

Lifestyle



This handout photo shows Finnish TikTok cleanfluencer Auri Kananen wearing pink gloves and making victory signs as she sits on a pile of trash and food remains in a flat in Helsinki, Finland.



This video grab shows Finnish TikTok cleanfluencer Auri Kananen with a rotten pizza as she is tidying up a pile of trash and food remains in a flat in Helsinki, Finland.



This video grab shows Finnish TikTok cleanfluencer Auri Kananen with a rotten pizza as she is tidying up a pile of trash and food remains in a flat in Helsinki, Finland.



This video grab shows Finnish TikTok cleanfluencer Auri Kananen amidst a pile of trash and food remains in a flat in Helsinki, Finland.

'Cleanfluencers' sweep TikTok, drawing millions

Marie Kondo may have admitted defeat, but a new generation of "cleanfluencers" is taking social media by storm, with millions watching them scour filthy homes and dole out cleaning hacks. Digging through a mountain of trash, Auri Kananen uncovered a rotten piece of pizza on the floor of a Helsinki flat, with insects devouring it. "I love cleaning, I love dirt," declared the 30-year-old Finn, who has far more social media followers than Kondo, the Japanese tidying guru who has admitted embracing the messier side of life since having her third child.

Kananen has quickly become one of the world's most successful "cleanfluencers", travelling the globe hunting for "the dirtiest homes possible". "I remember when I had 19 followers. Even then it felt really cool to have 19 strangers wanting to see me clean," said Kananen, or aurikatariina as she is known to her nine million followers on TikTok, with two million on YouTube. In her upbeat videos, she dusts, scrubs and sorts, wearing her signature hot pink rubber gloves as zippy pop music plays in the background. Her voiceovers often explain how the person she is helping ended up living in squalor. "Usually people have some mental health problem or other tragedy that has happened in their lives," Kananen told AFP.

The flat in Helsinki is the home of a depressed young man whose brother suffers from multiple sclerosis, she explained. She can relate to people living in miserable conditions because she



This video grab shows Finnish TikTok cleanfluencer Auri Kananen tidying up a pile of trash and food remains in a flat in Helsinki, Finland.

went through a period of depression herself, she said. "I know how overwhelming it is," she said. But her experience has shown her that no situation is hopeless.

The comments sections of her videos are filled with people saying how her videos have helped them cope with their difficulties, praising her non-judgemental manner. "I love how she is understanding the person in this situation and helping them instead of blaming them," one commenter wrote.

TikTok tidiers

With the global rise of TikTok, cleaning videos have become hugely popular on social media, inspiring a growing number to start posting content. "I was watching videos and I thought, that's what I do at home, I can just film my-

self doing it," recalled 27-year-old Abbi, known as cleanwithabbi to her two million followers. The English single mum films herself cleaning, doing the dishes and hoovering in her red brick home in Huyton near Liverpool.

Cleaning has always been an important part of her life as her youngest son Billy lives with sensory processing disorder. "He really loves his routine and he does like things to be clean," she said. Now Abbi, who does not wish to reveal her full name, posts TikTok videos for a living. Brands sponsor her to use their products, and she earns between \$720 and \$1,200 a video.

Abbi—whose sons Jack and Billy are six and five—hits the record button on her phone and swiftly makes their beds, arranging the soft toys nicely. "It relaxes me, it's like therapy," she told

AFP. "For me it's like an escape from any worries I've got."

'It's satisfying'

Ann Russell, a 59-year-old full-time cleaner from the south of England, has a different approach. Sitting on her sofa with her black dog Hollie, she answers a question from one of her TikTok followers, holding her phone up to her face. To remove a felt tip mark from a wooden table without removing the varnish she recommends isopropyl alcohol: "Dip a cotton bud in it and just rub it gently," she said. "If nobody told you, how on earth are you supposed to know?" she told AFP.

Russell makes between four and 12 videos every day, answering questions from her 2.3 million followers in a no-nonsense fashion. "I turn the phone on, I talk to the phone, and that's it. That's about as good as it gets. I am not very proficient," she said with a laugh.

The fact that cleaning "is satisfying" may be behind the videos' success, Russell said. Most of her and Abbi's viewers are women and millennials, as well as people struggling to find the motivation to clean. "Washing your socks, pairing them up and putting them in the drawer (gives) a sense of a good job well done," she said. "It makes people feel in control. And because they feel in control in their personal life, they feel that the outside world is a safer place."—AFP

S Africa art show highlights destructive ties between Man and Nature

A lioness towers over a seemingly dead hunter, her paws pinning his body to the ground. A woman dressed in black, her face replaced by a leopard's head, sits flanked by three prowling wild cats. The two installations are part of the latest exhibition by 72-year-old American photographic artist Roger Ballen, which opens in Johannesburg, South Africa, next Tuesday.

Renowned for his thought-provoking work into the human psyche, Ballen said the display aims to explore the "antagonistic" relationship between Man and Nature, especially the decimation of African wildlife. "If you look at the history of humanity, it's just been a destruction of nature, the destruction of wildlife," said Ballen, a New York native, who has lived and worked in South Africa for almost 40 years. Wildlife numbers across the continent have dropped 66 percent since 1970, according to the World Wildlife Fund. From black rhinos to pangolins, numerous species are now critically endangered.

The display zooms in on the "Golden Age" of African hunting around the end of the 19th century, when Ballen said "the problem started". It looks at the is-



US Photographic artist Roger Ballen poses for a portrait at the Inside Out Centre for the Arts in Johannesburg. — AFP photos

sue from both an "aesthetic" and "documentary" perspective, said the artist. The display, titled "End Of The Game", is the first to be hosted in Ballen's newly opened Inside Out Centre for the Arts in an affluent suburb of Johannesburg.

The photographer hopes the space will help lift Johannesburg's cultural scene and become a stop for tourists passing through the city on their way to big game parks. "We would hope that they come in as one person (and) go out as another," Ballen said.

'Flowers and love'

Clips of former US President Theodore Roosevelt's 1909 hunting trip, where more than 11,000 animals were killed for cataloguing purposes, are played, as the mannequins of two children sporting safari hats sit among the audience. Near the entrance, a man covered head to toe by a roaring lion's skin holds two screaming human heads in wooden, orange bags. Photos juxtaposing man and animals adorn the walls

that enclose other artworks dominated by taxidermy animals, skeletons, and puppets. Yet Ballen, who cuts a slender figure in a black shirt over black trousers and black sneakers, refutes descriptions of his work as dark or unsettling. "I find it interesting. It's bits and pieces of the world around me as I see it," he told AFP in an interview. "The world isn't necessarily flowers and love... life is made up of positives (and) negatives".

Still, the exhibition hopes to "psychologically challenge" and make a "deep impression on people", he said. This has been a recurring theme in Ballen's career, which has long featured black-and-white photographs of fictionalized scenes aiming to stir the viewer. "It is not just like looking at another cloud, or another thing on Instagram that you just forget immediately," said Ballen. "If it has a psychological impact, that's likely to remain in somebody's mind".—AFP



General views of US photographic artist Roger Ballen's work at the End of the Game exhibition at the Inside Out Centre for the Arts in Johannesburg.



Celebrities Lindsay Lohan, Jake Paul charged for touting crypto

Actress Lindsay Lohan, YouTuber Jake Paul and six other celebrities were charged by the US Securities and Exchange Commission for touting cryptocurrencies on social media without disclosing that they were paid to do so. The charges come as part of a case targeting entrepreneur Justin Sun for marketing Tronix and BitTorrent crypto assets without registering with the relevant authorities, and for manipulating crypto trading on his platform.

The case is one of several from the enforcer of US rules on the financial markets that has stepped up its crackdown on cryptocurrencies since the spectacular collapse of industry leader FTX at the end of last year. The SEC alleges that Sun sought to boost Tronix by artificially creating the appearance of trade on the secondary market by having his own employees buy and sell the asset.

"This case demonstrates again the high risk investors face when crypto asset securities are offered and sold without proper disclosure," said SEC Chair Gary Gensler in a statement. Sun also induced investors to purchase cryptocurrency through a campaign in which he and his celebrity promoters hid the fact they were paid for their tweets, Gensler said.

Without admitting or denying their guilt, Lohan and Paul agreed to pay \$40,670 and \$101,887 in restitution and fines respectively. Pornographic film actress Michele Mason (also known as Kendra Lust), rapper Lil Yachty (Miles Parks McCollum), singers Ne-Yo (Shaffer Smith) and Akon (Aliaune Thiam) have also agreed to settle the lawsuit. Rapper Soulja Boy (DeAndre Cortez Way) and YouTube singer Austin Mahone were not part of the settlement.—AFP



In this file photo Lindsay Lohan attends the 2019 Ali Forney Center Gala at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City. — AFP photos



In this file photo YouTube personality Jake Paul attends the fight between his brother Logan Paul and former world welterweight king Floyd Mayweather in an eight-round exhibition bout at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida.