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PAYAL MEHTA'S  
BESPOKE  
ARTISTRY

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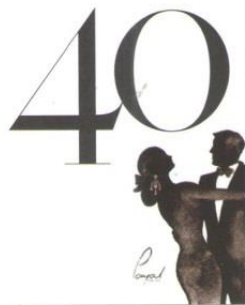
  
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## BESPOKE ARTISTRY

PAYAL MEHTA, the founder of Payal New York, is an exceptionally gifted artist. Her forte lies in creating custom-made pieces – a process she clearly enjoys, because she can easily get into the skin of her discerning client to understand her feelings, needs and personality to craft pieces that resonate perfectly with the spirit of the wearer. This ability of Payal's along with her unquenchable zest for learning gives her an added edge as a couture jewellery designer.

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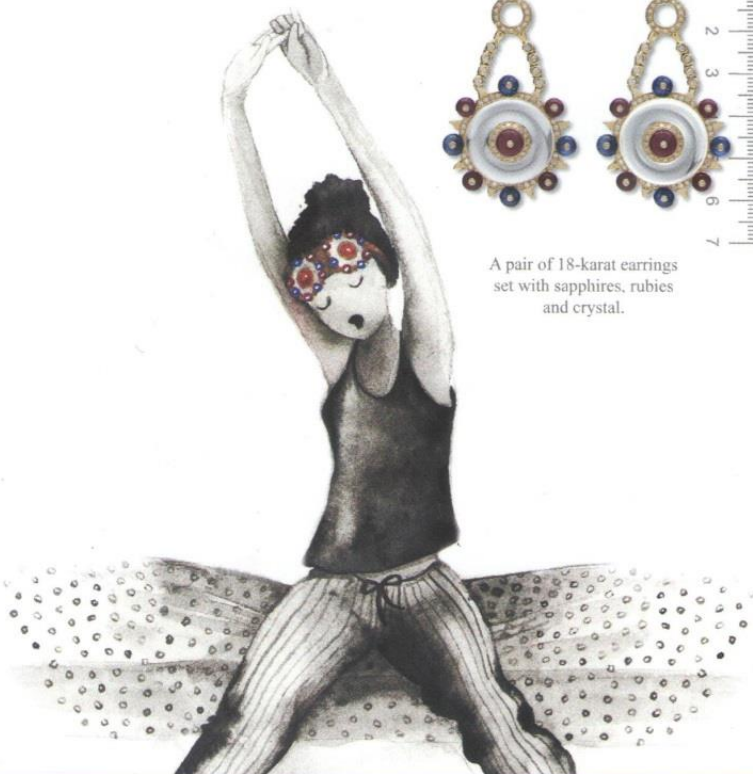
CARRERA Y CARRERA: Dreaming In Gold  
Bewjewelled Antiquities



A pair of 18-karat earrings set with sapphires, rubies and crystal.



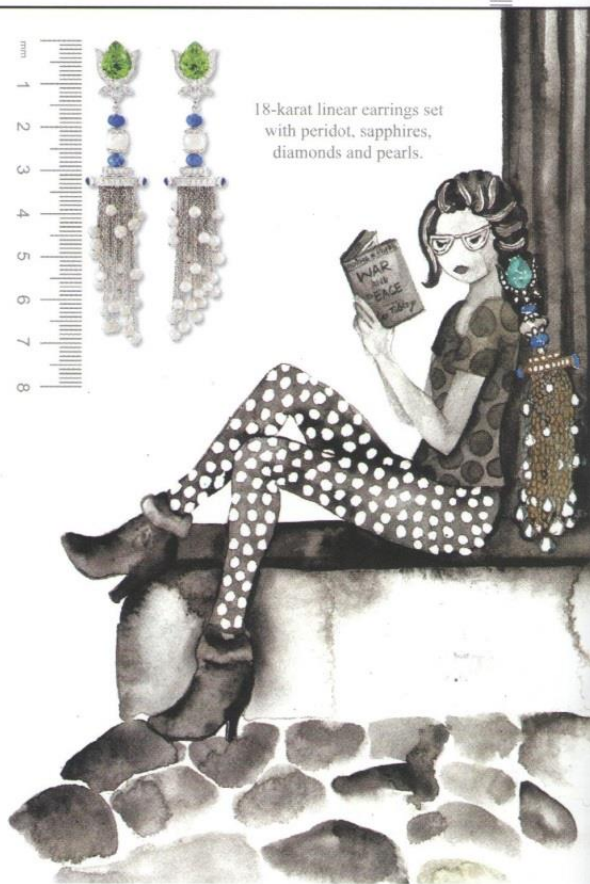
18-karat white gold chandeliers outfitted with rose-cut diamonds.



A 40.83-carat diamond and rose-cut bracelet.



18-karat linear earrings set with peridot, sapphires, diamonds and pearls.





Fancy colour mixed-shaped diamond bracelet in 18-karat gold with a total weight of 47.8 carats.



The linear diamond earrings set in 18-karat gold feature black jade.

## Payal Mehta's



# Bespoke Artistry



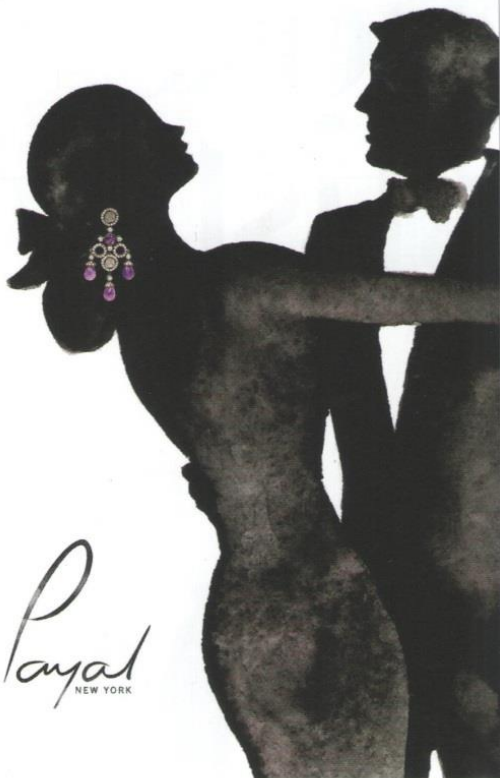
The 18-karat diamond earrings are patterned with a pair of blue chalcedony, aquamarine, tsavorites and pearls.



The avant-garde feather earrings in 18-karat gold are studded with grey and white diamonds.



*“The jewellery theme for this year at Le Bal was ‘Shine On’. That notion of each girl being like a star, a unique gem, was absolutely central to my thinking.”*



*PAYAL MEHTA, the founder of Payal New York, is an exceptionally gifted artist. Her forte lies in creating custom-made pieces – a process she clearly enjoys, because she can easily get into the skin of her discerning client to understand her feelings, needs and personality to craft pieces that resonate perfectly with the spirit of the wearer. This ability of Payal’s along with her unquenchable zest for learning gives her an added edge as a couture jewellery designer.*

*Her portfolio of work is peppered with degrees accrued for unrelated subjects – a student of maths and physics, she earned a diploma at the New York School of Interior Design. A certified chef from the Natural Gourmet Institute in New York, she dabbled in model drawing at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She is also a student of art and history, and it is only befitting her qualifications that she was recently chosen as the official jeweller to a high-end fashion event Le Bal des Débutantes in Paris in 2015, for which she created a one-off piece for every debutante to reflect her unique personality.*

*For a long time, Payal, daughter of a jewellery designer, and wife of a diamond merchant, was looking for a creative outlet to express herself, but she never thought of taking up designing until one day self-realisation hit her. Soon after that eureka moment in 2009, she conceptualised Payal New York.*

*“Creating jewellery as wearable works of art fulfils my sense of purpose in the world,” she believes. “Form follows function in everything I do.”*

BY SHANOO BIJLANI

**You were selected to be the official jeweller to Le Bal des Débutantes in 2015. How did this come about?**

Meeting Ophelie Renouard, founder of Parisian Le Bal, who I admire so much, led to many conversations about this possibility. I initially met Ophelie because my daughter, Ashna, was a debutante at Le Bal two years ago. It became clear that we had similar ideas about how Le Bal's ethos fits with my jewellery and design sensibility.

My entire design process is focused on a very small group of women. I think Ophelie was looking for a jeweller who was both passionate about design and not representative of the mass market. My forte is to customise my work. I usually only create 50 pieces a year, and each of these is one of a kind and special. My sense is that Ophelie found this approach appealing and desirable for Le Bal.

Le Bal is for remarkable girls and a small group of very selective families. It very quickly became apparent that Ophelie and I shared a similar vision.

**Tell us more about the collection you designed for Le Bal. What was the theme/s that you worked around, and what was the inspiration behind the collection? How long did it take you to conceive the line? How many pieces did you design in all?**

At Le Bal, the Debs get to go to a specific couture house and try on their dresses. It is usually their first couture dress experience. Previously, Debs did not get that experience with jewellery. I wanted to bring a couture experience to jewellery.

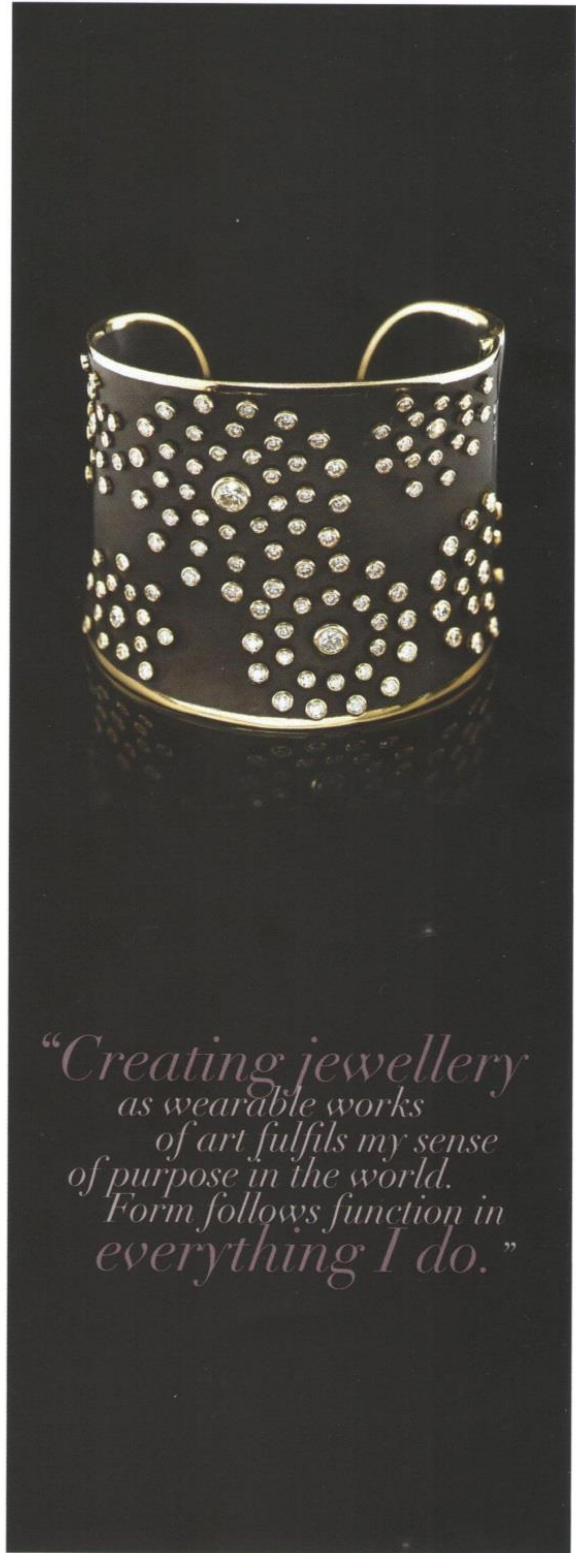
Just as the couture gowns are selected for each girl, I knew that I could do the same with jewellery. My goal is to fit each girl with jewellery that represents her personality, inner-being, and outward presence. Like with fashion, girls should get to experience their style and strength through jewellery as well.

I asked each girl what colours and gemstones they like. I also asked more specific questions, like do they like long earrings? Do they prefer specific ring types and sizes? I took all of these questions into account during the design process. I wanted to get a sense of each debutante's personality by learning more about them and getting their feedback. I also, of course, was interested in where the girls were from and if their home, their geographic background, could inform my design. I did keep the overall concept of Le Bal in mind, but each of these remarkable girls is different and I considered that in each of these designs.

I saw the Debs' pictures and this also played a role in my designs, but I was keen to understand their preferences and personalities. I was mostly influenced by the debutantes'

**The Starburst Cuff**

'I don't just go out and buy stones and make a collection out of it. Each piece is given as much time and energy as if one was doing an entire collection.'



*"Creating jewellery  
as wearable works  
of art fulfils my sense  
of purpose in the world.  
Form follows function in  
everything I do."*

personalities. Yes, the gowns were something I considered, but I was also quite taken with their inner-beauty, which I then translated into jewellery. I wanted to use my creativity to help these debutantes shine.

The jewellery theme for this year at Le Bal was "Shine On." That notion of each girl being like a star, a unique gem, was absolutely central to my thinking.

**Tell us about your background. Were you good at sketching/drawing as a child? Did you pursue creative hobbies?**

I did my bachelor's in maths and physics. As a child in school, I wanted to become an architect. I was interested in science, especially physics. Every action has a reaction and I was fascinated by this notion of causality. And yet I was a daydreamer, as my parents still remind me. I was always lost in my world, sketching and thinking about how design could create new possibilities.

**You belong to a family of jewellers, but your first choice was to be an interior architect. However, you also went on to become a certified chef and did a diploma in model drawing. So, when and how did you get drawn into jewellery designing? What were the trigger factors? When did you take it up as a full-time career?**

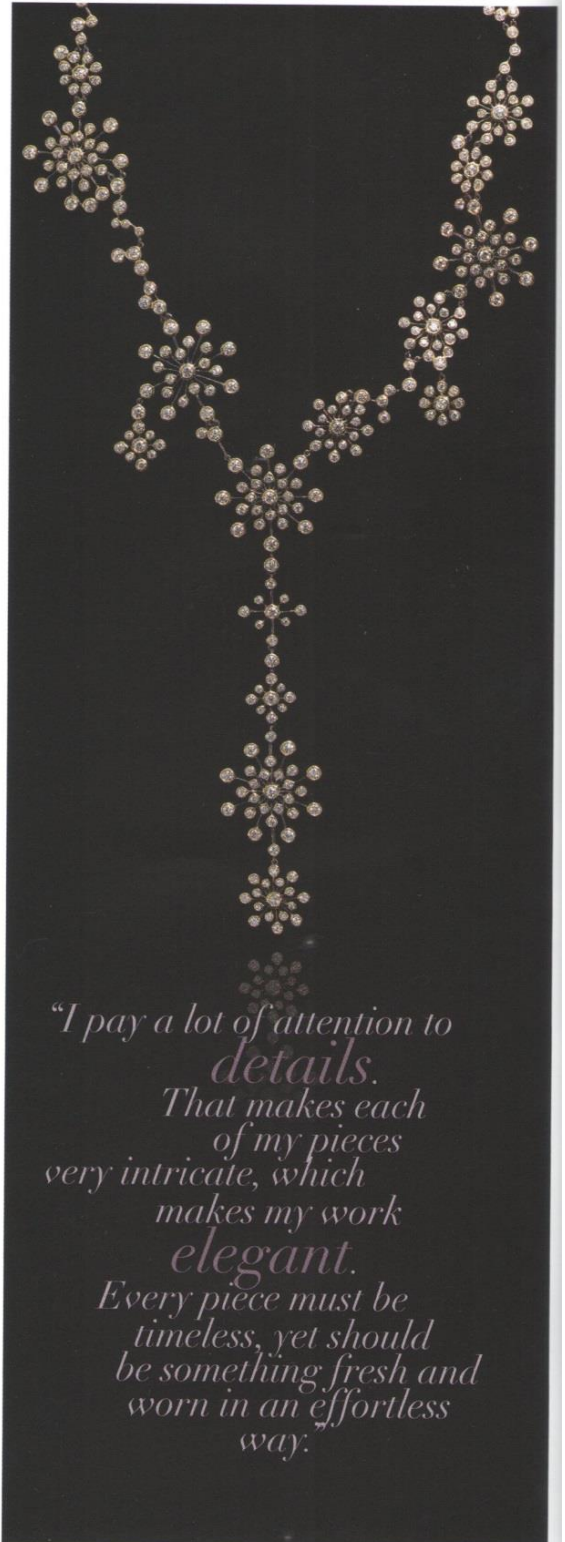
I discovered this passion through many trials and experiences. I have been surrounded by jewels since I was a child, but there were times when I left jewellery only to be pulled back into my love for beautiful metals and stones. Jewellery is an extension of who I am. It makes me feel alive and it has given me an incredible life dedicated to creating beautiful things.

Form follows function. I live my life with this mantra and how beautifully my life has shaped my function of being a jeweller. My interest in science and architecture as a child led me to physics. At the age of 21, I married and lived in Belgium. Then I moved to New York, which offered great exposure and different experiences. Raising two children and our family being interested in food led me to become a chef. If I do anything, I have to learn all about it. That's just who I am. For instance, when I was buying an apartment, I passed the real estate exams and wanted to learn all about New York real-estate law.

Interior designing was my childhood dream. While I was at interior design school, one of the projects was to build a store of something I was passionate about. I designed a concept jewellery store for six months at school. That's all I wanted to design. It just felt right. And that's how I started. When I

**The Starburst Necklace**

'I used silver, diamonds, and gold to create the idea of a midnight sky and starry nights.'



*"I pay a lot of attention to details. That makes each of my pieces very intricate, which makes my work elegant. Every piece must be timeless, yet should be something fresh and worn in an effortless way."*

finished the diploma, I realised that jewellery would always be my calling. That's when I started my first collection.

**Where did you study the art of jewellery making?**

I am still exploring and learning every day. There is so much evolution in trends, stones, and techniques. I also spend a lot of time at the trade shows and with the talented craftsmen who work with me.

**Tell us more about your design philosophy. Most of your jewellery is very feminine, but some collections are more abstract or organic. Tell us more about the design DNA that is specific to your lines.**

I pay a lot of attention to details. That makes each of my pieces very intricate, which makes my work elegant. Every piece must be timeless, yet should be something fresh and worn in an effortless way.

**What inspires you to make jewellery?**

My inspirations are everything I see or explore or something that has stayed in my heart. My idea is to create unique pieces of art, which are contemporary and edgy, focused on the tiny details of design. Each piece tells a story, has a personality, and makes a statement.

**Tell us something about your various collections and their inspirations. We would like to know your process of creation? Do you weave stories into your jewellery pieces? Do you draw the pieces and then take them to the workbench?**

I love to sketch. Drawing is such an important part of who I am as a designer and artist. First I think of a concept and then, I do intensive research. I also assess the client's sense of dress, personality, and preferences.

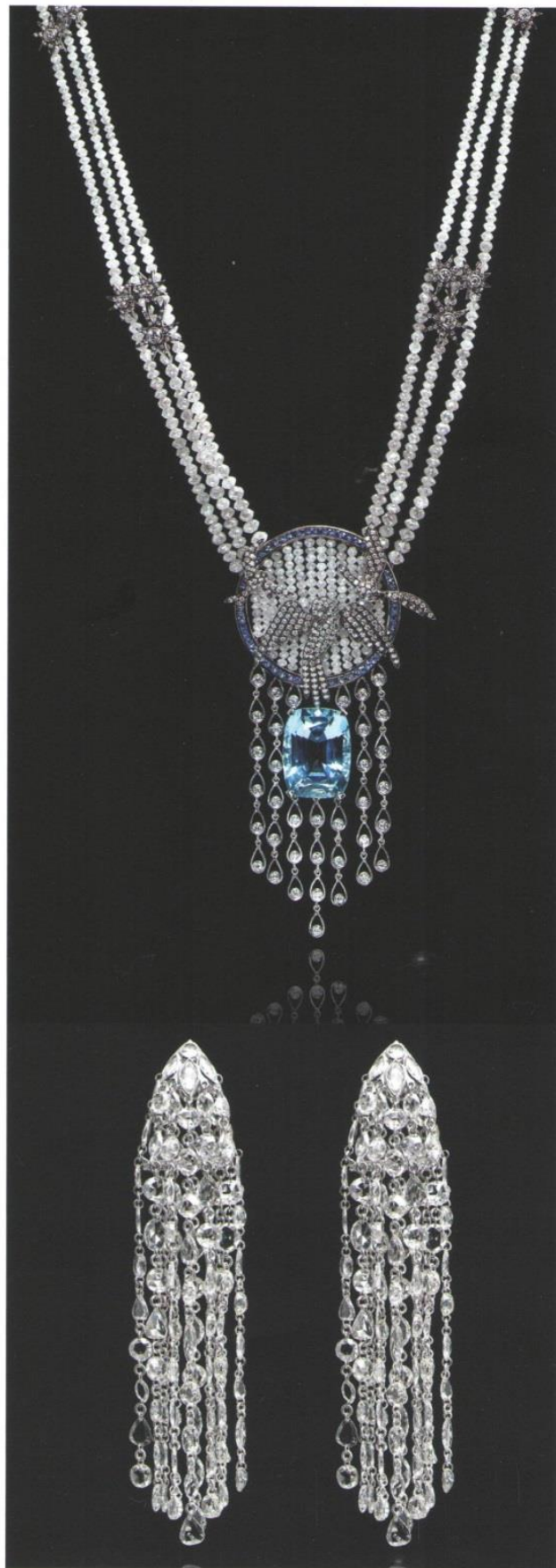
Finally, I take all of this information into account so that I can sketch the perfect jewellery design for a particular event. I see my role as transforming information into ideal designs, so that when the wearer puts on one of my pieces, she will feel complete.

**You founded your brand Payal Mehta New York in 2009. How has the journey been so far?**

I love every second of my day.

**Which are your favourite gemstones and which is your preferred metal?**

Diamonds are a must. I adore diamonds. After all, it is my birthstone. I am an Aries!



**The Cascading Diamond Necklace**

'The necklace hangs from the neck, creating the image of diamonds falling down the body with the light blue hue of the middle stone complimenting the piece as a whole.'

**Earrings**

'Each piece is unique and so are the stones and metals. These earrings exude the feeling of luxury that is so synonymous with the brand.'





**Pink and White Diamond Necklace**

The necklace is made of gold (45.67 gm) and embellished with 23.45 carats of diamonds. (Country of Origin: Thailand)

In my recent collection for Le Bal I used pink diamonds in many pieces, as they bring a sense of royalty. I also selected other coloured gemstones that are not typical, like pink sapphires, blue quartz, and black jade. The debutantes are young, so I wanted the collection to have a feeling of youth that matched their age.

For my Starburst collection, I used silver, diamonds, and gold to create the idea of a midnight sky and starry nights.

I don't just go out and buy stones and make a collection out of it. Each piece is given as much time and energy as if one was doing an entire collection. Each piece is unique and so are the stones and metals.

**How long does it take you to produce a collection?**

It's a journey through time. That is how I produce a collection. Indeed, some pieces have taken over two years and others, several months.

**What are your best-selling jewellery pieces?**

All of them.

**How many stores do you have in the world and where is your jewellery retailed? Any plans to expand? Do you sell in India as well?**

My jewels are one-of-a-kind, and I think that today, clients are looking for more and more unique pieces. I don't intend to retail in the near future. I take pride in creating unique pieces that tell a story—a beautiful and special story. This is what clients want from me. Jewellery is at its best when it is like couture. It should be special and made specifically for an individual. I intend to keep it that way.

I have my studio in New York and Dubai. I have my clients in India as well. I travel a lot to India and have exhibited my work at a jewellery show. My brand is about a global experience.

**Tell us about your other hobbies.**

Spending time with my family is something I love. Meeting new people over a cup of coffee and learning about them. Watching TV with my girls and bonding over it is my absolute favourite. I am also passionate about running and fitness. ■

*"I take pride in creating unique pieces that tell a story—a beautiful and special story. This is what clients want from me."*