

In Conversation with Safiya Abdallah



Credits: @dulcebysafiya

Arabian fashion designer, founder of Dulce by Safiya and Co-Designer & partner of Lohan by Lindsay Lohan, Safiya Abdallah, shares details of her journey into fashion design.

Scrolling through 'Dulce by Safiya' Instagram, it is clear that her designs hold a gap in the modest fashion market, adding a unique and creative touch to what for so many years have been perceived as 'not modern'. From glittery headscarves to wrap and double-breasted blazers, Abdallah's designs are a combination of modernity and tradition, inspired by her Moroccan, Mexican, and American heritage.

Abdallah, who chose to wear a headscarf or hijab nine years ago, after deciding to dress in an exemplary manner in her opinion, and, at the same time, appear more modern. A struggle that made it difficult for Abdallah to start wearing the hijab was the idea of wearing a headcover for a long time. Finally, Abdallah began designing clothing for herself, creating her version of modernity, which later gained admiration from her close friends. From here, Abdallah's inspiring career as a fashion designer began, leading her to be featured in Vogue Arabia and Modest Fashion Week. To her, the designs she creates an overlapping innovation between East and West.

Q. What does modesty mean to you?

A. Modesty, to me, is the way a woman or man conducts themselves in public and private. It has to do with an individual's character, looser fitting clothing, as well as how one treats others.

Q. What is your favourite part of being a modest fashion designer?

A. My favourite part of being a modest fashion designer is having an outlet for my creativity and making others feel amazing in a garment I designed feels incredible.

Q. How do you make sure that your designs combine modernity, religion, and fashion?

A. I have to admit I went through a phase where I wanted to appease what I thought the media and buyers would wish to, which meant using sheer materials that are styled to be modest or immodest things that had versatility. The following upcoming collections will be a return to the reason why I started to design modest fashion in its genuine authenticity.

Q. How does modest fashion, in your opinion, empower women?

A. Modest fashion empowers women by giving them the power of keeping their body and beauty private by wearing looser garments. It allows them to control who, when, where she lets her guard down in all aspects; that to me is true empowerment.

Q. What are the most notable changes you have witnessed in modest fashion for consumers and designers?

A. I would say a lot of modest brands are going for the fitted figure-hugging fashion where I genuinely believe looser garments to be so much more appealing with the right draping it will fit beautifully.

Q. What is the main message you want your designs to convey?

A. I want my designs to convey that this is a woman who knows what she wants; she's unapologetic about being modest and still holds to her values and ethics.

Q. Where do you get most of the inspiration for your designs?

A. I used to get inspiration from many fashion trends. I try and stay ahead of the curve; however, now I see more of an incentive for wearable clothing that can transcend from a fun daytime outing to evening wear.

Q. What is your motivation?

A. My primary motivation is my daughters. I have one ten year old and a newborn daughter, along with two boys in between. Creating something for the world, my children in the future can be proud of me for setting a standard and adding to the world by giving young girls and women alike who are struggling to find their voice while appearing modest to stay true to one's faith.

Q. can you give us personal anecdotes and experiences with the hijab?

A. I find that many women who wear hijab tend to stick to one another. It isn't common to see women who cover in a close friends group mixed with women who don't cover. I find there to be this strange divide that rarely breaks. I would love to break down those barriers and walls and have women celebrate their similarities rather than their differences.

Q. Tell me about your latest collection?

A. My latest collection is inspired by the sun, moon, and desert. I intended to design wearable classic yet modest pieces to be worn for Ramadan and beyond.

Q. Which Muslim females inspire you and who you think is a force for change?

A. Some so many Muslim females inspire me I can't even list them off; mostly, I'm planning to create a spotlight on every quarter of women I admire and want to share their journeys with our audience, which has been in the works for some time. Essentially get women who aren't necessarily out there and recognized by media and give them time to shine.

Q. Can you give us a highlight moment that you remember from your career as a modest fashion designer?

A. I would say my most significant highlight moment was dressing Gwen Stefani, who was one of my favourite artists as a child and pre-teen, who is a favourite.

Q. What is next for you?

A. Taking fashion and making it into something that adds to the world in more than just that way. I want to add more to the world as a legacy for future Muslim women alike to appreciate one another more and spread love and positivity.