

SUMMER 2020

# IN THE LIMELIGHT

INTELLIGENT MEDIA FOR THE SAVVY ENTREPRENEUR

WITH CLARISSA BURT

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on Renewal

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IRIS APFEL  
FULL CIRCLE





# IRIS APFEL

## FULL CIRCLE

LEXYE AVERSA

Living in Palm Beach is a fantasy reality show that unfolds every day. Celebrities, billionaires, scions of industry, sports greats, and other luminaries are omnipresent within in this special enclave. Many travel the globe, spreading their sphere of influence and businesses, with homes on several different continents. When they retreat to Palm Beach, they are neighbors, one of whom is international fashion icon, Iris Apfel.

Iris blazed a trail across the fashion world with dazzling designs, fabrics, greeting cards, eyeglasses, and jewelry—such as the creations designed for Tane, the largest silversmith in Mexico, that she's wearing for the cover and this article. Flamboyant, wise, and blessed with whimsical wit, her recognizable personality is an inspiration to millions. A Barbie Doll was created in her likeness, and no one else can claim signing a modeling contract with one of the top world agents at the age of 97. Iris is a legendary cover girl!

Having crossed paths with Ms. Apfel at charity events (some I chaired), dinner parties, or, sharing air kisses on Worth Avenue, it was a joy to interview her in May 2020. I have yearned to wear the layers of necklaces and color combinations she dares to don; now I know the true layers she wears as a person. Although she is continuously working on new projects and fashion lines, this consummate fashionista graciously put them on pause for a few hours. Like a good neighbor, Iris Apfel welcomed this interview.



**Aversa:** Iris, much has been published about your life and career, including a documentary. Your fashion statement is iconic and has forged your success, yet in the film, you said, "It's better to be happy than well-dressed."

**Apfel:** Fashion should be a natural expression of a person. If you stress about being perfect, matching "correctly," being overly concerned about how you look, it detracts from how you feel about yourself. You should not be a nervous wreck to be chic! Seclusion during the pandemic has revealed our true selves in how we feel about how we look. Many of us are comfortable attired in our robes all these weeks, while some feel more put together are more comfortable getting dressed, and others cherish even "dressing up," despite not leaving home.

**Aversa:** You and Carl had a glorious relationship over 68 years of marriage. I remember seeing the two of you seated together at a charity events and how your devotion to one another radiated. Do you recall what you were wearing on your first date together?

**Apfel:** I still wear that black dress from my first date with Carl! Our marriage was wonderful, and we were fortunate to work together for so many years. Of course, I miss him "madly."

**Aversa:** Style is unique and very personal. Have you always dressed as you are featured in the global public eye?

**Apfel:** Yes! This was always me. A woman's style is part of her DNA...you cannot learn style. Bringing your identity to fruition, reflecting reflect who you are, is inherent. While I admire many designers, I never follow any specific trend, as it wouldn't be me. Humanity evolves, it is different all the time, and I am true always to myself, "to be me."

**Aversa:** You have an intimate knowledge of fabric and color. What best represents for you the human condition...humanity...touching the Earth through fashion?

**Apfel:** I have collections which I love of Southwest and Native American tribal jewelry, fashions, and artifacts. I admire the beautiful art from their cultures, their profound sense of color. I am also drawn to original designs and concepts from a variety of ethnic jewelry, treasures which reflect the philosophies embodied in their heritage from countries and cultures around the world.

**Aversa:** Your eyeglasses may hold a clue to your innate personality. The large size, and of course the round shape...your complexity expressed with such simplicity. What is the secret behind those glasses?

**Apfel:** Since I was a little girl, I was always fascinated by "spectacles," especially crazy looking ones with big shapes. I used to frequent yard sales and collect them, keeping them in a "sacred" box.

As a teenager, I decided to start wearing them, even without lenses, to make a statement with this distinct fashion accessory! I would go to my box and pull out the largest and most noticeable ones. When I finally was prescribed to wear lenses, the optometrist had a heck of a time making them fit into my favorite big round frames! I was asked by many about why I was wearing glasses so large, to which I replied, "the bigger to see you!"

The circle design to me is beautiful and has always had a significant impact...it represents perfection, as espoused by the Native American Indians: "Everything comes full circle."

**Aversa:** Did you ever experience a moment in time when your dress, attitude, and what you were feeling were in perfect alignment?

**Apfel:** That generally describes who I am. I am a very private person and prefer to keep to myself, despite the hectic pace of my business and fashion visibility. I was well known in my field, but my image increased gradually over the years. It was poignant, even surprising, that after Carl's passing there have been so many fascinating opportunities and unexpected ventures which emerged to capture my attention while complementing my life's path with excitement at this juncture. The man upstairs has been very good to me.



**Aversa:** Do you have any predictions about what women's fashion and accessories will look like in the future?

**Apfel:** Fashion is ever evolving. During the COVID-19 isolation, I was asked to conceive something in the fashion sphere to amuse people during home confinement. So, realizing this has been a period of introspection for everyone, granting time to think about how they feel about themselves, I dreamed up an idea. Through social media, I suggested people empty their closets and experiment by creating new outfits (men, women, even babies, dogs and cats).

"Iris your Closet Around the World" has been viewed by over five million followers and received more than 3,000 pictures from over 63 countries. I periodically feature some of the most imaginative creations, "fashioned" out of ingenuity.

In the course of our visit, Iris Apfel revealed insights that penetrated beyond her wardrobe into the depth of her "true colors." Having attracted the attention of so many people who admire the conviction of her individuality, she exemplifies the passion of what happens when people stay "true always" to themselves. It is said that wisdom comes with age, but Iris Apfel's personal philosophy transcends both wisdom and age.

*She is Timeless*

Radio and media Host of LEX Travel & Creativity, Lexye Aversa was featured as "Best Global Event Planner" on FOX TV's "Best of South Florida." Find more information about her business and creative endeavors at [www.youtube.com/user/LexTravel](http://www.youtube.com/user/LexTravel), [www.ProfessionalTouchIntl.com](http://www.ProfessionalTouchIntl.com) contact her at [Lex@LexTravelWorld.com](mailto:Lex@LexTravelWorld.com)

Photos courtesy of Tane Jewelry and Iris Apfel.