



Meeting The ARTistocratic Aristocrat

Countess Isabella del Bono reveals what inspires her heraldic bijoux

Writer: Chiara Spagnoli Gabardi





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Iron bracelet
with diamonds,
amethyst and iolite.
Credits: Gianni Ummarino





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Countess Isabella del Bono belongs to oldest family of aristocrats in the bootshaped land. Growing up she was nurtured with the splendour and sumptuousness of her ancestors' vestige, which she channelled in the creation of exquisite jewels. As a former photographer and journalist, since 2005, Isabella del Bono has been creating of a line of coat of arms jewels made out of iron: Idb. Her pieces are handmade and unique, with innovative shapes and charismatic designs.

In this exclusive interview Countess Isabella del Bono explains how her family background inspired her in designing her IdB jewels:



Isabella del Bono. Credits: Gianni Ummarino



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IdB Sun and Moon Earrings in iron and diamonds. Credits: Gianni Ummarino



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Sculpture rings made in iron and gold with engraved coat-of-arms. Credits: Gianni Ummarino

How has your family lineage influenced your creativity as a jewellery designer?

To grow up in a certain environment, surrounded by beauty, was very inspirational for me. My family is one of the most ancient in Italy and goes back to the year 1000 and even earlier. My family was originally from Parma, which is why in the 1600s we received the title of Counts from the Farnese family. We have a family chapel in San Giovanni, which is the church behind the Duomo of Parma, with paintings of Parmigianino, so my heritage has truly been influential in my taste as a jewellery designer.



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Beyond those doors is an area called Chase Square, whice more open than this space was pre-renovation. On the right his photo — taken from the south side of the lobby area a Madison Square Garden store. To orient yourself: In the be of this photo is the box office, and the ramp that leads to turnstiles is to the left of the ticket windows. Beyond it

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What triggered you to design jewels?

It happened by chance, twenty years ago, when I was in Panarea with some friends. I was wearing a gold chevalier ring that my grandmother bequeathed to me. I dived into the sea and lost it. At that point of my life I didn't want to spend too much to make a new one, so I went to my mother's jeweller and asked if she could remake it with my coat-of-arms but not in gold. The lady of the shop suggested iron and I liked the idea. I was told that no one had been working with iron from a long time because it's a tough material to order and shape. As a result the ring was stunning and everyone was asking me where I had it made and wanted to have one custommade too. About ten years ago, I met by chance a Florentine artisan and asked him if he could make something similar to my ring. What he made was gorgeous, much better than mine, the engraving was beautiful and he's the one who makes my jewels to this day with tiny sculptures.



Iron bracelet with diamonds and gold.

Credits Gianni Ummarino



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Order of Malta cufflinks.

Who comes to you for a chevalier ring or a heraldic bijoux?

Through my family I have a very strong network of connections that encompass the oldest and most prominent families in Italy. These were my first customers, also because I started to showcase my designs in the private mansions of long-time friends, such as the Frescobaldi family in Florence. Also, people from the Roman aristocracy are collectors of my jewels, like Prince Orsini, Princess Pacelli, as well

as the Donà dalle Rose. In Milan, where I live, amongst my customers there are the Borromeo and Rusconi family, besides Paola Marzotto. Last year in Genoa Paolo Clerici, President of CoeClerici — one of the biggest Italian companies for private ships, coal and logistics — placed an order of cufflinks to give as Christmas gifts to his clients. They were all custom-made with the nautical flag that corresponds to the initials of the person.



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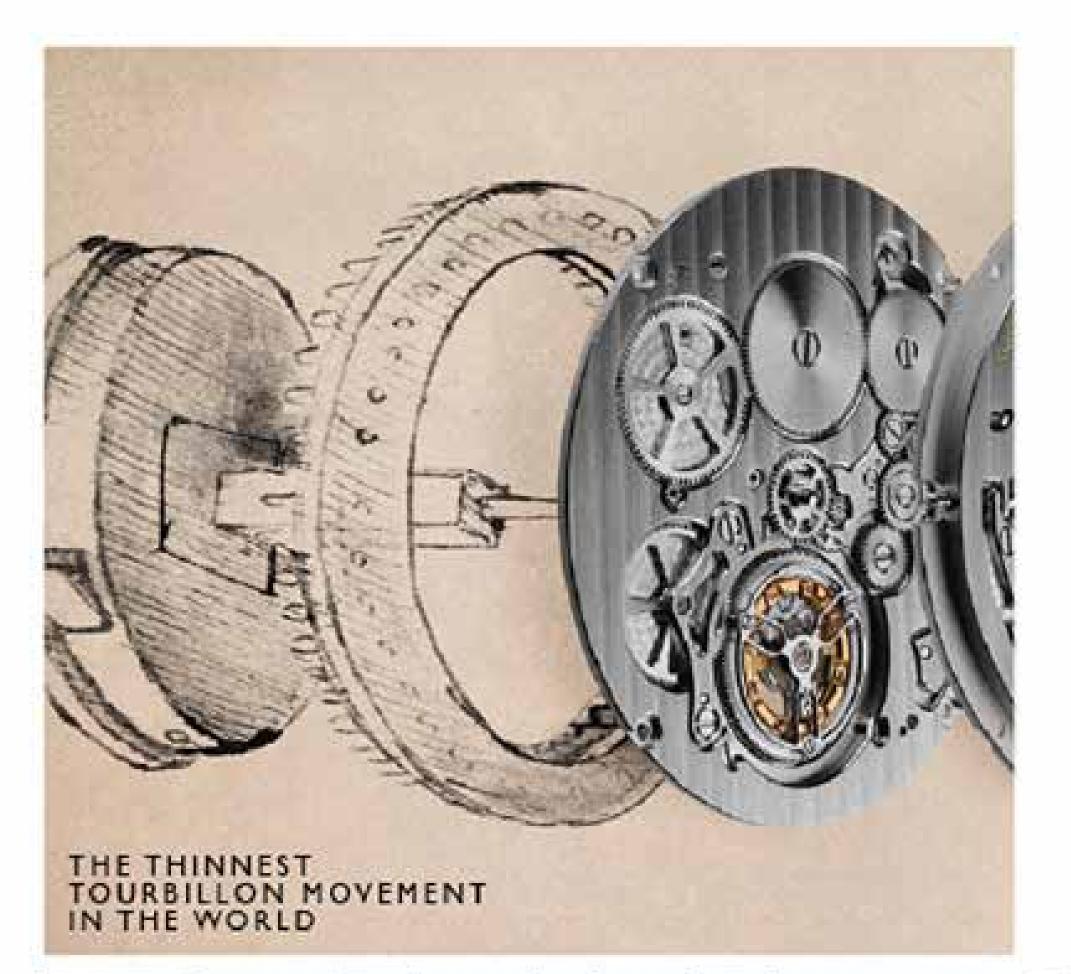


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«Details make perfection, and perfection is not a detail»

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How do you actualise coat-of-arms in your contemporary designs?

I decided to use iron because it was used during the Middle Ages and during World War II for the 'Oro alla Patria' — the so called 'Gold For The Country' — when the aristocracy would donate gold to make weapons. Chevalier rings were consequently made out of iron. The making of one of my rings is like constructing a tiny sculpture: it takes a week and you need a skilled artisan who is specialised in engraving and chiselling.



Iron and Gold cufflinks with coat-of-arms.

Credits: Gianni Ummarino



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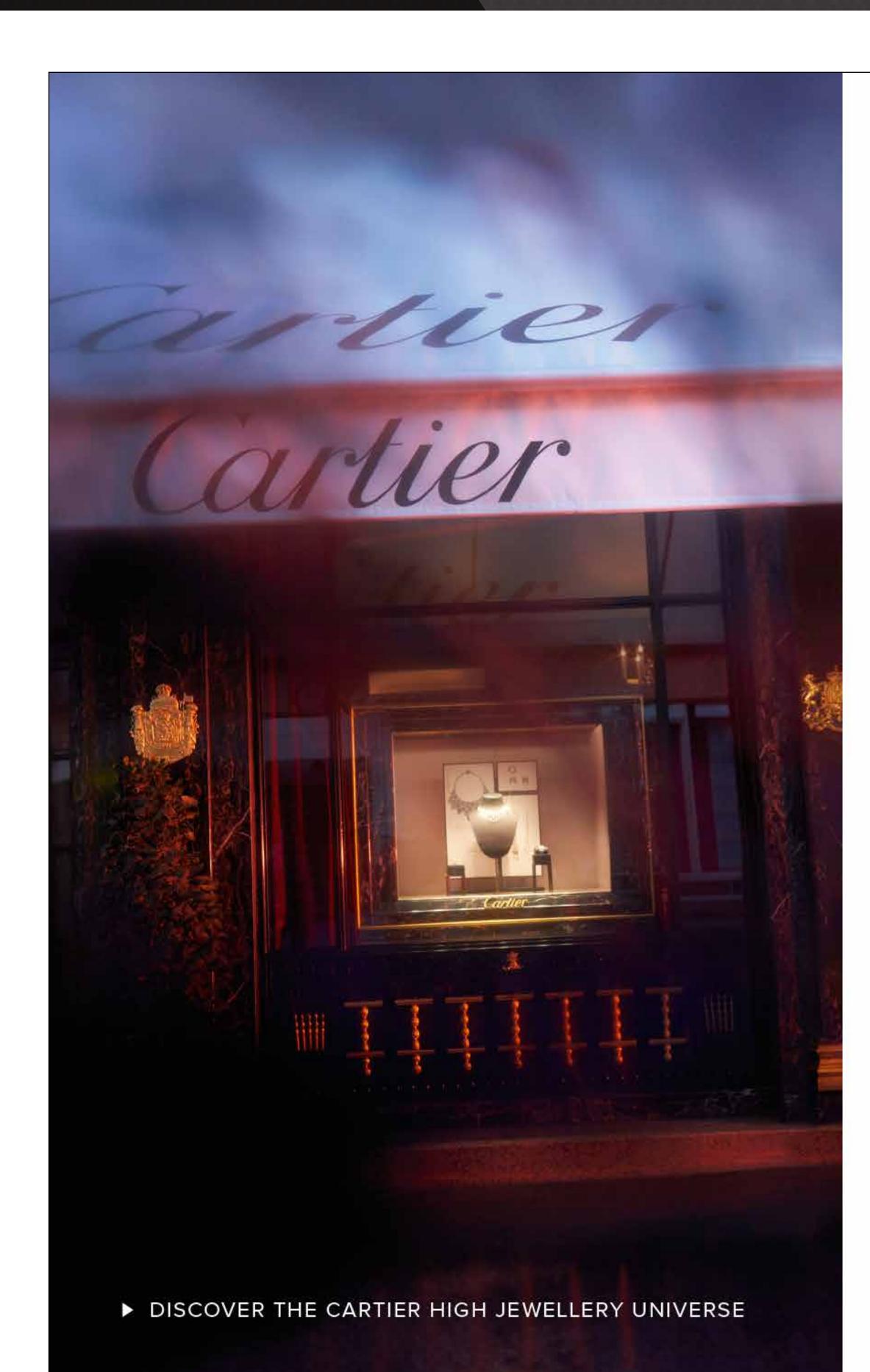
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Bracelet in iron, gold and silver with rubie. Credits: Gianni Ummarino

You are noble by blood and also by soul, since your use of iron is sustainable...

Iron is inside our body, it's inside the Earth, it's a piece of us. It surrounds us. It's a basic element that we touch all day long, even if we are completely unaware. I'm very concerned about the environment, hence my jewels are

sustainable. I'm also fascinated by esoteric symbolisms, which is why some of my pieces have the recurring theme of the lemniscate: the number 8 that if you tilt becomes the infinity symbol. I'm always eager to find out more about what lies behind creation and the universe, and the lemniscate epitomises all of this for me.



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Tell me about your latest collection?

It is made with enamel because I like to use elements that other people don't use, just like iron. It is very difficult to find artisans who know how to use fired enamel to produce rings. I always start from the stone and create the ring around it, and for my latest pieces I'm making big one-of-a-kind bijoux, pairing unusual colours such as violet with orange or green with orange. I'm newly designing my best-seller earrings, which are the chiselled sun and snake. Last year a pair of my sparkling green earrings was gifted to actress Julianne Moore.



Iron bracelet with diamonds with Lebanon's Cedar. Credits: Gianni Ummarino



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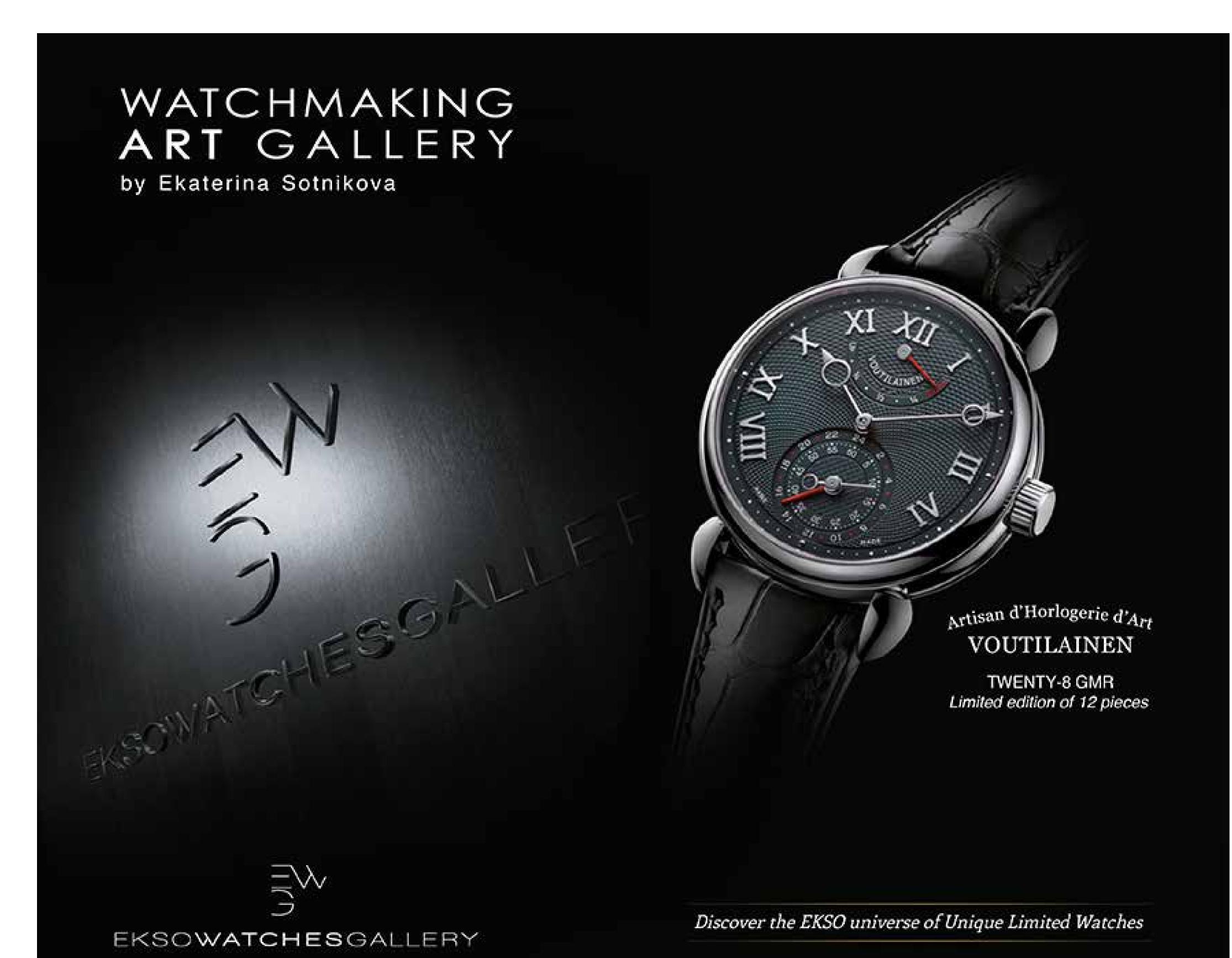




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Oval cufflinks in antique style with enamel on gold

Where can people see your creations?

You can either see them at Mariana Antinori's Shop in New York, located on Madison Avenue, or by appointment in my atelier in Milan. The production is small, very exclusive and not everyone can have access to it. An IdB bijoux is a precious trinket that represents an alternative to traditional gold jewels, that will become your emblem for a lifetime.

NEWSSTAND

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Iron Medallion exhibited at the Jewel Museum in Vicenza and published in the Skira Catalougue





Miniature gold cufflinks with enamel



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