

COCKPIT ARTS 3 YEARS

Maya Selway

- Fine jeweller



Maya Selway crafts timeless pieces of jewellery that are both understated yet compelling in their delicate lines and textural detailing. Working with 18ct gold and naturally coloured diamonds, Maya uses ancient techniques such as gold dust fusing to enhance the natural beauty of her materials. Originally trained as a silversmith, crafting sculptural silverware, she has spent the last three years strategically repositioning herself as goldsmith. A regular at the Goldsmiths' Fair, her fine jewellery collections sell in galleries and high-end boutiques throughout the world.

Maya arrived at Cockpit Arts in 2008 at a time when her sculptural objects were already gaining her international attention and press. She spent her early years at Cockpit establishing her reputation as a first class silversmith both in the UK and overseas. Then in 2013 a defining moment arrived: Maya had a baby. "It was an epiphany for me," she says. Suddenly with less time to devote to her business, and travelling to the international shows no longer practical, Maya had to reappraise her direction. "I realised the sculptural objects were winning me lots of awards and press attention, but it was the fine jewellery that had the most scope for growth."

With the help of Cockpit Arts' Business Development Team, Maya embarked on an ambitious growth plan. She decided to concentrate on developing and expanding her fine jewellery collections. Working only with precious metals and gemstones enabled her to enter the high end of the jewellery market, with an emphasis on bespoke pieces.

This has been key to the success of her business, as it has allowed Maya to carry on designing and making all her own work without the need to outsource. "That's the real value of my pieces. When you buy a Maya Selway Fine Jewellery ring, necklace or bracelet, you know it's been designed and hand made from start to finish by me," she asserts.

At around the same time, Maya was approached by New York's Museum of Modern Art to license her sculpture designs. She realised that this would allow her to keep both branches of her business alive. "It was really serendipitous," she says. "MoMA is a perfect match for my brand. It's exactly the right audience for me and it felt right." Cockpit's Head of Business Incubation, David Crump, was instrumental in helping Maya manage the licensing process. He introduced her to a specialist IP lawyer who was able to walk her through the contract to ensure she was getting the best deal. Her collection launched at MoMA in December 2015. "It was a lot of work to set up, but now it's flying on its own and that's the beauty of it," she says. "Sales have been really strong. It provides me with a nice extra revenue stream, without the pressure of making the pieces at such large volume."



Throughout her journey, Maya has worked extensively with business mentor Nigel Rust, a long-term associate of Cockpit Arts. He has helped her look at ways to streamline her business in order to maximise its efficiency. "He's been amazing!" Maya enthuses. "I really connect with his attention to detail and thorough, logical approach - he's Mr Systems! I'm dyslexic and Nigel has demystified a lot of the business processes. He's also just a very gentle, calm guy and I respond really well to that. He's helped me to feel a lot less overwhelmed. I'm so much more on top of things." Maya now has a number of systems in place to help streamline her cash flow and orders, which she feels has revolutionised the way she manages the business. She and Nigel continue to meet on a weekly basis to ensure things are staying on track and progressing in the right direction.

Over the last three years, Maya has relied on a network of Cockpit associates, including branding specialists Felt. They carried out a rebrand of Maya Selway Fine Jewellery, including a website, packaging design, exhibition and studio display, logo refresh and a new photography style. She now also regularly employs Cockpit's ex-head of marketing, Josie Ballin, on a freelance basis to help with newsletters, exhibition promotion, press releases and social media.

In this way, Maya feels that she has benefitted both directly and indirectly from the wider Cockpit community. "Lots of women here have worked while having kids and I feel Cockpit is really supportive of that." She says David Crump, in particular, helped her to put systems in place to ensure the business kept running while she was on maternity leave.

Maya went back to work just three months after having her second child, but she has only recently returned full time. She is now excited to be able to concentrate fully on designing new collections and refining her goldsmithing skills. She recently went on a course with the renowned Italian goldsmith Giovanni Corvaja. "He is my goldsmithing hero!" Maya smiles. "He takes three students a year for one week. It was amazing. I learnt lots of new skills which I will be introducing into my new collections soon."

All the hard work that has gone into setting up these systems and support networks has been in order to allow Maya to remain at the bench, designing and making jewellery. This is key to her business. "I want to be able to make a living from my jewellery without having to outsource the designing or making process," she states. "With the support I'm getting in other areas of my business I can focus on what I do best - making things!"

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