

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, AND WHY IN THE WORLD OF STYLE

W

SPRING'S SEXIEST FASHION

COLORFUL TOPS,
FLIRTY SKIRTS, AND
KNOCKOUT
BAGS

CHARLIZE THERON

ON THE ART
OF SEDUCTION

BRAD
PITT

VIOLA
DAVIS

LEONARDO
DICAPRIO

KIRSTEN
DUNST

GEORGE
CLOONEY

MICHELLE
WILLIAMS

TILDA
SWINTON

and more

THE MOVIE ISSUE

THE YEAR'S 20 BRIGHTEST STARS,
UNCENSORED AND UNZIPPED

by Lynn Hirschberg

CHARLIZE THERON

in *YOUNG ADULT*

In *Young Adult*, you play Mavis Gary, who is stunning on the outside and a mess on the inside. Returning to the small town in Minnesota where she reigned as the beauty/bitch of her high school, Mavis sets out to reclaim her ex-boyfriend, now married. She is self-involved, delusional, and generally hard to like, which is rare for a female protagonist in a comedy. Do you have to like a character to play her? I liked Mavis, but no, I don't think I need to like my characters. I do think empathy is very important. It's crucial to understand circumstance and story to grasp the role in a truthful manner. Your characters are like your children: Sometimes they make you proud, and other times, you think, Oh, really? In *Young Adult*, I wanted to show some cringe-worthy moments that only women will get. Like the "cutlets." Mavis wears flesh-colored glue-on gel-filled "breasts" over her real ones. I wear those! If you don't have boobs, you wear those cutlets. I heard a story of a girl who was on a date, started making out, and thought, Oh, he's going to

touch the cutlets! So she went to the bathroom to take them off, but her purse was too small to put them in there. I always thought that was a funny image, a woman not knowing what to do with these things that you stick onto your boobs. It's just the most bizarre, unsexy thing there is—so I added that to Mavis. Growing up in South Africa, were you always tall and blonde and beautiful? For the first eight years of my life, I didn't have front teeth. I was pretty sick as an infant, and antibiotics rotted them. But then I started to take dance classes, and I eventually got some teeth [laughs]. When I was 16, I went to Milan to model.

Did you dream of being an actress? I wanted to be a ballerina, but I was too tall, and I had too many injuries. What I loved as a ballerina was telling stories, and I could also do that with acting, so I eventually moved to L.A.

You had a star-is-born moment as a result of your first role. For *2 Days in the Valley*, you were on a billboard over Sunset Boulevard for a very long time. What was the audition for that movie like? I remember I was in a catsuit. I'd never auditioned before, and I almost brought a bottle of ketchup and squirted it all over myself for the scene where I got shot. I looked like a maniac. It was a dying scene, so I barged through the door and started crawling on the floor. I think they were too scared not to give me the role. ♦

Marchesa dress, Gian ring,
Harry Winston bracelet





Dior dress: Fleur of England
bra and briefs, Harry Winston
bracelet, Bulgari ring.



Oscar de la Renta gown. Harry Winston bracelet. Gian ring. Gucci shoes. Hair by Enzo Angileri using Nexxus at Clever Remix; makeup by Shane Polsh for Dior at Jed Root LA Inc. For stores, prices, and more, see Backstory, page 152.



VIOLA DAVIS

in *THE HELP*

"No matter what, people don't think of me for glamorous parts. I'll go to an audition or a meeting in a pretty dress, and they still think of me as depressed or embattled. Hopefully, that will change."

Dolce & Gabbana dress, Camilla Dietz Bergeron Ltd. necklace Kwiat ring (on right hand); Davis's own ring (on left hand).

THE YEAR 2011 was not full of happy endings at the movies. Unlike in the previous year, when a monarch with a stutter (*The King's Speech*) battled a hugely ambitious geek (*The Social Network*), the new crop told quieter, less triumphant stories and provided intimate portrayals of individuals who were usually struggling and often lost. If you believe, as I do, that films echo the mood of the culture, the year's characters bear this theory out: We're living in a cautious, alienated, somewhat depressed time. Frustration and disappointment are rampant; the economy is a mess, no politician appears trustworthy, and uncertainty prevails.

Instead of a fearless royal determined to lead his people, we saw

Brad Pitt as an enraged father in *The Tree of Life* and as a failed golden boy-turned-baseball manager out to save his team in *Moneyball*. The fact that both characters push and pull—and, ultimately, fall short—seems to be the point. Pitt, the quintessential movie star, the embodiment of all things American, now perfectly evokes the pain of men everywhere: the startling realization that, after a lifetime of believing otherwise, your best may no longer be good enough.

Similarly, Charlize Theron as Mavis Gary in *Young Adult* is lost in her past glory. While she can still shine like the beautiful dream girl she used to be in high school, present-day Mavis is, for the most part, a walking disaster. She drinks, she's delusional, and—most interesting—she has no real desire to change. George Clooney's character in *The Descendants*, in contrast, shows subtle signs of growing up. The film is about a man coming to terms with his relationships—with his wife, who is in a coma, and with his two estranged young daughters—and the shock of learning that his wife had been having an affair. And yet *The Descendants* is not about wrongs righted or familial breakthroughs. Instead, the film is about forgiveness—small acts of understanding that pass, these days, for hope.

That search for compassion is perhaps most vividly articulated in *The Help*, a movie about black maids in the American South in the sixties. Viola Davis gives a heartbreaking performance as Aibileen, a woman who has dedicated her life to caring for white families. When she's fired at the end of the film, Aibileen walks into the unknown with a mix of joy and trepidation.

Although they live in vastly different worlds, nearly all the characters in these movies suffer from a swirl of complex desires and fears. Leonardo DiCaprio in *J. Edgar* is both emboldened and hampered by his refusal of intimacy; Tilda Swinton in *We Need to Talk About Kevin* is tangled in a web of guilt; and love with her monstrous son; Gary Oldman in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* is simultaneously driven and depressed by his pursuit of a traitor.

And so on. For this portfolio, we picked 20 performers, each of whom has brilliantly inhabited a role that speaks to this moment in time. One of the most delightful depictions of the current emotional climate is Jean Dujardin's in *The Artist*. He plays a silent-movie star named George Valentin, who is unwilling to adjust to talkies. Like individuals everywhere who feel replaced by the innovations of the modern world, he fights the system. He loses.

But the movie does have a kind of uplift at the end: Valentin makes a certain accommodation that allows him to return to the spotlight. His role in films will never be the same—he will never be the kind of star he was—but he is back. While it is not the future Valentin imagined or expected, it is the future he will have to accept. And that, in today's world, passes for a happy ending.



ALBERT BROOKS

IN DRIVE

"I got *Drive* because I told my manager that I thought I could make an interesting villain. I read the script, and they asked me to go to the director's house to meet him. We chatted, and on my way out I pinned him up against the wall by his front door. He's Danish, and he's already very pale. 'What are you doing?' he asked. I was very quiet: 'I just want you to know that I have great physical strength.' So he gave me the part."

Giorgio Armani tuxedo jacket, shirt, and bow tie
Brooks's own glasses



WILL FERRELL

in EVERYTHING MUST GO

"When I read bedtime stories to my three sons, I try to do funny voices, and I immediately get a lot of crap for it. They say, 'Papa, what are you doing? Just use a regular voice!' They're not impressed. They don't find me funny."

Derek Rose pajamas. Ferrell's own ring.

KIRSTEN DUNST

in *MELANCHOLIA*

You started acting when you were 4. Did you go to a regular high school? Yes. I even went to the prom. I actually borrowed a dress from Sofia Coppola—a beautiful John Galiano burgundy dress that she had worn to the Golden Globes. I was a very lucky girl.

That was before *Spider-Man*. In *Spider-Man*, you and Tobey Maguire had an iconic kiss.

Compared to how romantic it looked, it was very unromantic—there was rain running down Tobey's nose, and he could barely breathe. It really wasn't fun.

You kissed Brad Pitt in *Interview With the Vampire* when you were 11 years old. What was that audition like? The director, Neil Jordan, asked my mother if I was okay. He thought that I was a disturbed child—he found it upsetting that I could cry so easily, but I needed to cry in the audition, so I just kept sobbing. I'd been auditioning for the role over and over, and it was like, God, just give me the role already—I'll cry, I'll scream, I'll do anything!

Olatz slip, Dunst's own earrings.



HAIR BY WARD AT BRYAN BAEZ
AGENCY NYC; MAKEUP BY AARON
DE MEY AT ART PARTNER

ANTONIO BANDERAS

IN THE SKIN I LIVE IN

"When you work in a different language, your emotional state changes. In Spanish, my mother language, words not only have the meaning they have—they also have a personal meaning. For me, it is more difficult to say 'Te quiero' than 'I love you.'"

Emporio Armani tank top. Banderas's own necklace and ring.





SHAILENE WOODLEY

in THE DESCENDANTS

"I did a ton of commercials growing up. My friends would go to soccer practice, and I would go to an audition. It was just a fun hobby. It's still a fun hobby—nothing more."

Frees bra and briefs.

HAIR BY WARD AT BRIAN SANTEY
AGENCY NYC; MAKEUP BY
AARON DE MEY AT ART PARTNER.