

"When I was suggested by one of my colleagues to take up painting during the COVID-19 lockdown, I was puzzled. I had never painted before and I was not sure I could start now," said Dipu. However, the suggestion had piqued her curiosity and she went ahead and tried it anyway.

WILD WHISPERS

Dipu's nature-inspired dream jewellery

"My first painting had people asking if they could buy it," shares Dipu. "I was amazed they even wanted to spend Tk 1,000 on it. Since then, I have sold paintings for as high as Tk 25,000."

As Dipu's confidence in her work grew, so did her sense of doing business. "I knew paintings were not something that could take my talent across the world. They were bulky and not always according to customers' tastes."

Jewellery, on the other hand, was something that she thought could allow her to represent her country, while also giving wings to her

creativity.

It was as if a seed was planted in her mind and she duly watered it with dedication and honesty.

"I looked for the right material and experimented with it for years," reminisces Dipu. "I let it rest, from 2021 until late in 2023. Only when I was sure my jewellery was colourfast and that its quality would not deteriorate with time, I thought about giving it a name — Leopid."

Dipu's business instincts are strong and she follows them blindly. "I could have sold my jewellery for a few hundred takas and it would have still taken off. However, I knew that playing it safe would never take my designs where they deserved to be. At the top!" Dipu used gemstones and pearls in her work, targeting the upscale segment of society.

"Whenever I thought my designs were becoming monotonous and predictable, I looked for unconventional materials such as jute and leather," said Dipu.

She added, "I remember walking hours in search of the exact sort of leather I required for my jewellery, with my ever-patient husband whiling away time in the car. I remember driving to Bhakurta, Savar to look for artisans who would help me in crafting metal the way I wanted. I remember spending close to three hours looking for the right kind of stones for my pieces in Tantibazar."

From working in extreme heat without a fan to top designers such as Zurhem in Dhaka and others in Russia, vying for collaboration, Dipu has seen it all. Much of her success can also be attributed to her strong knowledge of her client base.

Dipu's customers are all women in their 40s, comprising quite a few foreigners who do not mind spending money on genuine stones such as amethyst and pink rose used in her pieces. Pricing, therefore, is not a problem for the

entrepreneur. She pays handsomely to her artisans and they give her the best of their creativity.

Dipu believes in reinvesting in her business to make it grow. She has managed to move her work out of her home and into a proper workspace, thanks to the rolling profits.

"My single-minded focus to earn and earn fast is driven by my dream of creating a women-only workplace," confided Dipu. "I am still working with women who need additional sources of income. I never call them workers or labourers. They are my designers and the heart and soul of what I do."

What started as a passion project is now a responsibility for Dipu, as not excelling at her business could mean trouble for her artisans. "People depend on me now. I want to be able to solve all their problems through Dipu's Candor. I want to keep going for them."

Her next project, unique bridal jewellery, is now claiming her mind and her time, and we cannot wait to see brides flaunting the best of what Dipu has to offer.

By Munira Fidai
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Mridula
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Jewellery: Dipu's Candor
Makeup: Piash

