

J. SOARES JOALHEIROS, LDA.

Adelino Soares has Filigree genes. His mother was an *enchadeira* (filler) and his grandfather was a miner in Germunde mines, in Pejão, one of Portugal's largest mining operations at a time when ore was transported using cars towed by steam locomotives. "...So Filigree is here" he says, pointing to his veins and momentarily falling silent with a smile. He states that he has no royal blood but does have an immense generational passion.

He studied jewellery just because, and picked his destiny in his first year. We would be an artisan, using his hands as work instruments. Nothing fascinated him more than his mother's tired and time-worn hands, capable of creating wonderful things. Adelino yearned to discover what attributes his own hands might hold, and if they might match his mother's achievements.

Along the way in his training, he stumbled on the myth of the machine, which in modern experience was in a rush to devalue the past and present itself as the key factor in progress and development, thus in stark opposition to Filigree. The dilemma set in. How would he put his foot down in defence of Filigree in the face of the undeniable advancement of technology? His desire to delve deeper into knowledge helped him to see the breaking points and the opportunities to ensure the continuity of Filigree, and he started studying various possible intersections.

Adelino Soares decided to put technology at the service of tradition. He had lived long enough to learn that technology does not diminish tradition; it enhances it.

Technology thus became his meeting with art, the destabilizing factor in the sector while keeping his focus on people, his greatest asset. He founded a workshop where there are now 11 artisans working: 3 *enchadeiras* (fillers), 4 goldsmiths, and 4 jewellers. The hands of the designer produce new jewels: first from graphite on a simple sketch on paper, then 2D and 3D drawing to assess the volumes. The skeleton is then laser-cut before it is placed into the hands of those who work the magic: they will give it shape, graciousness and grandeur in unique and minutely worked jewels.

Like other artisans who certify their jewels as they make them by hand, Adelino helped transform Filigree into a trend, an object of desire, a luxury piece of jewellery. Clients from around the world seek him out to create a jewel to match their dreams, impressed by the complexity and delicateness of detail that only a human hand could possibly achieve. For Adelino Soares every jewel is special, with or without touches of modernity, with or without sapphires, with or without diamonds. In Portuguese Certified Filigree, everything is possible because it is handmade, provided the dreams are big enough to understand that exclusivity. Adelino uses technology in benefit to his artisanal art, as contradictory as that may sound.

There were always those who were dazzled by new technology, proclaiming that the world would never be the same and that Filigree's days were numbered. But the Filigree was reinforced.

Texts by Sónia Felgueiras

Enchant yourself with the story
of Adelino in video

