Curated By You: Leila Dâ??Angelo Makes a Stunning GS Darling Dress

Description

GS Darling Dress made with All-purpose Black Fs Signature Finish Midweight F

Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do.

My name is Leila, I live in London with my partner and my two Sphynx cats. Iâ??m a freelance strategist and most often Iâ??m focused on brand, creative and marketing challenges. But I love helping start-ups think about how their whole idea fits together. I started and stopped sewing a ton of times and finally created @peaceontheside â?? my Instagram account â?? to force me to stop procrastinating and sew.

Why do you sew?

I think the first thing I saved on Pinterest when it launched was a meme that said â??I wish I could illegally download clothesâ?•, and this is probably where my head was to begin with. I didnâ??t have a lot of money but I loved fashion and sewing felt like the ultimate life hack. Obviously, I know now that itâ??s not that easy because years later Iâ??m still not quite knocking out designer-dupes (although Iâ??m getting closer).

I think I sew now because I love the sense of creativity and grounding it gives me. So much of my life is out of my control, I jump on transport I donâ??t drive, often eat food Iâ??ve ordered on an app, use a computer I donâ??t really understand. I love that in this one area of my life â?? the clothes that I wear â?? itâ??s truly personal, itâ??s slow, properly from scratch and I understand all of it. It feels like a piece of real life when everything gets a bit surreal and fast and detached.

What do you like to listen to when youâ??re working (and why)?

My podcast app says Iâ??ve listened to 67 days of podcasts in the past 3 years. So that feels pretty clear. Audiobooks too. I love the escape that you get with someoneâ??s voice in your ear, it feels like sharing some temporary intimate space with someone you donâ??t know. Itâ??s a special way to view the world. I donâ??t mind if itâ??s fiction or *Today Explained*, true peace for me is listening to a podcast while I assemble a PDF or press seams. That

being said, after many mistakes, I have learned that I need to pause to read instructions!

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As a child, what was your first encounter and memory of beauty?

Such a good question but so tough. I think beauty has meant so many different things to me that itâ??s hard to know where it started. I want to think it was something profound, but it was probably the phase where I first discovered that there were girls with gloriously long straight hair. I used to put a cardigan on my head imagining what it would be like to have that kind of hair. For a while that was beauty to me.

And itâ??s probably no coincidence that I almost religiously straighten my hair now still, all these years later.

Where is home and how does it affect what you do?

Home is London. Iâ??ve always lived in a city and I think I thrive on bustle and people and diversity, even though I consider myself more on the introverted side of things. The kind of strategy I do for work is all about bringing different things together and finding the central truth that can make it make sense. That being said, my partner is Greek and we spend at least a month there every year, so sea and peace and windy islands are also definitely becoming part of who I am too.

Name a book that youâ??ve recently read which inspired you and why?

Itâ??s not the most recent book but Lisa Taddeoâ??s *Three Women* was one of those books I found myself constantly wanting to share passages from. It inspired me mostly because I think shame is such an easy place for women to get to and even more when it comes to our desire, so any book thatâ??s trying to challenge that idea I think would feel inspiring to me. But on top of a brilliant theme, she writes so beautifully and somehow the whole thing just feels like community.

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What was the first thing you ever remember making on your own? Tell us about this memory.

I remember using my parentsâ?? sewing machine to make outfits for my Barbie. We had beautiful scraps of fabric that I think they must have bought on their trip to Mali, so my Barbieâ??s were in traditional African prints that were likely 95% a tube with a tie around the waist. That being said, the memory of sitting on my Dad or Mumâ??s knee to use the machine has stayed with me and one I hope Iâ??ll get to recreate one day.

Who are your muses and inspiration?

To be honest, there are just too many at this point. Basically, itâ??s the entire list of people I follow on Instagram. I know social media can do horrible things to people and Iâ??ve had my moments with it, but Iâ??m genuinely grateful to have managed to carve out a little corner of joy, of everything social media promises to be at its best. My Instagram experience is still filled with the most wonderful, creative, supportive, inspiring people, so for now, my feed is my muse!

Do you have a community of crafters/ makers around you or do you find you are on your own?

My family are pretty makery. My dad is always doing something creative to his house, my mum is an artist and photographer and my brother is a baker. Plus my step-mum and my partner both have businesses theyâ??ve created, so one way or another, weâ??re all crafting something. But in terms of sewing, Iâ??m mostly on my own. Thatâ??s why the sewing community on Instagram has been so important to keep my motivation and momentum.

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How important is it to make something with your hands?

Thereâ??s nothing like it. The peace and flow I get into when Iâ??m sewing, the pride I feel when I finish and when I see my sewing improve, thereâ??s nothing else that gives me that sense of satisfaction and progress. Like I said before, itâ??s a piece of reality, and at least one I really need, to be able to take something like a piece of fabric and turn it into something useful and beautiful, before your eyes and with your own two hands.

What has been the most rewarding sewing project youâ??ve completed so far and why?

I want to answer this question in so many different ways! I could say that it was the birthday dress I made this year. I worked with a sewing tutor to create a bustier dress pattern for my measurements, did a practice run and then made one in the most beautiful deadstock fabric from Paris. It was the first thing that felt truly my own and the sewing was so careful and it fits like a glove. But then, I find the small, day-to-day things I make, the stuff that no one ever guesses I made, probably more rewarding. The lovely basics like tanks to wear to bed, turtlenecks out of super high quality jersey, knickers, all the stuff that makes sewing feel like a useful life skill, not just a fun one. I did Me Made May this year and it was the ability to reach for outfits all month that I found most rewarding, and you canâ??t do that by only sewing fancy bustier dresses!

What is more important to you â?? the process or the final product (ie your garment)?

I think it shifts as you shift. When Iâ??m sewing, nothing else matters, I forget in some ways that Iâ??m making something I want to wear (unless I want to wear it immediately and Iâ??m in a huge rush to finish). But nothing beats the final product and getting to wear whatever it is Iâ??ve made. So if I had to pick, itâ??s the finished thing. Even though, without the process, the finished

product wouldnâ??t feel half as good!

What does success mean to you?

I think success would be thriving as my authentic self â?? anxiety, idiosyncrasies and all. Iâ??ve spent so many years with a work persona, a family persona and a friendship or relationship persona. Iâ??m finally figuring out how to be honest about who I am, what Iâ??m feeling, what my wants and needs are and if I can do that and still have a great life, career and relationships, I think that would feel pretty successful!

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What have you chosen to make out of FS linen and why?

Speaking of whichâ?¦. for some reason, this super fun collaboration totally triggered a new level of anxiety and perfectionism in me (a topic I talk about on my Instagram too). I *could not* make a choice. There were so many amazing colours and I was just paralysed with all the potential things I could make. I finally settled on black linen â?? you can never go wrong with an LBD, was the thinking. But I wanted to elevate it a little and decided that Iâ??d go for a classic shape but add some contrasting white linen piping. But then I was on the hunt for a pattern and cue another bout of deep indecision.

Gracie Steel is a pattern maker Iâ??ve got to know over the last year and sheâ??s an expander for me â?? she never stops trying stuff, pushing herself, making amazing couture-worthy outfits. To start with, honestly, I found it intimidating. But now I just enjoy watching it happen and try to foster that freedom in myself. So it felt like a good way to honour that friendship and also, her GS Darling Dress with its cutouts is a killer shape for a classic black dress with white piping.

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