

Who Are You Wearing? With Joe Lycett

Kiri 00:39

Hello and welcome to the Who Are You Wearing podcast with me Kiri Pritchard Mclean. I am a stand up comedian who started a podcast just so I could legitimately ask my friends and heroes where they got their clothes from and just pretend it was for work. This week, I get to chat to national treasure in waiting and in my house already, Joe Lycett. Joe is so funny in this episode, as you expect from a stand up comedian. But we have a really interesting chat about evolving styles and gender in relation to clothes. And it turns out that I am a low key creep who has a bad memory of what Joe has won, than he has, not worrying at all. This is actually one of the earliest episodes we recorded in April 2021. Joe was at home in Birmingham and I was cross legged on the floor of my walk-in wardrobe in Wales. Sounds like a like a tongue twister, doesn't it? Like a vocal warmup, walk-in wardrobe in Wales. Anyway, I was desperate to chat to Joe. As soon as we, we decided we were going to do this podcast because obviously, between hosting sewing bee and having an incredible collection to the best costume designer in the world, and fur coats, there's plenty to chat about. So let's ask Joe Lycett, who are you wearing?

Joe 01:57

I think the first thing that kind of I got excited about in terms of clothing was the trainers that would light up. Every time you stepped you'd get like a little firework display from your feet. And I remember just thinking that they were the coolest things I've ever seen in my life. And so absolutely wanted a pair of those. And they were really cool. I also wanted some wheelies. But my parents never allowed me to get any of those. But I would still like some wheelies because I think they'd be really fun. But I think I'd break my legs these days. So it was more footwear that I was interested in than anything else. I wasn't that extravagant as a, as a child. I don't, I think I dressed up like any other kid. But I didn't have, my style was just sort of what mum bought me which is generally sort of, you know, nice tops and joggers, and you know, stuff that kids wear really so I wasn't, I wasn't particularly interested in fashion, and wasn't really in most of my, like teens and beyond. Really, I didn't worry. I don't think I worry too much about what I was wearing. I was quite happy with a shirt and a jacket like boys wear.

Kiri 03:16

Did you have big shoes? Did it, I don't know if they had, boys had them, but there was a pair when I was growing up because we're about the same age where there was a key that went into the bottom of the shoe that would, you turn and a little sort of cartoon would happen and then it would open up something which would have a toy inside. And oh my god those are the shoes to have.

Joe 03:33

No I did not. Oh my God. I want some of those.

Kiri 03:38

Yeah, yeah, you can keep all your secrets in there. Or at least a an ace of resin.

Joe 03:46

Oh, yes. I had lots of secrets back then. Let's just have a look in my shoe. Pop the key in, open it up. Oh you're a little cool lad. Pop that back. Get that back in the shoe!

Kiri 03:59

Pop it back in your immaculate shoe. No-one will know.. So your, so your mum is dressing you and sort of form your sense of style. You said that she, she makes stuff for you. Has she always been like handy with a sewing machine because I know, you live with Jenny didn't you, who is obviously in incredible creative clothes, was that something that was around, were people like the women especially in your life making clothes?

Joe 04:25

Not when I was growing up, I don't think Mum had loads of time to do that. She'd do bits of fixing you know like trousers, school trousers, whatever if they need bringing up and stuff so she was always, she was, she could do it. But she just didn't because she didn't have the time. she sews a lot more now, as does my sister, and my sister made me an amazing shirt for the sewing bee second series, I did of it. In fact, she kept some of the material over and made this cushion for me.

Kiri 04:54

I remember that shirt. It's like a multicoloured camo.

Joe 04:58

Yeah, it's an amazing fabric, so, so yeah, both mom and sister, my sister Beth are keen sewers and make a lot of stuff these days because mum's retired now so she's got the time. But yeah, not when I was growing up, it wasn't around loads, but I did have this strange, or do have this strange link now with my other mother, I have three mothers, there's Jenny who I live with in London and then Jane who was our next door neighbour when I was kid. And Jenny is yeah, this costume designer, but she would, interesting she would be, she wouldn't describe what she does is anywhere near fashion. She doesn't, she's not interested in fashion. She says, she uses costume to tell stories. So it's all about story to her. And what does it say about the character? It's not about fashion and what's in vogue. It's about I suppose what that character would see as the fashion of that time or what they want to wear in either going along with the fashion of that era or whatever. I mean, she is, the work that she's done, She's just done, She did it a while ago, It's just coming out, the Cruella film for Disney. She did all the costumes for that and just, she just steps it up and up and up.

Kiri 06:10

Because Jenny's won an Oscar hasn't she?

Joe 06:13

Two. She's a double Oscar winner, multiple BAFTA's, Emmys, has she got a Golden Globe? She's surely got a Golden Globe. She's got a lot basically.

Kiri 06:24

She's amazing. She's so cool.

Joe 06:26

I asked her, I asked her when I won, because I won two RTS awards this year. No big deal. I asked, as soon as I found out I'd won, I text her and asked her to remove the clutter from the mantelpiece so I could put my awards up.

Kiri 06:39

Has she ever made anything for you?

Joe 06:41

Oh, I don't think she's made anything but she's, she's always very helpful with stuff so she'll always give guidance and particularly if I've got a wedding to go or something and I want to look nice, she will always help there. She is just very good at knowing like the right cut for things, stuff, I'd love her to be my like, kind of go to style guide, but she's so busy and she's busy dressing Emma Stone and Emma Thompson and all of these hollywood stars, she's not interested in me.

Kiri 07:15

As a kid growing up, and cause it sounds like you were just sort of like wearing whatever was, went your way. Were you ever made, made to wear anything that you hated?

Joe 07:23

I never liked wearing school stuff, I always hated and still do to this day, hate any formal wear really. Even if I can camp it up and make it sort of glittery or whatever, I don't, I wear jackets on stuff because I sort of have to, but I don't like wearing a suit. It just immediately makes me feel like I'm back in school and having to be told what to do so, and ties, what is a tie? What is the point of a tie? I find them irksome. And yeah, so I'll always try and wear a t-shirt with a jacket if I can get away with it. I do not like a tie, they always look messy and I just always ended up looking like someone who sort of works in middle management in a service station on the M40. It's not, it's not the vibe I'm going for Kiri. So never into that, never, never liked that. But beyond that, I'm kind of open to everything and I'd like to be more adventurous than I am but I don't put as much time as I'd like because I, you know, I want to look cool, but I also don't want to spend any time on it. When I was, when I think of you and what you wear, it's cool, but it's, I wouldn't be like and he's so on trend. It's more what I get from you is like joy and fun with how you dress yourself. Like it's almost a childlike ish quality and that like there's a dressing up nature to it of like what's going to be fun to wear, which is so rare to see. Yeah, it shouldn't be that rare. Sometimes I put a coat on, this is the thing, because I don't really have any boring coats particularly not warm ones. But the warmest ones are the faux furs and all of those that are, you know, ostentatious or whatever, I sort of, I forget that other people see that as unusual and are quite happy going about their lives in drab grey, brown horrible things, he says wearing all black today, and I think that's such a shame really because I don't, genuinely these days don't see it as like, I'm making a statement, I want people to look at me, I'm just like, I like to look at it, I enjoy, it's pleasing to my eyes to see someone in things like that. And so when I see it to buy and wear myself it's just, it just makes me happy. So that's all it, all it is, it's not about wanting to sort of be glam or make myself a centre of attention or anything. It's just literally I want to wear it. It's, it's more that, and so sometimes it is annoying when you know you

wake up, you just think, I don't actually want to speak to anyone today but I do need to go to ASDA, but it is cold. And you go, the only thing I've got is this multicoloured fur coat. So that's why I could have to wear that to ASDA. Because I don't have anything else. And so inevitably, someone will come up to me, even if they don't know me after telling them that, Oh, like that coat or why are you wearing that? Or whatever it is. It's annoying.

Kiri 10:27

When you were growing up as a kid or a teenager, do you remember having an item of clothing that you just didn't want to take off that you, that you loved?

Joe 10:34

There must be. I had a thing actually, which I never wore. But what was it called? I've forgotten what it's called now. Basically it was this jumper, its like a striped jumper. I think it was red and white, it's called the swinger that was what it was called. And I used to, I used to listen to I should be so lucky by Kylie Minogue. And I used to swing the swing around. And it used to come with me everywhere. I used to love having the swinger and, you know, mum and dad gave it back to me recently as a birthday gift. In like a box, they'd found it. So I've still got the swinger, so that used to come everywhere, but I never wore it, it was always just to swing around and like the sleeves got really mucky because they were constantly hitting the ground.

Kiri 11:24

So what was it, sorry, it was?

Joe 11:26

Literally like a jumper, like, I think it was red and white striped jumper but like a thin Jersey not, not like a kind of wool or whatever or cotton. Yeah, that was the swinger.

Kiri 11:39

I love it. That is...

Joe 11:42

And who, who could see me becoming this strange man in adult life?

Kiri 11:49

As a teenager now, was there a, a trend that you, that you've basically, you've tried to pull off over the years, but it's just not happening for you?

Joe 11:58

I always wanted to have hair like Nick Carter from the Backstreet Boys. Because he, I've got blonde hair. People say it's ginger, but they're incorrect. And I always wanted to get the, you know, the curtains, Yeah, but I never quite managed it. I don't think there was anyone else. I think it was literally Nick Carter. I wanted to emulate.

Kiri 12:23

Do you remember his song, crazy little party girl?

Joe 12:25

No, I don't. That sounds sinister.

Kiri 12:28

When you look back, it doesn't, there's lots that doesn't stack up to that. I like that you went for Nick and not, not the older boy Aaron.

Joe 12:36

Was Aaron older?

Kiri 12:38

Oh, wait, hold on. No. Who was the older one?

Joe 12:41

Nick was the older one. He was one of the Backstreet Boys. And then Aaron Carter was the little upstart whippersnapper that came in and I think he got a track on the Shrek soundtrack if I remember.

Kiri 12:51

He did, and I do apologise it is actually the younger Carter who did crazy little party girl singing about another eight year old I think in a sexual manner. I apologise.

Joe 13:01

Well, that's, isn't that fine? If you're a child talking about another child? It's not is it, it's not fine.

Kiri 13:09

When it's been written by an adult? No. I think.

Joe 13:12

No I hadn't thought of that. Yeah.

Kiri 13:15

So many rules. It's hard to keep up.

Joe 13:17

I fully concur. I agree.

Kiri 13:25

So when you were a teenager, what were the big trends and do you remember dipping your toe into any of them?

Joe 13:34

What were the big trends?

Kiri 13:37

So I, when I was growing up, so when I was about 11, everyone had a pair of Adidas poppers and I leant into that because we went on holiday to Turkey. And my dad got a lot of knockoff ones. And then, when I was sort of like 13, it was the trousers with a skirt attached. They were very big, very big in north Wales.

Joe 13:57

Oh wow. I remember FC UK came in and everyone wanted, there was a big excitement about wearing the FC UK Top because it was so naughty at the time because everyone's like well that, that's a different, that's just a wrong spelling of a rude word. And I know that this lad at my school, he was really keen on getting one of these FC UK tops and asked his mum to go and buy one but he wasn't the smartest kid and his mum obviously wasn't the smartest either. And he came in on non uniform day with just a top that just said fuck off on it! That's, that's not the brand actually, that isn't the brand, is this really sweet?

Kiri 14:42

There was, there was, You're so right. It was the like oh, nod nod, wink wink, it's nearly a swear word, sort of like, Will they, Won't they, swear on their T-shirt thing and I remember ? market near me when I was growing up would sell knockoff ones. But they would like take the innuendo out of it completely because it would just say FC UK up the arse. And it's like there's no mistake there. That's just too strong.

Joe 15:10

That is the sort of thing I would love to wear though. I love a shit slogan. Oh my god, I just bought a hat, which has been dispatched, hasn't arrived yet, and it says on it, I just saw it on eBay and I couldn't not buy it, It says women want me, fish fear me. It's so perfect. It's so exactly me.

Kiri 15:35

I can't think of what corner of the internet you're knocking around on to get that in your targeted ads.

Joe 15:40

Yeah. Yeah, I'm obviously doing something right there.

Kiri 15:46

So you talked about not enjoying being in a school uniform, sort of like how restrictive it felt, Did you have a rebellious phase then?

Joe 15:55

No, this is the thing, I sort of make this discovery only recently that I consider myself to be recalcitrant, and anti authority. I don't like being told what to do. I don't like people in positions of power, and you know, F the police and all that. But although I think the police do a good job, but I just generally like, people in suits, I don't like. However, I'm also very well brought up and I'm very polite, and I'm very agreeable, and so I am in this sort of weird middle ground where I often go along with stuff. So I never

really rebelled in what I wore, or, you know, I always wore my uniform correctly at school or whatever. But I quietly despised doing it and didn't respect any of the teachers who wanted me to do that. So, and I, in later life, I still do that, I still kind of go Yeah, yeah, I'll do that, Oh, yeah, that's a good idea when I'm being kind of given advice on creative stuff or whatever. And then, inside my head, I'm going, I don't agree with any of that. And you'd have no idea what you're talking about, because I'm polite, and I'm really well brought up I just go, Yes, yes, no, I agree. And I think that's bad, really, I need to get used to sort of telling people the truth about how I actually think about things. So, So I was never actually rebellious, even though every part of me wanted to rebel, I was too, I suppose I was too scared, really.

Kiri 17:38

That's, I think I resonate with that, in that I have a huge problem with authority, drilled into me by my father who, yeah, he is very much like that, but at the same time, would hate to get a bollocking at school and ultimately want to do well and be thought of as being an achiever, and polite and nice and all those things. So that's, you know, but you'll have the beating heart of a rebel that also wants to like fuck the system and things.

Joe 18:08

Yeah, exactly, and so it's, it's hard to square that circle, isn't it? I think it's, stand up is a really good place for someone like that. Because you're essentially allowed to say whatever you want, as long as people are finding it funny. And so rebellion is encouraged in those spaces. And that's where it's actually going into something like TV or radio, you're podcasting, slightly less, but in TV and radio, you're sort of cajoled and sort of made to fit a bit of a mould. And as I say, I'm, because I'm so polite and agreeable, I'm quite good at doing that. Whereas actually, a lot of the time, I probably should be doing something else. God it's got deeper than I realised this is, I feel like I'm on a career, careers meeting at school. What should I do next? I should be an arsonist. Yes.

Kiri 19:01

I wanted to ask you about like, sort of your current style. So when we first met, you were at one of my very first gigs, I think first sort of like 15 gigs. It was Keithley, the cricketers, and you were opening and I was one of the middle 10 spots and you were wearing, so my first Joe Lycett image is you've got, I'd say shoulder length blond sort of waves very sort of like, almost like you know, when people like, put salt spray in their hair to get that look, that's what your hair was like, and you had sort of, sort of studenty jeans but you have, I remember you had sort of like a, I remember the top half in particular being full of textures being quite fem, quite light fabrics, and you had like a scarf that you wore like a, kind of a flowing, kind of like silk scarf, and I was just like, God, I've never seen anyone like you inhabit a comedy stage. Because you know, from watching loads of comedy and then starting to do it, it would just, it was men who looked a certain way. So seeing you inhabit this space that felt really kind of gender fluid as in like, you felt like you were playing with all those conventions as well as playing such a playful way on stage with your material. And I was like, Oh, wow. And then, but that isn't, that isn't maybe the essence of your style is there now. But that isn't how when I think of you now, you don't look anything like that. But was that the start of your style journey?

Joe 20:33

Must have been, yeah, I suppose it must have been. I think at that time, I'd really started to get into a lot of queer icons. But I was also at the same time interested in, I thought Russell Brand was very interesting in the way that he presented his visual image. I think he's less interesting now. But you know, the big hair and all that, but the queer icon that I was really fascinated by and continue to be, was Quentin Crisp. And he was, I mean, far more stylish, I would say and exaggerated than I was. But I particularly love that scarf vibe, and that's sort of, I liked billowing things and things that sort of were flowing and whatever. And I did and still do feel like women's clothes, or clothes that are made for stereotypically made for women are just a lot more fun and have a lot more, do a lot more with shape and explore more of that kind of thing. So yeah, I was definitely always into that. So yeah, I think that was, that was definitely me exploring how I could kind of, that was a form of rebellion I suppose. It's strange when I think about what I was like on stage back then. And, and as you say, the, the nature of the environment I was going into, there weren't, there weren't people like me on, in my head now I feel like there's, because we've progressed so much in such a short amount of time and there's so many queer and like, brilliant, bold people on the circuit now, but actually, there wasn't at that point. And you had people like Alan Carr and Graham Norton, and I suppose people like Scott Capurro. And so you had sort of gay men who were doing stand up and doing it in interesting ways, but queer and sort of gender fluid, and that kind of thing wasn't really a thing, was it?

Kiri 22:38

No, I think only Eddie, I think she was the only one sort of... Yeah, but, but again, in a different way, because I think Eddie's looks on stage, she's always been really strong, and authoritative, you know, like kind of strong, spiky heels was you, I thought was about softness, and feminine and lightness. And, and so completely different area, because softness, and lightness, and texture, and that playfulness is not something you see on a standup stage, even, even women then work hard and to the point and you know, to own the space.

Joe 23:18

But that's always been useful for me because I appear soft, and I appear gentle natured that when I'm not that it has a power that I think you don't get otherwise. And my opening line always used to be for a long time about being bisexual. So I'm bisexual, which means I can and will Fuck all of you. And that works because I'm so not non threatening, you know, so not somebody that would like I'm going to fuck you kind of, I don't have that vibe. And I think that's, it's a really fun thing to play with really.

Kiri 23:54

Do you consider makeup part of your outfit or your costume? Because I know, I also remember you paint your nails a lot, which again, is something that's like playing with what is what we expect in terms of gender. But is that something would you? Do you paint it and then go, I'll just leave it or you're like, Oh, I've got an outfit. Let's do, and it was one nail for a while as well wasn't it?

Joe 24:14

Could have been, the painting the nails thing. I think I tried once for something. I can't remember why did it first time around and I remember being, being very aware of my nails. From that point on, I felt very exposed by it, and then I thought that was interesting that just a simple change like that could have such an effect, because obviously I was anticipating people clocking it and disagreeing with it and being

cross about it. And so that made me want to do it more. And so I never did it particularly for the fashion although now I like to do it. If I see something shiny or like a really fun colour, I'll do it because of that. But essentially, it was just to piss people off and it still is really but, but also I bite my fingernails and it's a really good way of stopping me from doing it, so I did it really to kind of, both to kind of antagonise idiots and also, and also to, to stop myself from biting my nails. I haven't painted them for a long time, actually. And I have bitten them to bits. So I should probably do it again soon.

Kiri 25:18

Yeah, whack on a layer, treat yourself, I, you saying about shiny? That's another thing I associate you is a, is an item, or items of like a statement thing? I remember for a while you're a long, like, gold whistle. Was it?

Joe 25:34

Oh Yeah. You've remembered so much about me. I feel like I don't know myself. You've got, you've clearly got a dossier on me.

Kiri 25:47

No, it just it's, it's anyone that I think is interesting. fashion or style wise. I'm always looking at what, what they, because also, like I love, I think, I think fashion and clothes is play. So you look for ideas to you know, magpie? And also, it's just I've clocked it because I wouldn't, I wouldn't wear a whistle myself babes, but I'm like, oh, what? There's a choice there. That's really interesting. And yeah, it just is quirky. And it will be the kind of thing that, well you'd have to, you wouldn't instantly recognise what it was, you'd have to ask. So it's like an icebreaker and also some like amazing rings as well. I've seen you wear and, and yeah, jewellery is something I associate you with, Is that something you have fun with as well?

Joe 26:28

Oh, yeah. I love jewellery. I love daft jewellery though. I'm not fussed about expensive stuff. I like stuff that can, is either novelty, so had that whistle, but I've also got a harmonica and this little trumpet, the trumpet actually, I used in my standup a few times. So stuff that makes a noise or that does something I'm obsessed with. Or stuff that's funny. And my favourite necklace still to this day is this necklace I've got from, I bought it in LA I think I bought it in this sort of quite quirky little shop. And it's a unicorn shagging a panda. And it's, it's a, it's a mad idea, but it's really beautifully executed. So all in it just works. And yeah, that, that for me is one of my favourites but I've got amazing rings as well. Lots of different quirky stuff. Again, none of it particularly expensive, just stuff that I've found that I thought oh, that's why they put that on a ring, I'll buy that, I like animal stuff. And there's an artist in Birmingham, who I'm friends with called Leon Kitson who makes these rings out of like old pound coins, and he turns them into rings. And I've got a couple of those and I just think they're because they're so sort of brilliantly naff. Which is what he's, he's really good at like doing stuff that straddles that line of actually being quite sort of high fashion or high art merged with kind of counsellor statey, just stuff that he's found and I love those two things sort of jarring. I like that a lot.

Kiri 28:01

That reminds me I've got a ring that I made, it's so if you get a \$1 bill, an American dollar bill you can fold it in a way that it makes a ring where it sits in the one is on the front and I saw one of the strokes had it and I then, I think I went on eBay and paid like a 10 or for a \$1 bill so I could make my own and fold it and then have never worn it because I just worried about looking like a mad person but it was something I wanted because I love that idea of like you got a piece of jewellery that cost you, in my case the Turner plus postage and packaging. Like \$1, Like \$1 ring. Yeah, I love, I love that juxtaposition, because also you're wearing money so that looks expensive in a really like gauche way I love it.

Joe 28:42

Yeah, but it's also I just always love when stuffs kind of surprising. Remember, you remember like kids would make wallets out of gaffa tape. I remember you think that was so cool. He made a wallet out of gaffer tape I've loved all that stuff so yeah, anything that's sort of creative I suppose and and makes you think of something that you see all the time in a different way, all about that.

Kiri 29:29

Is there an item of clothing that you've had for years and years like a, like a very old item of clothing that you still love?

Joe 29:37

I mean so many of the coats are like that, I just keep the coats and cling on them, onto them for dear life really, and T shirts as well. I've got a lot of T shirts. There's one, I wish I could remember who gave it to me and they got shut down because they kept making, There's a Birmingham artist, I think, who gave it to me, works in the studio, in the building where my studio is, and I walk past and he was like ? And I was like, yeah, yeah, and he was like I'll buy these shirts, you want one? I was like, Yeah. And it was the Nike tick and it had 0121 rather than Nike. And so 0121 is the, is the dialling code of Birmingham, we always talk about 0121. And I just thought was so cool. And I don't know where he was doing sort of fake Patagonia's where they had the Birmingham skyline and stuff. But yeah, I love that Nike T-shirt. But they, I don't know where they were because they vanished now, I don't know where to get another one. So I sort of hold on to that very, very dearly. You got a one off there, real one off, because it was massively illegal. Is there, Is there an era that you would go back to in terms of fashion? you mentioned Quentin Crisp who I think of being, because the 70s, late 60s, early 70s was a weird mix of being very masculine, but also the men would be wearing bold prints, and lots of black chiffon, and things like that, so, but is there any era in fashion that you think you could slot into? No, is my answer to that question. I feel like actually, we've never been in a better time for people to express themselves in. God, we're nowhere near where we should be, but people express themselves in as an authentic and real way as possible. And so if anything, I'd like to go forward in time to an era when it's even more accepted, and when maybe we don't use as much fast fashion and we don't piss away so much sort of plastic into the ocean, and we've worked out how to, so, yes, there is an era, and I'd say it's 2200s. It'll be done then won't it? Just another 180 years, and we'll, we'll have fixed it.

Kiri 32:03

Yeah, I think we'll have fixed it. Or we'll just be, it'll be a scorched wasteland, one of the two. But you know, it'll be what it'll be. Is that something you think of in terms of fast fashion and by sustain?

Because I know, I remember you had a great jumper as well. I think it's from Wolf and badger, It had a fried egg on the top. And Wolf and badger are great for using small indie, I'm not, they're not terribly affordable, but sustainable businesses, and you can sort of organise it by sustainability. Is that something that you think about a lot? Or you're conscious of?

Joe 32:33

Yeah, well, we talked about it a lot on sewing bee, because sewing bee is there essentially, as obviously, it's there for entertainment. But it's there to encourage people to sew and to make stuff out of things that they have, you know, that maybe they don't use, and they can turn into something else. So it's important to me, I confess, though, I've not been that, because I love a coat or whatever, I keep buying coats, I don't ever throw them away. So I still got them, I suppose at some point, they probably will. And faux fur I now know is probably still not that great. Even though it's better than fur, it's still quite bad for the environment. So it's really hard to do. But it's sort of like anything in, in environmental stuff is that, of course we should be as individuals. We shouldn't be complacent and we should strive to be better. But ultimately, it won't change until the huge multibillion dollar companies that profit from a T-shirt being 30p. Stop, stop doing that. And I don't know how we get round to that, really. But yeah, it is, it is something that really worries me, the way the environment is treated as it should worry everyone and I think it worries a lot of people. So yes.

Kiri 33:57

I think everyone's conscious of it now, you know, even if it's colloquially. I think people understand when they're, even if they make a joke about if they're buying a t shirt from Primark or wherever Tesco or whatever and it's like a quid they, people will pick up knowing like there's a cost here somewhere whether or not seeing it on the label. There's a cost somewhere I think, even you know, kids and people who wouldn't have thought about it before are moving forward. But you're so right. It's, it's not the consumers who need to fix the problem, is it?

Joe 34:28

No, it's really hard though and actually I don't buy, other than coats, I don't buy clothes really. I'll buy new pants when they fall into bits and that kind of thing. But generally, things will be bought for the TV shows that I do. And I'll hold on to them and I'll use them in beyond so I'm very fortunate in that regard that I, but I don't like throwing out stuff that I've worn on TV shows or whatever, I like to kind of hold on, hold on to it or donate it for charity or whatever, because yeah, it can just be so wasteful this industry for that kind of thing.

Kiri 35:10

Yeah. Is there? Do you have an item of clothing that you can put on and you just feel amazing straightaway? That you're like I feel great in this?

Joe 35:19

I think it's, I might have, can I put it on now?

Kiri 35:22

Oh, I'd love for you to put it on right now.

Joe 35:28

Can you see me?

Kiri 35:30

Yes, I can. Yes, please. Oh, I love it.

Joe 35:35

Isn't that amazing?

Kiri 35:36

It's like a, in the nice possible way, It's like a Yeti.

Joe 35:39

Yeah, it just makes me so happy. It's so warm.

Kiri 35:43

Is that sort of what they would have on the end of Afghan coats in the 70s. That sort of like Mongolian wool, Is it called the, the long yarn stuff. Yeah, that looks amazing. Oh, great. Yeah, of course, you feel happy in that.

Joe 35:53

Let me tell you what it is. It's reclaimed vintage. I don't even know what that means. Oh, oh, it's mainly plastic. That's good to know.

Kiri 36:09

But it's reclaimed vintage. So that would have gone in a landfill somewhere. And you're now striding around in it.

Joe 36:14

Yeah baby. I did get told off by a woman who lives around the corner from me, who I never met before this day, and I was wearing this coat. And she's called, well she's called Linda I now know. And then I was stood outside the wine shop buying some wine. And she was on the other side of the road. And she went, ? And I said no. And she said you shouldn't wear it, I'll tell you why. And I went over and had a chat with her because I was walking the same way as she was. And she was really nice. She, she speaks to the afterlife. So she had a word with the afterlife for me and said that I'm gonna have a nice life. But I will have some health issues, but they won't be fatal. So that's good to know. But yeah, she had.

Kiri 37:01

So you're living forever?

Joe 37:02

I will live forever. She told me, so I will live to see that era of fashion I was asking about. But she did say that she didn't want me to wear this anymore. And I don't want to defy Linda because I really liked her. I mean, I've literally met her that one day. And we just had a chat with her walking back to our respective houses. But um, but I love it so much, Kiri.

Kiri 37:23

Maybe you can wear it at occasions you don't think Linda is going to be present at.

Joe 37:27

Yeah, that's fair. That's fair.

Kiri 37:29

Is the argument, because I know some people don't think you should even wear animal prints in that it encourages the fur trade, was that her thinking?

Joe 37:36

I think so. Yes. But then you could say, oh, don't drink oat milk because it will encourage people to drink milk.

Kiri 37:42

I put a picture of myself in a poncho up on Instagram, and it's leopard print, and is made from recycled bottles pulled out of the sea. And this girl was like, I can't believe how unethical your poncho is. And I was like, it's, it's plastic. And she's like, Yeah, but you're encouraging people to use fur and I was like it's made out of recycled bottles. I'm trying my very hardest. But it's, it's, it can feel kind of impossible sometimes to do the right thing can't it?

Joe 38:12

Yeah. Well, that's the, that's one of my big issues actually with righteous social media users is that often they go for someone trying their best and maybe as they think not getting it quite right, and rather than going for the clear enemies of whatever issue it is, I've had it in terms of sexuality where like, I've at one point I, and I don't believe this so it was just me misspeaking, I said both genders rather than all genders whilst talking about pansexuality and somebody was like you're not a true pansexual we're the proper pansexuals and I'm thinking, I'm not the problem here. Yes, I mean, you can spend loads of energy having a go at me but I'm really trying my best here. Whereas there are lots of people not who you could really easily pull apart on this and you probably should because they're the, they're the bad guys.

Kiri 39:09

Yeah, true. But then they probably knew about your, how you really make you money which is running gay conversion camps, obviously.

Joe 39:16

Yes, but that's such a good pay.

Kiri 39:20

You got to pay for those coats somehow. So that's reclaimed vintage. What is your relationship with shopping? Is it something you find fun? Is it something even to find time to do, is it online?

Joe 39:32

No, I hate it. And I used to hate going to places like Topman because they're always so judgy and I would never fit into anything and they'd always be like, we've got some stock in the extra large in Milton Keynes and look at me like I was a piece of shit. And I just think you go and fuck yourself. I look forward to being served by you in a shell garage in 10 years. I'm so annoyed about the way they spoke to me, I'm really wound up today, I don't know what's happened. I've just found some pistachio in this coat. No I don't like shopping. I don't like people in fashion shops, particularly, I even find shopping online to be really grim because it always has to be, or doesn't have to be that you end up on places. Like, if you're looking for something specific, you end up with BooHoo or ASOS. And they're always, you just know when it comes in the bag that it's just been packed by a dying child somewhere. So I always get really sort of depressed by the whole thing. So no, shopping isn't something I enjoy when it comes to clothes. It's not, it's not fun.

Kiri 40:47

It's sad that isn't it? And you were like, you know you said earlier that you weren't as big as when you were younger? Because you're in terms of sizing and things like that, is that another strain if it had been like, it being someone who wasn't automatically fitting into the, you know, a Topman medium that adds another strain to the situation. Is that fair?

Joe 41:10

Yeah, yeah, well, just clothes weren't designed for bigger people in all of these high streets, they're getting better, but the way they treat bigger people in fashion is just appalling, basically, isn't it? And it's so, it's sort of, it amazes me that it's taken this long for them to work out that most of the people they're selling to aren't the size of the people that they present as, and I know it's aspirational in their minds of like, you'll feel like this model that hasn't eaten for five years. But you won't, you should feel like you feel, like whatever. And that's not, it shouldn't be aspirational, it should be, it should be honest, I suppose, but like, it should elevate the position you're in, in different ways with colour and shape and style. It shouldn't be about making you feel seen, and that being the only goal. It's not, it's not right.

Kiri 42:13

No, you're totally right, that I hadn't even thought about that as well, that so much fashion is geared towards the feeling they're trying to, like when they're like, you will feel a million dollars, what they actually mean is you will feel thin. And that is the same thing. I hadn't even thought about that. So you mentioned earlier charity shopping, and thrifting I guess if we're being very cool. Are you a charity shop fan? Like have you ever gotten anything really good from a charity shop that you, that you love?

Joe 42:44

Well, that cardigan that everyone hated came from a charity shop. So I love that because of the discomfort it brought to many family members. Beyond that, I don't think I've got much from charity shops, you know, I think it is, oh, did I get one of the coats, one of the first furs, faux furs I got? Yes.

The first faux fur. Wow. That's a tongue twister. The first faux fur I bought was from a charity shop. And it was this black massive thing with huge pockets. And I wore that for a good few years. And that made me very very happy.

Kiri 43:28

I wonder how you reconcile your like, natural playfulness in how you dress yourself. And like even today when you're in your like sweats, you still got a fun shoe. You've got a very bright trainer on and some purple socks, and the hat of a millionaire of course. But I, because on sewing bee it works perfectly because you are one of the rare cases, I think only you and Joel I can think of, where I'm excited to see what the male host is wearing that like oh, it's gonna be a fun thing. And often it ties into the theme and is just really as your sense of fun comes over beautifully in your wardrobe on sewing bee really beautifully. But how that fits with other programmes because with Joe Lycett's got your back. You are, it's a consumer rights programme, and like there's so, does it have to speak the language of that of normally that's, you know, it's a suit and it's quite, you know, you wear jackets on that and is that a nod to the genre you're working in?

Joe 44:34

Yeah, it's a bit of they're always slightly mad jackets in studio. They're always you know, a bit more sort of straight laced, but in my kind of more camp way. But on, on the ground and we're actually going to these companies, I'm often dressed in fairly sure I've worn this coat in that series. But also I'm dressed like, when we did like, the story with Hermes, for example, where they, we found that they were selling, Hermes, the parcel company, were selling undelivered parcels in auctions, in from an auction house in Birmingham, which is absurd. So we bought some stuff and returned it to people. But I then went and took our findings to the head of Hermes UK, dressed as Hermes in a massive parcel that we took. I was delivered to him. And, and so I love dressing up for that, because it's, it can make the point actually. So yeah, so it's not a serious, weirdly that programme is a kind of pure hybrid of serious and not serious at the same time. And I think most the time we straddle that line pretty well. But yeah, I'm always looking for the way of essentially taking the piss out of the story that we're doing. Because that's where the most fun is, and often where the most impact is, weirdly. So it is about kind of turning up in a massive coat, and my favourite thing when those things happen is when you get the employees, this happened at Hermes, and this happened in other offices, where they all rushed to the window, and they're like, fucking Alex Jones. He's dressed as Hermes or he's dressed in a massive coat or whatever, they start taking pictures, and they're all excited. And then somebody in senior management, it always happens, it takes about five minutes. Suddenly, the shutters are down, back away from the window, stop taking photos, because obviously they can't be seem to be enjoying their own companies, being the piss taken ourselves, so they have to sort of retreat. And I love that because I'm like, you'll be waving for about three minutes, here's the manager, see ya, it's really quick. It's, it's really fun. So often the outfits are good fun for that, because it's something they can film from a distance. Yeah, really fun.

Kiri 46:55

Love it. Absolutely love it. It's your, your style now feels like really, I think really clear. Like, you know, you could, I think that someone could go out shopping and be like, Oh, this is the kind of thing Joe Lycett would wear. Do you know what I mean? Because there's a sense of fun to it. Do you see your

style evolving more as you, as you get older? Or do you think like, this is me now, this sort of like flourish? And, and this fondness is going to stay?

Joe 47:21

No, I think it's evolving. I really like, I bought a coat actually, which last year, the year before, which was like a big puffer thing. And I love those big puffer coats and they're like, cool, young people are wearing the big puffers whereas they wouldn't, a lot of the cool young people wouldn't be seen dead in this. So I do have a real, I love the aesthetic of kind of grime, musicians and hip hop and cool trainers. You know, hoodies that kind of vibe, I essentially want to be the Drake of the comedy world. So I can feel myself heading towards that and I haven't worn jeans for ages because, why would you in a lockdown scenario, so I'm really into sort of slacks and joggers these days in a way that I didn't used to be. So I'm definitely, things are definitely evolving. The problem with me is everything I wear I end up in the garden in it because I've never change before I go into the garden. So everything in the last year that I wear, like these trainers were a much lighter colour than they are now because they're now covered in mud from my garden. So I think I'm going for hip hop, grime gardening, chic.

Kiri 48:36

Yeah, okay, sort of like Monty Don. meets a grime artist. Yeah, there we go. Thank you. You saved me. I think I've seen a cut you're talking about? Is it the red and black one, and it's got sort of like, it's like floor length puffer jacket?

Joe 48:54

Oh my god. Yeah. The reason I stopped wearing is this because it's, it is amazing, it says BHM on it, which I thought meant Birmingham, but actually it stands for BooHooMan. And then I did a story on my show about BooHoo where they were essentially because of the speed at which their staff are meant to check the clothes. They don't check the clothes and they put them back on sale if you return things without checking them and we tested this by buying some clothes, putting, soiling them ourselves with various condiments sending them back to BooHoo getting a full refund no questions asked and then rebuying the same things with literally our condiments still on them. So like I put in a tailor into some, into like a plaice suit I think, then we sent it back, they gave us a refund, I then bought the same plaice suit and the literally the plaice suit with the Nutella and the crotch came from BooHoo. So I felt like I should probably stop wearing massive BooHoo labels when I go out.

Kiri 50:00

So, so your gorgeous coat that you've bought, your statement coat, is that, is that an item you can see yourself wearing for the, for the rest of your life? I know you talked about your style evolving, but is there anything you own now that you think I'll always have this, I'll always love this?

Joe 50:13

I hope so. Yeah, I think the only thing with this coat is it will probably start to get scraggier and scraggier, and also, you know, if I bump into Linda again, I'm in real trouble. So, I don't know. But yeah, I'd like to think I'll keep wearing it. Although I wore it the other night. We had a bonfire and it smells very bonfirey. I might have to get the febreze on this actually. Yes, very smokey.

Kiri 50:37

Oh, yeah. Because once the smell gets in that fabric, it's possibly there for life.

Joe 50:42

Yeah, well, it is in.

Kiri 50:44

It's quite deep isn't it? I once bought a rain mac from then shrill indoor market. And I, it was like you know one of those old women ones where it's a plastic mac with like polka dots on, I just thought I've been subversive. So I was like I'll buy one of those that sold women macs. And it smells of egg and chips for two years solidly. When they come into my student room be like, what's that smell? Its the Mac and I used to shower with it on and I couldn't get the smell out. Yeah, so it really stunk. It's fine now, but it got to a point where I just couldn't fit in it. So I was like, by the time it stops smelling of egg, I had to get rid of it. So are there any trends that you're hoping never come back?

Joe 51:28

No, it's my friend Alexa Chung, who I've actually only ever met once, and she didn't ask me what my name was. As my friend Alexa Chung says, never say never in fashion because you'll be wearing never in two years time. And I just think that's the best quote ever.

Kiri 51:54

Final question is what outfit would you be buried in?

Joe 52:02

Oh, that is a, I mean, just because I love a snooze, I think it would have to be, it would have to be something that I snooze in. I'd love to be buried like under a duvet with nice cushions and all of that. Just like you know, bed or bedtime forever, forever bedtime. But maybe with one little flourish that sort of a bit party. So if Yeah, I don't know.

Kiri 52:31

So you mean like a duvet that's tucked in around you. But it's actually a twister mat as well. One of those duvets. Yeah. That's so lovely. Joe, thank you so much for chatting. What a great chat. You're so, just so interesting. And I yeah, I love, I love seeing what you wear. I'm so excited when there's men on television that we can be excited about what they're wearing as well. And it's important as well for especially as being like a queer guy, like for young queer kids to see someone having fun, because you so outwardly have fun in what you're wearing. And I think it's so rare to see that I think what you're doing is having really important silent conversations with what you wear.

Joe 53:17

Well, that's very nice. I don't, I never sort of think of it like that. But now you've said that I will. And I'll think that I'm really important.

Kiri 53:26

Good, I'm glad. Oh, Joe, I think it is so lovely that you can see his sort of daft streak extending to every part of his life. Obviously it's in his comedy, but it's in his socks, in his Friday jumpers. I just think it's, it's so great that, that spirit, that you know of like cheekiness, that you can absolutely see in his wardrobe, I think it's fantastic. What a nice chap. As soon as I recorded this episode, I knew who the small business I wanted to shout out should be. So this is something I do every episode, I love small businesses, I love how passionate and innovative and sustainable they are. And I'm like many of us trying to move away from chains and fast fashion. So let me shout about this small business. So to celebrate Joe's penchant for a delicate piece of statement jewellery. I would love to introduce you to Claire Hill designs. A Welsh female owned business who not only makes amazing pieces of affordable Demi Fine Jewellery, she also does more for any other small business and Freelancer than any human I know, she's always championing small brands that's how I found loads of the like, the places I shop now is through Claire. So her range is defined as Demi fine so it's made with a gold, I'm gonna say this wrong, vermeil? I think it is, vermeil, don't ask me to re-record it Jo because I'm going to wear my ignorance on my sleeve here Okay, so it's made with gold vermeil, so it means that it has a silver base and a gold plating that's five times thicker than normal gold plate. Now the idea is that it's much higher quality and it's made to last and what is more sustainable than having something for the whole of your life. And speaking of as well all the pieces come with a year long guarantee, replating options, care guide, fixing service, and she's just starting a new scheme as well to buy back your silver. So this has all been a massive overhaul for Claire who's always made gorgeous jewellery and I've bought my agents some, I've bought my sister in law some, I've got some beautiful pieces, always get compliments for them, and I just was having such an interesting chat with her recently that she's being like, be the change you want to see and just changing how she works her business to make sure that it's making the world a better place and not taking away from it. So all Claire's silver is certified recycled and every gold piece has a recycled silver base. So reusing and recycling silver actually helps close the loop and then that gives silver new life. Now the factories that Claire works with only use ethically sourced gemstones that is incredibly rare. And also she's starting to use lab grown stones and diamonds too which I think is so exciting. Grow everything in a lab. Let me start eating meat again because it's grown in the lab. Let me wear loads of diamonds because they're grown in the lab. Yes please. Claire works the two factories based in Thailand, they have high standards of staff welfare and pay, no child or forced labour and proper working hours. One is a member of the responsible jewellery Council and the other has been audited by Intertek as well. All this stuff is like, it's so rare to go to, especially a jewellers website and find all this information like haven't even gone to Claire on this, this is all there. She's really transparent. She's written long blogs about this stuff. It's so interesting. So these factories have a high female workforce, many of the women in management positions, that's what we like to see, because it doesn't matter if all the women are on the shop floor, you need them running stuff as well. So between both factories, they've got schemes like onsite childcare, education, scholarships, pay for COVID vaccinations for staff, and have set up charity funds and services for families in need, incredible, and Claire also uses a family run factory in Shropshire for a selection of the chains and a place in Hatton gardens in London. Look at her jewellery, there is a beautiful birth stone range. They're just really like, I guess Modern Classic is the phrase right? And I'm absolutely going to treat myself to something from her new shorthand range that's coming this month. So she's got these beautiful pendants with shorthand, she's got a selection of words on there. And they're just so nice, because I've got a similar pendant to it. Actually, the noise you're gonna hear is me looking up to the side of me seeing if I can see where it is, but it's on my other jewellery stand. And it's, I always get

compliments on it. It's like a beautiful disc. So I'm gonna get one of those, exciting. Now we've had an email here that I want to share, because I think it's absolutely bang on where I want this podcast to go to because I love making this podcast, but I think the conversations are worth their weight in gold. But I also think the bigger meta conversation that we're having with it is so important. And I think from having other podcasts, you can genuinely grow a community. And I think that the community that listens to this podcast would be very keen and helping and hopefully moving forward doing some stuff together. So Dear Kiri, first I'd like to say what a fabulous listen who are you wearing is, I could have left out but I didn't. I followed so many new business pages because your view and your guests it brings me so much joy love it. My friends were a little bit amused as I now ask them what they'd like to be buried in. I see it as an important part of our friendship and Gretchen absolutely mate. And now she says I was wondering how I would go about utilising that WYW hive mind. I'm looking for a designer or creative person who can reimagine some of my clothes. I've many sequins and special pieces of clothing that I've had for a long time, and unfortunately don't fit my current body shape. I don't want to sell or give them away because I love them. But I know realistically that they are never gonna fit again. I would like to find a person that will be able to work with me to create new pieces out of my faithful old clothes. Can you help advise me on how or ask your followers if they have any recommendations? Thank you in advance Mony. Guys, what you got for us? We have a guest coming up who specialises in this stuff and has made something for me. I chatted about it on an Instagram Live I did last week, which loads of you were there, chatting back, but maybe we should do a specific one about this. Obviously we've got Makita's great tip about taking stuff to dry cleaners who are often tailors but it's, it's more than that, isn't it? It's creating something new out of what you've got. It's not just sort of taking it up or even putting a panel in. And I think we've got just the guest on the horizon in a couple of episodes for you. But I would love to hear from you guys because this is right up my street as well. So you can get in contact with us on Instagram @whoareyouwearingpod or you can email whoareyouwearingpod@gmail.com I'm honestly, I'm so interested in this. I would love this podcast to be part of a community that manages to fold sustainability into loving clothes and style. And we've got some great guests like I say coming up in that vein too. And I also think that last week's episode, with Keita really spoke to people too, because obviously the big focus on secondhand and alterations, Madeline said, I love this one so much. And I want to go clothes shopping with both Carrie and Makita love this podcast. Can you imagine what day out that would be? I'd be, oh my god, I'd be in heaven. If I ever find myself doing that. I would know I've been sort of like had some terrible accident probably just slipping in the bath or something. And yeah, that I'm in my heaven. Helen said of that episode, fabulous episode, especially the passionate love of the trousers. Absolutely love a trouser mate. Although this is an interesting point, Lucy says my seamstress charges a fortune. Being five foot one means I have to get everything altered, which adds an average 25 quid to every garment. I need to learn how to sew. Interesting you say this Lucy preach. I've talked about this on that Insta Live as well that I did from my cupboard. I really want to learn how to sew and just feel a bit more empowered to take the reins in adapting the clothing I've got and I get the impression lots of us are feeling like that especially in the new year. I've sold a couple of local things to me in north Wales. There's like a group called tecstiliau, who offer different kinds of courses and I think they've got, I've heard they've got a sewing machine one coming up. My friend, my dear friend Rachel Fairburn, future guest on this podcast. We've already recorded the episode. It's a, it's a belter. She wants to do the same as well. So guys, if you know of any, like sewingy things, I'd love to hear from you as well. I'm not very good because of how I learned with just like an online course. Maybe I need to sit down and persevere with some YouTube tutorials. But the old ADHD doesn't make that stuff very easy

for me. So yeah, I would love to hear from you because it feels like lots of us are on the same page with this. Thank you again for listening to the podcast and please now go straightway to where you get your podcasts and give us a nice review. I think we deserve it. I think it's a really good series. And if you give it a nice review more people find it so thank you. That was me driving assertive and then immediately backing down and feeling embarrassed. Next week you guys have the pleasure of earwiging into a chat about clothes and fashion between me and one of my style icons quite frankly, Lolly Adefope, see you then! Who Are You Wearing is produced by Joe Southerd, The artwork is by Mary Phillips and the music is by Annie glass. This has been a Little Wander production.