

DESIGNERS

Coming out fighting: Nada Ghazal

BY SONIA ESTHER SOLTANI - SEPTEMBER 1, 2020



In the wake of the devastating Beirut blast and Covid-19, this Lebanese designer speaks of hope, the future and her new resilience-themed collection.

For Lebanese designer [Nada Ghazal](#), 2020 was supposed to be a prosperous year with a new brand identity and collection, as well as an international launch. The pandemic put a halt to travels and shows. Then, a disastrous blast in Beirut's port killed almost 200 people, injured thousands and left hundreds of thousands homeless as entire neighborhoods were entirely destroyed.

In an ironic twist, Ghazal's latest collection, designed before Covid-19, was created to convey inner strength and resilience. The delicately gem-set pieces, handcrafted in Beirut, feature her signature bold look and undulating, sensual lines.

As her representative at [Valery Demure](#), a consultancy and showroom dedicated to cutting-edge designers, says, "This collection couldn't be more relevant to what [the Lebanese people] are going through right now. The designs stand tall and rise upwards to flourish out of the difficulties."



How are you and your close ones following the devastating explosion in Beirut on August 4?

Despite the great damages to our workshop, point of sale and home, we are blessed to be miraculously safe. Emotionally and psychologically, the explosion is too much to take in. I can say our hearts are truly broken, but we do have hope.

How is the design and art community coming together in the city to cope with this disaster?

The whole community has been hit hard with the blast, both personally and professionally. Museums, art galleries, couture houses, jewelers and others are all trying to keep their families safe and assess work damages as they try to get their operations back up and running. We are also seeing tremendous support from the Lebanese people locally and abroad and from the international community to support and promote Lebanese designers.

How had Covid-19 affected your workshop production?

Our production per se was not very much affected as we were able to work within the government health guidelines, ensuring social distancing by alternating staff and the production team in the workshop. Logistically we had some minor delays with shipping, but that was sorted as airports started opening up.



How did you become a designer?

In 2003 I left the advertising industry and returned to Lebanon [after having lived in Dubai], determined to build an international jewelry brand. I approached this as any entrepreneur would do; I did my research to see if my passion could actually be translated into a successful business venture.

In my research, I learnt that the global woman needed to accessorize to express herself and was forever looking for unique, individualistic pieces that reflected her image. She was looking for something that had a soul, something that was authentic, timeless and meticulously produced.

I designed my first collection of 25 handmade pieces with 18-karat gold wires and precious stones. My jewelry sold in three days after showcasing them in December 2003 and that gave me the confidence I needed to continue. Within a year, I established the Nada G brand, which is now Nada Ghazal Fine Jewelry.



Baby Malak Original Bonbon Round ring in 18-karat yellow gold with blue sapphires and Baby Malak Original Bonbon Rectangle ring in 18-karat yellow gold with multicolored sapphires.

How has your style evolved since your first sold-out collection?

I honed my craft by remaining authentic and bringing on board a team of craftsmen who understand and can translate my vision. I am still hands-on and get involved in each part of the creative and production process.

My style has definitely matured since I first started. Now the pieces are more sculptured and design focused. While each jewel is bold and has an edgy feel, it is completed with a brushed matt finish that makes it organic and grounded at the same time.

How was your latest collection, Baby Malak Flourish, born and what is its meaning?

Baby Malak Flourish is inspired by a sentiment of hope and one that is defiant of the status quo. At a time when our world, both at home as well as globally, is in upheaval, the pieces are a constant reminder that no matter how difficult things are we need to stand tall, rise out of the challenge and flourish.



Baby Malak Flourish Marquise rings.

How do you see the future of making fine jewelry in Beirut?

Not many people know that the Lebanese jewelry industry is quite substantial, constituting around 40% of Lebanon's exports annually. However, the pieces are more traditional and classic. With jewelry lovers around the world becoming a lot more discerning about their pieces, I believe there will be a shift towards executing jewelry that is more authentic and personal. That, together with meticulous craftsmanship, will continue to help us differentiate the fine jewelry industry in Lebanon.

