

Fashion at Work

EDITOR: JANE KELTNER DE VALL

RED HOT

"I started working with Giovanna and now totally understand that if you love somebody and respect them, you want to grow with them," Solange says. "I feel like I learn from every single shoot!"

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALEXANDER WAGNER.



SOLANGE franklin

AGE: 28

HOMETOWN: *Des Moines*

JOB: *"I'm first assistant to fashion editor Giovanna Battaglia."*

Both of my parents are doctors, and initially I didn't know that fashion could even be an occupation. I was premed at Mount Holyoke College, and while waiting for lab results I'd be thinking about how to redesign my lab coat and make cool science goggles! My interest in style started with *Teen Vogue*. I used to get two subscriptions—I'd cut up one to make mood boards and keep the other so I'd have a catalog of every issue. While in college, I scored an internship in the market department there. I commuted back and forth from western Massachusetts to New York City to finish school and intern at the same time!

I landed my job with Giovanna through the recommendation of someone I'd worked with while freelancing. When I started, I was her second assistant and then got promoted. Now I help Giovanna with each photo shoot she styles. I handle market and casting, pitch stories, and attend shows. I also coordinate looks at *W*, where she's a contributing fashion editor, and at ▶



Fashion at Work

solange's tips

1. Be positive. Attitude can get you almost as far as talent can.
2. Have other interests. Knowledge of art history, music, and current events is important.
3. Be resourceful. Do your research and ask lots of questions!

SOLANGE'S MUST-HAVES

From top: **Juicy Couture** sunglasses, \$145. Similar styles at [juicycouture.com](#). **Giovanna Battaglia by Case Scenario** iPhone cover, \$30. [yoox.com](#). **Diptyque** Do Son Eau de Toilette, \$88 for 1.7 oz. [nordstrom.com](#). **Stubbs & Wootton** shoes, \$400. [stubbsandwootton.com](#).



Vogue Japan. On a typical day, I'll wake up early to check in with people in Europe, then those in New York, and later our contacts in Japan. In the afternoon I'll go on appointments. Sometimes in the evening I'll attend an event with Giovanna, and then we'll have a shoot the next morning and be on set all day.

When it comes to styling a project, we start with our memories of the shows we saw during fashion week. We browse the collections online for a theme, whether it's a color or a silhouette. We're always inspired by new designers because they keep things fresh and exciting. Once we have a direction, we coordinate receiving the clothing at our office, then start compiling looks and trying them on models.

Giovanna is confident in my ability to help compose a beautiful picture. When people work with us, they say we're more like collaborators than employee and employer.

To me, she's like a big sister! I sometimes travel with her, and once, when we were in Tokyo doing a story for *Vogue Japan*, Giovanna and I took part in late-night karaoke! (I rapped TLC's "Waterfalls," and she was superimpressed.) She's someone who never forgets to have fun. That's what I love about her, and that's the epitome of what fashion is supposed to be: a celebration of style. One day I hope to go on my own as a stylist. The next step is to take on extra responsibility so I can be more like my amazing boss!" □



CHOOSING LOOKS FOR A SHOOT