

Haute Living's Exclusive Interview with Mayu Bijoux designer, Mayu McCartt

By [Melissa Martin](#) on July 28th, 2010

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Mayu McCartt is a young up-and-comer in the jewelry world. This ambitious designer possesses both talent and unique perspective which merge into the flawlessness that is her Mayu Bijoux collection. Her work is feminine and delicate, yet strong. Her handcrafted pieces have a clear design vision with mass appeal. I had the unique opportunity to speak with Mayu about her life, experiences, and her new Mayu Bijoux line in this exclusive interview.

HL: Describe yourself growing up.

MM: I've always been fascinated with making things, whether it be food, clothing, shoes, paintings, or anything else. Creating something with my hands always makes me feel more relaxed and happy. I was lucky enough to be raised in a family that encouraged my creativity.

HL: Your mother is from Japan. Did you often spend time there as a child?

MM: I spent summers with my family in Kyoto, watching my grandfather in his painting studio, playing in ceramic studios, and making paper and folding origami with my grandmother, sewing clothing with my mom, and just about every other arts and craft activity we could think of to stay busy during the sweltering summers in Japan.

HL: How did you cultivate your creativity as an adult?

MM: I went to CCA in SF and Apparel Arts pattern school to prepare me for the next several years working in couture wedding gown boutiques in both Marin, CA and Paris, France.

HL: Has this experience educated you on the business side of the fashion industry as well?

MM: Everything I have done thus far has built up my business and vision as a designer. I had wonderful mentors and really enjoyed working developing close relationships with clients.

HL: What lead you into the direction of jewelry making?

MM: I had been working making dresses and costumes for a while. After moving back from Paris, I had some space to think about my next direction in life. My parents had moved to the Middle East and I planned a long visit, sure that I would find my inspiration there.



HL: Where did you travel in the Middle East?

MM: I had traveled extensively to different counties, but on this visit I saw new parts of the world — Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Dubai.

HL: What specifically about these countries inspired you?

MM: I wandered around the streets taking tons of pictures, and I sorted through textiles in the markets. But in the end, I was simply inspired by the colors and textures of life around me. I visited markets and museums and kept coming across traditional clothing and jewelry made of fabric and stone, which I later incorporated in my vision of creating Mayu Bijoux.

HL: You mentioned before that you used to be a dressmaker. Will you ever venture back into designing clothes?

MM: I love making clothes, but am able to be more dynamic right now designing jewelry. It seems easier to capture and wear all of those textures and colors when it's encapsulated in an accessory. With Mayu Bijoux, even friends with different styles and taste all manage to find a piece that they love and add to their wardrobes.

HL: How did you pick the name Mayu Bijoux?

MM: While my mother was pregnant, she was spinning and weaving silk from little white cocoons. So my parents gave me the name Mayu, which is spelled with the unique Japanese character meaning silk cocoon. Bijoux is French for jewel, and when looking it up in my dictionary it's defined as "a small dainty usually ornamental piece of delicate workmanship." I thought the two names together represented the line well, but still leave room for growth and transformation.

HL: What are your preferred materials to work with?

MM: Most of the pieces are a combination of silk, metal, and stones. All of the pieces end up looking a little different because I incorporate vintage ribbon, sometimes flowers, and even buttons and vintage chandelier beads. Any time I can find something from my collection of notions and vintage that makes the jewelry stronger, I can't help but add it, even if it means I can't really duplicate it.



HL: What are your favorite pieces in the collection?

MM: The line is always growing and changing. I love the [Silk Cuffs](#) because they are unique and easy to layer with other bracelets and bangles. I felt the line needed more cuff styles so I brought in the heavier metal pieces. People love them because they are bold. You can't help but notice the heavy layers of gold petals on the [Garden Cuff](#); I think this is currently my favorite piece. The [Gold Hoop Earrings](#) are also great. I can wear them with everything.

HL: You grew up in the Bay Area before you relocated to New York. Do you consider yourself a New Yorker at heart?

MM: As much as I love New York, and appreciate how it has welcomed me, I always miss the beauty of the Bay Area and many of my close friends and family there. I'm lucky enough to be able to visit home a few times a year.

HL: Do you use your Brooklyn neighborhood as inspiration?

MM: Of course there is so much to see in NY, which keeps me constantly inspired; the weather, the people, the artwork. You can find inspiration anywhere as long as you keep your eyes open.

HL: What do you do on a daily basis to keep yourself creatively stimulated?

MM: Photography has always helped me with composition in design as well as fine-tuning my vision as a designer. My long time friend Arian, who lives in L.A., and I send iPhone picture messages back and forth daily of what we see on each coast as a way to keep up with each other. One of my recent pieces was inspired by his daily photo.

HL: What's in store for the future of Mayu Bijoux?

MM: Recently my sister Ami has joined me in NY. We share much of the same background and I believe our personalities compliment each other in a way that is wonderful for this business. In fact, I credit her business savvy ways for much of the more recent developments of Mayu Bijoux. I think the dream would be able to get the business to a point where we could bring both of our strengths together to run it as a team. This Fall, I am planning to expand my bridal section of the business.

There is no doubt that with her creative aptitude and ambition to succeed that Mayu McCartt will thrive in her ventures. She is hosting an upcoming Mayu Bijoux Trunk Show and Garden Party on August 8, 2010 from 11am-4pm PT at 208 W. Blithedale Ave in Mill Valley, CA. To purchase pieces online from Mayu Bijoux, visit www.mayubijoux.com.

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