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Interview by Jessica-Christin Hametner
Photography by Kane Hulse and Roksanda Ilinčić

Conversations: Roksanda Ilinčić & Grace Woodcock

A student of architecture before transitioning into fashion, Roksanda Ilinčić (right) combines playful patterns and geometric forms. Continuing the brand's artistic narrative, she provides a creative gallery space to champion the works of female artists and makers. Reinforcing her belief in supporting women, she invited London-based artist Grace Woodcock to install a duo of large-scale sculptures in the store window that complement the shapes of Roksanda's Spring/Summer collection





LEFT Grace Woodcock working on one of the sculptures in her studio
BELOW The orange and teal aligns with the vivid colours of Roksanđa's collection



Roksanda is the eponymous label of Serbian fashion designer Roksanđa Ilinćić. Known for vivid colour blocking and feminine silhouettes, the brand isn't afraid to push the boundaries of fashion and design. In this conversation between Roksanđa Ilinćić and Grace Woodcock, the pair discuss how they create a world of colour and inspiration. The conversation was facilitated by the editor-in-chief of ICON, Jessica-Christin Hametner, and held at the label's Mayfair store.

ICON: Can you explain how your collaboration began?
GRACE WOODCOCK: I was taking part in a show curated by Fels in Dalston, London, which is a curatorial

platform of furniture, art and design. Ella Simmonds, Roksanđa's art director, saw my benches there and asked for them to be in the Harrods concession. We then began talking about the window design for Roksanđa.

ROKSANĐA ILINĆIĆ: And a good friend of mine was telling me about you as well. This was around the time you participated in [a group exhibition called] ECHO at The Artist Room.

GRACE WOODCOCK: That was fun. It was the first time I used the fabrics like I've done in the window display here.

ROKSANĐA ILINĆIĆ: I started this platform to support female artists like Grace. After Ella introduced us, Grace made a bespoke piece especially for the

store, and I matched a dress from my Spring/Summer collection alongside hers to create this beautiful dialogue and contrast between the two works.

GRACE WOODCOCK: This was a great opportunity to produce something large. I wanted these sculptures to feel like they were spinning in opposition to each other and to have this under-the-sea sensibility to them. The inspiration came from bioluminescent sea creatures who shed their skin when they're threatened, leaving an illuminated, ghostly replica of themselves to distract a predator. These sculptures layer fluorescent orange and teal fabrics so the colours vibrate off each other, changing as you move around them. As they can be seen

RIGHT Grace Woodcock finds her inspiration in science and biology
BELOW A Roksanda jacket hangs in Grace's studio



'I try to find forms that give the viewer's body something to map onto, to reflect back a feeling the body knows, a memory of a sensation'

from inside the store it was important they worked from both sides. The effect is that they glow at night as the light passes through.

ICON: Grace, can you share how your background in painting evolved to the sculptural work we see here today? Likewise, how have your studies in architecture and design, Roksanda, evolved from design to fashion?

GRACE WOODCOCK: I always loved how tactile the act of painting is. But the sense of tactility I was reaching for wasn't coming across through painting.

This led my tutors at the RCA to question why my work was flat at all and encouraged me make it more sculptural. **ROKSANDA ILINČIĆ:** I studied Applied Arts and Architecture, and I think it is very important for me as a person and as a designer to combine all those influences that made me who I am today. Architecture and art are usually starting points of all my collections. It's something that never fails to inspire me.

ICON: Was there a defining moment when you knew you wanted to become designers?
ROKSANDA ILINČIĆ: I always loved

fashion but never thought it could be a profession until I was a teenager. I realised that my hobby and what I am passionate about can also become what I am doing in life. That was a big revelation. I studied architecture because I thought it would ensure a safe future. But I simply couldn't run away from fashion; that need to express myself through clothing was too strong. Eventually, I left architecture and I never looked back.

GRACE WOODCOCK: I've always loved art and design. All of my family are designers, and my mum is incredible



BELOW Bright colours and sculptural shapes from the Rokasanda Spring/Summer 2023 collection



'Architecture and art are usually starting points of all my collections. It's something that I always go back to for inspiration and something that never fails to inspire me'

in textiles. I always wanted to be an artist but, like Rokasanda, I didn't have anyone to model that on.

ICON: Rokasanda, how has your upbringing in Belgrade shaped your design principles?

ROKSANDA ILINČIĆ: Where we come from is a strong part of who we are. It's important to show that. My use of colour is definitely influenced by Serbia. We have long summers, and growing up I was surrounded by colour.

When I came to study in London, the fashion was the complete opposite of colour. So, I wanted to create something

that felt different and reminded me of home.

ICON: Where do you find your creative inspiration for projects like these?

GRACE WOODCOCK: I find inspiration in new biological discoveries and sci-fi. I am interested in the parts of our bodies and the world we still know almost nothing about.

ROKSANDA ILINČIĆ: It's interesting that you say that, as it's so evident in your work.

GRACE WOODCOCK: Thank you. I make these radial, vortex-like works to simulate a sense of the fluidity that we

feel in our inner processes and see in the world. I try to find forms that give the viewer's body something to map onto, to reflect back a feeling the body knows, a memory of a sensation. Irregular ripples and undulations relate so that when you look at it, it's like an eye massage.

ICON: What inspires you, Rokasanda?

ROKSANDA ILINČIĆ: As a fashion designer, you need to be connected not just to visual elements, but also to what's happening in society. Fashion is a mirror of society, so I always try to say something to society through clothing.