



PAYING ATTENTION

to the Small Things

From designing her own fashion line to planning weddings and lavish events, Majeda Kassir Bisharat never misses a detail. Learn how she went from being Jordan's first fashion designer to one of the most sought-after event planners today.



For Majeda Kassir Bisharat, fashion, design, and event planning are related, overlapping spheres of creativity. Perhaps it is this fact, along with years of hard work, that has allowed her to transition so fluidly – and successfully – from one to the next. Read on to learn what inspires her, how you can develop your own creative senses, and what tips Majeda offers that will help you plan your next fabulous event!

How and where did you get your start in fashion?

It all started when I was a little girl who realized her dolls needed a new wardrobe! I was constantly on the lookout for props and old cloth to sew into tiny outfits.

Before I knew it, I was redesigning my own outdated clothes to create more contemporary stylish pieces. Later I moved on to designing bathing suits for young Mediterranean women.

Despite how conservative society was in Jordan back then, my father fully supported my creative initiatives. He encouraged me to follow my fate to Instituto Callegari in Treviso, Italy – the beginning of my journey as a fashion designer.

How did your time and experience in Italy affect your development as a designer?

Italy was much more than just acquiring a degree. Whether I was learning Italian,

roaming picturesque cities, or trying foods with entirely new flavors, everything about my experiences triggered my vision of the future I wanted for myself and for Jordanian women in particular.

But I wanted to go beyond being a designer and to understand the industry from another perspective. So as soon as I earned my degree, I flew to Rome to take modeling classes, where I discovered different ways models should approach my designs before walking down my catwalk.

By then I was ready to go back to Jordan to launch my first line. As I prepared for my debut fashion show, I was

under a lot of pressure as the first local certified fashion designer in Amman. But my hard work paid off – model training, choosing the right music, planning the setup, and having all my designs ready in time. A newspaper the next day described me as the young Jordanian designer who “delightfully bewildered the audience with her designs.”

That was the beginning of my official start in fashion, and I went on to host several shows in Milan, Italy in 1985.

How did this interest in fashion develop into interests in interior design and event planning?

Fashion happened to be my first



PERSONAL INSIGHT:

Who is your luxury lifestyle icon?

Queen Rania is an international icon I look up to when it comes to luxury and lifestyle. Whatever role she plays – mother, wife, executive, activist, humanitarian or a social reformer – she is a queen in every single way.

What are you currently reading?

I stay up-to-date with the latest trends in fashion, design, and event planning by constantly skimming through magazines and online sites. I am also currently reading *Art of Celebration*, by Beth Benton Buckley

attempt at expressing my creativity. It was never just about the designs but also the industry – the people, cities, food, shows, parties, and dinners – that I longed to share with others. I decided to shift my focus towards the ready-to-wear side of the industry and opened “La Coquette Boutique” in Amman.

From London to Rome, with a Paris trip in between, I gathered my favorite items from runways and brought them back home for women to feel chic and trendy. I also planned gatherings for friends and family where the seating, table-

wear, gourmet adventures, and even floral arrangements were all inspired by my travels. Every event told a different story.

Which designers inspire you?

Karl Lagerfeld amazes me with his ability to alter himself to fit the visual trademark of each of the different fashion houses he’s headed throughout his career. There’s no better way to describe him than to repeat the words of Vogue in calling him “the master of reinvention.” He’s a brilliant photographer, a timeless designer

– outspoken, daring, controversial, proactive – and he is not afraid of exploring how far he can go with his creativity. Karl Lagerfeld has inspired my creative journey.

How do you pick themes for weddings?

Everything inspires me when it comes to weddings. I pick themes from movies, plays, fairy-tales, dreams, fashion shows, award shows and practically every creative experience I’ve encountered. I imagine blueprints of seating plans when I’m at restaurants and lounges. You can never run out of ideas!

What event are you most proud of having planned?

I am proud of each and every one of my events, which I nurture from rough drafts and inspirations into events and memories. At the end of the day, they are all my children.

My first event is very dear to me, as it marks a particular turning point in my life from fashion to event planning. I was famous for throwing parties at my home yet had never pictured developing my skills into a profession. The bliss I felt when I watched the joy on people’s faces at the event showed me a glimpse



of the bigger picture that comes with becoming an event planner. That day, I knew I wanted to do this for as long as my imagination allows me to.

What advice would you give to a young design entrepreneur?

Always be on the lookout for the narrowest channel of inspiration that could guide you towards standing out as different. It all depends on whether you want to be a “great” designer or a “timeless” one. The secret lies in how far you let yourself go.

And always remember, the competition starts between you and

you. The more you challenge yourself, the closer you get to your signature, which is what defines you from any other designer out there.

What is the single most important aspect of planning an event?

The key is knowing when to put yourself in the role of a planner, a client, or a guest. Then, you take all these viewpoints into consideration and plan every detail so everyone is happy.

How do you balance your roles as a mother and a wife, and your career?
I’ve faced challenges along the way,

like any other creative enthusiast out there, and here is where I am today. And I would have never achieved as much as I wanted to, if it weren’t for my family.

Yes, I have made career sacrifices, such as shifting my focus from design to ready-to-wear retailing, to devote more time to raising my children. However, they’re the best sacrifices I’ve ever made. My husband and my daughters have accompanied me through every step of my journey. They’re been my biggest inspiration, and their presence gives me the push to keep going after my dreams. ●