

The Concept

The new site Of a Kind promotes emerging fashion designers through integrated retail and editorial content. Designers are commissioned to create limited-edition, exclusive pieces, which are released one at a time in conjunction with related articles. Combining storytelling and exclusivity, Of a Kind offers a new way to engage with products and content, enhancing the connection between buyer and designer. Early adopters, tired of find-anywhere pieces and detached consumption, find stronger ties to the things they purchase; designers creating pieces for Of a Kind benefit from in-depth exposure to an eager audience of influencers.

The two key components of the site are:

- + Small-batch clothing and accessories for men and women, available only through Of a Kind. Visitors to the site have a unique but narrow opportunity to get their hands on something special.
- + Editorial content that tells the stories of the designers whose products are featured. By creating a connection between readers and designers, the experience becomes less about shopping and more about taking part in a narrative.

How it Works

Of a Kind selects one designer, whose work we love, to be featured each week. Stories about that designer are posted to the site on Monday and Tuesday, and the designer's edition is released in conjunction with their final story on Wednesday at 1pm EST. Every item sold on the site is limited-edition—and was designed exclusively for Of a Kind. With editions ranging in size from five to 50 pieces, visitors have the opportunity to own something truly special and collectible. Each order includes a certificate of authenticity signed and numbered by the designer.

The Designers

During the first month, the site will feature the products and stories of the following designers:

- + *Mandy Coon*: The DJ/model/designer creates moody-but-whimsical clothes—and designed one of the season'suzziest handbags.
- + *Lizzie Fortunato Jewels*: These twin sisters have been crafting intricate statement jewelry since their college days at Duke.
- + *Dusen Dusen*: Ellen Van Dusen is a textile whiz who designs her own high-impact, graphic fabrics out of her Brooklyn studio.
- + *Symmetry Goods*: This husband-wife team just launched their collection of unisex, hardware-adorned scarves for fall.



*Ernie Bunny Bag by Mandy Coon,
designed exclusively for Of a Kind
Edition of 30, \$295*



*Crystal Ship Necklace by Lizzie Fortunato Jewels
designed exclusively for Of a Kind
Edition of 25, \$270*



The Founders

+ Claire Mazur

Claire grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, and has an inordinate amount of second-smallest-state pride. Her first foray into the fashion industry came at age 16 when, after a chance encounter with Donna Karan, she landed a summer internship at DKNY. Claire's AOL screenname at the time was DKNYClaire, so this was a really big deal. As an undergrad at University of Chicago, Claire shifted her focus to the arts more broadly, going on to receive her masters in arts management from Columbia University and working for art collections and organizations as well as individual artists. Wanting to incorporate fashion into her work once again, Claire saw an opportunity to assist designers as she had artists, creating innovative ways for them to share their work with a passionate, engaged community.



+ Erica Cerulo

Erica grew up in Peoria, Illinois, and relied on magazines to get a fashion fix in a place that wasn't exactly the style capital of anywhere. During her time at University of Chicago, she discovered her love of editorial, and, with plenty of internships under her belt, made the scary move to New York, landing a job at *Details* magazine and spending five years there as an editor before making the transition to *Lucky*. During her tenure in print publishing, Erica became inspired and excited to tell the stories of designers in a new way and in a fresh environment. Her writing has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *InStyle*, *Good*, and *ReadyMade*.

+ The Beginnings

Claire and Erica met at University of Chicago in 2002 when a mutual frenemy introduced them, suggesting they should be friends because they both, at some point during their college careers, dated (Division III) basketball players. They quickly realized they had other things in common, an appreciation of fashion and a Tracy Flick-like approach to their extracurriculars among them. Both girls moved to New York post-graduation, and often found themselves talking about peers who had started businesses and their mutual admiration for those who had taken the plunge. When they conceptualized Of a Kind—over the course of 25 frantic emails in 12 hours—they knew they had to pursue it.



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