



Fresh off the Runway: How the NYT T Magazine Editor Finds Brands

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

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You're listening to Thrive-By-Design business marketing and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to flourish and thrive. Let's get started.

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Tracy: Welcome to the Thrive by Design episode one 174. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews the Chief Visionary Officer over at Flourish and Thrive Academy and host of the Thrive by Design podcast and I am excited to be here today because, as usual I have a great guest on our show. I love answering your questions, I love helping you guys out and I love bringing on fun new guests with different angles and one of the things that we hear behind the scenes at Flourish and Thrive, or maybe one of the things that I know you're thinking based on the questions you ask is what does it mean when an editor is creating a story, like what are they thinking of, how do we get inside their brains. Well you're lucky because today I have a very, very special guest. She is the editor Of The New York Times T Style Magazine and she covers fashion and accessories, and as the editor she's editing her pages, looking out for new designers to feature in conceptualizing stories to tell throughout the magazine, and today I'm excited to invite my guest Angela Koh on the show today. I met Angela at the Jewelry Independent Summit this summer and I got to moderate a panel that she was on, which was really great because this panel is all about how to get featured in magazines and in the press. They talked a little bit about behind the scenes and just different 360 aspect. I asked Angela back then to be on the show, she told me she couldn't do it until after New York fashion week was over, which was perfect because now we get to listen and learn about how she's picking trends, how she spotting



trends, how she's creating stories based on those trends and using it in like the fashion or combining fashion and jewelry, maybe is the best way to put it.

Then she also talks about how they're featuring product, where the balance of, how much product that's featured is actually from advertisers and how much product that featured is actually from editorial content. So this is a really, really great episode, so if you're ever wondering how to get into The New York times T Style magazine, you're definitely going to want to listen up, and I think that what you're going to learn today and discover is not only some of the awesome trends that are happening for spring 2019, but some fun ways that you can maybe reach out and think outside of the box to get an editor's attention. Plus at the end we're going to share with you how you can reach out to Angela and say hello to her and like pitch her in the DMs, because DMs are a great way to connect with editors of all types if you do it the right way. So this is going to be a fun episode.

So before we dive in I would love to take a word from our sponsor today. Today's sponsor is [findingbox.com](https://www.findingbox.com) I love brands that support small business because we're all small business here and sometimes you don't want to order thousands and thousands of hang tags or logo design elements to add to your jewelry because it's expensive and you don't have to carry all that inventory. So Finding Box is a great solution for this, because they have a custom engraved logo hang tags, beads and custom jewelry pouches, they love working with small business. In fact, they work with over 2000 already. They have fast lead times, some products can even be finished in 24 hours, hello, thank you. They also only require you to place small order minimums and you can get free designer visions and they also provide a sample. So they're just really a great resource. We highly recommend that you go check them and place your first order right now by using the code F&TPODCAST and enjoy 10% off by January 31st 2019. This is a great opportunity for you to save some money and also test out a new vendor where you can get small quantities and not have to be stuck with a ton of different things.

Okay, let's jump right in to my interview when Angela Koh.

Tracy: I'm excited today, well I'm always excited today to be on Thrive by Design, but I'm especially excited because I have an amazing guest, I have Angela Koh here who is the style editor of The New York Times Style section. Angela, welcome to the show today.



Angela: Hi, thank you so much for having me here.

Tracy: It's awesome to have you here, so I was just so excited because I got to moderate a panel at the Jewelry Independent Summit and you were one of the people that I was moderating questions to. I loved all the things that you had to say and we just came off Fashion Week here and I just had to interview you and to talk a little bit more about what trends you're seeing in the market and just share with at the designers who listen to the show a little bit more about what prestigious New York Times style section actually, like what you're actually looking for in that section to feature for designers. So first and foremost, it's awesome to have you here so thank you, but more than anything, I'd love to hear a little bit more about your journey into the fashion world and like a little bit more about you.

Angela: Yeah, so I've been at the New York Times Style Magazine, which we can also call T magazine. I've been at T magazine for about five years now, and I started out as the fashion assistant and I just worked my way up to now being a fashion market editor. Before that my first job was at Elle magazine where I was the accessory assistant, and there I think my favorite part of that job was I had to take care of all the fine jewelry and jewelry coming in and out of the closet, and that's when I first started to see all these creative jewelry brands out there. I feel like if you're not in jewelry or you don't really know. Yes, so Elle was my first job, and before that I was interning at a ton of places. I did internships at Harper's Bazaar, at W. I kind of got a taste of all the magazines. Yeah, that's how I ended up here at the New York Times Style magazine.

Tracy: That so fun. Well in the pre-show we were just chit chatting and you're sitting in the closet right now to record this.

Angela: I am.

Tracy: Which is so funny because I'm sitting in my closet. My audience knows that I record my podcast in my closet. So we're both sitting in the closet.

Angela: We share the floor with the actual New York Times, so it's so funny when desk sides come to me and our meeting rooms are like glass walls and reporters just walk by, just so confused, like what is this tray of diamonds doing in this office. So funny. But this closet, it's closed off, so no one can bother me.



Tracy: I love it. So when you're doing those desk side with the glass windows, do they stop by say like, do you like spontaneous trunk shows happen?

Angela: Yeah, this weekend was a lot about, it was like a sample sale happening, we could get a lot of that question. If we have like a big shoot, people kind of slow down and try to snoop. I get it, if you're not in it, I'm sure it's so fascinating to see racks and racks of clothes and shoes and jewelry just all in one place.

Tracy: That's so funny, I love that. I remember when I was just starting out doing desk sides at different publications and going and in, and some of them actually asked me to come back and do trunk shows in their office for the publicity side of the magazines, you it wasn't necessarily for the editors, but it was for the ad side. They'd be like, "Come in, we want to shop your collection for the holidays."

Angela: Oh that's so cool, that's a great idea actually.

Tracy: I know. Right?

Angela: Better write that down.

Tracy: Get brands to come in so everyone can do their holiday shopping. It's perfect. For T magazine, obviously you're probably like bombarded all the time with people reaching out to you and all that stuff, so what is it that you're really looking for in brands to cover in the magazine? How do you find most of the brands?

Angela: I think the most important thing first and foremost is obviously having a beautifully made product, but even with that, the market is so saturated so I think the thing that stands out to me the most is when a designer has a really authentic story to their brand and when you can really see the passion to their story. I've been doing this for years, and I have come across people who are just in it for the wrong reasons or they're in it for the money. It really does reflect on the product, so I think if you're a designer out there and you know you're in it for the right reasons and you know you love your product, then I'm sure somehow that it's going to be portrayed in your jewelry or clothing or whatever it is you're making. How I find most of my brands, it's kind of a mixture of a lot of things. I think the most traditional ways have tons of relationships with different publicists, and usually they grow throughout the years and they are the ones that come to me with new brands they have and they pitch me story ideas and



new brands that come their way. Another way is word of mouth which is through friends of friends introducing me to a brand which I find to be quite effective, because you kind of have a personal relationship with this person, so you have more of a personal connection with this brand that's being introduced to you. I mean these are all ways of people coming to me, but I also go out there and I try to hunt for brands and I think Instagram is so helpful with that, it's just so easy to click on a really great jewelry reporter or blogger and just going down a rabbit hole and just clicking the next designer that's tagged. That's a really easy way for me to find new jewelry designers. It's actually more, it's more easier with jewelry than ready to wear, I think, with looking for brands on Instagram, yeah. Especially because I think most ready to wear designers work off of like a retail calendar, but jewelry designers, if they make something new they just post it right away so it's a lot of newness all the time. And then another way I find designers is if the stores that I regularly shop at like Dover Street or like Totokaelo, like interesting, unique stories, I try to always see who they're carrying and who their new designers are.

Tracy: Awesome. That's great. So you get like through stores, through word of mouth, through publicists.

Angela: Yeah, it's a mixture of everything. Exactly.

Tracy: Do you ever purchase from people that you never heard of before?

Angela: To be honest, it is rare. I think especially if you're in editorial for a long time you kind of do know everyone that's publicist wise, you kind of do know everyone credible out there. I am more hesitant. If someone I've never heard shot me an email, if I'm busy, it'd probably be in my to do list and I probably, I might not get back to it for even months, but I'm not saying it's like impossible though. I think if the images in the email catch my eye right away, then yeah. This happened before, I've had designers who just found my email and emailed me, had a beautiful look book and I responded that week and wanting to know more. It is tougher if you don't have the connection with the editor, but it's not impossible. If that's the only way, I would say just give it a shot because you never know.

Tracy: You never know, yeah, and then you might find this amazing brand that you never heard of before and you're excited to feature them. Okay, we just got off fashion week and I'm dying to hear like what you saw out there



and what's the coolest fashion hits. What's happening for 2018, for spring 2018 as far as jewelry trends and fashion goes.

Angela: Fashion always repeats itself. I've been coming up with fashion stories at T for like three or four years now, and it's so funny because it's really the same trends, but we just have to repackage it. And with that said, I really think fashion is, it's always a reflection of what's happening in the world today. Such as like when the Burberry trench was invented, that was during World War II for soldier, so I think right now the most powerful thing that's happening is, since the election is people protesting and women just standing up for their rights. I think that is trickling upwards to the runway because I feel like the biggest trends are kind of a lot of suiting, beautiful suiting. Like Balenciaga, Tom Ford, Givenchy, they all kind of gave a nod to the 80's with beautiful...

Tracy: Power suit.

Angela: The power suit, yeah, exactly. The power suit. I feel like that's in the 80's is when women were really starting to go into the office and try to get office jobs and so you can kind of see that fashion influence from the 80's of power suiting coming back onto the runway. Another big influence, I would say is, it was like a ballerina dance influence, and if you watched the Dior show, they had actual like beautiful dancers performing while the models were walking. Yeah, it was so beautiful, but in the way it's kind of like it goes back to women empowerment because I feel like dance is such a empowering sport and it's such a beautiful way to express oneself. There's a lot of beautiful beiges, nudes and bush tones, flowy skirts and wrap dresses, and a lot of ballet flats. Not just at Dior, but Stella McCartney had it and Burberry had a lot of dance influence as well. For jewelry there's like a few people that are my favorite runway jewelry trend starters. One used to be Celine, but it's changed a lot this season with the new creative director. I went to Balenciaga, which is one of my favorite designers, and he always does interesting costume jewelry that's fun to wear, and this season he did it, again, like some 80's influence in my eyes, he did a lot of sculptural gold and silver chains and statement earrings. He did like a big button earring with a zebra print on it, which is a bit 80's as well.

Tracy: The buttons are back, oh my gosh.

Angela: The buttons are back, yeah. I think brands like Marnie who does always a strong costume jewelry, they also had oversized gold chains and statement necklaces and statement earrings and big, gold sculptural



shapes. That kind of fit well with the whole 80's trends again. And then kind of off from that, I think another jewelry trend I saw was this wanderlust bohemian, these beautiful like almost homemade pieces like at, I think it was Chloe had this beaded cuff that was so beautiful. And then they like anklets and toe rings. I haven't seen toe rings in a while. It just gave it kind of like, yeah, like a wanderlust boho just feeling to the show. The way that they had some handcrafty looking pieces too, jewelry-wise.

Tracy: That's awesome. I said spring 2018, but I really meant spring 2019.

Angela: I always get so confused too, because I'm working on resort, I'm watching the spring 2019, but right now fall is in the stores. I always get confused this season.

Tracy: I know, it's hard. I can't even believe that it's already the end of the year, which is like so crazy to me. So I'm glad you said you said suits are in because I just wore, my insurance sponsor at our live event called me the business mermaid because I wore a Veronica Beard suit that was sparkly and iridescent, but also a power suit.

Angela: I love it.

Tracy: Which was so fun. So what are some of the brands that you're absolutely loving at the moment, besides the ones that you mentioned, the bigger ones. Are there any independent brands that you love?.

Angela: Yeah, there are so many, and I feel like people like the CFDA and LVMH are really doing a great job cultivating these brands. In New York I would say my favorite young designer is, his name is Matthew Adams Dolan and he's been around for a while and he is in the CFDA this year, so I'm very happy for him for that. And then there's Richard Quinn who's a young designer in London, but he's most famous for last season, the Queen showed up to a show which is just unreal. That's probably the most famous person that's ever been to any show. But I think the British Council are who's running the fashion week. I think they really wanted more support for these young designer, so they got her to go to the show, which was incredible.

Tracy: He must have been like freaking out.

Angela: I don't even know what I would do. I think there's a lot of great young designers... And these, both designers, they're not afraid to take risks, their clothes are interesting and original. On the other side, there are designers



out there that are just knocking off people, they're just in it for the money, out of all that I'm glad there are still young, creative people who want to make their own designs and that are like... I'm friends with Matthew Adams Dolan, and the amount of hustle, he had to go through just trying to stay afloat and finally getting that recognition. It's definitely worth it.

Tracy: It's like I feel like building an independent brand, whether it's jewelry or fashion or anything else, it really requires like tremendous amount of courage to continue to put yourself out there and hustle and just like really going for it to build a business. Because at the end of the day, like there is, I mean I don't really believe in competition because I think you can stand out from the crowd, but at the end of the day, like there are a lot of other options, maybe is the best way to put it. It's how you position yourself is really matters.

.Angela: Yeah, exactly.

Tracy: Longevity is really determined by your ability to continue to move forward and come up with good ideas. Right?

Angela: 100% yes.

Tracy: Awesome. Okay, so obviously, you're curating stories all the time. You said you're working on resort right now as we speak. How do you come up with the ideas for the stories that you make?

Angela: Generally I just watch, I watch all of the resort 2019 shows, and then it's kind of like you just make a book, like I literally just have folders and on my desktop, and I mean to simplify it could be like floral and utilitarian and you just start putting looks into these folders, and then the story kind of grows and you kind of see what the biggest trends are. Like I said, trends always repeat itself, so it could be floral, but then I would have to find a way to spin it to, maybe it's going to be like floral dresses with a punk twist for this season. So generally I come up with the stories off of just the runway shows. But there are sometimes, and I recently had to do this where it's kind of like the end of the year and there's a list, I shouldn't be saying this, but there's like a list of advertisers that we haven't shot and it's kind of just like we have to make up a story with these people in it, and so sometimes that's how a story can appear as well.

Tracy: Okay, that's cool. And how do you like decide to pick jewelry in these stories when you're featuring, like let's say you're doing like punk-floral



dresses and themes. What's your decision process for like the jewelry to work into that story?

Angela: When it comes to fashion shoots, we hire, we actually hire, we have like a handful of fashion stylist that we hire, and since the story is more about fashion, we kind of have a conversation with them asking if they need any accessories, to accessorize it. So it's more up to them, but I do do the same thing, but with just only jewelry stories. Jewelry doesn't really have a fashion week, but they do have like couture and they do have kind of like marks of the beginning of their season, so in the same way I kind of try to get my eyes on everything out there and then I come up with these folders and then that come up with trends which evolve into a bigger story ideas, and for that it's also kind of the same as fashion. We do you have to shoot a lot of our advertisers. So as long as they're in it, that's the other spots we have room to play with, anyone interesting that's been coming that we want to include.

Tracy: Oh, I love it said. Do you go to a lot of the shows?

Angela: For jewelry I go to the couture show in Vegas, and then there's one in Paris that our director goes to.

Tracy: Premier class or something else?

Angela: I think it's just called Couture.

Tracy: Oh, Couture Paris, okay.

Angela: Yeah, it happens during actual ready to wear couture, and then a lot of jewelry designers show out there. And then we have a men's team that goes to Basel. So we kind of, we kind of split and conquer and then we come back with the photos that we have and come up with these stories.

Tracy: That so fun. Do you love it?

Angela: I do it, I can't complain. I think every editor you meet probably loves to complain how tired they are, but at the end of the day, it's a fun job and I think the best part is honestly being able to support these young designers and making beautiful images with them.



Tracy: That's so cool. I remember, I just like called to mind, I remember when we were talking at Jewelry Independent, you were talking about how you're known for your sneakers. You must wear a lot of sneakers. So funny.

Angela: You have to. I feel like the days of editors wearing heels are over, because you really got to hustle on both sides.

Tracy: The cool thing is that there are so many cool sneakers out there right now.

Angela: Yeah, that is true.

Tracy: I just bought this really awesome pair of animal print sneakers from a brand called Grates, which is in...

Angela: Oh yeah, yeah.

Tracy: And they're super fun. I did a photo shoot, this is totally off topic, but I did this photo shoot and the photographer... I posted a picture of me wearing the sneakers and no one said anything about anything else in the photo.

Angela: But they wanted the sneakers. That's great.

Tracy: I know, it's funny. I have just like one final question for you. What's the most interesting pitch that you've ever gotten and why did it stand out?

Angela: I get so many, it's hard to say. I think, I mean it's an obvious answer, but it really is people who think outside of the box. I think the last really memorable one actually was, it happened to my coworker who sits next to me and she covers beauty. I think it's, as editors, like every day we get all these press kits, we get so much crap sent to our office and this brand just sends a look letter and being like, "We're promoting XYZ and we're eco-conscious brand, and because of that we would like to clear out all your junk." They provided a service where we could just donate all this junk that we got from in the office and at home. I mean that's, these people you can just tell that they did their homework and it's authentic because instead of sending us crapload of things, they did the opposite and offered to clean our junk bin. I think that was really clever.

Tracy: They are now in alignment with that eco-friendly mission that they had. I remember speaking to a buyer once, and she's like, don't send me a bunch of like packaging in a cute box with like a postcard in it, because it



drives me crazy because we are a brand that's in alignment with sustainability and being eco-friendly, and that's just like a waste of stuff.

Angela: Yeah, exactly. So for them it really works. There's other, I think publicist that I'm close with, you really get to know the editor and they figure out what you like, sometimes they're like, "Let's go to this workout class." because they know I like to go to the gym, and then that's a way talk about a brands. I think, when you first pitch to someone, I'm sure like if you're a creative designer you'll find a creative way to pitch, but you'll start have these relationships with editors as they start to grow, I'm sure you'll find a way to pitch them that tailors to them.

Tracy: Absolutely. Thank you so much for being here today, this is awesome.

Angela: Yeah, of course. Thank you so much for having me.

Tracy: Oh, it's my pleasure. What's the best way for people to connect with T Magazine and with you?

Angela: They can go to my Instagram. It's @ang.koh. I usually don't respond to my DMs, but I actually after the Jewelry Independent Summit I started to because I realized that is a really great way for designers to reach out to me. So if they just slide into my DMs, I will get back to them that as soon as possible.

Tracy: Slide into her DMs. Okay, awesome. And we'll have a link for your Instagram on the show notes as well. And make sure that you follow T Magazine guys, we'll also have a link to the show notes as well. Angela, thank you so much for being here today, it's been so awesome.

Angela: Thank you so much for having me.

Tracy: I want to thank guests again Angela Koh for joining me today. Make sure that you guys check her out, go follow her on Instagram, and if you feel like you have an innovative pitch or a story to reach out to her, make sure that you develop a relationship with her first, comment on her post, start a conversation and reach out to her with an incredible story idea, and hopefully you too will get featured. And if not, keep putting yourself out there because that is what it's all about. Taking that leap of faith and getting the exposure for your brand, so that you can continue to grow consistent sales. So we're going to have all of Angela's information over on



the show notes, she also mentioned that if you have stuff on your phone you could just pop on over to Instagram and search for her.

If you're trying to get more exposure for your brand, I'd love for you to think about your current outreach strategy and what you're doing to actually get exposure and traffic to your business. And it all starts with your website as your number one sales tool. So if you are struggling to get exposure for your brand or consistent sales or you've gotten to a certain point and you're really trying to get to that six or multiple six figure mark in your jewelry business, I would highly encourage you, and your stock, because you don't know what is missing, I'd highly encourage you for you to jump on a game plan call with me or someone on my team. Here's how you can do that. You can head on over to you FlourishThriveAcademy.com/GamePlanCall, and from there you can find out exactly how you can apply to get on one of these calls. We don't give them away to everyone, you have to qualify for a certain criteria, but I definitely recommend that you do this because at the end of it, we're going to show you exactly what you need to do and what the next steps are for you to kind of reach your goals and reach your dreams. So head on over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/GamePlanCall, check out the parameters and let's do this, because my mission here this year and over the next period of time is really to help designers not only reach their goal, but to get to a place where they're paying themselves an amazing salary.

For independent jury brands what we figured out is that if you're doing about \$100,000 or slightly more in revenue that you're taking home a \$50,000 paycheck, and for most people depending on where you live in the United States that is a living wage, and we're trying to inspire entrepreneurship for men and women who want something better for themselves, who want to use their creativity to grow their business, who want to use their creativity to actually build something that's in alignment with their passion and continue to grow. So if that sounds like something that you want to do and you're ready to go for it and you're full out, and/or you have a business that's already doing maybe six figures or a little bit more and you're trying to get to your next level, whatever that looks like, I highly encourage you to jump on one of these calls so that you can talk to someone on my team and we can help you map out the next steps for your next level of success. So head over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/GamePlanCall, and let's do this, shall we?



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