



MY STYLE

## JASON C WOODSON

As a child of two distinct cultures and a citizen of three countries, Jason explains how embracing his 'other' status influenced his style

**G**rowing up in suburban New York, born to a mixed race couple, my parents told me that people wouldn't always accept us. I remember coming home one night and seeing this bright yellow light in the distance. Suddenly my parents said, "Get on the floor of the car and don't come up until we tell you it's safe!" But of course as we got closer and the light got brighter, I had to see what it was that had my parents so terrified. I remember the heat coming off of the fire and looking up from the corner of my window to see a group of men in white hoods and white robes gathered round a man in similar red robes illuminated by a great, flaming cross. I had never seen the Klu Klux Klan before, but I had counted the number of burnt crosses on peoples' lawns on my way to school many mornings. I had always wondered when it would be our turn. Although I didn't really understand what was happening, what I did understand in that

moment was that their attire had power. What they chose to wear not only defined what they were, but also – ironically, since the hoods hid their faces – who they were.

And I think that moment defined my sense of style more than anything else. I dress to distress, not impress. Whether it's gender or genre, fetish or fashion, race or sexuality, I like to take things out of context and create something that is both familiar and slightly jarring to the eye. Be it a long blonde wig or a pair of vintage lederhosen, I am most comfortable when I am straddling cultures, rather than attempting to be a part of one. I get invited to a lot of alternative clubbing events like Father Sebastiaan's Endless Night Balls and as with most things that I do, I like to create something that doesn't quite fit in with expectations. I hate cookie cutter looks. I have never been able to understand the clone look of the '70s. Why would I want to look like everyone

else?

I try to source my looks from a variety of places. This particular look, which I call Darth Dracarys, the Death Eater, is largely by one of my favourite designers, Tatjana Warnecke of Berlin. Her Cosmic Couture line is really trying to do something new and different on the fetish scene, rather than sticking with the same old, same old. I don't believe in cultural hegemonies. That's the work of KKK and similar hate groups; the rule of divide and conquer. I am the child of two distinct and different cultures, the citizen of three separate countries (I collect passports like I collect clothes), and as such I have always been treated as 'other' but that is something that I have embraced. It is only through sharing our differences that we can hope to understand each other better.

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