

MIRANDA MOREIRA

made PROFILE



creating limited edition, hand finished wall decor and sculptural pieces

One can imagine Miranda Moreira, owner of Bride&Wolfe, as a child. Dreamy, quiet, adventurous but solitary, happy making little worlds in the garden with secret pretend doors leading to lands rich with fairies, magic and the occasional friendly squirrel.

Inspiration for Miranda Moreira's whimsical woodcut works comes from multiple sources. From the rambling overgrown gardens of the seaside Melbourne suburbs where she grew up; to the light, sunsets and landscapes of the Australia she travelled around as a young adult; to the ornate, beautiful curly art nouveau influences of classical Paris where she spent six - self confessed - formative years.

"When I was in Paris, everywhere I looked was incredibly beautiful," Miranda says. "I was constantly inspired. It completely blew my mind."

After successfully finishing a Fine Arts degree in Melbourne, then completing a chef's apprenticeship in response to a growing passion for food and the hospitality industry, Miranda left Melbourne to travel to London and eventually Paris.

"I was working as a private chef for a French actor, who was also an art collector. His house was filled with these amazing statues and paintings.



Every day I would walk from my apartment, through the 16th arrondissement, to his house to cook dinner for him and his family. One day in a shop I spied a wood carving of a fairytale scene. It was an antique and they wouldn't sell it. But the image stayed with me."

All these new influences, combined with access to emerging technologies such as razor cutting, started Miranda thinking. She came back to Melbourne in 2005, pregnant with her first child, and started up Bride&Wolfe.

"I'd been back to Melbourne for a visit the year before and noticed there was a lot of laser cut jewellery around. I'd started thinking about using the technique on a larger scale."

At the start, the set up of the business required a lot of research, which Miranda loved. "I had to get out and speak to loads of people. I needed to find the right processes, the right timber. I'd had my first baby by then, so he'd come with me. I'd be sitting in a big old warehouse speaking to a supplier and breastfeeding."

When speaking with Miranda a strong sense of family is a continuing theme; from the way she has structured her business, with a studio in her backgarden so she can be home for her two boys, to the design of her 'whale' piece,



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from the curves of art nouveau to children's book illustrations, Miranda's inspirations are many



detailing an adventurous little boy riding atop of a majestic whale, inspired by her elder son.

She also takes inspiration from illustrations in books she reads to her boys, often books she'd read herself as a child. "I love Jan Pienkowski and Mary Ellsworth; both worked with silhouettes. I also love 1960s and 1970s Hallmark illustrations; they have a sense of creating family."

Miranda took her first couple of finished pieces to Kathy Hope, owner of Douglas & Hope, who sold them on consignment and promptly reordered.

As orders increased over the years Miranda has had to look at employing casual help from young Melbourne based artists to assist with some of the more time-consuming elements of the process. All the finishing of every Bride&Wolfe piece - sanding, painting, varnishing - is done by hand in Melbourne.

But Bride&Wolfe has never been about mass production or having the products in a lot of stores. "Especially in a city like Melbourne, which prides itself on original thinking and finding unique things," says Miranda. "I like the way the business grows, quietly moving forward. It suits me and my lifestyle."

Miranda has also spent some time going to design markets. "It was my first time hearing directly from my customers. It was exhausting but inspiring."

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*What's in a name?
The name 'Bride&Wolfe' came to Miranda after many weeks of trying out different names and word combinations. She'd been initially thinking of a more obvious French sounding name, but none of them were sounding quite right. Finally she realised the brand needed a name that evoked something slightly mysterious, enchanting and ominous, like the bride running away with the wolf prince. And hence, Bride&Wolfe came to be.*

In 2007 Miranda set up her own web shop, offering her products directly to customers. "It is a more cost-effective way of selling," she says, then promptly starts laughing. "Before I started this I didn't even know what cost-effective meant. Or PR. But I did know how to work hard."

Miranda's advice to others thinking of starting their own business is to foster open and honest relationships with wholesalers and suppliers. "It's vital to have a positive forward moving attitude, and not to be afraid."

And what does the future hold for Bride&Wolfe in Melbourne?

"I have about 15 designs in my head I haven't even had time to get down yet," says Miranda. "As my children get older I'll look at expanding further, looking for a larger studio, growing beyond Australian and New Zealand sales. But it will always be Melbourne based."



After some amazing times overseas, especially in Paris, Miranda is happy to be home and to run her business from here. "Melbourne is an amazing city, with so much going on. I'm sure I don't know 99% of the design work that goes on here, but what I see I like. It is dynamic and youthful and I am happy to be home."

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