THE IRREVERENT JEWELLERY AND POETRY OF LORENZ BÄUMER

BY ISABELLE CERBONESCHI

This engineer by training, who became a jeweller by passion, claims the distinction of being the only independent jeweller in the Place Vendôme. His creations take the form of a precious autobiography recounting his travels, his emotions and his dreams. His latest creation is a highly irreverent dinner service evocative of his universe of beetles and spiders, and his sense of humour. Interview.



Lonner Eliumer

If you accept an invitation to dine with jewelfer Lorenz Baumer, you should be prepared for anything. Especially for being insulted by your plate. Once you renove your neption decorated with a question mark, you may well be called a "great nuisance" or a "little bastard! But it's nothing personal. It's just a way for guests who hardly know each other to break the ice, and have a laugh - er not, depending on their same of humour. The hest makes up for a vey for quests who hardly know each other to break the ice, and have a faugh – er not, depending on their sense of humour. The host makes up for it with the dessert plates, filed with tender words that bring he evening to a more nellow close.

The table service designed by Lorenz Bäumer is like his jewellery, poetic, symbolic unusuit, unexpected, full of humour ancilove; is also the different. The son of a diplomat, Lorenz Bäumer's upbringing was defined by his fathert poetings. The landscapes he passed through ended up being infused into his jewellery, Lorenz Bäumer trained as an engineer at the prestiguois Ecole Centralle de Paris, but once he had his diploma he decided to create costrume jewellery, before launching his lower jewellery, house in 1992.

In 1988 he was spotted by Charel, for whom he designed jewellery collections for twenty years: the famous Camelia, Matelassie, Octo rings and so many other iconic pieces are all his doing. In 2009 it was Louis Vutton's burn to bring him in as a stristic derector of jewellery. He created the brand's first line of jewellery, "L'Ane du voyage", which was followed by many others. Their collaboration lasted until 2015. After winning an anonymous competition organised by the Palses of Monace, Lorenz Bäumer wee also entrusted with the creation of the "Exume Collaboration lasted until 2016. After winning an anonymous competition organised by the Palses of Monace, Lorenz Bäumer wee also entrusted with the creation of the "Exume Collaboration lasted until 2016. After winning an anonymous competition organised by the Palses of Monace, Lorenz Bäumer wee also entrusted with the creation of the "Exume Collaboration lasted until 2016. After winning an anonymous competition organised by the Palses of Monace, Lorenz Bäumer wee also entrusted with the creation of the "Exume Collaboration lasted until 2016. After winning an anonymous competition organised by the Palses of Monace, Lorenz Bäumer wee also entrusted with the creation of the "Exume Collaboration lasted until 2016. A

Monaco in 2010.

Moraco in 2010. He creates unique and distinctive jewellery that reflects his inner world, as well as his technical discoveries. It is to him that we ove the tatioosed diamond and the perfumed ring. He steers a conflictent path between two universes: magic and technology And often they correct ogether.



Europa Star: What led you to create tableware?

Lorent Baumer: My mother paints on percefair, and when I was a child I used to sketch templates for her. It's a different way of approaching design in everyday IIfe. These are

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Did this idea come from the memory of a particularly unpleasant dinner?

Actually, I want to translate what I do with jewellery into tableware. They are both classic and imwerent, and they tell a story by translating our skills and knowledge. At a dinner party, sometimes guess who don't know each other can be a bit disengaged. This service is a way to break to be with the ice with humour, All my guests can appreciate that. A nagolin with a guestion mark hides the place and when you take it off, you reveal an insult. But it's written in a very unthreatening way, with little flowers, it's very cutta, a bit bourgoos! I used a font that was created by the Silvera perselain factory, apparently for Catherine the Great, or possibly Madame du Bury.

It's probably better not to have a seating plan...

You're absolutely right! It makes me laugh to see the faces of my guess. They have to look twice to make sure they've read the text correctly. And then they look at their neighbour's face and think: "Phew,

their reighbour's face and think: "Phew,"
I'm not alone!" And the next question is: "Why did you choose
I'm not alone!" And six he next question is: "Why did you choose
that ward for me?" The answer is that it's our chance, and the
host has not been spared! It's designed as a sequence, the
dinner plates are decorated with swear words, the side plates
are adjectives: small, truge, micro, etc. There are six for men
and six for women, and they match up randomly.

But what if some of your guests don't have a sense of humour?

You don't want to have dinner with people who don't have a sense of humour! In the end, everyone finds it very funny because no one is singled out: everyone

because no one is singled out everyone gets the same treatment, but you have to end on a good note, so for dessert I chose sevent words: love, goddens, doring, muse. As forthe dinner service with beetes, they are inspired by my jewellery. I love the magic of these creatures that appear almost prehistoric. In ancient Egypt they were a symbol of longovity. Sometimes people have a phobia of beetles, so I've included some spiders (loughs).



I love the phrase attributed to Oscar Wilde: "Beauty lies in the eye of the broider." Estroyen sears in my jewellery what they wish to see. It could be love, the bond between a gendmether and a child, or just a bond with oncestf. I like it when jewellery has something to say, beyond the fact of being made from gold and diarmonds. It's like a language that creates a dialogue between two people: the one who buys it and the one who receives it.

Is your jewellery a way for you to write your autobiography, without words?

Yes, to some extent. They tell the story of my life, because I put a lot of myself inchent. It's not a merketing approach but a personal one. It's a form of psychoanalysis. Through my creations, I take pleasure in sharing the things I love in life, the moments I have experience and that I want others to experience too.

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A piece of jewellery is an ornament but also a message, a way of affirming who you are at a given moment in your life. Do you think it has the ability to accompany the wearer through a period of metamorphosis?

I designed my new line "Metamorphosis" during lockdown, around the idea of reinventing oneset. The motifs are trees and leaves that turn into a butterfly, depending on how you look at them. I by to change the way people look at themselves or at others, through the jewellery they receive. This magic is what I by to instill in my creations.

How did you get the idea of tattooing a diamond?

Most inventions happen at the intersection where the need for something, a moment in time and technology come tagether. The story of the tatology down at a mixture of all these things. First there was a desire: I love tatloos but I hate the idea of having something perminent or me. Secondy, laser technology allows a diamend to be heated very locally, almost imperceptibly, when the carbon from which a diamend is made is burned, the genistone turns black. A small drawing created by hand is deposited on the surface of the stone, without altering its value in the 19th century, diamonds were engraved by acratching them with another diamond, but laser tatteoling was not an option. Everyone can choose their own tuttoo. I usually draw them, but you could also bring me a child's drawing to be engraved on a diamond for sternity, it would make a goart gift for Mother's Day.

Can these tattoos be removed?

Yes, by re-polishing the diamond.

A piece of jewellery generally appeals to three senses: it can be seen, touched and heard. But you have introduced a fourth sense: smell, with your scented rings. Is this a way of bringing the tradition of the pomaader, the scented apple, up to date?

I wanted to introduce the sense of smell into the world of jewellery. So I had to use technology again, even though I always try to hide it. I used 3D printing, which makes it possible to



create a three-dimensional object that is in fact built up from layers of material. This meens that you can leave a void inside, which is not possible whee you cast metal using the lost was technique, which produces a solid material. In this way, we can create a porous metal object that is impregnated with perfume, like a sponge. The material is only possible because of technology, but I prefer not to talk about that because I want the technology to be at the service of beauty. A perfumed jewel is the stuff of drasms. A 3D printer: no one cares about that, Lusury has never been driven by technology, but by the beauty of an object and the dreams attached to it.

In the 12th century, scented jewellery had a purpose: it was thought that the scent of musk or ambergris protected against the plague, for example. Why add this dimension today?

Because it's a world I love and we have our own perfume. At some point, I would have lifed to become a perfumer. But in no way does my levellary protect against Covid! (laughs)

You are the last independent jeweller with a boutique on the Flace Vendôme. What are the problems you face today as an independent?

There are many of them, every day! You face problems because you are too small, because others block your access, but every situation has its advantages and disadvantages. Jofen say that my fellow jewellers in the big groups drive buses, and I drive a Ferrari. You have to be careful not to spin off the road, but you can do things that others cannot. But I don't have the financial resources they have.

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I remember a necklace you designed for Louis Vuitton that represented the Champs Elysées seen from above: the diamonds and rubies were like the headlights of cars. It was both geometric and figurative. How did you come up with that idea?

Actually, it was my son Carl who came up with the idea for the necklace. I teach my children to recognise stones, and one evening when we were down on the Champs Elysées,

my son, who must have been 6 or 7 years old, said to me: "Look, Dad, there are lots of rubies on one side of the Champs Elysées and on the other side, there are diamonds!" He was looking at the line of cars going up and down.

Where does your inspiration come from?

From different things: a technique, a beautiful material, something I see, or a flash of inspi-

ration. I often get ideas in the shower. You're alone there, the phone doesn't ring. Water is my element; it washes everything else away. I stick to what's essential.

Since you created of your own jewellery house, customer habits have changed, especially with the emergence of a wealthy and well-informed Chinese clientele, and millennial consumers. What is the current trend, and how are you adapting to these changes in consumption patterns?

Humans haven't changed: they want good, beautiful and real things, even if they may look at each of these things differently. I'm not a marketing man, I'm a creator, and I will create things I like, not what others like. But I want to be of my time and even a little ahead of it. Today we're living in difficult times. People need talismans that inspire them and speak to



them. This is how the "Metamorphosis" collection was born. We have created pendants too. They're like shields, granting symbolic protection. We're also thinking about NFTs. An NFT is not a virtual jewel: it's a certificate that entitles you to the real thing or to something special that you can sell and give to someone else. Perhaps you might receive the sketches for your own jewellery in NFT format, or the possibility to buy the earrings that go with a necklace or with a ring, under certain conditions. You have to be in tune with the times.

"I want technology to be at the service of beauty. A perfumed jewel is the stuff of dreams.

Your boutique even has a secret room. Ultimately, you're a great dreamer, both chivalrous and a bit of a magician. Was creating jewellery a childhood dream?

A 3D printer: no one

cares about that,"

I have always loved the idea of jewellery. My parents were diplomats and when my mother put on her jewels, she was no longer my mother; she was a princess. What we're creat-

ing is part of this universe: knights, princesses, women who transform themselves, Cinderella.. A piece of jewellery is both a dream and, at the same time, it's very concrete. It's not just a fairy tale: it's also an investment. This mixture of the two is so interesting and fun.

Speaking of which, when you design, in addition to the creative act, do you choose stones based on their investment value?

Not only do I think about it, but it's essential! If a client buys a piece of jewellery from me, it would be disrespectful not to take the investment dimension into account. Part of my job involves being an advisor; not just aesthetic but also financial. There are materials that I advise on, exactly as if they were for me. A few years ago, for example, I told all my clients to buy spinel, because it is a magnificent stone. Not all of them followed my advice, but in the meantime the prices have exploded! I don't want to be an investor in gernstones, because otherwise I wouldn't sell anything, but I do give advice. At the moment I'm inviting my clients to bet on coloured diamonds. Indeed, the price of all natural diamonds has increased considerably.

What would be your ultimate piece of jewellery - or the piece that technically you cannot yet make?

It would be a piece of jewellery that allows you to connect directly to your emotions, without going through the filter of the senses. It would be something poetic and a bit crazy. Why not a jewel coloured with love? •