

# The Vision Behind VeryRare: Interview with Raf Reyes

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“Here’s to the crazy ones! The rebels, the troublemakers, the ones who see things differently. While some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.” – Rob Siltanen1997

The “Think Different” slogan, infamous to the Apple brand, is just one of the many inspirations behind artist Raf Reyes and his brand VeryRare. VR is a two-city brand, based in London and Paris, as Raf pursues his Master’s at the prestigious Royal College of Art. The label was birthed out of a deep desire to combat the big sharks of the industry and provide specialized “fusions of the avant-garde, inside jokes, lux, art, and leisure, creating a perfect equilibrium of comfort, wit, style, and elegance.” Over the course of five years, Raf invested his time into the creation of a manifesto to undertake the beautiful chaos that is the art world. His manifesto clearly outlines 21- unchangeable-points dictating the philosophical framework behind the brand VeryRare.

## **What has been the hardest part of building VeryRare from the ground up?**

Raf identified that the development of his brand depends entirely upon a solid fan base. He asserts how in the system, "the big ones dominate. You can talk to anyone, you can have everything, but if you don't have the clout, it's hard for the industry to validate you. It's a pity. It shouldn't be like that. And I don't want to oversell and fall into fast-fashion." #16 of the manifesto claims sustainability as a priority for the brand. Currently, VR gives a portion of all net profits to the association "For The Planet."

## **What is the significance of 21 in your manifesto?**

His manifesto is a result of five years of working and creating something to be “the Very Rarest of all time.” The genesis of the brand wasn’t even attempting streetwear, “the manifesto’s real point was to talk about art.” Culminating years of blood and sweat, Raf released the brand VR at the age of 21. Hence, the relevance of 21 bullets in the manifesto.

## **Since VeryRare is all about the customer, how do you incorporate the individual when you make the product?**

Raf passionately asserts his dissatisfaction with the way brands serve their customers. “I know for a fact- as I’ve been a customer before passing on to the other side, being a creator/producer- that we’re being money-sacked on the regular... *and for what?!* VeryRare challenges that and takes an opposing position/stance *vis-à-vis* (in relation

to/against) barely-cooked simplistic views on fashion.” Raf uses his personal experiences to design quality products that will hold emotional and cultural longevity. Pieces with strong narratives.

When Raf was younger he worked as a bell boy at the Brighton Hotel in Paris, right across the street from the Jardin des Tuileries, and an 8-minute walk from the Louvre. Working shifts during fashion week exposed him to the luxuries that high class guests were often accustomed to- indulged and showered with gifts and more. Stemming from these experiences, Raf wondered how impactful that kind of kindness might be for the ordinary person, as they are so deserving.

Each parcel comes with complimentary goodie bags, attempting to replicate the feeling one gets on Christmas morning. Further, Raf explained that, “each and every VeryRare’s statement pieces is the result of me grinding a tri-digit number of hours- minimum- on the research, ideation, composition, production, sampling, weaving, knitting, packaging, distributing phases...

not to mention the V®R®® unique ‘goodie galore.’ Custom-made, by yours truly, 1-of-1 collage, horoscopes, coloring books, calendars, stickers, puzzles, temporary tattoos, Tamagotchis, keychains, trading cards, branded art handlers’ gloves, lenticular postcards and more, complimentary.”

### **What is the most important thing you want our readers to know about you and VeryRare?**

“That we’re here for the betterment of the game. That we’re here to stay. I want them to feel (and know) that they’re not alone. That they’re part of this large family of doers, DIYers & DIFYers. I feel like I somehow owe them.”

# VERY RARE®

GOODIE GALORE

house/us". BIG goodie bag offered as part of our ethos and each every customer like family, like it should be done, post-2020/post-covidism wise).

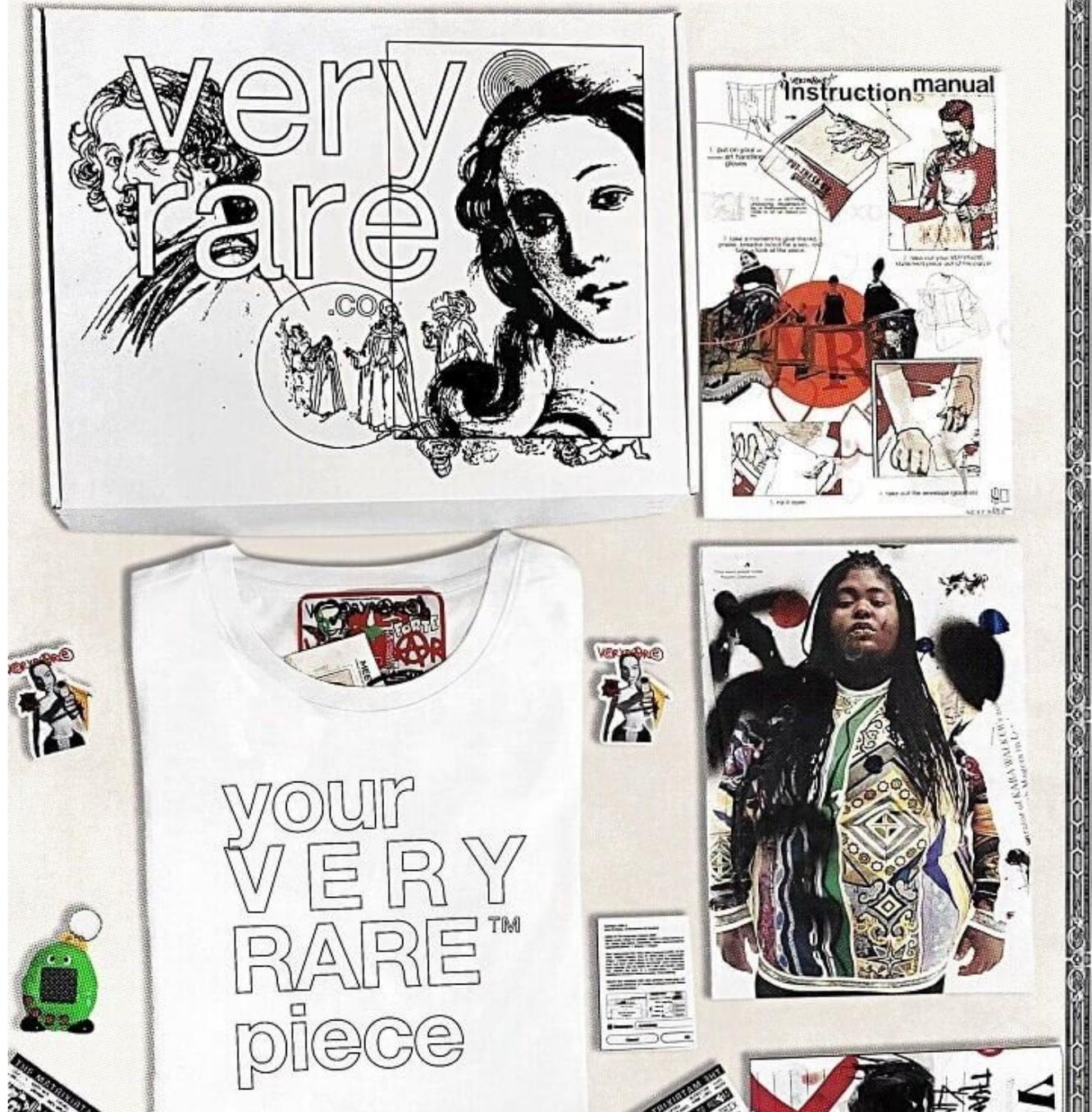




Image Courtesy: Raf Reyes

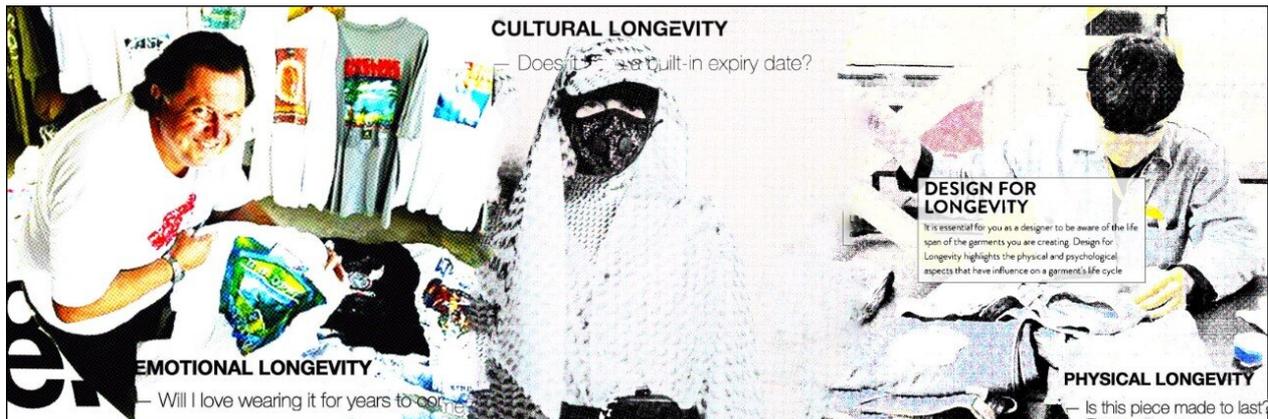


Image Courtesy: Raf Reyes

The name Raf Reyes was inspired by fashion icon Maison Margiela, a person who was far too Avant-Garde for his time. This was the kind of man who was rejected for challenging the norm yet seized his abilities to become revolutionary. Similarly, Raf hopes to take his art beyond even his own imagination. Raf aspires to exhibit his art on runways, museums, fashion week, but there is no limit to VeryRare's possibilities. Consistently pulling from cycle of life and art, here, there, then, and now, adding his own twist. There is history, fashion, music, but above all, for Raf Reyes, there is his customers- his family- and he'd "be nothing without them."

Raf believes that "society puts you in boxes, but you can do whatever you want as long as you believe in it, and the people who support you."

So, cheers to the crazy ones, let them inspire us, let us be them. The world is ours.

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