STORIES & INSIGHTS

Meet Rebecca Taylor Bratland

JESSICA MARKS 3 MIN READ

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We're excited to introduce you to the always-interesting and insightful Rebecca Taylor Bratland. We hope you'll enjoy our conversation with Rebecca Taylor below.

Hi Rebecca Taylor, thanks for joining us today. It's always helpful to hear about times when someone's had to take a risk + look at life/work through the decision, why did they take the risk, and what ended up happening. We'd love to hear about a risk you've taken.

I was raised in a small farm town in Wisconsin, population around 1,200. My experience with the world was very limited and I would spend my high school years daydreaming about being a model in the big city wearing high fashion and the glamorous lifestyle. I would write songs and strum a guitar, and most evenings you'd find me glued to the TV watching old movies filmed in New York.

I always dreamed of something more.

I wanted to be a model and a songwriter, but I couldn't do it in Wisconsin. My parents wanted nothing to do with this crazy idea and constantly urged me to go to college and become a corporate employee of some kind.

This dream was in my bones and in my soul, it was since the day I was born! I couldn't imagine being anything else. So, at the age of 18, I did what I had made the very decision at the tender age of 18 to move to New York city on a one way in Chicago.

I knew no one in New York, had no job prospects, no home, and no real life experience to speak of. Everyone in my life was against it and I didn't need to spend the rest of my life regretting choosing a "safe" route.

Within the first two weeks after I arrived in the city, I signed with the 2nd modeling agency and formed my first band.

Now, back in the early 1990's was a very dangerous place, and I lived in a 100 infested apartment in the LES on Rivington street. It was a far cry from Wisconsin, but it hasn't been that was I wouldn't have accomplished all that I have in my life I remain a successful model and actor at an age where most people have retired. Life is only getting better!

Rebecca Taylor, how fascinating! Thank you for sharing your insights with us. Now, we'd like to ask some questions, maybe you can also share some stories to introduce yourself to our readers who might have missed our earlier conversations!

I am a pro-age models model. My work consists of editorial, commercial, entertainment, and I am a pro-life activist. I am a mother of two and I am a Grandmother to 2 (one co-starring with Golden Globe Award winner Ian McShane). Eventually, I am working more now than I ever did as a young woman.

My life blossomed in my 50s after I was finally able to heal from pain accumulated in my 20s and 30s. I was a very lost young woman growing up in the fast-flat Hollywood woman and now want to seek models that they can relate to whether its age or body type, there are just moves aids today. Featuring beautiful older people of different body shapes and ethnicities gracing the pages of magazines. What a wonderful thing!

My goal has always been to show the world that just because you are a particular age doesn't mean you can't wear cool clothing, rock a fun haircut, and most importantly that you are never too old to pursue your dreams.

I've just completed my memoir, Chinese, which means "power" in Japanese. The book takes you on my journey as an international model in the 1980's and 90's, and how I was lost in my 20s and 30s, and how I finally found my power in my 50s and a woman of the Versus the Japanese culture.

Eventually, I was contract into becoming an informant against the organization and it let was placed on me. Disguised as a Japanese boy, I was able to infiltrate the Yakuza and bring down the Yakuza in Dark and city life, attempting to stay one step ahead of the yakuzas. I tried to commit suicide twice and normally escaped being raped.

I am fortunate to be alive, because many women I met in my journey did not survive. My goal in telling my story is to inspire and educate others about sex trafficking and suicide prevention, the most important goal is to make a lasting positive change in peoples' lives.

We'd love to hear a story of resilience from your journey.

In the 1990's when I was working as an international model I was contracted into being a spy for the Japanese Yakuza organization. I was placed on the Yakuza Japanese Mafia. When I knew too much my life became a living hell. I was followed and harassed day and night. Ultimately, I became an informant for the Japanese police who wanted to take down the entire organization. When a corrupt cop was paid off and my nightmare began.

My memoir "Chinese" recounts my survival story from nearly losing a victim of sex trafficking, trying to commit suicide twice, and becoming so desperate to end the suffering that I was one step away from jumping off a 20 story high rise.

This was the lowest point of my life. It was truly the depths of hell.

But this was nothing compared to the amount of pain I faced once I returned home.

Such, shame, and confusion about why I had survived when so many had died around me. I felt like I was a ghost, I was numb, I was angry and drink excessively, anything to keep the anger and confusion

My next choice was whether to live or this pain for the rest of my life or face it and overcome it head on.

So I did I went to therapy and began a deep painful dive into my inner soul. Deep down I wanted desperately to heal and set myself free.

My life has never been easy, I grew up in an abusive home and never really had a positive maternal figure in my life. I think this led to some of the choices I made in Japan, which left me with 10 lifetimes full of trauma.

It's taken years of work and I still suffer occasionally from PSTD. Insomnia. I can physically say that I am happy, unashamed, and free of all the anger. I don't blame anyone, and, most importantly, I have forgiven myself for being so trusting. Through this journey of life, it is sometimes difficult and painful and other times joyous but in between there are lessons to be learned.

As I look back on my life, I wouldn't change a thing. My experiences, both good and bad have made me into the woman I am today, strong, compassionate and resilient.

For you, what's the most rewarding aspect of being a creative?

The most rewarding aspect of being an artist is the fact that I can authentically and unapologetically be who I am. I now be modeling without stress combing, but I express myself artistically through the camera.

Being an artist is pure joy, especially when you are creating. It's almost as if you are channeling art from a higher place in your subconscious mind.

And to you that's doesn't have to be Baselitz, it does. While my friends are going on vacations and living the high life, I'm constantly hustling for the next gig and checking my bank account every every day to see if my payment for work I did three months ago arrived.

But I wouldn't—and couldn't—have it any other way. It's in my blood and my soul.

I'm an artist.

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