The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Teenage Designer Grows Up With Workaholic Superpowers

By Lena Smirnova

February 26, 2013



Photoshoots are among the many things keeping the young designer busy.

If Kira Plastinina could choose a superpower, a good option given her busy schedule would be to become an extremely efficient multitasker. At second glance, the 20-year-old fashion designer seems to already have that ability.

She is multitasking even while giving an interview. During the whole time, a makeup artist is hurriedly getting her ready for what is expected to be a five-hour-long photo shoot for the cover of a fashion magazine.

The heavy workload is nothing new for Plastinina, who broke onto the Russian fashion scene in 2007 when she was just 14 years old. A year after the first fashion show of the Kira Plastinina brand, aimed at teenage girls, the daughter of Russian entrepreneur Sergei Plastinin went on to launch premium level brand LUBLU and show the collection in Milan.

She is now the chief designer and head of Kira Plastinina Style Fashion House. The company has 180 stores worldwide, manufacturing in the Moscow region and in 2012 its turnover reached 4 billion rubles ($131 million).

“When I was 14, I was more involved on just the creative side, but now I’m getting more involved on the business side,” Plastinina said of her changing role in the company. “I’m not a child anymore. I’m involved in everything, every single part.”

Most of the time Plastinina manages the company remotely since she is currently taking up to 18 hours of classes each week at an American university to get her degree in art history and business.

This schedule doesn’t leave much free time, and the rare free moments Plastinina does get she prefers to spend on doing homework or extracurricular activities, like decorating her apartment.

“I get very happy when I get a lot of things done,” she said. “I have a list and if I can put a lot of check marks and cross a lot of things off my list, that’s what makes me really happy.”

The designer sat down with The Moscow Times to talk about the challenges of an early career, time management and the state of the Russian fashion industry.

**Q: What were the main challenges of starting off in the fashion industry so early?**

A: I started when I was just 14. There was a lot of good press, but there was also some negative press, and being a teenager and not completely sure of myself, that was a little difficult at first. But then I talked to my parents, and I talked to my friends and people at work, and I realized that I'm good at what I do and people believe in me. I grew a thicker skin and stopped paying attention to the criticism.

What was great about me starting at such a young age is that I was so close to the girls who came to the store. We had the same hobbies, we listed to the same music, we all graduated at the same time, so they kind of grew up with me.

**Q: Who do you see as your main customers?**

A: I don't put anything in the store that I wouldn't want to wear myself, so I feel that the girls who come to the store would be a lot like me. They'd also be very active, ambitious, want to do everything, experiment with their style and not be really worried about what others think about their outfits. They would enjoy the process of putting outfits together and finding the newest trend.

**Q: In general, what would you say are the core values of young consumers today?**

A: For our generation, we don't have one specific place where we're from. I feel like we're very cosmopolitan, and our mentality is the same way.

My friends throughout my childhood were always from different countries, not just from the States, but from all over the world because I went to an international school. I feel that there aren't really  cultural differences, and because of the growth of the Internet we're very well

connected.

**Q: Are there any other designers that catered to your generation when you were growing up?**

A: Not really. What I was doing was so unique and so personal there wasn't really another designer I was looking at, trying to see what they're doing.

I used to be really inspired by Vivian Westwood when I was little and not in terms of the design of her clothes, but in terms of her attitude, how she didn't care about what anyone else thought and  really trusted herself. Her feeling about her work and about herself really inspired me and helped me be confident about what I'm doing.

**Q: What made you decide to go to university?**

A: I feel like I need more knowledge. The things that I'm learning right now have been so valuable for my work. Things that I'm learning in university, I'm bringing back here. It makes my company better. I feel that a person should never stop learning and should always seize any opportunity to learn something new.

**Q: How do you manage to find the time for school, work and personal activities?**

A: I learned how to plan my time since I was little because even before I started working, I always had a lot of after-school activities, like English classes, art classes, dance, German, French. Every day was filled with many, many activities after class was over, so I just grew up being really busy, learning how to manage my time wisely.

**Q: Your father is a successful businessman. What did you learn from him?**

A: His work for him is his baby. Just growing up with him and seeing how hard he works and how emotionally invested he is in his work made me think that way about my company too.

Also, one big thing that I learned from both of my parents is the relationship with other people at work. I love my work because I think we have a great work environment. When I come here from the States, the first place I want to go to is not even home to visit my family, but I want to go to work. So many people have been with us from the very beginning. These are the people that I grew up with and that's like a big work family.

**Q: With all the milestones your company reached over the past years, what was your proudest moment?**

A: The opening of the factory only two hours outside of Moscow was huge and great for the collection. Now we have better control over what's being made and flexibility too. Our production cycle was cut from nine months to two months, which is incredible. For example, if there's a jacket that everyone really likes and we run out, in two months we can bring it back to the store, make people happy again.

Another big thing that I'm personally really proud of is the social responsibility aspect of that. We opened 450 new jobs pretty much just outside of Moscow, and I think that's great for the country  and it's just a great project in every single way.

**Q: The factory opening is a boost of confidence in the Russian fashion industry. What do you see as its potential?**

A: Right now so many people are interested in Russian fashion, Russian it-girls and Russian designers internationally at all the different fashion weeks. We're getting so much attention, and I feel that now is our time to shine. I'm really excited about how there are more and more Russian designers that show their collections at international fashion weeks. The numbers just keep growing and growing. People are getting more and more enthusiastic and intrigued about Russian designers.

Contact the author at e.smirnova@imedia.ru

**Related articles**:

- European Photos Confront Russian Women With Aging
- Black-and-White Photos Show that Green is Great
- BBC Takes Another Stab at Filming 'War and Peace'

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/02/26/teenage-designer-grows-up-with-workaholic-superpowers-a21891