



First Lady For First City

Kristin Eager Killion

Who's that Girl ?

Glamorous and elegant in an Cavalli dress, an upswept golden chignon and twinkling blue eyes, Kristin Eager Killion greets her guests with warmth and laughter at the opening of her exhibition *From the Heart* in Paris

Kristin, who hails from Winnetka, a Northern suburb outside of Chicago, is a designer and creator of sustainable art. An interdisciplinary artist whose work is inspired from abandoned objects found in the streets of Paris, her eye is caught by the sparkle of broken glass, the flash of bright color, or the edginess of an interesting shape. The triangular flags left over from a Paris running competition become the budding leaves of *Full Bloom*, a striking three dimensional wall sculpture. A cracked and rusty mannequin found on boulevard Flandrin becomes the stunning *Baby Doll*, a lanky sculpture complete with a veiled hat made out of a discarded lampshade and the netting from an onion bag. Kristin breathes new life into objects that have previously lost value.

In addition to wall art and sculptures, Kristin designs and creates earth friendly handbags and accessories from discarded champagne boxes and capsules. Kristin's fascination with champagne began around the time she got married in Paris in April 2006. "I didn't grow up with champagne so I was attracted to the image of champagne. I remember walking by the dumpster outside the Chanel boutique on avenue Montaigne where I spotted a bunch of *Veuve Clicquot* boxes. I immediately saw a really cool purse. I took the box and made a purse for my wedding!"

Moving on to Washington DC after getting married, Kristin's love for champagne and sparkling wine continued, but the paraphernalia was more difficult to find. Befriending bar tenders and joining a monthly champagne tasting group became necessary habits.

Eventually her friends and family caught on and began collecting the capsules and boxes for her creations. As she began wearing her champagne box handbag and accessories to parties in Washington, she realized she might be on to something. Kristin was overwhelmed with compliments from those who insisted that her stunning snakeskin bag must have come from the luxury store, Neiman Marcus. No one could believe that she had made the bag from items found in the garbage, the snakeskin like effect coming from the netting of a garlic bag. The original idea for the purses had not been to feature the champagne box, but when a friend gave her the hot pink and black Laurent Perrier box, she found it too beautiful to cover. The second version of the champagne box purse was born, one where you could see the actual box. From there followed handbags made from boxes of champagne by Bollinger, *Moët* & Chandon, Perrier Jouet, Pommery Cuvee Louise and *Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin*.

Back in Paris since 2009, Kristin works from a studio in her home and continues to design and create. She revels in champagne and sparkling wine paraphernalia from brands such as Charles Volner, Dom Perignon, Drappier, Duval-Leroy, Heidsieck, Henri Abelé, Henriot, Jacquart, Jean Paul Couamaïs-Vouvray, Maxim's, Mumm, Vranken - the list is endless. "I'm fascinated by the culture of champagne- the production process, the people behind it, the history and the atmosphere it creates. I also love the strength, perseverance and leadership that numerous women have shown in the creation of this culture." Don't throw out the box and capsule from your favorite bottle of bubbly, bring them to Kristin and she will create a one-of-a-kind handbag or accessory made exclusively for you.

Chilla Heuser

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