

漁師 RYŌSHI STUDIO™

# DARKLY

ART MAGAZINE

PRESENT

DENIS RYBALKINE & ARTHUR MOREL

## BEHIND THE KANJI

INTERVIEW FOR DARKLY ART MAGAZINE

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DARKLY  
ART MAGAZINE

TO CHERYL ADAM, PUBLICATION EDITOR FOR DARKLY MAGAZINE

## 1. Can you share the story behind the creation of Ryoshi Studio and how it has evolved since its inception in 2014?

**DENIS RYBALKINE** : Ryoshi Studio was born in 2014, starting out as a web studio. At that time, it was incredibly challenging for small brands to establish a presence online. Our ambition was clear: to offer independent brands an accessible and efficient way to claim their space in the digital world.

Soon, we realized the web was becoming an overcrowded arena. To stand out, we had to leverage what we excelled at—and that was creating powerful imagery. Visuals became our signature. Through bold style and strong visual identity, we captured attention and carved out a unique space for ourselves.

Today, Ryoshi Studio is widely recognized for its visual content creation, though it's only part of what we do. In truth, this is where we pour most of our energy because we know image is the ultimate tool to turn a brand into something desirable, memorable, and irresistible.

What started as a web studio evolved into a creative powerhouse focused on visual impact. And that impact is what makes a brand « sexy » and magnetic. At Ryoshi, we've supported independent brands that lacked the visibility they needed to break through. Our mission was—and still is—to provide these brands with structure, powerful aesthetics, and the exposure they deserve.

For us, a brand isn't just about its product; it's about its story, its emotion, its vision. Through our visuals, we ensure each brand tells its unique tale and shines, even in a fiercely competitive industry.



## 2. Ryoshi Studio focuses on supporting independent brands. What inspired this focus, and why do you think it's important to work with independent creators?

**ARTHUR MOREL :** We chose to support independent brands because that's where raw talent and authentic craftsmanship truly shine. It's not just about the products themselves; it's about celebrating the passion and creativity that fuel the designers behind them.

Take LULE GARDIA, for example: each piece is truly one of a kind. There's no mass production, no standardization. Lule Gardia is a masterful artisan, a true fashion designer. What captivates you about her creations isn't just the garment itself, but the story it tells—the chance to wear something handmade, crafted by a gifted designer. Owning a bespoke, unique piece is a treasure for those who seek to stand out.

When we started, supporting independent creators wasn't just a choice; it was our reality. Our journey began with SAKU SAKU, a brand that perfectly embodies this philosophy. By showcasing what we could achieve together, other brands took notice and sought us out. This is how Ryoshi Studio naturally became a trusted ally for independent designers.

In today's oversaturated market, standing out has become increasingly difficult. Although staging and visibility are now more accessible, authenticity and exceptional craftsmanship remain the key factors that set creators apart. These qualities are what resonate most in a sea of competition.

## 3. Your studio provides everything from professional packshots to editorial content. How do you balance creating visually captivating material while staying true to a brand's identity?

**DENIS RYBALKINE :** A brand's identity, as we see it, is first and foremost its positioning and message. It's what allows a brand to connect with its audience, evoke emotion, and foster loyalty. This philosophy guides how we craft visual content, particularly photography, to ensure it reflects the unique essence of each brand.

When we create images, we don't aim to rigidly conform to a predefined visual identity but rather to capture the brand's core essence. Take Lule Gardia, for instance: each garment is a handcrafted masterpiece, brought to life by a passionate designer. Through our imagery, we strive to elevate this value, showcasing the artistry and story behind each piece.

« *Whisper of the Lineage* » was far from a conventional photoshoot. The concept was to explore a meeting between Lule Gardia's world and a new generation. Lenaly wore these garments as if rediscovering them from her mother's wardrobe, reinterpreting them with youthful energy and a rebellious twist. It was about reappropriation, blending generations while remaining faithful to Lule Gardia's DNA.

That said, when it comes to packshots, the approach is entirely different. Here, precision is paramount. These images must be functional and standardized, delivering flawless and consistent presentations. Each photo is designed to seamlessly fit into a cohesive production chain while respecting the brand's image and standards.

#### 4. Collaboration seems to be at the core of Ryoshi Studio. Can you walk us through your typical creative process when working with a new client?

**DENIS RYBALKINE :** At Ryoshi, collaboration is much more than just a step in the creative process—it’s the essence of our work. For us, it’s about a true fusion between the creator’s vision and our visual expertise. We love immersing ourselves fully in the universe of every brand we collaborate with. This immersive approach allows us to not only create the best possible images but also highlight the craftsmanship, passion, and unique style of the creator.

We are very selective when it comes to the brands we work with. It’s vital for us to feel confident that our work will bring real value to their vision. It’s not just about producing images; it’s about deeply aligning with the creator’s universe, appreciating their style, and believing in their potential. We won’t help grow a brand we don’t genuinely believe in.

What excites us the most is discovering creators with exceptional craftsmanship and helping them elevate their art through imagery. Independent creators are often the most authentic: they have a true mastery of their craft and invest meticulous care into every product. This individuality is what inspires us and gives purpose to our work.

We often begin the process with a fitting session involving models. This moment is invaluable as it allows the creator to see their pieces from a new perspective, observing how they come to life and move on a model. It’s also a critical step for us, as it helps us start envisioning the creative direction for the visuals. The fitting session enables us to style the products in line with the brand’s identity and lays the groundwork for imagery that captures the essence of the product.

#### 5. What role do trends in photography and design play in your work, and how do you ensure your content stays relevant while remaining unique?

**ARTHUR MOREL :** Trends have no place in our work. We don’t aim to follow what’s “in” or popular at a given moment. Instead, our mission is to elevate the creations of the independent designers we collaborate with, completely free of fashion diktats. To us, these creators are the ones who truly write the story of fashion. By disregarding codes and conventions, we highlight what is authentic, soulful, and unique.

We are perfectionists in our craft. Every image we create is a standalone work of art, a painting where every detail matters. We only keep what feels like the very best—what resonates deeply. Our process is instinctive: every shoot is an adventure driven by improvisation and spontaneity. What matters most is the feeling, that magical instant when everything aligns. The photos we choose are the ones that capture a true connection with the model, a unique vibration in the moment.

Our style stands out for its raw and immediate character. We don’t create rigid or overly polished visuals; instead, we capture living, authentic moments. A recurring comment we hear is that our style is unique, with a distinctive vibe that runs through each image.



## 6. Many independent brands face challenges with visibility and audience retention. How does Ryoshi Studio help brands overcome these obstacles?

**ARTHUR MOREL :** For us, visibility starts with activation. As soon as a brand begins to take shape, we work to generate attention around it. This often starts with collaborations involving models and by spotlighting the behind-the-scenes moments of the creative process. These backstage glimpses, often just as captivating as the final product, establish an emotional connection with the audience. People are naturally curious about what happens in the shadows before a product is officially unveiled.

One of the keys lies in quickly activating a community around the brand. The sooner this buzz is created, the faster the brand finds its audience. By sharing these intimate moments and revealing not just the product but also the creative process, we foster authentic engagement.

What makes a brand visible and desirable is its uniqueness. Rarity drives demand, and this is precisely what we highlight in our work. The brands we collaborate with produce one-of-a-kind pieces, and our images naturally become an extension of this exclusivity.

But our support goes beyond just creating images. We help our clients maintain a consistent and impactful presence on their channels. Audience loyalty is built on both the quality and regularity of content. We work closely with each creator to identify and reach the most suitable audience for their products. Our campaigns are designed to evolve with seasons and collections, ensuring a strategy that always aligns with the brand's needs.

## 7. As a photographer, what are your favorite styles or techniques to use when creating visual content for brands, and how do they reflect the brand's message?

**DENIS RYBALKINE :** I draw immense inspiration from the works of Manfred Mugler, particularly his photography from the 80s and 90s. These images are both avant-garde and timeless, and that unique blend truly captivates me. My approach is to modernize this classic style, adding a contemporary twist while staying true to its essence. The goal is to maintain this striking aesthetic while adapting it to today's visual language.

One of my favorite techniques is falloff. Unlike highly contrasted lighting, this method uses exceptionally soft light on the subject while creating a sharp contrast with the background. This highlights the model or object, adding subtle depth to the image. Each photo becomes a story in itself, striking yet unobtrusive.

This visual style, blending modernity with purity, also mirrors my philosophy: to highlight what is unique and valuable. The creations of the independent brands I collaborate with deserve a spotlight that transcends fleeting trends. By giving them this timeless dimension, I see them as true works of art that can stand the test of time while remaining relevant.

## 8. What has been the most challenging project Ryoshi Studio has worked on, and how did your team overcome those challenges?

**DENIS RYBALKINE :** The most challenging project I've undertaken for Ryoshi Studio was working with artists like Louane Lesec. Unlike a traditional shoot for a brand, where the product is the main focus, the challenge here was far more intricate: visually connecting the artist's personality with their image. It wasn't just about taking a great photo; it was about going deeper to reveal their essence, their true identity. For a visual creator, this is a far more profound challenge than enhancing a product, as the human element brings an emotional depth that must shine through in every image.

While I usually prefer collaborating with brand creators, I choose to work with one or two artists a year. These projects demand total immersion into their universe. It's not just about technical execution or aesthetics; it's about crafting a brand image, finding the chemistry between the artist and the lens.

What I love about this process is the transformation. Elevating a model or artist, taking them to a level where they transcend their usual image, is what turns a simple photo into a piece of art. These projects, though intense, push me to explore new ways of telling unique visual stories and to constantly challenge my own creative boundaries.

## 9. How do you view the relationship between visual content and storytelling in branding, and how does your studio bring this to life in your projects?

**DENIS RYBALKINE :** For us, the connection between visual content and storytelling in branding is often overstated. Sure, you can tell a story at a specific moment, but a single image on its own can't convey everything. The real narrative comes to life in the editing process, in how the content is published and shared.

The true story, in our opinion, lies in the behind-the-scenes moments. The process of creation, the vibe on set, the interactions between people—this is where the real narrative takes shape. At Ryoshi, we focus on capturing and sharing these moments beyond the final images. These raw, authentic glimpses create a stronger emotional connection with the audience.

That said, when working with artists or personal brands like Louane or Daniela, storytelling becomes much more central. In these cases, light is the key tool, almost like a character in itself. I sculpt the light around the subject to express a mood or set a tone: dark, bright, soft, saturated. This use of light creates an atmosphere, and it's that atmosphere that hints at a story, even if it's more of a feeling than a structured narrative.

Branding at Ryoshi is also a process of evolution. We don't see it as a fixed step but as something that grows alongside our collaboration with a brand. Each collection or project can have its own visual identity, and we adapt our visuals to reflect these changes. This flexibility allows us to push a brand's identity to its fullest potential while leaving room for experimentation and innovation in every shoot.

## 10. Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for Ryoshi Studio, and how do you envision supporting independent creators in the future?

**ARTHUR MOREL :** At Ryoshi, we firmly believe that unity makes us stronger. This belief inspired Independent Fashion, an ambitious project designed to bring together independent creators on a collective platform aimed at showcasing and supporting their work.

This initiative is both physical and digital, uniting Parisian independent brands. Independent Fashion will not just be a media outlet but a true marketplace dedicated to unique creations and exclusive collections. Alongside this, we plan to open a pop-up store in Paris, hosting events such as private sales and fashion shows. This space will become a key meeting point for creators and their audience.

One of our main goals is to bring together around ten brands under this label, promote their work through features in independent media, and offer an integrated photo studio within the pop-up store. This studio will allow brands to photograph their pieces quickly and professionally, maintaining high standards of quality. We aim to offer an alternative to traditional channels by highlighting the uniqueness and authenticity of independent brands in a lively and dynamic setting.

In the long term, we envision evolving this project with a focus on seasonality. Through a regular rotation of creators, we aim to encourage collaboration between brands, inspire creativity with seasonal collections, and uphold the independence that makes these talents so special. Independent Fashion is more than just a project; it's a budding community, an ecosystem dedicated to innovation and the growth of independent creators.

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DENIS RYBALKINE & ARTHUR MOREL  
INDEPEPENDANT FASHION [STEREO]TYPES

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