

FASHION ON THE RISE

SARAH ANGOLD STUDIO

Written by LYNN FURGE

“I see these as pieces that want to be kept and collectible, I want people to value them, want to keep them and want to pass them down. I’m placing them in a weird position where I want them to be fashion, but I want them to invade fashion.” – Sarah Angold, Creator Sarah Angold Studio.

When I was a little girl, I would stack up all of my mother’s glorious, oversized jewelry and build castles for my Barbies. They needed to live there—lounging on lapis, leaning against Lucite. I was taken back to those days when I was wandering around the accessories exhibition in Somerset House, London, and came upon these astronomical, architectural, spiro-gyro bracelets by Sarah Angold. Twenty years ago it would have been the perfect seat for Magic Curl Barbie (a straight-haired girl’s obvious favorite). Now however, the goal was to get them on my wrist.

Most jewelry designers recently have fallen into two categories; this trap of romantic vintage pieces that come with tiny charms of animals, lace and ribbon, or the opposite—huge chain-linked, studded weaponry that can make good-girl dresses look tough.

Sarah Angold Studio does none of this. Completely unique, sculptural, geographic and industrial, each design jumps out at you like a Frank Gehry building jumps out of a skyline.

Every fashion editor looks for “the new face” of an industry. In the past couple of years we’ve seen the likes of Alexander Wang, Christopher Kane, and Dannijo cover the pages of the fashion dailies... but I am calling it in advance: Sarah Angold Studio.

Angold started in textile design as an undergraduate, working with leathers, chiffons, and silks with inlaid acrylics. “I was really

interested in texture and how that could change how things laid and hung,” Sarah explains from her London studio. “There was a collaboration with Hussein Chalayan, where I did textile pieces for his Paris show. I worked with Kate Lewis Studio on pieces for Calvin Klein, doing a lot of literal fabric construction with lots of cutting and layering. I then applied for [a] masters. The textile design felt too narrow.”

So she worked on specific cross-collaborations for her graduate degree at London’s Royal College of Art. This encompassed everything from a project with a vehicle designer in their human design department to working on a sensory project, which examined the perceptions and reactions of people with disabilities, children, and people on the extremes of society when confronted with consumer products. “I met with a disabled man regularly, and really began to look at how you could research based on the person and their problems. I wanted to find out what people needed rather than the general research of one hundred people... I felt the...one-on-one helped me get better insight,” explains Sarah of her process.

From there she worked as an industrial design engineer on a project for Procter & Gamble, and her final collaboration was doing surface detail and design for handbags. The day she graduated, Angold moved to Japan to work for Toyota. Upon returning to London, she took a residency with the Design Museum, developing a lighting installation with them.

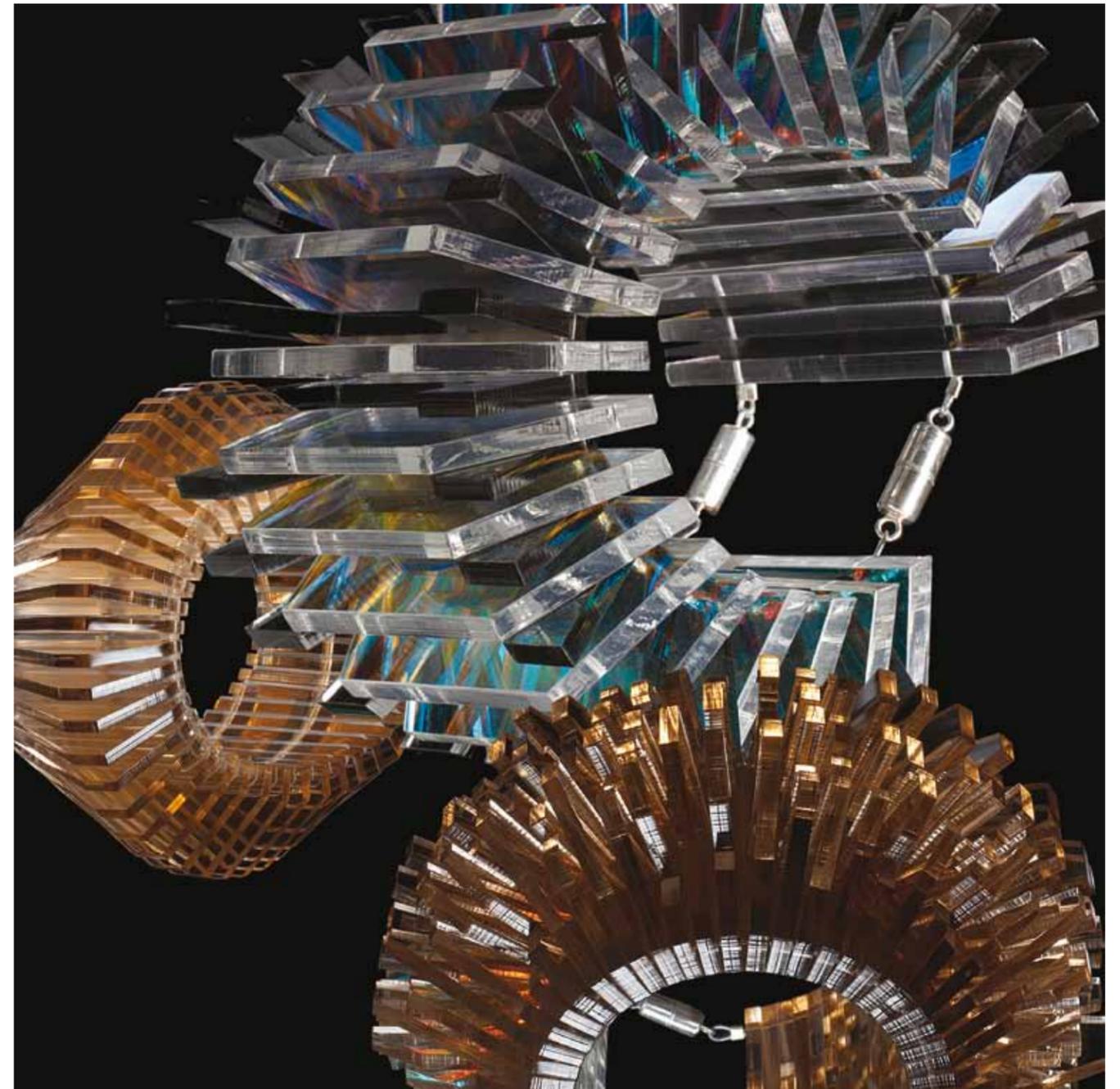
“Everything I have done is really experimental. At that point I realized I had loved everything I had done and I didn’t want to give up any of it, and the job I wanted didn’t exist, and therefore I had to create it for myself...therefore I started Sarah Angold Studio, my own company.”

With the first season, Sarah Angold Studio has already caught the attention of the shop within the Tate Modern. “Our first wholesale range is jewelry, but we are not a jewelry company... we are a creative design company. My friends would wear it; it was more of a bespoke level, and then due to the positive response [the pieces] received, I started making multiples of the same looks. I am always one that is keen for a challenge, and this was the first stage. A venture capitalist came to us, he had a design company that he built from scratch and sold for a couple million. He desired to come on board and he gave us a forecast, and we turned him down. He wanted to make a big machine. Even at a wholesale level, this will never be what we do. Everything is done in-house. Nothing is sent out to manufacturers. When I did try sending it out I remade eight-ninths of the collection because I wasn’t happy with the quality. We are going to sell well within the places that we pitch ourselves,” Angold explains firmly.

The lighting pieces were in a slightly more developed stage, so that could have made sense for a studio launch, but with different countries having different electric outlets and specifications, it was a difficult situation to bypass for a small team. After all, fashion is what Sarah knows, studied, and is very passionate about it. You see it in all elements of her work.

But let us go back to the beautiful pieces themselves. All come from photographs of scaffolding, cranes, fences, or random little urban geometric things Sarah finds while walking around cities. From there the images are put into a computer and turned into a line drawing to take the shapes and outlines, set into repeat, set into reflection, and allowed to evolve aesthetically. Does that fit a shape of the body somehow? What materials would make this piece work even stronger? Every aspect informs every other.

“I’ll grab a color of material, and then with photographs, scale things really big on the photocopier, sometimes take a cross section... they all start to come inside and coexist. It’s really instinctive. I am constantly interested in materials and textures. If I am at a shop, a trade fair, an amazing building, I am always someone



that is touching things. I have a few boxes of things I have collected and work out how that would make an interesting combination. I like contrasting and unusual combinations. We are talking with a recycled concrete company at the moment, surface and weight would be completely different, especially if it was molded. If I want to sit with it in my pocket, just play with it while I am talking, that is sort of my green light that I should be doing something fun with that material.”

There is also a metal element to the collection within the earrings and necklaces, which bridges the gap a bit between costume jewelry and fine

jewelry. The strength in metal tied the architectural aspect for the entire collection together, as well as solidified the longevity.

“I see these as pieces that want to be kept and collectible, I want people to value them ...to keep them and want to pass them down. I’m placing them in a weird position where I want them to be fashion, but I want them to invade fashion. They don’t necessarily have a season or a time or a place. Maybe in twenty years’ time, someone inherits my piece and they don’t necessarily wear it, but they hang it or display it. I want people to

connect with the beautiful factor and interesting factor and use it as they wish ...Maybe they are products that evolve and don’t stay what they were originally purposed for...maybe in the future it will inspire an architectural firm to create a new building, sky is the limit.”