

Moss Lipow

By [Clodagh](#) on [January 9, 2012](#)

Author of *Eyewear – a Visual History* – speaks exclusively to Eyestylist

9th January 2012 Visual arts connoisseur and eyewear designer Moss Lipow takes time from his busy agenda to answer our questions about his most enduring passion – eyewear.

Eyestylist: When did you start collecting frames and what sparked your interest?

Moss Lipow: I originally found I had to wear glasses in my late teens. I was less than enthusiastic. I was surprised to find that rather than limiting my style, they gave me a chance to enhance my style. I began to get more and more glasses for my prescription, then I started getting frames I liked just as a design object. When it reached critical mass and became an actual collection though, it is hard to say. Eventually I realised I loved it as a design medium and wanted to create in it, so I began to collect more to learn more. There really wasn't a thorough reference available. Eventually, I decided I'd like to write one, so I began to curate while I was collecting, so I'd have representative examples of everything. I conceived this project ten years ago. I'd say I have about 3000 frames, and almost all of the pieces were acquired individually and curated from a diverse collection. It's hard to pick a favourite. I tend to like old safety and motoring glasses. They weren't actually trying to be stylish, but they were definitely stylish.

Eyestylist: What has been your most astonishing discovery about eyewear?

Moss Lipow: The lack of limits as to what can be done with it. I think a great many fascinating things have been done in the past, and even more will be done in the future.

Eyestylist: Does your art background influence your designs?

Moss Lipow: I basically work on two different levels. I do things for performers and fashion editorial that are rather theatrical. I use an arsenal of visual reference to drive home the point to be made. The only rule is to say what you need to as clearly as possible. You mine references with designs meant to be worn on a day to day basis as well, only within accepted parameters of wearability. Taste and restraint are necessary. In a way though, when a person picks their outfit for a given day, they're styling their wardrobe – it's almost like their life is a movie, and they're the star. As a designer it's your obligation to help them feel like the star – cool, glamorous, elegant and mildly heroic.

Eyestylist: Who do you feel are the “visionaries” in eyewear today?

Moss Lipow: The newer wave of entrepreneurs and designers building more self-consciously design oriented brands.

Eyestylist: Do you think that the interest in eyewear will continue?

Moss Lipow: Yes, it's been pretty consistent since the late 1920's. Most of all, it's related to the acceptance of eyewear as a fashion item. I think the future will manifest itself in the continued proliferation and growth of boutique brands. They are niche now, but it's a nice sized niche, and it will continue to grow.

Eyestylist: Do you have an amusing/unusual/ “serendipity moment” about your research for the book?

Moss Lipow: Getting recognition as a designer let me know a lot of the people who made the fashion history I wrote about. For the future, I plan on opening a retail store in New York that will be a sort of eyewear Mecca. I'll do custom work for special clients, sell my work, and it will be a shrine to the medium. *Eyewear – A Visual History* is published by Taschen www.taschen.com JG