

Feature

Dedicated follower of fashion



■ Kasia Guzik is founder of The Mania, a new fashion feature, styling and visual merchandising business Pictures: Jon Guegan

KASIA Guzik is the founder of The Mania, a local business focused on contributing and collaborating on fashion-related content with Jersey-based publications, retailers, creative people and event organisers.

'The idea came to me a while ago, really,' says Polish-born Kasia. 'I have always had an intense interest in fashion. It was not until September of last year, though, that I really started to put together in my mind what The Mania could be.'

Her choice of name for the start-up can be easily explained. 'It is because I am a maniac,' she said with a laugh.

'A maniac about fashion, and honestly about everything I do – I am a very creative and passionate person, so if I am into something, then I am into it 100%.'

Born and raised in Krakow, Kasia has spent a lot of time in the UK and now lives and works in Jersey. Already balancing a full-time job in marketing with work for her graphic design company, House of Ideas, The Mania has progressively taken up more and more of Kasia's spare time since its inception.

'I essentially have three jobs,' she said. 'People always ask me, "How do you have time for this or that?" Well, I suppose I am just sort of used to it. I am busy all the time, and my social life mostly consists of meeting clients rather than my friends – although when we do catch up, we inevitably end up speaking for hours and hours. I have learned to survive on less sleep, too. There have been days where I have been up all night working until six in the morning, and then have to get ready for my day job at eight.'

One of Kasia's first clients for The Mania was local country lifestyle magazine Rural. 'I came up with this idea, because Jersey is quite famous for its equestrian pursuits and countryside living – why not run a feature which blends lifestyle with fashion? That sort of topic had never been run in the magazine before, so it was something fresh that could attract new readers. I did not want to stick to classic countryside fashion, either, like Hunter wellies and Barbour jackets. It was about utilising items which are suitable to be worn by people from any walk of life and any age,

Kasia Guzik is on a mission to promote the culture of fashion through her work in features, shoots and styling. She spoke to Jon Vickers about her passion for her new business

whether they actually live in the country or are just inspired by it.'

Since then Kasia has also worked with the likes of Gallery Magazine and Oliver Doran Photography. One of the benefits to the sort of work The Mania is involved in is that it allows Kasia the liberty to express herself.

'We usually have a loose structure in mind in terms of layout, and then there will be some mutual input of ideas. Which is good, but on the whole I am given freedom – I'm a free spirit, and I have to admit that sometimes it can be distracting as a creative person to be micro-managed on small details.'

Sometimes fashion in Jersey can be fairly conservative – this is something that Kasia has seen before.

'It has improved since then but it used to be the case in Krakow, when I lived there over 13 years ago, that if you wore something that made you stand out from the crowd too much, then you would attract strange glances from people.'

'London is different, though. You could go out wearing pyjamas and slippers and people would think, "Oh, that must be the new trend".'

In terms of what can be done in order to make people feel more confident in dressing the way that they want to, retail options can play an important role. 'Ultimately, it comes down to access to fashion,' said Kasia. 'In the bigger cities, there are so many shops around, and that then trick-

les down to what you see people wearing on the high street.'

With up-to-date trends and bold, eye-catching looks often covered in her work, Kasia is also making a difference in changing local opinions about fashion. The future looks bright for The Mania, and Kasia is already thinking about possible stages in its future development.

'There are two ideas that I have at the moment. Firstly, I would like to be creative director for a team of people – a hairdresser, a beautician, a photographer and perhaps also with me working as a stylist – where we could be prepared for anything, be it an advert, an event or a fashion shoot. The second would be to set up a store, a boutique. The idea that I envision is like nothing else that exists in Jersey, but for now it remains a secret. I would rather not share it!'

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Until it is time to make the next step, Kasia is continuing her tireless – or at least, with the lack of sleep, restless – efforts to grow the culture of fashion in Jersey to new heights, through her work in fashion features, shoots and styling.