



Hi! Blitz Interviews
Linh-Dan Pham

An exploration of Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava's own language, Dina JSR's third collection unfolds through delicate volumes, constructed as a replica of Calatrava's most successful works: a pathway opens up over a bare back, a corrugated roof reproduced through architectural folds, an over-head archway inspiring a geometric winged yoke.

Orchestrating a vocabulary of its own, the collection prolongs the encounter between architecture and femininity, spatial construction and fluidity to define its very own 'Poetical Movement'.



In this exclusive interview, we speak to French actress with Vietnamese descent, Linh-Dan Pham about her photoshoot in Dina JSR's dresses.

You're looking lovely in Lebanese designer Dina JSR's dresses. Tell us about your experience with this photo shoot and the pieces you wore.

Oh thank you! I so enjoyed this photo shoot! I fell in love with the dresses by Dina JSR. They are so glamorous and give such a womanly silhouette. I am usually very nervous for photo shoots and it is worse when I don't feel comfortable in the clothes, but in this case I loved every minute of it. When I put on any of the dresses I felt instantly very feminine but strong. They have great structure. On a day-to-day basis, I dress in a smart casual way, verging on the tomboy side ... but after wearing Dina JSR dresses, I rediscovered the pleasure of being more feminine, of enjoying wearing a dress and I made a note to myself: "Have to wear dresses more often!"

Architecture is a primary source of inspiration for the designer; having lived in some of the most urban locations in the world, how is your style inspired by

the big city life? What urban elements influence your style?

Actually I am heavily affected by my surroundings. I think there is an essence and sensibility in the style of the big cities I've lived in that differs widely, but that I absorb when I am there for a while. If I look at photos of myself from those different times, I look like a different person, and it's the clothes and the hairstyles.

When I was living in Asia and spending a lot of time in cities like Singapore, Hong Kong and Ho Chi Minh City, I tended to conform to a slightly more traditional feminine style when I dressed up, dresses and blouses in silk, carefully coordinated combinations, hair long and straight, not very adventurous; or for casual wear, very casual and summery, singlets and jeans, flip flops.

These cities follow the mainstream, they have a certain elegance, but don't really

set the trend, they don't hum with such an edgy vibe, and I was just wearing the "right" things. When I moved to New York to train at the Lee Strasberg Theater Institute it was like discovering a whole new me in that city; it hit me like a slap in the face and I loved it. On one level it didn't matter what I wore, because in New York you are anonymous against the scale and pace of the urban landscape, and I was just a theater student. On another level it's almost an obligation to explore and experiment as the city oozes originality and there are no taboos. It's also the place where strangers in restaurants, bars or the subway will spontaneously tell you "I love your look" – the weirder, the more appreciation, I loved the positivity; though I'm not sure I found my style. Now living between London and Paris, the effortless originality of London and the haute elegance of Paris have overlaid the edgier tendencies I picked up in New York. I love the result. I go for a much sleeker silhouette, and mix designer pieces from Miu Miu, Burberry, DVF and others with skinny jeans and jackets from The Kooples and April 77, and with simple cashmere pieces and other basics from Loft Design By. Then of course there are the red carpets, photo shoots and fashion shows that are much more a part of my life in Paris, where >>



I can pile on the true glamour, and try some of these great new designers like Dina JSR, Maison Rabih Kayrouz, Alexis Mabille as well as the established gods of glamour like Elie Saab.

You grew up in France, studied in New York, worked in Vietnam and Singapore and now you've added London to your list. Tell us about the influence this had on your career as an actress.

I believe traveling is very good for the soul. It forces you to be curious, to deal with the unknown and as a result you learn about yourself a lot.

Each country I lived in made me who I am today and I use all of that in my acting. France is where I grew up and spent my teenage years. Vietnam is my country of origin and living there made me understand my Asian roots better but I also had my first business job there in marketing and so I had many things to process at the same time! Singapore is where I realized that I did not want to pursue a career in business. New York is where I found my

true calling: acting. I think that by having traveled so much and done a few different things in my life has nourished me and so I am able to relate more to different stories that are offered to me when I go shoot a movie. I don't regret having waited so long to go back to films after INDOCHINE. Actually, I wasn't waiting for anything, I was just growing up! I needed that time to "construct" myself.

Paris has served as a strong inspiration for many designers in the region. What inspires you about the city you grew up in? How has it influenced your style?

Paris is where my acting career is centered. So a lot of my inspiration comes from the widely varying roles I play, rather from the city itself. Every movie brings a new look, and it's fun to work with the wardrobe designer to create the look which sometimes involves going shopping together. I've been a musician, a fast food waitress, a drug-pushing pharmacist, a space-age scientist and retired super-model super-bitch, among others. This is also the way I've experimented with hairstyles – a few years



ago I had to have a totally shaved head for a film, and the process of re-growing over a couple of years gave birth to a whole lot of new looks! Having said that, Paris itself inspires, or even demands, elegance, and it's where a lot of the red carpets, premieres, and parties happen for me so I can happily indulge that urge....

What are some of the high-end brands you would consider yourself loyal to? Which brands reflect Linh-Dan Pham?

My style does change from time to time with the influences of the different movie roles, designers I get dressed by for events and other new things. I am like a sponge. I take it all in. I don't think I have a final style, and can't claim particular loyalty, but I do love the youthful hip-ness of Burberry, the vivid structure and edgy femininity of Miu Miu, and the wonderfully clean lines and fabrics by Thomas Meier at Bottega Veneta. I suppose I will also treasure some of the incredible ball gowns by Elie Saab that I've

worn, especially the extraordinary gold lamee creation I was wearing when I won the Cesar. And if there's one outfit I have always fantasized about – since I sometimes go for that masculine look – what could be better than a super slim-cut men's smoking jacket and trousers by Yves Saint Laurent?

Let's talk about your return to the movie industry. Which types of roles are you mostly drawn to?

My tastes are quite eclectic and I have no career strategy, really. I am most interested in artistic adventures, to be part of someone's vision or world, so it doesn't matter to me whether the director is well established or is a beginner. All I am looking for is an artistic and human journey. So far, I have appeared in a lot of dramas. It seems that people think I am a very serious person. That's probably because I get very shy and reserved in public but in reality I love goofing around and laughing! I would love to do some action movies or comedies. I have recently done my first real comedy, and discovered I could do it, which was a revelation to me. I am a big fan of Judd Apatow but also Wes Anderson, Steven Spielberg, Jacques Audiard, François Ozon, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Arnaud Desplechin, Kathryn Bigelow... Ah, so many people I want to work with, so little time!

Interviewed by:
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