

Kambriel

In 1994 couture clothier Kambriel released her premiere collection in a lushly printed catalogue hand-tied with long, trailing black satin ribbons, enveloped in black linen, and gilded with silver ink. The collection, called Atrocities, immediately caught on in the underground scene. Since then, she's designed regularly for the likes of Neil Gaiman, Amanda Palmer, and countless other fans of her fantastical creations. In her *Theatre is Evil* companion art book, Palmer said this about their meeting: "Kambriel has been my costumer and clothing muse for ages. I first met her at the Orpheum Theatre in Boston ... there she was, resplendent in a mind-boggling black Victorian full-length get up and tricorne hat, looking like a goth version of Molly Ringwald from "Pretty in Pink" ... all homespun feathers, lace, buttons, and glam-confusion. ... We struck up a friendship immediately and since that day, she's been sewing me creations that came out of either her head, my head, or our collective imagination."

We feature Kambriel's designs—perfect for lovers of autumn and faerie glamour—on the next ten pages, but first talk with her about her own enchanted tale.

Faerie Magazine: Describe your aesthetic. What is it that you find beautiful and what inspires you?

Kambriel: My aesthetic tends towards the timeless and ethereal, with an added twist of magic and elegant whimsy. I find the natural world beautiful—dewdrops on spider webs, a bird singing to awake the sun, that ephemeral moment when the sky turns a fiery rose violet right before the emergence of moonlight. Kindness, caring, bravery, curiosity, and generosity are beautiful.

For clothing and accessory design, I find inspiration in non-fashion-related places. My inspiration is more likely to come from seeing the way the sunlight strikes a sand dune in the desert, the way the wind blows shape-shifting clouds across the sky, or the shimmering, shifting colors of a bioluminescent creature of the sea.

FM: Can you tell us a little bit about how you got started?

K: I've instinctively created things by hand since childhood, always with an old-world appreciation for the art of bringing inspiration to life. Even in youth, I'd wake up pre-dawn each day to carve out extra time to create one of a kind pieces not available elsewhere—just a little something to reflect my feelings/mood on that particular day. This kind of personal expression/inspiration was behind my first collection and still continues to this day: A reflection of the inner-self onto the outer-self—creations to bring you a little closer to your dreams.

FM: There are many period-reproduction clothing companies out there, and even many gothic clothing companies selling clothes inspired by past and present. But somehow, Kambriel manages to have a completely unique and recognizable look that is collected and respected by many avid fans. What you would consider to be the "signature Kambriel style"?

K: Thank you for the kind words! When I first offered my designs, everything was either brick and mortar shops or mail-order catalogues. A bit later, the online edition of the

Photo of Kambriel by Visioluxus
Design shown: Dracula's Bride Gown in Red Chiffon

Photo of Neil Gaiman by DividingMe
Il Sommo Poeta Wool Wrap



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catalogue went live at a time when you could literally fit all related clothing sites on a single, alphabetically arranged links page with perhaps a dozen or so links in total. I don't try to be unique, but I also don't follow fads or trends, though trends occasionally align with what I've been creating all along. My personal aesthetic has always resided somewhere betwixt and between any particular place or time so I don't get rid of designs seasonally, as they stand the test of time. I'm an old soul, so a sense of the past and other cultures often comes through in a very natural/instinctive way, but strictly adhering to period reproductions doesn't hold as much interest for me. I prefer the freedom of adding personal twists to everything I create and making pieces that, regardless of their visually dramatic styles, feel quite natural and comfortable to wear.

FM: Where is the most unusual place you've seen your items worn?

K: As a lifelong eccentric, my perspective on "unusual" is probably a tad skewed! My designs have been worn anywhere from national ad campaigns to government ceremonies, from the Academy Awards red carpet to the grave.



Photo of Lilah by Nadya Lev
La Plume Lace Choker

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FM: What can we expect to see from you in the future?

K: I'm considering putting together a book to capture some of the magic of the past twenty plus years, showcasing a wide range of designs, art, exhibits, articles, collaborations, etc ... along with personal memories, plus rare imagery and ephemera. I'm also enjoying staying true to my roots by creating more one-of-a-kind wearable art, fantastical millinery and jewelry pieces, incorporating beloved vintage and antique Victorian and Art Nouveau elements as a way to give them new life with a bit of added enchantment. Beyond the aesthetic, I love to incorporate antique and vintage elements from an environmental standpoint. In a world where so much already exists, I feel it's important to respect and make better use of that which we already have. I adore the innate charm and magic that resides in forgotten heirlooms, and it's an honor when I can combine imagination and skill to reinvent these elements in ways that will extend their life into new and exciting future chapters.

To read more, visit Kambriel online at Kambriel.com, etsy.com/shop/kambriel, or twitter.com/kambrieldesign.



Photo of Kambriel by Visioluxus
Design shown: Silk Parisian Bustle Ensemble

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