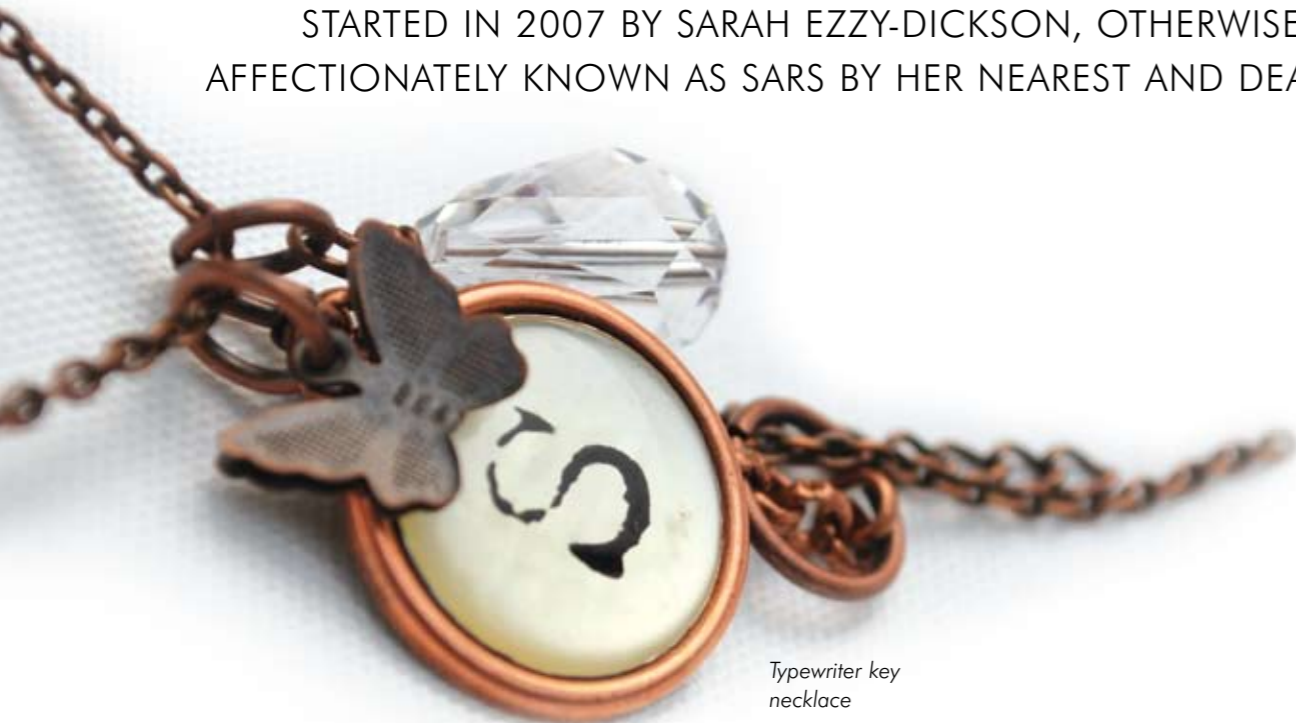


Totally Infectious!

INFECTIOUS DESIGNS IS A SYDNEY BASED BUSINESS STARTED IN 2007 BY SARAH EZZY-DICKSON, OTHERWISE AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS SARS BY HER NEAREST AND DEAREST.



Typewriter key necklace

Sars' inspiration comes from many sources, a single item can have hundreds of possibilities, or a newly learnt technique can spin her latest range of jewellery in a whole new direction.

SARS' OBSESSION WITH BEADS

and jewellery making started young. "I remember sitting in Maisy's (an elderly friend of my Mother's) sunroom when I was three or four and staring at her many jars and containers full of beads, buttons and other odds and sods and realising that almost anything can be combined and turned into beautiful jewellery." She has still got the very first piece of jewellery she ever made – a bracelet with an eclectic mix of vintage buttons, beads and crystals from Maisy's stash, strung on red cotton thread, a gift for her Grandmother who kept it up until her death a few years ago.

For a long time, beading had simply been a hobby that Sars enjoyed in her spare time, and it wasn't until she started working at a bead store that she realised she could potentially make money from something so

enjoyable. "I was constantly being inspired by so many customers who were making money from their hand-made jewellery, and I thought 'I could do that' so I went for it and that's when Infectious Designs was born." The name is a perfect description for Sars' business; not only does it link directly back to her 'name', but the designs are also incredibly infectious – as Sar says, you can't only own one, and you're liable to pass the infection onto anyone walking past you! It also makes for some very interesting jewellery categories on her website; ear infections (earrings) and neck infections (necklaces) to name just two.

As with many beaders, Sars started out using mainly cheap beads and findings, but soon discovered that in order to create the ideas she had in her head, quality was the only way to go. As soon as she turned 18, she got her first credit card "only so



Anemone ring



Cuff

I could place orders for beads online and from overseas!" This opened up many new avenues for Sars to venture down, and she soon found herself experimenting with Precious Metal Clay, to which she comments: "I'm terrible at sculpting, so I don't know why I thought that would be easy." It may not have been easy, but it piqued her interest in working with metal, which continued to remain dormant until 2008 when she did her first short course in silver smithing at Enmore Design Centre TAFE. From there, it was full steam ahead and at the beginning of this year she was accepted into the Jewellery Trade Manufacture course at the same TAFE.

After living out of home for the past five years, Sars has returned to her parents home in the St George district of Sydney and has set up a fully functioning studio in their garage, including her newest additions – her custom-made jeweller's bench and LPG/Oxygen torch set-up (both birthday presents from her parents for her recent 25th birthday). Sars is excited: "I have my own sanctuary where I can make as much mess and noise as I want or need to, play loud music and my friends can come over for a jewellery making session and there's a desk for everyone"

When asked if her style of jewellery has changed much over the years, Sars ponders this and replies, "Yes, and no. My ideas haven't changed as such, but my knowledge and experience has, which enables me to actually make those ideas happen. Once upon a time I would wish to be able to

make something and then forget about it because I wasn't able to, now nine times out of ten I can make it, which means not too many of my ideas go ignored anymore." Having been interested in mixing different media together since her early beginnings, Sars continues this through her current work too, combining lace, ribbon and fabric with resin, metalwork and beading. Her thirst for knowledge is never sated however, with every new technique she discovers finding its way into her work. "My to-learn list is massive, I really want to learn to felt and make lampwork beads, not to mention chain-maille and intricate seed-beading. There are never enough hours in my day, so I buy books to satisfy my urges, which usually end up encouraging me even more!" She also likes looking for alternative ways to use every-day items, like computer parts and broken toys, and keeps a box full of such items under her 'craft' desk for easy access.

Sars' inspiration comes from many sources, a single item can have hundreds

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Earrings

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Button brooches

of possibilities, or a newly learnt technique can spin her latest range of jewellery in a whole new direction. She names Georg Jensen and Susan Lenart Kazmer as her jewellery influences, but also loves the work of Jennifer Maestre, especially her pencil and nail sculptures, and Vivian Westwood "because she's crazy and amazing!" While she borrows ideas from current fashion trends, she tries to put a 'Sars' spin on it, such as her graffiti styled name necklaces and cuffs. "I saw lots of people wearing the cursive script name necklaces and thought immediately how awesome a graf version would be, so I had a few words to a friend of mine and now he pumps out the artwork for me to cut out of metal sheet, and we're expanding into Perspex soon. So far, they have been very popular."

Sars had a piece of jewellery featured in last year's A&E Metal Explorations exhibit and is gearing up to do it again this year. She is also donating several custom-made pieces to a charity fund raiser for the Royal Institute for the Deaf and Blind, but does most of her advertising by word of mouth, which so far has proved reasonably successful. Her most successful advert is a close friend, who Sars refers to as her "guinea pig for new designs" which she wears every day and often gets complimented on. "My friend makes sure they know where she got it from, which is great."

Her jewellery ranges are diverse, ranging from simple charm bracelets, necklaces and earrings to one-off custom-designed metal pieces like cuffs and pendants. Sars likes to source unusual items to put into her jewellery too, with one range featuring pages from



Charm necklaces



Charm bracelet

children's story books and another featuring epoxy typewriter keys. She has also recently rediscovered her love of rubber stamps too, stamping them onto recycled library book cards and setting them in bezel settings with resin, often achieving an abstract look when the ink bleeds into the card or resin. "Unexpected results can be great, unless they look terrible of course, then it goes into my 'I don't want to look at it' pile" which I often later raid when a new idea strikes me.

Sars doesn't wear much jewellery herself. "I find it easier to design with other people in mind, and most of my pieces get taken off my hands as soon as they're done, so I only end up keeping a small selection for myself. My friends and family love it though; they always get jewellery for their birthdays or Christmas, which makes it easy for me too!"

As well as jewellery making, Sars also has an avid interest in photography, recently purchasing her first digital SLR, which has enabled her to take amazing photos of her jewellery for her website, for which she also does most of the graphic design. She has



Copper dragonfly

also studied journalism, and has been a contributor for Creative Beading magazine for the last three years.

Infectious Designs can be found online at www.infectiousdesigns.com.au, but beware, you may become infected! ○