

The Brains Behind the Bling...

The creative genius that goes into conceptualising a beautiful piece of jewellery is multi-faceted and a process that fuses aesthetic aptitude with superlative skill, oodles of talent, and a sharp eye for design. **Saadiya Ahmad** meets with some of Dubai's hottest jewellery designers who reveal the ingenuity that goes into designing bling and upcoming trends to look out for.



Maya Mukhi has been designing jewellery for more than 10 years now with her sisters; Meena and Zeenat, under the brand name Mukhi Sisters which was developed five years ago.

Why design jewellery instead of fashion, for example?

"Jewellery runs in the Mukhi family genes: our mother, Effat Kreidie, is the creative force behind Effy's Jewelry. Her father, Chandru Mukhi, comes from a long line of Indian jewellers in the industry since 1875, and has been based in Beirut for more than 40 years. Born into a world of dazzle and sparkle, the three of us were on intimate terms with fine gems and jewellery from an early age. With such a rich heritage, we began collaborating on our own brand – Mukhi Sisters."

What are your favourite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"We love working with gold and precious stones. There isn't specific semi-precious stones that we like to work with, it depends on the colours and stones we fall in love with and feel the energy of, while brainstorming for new collections."

What are some future trends to look out for?

"Future trends at Mukhi Sisters to look out for would be our rings and earrings."

Available at S*uce in the UAE and Mukhi Sisters is also available at Mukhi Sisters Boutique in Beirut Souks.



Abrar Essam Alebrahim, is an architect who has been designing jewellery since April 2011 under the name THHABA. For her, jewellery design is similar to designing a building; it has structure and balance but of smaller scale making it fun to design and explore.

Why jewellery instead of fashion for example?

"It is more personal than fashion and more intimate like a cozy bedroom, you have to be comfortable with it to want to own it and appreciate it."

What are your favourite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"My favourite metal is always and forever gold. Women love gold since as far back as time goes. It is a precious metal and one that you cherish and pass on to your children. Gold is the best gift you can give your partner, it's also an ideal gift to celebrate a newborn or give to a special friend. When it comes to stones, I have a soft spot for diamonds in all shapes, cuts and colors. I also love working with Tanzanite because of its uniqueness as a stone and because of its colour."

What are some future trends in jewellery to look out for?

"This is a very tough question for me to answer. As deeply involved in fashion as I am being a jewellery designer, I actually do not follow the trends at all. I don't even agree most of the time with what is considered the 'it' item this season. I try my best to make things hip and happening, and I am enjoying the process."

Available in the UAE at SAUCE Boutiques



Leila Kashanipour has been designing jewellery since her first year at Central Saint Martins although her brand, Leilankash, was conceived in January 2011 as a business.

Why jewellery instead of fashion for example?

"In my personal opinion, jewellery and accessories complete ready-to-wear fashion and I have always been into detail and stacking things, so I guess it was a natural calling!"

What are your favourite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"I like hand carving all the masters myself. However for the new season I am using C.A.D (computer aided design) for the first time which I am excited about. I work a lot with brass, bronze, sterling silver and 22k gold. The gemstones I use vary from Turquoise, Lapis, Hematite, Moonstone to the colourful beauties such as Rubies, Emeralds, Jaspers..."

What are some future trends in jewellery to look out for?

"Lots of pearls, a minimalistic approach to classics and practical to wear..."

Available at Bloomingdales, Stone fine Jewelry, Sophiescloset.com in the UAE. Also Harvey Nichols



Nadine Kanso began her Bil Arabi line back in 2006. Through her designs, she pays homage to the sublimely aesthetic appeal of Arabic as a language.

Why jewellery instead of fashion for example?

"Bil Arabi is about a statement and about my pride in my language and culture; how better to translate that other than in Design of Arabic concept jewellery line."

What are your favourite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"Being in the Middle East, gold is very much in fashion and I enjoy working with rose, yellow and white gold. In classic pieces, often no gem or stones are included, just the simplicity of the letters. The more stylish pieces include diamonds, emeralds, flat stones, mother of pearl and recently, many pieces including black diamonds."

What are some future trends in jewellery to look out for?

"Our hand cuff collection reflects the new trend in jewellery to be more bold and creative. With more people travelling, they want quality pieces from places they visit and something that no one else has much access to back in their countries."

Available at S*uce, Bloomingdale's Dubai Mall, Harvey Nichols Mall of the Emirates. Or visit www.bilarabi.ae



Mira Sadi has been designing jewellery for two years and says she loves designing pieces that could both complete any jeans and white-T ensemble, or top up an evening gown.

Why jewellery instead of fashion for example?

"I believe in the natural flow of life. My entry into the field just happened, naturally."

What are your favorite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"I started off with strictly gold plated designs but have recently become very fond of silver. I love bringing in contradictory elements that clash. To date, I have tried being as asymmetrical as possible with my designs."

What are some future trends in jewellery to look out for?

"Well in general, I think the world is starting to break out. The body and head pieces, dramatic ear cuffs, you name it! People are bored. They want something exciting. Something new. They want to be intrigued."

Available at O'de rose boutique on Al Wasl road, Umm Suqeim 2, Dubai; or visit: www.o-derose.com.



Joanna Laura Constantine has been designing and working on her fine of fashion jewellery since 2008. She says that some of her pieces look like fashion jewellery while other pieces have the fine jewellery look and finishing.

Why jewellery instead of fashion for example?

"I did study fashion design actually but during my studies at Parsons School of Design in New York I discovered my passion for fashion accessories and jewellery."

What are your favourite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"I love using Swarovski crystals, pearls and semi-precious stones like rose quartz, turquoise and onyx. My favourite styles are the fine jewellery-looking pieces with an edge."

What are some future trends in jewelry to look out for?

"Statement earring worn on just one side and arm cuffs!"

Available at www.sophiescloset.com



Nosheen Bakhsh is a Saudi/Kashmiri designer whose love for jewellery began at a young age watching her mother adorn her beautiful collection. Her line, Sheen, is about being and doing beautiful things.

Why jewellery instead of fashion for example?

"I've always been a creative soul, utilising any opportunity to doodle, paint and craft things from accessories and clothing to home decor. My fondness for jewellery, along with my interest in abstract illustrations, led me to explore jewellery design as a form of artistic expression. My background in graphic design also helped refine those skills even though I had never been formally trained to design jewellery."

What are your favourite materials, gems, and stones you like to work with?

"Currently, my favourite material to work with is 18k rose gold! Even though it has been available for many years, only now is it truly being appreciated and favoured. The colour combinations possible with gemstones are endless and especially because it is not as popular as gold or white, they turn out very unique! I've used it the most in the Gul Collection."

What are some future trends in jewellery to look out for?

"Jewellery, like clothing, has its own unique trends. Currently, what I like to call 'ringlets' (bracelets attached to a ring) are in fashion, so are midi rings and armour rings, which take up your whole finger! Another trend is hand cuffs, ear cuffs and cross body chains too. The possibilities are clearly endless. My absolute favourite current trend is the armour rings and midi rings, which can be stacked."

Available at Be You Boutique & S*uce