



Curated By You: Justice McNeil Makes A Hand Painted Linen Jumpsuit

## Description

Justice McNeil is the epitome of a modern renaissance woman. She paints, sings, sews, holds down a job she loves, looks after her cats and plants and plays the ukulele. **Unlike the belief that you ought to take sides on whether you are for nature or technology, perhaps today where the most exciting change is happening is at the crossroads of the two. Justice is inspired by nature of the great American mountain landscapes, she is environmentally and ethically conscious and at the same time she is enabled by technology to be living a lifestyle many (including myself) would aspire to. There is no one without the other. The modern crafters and makers, embracing past artisan skills, moving away from cities, back into smaller communities have a vivid and prominent presence within the virtual sphere, it is precisely the possibility of no longer needing to have a physical space to sell your product, or the need for a middle man to curate the sale for you, replaced by a click of a button in your shopping cart that brings autonomy back into the hands of the creative.**



**Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do.**

**Hi! My name is [Justice](#) ! I am from Golden, CO but moved to San Francisco, CA 7 years ago and just a few months ago moved north to Marin County, about 30 minutes north of San Francisco. I create hand-painted, embroidered, and piecework linen clothing and home goods in my home studio in my “free time”. I work full time in the beauty industry as the Creative Content Manager/Graphic Designer for a clean, luxury cosmetics company called [lilah b.](#) . I live with my painter/videographer/screenplay writer boyfriend and we have two cats and a 19-year-old lovebird. When not at work or in the studio or biking between the two, I love to hike, eat vegan ramen, sing traditional choral music, care for my plants and play the ukulele.**

**Why do you sew?**

**I started sewing when I was younger because I wanted to wear clothes to match my dolls, so my mom taught me to sew so I could make myself and my dolls clothes to wear. Then, in high school, my style consisted of the 50s “new look”-esque dresses, corseted waists, high heels, pearls, and tightly curled hair and those types of clothes simply weren’t sold at the mall. So I made them myself. While I am no longer sewing to make things to match my American Girl Dolls or to dress like a character from Mad Men, I do still sew because so often what I want to wear just isn’t available to buy, or if it is, it is outside of my budget. I also think there is something so powerful and almost magical about wearing something that you made with your own hands. Not only did you get to dictate exactly how it looks and how it fits, but by creating it you imbue it with your energy and thoughts, and I think that is really magical.**

**Recently I have also been putting more and more effort into minimizing my impact on the planet. Having studied fashion journalism and design, I am acutely aware of how wasteful of an industry it is. Sewing has become one of my ways to minimize my impact. If I can make the clothing that I want, instead of buying something new (even if from an ethical and sustainable source) I can be 100% sure of the material I'm using and where it came from, the amount of waste I produce, who made it and in what environment (since it's myself) and since I'm making it fit to last, I won't be throwing it away anytime soon. So, I sew to do my part in saving the planet.**





MIX NATURAL Softened 100% Linen

### **What do you like to listen to when you're working (and why)?**

Sometimes sewing can start to feel a bit monotonous and be rather repetitive, so I like to listen to something that activates my brain. Sometimes this is an audiobook – lately, I've been listening to a lot of Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman books since I love a good fantasy fiction novel and theirs' are so fantastical, funny and clever. I also love to listen to musical soundtracks and sing along to them. I grew up in the theatre and listened to musicals almost non stop from ages 5 to 18 so they really bring me a lot of joy, and I love to sing, so listening to these and singing along while sewing both activates my brain and makes me happy. I especially love listening and singing along to Hamilton, but who doesn't?

### **As a child, what was your first encounter and memory of beauty?**

The Rocky Mountains have always been inextricably linked with beauty in my mind. I remember driving up into the mountains on Sunday mornings in the winter and seeing the sun hit the snowy peaks and my whole family would gasp in awe and someone would always say "We live here!" as if in complete surprise and wonder, every single time. That was beautiful.





## **Where is home and how does it affect what you do?**

**My current home is in San Rafael, CA, a town in Marin County about 30 minutes north of San Francisco. The landscape of the Marin Headlands greatly inspires me and my work. We go for hikes almost every week and there are so many trails around Mt. Tamalpais and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area that every time we hike, it's a completely different landscape. Between dry grassy hills, dense redwood forests, and the rocky coast, we are surrounded by some of the most beautiful spaces in the states (not biased at all...). The textures and colors of the land around me inspires my work and the colors I use. I've found I use way more oranges and yellows than I did in the past, which I attribute to the sunsets over the dry golden hills.**

## **Name a book that you've recently read which inspired you and why?**

**I currently am reading the book *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck. I was visiting my grandmother down in Monterey and she told me it was her and my grandpa's favorite book when they were in their 30s, so I picked up a copy. I'm only halfway through and it is a rather dark book, way darker than *The Grapes of Wrath*, but I love it. I won't say that it is the most "inspirational" book I've read recently (since I do read a fair amount of self-help/self-improvement books that are way more inspirational). However, one part that I've found quite profound is a part where they discuss the word "Timshel". Through a discussion of etymology and translation, the characters discover the meaning of the word is "Thou mayest", meaning that you do not have to do anything, but you may do something. The choice is always yours. I think that so often we feel like we *have* to do things, that we don't have a choice. But knowing that we always have a choice feels so empowering and freeing.**





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**What was the first thing you ever remember making on your own? Tell us about this memory.**

**The first creation I remember making was a cloak, jacket thing made of squares of felt sewn squares together when I was 7 or 8. I found a bunch of wool felt in my mom's studio and started by making a cape by sewing the squares together and sewing a string across the front. I then sewed two more squares into two tubes and attached them to the side to make "sleeves". Next, I made a hood and then found some fake fur and used it to make the collar. It was quite something...**

**I was so proud of making this cape, I called it my "little rainbow riding hood" and I wanted to wear it to school. I walked downstairs wearing it and asked my mom if kids at school would make fun of me for wearing it. She said, "yes, honey, they most likely will...but you have a choice. Either you go upstairs and change into jeans and a sweatshirt like everyone else, or you wear the amazing cape that you made yourself and know that what anyone else says doesn't matter." I wore the cape, I was teased, I cried on the way home, but then I wore the cape again the next day.**

**And since then, I've never worn "what everyone else is wearing."**







## **How do you balance a full-time job with setting up your own sewing business?**

**I struggle with this so much because I love my full-time job and yet I also would like to be home sewing all day. The biggest thing for me has been to create a schedule and stick with it. Since I also have lots of family (including a 6 month old nephew) nearby and sing in a local choir, I have few free nights during the week. I try to set aside 2-3 evenings a week and 1 day of the weekend for sewing. And I try not to give myself an unrealistic to-do list for each week. This requires patience and knowing I won't get as many projects done each week as I'd like, but at least I know I worked on them and I am making progress.**

## **Who are your muses and inspiration?**

**I am most inspired by nature. I grew up in the Rocky Mountains and now live in the gorgeous Marin Headlands, so I am greatly inspired by mountains and hills. I also spend a lot of time at the beach and always come away filled with awe and inspired by the crashing waves and rocky beaches of northern California.**

**My greatest style muses are Joni Mitchell, Anne Shirley of Anne of Green Gables or Laura Ingalls Wilder, and my mom, who knows how to rock a chunky sweater, paint-covered pants, and clogs.**

**As for artists, I would say my work is often inspired by artists like Rothko, Kandinsky, and von Klint — all who used bold color and big expressive movement and shapes.**





## **What's the best advice you've ever been given?**

**Since a very young age, my Mör Mör (grandma) has always told me to say “I am woman, hear me ROAR”. I was a very shy child and so she would tell me this to help inspire courage before doing something like placing my order at the sandwich shop. To this day, I still say this in my head every day as I head into work, into job interviews, before asking for raises, telling someone to leave me alone, asking for payment for freelance work, working at conferences etc. Hearing this as a child taught me that I had importance, a voice, and deserved to take up space. Something that I think we all need reminding of every once in a while.**

## **How important is it to make something with your hands?**

**Oh boy, so important. Both of my parents are artists. My mom is a sculptor and painter and my dad is a blacksmith and carpenter, so I have been making things with my hands my whole life. To me, making something with my hands helps me feel connected and grounded. It helps me to feel more connected with nature and the land as well as my family and the people who came before me making things with their hands. It also helps me to feel connected to my body as I can immediately see and feel the results of my work.**

## **What does success mean to you?**

**To me, success means being happy, healthy, and whole. I'm already pretty happy, healthy, and whole, so I feel pretty successful.**

**I'd love to be able to grow my business into a thing that encourages others to make things with their hands, be creative, connect with nature and connect with themselves and thus be more happy, healthy, and whole themselves. Because, after all, success doesn't mean much if you can't share it with others and help them to be successful as well.**





MIX NATURAL Softened 100% Linen

## What have you chosen to make out of FS linen and why?

I chose to make a hand-painted jumpsuit out of the [7.1 oz natural linen](#) using my own pattern. I love the drape of linen and feel of linen and wanted to make a jumpsuit for myself for the fall and winter. Since I live in California, it doesn't get too cold, so I thought heavier weight linen would do the job. To add some color and pattern to the natural linen, I hand-painted it after cutting out the pattern pieces and before sewing.

## [FS MIX NATURAL Softened 100% Linen comes in Different weights](#)

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### Author

masha