

SFF164: Kate Knight

[00:00:00] **Heidi:** Welcome to another episode of the successful fashion freelancer podcast. And there is so much in store in this episode today. Um, I'm chatting with Kate who is a cashmere sweater designer, and we talk about so many things. Um, first of all, the big one that doesn't even get revealed until closer to the end is that she took a 10 year break from the fashion industry, got back in and is crushing it on her freelance career.

Um, I love this part of her story so much because a lot of people think what if I'm outdated, what if I've lost sight of the trends and the technology and all the stuff that's going on. Um, and people take breaks for all sorts of reasons. They get burnt out and they leave. They start families and they leave.

And Kate is a perfect example of this. She has a daughter she left for 10 years to pursue a different career. And she is now back in as a freelancer, crushing it, um, outside of that, so many valuable things. Um, Kate has. Done a really great job of getting clients to [00:01:00] land in her lap. By being very niche as a cashmere sweater designer, she is getting traffic to her website.

Not a lot. She's getting traffic to her Instagram, not a lot. She's got 300 followers, but she is attracting the right people because she is so niche and focused. Everyone that has come to her is specifically looking for not just sweaters, but cashmere sweaters. So she talks all about how she's done this.

We talk a little bit about pricing and, um, ways she has approached that the lessons that she's learned from underpricing projects, so many great things, as well as the community and the friendships that she has built with other freelancers, um, helping each other out, just being friends and helping each other out with resources.

And, and it's been a great way for her to sort of emulate a working environment in an office, which she knew working as a freelancer was gonna be a challenge for her to not have coworkers. So. So many great things. Um, I won't spoil any of the details, but really, really great insights in this [00:02:00] conversation with Kate.

Um, Kate is one of our freelance accelerator graduates, and as I mentioned, she's doing amazing, amazing in her freelance career. Um, if you would like more information on getting started with freelance accelerator, you can check that out at, so heidi.com/fast F a S T. And if you would like to check out some

of our free resources to kickstart, you can head on over to, so heidi.com/freelance, you can grab our freelance success pack there.

It's absolutely free. We will link everything below and in the show notes for you. Um, but I want you to know that we have those resources available. Thank you so much for joining this episode. And without further ado, let's jump into my conversation with Kate. Welcome Kate to the successful fashion freelancer podcast.

Um, I know a little bit of your story because we hopped on a strategy session. What was it? Maybe like two months ago? Mm-hmm and. I love this little introduction of your strategy session because you applied for the session. [00:03:00] And then a few weeks later we got on the call and you were like, okay, but I kind of solved the problem that I had applied for.

Like, I was like, I'm not hearing back from these clients I'm pitching and now, oh, guess what? I have like two or three clients by then or something like that. So, um, I wanna talk all about that and your journey and where you're at and everything. But first after my long-winded introduction, why don't you introduce yourself and let us know who you are and what you do in the fashion industry?

[00:03:24] **Kate:** Hi, my name's Kate Knight and I'm a new weather designer who specializes in KME. Okay.

[00:03:30] **Heidi:** You've got that really down succinct. thank you. Um, tell us a little bit more about your background and, and sort of, you know, where you got to where you are.

[00:03:42] **Kate:** Um, so I've always sort of been half I feel in education and half in fashion.

Um, my first job was actually a lecturer at university of leads. And then after deciding not to do a PhD, I moved to New York and became a, a sweater designer and itwe designer, um, [00:04:00] and worked for a big cashmere supplier out there. And, um, then moved back to London, met my husband nine days later. Um, and started working in London, um, and worked for what, I guess you would call like the top end of the high street, um, in London and then got burnt out and got married and my dad died and, um, sort of said, right, that's it.

And started teaching, um, until I found. Your podcast less than a year ago. Okay. So I was looking through, um, a notebook I had and I watched a webinar. You did on the 16th of April 21. Um,

[00:04:43] **Heidi:** wait, you know the date I do cause I wrote it down in my notebook. Oh, oh, okay. Okay. Gotcha. I was like, that was really specific.

No, no. So today is April 7th. So it's like almost exactly a year ago. Yeah.

[00:04:55] **Kate:** Year. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Um, and I'd freelanced on and off. I'd done some [00:05:00] projects and I'd been to freelance for a bit and you helped me think, okay. This could actually be a full time job. Ah, I think that was the, the big change. And also that I could go out and look for freelance projects rather than sort of sit delicately on LinkedIn and hope they'd come for me.

[00:05:17] **Heidi:** I love that. Freezing sit delicately on LinkedIn

[00:05:21] **Kate:** um, and um, yeah, so, uh, we moved countries. Uh, last June and I started kind of earnestly pitching well, following the, the, the, um, you know, customer research thing. Yeah. Probably end of September. Um, and didn't yeah, it was Christmas. I got a couple of clients before Christmas, couple of little projects, and then after Christmas things really picked up.

Okay. Um, and, um, I'm now pretty busy. I'd still like some more clients. Yeah. Um, but, but [00:06:00] things, things are going well. Okay.

[00:06:01] **Heidi:** This is amazing. So let's start back a little. At the beginning, you made the comment that you had done some freelance before, but you didn't. But, but I, you had saw a webinar or heard something from, from my content that made you realize you could actually do it full time.

So as like a, you said full time job, but like, make it be like your sole income.

[00:06:24] **Kate:** It sounds, yeah. Making enough money to live on, I think was the sort of, yeah. Okay. Um, I, cause I'd done. Yeah, I'd done. Like people would contact me on LinkedIn. I'd do a project and then that would be it. Okay. Um, but your course, and your strategies sort of helped me think how to build on that.

And also yeah. That you can pitch for freelance

[00:06:45] **Heidi:** projects. So the projects you had gotten previous had come to you and they were project based, it wasn't doesn't sound like it was Perman Lance work.

[00:06:53] **Kate:** No, no, no. It was, um, uh, people finding me on LinkedIn and saying, can you do a collection? [00:07:00] Okay. So I'd done.

Maybe let's say five or six of those,

[00:07:03] **Heidi:** but then that was it. It just, that. But I do the

[00:07:06] **Kate:** project say thank you very much. Get the money. Okay. And, and then, yeah, move on. Okay. Um, and I was teaching and having a baby and, you know, I wasn't really focused on it life.

[00:07:17] **Heidi:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Okay. So, so then you realized you could do it, you know, full earn, earn a full time income.

Mm-hmm um, so what did it look like in those early day? When did you enroll in fast?

[00:07:33] **Kate:** Uh, in August, August? Um, so I, I sort of said to myself, so we moved in June. Okay. In June. I said to myself, July and August sorting out my portfolio. Okay. And then, um, yeah, sort of started for real okay. In September.

[00:07:49] **Heidi:** Okay. So you went through the content, um, still on, through the content.

Okay. You started going through the content. Yeah. Yeah. And you [00:08:00] started pitching. um, I, I believe, I mean, you did some other things, obviously you did some customer research, et cetera, but it's you started pitching and you like, weren't really hearing back initially, which was why you had scheduled the strategy session.

Yeah. So talk a little bit about like that process of kind of getting started and then you weren't hearing back, but then you all of a sudden started hearing back.

[00:08:21] **Kate:** Um, so I think I got much better, so I have to be honest, I'm still yet to money from pitching. Oh, So I'm still, so I'm still the clients I've got have come to me through various waves.

Okay. Um, and, but I've got a much better rate of people getting back to me from pitching. Okay. So I've had now several conversations with people and a lot of them have said, maybe not this right now, but later, and keep in touch. Yes. So that's not, so I've got a much, I feel like I've got a much better sort of, um, aim.

Um, and definitely part of [00:09:00] it is working out the, the, the, um, brands working out, which companies to work for. Yeah.

[00:09:07] **Heidi:** Um, sorry, go ahead. No, that, I think that's it. I mean, one of my comments was gonna be with pitching. A lot of it is really just about timing. Mm. Right. Mm-hmm they might need you tomorrow. It's like frantic.

Oh my gosh. I'm so glad. And it's like, you know what? Not right now, but like, you're planting so many seeds that are gonna start growing really, really soon. So where have these other projects come. So, um, from sitting delicately on LinkedIn .

[00:09:34] **Kate:** Um, so actually, do you remember your I'm sure you do remember the freelance week you did in the summer.

Yes. Um, and at one point you said to get an accountability, buddy. Oh, and I got in touch with another woman, um, called Marie. I don't know if, um, and then she got back in touch with me and said, I need a sweater designer. Um, and so started working that way and, oh, wow. Uh, for a [00:10:00] project for an equestrian startup.

So in the last few months I've done dogs, horses and babies. Wait,

a question so

[00:10:11] **Heidi:** that the KME sweaters or sweaters N KME

[00:10:16] **Kate:** dog sweaters. Yes. Oh my gosh. Um, and the, the question is for humans, To wear on horses,

[00:10:25] **Heidi:** not for the horses, not for the horses. Is it cashmere sweaters? Um, and baby, baby cashier.

[00:10:30] **Kate:** Okay. Yeah. Oh, you've just come back on. You've just, oh, my

[00:10:33] **Heidi:** video and froze.

Okay. So yeah. Okay. Yes. Yeah. I'm like, hello, I'm here. Um,

[00:10:38] **Kate:** so yes. So yeah, uh, cashier, my sweats for dogs, uh, cash, my sweaters for babies. And um, and then, um, it was actually Marino and cotton for, but sweat sweaters. Yeah. Yeah.

Okay.

[00:10:56] **Heidi:** So actually love this story so much because [00:11:00] I think when people think cashier sweaters, they might have a very narrow focus of what that could be.

And I believe we taught you were curious, you're like, is my niche too narrow? Right? Mm-hmm yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, but who would've thought casual bear sweaters for dogs. Yeah. And, and then equestrian, I know it wasn't cashmere, but same vein ish. Marino. Yeah. Cotton blend. Yeah. Um, and then babies, like, there's so much more opportunity outside of like what you may have kind of thought that niche could be.

And I, you and I talked and him, I was like, I don't, I'm not sure it's too narrow away from for me. Oh, okay. Well, the audio's still here, so I think we're good. Yeah. Yep. Back. Okay. Perfect. All right. So could you repeat the last question? Yeah. It wasn't a question, but it was just the, the fact that there's still so much, even when you're in a narrow market, like KME sweaters, which arguably is quite [00:12:00] niche.

There's still so much other opportunity that you might not have thought about initially.

[00:12:04] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, um, I've also got someone I've got to get back in touch with mid April. She does cashmere scarves, but she'd like to do. Sweaters sweaters. Yeah. Um, and then, um, we, last time we talked, I talked about reaching out to active wear companies that kind of have the, you know, we are good for the earth kind of, um, thing.

And I've got one I'm talking to next week, um, who is invested in doing some cash mess, socks to go with the, the, you know, plant based leggings. Yeah. Um, so recycled cash, miss socks to go with with, and that's been a sort of I've even niche from CME, I would say, into recycled cashmere. Wow.

[00:12:45] **Heidi:** Super niche.

[00:12:47] **Kate:** yeah.

Yeah. And because everybody at the moment is talking to me and saying, can you do recycle, can, how do I do recycled cashmere? Okay. Um, and, oh, [00:13:00] sorry. I dunno if I just cut out. No you're um, and good. Um, so I went to a, ya show in London, in February. To research, recycled cashmere. Yeah. Um, so I could know about it cuz it's see.

I had three conversations in one week about it. Wow.

[00:13:18] **Heidi:** And where are all the, are all these conversations coming from pitching?

[00:13:23] **Kate:** No. Um, okay. Interesting. Um, so probably my biggest client right now is, um, they're a mother daughter team based in Yorkshire. Um, and they sell secondhand cash, my sweaters. And they've got to the point where they're doing so well that they want to do, um, um, their own designs.

Yeah. But it needs to be recycled because that's their whole story is secondhand recycled.

[00:13:51] **Heidi:** Okay. And where did you connect with them? They

[00:13:53] **Kate:** found me, they found you. Yeah. Yeah. Wow. On my website.

[00:13:57] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Is your, your website [00:14:00] is the cashmere designer.com, right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:14:03] **Kate:** Okay. Okay. And I had the idea, um, listening to one of your podcasts and I was like, surely someone's done it.

Surely someone has that already. Um, did a quick Google was like, Nope. And, um, so that, that gave me the idea. Yeah. Um, and I thought, I thought for sure, someone would've had it have it on Insta, but no, they didn't. Um, yeah, so that I think has definitely helped me.

[00:14:29] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, the power of being niche, you're not competing with hardly anybody.

And so when people search for cashmere sweater, designer, like it's hard to get to the top of Google. It is if you're like active or something, but when you're that niche, it's actually really easy.

[00:14:47] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So if you do type in, I think the cashmere designer then lots of, um, Designer websites come up that do cashier and then I think it's my LinkedIn.

Okay. Um, [00:15:00] so yeah, um, like there's ones that are huge that I couldn't possibly compete with.

[00:15:05] **Heidi:** Yeah. But they're selling cashier's sweater, so it's really not your competition. No. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So the person's gonna keep looking until the, oh, there's what I want. That's the girl I want. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay.

This is interesting. This is interesting. I'm glad you did that. Um, I don't always advise, you know, kickstarting with a website and relying on people finding you, um, because it can be really, really hard, but the way that you've done it, which is working and it definitely can work. So I'm super excited to hear that it has, has been working for you.

Um, and then it sounds like you're getting people to your website as well to LinkedIn.

[00:15:46] **Kate:** Yes. So Leah linked, but no one actually has contacted me a LinkedIn instead being massive. Intas been massive. It feels like LinkedIn was last time. I was freelancing say six years ago. Okay. And now it [00:16:00] seems more INTA or I've I put more Instagram.

Yeah, Instagram, I've put more energy into it, I suppose. Okay.

[00:16:05] **Heidi:** Um, what is your Instagram tell everybody like who's listening. What are you posting on Instagram? How regularly? Like, what do you actually investing in that platform?

[00:16:13] **Kate:** Um, so, um, just sweaters, um, I've taken pictures of sweaters. Um, and, um, so like these ones close up, so sometimes I'll talk about the sort of technical details.

Okay. And then I'm doing a sort of alternate thing where I talk about technical aspects of knitting. Like what does new metric mean? Or what's a gauge and,

um, um, and sort of, so I'm mixing that and then just what feels like really, I'm gonna put this out on the internet sometimes of. Normal life okay. Okay.

[00:16:49] **Heidi:** Okay. How often are you posting? Couple of times a week. Not every day. Okay. Okay. And are you like strategic with [00:17:00] hashtags and stuff?

[00:17:01] **Kate:** Strategic ish, I think. Okay. Okay. Um, you know, I'll do, that's what I found one the other day. What was it where cash me or go naked? And I was like, oh,

[00:17:10] **Heidi:** I totally having that.

Yes. I love that. Such a fun one.

[00:17:14] **Kate:** Um, and, um, so I've got a, a page, I've got a notebook full of, you know, cash me related hashtags. Um, and then I do sort of, yeah, freelance ware designer, freelance fashion designer. Okay. Um, and are you hearing me okay? Yeah.

[00:17:30] **Heidi:** I'm hearing you good talking out. Yeah. That's all right.

Well, I'll do a disclaimer at the beginning that I know you're having a lot of wind and rain, so

[00:17:38] **Kate:** yeah, yeah, yeah. This is what it is. Yeah. Um, so yeah. Yeah. Um, so yeah, I'm doing things like that. And then I did a little one recently on like my stop five sustainable yarns. Okay. Um, so, but I'm not spending absolutely loads of time

[00:17:55] **Heidi:** doing it.

Okay. Like maybe an hour or two a week kind of getting it put together in schedule a couple

[00:17:59] **Kate:** [00:18:00] hours a week. Yeah. I, I don't really schedule it. I just kind of do it. Oh, you do in real time. Okay. I do. I do it when I think, oh, that just happened or, yeah. Um, and my, my best one to date is I washed some sweaters and hung them on a, put them on a sweater, dry and rack.

It's the most boring video it's literally of sweaters drying. yeah.

[00:18:20] **Heidi:** Is it

[00:18:22] **Kate:** a real? Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

[00:18:23] **Heidi:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And what's your follow account? 360. It's tiny, tiny. It's nothing. It's tiny. Yeah. Yeah. I love this. The, the, the freelancers that I know who do see some success on Instagram, which is possible, I feel like it can be really, really hard depending on what niche, but again, you're so niche, um, you don't need a lot of followers.

You just need the right people and you're attracting the right people, which is amazing. Yeah.

[00:18:54] **Kate:** Yeah. Um, and like, I don't care if I've only got 10, if they're 10 clients. Exactly. That's sort of how I [00:19:00] feel. Yeah. Um, so, so yeah,

[00:19:04] **Heidi:** it's good. Oh, I'm so excited to hear all of this. Um, okay. So I wanna know more details.

So, um, let's talk a little bit about your portfolio. Cause I know that we went through that on the strategy session. Mm-hmm um, what do you have put together for your portfolio? I mean, I, I imagine on Instagram, people are just seeing the feed and that's like enough to kind of get them in the door. And then they obviously, maybe if they find you through the web, they find your website, which.

I imagine there's, you know, portfolio there, but what do you have put together again? Really

[00:19:33] **Kate:** small. Yeah. And, um, slim, haven't done all the things we talked about. That's okay. In the last session ,

[00:19:38] **Heidi:** you've been busy working.

[00:19:40] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, so I think I've got five pages of women's wear, um, and that's it literally up on my portfolio.

Okay. And then I have done a few accessory, like one accessory page. Um, and yeah, that's all I've got. Okay. Um, so my portfolio, the website's really, really simple. It's just, [00:20:00] um, five pages, you know, some designs, some sweaters and some photos. Okay. Little bit about me and, uh, and some testimonials. Okay. And, uh,

[00:20:13] **Heidi:** get in touch.

Okay. And the five pages sounds like are just like five different projects, that's it? Yeah. Okay. Then a little bit about you testimonials get in touch that's it, which is essentially a portfolio with some more information. Web. Yeah, we have a web address, but all you're showing is that niche of KME sweaters.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Which is why it's working. Yeah, I know. You're I imagine you, if you wanna turn off the video, that's fine. On your side. It'll still record on my side. That might help the audio connection day. Okay. Let's try that. Okay. Well, keep your video on, oh, keep, sorry. Keep my video on. Yeah, keep your video, but turn off, you can turn off the view from my side.

Got it.

[00:20:57] **Kate:** Sorry, not that's okay

[00:20:58] **Heidi:** with this. [00:21:00] Um, I know we were talking earlier about, we do this conversation on Skype and it's a little bit vintage. I know you're probably used to zoom, so, um, okay. So. . I mean, I, I just, I know why all this is working for you. It's because it's so simple and it's so niche and mm-hmm, , you're just focusing on the one thing.

Um, have you heard any feedback from any of your clients about how they love that? You're so specialized and that's exactly what they like, they, you do exactly what they needed. Um, yeah, I

[00:21:30] **Kate:** think that it has been the ones who have got in touch with me have, have been looking specifically for cashmere. Okay.

Um, and they have all been cashmere companies of some form or ever. Yeah. Um, and that, yeah, that's they haven't said anything

[00:21:48] **Heidi:** specifically. Okay. But they were specifically looking for cashier. They weren't just looking for a sweater designer. They wanted someone who understood cashmere. Yeah. Very, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:22:00] Um, okay. Talk to us a little bit about how you are structuring your projects and your pricing, cuz this is always something that people get very, very curious about. I imagine you were curious and, and I'm sure it's still a learning curve because it's an, it's a lifelong learning curve. Um, but would you share what some of your projects look like and, and your proposals, et cetera?

[00:22:22] **Kate:** Um, yep. So, well, I, I did what you, you promised I would do and undercharged at the beginning. um,

[00:22:30] **Heidi:** okay. Talk about it. I wanna hear the story.

[00:22:33] **Kate:** Um, so the dog sweater project, um, I, and I've never done dog sweaters, so of course I had to go. Figure out how to draw dog sweaters and figure out how to size dog sweaters.

and then I was like, how on earth do grade dog

[00:22:49] **Heidi:** sweater? It's a whole different animal. Literally. I can help, but say

[00:22:55] **Kate:** that. Yeah, no. And I had to send an email saying, so I've done
[00:23:00] mainly humans before . Um, and this has been, um, a learning curve for me. Yeah. Um, so yeah, I undercharged, um, two \$25 for the tech pack.

[00:23:15] **Heidi:** Sorry. How much? 2, 2, 2, 2,

[00:23:17] **Kate:** 200 and 225,

[00:23:19] **Heidi:** 225 is a tech pack. Okay. Yeah. And did that include the, the POM? Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's too low. yep. especially like starting from scratch, but be besides the point a tech pack with a POM should not be that low, even if you've already done that. Yeah. Animal human, whatever it is.

[00:23:39] **Kate:** And I had to draw a dog sweater and I had to, like, I didn't have any library of dog flats.

[00:23:45] **Heidi:** Oh, you didn't. Why not? Yeah.

[00:23:48] **Kate:** so that was sort of my wake up call and I went, okay. I was undercharging, of course I was undercharging. Okay. Um, Heidi said a would and I did. Um,

[00:23:57] **Heidi:** so I it's a ride of passage I'm telling you.

Yeah,

[00:23:59] **Kate:** [00:24:00] yeah, yeah. So I'm now around 500, 600. Okay. For, for a full setback pack. Okay. Um, with like, I'm gonna do one next week with Farol and that will be a bit of a beast, but okay. Um, but

[00:24:14] **Heidi:** yeah, so you're doing so, but yeah, it's really hard. Yeah. And what part, what parts of the process you're doing? You're doing design tech, tech sourcing.

I'm still here. Yeah. Yep. Um, what parts of the process are

[00:24:27] **Kate:** you doing? I'm still filling my own. So I'm doing, um, Kind of everything. Um, and one thing I'm feeling my way through and not quite sure what I'm doing with is, um, food to production, sort of that sort, you know, once the tech packs are done through sampling and, and, um, so I'm still with the horse, riding people, helping them find a factory.

Okay. Um, and I'm doing that by the hour. Okay. Um, she's she sort of wants to manage it herself, but doesn't quite know what she's doing. So it's a weird one. Okay. [00:25:00]

[00:25:00] **Heidi:** You're kind of, co-managing

[00:25:01] **Kate:** it. Yes. Okay. And sort of not, yeah. Yeah. Okay. So, um, and they sort of, as time goes on, they're more sort of like, we think we need your help.

We think we do need, yeah. We probably need your help. um, um, but she's the one driving it, so I'm letting her drive, but kind of wanting to take the controls you're wanting to.

[00:25:24] **Heidi:** Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Okay. She's like all over the road, maybe.

[00:25:28] **Kate:** A little bit. Yeah, yeah. Or just, just slower than I'm used to. I mean, I think that's the other thing that I'm used to working for a company where, you know, you do the tech tax and then there's a sample and it's, um, it's, you know, it happens.

Yeah. Um, and this feels slower. Okay. Um, but I'm, I'm sort of letting them do it and, um, yeah. So I'm, I'm, that feels [00:26:00] a sort of different part of the process that I'm learning. Okay. Um, um, cause a lot of people will come. It seems like people coming to me again. Um, do you know fact, you know, I need factories, I need jams.

I need set facts, you know, the whole kit and caboodle, cuz generally they don't have those things in place. Right. Or they've come to me, like I've got one that the baby cashier and they've she's come to me and said, I've had a bit of a disaster and all. Baby jobber waistbands have come in too small. Ah, um, so I'm gonna help her find a new factory.

Okay. Um, but yeah, that's a bit I'm less familiar with and it feels harder than like a tech pack is a tech pack. And I know when I'm done, um, whereas a factory finding thing feels more difficult to

[00:26:52] **Heidi:** define. Yeah. So talk a little bit more about this because I think a lot of people in your position feel very similarly.

Like [00:27:00] I know you've worked for a lot of big brands. I mean, you've worked for like Nordstrom and, and some big, big names. Um, perhaps names over in the UK that I wouldn't know. Um, and. I think a lot of people who have quite a bit of experience are like, oh, I know how to design, and I know how to do the tech packs and I know how to do the POM or, you know, I know this, but what about like the sourcing and the production?

Like, I don't really know that because you worked at a big company and it was always a different department, so people can feel, I think, really nervous to kind of navigate that space. And like, what does that look like? Um, so you have a couple options, right? You can say, I stop at the tech pack and that's what I do.

Or it sounds like you you're, you didn't maybe have a, or I don't, maybe you did have some experience, but it doesn't sound like, so, and, and so you kind of like learning it as you go with your clients, like talk us through a little bit about how that's going and how it feels.

[00:27:51] **Kate:** Um, well, like the two that I'm doing it for, it feels like I wanna kind of wrestle the sting wheel out off from them.[00:28:00]

Um, and I dunno if that's my New York background. Yeah. Um, and it's not it's, I, I feel like I. maybe haven't managed it, but I've read an awful lot of emails doing it. Okay. Um, but I do feel, but I do feel like I'm, it's that whole thing of, like, you send an email, you get a reply, you send another email and it feels like they'll, I'll see an email.

They'll they'll read it obviously, and then not reply for a week. Mm. Um mm. The client, so, yeah,

[00:28:34] **Heidi:** yeah, yeah, yeah. And you're like, this is not the pace that fashion moves out. like, I needed you to reply five minutes ago for when I sent it. Yeah, yeah, yeah,

[00:28:45] **Kate:** yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, but there's nothing, I, I can't be like, you need to be better at reply to emails.

Yeah. Or,

[00:28:51] **Heidi:** or can I , I mean, it depends, there's delicate ways you could handle that if you wanted to. Um, but if they're fine with, you know, if they don't have this [00:29:00] hard deadline to meet, then you, you are kind of at the mercy of their pace.

[00:29:05] **Kate:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, um, And I'm used to working with China who, you know, if you don't reply within 24 hours, we'll send a, you know, email CC in the world.

Yeah.

[00:29:16] **Heidi:** With all caps and red and yeah. Yeah. Just checking in. Where are you? I'm following up, but following up. Yeah. Um, and so where are, are you guys different? Yeah. Where

[00:29:25] **Kate:** are you guys producing from around is before I've always worked with China on the pool, but more now, um, because I'm working with startups who want to do, um, sort of more European or us based production.

Yeah. It's more, you know, based, I'm working quite a lot with, um, they call themselves a, not a factory, a production farm in place in the north of England. Okay. Um, so there are two ladies who have, um, set up with Shima, seek knitty machines and they specifically do small production [00:30:00] runs and sampling.

[00:30:01] **Heidi:** Okay.

And is that a resource that you found. .

[00:30:05] **Kate:** Yeah. Uh, well for a friend of a friend. Okay. Passing to a friend. Okay. Um, and that's been, the other lovely thing is that I feel like I've got this sort of weird online community of people that I text mainly, um, who

also freelancers, um, and just check in with, and chat with and see how things are going.

Yeah. Um, a few of them are Mari and,

[00:30:31] **Heidi:** um, oh yeah. You connected with Mari. Yeah. Yeah. Amazing. She's phenomenal. Yeah. Yeah. And it sounds like maybe you have kids the same age or so. Cause I, I don't know when you had your baby. Um,

[00:30:41] **Kate:** no, my baby's now seven. My baby's

[00:30:43] **Heidi:** okay. that's right. You were, that was back when you were freelancing.

You had okay. You were, I was thinking it was last summer. Okay.

[00:30:50] **Kate:** Gotcha. Yeah, no. Um, so, but our daughters almost have the same birthday. They're both October. Oh, that's fun. Yeah. Yeah. [00:31:00] Um, and yeah, so we've had a, we've had a few chats, but when she's like having a baby and I'm like, I know

[00:31:06] **Heidi:** yeah. I think she's like her, her daughter's like five or six months now.

Yeah. That's tough.

[00:31:11] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. It's tough. Yeah. Um, and I also chat to Kirsti Alexander and it Andrea quite a lot. Yeah. To, yeah. Um, and then another woman who also lives in France, who's also English, but isn't, hasn't done so Heidi. Oh,

[00:31:28] **Heidi:** she hasn't done so hi so you've got a few contacts through for them accelerator and then some outside of that.

Yes.

[00:31:36] **Kate:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, and that's been really nice cuz I was, I didn't one of the things when I was thinking about doing this full time was I was like, I know I don't like working from home, particularly being on my own. Um, I know that doesn't really suit my personality. um, and I feel like I've got a bit of a community.

Yeah. Like

[00:31:56] **Heidi:** some coworkers, so to say some coworkers. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. So it [00:32:00] sounds like sometimes you're just chatting maybe about life or the industry, or a little bit kind of friendly. And then I imagine sometimes you're are you guys kind of helping each other with advice or resources or that sort of thing?

Yeah.

[00:32:10] **Kate:** Yeah. So like Mary and I have been sharing factories and yarns and, um, um, yeah. Also, um, I think you'll like the story someone, uh, texted me on last week and, um, she hasn't done fast, but I think she's been following you. Yeah. And, um, she said, oh, there's this, this freelance network where design job. And I thought of you and I was like, oh, that's really sweet for you.

Thank you so much. Yeah. Um, I have you done the say Heidi course and she said, no, I haven't, but I've been following her for free, you know? Yeah. What do you, what do you think? And I was like, no, you, you can learn a lot following her free stuff. Um, anyway, so we had a chat and she said, would you mind looking at my portfolio?

So we've had a look at her portfolio and just kind of helping and support him. That's amazing. Um, and yeah, it feels, [00:33:00] I think you should be really proud that it feels like there's this community of people looking out for each other. Yeah.

[00:33:06] **Heidi:** I love this so much because this is the thing, not just about freelancing, but about the fashion industry is that like, mm-hmm, , we need to be here for each other.

And like, you know, it has this it's notorious for being cutthroat and back stabby and you know, but at the end of the day, and I think people can have it very similar perception when it comes to freelancing. Like other freelancers are your competition. Yeah. Because they might take a job from you. But the truth is there's plenty of work to go around.

Even when you're specialized, cuz Mai also does sustainable sweater, knits. I mean, you guys are basically doing the same thing and yet you've made friends and you're helping each other. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And that's so cool. I mean, it's just so much more empowering for everybody. Yeah,

[00:33:50] **Kate:** totally. And, um, yeah. To not use the empower word, cause I think it gets overused, but I do feel I do feel, [00:34:00] um, empowered.

And so, um, the sort of freelance mentality where, um, I'm sort of like, well, I can do really anything I want. Um, and um, I'm actually helping a local artist, uh, with her social media, um, and building an instore account for her. And it's great. Cuz one morning, a week I go over to her house and I get to see someone in real life.

Yeah. That's nice. And, and um, also, um, Doing some, I mean, local drawing and sketching group, which is lovely to have the time to do that too. Oh, very cool. Um, and just get away from the computer. Yeah. Um, and, um, and then I recently, I dunno that where this will go or not, um, got in contact with my old university to offer assistance to students so that they can learn to do well, that they have the idea they can do freelancers do freelancing or do tech packs.

[00:34:58] **Heidi:** Oh, very cool. Yeah. Cuz it's not [00:35:00] something, a lot of people don't even know this is an option. Yeah.

[00:35:03] **Kate:** Yeah. And I sort of feel, and I said this to a friend, she, oh, so you're gonna train up your competition. I was like, no, I don't think it works like that. I don't think, um, um, I don't think that's how it works, you know?

I think it's, it's it's helpful for them as new graduates to know that there's an option there. Yeah. That they could freelance particularly so many women stop designing once they want to have a family. Mm-hmm . Um, and it's a tough industry to try and have a family in mm-hmm um, and yeah, the drop off at 30 odd must be massive.

Yeah. Um, so anyway, I don't, I literally just spoke to someone that the university, the other day. Yeah. And she was interested and I've sent her an email.

[00:35:47] **Heidi:** Very cool. I love that you're getting involved in, you know, things kind of above and beyond your specific, like freelance clients.

[00:35:59] **Kate:** [00:36:00] Yeah. And the sort of feeling of like, oh, I can do this and I can do this.

And let's think about this and yeah.

[00:36:04] **Heidi:** Yeah. How do you feel. about the freelance lifestyle compared to, um, you know, the employee lifestyle. And I know that, I don't know when, you know, how long were you working and how, and I know you kind of like were teaching and doing various things, but like when your last full-time fashion industry job was and what happened with the pandemic, I don't know how that affected your employment, but yeah.

Did it, did it, was that it that's what affected it? Um,

[00:36:35] **Kate:** yeah. Teaching in the pandemic was not fun. Yeah. Um, and yeah, so we've gone. And so my husband at the same, he's also, um, Stopped teaching after 20 years. And we've gone from like a timetable that you could pin on the fridge, um, where knowing exactly what every hour of the every day was doing to sort of look at each other going okay, what's happening today?

What's happening today? Yeah. [00:37:00] um, and, um, he, you'll also, I think I enjoy this. Um, he's been following some of the techniques in fast for the wine

[00:37:06] **Heidi:** industry. Oh, interesting. What does he do with wine? I like wine. I have I'm obliged to ask .

[00:37:12] **Kate:** So he's, he's following a, a lifelong passion to, so we are, obviously we are based in the wine industry.

Yeah. We live in near BAU. Yeah. And actually I'm, I'm talking to you in a vineyard. This is our friends who,

[00:37:24] **Heidi:** oh, I'm sorry. What you told me, you went to a friend's house for faster internet. You didn't tell me it was like on a vineyard.

[00:37:30] **Kate:** Well, they, they make wine okay. Okay. Um, so they make wine, lots of our friends make wine.

Um, and my husband is trying to build a, sort of a freelance career from the wine industry. Um, so he's set himself up as man verse wine and, um, is yeah, starting up sort of, um, doing marketing and, um, he's pitching, but having to pitch in French. Yeah. Okay. [00:38:00] And, uh, we've learned that cold pitches don't really work in the wine street.

Um, you need to go and with the French, you need to go and see them,

[00:38:10] **Heidi:** um, a little more of an interpersonal, like in person relationship. Yeah.

[00:38:14] **Kate:** Yeah, yeah. But we do follow the, always start with a compliment.

[00:38:17] **Heidi:** Yeah. So many people don't think about that.

[00:38:22] **Kate:** Yeah. So if he's sending out an email, he'll be like, okay, compliment Compli.

Your wine's delicious. Yeah. I mean,

[00:38:28] **Heidi:** he'll say more, something more specific. Yeah.

[00:38:32] **Kate:** um, blah, blah, blah. So he's now using it more where, so like there was a wine festival last weekend. He went and talked to lots of vineyards and now he's following up with emails. Ah. Oh, very cool. And the same sort of idea. And then again, another friend of mine who she's, uh, she's American, but she's a French teacher to lots of local English.

Yeah. And she'll say no's this one woman. Um, and she's referred like four clients to me. And, um, you know, I said a massive thank you [00:39:00] to her. And I was like, well, you know, this woman I talk about with time, say Heidi. Yeah. Uh, she says that you could maybe get her a small gift. And she was like a small gift. I could get a box of chocolates.

Everyone likes a box of chocolates.

[00:39:13] **Heidi:** oh my gosh. I love this is like trickling into these other industries.

[00:39:19] **Kate:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh, and, um, Yeah, everyone, everyone likes boxed chocolates. Everyone likes a compliment. No, one's unhappy about that. Yeah.

[00:39:29] **Heidi:** Um, oh, that's

[00:39:30] **Kate:** so cool. So yeah, we've we've um, we were joking the other night that it's as though we've just taken our, thrown our hands back into the dealer and said, deal us another hand.

Um, how does that feel? It feels amazing. I thought I was never gonna

[00:39:46] **Heidi:** design a game. Oh, why is that? Like, you were just gonna, you were gonna continue teaching. Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

[00:39:52] **Kate:** Okay. I was gonna be, yeah. And I was sort of gonna, and I like teaching and I enjoy teaching and I do like to be in the [00:40:00] classroom, but I really do love the design as well.

Yeah. And it's amazing how it's all sort of still there.

[00:40:07] **Heidi:** Right. Like riding a bike a little bit. Yeah. It's there. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So how long this is interesting. Uh, well, okay. I'll get back to that question. I wanna learn about the time gap between you and time you last designed and where you are now as a freelancer.

But, but I wanna rewind a little bit, cause we kind of, I don't feel like we really got the answer, but you said you feel like you've gotten a new hand of cards, which is so cool and you get play. 'em how you want. Um, but, but talk a little bit about how, you know, the pros and cons, cuz there's good and bad things.

I know you said work having, um, coworkers and stuff of, you know, working full time. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, in a very structured curriculum, whether career, whether that's teaching or, you know, in inhouse sort of brand versus freelancing.

[00:40:55] **Kate:** Um, yeah, so the definite cons are, you know, when does the working [00:41:00] day begin and end?

Yeah. Um, and we were used to as well having school holidays where work definitely ended mm-hmm um, but I also don't dread getting up and going to work.

[00:41:13] **Heidi:** Oh, that's so interesting.

[00:41:15] **Kate:** um, in fact I slightly miss it on the weekends. It's really sad.

[00:41:20] **Heidi:** oh, okay. You're not alone. I mean, I love my business. I love what I do.

Yeah. And on the weekends, I'm kind of like, what do I do with myself? Like I love to work, but is that appropriate? yeah.

[00:41:30] **Kate:** Can you send emails? It's not about, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Um, so definitely a can of our particular situation is dealing with the French bureaucracy and, um, the French taxes and all of that. So I feel like people almost got a part-time job dealing with that, but hopefully we're starting to get into bit of a rhythm there.

Okay.

[00:41:50] **Heidi:** Um, have you hired some type of accountant or CPA or? I don't know what, what, yeah. The type of person over there would be.

[00:41:56] **Kate:** Yeah, we, well, we do, we, don't sort of [00:42:00] both. Um, it's yeah, it's really complicated. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um, I have a yeah. Phone call with the, anyway. Hopefully it's mostly just dental settling in pains and then we'll get to a study of rhythm.

Yeah. Um, it's yeah, it can be awkward sort of, um, asking for payment, um, or reminding people about payment. Like I had one client come back earlier this week and say, yes, we'd like to do this other project. And I was like, that's great. There's also this outstanding invoice. from this other project project.

And they were, oh yeah, yeah. They've just been ill. I'm like, okay, okay. Yeah. Um, and, um, yeah, when people sort of just don't get back to you that's yeah. Um, and, um, but yeah, making the connections and feeling the possibilities is amazing. Um, so that's definitely the, the big pro.

[00:42:54] **Heidi:** Yeah. What kind of possibilities do you feel?

[00:42:58] **Kate:** Um, [00:43:00] so , um, I'm thinking about, um, sort of doing more on the knitwear education side and doing, um, I'm sort of loaf to say an online course, cuz it feels like everybody's doing an online course. Yeah. And I don't, I'm not sure, like I look at you and what you do in all and I'm not really there.

[00:43:21] **Heidi:** Um, but some, I mean this is like eight years in building.

It's a lot. Yeah. It doesn't, have's a lot, you don't get here overnight, it's it, everyone paints it to be really fast, but it's, it is very slow.

[00:43:31] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, and I see, I also see how much you're putting into it and I'm not quite sure of that, but then doing some sort of aspect where you've got fashion Dyna, who might like to know more about sweat and knits mm-hmm and um, how to design a course around that or some sort of something.

Yeah. Um, and I'm talking to my friend, who's a professor of knitting. um, about, you know, if she could do videos of stuff happening on the machines and how we would make that work [00:44:00] and that sort of thing. And then again, sort of, would it be an online community and again, like, Ugh, Facebook groups, dunno. yeah.

What does this all look like? Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So that's sort of the things that float around and I also am impressed with people like Connie and PKP who have sort of set up many, many agencies. Mm-hmm um, so I'm, I'm

[00:44:22] **Heidi:** ambitious. Yeah. I can tell it's clear

[00:44:27] **Kate:** um, but yeah, I literally wake up first thing in the morning, you know, what's gonna happen today.

Yeah. What's what's going on. Yeah. And,

[00:44:35] **Heidi:** um, it sounds like you like that feeling.

[00:44:38] **Kate:** Yes. Yeah. Yes. And I definitely didn't really have it teaching. Okay.

[00:44:43] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, so when, when was your. Last full-time job in the, like, I guess how long of a gap was it between when you went 10, 10 years

[00:44:55] **Kate:** oh

[00:44:57] **Heidi:** yeah. Okay. So you left [00:45:00] working in the industry as a designer, spent 10 years teaching.

Yeah. And now boom, crushed it with your freelance career very quickly.

[00:45:10] **Kate:** Mm-hmm mm-hmm um, although like, uh, was it Samya a few weeks ago I was listening to her podcast and she's I the vital lady.

[00:45:21] **Heidi:** Oh, Sam, Sam. Yeah. Samantha, Sam.

[00:45:25] **Kate:** Sam. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And she was saying how impatient she was. I feel like her, I was I like laughing it.

[00:45:32] **Heidi:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, I mean, listen, freelancing doesn't happen overnight either. I'll tell you it's a lot faster than building an online community and an online court. Like, unless you already have a following mm-hmm mm-hmm um, it's. A lot faster. Yeah. Um, 10 years. Mm-hmm gap. Yeah. How did you, okay. Cuz I, a lot of people are in this space and, and maybe they didn't teach in between.

And you [00:46:00] were teaching fashion specific stuff. What were you teaching?

[00:46:03] **Kate:** Exactly. Um, art and design. Oh, not session, nothing at all? No, no, no, no. Oh, okay. I

[00:46:10] **Heidi:** was, I was out, I love this even more.

[00:46:12] **Kate:** I was, yeah. I was out, out, out

[00:46:15] **Heidi:** okay. Because a lot of people are in this position. Maybe they stopped working for 10 years altogether because they had kids and a family.

And as you said, it's very hard to that in the industry. Yeah. Maybe they just got burnt out and they left and they went to a different industry. Yep. That what have you. Yeah. Yeah. How did you feel. Coming back and thinking like, do I still know the trends? Do I still know what's going on? Like I'm so outdated.

I mean, I don't wanna put words in your mouth but I've heard these stories from a lot of people and that's how people in this position feel. They're like, I don't know. Do I still even know what I'm doing?

[00:46:48] **Kate:** Yeah, I did. Um, but I also felt a bit like Alice in Wonderland that now so much is online. Mm. Um, and when I left you, couldn't really just Google things and find [00:47:00] things out and now you can.

Mm. Um, and then the algorithm finds you and, you know, um, so I still feel a bit God of, you know, aren't I, a bit old and all of that. Um, and, but, um, yeah, what's great is so much is, is there now? Yeah. Um, that there wasn't. And so it

felt like almost like walking back into a candy store of being like, oh, and this is just here and I can find this and this is, yeah.

[00:47:30] **Heidi:** Yeah. That's so. yeah. Have any of your clients like asked about, um, cause I think this is, yeah. You're shaking your head. No, no,

[00:47:41] **Kate:** no one seems to care. They

[00:47:42] **Heidi:** don't, people get so caught up with this and, and you do get that in a traditional job. They're gonna know, they're gonna wanna know they're gonna see your resume.

They're gonna wanna know, but like you had a 10 year gap and no one has asked or cared or anything.

[00:47:54] **Kate:** No. And you can go to my LinkedIn and see there was a 10, you know? Yeah. There's no, it's not hidden. No, no, no, no. [00:48:00] Yeah. Um, yeah, no one seems to mind.

[00:48:03] **Heidi:** Oh my gosh. I love this so much. At least no one's asked me about it.

No, and they're not gonna, because they don't because at the end of the day they care that. You can do the thing that they need done, which you can do. And if you don't know how to do it, you're gonna figure it out. Like you said, it's the internet and you can find out anything thing. And

[00:48:19] **Kate:** then also, yeah, the joy of fast, as I feel like I can, if I get really stark hop on and say, so I, I had a, not an interview meeting with someone the other day about, um, doing maternity stuff.

Okay. And she wanted to do a maternity bar and I was like, oh God, I've never done that maternity bra. But I was like, I can, I'm sure I could reach out to a lingerie designer in first and they would help me. And then yeah. You know, we could figure out something.

[00:48:44] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, you've got this great little community network, right.

Your fingertips to yeah. You know, beyond the internet itself. Yeah,

[00:48:51] **Kate:** yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, and um, also working with Connie,

[00:48:57] **Heidi:** you are okay, what are you

[00:48:58] **Kate:** doing with her? So [00:49:00] in the same way, she wants to do some recycled cash sweaters. Um, and so we got in touch and I'm sort of doing that here. Like, like helping her with the knit web bit.

Um,

[00:49:09] **Heidi:** she has clients that are doing that. No, no, no, she's doing, she's doing her own line. Yeah. I didn't know that.

[00:49:15] **Kate:** I think I can say that. Well, God. Oh, okay. Um, I'll I'll double check with her. Okay. I think that's not double check.

[00:49:22] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, and I just saw Instagram. She's pregnant. That's so exciting. Oh yeah.

Yeah. Do imminently I any minute. Yeah. I it's funny. Before I became a mom, I was like, huh, kids, babies. Sure. I'll see the picture. And now I'm like, you're pregnant. I wanna see the picture of the baby. I'm so excited. Like I never would've imagined how over the moon I would get over a new human being. Now I'm like genuinely like, show me all the pictures.

I need more picture pictures. Show me all the pictures.

[00:49:48] **Kate:** Tell me all the stories.

[00:49:49] **Heidi:** Oh my gosh, you're pregnant. I love that little belly. Or, you know, you were adopting or whatever it is like, oh my gosh. It just makes me so excited. I just get the chills. So when I, especially when I see like one of our students or something, I'm like, just get even more [00:50:00] excited, you know, someone in our community.

[00:50:02] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. And for sure. Um, yeah, you don't. I remember, yeah. Before I was pregnant being like. kind of what's the big deal. Yeah. yeah. And now show me other thing. Yeah. And particularly now that I've got sort of that perspective where, you know, it's all easy, not all easy, and it's never completely easy, but you know, that initial bit of parenting is over for me where nappies are done and she sleeps.

And um, so now, yeah, that feels, and then the other day she said to me, mommy, when, if we had forearms, would that make your job harder? I said, yes. if we had forearm, you know, I get these questions if you

[00:50:41] **Heidi:** had, what if

[00:50:42] **Kate:** people had forearm instead of two arms,

[00:50:44] **Heidi:** if we had four arms. Oh, okay. Wait, I love the imagination of a child and I'm just getting to learn this with AR he's.

He just turned two. Just got to get fun for you. Okay. The coolest one happened. We were [00:51:00] coming back from Mexico and we were in the plane and we were just taking off. And there was a small island, like right off the shore and it looked like a big rock in the water. Right. It's a little island looks like, and he goes, the rock is swimming.

And I was like, you know what? It totally is. I was like, cause I kind of pointed to him, I go, that's an island. And he goes, the rock is swimming. I go, well, you know what actually almost is that like how literal they think about things. It's so fascinating.

[00:51:29] **Kate:** Mm-hmm mm-hmm and I sent you that picture cuz she's obsessed with letter leopard print.

Yes,

[00:51:34] **Heidi:** that's right. I remember she was all styling. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. She's all right. Well for people who aren't moms or parents, it so bored from this conversation. Um, I am thrilled with your story. I mean, and then the kicker that you had taken a 10 year break, this is so cool. Um, which I, so, so not even did you go from like, you know, working full time, [00:52:00] very structured schedule to freelancing, you also broke back into the industry, so you were really Delta new hand of cards.

[00:52:07] **Kate:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, along with a new country.

[00:52:10] **Heidi:** And, um, when did you, where did you guys move from? Remind me.

[00:52:13] **Kate:** So we, we moved from Switzerland to France. Okay. Um, to, to, so we are also kind of Brexit, refugees. Okay. Um, France had a deal where you could move here, um, with Brexit and kind of we've had, so we've had the house for 10 years, so it's a weird combination of, okay.

We know the house, we know the, the region, but we've never really lived here full time. Okay. Um, so yeah, it's been

[00:52:35] **Heidi:** some change. Yeah. That's a lot of change. That's all been in what? The past year, couple years, nine, nine months. Nine months. Oh, that's a lot to pack into nine months. Yeah. Yeah. And then like building this career and it's amazing.

It's

[00:52:50] **Kate:** been busy. Yeah. Yeah. And then yeah, but also my husband is, is sort of doing the same thing, but in wine. Yeah. Um,

[00:52:58] **Heidi:** so we, we you'll have to keep [00:53:00] me updated. I'm super excited to hear how this journey we have.

[00:53:03] **Kate:** We have joked that he needs a wine, Heidi .

[00:53:07] **Heidi:** I mean, you know, some nights I am wine, Heidi I won't lie about that.

Um, I do love my wine. My dad makes wine too. Well, I should have to say maid. He stopped cuz he got really into mountain biking and welding and he's like welding his bike rack. I mean he's on his fourth. Iteration of welding is bite crack. Because he, well, they work, but he is like, it could be a little better.

So, you know, he's retired and stuff, but he was doing the whole thing. He was, he didn't grow grapes, but he bought the grapes. He crushed the grapes. Okay. He, yeah, destemmed him. He built some special machines to do it. Cuz the ones in the market, he didn't like the way they were. I mean, he was really into it.

Wow. Yeah. Wow. He's got a whole wine cell full I'm. Like I'll take some of those, but they live far away. So it's hard for me to get bottles.

[00:53:57] **Kate:** Yeah. Well tell them to get in touch with Jesse cuz yeah. He loves to talk [00:54:00] about wine really?

[00:54:01] **Heidi:** Oh my time. Yeah. Yeah. They should literally connect. Yeah. Yeah. Um, okay. And for people who aren't into wine, we're still, we're born them too.

Um, okay. So you see so many possibilities for your future. What's next in like the next, I know you're super busy, but like what do you see in the next three to six months? What do you have like on the, on the near future?

[00:54:21] **Kate:** I don't know. I think, I think I would really like to land a project from cold pitching.

Yeah. So keep on going. Yeah.

[00:54:27] **Heidi:** Um, you've got a lot of con you've had a lot of conversations.

[00:54:31] **Kate:** Yes. I've had a lot of conversations and sort of, it feels like near misses almost.

[00:54:36] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, does it tend to be mostly timing? I think it's

[00:54:40] **Kate:** timing and I think there's money. And I think, um, you know, people are hesitant with the current situation.

My sort of latest thing has also been to just try and pitch to slightly bigger brands. Mm-hmm, slightly more established. Um, and so I think I was looking for like, they had to be in business for at least three years. Someone who's sort of [00:55:00] has like someone who's been through through a few cycles. Yeah. Um, it's sort of my new thing.

I'm looking a little

[00:55:06] **Heidi:** bit, how are you figuring out how long they've been in business? How are you

[00:55:09] **Kate:** gauging that? Um, so LinkedIn, um, so I'm generally finding them from Insta then sort of cross re referencing with LinkedIn and then their own website. And usually from that sort of, you can just tell. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Okay. Um, so I think that was my problem before I was going for two smaller sort of. There's so many, so many bands that started in the pandemic, and then it feels like they've just sort of floundering a bit now. Mm-hmm um,

[00:55:38] **Heidi:** and so you're thinking maybe that would put them starting before the pandemic and then if they've they've made it, so they got established and then they've made it through.

That's a good sign. Yeah. That's smart. Yeah.

[00:55:48] **Kate:** Yeah. That's smart. Yeah. So that, so I'm realizing that at least half the battle is picking the right brands. Mm-hmm if not 75%. Yeah. Um, and then once sort [00:56:00] of, once you figured that out, then, then the writing, the pitch sort of happens quite quickly.

[00:56:06] **Heidi:** Yeah. Is it going, um, I know we had looked at your, one of your pitches on the strategy session and I thought it was great.

And you were like, thanks. Cause I've put a lot of time into it. And I think your husband had helped you if I'm not mistaken. Yeah, yeah, yeah. A little bit of wordsmithing, but it sounds like it's um, I, I say to everybody, it's a muscle and now you said the pitching part, it goes quickly.

[00:56:26] **Kate:** Yeah, I can I, yeah, I think you said to me, try and get them out in 20 minutes.

Yeah. Um, the bit that takes the time is finding the, the brands and that does take that feel like a good fit. Yeah, yeah. That feel yeah. And that, but I'm realizing that's the skill, um, almost, and then the writing of the pitch I can do quite quickly. Oh,

[00:56:46] **Heidi:** that's amazing. And it sounds like you're really refining your process for finding and filtering the brands.

[00:56:51] **Kate:** Yeah. Yeah. And it's funny, cuz at one point my husband was like, well, can I, I have a big list. He's like, can I take your spreadsheet? And he was like, what about these? I'm like, no, not [00:57:00] them. No, no, no, not those like,

um, and he was like, okay, you'll just have to do yourself because yeah. Yeah. Um, so yeah, we we're getting there. Yeah. Um, uh, yeah. I'm yeah. I'm hesitant to say about the online. I'm thinking more of just like a downloadable thing of

knit terminology and knit techniques. Yeah. Um, and we'll see where the university lecturing stuff goes.

Okay.

[00:57:31] **Heidi:** And would that be targeted at designers who wanna know more or maybe both brands that are trying to learn for themselves too? And I say designers, not people having their own brands, but like working in the industry, like learning

[00:57:44] **Kate:** like, like maybe other freelancers if they're interested or, um, or, yeah, just so I used to teach a course university of leads, um, for people who had been maybe brought on as a bio or a tech, um, who didn't have a knit background and their jobs would be like, don't worry, [00:58:00] come do it.

And we we'll send you to this course at leads. Um, and you'd let they I'd teach them all about, you know, ribs and needles and gauges and all that stuff. Yeah. Um, for two days and I loved it. I absolutely loved it. Yeah. It was my favorite, favorite teaching ever. Yeah. Um, because you had these highly motivated.

Professional women who just really, you know, they wanted to sort of squeeze every drip out of you, but I loved it. Yeah. Um, and so the thought of maybe trying to transition that online is interesting. That is super interesting. Um, but the, the big drawback is that there wouldn't be any knitty machines. And so I'm trying to think about how to do that.

So people can still learn in that hands on way. Yeah. Um, and I'm wondering if they pull apart a, um, fifth store sweater, does that give them the same experience? Yeah. It wouldn't be the same. It gives you something,

[00:58:57] **Heidi:** something,

[00:58:58] **Kate:** yeah. Like you [00:59:00] have to go and find a sweater or find three sweaters in a FTLE and then yeah.

Cut it up and pull it

[00:59:06] **Heidi:** apart. okay, well, keep us updated because, um, even if, you know, when you get the free downloadable or the guide or whatever, I would love, I'll totally put that out to the community because okay. People love this kind of stuff. And knitwear is so, you know, knits are such a specialty. I don't know hardly anything about it.

I mean, I like understand gage and stuff, but I don't know anything about sweater kni.

[00:59:32] **Kate:** Mm mm-hmm. And the Mo the sort of, most common thing I say to people is like, if you've got a, t-shirt say a t-shirt factory, they could also start making skirts or, you know? Yeah. Um, but they couldn't start making sweaters.

Yeah.

[00:59:47] **Heidi:** So specialized. Yeah. Yeah. Oh, my gosh, Kate, I'm so pumped that we got to have this conversation. Um, thank you so much for taking time out of your [01:00:00] insanely busy schedule and going to your friend's winery. um, I, because it's later there, hopefully you get to get off this call and like have a glass of wine.

It's 10:00 AM here. So I'm not gonna be having wine until tonight, but. Fix Kim here. So it's definitely loud. It is totally time. Please post on Insta a picture of like cheersing. I need to see this happen. okay. Yeah. And, uh, keep me posted on everything. This is so cool. I'm really, really pumped for you. Um, for all the reasons we've talked about.

I won't recap them cuz it's a lot and um, yeah. Keep us posted. I'd love to ask the question that I ask everybody at the end of the interview. And that is what is one thing people never ask you about being a fashion freelancer that you wish they would you're smiling so big and laughing. Cause I think have answer prepared, you know the question.

[01:00:52] **Kate:** Well, no, I, I, I it's, it's funny how many people do get surprised by this, even though I've listened to a whole bunch of your [01:01:00] podcasts. So I should not be surprised by this. Okay. Um, and I did chat about it with my husband last night. Um, and. I think my first answer is yeah. Just how much I enjoy it. Okay. Um, and then, um, one thing we haven't really talked about to sort of drop it in is also my other passion is sort of textile, uh, technology developments and innovations and how much I get to be reading about that now.

Oh, cool. Um, so yeah, people don't ask me about that, but sort of, um, all the textile innovations really fire me up. Yeah.

[01:01:33] **Heidi:** Yeah. That's really exciting. Thank you for sharing. Yeah. Um, and then we know where people can find you the cashmere designer on

instagram.com. I'm sure if we Google that your LinkedIn comes up, all the things.

So we'll link to that in the show notes, but it's so easy to remember. People can find you right away. Um, let us know when that downloadable happens and, or no pressure. If it, if you'd change direction, although I'll probably have people emailing us and being [01:02:00] like, Hey, this girl, we do have that from older episodes.

They're like, Hey, this person mentioned this thing. And like, where is it? I'm like, oh, it never came to fruition. Or, you know, they are no longer doing that thing or what have you, but

[01:02:12] **Kate:** no, it's, um, yeah, I'm very happy to get connect with other people. So, yeah.

[01:02:15] **Heidi:** Awesome. Thank you so much. This has been super fun, Kate.

[01:02:18] **Kate:** Thank you. Thank you for everything, Heidi. It really.

[01:02:23] **Heidi:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of the successful fashion freelancer podcast. I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Kate. One of our freelance accelerator graduates. If you are interested in learning more about freelance accelerator, you can head on over to.

So heidi.com/fast F a S T, we will link all of that below. And I would love to have you in the program. If you are looking to kickstart and kick ass in your freelance career, um, beyond that, I wanna give a huge thank you and shout out to my two right hand people behind the scenes that make this show possible.

My husband, mark, who does all the tech and the editing, as well as my right hand, Tara, who is like my unicorn of everything inside the [01:03:00] business. Um, my right hand, like literally an extension of my. Um, there's so much to make the show possible as well as all the other moving pieces and parts inside of successful fashion designer.

And again, thank you so much to you for listening. Um, check out freelance accelerator. If it seems like a good match for you, and you can also get started with all of our free resources, which you can find at. So heidi.com/freelance. Again, we'll link to everything below. Um, if you enjoyed this episode, make sure to subscribe on YouTube.

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