

SÓ-OURO ARTIGOS DE OURIVESARIA, LDA.

Arlindo Moura is in fact Arlindo Ferreira.

“Ferreira” as his name appears on official documents, after he opened his eyes to the world for the first time on a cold winter morning, while his father was beaming for the birth of his first son. “Moura” is a family legacy going back generations, an analogy with the Moors, tireless workers, because of the many hours dedicated to the art of handling gold threads, a habit that runs through his veins as ardently as it did in his grandfather's. And those before him. The family toil goes back to the great-great-great-great-grandfather, whose business prospered during World War II manufacturing plates. He had 20 children. Every one of them, without exception, worked from Sunday noon to Saturday night, reserving Sunday morning for the sacred ritual of mass.

The name stuck: Arlindo Moura is the youngest Filigree artisan known today.

Arlindo feels complete when he is in his grandfather's workshop. The late afternoon shafts of sunlight dismiss the window glass, bestowing upon the brown worktops and wooden benches a poetic and mystical aura. It is as if his grandfather was still there, at his corner table, poring over the Filigree, focusing on the details of this work.

Arlindo has kept the workshop just as it was. His small worktop, which is now out of bounds to everyone, sits just as it did during his grandfather's last days. When someone hears such an emotional outpouring and frequent references to his grandfather and asks “So is your grandfather still alive?”, Arlindo replies in the present tense. The workshop belongs to his grandfather, even if he is not here anymore.

Times have changed since Arlindo's grandfather's days, but Filigree has remained timeless, even with the advances and back steps of a design that is now both modern and traditional. “Beauty lies at that boundary.” The irreverence of Arlindo's personality does the rest in the creation of jewels. He makes only certified one-off pieces. That is his signature. He took a chance making a dress designed by Portuguese designer Micaela Oliveira. She had been thinking about it for a long time, decorated with terraces from the Douro wine region, caravels, Portuguese cobble pavement, swallows, and the word “Saudade”, all made of Filigree. Arlindo made her dream come true: 115 pieces of Filigree and 2.040 hours of work later, the dress was ready to head to Dubai to represent Portugal.

The little boy who watched his grandfather for hours in his workshop would never have imagined that this overwhelming emotion rising from the inner reaches of his soul would take over him whenever Filigree is the topic of conversation. A necklace he designed and executed in Filigree delights him. He gets excited over another story involving Filigree spirals. With a pencil and piece of paper in hand, he is reborn. And he hunches over the workbook where his grandfather noted down technical details of his jewels: “My grandfather wrote his notes in code. He only finished fourth grade, but he writes enigmatically. My father and my uncle never could decipher it, but I think like my grandfather. I can read him like nobody else can,” he says with a certain pride justified by longing and love.

Texts by Sónia Felgueiras

Enchant yourself with the story
of Arlindo in video

