

FASHIONNEXT

Fashion Senses interview with Kpoene' Kofi-Bruce

What inspired you to start sewing?

I grew up watching my mother sew and wishing I could do what she did. When I was five I remember looking at my first *Vogue* magazine and wanting to be part of that world. I started sewing by hand when I was six, buying fabric with my allowance and making clothes for my dolls and myself (I wasn't allowed to wear the clothes I made myself out of the house, of course!). My mother was always taking me to fabric stores and I guess I just absorbed it because I mostly remember playing in the big button bin by the cutting counter. In high school I took home economics and fashion merchandising and kept reading fashion magazines. In college I worked in the costume shop for the theater and started making myself clothes that I was actually allowed to wear. The day after I graduated from college I moved to New York and started my label, selling online and doing independent fashion shows and selling in boutiques. I eventually got the label into stores nationwide before taking a break to become a buyer and go back to school for business. I relaunched my label as Mignonette Bridal in 2011 and we have been in the same location since then.

Did you like fashion school?

Yes and no; I studied at FIT and went in as an older student, which I am grateful for. I had already had a business for a few years by then, so I knew what I didn't know, if that makes any sense. If you are thinking about going to art school, definitely try to get some real-world experience, or at least experience in a different area, before then. I always had office jobs before and during school so it was more of a balanced experience.

What was the hardest garment you ever made?

I made my own wedding dress! But every time I personally make something for someone it is hard, because I want them to love it and I want to be proud of it.

Do you like working in groups? Is it easier to work in groups?

I do not like working in groups. I think that is true of most people who consider themselves artists. I want my vision to be the thing that wins, but I have to accept that I don't always know best. Now that I have to work in groups almost always, I have gotten used to it, and have tried to learn when to put my foot down and when to ask questions about the best way to do something.