



WHIT's New York City Romance Is Runway-Ready

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Sunny, colorful places with bountiful flora and fauna. The sun-worshipping allure of the West Coast and the storied tapestries of the South. Faraway and exotic lands such as the African Savannah. These have long inspired Whitney Pozgay, the designer, creative and entrepreneur behind fashion brand WHIT, but her romance with New York City is inextricable. The city makes its way into her story, with unexpected pops of color, a sense of optimism, graphics, playfulness, risks and a nod to the arts.

With 99 percent of the WHIT line being produced in the heart of New York City, this relationship is no surprise. Since first launching in 2010, then reinventing itself following a residency with the CFDA Fashion Incubator in 2012, the brand has been about building its voice authentically and in fresh, ever-evolving ways that allow for serious collaboration – and a lot of fun.

“I’ve always had a passion for working hands-on with the product, so when my husband (artist Parker Argote) and I launched WHIT, we really wanted that to be one of the core values of what we do. We didn’t just want it to be about making clothes but about building a community,” Whitney says. “We had so many friends who were artists and photographers and set-builders and illustrators, and we were really excited to have the brand be a vehicle for collaboration and for working together with friends.”

Whitney has stayed true to that since the brand’s first season, working with Yestadt Millinery Atelier on a series of whimsical hats that capped off the brand’s Fall 2010 line. Since, every season has showcased a new artist collaboration, from Adam Handler to Parker himself, who paints a lot of the brand’s prints. It’s this artistic undertone that threads each WHIT garment – clean and modern, whimsical and architectural, classic and versatile.



“Art has always been a core message for us. It’s one of our favorite things about living in the city and having the exposure to museums and galleries,” Whitney gushes. “And it’s all ever-changing. With so much creativity here across all kinds of work, it’s fun to figure out ways to make art exist in clothing and off the canvas.”

For her most recent collection (Fall 2016), Whitney drew on inspiration from the distinct chapters of Peggy Guggenheim’s life – from her New York days and French galleries to her move to Venice, an element fittingly depicted through florals, which were inspired by an image of the iconic Peggy in a rose dress.

Whitney’s nostalgia for history, art and vintage fashion began long before her stints at Kate Spade and Steven Alan. A costume design major, the designer became entrenched in exploring personal style alongside her grandmother, mother and four aunts, all of whose distinct and quirky style fascinated her from a young age, compelling her to seek out her own signature look, one she describes as somewhere between feminine and playful and classic and downtown smart.

If nostalgia is the designer’s source of inspiration, then storytelling is her power tool, bringing each WHIT piece to life in a distinct way that helps “build out a world” and empower women to be modern and savvy and dance to their own beat. “That’s the WHIT girl,” Whitney says. “We really want our customer to personalize and mix and match pieces and find new ways to express their style. It used to bum me out in costume design that when you were done with a show, you had to box everything up. Just like that, it was all done. With our pieces, you might wear it one way, but someone else might be styling it a totally different way. It’s important for every piece to have its own story.”

Staying true to that story is Whitney’s ultimate vision for the brand, placing an emphasis on not being extremely trend-driven and focusing instead on the WHIT story, the collaborative nature of its iconic prints and the outside-the-box mentality that helped establish its core aesthetic.

“Our bigger risks are always our bigger sellers,” Whitney reflects. “Every season, we aim to do things we haven’t tried. When we started the brand, we really wanted to bridge the gap between what feminine meant and what the cleaner, menswear brands were doing, and we really felt like we fell in the middle. The tricky thing is that when people don’t know where to place you, they want to put you in a box. The worst mistake we could’ve made would’ve been to listen to people who tried to do that, thinking something has to work for everyone. It doesn’t.”

Forcing herself to have creative-only time has proven to be key as WHIT continues to grow and evolve its brand story, its eyes set on expanding into new categories, such as home décor and swimwear, having already collaborated with Anthropologie on a petite-gear line, WHIT 2. Whitney is adamant about seeking inspiration outside of the fashion space, turning instead to art, theater, nature and travel to guide her next creative pursuit.

“Collaborating with other partners and artists to continue to set ourselves apart is my ultimate vision, really defining ourselves and building out a whole WHIT world that stays true to that vision and makes sense,” Whitney says. “We’re writing a small but concise story. A story that’s 100 percent us.”

A colorful story that’s as a kaleidoscopic as New York City herself, no doubt.

**Stay tuned for more details on WHIT’s showing at New York Fashion Week this September, learn more here.*

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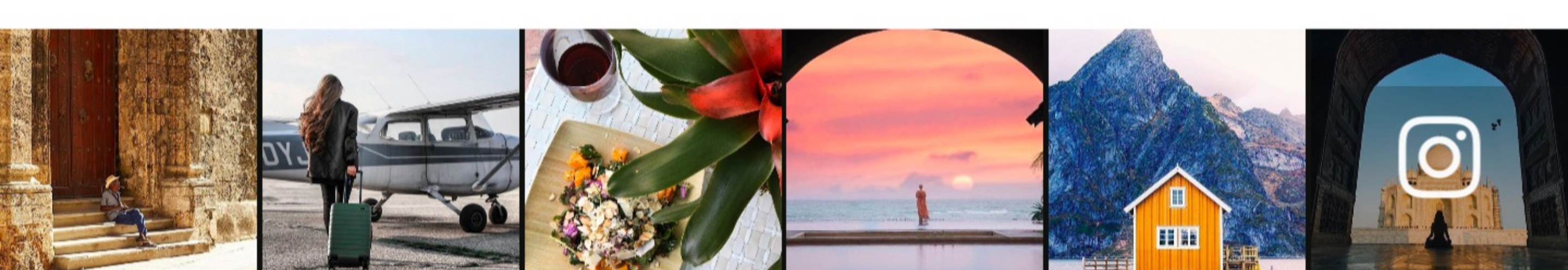
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Valeria is a self-proclaimed dreamer and grammar geek with a serious case of wanderlust. In addition to beach-combing, Valeria’s interests include serious writing, reading, cooking, dining, listening to live music and taking in the outdoors – preferably at the same time. Originally from Buenos Aires (and raised in Miami Beach), Valeria is also fluent in Spanish, Malbec and fútbol. Between the hours of 9 and 5, she’s a communications consultant for travel, tourism and hospitality brands. Always the optimist, she believes that connecting with and learning from one another is the surest way to break down barriers and spread some joy.

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