

# Tales from Faraway

by Antonella Reina

From the heart of Reykjavik to New Caledonia, via Africa...  
The stories of three designers outline a new map of creativity,  
giving us a "jewelry vision" with ever-broader horizons

Map data ©2022 Google

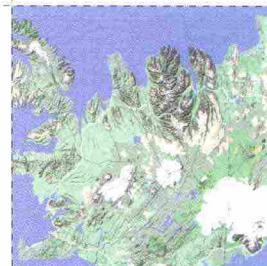
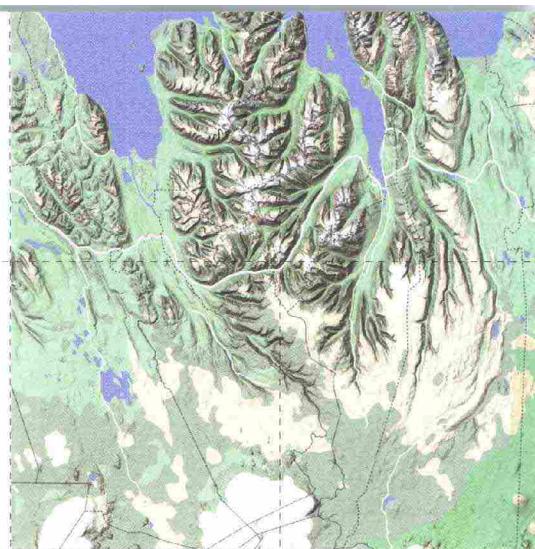
Designer Guðbjörg Kristín Ingvarsdóttir is the co-founder of Aurum, Iceland. Loan Favan is a young artist/designer founder of Naula Studio, New Caledonia. Ismaila Rufai is a digital creator who makes handmade jewelry to keep African tribal traditions alive. We collected their stories to understand what it means to create jewelry in places far from the mainstream and how the digital connection can now be an advantage for enriching the world of jewelry with alternative and extremely progressive cultural influences.

Guðbjörg Kristín Ingvarsdóttir è designer e co-founder di Aurum, Islanda. Loan Favan è una giovane artista/designer founder di Naula Studio, Nuova Caledonia. Ismaila Rufai è un creator digitale che realizza monili fatti a mano, per mantenere viva la tradizione tribale africana. Abbiamo raccolto le loro testimonianze per comprendere che cosa vuol dire creare gioielli in luoghi lontani dal mainstream, e quanto, oggi, la connessione digitale possa essere un vantaggio, per arricchire il mondo della gioielleria di influenze culturali alternative ed estremamente progressiste.

Iceland  
64.963° N. 19.0208° W

«I studied goldsmithing and jewelry design in Denmark, a country with an important history in design and this has meant a lot to me. Back in Iceland, I founded Aurum. Our country is truly beautiful but it has no deep-rooted tradition in jewelry, which made me feel free to invent my own style. I spend a lot of time working on concepts and ideas and I pay attention to every detail because I want each of my creations to convey a feeling or atmosphere that evokes the nature of my homeland. When I am in the studio at home, I live in a world of my own but, to grow as an artist, travel is essential for leaving the daily routine behind and getting a different perspective. We have dealers and customers in different countries, so I always try to stay connected with the international jewelry community. In Italy, for example, I have exhibited three times at **Artistar Jewels**: participating in similar events is a good way to compare ideas with other designers. As a company we have always been farsighted but we never lose touch with our Icelandic heritage, which is unique and lives on in our designs, in our flagship store, in our packaging, which is strictly based on eco-friendly production.»

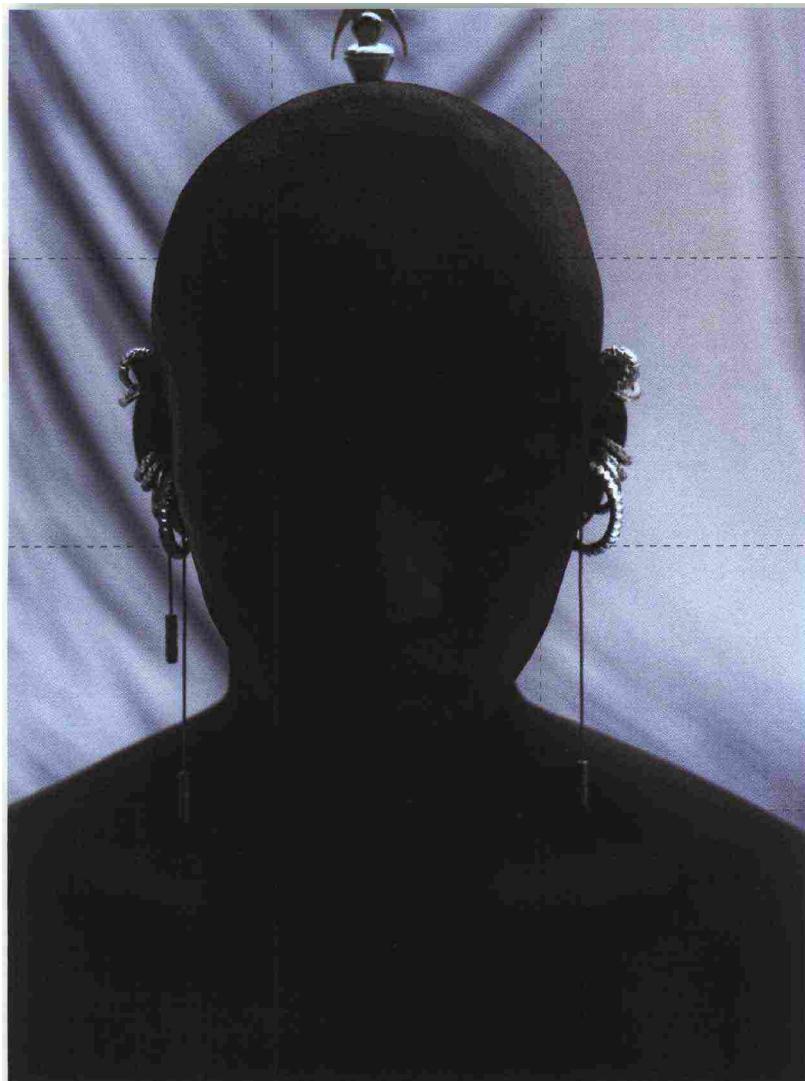
Below, from left.  
Gold plated silver Basalt earring with Swarovski pearl. Oxidized silver Basalt necklace with Swarovski pearl. Basalt collection, Aurum



«I WANT EACH OF MY CREATIONS TO CONVEY A FEELING OR ATMOSPHERE THAT EVOKE THE NATURE OF MY HOMELAND»



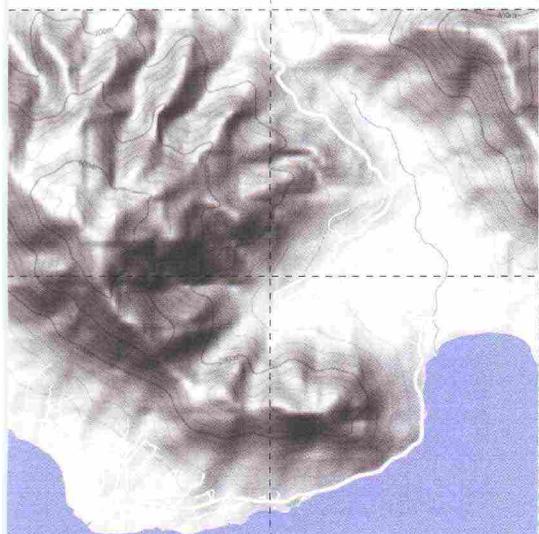
«TRAMITE OGNI CREAZIONE VOGLIO TRASMETTERE UNA SENSAZIONE O UN'ATMOSFERA CHE RIEVOCHI LA NATURA DELLA MIA TERRA»



«MOST INTERACTIONS ARE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:  
MEETINGS BETWEEN CREATIVES TAKE PLACE ON  
INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK»

New Caledonia  
20.9043° S, 165.6180° E

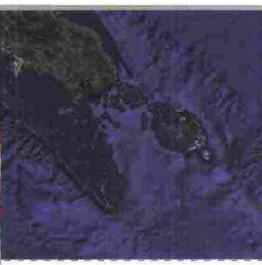
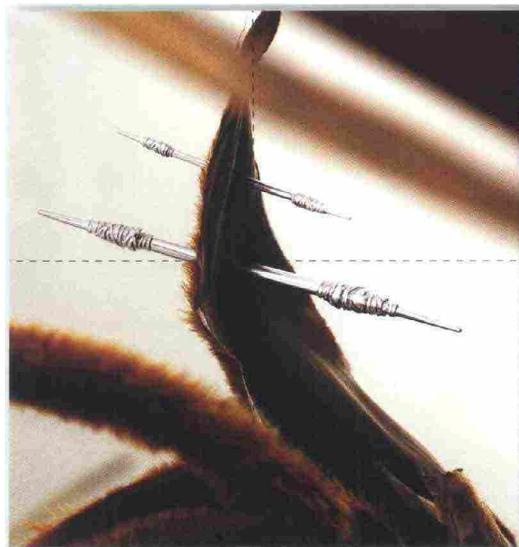
«I am originally from New Caledonia, Pacific. We have always been used to being on the other side of the world. To follow my dream, I had to go abroad and study in Paris and the Netherlands. In New Caledonia, finding materials and making jewelry is difficult or, in any case, extremely expensive. There was therefore little hope for me to return home and establish my brand there. I moved to Bali, Indonesia, in order to be able to create freely and have easy access to resources. This island offers many opportunities in terms of production and it's more dynamic and connected than New Caledonia: here I feel part of the world. However, for our generation (especially after Covid), where you live is not so important. Working remotely is a real possibility and most interactions are through social media: meetings between creatives take place on Instagram and TikTok. I have collaborated with people who live in Germany, Estonia or New York, all digitally. There are no limits, the only thing to consider is the time "gap" depending on the time zone. Bali somehow attracts a lot of creative people, so we also have interesting collaborations and conversations here on the island. I don't feel far from the rest of the world, if anything, I feel like I have had the best of both worlds. An island lifestyle close to my roots and the chance to create and connect both physically and digitally. In the future, I hope to travel more to deepen my connection with the outside world.»



«LA MAGGIOR PARTE DELLE INTERAZIONI  
PASSA ATTRAVERSO I SOCIAL MEDIA: GLI  
INCONTRI TRA CREATIVI AVVENGONO  
ANCHE SU INSTAGRAM E TIKTOK»

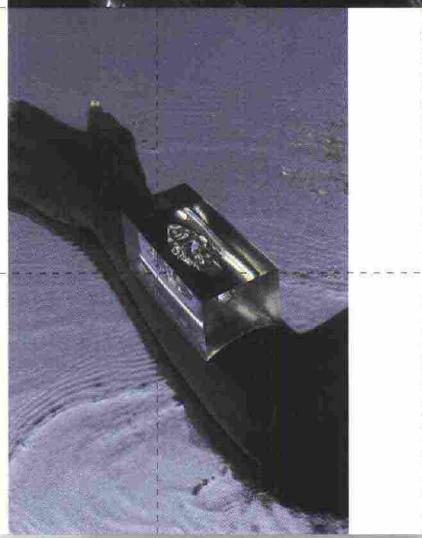
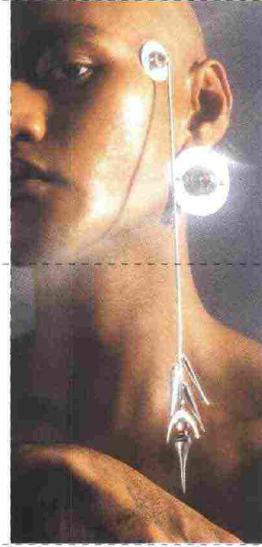
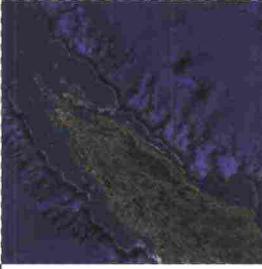


Ritaglio stampa ad uso esclusivo del destinatario, non riproducibile.

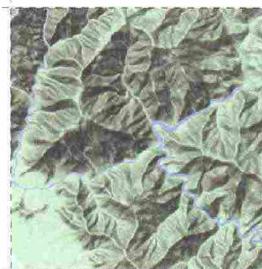


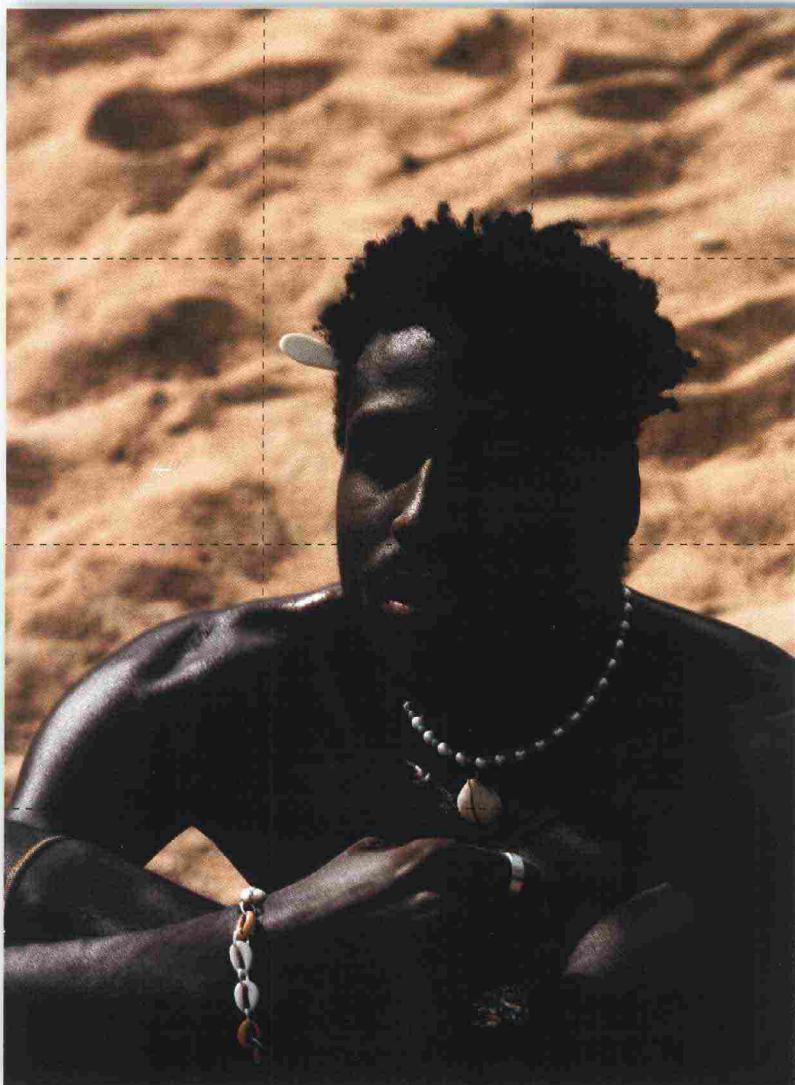
STORIES 87

From above, clockwise, Silver plated brass Cac earrings. Silver plated brass Meice rings. Silver plated brass Hoda earcuffs. Shegu implant with a metal fossilized silex floating in the middle of the box, Ngei collection, Naula Studio. Opposite page, Silver plated brass Hoda earcuffs and silver Yawe earrings in short and long version, Ngei collection, Naula Studio.



«Sono originaria della Nuova Caledonia, Pacifico. Siamo sempre stati abituati a stare dall'altra parte del mondo. Per seguire il mio sogno, ho dovuto andare all'estero e studiare a Parigi e nei Paesi Bassi. In Nuova Caledonia, reperire materiali e produrre gioielli è difficile o comunque estremamente costoso. Quindi c'era poca speranza, per me, di tornare a casa e stabilire il mio marchio lì. Mi sono trasferita a Bali, in Indonesia, per poter creare liberamente e avere facile accesso alle risorse. Quest'isola offre molte opportunità in termini di produzione, è più dinamica e connessa della Nuova Caledonia: qui mi sento inclusa nel mondo. In ogni caso, per la nostra generazione (soprattutto dopo il Covid), non è così importante il luogo in cui si vive. Il lavoro da remoto è una possibilità concreta, e la maggior parte delle interazioni passa attraverso i social media: gli incontri tra creativi avvengono anche su Instagram e TikTok. Ho collaborato con persone che vivono in Germania, Estonia o New York, tutto digitalmente. Non ci sono limiti, solo un "gap" temporale, dovuto al fuso, da tenere in considerazione. Bali attrae in qualche modo molti creativi, perciò abbiamo anche interessanti collaborazioni e conversazioni qui sull'isola. Non mi sento così distante dal resto del mondo, semmai mi sento come se avessi avuto il meglio di entrambi i mondi. Uno stile di vita isolano vicino alle mie radici e la possibilità di creare e connettermi sia fisicamente che digitalmente. In futuro, spero di viaggiare di più, per approfondire la mia connessione con l'estero».

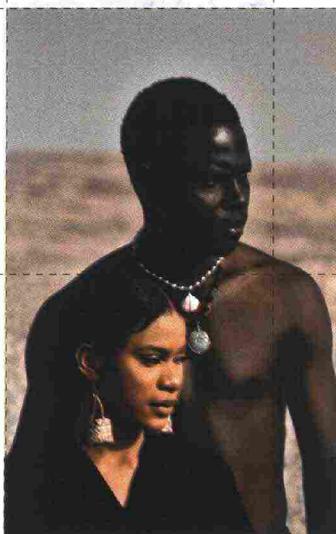
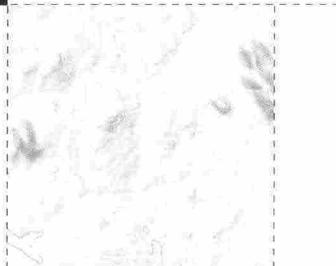
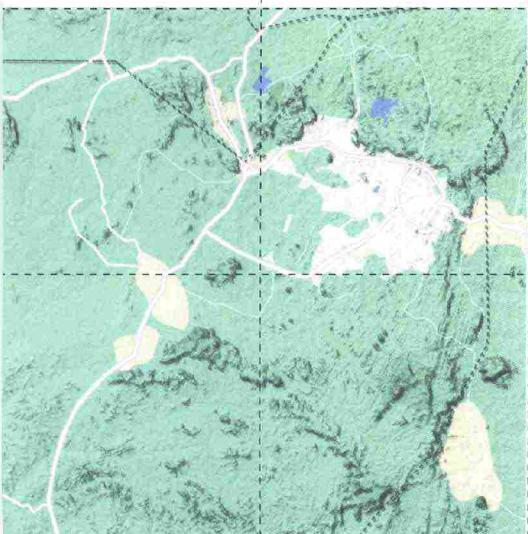


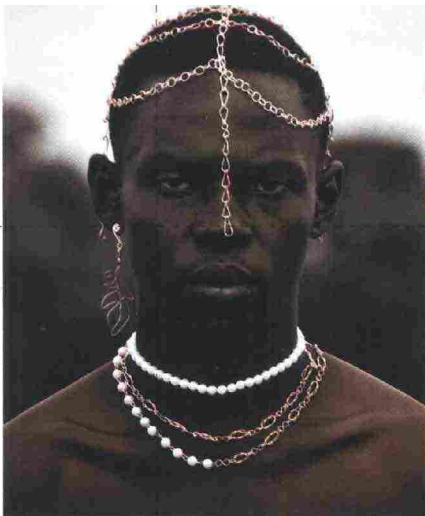


Nigeria  
9.0820° N, 8.6753° E

«My name is Ismaila Rufai, I am 23 years old and a photographer with a passion for jewelry. I am from the north-central part of Nigeria but I live in Abuja, the capital, where I produce digital content and am trying to build my own brand, although it is not easy due to my finances. Jewelry is an integral part of African culture: ivory, bone, wood, shells, beads are the materials used to create impressive necklaces, belts, anklets, bracelets and headdresses, all handmade by the locals. For me, the jewelry of African culture is an art form. It adds spice to life, it gives elegance, it is indispensable for enhancing the wearer's personality and, when used in the right way, it can tell a unique and beautiful story. That is why, together with a friend of mine, who is a skilled craftsman, we began to create handmade items using copper, cowry shells and other materials with the intention of keeping a tradition, so rich in culture and meaning, alive and somehow "fine tune" it to a contemporary aesthetic. I hope to soon enter the international jewelry market with my own creations. I and my team are working on it, but it is a slow process.»

«FOR ME, THE JEWELRY OF AFRICAN CULTURE IS AN ART FORM. IT ADDS SPICE TO LIFE, AND, WHEN USED IN THE RIGHT WAY, IT CAN TELL A UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL STORY.»

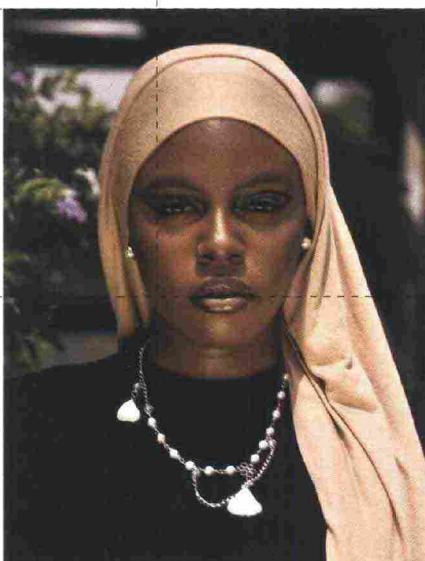
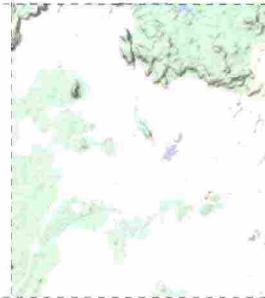
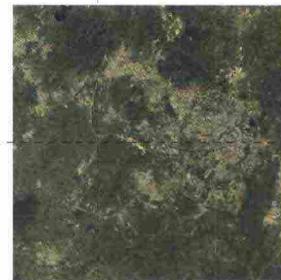




Here and opposite pages. Handmade jewelry in copper, cowry shells and other materials, inspired by the African Heritage, and all produced locally in Abuja, Nigeria.



STORIES 89



«Mi chiamo Ismaila Rufai, ho 23 anni e sono un fotografo con la passione per i gioielli. Vengo dalla parte centro-settentrionale della Nigeria, ma vivo nella capitale Abuja, dove produco contenuti digitali e sto provando a costruire il mio marchio, anche se non è semplice per le mie finanze. La gioielleria è parte integrante della cultura africana: avorio, osso, legno, conchiglie, perline sono i materiali per dar vita a collane imponenti, cinture, cavigliere, bracciali e copricapi, tutti fatti a mano dalla gente del posto. Per me, i gioielli della cultura africana sono una forma d'arte, aggiungono sapore alla vita, donano eleganza, sono indispensabili per accrescere la personalità di ognuno e, se usati nel modo giusto, riescono a raccontare una storia unica e bellissima. Per questo, assieme a un mio amico, abile artigiano, abbiamo iniziato a creare pezzi fatti a mano in rame, cipree e altri materiali, con l'intenzione di mantenere viva una tradizione ricca di cultura e di significato e in qualche modo "accordarla" a un'estetica contemporanea. Spero di potermi presto affacciare al mercato internazionale della gioielleria con le mie creazioni. Con il mio team ci stiamo lavorando, ma è un processo graduale». \*



«PER ME, I GIOIELLI DELLA CULTURA AFRICANA SONO UNA FORMA D'ARTE, AGGIUNGONO SAPORE ALLA VITA, E, SE USATI NEL MODO GIUSTO, RIESCONO A RACCONTARE UNA STORIA UNICA E BELLISSIMA»

