



*Ancient Treasure, rings in 14k gold, tourmaline, emerald and aquamarine. Photography: Jenna Wakani*

# Modern Treasures

Anat Kaplan's designs combine the symbolism of gems with the wearer's personal mystique

BY BONNIE SIEGLER

**I**t was spring of last year when Moscow-born, Israeli-bred Anat Kaplan decided to launch her line of custom jewellery designs, under the name Anouk Jewelry. Integrating classical history and mythology – thanks to her Masters degree in Fine Art History – and a modern approach to craftsmanship, Kaplan began producing intimate and stunning signature jewellery that reflects the individuality of the wearer.

“Since I come to jewellery from a visual arts and art history background, most of my role models come from the art world,” says Kaplan. “My work is influenced by artists such as Odilon Redon, Gustav Klimt, the unknown artists of Byzantine mosaics, Jean Arp and many more. There are also jewellery designers I admire such as Todd Reed, Luna Scamuzzi of Lucifer vir Honestus and the Canadian Claudio Pino, whose designs remind me of Michaelangelo’s constructions.” Kaplan moved to Toronto from Israel five years ago with her husband and 19-month-old daughter, Liya, Kaplan’s biggest inspiration. “She gives me the strength to follow my dreams,” says Kaplan.



*A selection of rings by Anat Kaplan.*

Kaplan's first piece of jewellery was a silver ring with a leaf hovering over a tiny amethyst dewdrop. "I kept the organic style, but never got back to being so literal. I think my first Anouk piece was my Sun and Water ring of gold and aquamarine, inspired by ancient Roman jewellery. That piece is very 'me' as it combines ancient influences with natural elements and, of course, water, which is a recurring theme in my designs."

Kaplan is fascinated with the treasures of the ancient world and the mysteries surrounding them, as well as the primal approach to artistry, "where you can clearly see the handprint of the artisan and the natural beauty of the materials," says Anat, who is also inspired by daily natural surroundings. "Using the sculpting process, I like my pieces to remind the wearer of the raw beauty of natural elements, such as grains of sand, a surface of a rock or rippling water. I call it evocative jewellery, as even in stressful times in the middle of downtown Toronto, I would like the wearer to look at her hand and let her ring remind her of a favourite sandy beach overlooking the ocean."

Launching her jewellery line in Toronto was a natural geographical progression for Kaplan. She fell in love with the diversity the city presents and the niche it offered her and her creative outlet. Anat's most popular pieces at the moment are her textured engagement ring designs. "I was always drawn to texture," she says. "That and color. I do believe, however, that over the years my designs have matured and have perhaps become more sculptural and complex."



*Anat Kaplan*

“With my pieces, I’d like us to be able to stop and get connected to something timeless and valuable. I’d like to bring back the concept of treasure.”

Working mostly in silver, gold and platinum, Anat is especially drawn to yellow gold, as most of the ancient jewellery that inspired her was made of pure gold. “The warmth of the rich yellow color combined with a rough texture evokes a timeless feel,” she says. Complimenting her choice of metals is the use of precious and semi-precious stones to suggest natural elements. “For instance, aquamarine, green amethyst and sapphire can evoke the different colors of water. A ruby might bring to mind the impression of a sunset, and a labradorite, the night sky, but these are my personal impressions; for somebody else, they might speak of different things.” Instinctively blending metals, textures and stones in making Anouk Jewellery pieces, Kaplan switches gears when creating a signature piece for a client, for which the translation of personal experiences combined with different stones and metals offer up personal symbolism. To ensure her custom creations reflect the wearer’s essence, Kaplan begins her design process with a consultation. Following that, a unique model is developed.

“As a designer, I like my pieces to have a personal meaning for the wearer,” says Kaplan of her personal jewellery design philosophy. “Jewellery should be more than just beautiful – it should have meaning. These days, our culture is all about new, fast and temporary. We’re used to changing our wardrobe, our hair, our jobs so often that everything seems replaceable, to the point where nothing has real value or meaning anymore. Lives are very fast-paced, and everything is easily replaceable. With my pieces, I’d like us to be able to stop and get connected to something timeless and valuable. I’d like to bring back the concept of treasure.”

As for general trends in jewellery designs for this year, Kaplan predicts big and bold, fused with simplicity. “I’m looking to bring out the raw, untouched beauty of the gems and metals, as opposed to forcing them into a polished, symmetrical perfection,” she says. “I love bold designs, because they make a statement and showcase these natural treasures in their full splendor.” [CJ]



*Sun and Water ring, in 14k gold and aquamarine. Photography: Lora Vertue*



*Night Sky ring, in 14k gold and labradorite.*