



# A breath of fashion fresh air

London-based Cypriot fashion designer Eleni Kyriacou launches her outstanding debut collection for spring/summer 2012

**FASHION FORCE**

Her philosophy and aspirations convey her determination to bring something innovative to the fashion scene both abroad and in Cyprus. She sees fashion as a powerful medium through which you can pass messages to the world.

"My dream would be to collaborate with the greatest fashion designer alive today - Hussein Chalayan who is of Turkish Cypriot origin. I would like to approach him when I'm ready and propose a collaboration. My dream would be to design a performance fashion show on the Green line in Cyprus with him."

"I've always thought that fashion has the capacity to be a powerful political tool just like art and music can be, but I think few fashion designers have ever tried to push this," she said.

She has worked in many different design areas, an imperative, as she supports, for every designer who wants to find their place in the industry.

Following her studies she moved to Greece for three years where she worked for Anamorphosis architects and then as design director for an interior textile com-

pany. She also worked for her parent's family business, Gallery K and Cypria Auctions in Cyprus. She then moved back to London to pursue her career in fashion.

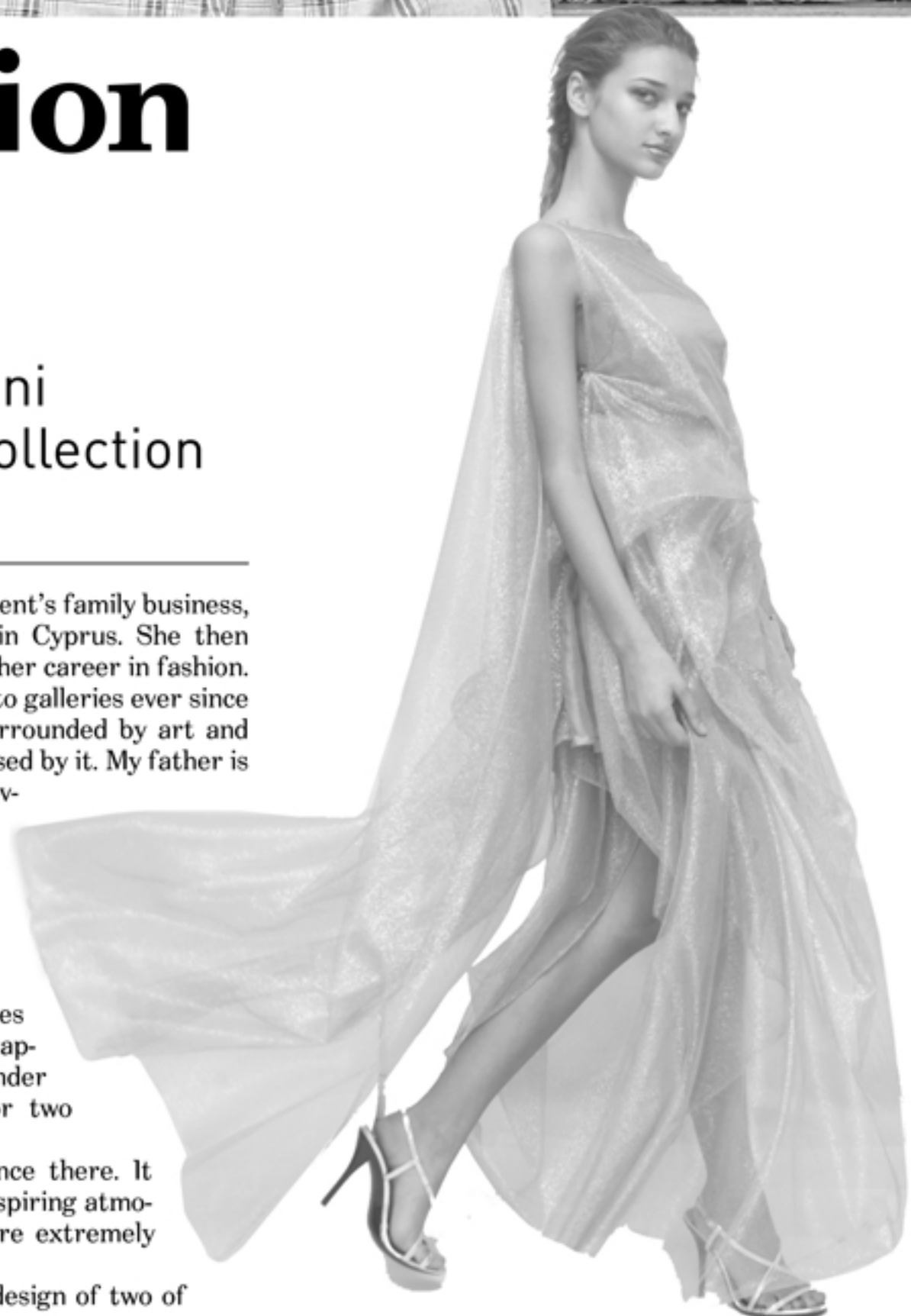
"My mother started taking me to galleries ever since I was in the pram. I grew up surrounded by art and antiques and was always mesmerised by it. My father is a sculptor and I'm sure his creativity has either rubbed off on me or been inherited by me in some way!" she said.

**ALEXANDER MCQUEEN**

One of the most impressive notes to Eleni's career thus far, is her apprenticeship for the late Alexander McQueen where she worked for two seasons at his design house.

"I absolutely loved my experience there. It was a wonderfully creative and inspiring atmosphere and the people there were extremely friendly."

"I was involved in areas of the design of two of



"There has to be innovation in the use of textiles for me to get excited," she admitted.

Through her collection she blends the best of all her worlds, the heritage in architecture with innovation in design to arresting effect. The fabrics that encapsulate the fragile woman portrayed are a reflection of this.

**STYLISH THINKING**

Kyriacou's ambition to go on creating special pieces is boosted by her inexhaustible sources of inspiration. She sees in fashion form, art, and structure and this is reflected in the details of her designs.

"The best part of the design process is the textiles, and the form, seeing it all come together like a collage or a sculpture. I'm inspired by art and design, but I think music plays a big role in my life as well, it helps fuel the passion too," she confessed.

"In the near future I'm designing my autumn/winter 2012/2013 collection which will be ready in January. I've also just been given a commission for a wedding dress which I am excited about."

She does hope to expand to Cyprus but wants to maintain her base in London as she feels she can do more with the greater resources available to her abroad, and being in a more culturally rich environment.

"I think there is a high level of passion and interest

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for fashion in Cyprus - which is fantastic! It's every designers dream! "You want women to believe that high end fashion is worth spending money on, and you want women to be adventurous and try new things."

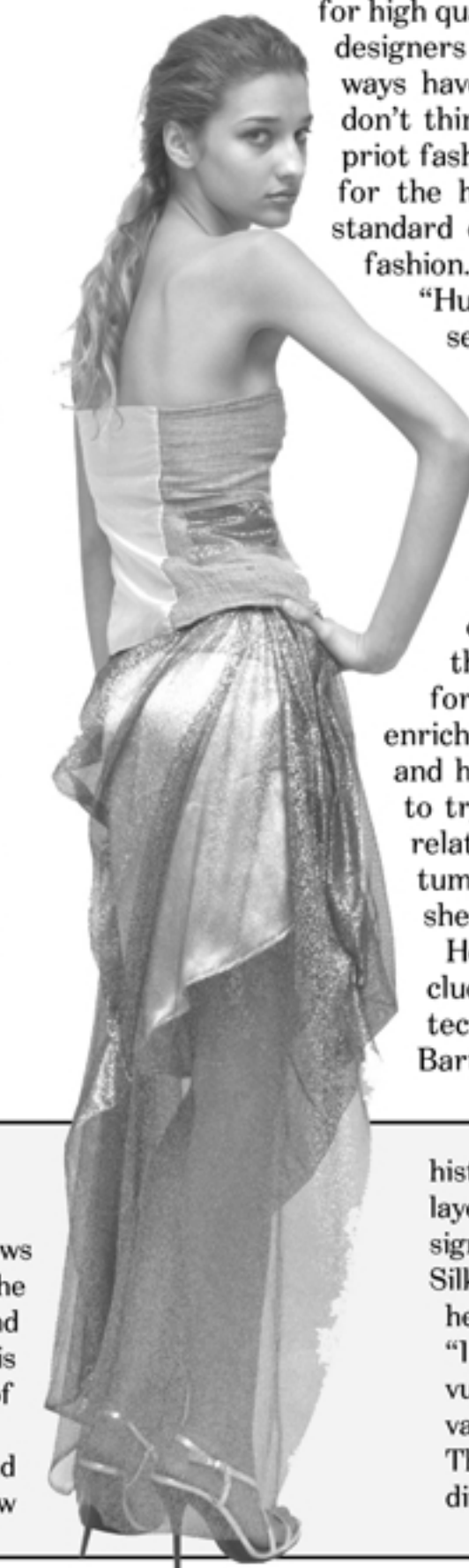
"As far as the fashion design scene goes, I tend to follow the main European, Japanese and US fashion more."

I think in order to balance the demand for high quality fashion in Cyprus, designers from abroad will always have to sell for; I simply don't think it's possible for Cypriot fashion designers to cater for the high demand and high standard of Cypriot women for fashion."

"Hussein Chalayan, and Issey Miyake are designers I admire, two great fashion geniuses, I think they are in their own league," she declares.

Her creative spirit does not settle in comfort zones, and it is this freedom and quest for more knowledge that enriches her as a person and her work. "I would love to try other creative areas related to fashion, like costume design for example," she admitted.

Her best moments include getting her architecture degree from the Bartlett, a moment she



takes pride in and when she was accepted for her first fashion placement working for Emilio de la Morena as it meant she would finally embark on the road to realising her dream. With such an impressive list of accomplishments it's not surprising that Kyriacou has no regrets. "Everything you do as a designer is an experience gained and a learning curve."

I could have gone into fashion/textiles as soon as I left school, but I think doing architecture made me the designer I am, I have no idea what I would have been like if I hadn't done it."

Eleni Kyriacou is holding a fashion presentation for this collection on Wednesday, November 9, from 6pm to 9pm at the Cyprus High Commission, Mayfair, London. The event is under the auspices of The High Commissioner for the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Alexandros N. Zenon and is being held in support of the Alkionides UK Charity. The exhibition continues on Thursday, November 10, 9am to 9pm. For more information visit [www.elenikyriacou.com](http://www.elenikyriacou.com).

Alexander McQueen's collections which was very exciting for me at the time. I was involved in the design of the textiles for the menswear line and in the accessories for the womenswear," she recalled.

Both apprenticeships have been largely influential and informed her as a designer.

"At Emilio de la Morena it was great, because it was the first time I had worked in fashion."

"It was good seeing how a designer works on a small scale, in contrast to my subsequent experience at Alexander McQueen where I saw creativity on a larger scale." Even though she has worked in various design areas, creativity in fashion has always lied in womenswear for Eleni, and so after what one could describe as a domino effect of events have led her to start designing on her own and create her own label.

Her work through her first collection entitled 'Women as Treasure' is characterised by strong design concepts developed through innovative use of textiles and form. Her aim is to create inventive garments that are also wearable.

**WOMEN AS TREASURE**

Her debut collection entitled 'Women as Treasure' draws inspiration from archaeology. The collection follows the concept of the archaeological process of excavation and discovery and the dresses unfold in stages following this process. It is directly inspired by photographs by Eleni of two archaeological sites in Athens, Greece. The first depicts the archaeological process in plan and the second in section, giving two different senses of how

historical layers are depicted and the moment when discovery occurs. Fragments and layers of buildings, roads, tombs, amphoras and so on inspire a collage like way of designing, using contrasting textures, layering of fabrics, transparencies and draping. Silks of varying textures, metallics, foiled leather, suede, tulle and cotton are used in her collection.

"I think a woman has many different personas. For this collection I'm tuning into the vulnerable and fragile woman, who has depth and layers and is waiting to be 'excavated' to reveal herself - the treasure," she explains.

The designer describes the Eleni Kyriacou woman as someone who wants something different and inspired and wants to feel wonderful wearing her creations.