



from left: jacket by
 linder; top by topshop,
 jeans by 7 for all man-
 kind, sneakers by vans,
 sunglasses by ahlem;
 corset by phileas; top
 by everybody, jeans by
 linder, sneakers by nike,
 sunglasses by ahlem.

BROADENED HORIZONS

AS BROAD CITY'S ABBI
AND ILANA VENTURE
INTO UNFAMILIAR
TERRITORY—LIKE
POLITICS, AND THE
STATE OF FLORIDA—THEIR
IRL SELVES ARE EXPERIENCING
THEIR OWN EVOLUTION. BY PAIGE
VIRVAD. PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHARLOTTE RUTHERFORD.
STYLED BY KAT TYPALDOS + STEPHANIE SINGER

"MAYBE IT'S THE RIGHT TIME TO THROW IN AN OVERTLY POLITICAL

Seated in a sunny edit bay in Midtown Manhattan, Abbi Jacobson poses this declarative question to her *Broad City* cohort Ilana Glazer, and the two ponder for a beat whether the scene they're working on should end with an anti-Trump sight gag.

In the episode, the girls travel to Florida and adopt the state's local customs and costumes: perms, neon tracksuits, driving a Cadillac the size of a New York studio apartment. As the show ends, and the camera pulls away from the pastel sprawl of retirement homes below, they *could* insert a skywriter, or maybe an airplane trailing a fluttering banner that says #RESIST. It would be the final touch on an episode filled with *Broad City* standards: bong hits, irreverent Judaism, body-cavity jokes. Maybe it's just the right flourish for 2017?

"We could put that in there," says Jacobson. "But it's also, like, just being ourselves is resistance."

Side by side on a couch, in sweat-shirts and ponytails, feet pulled up under them and computers balanced on their laps, Jacobson and Glazer don't look different from their stoner alter egos. But after three seasons of *Broad City*, fictional Abbi and Ilana are still broke and struggling to get in the game, while the real Jacobson and Glazer have become one of comedy's most powerful duos.

"[Over time] I've watched the machine of Abbi and Ilana just get faster and sleeker," says Glazer of their IRL partnership. "And it's just so delicious to press the button, or pull the lever. I'm like, 'Just go bitch.'" She pauses. "I don't

want to speak for Abbi, but I'm pretty proud of us. We're sick."

As their show enters its fourth season, the actresses are living a Hollywood dream that is almost unheard of: rising from obscurity to fame while maintaining creative control and keeping your best friend at your side. And after writing, producing, starring in, and directing over 50 episodes, they say their collaboration is stronger, and more seamless, than ever.

As of this writing, they were still making final edits in preparation for the August 23 premiere, but Glazer says even these last-minute editing sessions have become more like "Zen exercises," with hardly any disagreements and sometimes no need for discussion at all. "Over time, we've just gotten more on our game and need to say less," she explains. Jacobson agrees: "In the beginning we were learning on the job, so we had to spend more time verbalizing what we wanted." Now, she says, "when we're looking at something like the timing of a scene, or what should have a longer beat, it's more like a feeling."

"We're on a fucking roll," concludes Glazer.

En route to a nearby hotel to grab food, Glazer and Jacobson discuss how the new episodes might surprise longtime *Broad City* fans. Some of the changes will be cosmetic: It's the first season

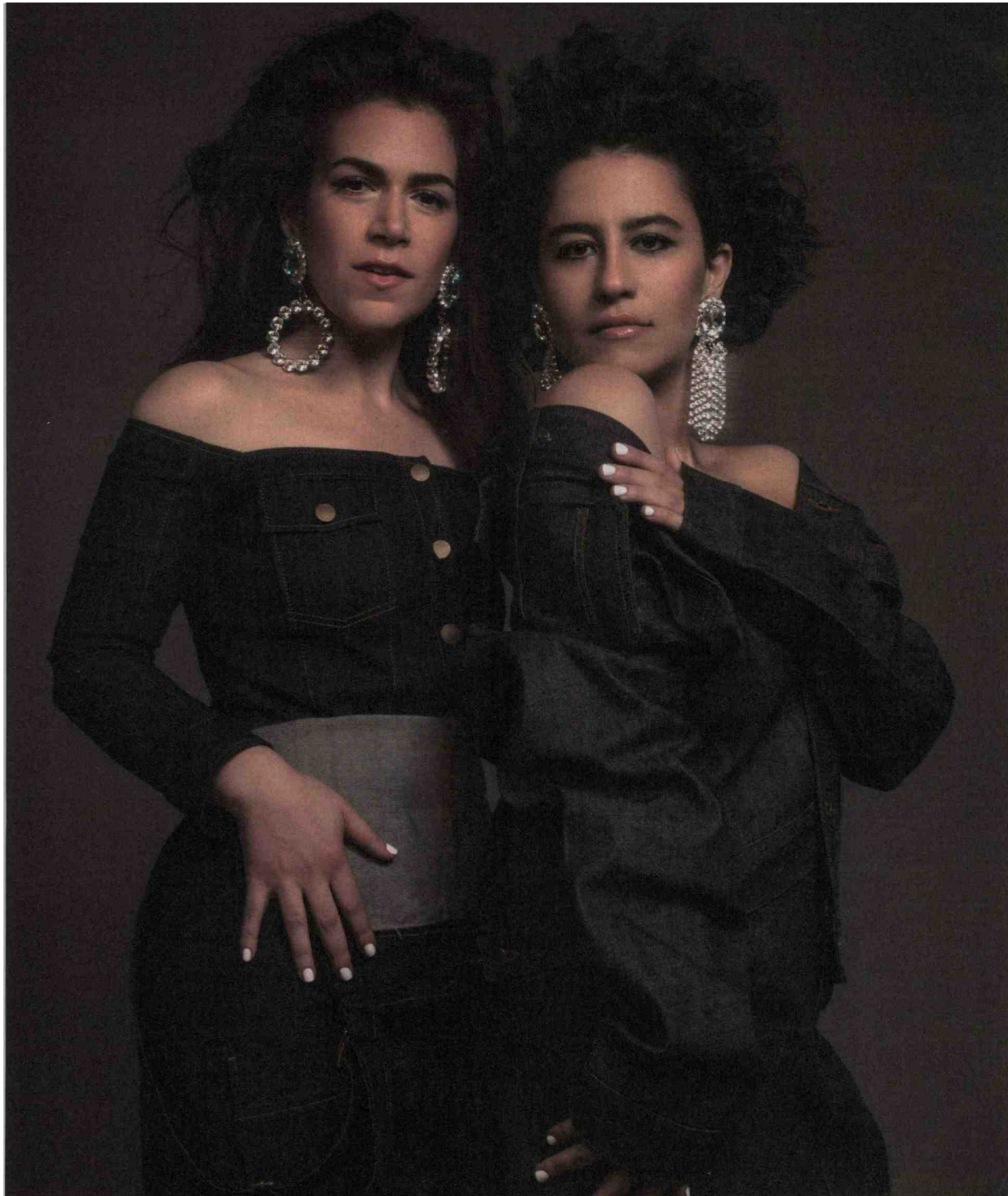
they've shot in winter, and the Florida-based episode isn't their only excursion outside of their natural NYC habitat. But one of the biggest changes, they say, will be the presence of politics, specifically, how Abbi and Ilana react to the 2017 presidential election and its aftermath.

It goes without saying that a lot has changed in the world since last season, when Ilana volunteered at Hillary Clinton campaign headquarters, and Clinton herself made a cameo (turning Jacobson and Glazer into fangirl mush, they freely admit). In Season 4, Abbi and Ilana are still broke, high, scheming millennials, but now they're also pissed off.

"We won't be picking up exactly from November 9," explains Glazer. "But our timeline will be vaguely current. This season is infused with what they're feeling—and what we're feeling—which is something along the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Sometimes it may just be a joke, or something in the background, but we definitely want that feeling to be cohesive across the season." Jacobson adds: "The basis of *Broad City* is taking a mundane event and making it ridiculous. Not to compare buying an air conditioner to Trump being president or anything. But it's about taking shittiness and putting a spin on it. The stakes are so high in general in the world right now that I think it even heightens the potential of how funny taking on this serious stuff can be."

It's not like *Broad City*, a show in which Ilana dreams of a future where everyone is "caramel and queer" and

from left: top by cinq
 a sept, jumper by ag,
 earrings by alessandra
 rich; top and skirt by
 a.p.c., earrings by ales-
 sandra rich.





from left: jacket by faith connexion, top by opening ceremony, bra by only hearts, shorts by topshop, boots by sophia webster; sweater by alexandre vauthier, shoes by manolo blahnik, belt and jacket from another man's treasure vintage.

**"I WAS ALWAYS UNCOMFORTABLE
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I WAS ALWAYS LIKE, 'AM I
FULLY INFORMED? DO I KNOW EVERYTHING?'
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'WE'RE FUNNY. WE'VE GOT A VOICE AND A
PLATFORM. WE HAVE THIS.'"**

—ABBI JACOBSON

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Abbi pegs her neighbor, ever risked being mistaken for conservative. But the duo's decision to put even more of their political perspectives into Season 4 seems based in a new confidence in themselves, and a conviction that the show has something important to say. "I was always uncomfortable talking about politics," says Jacobson. "I was always like, 'Am I fully informed? Do I know everything?' I've also been aware that we're two white girls from the suburbs and we're fortunate. But now I'm like, 'We're funny. We've got a voice and a platform. We have this.'"

Glazer chimes in: "The whole 'Don't talk about politics' thing is crazy to me. What do people say on social media when they don't like what you say? Unfollow?"

"Yes, unfollow!" says Jacobson.

"Well, unfollow," says Glazer. "I don't care. Yass. Unfollow. Kill it."

Broad City is a stoner buddy comedy, but it is also often—and accurately—described as a love story between best friends. Onscreen, Abbi and Ilana are totally obsessed with each other. They don't even spend time on the toilet apart. The only boundary between them is when one of them mutes a video chat to rip a particularly egregious fart.

Offscreen, the duo are more thoughtful and mellow than their characters, but also totally attuned to each other. At one point, Jacobson ducks into the restroom and Glazer orders appetizers for both of them. "That's exactly, like, the most married thing to do," she says with a laugh. "To order something and just intuitively know to split it."

When asked how they draw boundaries between friend time and work time, the question doesn't compute. "I just don't think we think about it in those terms," says Jacobson. Glazer agrees: "We are kind of constantly working, even when we're catching up and hanging out. For us, hanging out is work. But 'work' is a positive word. It just doesn't stop. It's fluid and seamless."

Like their characters on the show, Glazer is more gregarious and up-front, while Jacobson is content to hang back, occasionally jumping in to offer

an observation that perfectly builds on Glazer's first thought. They are always listening to each other and expanding on the other's idea. Maybe it's something they picked up from their early days in New York's Upright Citizens Brigade, where the main rule is to always expand a scene by saying, "Yes, and...."

It was back at UCB in 2007 that the two met and—after struggling to land parts on the school's house improv teams—decided to start a web series about themselves: two best friends, navigating the absurdities of New York life together.

In the very first web episode, titled "Making Change," proto-Abbi and -Ilana (who originally gave themselves pseudonyms before deciding to stick with their own first names) walk down a New York street and meet a homeless man who asks them for cash. Ilana offers him a \$10 bill and asks for change. Abbi is horrified. It's a simple odd-couple setup, but from the very beginning there's a rhythm to the absurdity, and a genuine chemistry between them that still anchors the series today.

As the two continued producing web episodes, they drew thousands of viewers. One of these fans was Amy Poehler, who agreed to appear on the series' Season 1 finale. She would go on to executive-produce the show, and helped them bring it to Comedy Central, where the show drew over a million views in its first season on the network. "I wish I could take parental credit for guiding them, but they're just such hard-working, competent, funny, talented people—it's always felt like a real, true collaboration," Poehler says. "Tone is so important in comedy, and *Broad City* got their tone right from the start because it came from Abbi and Ilana's brain and heart. I think they've always had that thing that they have."

In the early days, many of the show's plot points were pulled from Jacobson's and Glazer's real experiences as struggling New York twentysomethings. Ilana's job at "Deals! Deals! Deals!" was inspired by their time slacking off at Lifebooker. Jacobson's gig handing out flyers for Equinox inspired her character's bathroom-cleaning job at Soulstice.

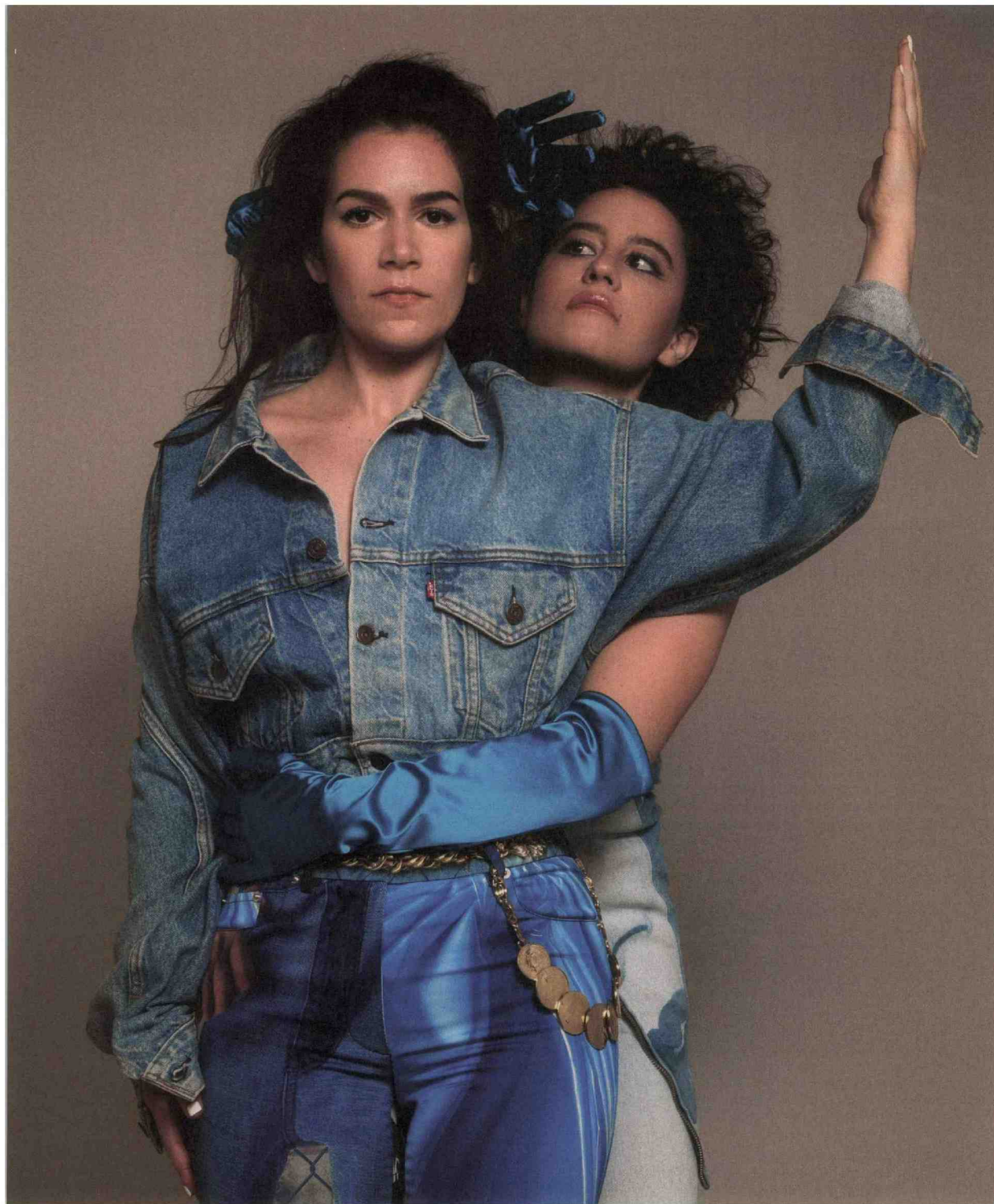
But now, going into Season 4 as

writers, directors, and—increasingly—Hollywood power players, Jacobson admits that some things have changed: "I guess, the longer we do this, the farther we get away from our characters. This show is specifically about people who are not in the game yet, and trying to get at it. So it feels weird for me to be doing walk-and-talks and making phone calls like I'm in an Aaron Sorkin movie. But that's what we're doing all the time. We have 'corporate conversations.' But it's also a little bit of an age thing, like, how old will we get playing these young characters?" Jacobson and Glazer are now 33 and 30. Their characters are still 25 and 28. As they get older, they've started to ask some bigger questions, like whether Abbi and Ilana will eventually grow up, à la *Girls*, or if part of the fun of the series is watching them refuse to evolve, like *Seinfeld*.

"In the past, we haven't had many arcs in the show," says Glazer, "and that changed a little bit in Season 3. Part of that is maybe because we're trying to figure out where we're eventually going to take these characters. We're trying to decide whether the show should take us from point A to point B in these women's lives, or if *Broad City* is just supposed to capture a particular moment." Not only are the actresses grappling with bigger questions, they're also venturing into uncharted waters, solo. A hiatus between seasons allowed for Glazer to star in *Rough Night* alongside Scarlett Johansson and Kate McKinnon this past June. This summer also sees Jacobson appearing in *Person to Person* with Michael Cera and Tavi Gevinson, and later, opposite Dave Franco in *6 Balloons*, a Netflix drama about middle-class heroin addiction. "It was this much darker thing to take on," says Jacobson, "and I don't want to only do stuff like that, but I think that I, and both of us, want to explore roles that are different from ourselves."

"People try to hold on to artists as they first met them," adds Glazer. "And that's totally understandable. But for us, we also need to feed the human part of ourselves, more than the thumbnail, 2-D versions. *Broad City* is our joint voice, but we also have our individual voices." Paul Downs, who plays Abbi's boss at Soulstice, and is also a writer for the

from front: jacket by re/done, pants by moschino, chain from another man's treasure vintage; pants and skirt by jeremy scott, gloves by portolano.



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—ILANA GLAZER

show, says he's always impressed by the depth of Jacobson's and Glazer's understanding of every part of the process. "There aren't a lot of people like them who wear so many hats, who do every part of the job," he says. "Over four seasons, they've really become such bosses, such moguls."

Lately, Glazer and Jacobson have started discussing how, and when, *Broad City* should end. "You just have to start thinking about it," says Jacobson. "Four years is pretty legitimate. Most shows don't go that long."

"We're still at the point where every episode is like our baby," Glazer adds. "But I would never want to get to a point where we're off our game in writing this world and these characters. That's kind of when I think we'll just know it's time to stop."

Most of the time, the two are focused on what's ahead, not reflecting on how far they, and *Broad City*, have come together. But last week when they premiered an episode from the new season at the Clusterfest comedy festival in San Francisco, there was a moment when it all sank in. "We just came out onstage and we talked and we danced," says Jacobson. "We used to do that for our live show at UCB, but for, like, 200 people, and we hadn't done it in years. This crowd was almost, like, 6,000 people. I hadn't even processed it.... It made me really feel like we're doing something necessary right now."

Glazer pulls up an Instagram video someone posted from the event, and the two watch it together, grinning. Onscreen the girls are bouncing around the stage in total uninhibited-celebration mode while the crowd goes completely nuts.

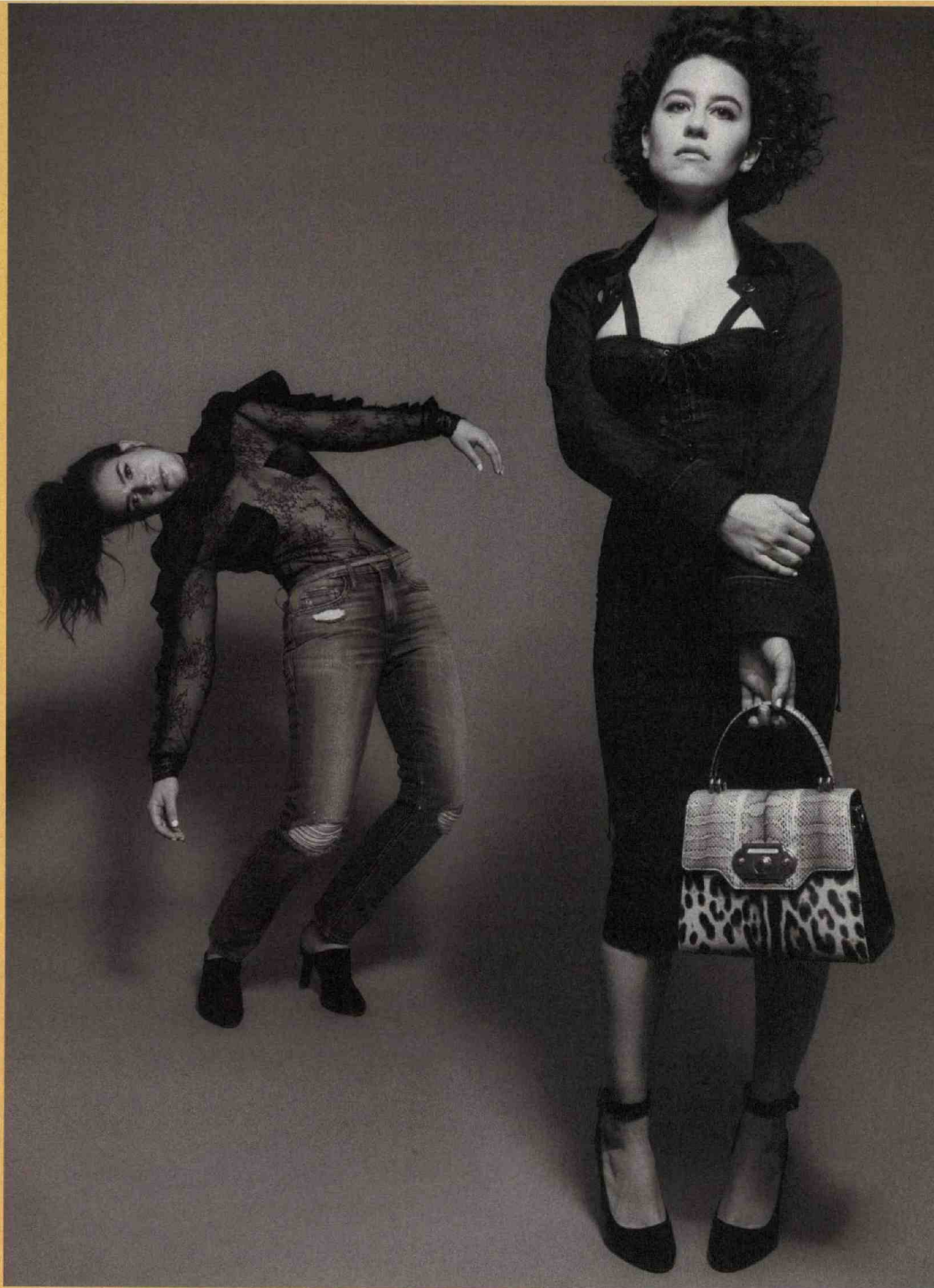
"I sent it to my dad and he was like, 'This video is insane!'" says Jacobson with a laugh. "We are crushing it so hard," Glazer adds. "We are dancing so hard, we can't breathe."

The moment was silly and joyful. But it was also a catharsis. "It's a release to come out with Season 4 and say, 'I love this product we've made and I'm so happy to put it out in the world,'" says Jacobson. Glazer feels the same: "Who knows how much we'll give a shit later about the other things we do. Down the line, maybe we'll just be making garbage for as much money as possible. But the fact that we have this level of precise passion right now, this time of giving this much of a shit, is very much its own high."

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from left: top by faith
 connexion, jeans by
 frame, mules by tibi;
 jacket by emporio
 armani, top, skirt,
 and bag by dolce &
 gabbana, shoes by
 nicholas kirkwood.

hair: peter butler at
 tracey mattingly using
 leonor greyl, makeup:
 rebecca restrepo,
 elizabeth arden global
 makeup artist, mani-
 curist: geraldine hol-
 ford at lmc worldwide
 using chanel le vernis.
 photo assistant: jada-
 renee bland, stylist's
 assistant: meaghan
 hartland.



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