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IN CONVERSATION WITH OLIVIA LOCHER: A PHOTOGRAPHER  
BREAKING THE LAW WITH A FASHIONABLE TWIST

BY Alexandria Deters, September 24, 2017



*Olivia Locher is a 26 years young photographer currently based in Manhattan, NY. Her keen eye and experience in fashion, brings an aesthetically pleasing style to all of her works, similar to her idol Andy Warhol. This style, combined with the sense of humor she brings to her photography, has taken the social media world by storm and garnered her over 70,000 followers on Instagram. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to speak with Olivia about her work after seeing her first solo exhibition 'Olivia Locher: I Fought the Law' in New York at the Steven Kasher Gallery.*

**Alexandria Deters:** I love your new exhibition 'I Fought the Law'. One of my favorite things about your work is that every photograph looks straight out of a fashion magazine or an ad campaign. You also shoot for magazines like W, did you bring your fashion eye to this series?

**Olivia Locher:** Thank you so much! When I was growing up I was very fashion obsessed. As a young girl, I found my way to the bookstore and slowly started subscribing to all of the fashion magazines. W was one of those first magazines I got my hands onto. I loved the fantasy world that was being presented to me within the pages of the editorials. I was gifted Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled Film Stills' book as a teenager and became obsessed with her world. She has an effortless sense of play between fine art and fashion ideas. Her work was a huge inspiration for me. When I went to art school at SVA there seemed to be an overall consensus to sway students away from fashion imagery. Luckily, this mindset rapidly changed, near the end of my four years fashion critique classes were being added to the curriculum, etc. My roots are so attached to fashion that it tends to influence all of my work. All of the little details that I'd bring to a fashion shoot intensifies even more for my singular projects.

**The series 'I Fought the Law' was inspired by a friend discussing a crazy law in Alabama, that it's illegal to have an ice cream cone in your back pocket. Having looked at laws in the US and working on this series since 2013, have you considered extending this series to laws in other countries that are odd as well?**

Oh that's such a tough question! It would be so convenient for me to continue this body of work because there is so much source material. I think it's safe to say I'm finished with photographing laws mostly out of fear of becoming a one hit wonder.

**This series gained major exposure through social media platforms such as Tumblr and Instagram. Also, you've mentioned that many artists have started to copy your distinct style which is really eye-catching and unique. In this digital age, what are your thoughts on artists copying other artists? Is there a solution to this or is this a negative (or positive) consequence of making your work more accessible to the public?**

The whole world of social media appropriation is sort of a double-edged sword for me. I generally get really excited and have fun with it when people copy my concepts. There have been a few circumstances where my work has been copied almost identically and someone else has made a large profit from it. I have a hard time with those situations because I often wish those companies would have reached out to me to knockoff myself for them. As a creative in 2017, I've learned that you can't be too protective of your ideas. We live in a share and borrow moodboard culture and unfortunately in that environment that leads to a lot of appropriation.

**What were some the challenges you faced in creating your first publication that you did not expect to encounter?**

The entire process was pretty effortless! Chronicle was a total dream to work with. I am embarrassed to admit that for the longest time I was afraid to give up design control to their expert team members. I was so fearful to sign the contract because there was a tiny mention inside saying the author won't have final control of the final design. The control freak I am with my work made it terrifying to sign the contract. Chronicle's team and my editor were amazing to work with and I loved everything they did with the book.

**You mention in a few interviews that Andy Warhol is one of your favorite artists, and how his work has inspired you. Who are some female artists/photographers that have had a large impact in your art practice?**

Andy Warhol is so important to me because at times I feel like I grew up inside The Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. I have always been super inspired by female artists! Growing up I was really inspired by women in bands, particularly Kim Gordon, PJ Harvey and Bjork. I got really attracted to the work of Diane Arbus in art school, I was very moved by her attachment and sensitivity to her subjects. Some women working in photography right now who I think are brilliant are, Viviane Sassen, Taryn Simon, and Alex Prager. Taryn Simon's 2016 show at Gagosian, 'Paperwork and the Will of Capital', really blew my mind the book is also gorgeous and so smart.

**So after having a first solo show in New York, what is next on the agenda?**

I am so excited to start shooting new concepts that have been on my mind for a while! I'm working on another long-term project titled, 'How To'. With this project, I illustrate simple tasks that are a little off... For example, how to kiss, how to be sexy, how to stay cool, etc. I have a lot of fun working on this project and it feels pretty open-ended and can possibly go on forever.