



# MEET SONIA BOYAJIAN

*Distinctive Style, Love of Ceramics and Handmade Jewelry*

| BY SMITHA SADANANDAN

Last fall, jewelry designer Sonia Boyajian opened the doors to her 5,500 sq.ft. gallery in West Hollywood on La Brea. Sonia worked with Pamela Shamshiri of Studio Shamshiri for the new space where she makes her bold, whimsical and delightful creations. Inspired by artist Georgia O’Keeffe’s home and studio in Abiquiu and elements from designer Alexander Girard’s home, the playful sense of shape, arcs, lines and angles create a visually engaging space. “Other parts like that main display cabinet was inspired by artist Donald Judd at the Chinati Foundation,” explains the Los Angeles native. The walls and interiors,

awash with pastel powder pink, incorporate arresting light fixtures, mobile and ceramic. “All the ceramic fixtures are enlarged pieces of the jewelry that I have already made.” Sonia’s desire to steer clear of identifiable pieces of objects and furniture has led to a “more austere and authentic approach.” The décor, says Sonia, came from the light fixtures, door knobs and mobile that Studio Shamshiri commissioned her to make in ceramic and bronze.

**Studio:** The soft angles and lines came from New Mexico architecture. We used a very pale pink color to create a warm and inviting

space. The paint was by Portola – and the natural limestone in the paint gives the adobe affect.

**Jewel displays and ceramics:** If you see a lot of ceramic, it’s because I make the ceramics in-house. It’s in the jewelry as well as the trays that hold the jewelry. We made every ceramic element in the space. I wouldn’t say that the jewelry is displayed on the wall but more in the niches meant to house the jewelry; like a ‘little home’ for each handmade object.

**Passion for art:** I love any form of art and design. I suppose I am mostly drawn to handcrafted work, artisanal pieces and the history and purpose of the creations.



**Interest in jewelry:** After studying fashion at Otis College of Art and Design, in LA, I moved to Antwerp to seek a job in fashion. In the meantime, my interest in jewelry led me to study at the Art Academy in Antwerp, which later led to my job with Antwerp jeweler Pascale Passelis. It is there that I honed my skills and learned how to truly work with metal and fine jewelry.

**Melding jewelry with ceramic:** It's true that I love ceramics, but the reason I initially began using ceramics in the jewelry is because I can create large-scale pieces without the added weight that metal brings on. My jewelry is handmade by me here in LA.

**Carving a path:** When I started 18-years-ago, there were not too many people making bold and whimsical jewelry. I carved my path by making a small collection and going to small boutiques around Europe, and showing my jewels. Luckily, people were interested and buyers started buying.

**Business lesson learned:** Direct-to-consumer is the best way to own your own company.

**The pieces that have the most meaning:** What is most meaningful to me are the pieces that I create for my clients, and that, in turn, becomes part of who they are, almost like their amulet. Then I know that what I created has a purpose.

**Exciting moments:** Doing the Nina Ricci runway jewelry with Peter Copping was definitely a highlight, as well as working with other incredible creative people. I would say that this studio collaboration between Pam and I would be the most exciting moment of my career. ◆

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