



Art Made to Wear

With her jewelry adorning the necks of Kate Moss, Nicole Kidman, Gwyneth Paltrow, Mary Tyler Moore and American Idol competitors, designer Ayala Bar is securing success all over the world

|| Yael Chen photos by Ilya Melnikov



Designer Ayala Bar

A true success story, jewelry designer Ayala Bar exported some NIS 10 million worth of jewelry this year. With 14 distributors who market her hand-made pieces at trade shows, Bar's typical customers are gallery owners, museum shops, exclusive gift shops and elite fashion boutiques.

At her studio in Givatayim, which also serves as her factory, Bar works in a sunny room, on a white table filled with drawers teeming with beads, glass, laces, threads and gorgeous fabrics, all of which she integrates into spectacular mosaic jewels. A long hallway leads to a large storeroom filled with endless beads in every shade imaginable, from Japan, Korea, Czech Republic, Italy, China and the US, from which she fashions necklaces, rings, bracelets, pins and earrings. She works alongside 30 talented women

who assemble the materials, making Bar's fantastic visions into tangible jewels.

Beads, Pebbles and...Fabric

Bar started out with a stand at the Nahalat Binyamin crafts fair in Tel Aviv, 20 years ago. She graduated from the Midrasha's Art Department, worked as a window dresser, designed theater sets for Beit Zvi Theater, and even designed and tailored clothing.

The first wares she sold at Nahalat Binyamin were large pillows shaped like watermelons, corn and peas, but although audiences were enthusiastic, sales were poor. What people preferred to buy, she explains, was jewelry – and that's how she first got into the field. "I made a sort of collage of beads, pebbles, glass and other materials glued onto differ- ▶

“There are days when I struggle with a certain piece, when I should have gone home hours before, but other days I’ll make seven pieces in a day. All in all, I’m lucky to work at something I love.”



ent surfaces,” she relates, “a line which exists to this day.” At one stage she traveled to India to purchase special beads, but ended up returning with three suitcases filled with fabric. “I couldn’t withstand the temptation,” she says. “Fabrics have always been my weakness, and I thought I might be able to design jewelry from fabric.” Within a year, her jewelry was a hit around the world.

Bar arrives at her studio every morning to design jewelry. It continues to amaze her that her expensive pieces sell around the world, no less than other pieces. “The jewelry is expensive,” she explains, “because everything I design is hand-made, and tons of work goes into each piece.”

Invitation Only

Aside from a single store in Tel Aviv, Bar markets all her jewelry at 42 trade shows each year. Since she works per order, all of the pieces were ordered in advance, and she designs six new collections per year.

Is it difficult?

“It is mostly wonderful. There are days when I struggle with a certain piece, when I should have gone home hours before, but other days I’ll make seven pieces in a day. All in all, I’m lucky to work at something I love.”

A mother of three, Bar starts each morning with a daily workout. She loves to travel, and often combines work with pleasure when she visits the trade shows where her pieces are on display.

Did you ever envision you’d have a jewelry empire?

“I never imagined this happening. A certain event in the United States made me realize how famous my jewelry is. Until then, I had never realized the degree of its success. A few years ago I was invited to a special event in my honor in Memphis, Tennessee, held at a stunning home on the banks of the Mississippi. I was seated in the seat of honor, while some 100 women who collect my jewelry told the story of each piece they owned. Some even had pieces from the days of the stand at Nahalat Binyamin. I realized they collect the pieces the way others collect paintings by famous artists. To them, I’m an artist and my jewelry is a good investment. It was simultaneously flattering and embarrassing.”

Eli Haddad. אלי חדד

Cabinet d'avocats & Notaire
משרד עורכי דין ונוטריון

how anyone could endure an hour a day alone with that nitwit... an unimportant language, but I made no objection: I am not one of those who... efforts to improve their minds.

We had a surprising number of visitors over the winter. These natives are a hardy lot, though, like all the Jews in the most appalling weather. Sometimes they brought real... I remember one... the boxes held... he had several skins... spotted fur from... brought when... in extremely poor... didn't have anything... of that...

We gave our visitors cheap present and bought anything they had in sell, and listened to the inevitable boasts and lies and gossip. In fact Ibrahim encouraged them to talk, and even took notes in a book he kept for the purpose on maps.

Maitre Eli Haddad
Maitre Yaël Ben-Shabbat-Nissim
Maitre Liat Levi-Liberman
Maitre Chai Abouhazira
Maitre Olivier Amsellem
Maitre Shlomi Abouhazira
Maitre Arié Brening
Maitre Avivit Zehavi

It certainly did seem to have been an interesting year on the plains, to hear our... trouble, the... been... years. Something was stirring them up, but no one knew what. And the... were get-... of horsemanship... "shook..."

Ashdod, 87/30 rue Aatsmaout
Tel.: 08-8679910 Fax.: 08-8679920
Tel Aviv, 52 rue Ayarkon
Tel.: 03-5167170 Fax.: 03-8679920

www.elihaddad.com eliadv@isdnet.il