

# ART ■ ZEALOUS

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## The Woman Who Does It All – Jennifer Elster

Kristina Adduci • January 6, 2016



Jennifer Elster is a woman of many hats. Born and raised in New York City, Elster is a filmmaker, photographer, fashion designer, performer, and founder of The Development, a private, underground, multi-faceted studio based in New York City where expansiveness is the currency. After keeping mostly to herself, in 2015, Elster began bringing her work to the public because it, “seems like the right time.” Elster launched ChannelELSTER.com: a place for Out of the Ordinary Cinema and Sound. The channel will be premiering an unusual mini series late winter. She invited Art Zealous to The Development to talk more about her upcoming projects and new leather collection.

Art Zealous: Tell us what The Development is for those who don't know underground compound

Jennifer Elster: The Development is a multi-faceted living installation where everything is in a state of development; it is an experiential form of artwork in itself. It is strange, spacious, beautiful, and very alive. A variety of things take place here. One day we will be filming, the next performing an art piece, but most often editing the work. I rarely stop to share my work. I compulsively create. We have a warm and talented team that are part of The Development family. It is a very special environment where guests feel both welcomed and curious to explore.

AZ: Tell us about your first exposure to the arts?

JE: I started creating at an early age. It was very natural. I don't remember a formal introduction to "art". It was in my lens, in every aspect of my life. My surroundings have always been incredibly fascinating to me.

AZ: Who has influenced you the most?

JE: Myself. I sound like an asshole, but it is true. I owe it to myself and my work to state that. Myself and the people I love inspire me the most. If I were to say one artist, I would have to say Bob Dylan. As a child he was always on our record player. I went through a lot with Dylan's songs as the backdrop.

AZ: You're a producer, creator of art and fashion, do you enjoy one over the other?

JE: I prefer making films over fashion, though I love to create a beautiful piece. I enjoy wearing my accessories because they are both original and primal. And it brings me joy to see others wear it well. I like to make people feel sexy such as altering their mood with an earring. But I have been studying humans in a very acute way my whole life. That is my real work and it manifests itself through words, images and films.

AZ: You just launched raw leather luxury collection J. ELSTER, tell us more

JE: Just like everything I get involved with, it happened naturally. I had a need for pieces that were fluid with my style. So I started making them. I enjoy the sensuality of a great piece. A great piece can make you feel differently. Sexy. Powerful. Whatever. Some of the pieces look like sculptures. Rough is signature. Unfinished has an appeal, just like the unknown. Each original designed piece is hand sculpted, hand crafted, and branded at The Development.

I began my career as a fashion editor at Conde Nast. After leaving, I became a conceptual fashion stylist, working on projects with David Bowie, Chloë Sevigny, Kate Winslet, Shirley Manson and Trent Reznor, to name a few. My work has appeared on the covers of magazines such as The Face, Dazed and Confused, Rolling Stone and Time.

AZ: Can you describe your personal design and / or artistic aesthetic?

JE: First, I am original. My work comes from within. I am raw and wild, but I am also sophisticated and painfully precise which is why the J. Elster collection is "Raw Luxury".

AZ: Your work seems to be preoccupied with the unknown. What intrigues you about the unknown?

JE: Where the mind goes in the balance. I love to figure things out. I spent ten years trying to puzzle The Being Experience aka ...In the Woods film series together. I should have been a biologist. I would have ultimately been more beneficial

as a human being.

AZ:What are you searching for?

JE:The purest state of being. Total surrender without fear.

AZ: What captures your imagination?

JE: Feelings.

AZ: Is great art more about conception or execution? Or is there art in the unfinished?

JE: It can be both, but often there is a dedication to survive the next moment.

AZ: The project you are most proud of?

JE: My life. My son. My relationship with my husband and the people I care about. I worked very hard at curating my existence. It took fearless determination and I am proud of what is. Still in development, of course.

AZ:How can we follow you?

JE: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Website