

CAMILLE BIDAULT WADDINGTON

CAMILLE BIDAULT-WADDINGTON IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL STYLISTS. SHE STYLES THE SHOWS OF MARC BY MARC JACOBS, HELPS DEFINE THE LOOK OF PARISIAN LUXURY BRANDS LIKE CHLOÉ OR HERMÈS, AND WORKS FOR A WELL CURATED SELECTION OF MAGAZINES LIKE VOGUE NIPPON, DAZED AND CONFUSED, AND PURPLE. NOW CAMILLE BIDAULT-WADDINGTON BRINGS HER MAGIC TO CLOSED, SHAPING THE IMAGES OF THE UPCOMING SPRING/SUMMER CAMPAIGN.

A CONVERSATION ABOUT FASHION

WORKING IN FASHION HAS BECOME VERY POPULAR THESE DAYS. NOT EVERYBODY HAS THE TALENT TO BE A DESIGNER OR JOURNALIST, SO BECOMING A STYLIST SEEMS LIKE THE BEST OPTION. HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE YOU STAY AT THE TOP OF YOUR GAME?

Being a stylist might be trendy, but it has also become more difficult to do quality work. There is not much freedom out there, so it is easy to become commercial and average very quickly. New stylists don't have any time to experiment. I am lucky. I am from an earlier generation and my senses were trained before the «pollution» began.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I know where to get good ideas. I know how to be inspired, and I know how to say «fuck you» to certain people. It's funny, actually. When I was younger I thought I'd have to stop being a stylist at 40. I thought it was a young people's thing. But the longer I am in this business, the more I understand that being a great stylist takes maturity, it takes experience.

EVERYONE COMPLAINS THAT FASHION IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE COMMERCIAL NOW. IS THAT NECESSARILY A BAD THING?

No. Why should it be bad to make money? Companies have to survive, so being commercial is not the problem. It doesn't bother me. What scares me is this new fake commercialism: ostentatious brands that are totally commercial, but nevertheless pretend to be something else. New York is full of them.

COULD YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE?

Let me try to explain myself without revealing names. Some designers hire great stylists and are clever enough to let them do their own thing. But their products are average. Despite that, these companies firmly believe in their uniqueness and, what's worse, that they are cool. But they are far from cool. They only have great stylists and creative teams. For me, this is worse than being honestly commercial. It's hypocritical.

WHAT ABOUT THE FASHION SCENE IN MILAN?

Milan is commercial. But everyone knows it, so at least it's honestly commercial. New York, on the other hand, pretends to be cool. But New York designers are a bunch of posers. In my opinion, they care more about being on style.com than designing high-quality modern clothes.

WHAT ABOUT PARIS?

I believe that designers in Paris work a bit harder than elsewhere and that creativity continues to be the most important value here. Also, French designers don't party as much and everything is more laid back.

AND LONDON?

London is funny and I love it. But it is also really messy. To be honest, who still wants to look like Mickey Mouse? I mean, it's sweet and all, but it's not really a style.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A STYLIST?

I studied fashion design at Studio Bercot in Paris. As you mentioned earlier, not everyone has the talent to be a designer and I was not that brilliant. However, Studio Bercot is the best fashion school in Paris, and all the designers and fashion magazines sent us their job ads. One day French Vogue was looking for an assistant, so Marie Rucki, the director, recommended me.

SOUNDS EASY.

When you are young, pretty and half-way talented, the beginning is always easy.

WHAT DID YOU DO AT FRENCH VOGUE?

First I was a runner for almost everyone at the magazine. Then I became Marie Amelie Sauvé's assistant. She was one of the fashion editors at that time.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE LATE 80'S, RIGHT?

Early 90's, my dear. I am turning 44 in December.

HOW LONG DID YOU WORK FOR MARIE AMELIE SAUVÉ?

Not long. I was dating Horst Diekgerdes. When you are dating a photographer, you believe that you are a genius and that you can do anything. You become a megalomaniac. But, in a way, this helped me to stand on my own two feet.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST SOLO ASSIGNMENT?

Back then Paris was not a center of the independent magazine world. Thankfully I knew some people in London who worked at «Dazed and Confused,» so Horst and I moved to London and I started working there.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST BREAKTHROUGH STORY?

I am not sure this was a breakthrough, but after 9/11 I did a shot with Terry Richardson for The Face Magazine, which featured naked girls wrapped in scarves holding big guns and Baklava. That story was partially censored, but it also got a lot of attention.

EARLIER WE TALKED ABOUT TODAY'S «POLLUTED» FASHION INDUSTRY, WHICH HAS BEEN RANSACKED BY BLOGGERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS FRESH OFF THE STREET, AND D-LISTERS. HOW DO YOU THINK THIS FASHION WORLD SHAPES PEOPLE'S STYLE?

It depends what kind of people we are talking about. I am not really interested in people who have terrible style. In my case, I used to dress up for work and especially for fashion shows. But I don't go to many fashion shows any more. It's just too stressful. And when I go, I put on a pair of jeans and a jacket and stay out of the limelight.

WHY DO YOU STAY OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT?

This red carpet photographer thing is so fake. It has become a competition, a circus: who will be photographed the most! And it disturbs me to see people dress up like clowns. You don't need to pile on a bunch of accessories and other things to look good.

LET'S FOCUS ON THE LAST TEN YEARS: WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST SHIFT IN THE INDUSTRY, IN YOUR OPINION?

Designers have become very conscious that fashion is a business. They even understand fabrics. They know now whether a fabric is wearable, durable, if it can be dry-cleaned, and so on.



YOU SOUND CYNICAL?

No. But fashion today can sometimes be rather dull, because the creativity of today's designers is much more circumscribed. They can't create anything silly, just for the sake of it, because it costs too much. Designers understand that they have to sell, which is ultimately a good thing. But it also opens the door for many bad designers who only make stuff that sells.

ARE YOU A FATALIST?

I can be.

ARE YOU A PERFECTIONIST?

Not at all. My own ideas bore me after about five minutes. But when somebody tells me «this will never work,» I want to kill that person. Why not try to figure out a way that works? Mentally I might be a perfectionist, because I contemplate perfection a lot, but I don't give a damn, for example, about the number of buttons on a shirt.

WHAT KEEPS YOU INTERESTED IN FASHION?

I love the act of dressing, even if I always end up wearing the same thing. I love inventing characters. I love working with designers. Being in this very creative world is very interesting. I like the cycle, which begins with an idea, then moves on to the collection, the show, the campaign, and finally the editorials. And then it begins anew. It's intense and stressful, but also a lot of fun. I don't know what I'd rather do.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION? WHAT GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE?

I do a lot of stupid things. Voilà, I've experienced a lot ; on many continents.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Definitely not the world of music, that's for sure. I draw inspiration from the past. I like the idea of heritage and culture. I like vintage stuff, but I also like mixing vintage with contemporary things. I also find that models can be inspiring.

DO YOU HAVE ANYONE IN PARTICULAR IN MIND?

Right now I am really into Marie Piovesan.

WHAT PART OF YOUR WORK IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

The conceptual parts. But to be honest, I don't have a ton of ideas each season. I am a bit suspicious of people who have 20,000 ideas.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

It doesn't change much: during the day I wear a sweater and a skirt. My skirts are usually navy, gray or cream-colored. Bare legs and masculine shoes. I never wear skinny shoes because they are uncomfortable and, on me, unflattering. In the evening I trade the sweater for a blouse and a different skirt. I am a minimalist, except when it comes to jewelry. I love jewelry.

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING TODAY?

Oh, nothing special. I just came back from the gym. I am wearing an old, navy-blue little boy sweater by Prada and a crepe skirt by Chloe. And I kept my gym leggings on, it is too cold to be outside with bare legs.

ACCESSORIES?

My handbag is by Hermès and very old. I like that it looks a little worn.

I LIKE THAT YOU ALWAYS HAVE PERFECTLY MANICURED NAILS. THAT'S VERY FRENCH.

Ah oui. I am obsessed with manicure. And I recently developed a second obsession: makeup. A little mascara here, a tiny bit of blush there. I love it, but I am crap at applying it.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT FASHION?

That people in fashion are stupid, nasty pricks and that everyone is gay. I mean, of course they are all gay. But they are the nicest people, funnier and more tolerant than others. I'm sure there are a lot of atrocities in the Silicone Valley, too. I think the fashion world is a ton of fun.

IS IT A DEMOCRATIC WORLD?

Not at all. Even when someone brags about their cool clothes from H&M, they'd still rather own the real thing. Working in fashion, you get to see first-hand why it's not democratic: making money takes forever. You only survive if you have a rich boyfriend or rich parents.

RICH BOYFRIEND, OR RICH PARENTS?

Both.

DOES ELEGANCY STILL EXIST?

Yes. But these days it is more mental than actual.

HOW ABOUT COOLNESS?

Either you are cool, or you are not. It's not something one can learn. Impossible. Thank God we are cool.

AND SEXINESS?

Sexiness is like coolness, you can't force it.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT STYLE?

That style has to be very interesting.

Interview JINA KHAYYER

PARIS

10 THINGS TO DO

BY CAMILLE BIDAULT-WADDINGTON

RESTAURANT: LE CINQ MARS

51 RUE DE VERNEUIL, 75007 PARIS
ONE OF MY FAVOURITE RESTAURANTS.
IT IS COSY AND SERVES DELICIOUS HOMECOOKING.

RESTAURANT: CAVIAR KASPIA

17 PLACE DE LA MADELEINE, 75008 PARIS
THE TABLE BY THE BAR IS USUALLY DESPISED, BUT I LIKE IT.
IT'S FUN TO LOOK AT PEOPLE ARRIVING.

RESTAURANT: CHEZ SAVY

23 RUE BAYARD, 75008 PARIS
MY FAVOURITE FRENCH CUISINE RESTAURANT.

GALLERY: AIR DE PARIS

32 RUE LOUISE WEISS, 75013 PARIS
THE GALLERY OWNER EDOUARD MERINO IS A GENIUS.

BOOKSHOP: LIBRAIRIE LECOINTRE DROUET

9 RUE DE TOURNON, 75006 PARIS
THEY HAVE AN AMAZING SELECTION OF 20TH CENTURY ARTS,
ARCHITECTURE AND AVANT-GARDES BOOKS

MUSEUM: LA MAISON ROUGE

10 BOULEVARD DE LA BASTILLE, 75012 PARIS

ANTIQUES: BRIMO DE LAROUSSILHE

7, QUAI DE VOLTAIRE, 75007 PARIS
ALWAYS INSPIRING TO WINDOW-SHOP HERE.
THEY HAVE A SUBLIME SELECTION.

HOTEL: AMOUR

8 RUE DE NAVARIN, 75009 PARIS

HOTEL: RAPHAEL

17, AVENUE KLÉBER, 75116 PARIS
IT'S A BIT PRICY BUT SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO ROMANTIC.

SHOPPING: LA JOLIE GARDE ROBE

15 RUE COMMINES, 75003 PARIS
BY FAR MY FAVOURITE VINTAGE SHOP