

# Men at Work

**From Chinatown galleries to Broadway footlights, these 10 tastemakers are bending the rules of what's possible in fashion, food, art, design, and performance.**

People say talking about music is like dancing about architecture. Those people have never been to a party at Alex Tieghi-Walker's TIWA Select gallery in NYC, where revelers get down among the craftiest of designs. Or flounced around Adam Charlap Hyman's artfully appointed spaces. Or witnessed the exuberant flourishes of Jontay Kahm's accented dresses. Conversely, they might not have ever appreciated the peerless construction of an Alex English joke, heard the precisely

imprecise echoes derived from Arsun's ancient amps, or let Anthony Ha's carefully pickled daikon enliven their taste buds. Rigor, depth, and balance are as easily found in these subjects' creative output as inspiration, vivacity, and passion can be located in a designer's research or a curator's eye. Every one of the men in our spring portfolio is making moves, not just in their individual expressions but in the culture they're increasingly shaping. In 2025, these are the fellas worth following. ►

*Instagram: @jortved*

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TEN USA / SPRING SUMMER 2025

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TOM FRANCIS





ANTHONY HA



A portrait of Roberto Cowan, a man with dark, curly hair and a light beard, standing against a textured, light-colored wall. He is wearing a green crewneck sweater with a dark green ribbed collar and cuffs, and dark blue jeans. His arms are crossed over his chest. The sweater has some faint, dark text on the front, which appears to be "RIVER PEAK" and "BROWN HIB FARM" below it. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the texture of the wall and the man's features.


ROBERTO COWAN





QUIL LEMONS






ARSUN SORRENTI





JONTAY KAHM



A full-body photograph of a man with brown hair and glasses, wearing a black sweater over a white collared shirt and dark trousers. He is standing in a room with a white fireplace mantel to his right, which holds a brass candlestick and a vase of pink lilies. To his left is a wooden armchair with a patterned seat cushion and two pink pillows. The wall behind him features a framed portrait and a painting of a building. The floor is covered with a light-colored rug and a dark blue shawl.

ADAM CHARLAP HYMAN





ALEX TIEGHI-WALKER





ALEX ENGLISH





ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO





**TOM FRANCIS**  
**ACTOR**

Instagram: @realtomfrancis

- Tom Francis has many talents, but one might stand out: “I can milk a cow,” he says. The 25-year-old actor—who won an Olivier last spring for his performance as Joe Gillis in *Sunset Blvd.* in London and took up that role on Broadway in the fall—grew up on farms in rural Suffolk, eastern England. His background might explain his open approach to new projects: “I just want to work with fun people and people who make the job interesting and have big ideas.” He also has a relaxed approach to style. “My thing is weathered jackets,” he says, though he keeps his eye on baggier items from Acne Studios, Thom Browne, and Thom Sweeney. Emerging from the ArtsEd performing arts school in London, Francis booked the role of Romeo in the city’s West End production of *‘Tis Juliet* before deciding he needed a serious break—maybe a permanent one—from musical theatre. Then along came the director Jamie Lloyd, a name on a list of Francis’s dream collaborators. Soon enough, he found himself in *Sunset*, with eyes on Hollywood and more. Next, he’s starring alongside Adam Sandler, George Clooney, and Greta Gerwig in Noah Baumbach’s new Netflix film, *Jay Kelly*. And he’s working on music. “I’m hoping to release an album,” he says. “Anthemic stuff.” His ambitions are impressive in scope, vaulting towards renaissance men like Donald Glover as models. “I think he’s such an inspiration, a multifaceted performer, creator, and artist,” Francis says. What’s his guiding light for keeping it all in perspective and himself grounded? “My main thing is don’t be a dick,” he says. “It’s the way to do business.”



**ANTHONY HA**  
**CHEF**

Instagram: @mrfishsauce

“My first job was at Dunkin’ Donuts,” says Anthony Ha, who has worked in service since he was 14. “That makes me so efficient.” The New Jersey-raised Ha, 32, and his wife, Sadie Mae Burns (they met as line cooks at Danny Bowien’s Mission Chinese), own Ha’s Dac Biet—a Vietnamese street-food inspired operation that, since 2019, has provided some of the most explosive pop-ups in New York. (The former *New York Times* restaurant critic Pete Wells called their 2021 effort “the restaurant of the summer.”) Last December, they opened their first permanent restaurant, Ha’s Snack Bar, on the Lower East Side. Since then, Ha jokes, his work uniform has been a mix of “old Silvertab Levi’s, a Marni Uniqlo work jacket, and grout.” It’s a whatever-it-takes-to-get-the-job-done kind of look that complements his new, efficiently run space. “We gave ourselves the limitation of a seven-inch plate,” he says. Serving snack-sized dishes—like pâté chaud, a Vietnamese meat pie, and oysters served with green chili nuoc mam sauce—has lured the peckish masses. Ha has also built a pantry of sauces and pickles derived from seasonal markets that he has preserved “and then leeches into the menu.” The next step may not come as a great surprise: “We’re searching for a second restaurant, something that’s 360 degrees, has gas and proper extraction.” And then a third? “I think two is great. Three might be crazy,” he says. Ha’s new, more mature focus is less on expansion than permanence. “Things that will last,” he says, “whereas pop-ups are kind of fleeting.”





**ROBERTO COWAN**  
**VINTAGE-CLOTHING DEALER**

*Instagram: @desertvintage*

► Roberto Cowan wears little that you would recognize. “I don’t like to wear logos,” he says. “I’m constantly touching and feeling fabrics. I have a hard time buying ‘new’ when I know the quality.” Along with his partner, Salima Boufelfel, Cowan, 35, owns Desert Vintage, a purveyor of vintage fashion’s utmost prizes—specializing in turn-of-the-20th-century through the 1970s—to knowing designer brands, dealers, and individuals the world over. In 2012, Cowan and Boufelfel—Tucson natives who had worked in vintage shops since their teens—took over Desert Vintage, a local mainstay (“It catered to the university customer,” Cowan says). They launched a digital presence and began offering a selection of western shirts and caftans—“things that had an ease to them because that was part of our surroundings,” Cowan says. As they refined their edit at trade shows, they made friends with other vintage hounds like Emily Adams Bode Aujla and Instagram’s own fashion editors. Then others caught on to their gospel of increasingly rarefied pieces. “When we started at trade shows, we were small, the dealers would buy from us. Now the tables have turned. I’m the one making a huge pile,” he says. In 2022, Desert Vintage expanded to New York’s Lower East Side, offering America’s most discerning customers a physical place to find objects like no other (“I have a 1930s Madame Grès cape that’s floor length and black chiffon that I cherish,” Cowan says). This year, it’s opening a third location, in Paris, realizing a long-held dream that has also become practical. “A big part of our business is working with design teams,” Cowan says. “Since Paris is the capital of fashion, they all shop with us.”



**QUIL LEMONS**  
**PHOTOGRAPHER**

*Instagram: @quillemons*

When you look at Quil Lemons or at *a* Quil Lemons, the challenge is knowing who you see. “I think there’s many versions of me. And that’s why playing with a self-portrait is fun,” he says. The 27-year-old photographer, born and raised in Philadelphia, now based in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, has emerged as a singular voice exploring Black and queer identity through his portraiture that is at once intimate, explicit, and tender (“Quil Lemons Wants to Be the Robert Mapplethorpe of His Community,” read a 2023 headline in *The New York Times*). “I love being subversive in all the spaces that I’m playing in,” he says. For all of his carefree notions, he’s quick to point out the challenges as well: “It’s the same struggle as with any other Black man in this country—just going against the grain, but also just not letting that weigh on me or the freeness of the work.” Lemons dove into those issues in *Quiladelphia*, his 2023 solo show at Hannah Traore Gallery, New York, but has also brought his provocative eye to editorial and commercial work for *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, Moncler, and Valentino. He shoots only on film—“unless there’s a gun in my back”—flying in the face of digital convenience. “Some things take longer to understand. With digital, the immediacy of everything is just too much,” he says. This summer, he’ll bring his work to Twenty Summers in Provincetown, Massachusetts, for a group show entitled *American Faggot Party*. For now, he’s reading Carter G. Woodson, Gary Indiana, and Hilton Als and contemplating what his own work means at this moment. “After the election results, everyone has become a little bit more radical about coming together,” he says. “The only way we can protect ourselves is by doing so.”





**ARSUN SORRENTI**  
**MUSICIAN**

Instagram: @arsunmusic

During high school, when New York City kids are usually playing soccer, interning, or faking their way into bars, Arsun Sorrenti had a different hobby: “I’ve been collecting audio equipment since I was 16.” While the producing world looks to “crate divers” like Mark Ronson to find hidden sounds on forgotten frets, Sorrenti, now 26, is a live version—seeing potential in the oldest pedals. He doesn’t sit on them either; his treasured pieces of old tech make their way into his songs, their delightfully outmoded pitches and jangles striding the sonic blast in his 2024 debut album, *Babe I Hear Thunder in Your Heart*, and in the new music he has been releasing since then. “Fifties and Sixties music is the backbone of what I know,” he says. He listens to classic rock, yes, but also classical music, hip-hop, jazz, folk, and sources so varied they can be surprising: Appalachian music and sea shanties have a considerable impact on his output. The tracks were different and profound enough to catch the attention of Cat Power while Sorrenti, who performs as Arsun, was still in high school. She asked him to open for her: in Europe, Australia, the US, everywhere. “I went from playing in practice rooms to immediately playing in front of 1,000 people. And I continued to tour with her for years,” he says. Currently, he’s perfecting his next song—“It’s kind of got a little bit of a jazzy nature to it, like a Julie London record”—and this spring is part of the line-ups at Luck Reunion, a music festival held at Willie Nelson’s ranch in Texas, and SXSW. And he’s obsessing over his latest toy. “I have an EMT 140 Plate Reverberator, a huge metal plate enclosed in a wooden box. It vibrates and comes back as this echo chamber sound,” he explains. “It’s like half the width of a car. I just love this reverb.”



**JONTAY KAHM**  
**DESIGNER**

Instagram: @jontay\_kahm

Jontay Kahm doesn’t like to sketch his ideas. “It’s all about texture,” says the 29-year-old Plains Cree designer and current Parsons School of Design grad student. The pieces he builds—which blend his culture and elements of traditional regalia with sculptural fashion aesthetics—“are not necessarily clothes. They’re like art pieces,” he says. Kahm, who hails from the Mosquito, Grizzly Bear’s Head, Lean Man First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada, says that the pull to fashion first came as a boy, when he witnessed the look and sound of Lady Gaga’s *Bad Romance* video. After studying fashion design at Marist College and studio arts at the Institute of American Indian Arts, he presented his BFA collection at the Santa Fe Indian Market in 2023, which caused more than a few heads to turn, including that of Gaga collaborator Nicola Formichetti. “He came into my DMs on Instagram. I was just smiling. It was a full-circle moment,” Kahm says. Parsons came calling, and one of his pieces—a sculptural top adorned with duck feathers—was worn by Lily Gladstone during last year’s Oscar campaign for *Killers of the Flower Moon*. His work—creations that are at once otherworldly and deeply tied to the land (you can recognize elements of animal hybridity, organic shapes, and playfulness)—subsume his own culture as well as contemporary art. “I’ve always been inspired by Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons. They’re like ecstasy to the eyes,” he says. He’s now busily preparing for the Indian Market in August and his Parsons thesis show, laying the foundations for his dream: to become a creative director at an established fashion house. “I would love to have a team behind me, because I can’t do it all alone forever.” ●





**ADAM CHARLAP HYMAN**  
**ARCHITECT**

Instagram: @adamcharlaphyman

► Despite joining *Architectural Digest*'s AD100 list for 2025, Adam Charlap Hyman (co-founder of the firm Charlap Hyman & Herrero) does not see his work as merely architecture. "I really see what I'm doing as collage," the 35-year-old South Orange, New Jersey, native says. "We have to use things that exist and buildings that are given to us. And there are a lot of creative voices that get folded into any given project." Those influences include the neo-liberty style of Gae Aulenti and the sensuality of Ward Bennett for the projects Charlap Hyman's firm completed with SSENSE, Moda Operandi, and Aspen Art Museum, as well as countless private homes (for gallerists, publishers, and artists, among others). They've even made their way to performance spaces, such as Santa Fe Opera's 2022 production of *Tristan und Isolde*. "It was open air, so there was this fun element of integrating the setting sun, wind, and rain." And they're not limited to structures, either: In 2023, Charlap Hyman and his mother, the artist Pilar Almon, developed a line of prints for the interiors brand Schumacher. These days, his collaborative collage is invoking an American classic, quite literally, as he begins renovations on a Stanford White-designed home in Long Island. "That requires an intense degree of specificity and care to restore and reinvent," he says. What's left to try? "I would like to do a flatware line. And a hardware line—knobs and handles and hinges. And I think Andre [Herrero] and I would love to design a place of worship." And if the sky were the limit? "Is it schizophrenic to say that the other dream project would be to do a private plane?"



**ALEX TIEGHI-WALKER**  
**GALLERIST**

Instagram: @tiwa\_select

Alex Tieghi-Walker's TIWA Select is a curious place. Dressed in a jumpsuit, beanie, and high-viz vest ("It's like the New York City sewer crew uniform"), a workaday mutt at his feet, and a wall of books behind him (including *Donald Judd Spaces*, the Bestia cookbook, and the *Butt Book*), 38-year-old Tieghi-Walker reigns over his kingdom in New York's Chinatown. The 2,400-square-foot space—where he lives, exhibits, and develops an entire social scene—is an outgrowth of Walker and his undefinable career. An art kid raised by a single mom—between Wales, London, and Italy—he graduated from college in the U.K. with a degree in medieval and modern languages before landing at a California winery and Berkeley, where, among his collected art, he hosted supper clubs from "this little upside-down boat barn type thing." In 2022, he formalized the concept and brought it to NYC, naming his space after the "select" shops he'd seen in Japan. "The type of artists I work with are mostly self-taught," he says. "People who have never formally gone through the motions of becoming an artist." These include ceramicists, woodworkers, lighting designers like Lindsey Adelman, up-and-comers like fashion's Zoe Gustavia Anna Whalen, and non-profits. More than just an alternative space to show, experience, and party, TIWA Select has managed to approximate something much more ineffable: community. "I know that's such a buzzword, but it's true," Tieghi-Walker says. He's also looking to expand the experience through pop-ups, partnerships with more prominent galleries and designers, and more. "I want to continue to give myself space to be adventurous and curious," he says.





**ALEX ENGLISH**  
**COMEDIAN**

Instagram: @alex3nglish

When Alex English arrived on New York City's comedy scene in the early 2010s, Hannibal Buress's show at the Knitting Factory in Williamsburg was the place to be, and that's where he broke out. "I went to H&M and got a nice paisley button-down shirt. I was like, 'I'm about to kill the game,'" he says. Since then, the culture has witnessed Trump and several hashtagged movements, comedy has become even more complicated, and English has moved on to bigger things than cool shows in Brooklyn bars. The 36-year-old Detroit native has taken his fearless, biting bits to the Comedy Cellar in Greenwich Village (the industry's mecca), to Netflix's *The Fix with Jimmy Carr*, and *SNL*'s 47th to 49th seasons (he did not get the callback for 50). "I'm burnt out writing for people. My interest is to write my own projects," he says. "The plan for 2025 is to be on the road practically every week." Like his career, his style has experienced an upgrade: He looks to "Tight T-shirts, big pants" from spots including Noah and Aimé Leon Dore for his onstage attire. With jokes as fearless as they are thoughtful, English is untrammelled by the standards that audiences—from Nashville to New York—might expect. "Identity is such a thing right now that people are tapped into. When you are gay and Black, you kind of can get away with more," he says. At the same time, English refuses to "police" what a comic can or can't say, instead choosing to play by a more classic code: "The biggest punishment is if they don't laugh. It's not that they don't get it, it's just not good. Rewrite that shit."



**ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO**  
**OPERA VIRTUOSO**

Instagram: @arcostanzo

To infer that Anthony Roth Costanzo is just an "opera singer" doesn't do him justice. Beginning at age 11, the 42-year-old countertenor has produced a wide variation of work, in both theme and scope—from singing backup for Michael Jackson as a child to baroque operas with the New York Philharmonic to Philip Glass at the Met. Last year, that diversity reached new heights when Costanzo was hired to lead the renowned Opera Philadelphia (he lives between that city and New York). "I'm excited about the potential of opera bringing people together in a time when we're really isolated and also divided," he says. He's also working on a project that will be a book (with Farrar, Straus and Giroux) and an album, *Countertenor*. "You know, opera is fundamentally an interdisciplinary art form. It's where ballet began," he says. His inspirations are, naturally, just as wide-ranging: from the Ballets Russes to the jazz singer Cécile McLorin Salvant. For his style inspiration: "I'm always in search of an intergalactic urban elegance." This translates to a wardrobe containing Comme des Garçons, Issey Miyake, and JW Anderson—and, for Costanzo's cabaret show with Justin Vivian Bond, *Only an Octave Apart*, costumes designed by his longtime friend Jonathan Anderson. Bond is also a close friend: "She has the ultimate desirable asset for a performer—freedom. That freedom is infectious." So how does Costanzo find his freedom? "I have so many administrative responsibilities, the times I feel the most free are when I'm on stage singing," he says. "That, and biking way too fast through New York City." ●