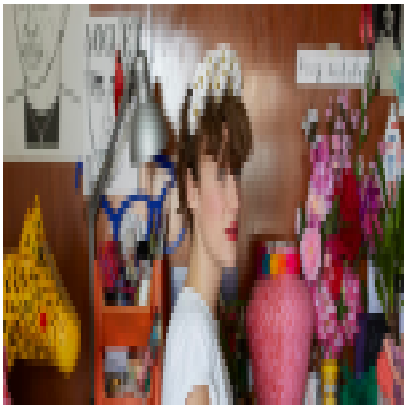


Interview with the Queen of Crafts Rosy Nicholas

Description



My first encounter with Rosyâ??s work happened about a year ago when I met the rainbow runner accessories designer Fred Butler. Fred and Rosy had worked together in unison on several of Fredâ??s collections and I was in awe of the fearless handmade revolution of accessories pushing boundaries I had stumbled across. I later found out that my best girl Make Up Artistâ?? Bobana Parojcic happened to share a studio with Rosy so I was hoping it was just a matter of time that we would meet. As fate would have it, we did meet. What was immanently most striking is the undeniable aura of elegance that surrounds Rosy. She is a lady indeed, a lady who is in love with getting her fingers dirty with glitter, who loves paper as much as lipstick, who makes pompoms looks awesomely chic, this girl is a dream. And as far as careers go, Rosy is definitely having a good time- making glitter papier mache pharaohs, painting scribbly lines into a lush monochrome wall covering at the Ace Hotel, and teachingâ?? Kirstie Allsopp how to make pompoms.

There is something endearing and alluring in Rosyâ??s work, it charms because it seems that all these objects and patterns and accessories are made by someone who is utterly in love with their work and in turn, the craft. The confidence in uneven lines, the pride in the imperfections, the very imperfections create a charming and inviting curious world of oddities with an air of festivity. When you look at Rosyâ??s work as a whole- you realise that you are taken into what my seven year old son would most probably call heaven. Itâ??s playful, itâ??s honest, and a lot of it is three dimensional, actual handmade papier-mache objects painted in wild colours and quick scribbles, almost relics from our own childhoods, free from digital cartoons and computer screens. Rosy has miraculously made herself busy and successful within a new wave of cool creatives who dig for the real rather than rendered perfection. She lifts craft of glue and glitter to the cool bench.

We asked Rosy a few questions about how she has made her love for the craft sparkle into a glittering career.



Portraits by the wonderfulâ?? Jenny Lewis

MK: Who is Rosy Nicholas?

RN: After graduating from Camberwell College of Arts I began working freelance across a range of fields including illustration, props and accessories. I live and work in East London and have a small studio where I draw, print and glue stuff together for a number of various clients around London.

I guess Iâ??m a maker, craft based stuff, its the only thing Iâ??ve ever been good at and as it happens Iâ??m having a pretty good time. I like simple yet often time consuming hand made techniques and modest materials to make paper collages, hand drawn patterns and art deco inspired shapes. So far Iâ??ve made a nice little career out of card, paper and glitter so Iâ??m pretty

lucky.









Kitty Joseph A/W 2014, Shoes by Rosy Nicholas

MK:*â??* Tell us a little about how it all started. Are you intuitive with where you were heading, or did you have a solid plan?

RN: I felt quite uncomfortable at high school, I was never academic and found being rubbish at most subjects quite hard so it was a real relief to get to art school. I chose to do graphics as that particular course at Camberwell covered lots of subjects like illustration/animation/design so I liked the idea of being able to try them all. I suppose in some ways I still donâ??t know where Iâ??m heading, but thatâ??s ok, I just try to take each job as it comes and enjoy it. Being multidisciplinary means that I get to do lots of different jobs and Iâ??ve always loved that.



MK: What has been the highlight of your career?

RN: I suppose I hope I havenâ??t had it yet! Maybe ask me that again when Iâ??m in my 40â??s. So far Iâ??ve done some really fun jobs but I think Iâ??ve always been a late bloomer in life and I only feel like Iâ??m getting going now.

MK: What important lessons would you advise someone who is thinking of starting out their own creative business?

RN: Itâ??s a lot of hard work and late nights and lonely cold studio time at the weekends when everyone else is out having fun but if you are getting to create and making things you love, for me it was my only choice.

I think when youâ??re starting out all you can do is make good things and try and get involved with others that you admire. Iâ??ve made a lot of my best friends and best clients from being an eager intern early on but you have to be selective too. Iâ??d be a very rich lady if I had a pound for every time someone asked me to do a job for no money, but that doesnâ??t mean it would be great for my C.V. However, in some cases, doing a great job with a small budget for a company/person who you admire that you can then put on your website is the only way to get going and prove to future clients you have talent. Itâ??s a fine balance getting it right.







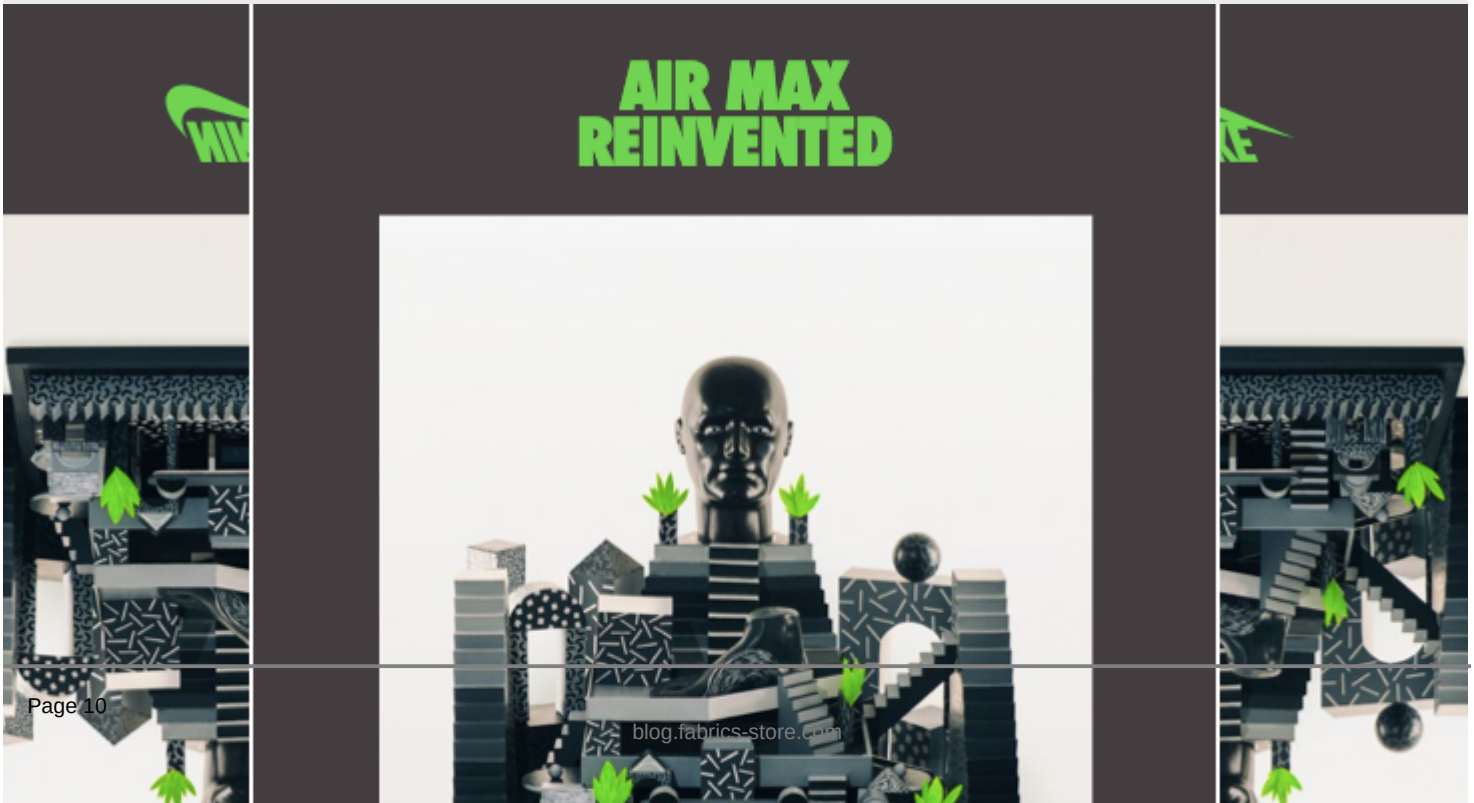


Lazy Oaf Garfield Look Book, Set Design and Props by Rosy Nicholas

MK:â?? What do you love most about your job?

RN: That Iâ??m my own boss and the freedom that it gives me. Apart from a few odd part-time jobs when I was starting out, Iâ??ve never had a 9-5 and I donâ??t think I ever could now. I feel very privileged that I get to go to galleries, museums and the cinema when I want mid week and donâ??t have anyone else to answer to. Of course, being freelance comes with its downsides too, but for me, the good points outweigh the bad. Week to week I can be doing completely different things and so it always feels new and not much like work.

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MK: What has been challenging?

RN: The most challenging thing is always money. The recession hit me hard and for a few years I was really struggling to pay the bills, I had to get lots of weird odd jobs and thought a lot about just trying to get a more normal 9-5 on a salary. Thankfully itâ??s starting to pick up again but money is never not a worry, Iâ??m constantly thinking to the month ahead about whether any work will come in and what I will do if it doesnâ??t. When you are freelance you have a lot more freedom with your time but also, things like weekends and holidays donâ??t really exist, it all just blurs into each other. Every night I go to sleep I run through all the things I need to do tomorrow, next week, next month, next year. But like I say, its a fun job and its nothing compared to people with real jobs like doctors and nurses.

MK: What does it mean to you to make something by hand from start to finish?

RN: Itâ??s the thing that I enjoy the most. As a child, playing with materials and doing craft projects was my favourite form of play. I had one doll and she had short hair and wore cord dungarees and most of my toys were practical things. I guess that came from my parents both being from art school, theyâ??d often just give me a slab of Das clay and tell me to make something. So now, later in life making something from scratch with craft materials is still the most fun thing to me. It is a time consuming way to work but its fun and I try to keep that element and remind myself to have a good time and not worry about work too much, if there isnâ??t any joy in it then whatâ??s the point.



Optical Trickery by Camille Walala and Photographer Jess Bonham, Shoes and Bracelet by Rosy Nicholas

MK: You share a studio with some amazing creatives, how has this affected you and your work?â??

RN: Itâ??s really important to me, being your own boss can be lonely so I love being in a big studio with people that I can talk to and get opinions from. A lot of people in my studio are creatives that work on computers, so Iâ??m definitely the most messy and practical maker. When Iâ??m sitting in my corner covered in glitter and everyone walks past and goes â??oooooh what you makingâ?? it gives me a little lift and reminds me Iâ??m lucky that this is my job. Iâ??m not a deep conceptual artist, I like making decorative things that people like to look at, so being in a big studio of people with good taste is really helpful as a gauge for whatâ??s working depending on their ooohâ??s.



MK: Do you have a mentor who guides you?

RN: When I was starting out I went and interned for Fred Butler as I followed her blog and always loved her work. She taught me a lot about experimenting with materials and being confident with my ideas to just start making and not think too much. She put trust in me very early on to make pieces for her own collection and that was a big moment for me. Having someone you admired thinking your ideas were good enough to sit with theirs and not having an ego about it was amazing. She has been nothing but encouraging and supportive to me and has since become a friend for life and favoured collaborator. Iâ??m still pretty convinced that she is from outer space but thatâ??s probably why I like her so much.



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Fred Butler S/S 2013, Shoes by Rosy Nicholas

MK: What does success mean to you?â??

RN: I think this has changed a lot over time. Now Iâ??m getting older and turning into a bit of a hippy I really value my time more and try to worry about money or doing â??coolâ?? jobs less than I did when I graduated. Living in London on the money I earn is hard and will probably only get worse until I eventually have to move away, which is a sad thing for me as I was born and bred here. But other than that, I realise how lucky I am to be doing what I do and I really admire people who work hard and do jobs that matter to the world. I donâ??t earn a great deal of money and I regret how little holidays Iâ??ve been on, but day to day my quality of life is success to me. I love London and being near my family and the great friends Iâ??ve made in East London. When Iâ??m walking to my studio in the morning to make whatever weird thing Iâ??m doing that week I think, this is ok, Iâ??m lucky.

CATEGORY

1. INTERVIEWS

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