

OCTOBER'S
FEATURED
ARTIST:
**GIANNI
SCUMACI**



Gianni Scumaci
INSPIRED BY

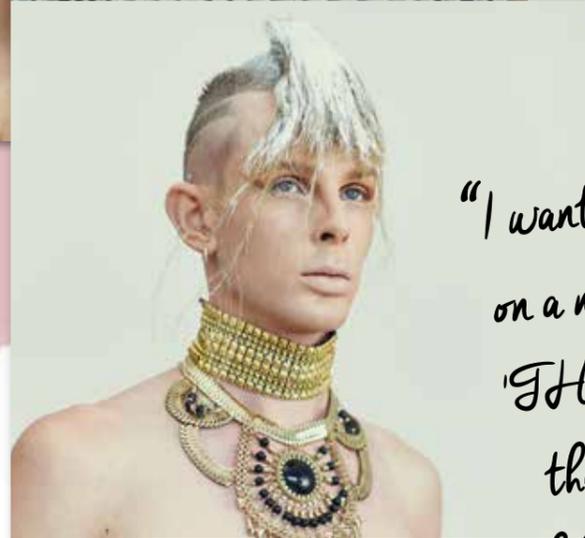


"IT'S NOT THE HAIR THAT IS PRIMARY TO MY CREATIVE PROCESS, IT'S THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHARACTER THAT I'M INTERPRETING.

"AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE MY LATEST WORK – A COLLABORATION WITH LBGT MOVEMENT, **SINK THE PINK**"



Gianni Scumaci worked for a decade at **Sassoon** and was its youngest-ever creative director. He then spent a further 10 years working in fashion with iconic photographers such as **Tim Walker** and **David Bailey** before travelling the world educating hairdressers in his salon and editorial techniques. Gianni's process is all about people first and then the hair. He is either discovering a character within his salon or out on the streets, creating a character for an editorial or advertising campaign, or evolving a character by acquiring a deeper understanding of who they are as a person and celebrating them as an individual. Immerse yourself in Gianni's work at creativeheadmag.com/education



"I wanted to understand each character on a much deeper level to reflect who 'THEY' are as person and celebrate them individually. it's core to my philosophy and my approach to work"

"They call themselves "The World's Biggest Gender Fuck Event", and they're not wrong. Since launching in 2008, Sink The Pink has transformed from a small, fun club night into a gigantic, genre-bending, expectation-smashing poly-sexual party, whose fans travel from across the globe to attend. Evoking the hedonism of the glorious Blitz club kids and the New Romantic age, Sink the Pink serves up bearded ladies, sword swallows, fire eaters, and a huge middle finger to gender norms.

"I first met Sink the Pink co-founder Glyn Fussell in early 2014, when I cut his hair on a shoot with the photographer David Bailey. The connection between us was strong and over the following two years I worked closely with Glyn and the Sink The Pink movement to get to know the unique characters involved, gain their acceptance, and allow me to interpret their individual looks. The results – which formed an exhibition at the Edinburgh International Fashion Festival and are now published here exclusively in Creative HEAD – show the Sink the Pink performers in a vulnerable new light. Stripped naked both emotionally and physically, each character has their own story that inspired me to create and capture them in this way."



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

GIANNI OPENED THIS YEAR'S **EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FASHION FESTIVAL** BY GIVING AN INSIGHT INTO THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND HIS WORK AND CREATIVE PROCESS. CREATIVE HEAD PUBLISHER CATHERINE HANDCOCK ASKED THE QUESTIONS...



CATHERINE HANDCOCK: So, Gianni, British hairdressing – about 36,000 salons bursting with young creative people and contributing £7 billion a year to the UK economy. Yet so often we hear, “I’m just a hairdresser” or “It’s just a haircut”. Why is that?

GIANNI SCUMACI: I think it stems from our education system. In general, the hierarchy of subjects places maths and sciences at the top, and right down at the bottom are the arts. So creativity isn’t valued in the same way as literacy, and if you’re a young, creative teenager you may not be able to process the information given to you in class because it’s too didactic or maybe you are more visual in the way you accept information. It’s important to not make mistakes in literacy, yet mistakes are an essential part of the creative process and the exams given are more a test of memory than intelligence. When I left school, you had two options if you hadn’t done so well – you either became a bricklayer or a hairdresser. That really hasn’t changed today. I strongly believe that the school experience has created low self-esteem within our industry and most hairdressers – not to mention

creatives in other fields – come away with a sense of failure. This is why a hairdresser will say, “I’m just a hairdresser” or “It’s just a haircut”. It makes my blood run cold to hear this. My hope is that as an industry we wake up and realise that academia is only part of the story, and the importance of our social function is very much on an equal with many others.

CH: As consumers, our relationship with our hairdresser is unique. There aren’t many people we happily visit regularly, confide our deepest secrets in and trust enough to alter our physical appearance, sometimes radically. But what about the other way round – how do hairdressers value their clients?

GS: Hairdressers place an incredible value on their clients. I think the issue is that hairdressers don’t value themselves. I don’t think they recognise the power and importance they have in the context of their client’s life. If hairdressers could value themselves as much as their clients do, the industry would be in a very different place.

CH: You say that people are more important than hair – and that you became aware of the importance of people at an early age in your father’s salon. What exactly was it about that salon environment that sparked this?

GS: My father is celebrating 50 years behind the same chair in the same barbershop that my grandfather built, there is no better example of dedication to the craft than this. So the barbershop is actually where I’m from. It’s in me, where I started and it’s really my first love. Barbershop intimacy is a much stronger culture than any salon environment I have ever worked in. As an eight-year-old working for pocket money on a Saturday and watching my father, it was his way with people that I was absorbing, not just the hair. I was exposed to conversations I wouldn’t normally have heard and I learned to use my ears as well as my eyes, which was an invaluable lesson in understanding people at such a young age. It became apparent to me that there was a lot more to people than just their hair.

CH: You are a third-generation hairdresser and you trained at Vidal Sassoon, which is known for its highly technical approach to cutting hair. How do you think these elements – the emotion of family, the discipline of Sassoon – have affected your approach to your craft?

GS: Vidal Sassoon gave me structure, which allowed me to articulate my work and creativity from a technical perspective. But once I had gone through that process, I found myself rebelling against it. I felt I was so far away from expressing the emotions and feelings I had with hair in a wider context – with an Irish-Italian upbringing, emotion is never far from the surface! I was approached to go into session work, where there are no rules – it was the polar opposite of where I had been. My collaborations over the years with photographer Tim Walker, who gave me almost complete creative autonomy, have matured me visually and creatively. I approach my work with feeling first, and then I apply technique.

CH: You’ve worked in the advertising and session worlds where incredible amounts of time, money and people power go into creating a single image that’s designed to sell a dream. In essence, isn’t this what the hairdresser does every day, and eight or nine times every day, in a salon?

GS: I disagree. I don’t think hairdressers sell dreams, and I don’t think they should sell dreams. Hairdressers should sell the clients back to themselves and celebrate who they really are, possibly from a different perspective but one that’s in tune and connected. Hair is an extension of who we are and it’s the hairdresser’s responsibility to gain a deeper understanding of their client to interpret that correctly.

CH: What difference could it make if hairdressers had more self-belief in their power to transform people’s lives? How would that impact the profession, and what could it mean for us as consumers?

GS: It would be seismic. I think having the respect for ourselves as individuals and as a profession would change us dramatically and command respect from outside the salon walls. The way hairdressing is seen today in a wider social context is a reflection of how we see ourselves. The respect for this profession has to come from within. It’s the power, not just the hair, which is in our hands, and now is the time to start believing it.



TO SEE A VIDEO OF THIS INTERVIEW, VISIT CREATIVEHEADMAG.COM/EDUCATION



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The Social Function Of A Hairdresser

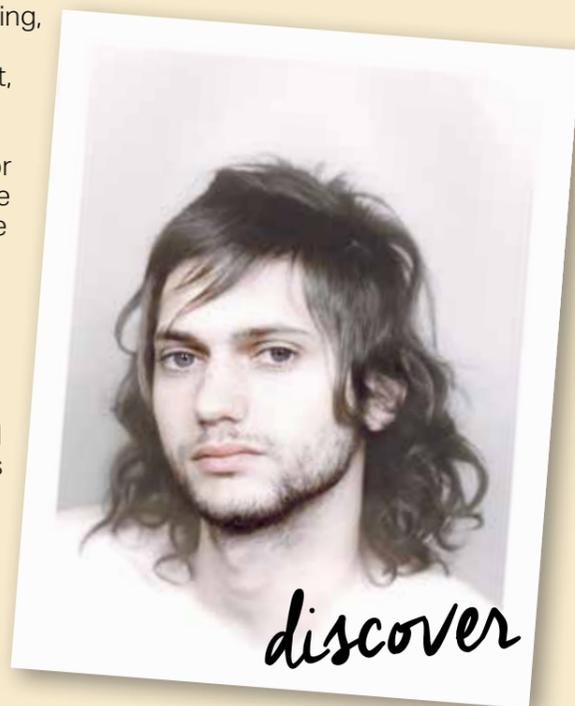
"The social function of a hairdresser is truly to understand how someone feels and, from this, celebrate their identity."

"Understanding the importance of this role is paramount to commanding the respect this industry so strongly deserves."

DISCOVER

THIS IS ABOUT CONNECTION AND UNDERSTANDING SOMEONE'S BOUNDARIES

"I do a lot of streetcasting, and I found this guy working in a bar. At first, he was unsure about me cutting his hair as he'd cut his own hair for years and didn't like the thought of anyone else touching it. However, I persuaded him to come to my studio as we spoke I discovered he was shy and quite reclusive. The cut I gave him was as if he'd cut his own hair – I was interpreting him as he is, not how I wanted him to be. The shoot was published in *i-D* magazine."



EVOLVE

THIS IS ABOUT RE-FRAMING SOMEONE AND TAKING THEM BEYOND THEIR BOUNDARIES

"Fanni was an unknown model when she came to me in the salon, and I sensed that she saw herself in a particular way – she was quite tomboyish, a bit of a skater. I saw that way too, but I also saw what I could do with her. I gave her a haircut that she could wear down for a softer, feminine look, but beneath it was a severe undercut that she could display to reveal her more androgynous side. Within two hours of leaving the salon she'd been booked for a high-profile ad campaign, and 'The Fanni' became an iconic look used in shows and campaigns for Gap, Gucci and Jil Sander – it even became a question in Trivial Pursuit! The reason why this haircut was so successful is because it wasn't done to a brief for a shoot – I did it because I had identified who Fanni was inside, which is far more powerful than working from a physical aesthetic."



CREATIVE HEAD EDUCATION

GS EDUCATION

"I have just launched GS EDUCATION, and these three elements are core to its philosophy and my approach to teaching: we **DISCOVER** area of individual needs, **CREATE** techniques to support those needs, and **EVOLVE** people through technical knowledge and skill truly to fulfil their potential."

"GS EDUCATION is a simple, understandable approach to cutting hair that will empower stylists with a deeper understanding of their work. My online Step By Step technical cutting videos from the Foundation series cover in-depth the key elements of shape and technique in cutting hair."

The videos are available to stream now at gianniscumaci.com. From 8 to 14 October, Round Layer Technique is free for Creative HEAD readers, just quote CHUK at the checkout.



CREATE

THIS IS ABOUT INTRODUCING SOMETHING NEW AND NOT RELATED TO THE PERSON



"We were on a shoot in Russia for *Vogue*. The stylist was Kate Phelan, the photographer was Tim Walker, and the model was Sasha Pivovarova. We'd already spent five weeks brainstorming references, and I'd arrived with a full awareness of what was required from the hair. However, Sasha missed her flight and suddenly we just had one day to shoot everything. I'd originally had an idea for a wig that Tim hadn't liked, but I'd packed it anyway. As soon as we started shooting, I knew in my gut that the wig was the right way to go, so when Sasha had a quick tea break I put it on her and cut in a fringe. Everyone was looking for Sasha and Kate saw me with her and ran over, shouting. Then she put a cheap plastic gold hat on Sasha and started shouting for Tim to come over and take a look, and he started shooting her with that cup of tea and everyone knew Sasha's whole character had suddenly come alive. That shot almost made the front cover, except there were no clothes in it – that's my cutting gown around Sasha's shoulders!"



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GIANNI SCUMACI is our Featured Artist at Creative HEAD Education this month, which is complete with tutorials, techniques and hundreds of new ideas. Come and be inspired at CREATIVEHEADMAG.COM/EDUCATION