



*Zambriel*

**Kambriel** create stunning clothing and accessories for "*Femme Fatales and Decadent Gentlemen*". With a range of clothing that conjures up images of gothic decadence, opulence, & dandyism; tied up with a lavish bow.

Having designed stunning gothic attire for the past sixteen years, Kambriel's work has adorned many around the world including musician's Faith & the muse, to writer Neil Gaiman.

With such a vast, glittering career to date we wanted to find out more about Kambriel.

*What sparked your interest in fashion design?*

I have always enjoyed creating things for as long as I can remember. For instance, when I was 12-13, I would wake up a couple of hours earlier than necessary before school just so I'd have that extra time with no other distractions to make something special to wear that day.

This might have involved embroidering band names/symbols onto my clothing by hand, or bleaching designs onto the back of a jacket, or coming up with some strange kind of head dress. There wasn't much of a scene at my school to speak of back then, so I simply did these things as a kind of self-expression, they made me feel more connected to who I was and what I was feeling inside.

*What made you decide to take up fashion design as a profession?*  
When the first catalogue (*under the name "Atrocities"*) was premiered in 1994, I never planned for it to be a profession, and never set out to offer what would be "popular"; it was originally a way to offer designs in an aesthetic which simply couldn't be found elsewhere at the time.

I, along with my partner Curse, thought that the catalogue, printed in ethereal grey on black pages, and tied together by hand with long, tattered satin ribbons, might find its way to a small number of people out with a similar mindset.

We never anticipated it would be received so well, and so widely around the world; even in the days before the easy and instantaneous access of web-sites.

A day turned into a week, which turned into months, years, and now; it's amazing to think that over a decade and a half later we are still creating with a sense of



passion for old-world techniques of items individually made by hand, and still sharing that darkly elegant and timeless aesthetic with others.

*Your designs incorporate elements of fantasy, gothic elegance, & victoriana; what inspires your designs?*

My inspiration comes from a twisted collection of experiences and feelings; a variety of eras and cultures throughout the spans of time. The sinuous folds of a fabric, the delicate gleam of a button, the iridescent feathers on a bird or fish, a dead tree in stark silhouette against a stormy sky..

*Have any other designers played a particular influence and inspiration to your*

*career?*

I've long admired the late Paul Poiret for his willingness to stand up against the rigid reign of the corset and venture forth in creating a new silhouette that strayed far from the expected norms at the time.

He had a fearlessness for design, unbridled creativity, and exacting standards.

*Kambriel's designs were chosen for the Gothic: Dark Glamour exhibition, how did you get involved with both the book & the exhibition?*

In August of 2007 (*a little more than a year before the exhibit premiered*), Dr. Valerie Steele, the Director & Chief Curator at the The Museum at FIT contacted me directly to let me know she was organizing a major museum exhibition.

She was intrigued by my work, and we began a discussion that led in the months to come to my loaning multiple pieces to be displayed at the exhibit, as well as being interviewed personally for the accompanying "*Gothic: Dark Glamour*" book which is still available for those who were not able to see the exhibit itself.

The world of haute couture and high fashion have repeatedly drawn inspiration and borrowed motifs from the gothic aesthetic, yet no one prior to this had fully made that connection, researched, and delved into this realm to the point of curating a major exhibit showing and even celebrating a clear and symbiotic connection between the two worlds.

It was truly an honour and a humbling experience to have my designs showcased alongside those of such iconic designers as Alexander McQueen, John Galiano, Givenchy, Yohji Yamamoto, Thierry Mugler, etc..

It was a grand collection, assembled around themes such as the







✪ KAMBRIEL ✪

Victorian cult of mourning, night, the ruined castle, the dark ages, the laboratory, and veils & masks; and Valerie revealed afterwards that it was her favourite exhibit to date.

*You've also done fashion shows previously, are there any more planned in the near future?*

Yes, we've been doing fashion shows, often in a unique vignette style since 1995.

These shows have ranged from vampiric theatrics, Edward Gorey inspired performances complete with limericks, wonderland dream scenarios, funeral marches, mystic rituals, asylum escapees, and choreographed dance.

As the invited Fashion Guest for the upcoming *Steamcon II* event in Seattle, I am currently in the midst of working on a show which will be performed as the finale at an elegant tea party setting for the attendees.

*You've already designed outfits for musicians, artist, & performers;*

*but given the chance to design for anyone in the world, is there anybody who you love to design an outfit for?*

Last year I met Tim Burton at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. He was taken with a sculptural hat that I'd made and said he thought I was the Mad Hatter! After that, I presented him with some of my designs; for both him and Helena Bonham Carter.

I'd love to design for them both personally, as I feel we share a natural sense of mischievous darkness tinged with elegant whimsy.

*What's been the most rewarding aspect of running your business?*

The fact that by remaining so intimately involved in it all, we've formed close-knit relationships with some of those who started as clients and ultimately became a kind of family of friends. It's a deep honour to hear from people for whom we are able to help make a dream or wish come true, for them to feel as beautiful on the outside as we know they are inside.

For performers, I love to be inspired

by their own personalities and artistic creations, and build on top of that to add to their stage persona; to help tell the story, paint a picture, and fulfill a vision.

*What are the plans for Kambriel in the next year & beyond?*

One of the things I'm most looking forward to on a personal level in the coming year is designing and creating an outfit for author Neil Gaiman to wear for his wedding to cabaret chanteuse Amanda Palmer. They are each such forces of creative nature in their own rights, that it is truly an honour for Neil to request this commission of me for such an incredibly special occasion. I have no doubts it shall be a wedding to remember!

Beyond that, we shall just have to wait and see what magic is in store...

*You can find Kambriel online at [www.kambriel.com](http://www.kambriel.com) where you can find their full range of clothing & accessories.*