Designs on love

Jelie Meow makes trinkets that melt hearts

Life-changing role for Oscar Isaac

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Symbols of love

Two aspiring jewellery designers come up with award-winning pieces in OE Fine Jewellery’s competition, writes Nadia Badarudin

A glance at the two award-winning pieces displayed at OE Fine Jewellery outlet in KLCC, I can’t help but wonder if the designers are madly in love.

One is a heart-shaped 18K gold locket studded with three diamonds. Called Prisoner Of Love, the heart is bedecked with love on one side. A key is attached to the locket. It is used to open the bars to unveil a miniature gold heart. Looking dazzling in a champagne suit, Jelle Meow says she designed the masterpiece with a lover’s dedication and loyalty in mind.

“Love is sacred and requires unconditional commitment. To be committed, true and loyal to your partner is important,” says the 22-year-old graduate of Raffles College of Higher Education, Kuala Lumpur.

Meow is one of two winners of a recent Valentine’s Day jewellery design competition organised by OE Fine Jewellery and Jewellery Design Faculty of Raffles College. She graduated with an advanced diploma in jewellery design in June. “The idea is to give your heart to someone for safe-keeping and it will be well-protected inside the locket. It’s about surrendering oneself to love,” says the soft-spoken Kedah-born who developed a passion for jewellery designing in her teens. Describing herself as traditional, Meow likes to browse magazines for the latest designs. “I am fascinated by finely-designed gems and accessories.

“However, I am a minimalist in accessorising. I love to dress up, but a stylish statement ring is enough to complete my look,” says Meow.

SEALED WITH A KISS
Her second award-winning piece, Sealed With A Kiss, is unique. The locket looks like an envelope with a love letter inside.

Meow draws inspiration from real-life situations, particularly between couples, lacking due to technology.

“People are busy with their mobile phones and gadgets instead of talking to each other. “Wouldn’t it be nice to revive romance the old school way where couples write love letters?”

Meow says her win has given her confidence to pursue her studies overseas and fulfill her dream of becoming a jewellery designer.

When I ask her whether she is in love, Meow says: “No. I have never been in love. “However, being observant and imaginative has helped me in my work. I am inspired by stories and things around me.”

OCCUPY MY HEART
The other winner is Hansen Foong. His family has been operating a goldsmith shop in Tanjung Malim, Perak for more than 30 years. He says he was initially not interested in the business but things took turn when he was asked to help his
Foong says having hands-on experience and dealing with customers sparked his interest in the trade.

"I find recommending designs and materials to customers challenging yet fulfilling.

"I started researching jewellery designs on the Internet out of curiosity," says the 24-year-old.

Foong pursued an art and design degree (majoring in jewellery design) at Raffles College and graduated in March.

His pendant is named Occupy My Heart and symbolises that the wearer's heart is already taken.

The second pendant is set with a diamond and comes with a tag which can be engraved with a name or message.

Foong says his creations are inspired by architecture, science and engineering.

So, what inspired the pendant design?

"The No Entry sign. It is simple, direct and easily understood. The wearer is telling others his/her heart is reserved for a special person."

"People always ask me why I studied jewellery designing and not something like fashion designing.

"For me, it's a niche with great potential. And I feel comfortable in a field I'm familiar with," he adds.

NURTURING LOCAL TALENTS

Established in Germany in 1900, Ong Fine Jewellery is known for its exquisite craftsmanship and timeless designs.

The company made its presence in Penang in 1974.

In 2012, it collaborated with the Jewellery Design Faculty of Raffles College to organise a competition to design pieces for Valentine's Day. Three designs with the highest originality and commercial potential were chosen out of 12 entries received.

Ong Fine Jewellery general manager Ong Li Dong says the collaboration was aimed at recognising and nurturing local talents.

"We look forward to training young talents and exploring their creativity."

"As an industry player, we want to provide a platform for these aspiring designers to grow and make a career in fine jewellery craftsmanship."

Ong says Meow and Foong were given a prototype of their design and a certificate of recognition from the company.

She adds that limited pieces of the winning designs will be available.

The collection comes in 18 karat gold and sterling silver or, with prices ranging from RM588. Details at www.ongjewellery.com

4 nadia.kusam@mgnt.com.my