

# Fabio Salini, The Jewel of Rome

Galuchat, copper, titanium, carbonium: a sophisticated full pavé metamorphosis



The designer Fabio Salini

I have known **Fabio Salini** for many years now, but still every time I visit his secluded atelier in the heart of Rome - just off Piazza Farnese - the sense of awe is overwhelming. I wouldn't call his pieces simply jewellery: unique masterpieces, the result of keen imagination and sophistication seamlessly at work, these are **the most versatile expression of what I consider to be contemporary high jewellery**: a combination of genius, a vast culture and a deep knowledge of the craft. This interview is an opportunity to appreciate his views on haute joaillerie.

**Titanium, carbonium, copper. What would you say is so enthralling in these materials, and why would you decide to weave them into high jewellery collections?**

**FS:** I have never ceased **experimenting with materials** that could be unique to my collections through combinations of peculiar qualities of light, colours and volumes. Right from my beginnings in this profession I have replaced the diamonds pavé - which was the fad at the time - with rock crystal as the main element of my jewellery; this choice would serve the dual purpose of creating my signature style, and of bestowing it with a sense of lightness in the tradition of the great jewellers of the 1930s: they had boldly introduced rock crystal back then, and their influence is indeed immediately visible in my early collections. My constant pursuit of new materials, colours and textures which will **emphasize the beauty of gemstones has led me to use titanium, carbonium, oxidized copper**. But only a very skilled craftsmanship will be able to exalt these plain materials, in stark contrast with the deep luminosity of gems, merging them in blends of intense brightness or delicate shades of colours.

**Galuchat. The combinations of shapes and colours in your collection is simply stunning: where does your interest for stingray leather come from, and how does it translate into jewellery?**

**FS:** Galuchat responds perfectly to my purpose of creating striking effects. Its wild resilience and uneven texture offers the ideal requisites to



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enhance the perfection of gemstones. **The versatility of this material lends itself to be molded into interesting shapes** and volumes: an ideal background to gems of diverse cuts. While the wide array of hues it can be dyed with, affords us countless chromatic combinations with the colours of the stones themselves.

**You have shown us an amazing number of different pieces from your superb collection. Is there an object which is your favourite?**

**FS:** No, I do not have a favorite object. **Every work is a step of an evolutionary process in my personal research of aesthetic harmony.** I am equally fond of each of them, as every single piece is the result of a very specific idea, and the expression of a particular emotional phase. I could probably say that there are indeed a few works that I am more proud of, and those would be the ones where I believe I have achieved the perfect balance between the demands of perfect jewellery craftsmanship and those of design.

**What is high jewellery today, and what has changed over time, in terms both of style and value?**

**FS:** The art of high jewellery is gradually distancing itself from what was once conceived as a mere composition - where a goldsmith would set a choice of valuable gems - now rather favouring a more organic, design-oriented perspective.

Innovative research results in a fusion of the most imaginative shapes and media, all aimed to create rather unusual effects. **As if the extreme factor (i.e. extremely opulent, extremely colorful, extremely imaginative) were in fact the prerequisite for 'the ultimate jewellery'."**

**Can we speak of trends in high jewelry? If so, what do you feel is the driving one at present?**

**FS:** Absolutely: jewellery - as everything else - does follow trends, although I personally endeavor to set my work apart, in a constant quest of uniqueness and originality. Being influenced by the present standards is of course inevitable.

Right now for instance, **I feel that contemporary art is crucial for my creative process:** it is teaching me to look beyond the purely aesthetic expression of the work, encouraging me to impart a new depth of meaning and emotion in my pieces.

**Three names: the most prominent designers from the past and contemporary landscape of Haute Joaillerie, and the most promising emerging talent of the future.**

**FS:** As for the past, only one name would not be enough! I can think of several great artists that have left a mark in the world of jewellery. To name a few: **Fulco di Verdura, Suzanne Belperron, Paul Flato, Jean Schlumberger.**

I would consider **JAR** the greatest contemporary artist. **The great revolution Joel Arthur Rosenthal has brought in the art of jewellery,** has been to abandon the pavé as a means to create volume, opting for a very subtle interpretation of its techniques instead, where it is used to delicately modulate light effects and colours. In brief, we are witnessing the revival of the Art of Jewellery: a new vision, which is nonetheless reminiscent of Cellini. As for the future... what could I possibly say? Well... considering that jewellery artists have always found recognition with maturity, **I would like to put myself forward at the ripe old age of fifty, as he future enfant prodige of the 21st century!**

*Text by Federica Frosini  
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