



Share



Fashion & Beauty

A LAB ON FIRE

Published on 30 July 2015
words Giorgia Cantarini

In a secret location near Marfa, Texas mysterious there is a small perfumery – a lab – where fascinating fragrances come to life. Guided by the talent of Mr. Kusubayashi, A Lab On Fire is a limited-production fragrance house built on collaborations with the brightest talents in the perfume industry. No one knows exactly how A Lab On Fire operates, or how Carlos Kusubayashi works.

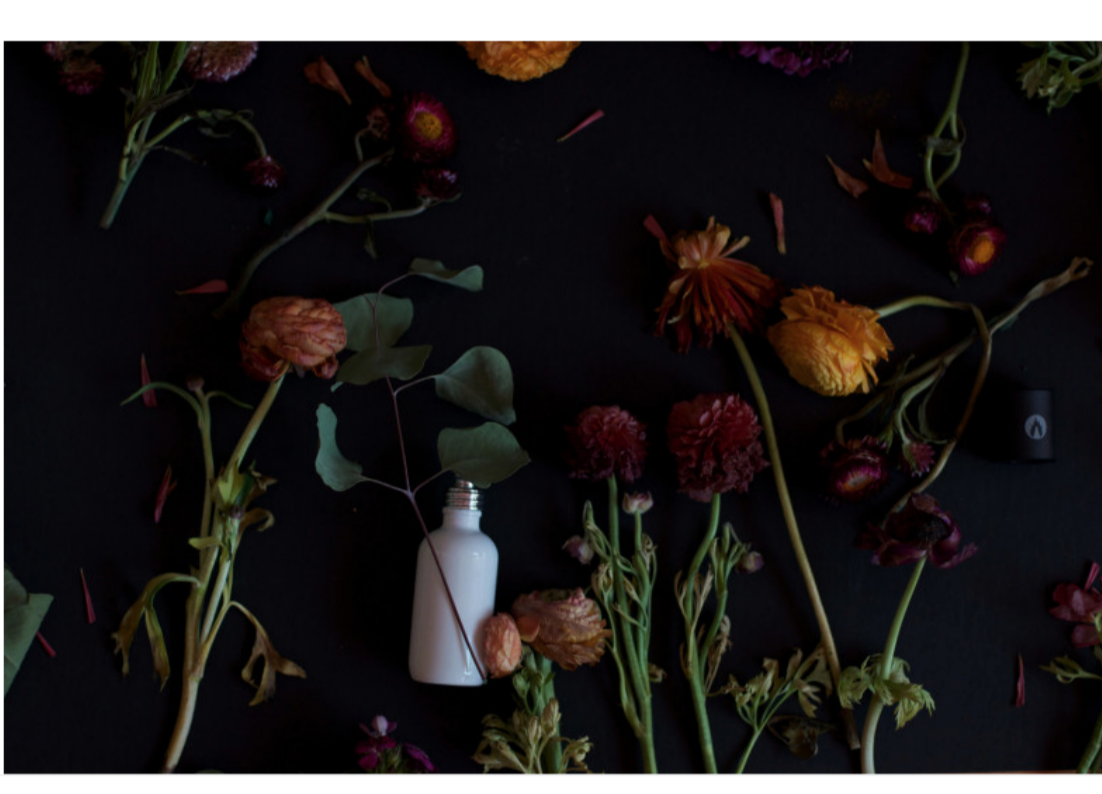
A creative soul and citizen of the world, Kusubayashi was born in Sao Paulo and raised in Japan. He experimented in various fields, including car manufacturing, apprenticing for a master kyoji (who mounts calligraphy), and restoring Asian art in Paris. Kusubayashi's interests eventually led him to Brooklyn where he worked for a Japanese sculptor until 2009. The personal identity of Carlos Kusubayashi still remains a secret, not unlike his fragrances that need to be experienced, to truly be appreciated. We were able to make contact with Carlos, the brain behind the label to find out more about his clandestine perfumery.

What's the secret behind the secret of A Lab on Fire? Why is everything such a mystery?

A Lab on Fire is a creative collective that includes perfumers, evaluators, a writer, a photographer and myself. We work together to make awesome fragrances, and each one speaks for itself. It is important for us to credit the creator/nose of each fragrance, but that's all we need to convey. We started A Lab on Fire as an exercise in showcasing the best talents outside the box. There is no need for a "BRAND" or "MEism" at A Lab on Fire.

What are the best and the worst sides of keeping your identity a mystery?

The good thing about not letting too much information out is that I don't waste time on things that are not essential to us, and so we can stay focused on our agenda. I can skip the attention of the media entirely. The downside could be that the opportunities for media exposure are limited, and it takes more time to develop strong distribution networks for the products. In Europe I've just started with Intertrade.



What's your relationship with fashion? Any favourite designers?

I'm such a t-shirt and jeans person that I don't really have much to say about fashion. I've always liked what Hedi Slimane does, including his photography. I also adore Phoebe Philo's understated yet stunning designs. A Lab on Fire may have certain quirky aspects, but if I put our olfactory aesthetic in the context of fashion design, our fragrances would be similar to their elegant and contemporary designs.

How does your creative process work?

Each project is different since we work with different perfumers, and each perfumer we work with has a unique style and a strong personality. We often start from an accord that a perfumer has already created by his/her own interest. But it really depends on them. For example, I find it easier to start from scratch when we work with Dominique Ropion, even though the process has the potential to take a very long time.



How did you come up with the idea of being based in Texas? Do you work in the middle of the desert in an unknown location?

I like the desert because there's nothing, and so I try to spend as much time as possible in my studio/shack/garage here in far West Texas during the year to do the creative work for A Lab on Fire. It is in an undisclosed location not too far from Marfa, and that's all I can tell. I spend less than one third of the year here in West Texas, but this is my home. As for the production of our fragrances, the operation is based out of New York Metropolitan area. Our collaborator IFF's factory is in New Jersey, our filling facility is not far from the factory, and our warehouse is in Lower Hudson Valley, New York, an hour drive north from Manhattan. It is important to keep the operation near New Jersey, which is the world's capital of fragrances and flavour development today. There are also three major airports in the area, and this is important since 90% of our fragrances are sold outside the United States. Fortunately, many things are done by email and FedEx lately, so I don't have to be on the East Coast all the time.

Can you describe your daily routine?

I don't like routine – I like to go with the flow, except for putting on a t-shirt and jeans before work, there is one thing I always try to do wherever I am – whether that is in the desert of West Texas, on the rough streets of Brooklyn, or somewhere far from the States – that is to run at dawn. It takes the edge off, leaving me calm and focused during the day.



Texas is said to be a conservative state in the US, but it seems to be very creative in Marfa and Austin. Can you tell us more about the creativity in these places?

Texas in general is probably as conservative as Orange County, California. I've been only once, but Austin is a unique city and not like other cities in Texas. The city has a cool vibe. On the other hand, Marfa is just a small and remote community in the middle of nowhere, and it is difficult to compare Marfa to a big city in the same context. I'm not an artist and cannot speak for them, but my first visit a few years ago was similar to those artists who had moved from big cities and are now living in the area. I was on an inspirational trip for my next move and wanted to be a bit off-grid and in a wild West kind of a place. You need to be able to appreciate nothingness to live in a place like this. It's like a blank canvas. You need some imagination to survive in the desert. The area offers a picturesque backdrop for artwork like Judd's or the much newer installation, Prada Marfa, which is not exactly in Marfa but in a town next to it called Valentine.

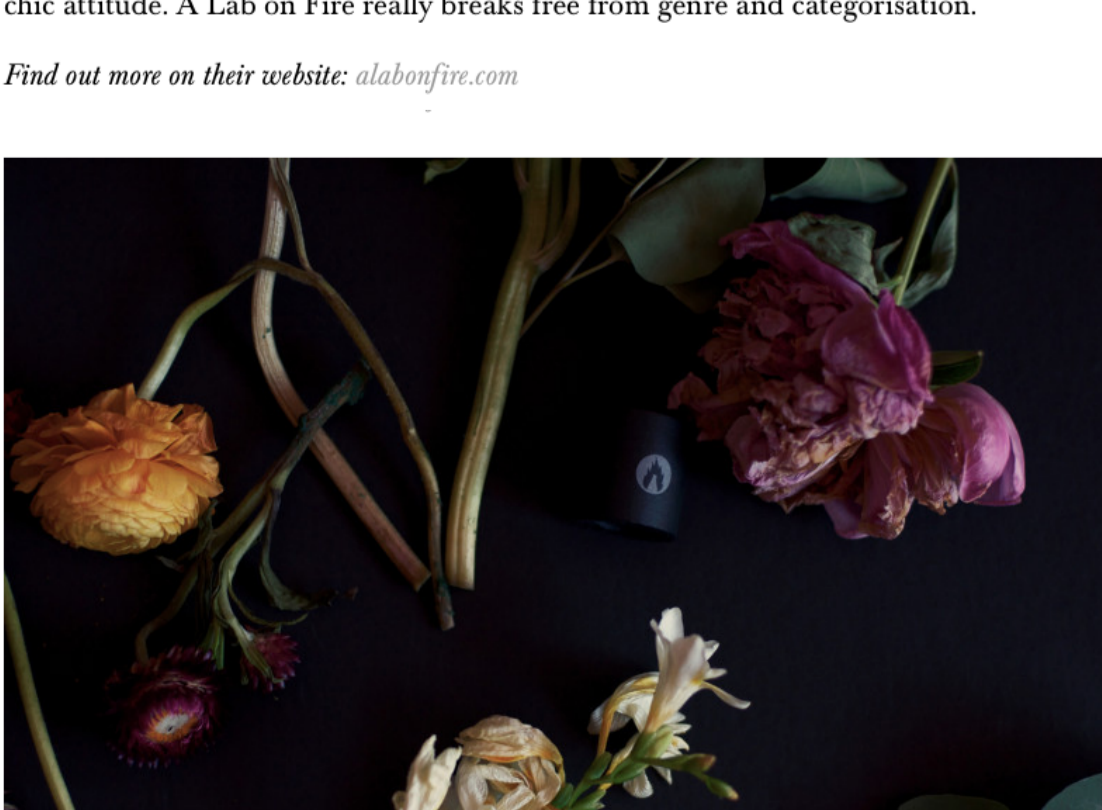
What's next for A Lab On Fire, any other incoming projects? New launches?

We always have four to five projects in the pipeline. Some only take less than a year, some can be a few years, but we try not to launch more than two new fragrances at the same time.

What's the secret of the success of A Lab On Fire?

Quality and glamour. Quality of the ingredients, supreme fragrant compositions and a chic attitude. A Lab on Fire really breaks free from genre and categorisation.

Find out more on their website: alabonfire.com



0 Comments

Hunger TV

Login