

# Karen Strassman

## **Tell us about your personal style.**

Because I'm petite, I tend to gravitate to more classic lines, especially for the red carpet...pieces that fit well and don't overwhelm, with some fun, elegant or sexy flare. In my daily life, because I spend a lot of time in the studio standing in front of the mic or in rehearsal working on auditions, scene work, theater, coaching clients, or running around town from session to session, I lean towards clothes and shoes I can move a lot in: jeans, boots, and playful tops.

## **Tell us about your time in Paris.**

I grew up in the United States on the East Coast, but my mother was from Denmark, and we spent a lot of vacations there when I was growing up. I always felt a deep resonance with Europe. When I was a teenager, I yearned to go back there to live and study.

As people often do at that age, I was struggling to figure out who I was, what I wanted in life, what I cared about... I was very drawn to France and their rich language. The art, culture and beauty of Paris somehow really called to me and I went there to study for a year, immersing myself in the language and lifestyle and exploring parts of myself I had less access to in the States. By some unforeseen providence I was invited to be an apprentice dialect coach at a studio that specialized in training French actors to act in English for movies and TV. I had an uncanny proclivity for it, and was offered a full-time job as one of their main coaches the following year. Faced with choosing between going back to the States to get my psychology degree, or following this new adventure doing something I loved and living in this beautiful city that so called to me, I put my psychology degree on hold to stay in France. From there, I spent two years working at this studio, ended up coaching many famous actors privately for projects in English, and coaching on sets as well. I was offered a role on one of the TV shows I was coaching on, got an agent, and decided to continue my acting training at Le Conservatoire National d'Art Dramatique de Paris, the most prestigious acting school in France at that time. I studied Racine, Moliere, and even Shakespeare in French, working hard to perfect my French accent so I could do more theater, movies and TV in French. To make extra money along with dialect coaching, I started doing voiceover, dubbing French films into English which led to an abundance of work in animation, video games, commercials, and fun projects like recording guided tours of the Louvre and the Musee d'Orsay in English. I married a Frenchman, and my one year in France turned into a 16 year acting career, voyage of self-discovery, and cherished home in the City of Lights.

## **What are your favorite designers for the red carpet?**

I have a particular penchant for Herve Leger because his dresses fit the petite frame so well, and I love a lot of Karen Millen's pieces.

## **What is your most favorite thing in your closet?**

I have a beautiful, very French, elegant Dior-reminiscent dress by Adelyn Rae that I wish I could wear every day. Casually, I

have colorful sweater-wrap from Lucky Jeans that my artist Dad gifted me when he was 85. I also have a collection of playful faux-fur jackets that make me smile.

## **What do you do for fun?**

I am blessed that acting, the thing I spend most of my life engaging in, also happens to be my biggest passion and source of endless fun. Outside of that, one of my greatest simple joys in life is swimming. People say I must have been a mermaid in another life, because I often feel more at home in water than on land. Everything gets so quiet in the water, problems melt away, and I can hear the quiet voice of my heart much more clearly there. I also love spending time with dear friends in intimate, deeply human conversations, soulful connections and wonderful uncontrollable laughter. And dancing!

## **Tell us about your shoe collection.**

Aside from sneakers, all the rest of my shoes are heels. Even boots. Paris is an excellent training ground for walking in heels. And I really love Steve Madden and Michael Kors.

## **Which fashion week is your favorite?**

I focus so much of my energy into all the TV, film, theater and voiceover work I'm involved in, which requires hours of rehearsals, learning lines, studying other actors, other shows, working with coaches, writing, journaling, coaching others... that I don't have the time to follow Fashion Week very closely. But if someone offered me an invitation to go back to Paris for a fashion week there, I would joyfully accept.

## **Where do you go to relax?**

I really like the simplicity of being in my apartment surrounded by my dad's paintings, warm music and my sweet kitty. I spend so much time on the road, on sets, jumping from studio to studio, that I don't get as much quiet time at home as I'd like. It helps me center and literally come back home. I also love being near water anywhere in the world, walking on the beach, sitting on a dock gently swaying above the waves with my feet in the water, or out in the middle of a lake on a boat.

## **What are your favorite colors?**

Teal, Burgundy, and Soft Rose.

## **Do you still study psychology ?**

Acting invites an exploration into the human spirit and human nature day in and day out. But as an actor, it's less about analyzing anything as much as it is about diving into the human heart and human condition to reveal raw, honest resonating truths and realities that may resonate universally. As a dialect and acting coach, I imagine there is psychology involved, but I relate to all of that in a more intuitive, spontaneous way without too much conscious analyzing. Outside of acting, I've always been kind of a seeker, and I read a lot of books related to mysticism, human evolution, personal development and the sacred.

### **What is your favorite movie?**

Here are a few: Francis, Five Feet Apart, Nell, The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, The Wizard of Oz, The Matrix, What's Eating Gilbert Grape, and Finding Nemo.

### **What's up next for you?**

I just shot four different TV shows this Fall that I can't yet talk about, as well as some really cool video games. I'll also have the exciting worldwide release of Tom Six's bold new film The Onania Club, and a really fun new play called Slap Kiss Kill, which I will be performing in Los Angeles this year.

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