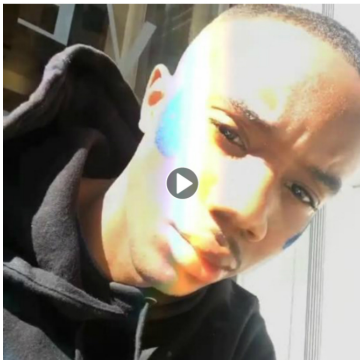
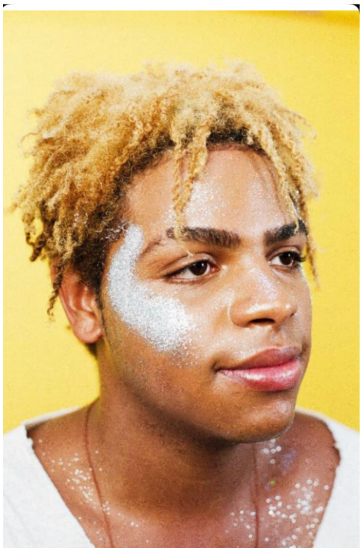


"Do My Makeup Like Frank Ocean"



A Quil Lemons video selfie, from NYFW.

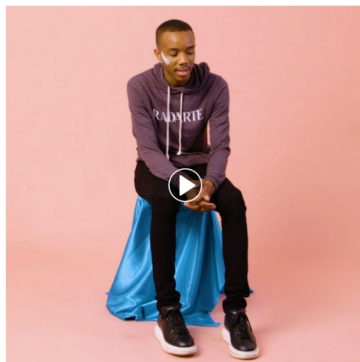
When 20-year-old artist Quil Lemons first put on glitter at a party for Milk Makeup, he didn't intend for it to be a political statement. He just liked a photo he'd seen on Frank Ocean's Snapchat—an image of Frank wearing glitter and purple eye shadow from his "Nikes" video—and he wanted to try it himself. But when Lemons tweeted a photo of his own glitter look, the reactions were polarizing.



Look No. 1: Silver glitter highlighter with just a little glitter on the collarbone.

"Some people were like, 'Yo, you don't need to be doing this because you're a black boy; we don't wear makeup,'" Lemons says. "Then there was the artsy half of Twitter, just a very progressive liberal side, that was like, 'Yes, this is what we need. Black men need to be more fluid. Black men need to embrace all sides of themselves.'"

Why "Glitterboy" Is About More Than Just Glitter



"Inherently, anything I do as a black creator is going to be political, because there's a lot of systems in place that would not allow me to be here."

The Dawn of the Glitterboys



Look No. 2: Glitter in pink, red, and purple hues for a magical, kind of messy look.

His first subject was Harley, a friend he had made over Instagram who is always willing to experiment with androgyny. "He was so comfortable with himself, so I just asked him, 'Can I shoot you with glitter on your face? Are you OK with makeup?'" Lemons recalls. "I had never done makeup, and he hadn't ever worn makeup, so we were just winging it. I shot him, I got the film back, and we both looked at it and were like, 'This is fire. This is crazy good.'"



The glitter photo that started it all.

Over the next few months, Lemons photographed more young black men for a series he calls "Glitterboy," an homage to Frank Ocean and the original photo he encountered on Ocean's Snapchat account, @arealglitterboy. "I'm a Frank Ocean stan," Lemons admits. "Anything Frank Ocean I have seen and dissected and really thought about."



Look No. 3: Green glitter around the brows and temples is all about emphasizing strong cheekbones.

"A lot of the guys I shot had never worn makeup before, and it was really cool to see them coming out of their comfort zones. There was this visceral sense of being a little uncomfortable, but that was good," Lemons says. "They were figuring out for themselves what it actually means to be a black boy, and what it means to not really feel the weight and pressure of societal norms."

Why Glitter Is the Best Makeup



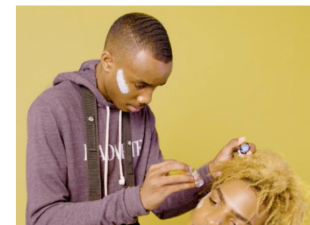
"Glitter is powerful because it's universal," Lemons says. "With foundation, you have to have 60 shades of foundation just to get the color to match a skin tone. Especially being black, it's hard to find foundations that are for our skin. Anyone can wear glitter and it's going to look good."

So, Who Is a Glitterboy?



"A Glitterboy, by my definition, is a black boy being themselves and not really giving a fuck what society or anyone has to say."

How to Wear Glitter IRL



Putting glitter on a model is an intimate and powerful moment for both photographer and subject.

Though Lemons spent five months shooting the "Glitterboy" series, he only started wearing glitter as a normal part of his routine in May. He says, "Now I'm so used to walking into rooms and everyone's like, 'What? You're so pretty.' And I'm like, 'Oh, yeah, I know.'"

By Rebecca Bates (@re.beccabates),
Photographed by Quil Lemons