



WOMEN'S JEWELRY ASSOCIATION

WJA ANNOUNCES 2023 JEWELRY LOUPE PROJECT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

April 20, 2023 (New York, NY) – Today, the Women's Jewelry Association (WJA) announces its new cohort of participants for its nationwide Jewelry Loupe Project program. WJA selected fourteen emerging designers to participate in this year's program from over 100 applications – a record number for the organization.

Alice Son, Ava Schlesinger, Betsy Yates, Caitlin Velázquez-Fagley, Jennifer Hillyer, June Cream, Kelly Lannen, Maura Green, Olivia Sugarman, Renata Cambauva, Sarah Bernstein, Sardwell, Tamsin Rasor, and Tiffany Bausch Weld will participate in the Jewelry Loupe Program between April – September 2023 to develop and launch their jewelry collections.

“Now in its fifth year, WJA's Jewelry Loupe Project is a staple program in our community. The level of mentorship, training and networking these emerging designers receive is really unparalleled. We are proud of the designers that commit to the rigorous program and we are grateful for the mentors and experts who dedicate so much of their time to uplift the next generation of designers and business owners,” shares WJA Executive Director Jennifer Markas.

This year's mentors include a talented line up of designers, on-air talent, and seasoned industry professionals: Angela Monaco, April Higashi, Ariel Gordon, Valerie Madison, Marie McCarthy, Viviana Langhoff, Michele Lau, Victoria Wieck, Morgan Miller, Rekha-Leigh Punch, Tanya Parikh, Jacqueline Raffi, Kate Rogowski, Ivette Nersesyanyan-Stephanopoulos, and Lilly Mullen.

WJA's Jewelry Loupe Project is a free, six-month business development and mentorship program for emerging designers within their first five years of business. The program, which was developed in 2019 by former San Francisco WJA chapter leader Marie McCarthy of Fiat Lux, is now in its fifth year. Thanks to support from De Beers, WJA was able to expand the program nationwide in 2022.

“At De Beers, we deeply value the contributions that women make to our businesses, the diamond and jewelry industry, and all of society. We are committed to accelerating economic inclusion and uplifting diverse voices to help shape the future through various programs which support and provide opportunities for women as part of our 'Building Forever' ambitions. We are proud to support WJA's Jewelry Loupe Project as we are aligned in our core values,” shares Céline Assimon, CEO of De Beers Jewellers and De Beers Forevermark.

To date, WJA has trained and mentored nearly 50 emerging designers. Each designer is paired with a mentor for the length of the program. Designers attend virtual sessions hosted by experts in design, marketing, sourcing, manufacturing, retail, packaging and pricing. The program culminates with a critique in the fall and mentors provide constructive feedback to prepare the designers to launch their collections. Anna Samsonova of Samsonova Consulting, and a special projects consultant to WJA, is helping facilitate the expert sessions and coordinate parts of the program in 2023.

To learn more, and to support the Jewelry Loupe Project, please contact Jennifer Markas, WJA Executive Director, at jennifer@womensjewelryassociation.com.

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About the Women's Jewelry Association:

WJA's mission is to help women in the jewelry and watch industries advance and develop professionally through networking, education, and leadership development. For more information, contact Jennifer Markas, WJA Executive Director at jennifer@womensjewelryassociation.com.

About WJA's Jewelry Loupe Project:

WJA offers emerging designers access to well-established designers, business owners, and seasoned industry professionals to explore design, launch their first line, and develop marketing strategies and business acumen.

ABOUT DE BEERS:

Established in 1888, De Beers is the only global diamond luxury brand that starts at source. Blending unparalleled expertise in the discovery and selection of diamonds with unique creativity and craftsmanship, the brand transforms nature's rarest treasures into distinctive jewellery designs through its Jewellery Houses, De Beers Jewellers and De Beers Forevermark, and is present in the most exclusive locations around the world, as well as offering leading education and laboratory testing services via De Beers Institute of Diamonds.

De Beers is committed to ensuring each diamond it discovers creates a lasting positive impact for the people and the place where it is found. This comes with a pledge to build a better future – one that is fairer, safer, cleaner and healthier, in which communities thrive, ethical practices are maintained, and the natural environment is protected. This long-term commitment is called Building Forever. Discover more at debeersgroup.com.