

MATERIA

BOHEMICA



THE ALPHA
Round Brilliant Cut

PRECIOSA

PRECIOSA

Director's Note

They

say that quality is priceless. Once we become aware of the true value of quality, of how much more something of quality has to offer, the less we are inclined to compromise. Just as one can taste the difference between a cup of coffee made with slow roasted organic beans from Central America and one that comes from a waiting room vending machine, or as one might inevitably feel the difference after enjoying a glass of fine wine as opposed to one without an appellation, so too can one tell the difference between fine jewelry stones and lackluster, hastily produced imitations. In my opinion, life is simply too short for bad coffee and bad wine, let alone bad jewelry.

Jewelry itself has a broad range of functions and meanings, from investment opportunities to spur-of-the-moment declarations of love, to wearable tokens of religious or spiritual identity. Since prehistory, our ancestors have been making and wearing jewelry, first from animal skins and bones, then later from unearthed precious gemstones, and now from man-made, responsibly sourced alternatives virtually indistinguishable from their naturally formed counterparts. Since its invention, humans have often attributed deeply personal meaning or symbolism to jewelry, such as luck, love, health, remembrance of a passed loved one or even a single memory. Sometimes the significance of a piece of jewelry is simply its origin: where it came from and who made it. When a piece of jewelry has a story, it becomes all the more valuable. This knowledge and these stories are the magic of jewelry making, and as a producer of fine jewelry stones, Preciosa understands the importance of both.

Every continent, every country and every region has its own unique set of resources. From coffee to fine jewelry stones, the best-in-class products are often the result of the local people's ability to hone their natural resources, sometimes over hundreds of years of trial and error. The Czech Republic has been known for its high-quality glass (and great tasting beer) since the Middle Ages. For centuries, craftsmen from the Bohemian region have perfected various glass cutting and polishing techniques, of which some are still used today. Our story, the story of Bohemian glassmaking, is one about quality. Every single one of our fine jewelry stones has always been and is still made in a small village in North Bohemia of around 3,600 inhabitants. This is Preciosa's origin, and this is what the laser engraved logo on each of our Alpha stones substantiates.

No matter the casting method, plating or design, fine jewelry always comes down to the quality of the stones. With that, I invite you to enjoy your favorite coffee or sip your favorite wine while reading this special issue of *Materia Bohemica* dedicated to fine jewelry stones, and may it remind you that quality and origin certainly do matter.

Jan Štiller





6 **Meet The Alpha**



14 **Bringing The Alpha to Life**



20 **86 Steps to Perfection**




32 **Behind the Scenes with Zorya**



40 **Art(ists) of Embellishment**



58 **Made in India**



64 **Origin Matters**



66 **A note from Preciosa's Managing Director of Fine Jewelry Stones, Pavel Fait**



Publisher
Preciosa, a.s.

Editor in Chief
Jan Štiller

Editorial
Gabriela Dvořáková
Colleen Klei
Michal Šťastný
Johana Kozmiková
Florence Li

Creative Direction
Irena Tesarčíková

Graphic Design
Lukáš Ráček

Contributors
Jan Dolejší
Milan Mošna
Marek Novotný
Petr Pazdera
Filip Šlapal

STILL LIFE IMAGES

Concept and Styling
Boys Play Nice

Jewelry Design
Zorya

Photographer
Boys Play Nice

Illustrator
Maria Makeeva

Behind-the-scenes Photographer
Jan Dolejší

DESIGN SHOWCASE

Featured Designers
Bibhu Mohapatra
Ek Thongprasert
Kerin Rose Gold
Sarran Youkongdee



MEET THE ALPHA

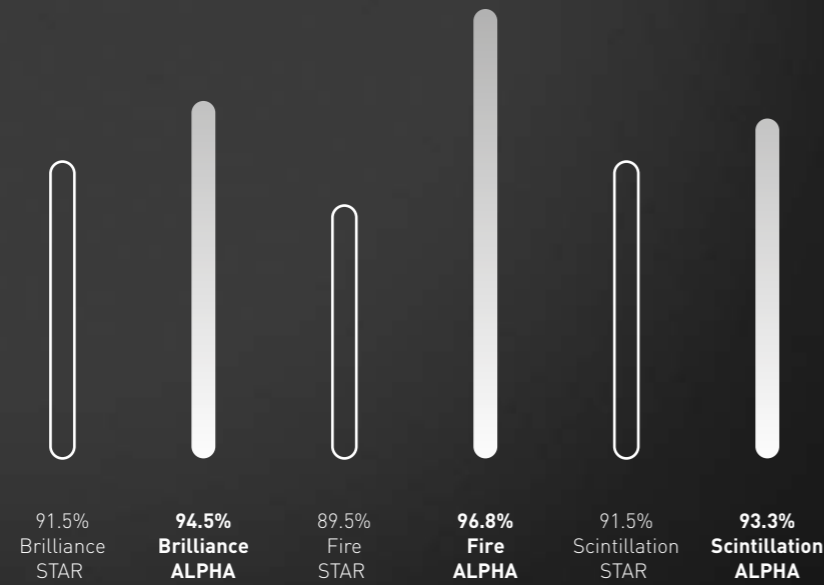
A paragon of geometrical precision, our re-imagined Round Brilliant cut achieves the most ideal ratio of brilliance, scintillation and fire ever exemplified by round-cut cubic zirconia. Named after the first letter in the Greek alphabet, the Alpha cut pays tribute to those ancient Greek mathematicians credited with the invention of geometry, upon whose intellect and pioneering spirit we so heavily rely.

Preciosa's Alpha Round Brilliant cut was meticulously developed in-house with the latest diamond-cutting software to enhance cubic zirconia's natural optical properties and aesthetic characteristics, resulting in a quantifiable worldwide industry benchmark. Though the parameters are designed to enhance the qualities of cubic zirconia, the Alpha cut extends to much of our fine jewelry stones portfolio, including nanogems.

Despite the material, each of our "Alpha stones" is a lasting testament to Preciosa's best-in-class patented cutting and polishing technology and traditional Bohemian heritage, easily verified by a microscopic laser-engraved Preciosa logo as proof of origin and authenticity.

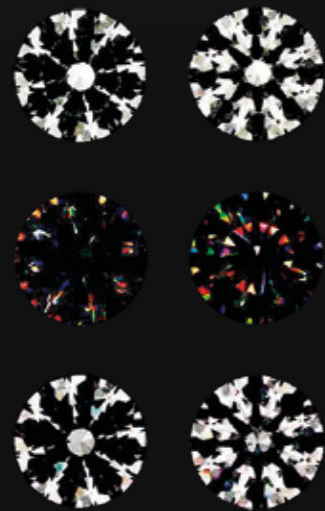
Balance

The results of a test performed with OGI Systems' high-resolution diamond grading technology, Scanox Proportion HD, shows that Alpha-cut cubic zirconia possess an overall higher and more well-balanced ratio of fire, brilliance and scintillation compared to the previously Star-cut stones.



Preciosa Alpha stones possess the ideal balance of fire, brilliance and scintillation. Confirmed by a third party of experts in Antwerp, Belgium—the diamond capital of Europe—the Alpha Round Brilliant cut exceeds the measurable performance of Preciosa's current Star Round Brilliant-cut stones.

STAR ALPHA

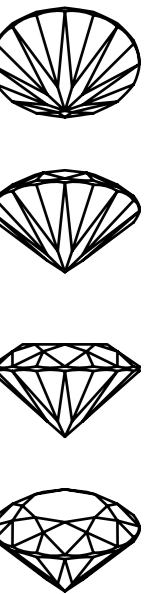


BRILLIANCE: the overall visual perception and degree of "brightness" of a gemstone based on the physical laws of refraction and reflection.

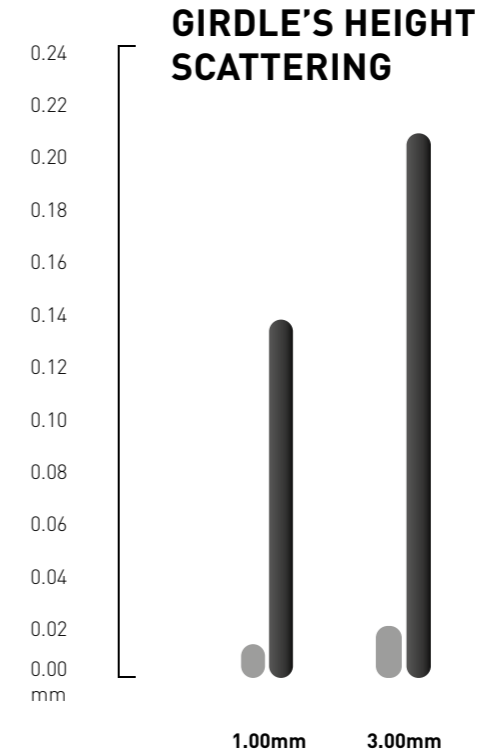
FIRE: the ability of a gemstone to split and disperse light in the colors of the spectrum.

SCINTILLATION: the frequency and degree of intensity of the flashes of light emitted by a gemstone as it is moved under a light.

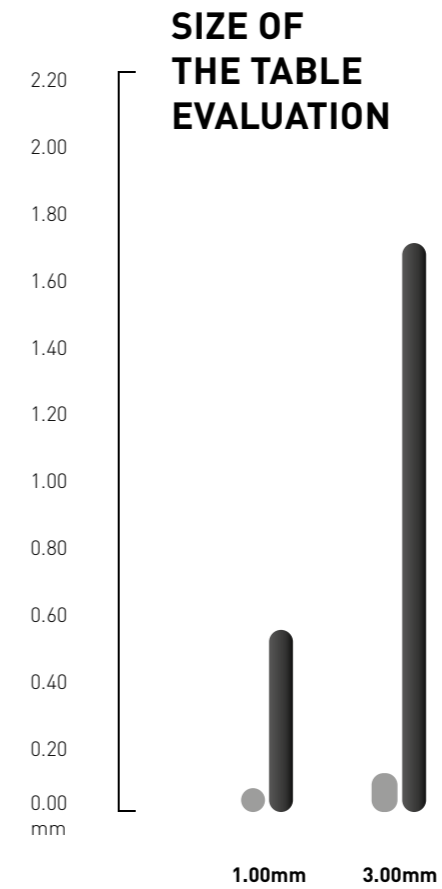
Geometry



2σ of the girdle's height ± (σ = standard deviation)
The girdle's average height

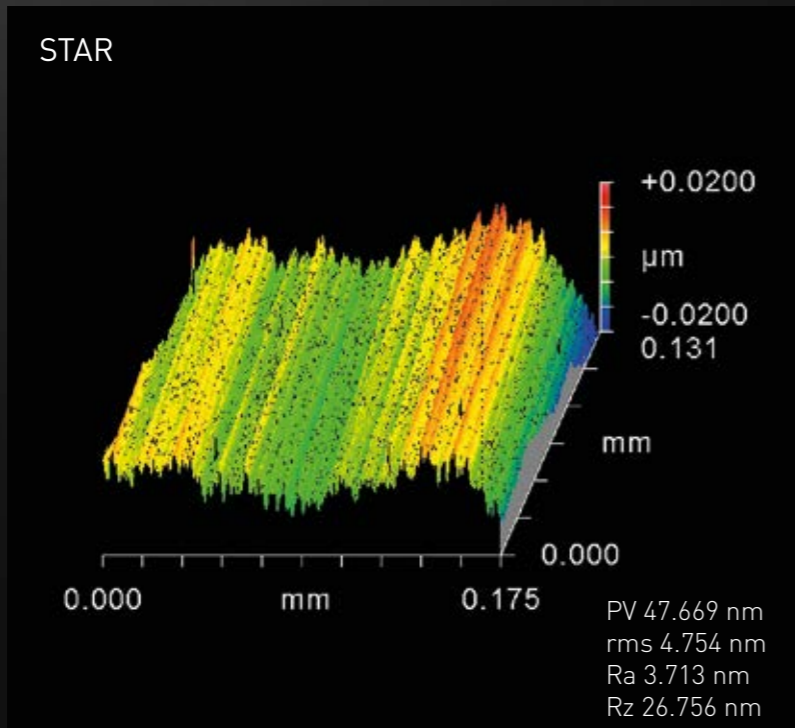
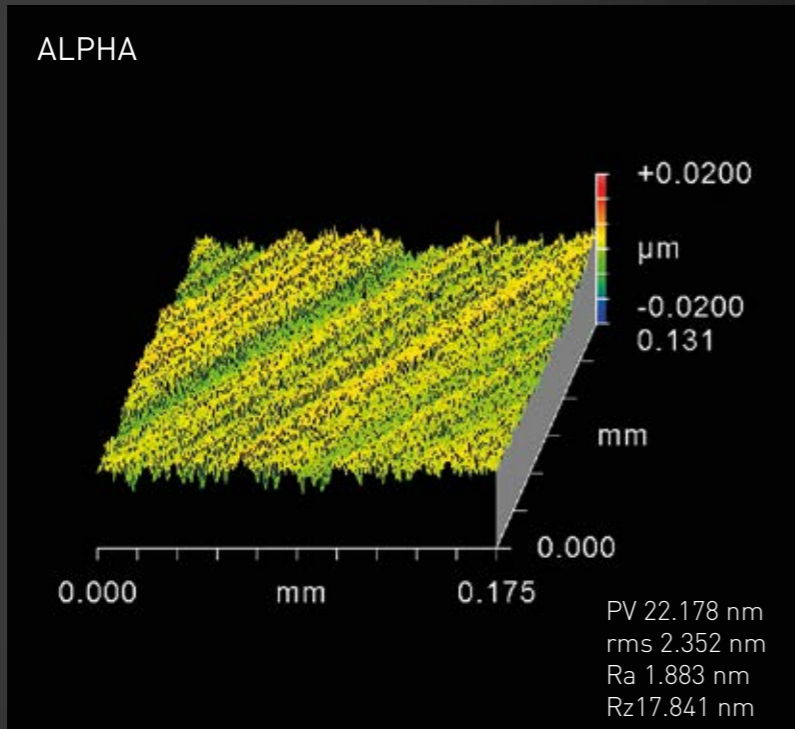


2σ of the table height ± (σ = standard deviation)
The average size of the table



The Alpha Round Brilliant cut ensures the lowest tolerance for geometrical deviation of any competing round brilliant cut on the global market. The curvature, girdle height and table size have each been adjusted to achieve a round brilliant-cut stone with as close to perfect stability as technologically possible – about 10-15% more stable than standard round brilliant-cut stones.

Polishing



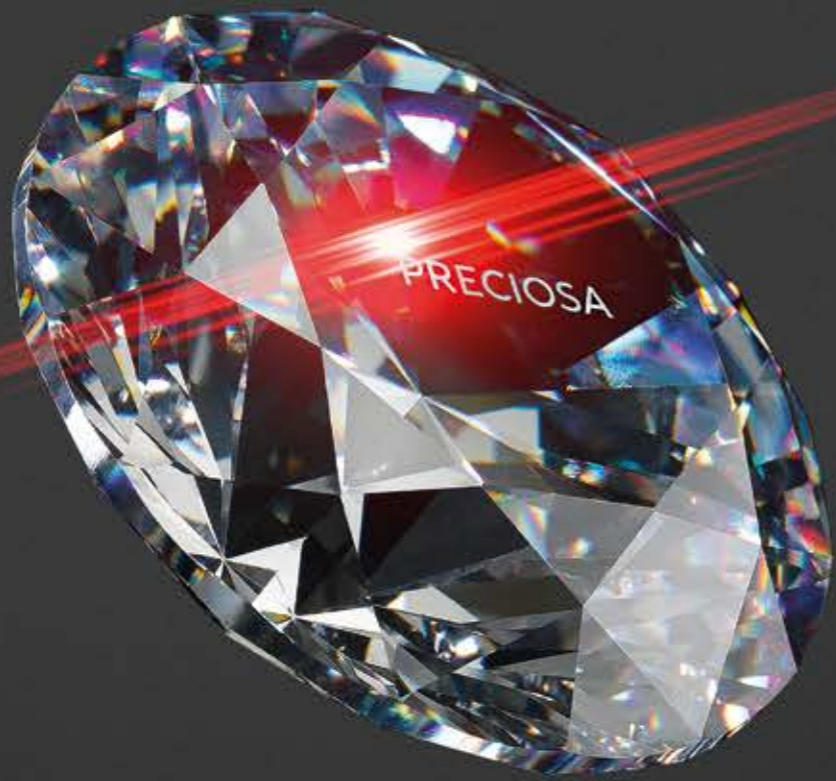
Preciosa's patented polishing technology and technical know-how is virtually unrivalled. To ensure the highest level of quality, Preciosa uses Zygo's 3D Optical Profiler, which is able to capture up to two million data points in a matter of seconds. The polishing on the table of a Preciosa Alpha-cut stone is 100% superior to that of competing round brilliant cuts, and on the facets an impressive 25% superior.



Preciosa uses a highly sophisticated camera system that ensures impeccable precision and a diameter tolerance of no more than ± 0.01 millimeter.

Quality Control

Laser Engraving



In an ever-expanding market full of choices, each with a more competitive price than the next, assurance of quality and responsible business practices is becoming increasingly more difficult to verify. Preciosa's laser engraving service for fine jewelry stones not only combats counterfeiting and ensures best-in-class quality, but also serves as proof that each laser-engraved stone was responsibly crafted in the Czech Republic according to EU legislation.

A regular feature of our Alpha-cut (Round Brilliant) stones, our laser-engraved Preciosa logo is undetectable to the naked eye. The laser engraving service is also completely customizable and applicable to any fine jewelry stone—regardless of shape, size or color—upon special request.

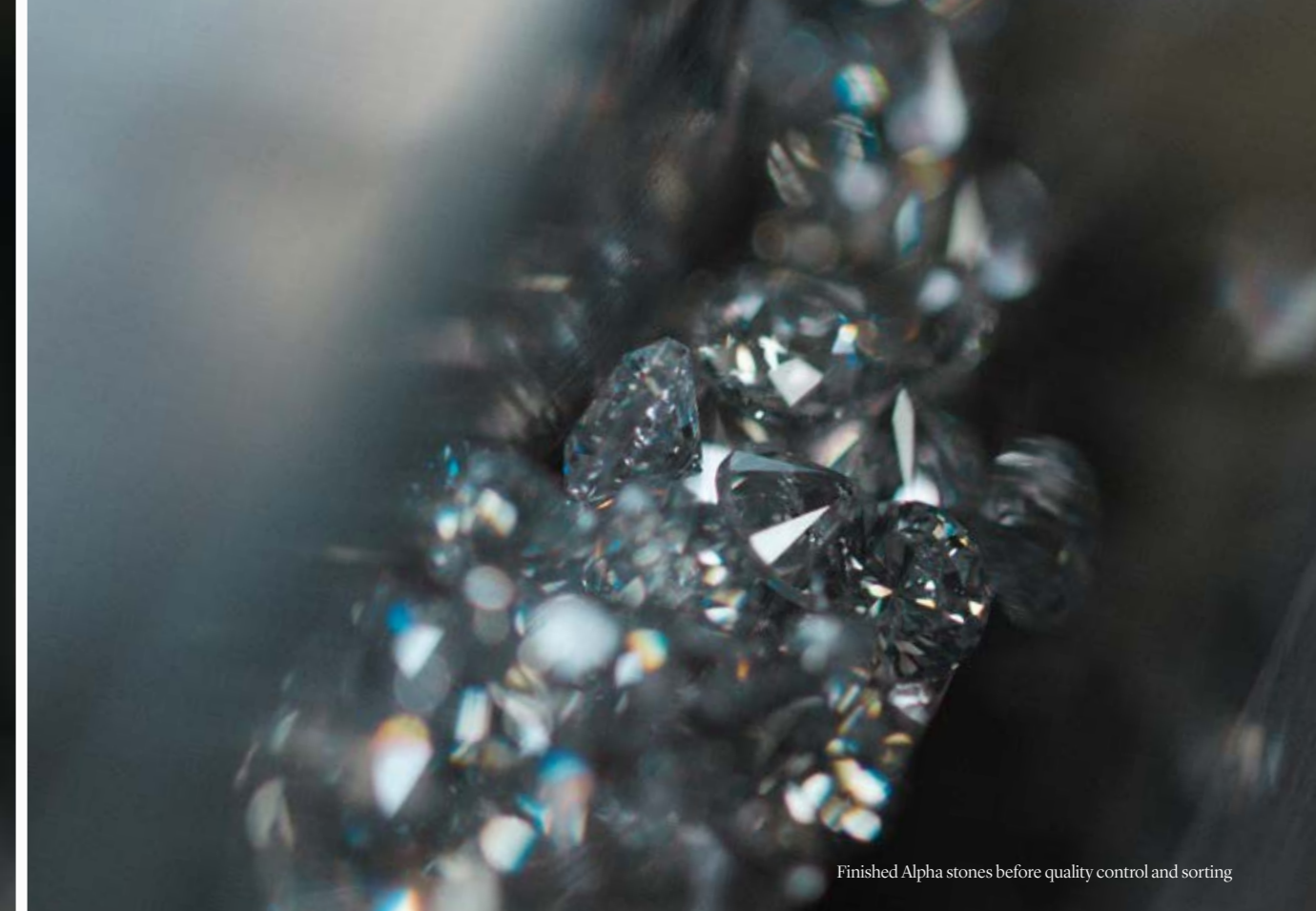


Bringing The Alpha to Life

Preciosa's head of innovations for fine jewelry stones, Jan Mlejnek, introduces the Alpha, Preciosa's re-invented Round Brilliant cut, and explains just how and why it's qualifiable as "second to none."



Preciosa Alpha stones during the cutting process



Finished Alpha stones before quality control and sorting

Can you talk about the name? Why is it called the Alpha?

We're calling our new round brilliant cut the Alpha because it's the best-in-class cut available on the worldwide market, especially when applied to cubic zirconia. Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and is often used to signify, as a name, the first or best version of something – it's literally second to none, like the alpha dog in a pack. The name is also a nod to the ancient Greek mathematicians who invented geometry, which is so important to our work.

How does this cut compare to the previous version?

To put it simply, Preciosa Alpha stones possess the ideal balance of fire, brilliance and scintillation. Confirmed by a third party of experts, the Alpha Round Brilliant cut far exceeds the measurable performance of our previous version, called "the Star." Add to this several improvements in the geometry of the girdle and table, and you have a cut that is engineered to maximize the optical properties and aesthetic appearance specifically of cubic zirconia. Lastly, we've included on each of our Alpha Round Brilliant-cut stones a microscopic, laser engraved Preciosa logo to serve as proof of origin.

And compared to other round brilliant-cut stones on the global market?

The same holds true; especially regarding the tolerance for geometrical deviation. Preciosa's Alpha cut consistently, quantifiably shows the lowest tolerance of any competing round brilliant cut.

What colors and materials are available in the Alpha round brilliant cut?

While the cut was developed specifically to bring out the characteristics of cubic zirconia, it's applicable to our

nanogems, synthetic spinel and corundum as well as our genuine black spinel and red garnet; the only material in our fine jewelry stones portfolio to which it cannot be applied is marcasite, which has its own unique set of specific cuts. Every Alpha-cut stone will also feature a laser engraving, even if it's not cubic zirconia. Regarding the colors, simply open our catalogue and choose! The cut comes in our regular assortment of colors for each material.

Is there a difference in the number of facets for smaller and larger sizes?

Yes, the smaller sizes (0.70mm to 1.45mm) have 41 facets, while the larger sizes (1.50mm to 8mm) have 57 facets.

What are cubic zirconia's defining characteristics and advantages?

The most important aspects of cubic zirconia are fire, brilliance and scintillation which is why the Alpha Round Brilliant cut is so meaningful. Furthermore, unlike naturally occurring diamonds, which can contain flaws and inclusions, cubic zirconia is incredibly consistent. This also applies to color. Cubic zirconia maintains its color extremely well, and since they are man-made, the range of color (and, in Preciosa's case, coatings) is broader and ever expanding.

What makes Preciosa's cubic zirconia world class?

It's all about the quality, the symmetry and the convergence of the facets. Over the years, Preciosa has developed some unique technology in-house, and has even patented a series of camera systems, which, when combined with our innovative and talented team members, allows us to achieve this industry-benchmark level of excellence and precision.



Preciosa's patented camera system gathers dozens of pieces of information about a single finished Alpha stone in less than a second



Alpha stones after their final polishing

How long did it take to develop?

Designing the cut itself took between one-and-a-half to two years. Part of this time was devoted to perfecting the laser engraving, since this is the first stone on which we're offering the service. It was important that the logo remain completely invisible to the naked eye and since this cut is offered across a wide variety of materials, it underwent a lot of testing.

Cubic zirconia is traditionally used for jewelry. Is it possible or have you seen it used across other segments?

It's true. Since its invention, cubic zirconia has spent most of its life in the realm of fine jewelry and I think anyone can see why. However, we're beginning to see designers test the boundaries of cubic zirconia's usage. In the era of Instagram, the jewelry and design market (in general) is becoming more saturated, and thus more competitive, every day. More than ever, creatives are searching for special material and cubic zirconia is high quality, price competitive and easy to responsibly source. I predict that we will see its uses diversify across timepieces, handbags, footwear, eye and headwear and maybe even textile. It's very exciting and keeping us extremely busy, but also extremely motivated.

"Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and is often used to signify, as a name, the first or best version of something... The name is also a nod to the ancient Greek mathematicians who invented geometry, which is so important to our work."



86

Steps to Perfection

Zorya tells the story of The Alpha with a single stone
for every step of the cutting and polishing process.











Behind the Scenes

with ZORYA

Prague-based design studio, Zorya, discusses the one-of-a-kind 86-step necklace they created to commemorate the introduction of the Alpha Round Brilliant cut.



Where did the idea of showcasing the 86 individual steps to create the Alpha cut come from? You essentially turned the production process itself into a work of art.

Zdeněk: While visiting the factory in Jablonné v Podještědí, where Preciosa fine jewelry stones are made, we came up with the idea of making a necklace that would showcase the 86 steps by using 86 stones, each showing the next stage in the process. We were impressed and inspired by how complicated the process actually is. It became not only about showcasing the cut but also telling the story, starting with the raw material and ending with a perfectly cut and polished stone.

Daniel: What's incredible is that the stones are clearly created by machines, but when you visit the factory, you realize how big a role human hands play in the production process. It's the attention to detail that makes this product special and we really wanted to focus on that. The detail is also what distinguishes the Alpha stones from similar existing products, and it isn't due to the machines but rather the people.

Zdeněk: Details are the most important aspect for our collections and projects we work on like these. Details are what creates a strong foundation for creativity, and the Alpha Round Brilliant cut is entirely based on detail. It represents perfect geometry and balance, which is partly why we were so eager to work with it.

What was the most challenging part of the creation process?

Daniel: Since the necklace begins with raw cubic zirconia, called "rough," and ends with a single finished stone, it meant we had to figure out how to set 85 different unfinished versions, each with its own proportion. We worked a lot with 3D models to make sure that the stones would match their settings.

Zdeněk: There is also a drawing for every stone and its setting, so there were 86 different sketches we had to follow. *[Laughing]* Seriously, each stone and each setting are original. We were in constant dialogue with Jan Mlejnek, Preciosa's head of innovations for fine jewelry stones, asking him questions and trying to figure out together how to make this idea work. The only way to showcase the cut by showing each of its 86 steps was to tailor each setting exactly to its stone.

Then the setting, as a whole necklace, is really something special? How did you create it?

Daniel: The metal part itself is rather conservative and minimalist; you can't really tell how special the setting is just by looking at it. Aside from its hyper customization, the necklace was specially created to maximize the amount of light able to pass through each stone. This type of setting was originally developed for diamonds and its purpose is to highlight the material's natural characteristics, allowing the stones to shine as much as possible. Because each of our 86 stones is slightly different, the light passes through each of them in a different way. You can actually see the brilliance increase as the stone approaches its finished state.

Are you pleased with the result? Were there any surprises during the production process?

Daniel: Now, looking at the piece, we notice how busy the first half of the necklace is compared to the second half. The bigger changes to the stone happen in the first half of the process, but the second half is also fascinating because of how subtle and delicate the cutting work is; the stones look almost the same, but they're not. Again, this shows how detailed these stones are and I think it makes the difference.

Can you talk more about your visit to the Preciosa factory?

Daniel: This wasn't our first visit, as we've worked with Preciosa for a while now, but this time was different. We noticed many more innovative solutions under development and creativity in general. We also feel that the people there are very open to speaking about their work. You can tell they are excited and feel a sense of pride in what they do.

Zdeněk: Production of fine jewelry stones is really interesting. I love seeing all the machines being operated by a gentle human touch. It's truly captivating to see how big of a production site is necessary to make something so tiny. The contrast of the big machines and the small stones they create is really something. Imagine a huge, burly man leaving the pub to go home and knit a delicate pair of socks – it's something like this. [Smiling] I also can't get over the attention to detail; every single stone is measured and checked.

What are your preferred jewelry making techniques? Do you use any machines? Have you ever developed a new approach to something?

Daniel: Many of our pieces are created using a combination of different steps and techniques used across the jewelry making industry, but they often need small tweaks. This piece, for example, wasn't created using traditional methods because the setting was so specific.

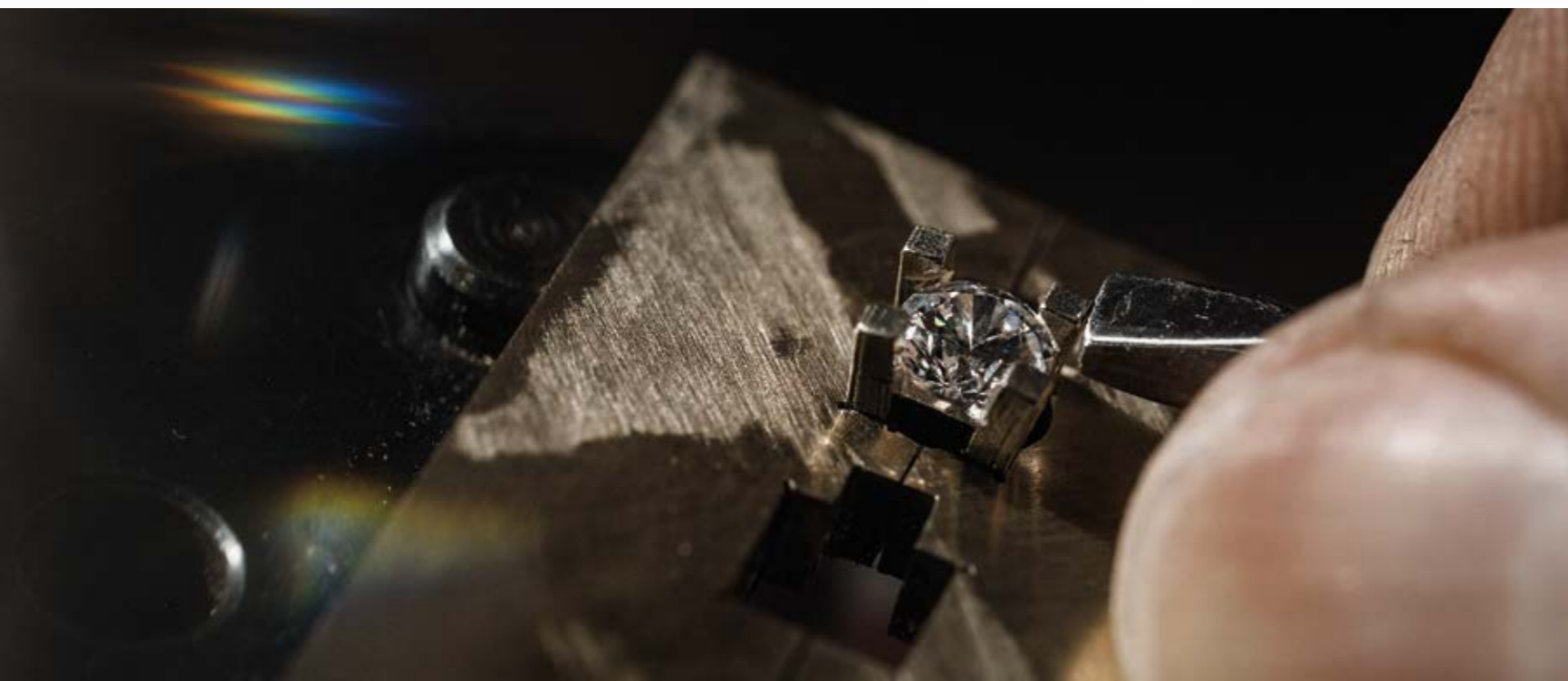
Zdeněk: The cups are square, and the edges are sharp to highlight the facets of the stone and the geometry of the cut. Square-shaped cups are not traditional, and even if you find some, they won't have sharp edges. Fortunately, we have a very experienced and talented team, who were able to turn our vision into reality.

How many people worked on this project and how long did it take to complete?

Daniel: Six members of our team worked on the necklace and several more from Preciosa, who prepared the stones in the different stages of the cut. We also worked closely with our talented jeweler, Přemysl Motyčka, who dedicated as much time to the necklace we did.

Zdeněk: Funnily enough it took almost exactly 86 days to create; around three months in total. The setting for the stones took about two weeks to make, so it was pretty time consuming as it was all done by hand. As I said, all together—to come up with the idea, prepare the stones and actually create the piece—took around 12 weeks.







This is a one-of-a-kind piece that will be flown around the world to display at different events, but if it were to ever be worn, who would you want to wear it?

Daniel: This is a hard question.

Zdeněk: A powerful business woman.

Daniel: Or an opera singer like Cecilia Bartoli! Or, Edita Gruberová. Now she would be the perfect fit.

When you design a piece, do you have a certain woman or persona in mind?

Daniel: Sure, we think about this. For this piece, we were really focused on the Alpha cut itself, but for our collections we usually imagine who would wear the pieces and how she or he would style them.

Does it change? Has the taste of the modern woman changed? What do you predict for the future of the global jewelry market?

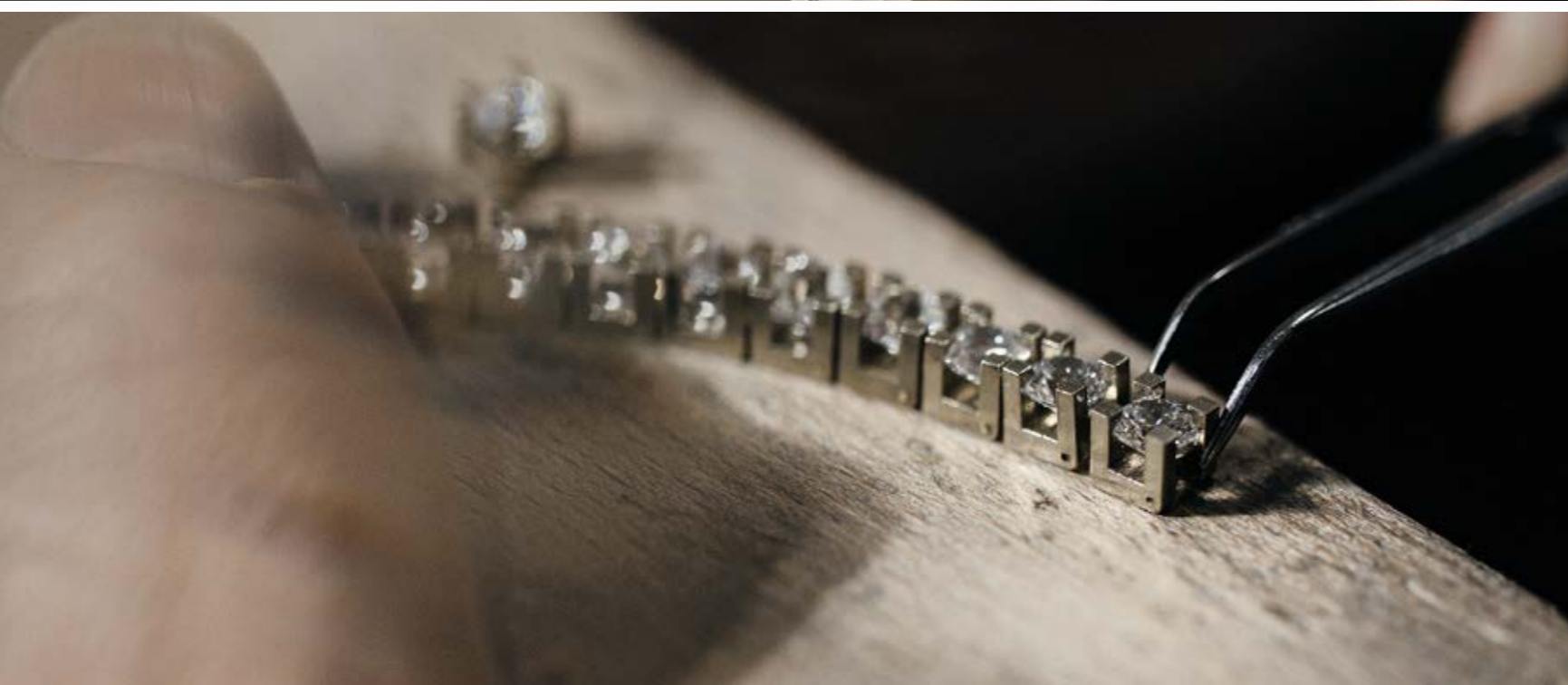
Zdeněk: Taste in jewelry has certainly changed over recent years. Jewelry isn't only about status anymore. Also, its meaning has shifted from being so heavily linked to religion or spirituality. In general, design is now facing a time when different opinions and industries are mixing together which is yielding something altogether new. Jewelry is still a bit conservative and jewelers represent a closed society. You have "big name" jewelry brands who are looking to turn a high profit and, on the other hand, you have art jewelry. I think the future of the industry will be a fusion with other industries and cultures, but it still needs to open up a little bit more first.

Daniel: Regarding the meaning of jewelry, it still exists, but in a different way. We see that politics plays a similar role as, for example, religion has in the past. Through jewelry we can communicate our opinions about problems we are facing today, such as gender equality or transsexuality. It's easy to find pieces that carry a deeper meaning. Personally, our work has always been influenced by different industries, technology and natural sciences.

What materials do you typically work with? How was it working with cubic zirconia?

Zdeněk: Usually we work with natural gemstones. However, there are so many possibilities and technological alterations that can be done with cubic zirconia, which is really appealing for us.

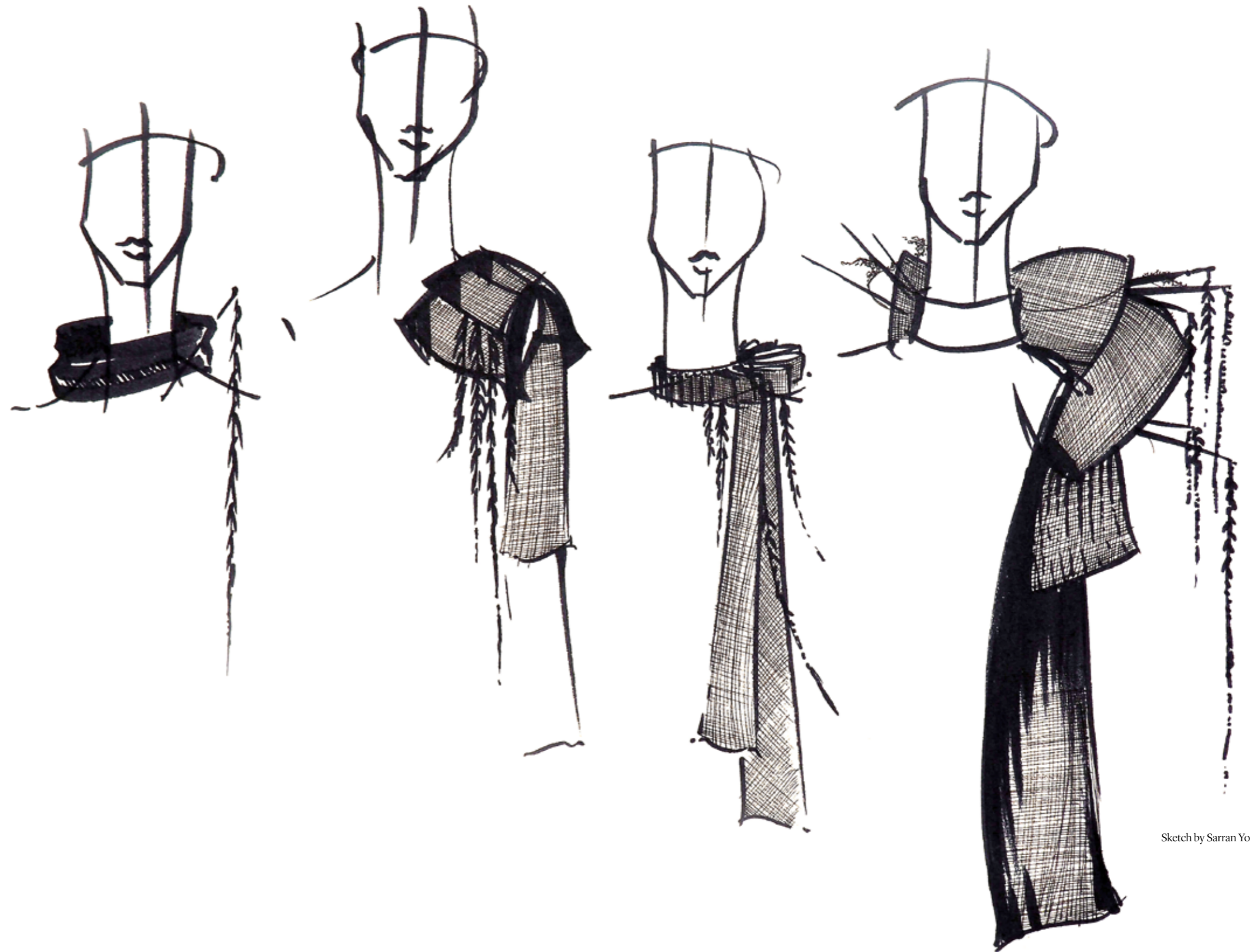
Daniel: Currently, cubic zirconia is positioned as an imitation of natural diamonds, but we think it can go even further than that. We would like to explore the possibilities and work with it as its own material and not as an imitation of something else. We look for authenticity.



Art(ists) of Embellishment

A behind-the-scenes look at the featured pieces from our designer showcase

For the special occasion of the launch of our reimagined Alpha Round Brilliant cut, we gave several of our favorite fashion and jewelry designers free reign to create the cubic zirconia-embellished piece of their dreams. From Indian-born master of embroidery and embellishment, Bibhu Mohapatra, to couture eyewear extraordinaire, Kerin Rose Gold of *a-morir*, to two of Thailand's most globally sought-after jewelry designers (both by consumers and name brands alike), Sarran Youkongdee and Ek Thonprasert, take a look at how some of the industry leaders brought our Alpha stones to life.



Sketch by Sarran Youkongdee

THE TAJ

by BIBHU MOHAPATRA



How would you describe modern day luxury? Is the definition of a “luxury good” changing at all?

Modern day luxury is a balance of traditional craft and the modernity of practical clothing that fits the lifestyle of the ultimate consumer. The definition of a luxury good is certainly evolving as an authentic story behind a product and its craft become more of a defining factor.

As you know, cubic zirconia is a fine jewelry stone and the man-made answer to naturally occurring diamonds, which have for a long time been a benchmark of luxury. Have you ever worked with cubic zirconia before? How was designing with them different than designing with crystals or other beaded embellishment?

Cubic zirconia has been around for some time and is a beautiful material that has really come into its own right. I have never worked with it before, so this was my very first time. The stones have all the characteristics of a semi-precious stone and work extremely well with precious metals. The architectural piece I have created turned out even more beautiful than I had imagined. I thoroughly enjoyed the process.

Can you talk a little about your design? Is there a story to tell?

I have designed a headpiece that we call “The Taj,” which means “imperial crown.” It is a piece that symbolizes the importance and power of the wearer. For this project specifically, I wanted to create a piece that magnifies and highlights the importance and power of women. The piece is sculptural, modern and finished with traditional techniques.

In your mind, who were you designing for when you designed this piece? How would she style it and what would it say about her?

This piece was designed with the ultimate Bibhu woman in mind. A woman who is modern, inspirational and embodies all the characteristics of a unique role model. Strong and powerful female role models have such an important part to play in today's world. She would wear this headpiece with a dressy outfit for an evening affair or with a casual "after-five" look, which calls for a mixture of high and low. The headpiece is very versatile.

Though you are based in New York, you're originally from India, which is known for producing some of the world's most beautiful, traditional and elaborate jewelry. Can these more traditional designs translate into something modern? Where do you envision the embellishment trend will lead?

In India, jewelry is cultural. It is present in every aspect of life. From the time a child is born and during every phase of his or her life, each piece of jewelry serves a specific purpose. Jewelry can signify trust, affection, power and security. I believe that traditional crafts can absolutely be used to create something modern and more adaptable to today's lifestyles. Embellishment is here to stay and, I believe, will continue to play a role in clothing, art, architecture and jewelry far into the future.



" The definition of a luxury good is certainly evolving as an authentic story behind a product and its craft become more of a defining factor. "



MODERN HEROINE

by EK THONGPRASERT

You studied fashion design in Antwerp, Belgium. What led you to eventually turn to jewelry design? Based on your experience, do you perceive any major differences between the European and Asian jewelry industries?

As a fashion student, you are pushed to design all the elements of the final look, which may have been what triggered me to design my first jewelry set there, in Antwerp. The difference I notice most is that in Europe, especially in Belgium and the Netherlands, people appreciate more contemporary jewelry, which didn't really exist in Thailand at that time. Actually, the aesthetic of contemporary jewelry is something that motivated me to start designing jewelry in the first place since contemporary jewelry pieces are often one-of-kind works of art, in which I have always been interested.

Now, as a professor at Bangkok University, you have the opportunity to work with the youngest generation of designers. Can you talk more about this experience? What advice do you give to your students?

Even though my class is focused on fashion design, I do sometimes get the chance to consult some emerging jewelry brands and designers through government sponsored projects. I see a lot of nice jewelry pieces, but many of them lack originality in terms of design and often vision. This is quite dangerous since, today, more and more jewelry brands are flooding the market, which means that only a few will survive in the long run. The advice I would give to any young designer (fashion, jewelry or otherwise) is that a strong brand identity is crucial. Be yourself and build something from your originality.

Where do you most often find inspiration for your designs?

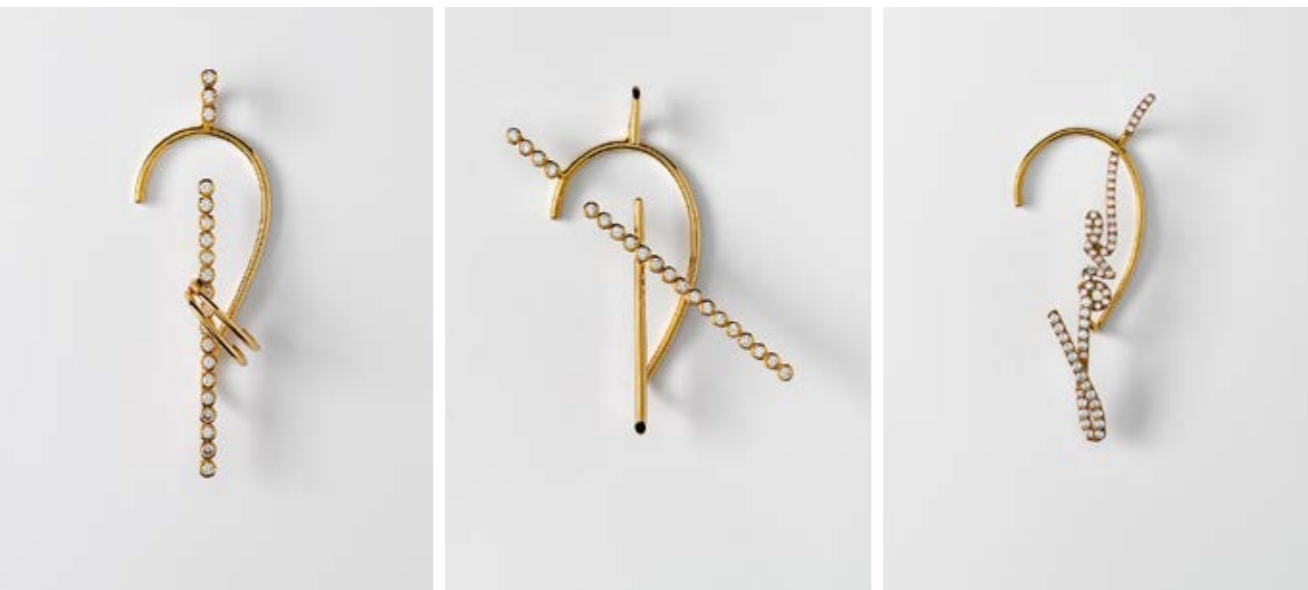
I mostly draw upon contemporary art and culture. I'm also fascinated by the many different tribes and civilizations from around the world. I guess I don't really limit myself to a specific thing or place, but rather, I prefer to observe and ask questions about what I'm seeing or experiencing. The answers are then given through my collections or design.

Tell us about your creation for Preciosa. What inspired you and how does it relate to your work in general?

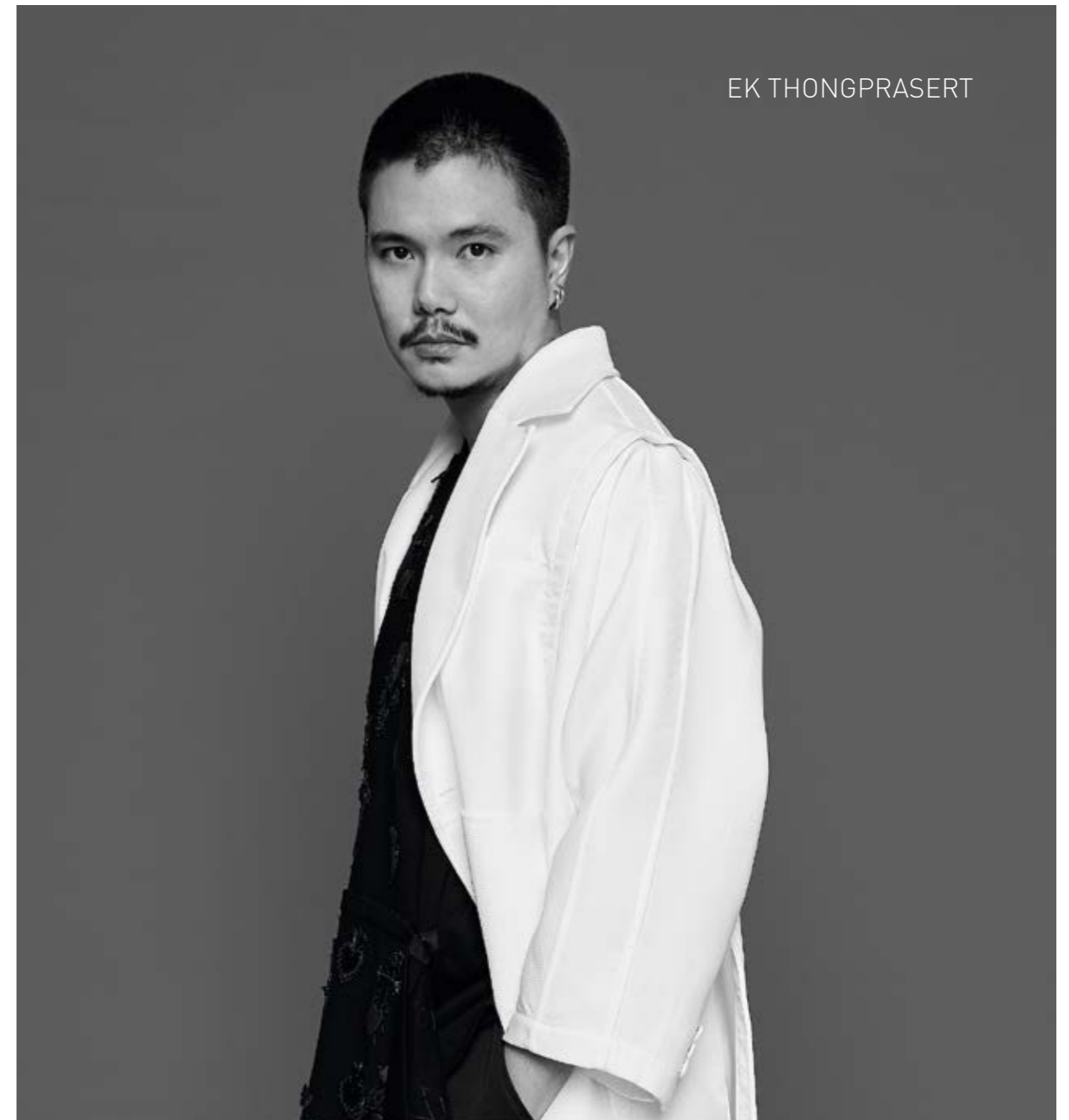
The collection of pieces I designed for Preciosa is called "Modern Heroine," and is all about strong, modern women. When a woman wears one of my designs, I want her to feel like she can conquer a world dominated by men, but in a subtler way than, for example, the image of a powerful woman in the 1980's. The traditional idea of femininity, especially when it pertains to jewelry, I think, triggers an overly romantic, dated image of women from the past century – someone like a 1950's housewife or the stereotypical princess. Through this collection, I want to present these cliché symbols, like hearts, or words and ideas like "honey," "darling," or "love" in a new way. I want to reimagine how the typical heart shape so often found in jewelry can be worn.

What's the next step for your brand?

I have been very fortunate so far; much of my work has been received positively and I am especially grateful for opportunities to collaborate with bigger, globally recognized brands, such as Comme des Garçons, and to be able to sell my pieces in retailers worldwide. My next goal is actually to enter the Chinese market, hopefully as soon as next year.



" When a woman wears one of my designs, I want her to feel like she can conquer a world dominated by men, but in a subtler way than, for example, the image of a powerful woman in the 1980's. The traditional idea of femininity, especially when it pertains to jewelry, I think, triggers an overly romantic, dated image of women from the past century. "



THE HOTEL VENUS FRAME AND BECCA CRYSTAL WAVE



BY A-MORIR

Let's start with your brand, *a-morir*. Can you talk a little about your creative vision and who you design for?

a-morir, in its 10th year, is a brand that takes something ordinary and makes it extraordinary. I love how covering something in crystals can turn an object into an objet d'art, but especially how it can bring a smile to someone's day. As a brand *a-morir* pioneered embellished eyewear into the 21st century and developed a cultlike following from the world's biggest pop stars because we offer something boundary pushing and unique. We are also a creative studio that specializes in embellishment for corporate and entertainment clients so when J.Lo needs a pair of thigh high boots crystalized in a day, or Gaga needs crystal eyebrows for a musical performance, we are on call.

In the past you focused heavily on eyewear but have begun to explore new forms of wearable embellishment, such as jewelry. What does this evolution mean for you creatively and for your brand?

My personal mission has always been that embellishment is for everyone. What I realized is that I needed to translate that to *a-morir* in order to maintain the brand's authenticity. I had begun making jewelry and embellished objects for myself and was getting purchase inquiries from friends who are not the typical *a-morir* clientele, and it sparked something in me; *a-morir*'s mission is taking something ordinary and making it extraordinary, which is what I have been doing with eyewear for the last 10 years, and I need to do that with everything!

Even a quick scroll through *a-morir*'s Instagram feed establishes very clearly that you are well versed in crystals and their many applications, but what was it like for you to work with cubic zirconia? How is the material different and have you ever designed with cubic zirconia before?

Cubic zirconia is such an exciting world to enter! While I have worked with pointed-back crystals I had never had the opportunity to experiment with something more closely in line with fine jewelry. Once I stopped staring at the jewels in the sun it became really exciting for me to figure out how to translate what I do into different materials. Getting to work closely with a jeweler and a diamond setter made the work collaborative and let me call on multiple people with their own expertise. The Hotel Venus frame is taking traditional *a-morir* and combining it with cubic zirconia, while the lenseless Becca Crystal Wave involved creating a lenseless eyewear piece from scratch. The piece was hand carved, and molded; the cubic zirconia stones are hand set by a prestigious diamond setter, and it was all finished by being dipped in gold.

Can you tell us about the pieces you designed to showcase Preciosa's improved round brilliant cut? What was your inspiration and how do you imagine they would be worn or styled?

The gold and crystal brow piece I designed is an evolution of *a-morir*'s lenseless eyewear series I created in 2013; *a-morir* has always pushed the fashion boundaries of eyewear and creating illusions. Removing lenses on our Becca Crystal Wave design gives the illusion of eyewear while transforming it into a unique jewelry statement. We have created similar illusions with chain necklaces, faux piercings, and a head harness. Our second illusion is for our Hotel Venus design, creating the illusion of crystal cubic zirconia tears. I wanted to take a frame and shape that has more familiarity and turn it on its head with elegant gold dipped cubic zirconia trails of tears.

We're beginning to see a shift from anonymous, mass production of goods toward a responsibly sourced, limited production of goods made by fairly paid workers. That said, fast fashion (including cheaply made knock-off accessories) is not quite yet a thing of the past. In your opinion, will this change ultimately come from inside the industry or from consumers? What can industry players do to speed along this process?

When it comes to fashion we are working in a broken system. Fashion and lifestyle websites showcase "affordable" options of designer pieces, retailers will purchase a lower priced wholesale line as opposed to supporting the trend originator. There are no legal protections for designers who get their work stolen by fast fashion brands, and our culture values money (and the perception of money) over almost everything else. The change has to come from everywhere; consumers have to change their purchase mentality from quantity to quality, and understand the impact of their spending. Journalists have to do their due diligence and find the origin of the trend they're promoting and realize that by promoting "affordable" options that they're promoting more consumer waste and (most likely) bad labor practices. Retailers have to stop giving voices and floor space to knockoff brands because their industry is decaying and they need independent brands more than independent brands need them. *a-morir* has been a female founded, self funded, made to order, well paying brand since day one and when the world ends I'm not going to look back and wish I had compromised those values to make a bit more money.

" Journalists have to do their due diligence and find the origin of the trend they're promoting and realize that by promoting 'affordable' options that they're promoting more consumer waste and (most likely) bad labor practices. "



SPIRIT

by SARRAN YOUKONGDEE

It's well known, especially within the industry, that Thailand is one of the world's jewelry producing hubs. However, the country is quickly gaining recognition for its emerging world class designers as well. What is your take on this?

I feel that, collectively, Thai jewelry designers are working very hard, both on their own and to support one another to shed a more contemporary light on the jewelry industry here. Not only do we possess generations of knowledge that allows us to create such beautiful pieces, but now we have a younger generation of talented, innovative designers that are representing Thailand in a more global context.

You've spoken in the past about how profoundly Thailand inspires you. What specifically about your country do you draw upon in your designs? Is there anything else you've been taking inspiration from lately?

I think I will never stop being inspired by Thailand's nature, both in the traditional sense but also in the metaphysical one. Nature, for me, is anything that gives me a sensation. I perceive nature through all my senses, not just through sight. I also take inspiration from mine and others' lifestyle, culture, art, cuisine, emotion... everything, really.

How often do you work with fine jewelry stones? Can you talk about your experience designing with Preciosa's Alpha Round Brilliant-cut cubic zirconia?

This was the first time I have ever worked with cubic zirconia. It's a new discovery for me and has definitely given me a new perspective on my work. Preciosa's new Alpha stones are stunning; I truly enjoyed the process of working with them and I'm very pleased with the final design.



" Not only do we possess generations of knowledge that allows us to create such beautiful pieces, but now we have a younger generation of talented, innovative designers that are representing Thailand in a more global context. "

SARRAN YOUKONGDEE



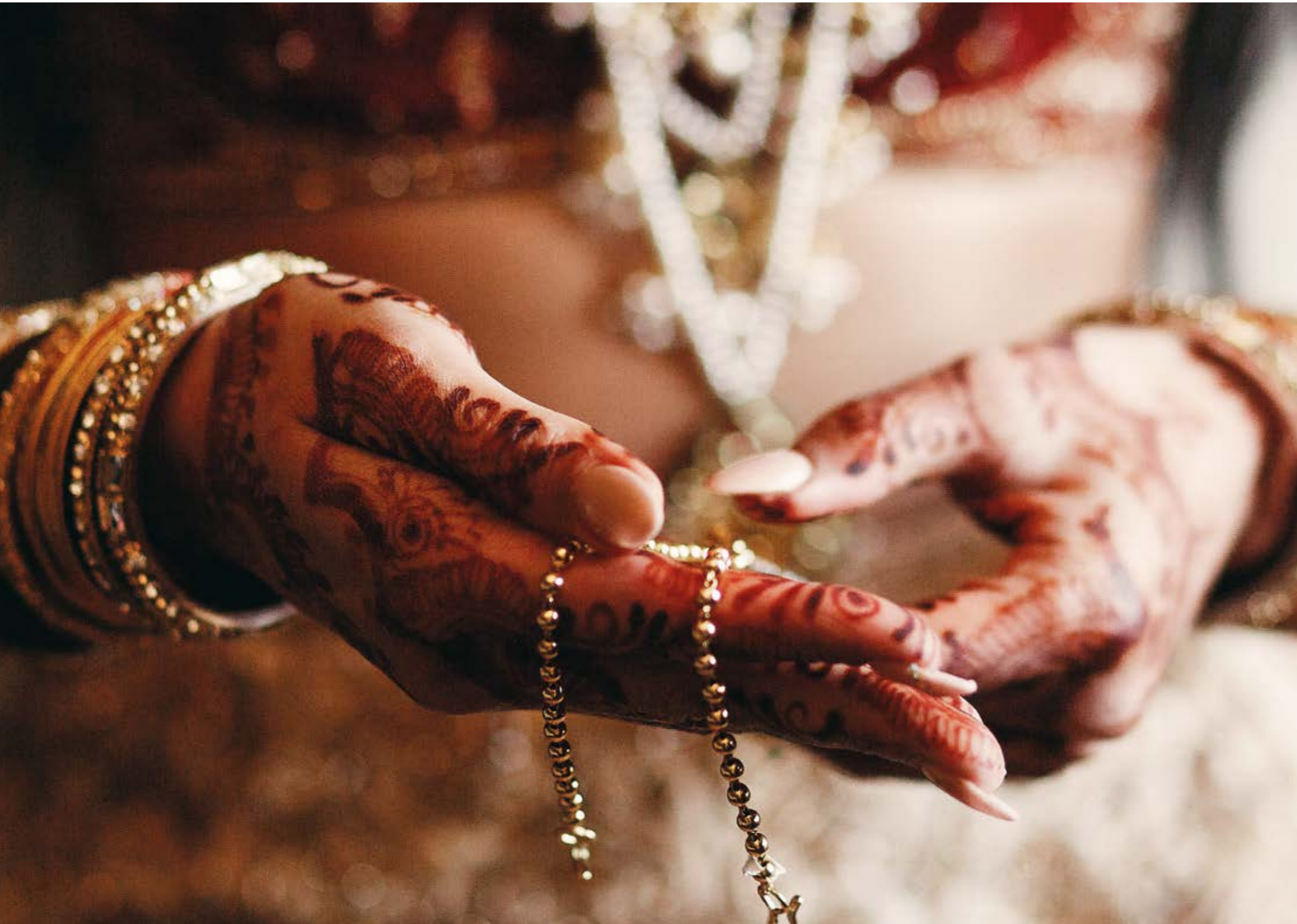
Can you tell us more about your design? Where did you find inspiration?

As is the case for most of my designs, I again turned to nature for inspiration. However, for this project, I was specifically and deeply inspired by trees. I created a necklace and pair of earrings inspired by how a willow tree looks and the sensation I feel when the wind blows through it.

You mentioned that the pieces you created for Preciosa will become part of a larger collection to be released later this year. Can you talk more about it?

My upcoming collection, which will be launched in August 2019, is called "Spirit by Sarran." The pieces with Preciosa stones are part of a larger inspiration, which has to do with different cultural influences in Thailand that stem from Japan and China. These influences are symbolized through trees, which are of course a part of nature, and nature connects us all.





Made in India

Here, the cultural, spiritual and everyday customs are deeply and inextricably intertwined with the choice and manner in which a person embellishes an outfit with even a single piece of jewelry. As rich and colorful as the jewels themselves, the history of Indian jewelry is to a large extent a representation of the history of the nation itself.



Indian jewelry manufacturer, Swammandir, putting into practice centuries-old jewelry making techniques



While

Western gem cutters and jewelry makers traditionally relied on the available resources acquired by Europe's ancient waxing and waning empires, their Indian counterparts enjoyed a steady, abundant supply of precious metals and gems that formed naturally in the hot and dry areas of India's subcontinent. Over the span of five millennia, its craftsmen took advantage of this access, constantly developing new techniques and improving the artform, unhindered by any domestic or foreign political influence. Some of the world's earliest jewelry makers were the people of the Indus Valley Civilization, who, up until the development and popularization of metals in 2100 B.C., traded widely in beads. In these ancient times, beads and primitive forms of jewelry served not only as embellishment, but also as symbols of spirituality, often signifying some specific teaching or virtue related to Hinduism.

By the 16th century A.D., largely due to the new-found global enthusiasm for seafaring exploration and trade, India had already

established itself as international powerhouse for fine jewelry with its skilled work forces of jewelry makers and a seemingly unending supply of natural resources. But it wasn't until 1526 after the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India, with its roots in Central Asia, that Persian ornamental jewelry began to blend with traditional Indian motifs, resulting in an artistic explosion of Indo-Persian ornamental patterns and extravagance such as the world had never seen. This cultural fusion was the basis for traditional Indian jewelry as we know in the 21st century.

Today, India and China are the world's largest consumers of gold; 20-25% of the world's total production of gold is both manufactured and consumed in India alone, which is highly indicative of the ever present and important role that jewelry plays in Indian culture. Both gold and silver are considered sacred metals according to Hindu belief and represent so much more than just beauty. Gold imagery, in particular, occurs frequently in ancient Indian literature and is inseparable from the creation of





18k gold Ganesha earrings with Preciosa Alpha stones and pearls.



18k gold necklace featuring Preciosa Alpha stones inspired by the Hindu god, Ganesha, by Indian jewelry manufacturer, Swammandir

spiritual human life in many of India's diverse religious beliefs.

As important, both aesthetically and symbolically, to a set or piece of jewelry are the gemstones themselves and, historically for India, the most prestigious of these was diamonds. As the first country to mine these precious stones, India's diamond trade began as far back as the third century B.C. While manmade cubic zirconia—which is both cost effective and easy to transparently source—has in recent years seen a significant increase in demand, diamonds have a rich and colorful history within Indian culture, having been used since the time of the Mughal Maharajas (emperors) as gifts to regain favor, pay tribute or express fidelity in exchange for protection.

Religion too has for thousands of years incentivized India's jewelry makers—in the way of both earthly rewards and those attained in the hereafter—to improve their techniques and methods, turning out bigger, better and more

opulent pieces to pay homage, or to pay debts. India is a nation famous for its religious diversity, and jewelry has always been closely linked to each of their individual practices and outward displays of devotion. This cultural institution has helped fuel the transform of the jewelry-making craft into a fully functioning industry, which today heavily contributes to India's booming economy.

From spirituality to financial insurance in case of unforeseen circumstances, jewelry can serve many purposes throughout one's lifespan. In India, every piece is ascribed a meaning or power and is worn with purpose. Jewelry here plays a central role in ceremonies and occasions, such as births and weddings, and can even convey messages from the wearer. And on top of all this meaning and symbolism is the striking and effortless beauty of traditional Indian jewelry, perfected over thousands of years by a nation of visionaries.

Origin matters.

Reliably crafted in a small village of around 3,600 inhabitants, Preciosa fine jewelry stones are the exquisite culmination of Bohemia's breathtaking beauty and abundant natural resources. Spanning half a millennium since the beginning of Habsburg rule, the name "Bohemia" has served as a symbol of pristine quality and the benchmark of Europe's gem-cutting, polishing and engraving capabilities. Behind every jewelry stone is a story, and ours begins right here.



A NOTE FROM PRECIOSA'S MANAGING DIRECTOR OF FINE JEWELRY STONES, PAVEL FAIT

Whether it's designing a new cut or scheduling delivery times, everything we do is about balance. The methodology, the techniques, the production, the people... everything comes together in one large-scale, living, breathing balancing act. Fortunately for us, Preciosa has had centuries of practice. As managing director, my job is to ensure that gem-cutting techniques developed here, in this very village, more than a hundred years ago are kept alive and practiced according to tradition. While preserving the past, we are also constantly looking toward the future, continuously developing new methods and technology—all in-house—that will enhance the process without compromising the quality or personal touch.

This is our competitive advantage: the perfect balance of centuries-old heritage and state-of-the-art technology; this, and the people that develop and put these techniques and machines into practice. One-hundred percent of Preciosa's fine jewelry stones production takes place in Jablonné v Podještědí, a small North Bohemian village of about 3,600 inhabitants near the Czech-German-Polish border. Much of my division's 200-person workforce is comprised of locals and Preciosa benefits heavily from their know-how, loyalty to the industry and sense of pride in the region.

Our people are the lifeblood of the company, which is why we provide them with every imaginable training, preparatory course or additional support they may need to ensure that the employee turn-over rate stays as low as possible. Preciosa's gem-cutters often come to us with years of experience and are even more often third or fourth-generation craftsmen. However, even to operate one of our machines can take more than six months of training, which is unfathomably long even for many other producers within the industry. Like our stones, we don't compromise on quality when it comes to our people; from machine operators to chemists, we search for people who perform at the highest caliber. Everyone's role is different, and everyone's role is vital.

Even the machines themselves come from our people. Preciosa maintains a team of experts who develop our technology in-house, the most advanced of which is currently operated by the fine jewelry stones division from the entire Group. This too is part of the tradition in North Bohemia as some of the machines were not available on the market at the time of their development; in the past, we had to become virtually self-reliant, which I think is still part of our company-wide mentality today. Our competitors could release a new, ground-breaking innovation at any moment, so rather than rely on external factors we prefer to take a more active approach by developing our own solutions that will ultimately expedite the process of providing our customers with exactly what they want. We do this not only to stay competitive, but also for the pride and satisfaction of knowing that we can. Our improved Round Brilliant cut, which we call the Alpha stone, is a wonderful example of what rewards this type of dedication and self-reliance can yield. Just like the cut itself, which creates the perfect ratio of fire, brilliance and scintillation, the Alpha's development was the result of Preciosa's finely tuned balance between our people, our technology and our tradition.





Responsibility to Our Region Our Community, Our People

To demonstrate our undying gratitude and appreciation for our region, its people and the natural resources it provides, we actively seek out ways in which we can give back to both the environment and our community. For more than twenty years, the Preciosa Foundation has contributed to numerous non-profit initiatives across the Bohemian region and throughout the Czech Republic. We focus our efforts on seven core areas. At the regional level, we support the

Fund for Health and Disease Prevention, the Environmental Fund, the Fund for Arts and Culture and the Fund for Exercise and Sports. At the national level, we contribute through our Fund for Research and Development, the Education Fund and lastly, the Fund for Social and Humanitarian Aid. The Preciosa Foundation has to date contributed more than USD 8 million to these organizations.

Bohemian *crafted* since 1548

We offer more than 36,000 premium crystals and fine jewelry stones in various shapes, sizes, colours and coatings to an extensive portfolio of luxury goods, fashion and jewelry designers, distributors, and producers across six continents.



Crafted from sand

Our unique crystal chandeliers and lighting projects adorn luxury hotels, royal palaces, private residences and yachts all over the globe. We follow the legacy of the highest quality Bohemian Crystal in combination with 21st century cutting-edge technologies and our glassmakers' craftsmanship. We shape centuries of dreams into light.



All about *beads*

We send traditional Czech beads and seed beads to all four corners of the earth. They are used in luxury jewelry designs and decorative embroidery, and also play an integral part in national costumes and traditional accessories. Our technically perfect beads, which are full of color and playfulness, are admired by professionals and non-professionals alike. They add a bit of magic to everything they touch.



Crystal beauty

Our crystal jewelry and décor delight those who love beauty all around the world. Luxurious jewelry and sought after fashion accessories are created in the cradle of the world's glass jewelry industry. We begin with the centuries old tradition of Bohemian cut crystal, enriching it with our craftsmanship and skills and the latest technologies. We represent the essence of fine and elegant beauty.



The *crystal crown* on your packaging

Vinolok is the most elegant and creative closure for wines, spirits, water, and oils. Vinolok is made from pure Bohemian glass, so there is absolutely no impact on aroma or flavor. Despite being completely leak proof, the unique properties of the Vinolok closure still allow the wine to breathe and develop slowly. The Vinolok glass closure establishes the look of a premium brand.



Preciosa Components Offices

Headquarters

Opletalova 3197/17
46601 Jablonec nad Nisou
Czech Republic

Prague

Jindřišská 939/20
110 00 Prague
Czech Republic

Guangzhou

V11, 47th Floor, Onelink
International Centre, No. 230,
Tianhe Road, Tianhe District,
510000 Guangzhou, China

Dongguan

Da Yu Ling Road
Wen Tang Industrial Zone Dongcheng
523121 Dongguan, Guangdong Province
China

Yiwu

Room 8312, 3/F, No. 1399
North Chouzhou Road 322000 Yiwu City,
Zhejiang Province, China

Hong Kong

Unit 2306 - 2308
Enterprise Square Two 3 Sheung Yuet Road
Kowloon Bay, Kowloon Hong Kong
Hong Kong S.A.R., China

Dubai

GB-7/RA-8, Jebel Ali Free Zone
P.O. Box 18185 Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Seoul

Preciosa a.s., Room No. 921
Hainam Bldg.64, Sejong-daero,
Jung-gu, Seoul, South Korea

Moscow

Office 150, Entr. 7,
4th Tverskaya-Yamskaya Str., 33/39
125 010 Moscow Russia



PRECIOSA

www.PreciosaComponents.com