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YES, I'M GONNA BE A STAR

*Model-turned-actor Jenny Shimizu
waifs goodbye to the runway*

by Cathay Che

She's the original CK One cologne girl: grungy, androgynous, tattooed and topless. She was infamous for escorting Madonna to New York's dyke clubs long before she came out in *The Advocate*. And now the first Asian American supermodel makes her film debut in the girl-bonding flick *Foxfire*.

Che: The name of your new film *Foxfire* is

Cinema

kinda reminiscent of that Jodie Foster film *Foxes*. What is it—a remake?

Shimizu: No, *Foxfire* is completely new. It's a film about young women making choices, and they're not always the correct choices. It's a rock-n-roll teenage coming-of-age kind of story, an *Outsiders* for women.

And your character, Goldie?

She's your basic loner type, sarcastic and destructive until she's sort of forced to become friends with these other misfit girls. It teaches her to care a little bit more about others and about herself.

Angelina Jolie [actor Jon Voight's daughter] plays Legs, a typical romance novel rebel—tall, dark, handsome, mysterious, clad in black leather. Only thing is, she's a girl. Why does her presence set these good suburban girls on fire?

Well, of course there's the obvious sexual tension, five girls together—they're all kind of waiting to see who's going to lez-out first. I think my character is attracted to Legs because she wants to be like her. Legs is a hero, she's independent. And then of course there are Angelina's lips, those great lips.

There's a scene in the film where all the girls get bare-breasted and Legs gives them tattoos. It's very, very sexy. When you were filming it were you self-conscious?

No. That scene was filmed at 5 in the morning, it was freezing—no one was laughing, everyone was just like, "Come on, no one better fuck it up!"

Are people giving you stress over the model-turned-actor thing?

In the beginning, but I didn't even consider myself a model. I had to remind myself, "Oh yeah, I do model."

You're a lot less visible as a model than you were a year ago, why?

Well, I moved from New York back to Los Angeles and bought a house out here. I never planned to model, I got a taste of it and I guess I kind of wanted to quit while I was ahead. Not that I've really quit, but I'm on to new things. Modeling opened some doors for me and I appreciate that.

So is acting what you're focusing on now?
No, I'm just self-obsessing in my room. I'm in

that mode of seeing my friends and taking care of myself.

Was it just the modeling industry you wanted to get away from, or did you really not like New York?

I'm just not a fast-paced New York-energy kind of person. It was exciting for three years, but it's just not my kind of town. I'm pretty much everything California—a true California girl.

I interviewed Margaret Cho a few months ago and we talked about the "all Asians look alike" thing, and she said it wasn't true because if she cut all her hair off she'd never look like you.

You know what, if you talk to her again, tell her she's my idol. She's so cool.

Well, who do we have as cool Asian role models besides maybe Margaret and you?

Well, the joke when I was growing up was Joan Chen. In fact, when people start to say, "Aren't you..." I always say, "Joan Chen?" Actually, I'm doing some kind of theater benefit with Joan Chen and some kind of [public service announcement] for the Japanese Voters League.

Are you respected in the Asian American community?

Yes, actually a lot more than I thought I would be. I thought, "Oh, my tattoos," and I'm so nutty,



Jenny Shimizu and Angelina Jolie (right)

but I've done a lot of Asian press.

And they're proud of you!

Yeah, in their own little conservative way.

How about the gay press? Do you feel forced to do the dyke-poster-girl role-model thing?

Yeah, "forced" is the right word. In a way it's a good thing, but being gay is just a part of me. It's not like it's my No. 1 issue and Jenny comes second, and that's what I feel like they want out of me—to go out and wave a flag or something. And I do get a lot of criticism for not quite being out enough I guess, but what more can I do? It's never really been an issue, I've always just been the way that I am.

Are you getting offered more than just lesbian parts in films?

Yes, thank God, cause I'm not about to do *Salmonberries II*. I'm looking for quality and content. Until then I'll just be shopping in Little Tokyo, pushing a shopping cart on Hollywood Boulevard and maybe hanging out with Margaret Cho.

Foxfire opens Aug. 23 at KOIN Center Cinemas, at Southwest Third Avenue and Clay Street in Portland. For times and prices call 255-5555, category 4608.

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