

renegade

game changers | thought leaders | rule breakers | style makers

COLLECTIVE

ISSUE 9

SYRIA

A MEDIA REVOLUTION

FINDING IT

ALEXA CHUNG

THE MAKING OF **WALT DISNEY +**

KRISTEN BELL

KICKSTARTING THE

FILM INDUSTRY

WOMEN IN TECH: THE SHIFT

FASHION / DESIGN / FILM / FOOD / TECH / ART / SOCIAL CHANGE / TRAVEL



PICTURE PERFECT

DRAWING inspiration from the likes of AUDREY HEPBURN and EMMANUELLE ALT, meet the FASHION ILLUSTRATOR whose CHIC designs have attracted some of the world's largest BRANDS.

WORDS: SHEREE MUTTON

She's stylish and well-travelled, but above all else, Australian illustrator Kerrie Hess is artistically talented. And her highly sought-after work is proof.

The Brisbane-born beauty with her sophisticated and polished look has penned drawings for luxury labels including Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Kate Spade and her classic illustrations have also graced the pages of top fashion mags and countless book covers.

"I'm always surprised when my favourite companies get in contact about collaborating," says the self-proclaimed lover of vintage fashion and Hitchcock films.

"I think you draw brands and people into your life that naturally suit the style of work that you do.

"I remember visiting Paris when I was 12 years old with my parents and discovering Printemps department store. Not in my wildest dreams would I have ever thought that I'd be asked to illustrate their spring billboards and windows, which went up across the city last April."

Far removed from the fashion world (and even illustration), Kerrie began her career with a different path in mind.

"I studied graphic design at Griffith University in Brisbane and although there was a small illustration element in the degree, I didn't think that I could make a career out of it at that time," Kerrie reveals.

"My first job was as a graphic designer for *The Independent* newspaper magazines in London and in my first year there I started to illustrate for the magazine as well."

From there Kerrie moved to work for the Arcadia fashion group (who own Topshop) and for *Vogue* Australia.

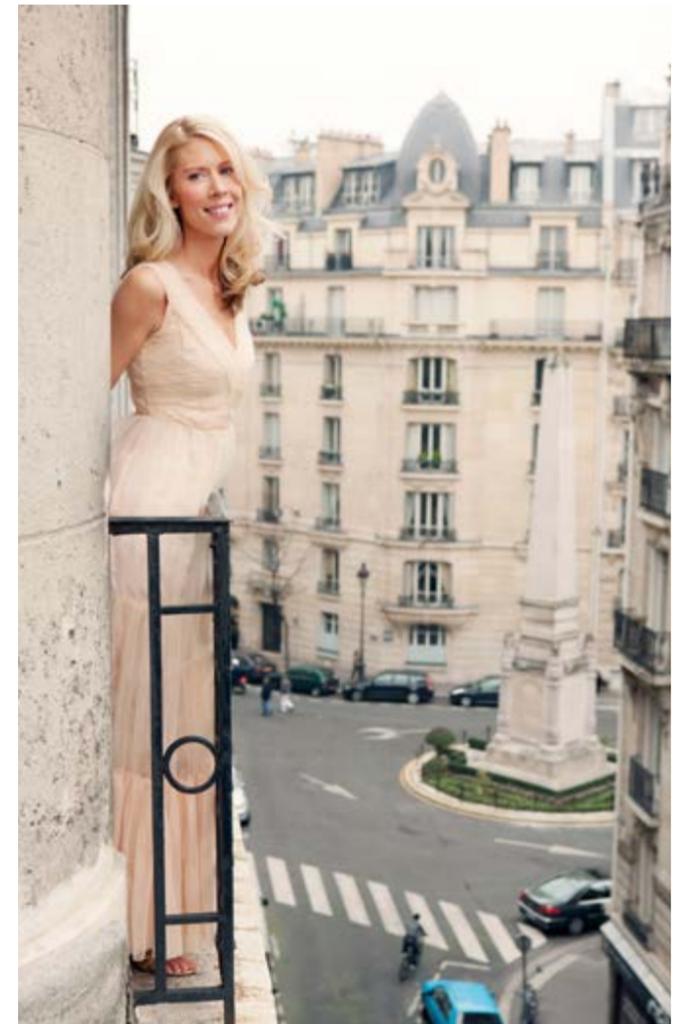
"It was a lovely way to start," she says.

With a growing portfolio of clients following stints in Hong Kong and Melbourne, it wasn't long before the fashion capital of the world was calling and Kerrie packed up her life and moved to Paris.

"I had been learning French for years and my son Marcel is half-French, so while he was only two years old and still pretty mobile, it seemed like a good time to go and live in this wonderful city," she says on reflection.

Kerrie spent 18 months living in a charming apartment in Neuilly-sur-Seine and says it was a natural source of inspiration for her artwork.

"I had my little café downstairs where I didn't even have to order. The waiter there just knew I wanted a café crème and a pain au chocolat. Creating a little network of friends



MOST CAREERS that LOOK very GLAMOROUS are probably 10% GLAMOUR and 90% HARD WORK.

over there, with regular catch-ups at Angelina, Café de Flore and Ladurée was pretty special."

Back in Brisbane, Kerrie has continued to forge a stellar career, working with local brands closer to home, including Collette Dinnigan and Myer.

But despite the refinement of her characters, with their vibrant colours and surreal beauty, Kerrie says life often isn't as enchanting as the statuesque women depicted in her illustrations.

"While there are some lovely events sprinkled into my life, generally I am at my desk, takeaway latte, music on, painting," she says.

"Most careers that look very glamorous are probably 10 per cent glamour and 90 per cent hard work.

"I work full-time in this capacity and sometimes wonder how I have ended up with such an unusual job. But it's truly one that I love, so I always feel very lucky. Seeing my work come to life with an end event is the icing on the cake." >

PHOTOGRAPHY: CARLA COULSON



In a business that largely depends on collaborations, fashion illustration is highly competitive and according to Kerrie, it's getting even tougher, partly due to social media.

"I started out a long time ago and there are so many other illustrators now. But I think if you just love what you do and are authentic, that will come through," she says.

"I appreciate what other artists are doing, but just tend to stick to my own path," she adds.

It's a move that has paid off for the skilled mother-of-one. And while collaborations are rich in numbers, Kerrie has also established herself as an author. Her book, *Shoestring Chic*, features 101 stylish tips on living the luxe life for less.

"I had published a number of books for teen girls previously and really wanted to work on a title in my area of passion. I also have never believed that money can buy style, so thought that a title in this genre would be both beautiful and practical. And of course it had to be illustrated," she says with a laugh.

Kerrie also sells limited-edition prints and most recently held an exhibition at the Le Meurice hotel in Paris.

"The idea of the exhibition came about during a chat over a café crème and pastry when I was in town about a year ago," she says.

"It was my first solo exhibition outside of Australia and to have it in this location was truly amazing."

This year, Kerrie is continuing to build her brand, joining forces with Cacao in Melbourne and Ladurée.

"I have a range of artisan chocolates set to release with Cacao Melbourne called the 'Les Petites Gourmettes Collection' and also a packaging collaboration with Ladurée," she says.

"I'm lucky enough to work with some amazing creative brands and people.

"When you have your own business, it's hard to switch off and just completely forget about work. But then I don't believe there is any truly perfect job out there. You just have to find the best one that fits with your life and that hopefully you love." ■

and another thing... kerrie hess on:

× collaborating with brands:

Pick your clients carefully in each sector. After all, you can't work for everyone, so better to make your alignments and be loyal to them. I have turned down jobs from competitor brands to Printemps as I don't think it's worth compromising a relationship with a key client just for one job. If your work is too saturated for too many brands on the market, you can also lose your appeal. Know your own value but always be easy to work with and on time.

× perfecting your craft:

Lots of practice is the first key to any creative skill, then experience in the industry. I feel like I have an understanding of the magazine industry from my time on the other side at *The Independent*, which is still helpful. I think Instagram is a great portal to getting feedback on your work too.

× loving your career:

That's the key to getting through the long hours and often tight deadlines that are almost always the case in the creative world, and also any new business. But if you can get there, waking up to a job that you're excited about is such a wonderful thing.



PHOTOGRAPHY: CARLIN OLSSON