

FLORENCE

In conversation with
RICHARD PALLARDY

Photographer NICOLAS COULOMB

TÉTIER



Necklace TÉTIER BIJOUX,
Shirt DRIES VAN NOTEN,
Pants OTTOLINGER.

Florence Tétier loves junk. Intent on promoting sustainability through her jewelry line, Tétier Bijoux, she collects all manner of discarded items—plastic forks, combs, beads—and turns them into stunningly unique high fashion pieces. Using only a heat gun and her imagination, she transforms this “*garbage*” into stunningly structural, candy-colored blossoms that are deployed as earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and hairpieces. Besides her work as a sustainable artist, Tétier also runs the avant-garde magazine, *Novembre*, and is in the process of getting a photography collaboration with her partner, Nicolas Coulomb, off the ground.



RICHARD PALLARDY: Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

FLORENCE TÉTIER. I grew up in the suburbs of Paris in a middle-class family. My mom is an executive director’s assistant and my father is a physiotherapist, and I also have a sister. I had a super classic French upbringing in the suburbs of Paris. My parents decided to move to Switzerland when I was 18 because we are half French and Swiss. It was right after I graduated and I didn't really know what I wanted to study. I thought okay, since I like drawing, let's try graphic design. So I went to school in Switzerland. I really enjoyed it. It was right after school that we, being students, wanted to make a magazine platform for young designers and creators because we thought it was missing at the time. That was 10 years ago, and it’s how *Novembre* started. Jewelry basically just

happened because I've always enjoyed making crafty things. I found myself missing it because it's a lot [of], as you know, working on the computer and sending emails. I was working as an art director. The person who was in charge of jewelry left, so I said, maybe I can try and see what happens. I did one collection, a stylist noticed my pieces and she started to shoot them, despite the fact that I didn't even have a showroom. I didn't mean for it to happen, now I'm just trying to keep it up.

R.P. Has living in France and Switzerland affected your design sensibilities?

F.T. I’m influenced by nature, it's not really the country I live in, but more like the environment in general. I'm more inspired now that I live in the countryside because I see a lot of nature, it's rich and inspiring to me. I think from my suburban upbringing—maybe it's very French—but there are these shops that sell super cheap furniture and super cheap [goods] in the suburbs. I really enjoy going to those and taking inspiration from them.

R.P. You mentioned that your jewelry designs are inspired by nature and natural forms. What is it about nature that sparks your creativity, as opposed to something more artificial?

It's so interesting to play with the classical jewelry codes like diamonds. My materials are so un-precious. around you. It's possible to transform things and make them nice again, give them a new life. I know I'm not going to save the planet by doing this, but how can I maybe make some people aware?

People would ask if it's glass, or sometimes ask if it's a diamond when I know it was a fork before! R.P. Your pieces seem designed to be photographed. Do you mean them to be wearable pieces? Are they more like art objects?

F.T. This is a good question. I do photography as well or I work as an art director on shoots. And sometimes I'm like, “*Oh, I wish this was bigger. I wish this was... you know.*” So I'm sometimes really frustrated with the object, but in a good way. It gives me new ideas. And so I think okay if it doesn't exist; I'm gonna make my own basically. So yes, I of course think more in terms of photography before I think of how people are gonna wear them.

R.P. You have a very distinctive color palette. A lot of it seems to be in these very saturated, candy-colored tones. What draws you to like that kind of color?

F.T. I think we live in a very complex world and I am really an activist in a lot of fields. I know we have a lot of contradictions as well. For example, I am a feminist, but I listen to a lot of misogynistic rap music so I think it's not black and white. I want to recreate this contrast in my jewelry. It's like okay, I'm using this very soft, light pink color, but I'm gonna contrast it with some spiky black things that seem a bit aggressive. I don't know, I kind of like this contrast. I think it's quite interesting and quite close to my vision of life.

R.P. Where do you find your materials?

F.T. I buy 50 percent secondhand and waste. And the rest I buy online. The goal is to eventually use 100 percent waste by the end of next year. My goal would be to partner with an association that collects plastic from the ocean or forest. At the moment, I am playing around and using dead stocks. I buy a lot of things from thrift stores as well because I don't want to buy from actual suppliers.

R.P. Do you work mostly with transparent materials or do you work with opaque materials too?

F.T. It's very cool to go into a horrible shop, find something, and think, “*Oh wow. This is beautiful. I want it.*” At the same time, if there's only green, there's just green and you can’t make it pink. So I work with the colors that already exist or I find ways to color them, but it's very crafty. If this is the only color that is available in the market, what can you do with it? I think it's quite challenging. I ended up really loving transparency, to be honest, and I know it works well. It's so interesting to play with the classical jewelry codes like diamonds. My materials are so un-precious. People would ask if it's glass, or sometimes ask if it's a diamond when I know it was a fork before!

R.P. You're really interested in upcycling or recycling materials that are easily found. How does that relate to your larger feelings on sustainability? And how does fashion and style contribute to a political agenda?

F.T. Of course, it's political. It's also very true to my own being and what I'm doing with my life, basically. I guess it's part of a general process on a personal level and if I can somehow impact other people by doing this, that’s great. This is why I really want to find an official partner and maybe make people aware of things, show them the whole process. I can show them how plastic from the beach can be transformed and send a message, or not to throw it on the beach but send it to me directly. My message would basically be not to buy new things and use whatever's already

R.P. Your magazine *Novembre* showcases a wide range of different types of artists. What is the unifying aesthetic for the magazine? What do you look for when you're looking for people to showcase in the magazine? What do you hope to accomplish by giving them a platform?

F.T. It's really important for me to have contrast [to show] how I think the world is, so it's very diverse. It's very close to my vision of education. I don't believe that a classroom should be filled with students that are all the same age at the same time. I feel it's important to have a mix of younger and older people so that they can feed off of each other. It was really important from the beginning to showcase the work of people who are completely unknown, who don't have any Instagram followers or even don't have an Instagram account. It's also a reflection of our world and we want it to be as inclusive as possible. I know this word is trendy at the moment, but it's always been like that just without naming it, basically.

R.P. Are there other designers working right now who you admire?

F.T. You never wear a head-to-toe look from one designer. You know about the full-look policy. When brands tell you, you have to shoot this look just how it was on the runway. You cannot touch it. I think it’s horrible. It kills creativity. It’s not how the world is. It’s ignorant and backward thinking. It’s very hard to pick one or two designers. But I could send you a list. [Tétier later sent us this: Eckhaus Latta, D’Heygere, Y/Project, Martine Rose, Ottolinger, Mowalola, Acne Studios, Vitelli.]

R.P. Are there any artists throughout history who you're drawn to; painters, sculptors, musicians...?

F.T. I love women who stand out, the kind of women who are not afraid of being themselves. They don’t give a fuck about anything and it’s great. Virginie Despentes, Courtney Love, Angela Davis, Lana Del Rey or Cicciolina. I also like Cindy Sherman, Donna Huanca, Beat Streuli, Tina Barney, Rineke Dijkstra, Larry Sultan. I’m more inspired by people than I am by their work.

R.P. You are working on a photography project with your partner Nicolas. What are you looking to photograph?

F.T. We really want to develop something more personal. This lockdown situation really made me realize I want to develop something more long-term. I don’t want to get back to how it was before. I want to develop long-term relationships with people or artists, and not just work on editorials for the sake of doing editorials. I want to step back a little from that and do more significant things. [I want to photograph] older, younger, fatter people, making it normal to do so. In light of everything that has happened, I want to listen to more people of color, and how we can make stuff together. I want to reflect reality and not just think about the business. We have to use real people. We are glamorizing fashion way too much. We need to change this for good. If I can play a part in this, I’d be happy.

It's political. And it's also very true to my own being and what I'm doing with my life, basically.



Top Y/PROJECT.



Earrings and Ring TETIER BIJOUX, Tank Top DRIES VAN NOTEN, Pants OTTOLINGER.

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