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# Pumps and Circumstance

Katia Jean Paul ruminates on the trends and the elements of style within the culture at large.



Q&A: Introducing LACAR Jewelry

by [Katia Jean Paul](#)

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Shira Laye and Morgan Carrier, the couple behind new Vancouver jewelry label LACAR talk their debut collection, the architectural landmark that inspired it and their dream muse, Catherine Deneuve...



Left: Model wears Helm Choker, silver Obelisk Ear Cuff and S-Ring. Right: Model wears Peg Necklace. LACAR Jewelry Fall 2014 lookbook

"Jewelry is unique in the fact that it's everlasting and holds a sentimental place in people's hearts," say Shira Laye and Morgan Carrier. "It is one of the oldest forms of adornment." The couple's jewelry label LACAR, a mix of their surnames, captures the very essence of these personal accessories, through distinct pieces of jewelry rife with history and beauty, and made to last. Informed by their many travels, their love of old films and all manner of art, Laye, a jewelry maker by profession, and Carrier, a theater and film designer, established LACAR in 2013, after many evenings spent together in Laye's design studio, with Carrier sanding and polishing her custom creations while they exchanged ideas, turning into a bona fide partnership.



Design duo Shira Laye and Morgan Carrier inside their Vancouver studio. (Photo courtesy of Shira Laye and Morgan Carrier)

*Oculus*, their debut collection, draws from Gothic architecture and mimics the intricate arches, vaults and buttresses of this bygone era in the form of silver, gold and bronze necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings adorned with semi-precious and precious stones like black jade, agate, and garnet. "*Oculus* is an expression of the beauty we saw in eroded sanctuary. We wanted our pieces to be monumental, worthy of worship, but we wanted them to be light and unencumbered by the heavy physical matter they are made of. So, we came up with the aesthetic of the arch," says Laye. The mostly unisex pieces, handmade with ethically sourced materials in Laye and Carrier's Vancouver studio, meld time-honoured jewelry making traditions with street style wearability, resulting in a modern collection steeped in history that while minimalist at first glance, boasts exquisite details that capture the eye.

With LACAR launched just in time for fall, below, the partners in love and business share their inspirations, creative process, and why Deneuve would make a perfect muse...

**Gothic architecture, as well as Renaissance art informs your aesthetic. How did you draw from these different sources to fashion the pieces for *Oculus*? What are some of the architectural haunts and landmarks you visited during your travels that are referenced in the collection?**

"I suppose the most honest answer despite being the most obvious is the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Who doesn't love Paris? Notre Dame lies in the heart of this great city and has so much folklore surrounding it. Its beauty and inspiration speaks for itself and we wanted to loosely interpret this beauty in the revealing arches of our collection, *Oculus*. We love the attention to detail in both Gothic architecture and Renaissance fashion. Craftsmanship was meant to last back then and its proof is in all the artifacts that remain intact from this era, whether it be tapestries, architecture or Renaissance jewelry. We strive to create things that will be lasting and timeless."

**How do film and design come into play when designing your pieces?**

"We are consumers of all things design and art. If we are watching Louis Malle's film, *Elevator to the Gallows*, we are as concerned with what Jeanne Moreau is wearing as with the plot itself. The two things can't be separated. Design is film and vice versa. If we visit a city, the first thing we research is what building to visit and which museums catch our fancy. It doesn't have to be the Met in NYC (although this is a fantastic museum) but even the smallest of museums can inspire a world of ideas. One of our favourite museum experiences was the Lock Museum (Musée de la Serrure) in Paris, where you could see medieval castle door locks. One of the castle doors was fitted with a lock in the shape of a lion's head that would chop your hand off if you used the wrong key."

**How would you describe your creative process?**

"When we are still working on paper, our inspiration comes from all over. For our first collection, *Oculus*, we used the aesthetic through line of the arch, inspired by Gothic architecture. Most of the pieces are made using the technique of lost wax casting, meaning we start out with a block of rock hard wax and carve the design out of it, then cast it and refine the piece in metal."

**Most of your pieces are unisex. What do you think it is about those pieces that appeal to both men and women?**

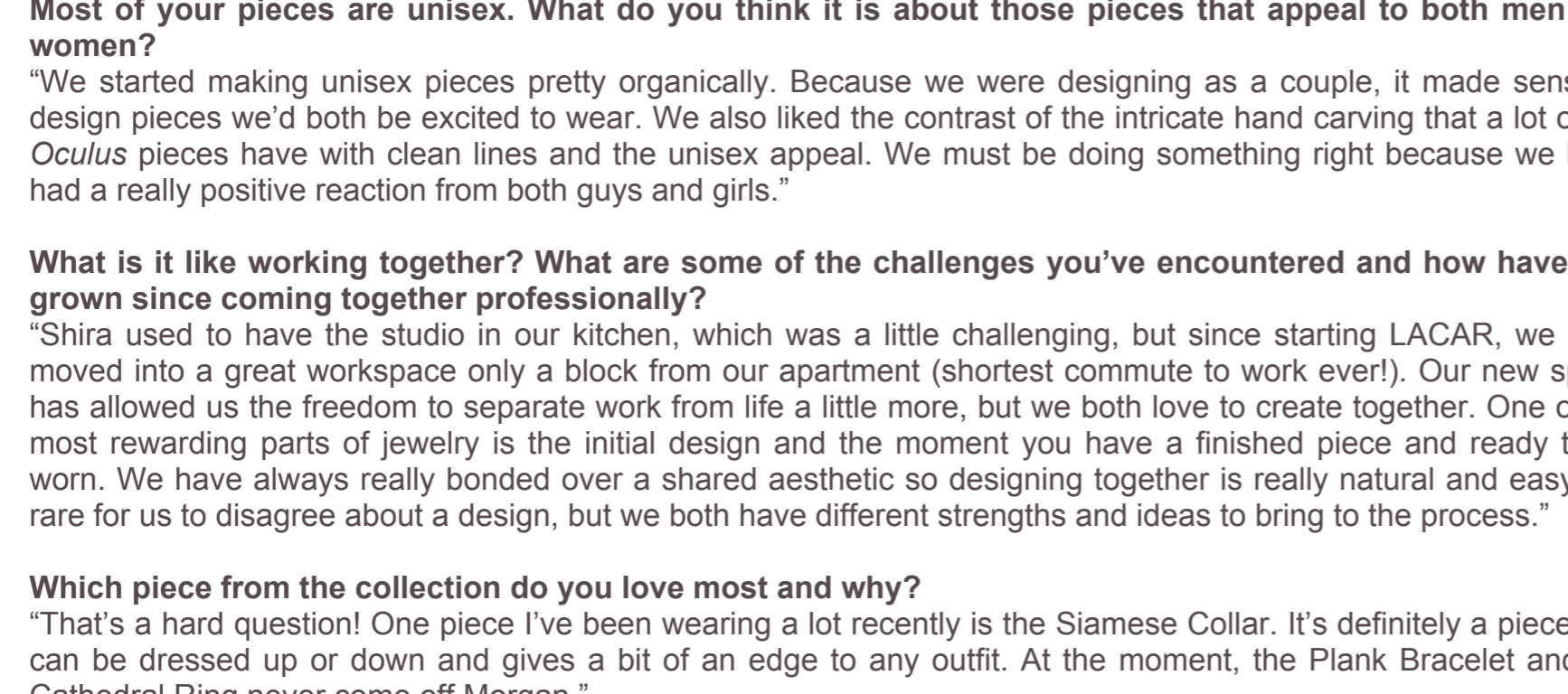
"We started making unisex pieces pretty organically. Because we were designing as a couple, it made sense to design pieces we'd both be excited to wear. We also liked the contrast of the intricate hand carving that a lot of the *Oculus* pieces have with clean lines and the unisex appeal. We must be doing something right because we have had a really positive reaction from both guys and girls."

**What is it like working together? What are some of the challenges you've encountered and how have you grown since coming together professionally?**

"Shira used to have the studio in our kitchen, which was a little challenging, but since starting LACAR, we have moved into a great workspace only a block from our apartment (shortest commute to work ever!). Our new space has allowed us the freedom to separate work from life a little more, but we both love to create together. One of the most rewarding parts of jewelry is the initial design and the moment you have a finished piece and ready to be worn. We have always really bonded over a shared aesthetic so designing together is really natural and easy. It's rare for us to disagree about a design, but we both have different strengths and ideas to bring to the process."

**Which piece from the collection do you love most and why?**

"That's a hard question! One piece I've been wearing a lot recently is the Siamese Collar. It's definitely a piece that can be dressed up or down and gives a bit of an edge to any outfit. At the moment, the Plank Bracelet and the Cathedral Ring never come off Morgan."



Clockwise from top left: Siamese Collar (\$360), Plank Bracelet (\$324) and Cathedral Ring (\$254).

**If you could choose a screen legend to be your muse, who would it be?**

"The French actress Catherine Deneuve has fascinated us since we first watched her in Luis Bunuel's 1967 masterpiece, *Belle de Jour* (designed by Yves Saint Laurent). She is always so cool and collected, and has exuded style and poise for more than half a century on the silver screen."

**What can we expect from you in the future?**

"Let's just say we have some good things cooking up for our next collection! You can definitely expect the same commitment to quality and detail that keeps us inspired to create."

LACAR Jewelry, available at [lacarstudio.com](#) and [select stockists](#).

Interview was edited for length and clarity.

*Fashion, art, architecture, design, TV, and film: Katia Jean Paul is a Montreal-based writer who casts a critical eye on her many idées fixes, unearthing the aesthetic and cultural dimensions within each and every subject. / Follow Katia on Twitter: [@KatiaJeanPaul](#)*

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