

FRANCESCA PITERA

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SUMMARY

Highly creative and deeply collaborative Creative Director and Designer with over 25 years of experience building thoughtful, elegant, and brand-defining collections. Recognized for nurturing teams and guiding the design process with clarity, vision, and grace. Known for developing new categories and elevating brand identity through understated yet impactful designs. Combines artistic intuition with technical precision, always maintaining a calm, encouraging presence that fosters innovation and unity.

DESIGN & LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Creative Direction | Product Development | Concept Design | Category Expansion | Team Leadership | Vendor Collaboration | Trend Research | Fit & Quality Oversight | Design Illustration | Development Calendar Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GIGI C – Los Angeles, CA

Lead Designer: Swim, Lounge, Cashmere, Resortwear | Oct 2024 – Present

At GIGI C, I led the design direction across core and new categories—swim, lounge, sport, cashmere, and fine jersey—developing a calm yet confident aesthetic that expanded the brand's reach and resonance. I introduced new silhouettes in resort wear, including dresses and luxury knitwear collections, while refining the existing swim and sport lines. This approach always balanced the brand's modern elegance with commercial intent. My work focused on creating a product identity that was clean, chic, and memorable, while building strong partnerships across technical, merchandising, and production teams.

JLM COUTURE – New York, NY

Lead Designer: Francesca Avila, Kali by Francesca Avila, Jim Hjelm Bridal & Occasions | 2021–2024, 2003–2014

At JLM Couture, I led the design and full development lifecycle of bridal and bridesmaid collections, creating some of the company's best-selling lines. I worked with embroidery, lace, and soft draping to craft timeless pieces. My leadership extended into quality control and vendor relationships, ensuring a seamless path from sketch to showroom. My approach was

both artistic and meticulous, emphasizing communication and consistency throughout the creative process.

MONIQUE LHUILLIER – Vernon, CA

Design Director: BLISS, Maids & ML Monique Lhuillier | 2014 – 2021

At Monique Lhuillier, I helped shape the creative voice of key collections including the BLISS line. I designed with intention—evolving silhouettes, fabrics, and details to remain modern and emotionally resonant. Through close collaboration with product managers and technical partners, I ensured each piece felt personal, polished, and on brand. I also guided vendor strategy and sourcing to support quality and cost integrity.

ST. JOHN KNITS – Irvine, CA

Senior Designer | 1993 – 2002

At St. John Knits, I worked on both RTW and couture collections, developing original patterns and stitches that reflected the brand's luxurious sensibility. I supported both the creative and operational sides of the design process, and cultivated a deep respect for craftsmanship and team continuity. My experience there laid the foundation for a design philosophy rooted in elegance, restraint, and collaboration.

AWARDS & HONORS

- David Hayes Golden Thimble Award
- Nichole Miller Golden Thimble Award
- DEBI Awards – Bridesmaids Better Design: 2004, 2005, 2008

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fashion Design – Otis Art Institute, Parsons School of Design

Sequin Design Program – Jacob Schlaepfer, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Computer Embroidery Development Training – St. John Knits