



Black leather 'Mock' jacket, \$2200, by **Acne Studios**; yellow gold/diamond/tsavorite/garnet/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' earrings, \$54,500, and yellow gold/tsavorite garnet/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' ring, \$15,900, both by **Cartier**.

# RUBY

MOTY  
-WOMAN OF THE YEAR-

Ask **Ruby Rose** to reflect on the prosperity of the past 12 months and the usually verbose DJ-turned-actress is left momentarily speechless.

“It’s been pretty wild,” she laughs, speaking from a hotel room in Cape Town, where she’s shooting *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter*. “I don’t usually give myself time to reflect, but when I do, I think: Wow, it’s been crazy.”

PHOTOGRAPHY **TODD BARRY** STYLING **KELLY HUME** WORDS **TIFFANY BAKKER**

Leather 'Mock' jacket, \$2200, by **Acne Studios**; nylon 'Magnolia Leavers' bra, \$211, by **La Perla**; cotton briefs (set of two), \$113, by **Base Range**; gold/diamond/tsavorite/garnet/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' earrings, \$54,500, and gold/tsavorite/garnet/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' ring, \$15,900, both by **Cartier**.



'Serena' bra, \$97, and matching briefs, \$90, both by **Yasmin Eslami**; leather 'Ink Splash' boots, \$3600, by **Christian Dior**; latex gloves, POA, by **babylikestopony**; gold 'Love' earrings, \$5200, by **Cartier**.

It's quite the understatement. From filming the 2014 short, *Break Free* (in which she morphs from a long-haired femme fatale into a beautiful James Dean-esque dude – complete with strap-on), to her robust appearance on hit series *Orange is the New Black*, the 29-year-old has become a global phenomenon. Not convinced – well, she's become pap worthy, filed a demure *Vanity Fair* feature and last month joined singer (and fellow tatt fan) Ed Sheeran as co-host of MTV's European Music Awards.

"There's a saying that every overnight success is 15 years in the making," she offers of her 'sudden' ascent. "I get a lot of Americans saying, 'This happened so quickly for you, like practically overnight.' You have to kind of bite your tongue, because you want to go, 'Well, actually...'"

It's been three years since Rose, known to most Australians for an extended stint as an MTV VJ, packed her bags and moved to Los Angeles – looking, simply, for something more.

"I could have stayed and had a nice career in Australia, but you have to keep evolving, keep changing and you have to reinvent yourself." Problem was, she wasn't sure how to.

"It was difficult, I had lost a little bit of who I was – so I didn't know what I was looking for."

Those early days in LA were rough – though she was up for another challenge considering hers is a personal story inked by a turbulent, at times abusive, upbringing that prompted thoughts of suicide and bouts of severe depression.

"I've never really had an easy ride, I guess, so I was quite prepared to fight."

Still, there came a point where she couldn't even clamber out of bed. The work wasn't coming in, agents wouldn't see her, and studios weren't interested.

"I was so down and out," she recalls. "I don't think I left the house for three months."

Plagued by swirling and distracting thoughts about chucking it in and catching a plane home, Rose gave things a final shot with *Break Free* – a story about her own experiences with gender fluidity, which she'd wanted to tell for 10 years. She posted the five-minute film, a project she also funded and produced, online in July 2014. It blew up – 30 million Facebook views with 13 million on YouTube, and counting.

"That experience made me think this is what I need to do," she says, adamantly. "I need to get back into writing and directing and producing, and make short films. I was like, 'Why didn't I do this earlier?'"

Those same Hollywood types who months earlier weren't interested now came calling – Rose promptly cast in Emmy-winning series *Orange is the New Black* as Stella Carlin, a rival for Piper's (Taylor Schilling) affections.



Cotton-blend 'Colorado' bodysuit, \$395, by **Wolford**; leather 'Ink Splash' boots, \$3600, by **Christian Dior**; gold/diamond/tsavorite/garnet/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' earrings, \$54,500, and gold/lacquer/peridot/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' ring, \$33,800, both by **Cartier**.



It's a no-brainer that a beautiful, tattooed lesbian would be snapped up for a show about a women's prison, but the Australian demonstrated she was more than just small-screen eye candy – quickly establishing herself as season three's breakout star and an actress to watch.

"It's pretty cool," says Rose of the broadened public profile *OITNB*'s delivered, while claiming an ongoing want and "responsibility" to remain visible for the LGBT community. "But it's not one that comes with any kind of heavy weight," she says. "I don't feel I'm carrying this burden around. I actually believe it's part of the reason I'm here – to be the person I didn't have growing up. It was alienating, I felt like a leprechaun."

This desire to be supportive is central to her strong, often emphatic, visibility on social media – to connect with those, especially youngsters, with no other outlet during difficult times.

"I have fans who write to me, gay or straight, who say I'm having a really tough day, and they relate to me for whatever reason... And I want to be there to catch them if they're going to fall."

As for the obvious – Rose points to Australia's failings with marriage equality as archaic.

"It's so ridiculous that this is even still a conversation – I really look forward to the day it's not," she says. "Inevitably, it's going to have to become legal. It's just a question of who's going to have the balls and the guts to do it. I thought Julia [Gillard] might, and that was disappointing when she didn't. I knew [Tony] Abbott wouldn't. I think with [Malcolm] Turnbull it seems like the issue is on the backburner until they sort out what is even happening there. But it has to happen – you can't continue to discount people based on their sexuality."

Rose credits fiancée, fashion designer Phoebe Dahl (granddaughter of iconic author Roald), as providing her life with more balance. The pair, together for two years, met at a party in Los Angeles. Rose originally passed on the invite – citing mental fragility. That was until told of the pet pig living at the party house.

"Animals are great healers, so yeah, I went for this pig, and walked away with a fiancée." Admitting that each and every day remains a battle – "you have to fight the anxiety, fight the depression" – Rose is learning to embrace her newfound success: as someone who despite some personal lows, is on the up and up.

"I look at how far I've come as a human, and how far I've come as an actor, and a performer, and to see the person I am now..." she says, trailing off. "I'm always pinching myself. It's amazing. These days, I jump out of bed." ■

HAIR: MAX PINNELL. MAKE-UP: RIE OMOTO.

Cotton tuxedo bib and cuff set, approx. \$565, and silk briefs, approx. \$215, both by **Kiki de Montparnasse**; gold/tsavorite/garnet/onyx 'Panthère de Cartier' ring, \$15,900, by **Cartier**.



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