

FASHION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE FIN PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP



- FASHION AND PORTRAITS
- WEDDINGS AND EVENTS
- TRAVEL AND LANDSCAPES

15% OFF
ALL WEDDING
PHOTOGRAPHY

INCLUDES ALL WEDDING PACKAGES.

40% OFF
PORTFOLIO
SHOOTS

Our passion for creative photography is what drives us to give you our very best service each and every time and because we love what we do, it will always be our pleasure!

So give us a call or drop us an email on info@finphotography.com.au and we hope to talk to you soon.

FIN PHOTOGRAPHY
GROUP

www.finphotography.com.au

The ultimate guide to the hottest talents from all over the world

July 2018

STAR CENTRAL

**MEET
SIONY
SINGH**

THE ASAN
CHARITY QUEEN
MOTHER
PAGEANT
WINNER OF 2018

**WHO IS
NELL
NAKKAN**
GET TO KNOW
CAUSE FILM
FESTIVAL'S
BEST ACTOR

**THE
RISE OF
'INSTA'
MODELS**

HOW 'INSTA'
MODELS ARE
FIXING FASHION'S
DIVERSITY
PROBLEM

**CAUSE
FILM
FESTIVAL**

A LOOK BACK
AT A FILM
FESTIVAL WITH
A HEART

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT

**ANDREW
VLAHOS**

FOLLOW US ON [TWITTER.COM/STARCENTRALMAG](https://twitter.com/STARCENTRALMAG) & LIKE US ON [FACEBOOK.COM/STARCENTRALMAG](https://facebook.com/STARCENTRALMAG)



RAY BARTHOLOMEUSZ

Photography

Fashion | Weddings | Events

M: 0413080713

E: ray.bartholomeusz@yahoo.com.au

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 5 **Siony Singh:** Meet the Asan Charity Queen Mother Pageant winner
- 6 **Feature:** Get to know Nell Nakkan - a stunning writer, actress, director, and producer.
- 10 **Event Review:** Cause Film Festival
- 12 **Event Review:** The Rise Project
- 16 **Event Review:** TPK Fashion Show
- 24 **Jessica Gillett:** Meet StarCentral's swimsuit model of the month
- 26 **Marjara Pelito:** Meet StarCentral's Instagram model of the month
- 28 **Spotlight:** Waking up to getting 'woke'
- 32 **Feature:** Former sex worker reveals the truth about the industry
- 34 **Feature:** How the world is embracing body diversity

18

Cover

Andrew Vlahos

Get to know this successful fitness model, dancer and blogger.



OPENING REMARKS



It has been nearly 13 years now since we released the first ever issue of StarCentral Magazine and I want to both share a couple of thoughts as well as wish you all the best for 2018. Firstly, I want to thank the great people behind StarCentral Magazine who are tirelessly working behind the scenes to ensure that our magazine and website is in tip top shape. You should all be proud of the significant contribution you make to the overall StarCentral business. Like any business there are, of course, ways we could improve. Working together, I am confident that we can elevate StarCentral Magazine to an even higher level this year. I'm definitely looking forward to working with you all again this 2018, and for those of you who just came back from a break, I hope you enjoyed some much needed quality time with family and friends. God bless.

Mike Ilagan
Managing Director

6

Nell Nakkan

Get to know this stunning writer, actress, director, and producer.



EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief
Jennifer Aluning

Managing Director
Mike Ilagan

Photographic & Art
Archie K, FIN Photography, Ash Narayan, Deepak Kubendran, Brooke B, Raymond Bartholomeusz, Gary Abela, Shekhar J, David Moore, Lisa Chan, Raf Flores, James Mao

Marketing
Alex Abella, Krissy Anderson, Eileen Maynigo, Barnes Luz, Jason Harris, Stephanie Macabenta, Charles Chan, Albie P, Dennis Nguyen, Annabel Gotfried, John Esquerra, Michelle Palmer, Cam, Angelica Whitelaw, Joanne Azzi, Chevvy, Tricia Argeseanu, Zenaída G, Gerry Samaniego

Writers & Contributors
Anjelica Whitelaw, Shiwani Gurbah, Patricia P, Holly Phillips, Jenny Hu, Charles Chan, Jill Antonio, Scott Murray, Vanessa Jensen, Leanne Harrison, Patricia Higgins, Judy Flynn, Angie, Katrina R, Joerisa, Rommel P, Christian Q, Christine Claire dela Pena, Dasein Catedrilla

While every effort is made to ensure the information in this magazine is correct, changes may occur that affect the accuracy of the copy, for which StarCentral holds no responsibility. The opinion of contributors are not necessarily those of StarCentral staff. StarCentral disclaims liability for those impressions.



EDITOR'S NOTES

Having had the honour of 'interviewing' many of StarCentral Magazine's featured artists over the last 13 years, I realised that they have one thing in common – how brave every single one of them has to be. Every artist has to be courageous. They are willingly, and constantly, baring their souls for all to see. Their souls encased in their music, their performances, their images in front of a camera, every step on a catwalk, in every fold of a gown. It is so daunting to leave yourself open to criticism. The world's current state of craving acceptance and inclusion make this even more unthinkable. But, these artists do it every day. And, they do it for one, simple reason: love. Their passion for their chosen craft, their profession demands it of them. As with my friend, Mike Ilagan, it has been and will continue to be, an honour and a privilege to be part of your journeys. Stay brave and be the role models so sorely needed in today's times.

Jenny Aluning
Editor-in-chief

All rights reserved. No articles or images may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher.



Want to Advertise? Email: krissy@starcentralmag.com

SIONY SINGH

CHARITY QUEEN MOTHER

Concepcion Adelante Singh, known as Siony Singh, is the Asan Charity Queen Mother Pageant winner of 2018. Siony, a woman of Filipino descent, currently resides in Australia. She was discovered in December 2017, when she joined the Christmas Spectacular Fashion Show at the Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney. Siony's favourite part of pageants is the opportunity to come out of her shell. She believes that pageants give people the opportunity to build their confidence, explore themselves, and contribute to worthy causes.

Pageants may have many benefits, but they also have downsides too. Pageant contestants put a lot of pressure on themselves, and sometimes that pressure can get to their heads. On top of that, Siony says that when judges ask a question that you can't answer satisfactorily, it can make you feel incompetent. She doesn't let these challenges get her down though. When asked what she finds most beautiful, Siony doesn't believe that it's the pageants or contestants. She says, "I think Motherhood is the most beautiful thing. I believe that motherhood is a beautiful endeavor. Not only is it beautiful because I am creating a young person with the help of my Lord, but also because I'm giving direction to the life of the little one."

Siony is a kind, caring person. She has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and works as a Business Consultant. She believes in doing her best to help those around her, her partner, her daughter, and herself.

NELL NAKKAN

BEST ACTOR

"I love the power of storytelling. I believe that through storytelling we have the power to change people's perceptions and the world." - Nell Nakkan

Danielle Kate Nakkan or Nell Nakkan for short is a stunning writer, actress, director, and a producer, who hails from Sydney, Australia and who's currently on the rise.

Nell actually got into the entertainment industry when she found an article in the newspaper about a talent agency workshop. She decided to attend this workshop, and this led her to be accepted into a child casting agency which became her starting point in the industry. She says that what she likes most about acting is the power that you can have from storytelling. She reveals that through storytelling, we have the power to change the world and people's perceptions. Although she loves being part of the entertainment industry, she confesses that it can be a very difficult industry to be involved in because it's hard to plan for what you're going to be doing next since things can change from one minute to the next minute.

Her extensive training includes being trained at the Atlantic theatre company located in New York City, Screenwise, ACTT, Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles, and at RADA in London. She also has a varied and extensive resume which covers everything from film projects to classical Theatre, and she's been working in the industry for over ten years which is probably one of the reasons why her acting chops earned her the "best actor" award at the Cause Film Festival. Her first major break was playing the role of Sheila in the Australian series A Place to Call Home. The show starred Marta Dusseldorp and Noni Hazelhurst.

She indicates that the most memorable experience of her career has been working on Foxtel's A Place to Call Home. She's been working with some of the best talents both on and off the camera and it has been an amazing experience for her. She also says that one of the most interesting people that she's met so far in the industry is Simon Baker – she revealed that she enjoys watching him work because he's such a talented star.

She further revealed that one of the most valuable lessons she has learned working in the industry is that you are in control of what you bring to the acting table and that everything else you do is going to be up to someone else.

Nell says that while her family does support her career, this can be both up and down at times. They are still quite proud of her work, and she has a great support network that helps her through any difficult times. Her current plans include more of A Place to Call Home which is in production for the 6th season. Later in the year in the United States, she will be shooting a feature called Giant Void and Director Michael Reisinger will be involved. This movie is a story of a software engineer named Chloe who works at the world's leading technology company. The company is doing an important job, but this job is top secret. The goal of the movie is to push the boundaries about what we understand artificial intelligence to be. She has a lot of passion for this project and she thinks that it touches on very relevant themes and questions in today's world. With so much talent under her belt, the road to the bright lights of stardom is only beginning for this promising thespian, Nell Nakkan.

Now, five questions for the 'LIGHTNING FAST' Round:

- 1. Last good movie I've seen:** Darkest Hour.
- 2. What do you consider beautiful and why?** I'm quite visual so I enjoy artwork, photography and a great view.
- 3. What haven't you done yet that you wish you could?** I would like to do something really physically demanding like a marathon, or a trek.
- 4. Complete this sentence: "If I had no fear, I'd..."** probably a bit more into high-risk sports. I prefer all my bones intact.
- 5. What is the one "flaw" you wouldn't change about yourself?** I used to get subconscious with the number of freckles I have, but as I have gotten older I have learned to love all flaws, curves and differences!



Photo by Suki Foster Photography



Photo by Suki Foster Photography



Photo by Suki Foster Photography



By Jenny Hu

CAUSE FILMFEST

George Orwell once said, "An idea is the only thing that can change the world," and it was obvious that Cause Film Festival has become the heart-felt embodiment of the quote on the 9th March 2018. Held at the heart of Parramatta's Riverside Theatre, a scarlet, velvet carpet was rolled, as patrons stood on it, they instantly transformed into movie stars due to the paparazzi treatment. The automatic doors of Riverside suddenly opened and the melodic banter of actors, producers, directors, and supporters waited for the commencement of the festival at 6:30 pm.

Cause film festival is the lovechild of Yolandi Franken, the esteemed film producer, beauty queen, and all-around philanthropist. Her dedication to charity work kept her up all night as she was frustrated because she wanted to make something different, something that is of a creative outlet. After many sleepless nights, she finally founded the film festival with a heart, Cause. Over the years, the festival showcased shorts with messages of empowerment, unity, love, heart-ache, and self-belief and most importantly, hope.

After four years of being the director of this festival, she stepped down from her role, due to her many noble causes and responsibilities she had harbored. She was saddened to let go of her festival, as she realized the tremendously positive impact for both the filmmakers and charities. Luckily, Suki Foster swooped in, took the reins from Yolandi and continue to the legacy of Cause Film Festival.

As everyone started to pour into the theatre, they were greeted by an overly-enthusiastic Prema Smith, the MC for the night. A delight of a man who entertained and informed the audience about what is on the agenda. After a few formalities from Yolandi and Suki, the theatre's lights dimmed and a sea of mummies was replaced by radio silence, in a decrescendo.

For the first hour or so, we were introduced to James is Grandiose, The Cycle, The Winter Retreat, and I'm Here Too. All films spoke of a nuanced experience whether it is about mental illness residing in people, acceptance of what they are or did, and redemption.

An unexpected glitch occurred between the showcasing of the short films and so, an unintentional break was taken. During mid-way glitch/break, Prema used his improvisation skills to reassure the audience of the technical difficulty. In the meanwhile, he shared an anecdote of how "I'm Here Too," resonated with him due to the loss of his best friend and his father. It was incredibly brave of him to share his story and again, very relevant too.

Post-glitch happened and the show went on, we were showed the remaining of the short films; Curated Illusions, Changing Tide, Operation Children of Wold Sumatra, Suicide Toilet and finally, Superheroes. With every respectable film festival, there is always a respectable award ceremony. Superheros took home two accolades, which includes Best Film and Award for Australia/New Zealand film. The winning film was praised for its creative approach to combatting domestic violence and its charming combination of animation and film itself.

The People's Choice Awards was given to hilarious Suicide Toilet, and First and Second Runner-up was awarded I'm Here Too and Curated Illusion, respectively. Nell Nakkam won the best actor for the Cause Film Festival for the main role in Winter Retreat.

StarCentral would like to congratulate the winners of the Cause contest and wish them best in their feature endeavours. Once again with the dimming of the lights, the film festival with a heart closed off its fourth year.



"Cause Film Festival is an annual short film festival whose aim is to support film makers, charities and causes."



By Jenny Hu

THE RISE PROJECT



By Jenny Hu

Breaking down the door to the fashion industry as a designer is never easy. It requires a resilience and unique aesthetic to distinguish from the competition. The Rise Project is a platform which dedicates itself to promoting young designers and make their mark in the illustrious world of fashion. All was revealed on the 25th March at the luxurious yet spacious ballroom at the Bankstown Sports Club.

Marky Dong was the mastermind behind the Rise Project and also the proud owner of his label, "Style of the Impression", debuting his "La Vie Rose Collection"—inspired by the song by Edith Piaf. Educated at the Billy Blue College of Fashion Design, Marky always has a passion for fashion design and had worked hard to make his dreams come true. He noticed how difficult it can be for graduated designers to break into the industry so he created the Rise Project as a platform to promote their collections. He structured the event as a pop-up market, where patrons can potentially buy and try-on their pieces with a short and sweet runaway to showcase the pieces.

The Rise Project featured a total of 13 designers including Marky's own label: Couture by Rita, Sashed by Sasha Lian, Omi Kay Couture, Tiana Van, Sruti Jindal, Em Bridal Boutique, Design by Shampz, House of Naath, Delina, Lakshimbee and Leather On, respectively. The designer stand was formed in a 'U' formation around the showroom, where open and ready to talk to potential customers.

As the clock struck 12'o'clock, Marky announced the much-anticipated fashion show—to the backdrop of early 2000's pop music. Power poses, astute struts and style dominated the catwalk by the models as they show the Magnus opuses of their respective designers. The room's atmosphere carried a sense of pride amongst the designers and awe amongst the patrons—as living masterpieces reeled in and out on stage.

One of the most striking designs featured in the catwalk was Lakshimbee's New York City Street style collection. It gave off a cuff eye-catching and possessed an unparalleled prowess to each outfit. Clean lines and patching was the result of sewing all the scrape fabrics together. Lakshmi Gowda is a designer who woven her passion for sustainability evident in her clothes.

One of the most striking designs featured in the catwalk was Lakshimbee's New York City Street style collection. It gave off a cuff eye-catching and possessed an unparalleled prowess to each outfit.

"The Rise Project featured a total of 13 designers including Marky's own label; Couture by Rita, Sashed by Sasha Lian, Omi Kay Couture, Tiana Van, Sruti Jindal, Em Bridal Boutique, Design by Champz, House of Naath, Delina, Lakshimbee and Leather On, respectively."

Clean lines and patching was the result of sewing all the scrape fabrics together. Lakshmi Gowda is a designer who wove her passion for sustainability evident in her clothes.

Omi Kay is also another designer whose designs are sublime. Her Graduate collection seems to tell a story of a fierce warrior princess venturing through the wispings sands of Ancient Arabia, to fight against an inevitable doom. Most of her collection is inspired by armour, which was achieved by incorporating metallic chiffon, sequins, and architectural structure silhouettes - leaving the models looking fierce and ready for battle.

Also, another notable mention that draws on a unique aesthetic is Delina Co. The designer, Delina Darusman-Gala who is a Muslim Indonesian took modest fashion and infused with a Japanese streetwear. It's an ingenious aesthetic that similar to what you found in a futuristic movie such as Blade Runner or Ghost in the Shell. Most of the clothes were made out of a breathable material—almost raincoat-like touch, which is suitable for a Muslim woman in the Australian Summer.

As each designer and their model finished off each catwalk stride, the masterpieces were immortalized by the photographers. After a few more rounds, it was back to stands for the designers to conduct business as usual.

StarCentral Magazine would like to congratulate Marky for his remarkable event and good luck to every designer in their future endeavors.



With the support of the
 Philippine Consulate General in Sydney

FASHION + TEXTILES + HOMEWARES

TULOY PO KAYO

The TPK Fashion Expo

- ▼ A three-hour showcase of Philippine fashions, music and dance
- ▼ A taste of traditional cuisine

Designers from the Philippines

- ▼ ANTHILL
- ▼ LUMAGO DESIGNS
- ▼ ROMOZA HOME
- ▼ W&C T'BOLI
- ▼ FRANCIS SOLLANO
- ▼ LEONARDO SALINAS
- ▼ EMMA BRACEROS
- ▼ NOVY BEREBER

Featuring
Jodilly Pendre
 Asia's Next Top Model
 Cycle 2 - Philippines

SATURDAY, JUNE 2
 5.30pm - 8.30pm • Tramsheds, 1 Daigal Way, Forest Lodge, Sydney

Central

tion
 ntral



Photos by Raymond Bartholomeusz



Tuloy Po Kayo

FASHION SHOW

Set in Tramsheds - a historic depot located in Rozelle, Sydney based designers such as Leonardo Salinas and Emma Braceros and Philippines based designers such as Anthill Fabric Gallery, Lumago designs, W & C T'Boli and Romoza showcased their innovative new creations at the The TULOY PO KAYO Fashion Expo 2018.

Amongst flashing lights, media coverage and music - a number of gorgeous models rocked the runway in an array of avant-garde clothing by any standard. This year they invited Asia's Next Top Model's Jodilly Pendre as a showstopper and she definitely brought the house down in her incredible finale dress.

The event was a community fundraiser with a twist - "Tuloy po kayo" means "Welcome, please come in" in Filipino. It is the traditional greeting that encapsulates the Filipino warmth and hospitality as they welcomed guests to their home. In this special fashion show and cultural expo, they showcased Philippine craftsmanship and ingenuity in fashion, jewellery and home designs. Congratulations to Michelle Baltazar, Marcus Rivera and Chi De Jesus for organizing such an entertaining event.

ANDREW VLAHOS

MODEL & INFLUENCER

"I channel the 'feel of the shoot' and really make it a moment that can't be replicated. Once I have this mindset, I am able to create moments - rather than 'just shots.'" - Andrew Vlahos

Andrew Vlahos' public profile is that of a successful fitness model, dancer and blogger. He is also a qualified accountant who hails from Sydney, Australia. Andrew has had a surprising career trajectory that began almost by accident, as a 'stand-in' for a shoot. Since then, this 'Mister Australia' has featured on the Ellen Degeneres Show, has been a backup dancer for the likes of Ricki Lee Coulter and Havana Brown, and has modelled for a vast number of high profile brands. Star Central sits down with Andrew to find out what life is typically like for this model (who is also an accountant), what motivates him career-wise, and what he would like to see in his future.

How do you see yourself?

"I'm Andrew Vlahos, Sydney boy from Australia with Greek heritage. Honestly, there isn't too much to me - I am 24 years old and an accountant, I work full time and enjoy being a fitness model and Instagram blogger. For me, it's the best of both worlds."

How were you 'discovered'?

"It all began for me in 2011, after I graduated high school. My mate couldn't make it for a shoot he had booked, and consulted the photographer about me taking his place. I had honestly never done modelling properly, and for me it was a chance to learn and try my luck. It manifested into what I am today, and I wouldn't have ever seen this coming."

What sort of projects have you worked on?

"I've done some amazing projects, both internationally and domestically. Just this year alone I was appointed 'Mister Australia' for the 'Mr International'

competition, where I was up against the world's best in Miami. It was one of my most cherished moments to date. Going back to 2012, I was on the Ellen Degeneres Show - when it came to Australia - and was lucky enough to be on TV around the world. I've modelled for high end brands and danced as a backup dancer for Ricki Lee Coulter and Havana Brown."

What do you like most about modeling?

"It gives me the opportunity to be who I want for that specific shoot and fill the brief. I can be anything or anyone in that moment. I channel the 'feel of the shoot' and really make it a moment that can't be replicated. Once I have this mindset, I am able to create moments - rather than 'just shots'."

Downside to being a model?

"Definitely the pressure, it's a big thing to stay constantly 'shredded', or look my best all year round. Ultimately, I am human - I have my good days and my bad. It's a mental strain to constantly look my best. But having said that, to feel pressure - it is a privilege. Not many have the ability to influence a demographic or city, and I have that ability. So, I'm blessed."

What are your plans for the future?

"My future plan is to be a top accountant - to build a reputable name in the corporate world. In terms of blogging and modelling - it is to grow my social media following and keep maintain my commitment to being a positive role model to other young gentlemen out there. Ideally, I want to leave an indelible mark on the world - something to last the test of time."



PHOTO BY RAYMOND BARTHOLOMEUSZ | OUTFIT BY VARQA CLOTHIER AND TAILORS



Minimalist, ethical, organic.
For the intelligent, elegant
+ health conscious woman.



@kateheussler



kateheussler.com

Helping Australians become millionaires one property at a time

July 2018 | AUST/NZ \$4.95

THE AUSTRALIAN Millionaire magazine

THE BEST
WAY TO
BUILD
WEALTH
THROUGH
INVESTMENT
PROPERTY

THE
PASSIVE
INCOME

FORMULA THAT IS
GUARANTEED
TO MAKE
YOU MILLIONS



COMING SOON

HOW TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL FREEDOM WITH PASSIVE INCOME

JESSICA GILLETT

SWIMSUIT MODEL

"In a short amount of time, I've learned so much and I have so much more to learn. Though the most valuable lesson I learned so far is to always take chances- whether it's a job, or a competition, or yourself in general. Always give everything a go and you won't regret anything."

If anyone ever asks us to name a versatile model who is not just stunning but also multi-talented and possesses other talents like photography, hairdressing etc, our first pick would have to be StarCentral magazine's gorgeous swimsuit model of the month, Jessica Gillett.

The 23- year old model hails from a Maltese background and she's currently based in Sydney, Australia's South West. The model is extremely career-oriented, focused, and ambitious. Apart from having a fabulous physique, she also possesses a creative mind. In fact, after high school, she earned certificates in hairdressing, makeup, and even Introductory Photography. She is currently in a happy and healthy relationship and her time apart from shooting is usually spent engaging in multiple activities like training hard at the gym, eating, hanging out with friends and family, and going to the beach, among others.

Jessica entered the world of modeling by first competing in the Maxim ASMY (Australian Swimwear Model of the Year) NSW final in 2017. From there, she was accepted into the nationals which were her first big break. She has never looked back since. She feels that the best part of her profession is the fact that she can be whoever she wants to be in front of the camera. She can create different avatars of herself and momentarily become an entirely different person. The sky is the limit! The only downside of the profession, according to her, is the fact that people underestimate the amount of work that goes into modeling. Models are very underrated in terms of workload.

When asked about the most memorable experience of her career so far, she was quick to reply that the only one that stands out in her memory was the three

months national finals of the Maxim Australian Swimwear Model of the Year contest. The event was particularly memorable as it turned her career around. Those 3 months taught her more things about modeling than she could think of learning on her own, and she also got the opportunity to meet some wonderful people. She feels all the people she has met and worked with so far have been great and she has been able to make so many different connections.

Describing the most important things she has learned so far professionally, she says, "In a short amount of time, I've learned so much and I have so much more to learn. Though the most valuable lesson I learned so far is to always take chances- whether it's a job, or a competition, or yourself in general. Always give everything a go and you won't regret anything." In line with these thoughts, when asked about her future plans, she replied that she wants to pocket as many experiences as she can. Through those experiences, she wants to develop and shape herself professionally and personally.

The first big project that she bagged recently was the Fit Bikini Model Extravaganza (FBME) competition in April and she expects to do so much more in the coming year. The definition of beauty for Jessica is the soul. According to her, people's souls are beautiful. She feels that it's incredible when you get to know someone beyond their exterior – getting to know their souls and finding out who they really are. When asked about the one "flaw" in her that she wouldn't change, she said that it's her inability to say no to a project. Although, because of this habit, she piles up on work and finds it difficult to manage all her commitments, she would not change this habit for anything.





MARJARA PETITO

INSTAGRAM MODEL

Most people think modeling is just all about looking good, maintaining a slim figure and a glowing skin – but that's not true at all. It is as much about your outlook and attitude as it is about your external facade. Not only should the cameraman know how to capture this attitude, but the onus is on the model too, to bring out that attitude using various poses and expressions. All professional models have this particular skill, and that is what makes them successful. Today we will be talking about one such model, and her name is Marjara Petito.

Marjara Francesca Petito, or Marjara Petito as she is popularly known, is a 25-year old stunning yet humble model. Her beauty can be attributed to her half-Brazilian, half-Italian genes and she is based out of Sydney. When she is not posing in front of the camera, she is just as normal as the girl next door. She has a college degree in Physical Education, which is most likely the reason for her incredible physique and she is also happily married. Her hobbies include pole dancing, gymming, horse riding, and dancing.

Looking back at how her career started, Marjara was always interested in modeling and began auditioning at the young age of 15. However, she had to undergo many rejections despite all her hard work. Finally, three years ago, she struck gold when an Australian photographer on Instagram discovered her. Talking about what she likes best about modeling, she says it is the feeling of being a diva that she gets when the cameras are flashing away in her direction. When asked about the flip side of the coin, she says "I love my job, so I don't really see a negative side, but the only thing that seems like the negative side is that we stand for far too long and are asked to sustain a certain pose for hours on end. Sometimes, even the photographer can be unpleasant."

Some of the most memorable moments in her professional

life include filming for an event in the Philippines embassy, having lunch at the embassy, as well as photoshoots in Hawaii, New Caledonia, and Singapore. It was tough for her to single out a particular moment or episode that stood out as the most memorable because, for her, working with a different photographer is a unique experience in itself. The other thing that she loves about her profession is the number of people she gets to meet when traveling to places for photoshoots.

When asked about how she was able to anchor herself in a profession which has more emphasis on external physical characteristics, her reply was no short of astounding. She said, "Well, it is difficult to not fall into the temptation of [plastic] surgery or some or the other form of retouch, especially when you know that everyone does it. Furthermore, a healthy diet and correct physical activities greatly help the mind and body to stay beautiful."

Marjara has planned out a number of new things to do in the future. She and her husband are looking forward to welcoming a new life into the world and becoming parents soon. Professionally, she is all set to launch her very own clothing collection for men, women, and children called "PETITO ITALIAN STYLE." When asked about how she defines the concept of beauty, she very graciously answers that according to her, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. For her, the eyes are the windows to the soul. Talking about "flaws," she says that the one flaw in her that she would never change would be her nose as she is scared of the pain.

Marjara is an ambitious, vivacious, and an incredibly hard-working model. She remains an inspiration to young girls out there and reminds them to never give up on their dreams. Watch out for Marjara and her clothing line in the near future!

WAKING UP TO GETTING 'WOKE'

When even 'less mainstream' content is filtered through such a distorted prism, and every human act or accomplishment requires a tick of approval, where can we possibly find any clarity of perspective?

By Patricia Higgins

It seems everyone these days is 'getting woke'. Social media personalities come to mind like David Wolfe and Jay Shetty - here you can witness a very general exploration of 'mindfulness' on Facebook. Which is fairly ironic, since Zuckerberg's weapon of mass distraction exists as possibly one of the least cerebral mediums that the modern world has to offer.

We are told to drink green juices, to practice yin yoga. We are presented with organic cotton merchandise, and we can waste a few idle moments watching videos on the signs of what is a healthy relationship. Which all equates to some potentially helpful advice. However, just like the hashtag 'blessed', there's a bit of a superficial feel to the overall picture. After all, digital content is commercial in its orientation - always underpinned by the prevailing flavour of the moment.

That takes us to the question: If a tree falls down in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it really happen?

That is, do we need an audience to make something real, meaningful and authentic? Can we achieve success without it having to be validated by a group of people, or by society at large? Beyond this, what does being at peace within ourselves really look like?

We all recognise that social media is a tool, it is almost a 'who drones wins' game of crafting attention, engagement and a mass following to be garnered and used for any given agenda - whether to fuel ego, or for a more enterprising purpose. The landscape can be one dominated by influence marketing, get-rich-quick-schemes and instagram models. Whilst the platforms all undoubtedly have their applications, the game is still basically about who makes the best moves on the chessboard of popularity.

When even 'less mainstream' content is filtered through such a distorted prism, and every human act or accomplishment requires a tick of approval, where can we possibly find any clarity of perspective? We are always showing the idealised side of ourselves and our lives. There is an overwhelming need to display our finest moments and to sidestep our worst.

Where is the reality? Just like that tree in the forest, living in the world of social media means we can't even fathom stepping outside the frame to understand the bigger picture.

One perspective to examine is that of Nicole Armit, Holographic Kinetics (HK) practitioner (and holistic qualified chef) of 'The Mind Foodie'. She says "...it all starts with us. Our perceptions and reactions, the world inside our own selves - the ongoing journey. Learning how powerful we can be when we tune in the observation of what is in our hearts and in our spirits. Find what helps you do that, without giving away your own power."

Her approach - in accordance with the central tenets of the HK as a modality as espoused by founder Stephen Richards - is to access an internal mechanism as the sovereign guide to renewed choice and intent. This refers to 'Spirit', an essence that is neither New Age or religious but, exists purely in its own right, belonging fundamentally to each and every individual on this planet. HK is comprised of the ancient Aboriginal knowledge of the laws or 'Lore' and the understanding that all things in nature are alive.

Empowerment is seen as the ability to change and manifest new cycles and patterns in an individual right down to their core, on a fractal level and on multiple timelines. It is based on the principle that there is an internal invisible world that exists alongside the external. The zero point of these worlds is always the observer.

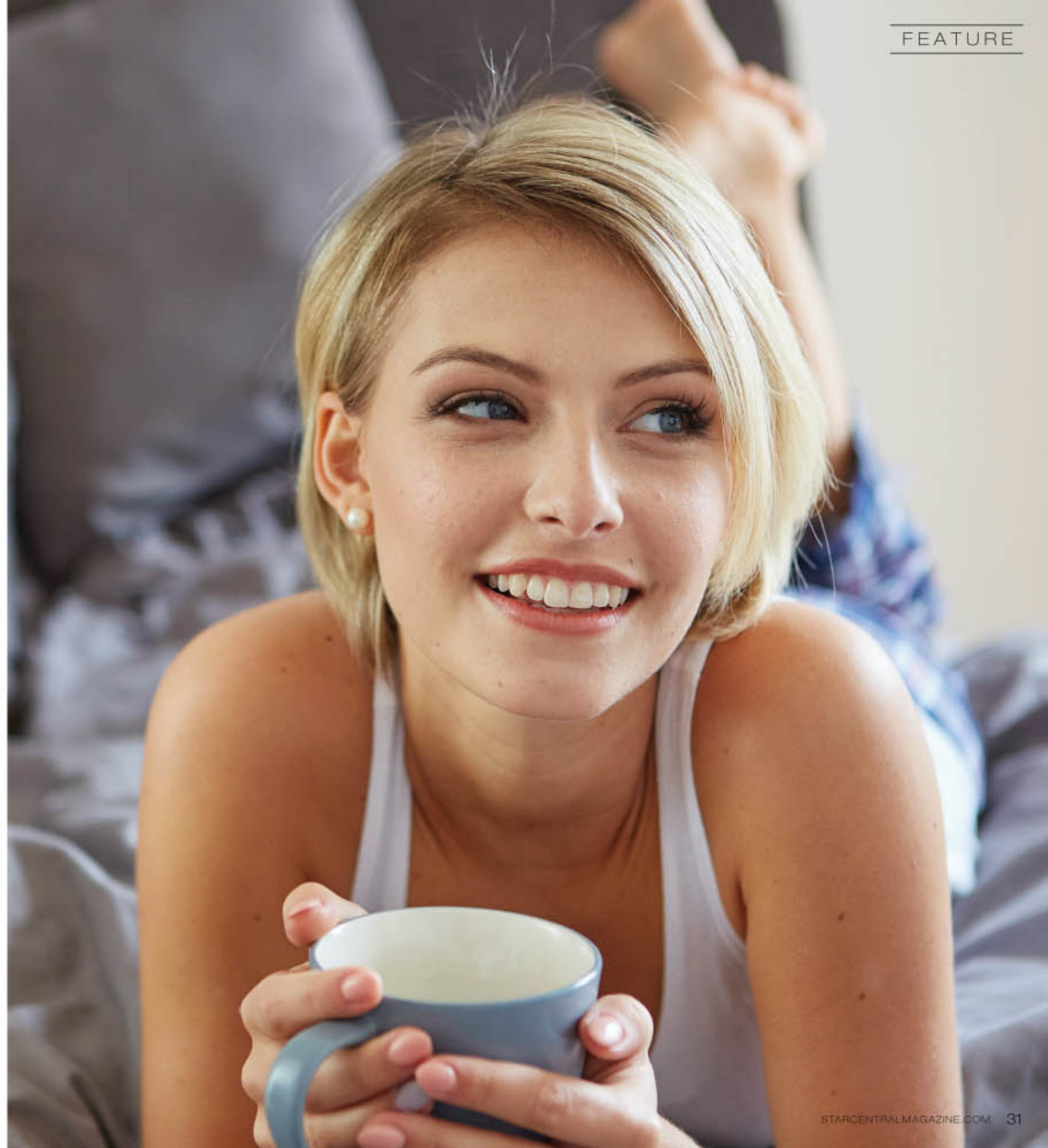
This means empowerment is the acknowledgement that we are the creator of our universe. This is how we answer the question of the tree falling in the forest: we are the arbiter of our own reality.

This viewpoint is echoed by Nigel Reading, a prominent architect and TEDx speaker responsible for the 'Asynsis Paradigm' that examines fractal geometries as embedded in complex systems and living beings alike. He states that "...we need to look at both the animate and inanimate, at the dynamical and space-time, not just the frozen and static."

Just like the universe in and around us, we are perfectly paradoxical. No bandwagon, no predominant expectation, nor- or any form of outwardly driven phenomenon can give us our power. It is already within.

Despite a conditioned inclination to do the opposite, it is about not shying away from our darker moments, our deepest wounds and perceived failings. Rather, it is about embracing and redefining them in the present. The process is dynamic. It is transcendental. Most importantly, empowerment is a vital force that is diametric to any extraneous viewpoint. In plain speak, it just is.

Trying to 'get woke'? Maybe just try getting real.



FORMER SEX WORKER REVEALS INDUSTRY TRUTH

By Patricia Higgins

...Roxanne you don't have to put on the red light...Those days are over you don't have to sell your body to the night..."

It's true that the longest profession in existence has always gotten a bad rap. When I sit down with *Roxy she is quick to assert the fundamentals of the sex industry. Our discussion begins as a matter-of-fact exposition on the fairly lurid, yet entirely fascinating practicalities of a universal service - one of the most common threads of all cultures and people, since time immemorial. But, what I wanted to know is - is sex work empowering?

There does come a time in our discussion where the veil between professional and personal becomes visible. A little pulled apart at the seams and misshapen, like it had been tried on far too many times before. Yes, that's an obvious literary analogy for what the daily reality of a sex worker might just feel like - should we try to imagine it for ourselves. However, most of us (regardless of our gender) are privileged enough to avoid ever having to 'put on the red light'.

Or, just as likely - we don't have the metaphorical kahunas to take such a massive sidestep into a career path of taboo. It just isn't a part of our world. So, in recounting my interview with Roxy, I am somewhat ironically aware of the risk of shading her story with my own sheltered bias - of which circumstance dictates I am always subject to. However, (and keeping in mind that this is but one woman's perspective) I was still surprised by the cliches.

A top example is the "Pretty Woman" thing. Yes, escorts do charge extra for kissing (and, here I was thinking that this was just a cute urban myth perpetuated by an iconic 90's flick). And, yes - a lot of women do offer up sexual services in order to put themselves through higher learning.

Roxy tells me it's not even just that - prostitution is used to make ends meet by a lot of people whilst they work in lowly paying graduate jobs, internships, training and work placements. "A lot of QLD health nurses are escorts," she divulges. Whilst I don't know the particular stats on that myself, a lot of articles written over recent years would tend to back this up - at least in the general sense.

What I take from this is that sex work is marginalised in the aspect that it is still heavily frowned upon (unlikely to be openly admitted to at a dinner party, for example) but, so startling common and widespread to make this incongruous.

In today's day and age the stigma that remains attached to it is almost laughable. Whether we want to talk about it or not, the fact remains - it is happening all around us.

It's interesting to look at the role of shame in the entire scenario of a sexual exchange for money. Played out on the client side of things, this manifests as repression, reclusion and subterfuge. Roxy says that a lot of the men she has seen have been 'lonely and depressed'. Some are fearful that they may be judged by their real life partners for their very different levels of desire and/or sexual tastes.

Indeed, professional sexual services can have quite the element of liberation. "The men who come to see me can be free, they can be themselves," she says. Some are "bored and tired with normal orgasms," others are "in a way doing it to keep a relationship together" and, for the rest it invariably comes down to the fact that "there will never be a perfect woman out there who fulfills all their needs."

As for Roxy and her initial motivation for becoming an escort? She puts it down to feeling like she didn't want to be in a relationship due to past hurts, and that "if you are going to have sex with a man you may as well get something for it". She also describes being a 'sugar baby' and enjoying holidays at places like Hamilton Island and payments of \$5000 cash. So, it's hardly all bad news.

But, for now at least, Roxy is retired. She tells me that at this point in her life "sex has lost a lot of its meaning" and that "she would prefer to make love" - drawing a distinction between the physical and emotional aspects of intercourse. Her tone is weary when she explains that "everyone is just searching for connection, they look for that where energy is explosive." And, that in this way "everyone is turning to sick sh**."

Roxy has a three-year-old child and is engaged to be married. She is waiting until her wedding night to consummate the relationship. When all is said and done - would she look at her history of sex work as empowering? She certainly got what she needed from it at the time. Did it leave her with a very distinct viewpoint on humanity? Most probably. But, is that a bad thing? Who am I to judge?

...Roxanne you don't have to wear that dress tonight. Walk the streets for money you don't care if it's wrong or if it's right..."

*name changed to preserve anonymity.



HOW THE WORLD IS EMBRACING Body Diversity

By Patricia Higgins

The female body has long been the promotional tool of advertisers, even before the widespread proliferation of mass media. As both an aspirational ideal, and as a testament to the fact that sex sells - the use of attractive females in advertising can be traced back to as early as 1871, when Pearl Tobacco featured a 'naked maiden' on their packaging cover.

Fast forward to 2018, and we are now accustomed to the amplification of beauty standards in the online world. A recent study by the University of Melbourne shows that a display of 'low levels of diversity in body size, ethnicity and age among models' comprise a typical fashion magazine's imagery. This is even more disturbing given that this content is afforded a viral reach through digital media platforms.

With the rise of 'insta models' and influence marketing, we can see that cruel and fickle beauty standards are very much alive and kicking. And what's the consensus?

To be a relevant, acceptable and bankable female in today's digital era still, for the most part, means being young, white, attractive, and slender. Although, depending on the prevailing mood of the moment, it may also equal the addition of a 'bubble booty' or 'kick-arse abs'.

The narrow representation of body image in the media is linked to 'body dissatisfaction' - this may take the form of eating disorders, suicide, depression - or, some other myriad manifestation. This is accountable for the vague, yet still very palpable, psychology of 'not feeling good enough'.

This viewed is echoed by author and ad critic Jean Kilbourne. She deconstructs the subconscious messages in advertisements and described how they create a 'toxic cultural environment'. "Women and girls compare themselves to these images every day, and failure to live up to them is inevitable because they are based on a flawlessness that doesn't exist," said Kilbourne (in a 2016 address at Harvard University).

The question remains: has anything really changed when it comes to promoting body diversity in mass marketing? Are we gaining any ground in the name of female empowerment? Or, are we still back in 1871?

Let's have a look at the positives. It's true that some countries have implemented initiatives to improve body image diversity in the media and the fashion industry. This has

included efforts to regulate minimum body size of models (for example in Israel and France), and the development of codes of practices such as the Australian Industry Code of Conduct on Body Image.

In recent years, global brands JCPenney, Dove and Nike have all attempted some form of marketing mission in a bid to promote body diversity. JCPenney provides a controversial example with its 'Here I Am' campaign. Launched in 2016, this ad series featured several prominent plus-sized women 'breaking the beauty-standard mold' on 'their journeys of both worldly success and personal self-acceptance'. However, detractors slammed the campaign as 'glorifying obesity'.

On the homefront, we have seen several brands follow suit. One to make the news: activewear label The Upside, who launched an ad campaign (also in 2016) that featured five 'inspiring women', including 'plus-size' model Laura Wells. However, it's really up for debate if this model could even be considered voluptuous (apparently she is a size 14 and between 3-6 sizes larger than a normal, industry standard model but, she looks pretty taut and trim overall).

Local suppliers and beauty industry brands are also joining the ranks. Royal Society, an Aussie tanning brand with a vegan stance is making headway on social media with a current 12.6K following. They also buck the trend on body diversity with a smattering of candid shots of 'everyday ladies getting a tan and enjoying themselves out and about' displayed amongst the obligatory starlets and aspirant lifestyle content. It's a refreshing step in the right direction.

What does this all equate to? Let's face it. It's a hard road impacting beauty standards. Both the studies and the practical examples show there's still a long way to go.

Whilst it's in our best interest as an altruistic human collective to represent all sizes, appearances, cultures and creeds - it's not always in the best interest of advertisers and their bottom dollar. In a world where everything is for sale at the right price, ethics come off second best. It's probable we will be seeing advertising's 'naked maidens' for a while yet!

There is some hope that lies with the more 'grass roots' initiatives to influence the tides of change for the greater good. So, if you are an influencer in the world of advertising, branding - or, perhaps own your own business in a relevant industry - then do remember, the power to promote body diversity might just rest with you.

