



# The New York Times

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## Best way to retreat from Ukraine



Ross Douthat

### OPINION

One of the hardest challenges in geopolitics is figuring out how to conduct a successful retreat. We witnessed that reality last summer in Afghanistan, when the Biden administration made the correct strategic choice — cutting America's losses instead of escalating to preserve a morally bankrupt status quo — but then staggered through a disastrous withdrawal that wounded Joe Biden's presidency and laid bare American incompetence to a watching world.

Now the world faces the same problem with Ukraine. The United States in its days as a hyperpower made a series of moves to extend its perimeter of influence deep into Russia's near-abroad. Some of those moves appear to

be sustainable: The expansion of NATO to include countries of the former Warsaw Pact was itself a risk, but at the moment those commitments seem secure. But the attempt to draw Ukraine out of

Russia's orbit, the partway-open door to Ukrainians who preferred westward-focused alliances, was a foolish overcommitment even when American power was at its height.

Note that this is not a question of what Ukrainians deserve. Russia is an authoritarian aggressor in the current crisis; Ukraine is a flawed democracy but a more decent regime than Vladimir Putin's oligarchy. When America gave Ukraine security assurances under Bill Clinton, opened the door to NATO membership under George W. Bush and supported the Maidan protests under Barack Obama, America was in each case acting with better intentions than Moscow in its own machinations.

But in geopolitics good intentions are always downstream from the realities of power. Whatever its desires or ours, the government in Ukraine has simply never been in a position to fully join the West — it's too economically weak, too internally divided and simply in the wrong place. And the actions of the Bush and Obama administrations — and for all of Donald Trump's personal sympathies for Putin, some Trump administration acts as well — have left America overstretched, its

*DOUTHAT, PAGE 10*

The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.



Tourists in the Timanfaya National Park, a volcanic area on the island of Lanzarote, Spain. Unlike some of its neighbors, Spain does not require a negative Covid test to enter.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAMUEL ARANDA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Seeking sun despite a surge

TAHICHE, CANARY ISLANDS

### Spain keeps doors open for tourists eager to travel, even as Omicron spreads

BY NICHOLAS CASEY AND JOSÉ BAUTISTA

Coronavirus infections were soaring in Spain, causing caseloads previously unseen in the pandemic. Intensive care unit beds were filling up in hospitals.

But that did not stop Tatjana Baldynjuk and Timur Neverkevits, a couple from Estonia, from buying plane tickets so they could visit the island of Lanzarote, a sunny outcrop dominated by volcanoes on the eastern edge of the Canary Islands archipelago, a far-flung part of Spain.

"It was 100 percent easier to come here than many other countries," said Ms. Baldynjuk, who works in freight logistics in Estonia.

More than half the people of Europe could be infected with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus by early March, according to the World Health Organization, and fear of its wild spread has led



Spain's embrace of tourists during a Covid surge can be explained by memories of recent financial ruin: The 2008 crisis devastated a wide swath of the economy.

governments to varying responses. The Netherlands turned to a lockdown, which it has only now begun to ease slightly. Italy went as far as banning unvaccinated people from bars and public transport.

And while Spain tightened some of its own rules in recent weeks, its message to tourists has remained largely the same as before the surge in cases: Please come.

Western European countries now

have some of the highest infection rates in the world. In Spain, new cases rocketed from an average of fewer than 2,000 a day in early November to more than 130,000 daily in the past week.

But unlike some of its neighbors, Spain does not require a negative test to enter the country. Entering a restaurant remains as simple as ever in some parts of the country. In Madrid, unlike Paris and Rome, one need not show proof of vaccination, and that is also the case in many other regions.

Like other countries, Spain is trying to calculate how much economic pain it can tolerate as it tries to keep its people safe. But here, memories of recent financial ruin are especially raw.

The Spanish economy contracted more than 11 percent in 2020 — the worst decline since the civil war of the 1930s. And that came just over a decade after the economic crisis of 2008. That crash devastated a wide swath of the economy in the years that followed, leading to widespread unemployment and homelessness, with some of the hungry left to forage in trash cans for food.

Spain's politicians are aware of what is at stake in keeping the flow of visitors to the country, according to Manuel HISPAIN, PAGE 4

## The Games that Xi built, entirely on his terms

Beijing has managed to fulfill its promises and subdue its critics

BY STEVEN LEE MYERS, KEITH BRADSHAW AND TARIQ PANJA

When the International Olympic Committee met seven years ago to choose a host for the 2022 Winter Games, China's leader, Xi Jinping, sent a short video message that helped tip the scale in a close vote.

China had limited experience with winter sports. Little snow falls in the distant hills where outdoor events would take place. Pollution was so dense at times that it was known as the Airpocalypse.

Mr. Xi pledged to resolve all of this, putting down his personal prestige in what seemed then like an audacious bid. "We will deliver every promise we made," he told the Olympic delegates meeting in Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur.

With the Games only days away, China has delivered. It has plowed through the obstacles that once made Beijing's bid seem a long shot and faced down new ones, including an unending pandemic and mounting international concern over its authoritarian behavior.

As in 2008, when Beijing was host of the Summer Olympics, the Games have become a showcase of the country's achievements. Only now, it is a very different country.

China no longer needs to prove its standing on the world stage; instead, it wants to proclaim the sweeping vision of a more prosperous, more confident nation under Mr. Xi, the country's most powerful leader since Mao. Where the government once sought to mollify its critics to make the Games a success, today it defies them.

Mr. Xi's government has brushed off criticism from human rights activists and world leaders as the bias of those who would keep China down. It has implicitly warned Olympic broadcasters and sponsors against bending to calls for protests or boycotts over the country's political crackdown in Hong Kong or its campaign of repression in Xinjiang, the largely Muslim region in the northwest.

It has overruled the I.O.C. in negotiations over health protocols to combat COVID-19 and imposed stricter safety measures than those in force during the Summer Olympics in Tokyo last year. It has insisted on sustaining its "zero Covid" strategy, evolved from China's first lockdown, in Wuhan two years ago, regardless of the cost to its economy and its people.

China's critics, activists for human and labor rights and others have accused the committee of failing to press Mr. Xi to change the country's increasingly authoritarian policies. That criticism, however, presumes that the com- OLYMPICS, PAGE 2

## A conceptual artist whose medium is the market

LONDON

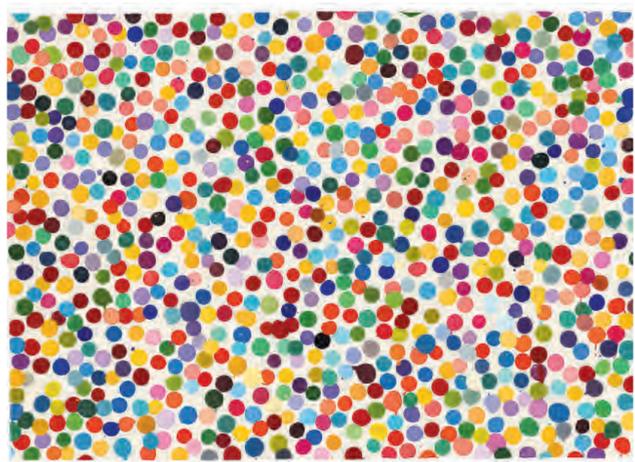
### Damien Hirst pushes for profit. Some say his originality is taking a hit.

BY SCOTT REYBURN

"He's a talented artist, but this? Really?" said Alan Baldwin, an art collector, looking down recently at a fluffy black sculpture of a spider with bow legs and googly eyes. Back in 1992, three years before winning the prestigious Turner Prize, its creator had astounded the art world by displaying a real 14-foot tiger shark embalmed in a tank of formaldehyde.

"Damien's having a laugh," Baldwin added. "He's wasting his talent."

Baldwin and his wife, Antonietta Quattrone, didn't think much of Damien Hirst's pre-Christmas exhibition of 16 "Pipe Cleaner Animals." Billed by the artist as "big and fun and playful" and on



One of 10,000 images in "The Currency," a project by Damien Hirst. Buyers can take the works, priced at \$2,000 each, as paintings or NFTs. Although Hirst, 56, is Britain's wealthiest artist, he is no longer the force he once was in the market.

display in the new ArtSpace gallery at Claridge's hotel in central London, some cost up to \$350,000.

But they were much more enthusiastic when they collected the purchase that had brought them there: "You ain't there to hide," No. 720 among 10,000 unique watermarked, microdotted and hologrammed spot paintings that Hirst's assistants had made for "The Currency," the artist's latest experiment in messing with the art market's notions of price and value.

Each image in the series was sold for the modest price of \$2,000, but each buyer had to choose between taking a physical painting or an NFT that can be traded on cryptocurrency platforms. Baldwin and Quattrone were among just 5 percent of buyers who had chosen a painting, Hirst's manager, Joe Hage, said in December.

"We just wanted to have an original piece," Quattrone said. "Our grandsons understand NFTs, but we don't."

The "Pipe Cleaner Animals" and "The Currency" were just two of more than 10 HIRST, PAGE 2

The New York Times

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## PAGE TWO

## Xi is staging the Olympics on his terms

OLYMPICS, FROM PAGE 1

mittee has leverage to use.

China's tenacious — many say ruthless — efficiency was precisely what appealed to Olympic delegates after the staggering costs of the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, and the white-knuckle chaos of preparations for the 2016 Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Christophe Dubi, the executive director of the Beijing Games, said in an interview that China had proved to be a partner willing and able to do whatever it took to pull off the event, regardless of the challenges.

"Organizing the Games," Mr. Dubi said, "was easy."

The committee has deflected questions about human rights and other controversies overshadowing the Games. Although the committee's own charter calls for "improving the promotion and respect of human rights," officials have said it was not for them to judge the host country's political system.

What matters most to the committee is pulling off the Games. By selecting Beijing, the committee had alighted on a "safe choice," said Thomas Bach, the committee's president.

## WHERE SNOW SELDOM FALLS

Beijing's bid to become the first city to host both Summer and Winter Olympics took root when Lim Chee Wah, the scion of a Malaysian developer of casinos and golf courses, moved to a booming Beijing in the 1990s and wanted a place to ski.

He drove up winding roads northwest of Beijing for five hours to a mountainous region populated by cabbage and potato farmers. The area's only ski resort was a single wooden building with a dining room, a handful of hotel rooms and a small ski shop.

"I went out and said, 'Where is the ski lift?' and they said, 'You see this road going up?'" he recalled in an interview. A Toyota Coaster minibus ferried skiers up the road to the top of the slope.

Mr. Lim, who had learned to ski in the resort town of Vail, Colorado, soon struck a deal with the local authorities to turn 24,700 acres of mostly barren hills into China's largest ski resort.

In 2009, he met with Gerhard Heiberg, Norway's representative on the executive board of the Olympic committee, who had overseen the organization of the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer. Together, they began envisioning how to hold the Games in the hills near the Great Wall of China.

China promised to spend only \$1.5 billion on capital projects at venues, plus that much in operating expenses, a small fraction of the cost for Sochi or the 2018 Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, which cost nearly \$13 billion.

China's bid seemed unlikely to succeed, especially since the 2018 Games were also taking place in Asia and officials expected the next host to be in Europe. Then one European city after another pulled out, leaving Beijing competing only against Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan, once a republic of the Soviet Union.

The final tally was 44-40 for Beijing,



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES

Xi Jinping put his personal prestige on the line when China bid to host the 2022 Winter Games. At left, one of the venues that will be used for the 2022 Olympics. Mr. Xi ordered the local authorities to make sure that they did not build too much.



with one abstention. Almaty's supporters were left to fume over a glitch in the electronic voting system that prompted a manual recount to "protect the integrity of the vote." That Kazakhstan has plunged into political turmoil on the eve of the Games seems now, in hindsight, further validation of the choice of Beijing.

"I don't think it's a stretch, and I'm not being disingenuous or negative toward the Chinese — they probably would not

have been victorious, had some of those European cities stayed in the race," said Terrence Burns, a marketing consultant who worked on Almaty's bid and for Beijing when it secured the 2008 Games. "But you know what? They hung in there, and you know, winners find a way to win."

## THE OLYMPIC HELMSMAN

In the months before the 2008 Olympics, Mr. Xi was put in charge of the final

preparations. He had only recently joined the country's highest political body, the Politburo Standing Committee. The role was effectively a test of his leadership potential.

He took a particular interest in military preparations for the Games, including the installation of 44 anti-aircraft batteries around Beijing, even though the likelihood of an aerial attack on the city seemed far-fetched.

Preparations for these Games reflect Mr. Xi's style of governance. He has been at the center of each decision — including the layout of the Olympic Village in Chongli and the brands of skis and ski suits. In keeping with increasingly nationalistic policies, he voiced a preference for Chinese ski equipment over imports.

When Mr. Xi went to inspect venues in the Chongli district of Zhangjiakou for the first time in January 2017, he ordered the local authorities to make sure that they did not build too much — a frequent tendency of officials in China who use any international event as an excuse for extravagant projects.

He has visited the Olympic venues five times altogether to check on

progress, most recently this month, when he said managing the Games well was China's "solemn pledge to the international community."

Because of the coronavirus, foreign spectators and even ordinary Chinese are prevented from attending the Games. Instead, China will allow only screened spectators of its own choosing. The Games will mostly be a performance for Chinese and international television audiences, offering a choreographed view of the country, the view that Mr. Xi's government has of itself.

If the coronavirus can be kept under control, Beijing could weather the Olympics with fewer problems than seemed likely when it won the rights to the Games in 2015. Mr. Xi's government has already effectively declared it a success. A dozen other Chinese cities are already angling for the 2036 Summer Olympics.

"The world looks forward to China," Mr. Xi said in a New Year's address, "and China is ready."

Chris Buckley contributed reporting. Claire Fu, Liu Yi and Li You contributed research.

## Pioneer in genome research

DEBORAH NICKERSON  
1954-2021

BY RICHARD SANDOMIR

Deborah Nickerson, a human genomics researcher who helped discover genes responsible for cardiovascular disease, autism and Miller syndrome, a rare condition that causes malformations of the face and limbs, died on Dec. 24 at her home in Seattle. She was 67.

Her brother, William Nickerson, who is her only immediate survivor, said the cause was abdominal cancer, which had been diagnosed less than a week earlier.

In her research, Dr. Nickerson employed the findings of the Human Genome Project, which completed its historic genetic sequencing of every human gene in 2003, and made them medically useful. By sequencing the genes of thousands of healthy people, she revealed how genetic variation could be used to identify specific genes that cause inherited disorders.

"Her imprint on genomic medicine is profound," said Dr. Gail Jarvik, a professor of medicine and genome science at the University of Washington School of Medicine. "Her role was in really helping us understand what changes in DNA among people meant, and in identifying what gene was changed in rare diseases."

Dr. Nickerson was also a professor of genome sciences at the University of Washington and was a founder and director of one of the five clinical sites that comprise the Gregor Consortium, the successor to the Centers for Mendelian Genomics, named after Gregor Mendel, a 19th-century Austrian monk known as the father of genetics.

Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the consortium seeks to identify gene mutations responsible for what are known as Mendelian disorders, in which patients have a mutation in one gene, like that for cystic fibrosis.

Working with Drs. Michael Bamshad and Jay Shendure, Dr. Nickerson found the gene for Miller syndrome, one of about 7,000 Mendelian disorders, in 2009.



Deborah Nickerson revealed how genetic variation could affect inherited disorders.

Dr. Francis Collins, the former director of the N.I.H. who is now a senior investigator at the National Human Genome Research Institute, a part of the N.I.H., called the discovery of the Miller syndrome gene "an explosive moment" and a "jaw-dropping" example of genome sequencing, the technique used to read all or part of a person's genome, an organism's complete set of DNA.

"I never envisioned that we'd be able to do that in my career or lifetime," he said in a phone interview, referring to the ability to determine a person's illness by reading his genome.

Deborah Ann Nickerson was born in Mineola, N.Y., on Long Island, and grew up in Jamaica, Queens, and West Islip, also on Long Island. Her parents, William and Josephine (Veccia) Nickerson, owned a garden center.

She graduated from Adelphi University in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in biology and received her Ph.D. in immunology from the University of Tennessee. She was a postdoctoral scholar in the division of infectious diseases from 1978-79 at the University of Kentucky's college of medicine.

"I love science," she said in a video on her university home page. "It was probably my hardest subject in school, and that's why it drives me. You want to get better and understand more."

Starting in 1979, Dr. Nickerson spent nearly a decade teaching biology at the University of South Florida before joining the biology department at the California Institute of Technology, first as a visiting associate and then as a senior research scientist. There she worked under Dr. Leroy Hood, who led the team that invented the DNA sequencer, which made the Human Genome Project possible.

She followed Dr. Hood to the University of Washington's newly created department of molecular biotechnology in 1992. After it merged with the university's department of genetics in 2001, she stayed to form the department of genome sciences.

Dr. Nickerson was an early adopter of technologies that made DNA sequencing less expensive; using them, she created a catalog of human genetic variation from a diverse population by sequencing the genes of more than 6,500 volunteers.

Dr. Nickerson also led a group of researchers who in 2017 reported finding genetic variants among patients' different responses to the blood thinner Warfarin, which had been a longstanding problem.

## Balancing art and the business of making money

HIRST, FROM PAGE 1

exhibitions and projects that the hyper-productive Hirst and his assistants created last year. This year has kicked off with "Forgiving and Forgetting," Hirst's first New York exhibition since 2018, running at Gagosian's West 24th Street showroom through Feb. 26. Although Hirst might be Britain's wealthiest artist, at 56 he is no longer the force he was in the market.

In 2008, his works raised \$268 million at auctions; in 2021, his auction sales had shrunk to \$24 million, according to the Artprice database. A new generation of wealthy collectors and speculators is more interested in buying works bearing younger emerging names. And with each attempt to monetize his artistic talent — whether through paintings, prints or NFTs — Hirst's originality as a conceptual sculptor becomes an ever more distant memory.

On a recent December afternoon, a mile east of Claridge's, Hirst was in his cavernous studio, surrounded by big abstract canvases in various stages of completion. Two new "Reverence Paintings," in which veils of gold flecks float ethereally over a white pointillist ground, were ready to be packed up for the Gagosian show. That exhibition also includes marble sculptures from Hirst's grandiose mock-archeological "Treasures From the Wreck of the Unbelievable" project, first unveiled during the 2017 Venice Biennale.

"My whole career can be seen as a history of painting. I loved Goya, Bacon. I adored Soutine. I just wanted to be a painter," Hirst said in an interview, wearing paint-splattered overalls. "I was always a bit frightened by it all, worried about my ability, my talent."

Hirst instead found fame and made most of his fortune by encasing flies, sharks, farm animals, cigarette butts and medicines in vitrines. The trademark spot and spin paintings he produced in the 1990s and early 2000s were made by teams of studio assistants. But for the last 15 years, Hirst has been doggedly painting on his own. After what he and most critics agreed was a false start trying to paint figuratively in the manner of his hero Francis Bacon, Hirst returned to the neo-pointillist ab-



DAMIEN HIRST AND SCIENCE LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED/DACS, LONDON/ARS, NY  
Damien Hirst, right, has been called "a very smart businessman." Above, his piece "For the Love of God," a diamond-encrusted skull, is valued at \$100 million.

straction he first explored as a student at Goldsmiths college in London in the late 1980s.

Sequestered in his studio during coronavirus lockdowns, Hirst used this painting technique to make 107 riotously colored canvases of flowering cherry blossom trees. A selection of 29 of these were exhibited at the Fondation Cartier in Paris last year. (The show moves on to the National Art Center in Tokyo in March.) Reviews were mixed. Jonathan Jones, an art critic at The Guardian, who regards Hirst as a great sculptor but a "lousy" painter, dismissed the exhibition as "another pumped-up lockdown antidote." It nonetheless drew 170,000 visitors over a six-month run.

"Cherry Blossoms" has proved to be one of Hirst's best-selling lines. According to Hage, the manager, Hirst retained some of the "Cherry Blossom" paintings for his personal collection, but all 80 or so of the works taken to market were sold before the Fondation Cartier show opened, for between \$750,000 and \$3.5 million each, by Gagosian and White Cube, the artist's dealerships and by Hirst's own company, Science Ltd.

"We could have sold many, many



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more," the gallerist Larry Gagosian said by phone. "People were literally begging to buy these paintings."

Gagosian recalled thinking that Hirst was "an extraordinarily original and innovative artist from the get-go, right after I saw the shark," adding that Hirst was also "a very smart businessman, as Warhol was."

Hirst's joining in the mania for NFTs was certainly smart business. He produced "The Currency" project with HENI, an art services business founded by Hage. They grossed about \$18 million from the initial sale, and, according to Hage, are collecting a further 5 percent of the proceeds from NFT resales.

"I've got about 2,000 people online constantly talking about 'The Currency,'" Hirst said. "It's trading all the time: It goes up and down, it's got value one minute, and not the next."

"It's like being in a cult, and I'm the cult leader," he added.

But Hirst's lucrative fascination with

flower paintings and financial value systems has turned him into a very different artist from the provocateur who in 1990 mesmerized the art world with "A Thousand Years," a vitrine filled with breeding flies being zapped above a severed calf's head.

Ivor Braka, a London-based private collector and dealer, acquired Hirst's mordant motorized formaldehyde piece, "This Little Piggy Went to Market, This Little Piggy Stayed at Home," at Hirst's first Gagosian show, in 1996, for about \$150,000. Not long afterward, he sold the sculpture to Charles Saatchi, who included it and "A Thousand Years" in the landmark 1997 "Sensation" exhibition in London that introduced Hirst to a wider audience.

"Damien was one of the most radical artists of postwar Britain, both as a sculptor and as a thinker," Braka said. But Hirst's subsequent strategy of "making the maximum amount of money in the shortest time was not the greatest decision," he added.

Under the guidance of a previous manager, the accountant Frank Dunphy, Hirst became a global brand. He negotiated huge cuts from his galleries, collab-

# World

## U.K.'s move on Russia is also a bid for status

LONDON

Multipronged strategy suggests an eagerness to redefine itself after Brexit

BY MARK LANDLER

Britain seized the world's attention on Saturday by accusing President Vladimir V. Putin of plotting to install a pro-Russian leader in Ukraine, a dramatic late-night announcement that instantly thrust it to the front lines of the most dangerous security crisis in Europe in decades.

British officials say the release of sensitive intelligence was calculated to foil a potential plot and to send a message to Mr. Putin. They cast it as part of a concerted strategy to be a muscular player in Europe's showdown with Russia — a role it has played since Winston Churchill warned of an "Iron Curtain" after World War II.

And yet Britain's moves also bear the imprint of a country eager to set itself apart, two years after it left the European Union. When Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken landed in Kyiv last week for talks about Russian troops massing on Ukraine's border, his plane taxied past a Royal Air Force C-17 cargo plane that had just finished unloading antitank weapons for the Ukrainian military.

"The U.K. is differentiating itself from Germany and France, and to some extent, even the U.S.," said Malcolm Chalmers, the deputy director general of the Royal United Services Institute, a think tank in London. "That comes out of Brexit, and the sense that we have to define ourselves as an independent middle power."

The theatrical timing and cloak-and-dagger nature of the intelligence disclosure, which came in the midst of a roiling political scandal at home, raised a more cynical question: whether some in the British government were simply eager to deflect attention from the problems that threaten to topple Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Either way, Britain is moving on multiple fronts. It is preparing legislation that would enable it to impose sanctions if Mr. Putin carried out an invasion. It dispatched senior ministers to other NATO countries menaced by Russia. (On Sunday, President Biden was said to be considering deploying several thousand U.S. troops, as well as warships and aircraft, to NATO allies in the Baltics and Eastern Europe, according to administration officials.) And it has begun engaging directly with Moscow, with reports that its foreign and defense secretaries plan to meet their Russian counterparts in the coming weeks.

Britain's hard-edge approach was crystallized in a punchy essay by the defense secretary, Ben Wallace. Writing in *The Times* of London, Mr. Wallace rejected Mr. Putin's claims of encirclement by NATO and accused the Russian leader of crude "ethnonationalism," based on what he called the bogus claim that Russians and Ukrainians are one people. The essay made waves in Washington and in European capitals.



Above, the Ukrainian military at a front-line position in Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast. Right, Ukrainian service members unloading anti-tank weapons supplied by Britain at the Boryspil International Airport near Kyiv.

"Whether Britain is in the E.U. or out of the E.U., it is always going to push back on Russian bad behavior," Karen Pierce, the British ambassador to the United States, said in an interview. "Where the Russians are concerned, you'll always find the U.K. at the forward end of the spectrum."

But Mr. Wallace is not the leader of Britain's government — Mr. Johnson is. And the prime minister is caught up in an increasingly desperate campaign to save his job amid a scandal over Downing Street parties that violated coronavirus restrictions. Not only has this political circus crowded out public debate over the British role in Ukraine, but it has also stoked suspicion that Mr. Johnson would welcome a distraction from questions about garden parties.

Even Saturday's announcement about a possible coup in Ukraine appeared timed to grab headlines in the Sunday morning papers and airtime on the news shows. Britain rarely declassifies intelligence in this manner, unlike the United States, though it has done so before on issues involving Russia.

"There is no distraction as enticing as



UKRAINIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY/VIA REUTERS

war," wrote Simon Jenkins, a columnist for *The Guardian*, adding that the only thing more dangerous than a populist leader in trouble was two populists in trouble — in this case, he asserted, Mr. Putin and Mr. Johnson.

Some Conservative lawmakers warn that Britain cannot afford a messy leadership battle at a time like this. But tough talk about Russia also appeals to the Tory right, and critics say some ambitious officials are taking advantage of the tensions.

During a visit to British troops in Estonia in November, the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, posed in military gear atop a tank. Commentators said she looked as if she were channeling Margaret Thatcher, which may not be a bad strategy for someone rumored as a potential replacement for Mr. Johnson.

At the same time, there are ample historical and strategic reasons for Britain to take a hard line with Russia. British officials have been furious with the Kremlin since the poisoning of a former

Russian intelligence agent and his daughter in Salisbury, England, with a nerve agent in 2018, an operation that Britain attributed to Russia's military intelligence and that led the British to expel about 150 diplomats.

The Russians have returned Britain's antipathy, viewing it as the leading edge of American efforts to curb its ambitions and dismissing criticism from British officials as moral posturing, given their country's imperial past. Britain has done little to stop Russian billionaires from using London as a haven, where they buy up Mayfair real estate and influence in the House of Lords.

While Mr. Johnson has not been as full-throated as his defense secretary, he said on Thursday that "any kind of incursion" by Russia "would be a disaster — not just for Ukraine but for Russia, a disaster for the world."

The prime minister, preoccupied by his political troubles, has largely ceded the stage on Ukraine policy to Mr. Wallace, a British Army veteran who was security minister at the time of the Salisbury attacks. In June, Mr. Wallace deployed a Navy destroyer, H.M.S. *Defender*, to sail close to the coast of Russian-occupied Crimea in the Black Sea. Russian planes buzzed the ship in protest.

Britain's action, analysts said, was deliberately aggressive, reflecting a frustration among military officials that its policy has been too reactive to Russia's

serial provocations. These go beyond the Salisbury attack to accusations that Moscow meddles in British elections and has corrupted its politics with dirty money.

Ambassador Pierce pointed out that Britain conducted an independent foreign policy even when it was a member of the European Union. It did, however, take part in E.U.-wide sanctions when it was part of the bloc, something it will no longer do after Brexit. Officials said that was why the government needed to draft new legislation aimed at Russian individuals and its financial services sector.

Beyond that, analysts said Britain's determination to be assertive also reflected its post-Brexit identity. Kim Darroch, who was national security adviser under Prime Minister David Cameron, said Britain once refused to supply weapons to Ukraine because it feared they could end up in the wrong hands. Now, those concerns are outweighed by the advantages of acting independently.

"I suspect this is part of showing we're not bound up with the European Union, which is led by the far more equivocal German view on Russia," said Mr. Darroch, who later served as ambassador to the United States.

**Are some in the government simply eager to deflect attention from the problems that threaten to topple Boris Johnson?**

Germany's equivocation helps explain why the R.A.F. planes carrying the antitank weapons to Ukraine flew a circuitous route across Denmark, avoiding German airspace. A senior British official said that reflected Britain's close consultations with Denmark and Sweden, and that London had not asked the Germans for permission because that would have delayed a mission that depended on speed.

"The most interesting thing is what it says about how frayed the U.K.-German relationship is," said Jeremy Shapiro, research director at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "The disunity was on display for everyone who could track the planes."

Ms. Truss also skipped a meeting in Berlin with Mr. Blinken and her counterparts from Germany and France to discuss Ukraine, sending her deputy. Instead, she traveled to Australia, where she and Mr. Wallace met with officials to discuss a new submarine alliance with Australia, Britain and the United States.

That seemed an odd choice in the midst of a mushrooming European crisis.

But it underscored Britain's commitment to Asia, another cornerstone of Britain's post-Brexit foreign policy. It also, analysts said, helped Britain avoid the perception of being unduly subservient to the United States.

"They have to work carefully not to be seen as a poodle," Mr. Shapiro said. "They want to show that they are an extra-regional player."

*Michael Schwartz and Michael Crowley contributed reporting from Kyiv, Ukraine, and Anton Troianovski from Moscow.*

## Killings pull domestic abuse out of the shadows in Greece

ATHENS

BY NIKI KITSANTONIS

One woman was suffocated, her body found next to her baby. Another was pushed off a cliff. Yet another was stabbed 23 times.

The highly publicized and horrific killings, along with a steep rise in domestic violence cases in Greece in the past year, have pushed partner-on-partner violence into the spotlight in a country where such abuse has long been whispered about but rarely discussed publicly.

"For decades, the Greek justice system showed leniency to abusers citing 'crimes of passion,'" said Clio Papantoleon, a prominent lawyer. Now, she notes, she is receiving a surge in requests for representation from victims of domestic violence.

The violence has led to interventions by the authorities, including a decision to start a national video campaign in November that urges women to leave abusers and offers free emotional support and legal advice. The video flashes apologies — "I didn't mean it," "My baby," "I'm sorry" — in knife-shaped blocks of text. The police have opened special offices to deal with domestic abuse cases.

But activists and officials say that much more needs to be done to prevent more women from dying or suffering silently for years. That includes more training for police officers, who critics complain sometimes fail to see warning signs. In one recent case that horrified the nation, a woman was stabbed to death just weeks after the police failed to intervene when called by a worried neighbor.

The rise in domestic abuse mirrors increases elsewhere that appear, in part,

to be a side effect of Covid lockdowns, prompting the United Nations to speak of a "shadow pandemic." Pope Francis has also addressed the issue, denouncing the increase in domestic violence worldwide as "almost satanic."

In Greece, the police recorded acts of domestic violence against 5,705 women in the first 10 months of last year, up nearly 60 percent from the same period of 2020. Some of the increase is probably the result of more women's speaking up, but that does not diminish the scope of the abuse.

The number of women who were killed in episodes of domestic violence was up, too — to 16 in the first 10 months of 2021, from nine for the whole of 2020.

**"For decades, the Greek justice system showed leniency to abusers citing 'crimes of passion.'"**

The brutality of the killings in Greece last year shocked the nation, dominated coverage in the news media and, in some cases, made international headlines.

The violence has fueled debate on a topic that until recently had been virtually taboo in Greece, said Vasiliki Petousi, a sociologist and head of gender research at the University of Crete.

"The significance of the family in Greece, and its unity, has typically spurred many women, and often their relatives, to conceal their abuse," Ms. Petousi said. But more women are speaking out, something she attributed in part to an increase in public awareness campaigns and media coverage. A decision by the Olympic sailing champion Sofia Bekatorou last year to make public a sexual assault allegation against a sailing federation official

prompted broader discussion about abuse in general, Ms. Petousi added.

Another pivotal moment came in May with the death of Caroline Crouch, killed while her child was nearby. Her husband, Charalambos Anagnostopoulos, a Greek helicopter pilot, admitted to suffocating her and is awaiting trial on murder charges.

Katerina Kostaki, a psychologist at a counseling center in Athens, one of a national network of 43 such centers, said that the gravity of the violence had spurred more victims to come forward. "Women were so scared that they'd be next that they started talking," she said.

The centers and a 24-hour phone line have been busy. In 2021, the centers received 5,491 visits, up from 4,925 in the previous year, and the phone line got 6,797 calls, up from 4,619 in 2019.

"The figures show the impact of the pandemic on abuse," said Maria Syrengele, the Greek deputy labor minister in charge of gender equality. "The violence has certainly increased, but so have appeals for support, as women listened, learned and trusted that there are facilities to visit and experts to listen to them."

In the same month that the government began its video campaign, the Greek Supreme Court prosecutor, Vasilis Pliotas, called for cases of domestic violence to be fast-tracked, referring to "extreme, inconceivable, unrestrained, abhorrent and exceptionally harsh homicides that have stunned society."

The Greek police also plan to open more special domestic abuse offices. Over the past two years, some 73 offices have been introduced nationwide to monitor such cases. In addition, six frontline units, with personnel specially trained to support victims, opened in city precincts at the end of last year.

The Greek public order minister,



A rally in Athens in June against domestic violence. Greece's rise in abuse mirrors increases elsewhere that appear, in part, to be a side effect of Covid lockdowns.

Takis Theodorikakos, said in the past week that more frontline units would be opened to tackle the problem, citing the recent rise in cases.

Even with the attention to domestic violence, there have been indications of police officers' mishandling abuse cases. In July, two police officers were suspended after failing to adequately respond to a call for help by a woman reporting domestic violence being committed against another woman in her apartment block in the Athens suburb of Dafni. The call had been flagged by the emergency service as "high priority," but the two officers who went to the scene did not intervene.

Less than three weeks later, the woman who had been abused was stabbed to death. The police said that her husband had confessed and was in custody, charged with murder.

Ms. Papantoleon, the lawyer, said an entrenched view by the police that domestic abuse was not always serious had precluded systematic action. She said that officers needed more training.

Giorgos Kalliakmanis, the head of the police union for southeastern Athens, where the Dafni stabbing happened, said that officers were instructed to take domestic violence seriously but that excessive demands on them and a lack of specialized training could be obstacles.

"Officers are overworked, dealing with cases ranging from checks on Covid measures to thefts," he said. "If 90 percent of domestic cases they've responded to in the past are simple arguments, they might not give enough weight to the more serious incidents."

He called the actions taken in the Dafni killing an "isolated incident," noting that the officers sent to the scene

"did not evaluate it properly and should have handled it differently."

The force is trying to better prepare its officers to respond to cases of domestic violence and began specialized training courses at the end of the last year with the help of psychologists and prosecutors, he added.

The justice system has also been criticized. Those convicted of abuse are sometimes given lenient sentences because they claim to have been provoked or because they have no prior convictions.

The political opposition, notably the leftist Syriza party, has proposed that the term femicide be included in Greece's criminal code as a separate offense carrying heavier punishment.

An initiative has also been taken at the European level. In December, the European Commission laid out rules to tackle hate crimes, including gender-based violence, after calls by European Parliament members in September for those offenses to be categorized as a "particularly serious crime."

Ms. Syrengele, the minister, said that Greece aimed to do more to combat abuse.

An "action plan for sexual equality" unveiled in December includes initiatives aimed at curbing domestic violence, including more public awareness drives and bolstering the participation of women in decision-making roles in the labor market and elsewhere.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that the plan would tackle Greece's "social ailments," including violence against women.

"There is a huge silent majority that are still not speaking out," said Ms. Petousi, the professor, who called for more counseling centers and other practical measures to encourage victims of violence to come forward. "There is much, much, much more to be done."

## WORLD



Michel Butros al-Jisri feeding the pigeons he keeps in a room attached to his house in Idlib, Syria. Wars, poverty and persecution have pushed many Christians out of the Mideast.

## ‘Now, there’s no one’

Christians in Idlib, Syria, lament loss of their city’s once-vibrant community

BY HWAIDA SAAD, ASMAA AL-OMAR AND BEN HUBBARD

On Christmas Day, Michel Butros al-Jisri, one of the last Christians in the Syrian city of Idlib, didn’t attend services, because the Islamist rebels who control the area had long since locked up the church. Nor did he gather with friends and relatives to celebrate around a tree because nearly all of his fellow Christians have either died or fled during Syria’s 10-year civil war.

Instead, Mr. al-Jisri said, he went to the city’s Christian cemetery, which no one uses anymore, to sit among the graves of his forebears and observe the day quietly, by himself.

“Who am I going to celebrate the holiday with? The walls?” he asked. “I don’t want to celebrate if I am alone.”

Mr. al-Jisri, who is 90, stooped and almost deaf but still fairly robust, is a living relic of one of the many formerly vibrant Christian communities in the Middle East that appear headed for extinction.

Communities across the Middle East and North Africa — some that trace their roots to Christianity’s early days — have been struggling for decades with wars, poverty and persecution. A British government report in 2019 said the number of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa had fallen to fewer than 4 percent of the population from more than 20 percent a century ago.

The past decade has been particularly brutal, as the upheavals have left Christians in parts of Iraq, Syria and beyond under the control of Islamist militants. They were subject to the whims of their new rulers, who banned their religious practices, seized their properties and even singled them out for death at times.

Over nine decades, Mr. al-Jisri went from being a member of a Christian community in Idlib that blended easily into the city’s social fabric to one of only three known Christians who remain.

He was born in 1931 in Idlib, a city surrounded by olive groves and farmland in northwestern Syria, one of four children, he said. His mother died when he was 2 months old, and his father soon remarried and had two more sons.

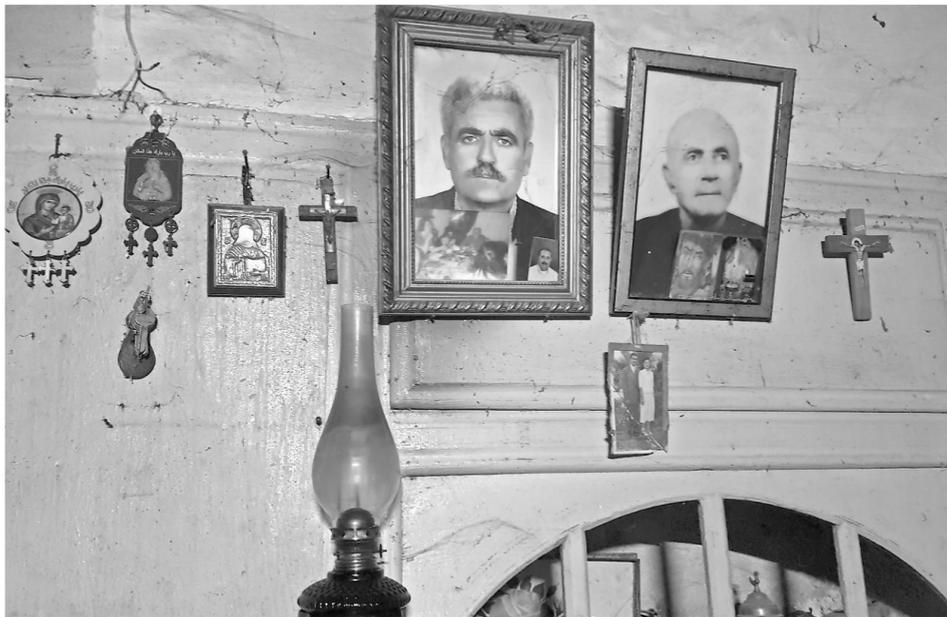
Although Idlib’s Christians did not rival the numbers in major cities like Aleppo, whose Christian population also fell during the war, there was a small, vibrant community in the provincial capital and nearby villages, living alongside the area’s Muslim majority with little friction.

Mr. al-Jisri’s family was Greek Orthodox, like most of Idlib’s Christians, and worshiped at St. Mary’s Orthodox Church, a stone chapel with a bell tower and rich in icons, built in 1886 near the city center. A National Evangelical Church was built around the corner years later.

Members of his community worked as jewelers, doctors, lawyers and merchants, and even sold alcohol, though it was religiously forbidden, to their Muslim neighbors.

On Easter and Christmas, the priest would open his home to Muslim and Christian well-wishers, according to Fayeza Qawsara, a historian from the area. A huge Christmas tree in a square near the church drew crowds of Muslim and Christian children who came to receive gifts, said Father Ibrahim Farah, Mr. al-Jisri’s former priest.

For many decades, Mr. al-Jisri worked for the church as the cemetery caretaker, keeping it clean, mending fences and organizing funerals. He



would receive the grieving families and make coffee for those paying their respects.

Syria has been ruled for more than 50 years by the al-Assad family, and under both Hafez, who died in 2000, and his son, Bashar, who has been Syria’s president since, violence between religious communities was rare.

But that system, and the life that Mr. al-Jisri had long known, fell apart after Syria’s civil war began in 2011, shaking the government’s hold on large swaths of territory.

In 2015, Islamist rebels stormed the city of Idlib. As they took control, they killed a Christian man, Elias al-Khal, and his son, Najib, who sold alcohol, Mr. al-Jisri said.

Soon afterward, they kidnapped Father Ibrahim and held him for 19 days, the priest said. By the time he was released, the church library and archive had been pillaged, and most of the about 1,200 Christians who had remained in the city until the rebels arrived had already fled or were on their way out.

“News spreads easily,” Mr. al-Jisri said. “They put their families in cars and drove away.”

The city’s new rulers closed the church and banned public displays of Christian devotion, further fueling the exodus. Once the Christians were gone, the rebels took over their homes and shops.

“We used to see Idlib as a nice mosaic,” Father Ibrahim said from Toronto, where he moved after fleeing Syria. “Now, it is a complete mess.”

Christians represented about 10 percent of Syria’s population of 21 million before the war began in 2011. Now, they account for about 5 percent, with fewer than 700,000 left, according to groups that track the persecution of Christians around the world.

With the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Christians began to leave that country in droves as well, and their population had shrunk to fewer than 500,000 by 2015 from as many as 1.5 million in 2003.

The flight of Christians from Idlib was particularly extreme, and by the end of 2015, Father Ibrahim said, only five Christians were left.

Two have since died.

One of those remaining is a woman who prefers to keep her life private. Another, Nabil Razzouq, 72, is a retired widower whose four adult children live elsewhere in Syria or abroad. He said he had chosen to stay in Idlib because the war had stolen Syrians’ time and he did not want to lose his home as well.

“If I lost time and place, I would go insane,” he said. “That’s why I held onto the place.”

Idlib is the last province in Syria still mostly controlled by rebels, and more than a third of the 4.4 million people in the country’s northwest fled there during the war or were bused there by the government after it conquered their towns.

Mr. al-Jisri said that he had not entered the church, helped with a funeral or had a drink of alcohol since before the rebels took over.

Above, Christian imagery and photographs of relatives on the walls of Mr. al-Jisri’s home. Left, an abandoned church in Yaqubiyah, in Idlib Province. Christians accounted for about 10 percent of Syria’s population before the war began in 2011.

“Now, there’s no one,” he said.

Members of his former congregation still pay him an honorary salary, which puts food on his table. He lives in a one-room house where a single gas burner serves as the kitchen, cushions on the floor are the living room and his bedroom is a mattress against the wall.

He has a heater but can’t get fuel. He has a television and a radio but no electricity.

Above the cupboard where he keeps his teacups hang fading photographs of dead relatives, crucifixes and icons of Jesus and Mary.

Mr. al-Jisri never married, and all but one of his siblings have died, he said. He thinks his surviving brother lives in the United States, but they are not in touch.

He has nieces and nephews whom he would love to visit in Aleppo, about an hour’s drive away in normal times. But he hasn’t made the trip in years, because it would require crossing a hostile front line between rebel and government forces.

So he spends his days wandering the city market, chatting with neighbors or dropping in on friends — or on the children of friends who have died.

It doesn’t bother him that they are all Muslims.

“We are all brothers,” he said.

Some days, he walks to the cemetery where he worked for so many years, just to check on it.

Once busy with families coming and going, it is now deserted, and he sometimes sits for hours, alone with the gravestones.

His closest friends are the pet pigeons he keeps in a room attached to his house. As they flutter around him in the courtyard cooing, he flings birdseed and sings to himself old Arabic songs about love and a country that has not always loved him back:

*O treasure of the Levant, your love is on my mind,  
The sweetest time, I spent with you,  
You said goodbye and promised me,  
Don’t forget me, I won’t forget you,  
No matter how many years and nights  
you are gone.*

## Spain says ‘come in,’ despite virus surge

SPAIN, FROM PAGE 1

Argalago, an economics professor at Pablo de Olavide University in Seville.

“The tourist sector has an elevated importance now,” he said.

Before the pandemic, the tourism business accounted for roughly 12.4 percent of the country’s economic output, and Spain is eager to get the numbers up again, especially during the winter months when northern Europeans traditionally head south to escape the cold. More than 2.23 million people are employed in Spanish tourism, nearly 11.8 percent of the country’s work force, a much higher figure than in neighbors like France, at 7.3 percent, or Germany, 8.4 percent.

Yet keeping the door open to visitors comes with risks that are well remembered in Spain. In 2020, eager to open to tourism and return to normal, Spain relaxed its restrictions before summer, helping spread a deadly second wave of the coronavirus.

The number of international tourists fell from around 84 million in 2019, to roughly 19 million in 2020, a drop of more than 77 percent.

Spain’s government has said it has little interest in returning to the restrictions it imposed during the first wave in 2020, saying that with its successful vaccination campaign, the country has already taken the biggest measures it can toward curbing the effects of the virus.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez recently went a step further, saying that the country should accept the virus as a fact of life. “We are going to have to learn to live with it, as we do with many other viruses,” he said.

The island of Lanzarote, 80 miles off the northwestern coast of Africa, offers a window into tourism where the coronavirus is accepted as endemic and the circulation of foreign visitors continues much as it did before the pandemic.

Its skies are dotted with planes filled with tourists arriving on direct flights from Manchester, Amsterdam and Düsseldorf. The warm weather means much of the island can be enjoyed outdoors, with no masks. Northern Europeans flock to wineries built along the black sides of volcanoes and bedecked in signs in German and English.

“This has to be the way ahead. Spain has to accept that the virus isn’t going away and that we need to continue on doing business,” said Juan Antonio Torres Díaz, who six months ago took over as the owner of Palacio Ico, a restaurant and hotel in the north of the island, betting that there would be a tourism recovery.

In other parts of the country, some say they are starting to see signs that foreign tourists, too, are learning to live with the virus.

Cristóbal Ruiz Mejías, a longtime waiter at Chinitas, a cafe in the beach town of Málaga on the mainland, said he was seeing tourists return, not only from France and Britain, but now also

from countries further afield, like Argentina. He is also adapting to the changes to his work — such as asking for vaccine certificates before customers can be seated, something that is required in the Andalusia region where Málaga is located.

“It still bothers me to have to ask for them,” he said, adding that he worried that fear of the virus could drive off tourists and harm Málaga’s fragile recovery.

For Encarna Pérez Donaíre, the owner of a small company that owns vacation rentals in Hornos de Segura, a village in southern Spain, the current approach is a welcome contrast to the one taken this time last year, when, with no vaccines available, shops and businesses in the region were not allowed to be open.

Now, about three quarters of her rooms have been occupied, she said. Her company has worked out protocols that tourists seem comfortable with, leaving rooms to air out a day between guests and leaving the keys in boxes to avoid contact with the property managers.

**New cases rocketed from an average of fewer than 2,000 a day in November to more than 130,000 daily in the past week.**

Ms. Pérez Donaíre said the challenges now had less to do with government restrictions than with concerns about the new variant. “People want to go out, but with Omicron as contagious as it is, there were more cancellations,” she said.

And the open-door policy in Spain has not been without its risks, as tourists like Marian López, a Spanish online marketing professional, came to realize during a trip with her partner to Lanzarote island.

Before arriving on Jan. 7, the couple celebrated a dinner with family for Three Kings Day, a traditional holiday in Spain. They spent the first weekend visiting some of the island’s beaches, and then learned that one of the relatives at their holiday dinner had Covid-19. Then they, too, began to feel symptoms, including body aches and fever, and tests showed they had been infected, forcing them to isolate.

After their hotel reservation ran out, they had to scramble to find an apartment to stay in to wait out the rest of the mandatory isolation period of a week — all while getting more ill.

Ms. López, who also runs a travel blog called Traveland, said she and her partner had joked before the trip that it might not be so bad if they were forced to work from the island if they got sick. Now they feel otherwise.

“When you’re sick,” she said, “it’s best to be at home.”

Nicholas Casey reported from Tahiche, and José Bautista from Madrid.



In Lanzarote, Spain, the circulation of foreign visitors continues much as normal. The warm weather means much of the island can be enjoyed outdoors, without masks.

## CORRECTIONS

• An obituary on Saturday-Sunday about the German-born actor Hardy Kruger referred incorrectly to two actors who told him stories about Nazi crimes when he met them while shooting the Nazi propaganda film “Young Eagles” in 1944. They were not Jewish. And a picture caption with the obituary, using information from Getty Images, misidentified the actress shown with Mr. Kruger in a scene from the movie “Sundays and Cybèle.” She is Patricia Gozzi, not Nicole Courcel.

• The article on Saturday-Sunday about 52 places to travel in 2022 misspelled the surname of a restaurant critic in New York City. His name is Robert Sietsema, not Robert Sietma. The article also misstated the status of a huemul rehabilitation center planned for Cerro Castillo National Park in Chile. The project is still in the process of getting funded, it is not in the construction stage. Puerto Rico’s El Yunque National Forest was described incorrectly. It is the only tropical rainforest within the U.S. Forest Service’s holdings, not the only rainforest.

The article misstated the reopening date of a museum in Milwaukee: America’s Black Holocaust Museum is scheduled to reopen this year, not in 2023. And the description of Argentina’s Iberá Park omitted an organization that purchased land to protect wildlife in Ar-

gentina. The land was purchased by Tompkins Conservation and Rewilding Argentina.

• A picture with an article on Friday about interference between 5G signals and radio altimeters was published in error. The image showed a pressure altimeter, not a radio altimeter. The article incorrectly described the fighter planes used in World War II. Most were not jets.

• An obituary on Jan. 14 about Alan Scott, the doctor behind the medical use of Botox, referred incorrectly to Clostridium botulinum. It is a microbe that produces the toxin botulinum; it is not itself a toxin.

• A film review on Jan. 11 about “A Hero” reversed the names and descriptions of two characters. Bahram, played by Mohsen Tanabandeh, is the print-shop owner who is owed money by the main character, Rahim; Hossein, played by Ali Reza Jahandideh, is married to Rahim’s sister, not vice versa.

• A review on Jan. 5 about “Chasing History” by Carl Bernstein, misidentified the newspaper that the reporter Will Fowler worked for when he was covering the Black Dahlia murder. It was The Los Angeles Examiner, not The Los Angeles Times.

# On abortion law, the U.S. is different

Among rich democracies, a trend toward expanding and funding services

BY CLAIRE CAIN MILLER  
AND MARGOT SANGER-KATZ

The U.S. chief justice, John G. Roberts Jr., said last month that the United States was an international outlier in allowing abortion more than halfway through pregnancy. That later cutoff, he said, places America in the company of North Korea and China.

It's true in some ways, but not all. Few countries allow abortion without restriction until fetal viability, the cutoff set by *Roe v. Wade*, which was decided 49 years ago Saturday. Because of medical advances, that is now around 23 weeks. And only around a dozen other countries allow abortions for any reason beyond 15 weeks of pregnancy, the threshold in the Mississippi law the Supreme Court is considering, which could overturn *Roe*.

But in many countries, women can get abortions after the gestational cutoff for a wide variety of reasons, including health or economic ones. In some, it can be easier to obtain an abortion than in many parts of America. Also, industrialized countries that America is often compared with tend to have more abortion providers and cover the costs of abortions.

"Under the status quo, abortion access is still out of reach for many in the United States," said Risa Kaufman, director for U.S. human rights at the Center for Reproductive Rights, which fights abortion restrictions in American courts and tracks international laws. "That is in contrast to many countries, including in Western Europe, that provide access to subsidized, fully funded abortion services, universal health care, contraception and broader social supports."

The United States is an outlier in another way — in considering rolling back abortion access.

The Mississippi case is a direct challenge to *Roe*. If the court overturns *Roe*, more than 20 states are expected to ban or severely limit abortion at all stages of pregnancy.

Just three countries have tightened abortion laws since 1994, according to the center: Poland, El Salvador and Nicaragua. In that period, 59 have expanded them. In 2018, Ireland, which had mostly banned abortion, made it legal on request until 12 weeks. Other countries, like South Korea, have decriminalized it.

"The U.S. trend is very much the minority trend," said Joanna Mishtal, an anthropologist at the University of Central Florida who studies reproductive rights policies in Europe. She said Poland is the only European nation "that is consistently restricting both policies and real access to services that are still lawful."

## HOW ABORTION IS GOVERNED

Worldwide, six in 10 women of reproductive age live in countries that broadly allow abortion, according to the Center for Reproductive Rights.

Sixty-six countries, home to just over a quarter of women of reproductive age,



KENNY HOLSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DAVID J. PHILLIP FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

either prohibit abortion or allow it only if a woman's life is in danger, according to the center's data on national laws that have been formally adopted.

Sixty-three countries, representing 35 percent of women of reproductive age, allow abortion for various reasons, including protection of a woman's physical or mental health or consideration of her social or economic circumstances.

Some countries in this group are more permissive than others. In Britain, women must have the approval of two doctors for their abortions, but requests are routinely granted up to 24 weeks — and beyond that for severe health reasons. In Bolivia, however, a woman must

show a grave health risk from her pregnancy, or show that it was a result of rape or incest.

Seventy-four countries, home to 38 percent of women, allow abortion for any reason for a certain number of weeks. The most common threshold is 12 weeks. A dozen or so countries besides the United States allow abortion without any restrictions or conditions after 15 weeks, the cutoff in question in the Mississippi case. They include North Korea, China, Iceland, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada and Vietnam.

"Through the lens of comparative national law, Mississippi's abortion regime is more permissive than in most coun-

Anti-abortion protesters, above, during the annual March for Life in Washington last week. At left, a celebration in Dublin after a 2018 referendum paved the way for a less strict abortion law in Ireland, where the cost of the procedure is now fully covered.

tries," wrote 141 international legal scholars in a brief to the Supreme Court in support of Mississippi.

## MORE ACCESS IN SOME LANDS . . .

Some of these countries, however, allow abortion after the cutoff if the woman has a valid reason, and legal scholars say that in some of them, abortion until fetal viability is as accessible as it is in the United States.

In Germany, for example, abortion is permitted on request until 12 weeks, and until 22 weeks if, in the woman's view, it is necessary for her physical or mental health or for present or future living conditions. In Denmark, which also has a 12-week cutoff, abortion is allowed after that time for factors including health; the person's age, income or housing; or her interests or occupation.

Other countries also allow exceptions after 12 weeks, but they are less broad. In France and Ireland, for instance, the exceptions are to prevent serious health issues or death, or if the fetus has a severe, incurable illness.

Gestational cutoffs, even if they have exemptions, can present obstacles to abortion access. One strong piece of evidence is the large number of women who travel to less restrictive countries in Europe for later abortions, Professor Mishtal said.

"Gestational age limits are serious

barriers," she said.

In America, only about 8 percent of abortions happen after 13 weeks. One reason some women have later abortions is the barriers in the United States. It takes time to save money for the procedure — or to arrange transportation, child care and time off work to travel to a clinic if there is not one nearby.

## . . . AND LESS IN OTHERS

In much of Europe, abortion laws may be more permissive than they appear on paper. But in other parts of the world, there is less access to abortion than the law permits. In sub-Saharan Africa, most countries ban abortion, but even those that say they allow it, such as South Africa, have limited access.

"Access to safe and affordable services in government hospitals can also be limited by a scarcity of health professionals that are trained to provide these legal abortions or have limited knowledge about abortion law," said Siri Suh, a medical sociologist at Brandeis University in Massachusetts who has researched reproductive health in Africa.

Abortion in Italy is broadly legal and free, but nearly three-quarters of doctors there have registered as conscientious objectors and are exempted from performing abortions for religious or moral reasons. Other doctors feel pressure from colleagues not to provide

abortions, Professor Mishtal and colleagues found. "It has a chilling effect," she said. "There is an enormous discrepancy between the law and the actual access."

## HOW THE U.S. STANDS OUT

In other rich democracies, abortion is covered by public health insurance. So are other forms of reproductive health care, including contraception. In Ireland, for example, the cost of an abortion is fully covered, the procedure can be performed by a general practitioner, and there is a government help line on how to get an abortion or reach a nurse during recovery.

The United States prohibits federal funding of abortions in most cases. Also, abortions tend to be provided only in special clinics, often far from where women live. In comparable nations, they are more likely to be offered at ordinary hospitals and medical clinics.

Most European countries have arrived at their abortion laws through legislation involving political compromise. In America, the viability threshold originated in the Supreme Court. Michael New, a research associate at the Catholic University of America in Washington who supports more U.S. restrictions on abortion, said this process difference may explain why the gestational limit in U.S. law is later than in most of its peer nations.

"A legal debate, built upon precedent, can be very different from a democratic debate or moral debate," he wrote in an email.

The United States is also unusual in having such a wide range of laws by state, a feature that will be magnified if *Roe* is overturned. "In California, abortion access is fairly similar to abortion access in the United Kingdom, whereas in Texas right now, abortion access is really among the most restrictive in the world," said Caitlin Gerdt, a vice president at Ibis Reproductive Health, a research group.

## ILLEGAL ABORTION BECOMES SAFER

The very nature of illegal abortion worldwide is being transformed because of the availability of pills that can end a pregnancy. Historically, countries without legal abortion tended to have high rates of unsafe abortion. But pills that cause abortions are safe and easy to transport. The most effective studied protocol involves two drugs. But just one, misoprostol, an ulcer drug on the World Health Organization's list of "essential medicines," causes a complete abortion in around 80 percent of cases or more, according to recent research.

In some countries, misoprostol is available over the counter at pharmacies. Activists in South America and Africa have increasingly helped women find and use the drug, outside the official health system. Women, including those in the United States, can order the pills online through groups in Europe from pharmacies outside the country.

In a post-*Roe* world, states might seek to make such assistance, or the use of such pills, subject to punishment. In El Salvador, which prohibits abortion but has widespread use of misoprostol, women who experience miscarriages are sometimes jailed.

"The risks have also changed," Ms. Gerdt said, "from physical to legal."

# Some Democrats hope to rescue climate provisions

WASHINGTON

BY CORAL DAVENPORT  
AND LISA FRIEDMAN

A growing number of Democrats in Congress want to move ahead with the climate portion of President Biden's stalled spending bill, saying the urgency of a warming planet demands action and they believe they can muster enough votes to muscle it past Republican opposition.

Faced with the possibility that Democrats could lose control of Congress in November's midterm elections, the party is now looking to salvage what it can from the \$2.2 trillion Build Back Better Act. The sweeping climate-change and social-policy bill passed the House but came to a halt last month when Joe Manchin III, the West Virginia Democrat and swing vote in the Senate, said he opposed it.

But Mr. Manchin has suggested that he might back various climate provisions in the legislation, leading some Democrats to say the party should regroup around a climate bill.

"The bottom line is that we are running out of time and the only thing that can pass is a package that has the votes," said Senator Edward Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts and a leading proponent of climate action.

Mr. Biden endorsed the strategy during a news conference, saying that he was "confident we can get pieces, big chunks" of the bill passed.

"I've been talking to a number of my colleagues on the Hill," Mr. Biden told reporters. "I think it's clear that we would be able to get support for the \$500 billion plus for energy and the environment."

His comments encouraged Democratic lawmakers who had been privately considering that option to talk openly about rallying around it. "I think the climate piece offers a path forward," Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon, said Thursday.

That could mean jettisoning many of the child-care, health care and tax-overhaul provisions that are priorities for various segments of the Democratic coalition.

But as nearly every part of the United States has recently experienced deadly storms, heat waves, drought and wildfires made worse by climate change, environmentalists say the window is closing for action to curb the pollution that is dangerously heating the planet.

"We don't have another 10 years to wait," Mr. Markey said. "We should take what Joe Manchin said, take the climate and clean-energy provisions in the package that have been largely worked through and financed, and take any other provisions in any other part of Build Back Better that have the votes, and put them together as a package."

Of the social programs that would not make the cut, Mr. Markey said, "that becomes the agenda that we run on in 2022 and 2024."

Republicans, including those who accept the scientific consensus that climate change is primarily a result of burning fossil fuels, expressed less urgency.

The New York Times asked all of the 50 Senate Republicans if they would support just the climate provisions in the Build Back Better Act if they were presented in a stand-alone bill. None said they would.

"You'd be hard-pressed" to find Republican members "who would be on board with approving these Democrat priorities," Senator John Boozman, Republican of Arkansas, said in a statement.

He described the climate provisions as "a far-left agenda" that is "opposed by every Republican in the Senate."

Two of the 50 Senate Republicans did speak in general terms about how they might back some climate measures. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said, "Some of it I might be able to support," while Lisa Murkowski of Alaska said, "I think anything is possible, as long as you



STEFAN REYNOLDS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Environmentalists say the window is closing for action to curb dangerous heating of the planet. And Republicans in Congress are not eager to pass climate legislation.

have an attitude of good will and good faith negotiating going here."

The climate portion of Build Back Better includes about \$555 billion aimed at moving the American economy away from its 150-year-old reliance on fossil fuels and toward clean energy sources.

Instead of penalties to punish polluters, the bill offers incentives for industries, utilities and individuals to shift from burning oil, gas and coal for energy and transportation to using wind, solar and other forms of power that do not emit carbon dioxide, the most plentiful of the greenhouse gases that are warming the world.

It would provide about \$320 billion in tax credits for producers and buyers of electric vehicles would receive up to \$12,500 in tax credits. The bill would extend existing tax credits to reduce costs for homeowners who install solar pan-

"The bottom line is that we are running out of time and the only thing that can pass is a package that has the votes."

els, geothermal pumps and small wind turbines, covering up to 30 percent of the bills.

The bill also includes \$6 billion to make buildings more energy efficient and roughly \$6 billion for owners to replace gas-powered furnaces and appliances with electric versions. And it provides billions of dollars for research and development of new technologies to capture carbon dioxide from the air.

Voters across the political spectrum — including conservative Republicans — strongly support tax credits and rebates to consumers, businesses and landlords for energy-efficient heating

and cooling, solar panels, electric vehicles and other low-emissions or no-carbon technology, according to a September 2021 poll conducted by climate change communications programs at Yale and George Mason universities.

And many of the clean-energy tax credits in Build Back Better have been backed by Republican lawmakers in the past and even written by them. The tax credits, some of which have been law since the 1970s, have typically been extended for just a few years at a time. The pending legislation would keep them in place for a decade, lending more certainty to markets.

"Lots of the direct benefits of these tax credits already go to red states," said Barry Rabe, a professor of political science and environmental policy at the University of Michigan. "We have seen major growth of wind and solar production in predominantly Republican states, such as Texas, Oklahoma and North Dakota. And these policies have had bipartisan support over time."

President Biden wants to significantly cut the pollution generated by the United States, the country that has historically pumped the most planet-warming gasses into the atmosphere. He aims to reduce the nation's greenhouse gas emissions at least 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, which is roughly the pace that scientists say the whole world must follow to keep the Earth from warming more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since the Industrial Revolution. That's the threshold beyond which scientists say catastrophic events will become more frequent.

Average global temperatures have already increased 1.1 degrees Celsius.

It will be extremely difficult to meet Mr. Biden's target without the clean energy tax credits in the Build Back Better Act, analysts say.

"This is a make-or-break moment on the climate crisis," said Jamal Raad, executive director of the climate advocacy group Evergreen Action. "Tough

choices need to be made on the other pieces of Build Back Better to get this over the finish line," he said, adding that he and other environmental groups have communicated this to the White House and Chuck Schumer of New York, the Senate majority leader.

Mr. Schumer did not respond to a request for comment on Thursday.

Even though Democrats control the White House and Congress, the party is stymied in the Senate by procedural rules, unified Republican opposition and the fact that the chamber is split 50-50, with Democrats and their two independent allies able to prevail only because of the tiebreaking authority of Vice President Kamala Harris.

If Democrats were to try to take a climate bill to the Senate floor for a vote, they would need to be joined by at least 10 Republicans to clear a 60-vote threshold to push past a Republican filibuster. They can bypass a filibuster by using a fast-track procedure known as reconciliation, which would allow them to take the legislation to the Senate floor with a simple 51-vote majority. That's the route that Senate leaders have been trying to use to advance the broader Build Back Better bill.

Asked why Republicans would block a procedural move to allow a vote on a climate bill, a spokesman for Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader, pointed to remarks the senator made in November about the climate section of the Build Back Better package. He called it "a reckless taxing and spending spree that would hammer American families and the affordable energy they need to power and heat their homes and drive their cars."

Mr. Rabe said that policy appears to be a casualty of Republican efforts to deny Mr. Biden a major legislative win in an election year. "Even those policies that might scream out for opportunity for bipartisanship run into this partisanship," he said.

Emily Cochrane contributed reporting.

# Business

## Fight over solar threatens state's climate goals

California regulators to vote on measure to cut incentives for home installations

BY IVAN PENN

California has led the United States in setting ambitious climate change goals and policies. But the state's progress is threatened by a nasty fight between rival camps in the energy industry, both of which consider themselves proponents of renewable energy.

The dispute is about who will get to build the green energy economy — utilities or smaller companies that install solar panels and batteries at homes — and reap billions of dollars in profits from those investments. At stake is whether the state can reach its goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2045.

For years, the rooftop solar business was ascendant in California, growing as much as 62 percent a year. That angered utilities and their labor unions, which had long controlled the production, sale and distribution of electricity, and they lobbied state leaders to rein in the rooftop solar business — an effort that is on the cusp of success.

The fighting could not come at a worse time, some energy experts said. President Biden's main legislative effort to move the country toward clean energy and electric cars has stalled in Congress, even as natural disasters and heat waves linked to a warming planet are becoming more common.

U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, which fell sharply in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, jumped 6.2 percent last year.

In addition to having about 12 percent of the U.S. population, California is widely considered a leader in energy and climate policy. Its decisions matter far beyond its territory, because other states and the federal government often copy them.

The California Public Utilities Commission plans to vote in the next few weeks to reduce the growth of solar energy in the state, which has added more of it than any other. The commission has proposed slashing the incentives that homeowners receive to install rooftop solar systems. Officials argue that the changes would help reduce utility bills for lower-income residents about \$10 a month by forcing rooftop solar users to pay higher fees to support the electric grid.

Analysts with Bank of America Global Research say the proposal would lead to a 20 percent annual drop in the installation of new rooftop solar systems in California next year before they would begin to recover. Representatives of the solar business expect a decline of up to 80 percent.

The proposal would force California to rely more on large power installations, including solar and wind farms, and long-distance transmission lines operated by utilities like Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison. Every watt of electricity not produced on the rooftop of a home would be produced and transmitted by a utility or a wholesale power company.

"You can understand why utilities don't like distributive resources," said David Feldman, a senior energy analyst at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, using an industry term for small energy systems. "The more elec-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELLA ANGGOTTI-JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Ralph Baca, top, a retired federal worker, said the proposed changes would probably have made it impossible for him to afford his rooftop solar system. Above, solar workers at a rally against the utilities commission's proposal to reduce the value of credits that homeowners with solar panels receive for power produced beyond what they use.

tricity they sell, the more money they make."

Some energy experts say utilities would not be able to produce or buy enough renewable energy to replace what would be lost from the decline in rooftop solar panels — which supplied 9 percent of the state's electricity in 2020, more than nuclear and coal put together. California would need to set aside about a quarter of its land for renewable energy to meet its climate goals without expanding rooftop solar, said Mark Z. Jacobson, a professor of civil and environmental energy at Stanford. As a result, utilities would have to turn to natural gas and other fossil fuels.

"The only thing this is going to do is reduce rooftop solar," Professor Jacobson said. "That will mean there will be more natural gas in the system. Every rooftop should have solar on it. You

should be encouraging more of it."

People who install solar panels on their roofs or property are still connected to the electrical grid, but they receive credit on their bills for power they produce beyond what they use. California's proposal would cut the value of those credits, which are roughly equivalent to retail electricity rates, by about 87 percent. In addition, the measure would impose a new monthly fee on solar homeowners — about \$56 for the typical rooftop system.

The monthly cost of solar and electricity for homeowners with an average rooftop system who are served by PG&E, the state's largest utility, would jump to \$215, from \$133, according to the California Solar and Storage Association.

An intense campaign is underway to sway regulators. Rooftop solar compa-

nies, homeowners and activists on one side and utilities and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers on the other are lobbying Gov. Gavin Newsom to intervene. While the commission is independent of Mr. Newsom, he wields enormous influence. The governor recently told reporters that the regulators should change their proposal, but he didn't specify how.

The electrical workers union, which did not respond to requests for comment, is playing a central role. It represents linemen, electricians and other utility employees, who usually earn more than the mostly nonunion workers who install rooftop systems. Many union members, an important constituency for Democrats, fear being left behind in the transition to green energy.

Other states are also taking aim at rooftop solar. Florida is considering legislation to roll back compensation to homeowners for the excess energy their panels produce, a benefit known as net energy metering.

No government, though, has adopted as big a change as California has proposed. The Solar Energy Industries Association said that if regulators approved the measure, the state would slide to last place for rooftop solar incentives from near the top of the group's rankings.

"The design of this proposal has been, 'Let's get solar out of the way,'" said Vikram Aggarwal, the founder and chief executive of EnergySage, a rooftop-solar comparison shopping site. "This proposal just doesn't feel fair from any perspective."

Fairness has been at the heart of California's solar debate.

Since Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican, kicked off the state's "Million Solar Roofs" initiative in 2006, regulators have struggled to find a balance between encouraging rooftop solar and keeping electrical rates affordable. The dispute boils down to two big questions:

How much should homeowners be paid for the excess power their solar panels send to the grid, and how much should rooftop solar users pay toward running the grid.

Utilities, their labor unions and some environmental and consumer groups say rooftop solar owners are being paid too much because utilities can produce electricity or buy it on the wholesale market at a much lower cost.

Lower-income customers who cannot afford solar panels are effectively subsidizing affluent homeowners, said Matthew Freedman, a staff lawyer for The Utility Reform Network, which represents ratepayers in California. "We have a crisis of affordability."

**"Every rooftop should have solar on it. You should be encouraging more of it."**

Ari Vanrenen, a spokeswoman for PG&E, said: "Sensible reform is necessary to support customer equity and help continue California's success toward a clean energy future."

During a virtual public hearing this month, Al Fortier, a leader in the electrical workers union, said well-paying union jobs at utilities were threatened by the growth of rooftop solar. "Net metering is making it worse," he said.

Unions representing coal miners, electricians and other workers have expressed similar concerns that the transition to renewable energy will depress wages. Companies in that business have generally opposed organizing efforts and usually pay less than old-line energy businesses. Utility linemen in California earned an average salary of \$94,000 in 2020, while solar panel installers made about \$50,000, according to government data.

The solar industry argues that it provides various jobs, many that pay as

well as comparable utility positions. Solar employs about 69,000 workers in California, including 25,000 residential installers, compared with the 38,000 who work for the state's three large investor-owned utilities.

Mary Powell, a former Vermont utility executive who last year became chief executive of Sunrun, the country's largest residential solar company, said the energy transition offered many opportunities for her company and utilities.

"This should not be a fight," Ms. Powell said at a rally this month in Los Angeles. "If the utilities are enlightened, what do they do? They embrace what we do."

Mr. Feldman of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, a division of the U.S. Energy Department, said the campaign to limit rooftop solar often ignores its benefits. Rooftop panels reduce the amount of power the grid needs to deliver, making the system more efficient.

"If you insulate your roof, buy energy-efficient appliances," Mr. Feldman said, "that's not any different from the grid perspective of a solar system."

The use of rooftop systems also reduces the need for new power plants — including those that contribute to climate change — and long-distance power lines, which have ignited large wildfires.

That is why other state officials want more rooftop solar. The California Energy Commission requires solar panels on new homes, and it voted last year to require solar panels and batteries in some other new buildings, including apartments.

The utility commission's proposal may not limit the use of rooftop solar by affluent people, but it would discourage others, said Bernadette Del Chiaro, the executive director of the California Solar and Storage Association. About 12 percent of California's rooftop solar users, or 150,000 homes, have incomes low enough to qualify for discounted electricity — \$34,840 a year or less for individuals and up to \$62,080 for families of five. That's more than all of the 107,000 rooftop solar homes in Florida.

"All the rhetoric of only rich people adopting rooftop solar is patently false," Ms. Del Chiaro said.

Ralph Baca, a retired warehouse worker for the federal government, said the proposed changes would probably have made his rooftop solar system unaffordable.

Because he has a low, fixed income, he receives a discount of 30 percent to 35 percent on his electric bill. Mr. Baca, who is 68 and lives in Barstow, two hours outside Los Angeles, typically paid \$100 a month for electricity and up to \$150 in the summer, forcing him to cut back on other necessities. After he bought solar panels about a month ago, his electricity costs are fixed at \$94 a month — \$84 goes to Sunrun and \$10 to Southern California Edison.

"I'm not wealthy," Mr. Baca said. "I was raised to turn everything off or we'd get a whipping."

Terrie Prosper, a utility commission spokeswoman, said its proposal would save lower-income consumers \$60 to \$120 a year in 2030.

The proposal would raise monthly costs for people who already had solar panels in the 15th year after their system was connected to the grid. New solar users would pay higher fees right away.

## Calculating how much stock retirees should hold

Strategies

BY JEFF SOMMER

The stock market can provide eye-popping returns but can also be counted on to produce big losses. High-quality bonds, on the other hand, typically generate modest returns but are better for income and relative stability.

So buy stocks for the long run, but as you age and get closer to the moment when you will need to rely on your nest egg, shift gradually into bonds and hold less stock.

These may seem to be truisms, and they are embedded in the design of target-date funds, the diversified stock-and-bond portfolios that received government approval to be the default offering in corporate retirement plans in 2007 and have quietly become central all-in-one pillars of investment for many Americans. While the ideas reflected in these funds may seem obvious, they are not settled doctrine in academic finance, and they certainly don't hold true for all people all of the time.

Still, with the demise of most traditional pensions — known as defined-benefit plans — and the limited, though crucial, capacity of Social Security to ensure comfortable retirement, people need to invest for themselves. With the blessing of the U.S. government, target-date funds and trusts have become an enormously important way of doing so. Once you choose a fund, you can "set it and forget it." The fund company does the rest for you.

About \$3.1 trillion was invested in them through October, according to data from the Investment Company Institute, a trade group for the mutual fund industry, and Morningstar, a financial research company.

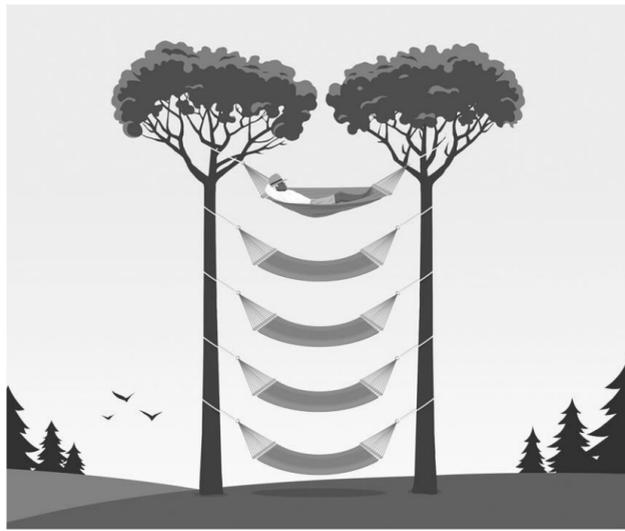
In a shift that is just beginning to be offered to workplace retirement plans, Vanguard, which has dominated the target-date fund market, has begun to acknowledge the need for variations in its standard portfolios for retirees.

It now says that some investors who have already entered retirement may be better off if they keep their stock holdings fairly high, retaining a 50 percent allocation to equities. The 50 percent stock retirement portfolio will be a new option available to companies with Vanguard target-date retirement funds in their plans. That is a big increase over the current allocation: just 30 percent stocks and 70 percent bonds.

"People will need to evaluate this at a household level," Roger Aliaga-Diaz, chief economist for the Americas and head of portfolio construction at Vanguard, said in an interview. "This greater allocation to stocks would be for people with more willingness to take on more risk, who are more comfortable with an inherently more volatile portfolio and who are wealthy enough to have the ability to take on more risk without endangering their retirement."

Like the target-date funds of other leading companies, including Fidelity, BlackRock, T. Rowe Price, and JPMorgan, Vanguard's offerings have kept things simple for investors until now.

Look under the hood, though, and you'll find that Vanguard's target-date



KIERSTEN ESSENPREIS

funds are actually a collection of low-cost, broad-based index funds, with holdings in a variety of domestic and international stocks and bonds. For large workplace plans, these investments are not mutual funds but, technically, collective index trusts, which are generally cheaper than mutual funds, with pricing negotiated with individual companies.

Until now, you could disregard the strategies powering the funds. All you had to do was decide which target-date fund most closely matched your likely retirement date — they are categorized

in five-year increments, ranging, at the moment, from 2015 to 2065, with the 2070 fund emerging shortly — and Vanguard would make adjustments for you gradually as you approached retirement. The Vanguard Target Retirement 2065 Fund, for example, contains more than 90 percent stock and less than 10 percent bonds.

The funds attain a 50 percent stock allocation at the designated target date, say 2030, and for seven years, the allocation declines until it reaches 30 percent in the Vanguard Target Retirement Income Fund for retired invest-

ors. That's the current setup, which will continue to be the default in workplace plans.

But this year, Vanguard is introducing a new fund, the Vanguard Target Retirement Income and Growth Trust. At the target date, a retiree's investments would flow into that fund, which will never drop its equity proportion below 50 percent, Nathan Zahm, head of goal-based investing research at Vanguard, said in an interview. "This fund is right for some people, those who can handle more risk and can afford to do so," he said. "But people will need to think carefully about it."

The company's research shows how the two different equity allocations would have affected a retiree with a portfolio of \$1 million from 1990 to 2020, based on the performance of the markets tracked by the indexes represented in Vanguard's current array of funds. The 50 percent stock fund would have had annualized returns of 7.3 percent versus 6.6 percent for the 30 percent stock fund. That amounts to \$7,000 extra each year for the fund with more stock, which the retiree could have spent or salted away.

But the greater risks associated with stock investing were also apparent. The biggest loss in any 12-month period for the fund with more stock was 28 percent, compared with 17 percent for the traditional income fund. Had those declines occurred in the first year of investing, the \$1 million portfolio would have had a substantial loss of \$280,000, compared with a \$170,000 decline for the bond-heavy fund. Clearly, unless you are capable of withstanding the greater loss, you should not risk the 50 percent stock fund.

It's easy to contemplate hefty stock investments when the market has risen for years. But if you need to stop working just as the stock market falls — which happened to many people in 2008, when the S&P 500 dropped more than 38 percent — target-retirement funds will generate painful losses with either allocation.

That's why some finance experts are skeptical about trusting such a big part of America's retirement to target-date funds. Zvi Bodie, professor emeritus in finance at Boston University, and the author of numerous books on investing, said in an interview that target-date funds fail to perform a crucial task: ensuring that people who save will have a secure retirement.

"The risk of owning stock never goes away," he said. "It's an illusion to think it will."

For a core investment, he recommends buying U.S. government inflation bonds, or I bonds, which are now paying an interest rate of more than 7 percent. And he favors purchasing lifetime insurance contracts, also known as annuities, which, he says, "are unpopular but will guarantee that you have enough to live on."

Adding stock to a retiree's portfolio may be fine if, for example, you have a pension that you can count on or have other sources of income. Otherwise, he said, "It's not what I'd suggest."

I've been investing in target-date funds for years and appreciate their virtues of simplicity and automatic rebalancing. But I'd have to think carefully before putting extra money into stocks. If market history tells us anything, it is that there will almost certainly be big shocks down the road.

# Racial strife mars diversity gains at U.S. Mint

WASHINGTON

Internal report describes ‘implicit bias’ against agency’s Black employees

BY ALAN RAPPEPORT

The United States Mint celebrated a milestone this month when it announced the first shipment of a new batch of quarters bearing the image of the writer and poet Maya Angelou, the first Black woman to be depicted on the 25-cent coin.

The announcement came weeks after President Biden said he would nominate Ventris C. Gibson to lead the Mint, where, if confirmed, she would serve as its first Black director.

But beneath the public signs of social progress is an agency that has struggled for years with racial tension, with Black employees saying they feel threatened, marginalized and professionally disadvantaged. While instances of racism at the Mint have surfaced in previous years, a new internal report that was reviewed by The New York Times depicts an institution rife with tumult over allegations of racist behavior.

A draft of the report, which was commissioned by the Mint last year and produced by an independent human resources consulting firm, determined that the agency, which is part of the Treasury Department, had a “culture problem” and that staff members felt a “lack of psychological safety.” The report described a workplace with “implicit bias” and “microaggressions” toward people of color.

Participants in a survey conducted by the consulting firm, which included more than 200 staff members, senior managers and executives, said race was a divisive issue at the Mint. Many people at the agency expressed concerns that hiring and promotions for people of color were not handled fairly and said they feared reprisal for making formal complaints.

In interviews with the firm that were quoted in the report, some managers at the Mint appeared dismissive of the racial concerns. Comments made by managers included saying that “we need a model minority” and that “if we put a minority as a U.S. Mint assistant director, the minorities will see we are not racist or sexist.”

The firm, TI Verbatim Consulting, said in the report that its findings “point to potential root causes for the racial divide” at the Mint. The report cited outdated policies, cliques, ambiguous promotion practices and the perception of favoritism. Although some members of the Mint’s work force described a positive environment, others said there had been a noticeable “downward spiral” in recent years amid growing racial tension and as acts of overt discrimination surfaced.

“The work force does not feel that the organization lives up to its values,” said



RICHARD PERRY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

the report, which surveyed a mix of white employees and people of color.

Concerns about a culture of discrimination at the Mint received national attention in 2017 after a white worker at a facility in Philadelphia tied a rope used for sealing coin bags into a noose and left it on the workstation of a Black colleague. In a letter in 2020 to Steven Mnuchin, who was the Treasury secretary, staff members at the Mint said that

**There are concerns about the ability to change an organization where cultural problems have festered for so long.**

another noose had surfaced and that the N-word had been written across walls in restrooms. They also said a white Mint official had referred to a Black leader at the agency as a “zoo keeper” in an instant message conversation.

The allegations were referred to the Treasury Department’s inspector general, Richard K. Delmar. He found no evidence of racial animus surrounding the Philadelphia noose incident, but his inquiry into other allegations continues. Mr. Delmar declined to comment on the review that is underway.

The day after the noose was found,

the employee in question was removed from his job. He challenged his removal before the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, which reviews cases of civil servants who are contesting their termination, and said his job involved tying knots. The Mint later agreed to a settlement with the employee after the U.S. Justice Department declined to take any action; a Mint spokesman said the settlement had been made in an effort to end the dispute and ensure that the employee would not be reinstated.

The revelations of racial turmoil come as the Mint is at a potential turning point. Mr. Biden has made racial equity a centerpiece of his agenda, and he announced in December that he would nominate Ms. Gibson to be the agency’s director. She is the Mint’s deputy director and has been leading the agency on an acting basis.

Ms. Gibson, who needs to be confirmed by the Senate, has vowed to improve the Mint’s culture. Last month, she led a diversity briefing during a senior managers’ meeting, and she is planning to create new career development programs to help make the promotion process more transparent.

“Our work force comes from diverse backgrounds, and I am committed to ensuring that we respect, honor and leverage that diversity,” Ms. Gibson said in a



TREASURY DEPARTMENT

statement. “We must ensure that there are no barriers to the success and advancement of any employee at the Mint.”

She added, “We at the senior leadership level must make concerted efforts to always treat our employees with fairness and integrity, and to restore faith in those basic tenets of good leadership and exemplify genuine care for the work force.”

But there are lingering concerns



BURWELL AND BURWELL PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE UNITED STATES MINT, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ventris C. Gibson, left, is poised to become the first Black director of the U.S. Mint, which has just issued 25-cent coins depicting Maya Angelou, above.

within the Mint’s staff about her commitment and ability to bring change to an organization where cultural problems have festered for so long.

Staff members inside the Mint are fearful that symbols of change may not necessarily lead to tangible cultural change at the 1,600-person agency, which was established by the Coinage Act of 1792. That includes the decision to put Ms. Angelou on the quarter.

“It’s a distraction,” said Rhonda Sapp,

the president of the Mint workers’ union, who questioned the value of putting Ms. Angelou on a coin “when you mistreat the people, some of whom are people of color, who are making the coins.”

Ms. Sapp, who said she had not seen the consulting firm’s report, said shifting the agency’s culture would require more sweeping changes among the Mint’s leadership.

“What good is it to have the first Black female director, if she is confirmed, when you have all of these people who have these behaviors and mind-sets undermining her at every turn?” Ms. Sapp asked.

Others are more optimistic that Ms. Gibson will be able to foster a culture of inclusion.

“Ventris brings years of human resources experience at large organizations,” said Rosie Rios, who served as treasurer of the United States during the Obama administration. “I’m sure she will do a fine job with the Mint.”

The report credited the Mint’s leadership for commissioning the assessment of its culture and allowing respondents to speak freely about the agency. It said that “tremendous opportunity exists for real change.”

Before Mr. Biden announced her nomination to lead the Mint, Ms. Gibson was appointed in October as the agency’s deputy director. At the time, Wally Adeyemo, the deputy Treasury secretary, hailed her selection as a sign of progress.

“Her historic appointment reflects our ongoing commitment to building a qualified, diverse work force at Treasury and its bureaus that will serve the American people well,” he said.

The Mint historically was a place that pioneered diversity but did not always prioritize healthy working conditions. In 1795, it became the first federal agency to employ women when it began hiring them to work in the so-called adjusting room, a poorly ventilated space where they would weigh and file down blank coins.

The agency has facilities in Philadelphia; Denver; San Francisco; West Point, N.Y.; and Fort Knox, Ky. Through the 1960s, the staff around the country was largely white and working class, but in recent decades it became more diverse. At the Mint’s administrative headquarters in Washington, where around 300 people work, those in leadership and higher-paying roles are mostly white, while employees on the lower end of the pay scale are mostly people of color, according to the report.

In recent years, bringing diversity to the imagery on America’s coins has been a priority for the Mint. The bipartisan Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020, which President Donald J. Trump signed into law the week before he left office, initiated the addition of notable women, such as Ms. Angelou, on quarters through 2025.

The findings of the report have yet to be released publicly. They are expected to be shared more widely within the Mint’s staff this month, Ms. Gibson said in her statement.

# Trump raised \$1 billion, but deal faced widespread doubt

A history of disputes and bankruptcies worried many Wall Street investors

BY MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN, KATE KELLY, KENNETH P. VOGEL, AND MAUREEN FARRELL

Last month, Donald J. Trump’s fledgling social media company announced that it had lined up \$1 billion from 36 investors. The size of the deal, the former U.S. president said in the announcement, signaled that his start-up’s plan to end the “tyranny” of Big Tech had significant support.

Getting there had been no slam dunk. Beginning in the fall, bankers for the company, Trump Media & Technology Group, approached dozens of investors pitching the \$1 billion deal, which offered them lucrative financial terms. By then, the start-up — intended partly as a conservative alternative to Twitter — had separately raised roughly \$300 million through its planned merger with a special purpose acquisition company.

Those willing to put up at least \$100 million, Trump Media’s bankers told potential investors, would get a call from Mr. Trump, said five people who were briefed about the pitches but were not authorized to speak publicly. Despite the opportunity to invest in a deal whose terms were structured to make a profit for investors, many of Wall Street’s big names passed.

More than a dozen well-known hedge funds and investment firms hesitated to go into business with Mr. Trump, people briefed on the matter said, because any association with him could risk alienating their investors, which often include public pension funds and foundations. Others were wary of Mr. Trump’s history of corporate bankruptcies and disputes with lenders and partners, and they were concerned that details about his media company were scant.

At the moment, Trump Media — which hired former Representative Devin Nunes, a staunch Trump ally, as chief executive in December — has no disclosed revenue or products.

Among the funds that turned down Trump Media’s bankers were Millen-

nium Management, a \$57 billion hedge fund; Hudson Bay Capital, a \$15 billion hedge fund; and Balyasny Asset Management, a hedge fund with \$13 billion in assets, according to a spokesman. Apollo Global Management, the big private equity firm, also passed, a person briefed on the matter said. The deal on offer is known as a “private investment in public equity,” or PIPE, which gives certain investors discounted shares in a public company.

People close to the three hedge funds did not explain why the firms had chosen not to invest.

Highbridge Capital Management, a hedge fund unit of JPMorgan Chase, the United States’ biggest bank, had bought shares in the initial public offering of Digital World Acquisition, the SPAC that later agreed to merge with Mr. Trump’s company. However, Highbridge didn’t go into the PIPE deal because of the optics of doing business with Mr. Trump, one person familiar with the decision said. Investors who buy shares of a SPAC don’t know what company it will end up merging with, which is why they’re often called “blank check” companies.

A spokesman for JPMorgan declined to comment.

Mr. Nunes did not respond to emails seeking comment sent to his Trump Media address and the general company address. Liz Harrington, a spokeswoman for Mr. Trump, also did not respond to requests for comment.

A lawyer for Trump Media and two bankers at EF Hutton, the small investment bank that arranged the financing and recently took the name of a once storied Wall Street firm, either declined to comment or did not return requests.

Trump Media agreed to merge with Digital World in October, raising \$293 million. On Dec. 4, the Trump company announced that it had lined up an additional \$1 billion through the PIPE deal. Three dozen investors signed up, according to filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, although they will have to turn over that money only if Trump Media’s merger with Digital World closes. Currently, that merger is under regulatory investigation. Its outcome will determine whether the deal can go through.



ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Among the bigger investors: Pentwater Capital, a \$10 billion hedge fund in Naples, Fla., and Sabby Management, a hedge fund in Upper Saddle River, N.J., that manages more than \$500 million, several people who were briefed about their involvement said. The amounts that Pentwater and Sabby invested couldn’t be learned.

“Investors have different risk preferences, including reputational as well as financial risk,” said Usha Rodrigues, who teaches corporate law at the University of Georgia School of Law. “If the deal is sweet enough, then the bankers will find someone who is likely to bite.”

In the days before Trump Media announced its \$1 billion financing, the former president called a handful of hedge funds, family offices and others who had signaled they would invest at least \$50 million each, two people briefed on the matter said. The calls were intended as both a deal sweetener for larger investors and an opportunity for them to ask Mr. Trump questions about the start-up’s plans before they made plans to invest, several people said.

Early on, Trump Media bankers told

some prospective investors that they would get a call from Mr. Trump if they put in \$100 million, according to interviews with those investors. Later on, other investors were told that \$50 million was enough for a call.

The roughly \$1.3 billion raised by the two deals would provide Mr. Trump with funds to get his company going. But before a single dollar can hit Trump Media’s balance sheet, its deal with Digital World must overcome scrutiny by securities regulators. The S.E.C. is investigating some of the events leading up to the Oct. 20 announcement of Trump Media’s planned merger with Digital World.

Regulators opened the inquiry after The New York Times reported that the chief executive of Digital World, Patrick Orlando, had talks with representatives of Trump Media as far back as March and had never disclosed that to investors — potentially flouting securities regulations. Regulators are also looking into trading in Digital World securities that happened before the merger announcement.

As the start-up waits for the regulatory scrutiny to wrap up and its merger



STEFANI REYNOLDS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Devin Nunes, above, gave up his House seat to become chief executive of Trump Media, Donald J. Trump’s fledgling social media company, in December. Trump Media agreed to merge with Digital World in October, a deal currently under regulatory investigation.

with Digital World to close, several people close to Mr. Trump have sought to raise a few million dollars from past supporters of his to provide Trump Media with funds to get going, said people who were approached or told about the efforts.

Among those urging Trump donors to invest is Roy Bailey, a lobbyist who is also raising money for a super PAC that is financing Mr. Trump’s political operation as he weighs another presidential campaign in 2024, two people approached by Mr. Bailey said.

One Republican donor, Dan Eberhart, who said he had spent time at the former president’s Mar-a-Lago Club in Florida recently, said he had “been approached by a number of people in Trump’s orbit” about investing in Trump Media. But, Mr. Eberhart said, “My focus is on investing in candidates to help us win back the Senate.”

If regulators approve Trump Media’s merger with Digital World, investors in the \$1 billion private deal stand to do well, whether or not the company thrives. As part of the deal, investors get to buy shares of Trump Media for

roughly 40 percent less than the prevailing market price. If the shares rise, they can profit from the rally. If the shares fall, their chance of losing money is significantly lower than that of the company’s other investors.

The investors also have the right to “short,” or borrow stock to bet on a fall of Trump Media shares, as a further protection against the risk of a price decline.

Vik Mittal, chief investment officer with Meteora Capital, which invested in the Digital World I.P.O., said the PIPE “provides downside protection to PIPE investors if shares of Digital World decline and unlimited upside if the deal works out.” His firm considered going into the PIPE but declined for reasons that Mr. Mittal did not want to divulge.

In the meantime, retail investors have turned Digital World into something of a “meme stock,” propping up its share price partly because of its association with Mr. Trump. Shares trade around \$80 — much higher than the \$10 price of the SPAC’s initial public offering.

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

# Opinion

## What Japan got right about Covid-19

The country embraced the science of the coronavirus early.

**Hitoshi Oshitani**

It all began with the coronavirus outbreak on a Diamond Princess cruise ship back in February 2020.

Nine health care workers and quarantine officers who were responding to the outbreak on the ship in Japan became infected. An official report suggested that they had most likely been infected through contact with infectious droplets and contaminated surfaces. But as an expert investigating respiratory infections, I had my doubts. These were people experienced in infection control and prevention procedures, and it was difficult to believe that not one, not two, but nine of them failed to wash their hands properly. While this was still in the very earliest days of the pandemic, it seemed possible that the coronavirus was spreading in some other way than through large droplets.

Then a report revealed that a traveler from China who visited Germany spread the coronavirus to other people despite not having symptoms at the time. This report confirmed what I and colleagues helping Japan's Ministry of Health respond to Covid-19 had speculated: That the coronavirus was being spread by people who were asymptomatic or hadn't developed symptoms yet.

At that point, we had to consider whether aerosols — tiny infectious particles or droplets suspended in the air — were playing a role in how the coronavirus was spreading. This wouldn't be a surprise. In 2017, a World Health Organization report discussed the critical role that aerosol transmission played in the spread of the flu. Why couldn't it be the same for Covid-19, a similar respiratory illness?

Japan's unique way of contact tracing also gave us more clues into how the virus spread. While other countries focused on prospective contact tracing, in which contact tracers identify and notify infected people's contacts after they are infected, we used retrospective contact tracing. This is an approach where tracers identify an infected person and look back to figure out when and where that person was infected and who else might have been infected simultaneously with them.

This approach turned out to be critical as we learned that the coronavirus was being spread predominantly by small numbers of infected individuals who then go on to seed super-spreading events. My research colleague Hiroshi Nishiura calculated that a majority of cases were most likely coming from infected people in closed, indoor environments. More data from public health centers in Japan confirmed that most Covid-19 clusters occurred in close-contact indoor settings, such as dinners, night clubs, karaoke bars, live music venues and gyms.

This has become common knowledge now, but we knew all of this before the end of February 2020 and before the World Health Organization considered Covid-19 a pandemic. This became the basis of Japan's strategy going forward and is ultimately what allowed Japan to have one of the lowest death rates among its peer countries.

If SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus, was



ISSEI KATO/REUTERS

being spread by aerosols and people could spread the virus before they developed any symptoms, it meant that Covid-19 was largely invisible and would be extremely challenging to eliminate. Prior diseases like SARS (caused by SARS-CoV, a related virus), which causes pneumonia in most cases, made it easy to identify patients.

Because this wasn't the case with SARS-CoV-2, a strategy of containment would be too difficult, and Japan needed to figure out an approach to living with Covid-19.

I suggested a basic concept: People should avoid the three C's, which are closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings. The Japanese government shared this advice with the public in early March, and it became omnipresent. The message to avoid the three C's was on the news, variety shows, social media and posters. "Three C's" was even declared the buzzword of the year in Japan in 2020.

Although Japan declared certain periods of the pandemic states of emergency, that equated to not much more than strongly worded warnings and some travel restrictions for residents. (Japan has prohibited tourists for most of the pandemic.) Drastic measures, such as lockdowns, were never taken

because the goal was always to find ways to live with Covid-19. (Japanese law also does not allow for lockdowns, so the country could not have declared them even if we had thought them necessary.) The three C's taught people what to avoid. How they do that may be different, depending on individual

**The basis of its strategy is ultimately what allowed Japan to have one of the lowest death rates among its peer countries.**

circumstances and risk tolerance. Some people may be able to stay home. Others may remain silent on crowded trains as they commute to work to avoid spread. Some people may dine out but avoid sitting immediately across from one another. Most people are likely to continue to mask.

These types of behavioral cues may work better in certain social environments, and Japan has a tendency toward adherence and responding to powerful peer pressure. Not everyone may agree with preventive measures, but many are reluctant to face the disapproval of their friends and neighbors.

When it comes to the numbers of

cases and deaths, Japan has fared well compared to other countries. It has had about 146 deaths per million people in the pandemic so far. The United States has had about 2,590 deaths per million.

Japan's approach to Covid-19 has often been misunderstood. Some have assumed the country was either doing poorly and hiding it or doing well because of Confucian traditions of people putting community over themselves. What really happened was that science was used to create an effective strategy and a digestible message. That message — to avoid the three C's — was actionable without being alarmist and prescribed a solution that could outlast changing circumstances. It worked because of an underlying trust between the public and pandemic responders.

Our approach hasn't been without consequences. Our economy was affected and people like service industry workers lost jobs as bars and restaurants were avoided. Some have suffered mental health challenges brought on by isolation. Going forward, the Japanese government needs to acknowledge the challenges, improve on them and work to protect the most vulnerable and underserved populations.

But broadly speaking, Japan has

weathered Covid-19 well. After a period of low transmission rates, the country is facing an uptick in cases because of Omicron, as are other countries. Even though over 70 percent of Japanese citizens are fully vaccinated, vaccination alone won't be sufficient for the world to live with Covid-19. The Japanese people will need to embrace the three C's whenever there's a surge. This is most likely how we will continue to adapt to life with the virus.

It would require a much deeper analysis to understand how anthropological, cultural and historical contexts have played into the various response measures around the world and their effectiveness. But for now, we know that an effective, science-based message has helped Japan keep deaths lower compared to the numbers in peer countries and could be an example of how to move forward in a world where Covid-19 will always be with us.

**HITOSHI OSHITANI** is a professor of virology at Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine in Japan and has helped advise the Japanese government on its Covid-19 response. He researches the epidemiology and control of viral infections, particularly respiratory viruses.

## The most valuable thing I can teach my kid is how to be lazy

The world in 2022 is an exhausting place. Prioritizing rest, sleep and dreaming is something I can pass on.

**Elliot Kukla**

"Abba, I have an idea," says my 3-year-old. "Put on your pajamas and your big mask, turn off the light, and get into bed."

"That sounds great," I say, honestly. I strap on my sleep apnea mask, change into soft, worn cotton PJs and crawl under the fluffy white duvet with him. Within seconds, he is lulled to sleep by the familiar gentle wheezing of my breathing machine. He knows the sight and sound of my sleeping body well; I have lupus, an autoimmune disease that causes chronic fatigue. On a good day, I can get by on 10 hours or so of sleep. When my condition flares, sometimes for weeks on end, I need to sleep for much of the day and night.

Before my child was born, I was afraid that my fatigue would make it impossible for me to be a good parent. And it's true that I am often juggling parenting needs and exhaustion. What I didn't anticipate is that prioritizing rest, sleep and dreaming is also something tangible I can offer my child.

He sees me napping every day, and he wants in. We build elaborate nests and gaze out the window together, luxuriously leaning on huge mounds of pillows. Most 3-year-olds I know fight bedtime, but we snuggle under the blankets on cold winter evenings, sighing in synchronized delight.

America in 2022 is an exhausting place to live. Pretty much everyone I know is tired. We're tired of answering work emails after dinner. We're tired of caring for senior family members in a

crumbling elder care system, of worrying about a mass shooting at our children's schools. We're tired by unprocessed grief and unintended illness and depression. We're tired of wildfires becoming a fact of life in the West, of floods and hurricanes hitting the South and East. We're really tired of this unending pandemic. Most of all, we are exhausted by trying to keep going as if everything is fine.

Increasing numbers of people are refusing to push through this mounting weariness: There are currently 10 million job openings in the United States, up from 6.4 million before the pandemic.

This trend is being led by young people; millions are planning to leave their jobs in the coming year. Some middle-aged people decry the laziness of today's youth, but as a chronically sick Gen X parent, and as a rabbi who has spent much of my career tending to dying people as their lives naturally slow, I am cheering young people on in this Great Resignation.

I have seen the limits of the grind. I want my child to learn how to be lazy.

The English word "lazy" is derived from the German "lâsch," meaning weak or feeble, and the Old Norse "lesu," meaning false or evil. Devon Price, a sociologist who studies laziness, remarks that these two origins capture the doublespeak built into the concept.

When we call people lazy (including ourselves), we are often pointing out that they're too tired and weak to be productive, while often simultaneously accusing them of faking feebleness to get out of work for malevolent purposes. As Dr. Price puts it, "The idea that lazy people are evil fakers who



CARI VANDER YACHT

deserve to suffer has been embedded in the word since the very start."

Shunning laziness is integral to the American dream. The Puritans who colonized New England believed that laziness led to damnation. They used this theology to justify their enslavement of Black people, whose souls they claimed to have "saved" by turning them into productive laborers.

This view has endured in American

culture. Hundreds of years later, working to the point of self-harm to build the boss's wealth is still lauded as a "good work ethic" in America, and the word "lazy" is still connected to racism and injustice. It's poor, uneducated, young, Black, brown, mentally ill, fat and chronically sick people who are most often accused of sloth. We rarely hear about lazy billionaires, no matter how much of their fortune is inherited.

For decades, I feared being labeled "lazy" because of my chronic fatigue. I pushed myself past my physical limits, all the way to severe illness, to prove my worth. Disabled activism taught me that stigmatizing rest is not just bad for my body, it's bad for the world. The pandemic demonstrates, in a visceral way, how staying home and doing less can be a form of activism. The pandemic has also illustrated how respite is not widely available to most essential workers in America, with tragic consequences for everybody. The lack of sick leave, family medical leave and the opportunity to work from home in essential, low-wage jobs has thrown kerosene on the viral fires of the pandemic.

Even as we look with hope toward a postpandemic future, we will still be living on a fragile, warming planet with increasing climate disruptions. It's urgent that we find ways to work less, travel less and burn less fuel while connecting and caring for one another more. In other words, it's critical that we un-shame laziness if we want our species to have a future. The world is on fire; rest will help to quench those flames.

Right now, as the Omicron variant spreads wildly, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has factored keeping people at work into their decisions on guidance, at times making it more dangerous for immunocompromised people like me to get health care or leave the house. As a high-risk person, I am painfully aware of how profits and productivity matter more to those in charge than my survival does. As Sunaura Taylor, a disabled activist, points out, our grinding **KUKLA, PAGE 10**

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## My friendly farewell to André the glorious



Maureen Dowd

WASHINGTON André Leon Talley was not the easiest of friends.

He could be demanding. And cutting. And moody.

But he was the most glorious of friends. He was soigné, to use one of his favorite words, and he had éclat, to use another. He was a true icon, prowling the world in search of glamour and beauty, disdaining “dreckitude.”

“Dreckitude” is the lowest point in the lowest ebb,” he once explained, adding, “Dreck” is a total, total, total hot mess.”

André glided around the globe like a French king, swathing himself in glittering caftans and sable coats custom-made by his designer friends. When he wasn’t swanning, he was swaddled under Hermès blankets watching MSNBC in his overstuffed house in White Plains, N.Y. He was a hoarder who had all the most beautiful crystal and linens — not to mention Truman Capote’s old sofa — but he never entertained. He sometimes wondered why he could ensorcele so many with his wit and style but not have a lover.

“I had dinners alone and I didn’t do lines of coke,” he told me about the Studio 54 era, when he worked for Andy Warhol. “I was not sexually promiscuous at all. I was fierce and smart and I did not exude that sexual energy. I wanted people to like me because I was smart, not for my Black sex vibe!” André could be so hilarious that Tom Ford collected his friend’s emails and notes in a little book because they were “truly works of art.”

“When he was excited, he was excited,” said Ford, who told me that he sometimes got a four-page letter on hotel stationery slipped under his door after a fashion show. “When he loved something, he loved it. When he hated something, he hated it. He was never boring.” I got to know André after he sent me a letter, in his big, loopy handwriting, about a column I wrote when my mom, who came from a family of Irish maids, died in 2005. He told me about his late grandmother in Durham, N.C., Bennie Davis, a maid for the men’s dormitory at Duke University, who raised him from the time he was a baby.

His grandmother sparked some Proustian connections that would cause him problems later in life. He did not want to be the size of a “manatee,” he told me, but “the smell of a biscuit in butter and molasses” was his “opioid,” evoking his grandmother’s love. “So sad I got fat and had to resort to Scarlet curtains and portieres, disguised as caftans and djellabas!” he said. “But I soldier on. Hard work, though.”

His grandmother taught him that poverty is not an impediment to panache; she boiled his sheets white and ironed his boxer shorts and towels. Later, after Diana Vreeland plucked the tall, skinny Black kid with the master’s

in French literature from Brown University to be her unpaid assistant at the Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute, André understood completely when Vreeland ironed her dollar bills and tissues. Crispness was all.

Indeed, it was one of the wrinkles in our relationship. I’m not an ironer. In fact, back in the ’70s, I threw out the family ironing board my mom had given me, in some sort of misguided feminist protest. When André would see me getting ready to go out in a wrinkled cocktail dress, he would fold his arms over his chest and order me to go change, or risk looking like “a roadshow Rita Hayworth.” Although that sounded good to me.

Once, when we were going to the Metropolitan Opera, André looked at the bit of my sea foam vintage gown that was peeking out from under my coat.

“Tulle,” he murmured ominously. “Blanche DuBois.”

Another time, he took me to a White House brunch celebrating Barack Obama’s second inauguration. “This is your date?” President Obama asked André, raising an eyebrow. But André didn’t care. He was focused on my footwear. “Rag & Bone booties are not for going to the White House,” he instructed me when we were out of the receiving line. “They are for going to Starbucks.”

As André said about his advice, “I AM NEVER WRONG!” He advised all women to moisturize their skin as well as Melania Trump, although, increasingly appalled with the racism he saw in the Trump White House, he instructed me: “We are never to talk about her again. She is nouveau riche trash.”

He loved Jackie Kennedy’s style but turned on her when he learned that she had snubbed Ann Lowe, the Black designer of her wedding dress, calling Lowe simply “a colored dressmaker.” “I don’t like Jackie O,” he said. “She is now Jackie No.”

When André was spending the night with me for that inaugural, he got the flu and ended up staying for five days. I cleared out of my bedroom and gave him my queen-size bed. He glowered at the closet that was too stuffed to close and barked at me to remove a hat from the wall, a broad-brim, pink-ribbon number that I’d worn to Easter Mass when I was little.

“Your look is *not* sweet,” he bellowed. “It is equestrian S&M!”

He missed his own tiger-stenciled sheets and he called me Bad Nurse. He kept me running with his requests for chicken noodle soup, Georgetown Cupcakes, chocolate milk and turkey chili. “Yes, I am difficult,” he said, “but I am loyal to a fault.” As his friend Diane von Furstenberg told me, when Vreeland’s eyesight failed her late in life, André went to that famous red apartment and read to her.

His loyalty was not always returned by those he had assumed were his best friends in the throwaway world of fashion. “People turn on you in an eyelash blink,” he said to me, sadly.

He described his sojourn leaving his size-18 Uggs beside my bed as “sheer joy and mayhem,” and he was right. We lounged in bed and watched old French movies and analyzed the allure of French movie stars from the ’60s. (His favorite was Jeanne Moreau in “Eva,” where she flayed her lover with a riding crop.)

One Christmas, to celebrate our love of movies, he gave me a special gift he’d gotten at auction: Joan Crawford’s sable coat, with “JC” embroidered inside.

I didn’t put it on a wire hanger.



JONATHAN BECKER/CONTOUR, VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Why I finally broke up with the Beatles

Josh Max

I know all the songs and so do you — I’ve known them all since I was a kid. But I not only know them all, I can play and sing them all — take your pick, from “Love Me Do” to “The End.”

Not so many years ago I would park my then-new car outside the front door of coffee shops where I was playing guitar and singing on Long Island, hold up the keys and announce, “If you can stump me on the Fabs, I’ll give you my wheels.” Or if I happened to have a hundred dollar bill, I’d pin it to the wall behind me and offer it to anyone who could name a Beatles song I couldn’t produce in three seconds.

But the game was rigged — you couldn’t beat the house.

Every now and then I’d get an aficionado who would call for “You Like Me Too Much,” “Not a Second Time” or maybe “The Sheik of Araby” from the Decca audition. I loved those challenges. But the requests I really appreciated were ones like “Your Feet’s Too Big” or “Red Sails in the Sunset” from the pre-“Ed Sullivan Show” December 1962 Star-Club performance in Hamburg, recorded with a single microphone placed in front of the stage.

Why would anyone bother to learn all this material?

Why does an alcoholic take a drink, a gambler lay down yet another bet? Because I was an addict, that’s why. As any 12-stepper knows, you don’t realize the extent of your addiction until you give it up.

The revelation that my obsession had turned into a problem came in February 2019, after I flew myself and my guitar to Los Angeles to audition for “America’s Got Talent.” There I spent seven hours in a vast, packed auditorium mingling with people in chicken suits, kid comedians, guys on stilts, singing nuns and stage moms. I did my usually surefire “Beatles Salad Bar” medley, in which I jam as many bits of songs, riffs and licks as I can into five minutes, using a timer. It usually ends up being about 60 songs.

But neither I nor the moderator, who sat at a desk and didn’t look up the whole time, was at our best after being there all day, and they’d given me only two minutes, not five. I knew it then — I’d flopped. But I didn’t just fail. I’d spent hundreds of dollars to fly thousands of miles, book a hotel and audition with a medley of songs by a band that had broken up nearly a half century before, instead of showcasing one of my own songs. After performing for my entire adult life, I’d lost myself as a musician. It was my Beatle bottom.

I knew right there it was time to stop relying on the Boys to get across. “No more Beatles,” I vowed, “just be yourself.” And so I began the process of turning them loose in my head.

Cold turkey was the way I went. So, off all my devices went the Fabs, and out of my mouth and guitar and piano came not a single “Baby’s good to me, y’know” or “Try to see it my way” or “Let me tell you how it will be.”

Would this abstinence last? I didn’t know. Even for the casual fan, the



ELLEN SURREY

de-Beatle-ing process is not easy. You can’t escape their songs any more than you can escape “Hotel California” at Applebee’s or Billy Joel’s “My Life” at the mall.

At first, I was shocked at how very saturated I’d been all these years without even knowing it. Aside from the music itself, there was also the need to know everything there was to

know about the band’s history, individual personalities, the dramas with wives and ex-wives, the children, the sisters, the brothers, the sisters, the parents, the aunts. I used to observe every Feb. 25 (George’s birthday), June 18 (Paul), and July 7 (Ringo) and Oct. 9 (John). I’d bought and immediately read, often several times, every book about them that I could find. The internet had only made it worse. I’d been saturated.

The first Beatle-free days were tough. Soon a week went by. A month. And something happened. It was as though I’d woken up from a deep sleep and was now available anew to the musical world. Amazing grace.

Still, there were moments of overwhelming nostalgia.

“Close your eyes and I’ll kiss you, tomorrow I’ll miss you” was the melody that hit me right in the heart about six weeks into my No Beatles diet. Ditto “Can’t Buy Me Love,” a song for running and jumping and falling down like the Fabs did in “A Hard Day’s Night,” even if you’re a grown man waiting in line at a post office. But I held fast.

Soon enough, trouble came knocking in the form of “Get Back,” the three-part, nearly eight-hour documentary detailing the making of what would become the 1970 “Let It Be” album. When the film was first released in November, I kept getting texts, emails and phone calls from other obsessives who for some reason thought I was going to pay to watch what I hear is an awfully long show about songs that I’ve never been on fire about. For me, early Beatles equals best Beatles. My Beatles all dress alike, have the same haircuts, tour the world and go “Woo!” My Beatles do not dig ponies. My Beatles don’t even have enough money to give George his own microphone.

It mattered not that I said, to everyone, loud and clear, “I don’t care.” People ran around that like a 15-year-

old fan running around a police barricade at Shea Stadium in 1965. Billy Preston’s keyboard mastery, they said, must be witnessed, as must the construction of the song “Get Back” or even the wonderful restoration for its own sake — the color, the sound. I am going to be an old man soon, I told them, and I do not have eight hours to devote to “Get Back.” I’ve bought every Beatles album on LP, 8-track, cassette, CD. It’s enough.

None of these people knew, of course, that I’d quit. Even now, I find the repeated demands that I watch and discuss “Get Back” dangerously familiar:

“Have a drink!”  
“Have a smoke!”  
“Have a cupcake!”  
“Have a Beatle!”

But why go back? Do the Beatles care if I live or die, if I am happy or sad?

The best rationale, in the end, came from a member of the band itself.

George says, in an interview on the TV show “West 57th Street” in December 1987: “It’s Beatles this, Beatles that, Beatle, Beatle, Beatle, Beatle. In the end it’s like ‘Oh, sod off with the Beatles,’ you know?”

JOSH MAX is a musician and author.

## It’s never too late to change your life



Charles M. Blow

My oldest brother died more than a year ago, and that unspeakable loss changed me. I would say that it was the last straw, but there were so many last straws. I will simply say that it was in the final bale.

I have always suffered from a predisposition to depression. It was like the old friend, the constant companion, always a few paces behind or in front. There, I was never truly alone. It was always in the room, sitting on the edge of the bed, wanting to snuggle.

It is sometimes incongruous to hear people who we think of as successful talk about mental and emotional struggle, because we associate struggle with a lack of things that economic stability can provide.

But the struggle can manifest differently, as it did in me: as a feeling of being completely overwhelmed by your life. Even if by all outward measures I appeared to be succeeding, inside I was drowning.

The impostor syndrome can be severe, that feeling that you truly don’t deserve the things you have, that you haven’t earned them and are not talented enough to be in the position you’re in. For me, a poor boy from a tiny town with one spotlight, that was an ever-present worry.

I disguised it well by playing against type: I shrouded a lack of confidence in robes of overconfidence.

Over 20 years ago, I became a single

dad. I loved it. I felt that I was doing an amazing thing. People, including my family, told me that I was. But I never said the thing I thought I couldn’t say: that parenthood was too much for me to do on my own, that it was consuming me, that I sometimes felt trapped in it, that it sometimes felt like someone was sitting on my chest, and I couldn’t breathe.

So I did with that feeling what I thought I must: I powered through. That was what men were supposed to do, right? Chin up, stiffened spine. No whining, no crying.

From time to time, when things became too overwhelming, or when I felt my life was truly spinning out of control, I would find a therapist. But therapy

never really seemed to work for me. I often felt that I was talking into the void.

Around the time my brother died, my life was a mess. Publicly, I was a columnist at The New York Times, a CNN

contributor about to start his own show on the Black News Channel, and an author on the brink of publishing his second book. My first, a memoir, had been adapted into an opera that would soon premiere at the Met. I worked out, and I ate well. “Health is Wealth” was my motto.

But privately, I wasn’t healthy. I was lonely and alone. I drank too much. I lived my life like it was about to end. I was afraid to be alone with my pain, because in the quiet, it got loud.

When people saw me, when they experienced me, they may well have seen a free spirit, even a reckless one. But in truth, what they were seeing was the personification of pain and trauma, walking and talking.



NETASHA JOHNSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Then, my brother’s death blew a hole in me and made me reconsider everything. What kind of life did I want to live? What kind of man — kind of person — did I want to be?

Within a month, I changed everything. I stopped drinking. I learned to sit with myself, alone, and experience my emotions, and to deal with tough days, and even the exhilarating ones, head on. I was, and am, still dating someone truly special who has taught me what being at peace with yourself looks like.

And I have come to see things clearly again — things that seem so simple to me now, but that somehow I couldn’t see then: that life is a series of peaks and valleys, and it is a fool’s errand to try to flatten them out. That beauty is in the connections we make, to self, to family, to friends, to the earth. That we don’t judge the quality of a life by the volume at which we live it. That I deserve to be kind to myself.

I am finally, fully, at peace. I have considered for months whether to write this column, whether it’s better to, as some advise, have an impeccably curated public persona. But the only image I want to project is one of honesty, openness and even vulnerability. The mission of my work is helping others any way I can, and that includes using the example of my own life and my own flaws.

My walk in recent years as an openly bisexual man has taught me the amazing power and importance of visibility, how transformational it can be to see someone else who is walking your walk.

As James Baldwin once put it, “You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read.” Maybe someone who feels privately broken as I did will read this, and they will realize that they are not alone and that it is not too late to change.

## OPINION

## What an antisemite's fantasy says about Jewish reality



Bret Stephens

A man travels 4,800 miles from the north of England to the heart of Texas.

Once there, appearing to be homeless, he gains entry into a synagogue just before its Shabbat services. The rabbi welcomes him with a cup of tea. With a handgun, he takes the rabbi and others hostage for 11 hours while demanding the release of a convicted terrorist held in a nearby prison. He phones a prominent New York rabbi to help push for the terrorist's release. A hostage reports him as saying, "I know President Biden will do things for the Jews." A witness, who sees the drama unfold on a livestream, watches him

**Why America can't ignore the continual threat against Jewish people.**

"ranting about Jews and Israel" and saying he has chosen his target because "America only cares about Jewish lives."

Antisemitism?

You would think it could not be more obvious, as everyone from the prime minister of Israel to the president of the United States to the Council on American-Islamic Relations agrees. But first you'd have to climb over a strange wall of obfuscation, misdirection and doubt.

"He was singularly focused on one issue, and it was not specifically related to the Jewish community, but we are continuing to work to find motive," the F.B.I. special agent in charge, Matthew DeSarno, said shortly after the standoff ended, presumably referring to the assailant's bid to free the imprisoned terrorist. Both The Associated Press and the BBC parroted the line, with the Beeb tweeting, "Texas synagogue hostage standoff not related to Jewish community — F.B.I."

The A.P. later deleted a tweet making a similar claim. And the F.B.I. amended its case last Sunday, calling the attack "a terrorism-related matter, in which the Jewish community was targeted." On Thursday, the F.B.I. director, Christopher Wray, finally acknowledged that it was an antisemitic attack.

Yet the only substantial reporting I found from a major American news organization that explicitly acknowledges the antisemitic nature of the attack was one astute story in The Washington Post. Instead, there was a focus on the assailant's supposed mental illness, along with additional reporting on the ever-increasing security-consciousness of synagogues worldwide.

Compare that with the mountain of reporting regarding the anti-Asian hate that allegedly animated the killer in last year's attacks on Atlanta-area massage parlors. Or compare it with the coverage of the unquestionably racist 2015 shooting at Charleston's Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. For that matter, compare it with the naked Jew-hatred that drove the killer in the 2018 synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh, which has been extensively reported and discussed. (His immediate "motive" was opposition to immigration.)

In the days since the attack, the F.B.I.'s head-in-sand approach, along with so much of the media's strange pattern of omission, has been the chief topic of discussion in every Jewish circle to which I belong. How can it be, we ask ourselves, that Jews should be victimized twice? First, by being physically targeted for being Jewish; second, by being begrudged the universal recognition that we were morally targeted, too? And how can it be that in this era of heightened sensitivity to every kind of hatred, bias, stereotype, -ism and -phobia, both conscious and unconscious, there's so much caviling, caveating and outright denying when it comes to calling out bias aimed at Jews?

The answer begins with the shapeshifting nature of antisemitism, which some perpetrate, others participate in (sometimes unwittingly), and a still greater number fail to recognize for what it is — in part because each successive mutation doesn't exactly resemble its predecessor.

What we generally call antisemitism is a 19th-century coinage that helped



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES. PHOTOGRAPH BY SELMAKSN/GETTY IMAGES

turn an ancient religious hatred into a racial hatred. As racial hatred came to be considered uncouth after World War II, anti-Zionism (that is, blanket opposition to a Jewish state, not criticism of particular Israeli policies) became a more acceptable way of opposing Jewish political interests and denigrating Jews. Should Israel cease to exist, new forms of bigotry will surely develop for the next stage of anti-Judaism, adapted to the prevailing beliefs of the times.

The common denominator in each of these mutations is an idea, based in fantasy and conspiracy, about Jewish power. The old-fashioned religious antisemite believed Jews had the power to kill Christ. The 19th-century antisemites who were the forerunners to the Nazis believed Jews had the power to start wars, manipulate kings and swin-

dle native people of their patrimony. Present-day anti-Zionists attribute to Israel and its supporters in the United States vast powers that they do not possess, like the power to draw America into war. On the far right, antisemites think that Jews are engaged in an immense scheme to replace white, working-class America with immigrant labor. Tucker Carlson and others have taken this conspiracy theory mainstream, much to the delight of neo-Nazis like David Duke, even if they are careful to leave out the part about Jews.

The man who attacked the synagogue entertained the same type of fantasy. Just as Willie Sutton was said to rob banks because "that's where the money is," this assailant took Jews hostage because that's where the power was (or so he thought). The F.B.I.'s moral idiocy

— there are no other words for it — in denying the specifically antisemitic nature of the attack lies in the idea that he could have imagined himself choosing just about any means to achieve his end, like taking hostages at the nearest church or convenience store. Similarly, the focus on his mental health evades the central fact that, crazy or not, his malice was not random. He aimed his gun at Jews.

The fantasy about Jewish power may seem outlandish, but it's far more pervasive than many think — which gets to the point of people participating in antisemitism even when they aren't knowingly perpetrating it.

Who, for instance, is most responsible for devising the war in Iraq? If your first-pass answer is "Wolfowitz, Feith, Abrams and Perle," you might ask yourself why you are naming second- and third-tier Bush administration officials, all of them Jewish, when all the top decision makers — Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice — are Christians. (If your response to this is that Wolfowitz et al. were the ones who pulled the strings, then you're an antisemite.)

Or take another example: if you think the reason Israel gets so much support in Congress is the money and influence of the pro-Israel lobby, you might be surprised to learn that that lobby ranks 20th on the most recent list of congressional donors, giving away a paltry \$4.5 million compared with the \$95 million that retiree interest groups donated. "All about the Benjamins" it is not, no matter what Representative Ilhan Omar might suppose.

But there's a larger context here, which has to do with prevailing assumptions about power itself.

A moral conviction of our time, especially prevalent on the cultural left, is that the powerful are presumptively bad while the powerless are presumptively good. These categories aren't just political. They are also social, economic, ethnic and racial. It's why so many conversations today revolve around the concept of "privilege" — a striking

redefinition of success that removes the presumption of merit from those who have it and the stigma of failure from those who don't.

It's also the likeliest reason there was so much obvious hesitancy to describe the attack in Texas as antisemitic. Unlike the Pittsburgh shooter or the "Jews will not replace us" crowd at Charlottesville — white, right-wing, mostly Christian and therefore "privileged" — the Texas assailant was a British Muslim of Pakistani descent. Not white. Not privileged. Not right-wing. In the binary narrative of the powerful versus the powerless, his naked antisemitism just doesn't compute: Powerless people are supposed to be victims, not murderous bigots. If he had ranted against Israel for oppressing Palestinians, it might have made more sense. And if he had donned a MAGA hat, we would certainly have had a much fuller exploration of his antisemitism, without time wasted exploring his other motives or state of mind.

For American Jews, this small silence about what happened this month should be profoundly worrisome, and not just as a matter of a journalistic lapse. It's bad enough that the Jewish state, which gained what power it has because its neighbors threatened it with extinction, is still treated by so many as a global pariah — its sympathizers abroad risking social or professional ostracism by mere association. It's bad enough, too, that the foul antisemitism of the right, yoked to its old themes of nativism, protectionism, nationalism and isolationism, is erupting into the public square like a burst sewage pipe.

Now American Jews find ourselves at perhaps the most successful period in our history, at a moment when much of the progressive left has decreed that privilege is a sin and that those who hold power should be stripped of it. Anyone with a long view of Jewish history should know how quickly economic and social privilege can turn to political and personal ruin, even — or especially — in countries where it might seem unthinkable.

There's much to be thankful for about how things ended in Texas, and about the outpouring of love and support, across faiths, for a little Jewish community. But the wise counsel for Jews is to be grateful for this month's good luck, while taking it as a warning that our luck in America may run out.



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The New York Times

## The best way to retreat from Ukraine

DOUTHAT, FROM PAGE 1

soft-power embrace of Kyiv ill-equipped to handle hard-power countermeasures from Moscow.

Given those realities, and the pressing need to concentrate American power in East Asia to counter China, it's clear enough where an ideal retreat would end up: with NATO expansion permanently tabled, with Ukraine subject to inevitable Russian pressure but neither invaded nor annexed, and with America's NATO allies shouldering more of the burden of maintaining a security perimeter in Eastern Europe.

But as with Afghanistan, the actual execution is harder than the theory. Coming to a stable understanding with Putin is challenging, because he's clearly invested in being a permanent disrupter, taking any opportunity to humiliate the West. Extricating the United States from its Ukrainian entanglements will inevitably instill doubts about America's more important commitments elsewhere, doubts that will be greater the more Kyiv suffers from America's retreat. And handing off more security responsibility to the Europeans has been an unmet goal of every recent U.S. president, with the particular problem that a key European power, Germany, often acts like a de facto ally of the Russians.

Given those difficulties, the Biden administration's wavering course has been understandable, even if the president's recent news conference was too honest by several orders of magnitude. The United States cannot do nothing if Russia invades Ukraine; it also would be insane to join the war on Ukraine's side. So the White House's quest for the right in-between response, some balance of sanctions and



TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

arms shipments, looks groping and uncertain for good reason: There's simply no perfect answer here, only a least-bad balancing of options.

But my sense is that America is still placing too much weight on the idea that only NATO gets to say who is in NATO, that simply ruling out Ukrainian membership is somehow an impossible concession. This conceit is an anachronism, an artifact of the post-Cold War moment when it briefly seemed possible that, as the historian Adam Tooze puts it, the world's crucial boundaries "would be drawn by the Western powers, the United States and the E.U., on their own terms and to suit their own strengths and preferences."

That's not how the world works now, and precisely because it's not how the world works I would be somewhat relieved — as an American citizen, not just an observer of international poli-

tics — to see my leaders acknowledge as much, rather than holding out the idea that someday we might be obliged by treaty to risk a nuclear war over the Donbas.

And if America cannot give up the idea outright, the idea of giving it up for some extensive period — like the 25 years suggested by Thomas Graham and Rajan Menon in a recent Politico op-ed — seems like a very reasonable deal to make.

Something can be reasonable and still be painful — painful as an acknowledgment of Western weakness, painful to the hopes and ambitions of Ukrainians.

But accepting some pain for the sake of a more sustainable position is simply what happens when you've made a generation's worth of poor decisions, and you're trying to find a decent and dignified way to a necessary retreat.

## Teaching my kid to be lazy

KUKLA, FROM PAGE 8

economic system inevitably leads to treating disabled people as disposable, while trapping able-bodied people in dangerous, exploitative jobs. "The right not to work," says Ms. Taylor, "is an ideal worthy of the impaired and able-bodied alike."

Laziness is more than the absence or avoidance of work; it's also the enjoyment of lazing in the sun, or in another's arms. I learned through my work in hospice that moments spent enjoying the company of an old friend, savoring the smell of coffee or catching a warm breeze can make even the end of life more pleasurable. As the future becomes more tenuous, I want to teach my child to enjoy the planet right now. I want to teach him how to laze in the grass and watch the clouds without any

artificially imposed sense of urgency. Many of the ways I have learned to live well in a chronically ill body — by taking the present moment slowly and gently, letting go of looking for certainty about the future, napping, dreaming, nurturing relationships and loving fiercely — are relevant for everyone living on this chronically ill planet.

To be sure, it is my privilege that allows me to teach my child to be lazy. Many people in America and elsewhere spend all their time working, some holding multiple jobs. Many still struggle to afford housing and food. For too many, laziness is not an option.

But rest should not be a luxury; our time belongs to us and is not inherently a commodity. Reclaiming our time is an act of sovereignty over our lives, deserved by everyone. "Rest," says the

nap bishop, the Black activist Tricia Hersey, "is a radical vision for a liberated future."

Today, my child and I are playing a game of hill. We are lying under a giant pile of every blanket in the house, pretending to be a hill studded with soft grasses. His warm breath is on my neck, skinny limbs splayed across my soft belly.

"Shh, Abba," he says. "Hills don't move or talk . . . they just lie still and grow things."

I am teaching my child to be lazy, and so far, it's going really well.

ELLIOT KUKLA is a rabbi who provides spiritual care to those who are grieving, dying, ill or disabled. He is working on a book about the power of rest in a time of planetary crisis.



# Sports

## A roller-coaster ride to the A.F.C. title game

KANSAS CITY, MO.

### Kansas City and Buffalo confirm a rivalry behind their brilliant quarterbacks

BY EMMANUEL MORGAN

Every sport needs a marquee rivalry. Boxing had Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier. The National Basketball Association had Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls countering Isiah Thomas and the Detroit Pistons. Tennis has Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

In this age of the National Football League, fans are witnessing the flourishing of Patrick Mahomes and Josh Allen.

The two young quarterbacks for Kansas City and Buffalo engaged in a thrilling battle on Sunday night as they went throw for throw in the A.F.C.'s divisional round, exchanging leads and accumulating yards as if it were an elementary schoolyard game at recess. The game was so exciting that it needed more time, the referee saying "great job so far" with a hint of sarcasm in his voice.

Harrison Butker kicked a 49-yard field goal to send the game to overtime after both teams exchanged the lead three times in just under two minutes. The contest finally concluded when Mahomes connected with Travis Kelce near the sideline for an 8-yard touchdown, leaving Kansas City with a 42-36 win at Arrowhead Stadium. Mahomes took off his helmet and ran into the end zone to meet Kelce as the wackiness of this game ended and officials confirmed the catch by replay.

"We were all just part of one of the better games in the National Football League," Kansas City Coach Andy Reid said in his postgame news conference. Kansas City will play the Cincinnati Bengals for the A.F.C. championship next Sunday, becoming the first team in league history to host four consecutive conference championship games.

Kansas City was the only home team to win its divisional game over the weekend. In the other three contests, road



Left, Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes, center, connected with Travis Kelce (87) to defeat Buffalo in overtime. Right, Josh Allen of the Bills threw four touchdown passes to Gabriel Davis, two in the fourth quarter.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAY BIGGESTAFF/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

teams won on last-minute field goals: The Bengals defeated the Tennessee Titans in Nashville, 19-16; the San Francisco 49ers edged the Packers in Green Bay, 13-10; and the Los Angeles Rams beat the Buccaneers at Tampa Bay, 30-27, to earn the right to host the 49ers in the N.F.C. title game on Sunday.

The Bills and Kansas City rattled off highlight-reel plays as if they were ordinary. With 13 seconds remaining, Allen found Gabriel Davis uncovered in the end zone, completing a 19-yard touchdown pitch-and-catch. With 62 seconds remaining, Mahomes found the speedy Tyreek Hill open in space. He caught the ball and sprinted untouched for a 64-yard touchdown. In total, 25 points were scored in under two minutes.

"If you're not going to go down fighting, then you don't deserve to be here," Mahomes said in his postgame news conference.

The two quarterbacks have now duelled three times in the last calendar year. Mahomes bested Allen in last season's A.F.C. championship game, 38-24, and after throwing for 325 yards and three touchdowns, hoisted the conference trophy at Arrowhead for the second consecutive season. As Kansas City celebrated, Bills receiver Stefon Diggs watched alone on the sideline while red, yellow and white confetti fell.

Buffalo got revenge this season in Week 5, when the Bills won, 38-20, giving Sunday night's meeting the added drama of a tiebreaker. Both Allen, 25, and Mahomes praised each other in the past week, but Allen acknowledged that he was under more pressure to win, as Mahomes, 26, had already played in three A.F.C. championship games and won a Super Bowl.

"That's the type of level that we want to be; in order to be the best, you go to

beat the best," Allen said. "And they've really been one of the, if not the best team in the last four years."

Allen played well Sunday, throwing for 329 yards and four touchdowns, all of them to Davis, two of them in the fourth quarter. He also rushed for a team-high 68 yards. His only downfall was that he did not have the ball last. He could only watch from the sideline as Kansas City won the coin toss before overtime, leaving him unable to respond to Kelce's game-winning touchdown. It was a disappointing end to a successful season in which the Bills won the A.F.C. East for the second straight year and finished with the N.F.L.'s top-ranked defense.

"I know the fans are disappointed, and I wish I could take it off of them," Bills Coach Sean McDermott said. "I wish I could take it off the team, but we can't. What doesn't kill you should only make you stronger. It's going to take

some time, but it will make us stronger."

Sunday night's game mimicked the 2018 season's A.F.C. championship game, when Mahomes saw Tom Brady and the Patriots march down the field and win in overtime. Mahomes joked that he would "take the win," but that he would have loved to have seen Allen on another possession.

"Whenever you have two teams going back and forth the way that we were going, it kind of stings that you can't see the other guy go," Mahomes said.

Kansas City, too, experienced a pendulum of emotions as the game concluded. Reid and the players credited Mahomes's resolve and the team's preparation. After the game, Hill said the team practices late-game situations on Fridays, and that resolve showed on Sunday. Mahomes demonstrated his greatness, Hill said, by driving Kansas City 44 yards in three plays with 13 sec-

onds left to set up Butker's game-tying kick. On the sideline before that sequence, Reid told Mahomes: "When it's grim, go be the grim reaper."

"This is just another step to get him into the Hall of Fame," Hill said.

The game in some ways resembled Kansas City's season. The team started 3-4 and looked vulnerable, as defenses found ways to contain its downfield strikes with zone coverage. But it rebounded, losing only one game since November and earning the No. 2 seed in the conference. Buffalo used some of those defensive strategies, but Mahomes was patient, relying on shorter throws and scrambling through open holes. In the rushing attack, Clyde Edwards-Helaire, Jerick McKinnon and Mecole Hardman combined for 115 yards. Mahomes called it a complete performance.

"I'll remember it forever," he said.

### NON SEQUITUR



### SUDOKU No. 2501

Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

Fill the grid so that every row, column 3x3 box and shaded 3x3 box contains each of the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once.

JUMBLE word game section with a cartoon and word lists.

### PEANUTS



### GARFIELD



### WIZARD of ID



### KENKEN

KenKen grid with mathematical symbols like 4+, 6x, 2-.

Fill the grids with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box.

For solving tips and more KenKen puzzles: www.nytimes.com/kenken. For Feedback: nytimes@kenken.com

### Answers to Previous Puzzles

Answers to previous puzzles including crossword and KenKen solutions.

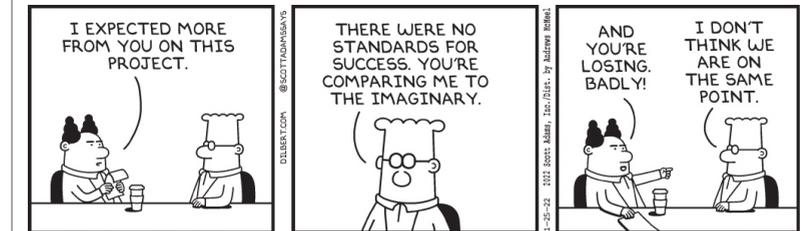
### DOONESBURY CLASSIC 1996



### CALVIN AND HOBBES



### DILBERT



### CROSSWORD | Edited by Will Shortz

- Across: 1 Smug expression, 6 Gentle attention-getter, 9 "Fidelio" is Beethoven's only one, 14 Be honest (with), 15 Tide competitor, 16 Tongue, but not cheek, 17 Make amends, 18 Hi or lo follower, 19 \_\_\_ boson (the so-called "God particle"), 20 General's responsibility?, 23 Foxy, 24 "\_\_\_ Te Ching", 25 In which head shots can be taken, 29 Apology for lago?, 32 Take stock of, 35 Peculiar light in the sky, in brief, 36 Millennium, at the beginning and end?, 37 Lure (in), 38 University entrance exam, for short, 39 It turns red litmus paper blue, 40 60 minuti, 41 Click of disapproval, 42 Wears, 44 Antitrust concern?, 48 Requests from, 49 Big name in ice cream, 50 Formerly named, 53 Editors of crossword puzzles, e.g.?, 57 Dagger's partner, 60 "Come as you \_\_\_", 61 They may be locked or blown, 62 Hooded snake, 63 Singer Cooke, 64 Country with the highest percentage of vegetarians, 65 Reuben ingredient, 66 "The Last O.G." channel, 67 One of the Affleck brothers, Down: 1 Cabbage dishes, 2 Rock genre, 3 Highbrow tower material?, 4 Home to the Atlantis casino, 5 Thieving condors of Mario games, 6 Holy \_\_\_, 7 Tr<sup>2</sup>, for a circle, 8 Bygone, 9 "Pick me! Pick me!", 10 One-named singer who pioneered the Minneapolis sound, 11 The hundred folds on a chef's toque are said to represent the number of ways to prepare this, 12 Scott Joplin tune, 13 T or F, say: Abbr., 21 Corn units, 22 \_\_\_, in an analogy, 26 Pellucid, 27 Part of a horror film address, for short, 28 National floral emblems of the U.S., 29 Date regularly, 30 Grossly, 31 Not seldom, poetically, 32 Pleasant whiff, 33 Billionaire philanthropist George, 34 Defeat soundly, so to speak, 38 It has colloquial gestures like "kiss-fist" and "shaking L": Abbr., 39 \_\_\_ choy, 41 Miso soup cubes, 42 Affirmative or negative, in a debate, 43 Medium, 45 Trio for Daniel Day-Lewis, 46 Bohemian folk dances, 47 Takes up or lets down, say, 50 Passionate learners, to some, 51 Bert's buddy on "Sesame Street", 52 College application part, 54 One wicked witch's home in "The Wizard of Oz", 55 Baltimore seafood specialty, 56 Hawaii's \_\_\_ Coast, 57 IV amounts, 58 Make oneself heard in a herd, 59 Kimono sash

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting positions for clues.

# Culture

## Battling bias and a ravenous plant

Conrad Ricamora reflects on the myriad costs of ethnic stereotypes

BY ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Since it opened in October 2019, Michael Mayer's well-received "Little Shop of Horrors" revival off Broadway has drawn quite the handsome string of leading men: Jonathan Groff was the first to step into Seymour Krelborn's Converse sneakers, and he was followed by Gideon Glick and Jeremy Jordan. This reflects the casting evolution of the character, a painfully shy plant geek — not many roles have been played by both Rick Moranis (in the show's 1986 movie adaptation) and Jake Gyllenhaal (in a 2015 concert production).

When asked about joining this, ahem, hot streak, Conrad Ricamora burst out laughing. "I played a nerdy IT guy for six years on 'How to Get Away With Murder,' so I don't know if there's a full consensus that I'm in the Jake Gyllenhaal Hall of Fame of Hot Actors," he said.

Since Jan. 11, Ricamora, 42, has been taking center stage at the Westside Theater, and while he displays serious comic muscle, he also taps into the character's painful loneliness. When he sings "Someone show me a way to get outta here/'Cause I constantly pray I'll get outta here" in the opening number, the ache is palpable.

This versatility won't be news to those who have seen him onstage before — yes, he can sing! There was the way Ricamora would summon a shamanic intensity as the magnetic political leader Ninoy Aquino in "Here Lies Love," the David Byrne and Fatboy Slim hit show that opened at the Public Theater in New York in 2013. And then there was his ardent romanticism as the doomed Burmese scholar and lover Lun Tha in the 2015 Lincoln Center production of "The King and I" — oh, those duets with Ashley Park's Tuptim!

Chatting after a recent rehearsal, the actor was candid about the obstacles he had to overcome on the road to Skid Row, the derelict neighborhood where "Little Shop of Horrors" is set.

There was the time the director of his first professional show, a production of "Anything Goes" in North Carolina, asked if he could sound more Chinese. "We call it 'ching chong' in the Asian acting community — 'they want you to be ching-chong-y'" said Ricamora, who is half-Filipino. "It didn't feel great."

Even with the production of "The King and I," which had great resources, he talked about being frustrated by what he felt was a lack of attention to dialects. "I didn't want to make any waves because I wanted this job — I still had debt, so much debt," he said. "And No. 2, I thought the best way to work was to say yes to everything because then they would tell other people that you're easy to work with." (The financial pressure was assuaged only after he started making "TV money," as he put it, on "How to Get Away With Murder," in which he played the computer whiz Oliver Hampton.)

It was a relief for Ricamora to be cast in David Henry Hwang and Jeanine Tesori's "Soft Power," a deliciously acid meta-musical from 2019 that looked at mythmaking and the way American culture deals with ethnic clichés — including a whole Rodgers and Hammerstein pastiche number about correct Chinese pronunciation.

One day, Tesori asked the largely Asian American cast what it had cost them to tell such a personal, emotional story in the show. Reliving that moment,



COLE WILSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ricamora turned her question on its head, and was once again overcome with the pain and anger the question had unlocked as he thought about the cast getting the still-rare opportunity to play fully human characters after so many years of stereotypical roles.

"What does it [expletive] cost me, us, all of my Asian American brothers and sisters?" he recounted, his voice shaking. "Here's what it costs us: Women are constantly made to play prostitutes and just sexual beings. As Asian American men, we're constantly asked to get rid of our sexuality completely and to be the butt of the joke and to be treated as third-class citizens."

"When you see Asian Americans standing up onstage in the theater, they're overcoming so many years of people telling them to push that aside and be a stereotype," he continued, tearing up. "We all wonder, 'When are we going to get a chance to exist fully?' And 'Soft Power' felt like that for all of us."

It had been a long ride up to that moment — yet for quite a while, Ricamora's life was focused not on theater but on tennis.

"You don't know how many times I wrote over and over again 'I'm going to

win the U.S. Open' in my journal in college," he said, laughing. "Wanting to get to Broadway was never a goal of mine because I didn't know it existed. I grew up on Air Force bases in very toxic masculine culture, so there was no theater. There were no arts at all."

His father, who had emigrated from the Philippines and was in the military, moved the family around until settling for a longer spell in Florida, where young Conrad attended middle and high school. His mother, who is white, had left when he was an infant, and his father remarried when Conrad was 8.

He majored in psychology at Queens University of Charlotte, N.C., which he attended on a tennis scholarship. And then he had an epiphany: In his junior year, he took a theater class and was assigned a monologue from Lanford Wilson's "Lemon Sky," about a teenage boy attempting to connect with his estranged father. "I remember thinking, 'This is my experience — I just have to stand here and say these words because I know what this person is talking about,'" he said. "The electricity I felt in that moment, that connection between actor, playwright and audience is something I've been chasing ever since."

After completing his degree, he started acting in local community theater and moved on to professional productions. Low point: that "Anything Goes."

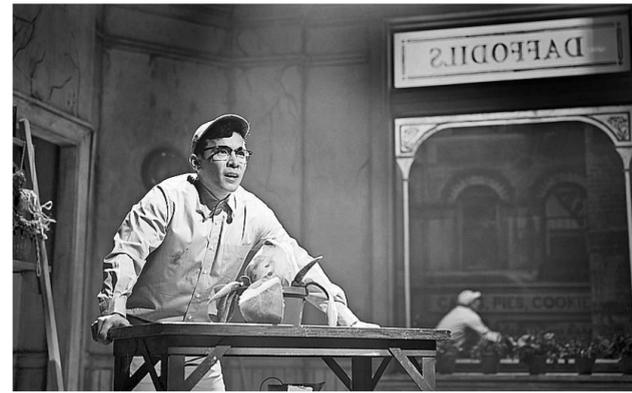
High point: "Shakespeare's R & J," in which he played Juliet opposite Evan Jonigkeit's Romeo in 2008. "For a queer person, it blew my mind away," Ricamora said of the Philadelphia production. "It felt like it exploded the world open for me. There was so much more that I could be accessing in my work."

He was almost done with his graduate studies in acting at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, when he saw the casting call for "Here Lies Love" and traveled to New York to audition.

"Immediately you just could tell you're in the presence of someone really special and — I hate to use this word — starchy," the director Alex Timbers said over the phone. "There was a real connection with the role, but also something where you want to be a part of that actor's career early on because they're going to go to extraordinary places."

Hwang was similarly impressed: "He's kind of a charisma machine."

And still, the outpouring unleashed by Tesori's question is haunting. Yes, Ri-



EMILIO MADRID



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Left, the actor Conrad Ricamora in a New York flower shop. Top, as Seymour in the Off Broadway revival of "Little Shop of Horrors." Above, in "Here Lies Love," with music by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim, which opened at the Public Theater in 2013.

camora is succeeding three Tony-nominated actors in "Little Shop of Horrors," but it's also hard to not feel a little frustrated for him: Why did it take so long to land a starring role? Why aren't actors like Ricamora, Jason Tam ("Be More Chill") or Telly Leung ("Allegiance") better known?

"There haven't been those roles for Asian romantic leads, that more or less hasn't existed," Hwang said. "Even when you get a role like Lun Tha, which is sort of in that direction, it's still not the center."

He added: "It's hard for Asian women in a different way: They tend to be oversexualized, portrayed as either lotus blossoms or dragon ladies, as we like to put it. So they are limited as well but in a different set of stereotypes."

Never mind the quality; even the quantity is lacking. According to a report by the Asian American Performers Action Coalition, only 6.3 percent of all available roles in New York City went to Asian American actors during the 2018-19 season.

### A "charisma machine" aims to expand roles for Asian Americans.

A partial solution is exactly what Ricamora is doing now: putting his stamp on an iconic role such as Seymour. He allowed that he was "white-knuckling it a little" after being propelled onstage after just two weeks of rehearsal, so for now he is focusing on making the role his. "I'll fill it out more and more as the run goes on," he said.

For Tammy Blanchard, who has played Seymour's love interest, Audrey, from the start: "Conrad is very deep, very centered. Jeremy was very comed-

ic, but you also had this sense of feeling for him. I think that Conrad's going to be more what Michael Mayer originally intended with Jonathan Groff — a dark, kind of emotional journey."

And when that experience concludes, Ricamora is ready to tell more stories.

"I'd like to play Tom in 'The Glass Menagerie' or Hal in 'Henry IV, Part 1' — my daddy issues run deep," Ricamora said, with a laugh, of his dream parts. "But especially after doing 'Soft Power,' I think the roles are still being written by playwrights I haven't even met, by Asian American playwrights that I haven't even met."

The challenge is obvious for that last demographic: The coalition's report points out that Asian American playwrights, composers, librettists and lyricists made up only 4.4 percent of all writers produced on New York stages in 2018-19. When a promising slate of productions steered by Asian Americans was lined up, at long last, in 2020, Covid-19 hit.

Ricamora is willing to do his part there, too, though in television for now: He and his friends Kelvin Moon Loh and Leigh Madjus just sold "No Rice," a half-hour comedy series that they are writing, executive producing and starring in. "The title comes from what people on Grindr or Tinder or Match or whatever would put," he explained, referring to racist shorthand. "Around 2015-2016 and earlier, it was all over the dating apps — people would freely write 'no rice,' 'no spice,' 'no fats,' 'no fems.'" (He would not reveal yet where it will air.)

In the meantime, he is happy to be back onstage, battling a bloodthirsty plant and singing of loneliness and ache. "I love coming back to theater so much because you get to show up every day," Ricamora said. "Theater grounds you — eight shows a week is no joke."

## There's no golf in his future

The 83-year-old founder of Pace Gallery is planning 'a project space for me'

BY TED LOOS

At 83, Arne Glimcher has already had unusual longevity as a top art dealer, with more than six decades in the business. But he is still expanding his reach.

Glimcher, the founder and chairman of Pace Gallery, plans to establish a new space in the TriBeCa neighborhood of New York, to open in September, called Gallery 125 Newbury, named after the Boston address where he started Pace in 1960.

"I'm going back to my roots," Glimcher said of the new place, which will be under the Pace umbrella but will be a sandbox of sorts for him. "It's a project space for me to do the thematic shows I want to do."

First up will be an exhibition about "futurism," he said, not the early 20th-century movement but works by contemporary artists across cultures who are forward-looking. He wasn't ready to name the artists yet.

"I'm a curator at heart, I always have been," Glimcher said in an interview. "I always wanted to be the director of MoMA. So this is my little modern art museum."

His son Marc Glimcher, Pace's presi-



VIA PACE GALLERY

Above, the young Arne Glimcher, center, with Louise Nevelson, one of the artists he worked with for decades. Right, the dealer at Gallery 125 Newbury, his new space in the TriBeCa neighborhood of New York, which is scheduled to open in September.

dent and chief executive, described the octogenarian's non-retirement plans this way: "No puttering around, no golf game for my father."

The programming at 125 Newbury, which will have five shows a year, may involve veteran artists whom the elder Glimcher already handles, like Richard Tuttle, Sam Gilliam, Lucas Samaras and Robert Irwin, as well as the estates of artists with whom he worked for decades, such as Louise Nevelson, Chuck

Close and Agnes Martin. Emerging artists are promised, and as a project space, it will also feature artists Pace does not officially represent.

The TriBeCa location, in what is perhaps the city's most vibrant gallery neighborhood, is 3,900 square feet and will be renovated by the firm Bonetti/Kozerski, which designed Pace's eight-story flagship in the city's Chelsea district, completed in 2019. Glimcher plans to split time between the two galleries —



LUCA PIRIOTTI, VIA PACE GALLERY

as will his designated team, Kathleen McDonnell, Talia Rosen and Oliver Shultz — and more people will be hired to staff the new space.

The family has turned Pace into a global operation, with nine outposts from Seoul to Geneva. A large artist roster means that even the founder's ideas cannot always be acted on right away.

"Sometimes it has to get pushed on the schedule — I might be able to do my idea in two years," Glimcher said, adding with a laugh, "I'm too old for that."

When Glimcher told his son about 125 Newbury, the initial reaction was, "What are you talking about?" Marc Glimcher said.

"But then I wasn't so surprised," he

went on. "He said he wanted space for his creativity, and we don't want to stifle his voice." Glimcher added that it was becoming difficult to tell his father that there was no room for his brainstorm.

During the elder Glimcher's career, he has been involved in making feature films, directing "The Mambo Kings" and producing "Gorillas in the Mist."

In 2020, Pace teamed up with two other powerful galleries, Acquavella and Gagosian, to sell privately the art left by the investor Donald B. Marron, who died in 2019, bypassing auction houses for a trove including works by Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning.

But few dealers are able to tell stories about the artists themselves as Glimcher can. A case in point is the time in the mid-80s that he and Louise Nevelson drove in a violent rainstorm to visit de Kooning on the East End of Long Island, outside New York. They got into an accident that totaled their vehicle, but she insisted on hiring a car service and pressing on to make the appointment with the great painter.

"We were sopping wet, so Bill gave us clothes to wear while ours dried," Glimcher said. "Imagine us sitting there in de Kooning's clothes."

He sounded energized about moving forward with his new project, adding, "I'm doing this because I am so interested in the now, and loving my life in the moment, rather than looking at things retrospectively."

## CULTURE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHAN PERSSON

# A vintage work dissolves into incoherence

DANCE REVIEW  
LONDON

## English National Ballet updates 'Raymonda' to the Crimean War

BY LAURA CAPPELLE

Esteemed ballerina. Experienced artistic director. Skilled fund-raiser. In Tamara Rojo, who was announced this month as San Francisco Ballet's next leader, American dance has tapped a woman of many talents. Still, the San Francisco company may want to hold off on adding choreography to her list of duties.

At the London Coliseum, Rojo has unveiled her final major project for English National Ballet, the ensemble she has led for 10 years, and her first as a choreographer and stage director: a reworking of Marius Petipa's 1898 ballet "Raymonda," set during the Crusades. Unlike "Swan Lake" or "Sleeping Beauty," it has been a work of niche appeal in Britain and the United States, mainly performed in Russia and in France, where Rudolf Nureyev's version has endured. (The Dutch National Ballet will also tackle "Raymonda" this season.)

English National Ballet's "Raymonda" is the first full production of the ballet by a British company, and Rojo, who relocated the plot to 19th-century Crimea and Britain, tries very hard to make it all things to all people — at the expense of integrity.

Raymonda, formerly a French countess, has been refashioned as a young English nurse serving during the Crimean War (1853 to 1856). Her beau, Jean de Brienne, is a soldier instead of a knight and is now called John de



### The characters in the 1898 original were near-abstract types. Tamara Rojo gives us a deeply uninteresting love triangle.

Bryan. The duo's romantic connection is thwarted by a prince from the allied Ottoman Empire, Abdur Rahman (an irresistible Jeffrey Cirio on opening night), a less offensive successor to Petipa's menacing Saracen knight, Abderakhman.

The urge to tie the plot to Britain and to fix its Orientalist aspects is understandable, but Rojo's "Raymonda" pulls in too many directions at once to cohere. One minute, it is a 20th-century romantic drama; the next, it goes back to the 1898 original, with reconstructed set pieces. It also nods to Soviet-era alterations and to other Petipa ballets, while including reimagined character dances by Vadim Sirotnin. It is impossible to keep track of, and worse, the constant tonal changes are treated as unimportant, as

if style made no difference to the audience.

This is a problem. The stakes in the 1898 version were primarily poetic and stylistic. "Raymonda" showcased Petipa's mature craft at the tail end of his half-century reign over Russia's Imperial troupe in St. Petersburg, now the Mariinsky Ballet, with especially exquisite solos for the leading women. Love featured only as a courtly ideal: The characters were near-abstract types, rather than detailed personas.

Rojo's 21st-century version, by com-

Above, a scene from Tamara Rojo's version of "Raymonda" for English National Ballet. Left, Isaac Hernández as John de Bryan and Shiori Kase as Raymonda. The production is Rojo's final major project for the company she has led for 10 years.

parison, gives us a deeply uninteresting love triangle. It's impossible to believe in Raymonda, John and Abdur as people with personalities and relatable struggles: "Raymonda" isn't built to reveal them, no matter how much cutting and pasting Rojo and her musical team, Gavin Sutherland and Lars Payne, have attempted with Alexander Glazunov's delightful score. The choreographic motifs Rojo introduces to paint inner conflict — Raymonda's joined fists behind her back and crossed arms in front, her constant tugging with John — feel superficial.

They also add to the sheer confusion over the kind of ballet Rojo's "Raymonda" wants to be. The first act takes place mainly at a military camp outside Sevastopol. It teems with busy characters straight out of the playbook of the British choreographer Kenneth MacMillan, who insisted on individuality even for background players. There are also multiple nods to his 1960s contemporary John Cranko, with Raymonda falling asleep, dreaming and being carried aloft much in the way Tatiana is in Cranko's "Onegin." Rojo stitches this together with attempts at 19th-century authenticity. To reconstruct Petipa's original ballets, which have been altered over time, the dance world has increasingly returned to manuscripts in which Petipa's steps were recorded around the time his St. Petersburg tenure ended. Rojo asked a notation specialist, Doug Fullington, to help, but has kept little beyond the women's variations. These are also

sometimes given to different characters than in Petipa's instructions, or subtly altered.

There are also nods to another Petipa ballet, "La Bayadère," most notably in the beautifully realized first act "Vision" scene: an episode that feels like a tribute to Florence Nightingale, one of Rojo's inspirations. Nightingale, a British nurse organizer during the Crimean War whose likeness appears on British 10-pound notes, was known as the Lady with the Lamp, and the nurses in Rojo's "Raymonda" carry lamps through darkness, too. Yet more often than not, war is a distant background, barely hinted at.

While on the surface Raymonda has greater agency than in Petipa's original, she comes out an inconsistent character. Even after she is married (in a depressing wedding dress that obscures the choreography), she continues to hesitate between John and Abdur, who hijack one of the ballet's great moments: Raymonda's pensive yet authoritative "claque" variation in the final act, which closes out her symbolic arc.

On opening night, Shiori Kase, a calm and careful performer, portrayed Raymonda as timid and unsure of her choices until the very end, when she leaves her own wedding to go back to nursing — an incongruous development, wrapped up in under a minute.

Rojo's "Raymonda" is by no means an outlier in the international ballet repertoire: It is only the latest production in a sea of half-updated, tangled versions of the few surviving 19th-century ballets. Total reimaginings can work, as Akram Khan's "Giselle," one of Rojo's commissioning successes, showed, but a serious art form should set higher standards of coherence for the versions it presents of classics. San Francisco will certainly hope for better.

# A weasel of fiction steals another's tale

BOOK REVIEW

## Last Resort

By Andrew Lipstein. 291 pp. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. \$27.

BY MOLLY YOUNG

Cowardly, avaricious, annoying, territorial, deceitful, opportunistic: There aren't enough shady adjectives in the dictionary to describe the narrator of Andrew Lipstein's "Last Resort." What fun! One great thing about the well-drawn weasels of fiction is that you can always locate a bit of yourself in them.

"Last Resort" is about a novelist who has stolen the plot of his best-selling book from a story relayed to him by an acquaintance. Now, if you read last year's "The Plot," by Jean Hanff Korelitz, you'll notice that this novel has a similar, uh, plot as that one. Given the timelines of publishing, it is certain that the emergence of these — not identical, but let's say fraternal-twin — stories within months of each other is pure coincidence. But there must be something in the air that has led to the double helping of this Faustian-bargain varietal.

Both novels are anti-Künstlerroman

— books not about the formation of genuine artists but about the self-destruction of phony ones. They are both thrillers about, of all things, intellectual property. Korelitz's book was tighter and darker. Lipstein's is funnier. Both are incredibly entertaining.

Caleb is the Faust of "Last Resort," an aspiring novelist in his 20s who lacks a compelling subject until he reunites with a college buddy named Avi, who recounts a set of remarkable recent events — Greek island, doomed affair, group sex with repressed married couple, death — which Caleb appraises the way an antiques dealer might study the marquetry on a Louis XVI secrétaire. Soon, with nary a scruple, Caleb expands Avi's anecdote into a full-length novel with enough commercial viability to land its unknown author a flashy agent.

When this agent shops the manuscript around, Avi — who, to Caleb's dismay, has switched careers and now works in publishing — discovers the betrayal. The two men meet under the eye of a lawyer, and come to an agreement: Avi's name will be printed on the book, as its author, but all the money will go to Caleb. (Not being a literary agent, I was curious as to whether this premise was realistic or bonkers. I asked an agent of consider-

able experience. He replied that it was "a stretch but not out of this world.")

Caleb's novel turns out to be a smash, though it might be more accurate to describe what he has written as "content" — a substance designed to be digested and excreted with minimal demands on the consumer's brain. From the very first meeting with his agent, Caleb is thinking about marketing, not art: typefaces (Caslon, specifically — he's kind of basic) and deckled edges and the Frankfurt Book Fair.

This is where alarm bells are meant to sound in the reader's mind. Aha! we think: Caleb is not an artist, but a careerist! And the careerist must suffer humiliation and defeat; he must be unmasked as a fraud; he must be dumped by a worthy woman who has mistakenly projected her sterling values onto him. Also, he should probably be sued.

Or — should he? If Lipstein had written a less cunning book, he might have contrasted Caleb with a character who represented artistic purity, whatever that is. But everyone here sits somewhere on the grifter spectrum, including the real people (Avi, doomed woman, repressed married couple) upon whom Caleb's characters are based. Lipstein seems ambivalent, as he

must be, about the compromises required of anyone who wants to earn money selling words. It's hard to skip innocently into a professional writing career. The pool of aspirants is too large and the quantity of jobs too small, and of those jobs only a teaspoonful are remunerative enough to pay for such things as rent. But Lipstein isn't implying that a person must be either celestially lucky or satanically unprincipled or both in order to "make it."

Caleb, for one thing, is not an evil genius. An evil genius wouldn't send self-incriminating text messages (first rule of being evil: Put nothing in writing), nor would he fail to change the names of the people he's novelizing. What type of doofus fails to cover his tracks in such obvious ways? Well, exactly the type of doofus who is Caleb. His hackiness as a writer is a reflection of his hackiness as a moral agent — or maybe it runs in the opposite direction. Caleb is blithe about his shortcomings, admitting that "I'm not the type to dot my i's or even fully dry my back after a shower."

In addition to a blithe streak, Caleb has a cruel streak, a petty streak and an intemperate streak, and Lipstein milks the comedy of these traits almost as well as Kingsley Amis did in "Lucky



Andrew Lipstein.

via ANDREW LIPSTEIN

Jim." Caleb observes that Avi looked "like James Dean if James Dean was a bit inbred." A Nissan Altima is "the color of a wet dog." The Muzak pumped through his co-working space consists of "Top 40-esque tracks seemingly gutted of choruses, bridges and

memorable hooks, played at a volume that might be described as enough." Lipstein even turns out an Amis-level observation on the topic of intoxication: "I was at the stage of drunkenness when certain footsteps surprise you."

It's a little obvious to locate the underlying anxieties of "Last Resort" — fraudulence, vanity — in the well-documented and rapidly growing unwillingness of readers to ascribe credibility to the media. Novelists are not "the media." (Thank God.) But it is true that authors of nearly every kind are engaged in a losing skirmish to retain status, and that their authority is so reduced that we should probably come up with another name for them.

The coexistence of "The Plot" and "Last Resort" could be a random incident — the way that "Armageddon" and "Deep Impact" both popped up in the summer of 1998 — or it could mark the advent of a whole genre that allegorizes the professional writer's suspicion that he might be a scammer. The major narrative distinction between the novels lies not in whether the scheming writers are punished for their sins — they are, they are — but in how. For one author, stealing someone's story is an unforgivable desecration. For the other, a petty crime.

## LIVING



Many restaurants in New York require diners to wear masks except when seated at their tables. “One thing I’ve noticed is that the crowds are almost all young people now,” one critic said. “Older diners, as a rule, don’t seem as comfortable coming back.”

## Two critics, two views on indoor dining

With Covid a concern in New York and Los Angeles, some insight

BY PETE WELLS AND TEJAL RAO

As the Omicron variant surges across the United States, Covid cases are at an all-time high. But unlike the situation in the spring of 2020, restaurants largely remain open (with a growing number of exceptions). Our restaurant critics, Pete Wells and Tejal Rao, are based in New York and Los Angeles, respectively. In both cities, restaurant workers are required to be fully vaccinated, as are diners eating indoors. The two conversed about their comfort levels with dining indoors, and the differences — or similarities — in their cities.

**PETE WELLS** So neither one of us is eating in restaurants this week, I hear.

**TEJAL RAO** I’m trying to remember my last meal inside a dining room, presenting my vaccination card. I definitely remember the last reservation that I canceled, just before Christmas. I was really looking forward to it, but the place didn’t have outdoor dining, and I was about to go visit my parents. And on Instagram, so many of the restaurants I follow were reporting infections. I thought: Well, this is it. I haven’t been inside a restaurant since my story earlier this month about Los Angeles sushi; I’m sticking to takeout or outdoor dining.

**WELLS** Well, I went out for dinner two Sundays ago. I was with a group of highly Covid-conscious people, so the deal was we had to eat outdoors and we all had to test right before the meal. We ate in one of those yurts, so we probably weren’t going to pick up any germs from strangers at the next table. But on the other hand if any one of us had been sick, we would all walk out of there with a good stiff dose of the virus. Two days later, my sons came home from school with rapid tests and right away, one of them tests positive! It brought a halt to my dining out. I’m not sure how long I’ll be at home, but I believe I need to wait five days after he’s symptom-free.

**RAO** I’m looking at case numbers right now, and people who are predicting the peak in Los Angeles, and it’s really hard to say.

**WELLS** In Brooklyn, I can walk 10 minutes in any direction and come to a free testing site. I might have to wait in line — OK, I definitely will have to wait in line — but I can get a rapid test and a P.C.R. test. Is that available to you in L.A.?

**RAO** Yes, there are a few spots around me, including a drive-through testing site at a Walgreens, some libraries and some community clinics. But they’re not walkable.

**WELLS** It’s interesting that we’ve all started worrying about tests during this



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

“We all have different risk tolerances, and we all have different ideas of what’s risky, and you see this playing out.”

Omicron wave, because the experts I have been listening to about the pandemic were talking about testing just a few months into the pandemic. The idea was that testing had to be part of the mix along with masks, distancing, etc. But the tests really haven’t come into the picture in a big way until the past month, and suddenly a lot of us are trying to get tested when in truth we should have had this in our bag of anti-Covid tricks a long time ago. And restaurant people have been testing, but they have huge problems just getting a supply of tests and paying for them.

**RAO** It’s so frustrating. If I were a restaurant worker, I’d want to test daily, and for my whole team to test daily, and it seems like that safety level shouldn’t be too much to ask for, but right now it seems impossible.

**WELLS** Yeah, I agree, and it’s particularly frustrating because it’s been almost two years since the virus arrived on our shores. I have two kids, both in high school, and both were sent home with rapid tests this week. Which is great, but it would have been greater if it had been going on for months already. The failure to provide tests, huge quantities of tests, and the failure to stress the importance



JEENAH MOON/REUTERS

of testing until very recently, are just maddening. Because unlike March 2020, we’ve had a lot of time to prepare.

**RAO** It’s embarrassing, actually. Sidebar, but because the symptoms of this variant have been reported as milder (which doesn’t mean mild, necessarily) I think a lot of people who were careful during the previous wave are feeling less careful now, but I’m terrified of losing my sense of smell again, among other things.

**WELLS** No, we don’t want you to get sick again! How is your nose, by the way?

**RAO** Oh, you know. Sensitive! Frightened! Exhausted! No, it’s fine. Thank you. I got my smell back completely, but unfortunately it’s a symptom you can experience again and again if you get sick, and there’s no guarantee it’ll come back again just because it came back once before.

**WELLS** Nobody has any idea what’s going to happen, right?

**RAO** I definitely don’t. I will say, I don’t feel as hopeless as I did before, as worried, because I’ve seen how restaurant people find new ways of doing things, or



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

In Los Angeles County, at left, as in New York, patrons are required to show proof of full vaccination for indoor dining. Above, a familiar sign in Los Angeles outlining the county’s vaccine mandates. Bottom, indoor diners in Times Square in New York.

build new businesses in the margins, and I wish they didn’t have to, but they do.

**WELLS** I keep saying that restaurant people are like theater people — no matter what, the show goes on. As soon as I am fairly certain I’m not walking around with virus particles bursting out of my cranium, I’ll start doing review meals again.

**RAO** It’s so impressive to me that you’ve been on a regular review schedule for a lot of the pandemic. I wanted to talk to you, in part, because I feel like I have no idea what’s happening or what I should be doing! Everything changes day to day, and even my own risk assessment will change from day to day.

**WELLS** Yeah, government guidance for restaurant critics has been scarce!

**RAO** LOL

**WELLS** A lot of restaurant workers aren’t even sure what they’re supposed to be doing: How long are they supposed to isolate after an exposure, or after a positive test, etc.? I think a lot of us were feeling very confident that with the vaccines it was kind of game over, and now that we’re in the middle of yet another surge with its own patterns, it’s really hard to know what to do.

Although if I had an unlimited supply of tests, I would probably just test daily.

**RAO** I was talking to a chef on the phone the other day, and she told me that she isn’t going to restaurants at all right now. But when I’m driving around, or picking up takeout, a lot of the patios and the dining rooms seem full.

**WELLS** Are all the restaurants on reduced schedules there? Nobody here is staying open past 10 p.m., except Keith McNally. So they’re not turning tables the way they were before. Which is just to say that it looks busier than it really is.

**RAO** Yeah, that’s a good point. A lot of

places are on shorter schedules here, too, with fewer staff working right now.

**WELLS** One thing I’ve noticed is that the crowds are almost all young people now. Older diners, as a rule, don’t seem as comfortable coming back. Although I have friends who are proud exceptions to that rule.

You know, you said a minute ago that your risk assessment changes every day, and that’s something that I’ve found so interesting in general. We all have different risk tolerances, and we all have different ideas of what’s risky, and you see this playing out all around us. You certainly see it in schools, where some parents want their kids home and others want them in the classroom and most are completely unsure what the best path is. But I even see it when I’m trying to round up a few people for a meal in a restaurant.

Anybody who spends a lot of time around an older parent is usually pretty cautious, and during this current wave, they’re even more cautious. And we have these strange jobs where, in the before times, we used to sit at close range talking, sometimes loudly, with a different set of people every night. And to do that now, the way we used to do it, would be sort of irresponsible.

**RAO** Sharing food from one plate! Passing a fork down the table!

**WELLS** One of my last meals before the first shutdown was at a hot-pot place in Flushing. Although if the pot is really, really hot, you’re probably killing off any germs at the table. (Not in the air, though!)

**RAO** My plan for now is to keep ordering takeout, and to stay away from indoor dining until the Omicron wave starts to really flatten out here, which should be in the next few weeks. At that point, I’ll reconsider.



**Lady Féerie watch**  
White gold, sapphires, diamonds,  
white mother-of-pearl, enamel.

# Van Cleef & Arpels

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# Jewelry

## A Cut Above

### Older pieces, younger buyers

Experts in vintage jewelry discuss the trends, including a rise in successful women spending on themselves

BY RACHEL FELDER

Whether you are looking for a delicate Art Deco engagement ring or a lavish antique diamond necklace, shopping for precious vintage jewelry can be as daunting as it is enticing.

On a recent blustery morning in New York City, a group of high-end vintage jewelry experts gathered to discuss what prospective buyers should look for (including whether pieces should be signed or inscribed with a brand name) and the types of pieces that are particularly good value at the moment.

They included executives from three auction houses — Quig Bruning, head of jewelry for the Americas at Sotheby's; Sara Payne Thomeier, who holds a similar position at Phillips; and Angelina Chen, a senior jewelry specialist at Christie's — and two independent dealers, Dana Kiyomura, the owner of Keyamour, a vintage jewelry retailer in Midtown Manhattan; and Peter Schaffer, an owner of the Fifth Avenue boutique A La Vieille Russie, which has been selling vintage jewels since 1851. Their conversation has been edited and condensed.

"The vintage market is the hottest it's ever been," Ms. Chen said. "It's on fire, basically."

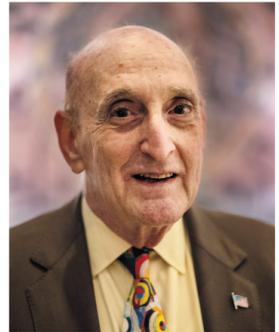
#### What trends are you noticing?

**QUIG BRUNING** Everybody's looking for signed jewelry. Cartier, Van Cleef — obviously those are the big two, they always have been. But it's expanded beyond that: It's Bulgari, it's Mauboussin, it's Boucheron. It's even smaller makers: it's Raymond Yard. If it's signed and vintage, there's a huge market for it.

**DANA KIYOMURA** I'm finding that antique diamond jewelry, particularly rings, is very, very popular. I think that there's been a lot of marketing around interesting cuts of diamonds — cushions and Asschers — that the general public are picking up on.

**MR. BRUNING** We had a ring in a sale in June: It was early 20th century. It had a couple of off-color SI, or slightly included, quality diamonds and a big old fat pear shape. It had really pretty stones. Those stones are probably worth about \$150,000, and it went for much more, **OLDER, PAGE 56**

**In demand**  
Vintage pieces, from left: a Van Cleef & Arpels necklace and bracelet combination in gold, cultured pearls and diamonds, circa 1970 (Sotheby's); a Victorian emerald and diamond ring, from about 1880 (Keyamour); a Tiffany Scorpio pendant in gold with diamonds, circa 1970 (Christie's); and an 1884 bangle with a diamond and sapphires (Keyamour).



**Peter Schaffer**  
An owner of A La Vieille Russie



**Dana Kiyomura**  
Owner of Keyamour



**Angelina Chen**  
Senior jewelry specialist, Christie's



**Quig Bruning**  
Head of jewelry, Americas, Sotheby's



**Sara Payne Thomeier**  
Head of jewels, Americas, Phillips

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



# BVLGARI

ROMA

IN STYLE

# Challenges birth innovation

Creations from designers embrace noteworthy trends, including transformable jewelry and innovative materials like titanium

PARIS

BY TINA ISAAC-GOIZÉ

As the fashion world struggles through another pandemic-era couture season, the high jewelry presentations that traditionally accompany it, Jan. 24 to 26, are more restrained than usual.

Some major houses — including Van Cleef & Arpels, Bulgari and Chanel — have postponed events until the next couture week, in July. But for others, the feeling seems to be that forging ahead is the best strategy for uncertain times, even if it means adjusting plans right up to the last minute.

Houses such as Cartier, De Beers, Boucheron, Dior and Louis Vuitton have been holding appointment-only viewings for clients and press to see their collections this week. And while some lines are limited to a handful of parures, there are firsts among the debuts as well as several notable transformable jewels, a trend in high jewelry that continues to grow.

There is even a 6,225-carat rough Zambian emerald on show, courtesy of Chopard, which is to be used in future high jewelry collections.

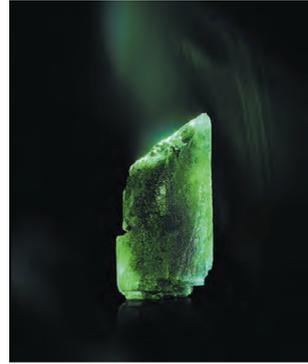
At De Beers, a collection called The Alchemist of Light explores themes of fluidity and reflection. The first collection completed since the arrival of its new chief executive, Céline Assimon, in September 2020, it is also the brand's first to incorporate titanium, a hardy yet lightweight metal more commonly used in high watchmaking than high jewelry. Of a planned seven parures, two are to be shown this week.

And the Light Rays transformable necklace in one of those parures seems to signal a new direction for the formerly traditional house. A choker style, it features a 4.22-carat radiant-cut fancy yellow-brown diamond mounted in black rhodium-plated white gold. The removable, micro-articulated bib was made of hammered anodized titanium in orange and yellow hues and set with rays of pavé diamonds.

"There is nothing like seeing rare diamonds catch the light or the tactile sensation of a necklace's articulations in person," Ms. Assimon wrote in an email. She also noted that, after two years of pandemic restrictions, clients were "ready to experiment more and express their personality," a trend she said De Beers was catering to by creating more oversized and versatile pieces.

For her high jewelry debut, Chaumet's creative director, Ehsan Moazen, explored a water theme in the collection Déferlante, which means "breaker," highlighting asymmetrical swells of diamonds in bead and bezel settings. Its eight pieces include a tiara, the house signature, that was inspired by archival drawings from the belle époque. It resembles a stylized wave, with 1,600 graduated diamonds breaking into sprays of diamonds.

At Boucheron, the house revisited one



of the most extravagant special commissions in the history of Place Vendôme. In 1928, the maharajah of Patiala checked into the Ritz hotel with 40 servants and then brought six coffers filled with thousands of precious stones across the square to Boucheron.

The drawings of the 149 pieces that the house made from those stones — executed by Louis Boucheron, the son of founder Frédéric Boucheron — was the starting point for Histoire de Style, New Maharajahs, a 14-piece collection that includes transformable, genderless designs. It showcases a diamond and emerald necklace that closely resembles one from the original commission, as well as a large lace-like choker in rock crystal and 4,561 diamonds. Both of the pieces can be worn three ways.

The house's creative director, Claire Choise, also played with scale. The New Padma earrings are composed of a pair of pear-cut diamond studs and a behind-the-ear piece. In diamond pavé, pearls and mother-of-pearl engraved with lotus flowers, the punk-like element stands upright, like a fringe, over the ear.

For Victoire de Castellane, the artistic director of Dior Joaillerie, couture is a recurring inspiration that she has explored in collections like the 2014 Archi

Dior and the 2015 Soie Dior. In Galons Dior — a collection name that refers to the braid trim often used in fashion — she has worked references to the volume and movement of fabric into 81 pieces of jewelry.

On the asymmetrical Multi Galons ring, for example, a zigzag of baguette diamonds and a row of flowers in pear- and round-cut diamonds encircle an oval center diamond flanked by brilliants.

Other jewelry houses are using the season to add new pieces to existing collections. Building on its Sixième Sens group, the subject of an extensive presentation at Lake Como, Italy, in July 2021, Cartier plans to unveil the collection's second and third chapters: a total of 50 new jewels.

These include the transformable Synesthésie necklace in platinum, set with a hexagonal Colombian emerald weighing more than 35 carats. A design that used the supple "articulated lace" technique, which makes metal settings inconspicuous, it features a cascade of diamonds and turquoise and emerald beads. The center motif and tassel are interchangeable and both can be worn as brooches.

In 1925, Cartier showed the modern neckline ornament Bérénice at the Ex-

position Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris. Now, almost a century later, the piece was the inspiration for the Victorienn necklace — a geometric array of diamonds, including two hexagonal-cut stones weighing a total of more than nine carats, and black lacquer pavé, anchored by a Colombian cabochon-cut emerald of more than 16 carats.

Louis Vuitton, which is celebrating the bicentennial of its founder's birth, is introducing the second chapter in its high jewelry collection Bravery.

The locks, buckles, studs and corner pieces of the house's signature trunks were the inspiration for 20 pieces — three parures and four cocktail rings — in precious metals and colored gems. (Louis Vuitton himself designed his first flat trunk in 1854.)

A cushion-cut yellow sapphire weighing more than 20 carats hangs from a V in baguette diamonds on the flamboyant Magnétisme necklace of pink, orange and yellow tourmalines interspersed with brilliant-cut diamonds. The sapphire, mounted in a rectangular frame, may be removed and worn on a chain.

In the same vein, Piaget is expanding on its Extraordinary Lights collection with a second act of three parures, in diamonds with tourmalines, emeralds or

sapphires. The Voluptuous Borealis necklace, a question mark style, features asymmetrical rows of channel-set diamonds and a 10.29-carat pear-shaped emerald pendant. It is to be presented with a matching ring and earrings, a diamond ear cuff and a jeweled watch.

Most independent designers seem to be sitting this season out. But despite travel restrictions that have kept her at home in Taiwan, Cindy Chao is among the few who decided to unveil new work in Paris this week.

Her seven-piece presentation includes Black Label Masterpiece earrings in titanium set with emerald-cut fancy dark brown-yellow diamonds surrounded by gradient diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, alexandrites and garnets.

Ms. Chao has called Paris her "inspiration city": She recently established a subsidiary here and has been finalizing plans for a showroom designed by the Dutch architect Tom Postma, scheduled to open later this year.

"For a designer, it's especially important to show work in person and not virtually," she said in an email. "Despite the virus, and even if we have to adapt to new rules and behaviors, we have to make do and try to find solutions."

**Renewal**  
Top row, from left: Cindy Chao's Black Label Masterpiece titanium earrings; a transformable diamond and emerald necklace from Boucheron; and a 6,225-carat Zambian emerald from Chopard. Bottom row, from left: Galons Dior's asymmetrical Multi Galons ring; Louis Vuitton's Magnétisme necklace; a tiara from Chaumet's Déferlante collection; and Cartier's transformable Synesthésie necklace.

TRENDING

# A versatile favorite

Chokers are attracting new fans and new notice on runways, but the neck-hugging style has been big since ancient times

LONDON

BY SUSANNE FOWLER

The choker, a neck-hugging jewelry style, seems to be riding a new wave of popularity.

Its appearance on women's, men's and couture runways and in fashion-world look books was featured in the 2021 annual roundup by Tagwalk, a search engine that tracks fashion trends. It noted that the use of chokers had increased 25.6 percent compared with the previous year.

And the style figured prominently in the spring 2022 fine jewelry and costume jewelry collections from Chanel, Dior, Coach and others.

Chanel, for example, offered a diamond-studded 18-karat white gold bouton de camélia choker — featuring the house's signature camellia motif — for \$38,400. The necklace has a sliding clasp that adjusts to fit different neck girths.

Several less expensive styles are included in Chanel's spring 2022 costume

jewelry range, including a double-strand gold-finish chain with interlocking white resin C's (\$775) and what the label called its Pearls Cascade choker, made with glass beads, rhinestones and resin (\$1,475).

Dior also offered several choker styles on its website, including what it called a "bold and assertive" D-Punkish choker in gold-finish metal with more than 100 white resin pearls and pointy conical studs for \$3,900.

One fan of the choker style is Tyler Chanel, a Los Angeles-based 27-year-old who writes the lifestyle and fashion blog Thrifts & Tangles to encourage sustainability. (A recent blog post was headlined "How to Politely Decline Gifts for the Holidays.")

"Choker-style necklaces are my favorite," she said by email. "They are so versatile."

"Necklaces of certain lengths only work with certain necklines, but chokers work with everything. They look great with V-neck tops and button-up tops (which make up the majority of my wardrobe)."

And, she said, she has noticed "a lot more people wearing bold gold chokers recently."

Still, "chokers are not something new," said Beatriz Chadour-Sampson, a jewelry historian based in England's Hampshire county.

For example, she said by telephone, "the pearl necklace worn tight around the neck is something that recurs throughout the centuries from Roman times and even up to the era of the Hollywood stars from the 1940s and '50s."

One of the earliest documented cases of such short necklaces, she said, are the portraits that were painted on boards and then incorporated into the mummy wrappings of upper-class women throughout the Fayum Basin in Egypt, circa A.D. 150. These portraits show finely dressed women wearing layered chokers of pearls and precious or semi-precious stones.

Chokers also appeared in paintings of royalty and the wealthy merchant classes of the Renaissance. When fashion called for an expansive décolleté, or



degree in international relations at the University of Chicago in 1990 and then going to Hungary with the Peace Corps.

"I thought I was going to try to work for the State Department, but instead — JEWELS," she wrote in an email. She would spend weekends in Hungary, Russia and what then was Czechoslovakia, she said, gathering stones and beads, some of which she still has in her studio.

Her collection includes chokers that she calls Aphrodite's Sea, made of hand-hammered silver, pearls, aquamarine and apatite (\$2,420); Axios, a double-strand of fine gold chain with ruby accents (\$1,440); and One Giant Leap for Mankind, with peach moonstones, hand-hammered copper discs, a ruby and sapphire mosaic, and a hook in rose gold (\$2,420).

"Jewels are my mojo, and so is the history behind them," Ms. Forero wrote. The choker style can be found in many cultures and for both for men and women, she added, "from the Maasai and the language of their beaded necklaces, to the Celtic torc, to the neck rings of traditional Thai (Kayan) women."

Possibly the most famous choker of the modern era was the one created for Diana, Princess of Wales, that combined a sapphire and diamond brooch given to her by Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and a short seven-strand pearl necklace.

Diana famously wore it in 1985 when she danced with John Travolta at the White House and, in 1994, to set off the décolleté of what would become known as her "revenge dress," an off-the-shoulder black silk stilette that she wore to a fund-raising dinner in London on the same day that Prince Charles went public about his affair with Camilla Parker Bowles. A statement piece, indeed.

**New looks**  
Clockwise from top: Dior's D-Punkish choker, featuring resin pearls and studs; a diamond-studded choker from Chanel; and a choker by Sophia Forero made with pearls, aquamarine and apatite.



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MARTIN KEENE/PA IMAGES, VIA GETTY IMAGES

## JEWELRY EVERYWHERE

## Your hair loves gems, too

From sparkly pins to glittering skullcaps, in gold and silver, with diamonds and other gemstones, hair jewelry is regaining popularity

BY MING LIU

Red carpet fashion events always draw attention — the celebrities! the glamour! the clothes! So it should be no surprise that the hair jewelry seen last fall at the Met Gala (like Rihanna's bejeweled Stephen Jones skullcap) and the British Fashion Awards (with Poppy Delevingne in star-shaped Swarovski hair pins) has revived interest in the look.

The celebrity stylist Elizabeth Saltzman, who was behind Ms Delevingne's adornment at the awards, said jewelry in your hair is like "the cherry on top," a touch that can be magnificent as well as transformative. And, "it's an easy way to change your look without having to change your clothes," she said. "It's makeup for the hair."

While most hair jewels are inexpensive costume pieces, several luxury labels, from niche brands to the Place Vendôme houses in Paris, have been adding their distinctive offerings to the style.

For example, Beppe D'Elia, who has worked with many major fashion houses in his three-decade career and styled celebrities from Sharon Stone to Bella Hadid, plans to open a flagship store in Milan in March for his hair jewelry brand, introduced in 2020 with the jeweler Nadia Missbach.

Mr. D'Elia said the line was the result of his frustration at seeing clients wearing hundreds of thousands of dollars of couture gowns and jewelry — and a "cheap elastic hair band."

"I don't think it's normal to put in your beautiful hair an elastic that you can buy in the supermarket for 20 cents — and meanwhile you have a 100,000-euro ring," he said. "It does not make sense."

His collection, crafted in 18-karat gold and diamonds in Milan, includes gold barrettes (from €230, or \$260; €9,900 for designs set with diamonds) and a chunky Pony Pimper, for ponytails, topped with a trio of diamonds (€1,660). A tennis bracelet-like design (€2,200) works for both the hair and wrist, while the dreadlock-inspired Wow Dread clip, with 7.7 carats of diamonds and priced at €18,200, is the collection's most luxe item.

Place Vendôme houses also have been working the trend, particularly with transformable features, into their high jewelry collections.

Hélène Poullit-Duquesne, Boucheron's chief executive, said the house's increasing number of precious



RICHARD BORD/GETTY IMAGES

hair gems are part of a systematic push to design more multifunctional pieces. "Multi-wear is part of our patrimony," she said. "As a client, I would prefer to have pieces that can be worn in three different ways, not only one."

Boucheron's creative director, Claire Choisine, noted that transformable jewels have always existed. But at Boucheron, "we've tried to push the idea — to add a bit of fun," she said, referring to the Art Deco-themed collection introduced in January 2021 that featured the Ruban Diamants jewel that could be worn as a belt, choker or hair band and the bow-tie style Noeud piece that tripled as a brooch, ring or hair clip.

The maison's latest collection — which reinterprets a 1928 Boucheron commission from the maharajah of Patiala being unveiled this week — includes the New Sarpech gem (price on application) that recalls lavish, early 20th century turban ornaments. Featuring swirls set with 426 diamonds and complemented by two rose-cut diamonds,

the piece was designed to serve as both a brooch and hair piece.

The current popularity of tiaras also is part of the trend, with jewelers again using transformability for a fresh update.

Van Cleef & Arpels' diamond and sapphire Andromède tiara from its current celestial-themed high jewelry collection included detachable clips, designed to be worn as either hair pins or brooches.

In 2019, Chanel's Russian-themed high jewelry collection featured several tiaras, most notably the transformable Sarafane necklace-cum-headpiece, studded with pearls and diamonds.

Chaumet is the Place Vendôme house perhaps most synonymous with the tiara, having famously created designs for Empress Josephine and now introducing new styles every year. Some of the creations from the 242-year-old house were highlighted during its 2019 exhibition "Autrement," which styled old and new Chaumet jewels in contemporary ways: a 1870s feather-style sap-

phire brooch pinned to the hair; a tiara worn backward, sitting at the base of a topknot bun; and delicate brooches clipped into cornrow braids.

At Paris Fashion Week last fall, hair jewelry got special notice as the Paris jeweler Messika and Kate Moss unveiled their second design collaboration. A host of head jewels appeared on their catwalk, tied around models' heads and looped through hair, adorning their foreheads or twinkling from hair partings.

Pearls also have a place in hair jewelry, with the Japanese house Tasaki creating nature-themed pieces, like its Coral hair corsage featuring diamond-set coral branches attached to a comb. Or there are the ascending rows of freshwater pearls that punctuate a corsage and head band designs in its Shell collection. And the cascade of different kinds of pearls, gold, and white and gray diamonds that create the Wisteria corsage, a flower that is a symbol of love and longevity.



## Hair décor

From left, a model at the high jewelry show by Kate Moss and Valérie Messika during Paris Fashion Week in October; a coral hair corsage (top) featuring diamond-set coral branches attached to a comb by Tasaki; a Boucheron New Sarpech brooch in diamonds and white gold; and the "Moonline" for hair parts by Beppe D'Elia Hair Jewelry.

She said she was drawn to hair jewelry's versatility, the idea that a piece could be worn different ways on the head, with all manner of hair styles.

"Hair jewelry appeals to a minimalist or a maximalist," she said. "You can layer and weave a tapestry of pieces — or go super chic with one signature hair tie to take any look to the next level."

## ON DISPLAY

## An exhibition of stories

The Museum of Arts and Design is showcasing contemporary jewelry and the tales they convey



JENNA BASCOM FOR MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

## Story time

The Museum of Arts and Design has a permanent collection of more than 1,000 pieces of contemporary jewelry, some of which are featured in "45 Stories in Jewelry: 1947 to Now," above, including MJ Tyson's "ESP" (2018), below.

BY SOPHIE HAIGNEY

On the round metal brooch a series of red dots form a desert flower — but the red dots are map pins, similar to the digital ones used by the nonprofit organization Humane Borders to mark its maps of the U.S.-Mexico border where the bodies of migrants have been found.

This is Julia Turner's "Three Days Walking," a 2013 brooch crafted in the style of Victorian mourning jewelry that is on display at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City, part of the museum's show "45 Stories in Jewelry: 1947 to Now."

The exhibition draws from the museum's permanent collection of more than 1,000 pieces of contemporary jewelry. It places each piece in narrative context, displaying bracelets and brooches and necklaces alongside eye-popping, colorful labels that describe their place within the history of design and their artists' practices. The exhibition is scheduled to run until April 10, though museum officials have said they are likely to retain it in some form.

"I really wanted to change the way you might view jewelry," said Barbara



JENNA BASCOM FOR MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

Paris Gifford, the exhibition's curator. "You might think of it as something only used to beautify what you're wearing, like a fastened stone or a platinum necklace, and not necessarily as a medium like sculpture or painting. There's a real human truth that these artists want to communicate using jewelry."

The show includes pieces like Ms. Turner's, which are explicitly political in nature. (Another such example is William Clark's 1969 "Police State Badge," which turns a police badge into protest art.) The exhibition also emphasizes jewelry made with unusual materials: paper earrings from the 1960s, and forward-thinking body-monitoring jewelry designed by Mary Ann Scherr in the 1970s, inspired by the devices worn by astronauts.

It also includes more personal pieces, like MJ Tyson's metalwork, which incorporates discarded materials from her childhood, including her CD-playing Discman, old necklaces and a girl scout pin.

"She became frustrated with all these leftover, sentimental pieces that we all have," Ms. Gifford said. "Everybody has a jewelry drawer filled with things from childhood that they can't bring themselves to throw away, but they don't wear it either, so it's just taking up space. In this ethos of recycling and reuse, Tyson took all these different pieces she had and melted them down to make a new piece of jewelry."

In one piece, titled "ESP," a viewer can still see the outlines of the partly melted Discman. Like many of the pieces on display in the exhibition, it tells a story in metal.

## HERITAGE

## Say it with stones

Eager to declare yourself? A ring set with lapis lazuli, opal, viridine and emerald spells "love."

BY KATHLEEN BECKETT

While strolling through Portobello Market in London more than eight years ago, Erica Weiner, who sells antique jewelry online, saw something weird. "There was a ring set with stones, but not symmetrically, and not in particularly complementary colors," she said in a phone interview from her home in New York's Hudson Valley.

It was an example of acrostic jewelry, a dealer told her, a design that features a kind of puzzle.

As Camille Cuvelier, who sells such antique pieces on her website Galerie Penelope, said: "Each piece has a message."

During an interview in her apartment in Paris, Ms. Cuvelier picked up a ring to demonstrate. "The first letter of each stone spells something," she said, indicating the line of small gems: ruby, emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby and diamond — or "regard," a popular sentiment from the past.

She also showed a Victorian bracelet



## Encrypted

Acrostic jewelry spells a word with the first letter of the name of each stone. From top, a ring from Galerie Penelope says "regard" (ruby, emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby, diamond); bracelets from Erica Weiner Jewelry spell "darling" and "taken"; Chaumet says "marry me" in a bracelet.



set with malachite, amethyst, emerald, sunstone, turquoise and agate, spelling "maesta." The word maesta means majesty in Italian, and often is used to refer to images of the Madonna and the child Jesus.

"Acrostic jewelry became popular in the 19th century, which was a sentimental century," Ms. Cuvelier said, adding, "All the jewelry had a story behind it." That spirit resonates today, she said, because: "people want to be different. That's why vintage sells so well, you have something unique."

Acrostic jewelry has been made for centuries by Mellerio dits Meller, the Paris jeweler that markets itself as the oldest family-run business in France, involving 15 generations now that Côme Mellerio, 27, has joined the maison.

"Our archives show we made an acrostic ring back in 1806," said Diane-Sophie Lanselle, Mellerio's development director, after welcoming a visitor into the boutique on Rue de la Paix.

The house also creates a variation in which "the first letter of each gemstone

doesn't spell out a word," Ms. Lanselle said, "but instead sounds like a sentence when spoken."

For example, a ring with lapis lazuli, amethyst, carnelian and diamond would spell "lacd." When spoken, in French, it sounds like "elle a cédé" — or "she gave in, or she surrendered," Ms. Lanselle said. "We still get requests for it."

A block away, on the Place Vendôme, Chaumet put on display in spring 2021 an acrostic bracelet that it had made for Napoleon to give to Josephine. The jeweler also resumed making custom bracelets in the style.

Clients now are shown a variety of gemstones, with one stone for each letter of the alphabet, including xaga (obsidian) for the hard-to-find "x," although in some instances there are two choices, like citrine or carnelian for "c."

A customer's selection of stones, a minimum of two and maximum of nine, are set in a pink gold bracelet from the jeweler's Liens line.

Chaumet said it gets about one new request a week for acrostic jewelry,

which also includes a ready-made example: a pink gold Liens bracelet with aquamarine, morganite, opal, uvite (tourmaline) and ruby, to spell "amour."

Jean-Marc Mansvelt, Chaumet's chief executive, said he rediscovered acrostic jewelry "when we did an exhibition in Beijing's Forbidden City in 2017. We had the opportunity to have a trio of acrostic bracelets that Napoleon ordered for Marie-Louise, indicating the date of his birth, of Marie-Louise's birth and their union. Napoleon was a romantic."

Ms. Weiner, the online jeweler and antique jewelry dealer, said she and her business partner, Lindsay Salmon, were so taken with the acrostic style that they began making custom bracelets as well as rings and necklaces, with a minimum of one stone and a maximum of 12.

And requests, she said, have been as varied as the gem selections: "People ask for names of children; a series of initials; dates; names of people they lost, like a memorial; or a place, like Alabama, and we got some who wanted California."

# LOUIS VUITTON

## High Jewellery

Bravery Collection, Le Mythe Necklace.  
White gold, sapphires, emerald and diamonds.





## BEHIND THE BRAND

## Putting a signature style to work

People admired Shelly Branch's jewelry. Now she sells bold vintage pieces that catch her eye.

BY RACHEL FELDER

Every day Shelly Branch posts precisely styled photographs of vintage jewelry on Particulieres.NYC, an Instagram account she created several years ago to sell the striking gold pieces she had begun to acquire. Even though she hadn't planned to become a jewelry dealer.

"I didn't set out to do this by any means," Ms. Branch said in an interview near her apartment on the edge of the garment district in Manhattan. "If you had told me five years ago that this is the life I would have and the livelihood that I'd make for myself, I would've said, 'Nuts.'"

Before founding her company — which is called Particulieres, although its Instagram label is a bit different — Ms. Branch was a journalist and author. She worked as an editor and writer at The Wall Street Journal, and was a staff writer at Money and Fortune. She also wrote a financial handbook, and co-wrote the 2006 book "What Would Jackie Do," a lifestyle guide inspired by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

In her spare time, she enjoyed finding and buying vintage decorative home items, like a French ceramic Mithé Espelt box and a bulbous Italian vase by Aldo Londi for Bitossi. "I've always been in love with ceramics, glass and vintage — mainly midcentury pieces," she said. "I have a large collection of objects."

"I'm an accumulator," Ms. Branch acknowledged, smiling.

After Ms. Branch left The Journal in 2017, she was inspired to become a dealer when people repeatedly admired the jewelry she was wearing and would ask if she had comparable items for sale.

Her selections — sourced from flea markets, dealers and other contacts — generally are about 50 years old and mostly are statement pieces in gold: a Boucheron tiger's-eye and pavé dia-

**"I didn't set out to do this by any means," said Ms. Branch, a former journalist and author who liked to hunt for vintage decorative home items.**

mond cocktail ring and a wide Van Cleef & Arpels onyx and diamond band, both from the '70s; oversize, textured gold disc earrings by Georg Jensen; link bracelets, chains and bangles.

Prices range from slightly less than \$3,000 for an unsigned chunky gold ring to around \$50,000 for a heavy gold chain by Jean Mahie for Cartier, although Ms. Branch said she also had sold more expensive pieces to some clients offline.

Ms. Branch's selections take some confidence to pull off: They are the opposite of, say, simple pearl studs. Still, she displays them in a way that makes them seem approachable and alluring.



JOSHUA BRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A gold link bracelet was recently photographed draped across a scarlet Alsterfors vase, for example. In another post, the contours of a boxy H. Stern ring were emphasized by the Stig Lindberg for Gustavsberg tray that sat behind it.

"Immediately you can see that it has a very personal aesthetic and voice to it," said Frederikke Moller, a client of Ms. Branch's who is head of communications at the Danish Arts Foundation in Copenhagen. "The jewelry is very bold and nonfussy and very '70s, but yet very fresh and contemporary."

Reed Morano, a Brooklyn-based filmmaker who has been a client for about 18 months, said, "She's an art dealer, effectively."

"She gets such a wide variety of things, but they all feel, elegantly, like they could all be in the same display in a museum," he said.

Ms. Branch's eye and professional background are not the only things that set her apart from her peers. "Obviously, I'm a Black woman in this industry," she said. "I can't name another anywhere, which is, which says a lot."

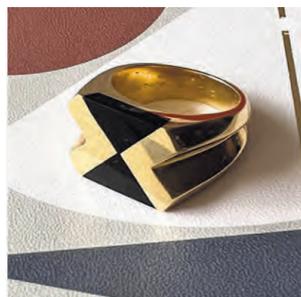
"I find it depressing," she said, "but it's not surprising given how the industry has been structured: How most people come from a family background of jewelry business; how it's mainly a male-dominated field. There are very high barriers to entry in this business."

Yet Ms. Branch seems to be successful. While she declined to disclose her annual income, she said she was making more than she did when she was a jour-

nalist. And both fellow dealers and customers say that her mix of enthusiasm, curiosity and determination to find and sell resonant pieces at fair prices has served her well.

The generally insular world of vin-

tage jewelry sellers makes those accomplishments all the more noteworthy. "It's difficult to be successful and make a sustainable living at it, because it's a lot about relationships, and it's a lot about vendors and sources," said David J. Bo-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHELLY BRANCH

naparte, president and chief executive of Jewelers of America, a nonprofit trade organization.

Ms. Branch said she intentionally left prices out of her Particulieres posts, to encourage people to get in touch and begin a conversation. "I really am selling as much a lifestyle as I am a product," she said. "My business is not strictly a transactional business by any means. It's a relationship business."

She said she tended to become quite friendly with many of her clients and estimated that about 75 percent of them were repeat customers. "I feel like I absolutely know them," Ms. Branch said. "I know their names of their pets. I know their husbands, their boyfriends, their woes, their problems."

Some have expressed concern over her sleep patterns, she said, because she frequently is up late, texting shoppers in Asia and Europe, with her dog, Porter, a terrier mix, by her side.

Ms. Branch's personal taste fuels what her business sells. During an interview on a chilly weekday afternoon, her jewelry included a large, boxy Trudell diamond ring that resembled a precious piece of Lego, a long chain necklace and an oversize, heavy gold link bracelet from the '40s by the French jewelry designer Georges L'Enfant.

"It has all of the things that I really love in a piece of jewelry," she said of the bracelet, describing it as "architectural" and "timeless."

Fortuitously, Ms. Branch's taste in jewelry happens to be on trend. "It's gold, which is very important right now, whether its '50s or '60s or '70s," said Lauren Santo Domingo, a founder and the chief brand officer for the retailer Moda Operandi, which hosted a Particulieres trunk show in 2019. Another is planned for later this year.

Ms. Branch — who will say only that she is in her 50s — was born in Nyack and raised in the nearby village of Piermont, two New York State commuter communities about 45 minutes north of Manhattan. Her parents were teachers; her mother, who later became a lawyer, was a fan of Persian rugs and squash blossom jewelry.

"She was always looking for the best thing at the best price," Ms. Branch said, "and she had a very strong, very curious eye." She and her older sister frequently spent family weekends at flea markets and warehouse sales so their mother could look for treasures and bargains.

Ms. Branch received a bachelor's degree from Barnard College and a master's from Columbia Journalism School. Although her current line of work has its challenges, she said its pressures were quite different from what she faced as a writer and editor.

"The types of things I used to have to dissect and figure out and investigate make this very easy by comparison," she said.

## A curator

The jewelry dealer Shelly Branch, who calls herself "an accumulator," in her Manhattan home with Porter, a terrier mix. Her eye has always been drawn to midcentury pieces, she said.

## Discoveries

At left, posts to Particulieres.NYC, an Instagram account Ms. Branch created. She collects and sells mostly statement pieces in gold that are about 50 years old.

## FROM THE COVER

## Older jewelry for younger buyers

OLDER, FROM PAGE S1

cause, to Dana's point, they're interesting cuts. It's an older ring, and people just went nuts for it.

**Are people becoming more confident about wearing unconventional cuts and quirkier pieces?**

**PETER SCHAFFER** I think so. I think people like the unusual, in any case.

**SARA PAYNE THOMEIER** I think that really is becoming more central to the cultural conversation, and it applies to jewelry as much as anything else. There's a real celebration of the individual, that wearing the uniform of what jewelry is supposed to be for you is kind of not interesting to people anymore. They want to find their personality. They want to share their voice, so something that's unique, something that has a different take on maybe a classic, I think really gets people going.

**Are there any surprises in what's selling well?**

**ANGELINA CHEN** Those zodiac pendants that nobody wanted to touch 10, 20 years ago are the latest hot thing, and Van Cleef has revived them in its modern line. There's always a cycle to everything.

**MR. BRUNING** Taste is definitely cyclical. What's really interesting about right now specifically is that it seems like almost everything is cycling up at the same time: Deco is popular, '40s are popular, '70s/'80s are going crazy, but even contemporary jewelers, they're doing very well — whether it's Hemmerle or whoever. So it's just this weird moment in time where you're not having two waves that are out of orbit, they're all kind of jumping up at the same time.

**MS. THOMEIER** I wouldn't say I'm surprised, but Rivière necklaces with any color gemstone.

**MR. SCHAFFER** Oh yes, absolutely. Even in rock crystal or paste.

**Why do you think people, including Anna Wintour, like that Rivière ("river of gems") style?**



HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**MS. THOMEIER** It's such a cool look. You can wear it with a T-shirt, you can put it on with a gown, and you can buy them in a variety of colors at a huge price differential.

**MR. BRUNING** I honestly would have said the exact same thing. That's at every price point, from \$2,000 for very, very simple ones to \$10 million for one with massive rocks. It's something that is appealing to everybody.

**What about unsigned jewelry, pieces that aren't marked with a designer or brand?**

**MS. CHEN** It's always easy with a signed piece, but ultimately there are pieces of jewelry that are not signed that are made so beautifully that people will have that confidence to buy it because it's a great piece of jewelry.

**MR. SCHAFFER** We had a necklace and we were convinced it was Cartier, the client was absolutely convinced it was Cartier, and there was no mark on it whatsoever. He kept saying, "Can you put down

Cartier?" and I said, "I can't unless you want me to charge you five times the price."

**Is there a type of item you'd consider, generally, to be especially good value right now?**

**MR. BRUNING** I think it's unsigned, beautiful vintage jewelry.

**MS. KIYOMURA** Yes.

**MR. BRUNING** As Peter was saying, you could have a beautiful vintage necklace that has no marks on it, or maybe has some random French hallmark — those are extremely undervalued.

**MS. KIYOMURA** My answer's always Victorian and Georgian jewelry. There's great design in Victorian jewelry and it's not that expensive. The market hasn't picked it up as much, and I think you can get a lot of bang for your buck, in the sense that the design is just so good, it can stand out, it can be a statement and it's not that expensive.

**Have the buyers of vintage jewelry changed?**

**MR. BRUNING** It's gotten much younger for us. That's been a huge sigh of relief. All of us were sitting around five or six years ago saying, "What are we going to do?" because our demographics were all skewing older and older and older. We're up by about 40 percent in under 40 years old, year over year. And a lot of that is digital, which we're all moving towards.

**MS. KIYOMURA** I have a lot of young women who are the repeat clients — they picked up a niche, they've found what they like and the aesthetic, and they always come back for another chain, another pendant, another locket or charm. It's their money; they're spending their own money.

**MS. CHEN** That's right. The young women are making good, solid salaries. I think that what we do plays into their lifestyle and their beliefs, and sustainability. The fact that it's not brand-new — it's been lovingly worn before and it's this whole

cycle that they're part of — I think that's part of what they love about it, too.

**Other than purchasing from a reputable source, what advice would you give someone who is buying vintage jewelry online?**

**MS. THOMEIER** Just be the absolute most annoying customer you can manage to be. Ask for photographs, ask for videos, call and ask again, speak to somebody that knows. Double check the measurements. Take something in your house that you could cut into that shape — you can put it on your wrist and see how it's going to feel.

**Is there a sweet spot in terms of price for vintage?**

**MR. BRUNING** It depends on the sale. We have different tiers of sales. With our online sales, our sweet spot is probably around \$25,000; for our larger live auctions, it's probably in the \$200,000 range, give or take. It really depends on the type of sale, but also what the makeup of the sale is.

**MS. CHEN** Each sale is put together so there's something for everyone, like a retail store. You can walk in and buy something for \$10,000 and I'm sure you'll find something for a million dollars as well.

**MS. THOMEIER** My mom used to tell me all the time when I was a child that there's a lid for every pot, sometimes it's just about putting them together. I think that is the case with jewelry.

**If someone wants to spend \$10,000 on a piece of vintage jewelry, what would you suggest she buy?**

**MR. SCHAFFER** For \$10,000, you buy what hits you in the solar plexus, not what one of us tells you to buy. You buy what you want — that should be the proper way of looking at \$10,000.

**MS. CHEN** Yes! I agree. You buy what you will wear most.

**MR. BRUNING** If you love it, buy it.

**MR. SCHAFFER** Exactly. That's the most important thing in jewelry.

## Talking trends

Experts in high-end vintage jewelry assembled for a discussion in New York earlier this month. Pictured, from left, are Angelina Chen of Christie's, Dana Kiyomura of Keyamour and Peter Schaffer of A La Vieille Russie.

## LEGACY

# The end of an art form

Pierre Heckmann, 93, is among the last sculptors of ivory in Europe, but that doesn't mean he's quitting anytime soon



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## PARIS

BY KATHLEEN BECKETT

Pedestrians on the boutique-lined Rue Bonaparte might pause at a shop displaying the discreet sign "Ivoire," their curiosity piqued by the elderly man at a workbench near the window. He might be repairing an ivory necklace that had lost a bead or the chip in an ivory jewelry box — practicing a dying art.

In Europe, Pierre Heckmann, 93, may well be one of the last ivoiriers, "a sculptor who works with ivory," he explained. He is sure he is the lone member, and therefore president, of the *Chambres Syndicales de l'Ivoire* and de *L'Ecaille* (tortoiseshell), one of France's many organizations for skilled artisans.

Mr. Heckmann said he learned to carve ivory from his father, who learned from his father. They used the very same tools that now clutter his workbench and the machines that stand ready in his workshop, but then the tools of this trade, from metal files to jigsaws, have not changed since the 1800s.

He may be the last of his family in the trade, too. While Mr. Heckmann's grandson, Nicolas, 39, now works with him, his duties are limited to sales rather than craftsmanship. And Nicolas's son is only 10, so his future is unknown.

Ivory, the hard white material of elephant tusks, has been prized since ancient times in treasures like the 35,000-year-old Venus of Hohle Fels, one of the oldest known sculptures of the human form, and the scores of ivory bangles that the British shipping heiress Nancy



Cunard stacked along both arms in the early 1900s for her portraits by Man Ray and Cecil Beaton.

But as demand for ivory grew and elephant herds were decimated, countries took action, and in 1989 the international ivory trade was banned, although authorities continue to battle poaching and smuggling operations.

The restrictions in France changed Mr. Heckmann's career. "I made sculptures for the most part of my life," he said, "but a law about five years ago prevented that. Now you can only sell ivory that's been made before 1947." So his work now focuses on repairs, like the damaged crucifix that he was handling one bright, crisp December morning. Christ's feet were missing so "I have

carved new feet," he said, fingering the individual toes of the arched feet that he was attaching to the figure.

To make repairs — and he has boxes filled with ivory pieces waiting for his expert touch — he has dozens of chunks of ivory, pieces left from his grandfather's and his father's time. Each one is a surprisingly dull beige until it is polished to a gleaming surface that exposes the creamy color underneath.

Mr. Heckmann's family came from Dieppe, a port city on the English Channel. When his father was young the city was still a center of the ivory trade, with ships bringing the tusks of elephants and walrus from Africa and Asia. As the port city began to lose its prominence, the family moved to Paris in 1910,

living and working at 57 Rue Bonaparte. "I was born in this building," Mr. Heckmann said with some pride. (Now he and his grandson live outside the city, and Nicolas drives them to work. "I come every day except Sunday; I never miss a day," Mr. Heckmann said.)

He studied sculpture at the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* nearby. "I trained on hard woods and marble, because ivory is very hard." After classes, he would come to the family shop for lessons on ivory from his father. At age 18 he made his first statue "of Venus, nude" and became a true ivoirier.

As the bells of the church of St-Sulpice, just around the corner, chimed 12 times, Mr. Heckmann prepared to head to lunch, locking the front door and grabbing onto the arm of his grandson, a necessity since he fell down some stairs a year ago.

The St-Sulpice neighborhood has changed a lot since his family arrived, he said. "The shops used to all sell religious objects," he reminisced. "Now it's all clothes," and any place not selling expensive fashion is selling expensive chocolates and macarons.

But some things have not changed. Turning onto Rue Guisarde, Mr. Heckmann pointed out the shop *Au Plat d'Étain*, which has been selling metal military miniatures since 1775. Across the street is *Le Bistrot de L'Enfance*, a restaurant where he has been dining for decades and where young staff members greeted him warmly, offering a glass of Champagne.

Over grilled fish he talked more about business, which seems surprisingly brisk for a shop so small and a skill so

specialized. He said he received "about five or six customers a day coming in for a repair and five or six to buy a piece of antique ivory." Mr. Heckmann and his family have collected pieces over the years that attract local customers, like Catherine Deneuve, and ivory aficionados from all over the world.

After lunch, two customers stood on the sidewalk waiting for the shop to reopen. One had a small statue of a Chinese peasant with a broken arm that needed repair. The other was Salama Khalfan, a jewelry designer based in Paris and Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. She loves the shop, she said, because "I find inspiration here." She was interested in an ivory chess set; the shop has a half dozen or so on display, ranging from about 2,000 euros to 5,000 euros (\$2,260 to \$5,655).

Not all the items are costly, however. A small beaded bracelet was €45, a modest amount reflecting that "ivory jewelry is not so popular today; it's gone out of fashion," Mr. Heckmann said. It is why he also sells necklaces in lapis lazuli, jade, carnelian and other stones, all displayed in the window.

And the shelves and cabinets were filled with other ivory treasures: buttons, handles, the heads of walking sticks and canes, belt buckles, door knobs like the one on the shop's front door — all with their own stories, which Mr. Heckmann was happy to share.

He has no plans to retire. "It's important to keep working," he said, as he picked up a bangle with rough edges and gently began to file them smooth. So he will keep coming to Rue Bonaparte — every day but Sundays.

## Dedication

Pierre Heckmann, at top left and at top right with his grandson Nicolas, is an ivoirier, and even at 93 he goes to work six days a week at his Paris shop around the corner from the church of St-Sulpice, far left. The sale of ivory made after 1947 is prohibited, so the work is focused on repairs.

## COMEBACK

# A Covid-era revival: crystals

Sales of feel-good jewelry featuring crystals, which can provide comfort in times of crisis, "is exploding at the seams"

## LOS ANGELES

BY ALEXANDRA CHENEY

At a time when wellness is at the forefront of many people's minds, crystal, rock crystal and gemstone jewelry has been experiencing a renaissance.

During anxious times, "we look to what has great symbolizing and healing powers," said Rebecca Selva, chief creative officer at Fred Leighton and Kwiat, "what for centuries and since ancient times was thought to have certain qualities of healing, grounding and positivity."

And several jewelry designers and makers say they are seeing the results.

"We're exploding at the seams" when it comes to sales, said Jacquie Aiche, the Los Angeles-based fine jewelry designer. Although Ms. Aiche has been incorporating crystals into her jewelry since the introduction of her namesake brand in 2003, she said sales of her crystal pieces more than doubled in the first half of 2020, "then plateaued at the spike and is still holding." (The company is privately owned; Ms. Aiche won't reveal revenues, but her crystal pieces range from \$2,000 to \$25,000.)

In addition to her Healing Crystals line of necklaces, which combines elements such as clear quartz, amethyst and topaz with diamonds, Ms. Aiche

said her body jewelry line, including diamond-encrusted halter bras and body chains, also had "surged." And in August 2020 she debuted her first men's line, which includes necklaces and charms featuring crystals, because "men were feeling left out when they came in with their ladies."

During the interview, Ms. Aiche sat at a square wooden table — in what used to be the garage at her Beverly Hills bungalow, but now is a workshop and studio — scattered with necklaces, a book on crystals, a large bowl full of chocolates and a bouquet of pink and red flowers.

"I don't sell jewelry, I sell energy," she said, "and there's this evolution of people searching for something they can connect to and feel better."

Examples of rock crystal jewelry can be traced as far back as the Sumerian and Mesopotamian civilizations. And, "pre-Columbian Indigenous people in the Americas were using nuts and beads with the same sort of mind-sets, that certain things could help protect you," said Sara Payne Thomeier, Head of Jewels for the Americas at Phillips auction house.

Not only is there now increased interest and awareness of the potential remedial properties of natural earth elements like crystals, but "it's more normalized and mainstream," Ms. Thomeier said. "I think back a few years ago; those who alluded to healing powers were per-



ceived as a bit hippy-dippy and were bashful to mention it. It's not embarrassing anymore to present the idea and show you have some faith in the possibility that these things can have healing powers.

"In fact," she added, "it can be a particularly powerful sales tool" for jewelry designers, salespeople and marketing executives alike.

For several months in 2020, the high jewelry designer Ana Khouri, who usually is based in New York, stayed on her farm in her home country of Brazil, hand-carving pieces for her newest exhibition and working on her nonprofit organization, *Projeto Ovo*, which generates money for about 80 Brazilian charities by selling donations of used clothing and accessories.

"I had time last year," Ms. Khouri said, "and the relationship between rosewood, which is now extinct, and crystals, and the inherent tension of the materials and magic was what I focused on."

ades. The New York-based designer made her first rock crystal amulet in 1986 after being inspired by an amulet in the collection of Lorenzo de' Medici, the 15th-century Florentine statesman.

"During this pandemic period there was, of course, a little bit of panic," Ms. St. Clair said. "Everything now is flooding back and people are looking for some connection. People want a personal meaningful object."

In a video interview from her SoHo studio, she declined to specify her revenue but noted that her sales this year had surpassed her prepandemic numbers and that her clients were increasingly comfortable buying online. "This is not a gift business. People are buying my pieces for themselves; they are choosing one that speaks to them personally," she said, adding, "we can't keep certain things around."

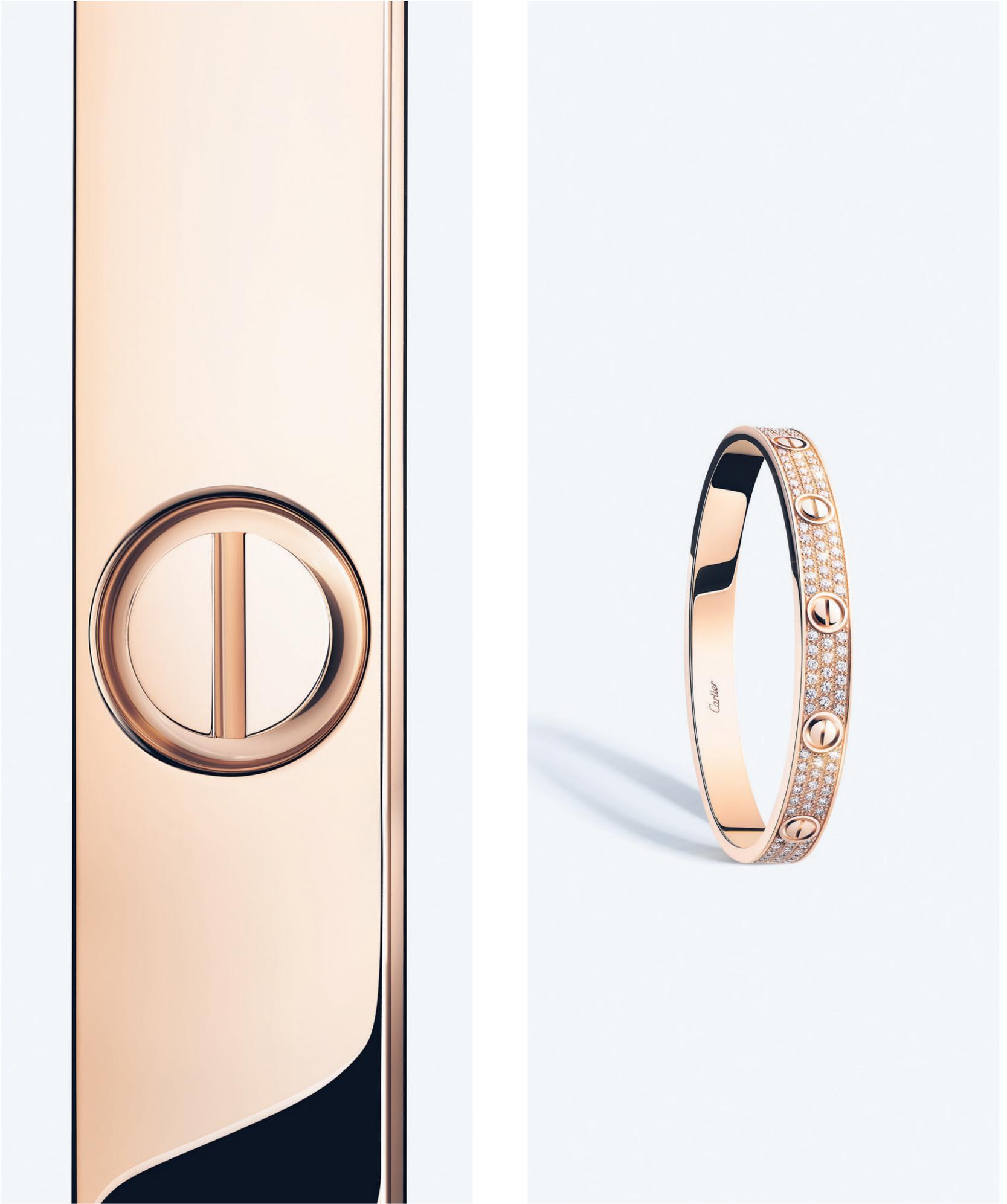
Her namesake company is known for its rock crystal amulets that incorporate designs such as mandalas and diamond pavé beehives in 18-karat gold, with prices from \$1,000 to \$25,000.

"There's no question within the category of gemstones, minerals, crystals and rock crystals, there has been a huge, huge increase in interest," Ms. Selva of Fred Leighton said. Case in point: While on the phone, Ms. Selva walked into her chief executive's office only to discover a newly installed giant amethyst geode.

"This is not a trend, it's more than that."

## Crystal vision

Clockwise from top left: Two necklaces — smoky quartz and chrysoprase double-point — from Jacquie Aiche; Temple St. Clair's Blue Moon Amulet (north, south, east and west are each represented by a cabochon-cut blue moonstone); Ana Khouri's minaudière made of carved rose quartz.



**LOVE**  
*Cartier*