

**The Museum at FIT FASHION CULTURE Podcast
Fran Lebowitz in conversation with Valerie Steele**

Recorded Friday, November 8, 2013

VALERIE STEELE

This is the afternoon session.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Feels like the morning session for me.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

I should have asked you to stay up all night the night before and then cruised in for it.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

You didn't have to ask me.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

Okay, well, I'm going to start. I'm going to start with a personal question, because why not? We've got you here. You have a very distinctive style. And can you characterize that style for us?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

No.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

Try.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

That's what distinctive means.

VALERIE STEELE

All right. Well, let me put it this way. I wanted to have one of your looks in the exhibition. And unfortunately, you weren't able to lend it. And I wonder, why do you think I wanted something of yours? And why were you – can you explain why you were unable to lend it?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Right, well you asked for a suit?

VALERIE STEELE

Yes.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Right. And in order to, I guess, lure me into the idea, you mentioned other women who were lending suits.

AUDIENCE

Louder! I can't hear.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

This would not be my problem. Just turn it up. Can you hear me now?

VALERIE STEELE

Someone should turn it up.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

All right. I'll start again. You asked me, in order to get me to agree to do this, you mentioned other women whose suits you had. It was suits you specifically wanted. And I don't remember all of them, but one of them was Marlene Dietrich.

VALERIE STEELE

Yes.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

And the reason I didn't lend it to you, and I couldn't, was because I do not have enough suits to not have one for six months. You again invoke Marlene Dietrich. And then I had to explain to you that she no longer needs her suits.

VALERIE STEELE

Yes. [LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

And when you're done with Marlene Dietrich suits, I wouldn't mind having them myself.

VALERIE STEELE

I know. I wouldn't mind either.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Who owns those?

VALERIE STEELE

The Berlin Film Museum. So we've got about six of her outfits.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

The Berlin Film Museum, well, no one deserves 'em less. Come on.

[EVERYONE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

When, when you first came to New York, you were friends with a lot of older, very cultivated gay guys. And I wonder, what kind of sartorial style did they have? This would have been, what, like the early seventies?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Like seventies? It depends which group of people you mean. The ones that are most often cited, I would say, had no sartorial style. I couldn't really tell you what they wore. I mean, first of all, what they also had was no money. And although people were saying, "You don't need any money." You need money. I really don't remember what they wore.

I mean, we all wore jeans. You know, one of them I could remember what he wore. He wore jeans and a black leather jacket and a white t-shirt. It was considered kind of witty, because that – those were not the kind of clothes gay men wore. You know, that was kind of the beginning of this kind of what became an excessively butch look.

But I really, other than that, I don't remember what they wore. I mean, extravagance in clothing and, you know, and calling attention to yourself with your clothing was kind of separate from this group. And it was considered to be a kind of fallback position if you weren't smart enough.

VALERIE STEELE

Ah, okay. The usual fashion, flamboyant fashion is dumb stereotype.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Yeah, but it wasn't just fashion. It wasn't just flamboyance and clothes, you know, It was a general flamboyance. Flamboyance isn't the word. It was what used to be called showing off.

VALERIE STEELE

What about lesbian elegance?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

What about it?

VALERIE STEELE

[CHUCKLES] Can you characterize it, talk about –

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Marlene Dietrich, that's why you wanted her clothes. Now, if you're asking me if New York is full of people who look like that, then no. It's not full of people who look like that now. Okay. Because it isn't just a thing of clothes. You know, and in fact, it maybe doesn't even have to be a thing of clothes. Obviously, it's easier to use clothes because you can purchase them.

VALERIE STEELE

What about elegance itself? You were joking before that there wasn't any elegance. How would you define elegance?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

No, I didn't say that. A man asked you for information on elegance, and I said, "There is no information on elegance".

Elegance, really, I think is a natural expression of character. You know, it certainly isn't what most people seem to mean. It is, which is a kind of gentility, you know, which is a kind of – I don't know – any idea of elegance.

You know, it's not something that you the reason people find it hard to define is because they rarely see it. And the reason they rarely see it is because it's intrinsic to someone. It's not something you can replicate. And you know, this culture, I don't mean just clothes, is entirely a culture of replication and nostalgia. You know, so one thing, and I mean Marlene Dietrich if you want to use her and people like that, they were not regressive looking. They were not looking back. Even though some of the styles were from a long time ago, it was incredibly progressive, you know. So that, it's so many, it involves so many things that I could not describe it to, especially at these prices.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

Warhol and Halston are two of the figures that we have represented in the show. And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about this Warhol style vis a vis Halston style, the kind of looks that they were associated with.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Well, I mean, the Andy style, it was a factory style. You know, it wasn't just Andy, you know. And it was I mean – now I have to always say this to people who are young, you know, who can't tell the difference between someone my age and someone who would be Andy's age if he was alive ... not the same age. So that was for someone Andy's age, which he must have been in his forties when I met him and I was like 20, it was an excessively youthful way to dress, because men at that time dress like adults. So that, it was jeans and Brooks Brothers shirts and, you know, I mean, I wore penny loafers and remember, if he did or not, the really the clotheshorse in

fact, it was Fred Hughes, you know, and he was a spectacular dresser and he wore blue jeans, but he paid much more attention to his clothes.

You know, Halston is not someone I was very interested in ever. I knew him, you know, I know that now he's considered to be Leonardo da Vinci or something. But, I mean [audience laughs] I thought that he was kind of a hit, frankly, which is why there was an overemphasis on exclusivity. There was, you know, just a tiny group of people around Halston.

The great thing about Halston was he had this house where he had huge parties, which was always good. But there was, I thought even at the time, even though the clothes were very modern, because they were made of plastic. They were made of ultrasuede, which was kind of polyester, which is plastic. So, and he had these great looking models around him – Karen and I don't remember the girls, other girls who were around Halston. There was a whole look around Halston, it was a whole look. Not just the way he looked, the way the girls looked, the way the clothes looked, the way his house looked, the way his offices looked – that's where his shows were – I mean, that's where all fashion shows were then. And it just, you know, I was around because he was around, but it was not something that I found magnetic.

VALERIE STEELE

We've got one outfit in the show, which is a Cockette outfit from that San Francisco performance art group. And I know The Cockettes came to New York once, but it was very, very different than sort of New York cross-dressing looks. I wonder, do you remember what the scene was like when The Cockettes came to New York?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Vividly. I remember very well because there was a huge amount of advance publicity for this. In an era when this sort of thing, you know, being drag queens had no publicity because it was illegal. You know, it would be like saying some heroin dealers were coming to New York from San Francisco. There was a lot of advance publicity.

[VALERIE AND AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

I don't remember why this happened. And I think it was because probably you don't know who this is now, but there was this guy named Rex Reed. There may still be a guy named Rex Reed. I don't know. And he wrote for Esquire, which, you know, was a big magazine that regular people read. You know, and I think he wrote about The Cockettes he saw.

And I think, also, Capote maybe said something about having seen them in San Francisco. So I don't remember who organized this, but someone organized a bus to go to the airport to meet them. I was on that bus. So I was on that bus to go to the airport to meet them. And there was zero security in airports then.

And so we were sitting in them, what are they called, the gate, you know, where the plane people get off the plane. And they came off the plane from San Francisco in drag, which you

were arrested for dressing like that not just in San Francisco, but everywhere. But, however, they weren't in drag really, to look like women, like candy, you know, which is probably more acceptable, but they just looked insane, too. And they had beards. That was, I believe, an innovation of the Coquettes, or at least it wasn't common in New York for men to have this, you know, beard, which is what could be more butch than a beard? And they didn't really dress like women. They just wore some articles, women's clothing. But they came off the plane screaming and banging on drums, singing.

And at the first, people I see getting off the plane is a woman with her son, a little boy, and she has her hand clamped over his eyes, which means that he was like that for like 6 hours on the plane. I also got a job as an usher at the opening of The Cockettes. And this was something I really tried to get because it was paying the unbelievable sum of \$90, which was almost my rent. And the reason was unbelievable. I discovered I never got paid.

So they were an enormous flop in New York. They were in New York for about a week before the opening, which was in a theater on Second Avenue, I can't remember where. And they were wine and dined and then they appeared and no one in New York could believe how terrible they were.

I mean, because we had, you know, Jackie Curtis. In other words, they were terrible because they were kind of dopey. You know, it wasn't funny. I mean, it wasn't enough in New York. Did you guys get dressed up and make, you know, yell? And they were kind of, I believe, actually driven from the city?

VALERIE STEELE

Well, I suppose San Francisco and New York were sort of quintessentially different kinds of cities. I mean, I know—

FRAN LEBOWITZ

They were polar opposites.

VALERIE STEELE

Polar opposites.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Yeah. Just like they are now.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I still haven't come around to San Francisco.

VALERIE STEELE

Yes, I remember I lived in a feminist commune there and it was lots of hairy legs. So it was similar like beards for the guys and drag and then hairy legs for all of the women, and very different. They hated the Velvet Underground when we played it out there.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Really? And it's just completely different. They deserve Silicon Valley.

[VALERIE AND AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

Well, one of our big questions that we asked at the course of the exhibition is why have there been so many gay fashion designers? So I wanted to get your take on that. Why –

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Why, that's a serious question? Why are there straight fashion designers? That would be my question.

VALERIE STEELE

Okay.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

And why are there so many straight men in fashion shows? Because really, it's like a hockey game now. I mean, can't something be done about that?

VALERIE STEELE

Yeah.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

You're an educator.

VALERIE STEELE

[LAUGHS] But I'm more.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I can't answer this question. Why are there – I mean, now or then?

VALERIE STEELE

Any time.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Because— not any time. The world has changed in regard to, certainly, the world has changed much more regard to people who are gay than it has in regard to fashion, because there are so few options in fashion, let's face it, which is why people keep going backwards.

And so that, you know, I mean, I'm trying to think I don't really recall that there being any straight designers when I was young. I mean, they could get other jobs, by the way. So that was also one of the reasons, you know, they could have other jobs. You know, so there were very few jobs or professions or fields that you could be in if you were gay without pretending to be straight.

VALERIE STEELE

Right.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Nevertheless, of course, many gay fashion designers pretended to be straight. That was one of the options.

VALERIE STEELE

Yes.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

You know, I mean, now you can be anything. A priest?

VALERIE STEELE

If someone asked you for advice on how to get on the best dressed list, how do people get on the best dressed list?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

People vote for you. Yes. People voted for me. Yes. I didn't really realize. I mean, I didn't really pay attention to it. If I'd known people were going to vote for me, I would run for mayor.

[VALERIE AND AUDIENCE LAUGH]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Okay. If it was the same people voting as well for the best dressed list, I'd be the mayor. I would rather be the mayor. I like being on the best dresses, but I would prefer to be the mayor. You would rather I'd be the mayor, too.

VALERIE STEELE

I'm sure more power doesn't get much power being on best dressed.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Is your own.

VALERIE STEELE

What do you think are the worst new fashions that have come up in the last, say, ten years?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Usually, I think the worst fashions are old ones, you know, I really can't stand to see things come back and back and back and back. I mean, probably by the time I was 30, I probably had seen platform shoes come back already three times. You know especially, I'm always shocked that something that was bad to begin with keeps coming back.

You know, it's as if every four years Richard Nixon is a president again.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Yeah. So there's you know, I would like to see something new. Of course, as I said before, you know, it's not an endless cavalcade of options, you know, clothes because clothes you have to wear, you know, so that it doesn't, you know, lead to endless self-expression. And when it does, I don't want to see these clothes.

So, I mean, to me, I would say shorts, okay. But I didn't mean the kind of shorts, but I really do not want to see adult men wearing shorts. I don't want to see them. I don't want to see them. I don't care, even if they look great in shorts.

Because truthfully, most people look horrible in shorts and they don't belong in the city. That to me is that maybe the biggest change is, you never used to see. No one wore shorts in the city. It was considered a suburban thing. To me it is still a suburban thing. So I don't want to see. To me, I see people in shorts, I think they're going to a cookout and they are. So baseball hats, you know, all this type of childish dressing, I really can't stand it. It looks horrible unless you're a child, you know, and I also think there are too many children. But I know you didn't ask me that.

So I would prefer, like the one good thing is, I notice that more men wear suits now, like it seems. You know, I wish that the suits fit them, but, you know, those little tiny suits, hardly any of you really are able to carry it off. You know, it's funny. It's a funny idea, but most people can't wear them, even though you do.

VALERIE STEELE

And any best clothes, clothes that rise above the mass of mediocrity.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

You mean, you know, that are generally available to—

VALERIE STEELE

In our lifetime that are available now?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I don't know. I really don't look at clothes in that way. I'm sure there are some. But maybe if you—
If you showed me some pictures, I could tell you.

VALERIE STEELE

You go to Savile Row, for example, you can get tailored.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

My clothes are from an English tailor. Except I don't go to London because I'm an Anglophobe.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

They come to New York twice a year and that's when I order my clothes. So it takes a year and
a half for me to get a suit.

VALERIE STEELE

What do you think is the appeal of leather?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

What do I think the appeal — is there some other appeal of leather I wasn't aware of?

VALERIE STEELE

Well, there's, we've got a lot of leather in the show. A lot. A lot of leather from the seventies to
being in a high fashion sense.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Sex. That's the appeal. That's it. There's no other appeal. It's durable.

[VALERIE AND AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

And it lasts longer than sex.

[AUDIENCE CONTINUES TO LAUGH]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Which is why at a certain age you should give it up. It's actually sad. Leather at a certain age,
you know, I mean, I see people and I feel sad for them, but for me.

VALERIE STEELE

It's like, what should they take up instead?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Some useful profession.

VALERIE STEELE

What's your feeling about t-shirts with messages on them?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Despicable. I actually like in 1971 or 72, I wrote – that's when they appeared. Okay. So I know. I know exactly when they appeared because the second they appeared, I wrote something about it for an interview, which is in I think, *The Metropolitan Life*. I couldn't believe it. It seems so unbelievably dumb. You know, before that. Well, first of all, people didn't routinely wear t-shirts.

You know, they were kind of underwear. So but the things the writing on them, horrendous, you know, because it was what I saw instantly, because I'm a prophet, was that it was an act of commerce, you know, and that is something I don't want to see on clothes. But obviously, I lost.

VALERIE STEELE

We have also a bunch of wedding dresses since post DOMA, a lot of gay and lesbian couples are getting married. And I wonder–

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I've heard.

VALERIE STEELE

What's your take on wedding clothes?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

You mean for gay marriages or in general.

VALERIE STEELE

Sure, let's start with gay marriages.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Marriage? I've never been to a gay wedding. I mean, I'm not boycotting them. I've never been asked to one. I don't think I know anyone who's had one. Or, people might not tell me.

To me, I have to tell you, it's astonishing, the idea that gay people want to get married is astonishing. Who wants to get married? Anyway, apparently they do. Wedding clothes in general. I mean, I mean, sometimes they look great. I mean, I remember the best wedding dress I ever saw in my life was this girl named Alexandra Auchincloss, who got married at St John the Divine, which is a spectacular place to get married and Carolina Herrera made the wedding dress. It's the best wedding dress I ever saw.

And she looked great. It was a very conventional wedding presided over by the bishop, etc. So if you asking me, you know, people who have some sort of novelty way of dressing for their wedding, I'm not an expert on this. It's like people writing their own vows.

VALERIE STEELE

Well, you've given a lot of what you might call etiquette advice to people over the years.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

No one listens to that.

VALERIE STEELE

Here's another chance. What kind of etiquette advice would you give this audience full of many young people about what they should and shouldn't do in terms of fashion?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

You know, I can't see them.

VALERIE STEELE

I know, we'll turn off the lights. If you could imagine them.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

No, I'm more likely to criticize than to advise.

VALERIE STEELE

Criticize, then.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Yes, which I'm not going to do. Oh.

VALERIE STEELE

No advice at all for them—

FRAN LEBOWITZ

No.

VALERIE STEELE

Etiquette?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I'm, you know, I'm not that confrontational. I believe in talking behind people's backs.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

[LAUGHS] Okay.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

That way they hear it more than once.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

VALERIE STEELE

I'm going to have you turn up the lights and we're going to have a chance for the audience to ask some questions. Can you turn off the lights, we can't see you. All right. So if you've got a question, the ideal thing is to come walking down to one of the two microphones so we can hear you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

[indistinguishable] Thursday, that said that single men known as bachelors not in New York or California, change their sheets four times a year.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I can't understand you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

How do you think that affects fashion?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I can't hear..

VALERIE STEELE

The first part, he was saying that he read some article that bachelors change their sheets four times a year, but I didn't catch the question part.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

RIGHT, I want to know how you think that affects fashion.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Okay. The question was that he read that bachelors changed their sheets four times a year.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

Yes, they study 21,000 men outside of New York and outside of L.A. and outside of San Francisco.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Okay. I have to tell you, I have zero experience of this. Nothing could be of less interest to me than how often bachelors change their sheets.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

But I believe you. But that is not a fashion issue. That's a health issue.

VALERIE STEELE

We have another question. We have another question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2

Hi Fran, when I was here earlier today for Simon Doonan's speech, someone mentioned you and said they had heard you speaking about a lot of the critical talent that we had lost during the AIDS epidemic. But you were also speaking to something called the critical audience, and that sounded super, super interesting. I was hoping—

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I can't —

VALERIE STEELE

She's referring to earlier this morning, someone referred to you and said that with the AIDS crisis, we'd lost not only a lot of artists, but also a critic, a critical audience that's necessary for art to thrive. So you were asking about that concept of critical audience?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Yeah, I think I said that in a movie that I did. Yeah, because no one ever talked about that. Everyone, you know, when everyone died of AIDS all at once, many artists died all at once. And you know, that was noticed, but no one noticed that the audience for these people died all at once. And that changed the culture as much as the artists dying.

No one seemed to notice that, of course, because they died. So it just never was remarked upon. But it had a huge effect because artists, whether they do it knowingly or not, collaborate with their audience. Even if you don't see the audience, even if you're a writer and they're reading your book and you're not with them because your awareness that your audience is knowledgeable makes you better.

Yeah. Okay. So I mean, I don't I can't I can't really say, but to go to the New York City Ballet now and to have gone when Balanchine was alive and Jerry Robbins was alive is an astonishingly heartbreaking experience. Not just because of the loss of these two great choreographers, which of course, is what anyone would notice, but because the audience is gone. So the audience that comes now just in your city, ballet knows nothing. The second the dancer puts your foot on the stage, they applaud. I mean, it used to be Baryshnikov that he hung in the air for 20 minutes. There'd be a smattering of applause. And I'm certain that it was very hard on the dancers to know that, you know, I mean, the ballet audience, they brought it up because they were a vicious audience, not in their behavior. They were completely dead silent, but in their,

what they knew. And that's because they loved the ballet. They loved it. Okay, if you love something, but you can't do it because they weren't dancers, and the people who could do it should do it perfectly. Okay. And that whole idea of not just an artist, an audience, but of art in general has completely evaporated. I'd like to see that come back instead of platform shoes.

VALERIE STEELE

Right.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS AND APPLAUDS]

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3

Hi.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Hi.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3

I have to excuse myself, the sound was bad, so I couldn't hear everything that you were saying about—

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I can't hear a thing. You're shaking.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3

Your suits.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

My suits?

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3

The suits that are made for you.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3

I imagine that you are very particular about how they're made. I wonder if you could tell us any of these specifics about how you like them made the fit, the detailing.

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Okay. Well, the tailors that make my suits, they're called Anderson and Shepherd. They're pretty old, an old company. They never would make clothes for women. I mean, I asked many men that I know to use them for many years to make me suits. They refuse. The last, in fact, perhaps only woman they had ever made clothes for before was Marlene Dietrich.

They were the same people. They're, by the way, the same tailors as who made them for Marlene Dietrich, and they just refused. They refused. They wouldn't do it. And finally, someone convinced them to make me some clothes. The first time I went for a fitting, the tailor who was fitting me would not touch me. And he was fitting me for a vest, which is really, really hard to fit on a woman.

And finally, I just said, Mr. Hitchcock, you have to touch me. You have to. You just have to. Otherwise it's not going to fit. But he didn't really touch me, and it really fit perfectly. And then a young boy I know who uses him as his tailor said that he won't touch him either. So apparently it's just a gentleman no touching situation.

So what they do is, first of all, I have to say that I know of almost no human activity as pleasurable as choosing fabrics. I can't. I could spend my entire life looking at swatches, discussing shades of gray. This is— I shouldn't use that actual term.

[VALERIE AND AUDIENCE LAUGH]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

I forgot that it entered the culture. So I find it a wholly pleasurable and enjoyable experience taking the fabric to the window to see what – do you think this is bluer or redder? Is this greener? But it takes forever. Yes, I did tell them the first of all, the clothes they made me, they made one suit that never fit, couldn't fit and kept going back. You know, once I believe that it doesn't fit. It doesn't fit. You have to either donate it to someone who is shaped like this, which in the case of the suit was no one. You have to give up on it. You have to take a loss on that suit. Otherwise, I believe what they do, since I've never been to this tailor in London because I do not go to England. They make a dummy. I don't know if it's still call that, but they make a form of you and so that form of me lives in London, so I don't have to.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

And since they made that form, there's like, now I only do two fittings. I used to be three. Very, very rarely. Clothes don't fit because the clothes are made on you. So even though, unfortunately, as we age, among the many hideous things is that your body changes. Not for the better. They still fit. You know, they might like, I mean, mine still fit. I might be at the point at which they no longer do, but I think at the point they will no longer do, you should not go out.

[VALERIE AND AUDIENCE LAUGH]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

So yeah, there are certain things I like that, you know, other people don't like. I mean, I don't— I'm not a person who says I – there are certain things I leave to them. Like I never tell them about the lining. Some people do. You know, I think you're good at that. You do it.

I always ask for, you know, I always use these, you know, buttons, these bone buttons. I always ask for the light colored ones. They didn't want to do it because they always use dark ones. Now I do light ones. I have seen other people with these light buttons. So obviously this seems to be the primary influence I have on the culture.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Okay, so this is like six people, by the way, in a show.

VALERIE STEELE

Will you please join me in thanking Fran?

FRAN LEBOWITZ

Thank you.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUDS]