

From Romania to the world of fashion: Daniela Vlad

Magdalena Slysz

Born in Romania, fashion designer Daniela Vlad tells a unique and captivating story about how she was able to start up her own clothing line and business in the U.S. As a young girl brought up in a communist country, Daniela remembers what life was like in those days, when a lot of the simple pleasures in life were forbidden.

“Back in those days, it was nearly impossible to find an original, unique piece of clothing. Everyone ended up wearing basically the same thing and there was little to no variety in between.”

Regardless of circumstances, Daniela's mother made it a priority to differentiate and express herself through her clothing, by sewing her own clothes. Due to the fact that she was able to create her own clothing, she never had to rely on anyone other than herself to create a unique look that was truly one of a kind.

This is exactly the kind of environment that Daniela grew up in, where the idea of designing and creating your own style and clothes was almost instinct-like. Daniela recalls being genuinely fascinated when she would find her mother sorting through various fabrics, searching for the most beautiful ones, and then watching as these fabrics began to turn into pieces of clothing that both she and her mother would wear. Being brought up in these types of surroundings undoubtedly had a profound effect on young Daniela. Following in the footsteps of her mother, she too began to start sewing.

“When I was a young girl, there weren't so many distractions around children like there are today. There was no television and no computer, so most of the time I was doing chores around the house, helping my mother. Sewing was something I did for the entertainment and pure joy that it brought me.”



At the tender age of 8, Daniela remembers that she was already sewing her own clothes, and like any growing girl, she became more and more aware of her personal taste and style. With time, she began to pay more attention to articles of clothing that caught her eye. Luckily for her, she didn't have to worry about saving up enough money to be able to afford beautiful designer pieces, as she could create her own. Other young girls in the neighborhood, who hadn't yet mastered the craft, expressed their jealousy over the fact that Daniela was able to make her own clothing. In response, Daniela began putting together skirts and other feminine pieces for her friends, because it was rewarding.

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"I feel immense gratification when I see my work on someone else. I know that thanks to my abilities and creative thought, that person is wearing a piece that is exceptional and made with the utmost attention to quality."

Taking into considering her success thus far, it's hard to believe that Daniela's brand came into fruition just two years ago. It's even more shocking that she came in the U.S only 9 years ago. She remembers how excited she was when she first set eyes on the impressive variety of clothing in our department stores.

"At first I thought to myself, this is amazing! Everything I see in the magazines is hanging on the racks in all the stores!"

However, once the honeymoon phase was over, she shifted her attention from the availability of the clothing, to the quality. There she found disappointment. She noticed that most of the clothes that were sold in the U.S were not actually made here. To her surprise, the majority were from foreign countries, particularly China. Daniela soon realized that even though there was an abundance of clothing for her to purchase at a low price, the clothes had little to no longevity and after a couple of washes; they no longer looked the same.

It's safe to say that this realization was a turning point for Daniela. She decided that just as did in Romania, to combat the lack of clothing, she would go back

to sewing, to ensure its quality. Around this time she also began to consider the idea of going to school for fashion and design. She had made a lot of new friends in the U.S and they were urging her to pursue a possible career in fashion design.

In 2006, Daniela enrolled at Gibbs College. It was at Gibbs that she met a professor from her native country, Romania, who taught her how to draw. Daniela remembers, that prior to learning how to draw, she had difficulty sharing her ideas with others. Often times a thought would pop into her head for a design, yet she had no way of capturing it.



Romanian-born fashion designer Daniela Vlad along with Mark Johnson, whom she credits a significant amount of her success to

Applying what she had learned at Gibbs, and using her life long talent of sewing, Daniela formed her self-titled brand Daniela Vlad, shortly after her graduation in 2008.

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Today, the company headquarters are located in New Britain, Connecticut. A town and state that aren't necessarily synonymous with high fashion. However, if you are able to get to her office, which is on the 4th floor of an industrial building that has been renovated into loft style offices, you may get the feeling that you're in a Manhattan sky scraper.

In the world of fashion, it's undeniably difficult to not only break out, but to create a long lasting brand, that is known for not only it's ahead of the curve style, but high quality and credibility. So I have to ask, how has Daniela managed to pull all of this off thus far?

"To not get lost in the crowd, you need to differentiate yourself with something original and worth while, no doubt. However, up until this point, I owe a lot of my success to the people who help me, day in and day out. No one can do everything on their own, and you need to surround yourself with individuals that have your best interest in mind, and who truly care about your well being. I am very fortunate to have that in my life."

As expected, a very humble and honest response from Daniela.

If you are interested in viewing Daniela Vlad's collection, simply go to:

www.danielavlad.com/home.html

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