

# Delicately Radiant

**E**verything Anaïs Chabane does is purposeful. From her tattoos to her studio, it's all meticulously elegant, feminine, and precise. But it isn't an antiquated, stuffy sort of femininity — the kind you'd find at a finishing school. Rather, it's a bold, intentional elegance that, more than anything, loves the female form and celebrates everything that makes it so.

"I want to be elegant in all the ways that I can, in my work, my personality, my clothing. I really want to change the mindset that people have that [tattoos] are rebellious," Chabane explains. "They can be elegant things, chic things, and more like an accessory — a beautiful accessory that you wear."

Hailing from Toulouse in the south of France, the 32-year-old Los Angeles adoptee has always been drawn to the feminine. The 5,000-year-old tradition of henna — a temporary, natural dye used to decorate the hands and feet of women at celebrations in her father's native Morocco — is Chabane's earliest inspiration. Her time at fashion school and her travels in India, where a similar but distinct form of henna is practiced, eventually shaped her inimitable style of fine-line tattooing.

Her designs, which can take more than eight hours to draw, are finer than traditional henna art but meld the geometric lines and vines of the Moroccan style with the emblems, mandalas and flowing elements

of Indian mehndi. Like all henna, Chabane's art is about appreciating and enhancing beauty. "What I do is ornament women's bodies," she says. "It's like lace underwear. It's body jewelry I have in my mind that flows with their body parts."

Looking at Chabane's own tattoos, you wouldn't recognize her commitment to fine line work. A bold collection of traditional, predominantly blackwork tattoos, they instead represent her commitment to an aesthetic. "I started with this style before I specialized in ornamental. I already had a lot of old-school tattoos, and I don't like having a mix of things," she shares. "For sure, I would have preferred something more like henna, but it was too late. I have an aesthetic in mind so I can't change anything."

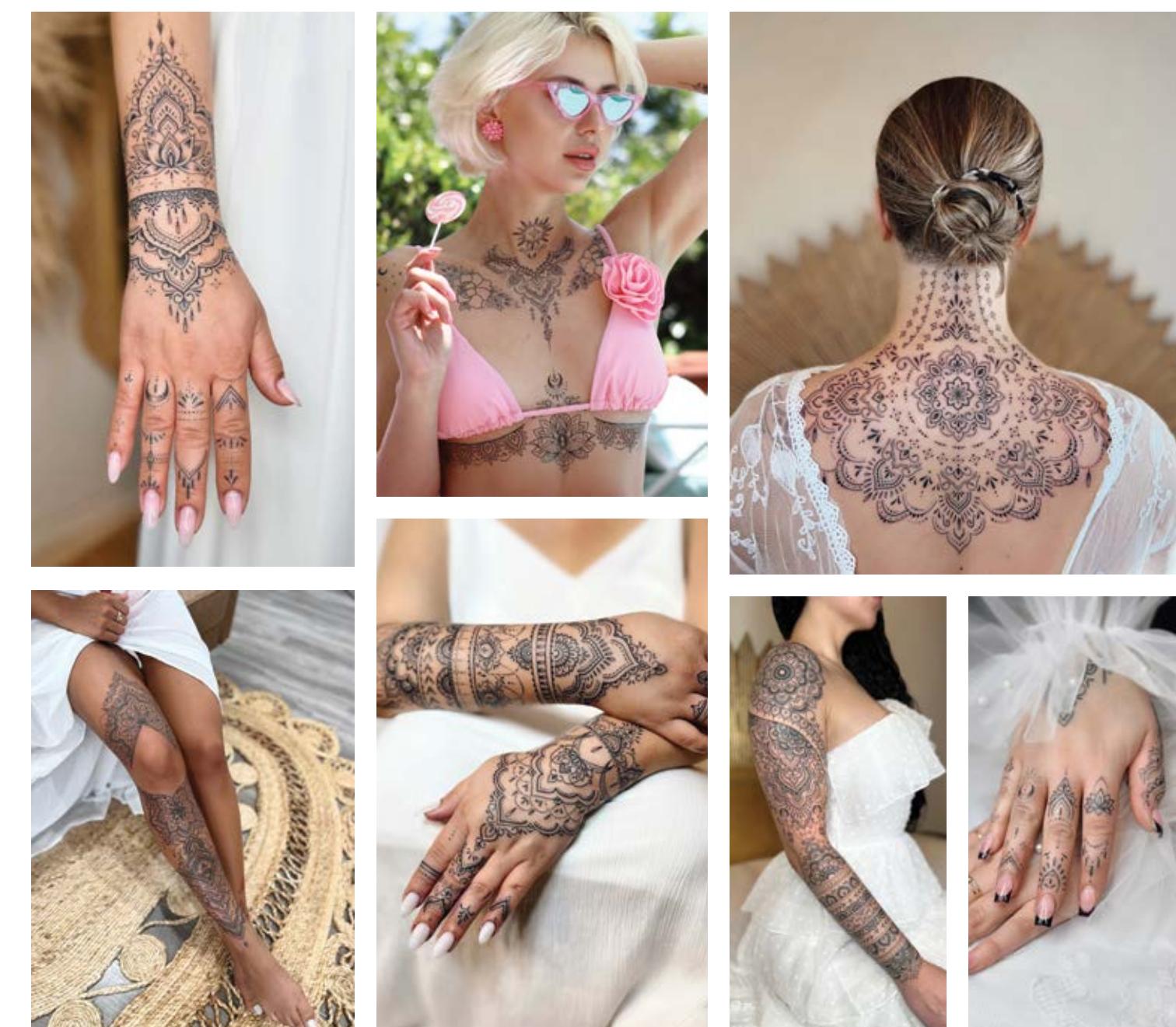
Despite this unwavering sense of style, her introduction to tattoos was casual and unplanned. "Before I was 18, I was not really interested in them... I just started with some friends who had already started at home." And it was another three or four months after that when she decided to get her own.

"It wasn't prepared and wasn't like 'I know I want a tattoo one day' or anything. It was just fun things, and we wanted to practice on each other," she explains. "They did a few of them on the same day. One on my back was wings with color — so horrible — so I covered it over later. And another one was a Gandhi quote that says, 'Begin by changing in you what you want to change around you.'"

## ANAÏS CHABANE'S FINE-LINE TATTOOS REVEAL FEARLESS FEMININITY.

BY ANNALIESE SMITH





Practicing like this for a couple of years and then struggling to find apprentice work in the “really saturated” Toulouse, Chabane decided to make room for herself and opened her own shop at just 22. “I probably wouldn’t do that again! When you’re 21 or 22 you do things like that. For some reason I was just not scared at all.”

With only two other artists specializing in ornamental tattoos in France in 2014, it didn’t take long before she exclusively tattooed clients in her style and carved her own space in the industry. A decade later, and fine line is one of the most popular styles in Europe and her new home in the United States, where she is one of its most sought-after artists. “It’s come really slowly. It’s not like the next day I was like ‘Oh my God, so many shops do fine line,’ Chabane

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explains. “I think it’s good. Everyone has a different style, even in fine line.” The popular style has even inspired her to create a line of temporary tattoos, based on her most popular designs, which launched in 2021. In her newest home on Melrose Avenue, Chabane has created a haven of bright, feminine energy, with female figures adorning

the shelves, soft furnishings accented with soft colors, lotus-shaped chairs, and a bed flanked by a huge, golden sun. Though she will tattoo men as a guest artist, she says she “only wants to work on women’s body parts” because “they flow so, so well” with her designs. Her studio reflects that — curated and inspired by the divine feminine. She will even buy flowing, white dresses that compliment a client’s new tattoo for a photo shoot that realizes beauty of the art on the body and the body as art.

Ultimately, tattoos are the vehicle through which Chabane practices deliberate elegance — uncompromising and unmistakably feminine. Whether permanent or temporary, or simply from the way she moves through the world, her pursuit of radical femininity is making the tattoo industry a more beautiful place.