



NEW BLOOD

Get to know Bea Bongiasca, Elizaveta Borzunova (of Liz Borzaya) and Sandrine De Laage, talented designers who are evolving the jewellery landscape in creative and cheerful ways

Words by **Smitha Sadanandan**



BEA BONGIASCA

As a high schooler, Bea Bongiasca made jewellery out of miniature doll food. She then discovered food miniatures on a trip to Tokyo and turned them into delicious charms for earrings and necklaces. Her playful ideas evolved over time: Today, this young award-winning Milanese jeweller has been turning heads internationally with her surrealist pop-art jewels, often imbued with Eastern-inspired design codes. The Central Saint Martins alumna launched her eponymous brand in 2014 and the inspiration for her earlier works – Happy Go Cola, No Rice, No Life, A Golden Lesson, and Floricultural – stem from her fascination with East Asia and her travels through the region. Rice grains and paddy fields, blossoms and vines, symbolism and kawaii culture have traversed through Bea’s creative palette.

This summer, she debuted a new addition, You Are So Vine – an enamel line that branches off from her Floricultural series. “The idea was that the iconic pieces from the Floricultural collection have been contaminated and intertwined with sinuous colourful vines of enamelled gold that give the jewellery a kinetic movement and a bold pop look. It wasn’t so much the flowers that inspired me; it was the vines and how they interact with other plants,” reveals Bongiasca. Drop and marquise-cut gems – amethyst, peridot, blue topaz, rock crystal, corundum – and diamonds accent the bright sinuous vines that transform into ravishing hoops, pendants, rings, ear cuffs; each begging to be worn.

beabongiasca.com



SANDRINE DE LAAGE

In the past, Sandrine de Laage considered many cities as her home – Paris, London, Hong Kong, New York, and LA.

“These places taught me that learning and embracing different cultures with their rich beauty’s symbols is an endless resource of inspiration,” says de Laage, who now lives in Ojai, a small town outside of Los Angeles.

She discovered her passion for jewellery design during her first job with Cartier in Hong Kong when she was 22.

Degrees in industrial design and business propelled her career from marketing to art director while still at Cartier.

“My 20-plus years of experience is a tremendous advantage, no question,” admits de Laage, who also worked with Harry Winston and De Beers. In 2016, she launched her own label to design jewellery that hinge on simple aesthetics and are more accessible. Her designs are a study on the efficiency of minimalism and how powerful elemental shapes and essential symbols can be, with the Atelier Collection, My Collection, and Cocktail Collection as examples.

Sandrine’s Boyfriend ring – an interlace of a pavé and oversized band – is one of her most popular pieces, which is a new take on a classic piece. “The simpler the design, the more attention it requires during the production,” she adds.

The designer also partners with non-profit organisations, where each piece of jewellery sold allows her to give back to women in need. “I believe that we have the power to make a difference as an individual and at a corporate level.”

sandrinedelaage.com



**ELIZAVETA
BORZUNOVA**

As a child, Elizaveta Borzunova fondly watched her mother dress up and wear beautiful jewellery.

“Her makeup table was always full of jewellery and she loved to change it all

the time,” recalls the Russian designer. As a result, she would dress up her dolls in her mother’s bling. These days however, Moscow-based Borzunova is busy dressing up her clients in gorgeous, playful jewellery that she designs for her label, Liza Borzaya. While she has no formal training in making or designing jewellery, it was while working for a German jewellery company and attending exhibitions that she found her true calling. The palm bracelet, which feature swallows in flight, is one of the first pieces she designed in 2013 and continues to be a bestseller from the brand.

“Art must serve beauty – this is the motto of my brand,” shares Borzunova. “Art can be very innovative, bright, or shocking, but it has to be beautiful. It should also reflect the individuality of the client.” Her Summer, Fairytale Gardens, and Palm Bracelets collections feature all these elements and are enriched with miniature hummingbirds, bullfinches, birds of paradise, poppies, cornflowers, squirrels, and even Disney characters like Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Meanwhile, her father’s tattoos inspired the Get Inked range, which features diamonds juxtaposed with old-school tattoo motifs like dice, hearts, and skulls. Meanwhile, her love for shoulder dusters led to the deliriously long earrings in the Classik collection. These exquisite, and often transformable, creations continue to spur Borzunova’s ascent into the world of meaningful jewellery.

lizaborzaya.com

