

Fashion as Empowerment; Youtuber Macy Eleni's Confidence Journey through Thrifted Fashion

By Meghan Keeney



Pastel colors and bright patterns create a vibrant color scheme in Macy Eleni Harris' closet. Oversized vintage sweatshirts hang next to tailored pin-striped blazers. Push past the old school Levi's and you'll find her "shimmy shake" tops. The one common theme of all her clothes? They're all thrifted.

Her current favorite item is a sheer, colorful tie-dye-looking, mesh, long sleeve top that she got off of DePop. She says she hasn't been able to wear it properly out in public, but she plans to post a picture in it on Instagram.

After obsessing and watching various fashion creators on YouTube over the years, Harris created her YouTube channel "Blazed and Glazed" on July 27, 2018. Her almost 2-year-old YouTube channel currently has 20k subscribers and she has 11k followers over on Instagram. On her channel, she shares her latest thrift hauls, outfits, and invites her audience to be their "beautiful-ass-queen self." She started thrifting 10 years ago back when she was in high school, reading cover to cover the latest issue of Teen Vogue.

"Back then it really wasn't about sustainability at all, because back then it was weird if someone was vegan. People weren't understanding back then of this is how we should be treating our planet" she says.

A Study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation found that clothing production has nearly doubled between 2000 and 2015. At the same time, the average amount of time a person wears a piece of clothing before they get rid of it in some way has gone down by 36%. Up to 85% of these clothes end up in the landfill. The UN Environment Programme reports that the fashion industry is responsible for 10 percent of global carbon emissions.

"Once you start thinking about that, it's hard to not think about that, then the clothes become a lot less cute to me. I'd rather thrift." says Harris

But clothes don't need to end up in the landfill. Just because you have no use for an item anymore doesn't mean someone else won't wear it. As of August 2019, the US Census website reports that there are over 25k resale and consignment shops in the US. According to America's Research Group around 17% of Americans will shop at a thrift store at some point during the year. In the same time, roughly 20% of Americans will visit and retail apparel store.

Harris says, "Thrifting gotten more popular over the past couple of years, which is awesome, but it wasn't something my friends wanted to do with me back in high school."

Nowadays, she frequently thrifts with other friends that she's met in the community; she has a series dedicated to it. Her "LA Thrift Queens" series debuted on July 26, 2019. The series is built around interviews with fellow fashionable LA thrifters and trip to the thrift store.

Macy's favorite places to shop

In LA, Macy continues to explore her love of thrift. Harris explains there are different categories of thrift stores, from curated vintage items, small stores for accessories, and large warehouses where you can pick up some furniture with your new jeans, Harris explains. Her personal favorite store in LA is St. Vincent DePaul.



The warehouse consignment shop is Los Angeles' largest thrift store. Stores Director Jorge Menjivar says that before COVID, the shop saw around 500 people a day during the week, and over 600 people during the weekends. Average purchases come out around \$25. For perspective, a t-shirt can ring up at \$1.50 on Wednesdays.

“I would say it [the demographic] is different now. We have noticed that a lot of teenagers are shopping secondhand stores” says Menjivar.

In navigating a vast store like SVDPLA, Harris comes in with inspiration at the ready, utilizing her phone’s camera roll loaded with folders of different seasons, moods, and vibes. Almost always, she walks in with a specific vision, piece, or color palette. She even has developed a strategic way of making her way through the store over the years. Most often she starts at the lingerie department, picking up smaller tops and slinky dresses, building off those pieces with bigger items like outerwear, shoes and accessories. Though she has the act of thrifting down, she understands that it can be daunting for new shoppers.

“Go in thinking of your favorite pieces to buy at Forever 21 or Zara and go to those sections in the thrift store” she says, “Have your mind focus on those sections.”

With everything closed at the moment, Harris has been relying on online thrifting venues, such as DePop and Instagram sales. DePop has become a popular marketplace among designers, stylists, sneaker heads, vintage collectors, and thrift shoppers. The app was founded in 2011 in Italy; in 2020, there are over 15 million users.

Shop Likes Reviews

 **Rogue yuhhh**
@emmarogue
★★★★★ (618)

⚡ ACTIVE TODAY 📦 1533 SOLD 📦 OFTEN SHIPS IN 4 DAYS

📌 tag us in ur fit pics @roguegarms ❤️
📌 sales r final! not respons aftr ship 📦
📌 ig: emmarogue-tiktok: emmarogue_
📌 fresh vid 📺
<https://youtu.be/kdGEpedhxGQ>

21k followers 156 following **Follow** ✉



 **Rose + Bush**
@roseandbush
★★★★★ (352)

⚡ ACTIVE TODAY 📦 918 SOLD 📦 OFTEN SHIPS IN 2 DAYS

vintage + modern finds for every style and gender
curated with love by rose + bush. no refunds. top
seller. MESSAGE FOR BUNDLES!
<https://instagram.com/roseandbush>

7917 followers 151 following **Follow** ✉



Thriftling has become its own source of income for user Emma Rogue. Rogue, @emmarogue on DePop, has over 21k followers. When stores are open, she goes thrifting for her shop around three times a week. From there, she posts her finds on her store and prices them based off of similar listings on the app and eBay. “At this point I pretty much thrift primarily to sell, if I find a fire piece that I love it’ll go to my personal collection, if not I’ll prob take a cute pic in it and then sell it” says Rogue.

Amanda Nguyen runs a similar thrifting store on the app. Her shop, @roseandbush, has 8k followers. Like Rogue, thrifting has become part of her routine. Nguyen says, “We wanted to be more mindful of our shopping habits and shop more sustainably, but we kept finding so many cool pieces, which is why we started our shop.” Shops on apps like DePop are now essential to anyone who still want to thrift during this time; clothes from these shops help Macy keep creating thrifted fashion content on her YouTube channel.

How Macy Eleni first got into fashion

Years before her YouTube Channel, high school Macy read nearly every Teen Vogue magazine and watched videos from the first fashion vloggers on YouTube. Back then, she admits that YouTube was still foreign to the mainstream; talking to a camera was strange. These videos became her inspiration and she recreated the looks she saw on screen in her basement. At the time, there wasn’t a fashion scene in her hometown of Dayton, Ohio. Even the nearest mall, the Dayton mall only had a handful of stores.

“We didn’t even have an H&M or Zara, just Forever 21,” says Harris, And I wasn’t going to do it [recreate outfits] at the mall, I had no money. I was 16”

One day, she stumbled into a Salvation Army thrift store near her mom’s house. Harris says that no one in her family regularly thrift shopped, and she doesn’t even remember what brought her to go into the shop that day. But after that random shopping trip, she was hooked.



The biggest draw to 16-year-old Macy? The low prices. “I could go in there and have bags of clothes and not commit to having it cost that much. When you’re 16, you usually save all your money for like one thing” she says.

Now Harris, who had been yearning to experiment with her style, had access to an affordable wardrobe at her fingertips. In her basement, she started posing in her thrifted outfits, recreating her favorite looks from Teen Vogue and YouTube. Even with her new love of thrift stores, Harris actually ended up working at that notorious Dayton Forever 21 for a bit. She would see the trendy outfits set up on mannequins and challenged herself to recreate them at the thrift store.

Though Teen Vogue and YouTube were teen Macy's biggest sources of inspiration, Harris now finds a majority of her fashion ideas from movies. When "Bohemian Rhapsody" (the film about Queen's Freddie Mercury) came out in the beginning of 2019, Harris was imbued with memories of studying him in High School. Suddenly, she was saving all of his iconic looks to her camera roll. Since then, the clothes he would wear and his attitude of wearing whatever-the-hell he wanted constantly influences her style. She plays with different colors and patterns; she doesn't just copy what others think is cool.

Harris' fashion sense has gone in many different directions over the past decade, she explains. Only in the past year, she says, has she truly honed in on her own style.

She says, "It's a lot of color, a lot of experimenting, and a lot of stuff that makes me happy."

After college, Macy made the move to LA, where she initially sought a career as an assistant stylist. She quickly learned that the job was insanely busy, and she knew she didn't want to be an assistant forever. Her main dream was to create TV shows. With this, she started her YouTube Career.

But Macy Eleni's "Blazed and Glazed" channel isn't her first go at YouTube. She previously had a popular channel about her struggles with her eating disorder and her recovery. As her eating disorder worsened in college, her relationship with fashion became toxic. While recovering from her unhealthy mindset, she posted videos on her channel as an outlet. She also wanted to support other people going through their own disordered relationship with their body. But as she mended her relationship with her body and food, she put her love of fashion on the backburner.

In 2018, she felt mentally in a much better place. She started seeing fashion in a whole new way. But her recovery-based YouTube channel seem to isolate her content, leaving her creatively unsatisfied and unhappy.

"I'm supposed to be doing this type of stuff because I love it and I'm not doing what I love" she says.

She knew she was ready to re-open her relationship with fashion and for a new chapter in her YouTube career. However, she explains that she didn't want to shove fashion content down her current subscribers' throats when they initially came for recovery videos. She wanted to be respectful to her existing fanbase; even videos like a fashion "try-on haul" can be triggering for those with a disordered relationship with their bodies and food. Because of this, she started "Blazed and Glazed."



Blazed And Glazed

20.7K subscribers

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COMMUNITY

CHANNELS

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Uploads ▶ PLAY ALL

FEATURED CHANNELS



60 Movies for ICONIC thrift store OUTFIT INSPO!
5.3K views • 4 days ago



a VERY personal q&a (confidence, career and be...
4.2K views • 6 days ago



MASSIVE Thrift With Me + my BEST try on thrift haul...
19K views • 1 week ago



LA Thrift Queens #8 (thrift with me) + HUGE \$100 thrift...
15K views • 2 weeks ago



Macy Harris

SUBSCRIBED

Through each video, Harris creates an experience for the viewer. Whether its layering clips of her fashion inspo or filming inside the thrift store's dressing room, her videos make you feel like you're shopping with her in LA.

For Harris, there is power in being able to fully express herself through clothing, and by doing so she hopes others feel comfortable to be themselves. Fashion is now empowering. What was once exclusive, she is working to make accessible to anybody.

"You're not just here, I want you to feel accepted, celebrated, and included" she says.