

THIS PAGE: *Cotton jersey Tentacle jacket with tiered fringing and cotton denim pant with details, both ASHER LEVINE. Leather Whitney lace-up shoes, DR. MARTENS. Pima*

cotton/nylon socks, GOLD TOE. OPPOSITE PAGE: Carp leather-cropped motorcycle jacket and cotton jersey asymmetric tentacle tank, both ASHER LEVINE.



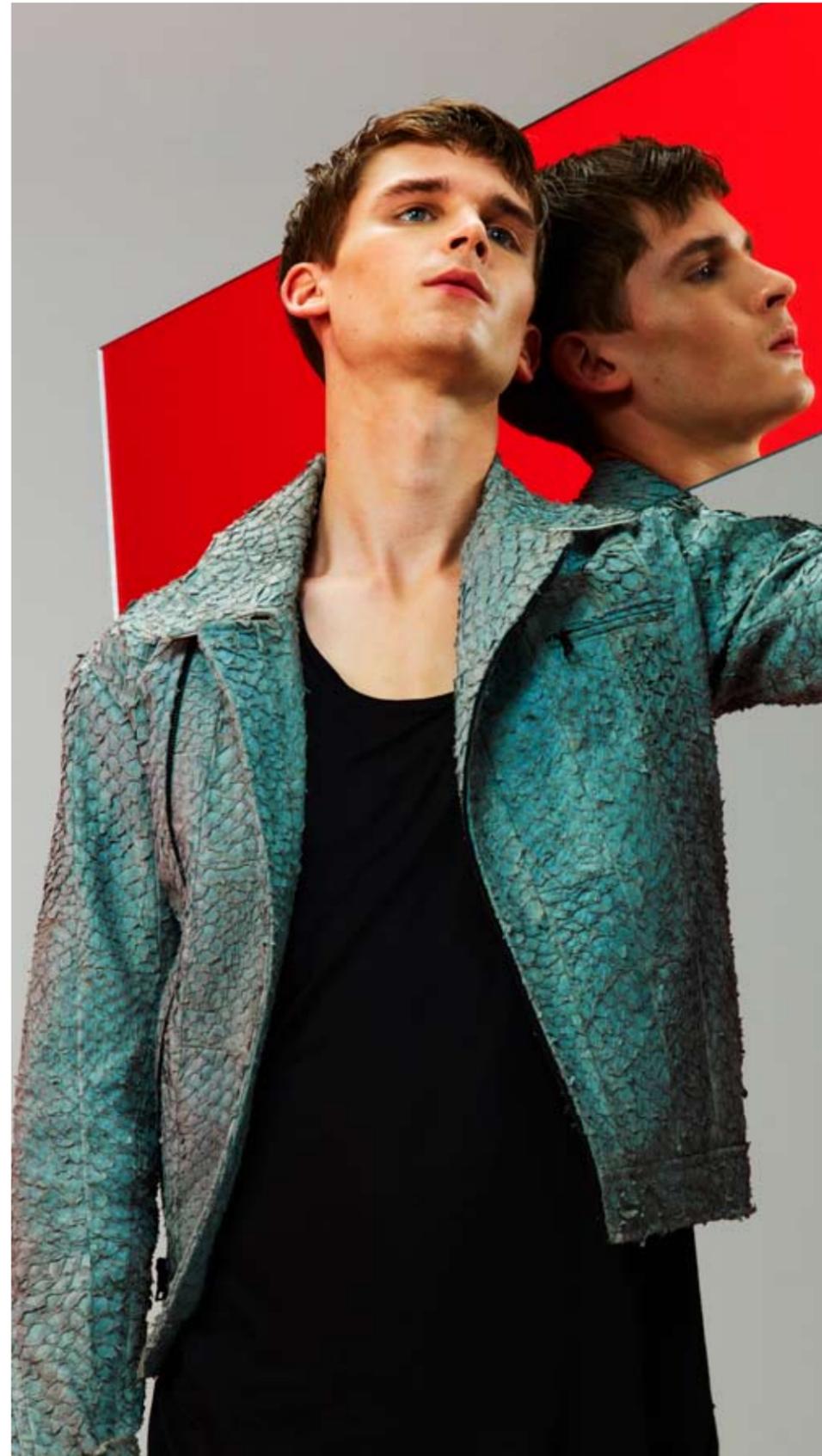
The DIY Dynamo

EMPLOYING EXOTIC MATERIALS AND A TOUCH OF THE FANTASTICAL, **ASHER LEVINE** CREATE MENSWEAR WORTHY OF PASSING ANY VELVET ROPE.

PHOTOS **DAVID SCHULZE**
STYLING **GREGORY WEIN**

Following his fall 2010 debut via a self-made fashion video—in which scenesters-gone-goth donned spiked boots and clothing sewn with thread fashioned from fox, alligator, Persian lamb and emu leather—the latest collection from New York-based Asher Levine paints draped tie-dye smocks, winged ponchos and floor-length trench coats with a black-and-blue palette. A hodgepodge of African skins highlight the collection, including wildebeest fur, which emits a blue hue in the right light. “Pairing exotic materials with luxurious fabrics yields a fresh look, not only masculine, but distinctive,” Levine says.

The 23-year-old native Floridian enrolled in sewing classes at age 10, and later, while studying at Pace University’s business school, spent his evenings designing in the basement of his West Village apartment. His experimental feats of fashion, influenced by science, abstract art and New York nightlife, have won him commissions to dress Lady Gaga and the Black Eyed Peas. The success has intensified his drive to maintain the label’s authenticity. “I steer clear from template show spaces—I believe everything from the stitch to the runway show should display a custom vision,” he says. “It’s what makes the thing exclusive. Every collection and show is a step forward.”





QUASIMI views his heritage through Western eyes.

After spending his college years as an intern for the firms of Herzog & de Meuron, Rem Koolhaas and David Adjaye, UAE-born Khalid Al Qasimi left a career in architecture to start his eponymous fashion line in 2008. "Architecture is the culmination of design education, so fashion was a natural avenue for me," says Qasimi. "It sits close to architecture when you consider the body as a landscape." Working from his London-based studio, Qasimi imbues his work with an East-meets-West aesthetic. The Central Saint Martins-trained 31-year-old juxtaposes textiles such as pastel organza and chiffon in creations with a masculine silhouette that evokes the Middle East. The result: new shapes via sleeveless vests, unlined jackets, and cutout geometric pockets exposing the body. His s/s 2011 collection, dubbed *The Empty Quarter*, was inspired by the travels of British explorer Sir Wilfred Thesiger, a general and lensman who traveled the Persian Gulf. "What inspires me is the art of dress," Qasimi says. "The smoking of garments with incense, the layering, the placement of the head dress—they're all beautiful rituals that play a large role in daily life."

Swedish label ODEUR wants you to think it over.

The unisex collection of Petter Hollström and Gorjan Lauseger, both 27, presents a reinterpreted silhouette that is masked with expertly draped metallic fabrics and offers a nod to futuristic sportswear, gothic fiction and wrinkled bedsheets. "We don't think in terms of what is manly or girly, but more about which element is needed to create an interesting silhouette, regardless of gender," Hollström explains. Their spring/summer 2011 offering, titled "Where the Shimmer Lies," gently pokes fun at the material indulgences of the nouveaux riches and their proclivity for clean-cut garments of cotton, silk, linen, wool mixes, and cashmere. The Stockholm-based label, started in 2006 as a T-shirt collection, has grown to comprise denim, outerwear and accessories. "Our aim is to get people to dress somewhat differently, taking small steps forward in the thought of their appearance," Hollström says. "Odeur allows for mixing traditional notions of what is manly and girly, and realizes them in a more interesting context."

THIS PAGE (FROM LEFT): *Wool Blind two-button blazer, cotton double singlet and cotton twill smell zipper jeans, all ODEUR. Polished leather Vidal Nuevo lace-up shoes,*

DR. MARTENS. Cotton double singlet, ODEUR. Nylon/lycra tight-end tights convertible leggings, SPANX. Crocodile-suede Alba heels, LARARE.

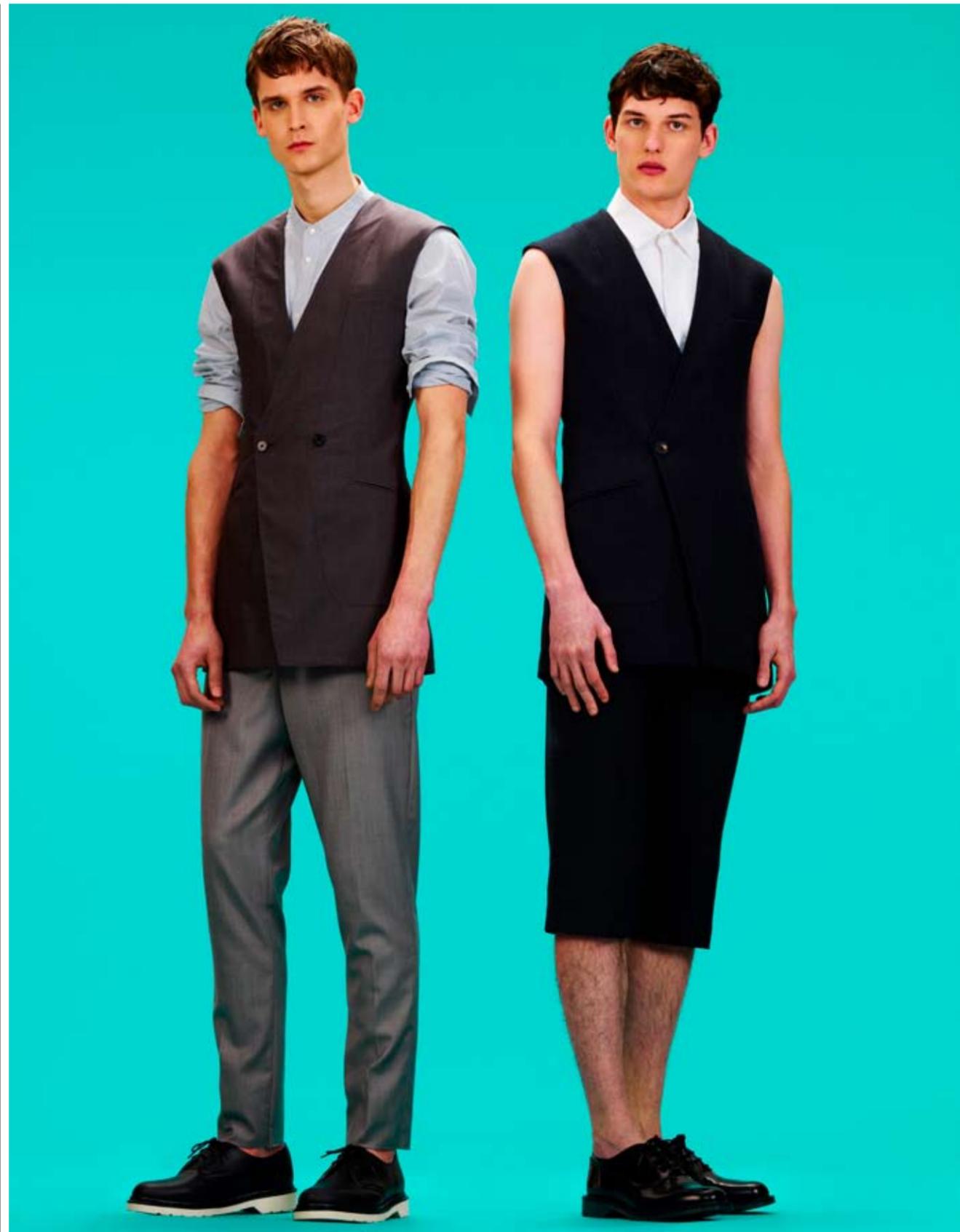
Solid brass-leather stud bracelet, NOIR. OPPOSITE: Linen belted trench coat, cotton/jersey knit tank top, and pants, all QASIMI.



THIS PAGE (FROM LEFT): *Linen long vest, cotton striped long-sleeve shirt and wool slim fit trousers, all QASIMI. Leather Whitney lace-up shoes, DR. MARTENS. Wool/silk long vest,*

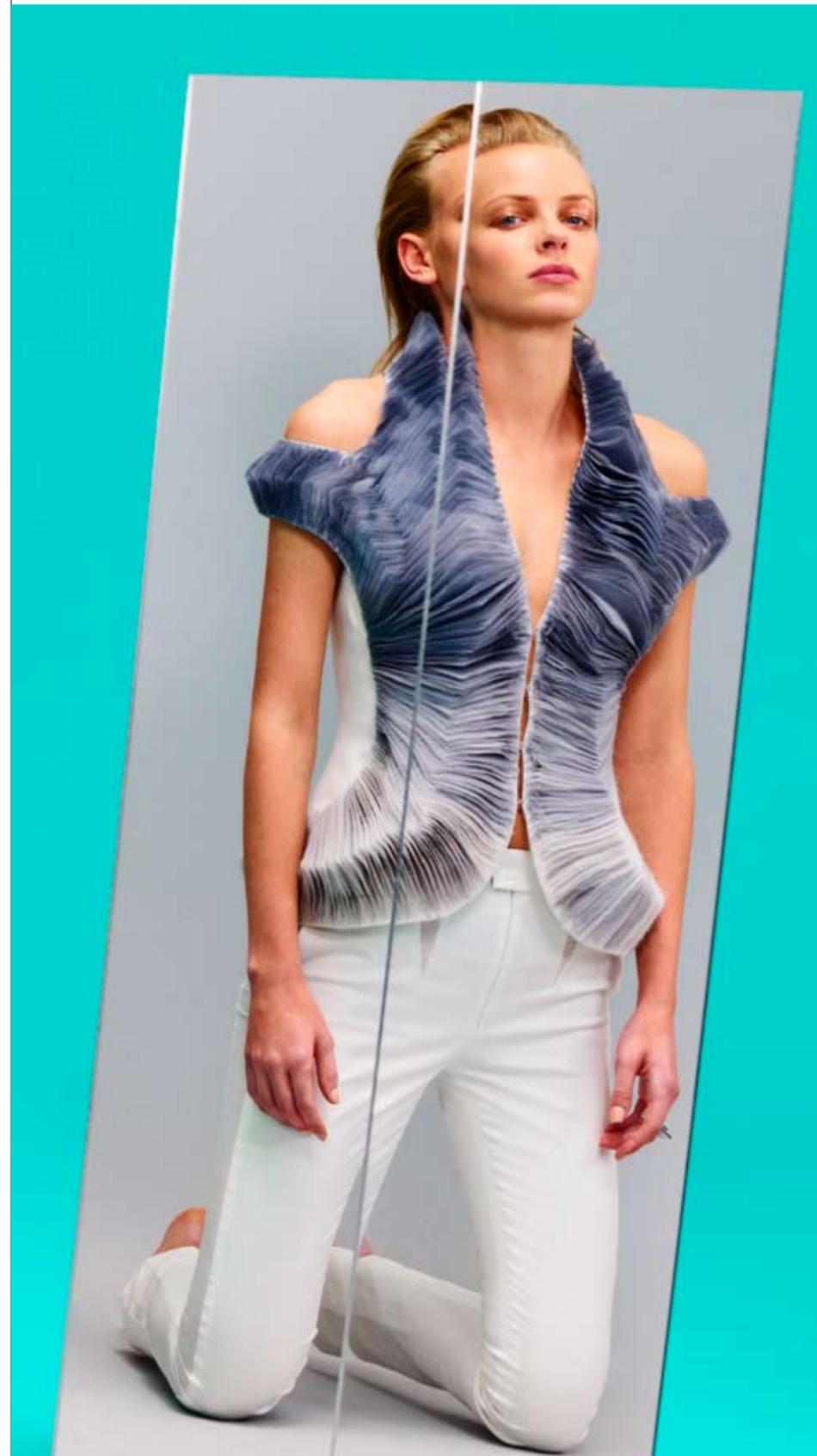
cotton sleeveless button down shirt and wool/silk cropped trousers, all QASIMI. Polished leather Vidal Nuevo lace-up shoes, DR. MARTENS. OPPOSITE: Organza gilet and

gabardine trousers with transparent silk/chiffon panels, both MAXIME SIMOENS. Solid brass plated rhodium stackable rings, all NOIR.



Wonder Woman would surely max out her plastic on the styles of MAXIME SIMOENS.

Paris-based Maxime Simoens' teen dream of becoming a film producer got derailed once he caught sight of an ad campaign for Madonna in a Jean-Paul Gaultier ensemble. From that moment on he resolved to pursue a career in fashion. Now 26 and seasoned by prized gigs at Dior, Balenciaga, and Jean Paul Gaultier, Simoens has his own two-year-old women's wear label, four-seasons strong, that somewhat reflects the work his former employers through geometric cuts, futuristic silhouettes and medieval undertones. "My work is inspired by the evolution of the female heroine," he says, in reference to his muse, Kirsten Dunst, who starred in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Marie Antoinette*, both big influences on the latest collection. For spring, Simoens concocted a delicate yet modern bow to Versailles, combining gabardine, satin and jacquard with feathers and embroidery. —TIFFANY JOW



HAIR: **KATSUMI MATSUO** for WOON. MAKE-UP: **TRACY ALFAJORA** for DIOR at Joe Management. MODELS: **BRYCE** at Ford Models, **LOWELL** at Soul Artist Management, and **DORITH** at Next Models. FASHION ASSISTANTS: **KELL CHOLKO** and **SANDRO ROMANS**. HAIR ASSISTANT: **HIROKO SUZUKI**. PHOTO ASSISTANTS: **JAKE JONES** and **MURRAY HALL**. LOCATION: **SPLASHLIGHT STUDIOS**.