





"Faces are

that out"

lanet Fashion isn't big on plurals. A pair of trousers - rightly or wrongly - will likely be referred to as "a trouser", while the term tatement heel" certainly isn't meant to gest a lone shoe. But the latest news in 1ry jewellery is no linguistic affectation. ngle earring is increasingly the adornment hoice for a new generation of women whom individuality, creativity and dernity are key.

If course, the mere act vearing a lone earring exactly a new concept ng Charles I was known avour a single pearl back he 17th century), but the es themselves represent a ous break with tradition. Today, it's all about ngle cuff or an ear et," explains Parisian ellery designer Valérie ssika. "Women are

ring their jewellery where - and v - you would least expect it." Vhile it's true that these asymmetric essories have a rebellious, even slightly versive, spirit, their sensibility is refined ner than punk, and polished rather than itical. And forget about surgical steel lashy diamantés: these designs are more precious than your average tume-jewellery confection.

Messika, the daughter of a renowned French diamond dealer, furnishes her minimal, yet daringly unconventional, designs with the finest white diamonds. Her collection features a single brilliant-cutdiamond earring with detachable gold chains linking to a bold upper-helix cuff, as well as asymmetric "climbers" that start with a stud, then trace the contours and curves of the upper ear. Thanks to clever engineering which also makes them light and comfortable

to wear - her pieces require zero commitment (or pain) as they're held in place by conventional piercings.

asymmetric.
Wearing a
single earring
helps balance Equally ingenious are the ear jackets by Diane Kordas, the pearl-and-diamond ear pins by Annoushka Ducas, and the sinuous upper-cartilage cuffs and lightning-bolt ear bars by Bee Goddess.

The Danish designer

Sophie Bille Brahe, whose sophisticated single earrings snake up the lobe, curve around the lower ear or creep towards the upper cartilage, is a rising star in the field of contemporary, yet finely crafted, ear candy. She makes the case for the single statement earring being more flattering than a traditional set. "Most people's faces, including mine, are asymmetric," she says. "I believe that wearing a single earring helps balance that out."

As another advantage, Brahe also cites the fact that different designs can be mixed and matched. "Being able to combine the individual pieces makes for a more personal form of expression," she explains.

"It seems to me that women today want their jewellery to make an aesthetic statement, one that speaks of their identity and style."

Asymmetric earrings' ability to convey a mood means that catwalk designers have been quick to catch on. At Alexander McQueen, for example, Sarah Burton sent her models out wearing glittering silver ear cuffs and chains decorated with unicorns and celestial symbols.

Meanwhile, the Italian designer Delfina Delettrez, scion of the Fendi dynasty, understands more than most about how the worlds of fashion and fine jewellery can intersect. Her intricately crafted Trillion earring is a quirky take on the classic pearl earring, while other designs feature surrealist motifs and Picasso-esque eyes.

Even the most pared-down examples of the trend - such as the brilliant-cut-diamond ear jackets by French jeweller Lise Ferreira Vanrycke - pack quite a punch. In fact, when it comes to single earrings, the aphorism "less is more" never seemed so apt. III



FROM LEFT Alexander McQueen hairpiece £215 and ear cuff £495; Sophie Bille Brahe Elipse earring £440 and Falcon earring £1,495: Delfina Delettrez earring £615

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