



Fashion Generator

Written by admin

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Betsy Cross of betsy & iya

By Jessica Wallenfels

Photo by Amaren Colosi



What betsy & iya Is

Unapologetically bold or slinky and sinuous, you'll know it's betsy & iya jewelry by the trademark earwires and clasps. The large, handformed, sterling silver loops add conspicuous bodaciousness to their functionality. Totemic talismans and semiprecious marvels make compelling focal points amid a menagerie of metals or within an asymmetrical system. Even the label's name is a study in contrasts: Betsy Cross is the designer/owner; iya is what Betsy called her sister before she could talk. While not directly involved with the business, "Iya"'s fashion sense guides Betsy in spirit.

Who Betsy Cross Is

The Roanoke, Virginia, native moved to Portland in 2006 with a Master's degree in physical theatre and a fascination with ornamentation. By early '08, her jewelry business plans snowballed of their own accord. "I just couldn't stop," the 27-year-old says of the mounting purchases preceding her March '08 launch. Betsy also loves sweating over a hot drill in her Northwest studio forging outsized trinkets. "They're big, but cute, which is how I feel as a person. I've always been tall and kind of clunky, but I feel cute and sexy."

What She Makes

Wildly divergent lines provide a look for every mood. From the va-va-voom "drips" line featuring death-defying danglies to her hard-knock, hand-engraved sterling dog tags, betsy & iya goes all the way. Heaping portions of mixed metal chain bathe you in badass luxury; Peruvian opals induce a dream state with milky murmurings. A whimsical poetic streak runs through the pendants—a word, letter or phrase worth wearing.

Why We Like It

betsy & iya comes on strong without overpowering the wearer. The pieces inspire confidence but remain accessories. Customers often remark, "I wouldn't have thought that would look right on me but when I try it on, it does." Betsy will customize any piece for a buyer to accommodate taste, fit, or wording, and supports independent artists in her materials purchasing, including the locally-mined agates and fair-trade beetle wings. She strings pearls and casts metal: she can't be stopped.

Where To Hunt It Down

Several stores around Portland, like Phlox (3962 N Mississippi Ave, 284-1264, www.phloxpdx.com), Presents of Mind (3633 SE Hawthorne Blvd, 230-7740, presentsofmind.tv) or Mabel & Zora (1468 NE Alberta St and , 335-6169, www.mabelandzora.com) or online at betsyandiya.com.

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