



RLI Emerging Retailers
Aiisha



When Fashion Meets Passion

Lebanese fashion designer Aiisha Ramadan has seen her clothing brand, Aiisha, blossom in recent years. Now, she is preparing for growth in the US and the Middle East, taking her unique, beautifully crafted collections in new and exciting markets.

Aiisha Ramadan is a Lebanese fashion designer based in UAE. She launched her own clothing brand, Aiisha, in 2006 and has won a number of prestigious awards, such as the Young Designer of the Year 2000 by Swarovski, and the Gr8! Women Achiever Awards 2011. Named as one of 30 'Most Awesome Women in the Arab World' in 2009 by Arabian Woman Magazine, she was also selected four times as one of the Ahlan! Hot 100.

The brand is the epitome of modern design; its beautifully crafted garments are worn by celebrities such as Nicole Scherzinger, Christina Aguilera, Ashanti and Paris Hilton. A number of international brands have partnered with Aiisha on nationally and internationally recognised projects, making her one of the most promising leading designers from the Middle East.

Beyond Aiisha's Couture, Bridal (White by Aiisha) and Prêt-à-Porter collections, I by Aiisha are the fruits of self-reflection that resulted in bridging her passion for extravagant couture with her personal style, which calls for simplicity. As an influential woman, her emphasis is on individuality, freedom of expression, self-acceptance and celebration, all portrayed in her usage of high-quality materials and clean lines with layered details.

"The past 12 months have been my favourite by

far," says Aiisha. "I met my mentor, manager and investor Asil Attar, a fashion industry expert and talent scout who signed me up into her business. I have enjoyed every second, understanding the fashion business the way it is globally understood and, more importantly, how the priority of shaping a brand's DNA ensures its sustainability and success. Where every person embodies different personalities all at once, a brand's DNA should be precise and that's what my team, led by Asil, and I have been working on. It's incredible how much hidden wealth of information, talent and secrets each designer carries and how it all surfaces when we start to explore that potential," she adds.

The company is currently focused upon getting its AW15 collection perfectly shaped with its signature looks to be launched globally. Like any collection, says Aiisha, this will take time. "I'm mostly excited about the feedback from the US and the Middle East, with the support of Asil's business we were looking at having a physical retail space by Q4 2015."

The US is an extremely attractive prospect for the brand, a vast market where it can be challenging to stand out among many incredible designers. However, with a strong coherent collection, and an 'army' backing the brand up, Aiisha remains confident that there is only one way to go: "Success, if God wills."

As for the UAE, whilst the brand is very well known in the region, Aiisha is committed to offering her clients and fans what they love in a more approachable sense in terms of price points and locations: "It will be very exciting to see us finally breaking through the barriers we have been experiencing for the past few years," she smiles. "You have to stay true to yourself and stick to your DNA; you have to believe in your brand and only then can you start introducing new ideas that might not seem very accepted in theory before its implemented. Following the brand will be inevitable."

With customers more aware now than ever, loyalty is a key driver behind the brand's success, and this is generated through its ethos of timeless, contemporary, clean lines and wearable clothes.

"I see a lot of people getting into fashion; many think they belong there, many are truly talented but waste years of their lives gambling with their own money. Very few find their guardian angel right from the start. However, all would have better chances in succeeding and being sure of what they are getting into if they invest in interning for few years at their favourite designer," she explains.

"The sky is the limit to what I dream of seeing my brand become. For now, I want to show season after season a consistent global line that evolves and that never compromises on quality and originality."