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half" she says, laughing. "It was a very different look for me. Some of my friends said they didn't even recognize me!"

Wits aside, it was Salmons's daily devotion to originality that won the attention of Lawrie. "We wanted individuals who could be strong, colorful and eye-catching without being gimmicky or over-styled," says Creative Director Katy Rein. "With Salmons, I don't know if it's a question of beauty in the



burst through disco, soulboats and before to the Phrygian, Simul- like cautions that know for wearing among New York style on. We told, then, that Loretta Longstanding Artist, Director After Elbow felt Salomons head but free, ducking back for autumn looks and dressing her in a corporate, militaristic, not there in the shirt (right). "There was no traditional sense. Personally, I find it has more to do with elegance and natural style. You can have a very interesting eight-year-old doing her hair in a certain way, or an 80-year-old who has seen it all and stayed true to what she believes to be her style."

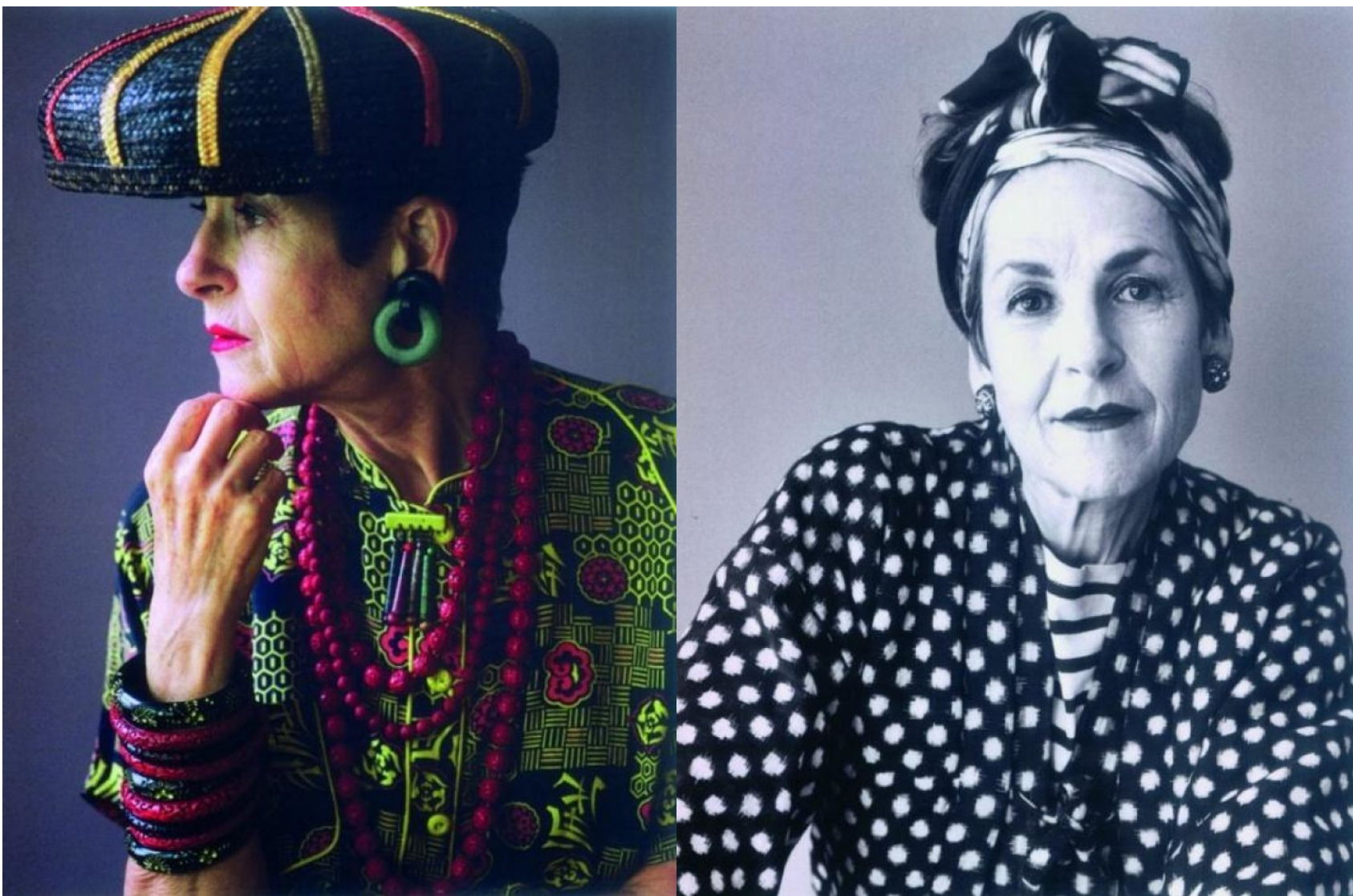
The second time I met Salomons was in a freezing February afternoon in Manhattan

Clothes have been scarce into Budapest life since she was a child. Indeed, if it weren't for clothing she may never have lived at all, having come from a Hungarian family orphaned by the onslaught of Nazism. "My father survived the camps by sewing their uniforms," she says. "There were a hundred boys in a labour camp and they had to





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do the cleaning, all of it. And there was room for one table. My father was chosen, which means he served the most authentic and the most creative. That's what saved his life."

After surviving the camps and fleeing to Israel, Salamon's family spent nine years with their young daughter in the fledgling state, where she learned to dress lavishly almost immediately. "My parents made all the clothes," she says. "My dad would make little boys' coats, and my mom made the skirts, the blouses, jumpers and dresses."

"When I was a little girl I used to have going to my dad's tailoring shop and I would see the fabric on the table. He was dimensional stuff," she adds. "The next day I'd go and it would be on the dummy or a man I thought, 'How did he do that?' I thought my father was a magician—that he knew his own something."

She pulled out a pile of old photographs from a drawer: Salamon as a French princess, Snow White, Arab girl, even as a model in Paris. The odyssey has followed her to this day, following the quirky routes that became famous for at least within her adopted hometown of New York. But it has been a long road from the Middle East to America, one which saw Salamon complete a PhD in psychotherapy and become a teacher before realizing her calling in style, opening shops and moving to the States to spend more waiting tables and working in retail stores. At first she was worried her parents was too shallow, but she slowly realized that it could be her unique gift to the world. "Everybody from surgery's most important but there was no way I was going to be a brain surgeon. No, at least one calling, wherever it is, and that calling is right."

Today Salamon runs her teaching skills to educate young women across New York in the art of dressing, and provides her styling wardrobe in a one-woman show called *The Faber of My Life*, which has attracted

something of a cult status. She is also the darling of legendary New York Times street style photographer Bill Cunningham, epitomizing the definition of growing old gracefully, and beautifully.

But it was the advent of the internet that propelled Salamon from underground hero into fully-fledged style icon, appearing regularly on sites like *IndieStyle*, *cos* and *expensivemag.com*. "Salomon always looks absolutely fabulous," says Ari Seth Cohen, creator and author of *Admire!* style, a blog once back about

ad with one person from each corner of the world. It was not about indie culture or regularity. It was more about individuals who already possess a strong identity in wearing clothes in their own way. This individuality is what drew Salamon each day—as an individuality lacking in an age where fashion, and life, is dependent on mass consumption. "Then in 2012 women really do need help, because we're so bombarded. There are so many lines out there and it's a constant stream," she sums up.



New York's growing image of sartorially savvy older women. It was from Cohen's pictures on the streets of Manhattan that Salamon got her big break as a model, snapped up by *Lavette Artistic Director* Alton Elian.

"I had seen advanced style and showed Alton," says Katy Kaim. "It was by coincidence or fate that at the same time the model agent came across Salamon. The owner of the campaign was in touch with old people, but we did not want to end up with a Roseanne

everything," she adds. "We chose some relationships and we chose some clothes. A skirt might cost you 15000 at the store, but it's only had you six months instead of buying it, here it made."

"I know that I can travel with my clothes my whole life," she continues. "In the old days, women didn't go far. They got thicker as they got older but it would be like when everyone says 'It's a dress.' That's because of business and the body we see. It's not consumption on every level."

Salamon is steadily redefined by the image of beauty presented by today's Hollywood stars. "Back in the day they would dress really well. Now it's all kind of the same look: whatever's hot is very predictable. Every fashion brand now it's just the straight dress. Fashion is becoming too predictable by business as opposed to individual expression."

She made her ultimate goal is to show the real carpet with the lenses the learned growing up—especially in the Middle East, a region where traditional styles she came over frequently. "I lived in Egypt for a year and learned one of the daughters of a family prince," she says. "The fathers in Egypt, the men in their galleys, they're gorgeous and elegant and they're parents, workers. The beautiful clothes that they make themselves that feel Indian, it's Indian."

"To put a star in a black galleys or an Indian suit that's a fashion look," she adds. "Good careers are gorgeous, opportunities and education. In the Western world we rarely think anything from and that could ever be beautiful."

So what does Salamon think of her new found fame? Could it spur a new generation of older women to re-evaluate their perceptions of beauty? She certainly opens a trend in the fashion world towards catering for older women, shifting to shifting perceptions about who holds the purse strings these days. "There are so many baby boomers and we're really the ones who have the buying power," she says. "Designers are realizing that it behooves them to have older models."

"Who can really afford designer clothes these days? Of course, some can," she adds. "But for the most part it's older women who have had careers and worked, and are on top of their game. And why not? They are—look great!" Looking at the pictures on these pages, it's hard to see otherwise. ■

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