



I o a n n a S o u f l i a

CARVES A NICHE FOR HERSELF

IOANNA SOUFLIA *talks about her unusual path to
jewellery design and her love for marble.*

Lawyer to jeweller is a big leap – one that Greek-born Ioanna Souflia was brave enough to take. A point of reference that meanders through her work, conceived as wearable art, relies heavily upon logic and imagination. Who would have thought law would underscore the contemporary aesthetic of her debut line, *In Between* – a Central Saint Martins graduation project and an impassioned dialogue between marble and rhodium-plated silver. “The strict logic that law requires” was melded with the “imagination that jewellery relies upon” for her sculptural pieces featuring crisp lines and luscious forms with graphic linear patterns. It was an intriguing way of highlighting the beauty of marble, besides being a great demonstration of the “space between the three categories of jewellery – fine, contemporary and fashion – and where they might meet.” A noteworthy debut! Maia Adams took note of Ioanna’s ready-to-wear-sculptures and introduced her to fashion designer Jean-Pierre Braganza. “Collaborating with him was one of those things where everything fell into place – at an unexpected time,” recalls the jeweller.

Ioanna was intent on carving a niche with a material as distinct as her vision. “It is my strong belief that the materials chosen to realise an idea play an important role in embodying the sentiments one wishes to convey through one’s work.” Marble, for Ioanna, therefore served multiple purposes: the difficulty of

fabrication embodied her previous discipline, Law, while also posing a creative challenge. “I cannot get past the intimate feeling between the hands and the tactile, cold natural stone that gradually adapts into a form,” admits the designer, who is led by an unconscious allure of her childhood memories and a Greek heritage.

As a newcomer, Ioanna faced her share of challenges while evolving a unique creative identity. It was a difficult task, given her choice of material: procuring marble, securing a high-level of craftsmanship, and translating her designs into tangible objects of the finest quality. The initial hurdle, though, was figuring out how to manufacture the marble components of her jewellery using Thasos and Bardiglio Imperiale marbles.

Sourced from the Greek island of Thasos, its namesake is soft and easy to carve on, while Bardiglio Imperiale, obtained from Italy, is tough to work with. “I learned how to carve the stone in order to have total control of the

- 1) Adoucissement earrings in rose gold with Bardiglio Imperiale marble and diamonds.
- 2) Amalgama pendant crafted with 9-karat black gold and 925 silver, and set with Thasos marble and black diamonds.
- 3) Amalgama earrings crafted in 14-karat black gold and set with Thasos marble and grey diamonds.



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outcome,” says Ioanna, working out of her studio in Paris. Sketches are translated into technical drawings; for the more demanding sculptural pieces, she perfects the model done either in wax or Styrofoam. The final designs are then sent to her workshop in Athens.

The quest for new ways to showcase marble led to her second collection, Symbiosis. Contrasting experiences and diverse visual stimuli converged at the Amalgama, Krama, Synergia and Symbiosis rings, earrings and cuffs – subtly accented with black diamonds – a visual antithesis that evolved into Symbiosis. The white Thasos marble and its purity lay veiled by the stark contrast of edgy black gold, as Ioanna chose to highlight the symbiotic relationship of modern adornments through materials as contradictory as marble and gold.

For the more feminine Adoucissement collection, crafted in rose gold, she tricked out the soft grey Bardiglio Imperiale marble in grey and white diamonds – distilling the warmth of the blushing grey skies into the jewellery. The Greek elegance that she poured into her geometric visions – often reminiscent of ancient columns, pillars and marbled arches – translated into crisp lines and feminine curves in her next work. The limited edition Adieu, an elegant farewell to marble, saw the sculpted white Thasos marble and grey Bardiglio Imperiale marble take centre stage alongside white and grey brilliant-cut diamonds, embedded on a platform of rose and black gold.

Launched in late 2017, Blueprint traversed an urban landscape of grids, lines and intersections. The idea for the series, says Ioanna, came about during one of her trips to her workshop (in Athens). “I was looking



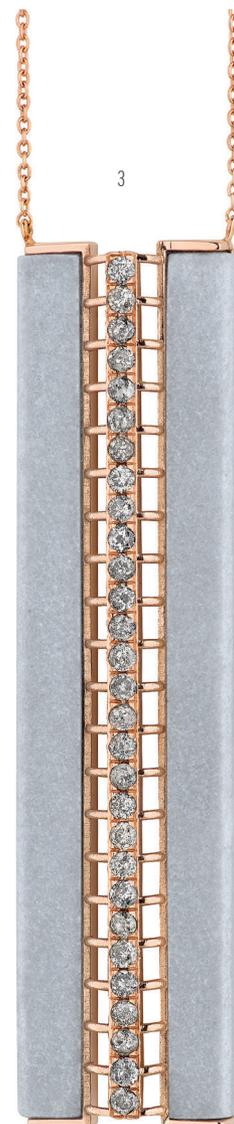
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up at the blue sky through a bridge designed by Santiago Calatrava, a see-through sculpture with the cables of the bridge forming a pattern as if on the sky.” The Blueprint collection, made in rose gold, was conceived as her jewelled overview of “how architecture shapes our vision of the sky and ultimately reveals a piece of blue”. Her inspiration travelled through the skies of Greece to land in Paris, where she currently lives. A departure from her signature marble pieces, the grid patterned rings, earrings, cuff bangles, and necklaces – gently adorned with diamonds – referenced the sky through the step-cut triangular midnight blue sapphire gems. “I specifically sourced these dark blue sapphires as they reminded me of luscious blue velvet.” Her newest initiative is a collaboration with award-winning fellow jeweller Yannis Sergakis. “Taking inspiration from each other’s works, we decided to unite creative forces and produce a collection for men that could also be worn by women,” she explains. Crafted in 9-karat rose, yellow and rhodium-plated white gold, the Marble pour Homme cufflinks – available in six styles – feature deep green marble from the island of Tinos and the white version from Thasos. These cufflinks will appeal to those with a love of the unusual. With avant-garde designs embodying geometric minimalism, Ioanna continues to challenge traditional hallmarks of fine jewellery. ■

– BY SMITHA SADANANDAN

1-4) The ring, pendants and a pair of earrings in 14-karat rose gold set with grey Bardiglio Imperiale marble and grey brilliant-cut diamonds from the Adoucissement line.
5) Adieu earrings in 14-karat rose and black gold set with Thasos and Bardiglio Imperiale marble and grey brilliant-cut diamonds.
6) Marble pour Homme cufflinks in 9-karat gold.