

Together

magazine

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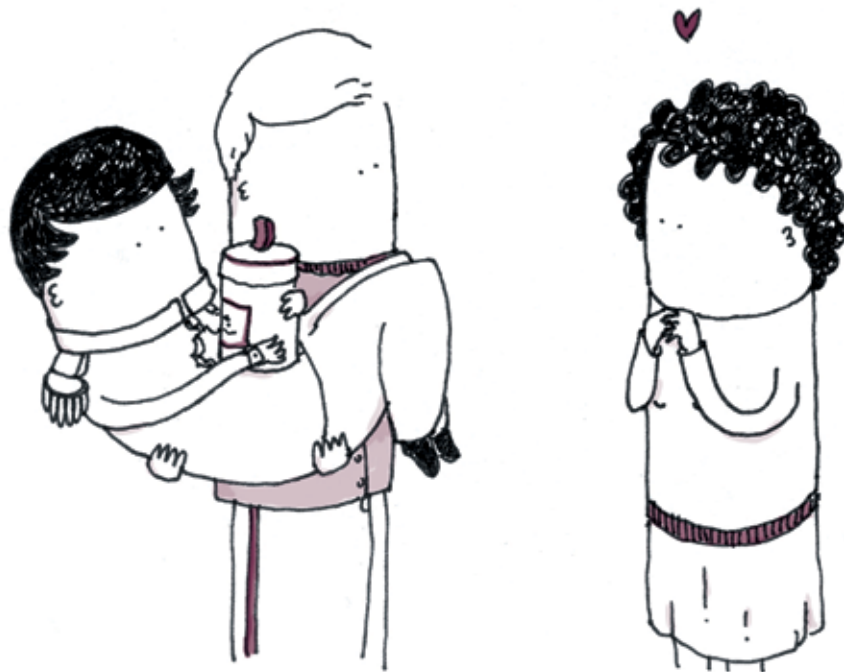
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Caroline Dechamby: Art for your arm

Brielle Gregory chats to a woman who turned her art into fashion

Caroline Dechamby did not set out to become an artist. For her, it was something that just came naturally.

"I never thought I would do what I do now," Dechamby says. "But it's just something that's inside of me, and when I paint I feel good. It was a natural thing to be an artist. There's no forcing."

Dechamby has been painting for 30 years now and has had her paintings on display in such prominent cities as London, Paris and Singapore. Fueled by her love for art, she took the step to open her own gallery in the mountains of Crans-Montana, Switzerland in 1997.

"It's a passion really," Dechamby says. "Just like you don't do a sport to make money, you don't paint to make money."

Now, Dechamby is putting that same passion into a new form of art: the handbag, or as Dechamby likes to call it, the "art bag."

"I thought, why not let my paint get out of my canvas and on to the arm of a lady?" Dechamby says. "Then the lady walks with my art."

This winter, Dechamby is debuting her Les Inséparables collection, an all-leather goods handbag collection featuring five different styles, including a large and small handbag, an evening bag, a wallet and a cell phone case.

Although Dechamby has designed another collection



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specifically for Crans-Montana in the past, this is the first time she will be spreading her handbag creations to the rest of the world.

"Since the first collection went so incredibly well, I thought now I'm ready to go into the world and make a bigger collection," Dechamby says. "It works because it's different and it's very good quality."

Much like paintings, the handbags are only available in a limited edition. The bags are entirely handmade in Rome and feature a neutral beige background with vivid characters in red, blue and green.

"It's hard work to get the right colors," Dechamby says. "It's a lot of investment."

Dechamby says she often makes little comics and funny designs when she is with her children, one of which she decided was right for her most recent collection. The particular characters featured in the Les Inséparables collection are ones Dechamby designed a long time ago, but the message of the painting remains the same: to show the love between two people.

What's unique about Dechamby's handbags is that they're more art than fashion. Dechamby views her bags as still being paintings, just on a different form of canvas.



"I think it's a bag that can last 10 years because it's a painting," Dechamby says. "Fashion is something that is very incredibly 'in', but then maybe one year later is out. My art bag isn't just current fashion because it will always be a limited edition."

The bags are designed for any woman, but more specifically, for a woman who is sensitive to art and has an eye for good work. Dechamby says she likes doing the bags as limited editions because it helps them remain unique. Once the limited amount is sold out, that's it.

However, once that amount is gone, Dechamby says, she can always move on and do another painting. The bags may be limited, but Dechamby's creativity is not. Since she cannot personally be everywhere, the bags are Dechamby's way of becoming universal.

"I'll keep going on with what I do, because I love painting," Dechamby says. "I always paint, I always go on. Every time I will get a new collection it will go into the world. It's just the way to do it."

For more information on the Les Inséparables collection, visit Caroline Dechamby's website at www.caroline-dechamby.com

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