



Paper chase

Words by Pauline Brettell

These boots are definitely NOT made for walking!

In fact it is the very lightness of design and sheer impracticality of Pippa Medding's paper shoes that makes them so appealing.



Pippa Meddings' ideals are listed as original design, creativity, re-using and recycling, made in England. These values seem to encapsulate all aspects of Pippa work and are codes with which she approaches everything she puts her hand to; whether it's designing a greeting card, a gift for her bridesmaids or developing a workshop to pass on the skill of shoemaking, all seem touched by a lightness of hand with a sensitivity and creativity on every level.



Having studied at Cordwainers College in London and graduated specialising in footwear and accessories, Pippa has worked as a designer for some of the best shoe labels known to women. From Pied a Terre to Debenhams, Bertie to Roberto Vianni, all have benefitted from her design skill and eye for detail.

In 2006 she decided to move back to the West Midlands and set up her own design practice. While coming back to her roots she remains in touch with life in the footwear lane on a freelance basis and, having travelled the world from trade fairs to factories, from sample rooms to studios, she is now in the process of setting up her own studio back home in Bromyard Herefordsire, where she has the time and space, along with a greater level of creative freedom to work on her own company, ideas and projects.

Pippa does admit to having always had a particular interest in footwear and as a child could be found winding bits of ribbon and other pretty bits and pieces around her feet, already embarking on the process of designing her own shoes.

More recently at her wedding, footwear was again a focal point, as beneath her traditional wedding dress your eyes were drawn to a pair of raspberry pink leather shoes peeping out from below the hem. The design is always in the detail.

Her trademark paper shoes have developed out of a process of designing and developing a series of workshops, including a project

with Hereford College of Arts, which combined gallery visits with experimental shoe making workshops. She wanted to be able to pass on her experience and skills to the pupils in an accessible manner and slowly the paper shoe emerged as part of this process. So although the paper shoe is entirely impractical on any level other than the visual, it does take its creator through a very practical step-by-step process of techniques

and stages essential to every day footwear design.

Having created a series of paper shoes for an exhibition, this is now an ongoing process that operates on two levels for Pippa. She gets commissioned to make shoes for clients who want their own personal piece of paper footwear, and she also continues to use this process of making shoes to teach and pass

“Personal anecdotes are an important part of the process.”

on her techniques and creativity by running workshops for adults and young people.

When making a shoe for a client, or for an exhibition, Pippa combines design considerations along with personal references as she recycles and re-uses old maps, paper images, possibly some old sheet music. Subtle anecdotes run through the designs and it is a considered and thought through process. If you look carefully you will find a place »

“you will find a place on a map, a phrase or a picture that is important to the person”



^ Pippa hand made these heart brooches covered with vintage fabric for her bridesmaids, and has now added them to her collection.

« on a map, a phrase or a picture that is important to the person for whom the shoe is being made. If you are attending one of her workshops she will encourage you to do the same, introducing various levels of design and personality to your own paper shoe!

Personal anecdotes are an important part of the process as “what is showing on the shoes is really important, it gives the shoe its own character and reference points”

But its not just about shoes for Pippa, she simply “loves drawing and using different mediums” and this took her interest in shoes onto another level by drawing, painting and designing her own range of greeting cards and prints. All are of course on recycled paper, a lot of them show her detailed hand illustrations of shoes and all give her the opportunity to experiment with different mediums.

Having recently married, moved house and embarked on the renovation of her new home, she is also busy with new designs and creations that are due to be exhibited at Dots Gallery in Bromyard for February and March. So if you want to cast an eye over her paper creations, find out more about the practicalities of footwear, or commission your own personal creation, you don't need a fairy godmother to whip up a glass slipper, get Pippa to recycle a paper one and be a new age Cinderella!