

SOLITAIRE

THE FINE ART OF JEWELLERY

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ASIA PACIFIC EDITION



HOMAGE TO COLOUR

CATE BLANCHETT | BVLGARI | TIFFANY & CO. | SUSTAINABLE LUXURY | OPALS
FASHION & JEWELLERY COLOUR TRENDS | SIMONE JEWELS | FLORA & FAUNA | JEWELLERY SHOPPING: HONG KONG

FACETS

opals



OBSESSED WITH OPALS

From hippie trinkets to fine jewellery, this versatile gemstone has come a long way

Words by Smitha Sadanandan

OPALS, WITH THEIR ARRESTING PLAY OF COLOUR AND LIGHT IN A MYRIAD OF VARIATIONS, have long been regarded as a gemstone of intrigue. The Romans considered this gem precious and powerful and called it *Opalus*, meaning 'precious stone'. The Bedouins imagined it to have fallen from the sky during thunderstorms; while the ancient Greeks believed opals imbued their wearers with the gift of prophecy and guarded them from disease.

So how are opals formed, and what creates the gorgeous speckles within the stone? According to GIA, opals contain water trapped in its silica structure and are formed 'when water evaporates and leaves behind solid deposits of silica in the cracks and between the layers of underground sedimentary rock'. Precious opals display a brilliant play of colours, which quite interestingly is often absent in common opals. The flashing rainbow colours are formed by sub-microscopic spheres stacked in a grid-like pattern.

Not surprisingly, opals have captured the imagination of designers then and now. The five main types often used in jewellery design are white or light opal, black opal, fire opal, boulder opal, and crystal or water opal.

Black opals and boulder opals star in a one-of-a-kind platinum necklace designed by Roland Krainz of **Fine Jewels of NYC**. Inspired by nature, seaside, and rocks, this standout necklace is accented with sapphires, diamonds, tsavorites, and emeralds.

FROM LEFT

Fleurs d'Opales high jewellery ring, CHOPARD

Calder-inspired drop earrings with Ethiopian opals, RUSH JEWELRY DESIGN

La Nature de Chaumet opal ring, CHAUMET

The Romans considered opal precious and powerful, and called it Opalus, meaning 'precious stone'



Stunning necklace featuring black and boulder opals by Roland Krainz, FINE JEWELS OF NYC

FACETS
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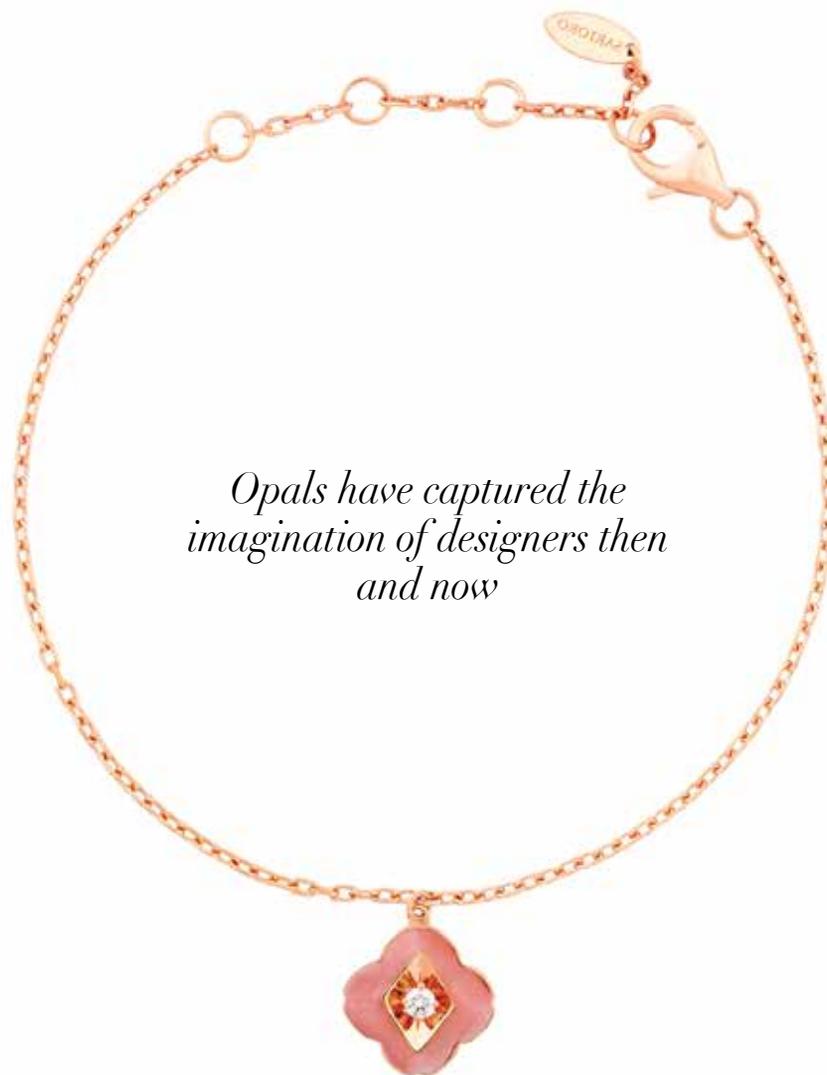


OPPOSITE

Everyday Luxury bracelet in 18K rose gold set with diamond and a floral patterned, custom-cut pink opal from the Zeste collection, SARTORO

THIS PAGE

1. Ring and earrings set featuring fire opals, MAURO FELTER **2.** Phoenix opal ear climbers, DAOU JEWELLERY **3.** Jade and opal earrings in burnished silver and 18K gold, CORRADO GIUSPINO
4. Dragonfly ring, MING LAMPSON **5.** Sistine opal earrings, FENG J **6.** Earrings in jelly black opals with brown diamond slice, ANA KATARINA **7.** Harlequin Australian black opal ring, VTSE



Opals have captured the imagination of designers then and now

For her dragonfly-inspired statement ring, London-based **Ming Lampson** chose an Australian black opal. The movement and intensity of the colour reminded her of the fluorescent colour often found on insects, which was the inspiration behind the dragonfly wing pattern on the back of the ring. “From the very first second that I saw the stone I fell in love with it,” shares Lampson. “There are such large swathes of colour within the stone, there are no small speckles, just huge patches of iridescent vivid fire.”

Ana-Katarina Vinkler-Petrovic, founder and designer of **Ana Katarina**, was enamoured by black jelly opals and their crystal composition, which imbues the gems with a jelly-like appearance. “Black opals contain subtle traces of iron oxide and carbon elements, which are not found in common opal,” says Vinkler-Petrovic. “This creates a darker saturation of the body and the beautiful reflection of much brighter colours that isn’t seen in ordinary opals.”

High Jewellery designer **Feng J** has been using opals both as a signature element and an inspiration since the beginning of her career. Feng’s *Sistine* opal earrings feature white opals. The designer likes to accent opals with moonstones, especially when using crystal opals, and believes diamonds are always a good way to embellish opals creations.

Jen Rush’s Calder-inspired gold drop earrings for her brand, **Rush Jewelry Design**, feature green-blue opals. “As an avid art enthusiast and collector, I think it is important to experience different mediums of art,” shares Rush. “One of the most interesting forms of sculpture to me is something that became known as kinetic art, where carefully balanced components or forms move with air.” Her handmade earrings, indeed, resemble mini-Calderesque sculptures. “Though inspired by Calder, in a way these earrings are actually the ‘anti-Calder’,” she adds.

VTse’s Harlequin opal and diamond statement ring is a riot of colours. “This stone is sought-after by collectors, miners, and lovers of gemstones because the Harlequin is an extremely rare pattern of repeating contracting diamonds or elongated squares, which encase the whole stone. As a gem lover, I fall deeply in love when I come across these rare beauties,” says Victoria Tse, Founder and CEO of the brand.

With ideas for new and exceptional designs taking shape, Piaget, Chaumet, Chopard, Dior, Oscar Heyman, Sartoro, and Irene Neuwirth frequently incorporate opals into their serious high jewellery pieces. 💎