

ELLE

HOLIDAY 2020





18 Winter Fashion



14 Powerful Women
of Dissent

NUE

Holiday 2020

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info@nuemagazine.com

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on the cover

Cover model/actress: Neva Cole

From the exhibition "Feel the Frill",
curated by Lisa Berman of
Sculpture to Wear

Photographer: Daniel Oropeza

LADY GODIVA

A Powerful Woman of Dissent

by Lisa Berman



The first time I laid eyes upon the glorious horse, a sculpture, Lux Maximus, by Daniel Oropeza, I envisioned a photograph that was legendary and timeless with a contemporary twist. Capturing an image of Lady Godiva atop of a award-winning artwork was a bit irreverent, scandalous, and controversial to begin with, and when I started to research the true meaning of the legend, that's when the ride really began. All too familiar with the tongue-in-cheek Halloween Costume with the long blonde wig and leggy nude who usually, just by default, earns the top prize, I thought there has be more to this cult fiction. Upon researching the legend who hailed from Coventry, England,

almost a thousand years ago, the famous ride was actually a personal stand, an unconventional "dissenting" of her husband's decision to tax the citizens. Exhausted by her tenacity on behalf of the people, her wealthy husband, the Governor of the region, responded with a dare: "If my wife were to ride through the town nude on horseback, I will cease the taxes". True to his word, she did and he stopped the taxation. Adding to the layering, almost 300 years later it was said that Lady Godiva's proclamation for the citizens to stay indoors and close their windows during her ride was followed by all, save one. Thomas, the local Tailor did not obey; he peered through the shutters and was blinded.

"Lady Godiva - First Lady of Dissent" / From the campaign created by Lisa M. Berman on behalf of the "Feel the Frill" exhibition honoring Ruth Bader Ginsberg, hosted by Sculpture To Wear Gallery / Actress Neva Cole / Lux Maximus (glass & metal) Sculpture by Daniel Oropeza, Winner of ARTPRIZE 2017 / Photographed at the Oropeza Sculpture Garden, managed by Berman Arts Agency at the Nursery by SouthWinds, Irvine, CA / Photographer: Daniel Oropeza / 2nd Camera/Lighting: Ed Dellis / Lisa M. Berman, Creative Director/Styling / Hair Accessories: Betsey Potter of Costume House LLC.



And thus we come to know the origin of "Peeping Tom".

History lesson traversed, I had just launched the "Feel the Frill" exhibition honoring Ruth Bader Ginsburg via my gallery Sculpture to Wear, which features "Collars of Dissent" synonymous with the Notorious RBG, and experienced the next surprise. When I learned that Lady Godiva's actions were of a "dissenting" nature, I immediately made the connection and decided to infuse the collars from the wearable

art show into the photoshoot. Sculptor Daniel Oropeza, the winner of ArtPrize 2017 remarked, "Working with Lisa always ends up being more than just the initial elements. The concept of Lady Godiva was an interesting idea from the inception and the more it evolved, the greater and richer the final vision became." As the Creative Director, there was only one choice to portray my version of Lady Godiva: actress and friend Neva Cole, a fellow widowed single mother. Most importantly (and surprisingly) she said yes!



Creative Director Lisa Berman (left) and pieces from the exhibit worn by Neva Cole (below)

"To simply say 'Yes,' takes effort and then there's the follow-through. We as humans thrive through connectivity. These pieces I'm wearing amplify our connectivity and honor that power."

This campaign was created from an eclectic "skeleton crew," four professionals who arrived without expectation and trusted in the creative process. It was an almost seamless production. The group included: Daniel Oropeza (The Scientific Sculptor), Ed Dellis (legendary race car driver & inventor of Persona Grip), actress and opera singer Neva Cole, and me, Creative Director Lisa M. Berman (Sculpture To Wear Gallery & Founder of Berman Arts Agency).

It wasn't until I sat down to write the account of our photoshoot that I learned of the namesake chocolate company's Lady Godiva's Initiative to Empower Women. "She stood up for what she believed in and gave a voice to the voiceless. Lady GODIVA is more than the inspiration behind the brand's name and more than its delicious chocolate; she is the embodiment of using a position of power to do good and continuing a legacy grounded in strength, boldness and doing what's right for her community," Wow!

With that important discovery, I felt that we had not only championed the making of a series of memorable images, but had made an authentic connection to a conversation that would resonate with other women, propelling the ideal



For more info about "Feel the Frill" exhibition, visit www.sculpturetowear.com



of standing up and "doing what's right" even further. We ended up with a damn good image of a real or imaginary icon, much like Wonder Woman, for the personal relevancy of the perpetuated myth is more important than the accuracy of the historical content. Afterall, it's the meaning that we give it that gives it value. And what we value, we honor; and what we honor, we respect.... and we all want that, especially NOW.