

# ART DIRECTOR PETRA STORRS AND POP SIREN PALOMA FAITH MAKE EACH OTHERS' DREAMS COME TRUE

"I like making things that are exciting, and not necessarily useful," giggles Petra Storrs in a west London café. It's a statement that pretty much sums up the relationship between the DIY art director and her pop singer pal, Paloma Faith. The pair met two years ago and instantly bonded over their mutual love of extravagant creations. Since then, Petra and Paloma have worked together on multiple music videos, a short film, and countless incredible costumes (including the much talked about reflective mirror dress, worn by Paloma). Paloma Faith's debut album *Do You Want The Truth Or Something Beautiful?* is out this September, and the singer turned to her gifted friend for help in designing the album cover, and in creating endless fairytale worlds in which to stage all of her wildly theatrical performances.

**Paloma Faith:** Why are you so tired? Were you up all night working?

**Petra Storrs:** Yeah, I was making this weird futuristic shoulder pad thing for a beauty shoot in *Vogue*.

**PF:** See, I can read your mind. We really are the perfect team. I'm good at coming up with far-fetched ideas that I could never make happen, and you're amazing at solving problems and making ideas real.

**PS:** That's why I like working with you. It gives me the opportunity to make these strange things that, otherwise, there would just be no reason or need for. Where do you get all of your wild ideas from anyway?

**PF:** I've always been an ideas person. I read a lot of books. The idea for that mirror dress you made me came from a book I read about theatre, and the question of who exactly is the observer and who is the observed. Obviously, as a performer, I am normally the observed, but I wanted to flip that dynamic around and make the audience the focus rather than me, hence the idea of a

**Name:** Petra Storrs

**Age:** 26

**Born:** Edinburgh

**What you know:** She's a prop, costume and set designer with a love for unusual materials.

**What you didn't:** Many of the materials Petra uses in her art she finds on the street.

**Previous:** She has designed intricate and wondrous sets and costumes for artists like MGMT, Telepathe and of course, Paloma Faith.



**Name:** Paloma Faith

**Age:** 24

**Born:** Hackney

**What you know:** Blues pop singer in the same vein as Amy Winehouse with a passion for burlesque and extraordinary costumes.

**What you didn't:** Paloma played an emo in the film *St Trinians* and has a role in Terry Gilliam's upcoming *The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus*.

**Previous:** She began her career singing in cabaret and burlesque clubs. She released her first single *Stone Cold Sober* in June.

reflective costume. I wanted people to see themselves in me. That's what I'm aiming for in my music as well. I want people to see themselves in my songs. The dress was a sort of metaphor for that.

**PS:** My problem at the moment is that I just can't think of anything I could make that would be better than that stupid dress! What's your favourite thing that I've made for you?

**PF:** Aside from the mirror dress, probably the dress made of paper. I always wanted to do costume changes during my shows, but I could never work out how to do it quickly on a low budget. The paper dress was perfect because it was disposable and I could just rip off all the layers one by one.

**PS:** That was amazing. That's why I think it's really important to create a prolonged working relationship with someone, rather than just work with people on individual projects. It allows ideas to evolve.

**PF:** It's true. And you grow to trust each other.

**PS:** I'm excited to see your new film with Terry Gilliam.

**PF:** Yeah, *The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus*. I play Sally, who walks through the Imaginarium and has to choose between good and evil. You would have loved the set. The Imaginarium was this really incredible, giant scale Victorian paper theatre on a horsedrawn cart. It was the most beautiful set I have ever seen.

**PS:** I would really like to do more work in film. I'm really inspired by the director Tarsem Singh. His film *The Fall* is so incredibly beautiful. I want to start doing things on a bigger scale. Do you think you'll keep acting?

**PF:** I want to keep acting, and I definitely want to make music something I do long term. And I always want to challenge myself visually. I feel that the visual side of me as a performer is just as important as the music. Plus I love doing it. I'm constantly thinking about costumes and set ideas.

**PS:** Me too. I just really enjoy the whole process of making things. It makes me really happy. I'm in no way a performer like you, so making stuff is a way of showing off by helping someone else to perform and show off. Does that make sense?

**PF:** Totally.

**PS:** I never get time to design things on paper the way you are taught at university. I prefer to daydream about what I want to make when I'm on the bus or in the swimming pool, and when I get it exactly how I want it to be in my head, I make it as fast as possible.

*Interview Karley Sciortino  
Photography Alexandra Catiere*

*Hair Syd Hayes at Premier for Q Cut  
Make-up Kelly Cornwell at Premier using Shu Uemura*

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