

PRESS RELEASE:

AOI is the realisation of a vision held by London-based creative director Farah Marafie in which rarefied materials, exceptional standards of craftsmanship and an uncompromising attention to detail come together in twice-yearly drops of hand-made, limited-edition wearable pieces of art.

Straddling the line between fashion and art, AOI is a multi-disciplinary design house committed to responsible micro-production and is unique in the dichotomous nature of its product offerings. Each biannual drop consists of only two categories that form a conceptual diptych, with both categories made from only the highest possible quality materials, and made by hand-picked specialist master craftsmen.

Launched in summer 2021, the first drop juxtaposed sensual silk suits made from fine Italian twill and rings crafted with 18 Karat gold, diamonds and semi-precious stones. The second drop paired a selection of nine coats using different materials and natural fibers with 4 multi-functional sunglasses made in Italy. For drop 3, planned for early 2023, will see a focus on cashmere as a material study and clogs.

Marafie's approach sees her creating for collectors, not shoppers. These are people who come to AOI to make an acquisition, to invest in a piece of timeless, wearable art. "Regardless of the category released, AOI is a feeling; it's about how you feel connecting with the collectible," she says.

The designer approaches each piece with an artist's eye, drawing her inspiration from far-reaching sources, including music, art, antiques and her various travels.

For every category released, she seeks out master craftsmen to bring her vision to life. The belief that "things of quality have no fear of time" is intrinsic to Marafie's ethos, and echoed in the many hours of workmanship involved in the creation of each AOI piece; a number that is meticulously recorded and proudly shared on aoiofficial.com and @aoi.

From the outset, this focus on couture-level artistry, precision tailoring and precious materials has engendered archival mentality. Rooted in a desire to create fewer pieces that can truly touch the lives of its clients, each piece is made in intentionally limited numbers to maintain its rarity and each piece is hand-numbered, limited edition and never reproduced.

The remarkable levels of artistry are celebrated through details about the making of each item. For instance, a patchwork leather coat made by a master leather lab team in Empoli, Italy, is one of six such coats, each of which required six pairs of hands to assemble the 1284 suede and leather hand-cut triangles and took 195 days to make.

Kuwaiti-Lebanese Marafie, who received her BA in Fashion Design at New York's Parsons School of Design and completed her MA at the prestigious Central Saint Martins college in London, is devoted to seeking out the world's most respected craftsmen; the people who have dedicated their lives to perfecting their craft.

Her inspirations are as varied as the ocean is deep, stretching from the hedonistic heyday of Arabian Glamour in the Seventies to industrial design, music, abstract art, colour and sculptural forms in furniture. Above all, her intention is for each AOI drop to be a celebration of life and all its complexities.

Farah Marafie - "AOI is not trying to be all things to all people. Like art, some pieces will speak to you and some won't. Someone may feel drawn to a collectible in one drop and be totally ambivalent about the next two drops. And that's OK. They'll connect with the next drop."

Realising that the world does not need another fashion brand and recognising the need to conserve and celebrate the art of global craftsmanship, AOI creates collectibles, not collections. This is wearable art, sustainably micro produced with zero waste, always seeking to minimise environmental impact by creating objects of permanence, with no restocks, reproductions or re-releases. Ever.

About the brand:

AOI is a high-end multi-disciplinary Design House founded in 2021 that releases 2 categories per drop, and two drops a year. Categories are always different and have no relation - can be anything from skirts, sculptures, 18karat gold rings, silk suits, coats, eyewear etc. A nod to the name, AN OCEAN of IDEAS.

Inspired by music, colors, textures and other enigmatic forms of art. The unique duo of products released is produced only in limited quantities. AOI generates a gallery of collectable, wearable pieces of art, championing the quality, craft and time that it takes to make.

Collectibles not collections.

All collectibles are hand-numbered, limited edition and never reproduced.

About the Creative Director:

AOI is the brainchild of young, London-based Fashion Designer and Creative Director, Farah Marafie. Farah completed her BA in Fashion Design at Parsons School of Design in New York and her MA from Central Saint Martins in London. She trained at various fashion houses, from luxury brands, to streetwear labels. These experiences have fine-tuned her skills and eye-fuelled Farah's desire to sculpt her own universe. One that would operate asymmetrically to an industry norm driven by quantity, speed and scale.

The Kuwaiti Lebanese designer has set her sights on developing a collection of collectibles. AOI is a rarefied brand that encompasses sensorial wearable pieces of art. Each edition is born out of the exploration of an archetype, re-imagined in collaboration with specialist makers worldwide.