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THE SUMMER ISSUE



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whimsical TALISMANS



By CELINE ASSOUD

Christina Debs designs - eclectic wearable works of art.



With a philosophy ingrained in rewriting classic luxury design for modern times and roots going back to Lebanese origins, Christina Debs dedicated herself to the studies of the art of jewellery and jewellery craftsmanship. Christina Debs Fine Jewellery has unveiled her collection in Switzerland in 2015 – making her the first Lebanese jeweller to exhibit in Baselworld Hall 1. Being fans of the label's globetrotting eclecticism, we sit today with the designer to discuss the making of her vibrantly hued pieces.

U: Tell us about your latest collection.

C.D: For the moment, I have nine collections that I add to every season. Hard Candy is a collection that revolves around a rose cut centre gemstone available in a large variety of colours and gems. This joyful collection can be worn for every mood and occasion and can be personalized with an initial of the customers. Diamond Tattoo, a collection that outlines the marking of the skin with jewellery ornaments. It can be worn like a second skin. Candy Pop features rounded classical beads and pearls with a twist. It is a different way of



wearing pearls and colourful beads.

Crystalline's collection rhymes with glare. Wonderland is a collection that features enchanting butterflies and pansies with colourful wings and petals. One of the most exceptional collections is the Secret Garden in which unmatched pieces pay tribute to nature through poetic gemstones that combine elegance and modernity. Mother Nature's collection features three-dimensional animals. It is a live representation of nature with fine creatures that you can pet on your fingernails all day long. Starlight is crafted with a refined eight-pointed star, representing the Northern Star. It is a lucky star that will shine on you. At last, Sunshine features trinkets made of refined 16-pointed sun.

U: What is your main inspiration?

C.D: Being a Lebanese born, I am influenced by my origins and the ancient civilization, the Phoenicians. They used to be great travellers, which provided them with a very rich culture. They were good traders and jewellery creators that travelled all over the Mediterranean and beyond. They used all the techniques that are still being used in jewellery production nowadays. They use to utilize brightly coloured stones, chiefly agate, lapis, carnelian and jasper. Shapes nature-inspired designs such as leaves, corns, and grapes. My inspiration is Phoenicia, the birthplace of Princess Europa, who gave her name to Europe, and whose effigy now adorns all currency bills of the EURO. She was so beautiful and passionate, that Zeus, the god of all gods, fell madly in love with her and changed himself into a bull to seduce her. Jewellery is also about love and seduction.

U: What are your favourite stones to work with?

C.D: The gemstones are focal point in my collections. I love working with them because they give so much colour and life to the pieces. All the stones that I use are natural, even if some of them are treated for colour purposes. I use more than 45 different coloured gemstones, and I always try to find new stones that we do not usually see in fine jewellery. For the moment, I have a preference for the chrysoprase. It is such a remarkable stone enriched in vibrant colour that enhances the beauty of any woman.

U: What inspired to start designing jewellery?

C.D: I was always fond of jewellery and gemstones. I started designing

and creating jewellery by passion from an early age. Then, I studied Diamond grading at GIA and at HRD, and jewellery design and technology at L'AFEDAP, L'Ecole de la rue du Louvre and L'Ecole Boule in Paris. Later on, in 2008, I created my own jewellery company.

U: How would you define your design aesthetic?

C.D: I would describe them as delicate, refined, elegant and modern yet classical, which makes them timeless.

U: What motivates you about innovations in the jewellery world right now?

C.D: I think the value and the worth of jewellery is based on innovation and quality rather than solely on the preciousness of the material used. There are many materials that I would like to use in my jewellery and new fields that I would like to explore.

U: Tell us about the Baselworld Hall 1 exhibition. How do you feel about exhibiting beside the most prestigious jewellery houses in the world?

C.D: It was really incredible to have such an exposure. We had the chance to exhibit in Hall 1 amongst the biggest brands of jewellery and watches. We had a very good feedback from the press and from the buyers. By the end of the show, people were referring to us as the yellow box.

U: If you weren't designing jewellery, what would you be doing?

C.D: I would be exploring any field that is related to art and story telling from architecture to landscaping.

U: Where do you most commonly derive inspiration when you are about to start designing a new collection?

C.D: It always starts with a simple idea or just a direction. Then, I do a lot of research. It stimulates my creativity.

U: Which designers would want to collaborate with?

C.D: I would love to collaborate with any designer from fashion, to architecture, to any product design. It is exhilarating and rewarding to associate two different worlds and to create a single shared piece.

U: Are you interested in one type of jewellery in particular?

C.D: Not really, I am very supple. I like to try new things. I might be exploring a new direction in my future collections.

U: What's next on your upcoming projects?

C.D: We are exhibiting at JCK in Las Vegas and we look to expand the brand and take it worldwide. ■



Christina Debs

COLOR FUSION

