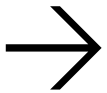




**In the following pages we feature Diane de Malherbe a Designer synonymous with timeless fashion that tell a mystic story. Her designs are renowned for elegance, versatility and timelessness that carry poetic handmade details and embellishments.**



**Interview: Neil Harris**

SUSSE  
AB  
UR



**“Timeless clothing is defined as a garment that can survive trends and ages and that can be passed on to different generations.”**



fashion design and pattern making in Paris and gained several years of experience designing for prestigious Haute Couture houses in New York, Paris, and London. Diane launched her first collection in 2017.

Through her recent collection, Diane explores a distinctive notion of luxury with unique handmade embellishments and finest fabrics that have been responsibly sourced, and uses ingenious systems for adjustable clothing to offer timeless pieces as an alternative to fast fashion.

The avant-garde fashion designer loves to dress all kinds of women, especially a woman “who is sensitive to the story and time spent behind the garment; someone with enough independence and own style to embody it while twisting it in her own way,” Diane explains.

**B**orn in Kuala Lumpur and raised in Paris, Diane is inspired by various mystic, spiritual, literature, art and historical sources. She studied

An intimate and tailored approach is taken when designing a piece of clothing that allows the designer to “gently guide her on the shapes I think would best fit her while

respecting her style.” Markedly, for her bridal clients, she would create original embroideries of the bride’s favourite flowers and ornaments.

Customers of Diane have high regard for the quality of fabrics she uses, the mastered tailoring and the unique details of the collections, especially the fact that garments can be customised through embellished accessories. Diane continues, “with the detachable embroidered wrists or collar for instance, they can adapt their outfit to any occasion by turning a work-day dress into a night gown.”

According to Diane, timeless clothing is defined as a garment that can survive trends and ages and that can be passed on to different generations. In addition to their timeless style, many of her garments are constructed with adjustable elements to ensure they evolve with the shape throughout her client’s life. “I am always pleased whenever I see women who still wear my dresses even while pregnant!” →





**What is your major source of inspiration at the moment?**

Malta! Its architecture, its people, its unique lace heritage and above all, its incredible history.

**What projects and collections are you currently working on?**

I am currently working on my second collection that I will present this year in Malta, France and possibly Switzerland; as well as bespoke wedding dresses for clients in France and London.

**What are your favourite textiles to use and why?**

I like to create collections with fabrics that I embellish through embroideries that I design, prints made from my drawings, or through the use of fabrics dyed in a unique colour. I am also interested in using unusual fabrics such as some borrowed from menswear or home decoration. Lastly, I would say that I strive to use materials made from natural fibres and that I am more sensitive to silky fabrics that are timeless and elegant.



“

**How do spiritual influences, literature, art and history come to play in your designs?**

For example, for my first collection I was inspired by the Chateau de Courances in France, where I was fortunate to live for a few months. Its ornamental architecture and its mystical gardens inspired the design of my embroideries. The equestrian shape of the coat, as well as the 40's style of some outfits is a reminiscence of the castle's long history of horse hunting and ball receptions. And finally, one of my favourite artist, Jean Cocteau, used to live close to Courances. I tried to infuse some of his oniric world into my collection and I have quoted his poetry on some of the garments. So you can imagine just how inspiring Malta is for me with its unique history as well as some of the artists who have created in Malta such as Le Caravage or Turner! →



**On your website, you mention fabrics are responsibly sourced; from where?**

The fabrics I use have been sourced from Italy, France and India. They are all made without the use of any hazardous chemicals and I mainly use fabric made of natural fibres.

**How does your business impact social and environmental issues?**

I try at my level to have a positive social and environmental impact in different ways. As explained above, in reaction to fast fashion, each piece is designed to last for many years and the idea of passing them across generations is very important to me. They are meant to be beautiful pieces that we cherish for life.

Garments are made with fabrics of the highest quality that are naturally dyed without the use of any hazardous chemicals. In addition, I aim to have a personal contact with each of my suppliers so the process of development is transparent and I can be sure that they are working in good conditions.

Lastly, embellishments are handmade by the most qualified artisans so I aim to help them preserve their art; I am really excited to work with Maltese lacemakers for my second collection! Finally, the clothes are made locally in France and Malta where I currently live.



**What are your major plans for 2019?**

My second collection and the launch of my brand in Malta!

**What is your major career highlights?**

I was fortunate to design for amazing fashion houses like Lanvin, Ralph & Russo, Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Givenchy... and to work with incredibly talented and kind people from whom I learned a lot. All the challenges and successes I shared with them were definitely the highlights of my career. Then of course, I will never forget the emotion I got from all



the congratulations during the presentation of my first collection after all the hard work I had put into launching my brand.

**What can you tell our readers about the pieces you have selected for this issue's fashion shoot?**

The hand-embroidered silk chiffon dresses (previous pages) are two of my favorite looks. They embody perfectly well my style with their feminine and elegant look, their versatility from the detachable capes, and their poetic feeling from the embroidered quotes by the artist Jean Cocteau that fly between the palms, the light movements of the capes, and the delicate nude colour.



I think these dresses are really for modern nymphs! [V]

**Quick Qs:**

**Who do you wish to dress?**

Any women who will feel like themselves wearing my dresses.

**Classic go-to textile?**

Silky fabrics.

**Inspirational Designer?**

DRIES VAN NOTEN, but I have so many more!

**Favourite time to create?**

At night.

**Magazine: print or online?**

Print