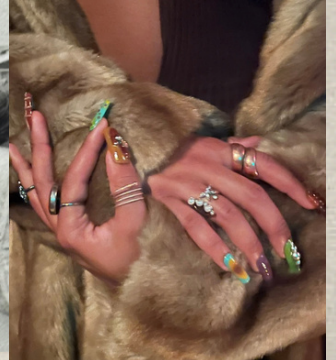




# a love letter to the women in detroit

From  
Detroit Now + Then  
(313) 669-8413



as women's history month closes, we wanted to pen a love letter to women in our lives that have changed our lives, brought us community, inspired us, & taught us everything we know-

There's something so special about the hands of a woman. The things she can create, build, grow, and enhance. We watch her transform a home, an energy, a room, and a look. She's a shapeshifter, a miracle worker, a nurturer. Most importantly, she's the baddest thing walking this earth.

Here, we're literally the foundation of all things—especially beauty. For as long as I can remember, there has been a beautician of some sort in my family. Trained and untrained, the women before me carried themselves with such energy and creativity that it showed in the day-to-day. I grew up with a cosmetologist; she fell in love with clippers and is still one of the cleanest barbers I've ever seen.





But like many girls, I grew up in front of the stove. Hearing that crackle when the hot comb connected to grease, the smell of Blue Magic lingering all day, the fear of both getting burned and/or getting yelled at for moving too much. My first Just For Me perm, first set of twisties, first updo, first silk press. Beautiful hands of beautiful women, always put love into my crown—I've always been blessed.

This isn't specifically about hair, my hands have been held by black women too. My fellow Virgo cousin gave me my first real manicure—cute little flowers for all the young girls, and made sure my sets were clean before each major event as I grew.

The first woman I knew who owned a shop of her own, filled with culture, conversations, laughs, style, for not just women but the entire community around us, all added. We, both, now find ourselves in similar situations as nail techs, now doing the hand holding literally and metaphorically.



There's something so special about the vulnerability you feel trusting someone during these experiences or in our case being trusted to provide these experiences. Trusting someone to bring your vision to life, help someone accentuate their sense of self, a collaborative moment, a social moment at the salon, or even a moment for them to pause, slow down, and relax. This feels like one of the greatest moments of community or bringing not just women, but people together. Allowing us all to be vulnerable, trusting, and creative together.



This sense of communal bonding through fashion, art, nails and hair is seen throughout Detroit. Many times it starts at home with your mom, your stylish older cousins, your aunts who always got that shit on. We're so thankful to grow up with this and still see this around Detroit.





Detroit has such a distinct style and swag. It doesn't always get the recognition around the country or around the world but it doesn't matter because Detroit never really needed that. It beautifully blends people's personal rugged style with elements within popular culture. I saw a TikTok recently that talked about "Detroit style curls" and I was confused because I had never heard of this and wanted to know. To my surprise, it was a classic look I was already very familiar with and you are too.

was already very familiar with and you are too. But I loved that it was floating around the internet giving flowers to this beautiful city and more importantly the beautiful woman here.

Women in Detroit have been carrying this city with their style, showcasing unique looks everywhere. Walking down the streets, inside restaurants (even at the coney), grocery shopping, popping out for events, at work- it doesn't matter the looks will inspire you. As the weather warms up, I'll be sad to see the girls put their furs away for summer. It's such a timeless Detroit look we all know.



I'm thankful for my time spent in salons around the city. I my aunt's friend worked at a salon right outside of my grandma's house on Chene and Lafayette. I loved flipping through the hairstyle books and magazines while I waited for my turn in the chair. The hairstyles were so creative and unique and cool. I wanted them all.

We can't not mention Hair Wars when talking about Detroit salons and hair culture. Hair Wars originated in Detroit in 1985, as

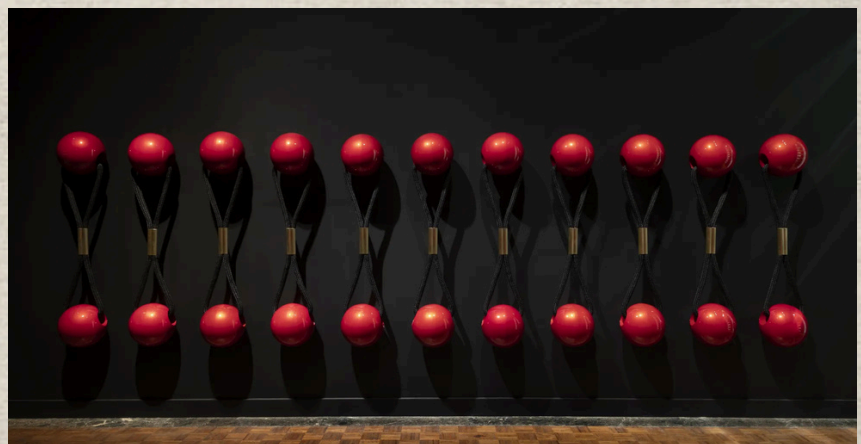
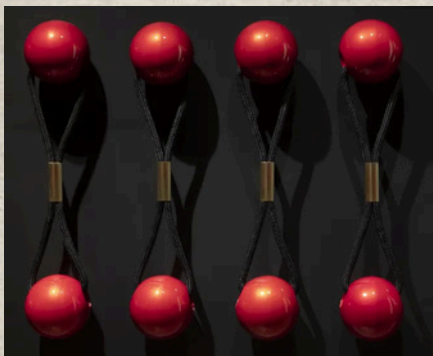
an infamous event and party created to showcase and platform fantasy-like, unconventional, elaborate, iconic hairstyles with hairstylists and salons around Detroit. Hair Wars were such a revolutionary, truly ahead of its time celebration of culture. It eventually became so popular that it toured around the US with hairstylists from around the country joining. It's funny to now see this type of styling trickle onto couture runways. Detroit was ahead of the game as always.

When we both started to work at Cure Nailhouse last year, it was a great way for Saybin and I to reinvent our friendship, be creative, and collab together. I couldn't help but notice how much community exists in spaces and salons like this and how important it is. I'm thankful that we're able to experience this communal bonding over style and hair and nails whether it be in a salon or in someone's kitchen waiting for the hot comb, or even a public bathroom fixing your hair and makeup with strangers, I'm thankful for it all.





It's incredible to see all of these worlds blend together and inspired one another. Last year, Tiff Massey's exhibit '7 Mile + Livernois' at the Detroit Institute of Arts, featured scaled up versions of jewelry and hair accessories as large sculptures. It's a perfect way to celebrate the pillars of black culture and style while paying homage to her childhood neighborhood where the iconic Detroit 'Fashion Avenue' exists. The exhibit featured a piece called, 'Baby Bling' which had huge sculpture replicas of the hair ties with the beads we all wore as a child. Another stand out piece, 'I've Got Bundes and I Got Flewed Out' was a large canvas with various bundles of braided and styled green hair. It's such a beautiful piece to look at noticing all the detailed artistry of each hairstyle. It was a perfect blend of Detroit culture, hairstyles, and fine art. Truly beautiful and one of a kind.





I'm so happy to experience exhibits like this, time with women in salons, moments of vulnerability, and time with the women I love and am inspired by throughout Detroit. It's exciting to think about how the culture will progress and adapt through the future but I'm excited. We hope to be the aunties and the mothers that pass this along and continue to be a part of this community bond.

We wanted to take this time to reflect and enjoy and thank these women for this and say happy women's history month ladies.

