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By Jo Mikula

METRI HOLLIDAY

Designing Luxury Scarves to Pamper and Empower



Spring Valley's Metri Holliday's scarves debut on runways at New York Fashion Week this month

Fashion is self-expression. At its highest form, it is life-enhancing, enabling us to connect with and communicate our true selves. This belief in the power of fashion-inspired Spring Valley's Metri Holliday to take a step back from the corporate tech world that she had inhabited for 17 years and create luxurious silk scarves designed to pamper *and* empower the wearer.

The decision to try her hand at design was not an easy one. Diagnosed with chronic fatigue in 2020, the mother of two took time out during the first days of the pandemic for self-reflection. "You start to wonder if you've wasted time, and a lot of questions follow," she says. "You've spent so many years in the whirlwind of professional and family life, that you've lost yourself. Finding yourself again can be a tough call."

Metri remembered the joy that came when playing dress-up — the fun she had with colors, patterns, designs. This led to pursuing her connection to fabrics and design and to have fun with it. "In all my previous roles, I have had the chance to be creative," explains Metri. "But it was a very different kind of creativity. And this has always been in my heart — a dream." She found that she had the time, and the resources, "So I said to myself, 'Get on with it!'"

Metri is guided by the value that she places on quality over quantity. As she studied brands like Gucci and Hermes, she realized that these brands were all telling a story and began considering what stories she wanted to tell. This coincided with the beginning of the pandemic, when the world had just gone into lockdown. This period of isolation inspired Metri to concentrate her stories on the process of finding oneself — scarves that include a secret

message to buoy the wearer. "I felt like when people cannot connect with one another, they need to connect with themselves," she says.

Metri's first line includes seven scarves centered on self-love and self-acceptance, and incorporates spirituality, colors, and designs that help the wearer intentionally embody a specific purpose. For instance, the "I am Vibrant" scarf uses orange, a color known to increase the supply of oxygen to the brain. The collection is about finding yourself again, and allowing your true self to bloom: Not just living, but thriving. They encourage travel, connection, and living in the present while also looking with clarity and openness to the future.

It's an auspicious time for Metri to be entering the fashion world with her brand of luxury scarves. In August, *Vogue* concluded that the top accessory at Copenhagen Fashion Week was a silk scarf and *Wall Street Journal* Fashion Editor Lizzy Wholley pronounced the scarf "an accessory that is undeniably trending," noting it was seen on the fall runways of designers Max Mara, Dior, Anna Sui, and Paco Rabanne. Metri is not surprised. "Whenever a woman wears a scarf, it makes her feel elegant," she explains. "It's tied to luxury. When you have high-quality silk touching your skin, you feel sensual. Sophisticated. Elegant."

The scarves in Metri's second collection celebrate her Indian heritage through the beauty of Mughal art. Each scarf in her Royal Art Collection is bordered by intricate designs inspired by Persian culture and Indian artists. Of "The True Queen" scarf, Metri says, "a queen is not afraid to be seen. She sets her own rules and creates her own life." The queen featured in the center of the scarf

symbolizes the divine feminine, a figure who is compassionate towards herself and who takes responsibility for her own 'happily ever after.' "It's a bold pattern to wear," adds Metri. "And when you know the purpose behind it, you start to embody it."

"Kingly Balance" taps into the wearer's warrior energy, a symbol of deep emotional strength helping the wearer to take a lead and restore harmony. In "Lover's Reflection," a pair of lovers in a garden are reflected in a pond. "When you look at it, you're there in that garden," says Metri. "This image is a reminder that love brings joy."

Metri conducts all of the research behind her scarves, and creates the vision and design for each piece. For some of the more intricate work, she often hires a freelance illustrator to help format her vision. After much searching, Metri found a group in New Jersey to prepare the highest quality silk, mulberry silk, for the scarves. The fabric is then printed and hand-rolled in Milan, Italy. The result is a buttery smooth silk, of similar quality as scarves by Gucci and Hermes.

After less than one year in business, Metri Holliday Scarves debut this month at the elite New York Fashion Week. It's a week-long affair for Metri, with press interviews, promotional work, and a rooftop runway show with scarves from both collections.

As she prepares for the show, Metri is working on her third collection, a line focused on compassion. She is in the process of researching mythological figures and traditions that embody love. She credits her husband with supporting her during this career change.

Metri's scarves embody a holistic approach to health that seeks harmony between mind, body, and spirit. After stepping back from her corporate job and learning more about her physical, mental, and spiritual health, she now seeks to help other women understand and harness their feelings to create the outcome they want. "I want to be a symbol of positivity and create more awareness around how our emotions or feelings influence the choices we make day-to-day," she says. "And to do it while having fun!"

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