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VanLeles

Fine jewellery influenced by Africa, elegance, imagination and ethical standards

Vania Leles exudes a rare African-Portuguese sensibility, born and raised in Guinea-Bissau, West Africa, but later educated in Lisbon, her designs are infused with rich colour and sophistication and central to her philosophy is a reverence for ethical sourcing.

A former model, Vania had always felt drawn to jewellery, and eventually embarked on a strategic career through which she developed an extraordinary knowledge of jewellery, old and new. She began her studies at the highly acclaimed Gemological Institute of America, before working for some of the most prestigious names in the industry, including Graff as their in-house gemologist, De Beers and, finally, at Sotheby's in the jewellery department.

However, it wasn't until 2011 that Vania's dream of having her own jewellery house became a reality as she opened a 'by appointment' showroom in Belgravia, where she worked on bespoke commissions for her private clients. Four years later, having cemented her reputation for high quality craftsmanship and beautiful designs, she opened her atelier in the heart of Mayfair, where she presents her collections alongside one-of-a-kind pieces and bespoke commissions. On arriving at the first-floor salon you



ABOVE: Oceana 18kt white gold, diamond and sapphire bangle

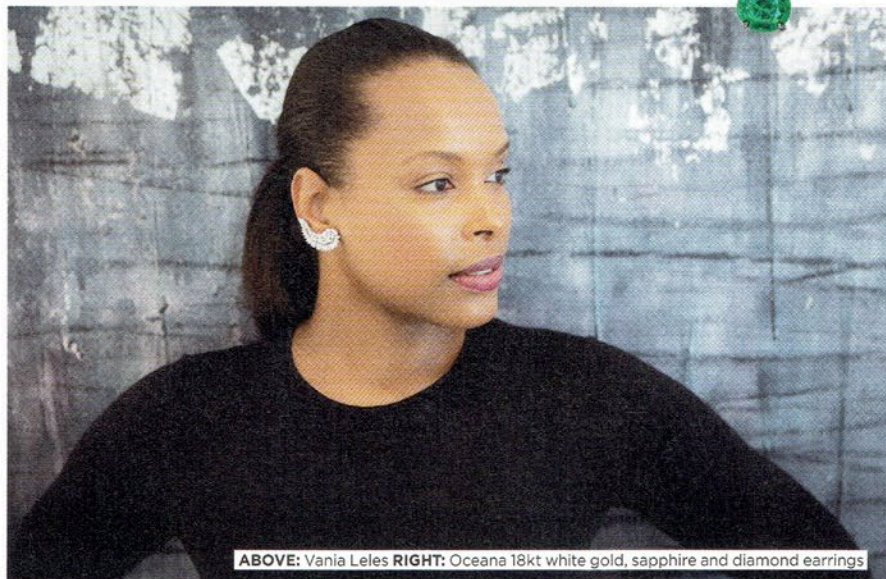


BELOW: Legends of Africa 18kt gold, diamond and Gemfields sourced emerald earrings

immediately understand Vania's style and approach, discreet and elegant, the space is very feminine and welcoming. 'My foremost priority is to ensure clients receive the most personal service and attention to detail. They come to the atelier to discover the latest one-off pieces and to discuss unique commissions, as a lot of our pieces are not publicised elsewhere.'

Vania's endless imagination, attention to detail and fervor for intricate design are evident in her collections, displayed in showcases around the room. She mostly finds inspiration from her African heritage and memories from travelling the world, but her experience as a child in Africa does not serve purely as inspiration, Vania has seen first hand the importance of ethically sourced gems, and sees it as a moral duty to focus on this in her business. Vania painstakingly adheres to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, ensuring all her gemstones originate from ethical sources and, where possible, often travels to the mines herself where she has very good relationships with the owners.

This passion for responsibly sourced gemstones led her to work on a collaboration with Gemfields earlier this year, resulting in her Legends of Africa emeralds collection. This scintillating collection, intricately embellished with Zambian emeralds and brilliant diamonds, perfectly demonstrates the confident but



ABOVE: Vania Leles RIGHT: Oceana 18kt white gold, sapphire and diamond earrings



Vania Leles' designs are infused with rich colour and sophistication



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classic aesthetic of VanLeles. The depth and allure of the emeralds is accentuated by the blackened gold finish, and brilliantly offset by the luminosity of the neighbouring white gold and diamonds.

This is a designer on an exciting path, her passion for craftsmanship, breathtaking designs, ethical sourcing and unparalleled customer service is causing a stir and we can't wait to hear what is next.



ABOVE: Drawing for Legends of Africa emerald earrings
LEFT: Lyla's Bow 18kt white gold and diamond ring