

HATS OFF TO MIRANDA



The famed and iconic New York Fashion Week beckons later this year for Perth milliner, Miranda Green, who has recently been invited to show a collection of her stitched and stunning haute couture hat range hot on the back of a recent successful showing at the Kentucky Derby. It's a challenge that would daunt most of us, and perhaps an all-the-more remarkable achievement considering Fremantle-based Miranda doesn't possess any particular or personal interest in fashion, and even more significantly has spent a lifetime battling clinical depression and its related symptoms. Despite multiple hospital admissions which first started at age 17 only four years after being diagnosed, Miranda says notwithstanding it is her illness which is one of the key ingredients informing both her work and her life.

In fact it was with the encouragement of an occupational therapist at the local psychiatric clinic that first set Miranda on the road to discovering her creative inner self, the therapist noting Miranda's dexterity and flair with needle and thread in some of her therapy workshops.

And it's the art of what she does, that Miranda says has been her godsend, providing purpose and direction so that today at 47, Miranda proudly proclaims, "I am happy to be me, and completely comfortable with who I am. Indeed in many ways I regard myself as quite fortunate".

Embarking on an introductory class for stitched hats at a TAFE college 10 years ago, Miranda says her millinery skills and unique style have mainly come about through a process of trial and error. While not possessing traditional millinery skills as such, Miranda says she has taken one small component of hat making - pattern design and stitched construction - to develop the craft way beyond the classroom and into what is now her own innovative body of work.

Miranda says the craft and art of what she does literally develops and unfolds before her eyes as she tinkers and tailors with colour and texture to create her internationally sought headwear confections. With a focus on fabrics and hand-stitching around configurations of boning, plastic and elastic, and then embellishing her works with wondrous feathers, richly-hued braids and exotic flowers, Miranda has managed to create a distinctive style that has won her international acclaim and a clientele from around the globe.

All presumably appreciate too some "Miranda" innovations such as an elastic inner she's created to stop the "blow-away hat" problem, also many designs worked up so that they are fully foldable or crushable, making them ideal for travelers. Aided by a website of her own creation - Miranda also writes on a regular basis as part of her therapeutic process, not to mention photographing all her own work too - Miranda principally manages to service her market personally online. This marketing method also provides Miranda with the necessary buffer allowing her to step back whenever she feels her strength is failing her.

Keen however to develop her range beyond one-off, haute couture work, Miranda has also embarked on setting up a workshop in a remote Himalayan community to produce a more affordable and accessible product range under the Green Girl and Resort Headwear brands.

In welcome contrast with many entrepreneurs, Miranda's commitment to excellence is also inseparable from her sense of social responsibility and she has recently set-up a small, ethically run workshop that she hopes will teach these Himalayan women new skills while producing some volume to allow her to broaden her market particularly in Australia.

This project has also seen Miranda invited to speak as a guest university lecturer on ethics.

And if all this isn't enough, Miranda is currently working on a glossy, coffee table book of her work which she hopes will form an integral aspect of her New York showing. In her inimitable style, not only is Miranda also writing all the text, styling and taking all the photographic images of her original creations, she is also self-publishing the tome under the self-selected Lionheart Publishing imprint.

Which looking at her life and story, very probably about sums up Miranda: a woman whom despite a distressing, lifetime struggle with a difficult adversary has fought with a true heart of courage to find and develop her talent and follow her own dream which now sees her at the fashion apex through her unique capacity interweaving fantasy into the fabric of our everyday life.

Go to www.mirandagreenmillinery.com.au

