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JEWELRY CONNOISSEUR

DESIGNERS

Passion Project: Marie Lichtenberg

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The former *Elle* fashion editor mixes optimism and exuberance to create significant contemporary design.

“A passion project” is how Parisian Marie Lichtenberg describes her first jewelry designs, launched in 2019. The collection is filled with exuberance, wit, charm and the designer’s ability to draw upon and interpret motifs and meanings from a range of different cultures and time periods. The vibrant colors of India, 1970s pop art, and antique and vintage jewelry meld into a joyful collection that has captured the



She explains that “the original idea was born from my favorite necklace that I received for my 14th birthday from my mother. The necklace was a hollow gold link chain which closed with a three-dimensional-lantern-shaped clasp. My mother’s family is from Martinique [French Indies]. This type of necklace is one of the most famous Creole pieces of jewelry.” Her idea of designing a similar clasp on a chain or a beaded cord was “to bring something authentic, significant, yet unique and full of optimism to contemporary design.”



Scapulaires in 18-karat gold with enamel and images on front and back. Photo: Marie Lichtenberg.

Playing with vintage

Lichtenberg’s mother was also a collector of vintage jewelry. “Growing up, my mom owned a small vintage jewelry shop in the 90s — in addition to her position as a creative director for an advertising agency. This shop was her ‘just for fun’ jewelry obsession, and I used to spend hours there, going through all the pieces — playing with them, trying them on, and thinking about the different ways in which to wear them.” Prior to launching her jewelry line, Lichtenberg was a fashion editor for



myself.”

Spending so much time around antique and vintage jewelry, combined with her years in fashion and her own sometimes offbeat, often joyful, and always distinctive taste and style were perhaps her predominant inspirations for the collection. She thought about the clasps as locks and traveled to India with a few ideas. When she returned, she brought back “two pieces that have evolved but are still in the collection today — the Bonheur and the Love locks. Both are intricately detailed and accented with gemstones and engraving.”



Marie wearing layered necklaces. Photo: Marie Lichtenberg.

From Instagram to Vegas

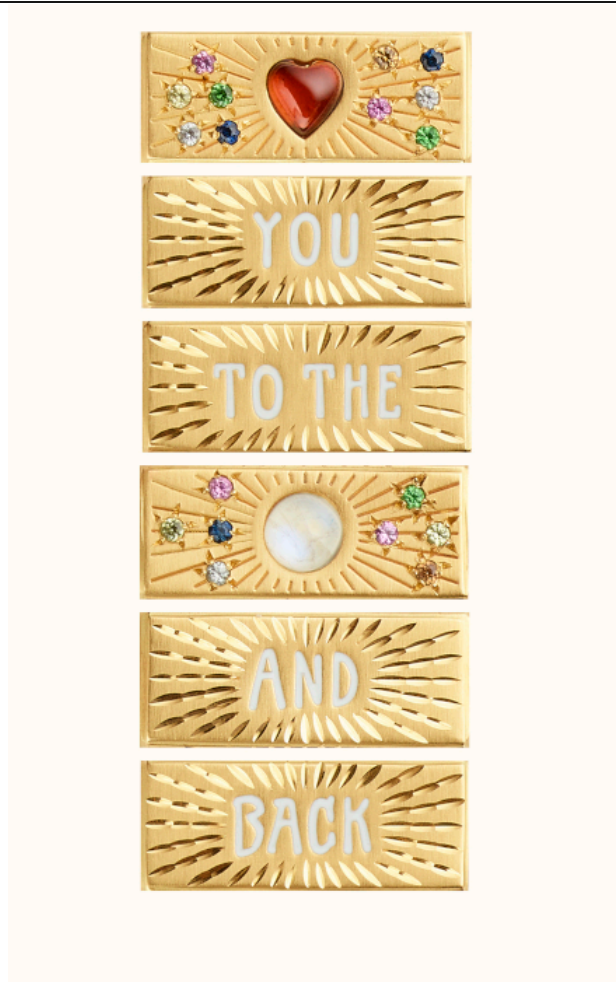
On an auspicious day in January 2019, Lichtenberg posted the two locks on her [Instagram](#) account. She sold 40 pieces in 48 hours. “I was in shock. I was just starting. Nothing was formulated. There was no business plan, no website, no team. No office. Only my workshop and my ideas.” Three years later, Lichtenberg has a full staff, a collection that includes all categories of jewelry, a production line, one-of-a-kind pieces, and factories working on her various designs. The designer recently



Protective Eye pendant in 18-karat gold with enamel. Photo: Marie Lichtenberg.

It's no wonder. Her collection has evolved from the original locks to ones that open up and reveal a surprise inside. She has perfected her enameling and gemstones accents and has added a range of 18-karat gold chains to the collection. The enthusiasm and love for what she creates emanates from all she designs. Two of Lichtenberg's new favorites are the Every Little Thing is Going To Be Alright colorful locket and the Vivons Heureux locket that opens to reveal a heart inside.

"We have worked out the kinks in our designs, have delved deeper and pushed the limits of our lockets, streamlined our production and branched out into different jewelry categories including earrings, rings, double-sided pendants," all with her signature **enameling** and accent colored-gemstones, offbeat and sometimes irreverent mixes of color and sentimental sayings. "All of these become delightful treasures that consumers want to wear, collect, layer and find the pieces that are most significant to them," she says. Lichtenberg still creates much of the collection in India, but has moved some of the production to Italy and France to bring her customers a collection that utilizes the best factory for each components.



The six faces of the Love You to The Moon And Back locket made in 14-karat yellow gold with enamel, moonstone and sapphires. Photo: Marie Lichtenberg.

Love you to the moon

"I think we all need a piece of jewelry that will make us feel protected or lucky, whatever we need to make us feel good," she says. "The Love You to The Moon And Back lock has been our first and best-selling piece since day one. It is a timeless and universal piece, with a message that speaks to all and can be used in different contexts." Although Lichtenberg doesn't consider herself superstitious, she says she feels better when wearing her Watchful Eye locket and Love locket.

"I truly believe," says Lichtenberg, "that there are words that have kind of magical powers: French and English words such as Love, Toujours, Bonheur, Protection, as well as many other significant-yet-simple mottos we feature. The new pendants, with enameled fronts and a variety of motifs and sayings on the back, have the same feeling, and offer a range, with which our customers will immediately connect, and all will be able to be worn with antique and vintage jewelry, or other modern pieces to offer the best of all worlds."



Bonheur locket in 14-karat yellow gold with enamel. Photo: Marie Lichtenberg.

Main image: Marie Lichtenberg, portrait. Photo: Marie Lichtenberg.



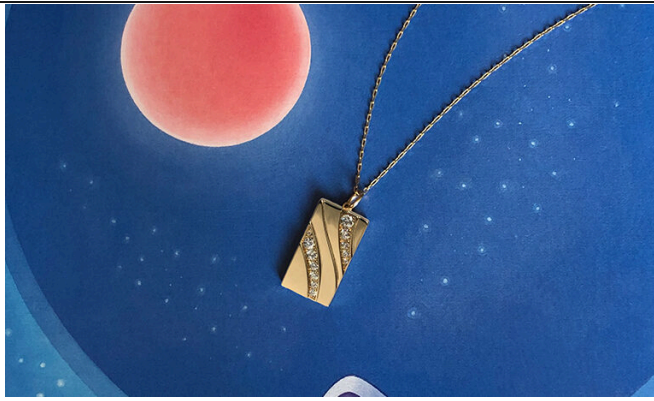
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