

PRESSDAY

THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION PR DIRECTORY

Guillaume Delacroix - PR Boy #2

by Emmanuelle Christ

This month's PR BOY is Guillaume Delacroix. Guillaume Delacroix has been working as a press agent for more than ten years; he began at KCD. After a brilliant "in-house" career (Giorgio Armani, Balenciaga) he launched his own press office just one year ago: [DLX PARIS](#).

Could you please tell us about your career?

At first I studied history of arts for 5 years at the Sorbonne. I never went to any business or press officer school. My first job in fashion was to fold scarves at Georges Rech's when I was 16. I always chose finals over continuous assessment so I could skip classes and internships could come one after another. My first was in a press office and I have not changed since. I thought I could further my studies but I was offered a



"Fashion is like cinema, you should always go over your basics to know what it is all about"

permanent contract so I dropped out of uni. **The fashion world is very peculiar and I've always thought it preferable to get your hand in territory.** This is often a matter of shared values, instinct, luck (simply) and none of these can come from a school where we generally tend to be formatted, calibrated, shaped.

Do you remember your first publication?

The very first publication resulting directly from my work was a photo of a white Kris Van Assche cardigan from the 2008 Spring Summer collection. But it was really the first acquired publications of Christophe Decarnin's second collection for Balmain that made me understand the real stake of this job. It means making your contribution every time. We could feel the enthusiasm for Balmain's renewal soar. We managed everything from Paris. Orders shifted from a dozen to more than a hundred a day for the 2009 Spring Summer collection. Then the first red carpets sealed the deal.

Tell us about your greatest success as a press officer.

My greatest success is my current job with **Wassim Saliba, my business partner**, and the launch of our own press office. It means creating jobs - there will be six of us soon (and eight or nine during the fashion week) - making the brands trust us, one by one, and to develop close relationships with each inside team. We are lucky to work with professionals devoted to our well-being and the development of our company. Some directors call me on a regular basis to enquire about the company's health and to offer their help. I hope for nothing more but to evolve in this positive and virtuous atmosphere. The point of launching our own press office was precisely to start learning things again, and this is what we are doing - once more - on a daily basis.



What is the cliché on your job that irritates you the most?

It is rather a tendency we see too often: when press officers act like guard dogs and delight in saying things like “no way, you cannot get in”.

“I work as a press officer, I don't even know when I lie. Don't mention it, I'm a journalist, that's even worse.” Is this tweet posted by Loïc Prigent a myth or reality?

Too true, too true, unfortunately! Yet this type of behavior (but one I haven't always been a stranger to) is precisely what encouraged me to become self-employed. I have always thought

that having too many privileges was toxic. This illustrates a lack of passion for this world and a lack of interest for one's job. This reminds me of all the people clinging to their job out of ease and comfort. It is high time for these people to change jobs! **And let's put ourselves in the shoes of the designer whose press officer admits to lying in order to defend the brand!**

Could you please describe your press office?

We have recently moved into a beautiful Hausmanian apartment in the upper part of Le Marais (Paris). All the reception rooms have been turned into showroom areas. We all work in the same room. There is still some work to be done regarding the lights and the installation of the accessories showroom but everything should be ready by mid-February for the March fashion shows. All in all, everything is the same for everyone in the team. This facilitates communication between all team members and the general pleasant atmosphere. Most of the time, we wrap up the week with music and a debrief on Friday evenings.

Tell us about your worse professional blunder?

The day I turned Marie Amélie Sauvé away from the entrance to a fashion show before the doors were opened to the public, when she was in fact the fashion consultant for the brand in question... The day I criticised a colleague by email and inadvertently sent it to him... The day I got confused between two French actresses and called one by the other one's name, her greatest rival... And many others... but you do learn from your mistakes. As long as you do not make the same mistake twice.

A typical day during the Fashion Week?

During the fashion week I prepare the clothes a week in advance. This may seem trivial but in fact it is what matters the most if you want to be efficient. No need to think in the morning: 6 ironed white shirts, 4 white tee-shirts and 4 black tee-shirts at the office, 3 new black pairs of jeans. From 8:00 to 10:00 am we check the incoming emails from the previous night. If your client is an Australian brand, the day starts very early because of the time difference. We then review the different seating arrangements - Last season, we dealt with 5 shows. So far, we will have 6 next season - we track the delivery of invitations. Then the whole team leaves for the event of the day, on average three hours in advance to prepare the room and do the usual tracking tasks. When the show ends, we head back to the office. Most of the time, Wassim does not stay for the show in order to follow with the rest of the schedule. Then: the sacro-sanct dinner break, we relax for a minute. Then we get back to listings, seating plans, invitations, etc. Until 11:00 pm or midnight. No time to attend the different evenings, unless we organise them ourselves.

Your best professional encounter, and why?

Undoubtedly, my most beautiful professional encounters were with two line managers I have met over the last ten years: **Txampi Diz at KCD** and then **Lionel Vermeil at Balenciaga**. I have learned everything from them. I have been very lucky to learn my job at their side. A sense of observation, judiciousness, a relevance in evaluating situations, an infallible instinct, a keen knowledge of the History of Fashion, manners, and so much more.

The hardest part of your job?

As a press officer or as an entrepreneur? I would say to spare every one's ego and sensitivity. To never neglect anyone because one day or another you will need this person. Admitting to it is nothing to be ashamed of. This is simply the rule of the game. It is not fashion-specific, this is the world of work. The hardest part when you are a young entrepreneur is to sign cheques! Too many cheques, all the time! Little is done to help young companies in France. Too much paperwork, too many taxes. No tax-exemption the first year anymore. We are often in a cold sweat. Yet this is part of the game and things are put back into perspective.

What will remain as your nicest fashion memory?

I have been extremely lucky to work on several McQueen shows and have been twice backstage to see the designer work and question himself until the last minute before the show began. For "Plato's Atlantis" I ran into the room just before the lights went off. As often, these moments coincide with the exhaustion typical of the end of a fashion week and the release of pressure, and one is never too far from an emotional moment. I believe we have seldom seen anyone who has since pushed creation this far to immerse us into an imaginary world and make us think. This was perfectly the case with his next show "Natural Dis-tinction Un-Natural Selection". Fashion is like cinema, you should always go over your basics to know what it is all about. There are about

Romy Ishii nominated you and wished to ask you this: "Why did you become self-employed? How do you choose your clients?"

I really wanted to try something different. **As a press agent, your work remains the same, whether it has been going on for 3 or 10 years.** After 10 years actually, I needed a new challenge to retain this passion. Turning my job into an interesting and rousing activity even if difficult on a daily basis. I often tried to bring young designers to the offices I used to work for - designers whose job is now well-known and appreciated. Then I was asked several times whether I was ready to take the plunge. I waited for my "in-house" career to be settled to do so. As far as clients are concerned, **we try to make sure there is a certain balance between well-established brands and new designers - and also no competition between them.** We only take one brand of accessories for instance, one men's brand, etc. When you look at it, we have been incredibly lucky to have been contacted over such a short period of time (we began in March 2015). If all goes well, three great brands will be announced within the next few months (Touch wood!).

When we interviewed Jean-Jacques PICART he was hoping the new interview would be of a young press officer to see how far his vision on this job was valid and where viewpoints differed. What do you think?

I can obviously confirm the fact that press officers have become "multi-fonctional super Shivas". I have seen this since we went into business, **brands come to see us for regular PR jobs but also for image consulting, designers' CVs. For some collections, we even work directly on the products themselves.** I believe it is very hard to say things nowadays, for people of our generation. In our world, people are clearly used to smooth talk. Whenever something hurts, hell

breaks loose. Or rather, public rows are so rare that they lead to discussions right away. The industry has been dictated to us from the start of the 2000s. I often have the impression that the young generation is rather developing on the margins of this system.

Who do you nominate for our next interview?

Fleur Pellerin, the French Culture Minister.

(<https://pressday.net/en/interviews/guillaume-delacroix-pr-boy-2>)