

## Interview: Vivian Luk, Bridal Couturier to Hong Kong's Rich and Famous

by Zoe LI 26/02/13 9:07 AM EST

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Details from Vivian Luk's 2013 collection, which will be officially revealed on March 1. (Courtesy Vivian Luk)



The Bluebell dress from "Pan," Vivian Luk's first collection, inspired by Peter Pan.

**Vivian Luk** is Hong Kong's most sought-after bespoke bridal couturier. She's designed one of [Guo Jingjing's gowns](#) for her extended wedding ceremonies with husband Kenneth Fok. While [Cathy Tsui](#), the actress wife of the junior Lee Ka Shing, is a regular customer of Luk's.

Yet, Luk is almost always associated with [Vera Wang](#), whom she worked for seven years ago in New York. Under the Vera Wang label, Luk created made-to-order celebrity gowns, including [Keira Knightly's 2006 Oscar dress](#).

This Friday, Luk will be revealing

her second collection of bridal and evening wear, in which she will continue to do what she does best: dramatic, complex, sculptural gowns that she personally hand-sculpts for each woman's unique curves.

With her latest and strongest collection, Luk has clearly come into her own as a designer. We ask her about the marine inspiration for her new gowns, trends in bridal wear, and who inspires her, besides Vera.

**You're already well known for your bespoke bridal gowns in Hong Kong, why are you doing these collections?**

Doing a collection helps to sharpen my language. I love working with people one on one, but after awhile, people are like, what's *your* style? Instead of just doing what they want, people

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## **You're already well known for your bespoke bridal gowns in Hong Kong, why are you doing these collections?**

Doing a collection helps to sharpen my language. I love working with people one on one, but after awhile, people are like, what's *your* style? Instead of just doing what they want, people want to see more of my vision.

The first collection was about finding out who am I, but now I feel like I know who I am so this second collection is where I take things up a notch.

## **So what is Vivian Luk's design language?**

Dreamy, a lot of movement, a lot of layers and textures, very organic, very sculptural.

I always talk about modeling the body to elongate different parts of it. Using color to highlight and chop up the body, to play with the proportions. It's kind of like painting where you use color and shading to make certain parts recede, but if you want something to stand out you use a highlight color. So color can make things more three dimensional.

In this new collection the inspiration is "under the sea" because life under water has so many curves and so many layers. I'm interested in the transparency of things and the movement. You can see layers of colors on top of each other because things like jelly fish have a soft and transparent body.

## **So are you a diver?**

I swim but I don't dive. I just like nature, that's the main thing. The first collection ([called Pan](#)) did use Peter Pan as a starting point, but it was inspired by the forest.

## **There is always a cinched waist in your silhouette.**

The waist is an area that I have to have in every dress. I don't know if it's a woman thing or because I know my own body and I've always wanted a really tiny waist. I use a big skirt to further emphasize the waist.

## **Do clients in Hong Kong have the same demands as clients in New York?**

They're all brides. Brides will be brides. But back at Vera's people walked in knowing what to expect. Here I am different and trying to make my own business.

## **How about their tastes in bridal design?**

It needs to flatter their body. Normally they might not care, they might wear a baggy top to make an edgy statement. But if they're the host they have to look good and effortless, it should make their body look good, elegant, and feminine.

## **What are some trends in bridal couture?**

Bridal is definitely not as traditional as before. Just looking at the last ten years I think bridal is more "fashion" than before. Before people might think bridal needs to portray a very innocent, classic, traditional personality but now it's more about showing your personality as an individual. So people are taking more risks.

## **Can we talk about your Oscar moment? It must have been an exciting stage in your career.**

I think back then I was so young that I didn't really know what was going on. If you have expectations, then you get more scared to do it, but when you have nothing to lose you don't have any expectations, and you're just a lot more courageous. Back then I was too young to know the significance of what I was doing. Knowledge can sometimes make you scared.

Back then I was just so excited, but also I thought that no one is going to know if Keira Knightly doesn't pick my dress. So I was sketching and looking at her movies and trying to get a sense of who she is and what her body is like. I didn't get to meet her.


Everyone else in the studio was crazy busy with the Vera Wang fashion show and there I was sketching at my desk and I was the only one doing this dress. So it felt like I was in my own world.

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
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When I went to show Vera the sketches everyone was like, who is this girl and who does she think she is, she's cutting the line.

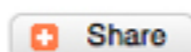
Vera really helped me to find my path to bridal. But she isn't the only person who inspired me and I don't like to emphasize this too much.

## **So who are some other people who had an effect on your career?**

My father, who was an interior designer, and who is now an artist. I remember when I was little I would go with him to see his clients and so from that time on I was already kind of part of that world.

My dad always encourages me to make things more strong, to be more bold. I do try to make things that are both masculine and feminine, always soft and hard. There's never anything that's too cute. Someone who is very delicate can also have a strong side. A girl is soft and strong at the same time.

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