

#BehindtheSelfie with... Julia Anastasopoulos, AKA SuzelleDIY

 By Leigh Andrews

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This #WomensMonth we go behind the selfie with selfie (or Suzelfie) queen Julia Anastasopoulos - if you don't know her, you definitely know her YouTube alter ego, SuzelleDIY and prepare yourself for her new persona, Tali, hitting a Showmax screen near you later this year.



'Nude tones and loving life so much,' says Julia – actually, that's Tali talking...

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I've lived in the same flat in Oranjezicht for over 15 years. It's a bright, creative space and has evolved over the years with renovations, sisters, and roommates moving in and out. I now live there with my husband, Ari Kruger. We work in a studio in Woodstock. We made the move just over a year ago because we desperately needed more space to shoot SuzelleDIY.

We now run our production company from there and it's a hive of all sorts of weird and wonderful activity. We have an open office space, an editing suite, a studio section for shooting, and a room full of Suzelle's wardrobe. When we aren't working, we are either relaxing at home or outdoors, with delicious food somewhere in the mix.

2. What's your claim to fame?

SuzelleDIY! Even though becoming a YouTuber was never really on my to-do list..

3. Describe your career so far.

After finishing drama school, I worked predominantly in theatre as an actress and as a designer. I also started a small design label called knolc, making stationery, plush toys, accessories and illustrated artworks, which I exhibited in spaces around Cape Town. I just loved the creative process, which kept me going in between my acting work. In 2010 I worked on a series of illustrated murals for the MyCiti bus stations in Cape Town and illustration suddenly became a much bigger part of my life. I was illustrating for children's books and ad campaigns and mostly performing in TV commercials when we started SuzelleDIY in 2014. It was a fun side project that was more of an experiment than anything else; we just wanted to flex our muscles and do something creative outside of our commercial work.



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Since SuzelleDIY, we have started our own production company, Sketchbook Studios, and we have just completed shooting an eight-part Showmax Original TV series called *Tali's Wedding Diary*.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

My niece and nephew, Greek food, family dinners, watching a great drama series and any kind of crafty project.

5. What do you love about your industry?

We're lucky to have found ourselves in a space that allows us to have a lot of creative freedom with the content we make. Even the brands and clients that we work with give us the creative space that we need to make the work great. I also love the immediacy and freedom of social media as a tool and how it allows us to promote the work and ideas that we are generating as entrepreneurs.

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

We have an early start and often grab a coffee on the way to the studio. If we are shooting, it begins with about an hour of hair, make-up and wardrobe. Then we will shoot for a few hours, depending on what needs to be done. We are a small team of five and there's always time spent on emails, planning, meetings, editing and production. We usually wrap up at about 6pm. With the TV show, things were a bit different as we were shooting full days on location. It was five weeks of very early (and cold) mornings and long, action-packed days. It was a crazy shooting schedule but we found our rhythm and loved every second of it.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Being on the pulse, attention to detail, good timing and a great sense of humour.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Anyone who has found a way to monetise their work outside of the traditional commercial way of doing things. People like [White on Rice](#) and [Lorraine Loots](#) are inspiring as they've carved out a niche for themselves by doing their thing and using social media as a tool.

9. What are you working on right now?

We have just started post production on our TV show, *Tali's Wedding Diary*, which is launching on Showmax in December. I am also working on some SuzelleDIY scripts and concepts we are shooting in the coming weeks.

10. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

Content! Branded content, content creation, creative content.

It's a funny word, but it's what we are trying to get right. We are constantly asking ourselves, 'What are people watching and why? What are we watching? How can we make it better?' And then, if I'm not singing or speaking in a weird accent, I'm often uttering positive affirmations to myself. It really works.

11. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

In the shower or while I'm swimming. It must be something about the water.

12. What's your secret talent/party trick?

I can sew; I actually made my own wedding dress.

13. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I love technology but there are some things I just can't get right. Fixing the DNS settings to make the AppleTV work? Nope. But I always read manuals and I google absolutely everything.

14. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

About 6,000 selfies and videos of either Suzelle or my new alter ego, Tali. It's total madness.

15. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

It's funny, but I really do live by Suzelle's philosophy: "Anybody can." My advice would be to just go for it. It's exactly how Suzelle came to be; it was us just doing our thing in the best way that we knew how.

Simple as that. Get in touch with creative production company Sketchbook Studios on their [website](#) and visit SuzelleDIY's website on [suzellediy.com](#), which links to their [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages, filled with Suzelfies. Follow her new character, [Tali babes](#) on Instagram and watch for the TV show, which will flight in December on Showmax, or just follow Anastasopoulos [on Instagram](#), for more of her day-to-day projects and everyday endeavours.

**Interviewed by Leigh Andrews.*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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