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"If you take risks, you may still fail. But if you do not take risks, you will surely fail. The greatest risk of all is to do nothing."
- Roberto C. Goizueta (1931 - 1997)
Cuban-American businessman, CEO, Coca-Cola Co.

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"Absence makes the heart grow fonder."
- Sextus Propertius

POESY LIANG

Poesy Liang's attempt in jewellery design 3 years ago met with success as soon as she started to show her work privately on the international circuit, instantly gaining recognition of private art collectors all over. Her special collection of cufflinks under the brand POEZ Jewellers can be seen adorning the cuffs of corporate celebrities and showcased over the pages of luxury magazines, despite making them available through private sales by invitation only. However, this successful architect designer of Malaysian-Taiwanese parentage has even more strings to her bow – trained by top masters in numerous forms of classical Chinese art since the age of 7, Poesy was discovered at 14 and starred in a Levi's Strauss television commercial and since then, managed to sustain a featured presence in the tele-media industry for the next 12 years. Her colourful life was punctuated twice by malignant paralysis caused by tumours in her spinal cord at 17 and 28; both challenges were overcome and deemed miracles. This led her to be actively aware of welfare issues; she spearheaded a thriving volunteer group called Helping Angels. After what looks like she completed a long road less travelled, Poesy further advanced her interior and product designing career by launching POEZ JEWELLERS. Here she talks to HOMME about her work and more:



HOMME:
What inspired you to start designing jewellery?

Poesy Liang:
I am naturally quite a fussy character when it comes to a few things – the things I eat and the things I wear. It was rare for me to find jewellery that I loved and it was given that I would always seek out craftspeople to make things customized to my specification. The inventor in me took things quite seriously, and making a piece of jewellery was just like creating a piece of art, which I would wear with pride. I designed everything myself, things I could not find available to buy – you name it I have attempted it. That was a very long time ago.

HOMME:
Your inspirations?

Poesy Liang:
Inspirations come from stones, as I liken each special being to a rare stone (polished or about to be polished). For the entire brand, stones used are all gemstones, materials nothing less than gold and platinum.

HOMME:
How did your jewellery business evolve from being a hobby to a commercial success?

Poesy Liang:
I have been working on ID jobs for nearly 6 years now. Back in 2004, my health did not look so good and every time I stubbed a toe or experienced a small leg injury, I was back in a wheelchair. The weaknesses of my lower limbs after surviving 3 surgeries limited my mobility and I had to think of a career change where I could still use my passion in creating and the corporate life, which could sustain my family and my other goals, if paralysis were to strike again.

HOMME:
In terms of your jewellery, where to from here?

Poesy Liang:
To be honest I started everywhere else – UK, few European countries, USA, Japan, Taiwan. It is only now that I am back at home in Malaysia and Singapore. There were interests in the Middle East so perhaps I will have to pay them a visit. At the end of the day, I want to stay private if possible as it is best kept available to the discerning global jet setting crowd by word of mouth and be represented only with a very exclusive list of retailers. My top 3 cities for a flagship existence would likely be Monaco, Las Vegas and Tokyo. With the economic climate, I am glad I have no plans to grow bigger anytime soon.



HOMME:
Your ideal customer?

Poesy Liang:
Billionaires and nearly there... or high powered corporate dealmakers who are oozing it haha...

HOMME:
Your ideal man?

Poesy Liang:
hehe... Ideal man - a scholar non-partying aristocratic type.

HOMME:
In terms of the men's jewellery, where to next?

Poesy Liang:
Well, to every corporate boardroom, private yachts and jets. For men I only want to focus on cufflinks. Maybe a novel ashtray or two.

HOMME:
Why?

Poesy Liang:
The cufflinks collection came about because of the void in the market to give a good exclusive present within the range of 10-20k to avoid buying an entry level watch, which most distinguished men on the corporate level would not even bat an eyelid at. Also I have been a cufflink fanatic since I was young, so my collection can fit into a corporate woman's wardrobe without a problem as it is very understated that way. The whole idea is to have a favourite pair of links that is precious to you and wear only that pair during the best occasions (especially when there is a high profile deal to close and that is the time you want all the luck possible to back up your expertise). The fact that the cufflinks are made of precious metal and the finest stones also reflects in a choice of good investment. Not only that, the production is limited hence in time to come, it would be nice to be among the exclusively discerning group of collectors. As for the novel ashtray, I once heard of a diamond and ruby encrusted ashtray inside a



Ferrari owned by a prince. The ashtray was said to be worth more than his limited edition car and I thought to myself I would not mind doing that.

HOMME:
What makes you happiest?

Poesy Liang:
On a day to day I am happy being productive, squeezing in as many completed tasks without being stressed out about the logistics. I am also very happy when I have zero expectations toward life.

HOMME:
What cause is closest to your heart? Why?

Poesy Liang:
I have trouble keeping only one cause close to my heart. At the moment Helping Angels does the most to focus on underprivileged welfare and children's education. My main idea is to promote altruism among career professionals in their 20s through our volunteer programs – as these are the youths who will be leading the world in future and having the power to make a big difference. Thus, I think it is important that we plant the seed now in order to be able to tackle many causes more successfully with more well-trained people on board. My welfare interest ranges widely hence I juggle different types of short term project to gain better understanding on how to facilitate further help for the future. A great project last year, in collaboration with the Thai Cambridge Alumni, we supplied 500 blankets to North Thailand and Laos for winter. I urge more people to think outside of their own environment and practice the helping spirit – it is the only way to balance up our indulgences in life.

HOMME:
Which artist do you admire most?

Poesy Liang:
I like John Sargent for a painting that astounded and haunted me for 2 decades.

HOMME:
What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

Poesy Liang:
I do a lot of crazy things. They are all positive stuff and I try to outdo myself on a day to day basis.

HOMME:
Who is your favourite historical figure?

Poesy Liang:
I admire way too many people to name just one.

HOMME:
What upsets you the most?

Poesy Liang:
Needing the toilet and being stuck in a traffic jam.

HOMME:
What is your favourite bar?

Poesy Liang:
No Black Tie in Kuala Lumpur.

HOMME:
What gadget can't you live without?

Poesy Liang:
I hate to admit this, but it is a good mobile phone with a complete phonebook.

HOMME:
What are you most afraid of?

Poesy Liang:
Not fulfilling a promise, dying before returning the things I borrowed or dying before making amends where there is a wrong.

HOMME:
Where do you love to shop?

Poesy Liang:
I shop in all sorts of places, it is part of my job. It really boils down to how much I have to spend. This is a really vast subject since people pay me to shop for their homes and interior projects. However, I really love it when I discover treasures in small shops that have not been duplicated all over the world.