

Who Are You Wearing Suzi Ruffell

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SPEAKERS

Kiri, Suzi

Kiri 00:00

Hello, I'm stand up comedian Kiri Pritchard McLean here to tell you that I'm on tour with my brand new show home truths. I'm going all over the country wherever will have me. I'm touring right through the spring and then because some of you lovely lot have bought so many tickets, I'm now getting to talk for the whole of autumn as well. If you would like to get tickets, they're all available on my website. Or you can go to littlewander.co.uk and get tickets there. I can't wait to see you, and I don't want to brag but I've got one hell of an outfit. Welcome to Who are you wearing? This is a podcast about style and fashion, and I'm your host Kiri Pritchard McLean. My guest this week is a phenomenal standup. They're also an actor, a writer, they're loads of things, but they are one of the snappiest dressers I know, it's the fantastic Suzi Ruffell. This episode was recorded in April 2021. Suzi was home in London and I was in Wales all crunched up in my cupboard. Now, I really love this episode, it is always a joy to speak to Suzi, really lovely pal of mine, who has, I think, just charisma and humour just crackling out of her every point. She's also incredibly honest and gifted when it comes to introspection. So I think this ended up being a really lovely episode, especially when Suzi talks about representation of gay women in our media. I think that's such an important conversation, and she's just so thoughtful and honest about it. Now, Suzi has had a really interesting journey with her style. I was really surprised to hear that, for years, she sort of used fashion to just hide away and disconnect from her gender and from growing up, and I think when she talks about feeling like she's sort of, I don't know, playing a part for years, is going to mean lots to so many of us, you know that whole pretending to be normal. Growing up is exhausting, isn't it? I think you're gonna love this episode. No, I don't think actually, I know you're gonna love this episode. It's an absolute corker. Let's get on with it, shall we? Please sit back and enjoy me asking Suzi Ruffell, who are you wearing?

Suzi 02:48

I remember always wanting to wear the same thing as sort of, I had sort of two best friends growing up who I'm still friends with now, Phoebe and Katie and I would want to wear what they were wearing. So I've always been copying. So there's quite a lot of quite funny photos of us in like those like shorty all in ones with like, a basketball and high tops actually. So a look that I

would love to have now. I can remember feeling quite embarrassed by clothes quite early. So rather than feeling like, Oh, I feel really great in this I remember feeling quite silly in a dress from quite early on. So there's a picture of her mum and dad's house. I'm not sure if you saw it when you came to mum and dad's, where I'm dressed as a sailor with a boater hat on. I mean, I was about six and I remember thinking, I look like a fucking twat, like an absolute, this is embarrassing. It's embarrassing for me, my brother's embarrassed, mum seemed happy about this. Like, I remember not feeling comfortable in a dress from quite early on, and feeling a bit like a fraud. Even though I am, I'm cisgender, and I'm very comfortable in being a woman. I'm a gay woman, but I'm very happy being a woman. But I remember not liking that sort of forced femininity or forced, This is how you're meant, you're meant to look and when you look like this, you need to not run about you need to be prim and proper. Get off your roller skates. So I think that rather than feeling like I felt super confident in clothes, I think for me that came actually much, much later. Like, into my adulthood when I was like, oh, I feel great in this, and up until then I felt like for quite a long time, and this includes sort of my teens and then even into my early 20s, where I would sort of constantly feel like I was trying to look more feminine, and I was feeling consistently quite embarrassed by it but still trying to make it work.

K

Kiri 04:58

Maybe you just hated the Navy.

S

Suzi 05:00

Maybe, I say that and then I'm wearing a nautical shirt. So I give with one hand I take away with the other. That's the thing with me. You can never trust me.

K

Kiri 05:10

How did you feel about, what did you wear to school? Did you wear trousers or did you wear a dress?

S

Suzi 05:13

I had to wear, so primary school I wore, what do you call like a tunic? Like a little...

K

Kiri 05:19

I know what you mean like a pinup.

S

Suzi 05:20

Yeah, like a very big tabard, or tabard it's not tabard, is it? It's tabard.

K Kiri 05:25
I love tabard though. I wasn't gonna pull you off on that.

S Suzi 05:28
That feels like how a drag queen would say tabard.

K Kiri 05:31
It feels like a drag queen name like Sue Tabard.

S Suzi 05:34
Let me just write that down. I don't know how long this career is gonna last, or if I'm another one. Yeah, so that was a white shirt, and I think a tie even at primary school, and then in secondary school, I wore a green pleated skirt for the first sort of year or so, and I think once you got to year nine, you're allowed to wear trousers, and then I was straight into townie girl, get them trousers on, and with a with a white shirt, a green and yellow tie, and a green V neck jumper. Which I actually didn't mind, I quite like uniform. That sounds like I'm gonna be like, sexy uniform dating. But more like, everyone has to wear the same. Great, and there's an androgyny to it, which I think I liked.

K Kiri 06:23
Yeah. So you know you're, are you like magpieing from friends and liking the idea? Because to me, that's not necessarily copying that's like, you want uniformity, and you want a like, like some kind of expression that you want us to be the same, and maybe a parity. But so did you have a strong style as a kid then, was it coming over in other ways?

S Suzi 06:42
I think like, in as much as I was quite sort of confident and outgoing and like performing constantly. I mean, I guess what some people would describe as unbearable, but mummy encouraged it. So I think that I was confident in other ways. But I don't think that any sort of stylishness was coming out. I remember getting a shirt from Morgan, for I think my 16th birthday, which was a top that was sort of in the theme of a shirt. So it had like a collar, and it said Morgan on it, and I think it had white cuffs and a white collar. But then it was just sort of like a black, sort of quite cheap, thin material, and it didn't have buttons or anything. But I do remember thinking, I liked that it had a collar and I thought that was very cool. I remember wearing that with a pair of trousers and a chain belt. If you can imagine such a thing, and white pointed toe boots, I've always liked white boots.

K Kiri 07:12



Kiri 07:42

I love this look. I really love that. That is, I think I could carbon date that to the month when you bought that. It's an absolute snapshot of an era. Was it a sort of thin jerseyish material?



Suzi 07:56

That would be right Kiri, yeah, I occasionally would be quite sort of, I guess, like outrageous with what I wore. So there's like, there's a great picture on my Instagram page, even if I do say so myself, of me in this, I think you commented on it, of me in this fake fur coat, and I've got really long hair, and I've sort of got my legs up and the local newspaper did a story about me moving to London to become an actor. I mean, it was a slow news day. Sure, and now I'm like how did I have the confidence to be like, a full fur fake coat in loads of different colours? Yeah I'll wear that. But I'm sure I must have seen like Destiny's Child wearing something similar and was like, that's cool. People think that's cool. I'll wear that, and I remember having a denim cat suit as well, that I thought was very, Destiny's child 'survivor' video.



Kiri 08:47

So you're picking from like pop culture then, as a teen, and as a kid, so was it, who was having a say in how you dressed, was mum involved?



Suzi 08:57

Oh, she was trying to be, look Kiri you've met ? Ruffell, a lovely woman. But she, yeah, I think she was trying to, she was always trying to make me more girly. Constantly, I would say that it's only now that she like loves what I wear. But even like when I wear a tie on television, I'll be like, I've worn a shirt and tie to like, prep her for it before she's like, but I think now she thinks how I dress is quite cool, and she sort of gets it, but I think certainly because she was raising a small gay, I think she was very concerned that I was going to immediately get short back and sides, wear a Ben Sherman and become very dikey which I actually think is a very cool look. But my mum was very worried about what that look would mean, what people would say to me, how people would react in Portsmouth which now I think it's a lot more open minded, but certainly when I was sort of 18, 19, it wasn't, or at least I didn't feel like it was in my mind. I mean cut to now I mean, it's literally a career.



Kiri 10:03

She's basically trying to mitigate any repercussions from being in an area that isn't as cool and open minded necessarily, or that was the feeling, so she's going, like, come on, let's just temper whatever she felt was going on.



Suzi 10:19

Yeah, I think I also wasn't out then, and so I think that mum was like, just put on a dress, just wear a print, like just, so my mum would like, my mum loves how you dress, she would be like, oh I saw Kiri on something she looked great. Like she would be very into how whatever you

Oh I saw him on something, she looked great. Like, she would be very into now, whatever you wear sort of feels like a party. Like it's, it feels sort of celebratory, and sort of celebratory in your femininity, whereas I very much wanted to dim that in me. I was like, I kind of don't even want people to, I didn't really want to be noticed for my, I wanted people to think that I was sort of funny. I remember wanting people to think I was funny from quite a young age, and that I was sort of good at dramatic stuff. But I didn't really want people to think any more about me. Not even like if I had a boyfriend or anything particularly girly about me, I've never had very big boobs, and I was very flat chested and sort of hit puberty quite a lot later than the other girls. So I sort of stayed in that androgynous place that sort of childlike place for longer, which I really liked, where gender wasn't really important, and we were, we were all kind of Peter Pan, you know, and then all of a sudden, you get to secondary school and like girls are talking about bras and some girls have boobs, and all of a sudden, it's a big thing, and for me, I was like, I don't want that to happen. I want to carry on being seven, and so I think that certainly at that point, I was sort of, in what I was wearing, I think uniform, and not just like the specific school uniform, but like the uniform of what girls wore. So it'd be like, very Rachel Stevesesque. You know, a bootcut jean, a pair of like moshy trainers, do you know what I mean, like, like animal trainers, or quicksilver trainers, that sort of thing, and then like a rip curl T-shirt. I sort of liked the idea of feeling like I lived in Australia, which is, that's how I thought Australians dressed.

K

Kiri 12:20

Well, I think, you know, heartbreak high. Jurassic is one of the ultimate style icons. I remember when I was growing up thinking I just want to look like him. I thought he looked really cool. Yes, he lived in a warehouse, and probably should have been in social care, looking back, and you know.

S

Suzi 12:34

But hindsight is 2020.

K

Kiri 12:35

I love the look. So in this pursuit of sort of femininity, in that you're not out and your mum's trying to sort of, I guess there's an air of protection there. Were you ever whacked in anything you absolutely hated?

S

Suzi 12:49

Oh loads. Yeah, like, my prom dress, like my mum got it made for me, which was so nice, and I mean, we were all just delighted that we were having a prom because it felt so American, and at that point, being American was the absolute pinnacle of everything. I mean, now, maybe not. But certainly then it seemed very cool to have, yeah, like, because they're like clueless, because of mean girls. You know, all of those TV shows that we were watching, you know, Sweet Valley High, and everything was about prom, and so we were like, we got to have a prom, which was great. But then it was always like, what am I going to wear, and so my mum's friend who was a dressmaker made me this sort of very over the top girly dress, and I

remember wearing fake nails, and I probably looked exactly how my mum like, my mum probably absolutely loved it, and I remember feeling like, once again, there was that voice in my head going, you look like a fucking twat.

K Kiri 13:54

Because I can't like, I've had times where I've felt like, Oh, you look like a dick, you know, but, but prom when you're like, it's kind of your like, promise that you're gonna feel great, and everyone's gonna punch the sky at the end. So to feel like you're not you and that you're like, playing the part of somebody else. I can't imagine the turmoil and the difficulty.

S Suzi 14:17

But I sort of felt like that until I was about 21. Like, I was playing a part, feeling like I was constantly sort of, it's something that I've now as like, a much older person. Not that I'm much older, but much older than I was then, as your senior Kiri, as a 65 year old woman, but I feel like I was for a long time trying really hard to be normal, or what I was, like, you know, that word means nothing to me now really. But a pursuit of normal was, I just wanted to be like my friends. I didn't want to be gay. I didn't want to have these sort of fixations with girls. I didn't want to have to deal with all those feelings. I just wanted to be normal.

K Kiri 15:07

So like, we grew up, we're about the same age. How did you negotiate the big trends? What were the big trends that you remember hitting and being like, this is a thing that I need to partake in, and how did you negotiate that? Were there any that suited you?

S Suzi 15:20

Yeah, the von dutch cap.

K Kiri 15:23

Hello, yes, please.

S Suzi 15:24

I think we can all remember.

K Kiri 15:25

I had a black and white one. Yeah.

S

Suzi 15:28

Mine was camouflage. So could you see me probably because it had VON DUTCH written in yellow. I thought that was unbelievably cool. Very baggy jeans. I went through that phase of very baggy jeans and roller skates, not blades, skates. Going down the seafront. Occasionally a skateboard. I went through a phase of wearing a beanie all the time, because pink had worn one in a video. I think the video for 'you make me sick'. She wore a little blue kango beanie, and I got a little blue kango beanie, it was not the same one. But I remember thinking this is very cool. We'd better alert the authorities because something very cool is happening. I feel like I've worn skinny jeans for 70% of my life. Like I've been in skinny jeans. So as soon as they came in, I was like, this is my look great. I can just wear skinny jeans all the time. But rather than having like, I didn't go through like a goth phase or anything like that. But it was more the Avril Levine skater boy phase.

K

Kiri 16:40

During any of these stages of your, sort of like growing up and adolescence, was there an item of clothing you had that you put on and you felt amazing or you felt like you in?

S

Suzi 16:51

I don't think so. I don't think that happened till I was in my 20s. Which I think is surprising cause I think people see me now, surprising, I mean, I don't know how much people thought about what I wear. But I think a lot of people might assume that I'd always been very confident with clothing and how I dress, because now I sort of dress in a way that's very statementy. But I think that didn't happen until, it didn't happen until I got quite good at stand up.

K

Kiri 17:21

Did you hit a rebellious phase, and did it show up in what you're wearing?

S

Suzi 17:25

I had definitely had a rebellious phase at school, and I think, I think that was probably around the time when I started wearing the baggy jeans. Got quite into eyeliner. Eyeliner then became very important, and I would say that, there was probably around 10 years where I wore eyeliner every single day, in the waterline, and I still, I mean have I got it on today? Yeah, I think I do.

K

Kiri 17:50

You still wear it? It's a bit of a Suzi Ruffell trademark that.

S

Suzi 17:53

S SUZI 17:53

Yeah, it was it used to be a lot sort of thicker. Because I remember I've got like, I've been in this, I've got very long hair that's been straightened within an inch of its life. So that feels sort of, that was sort of my way and parting it in the middle. Very Alanis Morissette rather than over to one side, that sort of look. Maybe like a studded belt, sure. I really wanted the All Saints one, but I couldn't afford it, cause mum was like 100 pounds on a belt, of course not. Go into Claires, get one in there. So that sort of thing. Went through a phase of hooking, having like a bulldog clip for my keys on my belt. It's all androgyny. I think that was how it was sort of coming out. But I think that being a bit of a Grunger you know, and this would be like one day a week. I'd be like, I'm gonna dress like a grunger today, would you use that word grunger? Is that a very Portsmouth word?

K Kiri 18:58

We were called goths in school. But yeah, we would have said skaters about ourselves.

S Suzi 19:03

Yeah. So we would, you'd say grungier in Portsmouth, my dad always got it wrong and called us gunges, and sure, and I, that style is sort of quite androgynous, isn't it? So I think I liked that. I remember these fucking massive trousers I had. I think they were animal. They had I mean, far, far too many pockets for a 15 year old. Where am I going? What do I need all these pockets for?

K Kiri 19:35

Literally don't have that many things in your bedroom.

S Suzi 19:37

I've got nothing, I've got Vaseline lip balm, the key to the back door and a Nokia 3310.

K Kiri 20:13

So the style that we know now is Suzi Ruffell, and there's there's prints in there. There's lots of tailoring. When did that start appearing? Because it's not in your teenage years, and it sounds like it wasn't even in you being in, most people hit their sort of style in uni, or as a teenager, but it feels like that didn't happen for you?

S Suzi 20:32

It didn't happen with me. So I started when I was about 23. So, about 12 years ago, yeah, that's right, and that was that look was a pair of white Doc Martens that had a zip up the front, black skinny jeans, a black vest, and a jazzy jacket. I wouldn't have called it a jazzy jacket then, it

would be like, a tailored jacket with something that I'd got from a charity shop. That is the kind of thing that quite a confident woman in her 70s might wear. That was the look.

K

Kiri 21:08

There's pictures I've seen and from seeing your early days, this is when your hair was much longer and curly as well right?

S

Suzi 21:13

I had it short, and then I grew it out because an ex, I was worried about being too, I was worried about looking too gay to an ex girlfriend's mother. So I decided to grow my hair out. Yeah, I mean, I think there's potentially internalised homophobia there. But there's, there's a lot less of it now. But yeah, there was a phase where I had quite long curly hair down to about my shoulders, which doesn't, I think we can all agree doesn't look great on me.

K

Kiri 21:44

You're very attractive. So I think you can pull off anything, but I always think that because you can pull off a short haircut. Why wouldn't you, because that's what not many people can do. So like, if you've got, if you can pull off short hair, chop it all off I say, because all you're doing is going, this is just how good my face is, I suppose what I'm doing will be like, look at all the curtains and fancy things around my face.

S

Suzi 22:08

Yeah, I think, I think that it's, it came down to being sort of confident enough to really go for it with short hair. At one point it was like a french crop, which I sort of loved, my mum hated. Your hair is too short now, that is too short. I don't mind that it's short, but I'm just letting you know that, that is too short. You've dropped your eyeliner. I guess, he is very problematic, but I thought dressing a bit like Russell Brand was very good. Sort of, some chains sometimes, like unbelievably skinny jeans like I was, like, like they were sprayed on, and, and I wore that for a while, and then I got quite into wearing a jazzy shirt, which for me is, a typical jazzy shirt is, the fabric would be sort of a silk, or a fake silk, a filk, it would be sort of a bold print. Basically what I want is a Versace shirt. But I've never bought a Versace shirt because they're very, very expensive. So when I go into somewhere like beyond retro or like quite a good charity shop, that's the bold print I'm looking for, to wear that with a plain trouser. Its not a plain trouser, it's a denim, like a black denim or blue denim jean with a boot, and then the suits have been something that have come about in, I would say the last three years. So it's quite recent that I've started really getting into tailoring and that is where I feel most at home. So wearing, and it took me a really long time to get the confidence to wear a suit and to buy a boys suit because that's the look that I like, I don't want one button in the middle for girls. I don't want that line. I now do wear women's suits, but they're from places that are doing sort of an androgynous tailoring, but because I don't have boobs and I haven't got much of a bum. If I wear a woman's suit there's like a lot of room at the top and a lot of room at the back, and you know, I've already got trousers with too many pairs of pockets. I don't need any more room. Okay. Do you

know what, I think it's hanging around with Tom Allen. Tom is like wear a suit, just wear a suit, and so being with someone like Tom, who is very confident in how, are you having him on this podcast? I'm sure he'll talk a lot about dressing Dickensian as a teenager, which would be great stuff. I think basically that's what I've always wanted to wear. I've always wanted to wear a suit. I love how I feel in a suit. I love how I feel when I put a suit on, I feel really confident because for a long time, I didn't like how I looked or I was trying to be, you know, there's loads of pictures of me from drama school wearing like, fur gilets, which now, like my friends that I, that I trained with, like, will look at these pictures and be like, who were you? Like, like I wore loads of like, really overtly feminine stuff like plunging necklines to show my like 34 A breasts? Do you want to see a sternum? Have a look. Like I was, my clothes were cashing checks that my body couldn't cash. but then as soon as I started wearing suits, and then it took me about 18 months ago, something like that. I did the Jonathan Ross show, and I decided I wanted to wear a suit and tie, and its the first time I'd worn it anywhere. I've not worn it out to like a party or anything that I was like, I want to wear a suit and tie, and I want a double breasted jacket, and I want to look like Diane Keaton going to the oscars, and I felt quite nervous about that. The lady who did my makeup was like, you look amazing, and it was almost like I was like, this is what I should have always worn. This is what I look best in, all those years of like trying so hard to fit into this box that I didn't fit in, and knowing exactly what it was that I wanted to wear. I knew exactly what it was I wanted to wear. I always wanted to wear a suit and tie. I was always jealous that Tom could wear it. I was, I never understand why men don't wear that more. Like I'll see, like, you know, especially like male comics, who like some of them dress, you know, some of them will put on an ironed shirt. But you know, if they've got a critic in, sure.

K

Kiri 24:42

Yeah.

S

Suzi 26:29

Or an ex girlfriend in the vicinity? Sure. But you know, day 24 of Edinburgh, you're lucky if that's only had two shows in it, and then I was like, why am I always encouraging men to wear suits when the truth is, is that I just want to wear a suit, and so after doing that, and wearing that, I was like, right, this is the look. I know I don't wear it for everything. I don't say, I don't wear it every time doing telly. But it's definitely something that, do you know what it's funny because I distinctly remember seeing Sara Pascoe, who's a friend to both of us, she wore a suit in one of her, in some of her press shots, and I remember being quite, like looking at her and being like, she looks great, and being sort of jealous of the fact that I was like, why can't I just do that? Why haven't I been able to just do that, and then I did. But I remember thinking, I'd love to be able to wear that, and then part of my brain just went you can, like you can, and so it's now, you know, I really liked that you think that I'm really stylish, and it's something that I'm delighted if people think I'm stylish, but if you asked me to put on a dress now I would feel like a fucking twat. Oh, just yeah, I've got a dress that I've worn once. Because I was in Fred Perry, and I was like, maybe this is me, and then I put it on, I wore it out and went, no, still not, and I feel sort of, also if I wear a dress, on the few occasions when I have, people make a really big deal out of it. Like you're wearing a dress, and then I'm like, well, I can never wear this again.

K Kiri 28:31

That's annoying.

S Suzi 28:34

I've toyed with braces for a long time. That's another thing that I tried to do that as a teenager. Because you remember when braces were quite in as a teenager?

K Kiri 28:42

Yes, yes, I do. I remember accumulating a load from charity shops and I would wear them sort of down around my baggy jeans I believe, or over a little brownies T-shirt or something, you know, super wacky. But yes, I do remember and I remember a look from you as well that is not that, it's not that far away of, well a stage look I've seen you is, I like how you mix. It's not even casual. It's sort of military and tailing. So I've seen you in a great suit and Doc Martens and I've seen you in Doc Martens, skinny jeans, and a Fred Perry as well. So I've seen, those are like strong Suzi looks.

S Suzi 29:17

Oh yeah, I went through a phase of just wearing Fred Perrys on stage as well, sort of looking like a skinhead without the sort of racist connotations. I'm hastened to add. Babe this is a podcast please don't. Basically, I watched This is England, and went, Vicky McClure is very cool. I mean basically what I'm learning from this podcast is I don't have style. I am a magpie, and I just go I'll have that, and I'll have that, and today I'll pretend to be this kind of person.

K Kiri 29:49

Because to me, the great like, Vicky McClure in This is England, that great style of a female skinhead, like that is totally playing with like gender, like, what people think of in terms of gender expression, there's a shaved head in there. There's, you know, like, a Fred Perry, like, you basically dress like the boys and there's tiny bits of softer detail, and by that, I literally just mean you've got sideburns and a fringe on your shaved head. But to me what you're doing is going, oh, that's something I recognise that I want to be like, and that's not, it's not necessarily copying, it's taking influence, which everyone does with their style, and you eventually, you'd obviously be just building yourself up to be, your most evolved Pokemon, which is Suzi sat on Jonathan Ross in a shirt and tie and a suit.

S Suzi 30:33

It was great that the day that I felt like I'd found my look, the cameras were rolling.

K Kiri 30:38

Yeah. Yeah, definitely. I remember you've got, my partner's got it here as well. A great bomber, that you wore, I remember us having a chat about this, because you wore this great bomber jacket for Apollo, like and a great again, nice print and a bit of showbiz to it, because there's always a bit of a showbiz edge to what you wear I think, that it shows me that you know that what we do is onstage, the lights are on us and people are watching and you've, you've turned up and you're gonna give them a show in your performance, but also the way you dress, and I remember us having a conversation about this, because loads of people said, where did you get it from, and then there was this big kind of a fallout in that people are like, how dare you shop at Topshop? Yeah, and you made a great point of being like, yeah, but I'm also being on Live at the Apollo in an affordable jacket that people can, as opposed to, because I've won stuff before that is, been at the top of my price range that I'm like, I've got this job at latitude and I'm going to spend all of the fee on this jumpsuit, and then people go, where did you get it from, and then you go, it's here, and it's 200 quid, which is like, that is not affordable, or sustainable or any of those things.

S

Suzi 31:46

I remember that. I'd forgotten that, that happened. But yeah, I got a load of shit from people going, you know, Philip Green doesn't pay people properly, and I was like, ah, ah, sorry. No, I don't, I don't think that I, that's not my fault. But like, you know, I think that's the thing, like some of the suits that I wear now are, would be sort of quite expensive. You know, they're not like in the 1000s. But they're sort of, you know, maybe 300 pounds, if you want a suit made, you're looking at like a lot more money, but I always get stuff off the rail, or I will go into a high street shop, buy a mans suit, and then take it to a tailors. That's what I always used to do. Certainly, when I, when I was trying to do stuff as much as possible, sort of on the cheap. That would be the cheapest way to do it, and whenever, sort of, as often when young gay girls, they do, where do you get all your suits from? I'll always say like, if you're a girl with, with big boobs, just get a classic men's suit with three buttons, and then you can wear it open, and if you're a girl with no boobs, get a boys suit that's double breasted and just take it to your local tailors where they can make it look like it was made to order. Which is great. But yeah, I think it's really difficult because, you know, I don't want to be someone that is sort of constantly wearing fast fashion and I make a real effort to not shop in those sorts of shops where you go, you know, where is this coming from? How can a top be two pounds? How does that make sense? You know, I can't work out what percentage of the people that are making it getting, what's the girl behind the counter getting, how is this working, what is the model here, and when something is that cheap, you can't help but go, something's not right here. But I want, if people like how I dress, I want to be able to give fashion tips to people where I can go, okay, you're like in your first year of uni, you haven't got the money to be able to go and spen 400 quid on a suit or 200 quid on a suit. But I think it's really difficult to, because I think you're someone that's really good with like sustainability and you're really good at like shopping local, and you're really good at sharing that, and shopping Welsh.

K

Kiri 33:41

But I buy lots of stuff. So that's not sustainable. You know, like, I try and do my 30 wears on everything. It kind of pays the planet back largely if you get 30 wears.



S

Suzi 33:54

I've got a pair of jeans, I've paid the planet back with about 14 times.

K

Kiri 34:00

It's time to buy that, that jet plane. But yeah, they say to try and wear something 30 times and some companies have a brilliant thing where on the label on the inside, there's literally like a little tick thing. So every time you put it in the wash, you tick it off so you get to a point where you're like oh, it's full. It's like, it's paid its debt back if you like, I'm expressing that very badly and there'll be sustainability people listening to this being like, that's not what it is. Yes, I do those things and I try and buy responsibly, buy small, all that kind of thing. But I have a lot of stuff. I have more clothes, you know, I could wear different a different outfit every single day of the year probably with all the stuff that I have here, which is not, I have consumed too much. So there's no like, there's, I just don't think there's any perfect approach to it. It's all us trying to reconcile things and especially as what you're talking about is so important, like you're being a visible queer icon, who's comfortable in their own skin.

S

Suzi 34:57

You're saying the word icon and I am here for it.

K

Kiri 34:59

But you are. When you, was it attitude where you and Tom hosted and you had a suit?

S

Suzi 35:06

We went to the attitude and we both wore tuxes. Yeah.

K

Kiri 35:08

That was it. Gorgeous, gorgeous, and if little Suzi had seen that back in, you know, in Pompeii, when she was like 13, seeing someone like that might have made everything a bit more easy.

S

Suzi 35:20

I would have been like, oh my God, I am gay. It's not a phase.

K

Kiri 35:25

Oh my god, I fancy future me.

S

Suzi 35:28

I should have, should have stuck with the tennis.

K

Kiri 35:34

But it is important.

S

Suzi 35:35

I think it is important to be, for me, it is sort of weirdly important for me to be sort of loudly androgynous in a way. You know, there's certain things as a lesbian, someone that identifies as a lesbian, that I think is really important for me to be visible as a lesbian, that I think it's really important that someone, who is this lesbian is also really inclusive of trans people. Because I think that some older sis lesbians might not be, and yeah, I think that my clothing really comes into that for how I express myself and how I look. Me at 15 could not believe that I would say this, but I like that I look queer. I like that people go, she's probably gay. I like that, and I never ever thought that I would. But because I think that I found a real comfort in it now, and I've found a real confidence in being who I am, and I guess it's, you know, growing up there were very few out women like Sue Perkins, Rona Cameron, I remember Rona Cameron being on I'm a Celebrity being so important to me, and you know, now I've worked with Sue and I sort of know Sue a bit, and she was I mean, I don't think she was out, I think, I think Rona Cameron might have outed her while she was in I'm a Celebrity or something like that happened. But I remember being so, so delighted to see a woman in a suit jacket. Like, isn't that ridiculous? Like I absolutely like, it like gave me air to breathe. I was like, oh, okay, these women exist. They're like me, it's not just me. It's not, because I think, I mean, now we're getting really into like, queer, queer podcasting. But like, I think for, there was a brief period where I thought, I guess there's like 20 lesbians. I guess I'm one of the few lesbians there are, because as soon, whenever you saw a gay on television, which still happens now, to a degree, you know, it's wonderful when you see stuff like It's a Sin, but you can't help but go, I'm sure there were some lesbians around. I'm sure there would have been gay women in those pubs. Maybe one and I love Russell T Davies, and I love that series. But there's still this real lack of gay women, and there's often stuff with bisexual, which I think is brilliant, and I love bisexual women, and there's, but there's, there's so rarely a woman going, I'm a woman that only sleeps with women, that it's not fluid for me. It's exactly this, this is what I am. But yet, a lot of these women have, we have existed for a really long time. You know, we've always been around, but there's such a lack of visibility, and I don't know, you know, whether that's because it wasn't palatable on television or because there's always been a real, like camp humour that's always existed, and therefore, there was like a way to make, I guess, gay men more palatable to a homophobic audience at one point. But, you know, I feel like growing up there were, the gay women on TV were Sandi Toksvig, Clare Balding and Sue Perkins, and if we look at television now, they're still the only three women that I could see hosting a show. You know, and so I guess that, when I saw women like that I was relieved, and so now I feel like, like, I don't think that I'm a particularly famous person. I'm sometimes on telly. If you're gay, you probably know who I am. If you're into comedy, you probably know who I am. If you're gay, and you're into comedy, you're coming to the tour.

K

Kiri 39:06

Mine as well.

S

Suzi 39:10

I think that I want to be really visible, and I want to talk about having a partner and I don't want that to be, you know, some of the gags are about that, most of the gags are about my mum, let's be honest. But being on a show where I'm talking about having a girlfriend and I'm wearing a type of really bold red lipstick, and I'm blurring those things that I never, I'm like sort of, I'm holding on to my femininity but like loving my androgyny, it's something that I never thought I could do as a teenager and something I thought I sort of wasn't allowed to do that now that I know I can do it. That's constantly what I want to do. That's constantly what I want to wear. It's constantly how I want to be visible so that if there's someone like me, sort of going, oh god, I don't want to be gay. I don't want this to be me. I don't know how to dress. I don't want to wear this skirt. That's what all the girls are wearing. Oh god, I think I fancy one of the girls, I'm gonna have to kiss that boy to sort of throw people off the scent, and all that sort of stuff so that someone can go, oh, she's cool. Great, I'll probably be alright, and the truth is I'm not cool, I'm riddled with anxiety, and I'll probably come off this call and go oh god Kiri hates me, god I probably look like such a prick. But I think that, that sort of loudly queer is something that's took me quite a long time to get to. Now I'm sort of alright with it.

K

Kiri 40:29

Yeah, and it's, you shouldn't, like it's so nice that you don't feel like you have to take up less space, which it feels like you've been minimising your, your queerness and your femininity and your masculinity and your androgyny for years, and now it feels like it's all settled and taking up as much space as it needs to.

S

Suzi 40:48

Yeah, I think so, and I think just like getting hold of who you are, and I think meeting people like, someone like Jen Brister who is like unapologetically herself on stage, who I love, who's a really good friend of mine. I found like enormously inspiring and not necessarily in like, a stylized way, but Jen just sort of does what the fuck she liked, and I remember being like, that's really cool, and everyone sort of fancied her. Boys, girls, gay, straight, whoever you were, everyone fancies Jen because she's beautiful, and I just remember being like, okay great. I can exist in this space.

K

Kiri 41:28

The pursuit to get to your, I'm gonna say the most evolved Pokemon Suzi, which you know what I think it is because I've screengrabbed it and sent it to you, I believe you and Tom were doing, Sky, is it Dating Your Filter, and you're in a blue suit and a turtleneck and you've got a strong red lip your hair is amazing, and you've got your beautiful, like your eyes are so, you've got your...

S

Suzi 41:48

You've got a professional makeup artist. That's what you're saying Kiri?

K

Kiri 41:52

Yeah, no, but you also your eyes are gorgeous. They're like Disney Princesses eyes with a strong red lip, and then this like disney prince quiff and then this bold suit and I was like, every time I see, like Rachel Fairburn and I will screenshot things and send it to each other and be like are we gay or do we just fancy Suzi?

S

Suzi 42:09

Oh my god, be still my beating heart, the three of us, let's go and live in a commune, it would be great. We could talk about murderers and then I'll be like, girls I'm too scared to sleep in the room by myself.

K

Kiri 42:24

Is it cold in here?

S

Suzi 42:26

Being nude would probably heat us all up. People need to know on this podcast that we're really good friends, because out of context that would look terrible.

K

Kiri 42:40

So this Suzi, that I've screengrabbed and sent it to you, I believe with the phrase, Are you fucking kidding me? Because you look so good. There must have been some experiments along the way, is there something you've tried to pull off repeatedly, that's not happened?

S

Suzi 42:54

Oh, like yeah, almost certainly. I can't do a cravat. I'd love to do a cravat. I can't do a cravat Kiri. It just doesn't look right. I don't know what it is. I think maybe I need a waistcoat. Listen, TBC, I'll keep everyone, listen. I'll ring in to another episode and let you know how I've got on with the waistcoat. When you're on with Tom, I'll interrupt it. Sorry, Kiri. I assume you'd want to hear, turns out I can pull off a cravat. Okay, bye. Yeah, I think there's been quite a lot of looks that I've tried. I had, I've not gone through quite a bad phase with my hair. Tom sent me a screengrab the other day of when I used to have, like all my hair on one side, and then I'd

blowdry it curly, and honestly, it looks dogshit. I don't know how people allowed it for so long. I don't know why one person, I don't know how I haven't got one friend that's good enough, to come over to me and go. It's not a look.

K

Kiri 43:48

We didn't know each other then to be fair.

S

Suzi 43:50

You would have done it. Rachel Fairburn would have talked about it on a podcast. But I don't think I look good in a leather jacket, which is a huge disappointment to me. As a vegan you must be very relieved.

K

Kiri 44:06

Well, I've recently found out you can make, there's a gold metallic jacket out there that is made out of pineapple leather, and it's 300 pounds I don't have. Oh, yeah. The little baby ones as well when they're all nice and soft. Yeah, I would have really put you in a leather jacket.

S

Suzi 44:25

I don't think it looks great. It's not. I don't think it massively suits me. I mean, I've got one for sure. But I don't know whether, I've really wanted one. I really wanted this very specific one from all saints, and by the time I could afford it, it was no longer a good look on me.

K

Kiri 44:45

I know exactly what you're on about.

S

Suzi 44:50

Yeah. like me at 23 would have looked really banging in this, unfortunately me at 31, I've somehow missed the boat. I always thought I could wear hats quite well. My partner Alice, thinks I have quite a small head, and I think that hats don't suit me as much as I want them to. I'd love to be able to pull off a cowboy hat, cowboy boots, I'd love to be able to pull off cowboy boots. Oh, Kiri you'll like this. So when I was like, like sort of, you know, early step, maybe like three, four years into stand up, sort of really working out what I would wear, I wear glasses sometimes as well, when I've got like a headache, I've got a pair of prescription glasses, and I thought for a while, maybe I'll wear those onstage. They're like little round glasses, and I turned up to, and I went through a phase of wearing a shirt with a tank top, and I turned up to a gig, and I think it was in the north. I don't know if you've heard of it, and an act, who I don't even, I don't even remember, like who they were, I think they were like one of those older acts, that's just played five clubs all their life. They've got their 20 minutes. They can host if need be. They

know what they're doing. They've got local to the street. You know, they've got local to the bus route, you know, and I was like, oh, hi, I'm Suzi. I'm Suzi Ruffell, and someone went, I never realised you were a character act and I was like, oh, no, this is just how I dress.

K

Kiri 46:24

Folding down the ventriloquist dummy. Brutal.

S

Suzi 46:30

But yeah, so I think, so it certainly wasn't like, you know, I got to 20, and I was like, I know what I'm wearing. It was like, there was some really bad outfits along the way.

K

Kiri 46:44

How about, because I, you know, you wear a lot of vintage stuff. What is, what's the item of clothing that you've had the longest that you still love, maybe still wear?

S

Suzi 46:53

I've got some shirts that have been around for a good while. I've got like a jacket, that was my nan's, that I can't get rid of. It's too good, and I think it was from BHS. Now deceased, of course, and I really liked that, and I can't get rid of it. I went through a phase of wearing it on stage, and now I think it doesn't look that great. It looks a bit worn out. Because I think my nan probably had it for I don't know, like 20 years, and then she died, and I was like, I must wear this to honour my grandma. I must do dick jokes on stage while wearing this to honour my dead grandmother. But yeah, that's, that I couldn't get rid of. I've got a tuxedo with like tails. You know, like proper tuxedo tails, that I got from a charity shop while I was on tour, that was made in 1925.

K

Kiri 47:59

Oh, my God, magic.

S

Suzi 48:01

But I've never found a way to wear it. I don't know how to wear it.

K

Kiri 48:07

When you marry your partner?

S

Suzi 48:09

Yeah. I guess so.

K

Kiri 48:13

Or conduct an orchestra. It's only, it's one of the two.

S

Suzi 48:15

I mean, I assume I'll be doing the same thing on the same day, right? I want an oompa band. But I'm going to do the orchestra. Yeah, so that's very old. But I've never found, I can't get rid of it. But I've also never found an excuse to wear it. Rather than just wandering around the house going, I'm wearing a tuxedo. I like to give away my clothes. So there's been people that I've, so I was at a gig once and someone said, I love your shirt. Afterwards. It's like, gay girl was like, she might not have been gay. But she was like, oh my god, I love how you dress and I love your shirt, and you're just so cool, and I was like, what the shirt I was wearing tonight, and she was like, yeah, I just love how you dress, and I was just like, have it. It's like a dress that, its like a shirt that I got from a charity shop. It's no big deal. Just have it. Don't get me wrong. I'm not doing that all the time. I'm not that nice of a person.

K

Kiri 49:10

Is there an era that you wish you existed in fashion wise?

S

Suzi 49:14

1920s. You know, when women first, not that I don't know if it was when they first start wearing suits. But when women were sort of almost sort of like mocking masculinity in tuxedos. I'm sort of thinking bright young things. Have you seen that film?

K

Kiri 49:29

Yeah, well, I know of, you know, right young things and a happy valley set.

S

Suzi 49:33

Yeah. So that sort of, I mean, the thing is, I think, you know, when people say like, oh, if you had to live in another time, I think what you're really saying is which era would you like to be rich in? Because I think if I was from my stock in the 1920s, it would have been fucking awful. But I want to be like part of like, I want to live in like Berkeley Square, and have tea at the ritz. So I would like to be rich in the 1920s. I'd like to be a rich lesbian in the 1920s.

K

Kiri 50:00

Oh, imagine what you'd be getting through, swanning off to Berlin, having an affair with all the bored wives, you'd do very well in the 20s.

S

Suzi 50:09

Thanks so much. I think we've just come up with a, I think we've just come up with a pitch for a sitcom as well.

K

Kiri 50:16

What's your relationship with shopping? Do you like it, do you do it online, do you prefer it in person?

S

Suzi 50:21

I don't particularly like online shopping. There's like a couple of brands that are like, only online, there's like, there actually was like a jumper that you put up, that you were wearing a little while ago that I then went and bought. So I try and like, if I can, I want to sort of support new sort of businesses like that, and people that are, you know, because I know how hard it is to sort of make a living out of a creative industry, and so I try and support places like that. But then I do really like going to like Selfridges, because there's a floor where there, where you can get women's suits, basically, where you can get really good suits, and it's a very new thing for me to be able to afford that sort of, those sorts of clothes, and don't get me wrong, you know, I'm coming to you from a two bedroom flat in southeast London. It's not like I'm like, unbelievably wealthy, but this is sort of the first period of my life where I can afford to go to somewhere like that and buy something you know, it would have to be for work or for an event or for something important, it wouldn't just be that I'd go and buy something enormously expensive all the time. But that and then I got, I had a suit made in Edinburgh, it was quite funny actually. We've mentioned Tom quite a lot in this call. The last time we were both in Edinburgh. So the last Edinburgh Festival. I was having quite a nice run, but I find the whole thing very stressful and horrible, and Tom wasn't there that year, and I spoke to him and I said, you know what, I'm going to, I'm going to treat myself to a suit and he said go to this place where I got, where I get my suits when I'm in Edinburgh, where I've bought a suit from before. They'll be really nice. Tell them what you want, tell them you want to go androgynous, it'll be great, and so I go in, they're really nice. I said my friend Tom Allen's suggested I come. They knew Tom, they remembered him from the year before. Great. I said, Look, I'm androgynous, I want to wear this. Anyway. So I bought this suit, I was absolutely delighted with it, and I took a picture of it and sent it to Tom, and he sent back a picture, and on that day he was wearing the exact same suit. So we have the exact same suit. Doing something like that, I think is really, that sort of felt really special for me to be able to do that. But I like to sort of feel the fabric, and I have to go out thinking, I can't just go into a shop and think I could buy anything in here. I need to go, today I am looking for or I'll see someone on Instagram or see someone at an award ceremony or see someone that I'm inspired by or I'll see a music video, I'll see a picture of Chris from Christine and the Queens and I'll go that is the look. That is what I want. I want

that, and then I will go out and try and create my version of that. I can't just, I can't just willy nilly into a shop and be like is it a jumper? Is it a top? Is it a pair of jeans? No, no, no, no. I'm going for a thing.

K Kiri 53:00

You're on a mission. So this like very I think iconic Suzi style that we have now, do you think it'll move drastically when you're older? Do you think you'll be back in dresses, or do you think this is it?

S Suzi 53:14

I think this is it. Me and you on whatever podcast, whatever we're calling a podcast in 2060. Let's say 2060, let's say, and I think you've just become one giant sequin, and I will be in a suit and tie with a massive grey quiff, and I imagine a very strong colour of spectacle. Can you see it? You can see it, can't you?

K Kiri 53:46

Yeah, I really can see it.

S Suzi 53:47

I sort of always want to look like I might edit a magazine. Do you know what I mean?

K Kiri 53:53

Yeah, yeah or be an iconic photographer as well.

S Suzi 53:57

Anna Lebovitz of course. I basically want to be the gay version of Devil Wears Prada.

K Kiri 54:05

One day, it's gonna happen sorry to break it to you but you might leave this mortal coil. What's the outfit that you're going to be buried in?

S Suzi 54:12

Whoa, I did not know it was going here, is this what the podcast is? You're gonna cut all the other stuff?

K Kiri 54:21
It's only for this question. Yeah. it's actually, it's Co-op funeralcare are sponsoring this.

S Suzi 54:29
Or do you know something that I don't and everyone's roped you into this?

K Kiri 54:35
Yeah. Anne's like listen, we need to get, sort of ask her what song she wants playing.

S Suzi 54:41
Okay, so Take That, never forget.

K Kiri 54:46
You want everyone doing the clap at the end.

S Suzi 54:49
I'm hoping that Robin is gonna pop in, and then and Carole King, You've got a Friend. Okay, great to chat to you, bye Kiri. What do I want to be buried in? Maybe that tuxedo jacket that was in from like the 20s, from the 1920s. Maybe something like that. I think, do you know what, no, I know I want to be buried in. A nice pair of pyjamas. A nice pair of buttoned up jamas. I feel like you know, it's not out of the realms of possibility that by the time I'm that old, I might be able to afford to have my pyjamas monogrammed. So I think a nice pair of pyjamas and maybe like a silk robe over the top. Sort of, sort of like Noel Coward on a Sunday.

K Kiri 55:36
Von Dutch caps. Yes, about time they had a mention. Do you know what I think Suzi's magpie approach to dressing yourself is like loads of us, right? Nick a bit from here, emulate this person. Do you know what I mean, take the hair from that person, take the shoes from that, you know, that show that you saw that you loved? That shirt reminds you of it. I love it, and you know what, we always ask guests in a pre show interview, who their style icons are, and it's so interesting, where people draw influence from and then what it leads to sort of manifesting in that person. In fact, maybe we should put out an episode of all those answers because they're so interesting. If you want us to put out a style icons episode with everyone's answers. Why don't you pop us an email, you can write to us on whoareyouwearingpod@gmail.com or seek a

messages on our Instagram. We are @whoareyouwearingpod and also we're going to be popping up pictures of Suzi there, she sent some absolute beltters over. I really loved Suzi's journey with her hair as well, because you forget that don't you, well especially I do as someone with longish hair, that we still associate long hair with femininity, which is just so redundant and you can obviously hear my adoration for Suzi's face and short hair in this chat, and I really love that Tom Allen encouraged Suzi to experiment with tailoring in suits because thank god, Suzi Ruffell in a suit is, I'll say it, perfection. Hence Rachel Fairburn and I's screengrabs back to one another, and that chat leading to creating, basically our own erotic fanfiction about ourselves. Do you know what though, its interesting when Suzi was talking about dresses, and feeling self conscious, I think it's sort of sad that on the occasions Suzi has worn a dress, people have just sort of fussed over it and commented over it so much, that she then ends up feeling self conscious, and I just think that's really sad. You know, it's hard, isn't it? Cuz people mean well, and they're just observing, but ultimately, like, let's not forget, shut the fuck up and stop commenting on what people look like, unless you've got a lovely compliment for them, and even then be aware of how that can be barbed. I was talking to my friend the other day about when you like, will lose weight and people praise you for it. The people think they're doing a nice thing. But all, I mean, in my case, certainly, all they did was like, reassure me that if there's less of me or more, you know, the world likes me more, and also you get this scary thing, where you suddenly get this currency of privilege of being smaller, and then you get terrified to lose it. So yeah, ultimately shut the hell up when it comes to other people's bodies. Right. I would just like to take a minute now to say thank you so much to people who have come to see my tour, and told me how much this podcast means to you. Now I'm sort of used to people saying that they listened to my other podcast all killer no filler. That is obviously lovely. But this podcast is my little passion project. So it is extra special when folk listen to this one. Shout out to the girl in Cardiff, in a hand sewn incredible outfit. She started sewing a lot done she had this amazing dress on that she'd made herself. She said she loved the podcast and it made me want to weep with joy. Oh and the babe in York actually where I was last night. She had a handmade jacket on loved, she came to my show in Durham as well. What an angel and really loved the Joe Black episode, and another girl at York actually was like, you read out my message, and then her friends are messaging going, is this you? Honestly I love meeting you guys so much. It means an awful lot. So thank you so much. Now, this week's small business is a recommendation that came out of Suzi and I's chat about wearing clothes more than 30 times. Apologies if you are very aware that, that's wrong, but that's, that's sort of my received wisdom that like you wear it 30 times and it's not as bad for the world. Now, this is a Welsh female owned brand, called Dati clothing. Its run by two incredibly impressive women who also founded the sustainable studio in Cardiff, which is a studio space for small businesses in the city that supports the creative industries. Now Dati clothing, oh my god, they're brilliant in so many ways. For a start, they make some excellent T-shirts, which are fair trade and organic cotton, and they're printed in Cardiff with earth friendly inks, and they have things like, so like the promise T-shirt says, I promise to wear you more than three times, which is actually where I sort of became aware of wearing your clothes multiple times to make sure you sort of, make them pay their debt back to the earth, to society. Also, when you buy that T shirt, Dati, donate to the brilliant charity welsh women's aid, which is fantastic. Oh, I also love the I will wear this to shreds T-shirt. Again, sort of reiterating the idea that we need to wear the clothes that we have instead of accumulating more, and it's based on a beautiful celtic phrase as well. Now, what I'm really excited about with Dati is their repurposing of clothes, especially with their rubbish jumpers range, oh god its so cool. So they work in the community principally with organisations that support LGBTQ folk+ and Boehm groups. So they take the jersey off cuts from these workshops and community projects, and then make a brand new jumper with them. So it's one of a kind. They're sort of oversize, unisex, super soft, and do you know what, you can even commission your own jumper from the

ones that you already have in your cupboard. How amazing is that? I absolutely love them. I think these two are so incredible, and also work with local artists to create sort of custom looks for them. They're phenomenal. So go and check out Dati clothing. Now it's spelt D A T I, so yeah, check them out on Insta and their website daticlothing.co.uk I love them. I think you're gonna really dig em, dig them. How old am I? Dig them. Can you tell I'm tired? Thank you so much for listening. The final episode of this series is next week and it's a very, very special episode with the mighty Jo Brand. So I'll see you then. Bye. 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.