

PURSUIT OF MAGNIFICENCE

Celebrated jewellery Designer Payal Mehta talks about the intricate process of crafting splendid pieces are nothing less than an extension of the that owner's personality

By Payal Mehta



When I create jewellery, the inspiration for a concept is akin to a search. I am always researching: speaking to my clients, looking at architecture, thinking and dreaming about what I see. I always strive for that perfect link between the women I design for and great works of art and design.

After speaking at length with my clients, I sketch. Sketching often leads to new ideas, including new stones and marvellous transitions in terms of thinking about materials and possibilities. This entire process is similar to the way an artist works with preparatory drawings in order to create a perfect painting.

Drawings are done with outlines by using some of my favourite techniques, such as cross hatching, and the forms are built up using a type of shading. Sketching also allows me to play with gradations of line and colour and, most importantly, different textures of diamonds. It helps create a layering effect by playing with coloured stones to devise a type of shading through gemstones.

This is how I create a painting with diamonds and tell a story in each piece I design. My ultimate goal is to use knowledge about my clients, my creativity, and my access to the finest materials to give women the very best in jewellery.

I take my designs to the finest craftsmen available. Yes, I am fortunate. I have grown up in the world of gems and jewellery, and I know people who can execute my clients' visions perfectly. Then the magic really starts. I work with my craftsmen, often sending them multiple versions of a piece. We work together; it is a shared vision at that point, going back and forth until the piece is nothing short of perfection. The entire process of creating a bespoke piece can take months. It is slow and labour intensive.

My jewellery design work is related to other design and intellectual passions I have had in my life. I harbour great interest in spaces and their mathematical proportions. I also studied physics and interior design in school. In any good design, mathematics and physics is not always visible, unless you are looking for it. But there is symmetry, geometry, and measurement involved in creating beautiful art. Many artists have taken advantage of mathematical findings, such as the golden ratio, to make their artwork realistic and beautiful. Physics has taught me to think of space, light, and the thought that every action has a reaction. Indeed, math, physics, and art are intricately linked. I strongly believe that design is not only what something looks like and feels like, design is also how something works.

For the past two years, I have been the official jeweller to Le Bal des Débutantes, a remarkable event held each year in Paris. Le Bal brings together 25 young women, who are between 16 and 22 years of age, to Paris where they enter the magical realm of couture. The event receives a tremendous amount of international attention, from a variety of global media sources, and also participates in funding a number of charities.

For this event, I design special, one-of-a-kind pieces for each debutante to reflect her unique personality. Like the work that surrounds Le Bal, my jewellery fits well with the event because it is bespoke in the truest sense of the word, from the design process to the craftsmanship that goes into these pieces to my guidance in working with these young women one-on-one to make their special night truly unique.

Le Bal encapsulates the central ethos of Payal New York: I design for women who are ambitious and know what they want, and I can make their dreams come to fruition, even though we are often working across time zones and oceans. 

