

THE BLUME EFFECT

THE JEWELRY BRAND
CURATING
UNAPOLOGETIC
STYLE

Words / **Hasani Malone**

The German word "blühen" translates to "bloom" or "to flourish" in English, which is the central theme in New York-based jewelry brand Ginger Blume. After connecting with the German word, and learning of the different types of ginger flowers, founder Brittanie Alexandria named the company "Ginger Blume." The title is a way to represent how people blossom along their individual journeys. "At the end of the day, regardless of how long it takes you or what your entire process [is], we are all blooming," Alexandria said. As for her, that journey includes launching Ginger Blume.

Alexandria created the brand in the summer of 2019 after a year of contemplating whether this was the right move. After pursuing a degree in business and a Master's in psychology, Alexandria - who is the product of a family in medicine - went get back to her creative roots. She decide to only put energy into things that she would want for the long term, then Ginger Blume came to fruition. When deciding on what goes into a collection for the minimalist brand, she looks for things that are simple and easy to wear, to dress up or down.

She looks for items that spark a sense of romance. Gold-toned jewelry is the go-to metal and always includes items that one would be able to layer, a self-professed secret passion of the designer.



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BRITTANIE ALEXANDER:

WHEN I'M GETTING DRESSED, I DON'T WANT MY EARRINGS TELLING THE WHOLE STORY. I THINK THEY DO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES; BUT THEY COMPLEMENT, THEY'RE NOT STEALING THE SHOW.

Founder, Ginger Blume

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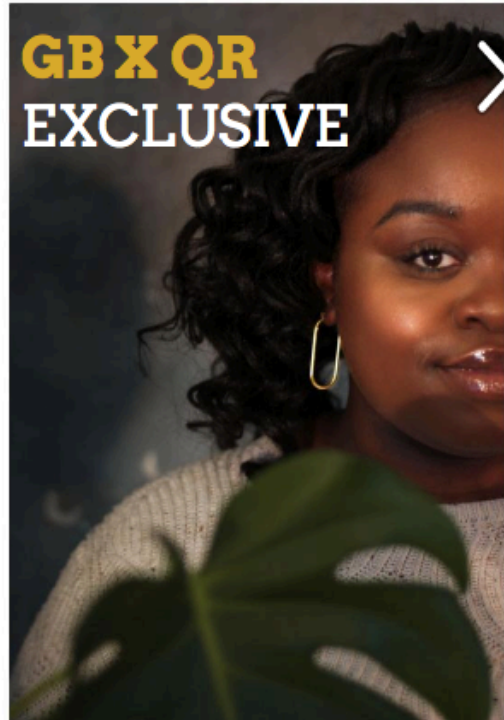
Her gold, oblong earrings hung off her ears as she spoke, later clarifying that they were part of the first collection.

Creating something simple with subtle beauty is an important aspect in crafting these collections. She went on to say that there wasn't a specific vision of what her customer base would look like, but pictured someone "who is naturally beautiful and looking to accompany their natural beauty." Alexandria hoped to create something representative of women, which is why many of the pieces are named after people in her life that have inspired her in some way, like Mrs. Hines and Danielle; and while all of them aren't based on real people, they each include real names to offer jewelry that is for women, by a woman.

Right now, the company is mostly run and operated out of Alexandria's two-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn. In fact, she is also the sole model for Ginger Blume, but hopes to create a community through the brand by collaborating and providing opportunities for other creatives. "We are not a massive brand, but I think anything that I could give to someone else to help them along their journey is really important to me in whatever it is that I do," Alexandria said.



"Stepping out from the traditional thing that society tells you to do, whether it is starting a business, modeling, writing. Any of those careers that are less mainstream, it's really hard to find opportunities when you're starting out. Ones that you feel good about and that you feel connected to. I want to be able to contribute to fostering that."



Photography / Reilly Shaw

For Alexandria, it's important to do what brings you passion and do it unapologetically - an important word for the company. The word means to do something at full force without being sorry or timid about it, no matter the outcome. The company's relationship with being *unapologetic* comes from its roots. Before creating Ginger Blume, Alexandria spent 6 months mentally jotting down a list of reasons why it would never work.

"I felt stuck in this analysis paralysis place where I was like, okay, how can I make mine differently? 'How can I do this?' I found myself just being stuck in a space where I actually wasn't doing anything. I was just thinking about the same concept, the same idea and I had to bring myself to a place where I just said, okay, whether it works, whether it doesn't work, whether I make a mistake, whatever the case may be, I need to just do it," she said.

By the end of the first 6 months, in the summer of 2019, she decided to take the deep dive and put her all into Ginger Blume. *Unapologetically*. She likes to incorporate the word into the different collections by including pieces with a natural, organic or abstract feel. The word is also one of the reasons she decided to use herself as the sole model for the brand, citing it to be an expression of herself, in a natural state of imperfections.



"I think we often times know what it is that we're supposed to do. We know what we are supposed to do, we know to some extent how we are supposed to do it, but we let all of these external stimuli, and all these things tell us false stories," she said. "I think if we really connect with what the tiny little voice inside us is telling us to do and you stick to that and say 'hey, this is what I'm going to do, it may not work but either way I'm going to learn something from it and to do it, just do it without being sorry about it; I think [we] will get a lot more from ourselves and be able to trust ourselves more if we lead with that intent."

For Alexandria, while taking that leap was scary, the first six months have proven to be a success. With average monthly sales ranging from 40-50 pieces and being included in the In Her Shoes 2019 list of Black women-owned brands to shop, Ginger Blume has been on a steady rise.

Right now, she's working on another collection, that's a bit edgier and a bit more New York inspired. She's also working on extending the Ginger Blume community to give a platform to other creatives and help contribute to the growth of other people.

For this creative, jewelry isn't the last stop on her journey - rather, it's just the beginning.