



Main

August 10, 2009

Paper View

Interview: Petra Storrs

Usually I'm loathe to talk in breathy, hero-worship tones but let's make no bones about it, I absolutely gawked when I first encountered the work of art director **Petra Storrs** – she's a set, prop and costume designer who has worked some serious origami- fashion magic with lots of bits of paper, amongst other things. Having been recently featured in **Dazed and Confused**, Storrs has been dressing a series of super brilliant muso-types like **MGMT**, **Telepathe** and **Paloma Faith**, for the latter constructed a ruddy brilliant umbrella dress out of mirrors.



Her work with paper and other inexpensive materials is testament to the potential for creativity to flourish even when times are hard. Practically speaking you'd be wise to stay away from water, flames and people with scissors, but these are minor quibbles, all that matters is that you'd look pretty damn cool.

Tell me a bit about your DIY ethos - when did you start experimenting?

Well, I design and make things, so I-do-it-myself, and I think it's important the designing and making processes go together as they inform each other. I have been working professionally as an art director and designer for a couple of years now, but previous to that I have always been very busy making art and my mum taught me and my friend to sew when we were very young (maybe 4 or 5 years old), and all our next door neighbours where painters, sculptors or keen quilt makers so I have always found it very appealing.

Do you think we're going to be seeing a lot more of it? Is creativity changing?

I don't know, it is hard to have an overview when you're in this little bubble! I think its important to try to work in a way that means you get the most creative output from what you put in be it time, materials or money. East London is choc a block with talented creative people working away for next to nothing, I think they should all be paid lots of money, that would be a nice change!

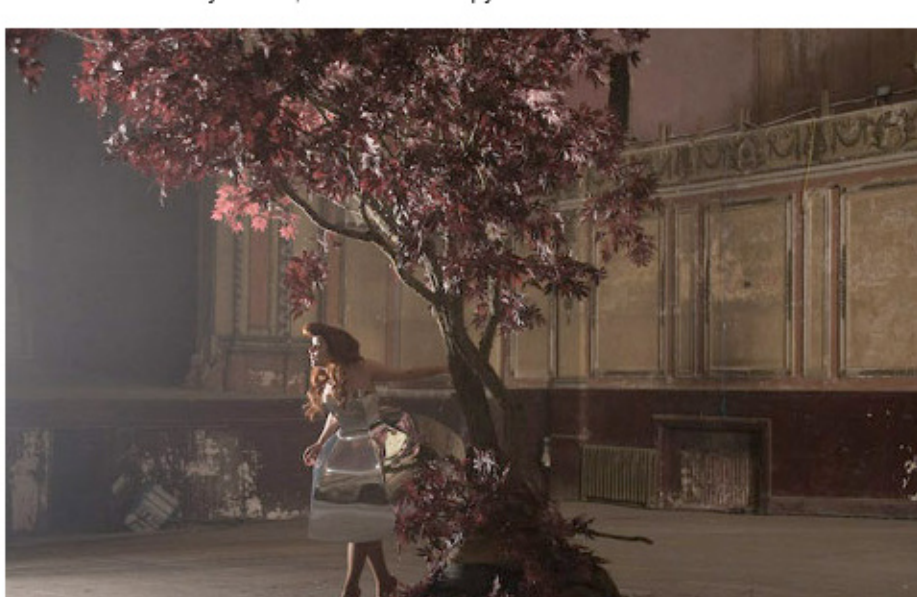


What is it about the materials - in particular your use of paper - which you find appealing?

I often work in paper because it is very immediate, and gives you license to experiment, almost like a maquette, or a three dimensional drawing, a blue print of how it might be. I think objects and designs have the most potential just before they are finished. Also I like how fragile and delicate paper is, as lots of my work is for the photographic industry, it really only needs to last for a few days until it is captured in a picture,

What is it you hope people will take away from your work?

I would like people to be pleased and for them to remember it, but my primary motivation is really for me, its like art therapy!

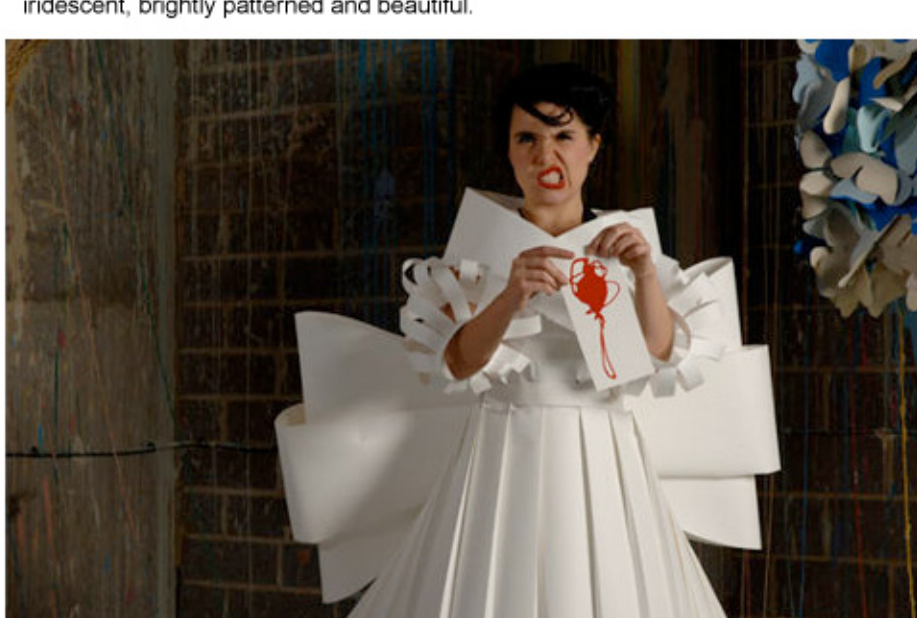


What has been your favourite project that you've worked on in the last year?

The Mirror Dress is my favourite project so far I think. It is collaboration with singer Paloma Faith, she's so theatrical and such a wonderful performer, it really comes alive, and its curved surfaces are completely reflective so it almost seems liquid as she moves around the stage. It's also different in every environment like a chameleon reflecting the surrounding colours, shapes and audience.

What or who else do you find inspiring?

Everything and anything, lots of sculptural shapes and structures, architecture, pictures from the National Geographic, Planet Earth, I love all the tiny underwater creatures and small insects beetles and bugs: they are really extraordinary iridescent, brightly patterned and beautiful.



What advice would you have for anyone hoping to break into fashion right now?

Work for as many different people as possible to gain experience of all the element that go in to having a small business and at the same time concentrate on a few projects of your own and make them amazing and create a website. Say Yes to everything because you never know what it will lead to.

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