

GRAMM

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# fearless STYLE SETTER

**ASK NICKI MINAJ** how she sees herself and you'll get a description of at least three personalities—each with a different closet and shoe preference. In fact, the style schizophrenic insists she shares a body with several fashionable personas who show up sporadically and take over her spirit during public appearances. One such inner persona is Barbie—a Donatella Versace-loving, Kimora Lee Simmons facsimile who wears every shade of pink known to Pantone. Minaj's second alter ego, her "twin brother" Roman Zolanski, is even more ostentatious. Looking like a cross between a *Hairspray* extra and a contestant on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, Zolanski recently told the *New York Times* that he's "leading the way when it comes to makeup and hair." Then there is Nicki herself, whom Minaj actually deems a separate entity from the "others." She dons rainbow wigs, and is sweet, soft-spoken and slightly mischievous. "I love being a boss in my career, but a girl behind closed doors," the 28-year-old, speaking as simply Nicki, admitted on late-night talk show *Chelsea Lately*.

Minaj's off-the-wall approach is getting her some serious coverage in the fashion press (she does have several people to dress for!), blogosphere and on television. For example, it's been less than six months since her platinum-selling debut disc *Pink Friday* hit the charts and she's managed to duet with Kanye West, Christina Aguilera, Rihanna and Eminem. Plus, she's christened her own M.A.C lipstick and is planning a world tour.

Hip hop insiders are already hailing the Trinidad expat as a Queen Latifah-in-the-making—a brazen multi-discipline force. It's her risqué resolve that makes Minaj more than just a Facebook "like," a forgettable Retweet, a derivative of Foxy Brown or an arch rival to Lil' Kim. This girl has a swagger that, with the right development, will outshine an alphabet of her male counterparts—from Akon to Jay-Z. Regardless of Minaj's sometimes-batty, sometimes-brilliant voices, her wardrobe is an event of its own on a red carpet. Switching from Marc Bouwer dresses one day to Gareth Pugh jackets the next, Minaj is certainly incomparable to anyone else charting in R&B today, given her attraction to extreme fashion. After all, in the song, "Fly," she raps: "I am not fly, I am levitation—I represent an entire generation." —*Elio Iannacci*

MINAJ IN  
GIVENCHY AT  
THE GRAMMYS