

marie claire

Women on Top Awards: The Transformers

By Sophie Moura
October 22, 2012 9:33 AM



For Marie Claire's third annual Women on Top Awards, we combed the country for the up-and-comers leading thought-revolutions, creating businesses, and making names for themselves in fields from the military to the arts. None is a day over 40, with a couple of notable exceptions: We've added a "Super Woman" category to celebrate women of any age who made their mark on 2012. But their accomplishments speak for themselves...

Top Visual Artist

Anya Kielar, 34, multimedia artist and sculptor

Résumé: Growing up in New York City's Soho neighborhood in the '80s, Kielar constantly visited galleries with her parents. In 2005, her Columbia MFA thesis project — inspired by an Oscar Wilde children's story — was picked up by a major gallery, selling out in less than two weeks. Subsequent exhibits have earned Kielar, who's expecting her first child this winter, comparisons to Andy Warhol. Her fourth solo show opens this fall.

Path to the Top: "I'm severely dyslexic, and as a kid, I loved art class because I didn't have to read out loud. As I got older, my parents encouraged me in my art — the summer I was 15, I stayed alone at our loft for three weeks to paint — but homework still took me five hours a night. That instilled a strong work ethic in me."

Defining Moment: "The New York Times used an image of a piece I'd worked on for four months — a canvas suit covered with paper butterflies — on the cover of the Arts section. I felt like I was really participating in the art world."

Gender Politics: "As a female artist, there's potential to do something new. For thousands of years, men represented women [in art]. Now we're doing it ourselves. My work veers toward the grotesque. In my new show of textile portraits, 'Women,' one of the mouths is an open slit. I'm not interested in pretty lips."