

CAROLINE ROSE DENT OF ROSIE WEISENCRANTZ REVEALS THE INFLUENCES THAT INSPIRE HER VINTAGE JEWELLERY DESIGNS



Dreams come true



SYLVIE HAIR COMBS



THIS BEAUTIFUL NECKLACE WAS MADE FOR A LITTLE GIRL, IN MEMORY OF HER DECEASED MOTHER

Caroline Rose Dent is well aware of the power of dreams. Her parents encouraged her to follow her own while growing up and studying, while her mother's own childhood dreams of becoming an actress led to black and white movies from the silent era onwards providing a backdrop of beauty and glamour to Caroline's life. And it was a character that appeared in one of her dreams who provided the business name and inspiration for her jewellery making later in life: Rosie Weisencrantz.

"Rosie Weisencrantz was a textile artist whose work was so incredibly beautiful, quite ethereal and delicate, that I awoke with a mixture of awe and envy towards this dream woman," Caroline recalls. "As my middle name is Rose anyway, I decided to adopt her as my alter ego for my jewellery. In many ways I feel that she has always been a part of me, but from that point on she had a name."

VINTAGE style

Prior to this however, Caroline started out as a weaver herself, having shown a natural talent for it at art college. It was also there that her lifelong love affair with all things vintage began. "I spent the best part of 1976 wearing a Victorian black silk whale-boned jacket with a tiny tail at the

back over a long dress, until it eventually shredded on me. I fell in love with the Twenties and Thirties, and surrounded myself with clothes, music and literature from those eras including a much-loved wind-up gramophone and lots of 78s, which to this day still travels with me on picnics."

After graduation, Caroline worked for 25 years as a freelance textile designer, selling her work around the world and being featured in books and magazines, as well as winning the International Textile Design award in 1994. "Although my textiles were very contemporary and cutting edge, my love affair with vintage still remained," she explains. Caroline's new creative outlet came about after the death of her beloved grandmother, whom she describes as "a curious mixture of superstition, mysticism and religion. Her tiny bungalow was full of strange paraphernalia, from rosaries and Buddhas to lucky charms, amulets and tarot cards. I inherited several of these fascinating pieces and it seemed the most natural thing to weave them together in one necklace so I could wear them all at the same time. This received so much attention that, when a shop asked if I could make some designs for them to sell, it seemed the natural way to go, and thus Rosie Weisencrantz Jewellery was born."

She continues, "It has been five years since then and my brand continues to evolve. When I look back at my first designs, they seem quite crude to me now,

"My dream is simple; sharing beauty by making pieces that are loved and treasured and make people happy."

As over time I have refined my techniques, extended my range of products and incorporated new elements. I think of my work as handcrafted vintage, and I believe what makes it unique is the combination of those two factors. Aside from linen thread, I use vintage and antique trinkets, amulets, beads, appliqué, buttons; basically anything unusual or lovely that I can find on my travels through antique markets. Because of my background in textiles, I use weaving and macramé techniques as opposed to silversmithing to link the treasures, and each necklace is finished off with my signature button and loop fastening."

BESPOKE beauty

Amongst her many inspirations, Caroline says that, "Victorian mourning jewellery in particular holds a deep fascination for me, as do lockets, religious and mystical amulets, and any objects that have a value to the wearer beyond its physical appearance and monetary value. Right now my inspiration comes from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, a potent mix of innocence, fantasy and nature."

In addition to her ready-to-wear range, which includes bracelets, earrings, necklaces

and hair adornments, Caroline also takes commissions, saying that, "Bespoke work is my favourite area of design, as I love to make pieces that hold meaning for the wearer and will hopefully be treasured forever. When someone approaches me for a design, they get my undivided attention whether it's a bridal, memorial or birthday piece. It is useful if a client lives nearby so they can drop by for a cup of tea and a chat about the piece they have in mind. These often incorporate mementos from their own life, ranging from grandma's favourite brooch or mother's precious locket, to a button from a pair of childhood pyjamas, anything that holds a special significance for them."

LOVING memory

One of Caroline's most recent and meaningful commissions was to make a necklace for a six year old girl who had tragically lost her mother to terminal cancer. "Just before her mother died, her daughter said that she was going to bring her pink flowers in heaven, and I used this as the theme for the necklace," says Caroline. "Over the next month I collected various pieces, including some sparkly pink flower trinkets, a beautiful old enamel locket with pink flowers painted on it and some tiny heart-shaped ones, which all had photos of the mother and child placed inside. It was such a pretty necklace which everyone loved, and it was deeply rewarding to make something that carried so much meaning, albeit in such sad circumstances."

Caroline adds, "In this age of rampant consumerism, as we slide towards ecological meltdown, we all need to slow down and re-evaluate how we live, and the choices we make in our everyday lives. My dream is simple; sharing beauty by making pieces that are loved and treasured and make people happy."



BRYONY HAIR BAND



LEONIE TIARA



DAISY TIARA AND ALIJAH NECKLACE

Where to shop

CHECK OUT THESE COMPANIES WHICH OFFER GENUINE VINTAGE COMPONENTS, OR MODERN-DAY EQUIVALENTS

Love Vintage lives up to its name, selling a huge range of unused vintage beads and components dating from the 1920s-1980s. Visit www.lovevintage-beads.co.uk or call 020 8455 0138 for details.



My Vintage Charms' website is jam-packed with unique and rare items, such as these dark mesh connector bows, £1.85 for three, and brass bow pendant, £1.50 each. Visit www.myvintagecharms.com to see their full range.

These gorgeous Eighties lucite beads from **Pandorion Beads** are ideal for creating a vintage look, with individual prices ranging from 5p-45p. Visit www.pandorion.co.uk or call 01206 868623 for more details.



CONTACTS BOOK

See Caroline's full range of beautiful jewellery at www.rosieweisencrantz.com or call 020 7263 7655 to find out more.