



HALLE BERRY

THE HOLLYWOOD
BEAUTY TESTS HER METTLE

Winter Fashion starring
BELLA HEATHCOTE, Carolina Castiglioni,
THE DOVE AND THE WOLF,
Gabriella Kiss, GRIMES, Joan Juliet Buck,
PAT McGRATH and Viola Di Grado.



A

s the editors of T were sending this issue to press, we found ourselves thinking about the idea of women's beauty that runs through its pages. Could there be a more pervasive, and loaded, topic? At a recent dinner party, as the talk turned to politics, in no time did

Michelle Obama's fingernail color at the Democratic National Convention enter the conversation. The substance of her speech seemed only to be amplified by the notion that she told her manicurist, What the heck, let's go with gray.

Nail polish is, of course, less on our minds than the fascination with how a person chooses to display herself. Though make no mistake: with the help of T's indefatigable beauty and style director, Sandra Ballentine, you'll find plenty of information here about how women are deciding to make themselves look lovely — from how they part their hair (in the center) to how they treat their skin (just please don't overpeel) — and to feel like self-determined participants in our quickly changing culture.

Isn't that what we really talk about when we talk about beauty: keeping up with the pace of change? Not just deciding when to jump on the color wheel — electric pink glitter eye shadow? Why not — but also retaining some measure of grace and poise as wrinkles come, relationships go, and time, in its messy, wisdom-bestowing way, marches on. One day you might be one of "The In Crowd" (Page 82), figuring out your style and forming fast friendships in Tyrone Lebon and Sara Moonves's playful fashion shoot; the next you may be the jewelry designer Gabriella Kiss (Page 76), who's created her own incredibly stylish universe out of a lifetime of work, family and gorgeous things.

There are few women in the public eye who have more elegantly embraced the passing of the years than Halle Berry (Page 68). Some of those years, by her own account, haven't been easy. But as Joyce Maynard's thoughtful profile of the actress shows, Berry has turned obstacles into the building blocks of a remarkable life as a movie star and as a mother. And if Berry has her way (is there any doubt?), her 4-year-old daughter will grow up knowing what truly makes her beautiful, no what matter what color nail polish she chooses.

JEFFRIES BLACKERBY



In this issue of T, Halle Berry shows off this season's jackets and jeans (Page 68) and the jewelry designer Gabriella Kiss (below) lets readers see her workshop (Page 76).



FROM TOP: CÉDRIC BUCHET; WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ (2)





SMALL WORLD

THE JEWELRY DESIGNER Gabriella Kiss's STUDIO
IS A MICROCOSM OF NATURE, HISTORY
AND THE CREATIONS OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

By PILAR VILADAS
Photographs by WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ

Shelf life In the dining room, above, of Gabriella Kiss's studio, her own jewelry designs are arranged with objects — like the pendants and chains draped over Parian ware hands, opposite — that she has collected over the years.



SOME WORKPLACES ARE ALL BUSINESS,

with nothing but the tools of the trade to reveal their owner's identity. But the studio of the jewelry designer Gabriella Kiss is, by comparison, an autobiography in three dimensions. For starters, the small 19th-century white clapboard house doesn't look like a workplace. Located across the road from the converted 1820 church in Bangall, N.Y., that she shares with her husband, the furniture designer Chris Lehrecke, and their two sons, it contains a nitty-gritty studio (the former garage, which connects to the house by a new breezeway) and a parlor-like showroom furnished with things like a taxidermied miniature African antelope and Belgian chandeliers that Kiss and Lehrecke bought on their 20th anniversary. There is also a dining room, with a modern table by Kiss and a desk by Lehrecke, that is lined with still-life arrangements of works — by Kiss, her friends or her son August — and objects that inspire her work, like 19th-century Parian ware hands, an Indian miniature painting and a swan's wing. And there's a working kitchen with arched windows and shelves full of colorful transferware cups and bowls — Kiss is an inveterate flea-market shopper. She and her assistants often cook lunch here, using whatever local ingredients happen to be in season. Upstairs, two bedrooms are reserved for assistants who live out of town and need a place to stay when they're working. When you visit Kiss's studio, you get the feeling that you're really seeing her outlook on life.

Kiss, who studied sculpture at Pratt Institute and worked for the jewelry designer Ted Muehling before going out on her own in 1988, is known for understated jewelry that highlights

THE STUDIO, with its arrangements of objects, IS A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST IN THREE DIMENSIONS.

The dish The kitchen in Kiss's studio; she added the arched outer windows. The shelves are stacked with transferware plates and bowls that Kiss has collected for years.



Cabin of curiosities Clockwise from upper left: the bathroom, with art by Melanie Bilenker; a stuffed pheasant with a pencil-section necklace by Lee Hale; natural and artificial objects on the dining room mantel; the front of the house that Kiss turned into her studio; the breezeway, with the door to the workroom; jewelry supplies; the showroom, with a taxidermied miniature African antelope; stacks of antique transferware cups and bowls in the kitchen.





KISS sees beauty where others may not — INCLUDING TINY AND EXQUISITE MOUSE BONES.

A feast for the eyes Above: objects, including an earring by Kiss, on a dining-room shelf. The dining room, opposite, is filled with the work of Kiss and her friends, as well as a desk by her husband, Chris Lehrecke. The chandelier is by Jessica Rose.

the beauty of semiprecious stones, as well as bolder pieces like earrings in the shape of snakes or clipper ships. She also sees beauty where others may not. Some of us look at mouse bones and shudder, but to Kiss, such things are “the substructure of form and movement. I’m inspired by them.” Casting mouse femurs and hip joints is no easy task — “They’re so tiny, so exquisite,” she explains — but Kiss transforms them into delicate gold and diamond chains. “It’s like honoring the life of the mouse,” she adds. “It’s a nice epilogue.” Likewise, the mushrooms that grow at the base of a dead tree might not top everyone’s list of desirables, but the bronze and silver brooches and earrings that Kiss casts from them certainly might. “We might as well celebrate our decay,” she says cheerfully.

Kiss’s dry but whimsical sense of humor extends to the work she’s given by friends and fellow designers and artists in exchange for her jewelry — like the three Roz Chast cartoons in the breezeway, the drawing of a deer by Kiki Smith, or the flies, made of pencil erasers and wire by Lee Hale, that sit beneath it on a narrow shelf in the dining room. In the bathroom, tiny hair drawings by Melanie Bilenker record everyday moments in the artist’s life. “There’s not that much in this world that’s original,” Kiss says, “and she’s taking this old Victorian form and making it new.”

The house’s cozy scale suits Kiss, who used to work at home in what had been the church’s choir loft but found that the soaring volume felt a bit overwhelming. It’s no accident that so many of the objects that Kiss makes, and collects, are tiny. “The church is a ‘wow’ space,” she says, “but the scale of my work is smaller than a matchbox. When we walk down the street, Chris will see the building, and I’ll see the molding.” ■

