

MARVELOUS MILIA M

ONCE IN A WHILE, A UNIQUE WOMAN COMES ALONG, WHO IS SO ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN OF HER CALLING IN LIFE. HER STYLE, HER FLAIR, AND THE WAY SHE CHOOSES TO LIVE AND EXPRESS HERSELF FREELY, WILL MAKE ALL OTHERS AROUND HER VIRTUALLY INVISIBLE BY COMPARISON. MILIA M IS JUST ONE OF THOSE WOMEN.

BY Mona El Yafi



Emerging as one of the leading female fashion designers of Lebanon, Milia M proves that Beirut is much more than just the Paris of the Middle East. Well on its way to becoming one of the top trendsetting fashion capitals of the world, Beirut is home to many new breakthrough talents in the prêt-à-porter and haute couture world, and of course to the very exciting, Milia M. Milia M was born and grew up in Beirut, having traveled to Paris later on in life where she studied fashion design. After working as a lingerie designer, Milia M returned to Beirut where she put her skills to good use, setting up her own studio and launching her first collection in 1999. Each year Milia M designs two collections. Past collections have been shown in Paris, Milan and Tokyo, and most collections are available worldwide in countries such as France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, England, and Japan. The beauty of a Milia M collection lies in the designer's ability to fully express her own intoxicating spirit, a one of a kind, contemporary, cool, and cultured allure. A little bit modern, a little bit romantic, with hints of seductive Middle Eastern mystery, Milia M designs are best suited for a daring set of female figures, much like the designer herself. Playing with transparencies, folds, openings, and mastering the art of the body-hugging cut, Milia M reveals and accentuates what most woman want; exciting clothing that is bold, and always beautiful. Diva caught up with the fashion prodigy to talk about her passion for fashion, the women she dresses, and those covetable designs she creates so well.

What influenced you as a child and drew you to work in fashion?
As a child I was always dressed up by my mother, completely different from the other children. Very early on, conscious of this difference I spent my time reinventing my look and other's too.

Which fashion designers have been important points of reference for you?
Jean Paul Gaultier, Yohji Yamamoto and as a persona Coco Chanel.

How do you find inspiration before you design a collection?
A lot of it comes from my travels, on the streets, conversations with other creative friends and colleagues, and from any discipline. reading and cinema and the social and economical trends too.

How would you describe your style?
Dynamic yet ethereal and engaging.

Do you have a specific type of woman in mind when you sit down and sketch a garment?

Contemporary and conscious of her femininity.

What do you most enjoy about being a fashion designer?
The creative process and its struggles. From the starting point scratch, to the moment the collection is actually there, I feel I am inventing a new story to tell each and every time.

With more and more designers originating from Lebanon and/or other parts of the Middle East, what is your impression of Middle Eastern fashion design today?

It's bubbly, and definitely a fertile ground to start from in order to reach and get the attention of a growing audience

How do you intend women to feel when wearing your collection?
Exclusive yet accessible. I like her to feel fashionable but not a fashion victim.

What celebrity would you love to dress?
Sophia Coppola, Liv Tyler, Cate Blanchett, Uma Thurman, Rachel Weisz, Liz Hurley.

What advice would you give to anyone interested in a career in fashion?
Perseverance.

What is the most difficult but necessary skill to acquire before one embarks on a career in fashion?
Metaphorically, head in the clouds and feet on the earth.

What would people be most surprised to find in your closet?
Baby girl's vintage clothing.

What would people never see you wear?
In my approach towards fashion I wouldn't consider anything a faux pas, but i personally would never carry a branded bag or wear birkenstocks.

Where can women find your line?
In our flagship store in Beirut, and other shops in Paris, London, NYC, Dubai... they can refer to my website for addresses.

Are there any new or upcoming projects you are working on that you can share with us?
Nothing you don't know of.

Considering the fact that the term «DIVA» originally derives from an ancient Italian word meaning «goddess», how would you complete this sentence: «I am a Diva because ...»?
It's fun! ■

For more information on Milia M visit, www.MiliaM.com