

LETTER &amp; DESIGN

## YLVA SKARP

CALLIGRAPHY

*"It's so fulfilling to see what  
you can create with just your own hands."*

YLVASKARP.SE

A 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN POET once wrote, "I will not follow where the path may lead, but I will go where there is no path, and I will leave a trail." For 46-year-old Ylva Skarp, this timeless quote embodies her 20-year career as a professional calligraphy artist and designer.



Born and raised in the small town of Leksand in central Sweden, Skarp became fascinated with lettering as a toddler. "I enjoyed writing," she says. "Not for the content, but for the shapes and way words felt when I wrote them." As she grew to love this form of expression, her passion would lead to Roehampton Institute in London, where she specialized in calligraphy.

After moving back to Sweden, she realized there were no viable career prospects as a calligrapher, so she made her own path, starting a business designing wedding invitations and personal gifts on commission. But Skarp felt limited. She wanted to bring her own visions to life and give them roots instead of always working under someone else's directions.

The perfect opportunity arose when kids came into the picture. Relocating to her hometown of Leksand 13 years ago to raise them closer to family, she opened up a small studio and shop in a garden shed. Finally, with a space of her own, Skarp expanded her vision into a formidable Swedish brand.

Roehampton was instrumental in giving Skarp a solid foundation, but she wanted her work to evoke feelings rather than traditional technique. Making this art form completely hers meant breaking from the old-school way of lettering and pouring her personal style and vision into calligraphy. "It's quite meditative and makes you forget time," she says. "And it's so fulfilling to see what you can create with just your own hands."

Inspired by the irregular and imperfect, Skarp can't stand perfection. "I still use a ruler if I have to," she notes, "but I'm freer in my expression to create that emotional connection through my messages."

She draws daily inspiration from life itself: "I'm always absorbing experiences—from walking in the woods and reading magazines to relaxing through yoga and horseback riding. As an artist, you're always turned on." —LOLA AKINMADE ÅKERSTRÖM

OPPOSITE PAGE: MAGDALENA BJÖRNSDÖTTIR / THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF RADICE / PREVIOUS SPREAD: LEFT PAGE: LAUREN PERLSTEIN / RIGHT PAGE: THE INVISIBLE STORE OF HAPPINESS. DESIGNED AND MADE BY SEBASTIAN COX IN COLLABORATION WITH SCULPTOR LAURA ELLEN BACON FOR CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK FOR THE AMERICAN HARDWOOD EXPORT COUNCIL. PHOTOGRAPHER PETR KREJCI.



FARM-TO-BOTTLE BEAUTY

## JASMINE URZIA

HERBALIST

*"I believe that when you do something you  
really enjoy you put your love and positive energy into it."*

RADICEAPOTHECARY.COM

FOUNDED BY JASMINE URZIA, a third-generation Italian pharmacist and herbalist, Radice Apothecary is a high-end but under-the-radar skin-care line that prides itself on using all-organic vegan ingredients. Inspired by her nonna, a pharmacist in Rome, Urzia started her brand as a passion project while adapting to a new life—and language—in Brooklyn. "Radice' means root," Jasmine explains. "It refers to the fact that this company really stems from my childhood—where I grew up working with my grandmother in her lab or in the garden, where I developed my botany skills."

From rosemary, sage, and lavender to thyme and Saint-John's-wort, ingredients are sourced directly from Urzia's production in Tuscany. "I believe it's really important to use elements I'm familiar with from Italy, so I spend half my time at my family's farm handpicking herbs and flowers for my creams," she says. Besides what grows in her garden, any ingredients that Jasmine can't cultivate herself (like apricot butter and virgin coconut oil) are purchased refined from high-quality vendors. Not to mention that every cream and mask is quite literally handcrafted in small batches through traditional procedures such as pressing by hand, laying out in bain-marie, or cold-soaking to attain maceration. "I like to have total control of consistency, color, and scent. It's just like cooking. If I need to adjust the recipe, I do it." To captivate the modern woman, Urzia focuses on making sophisticated, multipurpose products that tackle two (or more) issues at once. For instance, the best-selling Soothing Ointment (\$75) can be used as a nourishing facial balm, after-sun salve, and lip or cuticle treatment. "All of my products are made by me for now," she says, "because I believe that when you do something you really enjoy—which I do—you put your love and positive energy into it." —DIANA CERQUEIRA