

TEEN TITANS

Generation Y's new crop of young heroines takes flight.

THERE IS NO DEBATING IT: YOUTH WILL FOREVER BE FASHIONABLE. Besides all the wrinkle-free skin and shiny hair, there is a ferocious appetite for the future that accompanies all that is young. Yet aside from its superficial attributes, there is a rousing energy that comes from inexperience. The teenage years can often bolster a brazen accessory—a knows-no-bounds shield of optimism. To celebrate the rule- and deal-breaking side of youth, *FASHION* scoured the globe to spotlight six extraordinary young women—filmmaker, dancer, photographer, designer, activist and even a comic book character—who are staking their claims in the world. »



COVER

EDITOR:
ELIO
IANNACCI

The **CRUSADER**
KAMALA KHAN (ALIAS MS. MARVEL)

SHE'S A 16-YEAR-OLD PAKISTANI MUSLIM GIRL, a discernible dork who fangirls over comic books. Her strict parents are a buzzkill (no co-ed parties) and her school in Jersey City is made up of nerds and cool kids (not her). Oh, and she also happens to be a superhero and entirely fictional. In February, juggernaut comic book publisher Marvel Comics introduced Kamala Khan into its sprawling universe as Ms. Marvel. Her unique superpower: the ability to shift shapes. The brainchild of editor Sana Amanat and author G. Willow Wilson, Khan was brought to life by Toronto-based illustrator Adrian Alphona and is an anomaly among comic book babes for being *sans* brazen sexuality and neither buxom nor bombshell. "Kamala is an Ellen-Page-in-*Juno*-type girl covered up with layers of clothing—hoodies and pleated skirts over jeans," says Alphona. And then there's her Ms. Marvel costume, which is all fabric, no flesh—an electric-blue dress emblazoned with a thunderbolt worn over a red three-quarter-sleeve top, red tights, matching blue boots and a cape that modestly covers her neck. Ms. Marvel is a natural progression of that movement. What makes Khan extraordinary is just how very ordinary she is: She's every girl who's ever felt left out, could not reconcile her identity at home with who she is outside and does not realize the potential of her own greatness. If sales of the first issue of the series are any indication, there's an audience out there that's ready to embrace change: *Ms. Marvel* #1 reached the number one spot on Marvel's digital best-sellers list. It's a brave new world, and Kamala Khan is a superhero worth cheering for.

—Mishal Cazmi



The **AUTEUR**
KORA VANDERLIP

KORA VANDERLIP FIRST PICKED UP HER FAMILY'S video camera when she was nine, and "started experimenting." The 16-year-old based in B.C.'s Okanagan Valley has since made eight short films that have been screened at festivals around the world and won her numerous prizes, as well as a scholarship to Vancouver Film School. "I've always loved storytelling," she says, "but I really connected to the visual part of film. That's what started it."

Vanderlip's films are about small-town teens in life-changing situations: dealing with loss, leaving home, deciding how their future will unfold. "I think of them as a moment, a postcard, compared to a feature film being like a landscape," she explains. "I've always enjoyed watching people, and a huge motivator in my stories is character—the things people do, how they act." Her films are pensive and moody, with sparse dialogue that beautifully telegraphs youthful angst, and Vanderlip shows admirable restraint when it comes to putting too much information on the screen. "I like it when films don't tell you exactly what happens," she says. "Every person imagines their own ending."

Her parents have supported Vanderlip's work in a number of ways, including sending her to a filmmaking workshop in Toronto when she was 10. "That was great, because it gave me more knowledge about the technical side—camera angles, editing, lighting," she says. Meanwhile, her brother, Lukas, is her leading actor and provides atmospheric piano music for the soundtracks. "He usually hears about my ideas first," she says. "I'm so fortunate that he gained an interest in acting!"

Vanderlip is currently working on her first documentary, which will follow children in the arts for five years. Her future plans include making a feature film, perhaps in combination with her other passion, aviation—she's also getting her pilot's licence—as well as building her company, Mirror Room Productions, and working on-set for directors she admires, like the Coen Brothers. "Their style of storytelling is really intriguing," she says. In the meantime, she's off to see a program of Oscar-nominated shorts at TIFF. No doubt it won't be long before her own films are on that program. —Mary Dickie

PHOTOGRAPHY: ILLUSTRATION BY ADRIAN ALPHONA; VANDERLIP BY VANESSA HEINS

The **PRIMA BALLERINA**
MICHAELA DEPRINCE

WHEN MICHAELA DEPRINCE WAS RESCUED FROM WAR-TORN SIERRA Leone at the age of four, the first thing she sought out was not food, water or a much-needed dose of medicine. Although the preschooler suffered from fever, malnutrition, a hernia and a near-lethal case of mono, her soon-to-be adoptive parents, Elaine and Charles DePrince, found Michaela manically pointing to a glossy sheet of paper. It was a ripped cover of the 1979 issue of *Dance Magazine* which featured French prima ballerina Magali Messac pirouetting.

“I hid it in my underwear because I hadn’t wanted any of the other kids in the orphanage to take it from me,” says the now 19-year-old dancer via phone from her family home in New Jersey. “My mom told me I kept pointing to Magali when she found me,” she says, adding that her biological parents were both war victims. “I was trying to tell her what I was looking for—a pair of pointe shoes,” she explains. “In so many ways, Magali and ballet were my symbol of hope.” Messac’s success prompted DePrince to further obsess over dance, and once she was settled in her new family home in the States, a DVD of *The Nutcracker* had her begging for ballet lessons. DePrince’s serious exploration of grace and willingness to practice soon had the Dutch National Ballet calling, a company that DePrince now calls her home. Her next job with the DNB will go down in history, as DePrince is one of the few women of colour to play the coveted role of the White Swan, in an upcoming Dutch production of *Swan Lake*. On top of training for such epic milestones, DePrince also teaches

(the students are often two or three years younger than her), and is busy putting together an organization that will help build schools in Sierra Leone. In her downtime, she also writes: a book about her wild early-teen experiences is due to hit shelves in September. DePrince is optimistic that her presence in ballet will start a chain reaction of sorts. “I hope teens are inspired to work hard and to never give up on themselves,” she says. “I want them to realize that if you have something you love, put all your energy in that and you will succeed.” In terms of changes she would like to see in the future, DePrince visualizes opportunities for improvement in a couple of industries. “The fact that there aren’t a lot of black people on fashion runways is horrible,” she says. “Everybody loves seeing fashion, and [casting] shouldn’t be just based on the colour of the model. Same goes for ballet.” —*Elio Iannacci*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JADE YOUNG



The **STYLE SAVANT**
CECILIA CASSINI

“I spend time pursuing MY PASSION for FASHION the same way kids PLAY BASEBALL or the PIANO.”

sixth birthday, Cassini was given a sewing machine by her grandmother, and she’s been designing ever since. Her colourful creations, geared mainly toward kids and tweens, are decorated with ruffles and bows, feathers and fur. “They’re fun and fabulous—avant garde and classic at the same time” is how Cassini describes them. (Available by special order, her dresses retail for around \$60 to upwards of \$1,000.)

In 2012, the Style Network produced a short documentary called *Confessions of a Fashionette* about a then 12-year-old Cassini, in which cameras followed her as she attempted to expand her line with a major trunk show in L.A.

Throughout it all, Cassini says she gets mostly As in school by being organized and diligent. “I spend time pursuing my passion for fashion the same way kids play baseball or the piano,” she says, citing Coco Chanel as her idol.

Most impressive, however, is the way in which she gives back to her community. Since she was eight, Cassini has been designing dresses for little girls in hospitals and homeless shelters (“because every little girl deserves a dress,” she reasons). She also donates the proceeds of her trunk shows to children in need, and she has created a community service campaign called Follow Your Dreams that encourages children to pursue their passion at a young age. Still, as Cassini explains, “The biggest drawback to being a young designer is that I still have to go to school, and cannot travel the world just yet.” —*Shawna Cohen*

MOST TEENAGE GIRLS ARE HAPPY TO CHILL OUT AFTER SCHOOL, listening to Taylor Swift or Miley Cyrus. Not Cecilia Cassini. She’s busy dressing them. At just 15 years old, the Encino, Calif., native boasts an eponymous fashion line—launched in 2009—that has garnered attention not just from Swift and Cyrus but also from the likes of Sofia Vergara, Jenna Bush Hager and Kelly Osbourne, all devoted followers. Meanwhile, her website reads like a who’s who of the fashion industry: there’s Cassini and Klum, Cassini and DVF, Cassini and Tyra—the list goes on (“Betsey [Johnson] told me, ‘All you need is love!!!’” reads a photo caption).

So just how does the pint-sized daughter of a yoga instructor mom and photographer dad land herself in the style spotlight? Talent, of course, but also passion, which Cassini has in spades. She insists fashion is in her blood: “I actually think I was born knowing that I wanted to be a designer,” she says matter-of-factly. For her



The SHARP SHOOTER OLIVIA BEE

VIEWING A PHOTOGRAPH BY OLIVIA BEE IS LIKE WALKING INTO A SCENE from a Wes Anderson film. Equal parts peculiar and cool, her '70s-inspired images elicit a heavy dose of nostalgia. Remarkably, Bee only just turned 20—and her rise to fame is one for the books. Like most of her generation, she chronicled her teenage years in Portland, Ore., on social media sites such as Flickr and Instagram. But, unlike most of her selfie-obsessed peers, Bee caught the attention of Converse, which commissioned her to shoot an ad campaign at the ripe old age of 15. “I was like, ‘Wow, I have 12 pairs of Converse!’” Bee recalls. Next came Nike, which asked her to shoot a look book in Hawaii (her parents escorted her there and, as Bee recalls, “I also paid for my brother to come, because it was his 10th birthday”). She quickly got herself an agent, and pretty soon everyone from *The New York Times* to Fiat came calling.

One of her recent projects, an ad campaign for Roger Vivier’s Spring 2014 collection, stars Russian tastemaker Miroslava Duma. In typical Bee fashion, the campaign—shot in Paris—is campy yet sophisticated. “I was researching images of carousels from the 1920s. I love their playfulness, their circus vibe,” she says of the shoot.

Bee moved to Brooklyn at 18, though she now spends most of her time on an airplane. She’s been to Paris 10 times in the past year alone, and L.A. is another hotspot. “I travel all the time, all for work,” she says nonchalantly while listing Chicago, Japan, Madrid and Milan as next on her agenda. (Bee recently hired a studio manager and intern to help manage her 80-hour-a-week workload.)

While photography is her baby, Bee has also recently tried her hand at directing—and is betting on shooting a music video for Justin Timberlake or Beyoncé one day. In 2012, Hermès spotted her work and commissioned her to shoot the cover

of its magazine, along with an editorial inside (she used her friends as models). The Hermès folks were so impressed with the photos that they asked her to make a short film; the resulting film is so filtered and fairytale-ish, it’s like watching a designer version of *Moonrise Kingdom*. (Bee’s next film for the luxury brand comes out this month.)

Much like her photographic work, Bee’s wardrobe reflects a combination of whimsy and workable. Her essentials include black Levi’s and an Acne leather jacket (“It’s my favourite thing I own”), and she lists Dolce & Gabbana, Miu Miu and Chanel among her top designers. Not surprisingly, she still lives in her Converse—the label that started it all. “I was terrified,” Bee recalls of that first paid gig. “I still have this fear right before a shoot that my talent perspective will disappear overnight.” Turns out she has that imposter syndrome we’re all familiar with, though if one thing’s for certain, it’s that Olivia Bee is headed nowhere but up. —*Shawna Cohen*

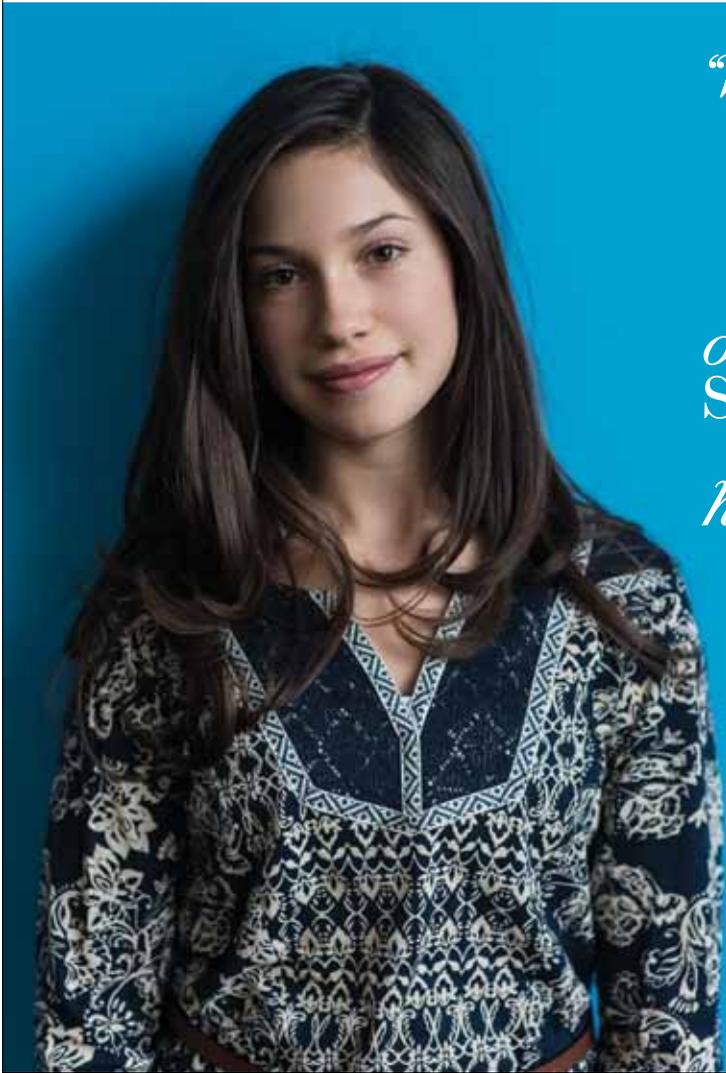
The **ACTIVIST**
RACHEL PARENT

RACHEL PARENT BECAME AN INSTANT STAR LAST SUMMER, WHEN HER nationally broadcast takedown of Kevin O’Leary went viral. The 14-year-old from Toronto had challenged the notoriously brash co-host of *The Lang and O’Leary Exchange* to a debate after he referred to anti-GMO activists as “just stupid.” Despite O’Leary’s name-calling and bully tactics during the segment, Parent stood her ground with grace and composure. “I’m so grateful for that interview,” she says. “It may not have seemed that way, but it helped us and the organization to really grow.”

That organization is Kids Right to Know, an educational and awareness group Parent founded in 2011 after she decided to do her class speech on the environmental and health impacts of genetically modified organisms. Like so many of those life-altering eureka moments, inspiration came to Parent from the most unlikely of places: her breakfast. “I was eating a bowl of cereal, and my grandma came up to me and said, ‘You know, that cereal might have GMOs in it.’ I was so shocked.” While researching the topic, it became clear to Parent that GMOs have a negative effect on nearly every point in the food chain, including animal cruelty, deforestation and food allergies. “It’s all so linked together. That’s why I chose GMOs. I knew it would affect almost every issue out there,” she explains. Through Kids Right to Know, Parent

advocates against GMOs and for the mandatory labelling of GMO foods in Canada and the U.S. Her cause has taken her around the world to events and conferences as far away as Australia, where in December she shared the stage at the Uplift Festival with doctors, best-selling authors and Vandana Shiva, a trail-blazing environmental activist Parent lists alongside Gandhi as one of her heroes.

When she’s asked about her dream career, Parent says that she’d like to be prime minister, a position she already seems suited for. Until then, she’ll continue on her mission to change the world. “We all have to speak out about what we believe in, regardless of where we live or what our situations are,” she says. “This is the world we have to grow up in. Why not make it a better place for our future?” — *Caitlin Agnew*



*“We all have to SPEAK
 OUT about what
 we BELIEVE IN,
 regardless of
 WHERE WE LIVE
 or what OUR
 SITUATIONS are.
 This is the world we
 have to GROW UP IN.
 Why not make it a
 better place for
 OUR FUTURE?”*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA MCINTYRE