

showcase

Kambriel

Theda Gown made from
Ivory Georgette \$175

Icele Headdress: contact
for pricing

By Kendy Paxia

Since 1995 Kambriel has been dreaming up and crafting clothing for the gothic community and those seeking darkly rich attire. Formerly known as Atrocities, Kambriel switched the name to reflect changes in current world trends. From satin to velvet and as far reaching as spider web lace, Kambriel has clothing to suit those craving decadents in well crafted garments. Often working directly with customers, Kambriel manages to capture what the wearer seeks and sews it up like a dark fairy godmother. Making dreams come true and granting wishes is just part of what it takes to hold down Kambriel. As companies start and fall apart, Kambriel has thrived by great customer service and giving those that do business with the company, reason to return time and time again. I recently had the chance to chat with Kambriel, head mistress of Kambriel the company (the company is her namesake). She was kind enough to answer some questions about what it is like to run a business and what Kambriel is all about.

Your company has been a staple in the goth community. How long have you been in business?

I've personally been involved in the goth scene since '85, but the business part of it began in 1994 when the "Atrocities: the Premiere Collection" catalogue was released.

You recently changed your company's name. Is there any significance to the name change?

The name has changed from Atrocities to Kambriel. When we began Atrocities, the name was more abstract and not so often used. We had been thinking of changing the name for a while since it grew tiring hearing about "the atrocities of Serbia", "Japanese war atrocities", etc... As time went on, I wanted to bring an aura of beauty that can come out of the darkness to a name that had always conveyed tragedy. Finally, when September 11, 2001 happened and those events were also described as "atrocities", I realized

the time had finally come, and decided that changing the business name to Kambriel would be best. I think the new name better expresses the inherent beauty of the designs, and the aesthetic I'm aiming for- an atmosphere of opulence and timelessness, with a sense of the fantastical. All of the original Atrocities offerings are, and will continue to be, available but with the addition of many new styles!

Over the years you have been featured in movies, books, and everything in between. What has been the most interesting place your work has shown up?

Well, there have been a few interesting surprises. Once was when a friend came back from vacation in Europe and he presented me with a flyer to a goth club in Belgium that used my Dracula's Bride photo for their flyers. Another surprise happened while watching a film called *The House of Mirth* starring Gillian Anderson and Eric Stoltz. Suddenly, I noticed in one of the scenes that Eric Stoltz's character was wearing one of our black embossed velvet Gomez Jackets (a Victorian-inspired men's smoking jacket)! Recently it was great to see some photos show up of comedienne Margaret Cho in a crimson pre-Raphaelite gown I designed for her wedding, which she wore again to receive an award at a NOW gala event in Washington, DC!

Your company has many awards. In this day and age when money comes first and customer service second how do you make sure your customers are happy?

First of all, I feel it's important to treat people with respect and sincere appreciation for their interest and support. I take special considerations into account whether a person likes a particular kind of fabric, nuances for their own particular style of dress, special sizing, etc... I want people to feel welcome to include details of their own personalities into how they wear my

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From Top:

Serpentine Vest made from 3-dimensional Brocade on Black Chenille Velvet \$175, worn with Iridescent Silver Taffeta Shirt \$75

Art Nouveau inspired Theda Gown made from Mettalic Silver Mesh \$195

Traditional Gothic Hooded Cape, \$150-\$300 depending on fabrics and linings used





photography by Rachel Kleinman Model: Lindsay



Far Left: Customized Arachne Shroud in Black Spiderweb Lace \$175

Left: Two-Piece Crystal palace Victorian Ensemble made from Iridescent Silver Taffeta \$400

Below: Venetian Lace Parasol \$75, with Victorian Jacket and Velvet Hat, contact Kambriel for pricing.



Extravagant full-length
Mourning Veil \$125

Gothic Nightdress in Cotton
(also available in Velvet) \$135

designs, and since all items are handmade to order, it allows a lot of freedom in this regard. We also take care of orders in a very timely fashion so people can be pleasantly surprised by how quickly their package arrives. I often include extra little treats in the packages- something we've done since '94!

Your clothing would best be described as traditional gothic finery with a sprinkle of modern elegance. How and where do you pull your inspiration from?

I would say that my inspiration comes from a combination of my personal vision, luxuriant fabrics, and a variety of eras. My roots in the underground scene have inspired me since I've always felt encouraged to do my own thing- to come up with strange and interesting new ways of looking at things and to not be confined by what others in the mainstream are doing or thinking. This has instilled in me a freedom to be more imaginative in my creations.

Inspiration also comes from finding exotic materials and envisioning exactly how they could most perfectly be used. The luster of a silk, the shadowy folds of velvet, the ghostliness of a sheer, and the textures of embellishment are all quite captivating to me.

What are some changes you have seen or have been through since '94 as a company? What things have you learned?

When we began in '94, the only way a person could order from us was to get a copy of our printed catalogue in the mail... Within the next couple of years, we realized the need to create a full online catalogue / web site. This gave anyone who was interested the opportunity to learn about our offerings. It also allowed us to offer new items much more quickly, since we didn't have to wait to print a new catalogue before we could show these new designs off! Our ever-changing selection of one-of-a-kind clothing, decor, and accessories would have been nearly impossible to offer in the original printed catalogue format, but is easily kept up to date on the web site!

Besides seeing your work end up in movies, you have also worked with celebrities. Who are some of the celebrities you have worked with and what was it like?

I am honored to design for some wonderful people who give off a terrific energy. I'm sure that is probably why they are well known to begin with. Out of everyone though, I'd have to say the two who are closest to my heart would have to be Monica Richards and Margaret Chow. The combination of these two women's powerful energy and intense personal style, inspires me to blend my creative vision with their own and hopefully come up with something better than either of us had originally imagined! This is really the best part of the experience- mutual inspiration. There are many people that I have worked with who may not be celebrities, but are certainly stars in their own right as far as I'm concerned... Some of our customers are just so dramatically themselves that I give them every bit as much credit and respect as someone who is better known. ♦

www.kambriel.com