



The *GILDED ONES*

FLOWER POWER

JILL GAYNOR

HARNESSING THE POWER OF FLOWERS.

Flowers have power. We may not realize it at first, but when we introduce flowers and plants into our world, our mood lightens and the air we breathe becomes cleaner and more fragrant. The moment that we allow our noses to delve deeply into sweet-smelling petals or permit our eyes to pause on a delightful posy of color and texture, we are submitting ourselves to the power of flowers. And who among us hasn't, at some point, looked at a gorgeous bouquet and wondered: "How did that gorgeous concoction come together? Who introduced those colors, flowers, and plants to each other?" Well... it's likely the work of a talented floral designer. Someone who marries their love of nature with a talent for design. Someone just like our next Gilded One, Jill Gaynor. Jill wasn't always a floral designer, but she has always been a lover of the outdoors as well as an artistic and creative soul. In fact, she has enjoyed quite a diverse and inspiring professional life. From the art world to the classroom, to eco-conscious toy design to flowers — you'll see what we mean. Keep scrolling to read more about the ultra talented Jill Gaynor



LET'S CHAT!

Home. Sweet. Home. On the east and west coasts. My family moved to Los Angeles right after I was born. I spent six years there. Then we moved to south Florida. After graduate school, I moved back to Los Angeles and spent 17 years there before moving back east to New York City. Just this year, I left NYC for Greenwich, Connecticut.

School Daze. I went to Syracuse University for my undergraduate degree where I studied art education. Thereafter, I went to New York University for graduate school for art dealership and collecting. I also went to Loyola Marymount for a graduate degree in Child & Adolescent Literacy.

The J.O.B. I am a floral designer. It is my dream job! I get to be creative, work with beautiful flowers and plants, and design environments that make people happy. I am lucky in that my studies in college and graduate school inform my career as a floral designer. I took a ton of art history classes, including 17th century Dutch still-life painting, which almost always includes flowers. Other influential art classes were color theory, drawing, sculpture, and painting. I wonder sometimes if I would have been drawn to a career as a floral designer had it been offered as a major in college. Yet, when I look back at all of my experiences and studies, they seem entirely relevant to what I am doing today.

Daytime Reverie: These days, I find myself daydreaming a lot about how truly blessed I am for my life, just as it is. It is perfectly imperfect. My family is healthy and happy. I have wonderful friends. I live in a lovely new town with a welcoming community and I enjoy my career. Beyond that, I catch myself daydreaming about planning and hosting beautiful dinner parties at home that are fun and filled with family and friends. It delights me to think about all of the details, from the table setting to the menu to the music that plays in the background. I also dream of one day having a home with enough backyard space to plant a garden filled with flowers and organic vegetables

Sign Language. My sign is Aries, which is a passionate and creative sign, but one with a domineering and short-tempered personality — at least according to [astrology.com](https://www.astrology.com). I agree that I am creative and passionate, but I don't consider myself to be short-tempered or domineering. In fact, I try to be as accommodating as I can!



YOU HAVE HAD A MOST INTERESTING CAREER PATH. TELL US ABOUT IT.

You worked in the Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills. How did you get that job?

My first gallery position was an internship at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York City while in graduate school at NYU. Upon completion of the internship, I accepted a position as the assistant registrar for the André Emmerich Gallery, also located in New York. After dealing with one too many snowy winters in New York, I was ready to experience life on the west coast. As luck would have it, Gagosian was opening a gallery in Beverly Hills. I submitted a resume for the front desk position and the rest is history.

Then you moved on to become a toy designer for a major toy manufacturing company. How did you transition from working in an art gallery to designing toys?

While I truly enjoyed working in the art world, I was interested in something else, which I had not yet pursued. I have always loved working with children and wanted to give teaching a try. I was specifically interested in helping children with learning challenges, so I took a position at Brentwood School in Los Angeles. Subsequently, I earned a master's degree in education and began to create original games to help my students learn basic skills. What started as a fun project turned into a real business. I took a chance on myself and started my own company called Beyond Learning. **Beyond Learning** designed, manufactured, and distributed eco-friendly educational games all over the world. The esteemed Dr. Harvey Karp (**Happiest Baby on the Block**) helped with the company's tag line: "Getting smart is just half the fun!".

Now you are a floral designer. Did that happen by chance or was floral design something you have been working towards for some time?

Totally by chance. After more than a decade in the toy industry, I felt ready for a career change. I wanted to find something that would allow me to use my creativity and simultaneously provide a connection to nature. There was a flower school a few blocks away from where I lived in New York City. One afternoon, I stopped in to inquire about taking a class. When I opened the door to the school, the first thing I noticed was the enchanting smell of fresh flowers, which instantly took me back to the gardens in California and made me feel at home. The woman who greeted me at the door described with immense passion the world of floral design. After talking to her for about 30 minutes, she encouraged me to take the only remaining spot in an upcoming professional program. That was it. I never looked back.

TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION AS A FLORAL DESIGNER.

What is your aesthetic?

I would say that it is a delicate balance between west coast grace, Manhattan sophistication, and New England elegance. The aesthetic that influences my work stems from all of my life experiences.

Has your love of flowers opened you up to a passion for scents?

I think back to my grandparents' garden in Harrison, NY, where my cousin, Lisa, and I would smell all of the roses and pick our favorites. My love of flowers has always been connected to scents. When people receive a bouquet of flowers, they look first at the presentation and then smell the flowers. Flowers and scents go hand in hand.

Tell us a bit more about your business model. We understand that you only take a select number of clients each year. What's behind that decision?

Jill Gaynor Design takes on a select number of clients so that I can give each client bespoke service. I always want the people with whom I work to feel as though I am their own personal florist.

What are some of the challenges of operating your own business?

Flowers are seasonal. I've received desperate pleas for last-minute peonies in February when they are out of season. It's like asking for snow during the summer.

What do you love most about what you do?

I love almost everything about being a floral designer. It is a joy working with each of my clients and coming up with designs that they are excited about. I cannot think of a more rewarding way to earn a living. I get to be creative and make people happy every day. I also love and respect the people that I have met in this industry. The floral design community is filled with talented, kind, creative, supportive, and very hard-working professionals. I feel privileged to be a part of it.

Do you have favorites? Flowers, we mean?

Gardenias.



WHEN YOU AREN'T IMMERSED IN FLOWERS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR PASTIMES?

Spending time with family is what I love the most. I also enjoy taking dance classes, practicing yoga, going for long walks, and listening to music. I love Colorado in the summer, especially hiking in the Rockies and going to concerts at Red Rocks

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN DESCRIBED BY PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU WELL? DO YOU AGREE WITH THEIR ASSESSMENT?

1. A kind, loyal, and generous person
2. who loves sunshine,
3. is very sentimental,
4. super creative, and
5. peaceful.

WHAT THREE WORDS DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE?

Understated.

Effortless.

Elegant.

HOW DOES JEWELRY FIT INTO YOUR DAILY WARDROBE?

Jewelry adds a little something special to my daily casual attire.



LET'S TALK ABOUT STYLE ICONS. WHOSE STYLE DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST AND WHY?

I appreciate and find inspiration from many different sources and styles, from flowers to interiors to fashion. It is hard to choose just one or two.

WHAT ARE YOUR 5 GO-TO WARDROBE PIECES?

1. Jeans
2. Adidas sneakers
3. Cashmere sweaters
4. Luxe cotton t-shirts
5. Gold jewelry

WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

Traveling the world. My college roommate started a travel blog, [I am Lost and Found](#). I love reading about her adventures.



YOU RECENTLY MOVED FROM NEW YORK CITY TO GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT.

What inspired the move?

I was ready for a life outside of New York City. One that was quieter and gave me more access to nature. I also wanted to be closer to my family so that I could be more involved in their daily lives.

When we chatted on the phone, you mentioned that something auspicious happened when you relocated, something that made you certain that you made the right move. Tell us about that.

The move happened very quickly. A college friend suggested that she and I meet for lunch on Greenwich Avenue. I had never been before, but thought it was such a cute area. For fun, we did a quick search for available homes for rent. The first listing that came up was only a few blocks away. I went to see it that afternoon and fell in love with the place immediately. I signed a lease that day. When I called my mom to tell her the news, she started to cry. She said, "Did you know our ancestors lived on Greenwich Avenue in the early 1900s?" I had no idea that was the case. She continued, "Your great great-grandfather was a tailor and the family lived above his shop." Then, she forwarded me a copy of the census report that she had requested from the Greenwich Historical Society. Turns out that my new apartment is two doors down from where my great great-grandparents lived.





WHERE WOULD YOU TELL FRIENDS TO GO IN ORDER TO GET THE GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT EXPERIENCE?

I am still new to the area, so there's a lot for me to discover. But so far, highlights include walking around [Tod's Point](#), visiting the [Audubon Society](#), dining al fresco at [Terra Restaurant](#), picking up the best clambake dinners from [Fjords Fisheries](#) and shopping on Greenwich Avenue

YOU HAVE TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD LEARNING ABOUT FLOWER DESIGN, INCLUDING AMSTERDAM AND PARIS.

But if you could live anywhere else in the world, where would it be and why?

I love Greenwich, Connecticut, but if I could have a second home, I would spend all summer in Vail, Colorado. I am looking forward to traveling abroad again soon. I'd love to visit Portugal!



LIGHTNING ROUND! PICK ONE.

On personal aura: Mystery or Clarity?
Clarity.

On personal style: Minimalist or Maximalist?
Minimalist.

On floral decor: Romantic, Dramatic, or Geometric:
Romantic.

On jewelry, pt. I: Delicate or Bold?
Delicate.

On jewelry, pt. II: Arm candy or ring bling?
Arm candy.

On travel: Adventure filled with spartan digs or calm and quiet but supremely luxe?
Quiet with an option for adventure but definitely supremely luxe!

On people, pt. I: Favorite human trait?
Humility, generosity, and positive energy!

On people, pt. II: Least favorite human trait?
Dishonesty.



WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT GOLD?

Gold is timeless and can be worn with anything.

WHAT DO AUVERE PIECES MUST YOU OWN?

It's hard to choose. I would love to have a jewelry box filled with Auvere pieces. Some of my favorite pieces include the [Flex Earring Tall](#), the [Double X Ring Polished](#), and the [Open Cage Cuff](#).



PARTING WORDS?

I love being a part of the world of floral design, in part because flowers and plants bring joy and happiness. Let's stay in touch! Come visit me on my [Instagram page](#) or my [website](#).

JILL IS WEARING HER OWN CLOTHING AND AUVERE JEWELRY

Look 1 Jewelry: Clean Cut Ring, Astra Bangles, Luna II Ring, Luna IV Ring, Galactic III Earring, and Pavo Necklace.

Look 2 Jewelry: Flex Earrings Tall, Double Stick Cuff, Clean Cut Rings, Maze Cuff Short, and Slash Ring Polished.

Look 3 Jewelry: Flex Earrings Tall, Lips Necklace, Perigee Pendant & Chain, Double Cone Pendant & Chain.

Look 4 Jewelry: Open Cage Cuff, Maze Ring Polished, Carina Earrings.

Look 5 Jewelry: Plexus Earrings, Ornate Cone Amulet & Chain Large, Triple Cage Necklace, V Neck Rings, Golden Apex Ring.