

Stewart wears leopard jacquard suit jacket and trousers and white cotton ruffle shirt all by ALEXANDER McQUEEN; vintage red gloves from MODES AND MORE; red and white tulle from CLOTH HOUSE; black crocodile leather platform boots by MAISON MARGIELA

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STEWART

Best known for his mannequin sculptures, he interrogates the possibility of the obscure, the subversive and the underground in an age of instant digital ubiquity

Writer PAUL FLYNN

At 31, Stewart Uoo has found himself in the slipstream of a generation gap. ‘I didn’t grow up with a computer,’ he notes. ‘It used to be about people who grew up with or without television, or before or after this or that war. And now it feels like generations are separated before and after this or that app was developed.’ This complicated purgatorial space is becoming more and more interesting to Stewart. ‘I like when things become intersectional and complicated because people aren’t able to take specific positions. They’re nowhere and everywhere and trying to figure out where subversion is in that. It is not located any more. Subversion is functioning in a different way. How are you supposed to figure out what your positions are?’

Stewart is a smart man who is currently working on a series of soft sculptures exploring menswear as window dressing, exploring where haberdashery ends and an art statement might begin. He grew up the son of first-generation, working-class Korean immigrants in Napa Valley suburbia. He’s currently learning the Korean language, adding new angst to his generational identity issues, because ‘it turns out I’m not very good at languages, even supposedly my own’. At art school in Oakland he noticed a changing frame of subversion. In the emerging digital age, with automatic access to mass audiences, what did the punk ideal of glorious obscurity even mean any more?

‘The attention economy is so bizarre,’ he says. ‘I mean, you’re trying to be obscure, but obscurity doesn’t make any sense any more. It’s really crazy. I think about that too much, about how I am and am not supposed to feel. It’s difficult.’ By 24, he had made Brooklyn his home and was running the brilliant Ecstapussy parties, mostly at Nichola Formichetti’s old three-storey studio space in Greene Street, Soho, with his friends Hayley and Marie. He is currently thinking about his place in New York’s nightlife as well as its art world, as friends move further down the trainline out of town.

In life as in art, Stewart is part of a network split between the peculiar brands of heroism implicated at either end by Henry Rollins and Kris Jenner. ‘And I don’t dislike either of them, that’s the thing,’ he says. His central question is: how does a hyperpopulist viewpoint square with being anti-establishment? ‘The mainstream can be so weird. I feel like there is a subversion going on now of people’s moral compass and their relationship to selling out. Selling out is not a pejorative any more. It’s almost not even a boundary.’ A friend was recently talking to him about her Instagram account, ‘How she’s channelling Kim Kardashian and her siblings. She said, “People don’t understand that my interests in them are not about their plasticity; it’s not simply superficial.”’

Like every artist before him, Stewart is working out what’s real and what’s fake in a world on a rapid spin cycle of change. Like everyone else, he had a weird 2016. He reckons he’s going through the same phase Janet Jackson was when she made *The Velvet Rope*. ‘That was a post-depression or reflective period where her work developed a new maturity, a moment where she was able to disentangle parts of her identity and figure out which ones were the ones she was devoted to or not.’ There is a dramatic pause. ‘That’s where I am,’ he says.

JIMMY

The genetically gifted dilettante with the intellectual heavyweight ancestry and fashion designer mum

Writer HARRIET VERNEY

Recently, 16-year-old Jimmy Freud and his friends have made a groundbreaking, life-changing new discovery. It may not be quite on a par with his great-great-grandfather Sigmund’s *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, but it’s still very, very important. Jimmy has discovered The Pub. ‘Yes,’ says the six-foot schoolboy, delighted at this major advancement for the psychology of mankind. ‘For the last few months my friends and I have been going to “The Pub”. It’s great. I never knew I could get into pubs. You meet a drunkard every time you go there. It’s really fun.’

Jimmy’s best subjects at school are English and science, specifically the GCSE physics he’s studying. ‘It concerns the wider universe,’ he says. ‘I like science fiction becoming something that exists, I find that really cool.’ He has also found a new love for a Malian folk-singer called Ali Farka Touré and has a little sideline in photography.

In an Adam Ant get-up on set, Jimmy is metamorphosing from cherubic chubby-cheeked boy to chiselled man-boy literally as we speak. He is frighteningly clever, adorably charming, and thankfully hasn’t yet reached the stage where grunting is the only form of communication. He doesn’t even mention football once, and would much rather talk of his other newfound obsession, Joni Mitchell. He has a stupidly, ridiculously handsome schoolboy face: sculpted jawline, hair that restlessly flops from side to side and falls across his face, with cremnitz-white skin and two giant conker-coloured eyes which, when they aren’t looking bashfully at the floor, resemble those of a wide-eyed puppy that is about to do something naughty (or in his case, has just discovered The Pub).

Alas, with underage pub visits comes the difficult task of finding a good fake ID. I ask to see Jimmy’s and he proudly produces a green provisional licence for me to inspect. Only problem is, when he opens his wallet the licence is sat next to his Zip Oyster card for under-18s, which happens to be neon green. Bit of a giveaway, Jimmy? ‘Oops,’ he says. And when I turn his quite passable fake ID over, it reads in quite legible font ‘this is not a real ID’. Oh dear. I mention this to his mum, the knitwear designer Bella Freud, after our interview. ‘Shit,’ she says. ‘I got him that.’

