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ZHUANG HONG YI ■ LITERATURE & LIFE ■ AMAZING DESTINATION: CAPITOLARE TOWER



◀ "Galaxie"

LAURA GALLON
BRINGING
THE 1920s
INTO THE 2020s

by Luca Marotta

Laura Gallon is no stranger to beautiful things. Born and raised in the elegant surrounds of Paris, design is in her blood; but her love for jewelry goes much deeper than this.

After being gifted a pair of diamond earrings that were made by her great-grandfather, Laura went on a personal pilgrimage to discover her heritage, and once more link the Gallon name to hand-crafted, bespoke jewelry.



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L.M. What inspired you to create your own jewelry brand?

L.G. I come from a family of jewelers; my great-grandparents on my father's side were jewelers in Orléans, just south of Paris, in the 1920s. I haven't always been in jewelry, however.

I actually started working in the fashion industry in Paris, working across design, marketing and communications. Later, when I worked in New York, I wasn't satisfied with my career, and started to think about what else I could do.



▲ Orléans, La Rue Royale, the Gallon boutique, 1920 ca

L.M. What was the moment where you thought to start working with jewelry?

L.G. My father gave me a pair of fan-shaped diamond earrings that his grandfather had made for his grandmother. Those earrings were kind of the starting point for me finding my purpose, finding what would fulfill me. And so I decided to go and study gemology and jewelry design at GIA (The Gemological Institute of America, ED), and to go back to my family heritage.

L.M. Has that familial heritage influenced your style and designs at all?

L.G. Definitely. The 1920s, Art Deco period inspires what I create today, and I'm definitely taking that heritage and reinterpreting it, bringing it back with a modern touch. I think the Art Deco style and jewelry from that period is making a come back.

But I think that it's interesting to add a modern touch to it with new gemstones, for example, that weren't used at that time; I use more color whereas back then it was more diamond focussed. I'm just mixing a bit of the past with the present in that way.

L.M. And, I would presume, that with the evolution of jewelry making techniques you are able to create things today that would not have been possible back then.

L.G. Yes, for sure. It's a very different way of working now.

L.M. When was your brand – Laura Gallon – created?

L.G. In May 2020, pretty much 100 years after my great-grandparents founded theirs. I founded it during the middle of the pandemic when I was in Los Angeles. I created two collections there; the first, "Haute Color" after haute couture, inspired by my fashion background. This collection is one-of-a-kind pieces. Very colorful, very vibrant, and all inspired by the colored stones that I found through my travels and meetings with gem dealers.

The second, which is called "Ready-To-Wear", are all pieces that are wearable daily. They can be mixed and matched together, and all are available in white, yellow, and rose gold. They're also at a more affordable price point for younger clients.

L.M. And now you're back in France?

L.G. I spend my time between France and the United States. I actually went back to where my great-grandparents had their store and their workshop. I did a lot of research in the city archives to find as much information as I could on them and their life and their workshop.

L.M. Did you find their shop?

L.G. Their shop no longer exists, but I found the building where it was. It was incredible from having seen photographs of it, to just standing in front of the same building. It was one of those moments where it just hits you. Boom. This is the reason why I'm doing jewelry today, the reason why I'm in the industry, because of my great-grandparents and their heritage, and because I was given those earrings that my great-grandfather created.



▲ "Nouvelle Vague"



▲ "Toujours"



▲ "Idylle"



▲ "Equilibre Emerald"

L.M. And is that why you took the bold step to name your brand after yourself?

L.G. Yes, because I want to continue this heritage from my father's side - I share the same last name, Gallon. You can see in the old pictures that my surname is there on the storefront. So I really wanted to incorporate this heritage into my brand identity and into my business, and into everything that I do.

L.M. And this also inspired your latest collection?

L.G. I named my newest collection Alice, directly inspired by those earrings my great-grandfather created for my great-grandmother, Alice. It's a tribute to her as much as it is my heritage.

L.M. And this collection was designed in the US or France?

L.G. In France, as I stayed for the entirety of 2021. It was very important to have this collection made in France versus the US for my previous two collections. I began looking for a workshop there, and I found an amazing one in Nice through recommendations in the industry.

L.M. Tell me more about this collection.

L.G. It features 21 pieces, made up of earrings, necklaces, rings, and a cuff bracelet. I used 18 karat gold and a mixture of colored stones and diamonds. I love color and I love how some people are naturally drawn to certain colored stones. It brings out emotion as each colored stone is very unique, so I tend to incorporate them a lot in my creations.

L.M. How do you feel being a small brand in a huge industry dominated by the big players?

L.G. I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing if I didn't believe in it. The more I talk with my clients about that the more confidence I have about the future of the brand. My clients don't want a piece of jewelry that thousands of other women worldwide have. They want something unique. In that sense, I think being a smaller brand is a strength.

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Laura Gallon



▲ "Solaire"

▼ "Première Danse"



L.M. How do you see your brand vision evolving?

L.G. I'm always thinking strategically and trying to plan for the next few years ahead. I'm going to start looking for investors, because everything right now is self-funded. And that's been working well! But, in order to continually develop collections and keep the business going I'm looking into investment.

L.M. And for potential investors, you've already hit the red carpet in Cannes!

L.G. I was lucky enough to have two actresses wear my pieces on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival. I was also lucky enough to walk the carpet myself with my own pieces. It was definitely a magical milestone for my career. And quite fitting - I was talking to someone the other day who said my family story could also make a great film! So it was fun to walk the red carpet imagining it could possibly be for a future film about my family.