

# VANITY FAIR

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*On Jewellery*

*The WORLD is  
in her POCKET*

# Lily

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## RETURN to Splendour

Just as Nada Ghazal's brand was going global, a series of catastrophes hit. Now she's back designing bold gold pieces, says *Kim Parker*

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**THE LEBANESE JEWELLER** Nada Ghazal is something of an expert when it comes to fresh starts. Driven by a lifelong passion to be creative, she quit a successful career in advertising in 2002 to found her own jewellery line. "It was just me in an apartment in Beirut, with my workbench, inviting people in for open-house events. I was entirely self-taught," Ghazal says. Her first collection, Organised Chaos, was inspired by the twisting wires and telephone cables visible all over the city—a place Ghazal describes as "my muse"—and sold out in three days.

In early 2020, just as Ghazal was launching her brand internationally, the coronavirus pandemic hit, forcing her to set up a contingency workshop in order to keep up production. Only months later, a catastrophic chemical explosion in Beirut's port killed 207 people, made hundreds of thousands more homeless and caused an estimated £12 billion in damage. It destroyed Ghazal's workshop and flagship store, which she had yet to unveil. "It was a challenging time, psychologically, financially and emotionally for everyone. I think we all had PTSD,"

says Ghazal, who saw a drop of 70 percent in local sales after the blast.

Miraculously, her team escaped unharmed, and they set about rebuilding her workshop as quickly as possible. "We needed to grow as fast as we could in order to support everyone and keep working. Luckily, the reception of the brand abroad, including the UK, had been wonderful, so I decided to concentrate on that. I felt like we needed a new opportunity and a new flagship, if possible, to give the brand the recognition it needed."

Ghazal and her family relocated to the UK at the end of December last year. "As a child, I spent some time at school here, and I love the energy of the country. London, like Beirut, has always been a crossroads between the East and West, so it felt like a natural step to be there," says Ghazal, who has settled in the southwest of the city and is currently searching for the perfect location for a new boutique, though both her office and workshop

will remain in Lebanon. "I'd like to find somewhere with a neighbourly vibe. I want to recreate the cosy, come-and-hang-out feeling that my first little apartment had, since buying jewellery is all about connecting to our emotions," she says.

The move to London has also inspired fresh ideas. "While house-hunting, I found a place which had a small, ornamental door in the garden, and it felt like a moment of magic, a blessing," says Ghazal. "For me, doors represent new possibilities and opportunities, which is exactly what I felt my brand needed."

Work is underway on a collection of jewels, to be released this summer, with nods to curving arches, doorways and keyholes, all in Ghazal's signature brushed gold, with colourful gemstones, "to represent qualities like optimism, power and faith". Bold statement earrings will also feature prominently, hints Ghazal: "They aren't something I've done before, but now's the time to take a chance and make something bigger. It's time to embrace the new." ■



Clockwise from top right: Doors of Opportunity necklace; the door in Ghazal's garden; Baby Malak Flourish Marquise ring; My Muse Blossom ring; My Muse Urban Colour thin cuff.

