

STYLEAID Established Designer Profile: S2

If Chrissie Catling's label, [S2](#), was a cinematic feat it'd be an underground cult classic.

While other labels try to gorge themselves on big budget effects and sweeping gestures, hers is gritty, raw, multilayered and more than anything else, real.

Her clothes are edgy and directional. They intelligently accentuate, are asymmetrical and minimal, yet bold in their simplicity.

'There are elements of architecture and what a very subtle palette means,' Catling told OUTinPerth recently when asked about the aesthetic of her label.

'Yes a lot of it has a dominance of black, especially in winter, but what does that bring to you as a person? If you have a great love of that simplicity, what does it bring to your soul? It's about nurturing the self.'

At the heart of Catling's label pulses two boutiques, one in North Perth and one in Mosman Park. It is here that you'll discover three crucial aspects to Catling's ongoing success: the product, the environment you find yourself in, and the service you receive there.

'They're our three very important things here, and that will never change. It's become stronger and more apparent to us that what is so important is good old fashioned honest service.

'That's what we're all about: not just feel good, but seriously look good.'

For STYLEAID, Catling will be exploring the sublime layering S2 is renowned for in a collection called Silt.

'I remember as a child walking into the water at the dam and your feet touching the cold water, but then before you really stick your feet in the mud or on the earth there is that very fine layer of silt.

'We do layer a lot, so it's about that fine layer, and this summer there are lots of finer layers. Last season was quite strong and bold and this season I think there'll be more that you can actually pull together, not in a bulky way, but on a fine layering "silt-ish" level.'

Catling's advice to emerging designers is simple: failure is never an option.

'You've got to believe you're going to make it happen because it's a tough industry but it's also a very rewarding one.

'And never forget that the people at the end of the line are the customers. Try and design with an everyday person body shape in mind would be fantastic, and you have to go in there with the belief that failure is not an option. Always.'

To add to this year's proceedings, S2 will be doing a small in-store fashion fundraiser for the WA AIDS Council, creating in collaboration with pre-eminent Perth street artist Stormie Mills a limited edition little black shift emblazoned with a Stormie print.

The perfect art piece, it can be adorned or displayed, layered or worn by itself, all done in a subtle black on black style. And ultimately, it's just another aspect that appeals to the overall cult classic that is S2.

S2 is located on Angove Street in North Perth and Glyde Street in Mosman Park and stocks Alistair Trung, Lui Hon, Skinny Nelson, Andrew McDonald shoes and S2. STYLEAID happens Friday July 30. www.styleaid.com.au

Scott-Patrick Mitchell

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