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Make me Beautiful

Hong Kong's personal style guru, Catherine McIntyre, talks to *inMAGAZINE* about Bangladesh, colours, shopping, and ultimately, finding your inner confidence.



Appearances can be deceiving. Worse still, they can sometimes get us altogether wrong. No one understands this more than Catherine McIntyre, Hong Kong's very own personal style coach. Despite being Scottish on paper (you don't get more Scottish a surname than McIntyre) Catherine is in fact French. Married to a Scot who himself works in the textile industry, Catherine has lead a life of adventure, travel and discovery.

From teahouses in Madagascar to isolated cottages in the middle of rural Scotland, industrial China to the colourful streets of Bangladesh, Catherine has seen it all. Perhaps it is this abundance of life experiences that has made her into the strong, confident and self-assured woman sitting across from me today. With her broad smile and warm, trusting eyes, Catherine is someone you're instantly drawn to. There's a spirit inside of her – a passion and excitement – that is as infectious as her smile. Without even knowing it, before long in her company you're beaming from cheek to cheek.

It all began, Catherine tells me, when she was living in Bangladesh. Catherine had always been into creating designs and making her own clothes and saw that this was a transferable skill which she could teach to the slum girls of Dhaka. And so she did. Catherine set up a workshop in the slum of Vatara, and called it the Bright Star Sewing Project. A sewing training centre for young street girls in the area, Catherine helped these young girls design and make items out of saris, that they were later able to sell for a profit. Not only did this enable them to have the skills and know-how to start up their own little businesses but moreover the process brought these young street girls together and watched them grow into independent young women.

It wasn't long before Catherine had to move again, but she could already sense what an enormous power creativity, styling and taking an interest in oneself could have on people – particularly women. It was this insight, teamed with her innate sense of style that led Catherine to become a personal style consultant. "You know I like that... helping people. Pushing them; helping them to look good." More than just being about helping an individual to look his or her best, Catherine says she relishes in seeing them grow as people. "It's really a journey because women really get to know and to accept themselves – how they



are and not how they would like to be," says Catherine.

A consultation with Catherine begins with a colour reading. This, she believes, is the most important part of the style awareness journey. "I would say, really, that this is the biggest art," says Catherine, "It really brings out the features." Using her coloured fan and drapes, Catherine determines what colours suit your skin tone, and which don't. Catherine takes into consideration the colour of your hair, your eyes, your lips, the tone of your skin and even the whites of your eyes. "People are amazed," says Catherine. While in the beginning they may be hesitant to believe that a certain colour suits them, once Catherine has compared and contrasted unflattering shades versus complimenting colours, they accept it and follow her advice.

"Your face is where you communicate. This is what you really want to emphasize and bring light to," says Catherine. "Really, after that it's the body shape [we look at], deciding what needs to be enhanced or disguised." Once Catherine and her client have determined the best colours, shapes and styles, it's time to hit the shops.

Catherine will take a client to a broad range of shops, according to the budget of the individual. Together, she will help you pick out a whole new wardrobe that will instantly make you look younger and more attractive. The effect is an instant boost of confidence, she says, with clients literally radiating from within. "The best part is really deeper than that – it's what the person wants to convey... the personality. That's why I call it a personal style journey."

Oftentimes, if a lack of available sizes or colours is an issue, Catherine will take clients to the tailor, enabling clothes to be made up in exactly the right colour, fit, style and fabric to best complement her client. "For me, the client is the most important," says Catherine. "It's not about the shops, it's not about the brands... it's about the individual."

With her warm and open demeanour, passion for fashion and all things colourful, Catherine is not just a pretty wall-flower but takes a genuine interest and pleasure in watching her clients develop the confidence and assurance to reflect the person they've always been on the inside, on the outside too. ■



讓我美麗

香港個人形象設計大師Catherine McIntyre與《inMAGAZINE》分享她對孟加拉、顏色及購物的看法，還有發掘內在自信的歷程。

「外表」可以誤導人，甚至是可以完全的內外不一。這個道理沒有人比本地著名個人形象設計大師Catherine McIntyre更清楚。雖然她的名字讀起來像個蘇格蘭人(沒有一個姓氏比McIntyre更富蘇格蘭色彩)，但其實Catherine是法國人。她的丈夫在蘇格蘭從事紡織業，而Catherine活在歷險、旅遊及體驗人生之中。

Catherine曾經在馬達加斯加經營茶館，在蘇格蘭郊外偏僻的小屋居住，到訪工業發達的中國，觀看滿街色彩的孟加拉。或者正因為這豐富的人生經驗。坐在我對面的她是個堅強、自信及有主見的女性。Catherine親切的微笑和誠懇的眼神令人瞬間就被吸引。然而，在她裡面更加是有一股力量——一種激情和活力——就如她的笑容一樣有感染力。和她在一起，你在不知不覺間就會變得談笑風生。

Catherine告訴我，一切由她在孟加拉的日子開始。她一直醉心於設計及製作衣服，並認為可以教導在達卡貧民窟的女孩這門技術，所以她在vatara貧民窟開了一間製作坊，取名Bright Star Sewing Project。Catherine在這個訓練縫紉中心教女孩如何用莎麗去設計及製作衣服，於是女孩們就可賣衣服賺錢。女孩們不單學懂了縫紉技術及建立了一門小生意，她們更在過程中成長為獨立自主的女性。

過了不久Catherine就離開了孟加拉，但她從中明白到創作、形象設計及對真切的個人關心所產生的強大力量——這在女性身上尤其顯著。這個體會加上她天賦的設計意念令她走上個人形象設計師之路。「我喜歡幫助別人，驅使他們變得更美。」除了因為幫助了他們展示最美一面而高興，Catherine還因為他們的成長

而感到欣慰。Catherine說：「女性要了解自己及接受自己真是一個過程，她們要接受自己是怎樣，而不是她們想怎樣。」

要問Catherine意見就由選擇顏色開始，她相信這是這個風格啟蒙之旅最重要的一環。「我會說這是最大的學問，因為顏色突顯了個性。」Catherine說。只要用她扇形的色版，Catherine就知道那種顏色適合你的膚色而那一種不。頭髮的顏色、眼睛的顏色、咀唇的顏色、膚色，甚至眼白的深淺Catherine也會考慮在內。她說：「一般人都會很驚奇。」開始時他們都會懷疑某種顏色是否適合自己，但當Catherine拿適合她們的顏色及格格不入的顏色互相比較及對比後，他們都會接受Catherine的建議。

Catherine說：「你的臉龐可與人溝通，這是你最需要著重及展示的地方，接著就是身型，我們要決定那些部位需要改善或遮掩。」當Catherine和客人決定了最好的顏色、形態及風格後，就要去商店一遊了。

Catherine會依照客人的預算到不同的商店，她會幫你選一摺全新的衣飾來使你看起來更年輕，更吸引。她說有自信的效果立刻就能見效，令客人由內至外散發光芒。「這比外表改變更深刻的，是一個人想呈現出來的性格，所以我稱之為發掘個人風格的旅程。」

有時衣服的大小及顏色可能是一個問題，於是Catherine就會帶客人到裁縫處去選擇最恰當的顏色、風格及材料來度身訂造衣服。「對我來說，客人是最重要的，不是商店，不是品牌，而是個人。」Catherine說。

Catherine平易近人，對時裝色彩充滿熱情，她不是一個裝飾的花瓶，而是真正樂於見到她的客人建立自信，去展示他們的內在——當然還有外在美。■