

The Next Iteration: How Mara Hoffman Shifted from Fashion to Photography

Description


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American creative Mara Hoffman spent 24 years building up her sustainable namesake fashion brand, securing an international reputation for focussing on high-quality clothing with bold, modern silhouettes. But in 2024, she suddenly closed up shop, to the surprise of her colleagues and friends. Although she left without a clear goal in mind, a year spent travelling and retraining allowed her to refocus on what mattered to her most. What she predominantly discovered was a love for photography, and it is this that has pushed her on to the next chapter. Now focused on building a career in photography, design, art direction and creative guidance, she feels deeply rooted in a multidisciplinary practice that is entirely her own.



Actress Jenny Slate, photographed by Hoffman for the latest issue of Mother Tongue magazineâ??s biannual edition

She says it is an expansion, rather than a complete reinvention of who she was before, observing, â??The most important sentiment around this â??launchâ?• for me is to make it clear that this is purely an extension, as opposed to a reinvention, new identity, or rebrand. I have always been this. MARA HOFFMAN STUDIO is simply an AND, as opposed to an I AM.â?•



Jackie Shuya Tan for Mara Hoffman 2020 campaign photographed by Mara Ho



Gaia Orgeas for Mara Hoffman 2020 campaign photographed by Mara Hoffman

When Hoffman closed her fashion business, she was keen to make time to rediscover aspects of herself that had been buried by the constant stresses and pressures of running a fashion business. She says, â??After 24 years, I had to take a hard look at what continuing would mean, and what it would mean not to.â• Choosing to leave, however hard, was not an admission of failure, but more a realisation that this particular chapter of her life had come to an end. She reflected back, â??I would rather walk out of this beautiful point of expression, owning my name and not being in debt,â• adding, â??It was a really elegant exit, considering what usually goes down in this industry.â•



Nonetheless, it was not an easy decision, and a period of what she called â??mourningâ?? and â??detoxificationâ?? followed, as uncertainty and indecision plagued her day to day life. Making time for herself during this period of rediscovery was paramount, and Hoffman was keen not to rush into any rash decision about what came next. â??I didnâ??t have a defined idea of what I was going to do,â?• she says. â??I thought; â??Just breathe. Detox. Figure out who you are without being a brand.â?• The process took some figuring out, as she explains, â??That took time. During that period, I knew I wanted to create work without the pressure of selling it. It was about something larger than it was about storytelling.â?•





Mara Hoffman 2022 campaign photographed by Mara Hoffman

Hoffman spent the best part of a year discovering new ways of doing and being, without the pressures of the fashion industry on her shoulders. This involved writing, travelling, speaking on panels about sustainability, and even enrolling in clairvoyant school. Eventually, Hoffman settled into photography â??a skill for which she was entirely self-taught, but something that had always been a part of her life. She linked her passion for photography with her lifelong interest in dancing, likening the two practices through a connection to the movement and energy of the human body that had long been an interest in her work as a fashion designer. From photography Hoffman has expanded into art direction and creative direction. It took Hoffman nearly a year before she was ready to officially launch her namesake studio, but the timeline felt right to her, by which point she had settled into a fluid, creative and interdisciplinary approach. â??I never want to have such singularity in my creative identity as I did with the brand,â?• she explains. â??As opposed to I am, everything is an and. And just more ands.â?•

CATEGORY

1. DISCIPLINES

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