

WJA EXPANDS JEWELRY LOUPE PROJECT NATIONWIDE TO TRAIN MORE EMERGING DESIGNERS WITH SUPPORT FROM DE BEERS

April 20, 2022 (New York, NY) - The Women's Jewelry Association (WJA) is excited to announce the expansion of its jewelry design business incubator across North America with support from De Beers.

"One of De Beers' company visions and goals for the future is to accelerate economic inclusion and support diverse voices to help shape the future of our business, communities, and society. We are proud to support WJA in the 2022 Jewelry Loupe Project as we are aligned in our core values." - Charles Stanley, President De Beers North America

With De Beers' partnership, WJA is able to keep the Jewelry Loupe Project free-of-charge and support more emerging designers, especially those from underserved and underrepresented communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ designers from across the country. De Beers is also offering complimentary access to its Diamond Foundation course for all participants. This year the program received nearly 100 applications from across the country. Participants for WJA's 2022 Jewelry Loupe Project have been selected and the program commences this month.

WJA's Jewelry Loupe Project was founded in 2019 by local chapter leaders in Northern California with a goal to train new designers on how to launch a jewelry business or how to elevate their existing business. The program's success over the past three years is due, in part, to its unique incubator model. Designers are paired with industry mentors for one-on-one support and monthly instruction is led by expert contributors from various parts of the jewelry supply chain.

"I developed the Jewelry Loupe Project to not only assist emerging designers, as most mentorships do, but also to build a strong community of dynamic jewelers aided by a large group of industry veterans. From there, most participants actively aid in the program beyond their year, essentially paying it forward and continually fostering a large community network of jewelers," - Marie McCarthy, Co-Founder of FiatLux and WJA Past President, Northern California Chapter.

The incubator's virtual-based training modules cover a variety of important topics, including:

- Concept and Design with Prerna Sethi and Lauren Hardwell Godfrey
- Marketing and Branding with Temi Adamolekun and Alexei Angelides
- Wholesale and Retail Partnerships with Lauren Wolf and Alicia Goodwin
- Sourcing and Materials with Jared Holstein and Noelle Habib
- Tradeshows and Sales with Morgan Miller and Randi Molofsky
- Packaging with Scott Wolfe of Casadevall
- E-Commerce with Ariel Gordon Maffei

Designers meet with their mentors on a monthly basis to discuss how the trainings can be incorporated into their work and how they can rethink their collections based off new information provided. The program closes this September with a final studio critique where all designers share their final collections through a sales pitch and, in turn, are given feedback by program mentors and representatives from WJA.

Past participants of the Jewelry Loupe Project had the opportunity to showcase their collections in February at MELEE THE SHOW in Tucson, Arizona. WJA looks forward to highlighting this year's Jewelry Loupe Project participants at future tradeshows and industry events.

For a complete list of the program's 2022 mentors, designers, and expert contributors please visit: <https://www.thejewelryloupeproject.com/> To sponsor the program or participate as a future mentor, please contact WJA Membership & Operations Manager, Rachel Jurisz at rachel@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, visit www.womensjewelryassociation.com.

For more information, contact:

Jennifer Markas, WJA Executive Director
jennifer@womensjewelryassociation.com