

MODERN LUXURY

MICHIGAN AVENUE



AIDY BRYANT

The Art of Retail

HITTING HER STRIDE AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF RETAIL AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, FASHIONISTA HELEN YI TALKS TRENDS, TRAVEL AND STYLE TREASURES. BY TARA GARDNER



Few Chicagoans are as immersed in the city's retail landscape as Helen Yi, who disrupted the Windy City fashion scene for over a decade at her eponymous luxury boutique in Wicker Park. When the retail director role at the MCA opened up, Yi knew instantly that it was the dream fit. "I get to work with the leading local and global artists

and talk to them about how to translate their vision into products. Are you kidding? That's a spectacular, never-ending story filled with unlimited possibilities," she says. Importing her contemporary cool vibe to the museum's retail space with a focus on streetwear and artist collaborations, the South Loop resident dishes on the inspirations that color her world.

01/ CULTURE VULTURE: "Growing up in Chicago, I can't remember a time when I wasn't familiar with Picasso, Dubuffet, Miró, Calder and Chagall, or the buildings designed by Mies van der Rohe, Daniel Burnham and Frank Lloyd Wright. These masterworks were literally around every corner, and collectively they represent my visual foundation."

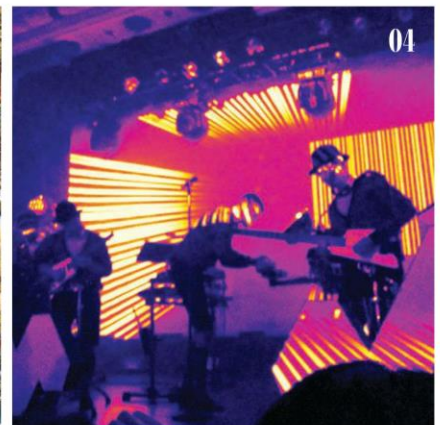
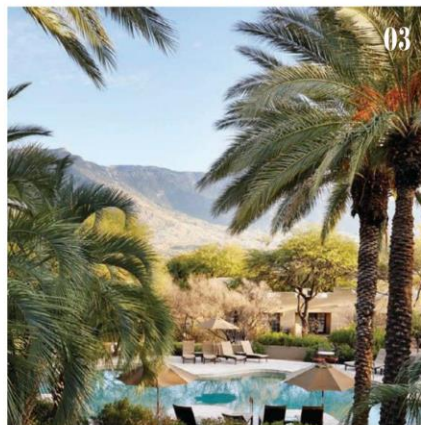
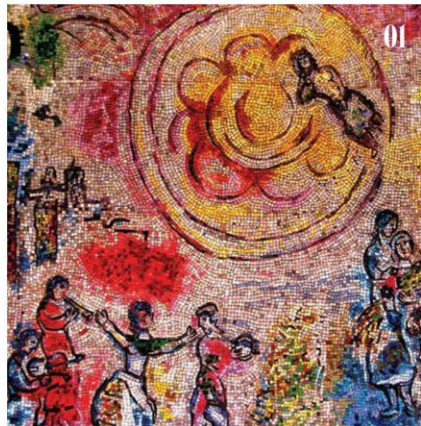
02/ DESIGNER DU JOUR: "Alexander McQueen. The past few collections have been exquisite. Sarah Burton has managed to start from a base of ultrafeminine silhouettes and fabrics, and then infused them with an edge you would expect of McQueen. This, within a collection that is perfectly tailored and unbelievably self-confident. The combination is sophisticated, bold and extravagant, held together with a dose of punk. I am in love."

03/ TRAVEL DESTINATION: "Miraval in Tucson, Arizona—my first solo vacation. It was an amazing experience and I made lifelong friends. The resort is perfect in every way."

04/ MUSICAL FAVORITES: "I listen to everything. But I grew up at The Metro and Lounge Ax watching bands like Eleventh Dream Day, Material Issue and Green."

05/ PRIMO PEOPLE-WATCHING: "Hotel Costes, near where Colette used to be, during Paris Fashion Week. Rue du 29 Juillet mimics a catwalk, where everyone walks down the street after the shows let out of the tents in the Tuileries."

06/ FAVORITE ACCESSORY: "My vintage gold Rolex Oyster Perpetual. It was my father's wedding gift to my mother. I inherited it, and it's incredibly special for many reasons."



HELEN YI PHOTO BY KATRINA WITKAMP; CHAGALL'S FOUR SEASONS PHOTO BY PETER FITZGERALD; CC BY SA 4.0; RUNWAY PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEXANDER MCQUEEN; METRO PHOTO BY GOATLING CC BY SA 2.0; WATCH PHOTO COURTESY OF ROLEX; WATCH BACKGROUND PHOTO BY EMILE GUILLEMOT ON UNSPLASH; HOTEL PHOTO BY JHOEL CC BY 2.0; RESORT PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRAVAL ARIZONA