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Shorts by *Christian Costa*
Shoes by *Prada*
Earrings & ring by *Le Vian*



Shirt by *Louis Vuitton*; cardigan by *Nina Skarra*; timepiece by *Cartier*

Q:

How does actress and globetrotter Maggie Q. while away the hours when she's not busy emoting on camera? Her answer just might inspire you

Words by Lauren Paige Kennedy

Most of us complain there simply aren't enough minutes in the day to tackle all we'd like to do. Then we conveniently forget the worthy cause we really did mean to support with our time and money, quickly forgiving ourselves for being too busy, too frantic, too stretched. But spend an afternoon with impassioned actress Maggie Q. and you may leave her side browbeating yourself for being, well, such a self-involved slacker.

Because in addition to her ardour for acting, which has landed the former model plum roles in Hollywood blockbusters such as *Live Free or Die Hard* (2007), *Mission Impossible III* (2006), and *Rush Hour 2* (2001), Ms. Q. jets the globe in her pursuit of other interests besides the next good script.

She actively supports the international animal group PETA; bonds with abused pit bulls at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in the American deserts of Utah; volunteers for Animals Asia at an African elephant orphanage; has raised tens of thousands of dollars for the China Bear Project; and produced the documentary *Earthlings* (2007), narrated by the actor Joaquin Phoenix, a film that reveals the horrors of harvesting animals for profit, whether it's for food or fur. Human suffering motivates her, too: the actress helped to build a hospital in a poor village in Rwanda; launched a micro-loan program in Kenya to assist HIV+ women learn other trades besides dangerous sex work; and has lobbied Congress in Washington, D.C., to train its legislative lens on human rights abuses happening in Burma.

Ms. Q. also begged her connected friends in D.C. to sneak her into Burma last May to research her second, still-untitled documentary as a producer. "We went to the refugee camps on the Thai side and crossed over," she says with a shrug, as if entering into an enforced military zone was no more difficult than, say, scoring front row seats to a Madonna concert in New York City. As to what she captured on film: "I can't say much about it yet," she hedges, her voice a mixture of contained excitement and seductive salesmanship. But she plans to shine a light on the plight of 70,000 child soldiers and two million displaced peoples suffering the consequences of 47 years of military might. "It was heartbreaking," she says, referring to all she witnessed. "And I've been to the darkest, saddest parts of Africa before. This was worse ... Even in Asia, they don't know what's happening in their own backyard."

Incidentally, despite her busy schedule righting so many of the world's wrongs, the actress is enjoying two big-screen releases this fall:

the romantic Chinese epic *The Warrior and the Wolf*; and the much-anticipated U.S. indie, *New York, I Love You*, in which she's rumoured to steal scenes from art house fixture Ethan Hawke. And she's currently filming the *noir* comic book thriller *Priest*, opposite perpetual clergyman Paul Bettany. So it's not as if she's blowing off her day job to hop around the world doing good. If anything, her star is rising higher and brighter than ever before.

Born Margaret Quigley in Honolulu, Hawaii, this half-Irish, half-Vietnamese stunner shortened her last name to "Q" to make it easier for the Chinese audience to pronounce after moving to Hong Kong in 1998 to pursue a modelling and acting career. She was quickly embraced by the Asian market like a home-grown daughter, rather than the all-American beauty she truly is.

What never changed, however, was her meritocratic, root-for-the-underdog nature. "I'm a fighter at heart, feisty and outspoken," she tells me as we chat at Smashbox Studios in Hollywood, her dramatic makeup and wild bouffant both remnants of the impossibly chic photo shoot she just rocked for the cover of this magazine. "In Asia I always get, 'Oh, Maggie, you're so Western!' Which I think was their way of saying I never shut up, and not talk about the things they didn't want to hear about. But I'm very upfront. I speak my mind."

She's as empathetic as she is articulate. "I was the kid who took home every bird that fell from a tree, every cat hit by a car," she says. "But I didn't get involved with animal rights, or anything else, until I was into my twenties."

"Maggie walks the walk," says Francis Battista, the founder of Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. "In the three years she's been with us, she's filmed two PSAs [public service announcements], done appearances, hosted events, and she visits the Sanctuary regularly to exercise the animals." (Or, "scrub floors and scoop goat shit," as Ms. Q. describes it.) Battista is referring to the nearly 2,000 dogs, cats, birds, horses and exotic animals, most of them previously abandoned and badly treated, that escaped "death row" for the safe house of his shelter, the largest in the United States. "She is thoroughly committed to the cause of animal rescue," he continues, "even bringing it to her 'other life'—I know she was thrilled to appear on the cover of Chinese Vogue with a dog in her arms, if only to show the Chinese audience how wonderful a dog can be as a beloved pet. It's not just business for Maggie. ▶

Necklace by *Marie Haskell Jewelry*
Bracelet by *Balenciaga*



Dress by *Giorgio Armani*
Allegria timepiece by *Van Cleef & Arpels*
Love bracelet by *Cartier*



Headband by *Dolce & Gabbana*; dress by *Roland Mouret*; earrings & ring by *Yves*; bracelet as before



Left: Dress by *Akris*
Bracelet & ring by *Stephen Webster*
Shoes by *Givenchy*
Opposite: Top by
Salvatore Ferragamo;
Shoes are *Salvatore Ferragamo*
cage heels made with *Crystalized™*
Swarovski Elements





Dress by Akris; hat by Givenchy; sash by Chanel

► It's where she lives in her heart—with animals and with children in need.”

Ms. Q. takes particular aim at trends, both culinary and in clothing, which thrive at animals' expense. “I don't feel you can look good or project light when your sense of fashion comes from a cruel place,” she says pointedly. “You strip an animal of its skin while it's alive, and then wash it and dye it and make it fluffy and put it on a store's shelf, and it looks very different from where it came from. There's a disconnect! It's why we call cows ‘beef.’ And pigs ‘pork.’ If someone said [at a restaurant], ‘Oh, you get an 8 oz cow with your potatoes, it's just a little to close to home. But ‘beef’ sounds like a meal.”

On the subject of animal cruelty, the actress has much to say. “I [recently] wrote the forward for a book on shark fins”—shark fins are yet another cause of hers, what with sharks being hunted to the point of near-extinction to make shark fin soup, a customary Chinese dish among a growing upscale class that considers it to be part delicacy, part aphrodisiac, and part anti-aging staple—“and it's just getting out of hand in Asia, you know? There's this thinking that shark fins can give you vitality, beautiful skin, health ... but how can you think something is healthy that doesn't stem from compassion? That's my message to consumers. There's a lot to be learned in Asia about what beauty truly means.”

Of course, she understands her vocal Western ways can, at times, conflict with hundreds of years of tradition. (Supping on shark fin soup dates back to the Ming Dynasty, after all). “When you're an American, you can appeal to many different [kinds of] people and their values,” the actress muses. “But when you're moving into China or Japan, you're dealing with a culture. How do we break traditions? You can't tell people their traditions are wrong. So for me, when I speak, it's not me telling people they are wrong or pointing fingers. It's me saying: ‘I understand you're used to [this tradition], but ... just because it's a tradition doesn't mean it's right.’”

When asked if she has ever encountered hostility or resentment for her opinions, Ms. Q. says, “I expect it—but not so far.” She knits her brow for a moment, contemplating both the question and her response, before summing it up with this: “If you don't care, just say you don't care. But you're the one who has to live like that. If you can, you're a different person than I am!”

She is a different kind of person: her voracious, whip-smart mind—“I like to study and I like to learn”—spouts off so many quick-fire facts during our conversation, and about such

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a wide swathe of the world's injustices, I can't help but mentally think of her as a walking search engine (if Google had a conscience, say, and looked amazing in size 2 couture). Perhaps acting is the ideal profession for someone whose heart bleeds for anything with two legs, four legs or fins, that faces stronger enemies with plans to exploit, dominate, silence, or eat it. Ms. Q. clearly identifies with those who suffer, and she wears her emotions on her sleeve. Isn't this ability—to fully walk in another's shoes—the first prerequisite of acting?

“She is very earnest,” remarks renowned director Tian Zhuang Zhuang of his only lead female character in the upcoming *The Warrior and the Wolf*, to be released in Hong Kong this autumn. “And eager to quickly grasp what I was trying to express.”

Lest we forget, acting is what propelled Ms. Q. into international recognition. But unlike some Hollywood types, this is one actress who would rather discuss today's headlines than her beauty regimen, although, when pushed, she admits to preferring yoga over doing biceps curls because the former “isn't brainless,” and enjoys practicing martial arts, “because there's an intelligence there to me.” She also radiates an inner glow, and seems genuinely thrilled to do all she does, both on- and offset.

Already a huge name in Asia, Hollywood is taking a renewed notice of its prodigal daughter, embracing Ms. Q. in several showcase roles this fall. In *New York, I Love You*, an anthology film featuring the romantic visions of eleven established directors, plus an all-star cast including Natalie Portman, Orlando Bloom, Shia LaBeouf, Bradley Cooper, Chris-

tina Ricci, Andy Garcia, and Cloris Leachman, to name a few, she plays a prostitute wooing her, played by the aforementioned Hawke. “He's my favorite actor to work with,” she raves about the actor. “So easy and relaxed. We just had a blast together.”

Priest is yet another departure. In this horror western set in an apocalyptic future, Ms. Q. portrays a priestess who joins the title character, a rogue man-of-the-cloth who has shunned church law, to track down a band of vampires that has kidnapped his niece. (Vampires being all the rage in Hollywood these days, the actress is certainly sinking her teeth into parts that can only be thought of as *au courant*).

As our conversation winds down, Ms. Q. looks at her watch, already mentally onto the next stop of her teeming schedule. Still, she politely makes sure I have all I need for my story, and volunteers to stay longer if necessary, even though she still adorns the over-the-top, look from her photo session. I assure her she's given me plenty to write about – and think about it, too, slacker that I am. Inspired, I tell her she makes me want to do more for charity, and for the greater good ... if I can find the time, that is. ■

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