

**The GemGenève Designer Vivarium:  
Showcasing the Best of Contemporary Jewellery Design  
Catering to Today's Escalating Quest for Individuality and Identity  
In an Age of Cultivated Connoisseurship**

At a time when the quest for exclusivity and individuality in jewellery is gathering momentum, when jewellery is appreciated as the most powerful expression of individual style, and when the independent designer-jeweller has a stronger than ever voice in our jewellery world, GemGenève presents this year's Designer Vivarium: showcasing the work of 11 individual designer-jewellers from around the world, curated by jewellery historian Vivienne Becker. The idea for a contemporary designer showcase came from the GemGenève founders, Thomas Faerber and Ronny Totah, who are both committed to nurturing talent in our industry, keeping it alive and dynamic. They both know that today's contemporary art jewels are tomorrow's antiques and heirlooms.

**The Art of Choice**

Each designer-jeweller has a strong point of view, a well-defined creative vision, and a high level of sophistication in terms of concept, design and craftsmanship. Each style is very different from the others, emphasising the vital element of originality and answering the search for a strong identity, which is so much part of today's ever more informed and cultivated jewellery world.

The Designer Vivarium – so called this year because it's where Jewels come to Life – will be housed in a separate section of the show, presented in an elegant arrangement of individual booths, which as last year, are separated by Japanese-style screens. The Designer Vivarium section has been designed to offer space for visitors to linger, look and lounge.

**The Designers**

- Sean Gilson, New York
- Alexandra Jefford, London
- Mr. Lieou
- Milio, Moscow
- Ming Jewellery, London
- Nadia Morgenthaler, Geneva
- Ninotchka Jewels, Moscow
- Racine, Geneva
- Cora Sheibani, London
- Alexander Tenzo, St Petersburg
- Tatiana Verstraeten, Paris

### **Designers for 2019**

**Sean Gilson:** also returning this year, Gilson is an American artist-goldsmith, who hand-crafts each of his jewels himself, in his workshop in Connecticut, and his atelier in New York City. Gilson studied fine art before training as a goldsmith with renowned European and American metalsmiths, and he brings an art-infused graphic, modernist approach to shape, form and material. He forges gold into powerful, primal, geometric shapes, burnishing it with a rich finish reminiscent of ancient gold work; he works with different species of pearls, natural, Akoya, South Sea and baroque pearls, using their shape and lustre to create dynamic structures and textural interest, for example, mixing sustainable coral with black Tahitian pearls in an entirely fresh combination of colour, sheen and shine.

**Alexandra Jefford:** Appropriately, this London-based designer was born and raised in Geneva, but studied fine art at Central St Martin's in London, where she focused on etching and drawing. After pursuing a career as an artist and illustrator, she turned to Jewellery in 2002, studying Jewellery design at the GIA in America and Gemology at the Gemological Association of Great Britain in London. She brings her art background to graphic, abstract, cerebral jewels that play with shapes and form, texture and colour, contrasts of sheen and matt, transparency and opacity, and in which etched lines take an important if subtle role. Added to this, Alexandra draws on inspirations from the Bauhaus and post-war American abstract expressionist painters. She showcases her most recent collections at GemGenève, including *Absence and Presence of Colour*, which sets vivid stones such as mandarin garnet and green tourmaline next to carved matt black onyx shapes, demonstrating her resolutely modernist approach to the jewel as art form.

**Mr. Lieou:** Nicholas Lieou, born in Hong Kong, Nicholas has studied, lived and worked around the world but has now returned to his roots, to settle in Hong Kong. After graduating from London's Royal College of Art, Nicholas worked for several major Jewellery houses, and in 2015 was appointed as Director of High Jewellery and Custom Design at Tiffany & Co. He left last year to develop his own designs and launched his first collection this year, 2019, with an eclectic series of one-of-a-kind jewels, aimed at establishing a new category of 'elevated High Jewellery'. He describes his style as organic yet graphic, and works to balance dualities of minimalism and maximalism, strength and fragility, masculine and feminine, imbuing his jewels with poetry and elegance. Themes have included orchids, drawn from his Asian upbringing, crafted with wing-like petals that part to show the gemstone beneath, and mythology, specifically Icarus, depicting the dramatic moment in which the boy's wings begin to disintegrate. Nicholas Lieou brings an erudite, artistic approach, excitement and imagination to the noble classicism of High Jewellery.

**Milio:** This collection of modern Russian jewels is the brainchild of mother and daughter, Lyudmila and Olga Mironov, who work together in Moscow. Their mission is to keep their beloved Russian Jewellery traditions alive, through the use of fine gemstones and stone-carving, while drawing on inspiration from timeless Art Deco modernism. The jewels are strong and bold, mostly linear in form, often centred on large cabochon or sugar-loaf shaped coloured stones, their well-defined shapes supported by rich, smooth and substantial gold work, and encircled or flanked by invisibly-set calibrated sapphires. Adding to the powerful effect of form and colour, centre stones are also set within frames of dark, or black, exotic woods.

**Ming Jewellery:** Ming Lampson, known simply as Ming, because she was born in Hong Kong to British parents, lives and works in London, as a very private jeweller, a secret known only to a close circle of clients and Jewellery devotees. Ming learnt about gemstones in Jaipur, where she was apprenticed to a local goldsmith, after which she studied Jewellery design at the Sir John Cass college in London, diamond grading at the Gemological Association in London, and coloured stones and pearls at the GIA in the U.S. She started her own business in 1998 and opened her atelier in London's Notting Hill in 2007, focusing on bespoke commissions. She has only recently begun to create her own collections, fusing her Asian roots with her British upbringing and European craftsmanship. The Oriental Garden collection is an expression of Ming's fantasy of an Asian garden, while Reverence for Nature explores Japan's profound affinity with the natural world, Japanese ritual and mythology, and the inimitable Japanese style of depicting nature in art, with striking serenity and power.

**Nadia Morgenthaler:** returning this year, Morgenthaler is a home-grown Geneva talent, a highly-skilled, experienced and inspired artist-artisan with her own atelier where her exquisite jewels are meticulously hand-crafted, using a harmonious blend of age-old traditional skills and the latest high-technology. Morgenthaler is known for jewels of exquisite refinement and sophistication and particularly for dramatic earrings that balance extraordinary structure with exceptional lightness and movement. She uses recherché gemstones, often antique stones, of soft, muted, indefinable colours, mixed with natural pearls, conjuring them with signature finesse into a distinctive style evocative of antique splendour and romance, accented by architectural details balanced by a bold contemporary attitude.

**Ninotchka:** This young Moscow-based design duo, Eugene Glagolev and Tim Abragimov, return this year with more startlingly original creations, with subtle and deeply emotive echoes of Russia's rich jewelled past. They began by designing jewels for Russian brands before developing their own ideas and style, and launching their own collection, named for the 1939 classic film Ninotchka and its star, Greta Garbo. They are both avid and knowledgeable students of jewellery history, and while their jewels are conjured around Russian gems, very often antique stones, including demantoid garnets, Siberian amethysts, and nephrite, their style exudes an exciting, contemporary sophistication. Most of all, however, Ninotchka jewels are about storytelling, weaving narratives rich in Russian romance, fable, folklore and touched with the poignancy of Imperial splendour.

**Racine:** Having simplified their name from Oselieri Racine, this husband and wife team, Pedro Oselieri Lopes and Miriam Racine Bergesen, move on from their place in last year's Emerging Talent section to become part of the Designer Vivarium. They met during gemological studies, and now based in Geneva, they design refined, delicate jewels of generally abstract designs and geometric silhouettes featuring coloured stones and exquisite pavé work, the stones meticulously arranged in melting harmonies or striking contrasts, representing today's contemporary Jewellery style. All their jewels are one-of-a-kind and are hand-crafted in Geneva's finest ateliers.

**Cora Sheibani:** Swiss born, London-based Sheibani grew up immersed in the art world, surrounded by art and the celebrated artists represented by her celebrated art-dealer father. Yet she approaches the jewel as pure design, rather than as art, working with line, form, colour, material and texture, integrating all into the overall concept of a collection. Through intriguing, unexpected, culturally-

inquiring themes, she takes jewellery into entirely new territory, with collections that range in narrative from cakes and ice-creams through cacti, clouds and the symbol of the eye, both human and animal. In her latest collection, Glow, Cora explores phosphorescent and fluorescent gemstones, playing with their light, turning their extraordinary light-giving properties, so often overlooked or denigrated, as a captivating contemporary design feature.

**Alexander Tenzo:** Based in St Petersburg, this quietly determined Russian gem-hunter and jeweller is a champion of Russian jewelled arts, a renovator and moderniser of age-old skills and traditions. For years he has scoured the world for rare and intriguing stones, such as Alexandrites and cat's eye cabochons, and has assembled what is a treasury of extraordinary, unusual coloured gems, which he now incorporates into his jewels. He also searches worldwide for specialist artisans who can achieve the refinement of technique and craftsmanship he envisages for his jewellery creations. Tenzo is known for reinvigorating the Russian art of stone carving, so inextricably linked to Fabergé, and deeply rooted in Russian culture, in the immense resources of gems and minerals in the Ural Mountains. Alongside his jewels, including his series of cameos and intaglios, he creates objects, meticulously, imaginatively carved from gems, hardstones and minerals.

**Tatiana Verstraeten:** This Belgian-born designer is bringing a fresh, fashion-fuelled look to the Place Vendôme where her intimate salon is situated. After gaining a Master's degree in business management and finance, she decided to follow her personal passion for fashion and jewellery design. She worked for various Paris houses, and then alongside the late Karl Lagerfeld, designing jewellery and head ornaments for Chanel, before launching her first precious jewellery collection during Paris couture in January this year, 2019. She has worked with diamonds, pearls and enamel creating sophisticated, ultra-feminine jewels infused with the fantasy and freedom of fashion jewellery, and with an edge that comes from a hint of 1920s style: dramatically long earrings graze the shoulders with fringes of diamond rain, stars and moons nestle amongst clusters of pearls and a spectacular necklace wraps around the neck and collar bone with wispy diamond feathers.

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GemGenève, May 9-12, 2019

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