

## ERIN FETHERSTON

BY KRISTIAN LALIBERTE

Across crowded parties or over champagne cocktails at Rose Bar, there's sometimes a certain girl who seems to glow as if lit from within. She has Bergdorf Blonde hair (read Nordic white) milky skin, and eyes the color of blue jewels, likely precious. It wouldn't be far off to assume she was straight from "Cinderella" central casting. Instead, this striking fairytale vision is designer Erin Fetherston, though "princess" is an adjective fashion editors and runway reporters constantly use in conjunction with her eponymous label.

The enchanted image is one that the twenty-eight-year-old Bay Area native (who's often mistaken for Icelandic), is not uncomfortable with, and at times actually cultivates. She admits that her public persona is intrinsically intertwined with her collection, and her angelic look doesn't hide any wild child Lindsanity or anything crazy like devil-worshipping. Indeed, Erin makes clothes for natural, uncontrived beauties much like herself and confesses, "I am my own first muse." The whole reason she became a designer was the fact that she "loved clothes so much and dressed up so often. Being a female designer you can start a dialogue with yourself, and I often ask myself, what do I want to wear right now?" In the era of celebustards leaving little to the imagination, one of Erin's first questions is always "is this a dress I can get in and out of the car with?"

That's not to say that Fetherston doesn't have her ties to Hollywood. Although she started as an American expat, studying fashion at the prestigious Parsons School of Design in Paris and designing two seasons of haute couture, she first rose to fame across the pond with the 2005 short film *WendyBird*, a film she conceived with Ellen Von Unwerth that stars Kirsten Dunst

wearing her Fall/Winter 2005-2006 Collection. The project was one of those moments that can define a career—she calls meeting both women at the same Paris party "an act of total fate." When Dunst came and saw her clothes at a presentation at the Chateau Marmont, the whole idea crystallized, resulting in the collaboration that was the "real introduction of 'Erin Fetherston' to the press." It was then too that she developed what she bashfully refers to as her "cult following." Perhaps some girls do have all the luck.

The success that followed all the buzz was immediate, with critically acclaimed showings at Bryant Park, the Ecco Domani Fashion Foundation Award, and a coveted finalist spot for the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund. Her rising status as a celebrity designer also helped bring about her own Go International Collection for Target—the dream of even seasoned artists. Her continual obligations in New York led to Fetherston exchanging the cobblestones of St. Germain for those of Tribeca, where she lives with her fiancé, well known boy-about-town Hedi Ferjani, and her two dogs, a crusted powderpuff and a bichon maltese. A permanent move to Manhattan can be dizzying for anyone,

but even more especially for someone whose blown-up pictures appear regularly in WWD and Teen Vogue. She didn't slip into the drunken socialite slash designer persona however, with wild nights at Beatrice and late lunches at The Regency, but instead focused on her continually evolving collection, which recently defied some negative reviews of being too girly when she debuted a more grown up, tailored sensibility for Fall/Winter 2009.

As she puts it, "I sincerely need ten hours of sleep a night... It's really important to me to wake up bright eyed in the morning." Just like Cinderella.

*"Though I've got social butterfly in my DNA, I am just so focused on growing my collection and my business. That always comes first"*



PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRYAN GUNSKY. ERIN FETHERSTON WEARS HER OWN DESIGN IN HER OFFICE