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From designer Tory Burch to artist Lauren Halsey, these creative visionaries are the icons of the 21st century

Our essential list of the indomitable changemakers and pioneering groundbreakers who are defining the culture.



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What makes a voice powerful? What makes one important? What makes one worthy of celebration or impossible to deny? These are the kinds of questions we asked ourselves in compiling this list of people, collectives, and choruses of individuals who are, in our estimation, Voices of Now. They are a diverse group of artists, writers, activists, and thinkers from across the cultural spectrum, each of them representing a perspective, a passion, a mission, and a distinct set of connections, ideas, and experiences. But it's the way that they speak to us—and this moment—that sets them apart.



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In putting together this list, we wanted to spotlight people who are not just at the vanguard of their respective fields but using their talents and platforms to shift narratives and conversations—and, in some cases, even presenting and starting new ones that need to be heard and had. It includes musicians and filmmakers, designers and creatives, activists and politicians, athletes and scientists, movers, makers, and



voices that empower us to find and use our own.

GRETA GERWIG, ACTOR, FILMMAKER & SCREENWRITER

Gerwig's *Barbie* is at once a searing critique of gender relations and a jubilant celebration of female empowerment. It has also transformed the blockbuster landscape, becoming the highest-grossing film by a female director and establishing Gerwig as an industry power player.

THE SWIFTIES

Taylor Swift's dedicated, joy-filled followers have taken fandom to new heights, traveling across the country to catch their idol's Eras-tour performances—creating a huge economic influx within local communities in the process. It is estimated that the US leg of the tour will generate \$5 billion in consumer spending. The Swifties have also curated a unique concert culture, beading friendship bracelets ahead of shows to trade with fellow fans. During Swift's performance of "Shake It Off" at a Seattle tour date, the Swifties' rapturous jubilation even caused seismic activity equivalent to a 2.3-magnitude earthquake.



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tracks—“Alien Superstar” and “Break My Soul”—on 2022’s Renaissance as a celebration of house music’s rich history and Black queer roots.

TRACY CHAPMAN, MUSICIAN

This July, Chapman became the first Black woman to earn a number one on Billboard’s Country Airplay chart as a solo songwriter with Luke Combs’s cover of her 1988 hit, “Fast Car,” illuminating her enduring influence and country music’s history of excluding diverse voices.

THE RESILIENT ONES

After withdrawing during the Summer Olympics in 2021 in order to focus on her mental health, gymnast Simone Biles took home the all-around title at her first competition back this summer. In August, sprinter Sha’Carri Richardson, who in 2021 qualified for the Summer Olympics but was suspended from Team USA due to cannabis use, won the 100-meter dash at the World Athletics Championships.

PHOEBE PHILO, DESIGNER

Perhaps no designer has had a more apparent influence over fashion’s new obsession with understatement and quality

Here's where the likes of Calvin Klein, Alexander McQueen, Franco Moschino, Erdem Moralioglu and other icons studied



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NARS Cosmetics just came to India: Here is everything you should know about the iconic brand

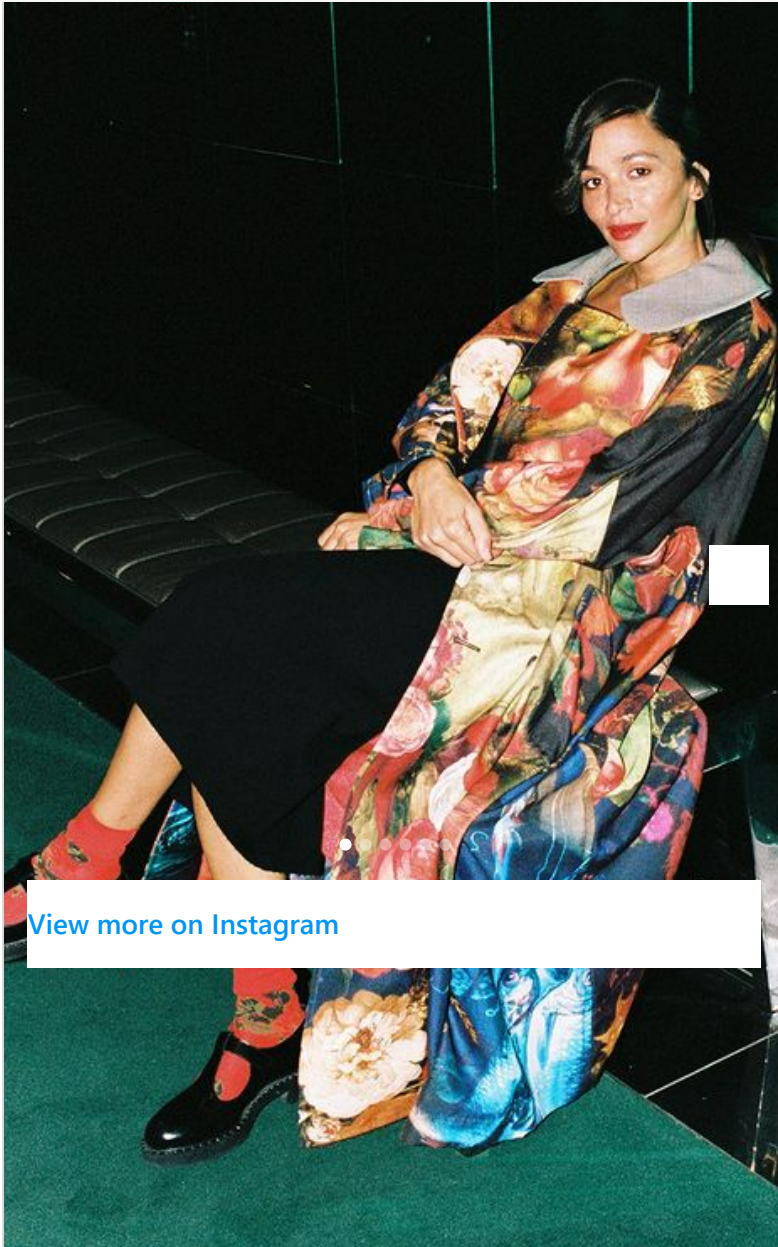


always retained echoes of her own singular style, Philo created a new blueprint for luxury that was highly personal and stood apart from the male gaze. Philo stepped away from Celine in 2018, but her work during her time there continues to fuel a cultish devotion, inspiring scores of dedicated Instagram accounts and even a crowded archive sale last fall in Paris. And while she has remained quiet in the intervening years, this fall is set to mark her glorious return with the long-awaited launch of her eponymous label.



Tracing the history of nail art and how it became beauty's biggest trend

LAILA GOHAR, ARTIST

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the mythical Marriott Zamalek - a big terracotta colored building with bottle green windows. Nadia and I would play hide and seek in the courtyard (slide 2). The place remains the setting of my favorite childhood memories. When [@theluxurycollection](#) called me to design products for and inspired by their properties that would live at the hotels it was a full circle moment. My favorite items we've made so far are the martini pick, inspired by a Frank Lloyd Wright gate I saw near the hotel in LA, and beautiful organza and Egyptian cotton cocktail napkin. Looking forward to the year ahead with exciting projects in Paris and Kyoto 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

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Using food as her predominant (often edible) medium, Gohar creates surreal tablescapes for museums, galleries, and fashion events. She describes Gohar World, her line of whimsical tableware, as “dreamy and sophisticated without taking itself too seriously”.

KWAME ONWUACHI, CHEF & RESTAURATEUR

The James Beard Award–winning Onwuachi’s new Manhattan restaurant, Tatiana, spotlights the Caribbean, African, and South American flavours of his heritage. “I want to continue to give life to traditions that were passed down to me,” he says.

LAUREN SANTO DOMINGO, ENTREPRENEUR

As artistic director of Tiffany & Co.’s Home collection, Moda Operandi co-founder, Santo Domingo is bringing her impeccable taste to one of the house’s most renowned categories, which includes tableware, silver, and crystal.

AMERICAN FASHION’S NEW POWER GENERATION



radically (and exquisitely) reinvented tailoring of his label Fear of God; Emily Adams Bode Aujla, who has put an emphasis on craft and material with Bode; Raul Lopez of Luar, a finalist for the 2023 LVMH Prize; Peter Do, who helms his own brand and was appointed the creative director of Helmut Lang in May; and Christopher John Rogers, who creates vibrant sportswear and evening looks.

THE STORYTELLERS RESHAPING HOLLYWOOD

Stories about Asian identity have often been sidelined in Hollywood, but a cadre of writers, filmmakers, and showrunners has now thrust them to the center. There's Celine Song's powerful drama *Past Lives*; Adele Lim's raunchy comedy *Joy Ride* (co-written by Cherry Chevapravatdumrong and Teresa Hsiao); Kelvin Yu's fantastical Disney+ series *American Born Chinese*; and the too-real-to-handle Netflix series *Beef*, created by Lee Sung Jin and executive-produced by stars Ali Wong and Steven Yeun. Next, an adaptation of Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart*, directed by *The White Lotus*'s Will Sharpe. "I'm excited that our stories are all over the damn place," says Lim.



of *The Favourite* director Lanthimos's unconventional, occasionally surrealist approach to cinema, cementing him as one of today's most visionary auteurs.

SZA, MUSICIAN

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friends on + announce ppl I Stan lmao) my team also surprised me w a GANG OF PLATINUM and gold plaques for SOS ☺☺ can't believe the album is already eligible for double platinum . LOVE TO EVERYBODY THAT GOT ME HERE AND CONTINUES TO LIFT ME UP . I love you ♡

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an artist in control of her craft. The genre-spanning musician has rejected being labeled as simply an R&B artist, and her lyricism is unmatched for its vulnerability and writerly style.

DREW BARRYMORE, HOST & PRODUCER

In a glorious second act (or perhaps her third or fourth), Barrymore launched *The Drew Barrymore Show* in the fall of 2020—and completely upended the traditional daytime talk show in the process, with offbeat segments, a parade of celebrity friends who join her, and most notably her own frankness, warmth and vulnerability.

LILY GLADSTONE, ACTOR

In an important moment for Indigenous representation in film, Gladstone—of Blackfeet and Nimiipuu heritage—stars in Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon*, based on David Grann's non-fiction book about murder and injustice in an Osage community.

RAMY YOUSSEF, ACTOR & SHOWRUNNER

Through his semi-autobiographical comedy drama series, *Ramy*, and additional projects



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TORY BURCH, DESIGNER & PHILANTHROPIST



wear and in their lives. Outside of running her own brand, she heads up the Tory Burch Foundation, which she founded in 2009 with the goal of supporting female entrepreneurs by providing access to funding, fellowships, and financial education.

MACKENZIE SCOTT AND MELINDA FRENCH GATES, PHILANTHROPISTS

In the wake of their respective divorces from Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates, Scott and French Gates led the charge on a radical, more humble approach to philanthropy, quietly donating billions of dollars with a conspicuous lack of fanfare to organisations focused on areas such as early-childhood education and development as well as those dedicated to advancing gender equality in tech, education, and politics.

AURORA JAMES, DESIGNER & ACTIVIST



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crash and felt the wind whisper across my skin that only today is promised and we must must make the most of it. Thank you to all of my seat mates last night for being open and vulnerable and making space for us to exchange ideas and let each other in. The future belongs to all of us if we're willing to fight for her. ☺☺ I love you guys, pass it on.

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fashion brand Brother Vellies, launched the Fifteen Percent Pledge, which encourages stores to pledge a portion of their purchasing power to Black-owned businesses. This year, she co-founded the Friends and Family Collective, a VC fund focusing on providing capital to Black founders.

MICHAEL KORS, DESIGNER & PHILANTHROPIST

Created in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme, Kors's global campaign against food insecurity, Watch Hunger Stop, celebrates its 10th anniversary this month. Raising money through the sale of limited-edition Michael Kors-branded capsule collections and donations, the campaign has donated more than 30 million meals to the WFP's school meals programme, providing nutritious food to children in underserved regions. "It's a reason to celebrate and a challenge to do more," Kors says of the campaign's impact.

KELLY SAWYER PATRICOF AND NORAH WEINSTEIN, PHILANTHROPISTS

Through the nonprofit Baby2Baby, co-founders Sawyer Patricof and Weinstein



climate disasters.

BREA BAKER, ACTIVIST & WRITER

Baker's book, **ROOTED: THE AMERICAN LEGACY OF LAND THEFT & THE MODERN MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LAND OWNERSHIP**, makes the case for land reparations.

THE WNBA'S OUTSPOKEN SUPERSTARS

The women of the WNBA have consistently banded together to lead displays of collective activism addressing racism, policing, gender pay equity, and LGBTQ+, voting, and reproductive rights—and fans have responded, turning out to games in record numbers. They also support one another: To protest the Russian detainment of their Phoenix Mercury teammate Brittney Griner in 2022, a group that included Sophie Cunningham and Brianna Turner held a rally on their home court.

ZOOEY ZEPHYR, MONTANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

In April, Zephyr, the first openly trans representative in Montana's state legislature, chided her Republican



THE VOICES OF RESPONSIBILITY IN AI

Computer scientists Yejin Choi and Joy Buolamwini are each working to eradicate racial and gender bias within AI. Choi has developed models that detect biases in language, while Buolamwini is the founder of the Algorithmic Justice League, a nonprofit that advocates for equitable technology. Buolamwini's debut book, *Unmasking AI*, is out this month.

DAN COLEN, ARTIST & FOOD ACTIVIST

In 2011, Colen, a celebrated New York painter and sculptor, established Sky High Farm, a non-profit in upstate New York that increases access to fresh, local food.

"Everyone deserves to eat nutritious food," says Colen. Since opening, it has donated more than 100,000 pounds of vegetables and 65,000 pounds of animal protein to food-access programmes.

CLIMATE ACTIVISM'S NEW GUARD

Today's most impactful environmentalists are coming at the climate crisis from all angles. Fisheries biologist Daniel Pauly and



overfishing. As the founder of non-profit Coral Gardeners, Titouan Bernicot is also working to reform ocean conservation by growing and planting resilient corals to revive reef ecosystems. Back on land, a group of youth environmentalists called the Climate Kids won a landmark case in August, suing the state of Montana on the grounds that its continued investment in fossil fuels violates an article in the state constitution that guarantees its citizens the right to a “clean and healthful environment.” And as the host of Meta’s *Climate Talks* podcast, journalist Sophia Li makes discussions surrounding climate justice and sustainability more accessible.

LAUREN HALSEY, ARTIST

Halsey’s sculptural artworks and site-specific projects often incorporate imagery and ideas drawn from South Central Los Angeles. During the pandemic, she established a center, Summaeverythang, to help provide food and support to members of the community. On view at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art through October 22, her installation eastside of South Central Los Angeles hieroglyph prototype architecture (I) is a love letter to her neighborhood. Designed for interaction



surrounded by four columns and four sphinxes.

FRIDA ESCOBEDO, ARCHITECT

In 2018, the Mexico City native became the youngest-ever designer of the annual Serpentine Pavilion in London. In 2022, she was selected to reimagine the Oscar L. Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, becoming the first woman to design a wing for the institution.

MAYA LIN, DESIGNER, ARTIST & ARCHITECT

The renowned designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., which she conceptualized as a senior at Yale University, Lin creates works that explore our relationship with the natural world; they commune with landscapes rather than dominate them.

DARE TURNER, MEG ONLI, AND ASHLEY JAMES, CURATORS

Museums nationwide are reevaluating the kinds of art they show and communities they serve, and that includes three of New York's preeminent institutions. This spring, Turner



named curator at large at the Whitney Museum of American Art and cocurator of the 2024 Whitney Biennial; and James (right), of the Guggenheim, organised the museum's new show "Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility," which explores what it means to be seen, not seen, or erased.

**DOLLY PARTON, SINGER,
SONGWRITER & PHILANTHROPIST**

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59,490 likes

dollyparton

My new 'Rockstar' single, "Let It Be" is dropping this Friday! This song is really special to me because I'm joined by @paulmccartney who wrote the song, along with @ringostarmusic, @mrpeterframpton and @mickfleetwoodofficial. Make sure to sign-up for my newsletter to be the first to hear an exclusive clip of the song!

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Throughout her legendary career, Parton has donated millions of dollars to



Foundation, which is focused on increasing childhood literacy. This month, Parton is set to release *Behind the Seams: My Life in Rhinestones*, a book chronicling the evolution of her iconic style, followed by her first rock album, *Rockstar*, in November.

LOIS LOWRY, AUTHOR

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Lowry's seminal young-adult dystopian novel *The Giver*, which has topped banned-books lists since its publication for its depiction of a society that, while free from war, pain, and poverty, is also void of colour, joy, individualism, and love. "The current victims of book banning, this generation of kids, will be the next generation of voters," says Lowry.

THE LITERARY DUO

Farrar, Straus and Giroux editor Jackson Howard (left) is helping to center more queer stories and voices in publishing, while Jonathan Escoffery, whom Howard has edited, is the author of the 2023 Booker-Prize-long-listed story collection *If I Survive You*, which examines race and identity through the eyes of a third-culture kid.



Adams and Lauren Underwood, the Black Maternal Health Caucus seeks to advance policy solutions to improve maternal-health outcomes for Black women. This year, they introduced the Momnibus Act, featuring 13 bills that would address every driver of maternal mortality, morbidity, and disparities. “I won’t stop fighting to confront the structural racism in health care,” says congresswoman and caucus member Ayanna Pressley.

BRANDEN JACOBSJENKINS, PLAYWRIGHT

Two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist Jacobs-Jenkins is transforming the historically white American theatre landscape through plays such as *Gloria* and *Everybody*, which address topics like race, class, and identity. His 2013 drama, *Appropriate*, which is set during an estate closing that exposes a contentious family history, is debuting on Broadway in November.

Compiled by Nojan Aminosharei, Stephen Mooallem and Fiona Murray.

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