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The Fresh, Young Talent All Label Designers Envy: Rachel Weathersby

The Creative, Timeless and Artful Designs by Mme. Weathersby®

By Adrienne Papp | June 26, 2011

The American Midwest isn't normally associated with the rarified atmosphere of high fashion and haute couture. Places like Indiana and Wisconsin – even Chicago – are more known for their solid industrial work ethic than their contributions to the rarified realms of fashion and art.

Which makes a designer like Rachel Weathersby all the more interesting. A product of northwestern Indiana, Rachel grew up a lover of the classic arts, with interests in literature, classical music and opera, old Hollywood movies and architecture. None of that was particularly appreciated in her neighborhood, but Rachel was undaunted and became an award-winning pianist. "I also read constantly as a young girl and had my mother take me to the library," she says. "I always felt a little out of place, like a fish out of

water. I never really felt I had a comfort zone, but I was drawn to the world of design, and initially wanted to be a fashion editor for magazines like Vogue and Allure."

After being accepted to Parson's School for Design in New York, Rachel made the move to the big city to continue her formal education there, but as fate would have it had to return to Indiana just two weeks later.

Rachel may have thought she had missed her opportunity to succeed in the world of design, but it was back in Indiana that her own instinctive creative talent began to flourish. "I have always been interested in beautiful imagery, whether in art, a historic symbol like a coat of arms, or glamorous gowns worn by movie stars. Sometimes I'd be looking through a book and I'll see something that was visually interesting to me, maybe a gown that Jean Harlow wore, an architectural shape or a piece of classic jewelry, and I'd play with it and bring it into a design for a dress or a pair of shoes. I used to watch a Canadian program called 'Fashion Television'

with Jeanne Beker. I loved the way they presented their collections and I just knew I could do the things they were describing, but with my own personal style."

Rachel's first foray into fashion design was a result of her becoming inspired by a



Design by Rachel Weathersby
Inspired by Princess Amelia
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peacock purse she saw at a fashion retailer. "In 2005 I decided to do my own take on a beautiful purse that just captivated me. I had a vision of what I could make it look like, a personal twist, and I decided to create that."

It took about a year to perfect, but when it was finished the very first creation for a line to eventually be called Mme. Weathersby® was a stunning purse covered with shimmering iridescence of peacock plumage, complemented with a beautiful polished bamboo handle. It was simple and elegant, and, with the myriad of colors the feathers gave off, infinitely varied in its beauty.



"That first design gave me a sense of confidence," Rachel says, "and then things just started to take off. The purse took on a life of its own and began to find a market and get out into the hands of individual customers."

In 2008 Rachel began showing her first collection, which debuted at a trade show in Texas and was picked up at several high-end boutiques nationally. But, even though the creativity was clearly there, Rachel ran into problems in terms of distribution. "Sizing became an issue. I found out that there were different scales in the way that fashion is sized, and I had to make sure that I was consistent with those standards, so that created some problems."

With her uniquely personal vision, Rachel has now become recognized as one of the most interesting fashion designers in the industry. She has developed a style that is based on the classical elegance of designers like Yves St. Laurent and Christian Dior, and wants her creations to have enduring value. "I don't want to be a trendy designer," she says. "I want my clothes to stand the test of time. When Yves St. Laurent creates a design, it's something that could be easily worn twenty years after they were introduced, maybe with a little alteration, and not seem out of date. In that sense I want to create classic designs that are both unique and also reflect and enhance a women's beauty. If you spend money on one of my designs, you're going to be able to wear it ten or twenty years from now and have it feel completely contemporary. My designs are definitely classic, but with a twist."

From a stunning ballroom gown with full train made completely of black leather, or playful pink, to shoes inspired by beaded choker chains, and jewelry, called by many shoe art, through a line of graceful and regal baby too cute to resist, Rachel Weathersby's fashion sense includes something for almost everyone. "I was trying to make a line of high heels for women, something very elegant and yet comfortable," she says, "and someone suggested that I make these for children too." What came from that suggestion was a dazzling collection of tiny footwear that uses combinations of sumptuous fabrics, elegant embroidery and whimsical designs in a line of tiny shoes that looks like they're right out of fairytale books. They completely transcend the idea of what baby footwear can be, and will be treasured for years as childhood keepsakes.

"I found a factory in Italy that understood the concept I had in mind and now they're doing beautiful work with the baby shoes," Rachel says. "These pieces were so well-received that I will likely branch out into a full collection of children's clothing as well."

It seems like there's no area of an elegant lifestyle from purses to shoes, to dresses and sunglasses that can't be improved by Rachel's unique vision: One of a kind, unparalleled and remembered in its timeless style forever! In the highly competitive world of fashion design, the Mme. Weathersby® label is just beginning to gain widespread recognition, and Rachel thinks she has much more to offer. "My goal is to bring classical elegance back to fashion and into areas even beyond the realm of women's clothing. Being continually inspired by the arts, I can range in style from something like the use of bright colors and whimsical butterflies to the dramatic flair of a formal ballroom gown with full train in black leather that looks like something out of 'The Matrix.'"

With her unique vision, Rachel plans to eventually enhance other aspects of our lives, including men's fashion, interior design, furniture, perfume and bath and body essences. "When I look at other designers, I have to admire what Ralph Lauren did," Rachel says. "He created an entire lifestyle out of his brand, even to the point of offering a full line of house paints. That's a brilliant way to share your creative sensibilities with other people."

In her bright future, Rachel sees herself as continuing to do the things that she loves the most, including designing haute couture for placement at high end department stores in the U.S. and retailers in Europe, but also moving into broader fields of various classy and timeless design. She'd also like to franchise her fashion brand in ways that will offer a wider distribution, more affordable prices, but also with the strict attention to details that are the hallmarks of her work.

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With her creative vision in full bloom, Rachel Weathersby and her very own Mme. Weathersby® brand are destined to become household names in both the international and national fashion industry, but also home décor, perfume and haute couture. And, as she continues to make creative inroads in fashion and design, our lives will all benefit from the classic elegance and beauty she so generously shares: regal, stylish and timeless. She is generous, honest and passionate about her work. A rare combination in a uniquely talented, never before young designer, who at the same time is very humble in her ways. When Hollywood meets talent, class and creativity the outcome is enough to take over the World of Fashion. It is explosive and unstoppable, – quite literally! That is Rachel Weathersby summed up in a few words!

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