

Brilliant

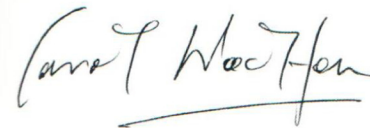
Introduction

It is a curious fact but the oldest things, and diamonds were formed in the earth's depths billions of years ago, can also be the most modern. Technically a diamond is nothing more than a lump of crystallised carbon but they've managed to maintain a rock-solid grip on our collective consciousness for 4,000 years since they were first discovered in India. The reason could be that in the hands of each new generation of jewellers diamonds become something contemporary and exciting encapsulating the fine and decorative arts of the time reflecting in their precious mirror-like facets the current zeitgeist. Our fascination might also stem from the fact that each diamond is unique, comparable to the individual crystalline structures of snowflakes, no two snowflakes or diamonds are ever the same. When the first soft flake of winter falls or you look deep into the icy-white depths of a diamond it can be mesmerising and a little like witnessing magic. When that ephemeral sparkle and natural beauty is harnessed into a strong design something of great power is created.

This power and brilliance has made diamonds the most highly prized gemstone worn throughout their long history by Royalty as a symbol of strength, courage and invincibility. Diamonds have been worn by the Kings and Queens in this country as a visible sign of sovereignty and the essential part of the outward show of monarchy. In this 60th Diamond Jubilee Year of Her Majesty the Queen I wanted to look at modern diamond creations that have been inspired by her anniversary as well as the changing role of diamonds in our artistic life.

I've chosen pieces that resonate to me with fashion, art, architecture and sculpture the unifying theme being a definable sense of something new and unique in each diamond story. Every piece by the nature of the design, the use of different cuts of stones and materials or with fresh aesthetics are pushing diamonds into new arenas transforming not only the way we wear diamonds but also their role in our cultural life. We can see how the 'savoir-faire' and skilful hands of the artisans in the ateliers of the great French haute joaillerie houses turn diamonds, like malleable precious threads, into fluid articulated couture creations linked to how we dress now. The avant garde designs of the London Fine Jewellery houses show how diamond design can be invested with a new point of view, coupled with artistic flair and craftsmanship, to evoke a sense of desire as well as pushing us to use diamonds in ways other than purely for adornment. The Masters of fashion design, Karl Lagerfeld and Bruno Frisoni, have created unique pieces that redefine the ways we wear diamonds finding unexpected ways to make diamonds part of our everyday vernacular and wardrobes. And how in the hands of Asian fine jewellers diamonds can depict moments in nature using the same colour palette and influences as modern artists.

Diamonds capture changes so in Brilliant we can appreciate the role diamonds have in linking us to our heritage and ancestry and sense of permanence but also how part of a diamonds strength and appeal is its very newness. They can brighten a moment but also set forever in stone the moment of now because diamonds never age they are eternally modern.



Carol Woolton is jewellery editor of British Vogue

Sun Wave Earrings

Michelle Ong (Carnet Jewellery)

Diamond Content:
Platinum and white gold set
with 484 diamonds weighing
40.59 carats.

Price:
POA – carnet@carnetjewellery.com
+852 252 65194

These earrings could only have been made in diamonds as they were inspired by the beauty and intensity of light. I created these earrings with the inherent qualities of sun and sunlight in the mind – the shape the sheer brilliance of the stones gives a sense of warm waves of light when worn' says Ong. The circular edged effect of the earrings is redolent of a precious lace worked fabric but hardened by diamonds with a reflective quality. In the same way that couturiers cut their precious cloth Ong fashions unusual flat cut diamonds into an antique crochet effect which she works into magnificent earrings and slithery slips of diamond ribbons. These earrings come alive with the subtle reflectivity and mirrored-effect of the breadth of the diamond cuts she uses creating a compelling visual identity, 'Diamonds will always be relevant, appropriate and desirable', she says.

Michelle Ong mixes glassy-surfaced flat cut diamonds with rondelle diamonds each one visually connecting to the next with movement and light and shine. She invests the hardest material known to man with a softly sensual and tactile quality as delicate as a piece of hand-sewn lace she has spun from light. The clarity and transparency of the stones combined with the elegance of the design create something with a masterful and breath-taking quality.



William Pear Brooch

Michelle Ong (Carnet Jewellery)

Diamond Content:

Platinum and white gold set with 786 stones of White diamonds, fancy intense yellow diamonds, Vivid yellow weighing 60.52 carats.

Price:

POA – carnet@carnetjewellery.com
+852 252 65194

Michelle Ong is inspired by the elegance and beauty of natural forms, 'I like to play with ideas based on the unexpected', she says, 'juxtaposition and blending of reality and fantasy: a jewelled representation of what I see around me'. When contemplating transforming a William Pear into a jewel, 'I immediately thought of diamonds and fancy diamonds for their depth, range of colour and sparkle'. She says, 'there's a vibrancy and life that mimics and extends the appeal of the form in nature'. The use of the shadowy yellow shades, every nuance of colour carefully chosen to make an artistic contribution to the jewel, are collated together by Ong to make a piece with great strength, form and harmony. Ong approaches jewellery as an art form with no set limits or formulas.

I love the subtle variations in the colours of the diamonds which mimics the different hues on the skin of a ripe pear in nature. In Michelle's extraordinary hands a mundane pear plucked from a bowl is transformed by her creative process and hundreds of tiny flecks of coloured stones to capture the fruit at the zenith of its ripe life into a magical jewel.

