

A World Apart

Story by Beth Livesay
Artwork by Julie Prunier Vecchio

One cannot help but wonder what goes through the mind of Julie Prunier Vecchio. A look at her online shop reveals a world of butterflies, leaves, and lots of silver. The odd shapes, specs of glimmer, and unexpectedness of it all make for a jewelry collection that beguiles the senses.

After featuring two of Julie's pieces in *Belle Armoire Jewelry's* sister publication, *Jewelry Affaire*, I became particularly fascinated with Julie's body of work. Editorially speaking, her collections tell a story that are anomalous and exude a sophistication that still mimics the natural lines and rough edges of her inspiration. The intrigue in regards to her technique, process, and creative philosophy are what lure us in. The promise of wearing something different and inspired is what piques the stylish eye. This sculptor turned wearable artist has studied in Geneva and Paris, worked for Van Cleef & Arpels, and continues to hammer out cutting edge jewelry, all at the age of 24. Julie was kind enough to let me into her world for a bit, offering us a glimpse of the creative spark that has ignited Prunier Vecchio Creations handmade contemporary jewelry. ➔





Belle Armoire Jewelry: What made you want to make jewelry?

Julie Prunier Vecchio: My love for art and the desire to connect it with people. Every time I see something beautiful I imagine a way I could wear it. That's how I decided to create sculptures that could be wearable.

BAJ: Why did you choose to study engraving?

JPV: I always wanted to work with my hands. When I first visited the ornamental workshop at L'École Boulle something happened. I started to imagine everything I would be able to do with it. I saw myself creating hand engraved, big pieces, even clothes made out of metal for fashion shows. I wanted to add elegance and finesse to different objects and turn them into pieces of jewelry. In order to do this, I felt like I needed some knowledge in jewelry. I went to another school in Lyon, France, for a year and was the apprentice to creator Michael Van (michael.van.free.fr/gal001/index.php). After school, I went to Geneva and learned micro hand engraving and micro sculpture on watches with a microscope. I worked in Olivier Vaucher's workshop (europastar.com/1003661262/) and engraved for Breguet, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Vacheron Constantin. This experience really extended my horizons and led me to start something on my own; to not just "make," but also to give a bigger piece of me — to create.

BAJ: What was it like studying at L'École Boulle in Paris?

JPV: It was a lot of fun living in Paris, surrounded by so many museums and magic monuments. Studying at L'École Boulle was like a dream. There are so many different workshops that when you are creating, you are never limited by techniques or materials. You can imagine and put into life anything you want.

BAJ: Do you have a favorite piece of jewelry that you wear?

JPV: My favorites are the Origraphy and Curly Pod collections. I wear them all the time! I switch between rings, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. I never wear them all at the same time unless I'm going to a very nice party.

BAJ: Describe the process (in a nutshell) for making your curly pod pieces.

JPV: This collection started with a real dry curly pod from Asia. I wanted to preserve the vibrations of the ribs on the shell. The pod had been cast in mold, then I cleaned it, assembled it, soldered, and left it in an acid to clean the oxidation. The piece (in silver) came out white from the acid. Then, I polished the inside to bring out the little place where the beans were, and the edges for the elegant touch.

BAJ: Describe the person who wears your jewelry.

JPV: People who love life and nature. Perhaps someone living in the city and looking for a piece of nature, or anyone who loves contemplating nature.

BAJ: What makes for an exceptional piece of jewelry? What sets your pieces apart from that of other jewelry?

JPV: For me an exceptional piece of jewelry is a piece that makes you feel something. My pieces aspire to be a statement of awe, nature, and life. With every collection I try to convey a message.

BAJ: What would you say has been your biggest accomplishment as an artist so far?

JPV: I'm looking forward to accomplishing a lot of things in the future. For now, having found my style and knowing what I really want to do in life at 24 years old is my biggest satisfaction.

BAJ: What should people wear your pieces with, and to what sort of occasion?

JPV: I think that most of the pieces can be worn with a casual outfit. For the bigger pieces, or if you wear one whole set, I would say, put on a very elegant dress and you are ready for a special occasion or a fancy party. ➔





BAJ: What message do you want your work to convey?

JPV: Different messages, it depends on the collection. Most of them are a celebration of nature. I think it's important to be conscious of our impact on the environment, today more than ever.

BAJ: Favorite things to do when not making jewelry?

JPV: Spending time with my family, exploring the New York and New Jersey area. We love hanging out in museums and parks. In winter, I spend a lot of time at the ice rink, it really feels good after a whole day sitting behind a bench.

BAJ: What do you have in store for future collections/jewelry lines?

JPV: A collection that would express how nature could take over man's work; lots of roots in silver and gold and maybe introduce some sculptured ebony. In the future, I would also like to include a lot more ornamental

engraving in the collections. My husband is an object art restorer and works a lot with wood and different materials not really common in jewelry. We are starting to associate our different techniques and knowledge to create something really new.

The thirst for newness is what drives editors, designers, artists, and wearable enthusiasts. Julie's pieces not only make a statement and invoke awe, but one which sets out to keep us conscience of the surrounding world. The convergence between her world and the one found in nature produce a line of pieces we want to embrace; a world we want to be a part of. By sharing her art with our necks, wrists, and ears, we can all be reminded of Julie's vision for our world, and be inspired to re-examine what's around us, and maybe even ourselves. ❖

To see more of Julie Prunier Vecchio's work, visit pruniervecchio.com.

