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girl in red collaborates with WePresent on graphic novel profile

Do you listen to girl in red? by award-winning graphic novelist Tillie Walden will publish exclusively on WeTransfer's editorial platform ahead of the singer-songwriter's highly anticipated debut album



Cover artwork, graphic novel 'Do you listen to girl in red?' Illustrated by Tillie Walden

20th April, 2021, Amsterdam: WePresent, the editorial platform of WeTransfer, collaborates with Norwegian singer-songwriter girl in red (aka Marie Ulven) and Eisner award-winning American cartoonist, Tille Walden, to create a five-chapter graphic novel profile. The comic tells the story of girl in red's upbringing in Horten, Norway, to becoming a worldwide music phenomenon to young queer womxn around the world.

Available exclusively on WePresent, *Do you listen to girl in red?* represents an innovative storytelling format alternative to the traditional artist profile, involving a number of creative collaborators to translate the artist's personal experiences - mental health, coming out and coming of age - into a compelling graphic novel broken down into five chapters: childhood, routine, relationships, the mind, and do you listen to girl in red?

The comic started as a conversation between Ulven and London-based writer Lucy Bourton. Hours of interviews later, this written material was brought to life through Studio Ghibli-inspired illustration by Tillie Walden, known for her graphic novel memoir, *Spinning*, which won her an Eisner award for Best Reality-Based Work in 2018.

A creative collaboration devised by WePresent between musician, cartoonist and writer, this project comes together ahead of girl in red's debut album, "if I could make it go quiet", revealing her creative process and journey in an innovative format new to the artist ahead of a key milestone in her musical career.

Marie Ulven, girl in red says, *"It was a fascinating experience being able to translate some key moments of my life into a visual art form. It was both really reflective and a lot of fun! Working on an entirely unique concept and producing something I'm very proud to share with everyone was the most enjoyable part of the collaboration. I'm just looking forward to seeing how people react to it themselves and what they take from it. It was so much fun opening up and exploring some key parts of my life, and I hope people enjoy reading about them too."*

Holly Fraser, Editor-in-Chief of WePresent, says: *"From working with photographer Tyler Mitchell to musician Lykke Li, WePresent has a long history collaborating with up-and-coming artists before they break onto the global stage. We believe girl in red's music resonates with a generation that share their lives and experiences through social media, and we wanted to experiment with a format new to the artist on our platform to see what we could create that could celebrate this artistic intimacy."*

Tillie Walden, cartoonist says, *“When I was asked to do this project I thought for a while about how to best represent girl in red’s life and experience. There’s always layers to presenting someone’s story like this - there’s her music, her persona, herself underneath all that. I hope people can step into Marie’s shoes through the stories, and can see the world from her end. I also hope people can connect the imagery with the music from the album, and enjoy their common elements.”*

Do you listen to girl in red? will be available exclusively on WePresent from 20th April 2021. Girl In Red’s debut album will be released on 30th April 2021.

ASSETS

Image sheet with downloadable assets here via Paste by WeTransfer

Notes to Editors:

About WePresent

WePresent is WeTransfer’s editorial platform, acting as the company’s cultural torchbearer and curator of creativity to 4m monthly readers in 190 countries. WePresent showcases the best in art, photography, music, and more, offering readers a fresh take on the magic and mystery of creative ideas. Championing diversity in everything it does, WePresent scours the globe for unexpected stories about creativity, from emerging young talent to renowned artists like Solange Knowles, Riz Ahmed, John Legend, Tyler Mitchell, Björk, FKA twigs, and Bernardine Evaristo.

About girl in red

Had everything gone according to plan, Marie Ulven - a.k.a. intimate rock/pop sensation girl in red - would’ve spent the vast majority of 2020 playing for new crowds, in new venues, and taking in new landscapes as she drove from city to city on tour. But the COVID-19 pandemic upended all of that, and so she found herself grounded, at home in Oslo, and revisiting the familiar skeletons of songs she’d begun to sketch out the year before.

She wrote and demoed 11 songs at home, and soon she was borrowing her father’s car to make the eight-hour trek from the Norwegian capital city to Bergen, a city nestled between majestic fjords in an inlet off the North Sea, to record if i could make it go quiet, her debut album out April 30th, 2021. Consider if i could make it go quiet the musical distillation of Ulven’s solitary conversations on the road: it’s an album brimming with the things we wish we could say to others, but tell ourselves instead.

“Every time I left the studio from Bergen, I would listen to hours and hours of my own tracks, and just be like, what can I do better? What can I refine?” she says, recalling her cross-country drives through the Norwegian wilderness to the studio. “Driving is a cathartic thing; it gives this amazing feeling of freedom. I love to talk to myself, so most of the time, if I didn’t listen to my songs, I would just reflect in the car. I read that talking out loud to yourself is healthy, so I’m going to keep doing that. But the drives, they take you out of all the other distractions because you just gotta pay attention to the road. It allows you some headspace.”

After 2018’s breakout single “i wanna be your girlfriend” established Ulven as a talent to watch, she amassed a worldwide following that heard themselves in her poetic lyrics, at times hopelessly romantic and painfully direct, that meshed beautifully with the sparse yet captivating arrangements she wrote and produced herself. Instead of nursing the emotional wounds of a

break-up or the aches of unrequited love in private, Ulven, then a teenager on the cusp of adulthood, opted to process and heal before her growing audience with a series of EPs and singles.

Whether it’s collaborating with pop mastermind and Billie Eilish collaborator FINNEAS on “Serotonin,” a huge pop anthem that speaks to Ulven’s struggles with mental health, or flexing her instrumental chops with album closer “it would feel like this,” she has pushed herself to new depths in her artistry and fortified it in the process.

“There are things on this album that I haven’t been able to talk about in my songwriting previously,” she says of if i could make it go quiet. “Serotonin’ is brutally honest, lyrically, especially about having these intrusive thoughts -- thoughts of never going to be okay, and thinking my therapist hates me. I stopped going to my therapist because I felt like I was such a big burden for her that she didn’t like me. I’m pretty sure a lot of people have felt that, whether it’s a friend or a family member or a therapist. I’m addressing a lot of things I haven’t been comfortable talking about, or admitting to myself, or even things to tell my closest friends and family.”

Betrayal, lust, longing, pulling herself out of a depressive spell -- nothing is off-limits on if i could make it go quiet, and Ulven lays bare her ruminations on all of the above while distorting and reimagining the sounds coming out of her piano and guitar. She explores the limits of the human condition and her radical acceptance of it on “Body And Mind,” which ebbs and flows over a moody, electronic groove; she proudly tackles sexual liberation with sunny chords on “hornylovesickmess,” and reveals she wants more from an unavailable partner on “midnight love.”

Love, in all its messiness, is a constant muse on if i could make it go quiet, and Ulven delighted in challenging the mere concept of a love song, and what it can do, in her own way. “When you [hear] ‘love song,’ I have very bad connotations immediately; I’m like, that’s some sappy shit!” she says, laughing. “But love is so big, and there are so many sides to love. I feel like I’m exploring a little bit more of the hate side of love with this album. I also feel like I’m exploring a little bit more of being vulnerable and letting someone in. I haven’t talked about that before... [The album] is a big, boiling pot of thoughts and things I haven’t said.”

There are lessons to be drawn from these self-examinations, and Ulven has eagerly embraced the opportunity to write her way through them, even when it hurts or she’s left with more questions than answers. It’s easy to picture her behind the wheel, somewhere between Oslo and Bergen, listening through “Rue” while recalling the dark mental place she was in when she wrote the song, or the friendship she hoped would turn into something more that inspired “You Stupid Bitch.”

if i could make it go quiet is girl in red in its purest, elevated form: Ulven has never been braver, and the music follows suit.

“I really poured my heart into a lot of these lyrics, fully,” she says. “I just feel like I emptied myself in this album.”

