

Oh my, look at that guy wearing the skinny jeans, wearing the american apparel jacket riding the fixed gear bike. He's such a hipster. A hipster you say? What really is a hipster. And why does nobody self respecting admit to being one?

Well, hipster culture generally defined by its critics as an odd dance of self identity. Where one adamantly denies their existence while wearing clearly defined simple separate claims. The following interviews are such cases of this refusal of individuals to internalize an ascribed label that they don't identify with because of the negative connotations generally associated with it.

Tell me a bit about yourself

My names Chantelle, I'm 26 years old I'm a makeup artist I've been doing make up for seven years. And I'm in the fashion industry.

How would you describe a hipster or hipsters culture that is?

I would describe a hipster culture as people who follow the fashion trend and in an extreme way enjoys the night life, is almost like a rebel in their own way. Yeah, I guess that's how I would define a hipster.

Any specific, like, marking they have or if you were to pick them out in a crowd how would find a hipster.

I think for myself, in a fashion sense way they would like stand out, like amongst the original person in there, you know, San Diego printed tee shirt there would be like you know obviously a difference. Like the style sense is a completely different feel, and I think that is what is like appealing to like the whole idea of it. So that would be something that would pinpoint that hipster, like, title I guess.

Even that aspect of it, though, its very ambiguous right?

It's very ambiguous. You know.

You can just see it, it's like, you know when you see it.

Yeah, its like, sidebar these people have style, like, they you know have some sort of idea of what's going on and understands the idea of culture.

And. Are you a hipster?

Um, the thing is though I can't like, I don't want to like put a title on myself and I know in fact like the whole thing, like we all want to believe that we're our own person and you know we're not trying to follow anyone and then blah blah. But I mean I guess? But, really?

But you wouldn't want to like, outright say "I'm a hipster"

You just don't do it?

You don't do it right? That's part of the deal right? You're a hipster you're are you even...

Yeah, I'm not even gonna like put a name tag on that says "Hi, nice to meet you my name's Chantelle and I'm a hipster. What do you do? You know? I think we all like to believe we are our own independent person.

Have you ever been called a hipster before?

Umm, yeah I think more in like a joking way I definitely feel like my surrounding are of those people so its not really something that its like "Yeah, me and my hipster friends are gonna like do the bar thing, like, just my friends. You know? We are not like, a crew of hipsters and like its.

It's kind of your defining characteristic. It's like we have common interests.

It doesn't define me at all. I'm not gonna put a label on myself.

Ok. Generally why do you think people look upon hipster like it's a culture, with like disdain.

I can only like assume because it has that "I don't give a shit" attitude that goes like, alongside with it. It's almost like people are like upset of these little don't care about anything and have no like boundaries and they are just like free willed kids and you know whatever.

Going back to what you talked about earlier about belongings. Would you directly or indirectly identify with people who are labeled hipsters?

I think we're inspired by the same things as far as trends, makeup fashion, music, all those kind of things. The bar scenes, like their different atmospheres. I think that that whole community is drawn to those same things so it is comfortable surroundings being in those places and being able to relate to those people.

Can you name some like, notable celebrities who might be labeled hipsters. To try and get a better grasp of like what a hipster would look like for like the general person out there?

As far as celebrity-wise Lindsay Lohan is like a perfect example. Umm,

I'm thinking Kanye West myself. Kind of like a hip-hop hipsters kind of thing.

Yeah, absolutely. He follows the trend he does that whole thing. He you know, takes it to the next level without caring if its going to make sense to anyone or not. But I definitely hands down have to go with Lindsay Lohan. Um, the Olsen twins are a perfect example. They would send out, as the hipsters, I mean their not done up in the gowns on the frickin, red carpet, they're you know, in the streets doing their thing. Um, I would definitely say those handful of celebrities would be perfect examples.

So whether or not you agree with me with the symbolic meaning of history. Would you say somebody becomes a hipster when they are labeled as one? Or does it happen when you deny being a hipster are you really defined as being a hipster?

That's kind of a tricky question. I would have to say, like, I guess if you are already doing something you are that. So its not like you're all of the sudden going to become and like, be a transformer.

So would you say that being a hipster would you actually be a hipster?

No, I think it would be the opposite.

Alright, is there anything else you want to add to this conversation? At all, on the hipster culture, I mean, any aspect of it?

So I feel like people just want to put labels on things when its really like irrelevant. People are going to do what and be what they want to be and realistically there needs to be no new, no label you know?

When you see hipsters on the street yell "Hipster!" and they'll turn around and get real mad, but they acknowledged that they're hipsters.

Labeling people is a seemingly simple and innocent act that we conveniently engage in every day of our lives. In order to reduce our uncertainty about others, enforce our own conceptions of self and social relations. It's a way for us to assert a sense of control over the chaotic world we live in, allows us to focus on things that our seemingly more important. We think its safe to say that we don't identify with all labels attributed to us we find it much easier to simply label others because labels all too often are over

generalized and fail to recognize the unique characteristics of the individual aside from the groups they are identified with.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Steph, I'm 26 years old and I'm a student at Cal State Long Beach.

Could you describe what you're wearing right now?

I'm just kind of wearing a little mix of pre-owned, family owned items. Like I have a jacket on that was my uncles, a scarf that was my grandma's, a dress, tights, and vintage boots that were my moms.

How would you describe a hipster or a hipster culture?

I think the epitome of hipster culture lives on Bedford avenue in Brooklyn, New York City. I think that's the kind of hipster people, you know, want to be like because they are the extreme hipsters. The new bands that are coming out that are coming from Brooklyn are you know MGMT and Vampire weekend, that kind of whole, like, young and cool and hip and style but kind of retro as well.

So with that are you a hipster?

No! I mean, maybe like to me, maybe on an ideological level I think so. Like, if you are talking about people who don't necessarily participate in like the main stream or like MTV crowd or what's being heavily marketed I'm under the radar. So that's like hipster maybe in those ways.

So, uh, have you ever been called a hipster before?

Yes I have. You know I think people use it kind of like "Uh, such a hipster" You know and my immediate response is like "No I'm not." First of all I'm kind of shocked because I don't think I'm hip, I think I'm pretty square especially since I'm going back to school I don't do anything very social. I'm kind of, you know, working at school or I'll just go to a local bar that happens to be like an older crowd Irish bar so I think well funny that you think that about me. And second of all no I'm not, because I don't think of myself as the people that I lived amongst in Brooklyn you know with like, the tattoos and like rooster haircuts and Skinny, skinny jeans you know. I don't know there's a whole aesthetic that I don't think I embody.

Why do you think that people generally look at hipster culture or hipsters with disdain. Where did hipsterdom go wrong?

I think it went wrong with the whole lets have fun maybe to each his own. Trying to live out this whole I'm dirt poor and hungry and in a rock band or I'm an artist or I drink cheap beer. Well we know you're not dirt poor, you just want to look that way and you just want to drink cheap beer because its cool. And you just you know its just, drinking like the cheap beer and then having a very expensive fixed gear bicycle and having a very expensive um, iPod or whatever else it is. I don't know, it sends mixed messages like, well its superficial and there's a level of unassailability you know like the whole like I'm cool and you're not and you are never going to be because you don't have these things and whatever they are portraying to have is based on false realities. Like they're not, you're not a starving artist. You just want to look like one and then you tell other people you can't also do that because a) I'm not an artist and b) I'm not starving, and money. I don't know its just that you just want to look tragic. And no one's ever going to look as tragic as you are.

Would you consider them, like, an ideal hipster then or would you, well, people who don't really try that much would that be a hipster?

I think it's the people that do try. Like those are the people that I would say have generated the negative response. Prime example, I used to work at American Apparel which has become the hipster Mecca, because it doesn't say anything, because there's no labels on it. However everybody who knows what

American Apparel is knows what's from American Apparel because they all have it too. So, you know there's that whole "I only wear things made in America, so I'm going wear Levi's, American Apparel, and Tom's. You know, and therefore you're going to judge people who might be wearing a Chaps sweatshirt that is made in China but think about everything else in your home. Like, are you eating things grown locally, are you also only listening to equipment that was assembled in America. Is your guitar from America. I don't know there's that, yeah, there's that labeling that someone's buying into the corporate ideologies more than you are. But if you examine them on a deeper level we are all buying into the same things. We just choose different stores.

Yeah, whether directly or indirectly do you generally identify with people who are labeled hipsters. I guess is there a community out there, a sense of belongingness?

In some sense, yeah. I think that you'll see those extremes and I'll want nothing to do with it. You think extreme hipster and you think "oh my gosh I don't want to sit by them in class because they are going to be persnickety" Or you are just talking crap the whole class period. And then there's those that you kind of feel like, yeah well they kind of meld in under the radar kind of sit alone, but maybe I'll share some common interest, form a little friendship.

Can you name some like, notable celebrities that you would consider hipster. For the layman trying to get an idea.

When you ask me that. I think first of all there's a couple of want to be hipsters. And in a lot and in the limelight I think Pete Lentz and Ashley Simpson. And I don't know about you but I remember when Ashley Simpson was not a hipster. You know, she made a pretty well transformation when she started dating Pete Lentz so its kind of like they kind of have, they embody that style that look, you know. The parquay hats, the hippie, the leather jackets the skinny, skinny jeans, you can get at urban outfitters. Then I think of the people who are also out there but they're not really notable, like I don't. I think about M Ward, he's like indie singer/songwriter, the music in that band with he and um, Zoey Deschenel she's kind of everyone always describes her as quirky actress. They just kind of are hip. And it's a little less contrived looking.

Do you become a hipster when you are labeled as a hipster or does it happen when you deny being one.

I think it's a lifestyle, I think it embodies more than just a label, like your identity can not be more than ascribed to you. Right, you're a hipster and there you are. And you say no I'm not and therefore you are it just doesn't really work. Because then it just sounds like you are saying no just to be disagreeable. Just like how it sounds like "Ok, I'll be ok with it later but I'm not ok with it now." Its not that I'm not ok with it, its just that its just not true. And if that's what you want to say about me I can live with it. But it, I think it's a lifestyle that involves a series of ritual activity, like the kind of company you keep, the kind of extracurricular things you are into. Like basically where to you go to feed your mind. What stimulated you?

Well is there anything else you'd want to add to the whole hipster phenomenon? That we didn't really flesh out?

There's a really big price you pay to have this look, to have this aesthetic. That's what ruins it for a lot of people. It becomes this about spending money to live a certain way and that is never what it was about in the first place. It was about expropriating old things, making them meaningful, stimulating yourself. But ya, I think its not the group of people that are ruining a certain persona or a certain image or whatever its when people reproduce for your concession to get money out of you that make it less meaningful and make it less unique to the individual.

The stigma usually associated with hipster culture seems to have arisen from an abundance of hasty generalizations which attempt to essentialize the characteristics of a sub-culture that continuously redefines itself. And in turn defies static definition. It was in this seemingly indefinable yet somehow easily recognizable phenomenon known as hipster culture that lies a manufactured and not easily (..) between those that live the life and claim to be authentic hipsters and then homogenized hipsters that superficially

attempt to consume genuine hipster aesthetic these perspective give an idea of a despaired group of people that lump together under the all encompassing hipster label and give the hipster labels lack of continuity that allows it to identify individuals who share similar taste and interests. Compound this with a negative connotations associated with the label and you see why the label is adamantly denied by those who feel that they are their own.

We hope that by highlighting two similar but different perspectives of hipster culture you have come to see how often times an innocent and convenient act of labeling leads to over generalizations to prevent us from recognizing and respecting the unique characteristics of a culture and individuals within it. Hopefully you will reanalyze you exert control over others through the act of labeling and assess its conducive to postive interactions. We recommend that you remain open to different interpretations will help you to realize the potential of life of diversity and non-judgmental communication.