

Ilenia Corti could be described as a creator of imaginary worlds and surreal places to treasure, equally through the creation of a jewel, an image, a shot.

She was born in 1975 in a family master jewellers who created unique high jewellery pieces in a personal, recognizable style always preserving ancient crafts and In 1969 they found the Santagostino fine art jewellery brand.

Ilenia soon developed a natural familiarity with gold and precious stones; ever since her childhood, her fantasy focused on the tiny world of insects. Her career started already when she used to wander around the family business observing the virtuoso techniques of her parents. She has always been very attuned to the world of art, cinema, fashion, drawing inspiration from contemporary avant-garde art, surrealism and pre-Raphaelite movement, from Bergman's black and white to Maya Deren's experimental cinema. In 1998 she obtains her Fashion design diploma at IED (Milan) and the following year she specializes in marketing and merchandising at the New York Fashion Institute of Technology. She collaborates with famous Italian and French maisons as consultant for accessory lines, and specializes in shoes design. Meanwhile she keeps collaborating with her family business, and in 2002 she becomes Art Director for Santagostino fine art jewellery brand. Her jewels, earrings, bracelets, chokers and bangles tell a magical story populated by tiny creatures represent part of the childhood dream. In the past years, her huge passion for art made her work with several artists, interchanging talents: some of her jewellery creations are on show at the Boston Museum of Modern Art and artists ask to collaborate with her. Marzia Migliora commissions her Anomma, a bracelet for her personal exhibition "Tanatosi" at the Fondazione Merz in Turin.

In 2008, the video "The Tree" is born from the creative synergy of the brand, talented animation director Virgilio Villorosi and artist Ericailcane with the classic stop motion technique .

Travelling frequently between Italy, France and the USA in her position as a consultant, Ilenia never leaves behind her old camera,

and some years ago, on finding in the attic her father's beloved old Super 8 camera, she turned it into her closest travel companion. She began filming any details, any hidden corner obsessively, using one of the most fascinating filming techniques, today nearly extinct.

In 2007 It's the birth of the brand "VernissageProject" with Matteo Mena. The two designers move in an uncontaminated space where creativity reigns, a surreal, childhood-like but tangible place, marked by the contrast between reality and dream.

Their project, **Vernissage**, invites us to admire a spectacular vision of Nature frozen in its vital tension, an image faded in time, a testimony of the memory of the enchantment for the smaller things, of a wonderful world which cannot find a place in day-to-day adult reality. Each fragment of this fragile and mysterious universe crystallizes itself in a jewel, in a jewel shoe. A freeze-frame in black and white of dusty gold filigree trapping diamonds, mother-of-pearl, agate, jade and amethyst.

Many images which tell us episodes of an eternal story in every season: metamorphosis and the pain of evolution.

Intricate, lace-like dry branches and finely etched dried flowers trap insects, dragonflies and other marvellous creatures from a past world. The inspiration for this project is rooted in the tension between dream visions, childhood vitality and adult pragmatism, in the charm of the animals kept under glass in Natural Science Museums, forever fixed and remembering their vital peak, in the pictures of a nostalgic, melancholy and lost nature taken by Sarah Moon. Imagine if the eighteenth-century botanical illustrations and entomology books by Maria Sibylla Merian and Mark Catesby survived a natural disaster, their colours now faded.

The new **Vernissage** collection, unique pieces of jewels and shoes, sold in exclusive for Barneys New York and Beverly Hills, spins tales of insects which used to camouflage amongst leaves and sticks, of white-horned deer stuck in the tentacles of the woods, of tiny flying animals frozen on bright white roses as they drank the morning dew. The diamonds, in nuances from grey to brown, and

the pink, yellow and burnished gold create an ancient suggestion of lost beauty.

Each collection, a chapter of a novel made of images, is retold in a super-8 video and through the free interpretation of an artist. In 2007 the first realization of the Super 8 video “At the Laboratorium” tells the atmosphere of the first Vernissage collection, in collaboration with the artist musician Last Days.

In 2008 the realization of the video “the Current”. It tells through evocative images faded in the time the birth of the necklace “the nest” in collaboration with the composer Linda Bjalla. In 2008 the realization of the video “Collapse” tells the memories of an evocative trip in Iceland. In 2009 the realization of the first music videoclip “Verano” for the Italian singer Moltheni.

[www.vernissageproject.com](http://www.vernissageproject.com)

[www.santagostinojewellery.net](http://www.santagostinojewellery.net)