



## French Connection

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It's Bastille Day and we've decided to celebrate one of France's best and brightest. Manhattan-based Sylvie Guieysse, who has been living in the financial district with her husband Antoine Gervais, an executive at Moët Hennessy, for the past three years, launched her first Couture line in Paris, developing eight collections and crafting what she calls "a very personal style, a fusion of influences, bright colors, and geometric lines." The buzz has been building at trade shows and at retailers like Nest Interiors in Chelsea and Home and Haven in Carroll Gardens for a couple of seasons, so we decided to sit with the self-proclaimed "happy seamstress" for a chat about inspiration and travel.



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**TRACE:** How did you get interested in world cultures?

When I was five years-old, my parents bought me an atlas and it was a shock; a feeling that the world is a huge place, with so many places and people to discover. When you get to meet a lot of people, you realize how ancestral fabrics are part of people's lives, and how they allow them to express their emotions. For instance, a sari will be very different if the fabric is chosen for a wedding or for everyday life. When I was eight years-old, I told my nanny, who was from Portugal, that I loved the color purple. She was surprised, and said that in Portugal, purple is the color for mourning. It was the first time I realized that colors had different meanings for different people. Also, my grandmother was a seamstress, and I learned from her how to choose a good fabric, and identify, through emotion and training, how a fabric should feel and whether it would be soft enough and so on. My grandmother is very detail-oriented, and my mother, who used to paint a lot when she was younger, would explain to me, in graphic detail, the beauty that could be extracted from the orange color in the sky. In my work now, I get attracted to colors that bring back some of these visual cues that appeal to me. I never try to create something weird, just beautiful objects that I like.

**TRACE:** How do you see your work evolving over the next few years?

Recently, I've been thinking about going back to fashion and making clothes, but pillows, and table linens and tapestries are keeping me quite busy at the moment.

For more information, go to <http://www.sylvie-pillows.com>

Interview: Claude Grunitzky  
Photography Mikaela Gauer