

# Life in colour

Enter the world  
of the incredibly  
rare and in demand  
electric turquoise  
Paraiba tourmaline.  
By Francesca Fearon

In Boghossian's Palace Voyages collection, inspired by the palaces of the Silk Road, there is a stunning suite of necklaces and earrings of electrifying turquoise-coloured Paraiba tourmalines that draws inspiration from the 18th-century gardens of Taman Sari in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It is an exceptional masterpiece with the large pear-shaped Paraibas from Mozambique and cabochons from Brazil, which took the Swiss jeweller years to collect.

In London, David Morris has presented two high jewellery collections this year, Skye and Mystic Cove, to express the chief executive and creative director Jeremy Morris's passion for this extraordinary gemstone, which in recent years has become synonymous with the brand. His Starburst cuff from the Skye collection features 59 carats of neon turquoise Paraiba stones, while the Mystic Cove collection, features cocktail rings and necklaces with lagoon-blue Paraibas paired with diamonds.

"One of the first qualities I look for in a gemstone is the intensity of its colour, and Paraiba tourmalines truly embody that," says Morris. "Their unique turquoise blue-green hue, paired with an unmatched vividness, sets them apart from any other gemstone."

The history of this rare stone is documented in *Paraiba: The Legacy of a Colour*, written by Kevin Ferreira, a gemmologist and specialist in this specific tourmaline through his family's involvement in mining the gem in Brazil and Africa, as well as jewellery journalist and influencer Katerina Perez.

They chart how the mesmerising beauty of the Paraiba has made it the rising star of the gem world. It is rare for new gemstones to be discovered. In the 20th century, kunzite, tanzanite and Paraiba tourmalines are the noted few, but the scarcity, vibrant colour and ever-increasing demand for the Paraiba has caused its value to rise incredibly quickly.

The tourmaline's name is derived from the Brazilian state of Paraiba, where small deposits were discovered in the late 1980s. Its vivacious colour is a result of trace elements of copper and manganese that cannot be replicated by any other mineral species. ►

BOGHOSSIAN

The Flowing Droplets set by Boghossian features diamonds and Paraiba tourmalines



KEVIN FERREIRA: THE PARAIBA BOOK



## ‘This gem is so rare that every jewel embellished with a Paraiba tourmaline can never be repeated’

Highly prized for its lagoon blue colour rather than its clarity, demand for the stone sent prices escalating to \$2,000 per carat at gem shows around the world when it was introduced in the late 1980s, and by 1998, prices were \$50,000 per carat because so few could be found.

Concurrently, in Mozambique and Nigeria in Africa, similar tourmalines were being unearthed, generally larger, clean and neon coloured, but not of the same intensity of hue as those from Paraiba.

“African Paraibas are equally stunning, but they possess distinct qualities that set them apart from the Brazilian stones,” explains Morris. “Brazilian Paraibas often have more inclusions and tend to display a more electric blue hue, though they are typically smaller in size. African Paraibas can present a softer, washed-out blue-green colour and usually have fewer inclusions.”

The discovery of a new gemstone excites jewellers around the world, and in the past 10 years designers have become fascinated by the Paraiba, with Chopard, Bvlgari, Moussaieff and Pomellato among those championing the stones in their high jewellery collections.

“New precious materials create excitement for designers, because working with unconventional metals or gems allows them to broaden their creative horizons, try something different and have an opportunity to experiment,” says Perez.

“Paraiba allows jewellers to come up with new colour combinations and play on contrasts, mix materials in unconventional ways and explore Paraiba’s beauty in its faceted, cabochon, carved and even rough form.”

More importantly, Perez explains, “this gem is so rare that every jewel embellished with a high-quality Paraiba tourmaline is unique and can never be repeated”.

Their reception in the Middle East was initially greeted with some scepticism “as there was little awareness about the stone”, says Morris.

“Over time, however, as these gems have become more fashionable, our clients have begun to recognise their beauty and rarity. With a growing understanding of how scarce they are, we’ve seen a noticeable surge in demand and desirability among our Middle Eastern clientele,” he adds. ■



Top left, Brazilian Paraibas tend to display a more electric blue hue  
Left, the history of this rare stone is documented in Paraiba: The Legacy of a Colour by Kevin Ferreira and Katerina Perez