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APRIL 2011

PARIS
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STYLE



<<
AMBER WEARS
 TANK TOP BY **GAP**,
 SKIRT BY **TOMMY**
HILFINGER,
 AND BRACELETS
 BY **DOGEARED**.
 PHOTOGRAPHED AT
THE BAR ROOM
 AT **PORTA VIA**,
 LOS ANGELES.

>>
 (L-R) **GASTON**
 WEARS JACKET BY
THE GENERAL
STORE, PANTS BY
AG ADRIANO
GOLDSCHMIED
 AND HAT BY
STETSON.
BENJAMIN WEARS
 SHIRT BY **FIELD**
SCOUT AND PANTS
 BY **GUESS**.



Amber Heard

Being a hot blonde is not always easy, according to actress Amber Heard. "I fit a certain build and character that has very limited options in this industry." After coming of age as hot blondes in *Hidden Palms*, *Pineapple Express* and *Zombieland* (where she succeeded in being both hot and a zombie, much to Jesse Eisenberg's character's confusion), the 24-year-old has matured, along with her craft, playing more developed parts like Nic Cage's attitude-and-estrogen-not-necessarily-in-that-order counterpart in *Drive Angry*. "I enjoy the ridiculousness of being able to talk about how much I love guns and cars." But on a serious note, she

adds, "Usually, women like that are written to be either sexy and insensitive or sensitive and weak—I love that I was able to make a strong character real."

Things got really real (and sent the Internet into a tizzy) when she attended GLAAD's 25th Anniversary party last December. Now, she does not refute her bi-sexuality but instead just chooses not to discuss it. "I don't label myself one way or another," she says. What that means privately is none of our business, but professionally, her layered, accomplished performance as Johnny Depp's love interest in the upcoming adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's *The Rum Diary* shows Heard transitioning from nuanced ingénue to an artist in her own right. "I've made it a struggle and cut out a battle for myself to find roles I can do a little more with." **HOBEY ECHLIN**

Ball-Nogues Studio

L.A. architecture firm Ball-Nogues has built its reputation almost entirely on temporary structures; an irony not lost on its founders, Gaston Nogues and Benjamin Ball. Since partnering in 2004, they have straddled the line between architecture and installation art with their intrepid structures and unorthodox materials, like using clothes pins and American Apparel overstock to make a tunnel in Shenzhen, China, called "Built to Wear." As Ball notes: "Impermanent projects present opportunities to take more risks than traditional buildings; we don't have to worry about it 'going out of style.'"

Their first project defied easy classification: an outdoor canopy of tinted Mylar meant to evoke a black hole in the heart of Silver Lake.

It set the pace for a series of interventions, like their kaleidoscopic string structure "Feathered Edge" housed at MOCA's Pacific Design Center. "Some of our projects don't have a use *per se*," Ball says, "but they propose ideas that intersect with the discourse surrounding architecture."

Their studio has become an experimental lab of sorts, where they test new ideas with abandon, far away from public scrutiny. But that may not be the case for much longer, as the scope of their work increases with their profile, including some permanent structures: they're working on projects like a wildlife observation deck in Woodstock, NY; an outdoor structure made entirely of stainless steel spheres in Edmonton, Alberta; and a large suspended atmospheric piece for the new Bradley West Terminal at LAX. As for their dream commission? They both immediately agree: "We don't really think in terms of dream projects." **FRANKLIN MELENDEZ**