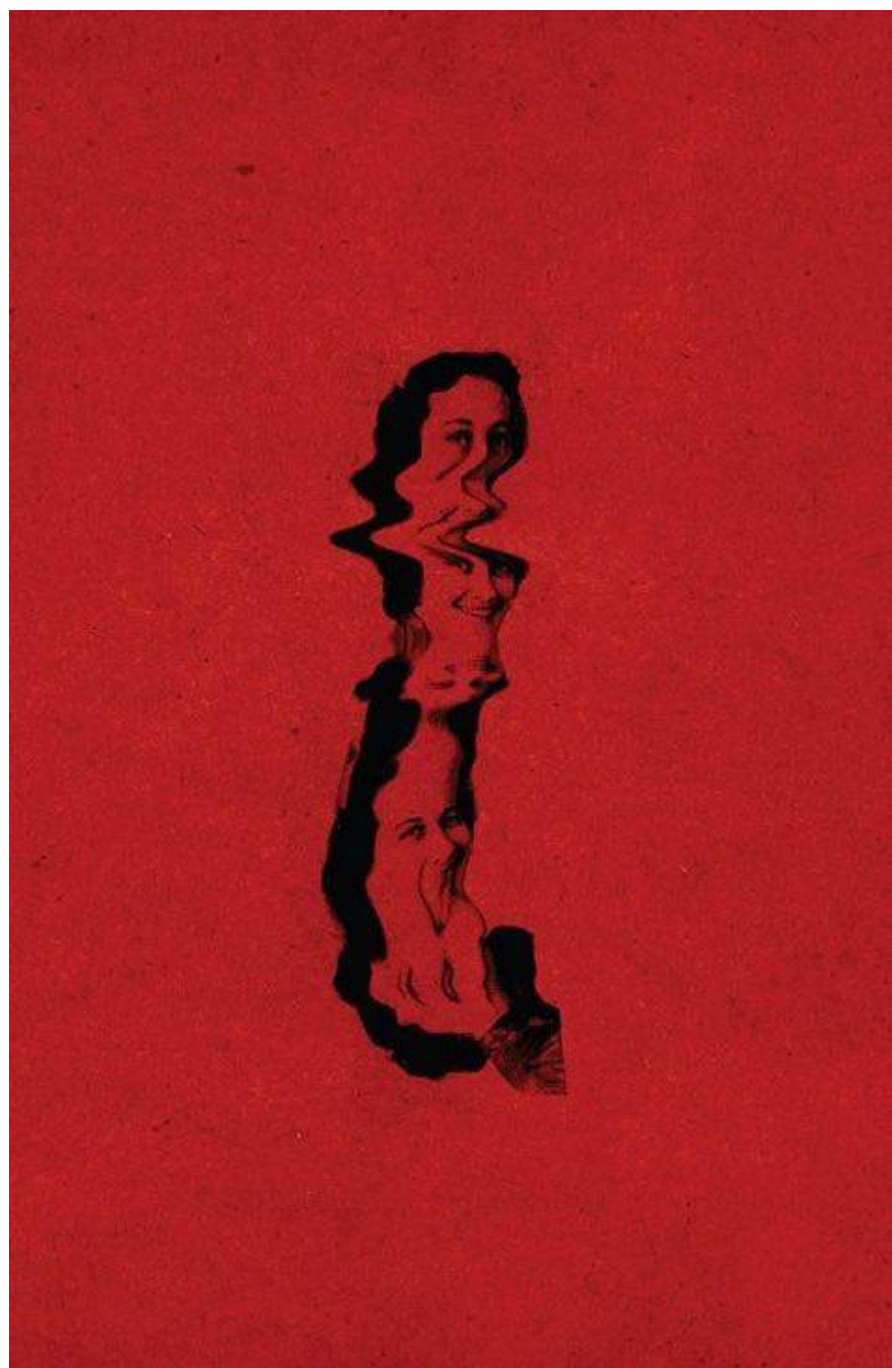


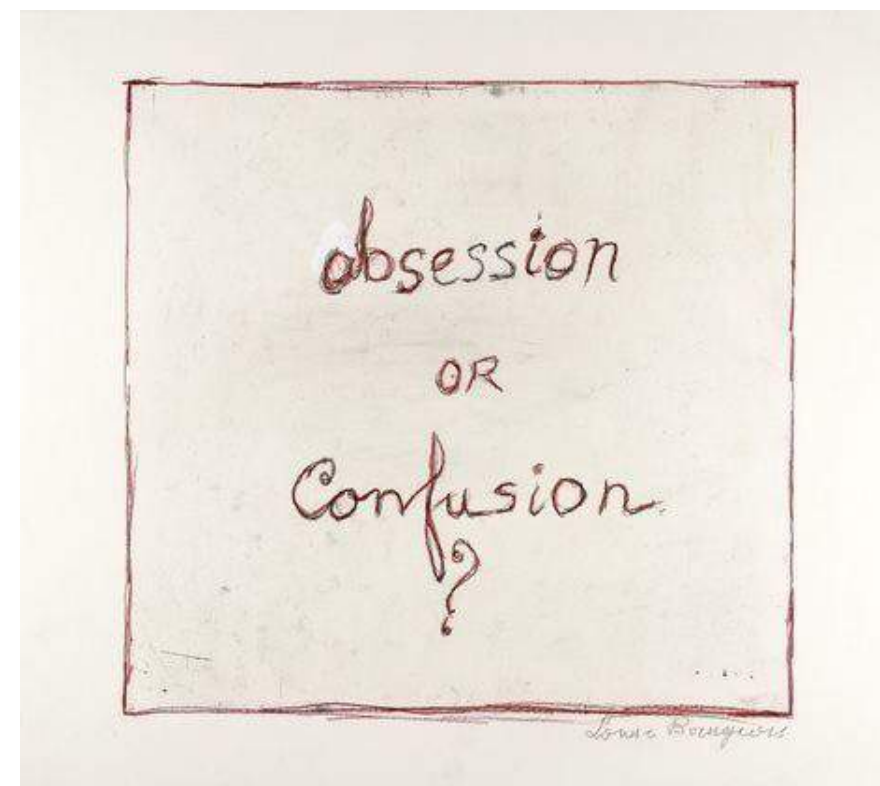


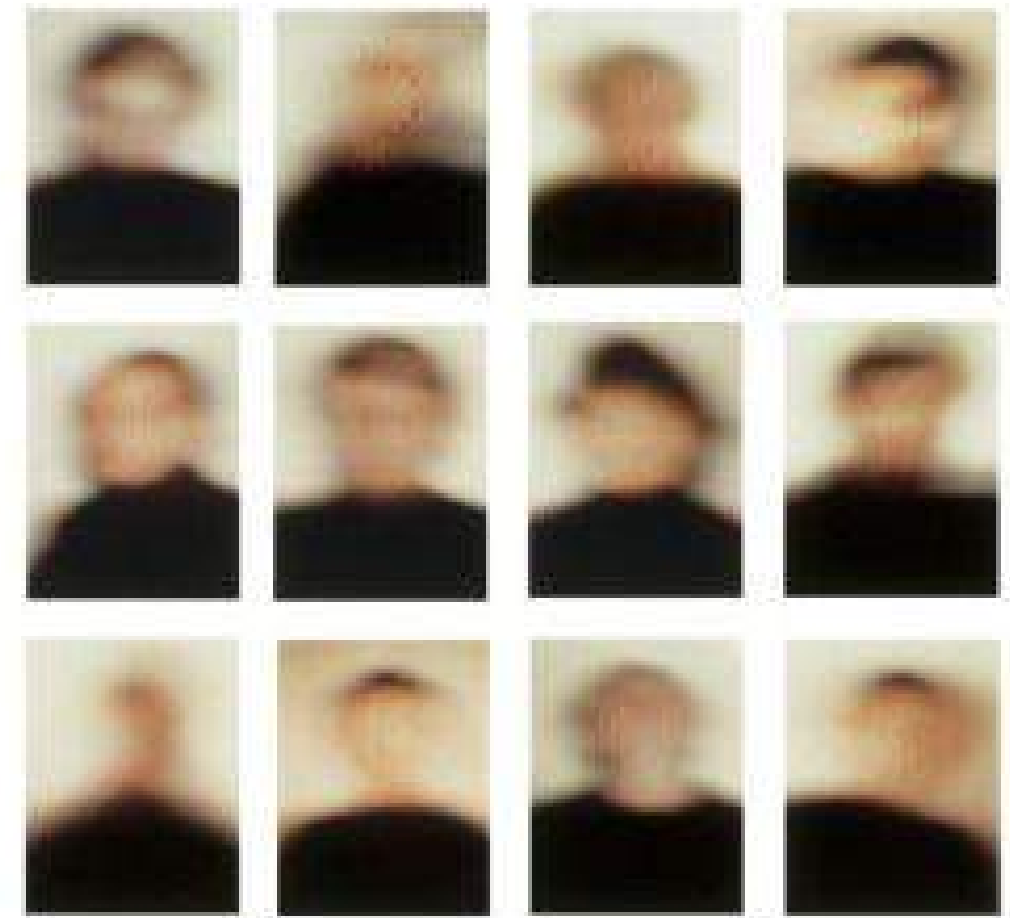








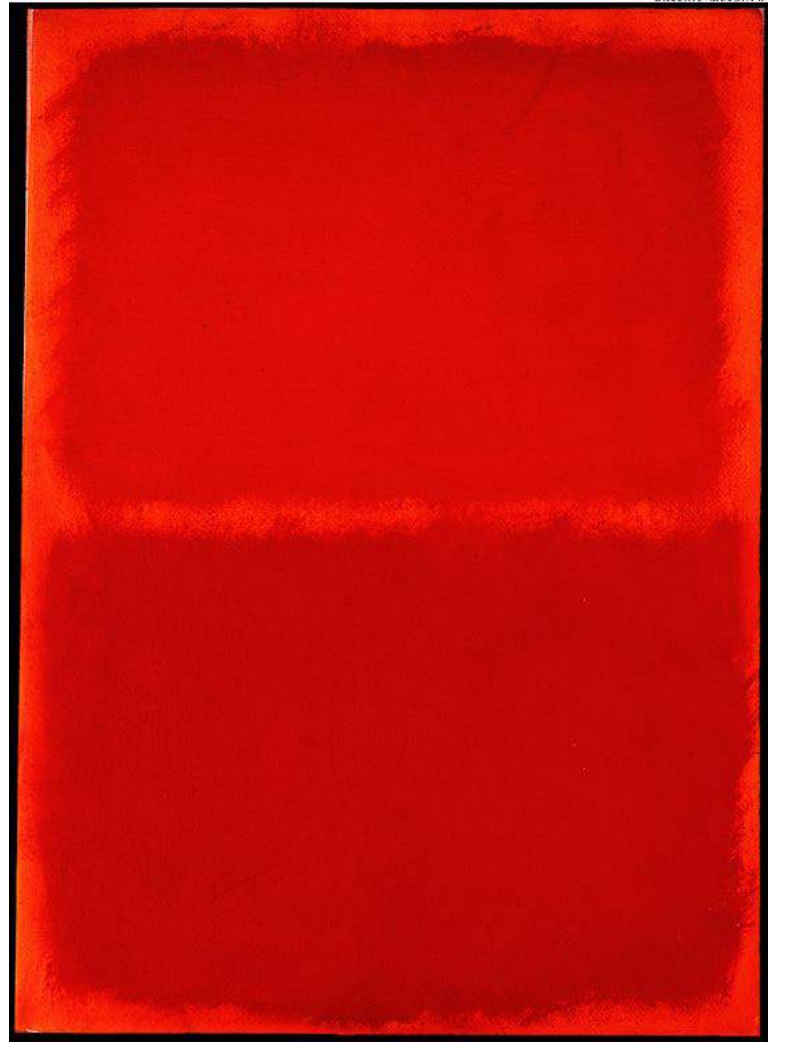


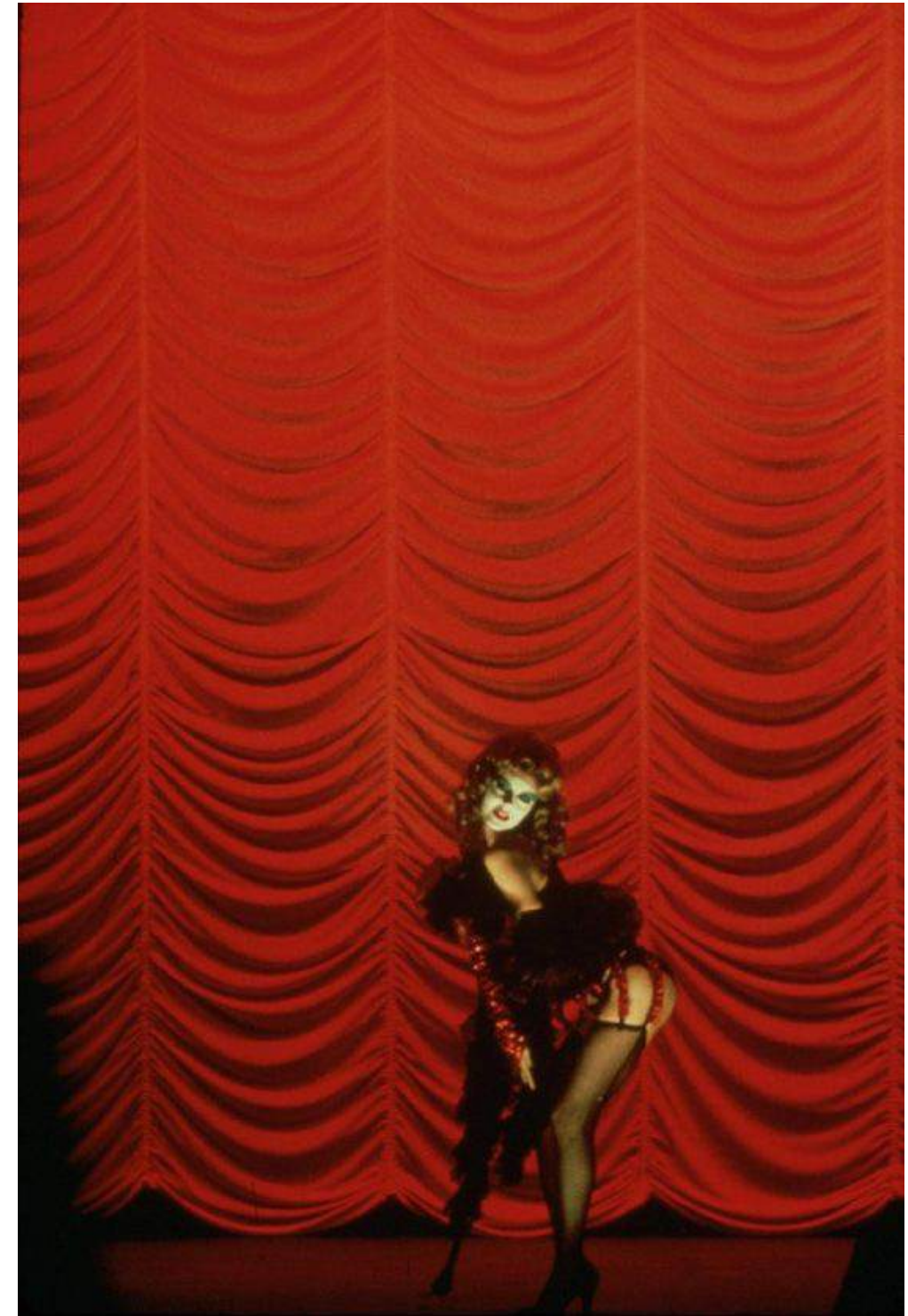




Ostrich leather opera gloves and leather Mary Jane shoes by Prada, Fishnet tights (throughout) by Jonathan Aston







# The Script

This short originally intended as a proof of concept for a feature version that took place over a year, of Cleo's growing infatuation and obsession with actor Henry Walker, but within the writing process it took on its own life.

Shooting Script

INT. SUBWAY CAR- DAY

CLEO, 19, sits on the subway looking out the window.

EXT. NY STREETS- DAY

Cleo walks through an alleyway.

CLEO (V.O.)  
Bea-- it's Cleo, let me in!

BEA (V.O.)  
Come on up!

Offscreen BUZZ.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRS-DAY

Shot of Cleo's maryjanes walking up the stairs.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM- DAY

Doorshot frame of BEA, 19 and Cleo hugging.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Bea is sitting on the bed, she taps next to her for Cleo to

sit.

BEA  
So, start from the beginning.  
What's his name again?

CLEO  
Henry. Henry Walker.

BEA  
(with a cheeky smile)  
And he's how old?

Cleo shoots her a sharp look.

CLEO  
That doesn't matter, I'm a young  
adult, plus what's a 27 year old  
age gap?  
(a beat)  
Young women aren't allowed to like  
older men -- we're just expected to  
be picked up by them -- and when we  
do like them, we're psychoanalyzed.

Bea smiles and nods slightly.

BEA  
Okay, well how did you meet?

CLEO  
We haven't. Yet.

Bea raises an eyebrow.

CLEO  
He's an actor, but he's not even

that famous really, and he lives in Greenwich Village. He's never been married...

BEA

Oh, but you're planning on meeting him? You've talked?

CLEO

Not exactly...it's not really like that--he doesn't even have social media, anyway.

(a beat)

We don't know each other--or, he doesn't know me, rather.

Bea smiles, connecting the dots.

BEA

So it's a celebrity cru--

CLEO

(serious)

No. This is different.

Bea leans in to listen.

CLEO

It's just--I learned this term. It was coined by the Surrealists--L'Amour Fou. It described these impassioned affairs and mad, consuming love--I just--I know that.

(a beat)

It's not a celebrity crush. Even though I don't actually know

him, I feel like I know him better than most people. And it's not even just him that I--love--it's his world.

Cleo lays on the bed, looking up at the ceiling as she speaks. Bea softens and looks at her with sympathy.

CLEO

It's so random. It must mean something, right?

(a beat)

I mean, why him? Why am I in so deep? Why do I think of this forty seven-year-old man twenty-seven hours a day? It means something. I know it does!

BEA

Well, how did it start? This obsession.

Cleo smiles, as if saying "I thought you'd never ask."

CLEO

I saw him in a small film and I was intrigued by him; something about him just stuck with me. And then I just kept thinking of him. But what set it all off was this moment...

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Cleo stands on a corner, looking at both of the crosswalk lights.

CLEO (V.O.)  
So in the spirit of Surrealism, I  
followed this technnique of  
strolling and allowing whimsy and  
chance to guide me--to be receptive  
to the invisible strings of fate.  
(a beat)  
So I followed the crosswalk lights;  
whichever lit up first.

Cleo walks to the crosswalk sign and looks around as she  
walks.

CLEO (V.O.)  
I did this for a while and just as  
I thought I was lost and wanted to  
go home, I looked up at the street  
name.

Cleo stands on the street, looking confused, then looks up,  
and shakes her head in disbelief.

CLEO (V.O.)  
Walker street.

Shot of the street name.

CLEO (V.O.)  
As if Henry Walker himself planted  
this for me, or guided me there.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

CLEO

So I accepted his challenge, this  
game of his.  
(a beat)  
And I started researching him...

INT. CLEO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cleo lays in bed, reading a book.

CLEO (V.O.)  
In interviews, he mentioned books  
that changed his life--Auster,  
Salinger, Woolf.  
(beat)  
Plays by Pinter, Sartre, Stoppard.  
(beat)  
I read them all, looking for him as  
I flipped each page.

MONTAGE:

Cleo reading these books and plays in bed, stop-motion style.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cleo sits on the couch, eating popcorn in the dark, as the TV  
screen flickers across her face and she's entranced by the  
film.

CLEO (V.O.)  
Films too.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cleo sits on a park bench. She takes a sip of her coffee.

CLEO (V.O.)  
He said his perfect Saturday was  
spent in the park with coffee and a  
croissant.

She takes a bite of her croissant gingerly, as if she is  
being watched.

CLEO (V.O.)  
He didn't specify which park, so I  
tried a few.  
(a beat)  
He wasn't wrong, it is a nice way  
to spend a Saturday.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Cleo sits at a cafe table outside.

CLEO (V.O.)  
If he mentioned restaurants or  
cafes he liked, I would go.  
(a beat)  
All to get a sense of his world.

A teapot is placed down and Cleo strains the tea into her  
cup.

CLEO (V.O.)  
In the New Yorker, he mentioned his  
favorite cafe. He recommended the  
apricot tea.

Cleo sips it and nods, then opens her book and doesn't read  
it, but watches the faces of people walking by.

EXT. BUILDING ON BUSY STREET - DAY

Cleo leans against a wall, and holding a cigarette, she  
lights it in her hands and just holds it while watching  
people walk by, trying to look sexy and mysterious.

CLEO (V.O.)  
I heard he was a smoker, so I  
thought I at least had to try.  
(a beat)  
Maybe he would offer me a light or  
think I was interesting.

She takes a drag and then has a coughing fit.

CLEO (V.O.)  
It wasn't for me.

EXT. WEST VILLAGE STREETS - DAY

Cleo stands in the beautiful streets of the West Village,  
looking around.

CLEO (V.O.)  
I walked his neighborhood--to get a  
sense of his environment.  
(a beat)  
It kind of felt like My Fair Lady,  
On The Street Where You Live--it



then hit me that I was approaching  
stalker territory.

(a beat)

If I did see him--I didn't want to  
under these circumstances.

Her facial expression turns from delight to dread and she  
quickly turns around and starts walking the other way.

INT. CLEO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cleo sits at her desk with the lamp on and writes on a sheet  
of paper "The Rule" in red ink.

CLEO (V.O.)

So I came up with a cardinal rule,  
a boundary, so I can play this game  
fairly.

She writes "1. Don't interfere with the hands of fate".

EXT. NY STREETS - DAY

Cleo stands walking on 5th Ave and pushes her neck out to  
look around the corner.

CLEO (V.O.)

When I wasn't looking for him, I  
thought I saw him everywhere.  
Around street corners, in the park,  
in store windows.  
It felt like we were the only two  
people in New York, like we were

playing a game of cat and mouse-  
and maybe, just maybe, he was  
looking for me too.

Then she passes a pole that has graffiti on it in the words  
"WHAT YOU SEEK IS SEEKING YOU - RUMI". She smiles.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Cleo stands on the subway, holding the pole, looking around  
the car, then her eyes look out the window to the passing  
train.

CLEO (V.O.)

I looked for him on passing subway  
cars.

(a beat)

I began thinking that maybe a  
glance would be enough, that it  
could be confirmation for the  
future. Just a glance could tell me  
that my intuition was right.

INT. MUSEUM SCULPTURE HALL - DAY

Cleo walks through the sculpture hall at the museum then  
enters a gallery.

INT. MUSEUM GALLERY - DAY

CLEO (V.O.)

He became an imaginary friend of sorts. I never felt alone...he was always there.

She sits on a bench in front of a painting and stares.

CLEO (V.O.)

I kept having this fantasy about sitting in front of this painting at the Met, and meeting him there, and him being so impressed by my wit and art history knowledge of 19th Century European Paintings.

(a beat)

When I later went to that gallery, he had left his mark.

Shot of the gallery name- called the "Henry J. Heinz II Gallery".

EXT. MUSEUM - DAY

Cleo walks down the museum steps.

CLEO (V.O.)

When I was walking back, I realized I was in the neighborhood he grew up in, among the streets of the Upper East Side.

EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT- DAY

CLEO (V.O.)

I walked through the rows of apartment buildings, imagining him as a kid. I don't know, it was like I knew him. It was like every little thing had brought me to this moment, all roads led to this place: where he came from. The origins of this entity in my life.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

CLEO

Like the end of a spiritual quest.

BEA

But you still want to see him, don't you?

CLEO

I don't know. I mean, yes I do, of course I do--and I know in my bones that we'll meet--but there must be a reason why we haven't yet.

CUT TO COMPILATION OF SHOTS - QUICK CUTS OF CLEO'S ADVENTURE  
A SECOND FROM EVERY VIGNETTE

CLEO

I fantasize about us meeting when I'm twenty-seven, and out of L'Amour Fou and we can just meet as...

A beat.

CLEO  
(with feeling)  
As equals.

Cleo hugs Bea goodbye.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cleo walks out of the apartment towards the subway entrance.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Cleo gets into the subway and sits down.

BEA (V.O.)  
Huh, a love story where he's not  
the ending.

A long beat.

CLEO (V.O.)  
He's just the epilogue.

Cleo looks up and sees the passing subway train. Her eyes  
widen and she smiles.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.

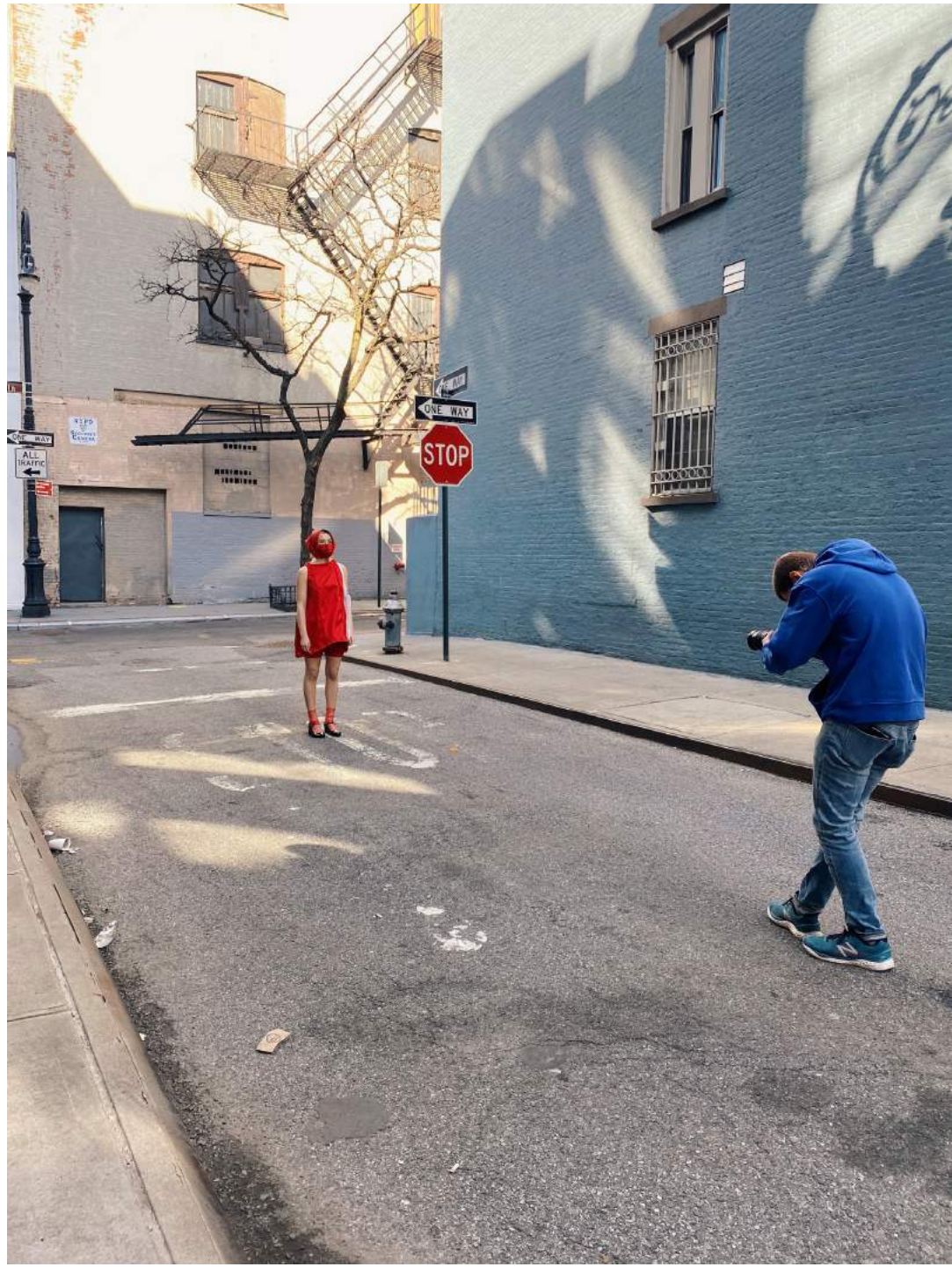


# Behind the scenes

Our very small but mighty team of new filmmakers embarked on this four day journey of creating the film in Manhattan. Throughout the entire production, it felt like we were making something bigger than ourselves and documenting it felt imperative.





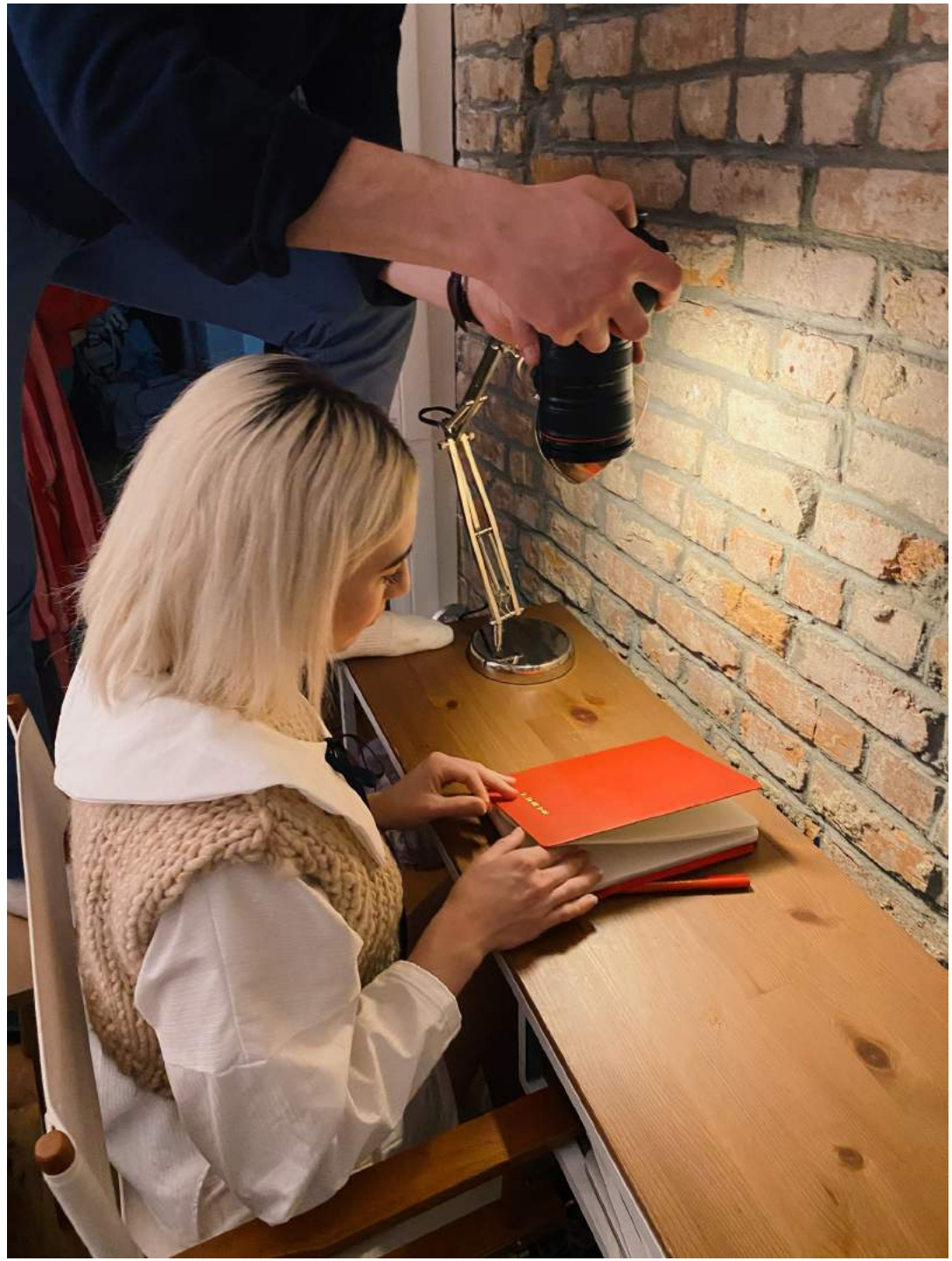


















BEA  
Huh, a love story where he's not  
the ending.

A long beat.

CLEO  
He's just the epilogue.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.

A Logan Levitt PICTURE





