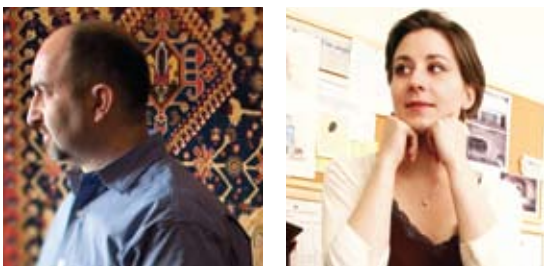




They are world-class entrepreneurs, but artists at heart. They find inspiration in a piece of fabric, a rooftop or an empty stage — wherever a blank canvas exists upon which innovation takes flight. Indeed, when it comes to theater set and costume designer Garance Marneur, weaver and restorer Hayk Oltaci, furniture architect Werner Aisslinger and fashion legend Miuccia Prada, their legacies will not be defined by sales and merchandising. They will instead be remembered for the passion they brought to their craft.



in studio

BY KARLIN MCCARTHY

miuccia prada



in studio

Name: Miuccia Prada

Where in the world: Born in Milan, Prada still lives in the same apartment where she grew up.

Known for: Producing designs that have placed her at the top of the fashion universe. “Mrs. Prada,” as she is known, took control of her family-owned business in 1978 and rapidly transformed it into one of the most well-known brand names in the world. Prada relishes the challenge of taking any color — even ones she loathes — and turning it into something beautiful. Her designs are stylishly minimalist, for both men and women, and have emerged as the definitive fashion statement the world over. There are now more than 250 Prada shops in 65 countries.

Quote: “Evening usually is too serious ... but I try to make it young and wearable.”

What inspires her: A European style of living, circa 1950s. And her business-minded husband, Patrizio Bertelli, whom she met at the same time she took over Prada. Bertelli’s considerable sense of marketing helped lead the company to its tremendous growth in the 1980s and 1990s. “If I hadn’t met him, I probably would have given up — or at least not been able to do what I have done,” she once told a reporter.

Next projects: Promoting her spring/summer lines, embracing styles of the past with choker collars, sweaters, open-toed sandals and even pajamas.

Guilty pleasures: A one-time student of mime, Prada relishes the “hippie girl” styles of her youth. Of course, she’s been able to turn that guilty pleasure into another thriving enterprise — her Miu Miu line.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORD SNOWDON



werner aisslinger

Name: Werner Aisslinger

Where in the world: Berlin Mitte near the main station of Berlin.

Known for: Finding art in furniture. One of the world's foremost designers, Aisslinger has launched Modernist collaborations with top names such as Cappellini, Daimler Chrysler and Bertelsmann. In 1999, he launched his Soft Cell "gel-furniture" collection at Milan's International Furniture Fair. In 2002, his "Case" design introduced to the world the concept of a trolley system made of modular aluminum and plastic containers. Currently, his Loftcube mobile living units are being promoted to be installed on the rooftops of urban high rises, transported by helicopter and able to be put together by a small crew. Loftcube made its debut in 2003 on the roof of the Universal Music building in Berlin during the inaugural DesignMai, two weeks of showcased design, of which Aisslinger himself is a co-organizer.

Quote: "My long-term goal is to open the spectrum. With all the three-dimensional objects one could do around the world, I'd like to move beyond furniture as much as possible."

What inspires him: Spanish architect Antoni Gaudí and Swiss architect Le Corbusier, both of whom Aisslinger praises for their ability to impart great design on the tops of buildings.

Next projects: Expanding Loftcube, to not only rooftops, but gardens and lakefront properties. "This started out as an experiment," Aisslinger says. "As a creative person, it's necessary to push limits now and then."

Guilty pleasures: The ever curious and creative Aisslinger also creates "non-statement" projects, such as those for houseboats and RVs.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARCUS RÖSSLE



in studio

Name: Garance Marneur**Where in the world:** Originally from Chartres, France. Now based in London for the past four years.**Known for:** Transforming a stage into a visual feast. Her set and costume designs for theater, dance and opera have thrilled audiences and critics, in productions this year such as *Dirty Butterfly* at the Young Vic Theatre in London as well as *Gianni Schicchi* at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. After studying fine art in Paris, Marneur went on to graduate with first-class honors in design/performance from Central Saint Martins in London, and won the Linbury Biennial Prize for Stage Design in 2007 (the winning design is at left). Her portfolio also includes film projects, such as *King of London* in 2006 and Agora Gallery near the Tate Modern for the London Architecture Biennial the same year.**Quote:** “*Rien n'est sûr mais c'est une piste,*” which translates to “Nothing is sure, but it is a path” (origin unknown). Also, from Alexandre Dumas, “*Ma foi, si je n'avais pas été là, je me serais bien ennuyé,*” or “If I hadn't been here, I would have been bored.”**What inspires her:** “Anything that surrounds me — situations, places or events, be it positive or negative, which at some moment in time force me to put things in question.”**Next projects:** *Turandot* by Brecht at the Hampstead Theatre, directed by Anthony Clark and rewritten by Ed Kemp; *Hansel and Gretel*, directed by Oliver Mears in October, an Opera North production; *I Am Falling* at Sadler's Wells, a Gate Theatre production directed by Carrie Cracknell, in November.**Guilty pleasures:** “Having a coffee in the sun. Sailing and the power of the sea — and adrenaline.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK DAVISON

garance marneur

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in studio



hayk oltaci

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVEN VOTE



Name: Hayk Oltaci

Where in the world: New York, where his business, Hayko Fine Rugs and Tapestries, has operated at 857 Lexington Ave. (at 65th Street) for 12 years.

Known for: Celebrating his heritage through sublime rug designs. Oltaci's showroom is the place where patrons worldwide come for the finest in authentic rugs. He works closely with museums, private collectors and auction houses such as Christie's, often over Turkish coffee. Born in Istanbul to Armenian parents, he came to New York City in 1988 with his wife (both of his daughters were born in the U.S.). He learned his craft while living in Strasbourg, France, for 10 years.

Quote: "Above all things, an honorable and forthright relationship is by far the most important thing to me."

What inspires him: An experience from his youth sparked a lifelong pursuit of excellence, as Oltaci explains: "My grandfather gave me a beautiful Turkish prayer rug from the Konya Ladik region when I was 17. There was a hole in the center of the rug and the selvage end was missing. We knew a repair man and we brought it to him. Three months later, we got it back. My heart was broken; it was horrible what they did to it. They put a patch on the hole and cut off the ends! It looked like a cheap machine-made rug. This rug had been a beautiful work of art, like a great painting. Now it was ruined by bad repair. I knew at that moment I wanted to help save these great works of art from my country."

Next projects: Oltaci will be conducting classes in the ancient art of rug weaving every month, a way to share his passion with patrons. "Most of our clients are by now old friends — they come back over and over through the years," he says. "We greatly value these long-term relationships. We hope to meet more new friends and look forward to working with them in the coming years." (To find out more, go to <http://weavers.meetup.com/31/members/2478480> or call Oltaci's showroom at 212-717-5400.)

Guilty pleasures: "Music, music, music. It keeps me close to my culture and brings people together."