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## THE 5 MOST STYLISH FITNESS STUDIOS IN NEW YORK CITY

Because the fashion industry does not work out in dingy basement yoga studios, OK?

CHERYL WISCHHOVER • MAR 3, 2016

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Jerry Hall in a Helmut Newton photo doing a technique that has not YET popped up in boutique fitness studios. (Photo: [Sky Ting Instagram](#))

Studios in New York City like [Gotham Gym](#) and [ModelFit](#) long ago cemented their popularity among the fashion set — at least among the fashion set that's a size zero and gets paid to walk in Victoria's Secret runway shows. But they're far from the only players in town when it comes to fitness spots that attract a fashion-y following. These five NYC studios, some of which also have Los Angeles outposts, possess some magical combination of a well-designed space, an innovative or cool workout concept, great retail offerings and a buzzy following that have made them a hit with fashion people. Read on to discover your new (and chic) destinations for exercise.

### Y7 STUDIO



GALLERY 4 Images

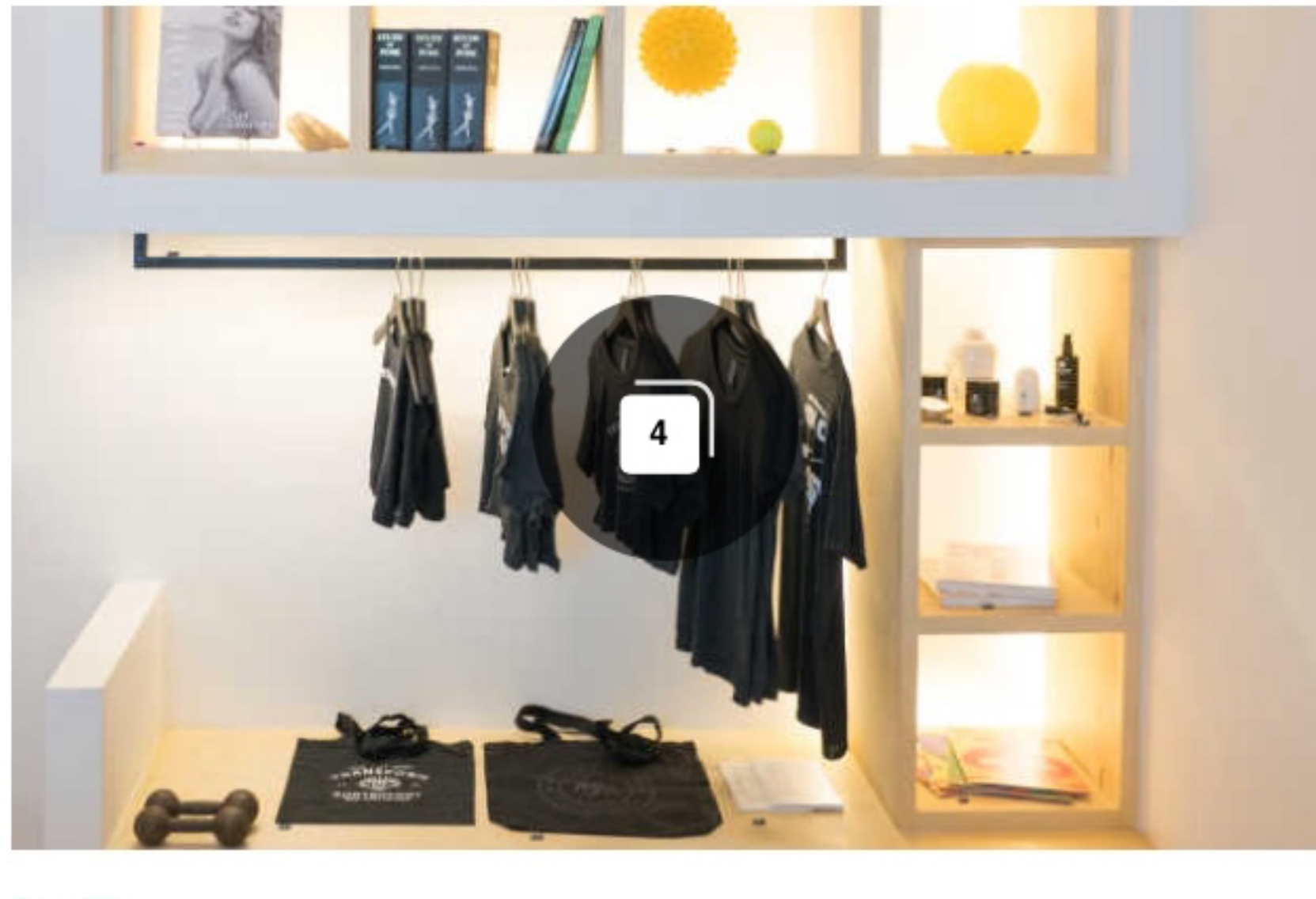
**The Concept:** If you hate yoga but really want to like it (me), this is the studio for you. [Y7](#) Founder Sarah Levey, 29, first started a pop-up in Brooklyn after she and her husband Mason got discouraged with traditional yoga. "I could not get into it. I had no idea what was happening — the chanting, the breathing. I was barely breaking a sweat and it just wasn't working for me," Levey says. Y7 classes feature very vigorous vinyasa flow sequences set to hip-hop music that will get your heart rate up and make you sweat — as will the 90-degree temperature the studios are heated to. There are two studios in Manhattan, one in Brooklyn and a newly opened Y7 in LA.

**The Vibe:** The studios are black and white with a minimalist sensibility — without a single Buddha statue in sight. Classes are held in candlelight, there are no mirrors, and music blares throughout class. The Flatiron studio also has what has to be the [most Instagrammed staircase](#) in NYC.

**The People:** You may run into Zosia Mamet, Nina Agdal, Shanina Shaik, and Rebecca Minkoff, as well as a gaggle of *Vogue*, *Self* and *Cosmopolitan* editors.

**The Retail:** Y7 sells its own branded merchandise in the form of shirts bearing slogans like "Tribe Called Sweat" and "Brooklyn We Flow Hard," all designed by the Leveys. "We've gotten approached a lot to carry other lines. There are so many other places that do that so well, so we just want to do our own fun stuff," Levey says.

### NEW YORK PILATES



GALLERY 4 Images

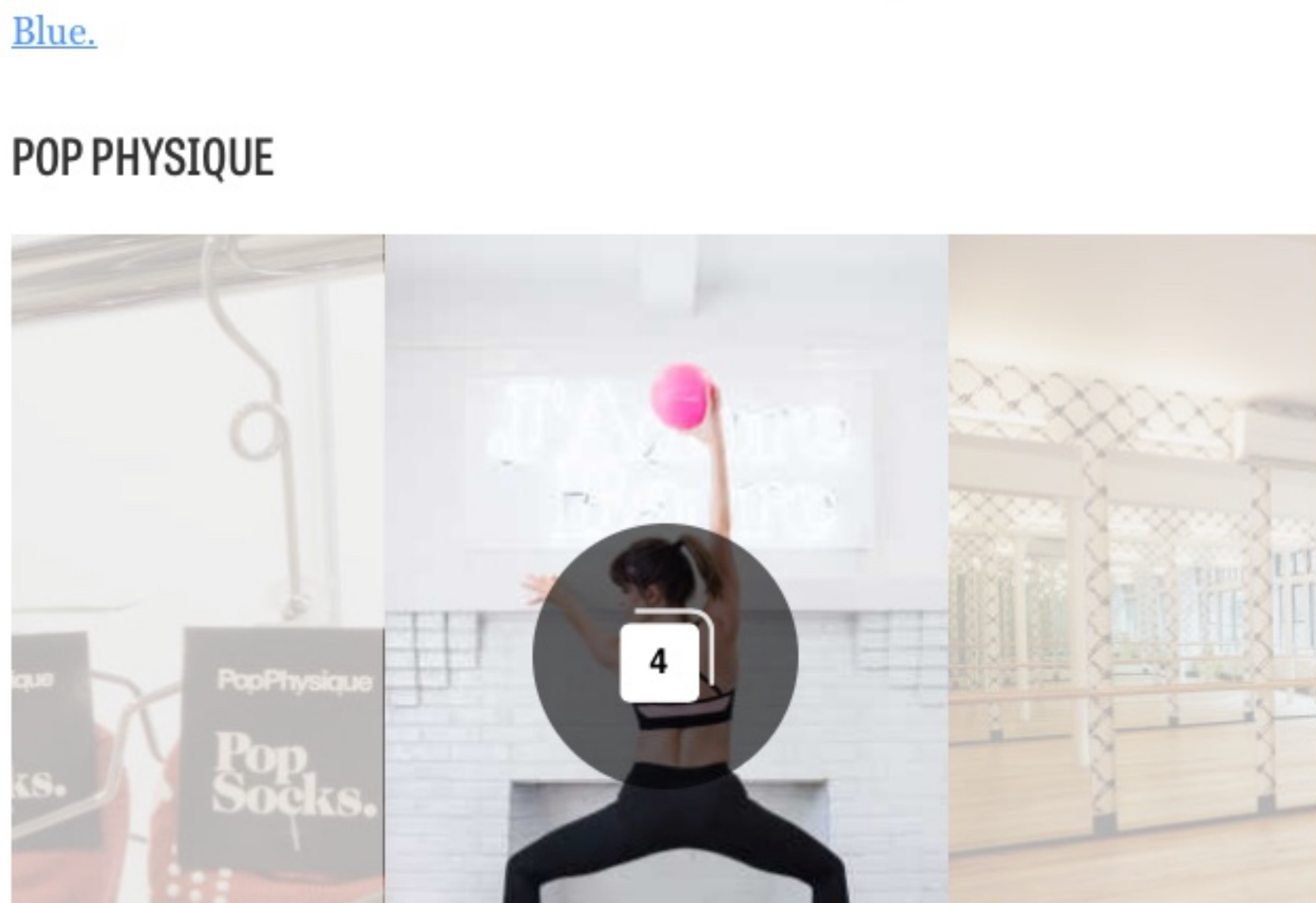
**The Concept:** Pilates has been around forever, but [New York Pilates](#) founder and ex-dancer Heather Andersen, 30, wanted to modernize it and bring it to a younger crowd with unfussy, bright studios and a top-notch teaching staff. "I wanted it to be really beautiful, and when you walk in it feels sort of magical and calming," Andersen says. "I want to listen to good music and I want to be hanging out with cute people!" It's a traditional Pilates workout — I didn't sweat much, but I couldn't laugh or walk for a good three days afterward due to muscle pain. There are currently two locations in NYC; the latest is in the heart of Soho on Howard Street, with Reformation on one side and expensive fashion pajama mecca Sleepy Jones on the other.

**The Vibe:** There is no stodginess here. Think whitewashed brick, airy bright studios, hanging plants, plank flooring and willowy instructors. There is some whimsy here, too — I spotted old "Buns of Steel" VHS tapes stacked up on a shelf by the front desk.

**The People:** Andersen doesn't like to name drop, but Hannah Bronfman and various fashion editors frequent the studio. "And over the summer we had a regular paparazzi issue," Andersen says. (*Fashionista* office speculation thinks maybe this was Taylor Swift or Karlie Kloss. This is obviously just unconfirmed rumor-mongering, though.)

**The Retail:** New York Pilates has a small line of tees and crop tops printed with the slogan "Pilates Is My Boyfriend" and printed graphics that resemble vintage rock tees. The studio has been meeting with smaller activewear brands to carry their pieces, and Andersen hopes to produce her own line soon. The studio also offers a natural artisanal beauty brand called [Violets Are Blue](#).

### POP PHYSIQUE



GALLERY 4 Images

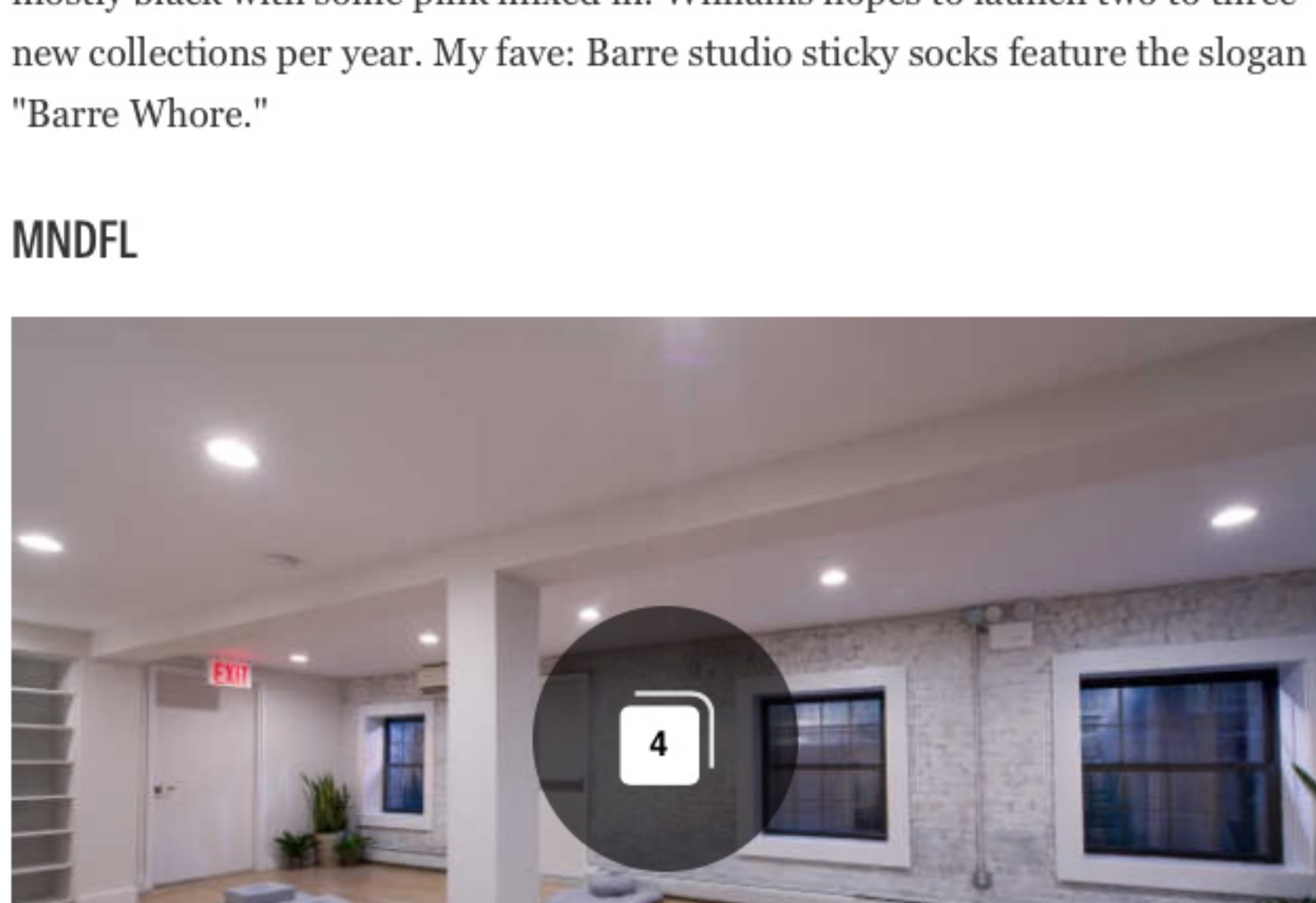
**The Concept:** [Pop Physique](#), which has multiple LA locations, recently opened its first outpost here in NYC. Founder Jennifer Williams, a former ballerina, opened the barre studio in 2008. "My idea of working out was always centered around dance and dance principles. I always thought if I hated the gym other people must as well. It was serendipitous timing for a boutique brand," says Williams. Pop Physique is a pretty traditional Lotte Berk style barre workout. You do repetitive small movements at the barre and on the floor with straps and balls, with the end result being every muscle in your body is burning and movement is torture.

**The Vibe:** The setting and sensibility are what truly makes Pop stand out from its zillions of barre competitors. Studios feature a clean black and white theme with different hits of color throughout, depending on the studio location. It's been compared to fellow LA brand American Apparel quite often, because the logo's font is similar and the ads bear a similar cheeky (as in butt cheeks) vibe. Williams is sort of tired of the comparison, though. "We are our own thing. I'm not a rip off of American Apparel," she says. "Whenever anyone says [the imagery] is sexual, I always point to David Bantou or Equinox, who are equally pushing boundaries. I happen to find the body very beautiful in certain shapes and forms. Since we're a workout studio, I do think it's important to show the body and to be aspirational to people." There is a branded selfie mirror in the studios ("Pop your selfie") that gets a lot of use, if Instagram is any indication.

**The People:** There is a long list of LA starlets and cool girls who love Pop, including Brie Larson, Mindy Kaling, Diane Krueger, HAIM, Trina Turk, Lykke Li and Kelis.

**The Retail:** Pop just launched its own line of activewear, featuring six pieces including a bra, a bodysuit, a sweatshirt and a bag. The first collection is mostly black with some pink mixed in. Williams hopes to launch two to three new collections per year. My fave: Barre studio sticky socks feature the slogan "Barre Whore."

### MNDFL



GALLERY 4 Images

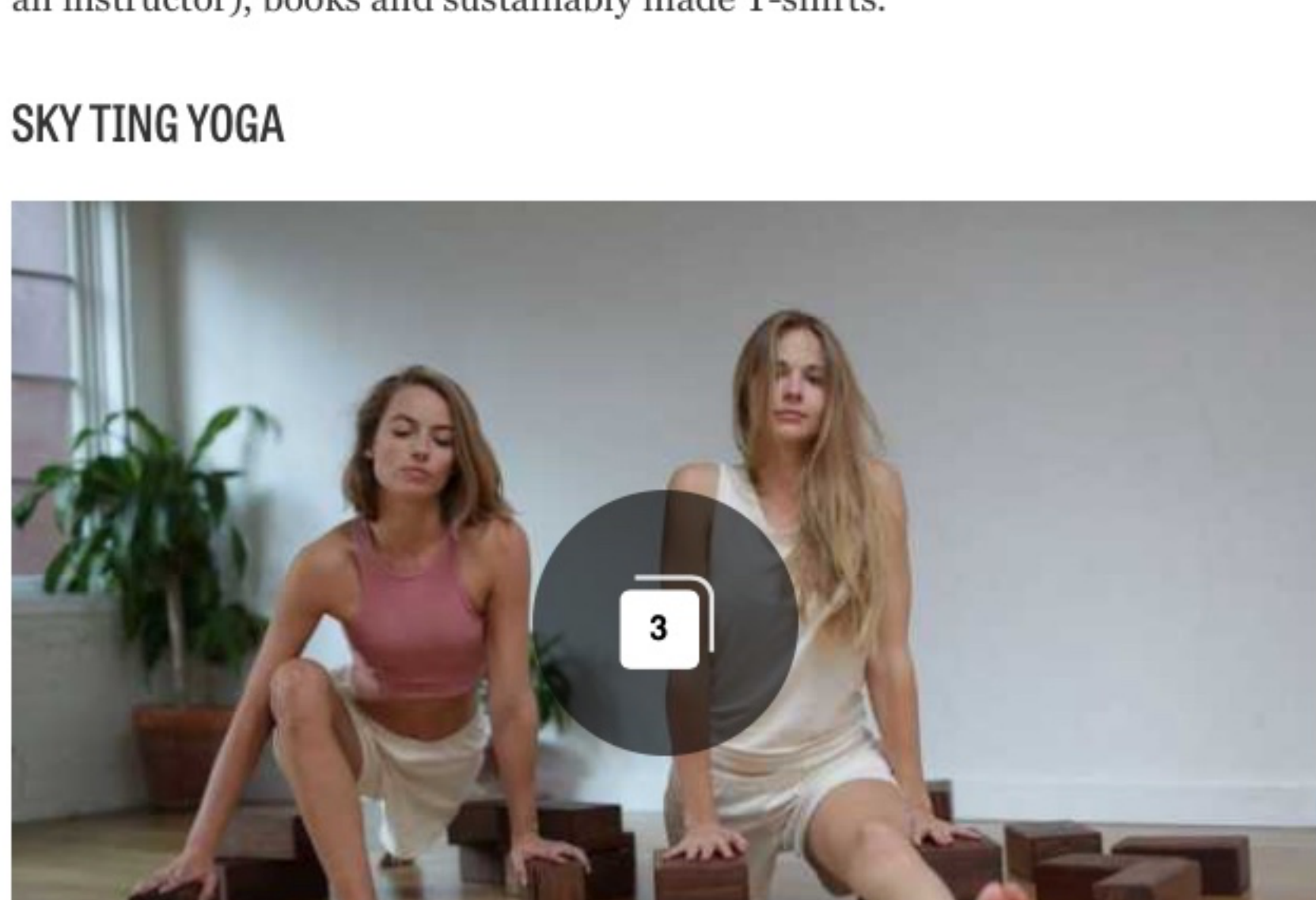
**The Concept:** [Meditation is the new Soul Cycle](#), people. [MNDFL](#) (pronounce it as if it had vowels) just opened as a drop-in meditation studio in NYC this past fall. You can even book a cushion in advance if you're really type A. The studio offers different kinds of meditation for whatever ails you, be it stress, a lack of sleep, a dearth of creativity or a need for more energy.

**The Vibe:** Succulents everywhere, a living wall (i.e. a wall with plants growing in it), and whitewashed exposed brick give this space a very alive, calm feeling. "Our intention was to create an optimal environment for meditation and relaxation where all New Yorkers would feel comfortable. We wanted it to feel more like a home than a studio. In short, our aesthetic is relaxing and inviting," says co-founder Ellie Burrows.

**The People:** MNDFL has been fully embraced by editors and the wellness community alike. I've been to countless beauty events at the space.

**The Retail:** It's a quirky mix of handmade items (like door hangers made by an instructor), books and sustainably made T-shirts.

### SKY TING YOGA



GALLERY 3 Images

**The Concept:** This is yoga for anyone of the yoga pretentiousness. (Is it obvious that I hate yoga? I do.) Friends and yoga instructors Krissy Jones, 27, and Chloe Kernaghan, 28, opened [Sky Ting Yoga](#), and were quickly anointed by *Vogue* as "fashion's favorite." They're just cool and laid back, and don't take it all too seriously. "We didn't want our studio to reflect an ancient Indian traditional yoga studio because that's not the way we teach. We wanted to make a place that was authentic to us and not cheesy in any way. Our method isn't very precious," Jones says. Case in point: While instructing us to look up at the sky, she said, "Try to sniff your armpit," rather than something like, "Open your heart chakra and look to the guiding heavens." Similarly chill young residents from the up-and-coming Chinatown neighborhood come here to practice.

**The Vibe:** Succulents, the official plant of cool girls everywhere, are liberally strewn around the studio. The upstairs studio (the first floor houses the reception and retail area) has a huge skylight and tons of windows, which let in natural light. A large stuffed giraffe is the studio mascot. The light blue yoga mats feature art designed by a yoga teacher, and the wood blocks — rather than those purple foam blocks you usually see — and neutral toned blankets shot through with subtle metallic threads add a chic touch.

**The People:** It's the first yoga studio to open in Chinatown, an area that's still affordable, at least by Manhattan standards, and has attracted a community of creatives. "We have people from all across the [fashion] industry, from editors to models and actors, celebs and musicians. The Glossier gang all come in too," says Jones.

**The Retail:** Along with branded T-shirts, the studio carries Nike, Live the Process (the founders of the two brands are friends) and Outdoor Voices, which essentially are the trifecta of fashion-y activewear. "Everything is hand selected and things that we would like to wear or look at in our house," says Kernaghan.

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