

Pretty Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & ZALDY

JVN: Hey, curious people. Welcome to Pretty Curious, our podcast on all things beauty. I'm Jonathan Van Ness, Happy Monday, queens! I hope you're thriving this week. We're talking to Emmy Award winning fashion and costume designer, Zaldy Goco. Oh my God. Ah So excited.

Ok. We have a listener question on Pretty Curious today. So this person asks, "What can I do about my acne scars and craters? Help?" OK. First of all, thank you so much for your question. We love a vulnerable queen on Getting Curious. So I think multi-pronged approach here is really important. And it's kind of like an inside outside approach and also like medical and then aesthetic. So with the inside approach, I want to start with no matter what, like scars or skin care situations or like whatever is going on on our skin because I have psoriasis and I've had a lot of breakouts. We talk about it all the time. But we are gorgeous and worthy of love and attraction. And there are people who like - we're just very gorgeous people and so many people don't give a shit about acne scars and craters. So don't worry about like perception, even though I know that when we have stuff going on our skin and when people look at us and kind of judge us, it's like, I just know what that feels like, but it's really important for us to have a really solid relationship with ourselves and give ourselves the love that we would want from others. Just that's really important. Like there is an inside job when we're dealing with something that bothers us. So that's the one thing.

So then when it comes to aesthetics, dermatologists do have more intensive treatment that can help to deal with acne scars and just any sort of skin condition. And that usually is going to look like a more aggressive um topical or like laser treatments and things of that or a micro needling situation. That will just help to bring more healing and more cell turnover to the face, which will like help the appearance of the of acne scars. So, a good dermatologist is important, but on that, I would also say consultations are really important in making sure that your dermatologist has a really good handle on your skin type and what your goals are is really important too. So really listen to your instinct when it comes to like the dermatologist that you're working with. Also from an aesthetic standpoint, if you're going to treat your acne, your acne or acne scars with makeup, skin care is really really important because if you don't prep your skin, makeup isn't going to look, you know, as good. And the blood and the coverage that you get for makeup is really dependent upon your skincare and skin care is a little bit trickier when you have acne because you obviously don't want to introduce more dirt, more debris, more germs into the skin and you don't want to clog any more pores. So, understanding the type of acne that you have, whether it's like hormonal or stress induced or like a different like cystic kind of chronic type of acne. That part's really important too. And then figuring out the right skin care for your acne is so important which an aesthetician or a derm can help you do. Um So that's that and I think typically though like lighter weight like gels and serums, things that aren't as heavy are really nice.

And just make sure that you're like giving clean hands clean face, like disinfecting your phone. And as much as you can minimize the touching of your face and make sure that you have a really good makeup brush cleaning ritual so that you're not introducing more bacteria onto your face. Um OK, but you guys, sometimes it's not even bacteria, sometimes it's like stress and like cystic, but just when you're kind of going through it, you don't want, you want it like as little bacteria on your face as possible. Uh So that your skin can breathe. Not that

I'm a biologist, but I just mean like bacteria that causes Zits. Ah OK. Thanks vulnerable queen. We love your questions. Uh We hope you're loving. Pretty curious. Let's get into our interview.

Zaldy is a fashion designer based in New York City since launching his own namesake clothing line in 2002. Zaldy has designed both stage wear and one of a kind looks for Lady Gaga Britney Spears, Cirque Du Soleil and others. He served as the head designer for Gwen Stefani's Lamb collection. And in 2016 was nominated for an Emmy in costume design for his work on Rupaul's drag race. Welcome to the show Zaldy. How are you?

ZALDY: I'm good, Happy Pride. How are you?

JVN: Good. You look gorgeous!

ZALDY: Wo happy to be talking to you. Thank you.

JVN: Let's start with now. It's 2024. This is such a time to be alive and you are just giving me look after, look after, look on Miss Ru. How did you meet RuPaul? How did you start collaborating? How do you start designing for her? And yeah, so it's like eight questions in one. That's how I roll -

ZALDY: It is. I mean, it's like, I mean, meeting Ru was just like by chance in New York City at a nightclub. I think it was called Pales De Butte, and I remember seeing RuPaul and I just, you know, like Ru was just so larger than life and like magnetic. I just was drawn to walk up and introduce myself and I just said, oh my God, I love you. I think you're so amazing. And I was like, how I'm like, you wore the same outfit last night and she was like, just looked at me. It was like, when they work, they always work and I just carry that with me through my entire life. I'll never forget meeting that moment. It was so like from that earliest moment, like she had those snappy retorts, it was like, so incredible. What year was that? God, I mean, it was club kid years. So this is like the early late eighties, maybe like 89-88.

JVN: How has your collaboration, like style, like evolved over the years? Like, is it the same or is it different because, I mean, she's like always on camera. So she's always working.

ZALDY: I was working, you know, it's like in my studio, it's like there's always a RuPaul gown being made somewhere, you know, whether we're working on other things now, but there's always brew happening somewhere. But, you know, it's like the report, it's the same as it always was. It's like there was just always this great attraction and acknowledgment that we loved certain things. And a trust was built early on and the trust has only grown bigger. And I don't know, it's like, it's a really really rare relationship that I have with certain clients, you know, where they just ask me for something or like I'm going to the Met Gala. Can you make me an outfit? It's not, can you send me 10 sketches? And it's just we work this way where we have full faith in what we're doing and what the job is and we just work, you know,

JVN: I love. Is there OK. Wait, wait, wait. So I hear what you're saying and is there ever any time with Ru where like, is there like something that you love that? Like Ru was like, I don't want to do a mid drive or like, I don't want to do this, but you're like, but I love this thing. Never, that never happens to you guys?

ZALDY: Never, never because like I said, it's just one of those things where we know what is going to work. We just know we both see this character of RuPaul the same way, you know, and we're as it grows, you know, currently in the future, it's like, it's always of the moment

we're always thinking future because like, you know, the show airs a year from now. So we're basically creating fashion. Like fashion does like a year ahead of time, you know, like, what do we want to look at next year?

JVN: One time I was at Le Pan on next to like it used to be next to Earth Cafe in West Hollywood. But it's not there anymore. But it was like 2010. And I was like, in there to get coffee before I went to work. And I looked up and Ru was like three people behind me. And I was like, oh my God, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it. I did, I couldn't help it. So I went up to her and I was like, oh my God, I was like, I love you. She just, she looked at me like you silly little gay and she just gave me a big hug and she's really cute and she was just, she was so nice and mor and sweet and just like, amazing. But um but how has it been just this? Like, because anyone who's cool, knew who she was already like, but she's like mainstream most Emmy winningest lady. Like, how's that been to observe your friend do this?

ZALDY: That Emmy room is insane. And you've seen the pictures that it's just a wall full of, it's orange and then wall with Emmy. It's just unbelievable. And, you know, it's like she worked for every single one of those, like, knowing Ru all this time, like, never gave up on Ru. Always believed in what Ru had to say and do. But I think just like all of us were really kind of like, dumbfounded on how important drag drag race and just that kind of world has become so important to everybody around the world. I mean, it's like, it's unbelievable how many people are in on drag and drag race and the culture and love it and respond so possibly to it. It's like I had no idea it was ever going to be this, this important as it was to us.

JVN: I feel really bad for anyone who ever goes into that room who doesn't look good in warm tones because because that light is not going to be giving it to you in that room.

ZALDY: I don't know if you remember season one, season one was like, are you there?
valesline/

JVN: Vaseline.

ZALDY: It was so insane. I kind of loved it too.

JVN: Moving on. OK. So this part, my friend Javier is literally going to shit poop his pants that you're on this podcast. Like he's Javier. I'm sorry, I hope you're not driving for this because I know you're going to Javier loves Gaga more than it's like almost like I think I need to like they could have like a, there's never a problem with loving Gaga, but it's really intense for Javier.

ZALDY: I know a lot of these, I know a lot of, I know a lot of people like this.

JVN: I mean, he just loves them. But so, but so Lady Gaga, Lady Gaga's Monsters tour. Britney spears', Femme Fatale tour Britney

ZALDY: Britney. Can you imagine like Britney Spears like Femme Fatal. The last tour, the last tour she did was Femme Fatale. And it was really, it was a real piece of work that we really put together. It was as you can imagine, challenging and rewarding, you know, um, I will share that. The most rewarding thing that I ever experienced was one day in rehearsal. I kind of went out, everyone went out for lunch and then I sort of came back in and I was like, oh, who's singing? It was like dark on set and it was just the voice a cappella and it was just Britney singing with no music. And I was like, oh my God, her voice, it was, it's like she has, I

can't even remember. I was just so like, gobsmacked. I just couldn't believe that I was watching her singing a cappella to really nobody. And it was just amazing. I was like, wow, she has fucking voice. It's incredible. So that was my, that was my big, big favorite moment of, of that experience.

JVN: Because Britney and the Femme Fatale tour and then go, but then Monster Ball tour. I was trying to think of them in terms of like silhouettes or like differences. Like how do you define someone's like, like shape and how they wanna be on stage? Because like, stage is so different than like real life. Like, do you, do you like, do you kind of bring your image or like your imagination into it? Or do you hear what the client wants or like, how do you approach your design?

ZALDY: Well, there's, you know, at that, at that stage, there's always a creative team, there's the creative director of the entire project. You know, you've got the choreographers to work with and the lighting people, you know, there's so many different people to work with and there's a big deck that comes. So there's, the show is all laid out and, you know, they have all kinds of inspirations and things they'd like to do. But it all really comes out when you meet and chat and talk about ideas and propose ideas, um, that you kind of just kind of get there together, you know, in the process. So, but, you know, I feel like when people ask me to do things, it's like they really want me to do something that I'm feeling. So, um, that's kind of how I take in any of the projects. It's like, what are they asking me actually to do? They want me to do what I can do for them. So, um, you know, it's, it's, it's, you work with a lot of information but there's a lot of freedom.

JVN: And because, and then, because I think I freaked out earlier because Katy Perry's that you worked on was -

ZALDY: I work with her a lot. Like I worked, I did Witness tour the, uh, her Las Vegas residency.

JVN: I love her beer can breasts.

ZALDY: Oh, that's, that's from the Las Vegas residency where she's in trash. So, she, we were like, her dress has to feel like she's in trash. So it's all made out of, um, beer can pulls and then I had gigantic beer can, rest cups made and, and it pours beer from the spout as well. Yes, exactly. Live on stage. It was really, really. And it happened every show, every show, I mean, she drank tea by the way, but it looks like beer. Um But every show she did it, it was so I love those kind of, she loves tricks. She loves trickery. She loves gags. She, it's like she's so much fun to play with because she loves all that. That's transformative stuff.

JVN: We have Katy Perry Britney Spears Beyoncé, Christina Aguilera Cirque Soleil. What's unique about designing like a costume versus like a, like high fashion look or sometimes they both like we the same.

ZALDY: I - it kind of, I mean, it's like, I, you know, coming from fashion, like all I ever wanted to be was a fashion designer. I didn't even know exactly what costume design was exactly. Um So I come from the world of fashion and I think that everything that I do is, is approached through those eyes and through those channels, like I'm always thinking about fashion, but when it is Cirque Du Soleil, you know, it's like you're dealing with acrobats, acrobatic uh apparatuses and harnesses and, you know, it's like everything has its own specific needs. So it's like you have to really work with performers and with the team working on those

outfits that know exactly how to, how to work with these type of um artists, really acrobats, you know.

JVN: You have been such a trendsetter in what you have designed and how we see so many of our favorite artists. What's your favorite part of it?

ZALDY: I mean, for me it's like, I love putting things together, you know, and really when I'm starting a project, you know, you're looking at inspirations, you're listening to music, you're watching movies, you're reading magazines, looking online, looking at your phone, like there's so many things that you have to sort of make connections with. And um for me, I think that's the most fun part is when little things that seemingly mean nothing start to connect and then like you connect them into this sort of unique image that you get into your mind and then the creativity begins. So for me, it's really that moment of like finding that real true inspiration that's born from all of the things that you join together and like warm to, to get to that moment and then you start the real work of letting it all out. Like that's the part that I love, you know, is really uh researching and that initial inspiration spark.

JVN: Chronologically just so I can get it in my brain. So you were like giving me like club kid model, New York City eighties or like late eighties? Nineties. You're like, and you're just in New York, your fucking club, another club.

ZALDY: Around the world. Like Westwood.

JVN: Yes. Every motherfucking

ZALDY: Like, yeah, we're all over the world that's in the nineties, you know.

JVN: So, and then are you like, and then do you start designing as your modeling, like in the nineties or when? Like, when did you, when were you like, I want, like, I want to design and do like fashion, like all the time or were you already?

ZALDY: I wanted to, like, I went to, I went to Parsons and I went, and I finished at Fit and then I went to Paris with my book on my arm and, you know, through certain connections I met, had an interview at T Nuclear, had an interview with all these other brands and labels and like, we'd be sitting there and I'd be flipped, they'd be flipping through my book and blah, blah. And then all of a sudden, I sort of like, see them kind of like flipping the pages but they're just looking at me and they're like, why do you want to be a designer? They're like, why don't you just be a model? And I'm like, you know, back then I was just this 5 ft 9 Androgynous looking boy not and going like, what is, what do you mean to be a model? I don't actually understand what you're saying, like you want me to be a model model like in a runway. Like it didn't make sense but it was, they like pretty much everybody said that and then I just was like, all right, fuck, I'll be a model fine. But then I realized that here is this really, really privileged point of entry where I get to like have Terry Muer drape a dress on me or fit uh J Paul go you know, fit clothes on you. Um You get to look at the collections, turn clothes inside out, see how they're made, feel fabrics, you know, and be a part of this like high end fashion world and like have all access to it. I have full access to everything and uh it was an incredible way to start my fashion.

JVN: You are that bitch. Is there any dream artist or project that you would love to get to do that? You haven't yet?

ZALDY: Yes, there was, there is, there is, there is, there is and it is and I came so close to getting it once um is the opening and closing of an Olympics?

JVN: Did someone preprocce you to tell me that or like why? Because I love the Olympics more than any not to desire for the opening, but I just, I love the Olympics so much I can't deal with how much I love it. Are you a summer queen? Uh a winter queen anytime a-

ZALDY: Summer and a fall. I'm a, I'm a winter and a summer. I love all of it. I love all of the snowboard. I love everything. I love.

JVN: What are your other favorite sports to watch?

ZALDY: Oh, my God. Well, obviously ice skating, gymnastics stuff. Um, I love, I love all of it. Skiing, jumping. Um, all of the exports, you know, in the tube on the snowboard.

JVN: I like all of them. I think we can do this together but like, I don't like 2028. I mean, there has to be, I mean, that's, it's four years away. It's here, there's going to be all these performers like that is probably, but then also we do have Italy in 26 if you want to get a little chilly, if you want to get a little bit figure skating ish, I just don't know the people putting that, that show on personally and I don't know the 2028 L A people either. But wow, opening and closing, I mean, I just feel like it's either or what was your goal to do both or did you say opening or closing? You're just one or the other.

ZALDY: I was saying both, but opening would be amazing.

JVN: Opening probably better. I think, I think the ratings are probably better on the opening.

ZALDY: And I, and I like the patch. I like watching all the athletes circle and I love the whole thing.

JVN: I'm like, really depressed on the closing ceremonies always. I'm like, oh, I know, what am I going to do now? I know. I know Olympics. Well, I'm really excited for the Paris games. Are you keeping up with us? Gymnastics right now? Have you been watching?

ZALDY: I have not been watching because I've been watching the, the, I love tennis. I've been watching the French Open.

JVN: I love the French Open. I'm watching the shit out of it. I am that little, that little I saw Amelie Moreso um standing behind uh that Alex uh this French guy who is trying to beat sinner but then didn't know and then I remember that Amele memo is a big old turf now and then I got sad. She doesn't like the trance girls. Um No, but also with it but I'm just like with a square jaw. I'm like that. I am mildly attracted to Emily and I don't know how to feel because no, because just really strong like a really big jaw, really pretty, very handsome, very handsome woman. No, she really is. Ok, so. Ok, so we did that. Ok. It's time for a rapid fire round. Um ok, so this is ok. Ok. It's going to be hard but I think you can do it so rapid fire. What's your go to budget beauty recommendation? Under \$10.

ZALDY: Under \$10. There's nothing under \$10 is there? Oh, I know I know Aquaphor lip gel lip ointments. Yes.

JVN: Ok. What about a splurge recommendation for Beauty?

ZALDY: For beauty. I have been using this for 30 years and over 2025 years it's Shiseido Bioluminescence Cream and um, I it's like a nighttime cream but I have al I've always put it like in my creases and under my eyes. I mean, and it's just, this is, this is

JVN: And it's a moisturizer?

ZALDY: It's just a moisturizer. It's moisturizer.

JVN: order it. We have to do,

ZALDY: It's expensive but the pot lasts like a year.

JVN: Order it. Chris. it's part of your job order right now. And you're listening order it. We have to review it on Pretty Curious and don't forget it. We have to write it down. We have to shahada by IUM. Give us a few more beauty ones. Give us, give us a few more beauty ones as long as we're here. I mean, you're a led all. Well,

ZALDY: I don't really, I don't use that much stuff.

JVN: Do you ever use like a little serum in your hair? Because if you don't, our instant recovery sup by JV and hair would be so pretty in there. Not that you need it. It would just be really like, we will set it right over.

ZALDY: I would love it. I'd love to try it because I have used, um, I have used the oil from uh B and B what's B and B again. Um They have this sort of like oil like a tiny, this like little orange jar of like oil and it's amazing. You know, if like the water is really dry, I love it.

JVN: Queen. We make this one oil. It's called prewashed scalp oil. And you put it on your scalp and then put it through your ends. Massage, massage, massage, and then you wash it out. You let it sit for like 10 minutes. It's gorgeous. And then I make this other stuff called instant recovery serum that you just put on after you wash it out of the shower just like before you like air dry or if you heat. So whatever you do, which is really light, it's perfect. You'll love it. And also our air dry cream would be really pretty for you too, but just like a pea size of this. I'm going to send you everything. Oh my God, I'm sending you everything I'm gonna need. Shasha bioluminescence. Is there anything else that we need to know? Like sleeping on our backs?

ZALDY: Like I used, you know, I used to sleep only on my back with my head like lower because I used to think like no wrinkles.

JVN: Yes, I think,

ZALDY: I agree. But, you know, like, ever since I was a child, I noticed that people had lines on their foreheads and I figured out it was from raising their eyebrows. So I guess I just never really, I consciously never have done that.

JVN: I'm just too expressive of a bitch. I also love that this was my version of a rapid fire round. I guess. I just can't do it with someone when we're both on this level of like the queer barometer. We can't. No, it's my fault. It's not even you, it's me. Let's, let's try more rapid. What's a product that you never leave home without?

ZALDY: It is definitely a for sure. I never leave home without it. Ok.

JVN: What's your favorite vintage beauty memory, vintage beauty look?

ZALDY: Oh, beauty, vintage beauty look for myself when I used to do drag

JVN: Or in pop culture, like anything

ZALDY: I'm gonna go personal. Like when I used to do drag, my favorite thing was to do the full makeup and then create like a fake beauty mask. Like normally we do like a light blue mask and but it would have full bead of makeup on as like the with the beauty mask. That was like my favorite look.

JVN: Oh my God. Can you put that on your stories or like on a feed post? We want to see this.

ZALDY: I will. Yeah. Or you know, like when I was doing drag too its like more sort of like genderless alien was more my look but very glamorous. You know, those were my airbrush makeup, all that kind of stuff.

JVN: If there was like a celebrity drag race or like an icons drag race, you should do it.

ZALDY: No, God, no, no,

JVN: Because you could just like show all these girls or, or, or what? Or, or, or I don't even know if you want to. I just feel like, wow, so iconic, legendary. OK. Let's go back to her. OK. This is, this is really fun. This is meh or MAJOR? It's our last segment and you're going to say meh if it's obviously major, if it's major. Ok. OK. But I am adding in a few things that weren't on here just from um our conversation. I just have to write it down. So I don't forget, I'm just thinking of a few more that are a little bit Olympic themed. Ok. Are you ready?

ZALDY I'm ready.

JVN If there's any that you just can't answer because it's too controversial as like a literal, like, you know, then just blink twice and I'll just keep it moving. Ok. Ok. Meh or major hand sewing?

ZALDY Major.

JVN Carrying around a sketchbook?

ZALDY: Major.

JVN Royal dance butter, cookie tins as a sewing kit?

ZALDY: Major. Because my grandmother had one

JVN: Making your own Halloween costume?

ZALDY: major.

JVN: Hem tape?

ZALDY: Only when needed.

JVN: Nontraditional materials?

ZALDY Major.

JVN Nipple showing?

ZALDY Major.

JVN: Opals?

ZALDY I love opals.

JVN: Quiet luxury?

ZALDY: Sure.

JVN: This is our last one and it's the most difficult and it's also not Met or major. It's this or that and I actually, it's not even this or that. I just need your favorite opening ceremony ever. And I'll tell you my top two to inspire you if you want.

ZALDY: My favorite opening ceremony of the Olympics was, yeah. Was PPA noi's Athens Olympic that Bjork performed in.

JVN: Damn bitch. I have to look it up after this because I don't even,

ZALDY: Oh my god. Let me tell you something. The creative director, the creative director of that one. It is, it is for the, it is legendary. I, I've watched it recently again and it's so, it's even more interesting now to watch it. It's just unbelievable to see.

JVN: You know, I was at University of Arizona at cheer camp in Tucson. Unfortunately. And so I, that was like, that was like one of the only opening ceremonies that I didn't see. I didn't start watching that game.

ZALDY: When we get off here right now. Watch it because then that guy who was creative director, he does, um, these theater productions like that are unbelievable. Like you must go see his work. It's a, he's, he's real visionary.

JVN: I feel like on the whole, the summer opening ceremonies are usually more entertaining because it's cold in the winter. So they're just like, oh, we don't want to do a big show.

ZALDY: Nobody wants to be outside in their coats and it's something like that or in the skating rink, it's just better. I love the summer ones. So, yes, let's clarify and say we want a Summer Olympics.

JVN: Summer Olympics, especially for you because it's like a lot to design for all of this. And you got to get that it's important that you manifest this. And on our final note, I would just say justice for the Rio opening ceremony. I will just say that I felt like, wow, you're going to have Gisele bunch in like all the way down this gel. She had to walk all the way down that runway in that fucking stadium. And God loved Giselle. She, I'm sure I know she's a Brazilian national Treasure. But could it be a shorter runway? Could they have popped up in the middle and done a sh I mean she had to slow runway, walk down a fucking stadium. And I just felt like God damn.

ZALDY: And then they did that during the London Olympics too with all the -

JVN: I just, I remember London opening was like, well, I think it was Spice Girls and Leona that closed it, which was also iconic. I think the opening of London was like all those, it was like Beatles and like all those like iconic like British performers which was cute.

ZALDY: But it was like Kate Moss Karen.

JVN: Oh you because they were, yeah,

ZALDY: They all runway and it was just like God, this is so low key like why it was so good though.

JVN: I liked how it was like, you know what Beijing. Yeah, it was and I also would say we have to go but I also would say the London closing ceremonies was really good too.

ZALDY: It was good. Yeah.

JVN: Yeah, it was Leona she was great. OK, Zaldy, everyone follows Zaldy on Instagram but you can see their work and Zaldyli thank you so much for coming on Pretty Curious. We love you so much and thank you so much for sharing everything with us and you're, I just love you. Thank you for coming on. Love you, honey.

ZALDY: I love you too. Bye bye.

JVN: You've been listening to Pretty Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. You can learn more about this week's guest in the episode description and follow us on Instagram and TikTok @CuriousWithJVN. Pretty Curious, drops every Monday. Wherever you get your podcasts and make sure to tune in every Wednesday for Getting Curious. Still can't get enough? Honey! You're insatiable! Subscribe to Extra Curious on Apple Podcasts for commercial free listening and our subscription only show. Ask JVN, we we're talking all about sex, relationships or really just whatever's on my mind that week. Our theme music is composed by Nathanael McClure. Come on. Nathnael, our editor and engineer is also Nathanael McClure. Yes, Getting Curious is produced by me, Chris McClure and Julia Melfi, with production support from Julie Carrillo, Anne Currie and Chad Hall.