

LIFE & STYLE

# How to Travel as a Couple

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Janis Provisor and Brad Davis *Fort Street Studio*

A 1989 visit to create woodblock prints in Hangzhou set American artists Janis Provisor and Brad Davis on a new geographic and creative course. In the following years, they launched their first collection as Fort Street Studio, today one of the world's leading luxury contemporary carpet-design houses.

The duo recently opened a new office in Hong Kong, in addition to existing showrooms in Los Angeles and New York. They spoke to the Journal about the beaches of Normandy, finding inspiration from their trips and traveling as a pair.

### **How often do you travel?**

Brad: On average, once every two months.

### **Where do you go?**

Janis: We have a lot of places that we repeat every year: Hong Kong, China, New York when we're living in Hong Kong, and the Caribbean when we just need to chill. And inspiration trips like a summer in Normandy.

### **What was your last big trip together?**

Brad: We [went] to Bali for five weeks. For many years, we have gone on design retreats where we relax, remove ourselves from the day to day, and focus on working exclusively on design and art.

### **What is the connection between travel and your art?**

Brad: My work is a collage of bits and pieces of every place I have ever been—from a crack in a wall to a masterpiece in a museum.

Janis: Travel always informs my work, but mostly because it informs me. I'm continually open to new experiences, both from the markets as well as museums, local fashion, the confluence of high and low.

### **Why is travel important to you as business owners?**

Brad: It gives you perspective that staying in one place can't impart. You experience what the clients in the U.S., Europe and Asia want, as well as what the weavers and the dyer in China or Jaipur need to do the best work.

## **What has been your best travel memory?**

Brad: A trip to Huang Shan (Yellow Mountains) in Anhui province, China. It is a fairyland landscape of spiky peaks with perpendicular pines jutting out and curling dragons of clouds. I realized Chinese painters were "realists."

Janis: The time I was taken to China in 1989 to make woodcuts, and it was a life-changing experience for both Brad and me.

## **Worst travel experience?**

Brad: Mercifully, the mind blocks most of them out. But interminable runway delays, missed appointments and canceled flights are the worst pains.

## **What's your packing strategy?**

Brad: After losing our baggage on two consecutive trips, we almost always do carry-on. Recently, we did six weeks in China, Nepal, and India with just two small bags. However, we carry our art studio in several big checked bags and have not had a problem so far. But we only do this with direct flights.

## **Favorite hotel?**

Brad: The Four Seasons in Istanbul. It is like having a bed in a museum.

Janis: Begawan Giri outside of Ubud in Bali. The grounds were spectacular, and it was a magical place to stay while discovering Bali.

## **How do you beat jet lag?**

Brad: Go to sleep as quickly as possible on the flight. Take a mild sleeping pill. Try to go out and walk around at your destination, preferably in the sun before going to sleep. And take half a sleeping pill for the next three nights to readjust.

### **How often do you travel without the other?**

Janis: Strangely enough, we rarely travel alone, but on occasion it does happen. If I'm alone and on business, I miss my playmate. When we first got together over 30 years ago, we discovered that we loved to travel and explore new places together. We're at our best when we're discovering new places.

### **How do you exercise while on the road?**

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### **What are your travel essentials?**

Janis: Comme des Garçon perfume, a good moisturizer, my phone, but most important my Kindle or iPad to have good novels at hand all the time.

### **Where would you like to go that you haven't been yet?**

Brad: I have traveled for 30 years in China and there are still places I would like to explore: Dunhuang, southern Shanxi, Yunnan. Sri Lanka is top of my list for its natural beauty.

— *Edited from an interview by Alexandra A. Seno*