

INTRODUCING KAORI OKUMURA

We speak to Japanese designer Kaori Okumura about her enigmatic knitwear label Kaori, stocked exclusively at Koh Samui...

'I was always interested in fashion when I was growing up,' muses Kaori, 'as father was very 'style-conscious.' Having lived in London for 17 years now, Kaori's knitwear line still has a cute Harajuku girl sassiness, mixed with a cool London vintage edge, in tribute perhaps to her geographical journey.

Kaori's style icon is the quirky fashion arbiter Iris Barrel Apfel (who at 86 years old, had a retrospective of her personal style held in her honour at the new York Met last year and is included in Vanity Fair's current International Best-Dressed List) 'She is so original and her style is so unique, that I'm not sure I can be that flamboyant!' she laughs.

The designer is particularly flattering of the London Fashion scene; 'I love Giles, because his form is so spectacular,' and is also a fan of any work that is 'form-orientated.' Kaori's background was as a trained architect, and although her full creative outlet is now her knitwear designs, this still continues to influence her work. 'I am always inspired by interesting 3D work,' Kaori states. 'Everything from architecture to sculpture....even origami...volume, depth and height created from something 2D. Indeed it is the construction-feel which first attracted Kaori to knitwear; 'I love being able to be creative immediately. It's similar to making a sculpture. I love the tangible, tactile feeling of handling yarn.'

Each piece of knitwear Kaori creates is hand-finished from beginning to end by the designer herself, creating unique almost couture pieces. To create her designs Kaori uses a technique called finger-knitting. 'Apart from small finishing details such as sewing buttons and making a cord, I don't use any needles or hooks – I only use my fingers. My patterns are not flat patterns. I use a mannequin 'to mould' the knit around the body. I like the feeling of making a sculpture.'

Kaori's husband also works in a similarly creative field, designing animations for MTV amongst other digital projects through his creative company called 'This is Real Art. 'We talk about creative ideas all the time,' Kaori smiles, when questioned whether the pair would ever collaborate, 'He's a very good critic of my work but his fingers are way too big for finger knitting!'

Kaori Okumura designer



Origami