

TUESDAY, 13 MAY 2014

Excellent Women: Petra Strrrs



Our excellent woman this week is the one and only [Petra Strrrs](#). Art director, prop stylist, set and costume designer, Petra is who you go to when you want a dress made out of chocolate,

a bedroom made out of paper or a pair of rocking-horse shoes. She's who Lady Gaga turned to when she wanted a dress made out of stained-glass for her video 'Born this way'.



Lady Gaga in Born this Way

Petra's clientele includes many names you'll know- and in fact you'll probably find yourself thinking, 'ah, so that's who made that!' throughout this post.



Photo by Alice Hawkins

[Paloma Faith's](#) mirror dress for example? Or her 'blimp' costume for her epic performance at Glastonbury?



For what is a hugely varied job, does Petra sometimes find it hard explaining what she does to people?

'Yes, especially as people concentrate on the design part, but with bigger projects the designing can be a mere 10% of the project, with the rest of my time spent running the budget, organising construction, haggling on prices, sourcing props, emailing for hours and hours, planning and organising logistics... the majority of it is not at all glamorous! But I really enjoy all the different elements that make up the job and I think if you are a designer you can apply the practice to anything from clothes to products to events to buildings - it's all the same principal.'



Petra assures me that her chocolate dress has not been eaten! (Yet, I want a nibble on the hem.)



Rachel May Snider in Camellia and The Rabbit

And Petra's not just good at making things with her hands - she also designed [a gorgeous website](#) for Rachel May Snider - I think we need more sites with dancing lobsters and woodland glades full of bluebells! Petra also created Rachel's incredible costume and props for her last production, [Camellia and the Rabbit](#), a one woman show about Rachel's love affair with tea.

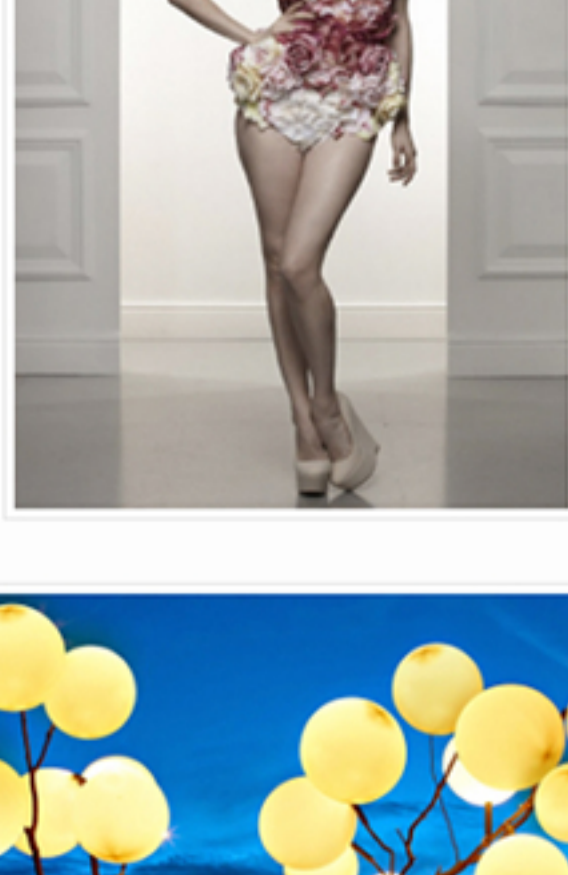


Rachel in Dressing for Breakfast

Petra has been working on a new show with performance artist Rachel, inspired by a collection of cardboard costumes cut from the back of 1950s cereal boxes! The show is called ['Dressing for Breakfast'](#) and involves a three-stringed washing line system flying cardboard cut-out clothes in and out over Rachel on stage, as she recounts the trials and tribulations of internet dating gone pear shaped, and looking back on the history of fashion. I saw the 'work in progress' preview and it had me in hysterics - I can't wait to see the full show.



Petra operates the washing-line system throughout the show: *'It was an experiment playing with different cut out costumes on pulleys, interchanging them to tell a story. Being part of the performance was a great experience, if slightly outside my comfort zone!'*



Having worked with [such incredible stars](#), I wondered what else could be left on Petra's to-do list...

'I'd like to work on more dance projects, making garments that change with the movement of the dancers - perhaps for someone like Beyonce. But I think what would be really great would be to make a range of accessories that appealed to the general population, that's the next challenge.'

Keep an eye on [Petra's blog](#) to see what she's up to next, maybe we'll get some chocolate accessories.