



Nikita

When the Icelandic outerwear and street brand Nikita started 11 years ago, the driving forces behind it were pure passion for snowboarding and founder Heida Birgisdottir's desire to design something nice for "girls who ride".

Working creatively was a given from the beginning, but seeing herself more as a designer than an artist, Heida soon discovered that with the range of her label growing bigger and more diverse, it had to offer some more variety too. And, as she says: "My strong side is to design the clothing, not graphics." So it seems to be more than just a happy coincidence when she and graphic designer David Young took on an intern named Gudjon in 2005, who came to be the first featured artist for Nikita.

That was 2005 and since then, the brand has established a thorough history of artist collaborations – some guest starring for just one of their winter, summer, street- or outerwear collections while others are back season after season.

Like, for example, Danish graphic designer and illustrator Miss Lotion, who has been working with Nikita for several years now. She's drawing the quirky characters that have embellished many a Nikita graphic, but you will mainly recognise her distinct typography and patterns present on all their collections. Others, like Harpa Einars' mystical, darkish drawings, are premiering on Nikita cloth this winter, and have already risen among Heida's favourite pieces. But no matter if devoted partner or guest star, just as the shapes and styles of the Nikita clothing are diverse and varied, so is the range of artists: from fine drawings by last year's discovery Hildur Yeoman; over happy, 'modern psychedelic' style owl graphics by US illustrator Amy Martino; street style art by skater Mimi Koop; to some funny comic characters by Ghica Popa, as featured on the Lily Jacket from the Outerwear collection.

The selection of whom they collaborate with is not based on fame or popularity, though, but solely on what they want for the respective collection. "We are very open

for new ideas from people, but then of course we have to pick out the ones that fit for the feeling and trend we are going for each season. But that also forms as we look through all the different art from different artists," Heida explains.

And there is a lot to flick through, as they receive heaps of portfolios "from all over the place", as David tells us. "Iceland is full of amazing artists and I am lucky enough to know a lot of them. I also browse all sorts of websites or online portfolios. And artists I have worked with before have also pointed me in the direction of a few."

Such a diverse list of artists on board for just one season is indicative of the strong connection between art and snowboarding, and Heida is fully backing it: "Snowboarding inspires me in many ways, I feel so free when I'm riding and that clears my head from all the worries and that helps me to be creative. To be a good rider you need to be creative, at least I think those are the best riders. Being creative when riding, finding all the possible spots to jump or slide makes snowboarding so much more fun."

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