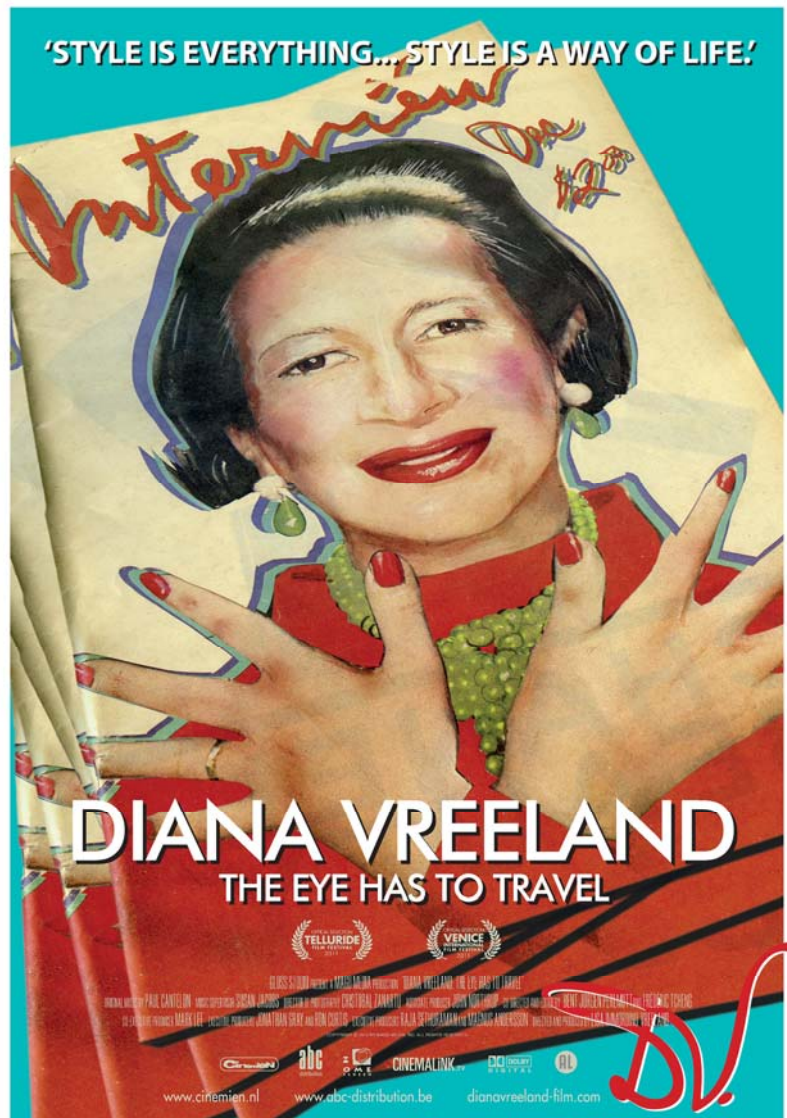


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DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL – synopsis nl + fr

Diana Vreeland – sprankelende persoonlijkheid, mode-icoon en hoofdredacteur – schreef geschiedenis door mode te verheffen tot kunstvorm. Vreeland zwaaide de scepter als hoofdredacteur van Harper's Bazaar en Vogue en creëerde een lifestyle vol glamour en excentriciteit die ongekend was in haar tijd. Vreeland werd bejubeld om haar humor en vlijmscherpe uitspraken als 'the bikini is the biggest thing since the atom bomb.' Twiggy, Lauren Bacall, Jackie O. en Coco Chanel behoorden tot haar meest intieme vrienden.

In de documentaire DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL blik The Empress of Fashion zelf terug op haar bewogen leven. De fine fleur uit de internationale modewereld komen aan het woord over deze grande dame aller tijdschriften.

Met o.a. Manolo Blahnik, Lauren Hutton, Diana von Furstenberg, David Bailey en Anjelica Huston.

Lengte 88min. / Taal: Engels / Land: Verenigde Staten

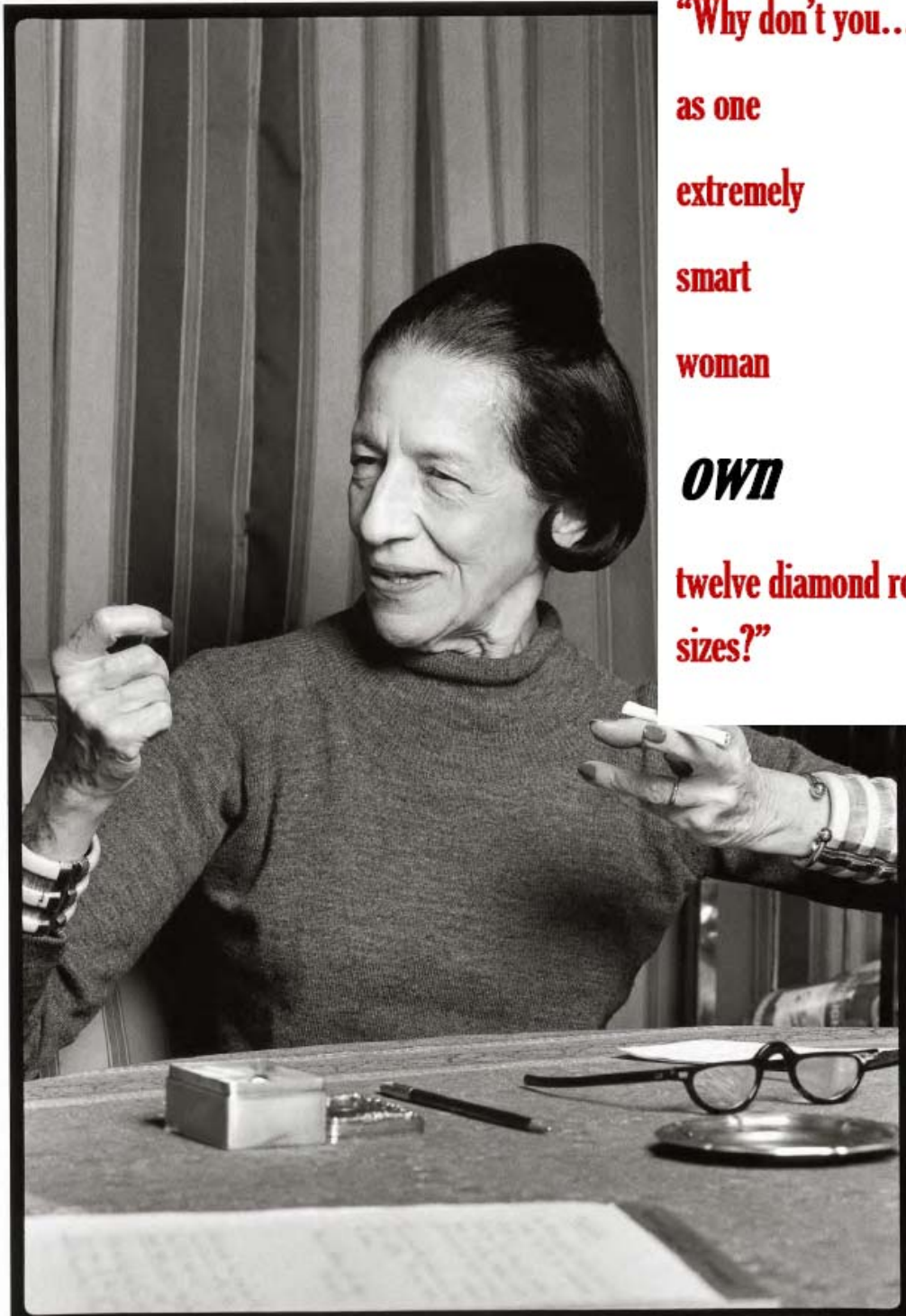
Diana Vreeland, personnalité hors norme, brillante, excentrique, aussi charmeuse qu'impérieuse, régna 55 ans durant sur la mode et éblouit le monde par sa vision unique du style.

DIANA VREELAND : THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL est à la fois un portrait intime et un vibrant hommage à l'une des femmes exceptionnelles du XXème siècle, véritable icône dont l'influence a changé le visage de la mode, de l'art, de l'édition et de la culture en général.

Avec e.a. Manolo Blahnik, Lauren Hutton, Diana von Furstenberg, David Bailey et Anjelica Huston.

Durée 88min. / Langue: anglais / Pays: Etats Unis





“Why don’t you...

as one

extremely

smart

woman

OWN

**twelve diamond roses of all
sizes?”**

Beroemd citaat uit een van Vreelands Why Don't You-columns – Citation connue d'un des Why Don't You-columns de Diana Vreeland

DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL – crew

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scenario / scénario Lisa Immordino Vreeland
..... Bent-Jorgen Perlmutt
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productie / production Magnus Andersson
..... Ron Curtis
..... Jonathan Gray
camera / caméra Christobal Zanartu
montage Bent-Jorgen Perlmutt
muziek / musique Paul Cantelon



DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL – Diana Vreeland

“Ik kan geen kleine hapjes uit de modewereld nemen, dat voelt als mezelf uithongeren”, aldus Diana Vreeland. De High Priestess of Fashion zat in het midden van de 20^{ste} eeuw vijftig jaar lang op haar glorieuze troon als hoofdredacteur van de toonaangevende modetijdschriften Harper's Bazaar en Vogue. Door haar inspanningen voor het Costume Institute van het Metropolitan Museum of Art wist Vreeland mode tot kunstvorm te verheffen.

In DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL van regisseur Lisa Immordino Vreeland blikt de in 1989 overleden Vreeland zelf terug op haar bewogen leven. De documentaire bestaat niet alleen uit vele archiefinterviews (veelal opgenomen in Vreelands bloemrijke woonkamer), maar ook uit nagespeelde dialogen tussen haar en schrijver George Plimpton, die in 1988 Vreelands memoires meeschreef. De fine fleur van de internationale modewereld komt aan het woord over deze grande dame aller tijdschriften. Regisseur Lisa Immordino Vreeland laat grootheden aan het woord als Diane von Fürstenberg, Andy Warhol, Manolo Blahnik en Oscar de la Renta wier carrière Vreeland vormgaf. De documentaire is fantastisch geïllustreerd met pagina's uit Vreelands tijdschriften en vele overrompelende archiefbeelden.

Diana Vreeland (1903-1989) was een beroemdheid en een New York socialite in haar tijd en een legende voor het nageslacht. Ze zwaaide de scepter als hoofdredacteur en columnist en werd bejubeld om haar humor én vlijmscherpe pen. In haar Why Don't You?-columns gaf zij haar lezeressen tips om elegant en origineel door het leven te gaan en... te dürfen dromen. Door haar uitgesproken persoonlijkheid was Vreeland kind aan huis bij de Amerikaanse beau monde en persoonlijk adviseuze van grootheden, zoals hartsvriendin Coco Chanel. In 1972, ná haar abrupte ontslag bij Vogue, werkte Vreeland voor het Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York als organisator van kunsttentoonstellingen die door haar onconventionele aanpak alle records braken. Met Vreelands tentoonstellingen, zoals The Glory of Russian Costume die meer dan een miljoen bezoekers trok, wist zij als een der eersten mode tot kunstvorm te verheven.

L'histoire de Diana Vreeland illustre l'accession des femmes au pouvoir et traverse certains des moments les plus marquants du XXème siècle dans le Paris de la Belle Epoque, le New York des années folles ou le Londres des « swinging sixties ». Elle rencontre également des événements majeurs comme les deux guerres mondiales, les vols de Charles Lindberg, l'histoire d'amour d'Edward VIII et de Wallis Simpson, la gloire et les tragédies des Kennedy, la libération des mœurs des années 1960 ainsi que les innombrables révolutions de la mode, du bikini au Blue Jean.

Diana Vreeland (1903-1989) a été l'arbitre du style du XXème siècle. Qualifiée d'« Impératrice de la mode », auteur de la fameuse chronique « Why Don't You ? » dans Harper's Bazaar, elle vécut une vie aussi trépidante qu'exceptionnelle, ponctuée de phrases définitives telles que « le bikini est la découverte la plus importante depuis la bombe atomique ». Conseillère de la First Lady Jackie Kennedy, devenue rédactrice en chef de Vogue, elle soutient des créateurs comme Yves Saint Laurent et Valentino, lance les mannequins stars des années 60 Twiggy et Marisa Berenson et fait reconnaître le talent de designers tels que Diane von Furstenberg, Oscar de la Renta et Manolo Blahnik. Tout commence à la Belle Epoque : le Modernisme, l'Art Nouveau, les ballets russes et la haute couture.

La jeune Diana est fascinée par les personnalités glamour et excentriques qui défilent dans le salon de ses parents à Paris. Mais son enfance est aussi marquée par une relation sans amour avec sa mère, américaine d'une beauté remarquable. « J'étais son horrible petit monstre » confiera Diana.

Au début de la première guerre mondiale, la famille déménage aux Etats-Unis. Diana, forcée de parler anglais, se met à bégayer et ne brille guère à l'école. Elle finit par abandonner ses études et se réfugie dans la danse, une vraie passion.

Si Diana ne se sent pas belle, elle ne s'apitoie jamais sur son sort. Elle crée plutôt son propre monde où le style, l'originalité et l'allure sont rois. Elle se construit une personnalité qui considère chaque moment de la vie comme une aventure, qu'elle soit témoin du couronnement du roi George V ou qu'elle monte à cheval avec Buffalo Bill dans le Wyoming. A 19 ans, elle ravit le cœur de l'un des célibataires les plus séduisants et les plus recherchés, Thomas Reed Vreeland. Installé à Londres, le couple commence une vie de voyages romantiques en Europe au volant du coupé Bugatti de Mr Vreeland : Paris, Budapest, Vienne, Rome. C'est à cette époque que Diana Vreeland découvre véritablement la couture et rencontre tous les créateurs de Paris.

La carrière inattendue de Diana dans la mode démarre à son retour à New York en 1936 lorsque Carmel Snow, rédactrice en chef d'Harper's Bazaar, remarque lors d'une soirée le style unique de Mrs Vreeland. Diana se voit proposer d'écrire dans la revue et se fait immédiatement remarquer par sa chronique provocatrice « Why don't you ? » qui encourage les lectrices à solliciter davantage leur imaginaire et à vivre leurs rêves. Elle écrira des homélies telles que, « Pourquoi ne rincez-vous pas les cheveux blonds de vos enfants au champagne pour qu'ils restent dorés ? », ou « Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas un dessus de lit en fourrure de singe blanche, montée sur du velours jaune ? ». Par le biais de sa rubrique et de ses photographies, Diana influence l'ensemble des pages du magazine de son sens incontestable de l'esthétique. Le photographe Richard Avedon, qui la surnomme affectueusement sa « tante folle », dira d'elle qu'« elle était et demeure la seule rédactrice de mode de génie. »

Après 25 ans chez Harper's Bazaar, Diana rejoint Vogue en tant que rédactrice en chef. C'était les années soixante et selon Diana Vreeland « Vous pouviez bien avoir une bosse sur le nez, tant que vous aviez un corps et un maintien sublimes, personne n'en avait rien à faire. » La singularité était alors célébrée et la transformation que Diana Vreeland fait subir à Vogue est à l'avant-garde de cette révolution culturelle. Les pages de Vogue explosent de mode, d'art, de musique, de cinéma. Vogue devient jeune, novateur, excitant, le magazine où les mannequins ont une personnalité et où la mode s'adresse à toutes les femmes. Diana devient une légende vivante, avec sa silhouette marquante, ses cheveux noirs de jais, son accent étrange, quelque part entre la haute société et l'argot de la rue.

Son fameux salon rouge, « un jardin en enfer », devient le quartier général de la société artistique new-yorkaise. Diana considère ces années comme les plus merveilleuses de sa vie – une époque adaptée à son imagination sauvage et fertile.

La mort de son mari met un terme à cette période d'ivresse et, peu après, Diana est sèchement renvoyée de Vogue en 1971, mettant le monde de la mode sens dessus-dessous. On dit qu'elle en fut si bouleversée qu'elle passa une année entière au lit. Mais Diana n'avait pas dit son dernier mot.

En 1973, à 70 ans, elle commence à travailler au Costume Institute du Metropolitan Museum où elle met en place de nouvelles normes pour exposer la mode à travers le monde, réveillant une institution quelque peu endormie. Tel un réalisateur de film, elle crée des décors dans lesquels des rêves conçus de toutes pièces prennent vie. Son approche controversée s'appuie davantage sur la mise en scène théâtrale que sur des faits historiques.

Les historiens qui la critiquent se tairont rapidement devant le succès public de ses expositions et le gain en notoriété du Costume Institute. Diana mélangea les faits et la fiction tout au long de sa carrière, déclarant même que Charles Lindberg était passé en avion au-dessus de son jardin à Brewster.

Alors qu'un curieux tenait à savoir si cette histoire était effective ou fictive, elle répondit, définitive : « Effective ! ».

Oracle de la mode du XXème siècle, Diana Vreeland voulut toujours convier le plus grand nombre à la rejoindre dans son voyage de réinvention perpétuelle de la vie. A travers son œil appliqué et avisé, elle a ouvert la porte de nos esprits et nous a donné la liberté d'imaginer. Ses idées et ses accomplissements sont aussi pertinents aujourd'hui qu'ils l'étaient à l'époque. Jackie Onassis l'exprimait ainsi : « Résumer l'entreprise de Diana à son influence dans le secteur de la mode minimise son implication réelle. Elle a posé sur son époque un regard sage et spirituel : « She has lived a life.»



DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL – chronologie

- 1903** Naissance de Diana Dalziel le 29 juillet à Paris.
« Diana réinventait son image et sa vie pour effacer le souvenir de cette petite fille sans amour ... Un besoin viscéral de singularité lui a permis de développer un instinct infaillible pour reconnaître l'originalité. »
- 1914** La famille Dalziel émigre aux Etats-Unis
- 1924** Mariage le 1er mars avec Thomas Reed Vreeland : « La chose la plus importante est d'aimer passionnément. Sans cela, qu'avons-nous ? Si vous vous contentez d'aimer quelqu'un, vous pourrez l'aimer autant que vous voudrez mais si ce n'est pas la passion brûlante qui vous dévaste, vous n'avez rien vécu. »
- 1925** Naissance de Thomas Reed Vreeland Jr
- 1927** Naissance de Frederick Dalziel Vreeland
- 1928** La famille Vreeland emménage à Londres.
Ouverture de sa boutique de lingerie que Wallis Simpson, future duchesse de Windsor, fréquentera assidument : « Un jour Wallis Simpson est entrée dans ma boutique. Elle savait exactement ce qu'elle voulait. Elle a commandé trois chemises de nuit : tout d'abord, il y en avait une en satin blanc, une copie de Vionnet. Ensuite, il y avait celle dont j'avais acheté l'original à Paris, à une formidable lingère russe. Toutes les grandes ingénères étaient russes, elles étaient les seules qui connaissaient réellement le luxe quand le luxe était à la mode. Le tour de cou était entièrement composé de pétales, c'était extraordinaire, quand vous bougiez elles ondulaient.
Enfin la troisième était une pièce merveilleuse en crêpe de Chine. Deux étaient bleu pâle, une autre était blanche.
A cette époque elle avait quitté son mari, Ernest Simpson. Elle n'avait personne pour la soutenir financièrement, c'était donc une grande folie pour elle. Ces chemises de nuit étaient destinées à un week-end très particulier. Le Prince de Galles avait découvert Wallis Simpson. »
- 1933** Diana est présentée le 18 mai au roi George V et à la reine Mary
- 1936** Carmel Snow l'engage au Harper's Bazaar où elle tiendra près d'un quart de siècle sa fameuse rubrique « Why don't you ? » et où elle développera des liens privilégiés avec l'avant-garde des créateurs de mode américains.
- 1945** Richard Avedon collabore pour la première fois avec Harper's Bazaar et rencontre Diana Vreeland : « Mrs Vreeland avait un bureau étroit, tout en longueur. Tout au bout, il y avait une mannequin, un peu gothique, vêtue d'une robe de mariée, stricte et également gothique. Je me tenais dans l'entrée. Mrs Vreeland ne me regardait pas. Elle a crié « Baron ! ». A ses côtés se tenait le baron Nicolas de Gunzburg, unique homme rédacteur de mode à

l'époque – une pelote à épingle accrochée sur le cœur comme une croix de guerre, - et elle criait « Baron, les épingles ! ». Elle en a pris une, a marché jusqu'au mannequin, balançant ses hanches, jusqu'à l'autre bout du bureau. Elle a planté son épingle, non seulement dans la robe mais aussi dans la fille, qui a laissé s'échapper un petit cri. Diana est retournée à son bureau, a levé les yeux sur moi pour la première fois, et a dit « Aberdeen, Aberdeen, est ce que cela ne vous donne pas envie de pleurer ? ». Et en effet, cela me donnait envie de pleurer.

Je suis retourné voir Carmel Snow et lui ai dit « Je ne peux pas travailler avec cette femme. Elle m'appelle Aberdeen. » Elle me répondit « Vous allez travailler avec elle », et je l'ai fait, pour mon plus grand plaisir, pendant près de 40 ans. Diana Vreeland a inventé la rédactrice de mode. Avant elle, il ne s'agissait que de dames de la haute société qui mettaient des chapeaux à d'autres dames de la haute société ! »

1957 FUNNY FACE de Stanley Donen s'inspire de son amitié et de sa collaboration avec Richard Avedon. Les personnages de Maggie Prescott et Dick Avery sont interprétés par Kay Thompson et Fred Astaire.

« Carmel Snow était ravie de la publicité que Funny Face offrait à Bazaar, à l'inverse de Vreeland. Cette dernière a assisté à une projection privée avec ses collaborateurs, et à la fin du film, elle s'est levée avec beaucoup de dignité ; alors qu'elle quittait la salle de projection, elle a murmuré à son assistante : « Never to be discussed » (Nous n'en parlerons jamais).

1960 Elle devient la conseillère de mode de Jackie Kennedy

1962 Diana quitte le Harper's Bazaar et devient rédactrice en chef de Vogue l'année suivante

1966 QUI ETES-VOUS POLLY MAGGOO ? est une satire de William Klein sur le monde de la mode dont le personnage Miss Maxwell est inspiré de Diana Vreeland. La même année, disparition de Thomas Reed Vreeland

1970 Diana Vreeland devient Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite avant d'être ... remerciée l'année suivante par le magazine Vogue : « Le monde de la mode est resté sans voix. Il semblerait que ce soit Alexander Liberman qui ait pris la décision même si Newhouse en a été le messenger. Leur relation était devenue compliquée, le coût de réalisation de chaque numéro était exorbitant. Il apparaît aussi qu'elle ne parvenait pas à saisir le nouvel esprit de la femme des années 70. La décennie du « moi » comme la surnommait Tom Wolfe, une décennie de prise de conscience de son individualité.

Liberman et Newhouse devaient penser que Vogue était trop exotique, onéreux, et aventureux pour coexister avec les nouvelles idées de l'époque. Son assistante, Grace Mirabella, s'est glissée dans le fameux bureau rouge et l'a immédiatement repeint en beige. »

- 1972** Diana Vreeland consultante du Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute.
- 1977** A l'occasion du portrait consacré à Diana Vreeland dans Rolling Stone, Truman Capote déclare : « Je ne peux penser qu'à 7 ou 8 femmes réellement originales. Aux Etats-Unis, nous en avons très peu. Emily Dickinson en faisait partie. Mais Mrs Vreeland, ou Madame Vreeland comme je l'appelle toujours, est une femme extraordinairement originale... Elle a contribué plus que quiconque à élever le goût des américaines...
C'est un génie mais le genre de génie que peu de gens reconnaîtront ».
- 1984** Publication des ses mémoires sous le titre D.V.
- 1985** Elle est nommée Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres
- 1989** Elle décède d'une crise cardiaque le 22 août.





Hoewel Lisa Immordino Vreeland haar schoongrootmoeder nooit heeft ontmoet, heeft ze in ieder geval één ding met de modelegende gemeen: she never takes no for an answer.

Deze vastberadenheid kwam goed van pas bij haar debuut als auteur en filmmaker.

Lisa was bekend met de familiegeschiedenis en had ongelimiteerde toegang tot het enorme archief van Diana Vreelands werk, maar ze had geen eerdere ervaring met schrijven of regisseren. Haar volharding won uiteindelijk.

Het viel Lisa op dat de legende van Vreeland niet altijd goed begrepen werd en wilde daarom jongere generaties informeren over meer dan de publieke persoonlijkheid van het mode icoon. “Ik had het gevoel dat ze verkeerd begrepen werd. Iedereen

kent de buitenkant van Diana Vreeland,” legt Lisa uit. “Wanneer mensen over haar praten, hebben ze het altijd over haar uiterlijk en haar manieren. Ik wilde haar serieuze kant tonen, het karakter van de vrouw.”

Een ander punt wat Lisa gemeen heeft met de altijd stijlvolle D.V. is een lange carrière in de mode. Lisa begon haar carrière als PR manager voor het Italiaanse Polo Ralph Lauren en heeft daarna verschillende modebedrijven gelanceerd – ze stond aan het begin van de wereldwijde sportmodelijn van Fabrizio Ferri, de sportmode van Pratico en een eigen kasjmier modelijn.

Tijdens het schrijven van het boek DIANA VREELAND: THE EYE HAS TO TRAVEL raakte Lisa geïnspireerd om een documentaire te maken die nog meer zou laten zien van Vreelands veelzijdigheid. Lisa woont in New York met haar man Alexander Vreeland en haar 8-jarige dochter Olivia, de achterkleindochter van Diana Vreeland....

Lisa Immordino Vreeland a passé les 25 dernières années immergée dans le monde de la mode et de l’art. Elle a commencé sa carrière dans la mode en tant que directrice des relations publiques pour Polo Ralph Lauren en Italie puis a lancé deux marques de vêtements, Pratico, une ligne sportswear pour les femmes et Mago, une collection de vêtement en cashmere dont elle est la styliste. Lisa a également été consultante pour plusieurs maisons de mode italiennes. Elle est mariée à Alexander Vreeland, petit-fils de Diana Vreeland.

Diana Vreeland -- tastemaker, magazine editor, Costume Institute institution -- was perhaps the city's most recognizable fashion icon. A look at a life of high style -- and high drama.

By Eleanor Dwight



STEP LIVELY: An image of Vreeland that appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1936. She had just begun her 26-year reign at the magazine.

(Photo: Martin Munkacsi;
Copyright Joan Munkacsi/Diana
Vreeland Archives.)

In the early spring of 1936, Carmel Snow, the legendary editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, watched as a young, dark-haired woman glided across the dance floor at the St. Regis hotel. She wore a white Chanel lace dress with a bolero and roses in her jet-black hair; her high cheekbones were heavily rouged. Snow was entranced and offered the woman -- a wife and mother of two just returned with her husband from six years abroad -- a job. And the rest is fashion history.

"I'd only been here for six months," Diana Vreeland later recalled. Though her husband, Reed, had been working at a bank, she also needed a job, badly. "I was going through money like one goes through . . . a bottle of scotch, I suppose, if you're an alcoholic." Thus began a tenure at *Bazaar* that would last 26 years, launching Vreeland as an American fashion icon.

She stood out from the start. Readers were introduced to her signature epigrammatic style with the typically colourful "Why Don't You?" column, which she began writing in August of 1936. "Why don't you . . . Turn your child into an Infanta for a fancy-dress party?" she asked

readers. "Why don't you own, as does one extremely smart woman, twelve diamond roses of all sizes?" The theme repeated over and over in Vreeland's column was a personal credo: Don't just be your ordinary dull self. Why don't you be ingenious and make yourself into something else?

This maxim had served her well in the past. Raised in New York by her American mother, Emily Key Hoffman, and English father, Frederick Young Dalziel, little Diana -- with her dark, curly hair, deep-set eyes, and aquiline nose -- had to contend with being the plain girl in a family of beauties. Her mother, a free-spirited socialite who ran with a bohemian crowd, was dubbed the "Society Carmencita" after John Singer Sargent's popular painting of a Spanish dancer; her younger sister, Alexandra, was blonde and angelic. As a child, Diana was told by her mother, "It's too bad that you have such a beautiful sister and

that you are so extremely ugly and so terribly jealous of her. This, of course, is why you are so impossible to deal with." Vreeland later summed up, with her typical aplomb: "Parents, you know, can be terrible."

For her part, Vreeland found her mother's flamboyance embarrassing. She claimed Emily came to Mother's Day at Brearley in "a bright green tweed suit and a little golden-yellow Tyrolean fedora with a little black feather, gilt at the end, that was short but sharp -- I'm talking sharp -- and she was very made up." In her teenage journal, she confided that "Mother and I agree on practically nothing." Instead, Diana emulated her classmates in how to dress; she worked on becoming tidy, enlarging her vocabulary, improving her manners. For the rest of her life, Vreeland would refine this ability to reinvent herself. "For years I am and always have been looking out for girls to idealize because they are things to look up to, because they are perfect," she wrote in her diary. But since she had never discovered "that girl or that woman," she announced, "I shall be that girl."

At Bazaar, Vreeland set about reinventing the job of fashion editor. She chose the American clothes to be featured in the magazine, oversaw the photography, and worked with the models. "I know what they're going to wear before they wear it, what they're going to eat before they eat it," she announced. "I know where they're going before it's even there!"

Photographer Richard Avedon credits Vreeland with starting "a totally new profession." Before her, the fashion editor was a society lady putting hats on other society ladies. Vreeland, on the other hand, felt that "to-day only personality counts . . . I do not believe we should put in [the magazine] so-called society, as it is *démodé* and practically doesn't exist . . . but ravishing personalities are the most riveting things in the world -- conversation, people's interests, the atmosphere that they create round them -- these are the things that I feel are worth putting in any issue."

When Avedon first met Vreeland, he was standing at the doorway of her long, narrow office, at the far end of which stood a model in a stiff wedding dress. "Mrs. Vreeland never looked at me. She cried, 'Baron!' Beside her stood Baron de Gunzburg, the only male fashion editor in the world, a pincushion hanging like a Croix de Guerre from a ribbon at his throat, and she cried, 'Baron! Baron, the pins!' She took one pin and walked swinging her hips down to the end of the office. She stuck the pin not only into the dress but into the girl, who let out a little scream. Vreeland returned to her desk, looked up at me for the first time and said, 'Aberdeen, Aberdeen, doesn't it make you want to cry?' Well, it did. I went back to Carmel Snow and said, 'I can't work with that woman. She calls me Aberdeen.' And Carmel Snow said, 'You're going to work with her.' And I did, to my enormous benefit, for almost 40 years."

Vreeland's home life was just as dramatic. When the war began in Europe in 1939, Reed moved to Canada, while Diana stayed in New York in order to keep her job at Bazaar. "Reed was living in Montreal through the war, working for British interests," Vreeland wrote in her memoir, DV. "It was a very vivid period in my life. For seven years, I was by myself." She was devoted to her dashing husband, whom she had met in 1923 and

married the following year; she was so smitten, on their first meeting, that when he asked her to play golf, she jumped at the chance, although she barely knew how to play. She showed up at the first tee with a bandaged arm and announced that she could only walk around the course with him.

And yet the relationship was far from perfect. There had always been rumors about Reed's liaisons, but Diana had looked the other way. Now people said that Reed had left his wife and was living in Canada with another woman. It was even rumored that Diana went to Montreal and confronted his girlfriend. She sat her down in front of a mirror and said, "Look at you, you are young and beautiful, and you have everything ahead of you. I am getting older and I have only my wonderful husband."



STYLISH PAIR: Diana and Reed Vreeland--her stylish, urbane husband with whom she had two sons, and whose death in 1966 devastated her--on the steps of the Southampton Bathing Corporation in the late forties.

(Photo: Pragoff Cantor, Diana Vreeland Archives.)

After the war, Reed returned to Manhattan, and the couple resumed a schedule filled with chic parties animated by their coterie of society friends -- C. Z. Guest, Cecil Beaton, Cole Porter. By 1955 the crowd was dining at the Vreelands' new apartment at 550 Park Avenue. The living room was blood red; as Diana announced: "I want this place to look like a garden, but a garden in hell." Scarlet chintz covered with brilliant Persian flowers cloaked the room. Red carpeting spread over the floors of the living room and hallway. As Vreeland pointed out, "Red is the great clarifier -- bright and revealing. I can't imagine becoming bored with red -- it would be like becoming bored with the person you love."

To 21-year-old Ali McGraw, the apartment represented a world filled with enticing possibilities. In 1960, McGraw, a recent Wellesley graduate, was Vreeland's assistant. Picking up her boss's portfolio every morning, she was greeted by the scent of Rigaud candles, good oatmeal, and bath soap: "I would drink in the sight of things, the Persian miniatures, the photographs of everyone I had ever heard of, the Scottish snuff horns."

She realized, she says, that she "had everything to learn."

By the end of the fifties, Vreeland herself was itching to take on new challenges. As Carmel Snow prepared to resign her post at Harper's Bazaar, Vreeland was keen to get her job. Hearst executives had other ideas. According to Adrian Allen, art director Alexey Brodovitch's assistant, Snow warned Bazaar's higher-ups that Vreeland "was a brilliant fashion editor who should never, ever, be editor-in-chief of a magazine." In late 1957, they chose to bring in Nancy White, Carmel Snow's niece. When Vreeland learned of White's appointment, she said, "We needed an artist and they sent us a house-painter."

Though she stuck it out for four more years, by early March 1962, the rumour began circulating that Diana Vreeland was leaving Bazaar. Sam Newhouse had bought Condé Nast, and, as one story has it, he hired Vreeland as a present to his wife, who wanted the best editor in the business for Vogue. In January 1963, Vreeland became Vogue's editor-in-chief.

Vreeland's humour and enthusiasm for the job immediately filled the nineteenth floor of the Graybar Building. According to former accessories editor Nuala Boylan, "A limousine would arrive, in the late morning or at lunchtime, and the door would snap open, and she would step out dressed in her usual head-to-foot black -- cashmere sweater, black wrap skirt, the pointed shoes, now famous, that were polished on the bottoms. The hands were beautifully manicured, the hair just so. It was a helmet -- once when her maid bumped into it by mistake with a tray, it clinked. And waiting at the curb, there would always be one assistant. . . . We would hear the clicking of feet and her loud voice over her shoulder dictating memos at a mile a minute."

Her secretary from 1964 to 1969, Felicity Clark, remembers an urgent memo, "a two-liner saying, 'Bring me shoes with chains on them.' Someone would come in swearing, saying, 'What's she on about now? There's no such thing as a shoe with a chain on it!' But you know, in six months' time everybody was wearing a shoe with a chain on it!" Another of Vreeland's memos stated that the Vogue staff should all wear bells at the office, according to fashion editor Carrie Donovan: "You know the sort of bells. Bells little kittens wear so they don't get lost in closets." So all the young women bought little bells, draping them around their necks and waists. "By the time she came in, we were all walking around with bells on. She pretended she didn't notice anything."

Donovan was always impressed with the abundance of Vreeland's ideas, and the intuitive sense she had for her readers. When Donovan planned to do a presentation using long skirts, which she had just seen in the French ready-to-wear, Vreeland admonished her. "'Oh, no, Carrie, modern women aren't going to go for that. They have to drive kids to school.' She never went anywhere except in a chauffeur-driven car; still, she understood all that."

Vreeland loved the sixties; her eclectic style fit right in with the times. "The idea of beauty was changing," she said. "If you had a bump on your nose, it made no difference so long as you had a marvelous body and good carriage. You held your head high, and you were a beauty. . . . You knew how to water-ski, and how to take a jet plane fast in the morning, arrive anywhere, and be anyone when you got off."

Vreeland's enthusiasm about the jet plane propelled her into producing fantastic, far-flung -- and wildly expensive -- fashion stories. Photographers went with models to Asia, Africa, the Middle East. But Vreeland, a perfectionist, was not always happy with the results. Model Penelope Tree remembers: "In England one time, David Bailey and I worked really hard on some photographs -- three days and three nights. We flew to America and triumphantly slapped them down on her desk. She got out her white gloves and she looked through the light box.

" 'Bailey, they're great!' Then there was a long pause. 'But we can't use them.'

" 'You fucking old bag! Why not?'

" 'There's no languor in the lips!' "

"We were furious, but we had to laugh," continues Tree. "She rather liked being called an old bag by Bailey."

One inspired shoot was Vreeland's assignment for Norman Parkinson in Tahiti in 1965. With a team of two models and 200 pounds of gold and silver Dynel -- false plastic hair -- Parkinson was sent off with the boss's instructions: "I wish you to select the finest Arab stallion that you can find in Tahiti -- check with some Veterinarian -- and caparison him in the manner of the Grand Epoch. I want to see an illustration, as this one here, where the horse's mane and tail are plaited to the ground. Use all the Dynel you want -- you don't have to bring it back." As Parkinson later remarked, "Mrs. Vreeland was always in there punching for the impossible and the unattainable. When her ideas succeeded, they were triumphant." If not, "there were no post mortems."

The sixties also brought unwelcome change. On June 6, 1966, Reed checked into New York Hospital, and the doctors discovered that he had cancer of the oesophagus. Diana didn't discuss her husband's illness with anyone.

When he died on August 3, 1966, at the age of 67, she was devastated. She drew a little heart in her date book with an arrow through it.

Susan Train, then a fashion editor at Vogue, remembers seeing Vreeland when she came to Paris for the collections the following January. "She adored him, and she grieved deeply. We were at one of the couture houses. She always ordered herself two or three things. She found an evening dress she liked. The vendeuse said, 'Do you want it in black?' 'Certainly not. In red. I don't want to remind anyone that I'm in mourning. That's my business.' Although she loved black, that winter she did not have anything in black."

After Reed's death, young men like photographer David Bailey and jewellery designer Kenneth Jay Lane filled the void in Vreeland's life. Lane met Vreeland when he first came to New York in the mid-fifties. Lane remembers: "She made me realize the importance of positive thinking. She would say, 'Don't look back. Just go ahead. Give ideas away. Under every idea there's a new idea waiting to be born.' " Lane accompanied Vreeland to movies and parties. Vreeland, he says, "wanted youthful energy -- Halston, occasionally Jack Nicholson. She didn't want to go to Brooke Astor's dinners anymore."

Soon, there was more bad news. By the end of the sixties, the powers at Vogue were becoming more critical of Vreeland's performance. When Carrie Donovan tried to warn her boss that the businessmen at Condé Nast were finding Vreeland's editorial style too costly and her message out of touch with the times, the older editor replied, "'Oh, I'm used to it. . . . I know how to handle those men. When they get this way, you just give it to them back.'" She was wrong. In the spring of 1971, Vreeland was fired.

When they realized Vreeland was leaving, her devoted editors were distraught. Polly Mellen hid in the bathroom, weeping. "Her office had always been wonderful. When you

came in to see her, there she was in the bright red office with the leopard-skin rug. . . The next morning the office was beige, the rug was beige, and Vogue was beige."

Vreeland began a frantic trip around Europe. One night, Kenny Lane joined her in the dining room at the Ritz in Madrid. As the orchestra played "Fascination," "she started to bawl," Lane recalls. "She couldn't stop. It all came out. No Reed, no job."

Money had always been a problem. After her marriage, Diana became the parent whose income could be depended on. Although Reed always worked -- in banking, in investments, for Rigaud candles, for Pucci -- his jobs didn't bring in much money. By keeping up appearances -- she clothed by Paris couturiers, Reed in Bond Street apparel, each smoking cigarettes, both using a holder -- they managed to hide their financial situation from all but their closest friends. Now Vreeland dealt with this latest financial crisis by using her ingenuity once again.

In the spring of '72, Vreeland's lawyer, Peter Tufo, approached Ashton Hawkins, counsel to the Metropolitan Museum, about her working with the Costume Institute. When curator Ted Rousseau met with C. Z. Guest to discuss improvements at the Institute, he asked, "What do you think about Diana Vreeland?" She replied, "Well, if you don't have her, don't bother to open it. Nobody else can even do it." At 69, Vreeland was about to begin the most successful act of her career.

Ostensibly, Vreeland had been hired to persuade people to give their high-fashion wardrobes to the museum: She could get, the reasoning went, a lot of people to open their trunks. It soon became clear, however, that she would also orchestrate the exhibitions in a whole new way. She once said, "The trouble with this country [is that] they want to give the public what it wants. Well, the public wants what it can't get, and it's up to the museum to teach them what to want."

While the staff members wanted the costumes to appear as they would have in the time period they represented, Vreeland wanted the clothes to look now. When a mannequin was being dressed for a historical show, Vreeland might say, "Oh, no, those shoes are wrong," and insist on better-looking shoes. The curator would reply that "these" shoes hadn't existed then. Mrs. Vreeland would say, "Well, if this woman looked like this mannequin . . . she would have thought of them."

In her off hours, Vreeland was living very much in the present. Although she had a string of male companions to escort her around town, she was particularly fond of Fred Hughes, a prominent member of Andy Warhol's crowd whom Warhol described as "one of the only young people around who insisted on Savile Row suits."

When Fred had flings with young women, Vreeland became jealous. Warhol, too, felt some jealousy; he complained that when Fred was drunk, he would "talk like Mrs. Vreeland." In 1986, long after Vreeland and Andy had stopped seeing each other regularly, Warhol wrote in his diary: "I told Fred that the kitchen was dirty and he looked at me and said, 'Well, I'm not going to do the dishes.' Diana Vreeland has been a really bad influence on him. I should've broken that up."

Although Vreeland enjoyed the Studio 54 culture, she didn't become part of it. As art critic John Richardson recalls, "Diana drank quite a bit" and preferred vodka and scotch to drugs. One night, while having dinner at his house on 38th Street, Kenny Lane said to her, "You're always talking about mara-ju-wanna" – which was how she pronounced it – "I think it's about time you smoke some." He gave her a "joint," and she lit up. "Oh, my God! Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, and then she became trancelike. "Mmmmmmm. Ohhh. Ohhh. I feel so strange, so wonderful." And, as Lane remembered, "she finished the performance and I said, 'Darling, I'm afraid it's not marijuana. It's a joint made with regular tobacco put back in.' 'Oh, no! How could you have done this to me?' " Vreeland's nonstop social life included older friends as well. As fashion executive Boaz Mazor remembers, there were two places you wanted to go in the seventies: the parties of "the Paleys and the de la Rentas, and Vreeland was always there, naturally."

In the winter of 1976, Vreeland visited her old friend Kitty Miller in Palm Beach. Her friend Lou Gartner remembers sitting with Vreeland at a large party. When dinner was over, at about 10:30, guests started to get up. Vreeland said, "What the hell is this, Scarsdale?" She said, "I want to go dancing." Gartner took her to a club in West Palm Beach. Gartner recalls, "I was talking to her and this shadow came across the table. And I looked up and there was the biggest black man I have ever seen in my life and he said, 'Do you want to dance?' Vreeland looked up and smiled at him, and he said, 'Not you, him.' And I said, 'I don't dance, but she's wild, she's great.' " Diana got up and, Gartner continues, "I've never seen anything like the two of them on the dance floor. I mean, you talk about dirty dancing, it was unreal." When she finally sat down, Vreeland said, " 'He's the most marvellous man. He's just out of prison. He needs help and support.' I said, 'We're going home.' "

After 1984, Vreeland started coming to the museum less and less, and as the eighties wore on, her health forced her to retire to the privacy of her red Park Avenue apartment, where she received only family and very close friends.

Although she had a good salary from the Met and a pension from Condé Nast, Vreeland's expenses still exceeded her income. In 1987, she decided to sell some of her costume jewellery and called Kenny Lane to ask what her "junk" jewels might bring at auction. He replied, "More than they're worth. Thirty or forty thousand dollars." Astonished, she replied, "That much? My God!" Vreeland's friends and acolytes packed themselves into Sotheby's for the event. The sale of the jewellery brought in \$167,000, well over Lane's estimate. As he recalled, "When I told D.V. over the phone what the results were, she said, 'Is that all?' And I said, 'Well, I'm glad I'm sitting down.' "

As her emphysema worsened, Vreeland secluded herself in her bedroom and refused to let anyone see her. When she invited people to dinner, she'd call her guests on the telephone in the dining room, where the meal was served, and conversation would proceed over the wire. Very good friends, like Lane, Oscar de la Renta, André Leon Talley, and Jacqueline Onassis, would come and read to her.

Several times an ambulance was called for her, only to have Vreeland revive -- once, famously, she shot straight up on the stretcher and ordered herself returned. In Vreeland's last hours, her household manager remembered, "she was hallucinating, talking to her mother. From what she was saying now, she was young again, dancing at a party, enjoying herself." Suddenly she cried out in her strong voice, speaking to the bandleader, "Don't stop the music or I'll tell my father!" These were her last words. She sank into a coma and did not revive again. Diana Vreeland died on August 2, 1989, in the New York Hospital. At the apartment, in the nurses' register, the last entry read "Mrs. Onassis called."

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