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# SELF

## Head Strong

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A bold signature hairstyle can do more than turn heads. As these four women reveal, choosing a unique cut, color or style can transform your life, too.

BY FIORELLA VALDESOLO

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It's no coincidence that some of the most iconic women of all time are known for having knockout hair. Try to imagine Louise Brooks roaring through the '20s without that fiercely independent bob. Madonna minus her blonde ambition: unfathomable. And what of those softer—yet no less sexy—looks? Think of Jane Birkin's tousled bangs or Gisele's effortless waves (which can launch a thousand likes on her Instagram feed). What they all have in common: The hair's the thing.

That idea was everywhere at spring fashion shows, where models marched down the runways with hair styled to look how *they* wanted it to be—Eddie Campbell with her choppy, untamed shag

and Soo Joo Park with rooty, platinum layers. The message was loud and clear: Now is the time to toss your head—and make your mark.

And when you do, others will take note. "Hair influences how people see you," says Arthur Markman, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Texas in Austin. In fact, surveys show that it's one of the first things people notice—within seven seconds of meeting you, says Vivian Diller, Ph.D., a psychologist in New York City and author of *Face It: What Women Really Feel as Their Looks Change*. As the women on these pages demonstrate, striking out on your own with your hair can make you feel more beautiful—and even more like yourself.

**SAMANTHA  
AND JENELLE  
FIGGINS,  
DANCERS**

"We like natural oils to keep our hair soft," says Samantha (left).

**BEAUTY NOTE**

For extra shine, massage in Motions Indulgent Oil Bony for Hair & Scalp, \$7.  
**BODYSUITS** Michael Kors





## THE TEXTURE THAT STOOD OUT

Growing up as twin sisters, Samantha and Jenelle Figgins, 25, often wore their hair in matching cornrows. In high school, they both started dancing seriously, which left little time for intricate braiding, so they chemically straightened their strands. "It was easier, but I didn't feel like myself," Samantha admits. A few years later, the sisters ditched the fake-straight look in favor of letting their naturally tight curls emerge. "I felt free!" Samantha says.

For Jenelle, it boosted her confidence. "I was able to see my face, finally, at a time when I was coming into my own," she says. After graduating from college, the sisters signed up with prestigious dance companies: Jenelle with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, where she earned the 2014 Princess Grace Award, for emerging talent; and Samantha with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. "A lot of African-American women, and the majority of black ballet dancers, have perms or have had their hair chemically processed," Jenelle says. "It's striking to be a black dancer in the ballet field in the first place, but choosing to hold on to who you naturally are in that scene is even more empowering."