

Production, Manufacturing and Packaging: Designer Alissia Melka-Teichroew Shares Her Story

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About 7 years ago after finishing the Design Academy Eindhoven in The Netherlands I started my Studio ALISSIA in Eindhoven. The projects I worked on ranged from tabletop to furniture to graphic/packaging design. After a year I felt it was necessary to see my own work in a different light and applied for Grad School and a Stipend to fund this.

This is how I ended up going to the US in 2002. After grad school and working for IDEO and several small freelance gigs, I felt confident enough to start my studio ALISSIAMt Design in Brooklyn. It mostly started by selling the rings and Handful of Plates at the Designboom Mart at the ICFE 05. The Plates were older and more known, also more expensive since they are manufactured in Europe and imported, the rings were new and cheap and caught many people's eyes. After the Mart it was necessary for me to keep freelancing and save money for the manufacturing. But once the rings started hitting the stores and mostly the blog sites like Design*Sponge they just took off. Press + stores contacted me from all over the world. And of course the more postings online about this product, the more interest.

The Diamond ring and Pearl ring were designed in January 2003 and I designed them for an intro to metalsmithing-class but noticed soon enough that it was a popular product. But since I'm a designer and not a businesswoman at heart it took me a while to actually get the product on the market. Also it took me a while to figure out the different materials, the manufacturing, etc. Mostly because it's something I would need to figure out on my own, fund on my own, promote on my own, etc.

This is how I finally went to work:

The first thing that was important to figure out was the manufacturing of the actual rings. In my case finding a caster and a laser cutter. Next was the packaging and then figuring out the pricing. It's important to remember that the price of packaging is not only the materials but also the time you spend packaging them. Up until now I have been managing the rings on my own. New stores email every week, some end up ordering others don't, but I keep them posted on shows, new work, pricing, new models etc.

For me personally it is important that my designs reflect what I believe in and are not based on compromises. This also means that the packaging needs to reflect the product. The other part that I love about selling or distributing your own work is to see how people respond to your work. It's not important that every one gets exactly what you mean by the product, it's more important and exciting to get the different and honest responses.

The products tend to lead a different life than you do, it's often more glamorous to be the product than the designer. Which I personally don't mind.

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