

SECOND ACT

SINCE STEPPING BACK FROM HIS CONTEMPORARY LINE IN 2011, DESIGNER ADAM LIPPES IS BACK ON THE STYLE SCENE WITH A LUXURIOUS, UPMARKET TWIST. THE NEW YORK-BASED DESIGNER PROVES LIGHTENING REALLY CAN STRIKE TWICE.



It's been over two years since Adam Lippes brought his design talents back to the style scene with his eponymous luxury line but don't call his latest venture a relaunch. "It isn't really one," says the designer, who got his start at Ralph Lauren, eventually filling the role of creative director at Oscar de la Renta before starting his own contemporary brand ADAM in 2004. Despite unrivaled success (twelve collections a year, an appearance on Oprah and investor dollars that would make any young designer cry with joy), it wasn't what he wanted. "One day I realised I wasn't happy and I quit." A bold move but it's one that has paved the way for Adam to return to his one true love. "Designer luxury apparel was really what I understood," says the Manhattanite. "Many people said, 'You can't do that because you can't go from contemporary to designer' and I thought, well geez, I'm going to try!" Nine seasons in, Adam has more than proven himself in the uncompromising luxury sector – he has shown this is where he belongs.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DIFFERENTLY THE SECOND TIME AROUND?

The best advice Oscar de la Renta ever gave me was to start small. And I didn't listen the first time. [Laughs]. The company grew so fast that really you can lose control over what you're trying to say and what you're trying to do. The second time around I realized we do not need to conquer the world. In the past two years, we have turned down more stores than we have accepted. We don't need to be everywhere. We sew everything by hand and it's a very labour intensive process and I want to keep it that way. There's no reason to take over the world in two years. We're twelve people working in a townhouse in the West Village in New York, self-financed and moving forward.

HOW IS DESIGNING A LUXURY BRAND DIFFERENT FROM A CONTEMPORARY BRAND?

Quality is the utmost thing we talk about. We do not compromise on fabric or sewing. We order the fabrics from France or Italy and then we sew



Pre-Fall 2015 looks available at Per Lei Couture in Doha.

HOW DID JAPANESE ARCHITECT KENGO KUMA SERVE AS AN INSPIRATION FOR YOUR PRE-FALL 2015 COLLECTION?

His work is so simple, thoughtful and refined but it has so much depth to it that it really gave me pause. It is the kind of thing that you had to look at again and again to really understand.

it all here in New York. Sometimes it becomes a little bit of a challenge between the business side and the design side but I have a saying - if I don't want to have it or give it as a gift, I'm not going to make it. If we make things we don't want or want to give, it's just about making more and I don't want to just make more. We also have a saying here that has become a filter - if you can't wear it with flats, we don't want to design it. It doesn't mean that you will wear it with flats or that we even show it with flats. We're working on

HOW DOES YOUR AESTHETIC TRANSLATE TO YOUR MIDDLE EASTERN CLIENTS?

People have really latched on to [the idea that] I am an American sportswear designer. First of all, American sportswear means pieces that you can mix and match and it is something that we do, meaning we don't just design outfits. We design pieces that a woman will have and love and play stylist with. And I think because I look so American, it's an easy term for me.

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resort right now and there is a certain dress and it's on its third fitting and sometimes when a piece is on its third fitting, it's like, uh oh. [Laughs]. And then the filter came down and we realized this is the one thing that really won't look good with flats so we said, lets just kill it. I really loved the dress and I thought about it all night but it didn't meet that filter and I don't want to make clothes like that.

[Laughs]. That being said, there is nothing American or preppy about what we do so I don't think that term really makes sense for me. I think one of the things that has been great for us is that women in the Middle East love to dress up but they're really refined. And I think we do that. We don't do things that scream sex or scream anything vulgar. I think our clothes can be sexy but you don't have to show anything to be sexy. ☺