

Open-shut CASES

Creative locket styles are back and ready to hold anything from a snapshot to a lock of hair, or even a portrait of a loved one's eye.

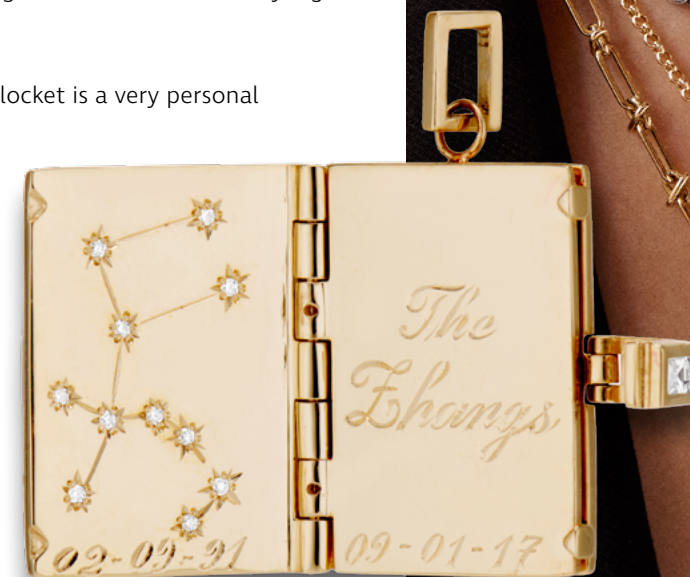
By Kate Matthams

Ashley Zhang

Ashley Zhang's best-selling book locket is a miniaturist's dream. A French-cut diamond clasp unlocks to reveal four tiny hinged gold pages, ready for custom-engraving with a meaningful inscription or diamond-set zodiac design. The New York-based jeweler's curation of vintage and antique jewels inspires her self-designed line, with influences blending Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco elements to create heirloom pieces. Book lockets were especially popular during the Victorian era in both the US and Europe, where they often served as mourning jewelry at a time when symbolism and hidden meanings were all-important. Representing a life story, faith and education, they could also conceal tiny portraits, keepsakes and engravings. Meanwhile, the French-cut diamond brings a touch of Art Deco styling.

Hargreaves Stockholm

For Jemima Hargreaves, the locket is a very personal piece of jewelry. "My grandmother wore one with photographs of my father as a small boy and her own father inside. It was made of tin, with no real value, and yet if you are someone who believes in being able to feel the power of a person in jewelry they have worn close, then this surely had it." ♦



Ashley Zhang
French Cut
Diamond Book
locket, open
(left) and with
other lockets on
model.

Cece Jewellery
locket pendants and
rings on model.

The Pod locket grew out of that memory. She designed it to carry “the treasures of everyday life, like a little sequin or a perfect pebble proudly presented to me by my children.” Exquisitely hand-engraved with lily pads and fish, its tactile form is based on a mermaid’s purse, a cherished find of her own in the rock pools of her childhood.

“I love how personal [lockets] are to people and how we can work with them to really tell their story,” says the designer.

Marie Lichtenberg

Marie Lichtenberg’s signature love lockets were born of her mother’s Martinican heritage, drawing inspiration from the *forçat* (cable) chains worn as symbols of emancipation. Her finely handcrafted locket clasps fasten gold and diamond chains or silk and pearl cords, showcasing jewelry craft like enameling and guilloché, while some even open to reveal a tiny surprise. She recently added leather thongs into the mix for the first time with



Hargreaves engraved Pod pendant with diamonds.



Marie Lichtenberg Love locket on model and Baby Clover Smash locket (right).

her gender-neutral Lasso Locket bracelet, which also has a redesigned clasp.

“Leather extends the Americana spirit that I love,” Lichtenberg explains. “It introduces a different kind of tension and brings something more raw, more grounded and more lived-in to precious pieces.” Brown tones, she adds, create contrast and warmth, anchoring the jewelry in authenticity rather than the purely ornamental.



IMAGES: HARGREAVES; MARIE LICHTENBERG; CECE JEWELLERY; ARMAN SARKISYAN

Cece Jewellery

Through her tiny enamel illustrations and portraits, Cece Fein-Hughes has modernized the jewelry art of the miniature, injecting it with contemporary desirability. The Lover’s Eye locket draws on the Victorian craze of gifting jewelry that contained miniature watercolors depicting the eye of a secret lover. They were popular in Europe as love tokens and mourning jewelry, and often came in the form of a locket, into which one could slip a lock of hair. Fast forward to 2026, and Cece Jewellery has resurrected the tradition with a gold locket hiding a custom portrait of the wearer’s own lover’s eye in champlevé enamel. As the inscription on the outside hints, the eyes are the windows to the soul, making this mysterious jewel a particularly touching gift.

Arman Sarkisyan

Arman Sarkisyan’s richly engraved and bejeweled lockets drew plenty of attention at the NouvelleBox showroom in Paris last Fall. The Los Angeles-based jeweler draws on the traditional techniques of his Armenian jewelry heritage to create pieces that, in his words, blend “old-world techniques with a modern aesthetic, utilizing rich gold, oxidized silver, diamonds, and vibrant gemstones.” A diamond and sapphire evil eye on an engraved gold background opens to reveal a space for photographs or mementos, while mottled blue opal inlay gleams out of darkly oxidized silver. At the show, a decorated cross locket revealed a lover’s eye portrait on the back – a one-of-a-kind piece cementing Sarkisyan’s position as a creator of truly modern heirlooms.

Jessie VE

“Even 18-karat-gold and diamond clouds have silver linings,” jokes Jessie Evans, who is known for her personal-narrative jewelry. Her Every Cloud locket reinterprets a traditional jewel in a thoroughly modern form: The polished gold bombé cloud – complete with diamond rain – slips up to reveal a “silver lining” that can be engraved.

Evans describes the piece as “the perfect reminder to always see the good and the positive in every situation, [and] as an *aide-mémoire* of whatever it is that brightens your day – whether that’s family, a reminder of a certain special person, or even French fries. We’re not here to tell you what gets you through your day!”



Cece Jewellery lockets and rings on model.



Arman Sarkisyan locket necklaces.