



KAMBRIEL

By Lorelei Burk
Photo by Tina Dolin

Kambriel has been a predominant part of

gothic clothing design and culture since 1994. She was named *Gothic Beauty's* Designer of the Year in 2005 and continues to be an imperious force today. Her elegant depictions of the gothic genre that can be seen in every aspect of her exquisite cloth masterpieces have continued to grow in notoriety and popularity among alternative and mainstream audiences alike. If she's not busy designing for musicians such as Amanda Palmer of the Dresden Dolls, actors and comedians like Margaret Cho or transforming brides and grooms to look like perfect gothic dollies for the most important day of their lives, then she is keeping herself busy with expanding her collection and organizing avant garde fashion shows.

"For Convergence 14 in Florida, we put on one of the most off-the-wall and devilishly lighthearted shows to date. It was performed with zombie models who did an undead limbo to Harry Belafonte's "Day-O: The Banana Boat Song." On a completely different note, we also did a more informal fashion show during New York City's Fall Fashion Week with my models at the private opening for the Gothic: Dark Glamour exhibit. In this instance, my models strolled amongst the attendees, lending dark elegance to the evening's atmosphere while wearing intricate ensembles, many of which were created especially in celebration of this exquisite event."

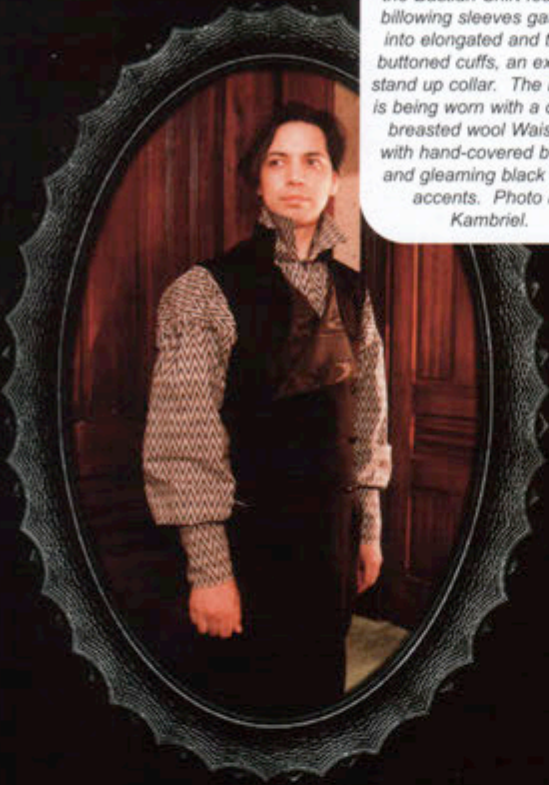


She experienced a whirlwind trip during New York City's Fashion Week full of grand, red carpet receptions, impromptu live interviews and esteemed event invitations. She attended several couture fashion shows where at times she was able to sit in the front row with European ambassadors and emissaries while adorned with her giant, grey wig and skull encrusted Pirate Antoinette gown. Despite the surreal intensity of being swamped with photographers and admirers, one of her most memorable moments from the event was a relatively quiet moment when she was conversing with a writer from the *New York Times* at the opening reception.

"I was sharing with her how this exhibit just goes to show the depth of beauty that can come from the gothic scene, how it has had, and continues to have, such a profound influence on many artists ~ even those outside of the scene itself. I went on to say that obviously there is so much more to it than those misfortunate stereotypes often propagated by the media at large, that there is a depth of extreme beauty that compels many of us to stay connected with the scene and find inspiration within it far beyond those years of teenage rebellion, and she just looked directly at me and said, "I'm starting to see that." Somehow, in that simple moment, it felt as though her eyes had opened to seeing gothic in a more open-minded, new and respectful way."

If you missed the exhibit it can now be viewed in a companion book called, *Gothic: Dark Glamour* by Dr. Valerie Steele who is the Director of

Curse is wearing the Bastian Shirt featuring billowing sleeves gathered into elongated and thrice-buttoned cuffs, an extra-tall stand up collar. The Bastian is being worn with a double-breasted wool Waistcoat with hand-covered buttons and gleaming black moire accents. Photo by Kambriel.



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Kambriel is wearing the Magia Nera jacket and choker, encrusted with elaborate jet beadwork, reclaimed antique sequins and shadow-edged with transparent tendrils of ruffled organza. Photo by Curse.

museum at FIT. Here you will find a distinguished collection of clothing that is infused with gothic culture from world class designers such as John Galliano, Alexander McQueen and Yohji Yamamoto. It is a thoughtful display of fashion that was, still is and a foreshadowing of what is to come. The book features clothing influenced by gothic culture as well as a personal interview with Kambriel where she was able to touch upon the formation and continuation of her inspiration with the gothic aesthetic. Her striking Midnight Bustle ensemble, prodigious Isabella Coattress and sublime Lace Filigree Skirt have been chosen to grace its glossy pages. There is also a section dedicated to the gothic music scene since the dominion of music and fashion are so intimately intertwined.

Of the many haute designers in the Gothic: Dark Glamour exhibit, Kambriel especially admires the visionaries John Galliano and Alexander McQueen who she feels have never been afraid to openly show a personal appreciation for the vast array of dramatic styles and darker themes that originate in the underground. I asked her how it feels to have her work shown with other world class designers, and to be recognized by such peers.

"I continue to feel a unique combination of being both honored and humbled at the same time. To be chosen as an independent representative of the gothic scene itself, and to have my work considered as worthy of being shown alongside these artistic masters of their craft, means so very much to me."

Recently, she has been busy designing new delicacies for the season to come. There are a variety of new gowns available for 2009 including a pre-Raphaelite inspired Suspiria Gown, a striped neo-Victorian version of the Isabella Coattress and a romantic, vampiric Crimson Medea Gown. For the men there are several new jackets to choose from as well as a sinisterly elegant Bastian Shirt and a finely detailed Abyss Waistcoat. She is also creating stagewear for the upcoming Faith & the Muse tour where she will draw from the transcendental spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism and the ancient Mongolian warriors as her inspiration. She is currently developing a wide selection of unique accessories that incorporate vintage and antique elements as well as adding more environmentally sustainable materials to her designs such as using organic bamboo and other renewable natural fibers.

If you have not yet been introduced to Kambriel's artistry then I encourage you to visit her website. If you already have, then I suggest you wander back to her mysterious, secret world and take another journey down her enchanted garden path to see the wonderful magic that can be found in her newest endeavors. She is a gothic companion that must be revisited as she continues to weave a universe full of the impeccably dressed. ♦

kambriel.com



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Page 54: The stark and timeless silhouette of the black moiré Midnight Bustle, worn with a matching Parisian Bustle Skirt accented with gathered crinoline and hand-cut lace. Tina Dolin photo of Kambriel.

Page 54 inset: Kambriel in her skull-adorned "Pirate Antoinette" gown, with cobweb loomed lace choker and jet earrings at Couture Fashion Week in NYC. Hair by Wig Witch.