

NW 13TH STREET 4TH AVE

IN CONVERSATION WITH REBECCA HALL

- Actress -

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USING HAIR STORY UNDRESSED **MAKE-UP** MATIN USING DIORSKIN NUDE

SPECIAL THANKS TO
DAVID FRAWLEY

INTERVIEW & WORDS ANNELI BOTZ
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Rebecca Hall has been a fixture in Hollywood's movie scene since starring in Christopher Nolan's "The Prestige" in 2006, followed by a nomination for the Golden Globes as Best Actress for her performance in Woody Allen's "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" two years later. Despite having enjoyed continuous success however, the actress has been able to keep her private life rather quiet.

Raised with a family background in the arts (her father being acclaimed director and founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company Peter Hall and her mother none other than opera singer Maria Ewing) Rebecca, who started acting at the age of ten, has chosen parts that oscillate between blockbuster roles and ambitious character performances. Her turn as Christine Chubbuck, a news reporter who attained morbid fame when she committed suicide in front of American national television in 1974, in "Christine" was praised by both critics and the public upon its release in 2017. "A career-best performance" according to The Guardian - that showed Hall's intelligent and compassionate interpretation of Chubbuck - a character far more nuanced and complex than the woman suffering from mental health issues perceived by the public prior to the movie.

In conversation with Whitelies Magazine, Rebecca discusses fear of failure and public expectations, as well as past experiences and what the future may hold.

Coat and skirt
THE ROW

Earrings
EYE M BY ILEANA MAKRI

Boots
DR MARTENS

Rebecca, playing news reporter Christine Chubbuck in Antonio Campos' "Christine" confronted you with a complex and diverse character. Within her mental illness, Christine shows a lot of anxiety that has to do with fear of failure. Can you relate to this fear?

Yes. I have a capacity to create high standards for myself. If I don't live up to those standards I do at times feel some disappointment, that can be hard and anxiety inducing for sure. But, crucially, there's a difference between the commitment I expect of myself in regards to the 'doing' of my work and the outcome. I try not to merge the two together. Perfectionism is manageable at work - it can be galvanizing. But you can't control the outcome of how people are going to receive the work once it's in the world - so trying to manage that fear is futile. Enjoy the experience of something and try not to place too much importance on the outcome. All of that is said is easier said than done, but it's really crucial.

Immersing yourself in such an intense role like this, did you ever start applying this same pressure she puts herself under on your own life?

There were times during the filming of "Christine" when I would wake up and hear her voice in my head telling me to 'do better.' It wasn't easy. I felt like I had all my own perfectionist tendencies plus another person's bearing down on me. Not only that - but I carried an obligation to do right by someone who existed - and whilst I didn't know her obviously I'd grown very close to the version of her I had come to understand, and my sense of responsibility to that person was huge, and not very forgiving if I felt for whatever reason I was falling short.

It was a hard process. Hard on my emotional state at the time and again when the film came out - I had to talk about it in the press for days on end. I'm proud that I went through it though - whatever I went through was nothing in relation to what she did. The truth is I learned deep empathy towards a challenging character, and no matter how hard that may have been, it's the reason I do what I do. I firmly believe that empathy is a quicker path towards change than judgment.

In 2018, you will be back in the theaters with a much lighter role. "Permission" is a comedy about a woman on the brink of marriage living in New York. The film puts a spotlight on the difficulties of modern relationships.

In "Permission" I play a woman turning 30 years old who has been in the same relationship since High School and is just beginning to question everything she took as a given. She's pretty urbane and sophisticated, but she's not exactly mature. The film is a sort of comedically tragic exploration of two people who think they're really grown up, learning to grow up in reality. It's also essentially a sex farce about hip Brooklynites who have no idea what they're talking about. In the sense that they like to think they're sex positive and progressive and all that sort of stuff, but the truth is a little different.

Who is Anna, the girl you are portraying?

Anna was a fun and funny character to play that I think a lot of women will relate to. She embodies the sort of woman whose desires don't necessarily match up with her need to be the 'good girl' in the conventional sense. The story is full of heart whilst also representing a very modern dilemma.

You live in New York City now, but in 2018 you will be starring in a story that could not be any more British, "Sherlock Holmes". Is there anything new about this adaption?

It's a comedy and that is definitely new. There is nothing serious or indeed that Arthur Conan Doyle about any of it. And then there is Will Ferrel.

Will Ferrel - is he really that funny?

He just has that comedy gene. But yes, Will Ferrel is really is that funny.

Where do you see the biggest difference between New Yorkers and Londoners?

Londoners will be impatient and then passive aggressive if something is not happening to their liking. New Yorkers will just be loud about it.

Jacket
3.1 PHILLIP LIM

Earrings
EYE M BY ILEANA MAKRI





You grew up in a family deeply rooted in the world of the theatre, the opera - the whole industry. What was that like?

In some families you grow up with a religion and church on Sundays. We spoke about plays and went to art galleries on a Sunday with that same sort of reverence. I think that made me respect culture and see its importance to society. It probably also made me realize that you don't perform for attention or fame, although obviously that's a part of it, but instead because you have some sort of respect and interest in the craft.

When you were ten years old, you started acting. Did you ever question your career path as an actress?

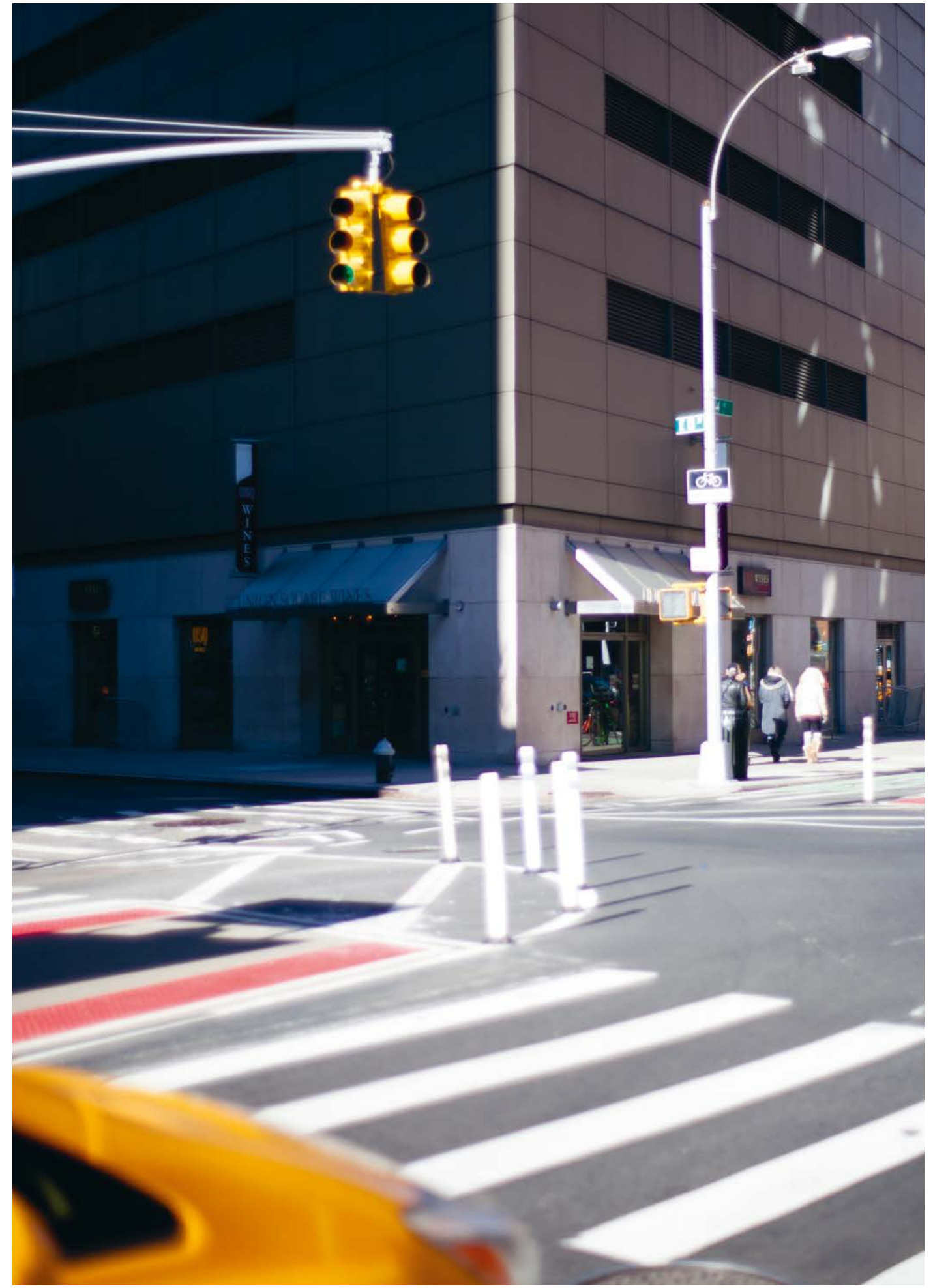
Yes. There was a chunk of time in my adolescence when I thought I might be a painter. I suppose I thought it would be 'different' and I was going through a sort of subtle phase of rebellion. I woke up and realized that privately I had never stopped thinking of myself as an actor and anyway, who was I kidding? Becoming an artist would have hardly been a 'rebellion'.

Did you ever experience the feeling that - since your own father Peter Hall was a famous director - you felt a greater fear of failing, not from your family but rather the public?

Yes. When I first started I was very aware that the public at large, may be predisposed to expect more of me because of who my parents were, and that if I wasn't good enough I had no right to be doing it just because of the arbitrary privilege of where I was born. I agreed with them and I remember thinking: I'll just keep doing this until you all say we don't want it anymore. I guess I still think that in some ways.

How much are actors allowed to consider themselves artists?

As much as they want probably. I do believe it's an act of creativity like any other. If you can create something that makes someone think differently about something or see the world in even a slightly different light - then I'd say you're an artist.





“I firmly believe that empathy is a quicker path to change than judgement.”

Dress
ROSETTA GETTY

Earrings
MIZUKI

Boots
DR MARTENS

Dresses layered
BEAUFILLE

Earrings
MIZUKI

It is early, six thirty A.M., in New York, when Rebecca Hall shows up to set for the shoot. It is one of those typically beautiful Manhattan mornings, cold and crisp, with a blue winter sky, where every breath leaves a mark in the air. The sound of the garbage collection cleaning up the streets sets the background tone for a city that has just awakened. First glimpses of sun are making their way through the steamy windows of the East Village apartment where the team has set up.

Hall enters, wearing no make-up; her beauty instantly compelling. She speaks with a soft tone, her British heritage undeniable, and smoothly switches into personal chitchat while getting hair and make-up done. The actress is in the early months of her pregnancy. Moments later she is out on the street, at the corner chosen for the shoot. She stands in the middle of New York traffic, the sun lighting up her face. She is wearing a smooth cashmere coat by The Row that clothes her body like a second skin. A strong woman that knows precisely how to carry her gracious long limbs, oblivious to the cold, embracing every moment of this moment at the corner.

