**PUMA: AW13’ Next Starts Now**

**Q&A with Sophia Chang, Illustrator and Designer**

1. **What is the best part of being an illustrator and why?**

**SC:** You’re living your dream as a kid! Well, I am at least. Fortunately, I work for myself so I set my own deadlines and act as my own boss**.**

1. **Finish this line – I get my best ideas when…**

**SC:** …I’m hanging out with friends and chatting. So I tend to interrupt 90% of the conversations I’m in.

1. **Your illustrations have a signature style – how did you develop this aesthetic?**

**SC:** I didn’t have a “style” throughout college. That was a real struggle for me. I think the style just came thru time. The more I worked, the more exposure I had with different tools…it eventually just evolved.

1. **You say you love and are inspired by hip-hop…Who are your top 3 hip-hop artists/acts of all time and list your top 5 tracks?**

**SC:** I’m inspired by a lot of hip-hop and R&B overall. The list changes over time. It’s very difficult for me to pick a top 3. I guess maybe SWV, Jay-Z and 2 Chainz for now.

1. **Do you remember your first pair of PUMAs? Do you have a favorite PUMA style & why?**

**SC:** Yes! My first pair was when I worked at PUMA Retail in college. It was a pair of black and white PUMA Clydes. I’d say that would still be my favorite pair, it’s an all-time classic!

1. **This is the first season you have partnered with PUMA on a project, what was it like to work with the campaign from start to finish? Which part of the PUMA collaboration do you find to be the most interesting?**

**SC:** Working with PUMA on this campaign has been a great experience! I was able to wear different hats as a design consultant, producer, stylist, and illustrator. I was also able to reach within my own network of creatives and form a dream team for the vision – photographer, Ja Tecson, Fruition LV’s team and NaiVasha Thomas. *Team work makes dream work*! I love multi-tasking and wearing different hats…or should I now say sneakers?

1. **What does “Next Starts Now” mean to you?**

**SC:** It’s an optimistic message. It means so many things to me…. It’s an encouraging message - the future is bright so don’t delay and take hold of your goals!

1. **What does the PUMA brand represent to you?**

**SC:** PUMA represents a classic brand that is a staple in footwear culture.

1. **Are you a self-proclaimed “Bun Queen” or did that title come with time, and finally, how high does your bun really go?**

**SC:** Good question (laughing)! I have a lot of hair and it’s super thick…basically like a lions mane. When NY summers got really hot and humid, the hair went up in a bun. I’ve done this my whole life but the summer of 2011, it started to become my nickname. I would meet up with friends and they would say “I spotted your bun 3 blocks away!”

As I was out and about that summer I started to take photos on Instagram of my hair with people, places, textures, patterns, landmarks and so forth. It became this weird sensation and I just went with it!

1. **What’s NEXT in store for Sophia?**

**SC:** So many things! I work on a lot of different creative platforms – magazines, branding, design, apparel, graphics, web/mobile and more. I have a few upcoming projects with PUMA I am very excited about and the next few months will be very interesting. Can’t give away too much detail, so you’ll just have to stay tuned!

Sophia Chang, Designer & Illustrator  
Site: <http://www.esymai.com> Instagram: @esymai #bun   
Tweet: @esymai - <http://www.twitter.com/esymai>